

CONTEMPORARY APPROPRIATIONS OF CULINARY TRADITION IN SLOVENIA

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This paper deals with appropriation and protection of local food and culinary tradition in contemporary Slovenian society. Food culture is an important part of national and regional heritage, and thus has not just economic, but also political and social importance. As a segment of the lifestyle and culture of Slovenians, it has not been particularly closely studied by ethnologists. During the last decades, Slovenian ethnologists focused research on several related subjects, particularly typical local dishes and food products and on protection of their geographical indications and designations of origin within the European Union. In 2008, Slovenian Parliament ratified the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), a result of which is the work on the making of the Slovenian Register of Living Cultural Heritage. It is in this manner that ethnologists try to draw attention to the significance of local products and dishes that are a part of the intangible heritage. A number of interesting questions have arisen during this process, for example how to present the food culture of various social and ethnic groups that live in Slovenia; is the culinary heritage of Slovenians truly as uniform as has been indicated and presented up to the present; when do certain foods and dishes become culinary heritage; and if food and foodstuffs are a part of tangible or intangible heritage.

Keywords: food culture, intangible heritage, local food, Register of Living Cultural Heritage, Slovenia.

Članek obravnava rabo in zaščito lokalnih jedi in izročila prehrane v sodobni slovenski družbi. Kultura hrane je pomemben del nacionalnega in pokrajinskega izročila in zato ni le gospodarsko, temveč tudi politično in družbeno pomembna. Etnologi je niso pogosto raziskovali kot del načina življenja. V zadnjih desetletjih so se slovenski raziskovalci zanimali za več povezanih tem, zlasti za krajevno značilne jedi in prehranske produkte in za zaščito njihovega geografskega izvira in oznak na ravni Evropske unije. Leta 2008 je slovenski Državni zbor potrdil Unescovo Konvencijo o varovanju nesnovne kulturne dediščine (2003), kar je spodbudilo pripravo Registra žive kulturne dediščine. Na ta način si etnologi prizadevajo opozoriti na pomen krajevnih izdelkov in jedi iz vidika nesnovne dediščine. Ob tem pa se je nanizalo nekaj zanimivih vprašanj: npr., kako predstaviti prehransko kulturo različnih družbenih in etničnih skupin, ki živijo v Sloveniji; ali je kulinarično izročilo Slovencev res tako enovito, kakor se je kazalo do zdaj; kdaj določena hrana in jedi postanejo kulinarično izročilo; in, ali je hrana del snovne ali nesnovne dediščine. Ključne besede: kultura hrane, nesnovna dediščina, krajevna hrana, Register žive kulturne dediščine.

As far as research is concerned, in European ethnology food as a cultural resource is a part of life and culture that has been trailing behind other material elements (i.e. costume, architecture, household furnishings). It represents a significant segment of human culture, since everybody is immersed in his/her social and cultural environment, which affects his or her choice of food, its use, preparation, and consuming. It conveys messages on socializing and social events, relations, hierarchy, inclusion and exclusion, the drawing of boundaries, and the overstepping of boundaries (Douglas 1982). Food helps us establish as well as reveal, strengthen, or renew the system of social differentiation and delineation between social groups. Günter Wiegmann, a German ethnologist and one of the founders of modern

research of food culture, once wrote that food, in addition to speech and clothing, is the only cultural element that is realized on a daily basis (Wiegelmann 2006: 13). His opinion is shared by a number of researchers who maintain that on all levels and in all periods of European civilization, shared meals were one of the most significant forms of daily, as well as occasional, and particularly festive, communication among people, and the kitchen the place where culture and nature meet and merge. In the extensive *Mythologiques*, Claude Lévi-Strauss stated that different tastes and manners of food preparation represent, in addition to kinship systems, myths, and rituals, permanent and basic socio-cultural patterns of human existence that still need to be researched (Lévi-Strauss 1983: 361). Food preparation as well as the act of cooking not only indicate that humans do not equal animals, but complex manners of food preparation, consumption, and serving also set apart the so-called civilized societies from savages. Food preparation is therefore, more than a transformation of raw foodstuffs into cooked, edible food, but a 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 shares of food, which is strongly linked to a host of cultural values (Godina Golija 1996: 10)

Experts on this subject, particularly ethnologist, should pay greater attention to these aspects of life and culture, especially nowadays, in present time of globalization and traveling cultures, when food as a cultural system implies many different levels of crossroads in diverse socio-cultural spaces: such as those between indulgence and normality, past and present, tradition and innovation, the global and regional, private and public, layman and professional – to name but a few (Böder 2010: 46).

