



Theme 6: Cuisine

Report of France

By Edouard de Laubrie

Phd (student), History of techniques and Museology, Conservatoire national des Arts et Métiers, Paris
M2 History of art and French ethnologic heritage, Museology, Ecole du Louvre, Paris
M2 Anthropology and Ethnology, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris
M1 Cultural Mediation, Université Paris VIII and Ecole du Louvre

museologist and ethnologist, member of the board of the AFMA Federation

AFMA, October 2011





LAMB IN FRANCE: TERRITORIAL SITUATION AND ICONIC PRODUCTS

CONTENTS :

1. INTRODUCTION

2. INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME: History of cooking based on sheep in the country / The evolution of consumption of sheep meat in the history of the country

3. THE REGIONS OF SHEEP PRODUCTION

- 3.1. In Normandy and Brittany**
- 3.2. In Landes**
- 3.3. In the Poitou**
- 3.4. In the Lorraine region**
- 3.5. In the Ile-de-France**
- 3.6. In the Burgundy**
- 3.7. In the Auvergne**
- 3.8. In the Rhône-Alpes region**
- 3.9. In the Provence region**
- 3.10. In the Languedoc-Roussillon region**
- 3.11. In Corsica**

4. PRODUCTS AND THEIR APPRECIATION

- 4.1. In Normandy and in Brittany**
- 4.2. In the Lorraine region**
- 4.3. In the Poitou-Charentes**
- 4.4. In the Rhone-Alpes region**
- 4.5. In the Provence**
- 4.6. In the Mediterranean regions**

5. Conservation of technologies of dishes based on sheep meat

6. Instruments (and their evolution in time are connected) preparation of mutton meals (cost of iron – pots, spoons, dishes, sticks etc)

7. Tradition of the theme and its heritage : What type of dishes are made from sheep meat. Soups, stews, grills etc

8. IN THE AQUITAINE AND MIDI PYRENEES REGIONS

- 8.1. The Pauillac lamb or the Pauillac milk lamb**
- 8.2. Suckling lamb from the Pyrenees**



8.3. Suckling lamb or "laiton" (suckler)

9. CONCLUSION

9.1. The importance of this heritage / theme in the country

9.2. Intangible cultural heritage, world heritage linked to ewes (possibly)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

RECIPES



LAMB IN FRANCE: TERRITORIAL SITUATION AND ICONIC PRODUCTS

1. INTRODUCTION

History of sheep husbandry in the country : sheep breeds – domestic and imported breeds
Most regions in France have ancient sheep breeds which over the course of time, have been perfected to develop a particular part of the animal, the wool, the meat or the milk, not forgetting the droppings which were used to fertilise the land.

One of the first French theoreticians of sheep husbandry was Jehan de Brie. A farmer and shepherd, he is the author of the first treaty on farming in French and the first shepherd's code "the art of the sheepfold" or the "good Shepherd" or the "real regime and government of shepherds and shepherdesses" written in 1379 at the request of Charles V. Quoting Aristotle and Saint Thomas Aquinas, Jehan de Brie, whose biography is little known, may have been an administrator at the court of Charles V. Monarchs therefore took an interest in sheep husbandry and Louis XVI created in 1787 the royal sheep farm in Rambouillet; the king showed the desire of the state to develop the merino wool breed, with the establishment of the flock which came from Spain in the Paris region. During the XIXth century, breeds coming from Great Britain, Germany or Flanders have also contributed to the improvement of French indigenous breeds. However, the cross breeds were more designed to be used for wool production for industrial weaving than for the production of meat.

From the XIXth century, an increasing specialisation of territories was undertaken throughout France. Some regions pushed sheep for example and others cattle. Competition between cattle and sheep may exist: in the Savoie, in the Alps, dairy cattle farming took over from traditional sheep farming. In the Poitou, in the west of France, in Echirré, a village reputed today for the quality of its butter, sheep were still the predominant type of farming at the beginning of the XIXth century.

All regions in France do not have a sheep rearing tradition. The Pays de la Loire, the Franche-Comté or the Nord-Pas-de-Calais regions do not have for instance, a developed sheep rearing tradition. Sheep husbandry is mainly present in territories where the land is poor or hilly, lush meadows are usually reserved for cattle rearing. The distribution of sheep is principally determined by physical geography. Whereas a sheep rearing tradition has been maintained in the North East of the country in the Champagne (Marne) and in the Lorraine in particular, or else in the Berry (centre of France), in the salt marshes on the coast (Brittany, Normandy), there is much more sheep rearing in the southern half of France (south of the Loire) in the Landes (until the planting of the Landes forest in the second half of the XIXth century), still nowadays in the main mountain ranges (Massif Central, Pyrenees, Alps). Sheep production is equally very important in Provence and Corsica.

