Digestible Governance. Gastrocracy and Spanish Foodways. Eugenia Afinoguénova, Lara Anderson, Rebecca Ingram. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2024, ISBN: 978-0-8265-0708-2. pp.318.

This exceedingly well-researched volume contains a collection of chapters that connect governance to foodways (the sourcing, preparation, distribution, and consumption of food) in Spain. Specifically, the editors use Spanish philosopher Fernando Savater's term "gastrocracy" not only to examine power dynamics in relation to foodways, but also to understand questions of identity in its many facets: gender, class, religion, race, and cultural differences. This is achieved by relying on the work of scholars from multiple areas of study as contributors to the volume: historians, anthropologists, contributors from in the multifaceted fields of Spanish Studies, Catalan Studies, Hispanic and Latin American Studies and in the field of economics and social history, and those working in Sephardic culture and literature and Ladino Studies.

Grounded in a Cultural Studies approach, the editors use Henri Lefebvre's ideas of everyday life to think about possibilities for food (and all the discourses surrounding it) to be mobilized as a form of resistance, and Michel Foucault's concept of biopolitics, which looks at how official institutions exert control over the body. The compelling work of Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson about "food talk" which serves to "craft identities and construct social worlds" is an effective frame for the chapters in the volume, as is that of Hannah Arendt on labor, work, and action, as the editors explicitly mention their wish to recognize the foodways-related contributions of women and other minoritized populations (6).

The introduction to the volume details the history of how women's importance in crafting national discourses was largely ignored in late 19th century Spain since male intellectuals controlled the narratives in works like the first gastronomic treaty, *Letters Exchanged between the Dining Room and the Kitchen* (José de Castro y Serrano and Mariano Pardo de Figueroa), published in 1877 (7). This treaty emphasized highlighting regional cuisines to create a national food culture to educate citizens and expose them to diverse recipes.

Appreciating the uniqueness of regional cuisines was overtaken by a desire to create a national food culture during both the Primo de Rivera and Franco regimes. The Franco dictatorship's failed experiment with autarky to produce a national food culture gave way to ending autarky in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when the government's focus on the tourism

industry opened possibilities for innovative ways to sell Spanish food to new audiences.

During the later years of the dictatorship and the transition to democracy, regional cuisines would be celebrated again, as evidenced in numerous texts mentioned by the editors. They consider the pertinent work of Germán Labrador Méndez about the transition to democracy and the connections between gastronomies, social engineering, and governance in relation to peripheral regions such as Catalonia and the Basque Country, areas that have utilized cuisine to mark difference before and after the transition (8). In the post-1975 era, both these regions have harnessed their culinary heritage, either through promoting *Catalanidad* via the Generalitat de Catalunya (see Mercer and Song) or via initiatives like Euskadi Gastronomika in the Basque Country.

Immigration to Spain has altered foodways, although this is not always recognized in hegemonic narratives of 21st century Spain such as the work of Manuel Vázquez Montalbán. Rather, emphasis has been placed on diversity within the country's 17 autonomous communities. However, the editors do well in pointing out that "racialized Spaniards" (*personas racializadas,* as they are known in Spain) like writers Chenta Tsai Tseng (Putochinomaricón) and Quan Zhou Wu (author of *Gazpacho agridulce* and other texts) mobilize food metaphors in their autobiographical work to critique dominant narratives and celebrate their diverse identities. This relates to Elizabeth Zanoni's ideas about the "movement of people and foods" being "deeply intertwined and critical to understanding nation-building, globalization, and the formation of migrant marketplaces" (9). Despite their contributions to the latter, the editors point out that migrants and racialized Spaniards are too often marginalized due to their socioeconomic conditions. Afinoguénova, Anderson and Ingram thus invite more research on acculturation, hybridity, and assimilation of the food and foodways of these groups.

