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any thorough, much less conclusive, analysis. The volume does suggest some interesting questions, at least in embryonic form, about food-related dilemmas characteristic of contemporary developed societies, including the particular forms these debates assume in France. It is disappointing that these questions are not pursued.

—Julia Abramson, University of Oklahoma

*Food and History*, volume 1, no. 1

The European Institute of Food History, Tours, France

Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2003

274 pp. 50

Along with the appearance or rebirth of several journals devoted to food (*Food and Foodways*; *Food, Culture and Society*; as well as the journal now in your hands) readers will also be delighted with the newly launched *Food and History*, which is devoted to food in the past. Edited by Massimo Montanari, the articles reflect a high level of scholarship and cover a broad range of topics, focusing mainly on Europe, with emphasis on the Middle Ages. Most submissions are in English, but there are also some in French, Italian, and German. The format is pleasant, academic in feel, and fairly hefty. So too is the price, at 108 euros for a year's subscription of two issues.

This first issue includes a fine article by Jean-Louis Flandrin on national taste preferences and changes in culinary preferences from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries; it is, however, also available translated and in expanded form in *Food: A Culinary History*. There is also a classic article by Fernand Braudel (also in French, first appearing in *Annales* in 1961) on the roots of European food history. It is interesting to see how many lines of inquiry were nascent over forty years ago and how many have flourished, particularly the materialist approach and the idea of the *longue durée*. But this field has blossomed in many ways that Braudel could not have imagined.

Apart from these two pieces, the contents are new and open up hitherto unexplored topics. There are ten research articles, as well as various other sections, including works in progress at the European Institute of Food History. A proportion of the journal is by Montanari himself—an editorial introduction, a description of current research on written and oral food histories, and the article “Who Invented Anorexia,” which reviews the literature since the 1980s. Covered are Rudolph Bell, Caroline Walker Bynum, and the work of Vandereycken and van Deth, but the article might have

included more recent work, especially that of Joan Jacobs Brumberg and Michelle Stacey.

The offerings on late-medieval Europe are particularly strong. An extremely well-researched article on sugar in late-medieval Sicily by Mohamed Ouerfelli provides a fresh look at European production between the years of imports from the eastern Mediterranean and New World plantations. We learn that financing derived largely from Pisans displaced after the conquest of their port by Florence, a fact that has the potential to revise the history of sugar, particularly in its European context.

An article on the late-medieval English meal structure by Gilly Lehmann is among the most detailed and thought provoking on the topic anywhere. It does, however, require very close reading and familiarity with the sources and is clearly written for specialists in medieval cuisine. The presence of such an article reveals that this journal does not yet seem to have found its target audience. Some authors assume nothing beyond an interest in food, while others clearly address an academic audience. The ideal journal would be able to reach both, but that is, admittedly, a very difficult task.

Particularly savory is a short article by Barbara Santich (the only non-European contributor, it appears) on adultery and cannibalism in some truly lurid medieval folktales. Each involves jealous husbands feeding their cheating wives the heart, and sometimes more, of their murdered lovers. The discussion offers some fascinating explanations about what these tales may have meant to medieval readers and how perversely they treat the familiar theme of true love.

An article by Johanna Maria van Winter on festive meals in the late Middle Ages intends to show by examining manners and festive gatherings how the meal was used as a means of communication. But the evidence presented sometimes suggests just the opposite. Manners and all ritualized behaviors obviate the need to communicate. Power relations need not be negotiated since status and behavior are explicitly encoded in the ritual. Individual expression and real communication are thus stifled—which was exactly the point in a courtly setting where threats had to be controlled. In the case of courtly meals, the communication is one-way and propagandistic.

Other articles compare Kazakh and Mongol foodways and look at how Italian cuisine infiltrated twentieth-century Flemish cookery. A discussion of the history of cow's milk and tuberculosis in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Germany and Switzerland by Barbara Orland is particularly revealing about the ways that scientific controversy, the economic interests of the dairy industry, and

public health issues intersected. She finds that a multitude of interests are necessary to ensure public safety, especially given the indirect nature of scientific progress. However, she doesn't address the loss of unpasteurized milk in terms of the resulting loss to gastronomy. This article, like several others, could have used better proofreading, as there are several typographical errors.

