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# Gorgonzola: Italian taste in the world between banquets, exhibitions, and technology, 1850s–1930s

Luciano Maffi and Martino Lorenzo Fagnani

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## ABSTRACT

This article analyses how Gorgonzola cheese achieved widespread success among the upper and middle classes in continental Europe, the British Isles, and North America between the 1850s and 1930s. Drawing on social history, the history of science and technology, and cultural history, the article highlights the important role played by hotels, restaurants, clubs, and ocean liners, on the one hand, and the circuit of industrial and agricultural exhibitions, on the other, in the nearly simultaneous growth in popularity of Gorgonzola among the upper and middle classes. Joining the consolidated historiographical and sociological vein that examines the interplay among class, food, and social capital, the novel analysis of documents such as newspaper articles, restaurant menus, literary sources, and exhibition catalogues offers a new perspective on the unique Gorgonzola phenomenon.

## RIASSUNTO

L'articolo analizza come il Gorgonzola abbia raggiunto il successo tra le classi medie e alte dell'Europa continentale, delle Isole britanniche e del Nord America tra gli anni Cinquanta dell'Ottocento e gli anni Trenta del Novecento. Attingendo alla storia sociale, alla storia della scienza e della tecnica e alla storia culturale, l'articolo evidenzia l'importante ruolo svolto da alberghi, ristoranti, club e transatlantici da un lato, e dal circuito delle esposizioni industriali e agricole dall'altro, nella crescita della popolarità del Gorgonzola quasi simultaneamente tra le classi alte e medie. Inserendosi nel consolidato filone storiografico e sociologico che esamina l'interazione tra classe, cibo e capitale sociale, l'inedita analisi di documenti come articoli di giornale, menu di ristoranti, fonti letterarie e cataloghi di mostre offre una nuova prospettiva sul singolare fenomeno di cui il Gorgonzola è protagonista.

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**PAROLE CHIAVE** Gorgonzola; cultura italiana; esposizioni; politiche commerciali; Ministero dell'agricoltura dell'industria e del commercio; storia del cibo

## Introduction

Gorgonzola is a blue spreadable cheese originating in and taking its name from the homonymous rural town at the foot of the Lombard Alps in northern Italy. Its origins date back at least to the Late Middle Ages, but it was mainly in

the second half of the nineteenth century that it gained international recognition as a fine Italian product and became a well-established part of Italian cultural heritage. 40

In the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Gorgonzola appeared on the tables of the aristocracy and upper classes on both sides of the Atlantic. At the same time, the rapid circulation of food practices and culture made possible by an increasingly efficient transportation and communication network, and the rise of a middle class that emulated the upper classes in matters of taste, 'democratized' its consumption in step with its affirmation as a fine Italian delicacy among the elites. 45

What were the networks that favoured the quick popularization and globalization of Gorgonzola? How could a cheese with such a pronounced flavour – which one either loves or hates with no middle ground – become so successful and well known? 50

There is an extensive historiography on how food products move across class boundaries, and how that changes over time. Many interesting case studies have been developed. Truffles, for example, in the early modern period are synonymous with royalty. Production increased enormously in the nineteenth century, with truffles becoming extensively available and much less a prestige symbol. However, after production collapsed, they are once again a rare symbol of prestige (Nowak 2015; van der Veen 2003). 55

In the case of Gorgonzola, however, this overlap – at least between the upper and middle class – was almost instantaneous. This is the surprising element that we seek to analyse in this article, joining the discussion of class, food, and social capital inaugurated with Pierre Bourdieu's classic *La Distinction* (1979). More recent contributions to the theme include Peter Naccarato and Kathleen LeBesco's *Culinary Capital* (2012) examining the important social role of food and related practices in attributing status to individuals on the basis of conformity to their culture's culinary norms and expectations. In the Italian literature, an analysis of the cultural relationship between food and society is presented in the seminal work of Alberto Capatti and Massimo Montanari (1998). 60

The late-nineteenth-century international success of Gorgonzola as a high quality denomination-of-origin specialty food is an excellent example of how a food becomes typical through the process of mobility and exchange. For instance, Capatti and Montanari discuss the case of Parmigiano, which became universally known and recognized as the cheese from Parma and Parma as the city of Parmigiano only after it became a widely circulating commodity known beyond its place of origin and its identity as a locally consumed product (Capatti and Montanari 1998, 47–65, 118–123). These elements were vital in the larger concurrent process of Italian nation building 75 80

and nation branding from the outside, as discussed by Fernand Braudel in *Out of Italy* (1991).

Some Italian scholars have studied Gorgonzola cheese from an economic and industrial point of view in the context of nineteenth- and twentieth-century dairy production. The recent studies of Claudio Besana, Rita d'Errico, and Renato Ghezzi are certainly worth mentioning in this regard, offering an initial analysis of the value of means of transportation and progress in science and technology in the internationalization of the Italian dairy industry (Besana 2012; d'Errico et al. 2017). In the international realm, a parallel case regarding Camembert is presented by Pierre Boisart, while Cristina Grasseni has dedicated a number of studies to Alpine and sub-Alpine cheeses, identifying their value in building the cultural heritage of their regions (Boisart 2003; Grasseni 2011, 2016).

As generally regards the creation of iconic products in the Italian agri-food sector and the importance of some networks of knowledge – among others, the exhibition network – in the construction of a 'typical product', the most pioneering and in-depth historiographic studies are the ones by Stefano Magagnoli and Francesco Chiapparino (Magagnoli 2011, 2015; Ceccarelli et al. 2013; Chiapparino 1998; Chiapparino and Covino 2002). For a comparative analysis, please see the situation in France, another main cheese producing State: Delfosse 2007; Vabre 2013, 2015).

Over the years, research on the phenomenon of the 'Made in Italy' has produced numerous studies, most of which have been published in Italian, although in some disciplinary areas the internationalization of research is already at an advanced stage. These studies have focused on numerous aspects and used a variety of methodological approaches ranging from economic and cultural history to business management and marketing (Ferraresi 2014; Pratesi 2001).

Regardless of the product sold, international studies have dealt with the evolution of the commercial space as an important element in the success of a product. We recall, among others, Andrew Hann and Jon Stobart, who studied the evolution of shop management and sales strategies in provincial shops in eighteenth-century England. Furthermore, an essential piece of historiography in this context in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century background is the classic *Cathedrals of Consumption*, edited by Geoffrey Crossick and Serge Jaumain and published in 1999 (Stobart 2008; Hann and Stobart 2005; Crossick and Jaumain 2020). With regard to the consumption of Italian food, articles by Melissa Gray, Simone Cinotto, Peter Naccarato, Zachary Nowak, and Elgin K. Eckert have addressed both its enjoyment by travellers in the *Bel Paese* and its physical and cultural exportation to other lands (Gray 2019; Cinotto 2018; Naccarato et al. 2017).

Having reviewed the international historiographic framework, still to be explained is what European and American customers saw in

Gorgonzola in the second half of the nineteenth century and in the years leading up to WWII, Gorgonzola appeared and consolidated its place on the tables of important hotels and restaurants, first classes of ocean liners, exclusive clubs, and gala dinners, and was appreciated in the most chic magazines. Soon, it was also present in more modest typical restaurants, youthful and dynamic clubs, and second-class menus. It was tasted and awarded prizes at international exhibitions and the subject of reports by U.S. diplomats. It was advertised in newspapers for its relatively affordable price in some shops, sold at Italian market stalls in Paris, and in the early twentieth century heralded as a delicacy in some department stores. Politicians, royalty, cardinals, and actors appreciated it. All this in a context that included at least most of Europe, the United States, and Canada.

