

**ANTONIO LATINI'S  
“THE MODERN STEWARD,  
OR THE ART OF PREPARING  
BANQUETS WELL”**



Portrait of Antonio Latini, from Volume I  
of *Lo Scalco alla Moderna* (Naples, 1692).

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**ANTONIO LATINI'S**  
**“THE MODERN STEWARD,**  
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**A COMPLETE**  
**ENGLISH TRANSLATION**

Edited and translated by  
**TOMMASO ASTARITA**

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All images are from the original edition of *Lo Scalco alla Moderna*,  
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## INTRODUCTION

IN 2014, I published a book containing translated excerpts from an Italian text titled *Lo scalco alla moderna* (*The Modern Steward*), first published in two quarto volumes in Naples in 1692–1694.<sup>1</sup> This 2014 book contains about one quarter of *Lo Scalco's* text, accompanied by my own commentary, context, and notes. The present volume offers the first complete translation of *Lo Scalco* into English (or any other language). I refer interested readers to my earlier book for more extensive discussion of some of the topics covered in this introduction.

*Lo Scalco's* author, Antonio Latini (1642–1696), was an experienced cook, steward, and banquet manager who worked in Rome and central Italy, and then served some of the leading families and individuals in Naples, at the time Italy's largest city and the capital of its largest state. His book is, in large part, what we may call a cookbook, but in fact includes much more (and something less) than we would expect to find today in a cookbook. Its title, in its full Baroque richness, is *The Modern Steward, or the Art of Preparing Banquets Well, with the Choicest Rules of Stewardship, Taught and Applied to Benefit Professionals, and Other Scholars* (*Lo scalco alla moderna, overo l'arte di ben disporre li conviti, con le regole più scelte di scalcheria, insegnate e poste in pratica a beneficio de' professori, ed altri studiosi*). It has never been published or translated since its original appearance in 1692–1694, except for two modern facsimile Italian limited editions.<sup>2</sup>

Latini's work has long been known to historians of cooking primarily because it is the first publication to include recipes that use tomatoes.<sup>3</sup> But the book has a broader claim

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**1** Tommaso Astarita, *The Italian Baroque Table: Cooking and Entertaining from the Golden Age of Naples* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2014).

**2** The facsimile editions are Antonio Latini, *Lo scalco alla moderna*, 2 vols. (facsimile, Lodi: Bibliotheca Culinaria, and Milan: Appunti di Gastronomia, 1993); and Latini, *Lo scalco alla moderna*, 2 vols. plus a volume of commentary (facsimile, Florence: Polistampa, 2004); a collection of a few of Latini's recipes appears in Claudio Novelli, ed., *Né pomodoro né pasta* (Naples: Grimaldi, 2003).

**3** See for instance Rudolf Grewe, "The Arrival of the Tomato in Spain and Italy: Early Recipes," *The Journal of Gastronomy* 3 (1987): 67–82; Alan Davidson, "Europeans' Wary Encounters with Tomatoes, Potatoes, and Other New World Foods," in *Chilies to Chocolate: Food the Americas Gave the World*, ed. Nelson Foster and Linda S. Cordell (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992), 1–14; Silvano Serventi and Françoise Sabban, *La pasta, storia e cultura di un cibo universale* (Bari: Laterza, 2000), 337; the entries for "Latini" and "tomato" in Gillian Riley, *The Oxford Companion to Italian Food* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); and David Gentilcore, *Pomodoro! A History of the Tomato in Italy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 50–52, and "The Impact of New World Plants, 1500–1800: The Americas in Italy," in *The New World in Early Modern Italy, 1492–1750*, ed. Elizabeth Horodowich and Lia Markey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 190–206; the first Spanish book to include recipes with tomatoes appeared in 1745, though there is evidence that tomatoes were eaten in Spain as early as the early seventeenth century (see Juan Altamiras, *New Art of Cookery. A Spanish Friar's Kitchen Notebook*, ed. Vicky Hayward (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017), especially 126–27). Tomatoes were originally regarded as ornamental plants and they entered cooking, especially elite cooking, only slowly: in his 1560s compendium of vegetables, Costanzo Felici describes the tomato as "more beautiful than good" (*Scritti naturalistici: Dell'insalata* (Urbino: Quattroventi, 1986), 90); see also Astarita, *Italian Baroque Table*, 127–32,

on our attention. Latini's work can help us see the transition from the earlier courtly Italian cooking style to the new French style that came to dominate European cooking during the eighteenth century as a less sudden and absolute revolution than historians sometimes present. Beginning in the mid-seventeenth century, French cookbooks offered a new approach: they emphasized the main ingredient of each dish, as opposed to variety and even confusion of flavours; relied on butter and herbs and sauces more than on sugar and spices; divided savoury and sweet flavours more clearly, restructuring also the order of the meal—all this in the name of rationality, refinement, and subtlety. Though Latini's cooking style is still by and large the more varied and lavish one of his predecessors, many features of his approach also point in the direction of the more local and national cuisines that developed, even without direct French influence, in the new era of French-dominated high cuisine. Some of the more extravagant elements of Latini's overall approach to cooking (such as the use of the rarest ingredients, like musk or ambergris, or his passion for decorating tables with sculptures in sugar retouched in gold) might seem quite exotic, though they have in fact experienced somewhat of a resurrection in our own times. Other elements of his work speak more directly to modern concerns. His interest in local ingredients and local practices, his attempt to join local styles with the international traditions he inherited, and his comments on the harmful effect of cruel methods of raising animals parallel some of today's trends towards both fusion cuisine and the use of local and organic ingredients. His attention to the connections between diet and health, however wrong-headed his science, may also speak to modern concerns about nutrition.

Latini's text is massive: almost nine hundred pages, divided into two volumes published two years apart. The first, larger volume covers all issues and dishes pertaining to ordinary cooking and entertaining, which at the time meant meat-centred cooking. Meat—with its great variety, high cost, and long association with hunting—was traditionally the food of the elites. This was what in Latini's time was called “fat” eating. The second, appropriately slimmer volume deals with “lean” cooking, necessary for Lent and all other times when Catholic tradition required abstinence from meat, but when the kinds of people who employed stewards still expected to be able to enjoy lavish meals, and to offer impressive feasts to their guests. This distinction was, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a standard way to organize books about cooking matters.

One of the major themes running through Latini's text is his desire to glorify the role of stewards, which he does explicitly by praising their skill and knowledge of elite life and its protocol, and implicitly by displaying, often rather heavy-handedly, his own erudition and medical knowledge. Stewards were officials working for elite families and charged with organizing and supervising all the eating and entertainment that went on in the households of great lords or prelates in the pre-modern age. The Italian term *scalco* came from the German and originally referred to those charged with the preparation of meat.<sup>4</sup> In medieval courts the “seneschal,” or “senior scalco,” was a noble official

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and Carolyn A. Nadeau, *Food Matters: Alonso Quijano's Diet and the Discourse on Food in Early Modern Spain* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 87–95.

<sup>4</sup> Ken Albala, in *The Banquet. Dining in the Great Courts of Late Renaissance Europe* (Urbana-

charged with the management of the ruler's household. Latini's pride in his profession draws in part from these noble origins. The responsibilities of stewards included the supervision of all cooking, but extended considerably farther. Latini therefore intended his work to guide stewards not only in how to prepare all types of dishes, but also in how to arrange meals and banquets, how to set the table, how to supervise the kitchen and household staff, and how to ensure the success of their noble employers in the competitive arena of social life.