RESEARCH OF FOOD CULTURE IN SLOVENIA

Food culture as a segment of the lifestyle and material culture of Slovenians has been insufficiently researched by Slovenian ethnologists. Apart from shorter descriptions and notes in ethnographic literature on festive dishes, in the 19th century no extensive and comprehensive texts had been written on this topic (Godina Golija 1996: 12). Günter Wiegelmann believes that this relative lack of scholarly interest in 19th century is primarily due to two factors: the influence of romanticism on ethnographical research and the fact that food culture is usually confined within family and as such perceived as a part of the intimate life of every individual. It is also recognized as female responsibility, and as it predominantly depended upon the knowledge generally possessed by women, it tended to be of no particular interest to researchers who at that time were largely male (Wiegelmann 1986: 34). It was not until 1944 that the first extensive study on the food culture of Slovenians was published, penned by Rajko Ložar, in *Narodopisje Slovencev 1* (Ethnography of Slovenians, Vol. 1). To this day, Ložar's text remains one of the most thorough investigations of popular food culture in the period prior to the industrialization of Slovenian rural areas. It abounds in data on

the production, consumption, and function of food in the life of the rural population in Slovenia. Important is also his later text, titled 'Imena naših jedi' (Names of our dishes); he namely cautioned that rather than collecting and publishing recipes and searching for typical Slovenian foods, ethnologists should investigate cultural and historic backgrounds of foodstuffs, dishes, and meals (Ložar 1973: 3).

The first ethnological doctoral dissertation on food culture was published after the Second World War. Written in 1947 by Slavacist and ethnologist Vilko Novak, it was entitled *Ljudska prehrana v Prekmurju* (Popular Food Culture in Prekmurje) (Novak 1947). Skillfully combining his knowledge about Slavic languages with ethnological field research, he recorded a wealth of dialectological data on the names of dishes, kitchenware, beverages, meals, etc. No extensive studies of this topic had followed for several decades. Shorter texts on the food culture of the Slovenian rural population were published in comprehensive reviews of Slovenian folk culture, for example in *Slovenska ljudska kultura* (Slovenian Folk Culture; Novak 1960) and *Slovensko ljudsko izročilo* (Slovenian Folk Heritage; Baš, ed., 1980). Ethnological studies from this period largely explore every day and festive dishes of the Slovenian rural population prior to industrial revolution and the introduction of store-bought food, thus focusing on a period when people still largely depended on home-grown food and regional variety was dominant.

Generally self-sufficient, Slovenian farmers worked the land for their own household needs and to a lesser extent to market their crops. Mostly growing crops indigenous to where they lived, they provided a variety of produce typical for the geographically diverse regions that make up Slovenia. It is therefore possible to say that this was a time when the food culture in Slovenia was still very geographically differentiated and staple foodstuffs did not yet come from traded goods sold in shops.

According to ethnological classification, there are four major types of food culture in Slovenia. The Pannonian type in the east is based on crops like wheat and buckwheat. Meals made from wheat and buckwheat flour consisted of different types of pasta, pies, which were often filled with cottage cheese, and breads. Dishes were flavored with sour cream and cottage cheese. Abundant crops of pumpkins, not grown anywhere else in Slovenia, gave excellent pumpkin oil widely used in cooking.

The northern type, or the Alpine type, is typical for the hills, mountains, and forest areas of the north. With the exception of corn and buckwheat, its harsh climate does not provide adequate conditions for agriculture, but is suitable for animal husbandry and Alpine dairy-farming. Food culture of this region was thus based mainly on dairy products such as milk, sour milk, curd, and cheese, and corn and buckwheat mush. Venison, which was rarer in other parts of Slovenia, could also be found on the tables of local households. Game meat was also cured and made into sausages and other meat products.

