



CULTURE AND NATURE: THE EUROPEAN HERITAGE OF
SHEEP FARMING AND PASTORAL LIFE

**RESEARCH THEME: SHEEP BASED CUISINE
SYNTHESIS REPORT FIRST DRAFT**

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INTRODUCTION

The history of sheep consume and sheep based cuisine in Europe.

While hunger is a biologic drive, food and eating serve not only the purpose to meet physiological needs but they are more: a characteristic pillar of our culture.

Food and nutrition have been broadly determined by environment and economy. At the same time they are bound to the culture and the psychological characteristics of particular ethnic groups. The idea of cuisine of every human society is largely ethnically charged and quite often this is one more sign of diversity between communities, ethnic groups and people.

In ancient times sheep and shepherds were inextricably tied to the mythology and legends of the time. According to ancient Greek mythology Amaltheia was the she-goat nurse of the god Zeus who nourished him with her milk in a cave on Mount Ida in Crete. When the god reached maturity he created his thunder-shield (aegis) from her hide and the 'horn of plenty' (keras amaltheias or cornucopia) from her horn. Sheep breeding played an important role in ancient Greek economy as Homer and Hesiod testify in their writings. Indeed, during the Homeric age, meat was a staple food: lambs, goats, calves, giblets were charcoal grilled. In several Rhapsodies of Homer's Odyssey, referring to events that took place circa 1180 BC, there is mention of roasting lamb on the spit.

Homer called Ancient Thrace „the mother of sheep”. Vergilius wrote poetry in the I. century A.D. about the shepherds along the Danube who provided milk as fat, as it could be carried to town in baskets. Archaeological evidence from the Chalcolitic – plenty of osteological material from domesticated sheep - testify that traditions in raising sheep for their meat, milk and wool in this region were rooted back in Prehistory. Old Slavic tribes in the period of their migration and settlement on the Balkans were also used to mutton. Proto-Bulgarians were a nomadic people and their nutrition was based on meat and milk, including mutton. According to the accounts of medieval analysts, bread was considered the principal food of Bulgarians, but they also mention that mutton was largely represented in their cuisine.

The history of sheep-breeding in Europe is closely related to changes in agricultural technologies. In Middle Ages and Early Modern Age animal husbandry required more land than cultivation, since animals needed pastures. Animal husbandry prevailed in those areas where circumstances were unfavourable for cultivation (a too dry climate) or the density of

population was very low, and land was available. The relationship between the two main branches of agriculture changed under the impact of the Industrial Revolution.

Wherever the climate was appropriate, animal husbandry became the main activity (in ocean climate) but its importance increased everywhere.

Sheep was bred in earlier times mainly for its fleece. After the pastures were turned into ploughed land, sheep-breeders didn't take another direction in sheep-breeding, like stabling the animals; we rather observe a decrease in sheep-breeding, or the restriction of sheep-breeding to areas with huge pastures available (in the mountains and in regions with less population density).

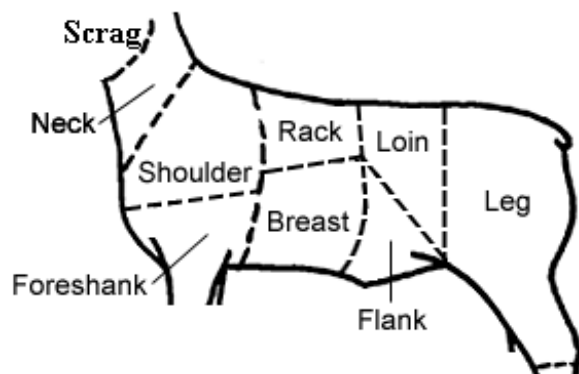
In Europe sheep-breeding and consumption of mutton was wide-spread in the 14th and 15th century. One reason was that the transformation of the environment and the deforestation resulted in the creation of large natural pastures where sheep could graze. The other reason was the high demand of wool, since textile industry started to develop fast and intensely in this time. Therefore, sheep was needed more than pigs. As a consequence, sheep became one of the most popular meat suppliers in European towns during Renaissance; eating mutton instead of pork was a question of prestige among middle class citizens. Fresh mutton was a festive food even among peasants: "a plate of beef or mutton replaced the usual roast pork to mark a festive occasion".¹

After a period of relative abundance during the Middle Ages, average meat consumption starts decreasing in Europe from the middle of the 16th century. This is due to the population growth, to the intensity of cultivation followed by the shrinking of pastures, as well as to the drastically decreasing export of live animals from Eastern-Europe as a consequence of the Turkish occupation. This is the period when dietary habits divide Europe increasingly into continental and Mediterranean regions. Continental Europe consumes more meat than the Mediterranean Europe. The process is intensified by the protestant Reformation: the Protestants broke with the dietary rules of meatless days practiced by Catholics. But the Catholic Church had to consider the geographic and climatic differences, since northern regions had no olives to replace animal fats during fast days. So the use of butter was allowed on meatless days from the 14th century already.

¹ Massimo Montanari: Famine and abundance 1996. 94.

Butchering of lamb and mutton

Sheep are butchered into a range of specific cuts of meat which can be used for different dishes and which cook in different ways and have to be treated differently, such as slow casseroles for cuts which can be tough if not cooked properly. The price of cuts depends on their culinary potential.



The basic parts of a lamb carcass

These basic parts have different culinary possibilities:

Breast

This cut is one of the cheapest cuts and whilst the price is similar to scrag end, but is much more versatile. It can be roasted on the bone, boned, stuffed and rolled, or when well trimmed, can be used for mince, burgers or skewers (kebabs). Some butchers also sell this cut in strips which are ideal for barbecues.

Flank

Unlike other cuts from the loin area, the flank is much tougher and is usually sold as mince.

Foreshank

Also known as Lamb shanks, this cut is suitable for slow roasting, stewing and braising. It has become very popular in recent years especially when braised when a whole shank with the bone is served per person. It is a very flavourful cut of meat.

Leg

This is a prime cut with little fat which is excellent for roasting as a joint. It is often cut into lamb steaks suitable for frying or grilling or into cubes for lean kebabs.

Loin

The loin is the most tender part of the lamb. It is from this area that loin chops come from as well as medallions, noisettes as well as roasting cuts. Suitable for roasting although the joints tend to be small unless a whole saddle is used, made up of a double loin roast, from both sides of the backbone. Frying and grilling are excellent for the smaller cuts.

Neck

This is one of the tougher cuts and is generally sold as Stewing lamb or made into mince meat. When sold in pieces it is only suitable for very long, slow, moist cooking. Although tough the flavour is very good so well worth the extra cooking. Best End of neck is traditionally used for Lancashire Hotpot.

Rack

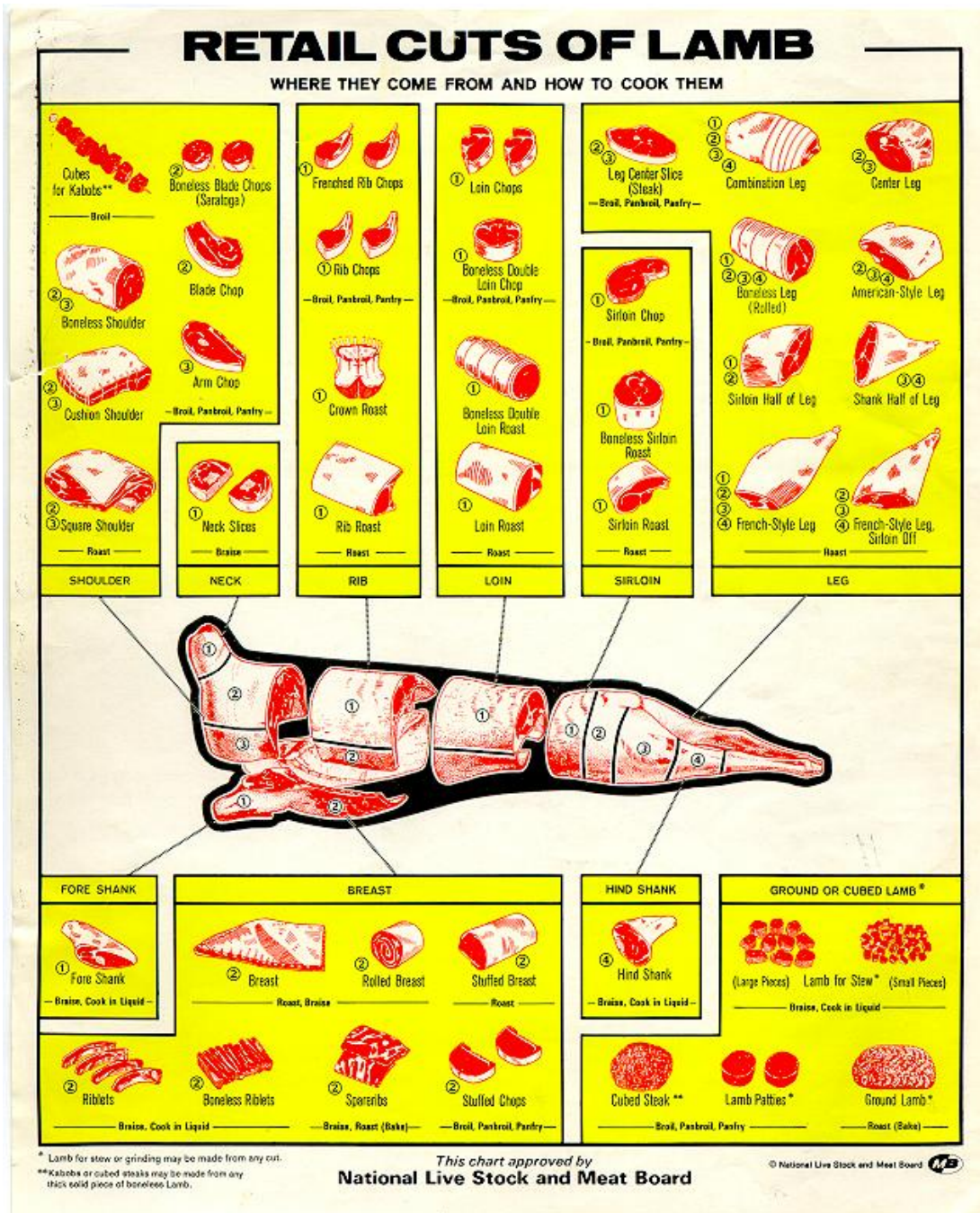
A "rack of lamb" is the name given to the whole rib section on either side of the backbone between the shoulder and the loin. A tender and flavoursome cut, it is also expensive and it is suitable for dry heat cooking such as roasting or grilling. This cut has a layer of fat which, although it can be trimmed down, is best left on when roasting as it melts and bastes the meat during cooking. Racks are often "Frenched" which means that the upper ends of the rib bones are scraped clean of meat and fat thereby exposing the bones which sometimes have paper frills popped over the top. Once frenched, it can be used to create a "Crown" where two racks are tied together to form a circle, the middle of which is then stuffed or a "Guard of honour" where the two sides of the rack are stood vertically with the bare bones uppermost and rib ends interlocked to resemble soldiers' swords. Racks are not large pieces: one rack of lamb is usually large enough to serve three people.

