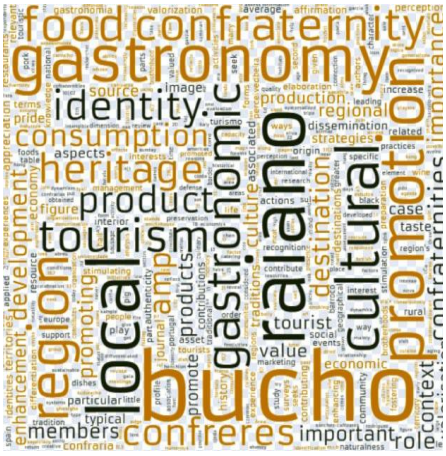
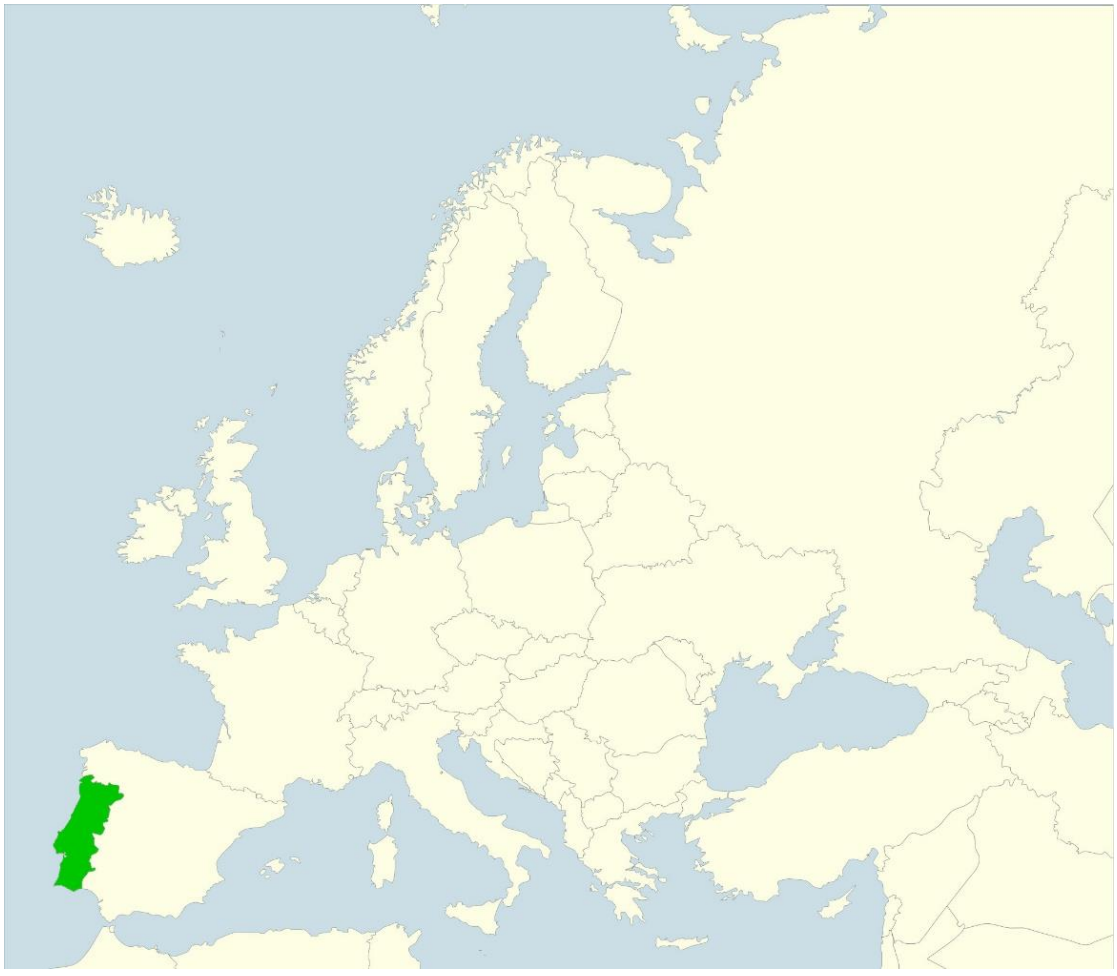
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GASTRONOMIC IDENTITY AND THE ROLE OF THE CONFRATERNITIES IN THE VALORISATION OF LOCAL PRODUCTS. THE CONFRATERNITY OF *BUCHO RAIANO* IN THE PROMOTION OF CULTURE AND INLAND TOURISM

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Abstract: Considering gastronomy as a source of expression of local culture, its use in tourism can contribute to enhancing and adding value to the destination, as well as encourage the pride of the local community, stimulating its production and consumption, and its dissemination outside the region. Bucho Raiano is a gastronomic product of identity and representativeness for the inland border region of Portugal (Riba Côa), for which its confraternity seeks the dissemination, the promotion of its consumption, and enhancement as a cultural resource. In this context, we seek to frame the Bucho Raiano gastronomic product, its identity, and the role of the confreres in its promotion and dissemination. Thus, this research aims to contextualize the Confraria do Bucho Raiano as a case study, evaluate the confreres' perception of the confraternity's mission, its strategies and contributions to the promotion and enhancement of this gastronomic product. The aim is to find out whether *Bucho* can be an important tourist product for this region and, consequently, strengthen the link between traditional local gastronomy and the tourist destination, according to the confreres' perception.

Keywords: Gastronomy; Tourism; Bucho Raiano; Confraternity; Food heritage

Highlights

- Bucho Raiano is a gastronomic product from the inland border region of northeast Portugal.
- Gastronomic confraternities play a significant role in preserving and valorizing gastronomic products.
- The research aims to explore the perceptions and behavior of the Confreres of Bucho Raiano.
- Confreres and their actions contribute to the preservation and dissemination of local gastronomy and culture.
- Gastronomy is linked to tourist destinations, promoting its dynamism and fostering the food traditions.

1. Introduction

Gastronomy and traditional dishes are among the cultural resources that can be used as a marketing tool to attract more visitors to the destination (Shenoy, 2005). Gastronomic products play a particularly important role in this enhancement and in extending the tourist experience, but also as a resource in identity formation in postmodern societies (Richards, 2012). In this context, the gastronomic confraternities play a relevant role in the preservation and valorization of gastronomic products, guaranteeing their authenticity and promoting the cultural and territorial identities with which they are associated.

