DOI: 10.30816/ICONN4/2017/82

Sankt Georg and *San Zopito*. The appeal of saints' names on the Italian and German food market

Marie A. Rieger
University of Bologna, Italy

Abstract: A search for food brands containing the elements *Sankt* or *San* (both meaning 'Saint') in the German and Italian trademark registers respectively shows significant differences. If restricted to Nice class 29 because of the high number of Italian brands, the number of German brands becomes extremely small. The present article focuses therefore – and contrary to what was originally planned – on Italian brands only. The analysis of the 372 brands collected will show their typical linguistic structure, source domains and possible motives for the name choices. Finally, I will discuss the question of what appeal saintly names exercise on Italian consumers.
Keywords: onomastics, hagionyms, product names, Italian food brands.

1. Introduction

Italy and the Roman Catholic Church are still an indissoluble binomial. According to a report from August 2017, 78% of Italians identify with Catholicism. This is not only the highest percentage of Catholic affiliation among thirteen Western European countries but, with only 1%, Italy also turns out to have the lowest percentage of declared Protestants and, with 15%, the second lowest percentage of persons "identifying as atheist, agnostic or 'nothing in particular'" (Pew Research Center 2017: 7). Furthermore, Italy reaches percentages which are significantly higher than the average of the 33 participating European countries for 9 out of 10 indicators used by the *European Values Study* to explore the importance of the religious dimension (Abbruzzese 2006: 138).[1] Germany differs from Italy not only with regard to declared affiliation (42% Catholics, 28% Protestants, 24% unaffiliated) but also to religious practice. Only 7% of German Catholics stated that they pray daily (Italian Catholics: 19%) and 14% that they attend Church on a weekly basis (Italian Catholics: 25%), whereas only 12% said that religion is very important in their lives in contrast to 21% of Italian Catholics (Pew Research Center 2017: 7–8).[2]

[1] For the tenth indicator ("Frequently thinking about the meaning of life"), there is no European percentage available (cf. Abbruzzese 2006: 138). The list of the 33 participating countries can be downloaded here: https://www.gesis.org/en/services/data-analysis/survey-data/rdc-international-survey-programs/european-values-study/ (accessed 22/09/17).

[2] On the importance of the religious dimension in Italy, see also Abbruzzese (2008), and, with regard to Germany, Pollack and Müller (2013).

BDD-V4461 © 2017 Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-03 00:50:19 UTC)

Despite these differences, saints' names form, to the present day, an integral and significant part of the name inventory of both cultures, and can be found in all name classes, most commonly as personal[3] and place names, which are also the best-researched name classes (not only) with regard to saints' names.[4] Much less researched are saints' names as ergonyms in general and brand names in particular.[5] As regards Italy, Paola Cotticelli Kurras, in her overview article on *Italian Commercial Names*, mentions only briefly that religion "is hinted at through geographical names or names of Saints" (2013: 265), whereas Sandra Reimann searched the German trademark register focusing on the questions of which "products bear saints' names and what are the motives for this choice of name" (2016: 271).

Starting from these premises, the aim of the study presented here was to find out if there are differences between the German and Italian food and beverage markets with respect to brand names containing the element *Sankt* and *San* which are the German and Italian words for 'Saint'.[6] For reasons explained in the next section, which describes the corpus examined, only part of the original project has been realized. Section 3 then analyses the collected brand names from different points of view, whereas Section 4 examines the question of whether there is a relationship between brand names and products. The paper concludes with a short summary.

2. Corpus

The present corpus is based on the Italian electronic trademark register run by the *Direzione Generale per la Lotta alla Contraffazione – Ufficio Italiano Brevetti e Marchi* or "Directorate-General for the Fight against Counterfeiting – Italian Patent and Trademark Office" (in the following ItTMR)[7] and its German counterpart, run by the *Deutsches Patent- und Markenamt*, the "German Patent and Trade Mark Office" (in the following GerTMR)[8]. The original idea was to collect trademarks registered in Nice classes 29–33, which are the classes referring to food and beverages.[9] Furthermore, the

[3] Although Germany cannot be considered a highly religious country, the majority of the ten most frequently chosen girls' and boys' names are those of saints or, at least, of biblical origin (see Dräger 2016: 19).