The four sections of the volume are divided into the politics of gastronomy (Part I: Gastropolitics); the ways in which gastronomy articulates identity debates (Part II: Ingestible Identities), the institutions of gastronomy (Part III: Gastrocratic Institutions), and the political resistance channeled through gastronomy (Part IV: Hard to Swallow). While mostly focused on 20th and 21st century Spain, some chapters do reference the country's history dating back to the Middle Ages.

Part I includes three chapters, beginning with "Public Control over Private Trade: Barcelona's Market Hall Food Retailing System" by Montserrat Miller, which traces the way in which Barcelona's city government asserted

authority by controlling both the supply and distribution of food from the medieval, early modern, and modern times, detailing the importance of public market halls in the cityscape that retained their relevance and durability even while other European cities saw their demise, and today, boasting "more markets per capita than any other city in Europe" (47). Their power and continued success in Barcelona is owed to advancing the common good and to the prevalence of women-owned and operated enterprises.

The next chapter, "Regenerating Catalan Cultural Identity" by H. Rosi Song, looks at Ferran Agulló's 1928 cookbook titled *Llibre de la cuina catalana,* detailing how the cookbook's origin is related to loss and nostalgia for an idealized past, and connecting the cookbook to the history of 20th century Catalan nationalist politics, noting how it served to both define a nationalist cuisine and to shape Catalan nationality (*nationalitat catalana*) via its cooking and eating practices (explicitly linked to the landscape) that persist to the present day, cementing the significance of cookbooks as influential texts, which is too often neglected.

"Francoist Food Culture in Post-Authoritarian Spain: Culinary Maps, Centralism and Food Memories," a chapter written by Lara Anderson, considers the persistence of and nostalgia for Franco's gastronomical unification project related to biopolitics, despite the present-day strength of regional food cultures. She examines popular culture manifestations like television shows, culinary maps, royal banquets, Francoist restaurants, and food memories as "acts of remembering," a particularly fascinating part of her analysis, for their power derives from the potency of sensory and bodily memories.

Part II comprises three chapters. "Food Fights: Nativism and Culinary Xenophobia in Europe" by Aitana Guia explores the relationship of xenophobia to migrant cuisines in Spain and other countries like Denmark and France, dubbed "culinary xenophobia." Guia considers the "ideological uses of pork" in areas such as advertising, school lunch menus, and historical city centers, beginning with the importance of who consumed which foods as signifiers of religious identity, dating back to the Christian conquest of Islamic Spain ending in 1492, and continuing into current debates about offering halal school lunches in Spanish public schools. This xenophobia is also seen in opposition to erect Chinese arches in an area with many Chinese-owned businesses in Valencia, Spain.

"*Kashrut* in Spain: Religious Observance, State Tolerance, or Niche Market Entrepreneurship?" by Silvina Schammah Gesser and Susy Gruss examines *kashrut* ("*kosher* food, eating rules, and cooking practices"), a practice of belonging, stemming from religion, channeled through food,

and rooted in Hebrew scriptures. As expressed in 20th and 21st century Spain, applications of *kashrut* represent the "re-initiation of Jewish life in the country" (128). Interestingly, the authors note that Spanish food and wine producers use *kashrut* practices to harness economic gains for other sectors of society—the prohibition of mixing dairy and meat can attract vegans and people who are lactose intolerant, and *kosher* wines from Spain are now exported to the U.S., Israel, France, and the U.K.

"Culinary Conflict or *Convivencia*?: *Halal* Food Practices, Perceptions, and Promotion in Spain" by Jessica Boll provides an excellent complement to the prior two chapters in this section. *Halal,* or permissible in Arabic, references products and behaviors sanctioned by Islamic law. Boll describes the surge in *halal* food products and production in Spain due in part to immigrants, Spanish converts, and Muslim tourists. Despite the myriad benefits of *halal* foods and methods, such products are unfortunately disdained by some sectors due to Islamophobia. However, Boll posits that products like *halal jamón* (made with lamb and beef) connect both a link to the past and a sense of belonging, which are fundamental to culinary identity, ending on a hopeful note that perhaps "*halal* fare in Spain has the potential to bring together historically opposed peoples and practices" (164).

