

From Half Baked to Homogenized: Risorgimento – Unita – Fascismo and the Rise of the Borghese Cookbook

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The year 1815 presents a tidy time marker for the germination of the Risorgimento, punctuated, as it is, by the Congress of Vienna, which incited social transformation in Europe. Throughout the first half of the 19th century, a political consciousness was set in motion that would eventually culminate in the unification of Italy in 1861, thereby establishing the Kingdom of Italy under the auspices of the House of Savoy. It was a complex transformation that evolved over decades but would not be fully realized until 1870, when the last papal stronghold was finally defeated and absorbed into the nation at large.

Concomitantly, throughout Europe, the upper echelons of the so-called ‘third estate’ were increasing in force and number, giving rise to a sizable socio-economic ethnology whose distinct values and evolving collective consciousness were impressed ever more firmly into the overall scheme of status delineation. The Italian peninsula, however, had long been a loose network of disparate communities with insular identities, each imbued with a strong sense of guardedness, jealousy, and rivalry. As such, the development of the Italian *borghesia*¹ unfolded at vastly different rates, in unevenly dispersed enclaves. The rise of the professional and merchant classes was, on the whole, more intensive and concentrated in the central to northern regions than in the south. At the time of unification, agriculture was by far the main source of income throughout the peninsula, but while the capitalist industrial model of farming was taking hold in the north, the south remained largely tied to its feudal origins and retrograde methods, a phenomenon that continued well into the 20th century. Hence, speaking about the *borghesia italiana* as a concrete national phenomenon with precise manifestations along a set timeline may be tenuous, but as this class metamorphosed over the course of the 19th century, concurrently with the naissance of the new nation, it is possible to trace how the Italian cookery book both reflected and influenced the forging of a united culinary identity, which would, eventually, become the pride of Italy.

The novelty of 19th century Italian cookbooks is that, by and large, they were intended for the middle class housewife and her kitchen help, as opposed to the chefs of the aristocracy, the target audience of previous publications. These multipurpose manuals of etiquette, gastronomy, healthcare, household tips, and entertaining provide a unique window not only onto prevailing tastes and customs of the day, but also onto the dictates and dictators of culinary fashion. Cookbooks functioned as a gelling agent for a social mindset, effectively corralling a collective consciousness within the strictures of what

should be eaten, and how and when it should be eaten, thus arming the modern consumer with culinary capital needed to set her table before proper society. The success of the printed cookbook, therefore, depended on the public’s disposition to grant cookbook writers the authority to override the traditional oral transmission of kitchen wisdom and social propriety.

While some of the dishes presented in these books might be reminiscent of those found in today’s ‘rustic’ Italian trattorias, this was not the parsimonious fare of the ‘have nots,’ the agricultural and urban labourers, whose monophagous diet and daily struggle to put food on the table has become a romanticized product of modern marketing. The *borghese* cookbook set a gastronomic bar intended to carve out a distinct culinary niche. The prohibitive cost of ingredients and often convoluted preparations allowed those of modest fortune to distance and differentiate themselves from the hungry multitude.

Purchasing a cookbook in itself required a budget that allowed for leisure items. Furthermore, it assumed a level of education that was at odds with the expectations for females. It was not until 1877 that the first three years of elementary school became obligatory for both boys and girls. However, as there was no retribution enforced upon parents who did not comply, many did not, sometimes simply because there was no school within a reasonable distance. In 1904, a new law obliged each municipality to provide a primary school with four grades, after which four years of schooling became the default standard for girls, even when more education was available. The overall literacy rate for the country in 1861 was 22%. By the turn of the century, it had increased to 44%. Illiteracy was compounded by the dialectal reality of Italy; linguist Arrigo Castellani proposes 10%, or two million people, as the most optimistic estimate of competent Italian language speakers in 1861 (Trifone). These factors reduced the cookbook buying public to educated women, fluent in Italian, with a vested interest in food, and extra cash on hand for incidentals – not to mention, her husband’s permission. Consequently, the northern and central regions, particularly Milan and Florence, had the highest output of cookbooks.