[4] For a historical overview on Christian naming, see Kohlheim (1996).

[5] On the current state of research on saints' names, see Dräger (2016).

[6] In Italian, *San* is the form before masculine names beginning with a consonant (*San Martino*). It becomes *Sant'* for both feminine and masculine names beginning with a vowel (*Sant'Elisabetta*, *Sant'Antonio*), and *Santa* before feminine names beginning with a consonant (*Santa Chiara*). Lastly, it becomes *Santo* before masculine names beginning with 's + consonant' (*Santo Stefano*, *Santo Spirito*).

[7] Italian homepage: http://www.uibm.gov.it/; the English version (http://www.uibm.gov.it/index.php/inglese) is still under construction, giving access only to selected items (accessed 22/09/17).

[8] German homepage: https://www.dpma.de/index.html; English version: https://www.dpma.de/english/index.html (accessed 22/09/17).

[9] "The Nice Classification (NCL), established by the Nice Agreement (1957), is an

BDD-V4461 © 2017 Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-03 00:50:19 UTC)

time range should comprise the years 1980 to 2016, since 1980 is the first year available in the Italian electronic register.[10]

However, the first inquiry in the ItTMR, dated February 17, 2017, resulted in more than 1200 trademarks containing the string 'San' for class 29 only.[11] Furthermore, on April 5, 2017, a new interface was released which included the important additional feature of showing the trademark images. With regard to the search term, there is, however, no distinction between words and syllables, and not even between the brand *names* and the general trademark descriptions.[12] Therefore, the basic search term *San* – with upper case (!) – generates not only brands such as *Santa Maria* or *San Benedetto*, but also a substantial number of mismatches, e.g. *Torre Rosano* 'Tower of Rosano [proper name]', or *i MoliSani* '(products) of/from [the region of] Molise'.[13] An example in which the string *San* appears within the descriptive text is *Rizzello Vini e Olio* 'Rizzello [proper name] Wines and Oil' because its logo shows a seemingly unrelated picture of *San Giorgio*. In order to eliminate apparent mismatches, duplications, and renewals, the listed data sets have, furthermore, to be opened one by one. Therefore, there was no other option than to limit the time range to the years 2000–2016 and to Nice class 29.[14]

There were two further selection criteria. First, the registration should not be a mere protective measure but brands must actually relate to products listed in class 29. This criterion led to the exclusion of brands such as *San Giorgio Seigen*, a metal processing industry registered for all 45 Nice classes, as well as of names of restaurants and hotels.[15] Second, since the present study is interested in the appeal of saints' names and not in place names, the string 'Saint + name' should not have the main function of indicating provenance. This second criterion led to the exclusion of brands such as *Pesche di San Sperate* 'Peaches from San Sperate [a town in Sardinia]'. Finally, multiple

international classification of goods and services applied for the registration of marks" (http://www.wipo.int/classifications/nice/en/) (accessed 22/09/17).

[10] The German electronic register has contained "[r]egistered German trademarks since October 1894, insofar as they were not deleted prior to 1 January 1995" (https://www.dpma.de/english/search/dpmaregister/index.html) (accessed 21/09/17).

[11] The author has saved the corresponding pdf-files.

[12] The corpus examined comprises only registered trademarks. Since the analysis regards mostly brand *names*, the term *brand* is generally used with regard to the *names*, the term *trademark*, instead, where other features are concerned.

[13] All Italian examples are retrievable at: http://www.uibm.gov.it/bancadati/search.php. Since all results have the same URL (http://www.uibm.gov.it/bancadati/search_result.php), it is not possible to indicate specific URLs for the given examples.

