

Melegueta or Grains of Paradise: To be ‘Pepperish’

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ABSTRACT: This essay synthesizes literary and religious references, folklore, historical and agricultural record to interrogate melegueta pepper’s (grains of paradise) role in West African foodways and indigenous knowledge. The focus is a cultural relativistic inquiry of Diaspora magio-religio-culinary culture, as opposed to didactic ethno-centrism. Pre-contact West Africans were advanced in their epistemologies of their lifeworld as a geography, a landscape of selfcare, and gustation. Multidisciplinary texts are utilized to understand melegueta’s importance and effect to West African and European cultures pre and post Maafa.

Emi to o je ata, emi yepere ni. (The spirit that doesn’t eat pepper is a feeble one)
—Yemisi Aribisala

30 The context is Nigerian; our food is ideally always pepperish. The Yoruba have disdainful words for those who don’t eat pepper, those who can’t eat it, and a categorical declaration of where pepper goes when it is eaten. All the spheres that it touches, especially the spirit (Aribisala 2015).

A Preta do Acarajé	The Black Bean Fritter Vendor
... Dez horas da noite,	Ten o’clock at night
na rua deserta	On a deserted street
A preta mercando	The black [woman] street vendor
parece um lamento	Sounds a lament
É o abará!	There is abará!
Na sua gamela	In her wooden bowl
tem molho cheiroso	She has an aromatic sauce
Pimenta da costa, tem acarajé	With spicy peppers from the coast
Ô, acarajé e cor	The acarajé is colored (<i>from palm oil</i>)
[...] Todo mundo gosta de acarajé	Everyone loves acarajé (Caymmi)

‘Atarere èwọ ọbbẹ, (melegueta) is never used in sauce’; although present in ritual offerings (Crowther 1843). This arcane aphorism explicitly states that melegueta peppers, are not for cooking. This is diametrically opposed to Caymmi’s anthem to the black-eyed pea fritter vendor. She seasons her food

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with melegueta. Or Yemisi Aribisala’s desire to walk with melegueta/chilies whenever leaving Nigeria to make food ‘pepperish’. Melegueta, kola nuts are thought to be indispensable in a Nigerian home, much as salt, black pepper may be to Western Europeans. Lydia Cabrera, and William Bascom identify several *ebós*, (sacred offerings to Orixá) requiring melegueta, (see Figure 1).

For Orixá Oxossi: Offer a sacrifice; guinea peppers. What should he do to be able to have magical power? Father should offer 80 guinea peppers [...] he had medicine that he was using. Orixá says that this person has a medicine. Orixá says that he should use guinea pepper; he should eat lots of it, eagerly. Orixá has spoken. The deities ordain it (Bascom 1993:340-43).



FIGURE 1. Grains of paradise (*Aframomum melegueta* pods), and husked seed (slightly larger quinoa/millet). Roça São João dos Angolares in São Tomé Island São Tomé and Príncipe (Moody 2006).

Ethnobotanist, Robert Voeks, identifies melegueta as a colonial export to Brazil, ‘magical use’, as well as honoring the deity Èsù,(the trickster figure) as a disruptive force. Achebe’s, *Things Fall Apart*, links melegueta to magic as we meet protagonist Okonkwo’s father Unoka: ‘lazy improvident and incapable of thinking about tomorrow’. Neighbor Okoye calls on Unoka to talk and divine. Unoka fetches his *opon ifá* (divining tray) kola nuts, *pemba*, (diviner’s chalk), and melegueta, saying, ‘I have kola nuts’. Okoye replies, ‘He who has kola, brings life [...] With kola [and melegueta] we have life. We should all live. We pray for life, children and a good harvest’ (Voeks 1997: 45, 113,125-8, 214; Achebe 1959:3-14).

Within West African religious cosmology there exists a symbiosis between melegueta and *obi/orobô*; kola nuts. Purification and breathe rituals, and initiation rites of priests who celebrate the ancestral dead utilize melegueta. Mastication of melegueta renovates one’s energy, particularly in community or in celebration of Èsù, Ogum and Xangô. Kola nuts fight malevolent forces, are oracles themselves; demonstrating divine loyalty and fidelity.

