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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

the head, rinse, slice; add cheese and oil.' This economy of expression can be matched by every chef's pocket *vade mecum*, *Le Répertoire de la cuisine* (1914), whose recipe for bordelaise sauce reads: 'Chopped shallots, cracked black peppercorns, thyme, bay leaf, boiled down in red wine; add *demi-glace*; sieve.'

These gnomic utterances perform the same function as the 6,000 words Julia Child required to instruct us how to make French bread. All going to show the adaptability of what might seem a rigorous format, a feature redoubled when recipes are gathered into book form which may then be presented as children's ditties, philosophical dialogues, shorthand *aides-mémoire*, dictionaries or encyclopaedias, travelogues, ethnographies, memoirs, novels or collections in random or considered order. Who more qualified to analyse this cornucopia than Henry Notaker, the multilingual Norwegian bibliographer whose *Printed Cookbooks in Europe, 1470–1700* (2010) accounted exhaustively for the infinity of editions, translations and plagiarisms of the heroic period of cookbook production?

Analysis is what he offers, not narrative, so that he can readily draw examples from the score or more European, Australian, American, South African and Latin American (but not Asian) literatures at his fingertips. This may disappoint those seeking some account of how the cookery book developed in one country or another, but will gratify those wanting discussion of the form and language of the recipe, the engagement of the genre with nationalism and localism, the relationship of cookbooks and medicine and the early literature of science in general, and how cookbooks were organized and the specifically modern recipe format took shape. Now, however, that one's kitchen bookshelf is somehow a lapel-badge of class or sub-group identity (much like our fathers' choice of motor car put us firmly in our social place), it is to be regretted that Notaker did not bring his account up to the present or the recent past, his forays into the 20th century going no further than an occasional reference to Bocuse, Ferran Adrià, and Marinetti and his Futurists. But this stirring work will none the less enhance our engagement with the kitchens of our ancestors.']

Carmen Soares, *Arquéstrato, Iguarias do mundo grego: guia gastronómico do Mediterrâneo antigo.* Portuguese translation with introductory study. Coimbra University Press, 2016.
Maria de Fátima, Sousa e Silva, Jorge Paiva, *Teofrasto, História das plantas*. Portuguese translation with introduction and commentary. Coimbra University Press, 2016. 460 pp.
Even if unfamiliar with Portuguese it's worth looking at these two translations from the DIAITA research group on food history at Coimbra.

The *History of Plants* is the greatest surviving work of ancient Greek botany, celebrated among historians of science, of great interest to food historians. This