

Carmen Soares, Cilene da Silva Gomes Ribeiro, eds.: *Mesas luso-brasileiras*: Coimbra University Press, 2018: 2 vols.

These two virtual volumes grew out of the 2017 conference in a biennial Portuguese-Brazilian series organized by DIAITA, a very active network of research on food history based at Coimbra. The primary focus may be on the Portuguese and Brazilians – their food, nutritional health, gastronomic pleasures – but, after all, the Portuguese travelled the world and conquered no small part of it, imbibing influences from ancient and medieval Europe, from the Orient, and the Occident. Expect to be surprised by the cultural and historical range of these volumes. The main language is Portuguese, but with several articles in English (Bruno Lauriou is always worth reading) and with abstracts in English throughout. The two volumes are available online: go to www.doabooks.org/ and search for ‘Mesas luso-brasileiras’. The books are also available as paperbacks if you would rather read print.

ANDREW DALBY

Roblyn Rawlins and David Livert: *Making Dinner: How American cooks produce and make meaning out of the evening meal*: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019: 218 pp., hardback, £85.00.

There is an old saying about not judging a book by its cover so perhaps I'm being too pernickety here, but looking at the vegetables displayed on the cover of *Making Dinner* I find myself wondering, 'Just what's going on? Why is someone slicing through the middle of an unpeeled onion, and the broccoli already cut in half? Shouldn't those carrots have a good scrape first? Who eats carrots and asparagus together anyway?' My irritation with the illustration is perhaps a little unfair as the book itself is a piece of serious research. It seeks to determine whether home-cooked food is, as is often said, really being usurped in favour of eating out and if cooking skills are being lost. In their attempt to find the answer the authors present a study of some 50 or so families across America and how they approach their evening meal. A combination of research methods includes in-depth interviews with each main provider who also kept a cooking journal detailing the meals made during the course of 14 days. The journals document some 300 dinners which Rawlins and Livert use to explore how American home cooks think about themselves and their relationships with their families through the medium of food and cooking. A sociological study such as this regarding the eating habits of American families, carried out at a particular point in time, makes a useful contribution, becoming part of a cohesive body of knowledge on the subject and perhaps in fifty or a hundred years time will provide an insight into how patterns of food consumption in the home in the early part of the twenty-first century have changed or become modified over time. Scholars who research food history and related fields will be more able than I to comment on its value. My own stance is that of an