

A Survey of Romanian Culinary Heritage in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century

FLORIN NACU

Introduction

FOOD, OR better said, specific dishes, embody cultural identity. People construct identities based on what they eat or do not eat. Countries and regions within them have their own culinary heritage due to the ways in which dishes from different traditions have been combined and adapted. Starting from culinary traditions one can analyze social, historical, and political developments.

Positioned “on the road of all evils,” as the chroniclers used to say, at the crossroads of the Middle Ages and the Modern Age, the Romanian Principalities (officially named so in the internal documents of Romania starting from 24 January 1862) were unavoidably influenced by western and eastern culinary traditions. The oriental world offered culinary delights prepared from aubergines, tomatoes, onions, peppers, okras, quinces and plums. These delicacies included stews such as *imam bayıldı* and moussaka, soups, lamb haggis, pastries and pies, baklava, sarailia, kanafeh, sorbet and coffee.¹ The western aspect of the Romanian synthesis consists of dishes consumed especially during autumn and winter, originating in Central Europe with main ingredients such as cabbage, Sauerkraut, potatoes, and of course smoked pork, salami and ham, registered trademarks of Central-European cuisine. Deserts are represented by cakes and pastry with cream, chocolate and cocoa.

Luminița Drugă and Nadia-Nicoleta Morărașu observed:

Considering food, Romania's geographical position on the crossroads between Central and South-Eastern Europe manifests itself in a synthesis of the Balkan cuisine, also called Byzantine or Ottoman, and Central-European, German and Hungarian cultural traditions. To the milk-based Dacian-Getae diet, which included cheese and curd cheese, the Roman pie was added . . . , and so were the Polish borscht, Turkish soups and meatballs, Greek sweets during the period of Phanariot domination, French aspic jelly and escalope, Italian lemonade, English beef steak, etc. In other words, Romanian gastronomy has multiple layers: Roman, Slavic, Greek, Turkish, Magyar, German, Italian, French, English. This is reflected

*in different sources including testimonies of foreign travellers who visited the Romanian Principalities on different occasions and enjoyed the hospitality of the people living here.*²

The monk Paul of Aleppo (1627–1669), who travelled to the Romanian Principalities in 1653, attended a banquet at the Princely Court. He described the use of plates, spoons and forks made of silver and gold. The traveller was impressed by the variety of food items. Dishes were prepared with oil. Olives, lemons and peas were used. At monasteries, only basic meals were taken, consisting of boiled beans, lentils fried in oil, and vegetables boiled in salty water. The monks drank wine, which was sometimes replaced by cider. Paul of Aleppo also mentioned the diet of the peasants, consisting of milk, young cheese, and vegetables such as onion, leak, garlic, cabbage, horse-radish, radishes, cucumbers and celery. Sometimes they ate soup made with fish or meat.³

This travel account already illustrates the two distinct categories within traditional Romanian cuisine, based on social stratification. One category concerns the food of the peasants, craftsmen and workers. The other is the cuisine of the nobility, traders, industrialists, practitioners of the free professions and intellectuals. There was no middle class in the period under concern here, only the upper and the lower class existed: two different levels of economic power, education, culture, customs, clothes, and also food.

In this article, I will first offer a brief presentation of the socio-historical context, outlining a few main events of the period under consideration, before surveying the literary works of this time for references to food and eating. The third and last main section focuses on culinary works—cookbooks—of the period. It will thus be illustrated how this synthesis of various oriental and western influences worked out. Sometimes sharp contrasts were made between what was perceived as “our food” (mainly local adaptations of Greek and Ottoman dishes) and “foreign novelties,” as the cuisine gradually took on more western influences.

The Socio-Historical Context: Main Political Events of 1840–1888

I HAVE CHOSEN this interval because the most important national transformations took place during this period of nearly 50 years. Earlier, during the “Phanariot century,” from the beginning of the eighteenth century until 1821 the Romanian Principalities were dominated by the Greek nobility, called Phanariotes after the Fener, the area within Constantinople inhabited by Greeks. Their rule arrested the development of Romanian culture on all levels. The Phanariot rulers, with a few exceptions, were corrupt, buying their positions with large sums of money and bringing their own (Greek) leading functionaries with them. The Greek culture and language became important, including in gastronomy, as the rulers brought their own kitchen personnel to continue the consumption of their traditional recipes from Fener.

During the period from 1821 to 1848, strategies and possible solutions were identified in the area of rural life, especially focused on land reform, but the international

context and the situation of the Principalities made efficient discussions, followed by action, impossible. The first major reform addressing structural inequality, which started to improve the conditions of the peasants by granting them ownership of the land they worked, was the land reform of July 1864, implemented on the initiative of ruler Alexandru Ioan Cuza with the assistance of Prime Minister Mihail Kogălniceanu, who had been a leader in the 1848 Revolution and movement.⁴

Cuza had been elected as prince of Moldavia and Wallachia in 1859, thus in effect sealing the unification of the Romanian Principalities, with a central capital in Bucharest. The unification was internationally recognized in 1862, although it was specified that this recognition was valid only for the time of Cuza's rule. His title became *domnitor* (ruler, prince) of the United Romanian Principalities. The period of his rule was not free of disputes, debates, troubles and scandals, culminating in his forced resignation and exile in 1866. Cuza aimed to implement several reforms and initiatives in order to modernize the country. A few examples will be presented here to offer some insight into the nature of his reforms and the reactions they provoked.

The introduction of a license which alcohol producers and traders had to purchase in order to continue practicing their professions led to the so called "revolt of the license-owners" in Craiova in November 1860. General Gheorghe Magheru was called in from Bucharest to suppress the revolt, which had resulted in several deaths and injuries.⁵

At the time the land reform was discussed, the Assembly, the legislative institution, was dominated by the conservatives. The Prime Minister at that time, Barbu Catargiu, vehemently opposed the idea of substantial land reform, declaring that he would rather die than break the laws. He was considered to be the main obstacle in the political dialogue.⁶ It is still unknown who was behind his assassination in June 1862.

The land reform would not have been possible without radical measures which caused disputes and controversies. A prime example is the nationalization of monastic estates, an action which was harshly criticized internationally by representatives from the monastic republic of Athos, the Holy Mountain. The monks sent memoranda to the Ottoman authorities in Constantinople, which undermined the position of Cuza.⁷ Cuza managed to prevent an international conflict from breaking out, by agreeing to pay compensations to the monasteries for their lost possessions. The land, however, was not returned.

In this context of opposition and dispute, Alexandru Ioan Cuza and the Prime Minister Mihail Kogălniceanu implemented an authoritarian regime on 2 May 1864. They created a Senate, to complement (and in practice, compete with) the legislative power, the Assembly. This resulted in a Romanian Parliament consisting, for the first time, of two chambers, each with well-defined limitations. The constitution, based on the Paris Convention of 1858, was modified by "an additional act."⁸

The opposition was called "the monstrous coalition," as politicians of all stripes found themselves united in their opposition to the increasingly unpopular national leader. They contributed to worsening his position and reputation. In 1865, while Cuza was traveling to Ems to undertake a health cure, an uprising broke out among the merchants in Bucharest, who refused to make use of the rentable market stalls. These protests gave voice to contrasting public opinions that the ruler intended to implement absolute con-

trol, or that the opposition (“the monstrous coalition”) plotted to overthrow Cuza’s regime.”

The latter option became reality, as Cuza was forced to resign during the night of 22 February 1866, and went into exile the next day. The Princely Lieutenancy, a kind of interim government consisting of several noblemen, started negotiations with Philip of Flanders, and following his refusal, with Karl (Carol) of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen. It was a period of uncertainty, as the international recognition of the unification of the Principalities, and with that, the beginnings of the modern state of Romania, had been connected with the rule of Cuza and could be undone after that. In spite of protests and attempts at disunification, on 10 May 1866 Carol I was crowned prince (*domnitor*) of the Romanian United Principalities (becoming king in 1881).¹⁰

The following period also turned out to be rather restless, both nationally and internationally. Prince Carol formed a government with liberal politicians, as they had been instrumental in installing him on the throne of the country. Many of these liberal politicians were Francophiles and friends of Emperor Napoleon III. As internationally tensions between Germany and France increased, the German origin of Prince Carol was gradually problematized and led to tensions. Prince Carol wanted to introduce Prussian models of education for the Romanian Army, as well as Prussian weapons and techniques. This did not appeal at all to the Romanian officers, who were products of French military models, and were accustomed to the French uniform and weapons.¹¹ French was the language spoken in the salons in the cities of Romania, and Paris represented a cultural model for Bucharest. Consequently, any attempt of the new prince to strengthen the ties with his native Germany would only make him more unpopular.

