

# IN THE SHADOW OF THE SALT COD. Writing vs Staging the Stockfish History in the Iberian Peninsula

por

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**Abstract:** For several centuries, salt cod have been a staple food in Spain and Portugal. We tend today to forget that the inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula also ate stockfish during the same period. This paper will review issues and historical evidence related to the air-dried unsalted cod consumption in these two countries, from the beginning of the Middle Ages to the present days. The goal is to re-evaluate the rewriting of the Iberian cod saga in the context of the ongoing attempt to revaluing the Catalan cuisine as an intangible cultural heritage and to promoting food tourism in the ports of the Costa Brava.

**Keywords:** National identity; Intangible cultural heritage; Food tourism; Food history.

**Resumo:** Ao longo de vários séculos, o bacalhau salgado e seco foi um alimento de base da dieta dos Espanhóis e dos Portugueses. Temos hoje tendência a esquecer que os habitantes da Península Ibérica também comeram *stockfish* durante este mesmo período. Este artigo explorará as fontes históricas que documentam o consumo deste peixe, seco sem ser previamente curado, ao longo dos séculos nestes dois países. Esta análise servirá de base para uma reflexão crítica sobre a narrativa acerca da saga ibérica do *Gadus morhua* mobilizada para sustentar a candidatura da cozinha catalã à lista do património cultural imaterial da Humanidade, atualmente em curso de preparação, bem como a promoção do turismo gastronómico.

**Palavras-chave:** Identidade nacional; Património cultural imaterial; Turismo gastronómico; História da alimentação.

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## HOW DARK IS THE SHADOW?

The place of birth of this article was an invitation of the Hordaland County Council to present a communication about the stockfish history and culinary traditions in Portugal within the framework of an International Gastronomic Symposium, which took place at Bergen a few years ago<sup>2</sup>. In the mind of the organizers, it was expectable that my country that elected cod as a symbol of the national identity should also be very familiar with the oldest tradition of curing cod, still alive in the North Norway, consisting to air dried naturally without salting it previously. The fact is if you ask to any of my compatriots what stockfish is, the most probable answer to this question will be “Sorry Sir, I am afraid I don’t know”. Even scholars that study the history of the Portuguese foodways ignore this issue. The memory of the stockfish consumption is, at the moment, almost totally forgotten between us. Paradoxically, this oblivion does not prevent some authors to believe that the Portuguese started to eat cod in the early middle age with the incursions of the Vikings that are traditionally intended as the inventors of this curing method.

The silence of the Portuguese and also the Spanish historians about this subject can be explained in several ways. In the first place, for most inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula, when we say cod, that is salt cod we mean. It is relevant to note that Norwegians also produce this kind of cured staple today. It is also important to be aware that the *Gadua morhua* does not live in the hot waters that surrounded our two countries. Our only contact with cod was, until now<sup>3</sup>, with the triangular plate carcase imported in Portugal. It is visually totally distinct of the rounded shape of the stockfish as it can be seen by the thousands of tourists that visit every year the fish market of Bergen (Fig. 1) and the few ones which travel to the Lofoten islands (Fig. 2).

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<sup>2</sup> “Stockfish-Symposium 2016”, the 11.<sup>th</sup> June at the Bryggens Museum, by invitation of Terje Inderhaug (Hordaland County Council). Organization: Hordaland County Council, Academia Europaea and University of Bergen, <<http://acadeuro.b.uib.no/activities/meetings/stocffish-symposium/>> [consulted 29/08/2016].

<sup>3</sup> A few years ago, the Maritime Museum of Ílhavo (district of Aveiro, Portugal) inaugurated an aquarium, where the visitors can observe cods alive. <<http://www.museumaritimio.cm-ilhavo.pt/pages/126>> [consulted 29/08/2016].



**Fig. 1.** Stockfish hung in the fish market of Bergen, June 2016. Author: A. J. M. Silva.



**Fig. 2.** Stockfish hung in a traditional fishing cabin at Kabelvåg (Lofoten Museum), June 2017. Author: A. J. M. Silva.

The silence of the historical sources as regards the air dried cod is another issue. The name of the fish species mentioned is often omitted. Even when we know that it is in fact cod, we have no way to specify the cure used to preserve it. In Northern countries, the analysis of ichthyological evidences discovered in archaeological contexts have proved to be an efficient method to going beyond the lack of information about cod consumption in the historical records<sup>4</sup>. However, in the Iberian context, this kind of approach is still rarely applied to the study of the Medieval and Modern period<sup>5</sup>. Anyway, at the moment, this analysis seems to give no guarantee to distinguish clearly stockfish and salt cod, also exported from Norway to the Mediterranean markets since the 18.<sup>th</sup> century<sup>6</sup>.

Even when the historical writings explicitly mention unsalted cod, they rarely employ derivations of the Northern appellation “stockfish” as “*estocafix*”<sup>7</sup>, “*stockfisch*”<sup>8</sup>, “*ó stockfisch*”<sup>9</sup>, “*estockfisch*”<sup>10</sup>, “*stochvisch*”<sup>11</sup>, “*bacalao stocwis*”<sup>12</sup>, “*bacalao stock*”<sup>13</sup>, “*stok-fiche*”<sup>14</sup>, “*stock-fisch*”<sup>15</sup>, “*stock-fish*”<sup>16</sup>, “*stockfisk*”<sup>17</sup>, “*ó stocfisch*”<sup>18</sup>, “*stocfisc*”<sup>19</sup> or “*stock fish*”<sup>20</sup>. It is the case to say that the beast has several names, depending on the location and the moment. We find different other designations in the Iberian documentation that generally mean “stick fish”, referring to the round shape and the hardness of the dried flesh, characteristics of this food staple. That is why the Portuguese sources often mention stockfish as “*peixe pao*”<sup>21</sup>,

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<sup>4</sup> BARRETT *et al.* (1999), “Archaeo-ichthyological evidence...”, pp. 353-388. BARRETT *et al.* (2008), “Detecting the medieval cod...”, pp. 850-861. BARRETT *et al.* (2009), “Dark Age Economics’ revisited...”, pp. 31-59.

<sup>5</sup> MORALES MUÑIZ *et al.* (2009), “Pesquerías medievales hispanas...”, p. 145.

<sup>6</sup> NIELSSEN (2001), “Indigenous and Early Fisheries...”, p. 189.

<sup>7</sup> MONTIÑO (1611), *Arte de cozina, pastelaria...*, fol. 311(v). This designation was still in use in the last century in Catalonia: PLA (1972), *El que hem menjat*, p. 324.

<sup>8</sup> D. J. A. y L. (1832), *Tratado de la conservación de las sustancias alimenticias*, p. 177.

<sup>9</sup> TERREROS y PANDO (1787), *Diccionario castellano...*, p. 116.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> BLUTEAU (1720), *Vocabulario portuguez, & latino...*, p. 231.

<sup>12</sup> BOY (1839), *Diccionario teórico...*, p. 276.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> VILA (2008), “Ferran Agulló...”, p. 110.

<sup>15</sup> BOY (1839), *Diccionario teórico...*, p. 337.

<sup>16</sup> MELLADO (1851), *Enciclopedia moderna...*, p. 326.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 338.

<sup>18</sup> TERREROS y PANDO (1787), *Diccionario castellano...*, p. 116.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> PLA (1968), *El meu país*, p. 354.

<sup>21</sup> SANTA TERESA, Frei Manuel de (17..), *Livro de cozinha para se governarem os que curiozamente quizerem guizar*, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal: Códice 11390, Lisbon, fol. 97(v). BLUTEAU (1720), *Vocabulario portuguez, & latino*, p. 231.

“*peyxe pao*”<sup>22</sup>, “*pao de peyxe*”<sup>23</sup> or “*peixe pau*”<sup>24</sup>. The Spanish writers of the Modern times expressed the same idea using the words “*pejepalo*”<sup>25</sup>, “*peje palo*”<sup>26</sup>, “*palo-pez*”<sup>27</sup>, “*pez-palo*”<sup>28</sup>, “*pez en palo*”<sup>29</sup>, “*pez de palo*”<sup>30</sup>, “*pezpálo*”<sup>31</sup>, “*pezpalo*”<sup>32</sup> or “*pez palo*”<sup>33</sup>. The words “*pixopalo*” and “*peixopalo*”<sup>34</sup>, still used today in Catalonia, seem to have an equal etymology.

Anyway, most of Portuguese and Spanish ignore what is “*peixopalo*” until now or in the best scenario, consider that it is a “Catalan thing”. The current heritage turn of the stockfish tradition in the ports of the Costa Brava, the unique region of the Iberian Peninsula where this staple is consumed today, gave birth recently to a growing number of narratives explaining the origins of this food tradition. In this paper, I will confront the rare and discrete references to stockfish in historical sources relative to Spain and Portugal with such narratives. On the other hand, I will explore the genealogy of the discourse mobilized actually to legitimate the staging of this culinary legacy as a tourist attraction in the context of the ongoing revaluating of the Catalan cuisine as an intangible cultural heritage and the touristification of this food tradition. The goal is to understand the reasons for the growing lag between the narratives serving as a basis for this heritagization process and the historical evidence about the consumption of the stockfish in the Iberian Peninsula. This case study will allow to express the idea that historians should understand the heritage turn of a food product simply as a totally new stage of its social existence, in what concerns both his meaning and his valuing.

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* MASCARENHAS (1734), *Gazeta de Lisboa Occidental*, p. 266.

<sup>25</sup> MONLAU (1870), *Higiene privada...*, p. 137.

<sup>26</sup> “Balanza general de comercio, y estado de la mercancías importadas y exportadas por el puerto de la Habana en todo el año de 1827, y derechos que han producido, formada con vista de los registros de entrada y salida liquidados en el expreso año”, in *Mercurio de España* (Madrid, August 1828), p. 148.

<sup>27</sup> MONLAU (1870) *Higiene privada...*, p. 137.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* (1827), “Real decreto modificando la renta del bacalao (07/08/1825)”, p. 235.

<sup>29</sup> MELLADO (1851), *Enciclopedia moderna...*, p. 326.

<sup>30</sup> “Oficio de la Secretaría de Estado fechado en San Lorenzo el 10 de Octubre de 1824”, reproduced by BÄCKSBACKA (2000), “Trading and...”, Documentary appendix – Doc. 7A, p. 432.

<sup>31</sup> “Informe de Hacienda dirigido a la Secretaria de Estado y fechado en Placio el 10 de enero de 1825 con orden de comunicación al Encargado de Negocios de Suecia”, reproduced by BÄCKSBACKA, (2000), “Trading and...”, Documentary appendix – Doc. 7B, pp. 432-435.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* MONLAU (1870), *Higiene privada...*, p. 137. D. J. A. y L. (1832), *Tratado de la conservación...*, p. 177.

<sup>33</sup> “Real decreto modificando la renta del bacalao (07/08/1805)”, April 1827, in *Mercurio de España*, Madrid, p. 241. JUNTA DE COMERCIO (1849), *Balanza mercantil de...*, p. 119.

<sup>34</sup> PLA (1972), *El que hem...*, p. 324.

In the end, this academic exercise will help to reflect about the societal relevance of the food heritage in the post-national era.

