

Issues which pertain to the vine plants intrinsic features as well as to the progressive and further civilizing touch held by its culture as it has been currently practiced upon the actual territory of Romania

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ABSTRACT

Archaeological research conducted over time has proven that on the territory of present-day Romania there has existed since ancient times a highly civilized human society that recorded slow but progressive accumulations generated by the natural environment of the territory endowed with a wide cultivar of forms that supported the free development of plants. The perceptible existence of wild but fruitful vines has been attested in two hundred and thirty localities. The attractive taste which he had at first occasionally discovered in the fruits mentioned above had certainly aroused the well-deserved attention of the primitive human being, and had therefore led him to deliberately take successive but strictly local actions to remove the other surrounding plants which might have become obstacles to the undisturbed development of the vine, applying to them at that time the so-called "paralysis procedure". The natural and extensive territorial progress of the vine has always been due to its intrinsic characteristics, namely: minimum requirements for environmental factors; easy rooting; vegetative propagation. This was therefore the main reason why vines were among the first plants taken into farms. Our ancestors dedicated special attention to vine cultivation and wine technology, as evidenced by the numerous vessels and utensils discovered throughout the country as well as the large number of localities that have names derived from vine culture.

Keywords: *archaeological research, Vitis sylvestris, clearings, history, vineyard*

The history of the vine in the Romanian

Archaeological investigations performed until the present day have proven with no possible doubt ever able to arise that the actual territory of Romania successively appeared during the so-denominated *Polished Stone Era* (that is to say from about 6500 b. J.-Chr. until around 2500 b. J.-Chr.) some among the most intensely flourishing, original and spiritually advanced types of human civilized societies which have ever been known to have existed throughout the whole territorial extent going from the Gibraltar Straits until the Ural Mountains. The respective achievements of efficiently attending to and of furthermore successfully sustaining a high civilizing development level had been rendered possible as being a direct consequence of some quite slow yet unavoidably progressive accumulations the starting point of which had effectively occurred even prior to the earliest thus pre-Antique so-denominated *Carved Stone Era*. These rather slow yet gradually progressive accumulations had been generated by the above evoked territory's natural environment which not only has been endowed with an intrinsic and quite prodigal asset of cultivar but which had also been supportive in regard to the free

development of the vegetative plants, to the more or less consequent from the existence of the living animals and – last but not least – to the step by step socially organized lives carried on by the primitive human beings for whom it had eventually become most useful as well as even pleasant to creatively assimilate the various influences he had encountered while making the immediate acquaintance of the other regions which did naturally surround one of his origins. In this context, a particular significance had been respectively held by the generally favoring local micro-climates as well as by the multitude of (and averagely rather large) extents detained by most of the by then existing *sylvan plots* throughout which *the climbing lianas* had by then been abundantly frequent - as by the way they also used to be at that time throughout the *Caucasus* region (*T. Antonescu, 1901*). While he had not yet chosen a sedentary settlement of his own the human being could have strolled on from here to there in his search for animals to hunt; from those he got various skins and furs which enabled him to protect himself while confronted to whatever naturally supervened misfortunes; he had around himself plenty of wood out of which he could however build up some temporary shelters; of course he had also disposed of fire through the action of which he could warm himself up and roast his captured venison meat; he could as well most easily spot honey and/or pick up various fruits among which especially grapes since at that earliest of times the wild yet fruit-bearing vine plants could have been most frequently encountered; as evidence able to support this statement let us therefore mention its presence upon the actual territory of our country under a still spontaneously generated status and this fact does nowadays occur even after that many flown millennia; more precisely speaking the perceptible existence of the wild but fruit-bearing vine has been attested in a number of not less than two hundred thirty Romanian localities – see Figure 1 below (*E. Pop, 1931*).



Figure 1. Ascertained presence spots of the vine species *Vitis sylvestris* (Gmel.) as it could be encountered in Romania (*apud E. Pop, 1931*)

Vitis sylvestris (Gmel.) could be quite recently encountered throughout the so-denominated Stârmina Woods which are situated in the actual Romanian department of Mehedinți (2018). The attractive taste he had at first occasionally discovered at the above mentioned fruits had of course arisen the well-deserved attention of the primitive human being and had therefore determined him to willfully take the respective actions to not just

support the natural development of but furthermore even to protect the respective trees, shrubs and climbing lianas which could offer him those good fruits; he thus had chosen to remove the surrounding other plants which could have become obstacles in respect to the formers untroubled development by at that time applying to them the so-denominated and should we so define it *pre-agricultural "crippling procedure"*¹. Through such successively taken yet strictly local actions some so-denominated "*runcuri*" [*clearings*] had come to appear as (still minimal) free plots into the by then virgin woods; however, the primitive human being had succeeded in the establishment of such tree-free small areas of his *first-ever gardens* (though even by then these plots had not yet been *cultivated* in the future and proper sense of this term).