In the summer of 1870 Eugeniu Carada (the brain behind the modern Romanian banking system) and Ion C. Brătianu tried to overthrow Prince Carol. They relied on Major Alexandru Candiano-Popescu, an anti-monarchist, who was supposed to initiate the coup in Ploiești. Brătianu, Carada and Candiano-Popescu promoted republican ideas, based on the French model (although France had temporarily renounced them, with the proclamation of Napoleon III as emperor).¹² The rebellion failed and Brătianu and Candiano-Popescu changed course and decided to support and collaborate with Carol. Eugeniu Carada, unofficially the leader of the National Bank of Romania from 1880, continued to refuse any direct contact with the prince, who later became king.¹³

The political turmoil continued. A reception held by Joseph Maria Friedrich von Radowitz, the minister of the German Empire in Bucharest on 10/22 March 1871 to mark the anniversary of Emperor William I, was interrupted by protesters, who vandalized the building. Prince Carol implemented a strategy for staying in power, by setting up a conservative government, forcing the resignation of the liberals. He also announced his (fake) intension to resign. His strategy for winning support paid off. The conservatives agreed to govern, and the liberals accepted to take a step back.¹⁴ They returned to power in 1876, leading to a period of liberal rule which ended with violent protests in the capital in March 1888. The liberal government fell, and the conservatives took over again.

A Survey of References to Food and Nourishment in the Press and in Literature

THE NEWSPAPER *Adevărul* (The Truth), edited by Constantin Mille (director, 1898–1920), dedicated considerable space to health education addressed to people in rural areas, especially women and children. Thus, women were advised to air and clean the rooms and to whitewash the walls (with chalk/lime). Moreover, the newspaper advised on personal hygiene, recommending regular baths, especially during the summer, when it was easier to get warm water by leaving it out in the sun. The newspaper also recommended to plant fruit trees in yards and to keep a vegetable garden.¹⁵ Factory workers were advised to drink milk, although it was difficult for them to find the time to visit a market in the city to obtain milk, as they often worked 12 to 14 hours a day.

Pruncul Român (Romanian Child), which appeared three times a week from 12 June 1848, under the editorship of C. A. Rosetti and Enrich Winterhalder, is another paper relevant in this context. Maria Rosetti (née Mary Grant), the wife of C. A. Rosetti, the model for the painting *Revolutionary Romania* by C. D. Rosenthal, and the first female journalist in Romania, wrote frequent pieces of advice for young mothers, including those living in the countryside. Obviously, providing nutritious meals for their children was an important aspect of her articles.

The impact of such advice would not have been very large, as newspapers did not benefit from a wide readership in rural areas in Romania. A primary reason for this was illiteracy, which was still at a high level, in spite of Cuza's education reform, further improved at the end of the 19th century by Spiru Haret. Another reason was economic, in rural areas people obtained what they needed by swapping one item for another. There was not much money to go around, and few people could afford a newspaper subscription.

After the period of cultural standstill resulting from the Phanariot domination (until 1821), education in Romanian was formally introduced only in 1831. Although attempts were made to promote and develop Romanian culture, progress was slow, and literature was dominated by translations and works inspired by foreign cultures. In 1840, Mihail Kogălniceanu called for a revival of Romanian culture in the new periodical *Dacia literară* (Literary Dacia) which had been founded on his initiative. The periodical further discussed the importance for writers to create works inspired by Romanian history, using settings and events from the past. Romanian literature thus came to be based on aspects of daily life from different social contexts, especially that of peasants, boyars, leaseholders and clerks. The context of workers featured less often. Such literary works also touched upon the topic of food, both in the circles of peasants and in those of boyars. During this period, there was a continuous stream of literary products with social and historical topics, in all literary genres, covering prose, poetry and drama.¹⁶ In what follows, a few of these works will be presented, focused on how food and culinary habits feature in them.

The Phanariot ruling class was the subject of the first novel in Romanian literature, *Ciocoii vechi și noi* (Old and new upstarts)¹⁷ by Nicolae Filimon (1862–1863). The novel follows the career of a young son of a minor Romanian boyar, sent as an apprentice at

the court of the Phanariot Prince Ioan Gheorghe Caragea (Caradja). The young boyar Andronache Tuzluc advanced rapidly from a simple *ciobodar* (a kind of lackey) to the distinguished rank of *postelnic* (chamberlain). The anti-hero Dinu Păturică is depicted as an upstart, with typical characteristics such as a keen but cunning mind, ready to learn whatever would help him to progress through the social ranks. He manages to become the confidant of the boyar, but uses this position to corrupt the boyar's mistress, influencing her to work together to undermine the boyar's position. They are further assisted in their evil plan by Costea Chiorul, a crook from Bucharest who masquerades as a merchant.

The authentic Romanian boyars and officials are portrayed as decent, honest people. An example is Andronache Tuzluc's former *vâtaf* (bailiff, a kind of team leader, manager, referring back to the period when the young boyar was a lackey) who lost his job due to the scheming of the boyar's mistress. The destruction of the victim Andronache Tuzluc, and of the conspirators Dinu Păturică and Costea Chiorul, is presented as destiny or fate. Nicolae Filimon (1819–1865),¹⁸ a firm supporter of the 1848 movement, thus portrays a sharp contrast between the retrograde Phanariot regime, and the positively innovative character of the native boyars.

The feasts organized by Andronache Tuzluc, and even those which took place at the initiative of Dinu Păturică, show an abundance of culinary delicacies, inspired by Greek and Turkish traditions: wine from Cyprus, coffee with cream, marinated red mullet (a species of goatfish), olives, fish soup, *slânina* (similar to bacon), pastrami, steak from beef or lamb, *mielul haiduceasc* (a lamb dish prepared in a certain way, associated with the "outlaws"), hard boiled eggs etc.:

The dining table was positioned in between two beds and surrounded with the chairs on which the honorable guests of Păturică would sit. There were numerous plates with starters on the table: marinated lobster, saucers with fresh beluga roe, skinless grey mullet, sardines in Mytilene oil seasoned with pepper and juice of lemons from Messina, sweet olives from Thessaly arranged in the form of a pyramid, grey mullet roe, figs from Santorini and halva from Adrianople. None of the gastronomic delicacies of the Orient was absent from the table of the upstart [ciocoi], which outdid that of his master in extravagance. All these snacks were arranged with military discipline, with at every two-palm distance a jug of yellow wine from Drăgășani, red wine with absinthe [pelin] from the vineyard of Bistrița monastery and oriental wines of different colors and tastes. Papornișele [special kind of serving bottles, partly covered with reedmace] with ouzo from Chio and retsina from Corinth were not missing either. Finally, Păturică took measures to ensure that his guests' desires for refined tastes were fulfilled in every detail.¹⁹

A contrast to Filimon's positive portrayal of the native boyars can be found in the comedies of Vasile Alecsandri (1821–1890), who presents some of them in a different light, namely as upstarts striving for wealth, showing off and pretending to have a sophistication which was far from them and which would have been impossible for them to acquire. He thus plays with the contrast between appearance and essence.²⁰ A good example of this can be seen in the ironical character he created, Madam Chirița, the

protagonist of four plays he wrote between 1850 and 1874.²¹ She represents a lady from an ancient boyar family from Moldavia, provincial and rude, who tried to gain access to the world of the educated and well-mannered bourgeoisie, when her husband was promoted to the rank of *ispavnik* (a local government officer, at county level). Not only did Chirița want to be noticed in Iași (the capital), but she also wanted to make it to Paris, which she eventually did. But before she managed to achieve her goal, she strove to impose Parisian ways of life onto the inhabitants of Bârzoieni:

*I believe, respected boyars, that you must be famished, because you here are accustomed to eat at noon... but we practice European ways... dinner at 5. Do not be annoyed... In half an hour the dishes will be placed on the table... Please, bear with us.*²²

It has been suggested that Vasile Alecsandri parodied a very wealthy lady from the Moldavian nobility, as a kind of revenge action, because he had hoped to become her son-in-law. Although he was a very rich young man (and a diplomat who nearly became the ruler of Moldova in 1859), she refused him on the grounds that her daughter should not marry “a silly little writer,” but a well-established traditional boyar. The writer Constantin Gane wrote a text on the back of a photograph, which identifies the lady behind Madam Chirița as Anastasia Greceanu, the wife of *Vornic* Gheorghe Greceanu. They had a town house in Fălticeni and an estate with a manor in Vadul Glodului.

