

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF OLIVE PRESSES

The earliest presses or olive paste presses consisted of a rectangular or round shallow stone basin in which the paste was pressed by means of a wooden beam, with a stone weight placed on one end, while the other end was anchored into a wall or a separate vertical stone or wooden structure, a frame. The press system with a weight was improved by a winch system, where pressing was achieved by tightening and applying pressure to the beam. As early as around 500 BC, the first presses with a large central wooden screw – *loza* – appeared, set into the centre of a wooden frame. By lowering and tightening a square wooden element using a wooden stick or lever, pressure was applied to the board beneath which the sacks of pressing mats were arranged. Alongside his earlier innovation with the mill, Faust Vrančić presented in 1616 his new invention, a press for wine and oil – *Torcular praelum pro vino et oleo*. Unlike previous presses, which worked by tightening large wooden screws, this innovative approach used a pulley lift that raised and gradually lowered a large stone weight into a wooden basket, thereby pressing oil or grapes. The process of pressing olive paste using wooden presses, which pressed the sacks with large wooden screws – *loze* – was preserved through the Middle Ages and continued in our villages until the early 20th century. In addition to the press with a central screw embedded in the centre of a wooden frame, which pressed on a piece of wooden beam above the pressing mats, there were also presses with a large side screw, which tightened and lowered a large cross beam, the other end anchored into the wall. There was also a press composed of two large side screws – *loze* on each side, on which a large cross beam, also known as *kobila* (mare), was placed, wound down using wooden nuts with three arms – *škraba* – to press down above the pressing mats with the olive paste. Such wooden presses, by the end of the 19th century, were replaced with iron or brass components: screws – *vide*, fittings, supports, winches, etc., and were known by names such as: *mandrevit*, *mandravid*, *madrevita*, or *mandravid*. Along with the presses, the so-called *mandravite*, there was also a moluvija system, which, by transferring force with a rope and winch, enabled additional tightening of the pressing mats and greater pressing efficiency. In the 20th century, hydraulic presses also appeared.