Diet and Health in Early Modern England and Italy

A Comparative Study of the Theoretical and Practical Understandings of Humoral Principles

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the assimilation and application of humoral medical knowledge in early modern Italy and England. By focusing on food and drink consumption, it seeks to examine how medical advice was expressed in printed health regimens and how it was applied in eating habits. The comparative aspect of this research aims to break down the homogenisation of the reception of humoral medicine in early modern Europe that is pervasive in studies of early modern medicine.

This project focuses on four sets of ingredients, and it aims to re-evaluate the medical significance of food and drink. Historians have focused on the social and cultural meanings of food in the early modern period. I investigate understandings of how food was considered to be a source of nourishment for the body rather than placing an emphasis on food as a tool of social demarcation. This thesis fits into a recent revisionist strand of scholarship that aims to re-shape our understanding of differences in dietary habits amongst different social strata.

This work combines a range of approaches to investigate the everyday experiences of individuals, families, cities, polities and nations with food and drink, from a medical standpoint. The study encompasses a range of modes of eating, from everyday meals to banquets, and argues that well-known and common ways of consuming foods were rooted in humoral theory. Sometimes the application of medical advice to food habits was unconscious. This thesis will argue for an implicit presence of humoral medicine in food consumption in early modern Italy and England. Well-known and enduring combinations of ingredients that defined important traditions of the culinary cultures of both Italy and England were both the result and the vehicle of applied medical knowledge.

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List of Abbreviations

ASMn	Archivio di Stato, Mantua
AG	Archivio Gonzaga
ASMo	Archivio di Stato, Modena
ASE	Archivio Segreto Estense
CRUSCA	Accademia della Crusca
ESHA	Lionel M. Munby, ed., *Early Stuart Household Accounts*, (Linton: Hertfordshire Record Society, 1986)
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
ODNB	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
Pepys	Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. by Henry B. Wheatley (London: George Bell and Sons, 1893)

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Introduction

This thesis looks at the reception and assimilation of medical advice and its effects on food consumption in early modern Italy and England, between 1500 and 1650. By adopting a comparative approach, this study sheds new light on the exchange and transmission of medical knowledge about eating and drinking as it moved between the books of physicians and kitchen tables, dining rooms, markets, streets and other places where people prepared, cooked and consumed their food and drink. Thinking from a culinary perspective, this thesis endeavours to establish a connection between a history of food consumption and a history of medicine. By studying the ways in which people approached food from a medical standpoint, I conduct a history of the consumption of medical knowledge. Such a topic fits into a broader, growing historiographical trend that investigates phenomena of health management in the domestic environment in early modern Europe. This thesis asks two key research questions: to what extent were lay people aware of the medical connotations of their culinary practices and food habits? And what was distinctively English or Italian about the ways in which food consumption and medical knowledge were correlated? To answer these questions, I adopt a two-step process. First, I look at how physicians, cooks, and humanists discussed specific sets of ingredients, in order to understand the medical theory of the time concerning those foodstuffs. Second, I compare these notions to food practices, observing how – and whether – these ingredients were prepared, cooked and consumed.

This work illuminates the relationship between medicine and food consumption in two innovative ways. First, it shows how people managed their food and drink habits with intent and according to their medical needs in a variety of ways. In this way we learn the extent to which lay people grasped and adapted complex notions of medical knowledge about food and drink. Second, this research uncovers more subtle ways in which medicine shaped taste and culinary conventions, through advocating combinations of foods that were considered particularly healthy. According to humoral theory, such preparations were perfectly balanced from a humoral perspective. But what did it mean to be healthy in the early modern period? How was health measured, or even academically defined?

Who was interested in eating in a healthy way? And perhaps even more importantly, how did people eat healthily? In this introduction I will first look at the nature of medical discourses in the early modern period, arguing for an enduring and long-lasting presence of humoral thought beyond the seventeenth century. I will also explain how I define 'Galenic principles', according to the objectives of this study expressed above. Then, I will review the existing literature on the relationship between health and the consumption of food and drink, and will show how this work fits into those debates. The third section will assess the main sources used and my methodology, and will offer a brief presentation and discussion of the four chapters. The last section of the introduction will explicate the main arguments advanced in this thesis.

Food, drink and early modern medicine

The medical tradition that is normally associated with Hippocrates (460 BC-370 BC) and Galen (130 AD-210 AD) was at the core of people's experiences of medicine in the early modern period. The early modern medical 'sensational science', to use a term borrowed from Robert Applebaum, was first and foremost based on ancient classical corpuses of knowledge that flourished and spread throughout the Middle Ages, thanks to the work of Arabic commentators and translators.[1] One of the most influential of these Eastern scholars was the Persian polymath Avicenna (Ibn Sina, 980 AD-1037 AD), author of the renowned *Canon of Medicine*. Works such as translations of Avicenna's *Canon*, or the widely disseminated *Regimen sanitatis salernitanum* (*The Salernitan Rules of Health*), a late-medieval set of medical rules that was created within the important medical school of Salerno, in southern Italy, allowed the medical philosophies of Hippocrates and Galen to reach and permeate the medical views of European physicians, practitioners and patients up to the late early modern period. Renaissance physicians wrote their health regimens and guides focusing on two major areas of the classical medical tradition: humoral theory and the six non-naturals.

[1] For a survey of the intersections between early modern medicine and culture in Europe see Robert Appelbaum, *Aguecheek's Beef, Belch's Hiccup, and Other Gastronomic Interjections. Literature, Culture, and Food Among the Early Moderns* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), pp. 44–65.

The idea of 'balance' was central to the humoral doctrine. The key concept underlying the ways in which the relationship between health and sickness was conceived in the premodern era is that of a constant motion, a perpetual fluidity, among the four humours of the body. It was believed that the human body was composed of four different humours: blood, phlegm, yellow bile (choler) and black bile (melancholy). The nature of these humours was widely discussed in early modern health regimens, and therefore it is on these which I will focus the most.[2] For premodern natural philosophers, the four humours interacted constantly with each other within the human body. The interaction of these fluids defined what was called the complexion, or temperament, of the body. The four complexions depended on the prevalence of some humours over others. For example, if a person had a preponderance of blood, they had what was called a sanguine temperament. Following the same line of reasoning, the other complexions were choleric, melancholic and phlegmatic. However, the complexion of the body was not based merely on physiology. On the contrary, as I will also show in this thesis on multiple occasions, it had a significant impact in defining people's character and personality and, to some extent, their identity.[3] Galenic principles and medical notions related to the humours contributed to establishing demarcations between different cultures and countries.[4] In this instance, humoral ideas of the body, and more specifically how the body reacted to the surrounding environment and to the food and drink that nourished it, were central in describing and defining differences between what and who was local, and what and who was foreign. As I will show in the chapters on meat and on herbs, roots and fruit, the different attitudes in Italy and England

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[2] Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs (De alimentorum facultatibus). Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, ed. by Owen Powell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 12–13.

[3] Michael Stolberg, *Experiencing Illness and the Sick Body in Early Modern Europe* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 85–89; Jennifer Richards, 'Gabriel Harvey's Choleric Writing', in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature: 1485-1603*, ed. by Mike Pincombe and Cathy Shrank (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 655–70. See also Steven Shapin, '"You Are What You Eat": Historical Changes in Ideas about Food and Identity', *Historical Research*, 87 (2014), 377–92 and Eric R. Dursteler, 'Bad Bread and the "Outrageous Drunkenness of the Turks": Food and Identity in the Accounts of Early Modern European Travelers to the Ottoman Empire', *Journal of World History*, 25 (2014), 203–28.

[4] For a survey of the connections between medicine and national identities see David C. Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe. Diet, Medicine and Society, 1450-1800* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), pp. 75–94; Ken Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 217–40.

towards the consumption of vegetables and meat were often discussed in relation to the humoral body beyond, as well as within, physicians' intellectual circles.

The sophisticated scheme of the humours was not a closed system, and it was significantly affected by what happened outside the human body. The ways in which the universe was conceptualised related to the four elements and the four qualities. According to Galen, the actual role of the elements was important only because they produced the basic level of the food chain: plants. Everything above this level, notably animals, fed on plants or on other animals. In turn, human bodies fed on animals and plants and so on. The four qualities defined the nature of organic things in the universe because ultimately everything in nature was thought to be either hot or cold, and at the same time either dry or moist. Ancient natural philosophers drew the line between organic and inorganic matter according to the possibility of being affected by these qualities.[5] Of course, all food is organic matter, which meant that every single food, from the most gigantic piece of beef to the smallest of seeds, was classified by physicians in four different, and yet correlated, combinations of four qualities: hot and dry, hot and moist, cold and dry, and cold and moist. The 'intensity' of these qualities in a particular ingredient and, therefore, the intensity of the effect that it had on the body was measured in a scale of degrees that went from one, the lowest, to four, the highest. The food and drink ingested was believed to have precise and discernible effects on the body through the interaction between the qualities of those ingredients and the humoral complexion of that body. Although the food itself was not held to have humours, these qualities were the same qualities that defined the humours and in turn the complexions of the human body. Blood (sanguine complexion) was thought to be hot and moist; choler (choleric complexion) was thought to be hot and dry; phlegm (phlegmatic complexion) was thought to be cold and moist; melancholy (melancholic complexion) was thought to be cold and dry. In general, the female body was generally believed to be inherently colder (melancholic or phlegmatic) than the male body, which was usually considered to be one of the hotter complexions (sanguine or choleric). In addition to this gendered disparity, age was believed to affect the complexion of the body over the life cycle in a significant way. Children were thought to be hot and moist, and were destined to

[5] Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance*, p. 53.

dry up and become colder with time. The body, growing through adulthood and old age, was believed to lose its original heat and moisture and became colder and drier until it reached the instant of death when the heat was lost forever.[6]

In their texts, Renaissance authors focused on the humoral connotations of food, and many compiled encyclopaedic lists of foods and drinks together with their humoral complexions and qualities, with indications of how to manage the food in order to make it healthy for each humoral complexion. This way of compiling health regimens was inherited from the Middle Ages. In his analysis of medieval medicine, Vivian Nutton found that the use of descriptive lists and tables, which often ended up being adopted by Renaissance physicians in their health regimen, was based on Avicenna's systematisation of works of classical natural philosophers.[7] For instance, the sixteenth-century Bolognese physician Baldassarre Pisanelli, pupil of the illustrious naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605), set out a list structured in this way in his *Trattato della natura dei cibi e del bere* (*A Treatise on the Nature of Foods and Drinks*, 1583).[8] A similar schematic approach was followed by English authors, such as James Hart (d. 1639), a Scottish physician who travelled between Edinburgh, England and the continent who wrote a well-known text entitled *Klinike, or the Diet of the Diseased* (1633).[9] This text, besides offering medical and dietetic advice to the ill, lists the qualities and effects on the body of many foods and drinks in a systematic manner. Moreover, the title was written in Greek on the title page, despite the text being in English, in what was a clear attempt to establish a relationship with the classical tradition of medicine. Without losing their focus on the medical discourse around food and drink as it was informed by ancient natural philosophers, regimens

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[6] See Chris Gilleard, 'Renaissance Treatises on "Successful Ageing"', *Ageing and Society*, 33 (2011), 189–215.