[14] However, it is important to note that an inquiry restricted to *class 29* results in brands which are all registered at least in class 29, but the relative data sets always indicate all classes for which the brands may be registered. In fact, many of the brands examined are registered for several classes, in the majority classes 29–33.

[15] Farmhouses with rooms to rent (a kind of tourism called *agriturismo* in Italian) are included if there is also farming.

BDD-V4461 © 2017 Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-03 00:50:19 UTC)

entries related to the same brand name were counted only once.[16] The Italian corpus thus collected comprises 372 items.

The identical inquiry in the GerTMR resulted in 10 trademarks containing the element *Sankt* and currently registered in class 29. Of these 10, only one brand, i.e. *Sankt Georg*, is actually related to goods listed in that class.[17] This totally unexpected result means that the study presented here is necessarily limited to Italian brands.

3. Linguistically oriented analysis

In what follows, the Italian corpus is analysed with regard to the formation patterns of the names (3a.), to source domains (3b.) and to naming motifs (3c.).

3a. Recurring formation patterns

The 372 brands show four frequently recurring formation patterns. *Pattern type 1* has the structure 'Saint + name'[18] and is, with 180 occurrences, by far the most frequent. 171 of these contain just the string 'Saint + name', e.g. *Sant'Agata*, *San Marco*. There are also some cases in which the two elements are written as one word. A good example for the fact that branding is creativity rather than compliance is given by the company *San Geminiano Italia*, since the brand name is registered in both versions, i.e. *San Geminiano* and *Sangeminiano*. Another non-standard example is *San Ste'*.[19] A few brands shorten *San* – correctly – to *S.*, e.g. *S. Tommaso*. In 9 cases, the basic string is extended by an adjunct, e.g. *Santa Maria del Sole* [of the sun]. *Type 2*, with 63 occurrences, is characterised by the fact that the brand names also include the related products or production sites, e.g. *Prosciutto* [Ham] *San Giorgio*, *Oleificio* [Oil Mill] *San Vincenzo*.

Type 3, with 84 occurrences, includes an element suggesting that the brands refer to farms. The first and largest subgroup (49) shows the structure 'Farm + Saint + name'. In Italian, there are a number of (near) synonyms related to the basic concept of *farm* but distinguished by historical time and/or size and/or ownership structure. In the corpus, *Tenuta* 'large agricultural estate' as in *Tenuta San Martino*, is the most frequent, but there are also *Fattoria* [farm] *Santa Lucia*, *Feudo* [fief] *San Martino*, and *Podere* [small farm] *Santa Caterina*. The brands of a smaller second subgroup (14) include names for rural buildings, e.g. *Casale* [farmhouse] *San Domenico*, *Cascina* [farmstead] *San Francesco*. The third and last subgroup of structure type 3 (21 items) is the most

[16] For example, the San Carlo Group, an Italian manufacturer of snack foods, asked for 57 registrations relative to its core brand *San Carlo*.

[17] Even a search for currently registered trademarks containing *Sankt* in *all* 45 Nice classes resulted in just 100 hits (last visit: 21/09/17). Irrespective of the question of registration, there are, however, commercial names in Germany containing saints' names, e.g. names of pharmacies. On this topic see Fahlbusch (2016).

[18] When it comes to structure, 'name' is intended as a wildcard for all elements occupying the proper name slot. As will be shown below, not all of them are actually *proper* names.

[19] The correct form should be 'San<u>to</u>' because the proper name begins with 's + consonant'. For *Ste'* see below.

BDD-V4461 © 2017 Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-03 00:50:19 UTC)

explicit one. Whereas elements such as *podere* and *cascina* are rather evocative, terms such as *azienda agraria* 'agrarian enterprise' or *cooperativa agricola* 'agrarian cooperative' focus more on the fact that there is a business behind the brand, e.g. *Azienda Agraria S. Lucia*. *Type 4*, with 19 occurrences, comprises an element, which relates to topography such as *colle* 'hill', *poggio* 'hummock', and frequently *terre* 'lands', forming brands such as *Terre di Santa Maria*.