### Latini's Life

Antonio Latini was born in Collamato, near Fabriano in the central Marches, a region on Italy's north-central Adriatic coast, on May 26, 1642. He came from a humble family and was orphaned at a young age. The editor of his autobiography acknowledged only that Latini "did not come from the first and oldest families of our town," but Latini himself averred that as children he and his brother wandered around their town "asking for bits of bread from door to door." He entered the service of local families in his birth region, where he learned to cook, read, and write, but already in 1658, at sixteen, he left the Marches to try his fortune in Rome. Between 1658 and 1682 he came and went between Rome and various small towns in north-central Italy. He worked in the households of various secular lords and prominent prelates both in Rome and elsewhere, starting with Cardinal Antonio Barberini. Outside Rome, Latini's most important posts were in Macerata, in his native Marches, a town that hosted numerous prominent guests on their way to Rome or to the important Marian sanctuary in nearby Loreto. These visits afforded Latini opportunities to shine and form useful connections. In 1670–1673 he served at Mirandola, a small duchy in Emilia where he "began to be well known in stewardship." Latini was thus part of a movable population of skilled servants who easily crossed political boundaries to find ever better conditions of employment. His first jobs in Rome were lowly, and in his autobiography Latini admits to youthful restlessness, laziness, and vague vices; he might have chosen to go back to a quieter provincial life until he felt ready to handle the pressures and competitiveness of Rome. Throughout his career, he relied on a network of fellow men from the Marches for contacts, support, and advice.<sup>5</sup>

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Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2007), translates *scalco* as "banquet manager," a term which he himself notes offers an incomplete idea of this official's responsibilities; in *Cooking in Europe, 1250–1650* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2006), 18, Albalá calls the steward the "head waiter" but "not a menial servant." Other authors—e.g. Roy Strong, *Feast: A History of Grand Eating* (New York: Harcourt, 2003), 134–35, and Terence Scully, in his translation of Bartolomeo Scappi, *The Opera (1570)* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), have preferred "steward." Throughout this work, I have italicized Italian words (and explained them) only at the first use; the glossary includes all such terms.

<sup>5</sup> The quotes are from Latini's autobiography, which he wrote around 1690–1692 and sent to the cleric Francesco Maria Nicolini, who also hailed from Collamato and was putting together a history of their town, which remained unpublished. The section of this manuscript containing Latini's autobiography was published much later as Latini, *Autobiografia (1642–1696), La vita di uno scalco*, ed. Furio Luccichenti (Rome: LEBERIT, 1992), quotes on 12, 16, and 34–35.

On the frontispiece of *The Modern Steward* Latini proudly wrote of himself that he was “practised in the service of numerous prelates and great lords.” In 1682, through various contacts, Latini moved to and soon settled in Naples, where he rose to service at the pinnacle of the city’s social scale. He worked as steward for Don Stefano Carrillo y Salcedo, who had a long and distinguished career in the administration of Naples from 1648 until his death fifty years later, and who was, at the time of Latini’s arrival, the dean (or most senior member) of the Collateral Council, then the highest political and administrative body in the kingdom of Naples, and a very influential member of the kingdom’s government elite; his palace above the Chiaia bridge was famous for its terrace overlooking the bay and for his collection of statues, ancient marbles, and works by Luca Giordano and other leading artists of the time.<sup>6</sup> In his book, Latini describes banquets and feasts he organized, and they include events in Naples, at various vacation spots near Naples, in Rome, in Loreto, and in other courtly settings in central Italy. His masters and their guests at these occasions show the breadth of Latini’s contacts: princes and cardinals, the viceroy of Naples, countless noblemen and noblewomen, and officials at the top of the Neapolitan state’s administrative hierarchy.

When he wrote his book, Latini could thus look back on a life of satisfaction, success, and prosperity. The oval portrait engraving that graces the first volume shows a self-confident man, in a slightly rigid pose, with a fashionable wig and elegant clothes. Shortly after the first volume appeared, in October 1693, Latini received a Roman knightly title. Latini may have been personally known to Pope Innocent XII (ruled 1691–1700), who was born Antonio Pignatelli and had served as archbishop of Naples in 1686–1691. The inscription surrounding Latini’s portrait in his second volume labels him “knight of the golden spur and count of the sacred apostolic Lateran palace.” Here Latini looks somewhat older (the two portraits depict him at forty-five and fifty respectively) and maybe stouter, but the clothes and wig are even more impressive, and on his left sleeve, prominently visible, is the cross of knighthood. Moreover, he is holding a copy of his own book. The humble kitchen hand from Collamato had probably succeeded beyond his wildest hopes. Latini died in Naples two years after publishing his second volume, on January 12, 1696. He seems to have had no family, and bequeathed his estate to the church of Fatebenefratelli (now della Pace), where he was buried.<sup>7</sup>

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**6** See Emilio Ricciardi, “Il ‘Poggio delle Mortelle’ nella storia dell’architettura napoletana” (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Naples, 2005), and Diana Carrió-Invernizzi, *El gobierno de las imágenes: Ceremonial y mecenazgo en la Italia española de la segunda mitad del siglo XVII* (Madrid: IberoAmericana, 2008), 364–67.

**7** Claudio Benporat, *Storia della gastronomia italiana* (Milan: Mursia, 1990), 211 for Latini’s burial; Kate H. Hanson, “Visualizing Culinary Culture at the Medici and Farnese Courts” (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Southern California, 2010), 114–15 on authors’ portraits in cooking books. The Pace church today is fairly dilapidated, and displays no obvious trace of its late seventeenth-century tombs.

## Latini's Naples

Antonio Latini lived in Naples at the end of the long period of Spanish rule in Naples, Sicily, and all of southern Italy. In 1503, during the Italian Wars (1494–1559) that pitted France against Spain in a struggle for control of the Italian peninsula and for European hegemony, Spanish forces conquered the kingdom of Naples (which included the entire continental South of Italy). Naples was thus added to the Italian domains of the Spanish Crown, which already included Sicily and Sardinia, and which would soon also include the duchy of Milan and a few smaller territories. Spain's dominion and hegemony were largely undisputed until the early eighteenth century, when a succession crisis of the Spanish monarchy led to a Europe-wide war and in 1707 to the Austrian takeover of the southern Italian kingdoms. From 1503, a series of Spanish viceroys exercised and embodied royal authority in southern Italy and presided over its administration and defence.<sup>8</sup>

The city of Naples prospered under Spanish rule. The city, already—with about one hundred thousand inhabitants—quite large at the turn of the sixteenth century, grew dramatically and possibly reached as many as three hundred thousand inhabitants around 1600, and over four hundred thousand by 1650. Naples was then by far the largest city in all of Italy, one of the three largest in Europe (with Paris and London), and indeed the largest city ruled by the Spanish kings in their global empire that spanned from Mexico to the Philippines. The population growth reflected the poverty of the Neapolitan kingdom, as masses of the rural poor sought a better life in the capital city. There they found work opportunities, and also fiscal and legal advantages, as well as—usually—guaranteed bread and basic food provisions at controlled prices.

