

## CANDIE WYNE

SOME DOCUMENTS RELATING TO TRADE  
BETWEEN ENGLAND AND CRETE  
DURING THE REIGN OF KING HENRY VIII

Englishmen began to be acquainted with the wines of Greece and Crete perhaps as early as the thirteenth century, not long after Venice had made herself mistress of certain territories of the Byzantine Empire. The first certain mention of these wines in the English language, however, comes rather later. *Malvoisie* is recorded in 1379-80, ("Extracts from the Account Rolls of the Abbey of Durham", p. 389, Surtees Society, 1898-1901) and *Malmsey* c. 1450? ("Manners and Household Expenses of the Thirteenth and Fifteenth Centuries", p. 456, Roxburgh Club, 1841). Knowledge of the wines may first have been obtained through the medium of France, but a considerable direct trade between England and Crete and the Morea later grew up. By the latter half of the fifteenth century Greek wines were so familiar to Englishmen that after George, Duke of Clarence, had been executed by his brother King Edward IV in 1478, the rumour could be put about that Clarence had died from accidental drowning in a butt of malusey. The implication, no doubt, was that the Duke was so fond of his malusey that he could not wait to drink it from a cup.

Richard Hakluyt (1552-1616) in his "Principall Navigations of the English Nation" refers to the antiquity of the English trade with the Levant and gives samples of the merchandise carried (Everyman edition, vol. 3, p. 2). "In the yeeres of our Lord 1511. 1512. &c. till the yeere 1534, divers tall ships of London... with certaine other ships of Southampton and Bristowe, had an ordinarie and usuall trade to Sicilia, Candie, Chio, and some-whiles to Cyprus, as also to Tripolis and Barutti in Syria. The commodities which they caried thither were fine Kersies of divers colours, course Kersies, white Westerne dozens, Cottons, certaine clothes called Statutes, and others called Cardinal-whites, and

Calveskins which were well sold in Sicilie, &c. The commodities which they returned backe were Silks, Chamlets, Rubarbe, Malmesies, Muskadels and other wines, sweete oyles, cotten wooll, Turkie carpets, Galles, Pepper, Cinamon, and some other spices, &c. Neither did our merchants onely employ their owne English shipping before mentioned, but sundry strangers also: as namely, Candiotics, Raguscaus, Sicilians, Genouezes, Venetian galliasses, Spanish and Portugale ships”.

The trade with the Levant was not without its hazards, not only from the Turk but also from the bad faith of foreign merchants. In the Public Record Office in London there is preserved a letter written by Henry VIII to John, King of Portugal, on 15 October 1531, demanding the restitution of certain English-owned goods detained in a Portuguese harbour. (Ref. Calendar of State Papers, Hen. VIII, vol. V, p. 225). The version of the letter given by Hakluyt, *op. cit.* vol. 3, p. 3, is as follows: “To the high and mighty prince, John by the grace of God, king of Portugale, and of Algarve on this side and beyond the sea in Africa, lord of Ghinea... Henry by the grace of God, king of England and of France, defender of the faith and lord of Ireland... sendeth greeting. Whereas our welbeloved and trustie subject John Gresham merchant of London, of late in humble maner hath signified unto us, that one William Heith his Factor and Agent, certaine moneths agoe had hired in Candie a certaine Portugale ship called Santo Antonio, (the patrone whereof is Diego Perez) and covenanted with the patrone of the sayd ship, that he should first saile to the Isle of Sio, to take in merchandize of sundry sortes, & then eftsoones return to Candie, to be fraughted with other goods all of which he was to bring into our kingdome of England, to the value of 12000 ducats, as by their billes of covenant and agreement more plainly appeareth: it so fel out, that ye aforesaid Diego your highnes subject having received the said goods, very trecherously and much contrary to his covenant, to the exceeding great losse of our subjects, putting in by the way into an haven of Portugale, & altering his pnrpose of comming into England, he remaineth still in that haven, & likewise detaineth our subjects good. Which injury (secing it is done in your Highnes kingdome) we hope your Highnes will see reformed according to equity & right”.

There are a number of documents, published and unpublished, which demonstrate the interest of English merchants, and of their patrons, in the commerce with Crete, and it appears that the political and military situation in the Levant was closely watched for any developments which might affect trading.

Calendar of State Papers, Hen. VIII, vol. V, p. 594, (Vit. B. XIII, 236, B. M.) 1387 5 October 1532. This document is a letter from one Matthew (King?) to Thomas Cromwell (Henry VIII's chief adviser during the later part of his reign) in which a favour is requested in connection with the import into England of "Candie wyne".

Calendar of State Papers, Hen. VIII, vol. VI, p. 541 (1353 R.O.) 26 October 1533. This paper is a letter from one Harry Huttoft, no doubt a factor or shipping agent, to Lord Lisle, to the effect that one of Lisle's ships was en route for Candy.

Calendar of State Papers, Hen. VIII, vol. VI, p. 583 (1462 R.O.) 25 November 1533. A further communication from Huttoft to Lord Lisle, to the effect that there has been no further news of Lisle's ship, except that she has been laden at Candy. Hakluyt, "Principall Navigations of the English Nation", Everyman edition, vol. 3, p. 5. "The shippes called the Holy Crosse, and the Mathew Gonson, made a voyage to the Ilandes of Candia and Chio in Turkie, about the yeere 1534... The ship called the Holy Crosse was a short shippe, and of burden 160 tunnes. And having been a full yeere at the sea in performance of this voyage, with great danger she returned home, where, upon her arrivall at Blackwall, in the river of Thames, her wine and oyle caske was found so weake, that they were not able to hoysse them out of the ship, but were constrayned to draw them as they lay, and put their wine and oyle into new vessels, and so to unlade the shippe. Their chief freight, was very excellent Muscatels and red Malmesie, the like whereof were seeldome seene before in England". The "Mathew Gonson" made a further successful voyage to Crete and Chios in 1535, but the "Holy Crosse was so shaken in this voyage, and so weakened, that she was layd up in the docke, and never made voyage after" (ibid.).