Scrag

Also known as scrag end or neck end, this is one of the tougher cuts and is therefore one of the cheaper ones. The meat from this area is often more fatty than other cuts and is usually sold chopped or diced for use in stews and casseroles.

Shoulder

Shoulder is often sold as two separate joints, blade and arm (knuckle). The whole shoulder is also sometimes called "square cut" which consists of the arm, blade, and rib bones. Suitable for roasting, shoulder is a relatively expensive cut, even more so if you buy it boned and rolled although adding a stuffing before rolling makes it more economical. Many cooks prefer to buy it this way as the structure of the bones in the joint can make carving difficult. Shoulder meat is also often trimmed of fat and sold as cubes for curries, kebabs and casseroles. Shoulder chops are suitable for pan-frying, grilling or braising.



An example of a chart describing the different cuts of meat (from the USA but essentially the same as the UK)

These cuts of meat exclude the offal (heart, lungs, liver, kidneys etc), which tend to be used in special ways. While liver may be braised and kidneys sometimes served “devilled” the other offal is mainly to be found in special dishes like haggis (see below). In recent years, with the rise in the popularity of Indian cookery, lamb and mutton have become associated with curries and other spicy dishes as well as the traditional British ones or those influenced by, for example, French cuisine.

Preparing technologies related to sheep meals

Cooking

Soups

In Estonia, in Urvaste, mutton has been used mainly for making soup (EA 56: 131). The animal's fat was added to soups and mashes as well.

Dried cabbage-leaf soup

Dried cabbage-leaf soup was made in late autumn and winter.

To make the soup, either a sheep or beef bone was boiled in a pot, adding groats later. Dried cabbage-leaves were rinsed briefly, chopped finely in a chopping vessel and added to the soup. Potatoes were boiled separately until half-tender and added to the soup. The soup was then simmered for some time. Salt was added while the pot was on the heat.

It has also been recorded that when such a soup was eaten with guests, the first bowl of soup was given to the master of the house, while the bottom of the pot went to the "other family". The meat bone was also given to the master, often leaving the rest with none. (EA 56: 345)

Offal soup

Offal soup was made from the internal organs (large intestine, stomach, lungs, heart, in some cases also liver) of a butchered animal (cow, sheep etc.). The liver and the intestine are cleaned and blanched with the rest of the internal organs. For blanching, all of the organs were placed into cold water and brought to a boil. Scum had to be skimmed from the top. The pot was not boiled for long. At the same time, groats or pearl barley was cooked in another pot until half-tender. Blanched and chopped internal organs were then added. Once the groats and the meat were done, peeled potatoes were added. After that, the soup was simmered until everything was tender. (EA 56: 349-350)

In Urvaste, offal soup was prepared until the second decade of the 20th century. Later, the internal organs of an animal were used for making meat jelly or sausages. (ERM, 2011)

Päädiku soup

The so-called *päädiku* soup was prepared from the head and legs of a sheep, calf or cow. The hair on the legs or on the head was burnt with fire either in the house or on the threshing-floor stove. A knife was then used for further cleaning in the kitchen, under the stove – legs were smashed and the head was chopped. After that, the meat was left to blanch in the pot. Groats were also cooked. Once the groats were done, the chopped and blanched head and legs were added. Salt was also added to the soup. Potatoes, originally also turnips, have been added as well. More water was added as necessary.

In the 20th century, when yellow turnips and carrots started to be grown in Urvaste, these vegetables were also added to the offal soup. Some have also added cabbage. (EA 56: 352)

Soups today

Using mutton in soups is quite common even today. The most traditional one is raw cabbage soup with stock made from sheep's bones, also containing potatoes, carrots and chopped raw cabbage. It is served with fresh herbs and sour cream. Mutton soup with apples and potatoes is even trendier. The so-called peasant soup is also made, by adding pearl barley or groats, yellow turnip and some potatoes and carrots to mutton stock. In the manor-house kitchen, mutton was used for making vegetable soup, which contained cabbage, parsley, yellow turnip, carrot and tomatoes, pressed through a sieve and was seasoned with sugar and vinegar before taking it off the heat. One of the most popular soups made with mutton is harcho, which reached Estonia from Caucasian cuisine during the Soviet era. To prepare harcho, one needs mutton on a bone, which is simmered on a low heat to make stock. Long-grain rice, some onions and carrots and tomato paste are then added, as well as garlic once the soup is almost ready. Raisins, prunes or apricots, as well as chilli pepper can also be added. Smoked mutton is used for making pea soup with pearl barley, carrots and onions. Pea soup has always been a food for joint working events, where a large number of people needed to be fed at once.

Scotch broth is a filling soup, originating **in Scotland** but now obtainable worldwide. The principal ingredients are usually barley, stewing or braising cuts of lamb or mutton (or, less authentically, beef), and root vegetables such as carrots, turnips or swedes. Greens, particularly cabbage and leeks, can also be added, usually towards the end of cooking to preserve flavour and texture. Dried pulses are often used too. The proportions and ingredients vary according to the recipe or availability.

Scotch broth is often sold ready-prepared in cans. As with many slow-cooked composite dishes, it is often claimed to taste even better when re-heated.

In Bulgaria among the dishes of mutton, a special place occupies the *kurban* soup (meat is boiled just in salted water without any other additions). This is a ritual meal, prepared from the meat of a previously promised and consecrated animal which is sacrificed on the occasion of certain religious or family holiday, i.e. the lamb is a ritual offering. This tradition is still preserved in many places. An established ritual system accompanies the preparation of the *kurban*. It includes practices related to the slaughter of the animal, divination by its entrails, donation of the skin to the church, cooking, distribution, consumption of the soup, burying the

bones in the crops, etc. A typical feature of common village *kurban*-offerings and celebrations in the Rhodopes is that the liver is boiled separately, cut into small pieces and the chef distributes them to everybody present. This is done on the most respected shepherds' summer holidays – St. George's Day, St. Nedelya and Ilinden (St. Elijah's Day).

In Greece, in Thessaly and Macedonia there is a culinary tradition of cooking lamb offal. The '*magiritsa*' is a traditional dish associated with the Easter (Pascha) tradition of the Greek Orthodox Church, cooked on Holy Saturday, breaking the fast following the 40 days fasting during the Greek Orthodox Lent. '*Magiritsa*' is a special soup made from lamb offal (liver, heart and intestine), as well as lettuce, dill, spring onions and rice.

Meat with cabbage in Hungary

A book by János Lippai was published in 1664 "Garden of Posen", where he writes about the cabbage: „*This plant is so common among Hungarians that a poor man hardly survives without it.*” Cabbage was always present in Hungarian kitchen because it was preserved either with salt or pickled and could be used during the whole year even in fasting periods – without meat - and on other occasions with meat, often with mutton. Cabbage dishes were made from fresh cabbage and sauerkraut. In the region Hajdúság following dish was prepared: mutton *pörkölt* cooked on fat with fried onion and paprika, some water and finally the sauerkraut was added.

Mush

Mush, in **Hungarian** 'kása' refers to the whole grain and to the thick dishes cooked from them, as well as to the dishes prepared of meal. The mush with mutton is generally known and used to be prepared for festive occasions, like vintage or wheat threshing. Pieces of mutton are put in the pot where onion is fried on fat; paprika is added, and cooked in the meat's own juice with little water, until dry. The millet was cooked in salty water in another pot; both dishes were mixed and cooked together and some hot paprika (chilli) was added too.

Mutton with grits is **in Bulgaria** an old ritual dish, called *keshkék*, cooked on special occasions – weddings, birth celebrations, all-village feasts, etc. Today it is still prepared in rural areas in the highlands, where domestic sheep breeding is still living. *Keshkek* is prepared in spring, according a local Smolyan recipe, and is ritually consumed for health and against drought and hail. The meat (usually a whole animal) cut into large pieces, is boiled and boned. Grits is boiled separately, added to the boned meat and this is permanently and vigorously stirred with big wooden spoons for an hour, until an almost homogenous consistency with a

very specific taste is obtained. The dish is cooked by men highly experienced in culinary, who have well mastered the traditional cuisine technologies.

Stew

*Stew, the **most important Hungarian dish**: Gulyás/pörkölt/paprikás*

Goulash dishes are cooked in the juice of the meat, which is cut into small pieces and different spices are added to the dish. Different varieties and names are distinguished. The most known and most frequent type of dish is the one made on the Great Hungarian Plain. A similar dish in Transylvania is called 'tokány', spiced with pepper. Two basic ways of preparation are known, which have developed into uncountable varieties. The most archaic variety is the steaming of the meat in its own juice, without fat, onion and water. It has following names in Hungarian: gulyás, gulyásos, gulyáshús, gulyásos hús, parázshús, pörkölt. The other way of preparation: onion is fried in fat, meat and water are added. The dish prepared is called paprikás. Both varieties were spiced with salt and pepper, and from the 19th century on, with paprika. These varieties have developed up to now into several kinds of dishes with different names.

The goulash type of dish became very popular in the 19th century: it went beyond the peasant society and reached a higher status in the hierarchy of dishes.

This peasant dish has become a national symbol due to the romantic aspect of national culture; but the origin and characteristics of the dish (prepared of small pieces of meat and it is not roast meat) set limits to its "career": it could not enter among the festive food of higher social layers, however it was present among their everyday meals. Peasant culinary habits however required goulash dishes to be served on the festive tables on the Great Plain, even more, it was a pertaining part of the menus served on weddings and on Sundays.

Cawl

Traditionally, **Welsh stew** usually contains meat, normally cut into small pieces. This may be lamb or mutton (with the fat trimmed or skimmed off the broth during cooking), beef, pork or bacon, the bacon sometimes being added as an accompaniment to another meat. The vegetables used also vary, though leeks are particularly often included, as are potatoes and carrots along with celery and onion and maybe parsnip or turnip.

