



THE
ATHENÆUM
PALL MALL LONDON

TUTORED WINE
TASTING
AND DINNER

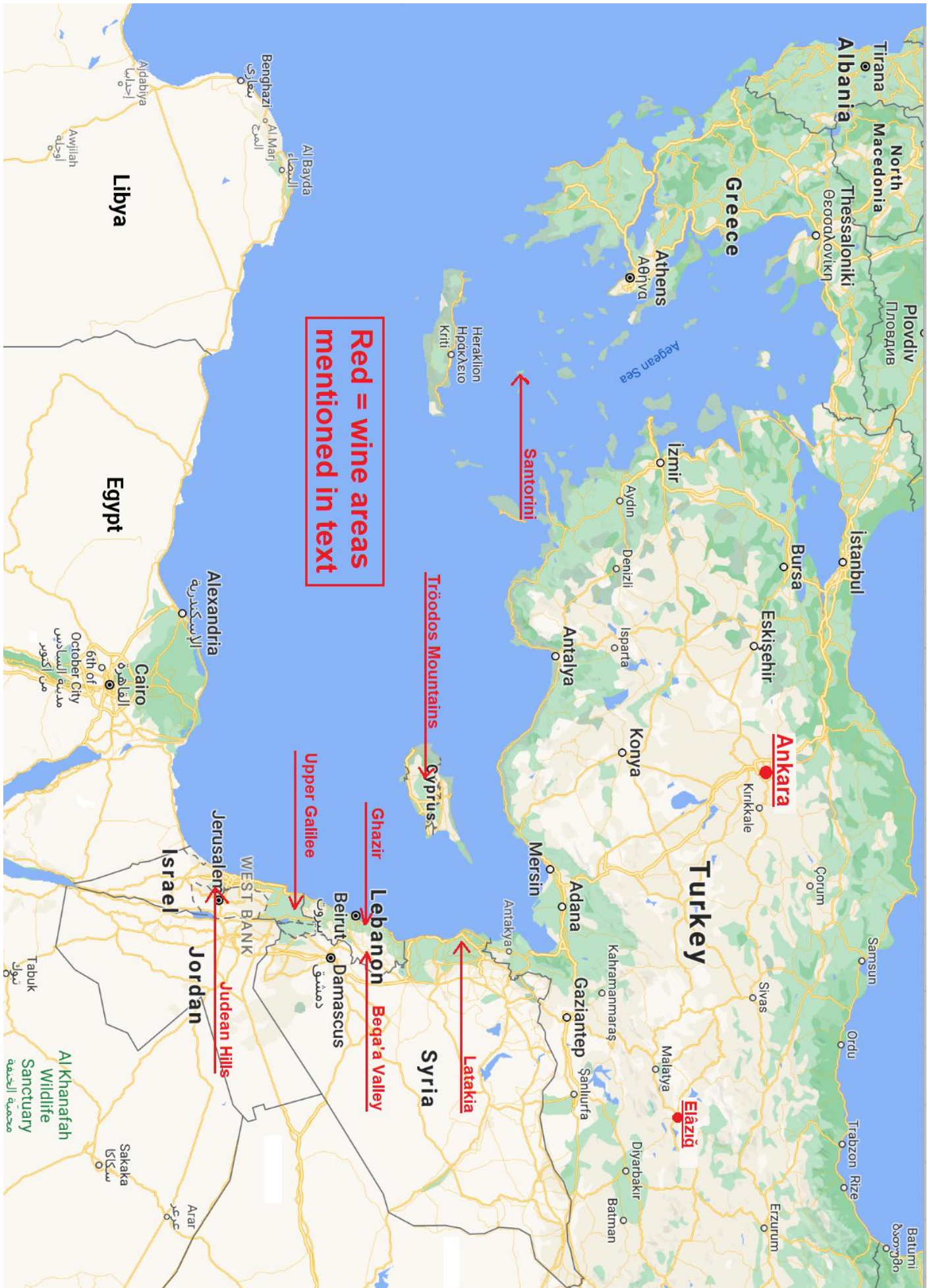
Thursday 3rd March 2022 at 7pm

*Featuring wines
from the
Eastern Mediterranean*

Speaker: Professor Kathleen Burk

Chairman: Richard Higham

MAP OF THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN



MENU AND DINNER WINES

Domaine Karanika Brut Cuvée Spéciale NV, Greece, 12.5%



Salad of calamari with chickpeas and celery

Gaía Wild Ferment Assyrtiko 2019, Santorini, Greece, 13.5%



Slow roast rump steak with lightly spiced rice and pine
nuts, grilled aubergine and peppers