Fashionable, luxury restaurants and clubs, on the one hand, and the international exhibition circuit, on the other, were both fundamental vectors in making Gorgonzola the well-known and internationally consumed cheese it is today.

However there was also a third, equally influential vector: newspapers and magazines circulating throughout the Western world. Articles and advertising communicated the foods and culinary traditions of near or far lands; Gorgonzola benefited greatly from this third mechanism. Adding to the studies on the relationship between food and social class, such as those by Naccarato, LeBesco, Capatti, and Montanari, our article also analyses the linguistic presentation of Gorgonzola in print media.

The Made in Italy, in spite of the fragility of the country's agriculture and industrial system, acquired a certain all-encompassing aura. Between the end of the Second World War and the 1980s, the qualities of Italian products were conflated into a modern myth of Italian-ness as a distinct cultural identity, which then constituted the reputational capital of Italian products. This myth continues today, guaranteeing exporting firms good market positioning. The country-of-origin effect thus acts as an important lever of competitiveness that generates two parallel and complementary effects: support for exports and imitative phenomena, e.g. counterfeiting, imitations, and, in particular, the phenomenon of Italian-sounding.

This process was relevant in the case of Italian cuisine and food products, which acquired a high reputational capital in spite of the backwardness of the underlying production system. We may consider that this positive performance was the result of an original combination of factors, in which the material qualities of the product (taste, wholesomeness, price) are inextricably interwoven with immaterial elements (tradition, history, *genius loci*, etc.), leveraging the desire to emulate the consumption of the upper classes, as discussed in the aforementioned *La Distinction* (1979) by the French sociologist-anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu. Furthermore, Italy as the cradle of the

Renaissance created notable appeal in promoting the Made in Italy in the late twentieth century (Belfanti 2014).

As for primary sources, we have based our analysis on monographic and periodic literature published from the 1850s to the 1930s. Specifically for the menus and most of the periodicals analysed, we referred respectively to the rich database *What's on the Menu?* of the New York Public Library (<http://menus.nypl.org>), especially the material from the Buttolph Collection, and the *Chronicling America – Historic American Newspapers* database of the Library of Congress, Washington D.C. (<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>). Furthermore, we have analysed and elaborated in tables the data present in catalogues and reports of some national, international, and universal exhibitions.

The sources analysed demonstrate how Gorgonzola was exported to the world via four main channels. The first three we analyse are the network of luxury and fashionable restaurants and clubs, the press, and the exposition circuit. The fourth vector of diffusion was Italian emigration to various parts of the world (on Italian migrants and the diffusion of their foods in the world, see Cinotto 2013; Zanoni 2018; Zancani 2019).

### From local to global: the birth of typicality

In this section we analyse the history and context of Gorgonzola production and describe how its fortunes were influenced by the revolution in transportation, by market internationalization, and by the surging circulation of intercultural news and information accompanying the first wave of globalization.

We shall begin with key information on the regional level, the first link in the local-global chain. This cheese was already produced in the Middle Ages. It is cited as the 'progenitor' of the blue cheeses obtained from cow's milk. Its production was linked for a long time to certain conditions related to the seasonality of the bovine diet and to the return of the herds from Alpine summer pastures. Its uniqueness was identified with the nature of the fertile and irrigated land, the climate and the season of production. These peculiarities were highlighted already in the 1840s (Marenesi 1840, 40–41). Its particular qualities were also pointed out in the 1880s by Carlo Besana, director of the Regia Stazione Sperimentale di Caseificio (Royal Experimental Dairy Station) in Lodi, who stated that the production of Gorgonzola was very cheap and did not require wood, colouring substances, or oil; the cheese ripened in a few months and its success did not show the uncertainties and difficulties that Grana cheese used to present. Indeed, according to Besana, the production of Gorgonzola did not produce any waste (Besana 1883, 39). This opinion continued to be shared by scientists and technicians working in the Italian dairy sector at the beginning of the twentieth century (Savini 1936).



Until the early nineteenth century, its production was identified with the area of Gorgonzola, about **nineteen** kilometers east of Milan. The town of Gorgonzola gave birth to the cheese of the same name, drawing in milk from producers within a radius of some **thirty** kilometers (Marenesi 1840, 40–41; Savini 1936, 11–15). Gorgonzola exemplifies the Italian phenomenon, highlighted by Alberto Capatti and Massimo Montanari, of the ‘appropriation’ by urban centers – hubs of commercial exchange – of food products from the surrounding countryside or neighboring areas. Other examples include radicchio of Treviso, oil of Bitonto, brill of Ravenna, swordfish of Messina, and **‘Roman’ pecorino cheese** and walnuts of Sorrento. Capatti and Montanari highlighted the importance of the urban network in the construction and transmission of a local and national gastronomic culture, with the emphasis on the market center rather than the production area (Capatti and Montanari 1998). However, already in the 1830s this cheese was made in many other places in Lombardy, even if ‘the one made in Gorgonzola always retains the primacy in public opinion for its originality’ (Marenesi 1840, 40–41). By that time, the area gradually extended to include the southern part of the province of Milan, the province of Pavia and the Lodi area, which have geographic and climatic conditions similar to those of the area around the town of Gorgonzola (Besana 2012, 37–38). Gorgonzola production thus expanded from a local context to a larger dimension, driven by its growing commercial success.

In the same years, before widespread industrialization of dairy production, the agronomist Luigi Cattaneo wrote in an issue of *Il Politecnico* magazine that the precious Gorgonzola was sought after in many and distant countries (Cattaneo 1840, 3). This is an aspect that should not be underestimated, taking into account that this cheese was still produced by traditional means. As a matter of fact, in the Milanese magazine *L’Uomo di Pietra*, a poem written in 1857 – hence before Italian unification (1861) – recited in verse that:

Si spedisce, ecco già, da Torino

Il Vermùt colla china ai Chinesi;

Gorgonzòla dà lor lo stracchino;

**La salsiccia da Monza ci va.**<sup>1</sup>

At the end of the 1870s, studies by the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry, and Commerce of the new Kingdom of Italy confirmed the fame of this Italian veined cheese, again identified with the town of Gorgonzola. Raffaele De Cesare, journalist, politician, and juror at the Paris World’s Fair of 1878, presented the Ministry with a report on the state of some dairy products (Monsagrati 1987).

For example, De Cesare collected the testimony of Fedele Massara (1825–1888) from Gorgonzola, lawman and scholar of socio-economic subjects. Massara compared the success of Gorgonzola with that of Swiss Gruyere, implying the problem of distinguishing what today we would call a P.D.O. product from similar ones from other areas. Gorgonzola cheese was no longer a prerogative of the charming town in the Martesana area. Massara, however, claimed that the cheese produced in Gorgonzola was better than that from other parts of Lombardy, Piedmont, and the Parma area thanks to the air, the production traditionally limited to two months a year, and the use of milk exclusively from cows coming from the mountains to the plains to pass the winter. The ‘real’ Gorgonzola, again according to Massara, distinguished itself from the others by its reddish crust and its white texture with light green spots. It was very different from other Gorgonzolas, which were black outside and yellow or yellow-brown inside with dark green spots. There was also a great difference in taste: sweet and then bitter for the imitation Gorgonzolas, uniformly aromatic and with a ‘bite’ for the original. De Cesare specified that he took Massara’s opinion with a grain of salt because he had personally tasted the Gorgonzola awarded a gold medal in Paris: it was exquisite and came from Codogno, not Gorgonzola (Direzione dell’Agricoltura 1881, 138–139).