Madam Chirița’s mindless imitation of foreign ways, especially French, and her hilarious corruptions of the French language are the main ways humor is created in the play. A contrast is presented between these foreign habits (and foreign food), and traditional Moldavian ways and eating habits, personified in Madam Chirița and her husband, respectively. Madam Chirița wants to offer French food—“*blanmanjale*,” a corrupted term based on *blanc* (white) and *manger* (to eat), referring to white French sauces)—, to the horror of her husband Bârzoi, who just wanted to continue to eat in the ways of his forefathers. A good illustration is the following monologue by the husband:

The lady no longer has the decency to occupy herself with the household... to bake cakes [cozonaci], pască [a kind of pastry eaten at Easter], pastrami, preserves, vodka, cherry liquor . . . the way things are in a normal household... or at least to prepare dishes for me... a cheșchet [a soup with tomato and grains], a plachie [an oven dish with fish], a capana [lamb stew with raisins], a moussaka, a baklava, a çullama . . . Christian food... healthy and light... But no, not in our house!... She just sits on her tandur²³ all day, and is interested only in toileting and foreign foods: blanmanjale, bouillons, German side dishes... what are these?... blanmanjale, bouillons? What about the borscht, the alivancă²⁴... for with them I grew up in my parents’ house... . . . And, another trouble... she introduced a custom of serving small green glasses with warm water at the end of meals... she says this is a fashion from Iași... to clean your mouth in front of one another... and there is no day in which I do not mess it up and drink the lukewarm water!²⁵

These two aspects of food, the contrast between the “traditional food items,” many of which are in fact adaptations of Turkish or Greek dishes, and the novelties from western

cuisines, also feature in another work by Vasile Alecsandri, “Porojan.” A good example is this description of “Costache, the cook, who would make some delicious *sarmale*,²⁶ *ihnele*,²⁷ *ostropățurile*²⁸ etc., but he would mess up the *blanmangele*, making them smell of soap, with the result that he himself had to eat them all.”²⁹ The story is set at the time when Romani slaves were liberated, and did not know what to do with their newly obtained freedom. By presenting the tragic fate of Porojan, Alecsandri calls for education about freedom, rights and limitations for all citizens. The main character was inspired by the author’s childhood friend. The two boys were separated when they reached school age, and Alecsandri enrolled in the strict boarding school of the French officer Victor Cuénim,³⁰ while Porojan became an apprentice in a bakery. The oriental snacks *simit* (a kind of bagel) and *halva* (a sweet made of sesame or sunflower seeds) feature as highly desirable childhood delicacies, “for which Porojan would have sold his hat, if he had one, and for which I would have given the shoes on my feet.”³¹

Mihail Kogălniceanu (1817–1891) wrote a novel with the title *Tainele inimii* (The secrets of the heart). In it, the character Stihescu voices objections to western influences on the Romanian cuisine similar to those expressed by the husband of Madam Chirița cited earlier. He exclaims:

And do you know what kind of food they served me? Instead of a decent turkey soup (potroc), a rooster stew, a duck with cabbage, a fried goose, and some alivancă, as my vătășiță³² used to prepare them, they hastily occupied the table with some bowls and plates with bouillon, beef steak, fricășă,³³ volovăi³⁴ and other strange indefinable mixtures, may they remain stuck in the throats of the Swabians who invented them.³⁵

In the short story “Alexandru Lăpușneanul,” published in 1840, Costache Negruzzi (1808–1868) described the traditional gastronomy of Moldavia:

At that time the fashion of select food items had not yet been introduced in Moldavia. Even the greatest feast would consist of only a few dishes. The Polish borscht would be followed by Greek dishes with boiled vegetables floating in butter, then the Turkish pilaf, and, finally, cosmopolitan fried meat. The first cookbook included recipes for zalatină, that is, jelly with lemon, orange, raspberry or vanilla and for pudding [budincă] with chocolate, wild strawberries, cherries or lemon.³⁶

The literary character seems to refer to the cookbook produced by its author (together with Kogălniceanu), which will be analyzed in the next section of this article. The “puddings” are in fact oven dishes (sweet or savory) made with eggs.

The same author criticized the habit of Phanariot rulers to randomly elevate incompetent people to important functions in a sketch with the title “Istoria unei plăcinte” (The history of a pie). Negruzzi portrays a Phanariot ruler, a great appreciator of pies, who was about to send his entire kitchen personnel to prison, just because they had not served him any pies for a while. A boyar, incompetent but cunning, who aspired to a high position in the Court, used this pie-loving weakness of the ruler to reach his aim. He brought him a large pie with cream and *gogoșele* (kind of doughnuts); the kind of

pie which his wife and servants had prepared for the ruler on an earlier occasion when he had visited the boyar. The ruler ate the pie with yoghurt and asked who had sent it. He immediately appointed the boyar as *vornic* (charged with the internal affairs of the ruler's court). A proverb arose: "With yoghurt and *gogoșele* you good-for-nothing have become a *vornic*!"³⁷

The next author to be addressed in this survey is Ion Creangă (1837–1889).³⁸ His novel *Amintiri din copilărie* (Memories of my boyhood) describes his childhood in the village of Humulești in Moldavia, inhabited by free peasants. The book includes sections dedicated to the cholera epidemics during the Revolution of 1848, which he survived as a child and to his school years, spent in different elementary schools and at Orthodox boarding schools, thus showing how boys and young men at the time were trained for the priesthood. In 1866, during the restless months after Cuza's dismissal, Ion Creangă (by then a deacon in Iași), took part in separatist actions, initiated by Metropolitan Calinic Miculescu, aiming at breaking the Union of 1859. It is thus rather remarkable that Creangă wrote two stories, "Moș Ion Roată și Unirea" (Uncle Ion Roată and the Union) and "Moș Ion Roată și Vodă Cuza" (Uncle Ion Roată and Prince Cuza) which present Cuza and the Union in a positive light.

Food is mentioned both in *Memories of My Boyhood* and in his tales. These works offer a portrait of rural life. In the author's childhood memories, both as part of the early life in the village of Humulești, and during the time he lived at the house of Pavăl Ciubotaru in Fălticeni, the reader encounters all kinds of food items, most of them already mentioned in this article. The following excerpt is illustrative of the peasant ways and attitudes to food and hospitality:

About nightfall we all, not forgetting old Bodrîngă, betook ourselves to a respectable tavern belonging to the daughter of the mayor at Rădășeni, where more people would come for love of the hostess than for any urge to drink wine; and lovely she was, too, a blessing upon her! She had recently married a widower, an old man; such a stick in the mud and just the sort of person you want for a host. The moment she saw us, the hostess welcomed us and ushered us into a large room, with shutters at the windows and wooden floor-boards, where there were only ourselves and the hostess, whenever she cared to look in. In one corner there were a few bushels of beans, in another hemp seed, in a third corner a heap of fine apples and Rădășeni pears that will keep over winter till after Easter, in the fourth, peas and broad beans divided by a wide plank and nearby some Turkish pumpkins; dried pears in a wooden tub, as sweet to the taste as figs; further on a heap of reels of hemp and flax thread, hanging from a rafter a bank of worsted and yarn variously colored, for carpets and runners. Then oakum, combings and sundry things dumped on shelves and corner cupboards as was usual in the house of a well-to-do farmer in those days. As soon as we were all assembled in that delightful room, the hostess closed the shutters, lit the candle, and in no time at all was back with a large earthen jug full of Odobești wine; and as she poured it into the glasses its bubbles shot up six inches into the air, it was so strong. . . . "Right you are, nuncle," said the hostess, coming in at the door with a dish of hot pies and a roast fowl that she set before us; and, my word, what a boon that was, for we were as ravenous as wolves. . . . It was after midnight when we saw that old Bodrîngă had left us and we slipped out, one by one, making for our lodgings;

myself with a load of dried pears and a large pumpkin that the hostess had given me; for she was as open-handed as she was lovely, the little darling! But when I reached our place what did I see? Nearly every one of my companions had “borrowed” some little thing; one of them, magnificent apples, another, Rădăşeni pears, old Bodrângă had picked up an armful of combings to set the fire burning, Trăsnea’s choice was hemp seed. Now Oşlobanu, whose boots had their uppers cut out of one cow’s hide and their soles out of another, was bringing up the rear; and, when he got inside, he lay down without taking his boots or clothes off and raised his feet up to the rafter in the ceiling, and you’ll never guess what happened next. A good tubful of beans, and no mistake, ran out of the tops of his boots, which he usually wore turned down and which he had turned up for this special occasion! My cousin Ion Mogorogea alone, son of an honest farmer, had taken no keepsake, while Zaharia, son of Gâtlan, had been content with kissing the lovely hostess.³⁹

Another writer of this period who should be mentioned here is Duiliu Zamfirescu (1858–1922), who was a diplomat and politician, like most of the authors discussed here. He depicted the life of a boyar family, the Comăneşteni, and their relatives in a sequence of five novels: *Viaţa la ţară* (Rural life, 1894), *Tănase Scatiu* (1895), *În război* (At war, 1898), *Îndreptări* (Advice, 1901–1902) and *Anna* (1906–1911).⁴⁰ He thus created the first multi-volume novel in Romanian literature. His work provides insight into the complicated social structures which characterized life in Romania at the end of the nineteenth century, focusing on the contrast between good traditional boyars and wicked ambitious upstarts. References to food are numerous. An example is how the English governess, Miss Sharp, forbade her young pupils to eat *mămăliguţa* (diminutive name for the staple food consisting of boiled corn flour, resulting in a porridge-like consistency). Yet, they were allowed to eat other “traditional food” such as lentil soup, fried meat of different kinds and preserves, and to drink coffee and other beverages.

