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Origin and historical development of the vine and wine in Bulgaria

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The emergence of viticulture and winemaking in Bulgaria is carried out in the following ways in chronological order:

The first vines were planted by the Thracians in the Upper Thracian lowlands along the Maritsa River. It is assumed that these were vines of the Pamid variety, which is certainly the oldest local Bulgarian variety.

Later (between the seventh and second centuries BC), Phoenicians and Greeks, who had an extremely developed seafaring, built their own ports on the Black Sea and through them began to import new varieties of vines on Bulgarian lands. This to some extent explains the fact why the greatest variety of varieties exists in Eastern Bulgaria.

In the period of the first-fourth century AD, when the Balkan Peninsula was part of the Roman Empire, there was also an exchange of vine varieties from other parts of the empire.

During the Ottoman rule, due to the ban on the consumption of wine by the Qur'an, the Turkish pashas brought many dessert varieties from Asia Minor to our lands. To this day, many of these dessert varieties, considered local, have Turkish names: Afuz Ali (Bulgarian), Sultanina, Chaush, Kadan Parmak, Optish Aga and others.

After the phylloxera crisis at the end of the 19th, beginning of the 20th century, a large part of the vineyards in Bulgaria were destroyed by the disease. In the period of restoration of the vineyards after that, varieties from Western European countries began to be imported. This trend continues to this day, as currently international dessert and wine varieties occupy a much higher percentage of plantations in Bulgaria than local ones.

Based on genetic analyzes of the vines in the Bulgarian lands, it can be concluded that the wine varieties Pamid, Gamza, Mavrud, Shiroka Melnishka vine, Zarchin, Kokorko, Vinenka and others. belong to the Black Sea ecological-geographical group (*Proles Pontica Negr.*) and have a primary local origin from the wild vine, *var. balcanica Negr.* Dessert varieties, Afuzali, Sultanina and others. belong to the eastern ecological-geographical group (*Proles Orientalis Negr.*) and originate from Asia Minor. Varieties such as Boya, Kriva loza and others. originate from the western ecological-geographical group (*Proles Accidentalisis Negr.*) and came from Western Europe. The varieties Chaush, Focha, Chernobryaga and others. in all probability they have a secondary local origin, ie they arose as natural hybrids between varieties of the Black Sea and Eastern ecological-geographical group.

In the Bulgarian lands, as already mentioned, the Thracians produced wine as early as the 3rd millennium BC. Homer mentions the Thracian city of Nizo, from where ships of wine set out for Greek soldiers during the siege of Troy. Homer also mentions the Thracian city of Ismar, where coins with the image of vines and grapes were minted.

The Greek writer Xenophon describes a feast of the Thracian king Seuthes (424-410 BC), where it is mentioned, among other things, that "wine was drunk in horns". In addition, the Thracians had a cult of the god Dionysus.

Archaeological finds from Thracian times (Starosel, Perperikon, etc.) have uncovered the remains of Thracian stone wineries, wine production systems, utensils, vessels, etc. All this undoubtedly means that the **vine and wine were an integral part of the life of the ancient Thracians** .

During the reign of Emperor Anthony Pius (2nd century BC) a special decree was issued in defense of viticulture in Lower Moesia (present-day Northern Bulgaria).

With the arrival of the Slavs and Proto-Bulgarians, they quickly adopted the material culture of the Thracians in viticulture and winemaking, enriched by contact with Byzantine and Roman influence, and these industries continued to develop until the fall under Ottoman rule.

Even in the period when Bulgaria was part of the Ottoman Empire, despite the Qur'an's ban on wine consumption, Bulgarians were not restricted from growing vineyards, but wine was taxed heavily. After the 18th century, the wine trade flourished and there are already certain wine-growing districts and farms. Many travelers who passed through the Bulgarian lands in the period 17-19 century write about " *flowering vineyards and excellent wines* ".