## REVISITING THE QUERINI ROUTE

According to the legend, the very first stockfish to be brought in a Mediterranean country came in the hands of Pietro Querini<sup>35</sup>. This Venetian merchant led us an account of his journey from Crete to the cold waters which bathe the shores of the North Norway and, then back to Italy, in the early 15.<sup>th</sup> century<sup>36</sup>. After the shipwreck of his boat, the unfortunate *Querina*'s captain and the remaining survivors were rescued by the inhabitants of the Lofoten islands. The members of the crew were probably the first Southerners to witness the air-drying method employed since a long time ago by the local farmers to cure the cod they exported to Bergen<sup>37</sup>.

The route used by the Italian adventurers to reach Norway circumnavigating the Iberian Peninsula was inaugurated in the early Middle Ages. Vikings attacks to the Western cities of *Hispania* are documented by historical sources between the 9.<sup>th</sup> and the 11.<sup>th</sup> century<sup>38</sup>. It is well known that stockfish was the staple food that sustained the maritime expansion of the Scandinavian sailors in all the Atlantic World<sup>39</sup>. However, the belief in the permanent presence of Norman communities in the northwest coast of the Peninsula based on toponymic, ethnographic and linguistic arguments<sup>40</sup> is not supported by historical sources, neither by the archaeological register<sup>41</sup>. We can say the same about the hypothesis of a regular trade of stockfish with the Baltic in a so early period, suggested by some authors<sup>42</sup>.

Later, the Crusades will represent a decisive step for constant contacts between the North of Europe and the Iberian Peninsula<sup>43</sup>. At the same period we have the

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<sup>35</sup> FIRRAO (2016), *La storia de la Querina...*, p. 58.

<sup>36</sup> LARIVIÈRE (2005), *Naufragés...*

<sup>37</sup> NIELSSEN (2001), "Indigenous and Early...", p. 187. WUBS-MROZEWICZ (2009), "Fish, stock...", p. 190.

<sup>38</sup> PIRES (2012), *Incursões Nórdicas...*, pp. 21-68. FERGUSON, (2009), *The hammer and...*, pp. 246-253. QUESADO (2000), "Two distant worlds...", pp. 26-27. MARQUES (1993), *Hansa e Portugal...*, pp. 25-28.

<sup>39</sup> PERDIKARIS *et al.* (2009), "Viking Age economics and...", p. 63.

<sup>40</sup> FERGUSON (2009), *The hammer and...*, p. 261. MARTINS (2013), *Viana do Castelo...*, p. 22. DIAS (1947), "Construções circulares no...", pp. 192-195.

<sup>41</sup> PIRES (2012), *Incursões Nórdicas...*, pp. 257-264.

<sup>42</sup> MARTINS, 2013, *Viana do Castelo...*, p. 22. DIAS, "Construções circulares...", pp. 192-195.

<sup>43</sup> MARQUES (1993), *Hansa e Portugal...*, pp. 28-37.

earliest reliable historical evidences of an international stockfish trade<sup>44</sup>. A Northern float helped the first king of Portugal, D. Afonso Henriques, to conquer Lisbon in 1147<sup>45</sup>. This time, the Germans that took part in the expedition effectively stayed in Portugal after the victory against the Muslims<sup>46</sup>. The maritime route inaugurated by Vikings and followed by the Northern crusaders to reach the holy land during the 12.<sup>th</sup> and the 13.<sup>th</sup> century will be used later by pilgrims from the North of Europe to reach the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, one the most important sanctuaries of the Christianity<sup>47</sup>. Pietro Querini itself and part of his crew made a quick scale in Galicia to visit the Church of the Blessed Jacob on 26 October 1431, before sailing in direction to Flanders and to their hazardous destiny<sup>48</sup>. The port of Lisbon, where the Venetian merchant landed two months earlier<sup>49</sup>, was now well connected with the North of Europe. However, at the time of the Querini odyssey, only few Spaniards, as the anonymous Franciscan monk that wrote the “*Libro del conocimiento de todos los reynos e tierras e señoríos que son por el mundo*”, had the opportunity to visit the Scandinavian regions<sup>50</sup>. Portuguese only had started a few time ago to negotiate directly with the Northern ports controlled by the Hanseatic league<sup>51</sup>, where the stockfish from Bergen was already the object of an intensive trade<sup>52</sup>. Before then, the Dutch merchants usually mediated relations between Portuguese and Northern cities, at least since the end of the 12.<sup>th</sup> century<sup>53</sup>. We need to wait two other centuries to see Hanseatic traders of oriental towns, mostly from Danzig, negotiating directly with Lisbon through the same route used by the Norman pilgrims and the Dutch traders<sup>54</sup>. On the other hand, the presence of Portuguese is documented since the 13.<sup>th</sup> century in Germany<sup>55</sup>. In the 15.<sup>th</sup> century, Lisbon was already an important node of the commercial relations between the Hanseatic world and the Mediterranean ports of Spain and

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<sup>44</sup> BARRETT *et al.* (2009), “‘Dark age economics’ revisited...”, pp. 33-34. HOFFMANN (2001), “Frontier Foods for Late...”, p. 145. CHRISTENSEN *et al.* (1996), “Norwegian Fisheries...”, p. 148.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30. PIRES (2012), *Incursões Nórdicas...*, pp. 225-227. QUESADO (2000), “Two distant worlds...”, p. 29.

<sup>46</sup> MARQUES (1993), *Hansa e Portugal...*, p. 35.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37-41. QUESADO (2000), “Two distant worlds...”, pp. 30-31.

<sup>48</sup> LARIVIÈRE (2005), *Naufragés...*, p. 14.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>50</sup> QUESADO (2000), “Two distant worlds...”, p. 22.

<sup>51</sup> CHRISTENSEN *et al.* (1996), “Norwegian Fisheries...”, pp. 145, 150.

<sup>52</sup> WUBS-MROZEWICZ (2009), “Fish, stock...”, pp. 193. NIELSSEN, (2001), “Indigenous and Early...”, p. 186.

<sup>53</sup> QUESADO (2000), “Two distant worlds...”, pp. 32-33. MARQUES, (1996), *Portugal na crise...*, p. 152. MARQUES (1993), *Hansa e Portugal...*, pp. 130-135.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37-42.

<sup>55</sup> MARQUES (1996). “A diversificação económica”, p. 514.

the North of Italy<sup>56</sup>. Dutch and German cities, as Bruges and Danzig, were now deeply involved in trading the stockfish of Bergen (Fig. 3)<sup>57</sup>. However, there is no evidence that this food staple was already part of the diet of the inhabitants of the Portuguese capital.



Fig. 3. The German dock at Bergen. June 2016. Photo A. J. M. Silva.

We must remember that the Western coast of Iberia exported salt fish since the antiquity to other regions of the known world<sup>58</sup>, so far as the German *limes* of the Roman Empire<sup>59</sup>. On the other hand, many authors also believe that this food staple was not an important element of the dietary in the ancient Mediterranean<sup>60</sup>. The expanding trend of its trade during the Middle Ages is traditionally explained by the growing periods of fasting imposed by the Church, only perpetuate by the

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 516.

<sup>57</sup> WUBS-MROZEWICZ, (2009), "Fish, stock...", p. 195. NIELSSEN, (2001), "Indigenous and Early...", p. 186.

<sup>58</sup> BOMBICO, (2015), "Salted Fish Industry...", pp. 19-39.

<sup>59</sup> MANTAS (1998), "Navegação, economia...", p. 237.

<sup>60</sup> HORDEN *et al.* (2000), *The Corrupting sea*, pp. 194-195.

Southern countries of Europe after the Reformation<sup>61</sup>. The recent reevaluation of the written and archaeological sources indicates, on the contrary, that the expansion of cities and populations contributed greatly to increase the demand for cured cod in all Europe, during the last centuries of the Middle Ages<sup>62</sup>. The fact is the production of dried fish was already common in all the Iberian Peninsula during the same period<sup>63</sup>. However, historical sources document sporadic imports of fish from Hanseatic cities since the 14.<sup>th</sup> century, but the unique species specifically mentioned, is the hearing<sup>64</sup>. The irregularity of the supply was probably not able to change the food habits in Lisbon and other Iberian ports. In fact, the first ichthyological evidences of cod consumption, detected in archaeological contexts at Seville, are not older than the end of the late 15.<sup>th</sup> - early 16.<sup>th</sup> century<sup>65</sup>.

## COD MEETS SALT

In the actual state of knowledge, we must assume that the inhabitants of the Andalusian capital and other ports of the Iberian Peninsula had consumed the Northern-West Atlantic cod before the Norwegian stockfish. It is commonly accepted that Basque, Portuguese, French, Irish and English began to catch this species in the Newfoundland banks around 1500. Basque fishermen perhaps arrived there a few decades before<sup>66</sup>. Some authors argued that they start to look for cod near the coasts of Ireland<sup>67</sup> and Scotland since the 11.<sup>th</sup> century<sup>68</sup>. Some authors also believe that the little ice age in the Atlantic area at the end of the Middle Ages gave them the opportunity to go after it even in the Bay of Biscay<sup>69</sup>. Other argues, on the contrary, that the warning of the climate during the 15.<sup>th</sup> century

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<sup>61</sup> ALBALA (2006), *Cooking in Europe: ...*, pp. 12, 114. ADAMSON (2004), *Food in medieval times*, p. 40.

<sup>62</sup> DAM (2009), "Fish for feast and fast...", p. 310. NIELSSEN (2001), "Indigenous and Early...", p. 186.

<sup>63</sup> PUENTE (1998), *El pescado en la alimentación...*, p. 133. MARQUES (1974), *A sociedade medieval portuguesa*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>64</sup> MARQUES (1993), *Hansa e Portugal...*, p. 75. HOFFMANN (2001), "Frontier Foods for...", note 56, p. 162.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145 and note 56, p. 162. MORALES MUÑIZ *et al.* (1991), "Sobre la presencia...", p. 24.

<sup>66</sup> LOEWEN (1996), "El estudio de la historia marítima...", p. 153. KURLANSKY (1999), *The Basque history of the world*, pp. 56-60.

<sup>67</sup> BOLUMBURU (2000), "La pesca en...", pp. 13, 27.

<sup>68</sup> MORALES MUÑIZ *et al.* (1991), "Sobre la presencia...", p. 21.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

would have been the reason why the Basques followed the cod in the Northwestern Atlantic<sup>70</sup>. Some scholars also think that the motivation of the first American fisheries was to compete with the stockfish monopole of the Hanseatic merchants<sup>71</sup>. Finally, other argues that the hunt of whales could explain the earlier Basque presence in the Newfoundland banks<sup>72</sup>. All these theories are, however, still very controversial and not clearly supported by written or archaeological evidence<sup>73</sup>. In fact, the historical sources don't mention cod consumption in the Basque Country, during the late Middle Ages<sup>74</sup>. It is, however, undeniable that the inhabitants were familiar since a very long time ago with the Mediterranean panoply of techniques to preserve fish using salt<sup>75</sup>. The archaeological discovery of salting tanks in the port of Guéthary<sup>76</sup> documents this curing method in the Biscay Coast during the early Roman period. In the end, Basque and other crews from all nations involved in the American campaigns used salt in different ways, since the early 1500s, to preserve their catches for the journey back to their homeland<sup>77</sup>. Consequently, at the beginning, cod had been exclusively synonym of salt cod for what concerns the inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula<sup>78</sup>.

