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Wine and Gastronomic Tourism in the Drama Region

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Abstract: Drama is a wine region in northern Greece with a local economy based on agricultural production. Despite its historical and geographical setting, the wine tourism industry is not very well developed in the wine-growing region of Drama. Although the sustainability of territorial development is often linked to local food and wine heritage, it seems that the implicated parties are not totally convinced. For this qualitative case study, we first conducted interviews with the management of the local wineries to determine the reason behind the low number of wine tourists in the area. Then, a workshop was organized, and all relevant parties were invited to increase awareness through education while also attempting to find mutually agreeable solutions through working group table discussions and the presentation of findings. Taking advantage of and preserving the cultural heritage through the cooperation of the related regional businesses, regional/central authorities, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) was concluded to be an important tool for organizing new initiatives that will boost wine tourism.

Keywords: food quality schemes; wine tourism; gastronomic tourism; PGI Drama; traditional speciality guaranteed; wine workshop; authenticity; sustainable development



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1. Introduction

Homer in *The Odyssey* wrote: A guest never forgets the host who treated him kindly. Since antiquity, people have known the strong relationship between the hosts (food and service providers) and the guests (tourists). Tourism and hospitality are considered separate industries that are strongly related. Although hospitality provides services to tourists and is a component of the tourism industry, the latter includes a broader range of additional elements. Food and gastronomic activities and other food-related events are considered to be integral parts of the activities of hospitality [1]. However, a strong link between gastronomy and tourism has developed rapidly in recent decades, revealing the attractive potential of gastronomic tourism. According to Richards [2], gastronomy has become a significant reason to visit a destination for an increasing number of tourists. In the literature, terms such as “gastronomic tourism,” “culinary tourism,” and “food tourism” are used interchangeably [3,4]. The United Nations World Tourism Organization [5] considers “gastronomic tourism” a growing market for the tourism industry and underlined the fact that it can be a dynamic force that increases the attractiveness and consequently the competitiveness of a destination.

In his review, Carlsen [6] reports wine tourism as a discrete field of research in rapid development. According to Johnson et al. [7], wine tourism can be identified as visits to vineyards and wineries, and participation in wine festivals and wine shows with the main motivating factor being to taste and/or experience wine attributes of a region. Although being part of the tourism industry, wine tourism represents a new form of advertising by wineries and a way to increase their earnings.

For Greece, agriculture, food production, and winemaking are integral parts of its history and identity. The Drama regional unit is part of the East Macedonia and Thrace region, which has a rich wine history dating back to ancient times [8]. The region can be classified as mostly agricultural, with viticulture representing one of the main sources of revenue. Greek mythology wants the god Dionysus [9] to be raised on the Pangaion (Pangeon) Mountain, while on the Falakro Mountain, his presence is celebrated with the production and enjoyment of wine. However, at the beginning of the 20th century, the entire mountainous area was cultivated with vineyards. Wine production began to decline starting in the 1950s as a result of a migration wave of the locals toward central Europe for economic and political reasons [10]. The renaissance of Drama's vineyards began in the early 1980s, but unfortunately, there are no surviving native Greek varieties in the region. At present, the total vineyard surface is about 608 hectares, owned mostly by 13 wineries and the rest by local vine growers. The vineyards are in the hills and mountains surrounding the city of Drama, which lies at the base of the mountainous area that separates the Greek Macedonia region from Bulgaria. The main cultivated grape varieties are the international Sauvignon Blanc (20.80%), Cabernet Sauvignon (13.90%), Merlot (13.70%), and the Greek Assyrtiko (7.60%), and Agiorgitiko (3.80%). The rest of the grape varieties are mostly Malagousia, Chardonnay, Muscat d'Alexandrie, Vidiano, Xinomavro, Syrah, Mavroudi, Sangiovese, and Tempranillo [11].

Historically, agriculture and the food trade have been heavily affected by both economics and politics. Governments have heavily distorted trade patterns with policy instruments (i.e., tariffs and subsidies). The regulations and standards applied can increase but also limit or prevent trade. In 1992, according to regulation 2081/92, the European Union first adopted a system for the protection of geographical indications and the designations of origin of agricultural products and foodstuffs, and according to regulation 2082/92, the rules on the certificates of a specific character for agricultural products and foodstuffs. Geographical indications, based on the concept of "terroir," represent an important form of food regulation that the EU has made a key trade policy priority. Among the different sectors of the economy, the wine sector is considered a world of territories. Therefore, the qualitative labeling of a wine represents one of the main discriminating factors for wine selection. Over the years European regulations have pushed up the quality standards of many food products. With this aim, on 10 December 2010, the European Commission adopted the "Quality Package" for food and agricultural products. The Quality Package was the first step in the revision of the quality policy for agricultural Products and resulted in the adoption of new quality legislation [12]. In particular, in order to specify the geographical indications of food products, the European legislation introduced PDO and PGI logos, which are the Protected Designation of Origin and Protected Geographical Indication, respectively. These designations were also successively extended to wines [13]. Nevertheless, the wine market does not only include premium wines, but also PDO and PGI wines; considerable proportions of the market in traditional wine producing countries are covered by non-premium wines such as basic and bulk wines. In 2006 and revised in 2012, the quality scheme Traditional Specialty Guaranteed (TSG) was approved by the EU in order to safeguard traditional methods of production and recipes. A name shall be eligible for registration as a 'traditional specialty guaranteed' where it describes a specific product or foodstuff that results from a mode of production, processing or composition corresponding to traditional practice for that product or foodstuff; or is produced from raw materials or ingredients that are those traditionally used.