In spite of the seemingly limited market, publishers succeeded in fanning the flames of social anxiety and domestic competition. Titles rolled off the presses with increasing regularity, and even mediocre compilations often went through multiple editions. Domesticity was one of the few arenas in which a woman held the reins. Genteel hospitality and a well-presented table were mediums

through which she could express her creativity and demonstrate her worth. Be they newcomers who had only recently made the grade, or signoras who were firmly nestled into the folds of the *borghesia*, women knew well that the proof was in the pudding.

In *The Art of Entertaining Explained to the Populace* (1850),² Dr. Giovanni Rajberti unapologetically delineates the public for which *borghese* cookery and entertaining books were intended albeit with a healthy dose of irony:

To whomsoever might want to know first off what I mean by populace, I will say, bypassing abstruse and complicated definitions, that I mean the middle class, as the lower class are still referred to as the plebs or rabble. ... I do not focus on this class because I do not want to steal away the public of the ultra-democrats, who have taken on the daunting task of making them, over time, the most elect portion of society. It would be a useless endeavor to explain entertaining to people who, besides being incapable of holding dinners, have quite enough to deal with just staying off daily hunger. ... However, should the riff-raff want to read it, be my guest.

My book is not in the least intended for the upper classes. The great, rich, and powerful landowners, born aristocrats of pure blood, or even half-blood, or even no blood, but distinguished for their gentlemanly ways and habits – it is as if you were of noble blood – you do not need my book. On the contrary, my book needs you ... you are my source of erudition, my venerated texts, my classical authors. If in an idle moment, in order to pass the time, you might want to look kindly upon this elementary scribbling, knowing well that you have nothing therein to learn, the true distance will be revealed that separates you from the rest of mortals (1932, pp. 35-7).

Pellegrino Artusi, champion of Umbertian righteousness, also demarcates his intended audience in the introductory pages to *Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well* (1891) with a note of condescension:

I'd like to be clear that I am speaking to the well-to-do classes. Those who have been abandoned by fortune are forced, unfortunately for them, to make a virtue of necessity and console themselves by reflecting that an active and frugal life contributes to a robust body and the conservation of health (Artusi, P. 1970, p. 14).

A slow but steady trend in upward mobility during the Risorgimento meant that, all along the social continuum, status was in constant flux. Cookbooks, therefore, sought to offer a broad-spectrum range of socio-culinary guidance tailored to each rung of the *borghese* ladder, tending, however, towards the higher rungs. Two of the earliest cookbooks produced for the low(ish)brow market were written, rather surprisingly, by members of the nobility. The first was the anonymous publication³ *The Straightforward Cook, or rather, Easy and Economical Cooking* (1826), a collection of recipes reflecting the budget

of modest *borghese* household. Each recipe includes an itemized price list of ingredients. While it may have been limited in practice, his effort acknowledges the importance of thrift in the *borghese* household.

The Duke of Buonvicino, Ippolito Cavalcanti, was not above putting his good name on *Cooking Theory and Practice - For the use and amusement of dilettante friends, ending with home cooking in Neapolitan dialect* (1837), although one does wonder if he was the *portanome* or the actual author. Whoever authored the book uses the terms 'amusement' and 'dilettante' rather loosely; it opens with six pages of inventory for the well-equipped kitchen, and the recipe section launches immediately into a detailed explanation on how to debone fowl, followed, logically, by *galantines*. *Italianità* in the 19th century cookbook can be evaluated in terms of how far it dares to detach from the French benchmark of quality. Here the plea for French approval is notably muted. While it employs a substantial amount of butter (considering it was published in Naples) and the standard battery of French sauces, it also includes a few pasta dishes and there is a clear attempt to limit extraneous ingredients and simplify instructions.

In the Neapolitan home cooking section, the author clarifies that his purpose in writing in dialect is not so much to provide an accessible text to those who don't speak the 'Tuscan language,' as it is to have a bit of fun. He also concedes, somewhat apologetically, that writing about the local food in the local language seemed more appropriate. This section contains many more recipes for pasta than the previous one. Of note is 'Vermicelli co le pommadore,' the first published recipe explicitly combining spaghetti and tomato sauce. The separate sections could be construed two ways: firstly, as separating sheep from goats, or secondly, as a melding of the classes – the author as an aristocrat, writing for the high *borghesia* and including a second section celebrating popular local cuisine.

