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## WINE TOURISM IN THE CONCEPT OF TOURIST ZONING IN BULGARIA

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### Abstract

This article reviews the role and place that wine tourism holds in the specialization of the different tourist regions in the country according to the current Concept for Touristic Zoning of Bulgaria (2015). It was clarified for which of the tourist regions wine tourism is the main, respectively complementary type of tourism. Along with that, a comparison was made between the tourism zoning adopted in our country and one of the viticultural zonings which reveals five viticultural regions. It was established that wine tourism was listed as the main or a complementary type of tourism for four out of five identified wine - growing regions. An attempt has been made to explain the absence of wine tourism both in the main and in the additional specialization of Varna and/or Burgas Black Sea tourist regions which are part of the Eastern ("Black Sea") viticultural region of Bulgaria.

**Keywords:** wine tourism, concept, tourist zoning, specialization

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article is to trace the ways in which wine tourism found a place in the "Concept for Tourist Zoning of Bulgaria" approved by Order No. 16-103 of 11.03.2015 of the Minister of Tourism Nikolina Angelkova. This happened once as a type and a subtype of tourism and four times as the main or the complementary type of tourism from the specialization of four out of nine tourist regions. Undoubtedly, very interesting is the comparison of the tourist region with one of the viticultural regions of the country which reveals five viticultural regions. It was established that wine tourism was listed as the main or the complementary type of tourism for four out of five identified wine - growing regions. An attempt has been made to explain the absence of wine tourism as a specialization of Varna and/or Burgas Black Sea tourist regions which are part of the Eastern ("Black Sea") viticultural region of Bulgaria.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Wine tourism appears in the main text of the Concept for Tourist Zoning of Bulgaria (Concept 2015) a total of 13 times. The first reference is on p. 23 but it is beyond the scope of the present study and we mention it only for information.

The next two mentions of *wine tourism* are as a *main type* and a *subtype of tourism*. On p. 29–30 in Table 3 "Main types and subtypes of tourism - working classification" as the *eighth* of total of 12 *main types of tourism* is indicated "**Wine and culinary tourism**" (p. 30). It includes *three subtypes of tourism*: "**Wine tourism** - the main purpose of the trip is wine tasting and grape products tasting; **Culinary tourism** – the main purpose of the trip is tasting of dishes and drinks typical of a certain destination; **Gourmet tourism** - a variety of culinary tourism with a requirement for exclusivity in the quality and uniqueness of food and drinks" (p. 30). The definition of the first subtype is valuable because it clarifies what to look for behind the term *wine tourism*.

The next four mentions of **wine tourism**

are as *main* and *complementary type of tourism* in the **main and extended specialization** in four out of nine identified tourist regions (see Fig. 1). This can be found on p. 31 in Table. 4 "Proposals for basic and advanced specialization of tourist regions".

**Wine tourism** is listed as the *main specialization* "Cultural and wine tourism" of Tourist Region (TR) "Thrace" (subsequently its name was specified to Thrace Tourist Region) as being repeated in the extended specialization under No. 2.

For two other regions of TR "Danube" (subsequently Danube Tourist Region) and TR "Valley of Roses" (subsequently referred to as "Valley of Roses"), **wine tourism** is under *complementary types* under No. 5. For TR "Danube" complementary tourism is with complex formulation: 5. *Wine and culinary tourism*.

The fourth mention of **wine tourism** is at Rila-Pirin (subsequently Rila-Pirin tourist region) where it is included in the *complementary types* under No. 6.



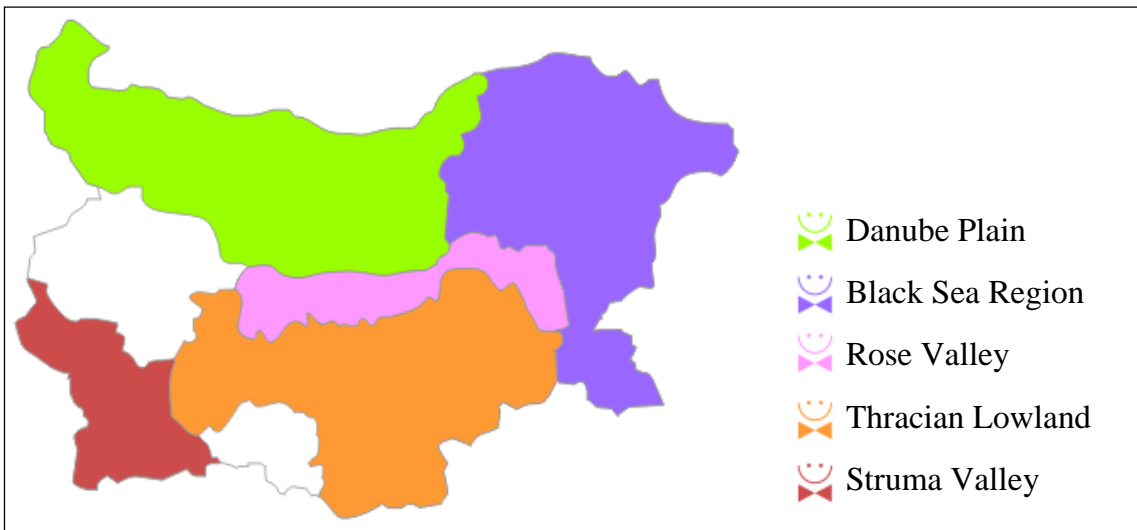
**Fig. 1.** Tourist zoning of Bulgaria, 2015  
*Source:* Concept for tourist zoning in Bulgaria, 2015, p. 53.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is interesting to make a comparison between the *tourist and viticultural zoning* of Bulgaria and to check to what extent the identified viticultural regions influenced as specialization through wine tourism in the different tourist regions of the country.

