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EATING THE EMPIRE: INTERSECTIONS OF FOOD, COOKERY AND IMPERIALISM IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BRITAIN*

Near the close of the eighteenth century, John Roach, publisher and travel-guide author, proudly declared that London taverns were venues where visitors 'are to be met [with] all the most delicate luxuries upon earth, and where the fortun'd voluptuary may indulge his appetite, not only with all the natural dainties of every season, but with delicacies produced by means of preternatural ingenuity'.¹ By then the edible produce of imperial trade pervaded British society, as these one-time luxuries moved down the scale of affordability to become semi-luxuries and, in some cases, perceived necessities. Foods ranging from coffee to curry also became the empire's most ubiquitous symbols, and their advertisement, retail, preparation and consumption reflected and contributed to British discussions and perceptions of the empire.

The importance of food to the history of the early empire is incontestable. The English, and later British, penchant for sweet, hot beverages helped to fuel the empire's expansion into Asia, transformed the ecosystems of large swathes of the Americas and doomed millions of Africans and their descendants to slavery.² European fondness for tobacco was a pillar of the North American empire, as was the transmission of the British love of

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¹ [John Roach], *Roach's London Pocket Pilot: or, Stranger's Guide through the Metropolis* (London, 1796), 44.

² See, especially, Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York, 1985); Woodruff D. Smith, 'Complications of the Commonplace: Tea, Sugar, and Imperialism', *Jl Interdisciplinary Hist.*, xxiii (1992).

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luxury foods to the colonial populations. American colonists' ultimate rejection of these imported luxuries, particularly tea, as tools of imperial tyranny ultimately became part of the framework of their political revolution.³ In Britain itself, mimicking and adapting these commodities' native consuming practices led to such hallmarks of eighteenth-century life as coffee houses and Josiah Wedgwood's porcelain.⁴

How British consumers understood these foods in terms of their relationships either to the peoples that produced them or to the imperial machinery that secured their cheapness and abundance is far less clear. When a woman in Edinburgh drank a cup of tea, or a family in Bath sat down to a meal of Indian curry, did they consider the cultures they might be mimicking or how these products reached Britain? Such questions are not trips into the tedious margins of history. The food trade was essential to the success of the empire and the military fiscal state that helped fuel it. The naval transportation of these goods employed thousands of ships' crews, and the tax revenue they generated in turn financed the warships that protected and extended their markets. The customs duty on coffee alone in 1774 was enough to build five ships of the line; the annual duty on sugar in the 1760s was roughly equivalent to the cost of maintaining all the ships in the British navy.⁵ Moreover, throughout the long eighteenth century edibles constituted the majority of the value and weight of Britain's imperial trade, and they appeared on the tables of Britons from across geographic and social spectrums. The advertisements and recipes that called for these foods emphasized their foreignness and relationship to the distant peoples connected to the empire. In consequence, these products bonded the empire and perceptions of it to consumerism, thus enabling imperial concerns to infiltrate the daily routines of most British men and women.

³ James E. McWilliams, *A Revolution in Eating: How the Quest for Food Shaped America* (New York, 2005), ch. 6; T. H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (Oxford, 2004), ch. 6; T. H. Breen, "'Baubles of Britain': The American and Consumer Revolutions of the Eighteenth Century", *Past and Present*, no. 119 (May 1988).

⁴ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2005).

⁵ The average annual duty on sugar between 1767 and 1771 was about £500,000: National Archives, London, Public Record Office (hereafter PRO), Treasury: Miscellaneous Record (hereafter T) 64/276B/388. The duty on coffee in 1774 was £115,126 8s. 8d.: PRO, T 64/276B/316. For the costs of naval ships and their maintenance, see John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688–1783* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990), 34–5.

This essay explores the relationship between food consumption and Britons' engagement with their empire in the long eighteenth century from three angles. The first section engages those studies that have shown the abundance of imperial commodities with fresh evidence on shopping practices and distribution networks to reveal a world in which many imperial foods were almost universally available. It argues that these foods' ubiquity and foreignness enabled them to assume meanings that transcended boundaries of geography, class and gender in Britain. Although regional variations in consuming patterns continued, such as those between rural and urban or between England and Scotland, they were not sufficient to stop certain foods from carrying nationwide meanings. The next two sections explore those meanings first in advertising and second in cookery. In both settings a number of these foods became linked with the empire and the peoples associated with it. African slavery, the East India Company, Virginian plantations, American Indians and China all became associated with specific foods. Ultimately, an examination of food in this way underlines the case for recognizing the empire's pervasive presence in Britons' lives, and it reveals how the consumption of imperial goods shaped perceptions of the empire and the peoples connected to it by trade.

I

UBIQUITY AND MEANING IN IMPERIAL FOODS

Taking up a large portion — as much as half — of a typical British household's budget, food was at the heart of the emerging consumer society. Almost every household bought at least some of its food, which made it one of the few links to consumerism that virtually all Britons shared. Some of the most popular edibles arrived as a result of imperial commerce. During the eighteenth century, food surpassed any other imported commodity in terms of both value and extent of dissemination. Coffee, tea, sugar, tobacco and a number of spices became commonplace during the eighteenth century, often reaching the tables of even the poorest and remotest Britons. In fact, these products of empire were far more pervasive than any of the traditional print media — pamphlets, newspapers, travel narratives — upon which scholars have relied so heavily in their quests to describe widespread British attitudes towards the

empire. Moreover, because women dominated the purchase and preparation of food during the eighteenth century, a consideration of it also enables access to a large slice of society whose activities in the male-dominated world of print were more exceptional than they were representative. Indeed, because eighteenth-century Britons, like virtually every other human society, commonly endowed food with meanings beyond its nutritional value, these ubiquitous goods had the potential to become powerful symbols of the empire.

The market for foods from around the empire boomed during the eighteenth century. Between 1650 and 1800 the rapid growth of the West Indian plantation system and the African slave trade propelled per capita annual sugar consumption to increase by 2,500 per cent to reach twenty pounds, and the tea into which much of it went could be acquired at over 62,000 licensed tea retailers nationwide by 1800. Tea was so plentiful that on a given day in 1784, London shop shelves alone carried over 146 tons of it.⁶ Coffee, tea's little sister in the hot beverage trade, and tobacco were not far behind. Customs officers recorded 7,639,917 pounds of coffee legally entering the country in a single year in the early 1770s — a time when seven times that amount of legal tobacco typically entered Britain annually.⁷ To this must be added the enormous black market that thrived on the light imperial foods and could easily double any import estimate.⁸

The domestic trading networks that distributed these goods from port to shop were remarkably extensive, ensuring that a miner's wife in Scotland had almost as much access to these imperial products as a nobleman living in London. Thus, although Londoners enjoyed the greatest choice in terms of grocers — over three thousand licensed grocers who sold tea by 1784 — provincial markets were competitive retailers too, and even small

⁶ For a summary of sugar consumption, see James Walvin, *Fruits of Empire: Exotic Produce and British Taste, 1660–1800* (London, 1997), 118–21; on tea, see Hoh-Cheung Mui and Lorna H. Mui, *Shops and Shopkeeping in Eighteenth-Century England* (Montreal, 1989), 200, 179.

⁷ PRO, T 64/276B/316; T 64/276B/330.

⁸ Mui and Mui, *Shops and Shopkeeping*, 249–50, estimate that before the Commutation Act of 1784 reduced the duty on tea from 119 per cent to 12.5 per cent, illegal tea accounted for as much as two-thirds of the total circulating through England. Walvin, *Fruits of Empire*, 170, estimates that most shops carried some illegal tea before 1784.

villages could become commercial battlegrounds.⁹ By mid century, roughly a quarter of all shops were grocers, and they competed in Britain's cities, towns and villages for shares of the tea, coffee, sugar, tobacco and spices markets.¹⁰ Large and even medium-sized provincial grocers such as George Milne in Perth, who kept less than £300 worth of inventory, dealt directly with wholesalers in the major port cities.¹¹ Small grocers typically bought directly from larger shops either nearby or in London, while others relied on the commercial connections of neighbouring shops in other trades, such as Fenton Walthol, a prosperous clothier and draper in Newcastle-under-Lyme, who purchased large quantities of various teas and coffees from London wholesalers for several small local shops during the 1780s and 1790s.¹² Thanks to the portability of the commodities, individual grocers often had geographically broad customer bases, which meant potentially fierce competition and substantial choice even for consumers in villages. James Hunter, a modest Glasgow grocer, competed in a typically large area, sending goods across Scotland to customers in such places as Darvel, Kilbride, Kilmarnock, Lanark, Mull, Stirling, Strathaven, Strathkinness and Wadestown.¹³ Ambitious London retailers also fought for a share of provincial markets, targeting large customers, such as small shops and large middling households. For example, the Original Tea-Warehouse in London offered to 'serve the Nobility, Gentry, Families, Shopkeepers, Coffee-Houses, Tea-Gardens, &c. in Town or Country, with the best Teas, Coffee, and Chocolates . . . [with prices] from 10 to 20 per cent lower than the usual Prices' in advertisements that regularly appeared in such newspapers as the

⁹ For the number of London grocers that sold tea, see Mui and Mui, *Shops and Shopkeeping*, 173, 179; on non-metropolitan shops as vibrant retailers, see Andrew Hann and Jon Stobart, 'Sites of Consumption: The Display of Goods in Provincial Shops in Eighteenth-Century England', *Cultural and Social Hist.*, ii (2005).

¹⁰ Mui and Mui, *Shops and Shopkeeping*, 191.

¹¹ National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh (hereafter NAS), Court of Sessions Papers (hereafter CS) 96/3341. Scottish and provincial English grocers seem to have relied heavily on London grocers and wholesalers, even when commodities may have entered Britain in nearer ports. A major regular exception was tobacco, which was dominated by Glasgow merchants and wholesalers.

¹² British Library (hereafter BL), Add. MS 36666, fos. 41–5.

¹³ NAS, CS 96/3374. The 'modest' label is based on the assessed value of the shop inventory and the extent of customers' debts, both of which were in the low hundreds of pounds rather than the thousands of pounds of large provincial groceries.

