“For al them that delight in Cookery”:
The Production and Use of Cookery Books in England, 1300–1600

DISSERTATION

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Sarah Peters Kernan
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Dissertation Committee:
Daniel Hobbins, PhD, Dissertation Advisor
Alison Beach, PhD, Program Advisor
Christopher Otter, PhD
ABSTRACT

Through an examination of the codicological and bibliographical features of manuscript and print cookbooks produced between 1300 and 1600, I offer a narrative of the early history of English cookeries, their readers, and their producers. The success of the genre was due, in part, to its flexibility. Cookbooks could be used in multiple ways in and out of the kitchen. Furthermore, I examine the shift from manuscript to print through the lens of cookbooks. I argue that an audience for early English printed cookbooks was already in place prior to the introduction of print. The audience for cookeries in England grew steadily over the course of three hundred years, incorporating new readers who spanned class and gender divides. The expanding audience in turn propelled new cookbook production.

The transition from script to print provides the backdrop for the genre’s development. First examining late medieval cookbooks as technical literature, I posit that many of these texts were used in contemporary kitchens. Some of the earliest English cookbooks, manuscript rolls, served as aides-mémoires for kitchen staff in great households. Other early manuscript cookbooks were instructional texts, used by cooks in medieval kitchens. Some fifteenth-century cookbook readers, aspirant professionals such as medical practitioners and lawyers, did not require the texts for cooking. These readers
used the texts to familiarize themselves with what had been served to their social superiors as a way to fit in and excel in a new social environment. Recipes were a vehicle for shaping a group’s new identity. Even while readers were increasingly from the professional and gentry class, cookeries still reflected a noble cuisine. This continued well after the introduction of print in England. However, the non-noble audience expanded enough for printers to specifically target these readers. These printed cookbooks were filled with recipes for gentry and professionals. At this point, we have clear evidence of women readers accessing cookeries. Once again, this new audience grew, using the cookbooks available to them, and in the 1570s and 1580s printers began producing texts explicitly for women. Now authors and printers affirmed the idea in print that eating and dining were pleasurable. They also inserted names and events important to English identity into cookbooks. This link between cookeries and the kingdom made cooking a domestic enterprise that was more than just a daily task, it was a connection to an identity, shared by other English readers.
To Dad
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VITA

2002..............................................................Natrona County High School

2007..............................................................B.A. History, magna cum laude
                           B.A. Music, cum laude
                           Emphasis in Arts Administration
                           Honors College Scholar
                           University of Missouri-Kansas City

2007–2010, 2012–2013 .................................Graduate Teaching Associate
                           Department of History
                           The Ohio State University

2009..............................................................M.A. History
                           G.I.S. Literacy Studies
                           The Ohio State University

2010–2012 .....................................................Graduate Teaching Associate
                           Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies
                           The Ohio State University

PUBLICATIONS


FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: History
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A NOTE ON THE TEXTS

Original spellings and typography have been retained in all quotations from early printed sources, including distinctions between u/v and i/j. Despite my best efforts to also employ original spellings and typographical conventions of all early printed titles, I have allowed a degree of inconsistency in the forms in which the titles of works are cited. In instances where I examine a single edition of a book, I cite the book with its original title. When discussing several editions of the same book, I have adopted a single version of the title to use for all editions due to the variations between titles of different editions. I indicate my use of an alternative title in a footnote, and I have included all referenced editions with original titles in the bibliography.

In quotations from manuscript and early printed books, I have expanded abbreviations according to conventional practice, with expansions represented by italicized letters.

I have cited signatures in early printed books, except in instances where foliation or pagination exists.
At the beginning of my archival research for this project, I sat in one library after another, constantly amazed at the number and variations of manuscripts and printed cookbooks. While these books were foreign to me in many ways, I recognized numerable characteristics that did not require specialized codicological knowledge or experiences in a history of the book course. As the daughter of an enthusiastic cookbook-annotator—and admittedly one myself—I recognized the occasional note in a margin, clarifying an instruction. Some of the dashes and marks next to recipe titles were the same that I indicated in my own cookbooks at home. And while I felt the crossmarks through entire recipes were overly dramatic, they were an obvious erasure of a recipe that failed. I could not tell exactly which ingredient in the recipe might be the culprit, but I knew one of them stained the parchment. After all, I have splattered oils, sauces, and juices all over the pages of my favorite cookbooks. These qualities personalize every book. I realized that these qualities also make these books very accessible and understandable to modern audiences. The presence or absence of marginalia and staining, in addition to features like binding, format, and the text itself, tell a story about these books. Cumulatively, the manuscripts and early print cookbooks reveal the beginnings of the genre.
This genre is the source of the study that follows. This is not a study of food, cuisine, or recipes, per se; it is a study of the books that instructed and inspired generations of hungry readers. In our age of food radio, television, magazines, websites, blogs, and, of course, books, the popularity of the history of anything food-related has skyrocketed. Scholars have responded, and scores of academic and popular culinary-themed books are printed every year. And yet, in this kitchen chaos, the beginnings of the cookbook genre have been neglected. The early history of English cookeries is not an easy, leisurely progression to the genre with which we are now familiar. For over the first few centuries of the genre’s sustained existence, a dramatic communication shift occurred. Printed cookbooks superseded manuscript copies for a century before the two technologies peacefully cohabitated in English cabinets again in the seventeenth century. All the while, new readers acquired cookbooks and used the texts in and out of the kitchen. Authors, scribes, and printers responded to changing needs of expanding audiences, communicating new ideas and encouraging the use of food to convey shifting cultural and social boundaries. An examination of the early years of English cookbook production requires a study of both manuscript and printed texts, a consideration of the shifting social hierarchies, and knowledge of the cultural history of the table. This history of cookbooks rests at their convergence.

The people involved in production and use of these texts added their own flavor to the dishes prescribed. When I now record my impressions of recipes I prepare in the margins of my cookbooks, I wonder what a historian might glean from these texts. Would they know how I learned to cook from the books which contain the most notes and
comments? Perhaps they might figure out how I have been piecing together a recipe book if they saw my binders full of handwritten recipe cards from family members and printed recipes I found online. Or that I rely on electronic sources like electronic books and collect blog posts and recipes on culinary magazine websites on a recipes board on the popular social media site Pinterest. The technological unease in my own modern collection of cookbooks, which includes printed books, handwritten recipes, and online collections, is shared by the cookeries within the scope of this study. That a modern cookery collection and those from centuries past both provide a vast volume of questions and quandaries should remind us that our encounters with cuisines and documentation thereof in texts are a demonstration of food’s central place in the human experience.
INTRODUCTION

In this study, I examine a variety of medieval and early modern English manuscript and print cookeries, their readers, and their producers. I argue that the audience for cookeries steadily grew over the course of three hundred years, incorporating new readers who spanned class and gender divides. The expanding audience in turn propelled new cookbook production. The flexibility of the genre led to its success; that is, cookbooks could be used multiple ways in and out of the kitchen.

My thesis directly counters two broader scholarly claims. First, scholars working with medieval manuscript cookeries have asserted that these texts served only as *aides-mémoires*; these cookbooks were neither used as a reference during the cooking process nor read for instruction. I contend that some manuscript cookbooks were indeed used in kitchens as references, and that other cookbooks were used as instructional texts. Second, some scholars of the history of the book have oversimplified the impact of the introduction of print, assuming—or perhaps simply neglecting to include in their research—that successful early printed books did not have manuscript precedents and that printed books created audiences. I show that in the genre of cookbooks, early printed books had many manuscript precedents and that an audience was already in place prior to the introduction of print. Print provided a means for supplying preexisting demand; it did
not create it. An audience for printed cookeries was already well-developed and spanned multiple social classes prior to the introduction of print. After the introduction of print, audiences continued to grow, but that precedent was already in place. Also, while cookbooks changed after the advent of print, they remained surprisingly consistent. Print was a vehicle for change in these texts, not its catalyst.

I show that as readers used manuscript cookeries in new ways, the audience for the genre grew and the number of cookeries copied increased. Readers were using the books in and out of the kitchen, for culinary instruction and learning about the foods associated with the classes to which they aspired. While printing technology made more copies available to the reading public, the printed book was, for almost seventy-five years, continually playing catch-up to new readers drawn to the genre. As the readership expanded down the social scale and came to include women, printers, publishers, and authors were responding to an already established audience. Cookbooks during the sixteenth-century varied in their use, as did earlier exemplars. These early printed books began to explore new ideas, such as the pleasure of food and a sense of national identity. These ideas invited readers to participate in the preparation and consumption of food as acts of pleasure and identity.

Cookery production between 1300 and 1600 was remarkably vigorous. England was the most active site of cookbook production in medieval Europe. A higher volume of manuscript cookeries were copied in England than anywhere else on the Continent. English printers initially produced fewer cookbooks than European printers; however, by
the late sixteenth century, England was outpacing most of the Continent in the number of different cookbooks produced. Additionally, England’s readers encouraged a unique direction for print cookeries. Unlike other sixteenth-century European cookbooks, English texts were printed and marketed to women, including non-nobles. This unique feature dramatically transformed the entire cookbook market in England; cookeries were almost exclusively directed to women. Other sites of cookbook production in the early modern period witnessed no such change; of the dominant printing centers, only those in Germany began printing cookbooks for women with significant gusto. French and Italian cookbooks lagged far behind in this regard. I examine some of the factors which gave rise to such an environment for a more democratic readership in England.

It is wise to attempt a description of a cookbook at this point, for the modern notion of a cookbook is not necessarily the same as a medieval or early modern one. Nor were medieval cookbooks the same as early modern examples. While frustrating to define, this is the very essence of why the genre appealed to so many readers over the course of several centuries. In all cases, a cookbook is a collection of culinary recipes. Every other feature has been variable.1

The lengths of late medieval English recipe collections vary widely, from a scant few recipes to several hundred. For this study, I am excluding collections of fewer than ten recipes, since individual recipes provide evidence about the food culture of a period,  

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1 Bruno Laurioux, *Les livres de cuisine médiévaux*, Typologie des sources du Moyen Âge occidental (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1997), 13–14; and Timothy Tomasik, “Cookbooks,” in *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms - Methods - Trends*, ed. Albrecht Classen, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 1725. Laurioux emphasizes this very point; the genre is incredibly diverse and inclusive of many forms and styles. Tomasik also stresses the difficulty in defining the genre in his review of the features and study of medieval cookeries.
but fall short of being a contribution to the cookery as a genre. Cookeries can be found as collections of recipes existing as discrete texts, or as collections of recipes existing as sections within a larger work. Although almost all manuscript cookeries are bound in codex form, three cookery texts survive as rolls. Two are English cookery rolls. Some manuscript cookbooks contain medical or household recipes in addition to culinary ones. And often late medieval cookeries were bound with other texts, particularly medical texts. Occasionally, cookbooks are bound alone as a freestanding volume.

Medieval cookery authors typically organized their texts into distinct parts. The most common method of organization was dividing recipes by food appropriate for meat days and food appropriate for fast days. Authors then organized the recipes by type of food preparation, such as pottage or fritter, or by the main ingredient, such as pig or capon. Many larger cookery collections contain a table of contents at the beginning. Individual recipes may be titled or untitled. Recipes usually contain a brief description of how to make the item of food without including a list of ingredients, measurements, or specific instructions.

Sixteenth-century English printed cookeries were equally varied in their characteristics. All were printed in London. Some were considerably larger collections than manuscript cookeries, numbering several hundred recipes. Most, however, were small collections printed in octavo or duodecimo format with fewer than fifty pages. Many cookbooks contained tables or indices that might appear before or after the recipes; these were printed with varying degrees of accuracy. A few print cookeries contained introductory material, including dedications, letters from the author to the reader,
verses. Most cookery authors and printers did not include this much additional material alongside the recipes. Furthermore, most cookbooks lacked illustrations.

Most sixteenth-century cookeries printed in England also contained medical or household recipes. Cookeries could contain a subset of culinary recipes: confectionary. Confections were primarily intended for a banquet course of a meal, though these are derivations from confectionary recipes which occasionally appeared in late medieval cookeries intended as medical recipes. Because of the regular inclusion of other recipes in cookery books, I have opted to adhere to Henry Notaker’s classification of a printed cookery as “a book with about two-thirds cookery instruction and at least 40–50 percent in recipe form.”² Recipes in printed cookeries also varied in the amount of detail presented. Authors of printed cookeries usually specified amounts of ingredients, for example, but did not always clearly state cooking instructions. In general, the recipes contained more explicit instruction than medieval examples.

The chronological scope of my dissertation does not capture the entirety of early English cookbook history. The genre in Europe dates back to Antiquity, but the only extant Antique text is Apicius, also known as De re coquinaria, a fourth- or fifth-century Roman collection.³ The monastery at Fulda produced copies of the collection in the ninth century, but the genre was otherwise stagnant throughout Europe.⁴ Culinary recipes re-


⁴ Only two manuscript copies dating before the fifteenth century survive. One is located at the New York Academy of Medicine, the other at the Vatican Library.
emerged in English manuscripts in twelfth century England, although the number is few and all are found in Alexander Nequam’s *De utensilibus*. The genre of cookeries re-emerged in fourteenth-century England. My dissertation begins in the midst of this revitalization of the genre, at a time when the cooks of royal households assisted in the preparation of cookeries for use in their noble kitchens.

While scribes and readers produced manuscript cookbooks from the late fifteenth century through the early seventeenth century, production slowed dramatically during the first century of print in England. The scope of this dissertation does not include a resurgence of manuscript cookeries in the form of recipe books throughout the seventeenth century. Individual recipe books incorporated recipes from friends and family, sometimes as gifts. The books were often passed down in families, and were constantly emended. The interplay between recipe books and printed cookbooks is equally as intriguing, for many manuscript recipe books incorporate recipes from printed texts. And, just as English printed cookbooks became a genre for women, recipe books were most abundant among women. This resurgence in manuscript recipe collections is notable, and an event I hope to explore in future iterations of this project. While recipe books have not been studied in the context of the greater history of early manuscript and print cookbooks, scholars have recently made use of this fertile category of texts to study topics such as women’s social and familial networks and knowledge transmission.

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6 One of the rare sixteenth-century manuscript cookery examples is London, British Library, MS Sloane 1201. This manuscript is dated to approximately 1525.

7 Printed scholarship on this topic includes essays by Michelle DiMeo, Margaret Ezell, Sara Pennell, Anne Stobart, and others in *Reading and Writing Recipe Books 1550–1800*, ed. Michelle DiMeo.
Because my research deals with the physical and textual characteristics of both manuscript and printed books, I adopted different methodologies for analyzing such distinct sources. The nature of these objects reveals a complexity of networks and a plethora of data about texts, producers, and readers. Every manuscript is unique: the paper or parchment, the script, the decoration, even the text. The details of these characteristics matter because they are different in every text; the history of their production and use differ from copy to copy. While some early printed books share this individuality, especially incunabula, most books printed in the same run are essentially the same. Physical characteristics provide important information, but the text itself yields the most evidence about the production and use of the book. Still, individual copies can be modified by readers, and this evidence of use is noted in my study. My first two chapters, then, examine details of specific manuscripts and focus little on the recipe texts. I focus more on the text in my last two chapters, which explore printed cookeries.

While I have concentrated on different aspects of the cookbooks for evidence of production and use, my research is rooted in archival sources. I have examined physical copies of more than forty cookery manuscripts. While scholars have produced editions and translations for all of the major manuscript cookeries from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, editions and translations lack valuable information about the production, dissemination, and use of the manuscripts. Editions typically omit physical characteristics.
descriptions of the manuscripts, as well as descriptions of other texts bound in the same manuscript. For example, a manuscript with food stains and marginal notes indicates a text actually used in the kitchen, as opposed to a valuable illuminated presentation copy that never saw the inside of a kitchen. Since beginning my research, several manuscripts containing cookeries have been digitized. I have examined most of these manuscripts in person, but have noted the rare instance when my use of a manuscript source was solely through a digitized copy. I have also examined approximately sixty copies of printed cookeries. Digital copies of many English cookery books printed prior to 1600 are available online, most notably through Early English Books Online. I have used these digital copies for my textual analysis, though my archival research informed my arguments about the physical aspects of the books.

I have created a database of manuscript and print cookeries and their characteristics. While in the archives, I examined each cookery book as an artifact, using D. C. Greetham’s method of descriptive bibliography to record many physical characteristics about the texts. These characteristics include size, condition, collation, watermarks, marginal notes, and decorations. I also noted characteristics that reveal details of production or use, such as other texts bound in the same manuscript and food stains present in the books.

While I am concerned less about food and more about books, knowledge about the experience and process of cooking medieval and early modern dishes has informed my research. When I share my research with other people, scholars or not, I am usually

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asked the question, “Have you tried cooking any of the recipes in the cookbooks?” This is a valuable question, and it is significant that almost everyone asks it. The process of cooking is universal; some degree of physical and experiential knowledge can open a new way of understanding a text, even one centuries old. As a means of analyzing the recipes contained in these cookeries, I participated in a late medieval English cookery course at the Ivan Day Historic Cooking School in Penrith, Cumbria. I cooked using historical methods, such as open hearth cooking and period utensils and vessels. By actually experiencing how late medieval cookery was performed, I came to understand what types of instructions and guidelines authors left out, as well as what a cookbook reader would be expected to know before using a recipe. My experience of the late medieval and early modern cooking experience is part of a growing movement in historical research and teaching, such as The Making and Knowing Project, directed by Pamela Smith. Reconstructing historical instruction provides a great deal of physical and procedural knowledge not present within a text, but vital to understanding the use of a text.

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9 Ivan Day is an independent historian who researches British food from the late Middle Ages to the nineteenth century. Day operates a historic cooking school out of his sixteenth-century home in Cumbria, UK. He also recreates period food in historical settings and has exhibited his work at several museums including the Getty Research Institute, Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Bard Graduate Center, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Victoria and Albert Museum. He is a consultant to the National Trust and English Heritage.

10 The Making and Knowing Project, directed by Pamela Smith, is based at Columbia University. The project aims to produce a digital edition and English translation of the sixteenth-century artisan manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 640. The process of creating this edition and translation is as important to the project as the end result, for the instructions contained within the manuscript are being carefully reconstructed as a method of refining the edition and understanding the text.
Throughout this study, I describe the growth and flexibility of the cookery genre over the course of three hundred years. Each chapter focuses on one aspect of the genre’s development, from the use of cookbooks as instructional texts to the incorporation of English identity into the genre. These explorations of narrow issues of production and use are woven into my overarching argument that the audience for cookeries constantly grew, incorporating new readers who spanned class and gender divides. The expanding audience in turn propelled new cookbook production.

In my first chapter, I demonstrate that many late medieval cookbooks were used in kitchens. I consider these texts as technical literature and propose a twofold classification of manuscript cookeries used in kitchens for the purposes of communicating culinary information: *aides-mémoires* for cooks and instructional cookbooks. I examine codicological evidence in three manuscript cookery rolls and London, British Library, MS Sloane 1108. While also considering these examples as technical literature, I argue that the physical evidence clearly points to a widespread use of the genre in medieval kitchens.

Many late medieval cookeries are found in manuscripts used by professionals like lawyers and medical practitioners. In my second chapter, I examine a group of twelve manuscripts in the British Library created by or for the use of medical professionals. Through consideration of the physical features and textual contents of the manuscripts, I posit that professionals looked to these cookeries as aspirational texts. Professionals could learn about the foods they should aspire to eat as members of a rising social group. The production and use of cookeries that I describe here is distinct from the technical
cookery texts in the first chapter. Throughout the fifteenth century, cookeries were being used in many ways. The genre was gradually developing into one that appealed to a variety of readers.

I examine this expansion of audience in the third chapter, specifically in relation to the introduction of print. I argue that the consumers of the first printed cookeries, and even the cookeries themselves, were part of the existing scribal tradition. These books were printed copies of manuscript recipes, and the same audiences purchased printed copies. Readers purchased hundreds of copies of the first English printed cookery, the Boke of Cokery (1500). In this way, the text reached a larger audience. Nobles, gentry, and professionals had all used cookbooks in the past; this printed cookery was consumed by the same audience. With a larger number of cookbooks now in circulation, gentry and professionals benefited from its availability. In 1545, however, the printing of A Proper New Book of Cookery finally reflected the cookery genre’s gentry and professional audience in the printed text. This audience had been gradually built over time but heretofore not mirrored in the genre. Similarly, women owned cookbooks long before authors, printers, and publishers targeted them as consumers. After a century of print, English printers began producing cookbooks for women in the 1570s. After the initial printing of John Partridge’s The Treasurie of Commodious Conceits in 1573, printers produced a surge of cookbooks for women. Printers and authors identified women as the main consumers of the genre, and would continue to do so until the present day.

With new audiences in place, cookbooks communicated the idea that food and dining were pleasurable experiences, as written recipes transmitted notions of identity,
community, and history. I examine the incorporation of these ideas into sixteenth-century cookbooks in the final chapter of this study. I show how authors and printers affirmed the idea in print that eating and dining were pleasurable. I also trace the incorporation of names and events important to English identity into cookbooks. This link between cookeries and the kingdom made cooking a domestic enterprise that was more than more than just a daily task, it was a connection to an identity, shared by other English readers.

As a project based in archival research, codicology, and bibliography, the greatest influence on my work has been the wealth of studies centered on the history of the book. In particular, the debate over the transition from manuscript to print, or more specifically, the effects of print, is a looming presence throughout my research. This dissertation responds to claims in several influential studies in the field of book history, offering a more nuanced examination of the shift from script to print.

In a foundational study of the field, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing, 1450–1800*, Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin provided a broad, sweeping history of the cultural shifts related to print.¹¹ Febvre and Martin’s goal was to establish how and why the printed book was such an important agent in aggregating scattered ideas of Western early modern thinkers. Though they emphasized the important role print played in the development of many cultural movements, they criticized scholars who

¹¹ Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing 1450–1800*, ed. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and David Wootton, trans. David Gerard (1976; repr., New York: Verso, 1997). Although bibliography was an established field of study by the time of the original publication of *L’apparition du livre* in 1958, particularly in France, cultural histories of print and books were a new phenomenon. Bibliography had heretofore been concerned with the study of physical characteristics of books and the production of texts; Febvre, Martin, and the following generation of bibliographers incorporated the culture of books and the reception of texts into the field of study.
offered less nuanced conclusions. Febvre and Martin shaped a field and inspired new inquiries with this publication.

Their consideration of the printing press as an agent of change strongly influenced Elizabeth Eisenstein, who in turn ignited an ongoing debate about the impact of print. Equally inspired by Marshall McLuhan’s exaggerated claim that print was a direct force of change, Eisenstein argued first in her 1979 two-volume *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* and later in her 1986 one-volume edition that print was a catalyst for change. The materials and humans involved in an emerging print culture came together at the right moment to produce revolutionary movements. Eisenstein focused on the printing press’s ability to disseminate, standardize, and preserve ideas and texts. Although she did not deny the important role humans play in the printing process, the printing press, not humans, was the agent of change. The printing press brought about the advent of print culture, which was also a revolution in and of itself, one unacknowledged by historians.

I have elected to examine both manuscript and printed texts in order to avoid one of Eisenstein’s major pitfalls: her approach to the transition from manuscript to print looking backwards, neglecting medieval precedents. Additionally, I propose more

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12 Febvre and Martin, 288. For example, stating that “…it is not part of our intention to revive the ridiculous thesis that the Reformation was the child of the printing press.” They do not, however, elaborate on which scholars promoted this idea.


14 Other scholars have examined the transition from manuscript to print, examining both categories of texts. See Julia Boffey, *Manuscript and Print in London c. 1475–1530* (London: The British Library,
continuity in this shift from script to print, as the new technology provided a means for copying texts and was no substitute for human agency in the creation of ideas and texts. Individuals, whether they were readers, authors, or publishers, were constantly at the heart of innovation in the production and use of cookbooks. Technology aided these people; it did not force change.

Eisenstein’s legacy is complex. While many people have criticized her scholarship, Eisenstein was a pioneer. Her approach to the topic, merging the history of the book with intellectual history, was very influential. The contents of the books she studied were as important as the bibliographic background. Her approach was unique at the time, although it is now widespread. Furthermore, her monumental study led to further studies of more restricted chronological, geographical, and generic scope. The field today is significantly richer as a result.

My research complements David McKitterick and Mary and Richard Rouse’s claims that the concept of a book was unstable for many years. Scribal and print practices intermingled well into the early modern period as functional and conceptual distinctions between the forms took nearly two hundred years to take shape. This is an important

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15 Scholars began addressing Eisenstein’s thesis immediately in book reviews, articles, and monographs. Scholars responded to Eisenstein in over 80 published reviews, each one contradicting the one before. See Sabrina Baron, Eric Lindquist, and Eleanor Shevlin, eds., Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein (Washington, D. C.: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007) for a concise overview of the response to and impact of her work.

distinction that challenges the idea of a distinct change in texts post-print. Continuity and overlap guided genre, readers, and book producers as both print and manuscript books intermingled. This is especially present in the cookery genre. In many instances, the changes I describe after the introduction of printing are rooted in ideas with a medieval past.

Other scholars have made similar observations. Adrian Johns demonstrates in *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* how authority and fixity were not immediately ascribed to print, but developed gradually. Johns argues that the credibility and immutability of print are products of social and cultural forces, not printing technology. Similarly, Andrew Pettegree argues in *The Book in the Renaissance* that the successes of early print were due to institutions long in place. For example, the most successful publishers were merchants who relied upon medieval trade networks. Furthermore, the Reformation provided print an opportunity to flourish; churches,

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McKitterick’s claims are similar to those of Roger Chartier, who argued that the emergence of print should be examined in a longer span of time. See Chartier, “‘Texts, Printing, Readings,’” in *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989): 154–71.


printers, and regulating authorities sought ways not only to stabilize print, but to make books safe for readers. The success of print was aided by one of the period’s major cultural movements, not the other way around. While obviously a much broader argument than my examination of a single genre, the evidence points in the same direction: social and cultural factors predicated changes in readership and communication technology.

Other studies of literacy and reading, as well as bibliographic studies of manuscript and early print, provide a framework for each of my chapters. The work of Michael Clanchy, David Cressy, Heidi Brayman Hackel, and William Sherman have especially shaped my conceptions of reading and literacy in late medieval and early modern England.19 Bibliographic studies by Robert Darnton, D. F. McKenzie, Malcolm Parkes, and others have gently influenced my consideration of the general production and use of manuscripts and early print books.20


My focus on cookbooks also classifies my research as culinary history. This field is still young; within a generation it has emerged and expanded in popularity, parallel to the recent and growing general interest in food. As culinary history has grown, so too has the breadth of scholarship and tools that have proved invaluable to conceptualizing a study of books about cooking. Surveys of the culinary landscape of medieval and early modern Europe by leaders in the field, such as Ken Albala, Bruno Laurioux, and Terence Scully, have provided an essential base of knowledge about food and cooking. I found that studies by Peter Brears, Mark Dawson, and Joan Thirsk were crucial to understanding the food and dining of late medieval and early modern England, in particular. My study of such a large volume of texts would have been impossible without the numerous editions and catalogues of manuscript and early print cookeries. Constance Hieatt’s efforts contributed critical editions of numerous medieval English cookery manuscripts, as well as indices and compendia of recipes and ingredients in her

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edited manuscript cookeries. Henry Notaker’s catalogue of cookeries printed in Europe from 1470–1700 is a resource of immense value.

Additionally, a growing number of monographs have demonstrated increased attention to the field, and have modelled a variety of possible approaches to culinary history. My approach combining book history and culinary history should be considered alongside two such monographs: first, a study that Anglophone food scholars have largely neglected, Bruno Laurioux’s *Le règne de Taillevent: Livres et pratiques culinaires à la fin du Moyen Âge*. Although focused on medieval French cookeries, Laurioux is the first to use a codicological approach to study the genre. Additionally, he visually presents his data with charts and graphs, demonstrating that the study of cookeries is quantifiable. He also emphasizes the historical context and materiality of books. Second, Gilly Lehmann’s *The British Housewife: Cookery Books, Cooking and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Focusing almost exclusively on eighteenth-century food culture in England, she merges a bibliographic approach to cookbooks with

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24 Notaker, *Printed Cookbooks in Europe*.


social and cultural analysis of the food and dining to present her conclusions about the English female cookery audience. As I completed my dissertation writing, I learned of the recent publication of two studies which bear similarities in topic and approach to my own by Deborah Krohn and Wendy Wall.27 This surge of interest in the books from which people cooked is exciting, and a testament to the necessity of further study in this field.

The variations in script and print cookeries within the scope of this study, including the recipe texts and the additional marks that readers left behind, can illuminate the development of the genre in England. The ways in which authors composed, scribes and printing presses copied, and readers used these books allows us to trace changes in the genre. The books changed in how they were used. Always a practical kitchen text, the cookbook was sometimes useful instruction for social interaction, a guide to the pleasure of cooking and dining, and a reminder of national identity. Spanning the course of three hundred years, the English people who delighted in cookery were diverse in class, gender, and profession, yet their experiences of food were all mediated through these texts.

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CHAPTER 1

COOKBOOKS IN THE MEDIEVAL KITCHEN

Daryalles
Make smale cofyns of paste þenne take þyck mylk of almondes and boile it tyl it
be thycke ynough and late it kole and take sugar and good poudre and cast þereto
and do it in þe cofyns and bake hem and send hem forth

—London, British Library, MS Sloane 1108, fol. 23r

Hunched over a large, wood table near the sweltering hearth, the cook for a noble
English household mixes flour and hot water, and then kneads the mixture with his hands
to form a large sphere of dough. He carefully divides the dough, forming each piece into
a small, freestanding coffin, or pie crust. Each coffin will serve only one person during
this Lenten banquet, so he is sure to form them into tidy two-inch high and two-inch
diameter circles. He did, after all, make the coffins far too large last time, and had
consequently written a note in the margin as a reminder: “make smalle.” The cook
glances at his small cookery book open nearby on the table, and realizes he has forgotten
to start the custard filling. Frustrated that he had not read the entire recipe before he
started his preparations, he frantically gestures to his servant, who races to the kitchen
fire and begins simmering almond milk in a large pot until it thickens further. As pieces
of glowing ash singe his arm, the servant wearily lifts the pot away from the fire to let the
thickened mixture cool. The cook is relieved to see on the page that he must only prepare
a spice mixture, or powder, to add to the pot. He grinds ginger, cinnamon, cloves, and
grains of paradise in a large stone mortar, pushing all of his weight on the pestle to accomplish this tiring task quickly. The cook adds the powder to the thickened almond milk, as well as sugar, and stirs the custard together. As he ladles the custard into the coffins, he is impressed with the thick and smooth consistency of the custard, even without eggs in this season of abstinence from all animal products. The servant carries the assembled darioles to the household’s oven, and bakes them until they are a beautiful golden brown.¹

Something like this imaginary account might once have occurred, if we are to judge from the evidence of a fifteenth-century manuscript cookery, London, British Library, MS Sloane 1108, which was indeed used in a medieval kitchen. The stained and singed cookbook even contains a note next to the recipe for darioles on fol. 23r, as well as many other notations by various hands throughout the manuscript. Cooks in kitchens across late medieval England used cookeries, a genre of text that provided culinary reminders and instruction. These cookeries belong to a broader category of texts intended for practical use among craftsmen, scholars, and laypeople: technical literature.

Technical literature, which had existed in varied formats since Antiquity, flourished in the late Middle Ages. Fishing, gardening, ship-building, and medical procedures were just a few topics on which authors contributed fourteenth- and fifteenth-century instructional texts.² This genre includes Latin and vernacular works in a wide

¹ Darioles are custards or creams contained in individual pie crusts. The darioles may be sweet or savory.

² *The Treatyse of Fysshynge wyth an Angle*, ca. 1450, was circulated in English manuscripts before gaining popularity as a printed text. Other fishing texts more frequently circulated on the Continent. Instructional gardening and agrarian texts were particularly numerous. A few of the most widely circulated were Pietro de Crescenzi, *Ruralia commoda* (ca. 1300); Nicholas Bollard, *De arborum plantatione* (early
variety of artisanal fields, but modern scholars who have engaged with medieval technical writing have traditionally focused on a small sample of the literature, especially Chaucer’s *Treatise on the Astrolabe* (1391) or the formalized structure of letter writing, *ars dictaminis*, and didactic literature, such as conduct manuals. Cookeries have not received the same degree of consideration, despite developing alongside other technical writing in late medieval Europe.

Beginning my exploration of the topic with a basic definition of technical literature is helpful. The Society for Technical Communication, an organization dedicated to the study and promotion of the field, has defined technical communication as any directive that addresses a specialized topic or provides instructions about how to do something. Although specialists and non-specialists now widely accept modern cookbooks as technical literature, medieval cookbooks resist such easy classification. Until recently, scholars believed that medieval cookeries were not intended to communicate information about the specialized topic of cooking to cooks or kitchen staff, nor did scholars believe that cookeries provided cooking instruction.

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I will show by contrast that many cookeries were used in kitchens. I will present two classifications of manuscript cookeries used in kitchens for the purposes of communicating culinary information: *aides-mémoires* for cooks and instructional cookbooks. By considering examples of the cookery genre as technical literature and examining the physical codicological evidence, I show that the genre was widely used in medieval kitchens.

Leading culinary historians claim that most late medieval cookeries were not used by cooks or as instructional literature; they argue that household stewards and staff employed these texts to plan menus and household expenses. Stephen Mennell states, “it may be that the rare written recipes were intended as little more than *aide-mémoire* for literate and high-ranking superintendents of kitchens …, while the people who did the actual cooking were expected to know by training and experience the appropriate quantities of the various ingredients.” Terence Scully is even more forceful in his assertion:

A recipe collection was compiled in manuscript not for the cook in a noble or bourgeois household but for the master or mistress of that household. It served to document certain standards of an elite class. Occasionally revised with additions, deletions and modifications, occasionally copied, with the approval of the master or mistress in order to please a flattering friend or relative, a manuscript collection of recipes reposed in the household library, not in its kitchen. With only the odd exception, these books are in good, clean condition — a tribute, if not to the intrinsic value of the data they contain, at least to the cost of the material and labour that went into their making. Normally very few copies, between one and four on average, of each text survive today; this number undoubtedly reflects a very low number of contemporary copies made.

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Scully leaves no room for other interpretations. Nor does he accurately characterize the body of physical evidence, particularly in his statement that most of the books are in clean condition.

