

Regions of Vineyard Tourism in Turkey

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Abstract

Turkey having historical, cultural and natural beauties is a potential tourism paradise. However, the visitor profile is mostly trip-entertainment based (sea-sun-sand). The busy and stressful city life is increasing the need for holidays for people who yearn for nature and natural life. An emerging type of tourism, called "rural tourism", is promising tourism option for our country. Agricultural tourism or Agro-tourism is a sub-branch of "rural tourism". Vineyard tourism is considered as the bottom line of agricultural tourism. A long term viticulture in Anatolia for a thousand year leads to the formation of biological diversity. Turkey is among the important countries in the world with its vineyard presence and grape production. The convenient ecological conditions of Turkey created a wide and rich genetic resource for different local varieties. Besides these local varieties, foreign varieties are also widely grown. Therefore, Turkey has a high potential for viniculture and vineyard tourism. It is necessary for the farmers to be educated and encouraged by giving public trainings on "Vineyard Tourism" in convenient regions of Turkey. The protection of these local varieties and types, which are now facing the danger of extinction, is given due importance to this issue.

Keywords: Rural tourism, Agricultural Tourism, Vineyard, Vineyard Tourism

INTRODUCTION

Turkey having historical, cultural and natural beauties is a potential tourism paradise. When tourism is mentioned, first thing to come to minds is mostly sea-sun-sand. Except for some conscious tourists visiting historical places, congress and fair tourism, health and thermal tourism, winter tourism etc., the visitor profile is mostly trip-entertainment based. One of the alternative tourism types is rural tourism. The increasing noise caused by the urbanization, environmental pollution, uniformity, much negativity which results in intense stress caused people to look for natural life and change the concept of tourism [1].

Turkey thanks to its convenient geographical structure, its historical and cultural infrastructure, has a big potential for multi-dimensional and rural tourism. With these rich resources, it can meet increasing demand in rural tourism, can get a big share from rural tourism and can benefit from the advantages that it provides.

Vineyard tourism is considered as a sub-branch of agricultural tourism. Anatolia has the characteristics of becoming the gene center of vine tree and has a deep-rooted viticulture, therefore, it has a high potential in terms of viticulture and vineyard tourism. Vineyard and wine tourism is common in USA, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada, Argentina, Chile and some European countries (France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Slovakia, Czech Republic etc.) [2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9].

In this article, the history and viticulture of some regions with potential to be developed as a vineyard tourism destination are described.

History of Viticulture in Turkey

Vine (*Vitis vinifera* L.) is one of the oldest plants of the earth with its almost 150-million-year history. People

recognized vine two million years ago in the Paleolithic Period, the cultivation of vine and the wine production was in the Neolithic Period, "BC 8500-4000" and the spread of the vine and viticulture was in the Chalcolithic Age, "BC 5000-3000" [10]. In this period and in the following periods, many civilizations [Hittites, Phrygians, Lydians, Ions, Urartians, Persians Empire, Roman Empire, Byzantine Empire, Seljuq and Ottoman Empire] were established in Anatolia and carried their culture and civilization to these lands (Fig.1).



Figure 1. Civilizations established in Anatolia

According to the findings of the archeological and archeobotanical studies, wild vine (*Vitis vinifera* ssp. *sylvestris*) has been cultivated for the first time in the territory of Transcaucasia located between Northeast Anatolia and the Caucasus Mountains (Fig. 2), then spread over Anatolia and all over the world [11]. It is understood that the vine was first seen in the years 3500-3000 BC in Mesopotamia and Egypt and then in Crete in 2200 BC. The viticulture and wine culture reached Europe during the Roman Empire and followed the river valleys by the hands of the colonists and advanced towards the interior region in the European continent [12].