Figure 2. Gorj Cleanups (2020)

Their chosen places had been in most cases determined by the (prior and naturally supervened) presences of some wild vine fruit-bearing logs or either of some trees bearing wild but tasty fruits. It must have been at first around those in this most ingenious way realized *anticipations of agriculture* that the primitive human being might have been - for the first time throughout human history - tempted to settle down (even if at that time he could have understood his own still rather foggy yet intensely luring intentions as being only temporary). It is therefore within such should define them as *innovative sites* that the first ever *pit houses* by then most appropriate to dwell into might have appeared (*I.C. Teodorescu, 1964*). From those above mentioned vine logs some larger amounts of grapes might certainly have come to be gathered and it must have been due to their excessive amounts themselves that some of them had (eventually because by then still unavoidably!) come to be crushed (while at the very first pre-historical time it had truly not mattered at all should this action have been fortuitous or either willfully exerted). From these crushed fruits a - delicious of course! - juice had dropped which was beyond whatever doubt

¹ *The above mentioned "crippling procedure" had by then consisted in the extraction from the concerned tree of a circular roundabout bark ring. Through the manual execution of this operation their unavoidable withering could have been provoked. It could have been most easily performed through the use made of a simple stone which could have been found inside of river beds and previously carved in order to fulfill this purpose. The existence and efficiency of this most ingenious intervention operated by the human being during his earliest ever thus primitive lifetime upon the territory of the Romanian historical province of Moldavia have been scientifically demonstrated by Mr. Constantin Mătase – at that time Director of the Archaeology Museum which had been founded in the Romanian city of Piatra Neamtz.*

worthy to be collected; or it had then been at this precise moment that under the amazed eyes of that time's coeval people a miraculous phenomenon had most unexpectedly occurred: after a by then still unevaluated time interval the still not sipped thus remaining liquid amounts of those fruits stored juice *had started to coldly boil!* (In spite of the fact that it does appear as a contradictory statement when simply understood under the strict terms made use of by logic the present figure of speech does hereby mean with no fire at all below its containing recipient which might have been consequently able to warm the involved juice up). In our opinion, it had been through this (understood at that time as a *quasi-magic modality*) that the primitive human being had come to be revealed the (from then on most dearly cherished!) *secret of wine*. Beyond whatever doubt it had precisely been due to this of course naturally occurred circumstance *but which at that pre-historical time had however been impossible to explain* that the earliest appeared among human beings have not just eventually but most intensely to become convinced that the newly discovered beverage should certainly have been taken into their entirely due consideration *as an entitled to be worshipped "gift"* which could have been most graciously imparted to them by the effectively active divine forces. Should the primitive human being have consumed it *he could therefore and unmistakably consequently be able to enter in immediate contact with them*. While being situated under this deliciously powerful impression most strongly caused by this newly revealed beverage he could thus only have been led towards the logical next effectively made decision which had been the one to take into the highest ever of his nourished considerations *the future multiplying of the vine* thereby endowing it with *the statute of a major concern* among his current preoccupations. The natural and quickly extensive territorial progress of the vine had always been due to its intrinsic features namely: - holding a rather small number of necessary requirements; - rooting quite easily; - being also able to rather quickly multiply itself through various vegetative modalities. This has consequently been the main reason why vine had figured among the first ever plants to be taken by human beings into serious consideration given its future *agricultural exploitation*. In regard to his own already foreseen, sedentary settlement one among the primitive human being's essentially favoring thought about motivations had as well been the vine's above-mentioned capacity of rapidly multiplying itself under the local and simply natural conditions provided by its environment. In virtue of its quite strong root system (which is usually able to most efficiently explore some considerable soil masses) as well as of its remarkably long life duration vine thus required human being a permanent attention while in the meantime through personal satisfactions it had offered him in exchange for it vine had gradually achieved to acquire the *intrinsic statute of a highly precious asset* which above all other considerations *could have been left as a legacy to the expected future generations*; yet in order to successfully operate such a transmission the primitive human being had necessarily at first to settle down by his own will and for a long time duration in the concerned vine plants close vicinity. This fact once accomplished later on he had through some rather little yet eventually decisive steps come to creatively assimilate the vine's initial example by further applying it to some other plants around him that is to say by at first simply picking up and then by gradually but this time by his own will sowing into the soil the respective spotted seeds of some most valuable cereals (A. Vasiliu, 1976). In a slightly ulterior parallel but similar indeed movement he had eventually concluded that for himself it could have been rather rewarding to apply in regard to the animals he could find around him the same – even for these earliest of times we could already so denominate it – *strategy* he had once chosen in respect to the vegetal *regnum* surrounding him; from that moment on he had therefore struggled in order to domesticate and further breed around himself the animals about which he had thought of as being the most useful in respect to his own goals. This had been the very former and the most ancient era in time – the one during which upon the