Portugal is identified as one of the best Gastronomy and Wine destinations in Europe and is therefore considered a tourist territory that enhances the differentiated tourist offer of a region (Turismo de Portugal, 2017). If, on the one hand, gastronomy is recognised as an asset that enhances the heritage identity of the destination and the tourist experience, on the other hand, tourism (through certain types/segments/motivations/ tourist behaviors) can generate notability and recognition for gastronomic identity, mainly in its dimensions of authenticity and symbolism (Sthapit et al., 2017). Authenticity, which in the case of Bucho Raiano, corresponds to the quality of pork from the region in question, seasonings and condiments, packaging, drying and preparation for consumption. However, it requires actions and commitments that protect the productions with cultural dimension, in the context of processes of commodification/touristification of culture.

The Bucho Raiano constitutes a gastronomic product of identity and representativeness for the inland border region of northeast Portugal (*Riba Côa*), for which its Confraternity of Bucho Raiano seeks its

dissemination, the promotion of its consumption, and the valorisation as a cultural resource and identity of the border region.

Considering gastronomy as a source of expression of local culture, its enjoyment in tourism can contribute to enhancing and adding value to the destination, as well as encouraging pride in the local community, stimulating its production and consumption, as well as its recognition outside the region (Kim & Choe, 2019). Literature suggests that the gastronomic products of a destination strengthen the economy in particular the local economy, increase the attractiveness of the destination, contribute to the authenticity of the destination and differentiate it from others, strengthen the image of the destination, contributing to its sustainability and increase its competitiveness (Barroco et al., 2016; Sthapit et al., 2021).

With this exploratory and pioneering research into the perceptions and behavior of the confreres, we sought to understand, through surveys, the importance and actions of the confraternity in the valorization and promotion of Bucho Raiano, the role of the confreres and their dynamics in the valorization and promotion of bucho and the region as a gastronomic destination. In this context, understanding the profile and actions of the confraternities forms the basis of the research, in order to understand their contribution as players in the preservation and enhancement of local gastronomy, culture and tourism.

2. The importance of gastronomy in affirming tourist destinations – literature review

The identity of the destination in terms of gastronomy can be created through products, typical dishes, or differentiating cuisines, which are directly related to the representativeness they have with the place, as well as the possibility of promoting tourist demand. Gastronomy has become a potential element to create an identity image, helping to position destinations and differentiate them from their competitors (Frochot, 2003; Oliveira, 2008; Kim & Choe, 2019).

The gastronomic "authenticity" associates symbolization to the tourist destination, which is associated, among other aspects, with the appreciation of the symbolic nature of the food (menus and specific foods and ingredients, specific ways of preservation, preparation, presentation, use of specific utensils) (Hegarty & O'Mahony, 2001; Fletchher et al., 2018). Barzallo-Neira & Pulido-Fernández (2023), recognize, through analysis of publications on gastronomy and tourism, the potential of certain regions in connecting the visitor with the essence of the destination through local products, cuisine, gastronomy, traditions, and the historical component that it carries within itself.

The connection of gastronomy to tourism and destinations is increasing, promoting its dynamism and fostering the appreciation of food traditions around their culture. According to Myttenaere (2013), the main components of current trends in rural tourism should be linked to the concept of authenticity that tourists associate namely with tradition, local culture, contact with nature and enthusiasm for discovering new forms of heritage, namely gastronomic heritage, and local products (Andersson & Mossberg, 2017). The World Tourism Organization (WTO) considers Gastronomy the essence of culture and a unique element of intangible heritage around the world, acting as a driver of tourism growth, being that, it is still, often, little valued and promoted by destinations. (Zaneti, 2016). Gastronomy is, in its ingredients, ways of using and cooking, a reflection of the ecological conditions of the territories, the history and socio-economic organization, the ways of life, and their food needs.The interests in culture and traditions, the authenticity of the experiences, and the connection of food to the territories allow gastronomic tourism to be combined with other forms of tourism contributing to the dissemination and affirmation of the destination, stimulating the economic activity sectors from production to catering. Thus, gastronomic tourism emerges as an indispensable resource that adds value and provides solutions for the differentiation of destinations, through the offer of exclusive products and knowledge that reveal themselves as identifying marks of a city or region (Font & Sanabria, 2018). The need for a destination to differentiate and develop as unique, passes through its authenticity (Sthapit, Björk, & Kumaran, 2021). As gastronomy is a prominent element of the intangible heritage of different regions, it represents the union of several factors, including traditional ways of life, the local economy, cultural identities, and geography itself.

Gastronomic tourism, interests in culture and traditions, the authenticity of the experiences, and the connection of food to the territories, allow gastronomic tourism to be combined with other forms of tourism contributing to the dissemination and affirmation of the destination, stimulating the economic activity sectors from production to catering, promoting the recognition that food products are a distinguishing factor of rural tourist destinations, at the same time allowing the promotion of specific heritages and traditions, contributing to local development (López-Guzmán & Sánchez-Cañizares, 2011; Mascarenhas & Gandara, 2015). It should be noted that never before has gastronomy been as fashionable as it is today, and the role of the media and the various programmes and competitions associated with it contributes greatly to this. More people are willing to try new things such as local cuisine and they often return to the place to taste the gastronomy again (Fletcher et al., 2018; Kivela & Crotts, 2009; International Culinary Tourism Association, 2012).

The marketing opportunities for gastronomic tourism are being developed by the countries that are given importance to this issue. Tourists' desires to experience local tastes in destinations and accommodation facilities have set the stage for the development of gastronomic tourism. (Sormaz, et al., 2016).

As Chang et al. (2011) state, gastronomy functions as an instrument for the socio-cultural development of destinations, highlighting the following aspects:

- Reinforces gastronomic identities – Gastronomic Tourism is developed based on characteristic local products. This factor helps to strengthen and affirm gastronomic identity, in addition to combating the effects of "food homogenization" driven by globalisation, such as fast food chains;
- Preserves local traditions, products, and recipes – the continued production of typical dishes, as well as other cultural events promoted by Gastronomic Tourism, allows local people to create a sustainable dynamic to preserve much of their gastronomic legacy;
- It enhances culture – As gastronomy is a source of expression of local culture, its use in tourism can contribute to enhancing and adding value to the culture of the destination;
- It enriches the cultural capital of the community – developing gastronomy as a tourism product also implies imparting knowledge and education to the community about its history and culture;
- Encourages Local Community Pride – by stimulating the local production of typical recipes or products, destinations value gastronomic heritage and this contributes to the community's identification and, at the same time, pride in its recognition outside the destination.