Figure 2. Anatolia, the motherland of vine

As indicated by mural painting, the vine was cultivated in prehistoric times in the Egyptian civilization, as the god of grapes in the Greek and Roman civilizations. Wine reveals itself as a tool of change in stone reliefs in the Hittites (2000 BC), a former resident of Anatolia [11, 13, 14]. Findings in Kültepe indicated that drinking cups from the 1750s BC were used for wine presentation in sacred ceremonies. It is possible to find many antique documents about the history of grapes and wine at every corner of Turkey. At the Anatolian Civilizations Museum in Ankara, there are many pottery and ceramic pots (Rhyton) in the shaped to various animal figures, but among them; golden drinking pots are the most beautiful samples.

After the Turks settled in Anatolia (11th century AD) they also contributed to the development of viticulture in these lands. Vine leaf and grape bunch figures were also be found in the Seljuq and Ottoman decorations. Evliya Çelebi as the famous Turkish traveler (17th century) mentioned the beauty of the vineyards in Anatolia and the intimacy of grapes and wines. Today, the vineyard has developed at significant levels in the regions where these historical works were located.

Some Important Regions of Turkey in Terms of Vineyard Tourism

Turkey has an ancient and rooted viticulture as well as being the center of genetic diversity for vine (Figure 3). Therefore, in this article, based on the available resources on the subject, some information on some of the regions with vineyards of Turkey will be given with respect to their history, the viticulture and potential contributions to "vineyard tourism".



Figure 3. The vineyards of Turkey

Marmara Region

In Bozcaada (Tenedos), viticulture and wine making are as old as the history of the island. The vineyard occupied a very important place in the island's local economy in Tenedos in 4th century BC, especially in the following

Hellenistic period (330-30 BC). During the surveys conducted in the rural areas of the island, about 10 farms or vineyard belonging to the Hellenistic period were identified. Numerous amphoras recovered in the excavations of Bozcaada cemetery area can be regarded as data indicating wine production of this period. In between the years 400 and 350 BC, the portrayal of two handles such as grape bunches, wine amphorae, and kylix and kantaros, used in wine, on Tenedos' stamped coins shows how important the vineyard was in the island's daily life and economy [15]. Tenes, who gave the name to the island, found a wild vine (*Vitis vinifera* ssp. *Silvestris*) around today's Poyraz Harbor and improved this sole to obtain Kuntra (Karacakız) type of wine.

Among the wine types in Bozcaada viticulture, Karacakız (Kuntra), Altıntaş (Vasilaki) and Karalahna, table grapes varieties, Bozcaada Çavuş has an important place [16]. Some of the vineyards in the island are used for holiday purposes as well as to meet the needs of agricultural production.

Avşa Island (Afissia) is a flat-faced flat island in the southwest of the Marmara Sea. The island has historically been used as a place of exile for Christian religious men and has remained empty throughout the middle ages. The entire surface of the island is full of Neolithic, Early Bronze Age, Chalcolithic, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman bowl, pottery pieces. There are many names given to Avşa which have changed over the centuries [1].

When Diogenes of Kyzikos called the islands of Propontis, Ofiussa and Fisia were separated from each other. Plinius named this island as Ophiussa. The name of the island was Afousia during the Byzantine Empire. Today, the island called Avşa. Avşa Island is one of the oldest vineyards and wine regions having a special microclimate. Cultivar, 'Adakarası' as a type of is widely grown in Avşa Island, Erdek and Balıkesir province. Unique grape varieties have very good quality, elegantly structured and aromatic, ready for drinking in a short time, with beautiful red color. In recent years, with the development of viticulture in the island, good quality grape varieties such as Syrah, Cabernet sauvignon and Merlot were also started to be grown. Therefore, Avşa Island (Afissia) has a multifaceted tourism potential with its historical and cultural infrastructure [1].

