

CHAPTER 3

The Practices of a Meal in Society

A meal is an eating occasion that takes place at a certain time and includes specific, prepared food, or the food eaten on that occasion.

(<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meal>)

Why did people create meals? Was it the desire for certain flavor and texture combinations; eating until one was sated, or being together? Meals are often the place for illustrating proper social behavior to the young. They are also the social interaction nexus for a group and of hospitality for guests. Why did this entity develop as a daily practice? Was it part of the hominid way of life, or did meals begin with humans? Was it all about fire and the resulting expansion of edible foods as more plants and animals could be detoxified? Or was having a mealtime with multiple ingredients simply the most powerful way to sustain social bonds and calm competition, enabling the consumers to feel sated together at the same time as issues were discussed? Some authors have suggested that communal eating is a foundational attribute of being human. Others link meals to agriculture, suggesting that foragers do not really eat meals but snacked throughout the day. Mothers had to stop and feed their children; perhaps that was the time to feed everyone.

Why we eat meals opens up a range of questions: Why are clusters of different ingredients, flavors, and textures eaten at once? Why is ingredient combination considered a good way to gain sustenance? Having a range of foods ready to be consumed is not as easy as just eating one item at a time. Why would it be better to prepare a mix of ingredients? Can we study meals in the past to better understand some meanings behind their development? Despite the definition of a meal having culturally and even individually specific (emic) meanings, reflecting Mary Douglas's (1984) suggestion that variations in meal structure and their content inform us

about not only daily life but also the larger society, we also consider these questions analytically (ethically) in this chapter. Can we uncover meals in archaeology?

This chapter has two goals. First I discuss the dynamic ingredients in this part of a food tradition, the meal, and how it has been identified in the archaeological record. Considering those questions posed previously: Is the essence of a meal to share food, to be communal, or are there other attributes that were important in creating a meal? Second, I focus on how meals work together to make up a cuisine. We can learn about society through the range of meal types people eat. Whether eaten on the go in the car, around a table at night, or for five days in a banquet hall, these different meal types immediately suggest different contexts and practices. Cuisines can be identified since they encompass sets of meals based on recurrent cooking practices, food traditions, and foodways. We address how thinking about meals and cuisines can give us new ways to investigate the past. Spending some time on this topic will heighten our awareness of the “virtuosity” of food (Appadurai 1981:495).

While a meal is so common to us that we don't think much about its existence, as archaeologists focusing on meals, we are confronted by a gap. There is a long way between the plant remains, animal bones, ceramic vessels, fire installations, middens, and past meals. Archeologists do not think about excavating meals; they think about seeking the practices that formed cuisines. A meal has not been a convenient frame of study. But in part this is exactly why I want to focus our thoughts on meals as we engage with this food topic. We assume that people did prepare and eat meals in the past (or is this again simply a Western perspective, having been raised with meals?), and just because people have not often left the plates and leftovers, archaeologists should not abandon the concept of a meal. While we dig up practices through the artifactual data patterns, let's consider how these link to meals, to actual past preparation and eating events. The meal is a practice for us to think about. We seek links between what we do and what people did in the past.

Although some of us snack, others eat the bulk of their food at meal-times, in packages of calories, flavors, and preparations. In fact, common wisdom in the popular press is that to maintain a proper body weight, one should not eat between meals; this is suggested to be how the French control obesity, despite their high-fat, high-calorie cuisine. Gatherers and hunters snack as they cut up a killed animal and nibble berries while collecting. With the arrival of cooking, as Lévi-Strauss noted, meals probably became more important, since the hearth fire creates a focal point

for processing a range of foods at one time. Did regular use of fire create the meal?

The study of meal preparation begins with the structuralism of Lévi-Strauss and the symbolism of Mary Douglas for a good reason. While these food theorists provide definitions we can use to work on larger food issues, they also illustrate the stodgy reticence to change one's foodways. People necessarily act within a particular field of social performance constrained by boundaries, rules, strategies and habits (Robb 2007). The study of meals uncovers their agentive capacities, highlighting both the flexibility of the material involved and the actions of the cooks. Food preparation codes come to us from theories of practice, structuration, and agency (Bourdieu 1977; Gell 1998; Giddens and Cassell 1993). These agent-oriented, people-oriented theories have been applied in archaeological food studies, activating the meal and its symbolic content (Robb 2007). We visit these theories as we consider people transforming raw ingredients into meals.

Pierre Bourdieu discusses the creation of social meaning through daily acts of household maintenance that move beyond Lévi-Strauss and Douglas into the agency of both unconscious and conscious practices (Bourdieu 1984; Douglas 1971:69; Gose 1991). In discussing Kabyle residents of Algeria, Bourdieu (1977) integrates cuisine with architecture, physical sensations, and directional orientations in space and time. To assure that the relationship between meal format and social structure is not arbitrary (as signs can be), Bourdieu tracks the congruence between meal categories (breakfast, lunch, tea, etc.) and the larger symbolic, structural categories that persist throughout the social world: how people interact through their resource procurement practices, live their lives within their landscapes, and engage in their social relations in codified yet continuously new interactions. In other words, the rules for eating within a culture are followed in a reflexive manner, being part of the tacit knowledge of a group that holds the capacity to change with each new meal.

This embodied notion of practice is at the heart of Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*. He first illustrated this in the daily practices and structured meanings in Berber homes, where he learned the community's codes of behavior that enable people to act in new settings within their traditional fields of action. What was Bourdieu studying when he first outlined *habitus*? Kabyle family food activities-meals (1977). He describes women's food related tasks, preparing, serving, and eating food. He notes how their daily routines and personal comportment codes are structured by the actions of those around them, the patterns of daily life, including the topography's

influence as people moved across the landscape. Routines are composed of monitoring and rationalizing expectations and motivations through the tensions of opposing pressures (Giddens and Cassell 1993:92). The concept of *habitus* echoes structuralist forms, yet within a flexible milieu that allows for slippage, contradictions, and creativity in people's lived lives. Meaning is the important ingredient that is often lost in a discussion of *habitus*, but it participates in actions, reproductions, and slippages, and therefore I include this meaning in with practice when I use the word *habitus* in this book. I do not want to only implicate the Marxist discussion of praxis with this joining of meaning and practice in *habitus*, but a fuller concept of action and value, more along the line of Arendt's (1998) theory of action.

Habitus and its imperfect reproduction of social life requires a link between routines, actors, dispositions, and activities – materiality. Latour (2005) tries to provide this link to materiality through objects' impacts on people. Objects continually intervene in human action, making them integral participants in people's activities and lives. Nowhere is this web of connections more evident than in culinary practices.

