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Rainer Zaiser



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Papers on French Seventeenth Century Literature

Review founded by Wolfgang Leiner

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Sommaire

DAVID ADAMS, MURIEL COLLART, DANIEL DROIXHE Acceptable Poultry Diet and Taste in La Framboisière's <i>Le Gouvernement nécessaire a chacun pour vivre longuement en santé</i> (1600).....	7
MADELEINE SAVART L'établissement territorial jésuite dans la <i>Relation de la Nouvelle-France</i> de 1616.....	23
ROBERTO ROMAGNINO Le spectacle des voix dans le roman de l'âge baroque.....	39
MICHAEL TAORMINA Rewriting the Promethean Theft of Fire in <i>L'Autre Monde; ou Les États et Empires de la Lune</i>	55
NATHALIE GRANDE Madame de Villegaignon moraliste.....	69
CAMILLE LECLÈRE-GREGORY Médée: From Motherhood to Womanhood.....	85
BERNARD J. BOURQUE Hippolyte-Jules Pilet de La Mesnardière et la notion de punition dans la tragédie.....	101
RALPH ALBANESE Silence et parole dans <i>L'École des Femmes</i>	117
CLARISSE CHABERNAUD Comment Racine fait-il parler des Romains en français ? Enquête sur Agrippine et Titus.....	129

EMMANUEL MINEL

Tapage théâtral et ouverture à la vie sensible dans le théâtre de Baron
(*Le Coquet trompé* [1685], *Les Enlèvements* [1685], *La Coquette et
la fausse prude* [1686], *Le Jaloux* [1687], *L'École des pères* [1705])..... 163

MALINA STEFANOVSKA

What Norbert Elias Leaves out and Saint-Simon Took into Account:
The Horizontal Social Bonds at the Court of Louis XIV 177

COMPTES RENDUS

Clément Duyck

Poétique de l'extase. France, 1601-1675

VOLKER KAPP 193

Gérard Ferreyrolles

De Pascal à Bossuet. La littérature entre théologie et anthropologie

VOLKER KAPP 196

François Lecercle et Clotilde Thouret (dir.)

*La haine du théâtre. Controverses européennes sur le spectacle,
Vol. 2: Discours et arguments*

PERRY GETHNER 200

Guillaume Peureux

De main en main. Poètes, poèmes et lecteurs au XVII^e siècle

MAXIME CARTRON 204

LIVRES REÇUS213

Acceptable Poultry Diet and Taste in La Framboisière's *Le Gouvernement nécessaire à chacun pour vivre longuement en santé* (1600)

DAVID ADAMS, MURIEL COLLART, DANIEL DROIXHE
(UNIVERSITIES OF MANCHESTER, BRUSSELS AND LIÈGE)

Nicolas Abraham de La Framboisière (1560-1636), professor and dean of the Faculty of Medicine at Reims, introduced his *Gouvernement nécessaire à chacun pour vivre longuement en santé* (1600) with this declaration: 'our predecessors, writing to their most intimate friends, instead of kissing their hands, as is the practice today, used to beg the Creator, in their long letters, to give them a long and happy life in perfect health, as they could wish for nothing more precious and exquisite'.¹ He explained that life is grounded on two principles: 'natural heat, which is the main instrument of the soul, and the radical humour, which is used by the latter as food, as oil nourishes the flame of the lamp'. But our heat diminishes every day when it is used. We cannot repair what has been lost 'to the same degree of perfection' and 'our heat, consuming the radical moisture, finally kills itself'.

Hence this 'incredible desire' to 'retain our being'. Compared to this desire, what are 'honour, fame, beauty and wealth'? Health alone can allow us to 'conveniently conduct our personal affairs, deal with our workload, do our duty and live for our enjoyment'. To do this, 'one must govern oneself as is required in the administration of things which are commonly called unnatural, although they are natural when we use them right'. Hippocrates and Galen defined them. They are six in number: air, drinking and eating, sleeping and staying awake, moving and resting, excreting the superfluities

¹ Nicolas Abraham de La Framboisière, *Le gouvernement nécessaire à chacun pour vivre longuement en santé* (Paris : Chez Michel Sonnius, 1600), 31. We have received comments, material and encouragement from V. Boudier, S. Colangelo, V. Giacomotto-Charra, L. Giannetti, S. Lardon, R. Laudan, J. Murray, H. Newton, M. Nicoud, and S. Salatosky. We especially thank Alice Piette for her everyday support.

of the body, and controlling the passions of the soul.² Hence, La Framboisière will devote the largest part of his book to ways of using good food and avoiding as far as possible food which is bad.

In this article, we shall concentrate on part of chapter 5, 'On flesh', which must be understood as meaning 'On meat'. Dealing with the matter as Galen does in the treatise *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, La Framboisière first considers 'four-footed beasts' and then deals with birds. Let us start by considering the first species of poultry that he mentions.



Bartolomeo Passerotti, *The Poultry Bandlers*,
c. 1577/1580, Florence, Fondazione Roberto Longhi²

² For an identification of the birds in this painting, see Valérie Boudier, *Des comestibles et d'autres sujets du même ordre... Peinture et nourriture dans les scènes de genre de Vincenzo Campi, Bartolomeo Passerotti et Annibale Carracci* (Thesis Paris, EHESS, Histoire et civilisations, 5 septembre 2007); Valérie Boudier, *La cuisine du peintre. Scène de genre et nourriture au Cinquecento* (Rennes-Tours : Presses de l'Université François Rabelais et Presses de l'Université de Rennes, 2010).