The anonymous 1842 publication *The Modern Italian Cook, or rather, The Friend of Gluttonous Home Economists and the Convalescent, an absolute necessity for heads of households who want to make inexpensive, family-style, healthy cuisine, and for those who want to give excellent dinners, for those who are in a state of illness or convalescence, for those who want to know all of the properties of foods, that is, the ones that are noxious and the ones that are advantageous to health, for those who want to learn to steward or the art of carving meat, those who want to preserve and disinfect both animal and vegetable foods, and for those who want to learn the art of pastry making, confectionery, liqueur, and ices*, is as comprehensive as its ambitious title promises. It notably highlights the 'Italian Cook' in the title, although the book was published in what was then the Duchy of Tuscany, twenty years before unification. The recipes feature a wide range of ingredients from all over Italy, and advanced some timid suggestions for potatoes, which were still suspect. It offered a smattering of regional favorites and impressionistic foreign

recipes, lending a cosmopolitan air. While the title may have taken its cue from Francesco Leonardi's six-volume opus *The Modern Apicius* (1790), an exhaustive reference for chefs of the aristocracy, the word 'modern' had an overwhelming appeal in the 19th century. 'Home style' surfaced intermittently, but 'traditional' was never specifically used as a selling point.

The Risorgimento witnessed a steady redrawing of the Italian map into ever-larger swatches, whose bureaucratic machinery required an army of petty clerks. These *impiegati* could count on a regular, albeit meager paycheck. Cookbooks set their sights on supplying the newbie urban housewife with a handbook of 'modern' socio-culinary know-how that would make the most of her husband's slim stipend while easing entry into her new societal role. Books like Pietro Santi Puppò's *The Modern Cook, or rather, the true way of cooking well with maximum thrift, useful not only to those who are starting off in the cooking trade, but also to all respectable families* (1849) underscored both keeping up with the Joneses, or *la bella figura*, the classic preoccupation of the *borghesia*, and frugality. While ostentatious display was the playground of the wealthy, the Sienese *borghese* expression: *il bello e il buono garba a tutti* – everyone likes what's beautiful and good – sums up the universal yearning for novelty and comfort.

Publishers and authors seemed to be keenly aware that prudent families were looking for that *one* dependable cookbook that would last a lifetime. Instilling a sense of trust and convincing potential buyers that *this* book was indeed where the buck stopped was a paramount concern. They tripped over each other with verbose subtitles and introductions reassuring the reader that the recipes and advice therein were reliable, up-to-date, comprehensive, impressive, healthy, and economical. They boldly and brazenly stepped over (if not on) the advice of mothers and grandmothers in dispensing their notions about 'modern' cuisine and entertaining guests in style. In so doing, they not only established a culinary consensus of appropriate dining behavior and standard gastronomic repertoire, but they provided a written basis, a scripture of sorts, of criteria from which to judge others and be judged. Publications proselytizing modernity pushed the envelope, challenging their readership much like a fashion designer. But women in corsets were used to making sacrifices in the name of fashion.

Key words from the titles of successful books were recycled, rehashed and remixed, seemingly for the very purpose of confounding the buyer, a trend that continued to the end of the century. Most include introductory preamble, like a culinary insurance policy, to assuage fears and entice consumer sensibilities. The publisher of *The Modern Cook – Indispensable for every class of person, or rather the easy, thrifty, healthy method of cooking foods, carving, storing wines, meat, etc, practicing the art of patisserie and ices* (1864) assures the reader that: "The book we are presenting to the public was compiled from the best works of this kind that have up to now seen the light both

in Italy and abroad and from the easiest to follow recipes' (Anonymous, p. 5) Whereas *The Modern Cook Universal or rather the Art of Living Well and Spending Little* (1881), spins the ambitious *weltanschauung* byline: 'This work contains the best recipes for the preparation of any food: Italian, Milanese, Piemontese, Venetian, French, English, Spanish, Turkish, Chinese, American etc. From haute cuisine to the home cook, this teaches important gastronomic secrets,' (Businelli, p. 1). What more could the borghese signora ask?