The question of demand is interesting too. It was not so much local and popular, but rather urban and elitist in the second half of the nineteenth century. Gioacchino Rossini (1792–1868), consummate and internationally famous composer from the Marche region, known for his epicureanism, received a steady stream of gastronomic delicacies from friends and admirers. Gorgonzola was one of them, accompanied by bottles of Château-Lafite from Rothschild and Schloss Johannisberg Riesling from Metternich.<sup>2</sup>

Another example from the same period is an interesting treatise on the food consumption of the working class (*popolo minuto*) in Milan from the late 1860s, where we read:

Gorgonzola, sought-after abroad, and the very tasty *Grana* are seen by our working class only in the opulent showcases of the butchers; in which they appear with truffles, Roquefort cheese, and other delicacies. The lower priced Gorgonzola consumed by the working class is of inferior quality and is sometimes harmful to health. (Bazzoni 1868, 57)

Gorgonzola’s increasing popularity in the period 1840–1879, in demand both in Italy and abroad, led to concern about authenticity and discussions on what were the characteristics and requirements of a good product. Foreign demand at that time was principally European, and mainly from the Netherlands, Switzerland and France (Marenesi 1840, 40–41), later spreading to the United Kingdom and America.

An 1857 report sent to Vienna by the Chamber of Commerce of Pavia (Milan and the rest of Lombardy were still under Austrian rule) pointed out the changes taking place mainly within commercial enterprises and dairies located in a very small area, highlighting the close link between them (Besana 2012, 45–46). In the forty years after Italian unification there was a steady increase in Lombard dairy production, favoured both by the increase of the irrigated area in the south of the region and by market demand. These developments in the productive sectors made it possible to respond to the growing demand from customers. These combined factors meant that the geography of Gorgonzola production changed in the late 1870s and early 1880s. The original territory expanded to the west to encompass the entire Lomellina area and part of the Novara area, and to the east to incorporate the Cremona area and part of the Mantua area. Dairies in Valsassina and the provinces of Como and Varese also achieved good results (Besana 2012, 88–93 and 147–159).

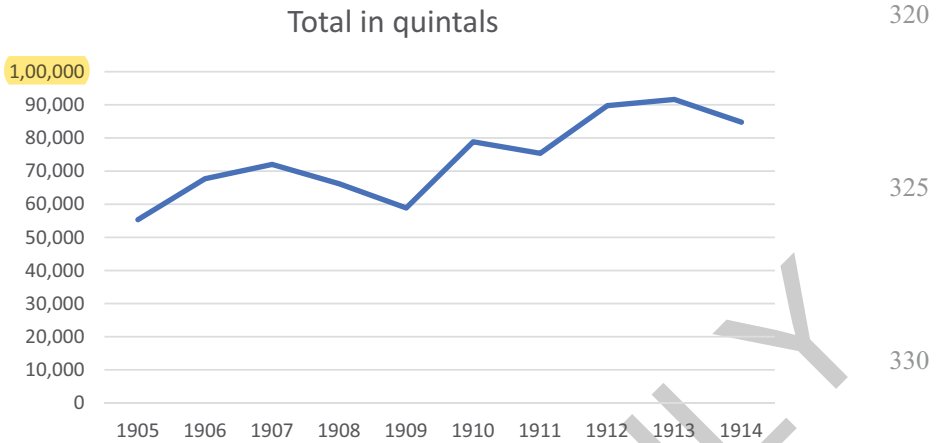
The growth of dairy production was driven by the development of domestic consumption but mainly by international demand for Lombard cheeses, among which Gorgonzola featured prominently. In the late nineteenth century, the development of commercial networks was favoured by the industrialization of the sector and the birth of important companies, such as Polenghi Lombardo, a very financially solid dairy company based in the Lodi area (Besana 2012, 109–110). These production facilities used modern machines and technologies for the various operations in the preparation of cheeses.

There is significant data on the growing production of Gorgonzola in the early twentieth century, when large quantities of soft (mostly Gorgonzola) and semi-hard cheeses were exported for a high value, confirming their quality and continuity of production. Table 1 presents data on quantities and related gross income in the period 1905–1914.

**Table 1.** Global export of soft and semi-hard cheeses, 1905–1914, with graphic elaboration.

GORGONZOLA, STRACCHINO AND FONTINA		
Year	Total in quintals	Total in lire
1905	55,337	84,66,561
1906	67,699	1,03,57,947
1907	72,031	1,38,85,890
1908	66,193	1,26,33,670
1909	58,896	1,11,90,240
1910	78,863	1,49,89,970
1911	75,355	1,43,17,450
1912	89,747	1,70,51,930
1913	91,624	1,74,08,560
1914	84,777	1,56,83,745

Source: Savini (1936, pp. 78–79).



Gorgonzola had thus transitioned from being a favourite of the Italian upper class to an internationally successful product. It established itself on international markets during the first wave of globalization. Scientific and technological progress brought numerous epochal changes during the second half of the nineteenth century. These affected the whole planet: directly in the case of the richest and most stable areas; and indirectly in areas with a more troubled history. It was the century of the transport revolution and the second industrial revolution, during which the links between science, technology, and industry developed. In particular, the role of science and technology was decisive in the genesis of the innovations of what is considered the age of steel, electricity, and chemistry, but which also had profound repercussions for the entire agri-food production chain. National growth paths, however, differed greatly and industrial development played an important role in the representation of the political and military strength of some States: it was Germany and the United States in particular that drove growth between 1873 and 1913.<sup>3</sup>

These processes brought about deep social, cultural, and economic-commercial changes in the West. The nineteenth century, as a 'long century' stretching from the end of the eighteenth to the beginning of the twentieth, witnessed the development and consolidation of a new class, above all European and North American: the bourgeoisie. With all its particular nuances, this class embodied an entrepreneurial attitude and a desire for novelty, imperatives of the second industrial revolution. One of the most representative environments of this nineteenth-century bourgeoisie was the metropolis, the ever-active city, merging grandeur, cosmopolitanism, and a modern urban network (with all its contradictions, such as the undeniable situations of hardship and poverty) (Mitchell *et al.* 1993).

For example, in 1907 Gorgonzola was already generating significant flows of money. It was sold at the time on the London market at 1 shilling per pound, equating to **US\$0.24** per pound. However, like any other object of consumption, we cannot understand its value except in relation to that of other goods (Douglas and Isherwood 1979). It fetched a high price on the London market, albeit less than Parmesan or Roquefort (1 shilling and 4 pennies per pound, **US\$0.32**), Port Salut (1 shilling and 2 pennies per pound, **US\$0.28**), and obviously the best varieties of Stilton (which could even reach 1 shilling and 6 pennies per pound, **US\$0.36**). Its success was undeniable in Berlin, where it cost 1.20 marks per pound, or **US\$0.28** - per pound, ranking it among the most expensive cheeses sold on the German market, together with German-made Brie and Emmental, and second only to Roquefort, which was 1.60 marks per pound (**US\$0.39**) (Thom 1907, 108–109).

Obviously, such a large production could not be limited to the original town of Gorgonzola. Already by the mid-nineteenth century this cheese had producers of recognized value throughout the Lombardy area, in some areas of Piedmont and in the Parma area. Naturally there was some amount of quibbling as to which Gorgonzola was better: that produced near the original town or any of the varieties produced in other areas in northern Italy, many of which won prizes at international exhibitions. In the following decades both criticism and attempts at promotion grew also for cheeses with similar qualities to Gorgonzola – or attempting to imitate them – produced in England or in the United States to satisfy growing local demand (Direzione dell’Agricoltura 1881, 138–139; Shorthouse 1891, 582; Thom 1907, 98). Later, Gorgonzola would be more broadly marketed as a ‘democratic’ product, moving towards the dimension of mass consumption we know today. In 2019, the Gorgonzola industry was worth more than **\$800 million**.<sup>4</sup>

### A trendy cheese on both sides of the Atlantic

A complex range of factors characterized the internationalization of Gorgonzola in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including social class, price, and use differences depending on the quality of the product. All these elements contributed to developing the global fame of Gorgonzola and to extending its appeal across the upper/middle class divide relatively quickly, something not found in other cases, such as the above example of truffles.