Joceval, Candomblé *Ogã*, (a male priest; guardian of altars), and Claudio, *Ojé*, (Egúngún priest) described melegueta’s role in ritual sacrifice and Èsù rituals. Èsù guards the crossroads and change, and interlocation between mortals and deities (Barton 2020).

Taste and Agency

Guinny Pepper is not plentiful, it groweth in the Woods wilde, a small plant like Privet or Pricke-wood’ (Hair and Kelling 1607/1981).

This piece is challenging; naming varies, varies widely. Predicated on African ethno-linguistic distinctions, and taxonomical variations, including cross-references to cardamom. Names were created to Marketing melegueta exports fostered more variations, as did melegueta exchanged as currency. This essay engages with power/agency, flavor, culture and circulation of melegueta (Hepper 1967; Limborch 1679:100; Stokes 1812: 71-2; Van Wyk 2013; Kronl 2008).

32 Melegueta pods were gathered from wild-foraged bushes flourishing in West African coastal forest zones and savannah woodlands from Sierra Leone, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Ghana, the Gulf of Guinea to Nigeria and the Benue river delta. Sparsely it’s found further south in Cameroon, Gabon and Angola. Melegueta’s pre-contact name came from cognates, potentially, wiza: *awisa* or *awusa*, (Ewe), *wisa* or *wusa* (Fante), *wie* (Gã-Danbe), *citta* (Hausa), *Atarere èwò òbbè*, *atarere*, *ata*, *ata-re*, *ose-oji*, or *ata kekere* (Yoruba), *ossame* (Angolares and Forros) São Tomé/Príncipe islands, and *eza* (Nzema). For North African Arabs and Berbers: *tin al-fil*, ‘pepper fruit,’ a condensation, *itrifil*; ‘African pepper’ in Turkish. *Alligator pepper* or *Guinea pepper* are bastardized nomenclatures. ‘Alligator’ being a wholly different spice. Spellings include: *Milleguetta*, *Melegette/Melegete*, and *Malagueta/ Malaghetta*, and *Menegetai* stemming from Romance language linguistic variations, and *meléga* or *meligo*, millet in archaic Italian, (size); *malagua*, the jellyfish’s sting, or, Phoenicia’s (Andalusian) ancient port, Málaga. *Malagueta* ‘mala fide’, ‘bad faith’ are chilies exported to Latin America with the enslaved; Brazil’s melegueta is *pimenta da costa*, West African ‘coastal peppers’ (SNNPR 2017; Barth 2019:8) (See Figure 2).

Agency, the power to assert and galvanize energy existed for all parties. Flavor’s agency is distinct since fashion fluctuates for cultural, ethnic or national groups. Culture apparent in Caymmi’s song of the lonely Bahian African-Brazilian street-food vendress. Authenticity and taste anchor this *ur-Baiana de acarajé* (bean-fritter vendress) wares. Melegueta gave her hot sauce its memorable punch. *Acarajé*, were fried to order, slathered with this zesty hot sauce, anchoring her clientele’s devotion.

Paula Wolfert revers tastes distinguishing *Ras el hanout*, Morocco’s iconic spice blend; ‘a spice merchant’s top selections.’ Her ideal had twenty-six spices, including melegueta (1973: 24-26). Tunisian *Qâlat/Gâlat Dagga* is a ‘sweet-n-warm’ blend of cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon,

