

CONSERVATION OF AN ETHNOGRAPHIC OBJECT TOO BIG TO CONTEMPLATE WITHOUT A LARGE WHISKEY

D.W.Grattan

Abstract - This article does not need one. We thought quite a lot about this but decided, for reasons which will be apparent once you read it, that an abstract, resumé, auszug, or anything else would be quite unnecessary, redundant, superfluous, uncalled for and even extraneous. We apologise for having to spell this out at the head of the paper, but there was no alternative. Now please read on...

I Introduction

With the current hiatus in the U.S. Space Shuttle programme the Bas-Culotte method of treating shipwrecks by extra-terrestrial freeze-drying (1) must temporarily be put on hold. This also raises questions about the recently proposed TPLV (2) illustrated in Fig.1. Whilst the actual purpose of launching totem poles into orbit remains at an early stage of consideration, it has been demonstrated that the NBP (3) looks wonderful in glossy science magazines and has nothing whatever to do with conservation... yet. It thus must be recognized as a really major and exciting setback whose time has not yet come, but is excitingly useless.

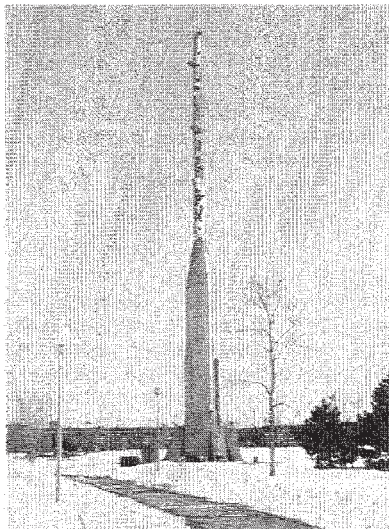


Figure 1 The totem pole launch vehicle. (Since publication of this photograph, the editors have been led to believe that this is actually a photo-montage. Legal action against the perpetrator of this deception is being contemplated.)

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On the other hand, if NASA or the U.S. Air Force could be convinced that a TPP (4), or even a TPF (5) was a sensible proposition, then they would obviously have less time to fly nuclear things around to the benefit of nobody. If a totem pole could be placed in a geo-stationary orbit, it would be available to the whole population for visual access through Earth-based Edmund Scientific telescopes. Objects could be made to rotate slowly, in an air- and insect-free environment, allowing inspection from all sides (6). Small boys could not climb upon them, nor leave wads of bubble gum and other less savoury articles in more or less accessible places. In fact, museums as display centres would no longer be necessary. It is even inconceivable that other more intricate orbits could not be devised to allow different objects to come into prominence at different times. Cometary orbits should not necessarily receive no consideration at this or any other point in light of this.

Editorial Interjection:

The lack of any available lunch vehicle did not long deter Bas-Culotte from making several experiments using economy as a basic consideration vis-a-vis stuffing the hollow centre of totem poles with gunpowder and putting a match to them. The results were spectacular but unpredictable. Three "vehicles" suffered loss of payload when poorly matched tree rings failed under pressure. A Congressional Enquiry concluded that the weakness in the tree rings in previous lunches had been covered up by layers of whitewash.

Grattan:

Look here Ed! Who is supposed to be writing this rubbish? You or me, eh? I didn't want to write about space again anyway. I really wanted to do something exciting, brilliant, creative, inspiring; something to stimulate the imagination and inspire future generations to achieve greater heights of something excitingly, brilliantly creative! I really wanted to write about...

ANALYSIS AND TREATMENT OF A RARE FOUR-SLICE TOASTER

ibid

Abstract - The analysis and treatment of a four-slice toaster is described. The analysis and treatment of a four-slice toaster are described. A description is given of the analysis and treatment of a four-slice toaster. Descriptions are given of the analysis and treatment of a four-slice toaster.

2 Introduction

The development of toast as a food item (as opposed to a construction material. Ed.) is unlikely to have preceded the introduction of bread. However, the discovery and baking of bread is itself lost in the mists of time. (What a stale cliché, if you'll excuse the bun. Ed.) Few crumbs of information remain. Toast was probably adopted as a food item as Man (or Woman) the hunter/gatherer became Man (or Woman) the eater of excessive quantities of over-packaged quasi-foodstuff. Doubtless the first piece of toast came soon afterward. Was it burnt, did it have peanut butter or marmalade, or perhaps damson jam, adsorbed upon it? These are archaeological questions which have yet to be answered.

Yet the history of toast is the history of civilization itself (7) and the development of the toaster must be seen as the culminating achievement of 6000 years of culinary evolutionary development. This is why the artifact under consideration here, the four-slice toaster, is of such profound significance. Not only is it a product of countless years of evolution (which the author has counted quite accurately 8 lines up. Ed.), the design, construction and pattern of use is a mirror (8) of the society which created it. Thus scientific analysis is of great importance and can help assist the complex ethical questions involved in conservation of this and like objects.

