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concave pasta holding bits of meat and sauce to contrast with the sprigs of the vegetable.

We meet strange combinations of ingredients – pasta cooked in a soup of salt cod, chickpeas and chestnuts: not a fanciful invention, simply a way of using cheap local things on non-meat days. Or the voluptuous combination of fried eggplants, grated smoked ricotta, and a tomato sauce that is *pasta alla norma* (and we get a convincing explanation of the name). The benign simplicity of the Roman *spaghetti al cascio e pepe* is given in its elemental form, a simple condiment of coarsely ground black pepper and *pecorino romano.*

A substantial main dish of pasta shapes with a tomato and swordfish sauce, or a light dish of spaghetti in a cream of red or yellow bell pepper, lightly seasoned with lemon and basil, are characteristic of the enthusiastic range of recipes. By now a bit in awe of the authors we follow their directions obediently, and are rewarded with dishes of considerable subtlety. This is a book to read and cook from with huge enjoyment.

Gillian Riley

Susan P. Mattern: *The Prince of Medicine: Galen in the Roman Empire*: Oxford University Press, 2012: 368 pp., hardback, £20.

Do readers of *PPC need* a biography on Galen? The answer must be affirmative. Galen was one of the most prolific authors of antiquity, with much of his therapy based on food, drink and stronger versions of these in drug form. He is our best authority on Greek and Roman foods. If you look up Andrew Dalby's *Food in the Ancient World from A to Z* (2003), Galen appears in many entries, 'hake' and 'heart' to take but two. Galen's many books on food, nutrition and the humours contain innumerable case studies and patient narratives of the kind used by Mattern in this volume. She collected all the medical cases in an earlier work, *Galen and the Rhetoric of Healing* (2008), and redeploys a number here. Writing Galen's biography is particularly problematic, since much of the evidence comes from this extremely ambitious and egotistical man himself, who presented himself to the world with such success that he dominated Western and Arabic medicine for a millennium and a half. Mattern's approach contrasts with Paul Moreau's, whose *Galien de Pergame* of 1985 is a series of quotations of Galen's own words.

Mattern treats the doctor thematically: Pergamum (Bergama in Turkey, where Galen was born), medical education, Rome (where he mainly practised), the gladiator school where he earned his spurs as a doctor, anatomy, etc. If this all sounds rather medical, much of the Rome chapter focuses on the grain dole to the poor and malnutrition. In his training, Galen was influenced by his father's experiments to discover whether tares were botanically related to wheat and barley or not (*On the Powers of Foods* 1.37). In his daily life, he

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might eat something unsuitable, such as wheat porridge (ib. 1.7), or invite a patient to his house and cure him by reversing the order of dishes in the meal (ib. 2.22). In his travels, he might ask Thracian farmers what sort of grain they are growing (ib. 1.13). His life and medicine revolved around food: we might expect the physician to the emperors Marcus Aurelius and Commodus to have much comment on imperial dinners and rich men's foods, but not a bit of it. As Mattern brings out, there is much more material on endemic food shortages in the Empire every spring (*On Good and Bad Juices* 1), one consequence of which was passing on skin ulcers to (wealthy) babies by wet nurses who suckled them (*On the Powers of Foods* 3.14). Galen was interested in both ends of the food spectrum: he had a home in Campania, producer of Rome's best vintages, on which he commented, while he studied most the agricultural poor, since their being forced down the food chain in the spring to eat acorns and vetch normally reserved for their animals was scientifically revealing. When it came down to it, he had no time for the livers of red mullet (ib. 3.26) or cooks preparing foods for pleasure rather than health (ib. 2.51).

John Wilkins

Anna Martellotti: *Linguistica e Cucina*: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2012: 170 pp., €20.

The chance survival of manuscripts – some elegant presentation copies, often in Latin, others grease-stained craft manuals in the vernacular that were sometimes copied out before being chucked away – leaves us with puzzles about how they might relate to each other, and to the wider world of provisions and how they were cooked and eaten. Linguistics can clarify some aspects of medieval Italian food history; and Martellotti explains how linguistic analysis has allowed her to form her own opinions of Italian culinary development as well as detailing those conclusions and opinions with fluency and enthusiasm. Language, however, is only one means of approach to the question.

The disciplines outlined in this book explain how all this scholarship might work and are brought out to buttress Martellotti's passionate and erudite, but not uncontested, arguments about the influence of Arab gastronomy on the cuisines of medieval Europe. It is hard to do justice to the complexities of her exciting and innovative argument. Briefly, she finds evidence, based on versions of a now-lost MS written in Sicily for the Emperor Frederick II by one of his renowned Arab cooks, that the whole of medieval European gastronomy was Arab in origin, with a certain Swabian input from Germany. Versions of this cuisine filtered down via Norman England (from direct contact with the Norman presence in Sicily), finding its way into all the known manuscript sources from Italy and the rest of Europe.

The charismatic Frederick, known as *Stupor Mundi*, Hohenstaufen (or

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