The main products, position in the economy/ of the country of the region

In 2009, France is today the second country for consumption of sheep meat in Europe behind the United Kingdom. However, on the European level, the French only stand in 5th place for the consumption of sheep meat per inhabitant (the Greeks are by far in first place). Whereas French households purchase more than 20% of lamb in traditional butchers' shops, sheep meat consumed in France is essentially imported mainly frozen from New Zealand and fresh when it comes from the British Isles. Sheep rearing is largely practised by small and medium sized farms, breeders have difficulty surviving and facing up to market fluctuations, despite actions taken to add value to these products.



2. INTRODUCTION OF THE THEME : History of cooking based on sheep in the country

The evolution of consumption of sheep meat in the history of the country

Sheep meat is appreciated in France just as much as beef or poultry. Only around fifty years ago, sheep meat production was more often than not national. Traditionally, lamb meat (since mutton was not eaten) is appreciated in festive occasions, during parties for important rituals (baptisms or Communion) or religious festivals. If lamb is sometimes eaten at Christmas, it remains the iconic meat of the feast of Easter. Even though the French are nowadays mainly de-christianised, leg of lamb from suckling lambs remains a dish which is particularly appreciated on Easter Sunday. Suckling lamb whichever region it comes from, is the key product throughout France. It is usually prepared in the oven or grilled. In some regions, in Normandy in particular (Manche) the mechoui, which involves roasting a whole lamb, is very popular. French immigrant populations from the Maghreb countries also consume a lot of sheep meat. Production of halal meat is a particularly flourishing market. In the Paris region, leg of lamb cooked in the oven and accompanied by flageolet beans, is the archetypical Sunday family meal and still is a great classic of French home cooking. History, economic and social causes which have had an effect on sheep rearing and its consumption

In fact, a distinction must be made between sheep meat which is produced in France and that which is imported. In reality, lamb eaten over the last twenty years is mainly imported from New Zealand or the United Kingdom to the detriment of French lamb. The latter costs 3 or 4 times more than imported lamb.

3. THE REGIONS OF SHEEP PRODUCTION

On the western seaboard of France, sheep rearing is important in Normandy, Brittany in the Poitou, then in the Aquitaine and of course in the Pyrenees. These latter two regions will be focused on in the next chapter.

3.1. In Normandy and Brittany

In Normandy and Brittany, three kinds of sheep husbandry exist depending on the specific territories or breeds. The first is situated on the herbus, coastal meadows which are periodically flooded by the sea, grazed by salt marsh lambs are accompanied by their mothers. Recorded as early as the XIIth and XIIIth centuries in the charters in favour of the abbots of Saint-Riom et de Beauport, the sheep were firstly reared for their wool; but from the XVIth century, for meat. In 1801, the Statistique d'Ille-et-Vilaine, speaks highly of the quality of these sheep. In fact, it is the development of sea bathing, particularly in Dinard, which was said to have given to the salt marsh sheep their true reputation. Faced with the demand from tourists, hoteliers and restaurateurs encouraged shepherds, from the 1920s-1930s, to increase production together with, from the marketing point of view, the image of the Mont-Saint-Michel. This famous sheep comes from a cross of ewes from sandy sea or river banks or "grévine" with meat rams from the Suffolk, vendéen, Charolais, rouge de l'Ouest or roussin breeds.



3.2. In Landes

The second farming area concerns the Landes sheep, originating from the Rennes area and from inner Brittany, raised in the heathlands, which is very rustic and receives no care. Finally, the Ouessant sheep one of the smallest sheep in the world with an adult live weight of 11 to 20 kg and a shoulder height of 50 cm, was reputed for its rusticity and its brown wool, but was not eaten.

3.3. In the Poitou

In the Poitou, sheep husbandry was already very extensive under the Ancien Régime. Sheep were reared for the needs of the local textile industry. In 1644, Parthenay had 30 traders-drapers and almost 50 cutters of good quality linen.

However, some of the sheep were fattened to be exported to Paris, Bordeaux or La Rochelle. In 1867, sheep population of the Poitou breed, a heterogeneous mix of breeds was estimated at 3500 000 heads. In the XIXth century, the Deux-Sèvres department specialized in sheep farming and supplied Paris with 127568 heads (between 1868 and 1873). In the Vienne, Montmorillon, which up to then concentrated on farming fat cattle, adopted, in the second half of the XIXth century a new breed of sheep, the Charmoise, created in 1837 by a breeder in the Loir-et-Cher, supplying good quality wool and meat. Nowadays, a standard for the vendéen sheep as been created and dominates the production in the Deux-Sèvres and a part of the Charente-Maritime.

3.4. In the Lorraine region

In the mainland part of France, sheep farming is significant in the Lorraine, Ile-de-France, in Burgundy, but also in the Auvergne, in the regions of the Alps and the Provence and in Corsica.

