

RESEARCH ON THE HISTORY OF MANUFACTURING PRESSED CHEESE IN ROMANIA

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Abstract

Pressed cheese is a superior way of valorification on milk and it is one of the most widespread and consumed types of cheese, especially in Europe. The production of this type of cheese has been done since ancient times, in the most varied areas of the world. In our country, the historical documents mentioned that, since 1374, pressed cheese has been produced in the mountain area of Wallachia. If in the past pressed cheese was made from sheep's milk, now it is made from cow's milk. The aim of the paper is to emphasize the old cheese producers in Romania being an important document, especially for processors who want to apply on the quality scheme at European level (PDO, PGI or TSG).

Key words: pressed cheese, manufacturing, history, Romania

INTRODUCTION

Pressed cheese is one of the most widespread and consumed types of cheese, especially on the European continent. There are more than 2000 types of pressed cheese worldwide, mozzarella being the most preferred and consumed variety in the world. Its beginnings are found in southern Italy, in Sicily, but today it is widespread in the Balkans, mainly in Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary, Turkey, Greece and Slovenia, but also throughout the European continent. The scalded cheeses, known in our country as cheese, are made according to a special technology, which consists of scalding in water at a temperature of 72-80°C the matured curd obtained from sheep's milk, cow's milk or mixture. After salting, the pressed cheese matures under certain conditions that ensure its characteristic organoleptic properties.

In our country, several varieties of cheese are made, which, depending on the consistency of the pasta, are classified as follows:

- assortment of pressed cheese with semi-pasta: Dobrogea pressed cheese, Delia pressed cheese and Teleorman pressed cheese.

- assortments of pressed cheese with soft paste: Penteleu pressed cheese, which is made mainly in the mountain area, the raw material being initially sheep's milk, but today it is also made from cow's milk.

- smoked pressed cheese: Brădet pressed cheese, Vrancea pressed cheese (Usturoi, 2008).

The aim of the paper is to emphasize the age of cheese production in Romania being an important document, especially for processors who want to apply on quality schemes at European level (PDO, PGI or TSG).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The beginnings of cheese making in our country are old enough, taking into account that our ancestors had as their main occupation the raising of cattle and especially sheep. The Dacians being sheep breeders, they knew how to prepare curd from their milk, which they consumed partly in summer, and another part was transformed into cheese for winter consumption. For preservation, the fermented curd was chopped and mixed with salt. In the Roman Empire, during its heyday, crafts were strongly developed, and in terms of nutrition, the preparation of a cheese with scalded pasta is also recorded.

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It is considered that cheese was introduced to Romania by Roman settlers in the III-IV centuries. It is appreciated that at the beginning the small, simple or smoked cheese was prepared, as it is still done today in the Câmpulung Muscel - Rucăr area and in Vrancea, as well as the curd dolls. Later, this technology was expanded, obtaining pressed cheese with soft paste (Penteleu) and hard cheese (Dobrogea).

Evidence, in the sense of animal husbandry and milk processing, are the archeological researches from the Orăștiei Mountains, they discovered the traces of some Dacian sheepfolds, with vessels for the preparation and storage of cheeses.

Among the local cheeses, those made from sheep's milk such as bellows cheese and cheese have been attested in documents since the 14th century.

Thus, the historical documents mention that, since 1374, pressed cheese was produced in the mountainous area of Wallachia.

The first documentary attestation of the term pressed cheese on Romanian territory dates from 1374: in Vlaicu Vodă's deed regarding the Vodița monastery, among other gifts made by the ruler are recorded "12 pressed cheeses".

The Vodița Monastery, located on the Danube bank, between Turnu Severin and Orșova localities, "represents the oldest documented voivodship foundation and also the first monastic settlement in our country administered autonomously (samovlasty) according to the rules of the oriental church established by Saint Basil the Great"

Vladislav I's deed of donation, known as Vlaicu voda, dated 1374 (the oldest original internal document), mentions: Ungrovlahia, I was willing, at God's urging, to build a monastery at Vodita in the name of the great and bearer of God, Antonie listening to the honest among the monks Nicodemus, also with expense and gifts from my reign, and with the work of Chir Nicodim and of his brethren, I built and painted. After all this, at every feast of the saint and bearer of God, Antonie, a thousand perpers from my lord's house and to distribute to the poor 300 perpers and 12 cheese bellows and 12

pressed cheeses and a mage of wax and 12 cloths of clothing and 12 cloths of shoes and 12 blankets. We place all these and give them every year from the princely house "(Panaintescu and Mioc, 1966, p.19).

