

## **‘Food palaces built of sausages [and] great ships of lamb chops’: The Gastronomical Fair of Dijon as Consuming Spectacle**

Philip Whalen

Cover from the 1934 Gastronomical Fair’s the “Official Catalogue”  
(Archives Municipal de Dijon, series 2F “Foire (1934).”)

### **Introduction**

“The Gastronomical Fair of Dijon is but a savory way to make direct and complete contact with one of France’s most generous regions.”

—Gaston Roupnel, “La Somptuosité de Bourgogne,” *L’Alsace Française* (1925)

The celebrated international food critic M. F. K. Fisher came into her culinary awakening in Dijon circa 1930: “We lived for almost three years in Dijon, which the Burgundians called without any quibble and with only half-hearted contradictions ‘the gastronomical capital of the world.’”<sup>1</sup> It was there she witnessed and recorded the transformation of a sleepy provincial capital into a referent of modern French gastronomy. Fisher declared “the streets were narrow and crooked, in the district around the *Faculté*, and at that time of the year rich with a fruity odor of cellars, dog dirt, and the countless public urinals needed in a wine town.”<sup>2</sup> *Serve it Forth* and *The Gastronomical Me* describe her experiences as a newlywed learning to negotiate the imperatives of romance and gastronomy simultaneously. Indeed, to discuss cuisine in Burgundy is to invoke the romance of that region’s cultural identity.

For all her colorful anecdotes, insights into French provincial manners, and resourceful culinary itineraries, Fisher’s texts (re)produced a preferred reading of Burgundian gastronomical identity.<sup>3</sup> Her descriptions of making and consuming “authentic” meals were set within the tour of the city’s obligatory gastronomical icons such as famous restaurants (snails *chez* Crespin), the pedagogical ministrations of a sympathetic waiter Aux Trois Faisans, “loud-mouthed stall-keepers” in the covered market (*les Halles*), aged *paté de foie gras* at the Buffet de la Gare, and the discoveries of a grouchy but well-stocked wine merchant. These iconic incidents underscored

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<sup>1</sup> M. F. K. Fisher, *The Gastronomical Me*, (New York: North Point Press, 1954 [1943]), 87. Also see the memoirs of her housemate—neither of which mentions the existence of the other—Gertrude Clark Powell’s “Housekeeping in the Provinces” and “Summertime in Burgundy” in *The Quiet Side of Europe* (Los Angeles: GCP, 1959), 10-41 and 76-107.

<sup>2</sup> Fisher, *The Gastronomical Me*, 52.

<sup>3</sup> Rebecca Sprang, *The Invention of the Restaurant: Paris and Modern Gastronomic Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

a familiar tale about the centrality of gastronomy to Burgundy— as though the entire region were united in the production, promotion, and consumption of the one and the same (ideologically encoded) menu.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, this refined gastronomical tradition was internationally recognized, for example, when Gertrude Clark Powell first translated the Burgundian, Brillat de Savarin’s epicurean *The Physiology of Taste* into English.

In contrast to this well publicized ‘tradition,’ the commercialized food fairs and wine festivals of Inter-war Dijon reveal that gastronomical regionalism generated multiple cultural openings for different popular ideological investments through the middlebrow aesthetics of gastronomic spectacle(s) in an age of emerging mass culture. Following Guy Debord’s theorization of “spectacle” as “the acme of ideology,”<sup>5</sup> art historian T. J. Clark has defined “spectacular society” as “an attempt— a partial and unfinished one— to bring into theoretical order a diverse set of symptoms which are normally treated... as anecdotal trappings affixed somewhat lightly to the old economic order: ‘consumerism,’ for instance, or ‘the society of leisure’; the rise of mass media, the expansion of advertising, the hypertrophy of official diversions...”<sup>6</sup> This understanding of how cultural choices become organized and promoted has particular salience where M. F. K. Fischer’s Rabelaisian vision figured ideologically in Gaston Dery’s authoritative 1930 *Dictionary of Jovial Gastronomy*: “Burgundian cuisine is worthy of the wines of that admirable province. All things savory are abundant there... Dijon offers gaiety, playful irony, snails, mustard, cassis, spice bread, saddle of rabbit à la Piron, parsleyd ham, lark and woodcock paté, jellied milk piglet, stuffed carp, and Chablis shrimps, what cheeses.... [and] the best wines in the world!”<sup>7</sup>

In an era of increasing mass marketing and democratic political choice (the Interwar years) the preferred ideological register invoked by regional cuisine(s) acquired a popular tone and middlebrow aesthetic. This tone countered the elitist claims made by cosmopolitans such as Raymond Badouin, editor of the all-important *Revue du Vin de France*, who “want[ed] to be the preferred guide for those who wish to find good succulent French cuisine in their plates [and] those who seek distinguished wines.”<sup>8</sup> Informed by the labors of cultural intermediaries such as Gaston Gérard and Gaston Roupnel among others, the Gastronomical Fair of Dijon became, instead, a paradigmatic model for marketing a Republican culture of economic and cultural regionalism through middlebrow spectacles calculated to “captivate all spirits, all intelligences, and interest all competences.”<sup>9</sup>

### **“Success comes to those that dare:” Making and Marketing Burgundy<sup>10</sup>**

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<sup>4</sup> On the expression of “knowledge and taste... through wine consumption,” see Kolleen Guy, “Rituals of Pleasure in the Land of Treasures: Wine Consumption and the Making of French Identity in the Late Nineteenth Century,” Warren Belasco and Philip Scranton, eds., *Food Nations: Selling Taste in Consumer Societies* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 39.

<sup>5</sup> Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (2002 [1967]), 151.

<sup>6</sup> T. J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 11.

<sup>7</sup> Gaston Derys, *Dictionnaire de Gastronomie joviale* (Paris: Editions des Portiques, 1930), 34.

<sup>8</sup> Raymond Badouin, *Revue du vin de France* 5 (March 1931): 1.

<sup>9</sup> Press release dated 1 October 1926 in Archives Municipales de Dijon, series 2F, “Foire 1926.”

<sup>10</sup> Albert David, “Dijon, Après la 5ieme Foire Gastronomique,” *Le Progrès de la Côte-d’Or* 23 November 1925, 2.

“We won’t be content to see splendors through store windows. We will touch them in ways to better appreciate them: by eating and drinking.”

--Gaston Gérard, *Dijon, Ma Bonne Ville* (1959)

In 1927, Dijon’s visionary and indefatigable mayor, Gaston Gérard, who served the city from from 1921-1935, and whom *l’Opinion* dubbed “the ambassador of French wine and advertising,” argued that new times required decisive action and new methods.<sup>11</sup> He bemoaned the sight of French cities plastered with posters designed to induce the French to travel abroad while local opportunities remained underdeveloped. As the first High Commissioner of Tourism (1930), first Under-Secretary of Tourism (1931), Under-Secretary of Public Works and Tourism (1932), and Governor of the Rotary Club (1933), Gérard was instrumental in implementing some of Interwar France’s most innovative marketing strategies and lasting tourism developments. He believed the solution to contemporary economic stagnation lay in the use of aggressive “American” marketing strategies calculated to stimulate sales by enhancing product identification. The Gastronomical Fair he launched in Dijon in 1921 would promote regional production and culture whose diversity would support the overarching national economy and identity. “We possess a firm called Burgundy,” he declared, “and our interest is to valorize it and made it bear fruit (“*fructifiée*”).”<sup>12</sup> This entailed, as Xavier Aubert, General Secretary of the Committee for the [Gastronomic] Fair [of Dijon] prosaically elaborated, the ability to “absorb yesterday’s enemies and stay today’s competition” in all matters relating to “liquid and solid alimentary products” through Gérard’s coordinated combination of private and public interests.<sup>13</sup>

In 1934, a local journalist observed that “Ardent defenders of Burgundy,” were “convinced regionalists” who “revived a spirit whose work ethic, intelligence, and common sense has, after numerous setbacks with the central government, become one of the foundations of our nation.”<sup>14</sup> Gérard wanted his province to stand on its own economic feet under limited direction from the national state.<sup>15</sup> He plotted a Burgundian cultural agenda along the axes of decentralized economic regionalism and republican political principles that served as paradigmatic model of sustainable economic growth for early twentieth-century France.<sup>16</sup> Its coordinates were regional leadership and economic productivity as a means to sustain consensual national unity through regional diversity (“Unity without Uniformity” said the conciliatory

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<sup>11</sup> “L’ambassadeur de la Propagande française et du vin français,” in “Discours de M. Gaston Gérard” [on the occasion of the 1927 Foire Gastronomique de Dijon] *Bien Public* 11 November 1927, 1. The sobriquet comes from J.-F. Louis Merlet, “A la louange des Gastronomes,” *Presse* 23 November 1928.

<sup>12</sup> Gérard also ensured that musical events and important speeches delivered during the Gastronomical Fair were broadcast by the Ecole supérieure des P. T. T. of Paris. Gérard, *Le Miroir du coin et du temps*, 164-5.

<sup>13</sup> Xavier Aubert, letter from the Comité de la Foire Gastronomique dated 4 November 1926 in Archives Municipales de Dijon, series 2F, “Foire 1926.”

<sup>14</sup> Claude Chatelus, “Après les Vendanges,” *La Terre de Bourgogne* 23 (1934), 372.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in “La Foire Gastronomique,” *Bien Public* 11 November 1927, 1.

<sup>16</sup> A typical Gérard speech is provided in “Chronique de la Foire: Le Discours de Gaston Gérard,” *Le Progrès de la Côte-d’Or* 11 November 1931, 2.

regionalist Jean Charles-Brun).<sup>17</sup> The success of this project depended on its implementation as an uplifting cultural phenomena liable to economic exploitation through modern marketing strategies that could exploit the catalogue of pre-existing tropes, symbolize residual values and beliefs, reflect contemporary cultural concerns, and mobilized current political interests.

Drawing civic leaders and regionalists in his wake, Gérard sought events that “radiated publicity.” He rallied the Burgundian cognoscenti to stage cultural revivals, organize civic events, found erudite associations, and establish regional journals designed to promote “an ideal representation of local cultural life.”<sup>18</sup> They collaborated to promote regional economic and cultural interests by marketing an essentialized, uplifting, and recognizable cultural identity packaged in the form of regional products such as wine, mustard, sweet bread, and cheeses. This marketing strategy was most successful where it sustained immediate regional cultural interests.<sup>19</sup>

Dijon’s cultural intermediaries attending a conference in the State Room, inside Dijon’s City Hall, 1932 (photo courtesy of Jean-François Bazin)

The Burgundian Inter-war cultural agenda exploited familiar images and idioms to articulate a rustic version of French modernity.<sup>20</sup> Carefully orchestrated spectacles (re)classified notions of rustic traditions into provisionally stable social, cultural, and political phenomena through representations of an idealized Burgundian community. The various gastronomical registers in which Burgundian culture was scripted onto regional products and into civic events created the possibility that Burgundians could inhabit both real and imagined social and cultural spaces through different patterns of consumption. They provided overlapping templates through which contemporary Burgundians acquired self-understanding, fashioned self-identities, scripted their own heritage, and defined their role within the national culture.<sup>21</sup> By participating in elaborately staged and choreographed fairs and festivals, consumer/participants positioned themselves (one to another) in a community in which subjective political preferences were embraced, negotiated, and/or displaced through market mechanisms. A “magnificent” revival of fairs and festivals (“clearly reflecting post-war economic activities,” noted Roger Thiblot)

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<sup>17</sup> Marion Carcano argues that the concept of ‘the region’ was recognized as the sole guarantor of social cohesion and national unity in “Mémoire et Ethnographie Folkloriste en Bourgogne,” (Mémoire de Maîtrise en Histoire Contemporaine: Université de Bourgogne, 1997), 74.