Bristol Journal, *Derby Mercury*, *Ipswich Journal*, *Oxford Journal* and *Stamford Mercury* during the 1770s and 1780s.¹⁴

Although wealth clearly enabled some consumers to acquire larger quantities of better-quality items, socio-economic status does not appear to have been a major barrier in gaining access to the foods under consideration here. In terms of demand, the imperial foods were desirable even at the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum. As the independent studies of Carole Shammas, Jan de Vries and Hans-Joachim Voth have shown, during the eighteenth century members of the lower economic ranks desired more luxury goods, which included certain foods, and they were willing to work longer hours in order to afford them.¹⁵ In fact, as much as 10 per cent of the household budget of even the English poor went on sugar and tea, and their Scottish cousins did not go without these small luxuries either.¹⁶

The retail practices, in particular, of many grocers facilitated widespread access to these goods. Although some grocers operating in urban markets undoubtedly tailored their shops to meet a specific clientele, most dealt with a socially diverse customer base that ranged from labourers to the ruling elite. For example, the customers of John McGeorge's shop in Dumfries were a typically diverse group that included the households of a host of artisans, fellow shopkeepers and members of the gentry along with those of an organist, fiddler, midwife, sergeant major, borough officer and dancing master.¹⁷ Such a diversity of customers meant that even village shops carried a range of types and qualities of foods that rivalled metropolitan retailers. Ann Gomm's little grocery in the small Cotswold village of Shipton-under-Wychwood was typical in that it offered customers a choice of at least half a dozen types of tea, three types of coffee, various types and qualities of tobacco products, several types of sugar, orange peel, confectionery, chocolate and an assortment of spices that included nutmeg, Jamaica

¹⁴ The precise wording is taken from the advertisement that appeared in the *Bristol Journal*, 12 June 1779.

¹⁵ Carole Shammas, 'Food Expenditures and Economic Well-Being in Early Modern England', *Jl Econ. Hist.*, xliii (1983), 99–100; Jan de Vries, 'Between Purchasing Power and the World of Goods', in John Brewer and Roy Porter (eds.), *Consumption and the World of Goods* (New York, 1994); Hans-Joachim Voth, *Time and Work in England, 1750–1830* (Oxford, 2000).

¹⁶ Walvin, *Fruits of Empire*, 120; A. J. S. Gibson and T. C. Smout, *Prices, Food and Wages in Scotland, 1550–1780* (Cambridge, 1995), 233–4.

¹⁷ NAS, CS 96/158/1.

pepper, cinnamon, allspice, ground ginger and black pepper.¹⁸ The extensive system of credit offered regularly and liberally by grocers significantly eased any financial barriers to acquiring these foods. David Kirk's modest grocery in Kirkcaldy at the turn of the century extended credit totalling nearly £1,000 to roughly 350 customers, which probably constituted the bulk of his customer base. As with most of the shops whose records survive from this period, debts for £3 to £5 were typical — more than ample to buy substantial quantities of almost any of the empire-related groceries sold. Moreover, credit was not the preserve of the middling or elite ranks. Those grocers' lists of credit-benefiting customers that have survived suggest that artisans and labourers regularly enjoyed the benefits of credit of several pounds. For example, the grocery at the Shotts Iron Works, an emerging industrial centre halfway between Edinburgh and Glasgow, typically extended credit to the landed gentry and local professionals along with a host of individuals identified as colliers, 'tinnners', smiths, ferrymen, army sergeants, and labourers.¹⁹ David Brownlie, identified simply as a 'labourer', enjoyed a typical credit line that was in excess of £3, which was enough credit to purchase ten pounds weight of basic black tea, over one hundred pounds of sugar, three pounds of Jamaica pepper or twenty-four pounds of twist tobacco at that grocery's prices.

Investing food with social, political or religious meaning is a universal practice in human societies, and eighteenth-century Britain was no exception. The significance of the Eucharist in Christianity is perhaps the best-known European illustration, but other examples need not be so contentious or obvious. Modern brand advertising is largely about instilling consumable goods with a particular meaning that is intended to appeal to a target audience — the association of the adventurous American West with smoking a brand of cigarette or enhanced sexual appeal in the London nightclub scene with drinking a particular lager. The consideration of the selection, preparation and consumption of foods as a form of communication or even a language — as Roland Barthes has argued — has long attracted the interest of anthropologists and sociologists.²⁰ Their investigations into the

¹⁸ Oxfordshire Record Office, Oxford, OA/B/118.

¹⁹ NAS, CS 96/898.

²⁰ Roland Barthes, 'Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption', in Elborg Forster and Robert Forster (eds.), *European Diet from Pre-Industrial to Modern Times* (New York, 1975); see also Roland Barthes, 'Ornamental

(cont. on p. 78)

practice of giving a pig to shame a neighbour, the negotiating language of preparing a quick meal after a long day of work, the gender implications of public hunger in Melanesian societies, the globalization of Chinese cuisine, and the cultural symbolism of the Western wedding cake all serve to underline that the meaningfulness of food is virtually universal throughout human society, but the meanings themselves are not.²¹

In some ways food consumption is a part of material culture. Like other objects, food can carry shared meanings that are particular to a specific culture. In fact, food's ability to engage more senses, and hence trigger a greater range of responses, makes it an especially powerful material object. Yet while the meanings of objects and their consumption have aroused considerable attention from historians, the meanings of food — its symbolism beyond that of nutritional value — is a topic that historians have generally undervalued. Moreover, when historians have considered food in this way, the focus has been predominately on the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.²² The present investigation, therefore, not only offers a fresh perspective on how Britons engaged and perceived their rapidly changing empire, but it also underlines the usefulness of food and cookery to historical enquiries.

(n. 20 cont.)

Cookery', in his *Mythologies* (Paris, 1957). To a great extent the debate has been shaped by the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Origin of Table Manners*, trans. John and Doreen Weightman (New York, 1978); Stephen Mennell, *All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Oxford, 1985); and, within the imperial framework, especially by the anthropologist Mintz's *Sweetness and Power*, and Sidney W. Mintz, *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom: Excursions into Eating, Culture, and the Past* (Boston, 1996).

²¹ For the examples given, see Michael W. Young, *Fighting with Food, Leadership, Values and Social Control in a Massim Society* (Cambridge, 1971); Mary Douglas, 'Deciphering a Meal', in her *Implicit Meanings: Essays in Anthropology*, 2nd edn (London, 1999); Miriam Kahn, *Always Hungry, Never Greedy: Food and the Expression of Gender in Melanesian Society* (Cambridge, 1986); David Y. H. Wu and Sidney C. H. Cheung (eds.), *The Globalization of Chinese Food* (Honolulu, 2002); and the essays in Anne Murcott (ed.), *The Sociology of Food and Eating: Essays on the Sociological Significance of Food* (Aldershot, 1983).

²² For some of the more provoking examples, see Janet Theophano, *Eat my Words: Reading Women's Lives through the Cookbooks They Wrote* (New York, 2002); Arjun Appadurai, 'How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, xxx (1988); Donna R. Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998); Harvey Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty: A Social History of Eating in Modern America* (Oxford, 1993).

It is difficult to understate the changing and growing importance of food's meanings in Britain during the eighteenth century. The value of cookery to an Englishman's cosmology, one critic observed at the close of the century, bordered on religious worship: 'Had the English continued as Pagans', he complained, 'they would have invented a new deity to preside over cookery'.²³ The virtual elimination of famine meant that food's significance shifted away from dietetics and towards gastronomy during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, which enabled it to take on new meanings. Hence, such items as tea and tobacco had ceased to be touted as medicines by the early eighteenth century and had instead become symbols of the British obsession with politeness, taste and luxury. This 'civilizing of the appetite', as Stephen Mennell has described it, meant that using food as a symbol of power or wealth became more complicated: whereas large quantities alone of food could previously demonstrate wealth and power, by the eighteenth century gluttony was a vice available to even the labouring ranks.²⁴ In consequence, novelty, quality, presentation and preparation of food became expected ways of displaying wealth and taste amongst the middling and elite ranks. Thus, for the pernickety world of British polite society, in which knowledge of how to use a commodity according to a set of changing guidelines was as important as its possession, eating was a public performance. As John Trusler remarked in the opening lines of his popular treatise on table manners, 'Of all the graceful accomplishments, and of every branch of polite education, it has been long admitted, that a gentleman and lady never show themselves more advantage, than in acquitting themselves well in the honours of their table'.²⁵

But expressions of personal prosperity, taste and choice through food were evident across the social divides. Writing for the *London Magazine* in 1755, 'The Connoisseur' declared that 'those, who have more leisure to study what they shall eat and drink, require something more in their food, than what is barely wholesome or

²³ John Adams, *Curious Thoughts on the History of Man: Chiefly Abridged or Selected from the Celebrated Works of Lord Kaimes, Lord Monboddo, Dr. Dunbar, and the Immortal Montesquieu* (Dublin, 1790), 145.

²⁴ Mennell, *All Manners of Food*, 314–37. His conclusions are supported by the detailed studies of Sara Pennell, 'The Material Culture of Food in Early Modern England, c.1650–c.1750' (Univ. of Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1997), and Carole Shammas, *The Pre-Industrial Consumer in England and America* (Oxford, 1990), ch. 5.

²⁵ John Trusler, *The Honours of the Table: or, Rules for Behaving during Meals* (London, 1788), 1–2.

necessary; their palates must be gratified with rich sauces and high-seasoned delicacies'.²⁶ However, the 'common day labourer', whose palate he dismissed as being 'glad to snatch a hasty meal with his wife and children that he may have the strength to return to work', had the potential to play the role of the connoisseur too, thanks to the extensive system of credit and the single-ounce sale quantities that grocers typically offered. Even poorer shoppers occasionally selected a more expensive version of one of their staples in quantities sufficient to impress a guest. Such was probably the case of Mary Smith, a relatively poor single woman who regularly bought several ounces of black tea along with butter and sugar during her weekly visit to Gomm's Cotswold grocery in the 1790s. On occasion, however, she replaced one ounce with Souchong tea or another specialty blend — possibly for the benefit of a special visitor or a treat for herself. For modest middling and prosperous artisan families, meals served as what Lorna Weatherill has called 'frontstage' events in which families could display status, in terms of both wealth and taste, visibly through such goods as porcelain dishes and silver cutlery.²⁷ Expensive teas or specially selected coffees in this context would have been ideal accompaniments to their Wedgwood cups and saucers. The truly wealthy could go a step further and create a dedicated space for the consumption of the beverage, such as the Chinese house on a Buckinghamshire estate that Caroline Lybbe described in 1770 as 'Inside & out all in the true Chinese taste' and 'a sweet summer Tea drinking place'.²⁸

Variables such as class, religion, gender and geography undoubtedly allowed multiple meanings for single foods, but three key factors combined to enable a number of empire-related foods to carry nationally shared meanings that transcended many of these barriers. First, such foods lacked a deep-rooted history in Britain at that time, because they were alien and relatively new to the British diet. For example, the ritual of cultivating, harvesting and drying tobacco did not stretch back to pre-Roman times and dictate a particular region's seasonal cycle, holiday traditions or architecture. Second, the inability of Britons to produce the empire-related

²⁶ *London Mag.* (Oct. 1755), 476.