The central type was characteristic for central Slovenia. It consisted of staples that grew best in this climate. People planted tuberous vegetables such as potatoes and turnips, in addition to buckwheat and millet. Buckwheat and millet porridge, boiled in water or

milk, was prepared frequently, as were cabbage and turnip. This was the first Slovenian region whose population started to include the potato in their daily meals; potatoes quickly became very popular and were prepared in a number of ways.

With its warm Mediterranean climate and karstic soil, western Slovenia gave birth to the Mediterranean type of food culture. Rather than enabling the growth of cereals the barren soil is suitable for growing olive trees, certain kinds of vegetables and fruits, vine, and raising sheep. Among the most widely served food, usually included into most meals, were the polenta that substituted bread, thick vegetable soups called the minestrone, vegetable and meat sauces, fish, and the widely used olive oil (Godina Golija 2006: 51–52).

Changes in food culture were introduced gradually and were connected with the growing mobility of the rural population. Whether working in towns on a regular basis or only occasionally, this segment of the population adopted some urban food customs and transplanted them to their original rural environment. Increasing industrialization, the introduction of railways and, as a consequence, greater mobility of population gradually significantly diminished the regional diversity of Slovenia. Second part of the 20th centuries was also the period of increased interest in industrially processed food.

Ethnological research of food culture gradually started to follow these changes. From the mid-1990s, scholarly interest in the subject again increased, particularly by curators in regional museums (Šlibar 2003). A product of this interest are studies that no longer focus solely on the so-called popular or folk food culture, thus the food culture of the Slovenian rural population and its typical daily and festive dishes, but also on the food culture of townspeople, for example of urban middle and working classes, and of miners. Several museums prepared ethnological exhibits on food culture. Celje Regional Museum displayed an urban kitchen and the mining town of Trbovlje organized an exhibit on the food culture of miners (Rajšter 2003; Mlakar Adamič 2004). During the last decade, a growing interest in the research of food culture in Slovenia as well as in other countries increased also among scholars of similar disciplines, for example sociologists and anthropologists.

PROMOTION AND DESIGNATION OF SLOVENIAN DISHES

Search for and promotion of typical Slovenian dishes is encouraged by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food of the Republic of Slovenia whose primary aim is to promote Slovenian agricultural products and certain food products. Tourist workers and the food service sector are increasingly interested in protected foodstuffs and food products. Due to these growing demands to align Slovenian legislation with the legislation of the European Union, the Ministry adopted the Regulation on the Conditions for the Use of the Designation of Traditional Specialty Guaranteed for various Slovenian foods and awarded certain foodstuffs and dishes the designation of protected food product. 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) (Gašek and Kos - Skubic 2010: 25). In addition, foodstuffs may also have the designation of origin as well as protected geographical indication, for instance Nanos cheese, ham of Prekmurje, Piran salt, Mohant cheese, Karst prosciutto etc. Both emphasize the significance of the region in which a particular item of food was produced and specify the ingredients used throughout the process of its production. It is namely imperative that the entire process of production and further processing takes 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 (Gašek and Kos - Skubic 2010: 9).

Since 2008, when the Slovenian parliament ratified UNESCO's *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (ICH), Slovenian ethnologists who study food culture have been participating in the preparation of the Register of Intangible Heritage (the so-called *living heritage*). The field of food culture, food preparation, and food products is the segment of the intangible heritage that strongly engages human creativity and requires a considerable degree of knowledge and skill. Following the model of other European countries, this field has been incorporated in the Slovenian *Register of Living Cultural Heritage* in the chapter entitled 'Economic Skills'. A work team that worked under the umbrella of the Institute of Slovenian Ethnology at the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts has created a list of cultural elements from the field of food culture that need to be documented, studied, and entered into the *Register* (Križnar 2010: 10). During 2009 and 2010, the author of this paper conducted fieldwork in three Slovenian regions, collecting data, references, and photographic material on three characteristic ingredients used in Slovenian cuisine: the *mohant* cheese; the *gibanica* (leavened pie), and pumpkinseed oil. A result of this project was a text that is also available online, with additional photographs, drawings, and a video (<http://www.zkds.si/>).

The major criteria for the foodstuffs and dishes included in the *Register* were the following: age; specialized knowledge required for their preparation; originality; and their importance in, and 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 the tourist offer in a region and serve for the promotion of its local cuisine (Godina Golijaja 2010b: 64–67).