Calendar of State Papers, Hen. VIII, vol. X, p. 55 (147 R. O.) 21 January 1536. This document is a communication from John

a' Borough to Lord Lisle giving news of the situation in the Levant. He retails the alarming intelligence that "Barba Rowse" (Hairredin Barbarossa) was at Constantinople, and was to be appointed the Turk's admiral. The Emperor had given orders that all ships bound for Candy or Constantinople were to be stopped at Messina.

During the reign of Henry VIII, therefore, (1509 - 1547) the English trade in Cretan wine and oil grew to the point where it required regularisation and official recognition. Not long previously the practice had begun of appointing, in areas where the English had important commercial interests, local representatives to look after those interests and to give advice and assistance to merchants and their factors. The first appointment of such an official was probably that of Lorenzo Strozzi to be English "consul" at Pisa in 1485. (J. W. Thompson, "Economic and Social History of Europe in Later Middle Ages", p. 455). In 1522 a similar appointment was made for the first time in Candia. The patent designating Censio Balthasari as English consul at Candia is preserved in the Public Record Office, London, and is quoted in Rymer's *Foedera* vol. XIII, p. 776. The text of the patent is as follows:

*An. 13 H. 8*  
*Pat. 13 H. 8*  
*p. 2 m. 5*

*De Consule Constituto*

*Rex omnibus ad quos &c. Salutem.*

*Sciatis quod Nos,*

*De gratia nostra speciali, ac ex certa Scientia & mero Motu nostris, necnon certis Causis & considerationibus Nos specialiter moventibus,*

*Dedimus & Concessimus, ac per Praesentes Damus & Concedimus Dilecto & Fideli Nostro Censio de Balthasari Filio quondam Johannis de Balthasari, alias dicto Censio de Menesara Mercatori de Luca Filio quondam Johannis Menesara, modo Residenti in Insula Cretae vel Candiae Officium sive Locum Magistri, Gubernatoris, Protectoris, sive Consulis omnium et singulorum Mercatorum aliorumque Ligorum & Subditorum nostrorum infra*

*Portum Insulam sive Terram Cretae vel Candiae frequentantium, morantium, mercandisantium, sive negotiantium, ipsumque Censium Magistrum, Gubernatorem, Protectorem, sive Consulem Mercatorum aliorumque Ligeorum & Subditorum nostrorum praedictorum Constituimus et Ordinavimus, ac per Praesentes Constituimus & Ordinamus,*

*Dantes & Concedentes eidem Censio plenam, Tenore Praesentium, Potestatem et Auctoritatem, ad omnia et singula quae pro Ordinatione, Regimine, Gubernatione, et Conservatione Mercatorum aliorumque Ligeorum et Subditorum nostrorum praedictorum, Bonorumque et Mercandiarum suarum prout sibi melius videbitur Ordinandum, Exercendum, et Perimplendum,*

*Habendum, Occupandum, et Exercendum Officium sive Locum praedictum ac caetera Praemissa praefato Censio per Se vel per sufficientem Deputatum sive sufficientes Deputatos suos, durante Vita sua, cum omnibus et omnimodis Feodis, Praemiis, Juribus, Profitibus, Commoditatibus, Avantagiis, et Emolumentis quibuscumque, in tam amplis et consimilibus modo et forma, prout aliquis alius sive aliqui alii hujusmodi sive consimile Officium aut Locum in Portu Insula sive Terra praedicta vel alibi ex dono sive Concessione nostris sive aliquorum Progenitorum sive Praedecessorum nostrorum quondam Regum Angliae habuerunt et gavisati fuerunt, habuit et gavisus fuit, coquod expressa mentio, &c.*

*In cujus, &c.*

*Teste Rege apud Westmonasterium, primo die Martii.*

*per ipsum Regem.*

Signor Balthasari seems to have held office for about eight years. We do not know under what circumstances he vacated it, but his place was filled on April 26, 1530, when a new English consul was appointed to Candia. This time it was an Englishman, Denis Harrys, a merchant of London. (The patent of the appointment is quoted in Rymer's *Foedera* XIV, 389). The fact that a Londoner was appointed is significant. It means that there were Englishmen living in Crete who were sufficiently well acquainted with the country, with its Venetian government, with its wine and oil producing and exporting business, and with the Italian and Greek languages, to exercise all the func-

tions of an official intermediary between the governments of England and Candia in respect of commercial operations. There was yet another consular appointment to Candia during the reign of Henry VIII. On October 15th, 1540, Master Harrys was succeeded as consul by a Greek, George Petrocochino. The formula of appointment in the case of Harrys and Petrocochino is the same, *mutatis mutandis*, as the formula of appointment for Balthasari.

The papers quoted above are enough to show that in the sixteenth century both the government of England and private Englishmen were well acquainted with the island of Crete. So widespread was the acquaintance that Shakespeare was able to make casual allusions to the island in his plays, with the certainty that his audience would understand him. Nowadays, alas, Shakespeare's allusions require explanation.

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