Iznik (Nicaea) is located on the east cost of the lake, Askania Limne (Askania Lake=Iznik Lake). The lake is surrounded by high mountains. İznik was founded by Antigonius Monophthalmos, one of the commanders of Alexander the Great of Macedonia. It was founded in 316 BC, with the name Antigoneia. Lysimakhos named the city after his wife, Nikaia in 301 BC [17, 18]. The city was in the territories of Bithynia Kingdom in 293 BC then in 123 AD, the Romans got it. Iznik in 476 AD, stayed within the borders of the Eastern Roman Empire which got the Byzantine name later on. The Seljuq state had Iznik in 476 AD then in 1080 Byzantines got the city as the second time again. It was later conquered by the Ottomans in 1331. This city has preserved historical monuments such as Çakırca Höyüğü, Berber Kaya, Asklepios Temple, Dörttepeliler Tumulus, Roman Theater, Obelisk Monument, Hagia Sophia Museum, Green Mosque and many other cultural houses throughout the ages. Therefore, it is considered as an 'open museum'.

The reason why Iznik has a relationship with the god of wine, Dionysos, is that there are lots of vine and grapes in the city. Since Dionysos is considered as the founding god of the city of Iznik, the clusters of grapes are located even in the coins. In the ancient times, 'Askania' as a place

around Iznik Lake was full of olive trees, fruit and vegetable gardens and vineyards.

In 1388, the Sultan Murat, the First built Nilüfer Hatun Cemetery in the memory of her mother Nilufer Hatun. This was opened in 1960 as "Iznik museum". Archaeological findings reflecting viticulture can be found in this museum. Iznik region is a rare vineyard region with a special ecology that can take its unique flavor and aroma of Müşküle grape variety.

Iznik with its nature offers an irreplaceable environment for nature enthusiasts as it can be green every season of the year and as it has clean air with plenty of oxygen. It has all the potential in terms of rural tourism.

Trakya Region (Trakis), which is located in the Marmara region of Turkey, has a wealth of daily material and spiritual cultural accumulation since Traklar. Throughout history, it has been hosting the many civilizations as well as the world's greatest empires (Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman). It has ecology suitable for cultivation and viticulture [19]. Viticulture has been intensively seen in the three regions of Trakya throughout the ancient history: Kırklareli and its nearby areas, Tekirdağ vineyards between Uçmakdere and Şarköy called Gonophore, Uzunköprü area bound to Edirne and Trakya Bağ Route (Historical Dionissos Wine Route) towards Gelibolu Peninsula near Enez [20]. The first wine museum in Turkey is located in Mürefte. In Şarköy, 2400 enterprises are engaged in viticulture directly or indirectly [21, 22, 23]. Variety of grapes for fine dining and wine (Merlot, Gamay, Cinsaut, and Semillon) are grown in this region [22, 24]. Trakya Region has suitable conditions for cultural tours, nature sports, sea tourism, agro-tourism and similar activities due to its deep rooted history, cultural diversity and natural beauty. The region has Cherry Festival, Şarköy Vine-Harvest Feists, Historical Kırkpınar Wrestling Festival, Kırklareli Karagöz Cultural and Kakava Festivals and many other similar cultural organizations and events [23].

Aegean Region

Foça (Phokaia) is significant in terms of being one of the Ionian cities in the ancient age. It is considered that the city was established by Ionians coming from Teos and Erythrai in the middle of seventh century BC. However, as a result of the excavations, the first inhabitants of Foça were Aioller and this leads us to consider this city was established in the second century BC [25]. The grape type known as Foça Karası is considered to be existed since the ancient age and this grape was produced for wine. Also, wine cups of Kyklis and Skyphos discovered in the excavations in Foça which belonged to the fourth and fifth centuries BC showing the significance of wine for the city in the religious ceremonies. The Foça Karası type of grape faces the danger of extinction in Foça, has emerged as a new economic value in recent years. The wine of Foça Karası has a good quality that can be trademarked in agricultural terms.