The last example to be mentioned here is the work of the I. L. Caragiale (1852–1912),⁴¹ known for satirizing the society in which he lived, in the period from 1877 until the beginning of the twentieth century. In his comedies he especially targeted the liberal political elite from the provinces, making fun of (and thus criticizing) the habits of the clerks and their families. An exceptional short-story writer and author of the drama “Năpasta” (The calamity, 1890), Caragiale probably offers the sharpest illustrations of the illnesses of modern Romanian society, exposing the striking contrast between appearance and essence.⁴² In the novella “În vreme de război” (At times of war, 1898), he describes the food that a traveller could find at the booths which took the place of inns during the War for Independence, the name given to Romania’s participation in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877–1878. The food of the traveller consisted largely of *corrigi* (a kind of bread rings), bread, wine and snacks such as olives, ham, pork ribs and sausages, as the following citation demonstrates:

When Mr. Stavrache returned to the room a few minutes later, carrying a tray with wine and glasses, he found one of the guests standing and warming himself next to the fireplace, the one who had arrived first; the other one was stretched out on the bed with his face turned

towards the wall: a tired traveller, who had a lie down to relax his bones. "Did you find some snacks?" "They had... olives, smoked pork ribs, pastrami and sheep cheese."⁴³

This short survey has thus provided some glimpses into different ways in which food features in the literature of the period under discussion. This period also saw the introduction of cookbooks, which will be examined in the following section.

A Survey of Gastronomic Books Published between 1840 and 1878

EARLY GASTRONOMIC works, from the end of the seventeenth until the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, were produced in each of the three main regions of modern Romania (Wallachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania).

Transylvania was theoretically under Ottoman domination until the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699, when it became formally part of the Habsburg Empire, which had been already gradually increasing its influence on the area for some time. An early culinary work in Romanian was published there in Cluj (Klausenburg, Kolozsvár) in 1695 as *Cărticica meseriei de bucatar* (Booklet for the cooking profession). This was a revised edition, and the exact date of the first edition remains unknown.⁴⁴ Moldavia had been ruled by the Phanariots since 1711, and the former Prince Dimitrie Cantemir was exiled to Russia, where he published in 1716 an encyclopedic work called *Descriptio Moldaviae*, which also refers to gastronomic aspects of the history and the traditions of the Principality of Moldavia.

The earliest collection of recipes, brought together from different sources, translated and adapted from different languages (including Italian and German) was created in Wallachia at the end of the 17th or the beginning of the 18th century and has been associated with Stolnik Constantin Cantacuzino (1639–1716). It identifies itself as *Carte intru care se scriu mâncările de pește i raci, stridii, melci, legumi, erburi și alte mâncări de sec și de dulce, după orânduiala lor* (A book in which have been written dishes with crayfish, oysters, snails, herbs and other fasting and non-fasting dishes according to their appropriate order). The text of this work as it survives in a manuscript from the 18th century, Romanian Manuscript 1120 from the Library of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest, was published in 1997 with an introductory study, preface and afterword, under the title *O lume într-o carte de bucate: Manuscris din epoca brâncovenească* (A world in a cookbook: A manuscript from the time of Brâncoveanu).⁴⁵

Ioana Constantinescu observes in her foreword:

*Shocking to a reader today is the large number of ingredients, usually 10 or 12 for a single dish . . . with the most diverse and contrasting tastes and flavors, at the same time sweet, sour, spicy, peppered, salty, and extremely flavorful and perfumed (with rose water etc.), and often colored with saffron.*⁴⁶

She ascribes this, and the presence of cinnamon in almost every dish, to a possible Turkish influence. It could also be seen as a late survival of earlier tastes, reflecting the culinary preferences of the (western) European high society in the Middle Ages, which was, as Paul Freedman demonstrates, characterized by an extravagant use of spices, colors, and sharp contrasting flavors, such as sweet-sour. By the 17th–18th century tastes had drastically changed, in favor of a much more moderate use of spices and increasing use of sugar.⁴⁷

The title given by the modern editors to the first gastronomic collection mentioned, *A World in a Cookbook*, invokes the idea (which they indeed develop in their introduction and foreword) that a careful reader or researcher can examine a cookbook in such a way that it sheds light on the society in which it was created. This idea is further developed by Barbara Ketcham Wheaton as she outlines some of the ways in which cookbooks can be used in social history. She advises to proceed in a systematic way, focusing on a single element, before considering the book as a whole. These elements include

An inventory of the ingredients and a consideration of their qualities, an analysis of the techniques at the cook's command, a reconstruction of the kitchen and its equipment, and finally the serving and eating act that all this had led up to.

Thus equipped, one can “understand the social acts of preparing and eating meals in past times and places.”⁴⁸ I will try to apply some of these ideas to my examination of the first cookbook from the middle of the nineteenth century. After this analysis, three further cookbooks will feature in considerably less detail.

Mihail Kogălniceanu, already mentioned as a politician in the first section of this article, and as writer of literature in the second, and Costache Negruzzi, featured in the previous section, also created a cookbook. It has the title *200 de rețete cercate de bucate, prăjituri și alte trebi gospodărești* (200 tried recipes of savory and sweet dishes, and other household advice), and was published in Iași, in 1841, followed by the second and third editions in 1842 and 1846.⁴⁹ It is still in print, with an additional element to the title, *Carte de bucate boierești*, specifying the higher social stratum of the target audience of the work.

The work is extremely interesting from a linguistic point of view, showing invented words, words which betray their origins (calques), and interesting combinations of features. Recipe 171 for example is called “rahatlocum,” combining the Romanian form “rahat” (a literal translation would be inappropriate in English, being a rude term for excrements), with the “original” *lacoumi* (“locum,” various spellings exist), referring to the sweet known in English as “Turkish Delight.” Calques from German can be seen in “cuhen” (for Kuchen, for example in recipes 151–152) and in “tort de lenți” (129) which echoes the jam-filled *Linzerkuchen*. Recipe 15 creates a Romanian plural form “jamboane” from the French jambon, which is served with “friganele,” apparently from Greek *frigania*; slices of white bread soaked in milk with egg and then fried (what Americans call “French toast”). The title of recipe 16, “Hulubi în papilotun,” combines a regionalism derived from Ukrainian for what in general Romanian is called *porumbel*, pigeon, followed by a phrase derived from French (*papillote*), indicating that the pigeon

is to be wrapped in paper. French influence is evident throughout the volume. For recipe 8, “Bou de modă,” a French dish with the same name exists, “Bœuf à la mode.” While in this case the prepositions have been translated, a French preposition is left as such in the title of recipe 13, “Pui au cotton,” where only the first word is Romanian, the rest is French (chicken in cotton, represented by bacon and the white paper in which the chicken is covered). Looking at the two main terms in recipe 14, *pârjoale cu sardele*, one finds *sardelă* borrowed from Italian sardella, also used in German as Sardelle (in Romanian they are more commonly called *hamsie*, for the fish with the scientific name *Engraulis encrasicolus*, European anchovy) and *pârjoale* derived from the Turkish *pirzola*, referring to a slab of meat (in this case, sheep is used).