Consumption of local and authentic food contributes to the sustainability of a region, both directly and indirectly or support local agriculture and local food production, improve destination incentive, support the nation economically, and in particular, are strong agents for the development of a local destination brand (Hall et al., 2003; Sampaio, 2009).

In this context, *Bucho Raiano* constitutes a differentiated culinary product, whose promotion and dynamisation may enhance the tourism, promotion of the identities of border regions, and promotion of the local economy. Traditional products are products with history, as if they were part of a particular place and culture, and produced with local raw materials from a region. Due to the knowledge and expertise – passed down through generations – of such foods, their production not only rescues the history wrapped in them, but also the historical character of the product and its communities. They are traditional products, which embody products with history, as if they were part of a particular place and culture, and produced with local raw materials from a region (Ramos & Silva, 2016; Zui & Zui, 2007. Due to the knowledge and expertise – passed down through generations – of such foods, their production not only rescues the history wrapped in them, but also the historical character of the product and local people.The importance of gastronomy in building the image of inland tourist destinations is articulated, as well as the valorisation of regional identity, evaluating the perception of the confreres in the mission of the confraternity, in the contributions promoted in the gastronomic and tourist valorisation of *Bucho Raiano*, in the strategies undertaken for the preservation of this product and its dynamisation in terms of consumption, identity, and gastronomic heritage.

3. The cofraternities and the promotion of local products – the confraternity of *bucho raiano – case study*

Confraternities or brotherhoods are socio-cultural organizations traditionally formed by groups of people who share a common interest, taste or passion, with an emphasis on cultural and in particular food elements/processes, often with a long history and strong traditions. Confraternities can take many forms, but usually involve regular gatherings of members, who come together to share their interests, participate in cultural activities, and advertise and value products (Black & Gravestock, 2006; Mascarenhas & Gândara,2015). Many confraternities have a philanthropic dimension, promoting community services, fundraising, or other forms of collaboration with territories and their communities. The Confraternities incorporate in their organization regional references, promoting a scenario of identity, being responsible for perpetuating traditions, adding the changes imposed by the contemporary world (Machado, 2002).

They originated in medieval Europe and were formed by artisans or merchants who shared a common trade or interest (Black & Gravestock, 2006). In reality, the gastronomic confraternities represent a little studied reality, both in their interaction with the binomial heritage and tourism, and in the role of the confreres in the context of their relationship with the confraternity and with the promotion of the gastronomic product.

In many cases, confraternities are associated with specific regions or cultures, and may have unique customs, dress, or rituals and display ceremonial objects during their meetings. In general, confraternities provide a way for people to connect with others who share the same interests and goals, engaging in social and cultural activities with their own identities associated with their interests and the territories they represent.

Gastronomic cofraternities play an important role in disseminating, promoting, and defending the agri-food products and quality gastronomy of a particular region, maintaining the historical legacy of the customs and respective peoples or regions, and contributing to the cultural and tourism valorisation of the territories to increase the tourism, to avoid the disappearance of traditions around their culture (Rodríguez & García 2018). Gastronomy is increasingly linked to tourism and destinations, promoting its dynamism and fostering the appreciation of food traditions around their culture (Andersson & Mossberg, 2017; Gheorghe, Tudorache & Nistorean, 2014). Gastronomic tourism, the interest in culture and traditions, the authenticity of the experiences, and the link between food and the territories, allow gastronomic tourism to be combined with other activities that contribute to the promotion and affirmation of the destination, stimulating the economic activity sectors from production to catering. The confreres and their dynamics contribute to the preservation, enhancement, and dissemination of local gastronomy and culture. They seek to strengthen the cultural identity of the region and promote *Bucho Raiano* as a gastronomic heritage and tourist resource of high value. Knowledge about the main contributions of the confraternity in the promotion of *Bucho Raiano* and the destination/region is systematized, evaluating positively its actions of cultural dynamization, tourist asset, stimulus in building the image, and the tourist destination itself. The need for a protected designation of origin (PDO) is recognised, for its greater dynamism in national and international gastronomic fairs and its presence in the region's restaurants.

The *Bucho Raiano* Confraternity was formally established in May 2009, to promote bucho as a gastronomic product of excellence from the lands of Riba Côa (Figure 1). Bucho corresponds to a typical regional sausage from the border areas in central Portugal. Traditionally, this sausage was processed in the winter months after the slaughter of the pig. *Bucho Raiano* is made with pieces of meat that remained attached to the bones, ribs, head, tail, and ear. The meat is previously put in a marinade, containing water, red pepper (paprika), salt, and garlic. After three days, the pig's bladder, tripe, and jowl are stuffed and taken to the smokehouse to be dried by the heat of the fire (Figure 2). After being stuffed, the tripe is hung, along with the other sausages (chorizos, "paios", "morcelas", among others), on the clotheslines of the smokehouse, where they are dried using the heat and smoke from the fire. The meat used, including bone and cartilage, has a differentiated texture and flavour and requires care in its confection/cooking, so as not to burst and lose the intensity of its meaty flavours and spices. The bucho is cooked in an iron pot, and wrapped in the linen cloth, to prevent it from bursting while boiling. Simmered for three hours,

it is then removed and opened on a large platter. Served with boiled potatoes and plenty of turnip greens and red wine. Home-made cooking has been replaced by production by butchers and small sausage and sausage makers who have seen a commercial opportunity in bucho. Restaurants are introducing bucho on their menus, thus satisfying customers who want to taste this gastronomic item, generating wealth and branding for the region.