actual territory held by our country had appeared the first ever zones into which the transition towards an effectively productive economic regime had been initiated – in this respect see Figure 3. Such genuinely appeared territorial zones had each of them been respectively defined (even throughout that *prior-to-Antiquity era!*) by some quite promisingly various handicraft and thereby social profiles since there had been: - communities profiled on hunting; - zones where the chosen profile had been the one of plants cultivation in its already agricultural meaning; - zones mostly profiled on the locally encountered animals domestication process; - specialized settlements where *the first ever human handicrafts* had come to be practiced within some still minimal yet most efficient workshops where various tools were manufactured such as hammers, hoes, various types of spikes respectively suitable for arrows, spears and/or pikes (while all of these specialized spikes had by then been made of carved little stones and/or of some most adequately sharpened animal bone small fragments) or then even vases made out of burned-up clay, etc. As time got by those lucrative interests could only have extended their productive impacts and this had been the main reason why the number of those even since that most ancient human era so many diversely specialized territorial zones could only have increased.



Figure 3. First ever transition zones towards the efficiently productive economy's regime as these had appeared within the space geographically situated in-between the Carpathian Mountains, the Danube Stream, and the Black Sea (later and first ever known as the *Pontus Euxinus*) before the IV-th millennium b.-J.-Chr. (*apud* the History Museum of Romania). *Legenda:* - Zone profiled on the locally encountered animals domestication process; - Zone of the human communities intensely profiled on hunting skills; - Zone vowed to the first ever founded sedentary handicraft workshops – Transition zone towards the plants cultivation process *already understood in its properly agricultural sense.*

A certain fact does as well exist that we ought to not at all ignore: precisely the one that the actual territory of Romania is the geographical space which does dispose of one of the *greatest reserves of salt* throughout Eastern Europe; or in our opinion the fact is beyond whatever doubt that the current use made of this essential naturally provided resource –