The 200 recipes are presented in the form of short numbered entries. They are not explicitly organized into themed subsections, such as starters, mains and deserts, or sections dedicated to specific main ingredients (e.g. meat, fish and vegetables). There are several sequences of multiple recipes dedicated to a main ingredient, or type of food. For example, recipes 43 and 44 explain how to make a pastry (pie) dough, which is then followed by two recipes for such pies/pastries (one with calf meat and the other with pigeons). It can also be noticed that, for example, recipes with chicken are spread throughout the book (e.g. recipe 9–13 form a cluster of five chicken recipes, and later on the same main ingredient features in recipe 62 “fried chicken with butter,” 65 “fried chicken” and 66 “chicken stuffed and fried”). Recipes 52 and 59 are for goose liver, but they are separated from each other by a sequence of six recipes for dumplings (55–58, *gălușicele*, currently spelled as *găluștele*, pl. of *gălușcă*). *Gălușicele* had already featured in a soup in recipe 3. The first six recipes are for soups, but a “budincă de grisă de pus în supă” (semolina balls to add to soups) is presented in recipe 78, followed by two more recipes for items which can be added to soups (a kind of toast with a spread made of lamb meat and chicken liver) and a *tarhana* made from sour milk, eggs and flour. This is followed by a sequence of recipes for sauces, for which different nouns are used: salce, sos, and bullion (the latter based on tomatoes and meant for preserving over winter), having as main ingredients tomatoes, small onions, mushrooms and butter.

After a sequence of 14 recipes for different types of *zalatînă* (jelly, 89–102, the first of which is a savory to be used in main dishes “however you wish”), the reader encounters a sequence of recipes with *budincă* in the title (103–128). Most of these “puddings” are sweet (even the first, although it is based on potatoes, mixed with butter, eggs, sugar, ground almonds, and lemon peel). Some of them are savory dishes, such as the *budincă* in recipes 114 with carrots, 115 with meat, 119 with potatoes and 123 with lobster. The defining characteristics of a *budincă* seem to be the presence of eggs and the baking in an oven. The “puddings” are followed by recipes for different types of cakes, sweets, bread, also featuring cherry liquor (181–183 *vișinap*⁵⁰), ice cream (170, titled simply *inghietată*⁵¹) and wine vinegar (192), as well as various bits of household advice. On a rough estimation it seems that more recipes are dedicated to deserts (including cakes, liquors etc.) than to savory dishes.

Although a recipe is by definition a piece of writing with instructions on how to make a certain dish,⁵² some of the entries in this cookbook explicitly have “how to make” in their titles. For example, entry 76 is entitled “cum se ferbe jambonul” (how to cook

ham), 157 “cum să face hamutul” (also how to make ham, but a different kind) and 186 “cum se fac drojdiile de pane” (how to make yeast for bread).

It can thus be seen that not all the entries are recipes in the strict sense, instructions for making a specific dish, indicating the ingredients and the process of preparation (including measurements). Unlike in current cookbooks, recipes do not begin with a list of ingredients, and one can look in vain for exact and consistent measurements, as will be illustrated shortly. Some of the entries are better perceived as advice on different topics. Some are related to the presentation of meals, other to the preservation of food items.

Some examples are entry 50 explaining how to preserve peas, 195 offering a way to keep nuts fresh for an entire year, 197 “a way to make sure that chickens lay eggs throughout the year,” 198 advising on how to make cloudy wine clear again and 200 which promises the reader that there is a way to keep meat fresh for a couple of weeks in summer. Recipes 67 and 68 describe how to make cheese from fresh cow’s milk, yellow cheese (*cașcaval*) in the first, and white cheese (*brânză*) in the second.

Kogălniceanu and Negruzzi pay attention not only to the cooking, but also to the serving of food. Recipe 51 instructs the cook to arrange the food (a carrot dish) on plates, and put it on the table while it is still hot. In recipe 115 the cook is instructed to cut the “meat pudding,” which has been baked in the oven, into “beautiful slices” and to decorate it with greens, implying that this is the way it is being served on plates or on a serving dish. Entry number 59, “Goose liver surrounded by a circle of rice,” is concerned with the aesthetic presentation of the dish. It first explains how to cook the livers, then instructs that they should be “arranged on the plate, where the circle of rice needs to be ready,” to be covered by sauce. Only after this they explain how to prepare the rice, and arrange it in “a nice circle” on the plate, further decorated with mushrooms and bits of lobster (or crayfish).

A few more observations can be made about the ingredients and the nature of the dishes cooked. Most of the savory recipes are based on meat or fish. The number of recipes with lobster/crab/crayfish (all the same word in Romanian, *rac*) is rather high. I did not spot a vegan recipe, or the term “de post,” referring to Orthodox fasting which presupposes a vegan diet. Meat-free recipes are few and far between, examples include 24 “French eggs,” 25 “spinach with pancakes,” 47 and 49 for beans and peas and 51 for a sweet carrot dish.

Several recipes combine more than one kind of meat or fish, indicating the affluent state of the target audience of the book. It might also raise the question of whether these recipes were actually prepared in reality. Where all the ingredients accessible at the time in the context of the readers of the book? Several recipes assume one has access to almonds (e.g. the sauce in recipe 81, and several of the “puddings” and cakes). Recipe 73, “dobă de curcan,” could pose a financial challenge as it requires a turkey, salt, pepper, allspice, cinnamon, lemon peel, tongue, ham (*jambon*), the leg of a cow, rabbit, bacon (*slanină*) and gherkins (pickled cucumbers). The jelly of recipe 93 contains vanilla and “the wood of chocolate” (*lemnul de ciocolată*), and the one of recipe 102 is based on four large oranges and a lemon. Tongue is used in multiple recipes (e.g. 34 for stuffed tongue and 71 for tongues kept with salt, niter and garlic in a *putina*, a wooden container, for 20 days, then aired and smoked). Brain also is a frequently reoccurring ingredient. Recipe

27 is for artichoke, to be filled with lobster or meat. Game features for example in recipes 37 and 61 for deer (roe, doe), and 60 for wild duck. Recipe 31 is for cow udders.

Spices are used in moderation throughout the cookbook. Recipe 10 (“hot chicken,” *pui fierbinți*): instructs the cook to add “fresh parsley, a bit of whole paper, a bit of allspice (*enibahar*, allspice, *Myrthus pimenta*),” to the pan (*tingire*) which also contains “small chicken, onion, carrot, one third of vinegar and two thirds of water.” This forms the sauce, or gravy in which the chicken is cooked and which is subsequently enriched with butter and thickened with flour. For recipe 22 one needs thyme (*cimbrisor*), cloves (*cuișoare*) and lemon juice. Recipe 76 explains how to prepare jambon, as follows:

put it (the ham) first in plain water to cook for half an hour, after which you add wine, less than the water. Add caraway seeds (chimion), allspice and other spices you wish. After it has cooked, you take it out of the water, and after it has cooled, it is ready.

Besides the use of spices, the absence of exact indications for quantities are worth noticing. Relative indicators of measurements, such as “a good spoonful” (of butter) and “a handful” (of capers) (in recipe 11) are directly related to the various actions one performs when one is cooking and indicate a mode of learning to cook by observing and participating. They are less suitable for a novice cook with no other guidance besides the words on the page in the book. This can also be seen for example in an instruction to “add salt as needed” (“sare pe cât trebuie,” in recipe 13).

Some recipes do use more exact measuring units, such as oka (an old measuring unit based on the container used for measuring, approximately 1.2829 kg) and *dramuri* (an old measuring unit of about 3,23 grams or 3,80 cm). Recipe 69, for pickled meat, instructs the cook to cut the meat (not specified how much, but it seems implied that one is dealing with the lean meat of one entire cow) in pieces of two or three *ocra* (one wonders whether it is a mistake for *dramuri*, as pieces of 6–10 cm make more sense than chunks of 2–3 kg...), and use for every *ocra* of salt 50 *dramuri* of niter (saltpeter, potassium nitrate, *silitră*) and 25 *dramuri* each of pepper, allspice, bay leaf and a bit of garlic. Layers of meat are to be alternated with layers of this mixture, until the *putina* (a wooden container) is full.

A few observations can be made about what the book reveals about cooking equipment and procedures. Several recipes instruct the reader to cook ingredients in a *tingire*, a word of Turkish origin (*tencere*) denoting a big (deep) pan/pot made of copper or cast iron in which food was cooked. The pan *tingire* is usually connected with the action “to cook” (boil). The action “frying” is also used. Half way into recipe 13 (*pui au cotton*) the cook is instructed to melt “a bit of butter” in a frying pan (*tigaie*), and place ingredients in it which had already been fried. The first time, no indication was given about the kind of pan, and kind or quantity of oil (butter, other fat). “Fat” is used in some recipes, without indicating the specific kind. More precise instructions about frying in butter are given in recipe 25, spinach with pancakes:

put butter in a fry pan until it heats up, then add the batter (a mixture of egg, milk and flour for making pancakes) in a thin layer, using a knife to spread it out. Let it fry until it is done on one side, then turn it over to the other side.