1. From chicken to turkey

The classification of birds is based on five criteria: ‘juice’, digestibility, the transversal factor of age, the degree of heat and the taste.³ La Framboisière opens the chapter by considering birds which are ‘domestic’. In general, they ‘occupy the first rank’ because ‘their juice in neither greasy nor thin, but moderate (*moyen*) and temperate’, as it is ‘neither excessively hot nor cold’. His compatriot Joseph du Chesne, also known as Quercetanus (1546-1609), confirms this statement with details in his *Le pourtraict de la santé* of 1627: ‘By the term *volaille*, we usually understand dishes that are prepared using hens, chickens, or capons, which is the most ordinary and common food, and the best and healthiest one of all for the human body’.⁴ Du Chesne adds: it is especially good against diseases and for the ‘most feeble natures’ which they strengthen because ‘their flesh is the most temperate’ and ‘does not easily turn into either phlegm, or black bile, or melancholy’.⁵ The latter will be

³ *Gouvernement*, 58 sq.; Galen (2018), IV.4, 353-383. On some of these traditional criteria, see Melitta Weiss Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times* (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 2004), 223.

⁴ Joseph du Chesne, *Le pourtraict de la santé* (Paris : Chez Claude Morel, 1627), 410-11. See Violaine Giacomotto-Charra, ‘Le régime de santé, vecteur de diffusion des savoirs nouveaux: L'exemple du *Pourtraict de la santé* de Joseph du Chesne’, in *Formes du savoir médical à la Renaissance*, éd. Violaine Giacomotto-Charra and Jacqueline Vons (Pessac : Maison des Sciences de l’Homme d’Aquitaine, 2017), 232-57.

⁵ For Ken Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 2002), 42, 269-70, du Chesne’s comments regarding chicken illustrate the fact that, if this author ‘was unwilling to toss out Galen and the Greeks’, ‘his specific recommendations are nothing out of the ordinary’. ‘That is, while the façade of orthodox Galenism may have been crumbling, its internal structure remained unscathed’. On the break which occurred in gastronomy in the middle of the XVIIth century, see Rachel Laudan, ‘A kind of chemistry’, below. On the theory of humours, see Anne Willan and Mark Cherniavsky, *Cookbook Library* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 2012), 46-47; Jacques Jouanna, ‘Pour une archéologie de la dimension environnementale dans la théorie médicale des quatre humeurs : la bile, l’été et le feu’, in *Conserver la santé ou la rétablir : le rôle de l’environnement dans la médecine antique et médiévale*, ed. Nicoletta Palmieri (Saint-Étienne : Publications de l’Université de Saint-Étienne, 2012), 15-22 ; Terence Scully, ‘A cook’s therapeutic use of garden herbs’, in *Health and Healing from the Medieval Garden*, ed. Peter Dendle and Alain Touwaide (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2015), 60-71. According to Furetière, melancholy is one of the four humours of the body, ‘the heaviest and the most inconvenient’ (sub *v*^o). It provokes ‘sadness, sorrow’ and, when it is black, it can produce madness. The famous dictionary refers to melancholy at a pivotal moment when the word evolves from

characterized as ‘the most viscous of all the humours’ because ‘it is dry, cold and thick’ by John Macollo, in his *XCIX canons, or rules learnedly describing an excellent method for practitioners in physic* (1659): melancholy was a decisive element in the genesis of many diseases, especially cancer⁶.

Of course, chickens, which are ‘more delicate’ than hens and capons, have ‘a better juice than old roosters’ whose flesh is ‘nitrous and salted’. La Framboisière especially distinguishes the *volaille d’Inde* (the turkey), whose flesh is so *friande* (crumbly), but lacks taste to some extent. What recipes could season it? Let us consider what is proposed by an Italian cook such as Bartolomeo Stefani. His *Arte di ben cucinare* is supposed to have been written for a dinner given in 1655 by duke Ottavia Gonzaga for queen Christina of Sweden: his book became a classic of gastronomic literature.

In the first recipe, which might be called ‘turkey prepared the Swiss way’, along with the *gallo d’India* cooked on a spit, Stefani uses some *mastice*.⁷ This word, which is now unknown, appears in the *Diccionario della Crusca* of 1612 and refers to a fruit comparable with a ‘wild plum’.⁸ Other seasonings could be used to enhance the taste, such as cinnamon, salt and pepper, in wine.

In a second recipe, which we might also call the ‘four eagles dish’, Stefani puts *mastice* with the turkey to be cooked in ‘a stone pot’ with another rather uncommon ingredient: *garofani*. *Garofano* corresponds to the plant now called dianthus or marigold and it is mentioned, in the *Diccionario della Crusca*, of 1612, along with many other condiments such as zettovario (an Indian plant of the genus *curcuma*), *noce moscata*, saffron, cardamom, etc., which are used

this properly medical meaning to a more general modern meaning. Traditionally, it designated a disease located in the spleen which generates smokes and a ‘melancholic humour or vapor’ which alters without any obvious reason the ‘temperature of the brain’ and ‘causes a reverie without fever’. The melancholic says ‘unreasonable things’ extended to howling, so that the disease may be classified in the category of *lycanthropy*. Thus, melancholy may designate, by further extension, ‘sadness itself’ or a sorrow due to ‘some unfortunate accident’, for example ‘a reversal of fortune’. Then, it means, at least in French, a ‘pleasant dream, a pleasure that you find in solitude’.