Salihli (Sardes) is the ancient Sardis (Sard) city, which is now on the UNESCO Tentative List of World Heritage. Starting from the end of the Bronze Age, it was the capital of the Lydian Civilization, which ruled until the 6th century [26]. The greatest contribution of Lydian civilization to human history is the invention of money. Sardes, located on the King's Road, has a significant function in the Ancient Age, and it also hosted Jewish community in the 3rd century. Therefore, one of the first synagogues in the history was in this region. Additionally, one of the seven holy shrines of

Christianity is located in Sardes, where the wealthy ones lived in during the Roman period [26]. Sardes is one of the places attracting local and foreign tourists in terms of cultural tourism. The region is also one of the few centers of the world that has been viniculture since ancient times. It has a potential to be evaluated in terms of the vineyard tourism. About 90% of the grapes produced in Salihli are the Sultani Seedless grape variety. Besides Sultani Seedless, many other grape varieties such as Alphonse Lavallée, Razakı, Cardinal, Trakya İlkeren, Yalova İncisi, Royal, Red Globe, Crimson Seedless, and Superior Seedless are also produced here.

Şirince (Kirkince) is one of the popular places of daily tourism in Seljuq district of İzmir. Şirince has unique examples of 19th century Anatolian architecture. It is an old Greek settlement with its narrow streets and authentic structure [27]. It is rumored that the name, Kirkince, was given after the forty people who hit the mountains in a legendary age. Located near the ruins of Ephesus, Şirince has historical remains which are presumed to belong to the Eastern Roman Empire and wooden houses resembling Ottoman architecture, a green nature, and vineyards. The people of the village can offer their handicrafts, olive oil, soap products and local fruit wines to tourists more than the rural activities in Şirince. Alicante Boushet, Misket, Syrah (Şiraz) are the grape varieties for wine production in Şirince [1].

Denizli (Laodikeia) was founded by Syrian king Antiochus the Second in the years between 261 and 245 BC. Antiochus named the city after his wife: Laodikeia. There are many ancient cities and temples in Denizli and in its districts. Some of them are Hierapolis Ancient City in Pamukkale, Tripolis Ancient City in Buldan, Tabea Ancient City in Kale, Colossae Ancient City in Honaz, Eumeneia Ancient City in Çivril and Dionysopolis Ancient City in Çaldır. Hierapolis (Pamukkale) only 22 km away from Denizli, is in the UNESCO's World Heritages List. [28].

Pamukkale (Hierapolis) is an important region according to the Roman and Byzantine archaeological remains, as well as the travertines and waterfalls of the hot water springs that rise from the underground. Denizli is a significant center for thermal health tourism and eco-tourism [28]. Apart from thermal health tourism, it hosts meetings in world standards in its meeting halls. The city stands out in viticulture and grape production with its favorable land and climate conditions. Sultani Seedless, Round Seedless, Razakı, and Çal Karası are grape varieties grown in the vineyards in this region. In Denizli, Buldan, Yenicekent, Güney, Bekilli and Çal are especially notable with their grapes. Specially, the Çal district of the city is world-famous for its Çal Karası grape variety.

The stone reliefs of the Phrygian period (900 BC) show the feast of drink and the Afyon province has a deep viticulture culture.

Black-Sea Region

There are some signs showing that there is a deeply rooted viticulture in these regions of Anatolia. For example, Çorum Alacahöyük has gold wine glasses and a test belonging to 2300 BC years from the royal tombs. Çorum Boğazköy has wine glasses named Rhyton in the form of bulls and goose heads from 1700-1600 BC [29]. There are grape bunch motifs on the silver coins found in Trabzon in 410 BC. The door belonging to the Byzantine Period in Amasya Museum was embellished with vine leaves and coarse grape bunches as forms of circles formed by the

vine branches symbolizing abundance, belonging to the Hellenistic Age (330 BC) [29]. There are grape clusters and grapevine motifs embossed in relief and sarcophagus made of Roman marble and lime. Grape varieties Amasya, Isabella, and Narince are grown in this region.

