

the potential comparisons this *mise en page* permits but simply in the fact that his is the *only* complete edition of all the known Viandier manuscripts to date.

Carole Lambert takes a much more traditional approach to presenting a hitherto unpublished collection of recipes. Indeed, she was not faced with four manuscripts but one . . . and a very modest one at that. It contains only 48 recipes but, given the scarcity of French culinary texts and the provincial origin of this manuscript, her *Recueil de Riom* must be considered of some importance. The recipes have not simply been copied from other cookbooks and, indeed, 15 titles can be found in no other text. The fact that the manuscript was clearly written in the Auvergne makes it all the more unusual. J-L Flandrin warns in his Preface against attributing too much importance to this fact, but Lambert suggest that the recipes 'might' exhibit specifically southern traits. In any event, the fact that a (wealthy) inhabitant of the Auvergne took an interest in this cosmopolitan collection of dishes indicates the extensive influence of 'court cookery' in 15th century France.

The last, and most recent, of these three publications is in no way comparable to the other two. This is not a collection of recipes but the work of a young French scholar who modestly claims to be offering a summary of recent research concerning food and eating in Medieval France. From the scholar's point of view the book suffers from being a 'coffee table' production with a greater emphasis on color photos than footnotes, but Laurioux has managed to incorporate perceptive remarks and well-documented research into a clearly written text. He, of course, knows the manuscripts that Scully and Lambert have published and he exploits them (particularly the former) in chapters devoted to 'The Food of the Rich and the Poor', 'Medieval Taste', 'Markets and Produce', 'Cooks and Cooking' and also 'Rituals and Table Manners.' The book contains much original research and provides an excellent over-view of all facets of medieval food in France. The chapter on 'Cooks and Cooking' is particularly well researched and will no doubt incite the otherwise faint-hearted to rush out and purchase Scully's and Lambert's books. Indeed, one would be wise to start by reading Laurioux; then cautiously experience a first encounter with a period text via Lambert; and finally, when ready to take the plunge, purchase Scully's Viandier for 'total immersion' in culinary French and the world of the kitchen in medieval France.

P.H.

Giovanna Casagrande: *Gola e Preghiera nella clausura dell'ultimo '500*, with a modern Italian version and notes by Giovanni Moretti and glossary, indices and an editorial note by Maria Raffaella Trabalza: Edizioni dell'Arquata, via Nazario Sauro 21, Foligno 05034, Perugia: 400 pp, 64 line illustrations, 2 half-tones, handsome card cover, 60,000 lire.

Maria Vittoria della Verde, lively intelligent and well-educated, entered the enclosed Dominican convent of San Tommaso in Perugia when she was eighteen years old and lived there until her death in 1622. In 1583 she began to fill two notebooks, in her elegant handwriting, with pious reflections and spiritual precepts. These have recently been discovered in the monastery's archives. One of the notebooks underwent a change of direction and became a repository of enthusiastic information about her practical interests – sewing and cookery. From this sometimes confusing mess of private jottings Giovanna Casagrande has extracted the text of the recipes and produced an impeccably scholarly edition. Her introduction contains an account of the monastic orders in Umbria at the turn of the century, the exciting story of how she managed to identify the author of the two unsigned notebooks, and a very helpful analysis of the recipes and ingredients, relating them to other texts of the period.

Maria Vittoria was an exact contemporary of Giacomo Castelvetro (see *PPC33*, pp 51-2), with whom she can have had little in common except a love of food and cooking. Her delicious dishes, like his, are modest and unpretentious. She writes with a cheerful, hands-on enthusiasm, which is sometimes tricky to follow but well worth the effort.

Pigeons – plump squabs, not our tough little wood pigeons – are stuffed with chopped bacon, herbs, spices and dried fruit and first stiffened by simmering for three minutes in stock, then spit-roasted over a hot fire and finished off in a covered dish, sprinkled with rosewater and served with sliced oranges, cinnamon and almonds.

Thin slices of veal are flattened, dusted with salt, pepper, ground cloves, cinnamon and coriander, chopped garlic and dried fennel, and rolled up with rashers of bacon, then dipped in flour and beaten egg whites and fried in lard.

Carrots are chopped small and stir-fried, then simmered in wine and vinegar with pepper and bay leaves and sweetened at the end of cooking with sweet cooked grape must.

The aptly named 'strozzapreti' are substantial dumplings served with a rich dressing of fried bread-crumbs, ground walnuts and spices.

Edizioni dell'Arquata is a small, independent publishing company created and run by Maria Raffaella Trabalza, who has been the guiding force behind this excellent publication. In addition to the basic glossary, she has provided an alphabetical index of recipes and has also listed them according to categories and written a characteristically exuberant Editorial Note.

Her list of current publications includes an enchanting series of pocket books on the life and customs of the people of the Italian lakes, 'Laghi e stagni d'Italia', with a volume devoted to the food and recipes around Lake Trasimeno. All the books can be ordered direct from the publisher.

G.R.