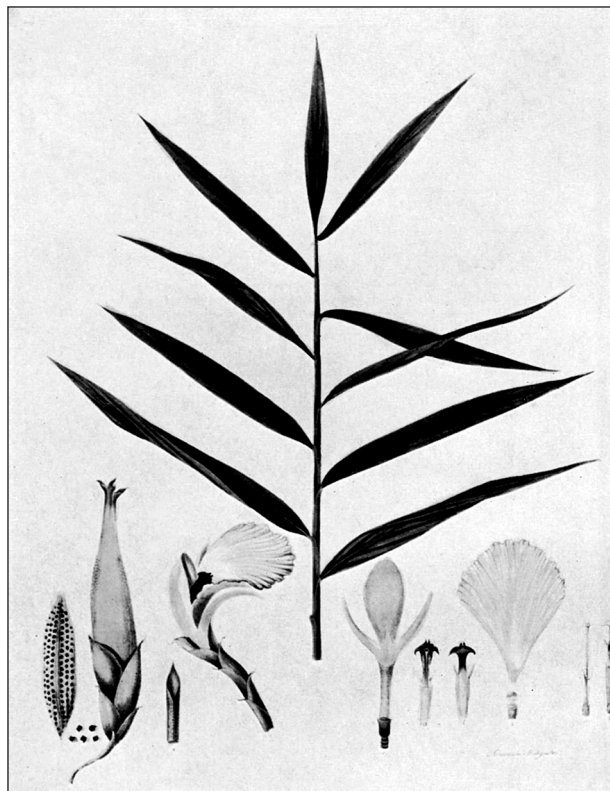


FIGURE 2. *Aframomum melegueta* (Rosc.) K. Schum.
In England, Pflanzenr. IV. 46:204 (1904). Plate 7,
p. 129. (Hepper 1967)

peppercorns, and melegueta (Sambar 2003: 175). The “Silk Routes Research Project posits that melegueta’s reddish-brown lachrymiform pods (+/-2 inches) hold sixty-one hundred seeds which fostered West African’s predilection for fiery chili condiments. Vaguely reminiscent of black pepper’s (*piper nigrum*) woodiness, it’s characterized by concurrent numbing and piquancy. Related to ginger (*Zingiberaceae*), melegueta’s gingerols and essential oils define its flavor chemistry exuding spicy, peppery, hot, gingerish overtones, a pleasing bitterness, and lemony, cardamom, clove and camphor aftertastes. Prized

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for its flavor, use as a stimulant, and medicine; Africans chew it with kola nuts. Medicinally used for dysentery and stomach disorders, and an antibacterial,

Transnational Trade

Fifteenth century Venetian slave trader Alvise Cadamosta sponsored by Prince Henrique, ‘*O Navigante*’ twice sailed West Africa’s coast tracing the Gambia River to its mouth. From Cadamosta’s journal, *Navigazioni*, (1508) (see Figure 3).

On this coast there grows a species of *melegete*, extremely pungent like pepper, resembling the Italian grain, *sorgo*. Producing a species of great strength, not inferior to *Pimienta del rabo* or *Pepe dalla coda*, ‘tailed pepper’ (*piper cubeba*) resembling *cubbebs*, which the Portuguese bring from Calicut, but so powerful that an ounce goes farther than a pound of the common sort; its exportation is prohibited, lest it injure the sale of that which is brought from Calicut (Kerr 1811:270).

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FIGURE 3: 'Negroland and Guinea with the European Settlements, explaining what belongs to England, Holland, Denmark, et cetera'. H. Moll Geographer (printed and sold by T. Bowles next year Chapter House in St. Paul's Church yard, & I. Bowles at ye Black Horse in Cornhill, 1729, originally published in 1727).

German pastor, Wilhelm Johann Müller, (1660s) described its cultivation and taste, 'this African spice is sharp and hot enough, but East Indian pepper is far superior' (Brooks 2019:54-7).

Along the Maghreb, Berber, Arab and Jewish merchants traded melegueta with farmers along the 'Pepper Coast/Grain Coast'; named for 'grains of paradise' not cereals/legumes. Tuareg caravans ferried it up the Sahel, and Sahara through to the Sudan and Ceuta. 'Melegetae' appears in a mock battle at an elite festival in Treviso, Italy (1214) as a spice in the 'faux fortress' that one dozen ladies protected from invading knights. Another vestige of Sub-Saharan trade routes referenced between melegueta and the Levant, and the Arabian Peninsula, are *jouz as-Sudan*, and *gawz al-Sudan*, broadly: Sudanese nuts (Van Harten 1970).