Central Anatolia Region

Objects like tablet and relief vase etc. were found in the region showing that the Hittites lived in this region in 4000 BC. Excavations in Yozgat Alishar presents us some wine and drink vessels in the form of grapes from 1800-1600 BC. It is believed that the Phrygians dominated the area after the Hittites. The King of Phrygia, Midas, is the founder of Ankara, in 800 BC in Central Anatolia. It is mentioned in the historical sources that the name of the vessel called ancestral anchor was first used in the city, or in the name of grape in Persian, the name of Engürü was used and changed to Ankara. Ankara and its surroundings have been one of the most significant regions where grapes are grown throughout history [29]. Phrygian domination continued until the Phrygians came under the dominance of Lydians living in Western Anatolia in 650 BC. Persians in 550 BC, Lydians dominated the Turks and Anatolia. In 331 BC, the Great Alexander defeated Persians and put an end to this empire. After the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC, Seleucids dominated some part of Anatolia. Then, the Galatians came to Anatolia from Thrace and dominated Ankara and its surroundings. After Galatas, Kalecik and the vicinity remained under the dominion of the Roman Empire for a long time. After the separation of the Roman Empire in 395 BC, it became under the rule of the Byzantine Empire. This situation continued until Turks came to Anatolia.

Kalecik (Eçelriğa) on the edge of the Kızılırmak River is 65 km away from Ankara. Both the effect of the Kızılırmak River and the topographic structure of the Central Anatolia has different climate structure according to the continental climate. It also has a wide range of agricultural products and it has the unique ecology for the grape variety, Kalecik Karası as it is well known in the world markets. The history of this grape variety, Kalecik Karası, goes back to 4000 BC, to the time of Hattis. The district became a very important center during the Romans period. The first two milestones of the world (Kalecik- Yozgat, Kalecik-Çankırı): some historical documents were found by Emperor Trajan who lived between 53-117 AD came to Kalecik during the Iranian campaign (Marcus Ulpius Nerva Traianus). Moreover, viticulture and wine growing in Kalecik has improved during the period of Trajan.

The decline in viticulture in Kalecik since the 1950s brought the Kalecik Karası variety of grape to the brink of extinction in 1990 [30]. The rehabilitation works were carried out by the faculty members of the Faculty of Agriculture of the University of Ankara and this grape variety was restored to Kalecik again. One of the people working in this rehabilitation works, Proffesor Y. Sabit Ağaoğlu and his wife, built a small boutique wine house in Kalecik, called Tomurcukbağı. They named their wine after Trajan.

Kalecik Karası is the grape variety in the wine growing facilities while there are Hasandede, Serge and Gül grape varieties in table grape growing facilities.

Cappadocia region is a region spread over Nevşehir, Kırşehir, Niğde, Aksaray and Kayseri provinces in Turkey. The region has been eradicated 60 million years ago through Erciyes, Hasan Mountain and Güllüdağ being erupted by the soft layers of lava and ash formed by rain and wind.

Cappadocia has been home to many civilizations (Assyrian, Hittite, Persian, Roman, Seljuk, and Ottoman) as well as natural changes throughout its history. The wine vessels, wine jugs and stone reliefs found in the excavations in the area show that the production of wine continues to develop in the Cappadocian civilizations. The Cappadocia region extending to the Hittite period (3000 BC) was found in grape chewing and wine making units in various galleries in the underground settlements. One of the main sources of the Hittites economy was viticulture. In order to protect the hilltops and vineyards from the thieves, the Hittites made very good laws that were appropriate for even today understands [29]. Nevşehir is the important viticulture centers of Anatolia. Many Christians escaping from sectarian conflicts during the Eastern Roman Empire took refuge in Cappadocia. There are many icons on the walls of Üzümlü Church in Ortahisar and the ceiling is decorated with a rich decorations. On the orange-colored background, circles and rectangular cross motifs, grape clusters and geometric motifs are depicted [31]. Emir is cultivated among the wine grape varieties in the region. The driving power of internal and external tourism has increased the consumption of wine, which led to the creation of new vineyards and the cultivation of new grape varieties. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of varieties of grapes, especially those of high quality and high yield, such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Merlot and Gamay.

In Konya Ereğlisi, İvriz sub-district (750 BC), on the rock relief of Tarhundas, the god of fertility holds grape bunch in his right hand and a wheat tress in his left hand as a fertility symbol. This is a sign that the bark of our province is very old and deeply rooted. As a matter of fact, Konya province has a significant potential with its rich and varied grape varieties [29].