The first references to consumption are related to employees of monasteries and to prisoners<sup>79</sup>. The cured cod started to compete with local species in the Andalusian market in the early 1500s<sup>80</sup>. At Madrid, the *bacalao* was already a popular alternative to local cured fish in the middle of the century<sup>81</sup>. The Newfoundland catches of the Iberian fleets will increase gradually. At least a Portuguese port, Aveiro, began to dry in its own beaches the fish heavily salted months before for the journey back home<sup>82</sup>. But, after 1580, both nations interrupted during a long

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>71</sup> ALBALA (2006), *Cooking in Europe: ...*, p. 114.

<sup>72</sup> MORALES MUÑIZ *et al.* (1991), "Sobre la presencia...", p. 23.

<sup>73</sup> HUXLEY (2000), "La industria pesquera...", p. 55.

<sup>74</sup> HOFFMANN (2001), "Frontier Foods...", note 56, p. 162. BOLUMBURU (2000), "La pesca en...", p. 26.

<sup>75</sup> LOWE (2017), *The consumption of salted...*, pp. 307-318.

<sup>76</sup> EPHREM (2010), "Un établissement unique...", pp. 21-48.

<sup>77</sup> POPE (2004), *Fish into wine...*, p. 15. SILVA (2015), "The fable of the cod and the promised sea...", p. 132.

<sup>78</sup> MORALES MUÑIZ *et al.* (1991), "Sobre la presencia...", p. 21.

<sup>79</sup> BUESCU (2014), "Aspectos da mesa do Rei...", p. 150. Salt cod was already part of the monks' diet in the 16.<sup>th</sup> century. BARROS (2014), *As receitas de cozinha de um...*, p. 49.

<sup>80</sup> HAMILTON (1970), *American Treasure and the...*, p. 319.

<sup>81</sup> BERNARDOS SANZ (2001), "El abastecimiento y consumo...", p. 14.

<sup>82</sup> MADAHIL (1959), *Milenário de Aveiro: ...*, p. 21.

time their regular presence in the Northwestern Atlantic<sup>83</sup>. British and French merchants supplied now the Mediterranean ports<sup>84</sup>. This trade will take an increasing importance with the growing of cured fish consumption in the Southern Europe. In the early 1500s, Madrid already depends of the imports from other countries as England or Ireland<sup>85</sup>. The collapse of the catches in the Iberian seas happened unfortunately at the same period, turning *bacalao* into a cheaper alternative to local species<sup>86</sup>. The supplying of cod became gradually a determinant factor of commercial deficit in Spain and Portugal, a fact highlighted by several authors during the next centuries<sup>87</sup>.

In the early 1700s, salt cod was already part of the daily diet of religious communities<sup>88</sup>. The repertoire of recipes compiled by the monk António de Saleté (end of the 17.<sup>th</sup> century — beginning of the 18.<sup>th</sup> century), describes not fewer than eleven dishes that include this fish, already mentioned as being the most usually served in the monastic institutions<sup>89</sup>. Cod was at the same time, an essential necessity for ordinary people of Madrid and other Iberian cities<sup>90</sup>. This staple product integrated now definitely both Spanish and Portuguese food habits<sup>91</sup>, including the most fortunate<sup>92</sup>. The *Gadus morhua* even substituted meat, the preferred meal of the richest<sup>93</sup>, during the many days of fasting imposed by the Church<sup>94</sup>. Lucas Rigaud, a French chef at the service of the Portuguese Royal family, innovated proposing to his aristocratic readers recipes with salt cod. The name of his first dish made with this fish, “*bacalhão á Provençal*”, suggests an exogenous origin — or influence — from his own country. He also recommends baking the cod with bechamel or to simply grill it<sup>95</sup>. It is relevant to note that neither Lucas Rigaud, neither Juan Altamira, the author of other famous cookbook printed at Barcelona

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<sup>83</sup> AMORIM (2001), “O Porto de Aveiro e...”, pp. 66-67. PUIG (2012), *El comercio marítimo...*, p. 176.

<sup>84</sup> BRIÈRE (1982), “L’état et le commerce...”, pp. 323-338.

<sup>85</sup> BERNARDOS SANZ (2001), “El abastecimiento y consumo...”, p. 2.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4. PUIG (2012), “El comercio marítimo...”, p. 152.

<sup>87</sup> UZTARIZ (1742), *Theorica, y practica de...*, pp. 271-272. AZAMBUJA (1835), *Memoria sobre a...*, p. 33. SALAZAR (1917-18), “Alguns aspectos das...”, pp. 272-345.

<sup>88</sup> BRAGA (2004), *Do primeiro almoço...*, p. 48. SERRANO LARRÁYOZ (2008), “Confiteria y cocina conventual...”, note n.º 20, p. 146.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 159, 166, 168.

<sup>90</sup> AMORIM (2009), “The evolution of Portuguese fisheries...”, pp. 266-267. PUENTE (1998), *El pescado...*, pp. 287-288.

<sup>91</sup> GRAFE (2004), “Popish habits vs nutritional...”, p. 35.

<sup>92</sup> TERREROS y PANDO (1787), *Diccionario castellano...*, p. 2.

<sup>93</sup> BRAGA (2005), *Cultura, religião e...*, p. 185.

<sup>94</sup> BRAGA (2004), *Do primeiro almoço...*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>95</sup> RIGAUD (1807) [1780], “Cozinheiro moderno...”, pp. 271-273.

in 1758, entitled “*Nueva arte de cocina, sacada de la escuela de la experiencia economica*”, mention stockfish in their culinary treatises. Juan Altamira is the pseudonym of Raimundo Gómez, who served as a chef at the convent of San Diego in Zaragoza. In his work, directed to a humbler public<sup>96</sup>, the Franciscan monk presents nine totally new recipes of salt cod, two of them including for the first time the tomato brought from Mexico<sup>97</sup>.

The growing popularity of this staple even in the higher-class milieu turned into a medical issue, when the Portuguese physician, Francisco da Fonseca Henriques, declared its consumption unhealthy. The dietetic knowledge continued, for the moment, to be ruled by the Hippocratic principals inherited from the Greek medicine, highlighting in a holistic way the influence of both external factors and the patient’s mode of existence<sup>98</sup>. In such perspective, Henriques suspected that cod tended to generate melancholic humours, considering its consumption as inadequate to the delicate people and to the sedentary lifestyle of the most fortunate<sup>99</sup>. This belief was probably shared by other members of the medical community at this time. A similar idea related specifically to stockfish had been already argued a few decades before in a treaty untitled “*De Bargerlyke Tafel, Om lang gesand sander ziekten te leven*” by the Amsterdamer physician, Stephanus Blankaart<sup>100</sup>.

## A FLEMISH “THING”

The references to stockfish in Spanish and Portuguese historical sources are very rare until the 1800s. The first mention, dated of 1611, is, however, one century older than the earlier salt cod recipes in Spanish culinary books<sup>101</sup>. The author, Francisco Martínez Montañón, started his career as a cook at the service of the princess Juana, sister of Filipe II, working later for the kings Filipe III and Filipe IV<sup>102</sup>. This chef seems not to intend stockfish, as an air-dried cured version of the *Gadus morhua* brought from America, now familiar to the Iberian consumers. However, he observed that, as “*abadajo*”, the stockfish flakes when it is cooked.

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<sup>96</sup> ALBALA (2003), *Food in early modern Europe...*, p. 150.

<sup>97</sup> ALTAMIRA (1758), “*Nueva arte de cocina, ...*”, pp. 82-90.

<sup>98</sup> SILVA (2013), *Un ingrédient du discours...*, pp. 75-132.

<sup>99</sup> HENRIQUES (2003) [1721], *Âncora medicinal: ...*, p. 138.

<sup>100</sup> WITTEVEEN (1984), “*Stockfish, or a course...*”, p. 135.

<sup>101</sup> MONTIÑO (1611), *Arte de cozina...*, fol. 311v, 312r.

<sup>102</sup> VARELA MERINO (2009), *Los galicismos en el...*, p. 288.

I assume that, by “*abadajo*”, he means cod and not pollack as discussed later<sup>103</sup>. The exogenous fish is presented as being rarely seen locally, imported to Spain from Flanders, that still was one of the most important markets of the Bergen exports. It is relevant to remember that Iberian ports were not yet directly in contact with Scandinavian producers at this moment. We must have in mind that the Hanseatic league kept the monopole of the Norwegian market until the middle of the 16.<sup>th</sup> century<sup>104</sup>. After then, the Dutch merchants that had established commercial relations with Norway since the 1430s<sup>105</sup> will assume their position<sup>106</sup>. Their role as intermediaries in the emerging Iberian stockfish trade must be understood in the context of the annexation of both Flanders (1556-1714) and Portugal (1580-1640) by the Spanish crown, that increased cultural interactions between these three regions.

The fact that Montañño designated air dried cod as “*estocafix*” and that he described its peculiar process of preparation (bitting with a hammer or a stick and soaking during a very long time<sup>107</sup>) let no doubt that is, indeed, stockfish. He suggests rehydrating it in tepid milk for one night instead of using water. After being boiled, the dried flesh should be flaked and fried slowly with butter and some onion, seasoned with a little of pepper, nutmeg, ginger and covered with milk, letting it warm before serving. Stockfish could also simply be prepared with butter and mustard and “*sus especias*”, being not clear what it means. Some ingredients used in this Spanish recipe, as the butter, the mustard and the ginger were already mentioned in the first culinary treaties of the 14.<sup>th</sup> and 15.<sup>th</sup> centuries, as “*Le Ménagier de Paris*” and “*Daz Buch van Guter Spise*”. A German cookbook published one hundred years later, also alluded to the addition of fried or finely chopped onions. However, the oldest Dutch recipes, that date back to the middle of the 1500s only mention butter and sometimes ginger powder. The fact that the only known Dutch cookbook, written during the 17.<sup>th</sup> century, not refers stockfish suggests that this food product was then not particularly appreciated by the local elites. In fact, we must bear in mind that, at this stage, the culinary literature continued to be intended for aristocratic kitchens. The consumers belonged now to lower levels of the society. They used to eat the smelly fish with a pedestrian garlic sauce<sup>108</sup>. So, the two ways of preparing this food staple suggested by

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<sup>103</sup> See p. 17.

<sup>104</sup> JOHNSEN (1930), “Les relations commerciales...”, p. 77.

<sup>105</sup> WUBS-MROZEWICZ (2009), “Fish, stock...”, p. 195.

<sup>106</sup> JOHNSEN (1930), “Les relations commerciales entre...”, pp. 77-78.

<sup>107</sup> ADAMSON (2004), *Food in medieval...*, p. 62. WUBS-MROZEWICZ (2009), “Fish, stock...”, p. 187.

<sup>108</sup> WITTEVEEN (1984), “Stockfish, or...”, p. 135.

Montiño seems not to be inspired by the Dutch repertoire of this period, but by references that this Chef — or his source? — had collected in books published earlier in the North of Europe. Including the “*estocafix*” dish should probably be an attempt to give an exotic option of the numerous alternative recipes made with local fishes, described in his work. So, without any evidence in contrary, at this stage, we should assume that the Iberian market of the air dried cod, should be mostly the few expatriates from the Lowlands<sup>109</sup> and individuals that lived in the Flemish Province during a previous period of their existence, being almost unknown to the rest of the population.

