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- KNUT BERGMANN: *Mit Wein Staat Machen: Eine Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (State-building with Wine: A History of the Federal Republic of Germany)*. Language: German. Insel Verlag, Berlin, 2018, 366 pp., ISBN 978-3458177715 (hardcover), €25.

Alcohol, like sex and religion, is a taboo that Americans scarcely broach in polite conversation. In politics too, alcohol seems anathema to the puritanical messages of the mainstream of promulgated Judeo-Christian values. Only in the rarest of instances, for example, William Henry Harrison's 1840 "Hard Cider" campaign and President Obama's "beer summit" following the arrest of Henry Louis Gates, have national politicians weaponized alcohol to send a curated message, usually about class. While the recent senate judiciary flap involving judge Brett Kavanaugh placed beer front and center in American politics, alcohol—especially wine—remains seemingly absent from the American political imagination.

This is less so in the case of Germany, particularly postwar West Germany, where the politics of wine, or rather the wine of politics, was often high stakes. Knut Bergmann's meticulously researched German-language book, *Mit Wein Staat Machen: Eine Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (State-building with Wine: A History of the Federal Republic of Germany)*, offers a fascinating glimpse into the inclusion and exclusion of wine at state events, which was often loaded with symbolic meaning, political pitfalls, and journalistic criticisms. Whether international spectacles such as the official visits of American President John F. Kennedy or the Swedish royal family, or the mundaneness of dressed-up Bonn diplomacy, wine—German or otherwise—was almost always a key ingredient in the making of the modern German state.

Bergmann, a political scientist by training, opens his study by tipping his hat to hand-picked anthropological, historical, and sociological themes in wine scholarship. Short sections on ceremony, consumption patterns, and alcohol policy during the Imperial period, Weimar Republic, and Nazi era demonstrate

Bergmann's commitment to the broader discipline. The lion's share of the book, however, follows the traditional trajectory of West German historical scholarship (early Republic, economic miracle, Ostpolitik, unification), although such a simplistic description on my part hardly captures the colorful imagery, clever detours, and political humor that makes this book unique.

Tucked in between the general political outline are delicious digressions on a number of related themes, including sobriety, table conversations, mishaps (e.g., Queen Elizabeth's pained disappointment with the painting gifted by Joachim Gauck during a 2015 visit to Berlin), the 1971 wine law, and menu cards. While the student of wine has much to learn here, the scholar of the Bonn Republic may glean even more from Bergmann's focus on the politics of soft power.

An important trend that emerges in Bergmann's work deals with the insecurities within the German wine trade, a feeling embodied by the protagonist in Martin Walser's *The Thirteenth Chapter* who utters "life is too short to drink German wine" (2012, p. 104). Even Chancellor Bismarck famously quipped to His Majesty, Wilhelm II, that his patriotism stopped at German wine. Postwar gastro-diplomats in the Federal Republic also struggled with whether or not German wine would send the right (or wrong) message, and many went to painstaking lengths to pour the right wine.

Though not necessarily the goal of Bergmann's work, a casual wine enthusiast will still delight in reading about the drinks that facilitated international diplomacy. Bernkasteler Doctor wine, as it had since the late 19th century, remained a staple of high politics, and was as present at key Cold War summits (including when the Soviets agreed to release German prisoners of war in 1955) as wiretaps and undercover spies. A litany of other familiar wines—Bordeaux First Growths, historic Champagne Maison, and noble Rheingau estates—keep the wine-focused reader as interested and entertained as those seeking a lesson in political science or German history.

The book is filled with dozens of photographs and other reproductions, including a 1995 photo of Fidel Castro inspecting a bottle of Chablis, which contribute to Bergmann's witty, entertaining style. Separate indexes for names and places make jumping between and around sections a snap, and the book is footnoted enough to easily facilitate following-up critical and not-so-critical source material.

Bergmann's efforts go a long way towards helping cement wine and other forms of alcohol as important objects in political history. Whether or not other historians and political scientists take note remains to be seen.

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MORTEN SCHOLER: *Coffee and Wine – Two Worlds Compared*. Troubador Publishing, Leicester, UK, 2018, 336 pp., ISBN 9781789014747 (hardcover), GBP 30.00 (\$38.33).

I strongly suspect that for those of us who are coffee and wine enthusiasts, this book will become our must go to encyclopedia. Written by Morten Scholer, with an eye to detail that probably only someone with an engineering background can bring to the subject, it explores two seemingly unrelated worlds. I say “seemingly” for there is no doubt that many in the coffee trade look up to the wine industry, wishing that they could find the magic wand that will transform the quality end of the coffee market into something approximating what wine has achieved. And it is in that spirit that Morten has explored the similarities and differences between the two, and, indeed in doing so, has clearly demonstrated that the wine industry can also learn a thing or two from the coffee industry.

With around 2.5 billion cups of coffee and 0.5 billion glasses of wine consumed each day, these industries are important components of not just world trade, but of everyday consumption and it is somewhat surprising that the literature comparing the two industries is so thin. This book is, therefore, long overdue. Morten has carefully maintained an objectivity that is uncommon among aficionados, although he does allow his love of both products to shine through. This is not, however, a book that can be read from cover to cover in one session, but rather a reference book that not only contains the basics, but also contains precious nuggets that inevitably will make you cry out loud “Wow, I never knew that!”

The book is designed to appeal to players in both industries, explaining both sectors in a simple, yet effective, style, allowing the reader from either the wine or coffee trade to understand the mechanics of how the other industry works and the challenges each face. On the other hand, it must be said, that the juxtaposition and constant zig-zag shift between coffee and wine has the potential to be, at times, a little confusing. But the clever use of colour codes together with many illustrations and maps, as well as a very detailed list of contents overcomes this, making the book more reader friendly than might have otherwise been the case.

As you would expect Morten starts off looking at the long and illustrious history of both products, although wine can certainly be traced further back than coffee. He then moves on to statistics (maybe not everyone’s cup of tea), but his unique and definitely quirky approach encourages the reader to continue delving into the different tables covering production, conversion ratios, and area devoted to both crops.