⁶ Quoted by Hannah Newton, *Misery to Mirth. Recovery from Illness in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 45–46. On the relationship between food and disease, see Daniel Droixhe, *Alimentation et maladie. Consultations à Padoue à l’aube des Temps modernes* (Bruxelles: Académie royale de Belgique, 2020).

⁷ Bartolomeo Stefani, *L’arte di ben cucinare* (Venice: Per Stefano Curti, 1685), 38: ‘Gallo d’India’; 13: ‘Secondo servitio di cucina’.

⁸ *Dicc., Crusca*, 1st ed., ‘Mastice. Imprima si passa per un’ Isola nominata Gilo, dove nasce la mastice, su piccioli arbuscelli, quasi, come prugne salvatiche’.

‘to warm up those who have a cold heart’.⁹ We learn that the French word for *garofano* was *oeillet*, another usual word for *bétoine*, (Engl. *betony*), a plant which gives off a fragrance of cloves.¹⁰

As with turkey *alla Svizzera*, a wine can be used in the ‘four eagles dish’: a *malvasia*, probably a light one, coming from northern Italy. It is also a high-quality dish, that would receive its full enhancement with an eagle made of ‘paste of marzipan’. A final ingredient should be added to this recipe as well as to another dish, ‘meatloaves of turkey breast’: namely marrow. The recipe for turkey found here is its full Italian version, with Parmesan cheese and *ricotta*.¹¹

For La Framboisière, the flesh of pheasant is ‘excellent, of good juice, easy to digest, and it generates good blood’. But its superior quality is perhaps to be ‘much more delicate’ than chicken and turkey.¹² Stefani recommends that the hunter who gets the pheasant ‘fat and young’, during winter, lets it stand for four days.¹³ ‘It must be finely larded, roasted on a low fire with a *royal dressing*’.

2. The question of the celebrated *royal sauce*

The recipe of this *salsa reale* raises many questions. On one side, Stefani provides the following recipe.¹⁴ Take a *cassolette* that you fill with one ounce of cinnamon, half an ounce of *garofani* (with a fragrance of cloves?), three ounces of sugar, and one and a half glasses of vinegar. An ounce corresponds more or less to the quarter of a litre. The mixture must be put in the covered *cassolette* to boil on a low fire until it is half-cooked, so that it will be perfectly prepared. The sauce may be served with any type of roast. R. Laudan opportunely observes that ‘sauces, often with a sour base of verjuice or

⁹ *Dicc., Crusca*, 1st ed., 800, 810, etc.

¹⁰ Leonhart Fuchs, *L'histoire des plantes* (Lyon: Chez Thibault Payan, 1568), 245-8 : ‘Chap. 134. De la seconde sorte de betoine’.

¹¹ Willan and Cherniavsky, *Cookbook*, 10, 44, 86, 115, 145, 177 specify that, as the XVIIth century advanced, the supplies of wild game were becoming depleted and ‘the taste for big birds was easily satisfied by adding New World turkeys to the inventory’, the exotic possibilities being also replaced by birds such as pigeons.

¹² *Ibid.*, 58.

¹³ Bartolomeo Stefani, *L'arte di ben cucinare* (Venice: Per Steffano Curti, 1685), 38. On the medieval preference for young animals, see Willan and Cherniavsky, *Cookbook*, 24.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 53.

vinegar, had to be tempered with spices and sugar to ensure that they were balanced', again in traditional accordance with humoral rules¹⁵.

The problem comes from the fact that a manuscript kept by the Library of the Royal Society is supposed to give, in 1621, a recipe for *Viande Royale*. But it has been suggested that it was a transcription of another recipe taken from a cookery manuscript in the Arundel Collection, 'reconstructed in the 19th- or early 20th century using elements from a 17th-century notebook'.¹⁶ The manuscript is entitled *Herbes to Season. Herbes to cure* and it would have been copied by a woman named Grace Acton. This interesting recipe is intended to show how to make a *viande royal* (see photos below). It is transcribed and given as a genuine 17th century recipe in *Stumbling into Historic Cookery*.¹⁷ Here is our transcription, where we introduce some punctuation: "Take a Greek or Rhenish wyne and clarifide honie, mix them well withe grounde rye & ginger, pepper cinnamon & cloves, saffron, sugar, mulberries and sandalwood, boil the mixture and salt it and take care that it be thick".¹⁸ Indian

¹⁵ Rachel Laudan, 'A kind of chemistry. The origins of modern French food', in *Petits propos culinaires* 62 (1999): 8-22; 'The birth of the modern diet', *Scientific American Online Issue* (Jan. 2004): 11-16. In her 1999 paper, the author inscribes the analysis in a detailed cultural and historical context. 'In the mid XVIIth century, beginning with Pierre La Varenne's *Le Cuisinier François* (1651), chefs started to deliberately break with conventional wisdom, abandoning safe old recipes, moving peripheral menu items to center stage, and inventing dishes that earlier generations would have found scandalously dangerous. They played down carefully balanced purees of food moistened with almond milk; they left warming spices and sugar out of the main dishes and sauces'. In accordance with humoral rules, they proffered the cold represented by salads and they 'delighted in fresh fruits', etc. Du Chesne already belongs to these 'new chefs', as 'he and his cronies had already shouldered the old-fashioned Galenists out of the court of the King of France'. But, as Albalá has noted (see above), his recipes still followed in some aspects the 'internal structure' of humoral theory. We shall not discuss this point. To outline these changes would require specialised research beyond our competence. On almond milk, see Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times*, 24, 45; Willan and Cherniavsky, *Cookbook*, 64.

