

WINERIES IN MACHAKHELI VALLEY

მარან-საწნახლები მაჭახლის ხეობაში

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Abstract: Viticulture-winemaking was one of the oldest, advanced, and leading field of agriculture from a certain stage of development. The cellar is, first, a purely agricultural building, where all the utensils and equipment related to winemaking are gathered. When we talk about the age of the wine industry and its development, we cannot fail to consider another inventory related to it. One of the components of such inventory is a winepress. According to the latest studies, viticulture and winemaking takes an important place in life in almost all parts of Georgia, including Ajara, in this case, in our studding area - Machakheli valley. Here, slopes with tall trees were used for vines, which grew naturally around yards, roads, arable fields, on the edge of ditches. It should also be emphasised that two periods are important while studying the viticulture and winemaking of Ajara: 1. from the ancient period to the rule of the Ottomans; 2. Period of Ottoman domination (XVII-XIX). Ottoman domination had a negative impact on viticulture and winemaking in Ajara and Samtskhe Saatabago - viticulture declined, and winemaking almost completely disappeared. During the rule of the Ottomans, the decline of winegrowing is mainly due to religious and socio-economic factors.

In developed medieval Machakheli, there were winepresses carved into the rock, stone boulders, as well as those with white limestone walls or half carved into the rock, which could be connected to both church and secular buildings, or placed separately in the forest, near the rocks, on the slopes of the mountains, near the vineyards. It is also worth noting that the cellars are confirmed in the high mountain zone, where the vineyard does not thrive, which in turn confirms the information about the tradition of transporting wine to the mountains and storing wine.

In the territory of Ajara, including in Machakheli, wine cellars identified and studied are confirmed with church-monastery, residential and defence complexes. Characteristic signs of wine cellars are the placement of a storage room with a rectangular plan partially underground, the representation of the space as one or two storage rooms, the exterior is covered with a banister, and the interior is vaulted, the use of large pitchers in the internal and external areas of the cellar, a relatively clean arrangement of stone walls and facades, and a high construction culture.

Along with the wineries, in the developed medieval Machakheli, wine presses were common in the vicinity of the wine cellar, as well as wine presses built in the rock, with whitewash walls carved out of the rock, or with whitewash walls carved out of the rock, which could be connected to both church and secular buildings.

Thus, it can be seen from the research that the winepresses preserved in the Machakheli valley confirm the ancient traditions of wine-growing. The abundance of winepresses, their construction techniques, forms, features show the continuity of winemaking and viticulture traditions in the developed and late Middle Ages.

Key words: Viticulture-winemaking; Machakheli valley; wine cellars; wine presses.

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აბსტრაქტი: მეურნეობის ერთ-ერთ უძველეს, დაწინაურებულ და განვითარების გარკვეული საფეხურიდან წამყვან დარგს წარმოადგენდა მევენახეობა-მეღვინეობა. მარანი, უპირველეს ყოვლისა, წმინდა სამეურნეო დანიშნულების ნაგებობაა, სადაც თავმოყრილია ყველა ის ჭურჭელი და ინვენტარი, რომლებიც მეღვინეობასთან არის დაკავშირებული. როდესაც მეღვინეობის დარგის ხანდაზმულობასა და მის განვითარებაზე გვაქვს საუბარი, არ შეიძლება მხედველობაში არ მივიღოთ მასთან დაკავშირებული სხვა ინვენტარიც. ასეთი ინვენტარის ერთ-ერთ შემადგენელ კომპონენტს საწნახელი წარმოადგენს. იგი, თავისი