not just for its most commonly encountered part held into the human's daily alimentation process but above all other matters for its role in safely preserving the highly precious hunted meats – has as well brought one among the greatest of the gradually accumulated contributions which had eventually determined the primitive human being to progressively manifest *a gradual intentionality trend towards his own life's stability* in respect to his established and therefore inhabited settlements once these had come to be created (E. Linda, 1985). As a matter of fact to the primitive yet most cunningly intelligent human being it had not at all taken a long time to become aware of the fact that due to the intrinsic fragility status which is normally held by the vine grapes it could not have been possible to transport the grapes harvests on some averagely longer distances without having to expect an unavoidable as well as quite considerable amount of accidental losses usually supervening through the grapes deterioration processes no matter should these have been accidentally fortuitous or either due to some naturally degenerative respectively undergone evolutions. The wine's preparation process ought therefore to be necessarily performed in the closest possible vicinity of the vine plantation itself. From these immemorial times until the present day, the vine plants had come to eventually oblige human beings to settle down as nearby as they could around them. This decision had to be taken in virtue of the not just arithmetically rather numerous but furthermore considerably diverse through their specific purposes caretaking agricultural works which ought to have been compulsorily applied to the concerned vine plants. As he had succeeded in preparing his quantity of wine this earliest among the successive vine cultivators had also been able to step forward towards another essentially important direction: the one of *becoming a producer*; it had still been true that he could not yet willfully generate whatever oenological-related and/or involved *raw material* but he had however succeeded his accession to a superior stage of economic development insofar could have been concerned *the wine understood as a finite product* (which by the way had happened to be – at that time as well as nowadays – a most highly valuable one). Seen as merchandise wine had therefore come to assume a due place among the primitive human being's' held *goods to successfully trade with*; or so it had happened that this by then quite newly invented practice had afterward and most quickly become the easiest as well as most convenient modality through which he could have acquired by exchanging wine for them a lot of other objects of various natures that he had effectively needed in order to help himself in his search for some generally better life conditions which might have rendered him able to carry on throughout some safer and/or *even happier common living standards*. It had therefore been pretty easy for him to consequently deduce the fact that should the wine eventually become more empirically attractive through its respectively perceptible quality level this could only have been achieved by at first reaching for some *more intensely ripened as well as sweeter by their taste vine grapes*; this had therefore been the main reason why he had gradually become always more attentive in respect to the specific as well as prodigally various intrinsic assets owned by the vine kinds he had by then stumbled upon and which had been respectively reflected through their grapes respective tastes; the following step to be taken had logically been the one of distinctively marking in order to further multiply them the vine kinds which in his own eyes did seem to present the greatest number of empirically thus immediately perceptible qualities. The naturally resourceful opportunity he had become the fastest aware of had precisely been the spots where the chosen vine kinds were cultivated and by starting from this insight he had further remarked among them the plots that happened to be the most supportive regarding the new decision taken about the most promising foreseen multiplying procedures to be applied. As he had met the recently discovered beverage which later was going to be known as *wine* of which one of its first ever and also for that time rather spectacular exerted influences had been the one to therefore determine the primitive

human being to genuinely experience the need of coming closer towards some other fellow people he could have met around himself as due to the wine he had as well felt the inner impulse of *enjoying togetherness*; or the most appropriate occasion for achieving that brotherly goal could have precisely been the celebrations held in respect to the god which through its strength had manifested the benevolence of imparting to the earliest of the human people the gift of wine and to which they of course had wished to most warmly thank for it. The largest grounds throughout the world itself do support the hypothesis of taking into consideration as a fundamental starting point the first ever invitation to share a meal that had been advanced towards someone: "(...) the most emotionally significant gesture ever made throughout the human history has been the first ever invitation to share a meal addressed to the first ever encountered stranger of whom until that very moment an irrepressible fear had kept him separated. Without this first step taken towards the other one, nothing would have ever happened of his wonderful story" (I. Matheescu, 1984). While facing the many difficulties he had necessarily to encounter around himself the primitive human being had step by step come to increase his awareness capacity, to successfully maintain a lot more steady confidence ones; activity as he could imagine it given the future while as a whole, comprehensive and ultimate result of these gradual evolutions he had become more finely sensitive throughout his insights. The main proof attesting that the general progress of his intellect does consist in the very fact that he had become able to realize by handicraft not only some strictly useful objects as he had done before but above those formers he had become from a certain moment on able to further imagine by himself some *artistically intended representations*. Those were some not quite large recipients yet of various sizes made out of burned clay and at first had presented only incisions or either excision; later on, these recipients could present upon them some paintings respectively related to his own by then nourished religious beliefs or to a large indeed diversity of magical practices. These objects could have taken a lot of forms should these have been truly imitating nature or then if not could have been *zoo-morph* or *anthropo-morph* ones; of course the assumed attitudes which for example could indicate *hieratical solemnity, affectionate feelings, intense meditation, laughter* or even to *accentuate the presence of sexual elements* etc. As a matter of fact, through their own *finesse* and quality perfection some of these objects do seem to have acquired a *unique artistic statute* should we have surveyed in order to compare them with the entire territory of Europe: such are for example *The Altar* – a great artifact made out of burned clay discovered upon the territory of the locality Trușești in the department of Botoșani and scientifically about the so-denominated *Cucuteni Culture* (3000 – 2500 years b. J.-Chr.); *Gânditorul [The Cogitator]* – a statuette discovered upon the territory of the locality Tchernavodă in the department of Constantza and scientifically about the so-denominated *Hamangia Culture* (around 4000 years b. J.-Chr.). In a lot of other places situated in Romania have also been discovered exhibits sometimes bearing a symbolic significance such as *rhytons* – *small vases made use of for ritual purposes, mugs, jugs, cups, ornamentally destined jewels* or *toys*. All of them apart from their great number are as well exquisitely diverse insofar as could be concerned their respective forms and *finesse* degrees. These are situated in time from 4000 until 1000 years b. J.-Chr. (see Figures 4 to 15).



