
The Geography of Italian Pasta

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Pasta is as much an institution as a food in Italy, where it has made a significant contribution to national culture. Its historical geography is one of strong regional variations based on climate, social factors, and diffusion patterns. These are considered herein; a taxonomy of pasta types is presented and illustrated in a series of maps that show regional variations. The classification scheme divides pasta into eight classes based on morphology and, where appropriate, filling. These include the spaghetti and tubular families, pasta shells, ribbon forms, short pasta, very small or "micro-pasta" types, the ravioli family of filled pasta, and the dumpling family, which includes *gnocchi*. Three patterns of diffusion of pasta types are identified: by sea, usually from the Mezzogiorno and Sicily, locally through adjacent regions, and outwards from the main centers of adoption. Many dry pasta forms are native to the south and center of Italy, while filled pasta of the ravioli family predominates north of the Apennines. Changes in the geography of pasta are reviewed and analyzed in terms of the modern duality of culture and commercialism. **Key Words:** pasta, Italy, cultural geography, regional geography.

Meglio ch'a panza schiatta ca 'a roba resta.

Better that the belly burst than food be left on the table.

—Neapolitan proverb

Introduction: A Brief Historical Geography of Pasta

Legend has it that when Marco Polo returned to Venice from China in 1298 he brought with him the recipe for flour-based dough noodles that were to be cooked in boiling water and served with a condiment of savory sauce. But there is no clear evidence that pasta diffused across Italy from Venice (for locations of regions and places see Fig. 1): indeed, it may have diffused northwards from Sicily. Other sources (Marinetti 1930, cited in David 1963) attribute it to Teodoric of Ravenna, King of the Ostrogoths (circa A.D. 523), and still others to the Etruscans. In fact, frescoes of the fourth century B.C. in the Etruscan *Tomba dei Rilievi* near Cerveteri show the basic implements and ingredients of pasta-making. Moreover, paintings of banquets show the revelers apparently eating a form of lasagna (definitions of types of pasta are given in Table 1).

According to Anderson (1994, 75), the Romans did not continue this tradition, but Plotkin (1985, 100) noted that the ancestor of lasagne, *lagane*, were popular in ancient times. In his *Satiræ* (Book 1, VI), Horace described the

peasant's meal of a rustic vegetable soup (*pultes*) that contained thick strips of dried *lagane*. But Apicius, in *De Re Coquinaria*, gave careful instructions on the preparation of moist *lagane* and therein lies the distinction between fresh pasta, made with eggs and flour, which became a rich person's dish, and dried pasta, without eggs, which was the food of the common man (Miloni 1998).

The rise of pasta was a predictable development. In 70 B.C. wheat production in Sicily reached 250 million kilograms and importation of that grain to Rome by sea from all sources exceeded 400 million kilograms (Miloni 1998). Yet, despite its extended storage capacity, wheat grain was liable to be infested by fungi, molds, and parasites. For this reason, in A.D. 62 Nero was forced to decree that all the stocks of the Roman granaries be thrown into the River Tiber. The tradition of mixing wheat with water and drying the resulting dough may therefore have arisen as a means of prolonging the storage life of wheat and increasing its ease of transportation: it arrived in Rome and Naples already in this form and this gradually encouraged these centers to start their own production of pasta (Miloni 1998).

On the other hand, the Arab geographer Al-Adrisi wrote that the art of making spaghetti, or the thinner vermicelli, reached Sicily with the North African caravans in about A.D. 1100. On that island they found the essential requi-

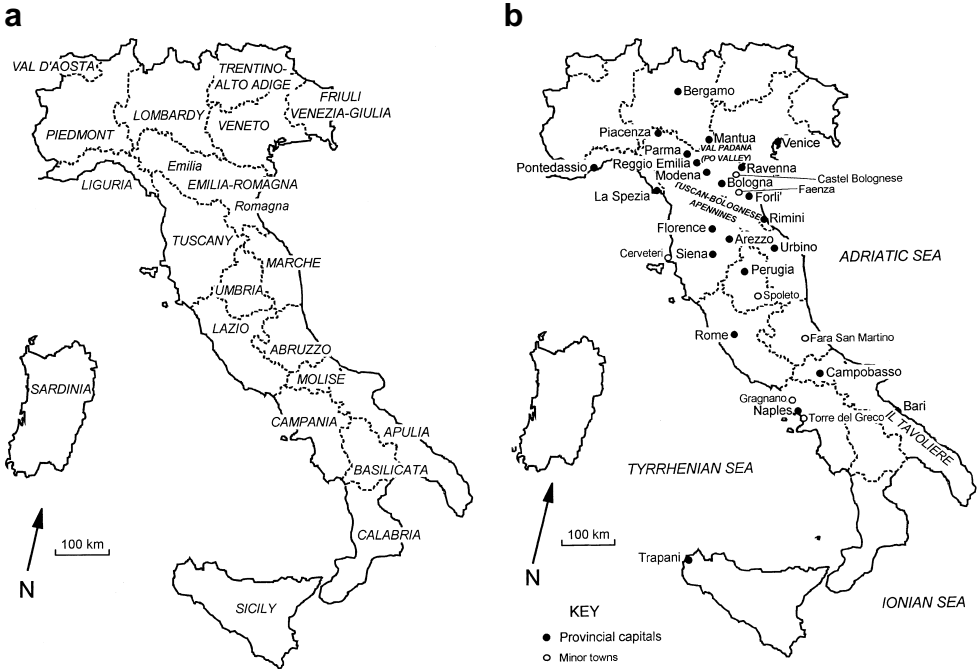


Figure 1: Location maps: (a) regions of Italy; (b) cities, towns and other places mentioned in the text.

sites: hard-grain semolina wheat, sweet water, and abundant sun and wind to dry the rolled-out product (Anon. 1992). Indeed, it is suggested that the word “maccheroni” is derived from the Sicilian *maccarruni* meaning “made into a dough by force” (Anon. 1992). In 1279 *macharonis (sic)* were recorded in a shipment from Sicily to Genoa. The Genoese, who were indefatigable traders, probably transported it around the peninsula and its use may have spread inland from the main ports.

According to Milioni (1998), pasta did not begin to evolve beyond vermicelli, gnocchi, and lasagne until the 1300s. Yet documents of the fifteenth century, such as Father Bartolomeo Secchi’s *De Honestâ Voluptate*, gave recipes for forms that were either long or hollow. Thus, there is no doubt that pasta was well established in Italy by the late Middle Ages and had begun to diversify. Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375) liked to eat it in a milk-based sauce (David 1963, 95) and he wrote in the *Decameron* of the imaginary land of Cockaigne where “there was a whole mountain of grated Parmesan cheese and on top were standing

people who did nothing but make macaroni and ravioli and cook them in capon broth” (Anderson 1994, 74).