The prestige classes on transatlantic ocean liners played a very important role in the internationalization of Italian food. It was served at the end of the most elegant meals together with a range of spreadable and non-spreadable cheeses found in different combinations and formats in the menus we have analysed: Roquefort, Camembert, Edam, Stilton, and Swiss and Danish cheeses. The upper class revelled in such prestigious fare (Forrester 2016).

We must also not underestimate the power of fashion, i.e. the appeal conveyed via newspapers, magazines, and even widely read novels mainly to members of the middle class, especially those who aspired to upper class lifestyles. 405

We shall now undertake a chronological analysis of the development of 'global' Gorgonzola in the press, in literature, and on menus.

In the Old World, the refined palates of some French travellers appreciated the taste of Gorgonzola cheese as early as the mid-nineteenth century. For example, in 1865 the diplomat Casimir de Rochechouart, Baron of Mortemart, wrote an account for the Parisian magazine *La Salle à Manger* of an elegant dinner that he had attended at the luxurious restaurant-hotel L'Italie, on the Lungarno in Florence. At the end of the dinner, Gorgonzola, seasonal fruits, ice cream, and coffee was brought to the table.<sup>5</sup> 410 415

In 1876 the sophisticated British writer and journalist William Blanchard Jerrold (1826–1884) criticized his experience at the Florian restaurant in Venice from the pages of *The Gentleman's Magazine*. He complained of the maître's insistence on offering him sophisticated French dishes – rather disappointing on that occasion – instead of Italian dishes, such as a plate of macaroni and a Milanese cutlet, which would have made 'an excellent dinner' if accompanied by a little Gorgonzola and an orange.<sup>6</sup> 420

Gorgonzola cheese became known during the second half of the nineteenth century as a highly prized product in all countries where it was served. It was well known both in Europe and in North America. As for the specific case of Great Britain, an article published in the *Journal of the Society of the Arts* of London in the mid-1880s about *stracchino di Gorgonzola* is indicative (Guscetti 1885, 286): 425

In the course of time, and in order to meet the increased demand for the cheese, it became an article of special production instead of a makeshift as at first, and its manufacture ~~has now extended not only all over Lombardy, but even to the district of the Lomellina in Piedmont.~~ Of late years, in consequence of the facilities of communication, it has found a market in foreign countries, and large quantities of Gorgonzola are annually exported. 430 435

This makes clear both the importance of Gorgonzola as early as the second half of the nineteenth century, and the possibilities opened up by the revolution in transportation, which made exporting much easier than in the past.

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* stated in those years that: 440

Among the foreign varieties of cheese esteemed in England, the Gorgonzola and the Parmesan from Italy may be mentioned. The Gorgonzola is a very rich cheese, resembling somewhat in quality the Stilton, though differing from it in shape and style.<sup>7</sup>

Several newspapers advertised it as a delight for the most refined palates. In 445  
 a February 1886 issue of the *Hazel Green Herald*, in Wolfe County, Kentucky, it  
 was called a ‘rich and elegant article of food’, remarking that it was ‘highly  
 prized and very delicious,’ probably referring to the numerous awards col-  
 lected by various dairy companies at international exhibitions (we will discuss  
 them shortly). Even the elderly English cardinal John Henry Newman, now 450  
 a saint of the Catholic Church, did not disdain good food and drink, albeit  
 relatively simple, as part of his sober regime. After dessert, he was very fond of  
 Gorgonzola. In particular, ‘the riper it is the better does he like it’. Above all,  
 ‘he will not touch American, being afraid of the ingredients’: so stated the  
*Freeman’s Journal* in Dublin in 1886, later reported by the *Hawaiian Gazette*.<sup>8</sup> 455

Furthermore, a report by the British Minister of Agriculture in the mid-  
 1880s for what was then the Dominion of Canada states that the main dairy  
 items imported into England were Gorgonzola and Stracchino. In the case of  
 Gorgonzola, one of the leading dealers in London declared:

In 1886, so far as I can calculate, the number of Gorgonzola cheeses imported 460  
 into England will reach 100,000, of the value of \$200,000 to \$250,000. In 1879  
 (seven years ago) the number did not exceed 50,000, valued at \$150,000. It will  
 be seen that while, in common with all other kinds of cheese, the value has  
 decreased, the quantity has increased.

The second most imported cheese after Italian Gorgonzola and Stracchino 465  
 was Swiss Gruyere. Followed by Camembert, Brie, Neufchâtel, and Roquefort  
 (which also circulated on the Continent).<sup>9</sup>

To close the celebrations for the centennial of the signing of the  
 Constitution of the United States on September 17, 1887, the ‘learned socie-  
 ties’ of Philadelphia, led by the University of Pennsylvania, gathered at the 470  
 American Academy of Music for a large banquet. It was attended by President  
 Grover Cleveland and his wife, former President Rutherford Hayes, the  
 Secretary of State, numerous other important individuals of the U.S. admin-  
 istration, representatives of numerous embassies, and men of science and  
 scholarship. The menu for such a solemn evening was very important and 475  
 met the expectations of the illustrious guests; each course was accompanied  
 by a special French wine. When the cheeses arrived on the table, guests were  
 able to help themselves to Roquefort, Gruyere, Brie and Gorgonzola, includ-  
 ing salads washed down with a Madeira from 1855 and ice cream and fruit to  
 rinse the palate before coffee and cordials.<sup>10</sup> 480

In 1888, the *Detroit Free Press* advertised its sale in a shop on Woodward  
 Avenue, where it came directly from Italy and customers preferred it to  
 Roquefort: ‘it was decidedly rich and sumptuous eating, and had that nutty  
 flavour which old cheese acquires’.<sup>11</sup>

A critical viewpoint was expressed in 1891 by the English author Edmund 485  
 Shorthouse—in the second volume of his educational work *A Present to Youths*

and *Young Men*, 'printed for private circulation and presentation', explained to his young audience that the English Gorgonzola was a terrible imitation made on purpose for the tastes of the country: 'Poor England!' he exclaimed, specifying that:

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The *genuine* Gorgonzola cheese, on the Continent, melts in the mouth, is full of cream, and tastes like a splendid *old* Stilton! The English imitation is a fraud, the 'green' is artificially produced – it tastes sour, is not old, and is unwholesome. (Shorthouse 1891, 582)

The book *Florence, the Lily of the Arno* by the U.S. writer Virginia Wales Johnson (~~1849–1916~~), published in 1891, gave a picturesque description of Florence, the city in which she spent a good part of her life after 1875, when she moved to Europe with her mother and sister.<sup>12</sup> It provides a 'noisy' perspective that might remind us of *A Room with a View* (1908) by the English writer Edward Morgan Forster. The cuisine in the heart of Tuscany included dishes and products from other Italian regions, such as polenta, Bologna sausages (probably meaning Bologna mortadella) and Gorgonzola, offering to the American readers the folkloristic image of a cosmopolitan Tuscany (Johnson 1891, 308).

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In the same year, a passage from the novel *An American Girl in London* by the Canadian writer and journalist Sara Jeanette Duncan (~~1861–1922~~) also alluded to the British love for cheese and the esteem that Gorgonzola enjoyed at the table. At the same time, Duncan referred to the strong taste of Gorgonzola, suggesting that according to the American culinary canons of the time it was considered too strong to be suitable for a lady's palate (according to the female stereotypes of the time). Here is the curious exchange between the protagonist, Miss Wick, and an English woman during a dinner aboard the steamer headed from New York to Liverpool:

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When the Gorgonzola appeared I refused it. In America ladies eat very little Gorgonzola.

