

## Eating and writing in 16<sup>th</sup> century Italy: A preliminary paper

RA, Youngsoon

### 1. Introduction

This is a preliminary research trial with the theme of books about eating in 16<sup>th</sup> century Italy. Culinary history is largely practiced by an interdisciplinary group of cultural historians and philologists. They published carefully revised modern editions and translations of medieval or early modern books about eating, particularly cookbooks, as well as many brilliant studies of recipes and cookbooks in their historical contexts. Scholars like Bruno Lauroux, Allen J. Grieco, Ken Albala, Terence Scully, Jean-Louis Flandrin, Massimo Montanari, Claudio Benporat, and other great historians, have constructed a foundation for this topic.<sup>1)</sup> Works of these scholars made culinary history

<sup>1)</sup> There is a huge collection of these great researchers, so the following can be just a part: Bruno Lauroux, "I libri di cucina italiani alla fine del Medioevo: un nuovo bilancio", *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 154(1996), pp. 33-58; Bruno Lauroux, *Le Règne de Taillevent : Livres et pratiques culinaires à la fin du Moyen Âge*(Paris : Sorbonne Publications, 1997); Allen J. Grieco, "From the cookbook to the table: A Florentine table and Italian Recipes of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries", ed., Carole Lambert, *Du Manuscrit à la Table*(Paris: Champion-Slatkine, 1992), pp. 29-38; Allen J. Grieco and Alban Gautier, "Food and Drink in Medieval and Renaissance Europe: An Overview of the Past Decade(2001-2012)", *Food & History*, 10, no.2(2012), pp. 73-88; Ken Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance*(Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002); Ken Albala, *The Banquet: Dining in the Great Courts of Renaissance Europe*(Urbana; Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007); Terence Scully, ed. and trans., *The Opera of Bartolomeo Scappi(1570): The Art and Craft of a Master Cook*(Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008); Terence Scully, ed., *The Viandier of Taillevent: An Edition of all Extant Manuscripts*(Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1988); Terence Scully and D. Eleanor Scully, *Early French Cookery: Sources, History, Original Recipes and Modern Adaptations*(Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1995); Terence Scully, *The Art of Cookery in the Middle Ages*(Woodbridge, Suffolk; Rochester, NY: The Boydell Press, 1995); Terence Scully, ed. and trans., *The Viandier: A Critical Edition with English Translation*(Totnes, Devon: Prospect Books, 1997); Terence Scully, trans., *Du fait de cuisine/On Cookery of Master Chiquart(1420) "Aucune science de l'art de cuysinerie et de cuisine ..."*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 354, (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2010); Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari, ed., *Storia dell'alimentazione*(Rome: Laterza, 1997); Massimo Montanari, *Il cibo come cultura*(Rome: Laterza, 2006); Massimo Montanari, *Alimentazione e cultura nel Medioevo*(Rome: Laterza, 1988); Claudio Benporat, *Storia della gastronomia italiana*(Milano: Mursia, 1990); Claudio Benporat, *Cucina italiana del Quattrocento*(Florence: Olschki, 1996);

as a separated academic field and succeeded to attract even general audiences.

However, a dismissive attitude towards this kind of books still exists. Even William Eamon, who focuses on the history of science and medicine in the Renaissance, discounts the importance of cookbooks. In his research about vernacular science through books of secrets which contain recipes, he says:

“The books of secrets were not regarded with the same detachment we would have for, say, a cookbook or chemical formulary, the closest modern equivalent of such a work. We do not take very seriously the claim of the cookbook that professes to reveal “all the secrets of the culinary art,” or the how-to book that promises to unveil the “secrets of woodworking.” Such books may be useful, but few users will imagine they are going to learn more than how to make a tolerable meal or a sturdy piece of furniture.”<sup>2)</sup>

It seems impossible to make such assumptions about the ways in which books about eating were read or used. Therefore, this research tries to explain the following: First, what books about eating were produced? What are the special features we can get from these books? And the more fundamental: What are the books about eating in this period in Italy?

About these goals, especially the last one, this preliminary paper does not have any conclusion. On the other hand, this paper still raises some questions. Going with these questions will be my permanent goal as historian. This paper shows where I am as a beginning historian in this quite ‘new field’, especially in Korea.

