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Thomas Bouchet, Stéphane Gacon, François Jarrige, François-Xavier Nérard et Xavier Vigna (dir.), *La Gamelle et l'outil: manger au travail en France et en Europe de la fin du XVIII siècle à nos jours*. Nancy, Editions Arbre bleu, 2016. 367 pp. €25.00 (hb) ISBN 979-10-90129-15-3.

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Eating is an activity that may seem relatively marginal to our working lives--something that happens in the breaks between periods of work, or is accorded so little significance that it no longer even merits a break. In this context, it is perhaps not surprising that questions about how and what people eat have commanded only passing attention from labour historians. Likewise, while scholars working on France in particular have contributed to our historical understanding of food, gastronomy and restaurant culture, they have rarely focused on the factory or workshop as vantage points from which food culture might be explored. Thus, one of the primary merits of *La Gamelle et l'outil* is to demonstrate that norms and practices of eating at work constitute a rich object for historical analysis, illuminating a wide range of themes from hygiene and disciplinary practices to globalisation and everyday life.

As the co-editors of the volume note in their introduction, workplace eating began to emerge as an object of historical study in its own right around 2000, notably with the publication of works by Jakob Tanner and Martin Bruegel.^[1] More recently, studies such as Patricia Tilburg's examination of debates about lunch reform and the *midinettes*, have brought a gender history perspective to bear on the topic.^[2] Concerned at once with norms and everyday practices, the field has also been nourished by engagement with sociological and anthropological approaches exemplified in Nicolas Hatzfeld's 2004 study of the 'pause casse-croûte' at Peugeot-Sochaux.^[3] Bringing together some twenty-one essays with a chronological span ranging from 1793 to the present, *La Gamelle et l'outil* not only extends the range of case studies available to us, but offers an opportunity to reflect on broader questions of conceptualisation and periodisation.

To this end the volume seeks to delineate a series of distinct 'régimes d'alimentation au travail' which correspond to a large extent to successive phases in the organisation of work. This periodisation also informs the structure of the book. Part One--'Manger entre les champs et les villes au temps de l'industrialisation'--addresses the period from the end of the eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century, when the dominant regime of workplace eating was, it is suggested, artisanal and proto-industrial (p.357). Scarcity and affordability were significant preoccupations in this period, but with three contributions on the utopians and others exploring experiments in social commerce, the question of collective versus individual provision also looms large in the treatment offered here. Most of these contributions deal with French case studies, from the development of a cantine at the Toulon arsenal in 1793 (examined by Julien Saint-Romain), to the efforts of cooks' associations during the Second Republic (discussed by Vincent Robert), but Ophélie Siméon's chapter on New Lanark offers an illuminating detour via the utopian socialism of Robert Owen. The latter contribution also prefigures a number of themes that recur later in the volume: the place of paternalism in efforts to organise

workplace eating; questions of discipline and worker autonomy; tensions between management and workers' views of who 'owns' or regulates the time of the meal break.

A more industrial regime of workplace eating emerged in the period from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries, it is argued (p.357), shaped notably by the development of hygienism and the drive for rationalisation. These concerns come into focus in Part Two, which spans the period from the 1880s to the 1960s. Claudio Chêne's chapter on the regulation of food for Tonkinese workers sent under contract to New Caledonia (1891–1963) shows, for example, how the rationalisation and distribution of food was marked by ethnic and other status distinctions in a trans-colonial setting. Indeed, had *La Gamelle et l'outil* focused only on France and the French empire, one might have expected more extensive coverage of the colonial dimensions of workplace food. The volume opens out instead on to other national contexts, including the USSR and post-war Poland. This heterogeneity perhaps reflects the fact that it has its origins in a conference (held at the Université de Bourgogne in 2014). In any case, historians of France might find more interest in a series of nicely illustrated contributions (Farrige; Gacon; Poggioli; Porhel) which explore the history of the 'repas de grève' from the 1880s to the 1970s. Keeping strikers fed was of course crucial to the success of any strike and was often a major grass roots logistical operation. Such meals could also be moments of transgressive conviviality, particularly, as Poggioli notes (p. 203), when 'arrosés' with copious quantities of wine.

Even in the course of the normal working day, meal breaks were potential opportunities for political and trade union discussions, as Pascal Raggi notes in a chapter on miners in postwar France in the final part of the book. Similarly, the tightly regulated breaks of assembly line workers could be re-appropriated as moments of solidarity and conviviality when workers clubbed together to lay on a hastily consumed festive spread for the holidays (p. 302). These examples reflect the emphasis in the final part of the volume on history 'from below' and on ethnographic methods. Moreover, while industry and industrial workers take centre stage in *La Gamelle et l'outil*, two contributions from sociologists address contemporary professional groups whose relationship to worktime (and therefore to break time) is rather different from that of factory workers: Michaël Meyer's chapter on police officers and Gwenaële Rot's on the film industry. Thus, if the constraints on eating at work mean that such meal times can never be considered in isolation from work itself, the boundary between the two is, Rot argues, particularly porous in the film-set canteen (p. 351).

In their concluding remarks, the co-editors seem less inclined to see the contemporary period in terms of a particular regime of workplace eating, noting instead the extent to which eating practices more generally have been transformed in this period, partly as a result of a revolution in the ways in which food is produced and distributed. One might also ask how far changes in the organisation of work since the 1980s have affected workplace eating practices, and what this tells us about changing norms around worktime, for example. Perhaps someone has already written a sociology of lunch 'al desko'—a workplace eating practice that many of those reading this are probably familiar with—but this volume certainly demonstrates not only the interest of workplace eating as an object for further enquiry but the value of a dialogue between sociological, ethnographic and historical approaches in this endeavour.

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[1] Jakob Tanner, *Fabrikmahlzeit. Ernährungswissenschaft, Industriearbeit und Volksernährung in der Schweiz 1890-1950* (Zurich: Chronos Verlag, 1999); Martin Breugel, 'Le repas à l'usine: industrialisation, nutrition et alimentation populaire' *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 51:3 (2004): 183-198.

[2] Patricia Tilburg, "Sa coquetterie tue la faim": Garment Workers, Lunch Reform and the Parisian Midinette, 1896-1933' *French Historical Studies*, 38:2 (2015): 281-309.

[3] Nicolas Hatzfeld, 'La pause casse-croûte. Quand les chaînes s'arrêtent à Peugeot-Sochaux', *Terrain*, 39 (2002) : 33-48.

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