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Woolgar has demonstrated deep interest in medieval food and its context and a wide acquaintance with the relevant written sources. If Peter Brears has given us a better understanding of the built environment and culinary equipment, thus enabling us to essay some medieval cookery of our own, this book accumulates a wealth of instance and anecdote drawn from court records, accounts, literary works and much else. Attention should be paid to the title, it does not pretend to be a history of food in England in the Middle Ages, but rather an account of its place in life in general. It does not indulge in statistics – always hazardous for this period – and relies on a narrative of a thousand episodes: from a poor beggarwoman being savaged by a dog, to a young girl scalded when ladling food out of a pot and a young scullion wounded in the foot when dropping his knife. There is no detailed analysis of one set of sources to attempt some form of measured assessment of, for example, patterns of consumption, levels of dietary sufficiency (of any class), the ups and downs of trade. It is not a book from the *Annales* school, you might say. Its chapters survey cooking by the peasantry; drinks and drinking; the cooking of bread, meats and dairy foods; sauces and spices; the place of gardens, foraging and hunting; what we can learn of food in towns, particularly from guild records; what monks got up to (very good on Durham and its kitchens); what went on at the lord's table; something about professional cooks and kitchen staff; a section on dietetics; and a nice chapter, tugging the heartstrings, on those who had insufficient and on famines. His strength is in his sources: he has read a host of financial accounts (many still unprinted) and teases out a multitude of enlightening facts. He tends to a view of medieval foodways being unitary: that there was a trickle-down of techniques, fashions and performance from the top tables to the humble peasant's cot. He does not explore the problems of regionalism. Nor does he go to great lengths to indentify change and development in what people ate and how they cooked it. Three centuries is a long time for there to have been no movement at all. That is not to say that he does not recognize such changes, but trying to pin them down to specifics is difficult, given the sources available. But the text is rewarding on many levels, and greatly helped by clear typography, even if the notes are all at the back.

Krishnendu Ray: *The Ethnic Restaurateur*: Bloomsbury, 2016: 264 pp., paperback, £19.99.

A book by someone who might be termed an ethnic academic, teaching food studies in New York. Basing his account on interviews, Ray tells of the establishment, commercial fate and culinary intentions of two Indian/Pakistani restaurants in NYC; investigates the mindset and motivations of the Culinary Institute of America and classically trained chefs and how they interact with immigrant practitioners; looks at the way that restaurants have been covered by the press and media in the US since the end of the nineteenth century; and

discusses how our interest in food, particularly foreign food, is rewriting some of the accepted hierarchies of taste. That all seems quite a lot to get between two covers – not helped by the poor typographical and production choices of the publisher (have they never considered how difficult faint sans-serif typefaces are to read?) – and if you discount the heavy academic superstructure, there are gems of information, facts and opinions about American taste, American restaurant history, and selling Oriental (and Latin American) food to a Western audience.

Jim Chevallier: *August Zang and the French Croissant. How Viennoiserie Came to France*: Chez Jim Books, N. Hollywood, CA, 2009: 86pp., paperback, £6.26.
Tamara S. Wagner and Narin Hassan, eds: *Consuming Culture in the Long Nineteenth Century. Narratives of Consumption 1700–1900*: Lexington Books, 2007: 290 pp., paperback, £24.95.

These two items are together because Jim Chevallier, the author of the first, has an essay in the collective volume that is the second. Christopher-August Zang (1807–1888) was an Austrian artillery officer who emigrated to Paris and set up a Viennese bakery in 1839 before returning home ten years later to found *Die Presse* newspaper (in the image of Paris's *La Presse*) which transformed Austrian journalism. A man of parts, then. Viennese bread was a fine, white, light, luxurious bread. It transformed French *boulangerie*. And it came with great flour from Hungary, a resolute affection for yeast as the raising agent, very special ovens (some, indeed, of Zang's design) which imparted a fine gloss to the thin crust and two excellent forms: the *kipfel* and the *kaisersemmel*. The *kipfel* was horn- or crescent-shaped, the *kaisersemmel* is the kaiser roll. The *kipfel* was the progenitor of the croissant as we know it, although at that point still made with bread dough, not puff paste. As Chevallier remarks, the modern croissant is a modern invention. But without Zang, it would have not existed. This short book is an entertaining canter through the Paris years of Zang and their aftermath. Full marks. Its author also contributed an entertaining essay on the eighteenth-century French (mainly) breakfast to the other volume – which has a funny idea of the 'long' nineteenth century. I am not sure that John Locke would have thought of himself as proto-Victorian and the title might have been better expressed as lots of essays on the nineteenth with a few relating to the eighteenth centuries. The authors' choice of titles is eye-catching: 'Vegetable Fictions in the Kingdom of Roast Beef'; 'Consuming the Maidservant'. The actual content is perfectly all right, mainly literature-based observations of food and feeding: vegetarianism in Victorian novels; Anglo-Indian cookery books and relations of rulers and the ruled; cooking and class in Dickens; indigestion and Kant; food and rumpy-pumpy in Hawthorne. I enjoyed Helen Day on Mrs Beeton and middle-class aspiration and Tamara Ketabgian on north-country proletarian diet (tea) with plenty from Mrs Gaskell. Christine Rinne is interesting on Prussian servants.