

APPELLATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS: GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION, VITICULTURE, AND CLIMATE CHANGE

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Abstract: Fine wine as we know it is a relatively modern innovation. But French wine culture presents a mythology of a stable and venerable tradition dating back centuries. Central to this mythology is the concept of *terroir*: the notion that the place—both the land and the people—defines the product. In the early Twentieth Century, France adopted laws giving local producers of wine exclusive rights to name the wine for the region of its origin. These regions, called appellations, have come to stand for the type and quality of wine produced within them—Champagne and Bordeaux are two well-known examples. The appellation regime had two justifications both relating to prevention of fraud: consumers could have confidence that wine was bona-fide and producers were protected because outside competition could not claim the appellation. Current law requires that wines claiming appellation meet strict requirements for quality, typicity, geography, and production method. But long-term climate change threatens to upend this regime. This paper traces the origins of French wine law and shows how the cultural and economic history has shaped the current law. It then surveys the current state of climate science as it relates to French wine and suggests that the law is presently ill-equipped to cope with projected changes. The paper concludes by presenting several alternatives to present law, each allowing for greater flexibility to protect the interests of wine producers and wine consumers.

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