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*In Vino Veritas*: Viticulture of Dalmatia and economics of the wine trade of ancient Rome

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As one of the first alcoholic beverages developed, wine is a beverage enjoyed around the world and has been present since the dawn of civilization. One culture that revered the drink and relied on it as sustenance were the Romans and because of this planted vineyards in all parts of their empire. The Adriatic islands of Dalmatia were one region in the Empire known for their wines. My research will explore: "What was the economic significance of viticulture and the commerce of wine on the islands of Roman Dalmatia and in what ways did this trade contribute to rural development and urbanization of the area?" The methods that I will use to answer this question is through historical archaeology which is a complementary mix of studying documents through historical methods with archaeological examination of artifacts left behind from ancient people. Studying modern viticulture will be included to understand grape cultivation and oenology, the science of wine production, will bring insight into how the Romans turned grapes into wine. This project will also involve an archaeological dig on the island of St. Clement, off the Croatian coast, where a team of archaeologist will be excavating the remains of Roman villa. Excavations from previous seasons uncovered features that could have been used in the process of wine production and artifacts obtained in this year's dig could help show how wine production influenced the development of the region overall. This research is important to the field of historical archaeology because much of the academic research of the region has mentioned that vineyards were present, but little is mentioned on how the production and commerce of wine effected the region's development. This project will endeavor to alleviate gaps in understanding of this region. To the broader community this research will enrich the understanding the heritage of one of the most popular potent potables. I will disseminate the results of my research in a couple different ways other than the Inquiry at UST poster session such as submitting my research for major academic conferences like the Mississippi State Undergraduate Research Symposium and others like it. This research will impact my academic and intellectual development by honing my skills as a historian and also allow me to acquire new skills and practice in the field of archaeology. Becoming an archaeologist is my long term professional goal of obtaining a PhD as an archaeologist through graduate school.

The Latin phrase, "*In vino veritas*," meaning, "In wine there is truth," is a testament to the social value the ancient Romans placed on wine. Today the image of Bacchus conjures notions of an inebriated hedonist running amuck at an orgy. In reality, ancient Romans viewed wine not as a drink of debauchery but a beverage of philosophy, symposia, and primarily sustenance. This cultural need created a demand that lead to the development of vineyards across the Mediterranean. With funding from the Young Scholars Grant I plan on uncovering the economic role that wine as a commodity played

in the development of the Roman Empire. My focus will be on islands off the Adriatic Dalmatian coast, which has been mentioned in ancient sources for producing high quality wines. The question that I am planning to address in my research is: “What was the economic significance of viticulture and the commerce of wine on the islands of Roman Dalmatia and in what ways did this trade contribute to rural development and urbanization of the province?”

The academic scholarship necessary to approach these questions is historical archaeology, an interdisciplinary method of studying the past through archaeology complemented by historical research of documents. This approach will be used because analyzing both written sources and artefacts will illuminate the narrative of the relationship the wine trade had with the development of the region. This project will involve a two-week archaeological dig on the island of St. Clement led by my faculty advisor, Dr. Ivančica Schrunk. The excavation will study the remains of a Roman villa dating from the 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>c. CE. The historical study aspect will analyze ancient sources of the time such as Cato the Elder, Columella, and Pliny the Elder along with the secondary scholarship on the time period. The modern sciences of viticulture and oenology will also be incorporated into the study in order to understand the effectiveness of ancient practices on their product. Much of the background on this project builds off of Dr. Schrunk’s archaeological work studying Roman villas in the Adriatic. Over the past several years an international group of archaeologists collaborating with by Dr. Schrunk have investigated the site uncovering several features of a villa that point to its function for wine production. The most relevant discoveries from the site were water-tight floors that could have functioned for wine storage or even fermentation (Begović, Schrunk, and Ugarković 2012, 143-166). Further research on these features is needed to fully understand its significances and purposes for viticultural activities.

This project is important because it will deepen the current historical understanding of the ancient economy of Dalmatia in the context of the larger trade network in the Roman Empire. Scholars such as Ante Škegro have argued that while most of Dalmatia’s economic focus was on mineral extraction on the mainland, the coast and the islands in the Adriatic were more suited for viticulture (Škegro 2006). One of the most prominent scholars of the region is the classicalist Dr. John J. Wilkes; who has written extensive work on the Roman province of Dalmatia. He argued that when the Greeks colonized islands in the Adriatic the first commercial activity started with mainland Illyrians was for necessary resources not found on the island in exchange for wine, oil, and salt. During the Roman period Italian settlers acquired coastal and insular land to develop villas and wine production increased (Wilkes 1969). Archaeologist Kevin Greene interpreted the general nature of the Roman economy by studying the archaeological records of shipping containers like amphorae (Greene 1986). From my preliminary research, the existing literature mentions viticulture was present but is lacking in the specifics of how viticulture and the commerce of wine helped developed the region. My research will endeavor to alleviate this omission.

The methods that will be used to address the question I pose will involve an interdisciplinary approach that would include historical archaeology, modern viticulture, and oenology. Through historical methods I will research and analyze the ancient sources that have written extensively on agricultural practices of their time periods.

Translated ancient primary sources such as Marcus Porcius Cato's *De Agri Cultura*, Lucius Junus Moderatus Columella's *De Re Rustica*, and Marcus Terentius Varro's *Res Rusticae* all give insight into viticulture practices (Unwin 1991, 102-107). Other sources include Strabo's *Geographica*, which describes wines from all over the Roman known world (Strabo 2014). *Historia Naturalis* by Pliny the Elder actually gives a ranking of wines which list wines from Dalmatia as some of the highest (Pliny 1957). I will also examine the secondary scholarship of the academics that were mentioned above as well as others. For the archaeological aspect of the project I will participate in the archaeological excavation with Dr. Schrunk on St. Clement and keep a field journal noting our observations. Studying the physical features and remains from the site along with other ancient artefacts such as amphorae will help explain gaps in the written sources about the region's economy. To fully understand ancient viticulture I will also need to study modern viticulture and oenology. Studying modern viticulture will deepen understanding of the biology of grapes and oenology, the science of winemaking, could help bring insight into how the Romans turned grapes into wine. All of these disciplines intermingle to help answer the question of how viticulture played a role in the economy and development of islands in the Adriatic.

The impact of this research will be a greater understanding of the Roman system of commerce in the Mediterranean world and its connection with the development of Dalmatia. It will also deepen the academic knowledge of lives of the ancient people that lived on these islands. Since wine is still popular in the modern world, this research will enrich the understanding of the heritage of wine for the general community. Next spring I will be student teaching and after graduation I can incorporate the research skills I will hone this summer into a history classroom. After a few years of teaching I plan on pursuing archaeology in graduate school. This project will develop my personal intellect and experience in the field of archaeology.

The findings from this research will be compiled in a major research paper that will become the magnum opus of my undergraduate career. After I create the paper I will design a poster that clearly communicates my thesis and findings, which will then be shared at the *Inquiry at UST* poster session highlighting undergraduate research. I could also create a presentation in the fall to share with the history club on campus to discuss the history and to show archaeological methods. Beyond sharing my results on campus I plan on submitting my findings to different conferences such as the Mississippi State Symposium of Undergraduate Research. For applying to graduate schools for archaeology and the research paper produced will be used as a writing sample.

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