The main idea was to create an EU quality label that could help producers to be more competitive by adding value to their traditional recipes and products.

In the Drama region, there are no Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) categories. However, the wines having a regional appellation of Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) Drama are considered some of Greece's best [14]. Most of the wines produced in the region are PGI Drama, followed by PGI Adriani, Agora, and Macedonia, follow in a smaller percentage by varietal, and only a low percentage are table wines [11]. The

wines are included in the category of premium wines, a stable quality recognized in the domestic and foreign markets for the last thirty years. About 30% of them are exported to other countries.

This study has two main objectives. The first was to examine the current situation in the region of Drama by presenting the geographical and historical framework and the local players in gastronomic tourism, especially focusing on wine tourism. The second was to conduct a critical analysis of the facilities and services already offered by the wineries of the region, examining whether the individual and occasional initiatives from the winemakers are effective enough to increase wine tourism and determining if the recognition of TGS and PDO labels could protect the local heritage and give more opportunities of sustainable development to producers.

2. Literature Review

Greece is the 20th wine producer country in the world [15], having for decades an agriculture-oriented economy. However, in recent years there has been a continuous increase in revenue of tourism, representing in 2023 13% of the GDP. Drama is the capital of the regional unit of Drama, which is part of the East Macedonia and Thrace region in northern Greece. Drama's regional sources of revenue include agriculture, small-scale mining (particularly of marble) and forestry. Recently, there have been efforts to exploit the rich local natural environment and to develop ecotourism. Although the surface planting with vines for the production of PGI wines in the Drama region represents only 1.5% of Greece's total vineyards (Greek Ministry of Rural Development and Food), the export of wine from Drama represents almost 5.5% of Greece's wine export in terms of volume (Hellenic Statistical Authority).

2.1. Geographical and Historical Settings

In ancient times, Drama was one of the most important centers of the Dionysian cult and bore the name "Edonis Region" [16]. The God Dionysos was worshipped in the area for centuries during ancient times. This fact has been confirmed by the archaeological findings in the Sanctuary of Dionysos in the Aggitis River valley [17]. Drama is in the northeastern part of Macedonia and is one of the few regions in Greece with no sea borders. Drama is confined by Bulgaria (north), Xanthi (east), Kavala (southeast), and Serres (west). To its south, among mountainous masses, there is a 432 m² valley with the rich Nestos River and its tributaries. At its north, there is Mount Falakro, which protects it from the cold northern weather. Moreover, it is surrounded at its east, south and west by Mount Lekani, Mount Pangaion and Mount Menikio (Figure 1) [18].

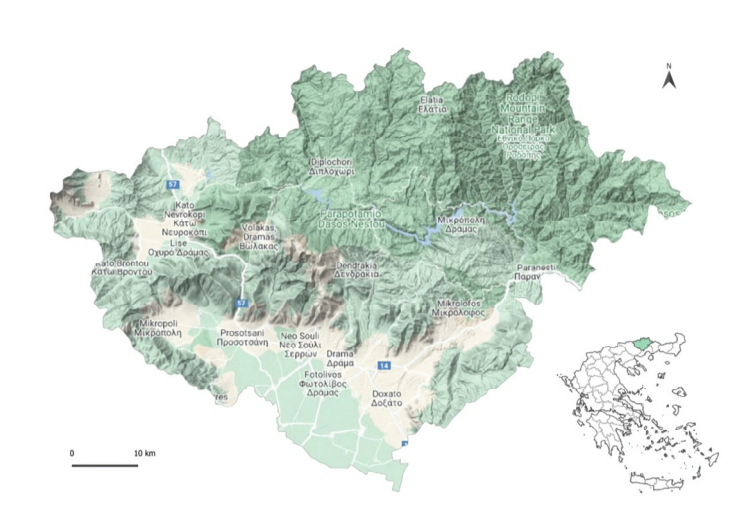


Figure 1. Map of Drama region [18].