²⁷ Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660–1760*, 2nd edn (London, 1996), 153–5.

²⁸ BL, Add. MS 42160 (Caroline Lybbe Powys Diaries), fo. 31.

foods domestically — at least not in large quantities — invariably connected them to the national consumer economy. This made them susceptible to national marketing, and these goods' cheapness and abundance ensured an enormous, socially diverse audience for advertisements. Third, the economic machinery that transported tea from China to Mary Smith's Cotswold home was a remarkably efficient one. The bulk of these goods went through just a handful of British ports; and, once in Britain, they usually required just a couple of middlemen to reach shops' shelves. Such efficiency greatly reduced the cost and increased the accessibility of these goods, but it also curtailed the possibility of their developing a British regional association. Thus, although Glasgow dominated the legal tobacco trade in the second half of the century, tobacco retained its primary affiliation with North America. Glasgow merchants might have been the main suppliers in Britain, but the city was not the nationally recognized place consumers associated with the best tobaccos. Quality tobacco was 'Virginia's Best' not 'the Clyde's Best'.

This is not to suggest that an imperial food's meaning was singular. The distinct combination of warmth, taste and smell of a cup of tea on a rainy day could remind a young man of time shared with his grandmother just as much as, if not probably more than, the East India Company. However, as argued below, the association of tea with the Asiatic imperial trade was one that the young man, as well as millions of other Britons, could share.

II

FOOD AND EMPIRE IN ADVERTISING

Images of the British colonies and imperial trade abounded in British advertisements for empire-related foods, regularly reminding consumers that tobacco was a product of North American colonialism and slavery, that coffee came from trade with the Middle East and British plantations, and that tea was a product of the East India Company's activities in Asia.

Eighteenth-century marketing efforts must not be taken lightly. Modern research into the psychology of advertising has revealed in more technical terms what most eighteenth-century entrepreneurs knew from experience: repetition, recycling of phrases, associated imagery, and the ability to tap into pre-existing assumptions

sold products.²⁹ Although most histories of advertising and marketing tend to depict this period as a crude preface to the more modern Victorian age, eighteenth-century advertisements were prevalent, powerful and complex.³⁰ Newspapers carried 251,470 legal advertisements a year by 1770, which reached millions of readers.³¹ These printed messages promoted everything from exotic pets to cures for gout, and sought the skills of everyone from cooks to privateers. Although visually simplistic — illustrations were extremely rare — their language revealed a shrewdness that could rival any modern advertisement.³²

Advertisements for food in newspapers, however, were sparse and usually consisted of wholesalers targeting large buyers rather than typical consumers. Instead, the trade card served as the primary advertising outlet for grocers selling imperial foods, just as it did for most individual shops.³³ Although earlier examples survive, trade cards truly came of age in the second half of the eighteenth century, when the growth of shops and advances in printing enabled cheaper and more visually stunning productions. This neglected historical resource had no exact format. Cards came in

²⁹ Andrew A. Mitchell and Jerry C. Olson, 'Are Product Attribute Beliefs the Only Mediator of Advertising Effects on Brand Attitude?', *Jl Marketing Research*, xviii (1981); Lars Hermerén, *English for Sale: A Study of the Language of Advertising* (Lund, 1999); James Shanteau, 'Consumer Impression Formation: The Integration of Visual and Verbal Information', in Sidney Hecker and David W. Stewart (eds.), *Nonverbal Communication in Advertising* (Lexington, 1988); Thomas J. Madden, William R. Dillon and Jacquelyn L. Twible, 'Construct Validity of Attitude Toward the Ad: An Assessment of Convergent/Discriminant Dimension', in Jerry Olson and Keith Sentis (eds.), *Advertising and Consumer Psychology*, iii (New York, 1986); Meryl Lichtenstein and Thomas K. Srull, 'Conceptual and Methodological Issues in Examining the Relationship between Consumer Memory and Judgment', in Linda F. Alwitt and Andrew A. Mitchell (eds.), *Psychological Processes and Advertising Effects: Theory, Research, and Applications* (Hillsdale, NJ, 1985).

³⁰ Ann McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York, 1995), esp. 208; Lori Anne Loeb, *Consuming Angels: Advertising and Victorian Women* (Oxford, 1994); Diana and Geoffrey Hindley, *Advertising in Victorian England, 1837–1901* (London, 1972); Sabine Gieszinger, *The History of Advertising Language: The Advertisements in the Times from 1778 to 1996* (Frankfurt am Main, 2001). For the best summary case for eighteenth-century advertising's complexity, see Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure*, 270–7.

³¹ Deduced from the advertisement duty for that year listed in T. R. Nevett, *Advertising in Britain: A History* (London, 1982), table iii.

³² Maurizio Gotti, 'The English of 18th Century Advertisements', *Merope*, vi (1994).

³³ For the most thorough examination to date of this much-neglected historical resource, see Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford, 'Selling Consumption in the Eighteenth Century: Advertising and the Trade Card in Britain and France', *Cultural and Social Hist.*, iv (2007). I am grateful to Maxine Berg for lending me an advance copy.

a variety of sizes, shapes and qualities, and, when broadly defined as they are here, can also be taken to include shop stationery and package labelling. By emphasizing images over words, trade cards signalled the entry of advertising into visual culture. Images of clocks, clothing, shop interiors and the like dominated the cards in the hope of provoking a desire for a particular good or experience; the text, which gave the name and location of the shop, merely provided a way to satisfy that desire. Thus, the trade card is remarkably akin to advertising on modern billboards, magazines or even television — in which a voiceover provides product details against a backdrop of visual images. This is significant, because modern psychological studies of the impact of advertising have long demonstrated that visual imagery has a far greater impact than text alone on consumers' immediate perceptions of the product, the longevity of those views, and the quickness and extent of their recall.³⁴ Perceptions of products grounded in visual imagery are also the most difficult to displace.

The case for accepting trade cards as useful sources for investigating consumers' perceptions of particular commodities and for better understanding shopping practice in general is admittedly circumstantial. Arguing for the impact value of visual imagery in advertising based on twentieth-century studies is, of course, dangerously anachronistic; however, patterns of consumption in eighteenth-century Britain have been demonstrated to be remarkably modern, so to suggest that the impact of advertising was similarly modern is not an unreasonable stretch. Potentially more problematic is that, like most printed ephemera from the eighteenth century, trade cards have survived only selectively. They survive largely accidentally in private papers and in a handful of collections, whose compilers selected their pieces according to criteria that do not match the needs of twenty-first-century historians. Collections almost never have more than one of a particular card, they tend to come from London shops, and, since most collectors were members of the higher social ranks, cards from elite

³⁴ For an accessible overview, see, especially, Julie A. Edell, 'Nonverbal Effects in Ads: A Review and Synthesis', in Hecker and Stewart (eds.), *Nonverbal Communication in Advertising*. See also R. N. Shepard, 'Recognition Memory for Words, Sentences, and Pictures', *Jl Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, vi (1967); Gordon H. Bower *et al.*, *Cognition in Learning Memory* (New York, 1972); Jolita Kisielius and Brian Sternthal, 'Examining the Vividness Controversy: An Availability-Valence Interpretation', *Jl Consumer Research*, xii (1986); K. A. and R. J. Lutz, 'Effects of Interactive Imagery on Learning: Applications to Advertising', *Jl Applied Psychology*, lxii (1977).

shops appear in abundance. In consequence, trade cards have been misunderstood, and largely dismissed, as expensive tools that high-end metropolitan retailers used to snare elite customers.

However, at least in the case of grocery-related cards, evidence can be assembled to combat this interpretation. Nearly two thousand cards from food retailers have survived in the Bodleian Library's John Johnson collection, London Guildhall's collection of trade cards and the British Museum's Banks and Heal collections. Although most of the cards are from metropolitan shops, there are plenty of examples from outside London, and there are no obvious differences between the two. Besides, as described above, most groceries both in and outside London often had geographically large markets, which meant that someone living in the smallest hamlet in the remotest county could still be exposed to a card advertising imperial foods. Moreover, the shops whose trade cards survive in these collections appear to have been diverse, and no common variable stands out as to why these shops would have been unique users of trade cards. Most of the shops appear in contemporary metropolitan and provincial trade directories, but some do not. An examination of the policy registers of the Sun Fire Office, one of the largest British assurance companies of the eighteenth century, indicates that those metropolitan grocers with trade cards who carried policies varied enormously in size of business. Some owned their own building, whereas others rented; while declared values of stock ranged from a few hundred to £4,000.³⁵ Furthermore, an examination of the policies of neighbouring shops reveals that those whose trade cards survive were not even unique within their own streets in terms of values of insured household goods and stock.

Utilizing trade cards as part of an advertising strategy would have made good business sense in the highly competitive world of the grocery trade. A small fortune could have been spent on producing a trade card commissioned from a well-known artist, but grocers' evident tendency to rely on recycled images and the availability of stock trade cards (which differed solely in the production of the food seller's name and address) would have kept costs low.³⁶ During the second half of the century, for about fifteen

³⁵ Guildhall Library, London, Sun Fire Office policy registers. The cost of policies ranged from less than £1 to £8, depending largely on the value of the insured goods.