The remaining 26 items show single structure types. Except for one, the brands of this group have in common with each other, and with the items of structure types 1 and 4, the fact that they do not specify their products or businesses. Examples are *Santo Stefano srl* [Ltd.] and *La Monachella* [Little Nun] *di San Pio.* The one exception here is the brand *La Basilica di San Formaggio* 'The basilica of Saint Cheese' (on this name see below).

The numerous examples so far show that nearly all elements forming the 372 brands examined are taken from the Italian onomasticon and lexicon. With regard to the lexicon, there are three brands containing dialectal nouns: the elements *fogher* 'fireplace' in *Il Fogher di San Daniele* and *formai* 'cheeses' in *Formai San Gabriel* are both Venetian, whereas *'nduja* in *'Nduja San Donato* is the local name of a certain type of Calabrian spreadable salami[20]. The only foreign noun *Khorasan* in *Khorasan Santa Candida* denotes a type of grain which has no common Italian equivalent.

In the whole corpus there are only three brands containing what Platen calls *Konzeptformen*, i.e. elements consisting of bits from a natural language, which, nonetheless, as a whole are not part of any lexicon:[21] the element *Atuttafrutta* is made up of the phrase 'a tutta frutta' which goes back to expressions such as *a tutta velocità* 'with the maximum speed' with *a tutto/tutta* meaning 'the maximum of something'.[22] The brand *Atuttafrutta Santa Rosa* may, therefore, suggest that the jam is composed entirely of fruit. The second *Konzeptform* – from the same trademark holder – is *Pomodorissimo* in *Pomodorissimo Santa Rosa*, where the superlative *-issimo* – as in *buonissimo* 'very good' – is combined with the noun *pomodoro* 'tomato'.[23] The third and last *Konzeptform* is *visciolentino*. The element is part of the rather complex brand *Visciolentino Viscola di San Valentino*, and is a non-standard derivation from *visciola*, which is a certain type of cherry.

With regard to the name-slot elements, there are two dialectal forms, i.e. *Luthia* in *Santa Luthia*, which is *Lucia* in Friulian dialect[24], and *Èramo* in *Sant'Eramo*, which

[20] See http://www.nduja.net/index.html (accessed 22/09/17).

[21] See Platen (1997: 41–43). For a general overview of frequent brand name formation patterns, see Nübling *et al.* (2012: 269–271).

[22] See http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/birra (accessed 22/09/17).

[23] The brand is related to preserved products such as sieved and chopped tomatoes. The combination of the superlative form *-issimo* with words other than adjectives is a frequent strategy in Italian marketing and naming. See Zilg (2006: 101–102).

[24] See http://www.santaluthia.com/Santa_Luthia_Srl/Home.html (accessed 02/08/2017).

BDD-V4461 © 2017 Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-03 00:50:19 UTC)

may be a dialectal form of *Erasmo*[25]. *Ste'* in the aforementioned brand *San Ste'* is a colloquially used short form of *Stefano*, whereas *Dan* in *San Dan* is an unusual short form of *Daniele*. *Feliu* in *San Feliu* is the Catalan form of the Italian *Felice*; the aforementioned brand *Formai San Gabriel* shows the proper name differing from the standard Italian *Gabriele*. Finally, there are two brands, *San Comaio* and *Sangiolaro*, containing evidently non-Italian elements: even if the logo of the latter shows the prototype of (the good) shepherd, suggesting that the part 'giolaro' is a proper name, all links found led only to the brand *Sangiolaro*, as also was the case of (*San*) *Comaio*.