"Cawl cennin", or leek cawl, can be made without meat but using meat stock. In some areas cawl is often served with bread and cheese. These are served separately on a plate. The dish

was traditionally cooked in an iron pot or cauldron over the fire. It is often said that cawl was originally the leftover meat and vegetables from the rest of the week boiled for another meal. Normally cawl is eaten in a bowl as a one-course meal. In some parts of Wales however the broth from the cawl was eaten as a first course and the meat and vegetables eaten separately as a second course.

Irish stew

Irish stew (Irish: stobhach / stobhach Gaelach) is a traditional stew made from lamb, or mutton, (mutton is used as it comes from less tender sheep over a year old and is fattier and has a stronger flavour) as well as potatoes, carrots, onions, and parsley.

Irish stew is a celebrated Irish dish, yet its composition is a matter of dispute. Purists maintain that the only acceptable and traditional ingredients are neck mutton chops or kid, potatoes, onions, and water. Other would add such items as carrots, turnips, and pearl barley; but the purists maintain they spoil the true flavour of the dish. The ingredients are boiled and simmered slowly for up to two hours. Mutton was the dominant ingredient because the economic importance of sheep lay in their wool and milk produce and this ensured that only old or economically non-viable animals ended up in the cooking pot, where they needed hours of slow boiling. Irish stew is the product of a culinary tradition that relied almost exclusively on cooking over an open fire. It seems that Irish stew was recognized as early as about 1800.²

Scouse/Lobscouse

Scouse is a type of lamb or beef stew **in England**. The word comes from lobscouse (originally lob's course) or lapskaus, Norwegian for "stew" and refers to a meat based stew commonly eaten by sailors throughout Northern Europe, which became popular in seaports such as Liverpool.

A "pan of scouse" became a common meal in working class Liverpool. A thickened stew, usually of mutton or lamb with vegetables slow cooked to tenderise cheap cuts of meat, it takes its name from the Norwegian for stew, "lapskaus". The shortened and anglicised version of this Norwegian word is "scouse" and is part of a genre of slang terms which refer to people by stereotypes of their dietary habits, e.g. Limey, Rosbif (American and French slang respectively for the English), and Kraut (an English colloquial ethnonym for a German).

² Oxford Companion to Food, Alan Davidson [Oxford University Press: Oxford] 1999 (p. 407)

Scouse is still a popular dish in Liverpool, where it is a staple of local pub and café menus, although recipes vary greatly and often include ingredients which are inconsistent with the thrifty roots of the dish. In its short form, "Scouse", the name eventually came into common English usage to describe the local accent of Liverpool, and a resident of Liverpool (as "Scouser").

The traditional recipe for Liverpool Scouse consists of a cheap cut of lamb, or in earlier days, mutton (such as breast, forequarter or "scrag end of neck"), removed from the bone and browned in a large saucepan, to which are added chopped onions, carrots, and water or meat stock, to which are added as many potatoes as possible. The sauce is not thickened, and it is usual to serve with preserved beetroot or red cabbage and white bread with butter. In the nearby town of St. Helens the dish is often called "Lobbies" and uses corned beef as the meat. An even more impoverished variety of this dish is 'blind Scouse', which features no meat, although it would likely have used cheap "soup bones" for flavouring the broth (prior to WW2, such meat bones could be sold to bone dealers after being used and for the same price as originally purchased from the butcher). Either recipe should more rightly be considered a potato stew. The dish is also popular in Leigh with local residents sometimes being referred to as 'Lobbygobblers'.

Tripe

In France 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.

A specialty called lamb "pilis" is known on the **Hungarian Great Plain**: The meat of lamb was cooked together with lungs, liver, head, neck-glands and the fat of the omentum, further boiled eggs, lard, parsley, onion, salt and pepper were added and all this was chopped and stuffed into the layers of the omentum. It was baked in the oven in a baking tin where fat was spread on.

The Greek Patsas is a soup composed of the stomach, offal and legs of the animal (mainly lamb or veal). A good quality patsas is white coloured, seasoned with salt and pepper, red chili pepper and pickled garlic (skordostoumbi).

The Scottish Haggis is a dish containing sheep's 'pluck' (heart, liver and lungs), minced with onion, oatmeal, suet, spices, and salt, mixed with stock, and traditionally simmered in the animal's stomach for approximately three hours. Most modern commercial haggis is prepared in a casing rather than an actual stomach. It has a long history and may be considered to be Scotland's national dish. It is one of the few dishes with special traditions attached to it and for that reason it will be described in more detail.

Haggis is a kind of sausage, or savoury pudding cooked in a casing of sheep's intestine, as many sausages are. As the 2001 English edition of the Larousse Gastronomique puts it, "Although its description is not immediately appealing, haggis has an excellent nutty texture and delicious savoury flavour".

The haggis is a traditional Scottish dish memorialised as the national dish of Scotland by Robert Burns' poem Address to a Haggis in 1787. Haggis is traditionally served with "neeps and tatties" (Scots: swede, yellow turnip or rutabaga and potatoes, boiled and mashed separately) and a "dram" (i.e. a glass of Scotch whisky), especially as the main course of a Burns supper. However it is also often eaten with other accompaniments.

Haggis is popularly assumed to be of Scottish origin, but there is a lack of historical evidence that could conclusively attribute its origins to any one place.

Haggis is traditionally served with the Burns supper on the week of January 25, when Scotland's national poet, Robert Burns, is commemorated. He wrote the poem Address to a Haggis, which starts "Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face, Great chieftain o' the puddin-race!" During Burns's lifetime haggis was a popular dish for the poor, as it was very cheap, being made from leftover, otherwise thrown away, parts of a sheep (the most common livestock in Scotland), yet nourishing.

Haggis is widely available in supermarkets in Scotland and other parts of the world all the year round, with cheaper brands normally packed in artificial casings, rather than stomachs, just as cheaper brands of sausages are no longer stuffed into animal intestines. Haggis can be served in Scottish fast-food establishments deep fried in batter. Together with chips, this comprises a "haggis supper". A "haggis burger" is a patty of fried haggis served on a bun, and a "haggis pakora" is another deep fried variant, available in some Indian restaurants in Scotland.

A modern haggis variant often served in higher class restaurants is the "Flying Scotsman", which is chicken breast stuffed with haggis. This can in turn be wrapped in bacon to create a dish known as "Chicken Balmoral". Haggis can also be used as a substitute for minced beef in various recipes.

Baking, grilling

Stuffed lamb and goat

On the Aegean islands housewives tend to cook the goat kid (not the lamb) in the oven and not on the spit. Traditionally, they **stuff** the goat kid – each island having its own stuffing, as they use local herbs and spices. A mainstream stuffing would consist of offal (liver, lungs), rice or bulgur, as well as fresh herbs, such as dill and fennel. Some recipes include lemon extract, poppy leaves or nuts and currants. In the old times meat consumption was very limited as it was considered a luxury; that is why only rich families could afford to have meat on Sundays, while the rest of the population would have meat only during celebrations and of course at Easter.

In Corsica the suckling lamb can be stuffed with fresh goat's or ewe's cheese, eggs, marjoram or chopped parsley and olive oil.

Roast mutton

Leg of lamb is one of the classic **British** roast meats along with roast beef and game dishes. It forms part of the canon of hearty British Sunday lunch/dinner menus and when roasted well and not too dry offers a succulent and flavourful meat to go with vegetables, Yorkshire puddings and other accompaniments. It has been traditional to eat roast lamb at Easter, although this is not a universal practice any more.

A rack of lamb or carré d'agneau (though this may also refer to other cuts) is a cut of lamb cut perpendicularly to the spine, and including 16 ribs or chops. At retail, it is usually sold 'single' (sawn longitudinally and including the 8 ribs on one side only), but may also be sold as a "double rack of lamb", with the ribs on both sides.

Rack of lamb is usually roasted, sometimes first coated with an herbed breadcrumb persillade. The tips of the bones are sometimes decorated with paper frills resembling chefs' toques

In Greece during the Ottoman occupation this mountainous region was the natural refuge for persecuted Greeks from surrounding areas, as well as the base for *kleftes* and *armatoli*¹. During this period these guerilla fighters, whenever they established a truce among them, used to spit roast lambs, because they believed that in this way they honoured Jesus Christ (the '*Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*') who would bless them with "resurrection" from the misery of their enslaved life. The Easter spit lamb was first established

as an Easter custom in Roumeli and gradually was adopted by all Greeks after the national liberation. Spit roasting a lamb on Easter Sunday in the open air is one of the oldest and most revered customs of Greek people.

Regarding roast lamb, one of the oldest ways of cooking it is called *ofto*, or, more recently named *anti-kristo* (opposite). Until a few years ago, one could still meet shepherds on the Psiloritis Mountain, in Crete, who would use almost exclusively this method for roasting their lamb. In Homer's *Iliad*, Rhapsody I, there is a passage describing this way of roasting lamb, not on coals, but using fire. Let us see how they would proceed to make *antikristo* lamb: First, they chose a lamb - more rarely a kid goat - aged one year maximum. Then the animal is cut into four pieces, it is seasoned with salt and each part is skewered with a sharp wooden stick. In ancient times, there are reports of warriors using their spears as spit. Next, a large pit is dug in the ground with a lot of firewood to build a strong fire. The skewers are placed around the pit's perimeter, taking into consideration the intensity of the fire, the wind's direction and the distance between the meat and the fire.

Roasting mutton on a spit - *chevermé, ovén na ruzhén*, is an old **Bulgarian** culinary practice. A delicacy was prepared from the intestine for those who slaughtered the animal and roasted it. It was called *kukurésh* - all the entrails: intestines, stomach cut in stripes, chopped heart, spleen and kidneys, wrapped in intestine, twined on a spit and roasted. The most prestigious part of the roast mutton is the tail - *koyrúk*. It was offered to the most respectable man, the dearest guest at the table. The neck - *shúinik*, was intended for the master of the roast.