At the moment, the only scientifically based viticultural zoning of the country

published as early as 1960, outlines 4 viticultural regions in Bulgaria: North Bulgarian, Eastern Bulgarian, South Bulgarian and South Western (see Roychev 2012: 490). However, there is also a zoning with five viticultural regions (see Fig. 2) – Danube Plain, Black Sea Region, Rose Valley, Thracian Lowland, Struma Valley (see Roychev 2012: 495–496).



**Fig. 2.** Bulgarian zoning with 5 viticultural regions

*Source:* < <http://bgbarman.bg/Енциклопедия/Тероар-и-винарски-райони-на-България.html> > (Visited on 24.04.2022).

By Ordinance No. 12/19.10.2005 on the terms and conditions for creating and maintaining a register of wine farms and a specialized vineyard map of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works (Ordinance No. 12, 2005: 74 -80), this zoning was "expanded" to cover the entire territory of the country including five regions with (almost) the same names: **I.** Northern wine-growing region (WR) "Danube Plain"; **II.** Eastern WR "Black Sea"; **III.** Sub-Balkan WR "Rose Valley"; **IV.** Southern WR "Thracian Lowland"; **V.** Southwestern WR "Struma Valley" but with an already extended territorial scope (see Fig. 3).

The team who developed the "Concept for Tourism Zoning of Bulgaria" (with leader Mariyana Asenova, members: Stoycho Motev, Elka Dogramadzhieva, Petko Evrev, Rositsa Ohridska-Olson, Pavel Valchev, Maria Ivanova) voluntarily (consciously) or unvoluntarily (accidentally) took into account the existence of four of the wine - growing regions, including the newest one – Sub - Balkan ("Rose Valley") and brought out **wine tourism** as *main or complementary* type of tourism for four out of the nine identified tourist

regions.

Wine is the *main type* of tourism in the Thracian tourist region which is part of WR "Thracian Lowland" where the latter is territorially located in the Rhodope tourist region.

*A complementary type* of tourism is in the Danube tourist region which is part of WR "Danube plain" where the latter is territorially located in the Staroplaninski tourist region.

*A complementary type* of tourism is in the "Valley of Roses" tourist region which overlaps with WR "Rozova Dolina" but the latter also includes municipalities from the Staroplaninski tourist region and the Burgas Black Sea tourist region.

*A complementary type* of tourism is also in the Rilo - Pirin tourist region which is part of WR "Struma Valley" where the latter is territorially located in the Sofia tourist region.

The identified Eastern WR "Black Sea" has spread over the territory of four tourist regions: entirely on the Varna Black Sea tourist region, partly on the Burgas Black Sea tourist region, on the municipalities of Silistra, Razgrad and Targovishte from the Danube tourist region and on the municipalities of Omurtag and Varbitsa from the Staroplaninski tourist region.





**Fig. 3.** Viticultural regions in Bulgaria according to Ordinance No. 12 from 2005

**Source:** < [http://www.eavw.com/upimages/1821011610964890\\_EAVW%20-%20pravilno.jpg](http://www.eavw.com/upimages/1821011610964890_EAVW%20-%20pravilno.jpg) > (Visited on 24.04.2022).

Only the existence of this "Black Sea" (Eastern) WR was not strong enough motive for the identification of wine tourism even as a *complementary type* in one or both Black Sea tourist regions. Why did this happen?

Could it be that the team who developed the Concept for Tourist Zoning of Bulgaria did not appreciate the importance of this wine region or did it happen for some other reason? We do not even assume that the team members did not know about the identification of the Eastern WR "Black Sea" because in Appendix 7 to the Concept, entitled "Analysis of other regions in relation to the tourist zoning of Bulgaria (Ethnographic division and wine-growing regions)" (Appendix 7, 2015), the existence of these five wine - growing regions is noted and the municipalities included in them according to Ordinance No. 12 of 2005 are precisely listed.

More careful analysis of the Eastern WR "Black Sea" is required. For this purpose, we used advertising materials from the brochure "Bulgaria. Wine and cuisine", issued by the Ministry of Tourism and popular scientific publications from the website *[bgbarman.bg](http://bgbarman.bg)*.