3b. Source domains

With a focus on the string 'Saint + name', the corpus comprises 168 types with regard to the name slot. The six most frequent names are *Giorgio* and *Martino* (both 17 occurrences), *Marco* (16), *Maria* (14), *Francesco* (13), and *Lucia* (12). They are followed by *Michele* and *Vito* (both 9), *Biagio* (8), *Lorenzo* (7), *Pietro* and *Stefano* (6), *Benedetto*, *Mauro*, and *Nicola* (all 5 occurrences). 112 name elements appear only once. On the basis of information gathered on the internet[26] it was possible to relate 152 names to Saints, from *Agostino* and *Alda* to *Luca* and *Lucia*, and to *Vittoria* and *Zopito*[27]. Only 35 of these names relate to female saints, while 117 relate to male saints.

If we exclude the seemingly meaningless elements *Comaio* and (*San*)*giolaro*, there are 14 brands that seem unrelated to (specific) saints. First and foremost, there is a type of brand that does not comprise the string 'Saint + name' but only the element *Saint(s)*, e.g. *Il Vento Dei Tre Santi* 'The wind of the three Saints'. The two brands *Santa Croce* and *Gocce Santa Croce* do not relate to a saint but to the *Holy Cross* (with *gocce* meaning 'drops'). For the brand *Badia* [Abbey] *Santa Gonda* it was possible to find references to a homonymic religious building situated in the town of San Miniato (near Pisa). However, it is not clear if the name relates to an actually canonized person. With regard to the brand *Masseria San Vicario* the last element simply means 'vicar', forming the name 'Farm Saint Vicar'. Even though these brands do not relate to (specific) saints, they have in common the fact that their elements pertain to the religious sphere.

The string 'Saint + name' of a small group of brands is homonymic with Italian toponyms which, in their current form, cannot be linked to saints' names: *San Cusumano* is not only a brand but also a neighbourhood in the town of Trapani (Sicily),

[25] See http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/santo-erasmo/ (accessed 22/09/17).

[26] Information about saints was obtained from the following specialized websites: http://www.santiebeati.it/, https://www.heiligenlexikon.de/ and *The Catholic Encyclopaedia* (http://www.newadvent.org/), as well as the Italian Encyclopaedia *Treccani* (www.treccani.it) (accessed 22/09/17).

[27] *Zopito* is not a common Italian first name and there is no mention of it in the relevant sources of information. According to a Wikipedia entry, it should be a spoofed form of *Sopitus in Domino*, an epitaph in a Roman catacomb simply meaning 'passed away in the Lord' (https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Zopito [accessed 22/09/17]). However, *San Zopito* is the patron of Loreto Aprutino, a small town in the region of Abruzzo.

BDD-V4461 © 2017 Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-03 00:50:19 UTC)

Santa Fiora a small town in Tuscany, *San Ginese* a hamlet near the town of Lucca, *San Polo* a quite frequent name of towns and neighbourhoods, and, finally, *Santa Venere*[28] the name of a torrent.

The remaining elements in the name-slot are the Italian female name *Ersilia* in *Cascina Sant'Ersilia*, which is, however, not related to any saint; the two nouns *buco* 'hole' in *San Buco*, literally 'Saint hole', and *formaggio* 'cheese' in *La Basilica di San Formaggio*; and, finally, the adjective *fresca* 'fresh [feminine singular]' in *Santa Fresca*.

3c. Naming motifs

In order to form a successful brand name, a series of legal and sociolinguistic requirements must be met (cf. Ronneberger-Sibold 2015: 2192–2193). In fact, the brands examined do "not closely describe the product in normal linguistic terms"[29], are "easy to pronounce and to spell, as well as to perceive and to recognize" and, relating to the religious domain, are not "too ordinary" (Ronneberger-Sibold 2015: 2193). Given the sheer number of Italian brands containing the string 'Saint + name', they also seem to "be attractive for the potential customers" (Ronneberger-Sibold 2015: 2193). A rather important requirement demands furthermore that "a brand name should highlight the qualities of the product, i.e. be motivated to a certain degree" (Ronneberger-Sibold 2015: 2193).