The physical evidence present in many extant English cookeries, however, suggests a greater role in medieval kitchens than these experts have acknowledged. The stains, folds, and marginal notations on the leaves of medieval cookeries beg for a nuanced interpretation of the books’ uses. While approximately half of medieval cookbooks contain little or no marginalia or staining and likely served another purpose outside of the kitchen, as I describe in Chapter 2, the rest of this chapter explores how many of these practical books were used as textual reminders for cooks and instructional culinary literature. At least half of the manuscripts I have examined exhibit at least minimal wear and marginal notations indicating some kitchen use. About a quarter of these contain heavy marginalia suggestive of extensive use, including culinary instruction. Authors wrote *aides-mémoires* and instructional literature with the assumption that the books would be used practically, in kitchens. Many cooks then used the texts in their workspaces, leaving traces of use. This is reflective of other technical writings which emerged contemporaneously. While authors and scribes occasionally left textual evidence that they intended their work to be used as instructional texts, their intentions did not necessarily converge with the actual use of a manuscript in a kitchen. The physical evidence sometimes does not reveal so specific a use, or—as we shall see from the example of a cookery roll below—suggests that cooks instead used the text as an *aide-mémoire*. While authorial intention and actual practice are not always clear, the
manuscripts in this chapter are important because they support the claim for widespread use of the cookery genre within medieval kitchens.

Culinary historians have not considered the use of early cookeries within the broader framework of technical writing. Scholars of the history of technical literature, such as Pamela Long, have presented evidence detailing a surge in production of technical writing in the late Middle Ages. Artisans in many crafts were very open with their technical knowledge and produced texts to disseminate that information. By the fifteenth century, a great variety of vernacular and Latin technical books, which ranged from highly illustrated to completely textual, had appeared due to an increasing correlation between political and technological power. Authors more frequently composed texts for patrons that displayed technological and artisanal superiority. Technological dominance, particularly in crafts associated with the military or economy, was tied to political power. Patrons increasingly desired these technical writings that showcased this technological and political power to their friends and enemies. Readers sought such texts for a growing number of purposes: to increase their political clout, to improve their own craftsmanship, to gauge the abilities of enemies, and to size up potential allies. As this list of uses for technical books swelled, so too did the size of the audience. By the introduction of print in the fifteenth century, an audience had already developed for printed technical books. Elizabeth Tebeaux, in her studies of shipbuilding

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9 Ibid.
literature, argues that these texts began as rudimentary texts more similar to notebooks than to highly technical literature. These works were compact *aides-mémoires*, designed to be carried by working seamen. The texts featured visual representations, such as tables and lists, more often than linear text.\(^\text{10}\)

This chapter will demonstrate that the same trends are present in cookery manuscripts, and argue that many cookeries were practical, technical texts designed for use in a kitchen setting. A survey of over thirty English manuscript cookeries suggests that many early cookeries were written to disseminate culinary information and were used in kitchens, most notably as *aides-mémoires* for cooks. Some were specifically intended or used as instructional literature to disseminate and teach information about the specialized craft of cooking. The form of medieval cookeries—whether roll or codex—provides insight into their likely function as *aide-mémoire* or instructional text. A wealth of physical evidence, such as the folding of a roll to one spot or another, patches of heavily worn paper or parchment, staining, or annotations on the manuscript, supports this interpretation. It is through understanding the physical evidence of use that we can come to understand medieval cookeries broadly as part of the genre of technical literature, a practical genre that was used in kitchens. Finally, in order to understand the books and how they were used, we must remember the human agency required not only in the act of cooking, but in the realization of what may or may not be included in a cookery text with the final product. Much of the chapter deals with the books themselves,

but those observations are predicated on the knowledge that many cooks were literate to the degree that this literature required.

**Literacy in the Kitchen**

The elephant in the room when discussing cookeries as technical literature, or texts intended for people working in medieval kitchens, is the question of literacy. Someone in a medieval kitchen had to be able to read and understand the recipes in order to use such a text in that space. Although plenty of scholars have approached the issue of medieval literacy with reason and nuance, scholars interested in cookeries tend to repeat outdated scholarship claiming that only nobles and clerics could read or write. They therefore assume that, because cooks were neither nobles nor clerics, they could not read and therefore could not have served as the intended audience for medieval cookeries.¹¹

Anne Willan, for example, claims that

> In the fifteenth century … only a tiny minority of those who did the cooking at home or worked in other people’s kitchens could read and write; fewer still could do the arithmetic to determine, for example, how many pints of water would be necessary to cook three pounds of turnips if two pints were required for each pound. Literacy, including numeracy, in the kitchen was a rarity before the

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eighteenth century, restricted largely to stewards or maîtres d’hôtel who oversaw large kitchen staffs in establishments of the nobility or the church.12

Such arguments carry weight only if one neglects a copious body of recent studies on historical literacy and definitions of the skill in the Middle Ages.

We should imagine literacy in the Middle Ages as quite different from modern literacy. In medieval society, being literate, or litteratus, meant that one could read and write Latin. The medieval definition of literacy did not technically include the ability to read and write any other vernacular language. Additionally, people who could read but not write Latin were not considered literate. Thus, a small group of people were literate by medieval standards. This definition of medieval literacy persisted even into the early twentieth century: James Thompson begins his 1939 study *Literacy of the Laity in the Middle Ages* with the statement that “literacy during the Middle Ages may be measured almost wholly by the extent of the knowledge and use of the Latin language.”13 This study remained an important work in the field of medieval education and literacy for a generation, although its focus was only on the upper class because “the illiteracy of the common people is not open to question.”14 In recent years, scholars have been much more generous in their consideration of literacy, allowing for gradations which include a more limited ability to read Latin and the ability to read or write a vernacular language.

Since Latin was a learned language and not a native language during the late Middle Ages, students had to attend schools or have private tutors to learn to read and

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14 Ibid.
write this language. Most late medieval English towns had elementary or grammar schools, and these institutions were free or inexpensive depending on the location. Private instruction for the wealthiest students was available within great households.\textsuperscript{15} Education in basic and advanced Latin and English literacy was available to a large number of people in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.\textsuperscript{16} In his seminal work on the topic of medieval literacy, Michael Clanchy identifies functional or practical literacy as the most common form of literacy in the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{17} Other scholars have taken up the idea of functional literacy as “pragmatic literacy” or \textit{pragmatische Schriftlichkeit}.\textsuperscript{18} This form of literacy describes the practical reading and writing skills that the medieval laity cultivated to accomplish specific goals. Whether learning to write one’s name or recognizing specific words or phrases on a page, many people learned to read or write based on the utility of the text in their daily life. For example, some medieval serfs learned to


\textsuperscript{17} Clanchy, \textit{From Memory to Written Record}, 328–34.

\textsuperscript{18} German scholars have had a particular interest in this topic. A special research unit (Der Sonderforschungsbereich 231) was formed at the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität in Münster on the topic of “Representatives, fields, and forms of pragmatic written record in the Middle Ages.” Publications, theses, conferences, and a postgraduate seminar were developed from this research unit. English-speaking scholars took note of this term when Malcolm Parkes used the term “pragmatic literacy” in his essay “The Literacy of the Laity” in \textit{Scribes, Scripts and Readers: Studies in the Communication, Presentation and Dissemination of Medieval Texts} (London: The Hambledon Press, 1991), 275–98. Also see group studies on the topic published in Franz Arlinghaus, Marcus Ostermann, Oliver Plessow, and Gudrun Tscherpel, eds., \textit{Transforming the Medieval World: Uses of Pragmatic Literacy in the Middle Ages}, Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2006). Interestingly, Clanchy has even replaced the term “practical literacy” with “pragmatic literacy” in the most recent edition (2013) of \textit{From Memory to Written Record}. 

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recognize important words, phrases, or seals on estate records in order to hold lords to their claims and even negotiate more favorable terms to their status.\(^\text{19}\)

Vernacular texts were, understandably, accessible to a broader range of people than Latin texts. Practical texts intended for regular use as well as household literature were often composed in the vernacular so that people untrained in Latin could still read the texts. Clerics, nobles, and others trained to read and write Latin were unlikely to cook for themselves, so there was little need to produce cookeries intended for kitchen use in Latin.\(^\text{20}\) Instead, cookeries were typically composed in the vernacular so that their audience could read the texts. Additionally during the late Middle Ages, texts intended for practical use, including civic records, estate documents, and even recipes, were regularly created according to set formula and restricted vocabulary that facilitated the comprehension of such texts, even for readers achieving only pragmatic literacy.\(^\text{21}\) Even groups formerly classified as illiterate, like women and servants, might have used cookeries, as such groups could have read and understood vernacular collections of recipes.\(^\text{22}\)


\(^{20}\) Occasionally, recipes, recipe titles, and cookery titles appear in Latin in late medieval English cookeries. A limited number of cookeries in Latin were composed and circulated on the Continent, like \textit{Liber de coquina} and \textit{Tractatus de modo preparandi et conendi omnia cibaria}.

\(^{21}\) Ibid., 4.

\(^{22}\) Georgine Brereton and Janet Ferrier, eds., \textit{Le Menagier De Paris} (New York: Clarendon Press, 1981), 1–5; and Gina Greco and Christine Rose, eds., \textit{The Good Wife's Guide: Le Ménagier De Paris, a Medieval Household Book} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 49–52. One such example among French texts is the recipe collection contained in \textit{Le Ménagier de Paris}, composed with the intention of educating a young bride on the management of her new household. This text, written by an older groom, codifies all aspects of maintaining a well-ordered home, as well as how to be an honorable and moral wife. The prologue of this work details the purpose thereof.
Peasants, townspeople, and servants were not universally illiterate in the Middle Ages. Professional cooks, who trained through various guild and apprenticeship systems, may have had access to some degree of education in certain cities. By the fifteenth century, guilds in England sometimes sent illiterate apprentices to school.\textsuperscript{23} Lower-status individuals such as servants, artisans, husbandmen, and laborers were documented as claiming the benefit of clergy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, indicating they had a high enough degree of reading ability to read two verses aloud from a Latin service book.\textsuperscript{24} While I have yet to locate a contemporary account of a cook using a book in a kitchen, Richard de Bury does include an instruction to clerics in his \textit{Philobiblon} regarding the interaction of kitchen staff and books: “Let the clerk take care also that the smutty scullion reeking from his stewpots does not touch the lily leaves of books, all unwashed, but he who walketh without blemish shall minister to the precious volumes.”\textsuperscript{25} Although this is only a passing mention of a scullion interacting with a manuscript, the passage suggests that kitchen staff occasionally tried to handle books, perhaps to read the texts contained within a household or monastic library.

\textsuperscript{23} Graff, \textit{The Legacies of Literacy}, 98.


\textsuperscript{25} Ernest Thomas, ed., \textit{The Philobiblon of Richard de Bury} (New York: Lockwood and Coombes, 1889), 240. The Latin source reads “Hoc etiam clericus disponat, ut olens ab ollis lixa cinereus librorum lilia non contingat illotus, sed qui ingreditur sine macula pretiosis codicibus ministrabit.” See page 134 of the same source for the English translation.
Early modern accounts of literate cooks are much more common, as the seventeenth and eighteenth century witnessed household and professional cooks engaged in reading and writing. For example, in English households, a literate cook was an asset, and one who could write poetry was also socially fashionable. Seventeenth-century chef François Pierre de la Varenne encouraged cooks to learn their profession through a combination of service in elite kitchens paired with use of his cookery, *Le Cuisinier français*, as an aide-mémoire. As a young pastry apprentice at a shop on the Rue Vivienne in Paris, Marie-Antoine Carême visited the nearby Bibliothèque nationale beginning in the late 1790s. At the library, he read architectural treatises as inspiration for his pastry creations. Domestic cooks, especially women, who produced or used culinary texts have been of particular interest recently. Wendy Wall coined the term “kitchen literacy” to examine the use and production of recipe books in early modern England in a complex climate of domestic practices and readers and writers of these texts traditionally defined as illiterate. Although these accounts extend into the early modern period, the possibility of a medieval literate cook who used texts in a kitchen remains, especially coupled with the evidence presented above. Certainly, not all medieval cooks were

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28 Davis, *Defining Culinary Authority*, 41.


literate. Cooks were not universally illiterate, however, and it is not only possible, but also likely, that some employed cookery texts.

Cookery Rolls as Aides-mémoires

Despite their unusual format, cookery rolls have received scant scholarly attention. Rolls make up a small percentage of extant manuscript cookeries; only three medieval European cookery rolls survive. Two English rolls survive: New York, Morgan Library, MS Bühler 36; and London, British Library, MS Additional 5016. Only one French cookery survives as a roll: Sion, Archives cantonales du Valais, MS Supersaxo 108. The English rolls were produced in the first half of the fifteenth century.31 These cookeries are notable both for their format as well as their content; the New York and London manuscripts include copies of the English Forme of Cury.32 This text, among the most famous and iconic of medieval cookbooks, was composed in association with the royal house of England. Master cooks at the court of Richard II, notably with the assistance of the court physicians, composed the Forme of Cury around 1390. The third

31 S 108 was copied in the second half of the thirteenth century. The English rolls were produced slightly later; Additional 5016 was produced in the first quarter of the fifteenth century and Bühler 36 was copied in the mid-fifteenth century. For an explanation of the dating of Additional 5016, which conflicts with the catalogue date of the manuscript, see Constance Hieatt and Sharon Butler, eds., Curye on Inglysch: English Culinary Manuscripts of the Fourteenth Century (Including the Forme of Cury), SS. 8, Early English Text Society (London: Oxford University Press, 1985), 24.

32 The Sion manuscript is a copy of the French Viandier of Taillevent, dating to the second half of the thirteenth century. For several centuries, Guillaume Tirel, a famous chef of the fourteenth century known as Taillevent, was thought to be the author of this cookery. However, once S 108 was identified as the earliest copy of the cookery and dated to the thirteenth century, it became clear that Taillevent could not have authored the text, as he was born c. 1315. It is possible that Taillevent was only a later arranger or editor of the text, and not the original author. Paul Aebischer first proposed this theory in “Un manuscrit valaisan du ‘Viandier’ attribué à Taillevent,” Vallesia 8 (1953): 80. My observations of S 108 are based on a digitized copy available online. See “S 108: Viandier,” Sion/Sitten, Médiathèque du Valais, posted 11 April 2010, http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/list/one/mvs/viandier.
extant roll, a copy of the Viandier of Taillevent, was similarly associated with the French royal household. These cookery rolls are united by the same set of medieval royal conventions of cuisine and etiquette, expansive kitchens, large teams of servants, and the desire and ability to impress royal power through opulent displays of feasting.33

The roll format deserves special attention, particularly in a consideration of cookeries as technical literature. Reading recipes from a roll is a different physical experience from reading recipes from a codex. Bruno Laurioux, the most notable scholar of medieval Continental cookeries, has stated that cookery rolls were a very practical form that deserve more attention. A striking feature of the rolls is their rubrication and tables, which made it easier to navigate the cookery.34 The ease of using a roll as a cooking reference resulted in stains and wear marks on these cookeries. Physical evidence and codicological clues from extant rolls provide the opportunity to modify previous conceptions of how cookbooks were used in the late Middle Ages, and where in the household they were located. These case studies reveal a new way to consider how the kitchen staff employed these texts.

33 Madeleine Pelner Cosman, Fabulous Feasts: Medieval Cookery and Ceremony (New York: George Braziller, 1976); Bridget Ann Henisch, Fast and Feast: Food in Medieval Society (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976); Agathe Lafortune-Martel, Fête noble en Bourgogne au XVe siècle: Le banquet du Faisan (1454): Aspects politiques, sociaux et culturels (Montréal: Bellarmin, 1984); and William Edward Mead, The English Medieval Feast (1931; repr., London: George Allen & Unwin, 1967). Also see Ken Fullam’s article arguing that feasts reflected and produced social change: “Decoding the Meanings Served at Feasts: The Late Medieval Feast as Advertisement and Mechanism of Sociogenesis,” in Translato or the Transmission of Culture in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Modes and Messages, ed. L. H. Hollengreen (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2009), 179–194. Feasts were a way to display power in the Middle Ages. A feast was not merely a meal; rather, a feast was a symbol and expression of the significance and authority of the host. Feasts were a celebration of all the senses with displays of food, expensive textiles, serving-ware made of precious stones and metals, and musical and theatrical performances. Major feasts could include hundreds or thousands of guests.

A cookery copied on a roll might seem unwieldy and impractical to the modern mind. Who would record lists of recipes on a long strip of parchment, only to roll it up again for storage? Imagine if one needed to consult a single recipe: would the entire roll be stretched out twenty feet just to double check the ingredients necessary for a dish of blanc manger? These, however, were not medieval concerns. The roll was a flexible and fluid form; with no pages to turn, a reader simply unrolled the portion of text he needed. He could keep rolling or unrolling to look at more of the text; the action was easy and continuous. Without a binding, the roll was lightweight and could be flexed into a variety of positions on a table or wall, or held in a hand. Additionally, the roll was an economical choice for texts, as it lacked quires and binding, and was typically undecorated. Without the cost of additional labor or materials, the roll was a relatively inexpensive form for practical texts.35

These features ensured that the roll was still a format in wide use in the fourteenth century. Legal records, including law codes, trial records, charters, and contracts, were often recorded on a manuscript roll. Heraldic and obituary rolls, as well as rolls containing histories and genealogies, were also common. While these texts were primarily used for recordkeeping and were not necessarily consulted on a regular basis, other practical genres were copied onto rolls. Medical texts, charms, and verse and prose prayers are just a few examples.36 Small contemporary English medical manuscripts


36 For a more complete listing of genres and specific manuscript examples, see Curt Bühler, “Prayers and Charms in Certain Middle English Scrolls,” Speculum 39, no. 2 (1964): 270–78.
containing diagnostic tools were produced specifically for transportation in a pocket or hung from a belt. One example of a roll containing remedies and charms at the Wellcome Library exhibits four small holes at the top of the parchment, possibly for attachment to a carrying pouch. And prayer rolls were often intended for a portable, personal devotional experience. Like cookery rolls, these small manuscripts were practical, portable, and easy to use.

If cookery rolls were rarely used, one would expect them to be clean copies on supple parchment, free of grime, markings, and staining. However, the cookery rolls are heavily worn, with sections of text rubbed off or bits of brittle parchment crumbled away. The two roll copies of the *Forme of Cury* also show signs of significant use. Additional 5016, dated between 1390 and 1425, contains innumerable tears, and the roll has been extensively restored. The ink and parchment are faded throughout, and only small patches remain vibrant. Some of these small patches appear to be oil-based stains which have kept the parchment hydrated, and consequently, the ink and parchment more vibrant. The fifteenth-century roll Bühler 36 is in poor condition. Chunks of parchment are missing from the edges of the first leaves of the roll. Although the stability of the parchment improves farther along inside the roll, there are stains in the 120s of the recipe

37 Rossell Hope Robbins, “Medical Manuscripts in Middle English,” *Speculum* 45, no. 3 (1970): 396–7. These were not rolls, but were not always codices, either. Sometimes these manuscripts were portable folded charts or rotating wheel charts, also known as volvelles.

38 London, Wellcome Library, MS 410. This manuscript is digitized and available online. See “Scroll containing remedies and charms against diseases, wounds, etc. Written in Late Middle English. Incomplete (Leech-Books VII),” Wellcome Library, accessed January 2016, http://wellcomelibrary.org/item/b19483211.

39 Irene O’Daly, “Size Matters: Portable Medieval Manuscripts,” medievalfragments, Leiden University, posted 25 July 2014, https://medievalfragments.wordpress.com/2014/07/25/size-matters-portable-medieval-manuscripts/. One example is a copy of the Middle English religious poem, the *Arma Christi*, in San Marino, CA, Huntington Library, MS HM 26054. This roll measures only 63 mm wide.
numbering. The red ink is in such unstable condition that the library has a warning with the roll to use caution since the ink flakes off the parchment.

The copy of the French *Viandier*, S 108, which is dated to the second half of the thirteenth century, similarly exhibits signs of regular use. Although the edges are relatively unscathed, the width of the parchment shows creases where the parchment looks like it was purposely folded to better see a recipe, a preparation for conger eel, located under line 400 on the verso side. This fold and an accompanying stain are pictured in Figure 1.1. Other creases are visible throughout the bottom third of the roll. The regularity of these creases suggests that pressure was applied to the roll of parchment, slightly flattening the roll. Both sides of the roll contain stains of unidentifiable substances. Finally, some ink has worn away on the roll. The worst wear can be found around line 90 on the recto side, a part of the text which should have been safely rolled between several layers of parchment, protecting it from any significant wear. The appearance of such significant wear in a concentrated area suggests that the roll was regularly opened to or held open at that particular spot, and that this caused a gradual disintegration of the ink. Indeed, even Terence Scully, skeptical of the manuscript cookery’s role in a kitchen, briefly conceded that S 108 was “clearly a functioning kitchen cookbook” due to the wear marks and staining.40

The condition of the cookery rolls speaks to their frequent use in a kitchen. Each text exhibits stains, folds, and tears, not only on the outside layers which would naturally receive the most wear, but also throughout the text. Rather than rolling out the entire manuscript when the reader needed to reference a recipe, the reader likely unwound the parchment to the recipe he needed, keeping it in the roll shape. The lightweight and flexible roll could then be inserted into a pocket, or placed on a table and held open with heavier objects. In either case, the roll would become worn very quickly and would have attracted kitchen stains and marks. The edges, in particular, would be worn away, and sections of parchment might even fall away from the edges. The results of this heavy usage can be seen in the extant rolls. Household stewards, head chefs, or even a literate cook could easily use a roll in this manner. Laurioux suggested that cookery rolls were a practical format which could be held in the hand or placed in the belt, or even hung on the wall. While other cookeries lacked manageability in an active kitchen, the roll was an
attractive and versatile alternative. In other words, a codex cookbook might be too heavy to hang from a belt, or too difficult to prop open to a specific recipe. A cook did not have to worry about these issues with a roll. Moreover, its ease of use was further enhanced by the addition of introductory tables, as in Additional 5016 and S 108, and rubrication, which appears in each extant roll. Not only was the roll a practical choice for a kitchen text, but it was also the perfect form for an aide-mémoire.

Until the mid-twentieth century, professional chefs, particularly in France, were trained through the apprenticeship method. Technique and recipes were taught by oral instruction and repeated experience. Despite rigorous training and years of experience, professional chefs and line cooks alike often stored a small copy of the Répertoire de la cuisine in their pocket in the kitchen as an aide-mémoire. It is not difficult to imagine cooks in the kitchens of medieval noble households, who employed similar apprenticeship systems as modern kitchens and had the resources to produce small, portable texts, referencing a roll to remember key recipes for important feasts.

The very features that made rolls practical—that made them convenient for use in the kitchen—remained the form’s assets well into the twentieth century. For example, the roll navigational map used by French, English, and American World War I fighter pilots in combat, provided a large volume of information in a small space. Like the cook

41 Laurioux, Le règne de Taillevent, 343.
42 Ibid., 332.
44 Several examples of these roll maps with both mounting and hanging mechanisms can be found on exhibit at the National Museum of the US Air Force in Dayton, Ohio.
seeking a reminder of a few measurements, the pilot simply rolled the map to the required portion, while keeping the rest conveniently stored. And as the cook could unfold a portion of a roll on his work space or stuff it in a pocket or belt, the pilot’s map could be mounted in the cockpit or hung around his neck. Despite the dramatic differences in time and place, the advantages of the roll draw together settings such as the medieval kitchen and the wartime cockpit and provide a helpful reminder that in understanding medieval cookery, the practical requirements of the active space are of paramount importance.

Extant cookery rolls clearly exhibit signs of kitchen use. We know that other cookery rolls did not survive. For example, the author of an extant codex copy of the French cookery, *Les Enseignements*, actually refers to the text as a roll, almost certainly an indication of its original form.\(^4\)\(^5\) Although few copies survive today, early cookeries may have been produced and subsequently destroyed in greater numbers precisely because of their use in the kitchen. Many popular, practical, and oft-used texts have not survived in high numbers simply because so many were destroyed through constant use.\(^4\)\(^6\)

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Cookeries as Instructional Literature

Many contemporary cookery codices also contain similar codicological evidence of use, such as stains, folds, and marginal notes. In many instances, it is difficult to tell if the book served as an aide-mémoire or another type of technical writing, instructional literature. Some books could have been used as both. Extant codices show far more physical evidence of use as a teaching tool, so it is these texts to which we now turn our attention. Readers typically view modern cookbooks as instructional texts, yet scholars have traditionally denied this classification to medieval cookeries. Feminist scholar Dena Attar makes the unsubstantiated claim that “no one actually learned to cook from the early cookery manuals which preserved the bizarre ideas and the less extreme practices of the master cooks, but the manuals spread word of the cooks’ achievements (often just listing dishes served at a banquet), they spread fashions in foods ... and they consolidated the status of the profession.”47 Ruth Carroll is one of the few scholars who has refuted such claims, arguing “that recipe books may have served to assert a household’s wealth need not negate other simultaneous functions of these texts, including instruction.”48

greatly, scholars generally agree that a majority of manuscripts produced in the Middle Ages did not survive. Manuscripts used in a high-risk setting were even less likely to survive the Middle Ages. Neddermeyer and Buringh have presented the most comprehensive estimates regarding manuscript survival. Neddermeyer suggests that only 7 percent of manuscripts copied during the fifteenth century survived (1.81). Buringh proposes more optimistic rates, calculating that 32 percent of manuscripts were lost in the Latin West during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (204). He calculated a fourteenth-century loss rate of 37 percent and a fifteenth-century loss rate of 39 percent in England, a region for which Buringh gathered more detailed data (194).


Bridget Ann Henisch also believed that cookeries were instructional based on the “practical hints and knowledgeable asides” found in the texts.49

Often scholars must rely on the most subtle clues to determine such a textual purpose and use; cookeries, however, include a myriad of explicit evidence. And although cookery authors rarely reveal their intentions in recipes, sometimes they indulge the reader with a stated purpose in a prologue. One exceptional prologue proclaims the instructional nature of the cookery. All the more surprising is the text which includes this intention: the *Forme of Cury*.

The earliest copy of the *Forme of Cury*, a codex dating to the late fourteenth century, contains a prologue without any mention of instruction.50 The two *Forme of Cury* rolls are thought to be the next-oldest copies. Additional 5016 is the only other copy of the cookery which contains a prologue. The two prologues differ; unlike the earlier copy, Additional 5016 states a clear purpose of instruction.51 The prologue mentions the act of teaching not once, but four times:

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49 Henisch, *Fast and Feast*, 144.


51 There are at least nine copies of the *Forme of Cury* which appear in a complete or nearly-complete form: Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 394 D; Durham, University Library, MS Cosin v iii 1 1; London, British Library (BL), MS Additional 5016; BL MS Arundel 334; BL MS Cotton Julius D viii; BL MS Harley 1605; Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS English 7; New York, Morgan Library, MS Bühler 36; and New York, New York Public Library, MS Whitney 1. I have not viewed Peniarth 394 D or Cosin v iii 1 1. I have only viewed English 7 online as a digitized manuscript. See “English MS 7,” The University of Manchester Library Image Collections, posted January 2009, http://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/s/2j9h53.
First it teache man for to make commune potages and commune mettis for howshold as they shold be made craftly and holsomely. Afterward it teachiþ for to make curious potages & meteys and sotileys for alle manere of states both hye and lowe. And the techyn of the fourme of makyn of potages & metteys bothe of flessh and of fissh. Buth yssette here by noumbre and by ordre. So þis litle table here sewyng wolte teche a man with oute taryyng: to fynde what meete þat hym lust for to haue.  

Constance Hieatt posits that Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS English 7 is the base copy for the branch of Forme of Cury manuscripts yielding Additional 5016 and Bühler 36. If Hieatt’s additional assessment is true that one or two more manuscript versions of the text were created between English MS 7 and Additional 5016, one or both of the lost manuscript versions likely contained the newer, longer prologue which included mention of instruction. With this prologue, a scribe or author would have distinguished the text as an instructional work. Furthermore, in the prologue, the author or scribe indicated his intention that the text be used for teaching. While it is most likely that the earliest copy was used as a teaching text, the later roll copy retained the expanded prologue, despite its use in a kitchen primarily as an aide-mémoire, as described above.

With the exception of the prologue above, English cookbooks do not contain explicit statements of their intent to teach. Cookeries from neighboring France, however, do feature evidence of some degree of instructional purpose. It is helpful for contextualizing the genre in England to consider the inclusion of language indicating instruction in French texts. For example, Du fait de cuisine contains the phrase “et pour

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52 Additional 5016, recto. See the entire edited prologue in Hieatt and Butler, eds., Curye on Inglysch, 20.


54 Hieatt and Butler, Curye on Inglysch, 29.
donner entendement” tens of times. The phrase more literally translates as “to give understanding,” but is accepted as “to instruct.” The author, Master Chiquart Amiczo, composed the cookery primarily as a record of the lavish cuisine prepared for his patron, but his repeated language throughout the recipes hints at a secondary purpose of instruction.55 One finds another example in the Parisian household handbook, *Le Ménagier de Paris*. In the prologue, the author uses instructive language when addressing his bride, such as, “c’estassavoir que une leçon generale vous sera par moy escripte,” or “this is a general instruction I will write for you.”56 He also repeatedly uses the word “saichiez” and “saichez” when outlining the contents of the text. The phrases containing “saichiez” and “saichez” literally translate to “for you to understand,” but imply instruction. Gina Greco and Christine Rose translate it as “teaches you,” “instructs you,” and “charges you.”57 Similarly, the title of the French cookery *Les Enseignements*, or *The Lessons*, indicates that the text was intended to provide culinary instruction.58

Linguistic and grammatical characteristics reveal an underlying concern with instruction in other cookeries and recipes. Ruth Carroll and Manfred Görlach have

55 Terence Scully, ed., *Du fait de cuisine / On Cookery of Master Chiquart (1420): “aucune science de l'art de cuysinerie et de cuysine”* (Tempe, AZ: ACMRS, 2010), 90. Chiquart’s stated purpose was documentation of the culinary activities of his kitchen. In his prologue, he explains that “man’s unretentive memory often reduces clear things to doubt. The foresight of worthy ancients therefore determined that ephemeral things should be rendered immortal by being written down, so that whatever the feebleness of the human mind cannot retain might survive by means of immutable writings. In order, therefore, that people in the present as well as those of future generations may know with certainty, the following is written down.”


58 The prologue of *Les Enseignements* leaves no doubt of the purpose: “Vez ci les enseignemens qui enseignenent a appareiller toutes manieres de viandes…..” (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 7131, f. 99v). This translates to “See here the lessons which teach preparation of all kinds of meats…..”
examined recipes as instructional texts based on these subtle clues. Carroll asserts that
the function of medieval recipes was instruction; however, both Carroll and Görlach
agree that the instruction was intended for a more experienced cook. Because most
recipes lack specificity, such as ingredient quantities and timing, only someone
experienced in a kitchen would be capable of performing the proper action. An
experienced cook then, as now, might turn to written recipes for new preparations or
ideas, relying on the text for basic instruction. The text in turn, would leave specifics to
the taste and temperament of the cook. Modern audiences assume that good writing,
especially instructional, requires specificity. However, this assumption reflects a cultural
and temporal bias. Recipes that seem vague and devoid of the specificity expected by
modern readers were perceived differently by medieval readers: as understandable
instructional texts for the individual already trained in culinary basics.

Görlach and Carroll propose several other linguistic and formal characteristics in
Middle English recipes which point to an instructional purpose. First, the recipes are clear
and straightforward. Recipe authors employed the imperative mood. The texts are
composed of short, simple sentences and lack complex structures. Recipes are organized
using temporal clauses, guiding a reader through the cooking process. Additionally,

59 Ruth Carroll, “Middle English Recipes: Vernacularisation of a Text-Type,” in Medical and
Scientific Writing in Late Medieval English, ed. Irma Taavitsainen and Päivi Pahta (New York: Cambridge
Cury,”; Manfred Görlach, “Text-Types and Language History: The Cookery Recipe,” in History of
Englishes: New Methods and Interpretations in Historical Linguistics, ed. Matti Rissanen, Ossu Ihalainen,
ME recipes as containing short, imperative clauses. This differs from other European recipes. For example,
medieval Catalan and Spanish recipes contain future tense and second-person indicative (See Carroll,
“Middle English Recipes,” 180).

60 Carroll, “Vague Language,” 58; and Görlach, “Text-Types and Language History,” 749.

recipes include a limited range of transitive verbs, reducing the vocabulary necessary for understanding and using a recipe.\textsuperscript{62} Furthermore, almost all transitive verbs are accompanied by an object, which increases the comprehension of the instructed action.\textsuperscript{63} Finally, Carroll asserts that most Middle English recipes use possessive pronouns which make the text more personal. This personal voice is common in other instructional literature.\textsuperscript{64}

Certainly, not all cookeries were intended for use in a kitchen or for the instruction of a household cook. A decorative cookery manuscript containing illumination or gold leaf was clearly meant for reading and consultation beyond the kitchen boundary.\textsuperscript{65} Clean recipe collections were probably not placed next to a simmering pot occasionally splattering pottage, nor were they marked by a meticulous cook noting parts of the recipe that did or did not work well. However, several vernacular English cookeries were copied in smaller, portable, practical manuscript formats, such as duodecimo, octavo, and quarto formats. These versions are free of decoration, bound as a single text, and have stains and marginalia.\textsuperscript{66} These cookeries spent some time in a kitchen setting, and most importantly, have evidence of being read for the purpose of preparing a recipe—that is, for instruction. Regardless of whether an author intended his

\textsuperscript{62} Carroll, “Middle English Recipes,” 187.

\textsuperscript{63} Görlach, “Text-Types and Language History,” 749.

\textsuperscript{64} Carroll, “Middle English Recipes,” 182.

\textsuperscript{65} An example of a cookery that was too decorative for kitchen use is London, British Library, MS Arundel 334, fols. 134r–217v.

\textsuperscript{66} Manuscripts that are composed in the vernacular, in a small and portable format, absent of decoration, bound as a single text, and exhibit stains and/or marginalia, include London, British Library (BL), MS Sloane 1108; BL MS Harley 279; BL MS Harley 4016; New York, New York Public Library, MS Whitney 1; and Manchester, John Rylands University Library, English MS 7.
recipes to be used for recording recipes used at a great feast or as aides-mémoires, the cookery could be used for culinary instruction if the physical properties of the manuscript were appropriate.

Several English manuscripts contain codicological evidence specifically suggesting instruction. Here I will focus on a single cookery that contains a number of characteristics indicating instructional use. These qualities appear in smaller quantities in other manuscripts, but the large number of features within London, British Library, MS Sloane 1108 provides a bountiful case study for medieval instructional cookeries. This manuscript does not contain any explicit statement regarding instructional intention; rather, the physical clues within the manuscript point to use within a kitchen setting for the purpose of learning how to prepare specific recipes.

