

[Statuti della Compagnia dei Brentatori di Bologna] [Statutes regulating the Wine Trade and Transportation in Bologna]

In Italian, manuscript on parchment

Italy, Bologna, after 1416, c. 1450

12 ff., complete, single quire of 12, written in dark brown ink in a semi-gothic bookhand, on up to 41 lines, ruled in pale brown ink (justification 205 x 145 mm), first capital of each new chapter set off to the left, chapter numerals in bright red, chapter headings in pale red, a few *manicula*. Bound in full modern bordeaux-colored velvet over pasteboard, smooth spine, modern pastedowns and endleaves, maroon morocco slipcase (Upper outer corners of ff. 1-9 waterstained with some fading to text, the fore-edges of ff. 1-2 and the upper outer corners of ff. 1-8 patched with blank vellum losing a few words of text on f. 1v). Dimensions 290 x 210 mm.

Apparently unpublished and possibly unique copy of the Statutes and recommendations regulating the wine trade and transportation in 15<sup>th</sup> century Bologna, this handsome manuscript contributes to the history of guilds in Emilia Romagna, as well as to the history of everyday commerce, taxation, municipal supplies, and victuals. Likely based on a still-unidentified Latin source, the manuscript merits further study in comparison to the holdings in Italian archives. It offers fascinating information and interesting anecdotes on the sale and use of wine in medieval Italy.

## PROVENANCE

1. Likely copied in Bologna given the very local nature of this document and the style of script. The document was certainly copied after 1416, since this date is mentioned on f. 2v with regards to the wine trade in the localities of Cento and Pieve di Cento. A later note in black ink is copied in the upper margin of f. 1, above the table of chapters: "15.. [suggesting a sixteenth-century date for the manuscript]. *Sopra il vino da trasportare...*"
2. From the Giannalisa Feltrinelli collection, with her bookplate pasted on upper pastedown. Sold at Christie's, The Giannalisa Feltrinelli Library, Part two, London, 3 December 1997, lot 211. There was an 8-catalogue sale of her celebrated library held at Christie's in 1997-98. On the family, see Carlo Feltrinelli, *Feltrinelli: A Story of Riches, Revolution, and Violent Death*, New York, Harcourt, 2002.

## TEXT

ff. 1-1v, Table of 48 chapters, including the following, for example, 1) *Imprima quanto se de pagare per lo vino se vende a menudo* (The retail cost of wine); 2. *Segondo quanto se de paghare per lo vino se vende in grosso* (The wholesale cost of wine); 3. *Terzo quanto se de pagare per lo vino che se portasse in exercito overo chavalchada de gente da arme* (The special price of wine for the military); 12) *Che niuno che venda vino ardisca refondere vino over acqua in lo vassello che cosi si vendesse* (The rules concerning mixing water with wine); 17) *Del prexio chelli tavernari et hostieri deno vendere el vino a menudo et delle mixure* (The prices that taverns and restaurants can charge and the measures they must use); 23) *Della exacione di mal paghi et debitori del dacio del vino* (How to collect unpaid accounts on the tax of wine); 24) *Dell albritrio del*

*gustare e far gustare a vino* (On who can drink wine and how much); and 42) *Che non se possa dare stalladegho senza licentia* (Regulations about boarding animals for the wine merchants).

ff. 2-11v, [Statuti della Compagnia dei Brentatori di Bologna], heading, *Pacti del dacio dal vino della citta de Bologna. Capitolo 1. Imprima quanto se de pagare per lo vino se vende a menudo. 2. Secondo quanto se de pagare per lo vino se vende in grosso. 3. Terzo quanto se de pagare per lo vino che se portasse in exercito overo chavalchada de gente da arme*; incipit chapter 1, "In prima che lo officiale ago deputado overo che sera deputado..."; incipit chapter 48, "Cap. 48. Hostaria de Male Albergo. Anchora ache l'ostiero che serra per lo tempo che vende..."; explicit, "[...] li quali per alcuno modo facessono in contrario";

ff. 12-12v, blank.

