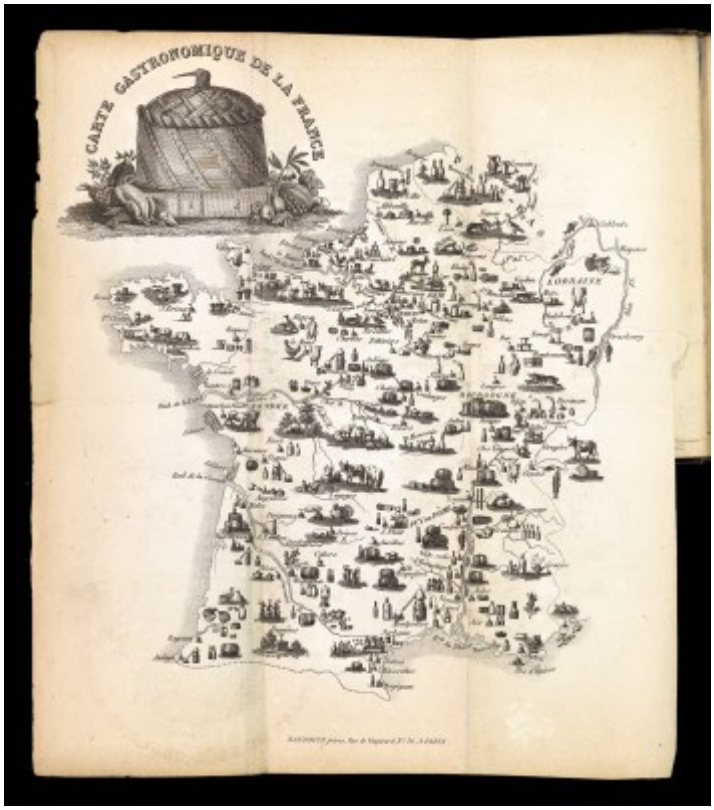

32mo (135 by 90 mm), half blue leather, marbled boards, engraved title with manuscript addition “Pseudo Horace Raisson”, plate of ‘Promenade du Gourmand’, one folding map (235 by 205 mm), closed tear.

TRAVELS IN FRENCH FOOD AND WINE

Nouvel Almanach des gourmands.

Author
DE PÉRIGORD, A.B. [Horace RAISSON and Léon THIESSÉ]

Publication date
1827

Publisher
Baudoin Frères,

Publication place
Paris,

Physical description
32mo (135 by 90 mm), half blue leather, marbled boards, engraved title with manuscript addition “Pseudo Horace Raisson”, plate of ‘Promenade du Gourmand’, one folding map (235 by 205 mm), closed tear.

Dimensions

Notes
A gastronomic map of France. This rare map appears in the ‘Nouvel Almanach des gourmands’, a work on fine dining and food, started by Horace-Napoléon Raisson and Léon Thiessé under the

pseudonym A.B. de Périgord. Its name is an homage to an earlier series of almanacs by Alexandre Grimod de la Reynière, 'Almanach des gourmands'. Reynière is considered the first gastronomic journalist, building on a contemporary interest in the science of gastronomy and the growing wealth of the post-Revolution middle class. He was the scion of a noble house born with disabled hands, and thus ignored by his parents, surviving the Revolution because his father, ashamed of his son's disability, had left the noble prefix "de" off his birth certificate. He was a noted eccentric, and held famous "funereal" dinners with coffins as centrepieces and all-black food.

The 'Nouvel Almanach' contains advice on everything from seasonal food (with a long discourse on truffles) to the correct order for courses to be served and eaten at table. It also carried extensive reviewed lists of restaurants, hotels, provisioners and wine merchants, who were invited to send in their wares to be tested by an "enlightened jury, and then scrupulously announced, described, and judged in future annuals". Like its predecessor, the 'Nouvel Almanach' was translated and reprinted, spreading the fame of French cookery around the world. A contemporary English reviewer welcomes this addition to an established classic, writing that "England would be ungrateful indeed, did she not acknowledge her obligations to that celebrated work; for at the time of its first appearance… she was still nearly as uncivilised as in the time of Louis Quatorze, whose ambassador in London complained that he had been sent to a country with twenty-four religious sects and only two fish sauces!" (New Monthly).

The folding map has a large Périgord pie in the upper right corner, a delicacy made with truffles and quails (the quail's head is visible peeking out of the top), which alludes to the pseudonym of the authors. The simple outline of France is crammed with small pictures showing the native delicacies of each region.

The almanac ran for three years and the present example is the third volume, which was edited by Thiessé alone. The third year is comparatively scarce, with only three copies traced in institutions: Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek, Weimar; New York Public Library; and Bibliothèque publique, Neuchâtel.

Bibliography

Lawrence R. Schehr and Allen S. Weiss, French Food: On the Table, On the Page, and in French Culture (Routledge, 2013); "Nouvel Almanach des Gourmands", The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal (London: Henry Coburn, 1825).

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 11869

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