Sloane 1108, an early-fifteenth-century manuscript, combines portions of text found in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 257 and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud 553.67 As a combination of two distinct cookeries, Sloane 1108 may have been customized for the needs of a specific household. The recipes are not exclusively intended for royalty; the required ingredients are not unusual or exotic, and although some require moderate expense, such as spices and fish like lampray and sturgeon, none approach the ostentation of peacock or swan. Significantly, this manuscript contains only a cookery text. No other texts, culinary or otherwise, accompany this untitled cookery. Sloane 1108 is presently bound alone, and seems to have been bound as a single text

67 The recipes are copied from at least two identified cookery collections: Douce 257, fols. 86r–96v; and Laud 553, fols. 5r–6v. I accessed these cookeries through printed editions: Hieatt and Butler, eds., *Curye on Inglysch*; and Thomas Austin, ed., *Two Fifteenth-Century Cookery-Books*, O.S. 91, Early English Text Society (London: Oxford University Press, 1888).
when Sir Hans Sloane’s library was transferred to the British Museum. Two folios are missing from the manuscript; however, the extant leaves present no evidence of a former physical connection to other texts. Thus, any indications of use or evidence of utility in the manuscript are applicable solely to the cookery.

Sloane 1108 was intended as a practical and utilitarian text. It is small, portable, and fits comfortably in the hand, yet the script is large enough for easy reading. Containing 150 recipes in 24 folios, the cookery offers the reader many culinary options, but is not overwhelmingly voluminous. The manuscript does not contain any decoration contemporary to the recipes. Additionally, the text is written almost exclusively in black ink with the exception of rubrication; both features indicate that the cookery was intended as a practical text and was not prohibitively expensive to produce.

Sloane 1108 is a paper manuscript. This is not unusual among cookeries, but is a special point to note among fifteenth century English manuscripts, as English manuscripts of this time are significantly more likely to be composed of parchment.

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68 The manuscript was rebound by the British Museum. The brown leather binding appears to be from the nineteenth century. A floral pattern decorates the border of the front and back covers. Centered on both covers is a gold seal containing an image of two boars around a sword, lion, and hand of Ulster. The words “BIBLIOTECA MANUSCRIPT SLOANEIANA” surrounds the heraldry. “CULINARY RECEIPTS. XV CENT. / MUS. BRIT. BIBL. SLOAN. / 1108 PLUT. LXXXVII. D.” is printed on the spine. The manuscript contains two other identifying numbers on fol. 1r which appear to be former shelf marks. One, at the top right corner of the page has been crossed out (Ms. 999), while the other, Ms. B. 297, is left complete at the bottom of the page, directly under the modern shelf mark.

69 The binding is still tight due to lack of use since being bound by the British Museum. As a result, I cannot confidently state the number of leaves in the manuscript gatherings, though I believe there are two gatherings. The missing leaves, however, are easily identifiable. The recipes are numbered with roman numerals, and several numbers are missing in two distinct clusters. Between fols. 1 and 2, the numbering skips from 5 to 16. These ten recipes equate to one or two missing leaves. Between fols. 16 and 17, the numbering skips from 89 to 94. These four missing recipes were likely on a single leaf.

70 The folios measures 210 mm x 140 mm.

71 Most European manuscript cookeries of the fifteenth century were produced on paper, rather than parchment. Although Sloane 1108 certainly follows this general trend, this manuscript was more
The paper in Sloane 1108 contains the same watermark on four different leaves.\textsuperscript{72} The watermark matches one depicting a two-wheeled cart in Edward Heawood’s “Sources of Early English Paper-Supply.”\textsuperscript{73} Due to the folding of the paper, only the bottom half of the watermark is clearly visible. Paper with this watermark was produced in Fabriano in central Italy and Cuneo in Piedmont. Heawood lists several examples of this paper in fifteenth-century England, including several Paston letters and Lincoln, Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS 91, otherwise known as the Thornton Manuscript. As an early-fifteenth-century manuscript, Sloane 1108 is an early example of this paper in England. The letters with a matching watermark, for example, were composed in the 1460s and 1470s.

The recipes in Sloane 1108 were copied by two scribes using an Anglicana hand. The first scribe copied recipes from fols. 1r–15v, while the second copied from fols. 16r–24v. The scribes have left further evidence, in addition to the black ink, minimal rubrication, and use of paper mentioned above, that this manuscript was not an expensive one to produce. None of the pages contain ruled writing blocks; all of the text is written in freehand. This step in the production process would not have been skipped in a more unusual among English cookeries of the period. Laurioux reports that 55\% of fifteenth-century European culinary manuscripts were recorded on paper (Laurioux, \textit{Le règne de Taillevent}, 288). Neddermeyer, however, calculates that English manuscripts were made from parchment far longer than on the Continent. He states that approximately 20\% of English manuscripts from 1400 to 1449 were produced on paper, as opposed to 44\% in France, 69\% in Italy, or a staggering 89\% in Austria and Switzerland (Neddermeyer, \textit{Von der Handschrift zum gedruckten Buch}, 1.259).

\textsuperscript{72} Fols. 5, 18, 21, and 22.

\textsuperscript{73} Edward Heawood, “Sources of Early English Paper-Supply,” \textit{The Library} s4-X, no. 3 (1929): 289. See Figure 22.
costly manuscript. This lack of ruling led to a wide variance of lines per writing block.\textsuperscript{74} The first scribe was considerably more careful and deliberate in writing than the second. The second scribe often appears to be writing in haste, as the script becomes smaller and messier, as if this was the last item the scribe had to copy after a long day of writing. Additionally, the second scribe used substantially more abbreviations, especially as he neared the end of the text.\textsuperscript{75} One of the scribes, or perhaps a third, included a title centered above each recipe in a larger script. All of the titles were written by the same scribe. Both scribes made some careless mistakes while copying the cookery, although they rectified the issues as they arose, occasionally inserting missing words into the text.\textsuperscript{76} The scribe who wrote the recipe titles was not without fault, either. He incorrectly recorded two titles on fol. 6r, as depicted in Figure 1.2, but crossed out both titles with red ink and provided the correct titles of “Cony en grave” and “Cony ou geli en cler broth.”

\textsuperscript{74} The lines per writing block vary between twenty-nine and thirty-four.

\textsuperscript{75} Few abbreviations appear until the second half; fol. 23 seems especially full.

\textsuperscript{76} For example, on fol. 12v, the scribe added “thereof” to the instructions in the “Longe fruter” recipe. The second scribe added a more crucial instruction to the “Blancmaunger” recipe on fol. 20r; he added two ingredients, “and sugar and salt,” to the text.
Figure 1.2. An example of corrections made by a scribe in Sloane 1108, fol. 6r. He crossed out the incorrect recipe titles and replaced each in the right margin.

Despite these rather ordinary features, Sloane 1108 is very special in one regard: the numerous indications of use scattered throughout the text by several contributors. These markings do not include an explicit statement of use by any individuals, but the kitchen use is self-evident. Just as sheet music is covered in pencil marks and notes made by a musician practicing the musical work and using the text in a practical setting, this and many other medieval cookeries contain copious notations which are *prima facie* evidence of functional and instructional use in a kitchen. Between three and seven contributors modified the manuscript, adding several layers of use and interest to the cookery’s history. The first modifications added organizational tools and clarified or corrected text. Two hands added roman numerals next to the recipes, one writing numerals from the beginning to fol. 16v, the second from fol. 17r to the end. Although these do not exactly match folios composed by the two main scribes, they could easily
have added the roman numerals as they wrote, sharing their efforts on fol. 16r and 16v. These roman numerals were added as a tool to help readers locate recipes quickly. In other cookeries, the roman numerals correspond to an index or table preceding the recipes, but no such table exists in this cookery. There are at least three possibilities: a table was created but was separated from the cookery text, the numerals were added before the table was created, or the numerals were added without any intention of including a table. Numerals without a corresponding table could serve as a mnemonic device for a reader requiring a quick marginal reminder of the recipe order, or may have substituted for catchwords, which are not present in Sloane 1108.

Other emendations in the cookery indicate that several people used the text as a cooking reference. One hand added additional instructions and comments throughout the cookery. His notes sometimes follow recipes, such as on fol. 5v; he added, “and whan it is dressed in maner of mortrewys, take red anys in comfyte, and the leuys of borage, and sett hem in the disshe,” to the end of the recipe for “froyde creem dalmandez,” then, “in maner of mortrewys in a dysshe,” after the recipe for “creeme buille,” and finally, “and take suger a good quantite and caste thereto” following the “papyns” recipe. In Figure 1.3, we see that the same hand also clarified at the end of the “Blaunche braune” recipe on fol. 13r that the meat may be served “leshe or yn a dysshe,” meaning that the meat may be sliced or served in a dish. The hand also specified at the end of the “Hanouey” recipe on fol. 17v that the recipe components are “together in a fayre dysshe.”
Figure 1.3. An addition to a recipe for “Blaunche braune” in Sloane 1108, fol. 13r. At the conclusion of the recipe, someone noted that the meat may be served “leshe or yn a dysshe.”

This exacting cook also clarified ingredients. In one instance, visible in Figure 1.4, the cook clarified that a recipe for rabbit or duck on fol. 6r was a suitable preparation for a hen.77 In two other instances, the cook wrote “chicken” next to two recipes for poussin, or young chicken, perhaps formally categorizing the poussin as a type of chicken or indicating that an older chicken could be used instead of a younger bird.78 This hand did not make the same indication of chicken next to a nearby recipe for capon, so it is also possible, though less likely, that the term poussin was unfamiliar.

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77 Above the recipe for “Cony malarde ou gelin en cyve,” the hand wrote “or henne.” The recipe states that a hen can be used, though the original recipe title omitted it.

78 The cook wrote “chekens” next to the recipe “Pousyn en dorr” on fol. 19v and similarly indicated “checens” next to the recipe for “Pousyn farcez” on fol. 20r.
Yet another hand added marginalia in the cookery. On fol. 23r, someone commented “make smale” next to the recipe title “Daryalles.” Visible in Figure 1.5, this note is in a similar placement on the page near the inside margin as another note which was scratched out, next to the recipe for “Lorry.” Although the recipe for darioles begins with the words “Make smale,” the hand does not appear to be the same as the scribe who wrote the main recipe text. Since the marginalia was produced by another hand, I do not believe these notes were accidental. Rather, someone wrote those words in the margin to highlight the fact that the individual pastry coffins, or crusts, which would contain the custards, needed to be small. Another hand appears on the same folio commenting on another recipe. A scribe wrote “frumentum” in a cursive hand next to the recipe “Frumente.” The scribe may have been simply emphasizing that the recipe was made with grain, as frumenty is a dish made of hulled wheat boiled in milk and seasoned with spices.
Figure 1.5. On Sloane 1108, fol. 23 r, there are many marginal notations. These include the addition of “frumentum” in the top margin, “make smalle” next to the title for “Daryalles,” and a curious line of numbers in the bottom margin.
The manuscript exhibits other marks that are highly suggestive of use inside a kitchen.79 The top edges of the paper in the cookery are slightly singed, burned dark brown and black, perhaps after an encounter with a small kitchen fire. The manuscript, like many, contains ink stains, but also includes two which appear to be food stains. One small stain on fol. 7r appears oil- or fat-based, and it readily soaked through to the other side and darkened the paper. Neither destroyed the cookery or significantly damaged the writing.80

One of the most intriguing examples of marginalia in Sloane 1108 is unrelated to culinary instruction, but has ties to the Order of the Garter. On the top of fol. 22r appears “hony soyte que mal y pens,” in a fifteenth-century script. This phrase, usually written as “honi soit qui mal y pense” translates to “shamed be he who thinks evil of it,” the motto of the Order of the Garter. Founded in 1348, the Order was a chivalric body that celebrated the military deeds of English knights. Only twenty-six knights, including the Sovereign and the Prince of Wales, were in the Order at a time. This highly exclusive group was well known throughout England by the early fifteenth century, when Sloane 1108 was copied. Not only were the Order’s ceremonial processions and activities highly

79 Sloane 1108 also surely contains signs of use invisible to the naked eye. The use of a densitometer to measure the degree of darkness on a page can reveal slight variations in paper and parchment color. Fingerprints and page staining can indicate patterns of wear and use, such as how readers held their books, where they turned the pages, or where they placed their fingers when they read. Studying these unintentional marks in cookeries could reveal which recipes were frequently used, how these books were held or propped open in the kitchen, and how people physically interacted with the layout of the pages. For a recent study of this nature, see Kathryn Rudy, “Dirty Books: Quantifying Patterns of Use in Medieval Manuscripts Using a Densitometer,” *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 2, no. 1 (2010): 1–44.

80 The other likely food stain appears on fol. 24v, measuring about 20 mm by 5 mm.
visible, but the Order was well represented in many late-fourteenth- and early-fifteenth-century visual and literary works, including perhaps most famously *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.\(^81\) In late medieval England, the Order of the Garter embodied the chivalric ideal.\(^82\) The popularity of the Order in English ceremonial life, as well as late medieval literature, likely led to an owner of Sloane 1108 writing the Order's motto in the manuscript. No evidence exists on Sloane 1108 that it was owned by a member of the Order; it is far more reasonable to assume that someone familiar with the popular Order simply placed the motto in the manuscript.

Over time, the culinary utility of the cookery diminished, presumably as recipes went out of fashion. Although the recipes were no longer useful for preparing dishes, the manuscript was still valuable as a workbook for several people recording notes and practicing writing. At least two people used the cookery in this manner at some point between the late fifteenth century and early seventeenth century; however, it is very difficult to distinguish between hands when examining scribbles and drawings and to determine a more specific number of readers. Individuals scribbled, practiced writing letters, and repeatedly practiced writing an abbreviation for the word “and” on the first folio alone.\(^83\) Another hand wrote a curious string of numbers on the bottom margin of

\(^{81}\) Other literary works include the fourteenth-century works *Wynner and Wastoure* and *Bridlington's Prophecies*, and the fifteenth-century works *The Boke of Noblesse* and *The Flower and the Leaf*. For more detail about the Order of the Garter in each of these works, as well as descriptions of visual representations of the Order, see Hugh Collins, *The Order of the Garter, 1348–1461: Chivalry and Politics in Late Medieval England* (New York: Clarendon Press, 2000).


\(^{83}\) On the bottom of fol. 1r, a hand scribbled in black ink. At the top of fol. 1v, a hand practiced writing an abbreviation for “and” multiple times. The abbreviations were inconsistently formed, as if the
fol. 23r, which can be seen in Figure 1.5. Many of these letters, numbers, and scribbles in ink reveal the work of a writer learning how to control the flow of ink from his or her quill.

Using pencil, another contributor drew a quill pen on the bottom of fol. 2r and scribbled on the bottom of fol. 8r. This same writer using pencil probably also contributed his name on fol. 1r, “E. Guilliam.” He completed his name with a flourish to the “m” containing a fish. The use of pencil, as well as the later style of script, point to these contributions occurring in the late sixteenth century, at the earliest. Although these later contributions to the manuscript provide no evidence of use of the cookery for instruction or in a kitchen setting, the marginalia do suggest that the manuscript remained practical and instructive, though as a venue to practice writing and arithmetic more than cooking.

Conclusion

Long before mass-print cookery tomes, culinary magazines, or television cooking shows, manuscripts provided culinary instruction to a willing audience. Sloane 1108 is one such example; this fifteenth-century manuscript was used in a kitchen for culinary purposes. These recipes taught someone—perhaps many people—how to create the dishes contained within its paper leaves. Those who used the cookery in the kitchen left hand was practicing how to control the flow of ink from his quill. At the bottom of fol. 1v is a string of nonsensical letters written in thick ink, suggesting an inexperienced hand wrote these characters.

This writer also curiously composed two similar strings of letters on fol. 2r next to the “Soupes en dorres” recipe and fol. 7r next to the “Blaunche porre” recipe; “yam_SH” and “y.A.M.S._x” respectively. In the space where I have placed “_” is an upside-down heart.
notes clarifying and emending recipes. Stains and burns also indicate use in a kitchen.

Finally, the cookery had a life beyond culinary instruction, as future generations used the text for practicing more academic exercises.

Although Sloane 1108 exhibits many characteristics of culinary instruction and use, other contemporaneous cookeries include less ample, but no less compelling, evidence. For example, London, British Library, MS Harley 279 is a small, lightweight manuscript. The book contains a cookery and several menus from fifteenth-century feasts, but these may have been produced separately and bound together at a later date because the pieces of parchment used to create these sections are dramatically different sizes. The parchment is heavily worn in some areas, and features a large stain on fol. 5 which is visible on both the recto and verso sides. Although the cookery appears well-used, it has only a single instance of marginalia, a mark next to a recipe on fol. 10r. BL Harley 4016, related to Harley 279 in its design and layout, does not contain similar wear marks. However, Harley 279 has abundant marginalia, marking several recipes of interest within the cookery.

Today, cookbooks are viewed primarily as instructional texts, even when the books also serve as decorative items, aspirational texts, or celebrity advertising. This primary characteristic of cookeries was also present in the Middle Ages. This notion of multiple characteristics and uses for cookeries is very important; a text that can serve many people and purposes organically expands its audience. Late medieval cookeries were not exorbitantly expensive for many consumers, but the texts took time and money to produce. Yet production of cookeries expanded in the fourteenth century and boomed in the fifteenth; a readership demanded these texts because cookeries were practical and
useful. Cooks, stewards, or even the master or mistress of the house could use recipes for many purposes.

In addition to culinary use and instruction, cookery manuscripts developed an alternative use among a specialized group—the emerging professional class—in late medieval England as aspirational texts. I examine this group of cookeries in the next chapter. The multiple uses of cookeries are of great exploratory value; as several audiences required, produced, and used cookeries, the readership for these texts consequently expanded. Within a few decades, the manuscript readership was substantial enough that printers and publishers would soon print thousands of copies of cookbooks for a hungry audience.
CHAPTER 2

PROFESSIONAL ASPIRATION AND THE ACQUISITION
OF CULINARY KNOWLEDGE

Þe heyroyn schal be diȝht as is þe swan and it come quyk to kechen. Þe sauce schal be mad of hym as a chaudoun of ginger & of galîngale, & þat it be coloured with þe blood or with brende crustes þat arn tosted.

—London, British Library, MS Sloane 468, fol. 85r

This recipe for heron follows one for swan in the cookery Utilis Coquinario. The text requires that the heron, a bird served exclusively to the highest nobility, be prepared as the swan in the preceding recipe: placed on a spit, larded, roasted, and carved. The heron is to be served with a sauce made from the bird’s innards, seasoned with ginger and galîngale, and tinted with the bird’s blood or darkly-toasted bread crusts. A bountiful feast might feature this heron served alongside other fantastic birds found in surrounding recipes: swan, peacock, crane, and lark. One would expect to see such a luxurious and elite recipe in a cookbook for the royal kitchen, considering that the dish would rarely be prepared outside of that space. However, this recipe is found in a copy of Utilis Coquinario in London, British Library, MS Sloane 468, alongside a collection of medical recipes purportedly from Hippocrates, Galen, and others, another collection of medical recipes in Latin and English, and a poem directed to “The man that wele of leche craft lere.” This manuscript lacks any decoration or ornamentation; it was written in black ink.
with minimal rubrication. Why would a cookbook containing luxury dishes be located in a utilitarian medical manuscript?

Even as cookeries were making their way into medieval kitchens as instructional texts, another group collected cookbooks for an entirely different purpose. An emerging group of professionals in late medieval Europe used these cookeries as tools for social education, and ultimately, class aspiration. These cookbooks are located in manuscripts created for and owned by medieval professionals, namely medical practitioners and lawyers. In this chapter I focus on fifteenth-century English medical practitioners’ manuscripts, since they account for the largest body of these texts; however, my claims apply to the cookeries owned by lawyers and other members of the rising gentry.

The body of English manuscripts that are of concern in this chapter constitute a large percentage of fifteenth-century cookeries. At least seventy-five of the approximately ninety extant medieval English manuscripts containing cookeries date from the fifteenth century. Nearly fifty percent of the fifteenth-century cookeries housed at just one British repository, the British Library, are contained in professional miscellanies or miscellanies from a professional household. Twelve of these British Library manuscripts were created by or for the use of medical practitioners.

I posit that cookeries contained in professional manuscripts were used primarily as aspirational texts. Professionals could learn about the foods they should aspire to eat as members of a rising social group. While occasional recipes may have been useful in their household kitchens or, in the case of physicians and surgeons, medical practices, the codicological context of these cookeries points to a very different use. To assess these sources, I first describe the social structure of late medieval England and how
professionals fit into the social hierarchy. Next, I show that medical practitioners actually owned and used the manuscripts described above. Finally, I delve into the physical features and textual contents of the manuscripts and establish that practitioners used the cookeries for social aspiration and education. The production and use of cookeries that I describe in this chapter is distinct from the technical cookery texts in the previous chapter. During the fifteenth century, cookeries were being used in many ways; the genre was gradually developing into one that appealed to a variety of readers.

Social Mobility and the Rise of Professionals

While social mobility is not generally considered a feature of medieval society, practitioners of certain trades were able and likely to ascend the social hierarchy. These practitioners include oft-discussed merchants who had great potential to surpass the middle class and enter the nobility, as well as two emerging professional groups who had similar potential to accumulate wealth, land, and titles: lawyers and medical practitioners. Law and medicine were not new fields; however, practitioners in the late Middle Ages shaped these trades into professions. At a time when urban populations rose, towns secured their own authority and governance, and trades formed guilds, lawyers and medical practitioners similarly began to organize and regulate themselves. They not only established standards of entry into practice, but also codified the necessary educational levels required for types of practice, and established professional codes. The rigor of the highest levels of professional practice consequently separated these specialists from other workers. Physicians, master surgeons, and lawyers were increasingly recognized for holding advanced knowledge and skill because of their university training. As a result,
they became the social superiors of many other workers. They enjoyed a degree of societal privilege, wealth, and upward mobility; the king gave the most fortunate land, annuities, and titles granting access into the lower nobility, as well as regular access to the royal court.

Although professionals were well-placed to rise through local hierarchies, their ascent was not always easy. The nobility was divided into upper and lower levels. Even the most successful and mobile professional could never enter the upper nobility, for bloodlines and hereditary rights to land determined this level of nobility. In England, the upper nobility, or peerage, not only accumulated more wealth through land ownership than the lower nobility, but also passed down hereditary titles. Between 1200 and 1400, the peerage distinguished itself from the larger body of landowners, who did not necessarily share the same lineage or ancestry as the peerage. By 1400, only about one hundred landowners were part of the hereditary parliamentary peerage; as such, they were distinct from all other landowners. These other landowners essentially comprised the gentry, which consisted of knights, esquires, and gentlemen. However, members of the gentry did not have to own land: this group encompassed both landowners and those who served the crown, such as professionals. By 1400, the lower nobility was accessible

1 David Crouch, The Birth of Nobility: Constructing Aristocracy in England and France 900–1300 (Harlow, UK: Longman, 2005), 173–221. Despite great similarities between the nobility of these two kingdoms, subtle differences existed not only between French and English nobility, but also between their historiographical treatment.

2 Peter Coss, The Origins of the English Gentry (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); and Christine Carpenter, “England: The Nobility and the Gentry,” in A Companion to Britain in the Later Middle Age, ed. S. H. Rigby (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 264–65. See Coss, The Origins of the English Gentry, 11, for a useful summary of six major characteristics of the English gentry. To further complicate matters, ‘gentleman’ not only referred to men with that title, but also became a term indicating a sense of gentility common among all nobles, similar to the French concept of noblesse. The term ‘gentleman’ was
to anyone with the right combination of wealth, land, and service to a lord or monarch.\textsuperscript{3} The king occasionally conferred the lower titles of esquire and gentlemen upon professionals who had achieved the pinnacle of success, especially those who attended to the sovereign ruler.\textsuperscript{4} Lawyers were more likely to receive the title of esquire, while other lay professionals were deemed gentlemen. Many men achieving great wealth, including land and real estate holdings, chose to remain outside of the nobility altogether, yet adopted the customs, values, tastes, and trappings of their titled peers. Behavior was particularly indicative of status; how one conducted himself in public was as important as the clothing and possessions conveying wealth.\textsuperscript{5} Thus the category of gentry was somewhat flexible in the fifteenth century, as it included these wealthy, non-noble men. From the sixteenth century onward, the concept had little to do with titles, and more to do with the collective identity of the group.

In England specifically social mobility was likely, even for professionals who did not directly serve the crown. First and foremost, many medical practitioners and lawyers had a high level of education and some attended a university. Education, including one

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used in contemporary French writings to designate the lowest nobility from lords, but they did not share the same status as English ‘gentlemen-bureaucrats’ or ‘merchant gentlemen.’

3 Jennifer Kermode, “The Merchants of Three Northern English Towns,” in \textit{Profession, Vocation, and Culture in Later Medieval England}, ed. Cecil H. Clough (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1982), 37. Even successful merchants far outside the reaches of London were able to ascend into the gentry. Kermode examines merchants in late medieval York, Beverly, and Hull. She identifies several such merchants: three merchants of York were knighted (John Gyllyot, William Todd, and Richard York); a grandson of merchant William Bowes became Lord Mayor of London in 1546–47; and several merchant daughters were married into gentry families. Still many other merchants simply styled themselves as gentlemen.


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without university training, was a very reliable vehicle for scaling the social ladder.\textsuperscript{6} Other routes to social advancement included marriage and political or administrative service.\textsuperscript{7} The right combination of factors could result in rapid upward mobility. Once a professional could begin practicing his craft and earning an income, many doors leading to further social advancement were opened. In addition to a well-paying career based on a strong education, professionals were able to dabble in business and real estate, serve local and regional rulers, and marry into other gentry families.

Several examples of late medieval professionals demonstrate these points; the cases of Sir John Fortescue Junior and Roger Marchall are particularly illustrative. John Fortescue began a steady social ascent to knighthood through his legal career.\textsuperscript{8} The son of a gentleman lawyer, Fortescue began practicing law in the 1420s in London and Westminster. After holding several offices in Lincoln’s Inn, he became a sergeant-at-law, then King’s sergeant, and finally in 1442 reached the second-highest legal position in England, Lord Chief Justice, King’s Bench. In the midst of his rise through his profession, he managed a series of successful real estate transactions, acquiring several properties in London and estates in other English counties. He also participated in the House of Commons and other political activities. Fortescue married the daughter of

\textsuperscript{6} Jo Ann Hoeppner Moran Cruz and Stephen Skibinski, “Social Mobility in Late Medieval England,” \textit{Quaestiones medii aevi novae} 12 (2007): 293–318. Moran Cruz and Skibinski posit that in late medieval England, factors such as smaller households with greater resources and an increasing demand for administrative positions propelled society to place a great value on education.


another gentry family, and for a time in his early career received ducal patronage. His personal and professional success was rewarded when he was made a knight around 1436. These successes were not typical of all professionals, but are certainly indicative of the possibilities surrounding social promotion.

The physician Roger Marchall did not rise to such a prominent position, but was able to benefit from the social mobility his profession afforded. Little is known of Marchall’s family or childhood; he spent twenty years in Cambridge studying medicine and as a foundation fellow at Peterhouse. Upon leaving Cambridge, he began practicing medicine in London. Marchall became linked with the guild of ironmongers in London; this relationship provided him with business opportunities which made him very wealthy. As indicated in his will, he had sufficient income to loan at least £200 to two different ironmongers. Marchall owned land and tenements in London, and also had a substantial manuscript collection, possibly reaching as many as forty-four ordinary and deluxe codices that he donated to three Cambridge colleges. He maintained several valuable relationships, which provided him the opportunity to inspect treacle for the mayor of London and serve as physician to Edward IV. The king’s apothecary was a close enough associate to serve as an executor of Marchall’s will upon his death. Marchall was not a gentleman in title, but his education, profession, business transactions, and charitable giving certainly put him in constant contact with the royal household and other high-status individuals.

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Late Medieval English Medical Practitioners

By the late Middle Ages, a variety of medical practitioners were active in England. Physicians were the most respected, and usually the wealthiest, of all medical practitioners. Master surgeons, who received surgical training and licensing by local authorities, also found wealth and notoriety. A clear distinction existed, however, between these two types of medical practitioners. A physician diagnosed based on theories, accumulated knowledge, and the observation of symptoms, and also prescribed remedies. By contrast, surgeons performed a wide variety of physical procedures to provide relief. This included incisions, cauterizations, cupping, setting fractures, as well as the application of ointments and other medications. This strong separation between physicians and surgeons was due, in part, to a religious prohibition. The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) forbade clergy in the major orders—subdeacons, deacons, and priests—from performing surgery that required incisions or cauterization. Since many physicians were clergy in the major orders, particularly through the fourteenth century, they were consequently prohibited from performing surgery. However, this certainly did not stop

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10 Nancy Siraisi, Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 19. The types of practitioners working throughout Europe varied from one region to another. Siraisi notes that there was not a uniform system of licensing throughout Europe, nor can we refer to a single medical profession. While practitioners with a university education carried the greatest prestige, also included as “professionals” were members in a guild of practitioners with the authority to examine candidates for membership, as well as practitioners with a license granted by a public authority.


12 Lateran IV, Canon 18 states “Nullus quoque clericus rottariis aut balistariis aut huiusmodi viris sanguinum praeponatur nec illam chirurgiae artem subdiaconus diaconus vel sacerdos exerceat quae ad usionem vel incisionem inducit nec quisquam purgationi aquæ ferventis vel frigidae seu ferri candentis ritum cuissilbet benefictionis aut consecrationis impendat salvis nihilominus prohibitionibus de monomachiis sive duellis antea promulgates.”
physicians from exploring surgical ideas. Furthermore on the Continent, some medical practitioners sought to promote the idea of a learned surgeon in order to create a well-rounded ideal of medical men and to improve the social and professional standing of surgeons.\textsuperscript{13} And at the University of Paris, surgery was included as an informal area of study, and at least one surgeon was admitted to the faculty of medicine.\textsuperscript{14}

Physicians received an extensive education based in the arts. Medical students were required to be a Master of Arts prior to starting medical studies, or, depending upon the institution, to spend two to three years obtaining an arts background prior to graduation.\textsuperscript{15} Although Continental universities produced a large number of physicians, medicine was a relatively unpopular course of study in English universities. Only ninety-four people read or taught medicine during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries at the University of Oxford, while only fifty-nine graduated in medicine from the University of Cambridge during the same period.\textsuperscript{16} Prospective surgeons had more educational flexibility than physicians, however. While surgeons were required to hold a university degree prior to becoming a master surgeon and joining the surgeon’s guild, there was no such requirement for journeymen surgeons.\textsuperscript{17} Barber-surgeons, who only performed


\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 160–61.


\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 108.

minor surgeries, were not expected to obtain any university education. A surgeon received his surgical training not at a university, but while serving as an apprentice for approximately six years under a master surgeon. A trained surgeon could begin practicing as a journeyman, or apply for a license to practice surgery as a master surgeon. The local guild of master surgeons and other local authorities served as a licensing body. No national licensing system existed for surgeons or physicians, though a group of practitioners did attempt to create one in the early fifteenth century.

Following their formal education, training, and licensing, many late medieval English physicians and surgeons could look forward to a comfortable, even lavish, lifestyle. They had two main sources of income: private practice and noble retainer. Some physicians and surgeons successfully balanced both types of practice. While private practice was typically less lucrative than practicing on retainer, many variables determined how much a physician or surgeon could charge for his services. Location naturally played a role; practitioners charged more for their services in London than in

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model. The University of Paris faculty played a role in the training and licensing of the highest level of surgeons by the mid-fourteenth century. In Paris, learned physician-surgeons were trained and licensed by medical faculty and master surgeons were trained by apprenticeship and licensed by a group of master surgeons. Barber surgeons remained outside of these licensing practices.

18 Rawcliffe, *Medicine & Society in Later Medieval England*, 126; Sirasi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine*, 34. Degrees in surgery were only available at Italian universities.


20 Ibid., 120–21 and 130–34. Following a failed attempt to create a national licensing body for English physicians and master surgeons, several practitioners desiring higher professional standards created the Joint College of Physicians and Surgeons of London in 1423. This attempt also failed, lasting only eighteen months. Physicians generally believed the group lessened their authority derived from university training and licensing, while master surgeons were generally eager to be grouped with physicians. Additionally, barber-surgeons, who practiced minor surgery and received no university training, practiced medicine outside of the College. Since barber-surgeons conducted a large portion of medical procedures, their exclusion undermined the College’s authority. Licensing was less of a concern outside of London; in some communities, like Beverly, the small number of physicians, surgeons, and barbers all contributed to a single guild.
other towns in England. Additionally, the reputation and ability of a specific practitioner, as well as the status and wealth of a patient, determined the cost of a diagnosis or treatment. While the surgeon Lanfranc of Milan broadly advised, “pore men helpe he bi his myȝt, and of þe riche men axe he good reward,” other practitioners provided far more detail on the topic. Celebrity surgeon Henry de Mondeville provided highly detailed instructions on determining fees and procuring payment. Henry suggested a method of negotiating an agreeable payment, especially from the wealthiest patients. He recommended that a surgeon first request an exorbitantly high fee, assess the patient’s reaction to the fee, and then negotiate a lower fee, if necessary. In any case, Henry strongly believed that surgeons should be paid very well and “a surgeon who has rescued an arm or a leg should not tolerate the offer of a small or null fee.” And because so many people tried to forego payment of medical services, Henry recommended that practitioners must never accept promissory notes, nor should a surgeon dine with their patient prior to receipt of payment. He also warned that a raucous night of wining and dining led to a poor financial aftermath: “What good will come of it for the surgeon if he is entertained at a cabaret? That sort of a dinner always leads to a diminished fee.”


23 Leonard Rosenman, ed. The Surgery of Master Henry de Mondeville, Surgeon of Philip the Fair, King of France, Written from 1306 to 1320: A French Translation, with Notes, and Introduction and a Biography by E. Nicaise; with the Collaboration of Dr. Saint-Lager and F. Chavannes; Translated into English in Two Volumes with Annotations, Comments and Appendices by Leonard D. Rosenman (Philadelphia: XLibris Corporation, 2003), I. 314–16.

