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2013

[Link to publication](#)

### *Citation for published version (APA):*

Lysaght, P., Jönsson, H., & Burstedt, A. (2013). *The return of traditional food*. (Lunds Studies in Arts and Cultural Sciences; Vol. 1). Lund University.

*Total number of authors:*

3

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*Patricia Lysaght (ed.)*

# The Return of Traditional Food

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# The Return of Traditional Food

Proceedings of the 19th International Ethnological Food Research Conference,

Department of Arts and Cultural Sciences,

Lund University, Sweden, 15-18 August, 2012

Patricia Lysaght

Editor

Lund Studies in Arts and Cultural Sciences 1

Lund University

Lund 2013

Lund Studies in Arts and Cultural Sciences is a series of monographs and edited volumes of high scholarly quality in subjects related to the Department of Arts and Cultural Sciences at Lund University. An editorial board decides on issues concerning publication. All texts have been peer reviewed prior to publication.

[www.kultur.lu.se](http://www.kultur.lu.se)

The support of the following institutions is gratefully acknowledged:

The Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities

The Royal Gustavus Adolphus Academy for Swedish Folk Culture

Skåne Food Innovation Network/Taste of Skåne

Cover design and photography: Johan Laserna

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ISBN 978-91-7267-357-1

Printed in Sweden by Media-Tryck, Lund University



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## *Opening Address*



# The 19th International Ethnological Food Research Conference, Lund 2012

*Nils-Arvid Bringéus*

Welcome to this 19th international conference of ethnological food research. The first such conference was organised here in Lund in 1970, and I am delighted that my present successor has taken the initiative of once more arranging a conference in Lund. The earlier one was held in the municipal library, where one could, in a natural way, acquire a historical background for ethnological food research, for outside the municipal library there stands a statue of Carl von Linné, known as the king of flowers because of his importance in promoting and systematising botany. Linné's interest in flora and fauna, however, extended not only to their reproductive system but also to their role as material for human consumption. *Dieta naturalis*, 'On a Natural Way of Living', is the title that he gave to his lectures on food and drink in Uppsala in 1735. As was the case with his botany, he sought less to gain knowledge from learned tomes than from practical observations of what people ate and drank in various parts of the country. Linné did not consider himself too superior to draw attention to everyday food habits in individual districts. He studied similarities but also differences in such habits. This is what ethnologists also started to do after the Second World War, when the comparative method was greatly assisted by maps based on local information. Admittedly, it was not exactly food habits that were first mapped but costumes, styles of building, customs and habits. German ethnologists had, however, already demonstrated that local dishes were suitable for mapping. On the basis of material collected in the 1930s, the German ethnologist Günter Wiegelman presented his professorial thesis *Alltags- und Festspeisen. Wandel und gegenwärtige Stellung* 1967, which one could say led to ethnological food research acquiring academic status.

Why did it take so long? Probably as a result of concurrent factors. The preparation of food took place in enclosed spaces both at home and in restaurants. It did not take place out in the open, on the visible front stage but back stage – to use terminology employed by the sociologist E. Goffman (*The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 1959). In addition, home preparation of food was carried out by women, and it did not have the same status as many male occupations. When domestic science became part of the school curriculum, it was only for girls. So it is hardly surprising that food research was lacking at the universities. Food was quite simply not regarded

as a presentable topic for research. During my time as a student, we used to eat in so-called *matlag* (sittings), morning, midday and evening – teams that comprised a blend of theologians, law students, medical students and humanists. All of us required food, but we hardly commented on what we ate. The social dimension was more important to us.

On the folklore syllabus there was nothing to be found about food. When I published a book with the title *Mat och miljö* ('Food and Environment') in 1970, it was the first time that food had been included on the syllabus, with a small special course at Lund University for five credits that could be taken as an alternative among other courses. Even so, it was perhaps not food as such that enticed me personally, rather the chance of using food as a point of departure for studying cultural areas and cultural boundaries that had then come to acquire key importance within folklore studies. A great advantage of food research was that it was so tradition-bound. Present-day maps could also be used to interpret historical courses of events. Even the radio could be used for collecting material. I once asked radio listeners in a food programme what they knew about *drickablandning* (a mixture of beer and milk). The very word worked like a key. People either knew at once what it was, or it was totally unfamiliar to them. Within a week I had collected so much data that this could be mapped and used to open up fresh issues.

In 1958, the same year that I defended my doctoral thesis, Alfa Olsson presented the first thesis on ethnological dietary habits (*Om allmogens kosthåll: Studier med utgångspunkt från västnordiska matvanor*; 'On the Diet of the Peasantry: Studies Based on West Nordic Food Habits'), and in 1961, Brita Egardt, in a German-language Festschrift (*Schwedische Volkskunde*), on the occasion of Sigfrid Svensson's 60th birthday, provided a first overview of what had been published in Sweden about popular dietary habits. I helped to edit the volume, which we felt had to appear in German, since it was then the leading international academic language.

Food both divides and unites us, and one of the things I and Günter Wiegelmann's hoped for, by means of the food convention in 1970, was to establish international maps based on similar questions. But all ethnological and folklore collecting activities were nationally based and it was impossible to break that tendency. On the other hand, it was easy to get a response for international symposia. Food had already been included in such an international symposium context in Japan. The Lund convention was an independent conference with dietary habits as its focus. Two participants in the anthropology convention in Japan, Margaret L. Arnett from Philadelphia and Grith Lerche from Copenhagen, inspired us to pursue this path in Lund. Perhaps just as important as the lectures were the excursions we went on to various parts of Scania and Småland. These gave the participants the chance to get practical insight into, for example, the baking of bread and the making of cheese cakes. Food is something for all our senses.

Using roughly the same model, food conferences have continued to take place in various European countries at roughly two-year intervals until the present day. During this time, much has occurred in world politics. After the end of the Second World War,

it was admittedly possible to travel and meet people internationally, but during the Cold War there was a fear in Eastern Europe of allowing research to be pursued freely. For that reason, it took a long time before food conferences could be held within a SIEF framework. For quite some years now, however, food conferences have come within SIEF's field of responsibility. This has made it possible to publish the conference lectures in a unified series and we are grateful to Professor Patricia Lysaght for her considerable contribution as editor of nine of the conference reports so far published in this context. This has meant that the research results have proved useful far outside the circle of conference participants. The topics of the various conferences to date are listed in this volume (pp. 309-311).

The Lund conference in 1970 has had a further important spin-off effect. Two of those who took part in my researcher seminar, Sven Olle Olsson and Anders Salomonsson, took the initiative in 1983 of forming the Scanian Gastronomic Academy. This comprises the former Danish regions of Skåne, Blekinge, Halland and the island of Bornholm. It comprises both practitioners and theorists, with members representing a range of various humanist but also medicinal sciences.

Precisely this diversity has been most rewarding. By means of prizes and rewards, a number of small-scale producers have been stimulated into action. An association of friends has also been linked to it, with more than 500 members. It has an even wider range of programmes on offer and is open to all those interested in food. The academy has published a series of articles and textbooks and has also been engaged in practical work, among other things by introducing nutrition as a subject in compulsory schooling. Another offshoot is the teaching of food research that is carried out at university level in Kristianstad and Hässleholm, focusing also on new food-related research areas such as, for example, taste. Alongside the Scanian activities, gastronomic academies have also been established in Västsverige and Norrland. These academies have also acquired a high status since governors of the various regions have been elected to them. I mention this as an example worth following.

There is, however, a far greater interest in preparing food at the practical level than in food research. Nowadays, cookery books of various kinds have their own shelf in bookshops, and it is reckoned that a new book on cookery or on food appears every day. Practically every corner of the country has now its own cookery book as well as every type of food. On radio and TV, food programmes are given more space than previously. Annual competitions for chefs are organised at both the national and the international level. The profession of chef has acquired a high status. In a recent book (*Den Gastronomiska revolutionen*, 2012), Håkan Jönsson, who is both a qualified chef and an ethnologist, has let a restaurant chef move from back stage to front stage.

Logistics has also been extremely important for the spreading of food items and food habits both nationally and internationally. In the shops we can choose between wines from all parts of the world, and in the vegetable sections there are plenty of varieties of tropical fruit all year round. The role formerly played by the seasons – both as a hindrance to and promoter of the accessibility of articles of food – has virtually disappeared, which one can be pleased about yet also deplore, since variation is much



reduced. We who live in Västernorrland belong to a generation of people who have moved from a dearth to a glut of food, something that not only gives us prosperity but which also results in the problem of having to choose as well as to abstain. This applies throughout our lives, from infancy to late old age. This has meant that nutritional research has become an issue for both the natural sciences and the humanities.

What is expedient now is not to jealously guard our subject areas but to be open to co-operation. Even though ethnologists only comprise a small group of researchers, ethnological issues can prove to be of great importance within both pure and applied research. The lectures at this conference provide a palette of references about both fields at the conceptual level and also at the advanced level. So let us liberally help ourselves to what is on offer, and continue our work.\*

\*See also: Bringéus, Nils-Arvid, 'Ethnological Food Conferences 1970-1998: Ideas and Routes for European Collaboration', in Lysaght, Patricia, (ed.), *Food From Nature. Attitudes, Strategies and Culinary Practices*, Uppsala 2000, 19-29.

## *Introduction*



## *Introduction*

# The Return of Traditional Food

*Patricia Lysaght*

The 19th International Ethnological Food Research Conference was held in Lund University, Sweden, 15-18 August, 2012. Hosted by the Department of Arts and Cultural Sciences, the theme of the conference was 'The Return of Traditional Food'. Twenty-seven of the papers presented at the conference are included in this volume. They are arranged in five groups according to the main emphasis of each, though some overlapping between the sections inevitably occurs.

Professor Dr. Nils-Arvid Bringéus gave the opening address at the conference. As the organiser of the first ever symposium on ethnological food research, held in Lund in 1970, and as co-editor, with Prof. Dr. Günter Wiegelmann, Münster, of the proceedings of that first meeting, he welcomed the SIEF ethnological food research group back to Lund for its nineteenth conference. Setting out the motivations for and the aspirations of that first symposium, he also reviewed the progress of the group to date, evaluating conference themes, publications, and contributions to international food research scholarship.

The opening keynote lecture entitled 'Sustainability and Fundamentalism. Moral Investment and Culinary Hedonism', was given by em. o. Univ. Prof. Dr. Konrad Köstlin, Institute for European Ethnology, Vienna University, and it is printed here in full. Commentary on the remaining papers in this book is given in accordance with the order in which they appear in the volume.

## I

In view of the international appeal and fame of the New Nordic Kitchen and the New Nordic Cuisine, it is not surprising that a number of presentations at the conference featured these topics (Part I).

In her paper, based on her keynote lecture dealing with the new Nordic diet and Danish food culture, Bi Skaarup reviews the background to the launch of the manifesto of the New Nordic Diet after a meeting held at restaurant Noma (Noma: *Nordisk mad*, Nordic Food) in Copenhagen on 1 November 2004, the key personnel involved, and the key decisions which were made at the meeting with regard to Nordic food and

gastronomy. With an emphasis on regional/local food, the need to rediscover native food resources and their qualities was recognised and acted on, but this return to native and traditional food products was not, as the author points out, a nostalgic turning back of the clock to times gone by, but rather a stimulus and a means for inventiveness by the leading Nordic cooks, who went on to create innovative dishes based on both wild and cultivated produce from the Nordic area, and who also gained international renown in the process.

With regard to Sweden, Håkan Jönsson charts its culinary journey from being regarded as a gastronomic wasteland to being an acknowledged fine dining arena. The journey, which commenced in the second half of the 1970s with the rising influence of chefs, saw the adoption of *Nouvelle Cuisine*, and, as a final step on the road to excellence in fine dining, also saw the establishment of the New Nordic Kitchen, commencing in 2004. Like Bi Skaarup, Jönsson points out that the approach of the New Nordic Kitchen is not to restore traditional dishes, but rather ‘to make tradition a basis on which creativity in the kitchen can develop’. He also notes that some chefs, among them super-chef Claus Meyer, interpret the concept of *terroir* ‘in a way that enables traditions to cope with gastronomic innovations’.

Also referring to the concept of *terroir*, Hanne Pico Larsen and Susanne Österlund-Pötzsch analyse how a kind of *terroir* narrative is utilised by food entrepreneurs in the islands of the Nordic-Baltic region. On the basis of fieldwork, the authors suggest that the emphasis on traditional Nordic wild and indigenous foods, not only links Nordic islands’ cuisine to the New Nordic Kitchen, but, when combined with the idea that islands are even more remote, natural and authentic than the contiguous mainland, enables the production of a ‘*superterroir* narrative’ of benefit to food entrepreneurs, restaurant businesses, and those engaged in different ways in the food industry in an island context.

## II

As the conference topic referred to the return of traditional food, it was to be expected that the theme of revitalisation would figure strongly on the participants’ agenda. Here eight papers connected to that theme are presented (Part II).

Madeleine Bonow and Paulina Rytönen examine the re-articulation of the artisan cheese sector, which is mainly concerned with goat cheese, in the county of Jämtland, a mountainous area in the northwest of Sweden, which commenced more than four decades ago. Promoted and subsidised by local authorities for a variety of social, economic and cultural reasons, the reinvention of Jämtlandic goat cheese has proved to be successful even though most of those involved in goat farming and cheese making in Jämtland are new to the sector and even to rural living.

Having carried out an extensive series of interviews with goat farmers, the authors utilise Pierre Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus and capital to explain why people became involved in the goat cheese business, how they learned the trade, how they coped with the everyday practices/demands that it entailed, how they survived in the business, and

what the different forms of capital they acquired in the process were. ‘Search for the old and create the new’ – the title of a project involved in the rehabilitation of Jämtlandic cellar-matured goat cheese, ‘with its own unique taste and colourful crust of natural mould’, especially among the younger generation of Swedes – would indeed appear to be an appropriate tag to characterise the approach and outcome of the whole Jämtlandic goat cheese experience.

‘Creating the new’ from the food heritage of a given environment is evident in two papers relating to Slovenia. Maja Godina Golija deals with the farinaceous dishes typical of the northeastern part of Slovenia, in the context of tourism. She examines, *inter alia*, the traditional ingredients and role of a leavened pie, *gibanica*, from the Prlekija and Prekmurje areas of Slovenia. She also charts the changes that it has undergone in terms of traditional formula and shape, and its place in the meal sequence, especially in public eating contexts, as it features predominantly as a dessert on hotel and restaurant menus nowadays. This is in contrast to its traditional role when it was prepared especially for festive occasions and during heavy farm work, in a rural setting in the regions in question. Tina Novak Pucer’s refers to the food traditions of Slovenian Istria located in the northernmost peninsula of the Mediterranean area. Having detailed the food habits of the region in the first half of the twentieth century, including discussion of Mediterranean influences on local dietary practices, the author considers the uses and transformations of traditional food in the context of a large number of festivals and thematic culinary evenings, which take place in the region each year from March to November.

In Poland, as elsewhere, farmers’ markets have become vehicles for revitalisation and transformational impulses with reference to traditional local food products. Violetta Krawczyk-Wasilewska and Katarzyna Orszulak-Dudkowska point out, that in the context of the change to a free market economy in Poland from the late 1980s onwards, traditional urban markets, in which products brought from the local countryside by farmers to be sold to urban dwellers, went into decline. Now revitalised as farmers’ markets, or as ‘Old-Polish Markets’ in the case of the city of Łódź, they are achieving commercial success. While these events are still organised in urban contexts, the setting nowadays for these markets is often large shopping malls and local pedestrian streets, rather than the market square as was formerly the case.

Against a background of changes brought about by the processes of modernisation and globalisation in modern Hungarian food culture, Anikó Báti examines trends towards the revival of aspects of old Hungarian food traditions, initially as a kind of quest for identity after the fall of communism, but later coming under the influence of nostalgia, and persisting nowadays as essentially leisure-time activities. Focusing on the revitalisation of the wood-fired baking oven, she points out that a consequence of the non-provision of baking ovens in Hungarian village houses after the 1950s, and the restructuring of agricultural policy and activity from the 1960s, when good quality flour for baking could no longer be accessed, was that the home-baking of bread in the traditional wood-fired stoves declined and the purchase of mass-produced bread became the norm. While a few families kept an outdoor wood-fired oven in which



bread for festive occasions was baked, know-how, and the use of the indoor oven, had virtually died out before its partial revitalisation after a lapse of half a century. This has had the follow-on effect of a return to home-made bread and old-style cooking – but only to some extent, and in certain circumstances, since these activities are essentially a phenomenon of the middle and upper classes, undertaken for lifestyle purposes, when they ‘return’ to rural living mainly during weekend and holiday periods. Mobile wood-fired ovens also feature during summer village festivals and in urban open-air markets, during which a return to ‘forgotten’ traditional forms of bread is very pronounced and popular.

Renée Valeri writes about the return of traditional foods in the context of French preserves, such as *confit de canard* (duck confit) and *foie gras*, exemplifying an interest in regional French specialities in France itself, and also internationally as an imported delicacy. The impact of modern technology and EU regulations on the production of the foods in question is also taken into account in the paper.

Naoto Minami analyses attitudes to traditional food in contemporary Japan from a variety of standpoints – political, economical, ideological and educational. The author makes the point that while the significance of traditional food and foodways in everyday life in Japan declined after World War II under the influence of rapid economic growth, modernisation, urbanisation and westernisation trends, a re-evaluation of Japanese foodways since the 1980s has led to movement away from westernised food habits and influences. He also points out that behind this trend are special interest groups such as agricultural, medical and food-business lobbies, but he notes that it has also been assisted by the fifty-volume work on the traditional foods and dishes of Japan published between 1984 and 1992. The author has further sought to analyse the reasons behind the promotion of traditional food as national policy in Japan since 2000, citing social and local-economy reasons as well as national prestige. But he also points to the potentially negative aspects of the promotion by central government of specific foods and foodways, such as the rise of a sense of enforced political nationalism vis-a-vis neighbouring countries, and the production of fake traditional dishes. With regard to the latter, the author cites the example of ‘Local Ramen’, a noodle dish originally imported from China which eventually evolved into a kind of Japanese food, and which is now being reinvented on a regional basis as a ‘traditional’ Japanese food.

Another country which underwent major economic and social change, especially since the 1960s, is Cyprus, a country situated in the Mediterranean Sea. From this period there was a shift to a flourishing market economy and the development of tourism. This gave rise to changes in food habits and lifestyle. With this situation in mind, as Antonia-Leda Matalas, Crystalleni Lazarou and Yiorgos Chrysanthou state, the Cypriot Food and Nutrition Virtual Museum was founded as a response to the need to record past foodways in Cyprus and to compile sources and information on the history and culture of Cypriot food and diet.

The authors also point out that not all revivals of traditional foods are necessarily benign. In Cyprus, for instance, the vine bird (*ambelopoulin*), a migratory songbird of the species *Sylvia atricapilla*, provides an example of a traditional food, the current

culinary use of which is giving rise to an ecological disaster, as this bird (and others) is being illegally caught in nets in unsustainable numbers. From being, formerly, a necessary form of sustenance as meat was scarce and virtually absent from the diet of most Cypriots, this bird has now become (unnecessary) gourmet fare and is served in restaurants and in the home as a delicacy. Although it is illegal to kill the bird, it has become the source of a very profitable business worth several millions of Euro annually.

### III

The commercial aspect of the return to traditional food indicated in a number of the papers in the previous section is dealt with in a more specific way in the following seven articles. One paper is concerned with fine dining in Sweden, an obviously commercial sector of food provision, while a number of the other authors indicate the role of tourism in the commercialisation of food traditions (Part III).

In her study of the distinctions of taste and the criteria that define and characterise fine dining and luxury expensive restaurants in Sweden, Anna Burstedt has worked empirically with food media, using the best-known and the most firmly-established restaurant guides in Sweden, and theoretically with the perspectives of the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu concerning matters of distinction. In researching the concept of taste in terms of the top segment of the fine dining establishment in Sweden, the author found that such restaurants, according to the guides, were usually located in major cities, and that the finding of a restaurant graded as high class and located in the countryside was almost a matter of surprise to the restaurant critics. With regard to the restaurant guides' attitudes to local raw materials and cooking techniques, she has noted that the countryside is presented in the 'right way' – 'in cultivated, refined and educated forms' – in these guides. Their interest in local foods could thus be viewed as representing an urban trend in respect of the countryside and as a matter of rural cultural expressions being appropriated for use in fine dining urban milieus.

Manon Boulianne's paper discusses the importance given to tradition in the production, marketing, distribution, and consumption of fine cheese in the province of Quebec, Canada, where more than three hundred varieties of fine cheese are produced annually by around one hundred cheese-making companies, both artisanal and industrial. The paper is based on research carried out in 2008 in order to ethnographically document the ongoing valorisation processes of *terroir* products in Quebec in the circumstances of the globalisation of food chains and systems. She notes that despite the fact that fine cheese making is scarcely two decades old in Quebec, the cheese produced is marketed and sold as a traditional and typical national food, and that both artisanal and industrial cheese makers use characters, images and stories from Quebec's rural past as marketing strategies, in order to symbolically link the cheese to local traditions. In fact, the author found that although fine cheese making in Quebec is an invented tradition, it is rapidly becoming emblematic of *terroir* products in general in Canada. As the author states, this raises several questions, including: How can these newly-invented cheeses be considered traditional food and what makes them typical

national food? Assuming that invented traditions are socially constructed, then questions arise as to how, why, and by whom Quebec's fine cheeses have been constructed as traditional food? By way of response, the author describes the contemporary 'cheesescape' in Quebec, detailing how tradition became a factor in state funding provided for rural areas from the 1990s, in order to enable rural settlements to diversify economic activities, such as by engaging in the development of local food production. Even though the policy changed in the subsequent decade when 'innovation, differentiation, and re-localisation, or place-based production and consumption, formed the core of the new paradigm', tradition, nevertheless, has remained basic to fine-chesse identity and promotion. Both major corporations and artisan businesses still use tradition, in various guises, as a powerful marketing tool for their fine cheese products. Relations between tradition, rural region, *terroir* and artisanship, are also dealt with in this paper.

The importance of the label 'traditional' for commercialisation and regional identity purposes, is discussed by Sonja Böder in relation to three food products considered typical of Westphalia, a region in the north-east of the German Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia. The products in question are Westphalian ham, Pumpernickel and Töttchen, respectively. Westphalian ham is a kind of raw ham with a special flavour which is achieved by means of a particular kind of curing and maturing process. For the highest quality product, a maturing period of between six and eighteen months duration is required. Pumpernickel is a bread, dark in colour, which is made of grist and whole rye grains. The whole grains are soaked in preparation for baking and, as it is a high density bread requiring slow cooking, a long baking time is required. Töttchen is identified with the Münsterland, itself a region in northwestern Westphalia. Originally prepared from various parts, including the giblets, of slaughtered pigs, cows or calves, restaurants nowadays serve a modified version of this product, made predominantly of veal and veal tongue, as a delicacy. While Westphalian ham has historically been regarded as an esteemed food, both Pumpernickel and Töttchen were considered to be low status foods, the latter in particular being regarded as the food of the poor. Today, however, as the author shows, these three products play a vital role in both the touristic and regional marketing of Westphalia. They are, therefore, staged in various ways, as the 'culinary legacy' of Westphalia, both by the manufacturers of the products and by the tourism industry, and are marketed accordingly. Based on the findings emanating from the research and documentation project, 'How Westphalian do Westphalians Eat? Local Food and Tradition', the author details and analyses the various labels, such as 'traditional', and the other strategies used by the different interested parties in the ongoing commercialisation processes of these products in Westphalia today.

The impact of the tourist industry on a traditional food product is also dealt with by Rogéria Campos de Almeida Dutra in her paper 'Cinnamon Bread: A Reinvented Tradition in a Rural Brazilian Village'. The author analyses why and how Cinnamon Bread, a delicacy found in the culinary repertoire of the area of the Ibitipoca Mountain Range in southeastern Brazil, became a 'souvenir' product due to the expansion of

tourism in the region in the course of the last three decades. Originally known as Puff Bread, its change of name and its contemporary production are, according to the author, emblematic of the complex dialogue between tradition and modernity, and of the changes that have taken place in the remote rural environment in Ibitipoca Mountain Range due to the development of tourism. As the author points out, Cinnamon Bread is an example of the reinvention of a tradition since its name, the use of its ingredients, and its elaboration, as well as the manner of its consumption, have been changed and re-signified in response to tourism development in the region. It is thus illustrative of both the affirmation and the transformation of a branch of female traditional knowledge and expertise, giving rise to new meanings in terms of contemporary social dynamics. The author also points out that despite the fact that Cinnamon Bread has become a commercial commodity in the context of the tourist industry, it is still anchored in tradition since 'the complex bread-making operation involving ingredients, measurements and know-how, is still retained by means of the collective memory, in the cultural background of the people'.

The dynamic of continuity and change in the choice of food for gastro-festivals in Hungary is the subject of Eszter Kisbán's contribution. In this situation also, as the author points out, tourism has played a role, especially from the 1990s, when the organisation of gastro-festivals was seen as a means by which tourism, and what it had to offer, could be developed and expanded. As a result of this initiative, a variety of gastro-festivals/competitions – some large and some small, and with different choices of foods, aims and participants – were organised, and some of these have continued to be successfully held on an annual basis to the present time. One of the small festivals is the plum jam-making competition held in village C. (Cseke/Szatmárcseke), a somewhat remote village of 1,500 inhabitants situated beside Hungary's second longest river, the Tisza, on a plain in the Szatmár region at a distance of more than 300 km from the capital city, Budapest. The jam making at the competition is carried out in the traditional manner just as is the case when plum jam is made at home. The competition is held on the village green over two days in late August, and between two and three thousand visitors attend. Following the success of the competition, which the villagers first organised in 1997, and due to the realisation that such plum jam is no longer made outside the region, except, perhaps, by the oldest inhabitants who still remember how it is cooked, various enterprises and associations based on the processing of the plum, mainly as a sugarless jam, have been set up by the villagers and by other local communities, thus bringing a commercial dimension to the use of a traditional food product. This aspect is likely to be further expanded under the influence of programmes for the regional development of rural tourism in Hungary.

Another form of the commercialisation of food traditions is the growing business of food re-enactments. Medieval food re-enactments in The Netherlands is the subject matter of Professor Dr. Johanna Maria van Winter's article. She points out that such events, even if only one-off happenings, require that the organisers have specific historical culinary knowledge of relevance to the occasion in question. Consequently, businesses and individuals have specialised in this area of service provision and are

available for hire on occasions (even for modern weddings and parties) when the hosts require that ‘food and drink mentioned in old cookery books and representative of the Middle Ages or even Roman Antiquity be served’. The author herself has participated in events in which dinners, based on recipes from her cookery book, *Van Soeter Cokene, recepten uit de Oudheid en Middeleeuwen* (‘On sweet cooking, recipes from Antiquity and the Middle Ages’), have been prepared. With regard to one of these occasions, the author remarks: ‘The cooks in question happily followed my instructions and prepared the dishes in an authentic fashion, though they used modern kitchen utensils in their work.’ She goes on to discuss the question of authenticity and how it can be pursued in the re-enactment scenario. Based on interviews, questionnaire responses and Internet research, the author discovered, with regard to the motivations of the various actors involved in medieval (and later) food re-enactments, that neither environmental nor health concerns play an explicit role in their work, and that these aspects would not appear to be matters of public concern either. In fact, the author remarks that the public would probably ‘be disappointed with ascetic hermit-type meals’. She did, however, determine that historical interest ‘and a desire to transmit national historical tradition as part of Dutch tradition’ were important motivating factors for all the parties in question.

In the final paper in this section, Shirley Cherkasky details the ‘return’ of marshmallows after a decline in popularity in the late twentieth century due to a consumer food-preference shift and the domination of food processing by a few very large and very powerful corporations. As a commercial product, marshmallows were popular with women and at young people’s gatherings. This led to the invention and sale of a marshmallow toaster and the provision of recipes using marshmallows in order to increase the use of the confection. Combined with sweet potatoes, marshmallows still form a traditional part of the Thanksgiving meal and they also feature in the celebration of other American holidays such as the 4th of July, Hallowe’en, and Christmas. Apart from these signal occasions, marshmallows are also experiencing a resurgence of interest by the manufacturing industry, the restaurant sector, and in home cooking.

## IV

The act of coming to a new country and of settling there either temporarily or permanently, or of students moving to a university environment outside their home area, involves different kinds and levels of change and adjustment in everyday life, including in relation to food and food habits. Three papers deal with traditional foodways from the point of view of the immigrant process (Part IV).

William G. Lockwood’s and Yvonne R. Lockwood’s paper is a culinary study of a recently arrived ethnic group – the Bosnian American community – in the United States. Arising from the Balkan war in the 1990s, great numbers of Bosnian refugees arrived in several regions of the United States, thus offering the authors ‘a rare opportunity of observing the earliest stages of an ethnic cuisine in the making’. Their

paper, which describes and analyses the processes and transformations involved in the making of a Bosnian-American cuisine, is based on ethnographic research in Bosnia and among Bosnian-Americans in the United States.

Janet Gilmore examines the foodways experiences of students, who are usually transient residents in a place or country, having moved away from home into a university environment and thus probably experiencing independence from a parental and a home-foodways framework for the first time. Based on ethnographic work dealing with student foodways at the University of Wisconsin-Madison over a number of years, the author suggests similarities between students' responses to foodways challenges in their new setting and those of new immigrants in unfamiliar environments. The author uses models of immigrant adaptation, viewing the students as transient or immigrant 'sojourners', who experience a transformative process – termed 'ethnogenesis' by the above-mentioned foodways scholars, William and Yvonne Lockwood – as they become exposed to, and manage, by means of adaptation and creation, the food and foodways of their new temporary environment.

In contrast to the two previous papers, Adelia Hanson's article concentrates on the traditional food of long-established immigrant groups – those who settled in Oklahoma state during the period of mass immigration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While the initial generation of these immigrants felt obliged to adapt to, and to blend in as much as possible with the dominant English-Scots-Irish culture of the time, the third generation felt confident and curious enough to show a greater interest in their ethnic origins. The author shows that cookbooks, recipe collections, and ethnic food festivals celebrating the foods of immigrant memory – such as the Kolache Festivals – named from the well-known Czech pastry with a fruit jam filling – in Prague and Yukon, and the Tulsa organised Oktoberfest of the German-speaking communities, have become an established part of the trend to acknowledge and celebrate ethnic diversity in the state of Oklahoma.

## V

Different aspects of a 'search' for traditional food in the light of modernisation, globalisation, historical innovation, EU regulations concerning cultural heritage, and changing food provision strategies due to modernising educational systems, are dealt with in the following four papers (Part V).

The title of Tatiana Voronina's paper, 'In Search of Traditional Food' is well justified by her analysis of contemporary food culture in Russia. She points out that significant dietary changes have occurred over the last couple of years, especially in large urban areas, which have led to the virtual disappearance of Russian traditional menus and their replacement by westernised ones. Noting that culinary borrowing was not new to Russian cuisine as, historically, it included dishes of Caucasian, French and German origin, she emphasises the ongoing replacement role which new foods are playing in the traditional menu and the speed at which they have been adopted in recent decades. According to the author, the disintegration of the former USSR in 1991 was



of particular significance in this context, as was the subsequent emergence of a free market economy and the availability of foreign foods typical of world culture. Also important were the culinary experiences of the 'New Russians', the entrepreneurs and financiers, for example, who travel abroad on business, and who, on their return, tend to influence gastronomic practices at home. She also shows that the growth of the private tourist industry has had a significant impact on traditional foods. This development has led to the opening of prestige and expensive gastronomic establishments offering the finest international cuisine, which has also meant that many traditional Russian dishes have disappeared from menus. Fast food franchises, which have proliferated in Russia, have further eroded traditional food patterns, and are considered to have contributed to a major obesity problem in contemporary Russian society.

However, all is not lost since the author tells us that while traditional Russian food, as an aspect of everyday life, is approaching relict status in large urban areas, especially in Moscow, it appears that some select and expensive city restaurants are now offering traditional dishes on their menus – thus enabling the élite of Russian society, who are worth it, to savour once again the tastes and foods of the recent past, in exclusive dining milieus. She also indicates that in humbler settings, that is, in small towns and rural areas, and in the vast territories of the Russian Federation, everyday menus still retain and include some dishes which are typical of Russian national cuisine.

Focusing on Scotland, Una A. Robertson takes both historical and contemporary perspectives into account in her search for 'traditional' Scottish food. She points to 'a problem in pinpointing a time when Scotland's diet might fit the concept of "traditional"'. She notes that household accounts and cookery books of the top level of society show that new ingredients from many parts of the world – oranges, sugar and nutmeg, for example – were components of a number of 'national dishes' even though they could not be grown locally. In fact, the cuisine of the upper echelons of Scottish society was intrinsically innovative and ready to adopt or adapt unfamiliar food items into its repertoire. Even the potato, which featured in dinner books of wealthier households, and which became a basic dietary element of the other sections of society, was an initial import.

The author suggests that it is the limited range of staple or basic foods of the majority of the people – such as, for example, oatmeal, oatcakes, pease bannocks, barley broth, buttermilk, greens, or potatoes – that should be considered the 'traditional foods' of Scotland, since they were produced, and consumed, locally. She also asks if there is, or, indeed, can really be, a return to 'traditional' foods of the past in Scotland, since many so-called traditional foods of Scotland are sourced internationally nowadays, such as lamb and beef from Australia, New Zealand and South America.

A search for, and the 'making' of, 'traditional food' in the context of the EU system of geographical indications is critically dealt with by Sarah May in her paper entitled 'Making Traditional Food – Local Interpretations of a European Protection System'. As the author points out, in order for a product to avail of the legal protection provided by the EU system of geographical indications, it is necessary for it to be

awarded the designation, ‘culinary heritage’, by the EU. It thus has to be ‘identified as being “traditional”, regionally established and historically anchored’. Using the example of cheese-making with PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) status in Germany (Odenwälder Frühstückskäse) and in Italy (Piave cheese), she demonstrates that applying for, and achieving the status of PDO for a food product – which is the highest protection level in the EU system of ‘agricultural products and foodstuffs as traditional specialities guaranteed’ – is a complex and lengthy process in which different actors, with different perspectives and interests, are involved. In the case of the above-mentioned cheeses, these actors included dairy owners, marketing directors, as well as local, regional and national government officials, all of whom, as the author shows, are involved in some way in initiating the application, and in interpreting the requirements of the EU system of protected geographical indications vis-à-vis the product for which PDO protection is being sought. Are they, therefore, effectively ‘making’ the process itself – and ‘making’ the product also – prior to the application, and influencing perceptions of the PDO-product afterwards? These, and other questions raised by the author, are critically addressed in this article.

The final paper in this section by Professor Silke Bärtsch, University of Education Karlsruhe (Pädagogische Hochschule Karlsruhe), Germany, concerns the Karlsruher Pausenbrotstudie 2012, and the search for information concerning the position of a traditional bread and butter snack brought from home by children in Germany and eaten by them during a mid-morning break in school – hence the name *Pausenbrot*. This data-gathering is part of a wider study of school food-provision in Germany. The aim of the study is to explore the significance and meaning of the German *Pausenbrot* in the context of developing a new general school-catering culture. The study has been undertaken against a background of ongoing social change in Germany, of an increasing number of mothers working outside the home on a full-time or on a part-times basis, and in response to changes in the German educational system. With regard to the latter, there is ongoing re-organisation of the school system in Germany, as traditionally, schools have been organised on a half-time basis – from c. 7.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. or variations thereof, in the different states. Because of the early start, the children have a break between c. 9.30 a.m. and 10.00 a.m. each morning during which they eat a snack traditionally prepared by mother at home and consisting of a type of bread and butter sandwich – the *Pausenbrot*. In the half-time school scenario lunches were never provided in school, but with the move towards full-time school (from c. 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.), the question of food provision in general in schools is under ongoing discussion. It is in this context that information was sought in response to the following basic questions about the *Pausenbrot* in the course of Karlsruhe study: ‘What is the situation in regard to the school morning break in Germany? Is it characterised by bread and butter brought from home, or by snack-food bought with money given to their children by their parents for this purpose?’ The research showed that most of the children in the survey brought food from home for the mid-morning break in school, and that traditional foodstuffs such as bread and butter, as in *Pausenbrot*, were still in use, though they differed from those of the past. It was also found that such a

home-produced snack was easily managed by children in the school situation, that it consisted generally-speaking of healthy food, and that it was still regarded (including by teachers) as an indication of parents' care for, and attention to, the well-being of their children.

Dublin

*Féile Shain Seain*/Feast of St. John, 24 June 2013

## Acknowledgment

Thanks to the Department of Arts and Cultural Sciences, Lund University, Sweden, for hosting the The 19th International Ethnological Food Research Conference, and to Håkan Jönsson, Ph.D., Associate Professor, and Anna Burstedt for their organistaion of the event.

## *Keynote Lecture*



# Sustainability and Fundamentalism. Moral Investment and Culinary Hedonism

*Konrad Köstlin*

## Good Feelings in General

In the summer of 2012 a yodeling seminar was advertised among folk-friends. It took place in the South Tyrolean Alps in Northern Italy. Included in the announcement was the assertion that all food, vegetables and meat, was bought from local farmers in the mountain area. This kind of a statement, as a declaration, is not so seldom met with. Yodeling – as a suggested natural use of the voice – needs an ‘unplugged’ context. One can also assume that during this meeting most participants donned casual dress woven from natural fabrics. This combination is not only due to the idea of the naturalness of the Alps. The life of the alpine herdsman and the image of green meadows dotted with flowers are included in this context. The anticipated attitude of the clients who joined the seminar is evident. But the explicitness of the verbalised addition of these markers is adjusted to a moral/ethical position of a specific world view which corresponds to a confession of the participants. Their world view is not just a quotation of the past, but tries to be its adaptation for a better future. As a confession it has to be documented in the announcement of the seminar (which was not inexpensive). The broad approach and the embedding of moralising markers reveal, that it is not only food and eating that have become encumbered with ever more values and their demands in relation to one’s lifestyle. Food, today, is so much under discussion, because – among other arguments – it pretends to bundle together global questions and individual demands.<sup>1</sup> It brings forward for discussion problems like world hunger, factory farming, carbon dioxide emissions, over-fishing, soil erosion, air pollution, water shortages, the loss of biodiversity, and global warming. A reorganisation of nutrition provision and an alteration of human behaviour seem to be an actual demand.

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1 Cf. Bringéus, Nils-Arvid, Opening Address to The 19th International Ethnological Food Research Conference, Lund 2012, in this volume.

Times have changed. Forty years ago one could argue about local food heritage in terms of revitalisation. In the search for the genuine, the old and the local, the discourse on authenticity<sup>2</sup> used traditional food not as an opposition, but as a visit to one's own past. In Germany, for instance, 'Heimat' was such a narrative, an option which included a touch of conservatism, and one that is not completely gone, but which sometimes remains undiagnosed in a renewed version of social conservatism. Starting in the nineteen-seventies, a movement which placed stress mainly on food, and garments, and on furniture and housing later on, converted this into a confession. According to Karl Marx, food, dress and housing as basic necessities, pervade all other activities of mankind. But next to the act of acquiring those basic necessities, a focus for ethnologists is to find out how mankind then bothers about politics, science, art and religion and, in general, about the production of 'sense'.

## From Heritage to Confession. New Food Narrations as a Production of 'Sense'

Today, the art of producing sense has gained a new importance. We live in a world in which, in regard to food, people are looking for something extraordinary just like stray cats appear to do. New aspects, and stories of all kinds, underline the importance of food discourses in modern societies. This may have to do with the fact that one's own body seems to be the only remaining aspect of experience that the individual has really power over. Individuals in Western societies try to express themselves by arguing with their 'seeking' bodies. They have learned (and are taught!) to feel in charge of their own body and to understand their body as an artefact for which they are responsible. Thus, the creative shaping of modern bodies shows the importance of that platform as an expression of self. And decisions on food – as something we can also share, but which is also for show and for celebration – belong to these responsibilities. Individuals today seem to walk through their food-worlds, believing that their preferences are totally self-created, similar to modern bricolages of religion. It takes them some time to realise that they share their self-created narratives and their values with many others. But, nevertheless, they connect their consumption of food to the state of the world.

A travel company promotes 'fair-travelling' by offering 'ecofriendly' programmes. In one programme, the 'sustainable dish of the day' on the Maldives Islands has a central position.<sup>3</sup> Aside from the fact that the Maldives Islands are only to be reached by means of a long-distance flight, it may produce momentarily a feeling of ecologically-correct handling (= being a moral person). And the story presented may offer the presentation and the narration of the self. Eco-travel to the 'rainbow region'

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2 Regina Bendix, *In Search of Authenticity*, Wisconsin 1987.

3 [www.cocopalm.com](http://www.cocopalm.com).

in South Africa includes waiters who carry ecologically certified lasagne to guests, to the accompaniment of sitar music, and the intention is to produce good feelings.

Since overweight Americans place a massive burden on the US healthcare system, New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg tries to reduce this problem by putting a ban on supersized soft drinks.<sup>4</sup> But the highly publicised offensive against XXL sugary sodas has erupted into a debate about personal freedom. And a day after Bloomberg had announced his plan to ban supersized soft drinks, he was on live-TV to celebrate, of all things, National Donut Day, as the city's official patron.<sup>5</sup> Jill Stein, who ran as the green candidate for the presidency in the US in 2012, declared that the physical condition of people was dependent on the air they breathed, the food they ate, and the exercises they engaged in. Personal freedom and responsibility for the environment seem to be opposite signals. The former Czech President, Vaclav Klaus, an economist and a freedom fundamentalist, has published a book entitled *Blue Planet in Green Shackles. What Is Endangered: Climate or Freedom?*<sup>6</sup> He argues that global warming has, as he says, become a symbol and an example of the clash between reality and fantasy, between truth and propaganda.

Confessions everywhere: The accent on the individual concerning food choice and the body is connected with ideas of responsibility for the environment and for sustainability, in that bundle of discourses. The (élite-) class that produces and disseminates discourses has placed much emphasis on the body. But linking it up with the status of the world is new. This may have to do with a notion that understands one's own body as the last remaining segment of self-determination. Contemporary practices of treating and shaping the body underline this.

This submission results in a high price concerning food delight in order to produce relatable sense. So it was not surprising that my hotel in Lund invited me to be 'closer to a sustainable world'.<sup>7</sup> And it is also not surprising to find, in an academic city like Lund, a place I would call a 'café moralico'. Western societies have developed indexes for sustainability which are not only ecologically based, but which also mediate a moral. Their index involves the whole life-process as a biography of the product bought. The claimed biography functions as a narration that embraces all the crucial points of our western moral code, such as child labour, the use of pesticides, and the waste of energy, in discourses on regional, seasonal, and social contexts, and on carbon

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4 [www.bloomberg.com/.../nyc-mayor-bloomberg](http://www.bloomberg.com/.../nyc-mayor-bloomberg), 6.10. 2012.

5 <http://www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel/new-york-mayor-s-soda-ban-sparks-debate-on-fat-and-freedom-a-849121.html>; 6. 10. 2012.

6 Klaus, Václav, *Blue Planet in Green Shackles. What Is Endangered: Climate or Freedom?* Washington D.C., 2008. Second edition. First published in Czech: *Modrá, nikoli zelená planeta: Co je ohrožen: klima, nebo svoboda?* Praha 2007.

7 'A day at Scandic is a day closer to a sustainable world.'... 'We give our hotel rooms back to nature'; [www.scandichotels.com/betterworld/](http://www.scandichotels.com/betterworld/); accessed August 2012.



dioxide. It makes it harder to consume food in a morally correct fashion. One must invest time in order to convert the product's life career into a personal data sheet and into one's own narrative. The farmstead on which a pig or a cow was bred has to function not only as proof of origin, but also as a part of a story, which one can visit with friends and children.

Times have changed. Any culinary heritage, often marked as 'tradition', has to withstand these claims. Seen as identity markers of nation-states, regions and communities, and of group identities in general, they are described by and attached to food. Marketing strategies gave birth to new culinary landscapes, which are also widely accessible for global consumption.<sup>8</sup> As such they can be perceived as being the spearhead of modernity. Domestic, as well as international consumers, are visiting not only their own pasts; their culinary excursions lead through a broad diversity of food options. These performances are often connected to representations of lifestyles. Talking of representations, it is pivotal to realise, that we are handling a set of selected items from any regional past which is included within the idea of 'tradition'.

Cookbooks and tourism have changed as cookbooks give more and more information about the cultural contexts, and later on also about the social contexts, of the production and use of regional food. The books have been converted into a new type of travel-guide by combining food with, and attaching food to, the depicted lifestyle of the region, and by bringing it – at least for readers of a certain awareness – under the regime of the new moral code. Similar to the LOHAS which represent the 'Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability', their anglophone ballad is directed to the (semi-) intellectual audience that is looking for good feelings in a world which feels a lack of orientation.

Since the 1970s, it has become more evident that the affirmation of a certain food has to do with tourism experiences and lifestyle, and it has also become more obvious how that has happened. It has to do with preferences which are performed throughout one's daily life. For instance, the pizza-pasta complex is mainly dominant in Northern European countries which are not really known for their exquisite cuisine, but which have suffered permanently under a enduring crisis of their kitchen (and – their lifestyles?). It may be true that cabbage is not fattening because it is seldom to everybody's liking. On the other hand, this may explain the addiction to pizza, and so on. A similar situation is to be found in the United States in connection with southern-American Tex-Mex-Food.<sup>9</sup> Tourism preferences correlate with food experiences at home and abroad. Their choice has to do with a modern type of confession representation – both in regard to food and tourism destinations. And, in regard to the pizza-pasta-complex, it is sometimes followed by the piazza-feeling even in open-air-

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8 Austria has got additional contours, for instance, in regard to regions of wine production, such as 'Blaufränkisch-Land'.

9 Quotation: 'Since most Americans have no idea how to cook': <http://blog.emeidi.com/2007/12/30/regional-essen/>; accessed April 2013.

surroundings not intended for this purpose. People have inhaled the piazza-feelings with the food. Food preferences are more explicitly seen as an expression of the self-entwined in the representation of one's lifestyle. European aficionados of Japanese architecture and housing prefer sushi and the futon, and they may wear – at least at home – clothes of Japanese style. The explicitness of that declaration underlines the symbolic meaning of one's lifestyles often so obviously that one can read the actor's choice as a confession.

## Confessions

Different values attached to culinary heritage, and attitudes towards food and the world in general, as a form of social and cultural responsibility, are under discussion in these times. These values connected with food now filter the food, not only in terms of male or female<sup>10</sup> in the salad-or-meat-opposition, but more and more in terms of what is good and bad. Tradition (which has often neglected these values) is now always seen in a positive perspective. The distance towards the local culinary (too much, too fat, too often) heritage is converted into a refinement of the old form of nourishment. 'Fairtrade' as a marker evokes the consumers' good feelings as it involves buying products with that certification (and assertion) of social responsibility. 'Bio' has its accent on one's body; 'fairtrade' stresses social and cultural aspects of production as a moral for one's own world.

In 1972, the singer, songwriter and alto-saxophonist, Artie Kaplan, released an album entitled 'Confessions of a male chauvinist pig'.<sup>11</sup> Confession is my catchword. Male chauvinism and its consumption of meat can be a shibboleth. The requirement that meat be avoided is to be found in 'Lonely Hearts'-type columns, providing evidence for a principal moral position that has replaced former information concerning, for instance, non-smokers, in those columns. Tradition undergoes a critical observance requirement since the vegetarian movement and veggies postulate 'cooking without bones'. The refusal to kill animals<sup>12</sup> ('brothers and sisters') has established its own categories: Lacto-Vegetarians, Ovo-Vegetarians, Frutarians,<sup>13</sup> Vegans (like the US boxing star, Mike Tyson), Freegans and – really in between – the Flexitarians. The differentiated scale depicts the orientations and, as a consequence, the necessity of a

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10 Nothing is more contagious than a person talking about their passion. In German-speaking countries advertised bio-joghurt was a snowball which became an avalanche.

11 [http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artie\\_Kaplan](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artie_Kaplan); accessed 16.3. 2013.

12 The protagonist of this notion is Paul Singer with his book *Animal Liberation*, New York 1975.

13 Invented for an ironic dialogue in the film 'Notting Hill' (1999). See [www.imdb.com/title/tt0125439/quotes](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0125439/quotes); accessed April 2013.

terminology for different confessions. A big fair entitled ‘Veggie Planet’<sup>14</sup> held in Austria in the spring of 2012 indicates the importance of the rise of orientations and their cultural embedding in one’s life. ‘How do vegetarians call for dinner? Hurry up kids, food is welking!’ We have learned from folklore studies, that the existence of jokes, stories and legends underlines the importance of an issue.<sup>15</sup> Jokes indicate that an issue has arrived as an important topic in the centre of a society.

To be recognised as a vegetarian can be a part of one’s confession. When offering an excursion for students twenty years ago in the former Eastern Block, they pointed first to their food-preferences, their concern about the right food. At that time, moralistic clients were mostly female, urban, and educated protagonists, who were prepared and willing to invest money and time in good food. When they went to the local market, they used baskets, in which they placed the leek beautifully. Only on Saturdays was there a perceptible male dominance at the local market. Men present themselves as slow-fooders which they celebrate at weekends. Celebratory food of this kind has its cultural time. It is the time for (semi-) public confession, a confession displayed by IT-managers as well as by migrants of all kinds. Thus, identity markers are also evident even when lifestyles are not always on show.

Times have changed: Carlo Petrini created and invented Slow Food as a European critique of McDonald’s Fast Food which, in Europe, is perceived as an expression of the American way of life and, as such, explicitly not European. Following the legend, Slow Food was founded when McDonald’s opened a restaurant at the Spanish Steps in Rome in 1986. This good and plausible story has already been transformed into ‘real’ believed history. This is understandable from the point of view of location – in the sense of the European icon, Rome, and its cuisine, being endangered at that time. Slow Food was seen as an opposition, viewed in terms of ‘culture’, as against a US ‘Non-culture’, that is as a foreign lifestyle. As we live in USP-times, the Unique Selling Proposition has become a mass phenomenon to articulate one’s difference even from this mass. Motivations and practices of choice, and the display of food consumption, have changed since then. The McDonald’s case may have sharpened the situation. But the fact that in Germany Turkish kebab is more often sold than McDonald’s burgers, accentuates an aspect of the specific European idea of food culture. Kebab is perceived as an ethnic food. But nobody would, at first glance, at least, concede the ethnic label in relation to the US-burger (a second glance might regard it as an ethnic confession).

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14 [www.veggieplanet.net/](http://www.veggieplanet.net/); accessed April 2013.

15 Brunvand, Jan Harold, *The Vanishing Hitchhiker. American Urban Legends and Their Meanings*, New York 1981.

## Carbon Footprint and Confessions

What people eat is incorporated into their confession and is connected with the performance of identity. This is not anymore the old and quiet form of inner-directedness.<sup>16</sup> It is a new type of moral which pretends and claims to be self-established according to new information which is mediated by NGOs, and so on. The carbon footprint may serve as an example. Since we are supposed to preserve nature, we are urged more and more to avoid that footprint. Until recently, most of us did not even realise that we were causing such a footprint to happen. In the meantime, we have learned to establish a new kind of conscience, that of being guilty when using an aircraft. We have to explain our situation and we have to defend our decision to take a flight, having been taught that we leave that carbon footprint behind when we do so.<sup>17</sup> It is, of all companies, BP, the British Petroleum Company, which is teaching us that we leave carbon traces in our wake. Websites with carbon calculators<sup>18</sup> tell us that the electric toothbrush (which my dentist has recommended) produces more carbon than a manual one. And inside the EU, electric bulbs are condemned to hell and their sale has ended. Using the Internet is also not without harm to the environment. The computers of our world produce more carbon dioxide than flight operations worldwide. And we are taught to change our perception of cows ruminating peacefully in green meadows, and to view them as climate-killers. We now know that eighteen per cent of hazardous greenhouse gases result from milk and meat production. On the other hand, nobody would buy milk if, instead of green meadows, the container depicted the climatic conditions arising from its production. We are taught that the production of one kilo of bio-beef generates as much carbon dioxide as that arising from a one hundred and thirteen kilometre car journey on a highway, and that the production of each litre of that white milk has the carbon footprint equivalent of a domestic flight.

The English Tesco chain has developed a carbon label which presents, besides details of a product's calorie content, the carbon trace involved in its production, retailing and recycling. This invasion of our minds tends to result in a new moral in regard to our responsibility towards the environment. And we also know that men are damaging the climate more than women since men eat more beef, the production of which destroys tropical rain forests, and so on. One-person-households, in regard to carbon dioxide, are also damaging the climate – therefore, divorces should be forbidden. Thus meat-eaters and singles feel degraded as they are regarded as being naughty. Meat, as a food preference, can find a confessional conversion: A German

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16 Riesman, David, Glazer, Nathan, Denney, Reuel, *The Lonely Crowd. A Study of the Changing of the American Character*, New York 1950.

17 The very moment elitarian practices become popular, they seem to be bad, and are to be damned.

18 <http://www.treehugger.com/renewable-energy/bps-carbon-footprint-calculator.html>; accessed April 2013.

magazine called 'Beef' has an image of a big lump of meat on each cover, and so fights back; and a shop in Lund offers 101 kinds of sausages.

## Tradition: Eating Moralised Culture

Times have changed. The management of culinary heritage has changed. Tradition as culinary heritage is used like a stone quarry. Only elements of the past are to be identified as 'tradition'. But the emphasis of the argument changes in the direction of the good feelings which are to be gained by following the new quartet of regional, seasonal, social and sustainable imperatives in relation to food. Traditional food, since it is only selectively packed into the sack of heritage and its culture, translates into a changeable new phenomenon. Its selection reflects a new goal – which is mainly verbalised but not always fulfilled – that is, to enjoy food, which, because of good feelings in terms of responsibility according to the above-mentioned quartet, allows a new hedonism based also on a moral code, to emerge.

Both, tensions and opportunities, in the processes of esteeming, valuing and protecting cultural heritage, and of mobilising it for development purposes in the wider social sphere, belong together. Such a wider sphere is René Redzepi's idea of the New Nordic kitchen.<sup>19</sup> With such a coined name we can explore how the idea of heritage is produced, and how it is attached to a context of shifting and mobile values which pretend to correspond to 'Nordic' values in general.

Times have really changed: People have to manufacture sense and meanings by establishing their own individual order. The pleasure surrounding food and sustainability is strongly interrelated with other discourses which have moral orientations. All of us are tourists in our own world. We are doing tourism, and as tourists, we appreciate food as a form of cultural heritage (including its conversion toward a form of contemporary edibility). This kind of edibility is a cultural one – we eat culture and lifestyles. In this regard, we communicate food as a form of cultural heritage not only to the 'real' tourists but as a story to ourselves as members of multi-cultural societies in general.

This reflects also the situation of the discipline of European ethnology. It has always been strictly a textbook on today's world even if we have also used historical materials to develop some of our arguments.

Culture itself can only be seen in its representations. And, European ethnology usually has to do with cultural facts as representations, which have a tendency towards representing the lower strata of society and its majorities. I admit that, at this time, the debate mentioned above touches only a minor part of Western societies and reflects only some discourses, since the vast majority of consumers stick with functional food,

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19 <http://noma.dk/> : 'In an effort to shape our way of cooking, we look to our landscape and delve into our ingredients and culture, hoping to rediscover our history and shape our future.' This position may be compared with the trademarking of the 'Nordic Model' as the Swedish vision of the country's social democrats as an advanced social democracy.

fast food, and the nutrition industry. Very many people eat food which is subject to reproach for being just 'stuff', and for being too cheap, and for being produced under conditions which clearly neglect moral aspects, and all the other facets of respect towards nature and sustainability. At the same time, we have a moralistic-coloured and multiple-orientated gastronomic boom, and elaborate discourses expressed as a form of personal confession. We live in a confessional society.

## A Sustainable Vocabulary

Sustainability is a moderate word which has entered our vocabulary and our minds in a non-aggressive manner. Concepts such as sustainability, moral investment, and culinary hedonism, try to create a link between morality and food, by understanding nutrition as a moral investment. Sticking to the seasons, and to the regions, and celebrating local knowledge, evokes good feelings, and can lead to a new, religious fundamentalism. This is not yet an avenue but a path which gets broader and which will lead from tradition to fundamentalism. The conversion of food into a moralistic event offers a terminology for the production and the reproduction of ourselves. The touch of the magic word, sustainability, signifies locally-produced food as statement and as an expression of the localised self. Regional food, following all the demands mentioned above moralises the region, fills regional products with a new sense and, similar to religion, of an awareness of eating a moral culture.

What is striking is the crossing over between hybridity and/as tradition as a new polyphony of the moral as a desirable perspective. It is not anymore a question of just sticking to the season and region as mentioned in the above quartet. The implication of there being a worldwide responsibility in relation to food connects local ethics with global ethics and culinary hedonism, and includes 'respect' (a new generalising catchword) for the seasonal and the regional in this new confession. It pretends to start at home, thus displaying short distances, nearness and, as a result, good feelings and pleasurable experiences, which appeal to one's good conscience as an argument for the regional kitchen. Any good story develops its own moral.

## Nationalising the Moral: USP

Within the last decade, official Austria has developed an attitude, which regards and celebrates traditional conscience as an ecological one, by connecting ecological aspects of conscience with a pleasure, which is ennobled by a slight touch of shelf-patriotism. It declares traditional knowledge to be 'regional property'.<sup>20</sup> This branding of the

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20 <http://www.gr-marketing.at/ueber-uns/genuss-region-oesterreich/>; accessed 7. 4. 2013.

regions is getting more and more important, not only as a culinary currency, but also as a cultural-economic one.<sup>21</sup>

Viewed in this way, society is split up, and groups and moods emerge which may soon dissolve into a new 'figuration' (Norbert Elias<sup>22</sup>). On the one hand it is bound to the bing of the microwave, while on the other, aproned star-catchers can be seen – not only in TV-Shows (but also, often following this example, at home, or in fancy restaurants) – who celebrate food as in a Christian service and who present the results like the wonder deeds of Jesus Christ. Artefacts – the bookrack in a lectern-like position, the hearth orientated to the audience like the altar, and the language of the *nova regio* kitchen, follows with that Latinised 'nova regio' label, the ritual pattern of the Catholic church.

## Fundamentalism vs. Manifold Competences

Since food and nutritional choices are declared to be individual decisions and since many seem to have been freely made, at least in terms of nutrition, the decision, nevertheless, is proclaimed as being a great responsibility and – like freedom – as also being a heavy burden, at the same time. And on top of the guilty consumers<sup>23</sup> – one has been told – are consumers of all kinds of animal products. The alarming appeal to vegetarianism seems to be content even with pescetarians and flexitarians, with weekend-vegetarians who mainly avoid meat, and with those who sometimes relapse. Is meat – like smoking – seen as a sin and is salad somehow sexy?

The moralisation of the consumption of traditional food is an attempt at innovation: a new facet within the dynamics of consumerism belonging to the permanency of innovations in search of the new, and insatiately in search of an ethical and moralistic quasi-religious bonding of the individual. It is easy for well-off people to live this moral – by buying vegetables in a small shop, for example. They may eat meat only once a week, meat which they buy at the butchers next door, or at an organic

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21 Culinarism and local culture are used as a regional currency. See, for example, Bingemeier Hans, Gerlach, Susanne, *Alpenküche. Genuß und Kultur. Kombiniertes Kochbuch mit Rezepten und kulturellen Beiträgen.... Spannende Reportagen über Almen, Kuhkämpfe, Schnapsbrennen kombiniert mit 120 alpenländischen Rezepten*, Stuttgart 2007; similar to a kind of 'Foodstyling', cultural signets like a Parmigiano knife attached to the cover of an antipasti-book and quoting the region like the attribute of a Christian saint.

22 Elias, Norbert, 'Figuration', in Schäfers, Bernhard, (ed.), *Grundbegriffe der Soziologie*, Stuttgart 2003, 88-91.

23 Once a month the Siemens Corporation in Germany offers vegetarian food in their casinos in more than fifty of their locations. Sustainability is the operator's 'philosophy'(!). The action which is based on regional products is named 'Terra'. The employees react in a friendly manner. But a minority converts the terra-day into a terror-day. Whole teams go – irritatingly enough – all together to McDonald's. Cf. Freiberger, Harald, 'Knochenhart', *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 4./5. Februar 2012.

working farmstead<sup>24</sup> on which they may also spend their holidays with the children.<sup>25</sup> They have an apartment situated not far from their university or their IT office, so they can use a bicycle to travel to work. In some respects their life is, perhaps, a little more complicated than that of others. But all the trouble gives rise to good feelings, since they consume products and live without exploiting people in distant countries, or at-home-farmers, or local shop owners. At home: this is quite a new expression. It means a new kind of confession. And the public is now the new father confessor. The moral has now turned into a hybrid confession towards the society in which we live: it is also an other-direction. And, as a matter of conscience, the promotion of the ethic of asceticism and quality, of less and better-produced products, is on display as a confession. The uncomfortable hero of the European Enlightenment, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, once looked at societies which he did not appreciate at all. Today's alarmists tend to urge all their compatriots to follow the same moral. The food-talibans are fundamentalists and, like the tag of fundamentalists, there is an absolute lack of humour in that mythology of moral authenticity.

## Conclusion

The class-society has reached new contours, and, leaving aside the democratic aspects in food, since, as it is within everybody's reach, it can equalise class differences, but not distinction. Food that was reserved for the upper classes can now to be afforded by a larger number of people. This was obviously not the goal of the inventors, those entrepreneurs who offered genuine champagne so inexpensively that it became attractive to all – but also for the upper classes to fill up their cellars.

The accent on tradition and on the region within the debate on sustainability is connected with life-style products. Their producers are tied to the consumers' loyalty and their public confession, because anywhere in the world their kind of product will be offered less expensively, since transport even by plane seems to be inexpensive. The stuff – lamb chops from New Zealand, for instance – stays lean, regardless of the conditions of transport. The big cities are the places in which the consumers of local food live, while villagers go to the local supermarket or drive once a month to a discount store to buy provisions. Charles Simic, a Serbian-born US-American poet, has pointed out that life in the countryside cannot be so good, as otherwise the big cities (as the better solution) would not exist and grow: The model of agrarian localism works quite well when there are big cities nearby.

Surrounded by options and their images as never before, and confronted with an information explosion via Facebook and YouTube, television channels, and all the various kinds media that are promoting and 'reflecting' types of food, traditional food, as the topic of the conference, seems to offer the seemingly unmanageable. The image

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24 Where the animals can live on straw.

25 'Der Bauer ihres Vertrauens' ('the farmer you trust').



of tradition pretends to offer a reduction in that complexity, not an endless, but a bounded and limited set of options. These options seem to consist of a capable, and an autonomously ludic, approach of changing types of interactivity as variations of the local. The incorporated reflections promise to offer a reduced form of complexity of the seemingly simple and authentic. The mutation leads to a new vision of tradition: regional, seasonal and socially-produced food pretending to offer the proposition that traditional food was produced under human conditions – a friendly glorification of the past.

Moral consumption (which also existed under different conditions in the past) is today focused on the individual and on his/her decision. This decision is the subject of a displayed confession. This new practice of protestantism as a visualised confession is necessary in order to combine moral inner-directedness with its public documentation. Seen from this perspective, food which includes all aspects of economic activity – the life of animals, the environment, and human beings – can offer a pleasurable experience: This assertion leads to a moral confession and explicitly converts food consumption into a moral event. By understanding tourist experiences of heritage sites (and since we are tourists at home), narrative, memory and emotion, and the interpretation and the communication of the values of heritage in order to engage with complex audiences, becomes normal. Today, identity building has to happen through tangible and intangible heritage, challenging traditions and regeneration programmes based on heritage and the economies of nostalgia. The processes of commodifying the past for touristic consumption – which is also ours – is a form of a permanent ‘invention of tradition’.<sup>26</sup>

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26 Hobsbawm, Eric, Ranger, Terence O., (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge 1992.

*Part I: The New Nordic Kitchen*



## *Keynote Lecture*

# The New Nordic Diet and Danish Food Culture

*Bi Skaarup*

This is a story about how an old inherited food culture was rejected, how a new food culture was created, and how the old food culture came back in from the cold.

In 1995-1996 I was given the chance to lead the Danish part of a large EU-financed project called *Euroterroir* which dealt with what was called the *specificity* of food products. The expression ‘specificity’ is a typical example of the kind of terminology fostered by the EU. The best way to describe the meaning of specificity is to say that my job was to find typical Danish foods in a range of defined categories such as bread, meat products, fruit, fish, and so on. ‘Typical’ was defined more precisely to mean food that had been produced in Denmark for at least one hundred years. As a result of the project I got a chance to carry out research into Danish food culture. A basic question was: Were there any original Danish foodstuffs still in existence? One important aspect of this work was that it did not deal with quality, as the project concerned food culture, not gastronomy. When I embarked on the project I thought that I would find a few products that met the requirement of being originally Danish, but to my great surprise I found that there were many such foodstuffs. Within the frame of the project, we had been allowed to deal with one hundred products – if we could muster that many – and apparently there were many more which met all guideline requirements.

As this European project progressed, it turned out that several of the countries involved had trouble getting the job done, as there were not sufficient experts on hand to carry out the research; so we in Denmark were given the possibility of describing a further thirty or so Danish products as part of the project.

The most important result of this work – from my point of view at least – was, that I realised that there was quite a lot to be proud of with regard to Danish food products. Like most Danes of my generation I thought that Denmark was – and indeed always had been – an underdeveloped country when it came to gastronomy.

Before I started on the project I did not know that some of the best sour cherries in the world, *Stevnsbærret*, are to be found in Denmark, and that the cherry tree in

question cannot grow and give quality fruit anywhere else. The same can be said about the pear, 'Clara Friis', a small, crisp, and very fresh-tasting green pear. But the most astonishing discovery was the many bread types and cakes that were to be found only in Denmark: e.g. the many different types of morning buns, *wienerbrød* (Danish pastry), and cream-cakes (*flødekager*). Nobody had actually described that situation before, and nobody, especially, not the people producing them, were aware of this.<sup>1</sup>

This was the time when discussion about Danish food culture had just started. In The Danish Academy of Gastronomy, of which I was a member from the early 1990s, we were worried about the extremely low quality of food manufactured by Danish producers, and we felt there was a need for a public debate about the matter. This resulted in the organisation of a conference in the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Copenhagen, in the autumn of 1995. This was led by three ministers of government, and was attended by the best cooks and food writers in Denmark, as well as by some university academics, a few curators from Danish cultural museums, and many journalists.

The general feeling expressed at the conference was that Danish food culture was of poor quality. The typical Danish dinner was described as consisting of a ready-prepared dinner heated in the microwave and consumed in front of the T.V. I knew from my research that that was not true, but the interesting thing was, that that was the general perception of Danish food culture, especially among the younger conference participants.

But one thing was certainly true – the typical Danish consumer went after *quantity* rather than *quality*, and if he or she finally wanted something good to eat it was French, Italian or Spanish cuisine that was chosen. As a cultural historian I could not but wonder how this had come about. How did a nation reach a state of total neglect of its food cultural heritage? So I set out to try to answer this question.

To do this it was necessary to go back two hundred and fifty years. Denmark was then an agricultural nation with about eighty per cent or more of the population living on the land and occupied with farming. The Age of Enlightenment changed Denmark markedly during the eighteenth century. Enlightenment ideas favoured agricultural development and was led by representatives of the great landowners from the new aristocracy, many of whom had come up from the Northern dukedoms south of the Baltic, e.g. Adam Gottlob Moltke, originally from Mecklenburg, Andreas Peter Bernstorff and Christian Ditleff Reventlow, both from Holsten, who foresaw good possibilities in letting the peasants take over the land.

The resulting agricultural revolution happened quietly in Denmark, and the transformation of the peasants from serfs to landowners took place over a relatively short period of time. In a matter of twenty years Danish farmland changed hands and the field systems were altered from the old rundale scattered system to larger coherent

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<sup>1</sup> Euroterroir – the Danish contribution can be studied in Danish as well as in English, at [www.historiskmad.dk](http://www.historiskmad.dk).

fields constituting each farm. Some farmers were allotted new land, as was the case with my family. Together with two other farmers, we were moved seven kilometres to the north of the village of Egelev where we had lived until then, out on the parish common at the uppermost northern part of the Island of Falster.

I had always found agricultural history particularly boring with its concern for field systems and property, and its lack of interest in the history of daily life and people. But having moved to a farm away from the village, I felt I had to attempt to understand the place to which I had moved. So I took up farm history again.

What I realised when studying the history of farming in Denmark from 1750 to the early twentieth century was, that the first few decades for farmers as owner-occupiers – the fact that the farmers now owned their farms and the land – were not easy. Having lived in the close society of the village, where generations of family and friends had resided for centuries, and where they had worked in common as a community to farm the land, the farmers were now on their own. From an economic point of view, the fact that Denmark held on to the wrong horse, so to speak, during the Napoleonic Wars, also did not help the farmers' case. Thus in the first half of the nineteenth century, the country's economy was in ruin, and agricultural prices were disastrous.

Several attempts were made by the farmers to make new networks, to find new ways of working together – as a substitute for the lost community of the villages. But it was not until the defeat of 1864 when Denmark lost the war against Prussia and Austria, that something happened – a simple wholesale society – in Danish *indkøbsforening* or *andelsforening* – was founded, after which a whole series of such societies were set up, leading to what is now called the co-operative movement, *andelsbevægelsen*. The Danish farmers had started a system of co-operation that worked for them, and during the course of the last half of the nineteenth century and the decades immediately following, they established many successful dairies, bacon factories, and slaughterhouses, on the basis of co-operative principles.

The typical Danish farm around the year 1800 had been a self-sufficient unit producing the food required by the inhabitants of the farm. Other commodities were secured by means of bartering goods from the farm in a grocery store in the nearest town.

This natural resource economy was abandoned in the late eighteenth hundreds, when Danish farmers directed their production efforts towards the British market, and in so doing started to earn money. Farm economy thus changed from a natural resource economy to one based on cash. This led to a marked change for the better in farmers' lives, not least as far as the women and their work were concerned. This also had an influence on the food that was produced and consumed by people in the countryside.

## A Food Revolution

Around the year 1800, the typical Danish farm produced all of the food needed for its residents. The women prepared the food from the products of the land and from the animals reared on it. At that time, Denmark did not, in the least, have a uniform food culture. The country was characterised by several different food cultures based on the conditions of the soil, geography and local climate, and the effects these could have on crops and animals.

We know this from the agriculturalist Gregers Begtrup's description of the country at the beginning of the nineteenth century. He not only described the land and the crops but also the conditions under which the people lived and how they managed to survive. In doing this he naturally described the food of each part of the country and gave a typical summer and winter menu for a farm. The menus from the different parts of the country were mainly based on the following:

Fish: North- and West-Jutland

Milk products: East Jutland and Fyn

Pork and peas: Zealand and the Islands south of Zealand (Lolland-Falster and Møn<sup>2</sup>)

As a general rule, diets in different parts of Denmark consisted mainly of spoon-food, such as thick soups, porridges and gruel, that is, foods normally eaten by using a spoon.

Cereals, especially barley and rye, played an important role, while wheat appeared only in the South of Jutland and in Lolland-Falster, and only for special occasions. In the rest of the country, the bolted rye flour bread was the fine bread, while the coarse rye bread was the daily bread all over the country, and had been ever since rye was introduced after the coming of Christianity.

To most of us this peasant food sounds very coarse and unappetising, but after having studied it for some time, and after having made the dishes concerned, I must admit that it certainly had its good qualities, just as it, no doubt, formerly had when cooked by a good mistress. And to my mind, it is important to stress that when people grow their own vegetables and fruit, and rear their own animals for meat, they will probably do what is possible to make the food taste good, if given the opportunity.

A hundred years later – around 1900 – Danish food, both rural and urban, had changed completely. The Danes were now eating what I call 'the-sauce-and-potato-cuisine' that came to dominate the diet throughout the twentieth century, and a daily diet based on local produce was disappearing more and more all over the country.

To understand this remarkable change one has to remember the situation of the Danish farmer. After centuries of serfdom, the Danish peasant finally became his own master, and after travelling a long economic road he finally began to earn money. This

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<sup>2</sup> Begtrup, G., *Beskrivelse over Agerdyrkningens Tilstand i Danmark*, Bd. 1-7, København 1803-1812.

meant a complete reorganisation of the work on the farm. Danish agriculture was modernised much more thoroughly than that of any other European country during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

For the women, the fact that cash was coming into the house meant that it was not necessary to produce everything from scratch, as had previously been done. Commodities were now being bought instead of being produced and processed on the farm. This meant relief for the women from much heavy work, but at the same time it also led, in the course of a few generations, to a loss of knowledge and understanding of product treatment.

This happened in a century of disaster for the Danish state. The Danes suffered several losses during the nineteenth century. As stated above, sympathy for the French emperor in the Napoleonic Wars resulted in national bankruptcy, then Norway was lost (1814), and finally the country suffered total humiliation as a result of its defeat by Prussia and Austria in 1864, after which Denmark became a small unimportant state. This last blow resulted in a loss of self-esteem for all of the Danish people.

An attempt to restore some national pride was made by the Folk High Schools, but what has become very characteristic of Danish society since the late nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century, is its growing dependence on institutional authority. This was definitely the case with regard to food. While young girls were formerly trained at home by their mothers or sent to another home to be trained there, institutions increasingly took over the role of training with regard to food and household economy.

Home Economics Schools, *husholdningskoler*, began to appear from around 1900, and the daughters of farmers, as well as those of the bourgeoisie, were sent away for training as good housewives or housekeepers. And, where previously every good housewife had specialities and secret recipes, and special ways of spoiling family and guests, there then emerged just one 'correct' way of doing things, courtesy of the home economic schools, in which hygiene and economic modesty were all-powerful rules.

The cookbooks from around 1900 and the following decades prove this clearly. And while Danish farming concentrated on producing food for external markets, the Danes were coaxed into consuming what could be called the left-overs from the butter and bacon industries. Instead of butter, they were told to eat margarine, and they were taught to substitute the many parts of the pigs that were leftover for the finer meat that had been exported to Britain.

Offal, for example, had never been consumed to any great extent in Denmark. But campaigns were initiated to show how dishes could be prepared from it and how healthy it was.<sup>3</sup> Danes were invited, or rather coaxed into eating dishes that looked like the real thing but were actually something else. Like the mock-turtle dish (*forloren skildpadde*), which is made of veal organ meats, Danes developed many mock-dishes, which utilised pork left-overs instead of the usual veal, beef, chicken or venison. The

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<sup>3</sup> Boyhus, Else-Marie, *Grisen – en køkkenhistorie*, Gyldendal 1998, 62.



food representing the era before the agricultural and industrial revolution was now considered *peasant food* – and this designation was definitely not meant as a compliment.

In the 1930s, when photographic pictures started to appear in the cookbooks, this situation was well illustrated. For example, a housewife was depicted as working in a completely clinical environment. She was clad in a nice white clean and newly-ironed smock, she held her equipment in the correct way, and she was clearly working in accordance with the rules. There was no smile, no sign of enjoyment or satisfaction in the work. This was not for fun; it was a very serious business. As Else-Marie Boyhus, our great Danish food historian, said in her paper at the meeting in the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in 1995: ‘all the enjoyment and fun had been taken out of the preparation of food. There was no prestige in housework anymore, and all the creativity and sensuality it could have involved had been drained away. When the economic situation finally allowed it, the housewives of Denmark were not persuaded to go into the labour market; they fled screaming out into it during the 1960s and 1970s.’

The problem with this situation was that these women, in spite of their full-time jobs, still had responsibility for the provision of the daily meals of the family. From skimming through women’s magazines of the period, it becomes evident that the mantras surrounding cooking were: *fast, easy and cheap*. It was just a matter of getting the family fed, and when mother finally needed to have a day off, it was celebrated with fast food from the pizzeria, a bag of chips, candy, a litre of cola, and a video-film from the store around the corner.

This was where Danish food was in the late twentieth century. Several generations of youngsters had grown up without having any knowledge of how to use typically Danish produce, and without any acquaintance with Danish food culture, and certainly without any feeling or memory of enjoyment or any other nice sensation connected to it. The general view of Danish food was that it was of poor quality and that it lacked any products of special quality.

## The Politicians Take Action

This was the culinary state of Denmark at the time of the conference about Danish Food Culture held in the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in 1995, which I have mentioned at the beginning of this paper. The outcome of this meeting was that the minister of cultural affairs set up a working group, the purpose of which was to find out how to turn the culinary boat, so to speak, and get Danish food culture to move in the right direction. Six people, including myself, were appointed to this working group. After a few months we presented a report which proposed that an institution working with the *Danish meal* and inspired by the Swedish Grythyttan, giving academic training in food culture to people working with food in all walks of life, be established.