In the Lorraine region, cattle and sheep are farmed all over, but the latter is increasing. The region is known for its "horizontal transhumance" during which Alsatian shepherds brought their flocks to the Lorraine, as many as 300 000 head in the beginning of the XXth century. Despite the uncertainties of times of war and the price reductions, 200 000 and 300 000 sheep were in this region in the second half of the XXth century. The Moselle and the Meurthe-et-Moselle together counted for nearly two-thirds of total volume, followed by the Vosges. The locally predominant breed is the île-de-france, occasionally crossed with texel and suffolk or even merino breeds. The production is fairly evenly spread throughout the year: the Meuse and the Meurthe-et-Moselle supply an important number of early fold lambs, the Vosges and the Moselle are more specialized in the late production of grass-fed lambs. The age at slaughter is less than 10 months and the dead weight must be from 16 to 23 kg. Grass-fed lambs are generally born in November-December. They then live partly free range depending on the weather and are mainly weaned in March.

3.5. In the Ile-de-France

Since at least the XIVth century and up to the end of the XIXth century, the Ile de France has had both sheep husbandry and large-scale arable farming. Immense flocks (as many as 2 000 heads) were led out to graze on straw after the harvest and on fallow land when the



use of common grazing was in force. In the beginning of the XIXth century, professor Auguste Yvart, of the École vétérinaire of Maisons-Alfort, decided to cross the merino of Rambouillet with the Dishley, from an English breed. In 1832, a new breed with the required qualities was obtained, but it was not until nearly the end of the century that the «Dishley-Mérinos» were spread throughout the Ile-de-France. The Seine-et-Marne department in the east of Paris, had 800000 sheep in 1836.

3.6. In the Burgundy

Burgundy is a region with a continental climate which is fairly tough and given over to forage. It has experienced an interesting development from the point of view of its choices of sheep farming. At the end of the XVIIIth century, the charollais area, which stretches from the hills of the Morvan to the valleys of the Charollais and the Bresse plains, had a population called "morvandelle" whose main market was supplying meat to Paris. With the upcoming of the dairy industry, breeders chose a new objective: improving the quality of the wool. To this end, they imported merino sheep, which were cross bred with these local populations. From 1820, breeders turned once again to meat production. They therefore imported dishley breed sheep, which they crossed with local populations. It is starting with this era that one speaks of charollais sheep on the markets which were thought of at the beginning of the XXth century as one of the best grass fed sheep. After the First World War, the arrival of the southdown gave rise to fierce competition. In the 1950s, demand for less fatty carcasses tipped the scales back to the local sheep, the charollais which developed once more. The first competition for the breed took place on 24th August 1963 in Palinges in the Saône-et-Loire and in the same year its genealogical book was established. Since 1972, the charollais sheep is shown at the Paris Concours général agricole (General agricultural competition).

3.7. In the Auvergne

In the Auvergne, the Allier department has the biggest sheep production of the region. Nevertheless, the total headcount is reducing considerably with 411 000 mother ewes in 2008. It has been constantly reducing over the last ten years with sheep meat production getting smaller.

3.8. In the Rhône-Alpes region

In the Rhône-Alpes region (Savoie, Drôme, Ardèche), the alpine lamb enables the most efficient use of resources which are difficult to access. Local breeds, very rustic, are the thônes and martod, in (Savoie), and the grivette (Isère, Loire, Rhône). The breed called «de Millery » fertile and an excellent milk producer, disappeared a long time ago. Towards 1600, Olivier de Serres, in his Théâtre d'agriculture praises the quality of sheep and ewes both from the point of view of their wool and their meat .

Each of the three departments (Savoie, Drôme, Ardèche) has its own specific method of husbandry depending upon the hilly nature of the terrain, the food available for the flock and the practice of transhumance.

The Drôme has two systems of husbandry which exist together according to the geographical situation: one the one hand, lambs grazing on grass, during the summer in the more mountainous regions and on the other hand lambs raised in a fold during winter in the



plains. It is this latter scheme which largely dominates nowadays in the more mountainous areas linked with an important increase in headcount of the flocks. This last point has led to certain changes in farming techniques such as the transhumance of ewes in summer which was formerly not generally practiced and which is tending to develop in the absence of sufficient forage resources. This situation has repercussions on cross breeding. In this way, that the merino appeared which is better adapted to transhumance thanks to its thicker fleece. Rams join the flock in May-June, lambs are born from autumn to the end of winter, in the folds. They are fed with their mothers' milk and have grain supplement (barley, oats, rye). The first lambs are ready for Christmas and production continues until early summer, according to the lambing times.

In the Ardèche and the Savoie, sheep and cattle compete with each other. In the Ardèche, the size of flocks are greater than available resources. Forage is not sufficient to ensure production in winter since summer pastures are kept for cattle. Thus, lambs are mainly produced at the end of spring. Ewes give birth principally from March to May in grasslands. In the Savoie, in the Alpine mountains, flocks ascend to mountain pastures at an altitude which varies from 1 200 to 2 500 m. Shepherds, who make their animals migrate to high mountain areas, do not displace them until the end of the month of April and plan lambing dates in accordance. In the mountain areas which take their value from cow's milk cheese production, pastures reserved for sheep are difficult to get to. Lambs are raised by their mothers and supplement their food by grazing the alpine grasses. In order to be sold under the collective brand "Savoie alpine lamb" the animal must be born in the Savoie between 15th February and 15th June, it must spend at least two months in alpine pastures and be raised by its mother.