This region was inhabited from the ancient years by Thracian tribes and Macedonians who mingled through the more recent centuries with Sarakatsans and refugees from Asia Minor and the Black Sea (Pontians, Kappadokians, and Minor Asia inhabitants), as well as other non-Greek populations such as Armenians, Jews, and Ottomans [19]. These blending cultures created new traditions and tastes due to the multicultural character of each population, adding something unique to the local cuisine and making it especially fine and impressively tasty. Over 600 hectares of vineyards supply the 13 wineries in the area, making Drama's vineyard one of the most dynamic in Greece. Wine production is aided by the sub-Mediterranean and dry climate, with high temperatures during the summer months. Proceeding up Mount Falakro, approaching the border with Bulgaria, the climate changes and becomes continental. Most of the annual rainfall in Drama occurs during the winter months, while summer is characterized by a long, dry period that allows grapes to ripen without being prone to fungal vine diseases. On the other hand, free-draining soils with high levels of sand and clay suggest that irrigation is needed during the long, dry summer months.

Most of the vineyards are in the lowlands and on the fringes of the mountains, between 200 and 400 m altitude. However, more winemakers are experimenting with mountainous viticulture, setting up wineries at greater altitudes and in cold locations near the Nevrokopi plateau. The low-altitude wineries make dynamic and voluptuous wines, while the mountainous ones make crispy and aromatic wines. Nevrokopi is known for its harsh winters and polar temperatures, but on the other hand, it has a rich plain area where some of the best Greek agricultural products are grown. Potatoes and beans grown in this area are recognized as PGI [20].

Drama is perhaps one of Greece's most modern wine-producing regions. Most vineyards are planted in a linear configuration and have managed, in only a few decades, to gain greater recognition due to their high-quality wines. The wineries are easily accessible, impressively designed and with modern infrastructure, making them ideal for wine tasting.

2.2. Wine Tourism Legislation Frame

Wineries often use badges or certifications to signal their commitment to quality and adherence to certain standards in order to attract visitors who are seeking a well-regulated and enjoyable wine tourism experience. These badges can help build trust with visitors by indicating that the winery follows best practices in areas such as sustainable viticulture, responsible wine production, or providing a high-quality visitor experience. It is a way for wineries to distinguish themselves.

Based on Greek legislation [21], a winery can have a Visitable Winery Mark (S.E.O.), i.e., a mark with a logo granted by the Ministry of Tourism, if: (a) within the boundaries of the establishment is provided either guided tours or reception and hospitality services in non-main tourist accommodations or catering, or all of the above services and (b) it has spaces and facilities of special specifications that ensure visitability. Additionally, recent legislation includes provisions that enhance sustainable tourism development [22]. This legislation sets the conditions for the establishment of the Wine Tourism Council ensuring the development of synergies between the stakeholders and actors involved, and the formulation of relevant proposals.

2.3. Wine Tourism Stakeholders

According to Donaldson and Preston [23], stakeholders are individuals or groups that have an interest in different corporations' activities. In the Drama area, many stakeholders have been involved in different actions related to the wine. There have been concerted actions by wine professionals and other organizations since the 1990s to increase the number of visitors to the wineries as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Wine tourism stakeholders and their role in the Drama region.

Stakeholders	Their Role
Department of Agricultural Biotechnology and Oenology, of the Democritus University of Thrace	Established in Drama in 2009, offers courses at the undergraduate level focusing on viticulture and oenology. Participation in diverse scientific research projects, including the study of the creation of a PDO zone for wines; helps strengthen wine production and the local economy in general. In addition, the scientific knowledge could help with the recognition as TSG and PDO of other agricultural products of high quality traditionally produced in the area.
Dramoinognosia (from Drama (Δράμα) + oino (οίνος-wine) + gnosi (γνώση-knowledge))	An annual Wine festival in Drama City established at 2014. For two weeks Drama is transformed into the city of wine. Organized by the local municipalities, the prefecture of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (prefectural self-government of Drama) and local wineries to promote local wine and food producers and horeca as well. A multitude of wine-focused events (scientific conferences, tastings, interactive events/visits to wineries, culinary events, cultural traditional events, etc.) (Figure 2).
Wine routes of Dionysos	Wine producers Association of the Northern Greece Vineyard was founded in 1993 and includes 34 wineries from northern Greece Mapping of wine roads that offering various activities to visitors (Figure 2). Principal role in the establishment of two PanHellenic annual events, “Open Cellar Doors” and the celebration of the “World Wine Tourism Day”.
Wines of Drama association	Created in 2017 by seven local wine producers aiming to create a smaller cluster to promote PGI Drama wines in export sales (EU and third countries) (Figure 2).
Gastronomic festival	Organized by the Chamber of Commerce of Drama since 2022. A three-day open event, where local agricultural products (including wine) are presented to the public. Well-known chefs cook live in front of the public, while recipes of the local traditional cuisine are also presented [24].
Oneiroupoli (Oneiro (όνειρο-dream), poli (πόλι-town))	Drama becomes Dreams Town for one month annually since 2003 [25], with various activities (a rich musical program, free activities for children, performances by theatre groups, happenings (painting, pantomimes, small youth bands, construction workshops, exhibitions, new technologies, etc.), and other free parallel activities for everyone). Organized by the municipality of Drama, aiming for the city and the wider region of eastern Macedonia to become a tourist attraction during the holiday season to stimulate the local economy and increase the popularity of local cultural customs and agricultural products.
Vines and wines of Idonida land	A non-profit organization founded at the end of 2004 by local amateurs of vines and wines.