Part III consists of three chapters. "The Institutionalization of the Asturian *Espicha* during the Franco Regime" by Luis Benito García Álvarez explains the state intervention in rituals of tapping alcoholic cider barrels called *espichas*. This valuable chapter, about both a drink and a region not spotlighted enough, traces the changes in the cider industry due to 19th century industrialization and subsequent growth in the cider industry (even serving Asturian communities in the Americas) to the ritualization of cider connected to other social activities and social mobility in the early 20th century. When Franco's dictatorship limited "rights of assembly, demonstration, and association," the rituals around cider consumption were altered and subsequently institutionalized by civic associations and government entities instead of private business owners (180; 185).

"Cava's Place" by Bob Davidson offers an engaging account of Catalan cava's production and reception, including a recent effort by producers to create a distinctive sparkling wine called Corpinnat, whose identity, unlike cava, is grounded in *terroir*, the complete natural environment in which the wine's production occurs. While cava is often associated with Catalonia since 95% (the vast majority) is produced there, in Penedès, in the rest of Spain, boycotts in the early 2000s against Catalan nationalism promulgated the consumption of non-Catalan cavas. Davidson, thus, connects cava to

ideas of social class, politically motivated boycotts, and territorial identity, elegantly deeming it a "moveable" drink in all these spheres.

"Food, Heritage, and Tourism: On the Uses of Food Heritage and Its Relations with Culture, Politics, and Socioeconomic Development" by F. Xavier Medina focuses on thinking about gastronomy and foodways as ways to construct heritage in Spain, which is ever evolving. Medina argues that language about heritage is connected to identity, and tourism discourses draw upon food heritage for promotion of local products and recipes. Importantly, this chapter touches on gastronomic tourism, which he sees as an area with potential for further research, especially at a time when tourism is both great generator of economic profit and the bane of many people's existence in Spain due to cost-of-living increases and overcrowding that come with over-tourism.

Part IV includes two chapters. "Ideology 'à la Carte': Food Politics in Franco's Spain" by Suzanne Dunai frames gastronomy as a form of soft power, detailing how the Francoist New State's policies influenced everything from home cooking and consumption of food to legislating the food supply. Dunai's analysis of the regime's control of foodways, in both public and private spheres, carves out a place for resistance despite the authoritarian politics of the time: the private life of the home, a space that is not given enough credence for its influence. The author blames autarkic policies that resulted in both scarcity and shortages during the *años de hambre* and "the inconsistency of food policy implemented by the regime" as reasons for unsuccessful imposition of practices surrounding foodways, noting that varying tastes, health, access to food, and differing religious preferences meant that Spaniards were neither as uniform nor as obedient in their production and consumption of foods as the regime may have hoped.

"Creating a 'Land of Charcuterie': Cured Meat Producers, Culinary Marketing, and the Construction of Gastronationalist Discourses in Twentieth-Century Catalonia" by Alejandro J. Gómez del Moral tackles the topic of cured meat, a thread discussed in different ways throughout this volume, noting that "in Catalonia as in the rest of Spain, cured pork is serious business—both in a literal sense, but also in cultural and political terms" (281). Gómez del Moral looks at the Catalonian context, specifically related to self-determination as producers and marketers engage in nation-building through their efforts, concluding that cured meat products and the ways they are marketed can reproduce ideas of an imagined Catalan national community.

An afterword by Carolyn A. Nadeau titled "Future Directions on Food Studies and Politics in Spain Today" is a wonderful '*repostre*'—an unexpected extra dessert served after the initial dessert—to close the volume. Nadeau does well in acknowledging the excellent work accomplished previously by the volume's three editors, which equipped them to expand upon and shepherd more food studies work into being. She also details the broad theoretical strokes and connections between the chapters in this volume, including their attention to the history of food practices connected to "government, private businesses, ethnic and religious groups, and other entities" (296). Other themes she highlights are regional foods and nationalistic discourse, and the power of food "to unite people through a common gastronomic identity" or, contrastingly, to be a "divisive instrument" (299). Nadeau raises several interesting questions based on the chapters in the volume that invite future research, including what the issues raised in the Spanish context might suggest for the larger European framework.