¹⁶ *Ancient Cookery. From a ms. In the Library of the Royal Society. Arundel Collection* (London: Printed for the Society of Antiquaries by John Nichols, 1890), No. 344, 275-445, 425 sq.; Ivan Day, 'Wellcome MS.1', in *Food History Jottings 7 March 2012*; quoted by <https://wellcomelibrary.org/item/b19743919#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=1&z=0.1207%2C-0.1637%2C1.1111%2C1.2251>.

¹⁷ <http://compendiumhistoric.blogspot.com/p/grace-acton-1621.html>.

¹⁸ Laudan, 'A kind of chemistry', 9 writes that, within the change that occurred in the mid XVIIth century, 'sugar was demoted from a presence throughout the meal to an appearance at dessert alone'. But at the same time, 'warm, spicy wines' are supposed to have 'given way to cool, sometimes sparkling wine' – Rhenish wine being closer to the latter kind.

sandal wood produces an oil which is highly priced for its ‘distinctive fragrance, which has been valued for centuries’ and the fruit of one of its varieties, the *quandong*, is used for pies, chutneys, etc.

The cookery manuscript in the Arundel Collection was printed by the Library of the Royal Society in 1890 and the model for the recipe is supposed to be n° 332, entitled *At a Feeste Roiall Pecoockes shall be dight on this manner*. But nothing really corresponds to the *Viande Royale*, even if it is included in a series of sauces. Another book, previously published, also gives the recipe attributed to Grace Acton.¹⁹ But a key to the problem is provided by modern research. A. Willan and M. Cherniavsky write: ‘*Forme of Cury* (Model of Cooking), which dates from around 1390 but did not appear in print until the late eighteenth century, records the recipes of the master cook (whose name is unknown) at the court of the flamboyant, ill-fated English king Richard II’. The document, which ‘outlines a jumble of meat, fish, poultry and game dishes in a primitive script that is hard to decipher’, mentions a ‘Vyannnd Ryal (royal meat), a multipurpose sauce of Greek and Rhenish wine thickened with rice flour and flavored with honey, ginger, pepper, cinnamon, cloves, saffron, Cypress sugar, and mulberries’.²⁰

Let us observe that the supposedly fake recipe from Middle Ages to Renaissance includes at least one ingredient – ‘Cypress sugar’ – which might correspond to one mentioned by Stefani – the product of ‘sandal-wood’.

3. Pheasant, peasant, vulgar cabbage and ascetic paintings

The indications given above about pheasant emphasize the high social status of the people who could order such a dish, with special and exotic condiments. Is it by chance that medieval physicians claimed that the pheasant, which is ‘warm and moist in nature’, ‘was the ideal food for the dainty stomach of the leisured class, convalescents and the young and the old, but it was thought to be harmful to manual laborers whose digestive tracts needed coarser foods’?²¹ Hence, it is no surprise to read what Stefani has to say concerning the bird: ‘peasants in the countryside so *disgratiamente* enjoy’ – that is to say ‘unfortunately, disgracefully’ – ‘such a hunting trophy, that they have dared (*siano avisati*) to cook it with cabbage, or pastry’.

¹⁹ Thomas Wright, *A History of Domestic Manners and Sentiments in England* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1862), 353.

²⁰ Willan and Cherniavsky, *Cookbook*, 23. Cypress sugar is written *sugur cypre* in the original.

²¹ Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times*, 37.

Cabbage is well-known as one of the ordinary foods of ‘the lowest of the common people’ and at the same time one of the most denigrated vegetables from a medical point of view.²² If the latter ‘are little esteemed in Renaissance dietetics’, as J. Céard has stated,²³ cabbage occupied the front line position, along with turnips, squash and cucumber, as *legumina* that must be avoided, whether raw or cooked. Galen, in the treatise *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, set the tone for the evaluation of cabbage when he wrote that ‘it has a bad juice and a bad smell’.²⁴ Simeon Seth, a Byzantine physician who in the eleventh century provided another treatise *On the virtues of foods*, repeated that cabbage, ‘a hot and dry’ vegetable, produced ‘a bad juice which induces melancholy’.²⁵ He added that cucumbers generate in the stomach a similar ‘viscous pituita’ or phlegm that ‘accumulates greasy humours’.²⁶ Prospero Calano or Calanius (1480-15..), from Sarzana, who practised in Rome and Bologna, published in 1538 a *Paraphrasis in librum Galeni De inaequal intemperitie* from which was extracted a *Traité excellent de l’entretienement de santé* (or *An Excellent Treatise for Maintaining Health*, 1550). We read in the

²² Daniel Droixhe, ‘What to Eat During Cancer Treatment? Giovanni Battista da Monte’s recommendations (1554-1583)’, to appear. On the humoral qualities or defects of vegetables, see Willan and Cherniavsky, *Cookbook*, 46-47.