The precise instructions for this part of the recipe contrast with the vague guidelines for what follows: “then prepare the spinach the way this is done.” The final step is arranging the plates by alternating layers of pancake and of spinach, “then it is ready.” The conclusion which can be drawn is that the Moldavian boyar target audience (or at least their cooks) was already familiar with preparing spinach, but not (or less) with pancakes.

In recipe 28 (potatoes with anchovy, *sardele*) both the pan/pot (*tingire*) and the frying pan (*tigaie*) are used, and the source of heating (related to the type of cooking equipment, stove) is also mentioned, as the cook is instructed to leave the food for a little while longer “pe jaratic,” a word of Slavonic origin, *žaratúku*, indicating cooking on hot embers. I have already mentioned some of the recipes in which meat is kept in a *putina* (wooden container) to marinate, for specific periods of time after which it is prepared further, in different ways, before serving. In recipe 75, pastrami from pork (the leg of a pig) is placed in a *putina* with allspice, salt, and garlic for marinating for three weeks, after which it is first aired for three days and smoked and then cooked in wine with three onions, bay leaves and rosemary.

Baking in an oven, in a vessel called a *calup*, is the procedure required for example in the *budinca* recipes, and explicitly mentioned in most of them (e.g. 103, 104, 106, 107, 108). Recipe 105 does not specify an oven, but mentions baking “on medium heat” and 111 warns that “the fire should not be too hot.” Recipe 119 instructs the cook to “bake it in the oven as for the other *budinca*.” The meat *budinca* of recipe 115 is prepared in a *tingire* which is covered with embers (*jeratic*). The *budinca* with lobster of recipe 123 is “cooked in steam for an hour.” Most of these “pudding” recipes also require that the ingredients are mixed for the duration of an hour, which seems somewhat cumbersome in a busy kitchen or household.

“Chopping” is frequently mentioned as an action, sometimes “very finely” (cutting the ingredients into very small pieces), so the use of knives of a certain quality is implied. The use of sieves is mentioned. In many recipes the stock in which the meat was cooked is used as a sauce (gravy), which is first filtered through a sieve, thus leaving bits of vegetable and spices behind.

The scale of the cooking implied is illustrated for example by recipe 78 which specifies that the resulting soup serves 10 people. Recipe 121, for a chocolate pudding, also using almonds and vanilla, specifies that “this is only for eight people.” The “lobster pudding which is called *meridon*” of recipe 123 requires 40 or 50 tails and legs of lobster, and 50 *dramuri* of peas. The book thus clearly aims at estates and manor houses, rather than at smaller family households. This is evident both in the quantities and in the selection of ingredients, many of which would not be available to “the average citizen.”

This anthology of recipes, selected from various sources which have not been specified, can be placed in the context of the general outlook and aims of Mihail Kogălniceanu and Costache Negruzzi as progressive politicians and men of culture open to occidental influences, seeking to modernize Romanian society and wanting to change

the world they lived in. They were members of a rising Romanian bourgeoisie, who sought to distance themselves from the traditional boyars, the aristocracy, which in the Phanariot age (from 1711 to 1821) was identified with the general category of *protipendada* (nobility).⁵³

Leaving aside the question of practicalities, the book was a success, and seemed to have initiated a taste for cookbooks in the decades which followed. In 1846, the year of the third edition of Kogălniceanu and Negruzzi's collection of 200 recipes, another cookbook was published in Iași, this time a translation of a work which had appeared in French a year earlier. Manolachi Drăghici translated the book of 500 recipes "from the great kitchen of Robert, the first cook of the French Court, appropriate for all social classes."⁵⁴ This collection has a clearer structure than the chaotic sequence of recipes of Negruzzi and Kogălniceanu. The recipes are organized into 33 chapters, with titles such as "for soups," "for sauces," "for pork," "for vegetables" and "for waffles."⁵⁵

The thirst for cookbooks around the middle of the 19th century is further illustrated by the first book of this genre written by a woman, and the first to be published in the Romanian Principalities, in 1846 or 1847 (but usually cited from the second or third edition, both of 1849): Maria Maurer, *Carte de bucate: Coprinde 190 niște de bucate, prăjituri, creme, spume, jaluține, înghețate, și cum se păstrează lucruri pentru iarnă: Toate alese și încercate de O Prietină a tutulor femeilor celor casnice* (Cookbook: Containing 190 recipes for savory dishes, cakes, creams, mousses, jellies, ice-creams, and how to preserve food for winter, tried by a friend of all homemakers). Unlike Kogălniceanu and Negruzzi she does not emphasize how the food looks on the plate, according to a set of aesthetic rules, but focuses on the preparation of the meals, and related activities, as indicated by the title. Another contrast with the first mentioned recipe book is the clear structure of the work, even clearer than that of French cook Robert (translated by Manolachi Drăghici). The numbered recipes are organized into 14 unnumbered sections, with titles such as soups, sauces, vegetables, chicken, game and other meals, salads, jellies and ice creams, cakes ("felurimi de prăjituri") and "pickles for winter." This last section is dedicated to preserving food for winter, not only in the form of pickling.

Several of the features mentioned in the analysis of Kogălniceanu and Negruzzi's cookbook are repeated in the work of Maurer, such as the term "rahatocum" (for Turkish delight), and the use of exotic ingredients such as orange, lemon, and vanilla.

Compared with the boyars' cookbook, the work of Maurer gives more attention to vegetables, and less to meat. This is illustrated by the fourth and fifth sections. The first of these, containing recipes 29–41, is dedicated to vegetables, and includes recipes for cabbage, carrot, cauliflower, peas, potatoes, spinach, green beans and artichoke. It is followed by a section tellingly called "side dishes to accompany vegetables" (recipes 42–54) which includes toast, fried egg, fried liver, fried brain, schnitzel, sausage, and fried cow tongue.

Maria Maurer can be considered a pioneer in the area of culinary education. She was a teacher in boarding schools where young ladies were trained to successfully manage the kitchens of their estates or other type of household. In the foreword to the second edition, she notes, on 1 May 1849: "This book, of great usefulness in marriage, was

written by me two years ago, to assist my dear students, whom I brought up from young ages, whose happiness is one of my most significant desires.”⁵⁶

The teacher clearly explains how to prepare the dishes, which on the whole are fairly simple. Her intention seems to have been to reach as many young women as possible, including those who did not have access to boarding school.

The absence of spices is noticeable. In contrast with the extravagant use of spices and combinations of different flavors in the cookbook preserved in Romanian Manuscript 1120, and the moderate use of spices such as cloves, allspice and cinnamon in the 200 recipes selected by Kogălniceanu and Negruzzi, Maria Mauer seems to be less interested in using or promoting them. The taste of dishes is enhanced by herbs, and by ingredients such as capers, which also feature in the *200 Recipes*.

As an illustration I will end this short treatment of this extremely popular (and best-selling) cookbook with the text of recipe 162, “Pleziruri,” the first item in the cake section:

*Mix together 50 dramuri of flour, 4 egg yolks, 25 dramuri of almonds, peeled and finely chopped, with 50 dramuri of sifted sugar, the peel of a lemon, a liter of milk, and 4 spoonfuls of wine. Mix all these ingredients thoroughly. Next, the iron mold for the cones is heated over the fire, greased with a bit of butter, cleaned with some paper, and placed again above the fire, so that it is heated well. Then you open the mold, and place a spoonful of the mixture (batter) on the bottom side. Close the mold, then rotate it constantly when you hold it over the fire, until you estimate that it is ready. You will need another person to take the cone out of the mold and place it over a spatula (stirring stick). After it has cooled, take it of the spatula. Continue this way until you have finished.*⁵⁷

One will notice that, compared with the recipes in the book of Kogălniceanu and Negruzzi, both the instructions for how to proceed and the quantity (measurements) of the ingredients are more precise.

This survey will close by briefly mentioning the first cookbook to refer to a Romanian cuisine in its title: *Bucătăria română: Carte coprinzătoare de mai multe rețete de bucate și buffet* (Romanian cuisine: Comprehensive book of many recipes and starters) by Christ Ionin. It was first published in 1865 and offers, in spite of the title, both foreign recipes, reproduced from various publications, and Romanian ones picked up in Bucharest. It is the only one of the four cookbooks mentioned here which does not mention in the title the number of recipes it presents.⁵⁸

A very interesting aspect of these four cookbooks mentioned here is that all of them are still in print, and one would thus assume in use, in the form of new editions produced in the 21st century. A relevant question, which will remain unanswered in the present study, is whether the editors and publishers embarked upon these new edition adventures with the idea that the books can still be used as cookbooks, or were the projects undertaken mainly for the historical, cultural and linguistic interests evident in these specimens of the genre of cookbook? To rephrase the question: are these new editions of 19th century cookbooks kept in the kitchen or in the study?