<sup>18</sup> Philippe Poirrier, “Municipalité et Culture au XXe siècle: Des Beaux-Arts à la Politique Culturelle,” (Thèse: Université de Bourgogne, 1995), 177-210. Also see Marion Carcano, “Regionalisme et Ethnographie Folkloriste en Bourgogne,” 5-31 for an analysis and overview of the community’s “réseau académique.”

<sup>19</sup> “The festivals will allow everyone to chase away grey thoughts, escape, and combat monotony.” Gaston Gérard, “Les fastes et liesses de Dijon,” *Bien Public* 31 October 1935, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991) and Susan Buck-Morse, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), 71.

<sup>21</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991) and Susan Buck-Morse, *The Dialectics of Seeing*, 71.

allowed Burgundy to (re)claim its desire prestige.<sup>22</sup> “Burgundy banished by the pens of revolutionaries,” writes Jean-François Bazin, “was reborn and resplendent... she inspired and federated new ardors.... It was recognized that the name alone was worth gold.”<sup>23</sup> Even Colette (who wrote sentimental novels while living in Paris and the Côte d’Azur) reclaimed her Burgundian accent and identity; “[I] belong to a pays that I left,” she lamented.<sup>24</sup> Their “collective dreamworld” (ur-phenomena), “imagined community,” or project of collective imagination, collaged regional “traditions” and industrialized modernity into a lasting social, cultural, and political phenomena. This process made it possible to collectively debate, define, (re)produce, or contest the dominant or preferred Burgundian cultural identity.<sup>25</sup>

### **An Enriching Formula: Dijon as Gastronomical Epicenter**

“The destiny of nations depends on the manner in which they nourish themselves.”

--Brillat-Savarin, *Aphorismes du Professeur* (1940)

Although the city of Lyon claimed to be gastronomical center of France under Edoard Herriot’s mayoralty, this status was quickly rivaled and surpassed by Dijon under Gaston Gérard’s administration.<sup>26</sup> His most notable accomplishment was the founding of the successful Gastronomical Fair in Dijon in 1921.<sup>27</sup> As President of the Federation of Burgundian Regional Syndicat’s d’Initiatives, Gérard was ideally positioned to coordinated competing and diverse local interests into cogent regional strategies. “Fortunately,” he reminded his constituents, “we retain and will make the most of our most important pretext for drawing tourists to our region:

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<sup>22</sup> Roger Thiblot, “Les Foires,” *Bien Public* 8 November 1929, 5.

<sup>23</sup> Jean-François Bazin, *La Bourgogne* (Rennes: Éditions Ouest-France, 1997), 76.

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Jean-François Bazin, *La Bourgogne* (Rennes: Éditions Ouest-France, 1997), 77.

<sup>25</sup> This helps explain, the apparent tensions, for instance, between high and low forms of historical anachronisms (re)created at these events.

<sup>26</sup> See, Henri Béraud, “Lyon, Capital du Bien Manger,” in Curnonsky et Gaston Derys, *Anthologie de la Gastronomie française* (Paris: Delagrave, 1936), 340. Dijon’s claim to preeminence was recognized when the General Estates of French Gastronomy (Les Etats Généraux de la Gastronomie Française) and Order of the Condon Blue (Commanderie des Cordons Bleus). This said, it is important to remember that before passage in 1935 of the new law on the *Appellations cotrollées* and when the wine merchants of Bordeaux continued to fund and wage a fierce lobby against its passage, their influence could still impact the editorial policies of the *Revue du Vin de France* which dedicated a volume to the gastronomy of all important wine-producing areas, especially Lyon, excepting Burgundy in 1933. See Marcel Grancher, “Les Fêtes Gastronomiques de la France;” Raymond Baudouin, “Lyon, capital gastronomique de la France;” and “Les menus der la Semaine Gastronomique Lyonnaise,” *Revue du Vin de France* 76 (1933): 7-12. Editor of the *Revue du Vin de France*, Baudouin would reveal himself an anti-Semite in its pages as early as 1938. See, *Revue du Vin de France* 133 (1938): 7-9.

<sup>27</sup> Come the success of the eighth fair, one well-dined critic remarked that Gérard “had turned himself into the apostle of the restoration of French cuisine.” J.-F.-Louis Merlet, “A la louange des Gastronomes,” *Presse*, 23 November 1928, 1-2.

our gastronomy.”<sup>28</sup> He noted how tourists at British International Exposition of 1900 were not merely “comical characters... [who] often paid more than things were worth.” He learned that it was thanks to them that “budgets could be balanced.”<sup>29</sup>

Following Paul Léon’s precepts concerning passive and active tourism (*vente sur place*), Gérard wanted ordinary fairgoers to spend and consume Burgundian ‘place’ as much as they looked.<sup>30</sup> His overall strategy was to promote regional economic and cultural interests simultaneously by marketing recognizable regional products. These included: Burgundian wines (over 1,200 vintages in 1925), mustards (Amora, Mack, Dumont, Truchot, Guyenot, Fagart, Fauroy and Grey-Poupon), chocolates (Lavin and Duthu), sweet breads (Philbée, Mulot, Petitjean, Michelin, Guilleminot, and Rouard-Pernot), candies, pralines and *pâtisseries* (Renardiet, Georges Aymé, and Bonnet), liqueurs (Legay-Lagoutte), biscuits (Bossuet), cheeses (Citeaux and Gachot), dried meats (Julien Rambaud and Sellenet), snails (Carnet and Thabard), jams and condiments (Citeaux, Goldité, du Chalet, Duband and Parizot), honey (Bertrand and de Lantenay), and even cycles (Peugeot).<sup>31</sup> Gérard intended for Dijon to host, “[a] complete exposition of all alimentary and more especially Dijonnais and Burgundian specialties that constitute the most interesting manifestation of the culinary arts and gastronomy... such that it would be embarrassingly difficult to say that anything was left out.”<sup>32</sup>

Gérard described his initial meeting with Dijon’s “commercial and industrial notables” to discuss the possibility of a future Gastronomical Fair in his autobiographical Dijon, *Ma Bonne Ville* (Dijon, My Fair City). The group was not initially receptive to his ideas. Only seventeen of thirty invitees arrived bearing “severe expressions” which he read as indicating: “talk all you want but you might as well take a hike than count on me.”<sup>33</sup> Undaunted, Gérard outlined an ingenious plan that would showcase both regional products and industries while minimizing capital outlays. Seeking to create an environment in which tourists would do more than ogle through showcases and store-windows, the mayor suggested that visitors consume—eat and drink—those very same wares seated in a stimulating and comfortable environment. Following the presentation, Lucien Richard, the modernizing president of the Pernots biscuit factory and leader of Dijon’s Chamber of Commerce, finally agreed the young mayor’s idea might be good after all. Although only five others concurred, Richard’s stature was preponderant and his opinion determining.

Building on the memory of Dijon’s Fair of 1858 as well as other annual industrial events such as the Paris Fair; extensively borrowing marketing strategies from the ‘Universal’ and

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<sup>28</sup> Gaston Gérard, *Le Miroir du coin et du temps* (Dijon: Editions des Etats Généraux de la Gastronomie française, 1959), 165.

<sup>29</sup> Gérard, *Le Miroir du coin et du temps*, 159.

<sup>30</sup> Paul Léon, “Préface,” in Léon Auscher and Georges Rozet, *Urbanisme et tourisme* (Paris: Editions Leroux, 1920), 4.

<sup>31</sup> “La Foire Gastronomique,” *Le Progrès de la Cote-d’Or* 7 November 1922, 1 and “Chronique de la Foire: L’Ouverture Officielle,” *Le Progrès de la Cote-d’Or* 8 November 1925, 1. A 31-page section on “The Products of Burgundy” in the official guide to the 6<sup>th</sup> Gastronomical Fair in 1926 describes these products in terms of their significance to Burgundian culture and history.

<sup>32</sup> “La Foire: L’animation en ville,” *Le Progrès de la Cote-d’Or* 6 November 1921, 2.

<sup>33</sup> Gaston Gérard, *Dijon, ma bonne ville... souvenirs et confidences* (Dijon: Etats Généraux de la Gastronomie française, 1928), 247.

'International' Expositions held in Paris in 1855, 1867, 1878, 1889, 1900 and 1925 that so effectively promoted French notions of prestige, pleasure, progress, and profit;<sup>34</sup> and emulating Edouard Herriot's highly successful Silk Fair in Lyon, competing with Beaune's annual Wine Exposition (since 1863), Gérard's Gastronomical Fair of Dijon successfully linked cultural novelty and socio-political inclusion. He diplomatically included as many private agricultural, industrial, commercial, and tourist interests as would participate. These highlighted Dijon's alimentary industries, colorful history, and accessible communications to create a Fair that would position Dijon on the map of French gastronomy; the Foire Gastronomique would highlight and sell samples of Burgundy's culinary arts.<sup>35</sup>

The coordination of this annual spectacle illustrates Gaston Gérard's flair for marketing. Different Fair days highlighted specific industries or fields of interest ranging from local agriculture to novel kitchen gadgets and from amateur sports and the fine arts. Each day's theme was marked by a parade, musical performances, an evening ball, and city-wide banquets produced by Dijon's many restaurants. Rather than allowing the Fair compete with existing restaurants or having them compete amongst themselves, the mayor drafted their participation and resources by having them all prepare (in a spirit of professional competition) and serve the same meals twice (lunch and dinner) each fair day in their own establishments. This spared municipal budget an imponderable cost.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, the Gastronomical Fair was so successful that the first Fairs of France conference was held in Dijon in 1925 to examine questions concerning fair organization, exhibitor interests, local infrastructure, and "multiple questions relating to fairs."<sup>37</sup>

Evidence of Dijon's pioneering use of up-to-date media practices to market Burgundian identity, culture and commerce may be gleaned from the existence of two promotional films commissioned by Gaston Gérard and directed by Henri Cruchetel for the Agricultural Days at the Gastronomical Fair of Dijon in 1926.<sup>38</sup> "The Production of Wheat (La Production de Blé)" and "The Vine and Wine in Burgundy (La Vigne et le Vin en Bourgogne)" were advertised as "representing the best modern advertising methods."<sup>39</sup> An estimated eight hundred persons watched what one critic judged should be shown to "the most enraged prohibitionists." Designed in three parts, "The Vine and Wine in Burgundy" depicted modern techniques and technology, the *vigneron's* "noble" work, and "an amusing" description of how Burgundians drink wine in the course of a "real" meal. The film ended with "four reputable gourmets" touring landmarks

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<sup>34</sup> Athur Chandler, "Fanfare for the New Empire" *World's Fairs* 7.2 (1986): 11-16, "Empire of Autumn" *World's Fairs* 6.3 (1986): 2-8, "Heroism in Defeat" *World's Fairs* 6.4 (1986): 9-16, "Revolution: The Paris Exposition Universelle of 1889" *World's Fairs* 7.1 (1987): 1-9, "Culmination: The Paris Exposition Universelle of 1889" *World's Fairs* 7.3 (1987): 8-14, and "Where Art Deco was Born" *World's Fairs* 9.1 (1989): 1-7.