Not only the poor flocked to Naples, though. Spanish officials, administrators, soldiers, and businessmen came to govern, defend, and profit from the city and kingdom. More and more members of the southern Italian nobility—a powerful class of largely feudal landowners—lived or spent much time in Naples, where they quickly joined ranks with the city's old elite. In Naples, nobles found access to royal law courts; enjoyed the pomp, social connections, and cultural offerings of city life; and gained lucrative and prestigious opportunities to serve the Spanish king as diplomats, administrators, or soldiers across his world dominions. Both noblemen and leading commoners occupied the vast number of offices required by the Spanish government, and large numbers of lawyers served the needs and interests of the city's litigious population—in the process often acquiring significant wealth and status. Foreign merchants and diplomats from all over northern Italy and the rest of Europe—Florentines, Genoese, Venetians, French, German, Flemish, Portuguese, English, and others—also added to Naples' growth: they established communities, founded churches, and many developed local roots. Naples, as a city writer put it in the 1630s, was “the whole world.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> For essays on all aspects of Spanish Naples see Astarita, ed., *A Companion to Early Modern Naples* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

<sup>9</sup> Giulio Cesare Capaccio, *Il Forastiero* (Naples: Roncagliolo, 1634), 940.

In Latini's time, Naples housed the only university of the continental South and hundreds of students came there from all the kingdom's provinces to study and begin their careers. Naples also had the largest port in southern Italy and was the capital of the largest Italian state. Finally, the city was home to a huge number of clerics: by the end of the sixteenth century, it already included thirty-seven parish churches, and housed about one hundred monastic houses, plus scores of chapels, charitable institutions, confraternities, hospitals, and other pious entities (and these numbers increased during the seventeenth century). The clergy probably formed about three percent of the city's population, or several thousand men and women, ranging from aristocratic nuns in the city's elite convents to ignorant and poor deacons and other minor clerics.

The city government was largely controlled by the families that belonged to the city's five noble districts, membership in which was carefully monitored by the royal government. Nobles enjoyed fiscal and other privileges, and they formed the city's—and the kingdom's—wealthiest and most powerful group. The rest of the city's population formed the so-called *Popolo* (People), a conglomeration of all other non-clerical citizens. An elite of lawyers, judges, merchants, financiers, and other professionals dominated the *Popolo* and occupied prominent positions in the kingdom's government organs. In the course of the seventeenth century, families from this group began to intermarry and integrate with both the city's old nobility and the kingdom's feudal aristocracy to form a single elite.

Much of the rest of the city's working population was organized in guilds, or trade associations, which guaranteed their members a set status in the city's social and cultural hierarchy and offered various forms of corporate solidarity and protection. Below them, street peddlers, domestic servants, unskilled day labourers, beggars, criminals, prostitutes, vagrants, and a mass of recent and indigent immigrants formed what writers usually called the "plebs," a potentially frightening population that had to be handled with cheap bread, rituals, and the threat of force. In 1585 a bloody urban riot, due to shortage and a subsequent spike in the price of bread, featured extreme mob violence and severe repression that echoed across Europe.

This rich, lively, large, and at times dangerous city became by the turn of the seventeenth century a major centre of Italian art and architecture, and in the course of the seventeenth century literature and music also flourished. Naples rivaled Rome as a centre of Italian Baroque art, and magnificent church buildings, aristocratic palaces, and a few royal projects dotted the city. The city's level of artistic production remained high in quality and quantity through the eighteenth century, and music life in particular expanded even more in the later century.

Naples, however, suffered some major blows during the seventeenth century, both natural and man-made. In 1631 the worst eruption of Vesuvius since the one that had destroyed Pompeii in 79 AD brought death, damage, and terror. It also greatly enhanced the worship of San Gennaro, one of the city's numerous patron saints and after 1631 its most deeply venerated protector. In 1647–1648 a major revolution shook the city and the kingdom: peasants attacked feudal estates, mobs killed noblemen in the capital, and everywhere tax collection ceased. It took the Spanish government nine months and significant reinforcements from Spain to restore order. Finally, and most devastat-

ingly in terms of human losses, in 1656 a major epidemic of plague killed probably more than half of the city's population, and thousands across the kingdom. Though Naples remained by far the largest city in both its kingdom and Italy as a whole, the city's population would not return to the pre-plague level of over four hundred thousand until the late eighteenth century.

The Naples in which Latini worked in the 1680s and 1690s was therefore somewhat diminished compared to the city of two or three generations before. Nevertheless, the city remained large and vibrant, and was still home to a diverse and wealthy elite, a numerous clergy, and an international population. Indeed the late decades of the seventeenth century also witnessed a rebirth of intellectual activities in Naples. Scientists and philosophers began to publish original works, and to read those of other European scholars. With resurgent interest in the natural sciences across western Europe came also more interest in the natural phenomena for which the South was famous. By the late seventeenth century, Naples and the South began to attract visitors who came not for trade, pilgrimage, diplomacy, or other practical purposes, but to see the ancient ruins and the volcanic sites in which the Naples neighbourhood was so rich even before the discoveries at Pompeii and Herculaneum in the 1730s and 1740s.

Latini thus found in Naples plenty of opportunities for contacts with the highest levels of the Italian social hierarchy. There he served patrons whose wealth allowed them to support large establishments and the lavish entertainments Latini knew how to provide so ably. The city also contained a large and skilled working population, and it guaranteed abundant supplies of all sorts of food provisions. Naples was surrounded by reasonably rich farmland, the product of which flowed into the city, and provisions were also shipped from more distant provinces as well as at times from other countries. In the sixteenth century, the city relied for its food provisions largely on nearby farms and orchards, especially in fertile volcanic lands immediately to the city's east that enjoyed good water and abundantly produced both winter and summer crops. There were even several orchards and gardens within the city walls. As the city grew dramatically during the Spanish centuries, many of these farm areas were lost to building or simply became insufficient for the city's needs, and provisioning Naples became ever more challenging. In famine years the government had to balance the city's food needs with the Madrid government's demands for grain shipments from southern Italy to Spain itself.<sup>10</sup> Latini must have often entered the food market himself, and he indeed maintained a suspicious attitude towards all providers, be they farmers in the country or city vendors, and included in his book advice on how to guard against the "malice" of fishermen, peasants, and shopkeepers. Still, even with these challenges, overall Naples proved a fertile ground for Latini's imagination and creativity, and a worthy theatre for his gastronomical triumphs.

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**10** In these pages I draw from Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water: A History of Southern Italy* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005), and from Giovanni Muto, "Le tante città di una capitale: Napoli nella prima età moderna," *Storia urbana* 32, 123 (April–June 2009): 19–54.

## The Context of Latini's Book

Latini's *The Modern Steward* occupies an important place in the history of books about cooking in Italy and in Europe at large, as it appeared at a time of transition from the elaborate standards and tastes of the Renaissance and Baroque periods to a new focus on relative simplicity and natural flavours.<sup>11</sup> Written works on culinary matters generally reflect established patterns and practices, and thus usually offer a somewhat traditional view of what people in any given period were cooking and eating. Great originality was neither expected nor especially appreciated in early modern technical books, and thus these works usually include large amounts of materials drawn more or less directly from earlier works. As Pamela Smith has argued, in the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries "all writing was viewed as wholly or partially an act of compilation and incorporation ... how-to books did not emerge from single authors, but from knowledge made, held, and shared collectively."<sup>12</sup> Moreover, most of our knowledge of cooking and eating pertains to what the European elites expected, preferred, and sought. The importance or even existence of foods customarily eaten by the poor, but considered vulgar or inappropriate by the elites, may thus be hidden to us in printed texts about cooking, though information about the eating habits of the poor may at times be gleaned from other texts.