In conclusion, while this collection does mention the gastronomic significance and contributions from Spain's peripheral regions, even including a chapter about Asturias, it is somewhat imbalanced in its coverage of Catalonia, with three chapters out of eleven dedicated to this region. Of course, no volume can cover every aspect of a nation's culinary heritage. Gladly, the editors plan to expand the volume to a version in Spanish, including more attention to the Basque Country, which is largely missing from the present volume despite its centrality in creating culinary narratives, traditions and trends, and hopefully other regions such as Galicia. Undoubtedly, the well-researched contributions in *Digestible Governance* are highly valuable in that they build on work done by the editors and others to bring Spain into the forefront of Food Studies, as it is often wrongly ignored, despite its prominence on the world stage in all things gastronomy.

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Food: The Next Global Transition. Carlos Francisco Echeverría, independently published, 2023. ISBN: 979-8864661185. pp.232.

From environmental threats to malnutrition, current debates around the production and consumption of food are complex and urgent. There is much scholarly and institutional information available, but public under-

standing of the problems and potential solutions around food systems is not always straightforward. The goal of Carlos Francisco Echeverría's recent book, *Food: The Next Global Transition*, is to tackle this issue, and the text offers a clear and engaging way into the vast, scientific world of food, climate change and sustainability.

With a professional background in politics, business and communication, Echeverría is particularly skilful in keeping simple the language and structure of the text and in weaving curious facts into the narrative. From stating that around 20% of the agri-food system's methane emissions originate from rice fields to naming the five countries that host more than 50% of the world's plastic waste, Echeverría sparks curiosity in his readership without overwhelming them with numbers—and this is particularly important, since his focus is on an "interested but not specialised" audience.

Food: The Next Global Transition is divided into two parts with eight chapters each. The first part, entitled "How We Got Here," brings together reflections on the history and current state of our food systems. The second, "The Possible Roads Ahead," highlights strategies and case studies of innovation, research and practice on food and sustainability. This past–present–future approach works well, as illustrated by the two complementary chapters on fishing and oceans (Chapters VII and XIV). Whilst the first of these sets the contemporary scene with discussions on exploitative fishing practices and water pollution, the second emphasises the importance of establishing more marine protected areas and considers the pros and cons of aquaculture.

It is interesting—and helpful—that many of the chapters are structured around ingredients or food groups. Chapters III and IV, for example, take a closer look at popular yet problematic crops: namely, corn (described as cheap and abundant), soybeans (the "nutritional prodigy") and sugar (an "expensive addiction"). Echeverría strikes a good critical balance in articulating economic, cultural and health-related knowledge, although the section on sugar could have been longer to contextualise the sociopolitical impacts of the slave trade in more detail. Corn resurfaces in Chapter XII, alongside information on the production of other grains (such as rice, oats and quinoa), legumes, roots, tubers, and fruit and vegetables. Here, Echeverría succeeds in demonstrating how good practices of water management, agrobiodiversity and integrated multitrophic crops, as well as the consumption of "basic ingredients," can build a strong foundation for sustainable food systems. Other highlights include Chapter V, which uses flour and bread to talk about mechanic progress and loss of nutritional value, and

Chapter XIII, which touches on controversial themes such as palm oil and meat substitutes.