In the Rhodopes the locals claim their *cheverme* is more delicious than in the plains, because the animals are not too fat and grazed aromatic grass. They also consider best the *cheverme* from a black beast, because black wool was thought to absorb better sun rays and in that way - to improve the taste of meat. Roasting a *cheverme* is long and slow process. It can take 3 to 4 hours, depending on the size and age of the animal. To achieve perfection, one should know many precious details about the preparation, salting, placing the meat on the spit, tying the legs, stitching the belly, etc. The power of fire and speed of rotation is also important. Smearing with fat prevents the meat going burnt, lends it a wonderful flavour and makes a crispy golden crust on top. This crust becomes rather hard in the course of cooling and that is the reason the roast must be torn into pieces while it is still hot. They check-up if the roast is ready by sticking the hips or the spine. But the best master can tell if the roast is ready just taking a look at it. At the end of roasting very tasty sauce oozes down from the meat, so the locals put underneath slices of bread to take it. If the roast is eaten warm, it can sate very

quickly the appetite. It can be also eaten cold in the way shepherds prefer it. A favorite combination is roast with hominy. Today, at fairs, holidays and festivals, family and friendly celebrations in the mountains, roast lamb (*chevermé*) is always offered as the favorite delicacy. On the occasion of special events the roast is made in the previous night. Lamb was roasted 3 or 6 together on a special construction. From time to time they changed their position in order to roast the meat equally. In this manner since the late 19-th c. in the market centers in the Rhodopes roast lamb was offered for sale.

Old Greek (since the Ottoman occupation) and very special way of roasting a lamb was the *Kleftiko*. Preparing the *Kleftiko* lamb is a quite time consuming process: First we open a big pit in the ground big enough so that the lamb can fit in easily; then we burn wood till it becomes charcoal. After thorough burning we remove coals and put the lamb inside the pit wrapped in its hide. The lamb has been seasoned with salt and pepper on the inside and has been tightly sewn. We cover the pit with ground and we put the coals on top keeping them burning continuously. Twenty four hours later we open the pit and remove the cooked lamb. Today instead of using the animal's hide we use clay pans.

In Bulgaria knows same method of roasting lamb or mutton preserved among shepherds and practiced away in secret places – *haidúshko pécheno* [‘hayduk’ meaning ‘bandit’ or ‘stolen’], *pécheno v tráp*, i.e. roast lamb in a pit. Lamb is roasted whole, and the ram is divided into four pieces lengthwise and crossways, the entrails and the head are placed in the stomach/rumen and finally everything is put in the skin. They heat up with fire a specially dug pit. The skin with the meat is laid upon the embers and buried with earth. Sometimes they set another fire over it. The process of roasting took very long time indeed. Usually it started early in the morning and finished in the evening, but the roast got unique flavour and tasted as stew.

Today this is performed as a tourist attraction in some mountain areas of the country, as well as for friends' tables or for eager fans of pomp. Mutton steaks also enjoy the reputation of a great delicacy – grilled on charcoal they are the favorite holiday dish in the Western Rhodopes – Chepino and Batak region, where it is also served in restaurants and at fairs. Mutton roasted on embers or under a *vrâshnik* [‘metal lid’] is considered a delicacy among shepherds in Southern Bulgaria.

Roasting of mutton or rather of lamb **in Hungary** was reserved for festive days. The meat was roasted on open fire, turned on spit. When roasted in the oven, a whole young animal was

placed on the tray. Slices of meat could be roasted on iron grills above the fire. Lean meat was larded.

In Estonia in 19th century farms, the liver, lungs, heart, stomach and kidneys were cooked after butchering a sheep; no more of the fresh meat was eaten. Some bones together with breast meat were made into a soup, but no sooner than a few days after the butchering. In the manor-house kitchen, mutton roast was prepared, using the front or back thigh meat. The meat was roasted in the oven with carrots and parsley, while the generated broth was used to prepare a sauce. The next day, slices of meat cut from the cold roast could be heated up with white sauce; boiled potatoes were used as a side dish on both occasions. During the first years of the Soviet period, when sheep were still raised in collective farms and households and mutton was available, the following mutton dishes were proposed: boiled mutton in white sauce, mutton with rice (with tomato puree), mutton with kidney beans, mutton with green beans, mutton with vegetables, mutton ragout, braised meat covered with breadcrumbs or not, mutton roast, mutton slices. In those years, a great number of mutton dishes reached Estonia from Armenia, Georgia and Russia, the most popular ones being pilaf and shashlik, which Estonians love to this day and which have become part of our everyday menu, although the original mutton is often substituted with pork these days. Minced meat was used for making different patties and meatballs of various sizes; the most popular offal were liver, kidneys and heart, but recipes for dishes containing brains can also be found.

Preserving technologies of sheep based dishes.

Mutton was normally consumed as fresh meat but some preservation methods were known. We know two kinds of preservation of mutton: for a short period of a few days, or for a longer time. Fresh meat was generally kept for a few days lowered into the shaft of a well. Even a layer of nettles (or hay) covering fresh meat kept it preserved for some days. Dehydration was also a well-known method: a sheep was skinned and cut into two and hung in the loft. The meat could be eaten for eight days. But this method was only suitable in the favourable climate of lofts under thatched roofs.

Meat was frozen in ice-cellars, as it happens today in freezers.

Freezing is a way of long-time preservation; however the most popular techniques were salting, smoking and keeping in fat.

Before smoking the meat was kept in brine, and after in a pickling solution for 8-10 days. Different spices were added to the solution: beside salt and pepper, pine-kernels, coriander and chopped vegetable. A slow fire of oak-wood or acacia smoked the meat. Even the smoke was often seasoned, when juniper berries were thrown into the fire. Smaller pieces of raw and fried meat were preserved in fat: meat was placed in a bowl and fat was poured over. The dish was closed air-tight.

On the Hungarian Great Plain salting and smoking was a popular way to preserve mutton. This method flourished in the 19th century. Historic sources mention preservation by air-drying. While in Northern Europe beef was preserved with salt, Hungarians chopped the meat small and air-dried it. In the 19th century herdsmen used to air-dry meat. According to herdsmen's lore in Törökszentmiklós, mutton paprikás was poured on the leather side of their furry coat and after having eaten, they smeared the remaining grease on the surface of the coat to impregnate it. The left-over meat was placed into linen sacks and kept in a dry place. Later they ate it cold or heated up. We read in sources from the 14th century, among others in the chronicle by Villani that Hungarian troops of King Louis the Great kept dried and pulverized meat; a nutritive dish was cooked when boiling the meat-powder in hot water. (Miskulin A. 1905: 72–73). Different sources mention that peoples on the Eurasian steppe used to take along dried meat for long journeys or military expeditions. It is possible that meat-drying is a surviving method of preservation practiced before the conquest of the country.

In France 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 cerebralis, 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.

In Bulgaria in autumn aging animals (male or female) were slaughtered and flesh was processed into durable meat products to meet the needs of the family in winter. Bulgarians used to make for winter supplies biltong (*pastarmá*) – salted and dried meat, lean or with bones, and *sazdarmá* (called *kavarmá*, *kaurmá* in southern regions) - fried and stewed in its own fat lean meat. The storage of these durable ovine meat products depends on the way of their preparation. Biltong is wrapped in cloth and then hung in a cool, dry and ventilated place. It can be further cooked with beans, roots and hotchpotches. Goat *pastarmá* was famous. *Sazdarmá* was “packed” in a sheep stomach/ rumen – *tarbúh*, *tarbúf* or in a skin – *meshína*. Then the opening was stitched up and the product was pressed under a weight and kept in a cold place. It was cut and consumed in winter months up to spring. It was served cold or warm and fried - with hominy, added in porridge or fried with eggs. People in the mountains kept the habit to prepare *pastarmá* and *sazdarmá* for winter supply of the family. Both products are also commercially available in areas where they were traditionally consumed.

Customs and mythology related to sheep consume.

No typical customs have been developed related to the preparation of mutton and lamb dishes **in Hungary**. Among Jews in Hungary it is a general custom to eat lamb during Passover. Passover or the feast of unleavened bread as it is called otherwise is the first pilgrimage festival according to the traditions of the Ancient Testament, when Jews remember the Exodus from Egypt.

The Israelites were instructed to mark the doorposts of their homes with the blood of a spring lamb and, upon seeing this, the spirit of the Lord *passed over* these homes. In commemoration, a lamb is slaughtered for Passover and unleavened bread is eaten. Jewish traditions require following strict rules in food preparation. After the complete exsanguination of the slaughtered animal the meat is soaked in water for about half an hour, and covered with salt for one hour, after which it has to be washed three times to clean it completely from blood. It is important that slaughter is performed by a trained individual (shochet) and it is required that the animal be killed by a single cut to prevent the animal's suffering. In the kitchen of Jews meat and dairy products are to be kept and cooked separately as well as the pots used for their cooking. These pots and utensils are kept in separate places in the kitchen; moreover, they are to be washed in different basins.

The blessing of Easter food - and among the specialties, the Easter lamb - is one of the Catholic Easter ceremonies. On Easter Sunday people take along a basket of food to the church to be blessed by the priest. The family shares the blessed food at home afterwards.

Cooking on open fire was in Hungarian traditions a custom of men; even today, men prepare mutton paprikás and pörkölt.

Mutton was eaten typically during autumn in households breeding sheep, since meat could be kept fresh in colder weather and could be eaten during several days. In warmer seasons sheep was slaughtered on occasions when many people had to be fed with fresh meat. Such occasions were family events, like asking a girl in marriage or baptising a child. The most typical opportunity for cooking mutton however was the wedding. The custom of frying lamb as Easter speciality is less practiced in the peasant kitchen, and was/is more typical for the town dweller middle class.

Mutton pörkölt or paprikás was often cooked on the occasion of community feasts, like parish feast. During the socialist system (before 1990), it was customary on the Great Plain to cook mutton pörkölt for the annual closing feast of the cooperatives.

The third group of occasions is linked to work: whenever work or help was carried out in common efforts, or on the day of vintage, mutton pörkölt or paprikás was served to the participants.

Lamb cooked with various methods (roast in the oven, with tomato sauce, stuffed, spit roast etc) **in Greece** was always prominent in celebrations such as weddings, name days, or Sunday family lunch. The wedding soup (lamb and tomato soup) was also very common in the old times.

Of course it is during the Greek Orthodox Easter that the lamb is the guest of honour at the celebratory lunch, always cooked according to the local culinary tradition. It is also worth noting that lamb figures prominently in religious festivals and rituals, as, for instance, the kourbani lamb .

Indeed, every village has its own patron saint and it is a custom to organize, once a year, a kourbani to honour him/her. The ritual starts early in the morning, when the animals are led to the sacrifice place where they are first blessed by the priest and then they are slaughtered. They are cut into pieces and they are put into big copper cauldrons to boil. While the meat is boiling rice or bulgur is added in the broth. When the celebratory Mass is over, the priest invites everybody to take part in the feast and distributes the meat. These religious festivals, apart from being an expression of faith, constitute collective cultural events that bring together people strengthening their sense of community. Through the sacrificial act, namely

the sacrificial lamb, the community reaffirms its collective identity and renews its commitment to the social and family context.