Elite European cooking in the late Middle Ages was lavish and cosmopolitan, with little attention to regional traditions or ingredients.<sup>13</sup> The emphasis was on the mixture of what to our taste might be discordant flavours, and spices were liberally applied, because their high cost made their use a sign of status and prestige and they were often deemed to have medicinal value. The aim of medieval cooks was to impress their masters and patrons by their concoctions: the eaters should be surprised, even mystified, by the clever and rare flavours they encountered, and the aim of great cooks was to transform the natural flavour and appearance of ingredients through their skill. In Mediterranean Europe, the influence of Arabic tradition was also fairly strong, as seen in the popularity of perfumes and scented waters, almond milk and lemons, spices and dried fruits, though most of these could be found to various extents also in northern Europe.

With the blossoming of the Renaissance, Italy and its Humanist movement influenced the rest of Europe in culinary matters, just as they did in art and political ideas. Around 1470 Bartolomeo Platina, an Italian Humanist who became the first papal librarian, wrote

<sup>11</sup> For concise overviews of the historiography on medieval and early modern food in Europe see Paul Freedman, "Food Histories of the Middle Ages," in *Writing Food History: A Global Perspective*, ed. Kyri W. Claflin and Peter Scholliers (London: Berg, 2012), 24–37, and Claflin, "Food Among the Historians: Early Modern Europe," in *Writing Food History*, 38–58.

<sup>12</sup> Pamela H. Smith, "Why Write a Book? From Lived Experience to the Written Word in Early Modern Europe," *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 47 (fall 2010): 25–50 at 39; on cookbooks as a genre, including on issues of originality, see recently Henry Notaker, *A History of Cookbooks: From Kitchen to Page over Seven Centuries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017).

<sup>13</sup> A discussion of early texts is in *Cuoco Napoletano. The Neapolitan Recipe Collection*, ed. and trans. Terence Scully (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000); see also Bruno Laurioux, *Une histoire culinaire du Moyen Age* (Paris: Champion, 2005), and Ken Albala, "Introduction," in *A Cultural History of Food in the Renaissance*, ed. Ken Albala (London: Berg, 2012), 1–28.



a Latin treatise entitled *On Right Pleasure and Good Health* (*De honesta voluptate et valetudine*), which drew heavily on the Italian work of Maestro Martino, a cook and author of the greatest Italian culinary work of its time.<sup>14</sup> While continuing the lavish preparations of late medieval cooking, Platina's book also emphasized the medical and moral aspects of cooking and eating and offered at least some examples of simpler cooking. Its success spread Italian ideas about cooking and eating across Europe. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries other Italian authors published influential works that offered advice for lavish banquets and menus, and Italy remained at the vanguard of culinary theory and gastronomical virtuosity. The major features of late Renaissance and early Baroque cooking for the elites were still, by and large, an extravagant variety and profusion of ingredients and flavours; a continuing focus on spices and the mixture of sweet and savoury; and impressive, awe-inspiring presentation. But, from Platina on, delicacy, refinement, and clarity also joined these earlier features as prized values in cooking.

In the second half of the seventeenth century, however, change accelerated. France rose as Europe's strongest power, and French culture gradually came to gain influence over most of Europe. French writers defined new standards for theatre, literature, painting, music, and so on, which came to be recognized across much of Europe. Numerous books were published in France that also attempted to define the proper, rational ways of cooking, serving food, and eating. A new focus on refinement and elegant restraint, on simplicity and rationality, and on nature, resulted in a new emphasis on enhancing the flavour of the main ingredient in any given dish. Flavours had to be appreciated in a reasonable manner, following notions of "good taste," rather than succumbing to the assault on the senses represented by the older approach. French cuisine thus began to define a new, clearer way to structure the meal, and to embrace local and regional ingredients and flavours instead of cosmopolitan and expensive spices. Into the eighteenth century and beyond, many French texts would be translated into Italian and other languages, and these innovations would make French cuisine the most influential across Europe.<sup>15</sup>

Latini's work came at the cusp of these developments. His book was the last of the great Italian culinary books published since the Renaissance, and has been described as the "most comprehensive" and "most ambitious in scope," as well as "a joy to read."<sup>16</sup> Latini's recipes and methods were in many ways still steeped in the earlier Italian traditions. At the same time, Latini was more interested than previous Italian authors in the regional context of his work: the vegetables, herbs, seafood, and even language of

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**14** Both books are available in English: Bartolomeo Platina, *On Right Pleasure and Good Health: A Critical Edition and Translation of De Honesti Voluptate and Valetudine*, trans. Mary Ella Milham (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1998); Maestro Martino, *The Art of Cooking: The First Modern Cookery Book*, ed. Luigi Ballerini, trans. Jeremy Parzen (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

**15** On these changes see for instance Susan Pinkard, *A Revolution in Taste: The Rise of French Cuisine, 1650–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

**16** Elizabeth David, *Harvest of the Cold Months: The Social History of Ice and Ices* (New York: Viking, 1995), 142–43, and Riley, *The Oxford Companion*, 273. On Latini's place within the history of texts about cooking, see also Agnese Portincasa, *Scrivere di gusto: Una storia della cucina italiana attraverso i ricettari* (Bologna: Pendragon, 2016).

Naples mattered a good deal to him and he found ways to stress their qualities and advantages. Latini's banquets, in true Baroque fashion, were perhaps even more stunning visually and more formal in protocol than those arranged by his predecessors, but at the same time the food eaten was somewhat simpler, and dishes and courses were fewer and more streamlined than in the previous century. Latini was also the last Italian author about culinary matters before the spread of the French style; thus, his approach reflected both cosmopolitan sources (especially Spanish, given Naples' ties with Spain at the time) and his specific regional focus. Later Neapolitan writers, particularly Vincenzo Corrado in the late eighteenth and Ippolito Cavalcanti in the early nineteenth century, would struggle under the competing influences of French cuisine and their own regional methods and traditions.<sup>17</sup>

Latini's life and book embody also another, somewhat parallel, transition. He wrote when the kind of lavish service for private, elite patrons in which he excelled was beginning to diminish in prominence. As the European population overall—and that of Europe's cities in particular—grew in the eighteenth century, and as commercialization affected ever more areas of Europeans' lives, public commercial cooking establishments and eating venues began to increase in importance. Courtly cooking and lavish aristocratic entertainment continued for a long time but they no longer represented the necessary apex of a career in the field of cuisine and entertaining. Naples lagged somewhat behind from this point of view, but eighteenth-century Paris or London housed great public cooks, and an increasing number of public places where gentlemen could eat well and impressively entertain their friends. In a sense, as Sara Pennell has argued, books like Latini's, though they certainly enhanced the professional status of their authors, also provide us with evidence of the increasing commercialization of expert knowledge about cooking and entertaining: no longer a craftsman's secret of limited interest beyond the household of his master, such knowledge itself became a commodity available through the book market. Thus Latini's book offers us a window into significant changes not only in the European approach to cooking, but also in the social world in which that cooking took place.<sup>18</sup>

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**17** Thus Latini offers much more than a tired repetition of old information, as claimed by John Dickie in *Delizia! The Epic History of the Italians and Their Food* (New York: The Free Press, 2008), who, in a brief chapter on Naples that includes several factual errors, flippantly dismisses Latini with “there is nothing modern about *The Modern Steward*” (163). Henry Notaker also slips when he badmouths Latini: in stating that Latini was “superficial and uninformed” in his knowledge of philosophy (which is correct, though not exactly surprising), Notaker describes him as “chief steward at the court in Naples” (*History of Cookbooks*, 278; the same claim also on p. 265), whereas Latini never worked at the viceroy's court. See also Katherine McIver, *Cooking and Eating in Renaissance Italy: From Kitchen to Table* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), chap. 6, for the transition from Renaissance to Baroque.