[7] Vivian Nutton, 'Medicine in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages', in *The Western Medical Tradition: 800 BC to AD 1800*, ed. by Lawrence I. Conrad, Michael Meve, Vivian Nutton, and others (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 79–90. See also Nancy Siraisi, *Avicenna in Renaissance Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), and Vivian Nutton, 'The Fortunes of Galen', in *The Cambridge Companion to Galen*, ed. by R. J. Hankinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 355–90.

[8] Baldassarre Pisanelli, *Trattato della natura de cibi et del bere del Sig. Baldassarre Pisanelli medico bolognese* (Rome: Bartholomeo Bonfadino, 1583).

[9] James Hart, *Klinike or The Diet of The Diseased* (London: John Beale, 1633).

compiled in this way could be consulted quickly by early modern readers to learn the humoral characteristics of specific ingredients.[10]

Alongside the theory of the four humours, the concept of the six non-naturals was the other major pillar of early modern medicine. The medical corpus of knowledge that early modern people inherited from the Middle Ages was based on the fundamental notion that a healthy lifestyle depended upon six interrelated factors: air, sleep, movement and rest, food and drink, retention and evacuation, and passions or emotions. In parallel with the concept of the humoral body, people were supposed to seek balance in the management of these factors: getting fresh and salubrious air; getting the right amount of sleep; balance between rest and exercise; a good and healthy intake of food and drink; healthy evacuation of unhealthy humours, urine and faeces; and finally a balanced emotional condition of the mind/soul. The non-naturals were considered capable of affecting the balance of the humours. As a result, these factors were a central element of preventive medicine, and in the classical medical tradition their management went under the name of *hygiene*.[11] In this instance, the notion of hygiene was connected to a more comprehensive set of healthy everyday practices, that related precisely to the non-naturals, rather than to notions related to the cleanliness of the body as in the modern usage of the term. Both practitioners and laypeople recognised the importance of the non-naturals in the early modern period; as with humoral theory, the non-naturals were prominent in the minds of early modern authors who structured some of their most popular health regimens around them.[12] For example, the Italian poet and physician Castore Durante (1529-1590) dedicated half of his famous health regimen, the *Tesoro della sanità* (*Treasury of Health*, 1590), to a discussion of the humoral connotations of foods, and the second half to the other non-

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[10] Sandra Cavallo and Tessa Storey, *Healthy Living in Late Renaissance Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 28.

[11] Lelland J. Rather, 'The "Six Things Non-Naturals": A Note on the Origins and Fate of a Doctrine and a Phrase', *Clio Medica*, 3 (1968), 337–47.

[12] For a comprehensive analysis of the six non-naturals in the early modern period see Heikki Mikkeli, *Hygiene in the Early Modern Medical Tradition* (Helsinki: Finnish Academy of Science and Letters, 1999); for an analysis of the understanding and application of healthy practices related to the non-naturals in the Italian domestic environment see Cavallo and Storey, *Healthy Living in Late Renaissance Italy*.

naturals.[13] The theory of the four humours and the management of the six non-naturals shaped the ways in which early modern people approached, studied and applied medical notions in their lives.

This thesis will focus exclusively on one of the six non-naturals: food and drink. In doing so, I do not advance the argument that food and drink were more important than any of the other five non-naturals. The idea of balance was central to the understanding of the humoral legacy in the early modern period, and permeated many aspects of early modern society. However, when the concept of balance is investigated through a culinary lens, both the polyhedric nature of the humoral discourse and its pervasiveness in early modern society become instantly clear, as the following chapters will show. The exclusive focus on food and drink will also favour a meaningful and effective comparison between attitudes towards medicine and food consumption in early modern Italy and England.

In this way, this thesis aims to make an original contribution by looking at the different ways in which the concept of the four humours was understood by both physicians and lay people in two different contexts – England and Italy – in a period in which other medical schools of thought, such as iatrophysics or iatrochemistry, were starting to spread across Europe. The spread of new philosophies that challenged the ancient doctrines of Hippocrates and Galen did not necessarily reflect sudden changes in the ways in which people actually thought about medicine, or how the relationship between health and disease was conceived. In fact, it was quite the opposite. In his *longue durée* survey of Galen and Galenism, the historian Owsei Temkin argued that, even around 1700, it remained difficult to make a neat separation between what was directly relatable to Galenic doctrines in the practice of medicine, and what was not, specifically 'because of the difficulty in dislodging Galen not only from hygiene, therapy, and semiology (the science of signs), but from concepts of health and disease'.[14] As Temkin notes, 'the strength of Galenism reposed in no small measure in its having provided medical categories, like the temperaments, for relating the individual to health and disease'.[15] In terms of the

[13] Castore Durante, *Il tesoro della sanità* (Venice: Domenico Imberti, 1643).

[14] Owsei Temkin, *Galenism. Rise and Decline of a Medical Philosophy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), p. 179.

[15] Temkin, p. 179.

production of medical writing in early modern Europe, the focus on dietetics reached its peak around the sixteenth century. After that point, humanists and physicians gradually shifted their attention to the other non-naturals, and much of the attention that was previously dedicated to the management of dietary practices shifted towards other topics altogether.[16]

Many changes in the early modern period, whether gradual or abrupt, had a major influence on the evolution of medicine, as well as on many other aspects of life. Climate, for example, according to the Galenic-Hippocratic theoretical framework, was an important aspect of health management. The complexion of the body, or its temperament, was affected by fluctuations in temperature and moisture, as were the humours and their qualities. Changes in temperature also occurred with food and drink when they were cooked or combined with other substances. The very humoral definition of health, a state of balance of the many bodily fluids, relies on the idea that for each complexion there is a specific climate in which the body works best. A melancholic or phlegmatic person, for example, would be more suited to damp and cold climates, whereas hotness and dryness would benefit sanguine and choleric people. This was a reciprocal relationship, nonetheless, as the climate of a specific area or country was also believed to have discernible effects on people's complexions. The European climate experienced some considerable changes over the *longue durée*. In the earlier Middle Ages, for instance, the average temperature in Europe was considerably warmer than in the 'Little Ice Age', which spanned 1300 to 1850.[17] In the sixteenth century alone, the river Thames in London froze eleven times. In the early modern period, southern Europe experienced high rains and flooding rather than ice and snow, as a result of the colder weather.[18] Climate also had a substantial effect on the production and distribution of food: for instance, lower than average temperatures ruined several harvests in England in the 1550s, 1560s and 1590s.[19]

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[16] Cavallo and Storey, *Healthy Living in Late Renaissance Italy*, p. 16; Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance*, p. 47.

[17] Brian Fagan, *The Little Ice Age: How Climate Made History 1300-1850* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), pp. 3–20.

[18] Fagan, p. 210 and p. 213.

[19] H. H. Lamb, *Climate, History and the Modern World* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 208.

Despite the impact of the 'Little Ice Age', it was only one of several colder periods that the Earth has endured, and it would be a mistake to look at this time of colder weather as an age of misery and dearth.[20] Bruce Campbell's research has explored the relationship between climate, disease and society throughout the late Middle Ages, and Campbell has argued that the relationship was not one-sided. According to Campbell, the struggle between 'human and environmental agencies' resulted in a series of efforts to counteract the harshness of nature in this period.[21] In his study of the correlation between food production and climate change in the early modern period, Geoffrey Parker reached a very similar conclusion. Despite the challenges of the climate during the Little Ice Age, Parker notes that, 'it required the misguided policies pursued by religious and political leaders to turn the crisis caused by sudden climate change into catastrophe'.[22] Climate stimulates therefore both action and inaction. As for the former, poorly chosen actions had negative consequences.

Europe experienced an increase in population and economic growth in precisely this period of lower temperatures.[23] Around 1500, the rate of economic growth began to slow, Europe's population kept growing, and agricultural production failed to keep pace with it. The result was an increase in food prices.[24] Still, Craig Muldrew very convincingly argues that despite everything, food in early modern England, on average, 'remained sufficient and continued to contain a surprising amount of meat'.[25] Guido Alfani reaches a similar conclusion in his study of Italy during the long sixteenth century (1494-1629). In the period between Charles VIII's Italian invasions and the worst outburst of plague in Italy since the fourteenth century, the Italian peninsula benefitted from 'a healthy and very

[20] For more insight into the topic see Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Times of Feast, Times of Famine: A History of Climate Since the Year 1000* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1972).

[21] Bruce Campbell, *The Great Transition: Climate, Disease and Society in the Late-Medieval World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 396.