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"Don't you *like* cheese?" she said, suddenly, a little as if I had offended her. I was so startled that I equivocated somewhat.

"No'm, not to day, I think — thank you!" I said. The fact is, I never touch it.

"Oh!" she responded. "But then, this is your first appearance, I suppose? In that case, you wouldn't like it." And I felt forgiven.<sup>13</sup>

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This excerpt confirms the geographical spread that Gorgonzola had already attained at that time in both the Old World and the New World. Indeed, from the previous British sources, we can assume that Gorgonzola was then a product both served on the tables of the rich and sold in cheaper shops. Duncan's novel also seems to suggest that in late-nineteenth-century American culture, Gorgonzola was considered a cheese 'for men', maybe for

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the strong taste that characterized it, universally and proverbially known for being stinky to the point of offensiveness, until one learns to love it. However, further historiographical research would be required to determine the validity and applicability of this hypothesis – which falls into the purview of gender studies. 530

We must add that the Prince of Wales (the future King Edward VII) – as reported by the *New-York Tribune* in 1891 – used to close family dinners with ‘a piece of Gorgonzola with a crust of home-made bread’. The same article specified that the cheeses, along with the usual blend of tea and the royal bed, followed Queen Victoria in all her travels, although she preferred Cheddar and water biscuits at the end of dinner.<sup>14</sup> 535

In the spring of 1895, a young woman from Connecticut, special correspondent Kate Jordan, described in the *Waterbury Evening Democrat* her passage from Genoa, the birthplace of Christopher Columbus, during a recent European trip. Among the Italian foods that she and some women friends had eaten in those three days were ‘spaghetti and Gorgonzola cheese’,<sup>15</sup> which suggests that it was already among the symbols of the cuisine of the *Bel Paese* in the USA. It was not a typical food of the Genoa area, but Jordan listed it – albeit without much enthusiasm – among the classic emblems of Italy. 540 545

In San Juan, Puerto Rico in 1897, the popular newspaper *La Correspondencia de Puerto Rico* carried advertisements for Cerecedo Hermanos & Compañía, food importers and sellers.<sup>16</sup> On that occasion, they sold low-priced treats to lift people’s spirits during the rigors of Holy Week. The advertising encouraged customers: ‘ríase de la humanidad que le persiga y que le quiera mal, comiendo un bocadito de queso Gorgonzola or Roquefort, Pategrás cream, bola de la crema y Gruyere’.<sup>17</sup> 550

In April 1898, the *Indianapolis Journal* declared Gorgonzola the ‘most popular’ Italian cheese, especially as an ‘after-dinner morsel’, followed by Parmesan, ‘so common in its grated state as the dressing for that toothsome Italian dish, spaghetti’. The same article, however, celebrated ‘the excellence of American imitation of foreign cheese’<sup>18</sup> (this was the focus of the article, referring to many European cheeses), ~~which would surely have enraged the aforementioned Fedele Massara, had he still been alive.~~ 555 560

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Gorgonzola was frequently on the first-class menus of the ocean liners of North German Lloyd of Bremen, which generally sailed from Atlantic or Mediterranean ports and connected Europe with New York, Australia, and the Far East. For instance, in late winter 1899 it was proposed on the SS *Königin Luise* lunch menu, classified among the ‘cold dishes to order’ alongside caviar, orange tart, and other delicacies.<sup>19</sup> 565

In the summer of 1900, from *The Evening Star* in Washington D.C., the wholesale and retail grocers G.G. Cornwell & Son, on Pennsylvania Avenue,

announced the sale of **twenty-five** Gorgonzola cheeses (both American and imported). Gorgonzola was the Italian flag-bearer,<sup>20</sup> even if we wonder whether it was the imported original or one produced via the 'excellence of American imitation' praised in the *Indianapolis Journal*. 570

In 1900, we find it among the cheeses of the Kempinski restaurant in Hamburg along with other prestigious names, such as Roquefort, Camembert, and Neufchâtel.<sup>21</sup> For lunch, again, Gorgonzola was served on request on the SS Barbarossa in September 1900 together with Edam and cream.<sup>22</sup> At the height of summer 1901, it was included on the menu of the SS Friedrich der Grosse as the only cheese among the dishes on the menu, which included anchovies and smoked sturgeon.<sup>23</sup> 575 580

Gorgonzola was also served in top-class clubs, hotels, and restaurants on both sides of the Atlantic. For example, in the autumn of 1901 it was included on the Magnetic Club menu of the St. Denis Hotel, on Broadway, along with Camembert.<sup>24</sup> It proliferated in the more 'youthful' men's clubs in New York State. At the Hudson River School Masters' Club, at the Ten Eyck Hotel in Albany, Gorgonzola was offered accompanied by crackers at the end of dinner in November 1901. Moreover, on the occasion considered, the menu had an interesting Italian touch, with shad roe labelled 'italienne', Roman-style sorbet, and 'Neapolitan ice cream'.<sup>25</sup> The Camp Fire Club, which is still based in Westchester County, traditionally dedicated to explorers, naturalists, and adventure seekers, organized a dinner at the Vendome Hotel in New York City at the turn of the century. It listed Gorgonzola cheese alongside Neufchâtel and American cheese, in a rather daring choice, which combined the tastes of the Old World with the more mixed ones of the United States.<sup>26</sup> 585 590

U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt was also served it at an official lunch in May 1905, when it was the only cheese on a rather light and refined menu.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, remaining in the context of official dinners, on November 11 of the same year a dinner was held in the auditorium of the Merchants Club in Chicago in honor of Liang Chentung, Chinese ambassador to the United States. The cheeses? Camembert and, of course, Gorgonzola.<sup>28</sup> 595 600

In June 1906, the *Hopkinsville Kentuckian* mentioned Gorgonzola as one of the protagonists of a curious – and questionable, in our opinion – diet based on cheeses 'for bringing stout people to slim, elegant and comfortable proportions'. Specifically, it was indicated together with Camembert as a nutritious luncheon cheese.<sup>29</sup> In a 1907 issue of the *White Pine News* from Ely, Nevada, Graham's Department Store referred to the stereotype of the housewife with the claim 'Let the Woman Be the Judge' and mentioned Gorgonzola, Roquefort, Edam, and others European cheeses among the quality products sold.<sup>30</sup> 605

In 1907, the Grand Hotel Hungaria in Budapest served – after a meal with champagne and Hungarian wines – Gorgonzola and butter between a 'charlotte russe' and a tempting 'corbeilles des fruits', before black 610

coffee.<sup>31</sup> To remain in a context of ‘exclusive informality’, we may also mention the well-known Crescent Athletic Club in Brooklyn, New York, where in November 1907 Gorgonzola was served together with Roquefort and Camembert in the regular *table d’hôte* dinner scheme.<sup>32</sup> 615

In March 1910, it appeared aboard both the SS *Barbarossa* and the SS *George Washington*, respectively at the end of lunch (with the Dutch cheese Edam) and at the end of supper (with an unidentified Swiss cheese, probably Emmental or Gruyere).<sup>33</sup> It was also served at the Congress Hotel in Chicago in 1910 for the 10th annual dinner of representatives of the Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York.<sup>34</sup> It was served at first-class tables on the Titanic in 1912 alongside other prestige cheeses, such as Cheshire, Stilton, Camembert, Roquefort, and Edam.<sup>35</sup> 620