24 Ibid., I.311.

25 Ibid., I.215.
This insistence on strong negotiating tactics was shared by contemporary practitioners. John Arderne, a fourteenth-century surgeon who developed a revolutionary method for operating on anal fistula, demanded high fees for his skill. At a time when some practitioners were considered wildly successful if they earned £40 a year, John Arderne charged that much for a single operation:

Therfore for the cure of fistula in ano, when it is curable, aske he competently, of a worthi man and a gret an hundred marke or fourty pounde, wiþ robeȝ and feeȝ of an hundred shillyng terme of lyfe by ȝere. Of lesse men fourty pounde, or fourty marke aske he without feeȝ; And take he noȝt less þan an hundred shillyngis. ffor neuer in all my lyf toke I lesse than an hundred shillyng for cure of that sekenes.26

While currency was the preferred method of payment, all doctors also accepted payment in kind. Henry de Mondeville suggested that practitioners offer pro bono services to paupers and accept payment in the form of eggs or poultry from the slightly less destitute.27 Physicians and surgeons also accepted jewels, plate, and robes, which could easily be converted into cash.28

Noble retainer was an even more profitable mode of medical practice; the patronage of the right household could transform a typical physician or surgeon into a landed gentleman. While many noble households retained medical practitioners, the most generous was the royal household. All retained physicians could expect to receive an annual fee, but some households, especially the royal one, also provided board and

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lodging, travel expenses, and clothing. Royal physicians could expect to earn at least £40 to £100 per year and £5 or more per year for fur robes appropriate to their status, while royal surgeons traditionally earned at least 40 s., as well as robes. The crown occasionally provided other perks such as pardons for practitioners embroiled in legal trouble, annuities to deceased practitioners’ widows and children, and the right to hunt—an exclusively noble privilege. A more lucrative royal gift to practitioners was land and property. Country estates, or even city tenements which were leased out, provided an income for the practitioner. The combination of land, income, and proximity to the king provided medical practitioners with a high degree of social prestige. After 1430, this was reflected in the social ranking of the court when physicians and master surgeons were accorded the rank of esquire in the royal household.

Because the number of physicians and master surgeons was relatively small, medical practitioners developed close-knit communities to maintain rigorous standards of practice and disperse professional information. And so, throughout the fifteenth century in England, the practice of medicine was gradually professionalized as training became more standardized and doctors cultivated a specific public image. Physicians and

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29 Rawcliffe, “The Profits of Practice,” 63. For example, in 1372 Master John Bray, physician of John of Gaunt, received a payment of £10 a year, food and drink, two horses and a page, and a travel allowance of 2s. per day.

30 Rawcliffe, Medicine & Society in Later Medieval England, 110, 116, 139. Successful physicians and surgeons wore distinctive robes; physicians wore full-length robes, while surgeons were accorded shorter robes. Red and gray were the preferred colors for physicians, who also, in the most ostentatious instances, selected luxury fabrics and trims such as fur and taffeta.


surgeons shared a similar expectation of income and lifestyle, and these professionals became a more cohesive and upwardly mobile group. This occurred at the same time other professional groups, such as lawyers, experienced the same social movement. The gentry, which included professionals, other successful businessmen such as merchants, and the lower nobility, was also concurrently developing a stronger identity.

The identity of one group of professionals—physicians—was shaped by several characteristics. Physicians increasingly emphasized education; this was especially clear through their high rate of book ownership and authorship. These professionals enjoyed high rates of marriage, which increased not only the size of the social group but also their opportunities for income, wealth, and property ownership. Finally, this group was highly preoccupied with courtesy and manners. This was no doubt reflective of the general gentry concern with behavior, as it was as important as possessions in identifying one’s status. This cohesion meant that physicians and master surgeons had established themselves as one of the more affluent urban groups by the early sixteenth century.

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34 E. W. Ives, “The Common Lawyers,” in Profession, Vocation, and Culture in Later Medieval England, ed. Cecil H. Clough (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1982), 185–89. Recent scholarship has examined one professional group, that of lawyers, as a cohesive and upwardly mobile social group with similar cultural tastes and practices. In general, late medieval lawyers were concerned with their individual and corporate images in public displays. This included their representation in Inns of Court formal Christmas ceremonies, and images in art, public building projects, and memorials. Individual lawyers also commissioned artistic representations in brass and on stained glass windows in legal costume, to reflect their profession, and in armor, to reflect their gentry status.

35 Robert Gottfried, Doctors and Medicine in Medieval England 1340-1530 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 259–74. The publication of this study of nearly 2,500 medieval English medical practitioners was met with harsh criticism due to a large number of errors and misattributions. Though I am not relying on Gottfried’s work, his identification and discussion of these characteristics is corroborated by other studies of the gentry, professionals, and medical practitioners.

Medical Practitioners and Their Books

Medical practitioners had an appetite for books. While guilds and colleges for physicians and surgeons played a large role in creating this professional community, texts similarly promoted communal ideas and standards. Physicians and surgeons did not cast aside their books and learning upon completion of their formal education. Rather, these practitioners, who had already developed a proclivity for the written word, continued reading, writing, and sharing texts of a professional nature. They collected texts about their world and the skills they needed to achieve great success as a practitioner as well as an aspiring gentleman.

Physicians and surgeons who were moving up the social hierarchy concerned themselves with courtesy and manners and needed to be knowledgeable about the topics of noble leisure. Books provided an ideal venue to glean the necessary information about the world to which they were entering. This group, already used to learning through texts and writing and owning manuscripts, recorded their professional codes and communicated aspirational social behaviors through books.

Indeed, English physicians and surgeons were widely known as enthusiastic book readers and collectors. They acquired manuscripts in Latin, French, and English; many manuscripts included two or three of these languages, although Middle English medical texts were especially popular.³⁷ While some fifteenth-century practitioners likely owned

³⁷ Rossell Hope Robbins, “Medical Manuscripts in Middle English,” *Speculum* 45, no. 3 (1970): 394, 408–9, 411–12; Charles Talbot, *Medicine in Medieval England* (London: Oldbourne, 1967), 186–87 and 191–92; and Rawcliffe, *Medicine & Society in Later Medieval England*, 130. Most scholars who have considered Middle English medical manuscripts concur that a variety of practitioners, from barbers to university educated physicians, consulted these texts. While Robbins did suggest that physicians used Latin texts and non-university trained practitioners used Middle English texts, he eventually conceded that some non-university trained practitioners such as John Crophill owned and used Latin texts (London, British
few manuscripts, such as John Crophill’s single volume, others amassed extensive collections, like Roger Marchall’s forty-four. The contents of large and small collections encompassed many topics, including medicine, astronomy and astrology, alchemy, history, literature, courtesy, and food. Furthermore, medical men copied extensive marginalia in their manuscripts. Crophill left copious notes and drawings throughout his lone manuscript. Marchall usually wrote his name in his manuscripts, wrote content lists, added diagrams, and even cross-referenced texts in different manuscripts.

Professionals also valued written codes of conduct—everything from descriptions of appropriate demeanor and the manner with which to address patients and peers, to instruction in social situations previously unknown to them. Texts which communicated professional and aspirational behavior were usually interspersed with practical medical information. Famous surgeons such as John Arderne, Henry de Mondeville, and Lanfranc of Milan devoted space in their surgical treatises to suggestions for professional conduct, all of which emphasized the importance of a well-rounded education. John Arderne, for example, detailed the qualities of a good surgeon, who must be charitable, modest,

38 Voigts, “A Doctor and His Books.”
39 Ibid., 262–64.
40 Power, Treatises of Fistula in Ano, Haemorrhoids, and Clysters by John Arderne; Rosenman, The Surgery of Master Henry de Mondeville; and Fleischhacker, Lanfrank’s “Science of Cirurgie.”
careful in the company he keeps, optimistic, sober, clean, ready to entertain patients with
stories, and much more.41

These doctors also emphasized the importance of reading and a broad knowledge
based in texts. John Arderne fittingly recommended that a practitioner should use books
to continue learning: “and be here euermore occupoed in thingis that biholdith to his
crafte; outhir rede he, or studie he, or write or pray hhe; for the excercyses of bokes
worshippeþ a leche. ffor why; he shal boþ byholden and he shal be more wise.”42
Similarly, Henry de Mondeville emphasized the importance of understanding a wide
variety of topics far beyond the strict bounds of medicine. Further proving the importance
of textual learning among practitioners, he stated,

Several of the well-known physicians and surgeons to whom I have given my
book for proof-reading and to edit especially for its prolixity have criticized me
for my insistence on stating precisely the sources of my citations of other authors,
by giving ‘chapter and verse’. The answer gives my two reasons. 1. To make it
easier for scholars to track down the sources. 2. As a result their comprehension
of my text is better and clearer.43

The ability to effectively use texts was of critical import to Henry de Mondeville.
Likewise, Lanfranc of Milan praised the practitioner who was well versed in topics
beyond medicine: “He muste studie in alle þe parties of philofie & in logik, þat he mowe
vndirstonde scripturis; in gramer, þat he speke congruliche; in arte þat techiþ him to
proue his proporciouns wiþ good resoun; in retorik þat techiþ him to speke semelich.”44

Intelligence, or at least an air of that quality, was crucial for dealing with specific

42 Ibid., 4.
patients: the wealthy, educated, and intellectual. Physicians, especially, in defining the medical profession, regarded themselves as part of a tradition of medicine as a learned discipline. As such, they were particularly appealing to the gentry and nobility, as well as former university students, who wanted erudite, university-trained practitioners.45 Even John Crophill, a practitioner in a village distant from any cosmopolitan centers, included Latin charms in his medical book and possibly used them when he wanted to impress his patients with his learning.46

Medical men also read conduct literature of a more general nature, in addition to professional conduct advice. This conduct literature often included rules for dining, both privately and at feasts. Knowledge of the meal, particularly one shared with social superiors, was of critical importance. The medieval meal was a mirror of social status, and behavior at this daily event might prove or even enhance one’s place in the social structure. Sometimes this advice was directly incorporated into the medical treatises described above. For example, John Arderne reminds his readers to be “content in strange places of metes and drinkes þer y-founden, vsyng mesure in al thingis.”47 Other dining advice was meant for a wide audience, including medical practitioners, and is often found outside of the context of medical ownership. Dining conduct manuals are found in a wide variety of manuscripts, but seem particularly convenient when paired with cookeries, such as in London, British Library, MS Sloane 1986 and London, British Library, MS

46 Robbins, “Medical Manuscripts in Middle English,” 411.
47 Power, Treatises of Fistula in Ano, Haemorrhoids, and Clysters by John Arderne, 4.
The pairing of dining advice with cookeries provided readers with a well-rounded sense of the medieval meal, offering advice about how to act and what one might eat. While just one aspect of professional life that changed along with the improvement in status, food provides a useful lens through which to view this shift, since extant cookery manuscripts offer clear evidence of the role dining could play in differentiating classes.

Cookeries as Aspirational Texts

Not only were their manners and professional conduct shaped by texts, but medical professionals also owned, read, and circulated manuscript cookeries as a way to learn about the foods and dining practices of the social class to which they aspired. This is especially apparent in the codicological context of the aforementioned group of cookery manuscripts from the British Library. These fifteenth-century texts, all contained in professional medical manuscripts, include several textual and codicological clues suggesting that the cookeries were intended not so much for culinary or medical instruction, but to ascertain culinary behaviors. Aspiring and established medical practitioners could use these cookeries to learn about the types of foods that members of a professional class would be expected to eat and serve, particularly in the company of the nobility and royalty. The professional medical manuscripts which contain cookeries,

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the focus of the remainder of the chapter, reveal a persistent concern with a daily show of wealth, status, and social networks: the meal.

Twelve manuscripts share three major characteristics that indicate that practitioners not only collected and read cookeries, but also used the texts for a purpose other than medical practice or cooking instruction. First, the cookeries are contained in manuscripts that share similar or identical textual and codicological characteristics. This degree of similarity is very important. It suggests that practitioners sought out and used a shared body of texts. These common texts informed the ways in which professionals conducted business and carried out daily activities. Furthermore, many of the codicological similarities indicate that scribes adhered to certain copying conventions while producing manuscripts for medical practitioners. The similarities may also corroborate the argument by Linda Voigts that London publishers produced texts for medical practitioners. Second, the cookeries lack the amount of marginalia present in other texts bound in the same manuscripts. Practitioners consistently left notes in the margins of almost all other texts bound with the cookeries. Because the cookeries remained as nearly clean copies in otherwise heavily annotated manuscripts, practitioners


50 Kevin Sharpe, *Sir Robert Cotton 1586–1631: History and Politics in Early Modern England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 68–73; and Colin Tite, *The Manuscript Library of Sir Robert Cotton* (London: The British Library, 1994), 45–46. There is one exception. Cotton Julius D VIII is composed of four distinct parts, all most likely from different manuscripts prior to ownership by Sir Robert Cotton. Cotton rebound many of the manuscripts he acquired, dividing up manuscripts and reorganizing the texts. Because Cotton Julius D VIII is not the original context of the medical texts and cookery inside, when I reference this manuscript, I will only discuss fols. 48r–132r. This section is a medical and scientific miscellany which is distinct from the other three sections in Cotton Julius D VIII.

must have read and used the cookery texts differently from the other texts in the same volume. And third, many cookery recipes contain ingredients that would be difficult or impossible for non-nobles to obtain, rendering the cookeries useless as practical guides for the kitchens of many professional households. This combination of factors creates a compelling case for the late medieval circulation of cookeries as aspirational texts, rather than texts based in kitchen use.

Unlike the cookeries that I discuss in Chapter 1, there is no evidence of noble use or ownership of these texts, nor do these cookeries contain evidence of kitchen use. Instead, the twelve cookeries and accompanying medical texts were used and compiled for professionals. These professionals, situated firmly in the gentry, consumed a variety of cultural goods and texts, such as art, music, and food. Their consumption patterns contributed to a more widespread gentry culture. The broadening of cookery readership beyond noble households in the fifteenth century is additionally important. The audience for cookeries expands and consumes increasingly more texts up to the time cookbooks begin to be printed later in the century.

There is no question that the twelve manuscripts were previously owned and used by medical practitioners, especially physicians and surgeons. In most instances, we do not know the names of the original owners and the manuscripts do not contain enough evidence to identify specific individuals. In two instances, the manuscript’s original compiler and owner has been identified. Nicholas Spalding, a practitioner about whom nothing is known, compiled Harley 2378. John Crophill, a practitioner in the village of Wix, compiled Harley 1735. Although Crophill was neither university-trained nor an urban resident, he was well educated and paid. Crophill copied much of his manuscript,
while a Norfolk scribe copied fols. 29r–36v.\textsuperscript{52} Sometimes where a name is associated with the manuscript, as in Sloane 442, owned by a “W. Slyngebye,” the individual does not otherwise exist in other records or is clearly a later owner. Yet the manuscripts reveal other clues to their provenance. The manuscripts in question contain mainly medical or health-related texts that trained medical professionals would have used. Though some of these texts may have been familiar to non-professionals or home practitioners, like herbals and charm recipes, many other texts require a high level of education and medical training. For example, Sloane 442 contains price lists of drugs, medical recipes in Latin, bloodletting and urinalysis tracts in English and Latin, and surgical texts in Latin.

Similarly, Sloane 7 contains bloodletting treatises and a plague treatise in Latin titled “The tretes of John of Burdeux the nobille ficecon aȝeyne the pestelence.”\textsuperscript{53} Yet one more example is Royal 18.A.vi. A chapter contained in a women’s health text begins by identifying the audience—physicians: “A phisycian behoueth to knowe in manere inspeccions.”\textsuperscript{54} Another text in the same manuscript describes bloodletting procedures. A reader wrote notes on times for bleeding at the end of the text. The marginalia, in Latin, is


\textsuperscript{54} Royal 18.A.vi, fol. 54r.
suggestive of a well-educated reader. These examples are indicative of the body of the group of twelve manuscripts; clearly these manuscripts were owned and used by professional medical practitioners.

The twelve manuscripts with which I am concerned share many codicological characteristics. I describe these features below, as well as list them by manuscript in Appendix A. These common features indicate that scribes adhered to certain copying conventions while producing manuscripts for medical practitioners. Physicians and surgeons may have circulated their texts within their small social circle. Since two practitioners copied parts of their own professional manuscripts, they were likely influenced by the texts, mise en page, illustrations, and other features they witnessed in the manuscripts used by their peers. The other ten manuscripts, probably copied by professional scribes, may corroborate an argument advanced by Linda Voigts that at least one manuscript publisher produced texts specifically for medical practitioners. Voigts claims that a group of fifteenth-century English manuscripts that share physical and textual similarities were produced by a publisher—an individual or group responsible for producing a specific kind of manuscript—for practitioners. Voigts refers to the group of six manuscripts as the “Sloane Group” and has identified fourteen other closely related manuscripts. The core group contains quarto manuscripts measuring approximately 210 x 145 mm. They share paper with common watermarks, mise en page, and hands. Furthermore, the manuscripts contain texts of common subject matter. Voigts argues

55 Royal 18.A.vi, fol. 20r is one example.


57 Ibid., 27–28.
that the Sloane Group manuscripts were created by a publisher who coordinated the subject matter and presentation of scientific and medical texts. This publisher may have been an individual or group and was based in London or Westminster in the 1450s and 1460s. While I am not yet willing to assert that the manuscripts I examine in this chapter were produced by the same publisher until I have the opportunity to examine them more closely, the parallels between the Sloane Group and the twelve medical manuscripts with cookeries are striking. Voigts has provided a model for examining such a group of texts. Additionally, her argument shows that a specific group of professionals was serviced by a publisher. Medical practitioners’ reliance upon a common group of texts was strong enough to support a publishing business.

The twelve medical manuscripts containing cookeries date from the late fourteenth century through the mid fifteenth century. Portions of four manuscripts date from the late fourteenth century through the early fifteenth; most were composed solidly in the fifteenth century. The four early manuscripts of the twelve containing cookeries share one characteristic: all or parts were composed on parchment, rather than paper. Six of the manuscripts consist of paper folios; some in entirety, two in part. This is notable because the manuscripts made around the same time are made of the same materials. The oldest manuscripts are made mainly of parchment, while the later manuscripts are made mainly of paper. This shift from parchment to paper is a widespread and well-documented development during the late fourteenth century through early fifteenth;

58 Ibid., 37. Voigts deduces this time and place based partly upon a strong connection in the manuscripts, especially Boston, Countway Library of Medicine, MS 19, to John Shirley and William Ebesham.
however, this seems like a more coordinated effort in production when paired with further evidence.  

Closer examination of the paper used reveals that three manuscripts contain related watermarks. While I was unable to discern the watermarks in two manuscripts, three of the paper manuscripts include watermarks of bulls and bulls’ heads. Harley 1735, Royal 18.A.vi, and Sloane 7 include watermarks of bulls’ heads, while Sloane 7 also includes a watermark of an entire bull. I could not find comparators in watermark catalogues for the images of bulls in Royal 18.A.vi and Sloane 7. However, Harley 1735 shares a watermark with several Sloane Group manuscripts: a bull’s head with St. Andrew’s Cross. Paper used in England with bull watermarks was often produced in southern France or northern Italy, especially Piedmont, so it is probable that all of these papers came from paper makers in the same region. Several manuscripts, all containing medical writings, were copied on related papers. It is possible, then, that a publisher bought a quantity of paper from the same makers and produced some of the manuscripts in the group of twelve with cookeries.

All twelve manuscripts are small, portable, and lightweight codices. Their most obvious features, size and mise en page, are also comparable. While the exact size of


each varies slightly, the average manuscript measures approximately 130 mm by 190 mm. Most are around this size, but there is some variation from 75 mm by 110 mm to 200 mm by 280 mm. The *mise en page* is also consistent. As depicted in Harley 2378 in Figure 2.1, all twelve cookeries contain a single writing block. The blocks are proportionate to the size of the manuscript leaves. Most of these blocks contain between 21 and 28 lines, though the number can vary even throughout a single text in a manuscript. Some of the blocks were clearly ruled, while others appear to have been composed in freehand. The manuscripts contain a variety of scripts, though a majority of the texts are written in secretary or Anglicana hands. A few scribes employed Anglicana formata. These similarities suggest that the scribes who copied these manuscripts adhered to a set of production conventions, imposed either by a publisher or by practitioners requesting texts similar to those of their colleagues.
Figure 2.1. This image from a cookery in Harley 2378, fol. 155r, depicts features present in many of the twelve manuscripts. Note the single writing block composed without ruling, the lack of decoration with the exception of rubrication, and the lack of marginalia next to the culinary recipes.

The twelve manuscripts share many decorative elements. Textual decoration is limited to red or blue initials and rubrication in most of the manuscripts. Arundel 334 is the outlier, containing minimal goldleaf decoration. Several manuscripts, however,
include illustrations, even in the cookery texts. Sloane 442 contains images of fish as
decoration in the cookery, and Harley 1735 contains drawings throughout the manuscript
margins, including images of animals and cooking tools throughout the cookery. Harley
2378 includes astrological diagrams, Harley 5401 contains a large number of
instructional images for surgery and diagnosis, and anatomical drawings appear in Royal
18.A.vi. Colored images of urine flasks for urinalysis instruction are located in Royal
18.A.vi, Sloane 7, and Sloane 468. These illustrated manuscripts in particular would not
be used in a kitchen setting; decoration involving goldleaf or colorful inks was too
precious for such a potentially destructive setting.

The original owners of these twelve manuscripts may have carefully planned the
compilation of texts. Several manuscripts, however, appear to be shaped by a more
particular purpose. Sloane 7, Sloane 442, and Sloane 468, appear to have been created as
unified codices, rather than pieced together from preexisting gatherings. In each of these
manuscripts, the scripts, mise en page, and decoration are consistent among all texts.

Several texts appear in multiple manuscripts in this group of twelve. In Appendix
B, I have included a list of texts which appear in at least two manuscripts of the twelve.
While some of these repetitions are of a certain type of text—like a bloodletting or
urinalysis treatise—others are of the same text, such as a poem, “That man that wole of
lechecraft lere.” This textual overlap is indicative of a common body of knowledge
valued by medical practitioners of the fifteenth century. Five manuscripts include at least
one general herbal on a variety of plants; three manuscripts include herbals specifically
about rosemary. Six manuscripts include texts on urines, several of these with illustrated diagrams. Another six contain texts on bloodletting. The urinalysis and bloodletting texts vary in scope: some focus on technique, while others are concerned with the timing of the procedures based on lunar, astronomical, or astrological signs. Four manuscripts contain texts on two important topics: wine (and wine-derived spirits) production and plant grafting, especially grapes. Two of these texts were well-known tomes on the topic of grafting, one by Nicholas Bollard and the other an adaptation and translation by Godfray of a fourth-century work by Palladius. These texts are regularly found paired together in manuscripts, as these are in Cotton Julius D VII and Sloane 7.

Two manuscripts include chronicles of English history. Arundel 334 contains a Latin chronicle of English history from 1326 to 1399. Harley 1605, an otherwise fifteenth-century manuscript, includes thirteenth-century fragments in French (Anglo-

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63 Herbals were added to Arundel 334, fols. 99v–114r; Harley 2378, fols. 12r–14r and fols. 113r–117r; Royal 18.A.i, fols. 64r–87v; Sloane 7, fols. 30r–33v; and Sloane 374, fols. 85v–86r. Herbals specifically about rosemary are in Harley 1735, fols. 51r–52v; Royal 17.A.iii, fols. 13r–17r; and Sloane 7, fols. 40r–41r. For a more detailed discussion of the rosemary texts, see Keiser, George, “Rosemary: Not Just for Remembrance,” in *Health and Healing from the Medieval Garden*, ed. Peter Dendle and Alain Touwaide (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: The Boydell Pres, 2008), 180–204.

64 Urinalysis texts are found in Harley 1735, fols. 43r–44r; Harley 5401, fols. 87v–88r; Royal 17.A.iii, fols. 1r–11r; Royal 18.A.i, fols. 23r–24v; Sloane 7, fol. 57r–57v and fols. 58r–59v; Sloane 374, fols. 5v–8v and fols. 10v–13v; Sloane 442, fols. 41r–42v.

65 I am including all texts which discuss bloodletting, including charms, recipes, and astronomical guides, as well as treatises solely dedicated to the topic. These are located in Harley 2378, fol. 118r–118v; Royal 17.A.iii, fols. 11v–13r and fols. 91r–95v; Royal 18.A.vi, fols. 54r–55v; Sloane 7, fols. 84r–85r; Sloane 374, fols. 92r–93v; Sloane 442, fols. 35r–36r.

66 Godfray’s adaptation of Palladius is in Cotton Julius D VIII, fols. 48r–73v and Sloane 7, fols. 88r–92r. Bollard’s work on grafting appears in Cotton Julius D VIII, fols. 74r–77r and Sloane 7, fols. 92r–93r. Other texts on grafting and wine production can be found in Royal 17.A.iii, fols. 80v–81v and fols. 87r–89r, and Sloane 442, fol. 4r.

67 Chronicles of English history appear in Arundel 334, fols. 6r–10r and Harley 1605 fols. 1r–42v.

68 Arundel 334, fols. 6r–9v.
Norman) of a poem on the history of England based on Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia Regum Britannie*. The focus on English history in these medical texts is notable, suggesting a concern with information about key historical events and notable English families who dominated the chronicles. Just as medical practitioners thirsted for practical dining knowledge that would benefit them at noble tables, a basic historical education would similarly serve them well while treating members of the nobility and royalty. The multiple languages represented in these chronicles are also important; well-educated medical practitioners in late medieval England would be able to read Latin, English, and French competently.

Two more seemingly unrelated texts are commonly paired together in fifteenth-century medical manuscripts: a verse beginning “That man that wole of lechecraft lere” and a collection of books or excerpts from books by Galen and Hippocrates. This pairing appears three times in the twelve manuscripts. The verse exhorts the reader, a medical man, to learn as much as he can about medicine from the following text and be a great healer. A selection of excerpts from the books of Galen and Hippocrates also appears in two other manuscripts: Royal 18.A.vi and Harley 1735. Royal 18.A.vi does not share the verse “That man that wole of lechecraft lere,” but it contains a prose prologue with a similar sentiment to introduce the medical texts.

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69 Ibid., fols. 1r–42v.

70 The pairing appears in Sloane 374, fols. 14r–14v and fols. 93v–94v; Sloane 442, fol. 43r and fols. 61v–63r; Sloane 468, fol. 7r, fol. 80v, and fols. 2r–80v.
Even more texts appear in two of the twelve manuscripts. These include plague treatises, lunaries, antidotaries, texts on simples, and texts on aqua vitae. These are all similar texts rather than identical texts; however, the degree of topical overlap is notable. Portions of the *Regimen Sanitatis Salernitani* and an herbal beginning with *agnus castus* each appear in two manuscripts.

The twelve professional manuscripts share many codicological and textual characteristics. Medical practitioners owned similar manuscripts of approximately the same size, of similar materials, written with the same scripts, and containing many of the same decorations, illustrations, and texts. Not only were physicians and surgeons circulating the same texts and ideas, they were doing so with manuscripts that physically presented that literature in the same way.

This level of similarity between texts is critical; it demonstrates that these texts were being transmitted together within a small professional circle. The presentation of the same or very similar texts with the same codicological features further supports the idea that medical practitioners were sharing texts and consequently copying or purchasing manuscripts like the ones their colleagues used. It may also indicate that a publisher produced these manuscripts for medical practitioners. Certain medical and non-medical topics and texts were considered part of a common body of knowledge among English

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71 Plague treatises were composed in Arundel 334, fols. 49r–53r and Sloane 7, fols. 85v–87r; lunaries in Harley 1735, fol. 48r and fol. 50r–v and Sloane 374, fols. 8v–10r; antidotaries in Harley 2378, fols. 63r–110r and Royal 17.A.iii, fols. 24v–30r; texts on simples in Harley 2378, fols. 10v–113r and Royal 17.A.iii, fol. 24v; and texts on aqua vitae in Royal 17.A.iii, fols. 80v–81v and fols. 81v–87r and Royal 18.A.vi, fols. 59r–62v.

72 The *Regimen Sanitatis Salernitani* appears in Arundel 334, fols. 22v–23r and Sloane 374, fols. 1r–5r. The herbal is in Royal 18.A.vi, fols. 64r–87v and Sloane 7, fols. 30r–33v. For more details on the herbal, see Gösta Brodin, ed., *Agnus Castus: a Middle English Herbal Reconstructed from Various Manuscripts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951).
medical practitioners. This shared corpus, which included medical, agricultural, and culinary knowledge, reveals the common interests cultivated by medieval professionals.

The marginalia in these medical manuscripts provides precious evidence about how these texts were used and read. While cookeries bound independently or in non-professional miscellanies contain abundant marginalia, including emendations to the recipes, cookeries found in manuscripts intended for professionals contain minimal markings. In this regard, the cookery texts stand apart from the surrounding professional texts, which generally include notes, references, and other marginalia. This imbalance of marginalia indicates that cookeries contained in professional manuscripts were not generally used as guides for cooking; instead, their purpose was to be read and used outside of the kitchen.

Marginalia is evidence of active readership; when considered in the context of technical or instructional literature, marginalia is often indicative of use. The medical manuscripts bound with the cookeries contain such evidence. For example, Harley 2378 contains extensive marginalia, almost all of it appearing outside of the cookery. Readers left several symbols in the margins, as well as a page filled with scribbles and symbols. Some readers inscribed their names in the manuscript. Still others included marginal notes and additional blocks of text, with some notes in Latin. One reader even included

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73 Marginal symbols appear on twenty-one folios. Scribbles and symbols appear around all margins on fol. 115r.

74 Names are inscribed on fols. 16r, 61r, 69v, and 70v.

75 Notes and additional texts are written in the margins of fols. 6v, 14v, 15v, 61v, 140r, and 184v. Notes cover the top and bottom margins of fol. 29r, while entire sections are erased on that same folio. Latin notes are written next to a Latin text on fol. 169r–v, while a Latin recipe is added in a Middle English medical recipe text on fol. 125v.
a highly detailed manicule next to a recipe for gunpowder.\textsuperscript{76} The only marginalia in the cookery in Harley 2378 are a few symbols next to some of the recipes. This lack of marginal notations in the cookery is depicted in Figure 2.1.

 Likewise, Royal 18.A.vi contains extensive marginalia in nearly every section except the cookery. A collection of medical recipes contains floral flourishes in the margins of six folios.\textsuperscript{77} Seventeen manicules appear throughout the manuscript, and two feet make an appearance.\textsuperscript{78} Drawings, including a fish, dragon, several body parts, and much more, appear throughout one text.\textsuperscript{79} Two sections contain large amounts of marginal writing, adding to the text already on the page.\textsuperscript{80} Despite the copious evidence of readership, the cookery does not contain any notes. Harley 1735, Royal 17.A.iii, and Sloane 374 contain similarly great discrepancies in marginalia, while the rest contain a consistent amount of marginalia—or lack thereof—across all manuscript parts. The cookeries consistently contain scant evidence of kitchen use. This is not due to lack of space; the cookery texts fill approximately 45 to 60 percent of the folios, leaving plenty of blank space for marginal notes. Yet readers did not fill these margins with additional text.

\textsuperscript{76} The manicule pointing to a recipe for gunpowder is on fol. 183r.

\textsuperscript{77} Floral flourishes are inscribed on fols. 4r–5r, 7r, 9r, and 13v.

\textsuperscript{78} Seventeen manicules on sixteen folios appear throughout the manuscript. Feet with attached legs are drawn on fols. 14v and 53v.

\textsuperscript{79} A fish and dragon are located on fol. 8r, while many other small drawings appear on fols. 64r–87v.

\textsuperscript{80} Heavy marginal notes cover fols. 49v–51v and fols. 64r–87v.
The recipe texts provide the final piece of the puzzle. Cookeries, as technical literature, were intended for kitchen use. I posit that cookeries in professional manuscripts, however, mainly served an alternate function—as aspirational texts. Professionals would read recipes and be able to identify culinary trends, ingredients, and menus that were associated with the noble and royal class. I have not yet been able to determine any comparable uses for contemporary manuscripts. Additionally, while secondary literature on this topic in medieval manuscript culture is lacking, I have found mentions of the use of cookeries specifically for social emulation, albeit during later centuries and specifically in regards to printed cookbooks. 81 Despite the lack of analogues from medieval manuscript culture, this is not an unfamiliar idea in the present day. With today’s boom in culinary literature, hordes of people purchase cookbooks they never use, or never even plan to use. And cookbooks from today’s finest restaurant kitchens—an easy comparator to medieval royal kitchens—contain notoriously expensive and demanding dishes far beyond the skill of home cooks. Yet the images, flavors, and processes keep consumers engaged in modern food culture and trends, whether or not they can reproduce restaurant dishes. Notable books in this category include Thomas Keller’s *The French Laundry Cookbook*, Heston Blumenthal’s *Historic Heston* (to accompany his restaurant Dinner), and Ferran Adrià’s *elBulli 2005–2011*. 82 Reservations are difficult to obtain at the French Laundry and Dinner; the same was true at elBulli until

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it closed in 2011. The difficulty of obtaining a reservation, as well as the cost of a meal, are circumvented by reading these cookbooks. The average diner may not be able to experience such a lavish meal with any regularity, yet they can become familiar with iconic dishes such as “Oysters and Pearls” and “Liquid Olives” when perusing the books.\footnote{“Oysters and Pearls” is a dish served at the French Laundry and “Liquid Olives” was a notable course served at elBulli.} Shared knowledge of these foodstuffs creates a sense of community among interested readers, whether or not they could partake in the actual dining experience. Similarly, the non-noble, professional audience owning these manuscripts would not necessarily have cooked the recipes; rather, these cookeries would have familiarized readers with the types of foods appropriate for the social station to which they aspired. In a class-conscious society where everyone was trying to scale the social ladder, cookeries gave medical practitioners a fighting chance to “keep up with the Joneses” at the dinner table, even when the Joneses were aristocrats.

Many medieval cookery recipes found in medical manuscripts contain ingredients that were difficult or impossible for non-nobles to acquire. There are, of course, recipes with completely ordinary and affordable ingredients. However, dishes featuring peacocks, cranes, and herons are contained in a collection known as Utilis Coquinario, found in Sloane 374 and Sloane 468. These birds were wholly out of reach for bourgeois consumers and difficult for all but the highest-ranked nobles to obtain. This collection also includes recipes for lamprey, an eel-like creature that was more expensive than common freshwater eels. Similarly, Arundel 334, Cotton Julius D VIII, and Harley 1605 contain the Forme of Cury, a cookery originating in King Richard II’s kitchen. In this
collection, recipes again feature animals such as turbot, lamprey, porpoise, swan, peacock, crane, and heron.

Wild game birds and large fresh fish were prized foodstuffs featured on noble tables. According to ancient and medieval thought, these animals had a high status in the animal kingdom, and were therefore available only to wealthy consumers. Birds, fish, and all other animals were classified by different characteristics and thus had different levels of status that mirrored contemporary social hierarchies. Wild game was available by hunting, a sport restricted to the nobility, as the right to hunt was granted by the king. Among fish, the largest, fresh, saltwater fish were the most prized, particularly if the fish were rare, difficult to catch, and had to be transported a long distance. Archeological excavations further demonstrate the status of such animals; bones from luxury birds and large fish as listed above are only found in castle and monastic house remains.