[22] Geoffrey Parker, *Global Crisis: War, Climate Change and Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), p. 25.

[23] Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie and Joseph Goy, *Tithe and Agrarian History from the Fourteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries. An Essay in Comparative History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 93.

[24] Le Roy Ladurie and Goy, p. 79.

[25] Craig Muldrew, *Food, Energy and the Creation of Industriousness. Work and Material Culture in Agrarian England, 1550-1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 319.

advanced economy'.[26] Despite the so-called horsemen of the apocalypse, namely War, Famine, Plague and Death, travelling widely across Italy, the Italian urban and rural economies did not collapse.

The gradual introduction of new foods from beyond Europe was another significant development of this period. These foods included potatoes, tomatoes, turkey, spices, cereals and plants. The availability and impact of these foods was increasingly significant towards the end of the early modern period.[27] Many early modern Europeans evaluated the qualities of these new foodstuffs in humoral terms.

This thesis focuses on medical discourses about food and drink and food practices in Italy and England. While this study will not examine the ways in which factors such as climate, gender, religion, class and global trade had an impact on medicine in detail, it will acknowledge where these changes are directly relevant to the discourse on food and drink.

Finally, if early modern medicine as a whole was much broader than the doctrine of the humours and the non-naturals, these connected sets of notions alone were absolutely central to the everyday medical experience of premodern lay people, especially when considering food and drink consumption. In particular, meals – at least in ideal terms – involved finding a balance of specific ingredients that reflected the desired humoral balance. Since this study investigates the everyday medical experience of lay people, and not simply the opinions of learned physicians, my main focus will be on the humoral body. Food and drink are central to the existence of life, and they were also believed to be an essential way to preserve and maintain good health. I use the concept of the balance of the four humours to analyse recipes and food traditions in early modern England and Italy.[28] Additionally, this work asserts that humoral theory and the six non-naturals were all part of a theoretical

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[26] Guido Alfani, *Calamities and the Economy in Renaissance Italy. The Grand Tour of the Horsemen of the Apocalipse*, trans. Christine Calvert (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 171.

[27] Gentilcore, *Food and Health*, pp. 154–155.

[28] For a survey of preventive medicine in early modern Italy and England see Louise Hill Curth, 'Lessons from the Past: Preventive Medicine in Early Modern England', *Medical Humanities*, 29 (2003), 16–21; *Conserving Health in Early Modern Culture. Bodies and Environments in Italy and England*, ed. by Sandra Cavallo and Tessa Storey (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017).

universe in which the concept of balance was key.[29] I argue that humoral principles deeply influenced and shaped attitudes towards food and drink consumption, in ways and times that went beyond the mere understanding and application of medical notions in the early modern period. Indeed, Ulinka Rublack and Pamela Selwyn's work demonstrates how this understanding of health in terms of balance of movements of fluids in the body remained relevant through to 1767.[30] Physicians were less interested in humours and were instead devoted to investigating actual bodily fluids by this point, but the humoral scheme outlived the early modern period.

Historiography

In the past three decades there has been a growing interest in the study of the relationship between medicine and food and drink consumption, both with regards to the Middle Ages and in the early modern period.[31] These studies focus mostly on three areas and they aim to show: how medicine, especially the six non-naturals, entered the domestic environment and how it could be learned and practised; how medicine influenced the shaping of social structures and the classification of social strata, especially when applied to food consumption; and changes in medical discourses over time.

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[29] Luis García-Ballester, 'On the Origin of the "Six Non-Naturals Things" in Galen', in *Galen and Galenism. Theory and Medical Practice from Antiquity to the European Renaissance*, ed. by Jon Arrizabalaga and others (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), pp. 105–15 (p. 111); Eleni Tsiompanou and Spyros G. Marketos, 'Hippocrates: Timeless Still', *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 106.7 (2013), 288–92.

[30] Ulinka Rublack and Pamela Selwyn, 'Fluxes: The Early Modern Body and the Emotions' in *History Workshop Journal*, 53 (Spring, 2002), 1–16, p. 1.

[31] Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance*; Ken Albala, 'Food for Healing: Convalescent Cookery in the Early Modern Era', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 43.2 (2012), 323–28; David C. Gentilcore, 'The Levitico, or How to Feed a Hundred Jesuits', *Food and History*, 8.1 (2010), 87–120; Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe*; Cavallo and Storey, *Healthy Living in Late Renaissance Italy*, with one chapter dedicated to drink consumption, pp. 209–239; Paul Lloyd, 'Nutritious Foods and Consumption Choices in the Early Modern Period', *Social History of Medicine*, 24 (2011), 161–65; A. M. Nada Patrone, 'Trattati medici, diete e regimi alimentari in ambito pedemontano alla fine del Medioevo', *Archeologia Medievale*, 8 (1981), 369–92. See also Paulina B. Lewicka, 'Diet as Culture. On the Medical Context of Food Consumption in the Medieval Middle East', *History Compass*, 12.7 (2014), 607–17. For more on this regarding the eighteenth century see J. W. Estes, 'The Medical Properties of Food in the Eighteenth Century', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 51 (1996), 127–54.

The first area of recent scholarship focuses on health management in the household. Sandra Cavallo and Tessa Storey's *Healthy Living in Late Renaissance Italy* (2012), and their more recent edited collection *Conserving Health in Early Modern Culture: Bodies and Environment in Italy and England* (2017), highlight the pervasiveness of medical discourses and their lay applications in early modern domestic environments in Europe. Despite the greater number of pages dedicated to food and drink in health regimens, these works show how all six of the non-naturals were constantly in the mind not only of higher status members of households, but also their servants who lived in the same housholds, the architects that built their palaces, and so on. Anne Stobart analyses the prominence of medicine in the domestic environment by studying the ways in which household medicines were prepared, discussed and used in seventeenth-century England. Stobart argues for a changing role of food as medical agent for the sick body, when compared with previous periods.[32] In her view, the fact that medicinal remedies were mostly prescribed on an empty stomach, and that physicians advocated fasting as a therapy to get better, reveal the extent to which these approaches were rapidly gaining popularity over food itself. Stobart's work has the merit of stressing the importance of health management in the domestic environment, in this period. However, her position on food does not take into account the preventive side of medicine, in which food was absolutely central to health management. Conversely, Sara Pennell demonstrated how food was still central to health management at the beginning of the eighteenth century in England, revealing evidence of people who sought to comply to what was prescribed in contemporary health regimens.[33] Moreover, despite the prominence of the humours becoming less and less pervasive in society, Pennell's analysis shows how ideas of wellbeing that were in place in this period were substantially derived from the six non-naturals.

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[32] Anne Stobart, *Household Medicine in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), p. 111.

[33] Sara Pennell, '"A Matter of so Great Importance to My Health": Alimentary Knowledge in Practice', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 43 (2012), 418–24. See also Sara Pennell, 'Consumption and Consumerism in Early Modern England', *The Historical Journal*, 42 (1999), 549–64 and Lucia Dacome, 'Noting the Mind: Commonplace Books and the Pursuit of the Self in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 65 (2004), 603–25.

Inspired by these examples, this thesis examines evidence which sheds light on food provision and health management in the household, alongside evidence from letters and household treatises. By doing so, I intend to further stress the importance of the domestic environment in the health and management of the body. In going beyond the theoretical side of medicine, this thesis is also strongly influenced by a 2012 article by Paul Lloyd.[34] Lloyd shows how fruit consumption, deemed generally dangerous and noxious by physicians, especially in a cold and moist environment, went hand in hand with sugar consumption in the early modern English household. Lloyd notes how most of the time the English made preserves with their fruit, which changed the humoral connotations of the original ingredients significantly, making them less cold and more humorally sound overall. However, Lloyd fails to associate the combination of ingredients that he found in the documents, and the ways in which preserves were prepared and cooked, with wider patterns of food consumption in relation to lay medical knowledge. Instead, this is exactly what I seek to do in my close readings of a range of Italian and English sources. One of the original dimensions of this study is that I go beyond the analysis of food combinations from a medical standpoint, and attempt to look at how these combinations of ingredients and preparations become embedded in national and regional culinary cultures. In this way, it is possible to start uncovering new ways in which medicine infiltrated everyday life in the past.

The second research area relates to the interaction between food, medicine and social status. These interactions were prominent in publications by food and medical historians in the 1990s, especially those by Massimo Montanari and Allen J. Grieco.[35] These two scholars have explored the cultures of food, medicine, class and

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[34] Paul S. Lloyd, 'Dietary Advice and Fruit-Eating in Late Tudor and Early Stuart England', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 67 (2012), 553–86.

[35] Allen J. Grieco, 'From the Cookbook to the Table: A Florentine Table and Italian Recipes of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries', in *Du manuscrit à la table. Essai sur la cuisine au moyen âge et répertoire des manuscrits médiévaux contenant des recettes culinaires*, ed. by Carole Lambert (Montreal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montreal, 1992), pp. 29–38; Allen J. Grieco, 'Il vitto di un ospedale: pratica, distinzioni sociali e teorie mediche alla metà del Quattrocento', in *Gli Innocenti e Firenze nei secoli. Un ospedale, un archivio, una città*, ed. by Lucia Sandri (Firenze: S.P.E.S., 1996), pp. 85–92; Allen J. Grieco, 'Food and Social Classes in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy', in *Food. A Culinary History from the Antiquity to the Present*, ed. by Jean-Louis Flandrin, Massimo Montanari, and Albert Sonnefield (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 302–12; Allen J. Grieco, 'Medieval and Renaissance

cuisine in late medieval and early modern Europe, especially in the Italian context. Both scholars repeatedly argued that medicine, as it was conveyed and formulated in texts, strengthened social strata divisions. Laura Giannetti, in a more recent publication on the fashionable trend of eating vegetables in Renaissance Italy, insists on this neat separation of dietary habits rooted in social structure, writing:

> In fact, food historians have demonstrated that the Galenic discourse of food in dietary tracts had only a minor role in shaping lived experience and food practice in early modern Italy. What one ate was often much more the result of one's economic position in society, the availability of certain food, the limits of Mediterranean climate, and local agricultural possibilities.[36]

Giannetti also argues how 'discourses of food – such as the one on vegetables and their low position in the food hierarchy – were fashioned also as social and cultural discourses with implications well beyond a simple dietary advice'.[37] In this thesis I demonstrate both how medicine had more than a 'minor role' in food consumption, and how early modern medical advice was anything but 'simple'.

