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Oil Trade



Salento, in
the south of
Italy

Olive oil is often called the
“**gold**” of Salento



Oil production is one of the
oldest activities of Salento



In south Salento the oil production was made in the underground oil mills, dug into the calcarean rock



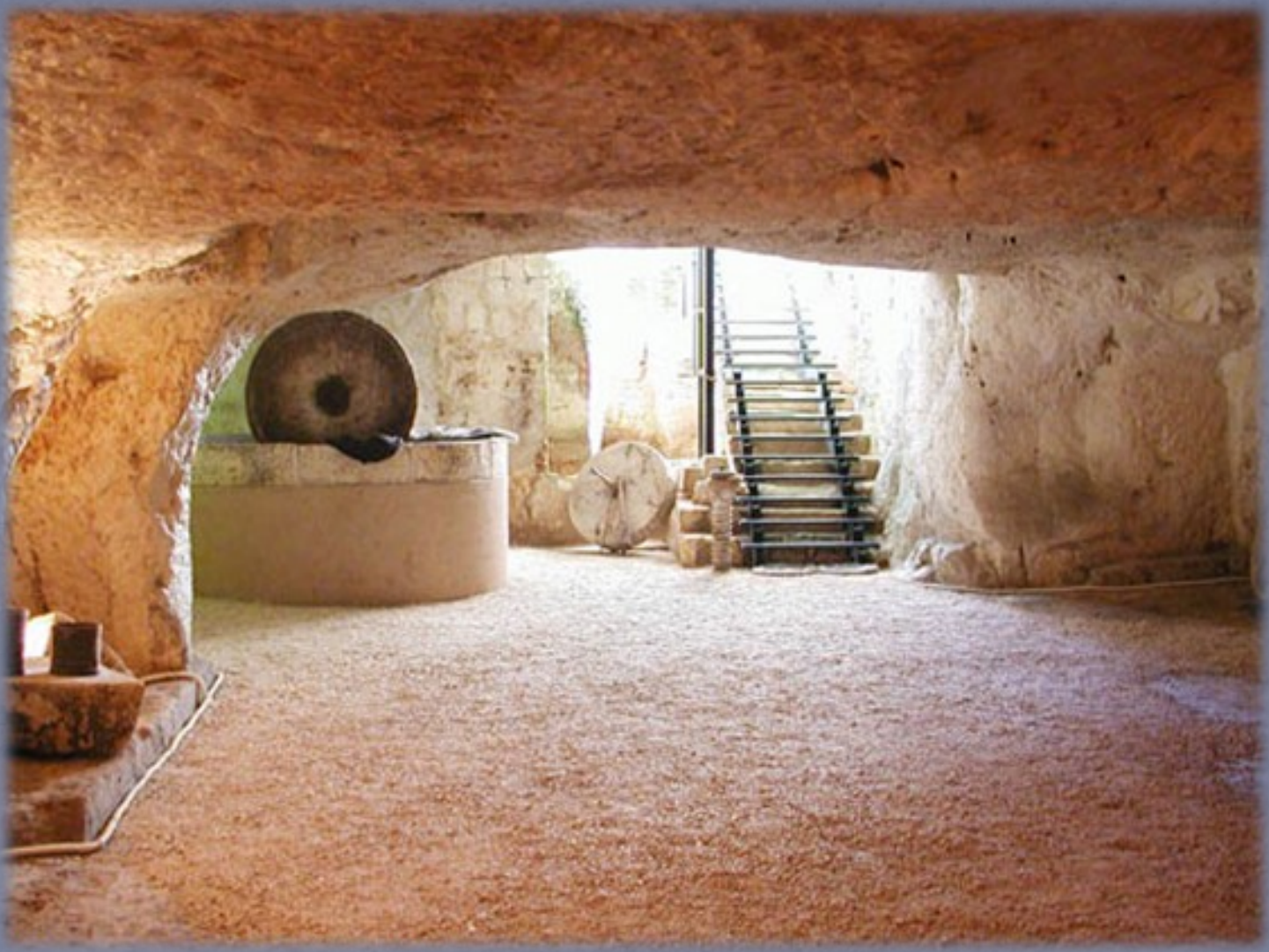




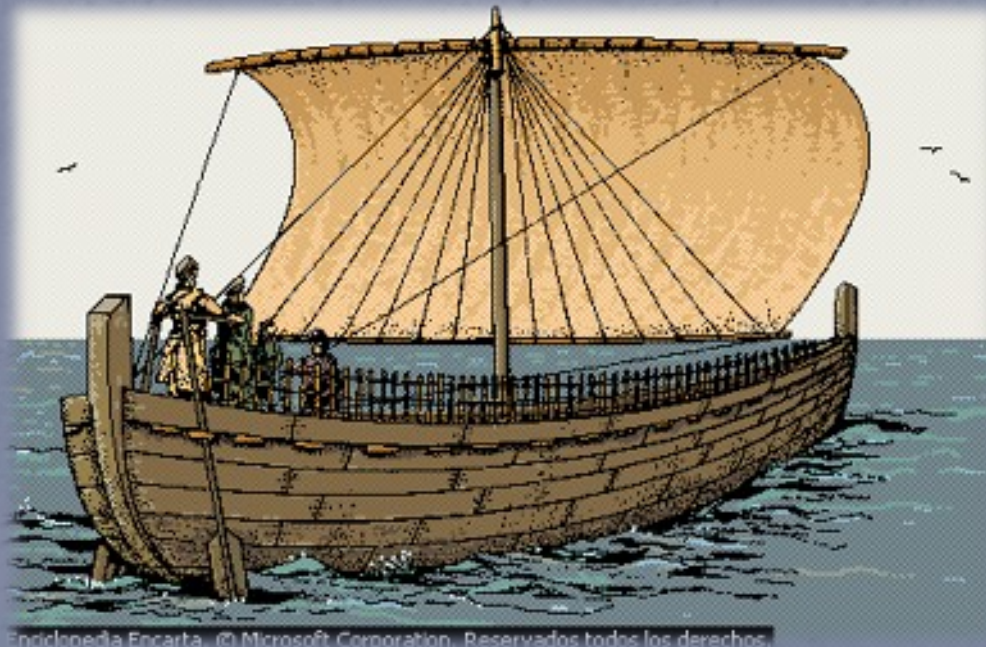
Photo: Augusto Martínez

The cultivation, production and trade of olive oil in Salento has an ancient tradition and even if it is unknown the actual date of beginning we know for sure the origin was the Mediterranean.



It is likely that the olive tree appeared in Salento between the seventh and eighth century B.C.

It was probably brought in Salento by Phoenician sailors.



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During the Roman domination the cultivation of olive trees in Salento was intensified and during Augustus emperor it was the hugest Roman olive area.



Even the Saracens,
in spite of their
destruction attitude
helped the
expansion of olive
oil introducing a
new variety of
spreading: the
'cellina' or
'Saracena'.



Important
was the
presence of
Byzantine
monks,
who moved
from East
because
they were
persecuted
in Salento.