MOHANT CHEESE

Let us examine more closely one of the elements of Slovenian culinary heritage included in the *Register of Living Cultural Heritage*, namely the *mohant* cheese. Available on the *Register's* website, the text dealing with this particular culinary specialty is also furnished with pho-



Figure 1. *Mohant* cheese as a part of everyday meal (photo: M. Godina Golija, 2009).

tographs depicting the making of the cheese as well as an ethnological documentary film (<http://www.zkds.si/?q=node/69>).

The *mohant* cheese is a traditional dairy product made in villages and on dairy mountains in Bohinj and its vicinity. Its distinctive, slightly tangy and bitter taste and a strong smell make it different from other cheeses produced in Slovenia. Rajko Ložar wrote that its production process was a simple and very old one, practiced even before the hard cheeses of Bohinj started to be produced in the mid-19th century (Ložar 1944: 202). Traditionally made in remote places far from main roads or milk collecting locations, the *mohant* was made from the surplus milk which the local farmers could not sell. The cheese is presently made on approximately fifteen farms situated in the municipality of Bohinj, either for the farmers' own consumption or as a registered supplementary economic activity. While in the first, and generally more frequent, case, the cheese is made in people's homes, usually in kitchens, several farmers had built small cheese dairies on their property.

The manufacturing process is as follows. When the milk is heated the cheese maker adds rennet. After twenty or forty minutes, the milk curdles. The curd is then roughly cut, stirred, and strained through a cloth or a sieve. After the whey has been drained the curd is mixed with salt and placed in containers. Until the 1980s, the cheese had been shaped into loaves, weighing two kilograms each, which were placed in wooden containers and left to age. Later on, many farmers started to place layer upon layer of cheese in plastic containers. The cheese is then pressed, covered with a linen cloth and with a wooden lid, and additionally weighted. Then it is left to ripen at 20°C for a period from four to six weeks, with excessive whey constantly drained. During this period, the cheese acquires its typical sharp, pungent flavor, light-yellow color, and plastic texture (Godina Golija 2010a: 57).

The *mohant* is generally consumed as a part of everyday dishes and meals. It is eaten with bread or with boiled sliced potatoes; it adds flavor to corn and buckwheat mush, roast potatoes, soups, and fried eggs. House makers have created and wrote down some modern recipes for its preparation, for example for pastries, cookies, omelets, and main dishes. These newly-created dishes with the *mohant* cheese serve to enrich the existing tourist offer and the catering services, particularly on agritourism farms (Godina Golija 2010a: 58).

The role of the *mohant* cheese in the life, and particularly in the economy, food culture, and folk medicine of the population of Bohinj and its vicinity has not yet been researched in detail. The exact history of this particular type of cheese making remains unknown. The Cheese Making Society of Bohinj (Sirarsko društvo Bohinj), which had taken steps



Figure 2. Making *mohant* cheese at home (photo: M. Godina Golija, 2009).

to provide the *mohant* cheese with the European Union Protected Designation of Origin, has been successful in the preservation of this heritage. The knowledge about its production is generally transmitted within the family, from generation to generation; the recipes are disseminated in the same manner.

The making of the *mohant* cheese is important for the economy of local farms, for tourism, and for the culinary offer of Bohinj. Preservation of the knowledge of its production process, and its use in cooking, are of exceptional importance for the safeguarding, presentation, and improvement of ethnographic characteristics and cultural heritage in northwest Slovenia, particularly in Bohinj and in the area of the Triglav National Park (Godina Golija 2010a: 58).

LOCAL DISHES AND IDENTITY

Local dishes that have been recognized as a part of our cultural heritage and help preserve cultural diversity, thus significantly raising the quality of life, play an equally important role in the creation of local identities; within the modern European society, these identities are becoming increasingly important. This is in accordance with the officially sanctioned policy of the European Union that, by applying different measures and creating projects, supports and funds regional development, local diversity, and specific local characteristics. It also indicates that the idea about the preservation and revival of the autonomy of European regions is becoming increasingly popular mainly among West European intellectuals (Köstlin 2010: 37). Advocates of these concepts promote and defend regional autonomy and economic autarchy, for example in energy production and consumption, and also in food supply and food culture. Within such concepts, food becomes an important expression of regional affiliation, particularly in connection with local food products and traditional dishes (Köstlin 2010: 38).