Giddens's (Giddens and Cassell 1993:89) structuration theory moves beyond the individual actor to the social practices of people and their things, creating a web of relationships. These fields of action are reproductive and recursive, not only re-creating edible meals for families day after day but also generating a meshwork of meanings with each meal (1993:91–93). The slippage makes each meal slightly different, as cooks throughout a community re-create their society through their meals. This is a community of eating practice, as a series of people learn how to prepare the same meal structures, by applying similar preparation technologies in different kitchens. These discrete, shared practices build larger communities and political entities. Social distinctions are produced and signified through these embodied practices and their associated technologies (Logan and Cruz 2014).

Ingold's *taskscape*s allows us to further envision these recursive activities and temporal rhythms of food gaining and preparation across a landscape (Ingold 2000). The notion of embedded practices in space and among people involves more than lifestyle and conditions of existence. This practical knowledge includes naturalized opinions generated over many years as well as the actual completion of tasks that over time become deeply embedded and made meaningful through repetition and successful outcomes. Meals are the most common outcome of food work and are charged with meaning, emulation, dissent, and creativity – and deserve our time as we seek them through the remains of those practices.

What is a Meal?

As with all food issues, the definition of a meal is contextual and varies by group, continent, and family. Most people can define a meal for themselves, but it gets slippery when consensus is sought. To begin we will use the basal definition: an eating occasion that takes place at a certain time and/or includes specific prepared food – usually a social event. By focusing on the meal and its role in social discourse, this chapter visits the importance of context, taste, embodiment, and habitual practices surrounding food. Some meals are recognizable in the archaeological record, through deposits of co-occurring ingredients or in a combination of in situ artifacts. Must we encounter coprolites to be able to discuss meal practices and their meanings?

For those of us who are the cooks in our families, we can relate to Mary Douglas's attempts to periodically simplify the *chaîne opératoire* of a meal and lessen the workload. Her failed attempts with her family prompted her to ask, "What defines the category of a meal in our home?" (Douglas 1997 [1972]:36). The inexorable, ritualized reenactments of mealtimes instigated Douglas's attempt to understand the structure and meaning of this most daily of practices. Even in this age of casual eating and 24/7 access, most food events follow a sequence that connect the participants to a larger social meshwork of meaning. Meals constitute a set of culturally constructed rules about the food items, what can be eaten with what, when, and in what sequence. These rules are usually known to practitioners and recipients (Frake 1969; Giddens 1979). Although meals are diverse, they have a common theme – eating a balance of foods in sufficient quantity to be sated. This concept of satiation is not just an issue of nutrition, as suggested in the last chapter of Audrey Richards's (1932) study of Bemba meals, or in Katherine Milton's (1987) work on South American monkey diets. Sufficiency is also based on culturally determined values.

Meals usually involve serving food to a number of people. It is often awkward for an individual to eat alone. Sneaking food by oneself in some societies is considered suspicious and even sinister. How are the social patterns of meal forms maintained, and what causes them to change? One definition of a meal is an eating event that incorporates a number of food contrasts in a combination of ingredients. One eats more than one ingredient in a meal. Does that make a one-pot stew a meal? When we consider foraging societies, we often associate them with snacking. But there are many examples of foragers bringing food home, sharing and eating

together around the hearth (Lee 1984). These look like meals because they have people eating together.

Meals often are described as foods being consumed in a series of dishes at one sitting, as with restaurant courses. This makes a meal diverse in flavor, texture, and color, adding a sense of performance. Meal types vary throughout the day, week, and season (Douglas 1997 [1972]). The modern urban work scene forces many to eat the same meal format five days a week, shifting meal times, types, and forms on the weekend. Seasonal cycles surely existed in the past as well.

Meal categories can be identified by their preparation and presentation (Conklin 1957). Connerton's work on bodily practices is helpful here; he invokes "incorporated practices" that link the body completing a task, an object, and the activity. For him, as for me, meals are habitual actions of daily subsistence that evoke the past with each reenactment. Incorporated actions allow for dishes and meal preparation to be more or less repeated, not just in ingredients but also postures, physical settings, as well as the range of senses that are engaged, recreating the recipe. Ingredients and anticipation work together in practice through the *chaîne opératoire* of the preparation and presentation to the consumers (Connerton 1989:72–73). Important here are the preparation acts that ramify throughout the rest of the day and year as people literally and mentally carry these meals with them after they leave the table, remembering them afterwards, and for the cook, envisioning the next meal's preparation, providing a rich palate of memory, the active agents of social life. Taskscape discussions highlight the dynamic importance of practice and memory in meals (Rowlands 1993).

Most people eat several meals a day. These meals can take place in a variety of formats, from standardized locations, such as in a kitchen or around a hearth, at a dining room table, or in an eating establishment. Meals can be eaten in cars, classrooms, or even while walking. Studying places specially designated for eating informs us about their valuation in the modern community. Having different locations for preparation, storage, and eating tells a different story than all of these located in one space. A fancy, expensive restaurant signifies that the meal is to be remembered, the occasion celebratory. We can also learn about the cultural context of the meal from its lavishness, the sequence of the dishes, the ingredients, as well as the number of flavor and texture contrasts, the preparation styles represented in the meal, the length of time people partake in the food, and the number of preparers.

Highly valued meals take more time to organize and prepare, taking place in special locations, often including more food or unusual ingredients.

These characteristics are what we associate with feasts. A modest case is seen in the Andes today, where helpers who assist in harvesting crops, must be fed cooked meals. Precooked potatoes with salsa will suffice for the family, but when additional people are there to help, hot soup, a meat or fish dish, boiled potatoes, and salsa are required to honor and repay their help, illustrated on the cover of this book.

Lavishness and ingredients determine feasts. Like the Andean farmers, the Bemba of Zambia ate porridge (starch) and relish (a savory sauce) daily, whereas a feast meal must include meat. A formal French feast is even more elaborate and must contain many courses, with a sequence of fish, eggs, and fowl. Mary Douglas (1975) explains the recursive links between daily meals and feasts. For the English, they are structurally similar, the feast simply being more sumptuously prepared and presented. In England, Sunday and Christmas dinners should have three courses, executed in a more intricate manner than daily meals, with more ingredients and more complex recipes (Douglas 1975). Dinner must be piping hot when placed on the table, the serving dishes warmed. The main course is always hot and savory, composed of meat, potato, and two vegetables (Figure 3.1); second comes a sweet, gooey pudding; and third, biscuits (cookies) and a hot drink.

Every society's meals have a complex grammar and syntax, built on habits and practices of cooks and consumers (Douglas and Nicod 1974; E. Rozin and P. Rozin 1981:243; Morell-Hart 2011). Molecular makeup, flavor, texture, and color combinations, as well as heating regimes, define courses and meals. The flavor principle, discussed in Chapter 2, frames specific combinations in dishes and meals, with specific flavors identifying specific meal (and dish) types.