One century after, the Montiño’s “*estocafix*” recipe will be translated into Portuguese by the monk Manuel de Santa Teresa in his cookbook “*Livro de cozinha para se governarem os que curiozamente quizerem guizar*”, without referring the name of his original author. He also continued to not consider this ingredient, he called “*peixe pao*”, as cod<sup>110</sup>. The relation between the two food products is yet not totally clear in the writings of this period. A Portuguese dictionary published in 1720, mentioned for the first time “*peixe pao*” as a Dutch word meaning “*bacalhao seco*”<sup>111</sup>. But one year later Francisco da Fonseca Henriques — the Portuguese physician cited below — still considers that this cured product is made with a fish distinct of cod<sup>112</sup>. It probably continued to be imported in small quantities to the Iberian Peninsula from the Lowlands as suggested by the Flemish etymology mentioned by the dictionary. However, the preponderant role of the Dutch merchants as middlemen of the trade between Baltic and Mediterranean nations was now close to end.

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<sup>109</sup> As, for example, the community of Dutch traders documented at Bilbao in the 1500s. GRAFE, Regina (2015), “Was There a Market...”, p. 602.

<sup>110</sup> SANTA TERESA, Frei Manuel de (17..), *Livro de cozinha para se governarem os que curiozamente quizerem guizar*, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal: Códice 11390, Lisbon, fol. 97(v). There is also a recipe of “*Peiche pao*” in another Portuguese cookbook written by Francisco Borges Henriques during the first half of the 18.<sup>th</sup> century. HENRIQUES, Francisco Borges (1715-1729), *Receitas dos milhores doces e de alguns guizados particulares e remedios de Conhecida experiencia / que fez Fr[ancisco] Borges H[enriqu]es para o uzo de sua Casa, 1715-1729*, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, manuscrito 7376, p. 96.

<sup>111</sup> BLUTEAU (1720), *Vocabulario portuguez...*, p. 231.

<sup>112</sup> HENRIQUES (2003) [1721], *Âncora medicinal...*, pp. 138, 139.

## A SCANDINAVIAN “THING”

Some Norwegian had sporadically visited Iberian ports in the early Modern Ages<sup>113</sup>. However, they did not have the financial resources necessary to have a constant direct access to the Mediterranean market. The Flemish revolt against the Spanish crown in 1572, gave for the first time the opportunity to Northern merchants, mostly from Bergen, to import salt from the Iberian ports<sup>114</sup> by their own in a regular base. However, the raids of pirates from North Africa and Dunkerque continued to frustrate the efforts made by both parts to reinforce their commercial relations, still often mediated by merchants of the Lowlands until the second half of the 17.<sup>th</sup> century<sup>115</sup>. During this period, the Dutch presence in the Mediterranean declined<sup>116</sup> but Scandinavians now had to deal with the growing number of English traders in the region and the attacks by muslin pirates<sup>117</sup>. In 1734, the journal “*Gazeta de Lisboa*” made a brief allusion to a Danish vessel charged with “*peixe pau*”, wood and iron, that made its entry in the port of Lisbon at the hands of the Turkish corsair Hasbi Musa<sup>118</sup>. The fact is the Soundtoll register only recorded two boats before the 1760, curiously both from Saint Petersburg, transporting a cargo of stockfish to Iberian ports, one to Cadix (1725)<sup>119</sup> and other to Lisbon (1756)<sup>120</sup>.

Some authors believe that it was the 1757 commercial treaty that created the conditions necessary to a regular trade between the Iberian Peninsula and Norway<sup>121</sup>. At the time, the stockfish’s consumption in Castilla and Leon is documented but it still was residual<sup>122</sup>. At the same moment, the Norwegian production was in expansion, after a long period of stagnation between 1650 and 1750, mainly due to the lowered demand for stockfish after the Reformation and the growing competition of the salt cod traded by the English and Dutch merchants<sup>123</sup>. At the

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<sup>113</sup> MÉNARD (2006), “La pesca gallega en Terranova...”, p. 393. MÖRNER (2000), “Swedish Trade and Shipping...”, p. 104.

<sup>114</sup> JOHNSEN (2001), “Les relations...”, p. 78.

<sup>115</sup> RICHTER-HANSSEN (2015), “The history of the...”, p. 24.

<sup>116</sup> MÖRNER (2000), “Swedish Trade...”, p. 111.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115. JOHNSEN (1930), “Les relations commerciales...”, p. 81.

<sup>118</sup> MASCARENHAS (1734), *Gazeta de Lisboa...*, pp. 266-267.

<sup>119</sup> 5-6-1725. Shipmaster: Iwan Micaloff from Petersburg. *Online database (n.º 1) of the Sound Toll registers*, record ID 569881, passage n.º 42. <<http://www.soundtoll.nl/index.php/en/>> [consulted 13/09/2016].

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.* 17-8-1756. Shipmaster: Allen Wardale from London, record ID 405164, Passage n.º 369.

<sup>121</sup> JOHNSEN (1930), “Les relations commerciales...”, p. 81.

<sup>122</sup> PUENTE (1998), *El pescado en la alimentación...*, p. 133.

<sup>123</sup> NIELSSEN (2001), “Indigenous and...”, p. 189. CHRISTENSEN *et al.* (1996), “Norwegian Fisheries...”, pp. 154-155.

same period, the Icelanders started to produce salt cod too, traded after then in the Mediterranean ports on board ships flying the Danish flag<sup>124</sup>.

In the end of the day, salt cod from the Newfoundland banks was still preferred by Spanish and Portuguese consumers<sup>125</sup>. However, the English and French traders now had to compete in the Catalan market with a new player. In a posthumous book published in 1748, Jacques Savary des Bruslons (1657-1716), the Inspector General of the Manufactures at the Paris Customs, complains the lack of business's opportunities in the port of Barcelona. He claims that the shipment of only one French vessel was enough to satisfy the local need of cured fish<sup>126</sup>. Earlier, some Norwegian producers — sponsored by Dutch merchants<sup>127</sup> — had started to preserve their own cod with salt imported from Iberian ports, initiating a second curing tradition, known since then locally as the *klipfish*<sup>128</sup>. The first referenced export of salt cod to Spain from Norway was, as expected, via Amsterdam, dating back to 1665. However, this food stuff was traded directly perhaps for the first time, thirty years later in 1692, to Bilbao<sup>129</sup>. In the 1750s, the salt cod represented already 1/10 of the total production, increasing to 1/4 around 1800, contributing greatly to the duplicating of the Norwegian cod's exports<sup>130</sup>. However, in the end of the 18.<sup>th</sup> century, Scandinavians still were minor players in the Spanish trade<sup>131</sup>.

The growing notoriety of the *klipfish* gave them the opportunity to expand at the same occasion the international market of the stockfish. The Sound Toll register already documents the import of stockfish at Gibraltar in 1790, the third older reference related to the Iberian Peninsula on this Danish source<sup>132</sup>. Other Spanish harbours as Malaga were now not only major scales on the route of redistributing centres in Italy like Livorno<sup>133</sup>, but also already importers of this food staple. At Barcelona, at this time the second most important port of the Spanish

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<sup>124</sup> ÞÓRÐARDÓTTIR (2015), *El bacalao de Islandia: ...*, pp. 13, 19.

<sup>125</sup> RICHTER-HANSSSEN (2015), "The history of the...", p. 28.

<sup>126</sup> BRUSLONS (1748), *Dictionnaire universel de commerce*, p. 143.

<sup>127</sup> SANDEN, Jarle (2016), "Stockfish production regions from early ages up to our days", oral presentation at the "Stockfish-Symposium 2016", the 11.<sup>th</sup> June at the Bryggens Museum, organized by the Hordaland County Council, the Academia Europaea and the University of Bergen, <<http://acadeuro.b.uib.no/activities/meetings/stoeffish-symposium/>> [consulted 29/08/2016]. RICHTER-HANSSSEN (2015), "The history of the...", p. 24.

<sup>128</sup> NIELSSEN (2001), "Indigenous and...", p. 189. PONTOPPIDAN (1755), *The natural history of Norway*, p. 159; LOBO (1812), *Memórias económicas*, pp. 267-268.

<sup>129</sup> RICHTER-HANSSSEN (2015), "The history of the...", p. 24.

<sup>130</sup> CHRISTENSEN *et al.* (1996), "Norwegian Fisheries ...", p. 157.

<sup>131</sup> RYAN (1986), *Fish out...*, p. 85.

<sup>132</sup> 16-8-1790. Shipmaster: Marc W. Seager from London. *Online database...*, record ID 53216, Passage n.º 2341.

<sup>133</sup> *Correo mercantil de España y sus Indias*, 1806, tome XXVII, Madrid, pp. 335-336.

kingdom<sup>134</sup>, the Norwegian and Icelandic salt cod were already preferred to the Newfoundland's product. The inhabitants of the city now consumed a significant amount of stockfish too<sup>135</sup>. Again, the beginning of the cod imports is not yet clearly dated locally. The historian Jaume Fàbrega<sup>136</sup>, seems to suggest that its consumption started locally in the 1500s. He mentions the fact that Robert de Nola, author of the cookbook "*El libre del coch*" printed in 1520 at Barcelona, includes already a recipe of "*merluça*" that he considers as a sort of "*bacalao*" (fol. LI v – LII r), prepared in the same way as salt cod. Does De Nola use the word "*merluça*" here as a synonym of "*bacalao*" as Lucas Rigaud will do later<sup>137</sup>? Any conclusion based in such reference is limited at the first place by the fact that the Catalan chief, which claimed to be at the service of Ferdinand I of Naples, included not only recipes of his own country, but also other ones taken from the French and the Italian repertoire. Even if it is not the case, we cannot exclude at all the hypothesis of "*merluça*" being really merluça. In fact, this word was used first to refer exclusively to the hake. It is well known that the Spanish had dried this species since the Middle Ages. Later, in the Modern Age, the "*merluça*" still was one variety among many others of "*cecial*". This designation was then applied to any cured fish without using salt, very popular in the Spanish markets until the 18.<sup>th</sup> century<sup>138</sup>. The same happen with "*abadejo*", which appears near 1600 in a list of food expenses from a monastery of Girona<sup>139</sup>. Again, this word exclusively means pollack (*Gadus pollachius*) originally. However, it was employed in the Spanish sources of this period to refer this local species too, as the *Gadus morhua* preserved following the same techniques<sup>140</sup>. It is for this reason not easy to date accurately the beginning of the salt cod consumption in Catalonia. In any case the first reference of cod imports at Barcelona is no older than 1574 and we must wait 1593 to have evidences of taxation related to this food product<sup>141</sup>. It is then likely that the cod trade at this port began to be significant only in the 1600s. Catalan elites probably discovered stockfish for the first time, reading the Montaña's work, the main culinary reference during all the 17.<sup>th</sup> century<sup>142</sup>. This book still was well-known in the middle of the 1700s. A Spanish dictionary published in 1753,

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<sup>134</sup> CALOSCI (2006), "La transformation du commerce...", p. 1.

<sup>135</sup> LIPP (1793), *Guide des négociants...*, pp. 204-205.

<sup>136</sup> FÀBREGA (2012), "De la fam...", p. 154.

<sup>137</sup> RIGAUD (1807) [1780], *Cozinheiro moderno...*, p. 271.

<sup>138</sup> PUENTE (1998), *El pescado...*, pp. 133-134.

<sup>139</sup> FÀBREGA (2012), "De la fam...", p. 140.

<sup>140</sup> OROZCO (1611), *Tesoro de la lengua castellana...*, pp. 173-174, 177.