³⁶ Among the most common seems to have been a Chinese man and woman drinking tea, while leaning against a cube that bore the grocer's details. Backgrounds varied and

(*cont. on p. 85*)

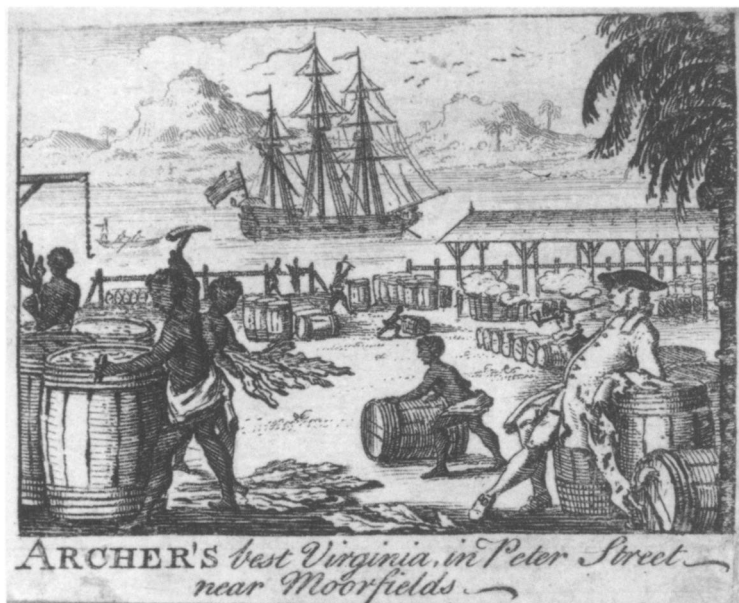
shillings a shopkeeper could buy either three medium-sized advertisements in a modest newspaper or between five hundred and a thousand individualized trade cards with a copperplate image.³⁷ The newspaper advertisements would have reached a potentially larger audience, but, surrounded by dozens of other equally unenticing advertisements, they could have been easily ignored by readers who had acquired the newspaper for reasons other than to peruse the grocery promotions. In sharp contrast, trade cards offered the appealing opportunity to target customers — using the cards as receipts and packaging to remind them where the products were purchased or as advertisements distributed selectively to potential customers. Besides, if grocers regularly extended credit in excess of several pounds to artisans and labourers in order to sell their goods in a highly competitive market, the notion of their spending just a few shillings on trade cards to promote a business is not unreasonable. At a cost of as little as one-fifth of a penny, they would have been a worthwhile addition to sales of a couple of shillings or more, and some surviving cards that were used as bills and receipts indicate that they accompanied sales measured in shillings and pennies. The cost of empire-related foods and the weekly and monthly quantities in which they were typically sold meant that purchases of such a size would have been fairly regular. Moreover, exposure would not have been limited to patrons whose purchase merited a card, because, as we have seen, grocers often had an economically diverse customer base. Cards thus could easily have been viewed by poorer customers as well as the host of servants that participated in household shopping and food preparation. In consequence, it is plausible to assume that trade cards enjoyed fairly broad exposure.

Three products dominated the imagery of shops selling imperial foods: tobacco, tea and coffee. Unlike most trade cards of other shops, which typically highlighted the products themselves or the shopping experience, the cards of shops selling these goods consistently placed greater emphasis on where their products

(n. 36 cont.)

included such items as tea cultivation, East India House, pagodas and British ships. For some examples, see British Museum, London, Department of Prints and Drawings, Banks Collection, box 7, cards 68.7, 68.13, 68.25; and Heal Collection, box 6, cards 68.16, 68.47, 68.116, 68.310, 68.242.

³⁷ Theodore R. Crom, *Trade Catalogues, 1542–1842* (Melrose, Fla., 1989), 309; Bodleian Library, Oxford, John Johnson Collection, JJ Booktrade Trade Cards 4.



1. British Museum, Heal Collection, box 12, card 117.4, probably c.1770.
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originated and how they had reached the shop. As a result, these products' associations with the empire were deliberate and obvious.

The North American empire was central to the visual imagery surrounding tobacco. Advertisements associated Virginia in particular with quality tobacco, with the slogan 'Best Virginia' serving as the standard phrase for sellers claiming the best product — even if the store's supplies did not actually come from that colony (and later state). Tobacco's association with African slavery and the plantation system was highlighted by the numerous card images that depicted the product's cultivation. Typically, in these images slaves harvested and loaded the tobacco onto waiting ships under the watchful eye of white colonists, who never seemed to do any of the heavy labour (see Plate 1). The most common symbol of tobacco on trade cards was the American Indian (see Plate 2). Shopkeepers could not have picked a more widely recognized image for associating their product with America. Although the wooden cigar store American Plains



2. British Museum, Heal Collection, box 12, card 117.156, c.1760.
 The illustration was also used by several other mid-century tobacconists.
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Indian would not materialize on either side of the Atlantic until the nineteenth century, tobacco had a heavy association in Britain with American Indians dating back to the early seventeenth century, when it was popularly known as the 'Indian weed'. As Britons took greater interest in their empire in the eighteenth century, American Indians featured prominently in discussions and representation of North America ranging from newspapers to the British Museum.³⁸ In fact, by the outbreak of the American Revolution, the American Indian had become the colonies' equivalent of Britannia in British satirical prints. Interestingly, the trade card imagery does not link American Indians to production; instead, they appeared as simply enjoying tobacco either in the company of other natives or with a white planter. This suggests a genuine awareness that the product came from colonialism rather than trade with natives — who never produced large quantities of tobacco for export to Britain — and underlines the interpretation

³⁸ Troy Bickham, *Savages within the Empire: Representations of American Indians in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2005).

of the American Indian as a visual indicator of the product's geographic origins.

As king of the hot beverage trade, tea dominated grocers' advertisements. The associated visual imagery heavily emphasized its connection with Asiatic trade and empire (see Plate 3). The standard image was a version of a stereotypical male Chinese peasant — often on a dock surrounded by tea caddies and crates. The crates usually had mock-Chinese writing, sometimes with intermixed boxes marked 'Tea' — to minimize any possible confusion. Other trade cards advertising tea featured scenes of Chinese workers engaged in tea production, pagodas, and in some cases workers drinking tea. East India House, the Company's new headquarters in Leadenhall Street, was another common symbol — even on the cards of those small and provincial shops that would have bought their tea through brokers rather than directly from the Company. The major tea brokers, who dominated the internal British trade by buying the Company's tea in bulk and then selling it to small shopkeepers and regional suppliers, seem to have supplied quite a few shops with template trade cards. This undoubtedly made trade cards available to retailers who otherwise might not have had them — or at least not ones with as much visual detail — and created the beginnings of branding. The Twinings, who were the best known of the major brokers, provided several templates over the course of the century that implored consumers to enjoy their products at the location advertised on the card (see Plate 4).

Advertising images associated with coffee are far less prevalent than those of tobacco or tea. Although British consumption of coffee matched, if not at times exceeded, that of tea in the early decades of the eighteenth century, by the 1740s — just before trade cards with copperplate images took off — tea had taken an unassailable lead.³⁹ By 1784 tea consumption in Britain was

³⁹ Until the second half of the eighteenth century, British-consumed coffee came from the East India Company's trade in Yemen coffee at the port of Mocha, but during the second quarter of the eighteenth century, Britain followed the lead of other European powers and began planting in its West Indian colonies. Plantation production boomed in the 1760s and 1770s, and between 1772 and 1774 British imports of coffee from the West Indies exceeded all other sources twentyfold. Most of this coffee, however, was re-exported to the rest of Europe, primarily to Germany. On coffee production and consumption, see, especially, S. D. Smith, 'Accounting for Taste: British Coffee Consumption in Historical Perspective', *Jl Interdisciplinary Hist.*, xxvii (1996); Walvin, *Fruits of Empire*, 32–47; S. D. Smith, 'Sugar's Poor Relation: British Coffee Planting in the West Indies, 1720–1833', *Slavery and Abolition*, xix (1998), 68–9.

seventeen times that of coffee.⁴⁰ Moreover, because tea was much more likely to be consumed in the home than coffee was (thousands of coffee houses peppered the urban landscape), it was generally purchased from a grocer. Not surprisingly, grocers therefore emphasized their top-selling hot beverage commodity in their advertisements.⁴¹ Nevertheless, coffee's foreign and imperial associations are also evident in some of the trade card images. The most common was a stereotype of a Turk, which connected coffee with the Ottoman Empire and the Middle East — the original exporter of coffee drinking to England in the seventeenth century and the East India Company's main source for most of the first half of the eighteenth century. Surviving grocers' advertisements and accounts indicate that most shops offered at least two blends: 'Turkish' and 'Plantation' (which referred to West Indian production). Some offered a third, 'Bourbon', later in the century. The extent to which these blends actually reflected their beans' origins is unclear; however, judging by the blends' roughly equivalent price and the grossly disproportional amount of West Indian coffee in Britain in the second half of the century — in 1774 legal imports from the British islands were six times that of all other sources combined — it is highly likely that Jamaican beans were the main ingredient in all of them.⁴² Even so, images of West Indian plantations on trade cards advertising coffee were slow to displace the Turk.

Although visual advertisements rarely associated sugar directly with the empire, it nevertheless merits some discussion here, because sugar trumped all other imported imperial products in terms of quantity and value. No definitive explanation can be given for the lack of imperial imagery on sugar advertisements, but it probably was a result of the chronological development of sugar as a commodity and its dietary functions rather than any nefarious effort by retailers to mask its association with West Indian plantation slavery. Sugar's connection with slavery was no secret, and by the end of the century some anti-slavery circles had instituted boycotts — although they did little in terms of reducing national consumption; and Kay Dian Kriz has noted the tendency to either ignore or idealize slavery in British art before

⁴⁰ Smith, 'Accounting for Taste', 184.

⁴¹ On tea versus coffee sales in shops, see Mui and Mui, *Shops and Shopkeeping*, 205–6.

⁴² PRO, T 64/276B/316.



3. British Museum, Banks Collection, box 7, card 68.60. Trade card of George Harris, Grocer and Tea Dealer, Bristol, c.1799. A typical trade card for such a business, it is full of stock images associated with the tea trade, including a pagoda, chests with mock-Mandarin writing, the East India Company's London headquarters, a British ship and the stereotypical Chinaman — although usually he is depicted wearing a traditional Chinese straw hat.

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the 1770s — at least partly as a result of planters' influence.⁴³ Nevertheless, the imagery of trade cards advertising tobacco throughout the second half of the century is littered with less-than-pleasant depictions of slavery — manual labour, nakedness, lazy white overseers. Such unabashed association of slavery in the advertising of one commodity but not another, even though both are largely retailed and consumed by the same people, suggests that the difference has more to do with the peculiarities of the commodities than with any concern for the repercussions of associating it with slavery. Thanks to medieval Mediterranean production, sugar

⁴³ For a description of some abolitionists' attempts to associate sugar with slavery, see Timothy Morton, 'Blood Sugar', in Tim Fulford and Peter J. Kitson (eds.), *Romanticism and Colonialism: Writing and Empire, 1780–1830* (Cambridge, 1998); Kay Dian Kriz, 'Curiosities, Commodities, and Transplanted Bodies in Han Sloane's "Natural History of Jamaica"', *William and Mary Quart.*, 3rd ser., lvii (2000); Kay Dian Kriz, 'Marketing Mulattresses in the Paintings and Prints of Agostino Brunias', in Felicity A. Nussbaum (ed.), *The Global Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore, 2003).