Figure 4. *Rhyton* – a cup made out of burned clay and used for ritual purposes ornamented through incisions and pricking discovered upon the territory of the locality Oltenitza in the department of Ilfov and scientifically of the so-denominated *Gumelnitza Culture* (4000-3000 years b. J.-Chr.). It is the so-called ancestor of the *Rhyton* made out of silver and on its outside covered with gold which had been later discovered upon the territory of the locality Poroina Mare in the department of Mehedinti and respectively evaluated as on the III-rd century b. J.-Chr.



Figure 5. Unique vase made out of burned clay scientifically of the so-denominated *Gumelnitza-Căscioarele Culture* (4000-3000 b. J.-Chr.). It had two mouthful apertures through which most probably two different persons had by then used to simultaneously drink after having fulfilled the so-denominated *brotherhood sacred ritual*.



Figure 6. Cup made out of burned clay endowed with polychromatic decorations discovered upon the territory of the locality Frumusica and scientifically of the so-denominated *Cucuteni Culture* (4000 b. J.-Chr.)



Figure 7. Vase made out of burned clay was discovered upon the territory of the locality Sălcuța in the department of Dolj (4000-3000 b. J.-Chr.).



Figure 8. Overlapping vessel of burnt clay with polychrome decorations. Cucuteni culture, jud. Neamt, b. J.-Chr



Figure 9. Vase made out of burned clay was discovered upon the territory of the locality Verbicioara in the department of Dolj and scientifically on the Bronze Age.



Figure 10. Little mug discovered upon the territory of the locality Cârna in the department of Dolj and scientifically of the so-denominated *Culture of Gârla Mare* (XIV-th century b. J.-Chr.).



Figure 11. Goblet-type vase made out of silver was discovered upon the territory of the locality Agighiol and scientifically of the Getho-Dacian civilization (IV-th century b. J.-Chr.).



Figure 12. Vase made out of burned clay discovered upon the territory of the department of Neamt locally denominated as *Calu [The Horse]* and scientifically of the so-denominated *Cucuteni Culture* (4000 b. J.-Chr.).



Figure 13. Supporting vase made out of burned clay endowed with polychromatic decorations combined with grooves discovered upon the territory of the locality Draguseni in the department of Botosani and scientifically of the so-denominated *Cucuteni Culture* (4000 b. J.-Chr.). It had most probably been within it that were by then placed in a close togetherness the ritually purposed cups of the above mentioned two persons which had used to simultaneously drink within the frame of the by then fulfilled *sacred brotherhood ritual*.



Figure 14. Hedging bills discovered upon the territory of the actual department of Gorj. Following the scientific opinion expressed by N. Al. Mironescu



Figure 15. Type of hedging bill which nowadays is still currently employed and which is most closely similar to the ones that in their times had been made use of by the Dacians.

The history of the vine in the world

Raymond Billiard has therefore cited *Perdrizet* who in 1910 had been the first ever scientist able to effectively assert the hypothesis in accordance to which the Antique Greeks had been during their lifetimes fully aware of the fact that their own later entirely