Belittling previous publications was another approach to coaxing a sale, here deftly elaborated by French born Francesco (né François) Chapusot, chef to the British Ambassador to Italy, in *Healthy, Thrifty and Elegant Cooking According to the Seasons* (1846):

The books that we have seen up to now in Italy, besides not being clear enough for a novice in the art, ... are little more than an indigestible mishmash of recipes that are often coarse, almost always greasy, warmed over, nauseating, and contrary to the purpose of a fine table ... which satisfies one's moral sense, as well as one's sense of order and of beauty (p. 3).

Pellegrino Artusi, in *Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well* (1891), also tooted his own horn by booting others, albeit in his own affable style:

Don't trust books dealing with this art; most of them are deceptive or incomprehensible, especially the Italian ones, the French ones are not as bad. ... But, seeing as how this is my fourteenth edition ... I humor myself to believe that these dishes in general are smiled upon. Fortunately, few people to date have cursed me for a queasy stomach or for other phenomena that decency will not allow me to mention (p. 8).

Authoritativeness was also fundamental to the marketing strategy. All of the 19th century borghese cookbooks were compiled by men. Most were experienced chefs of the aristocracy; others were dabbling doctors or members of the nobility, generally paired with a chef. The doctors often opened with an apologia of sorts, explaining why someone of their professional ilk would lower himself to writing about food. *A Doctor in the Kitchen, or rather, Why We Eat and How We Should Eat* (1881) begins with a self-deprecating spiel: 'A doctor in the kitchen! A man of such a noble science prostituting his very dignity between pots and pans! Putting his own name on a book that speaks of *sautéed onions* and *tomato sauce!*' (Giacchi, p. 7).

While the credentials of the author formed the basic foundation of quality assurance, the initial impact that reeled in potential buyers and espoused the voice of authority came from the book's title. After Italian unification in 1861, publishers took their prompts for authoritative appeal from the newly instated monarchy.

Thus began a tempest of royalty cookbook titles, along with the usual unbridled rehashing of bywords. First in the lineage was *The Queen of Cooks – Cooking for the Healthy and the Sick, with a special dietary insert, medical advice for gaining weight and recovering strength and curing obesity* (1865), later published as *The Queen of the Cooks – Choice cuisine and home cooking for the healthy and the sick, a practical handbook of cooking for good mothers and for those who want to become able cooks* (Prof. Dr. Leyer and an ‘ex-chef of the grandiose Restaurant Brébant of Paris,’ (1882), the latter dumbing down the ‘professional’ air of the former. *The Queen* was followed by *The King of the Cooks, or rather How to Cook Well Spending Little* (1868)⁴. *The King of the Cooks* resonated with the public and spawned a dizzying array of unabashedly similar titles and versions such as *The King of the Cooks – Treatise of Universal Gastronomy* and *The King of the Cooks, or rather the Art of Eating According to Italian Tastes with Both Our Food and Foreign Food* (1894), explicitly underscoring ‘Italian tastes’ as a marketing plus.⁵ G. Belloni un.masks pretenders to the throne with *The True King of the Cooks, or rather, the Art of Cooking with Thrift According to Italian Tastes* (1890), prefaced with a convivial salutation, curiously underwritten by the book itself: ‘Dearest Reader! So that you can tell me apart from the endless number of cookbooks, I am called The True King of the Cooks,⁶ a stark distinction indeed. The blatant lack of originality in the titles follows through in the content, which leaned more towards conformity than originality or individual distinction. Compilations varied on the continuum from highbrow to low, and they waived in their nod to France, but none yet dared to completely sever ties.