The most typical blood sacrifice in the culture of **Bulgarians** is the ritual mutton meal - *kurban*. It is prepared all over the country throughout the year for various personal, family and religious holidays and all-village celebrations - fairs, votive offerings to prevent diseases, mishaps, dangers and to overcome bad omens. **Gergyovden** (St. George's Day, May 6) as the most important holiday in relation to sheep and shepherds, suggested family ritual tables full of sheep products and meals – both milk and meat. On Gergyovden for the first time in the year farmers and shepherds milked the ewes and the first milk should be necessarily curdled into yoghurt to be tasted for the first time in the year. In some areas, this milk was curdled into cheese with the same ritual context – to be given away and eaten by all the society for well-being, with blessings and wishes for the health of flocks and a good milking season. On this day, the lamb meal (*kurban*) was the special sacrificial offering. According to the traditions and preferences, both basic recipes were used in cooking the lamb – roasted on a spit or stuffed with grits and greenery and roasted in the oven. Common village celebrations on *Gergyovden* involved commensality always outdoors, in the open air - “in the green” – at a special votive site, established by the tradition or in the churchyard. Yoghurt and fresh cheese made from the first milking were inevitably present on the table. Fresh cheese on this day was eaten with fresh green onion and garlic, which were also first picked from the garden and considered “milky”, i.e. ‘young’ and ‘white’. In advance, all the holiday meals and products were blessed in the church. In northeastern Bulgaria on that day pieces of fresh cheese were thrown at young married women as a blessing and wish for fertility and having much milk for their babies. In the past, consecrated food from the solemn table was distributed and exchanged in the neighborhood and among relatives. The vessels from these ritual meals should not be returned empty – to prevent ewes from losing their milk, so people used to put inside some salt.

In the early 60ies of the twentieth century, May 6 (St. George's Day) was officially declared the Day of the Shepherd. In rural areas of the country where large flocks of sheep were raised, this day was celebrated very solemnly and large feast tables were organized with lamb stew, roast lamb and fresh cheese.

A lot of animals were sacrificed on these celebrations – cooked or roasted on spits. People gathered around the feast tables according to their family or trade. There was plenty of fresh cheese and yoghurt. Shepherds' wives served food to everyone. Whoever took it must bless

both farmers and flocks. In general, in mountainous regions, where sheep husbandry was developed, the consumption and distribution of milk and milk products as ritual food was typical for many holidays – Christmas, Easter cycle, summer holidays (*Petrovden*, St. *Nedelya*, *Ilinden*), as well as *Petkovden* (St. Petka's Day), when rams were let to cover ewes.

❖ Social and economic dimensions

The role of sheep based dishes in the life of communities. (identity, signs, stereotypes, festivals)

In Hungary at the time of change of political regime, at the beginning of the 1990s, a change can be observed in the concept of identity of local communities. During the decades of the dictatorial social and political regime public festivals of communities were run and organised centrally, like any other areas of life; feasts and celebrations had all a similar structure composed of similar elements of programs. These common feasts were created due to an effort of centrally established activities with the purpose to “create traditions”, however earlier traditions and festive customs of the community were seldom considered. The political change wiped out earlier customs of feasts and celebrations in the shortest time. Local communities found themselves in a kind of vacuum – they needed opportunities for common feasts and gatherings to strengthen their cohesion, even, if the new political system recreated or revived older festive events. In the 1990s a new type of festivities was created in the life of communities: the village day. These events soon have become one of the most important ways to express local identity, or “collective spirit”. Thus the change of regime brought along an important novelty in the field of culture: the local festivals. Almost every town and village organises its own music, folklore, sport and gastronomic festivals.

Mutton dishes, especially mutton stew are popular in several gastronomic festivals. A special event takes place in Karcag, in the region of Nagykovács, where the annual mutton stew cooking competition has earned a reputation. The mutton cooking traditions of the region furnished the basis of the competition, which evolved so far that local people suggested including the mutton pörkölt of Karcag in the list of cultural heritage.

How to prepare the mutton stew of Karcag:

Put some pork fat in a cast iron pot and place the chopped meat in the pot (the bony parts to the bottom, followed by the singed head and the meat. Pluck, with the exception of liver, comes on the top). Nails and tripe are mixed into the ingredients in the pot. The mixture is cooked at high temperature for about 15 minutes without water added. Due to the heat, the meat gives off juice, in which the dish can be stewed. At the same time, onion is fried in fat, mixed with paprika powder and the mixture has to be added to the half-cooked dish while stirring permanently. Salt can be added before. 20-25 minutes before the dish is cooked, the liver is added as well as some more paprika powder for a good colour. At this point water is added too. Hot chilli and salt as required complete the stew.

In Bulgaria, in many places, traditionally associated with sheep-farming, local festivals are held, expressing reverence for pastoralism, flocks, milk. It is impossible to list all of them. In the last decade, several cultural events were held in order to protect the prestige of sheep milk in national scale, to preserve old traditions, to attract public interest in Bulgaria and abroad. We should mention the festival “In the Path of Goat Milk” – Gorna Bela Rechka village (Varshets municipality, Montana); “Yoghurt fair and Festival of Folk Traditions and Crafts” – Razgrad, “Uzana Polyana Fest” in Uzana site over Gabrovo, launched in 2011. Recently, in the last three years, in spring, the World Wildlife Fund organized outdoors tasting organic foods from “farm- lands of a high natural value”, among which Bulgarian sheep and goat yoghurt and dairy products were presented. The event took place in Sofia, in front of the National Theatre House. Such events demonstrate once again that as an important element of traditional pastoral culture, modern cuisine based on sheep products spontaneously refers to the period of climax of sheep-farming, which is probably not gone forever, if the interest for organic products and cuisine technologies is growing every year.

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.

- *Sheep based cuisine in the restaurants and in the rural, eco, village, agrotourism*

The lamb is a mainstay of the **British** diet and has been for centuries, reflecting the importance of sheep and sheep meat production in the UK. Lamb is not a meat for shepherds or sheep farmers only but an integral part of the national cuisine. What is perhaps remarkable to people from other countries is the lack of milk production and the absence of milk and milk products made from sheep. This reflects the historical emphasis on meat and wool and the way the breeds were developed to favour these characteristics as well as the fact the dairy farming using cattle is another large-scale agricultural practice so that almost all the necessary dairy products come from cow's milk.

What is not covered in the report is the role of sheep meat in the cuisine of ethnic minorities in the UK and of course the rise in popularity of food from the Indian sub-continent.

In France 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, same as in West- and Middle Europe traditional consumption of lamb.

Mutton dishes are being served again in **Hungarian** restaurants. Beside the traditional stew, roast lamb as well has become popular in many restaurants. The first famous representative of Hungarian gastronomy was János Gundel, the first member of the Gundel-dynasty. He invented several well-known dishes. He created the 'Palots-soup' to honour the famous Hungarian writer, Kálmán Mikszáth. The soup is today part of the menu in most restaurants, and it has become a typical food of Hungarian kitchen. The soup's ingredients are mutton, which is prepared as paprikás with potatoes and French beans and the dish is seasoned with sour cream and dill.

The Greek patsas used to be very popular in Macedonia and Thrace. The first patsas restaurant (patsatzidiko) opened in Thessaloniki, in the '20s, by a Greek refugee from Istanbul. The following years they gained in popularity but nowadays only few remain in business. Patsas is a soup composed of the stomach, offal and legs of the animal (mainly lamb or veal). A good quality patsas is white coloured, seasoned with salt and pepper, red chili pepper and pickled garlic (skordostoumbi).

In Bulgaria the sheep products, reasonably considered a delicacy, are widely used to enrich the menu of public catering and restaurants, which have the ambition to offer their customers local organic food prepared according to old recipes. Lamb roasted on spit (*cheverme*) is comprehended with a special aura. In the hunting lodge of the Bulgarian communist leader and head of state Todor Zhivkov near Momchilovtzi, Smolyan region, a special place was made for rotation of lambs and local people, while complaining of the weak tourist season last summer, said they had regularly made several *cheverme-s* a week ordered by wealthy fans from Sofia and Plovdiv, who sent their chauffeurs to take the lamb and celebrated at home with ecologically clean organic food.

Local people rely on the unspoiled pure nature and the unique taste of meat, cheese and milk and hope their dreams might come true to develop eco- and agro-tourism in the mode of small business in rural areas, alternative to the famous ski resort Pamporovo. A few years ago, one of the most attractive restaurants in Pamporovo was "Chevermeto", built up in 1970 after the idea of Panayot Cholakov from the neighboring village Progled. His name became fabulous for a "Rhodopean" restaurateur. The trademark of the restaurant is a demonstration of

roasting lamb on a spit according to the old technology. The attraction includes a chef and waiters dressed in traditional costumes, a programme of Rhodopean folk songs and dances and bagpipe performance while dinner – roasted lamb torn in large pieces - is served. This is the specialty of the house, visited by many Bulgarian and foreign tourists. Today it should be ordered in advance, because the competition is high and there is no restaurant in the resort or in the area that may not offer authentic *cheverme*. Ten years ago, a restaurant called “Chevermeto” opened even in Sofia. Hotels, accommodations and restaurants under the same label are already dispersed throughout the country – in Plovdiv, Bansko, Melnik, Stara Zagora, Ruse, Silistra, Kotel, Elena, Gabrovo and the seaside resorts. Everywhere in the “traditional folk” restaurants in spring sheep cheese is served with fresh garlic, meals of lamb liver, lamb soups and mutton dishes after the old recipes. The mountain restaurants necessarily offer local sheep yoghurt garnished with jams of wild berries.