2.4. Gastronomy and Gastronomic Tourism

“Obviously, mankind must eat to survive. We have this in common with all living things. . . . [However] we grow up eating what our parents and friends eat. We eat what is available” [26,27]. Local food is frequently defined as authentic products that not only symbolize tourism destinations but also vividly demonstrate local traditional culture [28].

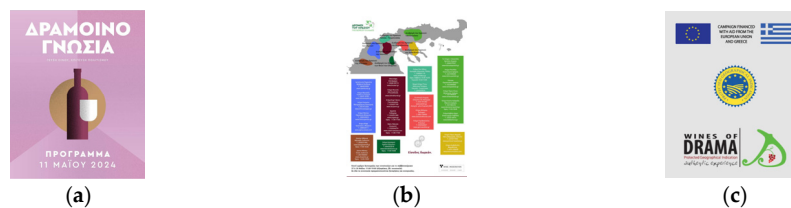


Figure 2. (a) Logo and publicity of the organization of the ninth event called “DramOinognosia”, (b) Map of members of The Wine Producers Association of the Northern Greece Vineyard, (c) Logo of Wines of Drama Association.

Gastronomic tourism is an integral part of the cultural heritage of any place or country and, according to Sormaz, et al. [29], is always one of the longest-surviving parts of culture and tradition. It has become a significant part of the attractiveness of tourism destinations. Consequently, marketing strategies have been developed to reflect this opportunity. It represents a form of leisure tourism activity in which visitors/tourists plan their trips to taste authentic local cuisine or participate in gastronomy events, both strongly related to the history and traditions of their destination.

Gastronomic tourism in the region includes activities such as studying and tasting local products, gaining information about the local cuisine, shopping for agricultural products directly from the site of production, participating in events such as festivals and tasting presentations of quality food products, highlighting Greek and Mediterranean cuisine, as well as the internationalization of local products. Businesses that are active in the catering sector and enhance their quality and upgrade their services may receive, upon request, the Greek Cuisine Label from the Ministry of Tourism if they fulfil the provisions of the T. 4333/2001 decision of the Minister of Development (B'1097).

According to the World Tourism Organization, wine tourism is a sub-type of gastronomic tourism. It comprises different activities such as providing receptions, guided tours, hospitality, and catering services in winemaking areas (vineyards) or facilities, tasting/consuming and/or purchasing wine, often near or on production sites. These services are often offered in combination with activities related to viticulture and wine production. Greece could become one of the most attractive countries in the world for wine tourism since it can offer 400 autochthonous grape varieties [30] and is the 20th wine-producing country in the world [15].

A place with a rich cultural heritage, Drama also shapes special eating habits. Her cuisine is simple in the way of cooking, but rich in the combination of ingredients. Livestock production plays an important role in Drama. There are several modern but also small family units that raise mainly goats, pigs and cattle and produce excellent quality meats, cheeses, and cured meats (pastourmades, soutzoukia, and sausages) (www.greekgastronomyguide.gr, accessed on 23 December 2023).

The culinary habits of the locals, the Greek refugees of Asia Minor, Pontus, Cappadocia, northern and eastern Thrace, the Armenians, and the Sarakatsans created over time a delicious cuisine, a multi-collected cuisine with recipes that marry Thrace with Macedonia. Thracian cuisine delicacies include: jigerosarmades (contain liver, onion, dill, and rice wrapped in lamb's skepe), babbo (sausage including fried pork lung with plighouri), leek with pork, and goat with spinach. Asia Minor originating recipes: ichli kiofte, hunkiar begenti, gyulbasi, and gousslemeds. Pontus dishes: sorvas (yogurt soup), keskek (chicken with wheat), and piroski. Sarakatsan originating cuisine includes: cabbage pie, pumpkin pie, milk pie, twist pie etc. Finally, among the sweets, the chewy halva made from tahini and caramel has a thin and chewy texture.

Drama's land is fertile and since 1994 was recognized as a Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) for three agricultural products: Potatoes Kato Nevrokopiou, Beans (Giants-Elephants) and Beans (Common-Medium seed) of the Prefecture of Drama. Mushrooms of Sidironero, pomegranates, and many more agricultural products are also famous. Its meats and dairy products are also very good, and its rivers used to be fished for freshwater prawns [20].

