

# From Kebab to Čevapčići

Foodways in (Post-)Ottoman Europe

Edited by  
Arkadiusz Blaszczyk  
and Stefan Rohdewald

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# Introduction: Foodways from Kebab to Ćevapčići and Their Significance in and beyond (Post-)Ottoman Europe

Arkadiusz Blaszczyk and Stefan Rohdewald

## 1. Ottoman Europe from Kebab to Ćevapčići

The history of food or acts of cooking, eating, and drinking have gained growing attention in the humanities and social sciences in the last decade, elaborating social, political, economic, and cultural dimensions of food and foodways in a global context of consumption.<sup>1</sup> As have most historical regions of the world,<sup>2</sup> the Near East and the Ottoman Empire or the Mediterranean have been approached within this new topical and methodological interest, too.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, many aspects and topics have not yet been contextualized or explored within an historical approach. This volume collects contributions to a conference, organized for the research group

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- 1 Just some recent works focusing on the general history of food: An impressive monograph on global and transepochal food history: Civitello, *Cuisine and Culture*; Handbooks: Helstoky, *Routledge History of Food*; Albala, *Food Cultures of the World*; About actual developments: Atkins, and Bowler, *Food in Society*; with a transdisciplinary approach and a focus on (geographical) food studies: Albala, *Routledge International Handbook of Food Studies*. On gender and foodways: Counihan, and Kaplan. *Food and Gender*; without elaborated historical approach: Montanari *Food Is Culture*; including chapters on Early Modern consumption developments: Nützenadel and Trentmann, *Food and Globalization*.
  - 2 E.g. in the series *Food Culture around the World*: Mack, Surina, *Food Culture in Russia and Central Asia*; Leong-Salobir, *Food Culture in Colonial Asia*. In a context of globalization with the example of Belize: Wilk, *Home Cooking in the Global Village*.
  - 3 Only some hints for the beginning: Singer, ed. *Starting with Food*; Tapper and Zubaida, eds. *A Taste of Thyme*; Heine, *Food Culture in the Near East, Middle East, and North Africa*; Helstoky, *Food Culture in the Mediterranean*. In a rather encyclopedic manner about food and health in pre-modern Islamic societies: Waines, *Food Culture and Health*. For the Ottoman Empire as such one should mention the works of Mary Pricilla Işın, *Osmanlı Mutfak İmparatorluğu*, and most recently, her English adaptation, *A Bountiful Empire*. Much research has been previously done on the Ottoman imaret ("soup kitchen") system. Cf. Singer, *Constructing Ottoman Beneficence*, and Neumann and Singer, *Feeding People, Feeding Power*. Another pioneering volume on Ottoman foodways is Faroqhi and Neumann, *The Illuminated Table*. Some recent collective works also cover Southeastern Europe, partially or totally. Cf. Francfort and Saillard, *Le Goût des autres*, and Thede et al., *Culinaria balcanica*, as well as Csáky and Lack, *Kulinarik und Kultur*. See also the most recent Jianu and Barbu, *Earthly Delights*. As tremendously important auxiliary instruments to the researcher of early modern Ottoman foodways, two rather new dictionaries/works of reference need to be mentioned here: Yerasimos, *Evlîya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi'nde Yemek Kültürü*, and Işın, *Osmanlı Mutfak Sözlüğü*. Arif and Bilgin, *Türk Mutfacı*, and its English version, *Turkish cuisine*, serve as a good introduction into the turkophone research on that topic.



*Ottoman Europe*,<sup>4</sup> at Justus Liebig University Giessen in 2015, addressing questions ranging from the production, exchange, and preparation of food to its consumption in Ottoman and post-Ottoman Southeastern Europe. One purpose of the meeting was to research concrete practices or descriptions of food (consumption) and the meanings attached to them in an “Ottoman Europe” between capital and periphery, in and between its regions, religions and confessions as well as in contact with the rest of Europe. By this it also aimed to foster the dialogue between Turkish/Ottoman and Southeastern European Studies on the one hand and European history on the other. Analogically, the purpose of the research group *Ottoman Europe* is to enhance the dialogue between Turkish/Ottoman and Southeastern European Studies on the one hand and research on European history on the other.<sup>5</sup> Yet while the research group focuses on the early modern period, the conference’s scope was extended to include Ottoman and post-Ottoman contexts of food-related practices in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This approach is close to the recently launched research program *Transottomanica* coordinated by the University of Giessen, focusing on Russian-Polish-Persian-Ottoman mobility dynamics, i.e. agent networks and the circulation of knowledge and objects between 1500 and 1918.<sup>6</sup>

The symposium aimed to recontextualize, reflect and expand upon recent approaches in foodways studies in the framework of an “Ottoman Europe.” Among other matters, the contributors were asked to contribute on questions of religion (fasting), diplomacy (gifts, banquets), discursive history (travel journals,<sup>7</sup> cookbooks), spatial history (coffee houses, market places), social and military history, heritage, prosopography (cooks, food critics) and even archeological<sup>8</sup> finds.

## 2. Secret Ingredients of History? The Historical Significance of Food

Until quite recently food was still barely considered a serious field of study among most historians, unless they were of the type who entirely devoted their careers to this topic. Yet studying food is far from trivial! Looking at food is a way of sneaking up from behind to startle long-lasting historical narratives. It may turn out like sitting as a “Westerner” in one of Istanbul’s sweetshops enjoying a Turkish sweet pudding called *tavuk göğsü* (lit. “chicken breast”)<sup>9</sup>, only to feel cheated afterwards upon learning that the name is not inspired by its shape or just coincidence, as it literally contains chicken – a horror to many “Westerners” who are no longer used to

4 <http://www.osmanisches-europa.de>. We would like to express our gratitude to all those who helped with editing this volume, especially Cordula Srodecki, Hagen Rinn, Magdalena Szych, and Barbara Valčić.

5 Cf. Helmedach et al., *Das osmanische Europa*.

6 German Research Foundation (DFG) Priority Programme 1981 *Transottomanica: Eastern European-Ottoman-Persian Mobility Dynamics*. <http://www.transottomanica.de>.

7 Cf. Dursteler, “Infidel Foods.”

8 E.g. Miholjek, Zmaić Kralj and Atasoy, eds., *Iznik – osmanska keramika*.

9 Cf. blanc-manger.

“sweet meats.” Not looking at food is like missing a secret (or not so secret at all) ingredient.