<sup>35</sup> Merchants who participated in the Gastronomical Fair benefited from a 50% tariff reduction on wares shipped on the P. L. M. railroad. *Bien Public* 3 August 1926, 3.

<sup>36</sup> In fact, the City was only asked to provide the token sum of one franc. In truth, the city provided a good deal on ancillary supports and public spaces without which the event would likely have never happened.

<sup>37</sup> "L'Alliance des Foires," *Progrès de la Côte-d'Or* 14 November 1925, 2.

<sup>38</sup> "Le poste radiotéléphonique," *Progrès de la Côte-d'Or* 13 November 1925, 2.

<sup>39</sup> *La Terre de Bourgogne*, 13 November 1926, 762.

associated with the history of wine— all in Burgundy.<sup>40</sup> Half a decade later, Gertrude Clark Powell noted the spectacular results of Gérard's vision(s): "[o]n our arrival we found the annual Gastronomical Fair in full swing.... Every year in November thousands of people are drawn into town to attend the Fair.... A central avenue, leading off the Place Wilson, about a mile in length, is covered over and lined with booths exhibiting everything from pottery to peanuts. There are beautiful exhibits of food palaces built of sausages; great ships of lamb chops. Burgundy is the gourmet's paradise. Preparing food here is an art."<sup>41</sup>

Never at a loss to exploit an opportunity for promotion, Gérard claimed "the Fair resembles no other. For five years, imitators have tried to steal its title but the Gastronomical Fair of Dijon remains incomparable... never-ending crowds, informed by visitors from previous years, hasten toward the odors of prepared meals and fragrant wines...."<sup>42</sup> By the end of the second Fair in 1922, local opinion underscored the obvious success of this "local and regional manifestation." Come the success of the eighth fair in 1928, one well-fed critic remarked that Gérard "had turned himself into the apostle of the restoration of French cuisine."<sup>43</sup> Dijon was "literally overwhelmed by tourists: hotels and restaurants were taken by assault and early on circulation slowed" to the benefit of all merchants— "Dijonnais, Burgundian, and some from without."<sup>44</sup> Although the profits of individual merchants goes beyond the scope of this study (and remains to be charted), increased attendance and entry fees regularly generated a net gain until the economic downswing starting in 1935 (lasting until the suspension of the Fair between 1940 and 1949).<sup>45</sup>

The first Gastronomical Fair of Dijon was an immediate success. If we can believe Gérard's neat formula, the 1921 Fair drew 80,000 visitors to a town of 80,000 and netted 80,000+ francs.<sup>46</sup> More precisely, Christelle Guilard has tabulated, for example, that the 1926 Fair grossed 828,977 francs and netted 92, 722 francs after expenditures, salaries, free tickets, and taxes; a considerable success that confirms Gérard's recollection.<sup>47</sup> While the Fair would not always generate the profit hoped for, especially during the late nineteen thirties, attendance doubled annually peaking in 1925 when 600,000 visitors came to see the wares of approximately 900 merchants.<sup>48</sup> The number of exhibits grew from 220 and- with great fluctuation- leveled off at 500 while attendance shrank back to an average of 175,000.<sup>49</sup> While Dijon's Gastronomical

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<sup>40</sup> *La Terre de Bourgogne*, 20 November 1926, 781-82, and 27 November 1926, 795-6.

<sup>41</sup> Gertrude Clark Powell, *The Quiet Side of Europe* (Los Angeles: SPEC, 1959), 11.

<sup>42</sup> Gaston Gérard, "Dijon et sa Foire Gastronomique," *L'Asace Française* 7 November 1925, 409.

<sup>43</sup> J.-F.-Louis Merlet, "A la louange des Gastronomes," *Presse*, 23 November 1928, 1-2.

<sup>44</sup> "La Foire," *Le Progrès de la Côte-d'Or* 12 November 1922, 2.

<sup>45</sup> The net gain decreased as the Fair grew in size. The Fair Committee incurred additional expenses such as security and the rental of additional fair grounds related to the scale of the event.

<sup>46</sup> Gaston Gérard, *Dijon, ma bonne ville*, 249.

<sup>47</sup> Christelle Guilard, "La Foire Gastronomique de Dijon" (Université de Bourgogne: Diplôme D'études Approfondies, 1999), 51.

<sup>48</sup> Archives Municipales de Dijon, series 2F, "Foire 1926."

<sup>49</sup> The annual records held in Dijon's Municipal Archives are incomplete and provide no statistics for numerous years du

Fair also drew exhibitors from around the world, it never ceased promoting Dijon's gastronomical importance. Nor did the influx of national, Parisian, and international vendors mean that the Fair was losing its regional character.<sup>50</sup> The preponderance of scheduled events and daily menus continued to reflect the Burgundian agenda. Indeed, Christelle Guilard's tabulations show that local and regional participation actually increased into the 1930s.<sup>51</sup> This ensured that local and regional wares and products were centrally positioned within a national, colonial, and international economic and cultural context.

At the height of its success the Fair started building a new and unique "monumental entrance" each year to impress visitors young and old with the most exotic sight in Dijon. Speaking for the collected mayors of the Côte-d'Or who, despite competing agendas and economic itineraries, became Dijon's "attentive and cultivated vassals," the Mayor of Beaune (Dijon's nearby and most important competitor), M. Labet thanked Gérard for creating a Fair that "gives such a powerful boost to the economic life and revival of our province and region."<sup>52</sup> Similarly, the President of the Côte-d'Or Commercial and Industrial Union, Albert David applauded the "splendid success" of Gérard's "magnificent manifestation" by contrasting the new Dijon with its former sleepy self: "[f]or those who remember Dijon of before, when the days disappeared into a perfect calm from one end of the year to the other, the contrast is striking and, according to everyone, presents the advantages of the modern times."<sup>53</sup> Dijon's City Hall circulated the following communiqué explaining the aims of the event as part of the preparations for the 1921 Gastronomical Fair: "[t]he Fair will consist in the wholesale and retail of not only consumables of all kinds but also of everything connected with food; production, manufacture, packaging, transportation, preservation, cuisine, the art of hotel management, gastronomical tourism, and the different details that, more or less, relate to food and gastronomy."<sup>54</sup>

Within several years of its inauguration, even the mayor of Beaune— who had held a rival wine festival— conceded the general benefits his nearest competitor had conferred onto the entire region: "[y]our fair gives a fecund and powerful boost to the economic life of our region and province. [he said speaking for] The mayors of the Côte-d'Or give you their recognition and appreciation for this support."<sup>55</sup> Although they continued to develop their own gastronomical events, they participated as the Fair promoted their collective interests.<sup>56</sup> When the mayors of 630 villages assembled for the 1931 Gastronomical Fair's Banquet of Mayors at the, Gérard's benefice was delivered in the form of a speech on the traditional interdependences between Dijon

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<sup>50</sup> Fully twenty percent of 900 merchants' stalls represented Parisian interests by 1925. See, "La Foire Gastronomique," *Le Progrès de la Côte-d'Or* 9 November, 1926, 3.

<sup>51</sup> Dijonnais merchantile interests alone represented 26 of 668 in 1926, 104 of 514 in 1932, 140 of 498 in 1935, and 122 of 489 in 1937. Guilard, "La Foire Gastronomique de Dijon," 51-42..

<sup>52</sup> Gaston Gérard, "La Côte-d'Or, berceau et paradis de la Gastronomie," in *La Côte-d'Or...* (Paris: Alépée, 1954), 171 and "Le Discours du Maire de Beaune," *Bien Public* 10 November, 1929, 4.

<sup>53</sup> Albert David, "Dijon, Après la 5ieme Foire Gastronomique," *Le Progrès de la Côte-d'Or* 23 November 1925, 2.

<sup>54</sup> "Communiqué de l'Hotel de Ville," 7 July 1921, AM de Dijon, Series 2F.

<sup>55</sup> "Le discours du Maire de Beaune" *Bien Public* 10 November 1929, 4.

<sup>56</sup> Gaston Gérard, "La Côte-d'Or, berceau et paradis de la Gastronomie," in *La Côte-d'Or...* (Paris: Alépée, 1954), 171.

and the region's villages. Since the hinterland needed outlets for its products, it was no great sacrifice for the city, he magnanimously asserted without apparent irony, to tax itself "a few centimes" to electrify and develop the countryside so that it could ride the new tramways to attend the Fair.<sup>57</sup>

### **An Enticing Recipe: "Dijon my fair city"**

"He who has never attended the Gastronomical Fair of Dijon doesn't know what a real feast is, a veritable celebration, an explosion of popular joy...."

-- Marcel-E. Grancher, *Denise Mène Les Boeufs* (1953)

When Stefan Zweig traveled to Dijon in November of 1931 to visit the tombs of the Dukes of Burgundy he hadn't expected to find the city decorated with "thousands of little flags dancing like miniature flames."<sup>58</sup> Although familiar with the sleepy provincial capital through his friendship with Romain Rolland, nothing had prepared the morose German author for such excitement. Zweig determined that the Gastronomical Fair of Dijon was in full swing from banners spanning the streets.<sup>59</sup> Indeed, residents of Dijon annually anticipated the days when "all the streets were superbly festooned and illuminated" and the merchants "competed by tastefully and humorously decorating their stores and artfully arranging their shelves to draw the admiration of visitors."<sup>60</sup> "Once a year, in November for the Foire Gastronomique," recalled M. F. K. Fisher, "[Dijon] recaptures for those days all its old glitter.... full of gourmets from every corner of France, and famous chefs twirled saucepans in its kitchens, and wine buyers drank Chambertins and Cortons and Romanée-Contis by the cave-ful."<sup>61</sup> Even local newspapers noted the extent, variety, and color of street decorations.<sup>62</sup>

Building temporary exhibit halls for the 1935 Gastronomical Fair of Dijon  
(Archives Municipal de Dijon, series 2F "Foire (1934).")

Among the cultural intermediaries who shaped Burgundian tourism and placed Dijon's Fair on France's gastronomical map, Henri Charrier—the President of the Academy of Arts and Sciences and Letters of Dijon and General Secretary of the Regional Committee on Tourism—singled out the "historical authority, poetic seduction, and philosophic intuitions" with which

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<sup>57</sup> "Chronique de la Foire: Le Discours de M. Gaston Gérard," *Le Progrès de la Côte-d'Or* 9, 10 November 1931, 2.

<sup>58</sup> Henry Miller promoted Dijon's reputation as a sleepy provincial capital in a chapter of *Tropic of Cancer* in which he accounted for his brief (3 weeks) and aborted stint as a teacher at the Lycée Carnot in the winter of 1932 (Paris: Obelisk Press, 1934). On this point, see Jean-François Bazin, *Le Tout Dijon* (Dijon: Editions Clea, 2003), 155.