**18** Sara Pennell, “Professional Cooking, Kitchens, and Service Work: *Accomplisht Cookery*,” in *A Cultural History of Food in the Early Modern Age*, ed. Beat Kümin (London: Berg, 2012), 103–21; see also Kümin, “Eating Out in Early Modern Europe,” in *A Cultural History of Food*, 87–101.

## The Role of the Steward

The steward was the leader among the “officials of the mouth,” who handled all matters related to food acquisition, preparation, and presentation. The other household official with a traditional claim to elevated status was the carver, the man in charge of serving most dishes, especially meat dishes, to the master and his guests. The carver performed the delicate and elegant task of slicing meat and other foods for distribution to each guest. This task was originally performed by the steward, and indeed the Italian verb *scalcare* refers to preparing cooked meat for serving. By the Renaissance the carver’s work had become prominent in all Italian courts and his job had expanded to the slicing of all sorts of foods besides meat. Carving evolved into quite a spectacular art by the turn of the seventeenth century. By Latini’s time the carver was subordinate to the steward, and Latini indeed insisted that a steward worth his salt should also be a skilled carver.

The steward was locked into an uneasy relationship with the cook, that is, the man in charge of the actual food preparation, along with his own team of assistants. Though many writers celebrated the importance of the cook, his job remained too manual a craft, and his appearance was too likely to be stained and inelegant, for him to acquire great status in the very hierarchical social structure of these centuries. Most cooks remained confined to the kitchen and subordinate to the steward. Bartolomeo Scappi, the greatest sixteenth-century Italian cook, celebrated the greatness of what he called in his title the “art and craft of a master cook,” but even he recognized that “it will always be more honourable for the cook to know how to serve as Steward than for the Steward to know how to serve as cook.” The steward Cesare Evitascandalo, writing in the 1570s, warned that “the steward who leaves everything to the cook will be in a very bad situation.” A century later the cook Bartolomeo Stefani also reluctantly allowed that cooks owed obedience to stewards “in what concerns the serving of dishes.”<sup>19</sup>

Other subordinates of the steward included the man in charge of acquiring provisions (*spenditore* or purchaser); the man in charge of storing and keeping provisions (*dispensiero* or stock manager); and the man in charge of all glasses and beverages (*bottigliero* or wine steward). One more official, the *credenziero*, requires a bit more explanation. This officer took his name from the position at which he worked, the *credenza*, which was—and is—a piece of furniture: a sideboard, buffet, or bureau. In other contexts the *credenziero* was simply an accountant, named presumably after the *credenza* in which he kept his accounts.<sup>20</sup> In the kitchen context, the *credenziero* also kept accounts, but his *credenza* was the stage for far more varied activities.

Credenze typically decorated dining halls and came to play important functions in early modern banqueting. Their name (related to the verb *credere*, to believe) may derive

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**19** Scappi, *Opera*, 382; Cesare Evitascandalo, *Libro dello scalco* (Rome: Vullietti, 1609), 1; Bartolomeo Stefani, *L'arte di ben cucinare* (1662; repr. Bologna: Forni, 2000), 9. Sean Takats, *The Expert Cook in Enlightenment France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011) discusses the rising status of cooks in eighteenth-century France, while acknowledging their continuing inferiority to *maitres d'hôtel* (who held a role similar to that of Italian stewards).

**20** John A. Marino, *Pastoral Economics in the Kingdom of Naples* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 171–72.

from the medieval practice of testing the food for poison once it was brought to the dining hall: a dependent, often the steward, would use a little bread to taste each dish, to assure the master and his guests that there was no danger in it. The steward Domenico Romoli implies that this test had become a ceremonial formality by the 1550s.<sup>21</sup> The credenza—large and visible to all diners—was the stage for this test, and remained the stage for the formal presentation of many dishes, which would be displayed there before being served to the diners at their tables. Over time, as the splendour of dining increased, several credenze developed: one was called *da mostra* or for show, and it displayed the silver, gold, and crystal vases and plates that demonstrated to the guests the wealth and sophistication of their host: at the 1600 banquet in Florence celebrating the marriage of Marie de' Medici with Henry IV of France, two thousand pieces of gold, silver, and gilt plate were displayed. Ottaviano Rabasco, like many other writers, blamed Spanish influence for such excesses: “today in Italy, and even more in Spain, we follow the practice of having a lot of silver displayed on the credenze, not for use in the banquet, but to show greatness and magnificence.”<sup>22</sup> Another credenza might be used to hold all beverages that would be served during the meal. The main credenza remained where much food would first be presented.

By the late Middle Ages, banquet service also differentiated between types of foods, and an elegant banquet consisted of distinct “services” or courses, each consisting of numerous dishes. These services came to be divided into “kitchen” services, namely hot foods brought from the kitchen just ahead of being served, and “credenza” services, which usually began and ended the meal and consisted of cold dishes, fruits, salads, and sweets. The credenziero was the man in charge of preparing all these dishes, and he became also responsible for keeping and displaying all linen, plates, and silver, most of which were kept in credenze. This separation would continue even after the rise of the French style: French cooking always maintained a clear separation between the products of the *cuisine* (kitchen) and those of the *office* (office, or the credenziero's kitchen, where for instance all sweets were prepared).<sup>23</sup>

The status of the credenziero evolved over time, especially vis-à-vis the cook. Though in 1560 Romoli mentions the credenziero as one of the steward's principal dependents, the great cook Scappi—writing a few years later—barely mentions this figure, and indeed implies that the steward was himself directly responsible for the credenza dishes. Perhaps professional rivalry was at work here, because the credenziero became in effect a parallel to the cook. Giovan Battista Rossetti in 1584 and Antonio Frugoli in 1631 again listed the credenziero as one of the top officials supervised by the steward. The credenziero usually had a subordinate staff—as well as a kitchen—of his own. The

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<sup>21</sup> Domenico Romoli, *La singolare dottrina* (1560) as quoted in Emilio Faccioli, ed., *L'arte della cucina in Italia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1987), 362.

<sup>22</sup> Strong, *Feast*, 165, on Henry IV's wedding; Ottaviano Rabasco, *Il convito* (Florence: Giunti, 1615), 231.

<sup>23</sup> I will leave the term credenziero in Italian, as no apt term exists in modern English. Latini uses the term interchangeably with *ripostiero*, which came from the Spanish and was not used generally by Italian authors not working in Naples.

credenziero's specific work, however, remained relatively neglected in many books from these centuries, perhaps because much of his work did not require actual cooking. In any case, no Italian credenziero published a book about his craft, and the first book devoted exclusively to it only appeared in Naples in 1778, by which point French cuisine and habits were the rage across Europe.<sup>24</sup>

These officials shared one characteristic: they were all men. Apparently, neither Latini nor any other Italian culinary author ever considered that women could serve in these capacities. Women of course cooked, in the great majority of households, but not usually in grander ones. The steward Cristoforo Messisbugo dismissively mentioned that he would not "spend time or effort to describe various vegetable or legume soups, or to teach how to fry a tench or grill a pike, or similar things, which any humble little woman will know how to do perfectly well."<sup>25</sup>

Clear evidence of the superior prestige of stewards over all other professionals involved with food comes in the number of texts authored by Italian stewards in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. After the invention of printing in the 1450s, the relative status of a profession could almost be measured by the number of authors among its practitioners and by the number of books devoted to explicating its role and practices. Books by cooks were rare: Scappi was the most famous cook to publish a book about his craft in the sixteenth century, Stefani the only one in the seventeenth. On the other hand, there was a profusion of books written by Italian stewards, and their books typically do not only cover the steward's own responsibilities, but also discuss most matters pertaining to cooking.