Another historical evidence about the manufacture of pressed cheese in Romania is from 1385, October 3 Argeș - when Dan I Voievod of Ungrovlahia - contributed to the maintenance of the Tismana monastery "from my house every year 10 cheese bellows, 10 pressed cheeses, 10 blankets, 10 mantle cloths and 10 shoe cloths, and honey and wax, as the year brings "(Panaintescu and Mioc, 1966, p.21).

Another historical proof is the gift of Mircea cel Bătrân, from 1387, June 27, Argeș, which strengthened the data given by his brother Dan I Voievod, Tismana Monastery - ,, from my house every year 10 cheese bellows, 10 pressed cheeses, 10 blankets, 10 mantle cloths and 10 shoe cloths "(Panaintescu and Mioc, 1966, p.24).

In 1391, September 1, Mircea cel Bătrân strengthens the donations granted to Tismana Monastery through a new document which says that ,, - ,, from my house every year 10 cheese bellows, 10 pressed cheeses, 10 blankets, 10 mantle cloths and 10 footwear "(Panaintescu and Mioc, 1966, p.35).

In September 1392, Mircea cel Bătrân strengthens the donations granted to Tismana Monastery through a new document by which he says that ,, - ,, from my house every year 10 cheese bellows, 10 pressed cheeses, 10 blankets, 10 mantle cloths and 10 footwear "(Panaintescu and Mioc, 1966, p.41).

In the period 1407-1418, Mircea cel Bătrân donated to the Sneagov monastery ,,..... the customs of the sheep, the customs of the pigs, the beekeeping, the bucketing, the wineries, the balls, the books, the bridges, the hay, of cheeses and dușegubine" (Panaintescu and Mioc, 1966, p.71).

Other evidence in support of cheese production in Romania since ancient times is the deed of Radu de la Afumați, from September 8, 1525 refers to the "path of Buzau county" evidence of skilled shepherds who, in addition to traditional dairy products, also prepared the famous Penteleu pressed cheese (Stoicescu, 1983).

Documents from the second half of the 18th century attest to the fact that some Jews owned "mountain huts" for the manufacture of cheese. In a document from 1776, the name of a Jew Zalman Cașcaval appears, who sells pressed cheeses (Oișteanu, 2012).

Tudor Pamfile in the book „The Romanian domestic industry,, published in 1910 describes the fact that the shepherd occupied a basic place in the Romanians' occupations, being regulated in documents since 1700. He shows that cheese is manufactured in large quantities, mentioning that in 1809 a merchant Ștefan Ciornei made a contract with a Turk to sell him "ten thousand kg of pressed cheese".

In the book "Development of the Moldovan economy between 1848 and 1864. Contributions" it is shown that in the Botoșani area, cattle breeding was related to the total processing of their products: ... milk was sold as it was obtained or turned into sour milk, cheese, pressed cheese and butter".

In Romania, the mass production of pressed cheese developed in the middle of the 19th century, with factories and milk processing workshops being set up in all regions of the country.

In the period after 1990, processed milk production registered a constant decline in all types of products, due primarily to the restructuring process of the oversized industrial sector for the structure of milk production in Romania (after 1989) and in response to the evolution of the economic environment. and the process of price liberalization (after 1997).

According to the INS, in 2019, Romania produced 331,344 tons of drinking milk, 68,114 tons of cream, 225,487 tons of sour milk and 96,717 tons of cheese. The 83,047 tons represent the production obtained from cow's milk. In contrast, butter production fell last year by 228 tons (-2.1%) to 10,653 tons.

CONCLUSIONS

The information shows that the manufacture of pressed cheese in Romania dates back to the fourteenth century, the Romanians having a long history in the production of this variety of cheese.

Pressed cheeses offer one of the simplest ways to make the most of milk. We recommend its production, especially by small producers, as it leads to higher economic efficiency.

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