Mediterranean Region

There are many settlements discovered in the Mediterranean region. This area has been cradled by many civilizations in the inscriptions of Assyrian and Hittite with the beginning of the usage of the writing in Anatolia. Many states have been dominating the region (Hittites, Lydians, Persians, Macedonians, Romans, Byzantines, Seljuqs, and Ottomans) in several periods.

The Mediterranean region is a potential tourism paradise with its historical, cultural and natural beauties. The presence of grape bunch motifs on the silver coins printed in Tarsus (378-374 BC) is a sign that the viticulture existed in the region since ancient times.

Some local grape varieties such as Adana Karası, Sergi Karası, Dökülgen, Kabarcık, Tarsus Beyazı etc. are grown in this region [32]. The most suitable ecology for early varieties of grapes that can be marketed easily and can be sold in higher prices in domestic and international markets is the coastal zone of the Mediterranean region. Central and Tarsus districts of İçel province are the earliest table grape production area of our country in this generation. This region is followed by the provinces of Adana and Hatay, which are located along the eastern Mediterranean shoreline, and the province of Antalya, which represents the western Mediterranean coastline.

East and Southeastern Region

Viticulture is done in many regions of Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia. As a matter of fact, irrigation canals from Urartians in Van and the hanging gardens of Menua

(Semiramis, Samram) remains around (900-600 BC) largely explains in old documents. The famous Turkish traveler Evliya Çelebi who visited Van Castle at the 17th century stated that all the windows of the castle looked at the lush vineyards and gardens and that these vineyards and gardens were immensely beautiful to impress everybody. Vine clusters and grape clusters were used in stone reliefs outside the Akdamar Church in Van (915-921 AD). Diyarbakır, located on the fertile soil of Upper Mesopotamia hosted many civilizations of different religions, languages, ethnic origins and beliefs such as Hittite and Hurri-Mittani, Assyrians, Arameans, Urartians, Scythians, Meds, Persians, Macedonians, Seleucids, Parties, Armenians, Romans, Sasanis, Byzantines, Umayyads, Abbasids, Seljuks, Artukids, Ayyubids, Mongols, Akkoyuns, Safevids and Ottomans. Vine and grape prosperity in Anatolian culture shows itself in many historical remains. The vine leaves and grape clusters used in the decorations of Diyarbakır Ulu Cami, the oldest mosque in Anatolia, are remarkable [29]. Elazığ's Öküzgözü, the wine obtained from the mixture of Diyarbakır's Boğazkere, won awards in international competitions and led to revitalization of the viticulture in the region [33].

CONCLUSION

Places considered as rural areas in Turkey have rich geography, historical and cultural values as well as natural beauty for rural tourism. However, this unique treasure is considered inefficient because of ignorance, indifference, lack of promotion and insufficient entrepreneurship.

The vineyard tourism in rural tourism is the sub-commodity of agricultural tourism (Agro tourism). It is significant to note that vine tourism has environmental, ecological sustainable, economically feasible and socially acceptable properties. In Turkey, there are needs to work with a responsible professional understanding and to emphasize competition and development in order to benefit more effectively and efficiently from the vineyards within the scope of rural tourism.

In order to encourage "Vineyard Tourism" in Turkey:

- 1- Vine-harvest tours and trips should be organized within the scope of vineyard tourism and viticulture, alongisde introducing our cultural values.
- 2- The local famous grape varieties and wines belonging to that local region should be introduced and tasted to the tourists coming to these regions as a part of vineyard tourism. (Vineyards and wine factories must be visited and introduced also they shuld be allowed to make their own wines).
- 3- Our tourism income should be increased by building boutique hotels, pensions etc. Rural development should be support the by preventing migration from villages to the cities
- 4- The Government should support the regions that are in need in terms of vinyard tourism.

It will be very important for our country in the future since vineyard or vineyard tourism encourages economic development.

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