The Iberian Reconquista and its resultant expulsion of the 'Moors' provided potential for trading, wealth and power, that would not only subvert Islam, (and Judaism) and the monopoly Genovese and Venetian city-states had had for years. Christian Iberians sought a direct route to India to establish/exploit trade in spices. Prince Henrique encouraged maritime prowess, technology, and exploration. Portugal's caravels and magnetic compasses

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were a boon to colonial successes. King Alfonso granted Fernão Gomes, a trade monopoly along West Africa's coast. He traveled south to Morocco then Mauritania and onto the Grain Coast; followed by Pedro de Sintra. Cadamosta lost his coastal claims following Prince Henrique's death, (1460). By 1487 King João II, Henrique's brother, enlisted Pero da Covilha and Alfonso de Pavia, bilingual in Portuguese and Arabic, posing as Moors, to scout out foreign spice markets and trade routes. They identified Calicut (Kozhikode; Kerala) having traveled by land through Egypt and East Africa enroute to India, hastening the need for fast sailing routes from Iberia to India. Portuguese Bartolomeu Dias rounded South Africa's Cape of Good Hope (1487-8). Vasco de Gama identified sea lanes between West Africa and India, (1496), opening the fifteenth century's, 'The Age of Discovery/Imperialism', as a lucrative period for Portugal's melegueta trading. Europeans accepted the flood of melegueta since the Romans had previously popularized pepper reflected in Apicius' first century cookbook (Barth 2019: 34-42).

Key political economy challenges for farmers, traders and merchant/slave traders begins with access. Contact frequently took place onboard ship due to the lack of navigable waterways, topographical threats, the paucity of trading posts, urban centers and an overall sparse population. Ascertaining fair value is abstract when gold, ivory and melegueta are traded for European textiles, brass/copper bangles and domestic tools ostensibly exotic in a subtropical culture. Many traders were also enslavers, doing business might cost someone their freedom. Additional threats to local are evidenced by how European ethnocentric mariners described the Africans. Pereira's *Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis*, (1505-08), corroborates the derogation of indigenous populations in narratives centered on navigational and exploitative descriptions of Grain coast traders (Hilling 1969),

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There is very large dense forest that extends 2 leagues from Cabo Mesurado to Santa Maria where the malagueta trade begins and extends forty leagues along the coast [...]

Eighteen leagues down between Rio do Junco to Rio dos Cestos received its names (junk and wicker-basket) since this is where the negroes come to the ships to sell their plentiful good quality pepper. Ships should anchor in 10-12 fathoms for safety where the bottom is muddy, not at 20 [...]

Three leagues from Rio dos Cestos near Ilha da Palma, [...] one could buy a bushel of peppers for a half-pound brass bracelet, and a slave for 2 of barber's basins; now a bushel is worth 5-6 bracelets, a slave 4-5 basins [...]

The best trading months are from October to April before the tempests arrive and pepper is plentiful...from Cabo Feroso to Resguate do Genoês pepper and slaves are easily obtained. Anchor at 15 fathoms [...]

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3 leagues to Rio de Sao Vicente it is rocky, but SE by E and NW by N for 15 leagues there is pepper [...] 4 leagues along the coast to Praya dos Escravos runs for 2 leagues you can find more pepper than slaves [...]

Seven leagues from Praya dos Escravos to Lagea WNW and ESE is marked by a huge rock (Druta), more than a bowshot long and half wide, ¼ league from shore. [...] the best place along the whole coast for pepper [...]

Use the rock [...] as your landmark. The negroes of this coast bring pepper for barter to the ships in the fishing canoes. [...] naked and not circumcised, they are idolators, being heathens [...]

These negroes are idolators, not circumcised, vicious people, seldom at peace...A hundred leagues upstream [...] is a negro country called Opuu, here there is much pepper, ivory, and slaves. 7° latitude north to Equator (Kimble 2010).

