Feeding a hunger for the ‘Other’: Celtic typography as an authenticating resource at the Dingle Food Festival.

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As a phenomenon that combines issues of place and identity with the commodification of cultural experience, culinary tourism offers a niche site in which to investigate how food and the presentation of food products can act as a catalyst for enhancing the tourist experience of the ‘Other’. Food festivals in minority language communities offer a site in which to investigate such processes as those involved in the production of such festivals attempt to balance a temporal link to the past with the demands of the new global (post)tourist. With this in mind, the aim of this presentation is to examine how a particular type of typography, Celtic typography, is being drawn on as a resource to index authentic otherness in the context of an Irish food festival based in the rural town of Dingle. Through an examination of semiotic landscape data from the Dingle food festival of 2013, I aim to uncover how this typography is drawn on as a resource to promote the food festival and the available products as part of an authentic ‘Other’. The analysis aims to reveal how the use of Celtic typography promotes the food festival and the products presented there as ‘authentically’ Irish. In so doing Celtic typography can be identified as a key component of the commodification of Irishness and as a resource for food tourism that connects place and identity and serves as a catalyst to enhance the (post)modernist tourist experience. The data will show how this typography reflects an image of Irish language and culture as simultaneously traditional and modern, local but global, where the Celtic typography becomes a key resource for promoting an authentic tourism product that is exotic, but accessible to all.

Keywords: minority, authenticity, semiotic landscape.