<sup>141</sup> FELIÚ I MONFORTE (1991), *Precios y salarios...*, p. 121.

<sup>142</sup> FÀBREGA (2012), "De la fam...", pp. 153-154.

including an entry dedicated to a stockfish stew named “*estocafris*”, still mentions the Montño’s cookbook as a reference for this dish<sup>143</sup>. Both salted and unsalted cod are recorded with no doubt in a food expenses list from the monastery of Palamós near 1800<sup>144</sup>, and at Girona before as an ingredient in the “*Llibre de l’art de quynar*”, authored by the monk Sever d’Oiot (1787)<sup>145</sup>. The “*peixopalo*” dish includes dried raisins and pine nuts, which also appear together in other preparations of his repertoire, mixed with “*diabollitos*” (dried plums?). The combination of stockfish with this last ingredient is documented again in a monastic recipe of the same period, in addition to tomatoes, almonds and chickpeas<sup>146</sup>.

The growing visibility of the stockfish in historical sources seems to be correlated with the expanding of the commercial presence of Scandinavians in the Mediterranean. During all the 19.<sup>th</sup> century, the British will lose gradually the leadership of the salt cod trade to other competitors. This tendency was favoured by a new geopolitical *status quo* in the Southern Europe Theatre, then the most important market for salt fish. Portugal will be for a long time the exception<sup>147</sup>. Oporto, for example, still bought 101120£ of *bacalhau* from English providers against only 13984£ from Norway in 1839<sup>148</sup>. The Spanish imports of *klipfish* collapsed with the Napoleonic wars<sup>149</sup>, but after the end of the conflict, Norwegians<sup>150</sup> were again important players<sup>151</sup>, concentrating their activities at Barcelona and Bilbao<sup>152</sup>. The key of their success was offering a shipper product than its Newfoundland competitors<sup>153</sup>. Scandinavians finally dominated the Spanish market, extending greatly their presence in ports of the Basque Country as Santander and San Sebastian<sup>154</sup>. The stockfish production was growing too, particularly in the Lofoten islands (Fig. 4).

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<sup>143</sup> TERREROS y PANDO (1787), *Diccionario castellano...*, p. 116.

<sup>144</sup> FÁBREGA (2012), “De la fam...”, p. 141.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 147-148.

<sup>146</sup> FÁBREGA (2013), *La cuina monàstica*, p. 126.

<sup>147</sup> CROUZET (2000), “America and the crisis...”, p. 295.

<sup>148</sup> WHITING (1844), *Commercial tariffs...*, p. 46.

<sup>149</sup> JOHNSEN (1930), “Les relations commerciales...”, pp. 82. CHRISTENSEN *et al.* (1996), “Norwegian Fisheries...”, p. 158.

<sup>150</sup> It is worth mentioning that in 1814, the Danish crown cede Norway to the king of Sweden, while Iceland continued being part of its territory: ÞÓRDARDÓTTIR (2015), *El bacalao de Islandia...*, p. 12. BÄCKSBACKA (2000), “Trading and Shipping...”, p. 363. RYAN (1986), *Fish out...*, p. 85.

<sup>151</sup> BÄCKSBACKA (2000), “Trading and Shipping...”, pp. 384-386.

<sup>152</sup> PUENTE (1998), *El pescado...*, pp. 163-164.

<sup>153</sup> RYAN (1986), *Fish out...*, pp. 86-89.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.



**Fig. 4.** General view of the 1815 main building, fishermen's cabins, and boathouses at the stockfish curing station of Kabelvåg (Lofoten Islands). June 2016. Photo A. J. M. Silva.

This food staple was now exported as far as Greece<sup>155</sup>, Tunisia<sup>156</sup>, Turkey<sup>157</sup>, Cuba<sup>158</sup> and Nigeria that still is an important market today<sup>159</sup>. The air-dried cured product was already clearly distinguished of salt cod in the fiscal documentation<sup>160</sup> and official statistics<sup>161</sup> of the Spanish Kingdom, which indicates its increasing

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<sup>155</sup> CHATZIOANNOU (2006), "Greece", p. 337. CHATZIOANNOU (2007), "Shaping Greek-Tunisian...", p. 171.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>157</sup> See "Tariff between Great Britain and Turkey, settled at Constantinople, on the 3.<sup>th</sup> October, 1850" in HERTSLET (1856), *A complete collection...*, p. 750.

<sup>158</sup> "Balanza general de comercio, y estado de la mercancías importadas y exportadas por el puerto de la Habana en todo el año de 1827, y derechos que han producido, formada con vista de los registros de entrada y salida liquidados en el expreso año", August 1828, in *Mercurio de España*, Madrid, p. 148.

<sup>159</sup> BERGER *et al.* (1999), p. 404.

<sup>160</sup> See in *Mercurio de España* (Madrid, April 1827): "Real decreto modificando la renta del bacalao (07/08/1805)", p. 235; "Real orden comunicando el real decreto de S. M. sobre que cese el arriendo del bacalao, y señalando los derechos á su entrada (15/08/1825)", p. 241. See also: "Real orden comunicada á la Direccion general de Rentas declarando que el pez Palo está comprendido en el arrendamiento del bacalao (10/10/1824)" in NIEVA (1825), *Decretos del Rey...*, p. 227.

<sup>161</sup> DIRECCION GENERAL de ADUANAS (1875), *Estadística general del...*, p. 42.

presence. Earlier, in 1815 to be exact, the American Consul of the Tarragona District reports that Danish vessels arrive now every year to the port of Barcelona with cargoes of stockfish. The Catalan capital turned at the same period into a main producer of textiles<sup>162</sup>, increasing greatly the number of urban low-income consumers, that still were the principal buyers of cod in all the Mediterranean Region, during the next century<sup>163</sup>. Belonging the testimony of the consul, this food product is "in estimation by the Catalans generally; it is underrated in value to codfish, but frequently sells at equal price"<sup>164</sup>. The popularity of "*pez de palo*" in this Spanish Province is also attested by a note of the *Secretaría de Estado* in 1824<sup>165</sup>. A communication of the "*Hacienda*" to this governmental office confirms the lower price of "*pezpálo*" compared with salt cod and the significative demand for this food product by the low-class members<sup>166</sup>. The cookbook "*La cuinera catalana*", presenting recipes supposedly affordable to the less fortunate readers, does not make any mention of this staple. This fact suggests that the stockfish consumers were probably now the poorest. The anonymous compilation, written in Catalan and published in 1829 at Barcelona, includes, however, several dishes of salt cod<sup>167</sup>. The recipes denote some similarities (as the use of tomato and honey) with the repertoire of preparations involving this ingredient made popular, one century before, by the Altamira work, reedited several times during the next hundred years<sup>168</sup>.

In 1839, a total quantity of 100.000 quintals of "*bacalao stocwis*" could have been imported to Barcelona from Norway and Iceland<sup>169</sup>. This staple was the principal export of the island since at least the 14.<sup>th</sup> century<sup>170</sup> and until the early 19.<sup>th</sup> century<sup>171</sup>. However, Bergen still was the major player, reserving to the Iberian

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<sup>162</sup> CALOSCI (2006), "La transformation...", p. 1.

<sup>163</sup> MOUTINHO (1985), *História da pesca...*, pp. 180-181. RICHTER-HANSEN (2015), "The history of the...", p. 30.

<sup>164</sup> BAKER (1815), *A view of the commerce...*, pp. 79-80.

<sup>165</sup> "Oficio de la Secretaría de Estado fechado en San Lorenzo el 10 de Octubre de 1824", reproduced by BÄCKSBACKA (2000), "Trading and Shipping...", Documentary appendix – Doc. 7A, p. 432.

<sup>166</sup> "Informe de Hacienda dirigido a la Secretaría de Estado y fechado en Placio el 10 de enero de 1825 con orden de comunicación al Encargado de Negocios de Suecia". *Ibid.*, Documentary appendix – Doc. 7B, pp. 432-435.

<sup>167</sup> ANONYMOUS AUTHOR (1839), *La cuinera catalana...*, pp. 21-23.

<sup>168</sup> ALBALA (2003), *Food in early...*, p. 150. BONAL i BASTONS (2000), *El receptari de l'Elvira...*, p. 54.

<sup>169</sup> BOY (1840), *Diccionario teórico...*, pp. 276-277. It is not totally clear if this estimation is only related to stockfish imports or also salt cod from Norway designated as "*platevis*" by the author.

<sup>170</sup> CARIUS-WILSON (1967), *Medieval Merchant Venturers*, p. 98.

<sup>171</sup> JONSSON (2010), "Comparing the Icelandic...", footnote n.º 20, p. 166.

market the average class of quality product<sup>172</sup>. But even in this period, the stockfish import continued to be residual when compared with *klipfish* carried by Spanish, Danish and Norwegian ships. Less than 10 years later, Barcelona was already an important centre of the Mediterranean stockfish's trade. At this stage, the Catalan port supplied all the regional market, particularly the harbours of the Costa Brava<sup>173</sup>. Part of the "*pez palo*" imported was reexported for other Spanish cities (Coruña, Santander, Cadiz, etc.)<sup>174</sup> and mostly to Italy (Livorno and Civitavecchia)<sup>175</sup>. In the second quarter of the 1800s, the trade of stockfish is also documented at Lisbon both by the Sound Toll register<sup>176</sup> and a Portuguese commercial report<sup>177</sup>. The lack of mentions to this staple in Spanish and Portuguese culinary books of this period suggested that this food product was definitively connoted with lower classes. The stockfish should not be consumed even by the Iberian growing middle class. The members embraced totally the salt cod as a gastronomic delicacy, being also adopted as a national symbol by educated men in Portugal at the same moment<sup>178</sup>.

## A CATALAN "THING"

At the end of the 1800s, Barcelona still was an important market for the Norwegian *klipfish*, but the Icelandic salt cod will be predominant here during the early years of the next century<sup>179</sup>. The Icelanders stopped producing stockfish at the same period<sup>180</sup>, letting the monopoly of the trade to Norway. On the other hand, Catalonia was the only region of the Iberian Peninsula, which continued to consume *peixopalo* after then. In the long term, the destiny of an exogenous element in a food system often depends directly on the resilience of the socio-cultural relevance accorded to the dishes, which include it as an ingredient. In this case, the continuity of the stockfish consumption in the Northern ports of the province seems to be related to the fact of being an important element of a local specialty,

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<sup>172</sup> BOY (1840), *Diccionario teórico...*, p. 302.

<sup>173</sup> JUNTA DE COMERCIO (1849), *Balanza mercantil...*, p. 119.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 287.

<sup>176</sup> 16-6-1814. Shipmaster: Chr. Georg Meyer from Kongsbacka. *Online database...*, record ID 1081168, Passage n.º 746. 28-7-1814. Shipmaster: J. H. Eppert from Dantzig, record ID 1073172, Passage n.º 667.

<sup>177</sup> "Notícias marítimas", 21.<sup>th</sup> August 1827, in *Gazeta de Lisboa*, n.º 197, p. 1098.

<sup>178</sup> SILVA (2015), "The fable of the cod...", p. 134.

<sup>179</sup> RYAN (1986), *Fish out...*, p. 86.