<sup>59</sup> Stefan Zweig, *Voyages* (Paris: Belfond, 2000), 33.

<sup>60</sup> A. Carreau, "5ième Foire Gastronomique," *La Terre de Bourgogne* 14 November 1925, 729.

<sup>61</sup> Fisher, *The Gastronomical Me*, 52 and M. F. K. Fisher, *The Art of Eating* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), 395.

<sup>62</sup> "Chronique de la Foire: La Décoration des Rues," *Progrès de la Côte-d'Or* 8 November 1925, 1.

Gaston Roupnel persuaded contemporaries that “each corner of Burgundy... sings for the soul of the human past.”<sup>63</sup> The Editor of the regionalist *La Bourgogne d’Or*, Gustave Gasser also judged Roupnel’s eight-page “Burgundy and Burgundian Art” catalogue (for the Jean Charpentier Gallery exhibit in Paris on 8 March 1936)<sup>64</sup> as providing a succinct and balanced overview of the region’s history, arts, and people.<sup>65</sup> Roupnel celebrated Burgundy’s culinary traditions in articles such as “The Sumptuousness of Burgundy,” “The Cook’s Truce,” “Burgundy and Gastronomy,” “Praise for Family Cuisine,” Burgundy, types and customs, the “Préface” to Max Cappe’s *Les Chants du Terroir*, *Poèmes Bourguignons*, as well “The Jérémie Affair” in the Gastronomical Fair’s 12th Official Guide.<sup>66</sup> These drew attention to the historical links between the newly incarnated Foire Gastronomique and traditional Burgundian agriculture. His “Preface” to Cappe’s *Les Chants du Terroir*, for example, explained that, “[t]o good wine, in fact, corresponds good food. One cannot go without the other. The entire spirit (*génie*) of Burgundian gastronomy comes from this delicious fatality that produces intoxicating (*énivrante*) and savory consequences. In the pays of Chambertin or Corton, a mouthful is a mouthful.”<sup>67</sup> His “The Sumptuousness of Burgundy,” further reminded readers that “the [1925] Gastronomical Fair of Dijon provided the most direct and complete encounter with France’s most generous and tasty cities.”<sup>68</sup>

Rather than simply the occasion for a “sumptuous snack,” Roupnel promised readers that the Gastronomical Fair would provide a holistic experience: “[i]t beckons to experience... and to glorify the vast production of a privileged land. It promises visits to museums and conferences, walks along the streets, artistic pilgrimages, the pleasures of the table, and the stirrings of memory.”<sup>69</sup> He also promised fairgoers the opportunity of discovering the entirety and

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<sup>63</sup> Henri Charrier, “Le Tourism,” in *La Côte-d’Or...* (Paris: Alépée, 1954), 135.

<sup>64</sup> *Art bourguignon et Bourgogne* [catalogue d’exposition] (Paris: Galerie Jean-Charpentier, 1936).

<sup>65</sup> “L’effort spirituel, le gout politique, l’art délie et la raison solide, l’allégresse et l’harmonie, l’énergie et la truculence, toute l’âme bourguignonne est signifiée en ces huit pages de style clair, de poésie émue, de vérité sans fard.” In “La Gloire bourguignonne,” *La Bourgogne d’Or* 102 (March/April 1936): 137.

<sup>66</sup> Roupnel, “La Somptuosité de la Bourgogne,” *L’Alsace Française*, 7 November 1925; “Eloge de la cuisine familiale,” *Le Bien Public*, 20 November 1929; *La Bourgogne, types et coutumes*, 128-133; Max Cappe, *Les Chants du Terroir, Poèmes Bourguignons* (Dijon: Imprimerie Lèpagnez, 1932 [dated by family members]). “L’Affair Jérémie,” *XIIIe Foire Gastronomique de Dijon*, (Dijon: Imprimerie Lepagnez, 1932); “Bourgogne & Gastronomie,” *Progrès de la Côte-d’Or* 9 November 1925, and “La Trêve du Cuisinier,” *Dépêche de Toulouse* 29 December 1921, 1.

<sup>67</sup> Roupnel, “Préface,” Max Cappe, *Les Chants du Terroir, Poèmes Bourguignons*, 4-5.

<sup>68</sup> Roupnel, “La Somptuosité de la Bourgogne,” *L’Alsace Française*, 7 November 1925, 415.

Roupnel’s article was accompanied by Henri Druout’s “Le vrai visage de la Bourgogne;” Albert Thibaudet’s “Le génie des écrivains bourguignons;” A. Kleinclausz’ “Dijon, ville d’art;” and Gaston Gérard’s “Dijon et sa foire gastronomique.”

<sup>69</sup> Roupnel, “La Somptuosité de la Bourgogne,” *L’Alsace Française*, 7 November 1925, 415.

uniqueness of the “Burgundian spirit” (génie bourguignon) through winetasting.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, Stefan Zweig reported:

[visitors] munched fresh waffles in the streets. In front of stores were stacks of thousands of delectable snails that, with wine, disappeared from the same vineyards they previously inhabited. The chefs— in white uniforms, red faces, and ceremonious airs— are the object of unlimited admiration and the incontestable masters of ceremony. As happens at wine fairs, shoppers from different countries, their eyes slightly anxious ... amble along the streets tantalized by the prospect of another wine tasting. Not a little boisterous, these copper-faced and voluminous gentlemen are happy, content, and joyous. They compose a petulant tableau of Sileniuses in smocks.<sup>71</sup>

Peirre Léon-Gaithier described the Fair as “fifteen days of celebration and feasting.”<sup>72</sup> Lasting six to fifteen days depending on the economic climate, the Fair was scheduled from mid-to-late November. This calendar dovetailed with the Saint Martin Farmers Fair held around mid-November (typically on the 10th) since its inception in 1666.<sup>73</sup> Remotely associated with early-modern Burgundian markets through renaissance trappings, the Saint Martin had, by the early 1920s, mostly devolved into a flea market replete with tinkers, cobblers, and various vendors selling foodstuffs, bric-a-brac, candies, and “recent” antiques.<sup>74</sup> Exploiting the same agricultural calendar, the Gastronomical Fair was scheduled for after regional harvest and local wine festivals and before the annual wine auction in Beaune and Roman Catholic Advent: “the peasants come in from the country and hold market at the Fair, selling livestock, vegetables, flowers. The country folk at the Fair go about all stiff and uncomfortable in their Sunday best.”<sup>75</sup>

Contemporary postcard of the Monumental Gate at the Gastronomical Fair of Dijon, c. early 1920s

Within less than one week before the grand opening of the first “Gastronomical Fair of Dijon” in 1921, a local booster anticipated “never before” would Dijon be so attractive and animated as during a “[c]omplete exposition of all the alimentary products and more particularly

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<sup>70</sup> “Ah! Je sais bien: il ne faut pas abuser de bienfait des Dieux. Il n’y a rien de rose comme le rose petit démon qui vit sous la belle livrée écarlante du Chambertin, à moins que ce ne soit le petit Dieu, blond et lutin, qui débouche, plein de malices, d’une bouteille de Montrachet!... En tous cas, si répréhensible qu’elle soit, cette ivresse au bon vin de Bourgogne n’est jamais méchante. L’ivrogne n’a jamais ici le mauvais vin. Et il n’a pas d’autre exaltation que celle des grands héroïsmes..., si grands que la terre ne les portes plus et qu’ils vont dans les fossés.” Ibid., 414.

<sup>71</sup> Stefan Zweig, *Voyages* (Paris: Belfond, 2000), 34.

<sup>72</sup> Pierre Léon-Gaithier, *Les Clos de Bourgogne* (Beaune: Darantière, n. d.), 12.

<sup>73</sup> One of the fathers of French gastronomy, Alexandre Grimod de la Reynière, kept the memory of the Saint Martin Fair alive in his early nineteenth-century manuals such as the *Ecrits gastronomiques* (Paris: Bibliothèque 10/18, 1997 [n. d.]).

<sup>74</sup> “La Foire de Saint Martin,” *Progrès de la Côte-d’Or* 11 November 1925, 2.

<sup>75</sup> Gertrude Clark Powell, *The Quiet Side of Europe*, 12.

Dijonnais and Burgundian specialties.” Within luxuriously decorated salons for the “pleasure and profit” of merchants and visitors, the event promised to constitute “a most interesting manifestation of culinary and gastronomical arts.”<sup>76</sup> There was also a strong emphasis on spectacle through “[a]ttractions of all kinds... for everyone.” Most memorable perhaps was the annual construction of a gaudily opulent Monumental Gate that served, in the parlance of World’s Fairs, as the event’s “spike.” The Monumental Gate of 1931, designed by Georges Parisot, was described as “following simple, elegant, and imposing principles of modern architecture” to harmoniously produce an “impression of balance and lightness.” Standing 25 meters high with sides draped in “luminous cascades” of water, the entrance’s gold and blue ornamentation on white background and red doorway were set into relief each evening with “impressive clarity from the velvety-dark and somber skies” by hidden lights.<sup>77</sup> Through this and lesser gates, visitors entered to wind their way around hundreds of merchants’ stalls and on to the Fair’s principal attractions– the “food courts,” “industrial chambers,” and “artisan salons.”

Photograph of entrance to the 1931 Gastronomical Faire in Dijon  
(Archives Municipal de Dijon, series 2F “Foire 1931”)

Following Gérard’s inclusive policy of offering “something for everyone,” Dijon’s mid-November festival offered all the attractions generally found at general *fête foraines* (fairs). The *Progrès de la Côte-d’Or* reported that crowds along Dijon’s Place Wilson observed various mechanized rides in which “delirious couples were thrown one onto the other on a rotating platform” or the “amateurs of violent emotions” aloft a centrifugal platform. Further on, the “clamor of spirited youths and the sharp cries of young girls” could be heard coming from the bumper cars. Children and grandparents “gave themselves to heartfelt joy” as they “went up and down” on the carousel’s wooden horses. Past the lure of feats of strength and accuracy, crowds shuffled between jugglers and clowns through the covered alleys to see the wax museum’s skeleton of ‘a man who died of hunger’ and Arnisio, the daughter of Ramses III. Elsewhere, “funny mirrors” deformed one’s reflection into grotesque shapes making their victims “laugh uncontrollably.” Others clamored to have their caricatures sketched and silhouettes cut. A great success was the water-chute sustained by “gigantic scaffolding” in front of City Hall. “Crazily exuberant” youths, it was reported, rode down its sides in wooden wagons at “vertiginous speeds.” Occasionally the atmosphere might be overwhelmed by the cries and laughter of swarming schoolchildren on a loosely monitored class outing.<sup>78</sup> Closer to the Place Darcy, fairgoers were treated to more exotic sights. Amidst a discussion of the foot races between the waiters of Dijon’s cafés, Gertrude Clark Powell recalled that, “[e]very square in town is filled with sideshows, fakirs, itinerant merchants, ‘instantaneous’ photo stands, hurdy-gurdy men, merry-go-rounds, [and] Arabian villages guarded by mangy camels.”<sup>79</sup> One tent contained a

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<sup>76</sup> “La Foire: L’animation en ville,” *Progrès de la Côte-d’Or* 4 November 1921, 1.