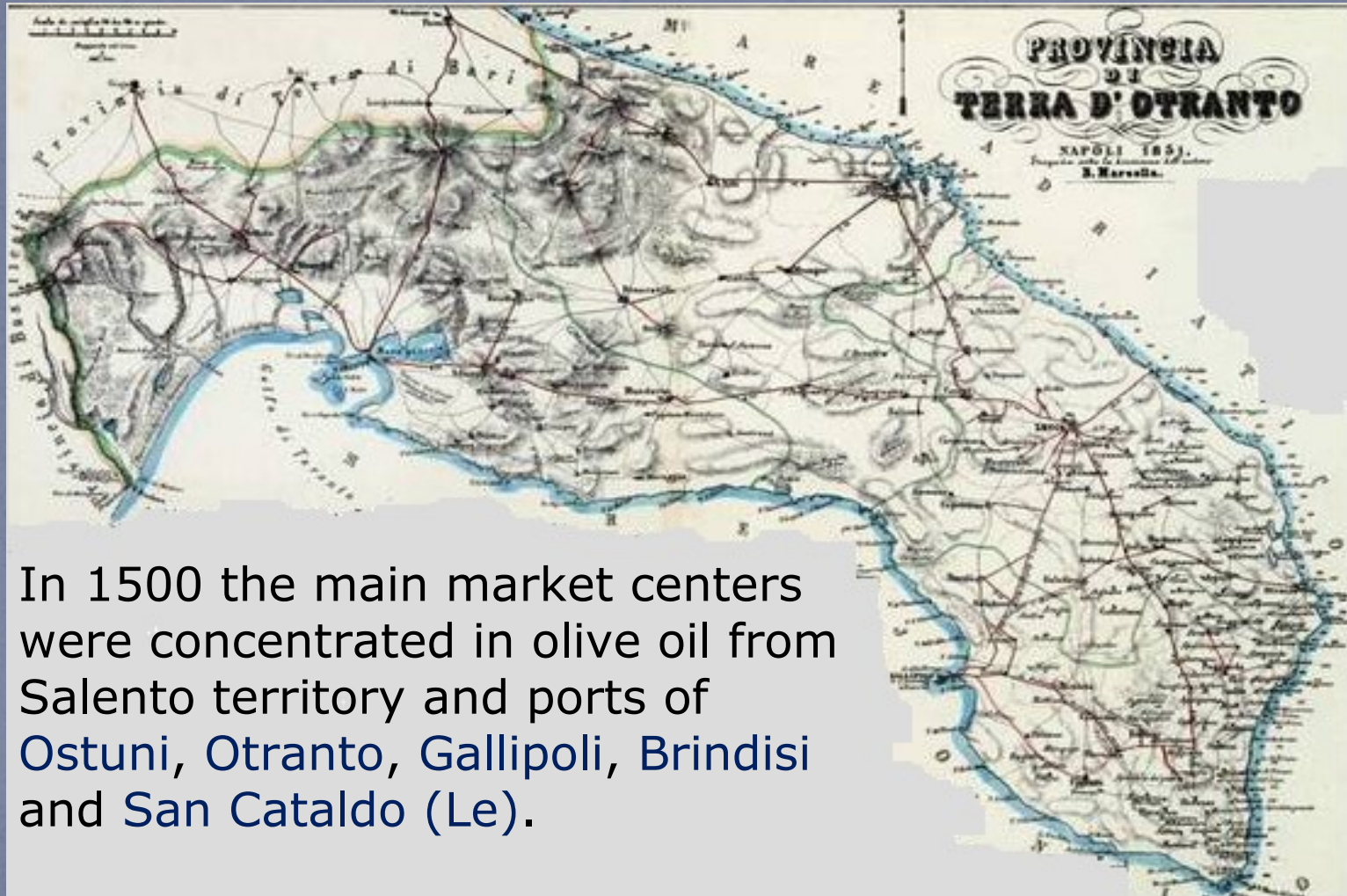


Byzantine colonization has got the merit of having established exhibitions and trade markets to ease the agricultural products exchange.

A further expansion of the olive grove areas is detected during the period of Norman rule.



The spread of olive led to the birth of intense commercial traffic carrying mainly by sea ways allowed the development of many port cities.



In 1500 the main market centers were concentrated in olive oil from Salento territory and ports of Ostuni, Otranto, Gallipoli, Brindisi and San Cataldo (Le).



Since the end of '500 and early '600, Gallipoli was the most important port in Europe for the oil trade.

Gallipoli became an important center of shipment of oil that poured into the city not only from the Terra d'Otranto, but also from the southern part of the neighboring land of Bari.

Many Italian and foreign merchants (mainly French and English) went into the Ionian city, they bought oil from the olives or the manufacturer, to sell it.



Salento didn't have any good roads permitting trade, this encouraged maritime trade and Gallipoli became the focal point of European oil trade.



Oil was kept in big tanks dug in the rock from which it was taken and sent daily to Naples or Venice and foreign ports in Great Britain or Russia, where it was burnt day and night, near holy icons.





The Russians wanted only clear, yellow and bright olive oil and Gallipoli was one of the very few cities that was selling it.

Gallipoli was so important that it could control european price of the oil trade and it hosted several viceconsulate of: Austria, Denmark, France, England, Ottoman Empire, Netherland, Portugal, Prussia, Russia, Spain, Sweden and Norway.



In the XV, XVI and for all the XVII century, there was all the European olive oil in Gallipoli and, to control the contracts, an annual expo called Fiera del Canneto used to take place from the 2nd to the 8th of July. That's where the contracts of oil and other products occurred. This expo still exists today and has become a "Storical Rievocation".



OLIVE OIL PRODUCTION IN LECCE COUNTY IN COMPARISON WITH PRODUCTION AGGREGADES

(.000 q)	1998/99		1999/2000	
World production	24.005	100,0%	21.935	100,0%
European Union	17.070	71,1%	17.155	78,2%
Puglia	1.674	7,0%	3.134	14,3%
Lecce	305	1,3%	817	3,7%

Trough these productions, the only Salento region represents the 3,7% of the world production of olive oil and these makes the Salento region the second productur in national ranking





This is the
motivation
because of it is
called salento
gold