The evidence provided in this thesis will show that actual patterns of food consumption were more fluid and less rigid than previously thought. Without denying that medical regimens stressed the importance of eating in relation to lifestyle, evidence from letters and diaries suggest that the elites were not afraid to eat foods such as fava beans or many types of fruit, herbs and roots, and meats that theoretically were suited to the lower sorts. Likewise, I found that recipes in English cookery books often combined affordable and expensive ingredients. Patterns of food consumption based on social classifications cannot be taken for granted. Mutton was certainly cheap and consumed in large quantities by the lower sorts, but historians should not assume that the middle and higher sorts did not consume it. My study

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Wines: Taste, Dietary Theory, and How To Choose the "Right" Wine (14th-16th Centuries)', *Medievalia*, 2009, 15–42. See also Jean-Louis Flandrin, 'Seasoning, Cooking, and Dietetics in the Late Middle Ages', in *Food. A Culinary History from the Antiquity to the Present*, ed. by Flandrin, Montanari, and Sonnefield, pp. 313–27.

[36] Laura Giannetti, 'Italian Renaissance Food-Fashioning or The Triumph of Greens', *California Italian Studies*, 1 (2010), 1–16 (p. 4).

[37] Giannetti, 'Italian Renaissance Food-Fashioning', pp. 2–3, n. 9.

also prompts future scholars to critically question the assumption that dietary habits reflect ignorance or rejection of medical advice. On a similar note, Craig Muldrew found that in early modern England meat consumption was a major and widespread phenomenon, and that the middling and lower sorts in particular ate great quantities of beef, the same meat that was served at court banquets in London.[38] Jane Whittle and Elizabeth Griffiths suggested that 'there were strong similarities across social groups' in terms of food habits, and found that in the household of Lady Alice Le Strange (1585-1656), in Norfolk, beef, cheese and mutton and lamb alone – all sorts fo foods that could be generally associated with the middle and lower sorts – made up 59% of the overall edible weight, in 1619.[39] In line with this revisionist strand of scholarship, my research suggests that we should look at food consumption, even when analysed from a medical standpoint, as a way of contact, rather than separation, between different social strata.

The third area of research looks at the relationship between food and health management on a broader chronological and geographical scale. Two monographs have directly tackled the relationship between food and drink consumption and health in early modern Europe: Ken Albala's *Eating Right in the Renaissance* (2002) and David Gentilcore's *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe* (2016). These two works both attempt to provide their readers with comprehensive accounts of the relationship between food and medicine in early modern Europe. In their analysis there is a tendency to imply that physicians' ideas about certain foods and drinks were automatically projected onto their patterns of consumption. Albala examines the medical culture of food in Europe through a focus on the genre of printed health regimens, and argues for a chronological division of Galenic medicine in the early modern period, from its rediscovery at the beginning of the Renaissance to its decline. By making no use of sources on practice, Gentilcore intentionally stresses the dissemination of medical and dietary knowledge over how it was received, assimilated and eventually applied.

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[38] Muldrew, *Food, Energy and the Creation of Industriousness*.

[39] Jane Whittle and Elizabeth Griffiths, *Consumption and Gender in The Early Seventeenth-Century Household* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 89, 116.

One of the major questions in the field that food and medical historians have failed to address in depth is the extent to which medical knowledge was applied to food consumption or, to put it differently, how much people knew about medicine and food, and how they acted upon this knowledge in their everyday life. For instance, the focus of Albala's *Eating Right in the Renaissance* is on the nature and popularity of the genre of health regimens during the European Renaissance and how the medical philosophy of the time evolved within this genre. However, Albala firmly believes that physicians' 'Fear of melons […] was a successful campaign'. He explains away melon consumption: 'People went on eating them, just as we go on eating everything we are told is bad for us, but the guilt experienced after indulgence was a sure sign that the physician's message had been internalized'.[40] Nonetheless, it is not clear how Albala proves that everybody who ate melons in this period either experienced indigestion, or felt guilt about it. Similarly, Gentilcore argues that European elites consumed large quantities of cheese despite physicians' warnings and precisely because it was something which was not recommended.[41] Although both positions focus more on physicians than patients, I believe that this approach is too general and simplistic. While some general ideas and conventional wisdom about certain set of ingredients were certainly in place among lay people, such as fruit and herbs being believed to be too moist and cold to be good for the body, to accept these as evidence for what and how people ate these foods, and whether people complied with the advice of physicians, is reductive.

In this thesis, I argue that medical and food historians should avoid jumping to conclusions that do not take people's everyday experience into account, especially if the aim is to look closely at patterns of food consumption. For instance, how people ate their foods is no less important than what people ate. By looking closely at medical regimens, it becomes apparent that the ways in which foods were discussed went beyond expressing the humoral qualities of these ingredients alone. Instead, physicians recommended listening to the body, keeping customs and habits in mind when judging the wholesomeness of foods, and offered guidance on how foods were to be prepared, cooked and eaten. Medical texts almost never offered advice as

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[40] Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance*, p. 12.

[41] Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe*, p. 68.

simple and definitive as 'this food is good' or 'this food is bad'. An important exception to this trend is discussed in chapter two of this thesis, when I analyse the negative reputation of mutton in early modern Italian medical writings. More usually, medical regimens in this period reinforce the idea that the ways in which food and drink were managed before being eaten were as important as the humoral qualities of the ingredients itself. Therefore, I argue neither for a deep understanding and full application of medical rules by lay people, nor for a complete rejection of physicians' advice. I aim to show the complexity of the relationship between food and medicine, not to solve the problem of which governed which.

Sources and methodology

The methodology of this study has two main dimensions. First, I compare what might be called the 'official' line of the physicians on matters of food, drink and health management with the everyday experiences of lay people to see how medical theory intersected with food and drink practices. Second, I compare English and Italian medical attitudes towards food and drink consumption, in order to highlight similarities and differences in the two contexts. This study generally focuses on the period from 1500 to 1650 to reflect Albala's chronological tripartition of the early modern period. Notably, Albala looked for changes in the ways in which medical texts were produced and conceptualised, while this study explores the static nature of people's way of approaching and dealing with food from a medical perspective across a period which was characterised by considerable change.

In order to understand the ideas that physicians had of food, I look at a variety of genres of printed texts that incorporate medical notions that lay people might have been familiar with and that could be applied in their everyday food habits. I focus on medical advice on food in vernacular health regimens by looking at very specific ideas about the humorality of food. While the first step of this process isolates the humoral qualities of single ingredients, the following stages look at how foods ended up being perceived and medically defined in that way. In this work some authors appear more frequently than others because they were perceived as a particular authority on the subject, as evidenced in part by the success that their works endured in the early modern period. For England, I frequently refer to Thomas Elyot (c. 1490-1546), an English diplomat and scholar, and the author of

the bestseller of all printed health regimens in English, *The Castel of Helth* (1534). This study also relies on the work of James Hart, discussed a few pages above. Hart was a Puritan doctor that lived in Northamptonshire, and the contemporary success of his 1633 publication *The Diet of the Diseased* merits its considerable use in this thesis. The works of Andrew Boorde (1490-1549), who travelled, lived and worked all over Britain and Europe, feature frequently in this study. Boorde drew on other medical texts, especially Elyot's work. In my discussion of Italy, I centre the analysis on Giacomo Castelvetro (1546-1616), because his work discusses both the diet of the Italians and the habits of the English, making them especially valuable for a comparison of attitudes towards food and health in early modern Italy and England. In certain sections I focus extensively on texts relevant to the specifics under discussion. For instance, Salvatore Massonio (1559-1629) and his remarkable treatise on salads feature prominently in the first chapter. Similarly, in the fourth chapter, the treatise of the fifteenth-century Italian physician Pantaleone da Confienza is discussed extensively because it is a treatise specifically about dairy foods.

The final food preparation that was served on the plate was the result of a series of actions that started long before the cooking process. Physicians formulated their views of food by looking at a multitude of factors. For example, they considered how raw ingredients were managed before they became edible food; the humoral quality of a given type of meat depended upon the inherent humoral qualities of that animal, and how the animal was bred and kept while it was still alive. An equivalent reasoning was applied to the ways in which grapes were grown to make wine, or how a cheese was aged and matured over time. The same can be said for the ways in which food was prepared and cooked. According to physicians, different cooking processes and different ways of preparing and storing ingredients had different humoral outcomes. Most of the time, physicians and medical authors inherited, developed, conceptualised and disseminated very specific humoral evaluations of food and drinks that were often controversial, to say the least. Focusing on a single set of ingredients, and looking closely at how these ingredients were discussed, can help us to understand the complex nature of this medical advice. These texts are excellent sources for understanding the medical thinking of the time about food and drink, and the six non-naturals more generally, as well as reflecting the complexity of the system. The inherent complexity that this kind of analysis reveals demonstrates

how the terms 'medicine' or 'medical knowledge' cannot be reduced to an abstract set of ideas.