<sup>180</sup> JONSSON (2010), "Comparing the Icelandic...", footnote n.º 20, p. 166.

known as “*es niu*”, which meant the nest. This dish — like many others of the regional repertoire — is a sort of surf and turf or “*mare y muntanya*” as Catalans say<sup>181</sup>, mixing in a very exotic way wild birds from the inland mountains, chicken eggs and pork meat of the local farms, cuttlefish caught by fishermen near the coast, imported salt cod, cod guts and, last but not least, stockfish. Pere Bahí let us the following ingredient list for this very peculiar dish<sup>182</sup>:

- 1 tender pigeon or 2 thrushes or quails;
- 4 centre cuts of salt cod soaked;
- 200g cuttlefish;
- 8 sausages;
- 200g stockfish soaked for five days;
- 150g cod guts;
- 8 potatoes;
- 4 tablespoons of *sofregit*;
- 1 glass good red wine;
- 2 tablespoons flour;
- 2 tablespoons of garlic;
- 2 boiled eggs;
- olive oil, water, salt and pepper.

The growing difficulty of getting stockfish and cod guts after the World War II should have dictated the loss of this recipe without the heritage turn of the Catalan cuisine during the last decades. The idea *per si* that Catalans share not only a particular language, common laws, costumes, political ideal and history, but they also have their own culinary system, have been argued perhaps for the first time by the regionalist writer Ferran Agulló i Vidal in the preface of his cookbook “*Llibre de la cuina catalana*”, published in 1928. At the same period, celebrating the local gastronomy turned into an important demonstration of national proud. In European countries, the apology of the regional diversity served to reinforce the cohesion of the nation made of a heterogeneous mosaic of complementary *terroirs*. The expansion of the restaurant industry, at the same moment, cannot be dissociated from the increasing popularity of the regional cuisines, more and

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<sup>181</sup> FÀBREGA, Jaume (2010), “Como podem definir la cuina catalana?”, *Blog Bona vida*, <<http://blocs.mesvilaweb.cat/jaumefabrega/?p=156530>> [consulted 21/08/2016].

<sup>182</sup> BAHÍ (1997), *El que menjava Josep Pla*.

more prized by the middle-class members. They were now numerous to visit the country land by train or by car to cultivate their patriotism<sup>183</sup>.

Agulló was one of the first Catalans to understand that the future of the poorest will be a kind of tourism, that take advantage not only of the sunny beaches but also of the local cultural legacy<sup>184</sup>. Faithful to the nationalist ideology, this author looks for the roots of the authentic Catalan cuisine, not in the previous gastronomic literature, but in the anonymous knowledge of the lower classes as he explained itself in an interview published in 1928 in a seminary of San Feliu de Guixols<sup>185</sup>. He elected precisely the local fishermen, and the *tapers* — the workers of the cork industry — as keepers of the ancestors' traditions, in conformity with the nationalist credo. This activity started locally at the middle of the 1700s, the production being first directed exclusively to the French market<sup>186</sup>. In the next century, the Catalan cork's sales will expand to Portugal, North Africa and the North Europe, turning this industry into a very prosperous segment of the provincial economy, attracting to the region numerous workers from France<sup>187</sup>.

The book of Agulló stimulated a durable interest of his educated compatriots for the food ways of the poorest. This is the emerging appetite for the culture of the humbles that made the Catalan intellectuals taste for the first time popular stockfish dishes, as “*es niu*” or the “*stok-fiche' amb patates i allioli*”, mentioned by Agulló in his 1928 interview<sup>188</sup>. It should be taken in consideration that even the elite members related to the *taper* business not had the habit of consuming *peixopalo* before. The recipe book of Elvira “Correu” written in the early 1900s by the wife of a cork trader from Palafrugell doesn't mention this ingredient in any of the few dishes of her repertoire made with fish. This fact seems to indicate that the most fortunate didn't eat it, preferring salt cod instead, anyway indirectly referred in only one Elvira's recipe of salsa<sup>189</sup>. The *peixopalo* was neither contemplated by the menus — clearly inspired by the French cuisine — of the first local restaurants that opened their door at the same period<sup>190</sup>.

The narrative that legitimizes the ongoing heritage turn of the stockfish, staged today as an element of the *taper* culture and at the same time as a true expression

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<sup>183</sup> SILVA (2016), *Le régime UNESCO*, pp. 45-47.

<sup>184</sup> ROGER (2008), “Ferran Agulló...”, p. 104.

<sup>185</sup> VILA (2008), “Ferran Agulló...”, p. 109.

<sup>186</sup> BONAL i BASTONS (2000), *El receptari...*, p. 14.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>188</sup> VILA (2008), “Ferran Agulló...”, p. 110.

<sup>189</sup> BONAL i BASTONS (2000), *El receptari...*, p. 69.

<sup>190</sup> BAUGUÉ i VILA (1995), *El Palafrugell popular...*, p. 41.

of the authentic Catalan cuisine, have probably its roots in the work of Agulló<sup>191</sup>. That is, however, the texts of another regionalist writer, Joseph Pla, that still inform the imaginary of this culinary tradition today. This Catalan author made several references to the *peixopalo* and *es niu* in the books “*El quadern gris*” (1966), “*El meu país*” (1968) and “*El que hem menjar*” (1972), which he dedicated to the coastal towns of what Agulló baptized earlier the “*Costa Brava*”. Belonging to Pla, at the moment that he wrote, *es niu* was one of the three more prized plates by the inhabitants of the region<sup>192</sup>. He also testifies that the non-educated members of lower classes still believed at this time that the most important ingredient of the dish — stockfish — was not cod but, at contrary, a different type of fish, like the writers of the Modern times<sup>193</sup>. According to him, in the past, *es niu* was served in the taverns of the port of Palafrugell, visited by foreigners on Sundays and the rest of the week by the inhabitants of the town, mostly on Mondays<sup>194</sup>. The *taper* habit of not working this day to socialize with friends around a table had been introduced by French immigrants before, in a context of prosperity shared even by the less fortunate during all the second half of the 1800s. This convivial way of life stimulated the development of a rich local food culture<sup>195</sup>. At the beginning of the next century, Palafrugell was one of the cities less affected by the decline of the cork industry in all the region<sup>196</sup>. There and only there, the lifestyle of the *tapers* was still strongly alive<sup>197</sup>.

The writings of Pla reflect all these facts. *Es niu*, that this author prefers personally served with *allioli*, is described in one of his books as particularly adequate to winter meals<sup>198</sup>, being ordinarily served during this season accompanied by a veal dish<sup>199</sup>. Pla also believes that it was the original inspiration of the numerous variations of *mare y muntania* that made famous the Catalan cuisine<sup>200</sup>. He considers this dish as an important element of the convivial culture of the last workers of the cork industry. He remembers that during his childhood, the *tapers* used to dedicate their Mondays to socialize in the taverns of the city instead of

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<sup>191</sup> See the testimony of Xavier Rocas (Tamaríu, Cala del Liris, 22/08/2013). <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=K00H4mo30VE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=K00H4mo30VE)> [consulted 21/08/2016].

<sup>192</sup> PLA (1966), *El quadern gris*, pp. 135-136.

<sup>193</sup> PLA (1972), *El que hem...*, p. 324.

<sup>194</sup> PLA (1966), *El quadern gris*, pp. 154-155.

<sup>195</sup> BONAL i BASTONS (2000), *El receptari...*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>196</sup> BOTET y SISÓ (1913), *Geografia general de...*, pp. 138, 630.

<sup>197</sup> BAUGUÉ i VILA (1995), *El Palafrugell...*, pp. 9-12.

<sup>198</sup> PLA (1968), *El meu país...*, pp. 354-355. PLA (1972), *El que hem...*, p. 324.

<sup>199</sup> PLA (1968), *El meu país...*, pp. 541-542.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 539-540.

working, *es niu* being part of the menu of convivial meals shared by small groups of old friends<sup>201</sup>. Other writers mention that *peixopalo* and cod guts were also served separately in small doses, as *tapas* in these establishments<sup>202</sup>. But, already in 1968, Pla testified the decline of the dish by lack of the principal ingredient, the stockfish<sup>203</sup>, rejecting the contemporaneous attempt to resurrect the plate substituting the missing element<sup>204</sup>.

The texts of Pla, Aguilló and the other authors involved in the 20.<sup>th</sup> century's regionalist movements will be later mobilized by further writers, as Manuel Vázquez Montalban, Jaume Fàbrega, Manuel Lladonosa and Antoni Massanés. They will turn *es niu* into an important element of the recently born Catalan gastronomic identity. This second wave of food writers will assume as a mission to give a new life to this specialty and other almost forgotten culinary treasures, facing their action as an act of cultural resistance<sup>205</sup>. These intellectuals not only shared with their public the knowledge as regards the ancient local cuisine. They also started to taste the lost food traditions in private gastronomic encounters. The philologist Modest Prats i Domingo participated at this revival movement inviting the other members of his circle to celebrate the dish popularized by Pla at the occasion of what they called "*la festa del niu*" that took place every year at the iconic Michelin starred restaurant *El Motel* in Figueres during the Lent period<sup>206</sup>. It is well known that the staging of the past tends to be mostly a process of recreation<sup>207</sup>. In this case, this group of enthusiastic gastronomes had often reinvented totally the recipes which they considered part of the emerging Catalan food identity<sup>208</sup>. It is important to note at the first place that Pla was perfectly aware that stockfish was consumed in other regions of the world at the same period<sup>209</sup>. However, as the history of this food stuff in the Iberian Peninsula continued to be unwritten at the moment, this humble ingredient could be easily transformed into a distinctive cultural marker. In fact, the lack of memory of its past consumption in the remaining Spanish provinces turned stockfish gradually into a "Catalan" thing.

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<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 541-542.

<sup>202</sup> BAUGUÉ i VILA (1995), *El Palafrugell...*, p. 22.

<sup>203</sup> PLA (1968), *El meu país...*, pp. 539-540.

<sup>204</sup> PLA (1972), *El que hem...*, p. 324.

<sup>205</sup> GUARDIÀ, Manuel (s.d.), "Market cuisine, Catalan cuisine and the Mediterranean diet", *web site Barcelona Metropolís*, <<http://lameva.barcelona.cat/bcnmetropolis/en/dossier/cuina-de-mercat-cuina-catalana-i-dieta-mediterrania-2/>> [consulted 22/08/2016].

<sup>206</sup> COMADIRA (2016), "Modest Prats, ...", p. 21.

<sup>207</sup> HERNANDEZ *et al.* (2014), "Sobre la construcció social...", p. 89.

<sup>208</sup> GUARDIÀ (s.d.), "Market cuisine...". LLOPART (2014), "Josep Rondisoni, ...", p. 1860.

<sup>209</sup> PLA (1968), *El meu país...*, pp. 354-355. PLA (1972), *El que hem...*, p. 324.