<sup>77</sup> “L’inauguration de la XIe Foire Gastronomique,” *Progrès de la Côte-d’Or* 1 November 1931, 2.

<sup>78</sup> “Chronique de la Foire: Les enfants visitent la Foire,” *Progrès de la Côte-d’Or* 17 November 1925, 2.

<sup>79</sup> Powell, *The Quiet Side of Europe*, 12.

“Freak Show” where one could see an octopus with a young woman’s head or another woman with three feet. Another act offered acrobatic fleas towing miniature chariots in hops and leaps. After visiting the vast exhibition halls, the crowd, to “augment its truculent trepidation,” jostled past “charming young girls selling medallions to raise money for *familles nombreuses* (large families)” to conclude “an incomparable day of popular animation” with an evening of “fantastic festivities” at Wilson Square.<sup>80</sup> Nocturnal tourists coursing beneath a “polychrome ceiling” of multicolored lights, were welcome by directional banners guiding them past the freshly decorated restaurants, stores, stalls, games, and bars. Blasted by amplified directives, “jostling crowds squeezed through the Monumental Gate and wiggled into the Court of Honor.”<sup>81</sup> These were merely preludes and side shows, however, to the Fair’s gastronomical centerpiece: “[a]fter the eyes have feasted on the many spectacles to the glory of Burgundian gastronomy in the Hall of Honor, once through the entrance doors, they are suddenly arrested by a series of succulent things.”<sup>82</sup>

An impressed reporter described how the 250 square-meter Court of Honor (Salon d’Honneur) designed by the Parisian architect Gaston Paris and built and garlanded by the city of Dijon, was a “veritable altar to gastronomy.” Its grand scale and kitschy decor awed and delighted fairgoers.<sup>83</sup> Green brocaded walls covered with black netting rose according to the “clean lines” of “svelte columnettes” toward a ceiling dressed in “an elegant cascade of flowers.” From its center fell an “amusing” and “stylistically contrasting” string of cherubs and other mythological figures. Tress and flowering plants filled the corners of the room while broad sheets of white velum rose from the center of the room to create a pyramidal chamber within the hall. This “curious motif” was lit separately so as to set it off from the rest of the hall. Invoking the vocabulary and imagery of the spectacular to describe the experience of visiting the Fair’s gastronomical ‘courts,’ reporters employing formulations like “like a Gargantuan dream,” “an enticing phantasmagoria,” “a vision followed like dream,” and “the drunken impression of having undertaken an apotheosis” to describe the experience of entering the 1925 Hall of Honor.<sup>84</sup> The gastronomical reporter, Marcel Grancher described a grandiose Court of Honor resplendent with decorations illustrating and jumbling territorial motifs and historical themes from different epochs. “An immense fresco” painted by the student’s of the Beaux-Arts school depicted the ancient city of Dijon surrounded by the Legion of Honor and the region’s succulent riches: “vintners carry bottles of fine wines, cooks dress boars’ heads, roast piglettes, feather foals, grill meats, and prepare snails and shrimp against a background of vines and decorative nudes.”<sup>85</sup>

Over-the-top marketing stratagems could put off supporters when they threatened the moderate sensibilities of conventional aesthetics. “What can one say of minced meats, soufflés, and towers of paté that cease to be real roasts and proper poultry. Married to the contorted styles and convulsions of art they become [architectural] cornices, capitals, and full arches,” quibbled

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<sup>80</sup> “Chronique de la Foire: La Fête Foraine,” *Progrès de la Côte-d’Or* 12 November 1925, 2.

<sup>81</sup> “Autour de la Foire: Illuminations et Fête Foraine,” *Le Progrès de la Côte-d’Or* 12 November 1931, 2.

<sup>82</sup> “Chronique de la Foire: L’Alimentation,” *Progrès de la Côte-d’Or* 10 November 1925, 1.

<sup>83</sup> “Chronique de la Foire: A Travers les Halls,” *Progrès de la Côte-d’Or* 10 November 1925, 1.

<sup>84</sup> “Chronique de la Foire: Le Salon d’Honneur,” *Progrès de la Côte-d’Or* 10 November 1925, 1.

<sup>85</sup> Marcel-E. Grancher, *Denise mène les boeufs* (Paris: Editions Rabelais, 1953), 239.

Gaston Roupnel.<sup>86</sup> He disquietly observed, “venerable lobsters that a bold chef had erected into an Eiffel Tower with Turkish minarets. I would have preferred a little less effort (“*préféré du poil aux pattes*”) than Persian art. That is no longer cuisine; it is architectural and monumental art. They build in Renaissance or Louis XIV styles; the nougat is naturally Rococo and the ice palaces are made of strawberries. I don’t envy those who have to do it all in a colonial vein...!”<sup>87</sup>

For most, however, accustomed as they were to a regimen of seventeenth-century architecture, an occasional clearance sale (*baderie*), and “café sitting [as] the only diversion...,” the Gastronomical Fair was easily the most memorable, exciting, even marvelous event of the year in “painfully bourgeois” Dijon.<sup>88</sup> “The visitor is seduced as his eyes draw him to the next stand and his admiration continuously grows.” Where else could the Dijonnais admire a three-layered pyramid made from a cubic meter of glistening giant shrimp in rows alternating with colorful Burgundian fruit all supporting an “enormous” bottle of red wine aloft? On the steps of this monumental pedestal, strawberries were sculpted to represent both wild and familiar barnyard animals. Here, rows of wares framed by the smiles of young salesgirls wearing folkloric skirts and headdresses. There, tucked into a bower of green plants, a butcher surrounded by whole lambs and cows. Elsewhere, a giant mound of butter against a backdrop of chrysanthemums keeping company with an active beehive covered by an enormous glass bell.<sup>89</sup> Grancher described the “prodigious” Table of Lucullus displayed across from the entrance of the Court of Honor:

[i]magine... an extraordinary spectacle... that hits the visitor right in the stomach so that he remains dumbstruck: knees weak and saliva running from the corners of his mouth. It’s a matter of a huge, brightly lit rotating table covered with flowers and greenery to display all that the region produces that is good and beautiful.... It is something prodigious; wild pigs stuck with silver forks, jellies trembling with luminescent transparency, motifs out of saindoux, cascades of shrimps, medieval towers made of truffled medallions topped by boats of shrimp with their red tails in the air.... Here a plane made of calf bones, hazel hens, and woodcocks stacked and topped by a royal pheasant, his tail sprightly deployed in whose dazzling gold, purple, and red feathers is reflected the prestigious memories of the courts of days of old, the parades of the Dukes of Burgundy dressed in gold and of lords in their finest robes— a heroic feast painted by Breughel and touched up by Jan Van Looy!<sup>90</sup>

Not to be outdone, the wine stalls, which could easily have constituted a fair on their own, might draw the gaze of visitors with “coquettish installations” calculated to invoke particular vintners, grower’s associations, and brand-names. Memorable stalls included Victor Morot and Co.’s spiraling glass staircase made entirely of colored liqueur flasks and Antoine Rodeo’s electrical windmill with wings covered in wine bottles. The most successful innovation

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<sup>86</sup> Gaston Roupnel, “Eloge de la cuisine familial,” *Bien Public* 20 November 1929, 5.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>88</sup> Gertrude Clark Powell, *The Quiet Side of Europe*, 93.

<sup>89</sup> “Chronique de la Foire: L’Alimentation,” *Progrès de la Côte-d’Or* 10 November 1925, 1.

<sup>90</sup> Marcel-E. Grancher, *Denise mène les boeufs* (Paris: Editions Rabelais, 1953), 239.

was the *buvette-restaurant* where visitors could rest, listen to music, and continue sampling the regional products they had just seen or tasted.<sup>91</sup>

### The Quarrel of the Dishes

Gourmets are nothing more than gourmands who lost their appetites.

--Roupnel, "La Trêve du Cuisinier," *Dépêche de Toulouse* (1921)

The Fair's promoters espoused a gastronomy of popular "family recipes." The merits of "good family cooking" were also regularly touted in the Automobile Club of Burgundy's monthly newsletter to "gastronomades."<sup>92</sup> While this provenance has been attributed to the Burgundian chef Alfred Contour and the publication of his *Le Cuisinier Bourguignon: Nouveau Livre de Cuisine Pratique* in 1891, the "Official Catalogue" for the 1936 Gastronomical Fair pointed, instead, to Pierre Hugenin's *Les Meilleurs Recettes de ma Pauvre Mere* (n. d.), where one could find short, simple recipes for vegetable soups, pots roast, lamb scrabble, carp meurette, and pineapple flan, as the basis of "Burgundian cuisine."<sup>93</sup> Even the famed Curnonsky promoted a "practical gastronomy" that "gather[ed] only the champions of simple cuisine, this real French cuisine in which the sauces do not mask the flavors of the dishes and in which 'things have the taste of what they are.'"<sup>94</sup> In 1922, the *Revue de Bourgogne* contrasted "old Burgundian cuisine," identified in terms of vegetable potée, pot roast (Boeuf bourguignon), snails, and *meurette*, among others, to the architectural "*gastrotechnie*" of the 1900 Paris Exposition.<sup>95</sup>

Gaston Roupnel echoed this gastronomical populism where he responded to the "pernicious pretensions" of the "intrusive nouvelle cuisine" of new culinary 'experts' like A. Escoffier, Philéas Gilbert, or Emile Fetu. Asserting such "erudition has always been indigestible," Roupnel argued that "real cuisine" was closer to hand: "[a]fter all, good cuisine, real cuisine is nothing more than a simple pot-au-feu (roast). The pot-au-feu... I don't know why it has become so unappreciated! In the bottom of a good round pot, trusting like a good man, murmur the delicate harmonies of a simmering broth slowly cooked over a low fire. Leeks and cloves add the aromas of the garden and tropics and abandon themselves to the bubbling juices of a loin that spent its life ruminating on the subject."<sup>96</sup> He further charged that cuisine had become an art too refined: "[o]ne prepares without a philosophy; without understanding the origins of dishes"<sup>97</sup> and sarcastically concluded that "new fangled gourmets [were] nothing more than gourmands who lost their appetites." His pages on the salted hams, raw sausages, and local wines of the vintners' mid-afternoon snack remain some of the best thick descriptions of the

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<sup>91</sup> "La Foire Gastronomique: Les Vins et Spiriteux," *Progrès de la Côte-d'Or* 8 November 1922, 1.

<sup>92</sup> See, for example, "Le coin du Gourmet," *L'Automobile Club de Bourgogne* (December 1937): 12.

<sup>93</sup> Alfred Contour *Le Cuisinier Bourguignon: Nouveau livre de cuisine pratique* (Beaune: Librairie Vinceneux-Loireau, 1921 [1891]) and

<sup>94</sup> Maurice-Edmond Saillard (Curnonsky), *Cuisine et vins de France* (Paris: Larousse, 1953), 3-4.

<sup>95</sup> Prosper Montagné and Philéas Gilbert, "A Travers la Bourgogne gourmande," *La Revue de Bourgogne* 12 (1922): 610-15.

<sup>96</sup> Gaston Roupnel, "La Trêve du Cuisinier," *Dépêche de Toulouse* 29 December 1921, 1.