სამეურნეო დანიშნულებით იმდენად ახლო კავშირშია მეღვინეობასთან, რომ ადამიანს ღვინის დაყენების დაწყებასთან ერთად პირველი საწნახელიც უნდა გაეკეთებინა. უახლესი კვლევებით ჩანს, რომ მევენახეობა-მეღვინეობას საქართველოს თითქმის ყველა კუთხეში ყოფა-ცხოვრების უმნიშვნელოვანესი ადგილი უჭირავს, მათ შორის აჭარაშიც, ამ შემთხვევაში, ჩვენი კვლევის არეალში - მაჭახლის ხეობაში. ვაზისათვის აქ გამოიყენებოდა მაღალხეებიანი ფერდები, რომლებიც ბუნებრივად იზრდებოდა ეზო-კარმიდამოს, გზების, სახნავ-სათესების ირგვლივ, დეღეების პირას. აღსანიშნავია ისიც, რომ აჭარის მევენახეობა-მეღვინეობის შესწავლისას ორი პერიოდი გამოიყოფა: 1. უძველესი პერიოდიდან ოსმალთა ბატონობამდე; 2. ოსმალთა ბატონობის პერიოდი (XVII-XIX). ოსმალთა ბატონობამ აჭარასა და სამცხე საათაბაგოში მევენახეობას და მეღვინეობაზე უარყოფითი გავლენა იქონია - მევენახეობა დაკნინდა, მეღვინეობა კი თითქმის მთლიანად მოისპო. ოსმალთა ბატონობის დროს მეღვინეობა-მევენახეობის დაცემა, უმთავრესად, რელიგიური და სოციალურ-ეკონომიკური ფაქტორებითაა განპირობებული.

განვითარებული შუა საუკუნეების მაჭახელში გავრცელებული იყო კლდეში, ქვის ლოდში გამოკვეთილი, ასევე, ქვითკირით ნაგები ან ნახევრად კლდეში გამოკვეთილი ქვითკირის კედლების მქონე საწნახლები, რომლებიც შეიძლება დაკავშირებული იყოს როგორც საეკლესიო, ისე, საერო ნაგებობებთან, ან განთავსებულ იქნას განცალკევებით ტყეში, კლდეებთან ახლოს, მთის ფერდებზე გაშენებული მაღლარი ვენახების მახლობლად.

მაჭახლის რეგიონში მევენახეობა-მეღვინეობის ფართოდ გავრცელებაზე მიუთითებს შემორჩენილი და არქეოლოგიური სამუშაოების შედეგად აღმოჩენილი ღია და დახურული ტიპის მარნები. აღსანიშნავია ისიც, რომ მარნები დასტურდება მაღალმთიან ზოლში, იქ სადაც ვენახი არ ხარობს, რაც თავის მხრივ ადასტურებს ცნობებს ბარიდან მთაში გადაგის ტრანსპორტირებისა და ღვინის შენახვის ტრადიციის შესახებ.

აჭარის ტერიტორიაზე, მათ შორის მაჭახელშიც, გამოვლენილი და შესწავლილი ღია და დახურული ტიპის მარნები დადასტურებულია საეკლესიო-სამონასტრო, საცხოვრებელ და თავდაცვით კომპლექსებთან. მარნების სახასიათო ნიშნებს წარმოადგენს მართკუთხა გეგმარების მქონე სათავსის ნაწილობრივ მიწის სიღრმეში განთავსება, სივრცის ერთ ან ორ სათავსოდ წარმოდგენა, ექსტერიერის ბანური, ხოლო ინტერიერის კამაროვანი გადახურვა, მარნის შიდა და გარე ტერიტორიებზე მოზრდილი ქვევრების ჩატანება, ქვით ნაგები კედლებისა და ფასადების შედარებით სუფთა წყობა და მაღალი სამშენებლო კულტურა.

მარნებთან ერთად, განვითარებული შუა საუკუნეების მაჭახელში გავრცელებული იყო მარნის, ან ვაზის სავარგულის მიმდებარედ, ასევე, კლდეში, ქვის ლოდში გამოკვეთილი ქვითკირით ნაგები ან ნახევრად კლდეში გამოკვეთილი ქვითკირის კედლების მქონე საწნახლები, რომლებიც შეიძლება დაკავშირებული იყოს როგორც საეკლესიო, ისე, საერო ნაგებობებთან.

ამდენად, კვლევებით ჩანს, რომ მაჭახლის ხეობაში შემორჩენილი მარან-საწნახლები მეღვინეობა-მევენახეობის უძველეს ტრადიციებს ადასტურებს. საწნახელთა სიმრავლე, მისი აგების ტექნიკა, ფორმები, თავისებურებები განვითარებულ და გვიან შუა საუკუნეებში მეღვინეობა-მევენახეობის ტრადიციების უწყვეტობას გვიჩვენებს.