Château Musar 2000, Beqa'a Valley, Lebanon, 13.5%



Baklava served with raisin and apricot compote
and Greek yoghurt

St. John's Commandaria KEO NV, Cyprus, 15%



Coffee
Petits fours



**LIST OF WINES FOR THE EASTERN
MEDITERRANEAN
WINE TASTING AND DINNER
3 MARCH 2022
TASTING WINES**

Domaine de Bargylus White 2014, Grand Vin de Syrie, Syria, 60% Chardonnay and 40% Sauvignon Blanc, 13.5%

Domaine de Bargylus is in the hinterland of Latakia, home of a Russian airbase and foreign intelligence centre, with a port that acts as Russia's naval base in the Mediterranean. It is also near the ancient city of Antioch. The brothers Karim and Sandro Saadé make wine in both Lebanon and Syria, although making wine in Syria is a real challenge, given the lack of a wine culture and infrastructure. This became even more difficult when war broke out. The Saadé brothers have been unable to visit the estate since the beginning of the conflict. There are obvious security concerns, but there are also logistical problems. Harvesting is done over the phone by the two brothers; grape samples are sent by taxi to Beirut in order to determine the harvest date of each of the different parcels; laboratory tests are made outside the country. Exporting the wine is also a very complex process.

The wine is dry, with almost crisp acidity and a medium roundness, a touch of citrus and minerals and a long finish. It is delicious.

Kavaklidere Çankaya 2020, Central Anatolia, Turkey, Emir, Narince and Sultana grapes, 13.5%

Kavaklidere Winery is the one of the oldest wineries in Turkey, the first privately owned, and one of the largest, with 650 hectares of vineyards around the country. It has very much had its ups and downs since it was established in 1929, what with family and financial difficulties and uneven management. However, in due course, things settled down. Its principle has always been

‘Anatolian wine from Anatolian grapes’, and for this wine only indigenous grapes are used. However, they are also trying to adapt international varieties to their various vineyards. Çankaya refers to a district of Ankara. This is a nice light lunch wine, and one of the most popular in Turkey.

On the nose the wine is fresh, young and fruity; on the palate it walks a tightrope between dry and off-dry, with nice acidity and some roundness.

Teperberg Inspire Famitage Dry White Wine 2018, Judean Hills, Israel, Dabouki 55%, Sauvignon Blanc 25% and Gewurztraminer 20%, 12.5%

Not surprisingly, 90% of the wines made in Israel are kosher. As well, there are no mass production wines in Israel for the simple reason that there is not enough land. Teperberg Winery was established in 1830, the first family winery in the land of Israel in modern times; in 1870 it was officially established within the walls of Jerusalem. The current family are the 5th generation to run the winery. It now has ten vineyards scattered around Israel, and is one of the largest wineries in Israel. In 2006 it left Jerusalem and moved to the countryside near a kibbutz. It is worth noting that the Dabouki grape is an indigenous grape found only in Israel. The wine is Kosher for Passover, meaning that, in addition to the usual prohibitions, no grains have been near the wine. I asked an Israeli wine critic whom I know what that meant, and he, with a certain lack of reverence, told me that it meant that the winery workers could not eat sandwiches in the area where the wine was being made.

The nose is aromatic, a bit of a combination of fruit and floral. It is a dry wine with nice acidity and some staying power, with some fruit and with stones underneath.