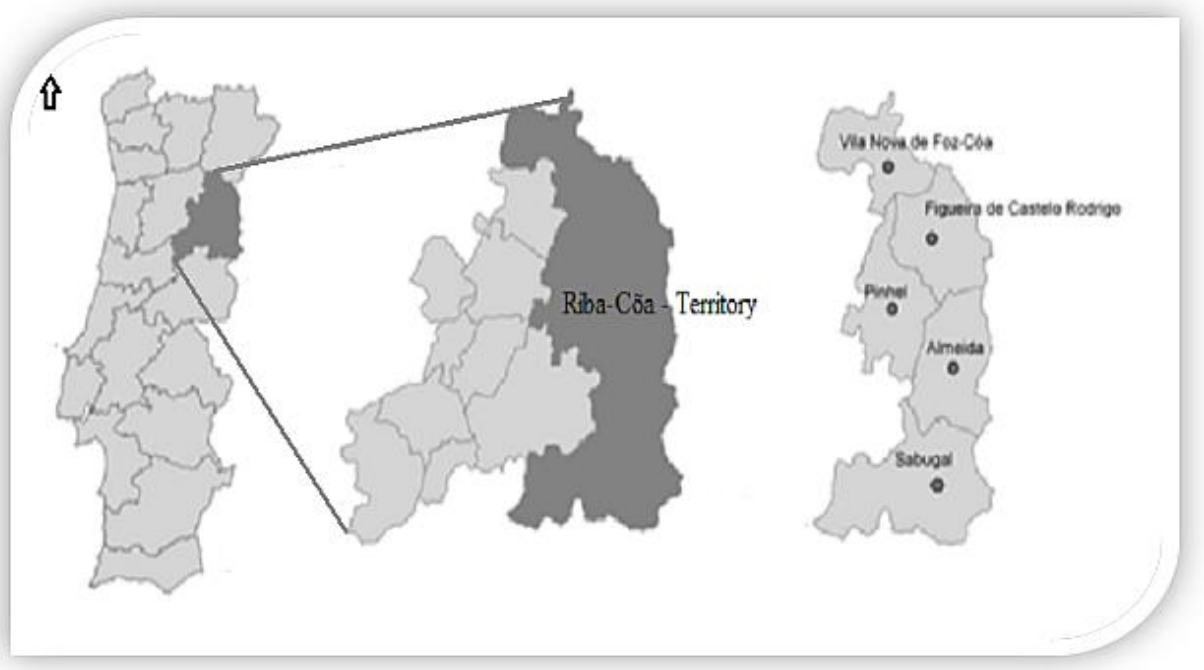


Fig 1. Location map of Riba Côa region – inland center of Portugal. Source: Authors' elaboration

The Bucho Raiano is a carnic sausage, today valued and appreciated, which reflects the hardship in which the people lived most of the yearin this region. The scarcity of resources and the little variety of products made the man “raiano”, sparse in blancmange, take advantage of all the less noble parts of the pig to be consumed in time. Thus the bladders were a reservoir to store these parts, after tempered and exposed to smoke that allowed its conservation and later consumption. In the traditional smoking region of "Riba Côa", the tradition of "bucho raiano" stands out with naturalness, which is only reproduced in these lands.

The purpose of the *Bucho Raiano* Confraternity is to promote *bucho* and contribute to its transformation into cultural identity and an economic opportunity for the border region. It organises two annual meetings: at Carnival time in the border region of Sabugal and in November in the metropolitan Lisbon area.



Fig 2. Bucho raiano and its traditional way of tasting. Source: Confraria do Bucho Raiano

Lent, especially on *Fat Sunday*, was the perfect occasion to taste bucho with the family. But nowadays, bucho has become a reference dish, being appropriate for any gathering of friends, especially in winter, as it is a gastronomic product of substance, intense in flavours and promoting conviviality through the sharing it represents. It should be noted that brotherhoods are institutions made up of players who may be involved in numerous aspects of the social, economic, and political life of their community or in its representation. The festivities promoted and the acts of enthronement tend to promote recognition and prestige, whereby belonging constitutes a factor of valorisation and recognition. Thus, the confreres constitute actors of dynamization and projection of the gastronomic products and simultaneously of the geographical areas of their origin. In this context, products less valued in the past or perceived as by-products gain significance and notability, due to their peculiarities of preparation and diversity of flavours. The unique and differentiating character of the products, together with the traditions are the essence of the destinations. Through food, it is possible to see and feel unspoken traditions. Food is also memory, acting in the imagination of each person and associated with the senses and life experiences of each individual (Barroco & Barroco, 2008; Okumus, Okumus, & Mckercher, B. 2007).

In this configuration, the confraternities have been promoting gastronomy and its touristic importance, associating conviviality and the memory of flavors, and constituting themselves as strongholds of resistance against what is seen as mischaracterization and loss of authenticity.

4. Methodology

An exploratory methodology is promoted about the product Bucho Raiano and its confraternity, seeking to describe the product, its preparation, and the associated traditions. The research focused on the importance of the confraternities in the promotion and defense of cultural heritage and in particular in the evaluation of the role of confreres in the promotion, dissemination and enhancement of Bucho Raiano as a gastronomic product, as well as perceptions about the dynamics and strategies promoted by the confraternity. At the same time, we sought to evaluate, through the perception of the confreres, the contributions that this delicacy can contribute to tourism in the region and its image as a destination. For this analysis, an electronic questionnaire was developed in conjunction with the Confraria Bucho Raiano, to obtain qualitative and quantitative information about the actions and positions of the 137 members of the confraternity. The survey was sent via email to all members in the second quarter of 2021, and 48 responses were obtained, which support the analysis developed. The survey is structured in four parts. The first part seeks to establish the profile of the members, the second part seeks to identify the reason and motivation for joining the confraternity, as well as to identify the most valued actions and initiatives developed by the confraternity. The third part seeks to know the perception of the importance of the confraternity in the promotion of Bucho and the destination Beira Interior and in the fourth and last part, to identify the contributions of the confraternity in the affirmation and promotion of the product and the promotion of the geographical origin.

In this context, the application of the survey as a primary source of information seeks to research the type of members, their motivation to join the confraternity and their perceptions about the confraternity and the importance of the valorization and dissemination of the Bucho as a cultural element and promoter of attracting tourists to a region with rural and border specificities. As a case study, we seek to know the profile and logics of the members' performance in the action of the confraternity and in the preservation of the bucho raiano, considering the geographical particularities of the territory and of the product itself.

5. Results

5.1 Confreres and their motivation to join the confraternity

The *Bucho Raiano* confraternity comprises of a total of 137 members who seek to enhance this gastronomic product and preserve its identity and associated cultural value. To evaluate the perception of the confreres about the mission of the confraternity, to perceive the positions and contributions of the confreres for the promotion and enhancement of this gastronomic product, to assess its importance

for tourism promotion for the region and consequently for the destination, a questionnaire survey was applied to all the confreres. A sample of 48 respondents was obtained, representing 35% of the total.

From the analysis of the 48 responses obtained, we can conclude that 83.3% of the confreres are male, with the 56–75 age group making up more than 75% of the respondents. The main ways of joining the confraternity were through a proposal submitted to the brotherhood – 43.8%, an invitation from a group of members 31.3%, and the invitation itself from the brotherhood 16.7%.

