

Dear EMMW friends,

Thank you for taking the time to read this rough draft of the last chapter of my dissertation. My project looks at the relations between culinary and literary cultures in the early modern Spanish Atlantic through the figure of the cook, considered both as literary character and historical agent. I look at the evolving attitudes towards cooking and argue that the kitchen trade was a practice that allowed individuals to engage with lettered culture, and forge communities and social identities.

For this chapter, I had to immerse myself in Italian sources that I do not usually engage with, so I am curious to know if you think this particular part of the chapter works, or if it can be improved. Any other comments on the chapter's structure and general argumentation will be very useful.

I apologize in advance for the missing sections, which I am still developing. I am very excited to present now, in the very last stage of my program. This workshop has been a great community for dialogue and exchange throughout the years. Thank you for reading! I look forward to your comments.

Cooking by the Book: Courtly Cuisine and the Orders of Knowledge in Early Modern Spain

In the frontispiece of one of the editions of *Llibre de doctrina para ben servir, de taller y de l'art del coch* (Figure 1), Spain's first printed cookbook, a man is depicted before a cooking fire. He sits at a three-legged stool by himself, stirring a pot with a long spoon. He wears a simple livery, a hat, and a belted pouch around his waist. Much like himself, the space occupied is devoid of ornament. There are no cooking instruments or foods in sight. Neither are any other members of the kitchen staff. A small window in the back suggests an unknown far exterior, perhaps where the food will finally be served. There are no sources of visual interest distracting from the main figure. The subject of the book, and its didactic intended use, is communicated by the unceremonious clear representation of the cook's craft. With the cook taking on the center stage, the woodcut visually suggests the book is aimed at those who share the author's trade, those represented by the cook on the stool.

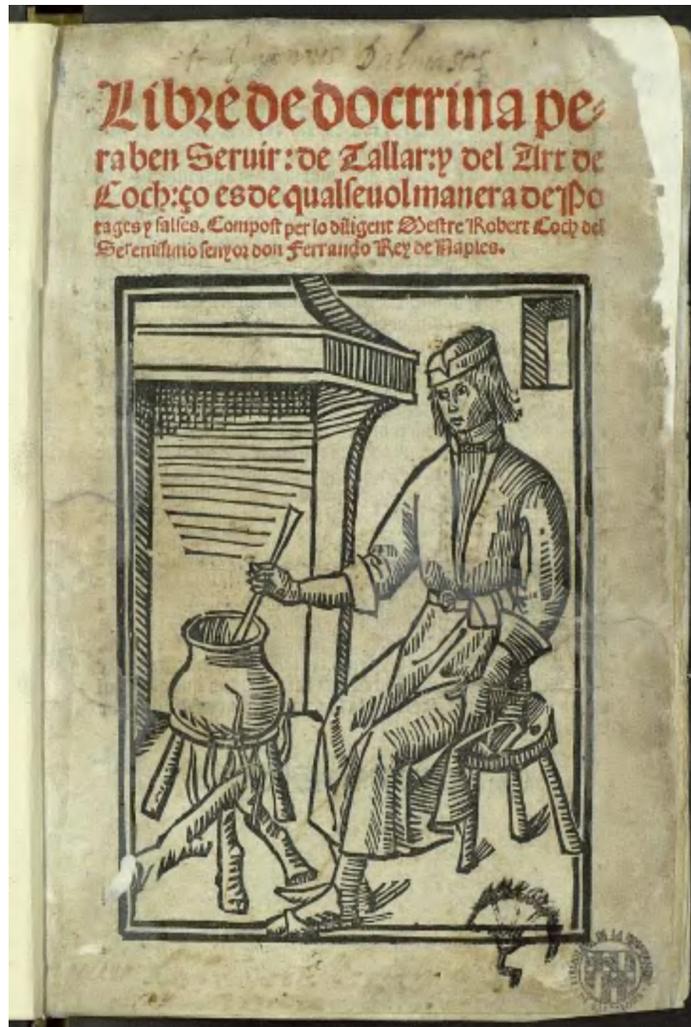


Figure 1. Mestre Robert. *Llibre de doctrina para ben servir, de taller y de l'art del coch*.

S.d. Universitat de Barcelona.

Preserved today at the University of Barcelona, this undated copy is considered by scholars to be the earliest version of *Llibre del coch*. According to Dionisio Pérez and María Ángeles Pérez Samper, it would have been published in the last decades of the fifteenth century. Some decades later, in 1520, *Llibre del coch* is published again in Barcelona in the workshop of Carles Amorós, one of Catalonia's most important printers. This time, however, the frontispiece has undergone major changes (Figure 2).