Technology is another strong thread in the book, and Echeverría often exposes the gap between scientific knowledge of transformative practices and the political will to effect change. The chapters in the first section do an excellent job of tracing the genealogies of techniques and tools in modern food production and in explaining how the development of agri-food businesses has taken place. A strong example of this is Chapter VIII, which initially showcases the environmental benefits of preserving certain ingredients and ends by presenting convincing problematisations of plastic packaging and ultra-processed food. Chapter VI, which explores the consumption of meat and animal products, also has an interesting section on refrigeration, and Chapter II makes a very strong case against the privatization of seeds and genetic material. In the second half of the book, discussions around greenwashing (Chapter IX) and genetically modified organisms (Chapter X) are particularly timely. They demonstrate the importance of thinking about food under economic and political prisms and deserved to be fleshed out in more detail.

While the author claims to have adopted a global approach to his research, and includes interesting examples from Latin America and Asia, the book feels very much focused on a readership in the Global North. Echeverría makes a case for this by stating that "the agri-food transition in European nations and the United States is decisive due to their material and cultural influence worldwide." However, at times, the book relies heavily on references from Spain and the US, and it would have been productive to include more scholarly perspectives from different geographical contexts. A similar point can be made about the articulation of dominant narratives within the book. In Chapter XV, for example, the author delves into gastronomy and how chefs are engaging with sustainability. However, with the exception of the *Gastromotiva* project in Brazil, which has a clear focus on marginalized communities, the examples selected by Echeverría are drawn from the mainstream. This feels like a missed opportunity to call attention to lesser-known practices of resistance, solidarity and collective action, which might have offered the reader more inspiration to do their part in relation to activism and consumer culture.

However, as the author reminds us throughout the book, learning about and acting on this subject is a continuous process. Despite some problematic generalisations, *Food: The Next Global Transition* is an accessible first step for audiences wanting to find out more about our current food systems

and the opportunities to transform them. May the food for thought it provides continue to encourage more research and practice in this field.

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Mediterranean Flows: People, Ideas, and Objects in Motion. Anna Usacheva, Jörg Ulrich, and Siam Bhayro, eds. Brill Schöningh, 2023. ISBN: 978-3-506-79513-7. pp. 210.

Mediterranean Flows: People, Ideas, and Objects in Motion (2023), edited by Anna Usacheva, Jörg Ulrich, and Siam Bhayro, takes readers on a sort of voyage through time and space by exploring the movement of people, ideas, and objects in the Ancient Mediterranean. Starting with a stimulating introduction written by Emilia Mataix Ferrándiz and Anna Usacheva, followed by nine fascinating chapters, the volume's authors underscore the fixed and fluid elements that fuel cultural identities, so often anchored in texts, things, ideas, people, animals, and boundaries (xi). *Mediterranean Flows* takes an inclusive, multidimensional approach to movement and connectivity in the ancient world, emphasizing how "migration, trade, travelling objects, knowledge exchange and the dissemination of books" (ix) complemented the movement and exchange of animals, plants, and objects throughout the Mediterranean.

Mediterranean Flows opens with Greg Woolf's broad study of mobility, titled "The Roman Mediterranean as a Fluid System." Establishing a conceptual core for all subsequent chapters, Woolf's chapter analyzes "connectivity" with respect to material flows (6), the "flows of living things" (9), and the "flows of information" (13), while examining factors such as the region's political economy, the mapping of networks, and how the Romans characterized their "others," the Barbarians (13). Following this is David Inglis's "The World Flows with Mediterranean Wine: On the Roles of *Mare Nostrum* in Global Wine Dynamics," which challenges the common perception of wine as a product originating in the Mediterranean, disregarding the "multiple globalisations throughout history of the Mediterranean and its wine world" (xv). Inglis traces the process by which wine became "mediterraneanized" and how socioeconomic factors impacted wine's move westward, leading to a normalization of daily wine drinking

(23) and a bridging of the Dionysian and Christian traditions (32), which extended into colonial empires beyond the Mediterranean.

