

The Secular Heritage of Confraternities - A European Experience of Differentiation

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Abstract. The aim of this study was to demonstrate the importance of confraternities, whether Bacchic, gastronomic, or cultural, as a true receptacle of an immeasurable intangible heritage, so important for present and future generations, especially in the Douro region. To carry out this exploratory study, a bibliographic research was carried out, through consultations on web pages, articles in newspapers, reports and master's and doctoral theses, and published books. Secondary analysis was carried out based on data obtained at the congress of CEUCO – European Council of Enogastronomic Confraternities, in 2019, with some references and socio-demographic data, considering the different experiences of the different confraternities. In conclusion, we can say that this movement of the Confraternities has proved to be important both for the circular economy and for the preservation of endogenous products and, above all, for the maintenance of the intangible heritage and local development.

Keywords: Confraternities, culture, heritage, local development, tourism.

1 Introduction

Wine and gastronomy tourism emerges as a powerful strategy for differentiating destinations in the world. In Portugal, it has been recognized as a fundamental destination, if not as one of the best destinations for food and wine travel¹. Without a doubt, the Confraternities are, par excellence, one of the promoters of the Mediterranean diet, which has been recognized (since 2012) as Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO². In the opinion of Graça Moura (2013), culture³, and here we can include gastronomic culture, plays an essential role, in terms of common roots of the immense fabric that was formed over the centuries in all areas of culture and whose meshes are they mirror and respond to each other in a kaleidoscopic way in space and time. The Confraternities appear as material and immaterial heritage and their dissemination and promotion has repercussions at a regional, national and world level. Sonati, et.al. (2009), states that the identity of a people resides mainly in their language and food culture. It is increasingly important to address the issue of diet and food culture, associated with the knowledge and flavours of populations, places, countries, and regions. In this sense, and in the defence of this heritage that integrates the Mediterranean diet, the Confraternity appear as a means of preserving material and immaterial heritage and have a special intervention about its dissemination and promotion with repercussions at regional, national and world levels. With a collection that is part of our memories, whether in gastronomic terms, or in Bacchic and cultural terms, the various Confraternities have repercussions in the future, being a form of differentiation. In the various scientific research documents, we can see that its roots go back to the Roman *collegia* and the Germanic guilds. It was in Rome that the first Colleges and Confraternities came together in taverns where snacks were made and the "servants" walked very well decorated, letting themselves be courted by customers who sometimes got into violent disputes, to get the favours of the employed (Machado, 2016). In Portugal, the oldest Confraternities date back to the 12th century. One of them is the Confraternity of S. João do Souto in the city of Braga, whose former commitment was lost. Also noteworthy is the Confraternity of Fungalvás, village of the Parish of Our Lady of Purification (Nossa Senhora da Purificação de Assentiz) of Assentiz, Municipality of Torres Novas. But it is in Tomar that the oldest Confraternities are found (Bexiga, in the parish of Our Lady of Conception (Nossa Senhora da Conceição), that of Payalvo, village in the parish of Our Lady of New Church (Nossa Senhora da Igreja Nova), in the municipality of Tomar, and Santa Maria de Olaia, parish from the Municipality of Torres Novas, all of them with such primitive characteristics, but which still maintain the heritage collection.

2 The Mediterranean diet and the confraternities

¹ In addition to the distinctions, in 2020 Portugal also included the distinction of "Europe's Leading Wine Region Hotel 2020 - L'AND Vineyards, Portugal". Consult the "Turismo de Portugal" website for more information: <http://www.turismodeportugal.pt/pt/Noticias/Paginas/portugal-e-melhor-destino-europeu-pelo-quarto-ano-consecutivo.aspx>