Drama has a rich cuisine with a special combination of ingredients, a fusion that combines elements of different culinary traditions. Local products such as cereal, vegetables and fruits, meat, chicken, and fish, mostly from sweet waters, combine to create a tasteful mosaic. Dishes are also enriched with the flavors of traditionally made sausages (the so-called petala), pastourma (dried aged beef recipe), kavourma (boiled meat in its fat with spices), soutzoukakia with oriental mixtures (meatballs), pligouri (crushed wheat), and trachana (cracked wheat dried with yogurt, milk, and vegetable pulp), as well as fresh yoghurt, giofkades (traditionally made pasta), and different spoon sweets with simple ingredients (fruit, nut, vegetable, or petal), sugar, a touch of lemon, and carrying the fragrance of almond. At the Municipality of Nevrokopi, on the border with Bulgaria, one can find local products of a unique flavor. At the Municipality of Prosotsani, between the river Aggitis and the two important biotopes of Greece, Falakro and Menikio, are produced rich flavored cheese and cold meat products. In the Municipality of Drama, in Sidironero there is wild game, cut steaks, or mountain trout. Then, in Doxato Municipality, pomegranate juice is produced, and in Agios Athanasios and Kefalari, there is the only facility in the region for breeding sturgeon. Finally, at the Municipality of Paranesti, there is plenty of livestock and within the community of Pelitis, visitors can find not only information but also the seeds from landraces to cultivate for free [20].

3. Materials and Methods

This is an ongoing qualitative case study. The research started with the finding that the wine tourism industry is not very well developed in the wine-growing region of Drama, Greece. The research objective was to investigate the reasons for this limitation by involving local stakeholders (state and local authorities, wineries, University professors and students, researchers, wine and gastronomy professionals, etc.). The first part of the study involved interviews with winery management, while the second part employed a workshop bringing together all of the relevant local stakeholders.

Therefore, interviews were carried out with ten winemakers or executives of local winemaking companies, all members of the Association of Drama Winemakers, which are already offering wine tourism services. Pre-testing of the questions involved interviewing five colleagues to test the general layout and clarity, while three in-depth interviews with industry specialists were conducted that contributed to the content validity [31]. The researcher visited the wineries and conducted the interviews in person during February 2023. The interview comprised the following sections: (a) the winery's tourism products and services; (b) the winery visitors' demographics; (c) partnerships with local agencies and associations; (d) strengths and weaknesses of the business; and (e) promotional activities of the winery. The collected data were used to evaluate the potential advantages of prioritizing the most pressing local challenges while coordinating sustainable solutions that could lead to further development of wine tourism in the region and more general territorial development [32].

A workshop was organized on 27 March 2019 in Drama, Greece, in order to better understand the reasons for the low visitability of the region, analyze the current dynamics and service provided by the whole region's infrastructure, and plan future actions in order to enhance the image of the region as a wine and culinary tourism destination. The "Drama workshop" was precisely meant to invite people from local and state authorities, representatives of local wineries and food producers, local press, academics, professionals, and students with the aim of provoking brainstorming and the emergence of the best possible proposals/solutions. The selection of the stakeholders was focused because as their participation increases, they may embark on co-creation to generate new ideas and reshape older ones that can give rise to shared decisions and applied initiatives [33,34].

During the one-day workshop, 56 participants, together with the organizers, were urged to reflect on the Drama's gastronomic heritage and its visibility and promotion in Greece and abroad. The workshop started with a presentation of the goals and analytical process of the workshop. The morning session gave the participants the chance to listen

to the invited professionals. In the evening session, 7 groups were composed of 5 to 10 participants, each group comprised of participants representing at least 4 different stakeholders, followed by the development of the specific thematic sections by specialized researchers and each group prepared their ideas, which were subsequently presented to the public. The thematic sections included: a. marketing of wine and culinary tourism destinations and experiential experiences, b. development of special forms of tourism in Drama, c. tourism destination image development and management, and d. new technologies for the promotion of wine and culinary tourism destinations. Accordingly, the structure of the workshop sessions was intentionally left flexible to adapt the schedule and the discussions to the interests and reactions of the participants while integrating any emerging insights and ideas into the design process itself. Thus, when the groups composed questions and targets, the discussion was ready to start. The relevance of the themes that had emerged during the preliminary interviews and the interactions that had taken place before the event were confirmed.

4. Results

In the first part of this section, the results of the interviews with the management of the wineries are presented, while the second part of the section is dedicated to the results of the workshop.

4.1. Perceptions of Winery Management

In the first step of our qualitative method research, the interviewees responded to questions regarding the five sections described previously. The answers received for each section are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Interviews with the management of wineries.