4. British Museum, Banks Collection, box 7, card 68.137, c.1787. This was one of several trade-card templates associated with Twinings. A blank space, in this case the inside of the archway, provides room for the cards to be tailored to include the individual proprietor's location. In the elevated centre is the British lion, and to its left and right are a stereotypical Chinaman, representing tea, and a Turk, representing coffee.
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had circulated throughout the British Isles for centuries before tea, tobacco or coffee became widely available.⁴⁴ Although expensive before the eighteenth century, sugar was sufficiently common to be used as medicine and as a regular cookery ingredient by the

⁴⁴ For a summary of the movement of British sugar sources, see Philip D. Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in Atlantic History*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 1998), ch. 1; Nuala Zahedieh, 'Economy', in David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (eds.), *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800* (New York, 2002), 56–9.

wealthy.⁴⁵ The longevity of the sugar market is reflected in the enduring symbol of the loaf, which was the form in which refined sugar had been transported from the Mediterranean for centuries — although during the eighteenth century it was sold in a variety of shapes and sizes and came from British plantations in the West Indies.⁴⁶ In fact, the loaf had such a powerful association with sugar in the grocery trade that signs bearing three sugar loaves became a standard street marker for grocers during the seventeenth century. Moreover, there was no connoisseurship associated with sugar, and, therefore, it did not need elaborate imagery to assure customers of quality, type and authenticity. Sugar was a sweetening ingredient, not a dish: a blend of sugar and tea was ‘tea’. Sugar was sold according to weight and type of refinement, not geographical origin; ‘Jamaica’s Best’ was never a label, and cookery books did not espouse the superiority of Antiguan sugar over its Barbadian competitor. In consequence, eighteenth-century traders had no need to rebrand or heavily advertise sugar. Customers knew it could be acquired at any grocery, and they bought it in abundance.

With the noted exception of sugar, these products’ advertisements visually described their reliance upon imperial trade and power. British ships appear in the vast majority of the cards advertising these foods, thus linking such widely beloved products as tobacco with naval strength and commerce. The cards would have hammered home the reality that no merchant fleet, and a navy to protect it, meant no tea — at least not in the affordable quantities to which consumers had grown accustomed. Such consistent imagery undoubtedly contributed to what John Brewer has described as the remarkable acceptance among the eighteenth-century English of the unprecedented enormous expense of constructing and maintaining the world’s finest navy.⁴⁷ The importance of the subjugation of other peoples is also evident in the advertising imagery. Britannia, the symbolic embodiment of Britain, appears regularly with her spear and shield before bowing imperial subjects offering imperial foods and goods as a form of tribute, such as on the printed instructions for making coffee that Anthony Schick distributed to his customers (see Plate 5). Many images are also suggestive of a racial superiority,

⁴⁵ Walvin, *Fruits of Empire*, 117–18.

⁴⁶ On the sugar loaf as the measurement of Mediterranean sales, see *ibid.*, 117.

⁴⁷ Brewer, *Sinews of Power*, 59.



5. British Museum, Banks Collection, box 4, card 38.10, 1812. 'Directions for Roasting and Making Coffee', from Anthony Schick, London. The same image was also used by William Green, another London grocer: Banks Collection, box 4, card 38.12. These directions would have accompanied packages of coffee, serving as receipts and bills. In this instance, the imperial Britannia is depicted as 'Lending a Helping Hand' to the coffee-producing colonies of the West Indies.

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particularly those cards that depicted African slavery. Such images portrayed African slaves toiling in fields and loading ships under the supervision of the planter, who was almost always resting. Elegantly dressed in European clothing and perfectly white, the planter contrasts remarkably with the savagery of the starkly black, shirtless slaves in loincloths (for example, see Plate 1).

This prevalent imagery reveals that consumers had at least some awareness of the complex and sometimes harsh imperial mechanisms that enabled the abundance of these products in Britain. Moreover, the advertising imagery suggests that this knowledge had some detail and accuracy. The images did not depict African

slaves harvesting tea or the Chinese growing tobacco for white masters. Tea came from maritime trade with China; tobacco resulted from slave labour in North America; coffee came either from trade with the Middle East or from plantations in the Americas. Consumers' unhesitating demand for these products, along with sellers' readiness to advertise these associations, ultimately underlines the acceptance of these practices — or at least widespread toleration of them in the light of the products they produced.

III

COOKING UP THE EMPIRE

During the second half of the century, cookery became a source for engaging foreign cultures, particularly those connected to the increasingly important empire. As foods took on new and more widely shared meanings in their own society, Britons increasingly looked on the cookery of other societies as reflective of their respective cultures. Replications of these dishes thus gave Britons who lacked the means, time or tenacity to travel overseas the opportunity to tour, in a small way, the wider world.

That certain dishes represented both domestic and foreign cultures is evident throughout the eighteenth century. Roast beef, haggis and frothing beer certainly carried connotations of Englishness, Scottishness and sometimes Britishness.⁴⁸ For many Britons, particular foods, just as much as any governing tradition, constituted part of the nation's identity. In this context some critics criticized foreign dishes as infiltrating usurpers that signposted cultural decline. As 'An Old Fellow' lamented in the *London Magazine* after observing New Year's Day in 1773,

Times, Sir, are changed. In such a day as this, an English kitchen used to be the palace of Plenty, Jollity, and Good-eating. Every thing was plain and plenty. Here stood the large, plump juicy buttocks of English roast beef, and there smiled the frothy tankards of English beer . . . Now mark the picture of the present time: instead of that firm roast-beef, that fragrant pudding, our tables groan with the luxuries of France and India. Here a lean fricassee rises in the room of our majestic ribs; and there a scoundrel

⁴⁸ James Gillray's etching entitled 'French Liberty. British Slavery' (1792), with its raw-onion-eating Frenchman and a plump John Bull feasting on roast beef, is a classic example among many. See Tamara L. Hunt, *Defining John Bull: Political Caricature and National Identity in Late Georgian England* (London, 2003), 91, 160; Ben Rogers, *Beef and Liberty: Roast Beef, John Bull and the English Nation* (London, 2003).

syllabub occupies the place of our well-beloved home-brewed . . . forgetting that good-eating and good porter are the two great supporters of Magna Charta and the British constitution, we open our hearts and our mouths to new fashions in cookery, which will one day lead us into ruin.⁴⁹

With such connections between cookery and their own cultural identities, Britons' associations of foreign foods with their native cultures would not have been difficult.

Printed British travel accounts around the globe abounded with detailed descriptions of indigenous cuisines. Travellers regularly treated the cookery they encountered as a reflection of the host culture, and considered it in a way that was similar to how they evaluated architecture or courtly rituals. Henry Timberlake used a description of Cherokee eating habits to underline his overall depiction of them as savages: 'What contributed greatly to render this feast disgusting, was eating without knives and forks, and being obliged to grope from dish to dish in the dark'.⁵⁰ A 1777 edition of Edward Terry's *A Voyage to East-India* placed his section 'Of their Diet, and their Cookery' in between sections on architecture and 'the Civilities of this People'.⁵¹ In other instances, technology, decor and cookery are blended in the same paragraph, such as in *A Summary of Universal History*'s comments on the Japanese:

They are good arithmeticians; better printers than their neighbours; inferior to them in their use of gun-powder, but superior in those works which may be termed upholstery. . . . Their cookery is good, and often very delicate. They have a convenient method of enlarging and contracting their apartments, by means of folding screens.⁵²

Virtual tourism was in vogue in the eighteenth century, as the increased pursuit of leisure combined with what Barbara Shapiro has described as the growing 'culture of fact' to form a substantial portion of British society that possessed the means and desire to learn about other cultures — and expected a high degree of accuracy in their representation.⁵³ As Samuel Johnson explained, virtual travel had its benefits: 'He that travels in theory has no inconveniences; he has shade and sunshine at his disposal, and

⁴⁹ *London Mag.* (Jan. 1773), 18.

⁵⁰ Henry Timberlake, *The Memoirs of Lieut. Henry Timberlake (who Accompanied the Three Cherokee Indians to England in the Year 1762) Containing Whatever He Observed* (London, 1765), pp. vii, 34–5.

⁵¹ Edward Terry, *A Voyage to East-India*, revised edn (London, 1777).

⁵² [Louis Pierre] Anquetil, *A Summary of Universal History, Exhibiting the Rise, Decline, and Revolutions of the Different Nations of the World, from Creation to the Present Time*, 9 vols. (London, 1800), v, 592–3.

⁵³ Barbara J. Shapiro, *A Culture of Fact: England, 1550–1720* (Ithaca, 2000).

wherever he alights finds tables of plenty and looks of gaiety'.⁵⁴ Such emerging public venues as panoramas, museums, botanical gardens and waxworks provided visitors, who ranged from artisan families to the aristocracy, opportunities to tour the globe in safety and comfort. As one visitor remarked after touring London's Leverian museum in 1782: '[here] all conspire to impress the mind with a conviction of the reality of things . . . As he [the visitor] proceeds, the objects before him make his active fancy travel from pole to pole through the torrid and through the frigid Zones'.⁵⁵

Like museums and botanical gardens, meals — whether eaten inside or outside the home — could act as social occasions for shared explorations of other worlds. As noted earlier, meals in the eighteenth century were opportunities for the British to display material wealth and sophistication through a combination of cuisine, tableware and manners. As Charlotte Mason remarked in the preface to her popular cookery book, the table reflected the host: 'It is certain, that a woman never appears to greater advantage than at the head of a Well-Regulated table . . . a table may be so conducted as to be the taste and management of the mistress'.⁵⁶ Dinner-table rules aimed at aspiring middling families and elite households encouraged a high degree of intimacy that would have encouraged discussion of the dishes on offer.⁵⁷ At dinner parties, the practice of seating guests according to social rank was blending with the new approach of female-male-female seating in which the men helped to serve the women. The rules of the number of courses or dishes in a course were not hard and fast; however, serving multiple dishes in each course was the common practice, and guests were expected to try a little of everything. Hence, guests had the opportunity to discuss the various dishes as they served each other and themselves, and were virtually guaranteed to end up with at least some of even the most alien dishes on their plates. In these conditions, serving a dish 'in the Chinese style' would not have been lost on guests. Certainly dishes sparked conversations at

⁵⁴ Idler, no. 58, 26 May 1759, repr. in *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*, ii, *The Idler and the Adventurer*, ed. W. J. Bate (New Haven, 1963), 181.

