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BOOK REVIEWS

Kristine Kowalchuk, ed.: *Preserving on Paper: Seventeenth-century Englishwomen's Receipt Books*: University of Toronto Press, 2017: 374 pp., paperback, £23.99.
An edited transcript of three more manuscript receipt books has to be welcomed. These are from the Folger Library and come ostensibly from the pens of Mary Granville and Anne Granville D'Ewes, Constance Hall, and Lettice Pudsey. The first MS is the more aristocratic and cosmopolitan (a very interesting subsection of recipes from Cadiz in the earlier part of the seventeenth century) and has the longest currency, running perhaps from *c.* 1640 to 1740. The second are of the late seventeenth century and come from the West Midlands and North Midlands respectively. Ms Kowalchuk provides a close transcription and an extensive glossary. She also contributes an introduction which considers MS recipe collections in the contexts of their time and of our own contemporary scholarly discourse. This is in line with present-day academic discourse. You will know my opinion of that, but others may find inspiration or enlightenment therefrom. These collections of receipts by women (she does not really account for the fashion for collecting recipes by men, not seeming to appreciate that Kenelm Digby's was a private collection, not intended for publication, as was also the more antiquarian John Evelyn's) had utility; they also mark a moment when women were in the process of becoming more literate. Their contents are a window into their lives as well as a record of culinary (and medical) practice. This seems to be enough to be going on with, without muddying the waters with discussions of folk memory, feminism, the parity of these creations with print culture (which was something else entirely), and general vapourings. The transcripts are commented upon with a light hand, while the glossary touches on the essentials of definition with little discussion of light and shade in the context of the manuscripts themselves. I was surprised there were no references to the works of Elizabeth David in the bibliography, particularly those published in this journal.

Mathilde Cohen and Yoriko Otomo, eds.: *Making Milk. The Past, Present and Future of our Primary Food*: Bloomsbury, 2017: 300 pp., hardback, £95.00.
A cursory inspection invited derision: a price tag beyond the means of many an independent scholar; headings such as 'Queering Milk: Male Feeding and Plant Milk', or 'Critical Ecofeminism: Milk Fauna and Flora'. This soon gave way to intrigued contemplation of essays on medieval images and constructs surrounding lactation (St Francis giving suck, or the miraculous qualities of mother's milk), the consumption of milk in modern India, the development of plant-based milk, and an eye-opening discussion of 'lactating man' by one of the editors, Mathilde Cohen. It is the sort of volume that drags the elderly

reader kicking and screaming into modern discourse. As such, it is thoroughly praiseworthy and stimulating beyond measure.

Henry Notaker: *A History of Cookbooks: From Kitchen to Page over Seven Centuries*: University of California Press, 2017: 373 pp., paperback, £32.95
Cookbooks are of immense importance to food history but this book is a reminder that they can be studied for other things: the publishing background, literacy rates, motives for writing, attitudes to plagiarism. The three sections of this volume, Food and Text, The Text and its Form and The Text and its World, examine context and perspectives. Are cookbooks literature or manuals? How do they evolve? What significance do prefaces, recipe form, or the way the books address the reader have to tell?

The discussion centres on books in Italian, French, German and English, with references to works in other European languages and excursions to North America. The author's special area of study, the early history of cookbooks, comes across strongly but there is much of interest in thematic chapters, such as that on Jewish cookbooks.

Despite the subtitle, the twentieth century receives less attention. There is little about the background to the explosion of cookbook publishing of the last 50 years, for example the link with magazines which gave both publicity and platforms to writers and provided the basis for many books, or of the TV chef tie-in. Sheer volume of material must be partially responsible for this. Photography, now so vital, is scarcely mentioned though illustrations from earlier centuries receive some attention (and a few are reproduced). But the subject is definitely the text.

The work of various historians, notably Bruno Laurioux and Alberto Capatti, influences a discussion which distils an enormous amount of information into one relatively concise volume. Inevitably this makes for a complex and dense read, and the author is to be complimented on maintaining clarity throughout. For the food historian it is a useful reminder that cookbooks have scope beyond that of mere instruction, and for the literary historian it highlights the complexities that underlie apparently simple manuals. It is a book for serious students of both fields.

Malcolm Thick

[This is a copy of the short review of Henry Notaker's book I submitted to the *Times Literary Supplement*. 'Cookery books have a long history. Or, more accurately, recipes do, if we accept the cuneiform jottings of a Babylonian temple clerk in *c.* 1700 BC as instructions, not shopping list. But the earliest book we hear echoes of, written by Mithaikos of Syracuse, Sparta and Athens, dates from the fifth century BC, although the only recipe we have from it (quoted by Athenaeus) is concise, if not exiguous: 'Red bandfish: gut, discard