Sixteenth century British annals of trade in bodies/commodities reiterate the desire for pepper, gold, and ivory. Towerson wrote, 'his men could barter with the negroes for malagueta pepper. Although he gathered pepper, his interest was gold' (257). Here is Wyndam's first Grain coast voyage (1552),

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From Eden's account of Lok's 1554-5 Mina voyage the crew gathered 'four hundred-pound weight and odde of gold, of two-&-twentie carrats, one graine in finenesse; sixe-&-thirtie butts grains of paradise; about two hundred fifty elephant's teeth' [...] Wyndham's 1567 Malagueta coast voyage a place, Lagoa near island of Saint Thoma the best place to trade in pepper [...] 1556-7 William Towerson's second Guinea voyage, six weeks on the coast they had three tunnes of grains of paradise they wanted to bring to the Mina market before the Portuguese [...] King Philip II wrote to Count de Feria from Brussels, January 20, 1559 of his nephew's financial issues, since English ships had arrived in Portsmouth, "laden with gold and pepper, brought from the Mina coast". The 1, 500 crown, surety bond put up in advance (+/- \$150,000.00 dollars) would not cover the shipment's cost, requiring immediate remittance [...]

These transnational profiteering monopolies stop at nothing to realize greater financial success even when taking a toll on the economics of their trading partners or more egregiously on human life, whether African or European (Blake 2010: 257,314-319,325, 335,395, 433). Slaver William Hawkins' second Sierra Leone voyage seeking goods not slaves for the Company of Merchant Adventurers, gathered over four hundred pounds of gold, thirty-six butts¹ of 'Guinea grains', and approximately two hundred fifty ivory

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tusks (1553). Forty years later, (1593) Dutch slaver, Barent Erickson made his second West African voyage, returning in March 1594 with valuable Gold Coast cargo of gold, ivory and 'grain' pepper. Successive expeditions sourced these three products. (McLaughlin 2014; University of Iowa 2015-20; Kup 1961: 40; Brooks 1993; Marees 1987).

Then French slaver Jean Barbot's journals (1678-79) described the highly organized market structure where vendresses controlled trade. Whether Barbot intended to be culturally relativistic it clearly shows the industry, knowledge, skill and order inherent in these market women.

Apart from the peasants who bring palm wine and sugarcane to market every day, there are no men who stand in public markets...The following goods were sold: sugarcane, plantains (bananes), bananas (*baccovens*), [sweet] potatoes, yams, lemons, oranges, rice, millet, maize, maniguette [pepper], bread, cakes, fish (raw, boiled, or fried), palm oil, eggs, pumpkins, purslane, the beer called *pitou*, fire-wood, roofing material, and country tobacco in untreated leaves... (Rönnbäck 2015: 122).

In oblique hindsight Despatch crewmember John Stubbs' journal appears darkly humorous. He understands how their 'trifling, valuable' cargo, may be lost to pirates. The Royal African Company's 1719 *Despatch* was captured near the Canary Islands, Stubbs, 'a witty, brisk fellow' ingeniously argued with pirate Howel Davis,

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Pray, Gentlemen, [...] if this Ship is burnt, you will thereby greatly serve the Company's Interest. The Vessel out two years on her Voyage, being old and crazy, almost eaten to pieces by the Worms' besides, her Stores are worth little, her Cargoe, consists only of a little Redwood and Melegette-pepper [Malaghetta]; so if she burned, the Company will lose little; but the Poor people [...] will lose all their Wages, [...] three times the value of the vessel, and her trifling Cargoe; so that the Company will be greatly obliged to you for destroying her, [...], the Vessel was spared, and delivered again to Captain Wilson (Breverton 2004: 50).