²³ Jean Céard, ‘La diététique dans la médecine de la Renaissance’, in *Pratiques et discours alimentaires à la Renaissance*, dir. Jean-Claude Margolin and Robert Sauzet (Paris : Maisonneuve et Larose, 1982), 36. Is there some difference between XVth century cooking as is illustrated in Martino of Como’s *Libro de arte coquinaria* (c. 1465) and Renaissance medical writings? Willan and Cherniavsky, *Cookbook*, 49 write that Martino’s ‘approach to ingredients reflects our own appreciation of local products, particularly fruits and vegetables’ – a modern rapprochement with which we may not agree. They also observe that such an important cookbook as the *Boke of Cokery*, first published in 1500, shows a change by mid-century: ‘at the opening, most vegetables and fruits – cabbages, onions, pears, and apples – were home-grown’, but they were replaced by ‘olives, capers and endive’. Is there another cultural but gradual change in the mid-seventeenth century? Rachel Laudan, ‘A kind of chemistry’, 9 notices that ‘fresh, often raw, fruits and vegetables and fresh herbs, became more popular while most spices were edged out’.

²⁴ Galien, *Sur les facultés des aliments*, texte établi et traduit par John Wilkins (Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2013), 151-3: ‘Chap. III. Chap. 44, Sur le chou’. Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs (De alimentorum facultatibus)*, introduction, translation and commentary by Owen Powell. With a foreword by John Wilkins (Cambridge et al.: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

²⁵ Symeon Seth, *Volumen de alimentorum facultatibus juxta ordinem literarum digestum* (Paris: Mathurin Dupuis, 1658), 47-8.

²⁶ Seth, *Volumen*, 126. La Framboisière, *Gouvernement*, 88: ‘The use of cucumbers is very dangerous, insomuch as their food is worth nothing’.

latter that ‘cabbages, mostly those grown in summer, generate a bad and melancholy juice, if they are cooked twice’.²⁷

La Framboisière simply follows Galen, Seth or Calano and states that ‘cabbages generate bad juice, are harmful for stomach and sight, and produce horrible dreams’.²⁸ He also writes that squash is not ‘as pernicious’ as cucumbers if we ‘correct their aqueous character with saffron, pepper or another aromatic powder’.²⁹ Thus, the balance between *moist* and *dry* was observed.

Is it by accident that the Spanish painter Juan Sánchez Cotán (1560-1627) brings together cabbage and cucumber in the *Still Life with Game Fowl, Vegetables and Fruits* and again in *Still Life with Game Fowl?*



Juan Sánchez Cotán, *Still Life with Game Fowl, Vegetables and Fruits*, 1602, Madrid, Museo del Prado. – CC0 Public Domain Designation

²⁷ Prospero Calano, *Paraphrasis in librum Galeni De inaequali intemperie* (Lyon: Apud Seb. Gryphium, 1538) ; *Traicté excellent de l'entretenement de santé* (Paris : Pour lehan Bonfons, 1550), 33. See Muriel Collart's forthcoming article.

²⁸ La Framboisière, *Gouvernement*, 83. Galen already wrote that lentils and cabbage ‘blunt the sight if the eye is not ‘moister than it is by nature’.

²⁹ La Framboisière, *Gouvernement*, 88.



Juan Sánchez Cotán, *Still Life with Game Fowl*, 1600-1603, Chicago, Art Institute. – CC0 Public Domain Designation

It has been argued that these still life paintings, by a man who, after his career as an artist, entered the Carthusian monastery of Santa Maria of El Paular, embodied a retreat from the world and its pleasures³⁰. In this way, they might also constitute an invitation to restrict oneself to the worst foods as a form of self-mortification. A. Willan and M. Cherniavsky have rightly stressed an ascetism that ‘strongly influenced the monastic orders established in later centuries’ – and a more general Christian diet – which had condemned the ‘over-enjoyment of rare and succulent dishes’, since the time of Joannes Cassianus or John the Hermit³¹.

This asceticism would not be implausible in a time and a culture which cultivated – apart from the luxurious lifestyle of high society – the criticism of the ‘industrious artifice’ which, especially due to the French influence, contaminated the Italian cooking of the Renaissance. A. Gazzoni has outlined this austere appraisal of banquets where meats were served in gold or silver dishes, and he notices that, ‘symbolically, it was properly big game, which

³⁰ Norman Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked: Four Essays on Still Life Paintings* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012).

³¹ Willan and Cherniavsky, *Cookbook*, 16, 50, who gives the example of the *Küchenmasterei* (1485).

lived closest to rough ground, which was the most extravagantly coated, dressed up and stylized in the most refined images³².

Earlier, we mentioned turnip, along with cabbage, as some of the worst vegetables which must be rejected. G. Ruoizzi refers to the Bolognese Giovanni Sabadino Arienti (c. 1445-1510) and his collection of short stories *Le porretane* (1483) for another socio-cultural observation.³³ When the peasant Zuco Padella takes food belonging to the noble Lippo Ghislieri, he does not commit ‘an occasional theft due to need or hunger’, but his act is ‘a true and real defiance, systematic and repeated, of the privilege of class’. ‘At the end of the struggle which opposes the losing peasant to the winning lord, the latter gives the other precise warnings on the social hierarchy of the fruits coming from trees and ground: *Next time, leave the fruits of my peers and eat those of yours, which are turnips, garlic, leeks, onions and shallots with sorghum bread*’.