The analysis so far has shown that there are several brands naming or at least hinting at the product(s) behind the name. But almost none of the brands examined can fulfil the function of "highlight[ing] the qualities of the product". In the whole corpus there are only three brands which hint – in at least some way – at the quality of their product. The first one is *La Basilica di San Formaggio* for a shop with a very large selection of cheeses where the specialization in one product type and the sheer number may also mean quality. The brand *San Bono*, on the other hand, may refer to the homonymic saint and, at the same time, to the name's original meaning, i.e. *buono* 'good'[30], just as *fresca* 'fresh' in *Santa Fresca* may suggest freshness. A fourth brand, *Santa Maria*, does not focus on quality, but has at least a transparent relation to the product promoted (fish), since the trademark shows Columbus's vessel.

Since the choice of the string 'Saint + name', in all other cases, does not seem to be linked to the related products or, at least, not directly, I tried to find other kinds of possible naming motifs looking at websites, addresses, surroundings and patrons with quite disappointing results. In fact, I could not detect any kind of possible motivation for 202 brands, that is, more than half of the total number.[31] In what follows, I will discuss what naming motifs can be hypothesised for the remaining 166 brands.

Roughly, there are two main groups: the first main group of 89 brands comprises

[28] *Venere* is the Italian form of 'Venus'.

[29] This requirement is essential for registrability.

[30] See https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bono_(nome) (accessed 22/09/17).

[31] However, I would like to point out that, due to the high number of items, time for research for the single brand was limited. This and the fact that the brands examined relate

BDD-V4461 © 2017 Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-03 00:50:19 UTC)

saints' names which correspond to nearby toponyms, whereas the 72 brands of the second main group seem to be connected more directly with the religious sphere. For the remaining 5 brands other kinds of possible motivations can be found. With regard to the first main group, the saints' names may originate from the address or other local toponyms, e.g. *Santa Caterina*, registered on *Via* [street] *Santa Caterina.* When the type of business is specified, the brand may have an orientation function, e.g. *Panificio* [Bakery] *San Marco*, located on *Via San Marco.* Most of the businesses behind the brands examined are situated in the countryside where municipalities comprise not only the main village but also hamlets, in Italian *località* or *frazione*. These may have functioned as name givers in cases such as *Cascina San Cassiano*, situated in *località San Cassiano*. Rather few brands replicate the name of the municipality, e.g. *San Giorgio*, registered in a municipality named *Castel San Giorgio*. An example for the evident use of local toponyms besides addresses is the brand *Corte* [Court] *San Colombano*, which is located in the nature reserve *Parco San Colombano*. The already mentioned brand *Santa Venere* explicitly took the name of the torrent that crosses the estate.[32] As shown by the examples, the string 'Saint + name' is, in most cases, the same in toponyms and brands. However, there are some examples of more or less creative modifications: the business related to the brand *Sangervasio* is situated in *località San Gervasio*, the one related to *TreSanti* on *Via Tressanti*.

Half of the 72 brands included in the second main group bear the name of the patron saints of the municipalities where they are registered and/or the businesses are situated. Examples are the brands *Santa Rosalia* (the patron saint of Palermo) and *San Geminiano* (the patron saint of Modena). The other 36 brands can be divided into two subgroups. The first and larger group includes brands in which the string 'Saint + name' is homonymic with a place of worship in the nearby surroundings. The farm *Il Vento Dei Tre Santi*, for example, took its name from the nearby church of *Tre Santi*.[33] The brands of the second, quite small, subgroup use the names of locally worshipped saints, e.g. the brand *Tenuta San Guido* is related to the locally known *San Guido della Gherardesca*.[34]

In the case of three of the five remaining brands, proper names of founders or holders are involved: two simple examples are the brands *San Ciriaco*, as homage to the company's founder, a certain Ciriaco Marasca[35], and *Podere San Vincenzo*, founded by a certain Vincenzo Procida[36]. A rather creative brand name is *Santo Stefano s.p.a.*[37], which, though seeming to be motivated by a saint, is actually a combination of the

---

mostly to small businesses located in the countryside make it likely that not all probable motivations were detected.