This is a new concept of food as a part of culture and cultural heritage that also brings an understanding that food is importantly linked to the natural environment in which it is produced, to its regional characteristics, to the lifestyle of the local population, and to

people's economic activities that ensure their survival. Food is therefore extremely closely connected with the territorial aspect, which is safeguarded and regulated by the UNESCO's 1972 *World Heritage Convention*. Food, and particularly local dishes, should be therefore considered from both aspects, namely the territorial one as well as within the framework of collective knowledge and tradition, and therefore the so-called intangible cultural heritage. Both aspects are regulated by the afore-mentioned UNESCO's 1972 *Convention* and the UNESCO's 2003 *Convention for the Safeguarding of the ICH*, in addition to some European Union documents pertaining to the production and protection of foodstuffs.

Since the production and sales of local products and traditional food are important factors in the economy of certain regions it is also necessary to consider the changing processes of the significance of local food products and dishes for the local population. This is particularly important when local dishes become a part of the officially recognized and recorded cultural heritage, and as such an expression and symbol of local identity. According to Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, all heritage interventions alter the relation between people, their actions, and cultural elements: "They change how people understand their culture and themselves. They change the fundamental conditions for cultural production and reproduction" (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 2004: 58).

When a certain food product becomes recognized as a local specialty and a part of the local heritage this raises a number of previously unimportant questions. These relate primarily to the ownership of this heritage and the dilemma of who has the right to use and exploit it, and who is the officially recognized implementing agency of such culinary heritage. Another highly pertinent question, which concerns geographical origin of food heritage, is particularly burning in view of the ongoing process of heritage delocalization. It is namely urgent to recognize that the act of determination and commercialization of regional food products denotes more than a simple, one-dimensional transfer from the local environment to the global market. It also produces new and intermediary factors. It is therefore all the more urgent to consider these new contexts that accompany food products on their journey through the process of distribution (Tschofen 2010: 119).

Similar processes were determined during the research of the production, safeguarding, and promotion of the *mohant* cheese.¹ Largely unknown until only two decades ago, this cheese was often included in daily meals of the local population of Bohinj and in the wider area of the Triglav National Park. Due to the growing number of tourists from urban parts of Slovenia as well as abroad, who seek primarily unspoiled nature and authenticity, which includes traditional culinary elements, this locally made cheese has become increasingly important. Another factor was a growing interest in organic food and local, traditional products. The *mohant* cheese has become an important ingredient of local cultural heritage that has been recognized as such by experts, tourist workers, and the local population.

¹ In the period from December 2009 and through January 2010, the author conducted fieldwork in the villages of Nemški Rovt and Brod in connection with the preparation of the required documentation for the entry of the *mohant* cheese in the Slovenian *Register of Living Cultural Heritage*.

The latter has modified its former attitude toward it largely on the basis of a number of activities related to this segment of local heritage. Having acquired the European Union Protected Designation of Origin, the cheese is featured on the Triglav National Park website, and has been included in the national *Register of Living Cultural Heritage*. The recently established Cheese Making Society of Bohinj has taken steps to ensure that the recipe for the making of this cheese is available only to those local communities who hold the rights to this particular segment of local heritage. In order to provide the cheese with the protected designation of origin, the Society has also prepared and submitted a detailed report to the European Union. Since some producers have also started to make this cheese in other parts of Slovenia, thus attempting to delocalize a part of the Slovenian cultural heritage, the Society has taken steps to protect it within the territory of Slovenia as well as in other parts of Europe. The cheese is now sold in its typical packaging furnished with the slogan proclaiming that “The *mohant* cheese is unique. The Cheese-Making Society of Bohinj.” The slogan underlines the territorial origin of the cheese, its exclusiveness, and its uniqueness.



Figure 3. Typical packaging furnished with the slogan (photo: M. Godina Golija, 2009).

Formerly largely unknown, this dairy product has become a distinctive and easily recognizable product typical of the geographical area that attracts numerous tourists. Its significance for the local population is not purely economic but also symbolic. Proud of this part of their local identity, the people of Bohinj present it to the public in various ways, for example on web pages describing the Triglav National Park and other local tourist attractions and events. It is important how the local culinary knowledge is treated, popularized and advertized, and disseminated. Production

and sales of local food are namely much more than a straightforward process of distribution of products from the place where they were produced to the consumer. This journey is much more complicated and involves new elements and experience that have an impact on the construction of cultural complexes.