3.9. In the Provence region

The Provence is another great sheep rearing area and the flocks are present in the back country and the "disadvantaged" areas (in alpine departments) but also in the Bouches-du-Rhône. The pastoral farming system of the Crau, a dry steppe in the Bouches-du-Rhône, turns to the Alps and the use of high-altitude pastures for the summer season. This pastoral system also relies, during the period of return from the mountain until mid-February, on the consumption by the ewes of the famous Crau hay (which has its own denomination of origin).

The Vercors mountain range also has large grass resources for migrating flocks of sheep.

The suckling lamb of the Alpes-du-Sud comes from either ewes of the southern pré-Alpe type (therefore in the mountain area), or from merino type ewes (in plains, in the Bouches-du-Rhône). The former are often raised in folds whereas the latter spend their time in the meadows of the Crau or in alpine pastures. The standard butcher's lamb weighs between 13 and 17 kg deadweight at age 100 days. A suckling lamb which has not been weaned weighs between 9 and 12 kg deadweight.

3.10. In the Languedoc-Roussillon region

The Languedoc-Roussillon region is deeply marked by its geography and its spaces with production in areas of plains and hills (Lauragais...) in a wet Mediterranean habitat (Camargue) and more particularly in mountainous regions (Pyrénées, Aubrac, Cévennes and Margeride). The Lozère mountain as that of the Pyrenees also produces lambs raised by their mothers. This suckling lamb is not weaned and it receives its food from pastureland forage,



mother's milk and cereal based foods. This production has spread throughout the region and gives lambs raised by their mothers of the Languedoc under several local brands.

3.11. In Corsica

In Corsica, two breeds are raised: the Corsican breed which represents 84% of the flocks and the Sardinian breed which accounts for approximately 3%. The Corsican breed is adapted to mountains and extensive farming whereas the Sardinian breed requires more favourable conditions. The lambs come from dairy ewes raised for their production of milk. Slaughter is carried out between thirty and forty-five days and the suckling lamb has therefore not been weaned. The carcass weighs between 5 and 7 kg at slaughter, its flesh is pink.

4. PRODUCTS AND THEIR APPRECIATION

Interest in sheep meat, from the point of view of its taste, mainly goes back to the XVIIIth century. At that time, more and more written documents are devoted to the quality of sheep meat according to the taste and the tenderness of the meat but also products from ewes, particularly cheeses. Thus, certain lamb breeds are particularly appreciated by gastronomes. The authors of the *Almanach du comestible* (1778) classify the Vivarais sheep among the most « delicate and fine » beside those of the Ardennes, Brittany, Normandy and Picardy, which are also very popular.

4.1. In Normandy and in Brittany

In Normandy and in Brittany, the salt marsh lamb from the Mont Saint Michel Bay has one of the highest reputations in France. This butcher's lamb is raised and fattened in a specific area, the herbus, pastures on the coast which are periodically flooded by the sea. It is particularly enjoyed at Easter feasts, until the end of the year. Whereas in 1970, only about ten shepherds used the herbus of the Ille-et-Vilaine, there were only nine salt marsh farms remaining in 1993, managing flocks of 400 to 800 heads for a total of approximately 4 700 ewes. This type of farming is particularly difficult and the animal mortality is high. The date on which Easter falls has an effect on the sale of salt marsh lambs: more are sold if Easter is late, whereas if the date falls early, there are fewer lambs as they do not have the required 60 days of herbus.

4.2. In the Lorraine region

Sheep meat is present on markets in the Lorraine from the end of the XVIIIth century, but is not always of excellent quality. Towards 1810, breeds of sheep are very small, badly looked after and badly fed. This does not stop Lorraine people from giving sheep meat a large place in their diet: supper is usually made up of mutton cooked with vegetables. On the other hand, gastronomes heap praise upon sheep meat from the Vosges.

It is during the Easter feasts that lamb is enjoyed the most, leg of lamb being cooked. Sheep meat is mainly served grilled, or as chops and in especially in stews accompanied by dry or green beans or, better still, by ker-pondy or rosa variety potatoes.



4.3. In the Poitou-Charentes

In the Poitou-Charentes, the birth of lambs, spread throughout the year, with three lambings in two years and no longer one single birth in Spring, promotes continuous consumption of this meat with in winter, a preference for leg and in Summer for chops. Nowadays, the Poitou-Charentes region is the primary production region of lambs for butchers in France with more than 2 000 farmers, who are breeders and fatteners. The animal market of Parthenay (Deux-Sèvres) is the second largest in France.

4.4. In the Rhone-Alpes region

In the Ardèche and the Drôme, the consumption of lamb is relatively spread out over the year in the south. The *défarde* is a recipe of drôme tripe, exclusively based upon lamb, made up of stomach and guts, presented in small parcels tied with string, which are blanched then slow cooked for 8-9 hours, with the lamb's feet, in a stew including garlic, a little tomato white wine a bouquet garni and possibly the white of leaks. One can add cognac or crush some lambs' livers to thicken the sauce. Long and fastidious to prepare, it is a well-reputed speciality of the town of Crest where it is particularly celebrated during the festival of Saint-Ferréol. It is eaten also in Chabrilan, where a very famous meal of *défarde* is organized each year.