Pasta’s great companion, the tomato (derived from its tropical ancestor *Lycopersicon esculentum*), was brought to Italy by the Spaniards and appears to have been grown in Siena in the 1560s and the Naples area from 1596, though it was initially used more as an ornamental plant, with high curiosity value, than as a source of food. Pasta did not attain its central importance in the Neapolitan diet until the seventeenth century, and tomato sauce did not become fashionable for another hundred years (Milioni 1998). The practice began in the western Sicilian port of Trapani, which may indicate that the idea was introduced from the western Mediterranean. In any case, it was well-established in Naples by the time that Vincenzo Corrado (1734–1836) wrote his compendium of recipes entitled *Il Cuoco Galante* (“The Gallant Cook”), though a recipe for vermicelli with tomato sauce was not published until 1839, in the *Cucina Casareccia in Dialetto Napoletano* (“Home Cooking in Neapolitan Dialect”), a solidly pa-

rochial work written by Ippolito Cavalcanti, Duke of Buonvicino (1787–1860).

When he liberated Naples in 1860, Garibaldi swore that maccheroni would be the force that united Italy. But instead of this generic form of *pasta secca* (dried pasta), the unifying force was to be the more specific form, spaghetti, which was perhaps the most amenable to mass production. When this took over at the end of the nineteenth century, Gragnano, near Naples, was established as the center of the nascent “pasta revolution,” in which grain from the Mezzogiorno (the south of Italy) was processed so that it could be eaten with a sauce made from that most southern of vegetables, the plum-shaped San Marzano tomato. The historic photographs of the Alinari brothers show strips of maccheroni being dried in the open air on long, bamboo poles outside a pasta factory in Torre Annunziata on the Bay of Naples, circa 1890 (Archivi Alinari 1984).

Hence, like pizza, which developed in Asia Minor and the Middle East as much as it did in Naples, pasta may have evolved in several countries independently, though it quickly established its centers of diffusion. Both foods served the vital and universal purpose of suppressing the appetite. This freed up the rich man’s palate so that he could concentrate on the pleasures of more delicate foods. Later, when living standards rose in the Industrial Revolution, it would save the poor man from gnawing pangs of hunger, but until then many poor people could only afford cornmeal and chestnut flour, not wheat flour, and a meat sauce or stuffing was an almost unattainable luxury (Kasper 1992, 72–73). But, though this simple food has since become ubiquitous, it is geographically diverse enough to reflect the extraordinarily variety of Italian culture itself.

Though Italy was finally unified in the 1860s, strong regional traditions continue to divide her. Like almost everything else Italian, the forms and shapes of pasta have strictly local origins (Hazelton 1978; Plotkin 1985). The paradox of an old country but a young nation has been reinforced by centuries of *campanilismo*, adherence to one’s own village, whose central point is the church campanile. Suspicion of the exotic is encapsulated in the old saying, still widely used, *moglie e bue dai paesi tuoi*, which freely translated means “get your oxen and your wife from where you’ve lived your

whole life.” Until very recently, the most pervasive form of such conservatism was that which related to food and dialect (hence the rich variety of local names for common species of pasta). Change has come only with the technologies of the second half of the 20th century: by promoting standardized speech, television has almost eliminated dialect, while the mechanization of food production has made local delicacies universal, if often debased, fare.

The following account offers a brief review of the literature on regional cultures of food. Next, it explores the regional geography of cuisine with specific reference to pasta in Italy. In order to make regional variations interpretable, a classification scheme is developed for the many types of pasta that can be identified. This is applied in such a way as to highlight geographical variations throughout the peninsula in gastronomy and its cultural and historical underpinnings. The last section assesses the impact on gastronomic traditions of modern changes in society and economy.

The Literature on the Regional Culture of Food

There is now a considerable literature on the geography, sociology, anthropology, and ethnology of food (Murcott 1988; Whit 1995; Cook and Crang 1996). It covers a very wide brief that includes famine and nutrition, agricultural change, and gender issues (Murcott 1983). In social anthropology, structuralist views of food habits based on interpretations of symbolism and meanings have now been largely superseded by materialist approaches that highlight the practical aspects (Murcott 1988). Sociologists, however, have only recently become interested in the culture of food (McIntosh 1996). Perhaps for this reason, social scientists have made little effort to study the culinary history of southern European countries (Mennell et al. 1992). Hence, the myth of the diffusion of pasta overland from China in the high Middle Ages was perpetuated by Goody (1982), Friedmann (1995), and Cook and Crang (1996).

Sociologists view the culture of food in relation to processes of differentiation and exclusion, as well as their opposites, assimilation and inclusion. The former allow groups of people to maintain their ethnic identities, while the

latter result in the dilution of cultures. Pitfalls are associated with both extremes, as complete assimilation would mean the disappearance of a cuisine, while complete separation would accord it ghetto status (McIntosh 1996). In this context, Van den Berghe (1984) argued that regionally distinctive food not only serves to integrate an ethnic group, but also helps to exclude non-members. He regarded ethnicity as *primordial* as well as *situational*, such that a distinctive cuisine reflects the ethnic group's long history of reciprocal relations in society. In spatial terms, Cook and Crang (1996) argued that distinctive styles in food can be considered in relation to their local setting, their "cultural biographies" (in other words, their histories of diffusion), and their historical roots.

Besides ethnicity, social stratification can be a major differentiating factor in food cultures (Mennell et al. 1992, 20–27). McIntosh (1996) suggested that the emergence during history of food traits that were differentiated by social class (the "high" cuisine of the gentry and the basic fare of peasants) has also helped to differentiate societies regionally. Thus, culinary traditions can be related to both ethnic grouping and the control and manipulation of class structures. Moreover, Wiegmann (1974) noted that exotic foods and the products of the rich person's table have only recently diffused down the social scale. However, Belmonte (1989) demonstrated in his fieldwork that class culture is not so relevant to the understanding of food traditions where the lower classes have generally been able to eat well.

Modern world culinary traditions must be seen against the background of changes in agricultural production, marketing and commerce, social behaviors, and food preparation habits (Fischler 1980). This has led to the potential breakdown of regional traditions into something that is spatially much more amorphous (Bell and Valentine 1977). However, as both Hägerstrand (1976) and Rogers (1983) noted, adoption and diffusion processes involving food are often slow. Moreover, according to Wiegmann (1974), class structures, morals, compatibility of diets, perceptions of what is acceptable, costs, and availabilities all act as barriers to diffusion. In short, many people remain conservative in their attitudes to food and prefer the familiar to the exotic. Indeed, Mennell (1985) suggested that conservatism in food

preferences has been common throughout history, for commensalism is a fundamental social ritual that combines sociality and dining, which are two of the most powerful reinforcers of behavioral patterns (Van den Berghe 1984). Moreover, in western European societies, food has traditionally been subject to powerful economic, social, and ecological constraints. Consumption has historically depended on a diversified system of domestic production which supported cultural and social patterns of eating that were rigid enough to border on the coercive (Fischler 1980). On the other hand, historically, both famine and plentiful harvests caused food innovations to spread more quickly, the former by force of desperation and the latter by increasing consumption (Wiegmann 1974).

Be that as it may, Italy has preserved its gastronomic traditions better than many countries which are in the throes of a similar process of modernization. The following section examines how that is so with respect to the language of pasta, the variety of shapes and forms that it takes, and the environment in which regional variations evolved.

