

Tradition, authenticity and expertise in and through Cypriot Easter flaounes¹

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Abstract

Flaounes are festive cheese pies that are widely produced and consumed at Eastertime in Cyprus. This article explores how preparing, consuming and evaluating flaounes is interactionally constructed in everyday practices and naturally occurring interactions, written accounts and ethnographic interviews with Greek Cypriot participants residing in various regions of Cyprus and in the UK diaspora. An ethnomethodological perspective to identities, culture and society is employed to provide analyses of the participants' local understandings of themselves and their social world and of categorizations of authenticity, tradition and change in relation to flaounes. It is shown that members, even when addressing the cultural and historical significance of flaounes, problematize categorizations of authenticity, while they construct tradition as compatible with innovation and change. For participants, however, the categorizations that have more relevance and importance relate to the taste and quality of the flaounes and the expertise of the maker. Practices around flaounes offer a prime site for positive self-presentation, where performance of culinary expertise intersects with gendered roles and Cypriotness.

Keywords: recipes, authenticity, tradition, change, festive foods, Easter, Cyprus, ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, membership categorization, identities

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1 Authenticity, tradition and change in food discourses

Arguments about authenticity seem to be inescapable in discussions of food traditions strongly linked to peoples' cultural, ethnic, or regional identities, family histories, and roles. Previous research on Mediterranean and especially Greek food discourse has shown the ambivalent status attributed to 'traditional', 'national' and 'local' food cultures. Petropoulos' home-ethnographic study about the role of bean stew as an unheralded Greek dish, has documented that as early as in the first half of the previous century a disdain and marginalization of the local cuisine in the Greek-speaking world prevailed.² However, around the 1980s/1990s, preference shifted from modernization and the pursuit of a homogeneous national urban cuisine (codified by trained professionals) to local (often rural) cultures, cuisines and diets, associated with 'tradition', and 'authenticity'. Eric Ball's selective genealogy of Greek cookbooks, illustrates this shift.³ Greek cookbooks (from Tselamentes in 1920 to Alexiadou in 1980) adapted 'traditional' Greek foods to modern western culinary and nutrition practices to successfully create the urban national cuisine of Greece, largely erasing regional variation and preoccupation with rural practices. On the other hand, from the 1980s and especially the 1990s "a new wave of Greek cookbooks began to take the notion of national cuisine into new directions".⁴ Cretan cookbooks are a telling case, as they focus on one regional cuisine (of Crete) and emphasize 'traditional' or 'authentic' Greek food and recipes, which are associated with the intergenerational (and local) transmission of valuable knowledge from mother to daughter (rather than the authority of the trained chef).⁵ Yiakoumaki shows an even more diverse and (seemingly) counter-hegemonic construction of Greek cuisine in texts on food in 1990s and early 2000s,⁶ as well as in cultural performances,⁷ that goes beyond regional variation, and explores food cultures of groups with non-Greek or contested Greek ethnicity (e.g. Jews of Thessaloniki, Pomacs in Thrace, ethnic Turks, Vlachs) that show a fascination with the 'other': the humble, the unsophisticated, even the vulgar (a form of indigenous exoticism).⁸ This is part of a more general (and earlier) fascination with specificity and the culinary other in food texts, as evident for example in the proliferation of a wide range of genres and sub-genres in English-language cookbooks.⁹

Examples of valorization of regional variation, rural, authentic and traditional food and practices can be found in discourses beyond 'Greek' food. Slow Food in Tuscany illustrates this recent concern for traditionality in food: juxtaposed to standardization and homogeneity and associated with diverse regional cuisines, local produce (linked to terroir), and embeddedness in the local context.¹⁰ Finnish consumers also reveal in research interviews a

² Ηλίας ΠΕΤΡΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, *Η Εθνική Φασουλάδα και η Ομελέτα* (Athens, 1990).

³ Eric L. BALL, "Greek Food after Mousaka: Cookbooks, 'Local' Culture, and the Cretan Diet", *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, vol. 21, no. 1 (2003), pp. 1-36.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Vassiliki YIAKOUMAKI, "'Local,' 'Ethnic,' and 'Rural' Food: On the Emergence of 'Cultural Diversity' in Post-EU-Accession Greece", *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, vol. 24, no. 2 (2006), pp. 415-45.

⁷ Vassiliki YIAKOUMAKI, "Ethnic Turks and 'Muslims', and the Performance of Multiculturalism: The Case of the Drómeno of Thrace", *South European Society and Politics*, vol. 11, no. 1 (2006), pp. 145-61.

⁸ Interestingly, the ethnic other is depoliticized and thus multiculturalism serves to reaffirm the hegemony of dominant ideologies.

⁹ Arjun APPADURAI, "How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 30, no. 1 (1988), pp. 3-24.

¹⁰ Mara MIELE and Jonathan MURDOCH, "The Practical Aesthetics of Traditional Cuisines: Slow Food in Tuscany", *Sociologia Ruralis*, vol. 42, no. 4 (2002), pp. 312-28.

preference for nostalgic authenticity, a late modern yearning for locally produced, traditional food that tastes like in the past.¹¹ Similarly to the restaurateurs in Tuscany (and their customers), Finnish informants viewed the most 'authentic' food as local (especially self-produced), but also embedded in their personal and shared cultural heritage.

Many studies treat a range of terms, including 'traditional',¹² 'real',¹³ 'true',¹⁴ and 'typical'¹⁵ as interwoven or even synonymous with 'authentic'. The use of 'authentic' is of course contextually contingent. For Kalymnians and Finnish consumers, for example, authentic food is locally grown and locally (and skilfully) prepared food, often with traditional practices and tools.¹⁶ Political and economic structures, including the European Union, as well as broader (middle and upper middle class) consumerist imperatives contribute to the definition of 'traditional', 'pure', 'authentic' foods.¹⁷ An extreme case of political influences on the definition of authenticity is a nationalistic discourse around feta cheese which associates the authenticity of feta to the authenticity of the Greek nation.¹⁸ Authenticity and traditionality are both amply employed to market products and services (in hospitality, food writing and produce promotion).¹⁹ Appadurai argues that in a highly marketized economy, the criteria of authenticity are necessarily complicated, as authenticity becomes a commodity in itself.²⁰ For Ball, the criteria for 'authentic' and 'traditional' (often conflated) are aesthetic and thus hard to codify.²¹ Stiles and colleagues, in their exploration of Greek restaurants around the world, found that authenticity is viewed by their informants in aesthetic terms of 'taste'.²² But 'taste' can mask the political, often exclusionary, nature of authenticity.²³ Authenticity is seen, then,

¹¹ Minna AUTIO, Rebecca COLLINS, Stefan WAHLEN and Marika ANTTILA, "Consuming Nostalgia? The Appreciation of Authenticity in Local Food Production", *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, vol. 37, no. 5 (2013), pp. 564-8.

¹² For Meredith Abarca, 'traditional' is constitutive of 'authentic', but juxtaposed to an extent to 'original' (e.g., Meredith ABARCA, "Authentic or Not, It's Original", *Food & Foodways* vol. 12, no. 1 (2004), p. 10). Other examples where 'traditional' and 'authentic' are treated as interchangeable or interlinked include: David E. SUTTON, *Secrets from the Greek Kitchen: Cooking, Skill, and Everyday Life on an Aegean Island* (Oakland, California, 2014), p. 49; Eric L. BALL "Greek Food after Mousaka...", p. 9; Richard HANDLER, "Authenticity", *Anthropology Today*, vol. 2, no. 1 (1986), pp. 2-4; Joy ADAPON, *Culinary Art and Anthropology* (Oxford; New York, 2008), p. 45.

¹³ Richard HANDLER, "Authenticity...", pp. 2-4; Minna AUTIO, Rebecca COLLINS, et al., "Consuming Nostalgia?..."; Joy ADAPON, *Culinary Art and Anthropology...*, p. 21.

¹⁴ Minna AUTIO, Rebecca COLLINS, et al., "Consuming Nostalgia?..."; Richard HANDLER, "Authenticity...", pp. 2-4.

¹⁵ Mara MIELE and Jonathan MURDOCH, "The Practical Aesthetics of Traditional Cuisines...", pp. 312-28, in their case study of a Tuscan restaurant, interlink the categories of 'typical' and 'traditional' (and also once 'authentic').

¹⁶ David E. SUTTON, *Secrets from the Greek Kitchen...*; Minna AUTIO, Rebecca COLLINS, et al., "Consuming Nostalgia?..."; pp. 13-23.

¹⁷ Vassiliki YIAKOUMAKI, "'Local,' 'Ethnic,' and 'Rural' Food..."; Meredith ABARCA, "Authentic or Not...", pp. 1-25.

¹⁸ Evangelia PETRIDOU, *Milk Ties: A Commodity Chain Approach to Greek Culture*, PhD thesis, University College London (London, 2001), p. 62.

¹⁹ For the commodification of authenticity in Mexican cookbooks and restaurants, see Joy ADAPON, *Culinary Art and Anthropology..* For the use of 'traditional' and 'authentic' in the context of Greek dairy products (and in EU regulations), see Evangelia PETRIDOU, *Milk Ties...*, pp. 36, 46, 51, 56-63.

²⁰ Arjun APPADURAI, "How to Make a National Cuisine...".

²¹ Eric L. BALL "Greek Food after Mousaka...", p. 18.

²² Kaelyn STILES, Ozlem ALTIOK and Michael M. BELL, "The Ghosts of Taste: Food and the Cultural Politics of Authenticity", *Agriculture and Human Values*, vol. 28, no. 2 (2011), pp. 225-36.

²³ Ibid. Also, see Richard HANDLER, "Authenticity...", p. 4.

as “a claim of presence through a claim of authorship” – it is not about a set of concrete criteria or tests of authenticity but an exploration of who claims authenticity.²⁴

Anthropologists have long recognized that “local meanings and uses” of authenticity should be the object of study,²⁵ and flaounes, the emblematic, celebratory Cypriot pies provide a prime site for the exploration of local conceptualizations of authenticity.

2 The case of flaounes

“Every Greek Cypriote family, as poor as it may be, considers it a holy duty to make flaounes for Easter”, reports the historian Kyriakos Hadjioannou in 1970.²⁶ *Flaounes* (in plural, and *flaouna* in singular) are festive Easter-time cheese pies and are an iconic Cypriot product. Grated cheese is kneaded with eggs, leaven, spices, mint, and raisins and left overnight to ferment. This mixture is then folded into thinly rolled-out disks of dough, leaving the top of the pie uncovered. Beaten eggs and sesame are added on top and the square or triangular pies are baked, until golden brown.

Planning for, preparing, and consuming flaounes is the highlight of the Easter festivities for my and many other Greek Cypriot families. Flaounes are traditionally produced on Easter eve (or earlier) and consumed on Easter day, right after the midnight mass, to break the 50-day long fast for Lent, when Orthodox Christians are required to abstain from meat and dairy products. They are made using a speciality hard Cypriot cheese, called ‘flaouna cheese’, which farmers produce only once a year, the weeks before Easter. Flaounes are also produced by the other religious communities of Cyprus: Turkish Cypriots, Armenians, Maronites, and Latins. Turkish Cypriots traditionally make flaounes during Ramadhan and eat them at the break of fasting.

[insert images 1 & 2]



Image 1: The collaborative preparation of flaounes (picture taken in 2008) {caption}

²⁴ Kaelyn STILES, Ozlem ALTIÖK and Michael M. BELL, “The Ghosts of Taste...”, p. 233.

²⁵ Dimitrios THEODOSSOPOULOS, “Laying Claim to Authenticity: Five Anthropological Dilemmas”, *Anthropology Quarterly*, vol. 86, no. 2 (2013), p. 344.

²⁶ Kyriakos HADJIOANNOU, “Παλάθη - Flado > Flado-onis > Flaon > Φλαούνα: Their Historical Background and Etymology”, *Orbis*, vol. 19 (1970), p. 488.