## 2. The point of view about cookbooks before the 16<sup>th</sup> century

First, a brief background survey of the history of the books about eating is necessary, if we are to begin to understand exactly what the characteristics of the books about eating in 16<sup>th</sup> century Italy are. Actually we may consider the book about eating as a

---

Claudio Benporat, *Cucina e convivialità italiana del Cinquecento*(Florence: Olschki, 2007).

<sup>2)</sup> William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*(Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 4-5.

---

cookbook in general. And we also may consider a cookbook as a fixed entity. However, in 16<sup>th</sup> century it may have been different. That's why we need to begin from the question: What is a cookbook?

We can find tips to respond to these questions above, looking at the types of cookbooks that existed before the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, we should know how to define a cookbook against books that may have contained recipes but shared functions with other genre, for example, a medical book. Henry Notaker did a bibliographic survey of European cookbooks. In this research, he cites a lack of consensus among scholars about the proportion of cooking recipes which makes a given resource a cookbook. He defines the cookbook as "a book with about two-thirds cookery instructions" that is "at least 40-50 percent in the form of recipes." With these criteria, he estimates that there were 100 different titles and 650 editions produced in Europe between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>3)</sup>

Handwritten recipe books for the local people or for personal needs continued to be produced together with printed books; in recent decades, many of them have been recovered from libraries and archives thanks to historians of culinary history. According to Lauroux, culinary knowledge continued to be transmitted primarily by means of handwritten recipe compilations well into the modern period, as in other areas of knowledge.<sup>4)</sup> Printed cookbooks didn't seem to simply replace handwritten ones even though the printing technology was sufficiently available. The relationship between these two looks complex and layered. It will be a long journey to study this relationship in deep.

Anyway, even though Lauroux is one of the historians who have written a comprehensive history of handwritten cookbooks at the end of the medieval period, it is difficult to get comparable quantitative records of printed early modern cookbooks.<sup>5)</sup> In terms of Italy, we know several Italian books of eating had already been printed in the 16<sup>th</sup>

---

3) Henry Notaker, *Printed Cookbooks in Europe, 1470-1700: A Bibliography of early modern culinary literature*(New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press; Houten, Netherlands: Hes & De Graaf Publishers, 2010), p. 2.

4) Bruno Lauroux, "I libri di cucina italiani alla fine del Medioevo: un nuovo bilancio", *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 154(1996), pp. 56-58.

5) Bruno Lauroux, *Le Règne de Taillevent : Livres et pratiques culinaires à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Paris : Sorbonne Publications, 1997), pp. 13-15.

century. These books illustrate the eating habits of people of high class like priests and aristocrats, including the royal family. They offer not only recipes but also various types of information about kitchen and table. In this preliminary paper I hopefully try to describe some important points about these books.

Anyway, knowledge of ancient food and food habits in Europe survived, however, few texts were widely known. An important source for ancient food was the *Deipnosophistae* (*The Learned Banqueters*), which is written by Athenaeus of Naucratis in the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE. This text described food and banquet in the ancient world, as well as quoted some lost literary works. It is an important source to research social life in that period.<sup>6)</sup>

There is a legendary author of one surviving ancient cookbook: Apicius. But from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century researchers have demonstrated that his cookbook is actually a reproduction by late probable scholar to preserve ancient cuisine with his name or simply his cuisine.<sup>7)</sup> By the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, humanists have been interested in this book: the text was first printed in 1498 with the title *Apicius de re quoquinaria*.<sup>8)</sup>

The texts of Apicius and Athenaeus may have been the primary sources for the diffusion of knowledge about ancient eating habits in Renaissance Europe. However they were not the first printed culinary texts. Platina, whose real name is Bartolomeo Sacchi, published *De honesta voluptate et valetudine* in Rome c. 1470 and in Venice in 1475.<sup>9)</sup> Translated almost immediately into several vernacular languages, it became a model for the genre of the cookbook. According to Mary E. Milham, this book has 16 Latin editions and 25 translations.<sup>10)</sup> Including ancient and medieval dietary knowledge, this book compiled various resources for well-living in a healthy way.<sup>11)</sup>

---

6) *Deipnosophists* was first printed in 1514 (Venice: Aldus): cfr. S. Douglas Olson, ed. and trans., *Athenaeus: The Learned Banqueters*(Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard Univ. Press, 2006), vol. 1, Books I-iii.106e, Loeb Classical Library 204, p. xvii.