Elements of a Regional Geography of Pasta

Language

Short of asking each household in Italy what the family tradition in pasta-making is, there is no way to establish precise regional boundaries of each species of pasta. In Urbino, for example, it is clear that one is being served an authentic local dish when it consists of the thick strips called *strozzapreti*, laced with an Emilian *ragù* (*ragù*). But further south in the Marche Region, the spaghetti-like *strozzapreti* become *strangolapreti* (see Fig. 2a) and, by the time one reaches Spoleto in Umbria, they have turned into the ribbon-shaped *strangozzi* (Fig. 2d). Traveling yet further south they undergo the fairly slight modification to *stringozzi* before disappearing altogether from the menu. To confuse the issue further, *gnocchi di patata* are sometimes also known as *strozzapreti* (Stefanile 1979, 16). These terms, incidentally, come from the verbs *strangolare* (to strangle) and *strozzare* (to throttle), indicating a form of pasta that is thick enough to pose problems for the windpipe, if not also the digestion. *Strozzapreti* literally means "strangle the priests," which is a

sort of reflection on the hearty appetite of the clergy, many of whom sport an exceedingly robust physique. It is also, perhaps, the echo of a subtle cry for independence: northern Marche and southern Romagna were for many years dominated by the temporal power of the Papacy, which by all accounts ruled with a rod of iron (Norwich 1982). Thus pasta “wittily expressed anticlerical sentiments without a word being spoken” (Kasper 1992, 72).

The pastas of the north and center of Italy exhibit a rich catalog of local variations. Many a dinner table has resounded to the inflamed passions of those who would distinguish the Marchean *vincisgrassi* from the Emilian *lasagne* (Fig. 2, Class 4) and those who would have it that they are the same thing. The origin of *tortelli di zucca*, sacks of pasta stuffed with pumpkin, is still regularly disputed by Mantovani, Modenesi, and Reggiani of Emilia-Romagna Region (Fig. 2, Class 7), and the purist might note a slight difference in the way the pumpkin mixture is spiced (with ginger, nutmeg, or marmalade) between each of these cities. But when one retreats into the Apennine mountains south of Bologna, which were once great bastions of poverty, the filling dwindles to an austere purée of potato. Furthermore, as if to assert some form of independence, the small sachets of *anolini* are circular in Piacenza and semi-circular in Parma (washed down, perhaps, with a glass of an unfiltered red wine from northern Romagna called *Clinton* after the North American grapes from which it is pressed).

Shape

It is not necessary for the *type* of pasta to change for it to be imbued with regional distinctiveness, for different strains of dialect readily achieve that. Consider the hollow pasta known as *cavatelli*. This eminently southern variety is made by rolling the dough into round strips with the diameter of a pencil. These are then cut into pieces 4–5 cm long and gently pressed with the balls of the fingers, so that they form open, ribbed “shells.” The Spanish inflection in dialects that have a Neapolitan root transforms the name into *cavatielle*, while the more clipped nasal sound of the interior near the isoglossa with Apulian dialect renders it *cavatedde* (the second “e” having a Germanic rather than Latin pronunciation, perhaps a reflection of the presence of Frederick II and his Swabian

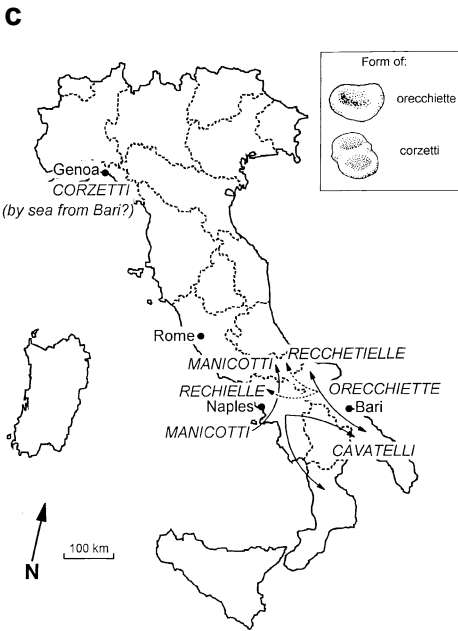
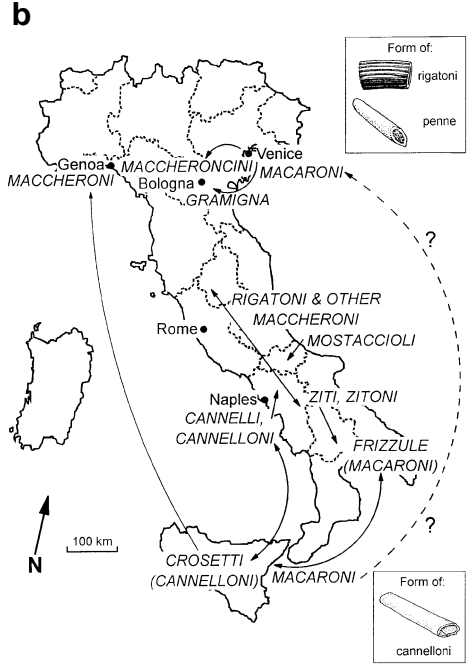
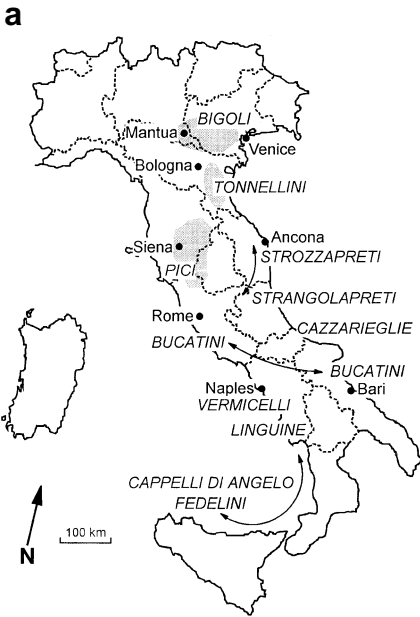
troops in the 1200s). Somewhere between the hinterlands of Naples and Bari the compromise, *cavatiedde*, is heard (see Fig. 2, Class 3; Lombardi and Mastropaolo 1986).

Food is a serious matter in Italy. Social eating is one of the bases of Italian culture and is the subject of much dedicated research and debate (for example, see Alessi 1994). The canons of Italian cookery have been laid down in such classic works as Ada Boni’s *Il talismano della felicità* (“The Talisman of Happiness,” Boni 1994), *Il cucchiaino d’argento* (“The Silver Spoon,” Anon. 1994) and Pellegrino Artusi’s famous *L’arte di mangiare bene* (“The Art of Eating Well”). Artusi (1897, 111th ed. 1991) gave precise dimensions for key types of pasta: for instance, diameters of 6.5 cm for *cappelletti* (p. 43) and 3.7 cm for *tortellini (agnolotti)*, both to be cooked in broth; 2.0 cm for *cannelli* (p. 52) and 8.2 cm for *crescioni (tortelli)* (p. 52). Moreover, the Accademia Italiana della Cucina has defined the correct width of a tagliatella as 8 mm (1/12,270th the height of the Torre degli Asinelli in Bologna) and its proper thickness as 0.6 mm. An official reference tagliatella, cast in solid gold, reposes in the city hall at Bologna (Kasper 1992, 78–79).