Nowadays **in Estonia**, sheep farmers themselves prefer to consume fresh lamb meat, which is marinated in different spice mixes and stewed or roasted in the oven or over coals. The most popular herbs and spices for seasoning mutton are rosemary, garlic, juniper berries and black pepper, as well as peppermint, thyme, oregano, caraway, parsley and cilantro. Red wine, lemon, tomato, onion, dark beer, apple or redcurrant juice, sometimes also vinegar, mustard or soy sauce are used for marinade. The meat is marinated in dry or liquid marinade for any length of time between a few hours and several days, the most typical marinating time being 24 hours. Sheep butchering and mutton-eating are these days no longer connected to specific seasons or holidays, except for Midsummer’s Eve or *jaanipäev* (23. June), when a bonfire is lighted and shashlik is prepared. Mutton is a definite number one in the everyday menu of sheep farmers; ordinary Estonians, however, still prefer pork. Because the tradition of consuming mutton was interrupted in Estonia for some time, people don't know how to prepare mutton dishes; also, mutton is often unavailable in regular shops, it can be bought from markets and sheep farmers. The menus of finer restaurants include mutton dishes, mostly lamb cutlets or roast lamb. In the early 1990s, Estonian restaurants exclusively used mutton imported from New Zealand or elsewhere, while these days it is gradually being replaced with domestic mutton, which is considered tastier. Gourmet restaurants buy meat directly from sheep farmers, claiming that the meat of animals who have lived freely throughout the year and without concentrated fodder is better. The meat of sheep raised on the coast and by the seaside, who have eaten salty seaweeds and drunk salty seawater, is considered especially delicious. With the increase in the number of sheep in Estonia, the

number of sheep farmers and advocates of mutton has also been growing year-by-year; mutton and mutton products are available in markets and fairs, more and more cookbooks are being published and new recipes are being developed. It is probably just a matter of time before mutton returns to our shops and to the everyday menus of Estonians.

In Poland the models of experiencing, and more exactly eating and tasting certain products, which were fixed in the 19th century literature addressed to tourists, to a significant degree influenced the habitus of a Tatra tourist, who also nowadays, despite numerous changes in the Zakopane landscape, will long for the taste of sheep cheese, the smell of smoked oscypek and meat roasted on bonfire, the sight of a pot hanging over the bonfire. Looking for spots where one can hide from the civilization and taste the “authentic mountain culture” a tourist gets to one of numerous inns of Zakopane and takes part in the specific regional performance held for him. The eclectic decor of the place as well as its location and architecture is a compilation of various spatial orders – a shepherd’s hut, a manor house, a hunter’s cottage, an inn and a bar.

- *Local product, local brands and the quality of food.*

The trademark’s purpose is to enable the consumer to identify the products of a certain producer and to distinguish them from other or similar products made by competitors. There are different possibilities to convey the message referring to the excellent, above average quality of unique products. The use of different quality marks, and mainly of trademarks is spreading fast. The main characteristic of the trademarks is the possibility of visual identification so that consumers can easily recognize, understand and remember them. Their content and message are clear, and carry information for the conscious consumer. An outstanding trademark **in Hungary** among collective trademarks is called „Kiváló Magyar Élelmiszer” (Outstanding Hungarian Foodstuff), which had been founded in 1998. For obtaining the right for using and maintaining the trademark, companies have to meet requirements controlled by the State, in order to safeguard the high quality. Purpose of the qualification is to distinguish Hungarian and guaranteed outstanding foodstuffs offered in the market. Another big group of trademarks are the quality certifications to distinguish eco products.

The European Union has established a tripartite system of quality agricultural products and foodstuff:

Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) ensures that only products genuinely originating in that region are allowed in commerce identified as such. More than 500 products are protected by this legal framework, which are produced due to the know-how of local producers. Furthermore, their qualities and characteristics must be essentially due to their region of production: they must also be produced, processed and prepared exclusively within that region, with specified methods.

Protected Geographical Status (PGS): the purpose is to protect the so far more than 450 products, having their reputation and characteristics genuinely originating in that region. At least one of the production, processing and preparatory phases has to take place within that region.

Traditional Specialty Guaranteed (TSG): this regime refers to such products (about 30), which have a certain traditional feature or a set of features in their composition or production process. TSG status does not require that a product is manufactured in a specific geographically delimited area, but the product description has to be respected in the manufacturing process.

The “Slovakian brindza” has been registered in 2008 by the European Union as a product under Protected Designation of Origin (PDO).

Although **in Poland** regional restaurants are rather a place where culinary experiments are made, manufacturers of cheeses in huts still remain faithful to old recipes, and the demand for their products is increasing. Especially mountain hard smoked cheeses made from sheep and cow milk are popular. The unquestioned king of these is oscypek, which in 2007 received the EU Protective Designation of Origin. It is made from sheep milk or a mixture of sheep and cow milk, the proportions of which are strictly prescribed by the regulations. The recent “fight” for the certificate for oscypek also proves that local products of Podhale, and especially those connected with the tradition of pastoral economy, have now become a value of which even highlanders themselves are aware and who consider them to be a very important ingredient of the cultural heritage. Oscypeks, nowadays served among others to visitors during wedding receptions organized in mountain style. They are also often given as a characteristic present from the native land when visiting relatives abroad. Moskals, although

in a different form – made from wheat-flour, sometimes with eggs or yeast, are served during various regional festivals, so is traditional mountain soup kwaśnica. The significance of pastoral economy products made in Podhale and endeavours of the local community to protect them can be proved by the fact that the official list of traditional and regional products approved by the Polish Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development includes all basic varieties of sheep and cow cheeses produced here. They are: oscypek, bundz, redykołka, bryndza, ser gazdowski gołka (hard, smoked cheese from cow milk of a roller shape) and żentyca. Finally, it is worth mentioning that the title of a traditional product was also granted in 2008 to Podhale lamb, which is appreciated for excellent quality of mountain sheep meat. Although in recent years it has become a highly appreciated, especially in Italy, export product, the native cuisine hardly ever uses it. The latter case shows how modifications occur in the local culinary tradition, which despite being entangled in rhetoric of authenticity, invariability and archaism is in fact a very dynamic process, which depends on customers' needs, images and tastes. Lamb meat – in the past an unimaginable luxury for highlanders – today is in a way institutionally called a “regional and traditional product”, tomorrow it might be present on Podhale tables and it may be included in the offer of traditional restaurants becoming one more pastoral tradition mark of Podtatrze.

It is quite natural to conclude that lambs and goats can be very well characterized as the «national animal protein» in the Greek diet. Currently, **in Greece**, there are 5.200.000 goats (first among EU member states) and 9.400.000 sheep. Quite recently, the EU services have granted PDO certification for goats and milk lambs of the Ellassona region (central Greece). This is the first certification of its kind granted to fresh meat products in Greece. Ellassona, in Thessaly, has developed a thriving animal farming sector, with approximately 400.000 free range sheep and goats, mainly local breeds that graze in pastures of more than 250,000 acres, rich in medicinal and aromatic plants and herbs, in a variety of altitudes.

Currently, there are several promotion campaigns of the so called “Baskets of Farming Products”. Indeed, in most European countries it is quite common to promote such ‘Baskets’, on behalf of various European regions, thus enhancing the development of local economy. In Greece, however, only some regions have managed to undertake such a promotion. These “Baskets” will include not only PDO products, but also a wide range of local brands. Quality and sufficient volume of local production are the main criteria in order to undertake such a promotional campaign destined for the domestic or international market. According to the bill of law to be adopted, each ‘Basket’ will include products of animal and vegetable origin,

dairy products, meat etc. it has been proposed to include lamb and goat meat in the Skopelos “Basket of Farming Products”, as well as mountainous Argitheia, Samothraki, Ellassona and Epirus (along with cheese products there are efforts to standardize the “Epirotic breakfast” in hotels).

In France the 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.

Slow Food

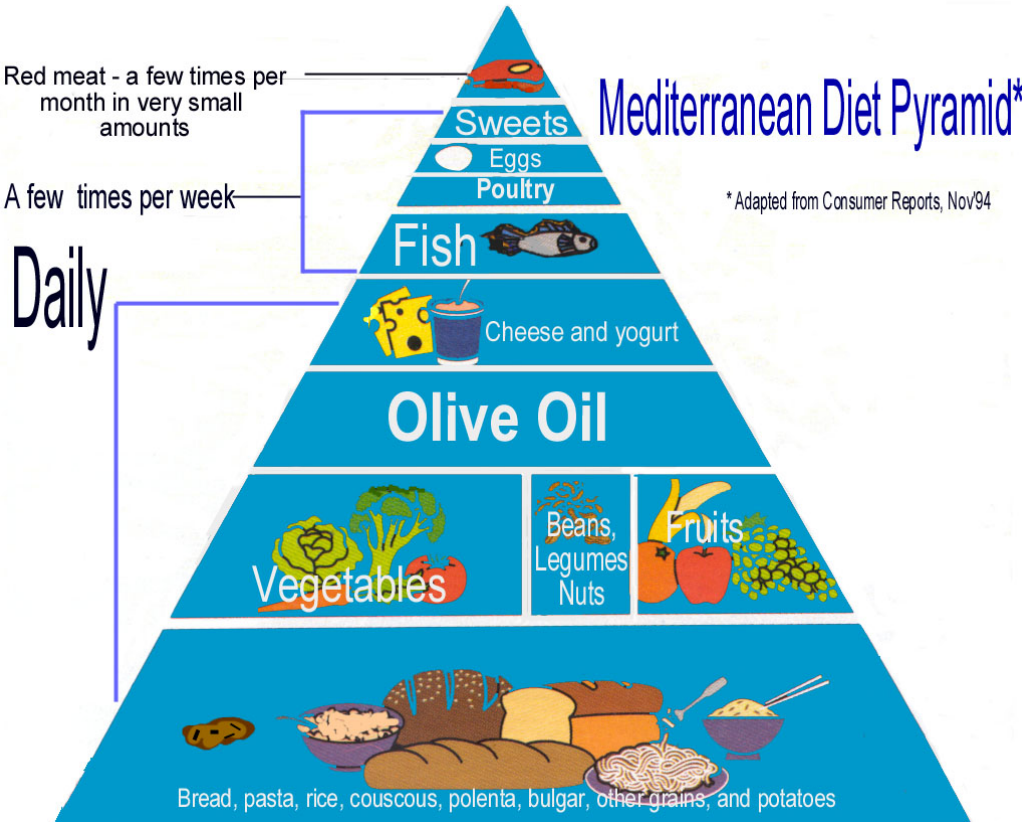
Slow Food is an international movement founded by the Italian journalist Carlo Petrini in 1986 in Rome. It strives to preserve culinary pleasures and local products against the effects of globalization and standardization, therefore its logo has become the snail. Eating well means to enjoy eating: not only to gulp down the food but to eat something fresh and nice and to discover whatever is growing in our environment – in harmony with nature.

Small local communities have been formed who believe that every community, every region and every nation has a fundamental right to enjoy its own tastes, dishes and products: its own kitchen. Therefore they have the right to grow their regional products, to prepare traditional food and to consume it. One of their most popular activity is searching for, preserving, enlisting in a catalogue and protecting local and traditional food products almost fallen into oblivion, along with their lore and preparation; for this purpose they launched the project "Ark of Taste" following the example of the Ark of Noah to save local culinary traditions and

foods of high quality within an exact culturally, historically and geographically definable and delimited area.