Professionals would not have had access to most of these ingredients for meals within their households. However, if they dined at the court of a royal or noble patient or

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began to associate with local nobles, then they would have wanted to be familiar with these foods and how they were prepared in order to cultivate the manners and courtesy to properly consume their dinner. In rare instances, the wealthiest physicians and surgeons might earn the substantial assets required to afford ingredients with an otherwise noble status, and if so, they were already familiar with the finest products to seek and the possible preparations that awaited them.

Professionals in the fifteenth century, situated between the middle class and the nobility, engaged in pecuniary emulation. That is, as professionals aspired to the noble class, they used their newfound wealth to emulate noble habits. By freely consuming products and services, professionals were announcing their wealth and time devoted to leisure rather than work. This activity included conspicuous consumption of a variety of goods, including food, as Thorstein Veblen specifically identified in The Theory of the Leisure Class. Certain luxury foods were strictly reserved for the nobility; consumption of such victuals identified one as a member of that group. Professionals strove to consume such luxury items, though in reality such consumption could happen only at noble tables. In preparation of such consumption at the homes of noble patients and patrons, medical practitioners read cookeries that described the luxury foodstuffs and their common preparations.

Conclusion

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Taken together, the evidence presented here suggests that medical professionals used cookeries for the specific purpose of familiarizing themselves with the types of foods appropriate to their aspirations. We know that practitioners owned these manuscripts and that these cookeries were circulated with other texts regularly read by practitioners. Yet features such as manuscript decoration and the lack of marginalia in the cookeries indicate that they were not used in a kitchen setting. The recipe ingredients further suggest that few physicians or surgeons could have actually produced the final dishes. Together, this evidence supports the conclusion that practitioners employed these texts to learn about higher-status foods and dishes, even if they could not yet afford them for their own households.

It is important both to acknowledge the relationship between medieval medicine and food, as well as to emphasize that these twelve cookeries were not likely consulted for medical purposes. Several scholars have examined the intricate connections between humoral theory and food in the direct treatment of ailments—sickdishes—and in the combinations of foods during a meal.88 As evinced by the lack of marginalia, however, medical practitioners did not treat the cookeries identified in this chapter as medical texts. Additionally, medical practitioners had other texts to consult for nutritional information. Dietaries, or texts dedicated to diet and nutrition, circulated among practitioners. Celebrity practitioners also included information on the topic in their writings. For example, Henry de Mondeville advocated treatment with diet prior to surgery or

medication, and Lanfranc of Milan dedicated a section of his surgical writings to this topic. Moreover, cookeries appear in manuscripts for other professional groups, including lawyers. London, British Library, MS Additional 32085, for example, contains all the same characteristics, only it is an English legal manuscript and not a medical one. Other examples of cookeries in otherwise professional manuscripts exist even in foreign variations: the Vivendier is a fifteenth-century cookery in the French medical manuscript Kassel, Gesamthochschulbibliothek, 4° MS med. 1, while Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Latin 7131 and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS LAT 9328 are two fourteenth-century French and Italian medical manuscripts. While physicians and lawyers, as well as the growing professional class, assuredly had individual reasons for knowing about the noble food and food culture of their time, the inclusion of these texts within and beside other field-specific texts and instructional literature points to a role for these cookeries in helping professionals learn about the banquets that awaited them as they were welcomed into increasingly opulent dining rooms.


CHAPTER 3

PRINT COOKERIES FOR A HUNGRY AUDIENCE

To bake Chickins.
Take and trusse your Chickins, the feete cut off, put them in the Coffin: then for every chickin put in euery Pye a handful of Goose beries, & a quantity of butter about every Chickin: then take a good quantitie of Suger and Sinimon with sufficient salt, put them into the Pye, let it bake one howre and a halfe, when it is baken take the yolke of an egge & half a Goblet of veriuce with sufficient suger sodden together, put in the pye & serue it.

—The Treasurie of Commodious Conceits (1573), sig. B.i.v

“To bake Chickins” was a respectable dinner selection for a gentry household. Although the ingredients were not overly expensive or difficult to obtain, the fact that the recipe featured chickens baked in a pie allowed the reader to customize the dish for a variety of situations. For example, a cook could ornately decorate the pastry or leave it unadorned. A gentlewoman could request, upon preparation for a dinner party, that her cook decorate the pie with the most fashionable geometric patterns, such as those employed in period garden designs. The addition of sugar and cinnamon flirted with expense and frivolity, but did not leave a haughty taste in the mouth. After all, the gentlewoman did not need to try hard to impress her guests; she simply did. Despite the appeal to a gentle audience, a reader without a regular cook staffed in her household could also benefit from the text. She had clear instructions and could prepare this dish with ease. The recipe contains crucial specifics, like the baking time, but also allowed the
reader to improvise the seasoning and amount of flavoring permeating the baked chickens.

The recipe’s printed source, John Partridge’s *The Treasurie of Commodious Conceits*, was an innovative text. Notably, it was the first cookbook printed for a female audience, particularly gentlewomen. Just one generation earlier, the first cookbook intended for a non-noble readership, *A Proper New Book of Cookery*, entered the market. While manuscript cookbooks produced throughout the fifteenth century were certainly used by non-noble readers and perhaps by the occasional female, the earliest cookbook authors likely never had these audiences in mind. How and why, then, did English authors and printers begin producing such texts after the introduction of print? I explore these important questions in this chapter, arguing that these targeted cookbooks were printed to satisfy an expanding readership, an audience that pre-existed the printing press. As printed books filled the marketplace, new audiences gradually emerged. A definitively non-noble readership and a female audience are the most significant groups to develop. These consumers first read and used books already on the market, but authors and printers identified these groups and produced cookbooks specifically for them. Despite initial risks, these producers ultimately codified new cookery markets.

The account of this emergence and development of print cookery audiences requires some discussion of printing and reading practices in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. I begin with a brief overview of early print cookeries and a consideration of the demand and use among gentry readers for household books. Next, I turn my attention to defining the social groups from which cookery audiences develop and to the question of literacy among potential cookery readers, such as women and
middling individuals. Finally, I delve into the body of sixteenth-century printed cookbooks, considering the emergence of non-noble and female readerships throughout the century.

By the time the printing press was established in England in 1476, cookbooks were already in circulation throughout Europe. Several Latin editions of *De honesta voluptate et valetudine* were printed in Italy starting in 1470. The number of vernacular editions, such as the German *Küchenmeisterei*, French *Le Viandier*, and Italian *De honesta voluptate et valetudine*, quickly eclipsed that of Latin cookeries on the Continent. English readers, however, waited until 1500 for their own vernacular cookbook. Latin cookbooks certainly found their way onto the island and served as international vehicles of culinary information, while translations of Italian and French cookeries were perennially popular in England. Culinary texts were printed as individual volumes, as well as included in books with topics such as medical information and estate management. Throughout this new process of print production, manuscript cookeries continued to be created. Readers wrote marginal notes in printed cookbooks, just as they had done in manuscript copies. Scribal and print traditions coexisted in this genre for several centuries.

Though a healthy number of copies of sixteenth-century printed English cookeries survive today, that total is likely a small percentage of copies that circulated at the time of their printing. Small, practical books, like the octavo and duodecimo cookbooks regularly printed from the 1580s onward, were among a category of texts prone to destruction. Practical books were likely to be destroyed through regular use, especially since kitchens
and still rooms were hostile environments for paper and parchment.¹ While print run estimates vary, printers likely produced between 500 and 1,000 copies of each cookbook edition during the sixteenth century.²

Like the emerging professional class in fifteenth-century England, the gentry of the following century continued to use manuscript and printed texts to codify and disseminate group knowledge and behavior.³ These readers avidly collected and read household and husbandry texts. Cookbooks and other recipe books were an important component of libraries and closets, as these texts served as guides to living in accordance with one’s status. Servants in grand households also benefited from such instruction.⁴ The audience of noble and professional readers, which had been growing over the course of two centuries, coalesced into a ready group of consumers by the advent of print. Rather than creating a new audience, the printing press fed an existing hunger for cookeries. At first, print simply increased the quantity of cookbooks available to readers;

¹ John Barnard, “Bibliographical Note: The Survival and Loss Rates of Psalms, ABCs, Psalters and Primers from the Stationers’ Stock, 1660–1700,” The Library 21 (1999): 148–50. Many small-format texts, like the ABCs, psalters, and primers of this study, were in high demand and printed by the tens of thousands. The loss rates, however, are enormous, particularly for the smallest formats. Still rooms were spaces in large households designated for a variety of activities, including distilling waters and oils, preparing medicines, and preserving fresh fruits and vegetables. The still room was typically located between the kitchen and garden.


the printing press did not immediately result in cookeries in the hands of new consumers. Printers did not even attempt to print original cookbooks; rather, the first printed English recipes had already circulated in manuscript form. The same noble, gentry, and professional readers were the intended audience for the earliest print cookeries in England. Over time, the proliferation of printed cookbooks, particularly more affordable copies, contributed to an expansion of audience that changed the landscape of cookery production until the present day. By the late sixteenth century, authors and printers produced cookbooks specifically for women. Some of these books were even intended for middling readers, rather than gentry and noble houses. This shift in audience is all the more startling when compared to the rest of Europe; England was alone in regularly producing printed cookbooks for women until the late seventeenth century. Cookbooks for a middling readership were only slightly less surprising.

In the past two decades, scholars have devoted significant attention to early modern women’s cookbooks and to women as cookbook authors. Yet, save brief descriptions of sixteenth-century texts, little has been studied about the publication history of the earliest English women’s cookbooks. Scholars have instead focused on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century books and authors. The initial years of women’s


cookery production provide an important key to not only understanding the trajectory of cookbooks as a feminine genre, but also visualizing a more complete picture of early cookery development.

As I mentioned in my description of the gentry in Chapter 2, the label had little to do with lineage, wealth, and land ownership from the sixteenth century onward. A collective identity among the gentry was more important than bloodlines or formal designations. Thus, when discussing sixteenth-century gentry, I approach the group with a flexible description. Many early modern descriptions and surveys of the social order survive, as well as modern analyses of the topic. Here I rely on syntheses of the vast scholarship on the gentry and early modern English social order, as these provide neat descriptions sufficient for the purposes of this chapter.7

Although the gentry remains frustratingly elusive to define, despite being a cohesive social group, entrance into this class was relatively easy. Provided that individuals were willing to function in society with gentry customs, manners, communication, preferences, and education, they could, as Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes describe, “define themselves, and be defined by others, as belonging to the


higher status group or not according to circumstance.”8 As a result, not only the upper and lower nobility comprised the gentry in Tudor England, but also professionals, servants to the crown, academics, and clergy.9 Merchants, tradesmen, and craftsmen could and did claim gentry status, based in part on their financial equivalence.

Just as the gentry had a flexible definition, so too did the middling class. Variables to their definition included whether the setting was urban or rural, or whether the more successful members were claiming gentry status. In an urban setting, merchants, tradesmen, and craftsmen were considered middling, except in the instances where they were highly successful and considered themselves gentry. In rural settings, yeomen and husbandmen comprised the middling class.10

These social groups experienced differing levels of education and literacy; so too did men and women in each class. Although literacy facilitated productive and complex interactions, the skill was still not universally valued in sixteenth-century England.11 Additionally, literacy rates constantly fluctuated. Time, geography, politics, and religion were among the many factors that affected the importance and accessibility of education. However, Tudor England was a literate environment in which no one escaped the ripples

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8 Heal and Holmes, 16.

9 Heal and Holmes, 7; Cressy, “Describing the Social Order,” 35–42; and Wrightson, 24–30.

10 Cressy, “Describing the Social Order,” 35–42. Cressy suggests a social hierarchy consisting of the following levels: 1) aristocratic gentlemen; 2) clergy and professionals; 3) merchants, tradesmen, and craftsmen; 4) yeomen; 5) husbandmen; and 6) laborers and servants.

11 David Cressy, Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 10–11; and Fox, 19–36. Literacy was unnecessary for most people conducting ordinary daily tasks and occupations; instead, orality was an appropriate mode of communication.
of the written word. Even those who could not read usually had access to someone who could.\textsuperscript{12}

While scholars disagree on specific historic literacy rates in England, in this instance the actual rates matter far less than the broad brushstrokes.\textsuperscript{13} People of a higher social status were more likely to be educated and literate than people in lower classes. In early modern England, gentlemen, clergy, and professionals were the most literate groups.\textsuperscript{14} Men were typically more literate than women. However, women from gentry and noble families were likely to meet or exceed the literacy of lower classes of men.\textsuperscript{15} Literacy levels varied dramatically from one geographical area to another. Urbanites were more literate than rural dwellers. This was particularly true with respect to residents of London, which boasted a more literate lay population than the rest of England, even in the late Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{16}

It is imperative to imagine the consumers of the first printed cookeries, and even the cookeries themselves, as part of the existing scribal tradition. Printers reproduced manuscript recipes and expected the same audiences to purchase and use the printed cookbooks. In the infancy of print, the cookbook conformed to a pre-existing readership trend. Print did not initially create an audience for these practical texts; instead, printers

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} Fox, 19, 36–47.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Houston, 130–54; and Cressy, \textit{Literacy and the Social Order}. Although specific rates differ, the overall conclusions are similar.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Cressy, \textit{Literacy and the Social Order}, 123.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Houston, 136.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Fox, 12–14. Cressy, \textit{Literacy and the Social Order}, 119–21. Cressy provides a stark example; women in some areas of England had a 98 percent illiteracy rate, while they boasted a 76 percent rate in London.
\end{itemize}
produced culinary volumes as a result of demand. This pre-existing audience for cookbooks further expanded as print increased the number of texts available in the marketplace. The increase facilitated the further growth of audiences and the emergence of a definitively non-noble cookbook in the mid-sixteenth century.

Class

The first English vernacular cookery printed in 1500 by Richard Pynson, as well as its two subsequent editions, originally circulated in manuscript form.17 Other than its nature as a printed book, the Boke of Cokery is very much a typical medieval cookery. The appearance of the text mirrors many fifteenth-century manuscript cookeries. The black gothic typeface is unadorned, nary a decorated capital or border in sight.18 Clearly differentiating the printed text from a manuscript one is the lack of rubrication, which speckles so many handwritten recipes. The quarto book of 64 leaves also mimics the size of its predecessors at 190 by 125 mm.

The Boke of Cokery not only looks like a late medieval cookery, it reads like one, too. The anonymous text begins not with recipes, but with the menus of several

17 *Here begynneth a noble boke of festes ryal and Cokery* (London: Richard Pynson, 1500). Henceforth this book will be called *Boke of Cokery*. For the book’s manuscript sources, see Constance Hieatt, “Richard Pynson’s Noble Boke of Festes Ryalle and Cokery and its Relationship to Two Analogous Manuscripts,” *Journal of the Early Book Society* 1 (1997), 78–95; Robina Napier, ed., *A Noble Boke off Cookry ffor a Prynce Houssolde or eny other Estately Houssolde; Reprinted Verbatim from a Rare MS. in the Holkham Collection* (London: Elliot Stock, 1882). Constance Hieatt believed that the *Boke of Cokery* was based on a manuscript source descended from New Haven, CT, Beinecke Library, MS Beinecke 163, which also resulted in the similar cookeries in Norfolk, Holkham Hall, MS 674 (edited by Napier) and London, Society of Antiquaries, MS 287.

18 Henry Notaker, *Printed Cookbooks in Europe, 1470–1700* (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2010), 56. The *Boke of Cokery* also does not contain any illustrations. However, Notaker erroneously reports that there are two full page illustrations in the book.
fourteenth and fifteenth-century noble feasts: one hosted by Henry IV at a Smithfield joust, the coronation feast of Henry V, a feast of the Earl of Huntingdon at Calais, a feast held for the king in London by the Earl of Warwick, the installation feast of Bishop Clifford in London, and an installation feast for the Archbishop of York in 1465. The author describes several other untitled feasts before discussing dishes appropriate for various seasons. Following this calendar, which also serves as a recipe index, the author finally provides recipes. The 275 recipes reflect dishes familiar to late medieval nobles like bucknade, leche lombarde, eles in bruet, and sauce camelyne. Dishes abound for the Lenten fast, and the text is filled with high status birds and fish fit for noble tables.

The text begins with a modest incipit, and concludes with Richard Pynson’s similarly quiet colophon. The incipit bluntly announces the topic and the audience, a book of royal feasts and a cookbook, intended for a noble household: “Here begynneth a noble boke of festes ryalle and Cokery a boke for a pryncis housholde or any other estates : and the makynge therof accordynge as ye shall fynde more playnly within this boke.”

The colophon similarly concludes the text, but an addition by Pynson plainly states the printer, location, and date: “Here endeth a noble boke of the festes Ryall, and the boke of cookery for a pryncys housholde or euerye other estates housholde, as ye maye fynde in the chapytres & in the makynge accordynge. Emprynted without temple barre by Rycharde Pynson in the yere of our lorde. M.D.”

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19 Boke of Cokery, sigs. aiir–avir.
20 Ibid., sigs. biv, Ivr, cviv, cviv-dir, and ciir.
21 Ibid., fol. aiir.
22 Ibid., fol. Liv.
Pynson’s printing in 1500 in his shop outside of the Temple Bar, a ceremonial gate between the City of London and Westminster.

The *Boke of Cokery* now exists as a unique copy in the library of the Marquess of Bath at Longleat House. This copy was owned by the Duke of Portland at Bulstrode Park before moving to its new home in the eighteenth century. It is bound with a fragment of a tract, also printed by Pynson in 1500. This text, *Remembraunce for the traduction of the Princesse Kateryne*, lists noblemen and women assigned to escort Catherine of Aragon through England upon her arrival from Spain in 1501 for her marriage to Prince Arthur. Only two leaves of the tract are bound with the *Boke of Cokery*. This tract presents an interesting counterpoint to the cookbook, as the list of nobles seems an appropriate way to conclude a book which begins with descriptions of feasts for or hosted by specific nobles in the preceding century.

The year of publication was a pivotal time for the printer. Pynson would soon move his printing shop inside the city of London and become the royal printer.

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years surrounding the printing of the *Boke of Cokery*, he printed a variety of texts, from the lavish to the popular. These included an elaborate *Sarum Missal* and editions of *Guy of Warwick* and *Here is a good boke to lerne to speke French*. Pynson is also known for his large output of legal texts. Despite the range of genres during this period, his books were within the reading preferences of professionals, gentry, and nobles.

While the print run of the *Boke of Cokery* is unknown, a general range of his output is easily estimated. According to legal proceedings against Pynson, he printed, or was contracted to print, between 200 and 1000 copies of several books in the 1490s.\(^{26}\) The *Boke of Cokery* likely had a run within this range. These same court documents also reveal Pynson’s wholesale book prices. Half of his books were priced at 2 s, but he also sold books at 20 d, 4 s, and 10 s.\(^{27}\) These books varied in format, size, and genre, so it is difficult to make a direct comparison to the *Boke of Cokery*, but Pynson likely sold it to booksellers and distributors around the modal value of 2 s. Given that 2 s was the equivalent of four days wages for a master craftsmen, the *Boke of Cokery* was an expensive book, though still more affordable than manuscript cookeries.\(^{28}\)

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26 Henry Plomer, “Two Lawsuits of Richard Pynson,” *The Library* X, no. 38 (April 1909): 126–27. In a lawsuit filed by the executors of John Rushe’s estate against Richard Pynson, the schedule provides numbers of books contracted and printed, as well as their wholesale prices. Pynson agreed to print 600 copies of five books and 1000 copies of another for John Rushe. Pynson, however, only printed 200 copies of two books, 300 copies of two books, and 600 copies of two books.

27 The “d” is an abbreviation for pence. There were twelve pence in one shilling (s), and twenty shillings in one pound.

28 “Prices & Wages (Munro),” MEMDB: Medieval and Early Modern Data Bank, accessed 1 November 2015, http://www2.scc.rutgers.edu/memdb/.
I have located a reference to one other copy of the 1500 edition of the *Boke of Cokery* in a list of books in the possession of James Morice. Morice was a gentleman in the service of Lady Margaret Beaufort, supervising her Cambridge foundations. He then served as a gentleman usher in the royal household following her death in 1509. Morice recorded a list of his twenty-three books in his copy of Cicero’s *De senectute*. The list has been dated to 1508; at this time the *Boke of Cokery* was available only in a single edition. Morice’s copy was bound “in j book” with seven other texts:


Although these books span a wide range of interests, all fall within noble and gentry interests. Courtesy, carving, and fifteenth-century verse were genres which appealed to one refining his manners and intelligence.

Once printed, the *Boke of Cokery* made a noble manuscript cookery available to a larger number of people, but the readership was not distant from that of fifteenth-century cookbooks. Such a book would appeal to noble households as a tool for planning meals, as well as to gentlemen aspiring to be more like their social superiors. Several features support this conclusion. First, the cookery’s incipit specifically targets these higher status readers rather than reaching out to a broad audience. Neither Pynson nor any other hand involved in the printing changed the incipit to reflect a desire to reach a new audience. Next, Pynson’s output targeted a higher status audience, one that encompassed

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professionals, gentry, and nobles. The tract fragment bound with the extant *Boke of Cokery* also suggests a gentry or noble reader who wanted or needed information about Catherine of Aragon’s travels. Last, the unique extant copy of the book has consistently been housed in the private libraries of noble estates. Although this is a single copy and cannot possibly mirror the lives of all other volumes, it is notable that the book was preserved in an estate library. While a vast majority of the books were destroyed or lost over time, the surviving copy was in at least two family collections, passed down through several generations.

Two other printers produced later editions of the *Boke of Cokery*: Wynkyn de Worde produced a 1510 edition and John Bydell printed a 1530s edition. While total sales of the editions are unknown, Oxford bookseller John Dorne left a record of his sales of the *Boke of Cokery* in 1520.\(^{31}\) Dorne recorded that he sold five cookeries that year, each at a price of 4 d, the cost of four large loaves of bread. This was an affordable text, though not cheap. Dorne sold many books between 1 and 3 d, but he also catered to a healthy market for books reaching more expensive heights of over 20 s. Rather than recording the books by an incipit or title, he noted the books as “cokery,” “the bocke of kockery,” “the bocke of kokery,” and “the bocke of cokeri.”\(^{32}\) Dorne indicated these cookeries in the vernacular rather than Latin. Since Dorne indicated Latin-language books in Latin in his records, it is safe to assume that the cookeries he sold were English-language cookeries. Since only two editions of English cookbooks had been printed as of

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1520, Dorne sold copies of either the 1500 or 1510 editions of the *Boke of Cokery*. Two of the five copies were sold with other texts: one was sold with a book on carving, while the other was sold with a volume of a Latin-English vocabulary, the *Vulgaria Stanbrigi*. The shopping habits of Dorne’s customers are telling; the people who purchased cookeries were also spending money on a text to aid in learning Latin vocabulary and an instruction manual for carving roasted meats at the table. These were not the habits of the average Englishman; these were aspirational gentry behaviors.

The *Boke of Cokery*’s bibliographic features, text, and readership all suggest the communicative continuity of print. Initially in this new form, the status quo of late medieval cookeries was maintained. The novelty of this printed cookery was the relatively large number of readers it reached compared to the manuscript source.

English readers had to wait until 1545 for a brand new cookbook. This anonymous cookery, *A Proper New Book of Cookery*, was popular enough to warrant seven editions from 1545 to the 1570s by six separate printers. The first edition of *A Proper New Book of Cookery* was indeed a very different cookbook from Pynson’s *Boke

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33 *The boke of keruynge* was printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1508 and 1513. The *Vulgaria Stanbrigi* was also printed multiple times before 1520 by de Worde and Richard Pynson. Unfortunately, the accompanying texts do not help determine with certainty which edition Dorne sold, since Pynson and de Worde also printed the first two editions of the *Boke of Cokery*.


of Cokery. Most noticeably, the book is smaller than its predecessor. This octavo volume contains only sixteen leaves and measures 130 x 80 mm.\textsuperscript{36}

\textit{A Proper New Book of Cookery} contains a relatively new feature advertising the book: a title page (see Figure 3.1). The title page was a feature that served to entice and inform readers, an increasingly important role in a quickly-expanding market.\textsuperscript{37} Flanked by a decorative frame with columns, scrollwork, and human figures, the title reveals the book’s contents and audience. Rather than touting any royal heritage, the cookery’s title instead touts an intended audience: “for all them that delighteth in cokery.” Unlike the readership of the \textit{Boke of Cokery} or many earlier manuscript cookeries, the audience was not restricted to nobles or those aspiring to that class. Anyone who took pleasure at the table could benefit from the book.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{36}] David Carlson, “Formats in English Printing to 1557,” \textit{Analytical & Enumerative Bibliography} NS2 (1988): 50. Smaller formats were increasingly common following the first generation of print. Smaller formats resulted in less expensive books for consumers, as well as less financial risk for printers. Printers could print more books with less paper, thus diversifying their products available to consumers and booksellers.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}

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38 *A Proper New Book of Cookery* (1545), sig. B.vi.v; and Notaker, 57. Notaker misquotes the colophon of the 1545 and 1545 editions, stating “Bankes” as “Banker.”

Cookery was one of only two collaborations between the printers. In the same year, Lant and Bankes also joined together to print another text about food, a tract titled An inueltiue ageinst glotony and dronkennes. Lant and Bankes printed this text at another location—possibly at Lant’s own shop—in the Old Bailey. While the print run of the cookery is unknown, these printers must have found success in the first edition, as they ran another printing in 1546.

While the contents of A Proper New Book of Cookery might seem quite similar to the Boke of Cokery at first glance, consisting of a listing of seasonal meats, several menus, and recipes, all are quite different from England’s first printed cookery. The listing of seasonal meats reflects both agricultural and liturgical seasons, rather than solely the latter. For example, the author describes the seasons for mallard duck, teal, and woodcock in this way: “Mallarde is good after a frost till candelmas so is a Teile and other wylde foule that swymmeth” and a “Woodcoke is best from October to Lente.” It is noteworthy that the meats listed here were acquirable and affordable not only to noble readers, but to gentry, with few exceptions, like peacock. Included in the following menus are lists of possible combinations of dishes for meals, not menus of actual feasts that had occurred. While many of these dishes and meals were beyond the scope of

print a specific text for a defined period of time. A privilege could be granted by a variety of authorities, including the king and universities, and the time period of exclusive rights varied. In this instance, the privilege likely indicated two years of printing rights.


41 Timperley, 298.

42 A Proper New Book of Cookery (1545), sig. A.ii.r.
everyday dining, the menus promoted possibilities for gentry diners, not aspirations to another dining class.

A Proper New Book of Cookery includes a total of forty-nine recipes. After the eighth recipe the remainder of the cookery is designated by a heading: “Here after foloweth a new booke of Cokery.”43 In a rather dramatic turn from earlier cookbooks, the recipes in this book feature practical and acquirable foodstuffs, and preparations fit for everyday dining in a gentry household. Gone are the dishes that filled fifteenth-century cookeries; now the reader meets recipes for snow, stewed tripe, tarts of all varieties, and several preparations of mutton.44 A Proper New Book of Cookery also departs from its predecessors in its instructions. The recipes contain more details, such as ingredient quantities. For example, in a recipe for clear jelly, the reader is instructed to “Take two calves fete and a shoulder of veale & let it upon the fire in a faire pot with a gallon of water and a gallon of claret wyne…”45 A recipe for a “couertarte after the French facion” begins, “Take a pynte of creme and the yelkes of tennne egges and beate them all together and put thereto halfe a dishe of swete butter and suger…”46 These are far more specific instruction than earlier recipes usually provided. It is possible that people responsible for cooking in lower gentry and yeomen households used these explicit

43 Notaker, 57. Notaker believes that the organization of recipes into two sections with the second section heading stating “Here after foloweth a newe booke of Cokerye” suggests that the cookbook was either compiled from multiple sources or that the 1545 edition was not the first. This language could also be a purposeful effort by the printers to convince the readers to purchase a new and updated edition, even if that was not necessarily the case.


46 Ibid., sig. B.iv.v.
recipes for instruction, as these households did not regularly staff cooks.\footnote{Elizabeth Griffiths and Jane Whittle. \textit{The World of Alice Le Strange: Consumption & Gender in the Early Seventeenth-Century Household} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 214–15.} It is also likely that the increased level of explanation benefited others in gentry households with a cook. Gentlemen and women would have written assistance in planning for entertaining, and educated servants, like clerks, would be better prepared for outfitting the kitchen with necessary foodstuffs.\footnote{Mark Dawson, \textit{Plenti and Grase: Food and Drink in a Sixteenth-Century Household} (Totnes, Devon: Prospect Books, 2009), 200–1.} As the numbers of the gentry ballooned in sixteenth-century England, the general education in food found in \textit{A Proper New Book of Cookery} was likely welcomed by gentry and servants alike.

While much of this book was new and innovative, certain bibliographic features remained unchanged. The book still contains blackletter typeface, though the letter forms are thinner than Pynson’s set, and the letters are spaced farther apart, thus rendering the new text easier to read. Additionally, \textit{A Proper New Book of Cookery} contains printed manucules, an organizational feature common in medieval texts.\footnote{For one example, see \textit{A Proper New Book of Cookery} (1545), sig. A.ii.v.} By providing a brand new text in a familiar form, Lant and Bankes helped establish legitimacy in a novel book aimed at an audience heretofore neglected by printers. Their book certainly piqued the taste of the gentry; six more editions of \textit{A Proper New Book of Cookery} were printed during the next thirty years.\footnote{The subsequent editions of \textit{A Proper New Book of Cookery} retained the same text, format, and approximate size, although decorative features and orthographical conventions changed. The inclusion of different ornamental borders on the title pages and more regular use of Roman typeface, particularly as recipe titles, are the only notable changes in later editions. The gentry still purchased and used this text throughout the sixteenth century. Anne Ahmed, ed., \textit{A Proper Newe Booke of Cokerye: Margaret Parker's Cookery Book} (Cambridge: Corpus Christi College, 2002).} So, after centuries of a gradually increasing readership for
manuscript and printed cookeries, the audience was large enough to warrant several editions and print runs of a cookbook divorced of overt noble ties, that is, thousands of copies intended for a predominantly gentry audience.

The first printed English cookeries are notable for their differing functions. Pynson’s *Book of Cookery* was important not for introducing the cookery genre to new readers, but for the dissemination of a single text of a very familiar genre to a greater number of people. Nobles, gentry, and professionals had all read cookbooks in the past; now hundreds of copies of the same text were available to the same audience. While the text targets nobles, just like the source manuscript, gentry and professionals surely benefited from its availability, as they did from the dissemination of noble manuscript cookeries. *A Proper New Book of Cookery* was significant then for its reflection of the gentry and professional audience in the printed text, an audience that had been gradually built over time but not mirrored in the genre until 1545.

*Gender*

In the mid-sixteenth century, a dramatic development began to take place in the cookery genre: women owned and used cookbooks available in the print marketplace. Just as gentlemen and professionals owned cookeries long before the texts specifically addressed the needs of their class, women owned cookbooks long before they were targeted as consumers. For example, Margaret Parker, the wife of Archbishop of Canterbury Matthew Parker, owned a copy of *A Proper New Book of Cookery* printed in
approximately 1558. After a century of print, English printers began producing cookbooks for women in the 1570s. After the initial printing of John Partridge’s *The Treasurie of Commodious Conceits* in 1573, a text subtitled *The Huswiues Closet, of healthfull prouision*, printers produced a surge of cookbooks for women. Printers and authors identified women as the main consumers of the genre, and would continue to do so until the present day. Twenty-three editions of six women’s cookbooks were printed from 1573 to 1600; thirty-four editions of eight different books were printed from 1573 to 1609. And as demonstrated in Table 3.1, an overwhelming majority of all printed cookbooks were printed for female readers beginning in 1580. Authors, printers, and booksellers were still targeting the gentry, but book producers viewed gentlewomen, particularly those emulating noble dining and home-keeping practices, as the most likely consumers of this exploding genre.

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51 Ahmed, vii–x.

52 There are likely additional editions which have yet to be uncovered, as not all are recorded in the *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland and Ireland, and of English Books Printed Abroad 1475–1640* (STC), the *English Short Title Catalogue* (ESTC) or other early print catalogues or bibliographies.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
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<td>84.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* Data adapted from Notaker, 56–70.

*Note:* These values represent all new titles, editions, and reprints.

This sudden proliferation of printed cookeries in the English book market, particularly those intended for women, requires further exploration. Markets in other regions of Europe did not witness the same increase in distinct titles or numbers of editions. Likewise, female readers in other areas of Europe would not be targeted as cookbook consumers for several decades, if not centuries. German-speaking regions of Europe boasted a multitude of manuscript and print *Frauenkochbücher* from the seventeenth century onward, but only one cookbook for women appeared in print in the sixteenth century.\(^{54}\) Other Continental book markets continued to appeal to a general or male-specific audience.

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Two main factors seem to have contributed to an increase in cookbooks for women in the late sixteenth century. First, gentlewomen in sixteenth-century England were generally well-educated and literate. Females were addressed as readers by authors and printers in several other genres; a shift to cookbooks was only a matter of time in England. Second, gentlewomen were also engaged in more direct and indirect kitchen activities, such as menu planning, distilling, sugar work, and medical simples preparation, than women in previous generations. Gentlewomen were initially guided by cookbooks and books of secrets not targeted at women printed earlier in the century. As women became a recognized segment of consumers, printers responded by producing cookbooks specifically for them. Printers were catching up to a social reality that had been formed gradually over the course of centuries. Shaped over many years, an audience of literate women was comfortable with purchasing books and directly involved in the preparation of food, drink, and medicine at home. This potential readership simply required notice; an author or printer did not need to create this audience.

The sudden appearance and flourishing of cookeries for women in late-sixteenth-century England consequently increased the overall production of cookbooks during that period. Joan Thirsk suggested that the overall increase in cookbooks could be explained by food shortages in 1587, but in so doing, she neglected the impact of such a high

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55 I have struggled in my attempted to identify a cause of the increase in cookbooks for women here. I believe there is much more to explore in this area beyond the two points I have identified. While sound, I find these factors to be insufficient explanations. I plan to return to this question in future research.

56 Women readers were targeted by authors and printers in a variety of printed genres, even to the extent that works by female authors were printed in the 1580s. Thomas Bentley’s *Monument of Matrons: Containing Seven Several Lamps of Virginity* (1582) is the most notable of such exemplars.
proportion of cookeries intended for a female audience. The food crisis of 1587, combined with widespread disease, led to high mortality rates around England. While possibly a contributing factor in increased cookbooks, food shortages do not provide the sole explanation, as similar crises occurred with some regularity throughout early modern England without repercussions in the book market. Cookeries, including those for women, were produced at higher rates prior to the 1587 food shortage. Additionally, while food shortages may have contributed to a sense of need and desire for greater home economy, those who purchased sixteenth-century cookbooks had extra money to spend on non-essential items, like cookbooks. As consumers with more expendable income, they were less impacted by food shortages than a majority of Englishmen and women. Thirsk was right to consider factors outside of the print industry as a reason for an increase in cookery production, but her theory neglected to account for a dramatic shift in audience that consequently shaped publication practices.