A good example of the *Geschichtsmächtigkeit*, the historical power of food, is the European hunger for meat, a cultural habit that exemplifies very well the mutual entanglement of space and environment (including climate) on one hand and diet on the other. Ferdinand Braudel, and in his wake, Massimo Montanari, pointed out the relation between a small population living in a heavily forested environment (raising pigs and hunting) and the consumption of meat in Medieval transalpine Europe. This legacy turned out to be so strong that despite periods of dominant grain production and consumption (dictated by a larger population), whenever the circumstances allowed for it, the people eagerly returned to substantial meat consumption. During the periods of meat “famines,” the high prestige of meat, considered a source of (physical) power, was preserved by the European nobility. Thus, after the great population drop of the fourteenth century large plots of land, formerly cleared for growing grain, were turned into pastures. Even as agriculture returned, the once established demand could be secured from less-populated areas in Eastern Europe, e.g. Ottoman Hungary, of course, with spatial and social consequences for these regions.<sup>10</sup> It is interesting to note that the origin of the term *haiduk*, later associated with national heroes and Hobsbawm’s *social bandits*, is related to cattle breeding (from Hung. *hajtók*, cattle driver).<sup>11</sup> Meat as a prestigious food was a crucial part of the Ottoman culture as well, originally a “hinterland” civilization with strong pastoral admixture. Here also religious considerations came into play by ruling out pork and favoring mutton, a meat mostly procured by the European provinces and dependencies of the Empire. Supplying Istanbul with meat was so tantamount to proper rule (and social peace), that the Ottomans maintained a special contract system (*celep-keşan*) with fixed prices aiming at keeping the meat prices in Istanbul as cheap as possible.<sup>12</sup> The Ottoman taste for mutton and the need to appease the capital bore telling fruits during supply crises, as in the draught-driven last decades of the sixteenth century. After the breakdown of the *celep-keşan* system, the Ottomans tried many measures to meet the demands. They set up a cash fund with money extorted from Armenian and Jewish families, went over to the requisition of mutton in the provinces, and finally, they forbade the slaughter of sheep in the provinces and ordered their provincial subjects to eat only goat and beef.<sup>13</sup> There were even international consequences. The Ottomans forbade the export of any meat-providing animals and entered a period of conflict with Poland-Lithuania, whose involvement in Moldovan affairs and problem of Cossack raids were endangering the important mutton supply coming from the northern Black Sea

10 Braudel, *Der Alltag*, 54–55, 106, 207–211; Montanari, *Der Hunger und der Überfluss*, 18–56, 89–100, 126–137, 173–187.

11 Cf. Adanır, *Heiduckentum*, 58–82.

12 Cf. Bömelburg et al., “Gewaltgemeinschaften,” 110; Faroqhi, *Towns and Townsmen*, 221–241; White, *The Climate of Rebellion*, 97–102, 117–118.

13 *Ibid.*, 98.

coast.<sup>14</sup> Suraiya Faruqi, in her contribution to this volume, adds to this picture the complementary perspective of the little man of Istanbul, who was able to provide himself in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with animal protein relatively easily, be it even with offal left over from the allocations of the Cities' royal, military, and administrative elites so alertly taken care off. Sidney Mintz has famously described comparably complex entanglements of food in the case of sugar.<sup>15</sup>

### 3. How to Approach Ottoman Europe from a Culinary Perspective?

This volume draws on the deliberately broadly defined concept of “foodways,” a term originally coined in vernacular usage and only later discovered and repurposed for scientific application. As such the term leaves sufficient space for the exploration of different approaches revolving around food-related practices. We follow the definition of Lawrance and de la Peña, who in addition to foodways as an approach to “*attitudes, practices and rituals around food*,”<sup>16</sup> see in foodways “*a critical lens to explore trans-cultural, and trans-regional mobility, locality, and local embeddedness of foodstuffs*,” their production and consumption.<sup>17</sup> With social mobility added to this catalogue of mobilities, studying foodways may reveal the “*profound impact foods have on culture, politics and industrial practices*.”<sup>18</sup> In modification of this, we believe that the term entanglement with its dimension of reciprocity, is more expressive than the word impact as it captures the mutual retroactions between food and abovementioned practices.

Food can serve as gateway for many sets of questions, far beyond the mere reconstruction of historical recipes. Two pioneers of studying food were using food and eating as an instrument to answer far-reaching questions. Norbert Elias, for example, developed the *process of civilization* theorem studying conduct books.<sup>19</sup> For Pierre Bourdieu, on the other hand, food and eating were natural objects of study, culminating in his famous book *Distinction*.<sup>20</sup> Pioneers like Elias and Bourdieu pointed to the social functions of food, synchronically and diachronically.

The reproduction of hierarchies and difference by means of foodways is an approach that can be applied on many levels, within one society/culture or between multiple ones. There is the “civilizational” discourse encoded in multiple forms, starting with the antagonism between mobile and sedentary lifestyles, bread- and non-bread-eaters, the labels of Barbarism, raw and cooked (in the Chinese case),

14 Bömelburg et al., “Gewaltgemeinschaften,” 110. In 1593, the Ottomans were planning to rebuild the fortress of Hocabey (Odessa) to protect the sheep supply.

15 Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*.

16 Harris et al., *The Meaning of Food*, viii–ix, quoted in Peña and Lawrance, “Foodways, ‘Foodism,’ or Foodscapes?,” 2.

17 Peña and Lawrance, “Foodways, ‘Foodism,’ or Foodscapes?,” 2.

18 Ibid.

19 Elias, *The Civilizing Process*.

20 Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique*.

Occidentalism vs. Orientalism, Balkanism, etc.<sup>21</sup> In his paper, for example, Arkadiusz Blaszczyk elaborates upon the parallels between the Ottoman and Polish ways of “othering” the Tatars and their foodways. The sedentary state perspective seems to transcend the religious and cultural proximity between Ottomans and Tatars, making the Ottomans converge with the culturally and religiously distinct, but sedentary Poles.

Božidar Jezernik, capturing and deconstructing many illustrative examples of the Western traveler’s gaze on Balkan customs, traces the changes these perspectives underwent. Thus, he could not find any complaints about the Ottomans eating with their bare hands that dated before the end of the seventeenth century because the Europeans didn’t know any cutlery until that time, either. Later, they either mocked them as mere imitators of European customs, or, especially since the end of the nineteenth century, longed for the true, authentic experience of eating with the hands, predating the ethno-food trends of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.<sup>22</sup> The ways of distinction always must move on. In this volume, Ágnes Drosztmér gives some insight into early modern Central European traveler’s perceptions of Ottoman food through the prism of religious superiority/inferiority.