assumed *myth embodied through Dionyssos the God* had traveled towards them precisely from Thracia; however, they could in no way at all answer to the hereby following questions: at what exact moment in time? by whom's intermediating action had it arrived to them? From this point onwards let us thus invite *Homer* himself to utter: (...) From out there were daily coming ships loaded with wine for the Greek troops which were by then besieging the fortress of Troy; it had [also] been from out there that *Odysseus* had obtained from *Maron* - *Apollo's* priest from *Iamaria* - the exquisitely enchanting beverage through the means of which he had come to get stiff drunken *Polyphemus the Cyclope* (...) (*G. Hagi*, 1925). It had therefore perhaps been right here - on the Northern side of Christ - that was born the cult vowed to the *god of vine and wine*. In 1913 *Raymond Billiard* had by the way issued the respective statements that its propagation had been realized through the successive conquests of the so-called *ancient countries* and that these victories had occurred in the following order: at first *Asia, Thracia, Greece* and *Italy* while from all of them on it had spread further into the other countries. Yet in the eventual reality of the effectively occurring facts the current culture of the vine itself as well as the currently exerted practice of wine-making had followed a rather slow yet slightly evolving thus progressive path. Given this cult's adoption as a genuinely honored faith, it should have been in the first place necessary to get the people accustomed to a god who had come to them already endowed with his patrimony of duly established legends, rites and specific features; or all of these most recently encountered assets had to further undergo the respective as well as successive stages of *insightful awareness, willful assimilation* and then *further on transmission*. The above-mentioned author continues his story the following way: "(...) among all of Europe's [distinct] parts *Thracia* had been the earliest known by the human being; as for its wines it had been the most highly respected in their virtues and it had as well preserved this prestige for the longest of times." On their turn the *Antique Greeks* who at their best were some equally skillful navigators and traders had been the first European people who in their own living times had dared to follow the example of the *Phoenicians* and therefore had spent centuries long in the sought for the achievement of founding as many *harbor-profiled cities* as they could have upon the coast of the *Pontus Euxinus [Black Sea]* and along the bed of the *Danube Stream*. The Greek's current trading practice had by then been the one to offer some quite useful handicraft products created within their workshops as well as amphorae filled in with their sweet wine (for the creation of which they had at first made use of *Corinth-type grapes* then later of *concentrated grapes must*) so that in exchange they could obtain living animals, skins, furs, honey and above all other things *the locally produced wine* which had been brought towards them by the *Thracian* inhabitants in rudimentary leather bags which had been carried upon horseback or either within small boats or rafts which at that time had been very quick indeed to float upon the streams of the many rivers flowing towards the *Danube* and therefore towards the sea. The Greeks had brought upon their great ships some quite large amphorae made out of burned clay into which they consequently emptied the local leather bags; then the so purchased wine was either carried back into their respective city-shaped countries or if not then sold into other harbor cities encountered along (among which the *Scythes* happened to be the most intensely attracted wine lovers). Because of the essential fact that during those most ancient times *once produced the wine was and always remained entirely natural* it had therefore been taken into the highest consideration *as a sacred liquid matter* while being ranked together with *water, blood* and *milk*. These four liquid matters were thus thought of as worthy enough to be *offered to the local gods as sacrificial tokens*. Among them wine had been the only as well as *earliest entertaining beverage*; it could therefore help the primitive human being on the respective occasions represented by certain rather outstanding moments in expressing *solemn attitudes, gestures, or feelings* should these have respectively meant

adoration, oblation, homage, addressed best wishes, taken oaths, elevated prayers, penitential taken vows, expressed friendships or either pious reminders. Such morally special formulations had been respectively dedicated to the dearest ones, to the momentarily celebrated ones, to the most reverentially evoked late people, to conquering warriors, to sportive contests winners, and last to be hereby mentioned but not at all the least of course and above all to the local gods.

Documents and archaeological objects attesting to the culture vine in Romania






Throughout our country (in many actual vine cultivated regions and centers) a lot of archaeologically discovered exhibit items do stand as supportive evidence therefore sustaining the effective existence upon the actual territory of Romania of currently carried on vine cultivating and wine-making activities during the Primitive and Antique Eras. Let us mention among these objects: - grape-crushing presses made by then out of most attentively chosen stones; - vases made out of burned clay respectively designed to assume various sizes and forms. These vases might also have happened to be ornamented with *drawings* (no matter should these have been performed through painting or either by executed incisions) or *prominent outside-shaped relief forms* which comfortably often represented *vine leaves or grape clusters*. Later on (that is to say respectively about the *Bronze and Iron Ages*) had as well been found: - some *hedging bills under their genuine Dacian-type employed form*; - *amphorae made out of burned clay and bearing Dacian seals thus consequently by them manufactured*; - *vine seeds as early created as these eras*; - decorative elements as well as some simply nominal mentions carved upon the most ancient ever among the archaeologically retrieved tombstones; - even *coffins* upon the outsides of which various ornamental elements do remind to the people able to see them of the existence of vine and/or wine. As for the *possible written proofs* supportive of the above-mentioned hypothesis there has been at least until the present day only one attested to exist. It is the treatise *Geographia* elaborated by the eminent Antique historian, geographer, and ethnographer *Strabon from Amaseia* (63 b. J.-Chr. – 19 A.D.) through which he does brings some very valuable precisions: the Dacian King Burebista (who around the year 70 b. J.-Chr. had successfully achieved the constitution of the first-ever simultaneously unitary and independent Getho-Dacian state) while being advised by *Daecaenaesus* – the highest moral authority of the country as he had held the religious dignity of a *Great Priest* and at that time was *de facto* the King's wisest counselor – had issued the order to wipe out all the vineyards which had by then existed throughout his country. The fact is therefore proven that here the culture of vine not only had existed but furthermore had become considerably important – and this had been true for a long time before 106 A.D. (the exact year when the Romans had perfected the military conquest of Dacia). As a matter of fact, on this occasion, a *jubilee medal* had been issued in order to honor *Trajan the valiant Emperor* which had been denominated in no other words but *Dacia Felix*.