Conclusions

THIS ARTICLE has first presented the historical context of the period under consideration, 1840–1888, a period in which major changes took place. Romanian cuisine, not in the least due to the geographical location of the country, on the margins of the Habsburg, Ottoman, and Russian Empires, showed a synthesis of eastern and western influences. References to food and eating abound in the literature of the period, rooted as it was in daily life, mainly of the upper classes, but sometimes, as in the stories of Ion Creangă, providing insight into peasant's attitudes to food. In some literary works sharp contrasts were made between what was perceived as “our food” (in fact mainly local adaptations of Greek and Ottoman dishes) and “foreign novelties,” as the cuisine gradually took on more western influences. The second and third part of this article shows that the synthesis of eastern and western culinary influences worked out in different ways in literature and in cookbooks.

The very same “blanmanjale,” white French sauces, satirized in the comedies of Vasile Alecsandri as undesirable novelties and contrasted with authentic wholesome food, feature in the anthology of 200 recipes by Kogălniceanu and Negruzzi and in the cookbook by Maria Maurer. Although Kogălniceanu created in his novel a literary character who complained of “strange indefinable mixtures,” adding the curse “may they remain stuck in the throats of the Swabians who invented them,” the same author in his cookbook seems to promote exactly these kinds of foreign dishes. The contrast between “authentic” and “novel/undesirable,” characterizing the eastern and western aspects of the synthesis created in Romanian cuisine, seems less manifest in cookbooks than in fiction. Recipes of different origin are encountered side by side in the synthesis affirmed in the gastronomic handbooks.

In the introduction it has been observed that in the period under concern here, there was no clear middle class. The cookbooks analyzed in the last main section of this study all belong to the upper class, and reflect the taste of this, relatively small, segment of society. It could be argued that, to a certain extent, cookbooks such as that of modernizing politicians Kogălniceanu and Negruzzi and of boarding school teacher Maria Maurer, who promoted simplicity and diversity, may have contributed to the strengthening of the identity of the bourgeoisie, and thus to the development of something equivalent to a middle class.

□

Notes

1. The topic of Turkish influences on the Romanian language has been discussed from all perspectives at least since the 19th century. A contribution which focuses specifically on the fate of culinary terminology with Turkish origins has been provided by Thede Kahl, “Zum Schicksal kulinarischer Orientalismen,” in *Culinaria balcanica*, edited by Thede Kahl, Peter Mario Kreuter, and Christina Vogel (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2015), 131–148.

2. Luminița Drugă and Nadia-Nicoleta Morărașu, “În căutarea gustului ‘pierdut’: Regăsirea identității naționale prin denumiri de mâncăruri, preparate și meniuri tradiționale,” in *Proceedings of the International Conference on Communication, Context, Interdisciplinarity*, vol. 2, *Comunicare, context, interdisciplinaritate: Studii și articole*, edited by Iulian Boldea (Târgu-Mureș: Petru Maior University Press, 2012), 141–150. A contrasting view is presented by Costin Scorpan, *Istoria României: Enciclopedie* (Bucharest: Nemira, 1997), 131, who argues that the first layer (the first types of food of the Romanians) consist of bread, polenta and *colivă* (boiled sweetened wheat). Dishes resulting from a synthesis of diverse influences were superposed on this first layer, assimilated, diversified, and identified as Romanian cuisine in the gastronomical annals.
3. Florin Nacu, “European Influences in Reforming Social Structures of Modern Romania,” in *Sociology, Education Sciences, International Relations, Conference GIDNI 2*, edited by Iulian Boldea (Târgu-Mureș: Arhipelag XXI Press, 2015), 274–278.
4. Amply analyzed for example by Constanța Vintilă-Ghițulescu, *Patimă și desfătare: Despre lucrurile mărunte ale vieții cotidiene în societatea românească 1750–1860* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2015), 33–38.
5. Gheorghe Platon, ed., *Istoria Românilor*, vol. 7, tome 2, *De la Independență la Marea Unire* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2003), 338.
6. Nacu, “European Influences,” 274–278.
7. Florin Nacu, *Conceptul de modernizare a României prin discursuri, inițiative și elemente de strategie politică (1859–1914)* (Craiova: Sitech, 2018), 15–19.
8. Florin Nacu, *Aspecte ale istoriei moderne și contemporane a României din perspectiva cercetării istorice naționale și internaționale a ultimilor 25 de ani (1989–2014)* (Iași: Tipografia Moldova, 2015), 23–27.
9. Florin Nacu, “Protest Movements in Oltenia in 1848–1866,” *Anuarul Institutului de Cercetări Socio-Umane “C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor”* (Craiova) 19 (2018): 52–62; id., “Profilul industrial al Olteniei și influența acestuia asupra societății (1866–1914),” *Arhivele Olteniei* (Craiova), new ser., 32 (2018): 57–64.
10. Florin Nacu, “Why Did the Socialist Movement Fail in Modern Romania?,” *Revista de științe politice* (Craiova) 61 (2019): 80–91.
11. Florin Nacu, *Structuri sociale în România anilor 1856–1918* (Craiova: Aius, 2013), 89–94.
12. Florin Nacu, *The Union of all the Romanians—From Political Concept to National Ideal* (Berlin: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2020), 139–143.
13. Florin Nacu, *Împlinirea dezideratului revoluționar pașoptist în timpul domniei lui Alexandru Ioan Cuza* (Iași: Tipografia Moldova, 2015), 10.
14. Sorin Liviu Damean, *Carol I al României 1866–1881* (Bucharest: Paideia, 2000), 58.
15. Ioan Scurtu, Ion Alexandrescu, Ion Bulei, and Ion Mamina, *Enciclopedia de istorie a României* (Bucharest: Meronia, 2001), 30–31.
16. Florin Nacu, “De la ‘clăcășie’ la ‘neoioabăgie,’—reperce istoriografice privind evoluția ‘chestiunii țărănești,’” *Arhivele Olteniei*, new ser., 29 (2015): 126–137.
17. This word has multiple meanings, including boyars, nobility, exploiters, upstarts, parvenus and boot lickers.
18. Nicolae Filimon, *Ciocoi vechi și noi* (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 2017), 10.
19. *Ibid.*, 150–151.

20. An examination of Alecsandri as a forgotten author, along with an assessment of the question of whether his plays can still be performed has been provided by Horst Fassel, "Vasile Alecsandri, ein Vergessener? Kann man Kleintheater von anno 1843–1870 wieder auf die Bühne bringen?," in *Vergessen, Verdrängt, Verschwunden: Aufgegebene Kulturen, Beziehungen und Orientierungen in der Balkanromania*, edited by Thede Kahl, Peter Mario Kreuter, and Cristina Vogel (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2018), 127–149.
21. *Chirița în Iași sau două fete ș-o neneacă* (1850), *Chirița în provincie* (1852), *Chirița în voiagiu* (1864) and *Chirița în balon* (1874). The texts can be found in the volume of collected plays: Vasile Alecsandri, *Teatru* (Bucharest: Socec, 1903).
22. Alecsandri, "Chirița în provincie," in *Teatru*, 494.
23. A calque from Turkish, a square item of furniture, covered with carpets, with a heating system underneath (a container with charcoal), used as a divan/sofa.
24. A kind of bun made from cornflour and buttermilk, baked in the oven with butter, cheese, or cream.
25. Alecsandri, "Chirița în provincie," 466.
26. Cabbage leaves stuffed with rice and meat, like Turkish sarma or Greek dolmades (but with cabbage rather than vine leaves).
27. A variant form of *iahnie*, from the Turkish yahni; a stew, usually made from beans.
28. Variant of *ostropel*, etymology unknown, a different type of stew, with garlic.
29. Alecsandri, "Vasile Porojan," in *Dridri*, edited by Georgeta Rădulescu-Dulgheru, anthology by Tudor Păcuraru, historical-literary landmarks by Daniel Nicolescu (Bucharest: Minerva, 1987), 281.
30. His brothers, Alexandru Ioan Cuza and his brothers, and Mihail Kogălniceanu, all studied at that institution. The strict schedule of that boarding school in Paris, the Spartan education, along with the austere meals (a tactic employed to make the young students forget the abundance from their parents' estates), was an important aspect of the training of these great Romanians.
31. Alecsandri, "Vasile Porojan," 278.
32. A female functionary in charge of the household personnel of an estate.
33. Calque from French: fricassee, a dish consisting of pieces of meat fried in a sauce.
34. From French: vol-au-vent; a specific type of dough filled with fish, meat or mushrooms.
35. Mihail Kogălniceanu, "Tainele inimii," in *Scrieri literare*, anthology, afterword and bibliography by Paul Cornea (Bucharest, Minerva, 1976).
36. Costache Negruzzi, *Fragmente istorice: Alexandru Lăpușneanu* (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 2017), 37–40.
37. C. Negruzzi, "Istoria unei plăcinte," in *Negru pe alb: Scrisori la un prieten*, afterword and bibliography by Ion Rotaru (Bucharest: Minerva, 1976), 100.
38. Ion Creangă, *Opere: Povești, povestiri, Amintiri din copilărie, teatru, scrisori, rostiri, zicători*, anthology, biographical itinerary, notes and selection of the critical texts by Daniel Corbu (Iași: Princeps, 2006), 23–26.
39. Ion Creangă, *Amintiri din copilărie. Povești. Povestiri* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2013), 71–72. English version: *Memories of My Boyhood: Stories and Tales*, translated by Ana Cartianu and R. C. Johnston (Bucharest: Minerva, 1978), 80–82.
40. Al. Săndulescu, *Pe urmele lui Duiliu Zamfirescu* (Bucharest: Sport-Turism, 1989), 87–92.