While cookbooks printed earlier in the century are nearer to their modern counterparts, cookeries for women printed in the late sixteenth century are quite distant. Whereas sixteenth-century print cookeries had been volumes containing mainly culinary recipes, cookbooks for women may also be classified as recipe books or books of

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secrets. 59 These texts contained not only culinary recipes and menus, but also medical and domestic advice and recipes. During this early period in the genre’s history, printers and readers did not adhere to a single, standardized definition of a cookbook. These books contained a large volume of information valuable for running a household, not just a kitchen.

This group of texts projected an image of the ideal gentlewoman: a domestic goddess capable of sustaining her family with delicious meals, curing household medical ailments, furnishing the household with home-crafted inks, perfumes, and powders, all while acting as the consummate hostess for gentle guests, preparing confectionary delights like sweetmeats and preserves. These texts are a mirror of general expectations of gentlewomen during the Tudor period. Yet women of this stature would only perform some of these tasks, and only with assistance from household servants. Typically, gentlewomen would not partake in the physical act of cooking except when cooking crossed over into confectionary and medical preparations. These arts were well within the purview of gentlewomen, as they required expensive ingredients, especially sugar. 60

59 Recipe books and books of secrets flourished in the early modern period. Both genres are intimately connected to cookbooks, and the overlap is considerable in many instances. Recipe books contain some combination of medical, household, and culinary recipes. This genre flourished in manuscript form, though printed books of recipes can be included in this category. Books of secrets contained a combination of medical, household, and scientific recipe and instruction. These texts often have recipes related to alchemy, dye or paint production, and cosmetics. The books can contain culinary recipes, but these tend to be confectionary and/or have medicinal value. As a result of this overlap in content, some scholars prefer to use the term “cookbook” or “cookery” as a label for specific early modern texts, where others prefer “recipe book” or “book of secrets.”

60 Lehmann, The British Housewife, 32–33.
On occasion, printers even catered to a literate middling audience of women, such as in the instance of *The Good Housewife’s Handmaid for the Kitchen*. This book, like others intended for a lower gentry or middling readership, lacked recipes focused on sugar. The recipes are clear and concise, and feature affordable and accessible ingredients. Everyday vegetables like turnips, onions, and cabbage balance out dishes with more expensive proteins such as mutton, beef, duck, and chicken. Spices and dried fruits included in the recipes were accessible to middling London women, while a country reader could adapt and perform substitutions using her own garden. While middling housewives would later become the audience for many cookbooks, this particular segment of the feminine readership was rarely articulated during the sixteenth century.

Sixteenth-century cookbooks marketed to women in all classes included a combination of the following five features. Some cookbooks feature most of these characteristics, but others include only one or two. To be sure, sixteenth-century cookeries aimed at a general audience, or specifically male readers, included some of these features. Authors and printers who anticipated a male readership did not include the first two features.

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61 *The good Huswifes Handmaide for the Kitchin* (London: Richard Jones, 1594). I will refer to this book and its related editions as *The Good Housewife’s Handmaid for the Kitchen*.


63 One of the most famous examples being Gervase Markham, *The English husvwife* (London: John Beale for R. Jackson, 1615). This was printed as the second part of a larger volume titled *Country Contentments*. Also see Paul Lloyd, *Food and Identity in England, 1540–1640: Eating to Impress* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), 18–19. Lloyd is convinced that middling readers were the main audience of print cookeries. However, he spends little time elaborating on this conclusion.
1. The cookery titles included mention of women, indicating housewives, widows, gentlewomen, or ladies. Examples of titles include *The Widow’s Treasure*, *The Good Housewife’s Jewell*, *The Good House-wiues Treasurie*, *The Good Housewife’s Handmaid for the Kitchen*, and *Delightes for Ladies*.

2. Women were identified as the inspiration or source of the book. This may have occurred in the prefatory or dedicatory materials, or as part of individual recipe titles. For example, John Partridge wrote in one of several prefatory letters and verses that a “certayne Gentlewoman (being my dere and special frende)” had implored him to print *The Treasurie of Commodious Conceits*. Some recipes are attributed to specific women. In *The Good Housewife’s Handmaid for the Kitchen*, recipes are titled “To boyle a Capon with Orenge after Mistres Duffelds way” and “How to keepe Larde after my Lady Westone Brownes way.”

3. The book included confectionary recipes. Confectionary was a broad category of recipes, all united by their base in sugar. Marchepan (marzipan), fruit preserves, marmalade, cakes and biscuits, lozenges, conserves, and comfits all fell under the broad classification. Although it had been imported into England for centuries, sugar became increasingly popular throughout the sixteenth century. It remained a costly

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64 John Partridge, *The Treasurie of commodious Conceits, & hidden Secrets* (London: Richard Jones, 1573), sig. A.iii.r. I will refer to this book and its successor editions as *The Treasurie of Commodious Conceits* in the body of the chapter.

65 *A booke of cookerie, otherwise called: The good huswiues handmaid for the kitchin* (London: Edward Allde, 1597), sigs. A5r–v and B5v–B6r. Also see *The good Huswifes Handmaide for the Kitchin* (London: Richard Jones, 1594), sig. A5r–v. The 1594 edition is missing several pages, so a complete comparison with the 1597 edition is not possible. I will refer to this family of titles as *The Good Housewife’s Handmaid for the Kitchen*. 130
commodity, however. Gentlewomen had the resources to partake in the majority of household confectionary-making, but even housewives of the lower gentry and middling class undertook some fruit preservation, particularly when their own gardens yielded the fruit. Marmalade, for example, would serve as a method of fruit preservation for some housewives, but on the most refined banquet tables, stiff marmalade could be molded into features on elaborate sugar work displays.

Many confectionary recipes were equally understood as having medical and culinary functions. This ambiguous classification, even in the sixteenth century, was due to a centuries-old relationship between the culinary, apothecary, and confectionary. Sugar was humorally balanced, a natural preservative, delicious, and costly. This perfect combination of characteristics helped sugar became one of the most important ingredients for affluent Tudor diners. As an example, *Manus Christi* appeared as a medical recipe in late medieval manuscripts. This item, a gold-flecked sugar lozenge flavored with rosewater, is also contained in sixteenth-century printed cookbooks as a confection with medical properties, particularly when combined with ingredients like powder of pearls. Over the course of the early modern period, *Manus Christi* became a pleasurable sweetmeat and symbol of conspicuous consumption rather than medicinal relief. The creation of confections and medicines took place in still rooms in gentry homes. Along with distilling, gentlewomen


68 Day, 4; and *The Treasvrie of hidden Secrets* (London: Richard Jones, 1596), sig. B2r.
undertook all of these preparations to benefit the health and status of their families.69

By the next century, the medical associations wore off, and confectionary and distillation resulted in products for elaborate dessert rituals.70

4. The books included information and advice for entertaining guests. Some books included menus, like Thomas Dawson’s *The Good Housewife’s Jewell* (1587), a cookery which begins with menus divided into flesh and fish days. *The Second Part of the Good Housewife’s Jewell* (1597) was printed with a new edition of *The Booke of Caruing and Sewing* (1508); this text contained menus corresponding to liturgical feasts throughout the year. *The Good Housewife’s Jewell* and *The Good Housewife’s Handmaid for the Kitchen* also contain lists of items necessary for a banquet, interjected in the culinary recipes.71 Other cookbooks contain recipes designated as banqueting dishes, such as “To farse a cabbadge for a banquet dish” or “To boile a pike with orenges a banquet dish.”72 Some confectionary preparations were similarly highlighted as amusing or interesting to guests at the table. For example, a recipe for sugar paste began circulating in England in the second half of the sixteenth century.

69 Day, 4; and Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England*, 311.

70 Day, 29–33.

71 Thomas Dawson, *The good husswifes Iewell* (London: John Wolfe for Edward White, 1587), sigs. C7v–C8r. I will refer to this title and subsequent editions as *The Good Housewife’s Jewell*. Here Dawson lists “The names of all thinges necessarie for a banquet.” Also see *The Good Housewife’s Handmaid for the Kitchen* (1597), sig. F4r. Listed here are “All necessaries apperteyning to a Banquet.” These lists refer specifically to the banquet course, not the modern notion of a banquet as an entire feast or grand meal. For a detailed discussion of the banquet course, see the essays in C. Anne Wilson, ed., *‘Banquetting Stuffe’: The Fare and Social Background of the Tudor and Stuart Banquet* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991).

72 *The Second part of the good Hus-wiues Iewell* (London: Edward Allde for Edward White, 1597), sigs. A8r and B7v. I will refer to this title and its related editions as *The Second Part of the Good Housewife’s Jewell*.
This paste could be molded into anything a host desired: “whereof may be made all manner of fruites and other fine things with their forme: as platters, dishes, glasses, cuppes, and such like things, wherewith you may furnish a table, and when you haue done you may eate them vp. A pleasant conceit for them that sit at the table.”\(^73\) This recipe was quite popular among gentry diners in Elizabethan England; it appears in multiple cookeries over the course of fifty years.\(^74\)

5. The recipes included more detail and were also composed in lucid and simple prose. Unlike most late medieval recipes, the amounts (or proportions) of ingredients, kitchen equipment, and other details were often provided. In these books, cooks were instructed to cut carrots into inch long pieces for boiled mutton and to use manchet, rather than just any bread, for the stuffing in a stuffed cabbage dish.\(^75\) One is told to put salt in fair running water and boil it until “it beare an Egge”—an indication of buoyancy and salt levels used in culinary parlance well into the twentieth century.\(^76\)

In a recipe for making white broth, the reader is instructed to use a long marrow bone


\(^{74}\) *The Second Part of the Good Housewife’s Jewell* (1597), sig. C8r–v. For several more similar recipes, including sugar paste formed into rabbits or pigeons, see Hugh Plat, *Delightes for Ladies* (London: Peter Short, 1602). Also see *The honorable entertainement gieuen to the Queenes Maiestie in progresse, at Eluetham in Hampshire, by the right honorable the Earle of Hertford.1591.* (London: John Wolfe , 1591), sig. D4r–v. Contained here is an account of a banquet presented to Elizabeth I during her progress in 1591 by Lord Hertford illustrating the further illustration of the popularity and luxuriousness of sugar work. During a fireworks show over water, a banquet was held in the garden. One hundred torch-bearers lit the way for two hundred men carrying dishes, each with a different sugar work sculpture. Human forms were cast in sugar, as well as castles, forts, drummers, and soldiers. Animals of all sorts were also made of sugar, including lions, unicorns, camels, tigers, elephants, eagles, owls, snakes, mermaids, and dolphins.

\(^{75}\) *The Second Part of the Good Housewife’s Jewell* (1597), sigs. Br and A8r. “To boile Mutton for Supper” and “To farse a cabbadge for a banquet dish.”

\(^{76}\) Ibid., sig. B6r. “To keepe lard in season.”
cut “long-wayes,” as well as capon or cock (not a hen or young chicken). The broth is prepared using a basin, pipkin, and cloth, and measurements like a “pinte of Muskadine or white wine” and “halfe a porrenger full” are specified. Even the recipe for baked chickens which opens the chapter contains ingredient measurements and ratios, as well as a specified baking time of an hour and a half.

These five features are particularly noticeable in the case of John Partridge’s *The Treasurie of Commodious Conceits* and its successor titles, *The Treasvrie of Hidden Secrets* and *The Good Housewife’s Handmaid for the Kitchen*. The London printer and bookseller, Richard Jones, printed at least three editions of *Commodious Conceits* with the first appearing in 1573. He divided and expanded the contents into a gentlewoman’s closet of secrets with an extensive collection of confectionary recipes, *Hidden Secrets*, and a cookery book of all other types of culinary recipes, *Handmaid*. While Partridge authored *Commodious Conceits* with women readers in mind, Jones gradually made a

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78 I will henceforth refer to *The Treasurie of Commodious Conceits* as *Commodious Conceits*, *The Treasvrie of hidden Secrets* as *Hidden Secrets*, and *The Good Housewife’s Handmaid for the Kitchen* as *Handmaid*.

79 Three are listed in the STC; however, in his 1584 edition, Jones mentions other copies he printed between 1573 and 1584. He may have printed two or three other editions during this period. Also see R. B. McKerrow, ed., *A Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers in England, Scotland and Ireland, and of Foreign Printers of English Books 1557–1910* (London: Printed for the Bibliographical Society, 1910); and Allison Kavey, *Books of Secrets: Natural Philosophy in England, 1550–1600* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press), 17–19. Jones was a well-established member of the Company of Stationers, having been admitted in 1564. He had a colorful career, which is detailed in Kavey’s book.

80 Gilly Lehmann, “At the Dramatists’ Table: The Climax and Decline of a Mannerist Cuisine in England, 1580–1630,” *Actes des congrès de la Société française Shakespeare* 29 (2012), accessed 20 September 2015, http://shakespeare.revues.org/1693, 6. While Lehmann does not provide this book or printer as an example, she states that late-Tudor cookbooks were often compiled by printers and booksellers rather than an author. Compilers sought recipes in manuscripts and printed books to create new collections which combined old and new culinary dishes.
number of changes to the text over several editions which reveal an increasing interest in new cookery books among an English female readership. By the time Jones printed the first edition of *Handmaid* in 1588 and *Hidden Secrets* in 1596, these texts were unabashedly women’s cookbooks.

Partridge was an unlikely cookbook author. Prior to his compilation of *Commodious Conceits*, he was best known as a poet. His three long poems, for which he was widely recognized, *Lady Pandavola, Astianax and Polixena*, and *The Worthie Hystorie of ... Plasidas*, were printed in 1566.\footnote{Joyce Boro, “Partridge, John (fl. 1566–1582),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Lawrence Goldman, accessed 12 September 2015, http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/view/article/21483.} Prior to the publication of *Commodious Conceits*, Jones printed another of Partridge’s non-culinary writings in 1570, *The ende and confession of Iohn Felton*.\footnote{John Partridge, *The ende and confession of Iohn Felton, the rank traytour, that set vp the traiterous bull on the Byshop of London his gate: Who suffred befor the same gate, for highe treason agaynst the Queenes Maiestie: the viii. daie of August, 1570: With an exhortacion to the papistes, to take heed of the like* (London: Richard Jones and Thomas Colwell, 1570).} With a background divorced from typical sixteenth-century cookbooks, Partridge welcomed women readers into his text in a manner unlike earlier cookeries.\footnote{Wendy Wall, “Literacy and the Domestic Arts,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 73 (September 2010): 390–94. Wall makes a similar observation about Partridge’s inclusion of women readers.} The full title is the first indication: *The Treasurie of commodious Conceits, & hidden Secrets. and may be called, The Huswiuues Closet, of healthfull provision. Mete and necessarie for the profitable vse of all estates both men and women: And also pleasant for recreation, With a necessary Table of all things herein contayned, Gathered out of sundrye Experiments lately practised by men of great knowledge.* In the book’s dedication, Partridge acknowledges the role a gentlewoman played in its
publication. He writes that he collected the book’s secrets “for my own behoofe, & my familiar frends” but “a certayne Gentlewoman (being my dere and special frende)” wanted him to publish the text. In one of several prefatory verses, Partridge addresses the book itself, dictating its use by his gentlewoman friend:

Let her vse thy commodities, as wel I kno the may
To put her frends for helth & preseruation
And also to pleasure them, for recreation.

Partridge asks the book to allow the gentlewoman to use the book’s contents for the purposes of preservation of food and good health, as well as pleasure.

Partridge tailored the book’s contents to reflect feminine interests: recipes for culinary, confectionary, household, and medical preparations. The approximately seventy recipes are mostly culinary, or more specifically, confectionary. The dishes reflect a finer cuisine for entertaining rather than everyday dining: baked pheasant, marchepan, preserved fruits, and hypocras. The pheasant, for example, was a highly fashionable bird following the reign of Henry VIII and his second wife, Anne Boelyn. Furthermore, the bird was baked inside a pie, or coffin. This type of preparation had the potential to be a culinary showpiece in the way that boiled or even roasted meat could not. The pastry could be decorated in any manner; the cook or the host was limited only by her imagination. The medical recipes, while addressing many common ailments, include

84 Partridge, *Commodious Conceits* (1573), sigs. A.iii.r–A.iii.v.
85 Ibid., sig. A.viii.v.
87 Robert May, *The Accomplisht Cook, or the Art and Mystery of Cookery* (London: R.W. for Nathaniel Brooke, 1660). While not depicted pictorially in cookbooks until May’s *The Accomplisht Cook,*
observations of concerns specific to women. Most of these are included in a section on women’s urines in a chapter describing infirmities based on urine observation.

The text is very detailed, providing clear instructions for most preparations. A majority of recipes even include ingredient quantities or proportions and the time needed for preparation. For example, the recipe for hypocras states:

Take of chosen Cinimon, two ounces, offyne Gynger one ounce, of Graynes halfe an ounce, bruse them all, steepe them in iii.or.iii. pyttes of food odiferous wine, with a pound of Sugre by the space of xxiiihowres, then put them into an Hpocras Bag of wollen, and so reecaeue the liquor. The rediest and best waye is to put the Spices with the halfe pownde of sugre, and the wine into a stone Bottle, or a stone put stopped close, and after xxiii howres it wyll bee ready, then cast a thin linnen cloth, or a peece of a boulter cloth on the mouth, & let so much run thorow: as ye wyll occupy at once, and kepe the vessell close, for it will to well keep both the sprite, odour and vertue of the wine, and also Spices.

Partridge assumes more culinary background in his recipes for baked meats. The recipe which opens this chapter, though detailed, omits instruction for preparing the pastry coffin. This omission, however, would not deter a gentlewoman directing her cook in banqueting preparations. Most of Partridge’s instructions are clear and succinct, providing enough information for any housewife, even an inexperienced one, to prepare a variety of stylish foodstuffs.

While these features were likely very attractive to women readers, several textual features were less sensitive to feminine interests and reflect the book’s male authorship. The full book title, which so openly embraces a female audience, includes men in its audience and concludes with an exultation of the experiments of learned men. A full-page cooks could create limitless designs in pastry. Dough could be braided, formed into geometric patterns, animals, or even heraldic symbols. The formed pastry could then be further decorated with paints or gilding.

88 Partridge, *Commodious Conceits* (1573), sig. D.iii.r.
woodcut image faces the title page, depicting a finely dressed gentleman seated at an
ornately decorated desk, writing. A bookcase filled with large volumes stands in the
background. The reader understands the seated gentleman as Partridge, and this visual
depiction a reminder of his knowledge and the book’s foundation in male traditions of
learning. Furthermore, Partridge fails to dedicate *Commodious Conceits* to the
gentlewoman he so lavishly praises in his prefatory remarks. Instead, he dedicates the
book to Richard Wistow, a gentleman and an assistant of the Company of Barbers and
Surgeons.  

Partridge also includes four pages of verses, in addition to the dedicatory
epistle and table of contents, as prefatory material. Two of the verses are addressed to the
book. Another, by “Thomas Curteyse Gentleman,” is written in praise of the author, and
another by “Thomas Blanck Gentleman,” on behalf of the author. These extensive
prefatory materials are unfamiliar textual interlopers in the cookery genre at this point,
and give the impression that the book is part of a learned, male tradition.

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89 Ibid., sigs. A.iii.r–A.iii.v.

90 Ibid., sigs. A.ii.v, A.v.r, A.v.v, and A.viii.v. The verses addressed to the book are titled “John
Partridge to his Booke” and “The Auctor to his Booke concerning his friende, whose importunate sute
procured him to publish the same.” The other two verses are “Thomas Curteyse Gentleman, in prayse of the
Auctor” and “Thomas Blanck Gentleman, in the behalf of the Auctor.”
Despite these features, Partridge’s text was overwhelmingly attractive to a female audience. Women owned and read *Commodious Conceits*: extant copies bear the names of their female owners.\(^91\) The book was a publishing success; at least six editions were printed over the course of eighteen years.\(^92\) Two London printers printed editions, but Richard Jones was the only one to alter the text throughout its iteration as *Commodious Conceits*. Since Partridge was most active between 1566 and 1582, it is unlikely that he

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\(^91\) For example, a copy housed at the Huntington Library declares a past owner, Mary Prime, with her signature.

\(^92\) Additional editions were printed in 1580 and 1584 by Richard Jones, 1584 for Henry Carre, 1586 for Henry Carre, and 1591 by Richard Jones.
was involved in many later editions of his book.\textsuperscript{93} Jones took on the role of printer-
publisher, rather than solely a printer who performed the labor of producing books. Over
two decades, Jones shaped the text according to his vision and ideas about the audience
and genre. It is Jones as publisher, not Partridge as author, who truly manipulated the
genre to serve women readers. Jones clearly saw a gap in the marketplace and hoped to
capitalize on it, despite the risk of publishing for an untested audience.

Jones printed the next extant edition in 1584; however, the title page indicates that
it is “now the fourth tyme corrected, and inlarged.”\textsuperscript{94} The 1584 edition bears several
changes, though without extant copies of earlier editions, it is impossible to pin down the
exact date of these alterations. The first modification Jones made involved the title,
changed to read: \textit{The treasurie of commodious Conceites, and hidden Secrets. Commonly
called, The Huswiues Closet of prouision, for the health of her houshold. Meete and
necessarie for the profitable vse of all estates. Gathered out of sundry Experiments lately
practised by men of great knowledge: And now the fourth tyme corrected, and inlarged,
with diuers necessary and new additions.} Although the long title still includes mention of
the experiments of learned men, the new focus is on the welfare of the household and
what the housewife can do for her family. This is also apparent visually, as “The Good
Huswiues Closet of prouision, for the health of her household” is centered on the page in
a larger typeface. The reader’s eye is drawn first to this central title, rather than the other
text on the page.

\textsuperscript{93} Partridge may have been deceased as his birth and death dates are unknown.

\textsuperscript{94} Partridge, \textit{Commodious Conceits} (1584 Jones), Air. The only one of these editions corroborated
by the STC is a 1580 edition.
By the 1584 edition, Jones also made several changes to the prefatory material. Although he retained, with minimal changes, the dedicatory letter to Richard Wistow and Partridge’s verse about the gentlewoman who inspired him, Jones removed all other verses. He also removed the woodcut illustration of the writer. Additionally, Jones moved the table of contents, originally featured in the title of the first edition, to the end of the book. Perhaps most importantly, Jones composed a letter to his female readership: “The Printer to all that couet the practise of good Huswiuery, aswell wiues as maides.” In it he outlined the purpose of the book, which was to assist the housewife in her noble role:

Aswell the Gentles of degree, as eke the meaner sort,

95 Ibid., sig. Aiv.
May practise here to purchase health, their household to comfort. And as the Proverbe proueth true to remedie eche greefe, Amongst the rest of Phisicks helps, the huswiues help is cheef. Therefore good huswiues once againe I say to you, repaire Vnto this Closet when you need, & make what ye find there, Which is a meane to make most things to huswiues vse pertain… Thus to conclude, I wish ye make the benefits of this booke, Both Gentles state, the Farmers wife, & Craftes mans huswife Cooke.

Jones welcomed women readers to an extent that Partridge originally did not. However, Jones also referred to readers from several socioeconomic groups. While the contents support a female readership, the recipes did not reflect this diversity; the recipes still reflected a gentlewoman’s lifestyle. A farmer or craftsman’s wife could not spare the expense of sugar or other precious ingredients for making many of the book’s preparations. Jones attempted to broaden his audience for this text through minimal effort; by modifying the front matter rather than the recipes, Jones was making the most visible, public portion of the book accessible to more women. Modifying the recipes was unnecessary for Jones to broaden his customer base, provided that his changes to the front matter were compelling enough.

The 1584 edition of *Commodious Conceits* also includes recipes which were not present in the first. The number of recipes expanded from approximately seventy in the first edition to ninety-one. The newly-added recipes again reflect an increased interest in targeting female consumers. For example, the book contains detailed instructions to make sugar paste to “make all manner of fruites and other fine things with their forme, as platters, dishes, glasses, cuppes…wherewith you may furnish a table: and when you haue done you may eate them vp.”96 This would be a useful recipe for gentlewomen to have

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96 Ibid., sigs. Aviiir–Bir.
for impressing guests in her home. Also added to the 1584 edition are a few recipes addressing concerns related to pregnancy and childbirth, such as “To know whether a woman shall euer conceiue, or no,” “To make a barren woman beare children,” and “To make women haue a quicke and speedy deliuerance of their children, and without paine, or at least very little.” Such recipes were naturally of interest to women expected to bear children.

The next two editions of *Commodious Conceits* printed in 1584 and 1586 for London printer Henry Carre contain almost identical content and layout as Jones’s 1584 edition. Before Jones printed another edition of *Commodious Conceits* in 1591, however, he printed *Handmaid* in 1588. At first glance, *Handmaid* does not appear related to *Commodious Conceits*; it is a collection of only non-confectionary culinary recipes. The preparations do not exclusively reflect banqueting dishes or meals for entertaining as in *Commodious Conceits*; rather, the text includes many everyday foods alongside more festive fare. Additionally, *Handmaid* does not contain any prefatory material. There are no images, dedications, or verses. The only textual indication that it is not an independent volume is the final statement within the long title: “Verie meete to be adioined to the good Huswifes Closet of prouision for her Houshold.” The first edition of *Commodious Conceits* already bore a similar subtitle, but by the 1584 edition, *Commodious Conceits* was subtitled *The Huswiues Closet of prouision, for the health of her houishold.*

*Handmaid*’s inclusion of only culinary recipes is an important distinction. While gentlewomen could afford the sugar and many other ingredients necessary for producing

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97 Ibid., sig. Cviir–v.

98 No copies of Jones’s 1588 edition are extant. My observations are based on his 1594 edition.
confectionary items, a larger group of women might be interested in a more general cookery book. Gentlewomen, who would not generally prepare meals for their families, could find value in *Handmaid* for the purposes of planning meals and running a household, while women in lower social stations might desire instruction or inspiration from the text. Since *Handmaid* featured recipes from named individuals, most women readers might be interested to purchase a book that revealed the interests and tastes of other English women.  

Although *Handmaid* originated with *Commodious Conceits*, only two recipes are from the original text: “To bake Chickens in Summer” and “To bake a Capon in steed of a Feasant.” This is not altogether surprising, as the original text has only seven non-confectionary culinary recipes. To create an entirely “new” cookery book, Jones compiled and copied recipes from several sources, printing it with a new title. In addition to the recipes from *Commodious Conceits*, he also gathered one recipe from *A Proper New Book of Cookery*, fifty-two recipes from *A Book of Cookery*, and twenty-three recipes from *The Good Housewife’s Jewell*.  

When Jones next printed *Commodious Conceits* in 1591, he kept the text and prefatory material the same as in past editions, but he removed almost all non-confectionary culinary recipes from the text. Jones retained a recipe for a “Fine Sauce for

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100 *Handmaid* (1594), sig. C6r; and Partridge, *Commodious Conceits* (1573), sig. B.i.v. “To bake Chickens in Summer” was originally titled “To bake Chickins.” Also *Handmaid* (1594), sig. C7r; and Partridge, *Commodious Conceits* (1573), sig. B.i.r–v. “To bake a Capon in steed of a Feasant” was originally titled “To bake a fesant, or Capon in steede of a fesant.”

101 Michael Best, “A Lost Cookery Book of the Sixteenth Century,” *The Library* s5-XXXII, no. 2 (1977): 156–60; and Notaker, 67. Gilly Lehmann indicated to Notaker that the 1594 edition also contained recipes from *A Proper New Book of Cookery*, *A Book of Cookrye* (editions printed between 1584 and 1594), and Dawson’s *The Good Housewife’s Jewell*. 

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a roasted Rabbet: vsed to king Henrie the eight."\textsuperscript{102} This may seem to be an outlier recipe in the newly-edited text, but the inclusion of a sauce used at the table of Henry VIII was likely more for reference to a royal figure rather than culinary instruction. Name dropping was a powerful tool for increasing the cachet of a text, particularly one aimed at gentlewomen, despite the fact that Henry VIII had been dead for almost forty-five years. The severance between these culinary and confectionary recipes was essentially complete.

In 1596, Jones made his last modifications to \textit{Commodious Conceits}. While the core text remained the same, Jones’s other changes were so significant that he essentially created a new text. Yet, the purpose of the text did not change: \textit{Hidden Secrets} was still intended as a resource for gentlewomen entertaining their friends and treating the medical woes of their families. The beginning of the long title was modified just enough to look like a different text: \textit{The Treasvrie of hidden Secrets. Commonlie called, The good Husvviues Closet of prouision, for the health of her Houshold}. Furthermore, the prefatory material found in \textit{Commodious Conceits} was excluded and all references to John Partridge was erased.

Jones added several features to appeal solely to women readers. Whereas all editions of \textit{Commodious Conceits} were dedicated to a London gentleman, Jones, signing the letter “R. I. Printer,” dedicates \textit{Hidden Secrets} “To all vvomen that loue and professe the practise of good huswifery, as well wiues as Maides.”\textsuperscript{103} Jones reiterates that a gentlewoman encouraged the first edition’s printing. He also grovels at the reader’s feet,

\textsuperscript{102} Partridge, \textit{Commodious Conceits} (1591), sig. A6v.

\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Hidden Secrets} (1596), sig. A2r.
proclaiming “my selfe at your command, to publish any thing that may be to your good 
liking, and to amend what otherwise shal prove to your discontent.” Rather than 
several pages of verse by Partridge in the first version, Jones simply includes a single 
verse based on previous material by Partridge titled “The Author of these Secretes, to his 
Booke.” Edited to only six lines, the verse praises the woman who inspired the book. 

Hidden Secrets contains most of the recipes in Commodious Conceits. However, 
it was enlarged to 140 chapters and recipes. Not surprisingly, the expansion favors the 
domestic activities of gentlewomen, including a greater variety of confectionary recipes, 
as well as more recipes for powders, oils, and perfumes. Two new confectionary recipes, 
both for preserving quinces, are stated to be from “Ladie Gray Clementt” and “King 
Edward,” advertising the noble pedigree of the recipes and their popularity among those 
in a higher social status than the readers. Hidden Secrets also includes an expanded 
household and medical section. Most notable is an expanded section to ease medical 
concerns specific to women: matters surrounding conception, pregnancy, and childbirth. 
Whereas previous editions of Commodious Conceits contained a few recipes, Hidden 
Secrets has seven pages dedicated to recipes such as “For the Flowers to be brought out 
shortly,” “For to cleanse the Matrice,” and “To bring foorth Flowers, and the Secundine, 
and a dead Child.” The book additionally includes descriptions of menstruation, 
conception, and problems arising during childbirth.

104 Idem. 
105 Ibid., sig. B4v. 
106 Ibid., sigs. E2v–E4v and F2v–F3r. 
107 Ibid., sigs. D3v and D4r.
Jones draws attention to the connection between *Handmaid* and *Commodious Conceits* in the dedicatory epistle of *Hidden Secrets*, stating his intention that the two books complement one another. He writes that he “did not long agoe print…a verie necessarie book of Cookery, & bequeathed it vnto you, called the good huswifes handmaid for the Kitchin…” He continues on, calling *Hidden Secrets* “The good Huswifes Closet of necessarie prouision for the health of her houshold.” Although he does not clarify that he previously printed the book under a different name, he states it “hath likewise been printed by me afore time.” After examining the book’s contents, he therefore placed ech thing that before was out of order in his due and conuenient place, and doe commendeth both vnto your protection: the one for your kitchin, and this other a readie help, always at hand as a Storehouse, or Treasurie of manie profitable secretes, and vnknowne Conceites to be vsed as occasion shall require.  

Here Jones reveals that he reorganized the material so that all kitchen recipes were contained in a single volume, and all other “secrets” were in another. However, all of the recipes were valuable, and the readers should therefore use and reference both books.  

Jones changed an important material aspect of the printing process of *Hidden Secrets*: it was printed in a quarto format. All previous editions, as well as *Handmaid*, were printed in an octavo format. This decision bucked a general trend throughout the sixteenth century, as books tended to be printed in smaller formats as time progressed.  

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109 Kavey, 96, 108–11. Kavey provides an alternate order of publishing events, arguing that *Hidden Secrets* was a combination of *Commodious Conceits* and *Handmaid*. Because she does not trace the many editions of these texts, she has not accurately determined when content was added or subtracted from various versions. Because of this, she neglects to address Jones’s intention that *Handmaid* and *Hidden Secrets* are complementary volumes.  
110 Carlson, 50.
It is possible that Jones made a decision to print *Hidden Secrets* in a format reserved for more expensive texts to contrast the text from the complementary *Handmaid*. Earlier editions of *Commodious Conceits* were priced at 4 d; Jones had included the price in his letter to women readers in his 1584 edition.¹¹¹ The letter and price were reprinted in all subsequent editions. The price of 4 d was inexpensive in the 1580s and 1590s, especially for the target audience of gentlewomen. Since *Handmaid* was similar in size to the octavo *Commodious Conceits*, it was likely also priced at or around 4 d. As *Handmaid* was not devoted to confectionary or recipes for entertaining, it likely had a slightly larger audience than gentlewomen. A literate woman from a lower social station could use such a book and could afford the purchase price. To distinguish *Hidden Secrets*, a complementary text devoted specifically to gentlewomen’s pursuits, Jones printed the book in a quarto format and could therefore charge a slightly higher price.

The editing and printing Jones undertook was not unusual during this time. Many printer-publishers regularly re-printed and updated books, both with and without attribution to original authors. The significance here lies in Jones’s attempt to appeal to a growing cookbook audience of women readers, particularly gentlewomen, with each edition. The printer’s division of recipes was an ingenious method, as the confectionary and other culinary recipes had different uses and thus different audiences. Jones was interested in appealing to gentry and women audiences. He increasingly printed books specifically for gentlemen and gentlewomen beginning in the late 1570s, and likely...

authored and compiled works for gentry readers during this period. Jones also printed a number of books specifically for women, exclusive of their class, such as a 1589 edition of *Iane Anger her Protection for vwomen*. As a bookseller who sold many of his own books, he was attuned to bestselling genres and consumer groups who purchased the most books. Jones used his knowledge of both printing and selling to modify a successful book and tailor it to an entirely feminine audience.