[32] See http://www.santavenere.com/home/?page_id=84 (accessed 22/09/17).

[33] See http://www.ilventodeitresanti.com/site%20ita/index.php (accessed 03/08/2017).

[34] See http://www.tenutasanguido.com (accessed 22/09/17).

[35] See http://www.sanciriaco.it/antica-norcineria/ (accessed 22/09/17).

[36] See http://www.poderesanvincenzo.it/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=13&Itemid=210&lang=it (accessed 22/09/17).

[37] The abbreviation *s.p.a.* stands for *società per azioni*, i.e. joint stock corporation.

BDD-V4461 © 2017 Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-03 00:50:19 UTC)

first names of the two founders, *Santo* Bertuzzo and *Stefano* Chemello.[38] The brand *San Pietro* seems instead to be connected to the locution *Patrimonio* [Benefice] *di San Pietro*, which refers to a historical donation to the Papacy.[39] What seems to be a rather strange brand, i.e. *Il San Buco*, literally 'The Saint Hole', is a creative pun. The related product is sheep cheese aged with *bacche di sambuco* [elderberries].

4. Affinities between names and products

As shown above, for most brands examined there is no clear correlation between the string 'Saint + name' and the commodities promoted. Even so, I tried to find out if there is at least some kind of affinity between certain names and specific product types. The basis of this analysis does not consist of the classes for which the brands are registered but of information gathered from the related business websites (if available) or other Internet sources. By this means, the only noticeable but far from significant link between a given name and a specific product was found for olive oil. In fact there are 8 brands containing *Santa Maria*, 6 containing *San Martino* and 6 *San Vito*, as well as 5 with *San Francesco*, *San Giorgio* and *Santa Lucia.*

A far more striking fact is that most businesses behind the brands examined are related to olive oil (146) and wine (89) production, 51 of which to both. Other frequently recurring products are cold cuts (50) and milk products, especially cheeses (48). 106 businesses produce and/or commercialize products such as fresh fruits and vegetables, jam, sauces, different kinds of Italian *pasta*, *grappe*, and so on.[40] In fact, more than 80% of the businesses (154 farms, 116 production sites, and 34 food outlets) grow, produce and/or sell the typical ingredients of Italian cuisine such as olive oil, wine, cheese, pasta, tomato sauce and vegetables. Considering that Nice classes 29–33[41] comprise about 700 different items, this result is rather significant: Italian brands related to Nice classes 29–33 and containing the term *San* have great affinity to a relatively small range of typically Italian agricultural products.[42]

5. Summary

The analysis of 372 brands containing the building block 'Saint (+ name)' and registered (at least) for Nice class 29 shows that there is a significant affinity between

[38] See http://www.santostefanospa.it/index2.htm (accessed 22/09/17).

[39] In fact, the brand is associated with the town of Sutri (near Viterbo), which was donated to the Papacy, see http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/patrimonio-di-san-pietro_(Dizionario-di-Storia)/ (accessed 22/09/17).

[40] Please note that many businesses are farms producing multiple products.

[41] With regard to Nice classes 29–33, which are related to food and beverages, 184 of the 372 brands examined here are registered just for class 29, 90 for two classes, 50 for three, 25 for four, and 23 for all five classes.

[42] In fact, the most "exotic" product commercialised from one of the businesses is saffron, not Italian in origin but a basic ingredient of *risotto alla milanese*, one of the typical dishes of the Milan region based on rice.

BDD-V4461 © 2017 Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-03 00:50:19 UTC)

saints' names and the basic ingredients of the traditional Italian eating and drinking culture. However, it is not yet clear why saints are thought to be good testimonials for these kinds of products. The answer to this question can be found in the trademark logos and, in particular, in the body copies where frequently recurring expressions are "back to family roots and traditions", "simple life in unspoiled earth", "traditional methods of cultivation and production"[43], "healthy food for healthy living,", and so on. In other words, saints seem to represent *simple life in a pristine nature*, which in turn seems to be a much desired way of life. It can therefore be said that the brands examined comply with another, "most important" requirement listed by Ronneberger-Sibold, i.e. "that a brand name evoke pleasant associations in the potential customers", i.e. "it should somehow allude to the positive values of the society in which the product is to be sold" (both citations: 2015: 2193). The very low number of comparable German brand names show, on the other hand, that saints' names are not suitable for international marketing.