Section of the Interview	Answers
Winery's tourism products and services	Amenities: Reception Hall, Production Areas, Restaurant, Basement Cellar/Aging Cellar, Tasting Room, Event Hall, Film Screening, Outdoor Playground, Vineyard, Gallery, Souvenir/Wine Shop, E-shop, Access for persons with disabilities Activities: Winery/vineyard guiding tour, Wine tasting
Winery visitor demographics	Nationality: 50% Greek, 20% Balkans, 13% German, 13% non-European Age: 75% middle aged, 15% students, 10% elderly
Partnerships with local agencies and associations	Type: Hotels–Guests–Accommodations, Restaurants–taverns, Trout Fish Farm, Municipality, Catering, No cooperation Regions: Kavala, Drama, Serres Associations: Union of wine producers of northern Greece, Association of small producers, Wines of Drama
Strengths and weaknesses of the business	Strengths: Location (Accessibility, Climate), Archaeological monuments, Religious attractions, Natural landscapes, Local events Weaknesses: Location (Accessibility, Climate), Advertising of local wineries, Organization/lack of cooperation of wineries, Organization of local bodies, Seasonality of visitors
Promotional activities of the winery	Type of events: Wine tasting–Food pairing, Seminar, Workshop, Wine tasting video, wine tasting at exhibitions, Drama trail race Periods of events: Christmas (Oneiroupoli), May (Dramoinognosia), Spring (Open Doors), Winter (Skiing) Method of promotion: Advertising, Social media Participation in exhibitions: Within Greece, Within Europe, Outside Europe, we do not participate in exhibitions Information method: Verbal information

Interviewees were required to report the winery's tourism products and services. The amenities and activities are presented in Figure 3a, indicating that all wineries have visiting areas for tourists and wine-tasting rooms and provide guiding tours. Among the wineries, 40% provide services for children in the form of an outdoor playground, while 80% have areas accessible to disabled persons.

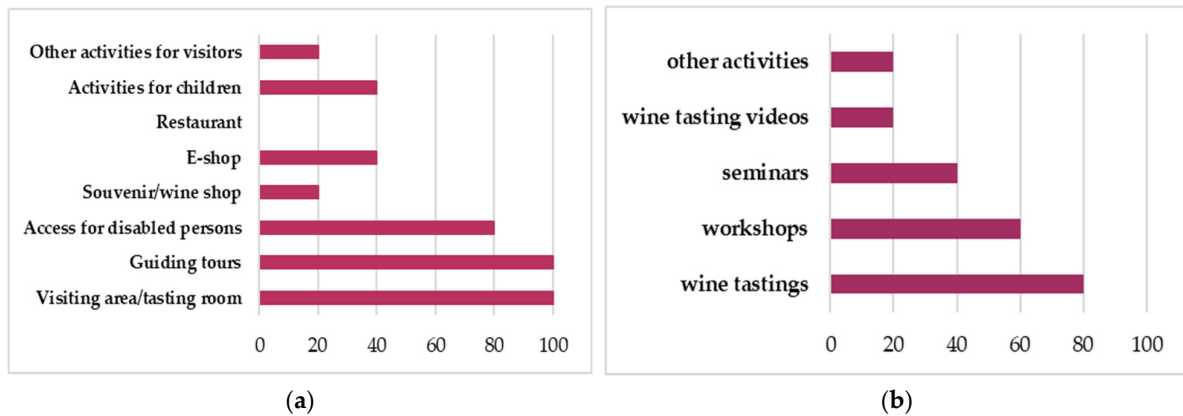


Figure 3. Results of the winery management interviews. (a) Available wine tourism products and services in the winery, (b) promotional activities of the winery.

Only 20% of the wineries have a souvenir/wine shop, while 40% have an e-shop. None of the wineries have a restaurant. These results indicate that the wineries do not use the potential offered by wine tourism. This supports Loubser's [35] findings that, despite being viewed as one of the primary strategic approaches of wineries, wine tourism is actually still considered a secondary activity.

With regard to the promotional activities organized by the wineries, the results are shown in Figure 3b. Specifically, 80% of the wineries organize wine tastings during wine exhibitions or wine tasting–food pairing events in local restaurants. Moreover, wineries are involved in workshops (60%) and seminars (40%) organization, while only 20% are making promotional wine-tasting videos uploaded on platforms and social media.

All of the interviewees agreed that even though they have invested in infrastructure and organizing events (wine-tasting, workshops, seminars, and wine tasting videos), wine tourism is limited to the small visitability of groups or individuals. With regard to the winery visitor demographics, half of the visitors are native and the other 50% are foreigners (mainly originating from the Balkans, Germany and other European countries, while 13% are non-Europeans (Table 2)). As for the age groups of the visitors, 75% of them are middle-aged, 10% elderly and only 15% are young (students). These results indicate that younger wine consumers are less inclined to visit wineries; therefore, wineries need to use strategic methods to draw in this demographic.