7) Phyllis Pray Bober, *Art, Culture and Cuisine: Ancient and Medieval Gastronomy*(Chicago; London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 149-159.

8) Joseph D. Vehling, ed., *Apicius: Cookery and Dining in Imperial Rome. A Bibliography, Critical Review and Translation of the Ancient Book known as Apicius de re Coquinaria*(New York: Dover, 1977), pp. 253-273.

9) Platina, *De Honesta Voluptate et Valetudine : On right Pleasure and Good Health*, ed. and trans., Mary Ella Milham(Tempe, Arizona: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1998), pp. 59-67.

10) Platina, *De Honesta Voluptate et Valetudine : On right Pleasure and Good Health*, ed. and trans., Mary Ella Milham(Tempe, Arizona: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1998), pp. 59-67.

Meanwhile, Luigi Ballerini suggests an interesting point of view about Bartolomeo Sacchi. According to him, Sacchi just wanted to show himself as humanist, instead of showing himself as a cook. So he depended on Maestro Martino of Como, who worked as cook for Cardinal Ludovico Trevisan, the Patriarch of Aquileia, for recipes for his book. Actually, the majority of the recipes of Platina's book are from Maestro Martino's.<sup>12)</sup>

When we observe the cookbooks produced in this period, the problem of relationship between text and practice gets more complicated. Between 1450 and 1550, the majority of cookbooks produced both in manuscript and in print were secondary products influenced by Maestro Martino's cookbook, *De arte coquinaria*.<sup>13)</sup> Besides Sacchi's books translated into different European languages like French, German and Dutch, Martino's recipes appeared in more than 27 Italian editions under the title *Epuario* attributed to Giovanni de Rosselli, or under the title *Opera dignissima et utile per chi si diletta di Cucinare*, attributed to Maestro Giovane.<sup>14)</sup>

Printing recipes as a cookbook can mean that at least some standardization has been done on the level of practice for cooking. This function, systematic organization of knowledge, could be one of the roles attributed to the difference between hand scripting and printing.

There exists some research supporting this suggestion in terms of the cookbook. Allen J. Grieco has investigated accounting books for food supply done by the Florence's civil government during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Through comparison with surviving records of recipes, he concludes that the collected recipes reflect cooking practice: "It is quite certain that the recipes found in fourteenth and fifteenth century

<sup>11)</sup> Platina, *De Honesta Voluptate et Valetudine : On right Pleasure and Good Health*, ed. and trans., Mary Ella Milham(Tempe, Arizona: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1998), pp. 56-59; Ken Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance*(Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), p. 27.

<sup>12)</sup> Maestro Martino, *The Art of Cooking: the First Modern cookery book*, ed., Luigi Ballerini(Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: Univ. of California Press, 2005), p. 16.

<sup>13)</sup> Bruno Lauroux, "I libri di cucina italiani alla fine del Medioevo: un nuovo bilancio", *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 154(1996), p. 53.

<sup>14)</sup> Platina, *De Honesta Voluptate et Valetudine: On right Pleasure and Good Health*, ed. and trans., Mary Ella Milham(Tempe, Arizona: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1998), p. 80.

cookbooks were not simply a literary exercise: they reflect a cuisine which was actually cooked and served.”<sup>15)</sup> Stephen Mennell, also, leaves similar comments about the general effect of printing on cooking: “The written collection of recipes, and still more the printed book, has a number of interesting possible consequences within an increasingly literate circle of professional cooks. They broke the absolute dependence of the transmission of culinary knowledge on apprenticeship and direct personal relationship, and made possible a wider transmission of knowledge than any oral tradition of word and gesture.”<sup>16)</sup> Who collects recipes, whether he is a cook or not, should have felt making documents rather than inventing them at any moment.