Latini's precursors included Messisbugo (1549), Romoli known as Panunto (1560), Rossetti (1584), Evitascandalo (1609, but written in the 1570s), Vittorio Lancellotti (1627), Frugoli (1631), Giovan Francesco Vasselli (1647), Giacomo Colorsi (1658), and Venanzio Mattei (1669).<sup>26</sup> All of these authors, including Latini, hailed from central Italy (Emilia, the Marches, Tuscany, and Latium). Many princely and sovereign courts in this region offered employment to stewards. The region also of course included the papal court of Rome, the most splendid Italian court and the one that long dictated the standard protocol for all of Europe's rulers and lords. The papal court was itself surrounded by the wealthy establishments of cardinals, Roman aristocrats, and foreign ambassadors to the papacy, traditionally the top position in any ambassadorial career. Most of the authors just listed in fact worked in Rome for at least part of their career.

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**24** See Romoli in Faccioli, *L'arte*, 366–67; Scappi, *Opera*, 131, 382, and 625–26; Giovan Battista Rossetti, *Dello scalco* (1584; repr., Bologna: Forni, 1991), 28; Antonio Frugoli, *Pratica e scalcaria* (1638; repr., Bologna: Forni, 2005), 5–6; the 1778 book is Vincenzo Corrado, *Il credenziere di buon gusto* (1778; repr., Bologna: Forni, 1991). See also Benporat, *Storia*, and Notaker, *A History of Cookbooks*, chap. 2.

**25** Cristoforo di Messisbugo, *Libro novo* (1557; repr., Bologna: Forni, 1980), 39v; Takats, *Expert Cook*, chap. 1, on women cooks.

**26** I give here the dates of the first editions of their works on stewardship; on reprints, see June di Schino and Furio Luccichenti, *Il cuoco segreto dei papi, Bartolomeo Scappi e la confraternita dei cuochi e dei pasticciari* (Rome: Gangemi, 2008), 61.

One somewhat different book, which might nonetheless be relevant to Latini's work, was Giovanni Battista Crisci's 1634 *Lucerna de corteggiani* (*Lantern for Courtiers*), published in Naples, which contains a dialogue about courts, a discussion of court officials, and then an enormous set of menus for meals and banquets for every day and season of the year. It is not clear whether the rather obscure Crisci was a steward (the main speaker in the dialogue is, but Crisci belonged to a literary academy and also authored a historical "tragicomedy," so his own professional identity is unclear); what is most interesting about his book is that he often includes the regional or local origins of the ingredients he includes in his lists, and that these origins are predominantly from the Italian South and Sicily. In this way, Crisci anticipates Latini's more local focus, in a perhaps conscious distancing from the predominant central and northern Italian tradition of earlier decades.

The topics and organization of these books by stewards (and a few cooks) display substantial similarities. Often, a first section describes and celebrates the role of the steward, and explains how to arrange banquets. There are then two main sections to all of these books: first, the authors offer detailed discussions of various categories of ingredients or preparations. This is most often where we find most of the recipes these books usually contain; as the intended audience consisted of experienced professionals, the recipes are rarely the main focus of these books (though they may occupy the most pages), nor are they very detailed: cooking times, heat levels, and precise measurements are rarely included, and ingredients and preparations are often described in shorthand language.<sup>27</sup> The final regular element in these books is a series of menus of banquets and other meals arranged by or otherwise known to the author. The authors include not only rich lists of dishes served, but also descriptions of room and table decorations, of musical or other entertainments that accompanied the meal, and of elaborate serving etiquette. These banquet descriptions may appear at the start of the book (as in Mesisbugo), as the central section (fairly short as in Romoli or very long as in Rossetti), or as a final substantial section (as in Frugoli); they may also be interspersed throughout (as in Vasselli) or indeed they may form virtually the entirety of the book (as in Lancellotti, Colorsi, and Mattei). These two elements—the discussion of various types of foods and the description of banquets—also form the core of works by cooks, such as Scappi and Stefani.

Latini's work was the largest of the lot, and it was the only one published as two separate volumes; its separation of "fat" and "lean" dishes was thus more absolute than in prior texts. It includes all the elements mentioned here, and several more, such as discussions of regional ingredients and wines, and a diet for convalescents. To serve his intellectual and social ambitions, Latini appears to have made a conscious effort to show off his familiarity with important books generally, in terms not simply of content, but also of his book's appearance: compared to those published by most of his Spanish and Italian peers, Latini's volumes are more clearly organized and structured, richer in illus-

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<sup>27</sup> The modern standard in recipes of separating a clear list of ingredients from a description of how to prepare them only began in the late eighteenth century, see Notaker, *A History of Cookbooks*, chap. 7.

trations (though he did not match Scappi's famous and numerous engravings of kitchens and utensils), and include fulsome dedications, poems in praise of the author, and other accompanying material that was customary in Renaissance and Baroque high-end publications. Latini also deployed more erudition than any of his predecessors (except perhaps the highly born Rossetti a century earlier), again in his aim to elevate the status of the steward. Finally, Latini was the only one of these Italian authors to have worked for much of his career outside of central Italy, and his text reflects his interest in and affection for his adopted home in the kingdom of Naples.

### **Concepts of Food and Health**

Like his predecessors, Latini saw all foods as fitting within the dominant understanding of the human body and the natural world. Since antiquity, an understanding had prevailed in Europe and the larger Mediterranean world that human health was based on the proper balance of four humours (blood, phlegm, choler, and bile). These humours were defined by their qualities: they were hot or cold, moist or dry, in different combinations, and they shaped individual personalities and temperaments. These qualities were also present in all foods. Food thus helped maintain—or could disrupt—the proper balance of the humours in the body, and therefore it could cause illness or aid in the recovery of good health. One ought to eat in moderation and with careful consideration of the food's own qualities. Thus writers on food indicated the hotness or coldness and dryness or moistness of each ingredient. Each food possessed these qualities to varying degrees: the first and second degree had relatively modest effects in most cases. The third degree indicated actual therapeutic power. Any quality in the fourth degree, the highest, could prove fatal if consumed without correctives or by someone of the wrong temperament, bodily balance, or lifestyle.

Animals, in addition to having these qualities, were traditionally associated with various traits, which should also be taken into account by those planning to cook or eat them: wild animals might be better than domestic ones for some eaters, timid animals would influence those who ate of them in that emotional direction, and each animal's own diet may shape the effects of eating that animal's meat. The individual nature of each person—her or his humoral temperament—had to be taken into account to determine which foods he or she should eat or avoid. The purpose of cooking, from a medical point of view, was thus to counter the potentially negative qualities of each food, to enhance the positive ones, and to facilitate digestion and nourishment for each individual eater.