4.5. In the Provence

The people from the Provence, who greatly enjoy this meat, are also by far the biggest consumers of it in the country: twice that of the national average. A festive Easter dish, lamb also is used in recipes of famous dishes, such as "les pieds et paquets". As a replacement for traditional lamb, goat is also a meat for festive meals, on the menu at Easter and all religious or family festivals in Ubaye, in the Queyras, in Champsaur or in Vésubie.

4.6. In the Mediterranean regions

As in many Mediterranean regions, sheep meat for a long time constituted the main meat for the inhabitants of the Languedoc. Languedoc sheep meat has not always had a good reputation: in the mid-XVIth century, Bruyerin-Champier classified it far behind that of the Berry or the Limousin, adding that its meat is mediocre. Indeed, one reared sheep primarily for their wool, as recounted by Olivier de Serres around 1600. However, the sheep of Ganges (Hérault) had achieved a certain reputation at the end of the Ancien Régime : the *Gazetin du comestible* recommended it to its readers in 1767. Towards 1815, merino sheep whose wool was much sought after, had already been introduced alongside the local breeds, giving an excellent meat. Next to fatty mutton, the people from the Languedoc ate suckling lamb or « country lamb » both mentioned in the *Tableau du maximum* established in 1793 for the Gard. In 1887, lamb is the main meat eaten in the Lauragais, the black mountain and the Corbières: the *pot-au-feu* (stew) is made with mutton rather than beef. The Sauveterre sheep, which was praised by the *Trésor gastronomique de France* of Curnonsky and Croze in the 1930s, is the beneficiary of this long and rich tradition, as is nowadays lamb fed by its mother.



Just as is the case in the other Mediterranean islands, Corsica is a land of sheep farming and constitutes one of the main resources of the country. Notwithstanding this, meat is not very present in culinary habits, eating meat is a sign of social standing. Meat is therefore a luxury product in traditional society, reserved for festive meals (Christmas and Easter), for exceptional events, funeral meals... The preferred meat of Corsicans is goat. Suckling lamb only comes second, eaten when weaned (i.e. when one begins to milk the mother). Lambs are therefore available according to the organisation of the dairy campaign, essentially during the end-of-year festivities. Only lambs from the winter period of lambing are available for Easter. Easter lamb is usually eaten with rice. Leg of lamb is eaten spit-roasted. Suckling lamb can be stuffed with fresh goat's or ewe's cheese, eggs, marjoram or chopped parsley and olive oil. Suckling lamb without its head or neck can be cooked on a spit and roasted on the hot ashes. This dish is then accompanied by potatoes fried in suet. The Almanach of Corsica for the year 1770 indicates that there are on the island « many kids, a lot of goats, sheep, wild boars and pigs which are excellent there» In 1809, its colleague of the department of the Liamone has a similar opinion mentioning that "wool producing animals are usually small [...] the taste of their flesh is everywhere fine". As is the case today, sheep farming at that time was principally for dairy production, and the sale of meat was only a by-product of this activity. In the XVIIIth century, sheep meat could be sold on the mainland, in Marseilles.

5. Conservation of technologies of dishes based on sheep meat

Nothing to report

6. Instruments (and their evolution in time are connected) preparation of mutton meals (cost of iron – pots, spoons, dishes, sticks etc)

Nothing to report

7. Tradition of the theme and its heritage : What type of dishes are made from sheep meat. Soups, stews, grills etc

Whereas lamb meat is eaten throughout France, the Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur region is different due to the production of charcuterie from parts of sheep meat. It is « moutounesso » dried lamb meat and the famous « pieds et paquets».

The "moutounesso" is lamb's meat stretched out during drying to facilitate dehydration. It takes the shape of a block of rolled meat, dark red in colour, weighing from 1 to 3 kg and made up of leg, shoulder or rack of salted, or sometimes smoked lamb. One can compare the consumption of this dry meat with the consumption of salted goat still found in the adjacent region of Rhône-Alpes in particular in the Tarentaise, in the Maurienne and in the haute Maurienne. In Provence, it was principally lamb which was salted by shepherds. In alpine pastures, during transhumance, one smoked sheep meat. To do this, animals injured in a fall were used or those who were ill with coenurus cerebri, which were skinned and dried. The skin was stretched over a table and the meaty parts were cut to make the salt penetrate; then the flesh was folded into the skin and compressed under a heavy weight so as to make the brine soak in. After about thirty days, it was unfolded and dried in the sun, then slightly smoked. Nowadays, lamb ham is only made on a small scale, and it is eaten more often by knowledgeable gastronomes than by isolated shepherds.

Several businesses of the region produce "pieds et paquets", but most of the tonnage is made in Sisteron (Alpes-de-Haute-Provence), by two firms. One recipe has been registered



at the INPI (industrial property protection office) in 1988. Production is estimated at 20-25 t per annum.