Although the impact of local economies and cultural elements within the global economy, markets, and cultural systems is still largely undetermined it needs to be taken very seriously, particularly within the context of the yet unexploited potential of the so-called senses of places. Already attracting attention of some scholars, it plays a significant role that will have to be more closely examined in the future (Tschofen 2010: 121).

CONCLUSION

Food culture is an important part of national and regional heritage, and thus has not just economic, but also political and social importance. As a segment of the lifestyle and culture of Slovenians, it has not been particularly closely studied by ethnologists. During the last decades, they focused research on several related subjects, particularly typical local food and on protection of geographical indications and designations of origin within the European Union. We can follow also increasing interest in certain local dishes and food products that during, and in connection with the tourist industry, have become a significant factor of development in certain places and regions in Slovenia, for instance the *mohant* cheese in Bohinj and the Triglav National Park area, and the *gibanica*, a type of leavened pie, in Prekija and Prekmurje (Godina Golija 2010a: 56; 2010b: 64). These formerly typical daily dishes of the poorer segment of the Slovenian population have become indispensable in the tourist offer, and, when neatly packed, a souvenir one can bring home from a tourist destination. In the past, the *mohant* cheese had been frequently ridiculed for its unpleasantly pungent smell by those who were living outside its original region. Lately it has become a highly praised culinary attraction incorporated into new recipes that significantly diverge from the traditional preparation and have been invented by prominent chefs. Once merely provisional ingredients of daily meals have been turned into a supreme culinary experience, they feature as a prominent element in the tourist offer of a village or region. Local home grown food is in present time often connected also with appropriation of health giving nature of local food, authenticity and ecological character of these types of food products.

Richard Tellström (2006: 60) wrote that marketing experts had stressed in their interviews primarily the importance of meeting consumer needs for local products and their authenticity. It is namely this emphasis on authenticity that expands the market, or heightens the expectancy of new ones. In meeting these demands they need to skillfully balance between cultural heritage and innovation. Tradition and cultural origin need to be perceived as attractive means for increasing positive effects of consumption of local foodstuffs, and that the concept of regional, traditional food has to be in balance with the concept of innovation. In addition to presenting cultural values and riches of the countryside to urban consumers, the tendency is 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 a result of a combination of values, and in relation to the concept of how to use cultural heritage for commercial and political purposes. Contemporary food and meal culture is namely always an international phenomenon regardless of the fact that it is defined on a local, regional or national level.

Food is therefore not only an important element of the material but also of the intangible world, both locally and internationally. It is a part of collective knowledge, tradition,

and innovations in the preparation, serving, and consumption of food. In mid-19th century, certain elements of the material culture such as the costume and the house (Schippers 2002: 127) were considered an important indicator of national affiliation and authenticity. In the contemporary Western world, the role of material goods is quite different. Objects tend to express individuality and micro identities. The so-called national dishes, which were a construct of and popularized by the intellectual elite of particularly Slavic nations in the second half of the 19th century, served to express and underline national affiliation (Makarovič 1991: 127). They have now been replaced by local food with special emphasis on its territorial origin and its connection with its local environment, authenticity, tradition, and unspoiled nature. This emphasis on tradition and on elements of rural life in the era before the industrial revolution resulted in the fact that modernity, which is classically perceived as the downfall of tradition, created tradition in the epistemological sense, thus turning it into a product of modernity (Anttonen 2005: 13). Much as over a century and a half ago, an important role in this process have once again been played by intellectuals and citizens of urban communities that fight the unification and globalization of culture and strive for a better quality of life, particularly in some of the regions that are very important for tourism and agriculture. In these environments, food becomes an important element in the creation of local identities. Moreover, it is an important factor of economic development in tourism, the catering industry, and in the production of traditional local food. It matches with an increased interest in the autonomy and autarchy of European regions, healthy lifestyle, nature protection, and quality leisure time (Köstlin 2010: 44).