Efforts to establish the institution commenced in 1999 when a suitable house was found in the old and partly-abandoned slaughterhouse area of Copenhagen. National funding was forthcoming, and the building work commenced.

While all of this was taking place, the leader of the project set up a series of events focusing on different aspects of food and food culture. These food festivals – as they could be called – were extremely popular with the public. The right button had been definitely hit; there was no doubt about that.

Unfortunately, the social democratic government then in power, fell. As a result, the new food-establishment project and many more of the previous government's schemes were dropped, on the basis of their alleged *patronisation of opinion*, by the new liberal government which came to power in 2001. But something had been started. The debate about Danish food and its qualities, or lack of them, continued apace.

## The New Nordic Food is Born

In 1996, Claus Meyer, the famous Danish gastronomic innovator, had asserted in an interview that if Danish food culture were to be recreated or revitalised, it would be necessary to look towards France in this connection.

I was strongly opposed to that view. As I had just completed the *Euroterroir* Project I knew that there was much inspiration and useful knowledge about good quality products to be found in Denmark. Claus Meyer was never a cultural snob, but, just like everybody else who was actively involved with food at that time, he lacked knowledge and historical awareness of traditional Danish food culture. Food, as a cultural phenomenon, was not an accepted topic of study in academic circles in Denmark in 1990s.

In the course of the next few years, Claus Meyer changed his mind about the necessity of looking to France in order to transform Danish cuisine, and he was in fact the guiding spirit behind the movement for New Scandinavian Food. The New Scandinavian Food manifesto was formulated by eight cooks from the Scandinavian countries at a conference held in Noma restaurant, Copenhagen, on 1 November 2004.<sup>4</sup>

Many of us attending and, indeed, giving papers, at this meeting were doubtful about what, if anything, this manifesto would lead to. Were these just the fine words of a group of excellent cooks, and would the idea of New Scandinavian Food ever be mentioned, let alone acted on, again? Would it all end up as a small storm in a teacup?

But time was on our side. Nationally – in the Scandinavian countries – and internationally, the subject gained much attention. The idea that the food products of our part of the world had many good qualities and possibilities, and that they could provide a sensible and healthy alternative to the conventional industrialised food of the western world, caught on.

But it ought to be stressed that what was envisaged for the new Scandinavian food was not that the Danes should eat reindeer from Lapland or musk ox from Greenland,

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<sup>4</sup> The manifesto of The New Nordic Diet, now more often called New Nordic Food, or New Nordic Cuisine, is published at: [http://www.clausmeyer.dk/en/the\\_new\\_nordic\\_cuisine\\_/manifesto\\_.html](http://www.clausmeyer.dk/en/the_new_nordic_cuisine_/manifesto_.html).

or that the Finn's should start drinking milk from Danish cows grazing on the marches of Southern Jutland. Rather, the intention was, and indeed still is today, to let the distinguished cooks be inventive and creative with some of the best ingredients from Scandinavia. In this way they would be the innovative front-runners in proving to the world that Scandinavian foodstuffs were of fine quality, but most importantly, they would also be the dispersers of the idea, and certainly of the culture, to all areas of society, that the food grown right where we live – in our back garden, so to speak – is definitely the best. All of that meant that we would have to rediscover our native food resources and their qualities, and here our old food culture was relevant as a means of providing an understanding of, and guidelines for, the use of local produce.

The New Nordic Food (NNF) is a construction. Scandinavia is a huge geographical area. If you fold a map of Europe just North of Denmark, the North of Norway will reach into the Sahara. This is just to illustrate that there is no point in talking about a geographical or a cultural unity in relation to Scandinavia. Nevertheless, our historical background does give us a certain sense of community in some respects. But to imagine that we have, or had, or indeed should have in the future, a common food culture is utopian. This is why the NNF's manifesto – which is the creed of its creators and followers – deals with the basic and common denominators that actually exist in all of Scandinavia. For example, the geographical conditions, which represent the northernmost border for the growing of many crops, give the plants an extra taste because of the hard conditions in which they have to survive. This has been known amongst winegrowers for ages, but it is true for many other crops, too.

But another important parameter is the local food culture, and in order to incorporate that into this NNF, it has to be rediscovered and reinvented on the basis of all the knowledge to be gleaned from the old ways of doing things. The work on this part of the project is only just beginning, and here the help of ethnologists and food historians from all over Scandinavia is required.

The plan for the realisation of NNF, as described by Claus Meyer at the conference in 2004, was as follows:

## Phase One

The implementation of NNF was to get going by letting the super cooks be the front-runners by creating new and completely different dishes based on produce, wild as well as cultivated, from all of Scandinavia. This has already been a success, and has indeed put Scandinavia on the gastronomic map of the world. But, very importantly, this has actually created interest and pride in local produce among the citizens of the region – the very thing that was lost one hundred years ago.

## Phase Two

We now have gone into phase two. Claus Meyer stated at the introductory meeting in Noma, that when the first phase had been a success, the next and most important step was the creation or the construction of a new diet or food for the people in general. This phase is being implemented right now. First of all, a one hundred million Danish kroner research-project has been launched, so that professional cooks, nutritional experts, and doctors of medicine, can explore the possibility that the Nordic Diet might be as healthy as the Mediterranean one. Many volunteers have been living on a diet based on local Danish products as part of the project, and cooks are making new, exciting, and palatable recipes for them.

Claus Meyer, who is the author of a number of excellent cookbooks, has now published his largest and most comprehensive cookbook to date, called 'Meyers Almanac', which provides menus for every day of the year. While working on this book, he realised how important it was to try to understand what Danish food had been like in the past. He asked me to provide an overview of Danish food for the last fifty years. When he explained what it was for, I had to point out that a fifty-year period was not enough in terms of Danish food, and that a time-span of two hundred years would be more appropriate. And that is what I provided. The book, making inspiring use of Danish produce and wild plants, is now based on Danish food and dishes from the last several hundred years, besides, of course, including much inspiration from other cultures also.

Food is so much more than just nourishment. One very important aspect is its use as a creator of identity. We are a bit Italian when we eat lasagne and we feel rather French when we sit picnicking in nature with a good bottle of Burgundy, a nice Brie cheese and a baguette. And eating together is definitely a very good way of engendering a certain sense of common social identity. An excellent example of this is the famous coffee table of South Jutland – in Danish, *Det Sønderjyske Kaffebord*.<sup>5</sup> For those who are unfamiliar with it, it can be described as an opulent array of pastries and cakes now considered typical of the South of Jutland. Its origin, though, is not limited only to that region. The tradition is known from all over the country from the last four decades of the nineteenth century. But after 1864, when the dukedom of Schleswig was incorporated into Germany under the Austrian Kaiser, the Danish-oriented part of the population of Schleswig started to meet under the pretext of singing together and having coffee – as political meetings were then not allowed. The women did the baking, and there was much competition between them in terms of the number of cakes made and with regard to making them as delicious as possible. All of their frustration of being occupied by the Germans, as they saw it, was transformed into those glorious cakes, and those overwhelming amounts of baked items became a symbol of Danishness.

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<sup>5</sup> Andriansen, Inge, *Smag på Sønderjyske Kaffebord*, København 2012, 118.

## Local Food Made of Local Produce as a Global Movement

Today, in this globalised world, what is needed, more than ever, is to know where we belong. And this is probably one of the explanations for the success of NNF. But in reality, while NNF may have reached enormous fame all over the planet, the movement towards the use of local produce and of becoming aware of, and living by means of local food culture, is not just a Scandinavian fad right now. All over the Western world this agenda is coming into fashion, and it does make sense. Not only are the food products better, when they are grown and harvested close to where they are going to be consumed, and at the time of perfect ripeness, but our neglected planet is also being saved from additional pollution, and from the results of the use of fossil fuels by avoiding transportation from distant places. And that, besides all of the deliciousness and joy that this kind of food gives, is of paramount importance at this time.

# The Road to the New Nordic Kitchen – Examples from Sweden

*Håkan Jönsson*

Until recent times Sweden was not renowned internationally for the high quality of its restaurants. The contrary was in fact the case as the country was seen as a remote region with a lack of both good restaurants and a tradition of fine dining. Over recent decades, however, this situation has changed, and there has been very positive developments in this regard. The increasing quality and status of Sweden's culinary offering is evident from the recent results of the most prestigious culinary competition in the world, the 'Bocuse d'Or'. In 2011, only Scandinavian chefs were on the podium as winners of this competition. Denmark won first place, Sweden finished second, and Norway was in third place. France, for two hundred years the undisputed leader in the world of gastronomy<sup>1</sup> finished fourth, outside the winning ranks. *The Washington Post* published an article in February 2011 with the headline 'Scandinavia – Culinary disaster zone no more!', in which it sought to describe the region's transition from the margins of the gastronomic world to the place – Copenhagen – in which the best restaurant in the world – Noma – according to the ranking of the S. Pellegrino-sponsored 'The World's 50 Best Restaurants'<sup>2</sup> – was located.<sup>3</sup>

What made this transition possible? What internal factors, that is, developments within the restaurant sphere, were involved, and how did they interact with broader societal and cultural changes to effect this transition? The aim of this paper is to get a perspective on these questions by searching for the roots underpinning the upgrading of Scandinavian restaurants. The material for the analysis, which focuses on Sweden, is based on interviews with chefs and restaurateurs who were among the first generation

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1 Trubek, A., *Haute Cuisine. How the French Invented the Culinary Profession*, Philadelphia 2000.

2 [www.theworlds50best.com](http://www.theworlds50best.com); accessed January 2013.

3 Nordstrom, L., Olsen, J., 'Scandinavia: A "Culinary Disaster Zone" No More', *The Washington Post*, 27 February 2011, 5.

to have changed the Swedish restaurant scene from the late 1970s onwards, as well as on fieldwork conducted in 2010 in one of the top restaurants in Sweden.<sup>4</sup>

## Background

With some exceptions, Swedish restaurants were of mediocre quality until the 1980s. While Denmark was a partial exception in this context, the culture of eating out in restaurants and cafés was weak, especially when compared to the situation in the countries bordering on the Mediterranean Sea. Apart from a wealthy minority in the larger cities, restaurant visits happened mainly on special occasions. The lack of a habit of eating in public places could be explained, to some extent, at least, by prevailing poor market conditions (sparsely populated areas limited the market for many restaurants), but the political steering system which developed in the early twentieth century was the more important factor.

As a part of the restrictive Swedish policy on alcohol consumption, restaurants were viewed as being problematic in that they were places where excessive alcohol consumption could potentially occur. The restrictive state policies on alcohol sale and consumption, especially from the 1920s to the late 1950s, strongly curtailed the private purchasing of alcohol. Only male citizens with a regular occupation were granted the right to make a small number of alcohol purchases, and these had to be listed in a 'Ration Book' issued to such citizens. A side effect of this policy was that people went to restaurants after they had already drunk their permitted quota of alcohol, in order to also consume the defined amount of alcohol allowed to be served to customers in restaurants. 'Two whites and one brown', meaning two glasses of white liquor, preferably vodka, and one glass of coloured spirits, often brandy, became the standard order based on the allowed maximum provision of alcohol per individual in restaurants. In order to be served alcohol, one had to order food. But as food became a necessary evil rather than being the purpose of the restaurant visit, it is not surprising that the standard of the food served remained low in most eating establishments. One of the older chefs told me in an interview how he, as a young chef, had worked in a restaurant where he cooked what was called 'restriction food' – food served to customers as a condition for the provision of alcohol. It was some kind of undefined stew, boiled for a long time, then kept in large buckets in the fridge, and later reheated when the guests ordered food. He added: 'But we filled the place with three hundred guests every day anyway; people came to drink, not to eat.'<sup>5</sup> Sometimes the food was not even consumed by the guest as it was essentially a symbolic artifact which was needed in case the liquor controllers showed up (which they quite often did). Stories about how, apparently, the

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4 The material was collected during the project, 'The Gastronomic Revolution in Sweden', financed by Einar Hansens Allhemstiftelse and Gastronomiska akademiens stiftelse. The results of the project have been published in Jönsson, H., *Den Gastronomiska revolutionen*, Stockholm 2012.

5 Interview with Björn Halling, 13 May 2009.

same sandwich was sent back and forth from the kitchen as new guests arrived, until some foreign visitor, who did not know the code, actually tried to eat the sandwich and, so the story goes, got food poisoning as a result, became part of the national folklore for decades.

Another restrictive dimension in the restaurant scene was, that in order to ensure that the desire for profit was not the driving motivation behind the restaurant business, the state and local municipalities had ownership of, and managed, many restaurants (from milk bars to fine dining restaurants), in order to set a standard for responsible restaurant management. It was not until the 1980s, that the state-owned restaurant-management company, SARA, was discontinued and sold to private interests.<sup>6</sup> The state-owned restaurants had a bad reputation among the chefs and restaurateurs whom I interviewed, as they were apparently known for their lack of ambition and their perfunctory attitude to service.

In 1955, the ration book was abolished, and a less-restrictive public policy on alcohol was launched. However, the state-controlled monopoly on selling alcohol remained in place (and still functions), and many restrictions continued. But the fact that the restaurants could no longer count on getting business from people who only visited restaurants in order to drink alcohol, eventually led to the upgrading of food and service in many restaurants.<sup>7</sup> The restaurants needed to develop their food profile to the extent that the food on offer could actually provide an attractive experience in itself. In the decades immediately following the abolition of the ration book, this development happened rather slowly. The restaurants had to cut down on staff numbers in order to adjust to the increasing cost of salaries, and some of the few really good restaurants, especially those in the traditional big hotels, were even going downhill in terms of quality during the period from the 1950s to the late 1970s. The menus were traditional in character, and many restaurateurs were putting more effort into the replacement of the time-consuming processing of raw ingredients with new and cheaper industrialised food items, than on developing the standard of cooking.

But in the late 1970s, something started to happen. ‘The second half of the 1970s was the period in which a few Swedish chefs started to rise above tinned asparagus, sauce béchamel and frozen vegetable mixes’, according to the restaurateur, Thomas Drejing, referring to both the existing poor standard of Swedish restaurants and what became the starting point for something new.<sup>8</sup> In 1984, *Guide Michelin* awarded its first stars to Swedish restaurants, a recognition at an international level that something was happening in the restaurant scene up north. But what triggered this development? What caused the sudden rise of the chefs? And why are chefs, and not other professions in the restaurant business, specifically mentioned in Drejing’s story? In order to answer

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6 Jarnhammar, L., *Reserverat & Serverat : Historien om Sveriges Hotell- och Restaurangföretag*, Stockholm 1989.

7 Hasselgren, E., ‘Sprit utan profit’, *Spiritus* (2003): 1-11.

8 Interview with Thomas Drejing, 5 December 2009.



these questions it is time to view the internal developments in the restaurant scene in Sweden from the 1980s onwards.

## *Nouvelle Cuisine* and the Rising Power of the Chef

The vast majority of the new restaurants that transformed the Scandinavian restaurant scene in the 1980s were inspired by *Nouvelle Cuisine* that had been developed in France by, among others, Paul Bocuse, Roger Verger, and the Troisgros brothers, in the late 1960s and 1970s. The *Nouvelle Cuisine* of the 1960s set out to refine the modes of cooking and the serving of food.<sup>9</sup> Some of the cornerstones of this cuisine included the idea that the food involved should ‘respect’ seasonal differences, and that it should celebrate freshness and local produce. The ideal form of cooking was seen to involve visiting the market early in the morning in order to get the best and freshest ingredients, and then to return to the restaurant and to create a menu of the day based on the purchases made. This mode of cooking opened up a new world for ambitious young chefs in Sweden.

Gunnar Forsell, founder of the restaurant Grappe d’Or in Stockholm, a typical example of the *Nouvelle Cuisine* restaurants, tells that his interest in French cooking started in the mid 1960s. He was introduced to the French chef, Alain Chapel, who had a three-star restaurant in France and who did regular guest performances at restaurant Gourmet in Stockholm. Chapel’s use of new, fresh, seasonal ingredients, became an eye-opener for Forsell:

Back then, the cooking in restaurants was quite restricted by the fact that large menus were printed at a high cost, and, therefore, changed only every third month. But I learnt to be guided by what was available on the specific day. That is how we worked at Grappe d’Or. We called the fishmonger and other suppliers and asked them what were the excellent products they could offer that day. Then we created the menus that I wrote by hand and had copied.<sup>10</sup>

The guiding principle that fresh seasonal produce should be used may seem rather obvious to us today. But a combination of the high cost of menus, decreasing staff numbers, and an appreciation for industrially-produced food, had led to a standardisation of restaurants menus, with many of the dishes being available all year round. The chefs inspired by *Nouvelle Cuisine* wanted to set a new and higher standard of cooking, which in their view, should be adjusted to the seasons, and the cooking itself should be light and gentle.

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9 Spang, Rebecca, *The Invention of the Restaurant*, Cambridge, Mass., 2000.

10 Interview with Gunnar Forsell, 15 May 2009.

The new generation of chefs were strongly pioneering and collaborative in spirit. The network, 'Les amis des saisons', included many of the best chefs in Scandinavia. They produced, among other things, a pamphlet in which Tore Wretman – the restaurateur who became a pioneer for fine dining in Sweden and a mentor for most of the new generation of chefs – wrote a Foreword that summarises the ideology behind *Nouvelle Cuisine* cooking:

In our time, when the classic culinary annual rhythm is threatened with being completely wiped out by different preservation techniques, and when air transport is making the seasons in other places on the earth easily accessible, they have come round to the idea that what is fresh and in season right here is always the best (...) The menu is subordinated to what the market square, the market hall, and the finest food stores, have to offer. Preferably, these are items that have not lost taste, texture and freshness because of long-distance travel.<sup>11</sup>

A critique of technological development is noticeable in the words of Wretman, and he was not alone in this regard at that time (1983). In the US especially, *Nouvelle Cuisine* had a connection to the counter-cultural critique against modernity and to the wish for a more 'natural' way of life.<sup>12</sup> Restaurants such as, Chez Panisse in Berkeley, California, and An American Place in New York, became trend-setters in this, more-consciously niche form of gastronomy. In this way, the critique against modernity became influential, although the arguments used were sensory rather than political in nature.

However, the popularity of *Nouvelle Cuisine* was due not only to its sensory and political strengths, but also to the business perspective involved. Increasing staff costs had already led to financial problems for many restaurants during the 1960s. One way to cut down on such costs was to reduce the time-consuming methods of presenting food in the dining room. Until the 1970s, much of the finishing artistic presentations of the food in fine dining restaurants, was regularly carried out in front of the guest. Thus meat was carved, lobsters were flamed, soles were filleted, and gravies were prepared in the guest's presence. But in order to cut costs, such artistic moments were reduced, and specialists such as ice sculptors and confectioners gradually disappeared.<sup>13</sup> The new ways of serving food – on the plate, in *Nouvelle Cuisine*-style – came as a blessing for many economically-stressed restaurateurs at that time.

The fact that the chef did basically all of the artistic preparation of the food meant that the need for waiters with specific skills was reduced. Their status declined, and the serving of food in restaurants became more of a short-term occupation for young people

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11 *Les amis des saisons* 1983, 2, Stockholm. Author's translation.

12 Belasco, W., *Appetite for Change. How the Counterculture Took On the Food Industry*, New York 1989.

13 Lundqvist, H., 'Lågstatusjobb på högstatuskrogar: Serveringsarbets degradering och feminisering 1950-2000', in Pipping Ekström, M., *Genus på krogen*, Culinary Arts 2, Örebro 2006, 35-83.

than a life-long career for skilled waiters as had been the case until then. The status of the chef went in the opposite direction, however. From being a low-status figure on the bottom rung of society, the chef became recognised as an artist. During the 1980s, therefore, the most prominent occupation in a restaurant gradually shifted from that of waiter to that of chef.

Since food in itself became a more important reason for a restaurant visit, there was an audience for the new fashionable *Nouvelle Cuisine* restaurants. Many of these new restaurants were increasingly run by chefs, another signal of the shift in power-relations in the restaurant business. The traditional restaurant career had been from waiter, to headwaiter, to restaurateur, but now chefs took over, leading to an even stronger focus on the food itself in the restaurants.

The *Nouvelle Cuisine* also enabled chefs to have a greater impact on the guests' choice of dishes. The traditional menus were large, with many different options being available to guests – who were actually then putting their own menu together by making a selection of the dishes and beverages on offer. But the menus at the *Nouvelle Cuisine* restaurants were short, offering much less choice to guests than had previously been the case. The reason for this was that chefs considered themselves to be the prime experts with regard to choice and saw no need for guests to have many different options from which to choose.

## From Back Stage to Front Stage

Another aspect of the changing role of the chefs in Sweden was their entrance into the public sphere. Until the 1980s, the chef had been a person known only to a few, a back stage figure in a restaurant, who was supposed to act but not to be seen. Erving Goffman's influential theories about the presentation of self in everyday life were developed while sitting in a local restaurant on the Shetland Islands, and noticing the tensions between the performance of local food in the restaurants and what was going on back stage (locals eating very different food, from what was being served as local food in the restaurant, butter being re-used, and so on).<sup>14</sup> The guests did not know what was going on in the kitchen back stage, which led to fear and mistrust, but also in some cases, to a fascination for the hidden. The chef was a magician, working in secret.<sup>15</sup>

The fascination for the hidden remained, to a certain extent, but during the 1980s, chefs started to become prominent figures, mainly due to the development of the media sector. Daytime television shows were the starting point for chefs entering into homes, so to speak, almost at any time of the day, and then from the 1990s, the

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14 Goffman, E., *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, New York 1959.

15 Spang, *op. cit.*, 2000, 156, 224.

explosion of new digital media made the chef into a celebrity.<sup>16</sup> Chefs became visible in restaurants – which were redesigned so that they could be seen by the guests through ‘open kitchens’, in which the previously-hidden work of chefs became a sort of artistic performance. The view that chefs are artists and public figures is mainly a new phenomenon, but it is also one that has become important, both for the restaurant visit as an experience, and for the whole restaurant business itself.<sup>17</sup>

Another important factor, in the rising status of chefs, was the culinary competition. The ‘Chef of the Year’ competition started in Sweden in 1983 and, after a few years, the winners became celebrities who could be seen in anything from commercials to game shows. Since the national competitions qualified chefs for entry into international competitions, Swedish chefs started to compete at an international level. The first years brought little success, but in 1995, the Swedish chef, Melker Andersson, finished second in the ‘Bocuse d’Or’, and, two years later, Mathias Dahlgren won the competition. Swedish chefs then became more and more respected by their international colleagues, and the weird figure of the Muppet Show was no longer the only widely-known and famous Swedish chef!

The influence of *Nouvelle Cuisine*, with its emphasis on the food itself and on food artistry, was important in this respect, not least for the boost in confidence which it gave to chefs. But even more important for the development of the reputation of Scandinavia as a culinary region was the connection between food and place inherent in *Nouvelle Cuisine* ideology.

## Get Local!

The rise of *Nouvelle Cuisine* turns out to be the key for an understanding of the development of the New Nordic Kitchen. In Sweden, *Nouvelle Cuisine* was called ‘The New French Kitchen’ and, during the early years of its development, it was, indeed, influenced by French cooking. Some restaurants, like Grappe d’Or, even had French names. Ironically, however, *Nouvelle Cuisine*, because of its celebration of local produce, eventually led to the fall of French culinary supremacy. The idea that ingredients should be fresh and local, changed existing perspectives on foodstuffs. During the early years, ducks imported from France, and ingredients such as truffle and *foie gras*, were still considered to be the best, and at this time it was primarily the modes of serving, rather than the ingredients, that were Swedish. But in time, an appreciation of local produce gained in intensity. The emphasis on ingredients, modes of cooking, and aesthetics, rather than on specific dishes, led to a break from the more or less canonical classical dishes of French cuisine, such as ‘Sole Walewska’ and ‘Lobster

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16 Ashley, Bob, Hollows, Joanne, Jones, Steve, Taylor, Ben, *Food and Cultural Studies*, London 2004.

17 Ferguson, P., Zukin, S., ‘The Careers of Chefs’, in Scapp, R., Seitz, B., (eds.), *Eating Culture*, Albany, N.Y., 2004.

Thérmidor'.<sup>18</sup> Thus, the chef should be innovative, but firmly grounded in the local soil. Thomas Drejing, chef and restaurateur, describes his way of working in the mid-1980s after returning from a session in France:

At that time most fine dining restaurants only focused on expensive ingredients. It was sole with truffles and champagne sauce. I had more of a feeling for local produce. I took tours around Veberöd (a small town in south Sweden), found suppliers of rabbits, carrots, and other ingredients, and created a supply chain at a local level.<sup>19</sup>

Being French in the *Nouvelle Cuisine* way in the Nordic area actually meant that both French dishes and ingredients were given up, and that preference was afforded to ingredients from places such as Veberöd, Borgholm and Burträsk. Gradually, this situation influenced some chefs not to automatically regard France as the role model for good gastronomy. In response to my question: 'What is your relation to French cuisine today?', Thomas Drejing responded:

There are a lot of great French restaurants, but the fact is that I also experienced some of the worst meals of my life in France. It is not very dynamic; it is a little old-fashioned. Italy is more exciting; it has an appealing simplicity where you don't overdo things.

Drejing's preference for Italian cooking is, as mentioned, based on the assumption that it lives up to the ideals of *Nouvelle Cuisine* in a much better way than the cuisine of the nation, France, that gave birth to it.

A dimension in the development of Scandinavian cooking is the growing use of signs of places in order to signal quality. Reading a menu in a fine-dining restaurant in Sweden has gradually turned into a geography lesson. We are told that the char comes from Lake Vättern, the chicken from Bosarp, the cheese from Vilhelmsdal, and so forth. Thus an implicit connection is made between places and certain food qualities.

There is a long-standing tradition of making geographical connections in restaurants. Thus classic French cuisine gave garnishes names such as Flamande, Provençale, Italienne, and so on. In France, especially, the idea of *terroir*, that is, that food and beverages should reflect and preserve the special qualities of the places in which they have been produced, is notable.<sup>20</sup> There are classical examples, such as Champagne and Bordeaux on the wine side, and Maine lobster and Bresse chicken on the food side. But, after the breakthrough of *Nouvelle Cuisine*, it was the food of places

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18 Trubek, *op. cit.*, 2000, 1.

19 Interview with Thomas Drejing, 5 December 2009.

20 Trubek, A., *The Taste of Place. A Cultural Journey into Terroir*, Berkeley, C.A., 2008, xv.

close to the restaurants, rather than delicacies from elsewhere, that was lifted onto the menus.

It should be noted that the road to a more distinct local (or, at least to a Nordic) gastronomic profile was quite long and arduous. Apart from a few pioneers such as Drejning, it took some twenty years before Swedish chefs felt secure enough to no longer regard French (and Italian) cuisine as the norm in terms of good gastronomy. The existing low level of confidence in their own ability among the chefs, due to the fact that, for decades, every chef was convinced that really refined and elegant gastronomy came from somewhere else, was one reason for the slow start.

Another factor was a genuine insecurity about how to translate into practice the *Nouvelle Cuisine* preference for freshness and gentle cooking in order to give, not just the ingredients, but the whole meal, a sense of locality. Traditional Scandinavian cooking was built on the need to cope with the short growing season. As a result, several preservation techniques, such as smoking, salting, and fermentation, were in use, and had influenced taste to such an extent that people were hesitant to embrace fresh food, even when it was readily available.<sup>21</sup> In order to combine the *Nouvelle Cuisine* mode of cooking with the desire for local and regional produce, a new philosophy of food was required.

## The Establishment of the New Nordic Kitchen

The final steps towards excellence in fine dining in Scandinavia were taken in Copenhagen. As mentioned, Noma was awarded the 'Best Restaurant in the World' title in 2010, and it defended this status in 2011 and 2012. Noma, an abbreviation for Nordic Food (Nordisk Mat), was established in 2004 by the entrepreneur and food journalist, Claus Meyer, and head chef René Redzepi. Noma serves, as expressed at its website [www.noma.dk](http://www.noma.dk), Nordic gourmet food, where classical cooking practices, Nordic ingredients, and Nordic food cultural heritage, are exposed to innovative gastronomic thought. This statement means, that this Nordic restaurant wants to take on the challenge of restoring the Nordic Kitchen, so that its tastes and regional individuality may enlighten the gastronomic world. It promises that its guests will not encounter sun-dried tomatoes, olive oil, *foie gras*, or black olives, during their visit. The Nordic region as defined by Noma is wide. The restaurant serves food from all over the Nordic countries – turnips from the Faroe Islands, seaweed from Iceland, muskox from Greenland, and beaver from Sweden, to mention but a few of the surprises that await guests at Noma.

The same year in which Noma was founded (2004), some of the best chefs in the Nordic countries met in Denmark, and wrote the so-called manifesto for the New Nordic Kitchen. Claus Meyer was the driving force in this context, but there were chefs

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21Fjellström, P., 'Nord-och mellansvensk kosthåll i kulturekologisk belysning', in Bringéus, N-A., *Mat och Miljö*, Lund 1970, 41.

from all the Nordic countries partaking in the process, among them, the above-mentioned ‘Bocuse d’Or’ winner, Mathias Dahlgren from Sweden. Since then the manifesto has been a gastronomical and an operational guide for many of the best restaurants in Scandinavia, although others have a less determined attitude towards it. The official manifesto states:

### **The Manifesto for the New Nordic Kitchen**

As Nordic chefs we find that the time has now come for us to create a New Nordic Kitchen, which by virtue of its good taste and special character compares favourably with the standard of the greatest kitchens of the world.

The aims of New Nordic Cuisine are:

1. To express the purity, freshness, simplicity and ethics we wish to associate with our region.
2. To reflect the changing of the seasons in the meals we make.
3. To base our cooking on ingredients and produce whose characteristics are particularly excellent in our climates, landscapes and waters.
4. To combine the demand for good taste with modern knowledge of health and well-being.
5. To promote Nordic products and the variety of Nordic producers – and to spread the word about their underlying cultures.
6. To promote animal welfare and a sound production process in our seas, on our farmland, and in the wild.
7. To develop potentially new applications of traditional Nordic food products.
8. To combine the best in Nordic cookery and culinary traditions with impulses from abroad.
9. To combine local self-sufficiency with regional sharing of high-quality products.
10. To join forces with consumer representatives, other cooking craftsmen, with agriculture, the fishing, food, retail and wholesale industries, with researchers, teachers, politicians and authorities, on this project, for the benefit and advantage of everyone in the Nordic countries.

On taking a closer look at the manifesto, it is evident that many of the ideas which it included were far from being new. Reference to local ingredients and culture, respect for the seasons, purity, freshness, simplicity and health, were all elements of *Nouvelle Cuisine*. In that sense, the manifesto was more of a codification of practices than something new. In the same way, the coming together of chefs in a network was not something substantially new either. Apart from their age, the chefs’ network did not differ greatly from that of their predecessors. It reflected more or less the same mission

and purpose as expressed by their older colleagues in the ‘Les amis des saisons’ network. But what was new about the project was that it had official support. The Nordic governments provided substantial funding for different projects in order to establish the New Nordic Kitchen.

But it was not so much the content of the New Nordic Kitchen but rather the attitude concerning it, that was revolutionary. To ‘create a New Nordic Kitchen, which, by virtue of its good taste and special character, compares favourably with the standard of the greatest kitchens of the world’, would have been a breathtaking outlook for the pioneers of the 1980s – whose goal was that they should be looked upon as being equal (or almost equal) to the great chefs in continental Europe, rather than to be seen to be setting the agenda for the gastronomic scene.

The new generation of chefs had greater confidence in their abilities and ambitions than their predecessors had. That their social status was much higher, is evident from the fact that during the 1990s, the occupation of chef had turned into one of the most popular career choices for young people in Sweden. And they could tell from their own experiences, arising from their work in restaurants and from their participation in competitions, that other countries were not that far ahead of them in the culinary context. Some even felt it was time to take the next step.

René Redzepi, the head-chef at Noma, has described his conversion to the New Nordic Kitchen as a logical consequence of his wish to become the best in his profession.<sup>22</sup> He had worked in restaurants of different styles and had reached the conclusion that if Scandinavian chefs were just imitating French or Italian cuisine, the French restaurants in, say Copenhagen, would only become *almost* as good as the best restaurants in Paris or Lyon. But he also knew that no one would be as good as the Nordic chefs for cooking Nordic food. Thus, if Nordic Cuisine were to be considered to be one of the best cuisines in the world, the potential for creating the best restaurant in the world would be greatly enhanced. And six years later Noma had succeeded.

Seen in retrospect, the road to the New Nordic Kitchen was clearly based on the ideology of *Nouvelle Cuisine*. The manifesto itself was, for the most part, a codification of practices rather than being something completely revolutionary in nature (apart from the attitude involved). But the success of the New Nordic Kitchen, especially in the way Noma interprets it, had at least one dimension that was new – the manner in which the first wave of good chefs in Scandinavia worked, that is, the way in which the culinary traditions were treated.

## Traditions for Innovation

The chefs working in the style of the New Nordic Kitchen put considerable effort into the reinterpretation of old food traditions. The *Nouvelle Cuisine* style of cooking was originally seen as a break from a traditional mode of cooking, and here the idea of using

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<sup>22</sup> Lecture at ‘Skåne Food Innovation Network’ day, 2009.



fresh local ingredients was especially problematic. Furthermore, the first generation of chefs operating in the *Nouvelle Cuisine* style, was a bit revolutionary in spirit. The chefs in question wanted to get rid of the old-school style of cooking in order to start with something new and fresh. But the new wave of chefs that succeeded them managed to find a way of fruitfully combining traditions and innovations.

Beaver meat has never been a substantial part of the traditional diet or the cooking repertoire of the Scandinavian countries. But the idea of the New Nordic Kitchen is not about tradition itself, and certainly not about cooking certain dishes that once were served in the region. The idea rather is to develop and to innovate on the basis of geographical conditions and traditions.

This includes ideas such as, that local and traditional food is more authentic than global, ‘placeless’, food. If authenticity demands congruence with actual eating habits, it is easy to conclude that the food served at New Nordic Kitchen restaurants is not authentic. The straw, muskoxen, birch sap, and other ingredients used at Noma, rarely bear any resemblance to the actual kinds of food used in the Nordic countries.

René Redzepi tells us that he became inspired when reading an old cookbook to use ashes in cooking. According to his culinary experiments, straw ashes is less bitter than the ashes of other plants. He praises the Swedish army’s survival handbook in which he has found many tips on ingredients that can be used for creating new dishes. Redzepi’s experimental spirit has led to increased collaboration with scientists, especially with those engaged in sensory studies. The founding of the Nordic Food Lab in Copenhagen (primarily funded by public monies) is a way in which to combine the two major trends evident in gastronomy in the course of the last decade – local food and molecular gastronomy.

Local and regional food is most often a construction based on either political or commercial standpoints (and sometimes it is a bit of both, as when food is used to market Sweden – during Sweden’s chairmanship of the European Union, for example).<sup>23</sup> Another obvious instance of this is the European Union’s system of granting food products which meet certain criteria the status of Traditional Specialities Guaranteed (TSG), thus protecting certain foodstuffs from being reproduced in the wrong way or in the wrong place.

But the way in which the New Nordic Kitchen’s deals with traditions is somewhat different from the approach adopted by those working with claims to authenticity. The ideologists, among them Claus Meyer, have adopted the idea of *terroir*, and try to interpret it in a way that enables traditions to cope with gastronomic innovations.<sup>24</sup> This has been a trend within frontline gastronomy for a couple of years. The American anthropologist and former chef, Amy Trubek, who has studied how the concept of

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23 Tellström, R., *Food and Meal Culture as Political and Marketing Arenas – World Fairs and EU-Meetings*, Örebro 2006.

24 See [www.clausmeyer.dk/en/the\\_new\\_nordic\\_cuisine\\_/nordic\\_terroir.html](http://www.clausmeyer.dk/en/the_new_nordic_cuisine_/nordic_terroir.html).

*terroir* has been expanding from France to other countries, concludes that the discussion of authenticity in relation to food has too often been based on a false opposition between tradition and innovation.<sup>25</sup> She sees nothing strange about the fact that restaurants, with local or regional profiles, can preserve traditions, and establish new traditions, at the same time. From Trubek's perspective, it is not relevant whether the Nordic food served at Noma is genuine or not, especially since this has never been the aim of the chefs who work there.

In 2010, I carried out fieldwork in one of the best restaurants in Southern Sweden – a restaurant with a distinct local profile. But the chefs were very outspoken about the fact that they did not want to serve the exact same food that had once been served in the region. One reason – but not the primary one – for this was, that it would be difficult to attract guests to the restaurant with such a proposal. More important was the fact that they believed that it would be impossible to get good chefs to work in the restaurants, if they were to cook and serve the same traditional dishes on a daily basis. They would certainly not do this themselves. This is in line with the results of Richard Tellström's study of regional food, in which he concluded that such food is an ongoing construction based on the actions of different actors, ranging from chefs to politicians.<sup>26</sup>

In contrast to restaurants trying to serve traditional *dishes*, the approach adopted by the New Nordic Kitchen has managed to make tradition a basis on which creativity in the kitchen can be developed. The step backwards in history turned out to be the big step forward in establishing Scandinavia as a culinary front zone.

## Urban Taste Leads to Rural Development

The search for local ingredients – which can be a matter of surprise for the increasingly-experienced clientele at restaurants – has led to some noteworthy consequences for the suppliers of the ingredients in question. Restaurants are basically an urban phenomenon,<sup>27</sup> but the demands of the restaurants are increasingly affecting the countryside, especially since it takes just a few years for trends in restaurant food to reach the mass market. At the restaurant in which I did my fieldwork, there was a long list of names of local suppliers next to the telephone. This was nothing new in itself. But the restaurateur told me that, during the previous few years, they had developed a much more intense dialogue with their suppliers. Previously, they had just telephoned and ordered what was available, but more recently they have tried to order new kinds of vegetables so as to stand out as being innovative. In dialogue with the suppliers, they have encouraged them to grow new varieties of herbs and vegetables. Sometimes the request could come as a surprise to the suppliers. One example is the local supplier of asparagus who discovered that the top restaurant wanted the thinnest asparagus spears

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25 Trubek, *op. cit.*, 2008, 208-10.

26 Tellström, *op. cit.*, 2006, 55-60.

27 Spang, *op. cit.*, 2000, 172.

that they could supply. Previously, the growers had regarded these as being second-class in quality, since they believed that the market wanted thick asparagus spears only. A parallel story concerned tomatoes, where the restaurant preferred variation in size and shape, rather than the large round variety that, for decades, tomato growers had been told represented premium quality.

The rise of the New Nordic Kitchen has also led to the establishment of some new businesses. The idea of the fresh wilderness is an important part of the New Nordic Kitchen scenario. There are some extreme examples of this approach, such as that of the celebrated chef, Magnus Nilsson who runs restaurant Fäviken, who, himself, (or with the assistance of his colleagues), tries to hunt, gather, and prepare, most of the food served at his renowned restaurant. Nilsson is an internationally famous chef<sup>28</sup> and Fäviken was ranked as the thirty-fourth best restaurant in the world in 2012 by the S. Pellegrino-sponsored 'The World's 50 Best Restaurants', and as one of the ten best restaurants in the world by the Zagat guide in 2013. Inspired by Nilsson and his followers, but without ready access to the wild landscape, the chefs in most of the top restaurants in Scandinavia want to include a greater variety of wild food on the menu. Several entrepreneurs have, therefore, started local businesses in order to supply the restaurants with local, yet exotic, foodstuffs, such as lambsquarter (*Chenopodium alba*/wild spinach), nettles, and beechnuts. Some have even gone international – the 'birch sap champagne', SAV, is about to become a success in the global market of gastronomy.

There are also examples of how old varieties of fruit and vegetables, which were close to extinction, have made a comeback on the plate, due to their celebration by the New Nordic Kitchen.

## A Brief Outlook and Concluding Remarks

This article has focused on the internal development which took place in the Scandinavian restaurant scene, in order to get a perspective on the upgrading of the reputation of Scandinavian gastronomy in recent years. The improved standards in gastronomy in general are certainly not to be explained fully by the developments in the restaurant scene. There were, in fact, several factors which had interacted in this context. Swedish society has gone through radical change since the first wave of chefs started their restaurant businesses in the late 1970s. Cultural and economic changes as well as political and legal decisions, have contributed to the positive developments in gastronomy. From the 1980s onwards, higher salaries and cheaper food contributed to an increase in purchasing power among the public. From the late 1980s, a gradual liberalisation of alcohol regulations has taken place, which in turn is a sign of a shift in cultural and political opinion. Dining out has gone from an activity largely limited to

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28 See, for example, Palling, Bruce, 'Gulls Eggs and Lichens', *Newsweek*, 10 October 2011.

special and rare occasions, to an accepted and even desirable activity for a large segment of the population. As a result of this, the number of employees in the restaurant sector increased by more than fifty per cent between 1993 and 2008.<sup>29</sup>

The growth of the restaurant business from the 1980s onwards is certainly not limited to Scandinavia. Also in France, the pioneer country in terms of modern gastronomy, dining out has increased in both social and economic importance.<sup>30</sup> But few countries have experienced such rapid transformation in this context as those in the Scandinavian region. The speed of change may be surprising to an international audience. The lack of strong traditions of dining out might be seen as an obstacle to development, but in this case it turned out to be an engine for creativity. The chefs got a more or less empty field in which to innovate. It was this combination of societal changes and the presence of a skilled generation of chefs, with a strong pioneering spirit, and eager to leave their mark on the gastronomic scene, that led to the establishment of Scandinavia as a respected culinary region.

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29 Tellström, R, Jönsson, H., 'Gastronomi i Kunskapssamhället', in Fjellström, Christina, (ed.), *Gastronomisk Forskning*, Stockholm 2008, 72.

30 Ferguson and Zukin, *op. cit.*, 2004, 92.

# Foraging for Nordic Wild Food

## Introducing Nordic Island *Terroir*

*Hanne Pico Larsen and Susanne Österlund-Pötzsch*

### Introduction

While gathering practices, such as berry picking, are part of the traditional food economy of the Nordic countries, there is a visible shift nowadays towards the recreational and pleasurable aspects of this activity. According to the Finnish Forest Research Institute, it appears that, in Finland, the popularity of berry picking as a hobby, might even have increased in the course of the last ten years. On the other hand, contemporary food trends have also opened up a new economic niche for foragers. Professional foraging, as carried out, for example, by the company *Jordnära* located in Southern Sweden, specialises in providing a wide range of wild herbs, berries and mushrooms for Scandinavian gourmet restaurants. In our joint research project, we aim to investigate how present-day foraging practices are connected to tradition, lifestyle, and the New Nordic Cuisine movement. In this article, however, we focus on one particular aspect of that project and we thus discuss the uses and the implementations of the concept of *terroir* in the setting of the islands of the Baltic Sea. Based on examples taken from fieldwork material, we suggest that island food entrepreneurs have created what could be referred to as a Nordic Island *superterroir* by drawing on current food trends and traditional images connected with islands.

### Place + Food = enter *Terroir*

In recent years there has been an increasing interest in locality in the Nordic countries, not least when it comes to food production. This global trend has merged with specific Nordic traditions, conditions and practices. One characteristic of this phenomenon is, that it is flourishing at all levels – from grass root to official policies. For example, local food production has become an important part of the building of brands and is drawn on heavily in the experience industry as well as in political rhetoric. Simultaneously, local food production is also a topic close to the hearts of many individuals in the private sphere as is clearly evident from the great number of blogs and websites dedicated to

this topic.<sup>1</sup> The centrality of these issues in society nowadays, has contributed to the current emphasis on the uniqueness of place, and has also made the themes of cultural heritage and roots more prominent.

In our ongoing research project, we aim to explore the growing interest in locality and food, and its connection to practices and ideas concerning roots, the soil, and cultural and natural heritage. In the Nordic countries, the image of nature as pristine and unsoiled has been an important trope to be employed in this connection. Interest in nature and the outdoor life in the Nordic area, is strongly connected to notions of normality, soundness, and national identity.<sup>2</sup> ‘Nordic nature’ is seen as symbolising health, simplicity, honesty and quality – keywords in the fields of Nordic design and art. Increasingly, ‘Nordic nature’ has become a central concept in the expanding tourism sector and in the experience economy, especially as a potential income-generating resource for peripheral areas. In recent decades, the concepts of ‘nature’ and ‘tradition’ are employed in the search for new national and regional food and culinary identities, as well as in the rhetoric of the New Nordic Cuisine, in order to create continuity with the past and to make current innovations appear more authentic.

The notion of ‘food from nature’ is very effective as it links environmental and nutritional concerns, place-branding and urban trends, with established practices and traditional images of the North. This combination of motives is evident, for example, in the current interest in organic food and ethical consumption. In our study, we wish to throw light on how marketing and consumer trends interact with everyday life and traditional practices – a relationship which we believe must be understood as a dynamic two-way process in which the theme of embodiment plays an important part. We consider society’s interest in body culture, health and sensory experiences, to be a vital factor in contemporary Nordic food culture.

We would like to suggest that a fruitful way of approaching and analysing these trends might be to do so in terms of the concept of *terroir*. The concept, *terroir*, is traditionally connected with French wine production and can loosely be translated as ‘the taste of place’. *Terroir* is affected by everything from the composition of the soil to the local climate – that is, everything that can be said to give a certain product its distinctive taste and flavour.

The American scholar Amy B. Trubek describes *terroir* as a story, a narrative, about a product’s unique background. These narratives not only lend the product a sense of authenticity but also help the consumer to localise the product geographically, and within a system of values and ideals.<sup>3</sup>

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1 See, for example: <http://www.julielindahl.com/web/index.php>; <http://www.cphgoodfood.dk/>; <http://www.signejohansen.com/>; accessed 12. 12. 2012.

2 Österlund-Pötzsch, S., ‘Walking Nordic. Performing Space, Place and Identity’, in Aronsson, P., Gradén, L., (eds.), *Performing Nordic Heritage. Everyday Life and Institutional Culture*, Farnham, Surrey, England 2013, 27-52.

3 Trubek, A. B., *The Taste of Place. A Cultural Journey into Terroir*, Berkeley, CA, 2009.

*Terroir* often evokes the idea of the cultivated land, or, in other words, the notion of the human domain taking over the natural world. However, in the case of the New Nordic *terroir*, the concept tends to be used in the context of the traditional image of the *uncultivated*, pristine, wild, fresh Nordic nature – an image that is often applied to every single aspect of food preparation. Most New Nordic chefs are very specific about how to bring the natural world into the human domain and how to create materialised versions of Nordic Cuisine imagery. As the Danish celebrity chef, René Redzepi of Noma restaurant, states: ‘*real* cooking is without pretence, it is straight to the point, and it always shows a link from the product’s natural environment that is unbroken when it hits the plate...’<sup>4</sup> The same chef took this to extremes when he served live Danish ants at his London pop-up restaurant during the Olympic Games in 2012!<sup>5</sup>

The idea of *terroir* intersects with the two other important themes in our study: foraging practices and Baltic islands. Both are instances, we would like to suggest, that offer powerful narratives of *terroir*. Before looking at how this can be found in our case studies we will provide a short background introduction to the New Nordic Food scene. In addition, we will discuss briefly how storytelling, such as a *terroir* narrative, is employed to build a bridge between wild nature and the consumer-oriented servicescapes<sup>6</sup> of restaurants and other food-related businesses.

## New Nordic Food: Manifesto, Movement – and Marketing

The New Nordic Cuisine has grown into a strong movement within the Nordic and Baltic countries. It has become a famous brand that has expanded into other ‘New Nordic’ establishments and is even used by governments and other brand seekers.

The movement follows a manifesto for values and virtues drawn up by chefs and food entrepreneurs as a result of a symposium held in Copenhagen in 2004. Despite Bruno Latour’s observation that the time of manifestos has long since passed,<sup>7</sup> it was the New Nordic Cuisine manifesto,<sup>8</sup> launched and signed by some of the most famous

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4 Redzepi, R., interview with Charlie Rose, 11. 6. 2010. See, <http://www.charlierose.com/guest/view/6917>.

5 See, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-07-30/london-cocktail-marathon-awaits-olympics-drinkers-review.html>; accessed 12. 12. 2012.

6 Servicescape: ‘the environment in which the service is assembled and in which the seller and customer interact, combined with tangible commodities that facilitate performance or communication of the service’. See, in this context, Booms, B. H., Bitner M. J., ‘Marketing Strategies and Organisation Structures for Service Firms’, in Donnelly, J. H., William, R. G., (eds.), *Marketing of Services*, Chicago 1981, 47-51.

7 Latour, B., ‘An Attempt at a “Compositionist Manifesto”’, *New Literary History* 41, no. 3 (2010): 471-90.

8 See, for example, <http://newnordicfood.org/about-nnf-ii/nordic-cuisine-manifesto/>; accessed 9. 12. 2012.

and popular chefs in the Nordic countries, that marked the beginning of what is today often referred to as the New Nordic Cuisine movement. Soon after the launch, the Nordic Council of Ministers adopted the manifesto as the ideology for their New Nordic Food programme.<sup>9</sup> The manifesto acts as a guide for élite chefs and restaurants in relation to Nordic food and cuisine, as well as for those engaged in the food industry today. It has even inspired a Danish research project to create a new Nordic diet for the Danish population to follow.<sup>10</sup>

A central idea of the New Nordic Cuisine is the strong emphasis that is placed on Nordic wild food – that is, food that can be caught, hunted, harvested, foraged for, gathered, and picked, in Nordic nature. As inherent elements of the genre, the manifesto for the New Nordic Kitchen reveals a list of values, virtues, techniques and ethics, with which the Nordic chefs would like to be associated.<sup>11</sup> The seemingly unpretentious and effortless simplicity listed in the manifesto speaks to contemporary foodies who treasure food that is delicious, but who also want food that is *authentic* – foods that are simple, made from the heart, and with history and tradition to back them up.<sup>12</sup>

There is nothing intrinsically revolutionary about the manifesto. It has been popular in the culinary world to utilise locally-grown, in-season, high-quality produce from high-quality producers, as well as from happy animals, for quite some time. Establishing foundations in collaboration with people from outside the restaurant world, with the purpose of improving food habits among the general public, is hardly ground-breaking either. As for restaurant menus based on foraged produce, it had already been done at the California-based restaurant, Chez Panisse, in the 1970s.<sup>13</sup> However, according to the in-house anthropologist, Mark Emil Hermansen, at the Nordic Foodlab,<sup>14</sup> ‘Nordic’ can now be seen ‘as a marker of group identity in the

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9 Hermansen, M. E., ‘Creating *Terroir*: An Anthropological Perspective on New Nordic Cuisine as an Expression of Nordic Identity’, <http://nordicfoodlab.org/blog/2012/8/creating-terroir-an-anthropological-perspective-on-new-nordic-cuisine-as-an-expression-of-nordic-identity>; accessed 12. 12. 2012.

10 <http://www.foodoflife.dk/Opus/English.aspx>; accessed 7. 12. 2012.

11 <http://nynordiskmad.org/>; accessed 7. 12. 2012.

12 Johnston, J., Bauman, S., *Foodies. Democracy and Distinction in the Gourmet Foodscape*, New York 2010, 203.

13 Smith, A. F., ‘Alice Waters’s Chez Panisse’, in Smith, A. F., (ed.), *Eating History: Thirty Turning Points in the Making of American Cuisine*, New York 2009, 256-62.

14 The non-profit Nordic Food Lab is another important establishment founded in the wake of the New Nordic Cuisine manifesto. It was established in 2008 by the people behind Noma. The Nordic Food Lab is also located at Noma. Their mission is to: ‘explore the building blocks of Nordic cuisine through traditional and modern gastronomies, and to share these results with chefs, academics, industry, and the public. We investigate old and new raw materials and techniques, developing recipes and ideas to share with the Nordic region and the world’ (see, <http://nordicfoodlab.org/>); accessed 7.12. 2012.



Scandinavian Region'. Hermansen views the New Nordic Cuisine as a counter movement to 'the modern world of globalization, migration and electronic mediation'. He states that 'The new forms of mediation destabilize the traditional boundaries of the nation-state and make room for new transnational "imagined communities"'.<sup>15</sup> In other words, despite the very diverse landscapes throughout the Nordic region, the purpose of the (re-) creation of a pan Nordic *terroir* and cuisine is to produce locality in a post-national world.

A common feature among New Nordic products and dishes is that they come with a story about nature and foraging. In this way, narrativised nature constitutes an important extension of the servicescape. Often there is a clear distinction between the man-made servicescape's physical surroundings and nature.<sup>16</sup> However, at many New Nordic Restaurants, the servicescape is, via narration, extended to include the greater Nordic *terroir*, and the romantic idea of the chef venturing out into the borderless, untouched nature, to harvest his/her wild catch, only then to return to prepare and serve it in the restaurant. The consumer is figuratively taken out into the wild. In this way, the extension of the servicescape exists in the stories told about the food and the *terroir* with the narrative serving to frame the food about to be consumed. In the field of consumer research, the process involved in the way tourist sites are presented and interpreted in an embodied way, by the commercial service provider, is referred to as 'communicative staging'.<sup>17</sup> In most of our cases, it is the foraging chef who is responsible both for cooking and for providing the communicative staging.

We now turn to see how the theme of returning to tradition and nature is employed in different ways by contemporary food entrepreneurs in the Nordic-Baltic region.

## New Nordic Foraging and Farming

The Swedish entrepreneur Roland Rittman has successfully set up his own company called *Jordnära* ('close to earth'),<sup>18</sup> which specialises in picking and selling a wide range of herbs, mushrooms and berries. He also sells products from local farms in Skåne (Scania County) in southern Sweden, Roland's business idea originated from picking mushrooms and selling them at the local market. He became interested in other wild foods that could be foraged and he also started to learn about edible herbs. According

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15 *Ibid.*

16 Bitner, M. J., 'Servicescapes: The Impact of Physical Surroundings on Customers and Employees', *Journal of Marketing* 56, no. 2 (1992): 57-71.

17 Arnould, E. J., Price, L. L., Tierney, P., 'The Wilderness Servicescape. An Ironic Commercial Landscape', in Sherry, J. F., (ed.), *Servicescapes. The Concept of Place in Contemporary Markets*, Chicago 1998, 403-38.

18 <http://rolandrittman.com/en/>; accessed 7. 12. 2012.

to Roland, the company just grew from there. ‘We are foragers by nature’, Roland commented in our interviews with him.<sup>19</sup> Roland actively looked for new customers, but when he offered the newly-opened Restaurant Noma herbs with the flavour of *cilantro* (coriander), he set something in motion, and his story has become inseparable from the story of Noma.<sup>20</sup> The demand among contemporary Nordic chefs for exciting and normally-overlooked locally-grown foods and herbs began to rise. Roland Rittman now employs a group of foragers and sells his products to top restaurants all over the Nordic countries. For the restaurants, the foraged herbs offer not only interesting new flavours for the menu, but also a *terroir* narrative of locality, history and Nordic nature.

Fig. 1: Foraging with Roland Rittman, 2011. Photo: Hanne Pico Larsen.



Roland Rittman has become something of a foraging poster boy, and favourite of trendy Nordic restaurants, as he is seen to perfectly illustrate the enthusiasm for wild foods within the New Nordic Cuisine movement. Another New Nordic Cuisine theme that Rittman and his company market, is locality – in this case food from the Baltic coastline of Skåne. However, as we shall argue, when it comes to locality and food,

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19 Interview with Roland Rittman, 14. 8. 2011.

20 Redzepi, R., *Noma: Time and Place in Nordic Cuisine*, New York and London 2010.

islands seem to have a special advantage in claiming *terroir*, even for the same products that can also be found on the mainland.

Islands, as pointed out by John Gillis, are perceived as being remote, and remote places are often associated with a quality of times past regardless of their actual history. Consequently, islands are also regarded as being inherently older, more isolated, and more rooted than other places.<sup>21</sup> Performing island-ness is closely tied to heritage production, notes Owe Ronström in his study of heritage production on the island of Gotland. When island heritage is being produced for tourism, island 'qualities' such as remoteness, a slower pace of life, and authenticity, tend to be emphasised.<sup>22</sup> The Nordic coastal countries, especially those in the area stretching from the east coast of Sweden, through the Åland archipelago, to the west coast of Finland, rank among countries with the highest density of islands along their coasts, in the world.<sup>23</sup> Questions regarding branding, identity, and economic survival, are naturally vital to the island communities of the Baltic. Little wonder then that the stereotypes of island-heritage production merge with the tropes of the successful New Nordic Cuisine movement. However, the extent to which this connection is deliberately and consciously made, and turned into a *terroir* narrative among the island food entrepreneurs, varies.

One example of a conscious performance of island-ness, which incidentally also has a connection to Restaurant Noma, is the apple orchards of the Danish island of Lilleø. The owner of the orchard is Claus Meyer, one of the most powerful food entrepreneurs in Denmark and co-founder of Noma. Meyer is also the owner of several other food-related businesses such as Meyers Madhus and Meyer's bakeries as well as the commercial production of fruit juices and vinegars made from Lilleø-apples. As one of the early and high-profile advocates of the New Nordic Cuisine, Meyer is clearly familiar with the vocabulary of the gastronomic world. It should come as no surprise then that the description of the island orchards in Meyer's own web pages is soaked in *terroir* language:

The island Lilleø has a unique micro climate and is one of the smallest islands in Denmark. It is situated in the sea surrounded by the islands of Zealand, Møn, Falster and Lolland. Since the 1930ties fruit farming has been the main activity of the island which today has more than 25 apple cultivars. There is no irrigation on the island which leads to a smaller yield compared to the traditional orchards. Plenty of night dew, the salty sea air and the smaller yield, contribute to giving the fruits a great intense taste. The fruit trees are normally cut down when they are 15 years old,

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21 Gillis, J., 'Places remote and islanded', *Michigan Quarterly Review* 40, no.1 (2001): 39-58.

22 Ronström, O., 'A Different Land. Heritage Production on the Island of Gotland', *Shima. The International Journal of Research into Island Cultures* 2, no. 2 (2008): 1-18.

23 Ronström, O., 'Island words, Island worlds', *Islands Studies Journal* 4, no. 2 (2009): 163-82.

but on this island many of the trees are between 20 and 60 years old which gives them a first class quality of taste. Unique for Lilleø is also its vineyard. Hansen's vineyard produces top quality wines for Noma.<sup>24</sup>

Thus the island conditions can be said to lead not only to local products of high quality, but also to a unique form of what we have labelled *superterroir* here. Moreover, the fact that Lilleø apples stem from an island – a clearly distinguishable area – has greatly benefitted their marketing possibilities, explains Hans Lund Hansen, apple farmer and one of Meyer's collaborators.<sup>25</sup> Even when the island was flooded in 2006 resulting in a large part of the island *terroir* being damaged, the media coverage secured nationwide sympathy and drew even more attention to the apples on the small island.<sup>26</sup> Island status is thus seen to confer a stronger level of identity on products.

Fig. 2: Apple picking with a Lilleø farmer, Hans Lund Hansen, 2012. Photo: Morten Sørensen.



This brings us to our argument that traditional Nordic wild and indigenous foods, combined with the idea of islands as being more authentic, remote, and natural than the mainland, produce a perfect *terroir* narrative – in fact, a *superterroir* narrative. The island format serves to condense, render exotic, and lend authenticity to foods. From this perspective even a commercial venture such as the large-scale growing of apple trees seems closer to traditional forging than modern-day industries.

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24 See [http://www.clausmeyer.dk/en/the\\_island\\_lilleoe.html](http://www.clausmeyer.dk/en/the_island_lilleoe.html); accessed 7. 12. 2012.

25 Interview with Hans Lund Hansen, 14. 8. 2012.

26 *Ibid.*

## Nordic Islands' Cuisines

A clear awareness of the concept of *terroir* and a conscious connection with the New Nordic Cuisine manifesto can also be found on the Estonian island of Muhu, close to Saaremaa island. The entrepreneurs of the luxury restaurant and spa at Pädeste Manor on Muhu Island, have emphasised its island status and have started what they call The Nordic Islands' Cuisine project. The theme of a return to wild and traditional food is prominent in their homepage presentation:

[At] Pädeste manor we decided to tread back, to unfold and sometimes rediscover this tradition. We like to offer our clients a choice of various palates from Muhu and neighboring islands in the fine tradition of Nordic Islands' Cuisine.

We offer tastes, which gain their character from the produce, techniques and recipes originating from the Nordic Islands. Terroir and the seasons guide us in our cuisine. There are incredible advantages to a rough and rugged climate. Have you ever pondered the influences of our summer, with its long evenings and bright nights, on the flavor of locally grown food? Not to mention the dampness of the fall and crisp winter at its heels with their ever-changing temperatures. There's no doubt this all contributes to the taste of the food. The slower a plant grows, the better it tastes!

[...]. The islands belonging to the Nordic Islands' Cuisine area are all quite similar in this sense, despite their location. [...] Muhu is home to a great variety of wild animals, and that's why we often make a traditional Muhu dish from game, called Lomat meats. When using traditional techniques like salting, drying, pickling and smoking to prepare the raw, fresh ingredients from our islands, we get a result that suits our kitchen perfectly.<sup>27</sup>

In the Nordic Islands' Cuisine project, the islands of the Baltic are described as having much in common despite different locations and other circumstances. Moreover, the motif of an inherent island *superterroir* is evident, as is the importance of the theme of foraging. As mentioned above, the foraging narrative is one that lends authenticity to the New Nordic Food movement and is part of the communicative staging and servicescape on offer in this context.

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27 [http://www.padaste.ee/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/padaste\\_nic\\_A4ls\\_ENG-2.pdf](http://www.padaste.ee/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/padaste_nic_A4ls_ENG-2.pdf); accessed 10. 12. 2012.

In one of our other case-studies on the Åland Islands it became evident that it was not considered enough just to follow the manifesto of New Nordic Cuisine. Therefore, a special Åland kitchen manifesto was launched in January 2012.<sup>28</sup> One of the key figures is the local star chef and entrepreneur Michael Björklund – who also was one of the signatures to the original New Nordic Cuisine manifesto. The number of food businesses and entrepreneurs on Åland has increased significantly over the last decade as has general interest in locally-produced food – something that is evident in the huge popularity of the annual Åland harvest festival.<sup>29</sup> Although many of the smaller local entrepreneurs do not directly refer to the concept of *terroir*, the descriptions of their products make a clear connection between the special conditions of the place and the taste of the product.<sup>30</sup> Likewise, many food products are described in terms of a ‘return to tradition’ in combination with local products.<sup>31</sup>

A somewhat different example of when the themes of *terroir* and foraging are drawn upon in a local food-branding attempt involves the so-called Åland champagne. In 2010, a shipwreck containing what might be the world’s oldest champagne (Juglar bottles from the early nineteenth century), was found in Åland waters. The local government on Åland soon turned this into a local asset. Without actually having anything to do with the Åland Islands, the salvaged champagne has become an Åland product of sorts as it is sold at auctions, advertised, and given a stamp of ‘heritage’, locally. Åland entrepreneurs soon picked up on the idea. At the conference centre and restaurant *Silverskär*, it is now possible to store one’s own champagne in the same conditions as those which applied to the famous ‘shipwreck champagne’ – advertised as the ‘ideal conditions’ for champagne storage.<sup>32</sup>

## Conclusion

With our examples we intended to show that present-day foraging, both as an actual practice and as a trope, is integral to the idea of the New Nordic Cuisine. In other words, foraging for Nordic wild food is a living traditional practice, but, increasingly, it has also become an important element in the building of various Nordic brands.

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28 [http://www.landsbygd.ax/\\_composer/upload/landsbygdsutveckling/Alandskt\\_koksmanifest\\_30.1.12.pdf](http://www.landsbygd.ax/_composer/upload/landsbygdsutveckling/Alandskt_koksmanifest_30.1.12.pdf); accessed 10. 12. 2012.

29 In 2011, the harvest festival was attended by over 17,000 participants. The total population of Åland is 28, 000 (<http://www.skordefest.ax/fakta/>; accessed 10.12. 2012).

30 For example, the Apple Orchard, Peders Aplagård, emphasises the many sun hours enjoyed by the archipelago community (<http://www.aplagarden.net/>; accessed 10. 12. 2012).

31 When a Swedish food magazine gave Åland butter the highest score in a comparative test in 2011, the chief executive of the Åland Dairy (ÅCA) commented, saying: ‘The secret is to do the churning in the old-fashioned way [...] and to only use Åland products [...]’; it’s an enlarged version of what people did on the farms in the old days’. See [http://www.aca.ax/sv/nyheter/var\\_t\\_smor\\_ar\\_godast/15](http://www.aca.ax/sv/nyheter/var_t_smor_ar_godast/15); accessed 10. 12. 2012.

32 <http://www.visitaland.com/se/fakta/artiklar?articleid=2774>; accessed 10. 12. 2012.

*Terroir* narratives about the return to traditional methods of food preparation, and to ‘natural’ local food, are vital for the success of New Nordic servicescapes. Moreover, by drawing upon various qualities and characteristics associated with islands, island food entrepreneurs have been able to create the concept of not only an island *terroir*, but of a Nordic Island *superterroir*.

Fig. 3: Susanne Österlund-Pötzsch and Hanne Pico Larsen island-hopping, 2012. Photo: Morten Sørensen.



## *Part II: Revitalisation and Transformation*





# Small-scale Farm Dairies in Jämtland

## Ancient Practices in Modern Forms

*Madeleine Bonow and Paulina Rytönen*

### Introduction

The structural rationalisation and modernisation of the Swedish agro-food sector led to the gradual abandonment of traditional food. Industrial processing became a quality marker and artisan food was regarded with suspicion. In recent years there has been renewed interest in traditional food. The search for food with a history springs from the rise in consumer concerns about the impact of productivist agriculture on the environment, food safety, animal welfare and rural economies. This increased consciousness in terms of food production has created a new income opportunity for farmers, especially in marginal areas of Jämtland.<sup>1</sup> The impact of globalising agro-food markets on farm economies forced farming to become an increasingly-multifunctional activity. Farming is now often combined with cultural and/or rural tourism, on-farm production, and farm stores. In addition, modern societies have imposed new demands on agriculture as farms are now supposed to generate a number of activities for the public good, such as the maintenance of beautiful landscapes, and engaging in environmental protection and biodiversity.<sup>2</sup>

Although this trend is expressed in different ways under the umbrella of the rise of local food, nevertheless, the return of traditional food, including forgotten production practices and products that were once abandoned in the name of modernity, has become quite prominent. A pioneering experience in this connection in Sweden is the re-articulation of artisan cheese production in Jämtland.<sup>3</sup> Important

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1 Hassink, J., Hulsink W., Grin, J., 'Care Farms in the Netherlands: An Underexplored Example of Multifunctional Agriculture –Toward an Empirically Grounded, Organization-Theory-Based Typology, *Rural Sociology* 77, no. 4 (2012), 569-600.

2 Cudworth, E., *Environmental Sociology*, London 2003; Hassink, Hulsink, Grin, *op. cit.*, 2012, 569-600.

3 The county of Jämtland is a mountainous, less-favoured area located in the northwest of Sweden. The county is very large and comprises 12% of the total national area, but only 1.4% of the population lives there, which makes it the most sparsely populated region in Europe. Jämtland has a very large number of

lessons are to be learned from this experience for the future enunciation of public policies concerning local traditional food, but our knowledge about the processes involved is still limited. The aim of this article is to present new knowledge about why the artisan cheese sector in Sweden was re-articulated. Emphasis is placed on the reasons why people became involved in this business and how different forms of capital were obtained and used in coping with the everyday carrying out of their businesses.<sup>4</sup>

## Theoretical Considerations and Previous Research

In a previous article that highlighted the main entrepreneurial features of the process under study here, we showed that the farmers involved had contributed to a change of institutional setting, especially concerning food safety regulations. The article argued that entrepreneurial actions were performed by both the farmers and local authorities in this connection. Some of the main conclusions were that the development of the artisan-cheese sector involved new organisational forms – the use of old knowledge in a new market situation, the development of new products, the opening up of new markets and new learning processes and, not least, a dynamic interaction between economic actors over time. All of these are classical entrepreneurial features.<sup>5</sup> But entrepreneurial theories are insufficient to explain why people became engaged in this trade and how they cope with everyday practices, nor can they explain the links between tradition, culture and the reproduction of the sector.

Some useful tools for our analysis are the concepts of capital and habitus, developed by Pierre Bourdieu. These concepts can help us to reach an understanding of the relationship between objective social structures and everyday practices.<sup>6</sup>

The use of the concept of capital proposes a sophisticated substitute to that offered within rational choice thinking.<sup>7</sup> Capital can be social, cultural, economic or symbolic, or more usually a combination of one or more of these elements. For the farmers, the

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small towns and villages scattered across the entire county. More than half of the county's population lives in villages and small communities of up to 1000 inhabitants. 15% of the population lives in small towns (1000-4000 inhabitants). 34% of the population lives in Östersund, the capital of Jämtland. The area located closest to the Norwegian border is characterised by a mountainous landscape in which the use of summer farms is a tradition that has been maintained over time.

<sup>4</sup> The sample is composed of people who combine the activities of farming, husbandry and cheese-making. Some of the people in the sample also run farm stores, farm inns, and so on. For the sake of simplicity all are referred to as farmers.

<sup>5</sup> Rytönen, P., Bonow, M., Johansson, M., Persson, Y, 'Goat Cheese Production in Sweden – A Pioneering Experience in the Re-emergence of Local Food, *Acta Agriculturae Scandinavica, Section B - Plant Soil Science* 63, Supplement 1 (2013): 38-46. See <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09064710.2013.798682>.

<sup>6</sup> Webb, J., Schirato, T., Danaher, G., *Understanding Bourdieu*, Crow's Nest, N.S.W., Australia 2002, 1.

<sup>7</sup> Savage M., Bagnall G., Longhurst B., *Globalization and Belonging*, London 2005.

*economic capital* involves money, assets, cash, debt, costs, prices, investments, loans, mortgages and goods. Their *cultural capital* is composed of skills, knowledge, know-how, values, norms, education, qualifications, cultural understanding, cultural artifacts, experiences, and an awareness of the culture of farming and cheese-making. Their *social capital* is made up of networks, meetings, friends, family, isolation, tensions, community, social connections, and professional acquaintances. Finally the *symbolic capital* is composed of identity, heritage (being born into a farm and the cheese-making craft), traditions, status, ownership, pride, emotions, and symbolic resources, such as the dairy herd, the land, and the farm.

The individual well-being of the farmers in our sample is considered to exist when they possess 'human capital' which they can use to negotiate and renegotiate their position in the wider fields of the dairy sector, thus giving them a more active sense of involvement beyond the production of cheese. Capital can be accumulated over time and has the potential to produce profits, and to reproduce itself in identical or expanded forms.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the artisan cheese sector can accumulate, use, and produce, all forms of capital. A person may use their social networks and their cultural capital – education, for example – to increase their financial and symbolic capital, as well as their status and well-being, while maintaining and reinforcing their identity. In this sense, starting a farm dairy becomes both an economic and a symbolic investment.<sup>9</sup> Not only is the farm a source of livelihood involving economic transactions with a numbers of various actors across local and global dairy sectors, it is also an emotional investment linked to the well-being of the individual farmers.<sup>10</sup>

Farmers develop their human capital in relation to their habitus, that is, their socially embodied selves. Habitus designates a way of being, a habitual state and 'in particular, a disposition, tendency, propensity or inclination' to act<sup>11</sup> in a manner that is not automatically conscious or spoken, but which has become embodied in actors through practice.<sup>12</sup> It is subject to prejudice from national or regional cultures, educational systems and practices, from one generation to the next. Habitus describes

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8 Bourdieu, P., 'The Forms of Capital', in Richardson, J., (ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, New York 1986.

9 Heilbron, J., 'Economic Sociology in France', *European Societies* 31, no. 1 (2001): 57.

10 Bourdieu, P., *Practical Reason*, Stanford, C.A., 1998.

11 Bourdieu, P., Wacquant, L.J.D., *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, London 1992, 18.

12 Adams, M., 'Hybridizing Habitus and Reflexivity: Towards an Understanding of Contemporary Identity', *Sociology. Journal of the British Sociological Association* 40, no. 3 (2006): 514-16; Lau, R.W.K., 'Habitus and the Practical Logic of Practice', *Sociology. Journal of the British Sociological Association* 38, no. 2 (2004): 374-6.

a 'feel for the game'<sup>13</sup> something that is taken for granted, like a 'fish in water',<sup>14</sup> a sense of what the 'right thing to do', is.<sup>15</sup> The notion of habitus is useful in order to understand how individual farmers construct a meaningful existence.<sup>16</sup> The concept defines an individual's feel for the state of play in a particular field, such as that of cheese-making.

A 'field' is an arena of production that is characterised by the competitive positions held by actors in their struggle to accumulate cultural capital.<sup>17</sup> The concept of 'field' refers to the contexts in which people's everyday practices occur, and to the interactions that take place within them. All farmers share certain fields such as their local communities, and local and regional bodies that structure the ways in which they work. The farmers in our sample have a common field that is specific to their practice and within which they negotiate some important conditions for their sector. Habitus is indispensable for the negotiation that takes place within different fields, and it is also necessary in order to understand how agents play the game (of cheese-making and farm dairying) as it creates a sense of history and a sense of the future.<sup>18</sup> Agents with a similar habitus can be expected to respond in similar ways. Cheese-making and farm dairying can be understood as a 'field', with a range of agents and characteristic forms of economic, social and cultural capital.

## Methods and Sources

The study was undertaken in the County of Jämtland between 2010 and 2012. We interviewed twenty-four of the twenty-eight farm-dairy owners. Some farms are owned and managed by couples. Sometimes we interviewed the couple together, but some were also interviewed separately, hence the many names in the references. The respondents' farms are quite small and range in size (comprising both arable and pasture land) from five to fifty hectares. The majority of farms raise goats, although some have cows or sheep. Some farms have mixed herds and some have, in addition to the home farm, a summer farm also, which is used for the pasturing of the animals between the months of June and August. Most of the farmers practice low-input agriculture. Some of the farms engage in organic farming, others use conventional farming methods, and a broad range of farming practices are in operation.

Information was collected in respondents' homes, by means of qualitative in-depth interviews that ranged in length from forty-five minutes to five hours. The

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13 Bourdieu, P., *The Logic of Practice*, Cambridge 1990.

14 Bourdieu, Wacquant., *op. cit.*, 1992, 127.

15 Bourdieu, *op. cit.*, 1998, 8.

16 Bourdieu, Wacquant., *op. cit.*, 1992, 127.

17 Swartz, D., *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*, London 1997, 117.

18 Webb, Schirato, Danaher, *op. cit.*, 2006, 49.

interviews were conducted with the business owner and other family members active in the business. Interviews were chosen as the main research method to be used, because they can generate rich and detailed accounts of individual experiences, and offer flexibility which allows for adaptation to each context, organisation and individual. The interviews consisted of both structured and open-ended questions concerning the history of the respondents' operations, farming conditions, individual strategies, entrepreneurship, administrative and financial issues, general and specific constraints, interactions within and outside the trade, sales and trademark strategies, relevant education and training, gender-related issues, future possibilities, and so on. We also interviewed informants from the County Board Administration (CBA) and Eldrimner (National Centre for Artisan Food Production) in order to emphasise structural aspects, policy implementation, and general sectoral development. Our analysis is based on Bourdieu's concepts of capital and habitus. All informants agreed to have their names and statements published for scientific purposes.

## The Articulation of the Artisan Cheese Sector in Jämtland

The modern form of the artisan cheese sector in Jämtland emerged in the late 1970s when special aid for goat farming was promoted by the local authorities as a way of preserving, re-appropriating and modernising, that farming sector. As many farms were, and are, small, and as the land is not suitable for large-scale intensive production, the public authorities have actively promoted a shift from cows to goats. A consequence of the involvement of the public authorities is that the sector also became institutionalised and monitored. In 1984, the County Board Administration, *Länsstyrelsen* (CBA), and Jämtland County Council (*Jämtlands läns Landsting*), started to offer financial support to goat farms under the leadership of Bodil Cornell, an official at the CBA, an organisation which is still involved in the development and in the provision of continuing public support for the sector. A crucial side-effect of the initiative was that closer interaction between the farmers was achieved, which has contributed to the existence of a partial safety net for active food artisans and has acted as an engine for the re-development of the sector. The subsidies provided by the CBA were also an incentive to start farm dairies.<sup>19</sup>

An additional milestone was an initiative launched by the goat-breeding association which, together with the CBA, made a grant of 50,000 crowns<sup>20</sup> for the implementation of the project entitled 'Swedish goat cheese'. The goal of the project was to work for the development of a new market-space for goat cheese. One of the means engaged in to achieve this was the development of a new modern standard goat-

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19 Interview with Cornell, Bodil, CEO at Eldrimner 2010.