Domaine de Bargylus Red 2014, Grand Vin de Syrie, Syria, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and Merlot, 14.6%

In the 7th edition of *The World Atlas of Wine*, Jancis Robinson and Hugh Johnson wrote that 'The finest wine produced in the Eastern Mediterranean is arguably the most surprising: Bargylus', whilst in the 8th edition they refer to their 'exceptional red and white'. The grapes are grown in very poor soil at an altitude of 900 metres, so the grapes benefit from hot sun during the day and a considerably cooler temperature at night. Autumn comes before full maturity, which allows a long and gradually cooler growing season. This means that, although the wine is dry, it has a sweetness from its maturity – as well as a high alcoholic level from all the sugars.

It has a nose of tobacco leaf and dark fruit, which is gorgeous. It has a nice crisp acidity which settled down; the tannins were already integrated and don't grip. It is smooth, full-bodied, has a long length and is wonderful.

Kayra Öküzgözü 2019, Turkey, 13%

Kayra has one of the most recognizable names in Turkish wine. It was established in 1942 in the eastern province of Elazığ, and remains a family-owned winery. The city of Elâzığ was not then much of a city; it grew up around the winery and vineyards. Apparently, many living in this conservative city have no idea that there is a winery in their midst. It specialises here in indigenous regional grapes, of which Öküzgözü is one of the most important.

The wine is a deep ruby with almost no rim. The nose is fruity, more red than dark fruits. It is a dry wine, with the acidity not so assertive as some other wines, and soft tannins. It has a fruitiness and, with an alcohol level of 13%, it is not a heavy wine. It has a medium rather than a long length, but it makes a nice and interesting lunch wine.

Carmel Signature Mediterranean 2018, Upper Galilee, Israel, 48% Syrah, 22% Carignan, 13% Marselan, 9% Tannat and 8% Petite Sirah, 13.5%

Carmel Winery was founded in 1882 by Baron Edmond de Rothschild and is currently the largest winery in Israel, exporting to forty countries and with a local market share of about 50%. A significant proportion of their sales come from basic wines and other products; the Signature category constitutes its premium wines. It owns nearly 3,500 acres situated all over Israel on different heights and with different terroirs. For the Signature series, after fermentation, the varieties are matured separately for seven months; after the decisions are taken as to which vats are going into which wine, they are consolidated and matured in French oak barrels for a further eight months. As with the Teperberg, it is labelled Kosher for Passover.

The wine is a dark ruby, whilst the nose is primarily dark fruit and is also a bit herby and even floral – a complex nose. It is dry with prominent acidity integrated with rather smooth tannins. Dark fruit dominates and thus it can seem a bit sweet. It is full-bodied with a long finish.

Château Kefraya Comte de M 2015, West Beqa'a Valley, Lebanon, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah, 14%

Lebanon was part of the land of Canaan and the Beqa'a Valley was planted with grapevines by the Canaanites at least 5,000 years ago. Even then it was the area producing the best wines in the Levant and was imported by empires from Babylonia to Egypt, and as far west as Crete. The first vines for Kefraya were planted in 1951, and in 1979 – in spite of the Lebanese civil war, which lasted from 1975 to 1990 - they began producing their own wines from their own grapes in their own winery. Their vineyards are on terraced slopes a thousand metres above the Mediterranean. This requires them to be dry-farmed, with no irrigation. The wine is aged in French oak as well as in clay amphoras; amphora wines are available. All of

their wines are blends – there are no single-varietal wines. The nose is dark fruit, cedar – appropriate, given the cedars of Lebanon – and a faint note of tobacco. It is dry with a lovely balance and with quite a bit of fruit accompanied by a savoury note. It has a long finish.

APERITIF WINE

Domaine Karanika Brut Cuvée Spéciale 2018, Greece, 90% Xinomavro, 12.5%, Assyrtiko 10%

This wine is made by the husband-and-wife team of Laurens M. Hartnan-Karanika and Annette van Kampen; she is in charge of the vineyards and he is the winemaker. They met in the Netherlands, and both spent 15 years in the publishing industry before deciding that they preferred to make wine. He has a Greek mother and Dutch father, and a passion for the red Xinomavro grape led them to buy a vineyard and set up a winery in North-West Greece. This area has the coolest climate in all of Greece. The wine, a blanc de noirs, is made by the méthode champenoise, and is biodynamic, using natural yeast. During fermentation, it is punched down by hand, aged for 12 months on the lees, riddled by hand – three times a day for three months – and disgorged by hand.