The frontispiece presents a far more complete scene that directly mirrors the title. Crammed in a single frame are a cook, a servant and a king. The servant ceremoniously extends a goblet to a disproportionately large king, who receives it with one hand while holding a knife on the other. The cooking utensils are carefully displayed in the back, yet the cook is brought to the fore, away from his usual quarters. He stands before a fire with his hand pointing at the steaming cauldron, his finger drawing attention to the subject of the book: his craft. His gesture is reinforced by the catch-title distributed on the side columns, which respectively read *Llibre* and *del coch*.

When considered back to back, these two editions offer contrasting depictions of the same subject. The lonely cook is now accompanied; the humble fire is now a kitchen full with gadgets; the lengthy title is condensed into a catchy phrase. In sum, in the 1520 edition, the world of cooking appears with a material and social complexity that is not present in the frontispiece to the undated copy. Can these features be interpreted as more than just the stylistic choices of each printer? How may we account for this contrast? I propose we ponder these questions through the lens of shifting orders of knowledge in the Renaissance, and the place of cooking within them. That is, looking at these seemingly insignificant details as a product of a wider cultural current that re-signified cooking from a manual humble occupation into a craft that was worthy of the attraction of readers and kings alike.

Published more than fifteen times in Spanish and Catalan in the space of a single

century, *Llibre del coch* was an editorial success of its time.¹ This textual abundance is a rare documentary trail that sheds light on the shifting attitudes towards cooking, as well as the evolution of the cookbook genre in sixteenth-century Spain. In this chapter, I will explore the book's textual history by focusing primarily on the first two editions, the first Catalan edition printed in Barcelona in 1520, and the first Castilian edition printed in 1525 in Toledo. As it will become clear, the differences between them are more than just superficial, and, in fact, give account of the shifting value of culinary knowledge.

1. Santanach documents seven editions in Catalan, all printed in Barcelona (1520, 1535, 1539, 1560, 1568, 1578, n.d.). Pérez Samper (1994, 47-48) documents six editions in Castilian (Toledo, 1525; Logroño 1529; Toledo?, 1538; Zaragoza, 1568; n.p., 1577).



Figure 2. Mestre Robert. *Llibre de doctrina para ben servir, de taller y de l'art del coch.*

Barcelona, Carles Amorós, 1520. Biblioteca Catalunya.

Little to nothing is known about Mestre Robert, the author of *Llibre del coch*.

Mestre Robert, the frontispiece tells us, served the *serenissimo senyor* Ferrante I, King of Naples. The cookbook contains more than 200 recipes, the vast majority of them of Catalan origin, and which can be traced back to Medieval Catalan manuscript collections like the *Llibre de Sent Soví* and the *Llibre d'aparallejar de menjar* (Santanach I

Suñol).² Like many other cookbooks and manuscript recipe-books of the early modern period, it is more a compilation of earlier widespread recipes than the original work of a single author.

Llibre del coch was likely composed and written in manuscript form decades before its first publication. Though the 1520 edition states that Mestre Robert was a cook to King Ferrante, it is possible that he, an Aragonese or Catalan cook, first came to Italy as cook to King Alfonso the Magnanimous, and later stayed in the service of his son. This would situate the book's composition somewhere between 1442—the year of Alfonso's arrival to Naples—and 1494—the last year of Ferrante's reign. Regardless of its specific timeline, *Llibre del Coch* emerges at a key point in the history of European culinary culture.

The First Cookery Book: Between Humanism and Practical Knowledge

It is around this time that Bartolomeo Sacchi, more commonly known as Platina, publishes *De honesta voluptate et valetudine* (On right pleasure and good health) in Rome. As the first cookery book ever printed, *De honesta voluptate* is a key antecedent to Mestre Robert's book. If at first glance they might seem rather dissimilar—one written in Latin by a Humanist, the other in the vernacular by a cook, one citing Classical sources, the

2. Though its recipes are predominantly of Catalan cuisine, there are recipes for some Genovese, Venetian and French dishes.

other exclusively giving didactic instructions—, *Llibre del coch* is part of a cultural current that is inaugurated by Platina's book.

Bartolomeo Sacchi, more commonly known as Platina, publishes this collection of recipes and dietary treatise in 1475. Platina was not a cook, but a Humanist. An Hellenist, member of the Roman Academy led by Pomponio Leto, writer of philosophical, political and historical works, he served as secretary to Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga, and, later, as librarian of the Vatican under Sixtus IV. If one peruses the titles of Platina's works—among which are a dialogue on nobility, a dialogue on love, a treatise on the perfect prince, and a lengthy history of the Papacy—, *De honesta voluptate* quickly stands out as an oddity. As I have discussed in the introduction, since Antiquity, cookery was not among the topics that were deemed worthy of the the attention of writers and thinkers. Cooks largely retained their ill-repute in the Middle Ages and early modern period. Simultaneously, however, other more nuanced and positive views of cooking began to emerge. Platina's book is central in understanding this gradual shift.

