

THE ROLE OF CLIMATE/SOIL OF DIFFERENT ZONES/TERROIRS ON GRAPE CHARACTERISTICS

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According to the different concern of the 'traditional' and the 'new' wine-producing Countries, a variable importance is recognized to the climate/soil and to grapevine cultivars as factors affecting the wine quality. However, the viticultural experience can state that, within each area, climate and soil plays an incontestable role in affecting grape quality, and consequently wine quality, as well as the genetic characteristics of the cultivar.

Zoning different areas is an interesting tool to study and characterize the ecological, geological, ecophysiological and biological factors which interact with the grapevine to determine the wine quality and that can be summarized by the French word '*terroir*'. The aim is to delimit and individuate homogeneous territories that can give homogeneous, identifiable, corresponding, enological products.

Actually, different approaches may be pursued in the 'zoning studies': historical, bioclimatic, pedological, varietal or multi-disciplinary. Many experiences in zoning viticultural areas have been done, particularly in the traditional viticultural areas, such as the DOC and DOCG areas in Europe (in particular France and Italy). Different soil types, and microclimatic zones, may influence with the presence of grape phenol precursors, and then the wine structure and aroma. Some examples illustrate the variety-ambient interaction as the basic binomial for grape quality as well as for wines characterized by specific and identifiable attributes.