Douglas (1997) deciphers meal structures from several cultures to illustrate how we can study meal structures. She codes dishes by their focal-ingredient-based dishes – A is for meat, stressing the place of meat as the focal ingredient in an English meal; B is the less stressed foods, vegetables; and I have added C for starch to open up her B category. In this way she describes the core English dinner as $A+2B$, one meat and two vegetables, whereas $C + B + 2A / 2A + 2B + 2C$ is a French meal, stressing starch, vegetable, and then two dishes that contain either meat or fish (Douglas 1997:43). State school lunches in the United States and England are required to have these three food categories from the modern concept of a food triangle: carbohydrates, vegetables, and proteins (except when Reagan was president). The onslaught of fast food being served at secondary schools has caused uproar among many parents, with the loss of hot dishes and milk in school lunches. The fast food suppliers retort



FIGURE 3.1. An English meal

that a hamburger with tomato ketchup and a bun is a full component of the food triangle, meeting USDA standards. I doubt Mary Douglas or Michael Pollan would agree.

Most of the world forms a meal around starch (C), served with a contrasting flavor (B). The starch can be cereal grain, bread, rice, or a tuber, accompanied by a flavorful set of ingredients: a vegetable dish in Asia, a relish in Africa, or tomato-based salsa in Latin America (Fiddes 1991). Often, the smaller dishes, the accents, are the more memorable parts of the meal, although archaeologists tend to focus on the staples, as spices and relishes are less easy to identify in the archaeological record.

Some meals are framed around a combination of items that work together in a catalytic manner, with blended flavors creating a certain effect on the body, such as the Barasana of Colombia's fish or game (A) and manioc bread (C) with a spicy chile pepper sauce (B) (Hugh-Jones 1995:59). The chile pepper aids in the digestion of the manioc. Other meals are sequences of food, to be consumed over time, as in the French meals. We can begin to look for meal grammars, core dishes, replacement options, and associated inscribed practices in the archaeological record.

Douglas's (1997) structural meal model places food items in a formal linguistic model using Saussurian semiotic structures for describing meals, applying the concepts of syntagm and paradigm. A *syntagmatic relationship* is one in which signs occur in sequence or parallel and operate together to create meaning, whereas a *paradigmatic relationship* is one in which an individual sign may be replaced by another sign. In Saussurian structuralism, "cuisine" is to a meal as "language" is to speech. Both contain the deep structuring structures that dictate acceptable cuisines and meals for a community.

Douglas (1997) applied this analysis to her family's meals. For her, the food paradigms are dishes that are relational to other dishes within a daily meal cycle, such as toast at breakfast or a potato at dinner. Linguistically, one noun replaces a different noun in a sentence, just as potato can replace toast as the starch (C). If tomato ketchup replaces green beans as the vegetable (B) in a meal, that is a paradigmatic food shift. Food syntagms are the dishes that make up the meal and are relational to each other; like beef and potatoes or llama meat and quinoa, they are the different word types in a sentence (Weismantel 1988). This can be illustrated by a Mexican meal with three components, A (meat and/or beans), C (maize tortilla), and B (salsa). If a dinner omelet made of eggs, potatoes, and spinach is served at 7 PM instead of beans, tortilla, and salsa, this is a syntagmatic replacement. Such categorizations of ingredients and meals can help clarify our understanding of meals and their content both today and in the past (Morell-Hart 2011).

Food archaeologists can identify the elements that make up a food category; for example, in the paradigmatic category of starch, will potatoes, rice, or pasta accompany lamb? What can these category options look like in specific archaeological settings, and how could they change in certain places and times? The syntagmatic structure would be the meal type. This is more difficult to assess by prehistoric archaeologists, except for the rare cases in which we find evidence for meals in burials or coprolites.

Some archaeological food scholars have begun to organize their food data to see what was eaten with what, tracing the syntagmatic structures of meals (Logan 2012; Morell-Hart 2011). Building on these structural rules of food replacement, Amanda Logan recently studied the changing food cuisine of the West African Banda throughout their colonial history over the past 600 years. By identifying how new foods were brought in, replacing others or blending into the diet, she traces the values and meaning of these new foodstuffs. She invokes Richard Wilk's work in Belize on how foods enter a cuisine: "[H]e sees new foods as being incorporated through

blending, submersion (or hiding), substitution, and alternation/promotion, among others” (Wilk 2006:114–115). To these points I would add two mechanisms that emphasize the temporal dimension of crop adoption to meals: habituation (building on Appadurai 1986) and experimentation (Logan 2012:323).

Whether one uses Douglas’s structure of paradigms and syntagms or describes the food item shifts as substitution, blending, and promotion, such meal documentation in archaeological investigation will be of great help in understanding past meals, as Logan (2012) demonstrates.

Archaeological Meals

The clearest evidence of past meals comes from the direct contexts of coprolites and preserved stomach contents (Glob 1969; Hillman 1986; Reinhard and Bryant 1992; Sobolik 1988; Sutton and Reinhard 1995; Williams-Dean 1986). Analysis of human feces or stomach contents, only rarely preserved or recovered, enables us to learn exactly what was consumed in meals or snacks (Reinhard 1993). Their preservation generally requires a dry, protected environment, although anaerobic wet privies can yield good evidence of consumption as well. Identification of the contents of meals enables us to learn about meal recipes and see the inscribed variety in their seasonality.

In one insightful study, Sutton and Reinhard (1995) investigated 115 coprolites from the Antelope House Pueblo II-III settlement in northern Arizona. Between AD 950 and 1300, thousands of coprolites were deposited and subsequently preserved in this Ancestral Puebloan cave/cliff dwelling settlement. These people lived in stonewalled rooms under an overhang above the valley, complete with storage and preparation/cooking areas. Sutton and Reinhard were able to identify the food combinations of individual meals and came up with three main meal types. The diet included both domestic and wild foods, with maize being the core food ingredient along with beans as well as a range of wild plants and animals. Ceramic storage vessels and grinding stones indicate that the most commonly eaten plants were stored and processed at the settlement for year-round consumption. A cluster analysis and selective immunoelectrophoresis study clarified that these meal types were built around whole maize kernels, ground or milled maize, and wild plant taxa (Sutton and Reinhard 1995:743). Products of the two maize food preparation strategies, whole and milled corn, were not consumed in the same meal, suggesting that one starch (C) was sufficient in their meals.

The most common meal was based on whole kernels, implying that this maize was eaten fresh in the summer when first harvested, as corn on the cob or in soup (C). A range of hearty stews filled with multiple textures and flavors were eaten in the late summer and autumn after the harvest, C + 2B. These summer whole-kernel (C) stews include a mix of wild herbaceous species, purslane (*Portulaca*), sumac (*Rhus*), beeweed (*Cleome*), prickly pear fruit (*Opuntia*), beans (*Phaseolus*) (B), and flavors such as groundcherry (*Physalis angulata*), along with small game (A) (Sutton and Reinhard 1995:746–747). Minnis (1989) found evidence of this same recipe in a coprolite from the Mesa Verde area from the same time (Pueblo II and III). Minnis concluded that maize constituted around 80 percent of their diet. These late-summer meals are the richest meals of the year, with the most diverse flavors and taxa, as many fresh ingredients were thrown into the pot.