20 The value corresponded to around 160,000 SEK in 2010 (c. Euro 17,700).

cheese that could be produced in sufficient quantities for the national market. In 1984, the formation of Jämtspira, a goat-cheese co-operative, provided the required platform for sustaining the development of a national market-space, as well as niche markets, for goat cheese. In addition, Jämtspira constituted an efficient support-tool for the expansion of the sector.<sup>21</sup>

The third vital component was the founding of a training centre for artisan cheese production in Ås.<sup>22</sup> This educational dairy became an important hub, not only for knowledge dissemination, but also for the development of new products. Later on, the activities at the centre were extended to include other artisan food products also, and since 2006, it has become a national centre – called Eldrimner – for artisan food production. The centre conducts training in food-elaboration techniques and business administration for the food sector. It is also involved in lobbying for the improvement of conditions for those engaged in the small-scale production and distribution of food. Eldrimner also promotes networking, co-operation, and the mobilisation of active and potential food artisans all over the country.<sup>23</sup>

## Habitus and Individual Stories of Farmers

Almost all of the farmers in the sample had in common that they had moved to the countryside and that they had started the dairy as a conscious choice, thus changing their way of life and their occupation up to that point. Some were younger than others, only a few were born on their current farm, and most were not farmers originally.

Ann, one of the most successful farmers, makes seventy tons of cheese each year. She started her farm dairy in the early 1980s, when she wanted to move back home after having lived in the city for several years. The main reason behind that decision was that she had always liked goats. She had been influenced by her neighbour, Elma, who had kept goats when Ann was a child. Elma always had a happy expression on her face. Ann used to sit and play with Elma's kid goats as much as possible. She was always clear in her own mind that she wanted to marry a farmer, but since she did not actually do that, she bought a farm of her own instead. She expresses her love for the goats in the following way: 'Of all the animals, it is only the goat and the dog that look into your eyes.' If you have goats this means almost automatically that you have to make cheese. She says that 'Making cheese is like a passion, a poison you become obsessed with; to create something, it's magical'... 'Cheese-making is part of an ancient tradition; it is a fantastic feeling to manufacture cheese. I also try to bring [a knowledge of] the craft to others'.<sup>24</sup>

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21 See Rytönen, Bonow, Johansson, Persson, *op. cit.*, 2013.

22 Ås is a small village located 10 km outside the county capital Östersund.

23 Interview with Cornell, Bodil, 2010.

24 Interview with Klensmeden, Ann, 2010.

Gert and Gunilla moved to Raftsjöhöjden from Stockholm in the middle of the 1980s. They initially co-owned the farm with some of Gert's relatives, but they became the sole owners in 2000. They wanted to grow biodynamic vegetables and to keep horses. They explain why they started the farm dairy as follows: 'We are goat lovers both of us... Gunilla is genuinely interested in agriculture, but I was interested in farming on this particular farm that had belonged to my ancestors. We are interested in building communities for the future. That is why we are here... I love animals, but I do not think that conventional agriculture is community building – it is the contrary.'<sup>25</sup> Gert explains that there are many people who believe that the countryside should be like a wine club, a place for the conscious consumer. But slow food, like cheese-making, is basically a completely revolutionary movement that can build new structures between town and country. Gert and Gunilla produce only the amount of cheese that they consider necessary for their own use and to support themselves, and they sell it mainly in the farm store and at special fairs and events.<sup>26</sup>

Ulla and Jonny, an elderly couple, bought their farm, Smååkran, in the year 2000. Johnny always dreamt of having a farm and of keeping cows. They have been engaged in many different types of economic activities throughout their lives – fishing, bus driving, and forest work, for example. They grew up in the countryside – Jonny lived outside Gothenburg and Ulla outside Karlstad. Jonny went to agricultural school and has worked in agriculture in the past. They decided to buy a place of their own after having lived in many different locations. The farm had a functioning dairy, which was important for them given their age. Jonny explains: 'It takes too long and it is too difficult to build up a business and we are too old.' They had no previous cheese-making experience, but they learned how to do it. They have also used the previous owner's recipes and notes in order to solve all the practical problems related to cheese-making. 'It is a hard but a fun job, and the goats are tremendously cuddly and social', says Ulla, 'but we are still not making any profit'.<sup>27</sup>

Karin, a former teacher, lives on Herrö goat farm in Härjedalen. The farm belongs to her husband Tord, but the dairy belongs to her. She has lived there for twelve years. Tord had previously kept dairy cows but changed to beef cattle raising when he divorced his first wife. He eventually gave that up and started to work at Scandinavian Airlines. They started buying goats and building the dairy in 2003. She states that: 'To cope one must be an enthusiast, have an outgoing temperament, and have self-discipline'. Karin would never have started the dairy knowing what she knows today. 'My salary was reduced dramatically. There is so much work! Taking care of the animals, milking, cheese-making, and then the marketing and sales and freight are completely hopeless'.

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25 Interview with Andersson, Gert and Gunilla, 2010.

26 Interview with Andersson, Gert and Gunilla, 2010.

27 Interview with Bengtsson, Ulla and Jonny, 2010.



She states that goats are lively, intelligent, and contented, and can follow you like a dog. When the goats are about to give birth she and Tord place a baby monitor in the barn where the kids are to be born. This monitor is connected to their bedroom as they want to go out and take care of the kid-goats as they are being born. They feel that goats need to be helped during birth and that the kids can also freeze to death if they are born in February or March, when it is really cold outside. They allow the kids to stay together with their mothers until it is time for them to graze in the summer meadows, or until it is time for slaughter, because they consider that kids grieve if they are taken directly after birth from their mothers. Karin would like to convey to the customers that all of the kids get to run with their respective mothers for at least three weeks.<sup>28</sup>

Hillsands goat-farm in the northern part of Jämtland is inhabited by a fourth generation of cheese-makers. The owner, Jan, was born on the farm and his father was also a cheese-maker. Jan is one of just a few men in this business, but he does not see that as a problem. 'You keep in contact with people you trust and who can help you with the business; gender is of lesser importance. Jan has an explicit mission in relation to his profession: 'I was born with goats, and for me it is important to keep the traditions of Jämtland alive. My vision is to preserve the original products and, at the same time, to develop and make new exciting cheeses. My goal is to preserve and spread the tradition of cellar-stored cheese and to develop the sector in a forward direction'.<sup>29</sup>

Leif, together with Stephen, runs Kullens Gårdsmejeri. They keep goats and a few mountain cows. 'This is not a job, it is a lifestyle', states Leif. He became enchanted by this way of life when, as a child, he was brought by his parents to a mountain chalet in Vemdalen. They bought the farm in 2005 and Leif then left his job in the advertising industry in Stockholm. Stephen has attended different courses connected with agriculture. They also point out that it is their liking for the animals that drives them. Stephen states that goats are the most intelligent animals in the world; they are sensible and affectionate and the milking of them is the most satisfying activity in life. They produce enough cheese to meet the demand from their own farm café, and the business is quite lucrative. They have guests all year round, but they are not interested in producing more cheese even though they have a potential market for it, as they want to have the leisure to enjoy their animals and to spend time in the summer farm.<sup>30</sup>

Karin lives on her husband's family farm just outside Östersund. This is her second marriage and she moved to the farm in the late 1990s. When Karin turned fifty, she got two goats as a birthday present. Her inspiration came from France, which she has visited on many occasions. She studied French in high-school and at the university.

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28 Interview with Paulsson, Tord; Nylén Paulsson, Karin, 2011.

29 Interview with Hammar, Jan, 2012.

30 Interviews with Engman, Leif; Palosaari Stephen, 2010, 2011.

But living ‘right here in Jämtland’, where there is such a rich cheese-culture and having Eldrimner close by, have been additional sources of inspiration for me. She explains why she loves her new line of work: ‘I feel so good down at the dairy and it never becomes a burden. There you can be alone.’ Karin looks forward to conveying the local culinary heritage to others and to be a mentor to others also.<sup>31</sup>

Elsa and Vidar run a goat-farm in Sjoutnäset. Their farm includes a government mountain cottage (*fjällägenhet*), and a small farm, with a long lease, at low cost, the purpose of which is to populate some of the most remote areas in Jämtland. Tenants are also normally employed on a part-time basis in nature conservation. In the past, it was possible to inherit such a contract, but authorities are now trying to finish this form of lease. Elsa and Vidar have rented their cottage since they got married in the 1960s. They are the only people left in the village and their closest neighbour lives ten kilometres away. Goat-cheese production has been, and is, their main occupation and source of income. They are constantly talking to the animals and call them ‘our girls’. All of the goats are named after people who visited the farm during the year previous to their birth. The goats graze freely on the mountains and come back home in the evening. They once installed a milking machine, but as it did not suit the goats they returned to milking by hand, although this is a heavy task. They claim that they can see how the goats are doing by looking them in the eye, and the goats are allowed to grow old even if their milk yield decreases. Vidar is the one who puts them to their final rest even though it is with a heavy heart that he does so: ‘It’s better that he does it than a stranger’, says Elsa. They milk the goats together but she takes care of the cheese-making on her own. Their cheese is sold to stores in neighbouring towns, and to tourists. Since the 1970s, they have also complemented their income by renting out huts to tourists. Activities such as hunting, fishing, and gathering mushrooms and berries, are part of their subsistence lifestyle. Although most of the informants in the sample are well educated, Elsa and Vidar stand out in this connection. Their son holds a doctoral degree in agronomic sciences and their daughter is a trained classical musician. Their economic activity and their way of life are conscious choices as they wish to live close to, and to be in harmony with, nature. They are now in their seventies and plan to retire in the near future. The farm will then be returned to the county administration services.<sup>32</sup>

## Capital

*Social capital* is crucial for the informants. As cheese-making and taking care of the goats is hard work, social networks and families are important sources of support for them during times of adversity, but also for coping with the day-to-day work. An important source of social capital was created through the setting up of Jämtspira co-

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31 Interview with Eriksson, Karin, 2012.

32 Interview with Andersson, Vidar and Elsa, 2010.

operative and Eldrimner. The networks generated by these initiatives enable an exchange of knowledge to take place as well as the provision of practical and moral support mechanisms. An important outcome of the interaction between cheese-makers is that they reached agreement on fair prices to be charged, and gave each other support so that they had the courage to charge enough for their products. Initially, the price of cheese was only a few crowns, while today the price varies between 250 SEK to 450 SEK per kilo. They also jointly promoted artisan cheeses and made them known to consumers, something which also improved profitability.

Unlike most farmers in Sweden who inherit their farms, most of the farmers in our sample are originally from other parts of the country. They have had to raise capital to invest in the farms, the herds, and the dairies. The key economic goal of most farmers is to survive; making a profit is of lesser importance. Achieving a low level of *economic capital* is not always considered to be an obstacle, since most of the informants consider cheese-making to be a hobby and a way of life. They value a slower pace of life. One way in which it is possible to keep the initial costs down is to rent a mobile dairy. Eldrimner owns three such dairies that can be leased at a very low cost for a period of two years. This allows people with limited resources to start a business.<sup>33</sup> Jämtspira was a milestone in the creation of economic capital. The six farmers who started the co-operative had a total production of four tons of cheese. In 2010, of the twenty farmers who had been involved in Jämtspira, one of them produced 120 tons of cheese, several produced 70 tons, and the smallest farms produced 4-5 tons each per year. The co-operation in Jämtspira opened up a new market for artisan cheese, which led to increased sales. It also became a door opener for those wishing to start new farm dairies. The economic capital also improved as a result of the support received from Eldrimner. New products were developed and quality was improved; consequently the cheeses became renowned for their superior taste.<sup>34</sup> Most of the cheese is sold at fairs and markets, and also directly to customers on the farm. Direct sales are important because they allow the farmer to keep a larger share of the revenues.

As the majority of the farmers had not been involved in cheese-making before they moved to their own farms, they initially lacked cultural capital. They were able to take up cheese-making because Eldrimner provided support, training courses, inspiration, and knowledge, for them. They all claim that Eldrimner has been very important for them. The transfer of cultural capital and of know-how also takes place between farmers. They consult each other when the cheese-making goes wrong, and help each other on market days. In the early 1990s, some farmers felt that they were entering a phase of their business in which they needed to improve their cultural capital and to learn more about the business. They had previously modernised the red goat-cheese and the brown or white whey-cheese (*getmese*), and they had also developed a

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33 Interview with Cornell, Bodil, 2010.

34 Interviews with Klensmeden, Ann, 2010; Cornell, Bodil, 2010.

white goat-cheese. Therefore, in 1992, Eldrimner started to organise study tours to other countries, and these tours are now a regular component of the Eldrimner knowledge-transfer model. In addition, Eldrimner found a cheese-making expert in France, Michael Lepage, who has been engaged in leading cheese-making courses in Jämtland for many years.<sup>35</sup> Lepage has inspired the development of new cheeses, most of them copies of French cheeses (e.g. brie, camembert, Port Salut, blue cheese, and fresh salad cheese), but with some quite resourceful names such as *Rockafett*, (Roquefort), *Kozzarella* (Mozzarella) and Port Norderön. These cheeses have been shown to be more appealing to the urban consumer than the traditional ones, but as they are sold as traditional Jämtlandic cheeses the message would appear to be confusing, although this does not seem to bother the consumers.

However, the search for authenticity resulted in the revitalisation of cellar-stored cheese. This product had previously been rejected because consumers thought that it was dirty due to its mould and hairy appearance. But through a project called: ‘Search for the old and create the new’,<sup>36</sup> the reputation of the product was restored a few years ago and became more popular than ever because of its ‘beautiful and colourful mold’.<sup>37</sup> ‘Educating the public has been vital because “young” people felt very suspicious about it’.<sup>38</sup> The reinvention of the Jämtlandic cheese tradition has also led to the reinvention of the spirit of Jämtland. Some of the farmers are trying to safeguard traditions by using traditional ways of keeping animals, by using a traditional breed, by practising transhumance, by using summer farms, and by keeping historical grazing practices alive. Some of them also wear traditional clothes at the fairs and markets. The notion of a ‘good farmer’, as a keeper of an open landscape and as a saviour of the local economy, keeps farmers together in the field and in the habitus also.

## Final remarks

The habitus of the farmers gave them a pre-disposition to fulfill a dream of farming, of living close to the animals, and in proximity to, and interaction with, nature. Although most farmers are financially successful or, are at least self-employed and able to finance their way of life, it was not a search for profit that drove them to start the farm dairy. Their habitus has also been a driver behind their building up of social, cultural and economic capital. Since financial issues are of secondary importance – their propensity to co-operate, help, and support each other, rather than compete against each other, has been quite high. An interesting paradox is that they managed to turn their initial lack of cultural capital into an asset. As they were not driven by old-production

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35 Interview with Cornell Bodil, 2010.

36 ‘*Söka gammalt skapa nytt.*’

37 Berglund, A., ‘*Söka Gammalt – Skapa Nytt*’, in Bonow, Madeleine, Rytkönen, Paulina, (eds.), *Ymer 2011 Gastronomins (Politiska) geografi*, Motala 2011, 67-82.

38 Interview with Klensmeden, Ann, 2010.

traditions, they were able to innovate and to develop the products, which the opening of a new market-space made possible. The symbolic capital gained from farming, contributes to the farmers' sense of well-being and offers them satisfaction regarding environmental and cultural questions, as well as concerning their contribution to the local economy. As a new field for artisan cheese-makers was constructed, which contained social capital, infrastructure, support networks (such as, Eldrimner discussion groups and cheese-making experts), some farmers will be able to see how the values and feelings associated with their habitus can translate into new practices. Small-scale farm dairying could thus come to be regarded as a possibility that can be rewarded not only with economic capital but also with symbolic capital.

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- Andersson, Vidar och Elsa, Sjoutnäset, 14. 7. 2010.
- Bengtsson, Ulla och Jonny, Smååkrans getgård, 12. 7. 2010.
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- Engman, Leif, Kullens gårdsmejeri, 17. 7. 2010.
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- Halvarsson, Hans, Länsstyrelsen, 8. 9. 2010.
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- Hansson, Marie, Bränna getgård, 14. 9. 2010.
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- Myhr, Anita, Myhrbodarna, 16. 7. 2010.
- Nilsson, Inger, Nilnilsgården, 10. 7. 2012.
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- Norrman, Thor, Skärvångerns Bymejeri, 15. 7. 2010; 18. 3. 2011.
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- Olsson, Axel, Klöppingen Fäbod Klövsjö, 8. 7. 2012.
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- Paulsson, Tor, Herrö getgård, 26. 6. 2011.

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# The Revitalisation of Rural Products in Slovenia: From Simple Food to Culinary Attraction

*Maja Godina Golija*

Food represents a significant segment of human culture since every person is immersed in his or her own social and cultural environment, and this affects his or her choice of food, its use, preparation, and consumption. Food also serves to establish, as well as to reveal, strengthen, or renew, the system of social differentiation and delineation between social and national groups. Food preparation is more than the transformation of the natural to the cultural. Eating is, therefore, not just a way of satisfying a basic biological need, but also a social activity and an act of communication between the sharers of food, something which is also strongly linked to a whole host of cultural values.<sup>1</sup>

In European ethnological research, analysis of food as a cultural resource and as a part of life and culture, has been trailing behind that of other material elements, such as architecture, furnishings, costume, and so on. But food implies also many different levels of crossroads in diverse socio-cultural spaces, such as those between past and present, indulgence and normality, tradition and innovation, the global and the regional, private and public, layman and professional, to name but a few.<sup>2</sup>

## Slovenian Ethnological Studies of Food

As a segment of the lifestyle and culture of Slovenes, food has not been particularly closely studied by ethnologists. But in recent decades, there is evidence of an increasing level of interest in certain local dishes and rural products which, in connection with the

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1 Godina Golija, M., *Prebrana v Mariboru v dvajsetih in tridesetih letih 20. stoletja* ('Food Culture in Maribor during the Twenties and Thirties of the Twentieth Century'), Maribor 1996, 10.

2 Böder, S., 'Cultural Crossroads at the Dining Table: Regional Food as a Signpost?', in Lysaght, P., (ed.), *Food and Meals at Cultural Crossroads*, Oslo 2010, 46.

tourist industry, have become a significant factor of development in certain places and regions of Slovenia.

Slovene ethnologists have focused their research on several related subjects, particularly on typical local dishes and food products, and on the protection of their geographical indications (PGI) and designations of origin (PDO) within the European Union. The search for, and the promotion of, typical Slovene dishes is encouraged by the Slovene Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food of the Republic of Slovenia, the primary aim of which is to promote Slovene agricultural products in general, and certain food products in particular. Tourist workers and the food service sector are increasingly interested in protected foodstuffs and food products. Due to these growing demands to align Slovene legislation with that of the European Union, the Ministry adopted the Regulation on the Conditions for the Use of the Designation of Traditional Specialty Guaranteed (TSG) for various Slovene foods, and awarded certain foodstuffs and dishes the designation of a protected food product. So far thirty-six Slovene foodstuffs and dishes have got the Designation of Traditional Specialty Guaranteed (TSG). Among them are the following: *prekmurska gibanica* (a cake of layered apples, poppy seeds, cottage cheese, and walnuts); *idrijski žlikrofi* (dumplings from Idrija) and *belokranjska pogača* (a type of cake from Bela Krajina).<sup>3</sup>

In addition, foodstuffs may also have the labels, Protected Designation of Origin and Protected Geographical Indication. Nanos cheese, Prekmurje ham, Piran salt, Mohant cheese, Karst prosciutto, and so on, can be mentioned in this context. Both labels emphasise the significance of the region in which a particular food item is produced and specify the ingredients used throughout the process of its production. It is imperative that the production, processing and preparation of the product take place in the same geographical area. The designation, Traditional Specialty Guaranteed, on the other hand, focuses more of the original recipe for a dish, ensuring that it is prepared from traditional ingredients and in a traditional manner.<sup>4</sup>

Arising from the ratification of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage by the Slovene Parliament in 2008, work on a Slovene Register of Living Heritage is now in progress. As part of this endeavour Slovene ethnologists are trying to draw attention to the significance of local products and dishes that are a part of the intangible heritage of the country. During 2009 and 2010, the author of this paper conducted fieldwork in three Slovene regions: Upper Carniola, Styria and Prekmurje, collecting data, literature, and photographic material on three characteristic ingredients used in Slovene cuisine: Mohant cheese; *gibanica* (leavened pie), and pumpkinseed oil. A text resulting from this project is available online, as well as additional photographs, drawings, and a video.<sup>5</sup> The major criteria for the foodstuffs

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3 Gašek, V., Kos-Skubic, M., *Slovenski zaščiteni kmetijski pridelki in živila* ('Slovenian Protected Agricultural Products and Foodstuffs'), Ljubljana 2010, 25.

4 *Ibid.*, 9.

5 See, <http://www.zkds.si/>; accessed January 2013.



and dishes to be included in the Register were the following: age, specialised knowledge required for their preparation, originality, and their importance in, and in connection with, their original social environment. All of them are traditionally renowned, prepared from ingredients typically produced in a given area, and continue to have considerable economic importance for the local population. In addition, they represent an important element of what is on offer for tourists in a particular region and serve to promote its local cuisine.<sup>6</sup>

A number of important questions have arisen as a result of this process: for example, how should the food culture of the various social and ethnic groups that live in Slovenia be presented?; is the culinary heritage of Slovenes really as uniform as has been indicated, and as it has been presented, to date?; when do certain foods and dishes become culinary heritage?; and are food and foodstuffs part of tangible or intangible cultural heritage?

### *Gibanica* as Part of Culinary Heritage

Let us examine more closely one of the elements of Slovene food included in the Slovene Register of Intangible Heritage, namely *gibanica*. The text dealing with this particular culinary specialty in Prlekija and Prekmurje, together with photographs depicting the making of this simple cake, is available on the Register's website.<sup>7</sup>

A typical festive cake in the northeast of Slovenia, *gibanica* has been mentioned in the earliest ethnographic writings relating to Slovenia. In his text from the first half of the nineteenth century, on the culture and life of Slovenes living in the area between the Mura and the Raba, the priest and ethnographer Jožef Košič mentioned *gibanica* when describing the menus that accompanied strenuous farm work. He says: 'In the summer, the first bowl is filled with either lettuce sprinkled with cracklings or with cucumbers and cream. The second is filled with cabbage or turnip; the third with legumes or with a farinaceous dish; and the fourth with *hajdinjača* made from buckwheat dough. Whenever buckwheat flour was unavailable the *hajdinjača* could be made from stretched dough from any other grain. When sprinkled just with turnip, it is called *repnjača*; when the filling is a mixture of turnip and cottage cheese it is [called] *gibanica*.'<sup>8</sup> The latter is also included in his description of food served at weddings: '... No wedding feast can pass without *gibanica*, which is named after its multilayered dough, the *gyüba*. It is prepared by scattering chopped cabbage, turnip, or cottage cheese over stretched dough, covering it with another layer of dough, and repeating this

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6 Godina Golija, M., 'Mohant' ('Mohant Cheese'), in Križnar, N., (ed.), *Živa kulturna dediščina se predstavi*, Ljubljana 2010, 56-9.

7 See, <http://www.zkds.si/?q=node/80>; accessed January 2013.

8 Košič, J., *Življenje Slovencev med Muro in Rabo* ('Life of Slovenes between the Mura and the Raba'), Budimpešta 1992, 29.

until the cake has ten or eleven layers. Each layer is sprinkled with lard topped with cabbage, turnip, or cottage cheese, and then baked.<sup>9</sup>

Authors of the comprehensive *Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild* ('The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in Word and Image') which was published in twenty-four volumes in Vienna between 1887 and 1902,<sup>10</sup> devoted considerable attention to ethnographic characteristics, the so-called popular culture, of the nations that comprised the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, including their food culture. In the first volume of this monumental book entitled 'Steiermark' and published in Vienna in 1890, Franc Hubad examined ethnographic characteristics of the Slovene population in Štajersko and Prekmurje. The typical farinaceous dishes of this region then included *gibanica*, *kvasenica*, and *krapci*, all with a filling made of (unsalted) cottage cheese and cream.

In his extensive review of the popular food culture of the Slovenes published in the 1940s, *Narodopisje Slovencev 1* ('Ethnography of Slovenes 1'), Rajko Ložar wrote the following about *gibanica*: "There is no firmly-established difference between *krapci* and the *gibanica* ... It has already been mentioned that in Prekmurje, the *gibanica* is called *kolač* (cake) and has to be included in the wedding menu. In Goričko, it is sprinkled with turnip seeds and named *repnjača* while that sprinkled with cheese is simply called *gibanica*. Pajk lists a variety of dishes that are not exactly defined and vary between *krapci* and *gibanica*... This rich menu indicates a culture dominated particularly by farinaceous dishes, which figure importantly in ritual cycles. This repertory of dishes is typical of agricultural lifestyle and of the farming population. Among these dishes, the many kinds of *gibanica*, and the dishes not made with leavened dough in general, play a major role."<sup>11</sup> Originally from Prekmurje, the ethnologist Vilko Novak who did extensive research on the food culture of this region, stated that *gibanica* is the most important farinaceous dish in the grain-producing areas of eastern Slovenia.<sup>12</sup>

According to the afore-mentioned sources, the *gibanica* was once prepared particularly on festive occasions and during heavy farm work. The cake is made of several layers (*güba*) of stretched dough folded in a baking dish or on a wooden baker's peel, and each fold is layered with cottage cheese, cream, or other fillings. According to their shape and filling, there are several varieties of *gibanica*. That from Prekmurje, the *prekmurska gibanica*, is made of stretched dough and of butter crust, and has the richest filling which is made from cottage cheese, poppy seeds, walnuts, and apples. Due to its rich ingredients, and the fact that it is not mentioned in older sources, it is probably of

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9 *Ibid.*, 30.

10 Godina Golija, M., 'Die materielle Kultur der Slowenen im "Kronprinzenwerk"', in Fikfak, J., Johler, R., (eds.), *Zu Produktion und Rezeption der "Österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie in Wort und Bild"*, Wien 2008, 242.

11 Ložar, S., *Narodopisje Slovencev 1* ('Ethnography of Slovenes 1'), Ljubljana 1944, 199.

12 Novak, V., *Slovenska ljudska kultura* ('Slovenian Popular Culture'), Ljubljana 1960, 168.

recent origin. It is baked in a round earthenware baking pot and sliced into triangular wedges not unlike those of a layer cake. The *gibanica* made only of stretched dough and containing but one kind of filling, for example, cottage cheese, apples, or nuts, is older in origin and is the most frequent type of *gibanica* in northeastern Slovenia.

Fig. 1: *Prekmurska gibanica* – Prekmurska cake with a very rich filling, 2012. Photo: Maja Godina Golija



While the age and origin of *gibanica* have not yet been researched in any great detail, the dish is often mentioned in tourist publications that promote local cuisine. It also features in a number of popular texts, and in several cookbooks that provide recipes for its preparation.<sup>13</sup> Authors of local cookbooks, or those that cover the entire region, feature it as a dish typical of this area.<sup>14</sup>

The richer version of *gibanica* is presented as a typical Slovene dish on the official Slovene tourist portal entitled ‘I Feel Slovenia’.<sup>15</sup> In addition to a photograph of the cake, there is also a description of it and a recipe for its preparation.

The typically round shape of *gibanica* is older than its more recent rectangular version. It was prepared on a baker’s peel used for pushing bread into the oven, or in

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13 Grum, A., *Slovenske narodne jedi* (‘Slovenian Folk Dishes’), Ljubljana 1960; Kuhar, B., *Sto značilnih jedi slovenskih pokrajin* (‘One Hundred Typical Dishes of Slovenian Regions’), Ljubljana 1999.

14 Fras, M., *Jedi naših babic* (‘Dishes of Our Grandmother’), Kapela 1997.

15 See, <http://www.slovenia.info/si/Jedi-in-recepti/Prekmurska-gibanica-recept.htm?recepti=8366&1ng=1>; accessed 8. 1. 2013.

round earthenware baking pans; some homemakers now bake it in rectangular baking tins. The stretched dough is thin and is baked in several layers spread with filling. There are usually four to six layers of dough, each smeared with melted butter or oil and cream. The name *gibanica* comes from the term *güba* (fold), which indicates a layer of stretched dough. The filling in *prleška gibanica* is made of cottage cheese and sour cream.

While the preparation of *prleška gibanica* is relatively simple, the making of *prekmurska gibanica* requires more knowledge and skill. Since the latter requires a stretched, as well as a butter crust, and different fillings, it was not as popular as the former. During or after arduous farm work, such as harvesting, the making of hay, and grape harvesting, homemakers have always tended to serve the simpler form of *gibanica* with cottage cheese and cream filling.

*Gibanica* is prepared as follows: Make smooth stretched dough from 50 dekagrams of flour, 1 egg, 2 tablespoons of oil, 1 tablespoon of vinegar, some salt, and lukewarm water. Knead it well, brush with oil, and let it rest for over an hour. In the meantime, prepare the filling from 1 kilogram of unsalted cottage cheese, 6 deciliters of sour cream, 1 egg, a pinch of salt, and sugar to taste. Separately beat an egg and add 3 deciliters of sour cream. Roll and stretch the rested dough over a board or a tablecloth thinly spread with flour. Grease a round earthenware baking pan and place the dough in it. The dough, which is now hanging well over the rim of the pan, is cut into *vogli*, which denotes the folds or layers that will be folded over the filling. The first layer of dough is placed in the pan, brushed with a tablespoon of melted butter, covered with a filling of cottage cheese, sour cream, and egg, and sprinkled with a mixture of sour cream and beaten egg. The process is repeated in exactly the same way until the last layer of dough has been placed on the top of the last batch of filling. This layer is covered with a mixture of sour cream and beaten egg, over which melted butter is poured. The dish is baked in a baker's oven or in an ordinary oven at 200 degrees Celsius for approximately half an hour. While still warm, it is cut into wedges.<sup>16</sup>

Since *gibanica* once represented an entire meal it was never sweetened. Today it is served primarily as a dessert, and sugar and raisins are added to the filling. Once baked, it may be dusted with powdered sugar. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, *gibanica* was a dish served mostly on important holidays. It is now made on special occasions but is also served on tourist farms as a dessert following the main meal, or in restaurants that serve typical dishes of the region.

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16 Godina Golija, M., 'Gibanica' ('Gibanica Cake'), in Križnar, N., (ed.), *Živa kulturna dediščina se predstavi*, Ljubljana 2010, 65.

Fig. 2: Preparation of *prleška gibanica* on the tourist farm Hlebec. Photo: Maja Godina Golija, 2009.



In rural households, knowledge about the preparation and serving of *gibanica* is usually transmitted from older homemakers to younger generations. As the recipes and the necessary skills are generally passed on by grandmothers and mothers to younger female household members, most of this knowledge and these traditions have been preserved orally. Very few women write down their tried and trusted recipes on paper. Local female societies, particularly those in Prlekija and Slovenske Gorice, prepare lectures and workshops that include the preparation of *gibanica*, thus preserving this local culinary heritage. Some of the collectors of recipes for the preparation of traditional dishes prepared on farms, also list *gibanica* in their recipe collections, and provide detailed instructions for its preparation. Some younger homemakers learn about it from cookbooks and from recipes available on the Internet.

Due to its huge popularity, *gibanica* has become subject to certain negative influences that tend to alter its traditional formula, shape, and the manner of serving it. The filling frequently includes large amounts of sugar, vanilla-flavoured sugar, and raisins, which were never included in the original recipe, as *gibanica* was originally the main course intended to satiate, and was thus made from local, home-grown foodstuffs. In addition to the original round *gibanica*, it is now frequently rectangular in shape, with servings that are square in shape instead of the typically triangular ones.

## The Tourism Industry and the Cake *Gibanica*

Since it is the most typical cake in northeastern Slovenia, and a traditional element of the local cuisine of the region, the position and the role of *gibanica*, a prominent part of Slovene culinary heritage, are quite important. In his book on Slovene popular culture, Vilko Novak wrote that, like the typical farinaceous dishes of the Alpine world – *bobi*, donuts, and *flancati* – *gibanica* from Prlekija, and that from Prekmurje, are among the most important dishes in the eastern part of Slovenia. Having several layers, they are filled with cottage cheese, poppy seeds, honey, raisins, walnuts, and cream. In addition to these, the locals also prepare cakes from leavened bread, for instance, *krapci* and *kvasenice*, which are scattered with fresh cheese from cow's milk or with cottage cheese. All of them are typically served only on festive days, for celebrations, and during major farm-work activity.<sup>17</sup>

The importance of these farm dishes has now significantly changed, however. While their original role in the festive menus has declined, they have become an exciting culinary experience for hikers, holidaymakers, and other visitors to northeastern Slovenia. Along with the rapidly-growing tourist development of this region – which is the result of the discovery of thermal springs, and the creation and swift development of hotel resorts and spas – there is also an increased interest in regional cultural features, particularly in ethnological characteristics and local cuisine. Some of the local food products have also found their way onto the menus of local hotel restaurants. But even more so, the growing popularity of these dishes is the result of the booming growth of tourist farms and catering establishments that offer traditional local food products and dishes.

When listing their local culinary offer, the two largest health resorts in this area – Radenci and Moravske Toplice – also mention that *gibanica* from Prlekija and that from Prekmurje are served after the main course in their hotels and in their pastry shops.<sup>18</sup> This farinaceous dish, traditionally known, served, and consumed in a rural environment, has thus become predominantly a dessert on the menus of hotel restaurants and cafés.

During her fieldwork in Prekmurje in 2012, this author collected data on the extent, dissemination, and transmission of knowledge concerning the preparation of this local culinary delicacy. Her informants mentioned the importance of catering schools and their impact on recipes and on the preservation and dissemination of knowledge related to them. A cook in a well-known Prekmurje restaurant famous for its preparation of two typical local dishes, *bograč* and *gibanica*, stated the following: 'I have learned how to prepare *gibanica* in the catering school while I was in my teens in the mid-1960s. Although descended from a Prekmurje family, we never made it at

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17 Novak, V., *Slovenska ljudska kultura* ('Slovenian Popular Culture'), Ljubljana 1960, 168.

18 See, <http://www.sava-hotels-resorts.com/sl/radenci/kulinarika/>; <http://www.sava-hotels-resorts.com/sl/moravske-toplice/kulinarika/caffe-praline>; accessed 8. 1. 2013.

home. It was not until [I went to] the catering school that I learned how to prepare the dough for it and how to assemble the layers in their correct order. There must be eight types of filling, the first being the poppy seed filling. The next one is made of cottage cheese, which is followed by the walnut filling, and finally the apples. This sequence is repeated once again. Forty years ago, this dish was not as popular as [it is] today, when it is served at the end of feasts, or festive lunches, or dinners in restaurants.’

*Gibanica* is an important dish which is increasingly included in the offer of tourist farms in Prekmurje and Štajersko. Some of them, for example the Ferencovi Tourist Farm in Cankova, have been awarded a special certificate for its preparation. They mostly offer the two most popular examples, *gibanica* from Prlekija and that from Prekmurje.

Some industries, particularly tourism and the catering industry, have a significant impact on the preservation of culinary tradition, its development, and transmission. Farm dishes which had been almost forgotten about have become an important part of the tourist offer in certain areas, as well as a unique culinary experience for visitors to different Slovene regions. The growing popularity of certain culinary specialties also increases their economic significance, and not only for the purpose of tourism. Some farms have started to focus mainly on the production and sale of traditional local food products and dishes, and made-to-order *gibanica* has become an important additional source of income for rural homemakers in northeastern Slovenia.

## Conclusion

During the last decade in Slovenia it has been possible to follow the increasing interest in certain rural products, their revitalisation and promotion, especially in connection with the tourist industry. These rural products have become a significant factor of development in certain places and regions in Slovenia – for instance, in Nature and National Parks and in Slovenia’s spa regions. A dish worth mentioning is *gibanica*, a type of leavened pie, available in Goričko Nature Park and in spa centres in the northeastern part of Slovenia.<sup>19</sup> Made of modest, home-grown farming produce, this and other formerly typical dishes of the poorer segment of the Slovene population, have become indispensable in the tourist offer, and, when neatly packed, they are also a souvenir which can be brought home from a tourist destination. Restaurant chefs, tourist-farm owners, and local food producers, play a large role in the exploitation, sale and promotion of Slovenian local food, including *gibanica*. What were once just ingredients for daily meals have now been converted into a supreme culinary experience, and feature as a prominent element in the tourist offer of a village, town, or region.

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19 Godina Golija, M., ‘*Gibanica*’ (*Gibanica Cake*) in Križnar, N., (ed). *Živa kulturna dediščina se predstavi*, Ljubljana 2010, 64.

Rural products are nowadays also often connected with the appropriation of the health-giving nature and the ecological character of local food. Richard Tellström, a Swedish food-culture researcher<sup>20</sup> has written that, in interviews, marketing experts primarily stress the importance of meeting consumer needs for local products and for their authenticity. It is especially this emphasis on authenticity that increases the market for products, or heightens the expectancy of new ones. In meeting these demands, marketers need to present a skillful balance between cultural heritage and innovation. Tradition and cultural origin need to be perceived as being attractive ways in which to increase the positive effects of the consumption of local foodstuffs, and the concept of regional, traditional food has to be perceived as being in balance with the concept of innovation. In addition to presenting cultural values and the riches of the countryside to urban consumers, the tendency is, more and more, to market them to foreign tourists. It is of particular importance that the value of such products corresponds to the values of modern consumers, and here the use of illusions and myths in pictures and stories, which are marketed together with the related local food product, is truly significant. Local, regional, and national food- and meal-cultures have to be understood, as the outcome of a combination of values, and in relation to the concept of how to use cultural heritage for commercial and political purposes.

Food is not only an important element of the material, but also of the intangible heritage world, both locally and internationally. It is a part of collective knowledge and tradition, and of innovations in the preparation, serving, and consumption of food. The so-called national dishes, which were a construct of, and popularised by, the intellectual elite of Slavic nations in particular, in the second half of the nineteenth century, served to express and underline national affiliation.<sup>21</sup> They have now been replaced by rural products, and by local food, concerning which special emphasis has been placed on territorial origin and on connections with the local environment, authenticity, tradition, and unspoiled nature. In these environments, food becomes an important element in the creation of local identities. It coincides with an increased interest in a healthy lifestyle, nature protection, and quality leisure time, but it is also an important factor of economic development in tourism, the catering industry, and in agriculture as well, as this is the basic producer of traditional local food.

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20 Tellström, R., *The Construction of Food and Meal Culture for Political and Commercial Ends: EU Summits, Rural Businesses and World Exhibitions*, Örebro 2006, 60.

21 Makarovič, G., 'Prehrana v 19. stoletju na Slovenskem' ('Nutrition throughout the 19th Century in Slovenia'), *Slovenski etnograf* 33-34, no. 1, (1991): 127.



# Hunger and Abundance: Food Heritage and Bringing Tradition Back on the Plate

*Tina Novak Pucer*

In this contribution I wish to present the role of traditional food in the daily diet as it once was and the return of traditional food on the plate and daily menu. My focus will be on Slovenian Istria, an area in which the Regional Museum Koper, my employer, performs its public service as a state establishment.

Until the mid-nineteenth century, Istria was one of the many provinces in Central and Eastern Europe inhabited by three ethnic groups, two of which – comprising the majority of the rural population – differed vastly in their social structure from the third one. The latter represented a minority consisting of the members of higher social classes – which, apart from the nobility, also included a significant part of the bourgeoisie, officialdom, and the intelligentsia. Social elevation was often linked to linguistic assimilation or, rather, to linguistic integration.<sup>1</sup>

Istria as the northernmost peninsula in the Mediterranean region, and hence the closest point of entry to the Central European area by sea, has always been at the centre of world events. The population not only followed, but actively participated in, major political, economic and ideological changes – despite being continuously pushed to the background, marginalised, and placed at the edge of various civilisations, ethnic groups, and state entities. The inhabitants found themselves in the sphere of ‘high politics’ only when the great powers were making, or at least trying to make history at their expense. Such is the image of Istria even today, a territory that has been settled for more than a millennium by Slavic and Romanic peoples, i.e. Croats, Slovenes and Italians, who have been more often brought together than set apart, by history.<sup>2</sup> It should, however, be borne in mind that various settlers – the Romans, Franks, Slavs, Venetians, Austrians and Italians – brought their dietary habits with them, and that this left a distinct influence on the local cuisine.

Since food is deemed to be a cultural good, the diets of past periods are treated and regarded as being an important part of cultural heritage. Cuisine and gastronomy

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1 Darovec, Darko, *Kratka zgodovina Istre* ('A Brief History of Istria'), Koper 2009, 241.

2 *Ibid.*, 261.

are two fields through which we can learn about cultural heritage, changes and innovations. They also enable us to explore the contemporary creativity of an individual, a family, a group, the inhabitants of a certain locality or a province, as well as assisting in the study of their daily life and festivals. Throughout the centuries, there have been alternating periods of hunger and plenty and it is common knowledge that peasants especially lived most of their lives in straitened circumstances. The eighteenth century was, in general, a century of hunger in Europe, arising from population growth, meagre food production and agricultural development, and hunger was at its height when mercantile principles were introduced in the second half of the eighteenth century. In that particular century, Europe was facing a major shortage of food, especially with regard to cereal products.<sup>3</sup> These shortages caused enormous changes in agricultural and livestock production. At this point, mention should also be made of the huge role played in the diet by potatoes (introduced in the territory of present-day Slovenia in the nineteenth century), and maize, the latter which spread from two directions – from neighbouring Friuli and also from the Balkans. Except in the Littoral, where it was the basic ingredient used in daily white or yellow *polenta*, as well as in various stews and soups, maize was not in widespread use until the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Hunger was of critical importance with regard to the introduction of potatoes and maize, while financial conditions, crop losses, and other factors, also contributed further to the poor nutritional situation, especially in rural areas. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the food revolution engulfed Europe in its entirety and changed the quality of life of its population. The food regime, which, hitherto, had been heavily based on cereals, gave way to a system in which the need for proteins and fats was predominantly satisfied by foods of animal origin. It was precisely the shortage of food that had, in the past, also dictated the concept of the ideal man, that is, that he should be of corpulent stature, as an indication of wealth and abundance. Today, however, the situation is different. Food is abundant, at least in the Western world, and the food industry is actually ‘feeding’ consumerism by almost incessantly bombarding the individual with information about new products and with the suggestion that they should be eaten and enjoyed. If the fear of hunger was typical of past periods, gluttony is the contemporary fear. ‘The irresistible attraction of excess, which a thousand years’ history of hunger had imprinted on bodies and minds, now began to take its toll.’<sup>5</sup>

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3 Bogataj, Janez, *Faksimile s prevodom v sodobno slovenščino in barvno prilogo: Vodnik, Valentin, Kuharske bukve* (‘Facsimile with a Translation into the Modern Slovenian Language and Colour Attachment: Vodnik, Valentin, “Cook Book”’), Celje 2011, 9.

4 *Ibid.*, 16.

5 Montanari, Massimo, *Lakota in izobilje* (‘Hunger and Abundance’), Ljubljana 1993, 223.

## Is Slovenian Istria Returning to Traditional Food?

My consideration of the above question draws on field notes taken during ethnological research conducted in the mid-twentieth century (1945-1954), in Istria, under the leadership of the ethnologist Boris Orel. I already presented some of the results of my own fieldwork at the 13th Conference of the International Commission for Ethnological Food Research held in Slovenia in 2000, although from a different perspective.<sup>6</sup> The field notes contain descriptions of Istrian dietary habits in the first half of the twentieth century. Istrian food is often classified as 'Mediterranean' food/diet. The so-called Mediterranean cuisine, as an example of a healthy diet, has been investigated ever since the Second World War period, and the first use of the term 'Mediterranean diet' dates to 1975.<sup>7</sup> The term was introduced in the book, *How to Eat Well and Stay Well the Mediterranean Way*, by the American physiologist, Ancel Keys.<sup>8</sup> The Mediterranean diet emerged and was transformed in poor, ecologically-exhausted environments in which people were essentially unable to provide sufficient food of animal origin to meet their own requirements.<sup>9</sup> However, Janez Vajkard Valvasor had already written about the Mediterranean trinity of cereals, olives, and wine, in eastern Istria, at the end of the seventeenth century, in his famous work *The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola*. He also mentioned chestnuts as being an important part of the diet, something which no longer holds true today.

In addition to traditional crops (cereals and vegetables), the inhabitants of Istria also cultivated plants introduced from other parts of the world, such as maize, tomatoes, and potatoes. Farmers themselves grew or raised most of their food in their own fields (agriculture) and meadows (livestock production). A favourable climate (sub-Mediterranean) and existing soil conditions facilitated the cultivation of climate-sensitive crops typical of Mediterranean countries. As already noted above, one of the basic characteristics of the Mediterranean diet is that it emerged in poor environments. This certainly also held true for the inhabitants of Istria, who would raise only a limited number of animals for their own needs, while selling better cuts of meat, as well as dairy products, to the coastal towns of Koper, Izola, Piran, and Trieste. The Mediterranean influence on dietary habits also manifested itself, not only in the use of spices, and herbs such as rosemary, bay, sage, garlic, onions, parsley and celery, as well as olive oil and wine, but also in the ways in which pasta, minestrone soups, vegetable dishes, and, in some places, fish dishes, were prepared. However, since Istria borders on the Karst and

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6 Pucer, Tina Novak, 'Food Culture in Istria', in Lysaght, Patricia, (ed.), *Food and Celebration. From Fasting to Feasting*, Ljubljana and Dublin 2002, 45-52.

7 Krese Baskar, Meta, Baskar, Bojan, 'Mediteranska prehrana, Mediteran v Sloveniji', ('Mediterranean Food, Mediterranean in Slovenia'), *Časopis za kritiko znanosti XXI* (1993): 69.

8 Keys, Ancel and Margaret, *How to Eat Well and Stay Well The Mediterranean Way*, Garden City, N.Y., 1975.

9 Krese Baskar, Meta, Baskar, Bojan, 'Mediteranska prehrana, Mediteran v Sloveniji', ('Mediterranean Food, Mediterranean in Slovenia'), *Časopis za kritiko znanosti XXI* (1993): 76.

since there is a geographical dividing line along its edge between the Mediterranean and continental zones, note should also be taken of the continental influence manifested in the use of lard, potatoes and roux, in the preparation of porridges and mushes, and in the minimum consumption of fish dishes. In the past, the majority of the population had an extremely modest diet, which often reflected the social position of individual households. Wealthier families could, of course, afford a richer and more abundant diet.

The ordinary daily diet consisted of cereals (maize, barley, wheat and rye) and vegetables, as well as small quantities of meat, dairy products and eggs. Breakfast consisted of malt coffee, or roux, accompanied by bread or baked polenta and, in some places, mush. *Moč*, also a breakfast dish, was made of vinegar, pepper, garlic, and crushed bread. A wealthier family could also afford eggs, sour milk and butter. For a morning snack, women and children would most often have some fruit, a piece of bread, *polenta*, or malt coffee. Men who performed demanding physical work had a more filling and substantial meal, e.g. *šopa* (slices of bread soaked in a milk-and-egg mixture) with asparagus, *šopa* with tomatoes, *frtada* with asparagus, and so forth. For lunch they would usually have minestrone as a single dish. Minestrone was prepared in many different ways, but it always consisted of a thick stew. It was usually a mix of different ingredients, especially vegetables, depending on the season and availability. The most characteristic type of minestrone was that made of beans, potatoes and maize, and was called *bobiči* or *špoč*. But various combinations of vegetables could be used: beans–potatoes, pasta–beans, sour cabbage or sour turnip–potatoes (*jota*), and so forth. Housewives also combined pasta, beans, carrots, potatoes, maize, barley, rice, leeks, celery, parsley, zucchinis, peas, and tomatoes, when making the stew. And they would always throw a piece of sausage, or, at least, a pork bone, into the pot; in desperate times the same bone could even be used more than once or by several different families. Roux – ‘tacada’ made from rendered thinly-chopped bacon or olive oil with onions, garlic and flour, enhanced the flavour of minestrone. Apart from minestrone, lunch would also consist of *polenta* and potatoes with various accompaniments and sauces. *Polenta* was the most widespread cereal food and the most commonly used in all meals. It was freshly cooked for breakfast, or what was leftover from the day before was baked and used. For lunch, *polenta* was served with a fish sauce made, for example, of codfish (*baccalà*), or with tomatoe sauce, or with mutton goulash, or with a sauce made from pork ribs and sausages, or with liver, bean stew, or animal blood (from the slaughter – the so-called black or bloody *polenta*). *Polenta* could also be served with vegetables, such as kale, cabbage or turnip (larded with cracknels or olive oil). In some places it was served with milk, whey, cheese, or fried eggs. Pieces of bread were served in a similar way. Afternoon snacks consisted of malt coffee, bread or *polenta*, and fruit. Pieces of bread were sometimes also soaked in red wine or olive oil, or sprinkled with sugar. For dinner, Istrians would most often have one of the following dishes: *radicchio* (leaf chicory) with beans, potatoes or eggs; *polenta* with sour cabbage or turnip; salted boiled potatoes; pasta with sauce; or risotto. Sunday food was better than weekday food, but fewer meals were eaten on Sundays – just breakfast, lunch, and dinner. For breakfast,

real coffee was served; lunch would consist of meat products or housewives would dress-up everyday dishes with sauces and so on, to make them more appetising. They would also make a dessert with apple, or cottage cheese, or serve walnut rolls called *štruklji*.

Meat was seldom eaten. Pork, with the exception of offal, which was used immediately after the pig was slaughtered, was dried. Istrians would sell the finer pieces of the meat (*prosciutto*), but keep the lard, cracknels and sausages for their own use. Meat was scarce and was always used sparingly. It was served on Sundays and on festival days, when it was used to make a soup (from chicken, hen, beef or pork), or goulash using hen or rabbit meat, mutton, or dried pork. Fish, except for codfish (*baccalà*), was hardly ever on the menu.

Festive food was, of course, richer than the everyday variety. The selection was wider and meals were made of finer ingredients than those used for everyday meals. In addition to meat dishes, dairy products, soups, holiday-bread recipes, pasta and sauces, desserts, consisting of dried fruit and compotes, were especially looked forward to by children. Some dishes were exclusively associated with certain Church festivals – for example, *baccalà* and fried kale were typical Christmas dishes, brawn (made of pork feet, ears, tail, a piece of shoulder or prosciutto, and spices – salt, pepper, bay, garlic), and boiled shoulder of pork, were typically served at Eastertime. During festival days, Istrian housewives would make soups – of beef or chicken – which they would complete with pasta or rice and spice up with salt and pepper, and sometimes also with bay and cumin. But no other foods were as festive in character as desserts. *Supe* – slices of stale bread soaked in a milk-and-egg mixture and fried in butter or oil – would usually find its way on to the dining table. Two other typical Istrian desserts were (1) *kroštoli* made of shortcrust pastry and fried in oil, and (2) *miške* made of leavened dough. Walnut *potica* (a roll cake which, apart from walnuts, could also be filled with pine nuts, raisins, almonds or hazelnuts), and *pinca* – sweet-milk bread made with the addition of butter, lemon or orange rind, were also favoured desserts. Leavened dough was also used to make *štruklji*, cooked or baked with various fillings, such as walnuts, pine nuts, almonds, hazelnuts, cracknels, jam, milk solids, or fried onions. In the past, festive food was served at Christmas, Shrovetide, Easter, and on the village saint's day.

Dishes and dietary habits noted in the aforementioned field notes make up the food heritage of Slovenian Istria. The simple composition of food reflects the modest resources and poverty that prevailed in the region, as well as the ingenuity of housewives who, nonetheless, also knew how to make delicious dishes.

## Reflections on the Return of Traditional Dishes to Istria

With regard to the population inhabiting, or originating from the hinterlands and residing in cities, we cannot speak of the return of traditional dishes in terms of added value, or as being an outstanding additional aspect of their nutritional regime, since their diet actually consisted of such dishes. This may also be true of other groups who only occasionally 'reach' for such dishes, in restaurants, for example, since over the course of the last ten to fifteen years, traditional dishes can be found on the menus of

various restaurants, in both rural and urban contexts – or perhaps this is just an impression conveyed by an improved flow of information or improved forms of communication arising from technological development.

Slovenia is divided into twenty-four gastronomic regions, including Slovenian Istria. Over the last four years, Slovenian Istria has hosted events under the title 'Gastronomic Treasures of Istria', with the aim of presenting the gastronomic and culinary traditions of the region. Thus, from March to November each year, Istria offers a series of festivals and thematic culinary evenings, such as: 'Golden Olive Twig Festival', 'Malvasia Festival', 'Mussels Week', 'Saltpans Feast', 'Asparagus Feast', 'Olive Oil and Chard Festival', 'Artichoke Festival', 'Ice Cream Festival', 'Wine and Garlic Festival', 'Fishermen's Sunday', 'Sweet Istria 2012,' 'Agricultural Days of Slovenian Istria,' 'Truffle Festival', 'Persimmon Festival', 'Chestnut and Young Wine Festival', and so on. The very names of the festivals and feasts attest to the presence of the Mediterranean food trinity in the region and offer a foretaste of traditional dishes. Personally, I would like to highlight the 'Sweet Istria Festival', which, since 2009, has been organised by the City Municipality of Koper, as the largest annual thematic culinary event in Slovenia. The organisers collaborate with the ethnologist Janez Bogataj, the leading authority in the field of investigating and preserving food heritage in Slovenia, along with the ethnologist Boris Kuhar. According to Bogataj, the 'Sweet Istria Festival' has a special place among events of its kind by 'filling the gap in the knowledge of desserts that represent a way to preserve and continue the sweet masterpieces of our ancestors'. It brings modern new forms and creativity to the field of confectionery and the production of sweet foods in Slovenia, while at the same time providing an opportunity for people to learn about foreign sweet food products. The event is described as an international festival of desserts and sweet foods offered for sale by producers at stalls. The festival is accompanied by various other events including a competition. The latter serves to promote the development of a sweet-food culture in Istria and beyond, as well as to improve the quality of desserts, especially in catering businesses. The event as a whole is one of the most innovative of its kind provided by Istria's and Slovenia's tourism sector,<sup>10</sup> although it could be regarded as being 'a bit too commercial'. From the selection of sweet treats on offer one can taste and buy traditional Istrian desserts, such as *potica* (roll cake), *štruklji* (dumpling), *kroštoli* (shortcrust pastry fried in oil), *miške* (leavened dough fried in oil), and other geographically-recognisable delicacies – for example, *prekmurska gibanica*, the best-known Istrian dessert, which is filled with poppy seeds, cottage cheese, walnuts and apples – while, at the same time, have the staff of the Specialist Diabetes Clinic measure one's blood sugar level. This, in fact, is my next consideration, as it is already common knowledge that sweet foods are among the primary causes of diabetes, the 'silent disease', which has come to affect ever younger age-groups. Given that some countries

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10 Bogataj, Janez, *Slovenija praznuje: Sodobne šege in navade na Slovenskem* ('Slovenia is Celebrating: Contemporary Manners and Customs in Slovenia'), Ljubljana 2011, 253.

have already introduced a special tax on sweetened beverages and foods, the basic idea for the festival – ‘the knowledge of desserts that represent a way to preserve and continue the sweet masterpieces of our ancestors’ – loses its appeal.

In Slovenian Istria, a very special form of the selling of surplus wine, known as *osmica* (eight [days]) (plural *osmice*) has been preserved ever since the time of the German Emperor Charlemagne. Written sources document the right to sell wine, and this entitlement was also preserved later on, during the reign of the Austrian Empress Maria Theresa and the Emperor Joseph II. In 1784, a decree was issued allowing winemakers a period of eight days to sell the previous year’s wine, or produce, tax-free. The winery in which a farmer would sell his wine free of tax for eight days in one year came to be called *osmica* (i.e. eight). In order to make it clear that there was an *osmica* taking place on the farm, the farmer would attach a bunch of ivy to the front door. *Osmica* is a form of retailing of non-bottled wine with a designation of origin. The winemaker would organise an *osmica* at his house, in a room where the wine was stored, most often a cellar. The farmer was thus able to sell his own produce, that is, what he himself did not need, to a consumer. As regards the visitors to *osmice*, I can only say that male villagers and people from the surrounding areas predominated until the 1970s. However, with the improvement of road connections, families from cities also started to visit *osmice* at weekends. The composition of visitors underwent a drastic change, especially from the 1970s onwards, when women, youths, and families with small children, began to frequent *osmice* also.

Over recent years a rule has been established that any given cellar is allowed to organise an *osmica* for ten days, twice a year, as long as it can offer its own food and drink for sale on the occasion. Every authority, from Austro-Hungarian to present-day Slovenian, was, and is aware of the beneficial aspects of *osmice*, which allow farmers to empty their barrels and to prepare them early enough for a new harvest. With time, the opportunity to sell the surplus wine led to the offering for sale of home-made meat and dairy products, home-made bread, *potica* and cooked *štruklji*. The basic rule, in a nutshell, is that farmers may sell only what they produce themselves, something which makes what is on offer at the different *osmice* almost identical and fairly limited in scope and variety. The produce for sale includes: home-made meats (*prosciutto*, *pancetta*, pork neck), sheep cheese (on rare occasions), olives and pickled vegetables (eggplant, zucchini, bell peppers), *baccalà*, sour cabbage, *ombolo* (pork chops) and sausages with *polenta* or potatoes. In some places *jota* and *bobiči* are also on offer, while in springtime asparagus served with eggs is on offer. *Potica*, *broštole*, and home-made bread are also generally available. Apart from wine, the farmers also provide home-made liquors (for example, cherry, ruda, fennel, jujube, and juniper).

Apart from a few traditional dishes being available at *osmice*, there are also farmhouses which offer a more diversified selection of traditional foods, such as, *gnocchi* (dumplings) with (usually game) goulash, meat baked under a *črepnja* (a big metal lid), *fuži* (a traditional Istrian pasta) with truffles, and so on. The elements of traditional dishes or their basic ingredients can still be found today on the menus of guesthouses and restaurants in Slovenian Istria. In this context, we can talk about the interpretation

and fusion of traditional and modern cuisine. Master chefs keep abreast of the demands of today's visitors and consumers by creating new dishes which are, nevertheless, always based on the food heritage of a given environment. Sometimes, they may also be a bit vague or mysterious about their innovativeness, with the names of dishes not being entirely revealing about what will be served on the plate.

Given that country dishes are often considered to be inappropriate for today's catering requirements and the demands of contemporary guests, they thus tend to serve as the bases for the development and refinement of older recipes and locally-grown foods. In this connection, we often find ourselves in an uneasy position, since, despite the fact that Istria is a coastal region, one can hardly ever find fish caught in the Slovenian sea – but rather farmed fish, or fish caught by other far-away countries, such as Spain, Greece, Japan, and the US – on the menu. The domestic fish-catch is negligible as are the quantities of fish on the plates in guesthouses. Why? There are various reasons of a political, historical, social, and environmental nature, for this. Fisheries are disappearing, and with them the boats that are destined for scrapping – a practice for which the EU literally rewards boat owners. But this is a different subject which deserves separate consideration.

As regards the influence of advertising on eating habits, especially those of children, the promotion of unhealthy food constitutes a burning problem on a global level. Food has become a notion associated with health, attractiveness, confidence, success, as well as with self-discipline and self-control. Consequently, over time, societies and cultures have been setting new physical ideals, which, in each period, have deviated from what was regarded as average. Today, these ideals are only attainable by those who, despite being subjected to manifold ideas about pleasures and indulgence, shape their disobedient bodies in order to conform to the prevailing norms of slimness. This is, of course, a sign of privilege, since only the highest social strata have sufficient time and money, as well as an appropriate life-style, to enable them to work on their bodies, to achieve the required slimness. The relationship between the actual, and the desired, body is characterised by feelings of constant tension and dissatisfaction, which most often stem from socially- and culturally-determined norms that exclude anyone else who is different; and, of course, it is precisely this deviation from the norm that leads to social and cultural stigmatisation.<sup>11</sup> Media messages thus deliberately push an individual into unhappiness, because an unhappy individual is a major building block of the capitalist market, just as food is an integral part of consumer society. Postmodern society has embraced the concept that 'slim is healthy'. In order to answer the questions how, when, and why, this idea gained ground, the culturological understanding of differences between urban and rural contexts, manifested both in traditional and modern society, is considered to be the most appropriate interpretative tool in this

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11 Južnič, Stane, *Človekovo telo med naravo in kulturo* ('The Human Body between Nature and Culture'), Ljubljana 1998, 28.



situation. Obesity could be an attribute of the way of life of a country, where the 'overweight', fat, and corpulent body, served as an indication of an individual's material wealth, economic prosperity and, therefore, social power.<sup>12</sup> Conversely, the urban environment of the bourgeois society of the nineteenth century embraced the slim body as a fundamental attribute of an individual's physical appearance. Values of slimness associated with dexterity, diligence and effectiveness, came to prominence, as a new aesthetical and cultural example, in the eighteenth century at the earliest.<sup>13</sup>

On a cultural level, attitudes towards food changed in the first half of the twentieth century when the danger and fear of hunger gave way to the danger and fear of excess.<sup>14</sup> Improper attitudes towards food give rise to many diseases, such as bulimia, anorexia, binge eating disorder, excessive weight loss, and so on, all of which attest to the fact that food can also be used a means of manipulation. In the life of an individual, food can thus often function as a reward or as a punishment, as a token of love and appreciation, as well as a form of blackmail, bribery, subordination, control, and comfort.

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12 Aleksić, Jelena, 'Ideologija hrane', ('The Ideology of Food'), *Teorija in praksa*, 38. 2. 2001, 315.

13 Montanari, *op. cit.*, 219.

14 *Ibid.*, 222.

# Farmers' Markets in Poland: Revitalisation of Traditional Food Products

*Violetta Krawczyk-Wasilewska and Katarzyna Orszulak-Dudkowska*

In the post-modern world, two culinary trends are readily discernible. On the one hand there is the homogenisation and globalisation of food cultures (called 'glocalization' or 'McDonaldization' by George Ritzer),<sup>1</sup> while on the other hand there is the permanent growth of the *Slow Food* movement and its philosophy.<sup>2</sup> The latter emphasises the need to safeguard and protect traditional local food products.

In contemporary Poland both tendencies are of interest to citizens, although the trend towards local culinary offerings seems to be increasing. There are many so-called 'folk' or historical inns, and smaller or larger restaurants serving traditional meals, all over the country, which compete with MacDonal'd's and KFC, as well as with popular Chinese and Vietnamese gastronomy. One example of this trend is the restaurant chain called Chłopskie Jadło ('Peasant's Food'), founded in 1995 and stylised according to nineteenth-century ethnographic collections. Before long the afore-mentioned restaurant, because of its high-quality cuisine, was granted the prestigious emblem 'Teraz Polska' ('Poland Now!').

We should also take into consideration that Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004 created an opportunity for producers from the food industry to protect regional and traditional names through the signs PDO (Protected Designation of Origin), PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) and TSG (Traditional Speciality Guaranteed), and hence to promote the areas where they are produced. There are also the labels, Quality – Tradition, Culinary Heritage – Region's Tastes and, the most popular of all, Regional Product. The registration of products' names under the patronage of the Polish Chamber of Regional and Local Products enabled the variety of regional foods to be increased and the provision of exceptional products to exist in a market dominated by mass-produced food.

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1 Ritzer, G., *The McDonaldization of Society*, Thousand Oaks, CA, 1993; Ritzer, G., *The Globalization of Nothing*, Thousand Oaks, CA, 1996.

2 Petrini, C., *Slow Food Revolution: A New Culture of Dining and Living*, New York 2006.

In contrast to a food industry characterised by mass production, there is a growing organic food sector. Since 2008, Łódź, the centrally-situated and second largest Polish city after Warsaw, has had one of the biggest fairs of organic food called, Natura Food, directed at organic food producers and traders, organic shops and gastronomy, as well as at individual customers.<sup>3</sup> In 2012, the Łódź Natura Food Fair was started with the co-operation of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements [IFOAM]. The IFOAM Group EU's goal is the worldwide adoption of ecologically-, socially-, and economically-sound systems that are based on the principles of the FAO Organic Agriculture Programme. By the way, the IFOAM EU Group is a non-profit membership-based organisation that brings together more than two hundred and fifty organisations, associations and enterprises. It represents the organic movement in Europe and promotes the further development of organic food and farming.

Taking the above into account, it seems that on the one hand the manufacture of regional and traditional products helps with the development of the diversification of agricultural activities and with the promotion of the regions, while on the other, it is followed by slow and organic food trends. The above-mentioned factors are easily observable in the growing popularity of so-called regional farmers' markets organised as events, and taking place at regular fairs also held within the space of big city shopping malls and hypermarkets. These events continue the old tradition of markets and fairs which were organised once per week in small towns and larger villages, and twice a week (Tuesdays and Fridays, preferably) in large towns. In the nineteen fifties it was still the case that farmers arrived in town on horse carts and offered their own agriculture products – potatoes and basic vegetables (carrots, parsley, leeks, celery and cabbage), seasonal fruits (apples, pears, tomatoes, plums, cherries, walnuts and hazelnuts), flour, groats, eggs, fresh and sour milk, butter, white cheese, geese, hens, chickens, as well as home-made bread and sausages – for sale.

After 1989, the time when the so-called political transition started, because of the free-market economy and the enormous impact of the influx into Poland of the main European hypermarket chains selling all kinds of food and food-products, the traditional Polish farmers' markets lost their former importance. Instead, expensive food boutiques and shops, to be found in large commercial centres, offer ecological or bio and organic Polish products, often under a recognised Polish brand (such as, for example, Ekoland, Eko-Lukta, and Krakowski Kredens), as well as foreign brands, for sale. It should also be emphasised, that since 1 July 2012, a new legal rule has been introduced in Poland that requires the EU's 'leaf' logo to appear on all packaged organic foods.

However, the traditional markets did not actually disappear from the map, but rather they changed their character. Nowadays, the regional farm products' markets are the most popular among Polish consumers and clients. They are organised as cyclical weekend events (occurring once or twice per month) in the corridors of big malls and

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<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.mtl.lodz/food>; accessed 8. 7. 2012; or <http://www.naturafood.pl>; accessed 8. 7. 2012.

hypermarkets, as well as outside them, or on popular pedestrian streets. Markets in the latter areas are organised occasionally during local holidays, fairs and feasts. In Łódź, there are regular, and fortnightly-organised, ‘Old-Polish Markets’ in the corridor of the big commercial centre named M1. It should also be mentioned that the so-called ‘Holiday’s Markets’ – are organised in the huge commercial complex called Manufaktura during the Christmas and Easter seasons (Fig. 1). Similar activities can be seen all over Poland.

Fig. 1: Polish traditional Easter cake, Easter Market, M1, Łódź, Poland. Photo: K. Orszulak-Dudkowska, 5 April 2012.



Farmers’ markets promote local and neighbourhood communities, demonstrating the social value of intangible cultural heritage. That is why, apart from food-product stands, associated cultural products of a folk-art character, including useful and decorative handmade objects and gadgets, are also presented, the whole often being accompanied by folk music performed by musicians dressed in traditional folk costumes.

The food products on offer include: traditionally-smoked pork hams and sausages (Fig. 2), black pudding, white boiled *wurst*, pâtés, smoked fish, venison and games, organic yellow and white cheeses, processed or smoked (made from cow’s, sheep’s or goat’s milk), free-range eggs, sourdough bread, home-baked cakes, vegetable and fruit preserves, natural juices, different types of honey (Fig. 3), herbal and fruit tinctures and

liqueurs, as well as local beers. Customers are attracted by the possibility of tasting samples of these products. Besides what is provided free of charge, there are finger sandwiches covered with lard and cracklings, followed by sour cucumber, also available for tasting. Moreover, the individual customer has, perhaps, the only opportunity to meet the farmer, or the producer's representative, in person. They do on-site marketing by giving a direct explanation of the product to clients, as well as providing cooking and serving advice to customers, who are happy with the individual attention they are getting and the chance to taste the food.

Fig. 2: Traditional smoked sausages. Farmers' Market, M1, Łódź, Poland, Photo: K. Orszulak-Dudkowska, 5 April 2012.



Fig. 3: Honey varieties. Farmers' Market, M1, Łódź, Poland. Photo: K. Orszulak-Dudkowska, 13 April 2012.



All foods are displayed on wooden boards or folk pottery placed on special wooden stands of two to three square meters in capacity. These are decorated with straw, leaves, field and meadow flowers, and covered with colourful folk textiles and pure white, embroidered tablecloths. This form of presentation is intended to create an atmosphere of a traditional country-food style that is simultaneously raw and simple, healthy and organic. To achieve such an impression, special firms work hard. They organise weekend farmers' markets, contact farmers and producers in different regions of Poland, do marketing and advertising, and design the displays for the various events.

The previously-mentioned socially-desirable label ideas like 'old-Polish', 'country style' or 'peasant's food', need some further explanation. Poland has been, for many centuries, a rural economy, and there never has been, in the past, just one type of culinary culture. Cultural differentiation within social classes and ethnic minorities must be taken into account, in spite of the fact that pauperised minor gentry and poor peasantry dominated society's structure. The latter ate meat very rarely, mainly at weddings and during holy-day feasts, while birds, fish and game were discreetly, and illegally, hunted on the estates of the middle gentry. By the late nineteenth century, the authentic culinary tradition of the serf peasants was based on wild plants – mainly mushrooms, forest berries, nuts, weeds, turnip-roots, cabbage and parsnips. Since the end of the nineteenth century when serfdom ended in Poland, the slow development of the small farms of individual peasants did not support a fattening diet. Everyday food was based on the peasant's own potatoes, cereals, flour, grits, eggs, cabbage, carrots and wild mushrooms, while meat, fish, poultry, honey, pickles and refined milk-products appeared only rarely on the farmer's table because of their high cost.

Today's so-called 'peasant tables' feature an enormous range of cold meats, jars of sour cucumbers, jugs of lard, and wooden barrels of beer, as well as bottles of vodka, while herbal or fruit spirits are often seen in restaurants, at weddings and banquets, as well as on the stands of farmers' markets. It should be emphasised that modern peasant tables are stylisations only and that they are to be contrasted with the authentic, historical folk-culinary tradition. They reflect, rather, some old cultural dream of cornucopia and a stereotypical image of the ceremonial Polish gentry-foods of the past.

The modern food offerings at the farmers' markets are a kind of traditional-kitchen recreation and culinary folklorism. They fulfill modern people's needs for cultural identification and 'back to the roots', versus the pressure of global food styles and the production of nutrition on a massive scale. This follows fashionable ethnic-kitchen trends and the popular post-modern belief that traditional-type foods are healthier, more organic, and tastier, than those that are mass-produced. The foregoing statement is undoubtedly true.

# The Return of the Wood-fired Baking Oven in Hungary

*Anikó Báti*

In modern Hungarian food culture changes brought about by globalisation and modernisation are evident, as are parallel new trends towards the revival of old traditions. In the past, there were, of course, also incidents of the temporary revival of old, out-dated methods of cooking, occurring under special practical circumstances, but these modern trends are mainly motivated by nostalgia. Elements of food culture that have been revived, have not become part of everyday life, but are focused instead on leisure-time activities. It is a worthwhile research exercise to try to discover the underlying motivations and values involved in such revitalisation trends.

In this paper I shall try to analyse such trends by using the example of the wood-fired baking oven which has not been in everyday use in Hungary for over fifty years, but which is currently undergoing a revitalisation impulse. My examples of the revival of this oven for the present paper are from the small village of Cserépfalu,<sup>1</sup> with a population of about eleven hundred people, situated in the northeastern part of Hungary. At present, there are eleven working wood-fired ovens in use in the village, six of which were built during the last few years. I should also add that I have found newly-built wood-fired ovens not only in the Hungarian countryside but also in the suburbs of Budapest.

In the first part of this paper I shall outline the recent history of the Hungarian baking oven. Then I shall describe and explain some of the communal and individual reasons behind the recent trend towards the building of this oven. Finally, I shall briefly describe the technology involved in its construction.

The Hungarian word for oven 'kemence' dates back to the Pre-Settlement period of Hungarian history. The word is of Slavic origin and, from the very start, it was used to denote the heating, cooking, drying and baking functions of the oven. Since the late

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<sup>1</sup> The study was sponsored by the Bolyai János Grant of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. See also, Báti, Anikó, *Régi és új elemek a cserépfalvai konyhán* ('Kitchens: Old and New Elements in Cserépfalu Today'), Néprajzi Értekezések 1., Budapest 2008.

Middle Ages, the ordinary people have used the enclosed baking oven for making their own bread at home. In the countryside, home-made bread remained the standard up to the mid-twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> This oven stood within the dwelling house and served also to provide heating during the winter months. The removal of the baking oven from the house itself and the building of it in the courtyard adjacent to the dwelling, was a late development.<sup>3</sup> This outdoor oven was still large, and was capable of accommodating the baking of five to six large loaves for family use over a week. However, the outdoor oven became a more important feature in the second half of the twentieth century, when houses were rebuilt and when kitchen technology was rapidly improving.<sup>4</sup>

Until the 1960s, families in Hungarian villages baked their own bread at home. But around that time they were forced to stop doing home baking, because of the re-organisation of farm ownership, when agricultural farmers' co-operatives were organised, and when the farmers had lost their own land. They had thus no access to the good quality wheat which they themselves had produced, and they were unable to buy flour for baking bread. Furthermore, the young women of the family were not in a position to help the older women with the physically-demanding task of baking, as they were engaged in study or work. In addition, the younger people had not learned how to knead and make bread, or how to pre-heat the oven, and, over time, even the older generations gradually began to forget these skills. It was also not worth heating up the oven in preparation for baking in a household in which only a few loaves of bread per week were consumed, and it was also quite difficult to get firewood.

Macro socio-economic processes were behind the changes in food culture which occurred in the second half of the twentieth century, and which entirely transformed earlier food traditions. The most important of these in the context of this paper were: the entry of women into the workforce which meant that meals for children and the elderly could no longer be provided within the family, and the growing trend towards the purchase of an increasing percentage of the food requirements of households, in the form of raw ingredients and ready-to-eat foods, in shops. A change could also be

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2 On the historical background of Hungarian food culture, see, Kisbán, Eszter, 'Táplálkozáskultúra' ('Food Culture'), in Balassa, Iván, (ed.), *Magyar Néprajz IV. Életmód* ('Compendium of Hungarian Ethnology, vol. 4. Ways of Life'), Budapest 1997, 417-582; Kisbán, Eszter, *A kenyér a táplálkozási struktúrában* ('Das Brot in der Ernährungsstruktur'/ 'Bread in the Nutritional Structure'), *Népi Kultúra-Népi Társadalom IV.* Budapest 1970, 97-125.

3 On the summer kitchens in Hungary, see, Zsuzsanna, Batari, 'The Interiors of Summer Kitchens: Changes in Lifestyle and its Material Consequences in the 20th Century', in Korkiakangas, Pirjo, Lappi, Tiina-Riitta, Niskanen, Heli, (eds.), *Touching Things. Ethnological Aspects of Modern Material Culture*, Helsinki 2008, 248-60. *Studia Fennica Ethnologica* 11.

4 On the innovations in food culture in the second part of the twentieth century, see Knézy, Judit, 'Innovations in Food Culture among the Rural Communities of Hungary, 1920-1970', in Oddy, Derek J., Petranova, Lydia (eds.), *The Diffusion of Food Culture in Europe from the Late Eighteenth Century to the Present Day*, Prague 2005, 135-51.



observed in the value attached to money and time, as people were prepared to spend money on foods which they had previously produced themselves. They bought electrical appliances to lighten household tasks, and they learned recipes from many different sources, rather than just in the home. At the same time they completely abandoned certain techniques, technologies, and dishes, or these remained the provenance only of the elderly.<sup>5</sup>

Most Hungarian households began to buy, rather than bake, their bread, around the same time (1960s),<sup>6</sup> but the outdoor oven, in which bread could be, and often was, baked for weddings and, even at a later date, for great festive occasions, was still kept by a few families. From the late 1950s, no traditional oven was provided in any of the new village houses built in the uniform design that had turned their back on traditional regional architectural forms. Thus the owners had no opportunity to make traditional home-baked bread, even if they wished to do so. Factory-made iron ranges with ovens, which had been installed in the houses, were later replaced by bottled gas ovens, and then in the twenty-first century, by modern gas cookers. Unlike the large traditional baking ovens, these modern cookers had ovens just large enough to bake bread for a single day, but refined cakes and pastries could also be made in them.

The equipment formerly used for baking bread almost completely lost its original functions with the demise of the oven-baking of bread. It was either no longer used or was given a secondary function – for example, wooden bowls and troughs which had been used in bread making were later sometimes used during pig slaughtering.<sup>7</sup>

By the end of the twentieth century, a complete change had taken place in the history of Hungarian bread making. During the 1990s, the bread-making machine appeared in the households of young and old alike in Cserépfalu. As the appliance could perform the whole bread-making procedure, no previous knowledge of, or skill in, bread-making was needed. The main reason for buying such a machine was the pleasant aroma of the freshly-made bread, apart from trying to provide healthy food for the family, and to be self-sufficient as much as possible, at least in the case of a staple food like bread. But the advent of the bread-making machine was an important stage in the revival of the making of bread at home, and also in the renewal of old memories of traditional baking.