De honesta voluptate almost entirely replicates an earlier cookery manuscript entitled *Libro de arte coquinaria*, written by Platina's friend Maestre Martino de Como. Martino served as cook to the Patriarch of Aquileia, a close friend of Cardinal Gonzaga, who was in turn known for his patronage of Humanists. Platina and Martino would have coincided at Gonzaga's villa in Castelli Romani, where they frequently dined

together. Though a Humanist and a cook sharing a meal in the same social setting seems like an implausible scenario, it is not entirely so. As Claude Benporat has suggested, Martino could have been, if not a permanent, than a sporadic member of the Roman Academy. The academy, Benporat notes, welcomed individuals from different social ranks, including servants of cardinals and prelates (741-745).

As suggested by its title, *De honesta voluptate* pretends to be more than a cooking manual. Part health treatise, part debate on the nature and morality of pleasure, the book's sources range from Pliny, to Martino, to the Roman cook Apicius. Recipes for sauces coexist with Classical commentary, meats with philosophical reflection. In this way, cookery is re-framed by Platina as a matter of Humanistic interest. In a letter to Cardinal Piccolomini, whose patronage Platina was seeking, he recognizes the eccentricity of his subject:

“As you are aware, it deals with the business of all the food merchants, and creeps through the taverns, and is, therefore, a greasy and sordid subject. But he who is versed in cookery is not far removed from genius [*ingenio*], since the meals that are to be concocted are largely a matter of ingenious composition, and, therefore, he must be proficient in it; he who takes upon himself this work as a profession must inform himself” (qtd. In Vehling 75)

It is striking that Platina does not attempt to justify his topic by referring to the moralizing discussion of pleasure nor to the health benefits of good food. In other

words, by emphasizing its usefulness to the reader. Rather, Platina exalts and defends the cook's *ingenio*. The notion of *ingenium*—an individual's innate genius and inventiveness— is at the center of Renaissance debates on the nature of art. For Leonardo da Vinci, *ingenium* was a discursive and mental process through which artists acquired knowledge, role of ingenium in the development of technology (Farago 134). More than a century later after Platina, the Spanish Jesuit Baltasar Gracián would define *ingenio* as “la agudeza en arte, teórica flamante” (45).

Not really interested in potential material and bodily benefits of his book, Platina instead exalts the intellectual and creative dimension of cooking. In that sense, Bruno Larioux's suspicions about the nature of the book ring particularly true: “Ne serait-il pas fondamentalement un livre de cuisine ensuite flanqué de passages médicaux guère originaux puis chapeauté d'un prologue moralisant?” (52). Larioux's question points to a shifting sensibility that is palpable in Platina's book. Though carefully framed as a topic that is subordinated to moral and health debates, food —the cook's creations— actually takes the center stage of the book. The philosophical discussion and dietary advice that are emphatically announced in the title begin to pale in comparison to the abundance of recipes and descriptions of ingredients. This supplementary nature of the debates thus gives way to a notion of cookery that is (albeit partially) non-contingent upon its relation to health and morale.³

3. Larioux also advances this idea by referring to the original title of Platina's manuscript, *De*

As his letter to Piccolomini suggests, the value of Platina's book lies in the dissemination of what he sees as the cook's ingenuity. This idea is encapsulated in his recipe for *biancomangiare*, the creamy almond-based chicken sauce that was a favorite of early modern palates:

"I have always preferred this to Apician condiments, nor is there any reason why the tastes of our ancestors should be preferred to our own, for even if we surpassed by them in nearly all arts, nevertheless in taste alone we are not vanquished, for in the whole world there no incentive to taste which has not been brought down, as it were, to the modern cooking school [*gymnasium popinarium*], where there is the keenest of discussion about the cooking of all foods. What a cook, oh immortal gods, you bestowed in my friend Martino of Como, from whom I have received, in great part, the things of which I am writing. You would say he is another Carneades if you were to hear him eloquently speaking *ex tempore* about the matters described above" (293)

Apicius's *De re coquinaria*, a collection of Roman recipes compiled around the fifth century, is a culinary "Classic" in the literal sense. But instead of praising his forbears, Platina re-evaluates tradition and champions the superiority of modern Italian taste. He

obsoniis liber, which made no reference to moral discussions and focused only on the dishes themselves.

compares the lowly tavern to the *gymnasium*, a key institution of Humanist education, the foods served with intellectual debates, and ideas with taste and seasoning. At stake here is a sense of culinary modernity, as well as cultural pride of Italian food practices. The cuisine of Martino is not contingent upon its relation to Apicius, but rather valuable on its own right. In praising Martino's genius, Platina also advances a positive and dignified image of the cook that is fairly innovative (Larioux 269). These three notions (modernity, cultural pride, and cookery as a liberal art) are pivotal to understand the emergence of cookbooks such as *Llibre del Coch*.