### 3. Printed Italian books of eating in the 16th century.

I've already referred to the fact that in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, several Italian books of eating had already been printed. Most of all, there were ambitious and passionate cookbook authors not only limited to Bartolomeo Scappi and Cristoforo da Messisbugo but also Giovanni Battista Rossetti and Domenico Romoli, called il Panunto. Even in regard to banquet management and the roles of the steward in it, Giovanni Battista Rossetti left descriptions in his book.

Meanwhile, Vincenzo Cervio explained the duties of the carver at the banquet in his own book *Il trinciante*. Working as a carver for Cardinal Alessandro Farnese(1520-1589), he published the book first in Venice in 1581 by Francesco Tramezzino and then in Rome in 1593 by Giulio Burchioni.<sup>17)</sup> He leaves detailed instructions about carving all kind of poultry,<sup>18)</sup> meats(including cold cuts),<sup>19)</sup> fish,<sup>20)</sup> fruit, and vegetables for show,<sup>21)</sup> as a kind of entertainment, at the table. In addition, he leaves useful illustrations not

---

<sup>15)</sup> Allen J. Grieco, “From the Cookbook to the Table: A Florentine Table and Italian Recipes of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries”, ed., Carole Lambert, *Du Manuscrit à la Table: Essais sur la cuisine au Moyen Âge*(Paris: Champion-Slatkine, 1992), p. 37.

<sup>16)</sup> Stephen Mennell, *All Manner of Food*(Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), p. 67.

<sup>17)</sup> Ken Albala, *The Banquet: Dining in the Great Courts of Renaissance Europe*(Urbana; Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007), p. X.

<sup>18)</sup> Vincenzo Cervio, *Il trinciante*(Rome: Stampa del Gabbia, 1593), pp. 18-41.

<sup>19)</sup> Vincenzo Cervio, *Il trinciante*(Rome: Stampa del Gabbia, 1593), pp. 41-62.

<sup>20)</sup> Vincenzo Cervio, *Il trinciante*(Rome: Stampa del Gabbia, 1593), pp. 63-75.

<sup>21)</sup> Vincenzo Cervio, *Il trinciante*(Rome: Stampa del Gabbia, 1593), pp. 76-82, 109-112.

only about precious birds to cut, like turkey(indian peacock) and peacock, but also various tools for cutting.<sup>22)</sup>

Born at Ferrara, the author of *Dello scalco*, Giovanni Battista Rossetti worked as the chief steward for Lucrezia d'Este, duchess of Urbino. In the introduction, he recognized the role of cooks like Messisbugo, Scappi and Romoli but emphasized his role as a systematic organizer for the whole court's material life.<sup>23)</sup> Rossetti's work starts with an explanation of "household stewardship and the art of organizing services associated with cooking and dining, followed by extensive menus for specific events, which he devised and then handed over to cook to prepare."<sup>24)</sup> Actually Rossetti was just interested in menus depending on the number of guests. So his book did not contain recipes. A menu was created as a plan to be followed and a list composed of menus was made to be easily checked. Each month had its own lists of menus. It would be an easy manual for future scalco.<sup>25)</sup>

Domenico Romoli's *La singolare dottrina* is an interesting book too. As his nickname, Panunto – oiled bread – means, he might have begun his career as a cook. His book has nearly 150 recipes and offers everyday menus for 365 days of the year. However, it is much more than a collection of recipes. In Book I, he outlines the responsibilities assigned to each household official: the purchasing agents, the master's personal cook, the sideboard attendant, the wine steward, among others.<sup>26)</sup> This book has characteristics of a book of health too.<sup>27)</sup> Book IX is devoted to dietary concerns with special reference to nutritional variety and complexity.<sup>28)</sup> Its goal is high status people's health, instead of the food. This aspect of Romoli's book recalls Platina's concern about diet and health.<sup>29)</sup>

---

<sup>22)</sup> Vincenzo Cervio, *Il trinciante*(Rome: Stampa del Gabbia, 1593), pp. 10-11.

<sup>23)</sup> Giovanni Battista Rossetti, *Dello scalco*(Ferrara: Domenico Mammarello, 1584), pp. Proemio.

<sup>24)</sup> Katherine A. McIver, *Cooking and Eating in Renaissance Italy: From Kitchen to Table*(Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2015), p. 6.

<sup>25)</sup> Claudio Benporat, *Storia della gastronomia italiana*(Milano: Mursia, 1990), pp. 124-127.

