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RUOLO Ricercatore confermato

AMBITO DISCIPLINARE Antropologia culturale

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Abstract

The "reinvention of food" rests on newly rediscovered cultures of taste, on situated knowledge and on the notion of *terroir* (Grasseni, 2007). This involves an enlarged "social life" of typical products (Appadurai 1988): their cultural significance is appropriated into new circles of consumption whilst their network of exchange expands (from gourmet restaurants to local festivals, from zero-mile critical consumers to Slow Food associates). Viceversa, several "technologies of localisation" standardise environments, *routines* and protocols of production. Legislation and regimentation calibrate local products to a global market, whilst the ritualisation of consumption adds to the virtualisation of local foods: in ads, festivals, TV programmes etc., local foods are more and more often interpreted as icons of "terroir" and of local identity, and are consequently treated as political and economic resources. In the 70s, the ambivalent relationship between "folklore and profit" was an object of anthropological critique (Lombardi Satriani 1973). Today, new ethnographic evidence and historical reflection are needed, to review the commodification of food as heritage. An apt and diversified context is that of alpine ecomuseums investing on local resources, ranging from the rediscovery of local breeds to the defense of traditional recipes in the face of DOP standardization, to the rediscovery of foodstuffs as a strategy to identify a locality with a specific local product.