In today’s consumption landscape the market hall is a place of luxury and authenticity. However, the idea of the market hall has changed several times during the 19th and 20th centuries. When the first market hall was constructed in Stockholm in 1875, the objective was to provide the consumers with safe food in a neatly organized environment that would foster civic pride and propel Stockholm into modernity. By the 1930s, the market halls in Stockholm were rundown and outmoded.

These rundown retail spaces had been replaced by neighborhood stores at a convenient distance from the consumer. The market halls seemed like old dinosaurs, waiting to be swept away by the river of time. But the market halls remained, and in due course experienced a renaissance as sumptuous food temples, more genuine and inviting than the bland standardization and cold rationality of mainstream food retail.

This book examines the role of the market hall in Stockholm and how the links between production, distribution and consumption of food have been organized in time and space during the past hundred and fifty years. How was the market hall recoded during this period? The relevance of this question lies in what this can tell us about urban food retail and the cultures of consumption linked to it. It also allows us to reflect upon the effects of the choices we make for the future of food production, distribution and consumption.
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