Wineries profit from tourist activities; however, this profit is small or exceedingly small for Drama wineries, according to the interviewees, compared to their overall profits and should increase. At the same time, visitors in other countries bring profit that ranges from 41–188 US dollars per visitor to South Africa and California, respectively [31]. In other words, little work has been performed regarding the promotion packet of wine and local gastronomic products.

4.2. Workshop Results

The organization of the workshop allowed the gathered local stakeholders to share experiences, perceptions and behavior (Table 3). The original goal of the following brainstorming session was to create tangible proposals for initiatives that could be put into place to help develop Drama as a destination image and promote Drama's gastronomic heritage abroad. Participants agreed that firstly, Drama should become a more attractive tourist destination. For this purpose, the culinary wealth of the region, unknown to many, should

certify its authenticity and be advertised and translated into experiential booths at food fairs, hands-on culinary events, multimedia exhibitions, virtual reality, video games, and other interactive forms of communication.

Table 3. Information about workshop participants and thematic.

Workshop participants profile	State/local authorities (mayor, regional governor), state bodies (direction of rural development), chamber of commerce, Wine producers Food producers (local specialties, agricultural products) Horeca (hospitality, restaurant, catering) Press (local, non-specialized) Academics (oenology, tourism, management, marketing) Students (oenology, tourism, management, marketing)
Workshop thematic	Marketing of wine and culinary tourism destinations and experiential experiences Development of special forms of tourism in Drama Tourism destination image development and management New technologies for the promotion of wine and culinary tourism destinations Developing destination images

The closure session outlined four possible interventions aiming to raise the visibility and profile of Drama as a wine and gastronomic tourism destination.

The proposed interventions are as follows:

1. Annual organization of a wine scientific conference that could be combined with some international wine competition by internationally combining the name Drama with wine.
2. A logo with a QR code that could be applied to product labels in stores, restaurants, and hospitality structures, allowing different stakeholders (communities, producers, and institutions) to present their own culinary landscapes.
3. The third idea included the creation of a network in which establishments that embody the practices of local gastronomic heritage would be identified and acknowledged to generate ties with the stakeholders closest to tourists. The establishments that meet the network's criteria would be identified through an application, Google Maps or even a filter on international restaurant search platforms.
4. The creation of producer's associations that could actively be involved in the recognition of a TSG food product as well as in the surveillance of the production process.

Evaluating the originality, applicability and success potential of the above -proposed interventions and examining the recent literature we are highlighting the following:

Today there is a trend of organizing structured courses and certifications to deepen oenophiles' understanding of wines and spirits. In our case, the education of oenophiles' might not be limited to the organization of an annual scientific conference proposed by the participants of our workshop. The cooperation of local stakeholders can organize educational activities, perhaps with a lighter and more accessible to all wine consumers character, at every organized local event. Mamalis, et al. [36] examined consumers' awareness (self-assessed knowledge) of the concept of wine terroir and the elements that are incorporated in this term. They concluded the need for wine education of Greek wine consumers, first on wine characteristics, the environment (natural and human) that impacts the final product and the core terroir elements and second on the concept of wine terroir and its elements, which combined are important for the consumer and his/her choices of wine.

In the current digital reality, the utilization of QR codes in wine gastronomy allows for a rich experience, linking consumers to information about wine's terroir, grape variety and food pairings. Embedded QR codes on labels or menus provide instant access to detailed insights, as our second proposed intervention could enhance the overall enjoyment

and understanding of the wine. Bellia, et al. [37] assessed the “existence of a relationship between the wine brand and the territory of origin for wines” in Sicily, Italy, specifically those produced in the Etna Valley. They also measured “awareness among producers and stakeholders of the recognizability of local wines by the market” and they found that “the brand–land link” for the wines of the study area is underutilized by wineries. Mamalis, et al. [36] found that the concept of wine terroir is not known by most wine consumers. Therefore, our workshop’s results are encouraging the liaison between wine and land that is missing among consumers. This is important because it leads to the creation of knowledge of its value.

Understanding practices, gastronomic heritage, and their connection to tourism is crucial. It involves appreciating local culinary traditions, sustainable farming methods and culinary techniques. This knowledge not only enriches the travel experience but also contributes to the preservation and promotion of cultural and gastronomic diversity in tourism destinations. Parasecoli and Rodriguez-Garcia [38] in their study concluded that the creation of a network in which affordable establishments that embody the practices of Spanish gastronomic heritage would be identified and acknowledged, generating ties with the stakeholders closest to tourists (hotels, hostels, travel agencies, etc.) that could raise the visibility and the profile of the Spanish gastronomic heritage.