In October 1913, a Parisian magazine, the humorous *Le Sourire*, noted how the now elderly actor Mounet-Sully used to eat a large piece of Gorgonzola with great pleasure at the stall of Italian products near the Opéra every Saturday.<sup>36</sup> It was not a restaurant or a gala dinner, but the notoriety of the character in question that dictated the lasting fame of the Gorgonzola icon, even in a colourful little article. Furthermore, the passion of Monsieur Mounet-Sully allows us to demonstrate once again how Gorgonzola was also a cheese for ‘cool and trendy’ contexts, albeit rather selective. 625

In July 1914, Gorgonzola was available for \$25 along with Gouda, Stilton, Roquefort, and cream cheese at the luncheon of the City Midday Club on Broadway for up and coming ‘merchants, lawyers, and financiers’, crowning a varied menu, ‘sparkling’ like the pineapple juice that could be ordered for \$15.<sup>37</sup> 630

The predilection of northern European shipping companies for Gorgonzola also emerged in the next decades. For example, on July 10, 1915, the SS *Frederik VIII of Skandinavien Amerika Linien* proposed it for the second cabin dinner along with Edam, Holstein, and Swiss cheese during the trip from Kristiania to New York.<sup>38</sup> 640

In 1916, it also appeared at a price of \$10 on the menu of a much more affordable New York restaurant: La Moderne Rotisserie on Eighth Avenue, which served purported French cuisine at ‘popular prices’, actually including spaghetti with various sauces, ravioli with different fillings, ‘asparagus a l’italienne’ [*sic*], alongside less convincing ‘French peas saute’ [*sic*] and various omelets (among them a ‘Spanish’ one).<sup>39</sup> The case of La Moderne Rotisserie was also part of a rather widespread trend in the US, studied a few years ago by Harvey Levenstein, according to whom Italian food underwent a sort of Frenchification to make it more refined in the eyes of American consumers. This trend took form above all from the most chic hotels and restaurants due to the substantial presence of chefs of European origin, who looked to French haute cuisine as a model (Levenstein 2003, 77). In 1917, we 645 650

find Gorgonzola among the cheeses on the menu of the luxurious Louis Sherry restaurant, New York City, at \$45 a portion.<sup>40</sup> 655

We may jump ahead a few years to evidence how Gorgonzola's broad-reaching success was not a fleeting phenomenon but became an established element in the tastes of the European and American middle and upper classes. 660

In April 1934, the SS **Paris** of the French Compagnie Générale Transatlantique listed Gorgonzola among a wide selection of cheeses at the end of the Sunday lunch. In that occasion, pastries, cakes, ice cream, and fruits followed the cheese.<sup>41</sup> In June 1935, the German steamer *Watussi* of the Deutsche Afrika Linie – which connected the African coast and the Americas in the South Atlantic Ocean – proposed for dinner Gorgonzola and Danish cheese, after plum jam and pistachio sorbet with pastries and before the fruit course. On another occasion, the *Watussi* served Gorgonzola with Edam, after preserved cherries and 'orange ice' with pastries, and before fruit to refresh the palate (followed by coffee in the lounge and the smoking room).<sup>42</sup> In 1937, Gorgonzola could also be tasted in British Columbia, at the restaurant of the Vancouver Hotel along with numerous other cheeses, where only Roquefort exceeded it in price per portion.<sup>43</sup> 665 670

Based on our analysis of those menus and various articles published in newspapers and magazines, we conclude that Gorgonzola was a recognized Italian delight throughout the Western world by the first decades of the twentieth century. We can also say that Gorgonzola was the object of increasingly broad demand as the economic resources of the middle class slowly grew. Moreover, the increasing efficiency of the transport network enabled delivery over large distances in relatively short times: this facilitated export and circulation of Gorgonzola and further boosted its fame. Another phenomenon that played an important role was the exhibition circuit, which provided a global showcase for the industrial products and technology of many different countries (The historiography on the development of exhibitions is quite extensive. We cite some of the most up-to-date sources: 675 680

Q1 Pellegrino 2008; Filipová 2015; Pearce et al. 2014). Let us examine the success that Gorgonzola had in some of these events. 685

### The spread of Gorgonzola through exhibitions

Gorgonzola cheese had the opportunity to make itself known and to earn a reputation as an excellent Italian product through exhibitions and trade-shows. This circuit allowed Gorgonzola to obtain an excellent reputation among professionals in the field: commercial networks and dairy companies. 690

For example, at the Paris World's Fair of 1867, the cheesemaker Lorenzo Marzoleni from Lecco exhibited Gorgonzola (*Exposition Universelle* 1867, 175). It was also featured at the Vienna World's Fair of 1873 along with other 695

cheeses exhibited by Pietro Polenghi from San Fiorano and Antonio Zazzera from Codogno (*Welt-Ausstellung 1873 in Wien* 1873, 197). At the International Dairy Exhibition in Hamburg (*Internationale Molkerei-Ausstellung*) a few years later (1877), the now-merged Zazzera and Polenghi company was among the exhibitors of Gorgonzola and other cheeses, in addition to the firm of Edoardo Guscetti of Milan and the Zucconi Brothers of Gorgonzola. Although the participation of Italians in the event was rather disorganized and there were many flaws in the advertising strategy, the public showed particular enthusiasm for Gorgonzola and Parmesan when they got a chance to taste it. Particularly successful was the idea of the Zucconi company of exhibiting and selling 'family size' blocks of Gorgonzola weighing between three and four kilograms (Cantoni 1877). About the Zazzera e Polenghi company, see Besana (2015).

Equally interesting is the report made by Raffaele De Cesare, mentioned above, for the Italian presence at the Paris World's Fair of 1878, where Gorgonzola won the gold medal. De Cesare pointed out that the production of Gorgonzola in its 'hometown' had been surpassed first in quantity and then in quality by the neighbouring towns and by more distant ones, as the manufacturing techniques and the trading network became increasingly efficient. De Cesare also reported some production data: according to his research, the town of Gorgonzola did not produce more than 200,000 kilograms of cheese, but the Polenghi-Lombardo-Cirio cheese company (in San Fiorano, near Codogno, quite far from Gorgonzola) alone produced 10,000 wheels with an average weight of 10 kilograms per wheel, half the total production of the town of Gorgonzola (De Cesare 1880, 42–44).

The rise of Gorgonzola on the international scene was also clear in the catalogue of the Antwerp World's Fair of 1885. On that occasion, it was presented as an Italian product not confined to any one locality. The Italian edition reads: 'The production of Gorgonzola has greatly expanded in recent years; it is produced everywhere in Lombardy' (*Esposizione universale di Anversa* 1885, 342). Of course, imitations were not lacking, such as those reported by the aforementioned scholar Fedele Massara in northern Italy or by Edmund Shorthouse in Great Britain. The success of Gorgonzola no longer rested on local demand, in a closed, almost 'self-consumption' circuit, but on increasing international demand.