Platina's recuperation of the "sordid" and "greasy" subject of cookery is part of a wider epistemological shift that originated in the late fifteenth century. Humanists revisited the Classical division of liberal and mechanical arts, proposing new classifications that gradually elevated the value of certain disciplines into the status of art. In the Classical scheme, liberal arts were those that exercised the mind and engaged with theoretical knowledge, whereas mechanical arts entailed the skillful manipulation of machines, tools, and the body. While the former were part of university curricula, required the mastery of texts, and were taught in Latin, knowledge of the latter was mostly transmitted orally and through hands-on practice (Long 104). Mechanical arts were passed on through apprenticeship in an entirely different social setting—the workshop—, which gave them the "certain unclean odor" of "the illiberal arts, for in antiquity they had been the work of slaves and the *vulgus*" (Smith 37).

This ordering of knowledge was challenged throughout the early modern period by artisans and artists in all corners of Europe. The printing press would prove a powerful tool in doing so. An avalanche of technical manuals on everything from how to paint and sculpt, to how to build walls or operate artillery, became highly popular across the continent. Books became a way to access knowledge that was previously only available through practice. Eventually, this proliferation of written practical knowledge translated into a re-evaluation of certain professions. As Pamela Long sums it up, certain crafts, “having been transformed into written, discursive disciplines, came to be treated as forms of ‘knowledge’” (104). With artisans and artists—agents of what Elizabeth Eisenstein has termed the “Commonwealth of Learning” —pouring the secrets of their trade onto the page, scholars and writers also became interested in the intellectual debate over the so-called mechanical arts.⁴ The kitchen trade, traditionally

4. alberti

“J'en ay dict ce mot sur le subject d'un Italien que je vien d'entretenir, qui a servy le feu Cardinal Caraffe de maistre d'hostel jusques à sa mort. Je luy faisoy compter de sa charge. Il m'a fait un discours de cette science de gueule avec une gravité et contenance magistrale, comme s'il m'eust parlé de quelque grand point de Theologie. Il m'a dechifré une difference d'appetits: celui qu'on a à jeun, qu'on a apres le second et tiers service; les moyens, tantost de luy plaire simplement, tantost de l'evveiller et picquer; la police de ses sauces, premierement en general, et puis particularisant les qualitez des ingrediens et leurs effects; les differences des salades selon leur saison, celle qui doit estre reschaufée, celle qui veut estre servie froide, la façon de les orner et embellir pour les rendre encores plaisantes à la veue. Apres cela, il est entré sur l'ordre du service, plein de belles et importantes considerations” (Montaigne I, 51, p. 294)

[He harangued me on the art of feeding with a professional gravity and demeanour as though he were explaining some important point of Theology. He listed differences of appetite: the

considered a mechanical art, would not be the exception.

The Italian Humanist Sperone Speroni, for example, wrote a *trattattello* about the virtues of a cook.⁵ For Speroni, a cook should be tempered in his eating habits, strong and fearless when carving animals, prudent when using fire, liberal with spices and condiments, and have spotless hygiene. All of these attributes refer to a cook's mechanical virtues when *doing* his craft. That is, to operating the tools (knives, fire) and materials (meats, spices) of his work, as well as on how to handle his own body. Speroni then adds virtues, or rather, skills, of another more unexpected nature:

“Eloquente per difendersi, se fosse accusato di mangiare i boni bocconi, e di non cocer bene le vivande. Poeta per cantar versi e fuggire il fastidio e la fatica del cucinare. Geometra per eleggere li tondi e quadri più o men cupi secondo le vivande, e le torre, e altre gelatine e saporì. Aritmetico per numerare le sue pentole e olle. Dipintore per ben colorire gli arrostiti e sale e saporì. Medico per conoscere la facile e difficile digestione [...] Filosofo in conoscere la natura delle carni, de tempo, della legna [...] Faceto con

appetite you have when you are hungry, the one you have after the second and third courses; what means there are of simply satisfying it or of sometimes exciting it; how to govern the commonwealth of sauces, first in general then in particular, listing the qualities of every ingredient and its effects; the different green-stuffs in their season, the ones which must be served hot, the ones which must be served cold as well as the ways in decorating them and embellish them to make them look even more appetizing. After all that he embarked upon how the service should be ordered, full of fine]

5. The date of the text is uncertain. It was first published in 1740 but probably circulated in manuscript form. See Katinis 149-160.

motti a' suoi sapori i conformi cioè salsi e pungenti, acciocché le parole si concordino con la sua professione ovvero arte" (Speroni 428)