Environment

However it may have been introduced into Italy, there is a fair element of geographical determinism about where pasta is produced. It is no accident that the best pasta comes from the areas of richest agriculture, where climate is moderately dry (500–800 mm of precipitation per year) and soils are marly loams or fertile alluvia. A distinction can be drawn between the south—the rolling plains of the Apulian Tavoliere and interior Sicily—and north—the flat, misty floodplains of the Padania, the lower Po Valley. In the Mezzogiorno durum semolina wheat produces a hard, brittle yellow pasta that is high in protein and low in starch and desiccates well in the summer drought. Durum wheat will not thrive in the Padania Plain and hence fresh pasta, often with the addition of eggs, is the speciality of Emilia-Romagna (Paglia 1959). There it is highly prized: the most authentic Bolognese tortellini are also known as *umbellichi sacri*, sacred navels.

Local differences apart, there have long been gastronomic connections between north and south. For example, the first pasta factory in



Bologna was inaugurated on 20 November 1586. Initially, it served to introduce the vermicelli, lasagne, and maccheroni of Rome, Naples, and Venice to what would become the

gastronomic capital of the peninsula (Kasper 1992, 73). By the time of Napoleon, the famous duality had appeared between the baked pasta of Campania and that of Emilia and Romagna.

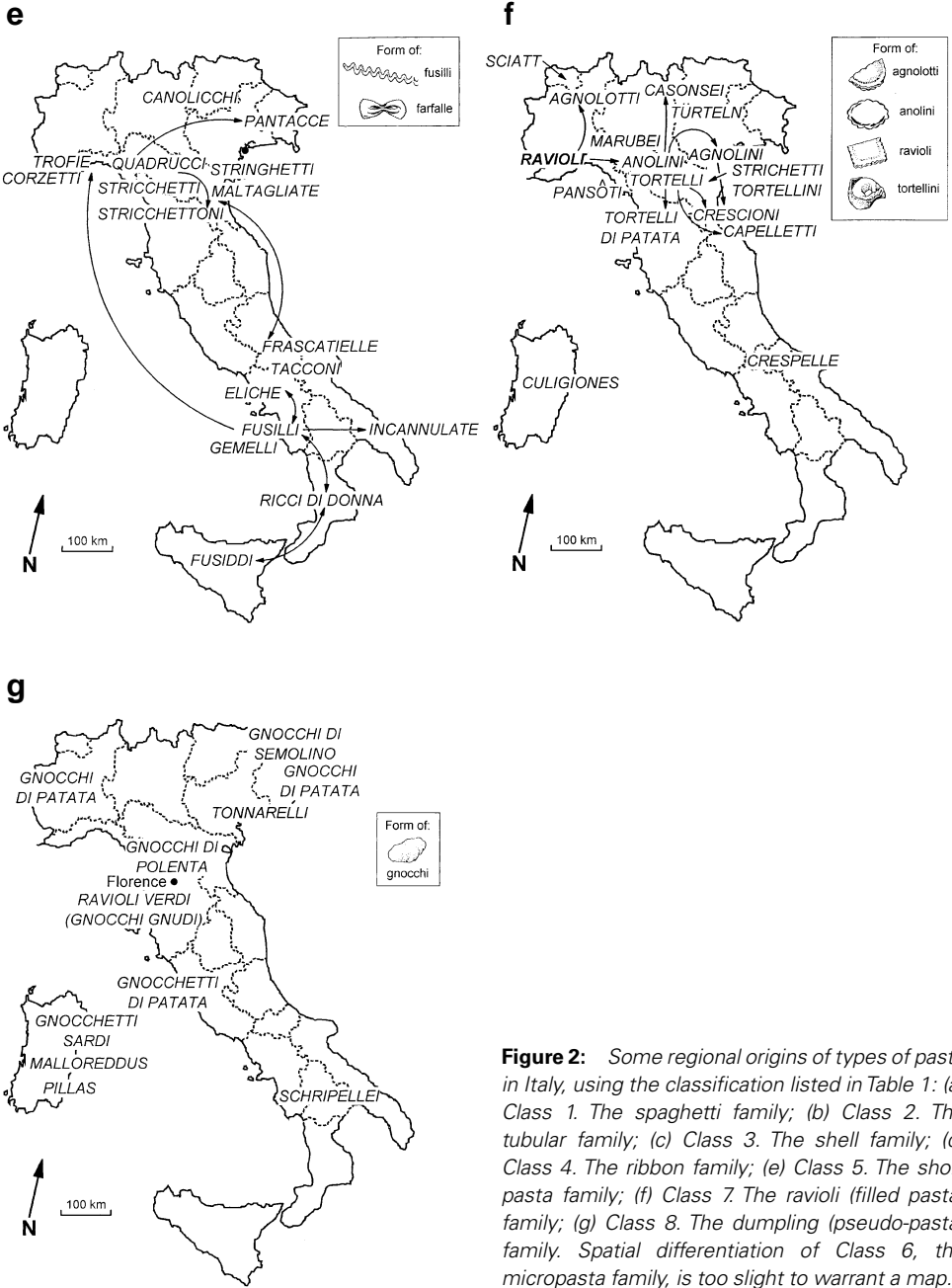


Figure 2: Some regional origins of types of pasta in Italy, using the classification listed in Table 1: (a) Class 1. The spaghetti family; (b) Class 2. The tubular family; (c) Class 3. The shell family; (d) Class 4. The ribbon family; (e) Class 5. The short pasta family; (f) Class 7. The ravioli (filled pasta) family; (g) Class 8. The dumpling (pseudo-pasta) family. Spatial differentiation of Class 6, the micropasta family, is too slight to warrant a map.

Marie Louise, Duchess of Parma, is thought to have introduced the baked lasagne to Emilia from Naples (Stefanile and Oliviero 1993). The dish soon lost the southern blush of toma-

toes and garlic in favor of a rich garnishing of *ragù*, with that robust meaty perfume that so tantalizingly pervades the foyers of northern opera houses during the interval.

Taxonomy and Regionalization

Pasta is defined as a simple dough of durum semola wheat and water, or soft grain wheat, eggs, and water, that usually receives its primary cooking by being boiled in salty water. It may be cooked fresh (*pasta fresca*) or allowed to dry for the purposes of conservation (*pasta secca*). In the Mezzogiorno it is often given the generic name *maccheroni* (or *maccheroni*), which according to Anderson (1994, 75) comes from the dialect verb *maccare*, to squash or flatten (i.e., the dough), though according to Plotkin (1985, 101) it is instead a Venetian term for *gnocchi* (dumplings).

Anderson (1994, 72–73) proposed a classification of *pasta secca* into long (e.g., spaghetti), short (e.g., penne) or miniscule (pastina), solid or hollow (the former rounded or flat and the latter empty or stuffed), and with a smooth or ribbed texture. It can be served drained as *pasta asciutta* or in a broth (*in brodo*). However, he did not develop these ideas into a full-scale classification of regional types. Other authors (e.g., Plotkin 1985) have been content to list the names and forms of pasta without classifying them.