The Mediterranean diet, recognized for its nutritional quality and healthy lifestyle that it promotes (among many other benefits)⁴. The *diata* (δίαιτα) referred above all to a diet practiced in the Mediterranean basin – it denotes a behavioural and organizational component that often went unnoticed by researchers in the area⁵. Nevertheless, the connection seems to be obvious and reflects the different dynamics that were generated, both from a social point of view and from an economic and political point of view (one cannot and should not abdicate the geostrategic notion that configured the Mediterranean as a commercial exponent for centuries in the profitability of its products). Brief, the Mediterranean diet as a phenomenon reflects the structures of society (Mascarenhas, 2015). The Mediterranean Diet involves a set of know-how, knowledge, rituals, symbols and traditions about agricultural techniques, fishing, cattle raising, conservation, processing, preparation and, especially, sharing and consumption of food.

The Mediterranean Diet was the second Portuguese element to integrate the list of intangible heritage of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)⁶, on December 4, 2013, having Tavira, a city in the Algarve, chosen in Portugal as a community representative of the application. The Mediterranean Diet is a cultural model that incorporates ancient social values and practices. By guaranteeing the preservation of the Mediterranean Diet and the values associated with it, it is also ensured that “the knowledge, creativity, identity and sustainability of territories and the environment are enhanced”⁷.

The nutritional model of this diet has remained constant through time and space, the main ingredients are olive oil, cereals, fresh or dried fruits and vegetables, a moderate

² “The recent recognition by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) of the Mediterranean diet as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity reinforces, together with the scientific evidence, the Mediterranean diet as a cultural and health model”. (Serra-Majem *et al.*, 2012, 157).

³ “Not as a compensating and informing roller, but as an addition of breathing in freedom towards the other and each one, and that there is a framework of cultural and linguistic diversity, which duly values what is proper to this cultural dimension, the common roots of the immense fabric that was formed over the centuries in all areas of culture and whose meshes mirror and respond in a kaleidoscope way in space and time.”

⁴ “The Mediterranean diet has numerous beneficial effects on among others the immune system, against allergies, on the psyche, or even on quality of life, topics that are currently fields of research. The Mediterranean diet has an international projection; it is regarded as the healthiest and the most sustainable eating pattern on the planet and is a key player in the public health nutrition field globally, but especially in the Mediterranean area. Moreover, this ancient cultural heritage should be preserved and promoted from different areas: public health, agriculture, culture, politics, and economic development”. (Serra-Majem *et al.*, 2012, 157).

⁵ It did not go unnoticed by the American physiologist Ancel Keys who, in a study extended to different Mediterranean countries, found the lowest incidence of myocardial infarctions in the countries of the Mediterranean basin (which correlated with the consumption of olive oil at the expense of other fats) and that he would earn it prestige to appear on the cover of Times Magazine (Jan. 1961).

⁶ The first one, was the Fado

⁷ Ana Paula Martins, mayor of Tavira

proportion of meat, fish and dairy products, abundant condiments and whose consumption at the table is accompanied by wine or infusions, always respecting the beliefs of each community. The Mediterranean diet also gave rise to a considerable body of knowledge, chants, refrains, tales, and legends. All this knowledge and flavours are deposited in recipes that are in the possession of many Confraternities and have kept the art of making them over time.

3 The confraternities in Europe and the Mediterranean diet

We can say that the Confraternities are sentinels of the enormous and rich cultural heritage and, above all, of a living culture. This identity is present from the utensils, the products, the confection, and the recording in books, whether of the vineyard and wine, or of the traditions and, essentially, of the places. It is the culture passed down from generation to generation, eagerly hoping the chain does not break. This connection between gastronomy and culture is evident when referring to:

A set of dietary practices determined over time by a society, begins to identify it and often becomes cultural heritage. The act of feeding, more than biological, involves the ways and technologies of cultivation, handling and collection of food, the choice, storage and forms of preparation and presentation, thus constituting a social and cultural process.