საკვანძო სიტყვები: მევენახეობა-მეღვინეობა; მაჭახლის ხეობა; ღია და დახურული ტიპის მარნები; ქვითკირის საწნახლები.

Introduction - According to the latest studies, viticulture and winemaking played an important role in cultural life of Georgia, including Ajara, in this case, in our study area - Machakheli valley. Here, slopes with tall trees were used for vines, which grew naturally around yards, roads, arable fields, on the edge of ditches. It should also be pointed out that two periods are significant when studying the viticulture and winemaking of Ajara: 1. from the ancient period to the rule of the Ottomans; 2. Period of Ottoman domination (XVII-XIX). Ottoman domination had a negative impact on viticulture and winemaking in Ajara and Samtskhe Saatabago - viticulture declined, and winemaking almost completely disappeared. During the rule of the Ottomans, the decline of winegrowing is mainly due to religious and socio-economic factors.

In the developed medieval Ajara, there were winepresses carved in the rock, stone boulders, as well as whitewashed or semi-rock washed winepresses with whitewashed walls, which could be connected to both church and secular buildings, or placed separately in the forest, near the rocks, on the mountain slopes.

Methodology - In the process of working on the paper, research was conducted with using descriptive, historical-comparative, and complex intensive, observation and definition, comparative and semiotic research methods.

Discussion/Results - When we consider the age of the wine industry and its development, we should point up another inventory related to it. One of the components of such inventory is a wine press. During the long period of existence of the wine press, three main types of this essential element related to winemaking can be observed in Georgian historical reality (Bokhochadze V., 1963), which are determined by the nature of the materials used for its construction.

1. Among the many ways of pressing grapes and many utensils - inventory, one of the main ones must have been a wine press made of wood and the method of pressing grapes in it, which came from its primitive and unknown form to the developed and perfect form of the existing wine press. Thus, the original type of wine press appears long and basic.

2. The second type of wine press should be considered as whole presses cut in the rock. They must have been known on the territory of Georgia since the IV-III centuries, and they reached the highest level of development and distribution in Georgia during the Middle Feudal period.

3. The third type is the wine presses built with limestone and stones. Limestone-built presses are similar in form to rock-cut and wooden presses, with some minor changes. As evidenced by the materials, it began its existence in the Middle Feudal period and is widespread even today (Bokhochadze, 1963).

According to the latest research, viticulture-winemaking occupies the most important place in life in almost all parts of Georgia, including Ajara. Vakhushti Batonishvili also mentioned that the Achariskalli valley was "a vineyard, fruitful, yielding, gentle, with every grain" (Vakhushti, 1941). Most of the vineyards in Western Georgia should have been leading. Also in Ajara, in the description of Batumi, Gonio and Erge, Vakhushti mentions a high vineyard and a wine distinguished by its taste qualities: "good, light and pleasant wine, with many flavors and smells" (Vakhushti, 1941). Information about high varieties of vines can be found in T. Sakhokia, G., Kazbegi, Iv., Javakhishvili, In the works of Kakhidze and others. A similar situation has been confirmed in Shavsheti, Klarjeti, Imerkhevi, Artanuji and generally in South-West Georgia (Kakhidze N., Viticulture-wine-growing and Fruit Growing, 2009). The grapevine common in Ajara is genetically related to the wild grapevine, which has been observed in many areas. Ajara is connected to the area of cultural vine formation, which includes the south-western part of Georgia,

the side of Aspindza and Adigeni, where giant vine trees still live today (Kakhidze N., *Viticulture-wine-growing and Fruit Growing*, 2009).

For vines in Ajara, slopes with tall trees were used. Maple (*Acer platanoides*) tree was considered the best for the widespread Chkhaveri variety. These trees grew naturally around yards, roads, fields, on the edge of ditches. The climatic conditions of Ajara also contributed to the cultivation of high-altitude vineyards, because tall vines are more resistant to harsh and frosty winters than low varieties (Kakhidze N., *Viticulture-wine-growing and Fruit Growing*, 2009). A total of 70 varieties of black-red and white high-altitude vines have been identified in Ajara. According to the materials of the Machakheli valley, a relatively large place was occupied by the cultivation of Chkhaveri, which had a large share in winemaking (Kakhidze N., *Viticulture-wine-growing and Fruit Growing*, 2009) (Kakhidze N., *Machakhli Gorge*, 1979).