3 Composition

The toaster under study here was constructed in 1976 at the Etna Toaster Works in Palermo, Sicily. Its serial number is 0000001-0 and was inspected by number 14026 (Fig.2). It is a composite artifact having the following organic and inorganic components:

- Poly (vinyl chloride)
- Brass
- Copper
- High Impact Polystyrene
- Tungsten
- Asbestos (nasty!)
- Stainless Steel
- Chrome Plated Steel
- Aluminum Alloy
- Charred Farinaceous Deposits
- cable insulation.
- electrical plug.
- terminal screws.
- electrical cord.
- outer casing.
- knob.
- heater elements.
- thermal insulation pads.
- toast guides.
- casing.
- lower casing components.
- interior.

4 Analysis

4.1 Differential Thermal Analysis (DTA).

This was performed on a differential thermal analyser using Micro DTA techniques on possible farinaceous food-related material located inside the toaster's interior compartment. An endotherm was identified at 100°C, which could be associated with loss of water. This was followed by a distinct aroma of burning toast. On removal the particles were found to be charred; too charred, in fact, to receive butter or marmalade for a Gustation Evaluation Test (GET) - damn! Nevertheless, in the farinaceous traces which maintained integrity there was some lack of friability. French Toast was thus ruled out.

4.2 Microscopic Examination.

A microscopic examination was conducted on the chrome-plated exterior. The researcher observed an eye-shaped object in the field of view of the microscope. Further studies indicated that this could probably be associated with a reflected image apparently emanating from the researcher's own organ of sight. This observation confirmed the reflective nature of the surface and also gave a high probability index of chromium (Cr) as the source (reflectivity of chromium 70% visible light).

4.3 Computer-Assisted Toastography.

With the assistance of the Blackburn Hamlet Veterinary Centre and the kind help of Des M. Bowell, a partially non-destructive CAT-scan (9) of the toaster's interior was performed.

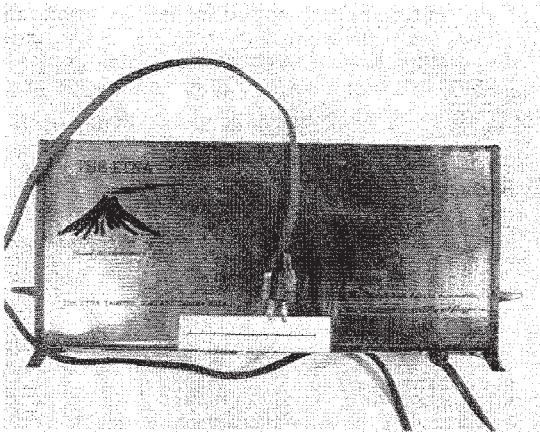


Figure 2 The Etna Toaster, subject of this study.

No cats were found, reliably indicating that mice were unlikely to have invaded the interior of the toaster. Computer reconstruction of the interior showed that this advanced technique could actually detect the presence of sliced bread or toast within the toaster. It could not, unfortunately, distinguish between the two.

4.4 Wet Chemical Analysis.

The toaster was first unplugged. The results of the wet chemical analysis have been unfortunately lost. I'm frightfully sorry about this, but I don't think any wet chemicals were detected anyway, so that's all right.

4.5 Strength Testing.

Tensile and compressive testing to determine elastic moduli and strength at fracture were not performed for fear of denting this valuable museum piece. We regret this unfortunate omission in the data and can only suggest that readers attempt to extrapolate by examination of similar items for sale at reduced price due to being hurled at abusive and recalcitrant toaster purchasers during end-of-line sales.

4.6 Elemental Analysis.

Four elements were identified:
Left.
Right.
Upper Left.
Upper Right.

(I have taken the trouble to check this bald assertion. There are, in fact, six elements in a four-slice toaster, as anyone who has ever been near one knows very well. Ed.)

5 Conservation

5.1 Conservation Procedure.

A largely non-interventive ethical procedure was adopted. Absolutely nothing was done to the toaster.

5.2 Ethics and the Poppupp Test.

As part of the analytical programme of evaluational examination, it was decided (by the toaster) to conduct a test introduced in the Ukrainian SSR Institute of Advanced Computerized Toastography by Academician Lebedev Poppupp (10).

Earlier dialogue with the toaster had raised the question of whether it, without toast, could be considered a complete artifact. And herein lies the difficulty; though superficially reversible, the bread entering the toaster is later emitted with a certain upward momentum having by that time a significant degree of thermal aging, yellowing, browning, Keats and even possible charring. Thus Academician Poppupp (11) devised the test whereby the thermal aging is limited by unplugging the toaster after engaging the bread in its correct location by depressing the high impact polystyrene knob located on the outer casing. Studies of the yellowing evaluational index by UV spectrometry have shown this to be a reliable procedure.