A variant meal, more likely an autumnal soup, had fewer species but concentrated on whole maize kernels and a sweet fruit. One version was groundcherry fruit and maize. Another was whole kernel maize and sumac fruit (presumably dried). These maize-based meals have a structure similar to the early spring meals: a sweet or pungent flavor added to the maize staple, or C + B. They would have been flavorful, filling meals and suggest that the sweet flavor was a highly valued ingredient, as it is for the Bemba, discussed in Chapter 2.

A second meal type at Antelope House was derived from stored food. The core of this meal was milled maize from dried kernels. Ground meals are simpler dishes. These winter meals are primarily maize flour (C), at times mixed with ground *Chenopodium/Amaranthus* seeds (C). These gruels or cornhusk-wrapped gruels (*tamales*) did not contain the same variety of fresh, summer-ripened herbaceous plants, but they had the fineness of the ground ingredients in these winter preparations, suggesting a continued effort in preparation.

The third Antelope House meal recipe consists wholly of locally indigenous taxa (C + B), built around the milled *Chenopodium/Amaranthus* seed (C) accompanied by a range of wild species, such as yucca (*Yucca* spp.) and horsetail (*Equisetum* spp.) (B) (Sutton and Reinhard 1995:747). In these meals the starchy seeds replace maize. All of these “wild” meals were similar in that the ground starchy seeds that were the core of the gruel, are ancestral meals. What does this third, less common meal type tell us about life in the Southwest during that time? These meals could have been consumed at any time during the year since the thirteen most common wild plant taxa in these meals could have been collected in the

summer and stored over the winter. These wild meals hearken to the past, representing recipes eaten before foreign domesticates came into their diet and tied them to farming. These older meals perhaps were preferred to the domestic flavors, at least seasonally. Alternatively they could have been starvation foods, eaten only after domestic stores ran out, retreating to the bounty of the landscape in the later winter and spring months. Whatever the circumstance of consumption, these wild meals must have had a special resonance for the residents. The first two meal types are different from this third recipe. The domesticated-based meal contains paradigmatic shifts from the original meal concept, but they keep the same general meal structure, demonstrating that maize entered into the cuisine as a starch.

Sutton and Reinhard completed a second study at neighboring sites in Canyon de Chelly, where they tracked a longer temporal span of meals. The residents at these sites were farmers who also continued to consume the foodstuffs and meals of their foraging ancestors. They ate a similar range of meals to those from Antelope House, with fewer ingredients in the winter months and more fresh greens and seeds in the summer months. Although meat was always present in these meals, it was much less abundant than the vegetable ingredients. This cuisine tradition continued as long as these settlements were occupied, reflecting the conservative nature of their meal culture and outlining a food tradition for this region and time. The one significant change through time in the Canyon de Chelly recipes was that the food was increasingly ground, perhaps a value that gained importance over time, although as it clearly took labor away from other tasks, it made the maize more digestible. What did this ground maize mean to the residents?

We see seasonality in these meals. The residents added seasonally available ingredients, with special meals of bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*), pronghorn antelope (*Antilocapra americana*), rabbits/hares (*Sylvilagus* spp. and *Lepus californicus*), and deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*). Wild plant foods were part of most meals. Many of the wild plant field followers like purslane and beeweed were added for flavor to the summer and autumn meals, suggesting the acceptance of disturbed taxmaslin fields in farming and in recipes to spice up the steady maize-based meals. Notably, these data demonstrate that the meals were all stews and the portion sizes did not change over time (Douglas 1971). The cooks emulated their mothers' cooking for 400 years, again identifying the community of practice throughout these communities. Departure from these cliff dwellings has often been linked to drought and associated food production loss, which could be the case, but some also

suggest that they migrated away to join others. I wonder what their meals looked like once living in the Rio Grande Pueblos?

These archaeological meals materialize Bourdieu's *habitus* of meal preparation and consumption, enabling archaeologists to get closer to people, their daily decisions, and how identity and social structure were embodied and enacted in the past (Mills 2007; Robb 2007). Having begun with meal structures, we can now consider constancy and change in meals. What do they say about these people's lives? Through the materialization of meals we can learn about a range of economic and social aspects that meals communicate about past societies. Whether we have coprolites, stable isotopes, faunal remains, plant remains, or only ceramic serving vessels, each of these data sets provides information about meals that can be placed into their social contexts. We turn to cuisine and place meals in a broader context.

Cuisines and the Social Economies of Taste

Cuisine is the French word for "kitchen," brought into the English language with the Norman Conquest in AD 1066. A cuisine is a unique and consistent set of ingredients, cooking techniques, and flavor principles, carrying psychological, social, and religious attitudes toward food, eating practices, and meals (Barker 1982:154; Farb and Armelagos 1980:227). Aesthetic tastes, cultural attitudes, regional history, and personal predilections in addition to nutrition shape a cuisine (Ashkenazi 1991). Flavor is an important marker defining the aesthetic taste of a community (Rozin 1982).

We cannot understand the power of a meal without it being embedded in a culturally constituted cuisine. As style is a way of doing things, cuisine is the style of an eating tradition. It is the larger system of rules that weaves together foodstuffs, technologies, recipes, and table manners through time and space, but also moral, cosmological meanings and tastes of meals in a social milieu, making the combination of meals and their ingredients choreographed and stylized for the viewer (Appadurai 1981:496).

In her rural Ecuador food study, Mary Weismantel (1988) illustrates that everyone has a cuisine, however simple. Within each cuisine is a spectrum of eating styles, from the sumptuous dishes and meals to the mundane, daily meals and snacks. These meals each have their unique contextual meanings and values. In rural Africa, where everyone eats the same food items, the Ashanti define social classes by the amount of food people eat (Goody 1982:204). The leaders are allowed to eat the greatest amount in any one sitting, making a heavy person a person of renown,

while the lowly person only gets small portions (Shack 1971). This cuisine of volume clearly contrasts with what is operating in Western society today, where it is not the portion size but the combinations of ingredients and preparations that designate a cuisine's class and economic standing, often with new additions to be trendy (Counihan and Van Esterik 2013; Paoli 1963; Pollan 2006). The newest version of this is Chef Watson, an online computer that works with the chemical ingredients of foods to create new recipes, as foodies seek out new taste sensations in what is called cognitive cooking (www.ibmchefwatson.com).

At its most basic, cuisine is a style of food preparation with specific ingredients. For the Rozins, cuisine is the culturally expounded and transmitted body of food-related practices of any given culture (E. Rozin and P. Rozin 1981:243). *Practice* is the operative word, also aiding archaeologists as we study past food practices through the different practices of growing, collecting, processing, and cooking food. For example, even identifying just one archaeological plant or processing technique can open up new ideas about past cuisines. Wheat processing is diverse, from finely ground and squeezed pasta, to cracked, to rough whole meal, to pounded muesli. Each of these forms of wheat is associated with specific cuisines – in this case, respectively, Italian, Turkish, English, and Alpen.