A Danish-British 1785-6 register lists goods exported from an English factory on Bence/Bunce island including, ivory, hides, wax, indigo, cotton, rice, millet, tamarinds, pepper of different kinds, cassia canes, and other chemical drugs; tortoise shell, [...] spermaceti, ambergrease, and gold to Captain Basteresse for \$1,400,00.00; \$3,700, 459.79 today, (Kup 1961:118). These accounts detail trade, consumption and profiteering patterns for melegueta. It enthralled consumers and sustained coffers across Europe to the detriment of the West Africans who had transformed a wild plant into a commodity. This production-distribution chain centred Africans as peripherals; the least return from the most arduous

labor, along with threat of enslavement. Dominant European core metropolises, urban middlemen, and financiers gained the majority profits from this spice trade.

...What's Cooking?

Flooding Europe with melegueta can be evidenced through four early cookbooks, *The Forme of Curry*, (+/-1390), and *Le Viandier*, (1300/1486), *La Liber da Cocina*, (1304-14) and *Apicius: Cookery and Dining in Imperial Rome* (1541). *Pouldre fine/douce*, 'fine spice' [powder] was commonly found in noble Medieval French pantries. A 'labor-savor', cooks ground the 'big four' spices: ginger, cinnamon, cloves and grains of paradise; storing *pouldre* in leather pouches (Scully et alia 2002: 55). *The Forme of Cury* lists 'greynes de Parys' in: *Sause Noyre for Capouns Yrosted. XX.VI.XVII* and *PUR FAIT YPOCRAS [I]. XX.IX. XI.*, (Capons with Black Sauce, and, To Make Spice Wine). Each use of melegueta won't be noted, yet these recipes indicate how it was used in bread thickened sauces for roasted and boiled poultry, pork, or fish; and 'mulled' or spiced wine. The wine's spices were both for taste and digestion (Brander and Pegge 1780; Kronl 2008). Apicius advocates for pepper, which ambiguously may reference melegueta.

[...] that in this case the term [pepper] probably stands for some other kind of aromatic seed less pungent than the grain known to us as 'pepper' and one more acceptable to the fine flavor of fruit, namely pimiento, allspice for instance, or clove, or nutmeg, or a mixture of these. 'Pepper' formerly was a generic term for all of these spices (Apicius and Vehling 1977).

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La Liber uses melegueta for camelina, Saracen (Arab/Muslim) style sauce, Candied Relish, Ash Gray Sauce for a Wild Boar Civet, and Ambroyno, (sweet food); spiced almond /almond milk thickened sauce for sautéed chicken. Camelina produced a spiced drink as a digestive aid with vinegar, and/or breadcrumbs (Möhren 11).

Le Viandier has the largest volume of recipes with melegueta (some with offal) including partridge *trimolette*, capons, hare and rabbit civet, *porc du mer* (porpoise), *Ung rozé a chair*, (A pink dish for meat days), lamprey, fish/meat en gelée, civet of veal, [sic], shredded mutton, hasty pork menu with vinaigrette, potage *lians*, and sauces: *gravé de loache*, (gravy), sauce 'to preserve fish', boiled sauces, cameline sauce, *Brouet Rousset*, (a broth) and crayfish gravy. As with *The Forme of Cury*, these bread or nut thickened sauces often complemented proteins subjected to two or more cooking methods. Sauces are spiced with ginger, cinnamon, cloves, long pepper, saffron, verjuice/vinegar in addition to melegueta. Two headnotes summarize the spice mixtures values

A hot, dry spice such as pepper is appropriate for a cold, moist meat such as pork, and particularly for its visceral. For the *Menue haste de porc* prepared here in R.17, rather than the pepper used by the Enseignments, the *Le*

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Viandier has substituted grains of paradise, melegueta pepper. Commonly known as “maniguette.” We use it to give amount to spirits [...]

Both almonds and chicken were held to be particularly suitable for persons with digestive problems and were relied upon regularly to form the basis of a bland diet. Ginger reinforced by grains of paradise, a relative of pepper—is the predominant spice and is likewise a favorite ‘digestive’ (Scully 1988).

[...] make it very good, add thereto an ounce of ginger, long pepper, grain of Paradise, and cloves, as much of the one as of the other, save less of cloves [...] when it hath been therein for 2-3 days, and the *bochet* tastes enough of spices, take out the bag [...] (Toussaint-Samat 2008).