This approach was based not only on the humoral theory, but also on the prevailing understanding of what happened during the digestive process. The stomach was conceived almost as an oven: it took the food in, it cooked or "concocted" it, and thus it made possible both the absorption of nutrients into the body, and the passage of waste through—and out of—the body. Different foods were more or less harmful in as much as they aided or slowed down this necessary process, and this could also vary by the individual's age, sex, rank, lifestyle, astrological sign, temperament, or other characteristics. Part of the appeal of spices in late medieval and Renaissance cooking was indeed based on the belief that they greatly facilitated the digestive process. In this overall conception,

all foods were, in a sense, also medicines, as they fundamentally affected humoral balance and bodily well-being.<sup>28</sup>

On this point too, Latini straddles an older approach and a new era. His understanding of the healthiness of foods was steeped in the old humoral theory which by his time was increasingly disputed across western Europe by both doctors and cooks. New chemical and physical approaches to medicine were spreading in the late seventeenth century and affecting medical views of the process of digestion, and thus of the role of food in the maintenance of health. Some physicians stressed chemical notions, seeing digestion as the decomposition of food through chemical processes, whereas others emphasized physical and mechanical processes, such as grinding and pressure.<sup>29</sup> In fact Giovanni Alfonso Borelli, one of the main exponents of this new mechanical understanding of digestion, which challenged some of the tenets of the old theory, was a Neapolitan near-contemporary of Latini's, though he mostly lived in Sicily and Rome. There is no evidence in Latini's book that he knew or understood these new ideas.

On the other hand, Latini's views on the overall need for moderation and on the individual context of any diet echoed notions that became quite popular during the eighteenth century, and that resonate also with modern concepts. In the early eighteenth century many doctors and dieticians, whatever their views of digestion, not only proposed a general moderation in eating, but argued against the eating of heavy meats, fatty foods, and spices, and for more consumption of vegetables, fruits, and foods prepared in simple ways, all suggestions that can be found also in Latini's approach. Aesthetic, medical, and culinary factors came together in this transition that, in Jean-Louis Flandrin's words, emancipated gastronomy from medicine. The long-term trend in medicine, as Ken Albala has written, was toward the "shift from prevention to therapy" and thus toward a smaller role for diet and nutrition in medical theory and practice. Ultimately, therefore, cooking and medicine separated, and the medical understanding that had sustained cooking when Latini learned his craft faded away; but these developments were quite slow, and Latini's work offers us also a sense of the underlying continuities that link his approach to our own.<sup>30</sup>

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**28** See e.g. Nancy Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), chap. 5; David Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe: Diet, Medicine, and Society, 1450–1800* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); on spices see Paul Freedman, *Out of the East: Spices and the Medieval Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), chap. 2.

**29** For the chemical understanding of digestion see Allen G. Debus, *The Chemical Philosophy: Paracelsian Science and Medicine in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, 2 vols. (New York: Science History Publications, 1977), 2:368–71, 529–30; see also David Gentilcore, "Body and Soul, or Living Physically in the Kitchen," in *A Cultural History of Food*, 143–63.

**30** See Pinkard, *A Revolution in Taste*, 64–71 and 165–71; Maurizio Sentieri, "Un'indagine sulle ragioni della persistenza della dietetica galenica lungo l'età preindustriale," in *Alimentazione e nutrizione secoli XIII–XVIII*, Acts of the 28th Settimana di Studi dell'Istituto Francesco Datini di Prato, ed. Simonetta Cavaciocchi (Florence: Le Monnier, 1996), 787–95; Jean-Louis Flandrin, "Diététique et gastronomie, XIV–XVIII siècles," in *Voeding en geneseskunde/Alimentation et médecine*, ed. Ria Jansen-Sieben and Frank Daelemans (Brussels: Archives et Bibliothèques de Belgique, 1993), 177–92; J. Estes, "Food as Medicine," in *The Cambridge World History of Food*, ed.



## Banquets and Protocol

The organization of Latini's two volumes was, as mentioned above, not unusual: after preliminary matters such as the status of the steward and management of the household, meat always came first, and then came discussions of various ways to prepare food (roasting, boiling, and so on, roughly in a progression of complexity). In these sections, Latini did not offer precise recipes, but simply outlined for his readers—who were experienced in the kitchen or at least advanced in training—the characteristics, challenges, and effects of each preparation. These sections were followed by descriptions of table decorations, and then elaborate descriptions of banquets and other fancy events. The second volume followed the same organization, though it included some other matters as well.

Banquets – and indeed most dining occasions for the elites – followed a standard protocol and structure. At the start of the meal, guests were offered water to wash their hands, and then usually helped themselves from the cold dishes set on the table. After this service was removed, the first of possibly several kitchen—or hot—services was brought in under the careful direction of the steward. Service could be “at two [or three, or more] plates,” which indicated how many plates of each dish were served together (usually, one plate would serve four to six guests). Serving plates were displayed on the table, and the carver often prepared individual portions for the guests. Little plates of sauces and condiments were also available, usually set in neat geometric patterns on the table around the larger serving plates. Table cloths were removed after each service, and often new napkins provided to the guests, who still did much of their eating with their fingers.

Guests did not usually have individual glasses in front of them: when they wished to drink, they signalled a servant, who brought them wine, water, and a glass (guests usually watered their wine), and these were then quickly taken away again: bottles and glasses did not appear as regular fixture of the table until the late eighteenth century. The final service was always a credenza service of salads, fruits, and other cold dishes. This was followed by the ritual of hand-washing, when each guest would be offered a basin, water, and probably yet another napkin. Finally, candied delicacies and other sweets—and toothpicks—were set on the table. The properly run banquet thus took care of all the guests' needs, and indeed Evitascandalo suggested that the steward also “order that in rooms [nearby] urinals and beds be prepared, so that, if guests need rest or other necessities, nothing should be lacking.”<sup>31</sup>

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Kenneth F. Kiple and Kriemhild Coneè Ornelas, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 2:1534–53; Ken Albala, “Insensible Perspiration and Oily Humor: An Eighteenth-Century Controversy over Vegetarianism,” *Gastronomica* 2, 3 (summer 2002): 29–36 at 30; Sydney Watts, “Enlightened Fasting: Religious Conviction, Scientific Inquiry, and Medical Knowledge in Early Modern France,” in *Food and Faith in Christian Culture*, ed. Ken Albala and Trudy Eden (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 105–23; and J. Trémolières, “A History of Dietetics,” *Progress in Food and Nutrition Science* 1, 2 (February 1975): 65–114 at 83 and 95.

**31** Evitascandalo, *Libro dello scalco*, 19; the exhibition catalogue Marina Cogotti and June di Schino, eds., *Magnificenze a tavola: Le arti del banchetto rinascimentale* (Rome: De Luca, 2012) includes essays on several of these topics.

## Definitions and Translation Issues

Latini used several terms that require a bit of context and explanation. I will here outline some prominent categories and how I have approached them in this translation (Latini's own use of these terms is not always consistent, so I have tried also to be guided by context).

1. The words *minestra* and *zuppa* can be confusing, as their meaning in Italian today varies by region. Some reference works translate *minestra* as simply “dish” (which is today a northern Italian usage of the term); others translate it as “pottage,” to indicate a chunky soup; others use “sops” for most *zuppe* to indicate their usual foundation in soaked bread. In Latini's usage, *minestra* tends to be thick and chunky; I will call these dishes “stews.” *Zuppa* almost always includes bread, and I will use “soup” for these dishes (indeed, in several cases, *zuppa* is simply bread soaked in broth topped with one or two particular ingredients). Latini uses *brodo* (broth) for thinner preparations he usually defines as “nourishing and healthy.” There are also various *brodetti* (literally, little broths), which may refer either to a particularly thin and light broth, or to a liquid preparation used to moisten or thicken the ingredients used inside a pie. I have used “thin broth” and “little broth” for these two uses of this term. Finally, Latini describes some other thick soup- or stew-like dishes as *pottaggi*, which I have rendered simply as “pottages.”

