

The Republic of Armenia

Gasparyan Samvel

President of the Armenian Department of the International

Academy of Viticulture and Wine-making

Melyan Gagik

Member Correspondent of the IAVW

**CONDITION AND PROSPECTS
PRESERVATION OF GENETIC RESOURCES OF GRAPES ON
ARMENIA.**

The numerous historical and archaeological data, inscription and other monuments of material culture, especially excavations testify that Armenia is one of the ancient hearths of viticulture and wine-making.

The great number of grape varieties and clones which have come down to us, are of special interest from the viewpoint of studying, classification, as well as for the purposes of selection.

There were approximately 37 thousand hectares of vineyard areas in Armenia (1993), nowadays, as a result of soil privatization, the vineyard areas are reduced to 12 thousand hectares, of which the complete ones are about 8 thousand hectares.

As of 1993, there was an ampelographic collection at the Merdzavan Experimental base, RA, which embraced over 800 aboriginal (standard, notwidely-spread and unknown) selection and foreign varieties and clones, but as a result of soil privatization it was wholly ruined.

However, we think that, the existing richness of the local grape varieties, which had been growing for millenniums (as a result of natural sow, soil mutation and other possible ways of getting new forms) has not been included in it. Those varieties have come down to us due to the national selection.

Nowadays there are three ampelographic collections in Armenia – the collection of the Institute of Botany, RA, embracing approximately 45 varieties, the collection of the Scientific Center of Soil Study and Agrichemistry, which includes more than 42 varieties

and the collection of the Scientific-Research Center of Viticulture and Wine-making, which embraces over 70 varieties, the latter are in bad condition.

On the whole, selection varieties are centered in the collection areas Caboriginal varieties, innumerable numbers, clones are absent.

We are sorry to cite that the aboriginal varieties are not firmed in the collection, they are energetically disappearing.

Their disappearance is generally connected with the eradication of the old vineyards.

The eradication of the old vineyards is large-scale. The wild grape varieties are being reduced in number. This is connected with the soil-plowing, the establishment of slopes and the cattle-graze.

Because of the financial difficulties, the expeditionary studies have been minimized. No clonal selection works are being carried out in Armenia, and almost no attention is paid to rare and disappearing varieties, as well as to the wild grapes and their varieties. Scientists have paid little attention to the wild grapevine, as well as to unknown varieties and clones.

For the solution of the problem it is necessary:

- to make a detailed study of all the vineyards' ampelographic form, paying special attention to the old extinct varieties,
- to investigate the spreading and the form variety of the wild-growing grapevine in the whole territory of Armenia,
- to restart expeditionary investigations, to continue a more detailed study of the Armenian grape genofund and to preserve the historically important local assortment of the wild grape varieties.

At the same time the solution of the above-mentioned problem is rather difficult. One of the difficulties is the existence of the great number of grape varieties together with their synonyms, and on the contrary, the same name is used for contrary, the same name is used for different varieties. There are local (aboriginal) varieties of grapes in almost every small region of Armenia.

It is difficult to find out whether they are the same varieties or different ones. These varieties change some of their variety peculiarities in different regions. As a result

of vineyards' eradication, many aboriginal varieties do not exist in productive areas, those varieties must be searched for in other places (farm territories).

The introduction of varieties is the most well-known method of collection-completing. Taking into consideration the fact that the major part of the grape-growing regions of Armenia are phylloxera-free. The introduction of the varieties into those regions is categorically prohibited.

The only place in the Republic of Armenia, where different forms and clones of the world genofund may be centered is the north-eastern viticulture zone which is infected with phylloxera. In case of possibility we intend to create a collection in the above-mentioned zone, which will fit the contemporary level of the ampelographic science.

When collaborating, it is necessary to work out a series of methodic materials, to establish a single – program-network for studying and investigation of geographical changes of varieties by width, by length and by vertical zoning. Mutual variety exchange and fruitful contacts of ampelographers must be realized, methods of works must be coordinated and the ampelographic investigations must be carried out unanimously.

The collected expeditionary material will enable us to enrich the forms of the cultured grapes, as well as to preserve the richness of the genofund varieties and the Armenian grape forms for the future generations.

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ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS



Modified from a map prepared by the
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