

WEINAKADEMIKER THESIS – ABSTRACT ON THESIS

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Topic: Quo vadis? Turkish Wine - Yesterday - Today - Tomorrow

1. Motivation for choosing the topic and objective

There is archaeological evidence suggesting that South-Eastern Anatolia was the birthplace of grape domestication and winemaking goes back here to 7000 years ago. Turkey is also a country with a huge number of indigenous grape varieties, some of which have a great quality potential.

During the Corona pandemic, all trips to Europe and European wine regions from Russia were limited and Turkey remained almost the only country open to visitors. In March 2021, I organized the first tour to Turkish wineries for private clients who, like me, felt a lack of travelling to wine regions, communication with winemakers and tastings. During this trip I discovered a lot of interesting topics, and this became the motivation for the further research. I crossed Turkey from the borders with Syria and Iraq to the borders with Bulgaria and Greece and visited about 20 wineries. In Moscow I organized few tastings both for professionals and private clients, where I offered Turkish wines "blindly" and got a very positive feedback.

Wine business in Turkey is demanding with a lot of restrictions and hurdles. The difficult economic situation in the country, hyper-inflation and dramatic geopolitical changes make the situation even more complex. The motivation for choosing this topic was to understand the status quo of the Turkish wine industry (market and production) under these circumstances, to make a SWOT analysis and based on this SWOT analysis to elaborate some strategies which can be helpful for further positive development of the Turkish wine business. I have risen the following questions: what measures should be taken by producers and sales channels to spur the domestic market, as well as whether Turkish wines are relevant for the international export market and if there is a potential for increasing exports.

Methodology

Some information was collected through websites of producers, books, internet research and articles in international wine magazines. The statistical data was taken from the OIV, the Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Turkey, the Tobacco and Alcohol Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, report of the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service and other sources. However, very little literature and up-to-date sources on Turkish wine industry are available and most of my analysis was done by own research in the country – by visiting wine regions, wineries and via expert interviews.

Content

The Thesis can be divided into three main parts:

The first part includes a brief introduction to the topic and some historical aspects. It also describes the wine regions and grape varieties, viticulture and winemaking practices.

The second part presents the structure of the market, consumption and production figures, including export and import, the area under vineyards, the production share of red/white and rosé wines and other basic issues. This part also contains an overview of producers and an analysis of the actual market development.

In the third section, a SWOT analysis of the Turkish wine market is carried out. Based on the SWOT analysis, some key strategies and recommendations for positive development of Turkish wine market are given.

Conclusion

Turkey has a long history of viticulture and winemaking with a lot of good terroirs and great portfolio of indigenous grapes. Large investments in production facilities and in vineyards made during the last 20-25 years and the attraction of international consultants led to a significant improvement in wine quality and an increase in production. However, after the introduction of a new law in 2013 with a lot of restrictions and sanctions on the wine business, the industry faced many threats and challenges. The difficult economic situation, the pandemic crisis, the political situation and the undeveloped wine culture in the country do not contribute to the development of the wine business, nevertheless, the market remained growing before the pandemic crisis, and I am convinced that the growth will continue in the future.

Turkey needs a lot of changes at the state level for the further positive development: an elimination of sanction on the wine business, the adoption of a wine law with quality standards for winemaking and viticulture, the cooperation between relevant ministries and wine producers and long-term support programs for producers. Turkey needs an organization like “Österreich Wein Marketing” as a platform for market analysis, education, cooperation between wine producers and promotion of Turkish wine. Turkey is a popular touristic destination; the share of wine consumption by tourists is large, so it is necessary to improve the offer and the education aspect for service people in Horeca and retail, to develop wine tourism and to promote Turkey as a country with culinary diversity. Export business has a limited potential because of the poor image of Turkish wines and strong international competitors, however, a selective export business with a focus on indigenous red varieties could be interesting.