Image 2: My family's 2017 flaounes {caption}

As flaounes are a pastry produced by both Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities and relatively unknown in the two motherlands (Greece and Turkey), they have been employed in rapprochement politics, as evidence of the common cultural heritage of the two communities.²⁷ For example, a short 2004 film, funded by the Bi-communal Development Programme (of the USA and UK) presented the tradition of making flaounes by juxtaposing a Greek-Cypriot and a Turkish-Cypriot woman showcasing their similar recipes for flaounes.²⁸ This shared tradition is framed as one of the many commonalities in values, language, culture, and practice between Turkish- and Greek-Cypriots.

This labour-intensive treat is often prepared by a group of female family members and home-made flaounes may be offered to guests and exchanged with other families, both in Cyprus and in Cypriot communities abroad, and are a testament to the culinary competence of each homemaker and family. Flaounes are also available in bakeries in Cyprus and in Cypriot and Turkish speciality shops in the UK around Easter time (flaounes in mini or 'cocktail' size are commercially available throughout the year) and some households choose to purchase their flaounes. But how are issues of authenticity, tradition, and change oriented to by producers and consumers of this uniquely Cypriot pastry? In what follows I discuss the views, attitudes,

²⁷ In 1960, when Cyprus was granted its independence from British rule, 78% of the population were Greek Cypriots and 18% Turkish Cypriots, with ethnic minorities and foreigners making up the remainder 4%. Despite a history of relatively peaceful co-existence, the two largest communities of Cypriots, the Greek-Cypriot majority and the Turkish-Cypriot minority have suffered from intercommunal violence, culminating in a Greek and Greek/Cypriot-led coup in July 1974, and the Turkish invasion in July and August of 1974. As a consequence of the invasion, the country was partitioned into the government-controlled, almost exclusively Greek-Cypriot area in the South and the Turkish-controlled area in the North (later self-declared as Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus) and forced dislocation of the two communities occurred. For an in-depth discussion of modern Cypriot history, see e.g. Μακάριος ΔΡΟΥΣΙΩΤΗΣ, *Η Μεγάλη Ιδέα της Μικρής Χούντας: Η ΕΟΚΑ Β και το Πραξικόπημα της 15ης Ιουλίου 1974* [The Great Idea of the Small Junta: EOKA B and the Coup of 15th July 1974] (Nicosia, 2010).

²⁸ EUROTiques – CYPRUS OFFICE (Producer) and George SYCALLIDES (Director), *Flaouna - Pilavuna: A Common Pastry for Greek-Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots*, Motion Picture (Nicosia, 2004), retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MytrM1OMI4I>, on 19/09/19.

and practices of Greek Cypriots, residing in Cyprus and in the UK diaspora, as I have collected them from casual conversations, group discussions, observations, and written accounts.

3 Methodology

3.1 Data and collection methods

The data analysed here include audiorecorded, naturally-occurring everyday conversation, where the topic of flaounes emerged naturally, and audiorecordings of talk during the production of flaounes. Additional fieldwork employing ethnographic tools was conducted around Easter of 2007 and 2015, including participant observation in their natural settings, participation in their daily activities and collection of artefacts (photographs, written recipes).²⁹ These naturally-emerging data were then supplemented by additional elicited data that targeted issues about flaounes and authenticity in a more explicit way, including ethnographic interviews with individuals (participants were asked to describe a characteristic or memorable incidents relating to flaounes in 2006) and groups (I facilitated five group discussions on opinions and experiences related to flaounes in 2015). In the case of group interviews, the participants were *bona fide* groups, either family members or friendship groups with a long interactional history, to encourage, as far as possible, the emergence of naturalistic data. Furthermore, written accounts were collected in 2015, when participants answered a series of questions (either in Greek or English) about their personal connections and reflections about flaounes, and the product's relationship to history, temporality, and authenticity.

A total of 21 participants contributed to the audio-recordings and written accounts and many more allowed me to observe them, and shared recipes and their experiences during the fieldwork. The participants were Greek Cypriots, aged between 29 and 87 years old, residing at various parts of Cyprus (especially Nicosia, Limassol and Paphos) as well as members of the Greek Cypriot community of London. The majority of the participants (17 out of 21) were female, as making flaounes is still a predominantly female task (I only encountered a story about one man in my fieldwork who makes flaounes himself). To protect the participants' anonymity, pseudonyms have been used here and all person-identifiable information has been altered.

I, as the researcher, am also a member of these local communities of practice,³⁰ and very familiar with the participants. Although I cannot be impartial, I bring in my own (auto-ethnographic)³¹ insights and decades-long experiences of discussing, preparing, and consuming flaounes. Also, this mitigates the researcher's intrusion and effect on the situated

²⁹ For ethnographic methods, see Wendy LEEDS-HURWITZ, "Ethnography" in Kristine L. FITCH and Robert SANDERS (eds), *Handbook of Language and Social Interaction* (Mahwah, N.J.; London, 2005), pp. 327-53.

³⁰ Originating in Etienne Wenger's work, the notion of "community of practice" allows for a fine-tuned view of communities as an aggregate of people who come together around a shared purpose and who, through regular interaction over time, develop a shared understanding of their bonds and a shared repertoire of semiotic resources. See Etienne WENGER, *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity* (Cambridge, 1998).

³¹ Carolyn ELLIS, Tony ADAMS, and Arthur BOCHNER, "Autoethnography: An Overview", *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, vol. 12, no. 1 (2010), n. pag.

activity (as I am already a member of the community) and therefore has offered a partial solution to the observer's paradox.³²

The timing of the data collection is significant. Although data collection spans a decade (and was conducted in three phases: in 2006, 2008 and 2015), the timing was always just before or after the Greek Orthodox Easter (which is based on the old Julian calendar), to coincide with the period of preparation and consumption of flaounes. The greater availability and relevance of the food product under investigation during the period of data collection can lead to richer empirical material, as Minna Autio and colleagues have argued.³³ Some of the participants contributed data to all three phases, and that allowed me to record telling and retellings of the same stories in a variety of contexts across a decade.

Extracts of spoken and written accounts are given in the original; if the original is in Greek then my translation in English follows (some of the participants in London chose to answer the questionnaire in English). The audio-recorded data were transcribed following Conversation Analytic conventions, as described by Gail Jefferson and a list of transcription symbols can be found in the appendix.³⁴ I chose to include both the original and the English translation, as I did not want to erase the non-standard, dialectal variety of the informants and also because ethnomethodology (see next section) necessitates attendance to the original (often culture-specific and untranslatable) terms members use.³⁵ In the transcript, the original (in Cypriot Greek) is given in standard Modern Greek spelling, followed by idiomatic line-by-line translation in English. The postalveolar fricatives phonemes [ʒ] and [ʝ] of Cypriot Greek that do not constitute part of the phonological inventory of Standard Modern Greek are represented with a letter of the Greek alphabet, modified with a down arrowhead on top of it, following commonly used, although far from standardized, orthographic conventions.³⁶

3.2 Analytical framework

The theoretical framework of this study is informed by ethnomethodology,³⁷ the empirical, systematic study of the most commonplace, everyday activities on their own terms. It believes that people accomplish local understandings by exploiting the features of mundane interaction.³⁸ Thus, ethnomethodology investigates participants' methods for producing

³² The observer's paradox describes the contradiction between the aim of examining how people talk and behave, when they are not systematically observed, and the fact that such data can only be obtained by systematic observation. See William LABOV, "Some Further Steps in Narrative Analysis", *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, vol. 7 (1997), pp. 395-415.

³³ Minna AUTIO, Rebecca COLLINS, et al., "Consuming Nostalgia?...", pp. 13-23.

³⁴ Gail JEFFERSON, "Glossary of Transcript Symbols with an Introduction" in Gene H. Lerner (ed.), *Conversation Analysis: Studies from the First Generation* (Philadelphia, 2004), pp. 13-23.

³⁵ A number of food scholars include partial or full excerpts in the (non-English) original. Tellingly, Lidia Marte, shows the importance and 'personal and collective political implications' of non-prestige dialectal forms 'usually erased from academic studies' in the expression of food memories. Lidia MARTE, "Foodmaps: Tracing Boundaries of 'Home' through Food Relations", *Food and Foodways*, vol. 15, no. 3-4 (2007), p. 273.

³⁶ See Dionysis GOUSOS and Marilena KARYOLEMOU, "Introduction", *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, vol. 168 (2004), pp. 1-17.

³⁷ For overview volumes on ethnomethodology, see Harold GARFINKEL (ed.), *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, (St. Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1967); Graham BUTTON, *Ethnomethodology and the Human Sciences: A Reappraisal* (Cambridge, 1991).

³⁸ Charles ANTAKI and Sue WIDDICOMBE, "Identity as an Achievement and as a Tool" in Charles ANTAKI and Sue WIDDICOMBE (eds), *Identities in Talk* (London, 1998), p. 2.

everyday activities as orderly and accountable social activities. The emphasis is on social members' observable apparatus or machinery, that is, exactly what they have to do to carry out an action, produce social practices, including talk, and acquire, expand, confirm, or revise commonsense knowledge.³⁹

Ethnomethodology regards society, history, and culture as temporally and locally occasioned interactional achievements rather than essential constructs that permeate all contexts passively and latently. However, what sets ethnomethodology apart from other anti-essentialist frameworks, such as social constructivism,⁴⁰ is that it takes a bottom-up approach to identities and the social order.⁴¹ That means that data are not interpreted as *products* of conceptual assumption (e.g. pre-formulated theories about the social processes that permeate the construction of culture and society) but the aim is to examine what can be discovered in and from the data about the *production* of witnessable events.⁴² Therefore, in the present study the aim is not to theorize the function of history, tradition, temporality, authenticity, and food practices but to show what these categorizations are for social members and how these categorizations inform locally ordered discursive practices and situated understanding of reality and the self.⁴³

Conversation Analysis⁴⁴ and Membership Categorization Analysis⁴⁵ emerged from the ethnomethodological tradition,⁴⁶ and are the main frameworks employed here to analyse the discourses about flaounes in this study. As I have shown elsewhere,⁴⁷ the two frameworks complement each other; Membership Categorization analyses participants' resources in organising knowledge and negotiating categorizations of self and others and Conversation Analysis, with its specific vocabulary to show in detail what goes on in talk-in-interaction, can provide a very rich descriptive apparatus of the turn-by-turn organization of talk, in which

³⁹ Wes SHARROCK and Bob ANDERSON, *The Ethnomethodologists* (Chichester, 1986), pp. 66, 113; Emanuel A. SCHEGLOFF, "Conversation Analysis and Socially Shared Cognition" in Lauren B. RESNICK, John M. LEVINE, and Stephanie D. TEASLEY (eds), *Perspectives on Socially Shared Cognition* (Washington, 1991), p.152.

⁴⁰ Social constructivism emphasizes 'the political economic constraints imposed on processes of identity-making' (Paul KROSKRITY, "Identity", *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, vol. 9, no. 1-2 (1999), p. 113) and the internalization of the social structure and are based on extra-situational ideologies and beliefs about social categories, and their features and status (Peter L. BERGER and Thomas LUCKMANN, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Harmondsworth, 1967), p. 83).

⁴¹ Graham BUTTON, "Introduction: Ethnomethodology and the Foundational Respecification of the Human Science" in Graham BUTTON (ed.), *Ethnomethodology and the Human Sciences: A Reappraisal* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 1-9.

⁴² John LEE, "Language and Culture: The Linguistic Analysis of Culture" in Graham BUTTON (ed.), *Ethnomethodology and the Human Sciences: A Reappraisal* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 196-226.

⁴³ Rod WATSON and T. S. WEINBERG, "Interviews and the Interactional Construction of Accounts of Homosexual Identity", *Social Analysis*, vol. 11 (1982), pp. 56-78.

⁴⁴ For the seminal paper on Conversation Analysis, see Harvey SACKS, Emanuel A. SCHEGLOFF and Gail JEFFERSON, "A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn-Taking for Conversation", *Language*, vol. 50 (1974), p. 718.

⁴⁵ For Sack's pioneering conceptualization of members' categories, see Harvey SACKS and Gail JEFFERSON, *Lectures on Conversation* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 40-47. For Membership Categorization Analysis, see Stephen HESTER and Peter EGLIN (eds), *Culture in Action: Studies in Membership Categorization Analysis* (Washington, D.C., 1997); Peter EGLIN and Stephen HESTER, *The Montreal Massacre: A Story of Membership Categorization Analysis* (Waterloo, Ontario, 2003).