Legal Limitations

Dutch 1358 taxation records levied import duties on ‘*Greyn Paradijs*’. From the period as a wild cultivar to key transnational commodity until economics, trade, regional, and personal tastes changed allowing *pipers nigrum*, *longum* and *cubeba* to usurp its position in food and beverages in the mid twentieth century. Additionally, cacao’s rise in international popularity and cultivation as a commodity overtook lands previously dedicated to melegueta. Official Blue Book statistics cite 191,011 pounds exported from the Gold Coast (Ghana) in 1871. In 1919 combined British imports from the Ivory Coast, Ghana and Sierra Leone into Liverpool totalled 30 tonnes;² and 19, 857 pounds were imported to the U.S. in 1940. Yet, after several centuries of a run-in popularity melegueta fell under legal edict, a harbinger of its nadir. (See Figures 4.)

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Year	£ x 10,000
1875	2.95
1891	1.87
1900	2.39
1910	1.70

FIGURE 4. Price of black pepper (*piper nigrum*) at London auction.

Melegueta was added to European beers, Dutch gin, Aquavit, and flavored wines as an adulterant. “To obtain the appearance of a good quality porter—to get “a fine frothy head,” iron sulphate, alum, salt, capsicum and grains of paradise improved weak and insipid beer’. Although foods were flavoured with melegueta during Queen Elizabeth I’s reign, and she added it to her beer, in 1816 it was banned in the UK for use in strengthening/revitalizing beer. Parliamentary Act 56 Geo. 3. C.58 forbade the use of adulterants including melegueta

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resulting in the levying of heavy financial penalties and/or revocation of licensure thereby forbidding brewers, chemists and publicans to possess or use grains of paradise to make beer (L200 fines), and druggists found selling to brewers were fined, L500. Chemists are a significant addition since melegueta was also seen as a digestive aid. *The Domestic Chemist* also identified melegueta as a key adulterant to beer and ale in 1831 (Van Harten 1970; Hart 1952; McCulloh 1839:8-13; British Online Archives; Ashworth 2004).

Contextualizing these gastronomic decisions against the West African traditions that today are holy sacralized suggests certain commonalities relative highly disparate applications. Consider the concurrent chewing of melegueta and kola nuts as a physical and spiritual stimulant. This practice focuses one’s sense of taste and heighten flavors on the tongue; as well as aiding digestion. Or, its use in Candomblé ceremony where its bracing flavor is done as a shared group activity to bring reverence to ritual offerings and directly engage with specific deities in Bantu and Yoruba traditions. Metaphorically, when compared to the prior *Le Viandier* quote, that melegueta, and/or the ‘*pouldre fine*’, fine spices; the *ur-quatre épice* contributes to uplifting the spirits. Can we then link the visceral desire to enliven a moment, a gustatory or a sacred experience that transformed a wild perennial cultivar into a global commodity as having a shared resonance between Europeans and the African Diaspora? This further enhances the agency and deleterious effects of a pepper that contributed to the enslaving of Africans, elevated European political economy, became an abstract substitute or simulacra for the inhumane trade in bodies. Products that could be valued by pirates/privateers, destroyed by bacterial molds or invasive pests, but was much easier to manage than enslaved chattel. Carried as a provision on Middle Passage slave ships melegueta [was] ‘given to our Negroes in their messes to keep them from the flux and dry belly-ach, which they are incident to.’ Understanding ‘pepperishness’ may provide insight to West African culinary cultural epistemologies and underscore the value of their knowledge systems and dogma in their own stead and in relation to European epistemes always already seen as more advanced historically.

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Notes

1. A butt is a large cask historically used for wine, beer or water, equal to 108 imperial gallons (491 liters). A butt-load equals 2,016 lb. pounds
2. Imperial long tonnes equal 2240 pounds, as opposed to 2,000 pounds for U.S. tons, or 67,200 pounds total.

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