The main reasons for joining the confraternity (Figure 3) are based on the geographical identity and gastronomic appreciation of the bucho:

- To be a native of the region and to value traditional gastronomy;
- To contribute to the appreciation of *Bucho Raiano* as a gastronomic heritage;
- To be a *Bucho Raiano* connoisseur.

There is a strong link between territory, culture, and gastronomy in the membership of the confraternity and the contribution to the valorisation of the gastronomic identities and traditions of the region. According to the sample obtained, a very relevant proportion of members over the age of 55 is noteworthy, which confers a relationship of nostalgia and heritage identity with gastronomy, in particular with the preparation and consumption of pork belly, very marked with the traditional slaughter and smoking of the inland regions and the connection with the agricultural and pastoral activities, which identify the main ways of local life. The territories of Riba Côa, due to its marginal geographic location, in the central inland of Portugal, near the border with Spain, are currently characterized by low population densities and high rates of aging. The landscape, it is dominated by vast uncultivated areas, a consequence of the strong agricultural dropout registered in the last decades and as a result of the climatic conditions and geomorphologic formations, the region presents thermomediterranean and mesomediterranean habitats (Gama et al., 2010). In the first habitats stands out patches of holm oak, while in the second stands forests of cork oak (Quercus suber), currently small residual forests due to intense conversion into "montado" forest through thinning of trees and shrubs. The pig is a remarkable presence in the interior landscapes of the Iberian Peninsula, proving to be fundamental in the sustenance of its poulalaçoes. Its meat and fat are fundamental elements for the nourishment of the communities of the interior regions, consumed throughout the year through its preservation in salt or by smoking. The abundance of livestock grazing areas and the practice of smoking contribute to the production of sausages, of which the bucho stands out in the region for its particularities of composition, shape and preparation.

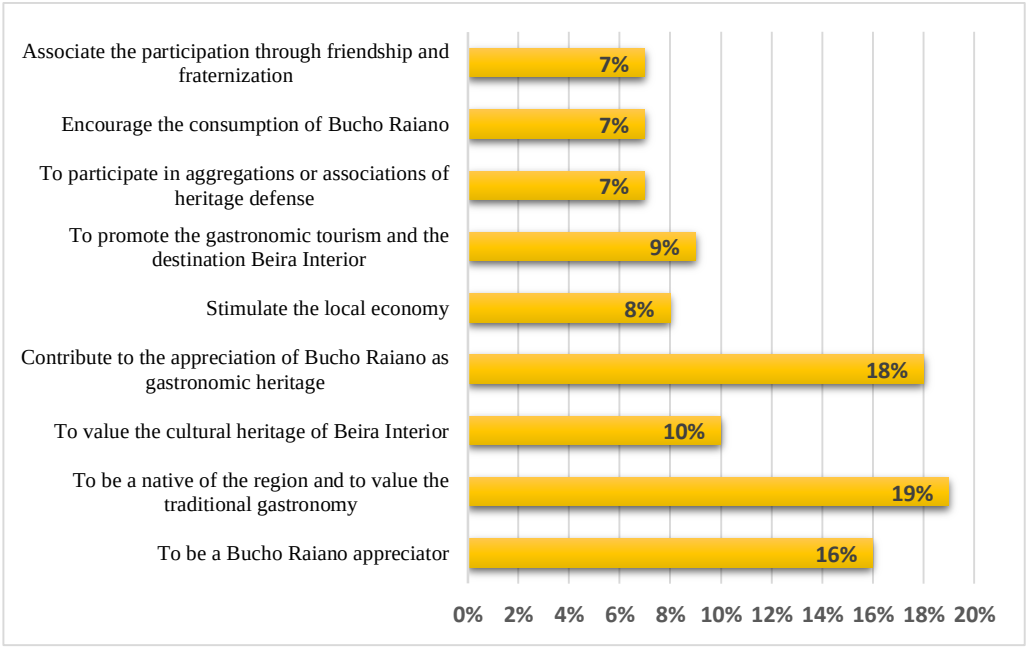


Fig 3. Main reasons for joining the Confraria of bucho raiano. Source: authors' elaboration (surveys applied to the confreres)

In terms of the factors that confreres value most in the confraternity, the following stand out in order of importance:

- The defense of *Bucho Raiano* and the promotion of the region;
- The valorisation of *Bucho Raiano* as a cultural heritage;
- Gastronomic events and socializing:

These assessments reflect a geographical relationship and cultural identity with the Riba Coa region and the interest in gastronomic events that constitute moments of proximity and dissemination of the gastronomic product (Figure 4). The perception of social recognition associated with the brotherhood and its members is also noteworthy as it includes elements that by their profession or social recognition associate distinction and merit to the members. This social relevance and merit, which can be perceived in the composition of the brotherhoods and their actions, imply influences, visibility, and inducements to taste and consume traditional products. Local food is food products that are grown or produced in a local area; it can be specialty food or regionally branded food that represents a local identity (Kim & Choe, 2019). In this context, its appreciation implies not only the maintenance of traditions and local cultural identity but also a relevant factor for its dissemination and stimulation of production and consumption.