⁵⁵ *European Mag. and London Rev.* (Jan. 1782), 17–21. For a more detailed examination of Lever's showmanship, see also Clare Haynes, 'A "Natural" Exhibitioner: Sir Ashton Lever and his Holosphusikon', *Brit. Jl Eighteenth-Century Studies*, xxiv (2001).

⁵⁶ Preface to Charlotte Mason, *The Ladies' Assistant for Regulating and Supplying her Table, Being a Complete System of Cookery*, 5th edn (London, 1786).

⁵⁷ For the best contemporary description of table manners, serving styles and servants roles, see the popular Trusler, *Honours of the Table*.

Oxford colleges, whose dons laid wagers on ingredients, dish names and which one would be served on a given night. In an episode that probably followed a dinner debate, a Mr Gent bet a Dr Stapylton two bottles of port, the standard wager at University College, that the 'Mango pickle is chiefly brought from the East Indies'.⁵⁸ Gent won the wager, indicating that college fellowship benefited from the more expensive genuine article, rather than the mock version then circulating in cookery books that substituted cucumbers for the mangoes.

Nowhere is the use of cookery to engage with other cultures more evident than in the contemporary printed cookery books. Relatively cheap, costing between two and six shillings, and primarily written for middling women and their servants — rather than for professional chefs as in earlier periods — these books flooded into British homes in their hundreds of thousands from the 1730s onwards.⁵⁹ This new generation of cookery books justified themselves on their ability to assist the user in navigating the increasingly diverse and complicated sea of cookery by providing the latest recipes that offered economy and ease without compromising appearance of status. As Sarah Harrison explained in the introduction to the eighth edition of her *The House-Keeper's Pocket-Book, and Compleat Family Cook*, 'the Design of the Undertaking is to inform such House-keepers, as are not in the higher Rank of Fortune, how to Eat, or Entertain Company, in the most elegant Manner, at a reasonable Expence'.⁶⁰ These books typically went through multiple editions, and the most successful authors became household names. Hannah Glasse and her *The Art of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy*, which first appeared in 1747 and went through at least seventeen editions by 1800, exemplified the popularity of these books. Samuel Johnson and his dinner party agreed Glasse's book was the best available, and an essayist in the *London Magazine* declared that 'nobody can do me so much good as Mrs. Hanna Glasse'.⁶¹ Fanny Burney cited Glasse by page

⁵⁸ University College, Oxford, UC 01/A1/1, 2 July 1804.

⁵⁹ Gilly Lehmann, *The British Housewife: Cookery Books, Cooking and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Blackawton, Devon, 2003), 61–79, offers a conservative estimate of 531,250 cookery books having been produced during the century.

⁶⁰ Sarah Harrison, *The House-Keeper's Pocket-Book, and Compleat Family Cook*, 8th edn (London, 1764), 5.

⁶¹ James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, 2 vols. (London, 1791), ii, 22–3; *London Mag.* (Oct. 1755), 477.

number and edition in her diary critique of a friend's dinner.⁶² Glasse's work was so widely known that when admonishing political speculators during the Peace of Amiens in 1802, the *Times* drew on it, remarking that they 'would do well to attend to the sure system of Mrs. Glasse's Cookery, who begins her receipt for dressing a favourite fish with "*first catch your Chub*"'.⁶³

The success of these books rested on their ability to provide access to cuisines from which most had been excluded by the barriers of wealth, social rank and geography. Glasse justified her book as a tool to simplify 'the great Cooks' . . . high Way of expressing themselves' for those middling women and their 'poor [servant] Girls [who] are at a Loss to know what they mean'. Cookery books from the chefs of London's most famous eating venues traded on their ability to enable families to enjoy the same fare in their own homes. The secrets of the Crown and Anchor—the elite venue that included a ballroom and hosted the two thousand guests at Charles James Fox's birthday party in 1798—could be had for just a few shillings, courtesy of its principal chefs' cookery book.⁶⁴ John Farley did the same for the London Tavern, which was perhaps the most famous public dining establishment in the city.⁶⁵ The cooks of national dinners, such as the Lord Mayor's Day feast in London, mapped out the fare in their books, ensuring that such recipes as the 'marrow puddings which were made for Queen Caroline' were no longer the preserve of royalty.⁶⁶ This even applied to French royalty, since the cook to the late Louis XVI

⁶² Entry for 19 Aug. 1773, in *The Early Diary of Frances Burney, 1768–1778*, ed. Annie Raine Ellis, 2 vols. (London, 1889), ii, 244.

⁶³ *Times*, 1 Oct. 1802.

⁶⁴ Francis Collingwood and John Woollams, *The Universal Cook, and City and Country Housekeeper*, 2nd edn (London, 1797); Edwina Ehrman, 'The 18th Century', in Edwina Ehrman et al., *London Eats Out: 500 Years of Capital Dining* (London, 1999), 53.

⁶⁵ The work was often advertised as 'Cooking at the London Tavern', but was sold as John Farley ('Principal Cook at the London Tavern'), *The London Art of Cookery, and Housekeeper's Complete Assistant* (London, 1783). It went through at least a dozen editions by 1811. There has been some debate over how much Farley wrote himself, and much of it appears to have been compiled by Richard Johnson, apparently without complaint from Farley, from other cookery books—a fairly common practice, albeit not to the degree followed by Farley and Johnson. See Fiona Lucraft, 'The London Art of Plagiarism: Part 1', *Petits propos culinaires*, no. 42 (1992); Peter Targett, 'Johnson or Farley?', *Petits propos culinaires*, no. 58 (1998). The London Tavern appears to have endorsed the publication because it was advertised as being sold on the premises.

⁶⁶ William Gelleroy, *The London Cook: or, The Whole Art of Cookery Made Easy and Familiar* (London, 1762), 203. Gelleroy was the chief cook to the Lord Mayor. The feast day was 9 November 1761.

published and advertised a cookbook while in exile in Britain.⁶⁷ Most of these celebrity-chef books were consciously uncomplicated and did their best to tap into the market created by Glasse and other female authors. As Richard Briggs, cook at the Temple Coffee House, explained in his book, he had used not only easy-to-understand language but also 'easily practicable' recipes, because 'To waste Language and high terms on such Subjects, appears to me to render the Art of Cookery embarrassing, and to throw Difficulties in the Way of the Learner'.⁶⁸

Recipes for non-British dishes in British cookery books abounded during the second half of the eighteenth century. Like its competitors, each new edition of Glasse's *Art of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy* offered a new array of foreign-associated dishes, including such delights as 'Hamburgh sausages', German 'sour-cROUT', 'Chickens and turkies dressed after the Dutch way' and 'fricasey of calves feet and chaldron, after the Italian way'. Among these were a host of non-European dishes, which by the 1778 edition included recipes for curry, 'pellow' (pilau), 'India pickle', 'turtle dressed the West India way', 'mutton kebobbed', 'Carolina Rice pudding' and 'Carolina Snow-Balls'.⁶⁹ John Farley's popular *The London Art of Cookery* also offered numerous dishes specifically associated with distant peoples and places, such as 'Indian Pickle, or Piccalillo', 'Indian bamboo imitated', an 'oat-meal pudding after the New England manner' and 'New England Hams'.⁷⁰ Ann Shackleford's 1767 *The Modern Art of Cookery Improved* included recipes for curry and pilau.⁷¹ Other recipes on offer in cookery books included 'American Pot-ash Cakes or Biscuits', 'A Turk's cake', 'New England Pancakes', 'pickles the Indian way', 'West Indian pepper pot', 'Mutton the Turkish way', 'China Chilo', 'Mullagatawny, or Currie-Soup' and many others.⁷²

⁶⁷ *Times*, 18 Sept. 1815.

⁶⁸ Richard Briggs ('Cook at the Glove Tavern, Fleet-Street, the White Hart Tavern, Holborn, and Now at the Temple Coffee-House'), *The English Art of Cookery, According to the Present Practice: Being a Complete Guide to All Housekeepers, on a Plan Entirely New* (London, 1788), preface.

⁶⁹ Hannah Glasse, *The Art of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy*, 13th edn (London, 1778), 102, 334, 331–2, 101, 385, 372, 377, 373.

⁷⁰ John Farley, *The London Art of Cookery, and Housekeeper's Complete Assistant*, 7th edn (London, 1792), 267, 271–2, 202, 294.

⁷¹ Ann Shackleford, *The Modern Art of Cookery Improved: or, Elegant, Cheap, and Easy Methods of Preparing Most of the Dishes Now in Vogue* (London, 1767).

⁷² Ann Peckham, *The Complete English Cook: or, The Prudent Housewife* (Leeds, 1767), 141–2; *The New London Cookery and Complete Domestic Guide* (London, 1827), 570–1;

(cont. on p. 100)

In all these recipes authenticity — or at least the pretence of it — was paramount. Phrases such as ‘the West Indian way’, ‘the Turkish way’, ‘as in China’, ‘as found in New England’ and ‘as made in India’ were standard features in almost every overseas recipe. Even when they drew from predominately British ingredients, their authors still claimed the final result would be authentic. Although the recipes varied between different authors, and sometimes between different editions of the same book, authors continually stressed the genuineness of their recipes, often dismissing their competitors’ endeavours.⁷³ For example, Glasse’s recipes for pilau, or ‘pellow’, changed over time, yet each was introduced as the ‘Indian way’ or ‘the true Indian way’. Moreover, and in contrast to other recipes, instructions for recreating non-European dishes almost never emphasized the tastiness or cheapness of a dish. In fact, many travel authors had long complained about those overseas cuisines that later appeared in the cookery books. Just as in museum displays of foreign artefacts, the primary intended wonder and enjoyment of an exhibited item was not its innate beauty or appeal but rather its authentic association with another culture. Thus, these dishes sometimes operated as digestible artefacts.

In consequence, context served as an important way of enhancing the authenticity of these dishes. Cookery book recipes often included explicit serving instructions. Recipes for curry, for example, came with accompanying instructions for preparing rice specifically for that dish.⁷⁴ There was also debate on whether

(n. 72 cont.)