41. Anatol E. Baconski, "Caragiale și Arghezi," *Viața românească* (Bucharest) 15, 6 (1962): 221–222.
42. Constantin Popescu-Cadem, "I. L. Caragiale, recurs la biografie," *Manuscriptum* (Bucharest) 8, 2 (27) (1977): 184–187.
43. I. L. Caragiale, "În vreme de război," in *Amintiri, nuvele, povestiri* (Bucharest: Editura pentru Literatură, 1962), 376.
44. *Cărticica meseriei de bucătar: Cartea de bucate tipărită la Cluj în 1695*, translation, introduction and explanatory notes by József Lukács (Bucharest: GastroArt, 2019), 6–7.
45. *O lume într-o carte de bucate: Manuscris din epoca brâncovenească*, transcription of the text, foreword and afterword by Ioana Constantinescu, with an introduction by Matei Cazacu (Bucharest: Editura Fundației Culturale Române, 1997). The manuscript belonged to the collection of Moses Gaster (Gaster MS 59), who identified it the catalogue which accompanied his manuscripts when he sold them to the Romanian academy in 1936 as "a very important copy of a cookbook," dated to 1749 based on a note on fol. 1, understood as a statement by the copyist of the manuscript: "Pis. az Mihai logofăt ot Greci, dumnealui Alexie biv vel (fost mare) clucer za arie. Mai 18 dni, leat 7257" (=1749). Constantinescu (p. 84) interprets this not as a scribal note, since the handwriting differs from the handwriting of the text in the manuscript, but as a statement that this Mihai, at the initiative of the former great *clucer* (intendant) Alexie (a well-known figure at the time), made a copy of the text from this manuscript (thus creating another manuscript of the work) which he finished on 18 May 1749. For more on Gaster and his Romanian manuscripts see Maria Cioată, "The Collection of Dr. Gaster at the Library of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest," in *Biblical Apocrypha in South-Eastern Europe and Related Areas: Proceedings of the Session held at the 12th International Congress of South-East European Studies (Bucharest, 2–6 September 2019)*, edited by Maria Cioată, Anissava Miltenova, and Emanuela Timotin (Brăila: Istros, 2021), 277–312, 297.
46. Ioana Constantinescu, foreword to *O lume într-o carte de bucate*, 89–90.
47. Paul Freedman, *Out of the East: Spices and the Medieval Imagination* (New Haven–London: Yale University Press, 2008). He examines the "demand, really the *craving*, for spices in Europe during the Middle Ages, from roughly A.D. 1000 until 1513" (p. 1). He notices a marked decrease in spices by the eighteenth century when "European food preferences had dramatically changed in favor of a richer but blander taste, and spices were no longer associated with healing or the sacred" (p. 2). In his conclusion, tellingly titled "The Rise and Fall of Spices," he attributes this change in taste to France's position of "undisputed gastronomic leadership" which it assumed in the period of Louis XIV. "One of the most distinctive features of the French culinary revolution of the seventeenth century was the rejection of spices." Sauces for example were no longer based on vinegar and seasoned with spices (such as nutmeg and cinnamon), but became thicker and richer due to the use of flour, butter and egg, and were flavored with capers, anchovies or mushrooms (p. 216).
48. Barbara Ketcham Wheaton, "Cookbooks As Resources for Social History," in *Food in Time and Place: The American Historical Association Companion to Food History*, edited by Paul Freedman, Joyce E. Chaplin, and Ken Albala (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2014), 276–277.

49. Mihail Kogălniceanu and Costache Negruzzi, *200 rețete cercate de bucate, prăjituri și alte trebi gospodăresci: Tipărite cu cheltueala și îngrijirea unei societăți de iubitori de înaintirea și strălucirea neamului Românesc* (in Cyrillic) (Iași: La Cantora Foiei Sătești, 1841).
50. The word is apparently derived from Turkish, and literally means cherry water. The Romanian variant, currently more commonly known as *vișinata*, is a kind of cherry liqueur.
51. It has been argued, convincingly according to a reviewer of the volume, that the term *ingheța*, as it is currently spelled, goes back to the Italian *gelato*. Luminița Fassel, “Haben die Rumänen eine eigene Küche? Eine diachronische und nicht zuletzt moldauische Perspektive,” in *Culinaria balcanica*, 157–168. Review by Wolfgang Schweickard, in *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* 131, 4 (2015): 1216.
52. Characterized by a fascinating interplay of oral and written aspects, as studied by Ioan Miliță and Sorin Guia, “Rețetele culinare: oralitate și scripturalitate” (I), *Diacronia* (Iași) 5 (2017): 1–12.
53. This contrast between the rising bourgeoisie and the old aristocracy and the way this manifested in their attitudes to food can be placed in a wider European context, as pointed out for example by Paul Freedman in his Introduction: “A New History of Cuisine” to *Food: The History of Taste*, edited by Paul Freedman (Berkeley-Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007).
54. Like the other cookbooks mentioned here, a new edition has been prepared in the 21st century: Manolachi Drăghici, *Rețete cercate în număr de 500 din Bucătăria cea mare a lui Robert, întâiul bucătar al Curții Franței, potrivit pentru toate sterile*, edited by Olga Rusu and Constantin-Armand Vizitiu (Iași: Opera Magna, 2005).
55. For an analysis, see Mariana Pitar, “Tradiție și inovație în limbajul gastronomic românesc din secolul al XIX-lea: Un exemplu de traducere,” in *Quaestiones Romanicae: Lucrările Colocviului Internațional Comunicare și cultură în România europeană (ediția I/15–16 iunie 2012)/Papers of the International Colloquium Communication and Culture in Romance Europe (First Edition/15th–16th of June 2012)* (Szeged: JATEPress, 2012), 400–405.
56. Maria Maurer, *Carte de bucate: Coprinde 190 rețete de bucate, prăjituri, creme, spume, jale-tine, înghețate și cum se păstrează lucruri pentru iarnă: Toate alese și încercate de O Prietina a tuturilor femeilor celor casnice* (in Cyrillic) (Bucharest: Tipografia lui Iosef Copainig, 1849). In her foreword to the new edition (Bucharest: Jurnalul, 2006), Simona Lazăr (who prepared this edition) draws attention to the uncertainty of the year of the first edition, and the remarkable sequence of new editions, five by the turn of the century. Each new edition indicates that a thousand copies had been sold (the editions might actually be simple new print sequences, rather than a new edition as the term is currently understood, with substantial changes).
57. *Ibid.*, 87.
58. Christ Ionin, *Bucătăria română: Carte coprinzătoare de mai multe rețete de bucate și buf-fet* (Bucharest: Stephan Rassidescu, 1865), new edition, with notes and foreword by Simona Lazăr (Bucharest: GastroArt, 2018).

Abstract

**A Survey of Romanian Culinary Heritage
in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century**

The article outlines the culinary history of the period 1840–1888, based on memoirs, literary works, and the first Romanian gastronomic works. The article offers a presentation of main events and of social structures, covering the relationships between the peasantry and the boyars, the free professions and the industrialists. It draws attention to the different ways in which the Romanian gastronomic synthesis of eastern and western influences operated in references to food and eating in literary works and in Romanian cookbooks from the middle of the nineteenth century. The suggestion is made that cookbooks might have played a role in strengthening the identity of the bourgeoisie, and thus the development of a middle class.

Keywords

gastronomy, gastronomic books, nineteenth-century recipes, Romanian history, Romanian literature