Liberals arts of the trivium (rhetoric) and quadrivium (geometry, arithmetic) appear alongside mechanical arts (medicine, painting), poetry and philosophy. Allotting an unparalleled complexity to cooking, Speroni understands it as a multidimensional practice engaging the mind and the body alike; a profession that, through language, analysis and reflection, creates art. Such a conception of cuisine stands in direct contrast to the idea of food being a sordid greasy business.⁶ In this view, Speroni prefigures the conception of cuisine as fine art that will fully develop in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Llibre del coch thus emerges in an environment where cookery is introduced into the circles of learned knowledge and the arts. Indeed, the kingdom of Naples was not peripheral to the cultural and intellectual renewal that characterized central Italy. As suggested above, its author possibly arrived to Italy with King Alfonso the Magnanimous, who became known for bringing Humanism and Spanish literature to the Neapolitan court.⁷ Alfonso's son Ferrante, whom Mestre Robert served, followed

6. In this view, Speroni prefigures the conception of cuisine as fine art that will fully develop in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For the idea of cuisine as fine art in this period see von Hoffman (137-169).

7. For the Italian Humanists of the mid fifteenth century, Spain was considered a land of quasi-barbarians, mostly knights and bureaucrats, who were fundamentally uninterested in Humanistic studies (Soler 69-70). Upon his arrival to the Neapolitan throne in 1442, King

his father's steps by promoting Humanism, supporting university studies, founding a printing press, and enlarging the archive of the Royal Library of Naples. Although unlike his father, who mostly championed the publication of literary and poetic works, Ferrante was more interested in practical literature—manuals on artillery, hunting and ironworking (Croce 67).⁸

A key figure in Ferrante's court, and of particularly importance to our interests, was the Humanist and chief secretary to the King, Giovanni Pontano. Pontano, who headed the first Humanist academy of Naples, not only was Platina's contemporary, but a fellow pupil of Pomponio Leto at the Roman Academy. Like Platina, Pontano wrote on the arts of dining and commensality. In the treatise *De conviventia*, Pontano recognizes banquets as a social and political tool that grants rulers "the gratitude of the public and the favor of citizens" (286). Above all, he notes, a good banquet must be abundant and diverse, even when conditions are challenging: "Anzi, se mancherà qualcosa perché il pasto sia lauto (e non è facile in tanta abbondanza conservare sempre questo livello), mi pare che si possa lasciar passare, purché come dicono gli spagnuoli,

Alfonso worked to counter this negative view, fashioning himself as a cultured ruler, sponsor of Humanists, and interested in the development of the arts. He destined considerable resources to publishing Humanistic works, reactivating the University of Naples, founding the Royal Library of Naples, among many other cultural endeavors. For a thorough study of Naples under Alfonso I and Ferrante, see Soler.

8. Alfonso used Castilian as the official language, yet Catalan was the everyday language in his court and government, and in the kitchens and stables of Castel Capuano and Castel Nuovo (Soler 103).

la mensa stessa sia carica" (286). *Gli spagnuoli*, of course, are the Aragonese. Pontano specifically praises the splendor of Alfonso's banquets, which were meant not only to please taste, but also to offer "visual pleasure" (290). He laments that such fine dining has fallen into oblivion in Naples: "Ricordo che da Alfonso questa usanza fu osservata con immenso splendore. È incredibile come questa iniziativa riuscisse a guadagnare l'animo della nobilita e anche quello del popolo, [...] questa consuetudine, come altre che sarebbe bene portare ad esempio, e stata per sempre interrotta" (287).

Throughout the treatise, Alfonso is presented as an exemplary host and ruler whose banquets displayed the wealth of his kingdom and the generosity of his character. In this way, *De conviventia* ventures to recuperate that past splendor of Aragonese hospitality. Indeed, Pontano recognizes the positive role that banquets had in Neapolitan intellectual life under Alfonso: "Una volta a quell'Alfonso di cui parliamo procurò gran lode il fatto di aver invitato a cena nei suoi giardini tutti i letterati che in quel tempo erano a Napoli, e offerta loro una lauta accoglienza" (292). In the banquet attended by the *letterati*, Alfonso's well-known enthusiasm for Humanism is conflated with his enthusiasm for feasts.

Pontano's ideas, then, may have helped set the stage at court—the necessary intellectual conditions, as it were—for the emergence of Mestre Robert's book. What I wish to suggest is that we look at Mestre Robert's book through the same lens as Platina's *De honesta voluptate*. That is, not as an isolated editorial curiosity, but as part of

an increased interest of Humanists in cookery both as practical knowledge, *ingenio*, and expression of political magnificence. It is in this context of cultural blooming and appreciation for practical literature that *Llibre del coch* is born. Granted, *Llibre del coc* is written in the vernacular and not in Latin, does not include moral or philosophical reflections, nor does it allude to the Classical past. Regardless, it is fundamental that we consider this book outside the confines of Iberia, and through its connections with Italian humanism and the editorial explosion of instructive literature. Not only does the former view reproduce the logic of the modern Nation-state, in as much the cookbook completes a teleological narrative of national cuisine, but it also risks overlooking its place in the cultural disputes of early modernity.