R. Laudan stresses the fact that ‘root vegetables and legumes’, ‘dry and cold’, were ‘better suited to the coarse constitutions of peasants than the delicate stomach of nobles’, so that ‘a chef who decided to serve them nonetheless would make sure they were stewed to add warmth and moisture³⁴. Thus, all those leafy vegetables such as ‘chard, marrow and onions’, which came from the ground and were wet and cold, ‘could be redeemed by frying’. Laudan adds: ‘Not surprisingly, an observer noted that in the reign of Henry VIII, Englishmen either ignored vegetables or treated them *as a food more meet for hogs and savage beasts to feed upon than mankind*’.

More specifically, M. W. Adamson took as the best example of the regimen of ‘common people’ the pages written by Jacques Dubois or Sylvius (1478-1555) ‘for the poor and for plague and famine victims’.³⁵ ‘Dubois follows medieval medical doctrine with his statement that people engaged in heavy

³² Andrea Gazzoni, ‘Cacciagione’, in *Banchetti letterari. Cibi, pietanze e ricette nella letteratura italiana da Dante a Camilleri*, ed. Gian Mario Anselmi and Gino Ruoizzi (Roma: Carocci, 2011), 61-7. Willan and Cherniavsky, *Cookbook*, 150, 167 relate how Lord Edward Herbert of Cherbury described a meal in Novara in 1648: the first course ‘was heightened artificially pyramidwise, to a sparrow which was on the top’; in another, ‘all manner of fowl, from the pheasant and partridge, to other fowl less than them, were heightened up to a lark’. But ‘the dizzying XVIIth century pyramids of sweets had become outdated’ in the XVIIIth, and Gilliers, in his *Le cannameliste français* of 1751 ‘favored flowers and fruits made from sugar paste or marzipan, in horizontal presentation’.

³³ Gino Ruoizzi, ‘Frutta e verdura’, in *Banchetti letterari. Cibi, pietanze e ricette nella letteratura italiana da Dante a Camilleri*, ed. Gian Mario Anselmi and Gino Ruoizzi (Roma: Carocci, 2011), 190-5.

³⁴ Laudan, ‘A kind of chemistry’, 11-12.

³⁵ Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times*, 105, 227.

physical labor have different dietary needs from those with a more sedentary lifestyle, in which category he counts the nobility and intellectuals'. 'The cookery of the poor, according to the sixteenth-century author, consists mainly of gruel, soups, and ragouts whose main ingredient is bread. Cheaper types of bread included barley, rye, and oats breads, and in time of famine breads from ground rice, beans, millet, chestnuts, bran, or any other edible plant. The bread is cooked in water with butter, stock, cow's milk, cider, cabbage, or beer', etc.

4. From partridge, woodcock and quail to lark, dove and pigeon

According to La Framboisière, these birds are supposed to share four of the same five qualities: good juice, easy digestibility, age and taste³⁶.

Partridges exceed all the others in good taste and delicacy. 'Judging from the three recipes contained in the cookbook of Apicius, and in the Middle Ages', this 'warm and moist bird' was regarded 'as the healthiest of all the game birds', 'especially when the bird was not cooked immediately after it had been killed, but several days later'³⁷. Young partridges are even better, but woodcocks are less so, and their flesh 'is not so delicious and of such good digestion'.

Among quails, which are more appreciated in autumn because they are fatter, the young ones are also better. Stefani distinguishes partridge and *beccasico* (snipe) as 'the most delicate and esteemed'. Partridges have 'their season' – from November to February – and the *figlioli*, or young, which are called *pernigoncelli*, must be eaten earlier, from August to October. Woodcocks are also better during summer, in August and September.

Was English cooking different from the continental sort, as concerns poultry? Willan and Cherniavsky write that, 'at the start of the XVIth century, English cooking, like that elsewhere in Europe, followed medieval traditions'.³⁸ But, as the century progressed, 'to a degree, the English compensated for their conservatism with a variety of meats and fish that could not be matched on the continent. Venison, partridge, grouse, pheasant, duck, and rabbit were commonplace, as elsewhere, but British cookbooks added teal, woodcock, heron, gull, bittern, larks, thrush, and more, some caught by the popular sport of falcony'.

What were the appropriate recipes using partridge, woodcock and quail? They must be roasted, and the cook will be careful to cook the woodcock over high heat 'and turn the spit with alacrity. A difference separates partridge and

³⁶ La Framboisière, *Gouvernement*, 58-9.

³⁷ Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times*, 37.

³⁸ Willan and Cherniavsky, *Cookbook*, 103-108.

quail with regard to the larding: it is recommended for partridge, allowing for the *royal sauce* described above, but Stefani does not like quail larded with slices of bacon because the flesh goes to pieces and dries out.

As a ‘very hot food’, quail will be accompanied, in a recipe provided by one of the most famous Italian authors of gastronomic literature, Bartolomeo Scappi (1500-1577), by an ingredient which has similar qualities: namely, fennel.³⁹ Adamson observes that fennel, classified by medieval physicians as dry and warm, had been used since Antiquity, as stalk, in stews and pickles and that it was ‘recommended for cold complexions and climates’.⁴⁰ ‘Quails are hardly mentioned in medieval cookbooks and dietetic texts’ because it is suspected of being harmful, as they ‘fed on poisonous plants such as hellebore’.⁴¹ ‘Pomegranates, nuts, and cinnamon supposedly help prevent any negative side effects the consumption of quails may have.’