<sup>97</sup> Gaston Roupnel, "Eloge de la cuisine familial," *Bien Public* 20 November 1929, 5.

period's quotidian culinary practices—peppered with the use of regional patois to indict “the Best is the enemy of the Good.”<sup>98</sup>

More discursively, Roupnel's revaluation of Burgundian cuisine also included a public lecture on Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin's gastronomical legacy at the 1929 Gastronomical Fair of Dijon.<sup>99</sup> The significance of Roupnel's interpretation of Burgundy's most famous eighteenth-century epicure and author of the gastro-philosophical tract entitled *La Physiologie du Gout* (1848) lay in the popular and inclusive spirit he attributed to his Burgundian legacy.<sup>100</sup> In fact, he made little effort to hide a certain disdain for what the fair was becoming: “[t]here is a Gastronomical Fair in happy Dijon.... By habit, however, good cuisine is generally available a little everywhere. Across precipitous staircases that lead to the true Paradise of Beatitude waft deadly aromas from timbered dining rooms... where Lucullus would die for never being able to leave.”<sup>101</sup>

Against the rapturous celebration of a French gastronomy (that imposed itself internationally in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) as a symbol of privilege and exaggerated wealth, Roupnel, perhaps thinking of Pierre Ronsard's poem “Salad” or Aimé Piron's rustic culinary verses, offered a more appealing, accessible, and populist interpretation of Burgundian gastronomy.<sup>102</sup> Following the popular journalist Curnonsky's efforts to make French gastronomy both more bourgeois and democratic,<sup>103</sup> Dijon's two left-leaning populist mayors, Gaston Gérard and Robert Jardillier, revalued Dijon's gastro-political role accordingly.<sup>104</sup> Gérard, for instance, interpreted Piron's theatrical and verse as reflecting an amiable and popular Burgundian “character” in a series of talks organized by the Librairie Hachette on the “glories of Burgundy” during the 17th Gastronomical Fair in 1937: “[m]ore than others, Burgundians understand Piron whom they must love as much as he resembles them. He reflects their finesse, realism, and common sense as much as their faults; a sharply critical eye (“discerner la paille dans l'oeil de son voisin”)... that is the principle trait of our amiable character.”<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Gaston Roupnel, *Bourgogne, types et coutumes* (Paris: Horizons de France, 1936), 127-138.

<sup>99</sup> Clément-Janin, “Toute la Bourgogne à la Foire,” *La Bourgogne d'Or* 14 (1927): 33-34. Also see, Jean Dagey, Brillat-Savarin,” *Progrès de la Côte-d'Or* 13 November 1925, 1.

<sup>100</sup> Rather, for example, than in the tradition of the celebration of the “Banquet de voeu” of the Burgundian Court of the early Renaissance in which all but an invited élite were relegated to the role of spectators. See David Fallows, “Le Banquet de Voeu, 1454” [musical liner notes], (London: Virgin Classics Limited, 1991), 6-8 and Jean Meyer, *La France Moderne* (Paris: Fayard, 1985), 50.

<sup>101</sup> Roupnel, “Eloge de la cuisine familial,” 5.

<sup>102</sup> “A reviewer provided this synopsis of Roupnel's lecture of Brillat-Savarin as godfather of popular Burgundian gastronomy. In “IX Foire gastronomique de Dijon; conférence de M. Roupnel,” *Le Bien Public* 13 November 1929. On Piron's folklorizations, see “Le Patois bourguignon au XVIIe siècle,” *Le Bien Public*, 28 February 1933, 3; Piron, “Aimé Piron apothicaire,” *Pays de Bourgogne* 159 (1993): 21-27; and Lucien Chiselle, “Le Plaisant Piron,” *La Bourgogne d'Or* 108 (1937): 121-29.

<sup>103</sup> Patrice Higonet, Paris, Capital of the World, 300.

<sup>104</sup> Philippe Poirrier, “From the Fine Arts to a Cultural Policy in Dijon from 1919 to 1995,” *Cultural Policy* 2 (1996): 343.

<sup>105</sup> “Piron ou le sel bourguignon,” *Le Progrès de la Côte-d'Or* 9 November 1937, 6.

This was also the time and place where the renown international food critic, M. F. K. Fisher first discovered the joys of indulging in simpler cuisine at the expense of gastronomic prejudices she judged “foolish... pretentious, often boring, as well as damnable expensive.”<sup>106</sup> Had not Léon Daudet, ‘who knew how to make everybody hate him,’ also written “The Rehabilitation of Garlic,” Pierre Descaves an homage to “Red String Beans,” Anatole France on “The History of a Plate of Macaroni,” and Gabriel Paysan “The Sausage” in the same ‘down-home,’ populist vein? Even the neo-Baroque Maurice Edmond Sailland, self-styled Curnonsky–“Prince of Gastronomes,” noted that it was Brillat-Savarin’s clear, plain style that made him a “classic.”<sup>107</sup> As late as 1949, Georges Rozet, the official historian of the Knights of Wine Tasting, insisted that “true and pure Burgundian cuisine is certainly rich (robuste) and flavorful (relevée) but neither overly complicated (tarabiscotée) nor pretentious (recherchée): all told, a relatively simple and rustic cuisine” [code for bourgeois].<sup>108</sup>

Gastronomes Gaston Gérard, Georges Faiveley, and André Robine (left to right) officiating at a Caveau Nuitton gathering during the mid 1930s (photograph from the collection of Jean-François Bazin)

This popular tradition survived through the 1930s in regular paeans to “the pot-au-feu of the French farmhouse” and other dishes in recipes frequently offered, for instance, in the culinary column of the *Progrès de la Côte-d’Or*.<sup>109</sup> Gertrude Powell recalled being invited to the home of Professor Georges Connes in Dijon... “charming people” and a bourgeois couple if there ever was one; “the dinner table was laid under a spreading cherry tree in the back of the garden; a regular French dinner” built around a roast chicken and tomato salad!<sup>110</sup> On another occasion, she and her husband were invited by their host family, the Rigaults, “for a family dinner” consisting of “roast beef, a dish of potatoes, and cabbage boiled with bacon. All very good. Madame told me the cabbage was in my honor.”<sup>111</sup> No Escoffier recipes in the homes of Dijon’s bourgeoisie. At mid-century, Waverly Root was able to assert, “Burgundy is still renowned for good food. Probably no other comparable area in the country, not even the Ile-de-France, can boast of so uniformly high level of good eating throughout the territory.”<sup>112</sup> Colette Willy made sure that Parisians knew as well. She informed them, on the authority of her pedigree as having been “born in a province [Burgundy] where we ate well without knowing that we were gourmand,” that “true cuisine” could only be “simple, ancient, and considered.”<sup>113</sup> Even *Le Monde* diplomatically recognized the pot-au-feu, even as it “makes the happiness of more than a

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<sup>106</sup> Fisher, *The Gastronomical Me*, 98-99.

<sup>107</sup> Curnonsky, “Eloge de Brillat-Savarin,” Curnonsky et Gaston Derys, *Anthologie de la Gastronomie française* (Paris: Delagrave, 1936), 210.

<sup>108</sup> Georges Rozet, *La Bourgogne tastevin en main* (Paris: Horizons de France, 1949), 148.

<sup>109</sup> Waverly Root, *The Food of France* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 13. For example, see Mélanie, “Le Pot-au-feu,” *Progrès de la Côte-d’Or* 8 November 1935, 5.

<sup>110</sup> Gertrude Clark Powell, *The Quiet Side of Europe*, 90.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>112</sup> Waverly Root, *The Food of France*, 186.

<sup>113</sup> Colette Willy, *Paysages et portraits* (Paris: Flammarion, 1958), 167-68 and 171. Also see, Colette Willy, “Récriminations,” *La France à Table: Bourgogne* (December 1954), 47.

few chefs,” as the “emblematic dish of household cuisine.”<sup>114</sup> As this interest served to pique interest and appetites, it remained to get the people to Dijon.

### **Frenchmen into Tourists: Getting Gourmands and Gourmets to Dijon**

“Gastronomy is the craze and passion of the day... like puzzles, yo-yos, dances, crosswords, cubism, and Freudism before... restaurants, inns, and hostels grow like mushrooms. With the help of automobile tourism, the French have gone off to discover the magnificence of our provinces.”

--Curnonsky and Gaston Derys, *Anthology of French Gastronomy* (1936)

It took Dijon’s foremost gastronomical booster to recognize that the city (“the city of 100 steeples”) was blessed with resources that could be more profitably exploited. Gaston Gérard listed the city’s attractions—museums, divers monuments, evening musical and theatrical performances, attractive parks, an “illustrious” history, a ducal palace, and most importantly a regional cuisine—in an promotional article in 1922. France, as he saw it, would discover Burgundian culinary traditions and regional products on the back of the national (P. M. L.) rails as reduced-fare trains pulled in and out every five minutes during Dijon’s Fair days: “Dijon, Gastronomical Capital. It’s the word. It’s the thing. It is only in Dijon that one savors a cuisine never to be equaled.... Come and you will return annually if you are, as I hope, joyous and gourmand.”<sup>115</sup>

Gabriel Boudier, Crème de Cassis advertisement, 1920s (postcard)

In 1925, a reporter for the *Progrès de la Côte-d’Or* covered a public conference on the theme of “Tourism and Hygiene” offered in one of the University of Dijon’s large amphitheatres. The speaker reminded readers that Burgundy could easily profit by exploiting its “coquettish” villages to situate stunning centers for rest and relaxation (villégiature et repos). He added that individual localities (pays) wishing to promote the reputations of their “natural, local, and built riches” needed to “organize themselves in order to better welcome and retain visitors.”<sup>116</sup> Along these lines, Gérard credited his political patron André Tardieu for making tourism as an important element within national domestic policy:

[h]e made it official. And, for three years and through five successive ministries, established a politics of tourism to which we owe the complete repaving of our roads, the coordination of land, sea, and air transportation, the interpenetration of all organizations responsible for creating and promoting tourism: Chambers of Commerce, the Touring-Club, the Club-Alpin, the Automobile-Club, hotel industry— now benefiting from a system of credit, tourist exchanges abroad, the evaluation of the nation’s

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<sup>114</sup> Jean Claude Ribaut, “Le pot-au-feu de Dodin-Bouffant,” *Le Monde* 10 June 2005, 24. Also see “La Bourgogne: Les recettes de notre pays” in *Cuisine de Terroir* 15 (1997): 45-62.

<sup>115</sup> Gaston Gérard, “La Foire Gastronomique,” *Le Progrès de la Côte-d’Or* 6 November 1922, 2.