A cuisine transforms natural food stuffs into cultural entities, acculturating not only the food but also the diners. It is an expressive field of discourse, revealing the position of the consumers in their world and even directing their moral and religious beliefs (Appadurai 1981; Farb and Armelagos 1980:232). Cuisines are codes that channel the style of preparation and consumption, the sequence and flavors in dishes, and even the weekly cycles of meals. Cuisines tend to be conservative, as corporeal learning becomes habituated through repeated and passed-on acts (Farb and Armelagos 1980:190). These practices can be very long-lived: the Chinese imperial cuisine lasted for more than 3,000 years. These activities are driven by ideal, remembered tastes, textures, and flavors, by dish presentation, as well as by the overall moral correctness of the meal (Douglas 1997).

Culinary history is social history; when it shifts, we can be sure other parts of society are also changing. Bourdieu (1977) admits that cuisines change, but they do not do so randomly. Societies that produce their own food and have a fairly stable diet find solace and contentment in a steady, unchanging diet. They prefer their own staples and flavorings as opposed to taking up new items (Powers and Powers 1984). It is not a question of boredom, but rather reassurance, as familiarity is sought by having the next meal be similar to the preceding ones, both in foodstuffs and in

preparation techniques (Macbeth and Lawry 1997:4). In my home these “comfort foods” are usually based on simple recipes that were eaten when young. Today’s trend to eat new, unknown items, to expand one’s cuisine, is particularly promoted by the modern, Western press as part of the food industry’s strategy to expand the food market.

People have strong attachments to their cuisine, including aversions to the food cultures of others (Ohnuki-Tierney 1993). Societies use culturally important foods and associated culinary patterns as metaphors of themselves. Presentation of a particular meal or cuisine marks the boundary between the collective and the “other” (Ohnuki-Tierney 1993; Rovane 2006). The Japanese believe rice is more than the staple of their cuisine; it creates their identity as well as a sacred metaphor for the state. Long-lived flavor combinations and their tempos of change allow us to track aspects of social and cultural life that can be elusive in archaeological inquiry. Changing cuisines signal other changes throughout society. Cuisines can materialize social changes more subtly than other elements of society can, initiating a semiotic cultural study for archaeologists (Thomas 2004). Therefore, understanding a cuisine’s components and tracking its history can be rewarding.

Culinary practices bring structure and meaning to daily life. Cuisines are filled with “typical” and “authentic” meals, providing a cocoon of identity. Daily cooking is recursive in that each time a cook uses familiar ingredients, the taste of the resulting dish will be acceptable to the local palate. This is a goal of the fast food industry around the world – to provide a meal with regular and consistent flavors, odors, and textures, providing a naturalized and familiar cuisine to those who consume them no matter where one is. Much expense goes into ensuring that the cheese, beef, and bread in a particular restaurant will taste the same in Russia as it does in Texas (Schlosser 2001). Goody (1982:189) described this creation of a global cuisine through the spread of Coca-Cola and supermarkets. Global food traditions seen in these widespread, uniform, globally shared meals begin to erode local cuisines.

At the opposite end of a shared eating tradition is *haute cuisine*, wherein chefs exert great effort to create new flavors and dishes. Concentrating on local ingredients and cuisine fusion, gourmet chefs emphasize uniqueness. Both extremes of this culinary spectrum – standardized fast food and unique haute cuisine – are products of our current social and economic global economy. Eating at either end of this spectrum gives an aura of new identity, place, and membership within an imagined community (Anderson and O’Gorman 1991).

Some have linked the creation of a special cuisine to a stratified political structure (Goody 1982; Mintz 1996). Arjun Appadurai (1981:496), for example, assumes that hierarchical political and economic conditions that build alliances participate in the development of a haute cuisine. He suggests that only unequal social and economic settings allow for the development of complicated dish variety. These inequalities translate through a naturalized morality that permeates society and creates differences recursively through eating habits. Appadurai posits that specific, unique dishes reinforce social differences when differential access to food is common, as in slavery or caste societies. In these hierarchical situations, intricate food practices take on cosmological and moral properties. This is the case, Appadurai notes, because in these societies people and gods produce food together, creating moral rights and obligations. These cosmological (yet veiled) influences on cuisine operate in all castes of India, his place of study, where there is a range of cuisines, each carrying complex and subtle social ramifications. This was also the case in the Mesopotamian past (Bottero 2004).

These socio-moral constraints of obligation operate in empires but also in the smallest communities, as Weismantel (1991) shows in a rural Andean farming family. There, children prefer bread, a foreign food that costs money, over the traditional potatoes, which are locally produced, in an attempt to reposition themselves out of poverty. If we restrict Appadurai's webs of meaning only to overtly complex meals or to large, class or state societies, we are leaving out the agency of every cook producing dinner. Although they are not necessarily equally ornate, all groups develop cuisine rules. As Bourdieu (1977, 1984) tells us, it is through daily practices that meanings are created and maintained. It is in these daily practices of breakfast and dinner that distinctive cuisines are forged.

I prefer the concept of cuisine in its more inclusive, Mintzean sense, as a constellation of cooking methods, dishes, ingredients, consumption etiquette, meal cycles, and tastes, regardless of the size or scope of a culture (Mintz 1996). The identification of "high" or "low" cuisines is artificial. Assigning these categories to specific cuisines leads to the same problems we have in archaeology when we try to define political categories within a community. Here I associate *haute* cuisine, defined by specific ingredients, preparations, and table manners, with groups that participate in the maintenance of a permanent elite class.

What makes a cuisine different from a diet is its prescriptive rules, meanings, and accompanying emotions that are activated in the production of acceptable foods. A diet is simply the calories and ingredients being

consumed. Staples form the bulk of the calories in a diet; flavorings often make up the bulk of the psychological importance (Rozin 1987:197). Past cuisines have the potential to chart consensus, choice, and political trends through food preferences because they reflect the broader tastes of a culture. Although all people eat, they do not eat all of the items available to them. Changes in frequencies of plant and animal consumption have been studied in archaeology, but these dietary trends are not often discussed along with the meanings and psychologies of the populace. The concept of cuisine helps us do that.

Beliefs about the proper ways of preparing and eating food inform status and class in addition to access to ingredients. These norms are learned at home through daily practices. Some culinary identities are deep-seated and continue despite radical changes in other parts of society. For example, the cuisine of combining fruit and meat, so common in Middle Eastern dishes, can be traced back to pre-Islamic consumption styles in Mesopotamia, reaffirming links to this millennia-old meal *habitus* (Bottero 2004). Lynn Harbottle traces Iranian immigrants to London, where their use of certain combinations of core ingredients in their meal preparations, such as apricots and lamb, continues to affirm their Iranian cuisine identities, both physically and emotionally (Harbottle 1997:177). In rural Anatolia, the basic ingredients of the cuisine – bulgur wheat, chickpeas, and lentils – have remained the core of some of this population's cuisine for 8,000 years, since the Neolithic.