<sup>26)</sup> Domenico Romoli, *La singolare dottrina*(Venice: Michele Tramezzino, 1560), Book I.

<sup>27)</sup> Anne Willan and Mark Cherniavsky, *The Cookbook Library: Four Centuries of the Cooks, writers, and Recipes That Made the Modern Cookbook*(Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), p. 82.

<sup>28)</sup> Domenico Romoli, *La singolare dottrina*(Venice: Michele Tramezzino, 1560), Book IX.

<sup>29)</sup> Claudio Benporat, *Storia della gastronomia italiana*(Milano: Mursia, 1990), p. 123.

Each author's book may be unique in terms of contents, organization and presentation. However both Cristoforo da Messisbugo and Bartolomeo Scappi succeeded to get more attraction from us. Messisbugo's book, *Banchetti, composizioni di vivande et apparecchio generale*<sup>30)</sup> is divided into three parts. In the first part as preface Messisbugo describes a detailed list. This list contains all the items needed in order to prepare various foodways in the court of Ferrara, like the visiting of guests, short trips, banquets and wedding ceremonies: furniture, kitchen utensils, food, and the servants.<sup>31)</sup> In the second part, he describes in detail various festivities that he himself organized: ten banquets(cena), three lunches(desinare), and an evening party(festino).<sup>32)</sup> Katherine McIver comments on the character of his book as follows: "Messisbugo provides us with a tangible picture of the richness and variety of the Este diet, the elegance of their surroundings, and the care and good taste lavished on the Este family and their guests both in the manner and the matter of entertainment, including details about the music performed during each course at his banquets."<sup>33)</sup> The last part of his book is composed of more than 300 recipes classified in the following divisions: Pastas, cakes(also pies), soups, sauces, broths, appetizers, and dairy products.<sup>34)</sup> This systematic organization was the element which made Giovanni Battista Rossetti to record Messisbugo with fame in his own book, though almost 30 years of difference.<sup>35)</sup>

Like Messisbugo's book, the book of Bartolomeo Scappi encompasses all the major concerns: the cook, the kitchen, the quality of supplies and provisions, curing and preserving food, and a precise inventory of all household equipment. But his book focuses on more of the cook's tasks as in respect to Messisbugo's book. About this,

<sup>30)</sup> This is the title of Messisbugo's first printed book in 1549 at Ferrara by Giovanni de Buglhat and Antonio Hucher. However, from the next edition which was printed in 1557 at Venice its title is changed: *Libro novo nel qual s'insegna a far d'ogni sorte di vivande second la diversità dei tempi così di carne come di pesce. Et il modo d'ordinar banchetti, apparecchiar tavole, fornir palazzi, & ornar camere per ogni gran Prencipe....*

<sup>31)</sup> Cristoforo da Messisbugo, *Libro novo nel qual s'insegna a far d'ogni sorte di vivande...*(Venice: Giovanni Padovano, 1557), ff. 3-8.

<sup>32)</sup> Cristoforo da Messisbugo, *Libro novo nel qual s'insegna a far d'ogni sorte di vivande...*(Venice: Giovanni Padovano, 1557), ff. 18-38.

<sup>33)</sup> Katherine A. McIver, *Cooking and Eating in Renaissance Italy: From Kitchen to Table*(Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2015), p. 11.

<sup>34)</sup> Cristoforo da Messisbugo, *Libro novo nel qual s'insegna a far d'ogni sorte di vivande...*(Venice: Giovanni Padovano, 1557), ff. 40-115.

<sup>35)</sup> Claudio Benporat, *Storia della gastronomia italiana*(Milano: Mursia, 1990), p. 118.

