

DA VINCI FAMILY AND WINE

THE PROPERTIES OF THE DA VINCI FAMILY IN VINCI

The daily and profound relation that has always linked Leonardo to wine derives from the fact that he was born in a family native of a small village in the wonderful Tuscan countryside: Vinci.

Located on the slopes of Montalbano at an altitude between 100 and 200 meters above sea level, a soft hilly landscape, a wonderfully ventilated slope, a bright solar exposure that culminates in radiant sunsets, a true naturalistic-elementary paradise for the vine and for the olive tree. Always.

The bell tower of Vinci surrounded by the greenery of its vines and olive trees

Another important aspect, the income of the notary's activity in Florence of Leonardo's father was invested by him in the purchase of agricultural estates and plots comprising many vineyards in the countryside of Vinci.





According to a thesis by some distinguished Leonardian academics among whom Alessandro Vezzosi, the family surname would derive from the neo-latin word “*Vincus*”, from *vinco*, *vincastro*, the willow, the tree from which the branches are pruned (*salci*), used to bind the vines, technique still applied today in autumn and which characterizes and is detectable throughout the rural landscape of Vinci.

The other members of the family were therefore involved in wine-making activities and, as in the case of uncle Francesco and Leonardo’s grandfather, Antonio, they did not disdain to work their own vineyards “*with their own hands*”.

A heritage of farms, land, olive groves and vineyards of uncommon consistency that of the Da Vinci family, over 30 lots of not always specified size, but that in the sum of the surfaces mentioned (in *staoira*, unit of measure in Tuscany during the period of Leonardo, approximately 525.01 sqm) is close to over 20 hectares today.

A large extension of land compared to the average of the properties at that time, that can be estimated at around 6 *staiora*. A total area that certainly required a productive application, probably professional, unlikely it could be familiar or personal.

The landscape of Vinci in its natural nuance, then Leonardian

LEONARDO AND THE FOOD

The references and quotations that Leonardo reserves for food in his autograph codes are less numerous and frequent than those concerning wine.

He was from Tuscany and native of Vinci, and his home table of childhood and adolescence was characterised of local products.

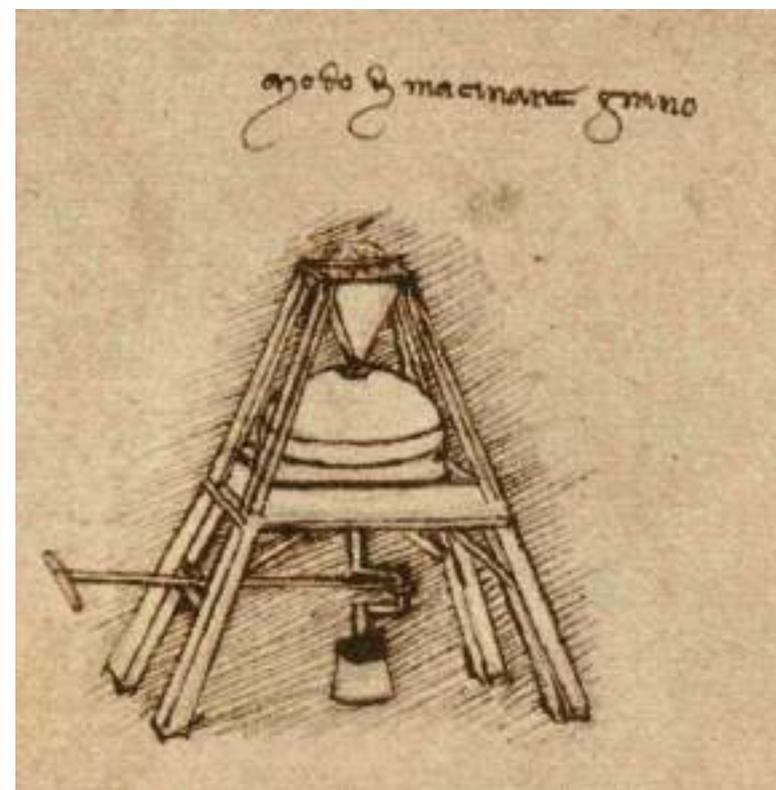
Bread, oil, salad, vegetables, cheese, salami, meat, eggs and fruit that were directly produced and / or hunted in the countryside of Vinci and Montalbano.

Even when he lived in Milan, the list of food shopping was primarily based on the aforementioned products, and contrary to what is disclosed, it does not result from any Leonardo's sentence or observation that he was vegetarian.