After that, the stockfish will be mobilized as a cultural heritage by other stakeholders, that conciliate today the safeguarding of the Catalan identity with different kinds of causes that sometimes transcend the frontiers of the national homeland. At the same period, governmental and non-governmental stakeholders turned Barcelona into the world capital of the Mediterranean diet<sup>210</sup>. This nutritional model “discovered” by Americans epidemiologists in the 1950s<sup>211</sup>, was converted into a global standard during the early 1990s, with the financial support of the International Olive Council<sup>212</sup>. The popularity of the Mediterranean pyramid was now used by the agrofood lobby to open new markets to olive oil, and later to other traditional Mediterranean food stuffs<sup>213</sup>. Several enterprises operating in Catalonia founded in 1995 the Association for the Advancement of the Mediterranean Diet to promote this scientific invention. One year after, this organization will sponsor the creation of the *Fundación Dieta Mediterránea*, based at Barcelona as the association<sup>214</sup>. The Tourism Consortium was encouraged at the same period by the representative of the local restaurant owners to use the popularity of the Med label to promote the Catalan capital as a tourist destination<sup>215</sup>. In the next years, chefs as Santi Santamaria, Ferran Adrià, Carme Ruscalleda and Joan Roca, influenced by the French school of the *nouvelle cuisine*, gave an international projection to the Catalan food products and traditions. Since the middle of the 20.<sup>th</sup> century, the beaches of the Costa Brava attracted a huge number of visitors<sup>216</sup>, which were now ready to embrace the tourist formula idealized a few decades before by Agulló. Tasting local flavours was henceforth a central element of the experience that travellers should look for<sup>217</sup>. All these facts help to understand the growing effort, supported by the municipalities of the Northern coast of Catalonia during the last two decades, to turn *es niu* into a culinary heritage, intended mostly as a valuing factor of the local offer<sup>218</sup>. The mentions to this food tradition in the writings of the early defenders of the Catalan cuisine, as Ferran Agulló i Vidal and Joseph Pla<sup>219</sup>, are now used to promote gastronomical festivals that take place during

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<sup>210</sup> SILVA (2016), *Le régime UNESCO*, pp. 98-100.

<sup>211</sup> SILVA (2015), *Le diète méditerranéenne*, pp. 47-62.

<sup>212</sup> SILVA (2016), *Le régime UNESCO*, p. 94.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 98-100.

<sup>215</sup> GUARDIÀ (s.d.), “Market cuisine...”.

<sup>216</sup> BAUGUÉ i VILA (1995), *El Palafrugell...*, p. 25.

<sup>217</sup> SILVA (2016), *Le régime UNESCO*, p. 73.

<sup>218</sup> See the testimony of Carme Bonal i Bastons (Tamaríu, ...).

<sup>219</sup> See the testimony of Xavier Rocas (Tamaríu, ...). Other authors also highlight the influence of the local writer Mossèn Tapiola: BONAL i BASTONS (2000), *El receptari...*, p. 52.

the Lent period in Northern ports as Palafrugell and Sant Feliu de Guíxols, that imported stockfish in the past. The historical narratives about *es niu* and the *taper* culture continue, however, to evolve. Today, this specialty is presented to tourists as a very ancient custom which started out as a Lent meal, not including the usual meaty ingredients at the beginning<sup>220</sup>. The “old brother” of the dish is now known as “*es niu de Quaresma*”<sup>221</sup>. Only later, the fishermen would add cuttlefish and the *tapers* would complete the recipe with wild birds and sausages. Some believe that the definitive version of *es niu* turned popular in the context of local festivities since the 19.<sup>th</sup> or even the 18.<sup>th</sup> century. However, the few testimonies of this period describing social events do not mention this dish as an element of the menu served to the participants<sup>222</sup>. On the other hand, if the caramelized onions sauce known as “*sofregit*” is already referred in the Catalan cookbooks of the Middle Ages<sup>223</sup>, the consumption of potatoes is documented for the first time in local expense lists and recipes written at the end of the 18.<sup>th</sup> century<sup>224</sup>. Finally, as we see before, stockfish that is still today intended as a central element of the dish probably wasn’t a staple food in Catalonia in the earlier century. It is relevant to mention here that salt cod is the plate by excellence of the Lent period in all the Spain today. This idea has been recently clearly expressed in the topic related to this fish of the Catalan cultural catalogue (Culturecat)<sup>225</sup>: “Its [Cod] standing as a Lent dish and, therefore, as a meal of abstinence, has in the past afforded it an undeserved fame as a common aliment.” The association of the *peixopalo* to the salt cod tradition cannot be accurate. However, it certainly contributes to convincing national visitors to taste *es niu* during the Lent period, turning it more familiar to the tourists from other Spanish provinces, themselves great consumers of salt cod.

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<sup>220</sup> See the testimony of Maria Àngels Palmada (Tamaríu, ...).

<sup>221</sup> CARRERA i ESCUDÉ, Manel (s.d.), “Niu de Quaresma”, *website festes.org*, <<http://www.festes.org/articles.php?id=1062>> [consulted 22/08/2016].

<sup>222</sup> BONAL i BASTONS (2000), *El receptari...*, pp. 15, 16, 20.

<sup>223</sup> GREWE (1981), “Catalan cuisine, ...”, p. 174.

<sup>224</sup> FÀBREGA (2012), “De la fam...”, p. 129.

<sup>225</sup> Anonymous author (s.d.), Topic “Cod”, *CultureCat – Catalogue of the Catalan culture*. <[http://www.gencat.cat/culturcat/portal/site/culturacatalana/menuitem.be2bc4cc4c5aec88f94a9710b0c0e1a0/en\\_GB/indexf102.html?vgnextoid=79c0ef2126896210VgnVCM1000000b0c1e0aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=79c0ef2126896210VgnVCM1000000b0c1e0aRCRD&vgnnextfmt=detall2&contentid=e556ef7fb89d7210VgnVCM1000008d0c1e0aRCRD&newLang=en\\_GB](http://www.gencat.cat/culturcat/portal/site/culturacatalana/menuitem.be2bc4cc4c5aec88f94a9710b0c0e1a0/en_GB/indexf102.html?vgnextoid=79c0ef2126896210VgnVCM1000000b0c1e0aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=79c0ef2126896210VgnVCM1000000b0c1e0aRCRD&vgnnextfmt=detall2&contentid=e556ef7fb89d7210VgnVCM1000008d0c1e0aRCRD&newLang=en_GB)> [consulted 24/08/2016].

## THE REWRITING OF THE IBERIAN COD SAGA

The project to inscribe the Catalan cuisine on the list of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity, actually in progress, can be the beginning of a new chapter in the writing of the Iberian cod history, where the stockfish will have finally a deserved place. In 2011, the publication of the Compendium of the Catalan Cuisine Heritage was the first step of the candidacy process<sup>226</sup>. This initiative is the last development related to the long-term commitment of this Spanish Province with the promotion of the Mediterranean diet. In 2005, the Fundación Dieta Mediterránea assumed a new mission: elevating this nutritional model to the new UNESCO list, with the support of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the Spanish government and the Catalan Generalitat<sup>227</sup>. The application approved in 2010, turned quickly into a successful case study, being one of the first food traditions inserted in this inventory. Since then, the recognition of the Mediterranean diet as an intangible heritage has demonstrated to be a very efficient step to catch tourists interested in authentic culinary experiences<sup>228</sup>. The fact that Catalonia was already in the map as a gastronomic destination and the local know-how related to drafting nomination proposals to the list could be used in favour of this new cause. The return of the UNESCO's recognition would be economical, in the framework of further tourist campaigns focused on food legacy<sup>229</sup>. The proposal could have been motivated, in addition, for political reasons. In fact, the defence of the national identity by the revivalist movement of the Catalan cuisine gains now a new meaning and more supporters with the growing popularity of the separatist cause in this autonomous community of Spain during the last years<sup>230</sup>.

In 2012, the Fundació Institut Català de la Cuina i de la Cultura Gastronòmica (FICCG) officially assumed the mission to take in charge the preparation of the application. This organization considers the UNESCO recognition openly as a way to promote this food legacy, and by extension the label Catalonia, as a benchmark of quality in the world. The members of this institution feel for this reason that their initiative must be intended as a national project of all and for all Catalans. They claim that their national food culture has characteristics that make it unique. In addition, they invoke the six hundred years of culinary literature published in

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<sup>226</sup> GUARDIÀ (s.d.), "Market cuisine, ...".

<sup>227</sup> SILVA (2016), *Le régime UNESCO*, pp. 99-102, 110-114.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 125-129.

<sup>229</sup> GUARDIÀ (s.d.), "Market cuisine, ...".

<sup>230</sup> PFEILSTETTER (2015), "Heritage entrepreneurship...", p. 217.

Catalonia to demonstrate the antiquity of this legacy<sup>231</sup>. They believe now in a sort of continuity between the erudite and vernacular cuisine, on the contrary of Agulló. Following this author, the base of the Catalan cuisine is older than the aristocratic repertoire of the first cookbooks, being inspired by the frugal diet of the Roman legionaries, rich in cereals and garlic<sup>232</sup>. The antique roots of the local food legacy were also highlighted by Antoni Riera Melis in his public speech at the presentation ceremony of the proposal<sup>233</sup>. The historian considered the national tradition as being totally representative of the Mediterranean culinary system, based on the Graeco-Roman trinity of the bread, wine and olive oil. He also mentions the ancient fish processing techniques, fermented or salted, as a legacy of the antique settlers that turned this food heritage very special. There is then no surprise that, even still being in construction, the online database of traditional Catalan recipes created within the framework of the proposal already includes *es niu*, made with different species of fish, as a typical regional specialty<sup>234</sup>.

To have any chance to be one day elevated to the UNESCO's inventory, the candidate to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity must be first described into a national inventory<sup>235</sup>. Curiously the presentation of *es niu* in the topic "Cod" of the Culturecat<sup>236</sup> omits stockfish intended as an essential element of the recipe since the time of Joseph Pla. This writer is paradoxically quoted to claim that *es niu* has "cod tripe as a basis, but can also include hard egg, potato, cuttlefish, sausage, "*botifarra*" [blood sausage], calf snout and birds (its name is derived from this)"<sup>237</sup>, making no allusion to *peixopalo* as an ingredient of the recipe. This anomaly can perhaps be explained by the fact that this food product is presented on the Culturecat not as a food product distinct of salt cod but at contrary as a simple alternative way of preserving *Gadus morhua*. This unifying conception of the two curing traditions is, however, in contradiction with

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<sup>231</sup> Presentation of the proposal "Catalan cuisine as intangible cultural heritage of Humanity". *Official website of the FICCG*. <<http://www.cuinacatalana.eu/ca/pag/projecteunesco-presentacio-cuina-catalana-patrimoni-de-la-humanitat/>> [consulted 28/08/2016].

<sup>232</sup> VILA (2008), "Ferran Agulló...", p. 110.

<sup>233</sup> Transcription of the Antoni Riera Melis's speech at the official presentation of the proposal "Catalan cuisine as intangible cultural heritage of Humanity" (Palau de la Generalitat de Catalunya, Barcelona, 19/03/2012). <[http://www.cuinacatalana.eu/pdf/discurs\\_riera.pdf](http://www.cuinacatalana.eu/pdf/discurs_riera.pdf)> [consulted 28/08/2016].

<sup>234</sup> On line version of the database "Corpus Culinari de la Cuina Catalana, inventari de plats típicament catalans". <<http://www.cuinacatalana.eu/ca/pag/receptes/?s=dGlwdXM9MTEmb9tX3JlY2VwdGE9bml1Jm-luZ3JlZGllbnQ9>> [consulted 28/08/2016].

<sup>235</sup> UNESCO (2011), *Infokit: Identifier...*, p. 5. <<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/01856-FR.pdf>> [consulted 11/09/2016].

<sup>236</sup> Anonymous author, Topic "Cod" ...

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*

the ancient belief, also shared by Catalan consumers in the past, of being related to two different species. This intangible aspect should, however, be preserved at the first place following the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. It is relevant to note here that the traditional cuisines had not been contemplated per se as an intangible cultural heritage by the authors of this normative act, while they mention clearly the indigenous conceptions concerning nature and the universe as a legacy to be protected by the State parties<sup>238</sup>.