Another level is the (re-)production of hierarchies and social positionality through food. Working with various kinds of registers, Tülay Artan has tried to discern what elite food meant in the Ottoman capital. She concludes that while bread was less an indicator of distinction, meat certainly was, yet, until the eighteenth century, rather through quantity than quality. Also, distinction was rather expressed through pricy wrappings than through the food itself. Only from the eighteenth century on does a certain degree of a deliberate search for exclusive foods become discernible.<sup>23</sup> In this volume, Özge Samancı shows that in the nineteenth century urban foodways of Balkan towns were much closer to the (palace) kitchen of Istanbul than to the surrounding rural diet – a difference attested by Mary Neuburger as well. In his contribution, Stefan Detchev testifies to the simplicity of the rural diet in nineteenth-century Bulgaria having little to do with the contemporary one. Certainly, much more research needs to be done on the social dimensions of the foodways in the Ottoman Europe prior to the nation-state period.

Finally, the national level is to be considered and the way it relates to the supranational, especially in the framework of Ottoman Europe.

Alexander Kiossev discussed the question of a common Balkan (culinary) culture, coming from Michael Herzfeld’s concept of *cultural intimacy*.<sup>24</sup> He elaborates that in recent decades, a new trend of countering the Western stigmatization of the Balkans and the correlated self-stigmatization emerged. As an alternative to the nationalist exclusivism aiming at eliminating all potential Balkan-

21 Montanari, *Der Hunger und der Überfluss*, 15–22, Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 99–126, Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*.

22 Jezernik, *Das wilde Europa*, 35–42.

23 Artan, “Aspects of the Ottoman Elite’s Food Consumption,” 107–200.

24 Kiossev, “The Dark Intimacy.” Cf. Michael Herzfeld, *Cultural Intimacy*. 58.

stigma, this new transnational phenomenon is marked by a positive reevaluation of these stigma, reflected in trends like Balkan-pop, -chic etc. Kiossev calls this the “dark” (as per being stigmatized) intimacy of the Balkan people:

*“In its extremes, its regional intimacy joyfully breaches national borders, norms of politeness, and archaic taboos, aping a kind of momentous ‘Balkan identity,’ which is just a form of anarchic protest against any kind of identity and any kind of symbolic order.”*<sup>25</sup>

He claims that,

*“relics of pre-modern identities still question the ultimate power of national ‘high’ cultures, while the national high cultures passionately reject the apparent Balkan similarities (cultivating simultaneously nesting Balkanisms). These high cultures are still engaged – each for its own sake – in a vain struggle against the arrogance of Western Balkanism.”*<sup>26</sup>

Kevin Kenjar provides an illustrative example of this struggle:

*“In the informal interviews conducted during the research of this paper, one Serbian participant, when asked to name several national dishes, immediately named skewered meat and spit-roasted lamb. After a brief pause, he stated, ‘I suppose those are Turkish.’ He subsequently named ‘spit-roasted pig’ followed by, of all things, bacon. This can be understood as a deliberate attempt to distance these dishes from the Ottoman past, despite the fact that a large percentage of the Ottoman population, particularly in the Balkans, did in fact eat pork.”*<sup>27</sup>

The immediate reaction here seems to reflect intimacy, while the subsequent revision betrays an attempt of destigmatization vis-à-vis a potentially judgmental foreigner.

Yet, where do we find Ottoman Europe in all of this? Is it possible to define Ottoman Europe culinarily speaking as an area where an Ottoman imperial communication zone and its post-imperial heritage allow for a lexical (the names of the dishes) and practical (the ways in which they are prepared) intimacy, or in other words, an illusion of understanding dishes and foodstuffs as being the same, an ignorance of the differences? Is it an area where an allusion (by practice or shared names) to certain dishes like *sarma* (grape-leaves or cabbage wraps) or *cévapi* (minced meat rolls) allows for a mutual bonding in circumstances where there is no need for demarcation? Such bonding can usually be observed between diaspora communities of geographically and culturally similar backgrounds.<sup>28</sup> Of course, such a definition would still need to justify its “Europeanness” vis-à-vis Anatolia and

25 Kiossev, “The Dark Intimacy,” 190, ft. 45.

26 Ibid.

27 Kenjar, “Balkan Culinary Nationalism,” 11.

28 Cf. Kiossev, “The Dark Intimacy”; see also Fotiadis, “Der Balkan im Kochtopf,” 15.

other Ottoman regions. Even if Ottoman Europe has some features that set it apart from other spaces within the Ottoman Empire, like a strong influence of Slavic in terms of languages, orthodoxy in terms of religion, the proximity to European markets on land routes, here the term is not used in an exclusive sense of a structurally sharply defined area, but consciously chosen to be open and permeable, a mere analytical instrument.

Kiossev's thoughts about similarity and difference can be related to Simon Harrison's elaborations on the different kinds of *mimetic conflict*. Following a certain tradition of sociological and anthropological thinking (Freud's *narcissism of minor differences*, Georg Simmel, Rene Girard, Anton Blok),<sup>29</sup> Harrison argues that similarity is not necessarily a source of social cohesion, but to the contrary, also a source of conflict:

*"Groups, it seems, can invoke the same cultural symbols to unite them and to divide them, because the 'sharing' of any historical icon is inherently provisional, contestable at any time by one or more of the factions claiming to share it. A shared symbol is transformed from a focus of common identity into a focus of division when one or more of the sectional groups identified with it appears to be trying to monopolise it in some way or claim it exclusively for itself."*<sup>30</sup>

In this respect, Western stigmatization of the Oriental, including the tendency to lump all Balkan people together, might be considered the trigger that set that process in motion. Ottoman Europe could be described as a space whose native groups (ethnic, national, etc.), despite feeling distinct from each other, share an extensively congruent repository of culinary icons inherited from Ottoman times, but who, in order to demonstrate their distinctiveness, have the need to either appropriate these icons exclusively for themselves or to rename and maybe moderately modify them.<sup>31</sup> An illustrative case would be that of "Greek" and "Bosnian" coffees in opposition to "Turkish" coffee discussed by Ali Çaksu in this volume. Yet, this process of dissociation is inherently ambiguous – after all, it is based on a positive emotional charging of Ottoman-time culinary icons, even if their origins are distorted or ignored.<sup>32</sup> These ambiguities in the search for authenticity are of special interest to Mary Neuburger in her contribution to this volume.

What has been described by Harrison from the small-scale perspective of intercultural contact has been theorized by Arjun Appadurai in a context of globalization. He introduced five *scapes* (ethnoscapes, technoscapes, financescapes, mediascapes, ideoscapes), which he understands as global flows, fluid agglomerations of persons, objects and ideas that transcend territorial cultures. Yet,

29 Harrison, *Fracturing Resemblances*, 1–13.

30 Ibid., 138. Cf. Hahn, "Antinomien," 11–26.

31 Harrison, *Fracturing Resemblances*, 142–145. Cf. Kenjar, "Balkan Culinary Nationalism," 6–11, and Zubaida, "National, Communal and Global Dimension" as well as Fotiadis, "Der Balkan im Kochtopf," and Krāsteva-Blagoeva, "Tasting the Balkans."