⁴⁶ Charles ANTAKI and Sue WIDDICOMBE, "Identity as an Achievement ...".

⁴⁷ Anna CHARALAMBIDOU, "Repairs and Old-age Categorisations: Interactional and Categorisation Analysis", *Linguistic Vanguard*, vol. 5, no. S2 (2019), pp. 1-10.

categories are situated. For the purpose of this study I will analyse the categorization ‘authentic’ as regards to flaounes, but will also be exploring participants’ related or alternative categorizations to authenticity, such as ‘traditional’ or ‘good’ flaounes.

Before looking in more detail at participants’ discourses of flaounes, it is worth briefly turning to the history of this food product as it emerges from the etymology of the word.

4 The history of flaounes

4.1 Etymology

Different names for flaounes have been reported in Cyprus, especially before the dramatic geodemographic changes of 1974 and the ensuing levelling of the regional patois varieties of the Cypriot Greek dialect.⁴⁸ According to Kypri and Protopapa, in the village of Karava (in North Cyprus), round flaounes were called “fesouthkia” and in the villages of the Karpass peninsula (the Northern-Eastern part of Cyprus) they were called “aflaounes”.⁴⁹ Currently, however, as my own research has shown, only the name *flaouna* (‘φλαούνα’) or the basilectal variant *vlaouna* (‘βλαούνα’) in Cypriot Greek and *pilavuna* in the Cypriot Turkish are encountered.

The etymology of the word alludes to the history of the custom. The word ‘flaouna’, according to Hadjioannou, comes from the ancient Greek word *παλάθη* (*pa’lathe*), a flat fruit cake, associated with religious celebrations of spring and Harvest and the cognate Old High German word *flado*: a pastry prepared with eggs, milk, and cheese (and fruit) for Easter. *Flado* then entered Latin and from Latin French, in the form of *flaon*. The Medieval French *flaon* is a pastry made of eggs, and cheese or butter and, just like the Latin *flado* (mentioned as early as the 6th century AD), closely linked with Easter.⁵⁰

The following diagram, adapted from Hadjioannou’s study,⁵¹ shows the trajectories through which the word ‘flado’ entered European languages. The word has taken various forms in Modern European languages and usually means round, flat cakes or pastries made of various ingredients (including egg, butter, curd, cheese, and fruits) which were initially associated with religious occasions.

⁴⁸ In recent years, and especially after the partition of the island in the summer of 1974, regional variation in Cypriot Greek has been in retreat, giving prominence to a generalized Cypriot Greek *koine*, based on the regional variety of Mesaoria (central Cyprus). See for example, Dionysis GOUTSOS and Marilena KARYOLEMOU, “Introduction”..., pp. 1-17.

⁴⁹ Θ.Δ. ΚΥΠΡΗ and Κ.Α. ΠΡΩΤΟΠΑΠΑ, *Παραδοσιακά Ζυμώματα της Κύπρου. Η Χρήση και η Σημασία τους στην Εθνική Ζωή* (Nicosia, 2003).

⁵⁰ Kyriakos HADJIOANNOU, “Παλάθη - Flado ...”, pp. 483-91.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 491.

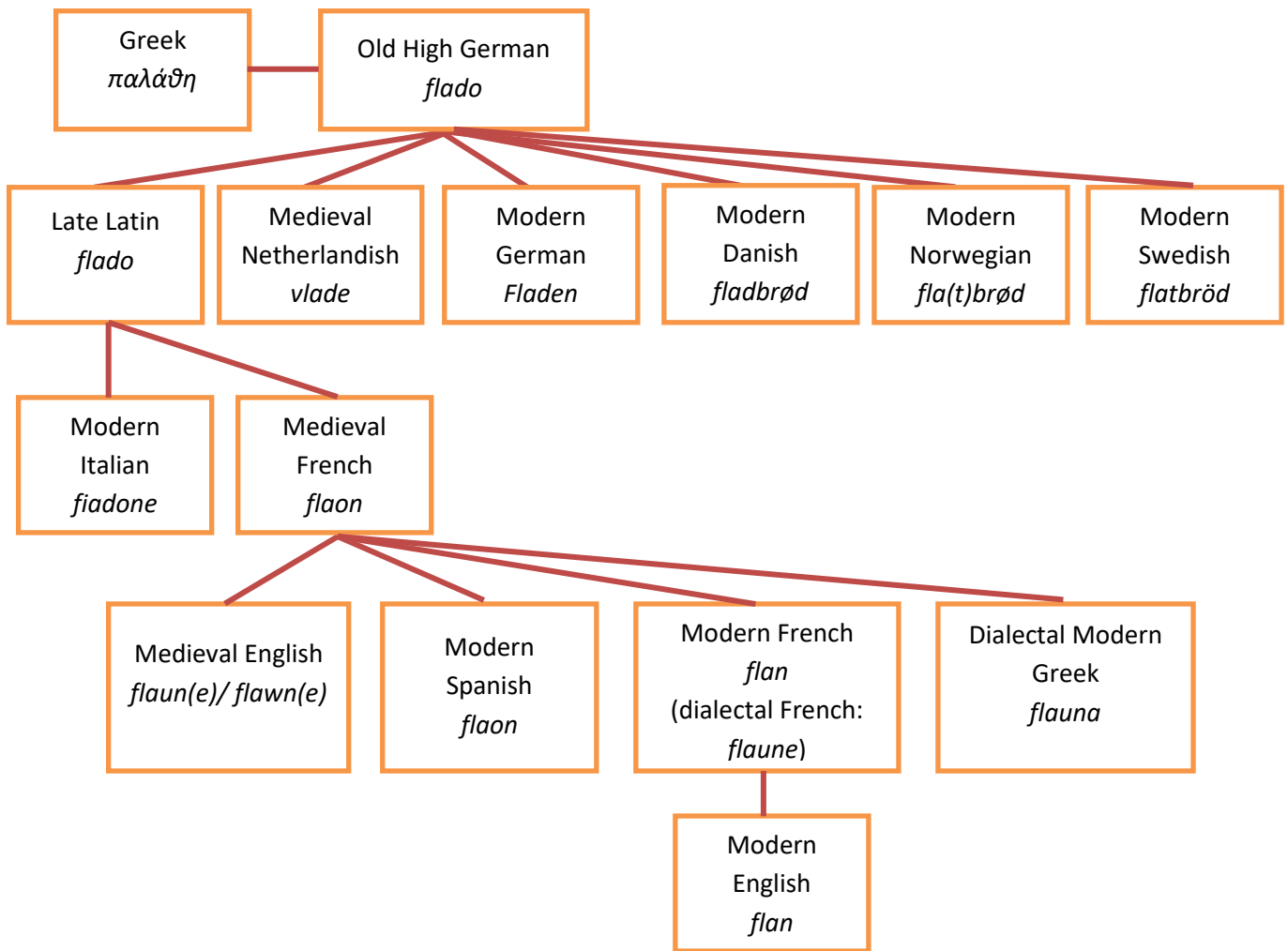


Diagram of the history of the word ‘flaouna’ {caption}

In Modern Greek, *flaouna* is encountered only in areas that were under the Frankish domination, between the 13th and the 15th century, e.g. Thrace, Peloponnese and the islands of Cimolos, Corfu, Crete, and Cyprus.⁵² The word often signifies a flatbread. Only in Cyprus (which was under Frankish rule of the Lusignan dynasty between 1192 and 1489) have *flaounes* maintained the original ingredients of the Latin *flado* and French *flaon* and the tradition of consuming them on Easter Sunday.

This view on the ancient Greek etymology of *flaounes* is also reflected in one written account by an informant of this study, who has a special interest in etymology. This informant, however, also proposes an alternative definition, that is testament of the Venetian rule of Cyprus from 1489 until 1571.

“Σύμφωνα με κάποια ετυμολογία η λέξη προέρχεται από το ενετικό ‘plato uno’, σύμφωνα με άλλη είναι αρχαιοελληνική.”

“According to one etymology the word is derived from the Venetian ‘plato uno’ and according to another from ancient Greek origin.”

(female, 68, written account, Nicosia, 2015)

⁵² Ibid., p. 481.

Finally, Xenophon Farmakides proposes an additional etymology, arguing that the word flaouna is derived from the Greek verb "φλάω" which means *to crush*.⁵³ To this date, the most widely accepted etymology of flaounes, however, is the one proposed by Hadjioannou; this is the view that is adopted by the (sparse) ethnographic and folklore work on flaounes and by the present study.⁵⁴

4.2 Reflections on history by producers and consumers

Even though the history of the flaounes-making customs is alluded to in the etymology of the term, it seems to be lost in the depths of the members' collective memory. The only attempt in the data to refer to the history of flaounes (beyond living memory) is the following:

"I believe it comes from the byzantine years when children went from house to house to announce the resurrection of Christ and were given a similar cake that had nuts in it. I cannot remember what it was called but the tradition has carried on from generation to generation."
(female, 38, written account, London, 2015)

In some regions of Cyprus, especially in the North and the West of the island, this custom is at least a century old, yet some of the older informants (above eighty years old) mentioned that the custom was not widespread among poorer families in the first half of the 20th century. Making (or at least purchasing) flaounes is now a very wide-spread practice both in Cyprus and in the UK diaspora, supported by the easy and affordable access to speciality ingredients in diasporic communities.

Issues of history and traditions beyond living memory were not explicitly oriented to at all in the participant observations and audiorecordings. In the written accounts, participants were specifically asked to address whether the history of flaounes is something that producers and consumers might reflect on.⁵⁵ The answers to these questions were either non-existent or very brief mentioning that the producers and consumers would not be concerned with the history of flaounes.

"Στην περίπτωση των φλαούνων δεν έχω ακούσει κανένα να αναφέρεται στην προέλευση της συνταγής. Ίσως μερικοί λαογράφοι. Η προέλευση των φλαούνων έχει σβηστεί από τη συλλογική μνήμη και συντηρείται αποκλειστικά και μόνο από την παράδοση."
"In the case of flaounes I have not heard anyone referring to the origin of the recipe. Perhaps some folklorists. The origin of flaounes has been erased from the collective memory and is conserved exclusively through tradition."

(male, 74, written account, Paphos, 2015)

⁵³ Ξενοφών Π. ΦΑΡΜΑΚΙΔΗΣ, *Άπαντα* (Nicosia, 2000). See also Βαρβάρα ΓΙΑΓΚΟΥ, Στάλω ΛΑΖΑΡΟΥ, Έλενα ΣΑΒΒΑ, and Μαρίνα ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥ, "Φλαούνα, η", *Cyprus Food Virtual Museum*. Retrieved from: http://foodmuseum.cs.ucy.ac.cy/web/guest/36/civitem/2517#_bs_civitem_tabcyprus.rec.tab1 on 20/09/19.

⁵⁴ For example: Euphrosyne RIZOPOULOU-EGOUMENIDOU, "Les Rites de la Semaine Pascale en Chypre" in *Les Rites de la Semaine Pascale: Mort et Resurrection, Proceedings of the XXII Atelier EURETHNO*, Calabre, Lamezia Terme 6-8 Septembre 2008, pp. 1-10. Evgenia PETROU, *Récits de Vie et de Gastronomie à Chypre*, unpublished research report (Nicosia, 1987).

⁵⁵ The relevant questions in the guide for the written accounts were:

- In what ways are flaounes associated with Cyprus' history and tradition?
- Do producers, retailers, and/or consumers of flaounes talk about or think about flaounes' history?
- Are there particular emotional and other associations that flaounes evokes? Do these have any relationship to flaounes' history?