<sup>116</sup> “Chronique de la Foire: Les conférences de l’Académie,” *Progrès de la Côte-d’Or* 10 November 1925, 1

cities in terms of their tourist amenities, an entire reorganization of thermal spas, the protection of historic sites, the organization of great folkloric festivals... etc....<sup>117</sup>

With Tardieu's exit from government, the onset of the Great Depression and reduced national subsidies, local and regional governments were increasingly forced to mostly fend for themselves. They continued to lobby Paris and local initiative. "The state," Gérard argued, "must at all costs support this endeavor, not by taxes but, rather, through tourism revenues."<sup>118</sup> Accordingly, Gérard promoted the sales of French wines and foodstuffs by traveling to 32 countries—from Indochina to Canada—and attending over 600 conferences during his political tenure.<sup>119</sup> His efforts were such that Prime Minister André Tardieu noted that "[e]verything [Gérard] wants, he gets. Everything he thinks, he advocates... whether in a brief concerning wine, roads, or tourism, he affirms a visionary zeal."<sup>120</sup>

Challenging a two hundred year-old trend in which the French sought sophisticated, complicated, and difficult dishes accompanied by mediocre wines,<sup>121</sup> the rapid development and expansion of modern transportation and communications technologies (trains, planes, automobiles, bicycles, radio, chambers of commerce, booster societies, and tourist magazines) during the first decades of the twentieth century made travel to "la France profonde" (literally "deep France") to indulge in regional gastronomy more accessible, affordable, sager, and desirable.<sup>122</sup> Historian Patrick Young has shown how a burgeoning turn-of-the-century tourism industry provided "the foundations for the potential economic revitalization of the [French] provinces."<sup>123</sup> Travel clubs, hotel associations, resort entrepreneurs, gastronomy societies, railway companies, and syndicates d'initiative (local booster associations) emerged to assist and profit from "internal" tourism.<sup>124</sup>

In contrast to nineteenth-century travel to religious shrines, chaste "centers of recuperation," or the historical "sites and monuments" reproduced on postage stamps, new

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<sup>117</sup> Gaston Gérard, *Le Miroir du coin et du temps* (Dijon: Editions des Etats Généraux de la Gastronomie française, 1959), 160.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 162-63.

<sup>119</sup> Gaston Gérard, quoted in *Bien Public* 19 November 1927, 1. Gérard's economic policies during the Great Depression, for example, are outlined in "Le discours de M. Gaston-Gérard au Congrès du Parti Radical Indépendant," *Le Progrès de la Côte-d'Or* 7 November 1938, 1 and 5.

<sup>120</sup> *Dictionnaire des Ministres de 1789 à 1989*, vol. 5 (Paris: Perrin, 1990), 1819.

<sup>121</sup> Patrice Higonnet, *Paris, Capital of the World* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2002), 313.

<sup>122</sup> See Gregory Alexis, *L'Age d'or du voyage, 1880-1939* (Paris: Chêne, 1990) and Marc Boyer, *L'invention du tourisme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), Gareth Shaw, *Critical Issues in Tourism* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994), and Xavier Martel, *L'iconographie touristique comme propagande géopolitique en temps de paix*, 2 vols., (Paris: X. Martel, 1998).

<sup>123</sup> Patrick Young, "La Vielle France as Object of Bourgeois Desire: The Touring Club de France and the French Regions, 1890-1918," in Rudy Koshar (ed.), *Histories of Leisure* (NY: Berg, 2002), 171-72.

<sup>124</sup> Among others, Mark McGovern defines tourism as "the consumption of place and the consumption of goods and services in that place," in "The Cracked Pint Glass of the Servant': The Irish Pub, Irish Identity and the Tourist Eye," in M. Cronin and B. O'Connor, *Irish Tourism* (New York: Channel View Books, 2003), 84.

destinations were more akin to the spas frequented by upper class patrons during the mid to late nineteenth-century and yet they were within post-war budgets. These new vacation sites provided “stimulating” leisure in the form of “authentic” food, wine, and cultural entertainment to middle class clients. In 1935, Raymond Baudouin, the editor of *La Revue du Vin de France* told assembled members of The Agrarian Party (Le Partie Agraire) that rural areas should develop tourist economies. “Rural communes” he insisted “must have the ambition to create tourist stops distinguished by original cachet, veritable temples of regional dishes and local wines, in a rustic or picturesque décor.”<sup>125</sup> The Touring Club of France noted in 1929 that “the preferred cuisine of tourists is regional: each terroir possesses original resources and savory recipes.”<sup>126</sup> Even the Duchess d’Uzès insisted on a visit to Dijon with a reception of City Hall in 1931 for her Automobile-Club Féminin’s “caravan.”<sup>127</sup> By the late 1930s, the francophilic gastronome and correspondent for Paris edition of the *Chicago Tribune*, Waverly Root, could report that the Michelin guide, “which gourmets never fail to carry with them when they sally into the provinces, lists just seven three-star restaurants outside of Paris; four of them [in Burgundy].”<sup>128</sup> Such gastronomical enticements were reason for Côte-d’Or’s Flying Club to zoom in locals and their guests for a Grand Burgundian Wines Rally in 1935.<sup>129</sup>

Burgundian tourism found a ready ally in the Touring Club of France whose principle objective was to “popularize the use of small tourist vehicles and generally enhance automobile circulation.”<sup>130</sup> Its monthly journal lured tourists along France’s roadways with detailed and picturesque narratives about the sights, meals, wines (“Burgundy, when it is authentic”), and accommodations travelers could find in “the country of Larmartine,” “along the Cluniac trail,” “through ‘unknown’ Burgundy,” and around “the Churches of Mâcon and Farms of Bresse”<sup>131</sup> The Automobile Club of Burgundy (whose radiator seal was the image of a Burgundian vigneronne) went one step further. It organized contemporary desires for “gaiety, vivacity, and honesty” into provincial tours with an eye to finishing in time for nine course meals accompanied by a “vin d’honneur.”<sup>132</sup> It organized events such as the 1932 “The Rail and Road:

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<sup>125</sup> Raymond Baudouin, “Agriculture et tourisme,” *La Revue du Vin de France* 98 (1935): 10-11.

<sup>126</sup> M. F. Carton quoted in “Tourisme et Gastronomie,” *Touring Club de France* 421 (1929): 258.

<sup>127</sup> Letter from The Automobile Club Féminin, dated 5 October 1931, to the Mayor of Dijon in Archives Municipales de Dijon, III/ 160, “Fêtes 1931.”

<sup>128</sup> Waverly Root, *The Food of France*, 186.

<sup>129</sup> Letter from Henri Bussiere, dated 18 July 1935, to the Mayor of Dijon in Archives Municipales de Dijon, III/ 164, “Fêtes 1935.”

<sup>130</sup> L[ucien] Bonnard, *Le Touring Club de France et son oeuvre* (Paris: TCF, 1927), 13.

<sup>131</sup> “Tourisme et Gastronomie,” *Touring Club de France* 421 (1929): 258; “Le Mâconnais: Pays de Lamartine,” *Touring Club de France* 466 (September 1933): 303-05; “Eglises du Mâconnais et fermes Bressanes,” *Touring Club de France* 516 (November 1937): 327-335; and “De Montbard à Dijon à travers la Bourgogne inconnue et pittoresque,” *Touring Club de France* 505 (December 1936): 389-397.

<sup>132</sup> François Woltner, “Les vins de France,” *Bulletin Province de L’Automobile Club de Bourgogne* (November 1929): 209-213), Georges Leconte, “Voyage à travers les provinces françaises,” *L’Automobile Club de Bourgogne* (October 1937): 7-8; “Tourisme et Gastronomie,” *L’Automobile Club de Bourgogne* (March 1934); Gaston Gérard, “Demeure historique de

the Gastronomical Fair,” the “Morvan Circuit” in 1935, and the “Gastronomical Dijon Rally” in 1937 to promote and benefit from the festivities at Dijon’s annual Fair.<sup>133</sup> Covering 150 kilometers per day for five days, the Automobile Club’s 1937 “Excursion in Burgundy” sought authentic regional cuisine.<sup>134</sup> From touring in Burgundy, the author Robert Desnos recalled how he and companions feasted like Olympic gods: “we made numerous toasts, drank a quantity of wine, and sang with deserts.”<sup>135</sup>

“J’ai Découvert a Dijon,” a promotional brochure designed by Georges Rozet, provided budding gastronomes seeking the “ideal travelers’ *rendez-vous* in Dijon” with a sample itinerary. Addressing his readers as “brother tourists,” Rozet described how neophytes could lodge at the conveniently located Hotel Terminus. There, following a day touring the monuments or the casino at the cinema-theatre, they could dine at La Grande Taverne restaurant.

Hotel Terminus Restaurant (Archives Municipal de Dijon, series 6Fi 248)

Whispering to readers “worthy of the confidence,” Rozet promised a fine regional cuisine and “authentic vintages” of “pure and high lineage” at prices no longer expected “after so many years of gastronomical inflation.” The “Hotel Terminus menu prix fix,” he noted, provides dishes descended from a long culinary tradition reaching back to the Dukes of Burgundy set off by a modern decor.”<sup>136</sup>

The Touring Club of France published a three-page report on tourism “In the Burgundian Region” in 1925 in which the reviewer— following a discussion of the region’s history, topography, tourist and infrastructures— concluded that it was the region “where one ate well... better than one slept!”<sup>137</sup> By 1930, general services had improved such that the gastronome Gaston Derys invoked a Culinary Contest organized by the Touring Club in Brillat-Savarin’s Burgundy.<sup>138</sup> Gaston Roupnel provided a fictional account of the annual banquet of a fictional scientific society (“*agapes amicales de l’année*”). Members of the “venerable and erudite” Helium Club convened “in one of those good old restaurants in Dijon... where pure genius operates through pots and pans.” The establishment’s most modest dish was so admired that, “[r]ajajas and maharajas left their elephants in India simply to discover its tripe. The house paté was terrestrial spirit en croûte!... A cup of coffee was an ode to Moka; simply smelling it made

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Bourgogne,” *L’Automobile Club de Bourgogne* (September 1934): 2-3; and “Journée Dijon-Macon,” *L’Automobile Club de Bourgogne* (June 1934): 5.

<sup>133</sup> “Le Rail et la Route:” La Foire gastronomique,” *L’Automobile Club de Bourgogne* (November 1932): 5-6, 17 and Robert Blanc, “Rallye Gastronomique de Dijon,” *L’Automobile Club de Bourgogne* (December 1934): 2-9.

<sup>134</sup> “Excursion dans le Dijonnais,” *L’Automobile Club de Bourgogne* (April 1937), 9-13.

<sup>135</sup> Robert Desnos, *Voyage en Bourgogne* (1930-1931) in *Desnos: Oeuvres* (Paris: Quarto, 1999), 632 and 615.

<sup>136</sup> Georges Rozet, *J’ai découvert a Dijon* (Macon: Protat Frères, n.d.), 13 and 14.

<sup>137</sup> “Au pays bourguignon,” *La Revue du Touring Club de France* 373 (December 1925): 508-512.