Mary Cole, *The Lady’s Complete Guide: or, Cookery in All its Branches*, 3rd edn (London, 1791), 183; Mason, *Ladies’ Assistant for Regulating and Supplying her Table* (1786), 388; Harrison, *House-Keeper’s Pocket-Book, and Compleat Family Cook* (1764), 179; Briggs, *English Art of Cookery* (1788), 42, and 2nd edn (London, 1793), 207; Mrs Margaret Dods, *The Cook and Housewife’s Manual* (Edinburgh, 1826), 59, 61.

⁷³ See, for example, J. Skeat, *The Art of Cookery and Pastry Made Easy and Familiar* (London, 1769), 41; Cole, *Lady’s Complete Guide* (1791), 191; Dods, *Cook and Housewife’s Manual*, 242–3, 181–2; Mrs Frazer, *The Practice of Cookery, Pastry, Pickling, Preserving, &c.* (Edinburgh, 1791), 69–70; Harrison, *House-Keeper’s Pocket-Book, and Compleat Family Cook* (1764), 30.

⁷⁴ See, for example, Hannah Glasse, *The Art of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy*, 5th edn (London, 1755), 101, and editions thereafter; Shackleford, *Modern Art of Cookery Improved*, 28; Duncan Macdonald (‘Late Head Cook at the Bedford Tavern and Hotel, Covent-Garden’), *The New London Family Cook: or, Town and Country Housekeeper’s Guide . . . Forming in the Whole the Most Complete Family Instructor*

(cont. on p. 101)

or not tea tasted better in authentic Asian chinaware or in the British-made equivalent. Claiming not to support the 'prejudice' itself, *The New London Cookery and Complete Domestic Guide* remarked: 'It is asserted by some female connoisseurs in tea, and perhaps it would be more difficult to disprove than to account for the fact, that tea tastes much better from Indian than British china'.⁷⁵ Dean Mahomed, a shrewd Indian entrepreneur living in London, carefully constructed an entire environment for his cuisine, complete with bamboo-cane sofas and wall adorned with Asian landscapes.⁷⁶ For customers interested in using his hookahs, he even had his own special tobacco blend. Advertised as the Hindostanee Coffee House, Mahomed's upmarket establishment in the wealthy district surrounding Portman Square targeted London's white population with a taste for India rather than the poor South Asian community of several thousand sailors and labourers. This was a space where Britons could experience the East, not a place for immigrants seeking the comforts of home.

Cooked table decorations provided further opportunities for hosts to display an interest in imperial topics and distant places to provoke conversation. Table decor was an important part of shared meals, and revealed a host's tastes. As one household guide instructed, 'The mode of covering the table differs in taste. It is not the multiplicity of things, but the choice, the dressing and the neat pleasing look of the whole, which gives respectability to her who presides'.⁷⁷ Imperial themes abounded. In the wake of the Cook voyages, the Manchester-based Elizabeth Raffald offered a recipe for a 'floating Desert Island' complete with gravel walks of shot comfits, eryngo root structures and islanders.⁷⁸ An alternative was a large confectionary 'Chinese Temple or Obelisk', which

(n. 74 cont.)

(London, 1812), 217; [Maria Eliza Rundell], *A New System of Domestic Cookery: Formed upon Principles of Economy and Adapted to the Use of Private Families*, new edn (London, 1812) 86; Briggs, *English Art of Cookery* (1788), 297; Harrison, *House-Keeper's Pocket-Book, and Compleat Family Cook* (1764), 30; Mason, *Ladies' Assistant for Regulating and Supplying her Table* (1786), 265.

⁷⁵ *New London Cookery and Complete Domestic Guide*, 629.

⁷⁶ Michael H. Fisher, *The First Indian Author in English: Dean Mahomed (1759–1851) in India, Ireland, and England* (Oxford, 1996), 257–63; *Times*, 27 Mar. 1811.

⁷⁷ [Rundell], *New System of Domestic Cookery*, p. v.

⁷⁸ Elizabeth Raffald, *The Experienced English Housekeeper: For the Use and Ease of Ladies, House-Keepers, Cooks, &c.* (Manchester, 1769), 175. The recipe grew in grandness and design over the course of its editions.

Farley assured 'will be a beautiful corner for a large table'.⁷⁹ 'These ornamental decorations', explained William Augustus Henderson following his own 1793 recipe for a 'Chinese Temple', 'are calculated to embellish grand entertainments, and it is certain they have all a very pleasing effect on the sight'.⁸⁰ Made mostly of sugar and potentially several feet high, such decorations were undoubted conversation starters.

Evidence for actual consumption of these dishes is admittedly sketchy, and the case for them appearing on British tables is largely circumstantial — based on such evidence as the frequency with which they appear in cookery books, the variation and constant updating of recipes and the increased availability of particular spices. The consumption of such imported foods as tea and coffee can be estimated from tax records and the surviving financial documents of some of the tens of thousands of shops that specialized in selling these commodities. They were also the elemental ingredients of the dishes through which the British consumed them — dried tea leaves made tea and coffee beans made coffee. In contrast, determining the number of 'New England Pancakes', chickens prepared 'as in China' or lamb joints cooked 'the Turkish way' that the British ate is impossible, not least because they relied on ingredients that could have been used to produce a number of different dishes.

Eating venues that sold or specialized in non-European dishes were rare at best, and, with the exception of the Hindostanee Coffee House, seem to have escaped the historical record. More probable is that such dishes were among many served on a given day, but detailed accounts have not survived. Paris restaurants offered the first menus at the end of the eighteenth century, but the practice would not make its way to Britain until much later.⁸¹ In November 1782 the London Tavern hosted the nationally reported celebrations of both the East India Company directors, following news of victories over the Dutch in Asia, and Admiral George Brydges Rodney, following his return from his crushing defeat of the

⁷⁹ Farley, *London Art of Cookery* (1792), 373–4, which is a modified version of the recipe from Raffald's *Experienced English Housekeeper*, 10th edn (London, 1786), 189–90.

⁸⁰ William Augustus Henderson, *The Housekeeper's Instructor: or, Universal Family Cook* (London, 1793), 256.

⁸¹ Rebecca L. Spang, *The Invention of the Restaurant: Paris and Modern Gastronomic Culture* (Cambridge, Mass., 2000), 76–8.

French West India fleet at the Battle of the Saintes, but we can only speculate as to whether or not its principal cook served his published recipes for curry or West Indian turtle to commemorate the occasions.⁸² Records for social clubs regularly note the alcohol consumed at meetings but do not seem to have given much attention to describing the food that was on offer. In terms of consumption in the home, some bills of fare have survived from royal and a handful of aristocratic households, but these are hardly representative of ordinary Britons' dining habits.⁸³ Moreover, they focus more on the placement of the courses than on the dishes themselves, and therefore tend to use rather vague descriptors such as 'garden things' and 'soup'.

Curry perhaps offers the best case study for the actual consumption of replicated dishes, because it was universally associated with India and because its name is easily identified and consistent — although spellings varied. Curry itself, or at least the incarnation that the British consumed in Asia and Britain, was a distant Anglicized cousin to what Indians ate.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, in eighteenth-century Britain its claim to be a 'true' Indian dish went unquestioned. Scholars tend to place the emergence of widespread consumption of curry in Britain in the mid nineteenth century, but available evidence indicates that the earlier date of the second half of the eighteenth century would be more accurate.⁸⁵ A cookery book recipe for curry first appeared in 1747 in the inaugural edition of Hannah Glasse's *The Art of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy* under the title 'To make a Currey the Indian Way'

⁸² For references to famous guests, see *Ruddiman's Weekly Mercury* (Edinburgh), 13 Nov 1782; *Derby Mercury*, 28 Nov. 1782.

⁸³ I have consulted BL, Add. MS 33343 (Table-Plans for dinner parties of Thomas, Lord Pelham, afterwards first earl of Chichester, 1774–1802); BL, Add. MSS 33325 to 33336 (Registers of the bills of fare in the household of the Duke of Newcastle, and, after his death, the Duchess of Newcastle, 1761–1774); PRO, LS 9/50–226 (Royal Bills of Fare for 1660–1812).

⁸⁴ For the best and lively history of 'Indian' food and its mutations and migrations to Europe, see Lizzie Collingham, *Curry: A Biography* (London, 2005).

⁸⁵ See, for example, *ibid.*, ch. 6; Susan Zlotnick, 'Domesticating Imperialism: Curry and Cookbooks in Victorian England', *Frontiers*, xvi (1996); Nupur Chaudhuri, 'Shawls, Jewelry, Curry, and Rice in Victorian Britain', in Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel (eds.), *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance* (Bloomington, 1992), 238–44. Chaudhuri notes that curry was first offered publicly in 1733 at the Norris Street Coffee House in London, but this appears to be an editing error, because the source cited is the same as at n. 90 below, which gives the year as 1773.

— the first of four different recipes that would appear in Glasse's book by 1800.⁸⁶ In the second half of the century, recipes appeared regularly in popular cookery books under headings that claimed to offer similar authenticity, although, ironically, curry was decreasingly served in British households in India.⁸⁷ That these works claimed 'plain and easy' recipes for use by middling and elite women and their servants suggests that curry was neither too exotic nor too complicated to prepare. Although addressed 'to all the Good House-wives of Great-Britain' and designed to appeal to lower middling country women, the 1764 edition of Sarah Harrison's cookery book included a unique recipe for 'Currie, an East-India Dish'.⁸⁸ In her *The Lady's Complete Guide*, Mary Cole promised that the recipes were a combination of originals and ones carefully selected from the leading cookery books 'but all extravagant, and almost impracticable receipts, I have purposely rejected', yet she felt comfortable in reprinting the curry recipe from the second edition of Glasse's *Art of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy*.⁸⁹ Authors who claimed credentials of working either in great households or well-known venues also included curry recipes in their cookery books, which in the case of the latter were sold on the premises. Determining whether or not the Cleikum Inn in Edinburgh or the Anchor Tavern in London served the curry from the principal cooks' published cookery books may be impossible, but at the very least Norris Street Coffee House in Haymarket advertised and served it in 1773.⁹⁰

Variations in the printed recipes and the eventual emergence of a 'curry powder' spice blend also suggest that curry was widely available and increasingly popular in the second half of the century. Printed recipes initially limited the animal flesh ingredient to rabbit, but soon they called for fowl, chicken, veal, cod, turkey, sausages and even lobster — all the while, of course, claiming authenticity. Recipes differed too on the use of cream, lemons, eggs, cucumbers and other ingredients. In his *The Art of Cookery and Pastery Made Easy and Familiar*, J. Skeat simply told readers

⁸⁶ Hannah Glasse, *The Art of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy* (London, 1747), 101.