In the historical-ethnographic study of viticulture of Ajara and winemaking, two periods are important: 1. from the ancient period to the rule of the Ottomans; 2. Period of Ottoman domination (XVII-XIX). Ottoman domination had a negative impact on viticulture and winemaking in Ajara and Samtskhe Saatabago - viticulture declined, and winemaking almost completely disappeared. During the rule of the Ottomans, the decline of winegrowing is mainly due to religious and socio-economic factors.

The development of this industry, along with grape varieties, is confirmed by plots in the rock, raised stone boulders in Lower and Upper Ajara, as well as whitewash presses built with whitewash or attached to rock massifs, partially whitewash presses, stone-built cellars, jars of various capacities buried in the ground, oral reports, terminological data and other (Kakhidze N., *Viticulture-wine-growing and Fruit Growing*, 2009)

According to the materials used for the construction of the wine press, four types of presses have been confirmed in Georgia: wooden, rock-cut whole presses, ceramic tile and hydraulic solution, and white lime presses (Bokhochadze V., 1963) (Dighmelashili K., 2020). The earliest of these is recorded in. In the cellar of the Tsikhisgori temple complex of the IV-III centuries BC (Dighmelashili K., 2020) (Tskitishvili G., 2003). A two-compartment wine press built with ceramic tiles and hydraulic solution, dating back to the II-III centuries, is confirmed in Karnisishkevi, an agricultural area of Mtskheta (Dighmelashili K., 2020).

In the advanced Middle Ages, a wine press carved into a rock, a monolithic stone boulder, is a common type, characterized by elongated rectangular shapes, it no longer has a basin, the purpose of which is fulfilled by a special vessel (Bokhochadze V., 1963).

The emergence of white lime presses is associated with the early Middle Ages, but it acquired a more massive character in the developed Middle Ages. An earlier case has been confirmed in the cellar found in the "buildings" of Nekresi village, which was obtained because of the reconstruction of a building from the pagan period (Dighmelashili K., 2020). White lime presses are confirmed to have developed in the Middle Ages in Eastern Georgia and the Ajara region of Western Georgia (Bokhochadze V., 1963) (Kakhidze A., Mamuladze Sh., 2016)

In Ajara, from the middle feudal times, there are wine presses built with white lime (Akho, Akutsa, Ortsva, Skhalta, Chvana, Zedo Chkhutuneti, etc.). The preserved Shushaneti complex in the village of Kirnati, which includes a wine press, a refectory, and a small church, is outstanding. The buildings are located on an artificially created terrace. From the point of view of scholars, they originally built a wine press, and then added a dining room and a bench. The eastern wall of the well-preserved press is built on a platform cut from the ground. The press, in fact, is a closed, one-

sided, arched opening with a slightly curved vaulted roof, and walls made of stones with horizontal piles. The inner walls of the press are plastered with a whitish fermentation layer. The press is a monolithic building, the length of which is 6.65 m, the width is 3.45 m. The length of the inner space itself is 2.2 m. width - 1.05 m, depth - 80 cm. The total height of the front facade is 3.5 meters. The refectory built on the western wall of the wine press has been undermined almost to the level of the foundation. A small bench should have been built on the dining room, which is also destroyed to the level of the foundation. A small, almost square „isarna“ is built with straight-sided stones. It is known that in the Middle Ages winepresses related to secular, church and economic buildings and were either separate buildings standing in the open air or included in the cellar. Like Shushaneti, the 7th century basilica of the village of Mshvildgori has a two-part whitewash press built on the church building, which was built on the apse wall in the 10th century during the functioning of the church (Dighmelashvili, 2020: 32). A similar two-part press has been confirmed at the site of the old Gavazi in Kopale, which is also attached to a small chapel. Holding winepresses near the church buildings was due to the chapel and liturgical needs of the buried in Ekvderi. We think that the inclusion of the wine press in the Shushaneti complex should be related to a similar process.