After the fall of communism in 1989, there were substantial changes in values in local communities. In both villages and large cities, a kind of ‘quest for identity’ was underway. The revival of old, out-dated, forgotten elements of lifestyle, especially with

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5 On the food industry, refrigerators, deep-freezers, and microwave ovens, see, Kisbán, Eszter, ‘Economics of Shortage: Conditions of the Food “Market” in the Case of Hungary’, in Hartog, Adel P. den, (ed.), *Food Technology, Science and Marketing: European Diet in the Twentieth Century*, Edinburgh 1995, 168-86.

6 On bread consumption in Hungary today, see, Báti, Anikó, ‘The Role of Bread in the Hungarian Diet Today’, *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica* 57, no. 2 (2012): 253-61.

7 This is similar to the situation in other regions of Hungary. For other examples, see, Szarvas, Zsuzsa, *Tárgyak és életmód*, (‘Objects and Lifestyles’), Budapest 1988.

regard to rural nutrition, was seen as one way of achieving this. Dishes from the first part of the twentieth century were regarded, and presented, as food items which could be easily interpreted and enjoyed by all participants at various local and regional summer gastro-festivals. This food was also seen as having remained beyond the influence of urbanisation and modernisation trends and, in terms of the public image of a region, it could thus function as a sort of tangible manifestation of local values and local identity. Special village museums were established in local dwelling-houses in several communities. The buildings were renovated and they also had a rebuilt baking oven. Later on, communal festivities, old and new, based on an emotional bond with local traditions, were organised around these buildings with their ovens, as the festivities usually included the participants having a meal together. By then a new set of communal festivities had been established – mostly based on invented traditions – which were playing an essential sustaining role in the life of the local community, as well as being tourist attractions.<sup>8</sup> In connection with such festivals, fairs, or village events, each town and village tried to pick dishes and ingredients from their own local gastronomy which they regarded as being truly local and unique, in order to turn them into symbols of a given festival. Objective research has found, however, that these foods were also part of regional gastronomy and they thus cannot be connected with a single settlement only.

Modern, newly-built baking ovens became, and remain, an indispensable element in local events – villages, towns, and cities alike soon began to copy this idea and to use it in their own festivals and events. Nowadays, forgotten dishes are baked in the oven and sold on the spot. Examples of these include, typical Hungarian pastry, *rétes* (unleavened, rolled pastry, filled with cottages cheese or fruits and poppy seeds), *kenyérlángos*<sup>9</sup> made from bread dough (flat round bread, with different toppings similar to pizza, but served with sour cream rather than with tomato sauce), meat, duck, and goose legs.

Apart from these communal festivities around such ovens, in some villages, the baking oven is rented out for family gatherings when it are not in use for public purposes. For different festive events, when large numbers of guests have to be provided for, several smaller, portable ovens made from modern materials, are used.

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8 Kovách, Imre, Megyesi, Boldizsár, 'Local Food Production and Knowledge Dynamics in Rural Sustainable Development', in Gorlach, Krzysztof, Koách, Imre, (eds.), *Local Food Production, Non-Agricultural Economies and Knowledge Dynamics in Rural Sustainable Development (the Czech, Hungarian, Polish cases)*. Working Papers 7, 2006/5, 24-38; E-book, see, <http://mek.niif.hu/04000/04024/04024.pdf#page=73>; Köstlin, Konrad, 'Tourism, Ethnic Food and Symbolic Values', in Lysaght, Patricia, (ed.), *Food and the Traveller, Migration, Immigration, Tourism and Ethnic Food*, Nicosia, Cyprus 2000, 108-14.

9 Shared public meals are leading to a great revival of leavened foods. *Lángos*, a deep-fried flat bread, made of bread dough on the basis of old recipes, became a popular food at open-air baths and markets, evoking home bread-baking in taste and smell. For recipes for *lángos*, see, Schwartz, Baba, *The Lost Art of Baking with Yeast. Delicious Hungarian Cakes and Pastries*, Melbourne 2003; Gergely, Anikó, *Culinaria Hungary*, Budapest, 1999; see, [http://easteuropeanfood.about.com/od/hungarianbreads/Hungarian\\_Bread\\_Recipes.htm](http://easteuropeanfood.about.com/od/hungarianbreads/Hungarian_Bread_Recipes.htm); accessed 20. 1. 2012.

Apart from communal baking ovens, the demand for private ovens – and with them the possibility of providing spectacular hospitality and dazzling food and entertainment, for guests – has increased dramatically in the course of the last decade. The inspiration for these ovens comes from many sources. Apart from the ovens in the communal spaces mentioned above, the most authentic sources of instruction for building new baking ovens are actually the old ovens still surviving in summer kitchens, and which are also occasionally used by their elderly owners. There are still a few people who have cherished childhood memories of seeing grandmother baking bread, and this motivates them towards having their own baking oven sometime in the future. International cuisine, involving wood-fired baking ovens, such as those in pizzerias, is also a great source of inspiration for the building of bread ovens. Many Hungarian restaurants offer oven-baked strudels, and also meat, as specialities. Cooking shows on TV with popular actors and cooks, have also contributed to the revival of the traditions of preparing food in the baking oven and to the awakening of nostalgic sentiments concerning it.

Fig: 1: Modern, newly-built baking oven with a cooking stove, in Cserépfalu, in the northeast of Hungary. Photo: Anikó Báti, 2012.



Fig. 2: A modern, newly-built baking oven during the heating stage, in a suburb of Budapest. Photo: Fruzsina Cseh, 2012



Outdoor cooking is one of the most popular leisure activities in Hungary today, and it is one of the few occasions on which men also prepare food. Until the 1990s, Hungarian stew, *pörkölt* or *gulyás* soup cooked in a *bogrács*, a kind of cauldron hung over the open fire, were the main dishes on the menu at family and friendly gatherings in both cities and rural areas. By the end of the twentieth century, the small, kitchen gardens around village houses, had been transformed into lawns, as young adults were no longer prepared to cultivate them, and most of the yards were rebuilt in a fashion suitable for outdoor parties. Barbecue grills became more and more widespread due to the influence of the media, cookbooks, and the DIY ('Do It Yourself') stores. These grills represented affluence and modernity in rural communities. In a very short time, however, the barbecue grills became affordable for urban and rural families as well, so they ceased to be a status symbol. Nowadays, it is the newly-built wood-fired baking oven, surrounded by garden furniture, located in a neatly-groomed garden, that can represent the wealth and social standing of the local elite towards their visitors, and towards viewers from the street as well. The hosts usually have their own ovens built to order, and they typically do the heating up of the oven themselves. They also supervise the process of cooking, and the wife usually does the preparation for the cooking or the baking. In the past all of these activities were women's tasks.

The reasons why the bread oven – which became out-dated fifty years ago, but which has entered a new life situation – could have become an object of such high

prestige<sup>10</sup> include, first of all, that it has been removed for a sufficiently-long period of time from the daily domestic routine. In addition, the costs of constructing such an oven are quite high (nearly two months' average salary), and it is very little used.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the idea of cooking and baking food in an oven is in complete contrast to typical daily food-preparation and eating habits, but that is another important reason why it is so special. The average family does not cook food every day, as the members eat their meals away from home in canteens, or they just have a sandwich. But cooking in a baking oven takes time in a time-scarce world – in fact it can require a whole day from start to finish. The building and maintenance costs of an oven, as well as the outlay involved in acquiring the necessary cooking tools and utensils, are also rather high. Heating up the oven may take three to four hours and requires constant supervision. The preparation and the cooking of the dough or meat also require skill and plenty of time. All of this can only be carried out in one's leisure time as these steps are preparatory to the actual entertainment of guests, as the oven is worth heating up only for the sake of a larger company.

Fig. 3: An older-type baking oven in use in a summer kitchen, Cserépfalu. Photo: Anikó Báti, 1999.



The renaissance of the baking oven occurred at almost the last moment in Hungary. Two generations had grown up since most ovens had been demolished in the villages. The practical skills necessary to operate them, the recipes known by heart, the little tricks of the trade, and knowledge of the right method of heating them up, had almost been lost. Home-baked dough had not remained a regular part of the daily diet. Associated traditions were no longer passed on naturally from mother to daughter through the process of learning within the family, but were transmitted to a few new

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10 Appadurai, Arjun, (ed.), *The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, Cambridge 1986.

11 On the symbolic value of objects, see, Baudrillard, Jean, *Le système des objets*, Paris 1984.

owners as part of a special tendency to preserve tradition. In most cases, knowledgeable elderly women were asked for help with the heating up of the newly-built oven, and with the kneading of the first batch of bread to be baked in it – that is how local knowledge and skills were utilised. Most problems connected with the newly-built ovens arose because the people concerned had little or no experience regarding the use of such ovens. Through lack of traditional experience, the younger folk did not know when the oven was hot enough, or how to adjust the heat, and they also did not know when the dough or meat was actually cooked, or how to protect food from soot.

Opinions on the new ovens differ greatly. Those who have one emphasise the unique taste of food cooked in such an oven, the distinctive cooking method involved, and the special ambience surrounding the cooking. Those who cannot afford such an oven tend to just see the wastefulness involved in leaving it unused for most of the year. Elderly women who had actually used these ovens, and who were able to pass on their knowledge concerning them, regard them as a means of preserving old traditions and of leading to a new appreciation of the past; and they are also proud of the wealth of their children who can afford to build an oven. Others are unable to comprehend why some take on the task of building an oven without having previous knowledge and experience in this regard.

Several kinds of experts are available to help customers with the building of a new baking oven. In the country and also in suburban homes, more and more families are having fireplaces built, in addition to having central heating in the house. The fireplace, as an object of high prestige, and because of the atmosphere which the sight of a fire creates, acts as a representation of wealth and social status. The most experienced builders of the ovens are stove makers, but brick masons are also often requested to do this work. And I have seen some ovens that were built by the owners themselves. There are numerous Internet sites where useful tips, ideas, and stories, on how to build an oven, where to find building materials, what steps to follow, and so on, are shared by the readers. DIY magazines have been dealing with the topic, in virtually every issue, for many years. The book on the former use, and the building of, baking ovens by the ethnographer of the Open-Air Ethnographical Museum of Szentendre,<sup>12</sup> has become a highly appreciated and popular work in this regard, and not only among professionals. The Open-Air Museum also runs courses for crafts-people and folk artists in order to preserve and pass on authentic traditions. In this way they can also learn about how to build baking ovens and about regional varieties of these as well. In Cserépfalu, the new ovens were built either by a stove maker who came from Transylvania, or by a brick mason.

The material used, in most parts of the country, in the construction of traditional ovens, was mud, often layered on a wooden frame. From the twentieth century

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12 Sabján, Tibor, *A búbos kemence* ('The Baking Oven'), Budapest 2002.

onwards, the body of the oven has been made using bricks, but also adobe (that is unburned sun-dried brick), and these kinds materials are still in use today.

Fig. 4: A newly-built oven in the eastern part of Hungary. Published with the kind permission of the website editors. The steps for building this kind of oven are to be found on the Internet.<sup>13</sup>



The building materials utilised in the ovens that I have examined were natural stone or brick, with used bricks forming the bottom of the oven in order to ensure heat resistance. The first step in the building process is to lay down a concrete foundation under the bottom of the oven, and also to lay the foundation of the fire compartment using bricks. The bottom of the oven is layered with lots of broken glass and glass shards to preserve heat more efficiently. Ovens made from mud or adobe are baked dry and become durable in use, but internal joints and cracks have to be regularly repaired in stone- or brick-built ovens. The oven in the picture above (Fig. 4) was built in a month. The proper heating of the newly-built oven is essential because of its heat storage capacity and the perfect, uncracked state of the walls – baking will not be very successful if the flow of hot air is insufficient, and the oven itself even might crack if the steam from the baking food cannot escape.

It is essential to have the right tools and utensils when using the ovens. The nationwide trend towards the building of new ovens gave a new direction and impetus to related crafts and pottery making – for example, a new market opened up for fire-resistant earthenware. In fact pottery centres, such as Nádudvar, had worked especially in this connection, at the end of the nineteenth century. Nowadays, jug- and bowl-makers also try to meet these new demands, and the craftsman who moved to

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13 See, [http://www.kemencebence.hu/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=236:kemence-epites-a-tisza-tonal&catid=10:cikkajanlo&Itemid=2](http://www.kemencebence.hu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=236:kemence-epites-a-tisza-tonal&catid=10:cikkajanlo&Itemid=2); accessed 18. 1. 2013.

Cserépfalu a few years ago also extended his range of products to include fire-resistant pots. As recipes and ideas, except for the baking of bread, have been mostly taken from the Internet, the resulting dishes cannot be seen as being local specialities, but that is not really expected either.

The building of new baking ovens has brought about a special way of preserving traditions. It has also led to the appreciation and conservation of a body of knowledge known to previous generations concerning the building and use of these ovens. Thus, nowadays, practical skills and recipes are conserved, not in the traditional manner of everyday performance, but rather in the context of entertainment and fun, in a completely different life situation than was formerly the case. To understand what the future might hold for these objects and trends, and to discover whether other elements of past gastronomic traditions may ever prove to be as popular as the wood-fired baking ovens, needs further intensive research.



# The Return of Some Traditional French Preserves

*Renée Valeri*

In 1967 we moved to Paris in order to continue to widen our experiences and add new horizons to our studies in ethnology, anthropology and other fields. Levi-Strauss, among others, was attracting many students to his seminars and was publishing books opening up new angles for research, and also for food studies. As a woman interested in food, I decided it would be interesting to choose such a subject for my fieldwork and thesis.

One of my teachers at Musée de l'Homme, Mlle Hélène Balfet, who had grown up in the department of Tarn in Southwest France, suggested I should take a look at a specialty to be found in most of Gascony, called *confit* – which I did.<sup>1</sup> For comparative reasons I decided to do extensive studies in three different villages, situated at an interval of roughly 100 km from each other, but in different French departments: Landes, Gers, and Tarn.

It turned out to be a very engaging subject (and product), which at that time was not particularly well known, or talked about, in the northern half of France. As it often is the case with truly regional foods, little was written about it, and it was a good learning experience to try to find out more about its role using various sources, such as interviews with the local people in the areas where it was found, travellers' accounts from earlier centuries, and other historical sources (e.g. doctors' descriptions of prevailing health problems in different areas), as well as the work of scholars in other disciplines, such as agricultural historians (e.g. Olivier de Serres, who was from this area, and others).

With the focus on *confit*, the interrelations of different elements in the Gascon food complex became more evident. The land was divided into small plots, too small to support larger animals such as cows, and cultivated by tenants, which in one department (Landes) constituted over half of the population. Polyculture was centred around maize and millet, well suited to the climate and the land. These crops were mainly used, and still are, to feed the smaller animals (the *basse-cour*) on the farm,

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<sup>1</sup> It resulted in *Le Confit et son rôle dans l'alimentation du Sud-Ouest de la France*, Lund 1977.

especially geese and ducks. In the cold season these farmyard animals were gently forced with (sometimes cooked) maize, with the help of a funnel.

Being thus forced to overeat, the birds develop both a hypertrophy of the liver (i.e. what is called *foie gras*, an internationally sought-after delicacy) and enough fat in the rest of the body for the making of the preserve called *confit*, prepared as follows: After slaughtering the birds and removing the precious liver, the meat is cut into pieces and left in coarse salt for about twenty-four hours. When the bird's fat has been melted and the salt has been brushed off the meat, the latter is put into the hot fat and cooked. When the meat is almost done, the pieces are transferred into a big jar, and the fat is strained and poured over them until all the meat is well covered.

Fig. 1: Larder in the Landes. Photo: Renée Valeri.



In a cool place, this preserve can be kept for a year or so, provided care is taken to ensure that the pieces of meat remain well covered and no airpockets have developed. This preserve is called *confit*, and is only made of animals which, themselves, can provide the necessary fat or lard required for protecting the meat from the air, i.e. geese, ducks, and pigs.

When prepared in an earlier era, the *confit* used to be stored in big earthenware pots, and kept in a cool place, In more recent times, it was put into tin containers and sealed, just as the *foie gras* was. The quantities of *foie gras* or other foods of value to be given to the landowner were stated in each contract. *Le confit* was considered a very useful but a more everyday resource for the family, giving both good flavour and

nourishment when added to the ubiquitous vegetable soup on a daily basis, and/or when there was a need to feed the next-door neighbours if they had turned up to assist with certain tasks, such as the killing of the pig, or for other agricultural jobs requiring help from the outside.

*Le confit* was still playing a very important role in the regional and local economy – both because of the meat, which makes it possible for the housewife to quickly put a meal on the table, which is not at all bad, either calorie-wise or taste-wise, and because of the fat, since this is the traditional and much-appreciated cooking fat in this part of France. This preserve is economical, since the only ingredient that needs to be added is some coarse salt, which is then brushed off in the preparation process. If people resist the temptation to sell the goose- or duck-livers for profit, these can be preserved in a similar way.

Still, this clever way of providing meat and fat during the year is surprisingly little diffused elsewhere. In spite of the fact that lard was, until quite recently, the most important cooking fat, people used to keep it apart from the salted meat.

However, there is an odd parallel between *confit* and a dish prepared by the Maori people in New Zealand,<sup>2</sup> who also put fried pigeons, doves or parrots into jars, and whose cooks poured boiling fat over the birds in order to provide an airtight seal. And there too, it was an appreciated dish, and often offered to visitors.

## *Confit* revisited

Then, after having lived and worked in countries on other continents for about thirty years, I was curious to see if, and how, matters had changed in the southwest of France during that time. After all, Gascogne had been left relatively untouched by the centralising efforts of the early nineteenth century, but the end of the century was different. Some important changes had taken place in the practices linked to the production of *confit* and *foie gras*.

In my earlier fieldwork, in the late 1960s, geese and ducks were raised and fattened during the winter months on most farms in the area, most intensively in the eastern part of the Landes. The fattened, force-fed geese or ducks – be it whole animals with the liver inside, only the livers themselves, or the fat-laden carcasses without the liver – were sold slaughtered at lively, specialised markets (*marchés au gras*) in the area. Buyers used to come from other areas of France, especially from the Périgord, where there were many *confit* and *foie gras* factories, but little domestic production.

Thirty years later I found that production in the whole area was on a more industrial scale, but also that EU regulations and the emergence of technicians and inspectors, now determined how the animals were to be raised, slaughtered, and made into preserves for sale. The investments in machinery, and often also in new buildings,

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<sup>2</sup> Information found by the author in 1972, next to a cask exhibited at Bishops Museum, Honolulu.

were forcing people to professionalise the activities involved in the production of the force-fed animals and the resulting preserves.

There was also a clear shift in the local markets (the so-called *marchés au gras*) mentioned above, with some disappearing, others flourishing by attracting tourists, who would travel from all over southern France to get their own provisions of fattened ducks and geese – and/or *fois gras*.

Other markets, which used to be very big in *fois gras*, were shrinking and about to disappear, although families were still coming there to buy a couple of dozen ducks to make *confit* for their own consumption, or wishing to offer this dish to friends or visiting relatives from other regions of France.

Observing the changes in the character of these markets is not just a matter of the visitor's nostalgia for a colourful and rather spectacular event. These changes reflect larger, structural changes affecting both agriculture and society at large, such as European Union regulations and the expansion of tourism, and might lead, in the end, to changes in taste.

People living in the area at this time explained the situation thus: Buying the machines to force-feed the ducks or geese (and make *foie gras* and *confit*) is a big investment – if you are to follow all the rules: different things must be at the right temperature, the hygiene must be right, and so on. Separate rooms are required for each phase of the process – there are even rules for the electricity – and technicians are constantly coming by to check that the regulations are being followed. If they are not, the birds cannot be sold, and the farmer is subject to control at any time. The margins for the farmers are becoming ever smaller, and it is harder to make ends meet.

It is true that people nowadays fatten the animals all year round (as opposed to the past, when this was done only in the winter) but it is also done in a different way. It gets harder to do the labour-intensive part personally, so people have to use machines.

Many people now sell the animals directly to the factories (*les conserveries*). It is more convenient and also easier, when the quality is not high (private customers can be difficult!). With the new techniques, one can fatten a larger number of ducks in a shorter space of time. However, as a result, the meat becomes less tasty, less 'done', so it is not suitable for *confit*, and does not yield that much fat. The aim these days is to obtain livers and fillets, in stark contrast to the situation thirty years ago, when one wanted a lot of fat and large livers. Obviously, this also leads to different foodways.

In the 1960s, the farmers would explain the increase in the numbers of ducks (as opposed to geese) by saying that the taste of duck was *plus fin*, i.e. 'more delicate'. Now and then, though, they also admit that geese are more difficult to stuff with food, since they require force-feeding three times a day instead of two, and for a longer period of time. To this one should add that the price per kilo of a goose liver is nearly double that of a duck liver, and is admittedly tastier. And it is still not uncommon to see a goose liver of 1.3 kg – although the record from the 1970s was way above that.

## Nostalgia

Driving through the countryside, memories from what it was like ‘then’ will superimpose themselves on the landscape/environment. One of the most obvious differences are the numerous billboards along the country roads advertising: *Foie Gras Confit*, *Confit Foie Gras*, *Vente directe de la Ferme*, *Table Paysanne*, *Bienvenu à la Ferme*, *Conserve à la Ferme*, *Ail du pays*.<sup>3</sup> And, as an ironic comment in the heart of this land of delicious fats, at Eugénie-les-Bains, where the well-known cook Michel Guérard resides, a billboard at the entrance to the town reads: *‘Eugénie-les-Bains, 1er village minceur de la France’* (E-I-B, foremost French village of slenderness).

On the whole, the marketing of regional foods – both in Paris and locally – has increased manifold. In the France of today it would be difficult to ignore what *confit* is. Specialised chains, such as ‘La Duchesse de Barry’, or ‘Les Ducs de Gascogne’, sell *confit* and *foie gras*, as well as farms that promote their wares on the billboards along the roadside (something which was never seen thirty years earlier). At that period, *confit* was rarely offered in restaurants or hotels. Today, many small villages have their own restaurants with local twists to the theme. Tourists in search of a true local flavour can get lists of farmers offering lunches with regional specialties, such as preparations with *confit*, *foie gras*, and so on.

In the study of *confit* mentioned earlier, one important conclusion, at least for the author, was the hierarchy of different foods encountered, which revealed itself through the collected material. The value attributed to a specific food would vary over time, in different areas, and in different social contexts.

It was not only a matter of the raw product (such as the relative value of beef, chicken, geese, etc.), but of how it was prepared, how ‘common’ it was, and other parameters. Ultimately, however, and in the light of the changes that have taken place, one must add a further point: the quality of the product – which is no longer what it used to be – or is it just one’s memory playing tricks?

In France, food is very much part of the national heritage. In 1977, a survey<sup>4</sup> revealed that eighty-four per cent of the French population thought that French cooking was the best in the world. However, at that time, French cooking tended not to be equated with a number of regional dishes, but with *haute cuisine*, i.e. the cooking of various well-known chefs, or with *la cuisine bourgeoise*. Although certain local products were still part of the national treasure (e.g. certain cheeses, oysters, or the *foie gras*), it is only during the last twenty-five years that attention has begun to focus on regional foods. The Conseil National des Arts Culinaires started publishing its series

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3 ‘*Foie Gras and Confit*’, ‘*Confit and Foie Gras*’, ‘Direct Sale at the Farm’, ‘Farm Meals’, ‘Welcome to the Farm’, ‘Home-made Preserves’, ‘Local Garlic’.

4 Pitte, Jean-Robert, *Gastronomie française - histoire et géographie d’une passion*, Paris 1991.

on the French regions in 1992, and has now compiled a very extensive inventory of what can be found where, with history, recipes, and so on.<sup>5</sup>

The consumption of ethnic or regional foods is said to provide an opportunity to enter another culture, and to establish closeness to the foreign. This is an important aspect of tourism, but one should add that instead of our travelling to another geographical environment, we can now travel in time, and even socially, through food and drink. Taste and smell are senses that are well suited to this transfer. In memory we can transcend the separate spheres of time and space, making our own sensory history and geography, parallel to, or different from, the official one. The expansion of modern tourism bears witness to people's eagerness to create new experiences but, even for those preferring armchair travel, the focus is on the pursuit of pleasure.<sup>6</sup>

In many societies affluence has been measured by full pantries, sometimes built so that the contents can be admired by everybody, and thus give prestige to the owner.

In other places they are carefully closed, in order not to cause envy, or to attract ill-intentioned witchcraft, or simply unwanted begging. In so-called primitive societies, with an insecure economy, people might never talk about hunger, but constantly worry about it – expressed indirectly in the fact that the ideal state of things is to have so much food that it will go bad before anyone manages to eat it. This does happen sometimes – especially with fruit or vegetables, or maybe with fish, also. Meat is more valued, and comes rarely in such big quantities that it cannot be dealt with, either through an immediate food feast, or through making preserves..

## Taste Improvement and Preservation at the Same Time

Still, the most common method of preserving meat in Europe, from the end of the Middle Ages to the present time, was probably by salting – on its own, or as mentioned earlier, combined with smoking, drying or other preservation methods. People probably got used to salt foods, so they subsequently found unsalted foods a bit insipid or tasteless. The great consumption of beer or ale by our ancestors in earlier times has often been blamed on salty foods. This has been documented since the Middle Ages, but we can assume that there was but little salt available in inland areas.<sup>7</sup>

We should not disregard the fact that salt (at least initially, before it became common, was an expensive product for our ancestors 'the happy few', and, therefore, that foods sometimes became too salty because of the status value of salt. The overuse of spices in renaissance cooking, which some researchers have interpreted as attempts to hide/cover up tainted foods, can be viewed from the same perspective. For instance,

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5 Carried out by Philip and Mary Hyman.

6 Tiger, Lionel, *The Pursuit of Pleasure*, London and New York 1992.

7 Cf., Renée Valeri, 'A Preserve Gone Bad or Just Another Beloved Delicacy? Surströmming and Gravlax', in Saberi, Helen, (ed.), *Cured, Fermented and Smoked Foods*, Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery, Totnes, Devon, UK 2010, 343-52.

the big quantities of nutmeg or cloves used in noble households should not be seen only as a way of flattering guests or of being concerned about the hosts' or their guests' tastebuds (maybe on the contrary, not to speak of the effect on their digestion); it could also be viewed as a way to boast about the host's wealth. At that period, spices were worth their weight in gold...and sometimes even more. As proof of the validity of this theory is the fact that when the prices of spices went down, eating habits changed.

## Preserves

However, preserving without any changes in taste, and maintaining the food's integrity, is best done by preventing the access of air to it. This procedure is older than most people assume. Around the Mediterranean, people have, for a very long period of time, not only kept vegetables, but even meat in olive oil. In some regions, wine which is kept for the family's own consumption is sometimes protected by a thin layer of oil at the top of the bottle.

Apicius recommended that Italians should preserve both raw and cooked meat in honey, but he added, by way of precaution, that the keeping quality was not as good in the summer as in the winter... In India, wild honey has also been used to preserve meat. This might have been as efficient as preserving it in fat, since both methods exclude air, and honey might also have caused some refined variations in flavour.

## The Return of a Traditional Food – But maybe not in its Traditional Place or Shape. Summary and Concluding Remarks

When I first started my search for information about *confit*, its roots and appearances, the southwest of France was quite a separate world from Paris. When I returned to Gascogne some thirty years later, to see if and how it had changed, two things (at least) had affected the situation; 1) the EU had put a certain bureaucratic screen across the region, and decided what and how things should be done; and 2) there was a new interest in regional foods in France, exemplified by the publishing of a series of books on regional foods.<sup>8</sup>

Also, the restaurant scene in Paris no longer reigned supreme. A recent visit, in 2012, showed that *confit* and *foie gras* were readily available in many small restaurants in Paris (as well as other regional specialties, testifying to a Return of Traditional Food). But even more so: both *confit*, *foie gras*, and jars of duck fat<sup>9</sup> are now being sold at the meat counter in the newly-refurbished *Saluballen* (the Covered Market at the very centre of Lund). It is, moreover, selling better here than it does in Stockholm,<sup>10</sup> in spite

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8 See note 5 above.

9 All imported from France.

10 According to the French wholesaler.

of the great differences in population between the two cities. Maybe Lund's proximity to the European continent, and a collective memory of eating geese, which used to be raised in the province of Skåne, could be part of the explanation.

Fig. 2: *Confit*-making in the Landes 1969. Photo: Renée Valeri.



Fig. 3: *Confit* for sale in Lund 2013. Photo: Renée Valeri.





# The Revival of Traditional Food in Contemporary Japan

*Naoto Minami*

## The Decline of Traditional Food under the Influence of Modernisation and Westernisation in Japan

In post-World War II Japan, the significance of traditional food and foodways in everyday life gradually diminished against the background of rapid economic growth and urbanisation during the 1960s and 1970s. At the same time, eating habits among ordinary people became gradually westernised, resulting in increased consumption of animal food – meat and dairy products, as well as fat, for example.<sup>1</sup> Eating habits in other East Asian countries, such as Korea, Taiwan and China, have also been westernised but at a somewhat later period than in Japan.

However, in the 1980s, westernised eating habits began to be criticised for various reasons. At the same time, a strong revival of traditional Japanese food commenced in several areas. This was connected with some complicated expectations by various interested parties – the agricultural lobby aiming for increased rice consumption, the medical office and health services which were apprehensive about the obesity problem, some conservative camps wishing to strengthen traditional values, and so on. The revival occurred simultaneously among impoverished local governments and certain central government ministries, as well as among the mass media/publishing houses. Some discourses praising traditional food on an ideological level have influenced public opinion in Japan. Thus, this article analyses the recent revival of traditional food and foodways in Japan from various perspectives.

To understand the background of the traditional food revival in contemporary Japan, we need to briefly survey the history of Japanese food since the late nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> This history involves a long process of cultural transformation, which can be

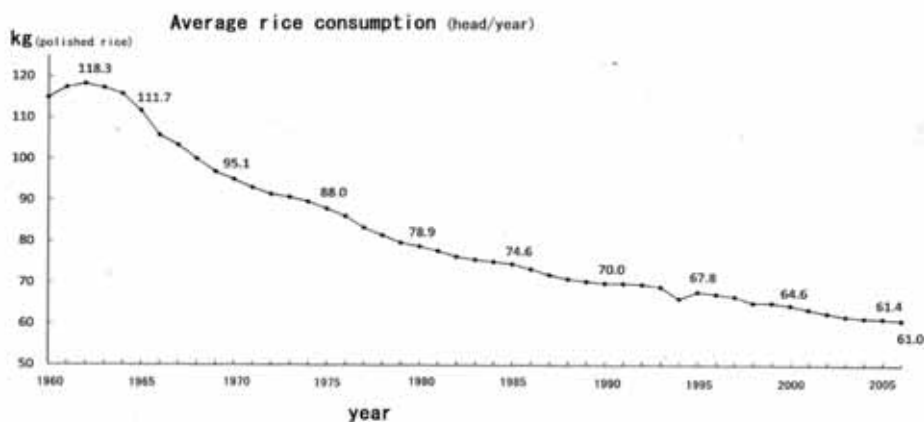
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1 On the general food history of Japan, see, Naomichi Ishige, *The History and Culture of Japanese Food*, New York 2001; Ehara Ayako, *et al.*, *Nihon Shokumotsu Shi* ('History of Japanese Food'), Tokyo 2009.

2 On the food history of Modern Japan, see, Ishikawa Hiroko and Ehara Ayako, (eds.), *Kindendai no Shokubunka* ('Food Culture of Modern Japan'), Tokyo 2002; Ehara Ayako and Higashiyotsuyanagi Shoko, *Kindai Ryorisho no Sekai* ('Cookery Books in Modern Japan'), Tokyo 2008.

divided into two stages. The first stage began with the Meiji revolution in 1868. Many radical changes occurred in the political and economic spheres, and the traditional way of life in Japan was deeply influenced by western civilisation, including food culture. Some European dishes were gradually introduced into Japanese society, but for decades, this impacted only on the upper class. After the beginning of industrialisation and urbanisation during the 1920s and the early 1930s, the foodways of the urban middle class also began to change gradually. This change was characterised by *Yoshoku*, a fusion of European dishes with traditional Japanese cooking.<sup>3</sup> Despite these changes during the first stage, traditional food was still dominant.

Graph 1



The second stage began with the occupation of Japan by the US Army following the surrender of the Japanese military at the end of World War II. After that, especially during the period of rapid economic growth in the 1960s, the everyday meals of ordinary people changed fundamentally both in quantity and quality. Two significant examples of this change are the consumption rates of rice and animal food. As shown in Graph 1,<sup>4</sup> the consumption rate of rice, the traditional staple food in Japan, fell continuously from 120 kg in 1960 to 60 kg by 2005, a reduction of nearly one half. On the other hand, the consumption rate of meat, eggs and dairy products,

<sup>3</sup> Tetsu Okada, *Tonkatsu no Tanjo* ('Birth of Breaded Pork Cutlet'), Tokyo 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Cited from [www.dpj.or.jp/news/files/1shohiseisan.pdf](http://www.dpj.or.jp/news/files/1shohiseisan.pdf), (homepage of the Democratic Party of Japan, news files), on 10. 1. 2013. The source is *Shokuryo Jukyuhyo* ('Food Balance Sheet of Japan'), ed. the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries every year.

representative of the westernisation of eating habits, increased greatly between 1950 and 2005, as shown in Table 1.<sup>5</sup>

Table 1. Average Intake of Animal Food (*per capita per day*)

(g)

Year	Meat	Fish	Egg	Dairy
1950	8.4	61.0	5.6	6.8
1955	12.0	77.2	11.5	14.2
1960	18.7	76.9	18.9	32.9
1965	29.5	76.3	35.2	57.4
1970	42.5	87.4	41.2	78.8
1975	64.2	94.0	41.5	103.6
1980	67.9	92.5	37.7	115.2
1985	71.7	90.0	40.3	116.7
1990	71.2	95.3	42.3	130.1
1995	82.3	96.9	42.1	144.5
2000	78.2	92.0	39.7	127.6
2005	80.2	84.0	34.2	125.1

As a result, the nutritional balance of Japanese people's food has gradually changed. As illustrated in Table 2,<sup>6</sup> the percentage of energy obtained from fat has increased, replacing that formerly obtained from carbohydrates. In the 1950s, a period when the food supply in Japan was probably at its lowest level, the percentage of energy from fat

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5 About the number before 1985, see, 'Nihon Eiyoshi Kai' ('Japan Dietetic Association'), (ed.), Sengo Showa no Eiyo Doko ('Trend of Nutrition in Postwar Showa Period'), Tokyo 1998, 75f. About the number after 1990, see Office for Life-Style Related Diseases Control, Health Service Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, (ed.), *Kokumin Kenko Eiyo Chosa* ('The National Health and Nutrition Survey in Japan'), 2005, Tokyo 2006, 66, 363.

6 About the number before 1985, Nihon Eiyoshi Kai ('Japan Dietetic Association'), (ed.), *op. cit.*, 58. About the number after 1990, see Office for Life-Style Related Diseases Control, Health Service Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, (ed.), *op. cit.*, 362.

was under ten per cent, but beginning from the 1960s, this rate has gradually increased, reaching about twenty-five per cent in the 1990s. On the other hand, the percentage of energy from carbohydrates has decreased from eighty per cent in the 1950s to sixty per cent or below in the 1990s. Fat thus became more important in everyday meals than was previously the case.

Table 2. Percentage of Energy from Fat, Carbohydrate and Protein

Year	fat	carbohydrate	protein
1950	7.7	79.3	13.0
1955	8.7	78.0	13.3
1960	10.6	76.1	13.3
1965	14.8	72.1	13.1
1970	18.9	67.1	14.0
1975	22.3	63.1	14.6
1980	23.6	61.5	14.9
1985	24.5	60.4	15.1
1990	25.3	59.2	15.5
1995	26.4	57.6	16.0
2000	26.3	57.8	15.9
2005	25.3	59.7	15.0

Briefly, the eating habits of the Japanese people have been rather fundamentally transformed during the last fifty years. In relation to this, Japanese agriculture, concentrating on rice crops, suffered difficulties. In the 1980s, politicians, the agricultural lobby, and the mass media, pointed to critical food problems. Some of these included the decline of the self-sufficiency ratio for food, the collapse of Japanese agriculture, and the disappearance of traditional Japanese food.

However, traditional Japanese food and foodways have not completely disappeared. Despite the changes mentioned above, the meal patterns of ordinary people have remained relatively stable right up to the present time. Rice is still a staple food of the Japanese, despite decreases in its consumption. The Japanese continue to eat more fish than meat, and the rapid increase in meat consumption has ceased since the 1980s. Moreover, the percentage of energy derived from fat, which reached twenty-five per cent around 1990, has remained stable.

What do these phenomena mean? Generally speaking, food culture is conservative and traditional factors in eating tend not to change. In this sense, the alleged crisis of traditional food was, and is, questionable. But it is rather important that traditional food is *assumed* by public opinion to be declining, because contemporary policies of central and local governments are usually constructed on this assumption. Indeed, the most fundamental changes have come about in images or discourses about food, rather than in the realities of food consumption – a point I would like to emphasise. In fact, this article focuses on *the assumption of declining traditional food and the attempts at reviving it*.

## Change of Attitude towards Traditional Food in the 1980s and 1990s

During the 1980s and 1990s, the Japanese attitude towards traditional food showed a tendency to go into reverse mode. The reasons for this tendency were changing circumstances – for instance, the end of economic growth, food repletion and satiation due to prosperity, internationalisation of foodstuffs, an increase in lifestyle-related diseases and the consequent expansion of the medical budget, a politically-conservative mood, and the rise of popular nationalism. Against this background, experts and the public began a fundamental re-evaluation of traditional Japanese food in the 1980s, and since then, the trend towards the westernisation of Japanese foodways has declined. Above all, some nutritionists began to take note of and to disseminate information about, the nutritional advantages of Japanese foodways, such as their reliance on vegetables and fish or their preference for low-fat food, in contrast to western foodways.<sup>7</sup> We may also presume that behind this re-evaluation were some special interest groups, such as, for example, the agricultural lobby, the medical authority, and food businesses.

Also in the 1980s, central government, especially the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MHW) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), initiated the promotion of traditional Japanese food and foodways. In 1985, the MHW published the ‘Dietary Guideline for Promoting Health’, which recommended eating a wide variety of foods (over thirty kinds per day), consuming less than 10g of salt as well as less animal fat, and so on. However, the ‘Guideline’ did not refer to traditional food. On the other hand, in its efforts, the MAFF directly mentioned traditional food. In 1983, the MAFF drew up an official document titled ‘Our Desirable Dietary Life: Seeking Foodways in Japanese Style’, which contained eight dietary goals – including,

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<sup>7</sup> For example, Nobunkyo Bunkabu, (ed.), *Nihon Minzoku no Jiritsu to Shokuseikatsu* (‘Autonomy of the Japanese Nation and its Foodways’), Tokyo 1977; Adachi Iwao, *Nihon Gata Shokuseikatsu no Rekishi* (‘History of the Foodways in Japanese Style’), Tokyo 1982.

for instance, eating less fat and more vegetables, eating breakfast, and so on.<sup>8</sup> In addition, it stressed the importance of rice as a staple food. Since then the phrase 'Foodways in Japanese Style' has become the most important slogan of the MAFF and the agricultural lobby (see, for example, Fig. 1).

Fig. 1: A typical image from 'Foodways Japanese Style'.<sup>9</sup>



At that time, the MHW and the MAFF campaigned separately for the promotion of traditional food. But in the year 2000, three ministries, the MHE, the MAFF and the Ministry of Education (since 2001, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, MEXT) published a joint 'Dietary Guideline', with the same contents as the earlier guideline. In Japan, the involvement of the Ministry of Education was regarded as being highly significant in the promotion of traditional food. In this way, central government strengthened the revival of traditional food.

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8 Toyokawa Hiroyuki, *Shokuseikatu Shishin no Hikaku Kento: Eiyoso kara Kondate e* ('Comparative Study of Dietary Guidelines: From Nutritional Analysis to Menu'), Nobunkyo 1987, 38-86.

9 Homepage of MAFF. See, <http://www.maff.go.jp/j/syokuiku/nozomasiisyokuseikatu.html>; accessed 10. 1. 2013. Cf. Ehara, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, 354-6.

Again during the 1980s, another attempt to promote traditional food began in the publishing business. *Nobun-kyo*, a publisher specialising in food and agriculture works, began publishing the ‘Collection of Traditional Food and Dishes in Japan’ (50 vols.) in 1984.<sup>10</sup> These volumes depict traditional dishes of ordinary people in the pre-war period, from 1910 and into the 1920s, in every prefecture of Japan, from Hokkaido to Okinawa. *Nobun-kyo*, who conducted extensive research on each traditional dish, in various regions, collected the experiences of many elderly women who were considered to be authorities on traditional cooking. Completed in 1992, this large project of fifty volumes has come to be regarded as an encyclopaedia of Japanese traditional food and cooking (see, for example, Fig. 2).

Fig. 2: Some traditional Japanese meals.<sup>11</sup>



## The Promotion of Traditional Food as a National Policy of Japan since 2000

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, attempts at promoting traditional food have intensified. As was previously the case, the reason may again be the changing circumstances of Japanese society – the collapse of the bubble economy and the subsequent long depression, the agricultural crisis arising from the influence of globalisation, the impoverishment of local economies, an increase in lifestyle-related diseases, the breakdown of the education system resulting in violence at school, and so on. In short, Japan is confronted with a general decline of national power.

In this situation, four interesting problems have emerged from the promotion of traditional food. First, *Shokuiku*, meaning food and nutritional education, has recently been intensively promoted by the government and mass media. Since the 1990s, serious

10 *Nihon no Shokuseikatsu Zenshu* (‘Collection of Traditional Food and Dishes in Japan’), Tokyo 1984-1992,

11 ‘Traditional Dishes from Kyoto Prefecture’. Hata Akemi, *et al.*, (eds.), *Kikigaki Kyoto no Shokuji* (‘Meals in Kyoto Prefecture, Based on a Fact-finding Survey’), (‘Collection of Traditional Food and Dishes in Japan’, vol. 26), Tokyo 1985, vii, viii, xii.

problems relating to children and juveniles have arisen, problems which are often considered to have arisen as a result of the decline of the traditional family. The collapse of the family meal epitomised by children eating no breakfast or eating alone, is considered to be especially blame-worthy in this connection. At the same time, claims that increasing rates of lifestyle-related diseases are resulting mainly from ordinary people's lack of proper knowledge about nutrition, have also intensified.<sup>12</sup>

Because of such arguments, nutritionists, schoolteachers, politicians and government officials (especially MAFF, MHW and MEXT), have begun to insist strongly on the importance of food education. More specifically, they stress the value of traditional food and extensively promote the teaching of food education through the cooking of traditional dishes. Eventually, the *Shokuiku* Basic Act was made law in 2005, and in 2006, the Basic Programme for *Shokuiku* Promotion was established. The term *Shokuiku* has been so popularised everywhere in Japan that many kinds of traditional local foods and dishes now feature in classes in every school in every region of Japan (see Fig. 3).

Fig.3: A typical image of a family meal according to *Shokuiku* advocates.<sup>13</sup>



Second, attempts to promote the local economy by eating traditional regional foods have recently become popularised. Throughout the long depression beginning in the 1990s, local economies in every region of Japan have declined in contrast to the

12 Ehara, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, 351-3. NHK ('Japan Broadcast Corporation') Hoso Bunka Kenkyujo ('Broadcasting Culture Research Institute'), (ed.), *Houshoku to Houshoku* ('Collapse of Food Culture and Indulged Eating Habits in Japan'), Tokyo 2006, *passim*.

13 A Guide to 'Shokuiku', from the homepage of the Cabinet Office. See, <http://www8.cao.go.jp/syokuiku/data/guide/index.html>; accessed 10. 1. 2013.



recovery evident in metropolitan areas. Many local authorities have struggled to overcome the impoverishment of local economies through tourism development, and the most preferred measure in this strategy was, and continues to be, the serving of traditional food. Therefore, many and varied traditional local foods and dishes have been re-discovered for that purpose.

A movement called *Chisan-Chisho* (or local production – local consumption) has developed in every region, and its main characteristic is always traditional food. In 2007, ‘a hundred representative local traditional dishes’ were selected under the leadership of the MAFF. Two or three of these dishes were selected from each of the forty-seven prefectures, and each dish has been posted on the *Chisan-Chisho* Internet site.<sup>14</sup>

Third, and rather remarkable for the past couple of years, the Japanese Government, especially the MAFF, has made serious efforts in support of the Food of Japan Campaign. Their purpose is to register Japanese food and foodways as part of UNESCO’s World Intangible Heritage initiative. Their model is French cuisine, which was registered as World Intangible Heritage in 2010. Not only are government officials enthusiastically promoting this project in order to support the agricultural and fisheries industries, to advance tourism, and to enhance national prestige, but some food companies, agricultural organisations, local governments, and famous chefs are also supporting the initiative.

Of course, traditional food plays an important role in the project, as demonstrated by the Internet homepage of the MAFF ([www.maff.go.jp/e/export/campaign/cm09.html](http://www.maff.go.jp/e/export/campaign/cm09.html)). The Food of Japan Campaign is in English so that most of the world can read it. On this page, a wide range of traditional foods, dishes, and cooking methods are introduced in order to globally advertise Japanese food.

But from a neutral viewpoint, it seems that we might want to adopt a rather sceptical attitude towards this national project, as it is rather strange for central government to be promoting some specific foods and foodways so intensively. Such a policy could lead to various kinds of an enforced political nationalism in regard to neighbouring countries. In addition, excessive praise by central government for traditional Japanese food could give rise to some negative outcomes – for instance, being regarded as meddling or trifling with the concept of traditional food, which is the fourth problem to be addressed here.

One remarkable phenomenon in the trend towards the revival of traditional food is that a variety of fake traditional dishes have been produced in recent years. Because of limited space, I can point out only one egregious example, i.e. Local Ramen. Ramen, a noodle dish originally imported from China, eventually evolved into a kind of traditional Japanese food. Now cooks all over Japan are inventing a variety of new Local

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<sup>14</sup> Homepage of the Rural Development Planning Commission, a corporate body supported by the MAFF. See, <http://www.rdpc.or.jp/kyoudoryouri100/recipe/selection/1>; accessed 10. 1. 2013.

Ramen dishes, pretending that it is a ‘traditional’ Japanese food.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, confusion reigns about what traditional food actually is.

## Conclusion: The Future of Traditional Food

The revival of traditional food in Japan has been on the fast track since about the year 2000. But some extravagant trends or abuses can be observed in this connection. It is difficult to say where the track will take traditional Japanese food and foodways in the future.

In 2008, the Ajinomoto Forum of Food Culture, financially supported by Ajinomoto Foundation of Dietary Culture, held a symposium concerning the future of Japanese traditional food and foodways. In the Ajinomoto Forum of Food Culture, which is the only interdisciplinary academic group in Japan engaged in food culture research, dozens of scholars from different academic fields (e.g. anthropology, history, dietetics, medical science) discuss various themes concerning food culture on an annual basis. The result of the 2008 symposium, titled the *Future of Traditional Food*, was published in 2009.<sup>16</sup> The book, which introduces various examples of traditional food both inside and outside Japan, also serves to disseminate different opinions – pessimistic and optimistic, concerning Japanese traditional food. For me, the most suggestive article is that by Professor Emeritus Naomichi Ishige, which addresses Japanese restaurants and Japanese food culture abroad.<sup>17</sup> He insists that there was, and is, *no genuinely traditional* Japanese cuisine and that traditional food should not be considered as closed or fixed, but open and dynamic. In other word, the future of traditional food in Japan is to be found not within the isolated territory of Japan but worldwide.

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15 Hayamizu Kenro, *Ramen to Aikoku* (‘Ramen and Patriotism’), Tokyo 2011, 135-82. The author also points out a connection between the boom of Local Ramen and nationalism in *ibid.*, 250-62.

16 Iwata Mitsuyo, (ed.), *Dentoshoiku no Mirai* (‘Future of Traditional Food’), Tokyo 2009.

17 Ishige Naomichi, ‘Sekai e Deta Nihon Ryori’ (‘Japanese Cuisine Diffusing Globally’), in *ibid.*, 208-31.

# The Cyprus Food and Nutrition Virtual Museum. An Attempt to Preserve and Disseminate Knowledge about Past Foodways and Controversial Issues Regarding the Revival of Traditional Food

*Antonia-Leda Matalas, Crystalleni Lazarou and Yiorgos Chrysanthou*

## Traditional Diets and Foods. Their Significance for Modern Societies

Various perspectives on traditional food have been extensively examined in scholarly literature on the subject. By studying the history of traditional food products an opportunity is afforded to put on record the knowledge and skills inherent in the production and preservation of traditional food, to investigate the impact of their consumption on human health, and to establish diet-disease relationships. Last, but not least, such a study also serves to further inform the history of local regions, and to enable the establishment of cultural identity and historical consciousness.

The traditional Mediterranean diets, in particular, have been acknowledged as being important elements of humanity's intangible cultural heritage.<sup>1</sup> The Mediterranean basin is known to harbour an extensive range of flora biodiversity, mainly due to its climatic conditions. In the past, plant foods have predominated in the Mediterranean diet and this is also the case today. Cyprus, an island on the borderline between Asia and Europe, stands as one of the centres of agriculture in the eastern Mediterranean since prehistoric times. Small-scale and subsistence farming, along with some foraging activities, have traditionally been the means of support for

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1 Reguant-Aleix, J., Arbore, R., Bach-Faig, A., Serra-Majem, L., 'The Mediterranean Heritage: An Intangible Cultural Heritage', *Public Health Nutrition* 12 (2009): 1591-4. For a presentation on the Mediterranean diet as part of the world's intangible cultural heritage, see: UNESCO. 1995-2010. *Intangible heritage*. <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=EN&pg=home>; accessed April 2013.

the inhabitants of rural Cyprus. As a result, the diet, which predominated in Cyprus until the 1960s, was characterised by a high intake of grains, greens, and other vegetable sources, and a concomitant limited use of animal products. Basil Stewart, a British traveller who visited Cyprus in 1880 and who wrote about the life of local people, has described the diet of the Cypriot peasants as a vegetable-based diet, lacking in meat:

The native food consists chiefly of olives, beans, onions, bread, cheese and vegetables. I never saw a Cypriot eating butcher's meat; probably they are too poor to afford the luxury of beef and mutton, cheap as the latter is .... and the quality of mutton is excellent, and lamb is delicious, which is remarkable, considering what miserable pasture the sheep are fed on.<sup>2</sup>

During recent decades, however, Cyprus has experienced major socio-demographic changes and a shift to a flourishing market economy. These changes have been followed by major alterations in lifestyle and health. In the course of the twentieth century, the rise in the standard of living of the Cypriots and the development of tourism, have affected the food habits of wide strata of the population, and have transformed the former self-sufficient communities into a modern consumer society.<sup>3</sup> Thus, food culture in Cyprus is changing rapidly.

The Cyprus Food and Nutrition Virtual Museum project responds to the need to record past foodways and traditional traits, and to compile sources and information on the history and culture of Cypriot food and diet. Traditional food products constitute a significant food sector and an important form of economic input in every country worldwide. The European Union has acknowledged the significance of traditional food and the need for the establishment of a system to protect registered traditional food products.<sup>4</sup> The Cyprus Food and Nutrition Virtual Museum aims to promote the study

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2 Stewart, B., *My experiences of Cyprus; being an account of the people, mediæval cities and castles, antiquities and history of the island of Cyprus: to which is added a chapter on the present economic and political problems which affect the island as a dependency of the British empire*, London 1908, 115.

3 Rizopoulou-Egoumenidou, E., 'Time for Producing and Consuming Food in Traditional Cypriot Society. Changing Eating Habits in the Course of the Twentieth Century', in Lysaght, P., (ed.), *Time for Food*, Åbo, Finland 2012, 194-209. Data on the diet followed by children in Cyprus in recent years are also available – see: Lazarou, C., Panagiotakos, D. B., Matalas, A.-L., 'Level of Adherence to the Mediterranean Diet among Children from Cyprus: The CYKIDS Study', *Public Health Nutrition* 12 (2009): 991-1000.

4 European Commission, *European Research on Traditional Food*, Community Research. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg 2007. Available at: <http://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/ftp7/kbbe/docs/traditional-foods.pdf>; accessed April 2013.

of the history of diet and food in Cyprus and to create an electronic depository of relevant data accessible to professionals and the general public.<sup>5</sup>

## Project Team and Sources

The project is being carried out jointly by ethnologists, nutritionists, historians, archaeologists, philologists, experts in marketing, and computer scientists, to ensure that aspects of alimentation in Cyprus are examined from an interdisciplinary point of view. Seventeen researchers<sup>6</sup> have been involved in the project since its beginning in 2009, while other experts have contributed to individual topics. Within the context of this research project, historical, folkloric and nutritional evidence for several traditional foods has been gathered and recorded. Data were drawn from written and other historical sources, as well as from oral testimonies recorded in the field among elderly peasant women, for the purposes of the project. Written sources that have been utilised include essays on Cypriot rural life, travellers' accounts, as well as archival documents dating from the sixteenth century to the twentieth century. For the period referring to the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, a time during which the island was, in turn, under Turkish (1571-1878) and English rule (1878-1960), a large amount of information has been derived from original articles published during the 1970s and 1980s in the scholarly journal *Folklore Cyprus* (Λαογραφική Κύπρος).

## The Electronic Database: Contents and Navigation

The database provides information on pre-industrial dietary patterns and meals, agricultural practices and tools, subsistence and early industrial activities, food processing techniques, traditional dishes and foods and their nutritional analysis. Data are organised under six main theme-sections: 1. Foods and Comestibles; 2. Traditional Recipes; 3. Meals and Dietary Regimens; 4. Spaces of Food Production and Distribution; 5. Traditional Processes and Methods of Food Production; and 6. Tools and Utensils. The electronic database is currently available in the Greek language only (<http://foodmuseum.cs.ucy.ac.cy>). For the purposes of this project, the database was designed in a way that allows one to search for records and documents following several different navigation schemes through the various sections.

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<sup>5</sup> The present work was carried out within the framework a research project launched by the University of Cyprus (<http://foodmuseum.cs.ucy.ac.cy>), co-funded by the Cyprus Research Foundation and the European Union structural funds.

<sup>6</sup> The researchers who have worked for the present project since its initiation in 2009 are: Nikos Andhilios, Natasa Charalambous, Yiorgos Chrysanthou, Eleni Christou, Demetra Demetriou, Loukia Hadjigavriel, Marilena Joannides, Chrystalleni Lazarou, Florentia Kythreotou, Anna Marangou, Antonia Matalas, Demetrios Michaelides, Marios Papas, Nasa Patapiou, Euphrosyne Rizopoulou-Egoumenidou, Athanasios Vionis, and Vana Yagkou.

Fig. 1: The Cyprus Food and Nutrition Virtual Museum's home page on the Internet.



Records of food items and dishes are the basic entities of the database – which currently contains more than 3,000 records. Each record consists of several fields which are organised into three sub-records. In the records, the user can find the common Greek-Cypriot and Greek name(s) of the food or dish in question, linguistic comments, such as the etymology of the name(s) used,<sup>7</sup> as well as other names utilised in the past and in antiquity and, in the case of a plant or animal, its Linnaean taxonomic name. Next, information on how Cypriot people get access to the food, descriptions of its preparation and/or the cooking methods involved, details of the food's role in the common diet, and its function on special occasions and associated symbolic uses, are provided. Details of all sources used, written and non-written, and relevant additional information, are also given. A chronology is attached to each record to facilitate searches based on chronologies. Finally, links to related records in the database (such as dish recipes and associated tools and utensils) and a number of useful documents, such as published articles, scanned copies of original manuscripts and other archival sources, photographic documents (including those of dishes and tools, and representation of processes, and so on), from published works (with permission), are also included as attachments. In addition, original pictures taken in the field during the research conducted for the purposes of the project, and nutritional analysis sheets, are incorporated in the records as *attached documents*.

Depending on the particular focus that a user may have, the navigation can commence from several starting points. The navigation scheme allows cross-linking as much as possible, and the user may select as a starting point for navigation a type of meal (e.g. breakfast, dinner, or snack), a specific food or food-group (if one wishes to search for lentil, for example, one may select one of the following options: lentil soup,

<sup>7</sup> Most of the information on the origin of colloquial terms of foods in the Cypriot dialect are derived from: Kyprí, T.D., *Materials for the Preparation of a Historical Dictionary of the Cypriot Dialect*, Part II: Glossary of Xenophon P. Pharmakidou, Nicosia 2003 (In Greek).

lentil, or pulses), an historical period, a geographical location, an ethnic group (Greek-Cypriots, Turkish-Cypriots, Armenians, and so on), a rite of passage, or a feast-day (e.g. a wedding, Easter day, and so on), or a particular social/professional class. In addition, the database allows for alphabetical and free-text searches.

Other contents of the website besides the records described above include old food advertisements and articles on the history of local food industries (provided by Cypriot food industries), educational applications, and three-dimensional panoramas of five thematic museums in Cyprus: the wine museum, the olive museum, the carob museum, the bee museum, and the Cyprus folklore museum.

## Revival of Traditional Foods: Benefits and Troubling Issues

The preservation of traditional food is beneficial for societies in a number of ways, especially with regard to peoples' nutritional status and disease prevention. One explicit paradigm taken from Cypriot food culture concerns the various sweet foods made from grape must that every household prepares in the autumn, shortly after the harvest of the new grapes. These sweets include grape must cakes (*kiofterka*), grape must dessert (*palouzes*), *soujoukkos*, a *loukoum*-like sweet with walnuts, as well as the concentrated grape must syrup called *epsema* or *petimezi*.<sup>8</sup> Sweet treats made of grape must are high in nutritional value and they contain no added sugar, as the grape must is sweet enough on its own. In addition, grape must also provides substantial amounts of flavonoids, the phytochemical compounds that are known to be potent antioxidants and to inhibit the initiation of the vascular disease, atherosclerosis.<sup>9</sup>

Besides their role in health maintenance, traditional food products are often the result of agricultural practices that preserve and enhance rural environments, and their production is very much in line with current thinking on rural development, the preservation of biodiversity, and sustainability.<sup>10</sup> This is not a universal rule though. In the case of Cyprus, the migratory songbirds of the species *Sylvia atricapilla* provide a paradigm of a traditional food, the culinary revival and expansion of which is giving rise to an ecological disaster. For this reason, the vine bird (*ambelopoulin*), the name by which the particular songbird is known in Cyprus, represents a controversial dish that has received much of attention in recent years.

From the available written sources, it is known that in Cyprus, the flesh of the vine-bird was, since the Venetian period (1489-1571), a much-esteemed food. In fact, available evidence supports the notion that the islanders used this bird as a food since

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8 Yangou, V., Demetriou, D., Matalas, A.L., 'A King with Rugs. Cypriot Meal Patterns of the Past and Traditional Food Products', *Hellenic Journal of Nutrition and Dietetics* 2 (2011): 87-95.

9 Vinson, J.A., Teufel, K., Wu, N., 'Red Wine, Dealcoholized Red Wine, and Especially Grape Juice, Inhibit Atherosclerosis', *Atherosclerosis* 156 (2001): 67-72.

10 European Commission, *op. cit.*, 2007.

the beginning of their presence on the island.<sup>11</sup> Migratory songbirds were also used as food in ancient Greece.<sup>12</sup> In past times, however, the birds were viewed by local people as a necessary form of sustenance, as meat was scarce and expensive and as Cypriots had very limited access to animal flesh. (As stated above, beef, since ancient classical times, was virtually absent from the diet of the islanders.) Today, the *ambelopoulin* does not constitute necessary sustenance, but is, rather, gourmet fare. It is served, pickled or steamed, in restaurants and homes, as a delicacy. The enthusiasm which Cypriots and many visitors to the island have for this delicacy, despite the fact that it is illegal to kill these birds, has resulted in the development of a very profitable business estimated to be worth about five million Euro annually.<sup>13</sup>

The method used for trapping the vine-birds further aggravates the ecological disaster. The contemporary method of choice – a combination of fine-mesh nylon fishing nets and electronic bird-calls that lure the birds – leads to the trapping of much larger numbers of birds compared to the traditional method using lime sticks which was formerly used. Though all bird trapping on Cyprus is illegal since 1974, large numbers of birds continue to be killed every year. Trapping kills birds indiscriminately, thus internationally-protected species of migratory birds are killed as well.<sup>14</sup>

## Concluding Comments

The Cyprus Food and Nutrition Virtual Museum represents an attempt to preserve and to record the cultural heritage of food in Cyprus. Included in the future aims of the project team is the intention to collect additional oral testimonies in order to further augment the database as a depository of cultural heritage. The information on the historical, folkloric, nutritional and environmental aspects of traditional dietary patterns, can be easily accessed by both the researchers and the general public through the website of the Cyprus Food and Nutrition Virtual Museum. Hopefully, this work will motivate further research on the history of traditional diet and foods in Cyprus and in other regions of Europe.

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11 Nikolaou-Konnari, A., 'The ampelopoulia on the glue sticks of history', *Politis*, Sunday, 26 October 2002. (Newspaper, Nicosia.)

12 Athenaeus, in his book the *Deipnosophists*, refers to the serving of a bird called *Sykallides* (fig-eaters), which is believed to belong to the same species as the vine-bird (*Deipnosophists* II, 65b-e and *Deipnosophists* IV, 129b-c).

13 BirdLifeCyprus, *Frontline Trapping in Cyprus. News on Illegal Bird Trapping in Cyprus*, Spring 2010 ([www.birdlifecyprus.org/](http://www.birdlifecyprus.org/); accessed April 2013).

14 According to BirdLifeCyprus, almost 2.5 million birds, across the whole of Cyprus, are estimated to have been killed during 2010.





*Part III: Commercialisation of Food Traditions*



# Luxury Restaurants and Fine Dining: A Discussion about Taste

*Anna Burstedt*

What determines what kind of food is to be considered finer and better than the one served, for example, in local restaurants, pizzerias and bars? The restaurant industry hides an unspoken agreement and an understanding of what is meant by concepts such as fine dining, gourmet, first class, and luxury, restaurants. It is probable that they are not all synonymous in meaning, but they are all used to categorise eating places in the upper crust of an imaginary restaurant hierarchy. The Swedish ethnologists Håkan Jönsson and Richard Tellström<sup>1</sup> have shown that the period from the mid-1980s onwards, saw the establishment and the expansion of a finer, a more expensive, and a better cuisine in the Swedish restaurant world. The understanding of what constitutes such luxury consumption tends to be implied, in the sense that it is necessary to ask who decides, and how is the decision made, that a restaurant belongs to the luxury class? Is it the food price, the hard-to-find ingredients used, the environmental exclusivity or the unique experience, which constitutes the 'luxury'? What is included in the term quality? How important are professional chefs for a restaurant's status?

Today's range of restaurants offers a variety of eating places which are attractive to and inviting for people from different walks of life. In relation to the phenomenon of fine dining, it is important to consider the social and class perspectives involved in the act of eating in a public environment. Restaurants are not only public spaces for undergoing experience; they are also places where power relations, discrimination and stereotypes can be expressed.<sup>2</sup>

The aim of this article is to study the criteria that constitute fine dining so-called, and luxury restaurants.<sup>3</sup> Food and eating have always been used to express status and social distinction, which can be visibly expressed and which is clearly observable in the

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1 Jönsson, H., Tellström, R., 'Utbildning inom det gastronomiska fältet', in Fjellström, C., *Gastronomisk forskning*, Stockholm 2009, 11-86.

2 Bourdieu, P., *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, Cornwall, 1985/2010; Cook, I., Crang, P., 'The World on a Plate. Culinary Culture, Displacement and Geographical Knowledge', *Journal of Material Culture* 1 (1996): 131-53.

3 Funding for this project has been provided by Sparbanksstiftelsen Färs och Frosta, Lund.

restaurant business. The classification of restaurants according to the labels fine, luxury and gourmet, involves beliefs about what is considered to belong to 'good taste'. There is an unspoken consensus about what is included in different restaurant concepts, and this article examines the values which this cultural understanding includes. What understandings and perceptions lie behind such concepts as 'fine dining' and 'first-class quality' in the restaurant world? What criteria seem to be important with regard to the notion of 'good taste'?

## Swedish Guides

To study the distinctions of taste, and how the luxury restaurants in Sweden are defined and characterised, I have chosen to work empirically with food media. This article is based on a close reading of the most-established and best-known restaurant guides in Sweden.<sup>4</sup> At this moment in time the *White Guide* is recognised as the leading restaurant guide in the country. It defines itself as follows:

*White Guide* is the only comprehensive restaurant guide in Sweden to evaluate the Swedish restaurant scene with journalistic integrity. The *White Guide* in Sweden is a guide of the highest international standard, a natural authority on the restaurants of Sweden.<sup>5</sup>

*White Guide* was created in 2004 through a unification of two other guides: *Gourmet 199 Bord*, first published in 1988, and *Vägarnas Bästa*. The latter, first published in 1985, was the first restaurant guide ever in Sweden and lasted for seventeen years. *Gourmet 100 Bord* and *White Guide* were also closely linked to what might be considered the most prestigious food magazine in Sweden: *Gourmet*. The quote above reflects the self-image of the business producing the guide; the *White Guide* can be considered to be the most important national source for restaurant critique in Sweden where it enjoys indisputable supremacy in this field.

Even though these Swedish publications have had quite a short history, guides dealing with food and eating have had a much longer one. The original model for *White Guide*, and, indeed, for all restaurant guides, is the *Guide Michelin* (or *Guide Rouge*) which was established in the late 1800s. As the name suggests, it was the tyre manufacturer, *Michelin*, which was the original creator of the guide. Its purpose from the beginning was to assist new, modern car owners, not only to locate places where they could get their car serviced and, more specifically, get tyres changed, but also to find places where food, drink and accommodation were provided. It was not until the 1930s that *Michelin* became a more refined restaurant guide targeting mainly the rising

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<sup>4</sup> The translation of quotes from Swedish to English is by the author.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.whiteguide.se/om>; accessed 1. 1. 2012.

tourism sector.<sup>6</sup> In the beginning, the *Michelin Guide* focused only on France, but today's *Michelin Guide* covers most countries worldwide – including Sweden, in the edition *Michelin Hotels and Restaurant Main Cities of Europe*, since 1982. The guide has developed from being a mere trailblazer for car drivers and tourists to being a guide for the more advanced gastronomic élite. Obtaining 3 stars as a quality mark is also regarded as the most prestigious recognition a restaurant establishment can achieve. The grading scheme is structured using a star grading system of 1 to 3 stars where 3 stars is the most desirable grade in the Michelin category.<sup>7</sup> The Swedish guides do not have a star system but have, nonetheless, a grading system for restaurants which includes the rankings 'good', 'better' and 'best'. But more about that later. Firstly, I wish to discuss what the exact purpose of a restaurant guide is?

## Taste Matters

The power to consecrate certain cultural products over others is the power to define taste.<sup>8</sup>

Taste is both an interesting theoretical concept and a physical sensation. Taste is used in this study as an expression, and as an interpretation of cultural values, and as a means by which to judge the distinction between good and bad taste. Defining something as being in good taste, as opposed to something unrefined, emerges as a culturally- and socially-constructed category that is possible to study.<sup>9</sup> Since the project's starting point is to study how the concept of high-class cuisine is defined in the context of gourmet and luxury restaurants, it is a fruitful approach to use a theoretical perspective concerning cultural distinctions in relation to food and meals as status markers.<sup>10</sup>

In discussing taste as a matter of distinction it is necessary to consider the work of the sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu. According to Bourdieu, taste is a product of social class which in turn is a combination of social position, education, economic and symbolic capital. These variables create, in different settings, the mode of conduct and

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6 Harp., L.S., *Marketing Michelin. Advertising & Cultural Identity in Twentieth-Century France*, Baltimore. 2001.

7 Johnson, C., Surlemont, B., 'The Role of Guides in the Artistic Industries. The Special Case of the "Star System" in the Haute-Cuisine Sector', *Managing Service Quality* 15, no. 6 (2005): 577-90; Johnson, C., et al., 'Behind the Stars. A Concise Typology of Michelin Restaurants in Europe', *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly* 46, no 2 (2005): 170-87.

8 Mitchell D., 'A Taste for New York: Restaurant Reviews, Food Discourse, and the Field of Gastronomy, in America', *American Association of Wine Economist*, Working Paper no. 106 (2012): 5.

9 Cf. Bourdieu, *op. cit.*, 165-317.

10 Cf. Wouters, C., *Informalization. Manners and Emotions since 1980*, London, 2007.

appreciation involved in taste. Combining the theoretical approach of taste as an expression of one's capital during every moment of food consumption, with actual food consumption, also becomes a moment to discuss the expressions of one's habitus. Habitus is a system of incorporated dispositions that affect people's actions and praxis. Habitus enables what is possible to do, to be done, with, and within, the social order to which one belongs. Taste, as a distinction, becomes in this matter both a learnt value in relation to one's capital asset, and a subjective practice that expresses one's habitus and dispositions.

Bourdieu points out that 'income plays an important part in determining distance from necessity'<sup>11</sup> but also adds that social, cultural and symbolical forms of capital are determinants in this context. He argues that food as a necessity is never the starting point for how food is used to express cultural similarities and differences. The French class structures in Bourdieu's field of study are not directly translatable to Swedish social structures,<sup>12</sup> but still the aspects concerning the expression of taste as a social marker, are useful. Food as a necessity for life, turned into consumer goods affected by economic, social and cultural factors and conditions, is a general starting point in all food-culture research. The translation of food from nutritional purposes to those concerned with business and pleasure, indicates how taste and distinction affect understandings, and conceptions, of meals and dishes. What is perceived as representing luxury and quality becomes relevant not only because of the economic possibility to purchase it, but also because of its ability to express social and cultural distance.

Applying Bourdieu's structural theories about food practices to the common saying *De gustibus non est disputandum* ('in matters of taste there can be no disputes'), serves to elaborate on our understanding of the Latin quote. Subjectivity plays a significant role in taste matters, but the quote can also be seen to implicitly define taste as something learnt and constructed within us. The construction of what good and bad taste is, does not need to be discussed. Bringing habitus into play, taste as something learnt and socially inherited becomes a relational concept, the criteria for which are always determined among the dominant classes.<sup>13</sup>

'Here is just a small lobster soup', says one of the waiters modestly, but what a lobster soup... a dense, smooth bisque with a resilient piece of lobster tail in it, actually one of the year's best 'ammisar' [*amuse bouche*]. And it announces the chef's, Thomas Andersson's style. Carefully selected raw materials prepared and based on a good idea, often with advanced

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11 Bourdieu, *op cit.*, 173.

12 Cf. Borda, B., Lundin, S., 'Vem får grädden på tårtan. Om samhällets subtila maktstrukturer i Pierre Bourdieus sociologi', *Rig* 69, no. 3 (1986): 66-86.

13 Seymore, D. 'The Social Construction of Taste', in Sloan, D., (ed.), *Culinary Taste. Consumer Behavior in the International Restaurant Sector*, Oxford 2004, 1-232.

technology and well-balanced compositions, each accessory has its own meaningful role. Scallops served with a small salad elegantly dressed with ginger and lime and pepper croutons with fun aromatic heat. A root vegetable cannelloni, with high root-crop sweetness, comes with a bouillon of artichokes with a deep and intense flavour. On top, fried lobsters with the right punch. The lemon-flavored salmon, with scrambled eggs and whitefish roe, is already a classic with its little sweet fried potato chunk (without an oil taste) – sweetness, saltiness and acidity in fine balance. A fried chicken with a nice browned surface and damp interior, served sliced with a risotto breaded with truffle, and an intense wine sauce that easily would have gained the upper hand, if it had not been offset with fresh apple and chicken liver salad. The presentation is brilliant. Small tubs with sauce of duck liver, sweet, moist and heavy as it should be; mashed potatoes flavoured with figs – outstanding entertainment value, Sweden and North Africa in a jumble – and finally a fresh Choucroute, or rather a quick pickled cabbage salad.<sup>14</sup>

What ideals are actually expressed in the foregoing quotation? I have chosen to use this quotation because it contains so many different aspects that recur in restaurant guides, and also in other restaurant reviews for that matter. Initially, when reading this description about the restaurant Storstad in *Gourmet 199 Bord*, my attention was caught by the word ‘ammisar’. ‘Ammisar’? I pondered on this word for a long time and continued reading all other volumes of the guides until I finally realised its meaning. ‘Ammisar’, is, quite simply, an abbreviation for *amuse bouche*, a small appetiser served to guests. Actually, an extraordinary amount of knowledge is required in order to read, and also to understand, the language, descriptions, and meaning, in the restaurant guides. What do, ‘well-balanced compositions’, ‘fun aromatic heat’, ‘deep and intense flavour’ or ‘sweet, moist and heavy as it should be’ actually mean?

## Creating Consensus

Jönsson and Tellström have sought to develop a definition of gastronomy.<sup>15</sup> According to them it is concerned with refined, more sophisticated and knowledge-intensive cooking. An important point they make is that this type of cooking and design, aims to provide not just nutrition, but also pleasure and meaning, in people’s lives. Their definition is in line with a bourdieuan understanding of taste:

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<sup>14</sup> This quotation in *Gourmet 199 Bord 2001*, 35, refers to the restaurant Storstad in Stockholm.

<sup>15</sup> Jönsson, Tellström, *op. cit.*, 19ff.



Gastronomy is the refining, professionalisation, cultivation and canonisation of food, techniques and dishes, where various unwanted parts are stripped away. Gastronomy is a way of building borders against those who do not fit in and, thus, it is also an aspect of society and of the struggle for power between different groups in the public arena.<sup>16</sup>

One unspoken aim of the restaurant guides can be said to be that of creating a consensus about what is good taste. Stephen Mennell points out that food media and food critique are part of the democratisation process which has occurred in the food area. Through the use of written language to convey cooking techniques, meal and taste compositions, food media have contributed to the spreading of what is considered to be good quality cuisine. Due to modern media, the definitions of good taste have travelled further both geographically and socially than if certain kinds of food knowledge had never left, for example, bourgeois and aristocratic circles.<sup>17</sup> Relying essentially on a system of experts, the guides aim to give readers confidence in the assessments of the interpreters of good taste and also to create a consensus on what constitutes good taste.<sup>18</sup> Even *White Guide* felt obliged to formulate the need for a guide that is considered to be reliable and which legitimises and justifies its taste definitions:

The need for hands-on guidance has increased significantly. To have a credible yardstick can also make one feel safe. It was with the intention of creating such a national standard that the both trusted and appreciated restaurant guides *Gourmet 199 Table* and *Vägarnas Bästa* came together to create the *White Guide*.<sup>19</sup>

By conferring on themselves the role of deciding what is safe and reliable with regard to taste, the guides provide little opportunity for the expression of the reader's subjective experience. Thus the values expressed by the guides should be sought and followed, precisely because their opinion is both consistent and safe, and can, therefore, be relied on? Food critic Michael Mölstad formulates his role as an inspector of restaurant cuisine, by suggesting that flavour is not subjective and individual, but rather that it is something which can be raised to the level of a professional assessment:

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16 Jönsson, Tellström, *op. cit.*, 80.

17 Mennell, S., *All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present*, New York 1985.

18 Naccarato, P., LeBasco, K., *Culinary Capital*, London 2012, 67ff.

19 *White Guide*, 2006, 6.

Is my type of restaurant criticism an objective science? No. It is not the case now, just as it was not when Bengt Frithiofsson started the serious restaurant criticism in the 1970s. We convey a subjective experience – but it is a qualified subjectivity with maximum credibility.<sup>20</sup>

The voices from the guides and from the critiques which they contain proclaim that both restaurant guests and readers need professional help in order to orient themselves in the eating-out sphere. Wouters<sup>21</sup> argues in his book *Informalization. Manners and Emotions since 1890*, that formality and informality operate in a parallel fashion in society.

In recent years, the informal restaurant's vision of the public living room, with the same stress on food, people and environment, has been the winning formula. The starched restaurant type with its old ceremonial formality has been inevitably pushed away to the City Hotels and to a few classic venues. But now it appears that the classic and more sophisticated dining procedure is making a comeback – suddenly, decanting, carving and flambé are carried out by very meticulous staff who are also increasingly dressed in uniform<sup>22</sup>.