Cod is now presented as “one of the most prominent fish in Catalan cuisine”<sup>239</sup>. We could, of course, argue the same for the other culinary traditions of the Iberian Peninsula, especially Portugal<sup>240</sup>. The important role of the cod in the Catalan food system is explained by “its easy preservation, be it dried in salt, or dried without salting, in a manner known as “*peixopalo*” [stockfish stew]. This trait allowed it to be transported in good condition to the kitchens of the interior and to the monasteries, at a time when other marine species were not available inland”<sup>241</sup>. The author of this topic omits the fact mentioned below that the air dried technique was used in the past to cure endogenous fishes too. The declining of the consumption of the local *cecial* in the inland regions, mostly due to the collapse of the shoals populating the Iberian waters during the Modern age, is also silenced. The database explains that cod “is not an autochthonous fish, but one that hails from the cold northern seas and it was the Basques who introduced it to the Peninsula”. An idea, that we saw before, is controversial. “When the whalers made their way to Terranova, they realized that they could salt and conserve them in the bodega, or simply leave them to dry on the deck with the wind and sun until they became firm”<sup>242</sup>. The alternative explanations argued in the past by the authors that believe that Basque was the first to visit the Newfoundland banks are omitted. The possibility of drying cod in the own deck of the ships is, of course, totally unrealistic. On the other hand, the idea that the popularization of the cod consumption “in Catalonia came when the Catalan boats went to the Baltic to take wine”<sup>243</sup> is once again very questionable. Highlighting a local import initiative omitting the role of the Scandinavians traders can be exaggerated as we see before. In fact, the maritime power of Catalonia is in clear decline at the same

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<sup>238</sup> Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, UNESCO, 32.<sup>nd</sup> session of the General Conference Meeting, Paris, 29 September to 17 October 2003, art. 2 al. 2-d.

<sup>239</sup> Anonymous author, Topic “Cod” ...

<sup>240</sup> SILVA (2015), “The fable of the cod...”, p. 130.

<sup>241</sup> Anonymous author, Topic “Cod” ...

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*

period<sup>244</sup>. Even more surprisingly, the title of the topic “Cod” is followed with a laconic “8.<sup>th</sup> Century BC - 21.<sup>th</sup> Century AC”<sup>245</sup>. Should we understand that the history of cod consumption in the Iberian Peninsula starts in the early middle age<sup>246</sup>, even in Catalonia?

As I argued before<sup>247</sup>, the heritage arena perpetuates until today the winning recipe of the first nationalists. The fact that the newest UNESCO’s list continues to be used to promote national identities reveals clearly that the “European Authorized Heritage Discourse” is still pre-eminent in this arena even in the post-national era where we live now<sup>248</sup>. Furthermore, as their predecessors, the contemporaneous stakeholders follow the tendency to make the cultural elements elected to guaranteeing the cohesion of the collective, older than they really are. In other words, more aged is the heritage, more authentic it is and so, more desirable it will be. The contemporaneous thirst for localness and nostalgic experiences in response to the food modernity<sup>249</sup> also contributes to repelling far away the origins of the cultural elements object of staging, even in contradiction with the historical facts, if necessary. As a last resort, the oral tradition can always be invoked to support the assumption of a remote past. Such narratives tend to adopt creationist schemes, substituting references to historical sources or archaeological evidence by convincing pragmatic explanations, as it seems to be the case here. Ironically, both authenticity<sup>250</sup> and antiquity<sup>251</sup> are non-criterion of inscriptions within the framework of the 2003 Convention, which reveals the growing lag between the strategies adopted by the stakeholders of the heritage arena and the current international agreements related to this issue<sup>252</sup>.

However, as the Mediterranean diet case study demonstrates clearly, the inscription of a cultural element in the UNESCO list acts not only as a guaranty of its significance as an identity marker but also as a veracity’s attestation of the origin narrative created to match the political agenda of the stakeholders that

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<sup>244</sup> GRAFE (2011), “The strange tale of...”, p. 85.

<sup>245</sup> Anonymous author, Topic “Cod” ...

<sup>246</sup> The mention of the “8.<sup>th</sup> Century BC” is an obvious mistake of the topic’s author, which wishes to refer probably instead to the “8.<sup>th</sup> Century AD” as the moment when the Catalan-cod tradition started.

<sup>247</sup> SILVA (2015), “The fable of the cod...”, pp. 139-140. SILVA (2016), *Le régime UNESCO*, p. 184.

<sup>248</sup> SMITH (2014), “Patrimoni immaterial: ...”, pp. 12-22.

<sup>249</sup> HERNANDEZ *et al.* (2014), “Sobre la construcció social...”, p. 87.

<sup>250</sup> BORTOLOTTI, Chiara (2013), “Authenticity: a non-criterion for the inscription on the lists of UNESCO’s intangible cultural heritage Convention”, in *IRCI (eds.), 2013 IRCI Meeting on ICH. Final report*, pp. 73-79. <[http://www.patrimoineimmateriel.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/201301-IRCI-Meeting-on-ICH\\_Chiera-Bortolotto\\_.pdf](http://www.patrimoineimmateriel.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/201301-IRCI-Meeting-on-ICH_Chiera-Bortolotto_.pdf)> [consulted 31/08/2016].

<sup>251</sup> UNESCO (2011), *Infokit: ...*, p. 13.

<sup>252</sup> SILVA (2016), *Diaita Nostra...*, pp. 61-62.

supported the candidacy<sup>253</sup>. In the one hand, the lack of commitment of the historian with the social uses of the past is a condition of his professional credibility in the academic community. The main purpose of staging cultural practices is, on the other hand, to celebrate a collective identity, mobilizing heritage in an instrumental way. In this point of view, there is an incommensurable distance in terms of priorities between staging a tradition and writing about its past, being faithful to the *legis arte* of the *Clio* sciences<sup>254</sup>. Reason why the historian can feel some difficulty facing the militant stakeholder perspective, unless he assumes the ongoing heritage turn as a new phase that must be treated exactly in the same way as the previous moments of the social existence of a food product. This paradigmatic twist should allow to understand better the changes related to the heritagization process in what concerns both the meaning and the valuing of food.

Nonetheless, the task of knowing more about the Iberian cod traditions can also be frustrating for a common internet user. At the moment I am writing, the database “CultureCat” is no more accessible online. However, anyone can read cached copies of the topic “Cod” described earlier stored by the Google engine<sup>255</sup>. At the same time, we can find an alternative rubric about this subject in the catalogue “gastroteca.cat”, one other database of the Generalitat de Catalunya specifically dedicated to gastronomy and considered credible by Catalan anthropologists working in the area of food heritage<sup>256</sup>. Belonging the author of this topic, the local cod tradition only started, after all, in the 16.<sup>th</sup> century. The supposed reference to *Gadus morhua* in the Nola book “*El libre del coch*” is probably what has inspired this statement, again quite controversial. In fact, as referred before, the first evidences of cod imports in Barcelona are no earlier than the end of the 1500s, this food product being economically significant perhaps only in the next century. The anonymous author, however, agrees with his colleague, that wrote the same topic in the alternative database that the cod “was soon a widely eaten fish, not least because it is easy to salt and preserve”. No mention is made here to *peixopalo*. It is also disturbing to learn that at contrary of the inland, it is “mostly eaten fresh”, considering the cod had probably never been consumed fresh in the Iberian Peninsula<sup>257</sup> until the last decade. As this example demonstrates, the growing financial resources allocated by European countries to promote Digital

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<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 58-61.

<sup>254</sup> BORTOLOTTI (2012), “Nouveaux acteurs...”, pp. 141-142.

<sup>255</sup> See an example of a cached version here: <<https://meocloud.pt/link/9e430c12-0b3a-4e0f-802d-eb8236b9b505/Cod.%20Culturcat.%20Generalitat%20de%20Catalunya.html/>> [consulted 11/09/2016].

<sup>256</sup> HERNANDEZ *et al.* (2014), “ Sobre la construcció social...”, note 4, p. 92.

<sup>257</sup> MORALES MUÑIZ *et al.* (1991), “Sobre la presencia...”, p. 21.

Humanities can be quite anti-productive, when the authors of the narratives that support the staging of cultural traditions are totally free of the obligation to sustain their statements referring to independent sources, as the researchers in Humanities and Social Sciences usually do. At the eyes of the common user, however, the fact of being disseminated by official institutions guaranties by itself the reliability of different versions, even being often contradictory.

### CATALAN CUISINE *VERSUS* QUERINI ROUTE

To conclude, the current race to the intangible cultural list gave finally an opportunity to the inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula to rediscover the fact they are part of the peoples connected by the Querini route. But, due to the almost total blackout about the consumption of stockfish in other Iberian regions, *peixopaló* turned gradually into a marker of the Catalan identity among others. After the success of the traditional Mexican cuisine and the French gastronomic meal proposals in 2010, the intangible cultural heritage list of humanity seems to be intended by a growing number of stakeholders as an opportunity to achieve goals that the authors of the 2003 Convention probably never imagine or even would approve. The elevation of culinary traditions to this inventory as a way of reinforcing national identities is surprisingly very consensual today, despite being in total contradiction with the spirit of this normative act and the Enlightenment values that inspired the founders of the UNESCO. One of them, André Malraux, trying to define what the heritage of humanity is, said one day: having to choose a myth, we should always prefer the Human instead of the Italian, the Roman or the German<sup>258</sup>. Simply, because it is the only one that offers a promise of peaceful coexistence between different nations, cultures and religions.

On the other hand, the use of the UNESCO label to promote tourism strategies based on food heritage, even being compatible with the current doctrine of this UN organization<sup>259</sup>, is, however, questionable too. For a historian, which is at the same time a stakeholder of the heritage arena, this issue can turn into a serious dilemma. Should we denounce openly, as many scholars do today, the growing expectation of economic return related to the new list? Should we consider that

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<sup>258</sup> MALRAUX, André (1936), *Sur l'héritage culturel. Discours au secrétariat général élargi de l'association internationale des écrivains pour la défense de la Culture à Londres.*

<sup>259</sup> SILVA (2016), *Diaita Nostra...*, p. 44.

the ongoing fetishization process affecting the historical monuments, debunked by Françoise Choay<sup>260</sup>, is now perverting the intangible heritage too? Put it like that seems perhaps a little vintage for those who remember the epic charge of Bruno Latour against the critical barbarity a few years ago<sup>261</sup>. Following this author, the scholars should try to cultivate new attachments instead of attacking mercilessly the existing ones. Should we renounce definitively to conciliate a critical perspective and humanistic concerns with a more symmetrical approach as some heritage experts argue today? I personally believe that we should not give up doing that. The main priorities — the new fetishes to adore if you want — should be in the first place the tolerance and the mutual understanding between communities and not the defence of the cultural identity per se or/and the promotion of economic interests<sup>262</sup>. At this point of view, shared legacies as the stockfish, ignoring political and cultural borders, offer today an irresistible opportunity to reconcile the international heritage policies with the constitutional spirit of the UNESCO.

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<sup>260</sup> CHOAY (2015), *As questões do património...*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>261</sup> LATOUR (2004), “Why Has Critique...”.

<sup>262</sup> LATOUR (2004), “Why Has Critique...”.

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