In his report on the Paris Exposition of 1878, however, De Cesare used the town of Gorgonzola to add a folkloristic touch that would certainly help to advertise the cheese on an international scale. In the Italian report, in fact, he described the town, praising the industriousness and friendliness of its people. Of course, he did not neglect to point out that good Gorgonzola was now produced throughout Lombardy, part of Piedmont and in the Parma area. Nonetheless, its origin in the charming northern Italian countryside was

**Table 2.** Gorgonzola exhibitors with prizes in chronological order of exposition, 1873–1892

Province of Origin	Year and Place of the Exposition	Awarded Prize
Lodi	1873, Vienna	
Lodi	1873, Vienna	
Milan	1876, Philadelphia	Four silver medals at Paris and Milan; honorable mentions at Le Havre and other expositions
Milan	1878, Paris	
Lodi	1878, Paris	
Lodi	1881, Milan	Silver medal (first prize at Cremona 1880)
Pavia	1881, Milan	
Pavia	1881, Milan	
Milan	1881, Milan	Two silver medals and one bronze medal at Paris 1867; one medal and an honorary diploma at Philadelphia 1876; honorable mentions at Paris and Milan; honorary diploma at Hamburg
Milan	1881, Milan	Medals and diplomas at London
Lodi	1881, Milan	Medals at the Expositions of Paris, London, Vienna, Florence, and Milan
Milan	1881, Milan	
Lodi	1881, Milan	
Pavia	1884, Turin	Bronze medal
Pavia	1884, Turin	Silver medal
Lodi	1884, Turin	Silver medal
Milan	1884, Turin	Silver medal
Lecco	1888, London	First prize
Lecco	1888, London	Diploma
Lodi	1888, London	
Lodi	1888, London	Diploma
Lodi	1888, London	
Lodi	1888, London	
Lodi	1888, London	Diploma
Milan	1888, London	Diploma
Milan	1888, London	
Lodi	1891–1892, Palermo	Silver medal
Pavia	1891–1892, Palermo	
Pavia	1891–1892, Palermo	Gold medal

Source: Data extracted from the catalogues of the expositions and elaborated by the authors.

a frequent leitmotif in many of the international publications that we have analysed (De Cesare 1880, 42–44 and 52).

At the Paris World's Fair of 1889, the USA focused its attention on Gorgonzola among the Italian dairy products on display. The United States thus began to show the interest that would develop in the following decades, as we have already seen in advertisements, articles, and menus.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, Dunham Jones Crain (1831–1908),<sup>45</sup> U.S. consul in Milan from 1877 to 1884, had presented to his government a rather detailed technical report a few years earlier on the preparation of some Italian dairy products, including Gorgonzola.<sup>46</sup> We cannot talk about industrial espionage, especially since the references and excerpts circulated fairly democratically in the U.S.

trade press. However, it is significant that a diplomat was deeply interested in the origins and production of Gorgonzola. This meant that the U.S.A. particularly appreciated this cheese and was experiencing increasing local consumption between the late 1870s and the first half of the 1880s (which presupposes that a satisfactory local production flanked importation). 750

Table 2 shows the Lombard Gorgonzola exhibitors who attended both Italian and international expositions from 1873 to 1892 and the awards they won. In addition to some of those already considered in the last pages, we list many others. 755

We conclude that the presence of Gorgonzola at national and international expositions, the awards obtained by the exhibitors, and the great interest showed by the public revealed how much Gorgonzola was already appreciated in the second half of the nineteenth century, with a particular interest by U.S. society. 760

## Conclusion

In the late nineteenth century, during the first wave of globalization, Gorgonzola established itself on international markets and its unmistakable taste became a part of Italian cultural heritage, recognized throughout the West and imitated in many countries. 765

From the point of view of its production, Gorgonzola is emblematic of the economic value of diversity, representing a distinct and characteristic agri-food supply chain associated with a specific part of Italy (Dotti 2014). Furthermore, in the second half of the nineteenth century, urbanization favoured the emergence of new food needs by consumers who demanded products with reliable characteristics. In the 1860s and 1870s, in particular, scientific research and technical development were crucial for the rapid evolution of the agri-food sector in the following decades. 770 775

In many cases, various products went from being local to having a global demand, which also involved more or less successful attempts at imitation and a debate on the concept of 'typicality' to preserve the genuine traits of a product. Today in the European Union, questions of origin are managed through Protected Geographical Indication policies and individual trade agreements with other non-European trading partners. For example, in 2019 in Europe, cheese certified as Gorgonzola could only be produced in 29 factories located in a strip of land covering eastern Piedmont and part of Lombardy (Romeo 2019). However, there are still many controversies, especially outside the European Union, that hover around the concept of Protected Geographical Indication. These regard both Gorgonzola and other food products covered by the Protected Designation of Origin (P.D.O.) trademark in general (Bharwani 2019; The Associated Press 2014). 780 785

There was a virtuous circle of development and progress with many and equally important stimuli. Technical and scientific progress and hygiene improvement in the production chain interacted with social factors such as population growth, urbanization, revolution in communications, industrialization, and the opening of international markets to new tastes. These coexisting factors generated a transformation in demand and the development of new ways to meet the changes in tastes and habits.

We find all these elements in the Gorgonzola case study. This blue cheese became a must at the end of meals along with a small selection of other European cheeses: Roquefort, Camembert, Edam, Stilton, Swiss cheeses and Danish cheeses. It was a typical taste that was appreciated in the best hotels, restaurants, ocean liners, and clubs, served at gala dinners attended by U.S. presidents and Chinese diplomats, tasted by the V.I.P.s of the time, and awarded prizes at international exhibitions. At the same time, however, since its first diffusion in the mid-nineteenth century, it also tickled the taste buds of the middle class. Prior to the 1930s, however, it had not spread below the middle class and had to wait for further socio-economic changes to become a truly democratic product without losing its qualities, as we know it in today's globalized world. However, its potential was already sensed by some, as demonstrated by the Graham's Department Store advertisements aimed at women as early as 1907.

Another trait that has clearly emerged from our analysis is more cultural than social. Gorgonzola was a trendy cheese throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, already among the typical 'made-in-Italy' delicacies, with an exotic shade and distant evocations of the Grand Tour, as emerged from the texts by Wales Johnson and Jordan. We may infer that it was a cheese whose strong taste made it ideal for the clubs of sportsmen, wealthy professionals, and adventure-lovers on the East Coast. In this direction, while Duncan in 1891 seemed to allude – not without a certain sarcasm – to a curious reluctance of 'American ladies' towards Gorgonzola, Jordan helped herself to it four years later on her trip through Genoa. The Europeans' approach was more casual. British, French, and Germans used to import it in large quantities, imitate it and then criticize the imitations, buy it at the stalls of Italian delicacies, and taste it at the exhibitions.

Our study feeds into the historiographical vein interweaving social class, food, and social capital initiated by Bourdieu and enriched by the contributions of authors such as Montanari, Capatti, Cinotto, and Zanoni. The remarkable case of Gorgonzola, with its simultaneous spread among the upper and middle classes on both sides of the ocean, is a unicum in this historiographical and anthropological tradition.

The case of Gorgonzola also demonstrates that the fortunes of the 'new Italian cuisine', or 'Made in Italy food' – based on local specialty products and traditional knowledge that have made high-quality food and wine the most



important item in Italy's international trade and economy since the 1980s – have solid roots in the food globalization that took place in the second half of the nineteenth century. Since the 1860s, food exports have driven an unprecedented development of the Italian food industry, and ushered in a pattern whereby – because of the absence of a large domestic consumer market until the 1960s (Chiapparino 1998) – the only way for Italian food companies to expand beyond the generally small, technologically backward dimension of a family business was to be strongly export-oriented, as we see with today's Ferrero, Barilla, and Eataly, just to name a few. Gorgonzola demonstrates the existence and extent of a network of Italian traders, merchants, and distributors operating on a transnational scale in the export and sale of processed food like cheese, cured meats, vermouth, pasta, and canned vegetables as early as the 1860s, inheriting the commercial routes and markets of, for example, the Kingdom of Sardinia and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.

The original contribution we seek to make is to enrich existing historiography relating to the development of the Made in Italy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, introducing sources that have not yet been applied to the case of Gorgonzola (or veined Italian cheeses generally). We have dedicated specific attention in our research to the aspects of continuity and change during the timespan in question, observing that the development of the world economy, socio-cultural changes, and globalization in this period significantly influenced the definition of 'Made in Italy' in the world.