32 Cf. Harrison, *Fracturing Resemblances*, 136–137.

still, these are “deeply perspectival constructs, inflected very much by the historical, linguistic and political situatedness of different sorts of actors.”<sup>33</sup> Thus he elaborates that

“the globalization of culture is not the same as its homogenization, but globalization involves the use of a variety of instruments of homogenization [...] that are absorbed into local political and cultural economies, only to be repatriated as heterogeneous dialogues of national sovereignty, free enterprise, and fundamentalism.”<sup>34</sup>

What Harrison calls mimetic conflict or appropriation Appadurai calls *repatriation of difference*.<sup>35</sup>

Recently, Appadurai’s scapes concept has been extended to include *foodscapes* as a means to analyze globalized food in local contexts.<sup>36</sup> Yet concepts like foodscapes have been criticized for miring “us in the present, limiting our ability to see how people across time and societies have dealt with the cultural and dietary changes that accompany shifts in food supplies.” They would “concretize particular terms, like ‘local’ and ‘global’ in ways that while perhaps true of the present, within an American context, are more flexible elsewhere, particularly in the past.”<sup>37</sup>

Even if the concept of global flows can be very useful in studying pre-modern times, deterritorialization cannot be considered sufficiently advanced by that time to disqualify the notion of culinary zones based on natural conditions and social structures, especially while remaining aware of the respective zones’ global entanglements, enhanced, of course, by a diachronic perspective. Thus, despite all resemblances, micro-level differences need to be taken seriously – dishes bearing the same or a similar name often look and taste very different from each other depending on the region and the foodstuffs historically available and affordable there, be it through local production or advantageous access to trading routes. In this volume, Uroš Urošević tries to pinpoint the representation of geographical diversity within the cookbook of Mahmud Nedim bin Tosun.

Bert Fragner coined the term *Ottoman culinary empire*,<sup>38</sup> defining it as “a large area shaped culinarily by Ottoman traditions,” “a macro-region” consisting of “a number of micro-regions, each characterized by local traditions of cuisine.”<sup>39</sup> For

33 Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, 33.

34 Ibid., 42.

35 Ibid.

36 Ferrero, “Comida sin par.” Cf. Möhring, *Fremdes Essen*, 18.

37 Peña and Lawrance, “Foodways, ‘Foodism,’ or Foodscapes?,” 4.

38 “To them [the elites of Istanbul] we owe the fact that, despite the disintegration of the Ottoman political empire, we can still see the survival of a large region which could be called the Ottoman culinary empire. The Balkans, Greece, Anatolia and the Fertile Crescent are today the homelands of partly hostile peoples, but there is no doubt beyond their consciousness, they are common heirs to what was once the Ottoman life-style, and their cuisines offer treacherous circumstantial evidence of that.” Fragner, “From the Caucasus,” 52. The term “Ottoman culinary empire” inspired Işın to entitle her eponymous book *Osmanlı Mutfak İmparatorluğu*.

39 Fragner, “From the Caucasus,” 53.

him, the latter is part of a larger Mediterranean culinary zone that has been shaped not only by nature and climate, but also “by two important political superstructures, the ancient Roman Empire and the period of Spanish-Ottoman hegemony.”<sup>40</sup> As a consequence, Ottoman cuisine was “americanized” earlier than others:

*“Apart from the political animosity which pervaded political relations between the Spanish and Austrian Habsburgs and the Ottomans, there also existed a special network of hegemony within which these two superpowers were rivals and partners at the same time. This means that new commercial and consumer goods brought by the Spaniards from the American continents to the European sphere found their immediate way into the Ottoman Empire, even earlier than to other European regions.”*<sup>41</sup>

The Ottoman cuisine came to be one of the most innovative and fashionable of Europe. Thus, the turkey was adopted in the Ottoman Empire as *tavuk hindi* (“Indian chicken”) and in a second step of reentanglement, returned to the New World as *turkey*.<sup>42</sup> This phenomenon is diametrically opposed to the theses of the non-European character and stagnation of the Ottoman Empire.

In his essay, Fagner defines the Ottoman culinary zone as marked by an early use of American foodstuffs, like tomatoes, paprika, beans, and maize, in contrast to a Persian culinary zone to the east, with a much smaller American impact, a tendency to use fruit with meats, and a distinct rice tradition.

Yet, Fagner tends to underemphasize the distinction between coastal and hinterland foodways as well as urban and rural foodways. Thus, Maya Petrovich contests in her contribution to this volume, the thesis of an all-too-simplified Mediterranean-first diffusion of these American foodstuffs. Also, Detchev and Samancı show that many of these American foodstuffs were not very popular among the rural populations deep into the nineteenth century.<sup>43</sup>

Furthermore, as Tülay Artan has illustrated, olive oil, so much associated with Mediterranean cuisine, was not very commonly used in the cuisine of the Ottoman palace, the capital, and interior provinces prior to the eighteenth century, where animal and butter fats prevailed. It was only in the aftermath of the Ottoman conquest of Crete, a major producer of olives and olive oil, in 1669, and the increased demand for olive oil by the French soap-making industries that olive oil found its way into the kitchen, probably simply because of its abundance. The

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40 Ibid.

41 Ibid., 51–52.

42 Cf. Vroom, “Mr. Turkey Goes to Turkey.”

43 The question of difference between urban haute cuisine and rural kitchens is relevant up to more contemporary days. Cf. Bradatan, “Cuisine and Cultural Identity.” Using statistical data for the period 1980–2000, Cristina Bradatan rejects the idea of a common Balkan cuisine in terms of similarly distributed food consumption patterns, e.g. calorie intake and the quantities and kinds of meat consumed. She admits that there is a national bias in her approach, ignoring the social and regional differences within the nation states. Still, she concludes that a common Balkan cuisine is only found in the “haute cuisine” of restaurants, which she considers not representative of daily life consumption patterns.



increased use of olive oil corresponded with an unprecedented rise in fish dishes, exclusively prepared with olive oil.<sup>44</sup>

Olive oil cannot serve, though, as a means of distinguishing Ottoman Europe from the rest of the Empire, as its use is not exclusive to any region. A culinary dividing line that would allow for setting (post-)Ottoman Europe apart would be the consumption of tea. Since the tradition of tea growing and tea drinking started very late in the nineteenth century<sup>45</sup> and commenced only during the early days of the Turkish Republic, the provinces that dropped out earlier were never imbued with an extensive tea culture. Thus, tea never could topple the throne of coffee in the Balkans, being largely considered a drink for the sick, and not one to serve your guests.<sup>46</sup> In this respect, one could dare to call (post-)Ottoman Europe more Ottoman than Turkey.