The “pieds et paquets” are parcels of tripe with lambs feet, fat, seasoned with garlic, parsley, pepper, white wine and salt. They are eaten cooked and hot, during festive meals.

In 1476, sheeps’ feet were, with calf’s feet, on the menu of the diner offered by the monks of Saint-Trophime in Arles for the funeral of their colleague, Etienne Roberti. In 1888, we find the first recipes for pieds et paquets in the book of Morard on provençale cuisine, but it is clear that it was by no means a novelty.

The importance of this dish is such that he devotes a whole chapter to it and gives no less than five recipes for pieds et paquets. In the 1930s, Marseilles pieds et paquets are particularly famous but also those of d’Auriol, of Cabannes and of Miramas; in the Var, those from Fayence, from les Arcs and from Grimaud.

8. IN THE AQUITAINE AND MIDI PYRENEES REGIONS

The Aquitaine has been a land crossed by flocks of sheep during reverse transhumance : in winter, the sheep came down from the Pyrenean mountains to graze in the low country and even further in the girondin lands. In return for grazing, they fertilized vines and gave the owner a little milk, cheese and lambs.

As lambing usually took place at Easter, the young ones which were not kept to renew the flock were sold in situ and eaten for the Easter feast.

Ewes were raised from the Gironde to the Pyrénées-Atlantiques and had a double use (bred for meat and milk). Two breeds are worthy of mention; the Pauillac lamb which is farmed in the Gers and the Lot-et-Garonne and the suckling lamb of the Pyrennees (a traditional area of sheep breeding) and completely raised on their mothers’ milk.

8.1. The Pauillac lamb or the Pauillac milk lamb

Pauillac is a transit port situated on the mouth of the Gironde river. At the beginning of the XIXth century, the town established abattoirs and according to the *Le Guide des agneaux des bergers d’Aquitaine*, received nearly 1 000 lambs a year in 1827. The town then had 13 butcher’s shops. The rearing and the reputation of the Pauillac lamb can be traced back to the XIXth century and its farming stretched to the Gers and to the Lot-et-Garonne. In 1898, Alcide Bontou records : « the sheep as well as the lambs from the Médoc are greatly enjoyed by food lovers ; they do not grow very big, but those of the Bas-Médoc, which are fed in the salt marshes, have a fine and delicate flesh”. In 1933, in the *Trésor gastronomique de France*, Curnonsky and Croze also mention the « Pauillac lamb » as a salt marsh animal. In 1938, the authors of the *Larousse Gastronomique*, in an article on suckling lambs, state that “the most perfect kind of this lamb is the one from Pauillac”. The brand “Agneau de Pauillac” defined specifically as a suckling lamb, was registered in 1985 and is used by around 300 producers.

The lamb weighs from 11 to 15 kg (dead weight) the colour of its flesh is white to light pink, its texture is fine and tender. All parts of the lamb can be eaten. The most characteristic part is the “baron”, formerly spelt “bas-rond”. It consists of the two hind legs and the rack.



8.2. Suckling lamb from the Pyrenees

The breeding area involves all of the Pyrénées-Atlantiques. There are three groups of producers, the main one being in Aicirits, near Saint-Palais. This lamb obtained a red label in 1992.

The lamb comes from a mother of local breed (manex tête rousse, manex tête noire, basco-béarnaise.). The reproducers can be meat breeds (berrichon, charollais, suffolk and texel) to improve the appearance of carcasses. Lambs are fed exclusively with mothers' milk from the teats by suckling, with no food supplement. Those coming from artificial milk feeding (no mother's milk available or multiple births) are excluded and cannot benefit from the red label. No health treatment or antibiotics are permitted. The lambs must be slaughtered in authorized abattoirs. Its flesh is especially light, with little fat and tender. All parts of the lamb can be eaten, the best pieces are the leg and rack.

The Midi-Pyrénées region is the foremost sheep farming region in France. One distinguishes there the roquefort production area where the production of lambs is merely incidental to cheese making and the other areas where the sheep flocks are specialised in meat production, particularly lambs suckled by their mothers. In the Causses du Lot one finds the caussenarde du Lot breed; in the Montagne Noire (Tarn), the lacaune breed; in the Grands Causses of the Aveyron, the lacaune and limousin breeds; in the valleys and hills of the Pyrenees, the tarasconnais or the castillonnais breeds, but each valley has a variant: barégeois, aure, campan or lourdais.

8.3. Suckling lamb or "laiton" (suckler)

In a trade dictionary from 1770 one can read that « in the Quercy, which is a country full of mountains, dry and arid almost everywhere, very fine sheep are raised whose flesh is delicate ». In the second half of the XIXth century, territories specialized by farming specific breeds of sheep: in the Aveyron the breeds called « de Larzac », « de Ségala » et « de Causse », were in favour, appreciated for their milk producing qualities; the milk from the Causse breed was used in the making of the famous Roquefort cheese. In the XIXth century, the breeders in the Tarn gave birth to a breed called "de Lacaune" which eventually constituted the greatest part of the sheep population of the region with the merino and the lauragais, whereas in the mountains (Hautes-Pyrénées et Ariège) it is the breed called "ariégeois" which was favoured by shepherds.

