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Library Four Centuries of the Cooks, Writers, and Recipes That Made the Modern Cookbook (2012) which at heart is a commentated catalogue of her and her late husband Mark Cherniavsky's own collection. In *Women in the Kitchen* she has identified a dozen women recipe writers and for each she has written a short biographical note before progressing to a handful of recipes from their works. These recipes she gives in their original and in her own tried and tested forms – useful when dealing with the seventeenth century, not so necessary with Alice Waters. The authors are for the most part American, although exceptions are made for the forerunners Hannah Woolley, Hannah Glasse and Maria Rundell. The biographies are short, but neither unhelpful nor unsympathetic, though sometimes quibbles might be raised (e.g. over Amelia Simmons, or Hannah Woolley's exact bibliography) that might have not arisen had more space been possible. But apart from the overall message (women do the hard work and write many of the best books), the true worth of this book lies in the recipes, which are admirable and admirably chosen.

Maryann Tebben: *Savoir-Faire. A History of Food in France*: Reaktion Books, London, 2020: 340 pp., hardback, £25.00.

This is a book that will please both Francophiles and Francophobes since its author is a bit of both. On the one hand, for Tebben, the French are expert in the field of gastronomy and have transformed the way we eat but, on the other, they are also experts in self-promotion giving the public the impression that they are much more important and influential than they actually are. As she puts it, 'The key to the dominance of French cuisine is not just the quality of the food, but the stories the French tell about it. And the French are excellent story tellers ... understanding the dominance of French cuisine in global food history requires a look beyond the facts, dates and statistics to include the tales invented, repeated, printed and published about those facts and dates.'

A case in point is the French use of the term *terroir*. She quotes Amy Trubek who calls the promotion of *terroir* in France 'a national project to preserve and promote France's much-vaunted agrarian past,' then Tebben adds, 'it certainly aligns with a belief in and nostalgia for the peasant farmer responsible for keeping France rooted to the soil. But *terroir* is also a marketing device for high-end wines, a protectionist measure aimed at defining France's borders and a means of excluding foods and influences deemed external to the French identity ... The present-day understanding of *terroir* used in the evaluation of French products vying for an *Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée* label goes a step further to include human expertise or *savoir-faire*, yet another French term encoding quality and talent. The French by their food tell the world the story of superiority, justifying a gastronomic legacy pre-ordained by natural resources, impossible to find anywhere else and accomplished with a long-standing tradition of French culinary genius, also naturally bred.'

Tebben claims her book is innovative in its approach to the history of French food because of the importance she accords to literary sources. She is not alone, however, in taking this approach although she makes no mention of the many volumes devoted to literary description of meals and seems to be unaware of Norman Kiell's dated but invaluable *Food and Drink in Literature. A Selective Annotated Bibliography* (Scarecrow Press, 1995).

The result of Tebben's research is a book which is a mix of facts extracted from primary sources, others culled from the work of fellow scholars, and contains what she calls 'hidden jewels,' collected from literary texts. One of her best chapters, however, puts literary references aside. It has the incongruous title 'French Innovations: Cookbooks, Champagne, Canning and Cheese.' Each one of these subjects are treated in an informative, though limited, manner. Her survey of French cookbook publishing, for instance, is devoted almost exclusively to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century cookbooks. The five pages she devotes to Champagne are, on the other hand, more inclusive both historically and technically, as is the section on Nicolas Appert and the development of canning in the early nineteenth century. This is followed by a discussion of French cheeses which provides us with an historically rich survey of cheese-making techniques and includes a lengthy section devoted to Camembert and the myths surrounding its creation.

The 37 pages she devotes to 'Butchers, Bakers and Winemakers' gives us a heavy dose of economic history as recorded in the work of more specialized historians whom she quotes at length before adding some comments of her own about the foods of rural France, contrasting it with the food of Paris which, too often, passes as 'French Food.

Her sixth chapter is devoted to her real passion – food in literature. Much is said about food in Proust, Zola and Flaubert before ending the chapter with references to the cinematic treatment of French food in recent times.

As Tebben cautions, 'This history is necessarily a snapshot, a holistic but inevitably partial view but one that aims to clarify the origins of French food identity from our vantage point as modern eaters.' This she does and among the many snapshots that make up the book there are, indeed, some 'hidden jewels'.

Philip Hyman