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Based on the "Instruction du 24. nov. 1802" of the French tax and finance ministry a new classification of vineyards was started in Napoleon's times. For the first time in history – see quotation – this classification is based on the fact that "the location with the highest yield is not necessarily the best" and that the "yield in high-quality vineyards is often extremely low either due to the consistency of the soil or due to the nature of the vine itself".

After 1815 the Prussians luckily adopted this idea and completed the classification in the 1840s. With extreme precision and broad expertise all vineyards were divided into eight different groups. Here it was often the case that one plot was divided into two or even three different groups. In the 1840s and 1850s during the great crisis in the wine-growing sector which was characterised by devastating crop failures and a ruinous drop in prices, more and more people claimed that the wine from the Mosel river must reach a better quality. That's why a textbook for viticulture written by the "Districtarzt" Arnoldi from Winningen and a viticulture map of the Trier region were published in Trier in 1868. On this map the assessment of the land registry was presented in three different colours describing the different quality of the vineyards. As an orientation for wine buyers the map quickly became so successful that the market required a corresponding map from the local government in Koblenz, too. After a long period of hesitating, this map was finally completed in 1897. Unfortunately, the official legislation for viticulture – with the law of 1892 – already focused on "Oechsle" as quality parameter at that time. So the maps became less and less important in the following decades.

Classification des Vignes.
2. 348. La vigne est susceptible d'être distribuée en plusieurs classes dans la même commune : elle donne lieu principalement à une observation qui peut être étendue à d'autres sortes de propriétés ; c'est que le terrain qui produit la meilleure denrée, n'est pas toujours celui qui doit tenir le premier rang dans la classification, parce que souvent il en produit fort peu, soit par la nature du terrain, soit par celle du plant.

Nowadays the production of wine is characterised by modern food design. Aromatized and synthetic wines fermented with genetically engineered yeasts and enzymes guarantee a taste of industrial progress. At the same time, however, a countermovement is forming. And the return to the traditions of the viticulture on the Mosel river i.e. focusing on the fascinating system "vineyard", means that the old map is the basis of a classification which is orientated towards the terroir and sees the wine from the Mosel region as a precious cultural asset, as the thrilling and mysterious expression of a vineyard's individuality.

There are 3448 hectares in the third category (ochre) and 2517 hectares in the secondary category (orange) but in the first the category (dark red) there are only 181 hectares of altogether 6146 hectares at that time i.e. slightly under 3% of all vineyards.

The Association of Quality Wine growing Estates in Germany (VDP) laid down in its resolutions concerning the classification of the vineyards that the wines which are grown and vinified in accordance with highest quality standards are to be called "1. Lage" (first class wines). On the external label these wines are marked  with the logo which is shifted upwards after the wine location.