Scully comments: "with this text he will leave Giovanni a written memorandum of all the high professional standards that he has striven to implant in the youth during his apprenticeship. In these endeavors and practices of a lifetime, he says, lie all the art and skill of a master cook."<sup>36)</sup> Therefore, this is not a simple recipe collection but culinary advice and commentary writing about food and cooking in 16<sup>th</sup> century Italy. We can see this particular regionalism in the introduction to Book IV. Scappi writes that the volume is devoted to "lists of brings that can be served from month to month, which are generally used in Italy, especially in the city of Rome..."<sup>37)</sup> But Rome is not the only region that he is interested in. He evaluates and compares various regional foods, like mullet, calamari and mackerel of Venice, and trout, shrimp and lampreys of Milan.<sup>38)</sup>

His *Opera* is divided into six books: Book I explains a cook's everyday working environment and conditions, with a picture of the ideal kitchen. But it is often thought that the engravings were added at a later date.<sup>39)</sup> Scully notes that "they are a meticulous and remarkably comprehensive representations of the conditions in which the cooks of Scappi's time worked and of the devices they handled in their work."<sup>40)</sup> The rest of book is dedicated to recipes: Book II is for meat, but it also includes recipes of soup and sauce; Book III is for fish for Lent; Book V is for pasta, tarts and pies; Book VI is for food for the sick.

Meanwhile, Book IV is somewhat interesting. Book IV consists of a series of monthly arranged banquet menus: around 8 to 10 menus per month from April to March, as well as 6 menus for Lent. Actually, Book IV has 163 pages and it is almost 35% of whole book. It may show the ambition of Scappi who wanted to enlarge the role of a cook making not only recipes but also menus. Making menus could be the role of a

---

<sup>36)</sup> Terence Scully, trans., *The Opera of Bartolomeo Scappi(1570): L'arte et prudenza d'un maestro cuoco*, written by Bartolomeo Scappi (Toronto; Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2008), p. 32.

<sup>37)</sup> Bartolomeo Scappi, *The Opera di M. Bartolomeo Scappi, cuoco secreto di Papa Pio V. Divisa in sei libri*(Venezia: Michele Tramezzino, 1570), f. 168v.

<sup>38)</sup> Claudio Benporat, *Storia della gastronomia italiana*(Milano: Mursia, 1990), p. 94.

<sup>39)</sup> Katherine A. McIver, *Cooking and Eating in Renaissance Italy: From Kitchen to Table*(Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2015), p. 13.

<sup>40)</sup> Terence Scully, trans., *The Opera of Bartolomeo Scappi(1570): L'arte et prudenza d'un maestro cuoco*, written by Bartolomeo Scappi (Toronto; Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2008), p. 39.

scalco. What does this mean? Did he want to get more roles? Is this the birth of the ‘Renaissance man’ who can do everything in terms of culinary section? Or is this an organized attempt at social promotion of an individual? After the end of Book VI, Scappi suddenly describes the funeral of Pope Paul III on November 10, 1549 and the successive Conclave for the election of his successor, Julius III on February 7, 1550. This description may not have anything to do with a cook. However we can see some illustrations in the last part of book. They show how the meal for the Conclave is served.<sup>41)</sup> It should be definitely Scappi’s responsibility. His intention looks quite clear.

Needless to say, these works continued to be published well into the 17<sup>th</sup> century. However, in this period we can notice the beginning of a change. According to Albala, the numbers of dishes are reduced from twelve to a mere six, or sometimes just three in a course meal. There is another change, too. Instead of a simple sauce used in the previous period, multiple garnishes appeared next to the main ingredients.<sup>42)</sup> He comments “these lavish ingredients used in Baroque.”<sup>43)</sup>

#### 4. Question: What we can deduct from these books?

Despite the development of book history, research about books of eating are often left out of this development.<sup>44)</sup> It seems that book historians generally focus on books whose content is considered ‘meaningful’ like the bible or the classics. It’s time to raise questions about books of eating from the point of view of ‘text’: Were these books actually popular? And what does this popularity in 16<sup>th</sup> century Italy tell us? Isn’t there any other meaning that we should understand from its text, especially the printed one?

First, we may deduce that printed books about eating, especially cookbooks, were

---

<sup>41)</sup> Bartolomeo Scappi, *The Opera di M. Bartolomeo Scappi, cuoco secreto di Papa Pio V. Divisa in sei libri*(Venezia: Michele Tramezzino, 1570), after the appendix of Book VI: These pages don’t have any page number. There are two illustrations what show serving a meal in the chapel.

<sup>42)</sup> Ken Albala, *The Banquet: Dining in the Great Courts of Renaissance Europe*(Urbana; Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007), pp. 22-23.