Major cuisine shifts usually correlate with social or political upheaval, illustrated when people are forced to eat from another group's food tradition (Holtzman 2009; Macbeth and Lawry 1997:4; Powers and Powers 1984; Vroom 2000). This rupture is registered in the Irish dietary change, when the potato replaced oats and barley 500 years ago, initially because of land-owner demands (Messer 1997). Such rupture has occurred with the recent entry of maize in northern Kenyan Samburu pastoral societies (Holtzman 2009). Sunflowers and maize across northern China have now become common crops; how are they entering the cuisine? In the Native North American diet, which changed rapidly following constraints imposed by European settlers, William and Marla Powers (1984) stunningly outline one such devastating culinary rupture for the Oglala Lakota hunting groups, forced to change from a cuisine of hunted bison, maize, and wild herbs to bags of wheat, cows (beef), lard, and coffee.

In the seventeenth century, the Oglala shifted from a generalized hunting and gathering strategy to intensive buffalo hunting with the introduction of the horse on the central plains of North America, which became

their staple as well as their most sacred food. With the European incursion into the Plains in the nineteenth century in search of farmland, the Oglala's access to their hunting territory and its animals was increasingly restricted, making their core food scarce and starvation common. As hunting territories were restricted for the Oglala and the military wantonly killed off the buffalo, the U.S. government encouraged the natives to "act like Europeans" and farm. The Oglala were not interested in farming. They were given cattle to herd and crops to grow, with little success. Not only was this a sweeping alteration to their relationship with their landscape; it also cut into the core of their cuisine morality. At first the Oglala found beef offensive and did not want to eat it. Cut off from their previous economic livelihoods, many starved, not being able to take up a completely new food tradition.

The Oglala, no longer economically self-sufficient, were given rations of flour, coffee, and bacon and were forced to change their diet *and* cuisine, or die. In desperation they began killing the cows in the same way they had killed the buffalo in the summer and fall, chasing them on horseback, preparing and feasting family and friends in the traditional way (Powers and Powers 1984:62). This cognitive transference of the cow into the "spotted buffalo" was essential for them to survive. The economics of staying alive within these new conditions demanded a shift in their cuisine. "Standing Bear noted that 'our buffalo' had perished and we were a meat eating people, so we succumbed to the habit which at first seemed so distasteful to us" (ibid:62). They not only had to shift to beef as their staple, they also had to reinvent their ritual feasting tradition around new preparations and ingredients. After years of being constrained on the reservations, the overexploited wild tubers (C) that were roasted in pits and consumed with buffalo meat (A) were lost, and the foods of their incarceration developed into their cuisine. Flour dumplings (C) fried in bacon grease, made from the rations during those early years, slowly evolved into the traditional ritual meal of fry bread (Adams 2011). This dish has remained particularly symbolic to the Oglala, but not from the old ways; rather it is a mnemonic of incarceration that nearly killed them.

Powers and Powers (1984:63) note that these rations, when distributed, were often spoiled or rotten, making them even more repugnant to the Oglala, increasing the irony that these very ingredients have become "Indian" or "native" foods today. The economics of conquest and starvation accelerated this cuisine transformation, which was completed by naming, processing, and then ritualizing these foods. Coffee (B) became a medicine, fry bread (C) the starch, and beef the sacred meat (A),

referencing the syntagmatic form of the earlier cuisine. A defeated people were deprived of their traditional foods and procurement strategies, yet their cultural *habitus* was not completely extracted from them. This reformulation of their cuisine through paradigmatic ingredient replacement does not mask their economic inequality but is an example of how even the downtrodden will maintain their identity through whatever agency they have (Adams 2011).

Meanwhile, other North American European cuisines were also transformed. Cuisine histories register different immigrant histories. Most Italian immigrants to the United States, for example, moved to cities and actively maintained their Italian cuisine as they opened food stores and restaurants, producing sausages with the same spices they had used in Italy, canning tomatoes, and making pasta, as well as importing Italian cheeses when possible (this is still ongoing in 2015). In contrast, Scandinavian rural immigrants did not maintain their food traditions but shifted to eat the rapidly evolving North American farm cuisine, based on a mix of European and American farmed foodstuffs with meals famously culminating in apple pie. Most of the Scandinavians became farmers in the interior of the continent, shifting from a coastal diet of dried fish and barley to wheat, maize, and pork. These minor and major cuisine changes reflect the level of impact this move had on populations' identities, practices, and cuisine. While the Italians were able to keep much of their cuisine and their society, the Scandinavians mainly clung to their baking traditions while adopting the new American farm cuisine, as it was impossible to remain with fish as the staple.

Archaeological Cuisines

Following this discussion of the structuring structures that form cuisines and how they are actively created in people's lives, I turn to archaeological settings to see what can be identified of cuisines in the past. To understand how cuisines inform us about past societies, let us look at a radical cuisine shift identified in the archaeological record to trace what such a change might have produced and signified in the lives of the people who lived through it. As in many areas across the globe, the Mesolithic foragers of Northern Europe went through a far-reaching shift in their food traditions with the onset of the Neolithic complex arriving on the continent. This shift brought new foods and lifestyles along with grain farming and herding from Anatolia (Ammerman and Cavalli-Sforza 1971; Evershed et al. 2008; Özdoğan 2002; Price 1989, 1996). Many Near Eastern and European

scholars have focused their research on this question of the Neolithic farming and herding complex in Europe. Rather than review this research, I turn to what it imparts regarding how people interacted with their food, landscape, and each other.

The archaeological evidence, especially the new syntheses of absolute dates, genetics, and stable isotopes, reveal that some years after the onset of the Neolithic, around 10,000 years ago, a mix of domestic grains, cow, goat, sheep, and pig remains is found increasingly northwards out of the Fertile Crescent, suggesting varying tempos, routes, and acceptances up into eastern Europe (Bocquet-Appel 2009; Bocquet-Appel et al. 2012). It turns out that not only new plants, animals, and an annual cycle focused on planting and herding spread into this region; there is evidence for the migration of Neolithic farmers up the major river valleys, settling across Europe (Bentley et al. 2003a). Interaction with the indigenous Mesolithic hunters is evident, with a break from some of the old cuisine and its ingredients. This interaction further suggests an eventual worldview shift, even a transformation in the concept of time (Borić 2003).