Bakhtin will say, being invited or inviting someone to participate in the Confraternity, to carry out a food experience, to attend or to be present in the space, means giving it importance in a local context, believing in its value. It also presages the fastening of bonds of solidarity that intend to be thick and capable of reproducing the institution, giving it a particular identity that is celebrated at dinner, the paroxysm of work and its foundation. “The image of the banquet is organically associated with all popular festival images. The banquet is an essential moment of all popular rejoicing” (Bakhtin, 1970: 277), as it is around a table, lecturing and discussing, laughing, or satirizing, feeding to excess drunkenness and voracity, that the group celebrates itself as a collective, canonize affirmative behaviour and systematize the network. It is by making the invitation that the group joins the wider collective, which builds a tangle of solidarities that sustain and credit the presence of relatives and friends during the time the work is being built. The banquet “is the triumph of life over death”, of the body that renews itself, of the liberation of the word, completes Bakhtin. The conviviality at the table is a vital element of the cultural identity and continuity of communities throughout the Mediterranean basin, being a moment of social exchange and communication, an affirmation and renewal of the identity of the family, group, or community.

This work aims to discover the impact of confraternities on local development, considering the preservation of the Mediterranean diet. It intends to analyse, through a cultural, gastronomic, and Bacchic context, how each Confraternity works with the preservation of the intangible heritage. Its objective is to demonstrate the importance of Confraternities in tourism and, above all, in sustainability and local development. The Confraternities work with endogenous products and a whole recipe that, despite being ancestral, has been maintained through the promoted events. In this sense, either the Fed-

eration of Confraternities, the European Council of Confraternities, or each of the confradic structures, seeks, through its confreres and confreres, to preserve and disseminate an entire identity patrimony of the regions and the art of Knowledge and Flavours. Without a doubt, they are a true receptacle of an immeasurable intangible heritage.

All these traditions are being collected and compiled and it is, above all, the confraternities that are responsible for ensuring their dissemination and preservation (museums, wineries on farms and wineries, restaurants and taverns, products and their production or elaboration, transmit an empirical knowledge that is unveiled to us by the hands of professionals who in multiple palettes of colours, smells and tastes make us discover this cultural wealth that focuses on gastronomy and wines. congress such as: olive oil, citrus fruits, legumes, aromatic plants, wine, the smoker itself, form the basis of the so-called Mediterranean diet. It was verified, through the information given by the participants and representatives of the various confraternities, that it should be to consider, of immeasurable importance, the entire cultural and enogastronomic movement, promoted by each of the Confraternity, during the weekends and throughout the year. visits made by the members of the Confraternity are scheduled annually and the members are divided to be present, throughout the country, at the commemorative events. At every moment, they appreciate the flavours of endogenous products and the way in which the various products and by-products are manufactured and handled.

4 European Confraternities Congress – CEUCO Algarve 2019

Through the European CEUCO congress, which took place in the Algarve in 2019, we sought to understand the functioning of the various Confraternities, and to know how the Mediterranean diet worked, as its focus was on the knowledge and flavour of the sea. We intend to make possible the systematization of the Gastronomic Confraternities, the Bacchic Confraternities or Oenophiles and the Cultural Confraternities within an association such as the European Council of Confraternities. With such a high number of participants, belonging to more than one Confraternity, it was not possible to obtain all the data referring to all 123 Confraternity registered in this congress. Although it was easy to analyse the products by sampling, it was not possible to properly track the products and by-products that make up the Mediterranean diet.

It was decided to analyse the confraternities and the products they presented and not the members who registered, as there were situations in which the country did not correspond to the lecturer's registration, as he could be associated with several confraternities, as honorary members.

To carry out this exploratory study, a thorough bibliographic research on the subject was carried out, through consultations on web pages, articles in newspapers, reports and master's and doctoral theses, and published books. The study adopted a descriptive analysis method to find the overall result. We also used a database obtained from CEUCO Portugal, referring to the European Congress, held in the Algarve in November 2019, with a sample of 580 participants, belonging to 123 European Confraternity, consisting of all those registered in the Enogastronomic Congress of the Algarve –

Knowledge and Flavour of the Sea, from almost all European countries, with the exceptional presence of Macau.