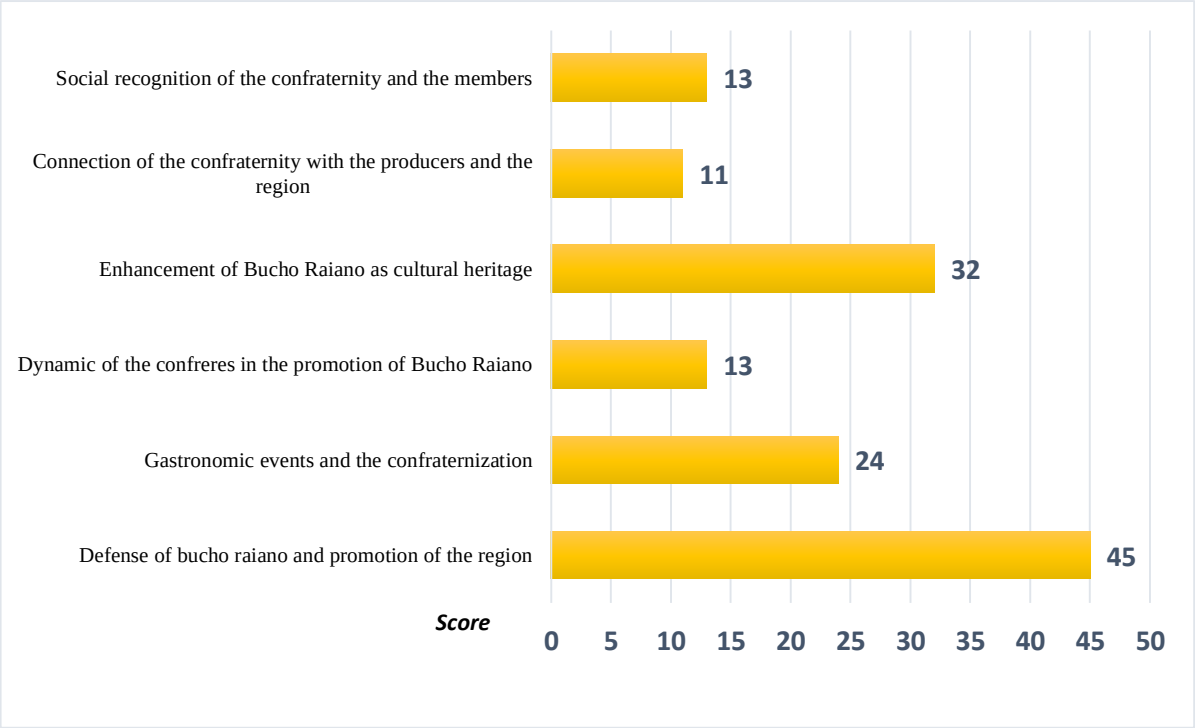


Fig 4. Most valued aspects in the Confraria do bucho raiano. Source: authors' elaboration (surveys applied to the confreres)

It becomes relevant to the link between the destination and the product, whose articulation allows establishing a geographical and cultural identity, which is the matrix of the tourism valorisation of food products and its capacity to promote the regions. The festivities associated with the confraternity are not only a moment of tasting and promotion of the gastronomic product but also a moment of conviviality, closeness, sociability, and social recognition.

Gastronomy is always part of the tourist experience, and in the era of globalisation, it constitutes an important intangible cultural heritage that distinguishes the region and reveals its authenticity. In this context, brotherhoods and sisterhoods play an important role in affirming the gastronomy of the regions, preserving it, and adding value to the product and its region.

5.2 Contributions of the confreres in affirming and promoting the product and boosting the geographical origin (destination)

The confreres are privileged actors, due to their social, economic, and political relationships, in the valorisation and stimulation of the consumption of differentiated gastronomic products such as *Bucho Raiano*. In this context and because of their involvement in the mission and values of the confraternity, it is important to know their practices, perceptions, and actions in the context of the confraternity.

In the appreciation of the main contributions to the promotion of the *Bucho Raiano* product and the dynamization of the region, there is importance given in particular to the spreading of Bucho *Raiano* outside the region and its valorization as a cultural heritage. It is perceived that gastronomic valorization can be an incentive for local businesses and communities to participate in tourism and benefit from its economic and social impacts. These two aspects get an average preference of 4.2 and 4.3 respectively, on a scale of 1 (not important) to 5 (very important), which emphasizes the importance that the members give to these aspects (Figure 5).

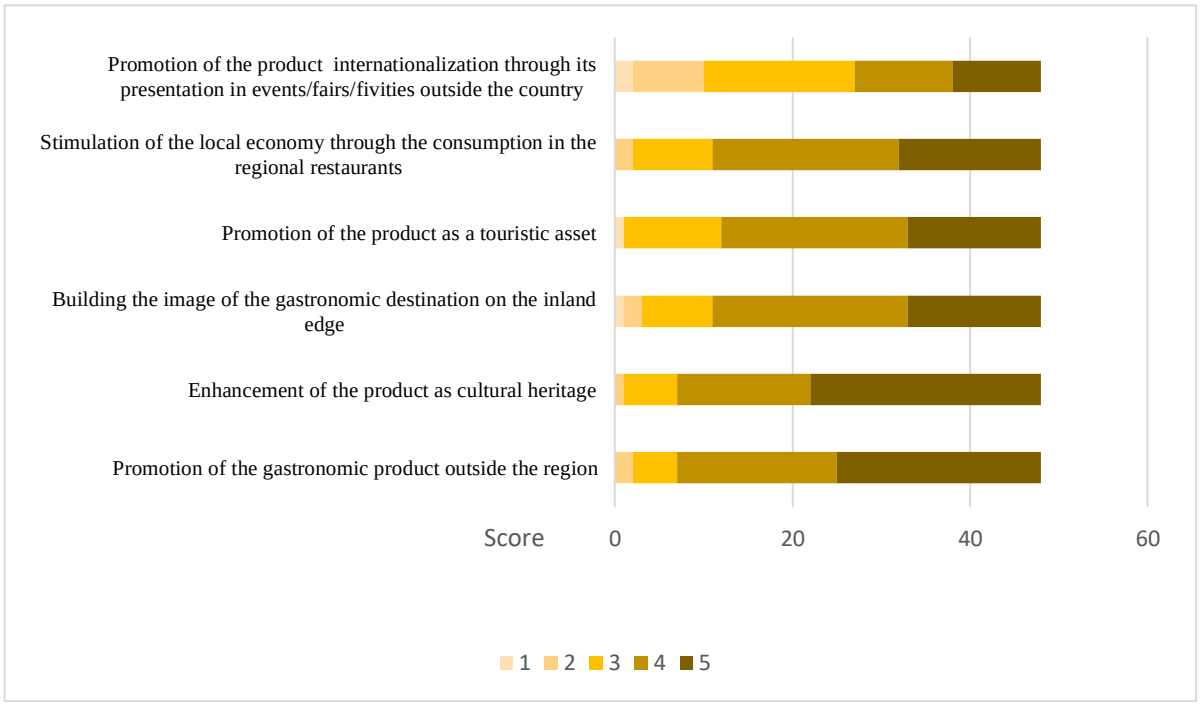


Fig 5. Contributions of the members in affirming and promoting the product and boosting its geographical origin. Source: authors' elaboration (surveys applied to the confreres)

Other evaluations were reproduced about the importance given to the stimulation of the local economy through consumption in regional restaurants, the promotion of the product as a tourist good, and the building of the image of the gastronomic destination of Beira Interior. In practice, the link to be consolidated is identified in terms of the association of bucho to the local economy, strengthening its presence among consumers, and its effective integration as an asset in the lists of local/regional restaurants. These contributions give the product a tourist value and a greater capacity, through its dissemination and promotion, to generate an image and a gastronomic destination. The promotion of the internationalization of the product through its presence at events/fairs and festivities is considered the weakest, having obtained an average rating of 3.4, on a scale of 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important), which denotes the weakness perceived by the members in the dissemination or in the existing ability to promote bucho nationally and internationally, requiring new strategies, from production and distribution to the recognition and gastronomic interest to be achieved with the product.

