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essentially a court style – so quickly became representative of Indian cookery in general. The food we are served in our High Street curry houses is a version of Mughal food, albeit probably cooked by Sylhetis who themselves eat Bengali cooking. And it should also be said that Mughal food itself differs enormously across the country. There is a recognizable difference between the Mughal dishes served in Delhi and Murshidabad, Lucknow and Hyderabad.

The arrival of Europeans brought huge changes as well. The most transformative group among the Europeans were clearly the Portuguese, who seized Goa from the Sultan of Bijapur in 1510. Having already established colonies in the New World, the Portuguese introduced potatoes, chillies, okra, papayas, pineapples, cashews, peanuts, maize, custard-apples and guava to India. Sen also wonders if the Portuguese might have influenced the famous sweets of Bengal. Bengali sweets contain a kind of cream cheese called *chhana*. *Chhana* is made by splitting milk with citric acid – a well-known method in Europe but one that breaks a major taboo in Indian cuisine. I have read Sen's Oxford Symposium paper on the subject and find it very convincing.

The British, unlike the Portuguese, seem to have brought comparatively little in culinary terms. In this case, the influence worked the other way round although there certainly is a strange half-remembered Anglo cuisine that can be found in clubs and very old hotels still.

The one massive contribution Britain made to the food of India is tea. The first tea grown in India was from Chinese bushes planted high up in Darjeeling but shortly afterwards indigenous tea was discovered in Assam. Now tea is the great Indian beverage par excellence.

The Indian Diaspora, which basically began in the 1830s, has taken Indian food around the world. There are now 30 millions Indians living outside India, a scale matched only by the Chinese. Chicken Tikka Masala is said to be Britain's favourite meal.

All in all, Feasts and Fasts is a fascinating book, packed with information and one that should stand as the definitive work for some time.

Joe Roberts

Reynald Abad: *Le Grand Marché: l'Approvisionnement alimentaire de Paris sous l'Ancien Régime*: Fayard, 2002: 1032 pp., paperback, €45.70.

Magisterial is the first word that comes to mind to descrine Reynald Abad's 1000-page *magnum opus*. Thorough, comprehensive, painstakingly researched, and logically and lucidly written follow soon after. This examination of the food supply for Paris in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries represents historical research on a grand scale and complements Steven Kaplan's earlier study of the grain and flour trade in the eighteenth century.

Abad begins by asking five basic questions: Where did the foodstuffs come from? How did they reach Paris? Who were the men and women responsible

for their transport and trade? What was the extent of this trade? How did the authorities intervene in the supply of food to Paris?

Simple they might be, but finding answers is not so straightforward; implicit in each is a sequence of additional questions: How are the foodstuffs produced? What are the seasonal patterns of supply and demand? How are transport routes chosen? The bibliographical evidence suggests that Abad has consulted every single archive, every provincial administrative report, every contemporaneous treatise on farming and fishing, on food and cooking, to produce this fascinating and invaluable compendium, amply illustrated with charts, diagrams and maps.

The answers are sometimes unexpected. The whole kingdom contributed to feeding Paris, though to different degrees, with a high proportion coming from regions in close proximity. Foodstuffs arrived in Paris by road or by river, or a combination of both, but river transport was very significant. For some commodities, such as seafood, cheeses and poultry, travelling merchants had the principal role; in general, Parisian merchants played a relatively small part. While there are difficulties in quantifying the supply, its value was probably around £130 m in the 1780s, equivalent to approximately one-third of total taxes levied by the monarchy. Political interventions ranged from price control for some commodities to buying live cattle in order to ensure an adequate and affordable supply of meat.

Between questions and answers Abad presents a wealth of fine details, such as that the Brie region was by far the largest supplier of fresh cheeses, and that there was little uniformity among them – some were made with skim milk, some with whole milk, some with the addition of cream. Virtually all the sugar was produced in the French colonies in the West Indies, as well as much of the coffee and cacao imported.

The evidence also leads to other conclusions; that the food supply for Paris was surprisingly diverse; that the demands of Paris, far from draining the provinces, generally benefited them financially; that luxury goods destined for a social élite – exclusive products, such as matured eaux-de-vie and fattened chickens as well as imported goods – also contributed to the redistribution of wealth. In this last respect, it seems to me that the words of Réaumur (1749) quoted by the author have a certain relevance today: 'Whenever wealth is distributed too unequally, rather than avoid making a place for luxury goods, we should encourage them; it is a way of extracting from those who have more than they need, and who are indifferent to the misfortunes of others, the means of satisfying the needs of several of the latter. We should be concerned that there are individuals who, without even noticing the expense, can afford to spend as much on one dish as would feed a whole family for a year; but so long as such individuals exist, we should take pleasure in knowing that an excessive price has been paid for a dish of *petits pois*; ... ideally, a tax would be imposed

on such arrogant tastes, and it could not be too high if it went towards those whose long hours of tough work barely provide enough to live on.'

As the publisher says, this is an exceptional work that will delight both historians and food scholars.

Barbara Santich

Regula Ysewijn: *Pride and Pudding: the history of British puddings*: Murdoch Books, 2016: 368 pp., hardback, £20.00.

I've often thought that the history of puddings would be a cracking subject for a book, and I know other people do too, so the main question in my mind is how come it's taken a Flemish girl, native of Antwerp, and a publisher essentially based in Australia to take the subject seriously? This must, in part, be due to the combined talents of the author and her husband. This is not only a history of British puddings: it's a fully-functioning recipe book with what amounts to a potted history of British food at the start, a discussion of historic cookery books, many snippets of social history, and gorgeous photographs by the author. There are also some 'wicked' (her adjective, not mine) illustrations by her husband, Bruno Vergauwen, who I suspect found himself eating enormous amounts of pudding of various descriptions during the two years this tome was in the writing. It's definitely a tome – it weighs in at just shy of one and a half kilos, and not much of that space is without print or picture.

Added to this, they also did the book design. To my mind this is perhaps the least successful thing about the book, and not just because it is essentially red and white – do they no' know that the Scottish Saltire is blue and white? This is a book with 'British' in the subtitle after all. It is, perhaps, the paper – this is heavy and good quality, and very, very white, perhaps best for the photographs, but I don't find it easy on the eye. Relatively small typeface is used in places, which had me peering at the page sometimes. But this is a minor point, especially when set against the richness of the contents, and the recipes and their page numbers are usefully detailed on the contents page.

These are divided into five main chapters, with an additional chapter of useful recipes for sauces, pastry and biscuits which appear as ingredients elsewhere. The main chapters include Boiled and steamed puddings; Baked puddings; Batter puddings; Bread puddings; and Jellies, milk puddings and ices. This moves the discussion through a logical progression from some of the earliest recorded puddings to the more frivolous and dessert-like items. The recipes are detailed and occasionally include photographs of different stages of, for instance, making sausage-type puddings, where the protagonists are either concentrating hard or not altogether enjoying the process. Regula is not afraid to call a gut a gut and her recipes for some of these early and (nowadays) less familiar puddings are among the most interesting in the book. But there are many other goodies to choose from, including delicious sounding castle