Some of the clearest evidence of this interaction and cultural transition comes from the Danube Gorges, where detailed site and burial interpretation have been re-studied (Borić et al. 2012; Borić and Price 2013). At the site of Lepinski Vir in Serbia, the recent analysis of the two dwelling phases, before and after the evidence of Neolithic material culture and people, elucidates the impact of the arrival of the newcomers in this region, reflected in how the past was remembered, while the new world of the farmer was being increasingly manifested. This history is noted in new burial forms, houses, and personal adornment. There was exchange of artifact styles, ideas, and also people, as women from indigenous communities clearly moved, lived, and were buried in the newcomers communities. The strontium isotope data support intermarriage, with the women moving between communities, allowing for worldview sharing, which eventually brought about farming and the Neolithic worldview throughout all communities in this Danube region by around 5900 BC (Borić and Price 2013). From strontium and other stable isotope data, Borić and Price have been able to identify people who did not grow up in the vicinity of their death, supporting this idea of intermarriage between the hunter-gatherers-fisherfolk and the farmer-pastoralists. Another dataset that supports this idea is the genetic and isotopic evidence from Germany, which documents the movement of Near Eastern genetic stock into Europe as farming men migrated and mated with indigenous women there as well (Bentley et al. 2003; Rasteiro et al. 2012; Skoglund et al. 2012).

With such powerful data, archaeologists increasingly postulate that these crops, animals, and new ways of viewing the world moved north with the migrating immigrants, rather than just the idea of farming being transmitted and traded. The demographic and burial evidence from this southeastern European region suggests that farming communities settled in valleys while the Mesolithic folk lived in upland areas (Bocquet-Appel 2009; Boric and Price 2013). This process displays a history that occurred over several thousand years across Europe up to Sweden (Skoglund et al. 2012).

The indigenous people of Denmark and Britain before about 4000 BC (5950 BP) had been eating a wide range of wild animals and plants, including fish, shellfish, mollusks, crustaceans, fowl, red and roe deer, elk, aurochs, and wild boar along with aquatic plants, nuts, herbs, grains, fruits, and herbs including apple, sloe and garlic mustard (Craig et al. 2011; Price 1989; Richards 2000; Richards et al. 2003b; Saul et al. 2013; Tauber 1981, 1983; Zvelebil 1995). As people adopted the Neolithic domestic cuisine, they shifted to a narrower diet of emmer and einkorn wheat, naked and hulled barley, and oats, along with domesticated cattle, pig, sheep, and dog (Koch 1998). Their diet breadth did not expand again until many years later with the age of exploration and the initiation of the modern global economy (Crosby 2003). Some might say this Neolithic cuisine and lifestyle shift was not necessarily an optimal choice (Hillman et al. 1989; Jones 1977). There are many examples, especially in the north, of people moving away from the bountiful shoreline resources with this new focus on inland farming of carbohydrate-rich ingredients. This new cuisine not only usurped the earlier cuisine; it shifted the core ingredient (A) from marine fish and crustaceans to domestic meat and milk, and also the starch (C) from indigenous wild grains, rhizomes and roots to farmed grasses (Fischer et al. 2007). This change also involved a lot more work, not only in the fields but also in grinding to make gruel and bread.

As Alasdair Whittle (1996; Bickle and Whittle 2013) demonstrates in his central European Neolithic research, this Near Eastern food complex gradually (over millennia) increased across central Europe (in the LBK culture), as mixed foraging and farming was replaced by farming alone. His data suggest that in some areas plants and animals were being exchanged – for example, seen in a local increase of agriculture in the late Mesolithic of Hungary (Whittle 1996). Other regions seemed to take up these domestic taxa more abruptly, as in Denmark and Britain, although marine foods remained part of the coastal diet for some time (Milner et al. 2004; Richards 2000; Richards et al. 2003b:292). By the Bronze Age, with people settled on the landscape and the cuisine firmly built around cereal and legume gruels

and soups, the remnants of the diverse Paleolithic diet with its range of wild herbs, roots, and fruit had almost disappeared, continuing only east in modern-day Ukraine (Lillie and Richards 2000). The cultural reasons for this shift have not been clarified by archaeological research.

What was the Neolithic grain based cuisine of the European farmer like to live on? Why did people adopt this? How did it make people feel? Anni Gamerith's (1981) historic study of nineteenth-century Austrian farm meals illustrates a similar cuisine and might shed some light on why people took up this foreign cuisine. She studied the weekly dinner menus of fourteen central Austrian farming families (Gamerith 1981:86–87). These meals display minor variations on wheat dumplings, what she calls farinaceous dishes (ground grain), and soups with meat and cabbage, making a meal of C with A+B. Meat was eaten daily, but meals were dominated by wheat-based recipes. Much like the Ancestral Puebloan core meals of maize or wild seeds, with some fruit added, this narrow range of preparations and flavorings made for a sustainable but extremely narrow cuisine for the farmers, whose Mesolithic ancestors had consumed diverse meals and cuisines for thousands of years.

Why did this almost complete cuisine shift occur across Europe with the coming of these domesticates? Scholars working on this issue have suggested a range of reasons. From the vantage point of our modern cuisine, we have to be impressed at such a major ingredient and cuisine shift across a continent, even if the process spanned several thousand years. The closest scale of such a cuisine change is registered in the onslaught of the European diet into North America in the 1600s, which was much more abrupt and rapid, spanning only several centuries. Was this Neolithic cuisine tied to a conquest shift, like which happened to the Oglala Lakota, who were forced to turn to wheat, beef, and coffee, or the shift to potato consumption by the Irish with the impact of the English landholders? The data do not suggest conquest. Douglas Price (1996) ties this Northern European Mesolithic-to-Neolithic cuisine change to intergroup competition and prestige models, which suggest that specific groups gained status when they adopted these new, foreign people and their foods. This emulatory model would have had reverberations throughout the society, especially if these crops also offered the thrill of new, even forbidden tastes. Although crops were taken up at varying rates across Europe, there are now several examples that link this cuisine change to the immigration of new people into regions and who interbred with the local inhabitants (Bentley et al. 2003). It does not seem to have been physical conquest, but it might have been psychological conquest, that is, so much intermarriage occurred as to swamp out the local patterns.

Another possibility is that the interest in and uptake of these new plants and animals was a result of increasing pressure on local food sources, such as coastal fish and mollusks, linked to climate change. Peter Rowley-Conwy (1984) posits that environmental pressures on marine food sources emanated out of the post-Pleistocene climatic shift. This shift would have been severe and sufficiently sustained to have markedly diminished marine resources, causing people to move inland from the coast in search for new resources, including introduced crops. The ecological evidence for a diminution of marine resources is not strong, nor can environmental scholars link the uptake of these new foods with the timing of long-term climatic shifts.

Others propose that increased stress on wild resources owing to the influx of migrants encouraged farming, making the locally gathered food more difficult to acquire. This thesis supports a production intensification model, which should be evident in increased marine food extraction as well as evidence of farming. Again, this thesis is not supported by the archaeological record. Instead, a strong increase in the plant and animal frequencies (and a concomitant reduction in marine resources) is reflected in the human stable isotope data (Richards et al. 2003b). Richards's (2000) stable isotopic work on English human remains over this Mesolithic-Neolithic transition demonstrates a reduction in seafood consumption, which strongly supports an ontological shift in the populace. We do not yet have a clear idea about the relative availability of food over this transition, but the archaeological evidence to date suggests that the shifts in food consumption were not driven by food stress.

