



## RARE DELIGHTS

An exhibit of early modern cookbooks from the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, sponsored by the Center for Italian Studies at the Henry Charles Lea Library

Curated by Eva Del Soldato, Natale Vacalebri and Marina Johnston, with the generous assistance of Lynne Farrington and John Pollack

**November 13, 2017 - 10:30am-5pm**



[Bartolomeo Sacchi], *Platynae de honesta voluptate*. Printed, Venice: 1475; and Apicius, *De re coquinaria*. Manuscript, between 1475 and 1499.

This volume gathers two masterpieces of universal cooking. The first is an early printed edition of the treatise *De honesta voluptate* by the Italian humanist Bartolomeo Sacchi (1421–1481), called “Platina.” The second is a manuscript selection from *De re coquinaria*, a Roman recipe book circulating from the third century AD, attributed to Marcus Gavius Apicius (1st century AD), the most famous gourmet of antiquity.

*Opera di M. Bartolomeo Scappi, cuoco secreto di Papa Pio quinto* [Treatise of Mr Bartolomeo Scappi, Private Cook of Pope Pius V]. Venice: Michele Tramezzino, 1581

Bartolomeo Scappi (d. 1577) was the official cook and kitchen director at the Pontifical court of Pius IV and his successor, Pius V. His “Dell’arte di cucinare” is the most important treatise on the Renaissance kitchen and cooking. Besides detailed instructions on how to manage a kitchen and the knowledge necessary to the ideal cook, Scappi offers more than a thousand recipes, many of which included novel ingredients made available by the discovery of the New World.

*Il Trinciante* [The Carver] di Vincenzo Cervio. In Venetia: Appresso gli heredi di Francesco Tramezzini, 1581

Vincenzo Cervio was Cardinal Alessandro Farnese’s official *trinciante* (personal waiter charged with carving primarily the master’s or important guests’ meats). His treatise deals with the appropriate way of cutting foods served at different kinds of banquets. The highly ritualized cutting (masterfully done while holding the food item in the air on a fork) and the proportional distribution of food reflected the power dynamics and social status of guests at the table of princes and popes.

*Libro dello Scalco* [Book of the Steward] di Cesare Evitascandalo. In Roma: Appresso Carlo Vullietti, 1609

This interesting seventeenth century treatise on kitchen stewardship by Cesare Evitascandalo (d. 1620 ca.) illustrates the evolution of the hosting of banquets in Italian noble families. Together with Rabasco’s

*Convito* (also in this exhibiton), it is one of the most important early modern works on the correct organization of convivial gatherings.

*Convito, ovvero, Discorsi di quelle materie che al convito s'appartengono* [The Banquet or Discourse on Those Matters that Befit a Banquet] di Ottaviano Rabasco. In Fiorenza: Per Gio. Donato, e Bernardino Giunti, & compagni, 1615

This is the most complete guide to the organization of the perfect banquet for any occasion. Ottaviano Rabasco discusses the best days and times for banquets; the distribution of seats at the table; the number of guests and how to calculate portions, and many other matters that contribute to the success of a banquet.

*Nota di regali fatti a n[ost]ro s[ignore] Papa Innocenzo XII nel viaggio di Civitavecchia* [List of Gifts to Our Prince Pope Innocent XII on His Trip to Civitavecchia]. Manuscript, 1696

A list of edible gifts made to Pope Innocent XII belies the social importance of food. Aristocrats from Castel di Guido and Civitavecchia presented the gifts - including wine, breads, cheeses, meat, fish, living animals, spices, and sweets - to the Pontiff during his visit to Civitavecchia, 6 May 1696.

*Ledger of Ambassadorial Expenses, 1669–1670*

This ledger from the Medici–Gondi collection records the living expenses of Fabio Giunigi, who later became archbishop of Ravenna, and of Bartolomeo Frangioni and Raffaele Mansi, Florentine ambassadors at the Papal court in Rome in 1669–1670. Most expenses concern food and offer a wealth of information on foods available in Rome at the time and on their specific use at the ambassadors' residence.

*Ledger of Gondi Accounts, 1711–1713*

This ledger from the Medici–Gondi collection was likely written by bursar Francesco Padovani and records the living expenses of Caterina Gondi, member of an important Florentine family of business associates of the Medici. The great majority of expenses refer to food items and offer information on Caterina's own taste as well as on the Tuscan cuisine of her time.

*Bacco in Toscana. Ditirambo* [Bacchus in Tuscany. A Dithyramb] by Francesco Redi. Florence: Matini, 1685

Though celebrated as a scientist – among other things he debunked spontaneous generation and other scientific myths about snakes – Redi (1626-1698) was also an active member in literary academies of his time, including the Accademia della Crusca and the Arcadia. The *Bacco in Toscana* is a poem in praise of wines. It is Bacchus himself who celebrates wine, and particularly that from Tuscany. Redi worked on it for many years.

*Bacco in America: componimento ditirambico in lode della cioccolata* [Bacchus in America: A Dithyrambic Poem in Praise of Chocolate] by Marcello Malaspina. Florence: B. Paperini, 1741

Following the model of Francesco Redi's *Bacco in Toscana* (1690, here shown in the 1804 edition printed in London by T. Becket), Marcello Malaspina (1689–1757) tells of Bacchus' arrival in the West Indies due to a powerful tempest caused by Neptune. In the New World, Bacchus meets peoples who do not know wine. Undaunted, he orders cocoa to be picked instead of grapes. He then presides to all stages of the production of chocolate, from the toasting of cocoa beans to the preparation of hot chocolate. Finally, the god declares that "il cioccolatto d'ogni beva è il re" [chocolate is the king of all drinks].

*Gli elogi del porco: capitoli berneschi* [In Praise of the Pig] by Triginto Bistonio. In Modena: Per gli eredi di Bartolomeo Soliani stampatori ducali, 1761

Triginto Bistonio, pseudonym of Abbot Giuseppe Ferrari, offers a poetic celebration of one of the greatest protagonists of world gastronomy, the pig. Though it was not looked upon favorably in some ancient cultures, the domestic pig took on an ever more important role in medieval agrarian economies, and it quickly became a "hero of the universal good" in the popular imaginary. Before Ferrari, the excellence of the pig had been sung by Geronimo Berselli (*Lodi del porco*, 1592) and Giulio Cesare Croce (*Eccellenza et trionfo del porco*, 1594) who also hailed, not coincidentally, from Emilia Romagna