5.3 Relevant aspects for the affirmation of the Bucho Raiano product and the tourist promotion of the region

The use of gastronomy as an ingredient in tourist exploration is increasingly interesting for visitors as it offers access to cultural heritage, making it possible to get to know the history, culture, and way of life of a community in the format of cultural tourism.

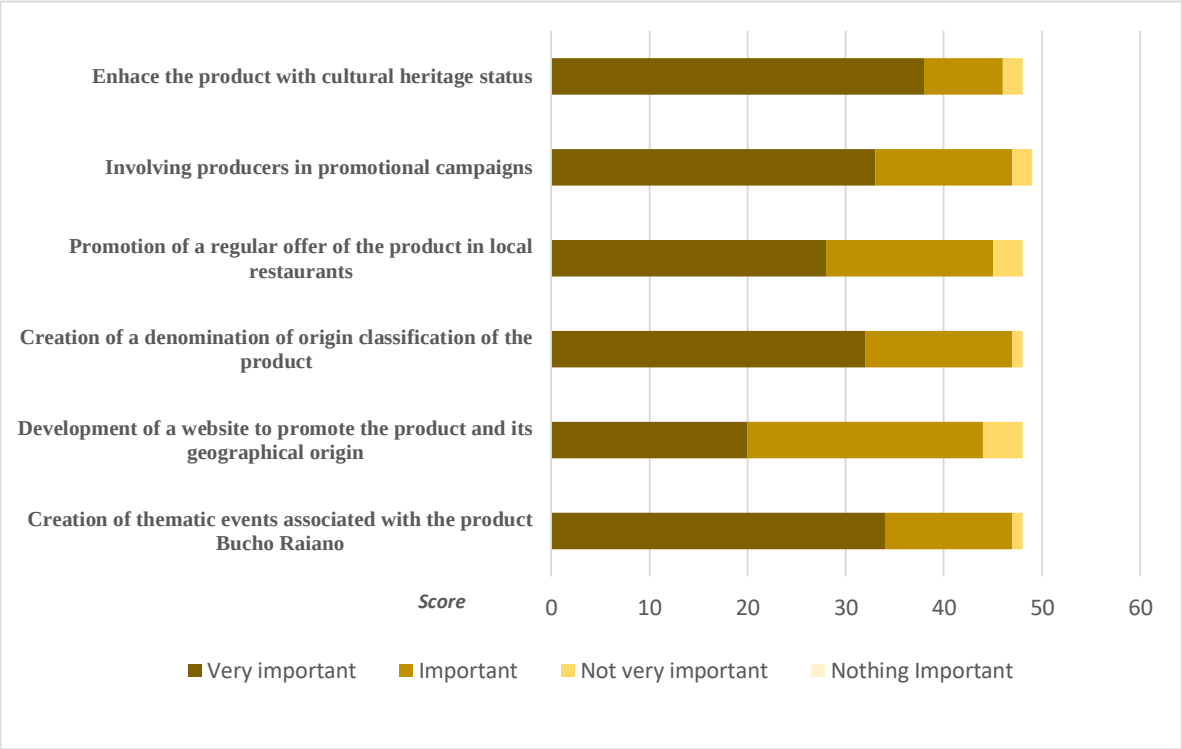


Fig 6. Aspects considered relevant for the affirmation of the bucho raiano product and tourism promotion of the region. Source: Authors' elaboration (surveys applied to the confreres)

According to the members inquired (Figure 6), the aspects considered relevant for the affirmation of the *Bucho Raiano* product and the tourist promotion of the region are based on the following, in order of importance:

- Enhancing the value of the product with cultural heritage status;
- Creation of thematic events associated with the *Bucho Raiano* product;
- Creation of denomination of origin classification for the product;
- Involve producers in dissemination campaigns;
- Promotion of a regular supply of the product in local restaurants;
- Development of a website to publicize the product and its geographical origin.

The importance of attributing a patrimonial status to Bucho should be highlighted, thus giving value to its territorial identity and gastronomic differentiation, as well as the concern with its dissemination and increasing consumption, encouraging its production with effects on the local economy. It is worth mentioning the concern with product certification, capable of guaranteeing the quality and authenticity of the production. This gastronomic certification is mentioned as a critical aspect to guarantee the quality and identity of the "Bucho raiano", along with the development of commercial capacity. The stimulation of its commercialization in non-traditional formats is expected, as well as the articulation with producers in its sale throughout the year and in its packaging that allows to extend the consumption periods.

5.4 Perception of the importance of the "Confraria" in the promotion of Bucho and the Beira Interior destination

The use of local gastronomy by restaurants can significantly increase production and be important in the marketing of regions and the purchase of local products by consumers (Henchion and McIntyre, 2000). The association of the products with their geographical histories and, necessarily, with their cultural references and ways of life, constitutes an important asset for the tourism dissemination of the places and for enhancing their visit. In this context, the following are perceived as the main contributions made by the confraternity (Table 1):

- Promotion of the gastronomic product – *Bucho Raiano*;
- The valorisation of the product – *Bucho Raiano* – as a cultural heritage;
- The perpetuation of the gastronomic memory associated with the production and consumption of Bucho
- The promotion of the *Bucho Raiano* product as a touristic asset

The recognition of the brotherhood in the valorisation and promotion of *Bucho Raiano*, not only as a gastronomic product and economic resource but also as a relevant element of cultural heritage and tourist asset. The importance attributed to the confraternity in perpetuating the gastronomic memory of the region, valuing and preserving its authenticity, as well as encouraging visitors to the region, and boosting tourist and hotel activities.