The Mediterranean diet

Mediterranean diet is a term coined by the American physiologist Ancel Keys who extolled the virtues of following a diet rich in vegetables, fruits, legumes, unrefined cereals, olive oil, dairy products and occasionally fish and meat, as it limited the risks for cardiovascular disease. In 1993, at the ‘International Conference for the Mediterranean Diet’, there was a consensus about what we define as healthy, traditional Mediterranean diet. In 1995, a group of scientists, from Harvard University, created the “Mediterranean Diet Pyramid”. In 2010, UNESCO included the Mediterranean Diet in the list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, following a joint petition by Greece, Spain Italy and Morocco. Each country appointed a city or town as a representative of traditional crops, local customs and habits, cultural and gastronomical events. Greece appointed the town of Koroni, in Peloponnesus, Spain the city of Soria, Italy the town of Cilento and Morocco the town of Chefchaouen, as emblematic communities for the promotion of the Mediterranean diet.



Greeks have always maintained a deep and primary relationship with the Goat. As it was mentioned above, in Greece the Goat symbolized wealth and plentiful food, as in the Amalthea horn, the “horn of plenty”. Indeed, in Greece the vast majority of the 7.800.000 sheep and goats are free range and no animal feed is needed; as a consequence sheep and goat meat is of unique quality, without any kind of additives and, of course, very tasteful. More particularly, goat meat is in great demand as it is less fatty than lamb meat and has its distinctive place in the Mediterranean Diet Pyramid.

Annex1

The main sheep consume regions in Europe

Hungary

Mutton dishes were known in the whole territory where Hungarian is spoken, however in some regions with considerable sheep-breeding they have been playing a major role during the past centuries and often even up to now. Generally, the main period to serve mutton dishes was autumn, during the typical period of slaughter after the end of autumn harvest till the beginning of Advent. Mutton was generally prepared from fresh meat.

The Great Hungarian Plain

Within Hungary's today's territory, this region can be regarded as the most important region of sheep-breeding and mutton consumption. A typical flatland shepherding of big animals takes place on the Great Plain. Sheep-breeding flourished even more when the new Merino breed spread at the beginning of the 19th century, which ended due to the drop in price of wool at the beginning of the 20th century. Parallel to the boom, the mutton consumption increased in the region. Mutton played an important role in the villages and market towns of the Great Plain; sheep was slaughtered for every social event. Dishes as “pörkölt” (stew) and “paprikás” as well as millet-mush with mutton were dominating in the alimentary culture of the Great Plain. When pörkölt and paprikás were to be prepared, the animal was skinned in such a way that no water touched it. The different parts of the sheep were placed into the cauldron in a specified order: the head cut into two was placed at the bottom, followed by the neck, by pieces of meat with bones, and finally the meat and the bones were put in the pot. In the meantime, salt and paprika was continuously added to the ingredients but nothing else, not even water. The dish had to boil in its own juice. The food was not stirred but shaken and

turned around. An old speciality was the “shepherd’s pudding”: bread seasoned with salt and paprika was stuffed into the cleaned colon of the sheep, and put into the “paprikás” to be cooked.

A typical dish of the gastronomy of the Great Plain was the millet-mush with mutton: the chopped mutton pieces were cooked in fat and onion, seasoned with paprika, with a little water until dry. The millet was cooked in salty water in another pot; both dishes were mixed and cooked together and some hot paprika (chilli) was added too. Several varieties are known: with vegetables, with corn-meal mush or spiced with tarragon. The millet-mush with mutton was considered as a festive dish in the region Hajdúság.

Different foodstuffs were produced of sheep-milk on the Great Plain. Sheep-milk was used only after treatment with rennet and curdling. The most important product is the cheese called gomolya. A side-product is the whey, a thin liquid dripping from the cheese. When the whey is boiled, the result is a thick, green-white liquid to be eaten hot or cold, eventually sweetened with sugar for breakfast. This sweet whey is called *zsendice* in Hungarian.

The gomolya cheese can be further processed to obtain cottage cheese. The ripe gomolya is washed, grated and kneaded by hand with salt added. After 2-3 days it could be eaten. Cottage cheese was pressed sometimes in a small wooden barrel to keep it for several months. It was eaten as topping of noodles and it served as ingredient of small round cakes (pogácsa).

Upper Hungary

Huge flocks of sheep were kept in the high mountains of the Carpathian basin. An important trading activity of sheep developed between the Great Plain and the Northern mountain range. Numerous flocks of sheep were driven in the 19th century from Transylvania and Temes County to the fairs of the towns of Losonc and of Nógrád County. Slovaks purchased sheep in Transylvania, in the regions of Bánát, Bácska and in the territory of present Hungary and drove them to the villages of Lower Tatra and of the Low and Big-Fátra.¹

The sheep of the Palots remained on the pastures from early spring till late autumn, where they spent the nights in pens in the forest. Wool and live animals made up their yield.

The Palots living in joint families, used to slaughter a sheep every second week from the beginning of October till December, the month when they began to slaughter pigs. In Upper Hungary mutton and lamb were served on festive occasions – such as engagement, wedding, parish feast, Easter; when important agricultural work was carried out (harvest, threshing, vintage) mutton was cooked. Mutton could be fried, or prepared as stew, called paprikás,

pörkölt, goulash. Rich peasants prepared stuffed lamb for important feasts. They used to slaughter lambs before Easter and to cook lamb paprikás, they roasted lamb meat and even fried lamb meat in breadcrumbs. Easter food was ham, eggs, sausage, lamb and sweet loaf.

Minced mutton was mixed with pork to be stuffed in sausage, mutton leg was smoked as ham but even mutton back and spare ribs were smoked for preservation.

A typical dish in Upper Hungary is cabbage cooked with mutton.

A characteristic element of the gastronomy in Upper Hungary is the sheep cottage cheese, being still a typical foodstuff in today's Slovakia. The cottage cheese – like all dairy products, carries different aromas in each time of the year and the flavour depends on the pasture too.

The cottage cheese made in May is considered as being the best because the fresh young grass on the spring pastures is the most nutritive. In the days of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy the cottage cheese from Liptó represented Upper Hungary: it was supplied even to the emperor's table and it was sold on the markets of Vienna and Pest.

Its Slovakian name is *brindza*. The cheese kept its importance in Slovakia up to now, in spite of the modernisation which took place in every field. Every restaurant serves the dish of dumplings with cottage cheese topping called “*bryndzové halusky*”.

A Hungarian speciality called “*körözött*” is a spread on bread: sheep cottage cheese is mixed with butter, sour cream, garlic and paprika powder.

Transylvania

Sheep-breeding is typical for the farmsteads in Transylvania (Nowadays in Romania). Mutton and dairy products of sheep are determining elements in their nourishment. Fresh milk is turned into cheese with the help of rennet. After a short time of maturing, the cheese is kneaded with salt and it turns to cottage cheese, which is kept airtight. People in Transylvania had sheep cottage cheese during the whole year. They ate it mainly as a condiment to give a special taste to corn-meal mush. The corn-meal mush cooked with the whey of sheep cheese is called “*bámos*”, being a favourite dish even today. When the whey is boiled, a kind of cheese is condensed in the pot, which is called “*orda*” in Transylvania. Pancakes stuffed with *orda* and dill are very tasty. A typical soup, especially for fasting days consists of large noodles boiled in curd. Even butter is made from sheep milk.

Corn-meal mush is staple food in Transylvania, even as a substitute of bread. The mush is served as it is, or with milk or with toppings of sheep cottage cheese and fried lard or as a garnishing of ‘paprikás’ and ‘tokány’ meat as well.

Mutton ‘tokány’ is a typical dish of Transylvanian cuisine. Meat is cut into strips of 4-6 cm. Unlike pörkölt, tokány meat is steamed and prepared without onion and the dish is seasoned with pepper instead of paprika.

France

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.

Normandy and Brittan

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.

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.

Poitou

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.

Lorraine region

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.

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, astronomes 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 kerpouddy or rosa variety potatoes.

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 .

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 SaintFerréol. It is eaten also in Chabrillan, where a very famous meal of *défarde* is organized each year.

Provance

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. 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.

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.

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.

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 heep, 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.

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.

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 18th century, sheep meat could be sold on the mainland, in Marseilles.

Greece

Macedonia – Thrace

These are regions with high mountains, big plains, long rivers and big lakes at the crossroads between East and West. Nomadic people, like the Sarakatsani and the Vlachs, being exclusively nomadic shepherds till the '60s, contributed significantly in establishing a thriving dairy and meat production in these regions. Furthermore, in 1922, following the Lausanne Treaty, 1.000.000 Greek refugees forcefully abandoned their Asia Minor and Black Sea communities and established themselves all over the Greek territory, Macedonia and Thrace being two of the most important reception regions. This massive influx greatly influenced Greek cuisine, as the refugees brought with them their culinary customs and traditions, spicy dishes with an oriental flavour.

Today, the most popular ways of cooking lamb is casserole (with tomato or fricassee sauce), roast in the oven with yogurt sauce, spit roast, or stuffed with offal, bread and aromatic herbs and spices.

The most typical dish of the region, however, is the *sarma*, composed of grape or cabbage leaves rolled around a filling usually based on minced meat. Another dish is *patsas*, which used to be very popular in Macedonia and Thrace. *Patsas* is a soup composed of the stomach, offal and legs of the animal (mainly lamb or veal). A good quality *patsas* is white coloured, seasoned with salt and pepper, red chili pepper and pickled garlic (*skordostoumbi*).

Epirus

The rugged terrain of Epirus has been the privileged living space for nomadic and semi-nomadic livestock farmers, roaming the Pindos mountain range with their herds. During the Ottoman Empire the absence of national borders in a vast geographical region facilitated herd movement from the mountain range to the Thessaly and Macedonian plains. Two local sheep breeds, '*boutsiko*' and '*vlach*', highly resistant to cold and constant movement, as well as goats of the Greek breed '*common goat*', were mostly used by shepherds to produce high quality dairy products (i.e. the PDO cheese *batzo*) and excellent meat.

As far as the Epirus culinary tradition is concerned, one could say that it has always been a bridge between East and West, North and South, in the sense that it uses olive oil and butter, or a mix of these two when appropriate, this combination reflecting characteristics of its local economy and culture. This is the reason why in Epirus the *pita* (pie) is not only a staple food but also a cultural icon. It is a logical consequence of the fact that transhumant shepherds moved extensively all over the Epirus Mountains and lowland pastures, exchanging their products with wheat, corn, flour and salt. With these simple ingredients and a pan on coals, covered by the all-purpose '*gastra*, namely a metallic lid that converts a simple pan to an improvised oven, they cooked not only pies, but also made bread. Cooking was slow and thorough in this contraption and, as a result, gave delicious dishes. In Epirus everything can be converted to a pie, meat, fish, vegetables, even the "*vasilopita*", New Year's pie, is made with lamb meat!