Methodology

As far as I am aware, no attempt has been made to classify types of Italian pasta comprehensively and investigate their geographical origins since the work of Vincenzo Agnoletti in 1832, who listed 129 types. Discussions of pasta in the books by Artusi (1991) and Plotkin (1985) are incomplete. I therefore compiled the classification shown in Table 1 on the basis of surveys of gastronomic and other literature in Italian and English, and in merit of 25 years of travel, during which I visited all 103 provinces of Italy and made notes on local culture, dialect, and traditions, dined in restaurants and private homes, and observed the making and selling of pasta.

Taxonomy was a necessary prelude to examining the regional variations. The first task was to list all types of pasta that could be discovered. These amounted to 160, though it is probable that others exist and that some names have disappeared over time (indeed some sources refer to more than 300 distinctive types). I excluded names that had a purely commercial resonance and no apparent local or na-

Table 1 A Morphological Classification of Italian Pasta

(1) The spaghetti family:In decreasing order of thickness:

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| <i>pici</i> | thick as a pencil, southern Tuscany, northern Lazio |
| <i>strozzapreti</i> | thick as a pencil, more irregular than <i>pici</i> , Marche |
| <i>strangolapreti</i> | alternative name for <i>strozzapreti</i> , Marche and Umbria |
| <i>bucatini</i> | fat spaghetti, Lazio and Puglia |
| <i>lingue di passero</i> | "sparrows' tongues," slightly thicker than <i>linguine</i> , southern Italy |
| <i>linguine</i> | flattened large diameter spaghetti, Campania |
| <i>perciatelli spaghetti</i> | thick spaghetti, central Italy |
| <i>bigoli (bigoi)</i> | all Italy ("worms") long, hand-made spaghetti, Veneto and Mantua |
| <i>cazzarieglie</i> | match-like, Molise |
| <i>tonnellini</i> | match-like, Romagna |
| <i>spaghettini</i> | thin spaghetti, all Italy |
| <i>vermicelli</i> | very thin spaghetti, Naples (Campania), Sicily |
| <i>capellini</i> | extremely thin spaghetti, all Italy |
| <i>fedelini (fidelini)</i> | (from <i>fedele</i> , faithful, or <i>filo</i> , thread or wire) spaghetti-like strands as thin as <i>capellini</i> , southern Italy |
| <i>capelli di angelo</i> | "angel's hair" (or <i>capalvenere</i> , "hair of Venus"), the thinnest of all pasta, southern Italy |

(2) The tubular family:In decreasing order of diameter:

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| <i>cannelloni</i> | very wide, Campania |
| <i>cannelli</i> | 2 cm wide, Campania and all-Italy |
| <i>crosetti</i> | <i>cannelloni</i> made with semolina, Sicily |
| <i>rigatoni</i> | wide, short and ribbed, central and southern Italy |
| <i>tortiglioni</i> | similar to <i>rigatoni</i> , but with spiral ribbing, all Italy |
| <i>ziti</i> | as for <i>rigatoni</i> , southern Italy |
| <i>zitoni</i> | very long <i>ziti</i> for baked pasta dishes, southern Italy |
| <i>candele</i> | slightly larger <i>zitoni</i> , southern Italy |
| <i>penne lisce</i> | smooth, cross-cut tubes, all Italy |
| <i>penne rigate</i> | ribbed, cross-cut tubes, all Italy |
| <i>pennette</i> | smaller in diameter than <i>penne</i> , all Italy |
| <i>perciatelli</i> | a form of <i>penne</i> or <i>ziti</i> , southern Italy |
| <i>mostaccioli</i> | local name for <i>penne</i> , Umbria |
| <i>macaroni</i> | thin tubes, Sicily and the Veneto |
| <i>maccheroni</i> | thin tubes, central and southern Italy (the word can also be used to refer to all forms of long, hollow noodles) |
| <i>mezzani</i> | medium-sized <i>maccheroni</i> of varied length, all Italy |
| <i>gomiti</i> | ("elbows") all Italy |
| <i>frizzone</i> | <i>maccheroni</i> , Basilicata |
| <i>maccheroncini</i> | little tubes, Emilia-Romagna and elsewhere |
| <i>gramigna</i> | ("little weeds") very slender tubes of pasta, Emilia-Romagna |

(3) The shell family:

| | |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>chioccioline</i> | shells, all Italy |
| <i>conchiglie</i> | shells, all Italy |
| <i>conchiglioni</i> | large shells, southern Italy |

(Continued)

Table 1 A Morphological Classification of Italian Pasta (Continued)

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <i>manicotti</i> | large shells, Naples (Campania) |
| <i>cavatelli</i> | made with the imprint of the tips of the fingers, southern Italy |
| <i>orecchiette</i> | "little ears," Apulia |
| <i>recchietelle</i> | local name for orecchiette, Campobasso (Molise) |
| <i>rechielle</i> | local name for orecchiette, Naples (Campania) |
| <i>rechietelle</i> | local name for orecchiette, Naples (Campania) |
| <i>corzetti</i> | "figures-of-eight" with the form of a coin once used in the Republic of Genoa, Liguria |
| (4) The ribbon family: | |
| <i>pasta alla chitarra</i> | pasta dough put through a mandoline, Abruzzo |
| <i>crioli</i> | local name for pasta alla chitarra, Molise |
| <i>fettuccine</i> | 1/2-cm wide strips, central Italy (Umbria, Lazio, Abruzzo, Molise) |
| <i>sagne</i> | fettuccine 5 cm long, Molise |
| <i>bavette</i> | a form of fettuccine, Liguria (see no. 1, above) |
| <i>pizzoccheri</i> | fettuccine made with buckwheat flour, Val d'Aosta |
| <i>strangozzi</i> | ribbon-shaped fettuccine, Spoleto (Umbria) |
| <i>stringozzi</i> | local name for strangozzi, parts of Umbria |
| <i>paglia e fieno</i> | "straw and grass," egg and spinach fettuccine, Tuscan-Bolognese Apennines, Liguria |
| <i>tagliatelle</i> | ribbons of egg pasta (from <i>tagliare</i> , to cut), Emilia, Liguria |
| <i>tagliarielle</i> | local name for tagliatelle, Molise |
| <i>taglioline</i> | egg pasta, thinner ribbons than tagliatelle, Emilia-Romagna |
| <i>nastroni</i> | large tagliatelle, Florence, Tuscany |
| <i>strette</i> | local name for tagliolini, Bologna (Romagna) |
| <i>trenette</i> | ribbon-shaped pasta similar to <i>linge di passero</i> and <i>bavette</i> , Liguria |
| <i>tagliarine (taglierini)</i> | thin strips, northeast Adriatic area |
| <i>tajarin</i> | <i>taglerine</i> of Piedmont |
| <i>bassotti</i> | hair-thin taglierini of egg pasta, Romagna |
| <i>garganelli</i> | pasta pressed through the comb of a hemp loom, Castel Bolognese (Romagna) |
| <i>strisce</i> | strips of pasta, Tuscany |
| <i>lagane</i> | 1 cm-wide strips, Basilicata |
| <i>pappardelle</i> | 1 1/2-cm wide irregular strips, Siena, Arezzo (southern Tuscany) |
| <i>lasagne</i> | 8–10 cm wide strips, Emilia-Romagna (egg pasta), Campania, Calabria, Puglia |
| <i>lasagne festonate</i> | <i>lasagne</i> with curled edges (also known as <i>lasagne ricce</i> , "curled lasagne," or <i>reginelle</i>) |
| <i>lasagnette</i> | small lasagne |
| <i>lasagnole</i> | Tuscan form of lasagne, Florence |
| <i>vincisgrassi</i> | a form of lasagne al forno, Marche |
| <i>testaroli</i> | flat squares cut from a rolled-out round of dough, La Spezia |

