Quips from “Putrid meat and fish in the Eurasian Middle and Upper Paleolithic:  Are We Missing a Key Part of Neanderthal and Modern Human Diet? “ written by Dr. John D. Speth.

Fermentation…’partially ‘pre-digest’ the high protein and fat content’

LAB fermentation meat/fish can…. ‘preserve free of pathogens..and remain safe to eat’

Fermented foods ‘are ubiquitous, desirable, and nutritionally important components  of forager diets’

“Fermented and rotted animal foods are—or at least were until quite recently—key dietary staples that were absolutely vital to the viability and success of these northern foraging groups.”

‘many….have concluded that life in northern environments might not have been possible without frequent recourse to fermented animal foods’

‘fermentation of meat and fish accomplishes outside the body much of what would normally happen to these foods in their unfermented state inside the body after one has ingested them’

‘endogenous and exogenous processes also contribute to the breakdown or lipolysis of fats in the food, liberating a range of nutritionally valuable free fatty acids’

‘I suspect that the more advanced the stage of fermentation or putrefaction, the greater the energetic benefits to the consumer’

‘The preservative effects of LAB fermentation also are invaluable in preventing fats from becoming rancid’

‘Fermentation provides an effective means of inhibiting the ‘autoxidation’ of the lipids that leads to rancidity’

‘fermentation may be one of the most effective ways to preserve and store lipid-rich brains of both fish and mammals’

‘LAB fermentation creates important B-complex vitamins….by retarding the autoxidation of lipids, fermentation favors preservation of these and other vitamins that might otherwise be diminished or lost’

‘clarifying some confusion…concerning the meaning of terms like ‘fermented’, ‘spoiled,’’rotted,’ ‘putrid,’ and ‘rancid,’……if some describe meat as ‘fermented’ most of us would assume that it is safe to eat…..if meat or fish described as ‘spoiled’…we would assume it is something we should not eat, …..I doubt there would be any hesitation about what to do with meat or fish that is characterized as ‘rotten’ or ‘putrid’ ‘

‘this is precisely where things become confusing,….cultural values and practices become in extricably mixed together with genuine issues of health and safety’

‘a body starts to decompose, a forensic scientists would likely refer to what was happening as the onset of ‘putrefaction’….. a food scientists dealing with pork sausages *at exactly the same stage of decomposition*would refer to the process as ‘fermentation’ ‘

‘the term ‘rancid’ ..refers specifically to the degradation of lipids in meat or fish in the presents , an ‘autoxidation’ process quite distinct from what happens to lipids that are fermented or putrified….ethnohistoric and ethnographic literature frequently conflates these two processes and as a result can be quite confusing, if not down right misleading’

‘keep in mind the important distinction between meat and fish that have been fermented….from meat and fish in which the fats have become oxidized and rancid’

‘ ‘spoilage’ is defined in much of the commercial fermentation literature….is frequently based more on Western culture values than actual threats to health’

‘fermented meat products…typically are evaluated by panels of experts who deem a product ‘spoiled’ if it taste, odor, texture, or color are ‘off’ by comparison to some mutually agreed upon standard’

‘Aided…by TV, movies, expanding market economies, and intrusive government policies, Western attitudes about food have been rapidly winning out,  supplanting the traditional foods and foodways of the north’

‘Moreover, fermentation is ideally suited for preserving and storing fatty meat and fish…to prevent spoilage’