Indeed, just as French supremacy began to diminish in the Italian kitchen, Jean Marie Parmentier attempted to negotiate a truce of good taste with the arrogantly entitled *The King of the King of Cooks – Complete treatise of high and low cuisine compiled from the works of the best Italian and foreign gastronomes with preliminary notes by Count Celso di Candiano* (1895). The same book was later revised and published as *The True Cookbook* (same subtitle) (1932), after the popularity of the royal family had waned. The glossary of terminology and all of the recipe names are translated into French; there are glaringly few recipes for pasta. As *King*, one of Parmentier’s few pasta concessions (tucked away on page 320) is *Maccheroni all’italiana*, essentially mac and cheese: Parmesan, Gruyere, butter, cream, pepper, and nutmeg. *The True Cookbook* banishes the precious few traces of pasta into a timbale, each involving some combination of tongue, fowl, butter, cheese, and truffles. The one recipe that is specifically pasta is ‘Spaghetti with Lamb Sauce,’ which consists of spaghetti tossed in the butter-deglazed pan where a leg of lamb had been roasted.

Out of Rome comes the aptly entitled *The Emperor of the Cooks – Complete manual of home cooking and haute cuisine compiled by Count Vitaliano Bossi with head chef*

Ercole Salvi. The emperors Bossi and Salvi appear to be somewhat removed from the concept of home cooking, evidenced by the book’s engravings of outlandishly elaborate dishes that are indeed befitting of the imperial table. The pheasant *galantine alla principessa*, for example, features two half cherubs sprouting out of the stern and bow of a boat shaped serving dish supported on a pedestal. The languid *putti* are entangled in a fruity garland adorning the dry-docked ship. The *galantine* itself is in full regalia, with pheasant head, bust, wings, and tail positioned artfully to mask the small portion of the display that is actually edible (1894-5, p. 73). The number of engravings a cookbook contained was advertised on the cover, the beginnings of the coffee table cookbook.

In 1898, King Umberto I ‘The Good’ awarded a medal to General Beva-Beccaris for opening fire on a crowd of civilians who were protesting food prices. The already tenuous reputation of the House of Savoy was irrevocably damaged and with it the vogue of royalty cookbook titles.⁷

While the various gastronome ‘Kings’ were battling it out, a vague stirring came from within the ranks of the *borghesia* itself. The jovial voice of an old *Romagnolo* emerged from nowhere, and without a drop of royal blood, a degree in medicine, or any professional culinary experience whatsoever, his cookbook would become the beloved icon of Italian cookery.

Pellegrino Artusi was a retired banker when, on a whim, he decided to indulge his gastronomic proclivities and compile a few hundred of his favorite recipes for publication. Lacking any sort of credential that would guarantee sales, he was unable to find a publisher. Disappointed but undaunted, he resorted to vanity publishing. Self-publishers are at liberty to choose their own title, and it is therefore interesting to note that Artusi grasped neither at the gaudy bauble of false nobility nor at exasperated claims of culinary prowess, preferring lucidity over ornament. The full title of his opus is: *Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well, a Practical Manual for Families, - Health - Thrift - Good Taste*. As a banker, he naturally valued precision, and emphasizes that it is meticulousness and not innate talent that will stand one in good stead in the kitchen. As a man of culture and a *borghese* bon vivant, he appreciated the distinction between relishing a good meal and voracious gluttony, and hoped that his book would not subject him to accusations of the latter (1970, p. 9).

Like its contemporaries, *Science* includes a variety of regional specialties and impressionistic foreign dishes, the former weighing heavily in favor of his own native region, Romagna, and his adopted one, Tuscany. Unlike many authors of the day, he does not instruct readers on serving at table, household tips, or entertaining etiquette. Although he is not a doctor, he adds ‘Some Health Guidelines’ in the fourth edition (1899) and an appendix of advice for those with ‘weak stomachs’ in the fourteenth edition (1910). *Science* presents significant advantages in

organization, and linguistic accessibility; it employs the metric system instead of local or vague measurements,⁸ and makes more credible proposals for the average housewife operating in a typical *borghese* kitchen; it is also more regionally inclusive. However, given the myriad of qualified competitors, what accounts for its outstanding success in its day, and why is it so venerated today, eclipsing all other historic Italian cookbooks?