Antti J. Lampinen's "Condemning Mobility: Nativist and Exclusionist Rhetoric in the Second-Century 'Sophistic' Discourse on Human Movement" analyzes "xenophobic anxieties" with respect to population movements though a comparison of Greek and Roman notions of autochthony (53). Lampinen's study is critical for understanding the role of fear and unease regarding human migration within the Roman empire, which often drew from "expressions of nativist or exclusionist rhetoric about immigrants or recently arrived individuals or groups" (47). Building on this is James Gerrard's chapter, *Travelling Brittania*: A Diachronic Perspective on Romano-British Mobility," in which the author analyzes ancient travel narratives beyond the archaeological focus on origins, endpoints, and "cartographic distance," in favor of seeing "travel as an experiential mode" (81). Gerrard analyzes the "social context of travel" (83) by looking at how humans tamed, trained, and rode horses, underscoring the "entanglements of animal, person, materiality and landscape" (90).

Following these initial chapters, the volume transitions from an emphasis on the movement of people, plants, and animals, to the topic of how ideas, words, and texts travelled throughout the Mediterranean region. Pieter B. Hartog's "Reading Acts in Motion: Movement and Glocalisation in the Acts of the Apostles" examines the literary practices and travel narrative element in the Book of Acts. Hartog analyzes "the central role that travel, motion, and mobility play in the Acts of the Apostles" (99) and how the Book of Acts "uses motion as a topos to describe the early Jesus movement as a global, supra-ethnic group in which Judaeans and non-Judaeans come together" (99). The two chapters following Hartog's build on his study through detailed textual, biblical and theological analyses, emphasizing how translations disseminated meanings beyond the local. Sigurvin Lárus Jónsson's "Sabbath as a Temporal Marker in Luke-Acts" analyzes the biblical terminology denoting time and the "motif of urgency and future-oriented eschatological outlook" that was fundamental to the Christian Mission (118). This temporal framing was punctuated by the Sabbath as a narrative device and a marker of "eschatological rest" (xvii), a pause integrally tied to the dissemination, flow, and extension of the Christian Ministry (126). Following Jónsson's study is Samuel Fernández's "Words and Concepts in Motion: Hilary of Poitiers between East and West," a close textual reading of Hilary's Latin translations of Greek technical terminology during the Arian controversy, whose primary weapons were letters, pamphlets, and other documents (129). Hilary's translations of these texts

from Greek to Latin made debates accessible to the Latin-speaking religious leaders of the west, but not without creating some confusion among western bishops.

Emphasizing the interrelation of mobility and ideas are the final two chapters of the volume, Anna Usacheva's "Educational and Ritual Aspects of Reading and Publishing Practices from the Greek Philosophical Schools to Latin Monasticism" and Jessica van't Westeinde's "Miles Make the Mind: Jerome on Travel, Learning, and Knowledge Exchange," which looks at the travels and teachings of the theologian Jerome. Usacheva analyzes how "the practice of reading, publishing, and book circulation encapsulates the concept of motion in both theoretical and material domains" (148). Usacheva focuses on how the textual practices of the philosophical schools dating from the first century BCE became transformed, thanks to the spread of Christianity, into an integral part of the spiritual, exegetical reading practices Christian monastic communities (160). Van't Westeinde builds on the Usacheva's mention of Jerome's work, showing how Jerome used his travels throughout the Roman Empire to expand not only his status, networks, and library, but also to facilitate the dissemination of his writings to prospective patrons and students, on the one hand making "accessible the knowledge and ideas of Greek authors to his Latin audience" (209) and, on the other, casting Jerome as a "prototype and catalyst for the mobile mind" (210).

One interesting element of *Mediterranean Flows* is its relevance to today's world, with several chapters establishing important parallels to contemporary understandings of both immigration and globalization, while noting the destructive impact of dehumanizing practices both then and now. The authors in this extraordinary collection of essays demonstrate the critical importance of approaching the study of the ancient Mediterranean through interdisciplinary and inclusive lenses, through careful and nuanced readings of texts and language, and through an understanding of how the migration of people, ideas, and objects enrich the human experience.

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