Momjan, Kingdom of Muscat

Terroir, Biotype and Identity of Croatia’s Smallest PDO Wine

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# Abstract


## Motivation

Muškat momjanski, a local biotype of Muscat Blanc à Petits Grains cultivated almost exclusively on the flysch slopes around the hilltop village of Momjan in northwestern Istria, is one of Croatia’s rarest indigenous viticultural resources. Reduced by phylloxera, two World Wars and Yugoslav collectivisation, the variety has been rebuilt over the last three decades by a small group of Momjan families. It received Croatian Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) protection in 2015, the first Croatian wine PDO awarded after Croatia’s accession to the European Union, and the corresponding EU eAmbrosia registration followed in 2021. This thesis is motivated by a desire to document, with the help of new research material kindly provided by the Institute of Agriculture and Tourism in Poreč, how a community of fewer than ten cellars around a single village has built and defended an EU-protected, biotype-level wine.

## Research question

The thesis examines whether the unique combination of flysch soils, mediterranean climate and genetically and ampelographicaly distinct Muscat biotype provides a sustainable model for micro-PDO protection of heritage varieties. It assesses the ampelographic identity of the biotype, the terroir factors codified in the PDO specification, the stylistic range of the wines, and the commercial position of the producer association Vino Momilianum.

## Methodology

The work draws on three streams: (1) Primary regulatory, archival and scientific sources made available by Dr. M. Bubola of IPTPO, the registered product specification *Specifikacija proizvoda Muškat momjanski / Moscato di Momiano* (Croatia, 2014), the Peršić et al. (2017) ampelographic study in *Mitteilungen Klosterneuburg*, the 2000 Dragan magisterij, the *Zelena knjiga vinove loze* entry (2015, pp. 288–289) co-authored by Bubola himself, the 1997 KZP elaborate prepared by the Faculty of Agriculture in Zagreb, the IPTPO web article and Croatian-media documentation of the 27 August 2015 PDO presentation, the *Klimatski atlas Hrvatske* (Zaninović, ed., DHMZ, 2008), the *Istarska enciklopedija* (LZMK, 2005) entry on Muškat momjanski, and the early twentieth century

periodicals *L'Istria agricola* (1913, 1923, 1926), (2) Standard industry references, Johnson & Robinson (2019) *The World Atlas of Wine* (8th ed.), Harding & Robinson (eds., 2023) *The Oxford Companion to Wine* (5th ed.), Clarke & Rand (2015) *Grapes & Wines* and Gordon (ed., 2010) *The Wine Opus*, and (3) Semi-structured interviews with four Momjan cellars, three Vino Momilianum members, Kabola (Patricija Markežić, director, May 2026), Prelac (Denis Prelac, May 2026) and Kozlović (Gianna and Gianfranco Kozlović, May 2026), and Sinković (Patrik Sinković, production manager, May 2026), a Momjan grower active outside the formal association. Full transcripts of the four interviews are included as Appendix B.

## Content overview

The introduction situates Momjan within the Buje microregion of northern Istria and traces viticulture in the village from medieval references to the 2021 EU PDO. The terroir chapter reconstructs the geology, soils, climate and wind regime as codified in the PDO specification, with particular attention to the explicit exclusion of terra rossa soils. The variety chapter sets out the OIV-descriptor profile of the biotype, the chemical and aromatic data published by Peršić et al. (2017) and Dragan (2000), and the viticultural constraints written into the PDO. The styles, producers and market chapters use the interview material to describe how the wines are positioned today. The thesis concludes by assessing the impact of PDO recognition and outlining the principal risks to the model.

## Conclusion

Momjan demonstrates that a European micro terroir can sustain a distinctive identity, a rigorous quality framework and a viable commercial model, on the scale of a single hilltop village. The 2015 Croatian PDO and the 2021 EU registration have stabilised the variety, broadened the stylistic range from semi-sweet toward dry and passito, and consolidated the international visibility of the producers. Pursuing and defending PDO status for Muškat momjanski therefore represents an affirmation of place, tradition and collective stewardship within the European quality-wine system.