The quail recipe given by Scappi could be used for other birds as well: woodcock, swift, ortolan, goldcrest, lark, dove, thrush, and blackbird.⁴² We pause here to consider only the lark, dove and pigeon.

a) Larks

Could we have here a variation in cooking culture between two books of recipes which are provided for different regional areas such as Rome and Mantua? In Scappi (Rome, 16th cent.), could it be that the lark, like the thrush and the blackbird, can perhaps be cooked in a more medieval way, ‘with a laurel leaf, and a slice of bacon, or with sausage’?⁴³ As in so many Renaissance recipes, it will be served ‘with bitter orange sugar, and salt as well’.⁴⁴ In Stefani, a century later and in Lombardy, the preparation seems at the same

³⁹ Bartolomeo Scappi, *Opera dell'arte del cucinare* (Venice: Per Alessandro de' Vecchi, 1622), 283: ‘Per arrostitir volatile, liquali non hanno da esser privi de suoi interiori, et hanno da essere spiumati asciutti, et sono li sottoscritti’. On ‘Scappi’s Renaissance kitchen’, see Willan and Cherniavsky, *Cookbook*, 89. On Scappi and cheese, see: Massimo Montanari, *Il formaggio con le pere. La storia in un proverbio* (Bari: Laterza, 2008), 38.

⁴⁰ Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times*, 13.

⁴¹ Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times*, 37.

⁴² The word *rigabbi*, which seems to be used only by Scappi with this spelling, corresponds to *rigabi*: ‘*Le thesor des trois langues, espagnole, françoise, et italiennne*’ (Cologne: Pour Samuel Crespin, 1617), s. v° ‘Regagliolo, *Roitelet oiseau*, *rigabio*, *vecello*’.

⁴³ Scappi, *Opera*, 41.

⁴⁴ ‘With the Europe-wide increase in trade [at the Renaissance], comes the growing use of ingredients such as oranges and lemons, which gradually replace the medieval verjuice for tartness’ (Willan and Cherniavsky, *Cookbook*, 115).

time closer to the natural taste of the flesh and more embellished.⁴⁵ Lark must be roasted ‘anointed with butter, with a layer of salt, sugar, cinnamon and crushed bread, and sage leaves’. It will be served with crushed eggs and lemon, and covered with ‘a very delicately cut pastry’.⁴⁶

b) Doves

However, some ingredients are reversed in the respective recipes for dove.⁴⁷ That provided by Scappi may seem closer to the original taste of the flesh, with its pastry of fine flour, sugar, salt and some fennel as with quails. Dove is ‘especially delicate’ in Stefani’s receipt, where a piece of bacon – as in more rustic cooking – is still added, the bird being roasted ‘with oil, or butter, or wrapped in paper’.⁴⁸

c) Pigeons

For La Framboisière, these constitute the worst variety of the ‘hot’ birds. In fact, they are ‘bien chauds’ so that they ‘easily light the fire in the blood’, with two consequences: they are harmful for ‘people whose body is inclined to fever and leprosy’; and they excite the libido. Moreover, if young pigeons compensate for the heat by having a flesh which is ‘still moist and tender’, that of old birds is ‘dry and hard’.

How can cooking remedy these defects? Stefani has a specific solution: the *minestrone* and *soppa* of pigeon. The first mixes the pigeon’s flesh, rubbed with a piece of bacon, with many ingredients: bread crumbs, cheese, pine nuts, three ounces of marzipan, pepper, nutmeg, cinnamon, betony (*garofani*, see above) and *petroscemolo*. This last word corresponds to the modern

⁴⁵ Stefani, *L’arte*, 126. Willan and Cherniavsky, *Cookbook*, 49 distinguish Martino of Como’s *Libro de arte coquinaria* (c. 1465), which ‘recognized regional styles of cooking’, especially with ‘crayfish of Venice and Rome’ or ‘the rice of Lombardy’. See also 87 on Scappi’s ‘specialties of Milan, Genoe, Lucca, Lombardy, Piedmont, Rome, Naples, Venice, and Sicily’. On eating fish in Rome, see Danielle Gourevitch, ‘Manger du poisson sur les rives du Tibre ?’, in *Conserver la santé ou la rétablir : le rôle de l’environnement dans la médecine antique et médiévale*, ed. Nicoletta Palmieri (Saint-Étienne : Publications de l’Université de Saint-Étienne, 2012), 103-130.

⁴⁶ *Intagliate nel cedro condito* : ‘Cederno, dedro albero, e ‘l frutto d’esso, simile ai limone, ed ha il sugo agro. Lat. *citrus*’ (*Dicc., Crusca*, 1st ed., 168).

⁴⁷ Scappi, *Opera*, 40v°: Book II, chapter 133, ‘Per arrostire, et accommodare tortore, et quaglie in piu modi’.

⁴⁸ Is there a change from medieval cooking, when bacon was more often used than butter for cooking (Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times*, 46)?

prezzemolo (parsley).⁴⁹ The *Diccionario della Crusca* compares the *petrosellino* to celery: both plants were called *apium* (Ital. *apio*) by Pliny the Elder.⁵⁰ Pigeon soup' compensates for the dryness in a different way.⁵¹ The bird is cooked in a mixture of milk and wine called *malvasia*, which is left to cool. One must put inside the pigeon some *pane di Spagna* (bread of Spain), soaked in the same wine, sugar and cinnamon. The bird will also be covered with 'pistachio milk' and pine nuts.