Cooking like a Catalan in Naples

Scholarly interest on Mestre Robert's *Llibre del coch* has highlighted its role in the history of Catalan and Spanish cuisine, and focused on its transitional character. In the words of Carolyn Nadeau, this cookbook "sheds the exclusive late medieval character of former cooking manuscripts and reveals a renaissance character" (26). Its connections to the political and cultural milieu of the Neapolitan court, and of late fifteenth century and early sixteenth century Italy in general, have been mostly overlooked. Though the earliest known edition was printed in Barcelona, there is no doubt that the cookbook was a product of wider cultural currents and exchanges between the Iberian and Italian peninsulas.

Platina's *De honesta voluptate*, and Martino's manuscript before it, evidence the standing of Catalan food culture in Italy. Both texts feature recipes from Catalonia: mirrauste, a dish for partridges, gourd, and blancmange. But the influence of Catalonia went beyond this small textual sample. In the words of Larioux, "la cour d'Alphonse puis celle de Ferrand donnent ainsi naissance à une culture syncrétique où les éléments ibériques viennent enrichir le fonds italien" (1996, 80). In regards to culinary culture, Catalan influence was particularly strong.⁹ Dishes, methods, products, in addition to an extensive circulation of a culinary-textual repertoire, were transmitted and firmly established within Italian culture, giving way to "culinary syncretism" (78). In fact, as Larioux notes, "le centre de gravité de la production culinaire italienne s'est donc déplacé vers le sud [...]. c'est un sud dont les liens avec l'Aragon sont forts et qui est largement ouvert au reste du monde méditerranéen" (1996, 78). *Libre del coch* was one of the first printed works that surfaced from this culinary center.¹⁰

The happy adoption by Italian palates of Catalan cuisine was seemingly at odds with contemporary politics. The presence in Italy of Catalans, and Spainards in general, had longed been a source of political tension. Aragonese rule in the Italian south, old

9. On the mutual influence between Italian and Catalan cuisines, see Santich.

10. On the place of Mestre Robert's within this culinary centre, Larioux writes: "Mais si le traité de Mestre Robert reprend du Sent Soví nombre de recettes qui ancrent sa catalanité, il est en même temps et tout autant influencé par la littérature culinaire italienne - composé dans un royaume de Naples à la fois italien et aragonais" (1996, 79).

commercial and political rivalries between Catalans and the Geonese, along with the advancement of Spanish cardinals to the highest circles of the Vatican, aggravated long-established tensions. As James Amelang points out, rivalry between Spain and Italy was two-folded. While Spaniards had a sense of political superiority due to the hegemony of their Empire, this was “accompanied by an equally clear if attenuating sense of cultural inferiority” (Amelang 446-447). Conversely, while Italians had a strong sense of their cultural hegemony, particularly in respect to high culture and art, they were acutely aware of Spain’s political supremacy.

Under this scenario, the enthusiastic adoption of Catalan food may seem exceptional. But as Amelang urges us to consider, “in terms of dress, foodways, and other items of broad cultural consumption, the exchanges between Italy and Spain evened themselves out more” (Amelang 453). Platina’s recipe for *Catalan mirrauste*, for example, opens with a direct comparison between Catalans and Italians: “The Catalan race, which is indeed distinguished and considered not much different in talent and physical form from the Italian level of skill, prepares a dish which they call mirrauste in this way” (275). Platina then goes on to give the instructions to the reader, but he does so not in the customary second person of the imperative (i.e. to make X, do Y). Rather, he uses the third-person of the plural; *they* cook the capons, *they* grate almonds, then *they* add some bits of bread, then *they* let everything boil. The exceptional shift in pronouns produces a distance between author, reader and source that is not

present in other recipes. The need to remark on the equivalence between Catalans and Italians, paired with the stylistic choices, inevitably point to cultural exchanges and the tensions that came with them.

Similarly, in a recipe for Catalan partridges, Platina finishes his cooking instructions with an anecdotal remark: “My friend Gallus frequently eats this food, although he is a very bitter enemy of the Catalonians, for he hates the race of men, not their dishes” (289). In true humanist fashion, people and culinary culture are carefully separated in the name of individual taste. In the words of Paul Freeman, “The gastronomic mind of Renaissance humanism was open to culinary influences from just about any culture” (199). Cities like Rome would have been “gastronomic Babels” where individuals encountered diverse culinary cultures, becoming at once creators and consumers of taste (Larioux 402).