Other printers directly capitalized on Jones’s success with *Commodious Conceits* and its later iterations, basing new books on strikingly similar ideas. In 1582, *The Widow’s Treasure*, a book of secrets including culinary recipes, was printed for Henry Dizle. While authorship is widely attributed to Partridge, the text does not acknowledge him. Like *Commodious Conceits*, prefatory materials dedicate the book to a wealthy widow who encouraged publication of the secrets. At least four more editions of *The Widow’s Treasure* were printed throughout the sixteenth century by multiple printers.

112 Works for gentry readers include: Nicholas Breton, *A smale handfull of fragrant flowers selected and gathered out of the louely garden of sacred scriptures, fit for any honorable or woorshipfull gentlewoman to smell vnto* (London: Richard Jones, 1575). *Cyuile and vncyuile life a discourse very profitable, pleasant, and fit to bee read of all nobilitie and gentlemen : where, in forme of a dialoge is disputed, what order of lyfe best beseemeth a gentleman in all ages and times* (London: Richard Jones, 1579). Austin Saker, *Narbonus The laberynth of libertie. Very pleasant for young gentlemen to peruse, and passing profitable for them to prosecute* (London: Richard Jones, 1580); and Richard Jones, *The arbor of amorous deuises VVherin, young gentlemen may reade many plesant fancies, and fi ne deuises: and thereon, meditate diuers sweete conceites, to court the loue of faire ladies and gentlewomen* (London: Richard Jones, 1597).

113 *Jane Anger, Iane Anger her Protection for vvomen* (London: Richard Jones and Thomas Orwin, 1589).

114 Jones indicates on the title pages of many of his books that they are to be sold in his shop, including Breton’s *A smale handfull of fragrant flowers*, Niels Hemmingsen’s *The vway of lyfe A Christian*, Ulpian Fulwell’s *The first parte, of the eyghth liberall science*, and Angel Day’s *The English secretorie*.

115 Notaker, 60. Notaker surmises *The Widow’s Treasure* was printed by John Kingston for Henry Dizle. *The VVidowes Treasure* (London: for Henry Dizle), 1582. I will refer to this title as *The Widow’s Treasure*. 149
including Jones. Some of these printers, like Edward Allde and Edward White, printed several other cookbooks aimed at women during the remainder of the century, further capitalizing on the initial risk—and success—of Jones.\textsuperscript{116}

\textit{Conclusion}

This change and growth in cookbook audience over the course of the sixteenth century is important for several reasons, both in the context of my study and beyond. As cookery became more widely available to readers in noble, gentry, and professional classes by the mid-sixteenth century, women consulted these texts more often. While surely aware of this segment of the audience, printers and authors neglected to market to female consumers. Printers and authors began acknowledging female readership in the 1570s and directly marketing to women in the 1580s; this was initially a risky business decision in a volatile book market, but the decision paid off, especially for Richard Jones. He capitalized on the success of the initial printing of \textit{Commodious Conceits}, as well as subsequent editions and versions. Other printers with connections to Jones also capitalized on editions, as well as entirely new cookbooks targeted at women. This was the beginning of a turn in the English print marketplace; cookbooks became a feminized genre.

\textsuperscript{116} Jones, Allde, or White printed sixteenth-century editions of \textit{A Book of Cookery}; Thomas Dawson’s \textit{The Good Housewife’s Jewell}, \textit{The Second Part of the Good Housewife’s Jewell}, \textit{The Good Hous-wiues Treasurie}, and \textit{Handmaid}. Also see Kavey, 20–22. Kavey focuses on the relationship between printers Jones, Allde, and White, particularly in regards to the printing of \textit{Commodious Conceits} and \textit{The Widow’s Treasure}. However, Kavey’s consideration of \textit{The Widow’s Treasure} begins with the 1588 edition and not the 1582 edition.
While printers continued to produce feminized cookbooks, a majority of this genre was intended for women readers beginning in the seventeenth century. At this point, women, or men posing as women, were among the more successful cookbook authors. While outside the chronological scope of my study, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century women’s authorship and consumption of cookbooks has been examined as an expansion of women’s authority in private and public spheres: the household and the world of print. In the closely-related genre of manuscript recipe books, women in all literate classes took a dominant role, creating hundreds of exemplars over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Recipe books were a vehicle for literate expressions of social networks, familial bonds, and authority in the home. These manuscript books follow the same structure as these sixteenth-century early cookbooks and books of secrets, even to the extent of acknowledging recipe provenance in marginal notes.

While the audience for cookbooks gradually expanded in England, the genre, too, adapted. The contents, as well as features of the physical books, revealed much more than culinary information to readers. In the next chapter, I explore ideas that emerged in cookeries for the first time. Instruction and inspiration remained the cornerstone of sixteenth-century cookbooks, but new elements—pleasure and identity—peppered the pages.

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117 See note 6 of this chapter.
To make Pies that the Birds may be alive in them, and fly out when it is cut up:
Make the coffin of a great Pie or pasty, in the bottom whereof make a hole as big as your fist, or bigger if you will, let the sides of the coffin bee somewhat higher then ordinary Pies, which done, put it full of flower and bake it, and being baked, open the hole in the bottome, and take out the flower. Then having a Pie of the bignesse of the hole in the bottome of the coffin aforesaid, you shal put it into the coffin, withall put into the said coffin round about the aforesaid Pie as many small liue birds as the empty coffin will hold, besides the Pie aforesaid. And this is to be done at such time as you send the Pie to the table, and set before the guests: where vncovering or cutting vp the lid of the great Pie, all the Birds will fly out, which is to delight and pleasure shew to the company. And because they shall not bee altogether mocked, you shall cut open the small Pie, and in this sort you may make many others, the like you may do with a Tart.

—Epulario, Or, The Italian Banquet, Biirr

Entering an intimate dining room in turn-of-the-seventeenth-century London, you sit down for supper. Your host appointed the table and floor with rich textiles. His fine portraits and exceptional paintings hang on the walls. Before you, rest glittering silver plate and Venetian drinking glasses. You have already imbibed the gentleman’s fine claret with the first foods of the evening, but your mind has remained sharp for witty dinner conversation among the group of ten. Just when you think the dinner is entering a lull and the banqueting course will begin in the adjoining chamber, two servants deliver an especially large pie to the table. Your companions gasp at the pie’s size, as well as the beautiful knotted design atop the pastry. You think you hear muffled chirping sounds, but that could not possibly be the case. Then, the servants deftly grasp the edges of the pie,
lift off the top, and several birds fly out! The diners shriek with surprise, and two even jump up from their chairs. The birds fly about the room for a moment, threatening to land on the diners, before exiting through the only open door with the assistance of a servant. After only a moment, the entire table erupts with laughter and delight, encouraging the party to continue for several more hours.

Live birds baked in a pie was a recipe straight from medieval tradition of subtleties. The dish was not intended for great feasts, however, but small dinner parties, including those hosted by wealthy gentry. Diners would not consume the pie, but instead be satiated by pleasure and delight. While this recipe is from a fifteenth-century Italian manuscript collection, it lived on in a print cookbook, published an astonishing thirty-one times in Italy throughout the sixteenth century. It would remain in print until 1683, undergoing a total of fifty-three editions. The book was even translated into English and printed in London in 1598.1 English diners seemed particularly enamored with the dish, adapting it into even more elaborate dinnertime showpieces complete with ships, cannons, and frogs. Attending a dinner with this sort of imaginative display would be an exciting experience—even reading about it is delightful!

This recipe in its English iteration reflects a new way to use cookbooks in the late sixteenth century. Cookeries had transitioned from utilitarian texts to objects that captured different ways of thinking about food and dining. In this chapter, I show how authors and printers portrayed the consumption of food as a delightful experience and encouraged readers to take pleasure in reading cookeries. Additionally, cookbooks began

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promoting and cultivating an English identity; being English was becoming closely connected to the preparation and eating of certain foods. Cookbooks were now a site in which a reader assumed an identity, one which recognized and encouraged membership in the broader community of fellow Englishmen. These books also observed enjoyment in the daily activity of food preparation and consumption.

To examine these new uses and ideas of pleasure and English identity, I consider a variety of material artifacts and textual sources. Beginning with the idea of pleasure as related to dining and cooking, I set out to describe the physical space and objects used for dining in sixteenth-century households likely to employ cookbooks. This is an important contextualization, as physical spaces for dining were changing and objects used for the consumption of food have parallels to the cookbooks as material objects. The pleasure one might experience dining was an important component of the books as objects and texts. I then transition to a consideration of the cookbooks as material objects. The size, decoration, and other physical properties of the books create a distinct and pleasurable experience closely tied to the text. I then study the cookery texts, identifying instances in both paratext and recipes, where authors evoked delight in cooking and dining, offering readers ways to experience food. I then turn my attention to a second function of late-sixteenth-century cookbooks: cultivating English identity. I cull evidence from the texts of cookbooks to demonstrate a myriad of ways in which authors incorporated local and national English identities into food production and consumption, as well as the contrast authors established between English and foreign identities. As authors and printers incorporated pleasure and identity into cookbooks, they shaped how readers used these
books. Readers could find inspiration in cookeries for delightful dinner parties or learn how their cooking could connect them to a broader English community.

Prior to the sixteenth century, cookbooks were certainly used to transmit ideas beyond culinary instruction. As I described in Chapter 2, professionals used collections of recipes to acquire knowledge about the culinary markers of the class to which they aspired. Other cookbooks presented records of menus and dishes served at notable medieval feasts, like the first printed cookbook in England, the *Boke of Cokery*.² But throughout the second half of the sixteenth century, cookbooks transmitted specific ideas to a widespread audience of gentry and middling readers, particularly women. Chiefly, cookbooks presented the idea that food and dining were pleasurable experiences and written recipes transmitted notions of identity, community, and history. These notions communicated interwoven ideas about class, gender, nationality, social networks, familial bonds, and household power structures. Printers and authors were only beginning to incorporate these ideas into cookeries in the late sixteenth century. The new audiences of printed cookeries were non-nobles, even the occasional middling reader, and women. As groups who previously lacked representation in cookbook production, their newfound inclusion in the marketplace was exciting territory. So, too, was the status acquired by non-nobles as individuals deserving of pleasure and members of a broader English community. Remnants of these new aspects of cookbook production linger in the marketplace even today.

² *Here begynneth a noble boke of festes ryalle and Cokery* (London: Richard Pynson, 1500).
I. Cookbooks and Pleasure

Throughout the late sixteenth century, printers designed cookeries with a reader’s pleasure in mind. Cookbooks also increasingly demonstrated the idea that food and dining were delightful and enjoyable activities. Cookbook authors and compilers increasingly included mention of pleasure through food and dining. I focus on the projection of pleasure and delight in late sixteenth-century cookbooks—both in the texts and material objects. This inclusion of pleasure in cookeries converged with a general change in food preferences; the two are interrelated, as the period functioned as a watershed for these topics. Multiple scholars have explored the shift in food preferences, particularly the development of an English cuisine.\(^3\) Here I concentrate on the notable incorporation of delight in culinary guides, rather than examining the food itself. While cookbook readers in prior centuries were no doubt interested in pleasant dinner parties and delightful culinary creations, cookbooks provide unique demonstrations of the regularity with which these ideas were in wide circulation for the first time in the late sixteenth century.

Elizabethan cookbooks reveal many kinds of culinary pleasures, from simple everyday delights to extravagant displays. Yet in each instance the cookbooks presented a joy and conviviality in food and dining that was previously missing from this genre. Cookbook authors included new, occasional descriptions of enjoyment through the senses

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of taste, smell, and sight. These textual elements painted a vibrant picture of dishes and meals, increasing the thought and anticipation of food. Authors suggested adding ingredients in amounts which pleased the cook. The very acts of cooking and preparing foods were lauded as delightful. Authors and printers described enjoyable dinners with companions; conversation and entertainment were critical elements of the shared dining experience. Importantly, a joyful and pleasing dinner was no longer restricted to the nobility. All audiences who consulted cookeries were considered capable of providing a delightful meal for others. As printers were continually attempting to expand their cookbook offerings for growing audiences, they actively worked to convince the readership that they were entitled to the same basic elements of pleasure as their social superiors.

Setting the Table

Cookeries were just one element of sixteenth-century cooking and dining. The material culture of the household, particularly as related to dining spaces and the consumption of food, not only provides an important context for cookery texts but also suggests some parallels to cookbooks as material objects. A consideration of the physical space and context of dining will reveal attitudes toward dining, particularly pleasure, and different ways in which cookbooks represented culinary delight.

Through the fifteenth century, most meals in any given household were communal. Dining took place in the great hall, or the largest space in a house. While the occasional meal for a nobleman or woman might take place in a private chamber, a vast majority of dining occurred publicly. During the late sixteenth century, rooms began to
be designated specifically for dining, particularly in country homes. While yeomen, lower gentry, and professionals did not have the same need or desire for entertaining spaces as the upper gentry, a standard had been set for a distinct dining room in homes by the end of the seventeenth century.\(^4\) These rooms were smaller than great halls of medieval households, and the sole purpose of dining rooms was to dine.\(^5\) These rooms were interchangeably called dining rooms, chambers, and parlors. An early depiction of such a division of space appears in Gervase Markham’s *The English Husbandman*, showing the separation of the dining room from the medieval dining space, the great hall (see Figure 4.1).\(^6\) The specific distribution of space draws the analyst’s attention to two items of import. First, dining was an important enough social activity, as well as one with enough subsidiary materials, to merit its own space. Second, in large houses, these spaces were smaller than the great halls of prior centuries. A smaller space indicated the trend toward more intimate dining experiences. These dining experiences were also private. Into the late Middle Ages, dining was a public experience. In a country manor, for example, landowners often dined in the same space as guests, visitors, and servants. By the late sixteenth century, however, dining was mainly a private activity. The food on the table no longer served solely as a public manifestation of power and wealth, a grand display for

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\(^5\) Mark Dawson, *Plenti and Grase: Food and Drink in a Sixteenth-Century Household* (Totnes, Devon: Prospect Books, 2009), 209. In many homes renovated from a medieval structure, the great hall was retained and would continue to be used for large meals and celebrations.

peers and peasants alike. Rather, the grandeur and expense of certain dishes provided a source of personal delight and pleasure.

Figure 4.1. Gervase Markham includes a dining room in his diagram of a country house in *The English Husbandman*. The dining room (B) is distinct from the great hall (A), though still near a battery of food preparation areas, such as the buttery, larder, dairy house, and kitchen (H–M).

The dining experience for non-nobles was changing dramatically. For gentry and professionals, those who could afford additional luxuries, dining at home was an event. These diners incorporated additional formalized trappings into their mealtimes, including decorated rooms, music-making, and beautiful objects to hold and aid in the consumption of food and drink. Music-making was often encouraged following supper to entertain diners late into the evening. This was as likely to occur within the dining room itself as in other parlors in the home.\(^7\) While late medieval consumers certainly purchased their fair share of beautiful dinnerware and dining furniture, luxury was more readily available to

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and affordable for non-nobles. Silver plate, the most expensive dining ware and a traditional marker of status, adorned more tables. Gentry families displayed their tastes and current fashions in the design of the silver. When not in use, imposing, elaborate cupboards and dressers displayed the household silver in the dining room. Throughout the sixteenth century, fine glassware increasingly decorated tables. Due to its fragile nature, imported glassware was expensive, but the beauty of items such as engraved Venetian drinking glasses made them especially appealing. Even everyday dining ware of gentry and professional households was not inexpensive: linens and napery, pewter plates, and pottery drinking and serving vessels from England and abroad were aesthetically pleasing, though more economical than silver and glass. These material objects which surrounded diners were simultaneously intended to delight. In the new private space of the dining room, any opulence was as much about personal pleasure as an extravagance to awe guests.

Households, particularly country estates of the nobility and gentry, also began to include designated areas for banquets—banquet houses and gardens—in the sixteenth century. While banquets can refer to an entire festive meal, in early modern England the term is usually applied to the final course of a meal consisting mainly of fruit, nuts, and

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8 Ibid., I, IV: 14. Pepys wrote about the renovation and redecoration of his London dining room. He even proudly described a new dining table which could fit nine or ten diners, but “eight with great room.” Also see Claudia Goldstein, *Pieter Bruegel and the Culture of the Early Modern Dinner Party* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 125–52. Goldstein details the aesthetics of the early modern dining room, especially the paintings which were hung in such rooms.


sugared confections. The banquet course could be enjoyed as a more modest dessert
course in less affluent homes, but landed gentry enjoyed the course in delightful buildings
and gardens that cultivated sensual pleasures.\textsuperscript{11} Guests were welcome to wander through
beautifully decorated rooms, sometimes part of permanent structures of stone, sometimes
temporary and constructed out of living greenery. While enjoying marchepan,
gingerbread, sugar plate, creams, knots, and candied fruits and nuts, banqueters could
stroll through fragrant and colorful pleasure gardens, view adjoining waterworks, or even
consume confections in grottoes meant to evoke the sense of dining underwater.\textsuperscript{12}
Entertainment was also part of the banquet, no matter whether the experience occurred in
a banquet house or garden, or simply a separate room inside the home. This might
include music, dancing, or modest games. Banqueting games and conversation were
sometimes inspired by the dinnerware. Banqueters often consumed their confections from
the plain side of thin wooden or sugar plates, or trenchers, while the opposite side might
be painted or gilded with images and verses, as in Figure 4.2.\textsuperscript{13} Once the sweetmeats
were consumed, diners could turn the trenchers over and read the text aloud.\textsuperscript{14} The

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11} C. Anne Wilson, ed., \textit{‘Banquetting Stuffe’: The Fare and Social Background of the Tudor and
\item \textsuperscript{12} Jennifer Stead, \textit{“Bowers of Bliss: The Banquet Setting,”} in \textit{‘Banquetting Stuffe’: The Fare and
Social Background of the Tudor and Stuart Banquet}, ed. C. Anne Wilson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh
University Press, 1991), 115–57. Also see page 131 in the same essay for a description of Lady Anne
Clifford’s grotto banqueting room at Skipton Castle, Yorkshire.
\item \textsuperscript{13} For example, see “Trencher (one of a set),” Metropolitan Museum of Art, ca. early seventeenth
\item \textsuperscript{14} Peter Brears, \textit{“Rare Conceites and Strange Delightes”} in \textit{‘Banquetting Stuffe’: The Fare and
Social Background of the Tudor and Stuart Banquet}, ed. C. Anne Wilson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh
University Press, 1991), 111.
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material world of the banquet was just as reflective of pleasure and delight as the new luxury of private dining spaces.

Figure 4.2. An early-seventeenth-century banqueting trencher made of painted and gilt wood. This example displays several biblical verses.

*The Material Object*

The physical experience of holding and using cookbooks changed during the course of the sixteenth century. The experience of handling these materials in a library today reveals several ways in which cookbooks were intended to elicit delight. When handling these books, a reader would be struck by several features. These later cookbooks were comfortable, small, usually in octavo format; perfect for casual perusal or for consultation while lying open on a kitchen or still room table. The paper was thick
and easy to turn. The cookeries were not illustrated, but dotted with decorated capitals, woodcut borders, and the occasional printed manicule or flourish. These occasional woodcuts and capitals were usually elaborate floral patterns, evoking beauty and private extravagance. Many of these elements, particularly the size, were also associated with other small objects frequently handled by gentlewomen, such as toilet boxes, lockets, and portrait miniatures. These features indicated a book that was intended not only for practical purposes, but for enjoyment. These codices evoked pleasure while one perused the recipes, recalled favorite dishes, and planned convivial gatherings among friends. The delight in the objects was closely connected to the delight in the experience instructed by the texts.

Most sixteenth-century English cookbooks included ornamental capitals and decorative borders as interior decoration. Illustrations paired with the text were rare; the lone example included several illustrations depicting animals, distillation equipment, and diagrams of garden layouts. Although one could open up any cookbook from this period and find ornamentation, a representative example is found in The Good House-

15 Most of the cookeries measure approximately 130 mm by 80 mm.


17 Cookeries produced by the same printer occasionally contain the same ornaments. See The Good House-wiues Treasurie (London: Edward Allde, 1588), sig. A.iii.r (depicted in Figure 4.3); and A Book of Cookrye (London: Edward Allde, 1591), sig. 4v. Both contain Edward Allde’s ornamental “T.”

18 Charles Estienne, Maison Rustique, or the Country Farm, trans. Richard Surflet (London: Edmund Bollifant for Bonham Norton, 1600). Also see Henry Notaker, Printed Cookbooks in Europe, 1470–1700 (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2010), 60. I have not examined the 1582 edition of The Widow’s Treasure, but Notaker states that it contains a woodcut image of a distilling instrument on the title page.
which contains decorative ornaments and capitals and an ornamental border around the title page (see Figure 4.3).\textsuperscript{19} Even cookeries that include husbandry or dietary advice, such as \textit{Dyets Dry Dinner} (1599) and \textit{Maison Rustique, or the Country Farm} (1600), showcase such adornments.\textsuperscript{20} In two instances, the books become textual jewel boxes; the small pages are adorned with borders of jewels and other attractive shapes. \textit{Delightes for Ladies} (1602) and \textit{A Closet for Ladies and Gentlewomen} (1608) were printed with a border on every page of recipes, as well as the ornamentation found in other books of this genre.\textsuperscript{21} Figures 4.4 and 4.5 illustrate these elaborate borders. The act of opening the books and perusing the contents provided visual delight for a reader; the very objects associated with an enjoyable experience were pleasing, in and of themselves.\textsuperscript{22} These dainty books were not ostentatious. Plain exteriors hid secretly beautiful interiors, just like the boxes, lockets, and miniatures that readers were accustomed to handling.

\textsuperscript{19} The Good House-wiues Treasurie.


\textsuperscript{21} Hugh Plat, \textit{Delightes for Ladies} (London: Peter Short, 1602); and \textit{A Closet for Ladies and Gentlewomen} (London: for Arthur Johnson, 1608).

\textsuperscript{22} Wall, “Literacy and the Domestic Arts,” 394. Wall argues that the decoration in combination with a lack of functional indexing “encouraged readers to meander through the text and to appreciate its beauty and variety.”
Figure 4.3. *The Good House-wiues Treasurie*, sig. A.iii.r, contains decorative ornaments and a large decorative capital on the same page. Image published with permission of ProQuest. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

Figure 4.4. *Delightes for Ladies* (1602) contains a jeweled border on every page. This recipe for sugar paste molded into animals is found on sigs. B3v–B4r.
Figure 4.5. *A Closet for Ladies and Gentlewomen* (1608) similarly contains an elaborate border on every page. Sometimes, as in this image of sigs. B8v–Cr, the printer included additional ornamentation to decorate the text.

Even the typeface contributed to a refined and pleasing appearance. While printers occasionally veered from their standard typesetting conventions, they tended to adhere to a standard practice when typesetting cookbooks. Typically, printers used roman typeface for recipe headings and title pages and used blackletter for the recipes. Italics were used more sparingly, sometimes appearing in recipe titles, on the title page, or as the typeface for dedicatory epistles. In 1600, printers changed the typical pattern of typesetting, and used roman type for the recipe text and italics for headings.23 Thomas Creede, printing for William Wood, bridged the old and new methods in *Dyets Dry Dinner*. Pictured in Figure 4.6, this book is laid out with one foodstuff featured every two

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23 The exceptions are: *Delightes for Ladies*, *A Closet for Ladies and Gentlewomen*, and *Maison Rustique*. 166
facing leaves. The verso leaf describes the food, including notes on humoral properties, dietary use, and preparations, including recipes. The recto leaf contains prose stories, literary references, or purported facts about the foodstuff. Each verso leaf is printed with blackletter typeface, while each recto leaf is printed with roman typeface. The consistent typesetting in cookbooks resulted in visually organized pages with systematic blocks of text, contributing to a reader’s desire to easily peruse the cookery for elements of an upcoming meal.

Figure 4.6. The text about each of the foodstuffs in Dyets Dry Dinner is laid out over two pages. As depicted here in sigs. M8v–Nr, the pages contain different types of information and this is visually represented by the differing typefaces.

Since many late sixteenth-century books were the same size, a reader could have several books bound together, creating a codex entirely of cookbooks. For example, four
cookeries at the British Library are bound together in a single volume.\textsuperscript{24} While it is impossible to know if these specific British Library copies were bound together by their earliest reader, this was a regular practice for print and manuscript texts.\textsuperscript{25} In particular, early modern readers frequently bound together \textit{Delightes for Ladies} and the \textit{Closet for Ladies and Gentlewomen}.\textsuperscript{26} The number of texts and binding could be customized according to the reader’s finances and desires.

These features were not present in the earliest print cookeries. While a few manuscript cookbooks include some decoration, the physical appearance was mostly utilitarian and could not be described as soliciting delight or pleasure. Manuscript cookbooks dating to the preceding centuries, though small, were usually larger than their early modern counterparts. In many instances, manuscript cookbooks were visually organized and neatly composed, but again lacking in decoration. Rubrication abounds, but this feature was one more of organization, not ornamentation. And while a few

\textsuperscript{24} British Library 1037.c104.e.32 includes \textit{A booke of cookerie, otherwise called: The good huswiues handmaid for the kitchin} (1597), \textit{The Widdowes Treasure} (1595), \textit{The Good Husvifes Jewell} (1596), and \textit{The Second part of the good Hus-wiues Jewell} (1597). The 1597 edition of \textit{The Second part of the good Hus-wiues Jewell} (henceforth referred to as \textit{The Second Part of the Good Housewife’s Jewell}) is typically found with \textit{The Booke of Caruing and Sewing}, as it is here.

\textsuperscript{25} Also complicating the possibility of dating the binding is the British Library’s rebinding of the texts in 1985.

\textsuperscript{26} Lynette Hunter, “‘Sweet Secrets’ from Occasional Receipt to Specialised Books: The Growth of a Genre,” in \textit{Banqueting Stuffe: The Fare and Social Background of the Tudor and Stuart Banquet}, ed. C. Anne Wilson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), 44; and Wendy Wall, \textit{Staging Domesticity: Household Work and English Identity in Early Modern Drama} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 47. Hunter identifies a copy at the University of Leeds Brotherton Library, in which the cookery section from \textit{Delightes for Ladies} and the sugar work and medicine sections of the \textit{Closet for Ladies and Gentlewomen} were bound together. Wendy Wall identifies another such copy of the two bound together at the Folger Shakespeare Library. I also examined a volume of the two texts at Harvard University’s Houghton Library.
instances of ornamental decoration appeared in fifteenth-century manuscript cookeries, this was not a standard feature of the genre during the late Middle Ages.

In contrast to medieval examples, the physical experience of handling late sixteenth-century cookbooks elicited delight, one directly associated with the textual contents and the experience of food and dining. Evidence of increased interest and pleasure in dining and entertaining, particularly among classes beneath the nobility, was elicited by both physical characteristics and text. Authors and printers included language about the pleasing and delightful experience of food and dining; the preparation and consumption of food was to be enjoyed.

Paratext

The idea of culinary pleasure, as related to the preparation and consumption of food, is obvious in the paratext and recipes of sixteenth-century cookeries. When one begins to read an early print cookbook, the paratext—the textual material surrounding the recipes in cookeries—immediately distinguishes the book from a medieval one. Since a majority of late medieval cookeries altogether lack paratext, these words in sixteenth-century cookeries reveal a new degree of information about the early modern culinary experience. The titles and subtitles of several cookbooks suggest, from the outset, a close engagement with pleasure. Taken at face value, inclusion of a word such as “delight” in a title by an author or printer was a clear statement of the joy of cooking (and dining). Such emotion in a public space on the book may have elicited an analogous response from the books’ owners; by remembering a wonderful experience related to the cookery’s contents, a reader might be enticed to re-read or re-use the book. The term “delight” very
likely had a secondary purpose: to engage a prospective reader enough to purchase a copy of the book. The titles were not promises, but they suggested that readers would find some joy in the pages. As early as *A Proper New Book of Cookery* in 1545, the long title proclaimed the book was “for all them that delighteth in cokery.”27 Printers of later editions modified the orthography but retained the same message: “for al them that delight in Cookery.”28 Likewise, John Partridge included in the long title of the 1573 edition of *The Treasurie of Commodious Conceits* that the book was “Mete and necessarie for the profitable vse of all estates both men and women: And also pleasant for recreation …”29 In the 1580s, two more cookbooks were printed with similar inclusions. According to the long title, *A Book of Cookrye*, first published in 1584, was “very necessary for all such as delight therin.”30 Depicted in Figure 4.3, *The Good House-wiues Treasurie* included a title immediately preceding the recipes on the first page of text stating, “A Book of Cookrye very necessary for all such as delight therin.”31 Finally, in 1602, Hugh Plat authored *Delightes for Ladies, to Adorne Their Persons, Tables, Closets, and Distillatories*.32 These titular mentions of pleasure were a highly visible indication of a widespread pleasure in food and dining apparent in the text of print cookeries.

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28 The 1575 and 1576 editions exhibit this orthographical change.


31 *The Good House-wiues Treasurie*, sig. A.iii.r.

32 Plat, *Delightes for Ladies*. 

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Beyond titles, authors and printers included a wide variety of language, both plain and oblique, describing food and dining as enjoyable and desirable experiences. These experiences were being sold to an audience who never witnessed the displays of awe and power at late medieval feasting tables, but who could appreciate a convivial meal with friends, or a wondrous display of shimmering sugar sculptures and comfits on a banquet table. While not all cookeries from the period contain prefatory materials, such as dedicatory epistles and introductory verses, these texts provide more than a passing reference to the delights of cookery.

Author John Partridge and printer Richard Jones both included statements in *The Treasurie of Commodious Conceits* about the role of the book in the reader’s life. Partridge included a stanza of verse to it, emphasizing that the book was not only practical, but also enjoyable:

Go little Booke, of profite and pleasance,
Vnto thy good Mistresse, without delay :
And tell her I send thee for the performance
Of her earnest sute, sith she would haue no nay,
Let hir vse thy commodities, as right wel she may,
To profite her freends, for healths preseruation,
And also to pleasure them for recreation.33

Partridge also noted that the book was useful for the woman who owned it and her friends. For a good woman would please her friends while entertaining them, specifically providing delicious food and good company, as the book instructed in its recipes. By the time he printed his 1584 edition, Jones also added that “Good Huswiues here you haue, a

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33 John Partridge, *The treasurie of commodious Conceites, and hidden Secrets* (London: Richard Jones, 1584), sig. A.iii.v. The verse also appears in the 1573 edition with different orthographical features. Another version with an identical first line is located in *The Treasvrie of hidden Secrets* (London: Richard Jones, 1596).
Iewell for your ioye …”34 Here Jones underscored that the book could contribute to the reader’s happiness. The book accomplished this through its material presence as a dainty, beautiful object, as well as a book that contained instruction and advice for creating foods and entertainment to please others.

Henry Butts advocates for pleasurable meals in *Dyets Dry Dinner*, although the cookery was atypical. The text was part cookbook, part dietary, part encyclopedia, and part dinner conversation guide. The book reflected its academic roots, and spoke to an audience of well-educated readers more concerned with dining than cooking.35 Additionally, as the title suggests, Butts advocated for dry dinners, or meals without alcohol. A dry dinner, however, did not mean a quiet, stiff, or boring meal. Instead, Butts promoted dining experiences fueled by wit, humor, and intelligence. Good conversation with companions during a meal was far more important than inebriated guests. While the foundation of *Dyets Dry Dinner* was different from contemporary cookeries, the spirit was remarkably the same: the experience of the meal, even the most ordinary gathering around food, should be pleasant. For Butts, this pleasure was derived from the diners, not the cuisine. The focus on the dining experience was due, in part, to whom the book is

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34 Partridge, *The Treasurie of Commodious Conceits* (1584 Jones), sig. A.i.v.

35 David Cressy, “Death of a Vice-Chancellor: Cambridge, 1632,” *History of Universities* 2 (2012), 92–112; and David L. Gants, “Creede, Thomas (b. in or before 1554, d. 1616),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, accessed 1 February 2016, http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/view/article/6666. This book has an unusual pedigree. Butts hailed from Norfolk, and his grandfather had been the physician of Henry VIII. At the time of printing, Butts was a fellow of Christ College Cambridge and had proceeded to Master of Arts. Butts later was elected as Master of Christ College Cambridge and became Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, and soon thereafter hanged himself. The printer, Thomas Creede, was also quite different from the small group of London printers who produced most contemporary English cookbooks. Creede was known for printing dramatic editions; now he is especially remembered for his editions of William Shakespeare plays.
dedicated: *Dyets Dry Dinner* was framed as a dinner invitation to Lady Anne Bacon. Butts claimed the text was meant to describe how he would create and serve his dry meal. He also evoked the friendship of Richard and Elynor Thekeston in the introductory text, *Partem Amici.* Butts remembered “that great good cheare I have often had with you, both at London and in Yorke-shire” and also invited the couple to his “Schollers Dinner.”

Before proceeding to the main cookery text, Butts described the escalation of pleasure throughout the meal:

> Neither did our infinit appetite here consist contented with things necessary, but something yet was wanting to adde voluptuous delight. Wherefore wanton appetite growing weary of Natures bare and simple Ordinary, gan glycurously to banquet with all sorts of Spices and Aromatique delicates … Thus proceded wee by degrees, from simplicitie and necessitie, to varietie and plentie, ending in luxury and superfluitie …

The meal began with foods to sustain and nourish, not please. However, the diner’s appetites wanted more than what nature alone could provide, so they consumed the delicious and aromatic banquet confections created by the cook. This fare steered the course of an otherwise basic meal to a luxurious one. However, Butts spoke not only of food here, but also conversation.

The other component of a pleasurable meal was verbal banter: the spoken word, however superfluous, added variety and luxury. For every foodstuff described in *Dyets Dry Dinner,* there was a section labeled “Storie for Table-talke,” intended to be contrived

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36 Butts, *Dyets Dry Dinner,* sigs. A3r–A5r.

37 Ibid., sigs. A6r–A8v.

38 Ibid., sig. A7r.

39 Ibid., sig. A8r–v.
kindling for conversations. While this core section of the book about individual foodstuffs was an unattributed adaptation and translation of part of an Italian cookery, Butts frequently interjected his own witty voice.⁴⁰ When introducing these bits of descriptions and conversation starters, Butts mused on their academic nature, likening each part to dishes of a meal, particularly badly-carved ones. Each dish was “Scholler-likely, that is, badly carued. For Schollers are bad Carvers.”⁴¹ Sometimes the table-talk was learned, filled with Classical references and occasional Latin texts. At other times, the talk was bawdy and befitting a schoolboy, like his comment of sugar: “If I were not very reuerently sparing of your reuerent modestie , especially at the table, I wold tell you it makes them smell and stincke like newe Oxe-dung.”⁴² In all instances, Butts advocated for a convivial meal, made pleasing by both food and conversation.