Tab 1. Perception of the importance of the confraria in the promotion of bucho and the Beira interior destination. Source: authors' elaboration (surveys applied to the confreres)

Contribution/Importance of the "Confraria" in the promotion of Bucho and the Beira Interior destination	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***	***Average***
Promotion of the gastronomic product – Bucho Raiano	0	0	2	10	36	4.7
The valorisation of the product – Bucho Raiano – as a cultural heritage	0	0	4	17	27	4.5
The construction of the image of the destination Beira Interior concerning gastronomy	0	3	5	21	19	4.2
The promotion of the Bucho Raiano product as a touristic asset	0	1	7	12	28	4.4
The stimulation of the economy through the production and commercialization of Bucho Raiano	0	1	8	14	25	4.3
The perpetuation of the gastronomic memory and tradition associated with the production and its consumption	0	0	7	8	33	4.5

It is understood that they are identified as less successful strategies and require more targeted actions related to the construction of the image of the destination inland edge concerning gastronomy and stimulation of the economy through the production and commercialization of *Bucho Raiano*. These dynamics require greater involvement of local stakeholders in the development of strategies that promote the consumption of *Bucho Raiano* and this is a strategic asset in the differentiation of the destination Riba Coa.

5.5 Evaluation of the contributions and strategies promoted by the fraternities

The role of the confraternities and their actions presuppose an active contribution to the enhancement of gastronomy and the perpetuation of its authenticity. In this context, it is important to understand how the confreres evaluate the contributions and the strategies promoted, both in the sense of achieving the objectives of the confraternity and in the perspective of involvement and harmony with the actions promoted.

Tab 2. Evaluation of the contributions and strategies promoted by the fraternities. Source: authors' elaboration (surveys applied to the confreres)

Contributions and strategies promoted by the Brotherhood/Evaluation	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***	*Average*
The organization of gastronomic events	0	3	13	5	31	4.2
Production of promotional material for the Bucho Raiano product and the region	1	3	7	23	14	4.0
Development of product studies and research	3	5	21	0	15	3.4
Promotion of seminars/conferences/workshops on the product and gastronomic interest	2	3	17	0	0	2.7
Development of new recipes and applications	2	7	16	14	9	3.4
Stimulation of agricultural activities	1	7	15	0	12	3.4
Enhancing cultural heritage and regional identities	1	6	0	5	27	4.3
Promotion of the consumption of bucho in the region's restaurants and hotels	2	4	0	14	27	4.3

Assessment from 1 to 5, where 1 is not important and 5 is very important

It is worth noting that the strategic aspects that received the highest recognition focused mainly on actions related to the promotion of the consumption of pork belly in restaurants and hotels in the region, the enhancement of cultural heritage and regional identities, and the organization of gastronomic events. Among the least valued aspects is the development of events to promote the product and the development of research. The growing popularity of local food among tourists is increasingly recognized by destinations as contributing to the development of the destination's own economy and culture (Chen & Huang 2018). The importance of the cultural dimension ad gastronomy in the tourism development of regions and their cultural enhancement is reinforced.

6. Discussion and conclusions

Confraternities occupy a prominent place in Portugal when it comes to gastronomy, promoting a product, a region, or even a specific form of culinary preparation that reflects its culture and traditions. Gastronomic confraternities have been assuming a leading role, often in conjunction with tourism promotion and the defense of techniques, practices, and values associated with what has been called intangible heritage.

Gastronomy is increasingly linked to tourism and destinations, promoting its dynamism and fostering the appreciation of food traditions around their culture. Promoting and preserving local gastronomy, these confraternities can also contribute to the overall economic and cultural development of their regions, leading to the settlement of people in areas of low population density. They can help to create a sense of pride and identity around local food traditions, which can attract tourists and stimulate economic growth. Myttenaere (2013) emphasised the importan trole played by the consumption of local agrifood products in the tourist experience.

The interests in culture and traditions, the authenticity of the experiences, and the connection of food to the territories, allow combining gastronomic tourism with other forms of tourism contributing to the dissemination and affirmation of the destination, stimulating the economic activity sectors from production to catering (Guzmán & Cañizares, 2012; Guruge, 2020). As Carvalho & Almeida (2022) pointed out, European brotherhoods are sentinels of an enormous and rich cultural heritage and, above all, of a living culture. Through their members, they represent movements of celebration and sharing that

highlight gastronomic merits, promoting the appreciation and promotion of their regions (Myttenaere, 2013).

The confreres and their initiatives contribute to the preservation, enhancement, and dissemination of local gastronomy and culture. They seek to strengthen the cultural identity of the region and promote Bucho Raiano as a gastronomic heritage and tourist resource. There is a clear relationship between naturalness, recognition of the patrimonial value of the gastronomic product and integration/membership of the confraternity. In this context, the confreres assume themselves as defenders of the bucho raiano, agents of its promotion and cultural enhancement. This role brings the capacity of defense and safeguarding of the gastronomy, cultural valorization and capacity of its diffusion, through festivities or in different geographical and socio professional contexts.

The main contributions associated with the action of the Bucho Raiano brotherhood and the destination/region is perceived as important, requiring greater proactivity in the development of fairs that enhance the product and its consideration in commercial formats. Actions that promote a greater production and commercialization of the bucho, enhancing its national and international consumption, are considered to be underdeveloped. The need for studies on production, preservation, packaging, distribution and new products related to "bucho raiano" requires more attention.

The research carried out allows us to characterize this gastronomic product of inland central Portugal, to reflect on the action of the confraternities in the preservation, enhancement, and promotion of *Bucho Raiano*, particularly on the role of the confraternities, as elements that promote the product, its history and the gastronomic culture of their communities.

A symbolic dimension of the confreres is recognized with the naturalness, the traditions associated with the confection and consumption of the *Bucho Raiano*, which they seek to preserve, generating a territorial identity. The valorization of the product's peculiarities, through its shape, its composition of meat and spices, and a certain "ritual" associated with its confection, constitute arguments for the gastronomic identity of the destination and its differentiation.

Confreres and their actions contribute to the preservation, enhancement, and dissemination of local gastronomy and culture. They seek to strengthen the cultural identity of the region and to promote *Bucho Raiano* as a gastronomic heritage and tourist resource. They constitute themselves as messengers of this cultural identity, in a context of collegiality, associated with the defense of epicurean values, interests, and patrimonial dimension of the gastronomic product, and of ritualization that manifests itself through the costume and the moment of celebration around the consumption and promotion of bucho raiano.

Knowledge about the main contributions of the confraternity in promoting *Bucho Raiano* and the destination/region is systematized, with a positive assessment of its cultural dynamisation actions, tourism assets, stimulus in building the image, and the regional tourist destination itself. The need for a denomination of geographical origin is recognised, as well as its greater promotion in national and international gastronomic exhibitions and its necessary presence in the region's restaurant offer.

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