2. There are several terms used for pies and tarts. *Pasticci* are savoury or sweet pies (or both), usually enclosed in a hard crust all around, and baked. Often, broth or juice is added in the last phase of baking by removing and then replacing the pie cover, which often was not eaten. *Crostata* today in Italian indicates an uncovered tart, generally sweet and often fruit-based, but Latini used this term for covered tarts, as fully enclosed as his *pasticci*: the difference lies rather in the dough, which is more solid for *pasticci*, while flaky and multi-layered—and more clearly meant to be eaten—in *crostate*. Generally more of Latini's *crostate* are sweet and fruit-based, but we also find some with vegetables or meats as the main ingredient.<sup>32</sup> Finally, Latini tended to use *torta* for uncovered tarts, and *pizza* more broadly for any kind of tart (the modern version of *pizza* is a later development in Neapolitan cuisine).

3. Terms to describe various types of pasta varied depending on shape or on time period and region.<sup>33</sup> In the sixteenth century dry pasta was produced, in Sicily, for instance, and traded; it was consumed generally by the poor, or by sailors on ships. But

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**32** Latini's *crostate* therefore do not fit the distinction as articulated by Albala (in *Banquet*, 93–94) and by Alberto Capatti and Massimo Montanari (*Italian Cuisine, A Cultural History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), chap. 2), who state that a *crostate* is a shallow, uncovered tart; on these terms, and also on *minestra* and *zuppa* as they are used in Italy today, see also Fabio Parasecoli, *Food Culture in Italy* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004), 27 and 52. On our modern notion of the *pizza*, which did not appear until the nineteenth century, see for instance Antonio Mattozzi, *Inventing the Pizzeria: A History of Pizza Making in Naples* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015).

**33** For this and what follows see especially Emilio Sereni, “Note di storia dell'alimentazione nel Mezzogiorno: i napoletani da ‘mangiafoglia’ a ‘mangiamaccheroni’,” in Emilio Sereni, *Terra nuova e buoi rossi* (Turin: Einaudi, 1981), 292–371 (originally published in the journal *Cronache meridionali* in 1958); Lejla Mancusi Sorrentino, *Maccheronea: Storia, aneddoti, proverbi, letteratura, e tante ricette* (Naples: Grimaldi, 2000); and Serventi and Sabban, *La pasta*.

the rich ate fresh pasta: stuffed, as with ravioli; as an ingredient in stews and many other dishes; or as part of the stuffing for pies of all sorts— but rarely as a dish in itself. Fresh pasta was almost invariably served with sugar (a practice echoed in the modern meaning of the English term “macaroon”). By 1546 Naples had a guild of pasta-makers (specifically, *vermicellari*); other Italian cities soon followed suit. In the early seventeenth century pasta (now generally called *maccheroni*) spread as a common food in Naples, and many literary texts mention it as an increasingly typical Neapolitan food, but it remained fairly expensive. By mid-century, however, economic trends and technological innovations led to the great popularization of pasta consumption. Suburban orchards became rarer and insufficient to the growing city’s needs, so that the transport of vegetables to the city became more expensive. New types of presses both made the production of dry pasta cheaper and allowed for a larger variety of forms. Naples’ relatively warm and dry climate made it a perfect location for this production, which required a quick and easy drying process. The result over time was that dry pasta became the standard food of the Naples poor and a significant local industry. But in Latini’s circles dry pasta remained a lowly food. Fresh pasta appeared in many of his dishes, under numerous terms, but virtually always as a subsidiary ingredient, and often with a sweetened flavour.

4. Various things, but especially fruits, could be preserved to be used when needed by being either cooked in a sugar syrup or candied. This was ordinarily the responsibility of the *credenziero*, and the process could be long and time-consuming. *Sciroppare* was the term for gentle and repeated cooking in a sugar syrup, which resulted in soft, sweet, and dense fruits that could be used at short notice, often to decorate dishes; I have simply referred to this as “cooking in syrup,” or “fruits [or other things] in syrup,” or “syruped,” depending on the context. When Latini used the term *candito* to refer to candied foods, he was referring to a related process, by which fruits (or other foods), after being at least partially cooked in syrup, would be dried out at a low temperature, and then likely plunged into hot sugar syrup, resulting in a thin candy coating; I have referred to these foods as “candied.” Finally, Latini uses the term *confettura* for preserves, usually served at the end of meals, though the term also included thick fruit pastes that could be moulded and used to decorate tables or particular dishes (confections); *confetti* (as a noun) were aromatic seeds or spices coated with layers of sugar, whereas Latini often used *confetti* (as an adjective) to refer to other foods that had undergone this process (again, mostly to be used as decorations); I have used “comfits” for the former, and “confectioned” for the latter.<sup>34</sup>

In translating Latini’s work, I have aimed to simplify his difficult and at times obscure sentence structure; I have also occasionally toned down his extravagant vocabulary. At the same time, I have sought to maintain a flavour of the Baroque prose and of the high literary style to which Latini clearly aspired as part of his program of celebrating the status and learning of stewards. Though likely unschooled in the traditional sense, Latini had acquired some learning, and one of his aims was to accentuate the intellectual standing of stewards. Many previous writers debated whether experience or learning was more valuable to a steward, but Latini usually emphasized both his practical experi-

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34 I am deeply grateful to Ivan Day for his help in understanding these terms and processes.

ence and his erudition. He did not so much argue that culinary knowledge was in fact knowledge rather than mere competence, but that to be truly competent in the kitchen one also had to have outside knowledge of a traditional learned type.<sup>35</sup>

Latini's particular interest in the language level and tone of the book is evident from its first pages, especially in his explanation, in the address to the reader, of why he chose to adjust his language to the regional terms and forms of Naples, rather than adhering closely to the Tuscan standards that had long before his time become the norm for elegant Italian writing. On this point Latini's commitment to the regional context of his work trumped his obvious desire to write in a recognizably elevated manner. Around the time he wrote, intellectuals and literary writers in Naples were in fact just beginning to devote more attention to the local dialect, a process which would lead in the early eighteenth century to the flourishing of dialect theatre and opera, and perhaps Latini consciously reflected these trends.<sup>36</sup>

On the other hand, I must note that Latini's text as a whole can be quite frustrating to understand. In his description of banquets or when discussing other elevated topics, he obviously aimed to impress with his learning and elegant style. Many parts of the text, though, especially in the second volume, are sloppy and careless, with typographical errors, repetitions, and the most irritatingly unclear use of punctuation it has ever been my fate to encounter, to the point that in some passages it is difficult to understand what precisely is being described, or what is being done with (or to) what ingredients. I suspect Latini might have dictated some parts of the book, particularly in the rush to publish the second volume (which unlike the first one lacks an errata page at the end). Latini could also be quite inconsistent in his use of technical terms, a few of his terms appear virtually nowhere else in seventeenth-century Italian texts, and his use of pronouns can be rather casual, all of which also can obscure his meaning. I have tried nonetheless to stay as close as possible to his words, and to the visual appearance of the original text, to convey both Latini's content and his tone.

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**35** I take this formulation of knowledge versus competence from Sara Pennell, "Pots and Pans History: The Material Culture of the Kitchen in Early Modern England," *Journal of Design History* 11 (1998): 201–16, where she develops it in terms of gender roles.

**36** See Barbara Ann Naddeo, "Urban Arcadia: Representations of the 'Dialect' of Naples in Linguistic Theory and Comic Theater, 1696–1780," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35 (2001): 41–65.