The interweaving of influences between Italian and Catalan recipes is such that it is almost futile to attempt a linear genealogy. Perhaps an earlier manuscript version of Mestre Robert’s book served as a source for Martino’s. Or perhaps it was the other way around. A book of italo-catalan cuisine, first composed in Naples and then published numerous times in Spain, actually gives account of the intense cultural and intellectual circulation of the Mediterranean. To place *Llibre del coch* within this network allows us to approach the emergence of culinary literature beyond the lens of foodstuffs, and consider the circulation of ideas and information.

The 1520 Barcelona Edition: Practice, Virtue and Taste

The first two editions of the book—the n.d. and the 1520—open with a paratext in which the objective and intended readership of the book is clearly defined: “Com sie cosa molt necessari als jouens de tendre eda apendre deles virtuts la carrera: e majorment aquells qui en delliberacio de seruir als homens de mayor grau o condicio se deliten: que aquells sapien ben seruir de moltes coses necessaries en aquells. E com yo haja delliberat fer alguna mencio de seruir enlo present libre” (162). The ideal readers are people of a “tender age”, those that are in the service of noble men. The book has a clear didactic objective: to provide these young people with the necessary and useful knowledge. That is, to guide them in their path (*carrera*) of service. It is worth noting that the word used here is *virtut*, meaning both technical skill and moral virtue.

Following Aristotle, writers like Giovanni Pontano and Platina discussed the relations between virtue, power and nobility. Pontano, for example, thought that virtue was acquired, learned and cultivated, rather than a God-given gift (Roick 123). Only virtue, and not lineage, could confer rulers with true nobility. In that sense, virtue is as an ethically charged concept that nonetheless required political skill. In other words, rulers not only had to become virtuous, but appear it. Banquets, as Pontano’s treatises on splendor and hospitality suggest, were a key way to display virtue. In this sense, the knowledge condensed in this book was doubly virtuous. On one side, it gave young apprentices the necessary practical skills of cooking, carving and serving, which—if

performed correctly —, in turn conferred them respectability, moral virtue. On the other, a virtuous cook helped construct the moral virtue, and political legitimacy, of a given master.

This two-folded idea of virtuous cooking is suggested on the frontispiece of the 1520 Barcelona edition. The world of the kitchen is here inserted into a visual narrative of nobility. Though the red ink creates a sense of depth that visually distances the kitchen from the dining room, background and foreground are merged into a single space where king, servant and cook co-exist arranged in a triangular composition. The cook stands exceptionally close to the monarch. Between them stands a servant holding a comically large goblet. In comparison to the undated edition discussed in the beginning of this chapter, where the reader zooms inside the space, here, the reader zooms out, coming out of the kitchen. With the doors wide open, its bright red secrets are in full display. Leaving his usual veil of anonymity behind, the cook has exited the kitchen to meet the reader. This visual disposition creates an image of the kitchen as a lively part of courtly life. Behind the king's display of virtue is a virtuous cook, and *Llibre del coch* contains the knowledge to become one.

Mestre Robert outlines three areas in which a cook must excel. As the title *Llibre de doctrina para ben servir, de taller y de l'art del coch* indicates, the book contains more than just cooking recipes. Descriptions on the correct way of carving meat and serving a table are featured alongside them. The first section, *On carving*, contains 15 instructions

on the correct methods to cut game, birds, and sharpening knives. From the beginning, the voice acknowledges the challenges of writing a book of practical nature: “a doctrina del talar nos pot donar molt bé a entendre per escriptura sinó per discreció e pràctica: no dient que saber bé tallar o trinxar no sia bona cosa: empero què vall aquell saber si hom no sab los circumstancies que si pertanyen?” (174) Writing cannot sufficiently communicate the embodied knowledge of carving. The book ought to be *put in practice*, presumably in the context of a master-apprentice relation.

As Pamela Smith has discussed, one way to explain the boom of practical manuals in the early modern period is the emergence of an urban middle-class who “in their social mobility were more isolated from familial sources of technical knowledge and more desirous of new information” (173). As the apprentice-master model of learning began to change, books allowed individuals to acquire knowledge in a different way. Indeed, after recognizing the difficulty of translating carving into writing, Mestre Robert writes: “e per aquells volran aprendre puguen a profitar se algun bon exemple e si alguna cosa los parra no esser per aells necessaria yols pregue que no la metan en compte sino que la dexen fora de lur memoria” (162). The text provides a model of reading where authority is constructed in the intersection between the author’s knowledge and the reader’s individual practice, between the book and the body. Its unfixed meaning must be consumed, digested, or even discarded according to the reader’s needs. In this sense, this passage also posits “a recipe for readership”

(Goldstein 15), teaching the reader not only how to *do* the things it seeks to teach, but how to respond to the text itself. Speaking directly to the youth, Mestre Robert's book situates itself within a temporality of the future, underscoring the modernity of both his literary and culinary enterprise.