In the beginning of the XXth century, fat lambs and sheep, much sought-after in the markets of Bordeaux, Toulouse and the other large towns in the South of France, were also sent to Paris. Lambs less than 18 months old were reserved for the capital, whereas suckling lambs aged from 20 to 25 days, were mainly appreciated in the South of France. The success of this meat, highly sought-after by food lovers, made it one of the most lucrative resources. Nowadays, suckling lamb must be over 45 days old and come from breeds (caussenarde du Lot, lacaune, blanc du Massif-central, limousin, tarasconnais, bizet et rava) whose main function is to produce milk.



9. CONCLUSION

9.1. The importance of this heritage / theme in the country

Quality sheep meat has been recognised by official labels which guarantees its geographical provenance and its sanitary and taste qualities. These labels are given in France by the Institut National de l'Origine et de la Qualité (INAO), using very precise specifications. In France, three sheep breeds have been given the Registered Designation of Origin "Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée - AOC" and nine have the label "Protected Geographical Indication (PGI)". Locally, professional organizations, regional and departmental chambers of agriculture oversee the quality of products. The sheep meat producers who have received a label often group together in professional associations which ensure quality, traceability of the sheep sector and the marketing campaigns for their products. Agricultural shows enable products to be promoted the most important of which is the Salon International de l'Agriculture which is held in Paris each year. The "brotherhoods" connected to sheep go on marches on this occasion.

For the general public, there are few marketing campaigns with the exception of advertising campaigns which promote the qualities of "French lamb" during Easter or campaigns such as "the week of taste" which promote local products particularly in schools.

From a tourism point of view, sheep festivals exist in France, but they are more often linked with transhumance festivals, which are numerous in the Alps and the Pyrenees and also in the Aquitaine. However, these events are not specifically linked to the consumption of lamb's meat. A festival of lamb is nevertheless held in Pauillac (Gironde) in June and affords a large place to tasting local lamb or again in Sisteron (Alpes-de-Haute-Provence) in July.

What is its contribution to contemporaneous culture of the country ?

Organisations such as « slow food » are not particularly interested in French lamb meat. In 1990, the Culture and Communication Ministry created the « Conseil national des Arts Culinaires (CNAC) » (National Council of Culinary Arts) which was disbanded in 1999, but which contributed the « Inventaire du patrimoine culinaire » (inventory of culinary heritage) published by region and which has served as a basis for the publication of this report. The objective of this inventory was to identify local products and traditional recipes which could be connected to them. Lamb was mentioned in these inventories.

In an attempt to halt the drop in sheep meat consumption, actions are undertaken for consumers by the sheep cross-professional body (INTERBEV). The intention is to change food habits which link lamb meat to festive and exceptional eating. In order to develop daily consumption of lamb, the cross- professional organization requested butchers to adopt a cut called "Presto". The idea was, to put lamb on the table for daily meals, to serve customers with minced lamb, in steaks and mini-roasts, in cubes and in mincemeat which cooks quickly and easily. The four person module was chosen as the basic unit to serve an excellent dish which requires "quick and simple cooking". It was supported by actions in shops, by a website for training suggesting how to prepare lamb. A national opinion survey on eating and cooking courses by great chefs completed the campaign. Launched during the 2008 Salon de l'agriculture, the "Presto lamb" has not yet met with the success hoped for and few firms have agreed to participate. Consumption figures continue to decline.

However, consumption of grilled lamb in sandwiches, composed of meat grilled on a skewer and cut in thin slices may change things in France. With the mass arrival of giros, döner



kebab and shawarmas, the meat is cut into slices of less than one centimeter thick and it is put on a vertical skewer. An electrical heating element or a gas burner around the top of the tower does the cooking. The external slice of the meat starts to cook and it is cut, with the slices falling into the bread. Salad can be added, a slice of tomato, an onion ring and to comply with western tastes, chips. Sauce may or may not be added usually based on whipped yoghurt, flavoured with garlic. Coming from the Middle East, it is lamb which is mostly used. Kebabs sold in France represent 14% of the sandwich market; lamb is on an equal footing with chicken and beef, but this is only the beginning. This new habit of eating "street food" is revolutionising in France traditional consumption of lamb.

9.2. Intangible cultural heritage, world heritage linked to ewes (possibly)

No culinary dish based on lamb has been the subject of protection as intangible cultural heritage. However, since lamb is mainly eaten during festive meals, it is integrated into the notion of gastronomic French meals, attributed as such in 2010. It is a customary social practice designed to celebrate the most important moments in the life of people and groups such as births, weddings, birthdays, success and reunions. It is a festive meal during which guests practise the art of "good eating" and of "good drinking". The gastronomical meal must conform to a well-defined plan: it starts with an aperitive and ends with a digestive drink, and in between, at least four courses, i.e. a starter, fish and/or meat with vegetables, cheese and a dessert. People who are acknowledged gastronomes and who have a deep knowledge of the tradition and keep up its memory, ensure the living practice of the rituals and thereby contribute to oral and /or written transmission to the younger generations in particular. The gastronomic meal brings family and friends together and more generally, reinforces social cohesion.