The widespread acknowledgement of humoral theory and the six non-naturals by lay people does not necessarily add much detail to our understanding of the application of medical knowledge to food consumption. In order to reach a better understanding of this process I turn to ego documents such as letters and diaries. As subjective and partial as such sources can be, they give a precise idea of what individuals deemed important in food consumption, and they further demonstrate the value placed on preventive health management. I use the diary of Samuel Pepys (1633-1703), letters written by the English nobility, and correspondence involving the Este and Gonzaga families in Italy, to explore the intersections between medicine and food and drink consumption. These sources reveal what and how people ate on given days, which provides a sense of their dietary habits, and sheds light on the ways in which medicine and food were discussed by lay people. Apart from these ego-documents, this thesis also makes use of household accounts to investigate patterns of consumption of specific foodstuffs.

For the English context, I focus on the household accounts of two families: the Cecils and the Radcliffes. The Cecils were one of the most pre-eminent families in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. They were involved in English politics throughout the early modern period, beginning with William Cecil, 1st Baron Burghley (1520-1598), who served as chief advisor to Elizabeth I, as well as secretary of State and Lord High Treasurer.[42] The accounts analysed in this study were compiled during the time of William Cecil, 2nd Earl of Salisbury (1591-1668), nephew of the aforementioned William, and concern the households of Hatfield House in Hertfordshire; Salisbury House on The Strand, London; and Quickswood in Clothall, Baldock, forty miles north of London.[43] The Radcliffe family was not as

[42] The bibliography on William Cecil is vast and extremely diverse in quality. For a recent and very punctual analysis see Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at The Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

[43] Lionel M. Munby, ed., *Early Stuart Household Accounts*, (ESHA), (Linton: Hertfordshire Record Society, 1986), p. v. For more on the Cecil family in the early modern period see Alan Haynes, *Robert Cecil Earl of Salisbury, 1563-1612: Servant of Two Sovereigns* (London: Howen, 1989) and D. M. Loades, *The Cecils: Privilege and Power Behind the Throne* (Kew: National Archives, 2007).

prominent as the Cecils in early modern England but were very politically active in the late Middle Ages. The accounts considered in this thesis were compiled in the time of the last living member of the family, Edward Radcliffe, 6th Earl of Sussex (1559-1643), who died in misery and without an heir, which led to the extinction of the earldom. These accounts referred to the household of Gorhambury in Hertfordshire, where his wife, Eleanor Wortley, ran the household in the late 1630s. The usefulness of these accounts relies in the fact that they cover relatively similar periods and concern households which were relatively close and similar in size to each other, despite the fact that the accounts provide no evidence of direct contact between the two families.[44]

For the Italian context, this study relies on the household accounts of two notable families of the early modern period, the house of Este and the house of Gonzaga. The Gonzaga ruled Mantua in northern Italy from 1328 to 1708.[45] The Este ruled over the territories of Ferrara, Modena and Reggio from the thirteenth century until 1597 (Ferrara) and 1796 (Modena and Reggio).[46] These two Italian families, in contrast to the Cecils and Radcliffes, were in direct contact with each other. The Gonzaga and Este families were also connected to major European monarchies because of the use of marriage to strengthen political allegiances and secure their dominions. This study uses the household accounts of the Ducal Palace of Mantua, the main residence of the House of Gonzaga. These accounts concern the courts of Isabella d'Este (1474-1539), Marchesa of Mantua, and her husband Francesco II Gonzaga.[47] For the house of Este I look at the accounts of Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este (1509-1572), niece of Isabella, which are preserved in their entirety.

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[44] ESHA, p. vi.

[45] The key study of the Gonzaga family, although old, is still Giuseppe Coniglio, *I Gonzaga* (Milan: Dall'Oglio, 1967).

[46] For the Este family see Trevor Dean, *Land and Power in Late Medieval Ferrara: The Rule of the Este, 1350-1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) and Dennis Looney and Deanna Shemek (eds.), *Phaethon's Children: The Este Court and Its Culture in Early Modern Ferrara* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005).

[47] For a recent survey of these two key figures of the Italian Renaissance see Sarah Cockram, *Isabella d'Este and Francesco Gonzaga: Power Sharing at The Italian Renaissance Court* (Farham: Ashgate, 2013).

When analysed and compared, this evidence demonstrates how health and food were connected to each other in the minds of people who accessed medical knowledge in a variety of ways. In some cases certain foods were recognised as particularly wholesome or particularly noxious, whilst, in other cases, recipes and particular combinations of ingredients that were considered healthy because of their final humoral balance were discussed and recommended to wider audiences.

The nature of these audiences was very diverse. We know today that these texts were aimed at, and indeed reached, a variety of social groups, especially those outside academic circles.[48] Certainly, laymen and women had a significant interest in healthcare, especially in a domestic environment. Scholarship on exchanges and transmission of medical notions in the early modern domestic environment has highlighted women's agency in managing the health of the household, and also their intellectual efforts in building and contributing to wider webs of lay knowledge in early modern Europe.[49] In comparison, there are fewer studies that shed light on early modern men and the ways in which they took care of their bodies and their health. Jennifer Evans argues that in early modern England men were at the centre of a discourse about infertility and impotence, and that physicians and authors saw men as potential customers for their written works. Moreover, Evans shows how the ways in which the male seed was theorised by physicians were rooted in humoralism and that it was believed that food consumption played a central role in the generation of healthy sperm by male bodies.[50] Early modern women were primarily in charge of health management in households across Europe. When a physician was not present, they provided both counsel to the household and preparations to fight ailments. However, when considering the provision and preparation of food

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[48] Sandra Cavallo and Tessa Storey, 'Regimens, Authors and Readers: Italy and England Compared', in *Conserving Health in Early Modern Culture*, ed. by Cavallo and Storey, pp. 23–52 (pp. 33–42).

[49] Rebecca Laroche, *Medical Authority and Englishwomen's Herbal Texts, 1550–1650* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009); Cavallo and Storey, *Healthy Living in Late Renaissance Italy*; Elaine Leong, 'Collecting Knowledge for the Family: Recipes, Gender and Practical Knowledge in the Early Modern English Household', *Centaurus*, 55 (2013), 81–103; Elaine Leong, '"Herbals She Peruseth": Reading Medicine in Early Modern England', *Renaissance Studies*, 28 (2014), 556–78; Alisha Rankin, *Panaceia's Daughters* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013).

[50] Jennifer Evans, '"They Are Called Imperfect Men", Male Infertility and Sexual Health in Early Modern England', *Social History of Medicine*, 29 (2014), 311–332.

and drink, the responsibility for health and wellbeing fell primarily on men. For example, the kitchen staff of elite households was mostly male. Authors of household manuals and cookery books, in Italy and England alike, stressed the fact that kitchen workers, especially the head cook, were in charge of caring for the health of both masters and guests. Despite the fact that the authors of household manuals and cookery books emphasised the role of male kitchen workers in caring for the health of the household, this thesis explores the multiplicity of contexts in which these ideas were discussed. For example, it considers a range of sources from Pepys' diary, where we learn how he and his male peers discussed medicine on an everyday basis, to the court of Mantua, where both male and female members of the family discussed food and health in knowledgeable and competent ways. This thesis will contribute to a growing body of scholarship which draws attention to how men, as well as women, sought to optimise their health by paying attention to the quantity and humoral qualities of the food and drink they consumed.

Ideas of food and medicine were present in a wide array of early modern texts, many of which have been consulted for the purposes of this study. Botanical tracts, treatises on specific ingredients, household management manuals, chorographical histories and descriptions of Italy and England, ballads, collections of popular narratives and stories, proverbs, travel accounts, collections of recipes, cookery books, descriptions of banquets, household accounts of food purchases, paintings, and material culture are all used in this thesis to contextualise the health regimens and ego-documents discussed above. I aim to create connections between the particular and the general, between micro- and macro-historical narratives of food and health. By working with such an extensive range of sources I argue for a widespread culture of health that was deeply connected to habitual patterns of consumption. A medical culture of food underlined many food- and drink-related habits, across Europe.

I adopt a comparative method, as defined by historians Deborah Cohen and Maura O'Connor, as a way of highlighting differences and similarities in my object of study.[51] Galen and medical practices were inextricably associated throughout

[51] Deborah Cohen and Maura O'Connor, 'Comparative History, Cross-National History, Transnational History - Definitions', in *Comparison and History: Europe in Cross-National*

Europe, from late antiquity to the beginning of the modern era. This connection is prominent in scholarship on food and medical history. The transnationality of humoral medicine in the history of medicine contributed to its homogenisation, which led, as Sandra Cavallo and Tessa Storey have argued, to a 'European synthesis' of Galen, that does not take into account local differences.[52] Cavallo and Storey have also demonstrated the effectiveness of the comparative method, by examining the genre of the health regimen in both early modern England and Italy.[53] Storey's analysis shows that there were both important differences and similarities between England and Italy in terms of the structure and chronology of health regimens.[54] Similarly, this thesis considers both early modern Italy and England. In the previous section I highlighted how Cavallo and Storey, by conducting a comparison between Italy and England, highlighted both similarities and differences between them in the ways in which medicine affected early modern people and vice versa. My research confirms their findings in this respect.

There were certainly many differences between Italy and England in the early modern period. The difference in religious confessions is a prominent one. However, as we have seen in the historiographical discussion above, one's religious context was not particularly relevant to how physicians formulated medical ideas about food and drink. The political situation is another key difference between England and Italy. English politics and state management in the early modern period were particularly tumultuous. However, when compared to Italy, early modern England was a unified kingdom which benefitted from political unity and geographical stability.[55] Italy, on the other hand, was composed of a multitude of states, including the Republic of Venice and the Papal States, to name only two of the largest ones. On top of these,

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Perspective, ed. by Deborah Cohen and Maura O'Connor (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. ix–xxiv (p. xv).

[52] Sandra Cavallo, 'Conserving Health: the Non-Naturals in Early Modern Culture and Society', in *Conserving Health in Early Modern Culture*, ed. by Cavallo and Storey, pp. 1–19 (p. 6).

[53] Cavallo and Storey, 'Regimens, Authors and Readers: Italy and England Compared', pp. 23–52.