<sup>43)</sup> Ken Albala, *The Banquet: Dining in the Great Courts of Renaissance Europe*(Urbana; Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007), p. 22.

<sup>44)</sup> Henry Notaker, “Printed Cookbooks: Food History, Book History, and literature”, *Food & History*, 10, no. 2(2012), pp. 131-159.

presumably read by a wide variety of people. Otherwise, they would not have been printed in multiple editions. Language is a key indicator of audience too: by the mid-sixteenth century, culinary texts were almost in the vernacular.<sup>45)</sup>

Undoubtedly recipes tell us many things. Its name and ingredients may be another way to let us approach the relationship between knowledge and practice. Written or printed recipes look fixed and unchangeable but they symbolize multiple layers of different practices. Jean-Louis Flandrin's research on the variations of the dish known in French as "Blanc Manger" is a good example. He analyzes 37 versions of this dish in English, French, Catalan, and Italian recipes, with the conclusion that the name had a life of its own and did not describe a fixed group of ingredients or processes.<sup>46)</sup> The application of the same name to describe a bunch of recipes that share some but not all ingredients suggests a common vocabulary which carries nuances perhaps lost to us.

Meanwhile, we can also find a typical expression from recipes: dishes titled with the name of a particular place, like *Pasticci di vitella lunghi all'Ongaresca*<sup>47)</sup> or *Oglia potrida alla Spagnola*.<sup>48)</sup> It happens frequently in these texts. This style of writing demonstrates the author's strategy through powerful populism and tacit knowledge. As we noticed before, Scappi continues to write this kind of regional identification in his text, as in *Brodo con agliata sopra come s'usa in Lombardia*<sup>49)</sup> or "In Venetia si chiamanocefali di buon budello, nella valle di Comacchio, letegrane, & in Toscana, muggini."<sup>50)</sup> By telling the reader that in Venice the fish is called one thing (*si chiamano...*), while in Tuscany it is called another, according to Krohn, he shows

---

<sup>45)</sup> Maria C. Catricalà, "La lingua dei Banchetti di Cristoforo Messisbugo", *Studi di Lessicografia Italiana*, 4(1982), pp. 147-268.

<sup>46)</sup> Jean-Louis Flandrin, "Internationalisme, nationalisme, et régionalisme dans la cuisine des XIVe et XVe siècles: le témoignage des livres de cuisine", *Manger et boire au Moyen Âge: Actes du colloque de Nice(15-17 Octobre 1982)* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1984), pp. 75-76. Cited in Deborah L. Krohn, *Food and Knowledge in Renaissance Italy: Bartolomeo Scappi's paper kitchens*(Farnham; Surrey: Ashgate, 2015), p. 10.

<sup>47)</sup> Bartolomeo Scappi, *The Opera di M. Bartolomeo Scappi, cuoco secreto di Papa Pio V. Divisa in sei libri*(Venezia: Michele Tramezzino, 1570), f. 182r.

<sup>48)</sup> Bartolomeo Scappi, *The Opera di M. Bartolomeo Scappi, cuoco secreto di Papa Pio V. Divisa in sei libri*(Venezia: Michele Tramezzino, 1570), f. 252v.

<sup>49)</sup> Bartolomeo Scappi, *The Opera di M. Bartolomeo Scappi, cuoco secreto di Papa Pio V. Divisa in sei libri*(Venezia: Michele Tramezzino, 1570), f. 78r.

<sup>50)</sup> Bartolomeo Scappi, *The Opera di M. Bartolomeo Scappi, cuoco secreto di Papa Pio V. Divisa in sei libri*(Venezia: Michele Tramezzino, 1570), f. 115v.

"personal familiarity with regional variations and increases his authority while at the same time alluding to tacit knowledge."<sup>51)</sup> In other example, he says "io l'affermo per isperienza", while describing various regional cheeses like fresh cheese from Tuscany, Milan, Germany, Rome and Naples.<sup>52)</sup> Here he emphasizes his regional knowledge through personal experience. Surely each local cheese has its own name.