BIBLIOGRAPHY :

L'Inventaire du Patrimoine Culinaire de la France [par région] : Produits du Terroir et recettes traditionnelles, Albin Michel, Conseil National des Arts Culinaires. Alsace (418 p., 1999), Aquitaine (386 p., 1997), Bourgogne (118 p., 1993), Champagne-Ardenne (258 p., 2000), Corse (338 p., 1996), Ile-de-France (338 p., 1993), Languedoc-Roussillon (408 p., 1998), Limousin (224 p., 1998), Lorraine (312 p., 1998), Midi-Pyrénées (338 p., 1996), Normandie (400 p., 2003), Picardie (226 p., 1999), Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur (498 p., 1995), Rhône-Alpes (578 p., 1995).

Filière Ovine, Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche, 2009, 12 p.

Site Internet de l'Institut National de l'Origine et de la Qualité (INAO) : <http://www.inao.gouv.fr>

Site Internet de l'UNESCO, Patrimoine Culturel Immatériel : <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=fr&pg=00011&RL=00437>

Site Internet de l'Association Nationale Interprofessionnelle du Bétail et des Viandes (INTERBEV) et INTERBEV Ovin : <http://www.interbev.fr>



RECIPES :

Pauillac Lamb : perigord leg of lamb crowned with garlic

For 8 persons

1 good leg of lamb, shortened, weight approx 2.5 kg

60 cloves of garlic

2 soupspoons of goose fat or duck fat, or even suet

1 small glass of local brandy, cognac or Armagnac

1 bottle of Monbazillac

Salt, pepper

The Pauillac lamb has a tender and delicate flesh which is better prepared simply by roasting, or even at its most sophisticated, breaded with breadcrumbs, garlic, parsley with which you can cover it, to protect it before it goes in the oven. This recipe was found in the Perigord, served traditionally with a mash of white or green beans, but which can be eaten with sautéed potatoes and a nice dandelion salad. Do not be afraid of adding the required quantity of garlic, as the long slow cooking time slow turns it into a confit and takes away any aggressive taste!

PREPARATION AND COOKING

Take the prepared leg (bone shortened) and plunge it in a large pan of boiling water. Poach it for 15 mn then drain carefully on a cloth.

Peel the cloves of garlic.

Melt the fat in a large oval pot with a thick bottom. Seize the leg on all sides then set fire to the brandy and throw it in the pot. Add all the garlic cloves, add the wine, generously salt and pepper, cover and cook on lowest possible heat for 4 hours, turning two or three times during cooking. Be sure to cover the pan hermetically each time. When cooked, the leg is beautifully soft and the cloves of garlic are caremelised and soft with no pungency.

PRESENTATION

Remove the leg from the pan carefully, as it is fragile and present it on a hot serving dish. Remove the garlic with a sieve and arrange them like a crown around the leg of lamb. Spoon over it the juice from the cooking and carve at table.

OBSERVATION

Cooking can be done in the oven if the pot can take it. In this case, turn the heat right down to 150° C (therm 4-5) and cook for 5 hours without touching the leg of lamb at all.



Pyrenean sheep stew

For 4 persons

7.2 kg of mutton (belly and neck mixed)

250g of pork belly (or smoked bacon)

2 large onions

2 soupspoons of oil

1 soupspoon of flour

1 bottle of dry white wine

1 small glass of Armagnac (optional)

75 cl of bouillon with fat removed

2 cloves of garlic

14 bouquet garni (1 branch of thyme, 1 laurel leaf, 2 branches of flat parsley)

800g to 7kg of firm potatoes

250g of fresh or dried mushrooms (boletus or forest mushrooms)

Salt, pepper

This recipe comes from the Ariège part of the Pyrenees when the flock descends from the pastures. The meat of the animals is then full of flavour due to the aromatic grass they have been grazing on in the mountains. Some farmer's wives do not use potatoes but bid the sauce like a civet at the end of the cooking with chicken or rabbit's blood. In former times, it was thickened with a dribble of vinegar or verjuice.

PREPARATION AND COOKING

Cut the meat into pieces and the pork belly into small pieces.

Peel and chop the onions

Sautee the meat in a large pan with a little oil. When the pieces start to brown, add the onions and bacon and let them cook together, salt and pepper, sprinkle with flour and mix without browning.

Add immediately the white wine with or without the Armagnac and the bouillon.

Add the peeled garlic cloves and the bouquet garni cover, slow cook for 1 hour without boiling.

In the meantime, peel, wash and dice the potatoes.

Clean the mushrooms (or rehydrate them if dry) and cut in large pieces.

Add the vegetables (mushrooms and potatoes) in the pan, cover and continue cooking for 30 mins.

PRESENTATION

Serve directly in the pot after removing the bouquet garni.