

The history of the Pedro Ximenez Grape

The origin of the Pedro Ximén grape is wrapped in legend. In 1661, the German ampelographer FJ Sachs suggested that the grape might have originated in the Canary Islands or in Madeira and then later travelled to the German regions of Rheingau, Rheinhessen and Mosel. Subsequently, a soldier from the Flanders regiments - either Spanish (Pedro son of Simón: "Pedro Ximén") or German (Peter Siemens) - would have taken the vine from Germany to the Sierras de Málaga.

This theory was disseminated in several ways by different writers such as August Wilhelm von Babo, Balthasar Sprenger, Varcárcel (1791), García de Leña (1792), Masdeu (1783) and González Gordon (1948), although others, among them Viala and Vemorel (1910) and Pullita Rovasenda, rejected such theories considering that the Pedro Ximenez grape does not share common characteristics with the German varieties.

These days, ampelographers believe that the Pedro Ximenez grape has its origin in some part of Andalusia and in 2007 DNA analysis showed that it is a descendant of the gubi Arab table grape. In Andalusia, this grape variety began to become famous at the end of the sixteenth century.

In 1618, the Spanish writer Vicente Espinel described the famous wine of "pedro ximénez de Málaga".

"This wine is so characteristic of Malaga that it is only in this city and its surroundings that the celebrated grape variety of its name is grown, from which the wine is produced and made."

Cecilio García de la Leña 1792

"What can certainly be affirmed is that all the stock of Pedro Ximen that exists outside Málaga comes from Málaga vines"

José Garijo Ruiz 1985

The opinion on which there has always been unanimity is that of its extraordinary quality. García de la Leña affirmed that "it is the most noble of all varieties". Esteban Boutelou (1807) gave his opinion that "it is one of the most cultivated and appreciated" and the great ampelographer Simón de Roxas Clemente (1807) wrote "Its must is rightly considered the best for dry and sweet wines...".