The only history that is made relevant by the participants has to do with their own past attempts at producing flaounes, and reflections on how to avoid mistakes/replicate good practices of previous years and therefore improve the quality of the product. This personal living history, or what the 74-year old informant above calls “tradition”, is connected with conceptualizations of (micro-)culture with a lower case ‘c’. By ‘culture’ (with lower-case c) I mean anti-essentialist, localized, discursive approaches to culture, as opposed to macro, all-encompassing accounts of Culture (with capital C).⁵⁶ The micro-analytic perspective which conceptualizes culture (with small ‘c’) and history as discursive achievements that participants orient to, ratify and contest in the contingencies of situated activity is in line with the ethnomethodological view of culture-in-action and is both a participants’ and analysts’ resource.⁵⁷

5 Negotiating authenticity

The term ‘authentic’ did not emerge as an emic members’ categorization in conversations, and was only used by the participants once it was introduced by the researcher. In fact the categorization ‘authentic’, was often treated as a trouble source by the interlocutors.⁵⁸

In the following example I (Anna, 31) am having a focus group discussion with Magda (32) and Ellie (31) in a local coffee shop. All participants are close friends. This extract is only three minutes into the conversation and the first time the categorization ‘authentic’ was introduced.

Excerpt 1

Participants: Magda, Ellie, Anna; local coffee shop, 4 April 15

1. A τζαι πώς είναι οι αυθεντικές φλαούνες?
2. M τι [εννοείς?]
3. A [‘Ελλη?](..)
4. E τι εννοείς?
5. A ε πώς είναι- πώς φαντάζεσαι ασπούμε ότι είναι οι πραγματικές οι φλαούνες?
6. E ε στο παραδοσιακό::: σχήμα::: που έσει τζαι πάνω ποτούντη:::ν πώς το λαλούσι? πε το.
7. M σισάμι.
8. E σισάμι. σε:: μεγάλο μέγεθος αν τζι η μάμμα μου καμνει τες-
9. όταν έκαμνεν έκαμνεν τες σε μικρό μέγεθος(..) ναι. εμφανισιακά τούτο. (.)
10. A ναι:
11. M ή θέλεις να σου πούμε ποια εν η παραδοσιακή συνταγή ασπούμε?

⁵⁶ This distinction between ‘culture’ and ‘Culture’ is proposed by the sociolinguistic Alexandra Georgakopoulou, who has called for an alternative focus of research, which shifts emphasis from generalized notions of culture to the analysis of local communities of practice and their ‘micro cultures’, as this will document in earnest the multiplicity of practices of members of a community and how culture is agentively constructed and de-constructed *in situ* by the interlocutors. Alexandra GEORGAKOPOULOU, “Reflections on Language-Centred Approaches to Greek ‘Society’ and ‘Culture’”, *Kampos: Cambridge Papers in Modern Greek*, vol. 12 (2004), pp. 45-68.

⁵⁷ Stephen HESTER and Peter EGLIN (eds), *Culture in Action...*; Sue WIDDICOMBE, “Identity as an Analysts’ and a Participants’ Resource” in Charles ANTAKI and Sue WIDDICOMBE (eds), *Identities in Talk* (London, 1998), pp. 191-206.

⁵⁸ Trouble source, in Conversation Analysis, are words or utterances that that need to be repaired either in the same turn or in upcoming turns, and can include mishearing, misunderstandings, mistakes, turn-taking errors and violations etc. Harvey SACKS, Emanuel A. SCHEGLOFF and Gail JEFFERSON, “A Simplest Systematics for the Organization...”, p. 723.

12. A ναι ναι

1. A and how are the authentic flaounes?
2. M what [do you mean?]
3. A [Ellie?] (..)
4. E what do you mean?
5. A erm how is- how do you imagine let's say that the real flaounes are?
6. E erm in traditiona::: shape:::: that has tha:::::t what is it called? say it.
7. M sesame.
8. E sesame. i::n large size although my mum makes them-
9. when she used to make she made them in small size.(..) yes. appearance wise this. (.)
10. A ye:s
11. M or do you want us to tell you the traditional recipe let's say?
12. A yes yes

Anna introduces the categorization 'authentic' (in line 1) as part of a question. However, both recipients, instead of ratifying the projected role of answer-giver, produce what in Conversation Analytic terms is an insert expansion, through a next-turn repair initiator (lines 2 and 4).⁵⁹ This initiates an other-initiated, self-repair by Anna in line 5, where she abandons the categorization 'authentic' and reformulates it as 'real'. The turn shape of line 5 is full of dispreference markers, including sudden changes in intonation, cut-off (after "is-") and use of qualifier ("let's say"), which makes relevant the difficulty (also for the researcher) in negotiating the categorization 'authentic' and its shared inferences.⁶⁰ Both Ellie and Magda, when they provide -in lines 6 onwards- a delayed response to the initial question, choose to orient to what Anna implies by 'authentic'/'real' with the a revised categorization, 'traditional' (lines 6 and 11), which the researcher does not contest. The request for further clarification in line 11 also shows that the interlocutors are still trying to establish what the categorizations authentic/real/traditional with regards to flaounes entail.

Having revised the categorization of authenticity, traditionality is here defined in terms of shape/appearance and recipe of the flaounes. However, the criteria of traditionality seem very fuzzy. More specifically, Ellie says in line 8 that 'traditional' flaounes are 'large', but then at the same line mentions that the flaounes her mum used to make (and which would expectably be viewed as real/traditional for her) were small.

Interestingly in the same conversation, the researcher asked twice more about what makes flaounes 'authentic' and both times the informants initiated repairs and revised the categorization to 'traditional'. This understanding of authenticity both as 'tradition' but also as 'representativeness', is evocative of Theodossopoulos' research on how local communities ('authenticity as tradition') on the one hand and tourists ('authenticity as representativeness') in Panama define traditional culture.⁶¹ This shows how previous categorizations of authenticity do not work in the context of the present study.

⁵⁹ Next turn repair initiators include elements such as 'huh?', 'who?', or quizzical looks and invite repair of the previous turn in the next turn. See e.g. Ian HUTCHBY and Robin WOFFITT, *Conversation Analysis: Principles, Practices and Applications* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 62; Stephen LEVINSON, *Pragmatics* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 339.

⁶⁰ For dispreference markers, see Stephen Levinson, *Pragmatics ...*, p. 334; David SILVERMAN, *Harvey Sacks: Social Science and Conversation Analysis* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 160.

⁶¹ Dimitrios THEODOSSOPOULOS, "Laying Claim to Authenticity...", pp. 346-347.

The participants of this study, although consistently orienting to the difficulty in defining authenticity, do not frame always authenticity in terms of tradition. The following conversation takes place as part of a group interview at Sasa’s kitchen, and Sasa (66), her two sisters Matina (68) and Lena (62) and I (Anna) are present.

Excerpt 2

Participants: Sasa, Matina, Lina, Anna; Sasa’s kitchen, 6 Apr 15

1. A ε: πώς είναι οι αυθεντικές οι φλαούνες κατά την άποψη σας?
2. Λ οι αλμυρές.
3. Σ =για μας?
4. A [ναι]
5. Σ [που] τες τρώμεν?
6. A ναι.
7. Σ ε οι αυθεντικές::ς που μπορεί να τες τρώει όλος ο κόσμος ασπούμε είναι:
8. εμ τζείνες οι αλμυρές οι οποίες εν βάλλουμεν άλας απλώς εν το τυρί
9. Λ =το τυρί
10. Σ =το τυρί που έσειε μέσα αλλά όι εμείς
11. [εν βάλλουμε πολλά]
12. Λ [τζαι βάλλουν τζαι]
13. χαλλούμια α βάλλουν τζαι χαλλούμια παραλλαγή βάλλουν τζαι χαλλούμια
14. Σ =όι εμείς εν εβάλαμεν ποττέ μας χαλλούμια

1. A em: how are the authentic flaounes in your opinion?
2. L savoury.
3. S =for us?
4. A [yes]
5. S [who] eat them?
6. A yes.
7. S em the authenti::c that all people might eat are let’s say:
8. em those savoury that we don’t add salt it’s just the cheese
9. L =the cheese
10. S =the cheese has inside but no we
11. [we don’t put a lot]
12. L [and they add also]
13. halloumi oh they add halloumi also a variation they add halloumi
14. S =no we have never added halloumi

In this extract, Anna’s question of what constitutes “authentic flaounes” is followed by Lina’s brief response (l. 2) and Sasa’s requests for clarification (lines 3 and 5). Although Anna in line 1 said “in your opinion” (using the plural form of ‘you’, and thus assigning the next turn to all interlocutors), Sasa still tries to ascertain for whom the flaounes are authentic, implying that the category-bound features of ‘authentic flaounes’ are different for each member. Interestingly, although Anna says “in your opinion” and Sasa refers to “us” and “we” (lines 3 and 5) in her answer, Sasa then refers (in line 7) to “all the people” (stressing “all” with increased loudness), before switching to what “we” do (lines 8 and 10). Lina also refers to a “variation” (use of halloumi cheese), l.13, that applies to other people, but not her family. The pronominal choices here and the oscillation between ‘us’, one the one hand, and ‘all/other the people’, on the other, indicates the participants’ orientation to a multiplicity of personal preferences, practices, ingredients, and recipes in making flaounes and their difficulty in

deciding which of the different variations should be associated with the categorization 'authentic'.

Issues in the categorization process of authentic flaounes recur in the data and could imply that, for the participants, the custom of flaounes is just something that they do rather than re-enact reflectively, and thus the tradition(s) they inhabit and which are deeply embedded in their practices. 'Authenticity' and its repaired categorical reference 'tradition' are constructed by members as abstract and plural, as inherited practices that tacitly condition all actions and utterances and this is in line with Oakershott's conceptualization of tradition.⁶² In fact, the orientation to the plural, fluid predicates of authenticity and tradition is made explicitly relevant both in the written accounts and in the focus group discussions.⁶³

“Υπάρχουν διάφορα είδη φλαούνων με διαφορετικούς τρόπους παρασκευής. Είναι οι αλμυρές, οι γλυκιές, οι παφίτικες, οι πασκιές. Όλες αυτές είναι αυθεντικές για την κάθε περιοχή και την κάθε οικογένεια. Υπάρχουν επίσης οι φλαούνες με την αναρή, που για μένα δεν είναι αυθεντικές γιατί ποτέ δεν φτιάχναμε τέτοιες φλαούνες στο σπίτι μας. [...] Αυθεντικός τρόπος είναι αυτός που έχει μάθει ο καθένας.”

“There are different types of flaounes with different ways of preparation. There are savoury, sweet, from Paphos, paskies.⁶⁴ All these are authentic for each area and family. There are also flaounes with anari cheese, which, for me, are not authentic because we did not use to make them in our home [...] The authentic way [of production] is whatever one has learnt.”

(female, 29, written account, Nicosia, 2015)

“Οι αυθεντικές φλαούνες είναι φλαούνες που κάμνει ο καθένας σπίτιν του γιατί θεωρεί ότι τζείνες εν οι αυθεντικές φλαούνες”

“The authentic flaounes are the flaounes that each person makes at his home because [they] believe that those are the authentic flaounes”

(female, 31, spoken account, Paphos, 2015)

These accounts reveal that authenticity of flaounes is not bound to a set of fixed or recognizable attributions, but rather subject to regional, family, and individual variation. Because authenticity appears to be such a fluid and hard to define categorization for the participants, one way of addressing questions about what makes flaounes authentic was to produce the emic categorization of 'very/most authentic'. Therefore, some informants (up to 70 year old) would differentiate between 'authentic' and 'even more authentic' flaounes. The most authentic flaounes were associated with an often imagined pre-modern, rural life, i.e. baked in an outdoor wood oven and made in the village. However, the oldest participants (in their 70s and 80s) -who have actually experienced this pre-technological life- do not view older ways of making flaounes as 'more authentic', just more difficult.

“Παλιά εν ήτα:ν τέλια τέλια: [...] δεν είχαμεν τα υλικά.”

“In the past they were not completely completely: [flaounes] [...] we did not have the ingredients.”

(female, 80, spoken account, Nicosia, 2015)

⁶² James ALEXANDER, “Three Rival Views of Tradition (Arendt, Oakeshott and MacIntyre)”, *Journal of the Philosophy of History*, vol. 6 (2012), pp. 20-43.

⁶³ Predicates include category-bound activities, attributions, motives, rights, entitlements, obligation, knowledge, abilities and competences. See Rod WATSON and T. S. WEINBERG, “Interviews and the Interactional Construction of Accounts of Homosexual Identity”, *Social Analysis*, vol. 11 (1982), p. 60.