[54] Cavallo and Storey, 'Regimens, Authors and Readers: Italy and England Compared', pp. 25–31.

[55] For an accessible and thorough survey of politics and society of early modern Italy see Christopher Black, *Early Modern Italy: A Social History* (London: Routledge, 2001).

there were a myriad of smaller city-states run by individual noble families, such as those discussed in this study, the Este and the Gonzaga. These smaller social and political elements were constantly negotiating allegiances or engaging in conflict with each other, or with the major states.[56] The different political contexts are reflected in the culinary discourse of the time. Certain aspects of English identity were increasingly being more and more associated with specific foods and drinks, such as beef and ale. These foodstuffs helped England to establish a shared sense of belonging and identity, as I will discuss in depth in this thesis. The same was not true of Italy.

Italy and England, despite the fragmentary nature of the former, also benefitted from a strong mutual recognition of their respective cultures, politics and commerce. Looking at the Republic of Venice, for example, Maria Fusaro established how the relationship between Venice and London was much more a story of two empires, rather than two cities. This was not only due to the well-documented struggle for the dominance of the Ionian islands in the Mediterranean, but also because the two countries had been involved in a long and mutually convenient commercial relationship.[57] These cultural, political, and economic factors were at the core of the relationship between the Italian peninsula and England. By looking at differences and similarities, in the two contexts, in the ways in which people ate, collected recipes, and discussed medicine and food in their correspondence, my study expands our understanding of the diversification of medical advice in early modern Europe. In this thesis, I focus on the content of health regimens, rather than on the ways in which they were produced or disseminated. By doing so, I show the fluidity of medical discourses in their smallest details, highlighting differences and similarities within and between England and Italy, in how foods and drinks were conceived from a medical standpoint.

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[56] Similarly, for early modern England see Humfrey Butters and Henry J. Cohn, 'Dynastic Politics, Religious Conflict and Reason of State: c. 1500-1650' in *The European World: 1500-1800. An Introduction to Early Modern History*, ed. by Beat Kümin (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 264–276.

[57] See Maria Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean: The Decline of Venice and the Rise of England, 1450-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 1–2.

This thesis is structured around four sets of ingredients, and I analyse them comparatively. By isolating specific ideas about ingredients in vernacular English and Italian health regimens I explore why physicians thought differently about some ingredients. In this way, I uncover the complexity of early modern medical advice on food and drink consumption. This approach is also reflected in how I use the concept of regionality. Instead of analysing Italy and England purely as national contexts, which amongst other things would be problematic given the political structures of this period, my analysis repeatedly shifts from small and urban environments to larger areas. These geographical contexts include English counties, small polities like Mantua and Ferrara, and major cities such as Venice, Rome, and London. These cities were both major urban centres and major centres of printing, in the early modern period.

Structure

This work is divided into four chapters that analyse four sets of ingredients: herbs, roots and fruit; meat; wine; and dairy foods. The decision to organise this study around ingredients, rather than adopting a thematic, chronological, or geographical approach, lies with the intention to stress the ever-present medical connotations of food and drink in the early modern period. The order of the chapters is inspired by medical ideas of digestion as they were interpreted by authors in the Renaissance, whereby herbs were believed to open the stomach and stimulate the appetite in the body, and cheese consumed at the end of the meal supposedly sealed the stomach in order to prevent the fumes of digestion from reaching the head. Therefore, the first chapter focuses on herbs, roots and fruit. Today, these ingredients are considered central to healthy dietary practices in many societies and cultures. Nothing could have been more different in the early modern period though, when these ingredients were viewed by physicians with suspicion and fear because of their excessive moisture and coldness. The chapter shows how environmental differences between Italy and England shaped differences in dietary habits. It was a clear and widely-shared stereotype that in Italy people consumed these ingredients in large quantities, yet, what is less known is that the English treasured them too, despite their complexion being supposedly unsuitable for eating these ingredients. The chapter reflects on the importance of dressings in defining the humoral balance of salads, by

looking at the ways in which they were described in printed texts of the time, and how they featured in cookery books.

While the first chapter reflects on the stereotype of legions of Italians eating large quantities of herbs to humorally counterbalance the terrible heat of the Italian summer, the second chapter considers the notion that the English were thought to be enthusiastic meat-eaters. It analyses how meat was medically defined, with particular emphasis on the differences between four-footed animals and fowl. Next, the chapter focuses on two case studies, based on the most consumed kinds of meat in the early modern period, namely beef and mutton. The idea that beef was what the proper Englishman had to eat to define himself as English was already very much in place in this period. For example, the Yeomen Warders of the Tower of London were known as 'Beefeaters' by the second half of the seventeenth century.[58] From a comparative perspective, beef is the ideal ingredient to highlight the ways in which the humoral discourse on food was sometimes used to define feelings of national belonging. Physicians in England stressed the inherent wholesomeness of beef for English bodies, even though it was cold and dry from a humoral viewpoint, and therefore not ideal for people living in cold climates. Mutton is an example of how an ingredient could be theorised differently in different contexts: in England, this meat was considered extremely good for any kind of complexion, while in Italy physicians developed a much more nuanced set of rules to observe around the types of meat derived from sheep. The chapter shows how these kinds of meat, usually considered ideal for the middle and lower sorts, were consumed by the elites as well. In England, for example, these ingredients were usually ennobled by combining them with expensive ingredients, such as lemon and oranges, in a probable imitation of Italian and French culinary styles. On the other hand, mutton from gelded animals was consumed by Italian elites, which reflected the notions of this meat in the writings of Italian physicians.

The third chapter focuses on wine. It is important to remember that people were nourished by drinks as well as solid food. Early modern writers considered wine to be highly nourishing for the body. In this chapter, I examine how physicians defined wine in their health regimens, and I investigate how people were supposed

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[58] OED, 'Beef, eater', *n*, (2.a).

to understand whether a specific wine was wholesome or not for their body. I show how the ways in which wine was understood in popular culture reflected the notions expressed by the physicians. The ways in which wine had to look, smell, and behave in the glass once poured, were all symptomatic signs of its overall quality, and I argue that medical and lay notions of healthy wine overlapped. In medicine, wine was associated with the generation of blood and was therefore often recommended as a restorative beverage for the body. For this reason, wine was given to household labourers in early modern Italy as part of their wage. Wine is a useful tool of historical analysis when thinking about the reception and application of medical theory by lay people, as wine is an important example of how medical theory and alimentary practices could effectively match with each other. I will analyse common ways of consuming wine, for example by mixing it with water, or by drinking it alongside melons and other fruits. These habits reflect the importance of the concept of balance in the former case, and the pervasiveness of humorality in culinary traditions in the latter.

The fourth chapter of this thesis explores dairy foods and is divided into three sections that focus on milk, milk-based preparations and cheese respectively. In this chapter I directly challenge the existing scholarship on this topic by showing that the consumption of dairy foods was not necessarily linked to indulgence and gluttony on one hand, or to ignorance of medical theories on the other. On the contrary, I demonstrate that a medically-informed pattern of consumption of dairy foods was widespread in both England and Italy in the early modern period. The chapter starts by exploring how milk was theorised from a medical standpoint as an essential source of nourishment for infants. Next, I evaluate the ways in which milk was consumed in adulthood, by analysing two very popular milk-based preparations in early modern England and Italy: posset and the *capo di latte*. The last section has a twofold goal. First, it aims to demonstrate how cheese was not only well thought of by physicians, but also that it was widely consumed in ways that matched physicians' advice. Second, I show how these ideas about cheese eating were embedded in popular culture. By highlighting the pervasiveness of these ways of eating cheese, I show how medicine permeated everyday life in early modern Europe.

Main arguments

The central aim of this study is to enhance the complexity of historical understandings of the reception, assimilation and adaptation of medical knowledge in early modern Europe. Using food and drink consumption as a tool to investigate patterns of exchange of medical knowledge, this thesis shows the extent to which people understood and managed medical notions, and the ways in which the early modern medical philosophy of balance was deeply embedded in food consumption. Moreover, the comparison between Italy and England allows for a new understanding of where and how the ubiquity of the humoral paradigm shifted according to regional and national differences. It shows the effects that cultural and environmental factors had on adaptions of the humoral philosophy, both in medical texts and in the everyday use of these notions by lay people. I argue that, despite the rigidity of the picture set out by previous scholarship, food consumption was an extremely fluid phenomenon, influenced by numerous facets of everyday life. Ultimately, culinary choices were shaped by personal taste, the desire to assert social distinction or to pursue social emulation, the proximity to local traditions, and health management.

One of the central arguments of this work is that, whether intentional or not and whether acknowledged or not, the act of eating and drinking, even when in good health, was inherently a medical one. Both learned physicians and lay people were well acquainted with the curative powers of food. Both groups also recognised that food could bring disease and discomfort to the body. When Dr Le Coop wrote to his patient Lady Lisle (1493-1566) with a detailed list of dietary recommendations to follow in order to recover from the 'cold and slymysh humours' that her body had succumbed to in the past few weeks, he pointed out how food could be both the origin of and the solution to the disease, writing:

> Madame, furthermore, ye must, if it pleaseth you, have regard that at your meat, ye do nothing that may be contrary to your disease and that might encrease or augment the same. Ye must above all things keep you from indigestion, for of the same proceedeth all evil corruption and all

> diseases or infirmities to man his body, and thereby is engendered an humour which is the food and nourishing of your disease.[59]

The words of Dr Le Coop highlight the idea that food is constantly exerting its nourishing powers over something. Within this theoretical framework, it was up to the individual to decide whether to eat foods that might nourish their disease, or that nourished their body. Therefore, food and drink were certainly sources of life, but they were also potentially bearers of illness and death.

