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Hispanic Studies Professor Will Analyze and Prepare Food Fit for the King

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— If you love Spanish cuisine, this might be a good time to make friends with longtime Illinois Wesleyan University faculty member Carolyn Nadeau.

That's because Nadeau, Byron S. Tucci Professor and Professor of **Hispanic Studies**, will be preparing and sampling nearly 500 recipes that were once enjoyed by the Spanish monarchy. Nadeau has been awarded a Franklin Research Grant from the American Philosophical Society in support of her project to prepare the first critical edition and translation of Francisco Martínez Montañón's 1611 cookbook, *Arte de cocina, pastelería, vizcochería y conservería* (the art of cooking, pie making, pastry making and preserving).

Martínez Montañón was head of the kitchens for both Philip III and Philip IV of Spain, making his cookbook a monumental artifact in Spain's culinary history, Nadeau said. Her project will include not only translation of the recipes into English, but also a critical analysis of Martínez Montañón's sensitivity to diverse palettes and comparisons to later editions of the cookbook, Nadeau explained.



Carolyn Nadeau

She said scholarly research in understanding the role food plays in peoples' social and cultural development has grown significantly in recent years. Scholars from a variety of disciplines are utilizing food in different ways to examine political implications, economic issues, social issues and gender issues, she said.

Nadeau said food serves as a useful marker in interpreting Spain's history. Both Muslim and Jewish culture has had significant impact on Spain's history, including the foodstuffs such as citrus fruits, sugar, eggplant and spinach, among others, brought into the Iberian Peninsula.

"If you look at food items such as these which define Spanish cuisine today, you have to make the acknowledgement that those did not come out of nowhere," Nadeau explained. "They have a connection to a people and a history."

She also noted that sugar was found in Spanish cuisine long before it appeared in dishes in other European countries. The Muslims first come into Spain in 711, she explained. All through the Middle Ages, Spanish recipes can be found that reference sugar.

"You don't get that in other parts of Europe until much, much later, the 17th century or so, when the exploitation of people working the plantations in the New World finds sugar in regular use in the rest of the continent," she said.

In her project she will also explore class issues. She noted Martínez Montañón's cookbook was written for people cooking for the king, the highest social class possible. When compared to literary texts outlining lower class diets during the same time periods, however, there are overlaps. She noted one such dish was the *olla podrida* (rotten pot or hodgepodge stew), which was found on nearly every man or woman's table, yet recipes for the dish appear in every court cookbook as well.

"It's a recipe written in many different discourses for the upper classes," she said. "So that tells us there is a sense of community in how food brings people together in spite of differences of class, race, region or gender."

The grant will cover travel to Spain for library research of some of the only existing editions of the cookbook, but it is the preparation of the recipes that most excites Nadeau.

"Food is so essential to all of us, of course, and I'm looking forward to preparing the dishes to better understand the subtleties and flavors," she said. "This cookbook was considered 'the' model for Spanish cooking well into the 19th century. By examining each recipe and his passionate side notes, I can enliven Martínez Montañón's authorial pride and acute attentiveness to his readers with appropriate glosses."

Nadeau has written a number of articles on food representation in Golden Age texts. She specializes in 16th- and 17th-century Spanish literature and is the author of two books: *Women of the Prologue: Imitation, Myth, and Magic in Don Quixote I* and a critical edition of Francisco de Quevedo's *El Buscón*. Nadeau joined the faculty at Illinois Wesleyan in 1994 and has directed off-campus studies in London, Madrid and Barcelona. She has chaired the Hispanic Studies department and taught both in the Humanities sequence and in the first-year Gateway Colloquium.

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