Producer associations are already new actors in the culinary heritage protection [39]. The two Women Cooperatives (1st established in 1998 and the 2nd in 2009) play a very important role as among the traditional agricultural products already produced, they also aim to collect other traditional recipes from residents of the wider area, to spread the recipes to the wider public, to continue production and to spread it to the younger generations. The rise of commercial interests that usually come together with wine/gastrotourism could lead to enhanced cultural interests in matters of preserving traditional foods.

5. Discussion

Wine tourism has been developed continuously, generating several definitions over time [40,41]. It is growing as a multidimensional phenomenon where visitors consume wine produced in the region while at the same tasting the local gastronomy. On the other hand, the region plays a catalytic role in the decision to visit as a tourist destination since at present, tourists are searching for a whole and unique experience not just linked to wine. Outlining the socio-economic profile of the visitors in northern Greek wineries, Alebaki and Iakovidou [41] concluded that visitors are mostly occasional “wine tourists,” men of a young age with a high level of education and a medium to high income. However, our results showed that most visitors to Drama wineries are middle-aged persons.

According to Alebaki and Iakovidou [42] and Charters and Aliknight [43], each visitor group contributes differently to the growth of wine tourism. The small profit of wine tourism, reported by the interviewees, is correlated with the fact that for “occasional visitors” a winery visit is not the primary motivation, and probably, they visit a winery because their friends or family want to [43]. For wineries, these segments appear to have less commercial interest and potential. Nevertheless, they can contribute to rural tourism development in general, as they participate in many activities in the wine region. In this case, great emphasis should be placed on promoting the destination’s attractiveness. Another finding of our study is that wineries are visited more often by tourist groups, suggesting that these wineries have been developed as a “destination attraction” of the region. Moreover, of importance is the origin of the visitors (ratio of domestic visitors to foreign 50:50). These findings are important, as the knowledge of the target markets for wine tourism is significant in creating specific marketing strategies. Our results reveal that the dynamics of wine tourism in the region are rapidly evolving over the years, suggesting that wine producers must embrace the new trends and try to take advantage of them and of opportunities that are developing.

There has long been a connection between art and beauty. A work of art is expected to be beautiful and conform to certain canons of regularity. For gastronomy, this translates into

menu balance and harmony in such areas as color, temperature, taste, and texture, which, in some cases, can be dictated by the aesthetic demands of the raw materials used to create a gastronomic work [28]. Local restaurants in the Drama region lack the gastronomic culture necessary for wine tourism development. Accommodation options are finite. Promotion and marketing are self-financed. There is strong seasonality in visitors (mostly during festivals) and a lack of joint efforts regarding wine tourism development among wineries, regional authorities, and state agencies.

Wine can be associated with tourism, local gastronomy, other agricultural products produced in the area, and ecotourism. Thus, territorial development and sustainability depend on the survival and reinforcement of the local wine industry and original good quality food products. Additionally, there is a need for wine education that should include practices of wine production and the elements that shape a good-quality wine. These are considered essential steps toward wooing Greek wine consumers since wine production is an important element of Greek agriculture, winery revenues, and the country's export power tips [36].

There are possible economic, political, and social benefits to the establishment of a protected designation of origin. The target is cooperation as follows:

- Cooperation and competition among wine producers have benefits for territorial development.
- Cooperation is necessary for establishing quality standards and sharing the benefits of promotional activities.
- Cooperation reduces the cost of the procurement of materials.
- Cooperation improves communication and information exchange.
- Collaboration in developing marketing campaigns, sharing information regarding export potential, finding new markets, participating in prestigious competitions, and other cooperative initiatives is necessary.

The spread of wine tourism is a unique opportunity to extend the tourist season in the Drama region. Furthermore, in combination with other kinds of tourism like winter, conferences, and religious tourism, the visitability of the whole region could be increased, helping the local economy and territorial development.

6. Conclusions

A survey provided the wineries' perspective on the current situation and development of wine tourism. Moreover, the workshop discussions revealed the wineries and local authorities' concerns about what must be achieved to improve wine tourism. To conclude, interviewing and bringing together all the stakeholders involved in the wine and gastronomic industry resulted in findings that will guide the next steps toward strengthening wine and culinary tourism in the region. Individual and occasional initiatives from the winemakers were revealed as not effective enough to increase the number of wine tourists. Although there are established major wineries in the region that have already created attractive infrastructures as tourist attractions, they lack an active collaboration among winemakers and winemakers with other stakeholders. Taking advantage of and preserving the cultural heritage by cooperation among related regional businesses, regional/central authorities as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) was concluded as an important tool for organizing new initiatives that will boost wine tourism. However, this represents a single case study dealing with a limited sample of wineries in a specific area (Drama region). This fact suggests that the revealed issues and concerns are not to be generalized to all the wineries operating in the same region, neighboring regional units or other provinces. Thus, a more systematic study involving a higher number of stakeholders is required in the future, considering the geography, cultural and gastronomical heritage, always with the ultimate goal of establishing authenticity and ensuring sustainable development.

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