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SODOBNE RABE KULINARIČNEGA IZROČILA V SLOVENIJI

Prehrana je pomemben del nacionalne in regionalne dediščine in kot taka nima samo ekonomskega, ampak tudi politični in družbeni pomen. Kot področje življenja in kulture Slovencev še ni podrobneje etnološko preučena. Nekateri evropski raziskovalci, npr. Günter Wiegmann (2006), povezujejo manjše zanimanje za prehrano predvsem z vplivom romantike na etnografsko raziskovanje, pa tudi z dejstvom, da je ljudska prehrana tisto področje kulture, ki se največkrat dogaja v družinskem krogu in spada v intimno območje življenja posameznika. Vendar hrana ni samo pomembna sestavina materialnega sveta, povezanega z življenjem posameznika, temveč tudi del nematerialnega na lokalni, pa tudi širši mednarodni ravni. Je del kolektivnega znanja in zavedanja, tradicije in inovacij povezanih s pripravo, postrežbo in uživanjem hrane. Če so bile sredi 19. stoletja nekatere sestavine materialne kulture, npr. noša in hiša, spoznane kot pomembni kazalniki nacionalne pripadnosti in samobitnosti, pa tudi ljudske ustvarjalnosti in estetskega čuta, potem lahko ugotovimo, da je vloga materialnih dobrin v sodobnem zahodnem svetu večinoma drugačna: posamezniki izražajo individualnost in mikroidentiteto s pomočjo predmetov. Nekoč od izobraženstva konstruirane in propagirane narodne jedi, ki so služile izražanju in poudarjanju nacionalne pripadnosti, zlasti politično zatiranih slovanskih narodov v drugi polovici 19. stoletja, so danes nadomeščene s propagiranjem lokalnih živilskih izdelkov in jedi, pri katerih je še posebej poudarjena teritorialnost, tj. povezanost hrane z lokalnim okoljem, avtentičnostjo, tradicijo in neokrnjeno naravo. Povezovanje s tradicijo in sestavinami vaškega življenja v predindustrijski dobi je povzročilo, da je modernost, ki v klasičnem naziranju uniči tradicijo, v epistemološkem smislu tradicijo ustvarila, tako da je tradicija v bistvu produkt modernosti (Anttonen 2005).

V zadnjih dveh desetletjih se je zanimanje za prehrano kot kulturno dobrino Slovencev pojavilo predvsem v povezavi z zaščito nekaterih slovenskih živilskih izdelkov in jedi v okvirih Evropske unije. Zaradi turistične industrije se je na Slovenskem povečalo tudi zanimanje za nekatere lokalne jedi in živila, posebno na območju Triglavskega narodnega parka in nekaterih drugih varovanih območij, npr. na Goričkem, Krasu in Beli krajini. Nekdaj značilne vsakdanje jedi revnejših skupin prebivalstva so postale zelo pomemben del turistične in gostinske ponudbe teh območij, lepo zavite pa so lahko celo turističen spominek, ki ga obiskovalci odnesejo domov.

Lokalne jedi v Sloveniji, ki so spoznane za del kulturne dediščine, niso pomembne samo v turizmu, ampak, podobno kakor drugod po Evropi, tudi pri oblikovanju lokalnih identitet, ki v sodobni družbi dobivajo vedno večji pomen. Pri tem ne gre le za uradno politiko Evropske unije, ki z različnimi ukrepi in projekti podpira in financira regionalni razvoj in lokalne posebnosti ter raznovrstnost evropskih regij, ampak za vse bolj prevladujočo zamisel o ohranjanju oz. oživljanju avtonomnosti evropskih regij, ki se opazneje uveljavlja zlasti med izobraženci v zahodni Evropi. Podobno kot pred stoletimi leti je pri tem procesu zelo vidna vloga ljudi iz urbanih okolij, ki se borijo proti poenotenju in globalizaciji kulture ter si prizadevajo za višjo kakovost bivanja, predvsem v nekaterih za turizem in kmetijstvo pomembnih regijah. V teh okoljih postane hrana bistven dejavnik ustvarjanja lokalnih identitet

(npr. sir mohant v Bohinju), pa tudi dejavnik gospodarskega razvoja v turizmu, gostinstvu in produkciji tradicionalnih lokalnih živil. To se ujema s povečanim zanimanjem za avtonomijo in avtarkijo evropskih regij, zdrav način življenja, varstvo narave in višjo kakovost preživljanja prostega časa.

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