⁶⁴ “Paskies” are a type of savoury pastry, similar to flaounes, that also has cooked meat in the cheese filling. They are made almost exclusively in Paphos and neighbouring villages.

The oldest participants (mid-seventies and older) reported that Cypriots in the olden days had limited access to quality ingredients (for example butter) and that would affect the recipe, if indeed the family had the means to even attempt to make flaounes. My fieldwork has also shown that flaounes of one or two generations ago would be closer to bread with a cheese filling, rather than a richer (sweet) pastry, as they are today.

On the whole, this flexibility in what is categorized as authentic in the production and consumption of flaounes means that authenticity cannot be threatened or questioned. For instance, the use of non-traditional, or non-Cypriot cheese or the use of newer methods of making flaounes (e.g. using 'smart' food processors) were not seen as necessarily inauthentic by the participants. Even commercially produced flaounes are not necessarily dissociated from authenticity. In particular, participants, especially in group interviews, would associate authentic flaounes with the activity of baking at home (and by 'home' they also include places outside Cyprus) and in opposition to mass production in commercial establishments. However, in focus group discussions and also in everyday conversations the often rehearsed view was that bakeries and commercial home bakers that use 'proper' ingredients at proper dosage make authentic flaounes. Informants insisted that the taste and the recipe followed would ultimately determine how the commercially produced flaounes would be categorized. This suggests that, for members, what constitutes a 'good'/'the best' flaouna, rather than 'authentic' appears to have more currency and relevance. This issue is further explored in Section 6.

6 Written and unwritten recipes

All naturally-occurring interactions and texts about flaounes involve, in some form, recipes. It is, then, worth investigating how categorizations of authenticity, tradition, and temporality are constructed in this specific genre.

Although, flaounes are often prepared from memory, without fixed measurements, as early as the sixties codification and written accounts of recipes (often retrospective) are not uncommon. A collection of detailed recipes for flaounes as well as a discussion on regional variation can be found in the collection *Authentic Recipes from Around the World*.⁶⁵ Handwritten recipes, however, like the ones in image 3, below, never give exact measurements, or an exhaustive list of processes and instead assume a great deal of tacit, unstated knowledge that resides in practice.⁶⁶ For instance, the baker is expected to estimate by sight, texture, smell, and taste how much liquid the dough needs or how many eggs should go in the cheese filling; these vary every year, depending e.g. on the size and maturity of the

⁶⁵ Deborah TONER, Emma-Jayne ABBOTS, Anna CHARALAMBIDOU and Ana MARTINS, *Authentic Recipes from Around the World* (Ceredigion, 2015), pp. 35-49.

⁶⁶ Of course, all written recipes (even commercially produced and consumed) presuppose some users' knowledge of technical verbs, tools, ingredients, and abilities and construct their readers as more or less knowledgeable and proficient. Nevertheless, these handwritten recipes for flaounes are especially elliptical. For the recipe readers' proposed identities, see Robin Tolmach LAKOFF, "Identity À La Carte: You Are What You Eat" in Anna DE FINA, Deborah SCHIFFRIN, and Michael BAMBERG (eds), *Discourse and Identity* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 142-65. For the linguistic features of written recipes see Cornelia GERHARDT, Maximiliane FROBENIUS, and Susanne HUCKLENBROICH-LEY (eds), *Culinary Linguistics: The Chef's Special* (Amsterdam, 2013), pp. 40, 60, 139.

cheese. This gustemological⁶⁷ approach to cooking that engages all senses and allows for the expression of the cook's agency alludes to Adapon's study of Mexican women.⁶⁸ In fact, written recipes are never a fixed point of departure and the recipe that is followed that year is retrospective and only written *after* they have prepared the flaounes (sometimes with notes on what could be improved for next year).

[insert image 3]

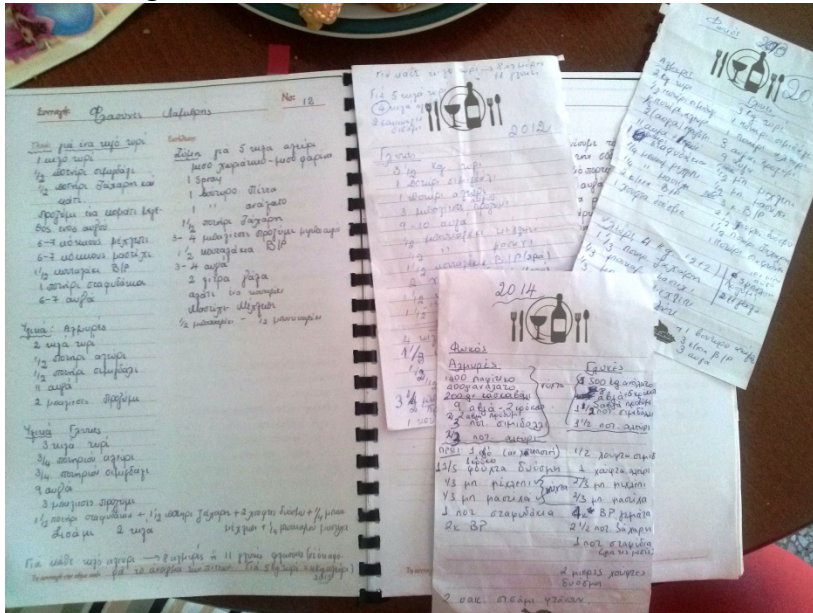


Image 3: A collection of a family's recipes for flaounes: on the left is the general recipe and on the right the variations of the recipe followed in 2012, 2013, and 2014 {caption}

Since written recipes are elliptical and not prescriptive, the exact ingredients, measurements and processes that are followed are subject to intense negotiation and contestation before, during, and after the production of flaounes. In my fieldwork, participants were constantly contesting each other, but also seeking reinforcement or advice, while preparing flaounes and lengthy and animated discussions ensued. Interlocutors would claim and contest authority through referring to written artefacts of last years' recipes (especially the just prior year), but also through recounting past experiences, alluding to written and unwritten recipes or advice from acquaintances and celebrity chefs. This is further evidence that the aim is to produce the best possible flaounes in terms of taste and appearance and not to be constrained by the written or unwritten recipes of the past. This attitude towards cooking which defies the logic of grams and measuring cups, is also linked to the sociability of preparing flaounes collaboratively.⁶⁹ This is comparable to the attitude towards food preparation discussed in

⁶⁷ I use here Sutton's term 'gustemology' to mean "a wide spectrum of cultural issues around taste and other sensory aspects of food". See David E. SUTTON, "Food and the Senses", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 39 (2010), p. 215.

⁶⁸ Joy ADAPON, *Culinary Art and Anthropology...*, pp. 21, 48.

⁶⁹ For apprenticeship to a craft, see John FLETT, "Alasdair Macintyre's Tradition-Constituted Enquiry in Polanyian Perspective", *Tradition and Discovery*, vol. 26, no. 2 (1999), pp. 12-13.

Ball's survey of Cretan cookbooks⁷⁰ and Goody's and Sutton's observations of oral and practice-based transmission of recipes.⁷¹

Discussions of ingredients and processes are not confined to the spatiotemporal sites of flaouna-making, but exchange and sharing of recipes can occur before or after baking or consuming flaounes, as well. As Abarca shows, this "free communal exchange of sharing recipes that takes place in private settings" is at odds with issues of generally recognised 'ownership' of recipes (for commercial purposes, e.g. in print cookbooks)⁷² and is something that people view most favourably.⁷³ Conversational recipe tellings are a prime site where the categorisation 'good/best flaouna' and also 'culinary expertise' are negotiated.

7 Conversational recipe tellings

I have shown elsewhere that recipe tellings and talk about food, in general, are the most frequent topic in everyday conversations of older Greek Cypriot women.⁷⁴ In interactions just prior to or after Easter, exchanges about flaounes dominate the floor. The way recipe tellings are organized in talk-in-interaction is revealing of the participants' categorical and identity work as well as how peer-learning is achieved in practice.

The extract below is from a self-recorded conversation just after Easter of 2008 (7 May) when the close-knit, all-female friendship group comprising Gregoria (79), Tasoulla (63), Myria (73), Loulla (74), and Charoulla (74) visited Olivia (74), at her house in a suburb of Nicosia to congratulate her on her granddaughter's wedding. This extract is in the second half of the conversation and is part of an extended sequence, fifteen minutes long, where participants exchange recipes and stories about making flaounes.

Excerpt 3

Participants: Gregoria, Tasoulla, Myria, Olivia, Loulla, Charoulla; 7 May 2008, Olivia's house

1. Γ είντα: είντα τυρίν βάλλεις?
2. Ο πκοιαν μάνα μου?
3. Γ είντα τυρίν βάλλεις?
4. Ο έβαλα:: τρία Παφίτικα.
5. Γ α.
6. Ο τζ' έβαλα τζαι θκυο:μισι κιλά κασκαβάλλιν
7. Τ μμ. [εν] το
8. Μ [μμ]
9. Τ κασκα[βάλλιν που τε:: ς]

⁷⁰ Eric L. BALL, "Greek Food after Mousaka...", p. 23.

⁷¹ Jack GOODY, "The Recipe, the Prescription and the Experiment" in Carole COUNIHAN and Penny VAN ESTERIK (eds), *Food and Culture: A Reader* (New York; Oxon, 2008), p. 86. David E. SUTTON, *Remembrance of Repasts: An Anthropology of Food and Memory* (New York, 2001).

⁷² Meredith ABARCA, "Authentic or Not...", p. 4.

⁷³ Frances SHORT, *Kitchen Secrets: The Meaning of Cooking in Everyday Life* (Oxford; New York, 2006), p. 37.

⁷⁴ Talk about food and recipes covered a sixth of all self-recorded everyday conversations (three out of eighteen hours of data) and more than ninety recipes were shared in these conversations. See, Anna CHARALAMBIDOU, "Η Συγκρότηση της 'Καλής Μαγείρισσας' μέσω Συνομιλιακών Συνταγών Ηλικιωμένων Γυναικών της Κύπρου" [The Construction of Culinary Expert Through Recipe Tellings Among Older Greek Cypriot Women.] in T. S. PAVLIDOU (ed.): *Ελληνική Γλώσσα και Προφορική Επικοινωνία: Μελέτες για τον Πορφορικό Λόγο* [Greek Language and Conversational Interaction: Studies in Spoken Discourse], (Thessaloniki, 2015), pp. 217-232.

10. Ο [τζ' έβαλα τζαι]
 11. Θκυο άλλα <του [πίττα>. έναν [ανάλατον τζ' ένα::ν]
 12. Τ [τζ' εμείς στην [δουλειά:ν μας]()]
 13. Μ [χαλλούμ[ιν? χαλλούμιν?]
 14. Γ [τυρίν ανάλατον]
 15. Τ [η μαστόρισσα έτσι φλα]ούνες
 16. Ο [όι όι τυρίν ανάλατον]
 17. Μ α.
 18. Γ [ανάλατον μέσα [για να πκιάννει την αρμυράδα.]
 19. Χ [εν εψηλώσαν? [εν εψηλώσαν εσένα?]
 20. Ο [νναι. διότι ήταν αρμυρά]
 21. Λ εμέναν εγίναν η πρώτη χρονιά [που έκαμα καλές φλαούνες ήταν φέτος.]
 22. Ο [βάλλω πάντα ποτζείν' τα ανάλατα μέσα]
 23. Λ πρώτη φορά. γιατί εψησαμέν τες εις τον Τάκη.
 24. Ο φέτι?
 25. Λ τζ' εφουσκώσαν τζ' εγίναν ήταν πολλά ωραίες.
 26. Μ μμ
 27. Λ τζαι γευσάτες τζαι ούλα. πρώτη
 28. [χρονιά ευχαριστήθηκα φλαούνες.]
 29. Χ [προζύμιν κόρη. άμαν βάλλετε] προζύμιν, εν το:: [η φλαούνα] θέλει προζύμι.
 30. Ο [το προζύμι]
 31. Λ [μες το κάζι δεν κάμνεις φλαούνες. [εν κάμνεις]
 32. Τ [() [όι εμε-]
 33. εγιώ κάμνω τες.
 34. Λ ό ο
 35. Χ τζαι μες το κάζι.