The first edition of *Science*, 1,000 copies, sold slowly; many were gifted. But in 1892, Artusi was championed by the charismatic professor, surgeon, anthropologist, and senator Paolo Mantegazza. This gave him the professional clout he had hitherto been lacking. Mantegazza was wildly enthusiastic about Artusi's work and did much to bring *Science* into the public forum. But in the final analysis, what set it apart from the pack, is largely contained in the word *bonomia*. Artusi's erudite good naturedness is palpable. His witty repartee never strays into condescension; he neither dumbs down nor confounds his reader with extraneous minutiae. His recipes are not deposited in alphabetical indifference like a dictionary, leaving the reader to sort things out for herself. On the contrary, he offers himself as a traveling companion – albeit the one holding the travel guide – a *primus inter pares*.

While scholarly enthusiasts have analyzed his appeal, speaking of *Science* in the same breath as *The Betrothed*, *The Divine Comedy*, and *Pinocchio*, even referring to it as the bible of Italian cuisine, Alberto Capatti, in the 2010 edition, suggests that Artusi's enduring appeal rests in his mastery of the 'spoken recipe' as a genre (p. XXII), taking it to a height that no other had before or has since achieved. The recipes were not outstanding, original, or unusual. *Science* was not a noble project of aimed at preserving the Italian cultural patrimony, or even of uniting Italians as a nation through food – although this has become its legacy. It was Artusi's unique ability to engage, entertain, and beguile in an affective style akin to the traditional oral transmission of culinary secrets that brought 'family' back into the *borghese* kitchen. He chatted his way through the instructions while, at the same time, presenting a valid collection of tried and true recipes that piqued curiosity without unduly challenging the *borghese* palate. Artusi was *alla mano*, down to earth, an amiable old *toscanaccio*, evident in his preamble to recipe #277 'English Pigeon or *piccion paio*?⁹

I am going to say right here, once and for all, that in my kitchen we don't make a fuss about names, and I don't go in for pretentious titles. If an Englishman were to say to me that this dish ... is not prepared in accordance with the custom of his country, I wouldn't give a hoot. So long as it is good, we are all even (1970, p. 253).

Artusi developed a loyal following and encouraged correspondence from his readers, validating their recipe contributions by including some in later editions. In so doing, he made *Science* into a family affair that ingratiated

him into homes, hearts, and hearths. While it stands alone for affective appeal and literary quality, *Science* was not so much the start of something new as it was the pinnacle of a long lineage of cookery books. However, as cooking methods and socio-political tides turned, *Science* fell into quasi obscurity after Artusi's death in 1911.

The dawn of the 20th century finally witnessed the publication of a cookery book by a woman. Milanese author Giulia Ferraris's *How Can I Eat Well?* (1900) – a book that Artusi had in his personal library – set the tone for women writers. The First World War empowered women and united Italians as never before in single-minded purpose. At war's end, women, who had assumed male roles, found themselves at square one once again. Suffrage moved in fits and starts, but was denied time and time again. In the midst of disappointment, however, there was a burgeoning field in which women could spread their wings: Home Economics.

In 1922, when the Fascist Party assumed control of the government, female consensus was vital to Mussolini's plans for self-sufficiency, or autarky. He rallied his people together instilling a sense of united purpose and nationalistic pride. Women were swept away in a wave of enthusiasm and began authoring cookery and domestic science books in the name of *patria*, with the specific aim of bringing the nation together as Italians. Notable among these were Ada Boni's *Talisman of Happiness* (1925),¹⁰ a tome of Italian culinary pride:

We have got to cook Italian food everywhere in Italy ... Above all, we should not hesitate to write culinary words in Italian. ... Our language has a rich vocabulary capable of expressing the most complicated list of foods without having to rely on any other language. ... But all will resolve itself when ... we firmly decided to follow and spread only our own fine cuisine, who's foods have precise names, consecrated by tradition and use (Boni in Moyer-Nocchi 2015, p. 198).

In his preface to the first edition of *Talisman*, her husband wrote a scathing passage against Artusi, describing him as: '...the author who managed to sell rags and baubles as rare silk and gold, heralded by all of the families that don't know how to cook' (Morone Salavarore 1998, p. 909). Artusi's quaint dilettantism faded as women zealously embraced the gravity of their role and the ambitions of their government.