(Continued)

Table 1 A Morphological Classification of Italian Pasta (Continued)

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>tripoline</i> | thin strips of <i>pasta al forno</i> with one curled edge, southern Italy |
| <i>malfadine</i> | thin strips of pasta with two curled edges, southern Italy |
| (5) The short pasta family: | |
| <i>cannolicchi</i> | short pasta, north Lombardy, Trentino Alto-Adige |
| <i>quadrucchi</i> | (or <i>quadretti</i>) squares of egg pasta, Emilia-Romagna |
| <i>maltagliati</i> | rolled up triangles of egg pasta, Emilia-Romagna |
| <i>tondarelli</i> | finely sliced tiny disks of egg pasta, Abruzzo |
| <i>pantacce</i> | diamond-shaped, northeast Italy |
| <i>pantacelle</i> | diamond-shaped, northeast Italy |
| <i>tacconi</i> | diamonds as big as palm of hand, Abruzzo and Molise |
| <i>pacche</i> | see <i>tacconi</i> , Molise |
| <i>paccozze</i> | see <i>tacconi</i> , Molise |
| <i>taccozzelle</i> | small diamonds, Molise |
| <i>farfalle</i> | butterfly or bow-tie shape, all Italy |
| <i>farfalline</i> | small farfalle (or <i>farfallette</i>), all Italy (<i>farfalloni</i> , large <i>farfalle</i>) |
| <i>stricchetti</i> | butterflies or bow-ties of egg pasta, Emilia-Romagna |
| <i>stricchettoni</i> | a larger form of <i>stricchetti</i> , Romagna |
| <i>stringhetti</i> | <i>stricchetti</i> cut diagonally before being pinched at the center, central Romagna |
| <i>fusilli</i> | spirals, southern Italy |
| <i>eliche</i> | larger spirals, Campania |
| <i>turcinateddi</i> | <i>fusilli (fusiddi)</i> of Sicily |
| <i>ricci di donna</i> | Calabria |
| <i>incannulate</i> | Apulia |
| <i>trofie</i> | spiral-shaped short pasta, Liguria |
| <i>gemelli</i> | double twists of pasta, Campania |
| <i>roselline</i> | pasta roses, Romagna |
| <i>frascatielle</i> | irregular shapes, Molise |
| (6) The micropasta family: | |
| <i>pastina</i> | tiny shapes, all Italy |
| <i>malfattini</i> | grains of pasta, Emilia-Romagna |
| <i>semini</i> | "little seeds" (<i>semi di melone</i> , melon seeds; <i>semi di cicoria</i> , chicory seeds), all Italy |
| <i>stellette</i> | "little stars," all Italy, also known as <i>stelline</i> |
| <i>ditali</i> | ("thimbles") small, short tubes, also <i>ditalini</i> (smaller) and <i>ditali rigati</i> (ribbed), southern Italy |
| <i>cannulicchi</i> | Sicilian <i>ditali</i> |
| <i>lumachine</i> | curved <i>ditali</i> |
| <i>margherite</i> | tiny "daisies," all Italy |
| <i>sorpresine</i> | "little surprises," all Italy |
| <i>anelli</i> | small rings (<i>anellini</i> , tiny rings), all Italy |
| <i>pepe bucato</i> | tiny tubes with a thin hole in the middle, all Italy |
| <i>perline</i> | tiny shells, all Italy |
| <i>quadrucchi</i> | tiny squares, all Italy |
| (7) The ravioli (filled pasta) family: | |
| <u>"Sachet":</u> | |
| <i>ravioli</i> | filled pasta "sachets," Liguria, Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna (originally from Genoa) |

(Continued)

Table 1 A Morphological Classification of Italian Pasta (Continued)

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>raviolini</i> | small ravioli, Liguria, Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna |
| <i>agnolotti</i> | small "sachets" of pasta larger than ravioli, Val d'Aosta, Piedmont, northern Emilia |
| <i>crepelle</i> | filled egg pasta, Molise (the name is also used for crêpes in Florence) |
| <i>culingiones</i> | (or <i>culurzones</i>) ravioli with spinach and cheese filling, Sardinia |
| <i>bombe</i> (archaic) | ravioli stuffed with cheese, Bologna (Romagna) |
| <i>bombolline</i> (archaic) | small "bombe," Bologna (Romagna) |
| <i>cuzzetielle</i> | ravioli, Molise |
| <i>laianelle</i> | ravioli, Molise |
| <i>sciatt</i> | cheese-filled pasta, Valtellina |
| <i>türteln</i> | ravioli filled with spinach, cabbage or sauerkraut, Dolomites |
| <i>tortelli</i> | ravioli "sachets," Emilia-Romagna |
| <i>tortelli d'erbette</i> | rectangular, stuffed with greens and ricotta |
| <i>tortelli di patata</i> | rectangular, stuffed with mashed potato, Tuscan-Bolognese Apennines |
| <i>tortelli di zucca</i> | large ravioli filled with pumpkin, Mantua (Lombardy) |
| <i>tortelloni</i> | large tortelli usually filled with cheese, Emilia-Romagna |
| <i>caramelle</i> | (or <i>tortelli con la coda</i> , "tortelli with tails," in dialect <i>turtei cu la cua</i>) tortelli with the ends twisted to look like wrapped candy, Emilia |
| Circular: | |
| <i>anolini di Parma</i> (<i>anolen</i>) | small disks or half-moons (Parma) |
| <i>anolini di Piacenza</i> (<i>anvein</i>) | circular ravioli, Piacenza (Lombardy) |
| <i>agnolini</i> | anolini of Mantua |
| <i>creoncini</i> | circular tortelli filled with spinach, Emilia-Romagna |
| <i>marubei</i> | anolini stuffed with sausage meat and cut with crimped edges (Piacenza) |
| <i>marubini</i> | anolini of Cremona |
| <i>pansòti</i> | "pot-bellies," filled with spinach and cheese, eastern Liguria |
| <i>panzarotti</i> | "broken-bellies," filled with mozzarella cheese, Apulia |
| Semi-circular: | |
| <i>anolini di Parma</i> | semi-circular, folded ravioli, Parma (Emilia—see above) |
| <i>casonsei</i> | crenscentic, filled with cheese etc., Brescia and Bergamo in Lombardy |
| <i>casumziei</i> | <i>casonsei</i> (or <i>casonziei</i>) of the Dolomites |
| Crimped and Tied: | |
| <i>cappellacci</i> | "old hats," stuffed with pumpkin, Emilia-Romagna |
| <i>cappelletti di Romagna</i> | (sometimes known as <i>orecchioni</i> , "big ears"), hat-shape formed from a circle, Romagna (special versions exist in Faenza, Forlì, Rimini and Ravenna) |
| <i>cappellini</i> | see cappelletti |
| <i>tortellini</i> | egg pasta, crimped, folded and filled, Bologna (Romagna) |
| <i>strichetti</i> | local name for tortellini, Province of Bologna (Romagna) |