1. G wha:t what cheese do you put?
 2. O which my dear?
 3. G what cheese do you put?
 4. O I pu::t three ((cheeses)) from Paphos.
 5. G ah.
 6. O and I also added two: and a half kilos of *kaskavalli* cheese
 7. Τ mm. [it's] the
 8. Μ [mm]
 9. Τ kaska[valli tha::t]
 10. Ο [and also I put]
 11. two more [<Pittas'> cheeses. one [unsalted and one::]
 12. Τ [and we at [our: work]()]
 13. Μ [halloum[i? halloumi?]
 14. G [unsalted cheese]
 15. Τ [the boss flaounes] like this
 16. Ο [no no unsalted cheese]
 17. Μ ah.
 18. G [unsalted inside [to balance the saltiness.]
 19. C [they didn't rise up? [yours didn't rise ?]
 20. Ο [yes. because they were salty]
 21. L mine they turn out this year was the first year that [I made nice flaounes.]
 22. Ο [I always add those unsalted ones]

23. L for the first time. because we baked them at Takis'.⁷⁵
 24. O this year?
 25. L and they rose and they were done they were very nice.
 26. M mm
 27. L and tasty and everything. the first
 28. [year that I enjoyed flaounes.]
 29. C [leaven dear. if you put] leaven, it is the:: [the flaouna] needs leaven.
 30. O [the leaven]
 31. L [in the cooker you can't make flaounes. [you can't make]
 32. T [() [no mine-]
 33. I do them.
 34. L nope nope
 35. C in the cooker as well.

Here Gregoria wants to find out how Olivia did the cheese filling for her flaounes, partly because Olivia originally comes from a village in Paphos and might, therefore, follow a different recipe. Initially (in lines 2-6) Olivia is given the floor to answer Gregoria's question. As Olivia's answer is a multi-turn unit (recipe), the normative expectation is that competition for the floor would be momentarily suspended to allow the speaker to complete her recipe.⁷⁶ However, before Olivia concludes, Tasoulla takes advantage of the transition relevance place⁷⁷ at the end of line 6 to provide her own opinion on kaskavalli cheese (lines 7 and 9). Subsequently, although Olivia has floor-holding rights and is clearly still in the middle of her turn and recipe telling (in line 11), Tasoulla attempts to maintain the floor through a violative interruption⁷⁸ to list the ingredients used at her workplace (line 12). Tasoulla was an employee at a bakery at the time, having worked in the past in a family-owned bakery, and at this point exhibits special interest in pursuing her own recipe telling (as evident also from l. 15). Myria contests to Tasoulla's bid for the floor and with her question in line 13 attributes the next turn to Olivia to continue with her list of ingredients. At the same time, Gregoria (line 14) with a progressional overlap attempts to complete Olivia's unfinished utterance in line 11 and thus also give the floor back to her. Olivia does provide a second pair part and completes listing her ingredients, but only through simultaneous talk (line 16). As can be seen here, there are extended instances of overlaps and violative interruptions, despite the preference in conversation for quick resolution of simultaneous talk, usually within two or three syllables.⁷⁹ This shows that participants have heightened interest for competing for the just upcoming turn, in order to provide their own evaluation of ingredients and processes or (more importantly) pursue their own recipe telling.

⁷⁵ "Takis" is a local bakery that offers to bake their customer's home-prepared flaounes in its professional oven.

⁷⁶ For turn-taking rules, see Harvey SACKS, Emanuel A. SCHEGLOFF and Gail JEFFERSON, "A Simplest Systematics for the Organization...", p. 696-735. It is important to note that in Conversation Analysis, these 'rules' are expectations that participants have about each other's conduct; participants themselves draw attention in some way or other to deviation from these rules. Hence, they are not a set of regularities that one can observe in behaviour or a set of psycholinguistic rules for assembling well-formed utterances (see e.g. Ian HUTCHBY and Robin WOOFFITT, *Conversation Analysis...*, pp. 50-51).

⁷⁷ A transition relevance place is the point where a turn construction unit ends (identified by primarily intonational, but also prosodic and syntactic means) and the speaker may change. See, e.g. Stephen LEVINSON, *Pragmatics...*, p. 297.

⁷⁸ An interruption is simultaneous talk which does not occur at or near a transition relevance place and apparently violates turn-taking norms: Robert NOFSINGER, *Everyday Conversation* (London, 1991), p. 102.

⁷⁹ Emanuel A. SCHEGLOFF, "Overlapping Talk and the Organisation of Turn-taking for Conversation", *Language in Society*, vol. 29 (2000), pp. 1-63.

Another interesting feature is recipe-internal elicitation, most often through polar questions, as in lines 13 and 19. These questions aim to elicit one particular aspect of the recipe, and thus move the recipe telling forward, but also, at the same time, showcase the culinary knowledge of the questioner; e.g. Myria in line 13 exhibits her knowledge that halloumi cheese goes in the flaounes filling. Continued elicitation throughout the recipe telling is a recurrent characteristic of conversational recipes in the data. Another feature of recipe tellings that can be seen in this extract is disagreement and contestation about the best way of making flaounes. At the end of the extract (lines 31-35), the participants disagree on the best way to bake flaounes: Loulla is in favour of taking her home-prepared flaounes to be baked in a professional bakery and Tasoulla and Charoulla argue that flaounes baked in the home cooker also turn out well. This is only a brief contestation, but in other instances heated and extended negotiations about what is the best way of making flaounes recur, including for example, detailed negotiations on the amount of oil and butter than goes in the dough or when the dough should be kneaded.

On the whole, recipe tellings about flaounes are a site of negotiation and contestation, with recurrence of joint drafting, overlaps, interruptions, and questioning. The joint drafting or collaborative telling of recipes is shown through the extended recipe-recipient's contributions to the telling of the recipe, by providing details and evaluations of the recipe, posing questions, and completing the teller's turns (as in line 14).⁸⁰ These aspects of sequential organization do not recur when the participants of this study discussed other topics. Thus this intense and explicit competition for the floor cannot be attributed to a general 'high involvement' conversational style of this group, or of the 'culture' it belongs to.⁸¹ Moreover, these organizational characteristics cannot be said to be genre-specific, as they do not occur in conversational recipe tellings, in general, as have been analysed in other sociocultural contexts.⁸²

Participants' increased interest and involvement is in fact linked to the topic of the conversation: recipe tellings of *festive* foods. Research on the conversational practices in talk about festive food, in the context of focus group discussions of older women in rural Canada and New Zealand, has shown that whenever the topic shifted to sharing and comparing recipes, the participants' conversations became more vibrant.⁸³ This can be attributed to the fact that festive foods are more likely to be offered to guests and to be given to people outside the house, and hence "bridge the gap between the private world of the home and the public

⁸⁰ For the interactional characteristics of conversational recipe tellings, see also Anna CHARALAMBIDOU, "The Construction of Culinary Expert through Recipe Tellings...", pp. 217-32.

⁸¹ Tannen has argued that Greek conversations are characterized by high-involvement style (which includes exaggerated intonation, extended overlaps and interrupting questions). See e.g., Deborah TANNEN, "Introducing Constructed Dialogue in Greek and American Conversational and Literary Narratives" in Florian COULMAS (ed.), *Direct and Indirect Speech* (Berlin, 1986), pp. 311-32.

⁸² Norrick analysed a corpus of conversational recipe tellings in English and found that this genre shares structural characteristics with both narratives and written recipes. Neal NORRICK, "Conversational Recipe Telling", *Journal of Pragmatics*, vol. 43 (2011), pp. 2740-61.

⁸³ For Canada see Grace O'SULLIVAN, Clare HOCKING, and Valerie WRIGHT-ST. CLAIR, "History in the Making: Older Canadian Women's Food-Related Practices", *Food and Foodways*, vol. 16, no. 1 (2008), pp. 63-87. For New Zealand see Valerie WRIGHT-ST CLAIR, Clare HOCKING, Wannipa BUNRAYONG, Soisuda VITTAYAKORN, and Phuonjai RATTAKORN, "Older New Zealand Women doing the Work of Christmas: A Recipe for Identity Formation", *The Sociological Review*, vol. 53, no. 2 (2005), pp. 332-50.

domain and thus are socially symbolic of culinary competence".⁸⁴ Sutton has shown that these gifts and counter-gifts of foods, and stories about them become a central element of personal and group identity for Kalyrnians.⁸⁵ My ethnographic research has confirmed that indeed participants gift their homemade flaounes to members outside of their household, including extended family members, neighbours, friends, their doctor, hairdresser, grocer, fellow church goers etc. Flaounes (and also their interactional construction) are, therefore, a prime opportunity for participants to showcase their culinary and domestic skills not just to their family, but also to their entire community.

8 Evaluating 'tradition' and 'change'

In excerpt 3, above, Loulla mentions that for the first time that year she baked her flaounes at a bakery, and she evaluates this change very positively (l. 21 onwards). She uses exaggeration, by saying that this is the first time her flaounes turn out good (in l. 21), even though she had praised highly her oven-cooked flaounes in previous years. Interestingly, although positive self-assessments invite and are systematically followed by an agreement in the next turn,⁸⁶ what occurs here, instead, is a request for clarification (line 24), minimal responses (line 26) or the continuation of the previous recipe telling (lines 22 and 29, 30). A weak agreement with the previous positive self evaluation is often oriented to by the participants as yet unstated disagreement;⁸⁷ and the disagreement is then explicitly expressed by Tasoulla, in lines 32-33 and Charoulla in line 35. This very positive evaluation of the change in her practices is something that Loulla repeats two more times in the remainder of this 30-minute conversation (interrupting Olivia's recipe telling), probably as a strategic manoeuvre to secure the next turn and pursue her own recipe-telling and thus show her culinary expertise.

Loulla orients to change as beneficial, and something that both she and her family can enjoy. Orientating to family's tastes and preferences (and to themselves as providers of food)⁸⁸ is a recurrent theme in Cypriot women's talk about food. Other participants also mention changes they have made to their recipes over the years, in line with new trends and dietary requirements of their family members. The recipes members use are based on a combination of recipes from female relatives, neighbours, friends, and celebrity chefs and do not remain unchanged. They are adapted (even changed drastically) year-by-year in response to mistakes of past years, evolving family taste, dietary requirements, new advice from friends, family, celebrity chefs etc. Even the oldest participants, in their late eighties, would actively seek new information and tweak their flaounes recipes every year. However, unlike previous research,⁸⁹ these twists are not viewed as problematic or at odds with authenticity or tradition.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 344.

⁸⁵ David E. SUTTON, *Remembrance of Repasts...*

⁸⁶ Anita POMERANTZ, "Agreeing and Disagreeing with Assessment: Some Features of Preferred/Dispreferred Turn Shapes" in J. Maxwell ATKINSON and John HERITAGE (eds), *Structure of Social Action: Studies in Conversation Analysis* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 57-101.

⁸⁷ Ibid., pp. 68-9, 76.

⁸⁸ Bob ASHLEY, Joanne HOLLOWS, Ben TAYLOR, and Steve JONES, *Food and Cultural Studies: Studies in Consumption and Markets* (London; New York, 2004), p. 129.

⁸⁹ For example, Meredith ABARCA, "Authentic or Not..." p. 18, discusses how newer recipes might render Mexican foods as not real or authentic (albeit still original to their creators).

The following written account is in response to the question “Do you know any recipes about flaounes?” and is a representative account of how family and personal recipes change year on year.

“Ξέρω μία συνταγή για φλαούνες, αυτήν που ακολουθούμε κάθε χρόνο με μικρές αλλαγές, ανάλογα με το αποτέλεσμα της προηγούμενης χρονιάς. Οι συνταγές προερχόντουσαν από διάφορες γυναίκες που ήξεραν να κάνουν φλαούνες και μετέφεραν την συνταγή στις φίλες τους ή στα παιδιά τους. Τα τελευταία χρόνια υπάρχουν πολλές τηλεοπτικές εκπομπές στις οποίες εμφανίζονται διάσημοι σεφ από την Κύπρο και δείχνουν πώς γίνονται οι φλαούνες. Μερικές φορές η οικογενειακή συνταγή τροποποιείται βάσει των υποδείξεων αυτών.”