The second and third issues of *Food and History* are now available. All follow the same format, with a classic text, articles, and works in progress. As with the first issue, the majority of submissions deal with European subjects ranging from classical times to the twentieth century. The journal thus fills a very particular niche and provides good evidence that the field of food studies is flourishing as never before.

—Ken Albala, University of the Pacific

*The Duchess Who Wouldn't Sit Down:  
An Informal History of Informality*

Jesse Browner

New York: Bloomsbury, 2003

198 pp. \$23.95 (cloth)

An anecdote: years ago, a major French scholar of film theory—my primary area of study at the time—was trying to arrange a date for us to get together, while I was in Paris, to have a good, solid discussion about some concepts in the field. As an aficionado of café culture—Left Bank intellectuals and all that—I suggested we meet late afternoon for an espresso; he declined and suggested that we instead pick a fine restaurant and have lunch together. Realizing the sanctity of gourmet mealtime for the gourmand French, I was flattered: I felt I was being admitted into some inner sanctum of distinction and privilege. He went on to explain that lunch was the only time he wasn't reading or writing or reflecting deeply, and that he didn't want to give up precious late-afternoon time for our conversation.

Based on my reading of *The Duchess Who Wouldn't Sit Down*, I would like to believe that Jesse Browner would like this story. First, he appears to like pithy stories per se. Despite its subtitle, his book doesn't so much offer a history (it is neither chronological, nor do its chapters arrange themselves into an overall logic) as it does a set of episodes from what would have to be a larger history. His volume appears as a set of great tales in which the foibles of hosting are outlined through memorable cases of success and failure. He ranges, for instance, over pre-Revolutionary royal festivities in France to the inhospitable times of the barbarian invasions

of France to banquets in classic Greece to, even, Hitler's private parties in his Nazi retreat. In all cases, Browner's emphasis is on the apposite anecdote: the revealing happenstance, the moment-to-moment scenes in which the complexity of the act of hosting is unveiled.

Second, I envision that Browner would like my story since it traffics in the sorts of things he finds significant about hosting. In particular, as he establishes from his first anecdote (an autobiographical one in which he explains how he serves gourmet sandwiches at poker games with his buddies as he knows they will let their guard down upon tasting the delicacies), Browner argues that hospitality is rarely a giving and spontaneous act of open graciousness. Even when the host is not aware of this, hospitality is overwhelmingly determined by ulterior motives and is thus enacted as a series of tactics and calculations. As Browner states in the introduction to his volume: "What is important is that hospitality be seen not as a gift, but as the transaction that it is, a trade-off so subliminal even the host may not be aware that it has taken place, or of the ways in which it has profited him [*sic*]" (pp.7–8). In my story, for instance, the Frenchman was not so much inviting me to share in his appreciation of fine cuisine as he was calculating, through intellectual accountancy, that lunchtime was nonscholarly time that he could afford to give up.

Browner's volume sets out to chronicle a number of cases in which hospitality unveils its strategic nature. Typical, for instance, is his examination of the welcoming of strangers into the home in ancient Greece: in Browner's analysis, a strong reason for opening one's domicile to strangers came from the fact that the Greek gods were known to disguise themselves as indigent, itinerant mortals and wander the earth to test people's basic moral fiber. In such a context, it is far better to be nice to everyone since you might never know if you were dealing with a masquerading god.

Certainly, Browner appears at times to desire nobler motives for hospitality. Thus, for instance, one of his chapters ends with a veritable ode to Saint Julian who, according to legend, redeemed himself from an early life of dissoluteness and cruelty by giving sustenance and succor (including the offer of his own wife!) to a passing leper. In a volume so given to accounts of naked self-interest, the obverse of wanton exploitation of others, the tale of Saint Julian comes as a moment of relief. In Browner's words, it stands as a narrative of "transformation and redemption [that] made possible the reawakening of a forgotten but cherished tradition that had lain dormant for many centuries" (p.128). But if the tale of Saint Julian represents an emergence of Western mores and moralities from the darkness of the Germanic dark ages,