This thesis specifically examines how health management was associated with food consumption, but in suggesting that eating and drinking were inherently medical actions it does not advocate that this medical significance of food was necessarily the most evident, or even the most ostensible, of those meanings that are usually attributed to food. Instead, by closely reading health regimens and what their authors had to say about the food and drink I analyse here, a picture of constant negotiation and struggle emerges between medicine, national and regional traditions, and individual appropriations of that same knowledge. Gentilcore is right to assert that food and medical historians 'went to town' in the attempt to establish firm positions on physicians' opinions of certain foods, or to understand the ways in which people reacted to these issues.[60] Even physicians with reasonably similar origins who worked in the same contexts discussed specific foodstuffs in different ways. Although the vast majority of the authors that I use in this work were rooted in the same medical philosophy, humoral and medical ideas about food were not fixed and undisputable.

This perspective allowed me to achieve two aims. First, it allowed me to unravel the complexities of the humoral system in addressing specific items of food and drink, and how different physicians considered and reasoned about particular foodstuffs in diverse ways, both within and beyond their geographical context. Second, it allowed me to explore the impact of other social factors, such as religion. The relationship between religion and medicine is complex. The body and the soul, in the early modern period and beyond, were seen as interdependent. 'Passions and emotions of the soul' was, after all, one of the six non-naturals. Domestic and

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[59] Calendar of State Papers Domestic, SP 3/14, f. 92, Dr Le Coop to Lady Lisle, 1538.

[60] Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe*, p. 141.

devotional habits went hand in hand, fostering a variety of implications for hygiene management.[61] Tessa Storey's analysis of English and Italian health regimens demonstrates how physicians discussed religion occasionally, but despite the historiographical narrative constructions of Catholic and Protestant bodies, 'authors engage more with notions of national identities than they do with religious identities'.[62] Religious themes are scarcer in Italian health regimens and practical guides than their English counterparts. My findings confirm what Storey argues: when looking at how physicians wrote about food and drink, and in analyses of foodstuffs in health regimens, religion is absent. Vitally, this study demonstrates that while historians often highlight the ways in which religion shaped early modern medicine, it was not prominent in discussions of foodstuffs. Given this characteristic of the evidence, religion does not feature in this thesis.

I suggest that the medical significance of food could be both acknowledged and overlooked by lay people, which means that the advice of physicians went both heard and unheard. It was neither the case that people rejected the physician's advice when sitting at the dining table, nor that health management was always at the forefront of their minds when eating.[63] The extent to which the advice and recommendations of the physicians were followed is of minor importance; instead, this study reveals how the worlds of food and medicine interacted in a vigorous, albeit complex, way. I aim to show how the medical philosophy of the four humours, and therefore the concept of balance, were present not only in the practices of preparing and assembling complex recipes, but also in popular, simple and widespread food preparations that survived the test of time. Many of the combinations of ingredients examined here feature in paintings, proverbs and ballads as well as in written sources. The staggering variety of sources that confirms the popularity of these preparations also shows the extent to which the medical notion of balance contributed to the definition of certain ways of eating in Europe up to the modern day. The possibility that people were not aware of the medical

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[61] Sasha Handley, 'Sleep-piety and Healthy Sleep in Early Modern English Households' in *Conserving Health in Early Modern Culture*, ed. by Cavallo and Storey, pp. 185–209 (p. 186).

[62] Tessa Storey, 'English and Italian Health Advice' in *Conserving Health in Early Modern Culture*, ed. by Cavallo and Storey, pp. 210–234 (p. 227).

[63] Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance*, pp. 2, 10.

connotations of these combinations does not negate the extent to which medical notions were embedded in these food traditions. If anything, it suggests that even people who had no medical knowledge whatsoever could comply, to some extent, with guidelines advanced by doctors on matters of health management. I therefore argue that food and drink consumption demonstrates that early modern people – consciously and unconsciously – assimilated medical knowledge.

Chapter 1
Herbs, Roots and Fruit

> For as moche as before that tillage of corne was invented, and that devouring of fleshe and fyshe was of mankynde used, men undoubtedlye lyved by fruites, and Nature was therewith contented and satisfied: but by chaunge of the diete of our progenytours, there is caused to be in our bodyes, such alteration frome the nature, whiche was in men at the begynnyng, that nowe all fruits generally are noyfull to manne, and do ingender yll humours, and be ofte tymes the cause of putrified fevers, if they be moch and continually eaten.[1]

These words by Sir Thomas Elyot (c. 1490 - 26 March 1546), English diplomat and scholar, convey most of the major issues that early modern people had to face when thinking about food and health management. Here, Elyot discusses the supposed very marginal benefit, and many dangers, associated with fruit consumption. Moreover, he stresses the importance of habit, and how the human body was believed to slowly adapt to new conditions, from a change of environment to evolving eating behaviours, whether for good or for bad. Elyot also points out the importance, in order to maintain an healthy body, of eating in a way that suited the natural complexion of the body. According to his account, drastic changes that occurred in people's dietary habits, and more specifically with fruit-eating, damaged the apparent connection that human beings had with the natural world. What once was deemed good had by now became noxious and best avoided. However, the most important lesson that Elyot was teaching here is that people were considered to be in charge of their own eating habits, and consequently, in charge of their own health. The passage comes from the opening section of chapter seven, entitled 'Of Fruites', of *The Castel of Helth* (1534), perhaps the most popular English health regimen of the

[1] Thomas Elyot, *The Castel of Helth* (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1589), sigg. E2r-v.

sixteenth century. This book alone was reprinted at least fourteen times between 1534 and 1610.

The opening section of the following chapter, entitled 'Herbes used in potage, or to eat' delivers a more moderate but comparable message:

> Generally al herbes raw, and not sodden [boiled], do ingender cold and watry iuyce, if they be eaten customably, or in abundance: albeit some herbes are comestible, and do lasse harme unto nature, and moderately usid, makith metely good blud.[2]

The only difference here, is that Elyot argues that a deliberate human action, namely boiling the herbs, would make a significant difference to the outcome of eating herbs in terms of the consumer's health. Roots were no exception and Elyot returns, once again, to the concept of frequency and the importance of the self-management of individual eating patterns:

> The iuyce made by them, is very grosse: And therefore beinge moche eaten, if they be not perfytely concote in the stomake, they doo make crude or rawe iuyce in the vaynes.[3]

Despite being three different sets of ingredients, herbs, roots and fruit were usually discussed together, or one immediately after the other, in early modern vernacular regimens. The close interrelation between these three sets of ingredients fostered a shared set of negative ideas about all three groups.

As seen in Elyot's words, herbs, roots and fruit were believed, when consumed excessively ('beinge much eaten'), to induce the production of cold humours, which were thought to generate putrefaction and corruption in the body. Eating these foods to excess was perceived to be particularly dangerous for people with melancholic and phlegmatic complexions. Within humoral thinking, the attempt to balance the intake of herbs, roots and fruit with local environmental conditions was a particular challenge for the inhabitants of cold and damp places like England. The idea that consuming herbs, roots and fruit was risky was widely accepted by

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[2] Elyot, *The Castel of Helth*, sig. F2v.

[3] Elyot, *The Castel of Helth*, sig. F3v.

physicians. The Italian doctor Michele Savonarola (1385-1468), whose work on food and the non-naturals was translated into Italian vernacular and reprinted during the sixteenth century by doctor Bartolomeo Boldo, gave the same advice as Elyot. Eating these ingredients was believed to harm the body, and to generate excess of phlegm and melancholy or, more generally, 'cattivo sugo', bad juice.[4] These ingredients were also believed, in a clear contrast to other foods and drink discussed in this work, to provide little or no nourishment at all to the human body. For early modern people, the excess of moisture present in these foodstuffs, which was associated with their softer texture, would have caused the food to pass through the digestive tract in such a fast way that it would have been very difficult for the body to retain any significant amount of nourishment.

This first chapter will examine the reputation of herbs, roots and fruit in medical texts and compare perceptions with evidence of consumption. This comparison illuminates the relationship between medical knowledge of these ingredients and its reception and application in culinary practices. I will analyse three interrelated aspects of herbs, roots and fruit consumption. First, I will show how these ingredients were consumed extensively in England, where physicians, considering the environmental conditions, constantly warned people about the dangers of eating these foods. Although physicians expressed anxiety about these ingredients, they also provided suggestions and strategies to counterbalance the problematic nature of these foodstuffs to their readership. Second, I will demonstrate how these ingredients were held in high regard by the elites. Third, I will argue that these foods were prepared and cooked in ways designed to promote health and minimise harm to the body. These three lines of argument point in a specific direction: the healthy consumption of herbs, roots and fruit was possible, and consumption choices may have been medically informed.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first looks at the culture of the garden in the early modern period and shows how the consumption of these

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[4] Bartolomeo Boldo, *Libro della natura et virtu delle cose, che nutriscono, e delle cose non naturali, con alcune osservationi per conservare la sanità, & alcuni quesiti bellissimi da notare. Raccolto da diversi auttori Greci e Latini e Arabi prima per M.Michele Savonarola medico Padoano poi di nuovo con miglior ordine ordinato, accresciuto e emendato e quasi fatto un altro per Bartolomeo Boldo medico Bressano* (Venice: Domenico and Giovan Battista Guerra, 1576), sig. E4r.

ingredients was shared across the social spectrum. The second section will explore the positive views of physicians and humanists towards these foodstuffs. Writers provided plenty of suggestions that encouraged consumption and that celebrated the merits of herbs, roots and fruit. The third and final section analyses patterns of provision coming from the households of the Cecils and of the Radcliffes, in England. It shows how even here herbs, roots and fruit were consumed in large quantities and appreciated.