Not only the dishes themselves, but also the words used to describe them, make their own history and identity. Mennell writes, "It remains to ask whether simply writing down recipes, and subsequently their wider dissemination through printing, have implications for the theory and practice of cookery in the same way that, it has been argued, literacy has had for other aspects of thought, custom and culture."<sup>53)</sup> In the last part of Scappi's book we find another 'important element of the printed cookbook from this period: illustrations. Writing recipes was one thing, but illustrating the kitchen with cook's tasks and tools to be used was another important development of cookbooks from this period. Illustrations appeared in these books, like catalogues, it was a standard for tools and techniques as well as names and ingredients.

On printing and its effect on cooking, Krohn's summary is noteworthy: "At first closely related texts made their way into print in different packages (Martino, Platina, Rosselli), limiting the available sources.... With the proliferation of easily available printed recipe collections in the sixteenth century, it may have been less inclined to preserve their recipes for posterity. At the same time, as the availability of printed cookbooks influenced the spreading culture of gastronomy, new practitioners came along and the field broadened. In this context innovation became desirable and marketable, as much from the printer's perspective – to sell books – as from the cook's or the eater's - to gain favor and to reinforce social standing and prestige."<sup>54)</sup>

As a conclusion, we can analyze the advent of books of eating in the second half of 16<sup>th</sup> century Italy from this point of view. Publication of Messisbugo's book –

---

<sup>51)</sup> Deborah L. Krohn, *Food and Knowledge in Renaissance Italy: Bartolomeo Scappi's paper kitchens*(Farnham; Surrey: Ashgate, 2015), p. 10.

<sup>52)</sup> Bartolomeo Scappi, *The Opera di M. Bartolomeo Scappi, cuoco secreto di Papa Pio V. Divisa in sei libri*(Venezia: Michele Tramezzino, 1570), f. 5v.

<sup>53)</sup> Stephen Mennell, *All Manner of Food*(Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), p. 67.

<sup>54)</sup> Deborah L. Krohn, *Food and Knowledge in Renaissance Italy: Bartolomeo Scappi's paper kitchens*(Farnham; Surrey: Ashgate, 2015), p. 11.

*Banchetti, composizioni di vivande et apparecchio generale* – in 1549 could be a definitive break from dominance of Maestro Martino's *De arte coquinaria*. His book was reprinted with 15 editions between 1549 and 1626.<sup>55)</sup> As I described above in a previous chapter, the first part of the book comprises a fascinating catalogue of objects, like furniture, bedding, tools, vessels, etc. Messisbugo might think they are for a court.

However, in the last part of book which contains recipes, we find interesting suggestions for less sumptuous meal: "if there is a middling Gentleman who is giving a banquet, he could use a third less sweet and spices..."<sup>56)</sup> and "who spends too much for sugar should know that sugar can be replaced by honey, except foods which should be white, because honey makes the color change..."<sup>57)</sup> These remarks show not only could Messisbugo recognize who is the reader of his book but also what the selling strategy should be. He realized not every reader would be of sufficient social level for a banquet. The described dishes required highly skilled labor, but the recipes were accessible to a more modest user. 15 reprinted editions show his strategy was quite successful.<sup>58)</sup>

This is a temporary conclusion of this preliminary research. At this moment, we can say this preliminary research indicates a beginning of new era for books about eating. We definitely need more data and analyses to arrive at a significant conclusion on books about eating in terms of book history. Reconstruction of the whole printing process of books of eating in this period and comprehension of their context will be the main tasks.

---

<sup>55)</sup> AA.VV., *Et coquatur ponendo...: cultura della cucina e della tavola in Europa tra Medioevo ed età moderna*(Prato: Giunti Industriale Grafiche, 1996), p. 302.

<sup>56)</sup> Cristoforo da Messisbugo, *Libro novo nel qual s'insegna a far d'ogni sorte di vivande...*(Venice: Giovanni Padovano, 1557), f. 39.

<sup>57)</sup> Cristoforo da Messisbugo, *Libro novo nel qual s'insegna a far d'ogni sorte di vivande...*(Venice: Giovanni Padovano, 1557), f. 39.

<sup>58)</sup> Henry Notaker, *Printed Cookbooks in Europe, 1470-1700: A Bibliography of early modern culinary literature*(New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press; Houten, Netherlands: Hes & De Graaf Publishers, 2010), pp. 298-305.