The strivings of the *patria* are reflected in a flurry of cookbooks written by *borghese* housewives for *borghese* housewives, advising women on how to tighten their belt for the regime. Mussolini embraced the virtue inherent in privation as a dietary ideal for the citizenry: 'Fortunately, the Italian people are not yet used to eating many times a day' (18 November 1930) (Quarestani 1976, p. 9). Among the numerous patriotic titles are *Rice for Every Day and Every Taste*, aimed at conserving wheat supplies, and *Living*

Well in Difficult Times, by Jewish author Fernanda Momigliano, who was forced into hiding after the decree of the 1938 Racial Laws. Lidia Morelli, who had previously authored books aimed at the modern woman of the 30s, like *5 o'clock Tea*, turned her sights towards the patria with *Housewives Against Sanctions* after Italy's invasion of Ethiopia. In addition to cookbooks, the monthly periodical *La Cucina Italiana* (1929-43) played a fundamental role in dispensing fascist culinary propaganda, establishing a uniform template of domestic mores, and molding the opinions and habits of its readership.

The context that spawned the fascist conformity slogan 'Believe, Obey, Fight,' was not one that celebrated regional differences. During the fascist era, *italianità*, meant the totalitarian forging of an unquestioning single-mind. This ideal wrought a national culinary outlook that would carry over into the postwar era. The celebration of regional differences, that has recently assumed center stage, came as a backlash reaction to nationalism; a prime example is Anna Gossetti's massive collection *Regional Italian Recipes* (1967).¹¹ The cookbooks of the fascist era were part and parcel of an ideology that underwent an immediate and severe silencing following WWII, associated, as they were, with fear and hardship, and not with the comforts of home. The nostalgic search for a common culinary hero of the past to dispel fears of the mounting industrialized food trade, found purchase in Piero Camporesi's laudatory annotated edition of *Science* (1970). 'Artusi' was thus rescued from obscurity and promoted as a national treasure. Alberto Capatti's 2010 edition meticulously compares each recipe of *Science* with its 19th century predecessors and contemporaries, together with the inevitable borrowings by later authors (even Ada Boni admits the 'Florentine steak' into her 1934 edition).

Italian culinary identity and pride developed cheek by jowl with the socio-political vicissitudes of the burgeoning nation, as they had never done before or since the period extending from the Risorgimento through the post WWII era. The passing decades saw the oral tradition of recipe transmission come to a virtual halt, as Italians became a 'people of the book'. These gastronomic scriptures corralled consensus and established *italianità*, forming the basis of the culinary behemoth that would come to dominate the international stage.

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Notes

- 1 The grammatical delineations for the Italian middle class (bourgeoisie, burghers, etc), are: borghesia (n.), borghese (adj.), borghesi (pl. adj.).
- 2 The dates listed throughout this paper reflect the date of the first known edition.
- 3 Later revealed as the work of Antonio Odescalchi from his youth.
- 4 The dates for works titled *The King of Cooks* is approximative.
- 5 The subtitle was lifted almost directly from *The Knowing Cook* (Moro, Florence 1871). *The Family Cook* (Salani, Florence, c. 1889) also uses the same subtitle. Cf. *The King of Cooks* (Salani, Florence, c. 1894) The content of all three is also nearly identical.

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- 6 The author's name does not appear on the title page of the first edition. It was on the title page of the 1901 edition; others were not available for consultation.
 - 7 The incident was called the Bava Beccaris massacre. The official figure for casualties was 80 dead and 450 injured.
 - 8 The metric system was developed during the French Revolution. When it was imposed publicly in the 1830s, met it with resistance. In the mid-1800s the scientific community finally adopted it.
 - 9 This wants be the Italian phonetic equivalent to 'pigeon pie', but falls short and in the meantime humourously translates into 'a couple of pigeons'.
 - 10 Source for date: Moroni Salvatore, M. P., 'Ragguaglio bibliografico sui ricettari del primo Novecento' p. 909
 - 11 I have been on a mission to find a sponsor to fund the translation of this book, as well as a publisher interested in assuming the project. Interested parties, please come forward!
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