⁸⁷ David Burton, *The Raj at the Table: A Culinary History of the British in India* (London, 1993), 3; Chaudhuri, 'Shawls, Jewelry, Curry, and Rice', 231–2.

⁸⁸ Harrison, *House-Keeper's Pocket-Book, and Compleat Family Cook* (1764), preface and p. 30.

⁸⁹ Cole, *Lady's Complete Guide* (1791), pp. vi, 148–9.

⁹⁰ *Public Advertiser*, 6 Dec. 1773, cited in James M. Holzman, *The Nabobs in England: A Study of the Returned Anglo-Indian, 1760–1785* (New York, 1926), 90.

that 'you may put in what best suits your fancy'.⁹¹ By the end of the century, curry was sufficiently popular that a recipe circulated that offered an 'easier, and much approved' method for cutting both the preparation time and the by-then growing ingredient list by half.⁹² Perhaps the best evidence for the widespread production and consumption of curry was the appearance in Britain of the spice blend 'curry powder' in the late eighteenth century, which suggests a sellers' response to market demand. Glasse's 1747 recipe calls merely for pepper and coriander in the way of spices, but in the 1760s and 1770s the spice list grew to include a combination of coriander, bay leaf, cayenne and turmeric. By the mid 1780s, however, 'curry powder' had all but replaced the old combination of spices in cookery books.⁹³ The assumption in cookery books was that it was bought, just like any other spice, although one provincial cookery book gave instructions on how to make it as late as 1795.⁹⁴ Elizabeth Austen, a cousin of the novelist, bought it as early as 1775, and the *Morning Herald* advertised its availability in May 1784 at Sorlie's Perfumery Warehouse in Piccadilly, London.⁹⁵ With such easy instructions and ingredients at hand, Margaret Dods of Edinburgh was able to give this description of curry in 1826: 'This common favourite dish is at once economic, convenient at table, and of easy preparation'.⁹⁶

The timing of the emergence of these dishes in British cookery underlines the case for interpreting them as reflective of the growing interest in the empire and the peoples connected to it. As numerous scholars have persuasively demonstrated from a variety of angles, sustained widespread public interest in the empire emerged during the Seven Years War, and became further interlocked with Britons' perceptions of their nation and prosperity during the American War of Independence and the wars with

⁹¹ Skeat, *Art of Cookery and Pastery Made Easy and Familiar*, 41.

⁹² See, for example, Hannah Glasse, *The Art of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy*, 16th edn (London, 1796), 129; [Rundell], *New System of Domestic Cookery*, 86. In such instances the 'easier' recipe appeared underneath a more protracted one.

⁹³ The first to use 'curree-powder' was Mason, *Ladies' Assistant for Regulating and Supplying her Table* (1786), 265. See also [Rundell], *New System of Domestic Cookery*, 10; Macdonald, *New London Family Cook*, 217, 602; Dods, *Cook and Housewife's Manual*, 181–2; *New London Cookery and Complete Domestic Guide*, 119–20.

⁹⁴ Sarah Martin, *The New Experienced English-Housekeeper: For the Use and Ease of Ladies, Housekeepers, Cooks &c.* (Doncaster, 1795), 35.

⁹⁵ Cited in Robert H. Goodall, *A Kentish Patchwork* (London, 1966), 20; cited in Holzman, *Nabobs in England*, 90.

⁹⁶ Dods, *Cook and Housewife's Manual*, 242–3.

revolutionary France.⁹⁷ Overseas affairs and figures became subjects of daily conversation as the nation invested unprecedented amounts of manpower and funds into the protection of expansion of the empire. British victors overseas, such as General Wolfe and Lord Cornwallis, were heralded in the streets in popular celebrations, and Britain's native opponents, such as George Washington and Tippoo Saib, became household names.

The empire-related cuisine was part of this cosmological shift, thus underlining that changes in consumption during the period were linked to cultural shifts as well as to availability and price. Before mid century, virtually no recipes, with the exception of instructions for tea and coffee, were widely associated with regions outside Europe. This was not for lack of contact — the East India Company's servants had been returning to England for a century and a half and travel accounts had described overseas dishes in vivid detail for some time — nor for lack of cookery books. Although the number of cookery book titles grew after mid century, the genre of inexpensive works on cookery aimed at the middling ranks had been in place for decades by mid century. Sarah Harrison's cookery book first appeared in 1733, but it was not until the eighth edition in 1764 that non-European recipes appeared. Only after the nationally celebrated Cook voyages to the South Pacific, which included numerous favourable descriptions of Tahitian barbecues in both the travel and newspaper press accounts, did 'barbicued pig' (the Tahitian meat of choice) appear in cookery books.⁹⁸ Although not buried in the Tahitian fashion, it was smothered with every exotic spice and fruit the cook could conjure up. Some cookbooks included mini imperial histories in descriptions of the ingredients. For example, in her *The British Housewife: or, The*

⁹⁷ For just a few examples, see, especially, Kathleen Wilson, *Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715–1785* (Cambridge, 1995); Bob Harris, '“American Idols”: Empire, War and the Middling Ranks in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Past and Present*, no. 150 (Feb. 1996); H. V. Bowen, 'British Conceptions of Global Empire, 1756–83', *Jl Imperial and Commonwealth Hist.*, xxvi (1998); Eliga H. Gould, *The Persistence of Empire: British Political Culture in the Age of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, 2000); P. J. Marshall, 'A Nation Defined by Empire, 1755–1776', in Alexander Grant and Keith J. Stringer (eds.), *Uniting the Kingdom? The Making of British History* (London, 1995); Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven, 1992).

⁹⁸ See, for example, Mason, *Ladies' Assistant for Regulating and Supplying her Table* (1786), 175–6; Farley, *London Art of Cookery* (1792), 127–8; Briggs, *English Art of Cookery* (1788), 264, who placed the recipe in between ones for curry, pilau and West Indian turtle.

Cook, Housekeeper's, and Gardiner's Companion, Martha Bradley gave the following account of 'Cayan Pepper': 'we imported this from the Negroes of our Plantations. The Fruit is common in Africa, and they having been accustomed to eat it there, shewed our People the Way in America, and they have taught us'.⁹⁹ Moreover, there is not a single dish with a colonial North American designation, such as 'Carolina Rice pudding' and 'New England Pancakes', before the American Revolution made America a central national topic of discussion. Until then, rice pudding and pancakes were merely rice pudding and pancakes.¹⁰⁰

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By the close of the eighteenth century, food was at the heart of the British imperial experience. Gastronomic tastes had driven the growth of British influence — territorial as well as trade — as entrepreneurs and adventurers sought ways to cheaply obtain and produce those edible products Britons loved. The process made some extremely wealthy and others slaves. In Britain, the trade helped to produce the modern consumer. Such products as coffee, tea and tobacco did not just infiltrate Britain, as they had in the seventeenth century; they swarmed into virtually every home to become part of the daily routines of most Britons — almost irrespective of class or geography. At the end of the eighteenth century eating connected the British to their empire, as foods became not only the most abundant products of imperial trade, but also the empire's most prevalent symbols. Visual advertising, which emerged on a wide scale during this period, hammered home the fact that these products were the result of overseas trade, naval power, colonialism and even slavery. The explosion of cookery books afforded middling and elite households throughout Britain opportunities to replicate and celebrate imperial experiences by transforming dishes such as curry and miniature, edible Polynesian islands into artefacts. Certainly, further

⁹⁹ Martha Bradley, *The British Housewife: or, The Cook, Housekeeper's, and Gardiner's Companion. Calculated for the Service both of London and the Country* (London, 1756?), 9–10.

¹⁰⁰ The first American-related designation appears to have been 'Carolina Rice pudding' and 'Carolina Snow-Balls', in Glasse, *Art of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy* (1778), 385. The designation 'New England' appeared shortly after the war, when it was applied to a number of foods, including hams, oatmeal and pancakes.

considerations of the shared meanings of particular consumable goods — not just calculations of weights, values, productions and distributions — offer potentially fruitful paths for exploring the ambitions and concerns of emerging consumer societies. Although perhaps better at it than many of their contemporaries, the eighteenth-century British were not alone in their penchant for collecting and ornamenting.

The particular shared meanings that empire-related foods assumed in eighteenth-century Britain both underline and challenge recent historical interpretations. The mid-century timing of the appearance of empire-related dishes in cookery books certainly supports recent interpretations that have depicted the Seven Years War as a watershed for popular British awareness of the empire. Indian recipes, edible table decorations and 'American' designations for familiar recipes all roughly follow the described major shifts in the public interest in the empire. A consideration of food, however, offers a different sort of access than the largely literary sources upon which scholars have largely relied. Sugar, coffee, tea and tobacco all enjoyed much more socially and geographically diverse audiences than the largely upper-middling world of the press. And, although newspapers made their way into women's hands, editors, unlike grocers and cookery-book authors, dealt with a predominately masculine customer base. The closely advertised connection of raw foods and cooked dishes with overseas activities certainly points to a much more overt relationship between early imperial enterprises and domestic life than has been recognized. Many of the Britons who consumed such common goods as tobacco and tea would have been unavoidably aware that the former relied on African slavery, the latter on trade with the East, and both on a strong maritime presence. Moreover, the proliferation of empire-related recipes, which consistently emphasized authenticity, suggests a genuine widespread interest in engaging in sensory investigations of overseas cultures. At a time when the British Empire excelled in conquering and erasing other peoples, its home constituents enthusiastically explored foreign places in ways that bombarded their senses, whether in the new public museums that used a combination of decor and artefacts to transport audiences across the globe or at the dinner table.

A consideration of food highlights at a grass-roots level how the empire was regarded, at least in part, in terms of the commodities it

produced. All of this ultimately complicates any sort of nationalistic veneer scholars might be tempted to place on British overseas activities during this period, because, seen from the viewpoint of the world of edible goods, the empire was about ensuring the ubiquity of little luxuries rather than expanding such national endeavours as the cultural war against France and popery. Although not necessarily in conflict with nationalistic motivations evident in the contemporary printed discourse, such a material perspective has the advantage of reaching the incredibly disparate array of groups within Britain who enabled the empire to prosper, and for whom the empire's meanings could universally include tea in their cups and tobacco in their pipes.

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