(Continued)

Table 1 A Morphological Classification of Italian Pasta (Continued)**(8) The dumpling (pseudo-pasta) family:**

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <i>gnocchi di patata</i> | bullet-sized potato pasta (also sometimes known as <i>cicche</i> , "sweetmeats"), Piedmont, Veneto, Rome |
| <i>gnocchetti di patata</i> | small gnocchi, Rome |
| <i>gnocchetti sardi</i> | smaller gnocchi, more regular in form, Sardinia |
| <i>canèderli</i> (<i>knödel</i>) | boiled dumpling the size of a gnocco, Trentino |
| <i>malloreddus</i> | flour and cheese gnocchi with saffron, Sardinia (known in parts of the island as <i>maccarrones caidos</i>) |
| <i>gnocchi di semolino</i> | small circles of semolina, Friuli Venezia-Giulia |
| <i>pillas</i> | semolina gnocchi, Sardinia |
| <i>gnocchi di polenta</i> | small circles of cornmeal, Tuscany |
| <i>ravioli verdi</i> | ricotta and spinach dumplings, Tuscany |
| <i>gnocchi gnudi</i> | same as ravioli verdi, Tuscany |
| <i>tonnarelli</i> | pasta that is as thick as it is broad, northeast Italy |
| <i>schripellei</i> | fried dough crêpes (known as <i>schripelle</i> or <i>schripedde</i> in Basilicata), southern Italy |

tional cultural underpinnings. I also made a distinction between slight local variations in name, given in parenthesis in the table, and small variations in both name and substance, which justified a separate entry in the table: for example, the *casonzei* of Bergamo are not necessarily identical to the *casumziei* of the Dolomites further north (Table 1 and Figure 2, Class 7), where local cheese may be used to fill these ravioli and pieces of *speck* ham may be added to the filling.

The next step was to organize the list into a series of categories based on shape and form. Common usage defines long cylindrical shapes, whether solid or hollow, as "macaroni" while "lasagne" refers to all flattened pasta shapes, including tagliatelle and fettuccine. However, a more sophisticated taxonomy is required. I began with the more ubiquitous, "classic" forms of solid and hollow *pasta secca*, which I called the "spaghetti" and "tubular" families, respectively (see Table 1, Classes 1 and 2). I then added the "shell family" (Class 3), which consists of pasta whose origins lie in a simple pressure of the thumb on a rolled out piece of dough. This is followed by what I have termed the "ribbon family" (Class 4), consisting of pasta that is first rolled flat and then cut into long strips of various sizes and forms. A variant of this is the "short pasta family" (Class 5), in which the strips are no more than a few centi-

meters long and the scraps of pasta may be twisted. I gave the name “micropasta family” (Class 6) to the tiny pieces of *pasta secca* of various shapes that are usually served in broth. *Pasta fresca* with a filling of cheese, meat, or vegetables I termed the “ravioli family” (Class 7). Finally, there remained a heterogeneous group of pasta types, such as *gnocchi*, which exist at the margins of what can be classified as pasta, and I termed these the “dumpling family,” or “pseudo-pasta” (Class 8).

Though some of the types of pasta have no very clear regional or local origin, and hence can be described as “all-Italian,” many are native to particular places and areas. Given the difficulty of plotting all of these on maps, especially where there is uncertainty about the regional boundaries of their provenance, I plotted them selectively with respect to the eight classes in order to illustrate the principal patterns of geographical variation and, where appropriate, the likely paths of diffusion. The latter must remain hypothetical, as few Italians will admit to having received a dearly-held local tradition from another place and few records exist from the distant past when the main traditions were spread.

Regional Variations and Spatial Patterns

A number of spatial regularities can be observed. To begin with, the spaghetti family (Fig. 2, Class 1) is widely distributed throughout peninsular Italy. Some types, such as *bucatini*, have diffused without changing their name, or with minor changes, such as *strozzapreti* and its more southerly synonym, *strangolapreti*, as noted above. Others are similar but have assumed different names in different places, such as *vermicelli* in Naples and *fedelini* in Sicily. Several regional varieties have expanded their area of influence but not extended beyond it, such as *pici* in southern Tuscany, *bigoli* in the eastern Padania, and *tonnellini* in Romagna (see Fig. 1 for locational information).

Tubular pasta (Fig. 2, Class 2) is also widespread in origin and, like the spaghetti family, is decidedly non-Alpine. It is probable that sea trade diffused the generic type *maccheroni* (or *macaroni*) from Sicily to the principal ports of Italy and that is why the name is so widespread, though in the southern region of Basilicata it is replaced by *frizzule* and in central Italy *rigatoni* become the dominant kind of *maccheroni*. In

times past this form of pasta may have diffused into the Po Valley from the port of Venice, though by the time it had reached Emilia the tubes had shrunk and become *maccheroncini*. Instead in Sicily they grew large and became *crosetti*, assuming the more common name of *cannelloni* in Naples, which had long had cultural ties with Sicily.

The shell family (Fig. 2, Class 3) is heavily localized in the Apennine south of the peninsula. *Orecchiette* probably diffused outward from Apulia, as they are still most closely associated with that region, while *cavatelli* appear to have diffused southwards from Campania, the region of Naples. The one anomaly is the occurrence of a shell pasta in Genoa, an innovation which was probably brought northwards from the southern ports with which the Genoese traded. But the shells of Genoa, *corzetti*, have assumed a strong local pattern, as their form is based on a coin which once circulated when that city was a maritime republic.

Ribbon pasta (Fig. 2, Class 4) is one of the most diverse types with many regional variations. The Campanian and Roman *lasagne* became *sagne* when they diffused south and eastward into the Apennine hinterland, in parts of which they retained their ancient name of *laganae*. Cut more finely and diffused northwards they became *fettuccine*, mingling with *tagliatelle*, which diffused outward from the main centers of production of *pasta fresca* in the Val Padana. The adoption of *tagliatelle* by the people of the northern Apennines saw them transformed into *paglia e fieno*, “hay and straw,” by adding spinach purée to half of the egg pasta so that the strips were green as well as golden yellow. Once established in the Po Valley, *lasagne* appear to have diffused north-westward into Piedmont Region, where they are known as *testaroli*, southeastward into the Marche Region, where they become *vincisgrassi* (“let the fat win!”) and southward into Tuscany, where they have assumed the name *lasagnole*.

Regional names for short pasta (Fig. 2, Class 5) are notably absent from central Italy, though in the commercial age this type now thrives there. Spiral types assume several names in the South: *elicbe* and *fusilli* in Campania, the dialectical variation *fusiddi* in Sicily, *ricci di donna* (“women’s curls”) in Calabria, and *incannulate* in the heel of Italy. The direction of diffusion is unknown and could have been either north-

ward or southward (it was certainly the latter in the case of Ligurian *trofie*). Pasta squares (*quadrucci*) developed in the upper Val Padana, and represent a variant on the theme of lasagne. An interesting correspondence exists between the irregular forms known as *maltagliate* in Romagna and *frascatielle* in Molise Region, several hundred kilometers further south. It is not clear how this arose, though possibly either by coincidence or through the migration of people from the south to the north.