## Notes

1. A loose translation would be "We already dispatch from Torino / vermouth with quinine to the Chinese / the town of Gorgonzola gives them stracchino / even Monza sausages go there". Vattelapesca, "Il taglio dell'Istmo di Suez". 855
2. *Strenna-Album* 1881, 51.
3. In this regard, please see to the rich existing bibliography, of which the most significant works for the subject treated here are reported: Findlay and O'Rourke (2003), Crafts and Venable (2003), Marks (2015), Pini (1991), and Sasso (1985). On food topics in global history: Pilcher (2017), Kindstedt (2012), Dalby (2009) and Nuetzenadel and Trentmann (2008). 860
4. Romeo (2019). Many similarities in the production process of Gorgonzola can also be seen in that of another important European cheese, the French Camembert. In this regard, see Boisard (2003). 865
5. "Correspondance." The writer signed himself "Avvocato Santini," but the publisher was sure of the author's identity. Regarding the hotel "L'Italia," as mentioned in the magazine article, this was located in the former Palazzo Murat-Bonaparte and was owned by the Swiss man Giuseppe Augier. See *Guida civile* 1862, 338. 870
6. Jerrold 1876, 695. For Jerrold's biography, see Slater (2004).
7. *Supplement to Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1885, 514).
8. *Hawaiian Gazette*, December 7, 1886, sheet 1.
9. *Report of the Minister of Agriculture* (1887, 297). 875

10. For all the details, see *Banquet* (1888).
11. Quoted in *The Pittsburgh Dispatch*, November 24, 1889, 7.
12. For Johnson's biography, see Bowerman, "Johnson, Virginia Wales."
13. Duncan (1891, 13). For Duncan's biography, see Dean (2005).
14. *Ballou's Monthly Magazine*, 431. 880
15. *Waterbury Evening Democrat*, May 2, 1895, sheet 3.
16. About Cerecedo Hermanos & Co. see *Anuario d'Italia* (1896, 2631). Regarding a dispute in which the company was involved in 1900–1903, see the detailed report in *Porto Rico Federal Reports* (1906, 53–58).
17. *La Correspondencia de Puerto Rico*, April 7, 1897, sheet 3. A loose translation by the authors of this article could be 'Let us laugh of the persons who hate us and let us eat a morsel of Gorgonzola or Roquefort, pategrás cream, cream balls, and Gruyere'. 885
18. *Indianapolis Journal*, April 17, 1898, 4.
19. Menu of the SS Königin Luise, March 12, 1899. 890
20. *The Evening Star*, January 12, 1900, 7.
21. Menu of the Kempinski Restaurant, August 27, 1900.
22. Menu of the SS Barbarossa, September 7, 1900.
23. Menu of the SS Friedrich der Grosse, August 26, 1901.
24. Menu of the Magnetic Club, November 20, 1901. 895
25. Menu of the Hudson River School Masters' Club, April 19, 1901.
26. Menu of a dinner organized by the Camp Fire Club, November 20. We can't read the year, but the New York Library archivists classified it as a 1900–1901 document. On the foundation of the Club, please refer to Gronauer, "The Camp Fire Club." 900
27. *Luncheon given in honor of the President of the Unites States Hon. Theodore Roosevelt*, May 10, 1905. The menu does not indicate the place where the lunch was given, but note that the publisher of the menu was A.C.M. Clurg & Co., Chicago.
28. *Dinner in honor of His Excellency Sir Chentung Liang-Cheng [ . . . ] by the Merchants Club of Chicago, Saturday November the eleventh nineteen hundred and five.* 905
29. *Hopkinsville Kentuckian*, June 14, 1906, 7.
30. *White Pine News*, July 5, 1907, 4. Many other issues in the same summer advertised the sale of Gorgonzola at Graham's.
31. Menu of the Grand Hotel Hungaria, November 30, 1907. 910
32. Menu of the Crescent Athletic Club, November 15, 1907.
33. Menus of the SS Barbarossa and SS George Washington, both March 13, 1910.
34. *Tenth annual dinner of the representatives of the Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York given by William B. Carlile, manager, Congress Hotel, Friday March eighteenth 1910.* 915
35. For a socio-cultural framework of the history of the *Titanic*, see Howells 2012. For the presence of Gorgonzola in menu of the *Titanic*, see Archbold et al. 1997, 90.
36. "Produits du midi." The excerpt was signed with the pseudonym 'Le Ramasseur des ragots'.
37. Menu of the City Midday Club, July 6, 1914. About this Club is very interesting Butler 1921, 18, quoted in Pertilla 2015. 920
38. Menu of the SS Frederik VIII, July 10, 1915.
39. Bill of Fare of La Moderne Rotisserie, with the handwritten "9. April. 1913."
40. Menu of Louis Sherry Restaurant, November 17, 1917.
41. Menu of the SS Paris, April 29, 1934. 925

42. Menus of the Watussi, June 16, 1935, and June 30, 1835.
43. Menu of the Vancouver Hotel, March 10, 1937.
44. *Reports of the United States Commissioners* 1891, 614. Gorgonzola was also mentioned, among many other Italian cheeses, in *Report of the Commissioner-General* 1901, 337. 930
45. See his obituary in the *New York Daily Tribune*, May 18, 1908, 5.
46. About Crain's report see *Reports of the United States Commissioners* 1891, 588–589. In addition to the typo "Train" (instead of "Crain"), the initials T.C.T. clearly referred to Thomas Crowell Taylor Crain (1860–1942), Dunham Jones's son. About Thomas, see *Burke's Distinguished Families* (1948, 2637). Nonetheless, we can say that, during his father's stay in Italy, Thomas resided in Milan until 1881, which could make him quite competent in some Italian socio-economic traits, even though he was quite young. The report is also mentioned in *Transactions* 1884, 252–253. 935

## Newspapers and menus in chronological order 940

- La Salle à Manger*, July 20, 1865.
- Hawaiian Gazette*, December 7, 1886.
- The Pittsburgh Dispatch*, November 24, 1889.
- Waterbury Evening Democrat*, May 2, 1895.
- La Correspondencia de Puerto Rico*, April 7, 1897. 945
- Indianapolis Journal*, April 17, 1898.
- Menu of the SS Königin Luise, March 12, 1899.
- The Evening Star*, January 12, 1900.
- Menu of the Kempinski Restaurant, August 27, 1900.
- Menu of the SS Barbarossa, September 7, 1900. 950
- Menu of the Hudson River School Masters' Club, April 19, 1901.
- Menu of the SS Friedrich der Grosse, August 26, 1901.
- Menu of the Magnetic Club, November 20, 1901.
- Luncheon given in honor of the President of the Unites States Hon. Theodore Roosevelt*, May 10, 1905. 955
- Dinner in honor of His Excellency Sir Chentung Liang-Cheng [...] by the Merchants Club of Chicago, Saturday November the eleventh nineteen hundred and five.*
- Hopkinsville Kentuckian*, June 14, 1906.
- White Pine News*, July 5, 1907.
- Menu of the Crescent Athletic Club, November 15, 1907. 960
- Menu of the Grand Hotel Hungaria, November 30, 1907.
- New York Daily Tribune*, May 18, 1908.
- Menu of the SS Barbarossa, March 13, 1910.
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- Bill of Fare of La Moderne Rotisserie, with the handwritten "9. April. 1913."
- Menu of the City Midday Club, July 6, 1914.
- Menu of the SS Frederik VIII, July 10, 1915. 970
- Menu of the Louis Sherry Restaurant, November 17, 1917.
- Menu of the SS Paris, April 29, 1934.

Menu of the steamer Watussi June 16, 1935.

Menu of the steamer Watussi, June 30, 1835.

Menu of the Vancouver Hotel, March 10, 1937.

Menu of a dinner organized by the Camp Fire Club, November 20, no year.

975

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