Ottoman Europe may serve as an example of culinary transfers and diffusions on the land routes as a (dis-)juncture within the global flow of foodways. Ottoman Europe with its peculiar “situatedness” transforms (“digests”) globally flowing food and foodways in a distinct way shaped by its local climatic, political, demographic and economic conditions, and by its locally specific embeddedness in global trade networks, before releasing them once more into the global flow.

Food is, in contrast to objects that can transcend large distances in time and space, short-lived and perishable. Due to this, even more than long-lived, durable objects that may leave the impression of being unchanging, food, with its need to be reproduced in short intervals, betrays the dynamic entanglement of the matter itself and the conceptualizations about it. The impermanence of food is such a significant *“loss to those without extensive durable things that, in some cases, attempts are made to transform food into more permanent words or things.”*

The complexities of *object itineraries* described by Joyce and Gillesby are obvious regarding food even more than in relation to other material objects:

*“Itineraries have the potential to resist the imposition of a boundary between a thing and representations of it, allowing us to ask when a reproduction or translation of a thing remains actively connected to it. Things may travel via textual descriptions, drawings, and photographs.”<sup>47</sup>*

44 Artan, “Aspects of the Ottoman Elite’s Food Consumption,” 143–153. The consumption of olive oil is not consistently distributed across Turkey until today. Cf. Raffard, “Interroger la nation,” 297–298.

45 Before the Tanzimat period, tea was considered mostly a medicinal plant in the Ottoman Empire. During that period, tea became a luxury, high-society drink popularized, among others, through Western-style tea parties, a fashion established by the British and French allies residing in Istanbul during the Crimean War. Tea as a drink of the populace entered Anatolia from the East, from the Russian Caucasus. Originally calling tea *Moskof çayı* (“Moscow tea”), the inhabitants of the Northern Black Sea region, being a center of (seasonal) work migration to and trade with Russia in the end of the nineteenth century, started to plant tea saplings brought from Russia in their own gardens, which became the nucleus of Turkish tea production. See Kuzucu, “Osmanlı İçecek Kültüründe.”

46 Cf. Perianova, “La nouvelle Alimentation,” 253

47 Joyce and Gillespie, “Making Things out of Objects that Move,” 11.

Food thus not only travels in the sacks of caravans, but also in cookbooks, in the minds and by passing the word; it travels in the form of mere names evoking exotic fantasies, or nameless objects that may or may not be deemed palatable. Foodways are thus literally food itineraries: the food-material itself and the knowledge/practices transforming them into food may travel separately and just meet under the auspices of specific circumstances. Thus, analyzing dialect words for certain foodstuffs maybe very illustrative in this respect. Tracing back only the dominant standard term may obscure the diffusion pattern, the food itinerary. Thus, Uwe Bläsing has shown that there are three word groups representing three ways the potato entered the territories of modern-day Turkey: one from Germany through the Balkans (*Grundbeere–krumpir–kumpir*), one coming via Eastern Anatolia from Russia and the Caucasus, and ultimately also from Germany (*Kartoffel–kartof–kartop*), and the Mediterranean route represented by the *patata–patates* standard variant. While patates come from an urban port-town background, where they were originally considered an exotic, luxury good, kumpir and kartop reflect the influx of potato consumption as culinary practice among the rural population, connected with migration (e.g. Balkan Turks, cross border work migration to the Russian Caucasus).<sup>48</sup> Thus, it is important to differentiate culinary names and practices and the complex relations between them. Another elucidating example is that of paprika. As Gabriella Schubert shows for the case of Hungary, Paprika arrived there first from the West, as an exotic medical plant. The practice of using paprika as a vegetable and spice came from the South, with Greek, Serbian and other merchants from Ottoman territories,<sup>49</sup> together with the name paprika (“little pepper,” first attested in 1649 in Serbocroatian). In Hungary, paprika won through just with the increased demand for an alternative for pepper during Napoleon’s continental system.<sup>50</sup> In this volume, complexity of diffusion is also discussed by Castilia Manea-Grgin and Maya Petrovich.

Other important questions revolving around food are related to practices of governance. For example, the communist economy in Southeastern Europe gives an opportunity to analyze culinary creativity in situations of shortage as well as the role of food in Communist propaganda.<sup>51</sup> Food and food practices can be analyzed through the prism of biopolitics or confessionalization, as well as public space. Readers interested in these problems are invited to contemplate the contributions of Ali Caksu, Christoph Neumann, Vjeran Kursar and Burak Onaran in this volume.

48 Bläsing, “Mr. Kumpir,” 47–74.

49 As Maya Petrovich argues for the tomato’s Indian connection in this volume, paprika may have been first introduced to the Ottomans in India and Persia during the sieges of the Portuguese colonies of Ormuz (1513) and Diu (1538). See Schubert, “Wem gehört der/die/das Paprika?,” 58. Yet, according to Işın, capsicum anuum was absent from Ottoman sources prior to the eighteenth century, when it became known under the name *Albanian pepper*. See Işın, *Osmanlı Mutfak İmparatorluğu*, 27.

50 For an example of a biopolitical approach in historical food studies, though not focused on Ottoman Europe, see Mackert, “‘I want to be a fat man / and with the fat man stand.’”

51 With very instructive contributions: Bren and Neuburger, eds., *Communism Unwrapped*.

#### 4. A Case in Point: Komšiluk vs. (Inter-)Nationalization – Ćevapčići and Their Transformations

Many of the angles addressed above are reflected in the history of *ćevapčići* or *ćevapi*, which inspired the name of the original conference and this volume.

Linguistically, it is obvious that *ćevapi* originates from kebab as it reflects a common sound change in Turkish loan-words of Serbo-Croatian (k > ć, cf. *sirće* vs. turk. *sirke* [vinegar]). Yet, it is important to again differentiate names from culinary practices, as kebab and *ćevapčići* are not identical. Kebab is a rather general term for many kinds of roasted meat, while *ćevapčići* mostly resemble a mix of skewer kebab in shape and meatballs (turk. *köfte*) in preparation. *Ćevapi/kebab* serves as a good example for the diffusion and the appropriation of a dish for different purposes across time and space. A very nice illustration of the journey *ćevapi* underwent was captured in the 1930s by Serbian writer Branislav Nušić (Alkibijad Nuša) in a text called *Beogradske kafane* ("Belgrade's coffeehouses"). In this spatial chronicle or rather narrative map of Belgrade's coffeehouses, where he aptly records the social changes of his lifetime as reflected in the cafés' names,<sup>52</sup> *ćevapčići* hold a special place:

*"And also those slaughtering blocks [kasapski panjevi], where roasted piglings and lambs were cut with axes, emigrated with us to the periphery [of Belgrade], also those large, dirty, burned trays [tepsije], on which intestines [krezele i škembići] were sizzling; with them emigrated also those sooty casseroles, in which fritters [mekike] were fried in black fat, and... all and much more moved there, to the periphery, while ćevapčići and ražnjići stayed back as the last traces of the past, which kept not only their citizenship in the center of a modernized capital, but whose tempting scent soon spread in all of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. From up in Maribor, where small red radishes once used to be the only appetizer [meze], down to Đevdeliće, where goat pastrami [pastrma od kozetine] used to be the king of meze; and from there, from the Adria, where olives and cured sargo [sušene sarage] used to rule the meze, all the way to the lands along the Timok, where kaškavalj-cheese was eaten as a starter alongside any drink – today ćevapčići and the other national mezes made themselves a home, equally beloved by all Serbs, Croats and Slovenians. And if once one used to say: 'Where there is glory, there are also Serbians,' today one could freely say: 'Where there are ćevapčići, there are also Yugoslavs!' And thus, ćevapčići have unified the three tribes of one*

52 The first coffeehouses were named after their owners' names (eg. "Hajdukovićeve kafane"), according to the places they were found ("Astronomska kula"), or peculiarities associated with these localities ("Dva papagaja"), their owners' places of origin ("Rudničanin"), and the predominant groups of customers ("esnafska kafana"). After 1848 names with a political connotation became widespread, reflecting political ideas ("Balkanski savez") and dynastic loyalties ("Srpska kruna"). Also, a certain "globalization" or "cosmopolitanism" of names occurred, with many cafés named after the cities of the world ("Berlin," "London" etc.). See Nušić, "Beogradske Kafane," 49–84.

*people even before politics, literature, art, and all other phenomena did. And in the same way you will sense with your nostrils that you have come to the land of goulash, when you enter Hungary, you notice that you have arrived in the land of macaroni, when you come to Italy, in the land of cucumber and paprika entering Romania, arriving in Yugoslavia you can sense by the scent of ćevapčići that you have arrived at a home, where three born brothers live: the Serb, the Croat and the Slovenian.”*<sup>53</sup>

Most of the dishes and instruments Nušić mentions here as remnants of old times clearly belong to an Ottoman culinary repository: “*kasapski panj*” (from Arabic/Turkish *kasap* [butcher], as opposed to modern *mesarski panj*), “*škembići*” (from Persian/Turkish *işkembe*, while “*krezle*” seems to be derived from German *Gekröse*), “*mekike*” (cf. *mekik pişi*), “*pastrma*” (*pastırma*, pastrami). Nušić notes that ćevapčići were rather latecomers, arriving from southern Serbia, from Leskovac via Niš to Belgrade only in the 1860s, where booths selling them soon flourished around the tavern *Rajić*, among whose drinking customers they became very popular. Now, that is in the 1930s when Nušić penned these thoughts, he claims they reached an “*international character*” and all the other “*mezeluci*” were banished to the city’s peripheries, together with the “*đezvas*” (cf. turk. *cezve* – a special copper pot for making “Turkish” coffee) and gypsy orchestras.<sup>54</sup>

Leskovac and Niš were still Ottoman cities when ćevapčići allegedly arrived in Belgrade. There is this interesting conflict in Nušić’s text between evoking the *ancienneté* of all those Ottoman-inherited dishes and the fact that at least ćevapčići arrived only decades after Serbia acquired autonomy from the Ottoman Empire. Nušić’s nostalgic description seems to reflect what Kiossev’s has called *dark intimacy* – the Oriental is associated with “*komšiluk*” (cf. turk. *komsuluk* – neighbourhood), with emotional comfort and proximity in a way detached from the actual “Oriental” character of the past – it is itself an imagination, a form of self-orientalization.<sup>55</sup>

Finally, ćevapčići attest to the complex history of appropriation. A typical way of coping with similarity, ćevapčići are dissociated with their “Oriental” attributive, wrested from the culinary repository of Ottoman Europe, reinterpreted as a sign of modernity, a culinary representative of Yugoslavia on the international scene, and a culinary cohesive on the “national” level (as contrary to transnational *dark intimacy*). Thus, the same dish could transform from an object of self-orientalization to a symbol of “occidentalization,” in the sense of creating a “modern” and unified national (culinary) culture modeled after the West.<sup>56</sup>

53 Ibid., 49–50.

54 Ibid, 50, 62–63.

55 Cf. Mary Neuburger’s paper and the case of Radu Rosetti in Margareta Aslan’s contribution in this volume.

56 Quite similar to the role of “shopska salat” in the Bulgarian case. Cf. Stefan Detchev’s contribution to this volume.

## 5. Much More to Explore...

The introductory remarks and problems mentioned so far touch upon but a small array of questions. Yet there is more to explore! Thus the 2015 conference invited its contributors to answer a broad catalogue of questions:

How and when are food's preparation, consumption, or its deferral (fasting) used as means of performative inclusion/exclusion in order to construct and enact social, religious and gender affiliations? In which cases is eating consciously charged with semiotic meaning and when is it performed without reflection? To what extent was the cuisine of the Ottoman Palace<sup>57</sup> an object of projection for the imperial self and in which circumstances did such cuisine cross the palace walls? How was food used to manifest hierarchies in politics and diplomacy? What role did food and its rituals play in the success of armies<sup>58</sup> (see *çorbacı başı*, the soup master, and other titles among the Janissaries, the Janissary traditions of *çanak yağma*, bowl plundering, and *kazan kaldırma*, turning the cauldron upside down)?

How were Ottoman/Southeastern European food practices refashioned as authentic and exclusive representations of nationality following post-Ottoman processes of disintegration and redefinition? Is it reasonable to differentiate between specific Romance, Turkic, or Slavic dishes, or rather to speak of cultural hybrids? Is a differentiation along geographically defined habitats feasible, taking into account coastal, high plain and mountain foodways? Moreover, how were regional practices of eating charged with social, cultural, or national meaning by local observers and travelers?<sup>59</sup>

How do spatial perceptions and conceptions of food reflect "orientalizing" and "occidentalizing" practices and discourses, for example, in the context of the Western European *Turquerie* and other fashions? Did the people in West and (South-)East react differently to technical innovations in the preparation and allocation of food? How did innovations become traditions? How did new dishes and foodstuffs spread, and how can one reconstruct the routes they took? How much information about the diffusion of food can be extracted from analyzing names (Romanian *brânză* to Slovak *bryndza*, kebab to *ćevapčići*)? Can we use food as an indicator or measure of ethnic, social, and religious changes in the Ottoman Empire? Which changes did new foodstuffs evoke? Which commercial, logistical, or advertising strategies were pursued to make the new "palatable"? What made some dishes succeed and others be forgotten? How did norms of taste evolve? How did taboos towards certain dishes develop? How did hygiene regulations as well as popular and academic discourses impact traditional cuisine? What conflicts did such actions provoke, especially considering the cultural identity of the consumers? How

57 Cf. Bilgin, *Osmanlı Saray Mutfağı*; Samancı, *Continuity and Change*; De Vooght, *Royal Taste: Food, Power and Status*; De Vooght, *The King Invites*.