The micropasta family (Class 6 in Table 1) has not been plotted, as it shows little regional variation. It is probable that most very small pasta is an artefact of mass production in modern age, before which it would have been cut without particular reference to shape and form.

With the exception of *crepelle* in the central-southern Apennines and *culigiones* in Sardinia, filled pasta (Fig. 2, Class 7) is a northern phenomenon. Variations on a theme can be seen in the types of *agnolini*, *anolini*, and *agnolotti* that abound throughout the Po Valley and likewise with the kinds of *tortelli*. In this respect, the differences almost certainly reflect the desire of each city-region to have its own distinctive gastronomy, an extension of the rivalry that existed when they were remarkably self-contained fiefdoms. The Alpine *casonsei* and *türteln* and the Apennine potato-filled *tortelli di patata* represent lateral diffusion with respect to the main Po Valley axis (i.e., north-south rather than northwest-southeast). In each of these cases the montane variety of filled pasta is stodgier than that of the lowlands, which is a reflection of the harsher life of the mountains and the need for a filling meal in times of cold weather. In this respect the last family, dumplings or pseudo-pasta (Fig. 2, Class 8), is also strongly related to the highlands—of interior Sardinia, of the Alps, and of the northern and southern Apennines. Again it reflects the starchiness of the peasant diet, though the tradition of small *gnocchetti* in the sophisticated *trattorie* of Rome is a curious exception to this rule.

In summary, there appear to be three patterns of diffusion of pasta types: by sea, usually from the Mezzogiorno and Sicily, locally through adjacent regions, and outwards from centers of adoption. In many cases names change, as do forms and, where appropriate,

fillings. This undoubtedly reflects both the inventiveness of local cooks and the desire to have a distinctive gastronomy that one can be proud of. Indeed, the variations on a theme that characterize types of filled pasta in the Po Valley seem to indicate an intense local rivalry amounting to each city's desire to claim the type of pasta for its own. The other source of variation is linguistic, in that dialect versions of the original names, or dialect words—in essence nicknames—that suggest the form of the pasta abound in the catalog of local variations. On a more extreme level local names reflect the German influence in Alto Adige and the Latino-Spanish roots of the Sard language in Sardinia. In this way an imported food has gradually become a local tradition many times over.

Present and Future Perspectives

The future of Italian pasta looks very different from its past. In the first place, massive increases in geographical connectivity have freed it from its regional dependence. It is the victim, or beneficiary, depending on how one views it, of what Thrift (1993, 97) calls “the new regional geography of mobility,” made up of “societies of control in which ultra-rapid forms of free-floating strategies of control modulate people.” According to McIntosh (1996, 52) the process began in the 1950s and 1960s when Italian regional cuisine was “discovered” by foreigners who had become disaffected with French cookery. Italians then forced the pace under the impetus of increased mobility and national tourism. This led to a more general diffusion of knowledge, and the “discovery” has gone on apace in the backwaters of the Mezzogiorno right up to present times.

Mennell et al. (1992) attributed the impact of new food technologies to three factors: the trend towards increasing urbanization, which isolated populations from the land, the modern reorganization of trade networks, and the industrialization of food production. As a result, the modern food industry is hyperspecialized: rather than the traditional local sources, most of what one eats now comes from elsewhere. The anthropologist Fischler (1980) saw this, not as the perversion of nature by culture, but as a breakdown in the “fit” between human biology and environment, which he meant equally in terms of the physical anthropology

of the body (obesity and other such negative traits) and socioculturally. Cook and Crang (1996) saw this “decontextualization” of foods as a schism between production and consumption on the basis of the increasingly fragmented and far-flung processes of growing, transporting, storing, and marketing food. However, in Italy the processes of change are by no means complete. Hence, much of the recent work on food geographies and sociologies as yet offers little insight there, because it deals with the modern *mobility* of food rather than its geographical *stability*.

Thus the best dried pasta still comes from the original centers of excellence, especially Torre del Greco in the Naples area, Fara San Martino in the Abruzzi, and Perugia in Umbria. Despite this, the manufactories are open as never before to importation of grain from abroad, and in terms of exports they are facing increasing competition from other countries, especially the United States. Emilia-Romagna has countered this with a policy of integrating its food production resources and emphasizing their high quality in order to create what has come to be known as “Food Valley,” in imitation of California’s “Silicon Valley.” Though small, local *pastifici* have sprung up in response to the demand for high quality “artisan-made” pasta (especially in Umbria and Apulia Regions), many other producers have been taken over by the multinationals, such as Barilla, SpA, and their production has been standardized. As national consumption, which peaked in the 1960s, has leveled off at about 25 kg per person per annum, further expansion in production is only likely to come from aggressive expansion of export markets, if this can be achieved (Anderson 1994).

Though this process may seem to be the death knell of regional distinctiveness, not all sociologists agree that modern consumption estranges and alienates. For example, McIntosh (1996) argued that the challenge of the food industry has been to meet the demand for nostalgia by offering tradition, family warmth and cohesion, local color, craftsmanship, and healthiness. Van den Berghe (1984) took a positive view of the impact of urbanization on food traditions. He observed that ethnic cuisine is likely to be a survivor of the urban melting-pot, which serves both to revitalize culinary traditions, by allowing them to be recreated and re-

interpreted, and to turn them into a form of cultural emissary for the ethnic group that originated them. Hence, he argued, food both reinforces ethnic ties and bridges ethnic divides (Van den Berghe 1984, 393). On the other hand, Baudrillard (1981) suggested that the forces of capitalist expansion deliberately weaken the links between social structure and culture in order to increase profits. Hence the multinational food corporations deal in symbols more than they sell products. Marxists adopt a more extreme attitude and call this “consumer fetishism” (Jhally 1987; Cooke and Crang 1996 referred to it as “commodity fetishism”). But whatever it is, there is no doubt that modern commercial culture calls into question the validity of regional traditions and usages. Italians may be moving in the direction of their cousins across the Atlantic: Goode et al. (1984) found that Italian Americans adhere to traditional food menus only on certain days of the week and when they can afford the time to appreciate them.

Thus, television advertising, the growth of literacy, and the universal broadening of tastes have made what were once strictly regional delicacies standard fare many hundreds of kilometers from their points of origin. Efficient marketing and distribution have made the products widely available. Competition among manufacturers has led to the introduction of many new names for types of pasta, *mutato nomine*, which is in effect a false tradition. One interesting development of the mid-1990s is the reintroduction of long spaghetti *alla napoletana*, which until recently were considered too unwieldy to have a future. Marketed as a sort of “limited edition” they have proved wildly popular: the secret of their success is the reintroduction of *trafile di bronzo*, the old-style brass pressing plates that give the pasta a rough, porous surface which is better able to adsorb sauce than the surface produced by teflon-coated slots.

In synthesis, the very desire to preserve and emphasize regional traditions in Italian pasta is causing their subtle erosion as commercial forces prevail over cultural ones. Nevertheless, there is no let up in the Italian passion for the national dish: indeed, there is now a museum of pasta, the Museo Storico degli Spaghetti at Pontedassio. But in the end, the only truly satisfactory way to analyze pasta is to eat it. ■

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