As put forward by the title and frontispiece, the craft of cooking is conceived in the book as a collective enterprise. In a previous chapter, I discussed how relations between the kitchen's inner strata was often conflictive, with lowly workers. Mestre Robert addresses this in the context of a courtly kitchen. Specifically, he writes, butchers, cooks and shoppers "nunca poden estar en pau" (176). This tension is mainly due to a lack of shared skills and knowledge: "Diu lo trinxant al coch que ell no sab cuynar ni donar bon orde en la cuyna perquè aquella carn es massa cuyta e nos pot be tallar: e que el no fa per altre respecte sino per fer lo caure en alguna vergonya per que cayga en fastig del senyor" (176). To remedy this situation, all three must acquire the skills of their respective crafts: "és necessari que lo comprador sia bon coch e bon trinxant, e lo coch que sia bon comprador e bon trinxant, e lo trinxant deu esser bon coch e bon comprador" (176). This reciprocal dynamic, where all elements have knowledge of each other, encapsulates the ultimate objective of the book: to provide the reader with a holistic scheme of the kitchen's essential *know hows*. To put it another way, by urging the reader to be acquainted with all the details of the craft, it puts a practical and culinary twist on the classic Humanistic precept of self-knowledge. *Know thy*

kitchen. If mastered, this knowledge of the self had the potential to put the reader in the path to virtue.

At this point, thinking of cooking in these seemingly grandiose terms might seem naively hyperbolic. But contemporary Humanists were not strangers to thinking about the matters of the intellect in parallel to the matters of daily life. For instance, Pontano's take on the motto *know thyself* was, in the words of Mario Santoro, "realistic". That is, the *man* at the center of his inquiry was "not an abstract and isolated man, but the 'social' man, the real man called to live in society" (Santoro 307). Pontano's particular view would earn him the admiration of his contemporaries, who saw him as "occupied in the affairs of kings" but never "a stranger to the rustic life" (Galateo quoted in Santoro 308). In knowing the kitchen's triad, the reader could bring peace and quiet to the noble household. In this way, the cook contributes in harmonizing his master's household. Ultimately, and in the case of Mestre Robert, the cook is an agent of domestic governance in the private sphere of the king.

It is within this framework that *Llibre del coch* conceives itself as a repository of knowledge that is *social, realistic, rustic*, but that nonetheless has the potential of instilling virtue: "Donchs, puys que así és, parlarem algun poch de l'art de la cuyna, la qual encara que no sia cosa molt necessària, emperò es *útil e profitosa* per causa que en algun loch se poria hom trobar que és bon saber de aquestes coses perquè fan a hom gran honor sabent-hi dir lo seu *vot*. E és necessari que aquell que aquest art vol usar, vol

veure provar y encara saber lo gust de son senyor” (176; emphasis mine).

This passage directly echoes contemporary ideas on the usefulness of “practical” arts. In *De tradendis disciplinis* (1531), Juan Luis Vives advises that men take an interest in learning “the arts and inventions of men: e.g. in those arts which pertain to eating, clothing, dwelling,” focusing on “how they can be applied to our *use* and *profit*” (209; emphasis mine).¹¹ For Mestre Robert, the usefulness and profit of cooking resides in bringing honor to oneself. Equipped with the necessary skills, the prospective cook can effectively “say his vows” (*dir lo seu vot*). In this formulation that evokes religious and chivalric language, the voice poses the knowledge of taste as a binding agent between master and servant.

In itself, the idea of *knowing taste* is interesting, as it is almost an oxymoron. *[I will close this section with a theoretical discussion of the recipe as a textual form in the context of the early modern hierarchy of the senses. I am considering incorporating experiential research to this section (aka cooking a recipe)]*

11. The arts that “conduce to the comforts of life” (209), says Vives, are not to be learned in school but, rather, by experience: “He should not be ashamed to enter into shops and factories, and to ask questions from craftsmen, and get to know about the details of their work. Formerly, learned men disdained to inquire into those things which it is of such great import to life to know and remember, and many matters were despised and so were left almost unknown to them” (209).

The 1525 Toledo Edition: Authority and the Cooking Subject

In this section I will discuss the particularities of the first Castilian edition, published in 1525 in Toledo. I am mostly interested in the addition of a prologue (I will argue that this was added by the printer), the addition of the cook's last name (which I will argue functions to individualize and highlight the cook as author). I will also discuss the book in the context of its printer, Miguel de Enguía, one of the most important printers of Erasmus and Humanism in general in Spain. In addition, I will discuss the curious coat of arms at the end of the book, which may suggest the interest of Charles V (famously known for his gluttony) in licensing the printing of this book.

I will conclude by discussing the frontispiece to the 1568 edition, where the cook is depicted as the central figure. In contrast to the 1520 edition, the cook appears alone, and the king and servant have disappeared. And, in contrast to the undated edition, he is depicted in a regal noble way. I read this as the beginnings of a "cooking subject" that can help us understand today's celebrity chef.