Figure 16. Copy coin of the *Dacia Felix* Roman jubilee medal. Its original coin is to be found within the frame of the *British Museum* in London.

On one of the sides of this medal (while the other is of course dedicated to the Emperor) is the representation of a woman sitting upon a rock while two children are respectively offering to her as devotion tokens *a wheat ear* and a *grape cluster* - both understood as the main most precious assets which at that time were produced by the newly conquered country (I.C. Teodorescu, 1964).

Table 1. *Vine sorts were traditionally cultivated in Romania until the appearance of the phylloxera and their respective denseness indices by then currently held for a hectare. Cutting systems and guidance patterns made use of (apud I. C. Teodorescu, 1939).*

Vineyard	Vine Sort	Plants' denseness (logs/hectare)	Cutting systems and guidance forms
Odobesti	Galbenă 2/3 Plăvaie+Poamă Verde+Poamă Pârce	3500-4500	
Orevitza and Golul Drâncei	Corb (Negru Vârtos) 1/3 Seină Neagră (Negru Moale) 1/3 Berbecel (Aurel) 1/3	around 7000	
Dragasani - around 7000	Cârlogancă (Crâmposie) 1/3 Braghină 1/3 Gordan+Tămâioasă Românească 1/3		
Cotnari	Grasă 1/3 Fetească Albă 1/3 Frâncușă 1/3 Tămâioasă Albă (Busuioacă) from Moldavia 1/6		
Dealul Mare	Gordan 1/3 Bășicată 1/3 Tigvoasă 1/6 Mingled Tămâioasă+Coarnă Albă+Verdea Negru Vârtos 1/3 Negru Moale 1/3 Coarnă Neagră 1/3 Tămâioasă Neagră 1/6	4000-6000	
Banat (Minis)	Lime Tree Leaf Cadârcă Bacator (Rujița) Abutz Fetească Albă Furmint Mustoasă Pășărească (Aprofehér)	9000	

Vineyard	Vine Sort	Plants' denseness (logs/hectare)	Cutting systems and guidance forms
	Fetească Albă (Leanca) - the local wines'king throughout the region Italian Riesling Furmint mingled up with Grasă (sometimes) Traminer Pinot Gris Iordană Opporto Muscat Ottonel Sylvaner Cabernet Franc Vine kinds creating table grapes: Hamburg Muscat Chasselas (white and red) Millennium Passatutti Muscat etc.	7000 - 10000	

It does indeed seem that our ancestors had therefore dedicated some amazing attention and inventive capacities in order to most efficiently manage the vine's cultivation process; or the effective presence of the same rather unexpectedly high degree of insights' *finesse* has as well been demonstrated through the *subtleness level* that they had also proven in the correctness of the interpretations they had respectively given to the influences exerted upon the vine plants by the various elements of their local environment; or in virtue of those still empirical evaluations they had most accurately deduced the right technical orientation to be chosen given removing whatever inconvenient these naturally occurred elements might have caused or on the contrary of making the best use they could have of the possible advantages these might have offered to the vine. We could be able to duly notice the efficiency of their above mentioned intuitive skills should we take an attentive look to respectively: - the great number of autochthonous kinds all endowed with some as valuable as diverse intrinsic assets the creations of which they have come to realize by applying the selection procedure to the naturally occurred vine's mutations which they eventually had come to take into consideration as being of an immediate use; - the both original and prodigally diverse technical modalities of cultivation insofar the plants' denseness could have been concerned for the approached individual case of each plot; - the vine strings respective cutting and orientation systems which had as well been diverse in order to most adequately suit the distinctive peculiarities held by each of their local and hosting micro-climates; - the associations of vine kinds into *sorts* which had been elaborated aiming to perform such a judiciously balanced and exquisitely delicate touch of oenological *savoir-faire* that they could effectively accomplish not just the day-by-day goals related to economical profit and/or to technological efficiency but in certain cases even the compensation of *some floral deficiencies they had remarked*; until the disaster caused by the phylloxera all of those *virtuose improvements* had been of course most carefully preserved. Above all other considerations, we do also have *geographically positional evidence* able to attest to our ancestors' empirically developed skills which consist in *the various vineyard's situations themselves throughout our country* all of which are so efficiently premeditated. These could be divided in two main

