

emerge: Antonio Latini himself, and his translator, Tommaso Astarita; together they make a formidable team. Astarita, a distinguished professor of history at Georgetown University in Washington, is Neapolitan born and bred, the ideal person to take us by the hand and lead us through the streets where Latini once wandered. Translating a cookery text from the past would always be a challenge, unlike the much simpler task of rendering the elegant prose of a fiction writer from one language to another. A gifted cook is rarely a brilliant writer, and translators struggle with the terminology and procedures of a craft manual, often clumsily expressed, told in the shorthand phrases of one professional talking to another. Quantities are given only occasionally, often implied, and rarely consistent. The tyranny of today's cookery editors has made us slavishly dependent on a pedantic insistence on numerical precision in specifying quantities, weights and measures, expressed in millimetres and grammes, when the old anthropomorphic way of saying a lump of butter the size of a walnut, or an egg, or little dumplings like chickpeas, or a handful of flour, or a pinch of salt, or a squirt of lemon juice, a slug of oil, a sprinkling of spices, or a piece of root ginger the size of your thumb, gives us an immediate image of what's needed. No need for precision scales when you can see at a glance what's intended. The Italian phrase *un po', un poco, ...* is maddeningly imprecise but rendered with glee by Astarita as 'bit, a bit', or 'bits of...' which still leaves us baffled when it occurs several times in one sentence.

Mark Dawson and Janet Pickering, eds.: *Pigs: Leeds Symposium on Food History and Traditions, 2022*: 105 pp., paperback, £8.00 (copies may be obtained directly by emailing <secretary@leedsfoodsymposium.org.uk>).

This excellent volume contains papers from the 2009 and 2011 symposia, the subject of both of which was the pig. At the time, there were delays in gathering the contributions together so that a volume in Prospect Books' own series of Leeds proceedings never saw the light of day. The papers here include three characteristically thorough studies by Peter Brears of the boar's head, the sucking pig and hogs' puddings and white puddings. Brears' illustrations are always worth attention, and so are the practical and toothsome recipes. These are followed by a nicely turned essay on the use of lard and pig fat in early English cooking contributed by the late Laura Mason. Then there is a thought-provoking piece from Steph Mastoris, currently Head of Museums at Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, on the image of the pig and its slaughter, particularly in Edwardian Britain (but in fact much more widely than that). Proceedings are rounded off by an account of pig butchery, especially in his home county, by the Lincolnshire master-butcher Eric Phipps. His contribution was in fact first published in *PPC* 91.