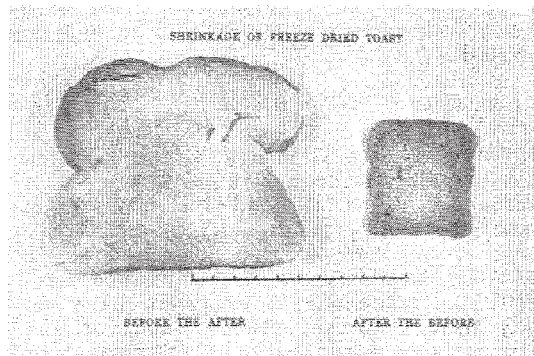


Figure 3 Shrinkage and deformation of bread after being subjected to experimental toasting in the machine under study.

5.3 Relative Humidity Control.

It was noted that on placing the bread in the toaster, rapid moisture loss took place. Shrinkage and deformation of the bread were also noted (Fig.3). Unlike wood (or brass

for that matter) the tangential, radial and longitudinal shrinkages of bread are equal at about 10.8% (Fig.4). To correct this problem, several approaches have been approached. Least interventive, and additionally least inventive, was the RH Control Nodule of Dr. Messi Stiffolski (12). Whilst 100% RH did prevent moisture loss, there was a minor amount of very unacceptable corrosion and mold growth.

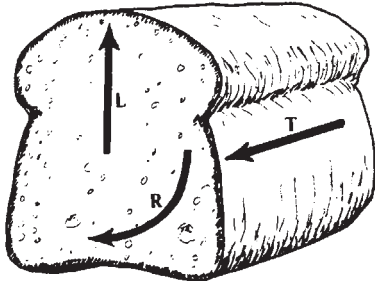


Figure 4 The axes of bread: longitudinal (T), radial (L) and tangential (R).

Total impregnation of the toast with PEG 3350 was next assessed. This also worked well in preventing deformation, but took large amounts of marmalade (thick cut) to hide the repulsive flavour.

6 Conclusion

In a sense, the philosophical non-interventive approach is demonstrated here as being profoundly impactful upon the inter-disciplinarian modus operandi... (Look Ed, I can't think of any more long words - and you do need long words in the discussion in order to baffle the reader as to what you have actually done, and we actually didn't do anything so long words are doubly important and I'm not so sure I should be writing this. Can you help?)

Editor:

D.W.Grattan

De damned bare-faced norve of presentin' me wid dis rubbish and expectin' me to mask all its flaws and drawbacks. Look you, de previous Editor may have allowed dis kind o' ting but O'll roast on a foire before Oi do, blast yer orange soul!

7 References

1. Bas-Culotte, J., "Lyophilization in Microgravity", *Recent Setbacks in Conservation*, Vol.1, 1985.
2. TPLV - Totem Pole Launch Vehicle.
3. NBP - Nose-Balanced Payload.
4. TPP - Totem Pole Payload.
5. TPF - Totem Pole Freeload.
6. The possibility of bacterial or viral infection from space-borne micro-organisms should not be discounted (cf. Hoyle and Chandrasekar).
7. Why? (Ed.)
8. It is literally a mirror, being chromium plated.
9. Guaranteed to kill cats.
10. Popupp, L., "Felix Mortus Est", *Studies in Cat Conservation*, 19,12, 1986, pp73-83.
11. It's in a big, green book in the library... I think it's on the third shelf as you go in, on the left, or is it..? Anyway, it's in there somewhere... I've seen it!
12. Stiffolski, Messi, "A Hair Restoring Formula and Environmentally Controlled Padded Cells in Conservation Management", *Museumstechniska Berichte*, 18,47,38,15,24, Bund 3, 1948, pp168-39.

Dr. DAVE (you can call me Sir) GRATTAN - Grattan is living poof that freeze-drying can cure baldness. Born in Cheam in the County of Surrey (with the fringe on top), he recieved his first hair at the age of one minute. This hair has been preserved with Brylcreem (also know as PEG 400) 1946-1956, Grecian Formula (also known as PEG 400) 1956-1976, and Epoxy Resin (AY103, HY956) 1976-1986. Dr. Grattan is 41. He has favoured parting his hair on the left side, and finds freeze-drying more accepted in society today. Although some prejudice and a minor amount of discrimination remain, a normal life for freeze-dryers is now possible. *Author's Address - Cheam in the County of Surrey until he left at a tender age.*

Resumé - On décrit les méthodes analytiques et la procédé de restauration d'un "four-slice toaster".

Auszug - In diesem Artikel wird Versuchstechniken und Restaurierung eine "four-slice toaster" beschrieben.