The empirical material oscillates constantly between placing emphasis on more formal trends in eating out, on the one hand, and then on informal trends on the other hand. Nonetheless, despite the fluctuations and variations in formality trends within restaurants as social arenas, it is assumed that guests will know the levels of formality that apply at that moment in time. An increasingly-informal society requires understanding and cultural competence in what is meant and included in various restaurant concepts, so restaurant visitors do not feel uncomfortable and distressed when they enter that arena.<sup>23</sup> Being over-dressed for visiting a local restaurant, can make one feel just as uncomfortable, and just as lost and ill-mannered, as if one has not dressed properly for a fancy restaurant. Today's informal society and unclear class markers create cultural uncertainty as well as more opportunities for the individual consumer's interpretations about what is to be regarded as good and bad taste. In this context, the guides seem to play a role as spokespersons and interpreters for what constitutes quality and for what is valuable in the dining-out experience. Nonetheless, the judging of food and the creation of consensus is a difficult task as it deals with sensorial experiences and subjective tastes.

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20 Hedman, U., Nordén, G., *Välkommen till bords. Uteätandet historia*, Stockholm 2012, 218.

21 Cf. Wouters, *op. cit.*

22 *Gourmet 199 Bord*, 1998, 11.

23 Cf. Wouters, *op. cit.*

## Classic, Boring or Fantastic?

The similarities between the Swedish *White Guide* and the French *Michelin Guide Rouge*, refer not only to the fact that they both use a specific colour in the title, but also to the manner in which the restaurants are classified. In the *Guide Rouge*, the restaurants are classified using stars with the following definitions as to their meaning:

- One Star – a very good restaurant in its category.
- Two Stars – excellent cooking, worth a detour.
- Three Stars – exceptional cuisine, worth a separate trip.<sup>24</sup>

One can obviously trace the origin of the *Guide Rouge* in the car and tyre industry since the stars are explained using a travelling metaphor. In the Swedish *White Guide*, it is not the journey that marks the criteria for value but the overall experience. The Swedish classifications (see following) also contain more descriptions and grading scales than the *Guide Rouge* does:

- International Master Class: The restaurant kitchen produces brilliant determined cooking at a level where it can compete with the very best restaurants in the world. Overall the experience is at a very high level.
- Master class: The restaurant kitchen produces very interesting and often innovative cuisine at the highest restaurant level in Sweden. Overall the experience is at a high level.
- Very good class: A very good overall experience; the kitchen produces interesting and very well-made food.
- Good class: A sympathetic experience overall; the kitchen produces well-executed cooking.<sup>25</sup>

Although there are, indeed, differences between different guides, the classifications are essentially similar to each other, not only in form but also in content. The difference between the classes is reflected by means of the wording used, but what does this mean in practice? For example, how can one really tell the difference between a very high level and a high level dining experience? And how are the assessments and evaluations made?

The system for evaluating a restaurant in *White Guide* is based upon four different categories<sup>26</sup>: Food (maximum 40 points), Beverages (maximum 20 points), Service

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24 Harp., L.S., *Marketing Michelin. Advertising & Cultural Identity in Twentieth-Century France*, Baltimore 2001.

25 *White Guide*, 2012, 11.

26 For more information about how the assessments and criteria are formulated in the *Guide Michelin*, see Harp., L.S., *Marketing Michelin. Advertising & Cultural Identity in Twentieth-Century France*, Baltimore 2001.

(maximum 25 points) and Atmosphere (maximum 15 points), giving a total of 100 points. To be nominated in the International Master Class category, a restaurant has to achieve at least 80 points in total and 36 points of these have to refer to the food category. The impact and importance of the categories have also changed over the years – in 2009 and 2010, for example, the food and service imperatives played a more central role in the total evaluation. The evaluations according to the points achieved are as follows:

- 17-21 points: Approved cooking.
- 22-27 points: Well-made food in the Good Class.
- 28-31 points: Interesting and well-made food in the very good class.
- 32-35 points: Very interesting and well-made food in the Swedish Master Class.<sup>27</sup>

It is the aggregate of the total points awarded for the categories, Food, Beverage, Service and Atmosphere, which, in the end, determines how a restaurant will be graded, and how it will be ranked in a restaurant hierarchy created annually by a ‘master class’ list, which contains nominations such as, ‘this year’s best restaurant’, ‘this year’s service experience’, and so on.

The system of grading can be registered as being transparent and clear but, on the other hand, many of the criteria can be open to discussion because there is no description about how the points are awarded. Another form of opposition to the guides is also the vague, implicit, and unspoken criteria by which restaurants are judged.<sup>28</sup>

In the Swedish guides, all restaurant assessments are followed by a short review of a visit in which dishes, service, atmosphere and tastes, are described in a more extravagant way than what the point numbers may indicate. The close reading of restaurant guides shows that many reviews accentuate the extremes. They can refer to ‘high level’ and ‘deep flavours’, ‘strong bouquets’ and ‘minimalistic decorations’, ‘intense compositions’ and ‘simple tastes’, just to mention some empirical examples. It is not surprising that there are superlatives that constantly recur in the guides as, in the end, the goal is to assess exactly the food and the restaurants that are considered to be good, better, or the best.

Yet another ideal than that of the extreme on the scale of merit that seems to be worth striving for is, namely, the balancing of tastes, composition, traditions and innovations. Discovering a meal that is not ‘too subtle’, ‘elaborate’ or ‘complex’, stands out as the preferred and perfect experience. The cuisine of ‘Number 2’ on the list in 1998, Franska Matsalen, is described as follows: ‘the textures and flavours are in fine

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27 The same formulation can be seen in *White Guide* from 2009 to 2012.

28 Johnson, *et. al, op. cit.*, 2005, 172.

balance', while in 'Number 3', Kattégatts Gastonomi och Logi, 'The craftsmanship is top class and the brothers Nilsson refrain from using unnecessary squiggles'.<sup>29</sup>

Finding the right balance also includes reaching a golden mean rather than balancing into boredom. Many assessments give a considered opinion about what is regarded as boring and no longer appropriate. An example of this from Franska Matsalen 1998 is as follows:

And what is devised here with the obligatory boring lobster – yes, claw and tail are presented accompanied by Persson's homemade sauerkraut with balanced acid, lardoons, and an intensely tasty wine and lobster sauce. All very good, but who remembers the lobster?<sup>30</sup>

Although the restaurant had achieved a high grade in the 1998 guide, the review reflects ideals about both balance and the merely boring. To serve lobster without experimentation, innovation, and somewhat surprising combinations, seems unacceptable and, for a guide-reader, or a restaurateur, the implication might well be that one would think twice before ordering or serving lobster on the occasion.

## Food Media

There is a long-lived, clear distinction between popular culture and elite food restaurant culture, but only the latter is the object of public discourse.<sup>31</sup>

The cultural skills needed for a restaurant visit, with regard to choosing which establishment suits the nature and purpose of the visit, can be purchased in what I choose to call food media. By the latter I mean everything from restaurant guides, to trade magazines, to restaurant reviews in newspapers. Media have proved to be of great importance in the creation of ideas, habits, and added value around food and meals.<sup>32</sup> By reading restaurant reviews, the consumer can take part in what connoisseurs and writers perceive as being signs of refinement and taste. Food media and journalism can be seen to function as cultural interpreters and mediators of core values in the restaurant

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29 *Gourmet 199 Bord 1998*, 12.

30 *idem*.

31 Amilien, V., 'The Rise of the Restaurants in Norway', in Jacobs, M., Scholliers, P., (eds): *Eating Out in Europe. Picnics, Gourmet Dining and Snacks in the Late Eighteenth Century*, Oxford 2003, 3.

32 Appadurai, A., 'How to make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India', in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30, no. 1 (1988); Warde, A., *Consumption, Food and Taste: Culinary Antinomies and Commodity Culture*, London 1997, 44 ff.

arena. In this context, the food scholar, Mitchell Davis, proclaims: ‘What we think about food and restaurants is largely shaped by what we read about them.’<sup>33</sup> This article focuses only on restaurant guides as they are part of media food discourse and of the public narrative negotiation about the values of eating out. Reviews and guides work mainly from given and predetermined criteria. It is important not to see this as being obvious and naturally given, but rather to consider what concepts and values this situation reproduces, and also which readers and recipients the media have in mind when formulating their reviews and guides.

No matter how many people, of whatever background, actually read *White Guide* – or indeed, other guides – their impact reaches farther than to those who actually read them. This is because consumers have ideas about food evaluation and have learned that there are definitions about what fine dining, *haute cuisine*, and luxury restaurants, compared to simpler ones, actually mean. This socialisation action is done, not only through food media, but also, according to Bourdieu’s categories of cultural and social capital, as part of everyday experiences, where our habitus creates feelings of comfort or discomfort, in different settings. The reading of a review or a guide might mean that a person was searching for actual guidance concerning a visit to a restaurant, but it could also mean that guests can thereby choose and customise their restaurant visit, not only according to their wallet, but also according to the environment in which they feel comfortable.

In some cases, it is still possible to understand that the review writers had a special kind of guest or a special kind of reader in mind when writing the review. It is not always the mainstream consumer, or even necessarily a self-taught gastronome, that can follow the associations and highly-metaphorical language that is used throughout the guides, such as, for example, the following: ‘And the fluffy Wallenbergs<sup>34</sup> of pheasant are forever parked on the menu – but by no means exclusively in order to become a wide-eyed tourist’s “favourite”’.<sup>35</sup> Using the term ‘tourist’ as a metaphor for a travelling visitor who comes just once and then never returns, signals an image of the expected guest being someone who visits these kinds of establishments frequently, and who has also eaten *wallenbergare* in different forms. The tourist appears as a guest who is not in the habit of visiting luxury restaurants or of experiencing fine dining. The guest has to have a proper habitus, in order to feel at ease when entering the locus of the first class restaurant, and needs also to possess the right culinary cultural capital in order to be able to read the guides and to appreciate the dishes. ‘A *pata negra* from Salamanca

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33 Davis, *op. cit.*, 2.

34 A Wallenbergaré is a hamburger normally made out of finely minced veal. It contains also cream, egg yolks, salt, pepper and fresh breadcrumbs. The dish is said to be named after Mayor Marcus Wallenberg.

35 *Gourmet 199 Table 1998*, 18.

served with a mild artichoke-paste, delicious, but a true *pata negra*-purist can really just accept olive accessories for the heavily scented ham.<sup>36</sup>

Mitchell Davis frequently uses the theories and notions of Bourdieu in his study of food media in New York. He stresses, however, that the concept of habitus should not be seen as something that is limiting and static. Habitus, he states, is ‘regenerative and constantly changing. Every aesthetic judgement reshapes and reinforces the habitus’.<sup>37</sup> It is worth noting that, from the point of view of ethnology, the relationship between how people can interact with structures, has long been a concern when using Bourdieu within the discipline. Habitus and cultural capital are fruitful concepts to use when analysing taste; however, the agency of the consumer and of the eaters must not be forgotten. Taste is not something that is constant and inherited, although learnt and imposed by, for example, food journalists. Definitions of taste are always changing and are constantly being negotiated in relation to experiences and cultural contexts. It is thus important to remember that habitus is not only about reproducing structures but also about re-working or re-shaping them.

## In the City

The plate is decorated with flowers from the garden, and they are edible,  
if hunger would attack.<sup>38</sup>

One recurring ideal and image in the guides about what constitutes good taste is French cuisine. Even if French cuisine is seen as a gastronomic ideal there is also a counterpart symbolised in the quote above. Refined and exclusive, French cooking is sometimes regarded as being too pretentious and as being more of an intellectual experience than something that is tasteful, satiating, and nourishing. In Sweden, the expression, ‘it was a dish with two crossed beans’, is commonly used to describe an eating event that was considered to have been far too pretentious, elaborate and snobbish, especially if it was thought to be more of an aesthetic show than a nice meal. Putting aesthetics and refinement in opposition to concentrating only on saturation, flavour and amount, is the difference, according to scholars, that characterises taste as a class marker.<sup>39</sup> Culinary researcher Virginie Amilien<sup>40</sup> has sought to define the concept ‘restaurant’ and says that the word itself includes a link to French cuisine, continental cuisine, and the urban

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36 *Gourmet 199 Table 1999*, 27.

37 Davis, *op. cit.*, 68.

38 *White Guide*, 2005, 41, referring to Oaxen Skärgårdskrog.

39 For an elaborate overview, see Davis 2012.

40 Amilien, *op. cit.*, 184.

environment. While there are many other establishments that offer food and drink, it is the word 'restaurant' and the environment it represents, that carries an aura of weekend, experience, and expectation. In the restaurant guides, however, French cuisine is still, overall, the ideal cuisine:

As always, when there are few trends many regress to the classic French [cuisine], a safe refuge in which to rest and to look for new signals. And when you do not know what to do you can never go wrong with a *confit de canard*.<sup>41</sup>

I think there is also a conception about taste, to the effect that, not only is it interrelated with French cuisine, but that it is also related to a distinction between city and countryside. With regard to this project my aim was, on the one hand, to discuss the concept of taste in terms of luxury restaurants, but it also seemed as if almost all of the first-class restaurants so nominated were located in the main cities:

Outside the big cities, it can unfortunately be difficult to find restaurants that meet our requirements. And it seems not to have got any easier over the years. In all honesty, we are probably also often a little kinder in our reviews of restaurants located in the provinces – for the simple reason, so that you, the reader, will have information about all that is available in both urban and rural areas.<sup>42</sup>

More or less the same words are used in the introduction to the guides of *Gourmet 199 Bord* from 1999 to 2004, which divide the Swedish restaurant scene into an urban and a rural one. The quote disappeared with the emergence of the *White Guide* in 2005, but the structure of the volumes still follows a geographical pattern based on the cities, and the majority of the restaurants represented on the top 10-list are situated in the main cities. Is it the case, then, that refined cuisine and cooking can only be produced and served in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö? Stockholm appears as the epicentre of taste in the empirical material, and prevails as the ideal focal point in the food and meals arena, thus also reproducing an image of the countryside as being less creative, innovative and modern:

Even further up in the region of Norrbotten, Kattilakoski Gatronimi shows that geography has nothing to do with either skills or ambition ... 'Poor' Småland region is not traditionally regarded as a gastronomic paradise, but the restaurant owner Bengtsson and his chef Anders Lauring

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41 *Gourmet 199 Bord 2004*, 51.

42 *Gourmet 199 Bord 1999-2004*.



succeed with the help of twenty small-scale farmers, all fishermen and farmers in the area – all of course with a culinary heritage label – and as many more ‘skogsmullar’<sup>43</sup> on the constant lookout for mushrooms, berries, shoots, sorrel and various tasty weeds, to convince us that the forest, meadow and lake of Småland is a sumptuous Tuscany.<sup>44</sup>

The quotation shows that restaurants graded in the high-class category and located in the countryside, are regarded as something of a surprise, as something that is almost astonishing and unexpected. It is even common to express the opinion that a restaurant can be successful despite its geographical location. That the countryside might have something to offer, is highlighted in the 2001 *White Guide*, when three restaurants from the small city of Helsingborg entered the list of the top fifteen restaurants in Sweden:

It means that Helsingborg has twice as many taverns on the best-list as Gothenburg – and this must surely be regarded as sensational. What is it about this town in northwest Skåne that allows such a range of restaurants to be present? A sophisticated audience with picky stomachs and decent swollen wallets certainly – but that can be found elsewhere also without it putting any trace on the gastronomic scene. No, it is obvious that it is about critical mass – good restaurants generate good restaurants.<sup>45</sup>

However, it appears as if there is currently a food trend in Sweden in which what is local and rural has turned out to be highly praiseworthy and dubbed a bright food ideal. Still, it is not so much that the food trend is taking place out in the actual countryside but rather that the countryside is the rural place where the raw materials, are produced – and skilled professionals (men) will transform the natural products into cultivated compositions served in urban fine dining milieus.

‘The open fire is one of the year's mega trends, and the restaurant that does not put a fire to something at the table, or does not burn something with an open flame in the dining room, has simply not kept up’, according to the opening of the 2012 *White Guide*. The fire motif recurs in many descriptions of the last year's trends, symbolising how fire as a natural force transforms raw materials into something culturally refined. The aspects of local nature, traditions, and the home-made, are reflected in all the top assessments of restaurants in the last three years. The best restaurant in 2012, Franzen/Lindeberg, is described in the following way:

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43 A Swedish word meaning approximately ‘nature lover’, a person who likes to spend a lot of time in the forest.

44 *White Guide*, 2007, 26-7.

45 *Gourmet 199 Bord*, 2001, 8.

This year not only sourdough bread will be rising in its beautiful little sarcophagus on the table, in addition, the butter is also churned in front of the guest's eyes. Together with the day's harvest from the two vegetable gardens, this is probably the optimal Swedish dish. Especially delicious is a wild cod slow-baked in homemade lard. A Swedish dairy cow, what else, tempts in three servings, first as a blood-pancake topped with duck liver, next as coal-fired tartar on roast beef with a clique caviar on top, and finally as a fillet with bone marrow and tender celeriac poached in country milk.<sup>46</sup>

A trend to revert to traditional cooking techniques, and to the use of local raw materials, seems to be embraced more willingly than ever before by the restaurant guides, thus creating, perhaps, some new conceptions of good taste.

The descriptions of local nature can be seen as a form of returning to a kind of food heritage and nostalgic 'old days'. The countryside is thereby represented in a new way in the recent guides – though not by restaurants actually situated in rural areas, as Stockholm still appears as the gastronomic sophistication cradle. The countryside is present but in the 'right way', that is, in cultivated, refined, educated and dignified forms. There is nothing new in relation to locality, origin, or genealogy emphasised in relation to food and dishes. Knowing where food comes from has long been a central element in food consumption.<sup>47</sup> However, I would argue that this is also a matter of appropriating cultural expressions. When local ingredients and techniques have also moved into the fine salons, they become means and ideals as defined by the culinary élite who act as interpreters of what is considered to be good taste. Through the assessments of localness, local food is also converted into a form of standardised taste for what fine Swedish cuisine is today. In that sense, the interest in local food has turned into an urban trend.

## Conclusion

The aim of this article is to analyse and discuss how distinctions about taste are shaped and reproduced. I have shown that cultural concepts about what is valued as good taste in restaurant milieus is created by a work of imagined consensus through taught and socialised taste perceptions. Restaurant guides still play an important role in creating a form of taste manual, not least for restaurateurs and already initiated guests. Contemporary discussions, about whether the importance of initiated critical reviewers in aesthetic areas has declined, due to the emergence of digital media and its publishing possibilities, can still be investigated. Nonetheless, the specific narration genre found in the guides is influential when it comes to describing a bodily experience that is often

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<sup>46</sup> About Franzten / Lindeberg in the *White Guide*, 2012, 214.

<sup>47</sup> Burstedt, A., Fredriksson, C., Jönsson, H., *Mat. Genealogi och gestaltning*, Lund 2006.

difficult to put into words. Eating is a physical experience involving all of our senses and its linguistic descriptions become an intellectual product transformed through the lenses of a cultural consensus about how to describe different textures, flavours, and aesthetics. From an ethnological perspective it has been most interesting to read the wordy and rich content of the periodicals and to discover that classical cultural dichotomies are to be found all through the materials. Tasty – inedible, classical – innovative, traditional – modern, sweet – sour, professional – badly executed, good craftsmanship – mass produced, and so on, are used in opposition to each other, and define what products, flavours and techniques are considered to constitute a prestigious meal and fine dining. The guides are permeated with descriptions about how meal compositions are *ambitious, sassy, confident, complex, and elegant*. But there is also the expression that simply says *boring, yawn!, disharmonious and badly executed*. The culinary language thus expresses taste both as an exceptionally good experience and as a matter of distinction.

Values are expressed in describing tender, perfectly-cooked veal, a classic crème brûlée, and a soup of symphonic flavours. This reflects the criteria that are highly valued in the culinary field and also implies that the guest's knowledge is greatly valued. To be a food connoisseur is a taste value and a criterion in itself.

# Fine Cheese and the Consumption of ‘Tradition’ in Quebec

*Manon Boulianne*

## Introduction

‘Fine cheese’ production and consumption have increased considerably in Quebec in the course of the last fifteen years. In the province of Quebec, the expression ‘fine cheese’ refers to products that are distinguishable from processed cheese, and also from curds, and from fresh cheeses such as *bocconcini*, cottage cheese, feta, ricotta, cheddar, and mozzarella. Mature cheddar and fresh goat’s cheese are both regarded as fine cheese. More than three hundred varieties of fine cheese are produced in Quebec today, in one hundred factories located throughout the province. Eighty-five of these factories are owned by small artisan cheese makers. But their overall share of the cheese market is very small compared to that of four large corporations (Saputo, Agropur, Damafro and Parmalat) who control ninety per cent of sales.

Although a recent development, fine cheese making has rapidly become emblematic of *terroir* products in Quebec, a phenomenon which the anthropologists Paxson and Trubek<sup>1</sup> have also observed in the case of the United States. Cheese makers transform raw and pasteurised cow’s milk, sheep’s milk, and goat’s milk into fresh or ripened soft, semi-soft or hard curd cheeses, presenting natural, bloomy, washed or wax-coated rinds. Quebec’s new kinds of cheese have become famous not only in the province of Quebec but throughout Canada, the United States, and in many other parts of the world. In 2009, *Le Cendrillon*, a vegetable ash-covered, soft goat cheese, produced by La Maison Alexis de Portneuf,<sup>2</sup> a facility owned by the multinational corporation Saputo Dairy Products Canada, was adjudged to be the world’s best cheese at the World Cheese Awards held in the Canary Islands.

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1 Paxson, H., ‘Locating Value in Artisan Cheese: Reverse Engineering *Terroir* for New-World Landscapes’, *American Anthropologist* 112, 3 (2010): 444-57; Trubek, A., *The Taste of Place. A Cultural Journey into Terroir*, Berkeley, CA, 2008.

2 Portneuf is the regional county municipality where the facility is located.

Wherever they appear, at the farm, in factory boutiques, deli shops, supermarkets, or in gourmet trails and tourist guides, ‘fine cheeses’ made in Quebec are identified as being a traditional and a typical national food.<sup>3</sup> Such a statement would be a truism in European countries where some types of cheese have been in existence for centuries, but in Quebec, where most of the locally-produced fine cheeses have only been in existence for a decade or so, it raises a whole range of questions. How can these newly-invented cheeses ever be considered to be traditional foods? What makes them typical anyhow? If we assume that invented traditions<sup>4</sup> are social constructs, then how, why, and by whom, have Quebec’s fine cheeses been constructed as traditional food? In this paper, after a brief description of the contemporary Quebec cheesescape, I shall explain how production has evolved over time. I shall then examine how tradition has become a factor in State funding dedicated to the development of rural areas since the 1990s. I shall also comment on consumers’ representations of fine cheese and reflect on the place afforded to tradition in the marketing of today’s fine cheeses. Relations between tradition, rural regions, *terroir* and artisanship, are commented on throughout the discussion.

## Cheese Production in Quebec: An Historical Overview

Cheese was not part of the diet of Quebec’s aboriginal people. French colonists who moved to New France at the beginning of the seventeenth century brought some cows with them and soon started to make farmstead cheese according to recipes brought by them from the homeland.<sup>5</sup> During the existence of the French colony (1608-1763), cheese making offered a way of preserving milk over time and it was a task performed by women. It took place in domestic space,<sup>6</sup> as was also the case in New England, America.<sup>7</sup> Cheese making then constituted a form of small-scale commodity production as cheese was not produced as a market product, as such, but rather what was surplus to family needs was traded among neighbours or in local markets. Commercial butter and cheese factories first appeared in 1865, in the Eastern

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3 Quebec, one of the ten provinces of Canada, is not a sovereign national state. It has a French and a British cultural heritage, but French is its only official language. Quebec is considered to be a ‘distinct society’ by the Federal Government and a nation by separatists and nationalists within the province.

4 Hobsbawm, E., Ranger, T. O., (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge 1983.

5 Barratt, R. F. ‘Industrie laitière’, *L’encyclopédie canadienne*, online, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=f1ARTf0002107>; accessed 26. 9. 2007.

6 Aubé, C. B., *Chronologie du développement alimentaire au Québec*, Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, 1996.

7 Marx, J.A., “‘The days had come of Curds and Cream’”. The Origins and Development of Cream Cheese in America, 1870-1880’, *Food, Culture & Society* 15, 2 (2012): 177-95.

Townships region, among Loyalists families<sup>8</sup> who had become established there during the Independence War between the United States and the British Empire.<sup>9</sup>

From 1865 onwards, cheddar gradually became the major and quasi-exclusive type of cheese produced in Quebec. The cheese factories received fresh milk from local farmers and transformed it into hard curd and round cheddar cheeses. Mature cheddar was shipped overseas to Great Britain as French Canadians ate this kind of cheese in its fresh form. The very year that the first cheese factory opened, the United States government put an end to the Reciprocity Treaty that had, since 1854, promoted free trade between the US and Canada. As a result, the Quebec dairy farmers moved overwhelmingly to cheese making in order to absorb the huge volumes of milk that could no longer be exported to the south. In addition, the imposition of internal US custom tariffs on Canadian milk products rendered the Quebec farmers unable to favourably compete with western United States farmers. As a consequence, the number of cheese factories in Quebec grew rapidly during the third quarter of the nineteenth century, reaching a peak of 1,300 in 1897. At that time, cheese consumption among Quebec's population was low – less than three pounds *per capita* annually, as 'People considered it a luxury article rather than a healthy and nutritious food'.<sup>10</sup> This is to be compared to an annual consumption of almost fifteen pounds *per capita* in 2005.

From the beginning of the twentieth century, the number of butter and cheese factories went into ongoing decline due to the implementation of State sanitary regulations. This resulted in the gradual restriction of production, and to the collapse of exports to Great Britain which favoured cheese produced in Ontario and New Zealand – which were (apparently) of a better quality.<sup>11</sup> It was only during the Second World War that exports to Europe grew significantly once more. In fact, during that period, all of the cheese produced in Canada was shipped to England, where domestic production was in a state of ruin. However, by 1985, some twenty-five years ago, there were only eight cheese factories left in Quebec.<sup>12</sup>

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8 'The term "Loyalists" refers to American colonists who remained loyal to the British Crown. Many of them served under the British during the American Revolution (1775-1783). Loyalists settled in what are now the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Quebec and Ontario.' See <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/022/022-909.003-e.html>; accessed 17. 1. 2012.

9 Ferland, C., 'Fromages du Québec', *Encyclopédie du patrimoine culturel de l'Amérique française*. See [http://www.ameriquefrancaise.org/fr/article-640/Fromages\\_du\\_Qu%C3%A9bec.html#6](http://www.ameriquefrancaise.org/fr/article-640/Fromages_du_Qu%C3%A9bec.html#6); accessed 9. 8. 2012.

10 Côté, D., *De la colonisation à la mondialisation: Histoire de l'agriculture au Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean 1838-2005*, Saguenay 2005, 62.

11 Dupré, R., 'Regulating the Quebec Dairy Industry, 1905-1921: Peeling off the Joseph Label', *The Journal of Economic History* 50, 2 (1990): 339-48.

12 Fournier, L., *La production du fromage cheddar au Québec: de l'artisanat à l'industrie, 1865-1990*. PhD Thesis, Faculté des lettres, Université Laval, Québec 1994, 18.

Apart from two exceptions, Quebec's cheesescape was, for decades, almost barren as far as fine cheese was concerned. In 1893, monks from the Trappist Cistercian monastery of Oka, north of Montreal, Quebec, started producing and selling a semi-hard curd and washed-rind cheese. This was similar to the cheese made in the Abbey Notre Dame du Port-du-Salut, located in Entrammes, France, from where one of their recruits had moved to the monastery of Oka. The Benedictine monks from the Abbey of St-Benoît-du-Lac, Montreal, had been producing a famous blue cheese, called *l'Ermite*, since 1943.

Starting in the 1970s, the importation of cheese from Europe contributed to the 'education' of Quebecois' taste in relation to cheese as it did elsewhere in North America.<sup>13</sup> In the 1980s, the conditions that would lead to an explosion of fine cheese making that would take place a decade later, were created. Some newly-settled immigrants of French, Belgian and Swiss origin started to replicate cheeses typical of the homeland. For example, the Lehmann family, originally from the Jura region of Switzerland, moved to the small town of Hébertville, in the St-John's Lake region, at the beginning of the 1980s, and started making farmstead cheeses.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, Quebec-born, cheese-makers-to-be, visited European producers and hired European consultants in order to learn their cheese-making techniques. The cheeses that resulted from these initiatives were no mere copies of the European originals, but rather the result of a different *terroir* and innovative recipes. The making of fine cheese kept developing in a global context that contributed to the turning of national and local food, and the conservation, 'patrimonialisation' and promotion of foodways, into a political issue and a target for State intervention.

## Rural Development Policies and Tradition from the 1990s

In 1966, the Office of Planning for Eastern Quebec,<sup>15</sup> which had been created three years before by the government of liberal Prime Minister Jean Lesage, conducted a planning exercise which ultimately led to the disappearance of ten rural communities and brought forth a movement of resistance among rural residents of the Lower Saint-Lawrence and Gaspésie regions.<sup>16</sup> Created in the aftermath of these events, the

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13 Macdonald, K. I., 'Mondo Formaggio: Windows on the Circulation of Cheese in the World', Unpublished Paper, Amherst College, Amherst, Mass., 19-20 October 2007.

14 Labrie, I., 'Fromagerie Lehmann: Après la tempête, enfin la récompense!', *Le Quotidien* 2. 5. 2009. See, <http://www.cyberpresse.ca/le-quotidien/personnalite-du-mois/200905/01/01-852429-fromagerie-lehman-apres-la-tempete-enfin-la-recompense.php>; accessed 27. 12. 2011.

15 Bureau d'aménagement de l'est du Québec (BAEQ), in French.

16 Isolated villages which had been relying on subsistence agriculture, or on a single extraction industry such as mining or forestry, were then suffering from high under-employment and unemployment rates, and migration to the main urban centres was frequent among young people, causing a critical decrease in local demography. Maintaining public and private infrastructures and services became problematic and

organisation called *Solidarité Rurale du Québec* promoted the idea, in the 1990s, that rural settlements had the potential to sustain themselves if only they could manage to diversify their economic activities from within. For *Solidarité Rurale*, a good way to attain this goal was to create incentives for the development of local food production. In addition, it urged the government to establish a national regulatory system and designations of origin for Quebec's *terroir* products, a notion which, until then, had not been used in Quebec.

In 1998, under a *Parti Québécois* government led by separatist Prime Minister Bernard Landry, and under the influence of the *Solidarité Rurale* lobby, the Ministry of Agriculture launched a funding programme for the development of *terroir* products.<sup>17</sup> In 2001, this programme was incorporated into the First National Rural Policy (2001-2006). The programme did not recommend the creation of designations of origin for existing foodstuffs, as one might have expected. Instead, and paradoxically, the Office of Regional Development and Rural Innovation from the Ministry of Economic and Regional Development and Research, which was in charge, offered funding to individuals and companies who were prepared to innovate and create *new* but *authentic* commodities with a specific identity that 'differentiates [them] from any other similar product[s]'<sup>18</sup> (emphasis added). These commodities should also incorporate local natural resources as well as 'traditional' knowledge and '*savoir-faire*'.

But how would tradition be objectified in a new product? Anticipating (I suppose) this kind of problem, the authors of the programme specified that in order to revitalise tradition, selected projects should 'have roots in the history of the territory where they were presented'. Tradition, then, did not have to be found in the process of production of newly-created foods, such as fine cheeses, as, apparently, a relationship between product and regional history would do. During the following years, some of the new or existing cheese facilities benefitted from this type of public financial support. More generally, however, since rural revitalisation continued to be a significant issue in the province, fine cheese projects could receive loans, grants or tax credits, from different State programmes, or from Quebec's Cheese Society,<sup>19</sup> in order to expand their facilities, purchase equipment, undergo training, or hire labour.

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the BAEQ recommended, among other things, that people be relocated and that villages which were less likely to redevelop in the future should be closed down.

17 The programme was titled 'Mesure de soutien au développement des produits du terroir'.

18 Cimon-Morin, V., *Rapport d'évaluation de la mesure Soutien au développement des produits du terroir. Version finale*. Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère du développement économique et régional et de la recherche 2004, 3.

19 Cheese makers, distributors, retailers, restaurant owners, and other institutional actors related to the food industry, set up the *Société des fromages du Québec* ('Quebec's Cheese Society'), a non-profit organisation, in 2002, in order to promote fine cheese production and consumption throughout the province.



In 2006, a new provincial regulation for Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) was adopted as a replacement for the 1996 law (which had, by then, only led to the creation of organic labels), with the intention of valuing, in a globalised food economy, differentiated, niche, and *terroir* products. However, neither artisan nor industrial fine-cheese producers – who were already accustomed to giving evocative names to their cheeses, which were attractively packaged in boxes or in paper wrappings, with applied labels depicting characters, places, or significant events from the local past – were, at that time, interested in the creation of protected designations for their cheeses.<sup>20</sup>

Tradition was soon to lose the privileged place it had occupied in the first National Rural Policy. In the second version of the Policy, launched in 2007, *terroir* and tradition, which both had formed an unlikely pairing alongside innovation, disappeared altogether, and were replaced by the expression ‘specialty products’. Henceforth, all innovations pertaining to ‘cultural, artisan and patrimonial’ products, together with food and forest products, could benefit from the Policy, which was clearly identified by its proponents as a ‘response to the globalization of markets’.<sup>21</sup> Innovation, differentiation and re-localisation, or place-based production and consumption, formed the core of the new paradigm, yet, still, today, tradition remains at the heart of fine cheese identity and promotion.

## Tradition as a Marketing Tool

Remarks of several participants in focus groups about cheese consumption held in 2010<sup>22</sup> revealed that marketing tools – such as cheese names and images that refer to local places, events or characters, black and white photos displayed on the walls of factory and farm boutiques or on website pages, in addition to commercials in which artisanship is proclaimed and fine cheese consumption is presented as a tradition in Quebec and, more generally, romantic store displays – become quality signs which the

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20 Four categories of protected designations were created by the new law: 1) A designation related to production methods (like the organic designation); 2) Protected Geographical Indication (PGI); 3) Protected Designation of Origin (PDO); 4) Designation of Specificity. To this day, the only designation enforced in Quebec is that of the Charlevoix lamb (PGI), although some new designations are under study. For example, a Designation of Specificity could soon be granted to the Canadienne Breed Cow’s Milk Cheese (CARTV, Conseil des appellations réservées et des termes valorisants, <http://cartv.gouv.qc.ca>; accessed 14. 1. 2013).

21 MAMR (Ministère des affaires municipales et des régions), Gouvernement du Québec, Entente de partenariat rural – Politique nationale de la ruralité 2007-2014. See, [http://www.mamr.gouv.qc.ca/regions/regi\\_rura\\_poli.asp](http://www.mamr.gouv.qc.ca/regions/regi_rura_poli.asp); accessed 24. 10. 2007.

22 Thanks to a SSHRC-CRSH grant (2007-2010), the ‘social production and construction’ of fine cheese in Quebec could be investigated from a commodity chain perspective.

participants themselves associate with locally-produced and artisan fine cheese.<sup>23</sup> Tradition is never far from artisanship in the minds of today's public, which craves authenticity.<sup>24</sup> Narratives found on cheese labels or on the bottom of wrapping boxes are also suggestive of the past, the rural, traditions, artisanship or authenticity, and several of these elements are often evoked at the same time. This is the case even for fine cheese produced in large plants, as exemplified in the following verses found on La Maison Alexis de Portneuf cheese boxes:

My soul belongs to Portneuf, yet my heart belongs to cheese. Seeking inspiration from the *countryside* around me, I lovingly *craft* shapes and mosaics of flavours. My gourmet cheeses embody temptation and the charm of *days gone by* (emphasis added).

As already mentioned, this plant belongs to the conglomerate Saputo, the turnover of which enables it to be ranked among the twenty most important dairy corporations in the world.<sup>25</sup> Saputo owns eight factories in Quebec, which, together, produce fifty-six different varieties of cheese.

Agropur, a gigantic co-operative which owns twenty-seven factories in Canada, the United States and Argentina, prints the following message on its fine cheese packages:

The *authentic* fine cheese you are holding is the pride of the 4,000 dairy farmers of Agropur, the largest cooperative in the country. Our long-standing *traditions* and values make us passionate about what we do best: *crafting* the very finest dairy products for you and your family (emphasis added).

Other actors from the cheese industry also use tradition, as well as artisanship, authenticity, or romantic images of the rural past, as marketing tools for fine cheeses. This is the case with Quebec's Federation of Milk Producers, a powerful organisation which represents seven thousand dairy farmers and promotes the products of its members. This is also the case with tourist associations, as well as with supermarkets chains such as IGA/Sobeys which has added artisan cheese to its food offering since 2010, in the aftermath of a listeria outbreak which temporarily slowed down Quebec's fine cheese industry. In all of these cases, narratives and images used in the promotion

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23 For more details about these représentations see, Boulianne, Manon, 'Artisans du pays et imaginaires fromagers. La qualification des fromages fins du Québec comme produits de terroir', *Anthropologie et Sociétés* 37, 2 (2013): 213-31.

24 Pratt, J., 'Food Values: The Local and the Authentic', *Critique of Anthropology* 27, 3 (2007): 285-300.

25 CCIF (Centre canadien d'information laitière), 'Les 20 principaux transformateurs à l'échelle mondiale - 2010', Ottawa. See, [http://www.infolait.gc.ca/index\\_f.php?s1=dff-fcil&s2=proc-trans&s3=glo20&page=list](http://www.infolait.gc.ca/index_f.php?s1=dff-fcil&s2=proc-trans&s3=glo20&page=list); accessed 28. 12. 2011.

of fine cheese rely heavily on the idea of tradition and/or associated concepts. IGA's first brochure, published with reference to the new artisan cheese line which it inaugurated in 2010, will serve as an example. It stated:

With great pride, your IGA storekeeper invites you to discover eleven new artisan cheeses exclusive to IGA. *Crafted* by artisans of *our regions* with good milk from here, they have the *authentic* and incomparable taste of Quebec's *terroir*... Get your fill of the well-known passion, *savoir-faire* and authenticity of Quebecois artisan cheese makers who hide behind these delicious cheeses (emphasis added).

This time, although tradition is not mentioned directly, artisan work, authenticity, locality and *terroir* are mobilised in order to convey the idea of tradition, which is set against standardised, delocalised and anonymous food produced for contemporary mass markets,<sup>26</sup> but not against innovation.

Farmstead cheese makers, in particular, appear to embody the 'new peasantry' as described by Jan Douwe van der Ploeg. According to him, this new peasantry, which defends tradition as defined above, consists of small farmers, who are characterised by a specific work ethic and a desire to maintain autonomy from the market, and who wish to develop a self-controlled resource-base, which implies the creation 'of as much value added as possible'<sup>27</sup> through their productive activities. Typically, these cheese makers will take charge of the entire process of production, from milking their own animals to controlling the ageing of cheeses. They will also take charge of the distribution of their products, which they sell, for the most part, directly to consumers, in farmers' markets and in CSA schemes, or to small retailers who, in turn, unambiguously give preference to artisan and québécois cheese over industrial and imported ones. During interviews conducted with artisan cheese makers, it was made clear that they wished to connect directly with consumers, so that the latter could learn about, appreciate, and value, their authentic artisanal work on the farm and as fine cheese producers.

## Concluding Remarks

Because it is the result of tradition and innovation, of old rural economies and contemporary diversified landscapes, Quebec's fine cheese embodies the old and the

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26 Pratt, *op. cit.*,

27 Van der Ploeg, J.D., *The New Peasantries. Struggles for Autonomy and Sustainability in an Era of Empire and Globalization*, London 2008, 42.

new world, local ways and global tastes, the past, the present and an uncertain future for a national minority which displays a 'rooted cosmopolitanism'.<sup>28</sup>

Quebec's citizens are very proud of their cheeses, which they compare to the French ones. When they enjoy a piece of fine cheese with a baguette and wine (foods also associated with France), along with the feeling of supporting the local economy and of enjoying a special food, they also, in a certain way, connect themselves to the French origins of Quebec, to an internationally-celebrated cuisine, and to rural ways of life that preceded the industrialisation of all trades from the nineteenth century, and the globalisation of the food economy in the twentieth century.

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28 Appiah, K.A., 'Cosmopolitan Patriots', in Cheah, P., Robbins, B., (eds.), *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation*, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1998, 91-114.

# The Importance of Being Traditional: Local Food between Commercialisation and Symbolic Construction

*Sonja Böder*

Gwendolen: ‘... and my ideal has always been to love some one of the name of Ernest. There is something in that name that inspires absolute confidence’.

Cecily: ‘You must not laugh at me, darling, but it had always been a girlish dream of mine to love some one whose name was Ernest. There is something in that name that seems to inspire absolute confidence’.<sup>1</sup>

In Oscar Wilde’s comedy ‘The Importance of Being Earnest’ both female lead characters are determined to marry a man named Ernest because the name inspires, or seems to inspire, trust. They are convinced that a man with that name must make a good husband. Without going into more detail concerning the content or the interpretation of the play, there is – in my opinion – a parallel between the two determined women and modern food marketing. Gwendolen and Cecily deduce the character and reliability of potential husbands from their name. Equally, consumers attempt to deduce content and quality from the description and labelling of food products. Therefore, food manufacturers bestow much attention on the external appearance and the marketing of their products.

## Trust Through Tradition?

Brand names and the design of food products are the result of careful consideration and targeted market research. They are supposed to inspire trust in a product, ‘because it is

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<sup>1</sup> Wilde, O., *The Importance of Being Earnest, A Trivial Comedy for Serious People*, London 1915, 12, 37. The play was first performed on 14 February 1895.

assumed that consumer trust is a key requirement for the purchase of brand products and thus a key requirement for the success of a brand'.<sup>2</sup> This concept is tied into an understanding of trust centred on reliability and security.

It appears that the label 'traditional' is particularly suitable for the conveying of trust in a product. The customer is aware of what he is buying, because 'the object and characteristic of "traditions", including invented ones, is invariance'.<sup>3</sup> The same is applied to new or newly-introduced food products, where the food manufacturers attempt to benefit from this advanced trust and market advantage. Thus, for these products, an impression which seems to indicate that they are based on traditional recipes or manufactured according to a traditional technique, is created. Therefore, marketing strategies for these products utilise a specific form of presentation and terminology. These include, for example, historicised packaging, with chequered covers which are intended to remind one of home or of hand-made products, as well as advertising slogans such as 'made in grandmother's kitchen' or 'just like mother serves them' ('nach Hausfrauenart').<sup>4</sup> The marketing of food products with an 'authentic' tradition, often features a reference to the age of the manufacturing company or to the point in time from when the respective product has been produced.

In this article I shall focus on three examples of traditional Westphalian<sup>5</sup> products that are affected, in different ways, by this marketing strategy: Westphalian ham, Pumpernickel, and Töttchen. By means of these three examples I wish to depict the role which traditional food-products play within the region's nutrition and how these products are staged and commercialised. This article is based on the findings of the research- and documentation-project, 'How Westphalian do Westphalians Eat? Local Food and Nutrition', conducted from 2007 to 2009 at the Folklore Commission for Westphalia, Münster, Germany.<sup>6</sup>

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2 Free translation of a quotation from Burmann, Chr., Meffert, H., 'Theoretisches Grundkonzept der identitätsorientierten Markenführung', in Burmann, Chr, Koers, M., (eds.), *Markenmanagement. Identitätsorientierte Markenführung und praktische Umsetzung*, 2nd revised and extended edition, Wiesbaden 2005, 42ff.

3 Hobsbawm, E., Ranger, T.O., (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge 1993, 2. Reprint; first published in 1983.

4 Cf. Tschofen, B., 'Wie hausgemacht... Die Dialektik industrialisierter Nahrungsgewohnheiten und das Wissen der Europäischen Ethnologien', in Lysaght, P., (ed.), *Changing Tastes. Food Culture and the Processes of Industrialization*. Proceedings of the 14th Conference of the International Commission for Ethnological Food Research, Basel and Vevey, Switzerland, 30 September – 6 October, 2002, Basel and Dublin 2004, 135-52.

5 Westphalia is the north-eastern part of the German Federal State North Rhine-Westphalia.

6 Böder, S., 'Cultural Crossroads at the Dining Table: Regional Food as Signpost?', in Lysaght, P., (ed.), *Food and Meals at Cultural Crossroads*. Proceedings of the 17th Conference of the International Commission for Ethnological Food Research, Oslo, Norway, September 15-19, 2008, Oslo 2010, 46-55.

Fig. 1: Random samples of 'tradition'-centred product-marketing. Source: [www.schwartau-handel.de](http://www.schwartau-handel.de).



## Traditional Westphalian Food – Three Examples

### Ham

Westphalian ham is a kind of raw ham with a spicy flavour. Its special taste is due to the fact that the long bone remains inside the ham throughout the entire production process. First of all, the ham, including the bones, is dry-salted manually for several weeks. Subsequently, it is cold-smoked over beech wood for three to five months until a dark red colour is achieved. Finally, before the bone is removed, the ham matures for several months. The entire production process lasts from six to eighteen months, with the latter extent giving the highest quality ham product.

### Pumpernickel

Pumpernickel is a bread consisting of grist and whole rye grains. The whole grains are soaked in hot water for several hours. This is necessary in order to prepare the dense

grains for the baking process. The dough is baked for a short time in closed baking tins at 200 °C. Thereafter, the dough is more steamed than baked, as the temperature is gradually lowered to about 100 °C over a period of between sixteen to twenty-four hours. Due to the high density of the bread and the corresponding slow cooking process required, a long baking time is necessary.

## Töttchen

Töttchen is a delicacy from the Münsterland, a region in north-western Westphalia. Originally it was prepared from various parts of pigs, cows or calves, which were not processed into sausages or ham after slaughter. These parts consisted, for example, of the head, including the brain and tongue, or of the giblets such as lungs and hearts, of the slaughtered animals. These ingredients – to which onions and vinegar were added – were cooked into a sweet and sour ragout. Nowadays, many restaurants offer Töttchen in a modified version – instead of giblets, it is veal and veal tongue which are predominantly used.

## Tradition between Continuity and Change

All three delicacies – Westphalian ham, Pumpernickel, and Töttchen – look back to traditions of varying ages. They are staged in different ways by both food producers and regional marketing strategies. In the case of Töttchen, the focus lies on the close regional reference to the Münsterland. Publications mentioning the Münsterland only vaguely refer to the age of this food. They concentrate more on the ambivalent appreciation of Töttchen and on its history as poor people's food. Evidence for Töttchen is found in collections of recipes and menus starting in the nineteenth century. Various sources describe how Töttchen was often eaten by men on Sundays, in connection with the morning pint of beer in a tavern after attending church service, as well as at fairs or at town festivals.

In the case of both Westphalian ham and Pumpernickel, their old associated traditions are emphasised, as a way of upholding the long-established image of Westphalia as 'the land of Pumpernickel and ham'. Mention of Westphalian ham was already made in the High Middle Ages. It was a high-class product which was traded nationally. As proof of the general esteem in which it was held, the following historical event is readily mentioned even today. In the fifteenth century, when the Westphalian city of Dortmund wanted to make a special present to the Emperor Sigismund, a dozen hams were chosen.<sup>7</sup> Apparently, Westphalian ham was a much-appreciated present, as evidenced by yet another source, this time from the beginning of the sixteenth century.

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7 Cf. Hebermann, C., *Zu Tisch in Westfalen*, Duisburg 1964, 8.



In 1510, approximately 13.7 hectolitres of beer and three hundredweight of Westphalian ham, were sent by the city of Cologne to the Emperor Maximilian in order to win his favour.<sup>8</sup>

By contrast, Pumpernickel, at the time of its appearance in literature, was rather more infamous than famous. Travelogues of foreign visitors from the sixteenth century are among the earliest sources which refer to Pumpernickel. Until the early nineteenth century, the many descriptions of Westphalian dishes and beverages found in these travelogues are definitely pejorative in character.<sup>9</sup>

This also becomes evident by taking a look at the comments of Justus Lipsius (1547-1606), one of the most important scholars of that time. In a letter to a friend, he mentions with dismay the horrible eating habits he experienced in northern Westphalia in the year 1586. He observed that the bread was hardly recognisable as such as it was black, sour and hefty. Large lumps of dough, almost five feet in length, which could barely be lifted by an ordinary man, were baked. He concludes his description with a quote from Pliny the Elder, who stated concerning some Germanic tribe: 'Pathetic is the tribe that devastates its earth'; Lipsius converts this quote into: 'Pathetic are the people who eat their own earth.'<sup>10</sup>

One hundred years later, it was the pontifical ambassador at the peace conference at the end of the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) who commented on Pumpernickel in a similarly negative fashion. Fabio Chigi, who later becomes Pope Alexander VII, stated that Pumpernickel was a dish which was not regarded as edible food even for farmers but only for the poorest of the people.<sup>11</sup>

Voltaire also travelled through Westphalia, and his description of Pumpernickel is usually included in any publication regarding regional cuisine. In a letter to Madame Denis, describing his journey made in 1750 to the Prussian court, he states: 'Soon after, I passed through the vast and gloomy and barren and repulsive Westphalian area [...]. A certain, black and sticky stone, consisting, as they say, of rye, is the food of the hosts'.<sup>12</sup>

Travelogues, taunting verses, and pamphlets, shaped and solidified the widespread heterostereotypes of the rural, raw and backward Westphalia, where, according to the accounts, the travellers found terrible dishes in guesthouses and met simple-minded folk. The authors applied their criticisms especially to the culinary elements of the (non)

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8 Historical Archive of the City of Cologne, (RK) Mittwochs-Rentkammer, bill 98, sheet 366 und 366v.

9 Böder, S., 'Westfälische Kulinarik in Reiseberichten und touristischer Vermarktung', in Moser, J., Seidl, D., (eds.), *Dinge auf Reisen. Materielle Kultur und Tourismus*, Münster 2009, 153-65.

10 Quoted from Gentner, C., *Pumpernickel. Das schwarze Brot der Westfalen*, Detmold 1991, 44.

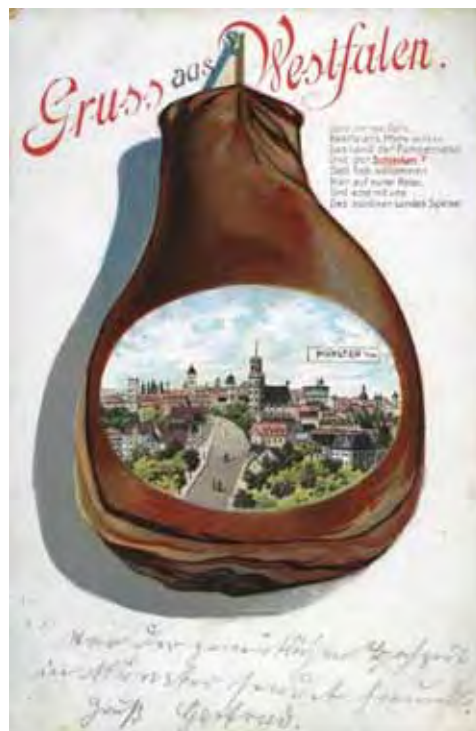
11 *Ibid.*, 50.

12 Free translation of a quotation from Voltaire, 'Voyage à Berlin', in de la Beaumarchais, P., (ed.), *Oeuvres Complètes de Voltaire*, vol. XII, Kehl 1785, 243-50.

culture, stating that while the ham was held in some regard, the Pumpernickel, in particular, symbolised, time and again, the region that was widely dubbed as being ‘barbaric’.<sup>13</sup>

Starting with this negative image, commercialisation of the region as a tourist destination, which is still ongoing today, was hardly realisable. But how was it that this negative portrayal of Westphalia changed? Commencing with the seventeenth century, but especially in the eighteenth century, Westphalian writers turned vehemently against the criticism, the mockery, and the humiliation, which had been heaped on Westphalia and on its food habits over the previous century. The debates, which were partly carried out in a very abrasive tone between the opponents and the advocates of Westphalian delicacies, were discontinued in the nineteenth century because during the romantic period everything rural appeared to represent a world that was seemingly unaffected by change over time.

Fig. 2: From heterostereotype to autostereotype: an early-twentieth century postcard from Münster citing the image of Westphalia as the ‘Land of Pumpernickel and Ham’. Source: Collection Tertünte, Folklore Commission for Westphalia/LWL.



13 Gentner, *op. cit.*, 48.

In the nineteenth century, the educated classes especially searched for ‘an intact world represented by the rural folk culture to counter industrial modernity with its urbanisation processes’.<sup>14</sup> In this sense, Westphalian ham and Pumpernickel were stylised by authors to represent the epitome of country and identity. Thus favoured by national enthusiasm, the change from a negative hetero- to a positive auto-stereotype had occurred by the end of the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup> Until this day, these, and other historical sources mentioning Westphalian food habits, are consistently cited in touristic publications and regional cuisine books. As indicated above, there are more negative than positive references to the Westphalian specialties in early sources, but this fact is either kept quiet or – more commonly – is referred to in a playful or light-hearted way.

## Traditional Food in Daily Nutrition

Today, Westphalian ham and Pumpernickel are known nationwide and they can also be purchased outside of Westphalia, while Töttchen, in contrast, is much more limited to the Münsterland. Apart from that, it can be obtained, at the most, as tinned food, in delicatessen shops or via the Internet. Outsiders usually only become acquainted with it while visiting the Münsterland. Therefore, Töttchen is perceived as being an explicitly regional food tradition.

Besides these three specialties discussed above, there is a number of foods that are considered to be typically Westphalian. As commonly understood, ‘typical food’ does not necessarily mean ‘traditional food’. Instead, food that is eaten frequently is generally regarded as being ‘typical food’: As part of the project, ‘How Westphalian do Westphalians Eat? Local Food and Nutrition’, a questionnaire was compiled and distributed among a variety of correspondents. Additionally, it was possible to complete the questionnaire online. At the beginning of the questionnaire the correspondents were asked which dishes and beverages they would term traditional, regional food. Overall, a vast number of different foods and dishes were mentioned in the 1500 questionnaire responses.

Ranked first was the potato. Although it does actually play an important role in Westphalian cuisine, the potato is not a distinctive element of that cuisine. Beer, mentioned in 556 responses, was in second place, followed by green cabbage in third place with 507 responses. Indeed, these latter examples are inherent elements of Westphalian nutrition, but this applies to many other regions of Germany, as well as to many regions worldwide also. In contrast, the next two items which were mentioned in the questionnaire responses – Pumpernickel (466 responses) and Westphalian ham

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14 Moser, J., ‘Urbane Volkskultur und populäre Musik in München’, in Moser, J., Becher, E., (eds.), *München-Sound. Urbane Volkskultur und populäre Musik*, München 2011, 8.

15 Krug-Richter, B., ‘Das Land der Pumpernickel und der Schinken? Regionale westfälische Küche zwischen Stereotyp und Realität’, *Westfälische Forschungen* 45 (1995): 257.

(386 responses) – are, indeed, traditional Westphalian products. On the other hand, Töttchen, as a traditional Westphalian food, was mentioned only 173 times.

The questionnaire correspondents were also asked to indicate the traditional food and dishes which they normally ate. Here, 145 mentioned Pumpernickel, 116 mentioned ham, and 20 mentioned Töttchen. This result is consistent with the findings of ethnological food research from other regions in Germany, since, according to Konrad Köstlin: ‘[...] in so far as food which is labelled as typical is hardly eaten as much as one would expect according to their iconic significance’.<sup>16</sup> The question thus arises as to the way in which the label ‘traditional’ is influencing the consumption and the commercialisation of food products in Westphalia.

## The Commercialisation of the ‘Culinary Legacy’ of the Region

Today, Westphalian ham, Pumpernickel, and Töttchen, are staged as the ‘culinary legacy’ of the region, both by the manufacturers of these products and as part of touristic marketing strategies for Westphalia. As a part of the ongoing ‘heritage-boom’, especially the economic and socio-cultural effects of the justification and legitimisation processes, are already in focus for the cultural sciences.<sup>17</sup>

At the beginning of the 1990s, the Council of the European Union, for the first time, enacted policies for ‘the Protection of Geographical Indications and Designations of Origin for Agricultural Products and Foodstuffs’.<sup>18</sup> The EU distinguishes three certification levels: PDO (Protected Designation of Origin), PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) und TSG (Traditional Speciality Guaranteed). The verification of regional delicacies as protection-worthy cultural possessions stands for evident market advantages and, is, therefore, the goal of many food manufacturers. The selection criteria for the allocation of quality labels through the European Union, primarily relate to geographical aspects. As a reaction to this, food manufacturers use agricultural references as a quality feature in the marketing of their products.<sup>19</sup> In this process, traditions are not necessarily always found but rather sometimes invented. Therefore, the authentication process can be understood as both testimony of authenticity and the production of authenticity.<sup>20</sup>

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16 Free translation of a quote from Köstlin, K., ‘Die Industrialisierung der Tradition’, in Lysaght (ed.), *op. cit.*, 126.

17 Cf. Hemme, D., Tauschek, M., Bendix, R., (eds.), *Prädikat ‘Heritage’. Wertschöpfungen aus kulturellen Ressourcen*, Berlin 2007.

18 Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2081/92 of 14 July 1992.

19 Haufe, St. G., ‘Die Standardisierung von Natürlichkeit und Herkunft’, in Bauer, S., *et al.*, (eds.), *Essen in Europa. Kulturelle ‘Rückstände’ in Nahrung und Körper*, Bielefeld 2010, 65-88.

20 Ermann, U., *Regionalprodukte. Vernetzungen und Grenzziehungen bei der Regionalisierung von Nahrungsmitteln*, Stuttgart 2005, 79.

Westphalian manufacturers refer to the efficacy of the official seal of quality as well. In February 2011, the ‘Schutzgemeinschaft Westfälische Schinken- und Wurstspezialitäten e.V.’ (‘Association for the Protection of Westphalian Sausage and Ham Specialties’) submitted an application to the European Union to register Westphalian ham as a product with Protected Geographical Indication. The chairman, master butcher Stefan Waltering, had the following to say about the community’s goals: ‘It can take up to 5 years to get the PGI. But we want to move forward right now. Therefore, we have declared Westphalia to be ‘Schinkenland Westfalen’ (‘Westphalia, the Land of Ham’). We have also developed a logo for our regional hand-made ham, made flyers, and have an Internet presence in order to establish the product’. He emphasises that it is not only important to merchandise the product but also the region behind it: ‘Tourism benefits from it too. Let us take Parma ham for example. Along with the product, the people also buy memories of their latest vacation. We want to follow this course’.<sup>21</sup> Eventually, the application was filed on 2 January 2011 and it is being currently processed.

In order to achieve the same for Pumpernickel, several smaller manufacturers have founded a protection community. Thomas Gill, a member of this group, states that the producers sought professional support: ‘During the application procedure we took advice from the North Rhine-Westphalian Ministry for Nature, Environment and Consumer Protection. If our application is granted, we want to use the EU-Logo to promote Westphalian Pumpernickel together’.<sup>22</sup>

There are currently no such intentions concerning Töttchen. It is not an internationally-known quality product that needs to be protected from plagiarism by an EU logo. Its symbolic construction is based on its close regional scope and its characteristic name. Therefore, since 2007, Töttchen is a ‘Leitgericht’ (symbolic trademark) of the campaign ‘Regional Menu: The Taste of the Münsterland’, which seeks to ‘rediscover the culinary identity of the region’.<sup>23</sup> The selection of this dish for this purpose was a matter of intense discussion, because, even though Töttchen is now prepared exclusively with high-quality meat, many people still associate it with its original form. Nowadays, giblets are not in compliance with conventional nutritional preferences, which is why Töttchen is rejected by many people. Finally, the key factor for the initiators of the campaign was that Töttchen presents a unique feature of the Münsterland, and that there is actually a high level of awareness concerning it in this region.

Westphalian ham, Pumpernickel, and Töttchen, play a vital role in the touristic as well as in the regional marketing of Westphalia. The marketing experts exploit the

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21 Landesamt für Natur, Umwelt und Verbraucherschutz NRW (ed.), *Genuss von Nordrhein bis Westfalen. Schutz für Lebensmittelspezialitäten*, Recklinghausen 2007, 11.

22 Ministerium für Klimaschutz, Umwelt, Landwirtschaft, Natur- und Verbraucherschutz des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen (ed.), *Ernährungswirtschaft in Nordrhein-Westfalen*, Düsseldorf 2011, 25.

23 Böder, *op. cit.*, 2010, 51.

fact that consumers are able to ‘incorporate’ the culture and history of a region by eating traditional dishes. Thus, there is hardly a city or region which does not offer at least one traditional delicacy. On the one hand, this offer is intended for tourists, who demonstrate their interest in a foreign culture. On the other hand, locals are enabled to easily construct and demonstrate local affiliation through these traditional products.

## Re-Contextualisation and Social Construction

The three Westphalian delicacies discussed in this article are examples of traditional food products that are successfully commercialised and marketed. Apparently, the designation of products as ‘traditional’ implies new attributions of meaning: ‘According to the EU-motto “unity in diversity”, concepts such as a sense of home, tradition-consciousness, and identity, are mobilised [...]; “local nutrition traditions” evolve to become valuable and particularly sensitive resources within an Europeanised, respectively, a globalised world’.<sup>24</sup> Products labelled ‘traditional’ gain a higher symbolic value than would otherwise be the case. A dense network of manufacturers, regional initiatives, public authorities, and marketing offices, which promote their real and media presence, has been formed around these examples. The multi-layered processes within this network lead to a concept ‘in which aesthetical, political and cognitive dimensions intertwine and create a history as a source of motivation and as a motor of identity processes.’<sup>25</sup>

But does the significance of tradition end with product and regional marketing? Beyond the commercial network of manufacturers, initiatives, and marketing offices, further relationships come into existence in the field of traditional food, such as, for example, between man and nature, man and history, as well as between the individual and society. Moreover, due to this re-contextualisation of traditional food products, connections to many other aspects of modern nutrition, such as, consumption criticism and health and region, arise. These represent a part, and an expression of, a modern lifestyle involving a more or less unspecific longing for rusticity, authenticity, and an emotional home.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, traditional food plays a crucial role when it comes to an external representation of one’s region and its ‘culinary heritage’. In a personal sphere, this expression of self may include serving regional specialities to foreign guests or eating

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24 Free translation of a quote from Beck, St., Scholze-Irrlitz, L., ‘Wie der Europäer is(s)t. Europäisierung durch Molekularisierung, Standardisierung und kreative Traditionalisierung von Nahrung und Ernährung’, in Bauer, S., *et al.*, (eds.), *Essen in Europa. Kulturelle ‘Rückstände’ in Nahrung und Körper*, Bielefeld 2010, 11.

25 Free translation of a quote from Tschöfen, B., ‘Antreten, ablehnen, verwalten? Was der Heritage-Boom den Kulturwissenschaften aufträgt’, in Hemme, *et al.*, (eds.), *op. cit.*, 20.

26 Free translation of a quote from Braun, A., ‘Lust aufs Land? Die mediale Inszenierung des Landlebens’, *Bayerisches Jahrbuch für Volkskunde* 2012, 13-27.

out in traditional restaurants. In a more public sphere, this applies also to meals related to traditional feasts, as well as to banquets at political or socio-cultural events. In contrast to such public occasions, traditional food, as part of everyday nutrition, is only one option among many others, as interviews and questionnaire responses point out. Westphalian ham and Pumpernickel benefit from the fact that they can be easily adapted to modern eating habits. This does not apply to Töttchen, especially when prepared traditionally. Instead, it prevails in custom, and as a means of distinction and as an element of regional advertising. The significance of tradition in the modern food scene consists of many facets. The food industry refers back to, and constructs, tradition, because the intangible symbolic significance also determines the importance of food.<sup>27</sup> Tradition conveys trust and quality and it is, in the end, a critical component of strategies concerning local rootedness in order to evoke an emotional bond with the home region. Regional food and traditional dishes serve as agents of distinction; they cause identity, and they represent an expression of a general yearning for authenticity and originality: 'The traditional maintains itself through a vast number of allocations, which are linked by people of the western world to their selectively mobilised past as well as with exoticism'.<sup>28</sup>

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27 Haufe, *op. cit.*, 68.

28 Free translation of a quote from Köstlin, *op. cit.*, 133.

# Cinnamon Bread: A Reinvented Tradition in a Rural Brazilian Village

*Rogéria Campos de Almeida Dutra*

Human beings do not obey a consistent dietary pattern but rather show a surprising degree of creativity in the act of nourishing themselves. Cookery does not respond exclusively to the biological needs of survival; it also has a cultural dimension as a privileged space in which nature is transformed by culture, as Lévi-Strauss would say.<sup>2</sup> Our refusal to eat certain kinds of foods – classified as ‘inedible’ – is not, generally-speaking, founded on physiology, but on a feeling of order, which involves the dimensions of ethics, aesthetics and diet, thus revealing culture as the originator of a criterion of palatability.<sup>3</sup> It is by means of the countless repetitions of stimuli that taste fixation is processed. Arising from habit, and as an object of memory, taste is built up by the unpredictable combination of what we classify as savory, sweet, sour, bitter, and spicy, flavours. Travellers who visited our country in Portuguese colonial times mentioned on several occasions the Brazilian people’s preference for the spicy flavour of pepper. In our Brazilian culture we observe how bitter and sour flavours are associated with something hard, bad, while a sweet flavour represents tenderness.

Accordingly, the study of food provision and consumption has a privileged space in cultural analysis, where food preferences can stand for distinctive and singular features of a country. These preferences vary among societies and also among particular social groups, and they can also differentiate internally with regard to these groups.

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1 This work is a result of the Research Project ‘Cinnamon Bread: Memory and Identity in the “Mantiqueira Mountain Range”’, financed by the Fundação de Amparo a Pesquisa de Minas Gerais (FAPEMIG), the financial support of which enabled this research to be carried out, and is gratefully acknowledged.

2 Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *L’Origine des Manières de Table*, Paris 1968.

3 Fischler, Claude, *L’Homnivore*, Paris 2001.



Thus they can refer to the food of men or women, children or adults, humans or gods. This approach poses multiple questions, the answers to which involve ecology, techniques (of food preparation and its conservation), family life, social relations, and the symbolic order.<sup>4</sup> Food habits, despite being deeply rooted, are not static – they follow the dynamics of society in which they operate, establishing a continuous dialogue between time (the historical process) and space (the environment). Cultural contact has never ceased to exist or to contribute to the reconstruction of singularity. As R. Bastide reminds us, culture develops much more by means of inter-fecundation than by self-fecundation.<sup>5</sup> One has to consider cultural contact as being not only a process of acculturation (in the literal sense of loss), but also as being a process of exchange, emphasising the meeting and melding of different traditions.

This paper aims to analyse the process of production of ‘Cinnamon Bread’, a delicacy present in the culinary repertoire of the area of Ibitipoca Mountain Range located in the southeastern part of Brazil. This bread became a ‘souvenir’ product due to the expansion of tourism in the region over the past thirty years. Its production today can be considered to be representative of the complex dialogue between tradition and modernity, and of the changes that have occurred in that rural environment due to the impact of tourism. As a result of this, the bread’s name was changed (from ‘Puff Bread’ to ‘Cinnamon Bread’) and it became a commodity. Nevertheless, the complex bread-making operation involving ingredients, measurements and know-how, is still retained, by means of collective memory, in the cultural background of the people.

Recognised as a typical product of the area of Ibitipoca Mountain Range, Cinnamon Bread – the recipe for which is to be found in touristic sites throughout the region<sup>6</sup> – occupies a prominent role in the construction of local identity. It is one of the most popular products purchased by tourists, and it is advertised along the dirt road that leads to the village, and in the houses of local residents, by means of signs which announce: ‘Cinnamon Bread Here’.

The local village, Conceição de Ibitipoca, is one of the oldest of Minas Gerais state. Records of the presence in the region of ‘bandeirantes’ – adventurous pioneers

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4 Douglas, Mary, (ed.), *Food and Social Order: Studies of Food and Festivities in Three American Communities*, New York 1984.

5 Bastide, Roger, *El prójimo y El extraño. El encuentro de las civilizaciones*, Buenos Aires 1973.

6 Cinnamon Bread Recipe: 1 kg of wheat flour, 1 glass of soy oil, 2 eggs, 3 tablespoons of margarine, ground cinnamon, caster sugar and granulated sugar, 1 egg white mixed with 1 egg yolk, 50g of baking yeast, 400 ml. of milk, 1 pinch of salt. In a single bowl, include the eggs, salt, granulated sugar, baking yeast, oil and milk. Mix with your hands to dissolve the yeast and sugar. Add flour and mix again until the dough is smooth. Cover the bowl with a cloth and let the dough rest for 45 mins. Then, divide the dough to make the bread. Roll out the dough with a rolling pin, keeping to a rectangular shape. Spread the margarine with a spoon over the dough. Mix the cinnamon with the caster sugar. Place a layer over the dough, to taste. Roll it up like a log. Bake in a wood stove for 15 mins., or in a gas stove for 30 mins. (<http://www.ibitipoca.tur.br/paodecanela/>); accessed 19 March 2013. See also: [http://sites.uai.com.br/guiagastronomia/lima\\_duarte\\_pao\\_canela.htm](http://sites.uai.com.br/guiagastronomia/lima_duarte_pao_canela.htm); accessed 19 March 2013.

who explored the interior of Brazil searching for gold along the route that would connect the gold reserves to the coast for exporting to Portugal – date from 1692. There is evidence that by 1715, dozens of settlers, who had come from other parts of the country and from Portugal, had already taken up residence in the region of Ibitipoca Mountain Range and that they were paying taxes to the government for the ownership of their plots.<sup>7</sup> In the course of the nineteenth century, this village gradually lost significance due to the growth of new settlements, but this did not discourage naturalists and travellers, such as Auguste de Saint-Hilaire,<sup>8</sup> who were attracted by the peculiarities of its landscapes, from visiting the region.

With the depletion of the gold reserves of the colony, several areas, which had been prominent during the gold-cycle era, saw a reduction in both their economic activity and population. Conceição de Ibitipoca village, as one of the villages thus affected, had then to rely on subsistence agriculture and cattle raising for its survival, and it remained in relative isolation for some time, given the difficulties of access to it and the aridity of its soil. From the second half of the twentieth century, this mountain range, due to the beauty of its landscapes with caves and waterfalls, became a place for the people of neighbouring towns to visit. In 1973, the State Park of Ibitipoca, an important study centre for scientists and cave specialists because of its singular geography, fauna and flora, was created. In the 1980s, it was adapted to suit visits by the public, and it has been widely reported on in the press since then.

The flow of tourists increased gradually during the 1990s,<sup>9</sup> and tourism became a large generator of economic activity in the village, leading to the development of the services sector, the construction of hostels by businessmen from urban centers, and the growth of trade in food and crafts. The dirt road, the wood-burning stove, the provincial air of this place, as synonyms for a bucolic life, allied to the ecologic wealth of the State Park of Ibitipoca, became attractive to the tourism industry which was clearly moving in the direction of rapid expansion and the creation of mass experience.

Several changes, such as disorderly urban growth and an adverse environmental impact, occurred in the lives of the people as a result of the tourism boom. Of significance also was the fact that a large part of the population became involved in activities relating directly or indirectly to the tourism industry, thus creating economic dependence on the seasonal flow of vacationers to the region. Local trade expansion also resulted in an increase in the employment of women. In the traditional social division of labour of this countryside, the responsibility for maintaining the domestic

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7 Delgado, Alexandre Miranda, *Memória histórica sobre a cidade de Lima Duarte e seu município*, Juiz de Fora, edição do autor 1962.

8 Saint Hilaire, Auguste de, *Viagem pelas províncias do Rio de Janeiro e Minas Gerais*, Belo Horizonte 1975.

9 According to ONG – ‘Associação dos Moradores e Amigos do Distrito de Conceição de Ibitipoca’, the State Park of Ibitipoca is visited by about fifty thousand tourists a year. Cf. [www.ibitipoca.tur.br](http://www.ibitipoca.tur.br); accessed 19 March 2013.

family cycle fell to women, while in this new scenario the women's range of activity was expanded, as they had the possibility to work as hostel employees, or in the preparation of meals or delicacies for tourists.<sup>10</sup>

In order to analyse the culinary language in operation in the craft production of Cinnamon Bread as a field of popular culture, the mechanisms through which the bread is reproduced must be examined. The production of this bread relies on a predominantly oral tradition, and on the practical creativity developed in native daily life. Its preparation is based on gestures, measures, and procedures, transmitted through the generations, as a field of feminine knowledge, which is developed in action: the technique was learned through observation and operation – by seeing how it was done and then by actually doing it oneself.<sup>11</sup> There is no authorship as such, only collective references of transmission, supported by the lived history of everyday life. In addition to the memory of gestures and texture, the know-how includes the field of measures – measures based on summarised procedures that underlie practical experience, rather than on mathematical precision. Approximate measurements are commonly used by the producers of this bread; thus, instead of following a recipe, they make it from memory, based on their own kitchen utensils, using, for instance, quantities such as, 'a jar of milk', 'a handful of sugar', or 'two dishes of cinnamon'.

Although the role of repetition is significant in the carrying out of traditional kitchen work, the increased production of Cinnamon Bread due to touristic development, encouraged comparison among the producers, and the affirmation of self-style. There is not a unique way of preparing this bread since the personal touch opens space for the use of certain culinary secrets. For example, the golden colour of its baked surface can be achieved by brushing the dough before baking with a mixture of egg yolk and black coffee without sugar; or by rolling the bread on a surface covered with cinnamon and sugar. Although the bread has been traditionally filled with cinnamon and sugar, the touristic desire for a variety of stimuli has led to the preparation of the bread using other fillings, thus giving rise to Banana Bread or Guava Sweet Bread rather than just Cinnamon Bread. In the past, the native people of Brazil used to fill this kind of bread with the bark of a native plant (*Ocotea pretiosa*), which has a flavour similar to that of cinnamon, but nowadays, imported cinnamon (*Cinnamomum zeylanicum*) is available for purchase in nearby towns. Previously, pork fat was added to the cinnamon and sugar fillings for the bread dough, in order to keep them moist. Nowadays, however, thanks to the operation of the cultural grammar about the edible, and in the context of the modern sensibility of the urban consumer in terms of health and well being, this strategy of maintaining the humidity of the filling has become unfeasible, and has been replaced by the use of vegetable margarine. Some

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10 Bedim, Bruno T., 'O processo de intervenção social do turismo na Serra de Ibitipoca (MG): simultâneo e desigual, dilema camponês no 'paraíso do capital'', 2008. Dissertação (Mestrado em Geografia). UFMG. Belo Horizonte 2008.

11 Bourdieu, Pierre, 'Habitue, code, codification', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociale* 64 (Sept. 1986): 40-44.

native bread-makers are also developing strategies in order to prepare greater quantities of bread during holidays – by using machines for kneading the bread and for rolling out the dough, a practice which requires of them that they master new skills.

The construction of regional identity involves the recognition of a common ancestry, a feeling of belonging that is expressed through emblematic traits. Regional kitchens, with their culinary methods and forms of social interactions, establish boundaries, and promote self-recognition.<sup>12</sup> Although operating with ancestry as a cultural value, located in the common past, the meanings of these practices, and their know-how, have been the subject of reconstructions, which are made in the present. In this region, the art of bread-making still remains a female domain, based on local values – such as the gender division of labour –, which are part of collective life. Yvonne Verdier, through an ethnographic study in a small French village, highlights how traditional social organisation conferred on those rural French washerwomen whom she describes, a ‘female destiny’, granting them a dominant role as mediators of human relations in that community.<sup>13</sup> In this current context, Cinnamon Bread production, offers the Brazilian rural women who make it and sell it, an opportunity to create new meanings for their know-how. Through this, their daily work in the kitchen, an activity, which was formerly hidden and belonged entirely to the domestic sphere, promotes visibility for them – they become known and gain prestige, in addition to gaining space in the production of family income, which was rarely allowed to them, in this rural territory of the interior of Brazil, in the past. The consumers, on the other hand, give new meanings to the ‘Puff Bread’ (as it was originally known) – not only by taking it home with them as a souvenir, but also by changing its name. According to the villagers, it was the tourists who were responsible for giving this culinary formula the label ‘Cinnamon Bread’ – when unsure of its name but with its approved flavour recorded in their memory, they asked for the bread with cinnamon. If the touristic experience can be understood as a journey from the profane to the sacred dimension, as a way of adding meaning to the lived life, then the exploratory eating re-enforces the power of food to represent and negotiate the difference, as a way of gaining access to cultural landscapes and natural environments. By tasting it, the consumers believe that they incorporate the attributes of the region, which led them to travel to that environment with its strong appeal to ecological tourism, embodied in the power of the mountains, the purity of the water of its waterfalls, and the originality of the craft process. They reinvent it also when they take it home as a gift for family and friends. Thus, besides granting authority of displacement to the givers, they strengthen bonds with those who are given the gifts.