Why would this cuisine and its ideological shift have happened so thoroughly across such a broad region, albeit along different trajectories and with different tempos across the continent? Although the southern folk moved in with their own cuisine, what was so attractive about it for the locals to accept it? There must have been some ideological values tied to these crops and animals, even if initially these new ways of life were not always positively valued. Were people (women) forced to work on these new farms, learning about the techniques, foods, and beliefs dissonantly, as the California native women did at the Russian outpost of Fort Ross, California (Lightfoot et al. 1998)? Or did these new foods seem exotic and attractive and thus were sought after even though there was little contact between the two disparate populations in the early years?

In the conversion model a new cultural and symbolic world was introduced, such that the belief in the old ways diminished as new activities created new *habitus* and new *chaîne opératoire*, as seen again later with

the spread of new religions across this same region in the Iron Age (Jones 1977; Politis and Saunders 2002). The new cuisines and the new activities that accompanied them eventually resulted in a cuisine replacement, not just ingredient substitutions. Interest in these new foodstuffs was part of a larger cultural sea change of socialization and identity transformation. Accompanying these new domestic foods was an increased emphasis on food sharing reflected in expanded storage and presentation, materialized in more complexly designed ceramic vessels and experienced in bread and beer gatherings. The continuation of female imagery throughout this cultural change implies that a lingering emphasis on abundance and fertility accompanied this new cuisine, as some of the ontological bits and pieces of the Mesolithic world remained (Borić 2003; Cauvin 2000; Whittle 1996:364).

These data suggest a complex interplay among cuisine, taste, and belief in this past as it occurs in the present. This example in part allows us to consider if ideological conversions can be reflected in food changes. Comparing this Mesolithic-Neolithic cuisine transition with the religious conversions that rippled across pagan Europe at the onset of Christianity, we see a much less rapid change in the cuisine evidence earlier on. Shifts from the past Mesolithic traditions seem to have been gradual and stepped, not radical like a mental and physical conquest that accompanies religious conversions, such as when Christians convert to Vedic Hinduism or to Islam, or when Jewish people were forced to convert to Christianity during the Spanish inquisition. This more radical speed of conversion is illustrated historically in the cuisine shifts in Boeotia, Greece over a series of three historic invasions. New foods often require new ways of cooking and therefore new vessels. Joaneta Vroom (2000) investigated 1,000 years of dining to track one region's cuisine changes over several different political regimes. She studied domestic ceramic use, food recipes, and images of communal eating during three political regimes – the Byzantine hegemony (seventh–twelfth centuries), the Frankish entrance (thirteenth–fifteenth centuries), and the Ottoman conquest (sixteenth–nineteenth centuries), providing examples of a political regime change, a demographic influence, and a religious conversion. These three political, economic, and cultural influences were substantial enough to alter the daily cuisine practices of the residents, seen in their dinner settings, ceramics and cutlery, ingredients, and also table manners. With each change came a shift in who could eat together, how the food was presented and consumed, and what core ingredients were highlighted. This Boeotian meal history illustrates how new policies and political pressures can bleed throughout lifestyles and

dining habits (Vroom 2000:213). People do remember their past, and in Boeotia they returned to their earlier eating traditions when the Franks left. Such resonance in cuisine and worldview shifts are illustrated in Danish Meso-Neolithic stable isotope evidence of a new cuisine adoption in a very different setting (Richards et al. 2003b:292). Although many reasons have been proposed for this cultural adoption, I agree with scholars that the most viable reason for the Neolithic foodway adoption was an ideological shift of ingredient and life style valuation, as the residents slowly interbred and indigenized the crops, animals, and lifestyles.

Archaeologists need to look for social impacts registered in their data, such as the cuisine sea change the Mesolithic inhabitants experienced. Such a sweeping change, the dropping out of the marine staple foods that had been the core flavor and base of the diet, is one of the more far-reaching expressions of societal and ideological change manifested in the past (Jones 1977). The Neolithic shifted daily practices to fields and pastures from boats and shorelines, as Danish peninsular dwellers turned their backs upon their former coastal foraging and fishing *habitus* (Richards et al. 2003b). Perhaps more important is that their taste palette had to have radically altered for them to believe that cereal gruel and beef was more flavorful than fish, nuts, and berries. Wheat, barley, pork, and beef must have seemed seductive, as these products have now virtually converted the globe's population to their taste.

In Sum

People can be fickle when it comes to their cuisine. Some yearn for an unchanging world: the local cuisine is usually considered more than acceptable fare; it is preferred. To many their traditional dishes link them to hearth, home, and family memories, as illustrated in the animated motion picture *Ratatouille* in which a dour food critic is won over by his childhood "comfort food" meal (Brandes and Anderson 2011). People long for the seasonal cuisine of their childhoods, as memory actively aids connection with their landscape and community (Sutton 2001). This situation is true not just for us but also for subsistence farmers and fisher folk in the past (Counihan 1997 [1984]; Gamerith 1981; Richards 1939).

Yet we have archaeological and historical examples of active and rapid cuisine change. Some seek out new foods to re-create themselves and their social standing, as have been experienced in the past fifty years around the globe (Wilk 2006). In the archaeological record, studied changes are derived from either conquest or emulation, both ideological and cosmological.

How did people view new meals and ingredients during times of change? Why do some groups resist change and try to maintain their traditional meals and cuisines, while others take up and even seek out new foods, dishes, and cuisines? Responses vary, but this question applied to the past opens up pathways in our studies of meaning and experience. New opinions accompany changes in food preparation or ingredients. Europeans have been wheat eaters for 6,000 years now. Were they originally forced into eating bread like the Oglala (Powers and Powers 1984) and the California Pomo women of Fort Ross (Lightfoot et al. 1998), or did they rush to accept it, like the Celtic leaders with the foreign wine brought by Greek traders (Dietler 1990)? How do new foods become exciting? Do constrained circumstances always make new meals the only available option, or are new foods tied to new belief systems, crafting desire for new tastes? These questions are at the heart of the social and economic omnivore's paradox as we investigate the entry of new meals and cuisines in the archaeological record.

Both meals and cuisines are composites, providing a basis from which to investigate the active *habitus* that sits at the heart of daily practice, linking mundane tasks to belief systems and social taste – in other words, to people's way of life. By focusing here specifically on the meal and its role in food archaeology, we have unleashed a range of questions that can direct us in our studies of the past. The meal and how it is crafted by and crafts the individual, the family, and the group provides access into past social lives and traditions. Studying cuisine's meals and serving utensils not only unveils daily life, family structure, storage patterns, presentation and resource access; it also speaks about economic domains, ideology, and lifestyles.