taken options: - their situation within the so-denominated *hillock-shaped zone* or - their situation *closely nearby to the Black Sea*. Apart from its immensely valuable contribution which is so happily reflected through the resulting wines' respective chemical compositions and oenological quality upheld levels this settlement does as well represents *a most favoring amidst-laid position*. As far as effectiveness could ever have been involved the above-mentioned choice does bring together the advantages that the human being could therefore have taken from the mountain and/or sub-montane zones (that is to say grazing fields, wood, venison etc.) with the ones he could have obtained from the *cereals-profiled plain zones*. In the meantime human beings had also managed to avoid an excessive distance with for the greatly important *fairs* where most of the trading exchanges used at that time to be accomplished and all of them were of course related to the Danube Stream and the Black Sea. On the other (historical) side we do as well find ourselves entitled to state that these above evoked hillock-shaped and sub-mountaineous counties had for centuries long (that is to say for as long as the migratory people had by those times taken their respective times to cross over throughout our country) offered to the local genuine inhabitants the best refuge shelter they could ever have had because these zones were hard indeed to get at by their successively invading enemies. It had been therefore within them that the Romanian nation had always found its most ancient as well as strongest resilience hearths to rely upon. Of course, our vine cultivated regions had been constituted with for a lot of other concomitantly existing elements. First of all, we ought to mention the intense feeling of love that common people had always nourished for the vine plants. We might find it quite hard to choose should we be asked: what other vegetative plant could ever have "tied up to itself" the human being as strongly and deeply as the vine has succeeded in doing so? As a vine plantation could be inherited for several generations - from father to son - both its perennial endurance and the most respectably important charge of work to be performed in its regard that ought to be successfully carried out throughout almost the whole year had eventually determined the "by now" at that time already more or less primitive human being to settle down in its closest neighborhood. These essential circumstances might have perhaps counted for him almost as heavily as could have weighed downside the usefulness and the pleasure provided to him by the consequently generated fruits it had brought to him which were grapes and their result the wine. As a matter of fact, in Romania even in our days the number of localities the respective official denominations of which are etymologically speaking related by their origins to the vine cultivation and wine-making disciplines is quite impressively high. Yet insofar the Romanian people could ever have been concerned we are due to state that in our opinion there also has existed a distinctively particular element able to intervene in its case and which has directly contributed to the deepening of the Romanians' affectionate feelings respectively nourished in regard to the vine plant. It has been the vine plant's own naturally adopted behavior (that is to say as it had to face some that strong forces so it could in no way at all confront them immediately nor straightly). This has been therefore the main reason why the vine as a plant could be able to stand the mutilation and then even burial procedures applied upon it while remaining still alive so that finally once the spring had come it could triumphantly rise again into the sunlight. Vine has always thus been in the eyes of our ancestors a living example very close to them as well as good to look at in order to consequently become inspired by its excellently proven inner strength so that in their turn they could willfully adopt it. During the centuries of their own endured historical suffering, our ancestors had had therefore right in front of them the rightful example which could for sure enable them to assume all of their misfortunes due to a perpetually nourished personal confidence which had undefectibly concerned the arrival of their longtime sought for and final victory. We, Romanians have always been deeply indebted to the vine plants for having offered to us right at hand the most supportive example we have ever needed for ourselves, and the proofs of its recognition as a best of

friends when in need are therefore constituted by the multiple representations of the vine plants – should these be retrieved throughout many among our most ancient religious books, in the paintings which do exist upon the walls of our Orthodox churches as well as in the exquisitely extensive cultivar represented by the various Romanian Orthodox icons.



Figure 17. Detail painting Tismana monastery, Gorj (2018)



Figure 18. Painting in pronaos, Horezu Monastery (2012)



Figure 19. Gate detail in Arges (Golești Wine Museum)



Figure 20. Dragoș Vodă Church, Putna



Figure 21. Medal of the Contest for Agriculture and Industry (Bucharest, 1881)

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