There are two main subtypes of white lime presses: the first type is a side-sloping and narrow press with a juice outlet hole placed at the bottom and a clay juice outlet pipe. Similar presses, according to the archaeological materials accompanying the settlements, early (Nekres) and developed (Gavazi, Ikalto, New Zhinvali, Tsobeni, Artozani complex, Matani Mlashebi settlement, Pshavi Aragvi Khertvisi Devbiani, Alaverdi Monastery, etc.) date back to the Middle Ages. The second type of presses with a straight-sided and bottomless clay juice pipe is confirmed on the monuments of the late Middle Ages: Akhmeta, Khashmi, Ujarma, Matani, etc. (Tchilashvili L., 1990) (Ramishvili R., 1974). It is difficult to determine the date of the Shushaneti press without considering the archaeological materials, however, according to the shape of the press and construction techniques, it can be considered a building of the late Middle Ages (XV-XVII).

In Machakheli, a semi-rock plot and whitewashed presses have been confirmed. This is the press of the village of Mere, which is partially located in the depth of the rock. One wall of the rectangular tank clings to the rock, the rest of the walls are made of slate stones and whitish-colored boils. The shapes and arrangement of the stones are irregular. The long wall, on the side of the rock, has a pit for the hanging pole. The inner walls of the rectangular shape of the tank were also plastered with a boiling layer.

In the village of Upper Chkhutuneti, there is a preserved white lime juice press, which is built with stones grown from the rock and a thick layer of clay. Here, as in the case of Mere, the press seems to be half embedded in the depth of the rock, which proves that there was a certain tradition of running white lime presses built with rock stones in the Machakheli valley. The peculiarity of the press consists of a straight-sided rectangular tank with a connecting hole to the shaft and pits intended for grinding. In the Machakheli valley, there is a Janavra and Dzeladze pressing plant with rectangular straight-sided tanks built half-in-the-rock with rock stones and boiling layers.

It is likely that the presence of separate open-air presses is due to the need to preserve the beneficial properties of grape juice, and therefore the presses were mechanically operated near the vineyard (Old Gavaz, Mskhalgori, Matani). The two-part nature of the presses is based on the specifics of pressing grapes of different varieties and colours (Tchilashvili L., 1990) (Dighmelashvili K., 2020)

Thus, in the developed Ajara of the Middle Ages, winepresses carved into the rock, stone boulders, as well as those built with white limestone or with white limestone walls carved out of the rock were widespread (in Kedi municipality - Zundaga, Koktauri, Akho, Akutsa, Bzubzu, Ortsva, Dzetsmani, Koromkheti, Makhuntseti; Khelvachauri municipality - Chikuneti, Zedo Chkhutuneti, Tskhemlara, Khertvisi, Ked-Kedi, Shushaneti, Ortabatum, Mere, Janavra, Chonchkho, etc.), which can be connected to both church and secular buildings, or be placed separately in the forest, near the rocks, Near the high vineyards planted on the slopes of the mountains. It is also worth noting that the cellars are confirmed in the high mountain zone, where the vineyard does not grow, which in turn confirms the reports about the tradition of transporting mash from the bar to the mountains and storing wine (Kakhidze A., Mamuladze Sh., 2016).

Medieval cellars are found in large numbers in Eastern Georgia (Rustavi, Mlashebi Gora, Nadikvari, Zhinvali, Kvemo Kartli Ispiani, Gudarekhi, Dmanisi Nakalakari, etc.) and in small quantities in Western Georgia (Kakhidze A., Mamuladze Sh., 2016). In this regard, the closed cellars preserved in the Machakheli valley (Zeda Chkhutuneti, Tskhemlara, Chikuneti, Kokholeti, etc.) are interesting too.