After the Liberation, viticulture continued to develop until 1885, when phylloxera entered Bulgaria across the western border. By 1919 it was reported that the phylloxera had destroyed 2/3 of the vineyards in Bulgaria (out of 1,200,000 decares of vineyards by 1897, in 1919 only 434,000 decares remained). During this period, public and private nurseries were established, which, with the help of specialists from Western Europe, began to produce seedlings resistant to phylloxera. In the 1920s, as a way out of the severe crisis in the wine industry, the production of table grapes began to develop very dynamically.

The first cooperative cellar in Bulgaria was built in 1909 in Suhindol. By 1928 there were over 60 such wineries in Bulgaria.

During the socialist period, a powerful rise in industrial wine production began. Led by the State Monopoly in the person of DSO Vinprom, the import and sowing of huge areas with the international varieties Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling, Aligote, Rkatsiteli and others began. Huge wineries are being built. In the 70's and early 80's Bulgaria occupied **one of the first places in the world in the export of wine and table grapes**. Zoning of the viticulture in Bulgaria is also carried out, serious scientific activity is carried out. This rise ended in the 80's to reach a deep and pervasive crisis in the wine sector in the 90's, when large enterprises were privatized, under the pressure of global competition lost markets, product quality fell, technology was moral. obsolete, and the vineyards desolate. **Moving in a positive direction** is observed after the year 2000, when in place of large factories began to appear many small producers who plant new, their own vineyards, buy modern equipment, their representatives go out and gain experience abroad and apply it back here. All this is a prerequisite for the production of increasingly high quality and competitive on the world market Bulgarian wines, which will preserve and show the world the millennial tradition in winemaking in our lands.

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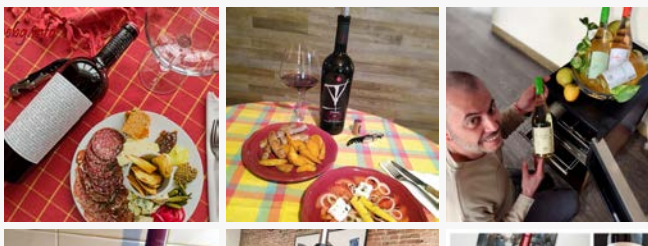
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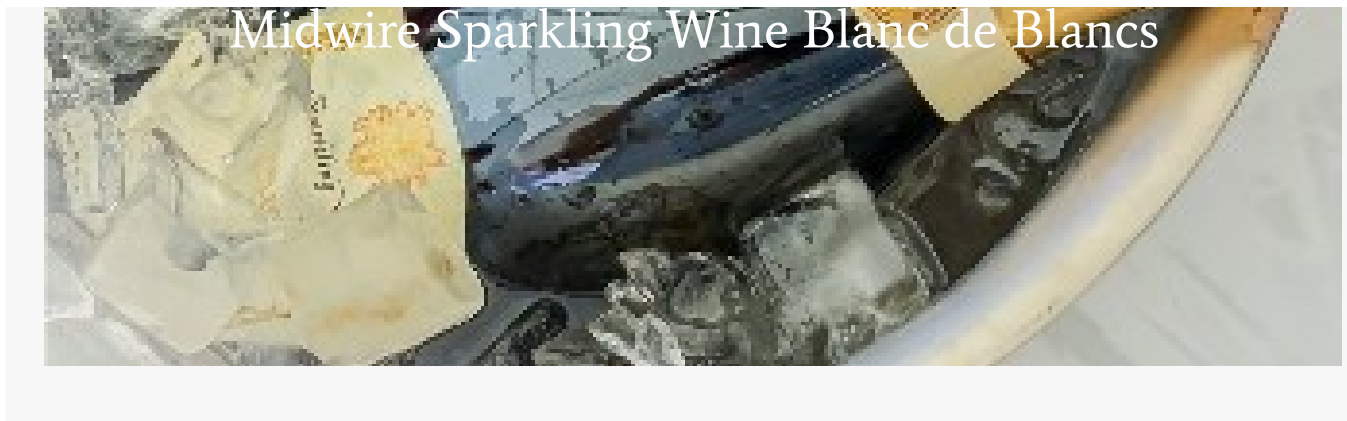


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