<sup>138</sup> Gaston Derys, “Petite Géographie Gastronomique de la France,” in Curnonsky et Gaston Derys, *Anthologie de la Gastronomie française* (Paris: Delagrave, 1936), 231.

one delirious with tropical thoughts.... As for the fine champagne, the barrel was said to have known Napoleon I in earlier days.”<sup>139</sup>

The link between a commodified gastronomic culture, where all aspects of the experience are packaged, scripted, valorized, marketed, and sold, and the development of Burgundian tourism is revealed in the experiences of tourists themselves.<sup>140</sup> As a member of the Club Alpin of the Côte-d’Or, M. F. K. Fisher recalls the “energetic but agreeable” outings to “carefully planned feasts at little village inns” where members consumed as “many courses and as many wines” before walking them off along the Route des crus to see “castles and convents and wine caves that were seldom bared.”<sup>141</sup> Her most orgiastic eating was with the Club Alpin where “[t]he schedule was always the same: a brisk walk from the station and the little train that had brought us from Dijon, four or five hours of eating and drinking, and then the long promenade, the climbing, the viewing of monuments and fallen temples. The real reason, though... was that every time we spent half a day plugging doggedly across muddy fields and shivering in bat-filled slimy ruins, we spent an equal amount of time sitting warmly, winily, in the best local restaurant, eating specialties of the village or the region more ardently than ever peak was scaled or Gothic arch gazed on.”<sup>142</sup> Indeed, the gastronomic impulse provided an education in wine, cuisine, manners, and suitable topics for conversation in provincial society. According to Fisher, “[t]he Club secretary always tried to arrange our sorties so that after we had studied a regional cuisine with the thoroughness it deserved, and had made solemn notes both physical and spiritual on the vintages that flourished there, or there, or there, we could devote ourselves with equally undivided zeal to the promenade itself.”<sup>143</sup>

The Touring Club, for example, organized a “gastronomical pilgrimage” around a Concours de Cuisine (Cooking Competition) among various restaurants in Brillat-Savarin’s native Bresse in 1930.<sup>144</sup> Famous for its slowly cooked and aromatic lamb, boar, and fowl stews, this region was recognized as a “gastronomical paradise.”<sup>145</sup> By 1936, France’s reigning

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<sup>139</sup> In this environment, [r]ather than manipulating their microscopes, the members held glasses in their hands. Instead of a bibliography, they were examining a Corton. Soon after the roast, the physics group leapt into a discussion of communicative heat exchanges during banquets. The geology section was lost between two wines and the industrial chemists were gay. In, “L’Affair Jérémie,” *XIIIe Foire Gastronomique de Dijon* [catalogue officiel], (Dijon: Imprimerie Lepage, 1932). [anonyme]

<sup>140</sup> Mark McGovern, “The Cracked Pint Glass of the Servant...,” 91. On the commodification of things “by nature not commercial,” the “coexistence of traditional and modern ideologies and business practices,” and their “incorporation into the whole system of capitalist relations” see, Susan Strasser, “Introduction,” and Jean-Christophe Agnew, “The Give-and-Take of Consumer Culture,” in S. Strasser, ed., *Commodifying Everything* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 3-9 and 11-39.

<sup>141</sup> Fisher, *The Art of Eating* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), 87 and 431.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 431 and 432.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 433.

<sup>144</sup> In a day when few of Dijon’s surrounding villages were yet electrified, the first, second, and third prizes for the competition were: an electric stove, one hundred francs, and an electric iron!

<sup>145</sup> Gaston Derys, “Petite géographie gastronomique de la France,” in *Anthologie de la Gastronomie française* (Paris: Delagrave, 1936), 231.

gastronomes—Curnonsky and Gaston Derys—were equally seduced. They dedicated a volume of their series of guides to the nation’s “culinary marvels and reputable French inns” to Burgundy.<sup>146</sup> Highlighting the region’s “delectable cuisine” and “incomparable wines,” they dubbed Dijon “a rare terrestrial paradise.”<sup>147</sup> Simon Arbellot repeated this evaluation in his *Gastronomical Guide of France*. The “Côte-d’Or” chapter drew attention to the Gastronomical Fair of Dijon where tourists could find, “[g]reat cuisine and great wines everywhere. From the Palace of the Ducs of Burgundy to the vineyards along the slopes, enchantment is the voyager’s most constant companion...[and] royal tradition exists between the old establishments and our daily tables.”<sup>148</sup> Four-day road-trips were organized to bring Parisians to visit Burgundy’s “Four Glories:” the Paulée in Meursault, the Gastronomical Fair of Dijon, Beaune’s wine auction, and the Caveau Nuiton.<sup>149</sup>

The region’s gastro-tourist attributes were seductively deployed through lavish menus such as the one served to the National Union of Reserve Officers for their annual banquet in Nuits-St.-Georges on July 24, 1932. Much as diversity was nationally heralded as promoting unity, the Hotel de la Côte-d’Or’s menu drew on the region’s diverse offerings to create a sequence of courses that represented a unified gastro-political experience: warm paté Côte-d’Or, Morvan ham with creamed mushrooms, Charolais filets with Burgundian peas, Bressian chicken in a Maçonnais white wine, and cheese from the Abbey of Citeaux— not to mention the regional 33 varieties of reds, 1 white, and 7 liqueurs.<sup>150</sup> Such orchestration was the happy result of complex and calculated marketing alliances that linked the culinary high and low. This ‘recipe’ was calculated to merge local and national agendas within a gambit aimed toward gaining tourism market shares. “Rather than be satisfied with an international cuisine with neither conscience nor flavor, opined Gaston Gérard, “the gastronome... desires honestly prepared and savory dishes [found in the Côte-d’Or].”<sup>151</sup> The popular Burgundian family dishes tempered restaurant fares and resulted “a regional cuisine prepared with love.”<sup>152</sup>

Evidence of the mutually beneficial link between tourism and gastronomy was prominent, for example, in contemporary marketing strategies and pedagogical techniques employed to promote gastronomical tourism at the Pavilion of Tourism at the 1931

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<sup>146</sup> The renewed interest in rural inns was provided a genealogy in Roger Vaultier’s “Auberges du Temps Jadis” in *L’Illustration* 2 October 1937.

<sup>147</sup> Curnonsky and Gaston Derys, *La France gastronomique, guide des merveilles culinaires et des bonnes auberges françaises*, La Bourgogne (Paris: F. Rouff, 1923), 48.

<sup>148</sup> Quoted in Gaston Gérard, “La Côte-d’Or, berceau et paradis de la Gastronomie,” in *La Côte-d’Or. Aspect Géographique, Historique, Touristique, Economique et Administrative du Département* (Paris: Alépée, 1954), 170.

<sup>149</sup> “Les Quatre Glorieuses de Bourgogne,” *Le Bien Public* 2 November 1935, 4.

<sup>150</sup> “Menu de l’Hotel de la Côte-d’Or pour l’occasion du XIIIième Congrès de l’Union Nationale des Officiers de Réserve a Dijon, 24 juillet 1932.”

<sup>151</sup> Gaston Gérard, “La Côte-d’Or, berceau et paradis de la Gastronomie,” in *La Côte-d’Or...* (Paris: Alépée, 1954), 172.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 172. Pascal Ory has compiled representative sampling of French gastronomical literature from the Renaissance through the twentieth century in *Le Discours gastronomique français des origines à nos jours* (Paris: Gallimard, 1998).

Gastronomical Fair of Dijon<sup>153</sup> The success of the Burgundian project for regional economic growth was showcased, most notable, at the 1937 Paris International Exposition's Regional Center. The Administrative Director of the Exposition's Regional Committee, declared that "with each regional pavilion, the Regional Center will be like a 'Little France' (*comme une Petite France*) directly produced by the regions and remaining in regional hands." He believed visitors who experienced Burgundian gastronomy in an appropriately rustic setting would take home a powerful memory (souvenir) of Burgundy's artisan, aesthetic, and folkloric riches. Replicating the Burgundian wine festivals and gastronomical fairs developed of the 1920s and 1930s, the Exposition's Rural Center featured a 600 square meter "Burgundian Cellar" modeled on Camille Rodier's popular caveau (cellar) in Nuits-Saint-Georges, Burgundy where the pseudo-folkloric Order of the Knights of the Wine Cups (*Chevaliers de Tastevin*) convened. Mindful of tourism interests, the Administrative Director fully expected visitors to the Pavilion would leave with the strong desire to visit Burgundy "to better appreciate its charms within their original scale and setting."<sup>154</sup> An annex further offered tourist information in the form of documentary films, enlarged photographs, wall maps, dioramas, and commercial brochures "glorifying the well known cities, tourist attractions, thermal spas, historic sites, monuments, as well as seasonal sports" of Burgundy. The organization of the Exposition's 16 restaurants further underscored the ascendancy of regional cultural intermediaries over Parisian restaurateurs. The Burgundian Pavilion's self-guided tour terminated with a visit to a restaurant where, we are told, the "high priests of gastronomy officiated with dignity."<sup>155</sup>

### **Conclusion:**

"The Gastronomical Fair of Dijon radiates and illuminates Burgundy with its immense publicity and distributes its benefits to all."

--Gaston Gérard, *Le Bien Public* (1927)

The success of the Burgundian gastronomical agenda lay in its ability to create a shared cultural space for diverse economic interests in terms of inclusive aesthetic registers. Unable, unwilling, and most likely not eager to resolve the *querelle des recettes et mets*, Gérard invoked and mobilized multiple traditions without irony or difficulty in *La France à Table's* volume on Burgundian gastronomy, tourism and folklore in 1954. He located Burgundian culinary excellence as residing both "on the table of the most modest inn of the most humble village" and in "our hotels" where "the most reputable chefs create the most celebrated dishes in the world."<sup>156</sup> Could this have been what Gaston Gérard envisioned when he hoped the Gastronomical Fair of Dijon would "allow everyone to escape reality, chase away grey thoughts, and combat monotony" and "find their own happiness?"<sup>157</sup> Hence the Gastronomical Fair of

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<sup>153</sup>"A Travers les Stands: Le Pavillon du Tourisme," *Le Progrès de la Côte-d'Or* 8 November 1931, 2.

<sup>154</sup> M. Charier, quoted in "L'économie bourguignonne vue de l'Exposition," *Progrès de la Côte-d'Or* 13 November 1937, 1.

<sup>155</sup> See, Ory, *Le Discours gastronomique français...*, 123.

<sup>156</sup> Gaston Gérard, "La Gastronomie Bourguignonne," *La France à Table: Bourgogne* (December 1954), 8.

<sup>157</sup> Gaston Gérard, "Les fastes et liesses de Dijon," *Bien Public* 31 October 1935, p. 3.

Dijon had the singular merit of simultaneously staging popular, elite, rustic, and urban spectacles to a crowd that reflected the social, political, and economic divisions that wracked greater France. The result was an important and lasting experiment with a directed economy resting on popular support and participation. Consider that the Gastronomical Fair has continued to attract an average of 195,000 visitors and 1,000 merchants through the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>158</sup>

Banquet at the 1959 Gastronomical Faire (Archives municipales de Dijon, series 2F “Foire, 1950-1959”)

Seen in broader perspective, the Burgundian cultural movement sought to mediate the seemingly irreconcilable demands of modern and traditional practices through sophisticated cultural stratagems more often associated with post-war, postmodern commercial culture. This project (re)negotiated Burgundian identity (inclusive– via semiotic conflation– of all levels of society) by manipulating emerging patterns of consumption that required the coordination of both productive forces and patterns of consumption. This provided contemporaries with new critical templates necessary for negotiating political tensions and cultural contradictions inherent in a region experiencing uneven economic development during a period of rapid modernization. By marketing gastronomical products within a popular and reassuringly middlebrow aesthetic, the shapers of the Burgundian cultural project showed how regional practices, values, and investments could be promoted through modern economic strategies. Economically speaking, Gaston Gérard’s gastro-political “firm called Burgundy” had arrived.

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<sup>158</sup> Christelle Guilard, “La Foire Gastronomique de Dijon,” Appendix 28.