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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

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is the only one-volume translation in any language: the translators are skilled in botanical history as well as Greek, and have provided useful notes, plant identifications, and excellent indexes.

Archestratos is, by most counts, the first gastronomic author. There are English translations of his surviving work by Wilkins and Hill (Prospect Books) and by Olson and Sens, but Carmen Soares' study goes into aspects of food history that these authors didn't approach, with maps and full references. It's illustrated in colour, well indexed, and accompanied by recipes reconstructed with Lusitanian flair.

Andrew Dalby

Vanina Leschziner: *At The Chef's Table. Culinary Creativity in Elite Restaurants*: Stanford University Press, 2015: 256 pp., hardback, £22.99.

Understanding the mind of a chef can be difficult when you're sitting in a restaurant eating a combination of flavours and textures that you yourself wouldn't have put together. 'Where did they come up with this?' I often think. Vanina Leschziner must have had the same thought. Her book seeks to answer this question of creativity in the kitchen. For her research Leschziner visited élite restaurants in New York and San Francisco and interviewed chefs and other employees to try and understand the elusive concept of creativity. Creativity is a tricky subject, but more so in food where recipes are easily accessible everywhere, yet, what she discovers is, like many artists, they gather inspiration from a number of places – other restaurants, cookbooks, travel and their own imagination and experience with tastes and flavours.

What emerged is especially telling of the two cities. Many chefs in New York cite Wylie Dufresne at wd-50 and his modernist cuisine as inspiration. Chefs in San Francisco, who according to Leschziner are more focused on tradition, simplicity and a 'reverence for ingredients,' lauded Alice Waters. The bi-coastal nature of this book leaves out a larger part of the United States and cities like Chicago or Los Angeles; yet, her choices are appropriate as important gastronomic hubs.

What I feel most strongly about in this book is the lack of interest in mystery, in romance. The fact of trying to understand creativity, to research it, place it within a rubric of academic understanding takes away the romance, the struggle, the energy that's necessary to create something that is significant. Its significance to the chef who created it – a creation of their mind – but one that is fleeting instead of lasting like a book or a piece of music. It moves through the world, leaving behind no trace of what it was, perhaps just a line on a menu. Creativity is elusive, and as she concludes in her book, it's because of its elusiveness that it is in constant need of research and understanding.

Jesse Dart

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