“I know a recipe for flaounes, the one we follow every year, with some changes, depending on the outcome of the year before. The recipes originate from various women that knew how to make flaounes and they would transmit the recipe to their [female] friends or their children. Lately there are many television shows, in which famous Cypriot chefs show how flaounes are made. Sometimes the family recipe is modified based on these recommendations.”

(female, 29, written account, Nicosia, 2015)

Interestingly, the member here shifts from a personal account in the first sentence to a more de-personalized account about the origin and influences of recipes in Cyprus, in general, indexing that the pattern followed by her family is in line with the practices in the wider community. The passing of time and change in recipes is not constructed as loss of authenticity and tradition. This is a recurrent pattern in the data; change in recipes through trial and error, new information, and better access to ingredients is viewed as improvement. The following written account also echoes the evaluation of time-induced change as improvement.

“Διά μέσου των αιώνων οριστικοποιείται και τελειοποιείται μια συνταγή, ανάλογα βεβαίως με τις γευστικές τροποποιήσεις που επέρχονται με τα χρόνια.”

“Through the centuries a recipe is solidified and perfected, depending, of course, on how tastes change over the years.”

(female, 68, written account, Nicosia, 2015)

The association of the categorization ‘change’ with positive category-bound attributions, however, does not occur in all contexts. There are instances where change is negatively evaluated. When participants were asked to say or write a story about flaounes they recounted an incident when something (often a change in ingredients, roles, or processes) went wrong. The following is a British Cypriot woman’s entire written response to the question “Are there any particular stories about flaounes that you would like to share?”.

“A few years ago I was told that I am wheat intolerant. This was just before Easter. I was devastated that I won't be able to have a flaouna or two. My mother in law came up with the ‘brilliant’ idea to make them with chickpea flour. I was so excited. We got all the ingredients and made the normal ones first and as they were baking all I could think of was I’ll be tasting one soon. Little did I know. Started kneading the dough with the chickpea flour. It was crumbling all over the place. The more water we put in the worse it got. My mother in law insisted that we could make it work. So we decided to lay a layer of the dough at the bottom of the baking tray spread the cheese mixture on top and then covered on top with another layer. We baked it and it looked fine. I had a piece while it was warm and it was edible and it resembled the taste of the flaouna. When I went to have another piece later oh dear it was like eating sand. Never again. I'd rather have a bit of pain and have a traditional flaouna than experiment again.”

(female, 38 years, written account, London, 2015)

In this extract the “brilliant” idea for the disastrous break from tradition (the use of chickpea instead of wheat flour) is attributed to the informant’s mother-in-law. In all cases the initiative for the ill-judged break from tradition was attributed to a third party, including sister or daughter. The fact that participants never take (full) responsibility for failures in making flaounes is shown in the fact that, even when recounting the same incident, members of the same family would place blame to someone other than themselves. This is further evidence of how important it is for the participants to claim for themselves the categorization of good cook, competent in making flaounes.

In the final sentence of the account above, the 38-year old participant orients to “traditional” as a categorization bound to the use of proper ingredients and to very positive attributions; a “traditional” flaouna is even worth enduring pain. Tradition here is not confined to practices back in Cyprus (the place of origin of the participant), but also to current practices in the diasporic community of London (so long as the ingredients are right). In fact this participant mentions elsewhere⁹⁰ that although the flaounes of her mother (who is in Cyprus) are the best, she likes all types, including newer (“healthier”) versions found in Cyprus and London with anari cheese and also the London variant with cheddar cheese. The translocal implications of domestically produced foodstuff (simultaneously making relevant family histories from the diaspora and the place of origin) is evocative of previous research on ‘home’ and ‘food’.⁹¹ My research shows, however, how ‘tradition’ itself is viewed by informants as a translocal concept – informed by past and present practices from a variety of spaces.

Like change, tradition can also be both positively and negatively evaluated and this suggests members’ reflexive orientations to past experiences.⁹² Although most frequently associated with positive attribution, tradition is viewed negatively e.g. when associated with flaounes the mother used to make thirty years ago, and which are not as tasty or presentable as the ones the family make now (after years of developing their skills and knowledge). This ambivalent evaluation of traditionality shows that for the participants the savoured and interactionally constructed quality (superior taste and appearance) rather than the authenticity or traditionality of their flaounes is their desideratum.

9 Concluding discussion

9.1 Cypriotness and culinary expertise

Flaounes are constructed as a quintessentially Cypriot product, inextricably linked to enduring and evolving practices and traditions, the authenticity and future of which are not threatened. Predictions for the future of flaounes are overwhelmingly positive by participants of all ages and genders, residing in Cyprus and abroad, both in written accounts and in the interviews. “As long as there are Cypriots, there will be flaounes”, mentions a 32-

⁹⁰ The relevant extract from her written account is: “My mum bakes flaounes as part of her job. They are the best. I always helped grating the cheese. I have now been making my own flaounes for the last 8-10 years. I love all types of flaounes, WITH the proper cheese, with 'anari' and with cheddar cheese (although they taste different).” (female, 38 years, written account, London, 2015)

⁹¹ Lidia MARTE, “Foodmaps...”, p. 275. Elia PETRIDOU, “The Taste of Home” in Daniel MILLER (ed.), *Home Possessions: Material Culture Behind Closed Doors* (Oxford; New York, 2001), pp. 87-104.

⁹² Julius ELSTER, “The Temporal Dimension of Reflexivity: Linking Reflexive Orientations to the Stock of Knowledge”, *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory*, vol. 18, no. 3 (2017), pp. 274-93.

year old woman from Limassol in a focus group discussion in 2015. All the informants of this study anticipate that Cypriots will keep making (or buying) and consuming flaounes at Easter time and that this will remain a “live aspect of our tradition” (male, 74, written account, Paphos, 2015). Younger informants, whether they themselves make flaounes or not, emphasized that, as flaounes are part and parcel of the Cypriot tradition, it is their duty to preserve it and pass it on to generations to come. Even with increased commercialization, the link between flaounes and Cypriotness is not expected to weaken. Regardless of the commercialization of the pastry, flaounes would remain “a product that has Cyprus as its exclusive country of origin” (female, 68, written account, Nicosia, 2015). All these examples attribute the longevity of flaounes to their inextricable association with the categorization ‘Cypriotness’. For Cypriots residing in Cyprus and abroad, making and consuming flaounes also provided the opportunity to index their Cypriotness (and this of course becomes more exacerbated in diasporic contexts) and fostered continuity of the idealized home. Since ‘tradition’ is often constructed as a malleable, changeable categorization, it seems that, for members, ‘Cypriotness’ with its more essential category-bound features, is what guarantees that practices around flaounes will remain unthreatened in the future.

In addition, flaounes for Cypriot women of all ages have high symbolic capital, because they provide ample opportunities for self-affirmation and public recognition. Members’ insistence in claiming the categorization ‘culinary expert’ through the practice of making flaounes, but - perhaps more prominently- through the interactional construction of the practice can be attributed to the functions of such talk. The heightened interest among the (female) informants who participate in making flaounes to claim that they use the ‘best’ recipe and makes the ‘best’ flaounes is shown through their meticulous note-taking of each year’s recipe (see Image 3, above), and most importantly in the sequential organization of extended, highly involved interactional sequences about flaounes. Talk about and while making flaounes has a set of recurrent organizational characteristics, including collaborative recipe tellings and high-involvement interactional style, with extended overlaps, interruptions, elaborations, assessment sequences, negotiation, and contestation. These characteristics of conversational recipes reveal the participants’ interest in exhibiting a wealth of knowledge about cooking techniques, practical skill, and engagement in cooking, and consequently membership in the category ‘expert in making flaounes’. Consequently, claiming the categorization of being competent in making flaounes appears to hold high social value, or in Bourdieu’s term symbolic capital for Greek Cypriot communities.⁹³

This is not only true for informants of the older generation, but also for informants of all ages who routinely participate in exchanging recipes, videos, and images about flaounes around Easter time and post images of their flaounes on their social media accounts. Although the representation of flaounes in social media could be the scope of a follow-on research, I would assume that this is a newer way of claiming one’s culinary expertise and performing in-groupness to an imagined (Cypriot) cultural community. My anecdotal evidence shows that posting images of one’s own flaounes and sharing recipes and ideas through social media are not confined to younger generations, only, but are practices performed by women up to their early seventies. As social media transcend geographical boundaries, they also contribute to

⁹³ Pierre BOURDIEU, “Language and Symbolic Power” in Adam JAWORSKI and Nikolas COUPLAND (eds), *The Discourse Reader* (London, 1999), pp. 502-13; Richard JENKINS, *Pierre Bourdieu* (London, 1992), p. 85.

the construction of an “imagined community, which is neither geographically bounded nor lacks the face-to-face communication”.⁹⁴

Recipe tellings and negotiations, face-to-face and online, offer interlocutors the opportunity to share, test, and develop their knowledge about flaounes. Although previous research on how recipes are transmitted orally and through practice has focused on relationships of subordination between a cook (e.g. mother) and an apprentice (e.g. the daughter),⁹⁵ this study has shown the importance of peer-learning and peer-contestations. In previous work, analysing everyday conversations of older Cypriot women, in particular, I have shown that discussions about domestic activities (especially cooking, but also cleaning and knitting) were by far their most frequent conversation practice, partly because the interlocutors worked to continuously reaffirm their membership to the categories of culinary expert and good homemaker (and by extension a good mother⁹⁶/grandmother/friend) through reports of their domestic activities and recipe tellings.⁹⁷ Recipe sharing,⁹⁸ food preparation, and cooking are still seen in most societies as prototypical female tasks⁹⁹ and participants of this study (of all ages) adhere, at least to a degree, to this gendered division of labour in their domestic practices. In the data, making flaounes and exchanging recipes were almost exclusively all-female activities.

The anthropologist Tullio Maranhão found that, for the Icarai fishermen in North-East Brazil, knowledge about fish was synonymous with learning how to be a good man that can provide

⁹⁴ I am borrowing this phrase from Georgiou’s research on ethnic media for North London’s Greek Cypriots. Myria GEORGIOU, *Negotiated Uses, Contested Meanings, Changing Identities: Greek Cypriot Media Consumption and Ethnic Identity Formations in North London*, PhD thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science (London, 2001), p. 2. My research shows how practices of the diasporic media are also echoed in food practices of individual actors.

⁹⁵ Jack GOODY, “The Recipe, the Prescription and the Experiment...”, p. 88. Sutton, on the other hand, has focused on both mother-daughter and ‘horizontal’ transmission. David E. SUTTON, *Secrets from the Greek Kitchen...*

⁹⁶ Cooking as linked to motherhood identifications is a recurrent finding in literature, including Anne ALLISON “Japanese Mothers and Obentos: The Lunchbox as Ideological State Apparatus” in Carole COUNIHAN and Penny VAN ESTERIK (eds), *Food and Culture: A Reader* (New York; Oxon, 2008), pp. 221-39; Marjorie DE VAULT, “Conflict and Deference” in Carole COUNIHAN and Penny VAN ESTERIK (eds), *Food and Culture: A Reader* (New York; Oxon, 2008), pp. 240-58.

⁹⁷ Anna CHARALAMBIDOU, “The Construction of Culinary Expert through Recipe Tellings...”, p. 225.

⁹⁸ Susan LEONARDI, “Recipes for Reading: Summer Pasta, Lobster-a-La-Riseholme, and Key Lime Pie”, *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, vol. 104, no. 3 (1989), p. 343.