58 Cf. Arkadiusz Blaszczyk's contribution to this volume. See also Işın's chapter on "Military Fare" in her recent *Bountiful Empire*, and Ünsal, "Siyasi Güç," 179–195.

59 E.g. Bues, "Die umschnupferten unsere wagen."

did communism affect foodways in Southeastern Europe? What did new concepts of family and labor do to them? How did new priorities trigger the disappearance of elaborate dishes in favor of fast food and the like? What does the appearance of slow food reveal about societal trends and involvement in global networks? What do West and (South-)East have in common, and where do they differ?

Even if not all of these questions could be addressed, we are sure that the results of tackling this questionnaire represent an interesting take on the culinary history of Ottoman Europe including modern Turkey.

## 6. The Contributions

The first chapter opens with **Margareta Aslan's** (Cluj-Napoca) contribution on the value of spices in the Romanian lands, with a focus on Transylvanian-Saxon towns as trading points for spices. Here trading registers of Szekler, Greek and Jewish merchant families, diplomatic correspondence and other sources show how spices imported from the East in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries grew in importance as commodities, pharmaceuticals, precious gifts, objects of mystical value, but also as “hard currency” – even to the degree that pepper destruction was used by Ottoman authorities as a tool to punish the Transylvanian merchants. She also gives insight into the tensions between (self-)orientalization and occidentalization in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as exemplified by the use of Oriental goods among the respective elites.

**Arkadiusz Blaszczyk** (Giessen) compares the image of the Tatars in Ottoman and Polish-Lithuanian sources focusing on Tatar food and foodways. He highlights the similarities of both perceptions, ranging from an often-ambiguous admiration to claims of outright monstrosity. The reasons for this he sees in the fact that Tatar foodways and dietary habits were alien to the sedentary Polish-Lithuanian society – and became successively unfamiliar to the post-nomadic Ottoman society. Blaszczyk concludes that the shared ways of imagining the Tatars as a lawless rabble of half-demonic horse eaters helped maintain a market of violence in the border-region by discursively recreating a void of state power in the mutual diplomatic interactions. Scapegoating them and their complement, the Cossacks, allowed both parties to conceal their own interests in cross-border raids.

**Castilia Manea-Grgin's** (Zagreb) paper focuses on two Italian-inspired cookbooks composed in the Romanian and Croatian aristocratic spheres, respectively. In respect to dating, authorship, and ownership, both manuscripts are the first cookbooks of their kind preserved in the Romanian and Croatian languages. Manea-Grgin concludes that the choice of the recipes and ingredients demonstrates that the Romanian and Croatian aristocracies fashioned their culinary art rather following Western European models than Ottoman ones, while the latter's impact was mostly restricted to the lexical level. Both nobilities showed interest not only in foreign and luxury foodstuffs, but also in the preparation of elaborate and fashionable dishes made according to costly European cookbooks.

**Ágnes Drosztmér** (Budapest) discusses the way Central Europeans imagined and reported on religiously conditioned food consumption in the Ottoman Empire of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Calling on reports of captives and diplomats who resided in the Ottoman Empire in the given time, Drosztmér tries to assess European-Christian discourses on religious practices of the Ottomans by contrasting narratives on Islamic rites with observations on food and food consumption. The accounts analyzed illustrate that there existed a high level of curiosity about Ottoman eating habits. However, they also reveal two different intentions: First, a general ethnographical interest in culinary arts and eating practices filtered by the experience of everyday practices and the observers' cultural and social background, and secondly a focus on food consumption as religious practice aiming at pointing out the "false" nature of Islam.

Using Ottoman sources of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth century, **Suraiya Faroqhi** (Istanbul) ponders about the existence of fast food and ready-made foods in early modern Istanbul. Drawing on examples from Bursa, she assumes that the main customers of ready-made foods were medrese students next to merchants and migrant dervishes, as cooking possibilities in hans and kervansarays were very limited. She concludes that animal-based food was widely affordable and easily accessible to ordinary people in early modern Ottoman cities.

In his contribution, **Ali Çaksu** (Sarajevo) elucidates the entanglement of coffee and politics by showcasing several examples from Ottoman Europe and beyond. He sets off with *devlet sohbeti* ("state talk") in the early modern Janissary coffee houses of Istanbul, subsequently touching upon their equivalents in Europe. Finally, he shifts the scope to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, analyzing the national adaption of "Turkish" coffee as Greek and Bosnian coffees in the respective countries.

**Vjeron Kursar** (Zagreb) focuses on Bosnian Franciscans, alcohol production and consumption in Ottoman Bosnia from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. Although Islamic legal prescriptions clearly prohibited both consumption and production, Kursar makes clear that the prospect of economic profit and taxation enabled the Bosnian Franciscans to gain permission from the Ottoman authorities to produce alcohol such as rakia, wine, and diverse spirits. He shows that despite this pragmatic stance towards alcohol, the language Bosnian Franciscans used to describe the misuse of alcohol highly mirrored Islamic rhetoric, especially since the beginning of what has been called the *age of confessionalization*. Eventually, the Bosnian Ottoman administration, in an act of "*interconfessional solidarity*," cooperated with the Franciscans to enforce anti-alcohol legislation when the excessive consumption of alcohol threatened the public order.

The question of Ottoman food culture in the Balkans as reflected in foreign traveler accounts of the nineteenth century is addressed in **Özge Samancı's** (Istanbul) contribution. Samancı expounds on the difficulties of defining "Ottoman cuisine," because research focused either only on the Ottoman Court kitchen or on the traditional Turkish kitchen. Both definitions disregard the vast geographical dimensions of the Empire as well its religious and ethno-cultural complexity.

According to Samancı, the traveler accounts reveal the manifold similarities between the culinary foodscape of the Balkans and the cuisine of the imperial capital. They also show that the various national Balkan cuisines adopted European table manners and culinary trends in order to set themselves apart from the Istanbul cuisine. Yet as the latter set out to be refashioned according to European models as well, they continued to share common traits willy-nilly in the track of Europeanization.

**Uroš Urošević** (Istanbul/Belgrade) analyzes the cookbook *Aşçıbaşı* of Mahmud Nedim bin Tosun by trying to pinpoint the main influences on the recipes in terms of geography. Thus, he classifies them according to five regional groups. In conclusion, he states that although Mahmud Nedim bin Tosun – in the same way as the Ottoman Empire in general – oriented himself towards Western culture and its cooking traditions, he did not reject the Ottoman culinary past.