Cinnamon Bread can be considered to be an example of the transformation of traditional knowledge, transmitted through generations, and the gaining of new

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12 Bourdieu, Pierre, ‘L’identité et la représentation’, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 35 (Nov. 1980): 63-72.

13 Verdier, Yvonne, *Façons de dire, façons de faire. La laveuse, la couturière, la cuisinière*, Paris 1979.

meanings in the face of contemporary social dynamics. It illustrates a case of the reinvention of a tradition, since its name, the process of its elaboration, and the use of its ingredients, as well as the manner of its consumption, are changed and re-signified.

Peasant villages do not represent a timeless space outside of the workings of history, and their craft products are shaped by their time. Instead of looking at an immutable traditional precept, we observe a selective continuity of pastry handcrafting in a 'contingent countryside'.<sup>14</sup> Tourism development, and its impact on people's traditional lifestyle, requires new analytical frames in order to overcome the idea of culture as a static phenomenon and as being deterministic of individuals' actions. Marshall Sahlins's proposal for transcending the dichotomy between 'structure' (cultural categories) and 'history' contributes to this analysis as it proposes to unify them into action.<sup>15</sup> Although cultural structures constrain the way in which history is lived, it can be transformed in the course of interactions over time. The event – in this case, the touristic development in the region – enables the meeting of these two dimensions of social life – cultural structure and history – resulting in a new view of the meaning of culture. Culture is now seen as an open system, where meanings become subject to revisions, once they are put at risk in the face of the way in which history unfolds. Thus, the stability of the cultural order is no longer an 'a priori' condition in order to become a negotiated reality where social groups can decide on their own destiny.

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14 Sutton, Susan B., 'Introduction: Past and Present in Rural Greece,' in Sutton, Susan B., (ed.), *Contingent Countryside: Settlement, Economy and Land Use in the Southern Argolid since 1700*, Stanford, C.A., 2000, 1-24.

15 Sahlins, Marshall, *Islands of History*, Chicago 1985.

# Continuity and Change: The Choice of Food for Gastro-Festivals around the Turn of the Millennium

*Eszter Kisbán*

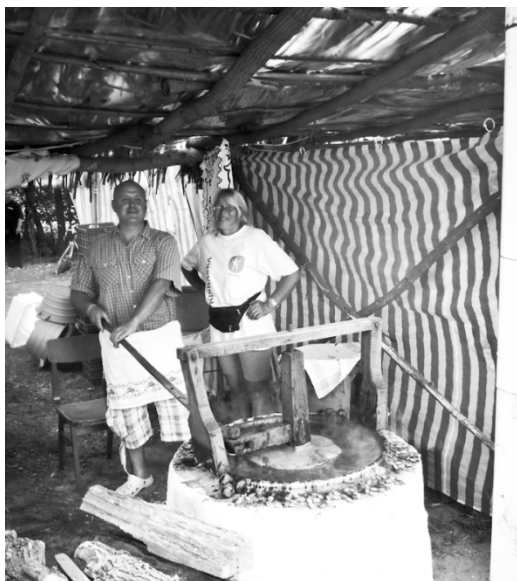
In the small, remote village of C. in Hungary, a plum jam-making competition has recently become a yearly event, with competitors typically coming from the immediate neighbourhood. This is a plain, intimate, pleasant event and the best possible choice of a competition food. The competition is a kind of gastro-festival, although participants would not use either the word gastronomy or even the word festival. The event, all the same, can be seen in the context of the new gastro-festivals that have been supported, since the mid 1990s, by an ambitious national programme for the development of tourism and the expansion of what it has to offer. News of village C's festival has not yet spread very far, but it is worth examining the rise, content, effect, and the message of the national programme for tourism development already mentioned. I shall come back to village C. after taking a look at other gastro-festivals in Hungary (Fig. 1).

## Gastro-festivals of the Period

Gastro-festivals have been proliferating rapidly in Hungary since the mid 1990s. They fall into three types. Type 1: This is an event for professional chefs which is held in cities, mainly in Budapest, and the competition is on the level of refined gastronomy. It is advertised nationally and attracts large numbers of visitors from far and wide. This type of event has been common since the late nineteenth century. Type 2: These are successful festivals launched typically in country towns, which are organised around a particular dish, and intended for a large number of visitors. The attraction of this second type of gastro-festival is that it is centred around simple dishes which are found in ordinary households, and which, in different variants, are known and popular throughout the country. These country-town events include ones: (a) where chefs from the local- and district-hospitality businesses prepare and serve the dishes; (b) where strictly non-professional teams cook and either compete or not, and (c) where both professional and non-professional teams can participate together, if they wish. It is striking that this category of festival has chosen dishes and products, which, according

to public opinion, are ‘properly’ or more expertly and more typically made by men, and men do, or direct, the cooking at the festivals. Although this type of festival was new during this period in that its size was measured by the number of participants and by the amount of advertising involved, it was not unprecedented, as such festivals, though smaller in scale, had been held in county towns in Hungary in the course of the twentieth century. Type 3: This group of gastro-festivals comprises festivals held in small settlements, a type of event without precedent in Hungary. Their number rose to over a hundred in the space of two decades. Since only a few of them register themselves on the national list, their exact number is not known. Some call themselves festivals, while others refer to themselves simply as competitions for the preparation of particular dishes. A customary local dish or product is chosen for the competition, that is, one that is made mainly by women both at home and in the competition. The great majority of the foods selected are ones found on the tables of ordinary local families, while the dishes themselves, or at least their names, are known throughout the country. The event attracts visitors mainly from the immediate vicinity, and is advertised, at the most, by its own county. It is not the intention to have overcrowded events. These small festivals receive modest financial support from the national budget for tourism and rural development. The competition in village C. is an example of such a small festival. However, before discussing the plum jam of village C. and the neighbouring villages of the region, it is worth considering a few data on the well-advertised gastro-festivals in the second group (2) by way of comparison.

Fig. 1: Competition, village C., 2011. Wooden stirrer over the oven and the cauldron (Szatmárcseke homepage).



## Popular Food – Big Festivals

In the city of Baja on the Danube river, a festival focused on ‘fisherman’s soup’ has been held on a July weekend every year since 1996. The city insists on calling the event a festival, ‘The festival of the city’, centred on a self-made, open-air meal with friends, was first organised to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the town’s rise to city status. The festival started with a couple of cauldrons in the main square, the site of the city hall, and a landing place for boats where people can cross to the city’s own island in the Danube, if they do not wish to use the bridge. The city has 37,000 inhabitants, and it has attracted nearly 100,000 visitors during the three days of the festival, in recent years. Cooking places with tables for the meal have spread into several streets beyond the main square and, years ago, also onto the island, as more and more people wished to participate. The website of the event does not give the exact number of cooking teams the city can handle, but warns that there are far more applicants than space for cauldrons and tables. Those who can cook bring their own cauldrons and the tripods on which to hang them, as well as 5-6 kg of fish for a table of 8-10 people, plus onions and spices, while the city provides the firewood, a desk on which to work, and a table with benches for the meal. The soup is cooked on Saturday between 6.00 and 7.00 p.m., the meal with the invited guests takes place from 7.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m., and there are fireworks at midnight.

Beyond a certain region, ‘fisherman’s soup’ made with red paprika powder became known throughout the country from around 1800, starting first in the cities. Fish consumption is very low in Hungary, with soup being probably the most popular dish made of fish. It is prepared at home and can also be eaten in restaurants, but as a festive rather than as an everyday dish. Many people rate it higher than either the old or the new forms of goulash, the ‘national dish’.

## Fish Soup on the Tisza Bank

Towns and villages along the Danube and the Tisza rivers have long been in rivalry over their ‘fisherman’s soup’. One year after the first festival at Baja, even the city of Szeged on the Tisza river, just 100 km away from Baja, started a fish festival in 1997. This has been held on an early September weekend every year since 1997. Szeged, which has 170,000 inhabitants, is the third largest city of the country and ranks higher than Baja in executive authority, and in many other ways also. At present, the Szeged festival draws 200,000 visitors. Non-professionals do not cook there; local restaurants and smaller gastro-businesses from the area set up tents and cook many kinds of fish dishes. The main attraction is a giant cauldron with a capacity of 3,500 litres made especially for these kinds of festivals. Cooks prepare fish soup in it more than once a day, so that from that alone 14,000 portions can be served to the public.



## Meat Sausage in a Previous Agro-town with Meat Trade

The town of Békéscsaba launched its annual meat-sausage festival in 1997, calling it a 'sausage-making competition'. The town is located 200 km from Baja, and the same distance from Budapest, with good transport conditions. The initiator of this festival specifically referred to the great success of the festival in Baja. Békéscsaba, a previous agro-town, is now a city and a county seat with a population of 64,000. The meat-sausage festival, which has now been extended to four days, attracts 60,000 to 70,000 visitors each year during a late October weekend. The main attraction is the sausage-making competition held on the spot, and the competition for already-made smoked sausages.

The sort of meat sausage in question has long been made in households throughout the country, during pig slaughtering in the winter season. It is a highly-prized food and has been especially popular since the late eighteenth century, when paprika began to be used as a spice. The filling is made entirely of meat. The sausage is intended to keep for several months as, after smoking, it is matured for a number of months before consumption. In contrast to other sausages, the making of it at home has always been exclusively the task of men. For a century and a half, it was also made by butchers, and, at a later date, large meat plants began to manufacture it. The professional product has long been present on the market, and one variant has become known under the name of Békéscsaba. This means that the name of the town, is itself, a good enticement for the holding of the competition there.

The sausage-making competition is held on a Saturday at the end of October. More than four hundred teams, each consisting of 3-5 adult men, compete. Entry is open to both non-professionals and to professional butchers. Each team brings its own equipment and, included as part of the registration fee, is the 10 kg of pork which is given to each team on the spot. The teams work at tables set out in a sports hall and in two giant tents. Each team submits one sausage for judging and can take away the rest. As the last step in the judging procedure, the freshly-made sausages are fried – something that is also customary when a pig is killed at home. In recent years, a competition for children has been announced on the preceding Thursday, and on the Sunday following for seniors. A separate competition is now held on Friday for smoked sausages made at home or in a small plant. This is the gastro-festival in which it is worthwhile for ambitious politicians to actively take part; one, who has been prime minister more than once, participated several times when his party was in opposition, thereby attracting considerable media attention.

## Goulash in a City on the Great Plain

Goulash proper, a beef stew, as it had been prepared by herdsmen on the plains for centuries, became the Hungarian 'national dish' from the late 1700s. In Hungarian, the name itself was transferred to a soup a century later. In the kitchen, the soup is

cooked in a pot, but cooking it outdoors in a cauldron has been very popular for several decades. The latter is seen as a special masculine skill.

A competition in the cooking of goulash, organised by the city of Szolnok in 1999, has now become a large annually-held festival. Geographically, the city is in the middle of the Great Plain – the homeland of the original goulash dish – and from being a small agro-town with 16,000 inhabitants, it grew to become the county seat in the 1870s. Its current population is close to 75,000 inhabitants. With regard to financial assistance and popularisation by the central authorities, the goulash festival has become the most privileged provincial gastro-festival to date.

The festival programme runs for three days during an early September weekend. The cooking competition itself has always been held on Saturday. There are juries to provide verdicts, and prizes to be won. Attendance is counted by cauldrons, which usually means teams of three persons each per cauldron, and the crowd of visitors (including the competitors) participating during the entire festival. The event started with 136 cauldrons and 9,000-10,000 visitors in 1999, and the figures reached a peak of 770 cauldrons and 70,000 visitors in 2006-2008.

In sharp contrast to these giant festivals is the cooking competition in village C.

## The Public Image of Village C.

The name of the village is not a secret; it is just that it is long and not easy to remember for those who do not speak Hungarian. Its name is Szatmárcseke, a compound word. Szatmár is the name of a region, and Cseke is the original name of the village. Both the villagers and the people of the region call it just Cseke, and I shall simply call it village C. The village is situated in a unique, but little known, region in Hungary, on a plain at the farthest possible distance from the capital city, at a distance of over 300 km. In terms of roads and public transport, it is quite hard to reach it. Included in the name of a plum brandy which has been marketed for many decades, the Szatmár region's name is known all over the country. It is not hard, therefore, to guess where village C. is situated. But that is all ordinary people usually know about the region and the village.

The village itself has some notable associations but these are largely well known only among specialists. It was in a mansion house here that the treasured national anthem of Hungary was written in 1823. Incidentally, the correspondence of the author mentioned the special attention he paid to his own plum trees. In literary circles, the village has long been a place of pilgrimage. In 1989, the day of the birth of the anthem was declared the 'Day of Hungarian Culture'. This was mentioned in the media and has been celebrated by literary circles with an excellent concert in the small Protestant church of village C. every year since then.

The vernacular architecture of the region and the graveyard of village C. are known to ethnologists and folklorists, and to visitors to the National Open Air Museum over 300 km away, as well as to people who have heard of the now obsolete interpretation of the special form of the local wooden grave-posts. Research and books on ancient monuments, churches and dwelling houses of the region, by architects and

ethnologists since the 1960s, have not especially impressed the local population. Financed by national funds, several buildings have been restored *in situ*, and the Open Air Museum was opened with buildings from the area in 1974. At the same time, village C. noticed that visitors were beginning to come to see the wooden grave-posts in their graveyard. The popularity of those grave-posts arose from a publication of the year 1930, when a professional folklorist wrote about them, and provided a romantic misinterpretation of their form and origin.<sup>1</sup> The attractive story, suggesting a bridge between the village on the bank of a large river and the prehistory of the Hungarians, has lingered on, mostly among urban intellectuals.

To mark the anniversary of the Hungarian conquest in the ninth century, the ministry of culture launched a series of books on the history of one hundred Hungarian villages. Village C. became one of the chosen villages. An excellent book by several experts was published in 2002, and became available on the Internet also in 2007. The books of the series, in manageable size and style, are intended for the general public. However, local authorities, who are still inexperienced in the tourism industry, have never made copies of them available for visitors to the village.

The village lies beside the Tisza, the country's second longest river, which flows from east to west across the Szatmár region. Not far from the village centre is a landing place for boats where paddlers in canoes make brief stops during the summer holidays. A visit to the village centre is not usually on their agenda.

## Plum Thickets and Orchards of the Micro-region

From time immemorial up to about 1960, the plum has been the most common fruit tree in Hungary, and the plum was the only fruit ordinary households could preserve by cooking, before the price of sugar, used for preserving purposes, dropped to a level they could afford, around 1900. Under differing natural conditions plum trees were cultivated in varying numbers in different regions.<sup>2</sup> The fruit used to be preserved either by drying or by cooking it into a thick jam, before the advent of affordable sugar.

Plum trees tolerate regular flooding well. The region where such hydrological conditions lasted longest, is precisely the Szatmár region we are speaking about. Streams with several small branches flow into the Tisza river there, and although regulation of the rivers began in the late eighteenth century, floods and flood plains long remained an everyday experience. People were used to periodically-inundated flood-plain forests of oak, shrubs and plum thickets, bogs and marshy patches, water meadows, and a limited amount of arable land. It is reported from the eighteenth and nineteenth

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1 Solymossy, Sándor, 'Ősi fejfaformák népközlésénél' ('Ancient Forms of Ancestral Wooden Grave-post in Folk-Culture'), *Ethnographia* XLI (1930): 65-84. For a critical study, see Nyárády, Mihály, 'A szatmárcsekei református temető fejfái' ('The Wooden Grave-posts of the Szatmárcseke Protestant Graveyard'), *A Nyíregyházi Jósza András Múzeum Évkönyve* 3 (1960): 193-214.

2 'Production of plums and sloes, 1961-2010', FAOSTAT at <http://faostat.fao.org/site/567/DesktopDefault.aspx?PageID=567#ancor>; accessed May 2013.

centuries that people brought dried plums, jars of plum jam, and dried sheets of thick plum jam, to market, and used the income to buy grain for bread. To bear fruit, plum trees had to be singled out in the thickets of plums and cared for on the spot, while others were transplanted into orchards. Oak forests diminished and grassland expanded during the nineteenth century but the plum trees remained. Regulation of the rivers has still not been fully completed. Plum trees are now grown in orchards but patches of plum thickets are still to be seen here and there.<sup>3</sup> There are local and regional varieties of plum.<sup>4</sup>

## The Genuine Plum Jam: Made at Home or Cooked at the Competition

Cooking plum jam that will last without sugar is not exclusively the skill of village C. in the region. It is regularly done at home for the family in the same way as it is also made in other villages of the micro-region.<sup>5</sup> The competition, held in village C. on the village green on a late August weekend, is a two-day event. The method of cooking at the festival is the same as that practised at home. Small differences which occur result from particular circumstances and will be mentioned in the following description (Fig.2).

Fig. 2: Plum jam, Panyola village, 2012.



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3 Kerekes, Katalin, *A Szatmár–Beregi-sík területhasználat változása az I. katonai felméréstől napjainkig* ('Changes of land use on the Szatmár-Bereg plain 1784-1858-1989'), Kaposvár-Nyiregyháza, 2002; see [http://hidrologia.hu/vandorgyules/30/dolgozatok/kerekes\\_katalin.html](http://hidrologia.hu/vandorgyules/30/dolgozatok/kerekes_katalin.html); accessed May 2013.

4 Andrásfalvy, Bertalan, 'Gyümölcs kultúra' ('Fruit-culture'), in Paládi-Kovács, Attila, Szilágyi, Miklós, (eds.), *Magyar Néprajz II. Gazdálkodás*, Budapest 2001, 493-527.

5 Detailed descriptions from villages of the Szatmár micro-region are to be found in the Annual of the Ethnographical Museum; see Luby, Margit, 'A szilva hazája' ('The Homeland of the Plum'), *Néprajzi Értesítő* XXXI (1939): 300-310.

A certain local variety of plum has been preferred for the making of the plum jam. This is a clingstone plum which ripens late, and is thus not yet available in August in time for the competition. Even if the slipstone plum, which ripens in time for the festival, is more costly than the clingstone plum, the local people are quite happy to use it and to save their favourite fruit for their own household.

What is needed for the cooking of the jam? The fruit, a large cauldron, a stove which is specially shaped to hold the cauldron, an efficient stirrer, and other vessels used during the work. The cauldron should be of copper, with a capacity of 70-80 litres. The hand-operated stirrer is a heavy and elaborate tool made of wood. The stove is built of air-dried brick and mud in the form of a truncated cone, open at the top, and fired from the bottom. It stands in the courtyard at home, and serves one autumn season. The competition participants build their oven stoves for the two-day event, each year. If clingstone plums are used, a sieve is needed to remove the stones after a short first phase of cooking.

Whether it is the clingstone or slipstone variety of plum fruits that is used, the cooking is done in two phases. In the first phase the plums are divided into cauldron-full batches. One after the other, each batch is cooked until the fruit turns into a juicy red pulp, which is then poured into another vessel. The stones of the clingstone variety are strained out at that point. In the second phase, the juicy pulp is gradually returned to the cauldron and cooked at low heat, with constant stirring, until it turns into a very thick, black jam. Stirring is hard work; it requires at least two, but preferably three persons working in turns, and the cooking takes about twelve hours at least. As the jam thickens, men take over the stirring. Finally, the finished thick jam is poured into a big wooden tub and, when it has partly cooled, it is bottled in earthenware or glass jars without any preservative whatsoever. Such jam can be kept for years, even after it has been opened.

Up to the early twentieth century it was also customary not to build the stoves on the surface of the ground. Instead a pit was dug and the cauldron was lowered into it, and the fire was lighted beneath it. In this scenario, the person who stirred the jam worked while sitting on the ground. Whichever way the jam is made, and although the participation of men is needed, the whole process of making the jam is seen as an art directed by the women.

This technology for making plum jam was used throughout the country up to the mid twentieth century, while, from the beginning of the century, more and more housewives had begun to make jam from a variety of fruits. These jams are cooked briefly using sugar in an iron pot on the kitchen range, and are much thinner than plum jam that is cooked very slowly. They are kept in bottles and once the bottle has been opened it is necessary to consume them quickly. With the exception of the Szatmár region, it is now mainly the members of the oldest age group who remember the old plum jam made without sugar that could be kept indefinitely. When people from outside this area come across such plum jam nowadays, many of them want to taste it and to buy it.

## The Competition Scenario

The competition will be held for the fifteenth time in August 2013. People in the region remember the exact date for the competition, but a modestly-advertised public invitation is issued in the spring. Active participation in the competition is limited to 25 to 30 cauldrons and teams must register in advance. It rarely happens that potential competitors call from far away to enquire about the event. When they do, and when they learn that each team has to cook 300 kg of plums, and when they hear about the size of the cauldron they have to bring with them, they immediately give up on the idea of competing, but some might still visit the unusual ‘attraction’ as spectators. The competitors come from the area surrounding village C. and they are familiar with the jam-making job. Village C. itself is allowed to enter only one team.

The competitors work on Friday and Saturday and there is no entry fee for them. Two to three thousand visitors are expected over the two days, a manageable crowd for the village with 1500 inhabitants. They can watch the work with the plums, and there is further entertainment for them, such as popular music during the day and dancing in the evening. There are local dishes to taste on sale and hand-made products can be purchased (including jars of plum jam, wooden objects and textiles), to take home. The entrance fee is kept low – it is the equivalent of 1 Euro per day, which is less than the price of a sandwich. The whole programme takes place on the village green.

By the time the competitors arrive on Friday morning, a sheltered booth is already prepared for each team on the village green. Work starts at 10.00 a.m. The first task to be undertaken by each team is to build its own stove. Usually, the teams bring their cauldrons (Fig. 3). While the stove-wall is drying, the booth is fitted out to enable the team to work comfortably, and also to accommodate spectators in case anyone wishes to observe the work from there later on. Plums are provided free of charge by the organisers – 300 kilograms for each team. First they wash and pit the plums, and make them ready for cooking. According to the organisers, about 70 kilograms of jam are expected in the end. That is about the same fruit to jam ratio calculated at home as well.<sup>6</sup>

After a short opening ceremony, cooking begins at 2.00 p.m. on Friday. Work, which continues throughout the night, is expected to be finished by Saturday noon. The jury goes around at 1.00 p.m. to judge the work and the announcement of the results follows at 2.00 p.m. The teams identify themselves by using the name of the village from which they come. Looking at the list of prize-winners over the years, it is clear that sooner or later all the regular competitors, and also newcomers, will earn a distinction.

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<sup>6</sup> Homepage of village C. [http://szatmarcseke.hu\\_picture\\_gallery](http://szatmarcseke.hu_picture_gallery). amateur pictures of the VIII-XIV (2006-2012) plum jam-making competitions; accessed May 2013.

Fig. 3: Stirring the jam, village C., 2011 (Szatmárcseke homepage).



## From Special Skill to Regional Identity

When village C. invented the competition for the cooking of plum jam in 1997, they simply chose a food they liked, one that required a lengthy and spectacular process of preparation, and one in which individuals could also show their skill. There are several other nearby villages that could have initiated such an event. As for a competition, all that was left for them was to take part as competitors and as critical spectators. At first, people in the small villages, including village C., were not even aware that such plum jam was no longer made outside the region. Nor did they anticipate that two virtues of the product that were rapidly acquiring increased value in the country at that time: the plum of the region as an ecological or semi-ecological product, and the sugarless quality of the jam.

In 2005, a neighbouring village (Tarpa, 2000 inhabitants), on the other bank of the Tisza river, set up a small business venture to make and export plum brandy. This increased the value of plums in the region. Soon the company began to manufacture plum jam as well, and officially registered it in Germany as an ecological product. This company is able to export the product to its warehouse there and then to distribute it to ecological shops in Switzerland and Germany for better prices than could be obtained in Hungary. These successes for the plums have mobilised villages in the micro-region. With financial assistance from the rural development fund, they are

setting up associations, social cooperatives, and local ecological shops, in order to encourage people to make jam at home, which they then buy up and sell as old-style plum jam (Fig. 4). The name of the region is displayed on the label and often the name of the individual maker of the jam, and the village in which the person lives, are also included. It is easy to find these products in small local gift shops in the Szatmár region. The relatively few ecological shops in towns and cities in Hungary also order such jam from Szatmár. In the meantime, a few small businesses in other regions have also realised the commercial potential of such jam. And in Szatmár, several villages opened exhibitions in old houses displaying the utensils used for jam-making. In the village of P. (Penyige, 750 inhabitants) that has given its name to the highly-valued clingstone plum of the region, an entire small local museum has been devoted to jam-making. In recent years a few villages have begun to advertise their jam offer in ‘open yards’ – on a day in September or October people make plum jam in their own yards and welcome visitors who come to watch the jam-making process.

Fig. 4: Plum jam, Panyola village, 2012.



A most recent development is that the micro-region has been invited to join an extended regional programme for rural tourism. The creation of a ‘Plum Trail’ is already in progress. There will be stops at the nearby nature conservation area, in several villages which have protected ecclesiastical and vernacular buildings; there will be exhibitions presenting the plum, the brandy, and the distillery, as well as the skill and



equipment used for cooking the jam in the villages. In the second phase, the project will be extended to include the neighbouring region in Romania as well.

The festival of the competition in cooking plum jam has never been a lucrative enterprise for the village. It is seen as a happy and successful event, and is more a source of pride than being of direct financial benefit to the villagers. It seems that, in spite of the prestige of the poet who composed the national anthem, or the tribute paid to the people in the book about their village on the occasion of the Millennium, or the interest shown by visitors in their grave-posts and in the ancient monuments of the region, the people of village C., due to their personal participation in the competition, may rank it highest in their hearts. On the other hand, they happily share their role with other villages in the 'Land of the Plum' in the raising of national interest in the region.

The jam is a matter of pride especially for the women. Plum jam produced under controlled conditions in the home has now begun to yield a modest income as well, and could help to keep people in the villages of the region.\*

\* I am grateful to Patricia Lysaght for special help with the English text.

The present research is assisted by the *Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA, Programme Nr. K 81120, Klára Kuti)*.

# Medieval Food Re-enactments in the Netherlands

*Johanna Maria van Winter*

‘Retro’ is fashionable, in the Netherlands as elsewhere. This is evident not only in fashion, architecture and interior decoration, but also in cuisine, in so far as this is the field of interest of some dedicated cooks. ‘Retro’ is fashionable not only on occasions which are memorial in character but also, for example, at modern weddings and parties, as these are occasions on which food and drink mentioned in old cookery books and representative of the Middle Ages or even Roman antiquity, are served. Such events, even if only one-off happenings, require that the organisers have specific historical culinary knowledge of relevance to the occasion in question.

More or less as a consequence of this situation, several businesses and private individuals have specialised in the field of medieval food re-enactment, and are available for hire for such occasions. On 15 January 2011, for instance, the catering firm ‘Geback en Gebraet’ (‘Pastry and Roast’), with its staff dressed in period costume, presented a seventeenth century taste-test in the Westfries Museum in Hoorn. Likewise, on 4 September of the same year, the Utrecht Museum Catharijneconvent organised a medieval market with titbits of medieval food prepared by the company ‘Edelike spijse’ (‘Noble Food’), the staff of which also wore contemporary dress. There are so many such occasions in the Netherlands at the present time that it is virtually impossible to keep track of them all.

Occasionally, I myself have had the opportunity to participate in a medieval dinner based on recipes from my cookery book *Van Soeter Cokene, recepten uit de Oudheid en Middeleeuwen* (‘On Sweet Cooking, Recipes from Antiquity and the Middle Ages’, 1971). On the occasion in question, I provided information for the guests, between the courses, about the ingredients and their processing. I did something similar in the Theatre Restaurant in Utrecht, in co-operation with its cook, on 12 June 2008, an event framed by the singing of medieval songs. In the Auditorium of Utrecht University, on 5 November of the same year, the ‘Old London Catering’ firm prepared a three-course dinner based on my recipes, as an accompaniment to a performance of the medieval tale of the *Burggravinne van Vergi* (‘Viscountess of Vergi’). The cooks in question happily followed my instructions and prepared the dishes in an authentic fashion, though they used modern kitchen utensils in their work.

Authenticity can be pursued in different ways – in, for example, the selection of ingredients, recipes and utensils, as well as in the choice of cutlery and table dressing used, and in the costumes worn by the cooks and guests. A company which aspires to the greatest possible level of authenticity, also with regard to eating and cooking utensils, is the afore-mentioned ‘Edelike spijse’ group ([www.edelikespijse.nl](http://www.edelikespijse.nl)) based in Nieuwerkerk aan de IJssel (Province Zuid-Holland). This is what they wrote to me in response to my questionnaire concerning medieval food re-enactment in the Netherlands:

Motivation: using present-day knowledge to correct false modern perceptions concerning historical food arising from the rewriting of history in succeeding centuries.

They continued:

In the meantime all our pans are riveted. We started with cast iron pans but have been able to replace them all with authentic ones. Of course, this goes for all aspects of the trade: at first you must provide for the necessary materials and later on replace them with authentic items. We started by using modern Portuguese ceramics [for tableware and flatware] but after a year we replaced them with replicas [of medieval ceramics].

We do all kinds of school projects, for reasonable prices. Of course it makes a difference, price-wise, what is on the menu. We get groups that want ‘high’ cooking and groups that want ‘low’ cooking. Besides, the number of participants plays a role concerning costs. On average, we charge €30.00 to €50.00 per person and we have a limit of 30 participants. We build an encampment and have a cooking place where we cook on an open fire. The encampment is mediievally-adapted. For a cooking session I require at least three people for supervision purposes.

We are neither charlatans nor money-grabbers. We try to teach our guests as much as possible about the medieval way of life. For that reason we have a vegetable garden, an orchard, and a herb garden, and we do our own slaughtering. Everything has to be as authentic as possible and this comes at a price. However, we try to keep it as low as we can so that the experience can be accessible to as many people as possible. In our restaurant, we charge €2.50 for a dish with four medieval titbits, which we have made ourselves. We earn little from that. But at each table we like to tell why we cook this way. For this is what we are: cooking masters from the fourteenth century.

This group is inspired by a sense of idealism with a wish to revitalise the real Middle Ages by means of educative projects, in which the surroundings, costumes, home-grown vegetables, and slaughtering, play a role. Their services are not cheap, and yet the enterprise is barely profitable, as among the guests there are usually souvenir hunters. As result, items such as salt cellars and knives have to be replaced on a regular basis.

As is the case in so many countries, more and more medieval re-enactment groups are active in the Netherlands, though to date they appear to have mainly occupied themselves with tournaments, archery, dressmaking, ceramics, and the like, rather than with food. The caterers 'Edelike Spijse', already mentioned, also keep in close contact with them. Some private individuals with a passion for cooking are especially focussed on medieval cuisine, and even on meals from Roman antiquity. They publish recipes with their preparation on their websites and sometimes also organise medieval dinners. See, for example, the website [www.eetverleden.nl](http://www.eetverleden.nl), set up by Mrs. Manon Henzen in Nimwegen. Mrs. Henzen, who graduated in History and Near-East Studies, is presently employed in the heritage sector. She wrote to me about her project entitled 'eet!verleden' ('Eat, Past'), as follows:

I organise cultural history projects and am an adviser to museums and institutions such as 'Gelders Erfgoed' ('Heritage of Gelderland') and 'Nederlands Openluchtmuseum' (Dutch Open Air Museum). There I am engaged on an ongoing basis with the transmission of knowledge about heritage and the collections to the public, in an innovative and unexpected way. I personally think it very important that people are given some knowledge of their history and heritage, and I'm convinced that this gives them more insight into, and enriches, their lives.

This is exactly what I want to transmit with 'eet!verleden'. Eating and drinking tend to connect people in a positive way and to give them a good feeling. So I use the history of eating and drinking to promote a bit of history, at the same time as enormously enjoying this myself.

With 'eet!verleden' I do not take people back in time but take the past into the present. I try to make history attractive for the present-day table. In this way, you can say that I myself have been inspired by historical dishes and tastes, and make new creations with them, attractive for the table anno 2012. So I do not try to cook as authentically as possible (although I certainly do so at home), but try to make the dishes palatable for a broad public.

Criticism is not unwelcome to Mrs. Henzen, however. In cases where she has incorrectly interpreted a recipe, she will, when informed, change it immediately on her website. Commercially, her website is not yet attracting a following but she hopes that

in the long run she can earn about half of her income from this activity in addition to her freelance job.

Another private entrepreneur, Mrs. Janiek Kistemaker, is a graduate in classical languages, Her website, [www.apiciana.nl](http://www.apiciana.nl), focuses completely on Roman antiquity. She wrote to me as follows:

What drives me is that I am happy to try to approximate as far as possible the taste of Roman cuisine and to adapt it to the modern kitchen. I am not charmed by modern commonplace ideas such as that nightingale tongues are an inherent element of Roman cuisine. There are so many fascinating things to be told that can bring us closer to the Roman way of life, and, in my eyes, therefore, exoticisms are simply obstacles to achieving this.

Mrs. Kistemaker has tried to organise workshops but, as she has not been very successful in this endeavour, she now limits herself to publishing recipes with their modern form of preparation. Here the pursuit of scientifically-warranted authenticity takes the stage, albeit without reference to antique cooking utensils.

The same holds true for Mrs. Christianne Muusers, a graduate in Dutch language and literature. On her website ([www.Coquinaria.nl](http://www.Coquinaria.nl)), she publishes recipes from unedited Middle Dutch manuscripts and texts, which are to be found only in barely-accessible editions, and provides English and modern Dutch translations of them. This is work in progress that goes ahead slowly. On her website she provides old as well as new recipes, together with their preparation. Earlier on, she had organised workshops to teach people how to cook using medieval recipes, but today the stress lies on the above-mentioned editing and translation of manuscripts, as well as on lecturing about the eating culture of various periods. She spans the period from Roman times to the nineteenth century, for adult audiences, and also for primary school children, the latter aged from ten to twelve years. More often than not her lectures are followed by taste tests of titbits from the period in question, albeit with concessions to modern taste. With regard to the aim of her work, she writes:

I want to make people conscious of what cooking is really about. That it is not exclusively a question of culinary history but also concerns knowledge of commodities and basic skills, the reading of labels on products, and the unmasking of empty marketing slogans. This involves some degree of historical consciousness, which, at the moment in the Netherlands, can be said to be at a dramatically low level.

She recognises, however, that it is not possible at this stage to regain the authentic taste of old recipes in all respects, because the work is carried out under completely different conditions:

Thus in their preparation the recipes have been adapted for the modern kitchen. I use a food processor instead of a mortar, a grill instead of a salamander. In this respect I do not work in the authentic way. The ingredients are not authentic, because present-day methods of growing, harvesting and production, differ a great deal from those of the past, which cannot be easily reproduced.

However, within these limitations I try to follow the historical recipes as faithfully as possible. I know that my version will be different from that of medieval cooks, in the same way as the versions of my pupils will differ from each other. The adaptations which I have made include the use of gelatine instead of sturgeon bladder, but with regard to the greases, lard remains lard and marrow remains marrow.

I never will be able to make a living from these activities, which is not my purpose. My website has no advertisements, although I quite often get offers of such. My aim is not to earn money but to spread knowledge.

Whereas these ladies increasingly specialise in lecturing and publishing, we have two trades in the Netherlands which are fully practice-oriented, that is, that they are concerned with the practice of the vegetable garden and with the re-growing of old crops. They also have the following websites: (a) Vergeten groenten ('Forgotten vegetables'); ([www.vergetengroenten.nl](http://www.vergetengroenten.nl)), ing. Jac Nijskens MBA, De Historische Groentehof ('The Historical Vegetable Court'); Stichting Vergeten Groenten ('Foundation of Forgotten Vegetables') in Beesel (Province Limburg); conducted tours, cooking workshops, taste tests, dinners, and catering & events with forgotten vegetables on location. (b) De Ommuurde Tuin ('The Walled Garden'); ([www.ommuurdetuin.nl](http://www.ommuurdetuin.nl)), Taco IJzerman & Esther Kuiler, biological market-garden on the landed estate 'Oranje Nassau's Oord' between Wageningen and Renkum (Province Gelderland). 'Here we grow more than one hundred tasty seasonal vegetables and herbs, well-known ones, and historical and wild species.'

Both companies seek to bring a modern Dutch public into contact with old-Dutch cuisine and with the taste of traditional crops that are freshly harvested and processed. Foreign ingredients may not be dominant in the dishes. On the whole, they do not go back as far as the Middle Ages, but sometimes recipes from my book, *Van Soeter Cokene*, are on the menu. It is not their aim to use historical costumes and medieval cooking utensils, but molecular cooking (induction cooking) is forbidden. The care of the environment is not a main point either, but rather an accidental one. Commercially-speaking, these companies are not really remunerative enterprises as a lot of idealism is needed to keep them going. Regarding my question concerning the commercial aspect, Jac Nijskens from Beesel wrote as follows:

None. It takes much time and also money. It does not pay. Sometimes I become disheartened. But I persevere and do not give up and stay with my vision. I look at the long term. I would like to change the financial aspect and to get help with that. I would gladly like to work cost-neutral. I want to grow with my concept, to reach more people, to inform more people about it. In addition to forgotten vegetables, we have started with forgotten fruit. I hope to start with forgotten mushrooms in 2013. When we take on forgotten breads and forgotten meats we will have to do this with some caution.

The question of age and personal energy must also be taken into account in terms of whether a business can continue to direct itself to the practice of growing vegetables, as well as cooking and eating with groups. In this connection, Mrs. Carolina Verhoeven, with her Academy of Culinary History, must be mentioned. This academy has been developed, from a culinary museum in Appelscha (Province Friesland) with a strong practice of holding culinary historical workshops, into a centre of knowledge. In her website, [www.landskeuken.nl](http://www.landskeuken.nl), Haulerwijk (Province Friesland), she writes:

My name is Carolina Verhoeven, culinary ethnologist and owner of the Academy of Culinary History. I am interested in everything that concerns the preparation of food.

The Academy of Culinary History is an interregional centre of knowledge which collects and transmits culinary heritage. The Academy of Culinary History does so by co-operating with national and international kitchens, with the hotel and restaurant sectors, with schools, libraries, trades/-businesses, and with private individuals.

The most important aims of the Academy are:

- To reach a broad public for transmitting culinary historical knowledge.
- To collect and control information about culinary traditions in the broadest sense.
- To apply this knowledge about culinary traditions.
- To acquire a material collection concerning culinary heritage.
- To install and keep a culinary archive and database.

In contrast to this, a museum that is more and more practice-oriented and which thus attracts large groups of visitors, is the Nederlands Bakkerijmuseum ('Dutch Bakery Museum') in Hattem (Province Gelderland) (See [www.bakkerijmuseum.nl](http://www.bakkerijmuseum.nl)). Its Director is Fred G. Voskuil.

According to their digital *Newsletter* (Fall 2011), visitors include:

Master bakers, apprentice bakers and home bakers, but also families, school classes and other bread aficionados. As time goes on, more and more people find their way to the Dutch Bakery Museum. For us, it [2011] was the most beautiful summer of our existence, in that no less than 13,500 adults and children visited our museum. What an atmosphere and dynamics!

Summer 2011 was full of culinary highlights. The museum was at its best. In the small old bakery, the wood-oven burnt at full speed, and bakers Bill and Henk were baking their famous Sunny pies. Apprentice bakers made stuffed cakes with children at the threshing floor, and, in the theatre, conservator Fred gave his famous demonstration on 'The symbolic in bread'.

And we are still waiting for the high point of this year. On 1 November, the new demonstration bakery opens its doors for apprentice and hobby bakers or producers from the trade. They can try-out historical recipes or experiment with new products, eventually with the help of professional bakers. The public at large can see how a modern baker works.

This museum has a staff of baking professionals who accompany volunteers and provide the necessary apparatus for the demonstration of old and new baking techniques. They do not go back as far as the Middle Ages, but to the seventeenth century at least. Also their shop, in which their own products find a ready sale, is successful. The museum is housed in two medieval buildings next to the old town wall of Hattem, which gives its surroundings a historical atmosphere. During the whole of 2011, 49,712 people visited the museum, not counting those who looked at its website and consulted its bakery wiki, the database of bakery items.

One would expect that the ecological aspect might play an important role in food re-enactments, that is, that interest in the protection of the environment from pollution, and the desire to avoid unnecessary animal suffering caused by the worldwide transport of materials and cattle, would be prominent. However, it is clear from the answers to my questionnaire, that the environmental aspect plays only a minor role, and that it is by no means the most important aspect. Yet, in Utrecht, an initiative with an eye primarily to this concern, exists: See Troost & Proost ('Solace and Cheers'), Lars Leeferink & Jan van Rossum, [www.troostenproost.nl](http://www.troostenproost.nl).

In order to avoid having to drag their utensils, supplies and cattle along, these professional cooks of Troost & Proost want, as an ecological alternative, to have all their ingredients originating in Dutch soil. Their recipes are often their own creations. On several occasions during the year, they offer a thematic dinner in line with the season, as, for example, 'The warm winter' on 10 February 2012, and 'The salty sea' on 9 March 2012. At this last dinner, one of the dishes was a seaweed pottage with



crayfish, and the desert a trifle of ship's biscuit in buckthorn liquor. The cooks are happily inspired by dishes and cooking techniques from abroad, but with ingredients originating in Dutch soil. However, on demand, they sometimes make historical meals, at an antique Roman event, for example, but then the ingredients are not exclusively Dutch.

On comparing all of these websites it comes as a matter of surprise that a 'health' aspect does not play an explicit role, although, perhaps, it is implied as the accent is on fresh ingredients. Nobody asks if the marrow and eggs used in the medieval cuisine, and the fat fish of the Romans, or the stuffed pies of the home bakery, really are good for the waistline or for the cholesterol level. Actually, the public does not appear to be interested in that aspect and probably would be disappointed with ascetic hermit-type meals.

Historical interest is an important motive for all parties I interviewed concerning medieval food re-enactments, together with a wish to transmit national historical traditions as part of Dutch identity. Our modern times seem to be balanced by a quest to investigate our roots, probably because we are confronted with the influences from so many other cultures in which we have to find our own way. I am convinced that a more intimate knowledge of our own background and ancestry is a prerequisite for openness to other cultures in the world at large.

# The Marshmallow Metamorphosis

*Shirley Cherkasky*

Marshmallows are a festive food, appearing at American parties, potlucks, cook-outs, family gatherings, on holiday tables, and at other celebrations. Although today in the United States, they may be considered ordinary and old-fashioned, that has not always been true. The first thing I would like to point out about marshmallow is that it is a *survivor* and its history goes back several hundred years, not exactly, of course, in the form in which we now know it. No other food that I can think of has been in an almost constant state of change, yet has continued to maintain its basic consistency and flavour, that is, as a pleasant, spongy, sweet substance. Over the past one thousand years, it has morphed from being totally plant-based, with a medicinal purpose, to its current role in the U.S. as a confection or important ingredient in candy, with side journeys along the way, appearing in salads, sandwiches, and even soups. It has continued to adapt to the market, sweetly complying with whatever is demanded of it, playing many roles, and continuing to survive.

Today's marshmallow almost always is a confection, consisting of a mixture of sweeteners and other flavourings, water, and gelatin whipped into a stabilized foam which primarily takes two basic forms: as a semi-liquid known as marshmallow cream, whip, or fluff; or in a more firm, soft and springy, moulded cylinder shape about one inch in diameter and one inch high. But no other food seems to appear in so many other possible sizes, shapes, flavours, and colours imaginable, or in forms appropriate for celebrating so many of America's holidays, including Thanksgiving, Easter, the 4th of July, Hallowe'en, and Christmas. It is claimed that Americans eat more than 90 million pounds of marshmallows a year.<sup>1</sup> Marshmallow's fascinating history goes back several hundred years. Originally, the marsh mallow was a common plant resembling a hollyhock with a smaller pink flower and was known very early in Europe and Asia. It was also called mortification root or sweet weed, and is a member of the mallow family, *Malvaceae*. Later, it was assigned the scientific name of *Althaea officinalis*, with *officinalis* indicating that it was thought to possess medicinal properties because the sweet, sticky sap that was extracted from its roots was a demulcent, that is, a substance having a mucilaginous character, capable of soothing inflamed or irritated mucous

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<sup>1</sup> Talanian, Eileen, *Marshmallows: Homemade Gourmet Treats*, Layton, Utah 2008, 8.

membranes, as in the throat. It was used as a remedy for the common cold. It was also an excipient, having the quality of forming, with a liquid, the adhesiveness needed for the preparation of pills and tablets. Its other important property was its sweetness, which helped 'to make the medicine go down'. This may have been why it also was credited with aiding digestion and treating or curing a variety of other common ailments.<sup>2</sup>

Sweet flavours have been attractive to humans from earliest times, probably from between 8,000 and 4,000 BCE, their use spreading from Asia through the Middle East to Europe. By the twelfth century CE, sugar, also originally regarded as having medicinal properties, was known in Europe through trade with the Arabs but only royalty and wealthy élites could afford to enjoy it. Before sugar was widely available in Northern Europe, the craving for sweet flavours was somewhat satisfied by the use of fruit, such as dates, figs, and grapes, as well as by beets, carrots, and parsnips which were used in cakes, pies, puddings, and other mildly sweet foods. So it is not surprising that marshmallow soon made the transition from a pleasant tasting medicine to a pleasant tasting and easily available treat.

The first cooks to figure out how to make marshmallow's consistency and taste easier to create were the French who combined the pulverised root with sugar and whipped egg whites, to form sheets of what they called *pâte de guimauve* which they used to decorate small cakes.<sup>3</sup> Then other confectioners in Europe devised a way to substitute other sticky substances, such as gum arabic exuded from certain Middle Eastern acacia trees, for marshmallow root sap, since they had similar excipient and demulcent properties.

Once it reached the U.S. by the 1800s, marshmallow was made by small-scale confectioners as a sweet for children. It also was used in its soft, semi-liquid form as a topping for cakes or for ice cream. In 1884, an American confectioner published an instruction book for retail candy makers that included a formula for marshmallow drops using pulverised gum arabic, sugar, whipped egg whites, and flavourings. He noted that 'some use a decoction of Marshmallow Root in making the drops, but as it gives them a bitter taste, I always omit it'.<sup>4</sup>

His instructions called for the use of the 'cast and mold' process, credited to a German candy maker in the early 1800s. The process used a two-inch-deep pan of sifted and levelled cornstarch, with rows of indentations made in the cornstarch with a set of small metal, plaster, or wooden forms mounted on a frame. Warm, semi-fluid marshmallow foam was dropped into the indentations. After the foam had cooled and

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2 Marshmallow root is still available in American health food stores and promoted as having 'proven anti-inflammatory effects as well as hypoglycemic and immune stimulating properties, rich in Vitamins A and C'. It can be used as a cold infusion and drunk, or as a mouth wash. (Source: From the label on a packet of Kalustyan's Marshmallow root; [www.kalustyans.com](http://www.kalustyans.com).)

3 Garrett, Theodore F., (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Practical Cookery*, Vol. 4, New York n.d., 914.

4 Frye, G.V., *Frye's Practical Candy Maker: Comprising Practical Receipts for the Manufacture of Fine Hand-Made Candies Especially Adapted for Fine Retail Trade*, Chicago 1884, 61.

firmed up, the marshmallows were removed from the cornstarch and dusted with powdered sugar. Moulded marshmallows were produced in this fashion by many confectionery manufacturers, under a variety of trade names, including Angelus, Campfire, UNICY, Puritan, and Bunte.

In 1896, in Chicago, a big centre for candy manufacture at that time, a German immigrant family named Rueckheim had introduced their new product, Cracker Jack, shortly after the Chicago Exposition of 1893, with the prophetic phrase, 'the more you eat, the more you want'. Cracker Jack is a caramel-coated popcorn and peanut confection. Packaged in small cardboard boxes, it lived up to its promotional advertising and became a great commercial success. But the company advertisements also guaranteed their product to be fresh and crisp, and that proved to be a more difficult promise to keep once the cardboard box containers had been purchased and opened. A friend of the Rueckheim family, Henry Eckstein, searching for a packaging solution to keep moisture out of Cracker Jack boxes, reportedly paid a German scientist \$500 to teach him how to make wax paper. He then improved the process and his improvements eventually made him a millionaire. By 1899, the Cracker Jack Company had developed a wax-sealed box and, by 1902, a moisture-proof box. Cracker Jack's success was assured, by keeping the contents of their boxes fresh and crispy and all moisture out.<sup>5</sup>

In the late nineteenth century, commercially manufactured marshmallows were delivered to retailers in loose lots, much like other food products of the period. But with a product so vulnerable to rapidly becoming stale and tough, a tin with a tight-fitting lid, holding three-pound or five-pound lots, was developed to preserve freshness, and used by many well-known Midwestern marshmallow manufacturers.

By 1907, the very successful Cracker Jack Company had acquired the company making Angelus marshmallows and trademarked the name. However, keeping packaged marshmallows soft and pliable remained a problem since the goal was to keep moisture *inside* the package. That goal was reached, too, by the Cracker Jack waxing method.<sup>6</sup> By 1939, when Cracker Jack had also acquired the Campfire Marshmallow Company, the Angelus-Campfire Company began advertising that it had introduced new packaging for home use, in one-pound, heavily-waxed cartons, composed of four small, rectangular, quarter-pound boxes, also heavily waxed. Campfire's distinctive blue, white, and red packages, with a little image of a 'Campfire girl,' could be purchased in grocery stores in either size. Each of the smaller boxes contained two layers of eight marshmallows, with a waxed paper sheet between the layers, just the right size to take along on a Girl Scout cook-out.

After 1924, when cellophane packaging was developed, in a further attempt to keep their product soft and fresh but temptingly more visible, Cracker Jack was

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5 Smith, Andrew, *Popped Culture. A Social History of Popcorn in America*, Washington, D.C. 2001, 86.

6 Angelus-Campfire Co., *Angelus-Campfire Marshmallows: History, Manufacture and Uses*, Promotional pamphlet, n.p., n.d.

encasing Campfire in 8-ounce cellophane bags and Angelus in 16-ounce bags. The efforts to keep staleness at bay and assure a longer shelf life of a soft, rather moist product have continued, and today marshmallows are primarily packaged in relatively heavy plastic film. One advantage of flexible packaging is that it can be compressed around what is left in an opened bag, to keep air out and moisture in. This has prolonged the shelf life but still is not a perfect solution, so it will be interesting to see what the next packaging advance will be.

By the early twentieth century, the joys of toasting marshmallows over a campfire had been discovered and marshmallow roasts joined taffy pulls<sup>7</sup> and fudge parties as amusements for young people. The promotional pamphlet distributed by Chicago's Bunte Brothers, a large successful candy company, gave these detailed instructions for 'Toasting marshmallows in the oven', and declared: 'The easiest possible dessert is a plate of roasted Bunte Marshmallows and it is one that would be greatly enjoyed now and then, but no one seems to ever think of toasting Marshmallows except at a bonfire roast or before a grate fire'.<sup>8</sup>

Electricity is so essential to the contemporary American household that it is hard now to imagine the difficulty of preparing food without its help. Very early in the twentieth century, when it became available in urban homes, it made possible incandescent lights, and electric stoves and refrigerators, and it also spurred the invention of small labour-saving appliances such as mixers, bread toasters, and all the other devices that have continued to appear since then. Some are big sellers and remain in demand; others appear briefly and fade away. Such a one probably was the A-26 Bar-B-Q electric marshmallow toaster, offered for sale by the Angelus-Campfire Company for \$1.25 in about 1909.<sup>9</sup> It is on exhibit in the electricity section of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History in Washington D.C. (Fig. 1). It made indoor marshmallow toasting possible year-round but could only accommodate four fork-holders at one time, so it must have been limited to rather small parties. Though one wonders why anyone would ever have wanted such a ridiculous object, its novelty probably was a big selling point.

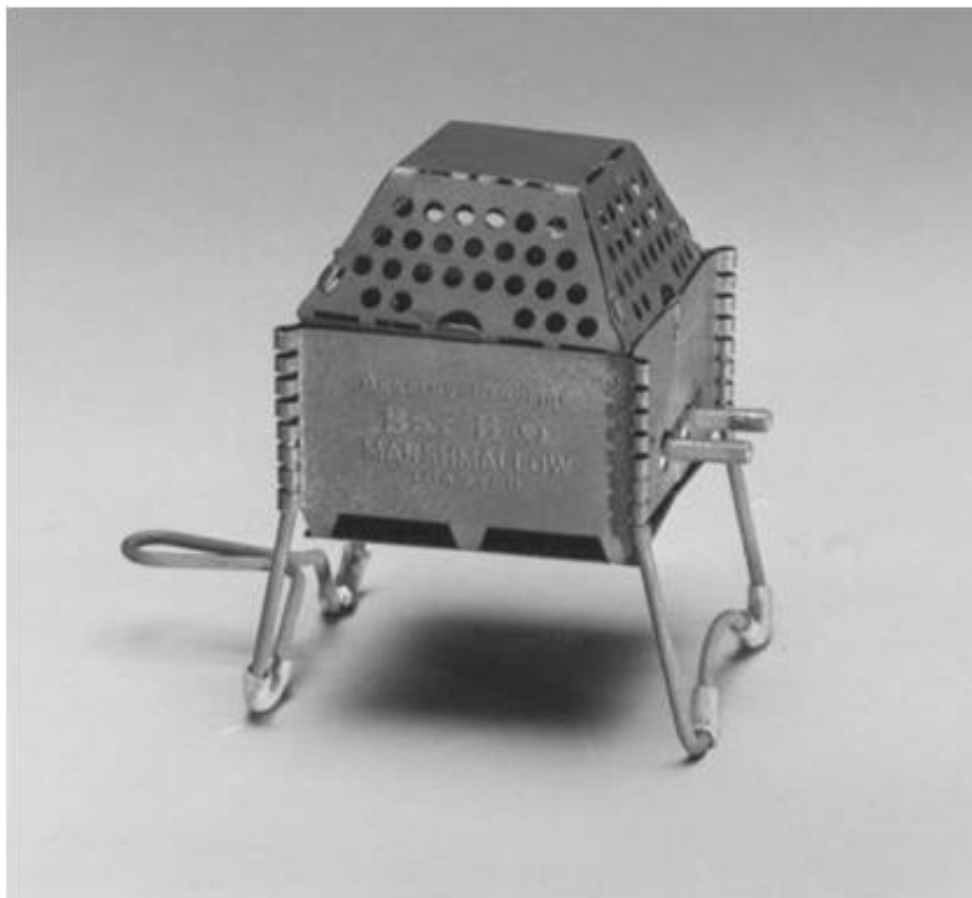
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7 A taffy-pull is an American social gathering where taffy [a confection like chewy toffee] is made.

8 Bunte Brothers, *Bunte Marshmallow Recipes*, Chicago. Advertising pamphlet, n.p., n.d.

9 Made of metal (kind not specified), the toaster is 7 1/2 inches long, 2 3/4 inches wide, and 4 3/4 inches high.

Fig. 1: Electric marshmallow toaster made by the Angelus-Campfire Company, Chicago, Illinois.



During the early twentieth century, food and beverage adulteration had become so flagrant that the campaign against it was capturing everyone's attention. This was one of the factors that gave marshmallows their great appeal at that time, and the opportunity for manufacturers to promote them as a soft, white, pure and, above all, dainty food, healthful and safe in their snug packaging. More cookbook writers were including them as essential ingredients in their recipes. In 1917, the cookbook of Mrs. Ida Bailey Allen, then a very popular radio personality, included several recipes calling for marshmallows and, on a back flyleaf, an advertisement with a recipe calling for marshmallows in a gelatin salad that seemed to be a clear prediction of the happy and long-lasting union of marshmallows and Jell-O in the future.<sup>10</sup> Other marshmallow manufacturers, ever alert to new possibilities for promoting their product as 'food,' began distributing free pamphlets with recipes for using marshmallows not only in

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10 Allen, Ida C. Bailey, *Mrs. Allen's Cook Book*, Boston 1917, flyleaf.

elaborate cakes, fanciful frozen desserts, and ice cream toppings, but also in sauces, beverages, sandwiches, salads using a variety of fruits and vegetables, and even in tomato soup, instead of croutons. A Campfire Company pamphlet, published before 1930, stated ‘...Campfire [marshmallows] were destined for a field of wider usefulness . . . in a greater variety of ways for making dainty delicious food dishes’.<sup>11</sup> Cookbooks of every kind began listing marshmallows as necessary ingredients.

In the years before World War II, marshmallows enjoyed a heyday in the U.S., and proved the success of manufacturers’ efforts to introduce them into every course of a festive meal. They were served at ‘ladies’ luncheons,’ combined with fruits and vegetables in gloriously-coloured salads and desserts, and were just as popular at potlucks and children’s parties.

The manufacturers’ inventiveness did not stop there. They gave away small pamphlets showing how to fashion little party favours, or to use marshmallows with other foods to produce fanciful figures as part of a composed salad, or to decorate a celebratory cake.<sup>12</sup> The affinity of marshmallows for sweet potatoes became widely known in the late 1920s and recipes from that period still appear in cookbooks of today: marshmallow-stuffed sweet potato balls; or mashed sweet potatoes topped with marshmallows and returned to the oven to brown, a traditional Thanksgiving offering that many family gatherings still regard as essential for the feast.<sup>13</sup>

Other recipes from before World War II also are still popular. Marshmallow Treats, commonly known as Rice Krispy bars, were created in 1939 by a home economist for the cereal manufacturer, W.K. Kellogg Co., and trademarked.<sup>14</sup> Although these are thought to be favourites mainly among children, they seem to be popular among adults of all ages, too.<sup>15</sup>

In 1954, marshmallow manufacture made a great leap forward in efficiency and economy over the cast-and-mould method when a first-generation Greek American, Alex Doumak, after experimenting for six years, invented and patented a method for extruding marshmallow foam through a tube, forming it into a long rope, and then mechanically cutting it into uniform pieces before the pieces are dropped into a bed of starch and powdered sugar.<sup>16</sup> This made it possible, by using smaller-diameter tubes to produce the now familiar miniature marshmallows, and eliminated the need to cut the usual-sized ones into small pieces. Women thought this was a wonderful development,

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11 Campfire Marshmallows: *The new food*. Promotional Recipe Pamphlet, n.p, n.d.

12 Lowney, Walter M. & Co., Ltd., 55 *Dainty Marshmallow Recipes* by Marcia Camp, Montreal n.d.

13 Curtin, Kathleen, Oliver, Sandra L., *Giving Thanks: Thanksgiving Recipes and History from Pilgrims to Pumpkin Pie*, New York, 2005, 132.

14 Stevens, Patricia Bunning, *Rare Bits: Unusual Origins of Popular Recipes*, Athens, Ohio 1998, 168.

15 Albala, Ken, *Pancake: A Global History*, London 2008, 54. ‘. . . all mass-produced junk food. They are enjoyed by adults precisely because grown-ups should not like them; they are regressively infantile, and this in itself is comforting’.

16 Doumak, Inc. web page: [www.doumak.com](http://www.doumak.com); accessed 18. 12. 2013.

as anyone can appreciate who has ever had to cut up a lot of marshmallows, a sticky job requiring a pair of large scissors with wet blades. I assume that the supersized marshmallows now available in U.S. supermarkets are produced in the same way, with larger diameter tubes. Other developments followed in the 1950s and 1960s: marshmallows appeared on supermarket shelves in pastel 'salad' colours of yellow, orange, and pale green.

In more recent years, with the growth of large food conglomerates, almost all of the smaller manufacturers of moulded marshmallows either have been acquired by megafood companies, or have dropped out of the competitive race. Today, most of the marshmallows on supermarket shelves are supplied by units of just two big conglomerates, plus one large independent firm that continues to provide marshmallows for a variety of private labels. Despite the very limited number of manufacturers, marshmallows still can be purchased in a myriad of shapes, colours, sizes, as well as kosher-labelled that are made without pork-derived gelatin.

Although in the late twentieth century the thought of marshmallows appearing on the dinner table often inspired sneers and laughter except among Midwesterners, they are as popular as ever for toasting over campfires, for topping hot cocoa or ice cream sundaes, or for constructing s'mores, which are so familiar to Americans but may be less so in other parts of the world. The origin of s'mores is not clear although they are frequently associated with the Girl Scouts since a Scout publication of 1927 included the first recorded version for making them.<sup>17</sup> They certainly were well-known before World War II when I was a Scout. A s'more is constructed by topping a graham cracker square with a similarly-sized piece of a milk chocolate bar, then with a standard-size marshmallow that has been toasted so it is hot and meltingly soft and then another graham cracker square. This 'sandwich' is compressed so that the marshmallow softens the chocolate and oozes out around the edges. Today in Midwest supermarkets, marshmallows are appearing in a shape made expressly for s'mores: about ½ inch high, and 2 inches square.

Traditionally-shaped marshmallows also are pantry staples as ingredients in Rice Krispy Treats, while Marshmallow Fluff is essential to certain recipes for fudge and, at least in New England, for Fluffernutter sandwiches.

Having lived in the Midwest while my children were growing up, I never heard the term 'Fluffernutter' until the early 1990s when a co-worker originally from Massachusetts was nostalgically singing their praises. The term 'Fluffernutter' was coined in the 1960s and describes a layer of Marshmallow Fluff, spread on any kind of bread, and topped with a second slice of bread spread with smooth peanut butter to make a sandwich.

Marshmallow Fluff was developed by a candy factory owner in Somerville, Massachusetts just before World War I. The war's sugar shortages forced him to close and, after the war, he was no longer interested in getting back into the business. But

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17 Girl Scouts Inc., *Tramping and Trailing with the Girl Scouts*, 1927.



two young World War I veterans named Durkee and Mower were looking for a business opportunity. They pooled their savings, bought his formula and name, and began to sell Fluff door-to-door. By 1920, they had become so successful that they shifted from selling to housewives to retailing to local grocery stores. The labels on their jars of Fluff included a recipe for fudge and a list of sandwich ideas, including one with peanut butter. Newspaper and radio advertising followed. Their business survived the Great Depression, and although they had to cut back during World War II's sugar shortages, they continued to expand rapidly after. In 1956 they collaborated with Nestle' to promote a recipe for Never Fail Fudge that was credited to Mamie Eisenhower and remains on Fluff labels today. The company is still owned by the original families and Fluff is available in Canada, and countries in Europe, the Middle East, and in South Africa.<sup>18</sup>

In 2006 Fluffernutters became a contentious matter in the Massachusetts State House. A Massachusetts state senator was outraged one day when his son, a third-grader, came home from school and enthusiastically described the sandwich he had had for lunch in his Cambridge school: a Fluffernutter. His father, it should be noted, was not native to Massachusetts but was well-known for his advocacy for the poor and immigrants, and also concerned about the childhood obesity crisis. He announced his intention to file an amendment to a school anti-junk-food bill to limit servings of Fluff in public schools to once per week.

That opened a Pandora's Box in an area where it is estimated that Fluff is in almost every household's cupboard, and where the New England states and upstate New York account for more than fifty per cent of Fluff sales. Durkee-Mower does little advertising nowadays because their consumer base is so loyal, and it is not unusual to encounter Fluff fans who, for years, have eaten a Fluffernutter for breakfast or lunch every day of the week. The challenge to Fluff by the state senator was met by a legislator in the Massachusetts House of Representatives who announced her intention to file a bill to make the Fluffernutter the official state sandwich. When that hit the media, Durkee-Mower's online sales jumped eight-fold. As a result, the state senator withdrew his amendment, the state representative withdrew her bill, and Somerville, where Fluff originated, became the site of a big Fluff festival. It featured interpretations by local artists, science-fair entrants, and a variety of other activities, described by some as an 'orgiastic frenzy'.<sup>19</sup>

One cannot discuss Fluffernutters without also noting the Peeps phenomenon. The Rodda Candy Company of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, was bought in 1953 by a family in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, named Born. The company cleverly changed its name to Just Born since it was headquartered in Bethlehem, and pioneered marshmallow technology in the 1950s by developing a method of mass-producing marshmallows in a variety of shapes and with an unusual texture. Their first venture

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18 Durkee-Mower Inc. with Justin Schwartz, *The Marshmallow Fluff Cookbook*, Philadelphia 2004.

19 Liesener, Katie, 'Marshmallow Fluff', *Gastronomica*, Spring 2009, 51-5.

was with a bright yellow, baby chick-shaped form with a texture that was slightly crispy on the outside and with a spongier center. After some years, as their business ballooned into millions of boxes at Easter time, the company has continued to make their sweet in the same flavour but in shapes and colours appropriate for every holiday and season: bunnies for Easter; red, white and blue stars for the 4th of July; black 'ghosts' for Hallowe'en; green Christmas trees, and so on. Regardless of shape and colour, most are sold in the similar distinctive packaging and are labelled 'Peeps'. The first Peep in 1953 took twenty-six hours to manufacture. Today it takes six minutes.<sup>20</sup>

For the past six Easter seasons, *The Washington Post* has run its Peeps Diorama Contest, announced with great fanfare for weeks before Lent. In 2011, the contest received more than 900 entries created by individuals or teams. The contest rules specify that the diorama must fit in a shoe box or be of comparable size. It must represent a famous event, scene, or concept, may be historic, current, or future, and all characters in the diorama must be played by Peeps chicks or bunnies. Pictures of the winning entries are featured in the *Post* with the names of the creators.<sup>21</sup>

As noted earlier, marshmallow is a survivor and its manufacturers have kept its sales rates up despite the fickle food shopper. Each time some trendy use for marshmallows becomes passé, a new one appears, accompanied by products developed to prepare or serve it. Currently, homemade or artisanal marshmallows are being promoted as desserts in American upscale restaurants, and s'mores recipes are featured in recently published cookbooks for such exotic-sounding desserts as S'mores Cheese Cake.

A separate industry has emerged to supply products for toasting marshmallows, similar to that 1909 electric toaster at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. In my collection are two simple plastic gadgets for making s'mores in a microwave and a more elaborate table-top device with a Lazy Susan tray, a metal grill using Sterno, ceramic dishes for marshmallows, graham crackers, and chocolate bars, and four toasting forks.

Also advertised recently was a battery-operated, spinning, three-pronged fork with a telescoping rod and handle, with a button to set it in motion. There is also a low-tech version: a set of specially prepared thirty-inch long white birch sticks, in case you do not have a pocket knife and some small branches available.

An even more outlandish example of a new marshmallow-related product is Smirnoff's Fluffed Marshmallow Flavoured Vodka. With a pleasantly smoky aroma it is really quite tasty if you are a toasted marshmallow lover.

This paper's focus necessarily has been limited to marshmallow's role in the U.S. but factories all over Europe and Asia are known for the quality and popularity of their marshmallows, insuring a successful future.

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20 Bzdek, Vincent, 'Just One More Peep . . .', *The Washington Post*, Washington, D.C., 4 April 2004.

21 Thomas, Holly, 'Peep Culture', *The Washington Post*, 17 April 2011, 25-31.



*Part IV: Traditional Foodways and the  
Immigrant Process*



# The Transformation of Traditional Foodways in the Bosnian American Community

*William G. Lockwood and Yvonne R. Lockwood*

It is now generally recognised that the food of an ethnic group is not the same as that of its homeland, but, rather, the result of creolisation, the long process whereby food and foodways are transformed in the new homeland. This is, of course, one aspect of the more general process of the cultural transformation of an immigrant culture to an ethnic culture. By far the majority of studies of ethnic food in America are of ethnic groups established during the period of mass immigration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and they are, therefore, the result of multiple generations of development.<sup>1</sup>

With one exception, no Bosnian American community existed in the United States prior to the Yugoslav civil war in the 1990s. The great waves of Bosnian refugees who arrived during and after the war offer an opportunity to observe the earliest stages of an ethnic cuisine in the making. This culinary study of a recently arrived American ethnic group will hopefully provide new insights on the importance, persistence, and malleability of traditional food and foodways. We will describe and analyse various processes in the creation of a Bosnian-American cuisine.

The term 'Bosnian' has two meanings. One is geographic and includes Serbs and Croats, as well as Muslims. The other is ethnic and applies only to Bosnian Muslims. With the rise of Bosnian nationalism since the Bosnian civil war, many members of this group call themselves 'Bošnjaci' (singular, Bošnjak), a term used in the Ottoman period and in modern Turkey. What follows refers to this group. In this paper, we use 'Bosnian' as do members of the community, interchangeably with Bošnjak or Bosnian Muslim. In America, Bosnian Serbs and Croats quickly became part of pre-existing Serbian and Croatian communities.

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<sup>1</sup> Gabaccia, Donna, *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans*, Cambridge, MA, 1998.

The first Muslim immigrants from Bosnia-Herzegovina, mostly young men from villages in Herzegovina, arrived around 1900 and settled in Chicago.<sup>2</sup> They were soon followed by others. Numbering less than two hundred, this was the only Bosnian community before World War II. After 1945 a large wave of war refugees settled in the greater Chicago area, revitalising the original community. Beginning in the 1960s, a steady, economically motivated migration of Bosnian Muslims again settled in Chicago. There was by this time a smattering of Bosnians elsewhere in America but nowhere else were there enough to build mosques or establish viable communities. The last wave during and following the Bosnian civil war was larger than any that preceded it. Chicago is still a principal community, but a number of other large communities have developed, including the metropolitan area of Detroit, Michigan.<sup>3</sup> By two decades in America, Bosnian Americans have established an impressive ethnic infrastructure of mosques, social centres and clubs, newspapers, and television and radio programmes. Larger communities easily support a number and variety of businesses serving Bosnians, including grocery stores, meat markets, bakeries, restaurants, coffee houses, and nightclubs. Very early on, Bosnians purchased homes and many have built second dwellings for themselves or for their families back in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Children of immigrants are attending colleges. Bosnian Americans are hard working, enterprising, and upwardly mobile.

Both Bosnia and Bosnia America are culturally very heterogeneous, even if we confine our study to Bošnjaci. This makes all generalisations very difficult. There is in rural Bosnia a very high degree of localisation of culture. The food, for example, of one valley may differ significantly from that of the next valley over. This is reflected, in this early stage of American acculturation, in Bosnian communities in the United States. Thus, where we obtained our data becomes very important. We had previously lived in a Muslim village in west central Bosnia for two years.<sup>4</sup> Food and foodways were not our only interest but an important one. Before, during, and since that period, we travelled widely in Bosnia-Herzegovina and elsewhere in Yugoslavia. We also visited the Chicago community a number of times while it still was the only Bosnian community in America.<sup>5</sup> In 1998 William did research on the West Bosnian community in Waterloo, Iowa, and we have visited more briefly a number of other Bosnian American

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2 Lockwood, William G., 'Bosnian Muslims', in Stephen Thernstrom, (ed.), *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, Cambridge, MA, 1980, 184-6 Puskar, Samira, *Bosnian Americans of Chicagoland*, Charleston, SC, 2007.

3 Exact population figures are not available, but according to a Bosnian Embassy estimate, there are some 350,000 Bosnian Muslims in the United States. There are approximately 5,000 Bosnian Americans in the Detroit area and another 2,000 across Michigan in Grand Rapids.

4 Lockwood, William G., *European Moslems: Ethnicity and Economy in Western Bosnia*, New York 1975; Lockwood, Yvonne R., *Text and Context. Folksong in a Bosnian Muslim Village*, Columbus, OH, 1983.

5 Lockwood, William G., *op. cit.*, 1980.

communities. We began working with immigrants from the Tuzla area, in northeast Bosnia, soon after their arrival in the Detroit area. Most of our data are from this group, supplemented with data from other Bosnian populations elsewhere in the United States.

Ethnic foodways are in constant flux.<sup>6</sup> Changes in immigrant foodways are part of a larger process of social and cultural change. The process by which immigrants become ethnic Americans is long, gradual and very complex. This process can be considered as ethnogenesis or the creation of a new social group. Along with the development of a new ethnic group is a parallel development of a new subculture that both symbolises the group's uniqueness to its members and marks its social boundaries. The new subculture is altered to a greater or lesser degree from what was known in the homeland. Bosnian Americans are not the same as Bosnians in Bosnia and Bosnian American culture is different from the diverse cultures found in Bosnia.

It is impossible to recreate exactly in America the foods of one's homeland.<sup>7</sup> Ingredients as basic as flour, for example, are different in the United States, yielding different results. Many ingredients are unobtainable here. The same is true of the equipment and implements of cooking. For example the national dish of Bosnia, Bosanski lonac, is a stew of combined meats and vegetables slow-cooked in a special earthenware pot. The special pot is so much a part of the dish that it is named after it; lonac means pot. These pots are used for no other purpose and are often treasured heirlooms. One Bosnian American housewife related how hers was a gift from her father, who had given each of his daughters one, which he had brought back from a distant Bosnian market. She had been forced to abandon hers when she fled Bosnia. One might cook a similar combination of meats and vegetables in an aluminum stew pot but it is not the same.

These sorts of problems get worked out, just as for other aspects of life. Adjustments are made. Substitutions are found. One accepts that some favourite foods of one's homeland can now exist only as fond memories. It is this process of adjustment, the culinary dimension of an immigrant becoming an ethnic American, that is of significance here.

No group of emigrants from any country represents a cross section of the country's population. Emigrants are drawn from some regions more than others, some social strata more than others, and some communities more than others. Each of these groups possesses a discrete subculture, including distinctive foodways.

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6 Lockwood, William G., 'United States: Ethnic Cuisines', in Katz, Solomon H., (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Food and Culture*, vol. 3, New York 2005, 442-6.

7 For an overview of Bosnian food in Bosnia-Herzegovina, see Lockwood, William G., Lockwood, Yvonne R., 'Bosnia-Herzegovina', in Albala, Kenneth, (ed.), *Food Cultures of the World Encyclopedia*, Santa Barbara, CA, vol. 4, 2011, 51-60.



The creation of ethnic culture takes place within particular constraints of minority life: homesickness, prejudice, a sense of being different, an urge to assimilate or to resist assimilation, the need to recreate the Old World in the New or to reject all possible reminders of the life that was. Multiple factors shape the specific form taken by the new culture. Many call this process 'creolisation' after the term for a similar linguistic process, both of which refer to the creation of a new cultural configuration out of parts of several other pre-existing cultures.<sup>8</sup>

There are a number of different aspects of this transformation from an immigrant to an ethnic cuisine. These include selective processes by which some dishes are abandoned and others preserved; the revival of some dishes nearly forgotten in the homeland; changes in the function and symbolism of some foods; the substitution of ingredients for those unobtainable here; the amalgamation of regional and social differences in food and foodways; and, the effects of influences drawn not only from mainstream American cooking but from the cooking – usually already creolised – of other American ethnic groups.

Islam was less strongly practiced in Bosnia than in most Islamic societies, the result in some part to the discouragement of religion in socialist Yugoslavia. One consequence of the Yugoslav civil war was a resurgence of religion in all groups, including Muslims. Soon after their arrival in America, Bosnians established Bosnian mosques, even in those areas where Arab or South Asian mosques already existed. Many, but by no means all, Bosnians observe Ramazan (Arabic, Ramadan), the Islamic month of fasting. The meals prior to and at the end of each day of fast are bountiful but there seem to be no special foods associated with Ramazan. Pork is avoided, even by those Bosnians otherwise not particularly observant. On the other hand, the majority drink alcohol, especially šljivovica and beer.

Each Bajram (Arabic, Eid) is also observed. Ramazanski Bajram consists of three days of feasting, visiting, and prayer following Ramazan. Sometimes one home will host an evening of prayer, including a local Imam, followed by a feast, the men and women eating separately. Thirty days later, Kurbandanski Bajram is centered on the ritual killing of a sacrificial animal (*kurban*), usually a sheep that should be pure white and lacking imperfections. According to the Koran, the meat should be distributed to the poor, but as one member of the Detroit area community told us, 'In America there are no poor,' i.e., no poor Bosnians. Instead, small packages of raw meat are given to friends and relatives, who return packages of their own *kurban* in a round of gift giving lasting over a three-day period. Some families, in the years following their arrival in America, sent money back to a relative in Bosnia to purchase, kill, and distribute a *kurban* in their name. All religious holidays are according to the lunar calendar.

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8 Baron, Robert, Cara, Ana C., 'Introduction: Creolization and Folklore—Cultural Creativity in Progress', *Journal of American Folklore* 116, no. 459 (2003): 4-8. Special Issue, Creolization.

