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designation. And even if Maronian Chardonnay and Cabernet gain prizes in world competitions, they will struggle at a higher price for the same marketplace niches as worthy competitors from unsung appellations in Bulgaria, Romania, etc.

### Methymneos Dry Red Table Wine

Label inscription: "I can also mention and praise the wine produced by the vineyards of other cities and I do not forget their names. But none compare with that of Lesvos." (Archestratos, as quoted by Athenaeus in *The Deipnosophists*, 3rd century A.D.)

Commercial wineries have been sprouting all over the far-flung Greek landscape, increasingly including islands that were known for wine in antiquity but have not been heard from in decades or centuries. A notable recent instance is the work of Yiannis Lambrou on Lesvos (or Mytilini), where phylloxera and specialization in ouzo combined to nearly wipe out local wine. Lambrou has resuscitated the *krasostaphylo* variety on the volcanic soil of the village of Hythira and is producing this distinctive red from it. However, while Lambrou is able to make a most favorable mention of Lesvos and hype "Product of Organic Agriculture" on the label, there is no near-term prospect of a Lesvos country wine designation. This marketing disadvantage occurs in areas where production is small and there is only a single private-sector producer. The Greek Wine Institute and Ministry of Agriculture usually invoke the principle that local wine typically cannot be determined on the basis of one producer, though embarrassing exceptions have been made for some influential boutique producers who have thirsted for geographic designations.

M. I-G.

Moving to the northern Aegean Sea, an opposite case can be seen on Ikaria. The island has the oldest known wine place name derived from a topographic feature: The Pramnios Rock lent its name to the red Pramnian wine mentioned by Homer. Nikos Afianes has at long last brought Ikaria into the

realm of bottling, and is using the native grape varieties *Fokiano*, *Koriostafylo* and *Syriki*—whether or not they were known to Homer—for his red wines on the Nicaria and Icarus labels. Country wine status might be authorized for Ikaria at some point in the future, but the Pramnios name will not be revived, and without that, there will be no particular marketing benefit, either. Sales will mostly remain restricted to Ikaria and a very few shops on the mainland.

In the southern Aegean, particularly the Cyclades Islands, commercial wine stagnated after the sweet Malvasia (Malmsey) wine of the Middle Ages passed out of fashion. Small producers such as Takis Probonas on Naxos and Nikos Asymomytis on Mykonos are using typical Cycladic varieties but have no prospect of using their well-known island names as country wine names. The possibility of a geographic designation for them is in effect restricted to the Aegean Islands country wine designation, which, moreover, was not created because of anything having to do with wine (just consider the size of this zone), but instead as a measure to solidify Greece's worldwide association with the Aegean in the face of perceived Turkish challenges to Greek sovereignty there.

While the Aegean Islands designation does nothing to create a *terroir* identity for island producers like Probonas and Asymomytis, it well suits large mainland companies that want to purchase grapes from various Aegean sources to produce a large quantity of wine with a geographic designation for export. However, the Aegean Islands designation does require use of typical Aegean grapes, and the red (*Mandilaria*) and white (*Asyrtiko* and *Athiri*) wines from the Kourtakis firm, one of Greece's largest, on their Aegean Islands label do provide a sense of place that Greek country wines too often lack.

The island of Santorini comprises a thoroughly peculiar *terroir* deserving of separate mention in any case,