The nose is a slightly curious combination of citrus, stone fruits and herbs; in any case, it is very aromatic. It has lots of bubbles and, I must admit, some may find the acidity a bit sharp.

DINNER WINES

Gaía Wild Ferment Assyrtiko 2019, Santorini, Greece, 13.5%

Gaía Estate was founded in 1994 and is considered one of the pioneers of the modern Greek wine revolution. It has estates in both Nemea on the Peloponnese and on the island of Santorini. Many of you will know about the fierce winds on the island, and to

counter this, the canes of the 80-year-old Assyrtiko grapevines are hand-woven into basket shapes and the grape bunches are coerced into growing inside the basket of the canes. Natural fermentation using only natural yeast – that is, wild fermentation – takes place in a combination of stainless steel and oak barrels.

The wine is smoky and savoury with crisp acidity, a bit of vanilla from the oak, but a citrus quality is about the only obvious fruit: minerals rule. It has a lively freshness and an intensity that grows with time in the glass.

Château Musar 2000, Beqa'a Valley, Lebanon, about 33% each of Cabernet Sauvignon, Carignan and Cinsault, 13.5%

Château Musar was established by Gaston Hochar in 1930, and has produced wine every year except for 1976 and 1984, both years of war. During the years from 1975 to 1990, there were wars against Israel as well as civil war. Pickers picked by crouching under the vines as bullets flew overhead. Sometimes it was necessary to wait for a break in the shelling before being able to pick whatever grapes were left; getting the grapes to the winery often required the drivers to take grave chances with their lives. The winery is located in Ghazir, about 15 miles north of Beirut, but their vineyards are located in the Beka'a Valley, a long and sometimes dangerous truck journey over the mountains. The vineyards are at an altitude of about a thousand metres and, as with Bargylus, cool temperatures at night lengthen the time for the grapes to ripen, thereby increasing their quality. Serge Hochar, involved since 1959, stated that the Cabernet Sauvignon provides 'the bones and the skeleton to the wine, the Carignan the flesh and muscle and the Cinsault the silky smooth finesse'. One thing that makes the Musar wines unusual is that the varietals are normally blended only after they have three years in barrels; Hochar then waits a further four years before releasing the vintage. In this vintage, however, the grapes were fermented in concrete vats and the wine was then aged for a year in French oak barriques. It was blended and bottled at the end

of the third year following the harvest, and then cellar-aged for a further 3-4 years. Consequentially, this 2000 vintage was released in 2007.

The wine is a medium mahogany colour, although it began as a deep, dark red. The aroma is very mature and savoury rather than fruity. It is dry and mature, and still in balance between acid and the nice, smooth tannins, though not as redolent with black cherries as it was when younger. It is full-bodied and rich with a very long finish.

St John's Commandaria KEO NV, Cyprus, Mavro and Xynisteri grapes, 15%

This wine represents an ancient wine style that has been made in Cyprus since 800 BC. In the 12th century it was named Commandaria by the knights of St John, who, during the Crusades, established its reputation throughout Europe. The wine is made from two ancient and indigenous grape varieties, Mavro and Xynisteri, coming from the denominated area on the eastern slopes of the Tröodos Mountains; only these fourteen villages have the right to make Commandaria. The grapes grow on volcanic soils, resulting in a low yield of high-quality grapes. Once harvested, they are left to dry in the sun until the water has evaporated and the sugar is concentrated inside the grapes. They are then pressed and the resulting syrup-like juice is left to ferment naturally in traditional wooden vats. It is then aged in old oak barrels. The wine is a blend of different vintages based on the Solera system, with younger wine blended with older wine to achieve a consistent style.

The wine is amber-coloured, with a powerful bouquet of dried fruit, spices and some oak. Not too surprisingly, the wine is very sweet, although not syrupy.

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