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The book shows a definite slant towards town life, although it has to be admitted that the majority of the population was urban, and has a tendency to overstate the emulation of British society in the Australian colonies. While many Europeans were 'replicating familiar and valued customs ... to make an unfamiliar place into a home' (p. 126), others were advocating a way of life and, in particular, a way of eating more in sympathy with the environment and climate. As early as the 1850s, for example, a menu of cold fowl, champagne and strawberry ice was seen as a commonsense alternative for Christmas dinner.

One of the strengths of this book is its wide-ranging research, including an impressive proportion of primary resources as well as nineteenth-century fiction. Insightful observations and lively prose enhance its appeal. Yet the book on Australian kitchens, taking actual historic kitchens as a starting point, remains to be written.

Barbara Santich

Wendy Wall: *Recipes for Thought: Knowledge and Taste in the Early Modern English Kitchen*: University of Pennsylvania, 2015: 328 pp., hardback, £53.99.
David Gentilcore: *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe*: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016: 264 pp., paperback, £25.99.
I reviewed these two books for the *TLS* the other month and this was the first draft of my text, later divided into two discrete items on the 'In Brief' pages. A longer review of Wendy Wall's book is promised by Gilly Lehmann, perhaps for the next issue.

> Although the art of cookery was long disdained by scholars as smacking of the animal, its incidental intellectual credentials are impressive. The recipe, an early and significant model of technical communication, is a form persistent in literate societies since at least the second millennium BC; and the cookery schools of early modern Britain were positive pioneers of female and practical education: Edward Kidder's establishments in London, for example, boasting as many as 6,000 alumnae in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. It is thus fitting that Wendy Wall should investigate the early modern English printed cookery book and the surviving manuscript recipe collections of scores of English housewives to discover not what they tell us about cookery but as keys to unlock the mindset and intellect of their compilers. This she does by exploring the parallels between forms of recipe writing and the recording of scientific experiments by members of the newly formed Royal Society – a link between the wider intellectual world and the private household that she might have deepened by comparing recipe collecting to the investigation and reporting of artisanal expertise by such figures as Sir Hugh Plat and John Evelyn, who undertook both activities. She uses recipes, too, as exemplars of female literacy on several levels, in

reading and writing as well as the construction of culinary fancies such as pastry letters and sugar-paste ornaments, to claim a wider, more inclusive interpretation of the skill. For her, manuscript recipe books of the late seventeenth century are a visible sign of a community otherwise dismissed as mere housewives but capable of reasoned discourse and intentional performance. She makes a nice case for the more general importance of the recipe form, citing among other things its role in the plotting of *All's Well That Ends Well*. While dealing exhaustively with private manuscripts, she prefaces that discussion by exploring early printed recipe books, from John Partridge's *Treasurie of Commodious Conceits* (1573) to Hannah Glasse's *Art of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy* (1747), tracing how their audience changed from women wishing to understand the 'secrets' of the 'closet' (for which read laboratory) and the mysteries of distilling and sugar-work (and often the medicine-cupboard too), to ladies of the house wanting a manual to instruct their servants, or even servants wanting a manual to better themselves. But for Wall, the medium is the whole message, and it is a regret that the 'what' is not more often brought in line with the 'how' and 'why' in her account. The Restoration cook Robert May has a recipe for 'Red Deer Pie' in which he decorates the top crust with two crossbow bolts (easy to cut out in pastry). This seems a sensible device, while she would rather it 'subtly hearkens back to the critical moment when the animal converted, with some labor and violence, into food.' It must be germane that the vast majority of the earliest recipes (Sir Hugh Plat for example) are forms of chemistry – distilling, sugar-work and cosmetics – while later books concentrate on mainstream cooking. And the search for hidden meanings in a very transparent literary form may lead to outrageous overload of nonsensical signification.

David Gentilcore, on the other hand, maintains a steady connection between the theoretical dietetics of physicians from all over Western Europe and everyday comestibles. Having profitably sketched the shifts from the revived Galenism of the late Middle Ages which balanced the various attributes of foods to the humoral constitution of the patient, through the chemical diagnoses of Paracelsus and the mechanical explanations of his successors to the rational embrace of moderation in all things by the great Bath doctor George Cheyne in Georgian England, he then looks at how these various experts coped with real change in the kitchen and at table. The way in which they viewed foreign foods, nationhood and locality; how they dealt with religious imperatives and the move away from fasting and abstinence among Protestants on the one hand and a less extreme Catholicism on the other; what they made of early vegetarianism and of the greater acceptance of fruit and vegetables into the diet after the sixteenth century; their reaction to the arrival of foods from the New

World after 1492 and their adoption or rejection; and, finally, their views of the three great Enlightenment stimulants: tea, coffee and chocolate. All this is covered with gusto and not a little scholarship: a wide reading of the original sources as well as of modern literature, drawn from many countries. It will surprise no-one that the doctors knew little of what they wrote. Yesterday's axiom was today's object of derision. Anyone who has suffered trying to keep up with modern dietetic opinion will sympathize. But these manuals, like the slimming schemes of today, had large sales and were widely translated. The great imponderable, however, is the degree to which any of the advice was heeded. There are moments when the influence of Galenic theory can be seen to have had real influence: the Balkan taboo against serving yoghurt with fish may be an example, two cold moist foods would be sudden death to a phlegmatic. But all too often Gentilcore records (with regret perhaps) the trimming of medical advice to the realities of the patients' appetites. In part this was due to the decline of Galenic medicine and the adoption of a chemical or mechanical view of the digestive process. This liberated the doctor, and the diner, from concerns for particular foodstuffs and allowed them to target lifestyles in general such as the perils of over-indulgence and over-complication. That a preoccupation with health is central to our approach to the table is illustrated by the emergence of the modern restaurant, the first instance of which was indeed to *restaurer* the failing bodies of its customers with nourishing broths. So perhaps the doctors are our guides after all.

Helen Caruana Galizia: *The Food and Cookery of Malta and Gozo*: Midsea Books, Malta, 2016: 288 pp., paperback, £19.50 (Amazon).
The first new edition since the last century of this work which saw the light in 1973 (in co-authorship with her sister Anne), then appeared as a Prospect Book in 1997. It has grown quite a lot, and has gathered some excellent photographs from Darrin Zammit Lupi. Pages are either blue or white. If white, they are occupied by recipes; the blue are reserved for lexical, encyclopaedic or informative items on ingredients, food customs, history, and much else besides. Helen Galizia has always been an enthusiast and it shows. Malta is really interesting as a showpiece island cuisine that may be dissected rather as naturalists and Darwinians analyse island ecologies.

Eric C. Rath: *Japan's Cuisines: Food, Place and Identity*: Reaktion Books, 2016: 280 pp., hardback, £30.
To the ignorant, Japan always seems a complex society, yet often susceptible to shorthand definition and explanation. The various styles of Japanese cuisine are defined by single words whose meanings are clearcut. The history of those cuisines also seems explicable by strong timelines and easily identifiable cause