This manuscript provides the statutes regulating the wine trade (and its subsidiary, the vinegar trade, in Italian "axedo") in Bologna and its territory in the first half of the fifteenth century. The manuscript comprises 48 chapters which cover such topics as the transport of wine between the countryside and the city or the payment of excise taxes and duties on this commerce. The first statute deals precisely with issues concerning the "dacio dal vino" (*dazio*, in modern-day Italian), that is a tax paid for a specific purchase of goods or foodstuffs or when engaging in a specific activity such as the transportation of goods. Also, these chapters regulate the retail sale of wine (*vendere vino a menudo*) in considerable detail. Local differences in the application of the statutes are set forth, with reference to the provision that these statutes should not contradict the agreement reached in 1416 regarding the wine trade in the localities of Cento and Pieve di Cento, which are nearby Bolognese localities (see f. 2v). It is likely that the manuscript dates from a period not long after this.

Although references to the wine trade appear frequently in collections of statutes and economic regulations from the thirteenth century on (for example, there are many references to viticulture and the excise taxes it generated in the 1288 Statuti di Bologna, 1937-1939), the present manuscript is a very early example of a collection dedicated specifically to this subject. Since official compilations of the law at this time were in Latin, it is probable that the present codex represents a set of extracts, offering a translation into the vernacular, for the use of the guild of *brentatori* [wine-carriers] (the name comes from *brenta*, the name of the vessel used both to transport wine and as a standard measure). The "brentatori" were responsible for unloading the wine, and for measuring and distributing the wine throughout the city. There is also much information concerning the "conduxedori," the tax-collectors of the "dazio" or tax imposed on wine purchases and sales.

Detailed tax records from Bologna reveal that its fifteenth-century inhabitants drank an average of two liters of wine a day, and the "brentatori" were important economic agents as they ensured the steady supply of wine and acted as a link between the medieval city and the surrounding wine-producing region. The *Catalogo della raccolta di statuti...*, Rome, 1943 lists only a seventeenth-century manuscript of *Statuti e capitoli dell'honoranda Compagnia de' Brentatori di Bologna* (vol. I, pp. 156-157). The present document is thus a precious document most certainly for the study of the wine trade in Emilia Romagna in the fifteenth century, but also for linguistic, monetary, and socio-economic studies. Further research into local Bolognese archival holdings would certainly provide comparisons with other documents to complete the history of the commerce of wine

and its supply in Emilia Romagna, which remains to this day an important wine-producing region.

A fuller reading of the manuscript reveals many intriguing details about various aspects concerning the purchase, sale, and use of wine. For example, (ch. 12) sellers are forbidden to mix wine with water, an interdiction that suggests this practice may have been common; (ch. 24) people are free to drink up to 5 bottles [two liters] of wine daily within the walls of the city or under its gates or in other places, **provided** they are over 14 years of age; and (ch. 42), only those merchants or other individuals who are selling wine in Bologna's city limits have the right to stable their animals in the city stalls.

## LITERATURE

*Catalogo della raccolta di statuti consuetudini, leggi, decreti, ordini e privilegi dei comuni delle associazioni e degli enti locali italiani, dal medioevo alla fine del secolo XVIII*, Rome, 1943.

Da Passano, M. *La vite e il vino: storia e diritto (secoli XI-XIX)*, Rome, 2000.

Fasoli, G. *Catalogo descrittivo degli statuti bolognesi conservati nell'Archivio di Stato de Bologna*, Bologna, 1931.

Fasoli, G. *Bologna nell'età medievale*, 1978.

Melis, F. *I vini italiani nel Medioevo*, Florence, 1984.

Pini, A. I. *Vite e vino nel Medioevo*, Bologna, 1989

[Statutes, 1288]. *Statuti di Bologna dell'anno 1288*, ed. Gina Fasoli and Pietro Sella [Studi e Testi 73], Vatican City, 1937 and 1939, 2 vol.

[Statutes, 1352]. *Gli statuti del Comune di Bologna degli anni 1352, 1357, 1376, 1389, libri I-III, a cura di Valeria Braidì*, Bologna, 2002.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Archivio di Stato di Bologna

<http://www.maas.ccr.it/PDF/Bologna.pdf>

Bolognese Wine Site (with some historical details)

<http://www.vinealia.org/website.asp?id=7801>

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