In the village of Tskhemlara in Khelvachauri municipality, a cellar from the Middle Ages has been preserved in an authentic form. The building is rectangular in shape (5.1x4.15, m., internal height - 2.3 m, wall thickness - 0.9-1 m) and is built solidly, thick, in some places with edged stones and a thick layer of boiling, and the chamber with small stones. Several rows of narrow, uneven stones are inserted in a straight line in the belt of the arch, the arrangement of which is different from the stone arrangement of the slopes of the arch. The lunette wall supporting the arch is partially built on the rock. Remains of six pitchers of different sizes, broken in half, remain in the ground. The pitchers must be developed, or from the late medieval period. The only entrance to the building is in the south. The wall of the cellar, built of medium-sized stones and bricks, has three small rectangular niches with a pedimented roof on a horizontal axis. The pediments of the niches are lined with slightly sloping, obliquely stacked slate stones. The outer edges of the cellar are made of straight, solid, well-hewn stones, and part of the walls are embedded in the ground and rest on natural rock. The cellar does not have a roof. The nature of the construction techniques, the stone arrangement of the walls built with relatively small unprocessed stones and the layer of boiling shows more similarities with the monuments of the late Middle Ages of the XVI-XVII centuries. The cellar of Tskhemlara was an agricultural building connected to the residential complex, which is confirmed by the stone oven near the cellar, which was used for drying corn and fruits.

It is interesting to see the preserved closed type of cellar in the homestead plot of Dzneladze in the village of Upper Chkhutuneti, which is built with small unprocessed stones and fermentation. The cellar has a tympanum door and an internal vaulted roof, a small roof is placed in the thickness of the wall. The Dzneladze wine cellar is one of the outstanding examples of this type of agricultural architecture.

One of the remains of significant site of wine cellar as a stone-built residential house and agricultural buildings is in the homestead plot of Amiran Malakmadze in Chikuneti village. The almost dry pile building was probably included in a late medieval (XVI-XVII century) homestead complex, as evidenced by the remains of buildings built of raised stone blocks on both sides of the stone staircase leading to the courtyard terrace. Fragments of pitchers buried in the ground were exposed in the echo area of the cellar. The cellar consists of two storage rooms with independent entrances united by a common facade. The storage is built into the ground layer. The head of the

cellar is compacted from the outside. Traces of restoration and strengthening can be seen on the southern wall, architrave, and arch slopes. The walls of the storehouse are built with large stones. Stones pointed towards the hump of the slightly arrow-shaped arch are used. A pile of small oblong stones is used in the belt of the arch. A wall embedded in the earth layer is especially solid. The second storeroom was built in a similar way, and the architrave stone laid on top of the door was probably also a support for the roof. On the slope preserved in Ajara, half-full cellars built into the ground, the outer walls of which partially protrude into the space, were probably supposed to have a shingle roof, and it is possible that an auxiliary structure was built above them. It should be noted that in the territory of the Khikhani fortress in Ajara, dry pile buildings of the XVII-XVIII centuries have been confirmed, with a small area, semi-detached, consisting of only one room, which may also have a thatched roof (Mindorashvili D., 2016). The courtyard of the Chikuneti cellar is divided into terraces, considering the terrain. The earthen head of the Tskhemlara cellar is the upper terrace of the yard, from which a five-step stone staircase descends. Fragments of a low fence of old and new raven stone have been preserved here and there. The vineyard is planted on the hillside below.

In the Achariskali valley, as well as in the eastern and western parts of Georgia, relatively cool and dry places were chosen to maintain the quality of wine and to set up wine cellars. The method of placing the pitchers in the ground is of some importance for dating. B.C. From the 6th century AD Until the 11th century, pitchers were buried without lime, the method of burying them was developed from the Middle Ages, from the 10th-11th centuries. In the Achariskali valley, there are both fixed and unhandled pitchers, which are similarly dated to the developed or late Middle Ages (Bokhochadze V., 1963) (Kakhidze A., Mamuladze Sh., 2016).

On the example of the discussed samples, in Ajara, the tradition of placing residential and economic storages, including cellars, both separately and on the first basement floor of a residential house, characteristic of the region of Western Georgia, is revealed. Depending on the terrain, the courtyards are characterized by a terraced structure, the spread of complexes in a relatively small area, closer placement of residential and agricultural buildings.

Thus, the winepresses preserved in Ajara confirm the ancient traditions of winemaking and viticulture. The abundance of winepresses, their construction techniques, forms, features show the continuity of winemaking and viticulture traditions in the developed and late Middle Ages.

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