Based on the data analysed, we can say that there are more than 13 thousand kilometres covered in relation to the European gastronomic, Bacchic, and cultural Confraternities, which maintain the traditions of flavours and knowledge transported through culture and a territory. In addition, it should be noted that all this activity, either by the occurrence of chapters and/or enthronements, or by the congresses that are taking place, have created a differentiating movement in terms of destination, representing an added value for cities, places, and regions, influencing the dynamics of heritage tourism. The Confraternity, whether Bacchic, gastronomic, or cultural, are the true receptacle of this immeasurable intangible heritage in terms of the preservation of the diet and food culture.

This movement of multiple Confraternities, represented by their members, are creators of development, sustainability, and preservation of ecosystems. From the recipes made known by our grandparents, and already received by them from their ancestors to the sale of endogenous products and identity of certain areas, make this secular heritage a means of differentiation, dissemination and a sustainability strategy based on a circular economy structure. Undoubtedly, cultural initiatives and projects, duly based on logics of added value and differentiating characteristics, work as a unique and proactive element, not only for providing services to the community, but also for qualifying and empowering citizens taken individually and by the populations within a specific framework of favouring social and territorial cohesion (Santos (2012)). In this sense, the gastronomic, Bacchic, and cultural Confraternity are promoters of an entire activity whose main result is sustainable development, neither sex, profession, nor region of origin influence the confradic experience.

It is a reality that involves all generations and all types of professions. The obligation is only to belong to a Brotherhood complying with the values and principles that are inherent to it. In the Congress that we analysed, there was all that, in a sharing of knowledge and flavours. Each of the Confraternity created a space with decoration and products identifying the country and region of origin. The registered members were aged between 25 and 80 years, depending on the region they came from, they were mostly men or women (eg France Provence – 98% registered women representing the wines of the region; Greece – 78% registered men, chefs). In professional terms, not all the members of the Gastronomic Confraternity were involved in the restoration and not all the members of the Bacchic Confraternity were involved in the production or marketing of wines. Many registered members just wanted to maintain the tradition or recreate the flavours of the recipes or preserve the identity of their region. Thus, we were able to verify that the members of the Confraternity could be effective or honorary, all of them having as their main function the dissemination of culture and the preservation of heritage.

5 Conclusions

With this study it was verified that the European confraternities, belonging to CEUCO, recognize the high importance of this type of congress and this type of activities, about the preservation of the diet and food culture. It is a medium where personalized contact is privileged and where the positive impact on the population's culture and heritage can be identified as an element of identity. During the event, knowledge sharing strategies were worked out and special attention was given to the need for the so-called "marriage" between Bacchic and gastronomic confraternities, to promote a region or a place considering its products and its knowledge. The articulation of various types of Confraternities can, with their experience, affect the entire development process of various regions and create a personalized point of contact. Undoubtedly, in terms of values and principles, there are no significant differences between the Confraternities, only their size and their dress. Defending and disseminating the authenticity of true gastronomy, without, however, repressing its natural evolution and adequate to technical progress and defending and disseminating endogenous products, are the main objectives of the Confraternity present at this Congress. We can conclude that this is undoubtedly the way to ensure the safeguarding and enhancement of cultural, material, and immaterial heritage existing in territories, which have their own cultural and food identity, marked by the historical and social evolution of their traditional flavours and knowledge. Safeguarding the Mediterranean diet will gain more notoriety and more followers if we manage to maintain the identity and differentiation in the use of the products that comprise it.

Limitations

One of the limitations of this work was to be able to articulate with the various confraternities in order to see the similarities and differences between them, due to the various dialects used by the confreres and the specific terms of each region. This limitation allows us to work in the future with a guide of terms associated with gastronomy, with endogenous products, taking into account the diversity of brotherhoods, regions and products. It could be a good reference for the Mediterranean diet network.

Greetings

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