The sophistication of the meal and its peculiar components are highlighted by a last touch of presentation final presentational touch: on the dish, the cook will arrange *un Rebesco di fiori*, that is to say probably an *arabesco* of flowers 'made of a paste of marzipan icing' which forms 'a delicate cover of sugar'...⁵² Obviously, pigeon could be a distinguished food for distinguished people. G. Ruoizzi mentions another case of 'theatrical and princely scenography' among Stefani's recipes: strawberries in white wine are served with birds in marzipan that seem to want to catch them.⁵³ M. W. Adamson recalls that pigeons and doves, 'warm and moist in nature', 'praised as excellent food' and full of dietic qualities, were already, in the Middle Ages, 'upper-class fare, often served roasted or in the form of pies'⁵⁴.

If pigeons are 'hot' and bad birds for La Framboisière, Du Chesne subjects them to an absolutely different medical scrutiny. 'They are a very good food, generate good blood, and warm and strengthen the stomach'⁵⁵. They especially benefit old people and those who are subject to diseases 'caused by cold'.

5. Porn-food: goose and duck

In general, La Framboisière writes, the animals which live in 'aquatic places' have a flesh that is moist, viscous, loaded with excrements and more difficult to digest', unlike those living in mountains, whose drier air gives

⁴⁹ Stefani, *L'arte*, 28: 'Minestra di piccioni'. In his famous medieval *Ménagier de Paris*, Taillevent 'calls for a mixture of white ginger ('the best kind'), cinnamon, peppercorns, long pepper, nutmeg, cloves, grains of paradise, and galingale' (Willan and Cherniavsky, *Cookbook*, 55).

⁵⁰ *Dicc., Crusca*, 3rd ed., 168, vol. III, 1201.

⁵¹ Stefani, *L'arte*, 136: 'Primo servitio di credenza'.

⁵² *Dicc., Crusca*, 1st ed., 70: 'Arabesco. E arabesco, o rabesco, si dice a una sorte di dipintura a fogliame, e intrecciatura di linee, fatta all'araba'.

⁵³ Ruoizzi, 'Frutta e verdura', 193-4. On marzipan, 'known in Italy and southern France by 1340', whose principal ingredients were 'sugar, almonds, and rose water', see Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times*, 89.

⁵⁴ Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times*, 37-38.

⁵⁵ Du Chesne, *Pourtraict*, 426.

them ‘a harder flesh, with less or no grease’, which allows them to be ‘kept for more days without corruption’.⁵⁶ Among these ‘aquatic’ animals, geese, ducks, cranes and storks are birds which are bad to different degrees.⁵⁷ The last two are the worst, having ‘hard flesh’, and a ‘greasy and melancholic juice.’ Geese are also hard to cook but their wings ‘are not worse than others’. If some of the ‘best tables’ appreciate them ‘freshly salted’, Du Chesne writes, the old ones, cooked with cabbage to make ‘a white, heavy and good soup’, are ‘commonly eaten by villagers and poor people’.⁵⁸ The *Diccionario della Crusca* of 1612 says the *anitra* (duck), also generates ‘greasy humours’.⁵⁹ Stefani agrees: this food ‘fills the body with much moisture’ when one eats too much of it.⁶⁰ But the flesh can be ‘very delicate’ and ‘please all’, especially if it is roasted, ‘full of fragrant herbs, with bacon and other ingredients such as *brogne*’. This word does not appear in the *Diccionario della Crusca*, but it corresponds to the modern *prugne* ‘plums’.⁶¹ Damsons were the best, followed by those of Lombardy. Let us make space, finally, for a special recipe. Lancelot de Casteau, in his *Ouverture de cuisine* written for several prince-bishops of Liège of the 16th – 17th centuries, wrote: ‘Take a duck which is garnished with small lardoons and put it to boil with Spanish wine; when it is almost cooked, take slices of fresh lemon and chestnuts, cooked and peeled, nutmeg, cinnamon and sugar, and steam them well. Then take small stems of sage and wet them in a porridge made of white flowers and egg yolks, fricassee the sage in unsalted butter, and throw everything on the duck in a dish’. You may serve it in this way or, if, on tasting, it does not have enough flavour, you can sprinkle – or *stitchî* as they say in Liège – some extra sugar.⁶² There is no doubt that such a preparation could conceal in the best way recommended by Galen the ‘greasy humours’ and the ‘moisture’ that porn-food required. We may wager that the prince-bishops’ subjects were accustomed to another type of ‘coarse food’, often reduced to gruel spiced with sage, one of the herbs most commonly used in dishes eaten by the poor⁶³.

⁵⁶ La Framboisière, *Gouvernement*, 54-5.

⁵⁷ La Framboisière, *Gouvernement*, 60-61.

⁵⁸ Du Chesne, *Pourtraict*, 423.

⁵⁹ *Dicc., Crusca*, 1st ed., 58.

⁶⁰ Stefani, *L'arte*, 38.

⁶¹ *Dicc., Crusca*, 1st ed., 58 ; Jean Bauhin, *Historia plantarum universalis* (Yverdon, 1650), 187.

⁶² Lancelot de Casteau, Montois, *Ouverture de cuisine* (Liège : Par Léonard Streele, 1604).

⁶³ Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times*, 227. The *Ouverture de cuisine* is supposed to have been ‘published in Liège in a part of Flanders that is now Belgium’... (Willan and Cherniavsky, *Cookbook*, 125).

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