References

Abbruzzese, S. 2006. I valori degli italiana e degli europei: il caso della religione. In *Valori a confronto: Italia ed Europa*, R. Gubert and G. Pollini (eds.), 135–180. Milano: FrancoAngeli.

Abbruzzese, S. 2008. Appartenenza religiosa e spirito civico. In *Il senso civico degli italiani. La realtà oltre il pregiudizio*, R. Gubert and G. Pollini (eds.), 81–131. Milano: FrancoAngeli.

Cotticelli Kurras, P. 2013. Italian Commercial Names: Brand and Product Names on the Globalised Market. In *Onomastics in Contemporary Public Space*, O. Felecan and A. Bugheşiu (eds.), 257–276. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Dräger, K. 2016. »Petersen, Weihenstephan, San Pellegrino«. Eine Einführung zum Thema Heiligenverehrung und Namengebung. In *Heiligenverehrung und Namengebung*, K. Dräger, F. Fahlbusch and D. Nübling (eds.), 1–15. Berlin and Boston: de Gruyter.

Fahlbusch, F. 2016. »Maria Heil der Kranken«. Heilige in Apothekennamen. In *Heiligenverehrung und Namengebung*, K. Dräger, F. Fahlbusch and D. Nübling (eds.), 257–269. Berlin and Boston: de Gruyter.

Kohlheim, V. 1996. Die christliche Namengebung. In *Name Studies. An International Handbook of Onomastics*, vol. 2, E. Eichler, G. Hilty, H. Löffler, H. Steger and L. Zgusta (eds.), 1048–1057. Berlin and New York: de Gruyter.

Nübling, D., F. Fahlbusch and R. Heuser. 2012. *Namen. Eine Einführung in die Onomastik.* Tübingen: narr.

Pew Research Center. 2017. *Five Centuries After Reformation, Catholic-Protestant Divide in Western Europe Has Faded*. Washington. [pdf-file; download: http://www.pewforum.org/2017/08/31/five-centuries-after-reformation-catholic-protestant-divide-in-western-europe-has-faded/ (accessed 18/09/2017).]

Platen, Ch. 1997. *Ökonymie. Zur Produktnamen-Linguistik im Europäischen Binnenmarkt.* Tübingen: Max Niemeyer.

Pollack, D. and O. Müller. 2014. *Religionsmonitor 2013. Verstehen was verbindet. Religiosität und Zusammenhalt in Deutschland.* Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung. [pdf-file; download:

[43] Where *traditional* frequently stands for *organic*.

BDD-V4461 © 2017 Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-03 00:50:19 UTC)

https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/de/publikationen/publikation/did/religionsmonitor–2013/ (accessed 18/09/2017).]

Reimann, S. 2016. »Sankt Martin und Sankt Mokka«. Echte und unechte Heiligennamen als Markennamen. In *Heiligenverehrung und Namengebung*, K. Dräger, F. Fahlbusch and D. Nübling (eds.), 271–291. Berlin and Boston: de Gruyter.

Ronneberger-Sibold, E. 2015. Word-Formation and Brand Names. In *Word-Formation. An International Handbook of the Languages of Europe*, vol. 3, P. O. Müller, I. Ohnheiser, S. Olsen and F. Rainer (eds.), 2192–2210. Berlin and Boston: de Gruyter Mouton.

Zilg, A. 2006. *Markennamen im italienischen Lebensmittelmarkt.* Wilhelmsfeld: gottfried egert.

BDD-V4461 © 2017 Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-03 00:50:19 UTC)