Infusion cuisine: a study of the value of foods in a pottery context across the transition to agriculture in the southern Baltic.

Volume I

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Hayley Saul
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The University of York
Department of Archaeology
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Abstract

Pottery residues offer a promising source of evidence about the types of food that were important in the Late Mesolithic and Early Neolithic, as domesticates began to be incorporated into culinary use. It is argued that although residues are not a *reflection* of the economy, there were diverse values to food that contributed to the sequence that domesticates appear in the archaeological record, as well as the seeming rate and extent to which they were adopted. Although calorific value has received attention (Rowley-Conwy 1984), and prestige models (Fischer 2002) acknowledge the social embeddedness of food culture, foods are also implicated in multiple evaluation processes that cross-cut the categories of ritual and mundane, prestige and subsistence. Ethnographic accounts suggest that food may be valued as perhaps medicine, for aesthetic purposes, for inducing altered consciousness, as well as negative values such as toxicity or pollution, to name a few. One way of understanding the concept of Cuisine is to suggest that it is a selective mixing and manipulation of these *values* into a cultural notion of food, rather than simply a literal mixing of food units into a meal, or menu. Such a concept of Cuisine is expressed in traditions of pottery use, through the choices of what it is acceptable to use certain vessels for. Investigating the values of food over time can suggest what motivations *brought about* a change in culinary practices to include domesticates.

This thesis reports on the results of multi-disciplinary analyses of pottery residues from sites in the southern Baltic. Lipid characterisation techniques and isotope analyses of absorbed residues and surface deposits were combined with novel plant microfossil investigations of starches from the surface ‘foodcrusts’, and stylistic information on the pots. An automated programme was developed to assign starches to a taxonomic class, based on comparison to modern reference examples according to 26 morphological variables. The combined findings suggest that foods were implicated in multiple processes of evaluation, not all of which directly motivated the change to a domesticated food economy.

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Figure 7. 22. A chart showing the ages of dietary stress shown on tooth enamel at the Skateholm cemeteries. At Skateholm II the weaning period is singular c.5years old, but several periods of dietary stress possibly linked to multiple weaning stages are in evidence at Skateholm I.

Figure 7. 23. A table showing the antibiotic constituents of different types of milk.

Figure 7. 24. A wooden spoon from the Danish National Museum collection. The spoon is from Maglelyng in the Åmosen.

Figure 7. 25. A table showing the lactose content of different milk derivatives.

Figure 7. 26. Vessel N_22, a funnel bowl that would have had an open orifice suitable for separating cream, or whey from milk solids. Picture by K. Glykou. Scale 3:4.

Figure 7. 27. A table showing the 'weed-species' introduced with the earliest advent of cereals in southern Scandinavia, with documented instances where these plants exhibit spice-properties. O= a minor presence, X= a considerable presence, XX= a major presence. Adapted from Regnell and Sjogren (2006c, 150-151), with additions from Watts (2007), Facciola (1998), and Bown (1995).

Acknowledgements

In memory of Eva Koch

My final task- apart from wiping the disbelieving look that three years can pass so quickly- is to muster some sort of linearity to my scattered memories and pay my respect and gratitude to all those that have helped and encourage me on the way. Here goes:

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Author's declaration

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