Thanksgiving is also observed. Like so many other immigrant and ethnic communities in America, the Thanksgiving feast consists of a turkey surrounded by Bosnian dishes.<sup>9</sup>

Bread is the constant, an essential component of every meal, in Bosnia and in Bosnia America.<sup>10</sup> There is a maxim in Bosnia, 'We don't even eat bread without bread.' Several big slabs of bread are laid by the plate as part of the place setting at both family and festive occasions. In America, the daily bread is usually loaves of unsliced white bread obtained at Bosnian bakeries, if available, otherwise at grocery stores. A specialty bread, *lepinje* (also called *samun*), eight-inch-wide rounds of a puffy white yeast bread, are essential when eating *ćevapčići*, the very popular, uncased, grilled sausage. Every larger Bosnian American community has one or more bakeries producing *lepinje* and usually also loaves of the daily bread. *Ćevapčići* and *lepinje* are the most common foods, sometimes the only foods, offered at Bosnian American restaurants. *Lepinje* are split and laid over the *ćevapčić* as they fry on the grill, so as to soak up grease and meat juices. *Ćevapčići* are traditionally served in groups of five or ten in *lepinje* with chopped onions on the side and eaten not as a sandwich but by hand, one by one, with a piece of the bread. *Lepinje* is produced only in bakeries, never at home, because it necessitates a bakery oven. A number of commercial bakers learned to produce *lepinje* only after emigration. Reviewers of Bosnian restaurants invariably enthuse about the bread, and restaurants catering to non-Bosnians have come to serve *lepinje* with everything. Loaves of daily bread are sometimes baked at home but less so now than when Bosnians first arrived, because most women now work outside the home and have less time for baking.

Meat is more commonly eaten in America than in Bosnia. Fish, because it is more available, and chicken, probably because it is the least expensive meat, are more frequently eaten. Lamb is much less common, even among those Bosnians from sheep herding regions, because of its relative high cost. Veal is highly ranked but less eaten than in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Pork is still avoided for religious reasons. Beef has become the most commonly eaten meat. In Bosnia and elsewhere in former Yugoslavia, spit-roasting a whole sheep is part of festive occasions. The act, itself, usually accompanied by jovial visiting, drinking, and singing, is as important as the food prepared. It is no wonder that Bosnians recently arrived in America, with a job that affords some luxuries, are roasting sheep much more frequently than they ever did in Bosnia. Always a joyous act, in the United States it takes an additional meaning, filled with nostalgia and symbolism of all those happier times in the homeland.

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9 Lockwood, William G., Lockwood, Yvonne R., 'Being American: An Arab American Thanksgiving', in Walker, Harlan, (ed.), *The Meal*. Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 2001, Totnes, England 2002; Pleck, Elizabeth, 'Family, Feast, and Football', in *Celebrating the Family. Ethnicity, Consumer Culture, and Family Rituals*, Cambridge 2000, 21-42.

10 Cf. Bringa, Tone, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village*, Princeton, NJ, 1995, 158-9.

Fig. 1: *Čevapčići* on the grill in southeast Michigan, 2011.



Fig. 2: Spit roasted lamb and chickens for a Bosnian picnic in southeast Michigan, 2011.



In addition to *ćevapčići*, *pljeskavica* (patties traditionally made of a mixture of ground meats but now all beef), chicken, offal, and, most common, thin beefsteaks are cooked on backyard grills or over campfires. Mixed grill (*mešano meso*) is a popular combination of grilled meats. In Bosnia *ćevapčići* are considered restaurant food and are not prepared at home. In America, uncooked *ćevapčići* are available from every Bosnian butcher and frozen from every Bosnian market.

Smoked meat (*subo meso*), either beef or lamb, and smoked beef or lamb sausage (*sudžuk*) are much appreciated snacks, usually served as appetisers (*meze*), especially with drinks. They are produced by Bosnian butchers (who were not necessarily butchers in Bosnia-Hercegovina) in a number of communities scattered across the United States and Canada. Smoked meat and, less commonly, sausage are also often home produced. Men have constructed their own backyard smokehouses, and smoked meat are frequent gifts between men.

The most common food in Bosnia America, as in Bosnia, is *pita*. *Phylo*-like dough (*juška*) is rolled around filling, then baked. The filling varies widely, but ground meat, white cheese, spinach and cheese, potatoes, cabbage, winter squash, wild nettles, and apples are most common. At least one Bosnian American has experimented with mushrooms. Bosnian cooks from Tuzla villages have learned to fill *pita* with leeks from a woman from Prijedor, where it is traditional. The same dough is used for baklava and related sweets but this must be air-dried before use. In America, therefore, it is more convenient to purchase manufactured *phylo* from Greek or Arab markets when making sweet pastries. When making *pita*, sour cream is often spread over the top after baking to make the dough soft and moist. *Pita* is a part of nearly every meal, both daily and special occasions, and is usually served as an accompaniment to the main course.

Vegetables are little eaten, both in Bosnia and Bosnia America, except in combinations such as spinach *pita*, *Bosanski lonac*, or stuffed peppers. The primary exception is salad. Onions are essential to the cuisine. It is said that in preparation of a meal, a Bosnian will chop onions and then decide what to cook. Cabbage rolls (*sarma*), meat and rice wrapped usually in home cured sauerkraut leaves, and peppers (*punjeni paprike*) stuffed with the same filling are common favourites. Stuffed onions (*sogan dolma*) are a Muslim specialty. Bean soup, sometimes prepared with a bit of fresh meat or *subo meso*, is frequently prepared. Paprika is the primary spice.

*Trahana* (in some regions, *tarhana* or *tarana*) is an ancient food introduced during the Ottoman period. In Bosnia-Hercegovina it is associated with and usually only produced by Muslims. Several proverbs concerning *trahana* were used by Christians in ridicule of Muslim eating habits<sup>11</sup>: *Tarana, Turska hrana*, (*Tarana*, Turkish food); *Tarana, glavna hrana za godinu dana* (*Tarana*, the main food for all year).

In pre-civil war Bosnia-Hercegovina, Christians sometimes obtained *trahana* from Muslim friends. It is a popular home-processed food, a sort of granular dumpling used in soup. Bosnians of the Detroit area remember it, but it had long disappeared from

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11 Christians often called Bosnian Muslims 'Turks' as an ethnic slur.

the active repertoire of recipes in the area from which they came. In the Waterloo community of Iowa, *trahana* is still common. Its traditional production involves at least a week of fermentation, then forcing the dough through a traditional sieve (*sito*) to form the grains. These sieves are unavailable in America, consequently, housewives have developed different methods of achieving similar results, working on an experimental basis. One, for example, substitutes an American strainer that is not quite right. Another dries the dough and grates it. Unless someone starts importing the traditional sieves, one or another alternative method will eventually be accepted by the community as best for doing the job.

In some cases it is the context of the food event that is unique to Bosnian Americans. As with most other ethnic groups, picnics provide an occasion where larger numbers of the community are brought together than there is room for in a home. Perhaps even more important, most came from villages and being outside, closer to nature, is very welcome. Picnics either in area parks or at the farm of an earlier arrival were common and important events in the earliest days of the Chicago community prior to WW I and during the interwar period.<sup>12</sup> The post-civil war arrivals quickly began staging their own picnics, either at regional public parks or at the farms of sympathetic non-Bosnian friends. A spit roasted lamb, or even a goat, is usually a primary feature of such occasions. Grilled *ćevapčići* and other meats are always prepared as well, usually eaten while waiting for the lamb to roast. The spit holding the lamb is turned by hand or, in America, by a homemade contraption constructed of a windshield wiper motor and bicycle gears. Outdoor meat cooking is always the provenance of men, whether at picnics or at home. At picnics, men may cook stews of the lamb offal, *Bosanski lonac*, goulash, or soup of freshly caught fish. The women watch this with a smile since Bosnian men tend never to cook at home other than to grill meat. Picnic food includes the ubiquitous *pita*, eaten cold, salads and fruits, always including watermelon if in season. Bosnian coffee, prepared either at the fire or over camp stoves, is prepared at frequent intervals. Cooking and eating are always a focus of picnic activity. There is often a soccer game, sometimes fishing, but social interaction over food is always most important.

Sometimes a picnic provides an opportunity for other food events. *Kolač na platne* (bread on a griddle) is a baking soda and sour milk bread. In Bosnia it is grilled, first on one side then on the other, directly on top the wood burning stove. In America, this is impossible, since families now have gas or electric stoves, but at occasional picnics some women use a griddle over the wood fire. It is much enjoyed by all, eaten hot with *kajmak* and much nostalgia and reminiscing.

*Kolač na platne* is but one example of revival foods laden with memories. Another is *ćetenija*. Parents complain that their children are becoming more Americanised and losing their Bosnian roots. Children tend to socialise with non-Bosnian Americans and even speak English at home and among other Bosnian children. To counteract this

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12 Puskar, Samira, *op. cit.*, 2007.

situation, some parents send their children during the summer to relatives in Bosnia. Some parents also are teaching their children a particular Bosnian custom that was meaningful to the parents themselves. 'Our children should grow up knowing their traditions and who they are,' stated one mother.

Every winter for the past four to five years, some ten to twelve families in greater Detroit come together for a *ćetenija*-making party. *Ćetenija*, a kind of halva, is made from toasted white flour and sugar. It has become a symbol of being Bošnjak in America. Although passing on this tradition is the intent, the event is also an important social and cultural occasion that reinforces the friendship and co-ethnic ties between families from the same region of Bosnia. The process of making *ćetenija* is integral to its very meaning.

As the children watch, women toast the flour in the oven. Sugar with a little lemon juice and very little water is heated until the sugar turns a reddish brown. It is then poured out into a low wide pan (*tepsija*) and placed outside in the snow to cool until a finger indentation can be made in the sugar. The pan is then brought inside and with oiled hands, women pull the cooked sugar from the pan and begin the arduous process of kneading the sugar until it is shiny and golden in colour. Then the toasted flour is worked into the sugar, which is then stretched and pulled into strands, first the size of fettuccini, then, when finished, into fine hair-like threads.

It is then cut into pieces and eaten. It is slightly sweet and melts in the mouth. Women laughingly recalled a moment some years earlier when as new arrivals to the United States, they unknowingly used flour that is premixed with salt and baking powder. That *ćetenija* was inedible.

Underlying this event is an opportunity for the hostess to show off her hospitality. At one event, the evening began with coffee, fruit juices, liquor and beer (for the men who do not abstain) and a selection of Turkish-style Bosnian pastries. While the sugar cooled, the hostess offered heaping platters of a variety of meats and cheeses, potatoes, rice, salads, bread, relish, pickles, and pastries. When this was cleared away, potato chips, salted nuts, and pretzels were put out.

In Bosnia, as in the United States, the social context of *ćetenija*-making is important. In Bosnia, the *ćetenija* makers are marriageable girls, and the event is an occasion for flirting between them and village boys. When the cooked sugar is put outside to cool, the boys steal it and must be bribed to give it back with an invitation to share the finished *ćetenija*. In the United States, however, the context, function and meaning are very different. *Ćetenija* is made not by marriageable girls, but by middle-aged women who are teaching the children. Boys and girls try their hand at working the sugar while listening to stories about *ćetenija*-making in Bosnia.

*Rešedija* is also a dish with memories. Considered old-fashioned even in Bosnia, women in greater Detroit do not make it, with few exceptions. An elderly woman brought *rešedija* to a picnic, and everyone commented on how long it had been since they had eaten it.

*Rešedija* is a crumbly sweet eaten as a snack or as part of a meal. Flour mixed with water is placed in the hot summer sun. After three days, the water is poured off, and

the flour, now like brick, is put in an oven to dry, then broken into crumbs that are mixed with a thick plum preserve (*pekmez*). The crumbs can be kept in an airtight container for a very long time and several women, eager to make *rešedija*, asked for jars of these crumbs. It is, however, doubtful that anyone else in this community will ever make *rešedija* from scratch because it is so time consuming.

Improvements in international marketing have made it much easier to replicate Bosnian food in America. Bosnian markets, and sometimes non-Bosnian markets with a partial clientele of Bosnians, stock imports from Bosnia-Herzegovina and parallel products from Croatia, Macedonia, and Serbia. As a result it is less necessary to find or concoct substitutes. Earlier Balkan immigrants, and those Bosnians without access to such markets, found it necessary to construct a substitute for *kajmak*, a partially fermented cultured cream product similar to clotted cream that is much used throughout the Balkans, eaten both fresh and in cooking. Some stores import a credible factory-made version from Bosnia-Herzegovina, but most families substitute American sour cream for purposes of cooking. So common is its use that they purchase sour cream in three, even five, pound cartons. A local Macedonian market makes a concocted *kajmak* as was very common among earlier Balkan immigrants. Recipes vary but usually include some combination of sour cream, feta, cream cheese, and butter. The same market also sells imported Bosnian *kajmak*, but long time customers have become so habituated to the made up version that they prefer it. An aged version of *kajmak* (*stari kajmak*) is apparently unavailable in America.

Bosnian markets also import a number of other products either unavailable in America or preferred by Bosnians to their American counterparts. Sugar cubes are imported because the large rectangular, rough-edged Bosnian cubes are more familiar than American, even if the taste is no different. *Vegeta*, considered essential by Bosnian cooks, is always on the shelves in great supply. It is a flavour enhancer composed primarily of salt, dehydrated vegetables, and monosodium glutamate, and Bosnians use it in many savory dishes, such as stews and meats to be grilled. Also common are jars of *ajvar*, a relish made of pepper paste sometimes diluted with eggplant puree, and *pekmez*, a fruit spread most commonly made of the same plums used for *šljivovica*. Both can be homemade, producing a superior product. *Travnički sir* (cheese from Travnik) is a feta-like white cheese but creamier, less crumbly, and less salty. It is sometimes imported but difficult to find and not as good as the bulk product in Bosnia. Bosnians much prefer it, but they have largely replaced it with feta. Bosnian coffee, paprika, jams and herbal teas from one or another of the post-Yugoslav nations, small cans of Croatian or Bosnian paté, *jufka*, imported thin noodles as used in soup, shrink wrapped packages of *subo meso*, frozen and/or fresh *ćevapčići*, and *lepinje* are usually available. Sometimes one can purchase chunks of freshly roasted lamb. No effort is made to obtain halal meats, even though these are readily available in nearby Arab markets.

Some men continue to make *šljivovica*, a common practice in Bosnia-Herzegovina but illegal in the United States. Stills are usually homemade and crude since even to possess one is illegal. Once constructed, a still is usually passed among friends and relatives for their own use. Obtaining enough of the right kind of plums is

a problem since the favoured variety is not commonly available in America. Once a farm is located with a supply, even some distance away, word is quickly passed through the network of Bosnian men.

Some Bosnian Americans garden, often planting vegetables using seeds brought from Bosnia. Gardens frequently include fruit trees. Canning is uncommon but many preserve by pickling, principally saurkraut (including whole head for *sarma*) and peppers (including peppers stuffed with saurkraut). Plums are used for a thick jam (*pekmez*).

Hunting and fishing are very popular among Bosnian men. Deer hunters tend to kill as many deer as is legal (six in one example) and distribute most of the venison within the community. One popular way of cooking fish, including carp, which is little eaten by most other Americans, is in a soupy stew seasoned with paprika.

Bosnian restaurants tend to be of two types, those catering to fellow Bosnians and those primarily serving Bosnian food to the general public. The proprietors of either type were almost never restaurateurs in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The clientele of the former are almost exclusively men. They usually offer little other than *ćevapčići* and other grilled meat, coffee, and perhaps beer. Roasted lamb may be available on weekends. The social function of such establishments is more important than the food. They are a feature of the earlier days of the Bosnian community and have declined in number over time.

The greatest changes in Bosnian food are found in those Bosnian restaurants catering to a non-Bosnian clientele. The food is frequently a fanciful version of traditional Bosnian food, whatever the proprietor thinks will appeal to Americans. Thus, it is the public face of Bosnian food that is the least Bosnian. There has been a craze in New York City in the past few years for 'Bosnian hamburgers', by which is meant an over-sized *pljeskavica* usually filled with mozzarella cheese, served in *lepinje* and eaten like a sandwich. There is even in New York City a Bosnian food truck, the current trend in selling street food in American cities. Much more chicken is offered in Bosnian American restaurants than would be in Bosnia. At least one restaurant has added Greek-style gyros to its menu. One has added Arabic hummus. Another, in a neighbourhood shared with Albanians, has included '*Kosovski sudžuk*.' While in Bosnia, *ćevapčići* are served only with *lepinje* and chopped onions, some restaurateurs in America will serve both *kajmak* and *ajvar*, as well, with a green salad on the side.

Turkish-style Bosnian coffee is still the norm, though now served in American coffee cups or demitasse instead of the tiny handleless cups (*findžani*) that were traditional. It is sometimes made in the traditional *djezva*, but now more often in a larger metal pot. Coffee is made repeatedly during the day. As one Bosnian from the St. Louis community stated, 'We have Turkish coffee maybe three to four times a day, but it's not like in the U.S. where you use coffee to wake up. We use coffee to socialize.' This last point is most important. When guests arrive, coffee is immediately made. It is served with sugar cubes on the saucer to be dipped or drunk through along with two or three pieces of sweet pastry, even if the coffee service is preliminary to a large meal.



Bosnian Americans prefer coffee imported from Bosnia, even though similar Turkish-style coffee from Turkey, the Middle East and America is more readily available. Tea is never drunk except herbal teas and then primarily for medicinal purposes. Coffee-houses are important nodes in the male communication network. They were particularly important soon after arrival but always less common in America than in Bosnia-Herzegovina, because American work schedules do not provide the leisure time to attend.

Bosnian food in America has changed and, no doubt, will continue to change. Yet at the same time, it has remained remarkably stable, at least in the private sector. To some extent, this is due to advances in international exchange and the entrepreneurial spirit of Bosnian Americans themselves, which has resulted in the ready availability of familiar cooking supplies that would not have been so available to earlier waves of immigrants. It is further facilitated by frequent visits back to Bosnia-Herzegovina. But resilience must be due in large part to a preference for their national cuisine and its symbolic importance as an emblem of the life they were torn from. Even after twenty years in America, most Bosnians eat Bosnian or Bosnian American food at every meal. There is still some substitution of ingredients particularly for those without access to Bosnian markets, but this occurs less often than with many earlier waves of immigrants.

We expect Bosnian restaurants to become more common and more popular in America with the result that more and more Americans will become familiar with certain aspects of Bosnian food. At the same time, Bosnian restaurant food will change at an accelerated pace to accommodate the presumed expectations of an uninformed public.

The cultural amalgamation of Bosnian Americans is at a very early stage. There are still many differences, for example, in the foodways developing in the Detroit area and in Waterloo, Iowa. A number of dishes nearly forgotten in Bosnia-Herzegovina have been revived, always with concurrent changes in function and symbolism.

Those who came as small children and those born in America are now getting married, most often to fellow Bosnian Muslims and are establishing their own households. What they will eat and how they will cook it will be key in the sustainability of a Bosnian American cuisine.

One can observe creolisation in any aspect of ethnic culture, but it is particularly significant in food and foodways. There are a number of reasons for this. First, cooking and eating are expressive behaviour, relatively easy to observe, and heavily laden with symbolic meaning. Because cuisine is especially responsive to new environments, where some ingredients are unavailable, and because new social settings bring new ways of eating and cooking, foodways are especially quick to adapt and change. At the same time, however, perhaps no aspect of culture is so resilient to change, so tenaciously held. Generations after the loss of their mother tongue, Bosnian Americans are still likely to be cooking and eating some version of the family's 'mother cuisine', even though it may be significantly changed from food in their homeland.

# University Students, Foodways, and the Immigrant Process

*Janet C. Gilmore*

‘The Return of Traditional Food’ catches the imagination, but proves a conundrum for this folklorist. What do we mean by a ‘return’ to ‘traditional,’ when continuity is inherent in tradition and the traditional?<sup>1</sup> While continuities persist, change is also a constant companion; often what we see as traditional is a lively, yet subtly expressed, moving target. Because any foodstuff is part of a vastly complex system and ‘bundle of ideas,’ and necessarily differs from past ancestors because of environmental, occupational, and cultural shifts – in practices of selection, cultivation, gathering, harvesting, and processing, of distribution, marketing, and display, of cookery and consumption<sup>2</sup> – perhaps we might ask what aspects of ‘traditional food’ seem to be experiencing a ‘return’ and in what fashion? Critically, we who perpetuate traditional food and related practices also change through time and variably choose to continue or discontinue certain aspects in response to fellow actors and audiences.<sup>3</sup>

As in the United States in general, the Upper Midwest, a region of diverse creolised immigrant and indigenous communities, is a challenging arena for determining what might be its traditional regional or ethnic foods. Its foodways have been, and continue to be, what folklorists call ‘emergent’ and constantly in re-creation.<sup>4</sup> First-generation immigrants and contact-era indigenous people have lost integrities of

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1 Glassie, H., ‘Tradition’, *Journal of American Folklore* 108, no.430 (1995): 395-412.

2 These categories provide ‘a balanced representation of the intersection of food and culture’, Camp, C., *American Foodways: What, When, Why and How We Eat in America*, Little Rock, Ark., 1989, 57, along with Jay Anderson’s pioneering definition of foodways as an interrelated conceptual system composed of them (Humphrey, T. C., Humphrey, L. T., Samuelson, S., ‘Introduction’, in Humphrey, T. C., Humphrey, L. T., (eds.), *We Gather Together: Food and Festival in American Life*, Logan, Utah, 1988, 5.

3 Folklore’s performance model is articulated in Bauman, R., ‘Verbal Art as Performance’, in *Verbal Art as Performance*, Prospect Heights, Ill., 1984, 1-58; Camp applies the performance model to foodways throughout *American Foodways* (note 2), and see ‘Meal Organization and Event Organization’, Camp, *op. cit.*, 58-9.

4 *Ibid.*, 37-45.

earlier traditional food systems as they have adapted to new, changing environments and circumstances, especially from the seventeenth-century contact period of indigenous and European encounters to the present. This process continues today with new immigrant settlers and, as I suggest in this paper, with college students, a demographic often perceived by faculty and university staff as knowingly abusing, or not having or knowing, good food practices. At the University of Wisconsin-Madison, a large public university of over 40,000 students located in the state's capital city, the always changing and loosely constructed group of students often serves as a crucible for the 'intentional communities' of the new local foods entrepreneurs and promoters who appear to be 'returning to traditional foods,' and they sometimes share similar socioeconomic and college-educated demographics.<sup>5</sup> Based on ethnographic work among and by university students, this essay suggests not only how university students and their contexts can be likened to those of new immigrants, but also how their food adaptations to this new temporary college home follow familiar new immigrant ways that result in new amalgams, continuities, and change in food traditions.

Commonly, displaced and recombined immigrant groups re-create selected 'Old Country' food traditions that also accommodate new foods and practices from similarly displaced but different groups as well as from mainstream American foodways. These syntheses have often resulted in everyday and celebratory regional and ethnic food traditions and patterns that are today sometimes marginalised, denigrated or displaced, or sometimes appropriated, recreated, and intensified in new contexts – 'built of recursive work as people plunder the past to confect new things'<sup>6</sup> – by the widespread local foods movement, some of whose members have, and draw upon, their own regional and ethnic roots. Trends in *haute cuisine*, and the local, organic, and artisanal foods movements tend to transplant perceived traditional food models from everywhere but local. But this 'throwing the baby out with the bath water' syndrome is a familiar and traditional one to teenagers and young college students experimenting with new identities beyond nuclear families, neighbours, and home communities. Even when they think they reject old ways wholesale, many continue to perpetuate aspects that may 'run quietly at the edge of thought and beneath common life'.<sup>7</sup>

Student food backgrounds, habits, attitudes, and food-related experiences at work, home, and the university have emerged in foodways courses at the University of

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5 Interviews of market vendors and managers in Carpenter, M., with Carpenter, Q., *Dane County Farmers' Market*, Madison, Wis., 2003, and UW-Madison student 2012 projects suggest diversity overall in socioeconomic backgrounds and histories. Within two main categories – those with, and those without, prior continuous agricultural and/or culinary experience – there are strong similarities in backgrounds.

6 Glassie, *op. cit.*, 1995, 405.

7 *Ibid.*

Wisconsin-Madison.<sup>8</sup> An ‘ethnography in the classroom’ approach where students share food experiences in teacher-led class discussions, and assignments that feature ethnographic research into individual student food heritage, have been particularly revealing. In fact, student experiences expressed in these courses, particularly in Spring 2009, map a sequence of four to five food maturation stages through which all progress, including ‘throwing the baby out with the bathwater’ stages.<sup>9</sup> Beginning, first, with a mythological childhood past expressed through family celebratory food traditions, this progression changes into, second, teen-years’ experimentation with food away from home shared by fellow teens and featuring highly advertised, mainstream fast-food preferences like pizza to, third, a similar, de-stabilising first-year college experience. A fourth stage is a maturing later-college experience, while eventually, in a fifth stage, some students exhibit a pattern influenced by the needs of others in new family social units. The second through fourth phases are the most relevant in the following discussion.

Students in my classes typically represent a diverse range of experiences and interests in food.<sup>10</sup> Most are reaching the ends of their undergraduate careers in majors such as food and nutrition sciences, public health, sociology, anthropology, history, art history, environmental history, languages and literature area studies, folklore, and art; some are graduate students in these fields.<sup>11</sup> There tend to be more women in the classes than men. Most fit the ‘white upper and middle-class’ profile characteristic of this research university, although this monolithic category soon breaks down into subcategories that include African-Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, and second-generation Wisconsin Hmong-Americans. Students come chiefly from Upper Midwestern rural and urban areas in Wisconsin and surrounding states of Minnesota, Illinois, and Iowa, places inhabited by admixtures of numerous old and new immigrant groups. Some also come from large eastern seaboard urban conglomerates like New York City and from overseas, in particular south Asian countries such as India, Sri Lanka, and Java where numerous ethnic groups have coexisted for generations. Strong connections emerge with specific older immigrant communities as well as food producers such as hunters, fishers, gatherers, farmers, and gardeners. Many still have living grandparents, parents, and extended families to whom they attribute important

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8 Foodways content and assignments in ‘Folklore of Festivals and Celebrations’ classes in 2004, 2006, 2007, and 2009, involved *c.* 120 students altogether. Courses devoted to foodways in 2005, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012 involved *c.* 90 students altogether.

9 This class focused on the results of student food journals over a period of a week, following up on a 2008 Population Health Course Development grant funded by UW-Madison’s Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health and Society Scholars Program.

10 Student demographic information from entry questionnaires completed the first day of class, coupled with class discussion and student ethnographic project research.

11 This demographic represents students in all courses mentioned earlier.

foodways influences in learning to cook, produce celebratory foods and events, or share food procurement and production.<sup>12</sup> Some family members have restaurant work histories as owners, chefs, fry cooks, and pastry makers, while students themselves often have worked in restaurants at entry-level jobs, especially as servers. And some, but certainly not the majority, have been involved in community gardening, Slow Food social meal preparation and dining, and gardening activism with grade schools and communities identified as inhabiting food deserts or swamps (terms that apply to areas of high student density, even on campus).<sup>13</sup>

Student testimony in class, in food journals, and in assignments that document special and everyday food productions and events collectively suggest how conscious ruptures from home-based food traditions unfold, while unheralded continuities persist. Conditions characteristic of new immigrant adaptation to the U.S. intriguingly apply to this ever-shifting amalgam of individuals. In particular students exhibit many features that contribute to and develop from what foodways ethnographers William and Yvonne Lockwood call ‘ethnogenesis,’ a process that transforms individuals and families from diverse localities and social backgrounds of a particular national entity into a new group with a distinctive creolised identity in the new country.<sup>14</sup> Building on generations of linguistic, anthropological, and folkloristic research on creolisation,<sup>15</sup> Linda Dégh and the Lockwoods have elaborated a number of factors that contribute to this process and the resulting admixtures of folk expressions. I have found their works useful for understanding how student foodways creolisation may unfold, with attendant substitutions, displacements, combinations, and creations in traditional forms and meanings.<sup>16</sup>

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12 See Gilmore, J. C., ‘Centered on Food’, in ‘On Key Ingredients’, *Wisconsin Humanities Council Newsletter ON*, Winter 2011, panels 3-7.

13 See Guthman, J., ‘Bringing Good Food to Others: Investigating the Subjects of Alternative Food Practice’, *Cultural Geographies* 15, no. 4 (2008): 432, for ‘food desert’ meanings and 2002 sources. ‘Food desert’ (an area lacking ‘full-service grocery stores’) and ‘food swamp’ (an area ‘flooded with junk food’) are applied to Madison in Schneider, P., ‘Food Deserts, Bringing Fresh Produce to Low-income Neighborhoods is the First Step toward a Citywide Food Policy’, *The Cap Times*, Week of July 11-17, 2012, 18-22.

14 Lockwood, Y. R., Lockwood, W. G., ‘Pasties in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula: Foodways, Interethnic Relations, and Regionalism’, in Stern, S., Cicala, J. A., (eds.), *Creative Ethnicity: Symbols and Strategies of Contemporary Ethnic Life*, Logan, Utah, 1991, 3-4; Lockwood, W. G., Lockwood, Y. R., ‘Continuity and Adaptation in Arab American Foodways’, in Abraham, N., Shyrook, A., (eds.), *Arab Detroit: From Margin to Mainstream*, Detroit, 2000, 515-16.

15 See Baron, R., Cara, A. C., (eds.), *Creolization as Cultural Creativity*, Jackson, Miss., 2011, particularly their ‘Introduction: Creolization as Cultural Creativity’, 3-8 ff., and R. Baron’s essay, ‘Amalgams and Mosaics, Syncretisms and Reinterpretations: Reading Herskovits and Contemporary Creolists for Metaphors of Creolization’, 243-84.

16 The following discussion draws from Dégh, L., ‘Approaches to Folklore Research among Immigrant Groups’, *Journal of American Folklore* 79, no. 314 (1966): 551-6; and the Lockwoods’ ‘Continuity and Adaptation in Arab American Foodways’. Point by point citations have been removed here for brevity.

An important factor in the creolisation process is immigrant (self-) selection, a student's likelihood of past family and community experiences, or strongly held positive stereotypes about the university, that lead to the student's decision to leave home to join a new, foreign community of strangers of the same ages, from other places. Like new immigrants, the students experience disjuncture from home. While each represents a home community and socio-economic groups within it, each does not transplant a whole community and context with them.

A second factor is their status as immigrant 'sojourners'. Like a significant number of immigrants who tested the waters for families and communities before others joined them, undergraduate students typically travel as individuals and 'sojourners' who do not expect to stay longer in Madison and at the university than to complete a degree in four to five years. They may view themselves as transient, temporary residents, even though some remain in Madison after their university experience – following the pattern for many immigrants who had intended to stay for only a short time to build assets and return home.

Also like sojourners and the newly arrived, most students' home communities are not local, although a significant number can return home relatively easily, or entertain visitors from home, on weekends and during vacations. Most spend their first year in residence halls on campus, in a high-density urban ghetto chiefly oriented towards their kind – much like sojourners settled in immigrant community boarding houses adjacent to urban work sites so typical of the once heavily industrialised Great Lakes region. After this seminal year, most students disperse into residences in surrounding Madison, but a good majority still lives with easy access to campus and thus in urban neighbourhoods densely populated with students. They may find themselves 'ghettoised' as on campus, but outside the surrogate parental authority of the university's residence hall food system and social relationships. Here they may find themselves modelling experienced, older students in another common immigrant pattern where newer immigrants often look to the example of more established immigrants who may have moved beyond entry-level jobs and neighbourhoods.

Another commonality with new immigrants is student intermingling and exposure to different traditions, sowing the seeds for diffusions and amalgamations of food traditions. In the destabilising first-year on-campus experience, students have increasing choices in food plans, food procurement locations, and housing communities – including a new 'Green House' dorm that integrates local foods and food activism in an ecological orientation. Nevertheless, they mingle in socially similar ways to new immigrants in immigrant ghettos, encountering differing habits including food-related ones, as they become acquainted, dine and take classes together, make new friends, and adjust to the new environment.

Despite the university food system's attempts to provide greater variety, preferred and trendy foods, accommodations for food allergies and vegetarianism, and even locally-grown organic produce, students report tendencies to reject the institutionalised food offerings in favour of experimental and opportunistic social eating at alluring off-campus establishments – in ways similar to rejections of family foods for selections

available through peer-group adventure. Especially on the infamous adjacent State Street, they indulge in a concentration of diverse and intensified restaurant and food shop offerings calibrated especially towards the student 'ethnic' group (although there are other important types of clientele). These selections are heavy on specialty ice creams, pastries, sweets, popular Italian-American, Mexican-American, and Asian-American fast foods, as well as coffee and juice shops, taverns, and high-end ethnic and fusion food restaurants. Perhaps unlike most new immigrants, but more like their children, they binge on unfettered access to this panoply of desirable and sometimes new foods – or interesting new versions of them – as they test new social associations. In an environment of discovery and independence like this, university food service – an institutionalised parental substitute concerned about scientifically-established healthy diets and food safety – may never satisfy its new captives. This vulnerable, newly forming and constantly changing first-year group sees itself as freshmen in college, yet is perceived by outsiders and university workers as an ethnic stereotype of 'college students'. Off-campus food businesses act partly as predators reaping huge benefits by catering to the undeveloped tastes and food adventurism of this captive age-related ethnic group of sojourners, with a new-immigrant parallel in hiring them as low-paid part-time workers.

The mature students groan as they decry their 'unhealthy' and cash-consuming obsessions during that first year. Seeing themselves as now reformed, most in my classes chose to live off campus by their second year, where they claim they slowly improve their food sensibilities, restrained – like new immigrants – by time, money, and limited or irregular availability of fair-priced food variety. While some learn to navigate the State Street 'food swamp' and university offerings with convenience, satisfaction, economy, and social dynamics in mind, others rue and often shun the limited offerings and high prices at local groceries, markets, and restaurants. Some come to rely on roommates, friends, visiting family with cars, and sometimes their free bus passes, to stock up every three weeks at fuller, large discount groceries with huge variety and decent prices, located far distant from campus on metropolitan edges. Through time and trends, like new immigrants who have created ethnic markets and restaurants, students, sometimes joined by faculty, have created a number of off-campus institutions to improve access to better foods and prices near campus: these have included dining clubs with weekly and monthly meals, affordable food cooperatives, community gardens, lunch food carts on university mall, and more recently, distributions of food from community gardens as well as a new 'Fresh Market' grocery – to say nothing of more dispersed area markets and eateries set up by and for the university's international students, faculty, and staff.

Once launched on their own, typically with like-minded friends, like newcomers in an unfamiliar host culture, undergraduates thus face stresses in obtaining customary food adequacy. Like many of the youngest solitary immigrant sojourners, most are inexperienced in navigating food systems and paradigms. Besides difficult access to economical and quality food, they confess to a lack of food preparation and shopping knowledge, inadequate cooking equipment and supplies, and because of their

educational and work commitments, little time to eat or cook – especially during typical week days.

As resourceful ‘pioneers’ moving to more active roles in feeding themselves, students invoke familiar coping strategies, some of which have been described among new immigrants, but are equally common among the newly married of past generations. With the dominant constraints of time, money, limited knowledge and cooking facilities, students favour a range of ‘cheap and free food’ options. Particularly men continue to dine in off-campus eateries, choosing ones that offer a lot of quick and cheap food of acceptable variety, that are close to apartments or on their way to campus. Others – food opportunists – rely heavily on free foods available through work places like university food service or campus-area restaurants and coffee shops. A few enterprising and daring sorts will ‘dumpster dive’ mostly for fresh ingredients that restaurants and food producers toss out – usually students in my classes find this practice offensive and too risky. As in the dorms, and like new immigrants, many students enjoy food packages from home sent by mail or leftovers taken away from visits home, especially at Thanksgiving – and some return home periodically to bask in familiar food bounties and meal patterns.

Students who are more interested in feeding themselves usually claim food economy and make time to obtain limited basic ingredients and equipment, and cook for themselves. Typically these students cook for themselves alone during the week, even if room-mates are cooking and dining independently and simultaneously in the apartment. Some deliberately time cooking sessions for when others are not present, and some will cook meals on the weekend to consume during the week. In this context, they may employ and combine a number of economy food production strategies. Some – often men – defy learning any recipes as they experiment with mixing classic cheap and quickly-cooked staples like pasta with ready-made sauces and whatever else might be on hand including leftovers from past meals. Others shop for brands of ingredients familiar in their homes and expand their shopping to distant full-service groceries, where some call on family members for help in understanding how to shop and recreate selected home-time recipes. Like new immigrants, some report longings for selected old dishes from home, and some students communicate with parents periodically to obtain recipes, identify ingredients, and explain processes. One student’s mother prepared a cookbook of favourite family recipes for her, and was on call by phone to help as she systematically tried them out. Other student cooks, like new immigrants, resuscitate cheap everyday classics – or ‘poor food’ – from their youths that are relatively quick and easy to make: macaroni and cheese is particularly common. Some report perfecting specialties they developed as young cooks in their homes, cheered on by their families, or as beginning college cooks, cheered on by friends. Within these contexts of recreating selected familiar basics at first, most move on to new territory, testing ideas that they have seen reproduced by friends or on TV, or that they have encountered in restaurants,



community food activism, cookbooks, and on the Internet.<sup>17</sup> A few report romances with new equipment like food processors, blenders, and toaster ovens that inspire experimentation with new foods and recipes discovered through student social experiences and new-found vegetarianism.

Regardless of the specific food sources, students forge new synthetic food repertoires differentially, depending on their personalities, as they selectively add new food preference terminologies, stereotypes, and preparations to old ones and often make vegetarian substitutions in formerly meat-based concoctions. Perhaps more like children in new immigrant families than their parents, these students may embrace and favour new foods of 'the other,' forcing their families to accommodate new rebellious tastes, with sometimes lasting effects on the family's dietary patterns.

While the young folk may sometimes claim or appear to reject, wholesale, old family and community models, including everyday timing of consuming foods, the student food logs indicate that they still follow an underlying weekly pattern of meal sequencing, elaboration, and sociability identified in diverse American, immigrant American, and British working class households.<sup>18</sup> While they may seem to authority figures like they are ruining themselves on bad, expensive foods they can acquire and eat easily, in fact they seem to divide each week into two parts. The first is a Monday-Thursday spartan everyday grind that is almost like a solitary fasting cycle strictly regimented by time efficiencies around classes, homework, and work. Food is treated here like quick fuel. The second cycle is a festal Friday through Sunday sociable weekend feasting extravaganza where eating schedules are fluid, meals are fuller, slower, often shared with and sometimes cooked with others, and food offerings are richer, more intense and complex. Students offset the losses of the work week with excesses on the weekend – and these weekends are when they often work socially on emerging new food identities in communal cooking, dining, or food exchange, with occasional relapses to home-based identities while visiting with family members and old friends. In making time to cook, feast, and visit, students not only perpetuate social matrices of foodways, but cultivate exchange and friendship. Even while creating or sampling new foods within this context, the students often experience or recreate familiar meal strategies and especially potluck meal formats in complementary foods, display, consumption, and clean up.

This preliminary development of parallels, findings, and generalisations suggests that the college student experience of heightened food dynamism and adventurism is variable while it builds on the destabilisation that takes place as teenagers move away

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17 Gilmore, *op. cit.*, 2011.

18 Adler, T. A., 'Making Pancakes on Sunday: The Male Cook in Family Tradition', *Western Folklore* 40, no. 1 (1981): 45-54; Douglas, M., 'Food as an Art Form', *Studio, International Journal of Modern Art* 188, no. 969 (1974): 83-8; and Goode, J., Theophano, J., Curtis, K., 'A Framework for the Analysis of Continuity and Change in Shared Sociocultural Rules for Food Use: The Italian-American Pattern', in Brown, L. K., Mussell, K., (eds.), *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States*, Knoxville, Tenn., 1985, 66-88.

from family, the familiar, and symbols of parental authority, towards peer group preferences, approval, and differentiation from home-based food patterns. The college food experience orients students to common, shared adaptations as they face mainstream institutional offerings aimed towards the age group and parental approval, and differentiate and realign by food orientation, choosing and rejecting dorm foods as they watch others move through the same process, accepting and rejecting fellow students' selections, preferences, and alternate strategies. They begin to build new procurement, cookery (repertoires, tools), distribution, and consumption (meal habits, display) amalgams following common immigrant adaptation patterns that combine selections from their home backgrounds, teen and dorm experiences, and other students, plus commercial media and local restaurants and markets. Ethnographic work with student foodways suggests the potential to expand beyond simplistic establishment stereotypes of student food habits, 'cooking literacy,' procurement of food, and related 'health' concerns. Further, the similarities to new immigrant experiences offer another lens through which to explore the emergence of new food traditions among immigrants and the new local food producers and consumers. All are selecting from culturally, historically, and geographically diverse traditional foodways, inevitably integrating their own and imagined versions of past foodways, as they may 'noisily and conspicuously modernize' them and invent new combinations that both continue and change heritage if only in 'a general tone, a sound, a look, a certain spirit'.<sup>19</sup>

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19 Glassie, *op. cit.*, 1995, 405, 408.

# The Foods of Immigrant Memory

*Adelia Hanson*

Even in mostly rural Oklahoma some of the current trends for recapturing older food traditions can be found. These include wild food foraging and heritage seed collecting and growing. However, I will focus on immigrant food memories, and the present day festivals they inspire. Because of our state's unusual beginnings just at the end of the 1800s and the beginning of the 1900s, a significant number of early settlers were European immigrants. Oklahoma, which in the 1800s was designated as Indian Territory, was not opened for non-Native American settlement until 1889. At that time Oklahoma was gradually opened to homestead settlement by four land-runs, and four settlements by lottery. The prospect of free homestead land drew seekers from other parts of the U.S. and Europe. In the census of 1900, 2.6% of the population of Oklahoma Territory was foreign born.<sup>1</sup>

In the early years of the immigrant experience foreign-born settlers felt the pressure to blend into the predominant English-Scots-Irish culture of that era. Especially during the years surrounding WWI, the nervous major U.S. culture spoke of the need for 'Americanisation' of immigrants – and most-especially of the German speaking population – which was the most numerous group. All immigrant groups, even the Italians, tried to 'keep their heads down' and to blend in as much as possible, while often keeping to communities where they could continue their language and culture.

By the third generation, however, the grandchildren of the originals began to show greater interest in their family ethnic backgrounds. This trend led to the 1970s and 1980s multicultural programmes that created renewed interest and pride in the cultures of the various ethnic groups. One sign of this interest in ethnic origins was a series of short books authored by Oklahoma historians and published by the University of Oklahoma Press with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Each book covered one of nine of the larger ethnic groups that settled in Oklahoma and from them I have abstracted demographic information.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.census.gov/population/www.documentation/twps0029/tab13.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www.documentation/twps0029/tab13.html); accessed 15 January 2013.

Two cookbooks also demonstrate this interest. *Pioneer Cookery Around Oklahoma* was published by a science museum in 1978. Its index includes recipes with German, Czech, Russian and Greek names, among others: *Streuselkuchen*, *Lebkuchen*, *Kolache*, *Borscht*, *Königsberger Klopse*, *Dampfkraut*, *Gahntze Tzimmes*, *Kugel*, *Tamales*, and *Dolmades*.<sup>2</sup> The second book is *Oklahoma Cooks: More than 335 recipes from homes around the world, brought home to Oklahoma*, published by the Oklahoma Folklife Council in 1989.<sup>3</sup> This book divides the world into large regions for recipe purposes (e.g. Western and Eastern European, Mediterranean, Hispanic, and so on), with recipes from named Oklahoma individuals whose heritage is from one of the regions.

Soon our two largest cities and various small towns associated with particular ethnic groups discovered the boost to tourism and business that food festivals provide, including the subgroup of ethnic food festivals. One of the earliest ethnic ones was held in Prague, Oklahoma, whose Czech population began a Kolache Festival, in 1952. Festivals in various places now feature ethnic foods to celebrate St. Patrick's Day, Oktoberfest, Scottish Days, Lebanese Tabbouleh Fest, Shalom Fest for Jewish heritage, Italian Fest, Turkish Festival, and the Greek Holiday Festival. African Americans began talking about and sharing their Soul Food recipes. Indigenous American Indians tribes also have many pow-wows, always offering their native foods.<sup>4</sup>

One of the larger immigrant groups in Oklahoma were the Czechs who between 1865 and 1914 flocked to the Great Plains states north-to-south from North Dakota to Texas.<sup>5</sup> At the time when Oklahoma Territory was opened for settlement, many Czechs who came for the land runs had already lived in other states, primarily north of Oklahoma. So it is not surprising that in Oklahoma they tended to concentrate in the north central counties. Often they settled near where the Germans were settling since many Czechs were able to speak German.<sup>6</sup> Two areas where sizable numbers lived were

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2 Kennedy Rosser, Linda, *Pioneer Cookery Around Oklahoma*, Oklahoma City, OK, 1978. The recipe spellings found in the book occasionally are not the standard spelling, but spellings as the names were remembered by the immigrants or by their families. For this publication German names have been changed to the correct form.

3 Copeland, Pat, (ed.), *Oklahoma Cooks, More than 335 recipes from homes around the world, brought home to Oklahoma*, Oklahoma City, OK, 1989.

4 See, Oklahoma's Official Travel and Tourism Site: [www.TravelOK.com](http://www.TravelOK.com), click on 'Festivals', then on 'food' and 'ethnic' to filter those from other types. There are also numerous newspaper reports of various festivals. I include only a sampling of these here: Mikles, Natalie, 'Fill 'er up, Ethnic food festivals entice Sooners', *Tulsa World*, 17 May 2008; 13 Sept, 2011, p. D-2; Harper, David, 'Oktoberfest: Taste of Germany: Thousands gather for food, music, fun', *Tulsa World*, 23 October 2011, p. A-19; 'Authentic edibles worth seeking out at Oktoberfest', *Tulsa World*, Weekend 20, October 2011, 5; Mikles, Natalie, 'Touting tabouli: Bristow celebrates delicious heritage with festival', *Tulsa World*, 10 May 2008; Mikles, Natalie, 'Taste of Turkish: Festival to offer flavor of Turkey', *Tulsa World*, 27 April 2011.

5 <http://plainshumanities.unl.edu/encyclopedia/doc/egg.ea.006>; accessed 15 January 2013, contains historical demographic information about the Czechs in the United States.

6 Bicha, Karel D., *The Czechs in Oklahoma*, Norman, OK, 1980, 13, 18-19.

in or near Prague and Yukon. Prague is the smaller town, with a population of 2,378 in 2011, but it has the oldest Kolache Festival. A *kolache* is a sweet bun with a fruit jam filling and it is the best known of Czech baked goods. Prague chose the name to represent the town's Czech heritage when it celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1952.

The first Prague Kolache Festival was such a success that it has continued (except for a ten-year interval between 1955 and 1965) until today. It is held on the first Saturday in May and regularly attracts 20,000 to 30,000 people to the tiny town. They come for more than the *Kolaches* and *Kolbase*, though in recent festivals an estimated 50,000 *Kolaches* are sold. There is also a parade, a craft show, Czech national costumes, singing, dancing, food and craft sales booths.<sup>7</sup>

Fig. 1: Kolache sales at Yukon's Czech Festival.



The Czech Festival in Yukon, near the state's capital city calls itself the largest outdoor free festival in Oklahoma. The Yukon Czech Festival began in 1966 as a way to celebrate the seventy-fifth year of the city's founding, and was so successful that it continued annually thereafter. It has the same parades, native costumes, street dancing and vending as the Prague one. The first festival queen was chosen for having baked 600 dozen *Kolaches*. Currently teams of local volunteers meet in a commercial kitchen weekly, beginning in July, to bake the approximately 35,000 *Kolaches* and at least 1,500 other breads needed for the October festival. Czech rye and specialty breads were added

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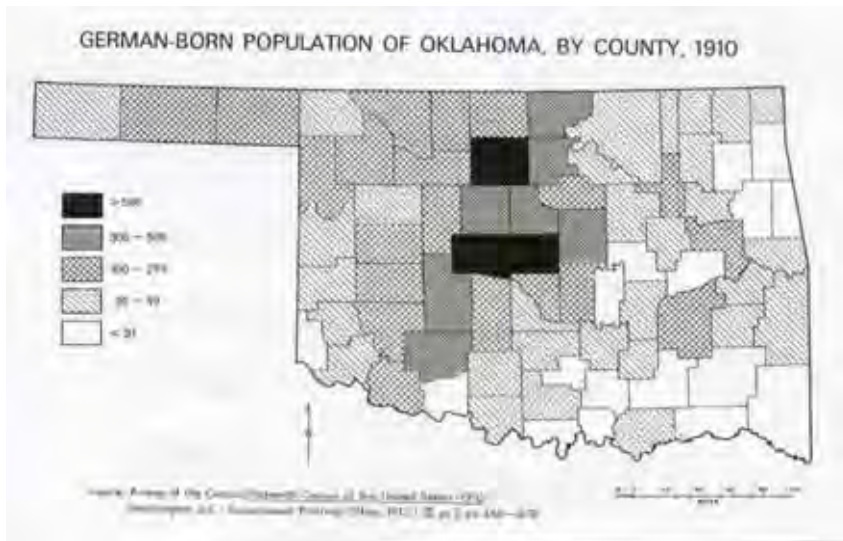
<sup>7</sup> <http://www.praguekolachefestival.com/history.htm>; accessed 15 January 2013.

in 1984. In addition, over 1,500 pounds of kolbasy [*Kolbase*] are sold during the festival.<sup>8</sup>

And in our neighboring state of Texas, seven towns east of Houston also attract visitors to their Czech bakeries featuring *Kolaches* – and advertise themselves as the Kolache Trail.<sup>9</sup>

From the state's beginning the largest immigrant group was German-speaking. In the 1910 census there were 10,000 German-born immigrants in Oklahoma, and 30,000 who had one German-born parent. In the early 1900s there were at least sixteen German language newspapers, and many German language churches.<sup>10</sup>

Fig. 2: Distribution of German speaking immigrants in 1910.



The Tulsa Oktoberfest, beginning in 1979, remains Oklahoma's largest and has gained national recognition in magazine travel guides. With many German restaurant food tents, visiting German musical groups, and imported Bavarian beer, and Czech beers too, *Wine Enthusiast Magazine*, in October 2011, called it 'arguably the most Munich-like Oktoberfest in the U.S.' *Bon Appetit* magazine in October 2005, called it 'one of the best German food festivals in the U.S.' On offer are the usual kinds of *Wurst* and *Sauerkraut* (on average 20,000 *Bratwurst* and *Knackwurst* are sold), *Schnitzel*,

8 Library of Congress, Local Legacies collection; see, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/legacies/OK/200003708.html>; accessed 15 January 2013. Kolbasy (with the 'y' pronounced) is the local name and spelling for the German *Kolbase*.

9 Disbrowe, Paula, 'Road Food Revisited: Kolache Trail', *Southern Living*, December 1911, 54-6.

10 Rohrs, Richard C., *The Germans in Oklahoma*, Norman, OK, 1980, 22-4.

German potato salad, Polish sausage (aka *kietbasa*, or called locally, kolbasy), apple strudel, *Stollen*, soft pretzels, potato pancakes, plus a variety of usual Oklahoma fair foods. The supply of *Wurst* is greatly aided by Siggie's, a Tulsa German sausage factory and restaurant. Though Sigge is Austrian, he makes a full line of German favourites and supplies numerous German restaurants and delicatessens.<sup>11</sup>

Among the German-speaking immigrants there were also Germans from the Ukraine, pushed to immigrate in the late 1800s by the increasing pressures of Russification. Germans from Russia, as we call the group, (afterward referred to here as GFR) were a particular interest of mine last year, as our Lutheran church was celebrating the centennial of its founding by Germans from Russia that settled west of Stillwater, Oklahoma beginning in the 1890s, and who moved the church into Stillwater in 1911.

Germans migrated to the Ukraine in the beginning in 1763 when Tsarina Catherine the Great invited Germans to populate and make productive territories newly added to the Russian empire. For almost one hundred years Germans moved eastward and applied their thrifty, hard-working habits, and better agricultural techniques to the land they occupied. They turned the Ukraine into the breadbasket of Europe. Originally they were promised local autonomy, and the freedom to retain their German language, schools, and religion. But by the 1870s these privileges were withdrawn and the German population began its migration to the U.S. By the early 1900s, an estimated 300,000 settled in the Great Plains states where land was still available. One item they brought with them was seed from the Turkish red winter wheat they had adopted in the Ukraine. This seed eventually became the dominant wheat strain grown in the U.S. southern plains.<sup>12</sup>

Oklahoma Territory was opened to settlement in 1889 and, by statehood in 1907, approximately 4,100 GFR lived in Oklahoma. They were scattered mostly in the western parts of the state. About twenty families settled west of Stillwater beginning in 1893. Most were from the neighbouring villages of Annette and Josephine in the province of Volhynia, a little bit east of Kiev, Russia. In Oklahoma, they almost immediately founded a Lutheran congregation which met in the beginning in homes, in farm buildings, and in the school.<sup>13</sup>

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11 Marshall Middleton, Nicole, 'Tulsa's annual Oktoberfest has gained national attention for offering authentic German food, music, and fun', *Tulsa World*, Weekend 20, October 2011, 14-15; Tulsa Oktoberfest, Travelok.com, see, <http://www.travelok.com/listings/view.profile/id.15825/type/event>; accessed 15 January 2013.

12 Hale, Douglas, *The Germans From Russia in Oklahoma*, Norman, OK, 1980, 2-4, 8-9.

13 Friedemann, Jene, *Bread for the Third Generation: An Early History of Salem Lutheran Church, Stillwater, Oklahoma*, Western History Publications, Inc., Stillwater, OK, 1987, 1-2, 7-10, 32-5, 39, 61.

Fig. 3 Photo of the wedding of Friedrich Less and Julia Bergstrasser, Stillwater 1910. <sup>14</sup>



The 1910 wedding of Friedrich Less and Julia Bergstrasser, both born in the Ukraine, took place at the Bergstrasser farm south of Stillwater. Also in the photo are the bride's grandparents Augusta and Gustav Friedemann, important to the founding of Friedens (later Salem) church. It also is the only photo we have of the group of Germans from Russia that founded our church in Stillwater.

From a memoir in the Bergstrasser genealogy, 'The wedding was a typical three-day German affair with lots of food, a band, (instruments visible in the photo) and much merry making for the many guests. The wedding took place at the home of the bride's father. The *Stillwater Gazette* said the band of the Evangelical Lutheran congregation from Richburg made its appearance and entertained the guests with excellent music.'<sup>15</sup>

One of Julia Bergstrasser's sisters, Emilie, recalled their farm in Volhynia, Russia, with its rich soil and delicious apples. 'They raised beets, which were used to make borscht, a favorite soup, rye bread was made every day. The family had a lot of fruit, especially apples and plums.'<sup>16</sup> In Oklahoma they farmed much as they did in the

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<sup>14</sup> Less, Virginia and Gerhardt, *The Wandering Bergstrasser Clan*, Mount Vernon, Indiana 2001, 175.

<sup>15</sup> Less, *op. cit.*, 173.

<sup>16</sup> *Loc. cit.*, 121.



Ukraine: ‘The family butchered their pigs and cows, made their own sausage, and made sauerkraut in big barrels. They milked up to 15 cows and kept a cream separator.’<sup>17</sup> And according to a Bieberdorf memoir in the same book, ‘They grew rye, barley, flax, and wheat. . . they raised frying chickens to sell, and canned fruits and vegetables from a large garden and orchard.’<sup>18</sup>

The Germans from Russia have no large festivals in Oklahoma, but at least one local one I have found is by a Mennonite community in southern Oklahoma. From our Stillwater Salem church I began collecting the recipes and foodways of our remaining older members, children of the original families, particularly those of two ninety-year-old women, Florence Friedemann and Olga Reinholtz. I found other recipes from the church cookbooks published in 1973, and 1981<sup>19</sup> when more children of the first families were still living. From those sources I copied recipes that were passed out to the present-day congregation to make for a dinner that was the first event in 2011, our Centennial Year.

There is a national organisation called The American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, which published a cookbook in 1973, now in its nineteenth printing.<sup>20</sup> Oklahoma has a chapter of the national organisation which meets twice a year. It is also collecting recipes, and at one of its 2011 meetings, members were interviewed by Oklahoma State University oral historians.<sup>21</sup>

‘Oodles of Noodles’ was the subtitle of the 2011 Oklahoma meeting in calling for traditional dishes for the potluck lunch. As you might imagine for people of German-East European origins, noodles and noodle pockets with various fillings were an important element of the food culture. It is complicated to compile a list of the most common traditional foods, however, because of the wide variety of local names in use for them. For example, some called the filled noodle pockets, by their Ukrainian Russian name, *vareniki*. Two families in our congregation, who had lived near each other for three generations, had two other names for the same dish: *Maultasche* according to one family, and *pirogi* according to the other.<sup>22</sup> The GFR cookbook has more names – *Käsknöpfle* and *pirogen*. And those who had changed the dish’s name to English called them Cottage Cheese Pockets. Home-made cottage cheese was the most

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17 *Ibid.*, 129.

18 *Ibid.*, 148.

19 *Favorite Recipes from Salem Lutheran Church Women, Stillwater, OK, Waseca, Minnesota 1973 and 1981*.

20 *Küche Kochen*, The American Historical Society of Germans From Russia International, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1973, 19th printing, 2006.

21 OSU Oral History accessed at <http://139.78.48.197/cdm/search/collection/Spot/searchterm/germans%20from%20russia/field/series/mode/all/conn/and/order/nosort>; accessed 21. 3. 2013.

22 Interview with Karl Oltmanns and Alene Friedemann Allinson, 26 July 2012.

common filling used for the noodle pockets, but others could vary from onions to fruit. So the one dish had many different names.

One dish with a name Halupcha is mentioned by both my Stillwater sources, Olga Reinholtz and Florence Friedemann. They make it as a casserole of layered bacon or ham, grated potatoes, onions, sauerkraut, and oatmeal, which are baked, then cooled, cut into squares, and fried in bacon fat. Originally the word is the Russian, *golubtsy*, meaning cabbage roll.<sup>23</sup> So apparently the Stillwater immigrant version made the ingredients for cabbage rolls into a less labour-intensive casserole.

Another food with GFR connections – called bierox, bourocks, baraks, and other variations – is still popular in western Oklahoma, especially in the western town of Shattuck. This name is derived from the Turkish, *börek*, and refers to a savory rich yeast bun or filo pastry, filled with either meat or cheese.<sup>24</sup> The usual Oklahoma version is a wheat yeast bun wrapped around a filling that usually includes meat, cabbage, and onion.<sup>25</sup> Bierox was listed in the January 4, 2012 edition of the *Tulsa World* newspaper as number sixteen in the most searched for recipes in their archive.<sup>26</sup>

Dishes that nearly every GFR family made and that held widely-used traditional names included: *Sauerkraut*, *Käse*, *Wurst*, *Borscht*, *Küchen*, and *Strudel*.

To close I will use the words of two women who sum up the cherished memories of food among ethnic groups. First is Margaret Rzepczynski, an ethnic Pole and chef-owner of a German restaurant in Tulsa, Oklahoma. In an article about the heritage of the Polish in Oklahoma, she is quoted as saying, ‘People can forget a lot of things, but people never forget food.’<sup>27</sup>

Then from Jennifer James’s blog about culture in Oklahoma City, the following caught my eye. One of her blog entries is about her pleasure that the daughter of Carrie, a renowned Oklahoma City cook, opened a bakery using, among others, her mother’s treasured recipes for sweet potato pie, yeast rolls, and a strawberry cake. The bakery is called Carrie’s Girl. Writing about it, and also about an African American soul food restaurant, Jennifer stated eloquently: ‘When I visit Momma E’s for fried chicken and greens with neck bones and bacon drippings or carry home this sweet potato pie baked by Carrie’s Girl, I am embarking on an experience that goes beyond food. I’m partaking in a legacy found in recipes and traditions handed down through the centuries. It is uncomplicated and delightful, but it is of great consequence and cannot be overlooked.’<sup>28</sup>

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23 Personal communication with Professor Tatiana Voronina from Moscow, 15 August 2012.

24 Davidson, Alan, *The Oxford Companion to Food*, Oxford 1999, listed under ‘Börek’, 89.

25 Speer, Bonnie, ‘Berrox: Food Favorite of the Northwest’, *Orbit Magazine* (Sunday magazine of *The Oklahoman* newspaper), 4 September 1977, 15.

26 Marshall Middleton, Nicole, ‘Tulsa’s top 25 recipes for 2011’, *Tulsa World*, 4 January 2012, D-1.

27 Overall, Michael, ‘Harrah holds on to its Polish heritage’, *Tulsa World*, 28 October 1907, A-21.

28 James, Jennifer, ‘Carrie’s Girl’, [www.genx67.com/search?q=Carrie%275+/Girl](http://www.genx67.com/search?q=Carrie%275+/Girl); accessed 3 April 2012.



*Part V: In Search of Traditional Food*



# In Search of Traditional Food: Some Reflections on Contemporary Food Culture in Russia

*Tatiana Voronina*

## Introduction

Renewed interest in traditional food culture has arisen because of many issues, including the problem of the public health of citizens in various European countries. For that reason, when speaking about the role of tradition in everyday food and meals, it is necessary to analyse the contemporary situation in the field of nutrition as it applies in each individual country.

In the past in Russia, the theme of nourishment was dealt with, for the most part, by specialists in the fields of dietology, health nutrition, the culinary sciences, and medicine, but the contemporary culture of food was also examined, to some extent, at least, from an ethnological point of view. Today, however, the situation in Russia is such that many questions, including the following, need to be urgently asked: (1) how did Russian nutrition change, beginning from the 1990s, after the disintegration of such a great power as the USSR (1991); and (2) to what extent was the former food ration retained, and what were the novelties which began to be included in the everyday and festive menus of the people? I have partially dealt with these questions in previous papers delivered at the international ICEFR conferences in association SIEF, headed by its President, Professor Patricia Lysaght. Nevertheless, the considerable dietary changes that have occurred during the last two to three years, have led me to examine more closely the nutritional situation as a whole in Russia, and especially the process involved in the virtual replacement of the traditional menu with that which is common in western Europe, so that traditional Russian food is slowly reaching relict status in the big cities in Russia, and especially in Moscow. But for those Russians who live in small towns, and especially for those residing in rural areas, and throughout the vast territory of the Russian Federation, the everyday menu still includes dishes typical of national cuisine such as *borsch* (Russian beetroot soup), porridges, bread, farinaceous foods, and potatoes.

## Sources

In this paper I have used a variety of sources in order to understand the socio-economic situation in the country that has changed consumption- and lifestyle-patterns in contemporary Russia, which in turn have affected consumer choice, and which have formed everyday food and eating habits at home and during the working day. The sources used include my personal field observations and especially data published in the mass media – in daily newspapers, popular magazines, and in special broadcasts and TV shows devoted to Russian national cuisine in which international information concerning food is translated into Russian and presented. It is worth emphasising that the Russian newspapers, especially in Moscow – for example, *Moscow Komsomolets* ('Moscow Member of Komsomol') and *Vechernaya Moscow* ('Evening Moscow'), are very interested in and deal intensively with the problems of nourishment on a fairly regular basis.

## About Traditional Food in Russia

The first thing that is necessary to mention in relation to traditional food in Russia is a tendency to buy locally-produced food products at numerous markets in the cities and in rural areas. A public opinion poll made by Maxpark showed that 68% of Moscovites prefer to buy locally-produced foodstuffs, 14% prefer to buy imported products, 13% like a mixture of these, and only 5% prefer to produce food products themselves.<sup>1</sup>

Despite changes, especially in recent times, contemporary Russian food still retains its most basic and characteristic features, particularly in relation to the number of courses and dishes served. This is especially the case with regard to food provided in the home when it is necessary to take into account family members' tastes, and also in terms of food served in state kindergartens, schools, hospitals and medical clinics. First of all, there are many dinner dishes that are found in many variants, and include traditional soups, *shchi* (Russian cabbage soup) or *borshch* as the first dish, meat and fish garnished with vegetables, or porridges, as the second dish, with compote or tea usually completing the dinner.

Traditional food is still presented in luxury restaurants that offer the most popular national dishes even from the Soviet past.

It should be noted that what is termed Soviet cuisine was not formed all at once. During a relatively short space of time – seventy years – it went through at least five different stages, reflecting the socio-economic history of the country. The special terminology used to describe the Soviet culinary arts, and the special tastes resulting from the composition of its dishes, distinguished Soviet cuisine from Russian

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<sup>1</sup> 'Evening Moscow' (*Vechernaya Moskva*) 10 (14-21 March 2013): 12.

traditional cuisine and also from European or Asian cuisines.<sup>2</sup> Culinary borrowing is not new to Russian cuisine, as historically, it included Caucasian, German and French dishes. In earlier periods, however, the processes of adoption and adaptation were slower, unlike the speed at which such processes can unfold at the present time. Even in the twentieth century, prior to the most recent economic crisis, Russian food products had managed to retain their natural qualities. At the same time, however, Russian cuisine was enriched by the incorporation of new products and dishes of the people in the various republics of former USSR.<sup>3</sup>

Even the passengers of the aviation company Aeroflot can still eat traditional Russian dishes such as *shchi* with white mushrooms, fried lamb with cabbage and cranberries, halibut (turbot) from Murmansk with fried vegetables served with different dressings, as well as other traditional dishes. Those who follow religious prescriptions and engage in fasting, are not forgotten when traveling with Aeroflot, as their menu excludes meat, milk and fish dishes, but includes a large choice of vegetables and fruit.<sup>4</sup>

## New Trends in the Russian Way of Life

The forced migration of ethnic Russians from the former Soviet Republics, especially from Middle Asia, who became, in effect, immigrants in the new Russian State, was a result of the disintegration of the former USSR in 1991. They brought with them many dishes from the Republics to the central part of the country. Thus at the end of the twentieth century, the definition of ethnic traditional food changed very significantly in the context of Russia, and the movement of people, comprising ethnic migration, as well as food migration, has played no small role in this change.<sup>5</sup>

As a result of political upheavals in the early 1990s, foreign foodstuffs began to flood the Russian market, leading to the inclusion of dishes and drinks that are typical of world urban culture. New foodstuffs appeared in the diet when the free market economy attracted a huge number of foreign investors into the food industry. Accompanying the development of the private tourist industry has been the opening of prestige and expensive gastronomic establishments offering the finest international cuisine.

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2 Pohljobkin, W.V., 'National Kitchens of Our People. Cook Book' (*Natsionalnye kuhni nashih narodov. Povarennaya kniga*), Moscow 1997, 46.

3 Voronina, Tatiana, 'The Impact of Political Change on Ethnic Food in Twentieth-Century Russia', in Patricia Lysaght, (ed.), *Food and the Traveller: Migration, Immigration, Tourism and Ethnic Food*, Nicosia, Cyprus 1998, 249.

4 *Kommersant* ('Business Man') 45 (10 March 2013): 10.

5 Voronina, T. A., 'Traditions in the Russian Food Patterns at the turn of the XX-XXIst Centuries' (*Traditsii v pishhe Russkikh na rubezhe XX-XXI vekov*), in Arutjunov, S., Voronina, T., (eds.), 'Traditional Food as an Expression of Ethnic Identity' (*Traditsionnaya pisha kak vyrazhenie etnicheskogo samosoznania*), Moscow 2001, 70-2.



On the whole, since the beginning of the twenty-first century, it can be said that Russia has been involved in a process of change that concerns many spheres of life, including changes to the everyday meal. Vivid examples of the causes of change in terms of food and meals are supermarkets that offer a wide choice of any international cuisine (American, Chinese, Japanese, Italian, and so on). During the last decade many restaurants and cafés began to offer dishes such as Japanese *sushi* and Italian pizza, and it has become ordinary to order these dishes for delivery to the workplace or to one's home.

As regards public catering, the leaders in this arena, besides McDonald's, are the Subway and Starbucks franchises, that offer standard dishes – for example, hotdogs, hamburgers, sandwiches, still and carbonated water, among a wide choice of snacks and drinks – that are to be found virtually anywhere in the world.

Advertisements and mass advertising also began to play a much more prominent role in relation to food. The mass media in general try to popularise knowledge about world culinary traditions. At the beginning of the 1990s, it was difficult to find a magazine which included recipes, but now glossy publications, with bright covers and food illustrations, flood the market, and they contain many suggestions about how to prepare foreign dishes. The magazine 'Gastronome' provides suggestions for the preparation of old Russian dishes and also for those of the 'new Russian cuisine' that is enriched by the inclusion of foreign recipes. The term 'foodist' means a 'culinary snob', while the term 'foodism' means 'culinary snobbery'.<sup>6</sup>

Contemporary Russians, as never before, undergo intense pressure from the producers of food products, who use a wide spectrum of advertisements, ranging from the packaging of products to big advertising panels, that call on the public to buy 'healthy food products'.

It has become a trend to use half-ready food, for example 'Rollton' – a dried broth or puree product from which a meal can be quickly prepared. But such products include modified starch, as well as taste and smell boosters (glutamate of sodium or Na, I-G, flavours identical to natural, vegetable oil, and so on). The firm, 'Cuisine without boundaries', also distributes half-prepared food as a 'business-menu', 'business-lunch' or 'big lunch', but it is difficult to believe that the 'meat does not contain any conserving agents and is ready for use', as the sign says.<sup>7</sup> These, and other fast foods, are popularised by the mass media, especially by TV.

A system of twenty-hour delivery of ready-to-eat food to a client's address (home or office) has become common, and such food can be ordered through the Internet or by telephone. Information about the various menus from which the dishes can be chosen is available on the Internet or on special leaflets with different menus distributed to households and the workplace. Italian cuisine is the most popular one in this connection with Japanese cuisine in second place. It is also the case that after a long

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6 *Gastronome* ('Gastronomy') 4 (April 2010): 83 (Moscow).

7 info@kbgfood.ru.; accessed April 2013.

interval Russian traditional food – *borsbch*, *bliny* (Russian pancake), porridges, salads and other dishes – has once again become popular and is easy to order for home delivery using the Internet.

The beginning of the twenty-first century saw a sharp increase in the consumption of vegetable protein (especially soya beans in sausages and confectionery), frozen foodstuffs, and genetically modified foods – all being products that threaten the health of contemporary Russians, especially that of children. On the one hand, frozen foodstuffs are easy to use at work and in snack-shops and cafés. For instance, a company called ‘Vilon’ has a wide range of frozen dishes, beginning with traditional soups and offering second-course dishes consisting, for example, of cutlets, *pelmeny*, or *bliny* (see <http://www.vilon.ru>), for a business lunch. On the other hand, it then becomes a tradition to eat such food during the week also.

But arising from global changes in political and economic spheres during the last twenty years, there is an ongoing tendency towards further internationalisation and globalisation in many aspects of life. Stratification processes in post-Soviet Russian society have led to a situation in which its larger segment – the middle class – is hardly in a position to buy expensive (natural) food products or even to periodically visit a restaurant.

Globalisation was also involved in relation to a pre-school menu for children in Russia. A critical discussion concerning a kindergarten menu introduced in Moscow in January 2013, which included prepared (half-finished products) and frozen food, was carried on in the mass media and especially on TV. Parents, who held mass street protests against this measure, insisted that the new menu be cancelled, and that the food should continue to be prepared in the kindergarten in accordance to traditional recipes – in other words, that the traditional menu should be reinstated.

At the end of the twentieth century, and with the stabilisation of the Russian economy, it became possible for many people to have a plentiful supply, and a wide variety, of food, but the other side of that coin was the emergence of a sharp differentiation between rich and poor in society in terms of menu.

The new strata of the Russian population, such as the ‘New Russians’, businessmen, and especially people employed in banks (the number of the banks increased considerably) have had to work longer hours and under a different work regime to that which had formerly existed. As a result of this situation, it became problematic for these people during 1990s to have lunch or a snack during the day, as the old system of public catering establishments no longer functioned, and not enough new ones had emerged to fill the gap. Having more money than ordinary people, high- and even low-ranking officials visited restaurants and cafés, that had also changed in response to new demands, in order to dine. It became fashionable to visit restaurants after work and to relax in the company of colleagues or friends.

As the people who were engaged in corporate business, or the new élite, became more engaged in international commerce, they began to visit other countries and to attend official presentations. As a result of experiencing new surroundings and meeting

new people, the new Russians began to follow the widespread norms of behaviour and outward appearance of the international community.

Accompanying the development of the private tourist industry has been the opening of prestige and expensive gastronomic establishments offering the finest international cuisine, including coffee, pastries and desserts in the best Viennese tradition, as well as a wide variety of hitherto unfamiliar fresh and salt-water fish imported from many parts of the world. However, an unfortunate result of this trend towards the provision of an international cuisine, has been the disappearance of many traditional Russian dishes from the menus of many catering establishments – to the surprise of many tourists.

## Fast Food is a Real Threat to Our Health

Fast food has caused a revolutionary shift to take place in the nutrition of Russians, especially of Moscovites. In 1992, the first McDonald's fast food restaurant in Russia opened in Moscow, and this fast food chain is still opening new outlets elsewhere in Russia. The Ukrainian researcher and writer, V. Panchenko, has considered the meaning of the McDonald's brand in Russia, in his book, 'Fastfood – Great and Terrible' (2009).<sup>8</sup>

The book was written in the form of a dialogue with the American investigative journalist – Eric Shlosser, who, in his book, *Fast Food Nation*,<sup>9</sup> examined the phenomenon of the distribution of the McDonald's brand in the USA. V. Panchenko, in dealing with the McDonald's brand in the former USSR, compares the traditions of nutrition in the USA and in the then USSR, and in this context, gives a non-standard analysis of the processes that took place in the Soviet Union, in particular, those connected with industrialisation and collectivisation. The writers agreed that globalism is advancing, and that it is influencing not only the system of nutrition of the inhabitants of the whole world, but also their very way of life.

The contemporary food industry offers numerous new, previously unknown, semi-prepared foodstuffs for consumption. These dishes attract many consumers because they can be prepared quickly and easily. But as 'fast food' often contains many artificial food additives, it can be considered to be an unhealthy food.

In many countries, twenty per cent of citizens suffer from obesity, and more than a half carry superfluous body weight – thanks, to some extent, at least to fast food products. The newspaper *Metro* (published in Moscow) noted a few years ago that the results of research carried out by Canadian medical doctors among fifty-seven students, showed that the abuse of fast food is unhealthy, not only because it results in weight

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8 Panchenko V., 'Fastfood – Great and Terrible' (*Fastfud – velikij i uzhasnyj*), Dnepropetrovsk 2009, 13.

9 Shlosser, Eric, *Fast Food Nation*, London 2001.

gain, but also because it appears that people who tend to visit fast food restaurants become impatient as they wait to satisfy their craving for fast food and, as a result, they become completely uneconomical in their expenditure.<sup>10</sup>

The contemporary food market continuously offers for consumption, different kinds of 'fast food' or 'junk food', rich in fats and sugar, such as doughnuts, confectionary, Big Macs and other kind of burgers, potato chips, snacks, nuts, and so on, which provide the human body with superfluous calories. Attractive advertisements influence children from early childhood and form ideas about food that can be one of the causes of obesity in children.

## Obesity: What to Do about It?

New foods and a new way of life in Russia have led to an increasing number of overweight people. Obesity is slowly becoming a contemporary symbol of Russian society. This is also leading, however, to the popularity of Western ideals of slimness, good looks, and different low-calorie diets, in Russia. The latter situation is more common for well-to-do people in big cities, who pay more attention to their nutrition. It has become a mark of prestige to be known to be following a fashionable diet in the search for good health and beauty.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, in the context of economic stabilisation in Russia, special diets to enable people to grow thin and to be more beautiful, became very popular. These new diets became fashionable and spread quickly among different strata of the population. One can easily find many articles about diets in newspapers, magazines, and especially on TV, where famous people demonstrated their slim figure, low weight, beautiful face and body.

A special study made by Saint Louis University (USA) from 2000 showed that the inhabitants of Eastern Europe and the former USSR began to grow fat when the economies of their states went over to free market ideals. By contrast, the number of people in western Europe who suffer from obesity is now lower than in the countries of Soviet block. Obesity affects Norwegians only to small degree (only 6% Norwegians have an abnormal body weight), while it affects, to a somewhat greater degree, Russians and Lithuanians (both 18%), and also Hungarians (19%), as a magazine *The Washington Profile* informs us. The above-mentioned Saint Louis University investigation determined which factors promoted obesity in people. They took into account the type of economy, the quality of government, the most popular diets, the level of urbanisation, the availability of cars, the quality of the roads, and so on, of the areas investigated. They reached the conclusion that the following reasons contributed to people becoming overweight: psychological stress connected with the last political reforms, change in working conditions (for example, a sharp increase in the number of

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<sup>10</sup> *Metro* ('Metro') 42 (22 April 2010): 9.

office workers, using computers), the expansion of fast food systems (for example, McDonald's), the appearance of numerous cafés that sell cheap packed products, for instance, sandwiches that are very convenient for a quick meal.<sup>11</sup>

In a word, diets are now in demand, and taking into account that they are popularised in many verbal and written forms, one can say that diets have become a kind of business. This situation can be explained as follows, to some extent, at least – after the democratic reforms, Russia became a more open country for Western (West European) markets which led to the distribution of a significant amount of imported food products.

