

THE HISTORY OF THE FIRST DEMARKATED WINE REGION OF THE WORLD – THE TOKAJ WINE REGION

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Tokaj

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The optimal climatic conditions of the region were proved in 1867, when a leaf-print of *Vitis tokaiensis* was found in a stone from miocen age (13 million years ago).

Concerning the viticulture, already the Hungarian tribes coming to the Carpathian basin knew it and started to practice at the end of the 9th century.

In 1241, after the Tatar invasion IV. king Béla revitalized the region bringing also foreigner „vinitors”.

In the 15th century, under the rules of king Mathias the Tokaji winemaking strenghtened and nothern Hungarian cities created vineyards and wineries in the region.

In the 16th century the Turkish army attacked and later occupied the southern part of Hungary, thus the importance of Tokaj increased.

The *first written memory about Tokaji Aszú wine dates back to 1571*, it was found amongst the documents of the famous Garay family.

In the first part of the 17th century, under the ownership of Rákóczi family the viticulture flourished. In 1613 and later in 1641 the towns organized a conference, where the strict regulation of viticulture and winemaking was accepted in 48 points.

In 1723 Mátyás Bél published a study of Hungary. Connecting to this his colleague, János Matolai *created the first classification of the World* rating the vineyards into three classes.

On the 1st of October in 1737, VI. king Károly announced the first demarcation of Tokaj creating a closed wine region and giving the possibility to those 22 towns to use „Tokaji” name. The viticultural and winemaking rules were specified and the planting was allowed only with licence.

In 1798 the vineyard classification was redeveloped by Antal Szirmay, based on the work of János Dercsényi.

During the 19th and the 20th century the knowledge of terroirs was collected further in the families. After the political changes in 1989 detailed work started at the wineries to be able to discover the possibilities of the extremely rich and diverse terroirs created by the active and colorful vulcanism and the outstanding macro- and microclimatical circumstances.

In 2002 Tokaj obtained the World Heritage title in „cultural landscape” category as „Tokaj Historical Wine Region”.