Hugh Plat’s turn-of-the-century cookery, Delightes for Ladies, contained the most overt ode to the sensual joys of food.⁴³ Fruits, nuts, and sugar work were lauded, their aromas, tastes, and beauty celebrated. Plat’s sentiments were indicative of the growing interest in culinary pleasures in cookeries. Plat began his epistle innocuously enough. Framed by the salutation to “all true louers of Arte and knowledge,” he described a series of topics about which he had written other books. Then, he outlined the contents of the

⁴⁰ Baldassarre Pisanelli, Trattato della natura del cibi et del bere (Rome: Bartolomeo Bonfadino and Tito Diani, 1583).

⁴¹ Butts, Dyets Dry Dinner, sig. Aa2v. The italics are from the printed text.

⁴² Ibid., sig. O6r.

⁴³ Plat, Delightes for Ladies, sigs. A2r–A3v. Also note Thick, Sir Hugh Plat, 149–53. While the verse and prefatory material of this book was almost certainly composed by Plat, he was not the primary author of the cookery and confectionary recipes in Delightes for Ladies. According to Malcolm Thick, most of these recipes are sourced from London, British Library, MS Sloane 2189, and were probably written by someone with the initials “T.T.”
book. Instead of simply listing the types of recipes within, Plat waxed poetic about the final dishes, including:

Of Marmelade and paste of Genua,
Of musked sugars I intend to wright:
Of Leach, of Sucket, and Quidinia,
Affording to each Lady her delight.44

Plat was not content with simple lists. He continued on to describe the creation of confections and their inherent beauty:

I teach both fruits and flowers to preserue,
And candie them, so Nutmegs, cloues and mace:
To make both marchpaine paste, and sugred plate,
And cast the same in forms of sweetest grace.
Each bird and foule so moulded from the life,
And after cast in sweet compounds of arte,
Asif the flesh and forme which nature gaue,
Did still remaine in euerie lim and part.
When chrystall frosts haue nipt the tender grape,
And cleane consum’d the fruits of euerie vine,
Yet here behold the clusters fresh and faire,
Fed from the branch, or hanging on the line,
The walnut, small nut, and the chesnut sweete,
Whose sugred kernels loose their pleasing taste,
Are here from yeere to yeere preserued,
And made by Arte with strongest fruites to last.45

Plat’s focus was on the beauty afforded by preservation or a skillful sugar creation.

Candied nuts, fruits, and flowers; marchepan; and cast sugar became more perfect forms of themselves, no longer perishable at the whim of nature, but at the whim of the reader. With Plat’s instruction, simple foods were elevated into dishes of pleasure, delighting every sense, and bringing joy to those who saw or consumed the final results. The beauty and taste Plat described was available to the cook who prepared the dishes and the taster

44 Plat, Delightes for Ladies, sig. A2v.
who consumed them. But the verse itself was also pleasing; rather than a dull and lifeless introduction to the cookery, Plat composed a lyrical verse which was a delight for the reader. The lush descriptions created a still room or banquet table in the reader’s mind, serving as a method for the reader to imagine or relive an exquisite dining experience.

Late-sixteenth-century cookbook authors and printers realized the value of paratext in setting the tone of a recipe collection. Their titles, dedicatory comments, and other non-recipe prose and verse reveal a bond between pleasure and the preparation and consumption of food that was not present in earlier cookeries. Recipe texts also changed, similarly reflecting culinary delight.

Text

The core of any cookbook, the recipes, can indicate the interests and expectations of readers. Medieval recipes, often stripped of many details and helpful descriptions, lacked any notion of pleasure in cooking or eating. In late medieval England, most people who used cookbooks were either preparing food for someone else, or using the cookbooks to learn about food and dining, but not cooking. As cookbook audiences expanded, the same people who were responsible for eating and consuming some cookery preparations in the household were also reading and purchasing cookbooks. As these roles converged, recipes included information to help the readers in their efforts to both prepare and consume good food.

Recipes contain both blatant declarations of delightful foods and more subtle semantic shifts from earlier cookeries, such as the use of more descriptive adjectives that evoked pleasure. This shift in description, which aided in the preparation of food, and
thus the utility of the text, aligns with Eugene Kintgen’s description of reading for pleasure in Tudor England.46 This period witnessed an increase in the publication of books including “pleasure” or “delight” in the titles. However, the pleasure of the book was not due solely to a pleasurable reading experience; for Kintgen points out that there is no model of art or aesthetic reading at this time. Rather, the pleasure of the text was closely aligned with the utility of the text. In the cookery genre, delightful descriptions of food were an aid to make the recipes more useful for the reader. The usefulness helped facilitate pleasure, and the symbiotic relationship between reading the cookbooks and producing and consuming its products was solidified.

For some readers, the pleasure of reading a cookbook was the shared delight in the recipe texts. In an August 1663 diary entry, Samuel Pepys wrote about a day spent on the king’s pleasure boat with some companions. He read aloud to entertain the group, going “all the way reading in a book of Receipts of making fine meats and sweetmeats; among others, one ‘To Make my own sweet water’–which made us good sport.”47 It is easy to imagine that readers a few decades earlier experienced the same sentiment; part of the pleasure was in the reading, particularly the communal experience of delight in the recipes.

A description of the visual characteristics of the food or the taste of the food became very important, even in instances where the recipe had been in use for several centuries. Vivid descriptions were crucial, for cookbooks were marketed to an audience


who likely had not seen or made these dishes or their medieval precedents. Through the fifteenth century, noble diners, and perhaps a lucky group of commoner spectators, might have experienced a meal with a peacock redressed in its own skin and feathers, or several pottages of vibrant hues. Occasional medieval cookeries described these dishes, but withheld detailed instruction of their creation. Mass-printed cookbooks provided careful description of and direction for cooking culinary showpieces. These dishes were intended to delight, and this point was specifically stated in the recipes.

One way in which authors of late-sixteenth-century cookeries indicated an interest and pleasure in food and dining was through overt descriptions of the experiences as pleasing, beautiful, colorful, and good-tasting. In particular, the adjectives used in recipes to describe foods marked a dramatic shift from earlier cookbooks. Tasting with the eyes, as well as the mouth, became a critical part of evaluating a food and determining its delightfulness. In preparing foods, readers of cookeries found instructions that incorporated metaphors of other beautiful objects, like “cut into small pieces like Diamonds” and “till you finde the candy hard and glitering like diamonds.”

These cookbooks also focused on color as a key component of the banqueting experience, as well as an aspect of dining that could delight the cookbook reader and his or her guests. Late medieval cookeries occasionally described how to color foods and the range of colors available, but later examples were more persistent in this attribute. Authors indicated specific colors: for example, rather than “red” codiniac, or quince marmalade, a recipe produces “a rubye colour.” Another recipe specified the types of

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48 A Closet for Ladies and Gentlewomen, 30; and Plat, Delightes for Ladies, sig. C8v.

49 A Closet for Ladies and Gentlewomen, 46.
roses to produce a beautiful color: a “conserve of red and damaske Roses … will be of an
excellent colour.” Plat similarly provided instructions for making water and vinegar of
rose, which could be adapted for violet, marigold, or cowslip. His recipe resulted in
items the color of the flower used. More generally, Plat described how to “make sugar
paste both of colour and taste of any flower.” The author of Epulario provided
instructions for producing green broth, white broth, green or yellow meat, and golden
sops. The cookery also contained detailed instructions for producing multi-hued dishes,
such as “Gealies of flesh or fish, and of diuers colours in one platter.” This vibrant jellied
meat or fish dish could contain any colors the reader desired; the author provided tips for
producing red, sanguine, yellow, and green using a variety of dyes, like kernels, saffron,
wheat, parsley, and carrots. The desire to color the banquet and dining table was not
new, as medieval subtleties on royal tables certainly accomplished this. However, the
concern among non-nobles was something new in these cookbooks. Medieval English
cookeries relayed instructions for creating opulent dishes, but a reader was left to his own
devices visualizing such creations. A sixteenth-century reader, however, could experience
extravagant dishes prior to preparing them, through careful description of culinary
details. This description extended from mere visualizing to experiencing the food more

50 Ibid., 54.

51 Plat, Delightes for Ladies, sigs. G3v–G4r.

52 Ibid., sig. B7v.

53 Epulario, sigs. Er and Eiir.

54 Ibid., sigs. Iiiiiv–Kr.
fully at the table. Consuming food with the eyes as well as the mouth was pleasurable, and now that benefit was extended to a much larger group of Englishmen and women.

The sixteenth-century cookeries stood apart from their medieval counterparts in another way. The later texts stressed a quality of excellence, for a recipe only brought pleasure and delight when it was well executed. In the preparation and evaluation of dishes, authors described how to improve food. Sometimes, the reader was given two options, though one was clearly preferred. In one book, the cook was directed when making chewets in Lent that “if you haue any fat of fish it is better than Oyle.”55 Or, when making shortcake, the author indicated that clotted cream or sweet butter can be used, “but Creame is better.”56 In some instances, a reader was cautioned against doing something that would make the dish unpleasant. The author of one cookery warned his readers to avoid putting too many cloves in walnut confit, “least they taste bitter.”57 Similarly in another book, a reader preparing Ising puddings was told: “beware yee pull not away too much of the fat within, for the fatter they be within, the better it is for the Puddings.”58 Authors also reminded their readers that a dish “will be good,” provided they follow his directions.59 Similar notices dotted the pages of other cookeries. Readers of Epulario frequently see “it will be good” and “it will be the better.”60 Other authors

55 The good Huswifes Handmaide for the Kitchin (London: Richard Jones, 1594), sigs. 18v–19r.
56 Ibid., sig. G6r–v.
58 The good Huswifes Handmaide for the Kitchin, sig. G4r–v.
59 See an example in The Second Part of the Good Housewife’s Jewell, 52.
60 See an example in Epulario, sig. Eiiir.
preferred appealing directly to the sense of taste, such as one who wrote of his instruction, “and that will make them taste a more pleasant taste.”\textsuperscript{61} Sometimes the qualities of the finished product were enough to please; marchepan conceits, which could be molded or printed in any shape or design the cook desired, were designated as “excellent good to please children.”\textsuperscript{62} Readers were regularly prompted to think about the quality of their food and how they might improve it. Recipes also highlighted preferences for some ingredients and methods over others; the pleasure of the readers and diners depended upon their choices.

Late-sixteenth-century cookbooks offered mention of pleasure in a very specific context. Phrases such as “if you please,” “if you will,” and “at your pleasure” ran rampant in these printed cookeries. Such phrases were used rhetorically in other contemporary writing to indicate satisfaction. In cookbooks, essentially instructional texts, the expressions were not only utilitarian, but also suggested a concern with pleasure more than basic satisfaction. The terms “pleasure” and “please” were indicative of will and choice; the right decisions would achieve delight and enjoyment. Phrases like “if you please,” “if you will,” “at your pleasure,” “what fashion you please,” and even the more florid “till you find the taste therof sufficiely graced to your own liking” hinted at true pleasure in the instruction, based on the use of free will.\textsuperscript{63} The reader and cook had the ability to make an array of decisions when approaching a recipe. Each choice customized

\textsuperscript{61} \textit{A Closet for Ladies and Gentlewomen}, 2–3.

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 38–39.

\textsuperscript{63} The phrases “if you please,” “if you will,” and “at your pleasure” appear with regularity throughout many contemporary cookbooks. See Ibid., 34; and Plat, \textit{Delightes for Ladies}, sig. 63r to find “print it with your moulds on what fashion you please” and “till you find the taste therof sufficiely graced to your own liking.”
the recipe, and each exercise of this free will and personal preference was a way for the reader to become more pleased with the text and the food produced from it. This semantic point was a minor one, compared to the overt statements of pleasure found in the cookbooks. However, such phrases permeated the recipes; the constant stated permission to exert choice was a delight not offered to readers of earlier cookeries. Authors consistently nodded to pleasure throughout cookbook recipes, inviting the reader to consider his or her own preferences, as well as enjoyment in the beauty of the culinary process and results.

Many dishes were specifically identified as being pleasing for guests; these recipes also marked a change from late medieval cookbooks. While earlier books, particularly those composed for royal households, contained recipes for subtleties, these dishes were not intended to be prepared in non-noble households. Sometimes the recipes were mere descriptions of the subtleties, and the text lacked enough instruction to be useful. Late-sixteenth-century cookbooks contained a variety of dishes intended to be prepared for and delight guests. Furthermore, these dishes were not limited to noble and royal households. Because the printed cookeries were available to a wide audience, the foods were also available to a wide audience. In many instances, these early modern showpieces contained notes regarding substitution; while the printed recipe may have incorporated expensive and lavish ingredients, a reader or cook did not necessarily have to adhere to the original suggestions. The same effect could be achieved by non-nobles. Readers who used the cookbooks had access to instruction for providing pleasure and delight for their dinner guests, even if their means were more limited.
The dishes intended to delight guests fell into two main categories: confectionary and food for the dining table. Confections were often intended for entertaining and banqueting, whether or not a recipe stated it. Certain recipes were identified, however, as being especially pleasing for guests. The sugar plate recipe described in the preceding chapter is proclaimed as “a pleasant conceit for them that sit at the table.” The same sugar plate recipe appeared in several cookeries, and similar recipes instructed readers in creating other molded sugar objects, including those “from the life.” The recipe that opens this chapter, a pie with live birds, would be a wondrous addition to a table. The author rightly states that once the pie is cut open, “all the Birds will flie out, which is to delight and pleasure shew to the company.” There is no question that this pie was meant to capture the reader’s imagination and to delight discerning dinner guests. Epulario contained several other dishes that played with the boundary between reality and fantasy, always to please diners. Harkening back to medieval feasts, the cookery contained instructions for a peacock redressed in its feathers. This dramatic dish “shall seeme to be aliue and cast fire out of the mouth.” Only the wealthiest households could serve peacock, particularly one gilded “with leafe gold,” but the author provides an alternative for less affluent readers: “The like may be done with a feisant,or any other birds.” This dish, then, could be prepared with a variety of birds—and without gold leaf—, according

64 See footnotes 71 and 72 in Chapter 3.
65 Plat, Delights for Ladies, sigs. C7r–C8r.
66 Epulario, sig. Biiiir.
67 Ibid., sig. Cr.
68 Ibid.
to the reader’s desire and budget. The author of the same cookbook included still more dishes meant to “seem aliue,” including whole fish suspended in jelly inside a basket and a crayfish suspended in jelly.⁶⁹ A diner could delight in the ability and encouragement to eat objects and animals that appeared ordinary and inedible or completely fantastical. The table became a venue for acting out creative fictions, the cookbooks a vehicle for imagining and creating the dining situation.

These dishes, within reach of diners in social classes beyond the nobility, marked the beginning of a tradition of delight at the table. Extravagant displays for the nobility extend back many centuries, and continued to appear on their feasting and dining tables for several more centuries. But lower status diners, such as gentry and professionals, now had access to detailed instructions for creating their own versions of edible, fantastical tablescapes. Indeed, the recipes from *Epulario* were sourced from a fifteenth-century Italian cookery manuscript, and adapted, printed, and translated to deliver the recipes to an increasingly large audience. The goal of these recipes was to bring pleasure, happiness, and excitement, beyond the simple act of eating delicious food, to the readers and their companions in dining. Over the next fifty years, this pleasure in the visual and dramatic aspects of food would become exceedingly important.

II. Cookbooks and English Identity

The same late-sixteenth-century cookbooks not only transmitted ideas about pleasure in food and dining, but also conveyed identity. Specifically, the cookeries reflect

⁶⁹ Ibid., sigs. Kiir and Kr.
an English national identity built upon memories of the excellence and achievement of the state and its monarchs. Cookbooks from the last decades of the sixteenth century present a historical memory of England as shaped by its prominent leaders and military victories. Distinctions are made between England and foreign powers, both in recipes and the books themselves. Furthermore, regional variations among multiple English communities are described as evidence of a prevailing characteristic of the national identity even amid the increasing recognition of local tastes.

These sources represent the first strains of a more significant movement in later cookbooks and household texts, one in which English identity was interwoven with domestic accomplishment: the housewife and her domestic skills were celebrated as a point of national pride. While this marriage between domesticity and nationalism did not reach its apex for several decades, the first inklings appeared here. As authors and printers incorporated increasingly more gestures to a national identity connected to food, the trend quickly became self-perpetuating and readers purchased these texts in order to become the ideal English housewife. This inclusion of English greatness was a compelling marketing tool, one that encouraged pride in the accomplishments of peers, and provoked readers to join in this tradition.


To be clear, when I use the terms “English identity” and “Englishness,” I am not arguing for sixteenth-century nationalism in a modern sense of the word. Instead, I use the terms in the manner of Philip Schwyzer to suggest a trajectory toward a formalized English (and British) identity and nationalism. Additionally, my analysis should be read in consort with Wendy Wall’s attempt to understand “the process by which Englishness was conferred on and experienced by early modern persons.” While a modern sense of nationalism was in its infancy during the sixteenth century, many scholars have shown that contemporary literature, including cookbooks, reflected a real concern with the idea of national identity.

Cookbook authors and publishers used a variety of tools to reflect a common identity. They alluded to important leaders and events as a way to embrace historical memory, and they contrasted foreign and familiar foods, texts, and recipes in order to build a sense of common culinary identity. The national identity they presented in cookbooks was less about politics and a shared experience under the same government than about cultural unity. Cookbook audiences, bound together by the same foods, tastes,

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and preferences, were linked by their English identity, with expectations of domesticity and cuisine presented as different from other nations.

These statements, however, were not didactic; to the contrary, authors and printers effectively drew on collective memory. They only included past rulers and events in cookeries; they did not comment on current leaders or political or popular occurrences. As a result, Elizabeth I was not explicitly mentioned in cookbooks. Yet all editions of *The Treasurie of Commodious Conceits* mention Henry VIII in the recipe for a “Fine Sauce for a roasted Rabbet.” Richard Jones associates King Edward with a confectionary recipe in *The Treasurie of Hidden Secrets*. Finally, *A Closet for Ladies and Gentlewomen* includes a reference to Queen Mary. The author includes a recipe for a marmalade “which was given Queene Mary for a New-yeares gift.” The cookeries that contained these royal names also included the names of other individuals. These instances of royal name-dropping, however, stand out from all others in the text. Mentioning important or celebrity figures was a tactic used by authors and printers to help sell their books. But this technique also served another purpose: to provide a specific point of reference through which authors and printers demonstrated that the recipes comprised a “classic” cuisine. By forming a mythos around recipes and developing a notion of “classic recipes,” authors and printers were again modifying the marketing of

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75 Dedications did mention living individuals, but these were never rulers. These were always more local figures, friends, acquaintances, patrons. Not all books included dedications, either.


77 *The Treasvrie of hidden Secrets*, sig. B4v.

78 *A Closet for Ladies and Gentlewomen*, 43.
cookeries. When consumers associated a dish with a specific historical person, and began to think of the food as something that fed and nourished English royal and noble families for many years, this had the same effect as calling a modern recipe “Aunt Levina’s Meatloaf” or “Great Grandma’s Christmas Fudge.” The food and the text connected the cookbook reader with the past, even a past they were creating and not one that they had experienced first-hand.  

A recipe connected to an instantly recognizable figure creates a history for the recipe, and the cookbook becomes an object that connects readers to the past. Cookery books, including late medieval manuscript examples, are constantly transformed by the people who use them, and yet these texts, like the dishes represented inside, are simultaneously reminders of the past. While cookbook readers’ tastes may have changed over time, authors and printers inserted or retained certain recipes and references that allowed audiences to make a connection to the past. As cookbooks became this intermediary for memory, their role in the kitchen shifted from being a tool for instruction to an object that facilitated a long-term connection with food. Food is ephemeral, digested or discarded, yet memories associated with food are remarkably resilient. Readers used the cookbook, a written record of food, as a textual intercessor for memories of food, conversation, people, and identity.

In the same vein, historical events provided opportunities for intertextual commentary. One major historical event, from the not-so-distant past, referenced in a

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79 Schwyzer, *Literature, Nationalism, and Memory*, 2–3. This is equivalent to Schwyzer’s description of the “remarkable imaginative leap” which allowed the Tudors to create a written, imagined past which defined how they perceived themselves in the present. Rather than discovering their past, English writers invented one, in part based on historic, linguistic, and geographical realities.
cookbook is the English defeat of the Spanish Armada. This event serves as a simple reminder of national and military greatness. As a major victory for the nation, nearly every man and woman in England, especially a learned gentry audience, was familiar with the event and how the victory raised England’s status on the international stage.

Hugh Plat refers to this event in the introductory verses of Delightes for Ladies:

Empalings now adew, tush marchpaine wals
Are strong enough, and best befits our age:
Let piercing bullets turne to sugar bals:
The Spanish feare is hush't and all their rage.80

In verses describing the scrumptious confections the book contains, Plat refers to England’s rivalry with Spain. England has no more to fear from Spain, as its rival’s ammunition became sugar balls, a thing of delight. While Plat uses food in his description, the references to marchepan and sugar balls are not the focus or the point of celebration; that privilege is granted to England’s victory over Spain. Plat’s promotion of the glory of England was partly a personal matter. He had much at stake as a gentleman who spent significant time at the royal Court; the success of his inventions, ideas, and publications and his attempts at securing a patron were linked to his ability to flatter courtiers, in part by bolstering the success and greatness of the nation.81 Plat’s personal motives, however, became incorporated into a larger, gradual process of nationalizing cookery and domestic activities.

In the late sixteenth century, the inclusion of important historical figures and events was likely not a carefully-planned attempt to create a sense of national pride or to

80 Plat, Delightes for Ladies, sig. A2v.

81 Thick, Sir Hugh Plat, 11–40, especially 34–35.
weave together notions of English greatness and culinary activities. Rather, authors and printers referenced well-known people, events, and long-held regional stereotypes to make their books more popular and accessible to consumers. England’s identity was distilled to a few key people and events of the past in printed cookbooks. Their historical references were not so much about the monarchs or the victory over the Armada, but the cookery readers as part of a tradition of English might. The texts incorporate occasional historical references to project an image of distinction through food. The frequent inclusion of these references over the course of several decades, however, resulted in an intricately interwoven notion of Englishness, food, and power.

Another author, Henry Butts, projected English identity through consideration of regional dining habits and preferences. While Butts neatly categorized the preferred foods of several regions of England, he described the populations of those regions without discrimination as his “Countrymen.” He preferred the company of his fellow “Norfolkmen. For they are true Catholiques in matter of Dyet: no Recusants of anything that is mans meate.”82 Butts continued on to describe the culinary preferences of men from eight other regions.

For the Northeren-man, White-meates, Beefe, Mutton, Venison: for the Southerne-man, Fruites, Hearbes, Fowle, Fish, Spice, and Sauce. As for the Middle-Sex or Londoner, I smell his Diet. Vescitur aura atheria. Here is a Pipe of right Trinidado for him. The Yorkers they will bee content with bald Tabacodocko. What should I say? here is good Veale for the Essex-man: passing Leekes and excellent Cheese for the Welsh-man, Denique quid non? Mary, here are neither Eg-pies for the Lancashire-man, nor Wag-tayles for the Kentish-man. But that is all one; here is other good cheere enough.83

82 Butts, Dyets Dry Dinner, sig. Aar.
83 Ibid., sig. Aav.
While Butts described great diversity and variation in the foods men from different parts of England desire, the regions still combined into a single nation. Despite localized preferences, England, too, had its own unifying culinary traditions and preferences. “Countreymen” referred to all Englishmen, and Dyets Dry Dinner expounded a more general order of the meal and dietary needs. Occasionally, Butts commented about a broader food experience, common throughout the state, such as his note that “Many in England have surfetted of Lamprey pies.”

Local and national identities each had a place in this cookbook; Butts clearly demonstrated these converging English identities through food.

An important aspect of identifying recipes or cookbooks as English was to distinguish the familiar from the foreign. And so when one picks up a sixteenth-century English cookbook, he or she is bound to stumble across multiple recipe titles that reference a foreign locale. A reader could find a wide range of sources, like “To make a boyled meate after the French waies,” “To boile chickins and mutton after the Dutch fashion,” “To make Spanish balles,” “To make balles of Italie,” and “To make white meats after the manner of Catalonia.” This was not a new feature of early modern cookbooks, as most medieval copies contained some similar titles. Nor was this an occurrence restricted to English cookeries; medieval and early modern cookbooks produced around Europe contained such references. Furthermore, these instructions

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84 Ibid., sig. M3r.
designated as French, Dutch, and the like, may or may not refer to a distinct method or flavor. Sometimes just the recipe title indicated foreign influence, whereas the instruction and flavors did not. These “foreign” recipes in sixteenth-century cookbooks should be interpreted within the context of increasing references to English identity. When paired with mentions of England’s leaders and historic military success, recipes designated as foreign served as a reminder of an “other” or “exotic” people and cuisine. Recipes left undesignated were English by exclusion. In cookbooks, culinary differences were an indication of differences in identity. People who used more butter, olive oil, parsley, or whatever were different from an Englishman or woman. While the occasional preparation and serving of foreign dishes provided an air of exoticism and cosmopolitanism to the table, the overall effect was a method of distinguishing English cuisine by what it was not.

Entire foreign cookbooks were also translated and adapted for an English readership during the late sixteenth century. Just as the occasional foreign dish added a touch of interest and exotic flavor to a table, a foreign cookbook accomplished the same task in a gentleman or woman’s closet. These translations, even when heavily adapted or emended to reflect English practices, were not as successful as English texts. Whereas English cookbooks almost always underwent several reprints and editions, translations of foreign works did not. Epulario, a translation from an Italian cookbook, underwent a

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86 Ken Albala, The Banquet: Dining in the Great Courts of Late Renaissance Europe (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 118–38. See “Chapter 8: Nations” for a description of varying national and regional identifications of food and their corresponding flavors (or lack thereof) in early modern European cookbooks.

87 There are two exceptions, both of which included only modest culinary sections: The Secretes of the Reverende Maister Alexis of Piemount was printed six times between 1558 and 1615 and Maison
single printing.88 Dyets Dry Dinner, adapted from Baldassarre Pisanelli’s Trattato della natura del cibi et del bere, also was printed only once.89 A Dutch cookbook, of which no copies have survived, shared the same printing narrative.90 The printers of these cookeries likely took on the risk of publishing translations of these foreign works because all were remarkably successful in other markets.91 Printers issued an astonishing fifty-three editions of Epulario in Italy beginning in 1516, before an English translation was printed in 1598. Even Pisanelli’s cookery was printed in Italian, Latin, and French before Butts’s version was printed.92 Indeed, the London printers who printed these cookbooks likely thought the books would be similarly profitable in the English market. However, in addition to their foreign nature, many of the recipes within these translated cookbooks were distinctly old-fashioned by the time they reached the English marketplace, as they had already circulated throughout Europe for decades, if not generations. So, when

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89 Baldassarre Pisanelli, Trattato della natura del cibi et del bere (Rome: Bartolomeo Bonfadino and Tito Diani, 1583).

90 William Carew Hazlitt, Old Cookery Books and Ancient Cuisine (London: Elliot Stock, 1886), 67. This book is listed as “Cookery for all manner of Dutch Victual. Licensed in 1590, but not otherwise known.”

91 The Secretes was international bestseller prior to its English printing. It was printed in Italian, French, and Dutch prior to its arrival in England. It was later translated into Latin, Spanish, and German. Maison Rustique had already appeared in Latin, French, Dutch, German, and Italian between 1554 and 1581 before Edmund Bollifant printed an English translation for Bonham Norton in 1600.

92 Pisanelli’s work was published in Italian in 1583, Latin in 1593, and French in 1596.
readers were faced with the choice between foreign and English cookbooks, they selected English texts.93

While these texts are not typically included in examinations of English cookery, the occasional foreign recipe became assimilated into the English culinary tradition, and in some instances, closely associated with English identity. The recipe for live birds baked in a pie from Epulario is an intriguing example of culinary assimilation. While examples of this distinctly old-fashioned subtlety can be traced to Italian, French, and English sources, it lives on as a parochial contribution in the English imagination. In The Accomplisht Cook, Robert May included a reminiscence of an elaborate series of subtleties, including pies with live birds and frogs. May noted that such pies “… were formerly the delights of the Nobility, before good House-keeping had left England …”94 A century later, John Nott related the same series of dishes in The Cooks and Confectioners Dictionary.95 Like May, Nott portrayed the pies as part of a memory “when good House-keeping was in Fashion among the English Nobility.”96 Birds baked in a pie continued to live on as an English tradition when later in the eighteenth century, a print version of the nursery rhyme “Sing a Song of Sixpence” mentioned the dish:

Sing a song of sixpence,
A pocket full of rye.

93 Ironically, in the second half of the seventeenth century, the English royal court warmly welcomed French cuisine onto their tables. This turn to court cookery and French cookery was reflected in cookbooks of the period.


96 Ibid., sig. A4r.
Four and twenty blackbirds,  
Baked in a pie.  

When the pie was opened,  
The birds began to sing;  
Was not that a dainty dish,  
To set before the king?  

The pie had become so English that children could embrace the concept. Thanks to the nursery rhyme, the pie remains a recognizable English victual to this day.  

The assimilation of foreign recipes into the English vernacular was part of a much broader culinary change. The popularity of expensive and exotic foods, many new to the market, among the nobility was quickly trickling down to lower classes. These foods were becoming available and affordable to many consumers in cities and the country, transforming the cuisine of the nation. To highlight just one aspect of this shift, English gardens began growing fruits previously imported and considered exotic and expensive. Within a generation, these foods became so aligned with English consumption that they were included in nearly every cookbook and recipe book in subsequent centuries. Imported fruits, like oranges and lemons from Spain, prunes from Damascus and France, and dates from Egypt, were all distinct and valued, but English orchards dotting the countryside produced the formerly foreign cherries, peaches, and apricots. These fruits were the core of English preservation techniques; from middling to noble, housewives

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98 Some of Britain’s most iconic pottery makers emblazon their dishes and pie plates with blackbirds and the appropriate nursery rhyme verses. For example, Mason Cash has a line of pie plates and other blackbird dishes dedicated to the blackbird pie.

were judged on these fruit preserves and confections. In the same way that these fruits were previously considered foreign and then assimilated into English culinary traditions, specific recipes and techniques were also integrated. English readers generally preferred English cookbooks, though the market was open to integrating foreign recipes. These recipes could then be used to define an English cuisine, or adapted as English.

Conclusion

By the turn of the seventeenth century, the connection between identity and food was firmly implanted; indeed, it only increased over time. In particular, a woman who could prepare delightful meals and create a pleasing dinner experience was the ideal Englishwoman. Cookbooks were precisely the texts that could enable women to nourish their households. In these books, women readers were bound together as part of a greater English community and part of a successful nation. Their success in feeding their households was tied to the great monarchs and moments in English history; through allusion and memory, cookbooks connected Englishwomen to the success of the state. Authors of seventeenth century cookbooks later eschewed allusion and memory for blunt rhetorical devices, but the sentiment remained the same. As the connection between Englishness and domesticity grew, it also became a reason to purchase cookbooks. Readers simply needed to purchase, read, and use a cookbook to be part of a community who shared this English identity.

In the late sixteenth century, cookery authors and printers refreshed the genre, transforming utilitarian texts to objects that captured different ways of thinking about food and dining. Cookbooks not only provided clear instruction to gentry, professional,
and middling men and women, but also reflected a widespread belief that the preparation and consumption of food was pleasurable. Furthermore, authors and printers began to use words that whispered of a great English history. Cookbooks would later resonate with the connection between the English state and housewifery, but in late-sixteenth-century cookeries, the whisper of English identity was loud enough to suggest a community of readers who had the same past and identity. Pleasure and identity were new elements in cookbooks, but these were just the latest developments in a flexible and appealing genre.
CONCLUSION

Authors, readers, scribes, and printers all played different roles in the life of the cookery genre over the course of three hundred years; all the while, the genre grew and its readership expanded. Some of the earliest English cookbooks, manuscript rolls, served as *aides-mémoires* for kitchen staff in great households. Other early manuscript cookbooks were instructional texts, used by cooks in medieval kitchens. These fourteenth- and fifteenth-century cookeries were often useful and sometimes necessary because in an increasingly literate society, people needed assistance remembering what worked before in their kitchen. Some fifteenth-century cookbook readers did not require the texts for cooking, but the genre’s utility was not lost on them. As records of dishes, cookeries were a valuable tool for aspirant professionals. These books again presented the past, and consequently, readers treated the texts as predictions of what they might encounter in a noble household. Readers familiarized themselves with what had been served to their social superiors as a way to fit in and excel in a new social environment. Recipes were a vehicle for shaping a group’s new identity.

Even while readers were increasingly from the professional and gentry class, cookeries still reflected a noble cuisine. This continued well after the introduction of print in England, and the first printed cookbook followed this pattern. However, the non-noble audience expanded enough for printers to specifically target these readers. These
cookbooks were filled with recipes for gentry and professionals and book prices decreased. It is at this point when we have evidence for women readers using cookeries. Once again, this new audience grew, using the cookbooks available to them, and in the 1570s and 1580s, printers began producing texts explicitly for women. Now authors and printers affirmed the idea in print that eating and dining were pleasurable. They also inserted names and events important to English identity into cookbooks. This link between cookeries and the kingdom made cooking a domestic enterprise that was more than more than just a daily task, it was a connection to an identity, shared by other English readers.

Cookbooks were a remarkably adaptable genre, which balanced utility with the changing needs of readers and goals of authors and printers. While cookeries were first and foremost practical, instructional texts, even during the genre’s infancy in England, the books presented other ideas, notably the pleasure of food and a sense of identity. In the fifteenth century, that identity was a better position in English society. In the next century, that identity was one of Englishness. Cookeries transmitted such bold and powerful ideas to social groups below the nobility: dining could be enjoyable for non-nobles and that same act could raise or maintain one’s social status. Cookbooks transmitted more than recipes; they communicated broader ideas about food and integrated readers into larger textual communities. Spanning the centuries of this study, the English populations who delighted in cookery were diverse in class, gender, and profession, yet their experiences of food were all mediated through these texts. From manuscript to print, from mere kitchen tool to platform for national identity, from instructional guide to artful metaphor for pleasure in early modern England, the changes
in cookeries speak to the intersection of text and cuisine, a relationship that continues to this day.
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  MS Harley 1735
  MS Harley 2378
  MS Harley 4016
  MS Harley 5401
  MS Royal 17.A.iii
  MS Royal 18.A.vi
  MS Sloane 7
  MS Sloane 374
  MS Sloane 442
  MS Sloane 468
  MS Sloane 1108


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*Modern Texts Used as Primary Sources*


Secondary Sources


APPENDIX A
CODICOLOGICAL FEATURES OF BRITISH LIBRARY MEDICAL MANUSCRIPTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Watermarks</th>
<th>Page Dimensions</th>
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