**Aylin Öney Tan**<sup>60</sup> (Istanbul) pursues the question of how the Ottoman and later Turkish Sephardic communities coped with the challenges of Westernization and migration to Israel (*Aliyah*) and how these changes were mirrored in culinary developments. According to her, Sephardic Jews, as former subjects of Arabic Spain, were already close to the culinary traditions of the Ottomans even before they emigrated to the latter's dominions. Based on memoirs and autobiographies of Sephardic Jews of Istanbul, Bursa, and other towns, she elaborates that westernization and Aliyah were accepted and experienced differently among the members of the Sephardic community. Western innovations reached Sephardic cuisine only after the establishment of the French *Alliance Israélite Universelle* in the 1860s. The Turkish Jews, who left for Israel after 1950, taking their foodways with them, felt alienated by the predominantly Ashkenazi eating culture.

**Burak Onaran** (Istanbul) discusses the treatment of the Islamic pork taboo in the early Republic of Turkey from 1920 to 1950. Reviewing the public discourse on the pork ban and, to a lesser degree, state policies of farming in this period, he demonstrates that the way this taboo was tested must be seen in the light of westernization processes, secularist policies of the state, and Islamic reformist thought. He finds that although the supporters of the *halalization* of pork remained a marginal group, the debate proves that nutrition and cuisine constituted a major arena of conflict between political, economic, and religious interests in the Early Republican period.

**Christoph Neumann** (Munich) compares rakı consumption and production in nineteenth- and twenty-first-century Istanbul, reevaluating the contemporary Turkish national drink debate from a deeper historical perspective. He elaborates that rakı, at least in the Istanbul case, may legitimately bear the label of a national drink only for the short period of the decades following the Crimean War, a time when rakı was produced in the city itself. Thus, it was the demand of the allied soldiers that gave birth to the modern-day form of rakı in the first place. Finally, he concludes that in

60 Cf. reflections of Aylin Öney Tan about the conference: "Ottomans in Europe," *Hürriyet Daily News*, October 5, 2015, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/opinion/aylin-oney-tan/ottomans-in-europe-89363>.



regard to alcohol the restrictive atmosphere of today bears some resemblance to the Hamidian period of the late nineteenth century.

**Maya Petrovich** (Oxford) advocates for a global perspective on tracing the history of dishes frequently monopolized by national cuisines. She does so with the example of the clay pot dish called *güveç* in Turkish, a fare heavily associated with tomatoes as its major ingredient. Analyzing various recipes ranging from the Balkans, Ottoman Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, to India, she challenges the commonly accepted narrative that the tomato was diffused throughout Italy. She rather suggests a more complex pattern making all maritime nodes in the Iberian and Dutch trade networks equally probable starting points of diffusion, thereby giving special credit to India.

**Mary Neuburger** (Austin) analyzes the depiction of foodways in Bulgarian autochthone ethnographic writings and travelogues of the so-called *National Revival* phase. She shows that a paradigmatic change occurred in 1878. While prior to the Treaty of Berlin, Bulgarian semiotic texts were mapping the nation by dissociating themselves from the Ottomans, after that date they sought to defend national authenticity against the incursions of the West by drawing on the Ottoman cultural/culinary heritage as a repository to construct Bulgarian authenticity. She argues that, henceforth, critique of the Ottoman Empire became ambiguously entangled with anti-Western stances.

**Stefan Detchev** (Sofia) tracks Bulgaria's national culinary showpiece *Šopska salata* back to its astonishingly recent origins. According to his findings, at the end of the nineteenth century salads were basically unknown to the Bulgarians and the vegetables used to prepare them were mostly of bad reputation, not to mention their absence from Bulgarian cookbooks. However, soon after, they reached Bulgaria in the wake of other European fashions, finally achieving their breakthrough with the global trend of healthy eating and state-promoted vitamin consumption in the 1950s. In the 1960s the salad was forged into a national symbol to represent Bulgaria on the international scene. As Detchev shows, this was part of self-imagining Bulgaria as a land of sun and fresh vegetables, drawing on and adapting the older stereotype of the Bulgarian green-grocer.<sup>61</sup>

**Stefan Rohdewald** (Giessen) analyzes cookbooks as speech acts reproducing different images of the Ottoman past to identify with, ranging from multiculturalism to nationalizing projections, some of which are labeled as "Neo-Ottoman." He shows that most of the books under scrutiny conjure the image of an Ottoman Empire homogenously Turkish and Muslim and, by that, ignore the complex constellation of Muslim, Christian and Jewish communities that brought the Ottoman cuisine into being. Rohdewald stresses the importance of studying cookbooks as a gateway to understand the logics of Neo-Ottomanism in modern Turkey.

61 Cf. Adelheid Wölfl about this lecture in Giessen: Adelheid Wölfl, "Šopska-Salat, Vom Ausländer zum Nationalsalat," *Standard*, October 10, 2015, <http://derstandard.at/2000023502773/Sopska-Salat-Vom-Auslaender-zum-Nationalsalat>.

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# The Value of Spices in the Romanian Lands during the Ottoman Suzerainty (Sixteenth–Eighteenth Centuries)

Margareta Aslan

## 1. Introduction

The presence of Asian spices and herbs in the territories of Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania (subsequently referred to as the Romanian lands<sup>1</sup>) is an intriguing subject. Currently, there is a range of studies, however not very numerous, related to spices, but they do not exhaustively explore such an extensive subject. A careful processing of the information related to spices enables us to analyze and compare their presence and distribution across the Romanian lands, and particularly the great value attributed to them in Ottoman Europe. If in the beginning spices were the symbol of luxury used only by the elites, access to spices extended westward together with the Ottoman Empire's expansion, causing a steady increase in the number of consumers.

This is a study on the impact of spices in the Romanian lands aimed at assessing their value as reflected in the economic prosperity of a new class of merchants, as well as attempting to highlight the importance of spices in the art of cooking and other contexts by the types and quantities used.

The questions this paper wishes to answer are the following: How did the spices brought from the Ottoman Empire affect the socio-economic and everyday life of the Romanian lands? How similar or how different were the flavors in Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia? Which spices dominated the respective cuisines?

## 2. The Value of the Spices in the Customs Registers

The Wallachian customs registers indicate large amounts of various goods, noted for their entry and transit through the Romanian territories. Along with pouches of gold, silver and cloth or silk fabrics, which represented the wealth of the elites, pepper pouches were not missing. According to Tahsin Gemil, the sultan enforced strict

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1 This term is used as a translation of the Romanian historiographic expression *țările române* for reasons of convenience and not as to claim *ex post facto* that the three principalities were Romanian in a modern national sense (especially what concerns Transylvania with its long history of Hungarian, Székler and Transylvanian Saxon elites).