Bread: always regularly purchased and cited as a fruit of the oven, as food that nourishes the growth of the individual, from baby to man. The wheat as the sweetness of the sun, of the earth, of water and of the air, nourished and matured by elements of which nature is composed and through the seed-gene of this or that vegetable give themselves as a gift. Food, elementary gift.

Regarding the wheat, in sheet 87 recto of the Codex Atlanticus, Leonardo draws a mechanical device for its grinding with the inscription:

“modo di macinare grano”.



*Codex Atlanticus,
sheet 87 recto*

THE DISECLIPSING OF LEONARDO'S VINEYARD IN MILAN

20 March 2015 was a special date.

Without any of us having been able to predict such a day as that of the physical replanting of Leonardo's vineyard, the date that was effectively defined, resulted in absolutely unique day.

In particular thanks to four coinciding, astronomical, therefore extra-human reasons.

The spring equinox, the lunar perigee, the new moon and the solar eclipse.

The equinox: the moment in which the plants had come back to the land of Milan, the day would have lasted longer than night, a sign of rebirth, of increasing luminosity, of solar and fruitful auspiciousness. On March 20, the Earth's axis was perpendicular to the sun's rays, a condition that only returns twice a year. After this day, the axis will begin to tilt, making sure that the light lasts longer in the day time in our hemisphere.

The lunar perigee: in astronomy it measures the minimum distance between two planets. A variable measure in the earth-moon case from 357.000 Km. To 406.000 Km.

Well, the perigee of 20 March 2015 foresaw a distance between earth and moon of 357,583 Km, as we can image very close to the minimum limit of distance. Moon that at 06.36 am of 20 March became new. Even more symbolically and fatally relevant was the event of the solar eclipse that interested the earth in that day.



On 20 March 2015, with Letizia and Piero Castellini toasting to Leonardo's reborn vineyard

From Milan to Zanobi Boni, my Farmer,

Li 9 December 1515

The last four carafes they were not according to my expectation, and I regretted it.

The Fiesole vines cultivate in a better way they should provide to our Italy most excellent wine, as in Ser Ottaviano.

You know that I also said that you should fertilize the rope when it is inserted in the ground with the rubble of works or of demolished walls, and this dries the root, the stem, and so the leaves from the air attract the substances suitable for the perfection of the bunch.

Then pessimally for our days we made wine in open tanks, and so the essence of the fruit in the boiling has escaped through the air, and there is nothing left but a moist and faded colored of the skins and of the pulp; then the wine is not moved from one tank to another how it should be done, and for this reason the wine is made turbid and heavy for the bowels.

Thereby if you and others would made sense of this reasons, we would drink excellent wine.

M.N.D. Save you.

Leonardo da Vinci

Leonardo writes after tasting his wine: first the direct sensorial experience, the examination of the sensations emanated from the wine in the glass, then the detection and highlighting of organoleptic defects that are the result of productive vices coming from the obtainment and transformation of grapes. From this, finally, the improved technical, viticultural and oenological indications, aimed at optimising the quality of the product. In this, the scientific approach. Leonardo had high expectations regarding the quality of his wine, and he regretted that its organoleptic characteristics were not at the same level of his expectations.

The Fiesole vines cultivate in a better way they should provide to our Italy most excellent wine, as in Ser Ottaviano.

To obtain a great wine, a great grape is necessary, and for this reason the vines should be cultivated in the best way: maximising the quality of the grapes in order to maximise the quality of the wine.

You know that I also said that you should fertilize the rope when it is inserted in the ground with the rubble of works or of demolished walls, and this dries the root, the stem, and so the leaves from the air attract the substances suitable for the perfection of the bunch.

To obtain a great grape it is necessary to fertilise the grapevine with basic-siliceous substances (with the rubble, that is con la maceria di calcina di fabbriche o muralie dimoliti), substances that in addition to nourishing the plant dry the root and the stem improving the hygrometric conditions of the cultivation; a plant that works with good nutrition and in the presence of not humid or stagnant air, is thus in an ideal physiological and phytosanitary state, and is therefore in a situation in which it is able to draw from itself, through the leaves and stem, the necessary substances from the air, which serve to achieve the purpose of the winemaker: the perfection of the bunch. According to Leonardo, the man, the winemaker, must make sure that the vine is placed in a position to feed itself, harmoniously, with the natural elements of which its fruit is produced. Superb vision of the leaves as attractors-receptors-absorbers of substances present in the air and useful for the bunch perfection. The leaf is then the way through which the vine first inhales and absorbs