The availability and use of genetically modified products or organisms (GMO), such as soya beans, maize, potatoes, rice, carrots and so on, the use of which spread very quickly in Russia from 1995 onwards, is another reason why Russian people are gaining extra weight. Analysing the data of other countries in this connection, one can easily note that obesity is a progressive process in the places where genetically modified products are freely on sale – in the USA, Canada, the Arab countries, Africa, Latin America, and Russia. Russians eat mainly imported products – more than 50% of food is imported.

It is a well-known fact that some bad habits can promote obesity. They include over-eating, smoking, drinking alcohol, taking coffee, eating refined products, consuming too much salt, eating products that had been subjected to hard thermal processing (processed food), and the consumption of excessive amounts of animal protein foods. But the problem is that such bad habits have continued to grow to such an extent that obesity now ranks with alcoholism, smoking, and so on, in terms of the threat to health in Russia.<sup>12</sup>

## Can We Return to Traditional Food?

Concepts such as 'tradition', and 'traditional food' are still in widespread use in the everyday lexicon of the people, but they usually refer mainly to past traditions of meal preparation and past food habits. At the same time, when we discuss the role of tradition in contemporary life, it is difficult to discover an example of where tradition plays a significant role.

Thus, while we can speak about new trends in the everyday food consumption of Russians, and about the harmful effects of fast-food trends and the dangers they pose to the health of society, it is also necessary to ask the simple question: can we return to traditional food, and if so, how can we return to traditional food?

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11 NEWSru.com // News of Russia // Wednesday, 7 June 2007.

12 Voronina T., 'From Soviet Cuisine to Kremlin Diet: Changes in Consumption and Lifestyle in Twentieth-Century Russia'. in Oddy, Dereck J., Atkins, Peter J., (eds.), *The Rise of Obesity in Europe. A Twentieth Century Food History*, London 2009, 33-44.

The process of the revival of the traditional food that was common, for instance, one hundred years ago, is beset by many difficulties. Recent studies show that in many developed societies in Europe hypovitaminosis is prevalent, especially among pregnant women, nursing mothers, pupils, students, and elderly people. The reasons for this are to be found both in the non-observance of the rules of 'rational' or so-called balanced food consumption, and in the changes to the structure of food rations in the countries concerned. Hypovitaminosis is closely connected to the increasing consumption of refined foods, foods rich in calories, and also of canned food products, or of long-term preserved foods which have suffered vitamin loss. It is thus necessary to use natural products rich in vitamins as much as possible and also to use industrial vitamins, especially during the winter and spring months when food products are low in vital vitamin content.<sup>13</sup>

## Discussion and Conclusion

The above reflections on the theme of the revitalisation of traditional food have led to the conclusion that while Russian traditional cuisine still retains its basic characteristics at the level of home food provision and in the segment of expensive restaurants and cafés, it has, on the whole, a tendency towards internationalisation and globalisation. This has also occurred in other European cuisines, something which is evident from a comparison of the food advertisements to be found in different European countries.

Many new dishes appeared on the tables of Russians thanks mainly to their frequent business trips abroad where they got to know other national cuisines, which they try to reproduce on their return home. It is evident that the commercialisation of food production, economics, and profit, are basic factors influencing the food sector.

Globalisation can act to level out many food-cultural traditions and, as a result, some traditions disappear forever. Thus levelling could be considered to be a negative process that can lead to a complete destruction of a traditional way of life, including the fundamental nutritional complex.

At the end of the twentieth century and at the beginning of the twenty-first, the problem of obesity in Russia became an urgent social one needing a solution. A tendency towards being overweight proves once again that an abundance of foodstuffs does not always lead to a healthy way of life. History shows that, as a rule, people cannot use the profusion of food wisely or in a healthy fashion during periods of temporary or constant wellbeing of the economy.

A famous Russian culinary historian, W. Pohljobkin, using the experience of the introduction of new standards of food culture on a mass scale during the Soviet period, has characterised the results of such innovations as the standardisation of common

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13 Skurihin, I.M., (ed.), 'The Book About Tasty and Healthy Food' (*Kniga o vkusnoj i zdorovoj pishche*), Moscow 1992, 6.

tastes, the development of mass culinary food habits, and the inability or unwillingness to try different culinary variants, and so on. Such standards, according to W. Pohljobin, also spread throughout the whole field of home consumption in the USSR.<sup>14</sup> It is difficult not to agree with such a conclusion because it is a well-known fact that global simplification as a whole could have negative consequences. It is unpleasant even to imagine that in ten to twenty year's time, that mass food culture might have spread worldwide.

Thus it transpires that good, healthy food could cease to be a reality and become only a myth. It is necessary, therefore, that each one of us endeavours to do all we can to resist this situation and that we return, using our networks for culinary heritage, to the traditional dishes of our national cuisine which have already been lost. It is a common task to revitalise forgotten products and to make tradition an important factor in terms of the consumption and production of food today.

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14 Pohljobkin, W.V., *op. cit.*, 1997, 6.

# Tradition under the Microscope: The Scottish Cuisine

*Una A. Robertson*

Childhood memories often include food – granny’s special soup, for example, or home baking displayed on the tea table. Even for today’s older generation such memories will barely stretch beyond the 1950s, a time when produce was already imported from around the world. Surely ‘traditional’ when used in regard to food harks back to an earlier era when the diet was based on supplies produced or processed locally and according to season? Dictionaries give little indication of time in their definitions, merely of something ‘being handed down’ or of ‘continuing’.

Evidence would suggest that a return to such a concept is happening, but only to a modest extent and only among those with a keen interest in the subject; also, when looked at closely, just how genuine is this ‘return to tradition’?

Underlying signs look encouraging. Environmental issues and the organic movement attract attention, as do concerns about decreasing bio-diversity, all of which encourage the preservation of ‘heritage’ stocks – whether of older breeds of livestock and poultry or of fruit and vegetables. The Slow Food Movement, aiming to reconnect consumers with the land, the producers and the enjoyment of food, offers an alternative to fast food.<sup>1</sup> As to availability Farmers Markets, of which there are now over fifty in Scotland, and the increasing number of Farm Shops offer a plethora of items grown, reared or processed locally; while growers of fruit and vegetables deliver boxes of seasonal produce to householders on a regular basis. In addition, tourism authorities promote food festivals, flavour fortnights and so on around the country, while encouraging restaurants to include menus based on ‘Traditional Scottish Fare’.

When produce from around the world is being flown into the country without concern as to distance or season, then that must negate any suggestion of ‘traditional’ food. Looking back across the years, steamships allied to refrigeration<sup>2</sup> enabled the

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1 Fast food: that is, food prepared/served quickly, convenient/pre-cooked or prepared ingredients.

2 Chilled meat: the first successful consignment from Australia arrived in London on 2 February 1880. See Burke, J., *Connections*, London 1979, 242.



transport of foodstuffs from far-away countries and revolutionised the supply chain – meat and butter from Australia and New Zealand, eggs from Canada, ‘green fruit’ from South Africa and almost anywhere else in the world.<sup>3</sup> Earlier again and the impact of the railways was immense. Fresh meat and fish from Aberdeen in the north-east of Scotland went on sale in London, twenty-four hours and five hundred and fifty miles later. Edinburgh could be supplied with milk from Dumfriesshire, a distance of one hundred miles or more, whereas previously the maximum distance for delivering milk by fast-trotting pony was said to be ten miles.<sup>4</sup> That takes us back almost two hundred years. Was the food supply, even then, truly local?

Generally speaking, Scotland’s natural larder was considered amazing in its diversity, despite both its unpredictable climate and vast areas of less fertile terrain. Meat, game, poultry and fish were available to those who could afford to buy them or who owned the land on which they were reared or brought to harbour. However, observations by early visitors reveal mixed reactions: some said that Scotland had a plenitude of produce of all kinds and lacked little; others saw only poverty and a scarcity of finer items on the dinner table.

Apart from leeks, onions, ‘greens’ (an early form of cabbage) and kail, many vegetables had originated elsewhere in the world and were introduced during the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries. By 1683 when the first gardening book written specifically for Scottish gardeners was published, a wide-ranging assortment of fruit, herbs and vegetables was recognised.<sup>5</sup> Even then, they were principally grown in the Lowlands.

In the Highlands kitchen gardens were slow to be established. It was not until 1734 that Lochiel of Achnacarry, (north of Fort William) served his guests with a soup called Hotch-Potch which included carrots, turnips and peas ‘the first time that these vegetables had been produced in that part of the world’.<sup>6</sup> It was generally agreed that the situation regarding vegetables improved greatly during the eighteenth century and cookery books included many recipes. However, even today, the Scots are reluctant to eat their vegetables.

Cookery books of the period, setting out to inspire and educate their readership, reveal what might be available to the cook and many items were called for that were never ‘local’. In the 1820s, before the impact of the railways had been felt, numerous

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3 Law, James T., *Law’s Grocer’s Manual*, Liverpool n.d. but c.1895.

4 Fussell, G.E., *Economic History*, vol. 3, 1937, ‘18th Century Traffic in Milk Products’, 380.

5 Reid, John, *The Scots Gard’ner*, 1683, Edinburgh 1988, incorporating *The Gard’ners Kalendar* ... ‘a Catalogue of such dishes and drinks as a compleat Garden can afford in their seasons.’

6 Neill, P., *On Scottish Gardens and Orchards*, Edinburgh 1813, 64.

recipes from Mrs. Dalgairns assumed the ready accessibility of imported products such as sugar, wine, brandy, dried fruit, citrus fruits, pepper and several spices<sup>7</sup>.

Meg Dods' cookery book included a section entitled 'Scotch National Dishes'<sup>8</sup> and even the most basic are flavoured with pepper (either black and white), lemon juice or spices. Interestingly, many of them are soups or stews based on meat, poultry and fish – often using the humbler parts of the carcase – and on oatmeal and barley. Even haggis, that most Scottish of Scottish dishes, requires a dash of cayenne and lemon juice while her recipe for Lamb's Haggis specifies nutmeg.<sup>9</sup> Also included is 'Orange Marmalade', generally credited with being a Scottish invention, but its basic ingredients of sugar and bitter oranges could never have been of local origin. Imported items are especially noticeable in recipes for cakes and biscuits, in all their countless variations: scones, diet loaf, shortbreads, gingerbreads, Dundee cake and the Black Bun for Hogmanay were all long-time favourites and Scottish housewives became celebrated for their prowess in baking.

If cookery books are considered as being too ambitious, too idealistic, and not in tune with the prevailing supply situation, then domestic account books reveal what was actually on the nation's shopping lists. Slightly earlier, a household living in Edinburgh's New Town was buying many of these non-local items, together with vermicelli or macaroni, curry powder, ketchup and several types of sugar.<sup>10</sup> In fact, the household accounts over the previous one hundred and fifty years bear a remarkable similarity, whether belonging to families in Edinburgh in the 1750s, in the 1700s or even in the 1670s.<sup>11</sup> Raisins, currants, ginger, coffee beans, various sugars, tea and spices such as cinnamon, nutmeg, mace and pepper were frequent purchases.

Equally noticeable are the entries regarding lemons and oranges, sometimes specified as being 'sweet' or 'bitter', sometimes in large numbers and in close proximity to accounts for sugar. In 1710 Lady Grizell Baillie used her vast consignment to make orange wine and had 'two dusone (i.e. 24) oranges to preserve'<sup>12</sup> while the Innes of Stowe accounts in 1754 specify the purchase of '8lbs of bitter oranges for marmalade'.<sup>13</sup>

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7 Dalgairns, Mrs., *The Practice of Cookery*, Edinburgh 1829.

8 Meg Dods (pseud.), *The Cook & Housewife's Manual*, Edinburgh 1827.

9 Dods, *op. cit.*, 354, 355.

10 Private m. s. account book, 1810-14.

11 Innes of Stow, National Archives of Scotland, GD 113; Scott-Moncrieff, R., (ed.), *Household Book of Lady Grizell Baillie 1692-1733*, Edinburgh 1911; Hallen, Revd. A.W. Cornelius, (ed.), *Account Book of Sir John Foulis of Ravelston, 1671-1707*, Edinburgh 1894.

12 Scott-Moncrieff, *op. cit.*, 90: 'For 30 dusone oranges, 20 dusone limons at 15d.p duson[e]'.  
13 Innes of Stow, GD 113, v.397, 22 February 1754.

At this level of society it would seem that the ‘traditional’ Scottish cuisine had always been innovative, ever ready to accept unfamiliar items and to adopt or adapt them as necessary.

However, there were many for whom a cookery book was totally unnecessary: their diet was based on a few staple foods. In the 1790s, the First Statistical Account of Scotland was compiled from information supplied by the parish ministers, some of whom recorded details of how their parishioners lived. In Dalmeny, then a small village outside Edinburgh, the diet of ‘the common people’ could be taken as typical of much of the country: ‘Their food consists of oat-meal porridge, oatcakes and pease bannocks, barley broth, with greens, potatoes, buttermilk and water. Some begin now to use wheaten bread and small beer, but seldom eat any butcher meat (that is, fresh meat). The luxuries in which they indulge are tea, and what is worse, whisky.’<sup>14</sup>

Further afield, at Linton in the Borders, the record stated: ‘In the memory of the old people, the mode of living is much altered ... farmers ate no flesh but what died of itself; onions were a common relish to their bread ... More flesh is now consumed even by cottagers, than formerly by farmers.’<sup>15</sup>

The part played by potatoes in the diet was a recent development, potatoes being one of the many vegetables originating elsewhere in the world. John Reid described their cultivation in 1683<sup>16</sup> and they are mentioned in the Buccleuch Accounts of 1701.<sup>17</sup> However, several decades passed before the first potatoes were grown here as a field crop and huge crowds flocked to see the novelty.<sup>18</sup> There is no shortage of recipes for dishes based on potatoes and they are recorded in the dinner books of the wealthier households. However, the general population regarded potatoes with suspicion and were slow to accept them although in due course they came to play a major role in the diet. The labourers in Kelso, for example, some forty miles south of Edinburgh, lived mainly upon hasty pudding – basically a dish of flour or oatmeal boiled in milk but enhanced with spices and dried fruits if available – or else on potatoes boiled with milk ... adults eating at a meal some six to eight English pounds weight which included the milk.<sup>19</sup>

It is these, surely, that should be considered as the ‘basic’ items, the ‘traditional foods’, seeing that they were produced locally, within a limited distance of those who consumed them and were supported by them. If the first strand in the Scottish tradition, found well before the railway age, is the availability of foreign goods readily adopted into the cuisine, then the second strand is composed of purely local products.

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14 Sinclair, Sir John, (ed.), *Statistical Account of Scotland 1791-99*, vol. 2, Wakefield 1979, 729.

15 Sinclair, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, 1979, 807.

16 Reid, *op. cit.*, 107.

17 Buccleuch Muniments, National Archives of Scotland, GD 224, v. 224/25/19, re Oct-Dec 1701.

18 Dates given for this event are variable and range from 1728-1739.

19 Sinclair, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, 520-1.

But which are promoted as ‘Scottish Fayre’? One can eat one’s way around the world in Scotland’s cities with innovative cuisines and unfamiliar ingredients: that represents the first strand. However, it is with the second strand that one finds some strange ideas on ‘tradition’ or its near-synonym of ‘heritage’.

There is little evidence of the diet of Dalmeny or of Kelso being offered – the oatmeal, the barley, buttermilk, greens or potatoes (other than as ‘chips’ or ‘jacket’); water is on the menu but comes bottled and from anywhere other than its own locality while whisky is heavily promoted and a huge source of government revenue. The ‘tasting menu’ of one Edinburgh establishment starts with the confusing concept of ‘Scottish tapas’. Other such menus boast a dessert based on tayberries (*rubus fruticosus x idaeus*), which are a modern hybrid fruit, patented in 1979<sup>20</sup>; ‘Sticky Toffee Pudding’ is another favourite, but its creation is generally credited to a hotelier in the English Lake District in the 1960s<sup>21</sup> – although it is possibly descended from a dish created in 1907 by the landlord of a Yorkshire pub, again an English provenance. Furthermore, two recent authors fail to mention it in their books on the Scottish diet.<sup>22</sup> Orange Marmalade (considered to be one of Scotland’s gifts to the world, the other being Porridge<sup>23</sup>) is celebrated with a ‘National Marmalade Week’ but it is held in the English Lake District.<sup>24</sup>

As to the suppliers of ‘traditional’ or ‘heritage’ produce, one firm proudly announces that its beef and lamb are sourced from Australia, New Zealand and South America; while the fresh pork and bacon sold at many Farmers’ Markets are derived from an American breed of pig.

Are such items really representative of what they purport to be? Such disregard of logic apart, is there really a return to the foods of yester-year?

One custom that is certainly being ignored is the way our forebears, even the wealthier elements, ate every part of an animal, bird or fish. Whereas cookery books and dinner books abound in many dishes based on the humbler parts of an animal, for example, cow heels, ox cheeks, pigs head and feet soused, fried sheep’s trotters, giblet pies, calves’ ears dressed and cod’s head boiled,<sup>25</sup> few restaurants nowadays would dare advertise such dishes. The diary of Parson Woodforde, an English clergyman, records

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20 Tayberry, *rubus fruticosus x idaeus*, patented by D.L. Jennings, Dundee and released in 1979 by the Scottish Horticultural Research Institute.

21 Sharrow Bay Hotel, Cumbria: a steamed sponge with dates or prunes, served with toffee sauce and vanilla custard or ice cream.

22 Brown, C., *Scottish Cookery*, Glasgow 1985; Hope, A., *A Caledonian Feast*, Edinburgh 1987.

23 McNeill, F.M., *The Scot’s Kitchen*, London & Glasgow 1929, 221.

24 *Daily Telegraph*, 10. 3. 2012, W10: National Marmalade Week, held at the mansion house of Dalemain, near Penrith, Cumbria.

25 Dalgairns, *op. cit.*, 93, 15, 91; 140, 232; 233, 125, 43.

how he dined one day in 1763 on a roasted tongue and udder.<sup>26</sup> A contemporary recipe shows its preparation took both time and trouble: the meats were boiled until tender, skinned, tied together, coated with egg and dried crumbs, then roasted and sent to table with gravy, currant jelly and garnished with lemon slices or barberries.<sup>27</sup> Despite such careful presentation, the diary finishes: 'I shall not dine on Tongue and Udder again very soon.'

A further aspect regarding 'traditional food' that gives cause for gratitude relates to the work done over the past one hundred and fifty years in legislating against the worst abuses of food adulteration. Edinburgh appointed its first Medical Officer of Health in 1862 and his report into conditions in the City make for disturbing reading.<sup>28</sup> The survey concentrated on the conditions of the byres in which the milking cows were kept and on the way meat from diseased animals was sold into the supply chain. Later reports scrutinised the conditions in which milk, ice cream and other milk products were sold.<sup>29</sup> Trading Standards Officers continue the work to this day and while some feel they go too far in their remit, the public can be reasonably confident that the foods on offer are not only precisely what they purport to be and are of the specified weight but are also safe to eat.

Again, other areas where long-time customs are not being followed relate to pubs and to the supply of breads, and here former practices are being surpassed. The majority of Scottish public houses were notorious for being male-dominated drinking places and very different to the majority of their English counterparts. Since the 1990s, many have been transformed into what are termed 'gastro-pubs' that serve ambitious menus of 'fine fayre' and can be pleasant places in which to eat. The situation regarding even such a traditional item as bread has moved forward. Nowadays, many different varieties are on sale, as are the flours and other ingredients needed by the home baker. In 1829 Mrs Dalgairns offers only two basic recipes for bread and a third for 'Brown Bread' that could be varied by utilising oatmeal, or differing proportions of wheat, barley or rye flour.<sup>30</sup> Meg Dods provides a recipe for 'Common Wheaten Bread' but also adds 'Breakfast Rolls' and describes the possible variations to be made on the basic dough with the addition of milk, eggs, butter or sugar to give French bread or brioche paste.<sup>31</sup>

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26 Hughes, D., (ed.), *Diary of a Country Parson*, The Folio Society, London 1992, 23 (17th February 1763).

27 Robertson, H., *The Young Ladies School of Arts*, Edinburgh 1767, part ii, 36.

28 Littlejohn, Dr. H., *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the City of Edinburgh*, Edinburgh 1865.

29 Tait, H.P., *A Doctor and Two Policemen: a History of the Edinburgh Health Dept. 1862-1974*, Edinburgh 1974, gives a wider view of the subject.

30 Dalgairns, *op. cit.*, 357-9.

31 Dods, *op. cit.*, 445, 444.

Finally, meals no longer follow their longtime patterns. The concept of four meals a day is rarely adhered to in favour of ‘grazing’ or ‘snacking’; Dining Rooms are going out of fashion and meals are taken in the kitchen; while families are less likely to all eat together at the same time. Even the way in which people eat their food is changing. A Department Store disclosed recently that twice as many table forks are sold as table knives – since people are increasingly accustomed to eating with a fork on its own due to the popularity of many ethnic dishes, whether eaten in the home or as ‘carry-outs’.<sup>32</sup>

From this brief analysis Scotland would seem to be employing a highly-selective approach to a potential ‘return to traditional foods’. On the one hand there is the ongoing appeal and ever-widening field of innovative cooking and unfamiliar ingredients.

On the other hand, despite a modest reaction against ‘fast foods’, all is not what it would seem. The combined environmental concerns and the positive approach with Farmers’ Markets and Farm Shops does not take into account the power of the supermarkets and the continuing demise of the small local shop. The promotion of Scottish foods is somewhat limited in its scope and the current interpretation of the cuisine of our forbears is questionable, as is the authenticity of much that is offered under the imprint of ‘Traditional’ and ‘Scottish’.

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<sup>32</sup> *The Scotsman*, 21 July 2009, 13, *re* the Department Store chain Debenhams; ‘British table manners in a plate of crisis as fewer households fork out for knives’.

# Making ‘Traditional Food’ – Local Interpretations of a European Protection-System

*Sarah May*

The move to protect local products in Hesse began as follows according to an official in the Hessian Department of Quality Protection: ‘The ministry asked if there were food specialties in Hesse. And this was not our area of responsibility, but in the absence of others who took care of the applying for EU-protection, this is important to point out, it was my private initiative. From the idea to the implementation, I did it on my own, and the manufacturer supported me a little.’<sup>1</sup> This is how Hesse, a federal state in the German mid-west, introduced a cheese specialty – Odenwälder Frühstückskäse – into the EU-protection system of geographical indications. This cheese has the label ‘PDO’ since 1997 due to this initiative.

The ‘protected designation of origin’ (PDO) is the highest protection level in the EU-system of ‘agricultural products and foodstuffs as traditional specialties guaranteed’.<sup>2</sup> The geographical indications provide legal protection for a specific product, which is identified as being ‘traditional’, regionally established, and historically anchored. They give producers in a certain area a common right on a common product, so the protected specialty does not refer to a particular company but to the product’s geographical origin.

Before designating a product as ‘culinary heritage’<sup>3</sup> within the EU-system, it has to be declared worthy of protection. Therefore, the applicants have to collect local and

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1 Interview at the Hessian Department of Quality Protection in Giessen, 19 April 2012.

2 Council Regulation (EC) No 509/2006 (20 March 2006). This revised regulation is based on Council Regulation (EEC) No 2081/92 that was enacted on 14 July 1992. Together, they organise the indication of origin at EU-level. Next to the ‘PDO’, there are the protection levels of ‘protected geographical indication’ (PGI), and ‘traditional specialty guaranteed’ (TSG) whose restrictions on geographical origin are less severe.

3 In order to clearly define ‘culinary heritage’, cf. Tschofen, Bernhard, ‘Vom Geschmack der Regionen. Kulinarische Praxis, europäische Politik und räumliche Kultur – eine Forschungsskizze’, *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 103 (2007): 169-95.

historical knowledge and present this material to the EU. Various actors are involved in the processes of initiating the application, and of proving the local origin of the product, all of which involves research and negotiation, as well as the submission of the request and the lobbying for its success. As illustrated by the quote above, the European system is put into effect by local actors, such as dairy owners, marketing directors, and regional and national government officials, who shape a transnational network according to subjective interests and initiatives. So the system of geographical indications is neither set nor static. There are people using it, and consequently making it. They are performing, interpreting and selling a product and a practice and, they are, thereby, with reference to Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's assertion, creating a metacultural relationship from what was once just *habitus*.<sup>4</sup>

This paper aims to come to an understanding of the metacultural processes within this system of protecting, or rather of creating, heritage: Who initiates and influences the application? How do the various actors involved interpret the EU-system? What changes accompany the implementation of geographical indications? These questions are discussed using the examples of PDO cheese-making in Germany and Italy, by focusing on the motives and strategies of the different actors, in order to show which processes and effects result from the transformation of a so-called 'traditional food' into a legally secured common property.<sup>5</sup>

## Motives – Protecting Sales, not Local Knowledge

In the early 1990s, the Hessian ministry suggested that an attempt be made to have some local product registered as an EU protected speciality. The official at the Hessian department of Quality Protection hesitated before he chose the Odenwälder Frühstückskäse, a 'breakfast-cheese' – a small soft cheese the size of the palm of a hand – from the forest region Odenwald belonging inter alia to Hesse, as a candidate product for the protection scheme. The official pondered whether protection-system and product go together. On the one hand, he considered the cheese to be a perfect example of a product for which protection should be sought, because the entire supply chain was located in the region. He continued: 'And that is what this is all about, that is

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4 Cf. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara, 'World Heritage and Cultural Economics', in Karp, Ivan, Kratz, Corinne A., (eds.), *Museums Frictions. Public Cultures/ Global Transformations*, Durham and London 2006, 161.

5 This paper is part of a comparative study of four PDO-cheese-specialties in Italy and Germany for which I did interviews with cheese makers, with officials of different governmental levels and administration offices of each of two German and Italian regions, as well as with actors in regional marketing, non-governmental organisations, and local food organisations. Embedded in an interdisciplinary research group on cultural property, it focuses on structures of governance and negotiation, and on interests and conflicts, in the transformation process of 'culinary heritage'. Cf. <http://cultural-property.uni-goettingen.de>; accessed 17. 1. 2013.



written in the programme. The point is, the keeping of the entire supply chain and the production in the region.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, he also somewhat doubted the cheese's suitability for registration because the dairy did not seem to be interested in selling the product beyond the region. For sale within the region, though – as he saw it – neither the sign nor the protection would be of importance. In the early 1990s, and as is also the case today, only one family-owned dairy produced the Odenwälder Frühstückskäse. Founded around 1900, the dairy was handed on from father to son and is run today by a married couple of the family in question. Twenty employees are involved in the manufacture of cheese and dairy goods from the milk supplied to the dairy by twenty local milk farmers – a form of co-operation which has been in existence for many years.

It is quite unusual for a product of a single producer to be labelled as a PDO. The couple did not apply for EU-protection for the cheese of their own accord but were prompted to do so by the aforementioned official: 'He identified our cheese as something special. And we are always so involved in our daily routine, and we are so blessed with the work, that we would not have had the free time and capacity for that bureaucratic procedure. We would have said that it was too much of an effort.'<sup>7</sup> So it was essentially due to the encouragement from the state that the Odenwälder Frühstückskäse applied for and gained a PDO.

In Italy, a different situation presented itself. A dairy company in Belluno, a remote province in the Veneto region, produces the hard cheese called 'Piave', named after a local river. Measuring about thirty centimetres in diameter, it is sold at different maturity levels, mostly in Italy, but also abroad – in the United States, for example. The dairy company in question is the only producer of Piave. But in contrast to the dairy in the Odenwald, it is organised as a co-operative of four hundred milk farmers. Founded in 1954, it currently employs about one hundred and eighty people. Just two years ago, in May 2010, Piave became protected as a PDO. The co-operative's administration initiated the application some years previously. In an interview, the marketing director stressed that while EU-protection was not necessary because Piave was not, in fact, 'endangered', the PDO was a useful means of emphasising the high quality of the cheese, and also that the EU-label would be advantageous for sales beyond Belluno.<sup>8</sup>

The views expressed by the actors in Odenwald and Belluno show that each had different motives for wanting to have their cheese specialties labelled as PDO. In the case of the German cheese, the desire was to support the rural areas in question by keeping the supply chain local. With regard to the Italian cheese, the PDO was seen as a means by which to highlight the quality of the product and to increase local and

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6 Interview at the Hessian Department of Quality Protection in Giessen, 19 April 2012.

7 Interview at the dairy in the Odenwald, 18 April 2012.

8 Cf. notes of the interview at the dairy company in Belluno, 18 June 2012.

international sales. EU geographical indications are intended to protect the product and production, and to increase visibility and sales. These insights mirror Gisela Welz's observations: 'The regulation of geographical indications does not aim to protect primarily local knowledge but to give clear information to the consumers and to support the rural areas by increasing the farmers' incomes.'<sup>9</sup> These commercial motivations might explain the special state interest as seen in the case of the German cheese. But even if the actors, in the first instance, appear to use the geographical indications as an economic or legal tool, the application for, and the use of, the 'PDO' sets off actions and transformations that reach far beyond this situation.

## Strategies – Proving the Link between Spatial Origin and Traditional Manufacturing

The most difficult part of a successful application for geographical indications is the proving of the link between spatial origin and traditional manufacturing, by demonstrating the regional and traditional qualities of the product. Here cultural knowledge has to be transformed into a legal context – in order to describe the specification, information has to be collected, selected and arranged. Special local, historical, technical and cultural knowledge is thus necessary.

The putting into words of a 'traditional' practice requires the translation of experience into language which is standardised and internationally comparable.<sup>10</sup> Not every producer, or producer group, has the skills to perform such translation work. Superficially, the application seems to be open to everybody, but the burden of providing proof acts as a potential barrier, as there is a knowledge hierarchy among cheese makers, marketing directors, regional and ministerial officials, as well as between the actors from different areas.

In the Odenwald, the dairy was in charge of finding the necessary pieces of evidence for the PDO application. The owner remarked: 'We collected information. I had to bring documents, and then I had to describe how to make the cheese. What else? We met and discussed... But this was a very time-consuming procedure. On our

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9 Welz, Gisela, 'Europäische Produkte: Nahrungskulturelles Erbe und EU-Politik. Am Beispiel der Republik Zypern', in Hemme Dorothee, Tauschek, Markus, Bendix, Regina, (eds.), *Prädikat "Heritage". Wertschöpfungen aus kulturellen Ressourcen*, Berlin 2007, 324.

10 Cf. Welz, Gisela, 'Europäische Produkte. Nahrungskulturelles Erbe und EU-Politik. Am Beispiel der Republik Zypern', in Hemme Dorothee, Tauschek, Markus, Bendix, Regina, (eds.), *Prädikat "Heritage". Wertschöpfungen aus kulturellen Ressourcen*, Berlin 2007, 331. Cf. also, Hegnes, Atle Wehn, 'Der Schutz der geographischen Nahrungsmittelherkunft in Norwegen als Übersetzungsprozess', in Bauer, Susanne, Bischof, Christine, Haufe, Stephan Gabriel, Beck, Stefan, Scholze-Irritz, Leonore, (eds.), *Essen in Europa. Kulturelle "Rückstände" in Nahrung und Körper*, Bielefeld 2010, 43-64.

own, we would not have made it.’<sup>11</sup> Finding suitable documents was complicated because, until then, the dairy had not been obliged to prove its traditional rootedness. In order to underline the traditional nature of the manufacturing process, a local historian contributed some certificates from the eighteenth century of which the dairy owner was then unaware. The selection of data and its submission was then completed by the ministry’s official. The results of this process can be viewed in the ‘Single Document’ that is published in the ‘Official Journal of the European Union’, which describes Frühstückskäse as a ‘Traditional product from the southern part of the Hessian Odenwald. Documents dating from the eighteenth century confirm that farmers in the Odenwald had to provide cheese to the respective feudal lord as part of the leasehold rent.’<sup>12</sup>

In the case of Piave, the dairy and the regional government worked together to provide proof that Piave was rooted in the area of Belluno and not in any other place. They did research on the Internet as well as in the archives of the historical dairy school, in local ethnographic museums, and in the local Chamber of Industry and Commerce. This research led to the rediscovery of some hitherto unknown historical documents which describe the methods of dairying in the region and the founding of the first dairy association.<sup>13</sup>

The proof of the link between spatial origin and traditional manufacturing has to be regarded as a construction. Research and application create a narrative of ‘how it really was’ by formulating a popular definition of a link which was not that obvious before. So, in case of Piave cheese, the locals emphasise, or rather repeat the link’s description from the ‘Single Document’ content, which notes that: ‘The production of Piave cheese has been handed down from generation to generation in the province of Belluno. Its origin dates from the end of the 19th century when the first rotating dairies were set up in mountain areas in Italy’,<sup>14</sup> – all aspects that are frequently mentioned in the interviews, concerning the EU-protection of Piave PDO, which I undertook.

The EU-system presupposes an awareness of a link between geographical and traditional aspects. As indicated, this consciousness might actually exist, but it also needs to be actively constructed during the application process. Arguing for this link often calls for further investigation and the creation of additional knowledge. In this context, the actors choose modes of research and selection, interpretation and contextualisation of information, subjectively. The applicants’ backgrounds influence the transformation of the (formerly) experienced, into juristically fixed knowledge,

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11 Interview at the dairy in the Odenwald, 18 April 2012.

12 <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/door/browse.html?display>, accessed 17 January 2013.

13 Cf. notes of the interview at the dairy company in Belluno, 18 June 2012.

14 <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:234:0018:0022:EN:PDF>, accessed 17 January 2013. Cf. also the notes of the interview at the dairy company in Belluno on 18 June 2012.

resulting in the specification and the understanding of the PDO-product in its ‘newly written but historically-founded’ dress.

## Making People Associate a Product with a Particular Place

Geographical indications are based on the assumption that products have characteristics which are identifiable by spatial origin. Therefore, it must be possible to associate the product with one particular place on the map. This place has to offer boundaries as well as certain distinguishing characteristics, regardless of whether this ‘place’ is a region, a province, or a valley, considering that all of these spatial categories are understood as constructed.

The area which is demarcated as Piave’s ancestral region corresponds to former fixed borders and covers the entire province of Belluno. According to the marketing director, this is the case mainly for practical reasons, even though the milk production at present does not extend across the total region.<sup>15</sup> The EU assumes that a product’s borders originate from a traditional and, thus also, from a geographical background. In the case of Piave, while the registered boundaries concur with this supposition, there is still an element of ‘border-making’ in this process, because the registered boundaries are not established by daily use.

In case of Odenwälder Frühstückskäse, the boundaries correspond to the area in which milk production used in the manufacture of the cheese is currently carried out. Thus, officially-accepted borders are neglected in order to mirror the product’s actual areas of production. The Hessian official stated: ‘I simply defined the region – Odenwald plus Bergstraße – because the milk suppliers are located in both districts. Ergo, it makes sense to extend the Odenwald [...] for purely practical reasons. That is the best procedure, because that is how I proceeded.’<sup>16</sup> Therefore, demarcating the ‘traditional production area’ of Odenwälder Frühstückskäse for a PDO was a one-man-decision based on an empirical approach referring to established networks.

Within these registered boundaries, the area has to offer certain characteristics. Some of them are defined by local actors during the application. For example, the area attributed to the Odenwälder Frühstückskäse is characterised by the altitude of the meadows which are 400 to 550 metres above sea-level, as well as by precipitation levels, and by the quality of the soil.<sup>17</sup> Of course, such descriptions are inevitably reductive in

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15 Cf. notes of the interview at the dairy company in Belluno, 18 June 2012.

16 Interview at the Hessian Department of Quality Protection in Giessen, 19 April 2012. A district (‘Kreis’ or ‘Landkreis’) is, in accordance with German local law, an association of local authorities (‘Gemeindeverband’). Several districts are situated in the area of the low mountain range Odenwald. The only one that is completely located within this area is the district of Odenwald (‘Odenwaldkreis’) which is the least populous district in Hesse. It borders on the district Bergstraße in the south-west and west.

17 Cf. <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/door/browse.html?display>, accessed 17 January 2013.

terms of the actual complex geological, climatic and biological characteristics of the area.

Additional specifications in the PDO document refer to the current reputation of the area – which is difficult to prove and hard to pin down. This reputation, understood as an emotional component, is intentionally being constructed in Odenwald: There are local marketing campaigns underlining the naturalness of the region and describing the low mountain range as a ‘typical region for milk cattle’.<sup>18</sup> Its hills with grassland and thick forests are advertised as a perfect area for hiking and holidays. Constructing such characteristics enables the establishment of an image of Odenwald as a natural, but also as an agriculturally-structured area. Its food and handicrafts are advertised using a common ‘regional brand’, and its rurality is portrayed as a retreat for residents of nearby cities.<sup>19</sup> This image supports the intention of local actors and the EU to cause people to associate the product with one particular place. In addition, the application procedure and the status of being protected may prompt local actors to foster this image with the aim of transferring the Odenwald image on to the cheese.

Similarly, in Belluno, the local ‘Chamber of Industry and Commerce’ is attempting to enhance the region’s image by promoting the Dolomite Alps, a UNESCO world heritage site. The regional actors in policy and marketing are trying to focus more attention on local culinary specialties by means of such initiatives as a ‘road of cheese’ and the campaign ‘Veneto region – the land of cheeses’, because cheese was once an important source of income in the region.<sup>20</sup> Today, however, it is not the agricultural, but the industrial and touristic sectors which are crucial.

Culinary practices and specialties not only derive from one area but they also create those areas as symbolic constructs.<sup>21</sup> In the context of the EU-protection system, it seems to be necessary for actors to prove, and thereby to create, a local or regional identity: ‘It is these cultural meanings that reinforce the sales value of the region and the regional products’,<sup>22</sup> as Karin Salomonsson has pointed out. Those who want to use a geographical indication as an economic or legal tool, cannot neglect to take on board the instrumentality of cultural arguments or the impact of cultural processes

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18 Mohr, Cornelius, ‘Spezialitäten aus dem Odenwald’, in *Landwirtschaftliches Wochenblatt*, cf.: <http://www.lw-heute.de/?redid=30679>; accessed 17 January 2013.

19 Cf. <http://www.regionalmarke-odenwald.de>; accessed 17 January 2013, as well as the interview with the Slow Food Convivium Odenwald, Darmstadt, 17 April 2012.

20 Cf. Original in Italian: A.Pro,La.V. ‘la Regione Veneto, la terra da formaggi’, undated brochure. Cf. <http://www.formaggisaporidolomiti.it>; accessed 17 January 2013. There is a ‘street of milk and cheese’ in Hesse as well: <http://www.milchundkaesestrasse.de/hessen>, accessed 17 January 2013.

21 Cf. Cook, Ian, Crang, Philip, ‘The World on a Plate: Culinary Culture, Displacement and Geographical Knowledges’, in *Journal of Material Culture* 1 (1996): 140.

22 Salomonsson, Karin, ‘The E-economy and the Culinary Heritage’, *Ethnologia Europaea* 32, no. 2 (2002): 135.

during application. Application strategies may differ between regions and according to EU pre-suppositions, but the gaining of the mark of origin PDO implies that cultural fragments and practices are instrumentalised. This is accompanied by an increase in symbolic capital.<sup>23</sup> This capital can then be exploited for the product's sales and the area's enhancement.

## Effects – A Return to, or Rather the Creation of, Traditional Food?

During the application procedure the product acquires a narrative based on nutritional, but especially, on ethnographic knowledge, as Bernhard Tschofen emphasises.<sup>24</sup> That narrative then creates changes in the perception of the producer, his product and its area of origin: Each narrative interprets the empirical practices surrounding the product and moves them into another context. Narratives provide and create structures, while proving the link between product and region creates special knowledge. This knowledge may actually change practices, processes, and perception.

The historical research undertaken by the Hessian actors, for instance, threw light on the current situation concerning Odenwälder Frühstückskäse. Several dairies were formerly involved in the production of Odenwälder Frühstückskäse, but in the 1970s and 1980s, the other dairies formed co-operatives to cut costs. These co-operatives changed and modernised their product line and belittled the ongoing production of Frühstückskäse. The current owner reflected on past decisions as follows: 'Why did we continue? Certainly not because we were so forward-thinking. It might be that we were rather antiquated. We never put our faith in progress. Especially my father – he never followed the trends. They laughed at him. But we continued to produce the outdated products, so we could stand out from the crowd. We stumbled on a niche, but that could not have been foreseen from the beginning.'<sup>25</sup>

The maintaining of a vintage product, and the passing on of methods of production from father to son, and noticing this only afterwards – these processes fit Hermann Bausinger's description of tradition as the 'conscious cultivation of the transferred in its historical form'.<sup>26</sup> Tradition appears as actions that once were routine. It is only modernisation that re-evaluates tradition as something special which is worthy of selection and worthy of protection by the EU. Terms like tradition and heritage

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23 Cf. Bendix, Regina, Hemme, Dorothee, Tauschek, Markus, 'Vorwort', in Hemme, Dorothee, Tauschek, Markus, Bendix, Regina, (eds.), *Prädikat "Heritage". Wertschöpfungen aus kulturellen Ressourcen*, Berlin 2007, 9.

24 Cf. Tschofen, Bernhard, 'Vom Geschmack der Regionen. Kulinarische Praxis, europäische Politik und räumliche Kultur – eine Forschungsskizze', *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 103 (2007): 184.

25 Interview at the dairy in the Odenwald, 18 April 2012.

26 Bausinger, Hermann, 'Tradition und Modernisierung', *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde* 87 (1991): 7.

might suggest permanence and contingency. Instead their processuality has to be emphasised as Regina Bendix categorically states: ‘There is no cultural heritage, cultural heritage becomes.’<sup>27</sup> Heritage is a subsequently-acknowledged status. This status is based on negotiations and collective decisions.<sup>28</sup> If the existence of traditional food is presupposed within the EU-system, the registration of such a ‘traditional product’ causes various changes to occur that may make it permissible to talk about creating a different, a newly-delineated ‘traditional food’. Culinary heritage is a never-ending process of negotiation, modification and creation – as has been illustrated for the regions of Odenwald and Belluno.

## Making ‘Traditional Food’ – European Benefit and Local Valuation

Five hundred and fifty-eight products are now registered as PDO by the EU. The culinary diversity and regional specialties involved are part and parcel of European rhetoric, image and identity.<sup>29</sup> In the Odenwald, the product’s visibility as an advertising medium is fairly extensive, the PDO designation less so: ‘The sign, the PDO sign, we promoted it a little, we talked about it. It had a good regional press when we received the certificate. I don’t know if the customers understood, because this sign is always in need of explanation. But there certainly is one positive aspect, the product is highlighted. I think that the customers remember that there is a special product involved.’<sup>30</sup> The dairy owners assume that awareness and appreciation of the cheese will grow only if more regional products become EU-protected. This is confirmed by the evaluation of the Hessian official, who stated: ‘For the dairy, not that much has changed. They use the sign on the leaflets and on the products without achieving any additional economic value. Hesse, by contrast, is the obvious winner: The protected cheese is a flagship. We can present the product.’<sup>31</sup>

Both in Odenwald and in Belluno the products have gained in reputation but not in sales. In Belluno, a protection association is in charge of Piave since the beginning

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27 Bendix, Regina, ‘Kulturelles Erbe zwischen Wirtschaft und Politik. Ein Ausblick’, in Hemme, Dorothee, Tauschek, Markus, Bendix, Regina, (eds.), *Prädikat “Heritage”. Wertschöpfungen aus kulturellen Ressourcen*, Berlin 2007, 340.

28 Cf. Csáky, Moritz, Sommer, Monika, ‘Vorwort’, in Csáky, Moritz, Sommer, Monika, (eds.), *Kulturerbe als soziokulturelle Praxis*, Innsbruck 2005, 8.

29 Cf. Salomonsson, Karin, ‘The E-economy and the Culinary Heritage’, *Ethnologia Europaea* 32, no. 2 (2002):125; for the figure cf.: <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/door/browse.html?display>; accessed 17 January 2013. In total there are 1138 protected products within the EU-protection system to date.

30 Interview at the dairy in the Odenwald, 18 April 2012.

31 Interview at the Hessian Department of Quality Protection in Giessen, 19 April 2012.

of 2012.<sup>32</sup> This association promotes and represents the cheese which is no longer in private ownership but is rather common property. Other dairies are waiting for admittance into the protection association so that they, too, can produce Piave cheese. Piave's marketing director explains that there are several requests but that no other dairy has started producing the cheese as yet. He says that in a very matter of fact way.

In Odenwald, a protection association does not exist. Other potential producers are not that welcome: 'Then we would have a problem', remarks the dairy owner. On the other hand, he is sure that: 'Even if we have to pass on our recipe to other cheese makers, they would not be able to manufacture the same cheese. We do not pride ourselves on that, but there is a lot of experience that cannot be put into words.'<sup>33</sup> Could there be more suitable words to highlight the limits of the EU-protection system?

The official registration of 'traditional food' can change how people perceive their culture and themselves. It could create a new consciousness for protected products and highlight regional practices as the discussion of the two cases above indicates. But above all it emphasises that the demarcation of culinary heritage and the protection afforded within the EU-system are always linked to acting subjects, who are making 'traditional food' according to their personal experience and empirical knowledge.

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32 The office of the 'Consorzio di Tutela del Formaggio Piave DOP' is located in the dairy factory. The responsible employee worked for the dairy factory before the protection association was founded. Cf. notes of the interview at the dairy company in Belluno, 18 June 2012.

33 Interview at the dairy in the Odenwald, 18 April 2012.



# Traditional Bread and Butter Culture in German Schools

*Silke Bartsch*

German society is changing. More and more mothers work outside the home and they feel less inclined to do housework without help from others. At the same time, full-time school (c. 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.) in contrast to the traditional half-time school (c. 7.30 a.m. to 1.30 pm.), is becoming more common. What does this mean for 'the old-fashioned (German) Pausenbrot'? 'Pausenbrot' is part of the bread and butter culture in Germany. It means a kind of sandwich, prepared at home, which is eaten during (school) breaks. It is good value for money and comfortable to take to school and to eat (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1: Bread and Butter: (a) Pieter Bruegel d. Ä. (1568), 'The Peasant Wedding'. Photo: [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Die\\_Bauernhochzeit](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Die_Bauernhochzeit); (b) A bread and butter home-made/bought sandwich. Photo: Karlsruher Pausenbrotstudie 2012.



## Excursus: Half-time School in Germany

As a consequence of federalism in Germany, schools are organised differently in the various federal regions. What all regions have in common, however, is that traditional school is organised as a half-time school. Accordingly, there is no tradition of having lunch at school and this is still unusual in Germany. However, having a morning break at school is a common practice. Therefore, pupils have traditionally taken bread and butter in the form of a sandwich, often prepared by their mothers, from home to school (Fig. 1 b; see also Fig. 3 a/b; Fig. 4 d), for this break; hence the designation ‘Pausenbrot’ for this snack. Nowadays, the ‘Pausenbrot’ could also be a snack other than bread and butter (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2: Convenience snacks for the morning break at school. Photos: Karlsruher Pausenbrotstudie 2012.



In addition to homemade foodstuffs, snacks are often offered at many (but not all) schools. This makes it possible for parents to give a little money to their children in order to buy a snack for the morning break. At school, three kinds of vendors offer snacks during the morning breaks: 1. Trades-people such as bakers and caterers (especially in the north of Germany); 2. Action groups (e. g. parent associations); and 3. Vending machines (soft drinks).<sup>1</sup>

Since PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment<sup>2</sup>) in 2000, half-time school is changing to full-time school, though the rate at which this is happening in the different federal states, varies. However, the fact is, that full-time school will

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1 Schwarzenberger, K., Kustermann, W., ‘Pausenverkauf an weiterführenden Schulen – eine Situationsanalyse’, *Ernährungs Umschau* 53, 11 (2006): B 45-B 48.

2 For further information see, <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/>.

become more and more common, and in a full-time school scenario, lunch is a ‘must-have’. By 2008, about sixteen per cent of pupils in Germany were eating lunch in school.<sup>3</sup> No data for the intervening years are available so far. The following two examples, from Berlin and Baden-Württemberg illustrate the consequences of the change from half-time to full-time school in respect of school snacks and meals.

### Example 1: Berlin

For the past two years, Berlin, as a city-state, has comprehensive schools organised as full-time schools. In addition, a secondary school system of the old kind, called ‘Gymnasium’, in which schools are organised predominantly as half-time schools,<sup>4</sup> still exists in Berlin. By 2009, the primary schools in Berlin were already organised on a full-time basis and internal data<sup>5</sup> show that, in that year, around 60 % to 85 % of pupils (it depended on the district of the town from where the student came) ate lunch at school.

### Example 2: Baden-Württemberg

Baden-Württemberg is in the south of Germany. It is a federal state where, traditionally, many mothers work solely in the home, or work on a part-time basis outside the home. No data are yet available on how many schools are offering meals in this state. But it is probably correct to suggest that the number is much less compared to the situation in Berlin, for example. While Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria started to introduce full-time schools at a later date than that of the other regions in Germany, nevertheless, the re-organisation of the school system in the south is currently in full swing.

## Karlsruher Pausenbrotstudie 2012

The aim of the Karlsruher Pausenbrotstudie 2012 was to explore the significance and meanings of the ‘old-fashioned German “Pausenbrot”’ and to discuss the cultural consequences of new ways of school catering. In this article three questions are posed and addressed:

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3 Deutsche Gesellschaft für Ernährung (DGE), (Hrsg.), *Ernährungsbericht 2008*. Frankfurt a. M., 2008.

4 *Berliner Zeitung* 4./5. 8. 2012.

5 Vernetzungsstelle Schulverpflegung Berlin, promoted by AOK Berlin, and supported by SenBWF (Senatsverwaltung für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung Berlin), made an internal study in the federal state of Berlin. Cf. Bartsch, S., *et al.*, ‘Ernährungsbildung – Standort und Perspektiven’, *Ernährungs Umschau* 60, 2 (2013): M84-M95.

1. Does the majority of pupils take food to eat during school breaks (especially bread and butter) from home – or not?
2. What kind of foodstuffs to be eaten during (school) breaks do pupils bring from home to school nowadays?
3. Who prepares the foodstuff eaten during (school) breaks?

### Survey Method: Picture Documentation

A student project carried out in the 2012 summer semester, in a region located in the south of Germany (Baden-Württemberg, Karlsruhe), constituted part of the research for the Karlsruher Pausenbrotstudie 2012. Students of the University of Education in Karlsruhe had training days in the schools in question. One of the tasks of the different student groups during their training period was to photograph, early in the morning, the school breakfast of each pupil in their study group. Each photo was identified by noting the sex and age of the pupil, the region (countryside or town) from which the pupil came, and whether or not he/she had a migration background. Information concerning who prepared the school breakfast was also included (samples of the pictures are presented in Fig. 3). If a pupil had not brought anything for school breakfast, the students were obliged to make a photo of an empty paper sheet. In order to gain authentic data, the pupils were not informed in advance about the photo sessions. By using the method just described, 196 photos from 103 boys and 93 girls were gathered. All of the pupils were attending primary or secondary schools in and around Karlsruhe (Table 1). The pupils were aged between six and nineteen years of age at the time. Thirty-two of the pupils had a migration background.

Fig. 3: Some typical foodstuffs for the morning break at school – a picture sample. Photos: Karlsruher Pausenbrotstudie 2012.



**Table 1: Pupils in the survey**

Age (in years)	6 – 9	6 – 9	10 – 12	13 – 15	16 – 19
Boys	103	27	44	29	3
Girls	93	29	41	19	4
Boys and Girls	196	56	85	48	7

## Pilot Study and Theses

There is ongoing public complaint about the perceived lack of home-made food being brought by children to school for their school breaks. The common assumption seems to be that parents, rather than give their children home-made foods, give them pocket money so that they can buy snacks at school. In Germany, the giving of money to a pupil to buy snack-food at school is regarded as a symbol that a less than optimum amount of parental love and care is being given to the child. The reality is that in the future more and more mothers will become employed outside the home,<sup>6</sup> although mostly part-time. Many conservatives in society are of the opinion that when mothers work outside the home, this adversely affects how well they look after their children, and their children's education. But there is no independent evidence that this is in fact the case. Nevertheless, many schoolteachers, and many people in society also, indict, first of all, mothers (and parents) for the perceived inappropriate forms of nutrition which their children bring to school with them, and its perceived adverse effects on their progress, health and well-being<sup>7</sup>. In this context, school achievement,<sup>8</sup> bad health, especially with regard to the increasing number of overweight children and young people,<sup>9</sup> are matters for general discussion. It is, of course, the case that pupils have many possibilities to buy snacks on their way to school and at school, if they so wish, and the market for snack-food has undoubtedly increased in recent decades. But what is the situation in reality with regard to the school morning break in Germany? Is it

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6 Bartsch, S., Methfessel, B., 'Wandel der Lebensformen als Herausforderung an die Lebensführung', *Hauswirtschaft und Wissenschaft* 60 (2012): 173-9; *Ibid.*, 180-90.

7 Bartsch, S., *Jugendesskultur: Bedeutungen des Essens für Jugendliche im Kontext Familie und Peergroup*. In Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung (BZgA): Reihe Forschung und Praxis der Gesundheitsförderung, Band 30, 2008.

8 Cooper S.B., Banelow S., Nevill M.E., 'Breakfast Consumption and Cognitive Function in Adolescent Schoolchildren', *Physiology & Behaviour* 103 (2011): 431-9; Widenhorn-Müller K., *et. al.*, 'Influence of having Breakfast on Cognitive Performance and Mood in 13- to 20-year-old High School Students: Results of a Crossover Trial', *Pediatrics* 122 (2008): 279-84.

9 Haug, E., *et. al.* 'Overweight in School-aged Children and its Relationship with Demographic and Lifestyle Factors: Results from the WHO-Collaborative Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) Study', *International Journal of Public Health* 54 (2009):167-79.

characterised by bread and butter brought from home, or by snack-food bought with money given to the children by their parents for this purpose?

Our pilot study conducted in the autumn of 2011 indicated that traditional food, such as 'Pausenbrot' brought from home, was the typical foodstuff for the morning break at school.<sup>10</sup> This finding is similar to that of the intervention study *GeKoKidS-Study*<sup>11</sup> carried out in the federal state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, which showed that 93.5 % of the 9- to 13-year-old children took food for the school breakfast from home with them. Admittedly, this represented a group of young children who had received intense instruction with regard to healthy nutrition, and whose parents had received special information concerning nutrition in the form of flyers, parent-teacher meetings, and so on. The interviewed persons were thus atypical. However, despite this intervention, the purpose of which was to increase the consumption of healthy foodstuffs among this group of pupils, the percentage doing so was nonetheless remarkably high. The outcomes were as follows:

1. Most of the children and youngsters took foodstuffs from home with them for the morning break at school.
2. Traditional foods such as bread and butter as in 'Pausenbrot' were still in vogue, but they differed from those of the past.
3. Mothers still prepared food for their children for the morning break at school; what it consisted of depended on the age and sex of their children.

## Results and Interpretation

### School Break: Foodstuffs Taken from Home

#### *Foodstuffs from Home are Still in Vogue*

Only one of the 196 pupils (a boy) mentioned above had nothing (neither foodstuffs drinks, nor money) for the school break. Six of the pupils had no food, just a drink. Twenty-two pupils had money to buy snacks – for five of these, the snacks were an add-on to the food or/and drinks brought from home. Seventeen pupils had thus only money with them. Six had food, such as a lye pretzel, which they had bought on their way to school. It was not clear who had given them the money for it. In total, one hundred and seventy-eight pupils had food or drink, or both, for the morning break at school. This means that 91 % of the pupils were provided for, food- and/or drink-wise. In summary, 11 % of pupils had money – sometimes in addition to food – to buy

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10 Förster, L., *Sind Pausenbrote ein Relikt aus der Vergangenheit? Bedeutung und Stellenwert des Pausenbrots in der Sekundarstufe 1*. Wissenschaftliche Hausarbeit an der Pädagogischen Hochschule Karlsruhe, 2011.

11 Müller, J. M., *et al.*, Das Schulfrühstück von 9- bis 13-jährigen Kindern – Erfahrungen von GeKoKidS (Gesundheitskompetenz bei Kindern in der Schule), *Ernährungs Umschau* 56, no. 9 (2009): 498-505.

something for the school break. The big surprise was the Euro 100 banknote which one pupil had, but this was not typical. Normally, the pupils had just a little money with which to buy a snack. Often parents gave the money to their children, but sometimes pupils spent their own pocket money in order to buy a snack at the school break. But the provision of money to their children with which to buy school-break snacks, differs as between mothers and fathers (Table 2).

## Types of 'Pausenbrot'

### *Bread and Butter Dominate the 'Pausenbrot'*

Traditional 'Pausenbrot' is part of German bread and butter culture<sup>12</sup> (Fig. 1), and it is linked to different meanings, such as mother's love and care, and home. The traditional bread and butter 'Pausenbrot' consists of one slice of (brown) bread, with a cold cut of meat, cheese, and so on, usually eaten between breakfast and lunch or in the *evening*. It is also called '*Vesper*' or '*Brotzeit*' in the south of Germany. The traditional 'Pausenbrot' as a home-meal variant consists of two slices of bread with a slice of cheese or sausage between them (Fig. 3 a/b/c).

The eating of a healthy bread and butter 'Pausenbrot' with wholegrain bread and vegetables, is part of a campaign to direct younger schoolchildren towards a healthy diet. For example, on the first day of the school year 2012, about a quarter of all schoolchildren in Germany got sandwich boxes, which they were to fill with healthy food.<sup>13</sup> So bread and butter as 'Pausenbrot' has a prominent role in school catering.

A closer look at the details on the 178 pictures from the Karlsruher Pausenbrotstudie 2012, where the kind of food to be eaten for the morning school break is shown, indicates that convenience snacks (Fig. 2) are not popular. 137 pupils took some kind of bread to school as a breakfast snack. Of these, 118 took bread and butter with them to school (that is, about 86 % of those who took bread, and about 60 % of all pupils). It was mainly the traditional type of bread and butter that was brought to school (Fig. 3 a/b; Fig. 1 b; Fig 4 d), but there were also variations. Thus, bread and butter seem to be part of the school breakfast in German schools, appearing in various forms, and often with added fruit or vegetables or sweet foods. Lye bread products are the most popular variation, followed by toasting-type bread to form a

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12 For the beginnings of bread and butter consumption in the Middle Ages, see Wiegelmann, G., *Alltags- und Festspeisen in Mitteleuropa: Innovationen, Strukturen und Regionen vom späten Mittelalter bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, Münster u. a., 2006, 2. erw. Auflage). It started with simple rye bread and butter. Afterwards it was usual to have some cheese or sausage on it.

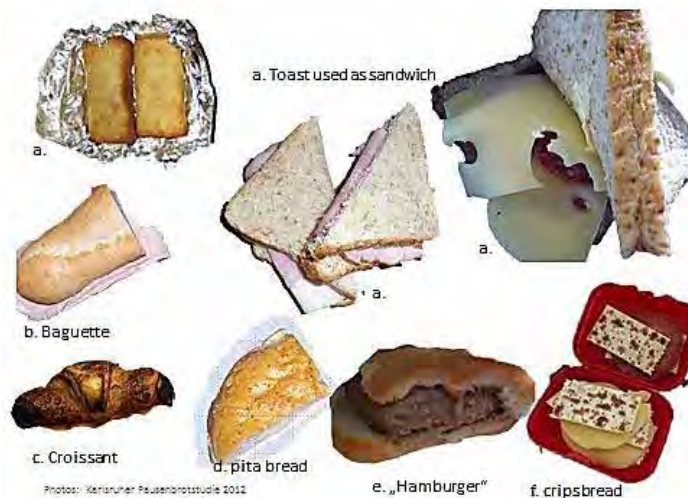
13 Press release 13. 8. 2012. For 'Initiative Bio-Brotbox', See, [http://bio-brotbox.de/downloads/pressemitteilung\\_bio-brotbox\\_netzwerk\\_2012.pdf](http://bio-brotbox.de/downloads/pressemitteilung_bio-brotbox_netzwerk_2012.pdf); accessed 4. 1. 2013. Examples of other action groups can be found via the Internet at <http://www.bio-brotbox.de/>; accessed 4. 1. 2013. These include mainly action groups linked to 'bio' (organic food). For an example of an action group in the region of Karlsruhe, see, <http://www.fasanenbrot.de/Aktionen/Inhalte/Bio-Brotbox-Aktion-mit-Fasanenbrot.html>; accessed 4. 1. 2013.

sandwich (Fig. 5 a). Other bread variations include baguette, croissant, pita, a burger bun for a kind of homemade ‘Hamburger’ (without salad), and crispbread (Fig. 5 b, c, d, e, f).

Fig. 4: Variations on Bread and Butter Culture.



Fig. 5: Variations on Bread and Butter Culture.





### *Healthy Food Meets Lifestyle*

The forms of bread and butter eaten during school breaks vary considerably and are part of a changing food culture. Here is one of the most popular cases. Often bread and butter are upgraded by the use of salad and vegetables (Fig. 3 c; Fig. 4b). In 118 cases, the boys and girls took bread and butter to school as their school-break snack. Of these, 43.2 % (= 51 pieces) had fruit and/or vegetables as an accompaniment. This latter variation is not typical of the old-fashioned bread and butter 'Pausenbrot'. Health campaigns, have, over many years, encouraged people to eat more fruit and vegetables. For example, the 5-a-day-campaign has existed for more than ten years. At the same time, it points to certain kinds of self-service restaurants, which function like modern snack bars and cafeterias or gourmet restaurants, which serve high-priced bread and butter. An example of this is provided by the company 'Manufactum',<sup>14</sup> which offers typical bread and butter in a self-service restaurant named 'Brot & Butter' (Fig. 7) to be found in some German cities, in Munich and Berlin, for example. This seems to be the new manifestation of bread and butter culture in Germany. Thus bread and butter are becoming increasingly fashionable and more and more 'hip'. A LOHAS (Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability)-type of lifestyle is becoming increasingly popular, especially among more educated people with higher incomes. Bread is linked to local food, so it is less exotic and also good to think about from the point of view of a sustainable eating style.

### *Fruits and Vegetables Accompany Bread and Butter*

For the morning school break pupils often have more than just bread and butter. 35 % of all pupils also have fruit and/or vegetables with them – with, and without bread. In some cases pupils eat fruit and/or vegetables only. There are differences between girls and boys in this regard as the gender effect depends on the age of the pupils. Thus many more girls than boys over twelve years of age eat fruit and vegetables during the school break.

### *Brown Bread as Traditional Bread*

The traditional bread used with butter is rye (brown) bread. This is not the same as wholegrain bread which is promoted in terms of a healthy lifestyle. In Germany,

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<sup>14</sup> 'Brot & Butter' is a special offer of Manufactum in Germany. The link is only on the German Internet site: <http://www.manufactum.de/brot-und-butter-steinofenbaeckerei-c-34/>; accessed 4. 1. 2013. Another example is to be found at, [www.aran.coop](http://www.aran.coop); accessed 4. 1. 2013. Pointers for eating bread and butter can be found in journals like *Food & Travel* or *Der Feinschmecker*. See, for example, 'Joseph-Roth-Diele offers bread and butter at lunchtime and it is a new high-class meeting place for eating lunch', in *Der Feinschmecker*, June 2012, 22.

wholegrain bread has just a ten per cent share of the bread market.<sup>15</sup> The pictures from the 2012 Karlsruher Pausenbrotstudie only provide information about the colour of bread used in the school snacks. Out of 137 breads that were photographed, 68 were white in colour and 69 were dark in colour, and it is not possible, on the basis of the visual evidence, to determine whether or not rye or wholegrain bread was being used, in every case. Also bakers often put malt or caramel colour (e. g. E 150) in the white bread to give it a brown colour, as dark bread has a ‘healthy’ image, and can be part of a lifestyle choice, or a sign that one is taking care of one’s health. But probably only a small proportion of the bread which the children in the survey brought to school was wholegrain bread. Data provided by J. P. Müller *et al.*<sup>16</sup> show that only 15.3 % of the school children of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern have wholemeal bread with them for the school break. Although this is a high percentage compared to the German average, it needs to be borne in mind that it was probably influenced by a health intervention education programme in which the above-mentioned children participated. Without this intervention it is likely that less wholemeal bread would have featured in these children’s ‘Pausenbrot’.

Fig. 6: Brot & Butter café, Berlin. Photo: Silke Bartsch, Autumn 2012.



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15 Schulze-Lohmann, P., ‘Ballaststoffe Grundlagen – präventives Potenzial – Empfehlungen für die Lebensmittelauswahl’, *Ernährungs Umschau* 59, no. 7 (2012): 408-17.

16 Müller, J. M., *et al.*, ‘Das Schulfrühstück von 9- bis 13-jährigen Kindern – Erfahrungen von GeKoKidS (Gesundheitskompetenz bei Kindern in der Schule)’, *Ernährungs Umschau* 56 (2009): 498-505.

### *Sweet Love and Feelings of Security*

Sweet foods can be interpreted as symbols of gratification, well-being, and also of 'mothers love'.<sup>17</sup> In the latter context they are understood as a positive sign from mother (or father), which gives her/his child a feeling of security outside the home. Commercial advertising, in television, for example, highlights this symbolic meaning of sweet food, and thus reinforces it. But in our survey, sweet foods were rarely in evidence, appearing only as a kind of an add-on product. Only sixteen of the pictures from the study include sweet items such as biscuits, chocolate bars and bonbons. It would seem, then, that it was not necessary to add sweet foods to bread and butter to show that mothers (and fathers) care for their children, and that fruit and vegetables could take over the role of sweet foods.

### *Regional Influences*

The pictures show regional influences – various types of lye bread like pretzel bars or rolls, for example, are in evidence (Fig. 6). Lye bread is a typical baked specialty in the south of Germany (e. g. in Bavaria and Swabia). This bread is made by glazing the dough with a lye solution before baking it, so that it will achieve its typical brown colour during the baking process. Some children have lye bread, without any cheese or sausage fillings, bought from the bakery, while others have lye bread which has been upgraded at home by the addition of butter or/and other fillings such as slices of cheese or sausage.

Fig. 7: Regional Influences.



17 Karmasin, H., *Die geheime Botschaft unserer Speisen*, München 2001.

### 3. Preparing Foodstuff for the Morning Break

To the present day, the preparation of food for the school break is essentially mother's work – it is part of 'doing gender',<sup>18</sup> as the provision of money is often father's responsibility. The survey showed that nearly seventy per cent of foodstuffs for the school break were prepared by mothers, and that less than one per cent of mothers gave money to their children to buy a snack for the break (Table 2). In some cases, both parents prepared the food for the school break together. In total, 138 mothers of 196 pupils prepared the school food and this could also be interpreted as meaning that they cared for the well-being of their children – in spite of being increasingly employed outside the home and being emancipated. The symbol of 'Mother's Love to eat in the sandwich box' is still working. The gender effect apparently worked differently for the children than for their parents. Twelve boys and eleven girls were responsible for their breakfast break at school. All of these children were older than ten years. Ten of them (four girls and six boys) spent their pocket money on food for the school break instead of preparing foodstuffs at home. The children of today are the parents of tomorrow, so that could be a sign of change.

**Table 2: Person who prepares 'Pausenbrot'**

Person N = 196	quantity	percent rounded	Comment
mother	131	67 %	Less than 1 % of the mothers gave money for a snacks
father	15	8 %	40 % of the fathers gave money for snacks
parents	7	4 %	
child	23	12 %	Nearly half of them spent their pocket money on snacks
others	5	3 %	e. g. grandparents
not specified	15	8 %	

A mother's care for her children was shown to be independent of the sex of her children, but to depend on the age of her children. 66 out of 103 boys (64 %), and 72 out of 93 girls (77 %) had a 'Pausenbrot' prepared by their mothers. As the children got older, a mother's preparation of the 'Pausenbrot' for her children decreased (Table 3).

**Table 3: How many mothers prepare a 'Pausenbrot' for their children?**

Age (in years)	6 – 9	10 – 12	13 – 16	17 – 19
Numbers of boys and girls	56	85	48	7
Foodstuff prepared by mothers	45 (80 %)	61 (72 %)	26 (54 %)	6

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18 Setzwein, M., *Ernährung – Körper – Geschlecht*, Wiesbaden 2004; Bartsch, S., 'Essstile von Männern und Frauen. Der Genderaspekt in der Gesundheitsprävention und Gesundheitsberatung', *Ernährungs Umschau* 11 (2008): 672- 81.

## Conclusion

Bread and butter culture is part of the traditional German school breakfast – even in schools that offer lunch. The forms of bread and butter eaten during school breaks vary considerably and are part of a changing food culture in Germany. This situation is influenced by region, culture, health benefits, lifestyle, and so on. The possibilities for children to buy snacks (and lunch) at school, continue to increase, but a ‘Pausenbrot’ taken to school from home – mostly prepared by mothers – is still important in Germany. Possible reasons for this are: 1. Bread and butter are inexpensive foods and they are often linked to good value for money. 2. Bread and butter are still regarded as a sign of mother’s love and care for her children. Thus most teachers are of the opinion that a ‘Pausenbrot’ prepared at home is a sign of taking care of one’s young children. 3. A bread and butter snack is easy for the pupil to eat irrespective of whether a specific place or time is provided for this activity – timetables that factor in school snack time, and the provision of specific eating areas in schools need further development in Germany. In this study eating behaviour concerning home-made snacks is not considered. Nevertheless there is evidence which suggests that youngsters often do not eat their ‘Pausenbrot’,<sup>19</sup> and there are also signs of an exchange of ‘Pausenbrot’ between children.

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19 Körner, T., Bartsch, S., ‘Pausenbrot in die Tonne? Zwischen Unbehagen und Freiheit zur Selbstbestimmung. Lebensmittelversorgung — (k)ein Thema für Jugendliche?’, *Haushalt in Bildung & Forschung* 1 (2012): 67-81.

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# International Commission for Ethnological Food Research: Conferences, Themes and Publications (1970-2013)

Year	Place	Theme / Publication
1970	Lund, Sweden	<i>Theme:</i> 'Ethnological Food Research: Development, Methods and Future Tasks'. <i>Publication:</i> Ethnological Food Research in Europe and USA. <i>Editors:</i> Nils-Arvid Bringéus & Günter Wiegmann. <i>Publisher:</i> Otto Schwartz & Co., Göttingen, 1971, 213pp. See also: <i>Ethnologia Scandinavica</i> 1971, 1-187 and <i>Ethnologia Europaea</i> 5 (1971), 1-213.
1973	Helsinki, Finland	<i>Theme:</i> 'Dominant Traits in Regional Food Systems in the Twentieth Century'. <i>Publication:</i> Ethnologische Nahrungsforschung. Ethnological Food Research. <i>Editors:</i> Niilo Valonen & Juhani U. E. Lehtonen. <i>Publisher:</i> Sonderdruck aus/Offprint from: <i>Kansatieteellinen Arkisto</i> 26. Suomen Muinaismuistoyhdistys, Helsinki 1975, 340pp.
1977	Cardiff, Wales	<i>Theme:</i> 'National Food'. <i>Publication:</i> Food in Perspective. <i>Editors:</i> Alexander Fenton & Trefor M. Owen. <i>Publishers:</i> John Donald Publishers Ltd., Edinburgh 1981, 425pp.
1980	Stainz, Austria	<i>Theme:</i> 'Nahrung als Kommunikation'. <i>Publication:</i> Proceedings unpublished. Review of conference in: <i>Österreichische Zeitschrift für Volkskunde</i> 1980, 252-63.

1983	Mátrafüred, Hungary	<i>Theme:</i> 'Sequences and Periods of Change in the History of Popular Diet'. <i>Publication:</i> Food in Change. Eating Habits from the Middle Ages to the Present Day. <i>Editors:</i> Alexander Fenton & Eszter Kisbán. <i>Publisher:</i> John Donald Publishers in association with the National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh 1986, 166pp.
1985	Karniowice, Poland	<i>Theme:</i> 'Innovations in Food Habits'. <i>Publication:</i> Proceedings unpublished. Review of conference in: <i>Ethnologica Scandinavica</i> 1986, 161-3.
1987	Søgndal, Norway	<i>Theme:</i> 'Food Preservation and Conservation'. <i>Publication:</i> Food Conservation. Ethnological Studies. <i>Editors:</i> Astri Riddervold & Andreas Ropeid. <i>Publisher:</i> Prospect Books, London 1988, 224pp.
1989	Philadelphia, USA	<i>Theme:</i> 'Food as Symbol'. <i>Publication:</i> Proceedings unpublished.
1992	Dublin & Kilfinane Co. Limerick & The Burren Co. Clare, Ireland	<i>Theme:</i> 'Milk and Milk Products'. <i>Publication:</i> Milk and Milk Products from Medieval to Modern Times. <i>Editor:</i> Patricia Lysaght. <i>Publisher:</i> Canongate Academic in association with the Department of Irish Folklore, University College Dublin and the European Ethnological Research Centre, Edinburgh, Edinburgh 1994, 229pp.
1994	Freising, Germany	<i>Theme:</i> 'The Potato'/'Die Kartoffel'. <i>Publication:</i> Kulturprägung durch Nahrung: Die Kartoffel. <i>Editors:</i> Sigrid Weggeman & Gertrud Benker. <i>Publisher:</i> Edition infotainment Verlags GmbH., München 1997 (Part publication of the Conference Proceedings), 94pp.
1996	Nicosia, Cyprus	<i>Theme:</i> 'Food and the Traveller. The Impact of Migration, Immigration and Tourism on Ethnic Traditional Food'. <i>Publication:</i> Food and the Traveller. Migration, Immigration, Tourism and Ethnic Food. <i>Editor:</i> Patricia Lysaght. <i>Publisher:</i> Intercollege Press, in association with the Department of Irish Folklore, University College Dublin, Nicosia 1998, 342pp.
1998	Umeå & Frostviken, Sweden	<i>Theme:</i> 'Making the Most of Nature'. <i>Publication:</i> Food from Nature. Attitudes, Strategies and Culinary Practices. <i>Editor:</i> Patricia Lysaght. <i>Publisher:</i> The Royal Gustavus Adolphus Academy for Swedish Folk Culture ( <i>Acta Academiae Regiae Gustavi Adolphi</i> 71), Uppsala, Sweden 2000, 400pp.

2000	Ljubljana, Piran, Slovenia	<i>Theme:</i> 'Food and Celebration: From Fasting to Feasting'. <i>Publication:</i> Food and Celebration. From Fasting to Feasting. <i>Editor:</i> Patricia Lysaght. <i>Publisher:</i> Založba. ZRC/ZRC Publishing, ZRC SAZU, in association with the Department of Irish Folklore, University College Dublin, Ljubljana 2002, 428pp.
2002	Basel and Vevey, Switzerland	<i>Theme:</i> 'Changing Tastes. Food Culture and the Process of Industrialization'. <i>Publication:</i> Changing Tastes. Food Culture and the Processes of Industrialization. <i>Editor:</i> Patricia Lysaght (with Christine Burckhardt-Seebass). <i>Publisher:</i> Verlag der Schweizerischen Gessellschaft für Volkskunde, Basel, in association with the Department of Irish Folklore, University College Dublin, Basel 2004, 332pp.
2004	Dubrovnik, Croatia	<i>Theme:</i> 'Mediterranean Food and Its Influences Abroad'. <i>Publication:</i> Mediterranean Food: Concepts and Trends. <i>Editor:</i> Patricia Lysaght (with Nives Rittig-Beljak). <i>Publisher:</i> Biblioteka Nova Etnografija, Zagreb 2006, 350pp.
2006	Innsbruck, Austria & Merano, Italy	<i>Theme:</i> 'Sanitas per Aquas. Foodways and Lifestyles in the Search for Health and Beauty'. <i>Publication:</i> Sanitas per Aquas. Spas, Lifestyles and Foodways. <i>Editor:</i> Patricia Lysaght. <i>Publisher:</i> Studien Verlag, Innsbruck, Austria 2008, 379pp.
2008	Oslo, Norway	<i>Theme:</i> 'Cultural Crossroads. Food and Meals at Cultural Crossroads'. <i>Publication:</i> Food and Meals at Cultural Crossroads. <i>Editor:</i> Patricia Lysaght (in collaboration with Ann Helene Bolstad Skjelbred). <i>Publisher:</i> Novus Press, Oslo 2010, 341pp.
2010	Åbo-Turku, Finland	<i>Theme:</i> 'Time for Food. Everyday Food and Changing Meal Habits'. <i>Publication:</i> Time for Food. Everyday Food and Changing Meal Habits in a Global Perspective. <i>Editor:</i> Patricia Lysaght. <i>Publisher:</i> Åbo Akademi University Press, Åbo/Turku 2012, 366pp.
2012	Lund, Sweden	<i>Theme:</i> 'The Return of Traditional Food'. <i>Publication:</i> The Return of Traditional Food. <i>Editor:</i> Patricia Lysaght. <i>Publisher:</i> Department of Arts and Cultural Sciences, Lund University, Lund 2013, 311pp.