According to materials from the Ministry of Tourism: "The Eastern [Black Sea] wine - growing region covers three sub - regions - Chernomorie, Dobrudzha and Ludogorie. The mild climate is favorable for growing mainly white [wine] grape varieties - Sauvignon blanc, Chardonnay, June blanc, Dimiat, Rkatsiteli, Traminer, Aligote, Riesling... In some microdistricts, the conditions are also suitable for growing some red varieties - Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc. The biggest wine cellars in this region are concentrated in Varna, Pomorie, Burgas, Targovishte, Shumen, [the village of] Khan

Krum and [the city of Veliki] Preslav" (Bulgaria. Wine and cuisine, p. 3).

According to the website [bgbarman.bg](http://bgbarman.bg), "The Eastern [Black Sea] wine - growing region covers Ludogorie, Dobrudza and 25–40 km [inland] from the Black Sea coastline. The mild climate here is very favorable for the cultivation of the white [wine] varieties Muscat Ottonel, Dimyat, Chardonnay, Juni blanc, Traminer, Sauvignon blanc... Stara Planina sinks into the Black Sea at Cape Emine and divides the region into two parts - southern and northern.

**The northern Black Sea region** includes Zlatna Dobrudza in the north to the town of Silistra, the rocky coast of the Black Sea in the east, Ludogorie in the west and in the south through Targovishte, the medieval capitals in Shumensko, to Eastern Stara Planina and Cape Emine. The region includes Varna, Dobrich and Shumen regions, Targovishte and Razgrad. In the Northern Black Sea region of Bulgaria, mostly white [wine] varieties are grown, such as Dimyat, Riesling, Muscat Ottonel, Chardonnay, June Blanc, Traminer, Sauvignon Blanc which produce grapes of excellent quality here. Here are located big producers such as: "Khan Krum" [village of Khan Krum], "Vineks Preslav" [village of Veliki Preslav] and "LVK" Targovishte, "Domain Boyar" - Shumen [no longer functioning], Wine Cellar "Osmar" [village of Osmar], "Dimyat" Varna, Vinprom "Alvina" [Dobrich].

**[The Southern Black Sea Region]** covers the Black Sea coast south from Cape Emine to our border with Turkey. The traditionally grown varieties are white [wines], mostly Chardonnay, Dimyat, Rkatsiteli, Muscat and Sauvignon Blanc. From the red wines, Cabernet, Merlot and Pamid predominate in the varieties. The two prominent wine centers are Pomorie ["Tohun", "Boyar" etc.] and Burgas [no longer functioning]. Popular producers are "Chernomorsko zlato" [Pomorie] and "Shato Rosenovo" [Wine Cellar "Strandzha", village of Rosenovo, municipality Sredets, Burgas]"

(<http://bgbarman.bg/Енциклопедия/Черноморски/>) (Visited on 24.04.2022).

Here we have to add that Vinprom "Karnobat" also falls into the Burgas Black Sea tourist region which according to the viticultural zoning is included in WR "Rozova Dolina". In the same wine - growing region are the wine - producing centers of the region. Burgas - the town of Sungurlare and the village of Slavyantsi but according to tourist zoning, they are in the Staroplaninski tourist region.

It can be seen that in both Varna and Burgas Black Sea tourist regions there are big enough wine producers along which wine tourism can be formed. Therefore, we assume that the only reason why wine tourism is not included in the "Tourist Zoning Concept of Bulgaria" for these two regions, at least as complementary, is the wide range of types of tourism appearing as specialized for them.

For the Varna Black Sea tourist region, the main specialization is: 1. Sea recreational tourism; 2. Sport tourism; and the additional specialization is: 3. Cultural - historical and festival tourism; 4. Business tourism (MICE); 5. Health tourism (all types); 6. Ecotourism.

For the Burgas Black Sea tourist region, the main specialization is: 1. Sea recreational tourism; 2. Cultural tourism (all types); and the additional specialization is: 3. Adventure and ecotourism; 4. Health tourism (all types); 5. Rural tourism; 6. Religious and pilgrimage tourism.

However, for the future, we believe that by refining the specialization of the nine tourist regions, it is possible to introduce wine tourism as specialized for one or both of the Black Sea tourist regions - Varna and Burgas.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the presented facts, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. In "Tourist Zoning Concept of Bulgaria" (2015), wine tourism is listed as a **type** and as a **subtype of tourism**.

2. In the specialization of the identified nine tourist regions, wine tourism has been stated as the main one for the Thracian tourist region and as a complementary for the Danube tourist region, the "Valley of Roses" tourist region and the Rilo - Pirin tourist region.

3. The identified five wine - growing regions in Bulgaria have contributed to the *specialization in wine tourism* for four of the tourist regions in the country, territorially overlapping with the wine - growing regions. Only in the Eastern wine - growing region ("Black Sea"), the team who developed the "Concept for touristic zoning of Bulgaria" did not reveal specialization through wine tourism in the Varna and/or Burgas Black Sea tourist regions.

4. A possible reason for this is, of course, the broad specialization in different types of tourism of the two mentioned Black Sea tourist regions.

5. We recommend that in case of future refinement of the specialization of the tourist regions, wine tourism to be introduced as a specialization for one or both of the Black Sea tourist regions - Varna and Burgas.

Academic Publishing House, 576.

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