The Ionian Islands

The Ionian Islands' traditional cuisine was formed under the influence of immigrants settling there from different regions of Greece (Epirus, Crete, Peloponnesus), as well as foreign invaders, such as the Venetians, the French and the English.

Indeed, the Epirotic influence is evident in various dishes such as roast lamb with yogurt sauce. Otherwise, a most common dish is roast lamb/kid goat, as well as lamb casserole with

tomato sauce or vegetables. Most characteristically, in Corfu there is no traditional “*magiritsa*’ soup on Holy Saturday, namely the first meal breaking the fast of the 40 days Greek Orthodox Lent period, but a dish called “*tsilikothra*”, which is lamb liver seasoned with aromatic herbs and spices in a casserole thickened with an egg and lemon sauce (*avgolemono*).

Thessaly

This Greek region is a real mosaic of people, customs and traditions, depending on the relief of each area. To give an example, on Thessaly’s mountains we have Vlachs, Sarakatsani, Chasiotes and Antichasiotes, who are mainly livestock farmers and shepherds, while the Karagouni people live in the plains; along the Aegean coast inhabitants have adopted insular habits and customs. Each one of these population groups preserves each own cultural and gastronomy identity, which is passed from one generation to the other. Farming and animal breeding always provided local raw material that eventually shaped the region’s identity. Farmers involved in livestock breeding supplied the region with meat - that would usually be consumed only on Sundays or festive days, as it was considered a rare delicacy. They mainly produced milk and dairy products that assured their everyday diet. Farmers living in the plains and valleys produced all kinds of vegetables, fruits and cereals that would be exchanged with meat, milk, cheese and yogurt at the open air markets where these two groups traded their produce. This is why a lot of traditional lamb dishes are garnished with yogurt, cheese and a variety of vegetables. As an example we can mention the *Wine Grower’s Lamb* recipe, according to which the lamb is wrapped in vine leaves and is stuffed with *kefalotyri* cheese; a variation to this recipe has the lamb stuffed with *batzo* cheese wrapped in wax paper. A Sarakatsani recipe from the Agrafa Mountains is roast lamb with yogurt poured on top.

Stereia Hellas or Roumeli

Stereia Hellas, also known as Roumeli, is a geographical department in central mainland Greece. It is a mainly rural region, characterized by high mountains and great plains. Its economy is based on farming and animal breeding, as well as forestry. The extensive hilly and mountainous terrain contributes significantly to the development of livestock farming, both small and large animals.

On the mountains of Stereia Hellas there is seasonal pastoralism, in summer, while during wintertime pastoralists move their flocks to the plains. However, this kind of livestock

farming loses gradually its nomadic character, becoming increasingly semi nomadic. Around the area of Athens there are significant sheep farms.

Peloponnese or Morias

The economy of Peloponnese was traditionally based almost exclusively on agriculture and livestock farming, sheep farming being quite developed. The Peloponnese inhabitants lived in isolation for four centuries, under the Ottoman occupation (with some cities being conquered for some time by the Venetians), an isolation that cut them off from the outside world but also from each other. A *sui generis* migration flow took place as soon as the Ottoman rule consolidated its power. Greeks living in the plains abandoned their towns, villages and communities, opting for settlement on the rugged mountains of the peninsula; they were called *Kleftes* and *Armatoli*. Indeed, because of the fact that Ottomans found it difficult to exercise effectively their military or administrative authority on mountainous areas, *Kleftes* and *Armatoli* chose to live a semi legal existence on the mountains than being completely subjugated by the rulers, fighting the enemy whenever they could. It is also worth noting that these were also the protagonists of every liberation struggle culminating to the National Liberation Revolution in 1821. This kind of mountain life was full of hardships, as well as dangers, thus influencing everyday practices. Food was adapted to the specific conditions and available resources. As an illustration of the above we can mention the culinary tradition that was developed by the guerrillas in cooking lamb with a special way, called *Kleftiko of Morias*. They would steal a sheep and then roast it buried in the ground, (in a similar way of lamb roasting as in Roumeli); then they would chop the lamb in pieces and place them inside the animal's belly or the lamb's hide. It is quite evident that overwhelming security reasons against the enemy imposed this culinary tradition, as it is the case with the Aegean islands whose inhabitants lived in constant fear of the pirates. Burying the lamb in the ground assured that no tell tale smoke or smell would betray their position. This basic concept developed in time, so we have several variations, namely wrapping the lamb in wax paper, filo pastry or aluminium foil and then slowly roasting in a wood-fire oven or an electric one. A slightly different variation of the above idea (buried in the ground) is the lamb *Kapama* (kapak= lid in Turkish), meaning that the lamb is baked inside a large earthenware casserole like pot with a firm lid. Nowadays it is quite common to wrap the lamb in 3 fold wax paper and put it in *gastra*, i.e. a deep, round, fired clay or earthenware casserole pot.

The Cyclades islands

The Cyclades is a [Greek island](#) group in the [Aegean Sea](#), south-east of the mainland of Greece. The Cyclades islands are barren, hilly and mountainous with limited farming land. Animal farming, especially sheep and goat, was highly developed, since there were no pastures for big cattle. There are big numbers of goats roaming on each island, supplying meat and milk to the local population all year through. It is only natural that some of the tastier recipes for goat kid originate from the Cyclades islands; these are simple dishes, cooked in the oven or in the pot, seasoned with the exquisite aroma of local herbs and plants.

On the Aegean islands housewives tend to cook the goat kid (not the lamb) in the oven and not on the spit. Traditionally, they stuff the goat kid – each island having its own stuffing, as they use local herbs and spices. A mainstream stuffing would consist of offal (liver, lungs), rice or bulgur, as well as fresh herbs, such as dill and fennel. Some recipes include lemon extract, poppy leaves or nuts and currants. In the old times meat consumption was very limited as it was considered a luxury; that is why only rich families could afford to have meat on Sundays, while the rest of the population would have meat only during celebrations and of course at Easter.

The Dodecanese islands

Each one of the Dodecanese islands (which in fact are not 12, *dodeka*, but 14), has its own unique character, its own habits and gastronomy, although they all share a common historic background. This cluster of islands is located near the Asia Minor coast, as well as North Africa, and this proximity, undoubtedly, casts its influence on local gastronomy, endowing it with spices and perfumes and original dishes.

The cooking utensil, traditionally, was an earth ware pan that had to be sealed tightly – sometimes using dough. It was a low, wide pan, either round or oval, with a lid and two side handles (today we use the *gastra*). Lighting the traditional wood fire clay oven was a ritual; everything had to be done carefully and when the baking pan was inside, the oven was sealed with mud and bricks so that it was airtight. The lamb remained in the oven, cooking slowly, for 20 hours.

One of the most intriguing characteristics of the Dodecanese islands is the appearance of cloves in many savory dishes.

The North Aegean Islands

In North Aegean islands mountains cover most of their surface, 40% of which is pasture land. Sheep breeding is quite developed, however, in Ikaria, where sheep and goats graze everywhere without any restrictions, there is a problem of over grazing and environmental degradation. Their culinary tradition has been shaped by their proximity to the Asia Minor coast, consequently stuffed lamb is very popular; in Samos and in Ikaria -, in Lesbos and Chios we have lamb stuffed with liver, pine nuts and spices, as well as with yogurt poured on the top.

Sporades islands

The cuisine of the island of Skyros is based mainly on animal farming products. Lambs and goats graze freely on the island and are cooked in a unique way.

Crete

It is said that animal farming first appeared in Crete along with the first inhabitants who settled on the island. References in Homer, as well as findings from the Minoan era certify that the oldest profession was that of the shepherd's. Animal farming in Crete mainly involves sheep and goat, as the island has the 16% and 15% of the total sheep and goat population of Greece respectively (there are more than 1.200.000 sheep and goats). Out of the total animal population, 70% is located on the mountains, 20% on hilly areas and 10% in the lowland areas. Sheep and goats are free range, grazing freely or in *metata*¹ upon the Cretan flora, namely a wide range of plants and shrubs. Local breeds have become perfectly adapted to the island's micro climate and there is no need to use drugs or antibiotics.

In Crete, it is evident that the particular ecosystem shapes its culinary tradition. Indeed, Crete presents a unique botanical wealth, its aromatic plants, endemic wild herbs and shrubbery figuring promptly in its gastronomy. The Cretan cuisine has been shaped by western (Venetian) as well as oriental influence – the last instance was the massive refugee influx of Greeks from Asia Minor following the 1922 war – and its gastronomy can only be characterized as original based on excellent raw materials. As an example we can mention the *gamopilafo* (wedding *pilaf*) with *staka butter* (butterfat from goat's milk), snails, 'meat cake', *graviera* cheese and free range goat kid served with honey. Cretan gastronomy reflects memories of its distant past, Byzantine Venetian, Ottoman. Traditionally, in Crete they would not spit roast the Easter lamb; instead, they would roast it in various ways, i.e. *ofto* (and/or

anti-kristo), boiled, in red sauce, in *avgolemono* (egg and lemon sauce) with artichokes etc. A soft white cheese, produced in the beginning of springtime, was always a necessary ingredient, as it accompanied meat at the celebratory Easter table. Moreover, the ‘meat cake’, namely a pie with cheese, boiled lamb and cinnamon seasoning, is one of the most unusual and original recipes.

Regarding roast lamb, one of the oldest ways of cooking it is called *ofto*, or, more recently named *anti-kristo* (*opposite*). Until a few years ago, one could still meet shepherds on the Psiloritis Mountain, in Crete, who would use almost exclusively this method for roasting their lamb. In Homer’s *Iliad*, Rhapsody I, there is a passage describing this way of roasting lamb, not on coals, but using fire. Let us see how they would proceed to make *antikristo* lamb: First, they chose a lamb - more rarely a kid goat – aged one year maximum. Then the animal is cut into four pieces, it is seasoned with salt and each part is skewered with a sharp wooden stick. In ancient times, there are reports of warriors using their spears as spit. Next, a large pit is dug in the ground with a lot of firewood to build a strong fire. The skewers are placed around the pit’s perimeter, taking into consideration the intensity of the fire, the wind’s direction and the distance between the meat and the fire.

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