



Analects

# The wine, by The Corregidor Mejía

Adán Felipe de Mejía y Herrera was born on September 22nd, 1896 in Lima. The Corregidor<sup>1</sup>, as his friends and loved ones called him, never signed his articles and publications, but he was immediately recognized for his distinctive style.

He adopted his nickname when he lived with his grandfather and uncles in the Lima district of San Miguel in 1924. His desire for correcting their grammatical mistakes constantly, even when speaking, made him carry the name The Corregidor.

His father, Adán H. Mejía, was an excellent doctor in the city, and his grandfather, Mr. Hilario, was a beloved and renowned apothecary of the capital. The Corregidor always visited his grandfather's work place since he was a child, and he felt motivated by his grandfather's meekness, prudence, and wisdom. The costumers were very politely

assisted by the grandfather in front of the little grandson's restless and curious look.

The Corregidor studied at the Faculty of Letters of the National University of San Marcos. In 1928, he started working as a collaborator in the newspaper *El Tiempo* (The Time), where he published a series of chronicles from Lima, entitled *De la viandanza urbana* (From the Urban Viandanza) and *Exhumaciones* (Exhumations), making criticism of the writers of the time.

In 1934, he wrote for *El hombre de la calle* (The Man of the Street). Then, at the end of the same year, he started to work in *La revista semanal* (The Weekly Magazine). In 1937, he provided service in *Universal* (Universal) and his last publications were written in *La Prensa* (The Press) from 1946 on, under the titles *Ayer y hoy* (Yesterday and Today)

<sup>1</sup>Corregidor comes from the Spanish word *corregir*, which means "to correct." Consequently, *corregidor* refers to "one who corrects."

and Puntadas sin nudo (Stitches without Knots); until he passed away on May 5th, 1948.

The Corregidor was a humorous chronicler. He invented several neologisms using his own style, which was easily recognizable because of its nuances. “It was like a kind of preventive ophthalmology, which relieved readers by moving them away from myopia. When there was already an agglomeration everywhere: sidewalks, driveways, cinemas, schools, universities, hospitals, etc., The Corregidor’s words were loose like in a square, but skillfully directed.”; this is how Juan Francisco Valega, his friend from childhood, describes him in the prologue of the first edition of the book *Ayer y hoy*, published in 1959 with the compilation of the chronicles from Lima that were written in La Prensa by The Corregidor.

Among a variety of topics, the chronicles deal with the uses and customs of the cuisine native to Lima, since The Corregidor was also a passionate lover of the art of cooking, which was clearly reflected in many of his writings.

Juan Francisco Valega points out that the life of Adán Felipe Mejía, The Corregidor, was full of obstacles and sorrow, but his face mask was always smiling. He was bohemian in the fullest sense of the word; he was a free, good man. He was a hardworking person, who everyone considered lazy though. But, his suffering, turned into eternal laughter, made him immortal.

In this edition, one of these extraordinary chronicles, where he deals with wine and the art of drinking in Lima at that time, was collected for your enjoyment.

*“It was like a kind of preventive ophthalmology, which relieved readers by moving them away from myopia”*

## THE WINE

All the countries of hardworking people have their typical liquor,  
and they get drunk with it, openly, without hypocrisy or foolishness.

And they get drunk on national commemoration days!

Joyfully!

Raising the glass!

Clinking the glasses until they split into splinters! ...

Proud of their homeland and the native spirituous, rousing liquid!

Cheerfully!

Not all countries on earth enjoy national liquor  
and domestic drunkenness.

No!

Having your own liquor means having ancestry and  
trajectory and brightness.

It means influencing the history of the planet,

and making history,

pure history, since history is not the deceased, memorable past,

as meant by those who fall into routine, repeating

merely the same words..., but the living present!

History is presence...

It is civilization

And a distinctive way of drinking is culture!

It is contribution!

Vigor!

Worldly influence!

Personality!

Life!

Speed! ...

Strength!

Temper!

Powerfulness!

Push!

The English have their whiskey.

The French, cognac.

The Germans, their beers...

The Russians, vodka.

The Yankees, demonic mixtures.

The Belgians ... absinthe!

The Chinese, rice liquor.

The Catalans, the anís del mono in Badalona...

And the Peruvians ... chicha and pisco!

And the Greeks of Homer ... the grape wine!

In fact:

There are only four cultures in the field of sweet drunkenness!

The Greek, with his grape wine.

The Peruvian, with his golden chicha made out of corn.

The German, with his beer.

And the sensual Arab, with his alembic distiller  
of tinctures ...

Everything else is confection...

Refinement.

Concoction.

Misuse.

Decadence.

Blend...

Like it or not, the sweetest drunkenness comes from grapes.

More natural.

Fresher.

Lusher and more cheerful, rural, and pleasant.

They sang about it:

Virgil

Horace.

Ovid

In immortal verses!...

That divine blind man, Homer Melesigenes, has drunk

the generous wine from the lively vineyard of Greece and has sung

about it in verses, listened to and learnt by heart by the Olympian Gods

with pleasure!

Celestial hexameter! ...

Father Bacchus, old crapulous and amusing God, protected the  
vineyard

above all things.

Oh, the pagan libations!

The sky blue and pink vacancies!

Cyprus!

Falerno!

Paphos! ...

Then...

Light wines from Italy.

Strong wines from Spain.

Accomplished wines from France.

Creole wines!

Peruvians!

Ruby wine from Chincha.

Cachina<sup>2</sup>!

Ica, multanimous.

Moquegua, generous.

Calango, pleasant to the eyes

Rinconada de Mala, sugared...

Surco, easy to swallow.

Madgalena del Mar, stylish, aborgoñado<sup>3</sup>, palillo-scented.

<sup>2</sup>Cachina is a drink made from grapes with short fermentation.

Pedregal, azambado<sup>4</sup>.

Let's cultivate life and save wine, which is one of the few pleasures that remain!

Ah, our ancient Peruvian wines that thrilled us!

Oh, our piscos!

Oh, our grape of all colors, tastes, and sizes!

The huge barrels.

The plethoric wine cellars.

The Pampano ... honest ... chaste ... creative...

The robust vines, like boas, in the fields of Ica, surrendered to the weight of tight, enormous bunches ...

And the endless, earthly pleasure of drinking a good glass of joyful wine,

under the relaxing shade of the vine arbor,

at twilight, while the acequia sings and the crickets chirp... and

a fat chicken, softened in tomato sauce and later eaten,

is digested in peace!!

The sun sets! ...

The night falls!

Happiness arrives! ...



Source: Mejía, Adán Felipe (1959). *Ayer y Hoy* (Compilation and prologue by Juan Francisco Valega) (1st Edition). Lima: Tahuantinsuyo Editions.

<sup>3</sup>Aborgoñado is a type of red wine similar to the wine produced in the French Burgundy.

<sup>4</sup>Azambado refers to people of mixed Indian and African ancestry.