⁹⁹ For the gendered construction of cooking in Mexico see Meredith ABARCA, “Charlas culinarias: Mexican Women Speak from their Public Kitchens”, *Food and Foodways*, vol. 15 (2007), p. 206 and, Ramona L. PEREZ, “Fiesta as Tradition, Fiesta as Change: Ritual, Alcohol and Violence in a Mexican Community”, *Addiction*, vol. 95, no. 3 (2000), pp. 365-73; for France see Michel DE CERTAN and Luce GIARD, “The Nourishing Act” in Carole COUNIHAN and Penny VAN ESTERIK (eds), *Food and Culture: A Reader* (New York; Oxon, 2008), p. 71; for Sweden, see Birgitta SIDENVALL, Margaretha NYDAHL and Christina FJELLSTRÖM, “The Meal as a Gift: The Meaning of Cooking Among Retired Women”, *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, vol. 19 (2000), p. 417; for Canada, see Grace O’SULLIVAN, Clare HOCKING, and Valerie WRIGHT-ST. CLAIR, “History in the Making...”, p. 64; for Japan, see Anne ALLISON “Japanese Mothers and Obentos...”, p. 228; for the Middle East and the Arab-speaking world, see chapters in Sami ZUBAIDA and Richard TAPPER (eds), *Culinary Cultures of the Middle East* (London; New York, 1994); for different ethnic groups and migrant communities in the USA and abroad see chapters in Arlene Voski AVAKIAN (ed.), *Through the Kitchen Window: Women Explore the Intimate Meanings of Food and Cooking* (Boston, 1997); and for ancient and contemporary societies throughout the world see Paul FIELDHOUSE, *Food and Nutrition: Customs and Culture* (Cheltenham, 1998), p. 113.

for his family and help his comrades.¹⁰⁰ Joy Adapon has shown how (home) cooking is linked with nurturing one's family and being a good wife,¹⁰¹ while Meredith Abarca shows how women are tasked with the role of keepers and teachers of (culinary) traditions.¹⁰² For the informants of this study, culinary expertise can be associated with identifications as a good homemaker ('vouκοκυρά'/*nikokira*) and good woman who can take care of and fulfil her obligations towards her family and, also, assist her friends when they are in need. The inextricable link between food, 'vouκοκυροσύνη' (*nikokirosini*/ domesticity),¹⁰³ and caring for others is evocative of previous research on associations of Greek food, where the domestic sphere (home) subsumes and interweaves values and practices of good cooking, being a good person, caring for others, cleanliness, family and family tradition, and sociability.¹⁰⁴ This is especially important for older participants, as inter-house food (and in general free care) provision, from older households (especially women) to younger households of the extended family is exceptionally frequent in Cyprus¹⁰⁵ and in the Cypriot migrant community in London.¹⁰⁶

9.2 Revisiting authenticity, tradition and change

The etymology of the word 'flaounes' is testament to the centuries-old history of the term and the custom's link to European-wide traditions of festive food for Spring-time religious celebrations. The participants in this study, however, appear to construct as more relevant to them (a) living memory rather than century-old history and traditions and (b) competitions over taste and quality of their own recipe and flaounes rather than claims of authenticity or tradition.

In written accounts, 'authenticity' is defined by participants as an ever-changing concept, linked to evolving personal tastes, family histories, shifting personal circumstances. This is in contrast to previous research that showed how in public discourse authenticity is viewed as standardization and a denying space for change and new creations.¹⁰⁷ Of course, social scientists have long problematized the fixation on (nostalgic) authenticity in ethnography and rejected binarisms of (in)authenticity.¹⁰⁸ The contribution of this study is that it shows how social members themselves reject such binarisms in the contingencies of situated activity.

Traditionality is a categorization that is often nominated by participants as an alternative to 'authentic' or 'real' flaounes. Tradition can be linked to an imaginary pre-technological past,

¹⁰⁰ Tullio MARANHÃO, "Recollections of Fieldwork Conversations, or Authorial Difficulties in Anthropological Writing" in Jane H. HILL and Judith T. IRVINE (eds), *Responsibility and Evidence in Oral Discourse* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 260-88.

¹⁰¹ Joy ADAPON, *Culinary Art and Anthropology...*, p. 45.

¹⁰² Meredith ABARCA, "Authentic or Not...", p. 12.

¹⁰³ 'Νουκοκυρά' (*nikokira* - female) can be translated as housewife, homemaker, hostess, landlady, or a house-proud woman capable in domestic duties (cleaning, cooking, organization). The male version of the term ('vouκοκύρης' - *nikokiris*) means master of the house, landlord, but also a provider, a family man, and tidy person.

¹⁰⁴ Elia PETRIDOU, "The Taste of Home...", pp. 87-104.

¹⁰⁵ Christos MINAS, David S. JACOBSON and Caroline MCMULLAN, "Welfare Regime and Inter-Household Food Provision: The Case of Cyprus", *Journal of European Social Policy*, vol. 23, no. 3 (2013), pp. 300-14.

¹⁰⁶ Helen CYLWIK, "Expectations of Inter-Generational Reciprocity among Older Greek Cypriot Migrants in London", *Ageing & Society*, vol. 22 (2002), pp. 599-613.

¹⁰⁷ Meredith ABARCA, "Authentic or Not...", p.12.

¹⁰⁸ Bob ASHLEY, Joanne HOLLOWS et al., *Food and Cultural Studies...*, pp. 9, 13. Dimitrios THEODOSSOPOULOS, "Laying Claim to Authenticity...", pp. 337-60.

but this is hardly ever the case. It is more often associated with living memory and family-specific ways of doing things. It is understood as a meaningful, but locally diffused categorization, without fixed features and attributions. Tradition is partly viewed in MacIntyre's terms of apprenticeship to a craft, "an art (craft), which can neither be specified in detail nor transmitted by prescription".¹⁰⁹ However, unlike MacIntyre's conceptualization of tradition as learnt through uncritical imitation of a master – for the participants of this study 'masters' (i.e. older family members, celebrity chefs, time-old traditions) are under scrutiny. As I argued above, Oakershott's conceptualization of tradition as inherited practices that *tacitly* shape all actions and utterances is more in line with how participants view both tradition and its source categorization, authenticity.¹¹⁰ That is why participants find authenticity hard to define and tradition a categorization that is abstract and not uproblematically positive.

Although tradition is often associated with positive attributions, 'change' is also often positively evaluated. This shows that for the participants (especially the older ones and the ones that are actively involved in making flaounes) tradition and doing things the 'old way' does not necessarily result in flaounes that are evaluated highly in terms of taste, appearance, or even nutritional value. Rather than viewing tradition as past to be preserved or discovered (as previous research has shown),¹¹¹ tradition is viewed as lived experience, open to innovation and change.

This research has shown how ideologies of 'authenticity' and to an extent 'tradition' are not grounded in the authority of long-standing, unchanged, and homogeneous practices. In fact, even though flaounes offer the means of constructing cultural specificity (Cypriotness) and aligning oneself with imagined and lived familial and community past, change and innovation are embraced. This is contrary to previous research that has shown how members go to great lengths to index their conservatism in food practices, when these practices are viewed as crucial in constructing cultural identity.¹¹² This might be, in part, because the participants of this study do not operate in a marketized context, where 'authenticity' and 'tradition' are commodities that need to be defended, re-affirmed and promoted, as is the case, for example, of Italian restaurants, targeting an upper-class clientele in urban centres in Israel, which employ 'authenticity' to differentiate from 'orientalised' pizzerias in the Israeli periphery.¹¹³ Another reason is because Greek Cypriots are not a minority group who feel their culture is under threat (e.g. like the Gullah in USA).¹¹⁴ However, even migrant informants of this study seemed open to innovation, acknowledged variation, and even appraised positively London-specific, non-traditional (and non-Cypriot) ingredients in flaounes (e.g.

¹⁰⁹ John FLETT, "Alasdair MacIntyre's Tradition-Constituted Enquiry...", p.13. See also James ALEXANDER, "Three Rival Views of Tradition...", p. 37.

¹¹⁰ Terry NARDIN, *The Philosophy of Michael Oakeshott* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 2001), p. 76.

¹¹¹ David E. SUTTON, "Food and the Senses...", p. 220.

¹¹² For the cultural conservatism in food practices of Gullah women in Georgia and South Carolina, see Josephine A. BOKU-BETTS, "We Got Our Way of Cooking Things: Women, Food, and Preservation of Cultural Identity among the Gullah", *Gender & Society*, vol. 9, no. 5 (1995), pp. 535-55.

¹¹³ Nir AVIELI, *Food and Power: A Culinary Ethnography of Israel* (Oakland, California, 2017), p. 103.

For another example where elaborate displays of authenticity are vital for Latino shops in Queens, New York, in attracting a clientele of compatriots and culinary tourists, see Ramona L. PEREZ, and Babette AUDANT, "Livin' La Vida Sabrosa: Savoring Latino New York" in Annie HAUCK-LAWSON, Jonathan DEUTSCH, and Michael LOMONACO (eds), *Gastropolis: Food and New York City* (Columbia, 2008), pp. 209-30.

¹¹⁴ Josephine A. BOKU-BETTS, "We Got Our Way of Cooking Things..."

cheddar cheese). This shows that members understand themselves as reflexive agents, who can develop a variety of orientations to conservation and change, both home and abroad.¹¹⁵

The fact that making flaounes is a live custom and that participants construe tradition as a multivalent category, bound to both positive and negative attributions, might explain why authenticity appears a problematic categorization, without obvious features. This helps understand how the concept of 'local authenticity'¹¹⁶ operates in everyday conversations. Local authenticity here, although is defined in abstract aesthetic terms, is not viewed as exclusionary; despite exclusion being a leitmotif in previous research on authenticity.¹¹⁷ In both written accounts and conversations, 'taste' appears to be an important (perhaps the most important) predicate of a flaouna as traditional, real, authentic, homemade, and ultimately good. But the taste and recipe of flaounes are important to the participants in and of themselves, and not because of a tenuous or even contested link to authenticity, traditions, or a place.¹¹⁸ On the contrary, the focus of participants is not on whether flaounes are authentic/traditional/real etc. but instead on assessing the taste and recipe of one's flaounes and claiming positive assessment for one's own production.

To conclude, this research reaffirms how "authenticity" is more a researchers' or food marketing concept, rather than a meaningful category for participants in their daily lives.¹¹⁹ This is partly because the practices associated with making and consuming flaounes are seeming 'natural' to the participants, albeit not trivial, as they generate heightened interest in conversations and are constructed as central to national identity. The ethnographic case of flaounes underscores the recognition that traditional foods can be viewed as culinary practices that are not fixed in place and space and that are constantly changing corresponding to economic, familial, dietary changes, even when people live all their lives in the same area. Innovations are not necessarily antithetical to what Cypriot women (and men) in Cyprus and the UK diaspora view as 'traditional'. Taste, although very important, is not about replicating past sensory experiences, but is used as a general guideline to link a range of current practices to those of the past. The acquisition of culinary expertise is an endless process of reflexive experimentation, contestation, learning, community building, and self-affirmation, as a 'Cypriot', a good homemaker, and a good woman.

¹¹⁵ Julius ELSTER, "The Temporal Dimension of Reflexivity...", p. 274.

¹¹⁶ Ball defines this as the "aesthetic rhetoric which is ambiguous enough to be interpreted both in romantic and nationalistic terms". Eric L. BALL, "Greek Food after Mousaka...", p. 18.

¹¹⁷ Eric L. BALL, "Greek Food after Mousaka...", p. 18. Kaelyn STILES, Ozlem ALTIOK and Michael M. BELL, "The Ghosts of Taste...", p. 233. Also, see Richard HANDLER, "Authenticity...", p. 4.

¹¹⁸ Unlike, for example, Stiles and colleagues who show how place, taste and authorship become important because of their association with the cultural politics of authenticity. Kaelyn STILES, Ozlem ALTIOK and Michael M. BELL, "The Ghosts of Taste...", pp. 225-36.

¹¹⁹ Meredith ABARCA, "Authentic or Not...", p. 1.

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Appendix: Transcription Symbols

In the extracts cited the following transcription symbols are used:

[Onset of overlapping or simultaneous talk
]	End of overlap
=	Latching
(.)	Pause shorter than 0.5 seconds
(..)	Pause longer than 0.5 seconds
::	Prolongation or stretching of the preceding sound
-	Cut-off or self interruption
<u>Underlined</u>	Stress or emphasis, usually by increased loudness
< >	Markedly slowed or drawn out talk
.	Falling or final intonational contour
?	High rise in intonation
,	Low rise in intonation (continuing intonation)