Finally, a brief point on language. In the early modern period the word 'vegetable' did not exist as we use it today, and there was a clear distinction between herbs and roots. 'Herbs' was a very general term that was used both for staple leafy herbs, such as lettuce and spinach, and to refer to a larger set of plants, whose use was mostly medical.[5] According to Elyot, the most notable herbs used in the kitchen were aniseed, beans, cabbage, chicory, colewort, endive, fennel, lettuce, mallow, parsley, peas, purslane, sorrel and white beets. The most used roots were carrot, garlic, onion, parsnip, radish and turnip.[6] Herbs and roots were used as ingredients in the household context both in culinary recipes and specific herbal medical preparations.[7] Where possible, this study follows Elyot's categorisation. The term 'vegetable(s)' in this chapter must be read in the modern sense, as a combination of leaf vegetables (or herbs) and tubers (or roots). This chapter will focus extensively on herbs, roots and fruit. It is important to notice how fruit will feature also in the remaining chapters of the thesis, as it was a set of ingredients that, because of its medical reputation, was often used to counterbalance the humoral qualities of other foods.

The evolution of the garden

Herbs were prevalent in early modern kitchens. Vegetables were imported, grown, discussed, sold, bought and eaten widely. And yet, the ubiquity of vegetable

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[5] Mark Dawson, *Plenti and Grase: Food and Drink in a Sixteenth-Century Household* (London: Prospect Books, 2009), p. 143.

[6] Elyot, *The Castel of Helth*, sigg. C7v-D4r.

[7] On early modern ideas of vegetables and herbs see Joan Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), p. 284; For evidence of a household garden used for both food and medical provision see Dawson, p. 143.

consumption was downplayed in older scholarship. Allen J. Grieco, who has worked on the late medieval and early modern social classification of foods, argued that food consumption related to the so-called 'Great Chain of Being'.[8] According to this classification, the further a specific food was from the ground, the nobler it was believed to be. Therefore, particular foodstuffs were more or less suited to specific sorts of people. Roots like onions and garlic were considered to be the most humble ingredients of all since they grew underground; they were perceived to be ideal for people belonging to the lowest strata of society. Going up through the chain, fruits and fowl occupied the noblest positions within the scheme, since these foods are naturally suspended from the ground. Actual consumption of foods, however, diverged from this hierarchy quite dramatically. Craig Muldrew argues that the enduring argument that vegetables were either marginal or completely absent from the early modern tables was 'one of the most prevalent myths about early modern diet', and that vegetables were eaten across social strata.[9] Vegetables were consumed and discussed extensively in early modern England, and different kinds of vegetables, both green and roots, were present on the tables of many English households.[10] The demand for vegetables coming from the lower sorts, Muldrew argues, was a relevant driving force for the economy since they were the largest part of the overall population. He goes on by quoting the English clergyman William Harrison (1534-1593):

> The vegetables listed as being consumed by the "poor commons" were 'melons, pompions [pumpkins], gourds, cucumbers, radishes, skirrets, parsnips, carrots, cabbages, navews, turnips, and all kinds of salad herbs'.[11]

However, the fact that herbs and roots were a staple food for the lower strata does not mean that the elites ignored or despised them. Many vegetables, even those theoretically associated with the lower and middling sorts such as onions, shallots

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[8] Grieco, 'Food and Social Classes', p. 309.

[9] Muldrew, p. 106.

[10] Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England*, p. 289.

[11] Muldrew, p. 108.

and garlic, were consumed extensively by the elites, both raw and cooked.[12] There were social connotations of prestige in buying, growing and eating vegetables that were not widely consumed. All the same, Mark Dawson notes that 'For fresh fruit and vegetables, most large households would have turned to their own gardens and orchards … as a food resource'.[13] It seems that despite the general idea that the physicians had of these ingredients, they were widely consumed across the social spectrum.

The seventeenth century witnessed an emerging interest in scientific cultivation, which was fully established and acknowledged by the middle of the century. Joan Thirsk said that gardeners were persuaded by their 'professional curiosity … to seek out yet more varieties, colours and flavours' of different species of vegetables.[14] This tendency spread widely beyond the scientific circles of agronomists and botanists as it became more and more popular to start to cultivate plants that once were to be found in wild habitats, in gardens. In early modern London, the production and sale of vegetables was a huge industry, so much so that the city needed a great supply of vegetables, which were eaten in preserved form as well as fresh.

Most of the vegetables and fruit that were eaten fresh in Italy, were not readily available in England. According to Dawson and Muldrew, the growing interest for the garden led to an expansion of the market for seeds in late sixteenth-century London, consequently more and more seeds from the continent were made available for the English market. The account compiled in 1623 by Alice Le Strange (1585-1656), a notable figure among Norfolk's gentry, reports that 'seeds for "wallflowers 4d: garlick 4d: fennel 2d; purselin 2d: cardus [cardoon] 2d: cucumbers 2d: melons 2d: Alexanders 3d: stockgillflowers 3d: cabbages 4d"' were purchased locally.[15] Historians Jane Whittle and Elizabeth Griffiths pointed out that the Le Stranges purchased and ate both vegetables and fruits. The patterns of provision of these ingredients, however, were split between luxury items (which feature quite rarely in

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[12] Ken Albala, *The Banquet: Dining in the Great Courts of Late Renaissance Europe* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007), pp. 73–82.

[13] Dawson, p. 141.

[14] Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England*, pp. 290–91.

[15] Whittle and Griffiths, p. 92.

the accounts), local purchases, and gifts of foods and seeds.[16] A French gardening manual, *The French Gardiner*, translated and published in England in 1658, stresses the importance of making an effort to purchase good quality seeds. Speaking specifically about melon seeds, the author suggested that Italy and France were the best places to purchase them. The gardener should 'diligently enquire after the best seeds, such as you may procure out of Italy, from Lions, Tours, Anjou, Champagne'.[17] This text suggests that people sought to identify the best products available on the market.

Herbs, roots and fruit, however, had been cultivated systematically before the birth of the culture of the garden and the expansion of the seeds and plants market in the early modern period. In spaces such as convents and monasteries, herbs and simples had had dedicated spaces within the building's walls, for both culinary and medicinal purposes, for a very long time.[18] However, during the sixteenth century the tradition of the English country house kitchen garden changed towards a new, more sophisticated, form of herbal knowledge that was spreading across Europe. This tradition evolved and spread in Europe following the appearance of the first botanical gardens in Italy in Pisa (1544), Padua (1545) and Bologna (1568). The work of pioneer naturalists, physicians and collectors such as Ulisse Aldrovandi or Luca Ghini (1490-1566), contributed significantly to the elevation of the study of plants as a full academic subject in its own right. This type of learned herbal academic tradition, usually related to specific schools or universities, reached Britain in 1622 with the opening of the Oxford Physic Garden.[19] However, already half a century earlier, in 1558, Thomas Hill (1528-?) authored the very first treatise of gardening ever printed in England. The text was entitled *A most briefe and pleasaunte treatise, teachyng how to dresse, sowe, and set a garden*. This treatise, moreover, was aimed at a lay public interested in a garden that would provide food and simples for herbal remedies, and not at a learned academic audience.

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[16] Whittle and Griffiths, p. 116.

[17] Nicolas de Bonnefons, *The French Gardiner* (London: John Crooke, 1658), sig. G1v.

[18] C. Anne Wilson, 'Growing Aromatic Herbs and Flowers for Food and Physic in The Country House Kitchen Garden', in *The Country House Kitchen Garden, 1600-1950*, ed. by C. anne Wilson (Phoenix Mill: Sutton Publishing, 2003), pp. 76–88 (p. 76).

[19] Wilson, 'Growing Aromatic Herbs and Flowers for Food and Physic in The Country House Kitchen Garden', p. 83.

In England, Hill's publication opened the way for a flourishing market of books regarding the art of gardening in the following century, which confirmed that the garden had become an essential tool of food provision across social groups. Hill's book was aimed at those who wanted to learn about 'settyng and placinge of Gardens in the village, subburbes, or in the Citie'.[20] Having the garden close to the city was preferable for a variety of reasons but the most important was the easiness of selling 'herbes and sources'.[21] For instance, violet, roses and 'many other thinges' would benefit from being 'nere to the Citie' because of the demand of the market, and experience taught that 'Burrage, Langdebefe, Aeppe, Spinage, Marigoldes, Time, Isope, Rosemary, and such like' were needed as well in very densely populated areas.[22] In early modern England vegetables of all sorts, from Sicilian cauliflowers to Spanish lettuce and Zealand cabbage, were imported from Europe to be sold in the markets, and to be eaten or planted and grown.[23] However, none of these herbs were consumed exclusively by the lower strata. Instead, they were sold and bought by everybody. The demand for herbs, roots and fruit is demonstrated by references to the sale of seeds and plants in contemporary agricultural treatises. For example, the Spanish author Gabriello Alfonso D'Herrera (1470-1539), whose treatise on agriculture was translated into Italian in 1592, explained it was essential that the garden was built in such a position 'to make sure to be near to a populated city, so that the herbs can be sold'.[24] Between the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century almost forty books in a range of genres including gardening manuals, horticultural treatises and herbals were published in England alone.[25] Perhaps one of the most renowned horticultural treatises printed in England is the

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[20] Thomas Hill, *A Most Briefe and Pleasaunte Treatise, Teachyng How to Dresse, Sowe, and Set a Garden* (London: J. Day, 1558), sig. A3v.

[21] Hill, sig. A4v.

[22] Hill, sig. A4v.

[23] For more on imports of vegetables to Britain from Europe, Asia and the New World see C. Anne Wilson, *Food and Drink in Britain from the Stone Age to Recent Times* (London: Constable, 1973), pp. 340–64.

[24] Gabriello Alfonso D'Herrera, *Agricoltura. Tratta da diversi antichi e moderni* (Venice: Nicolò Polo, 1592), sig. V4v, 'Ma se si fa per haver à vender l'ortaglie, & farcene mercantia, & guadagno, si ha da procurare di farlo vicino a qualche buona Città popolata, accioche l'ortaglie si possino ben dispensare, che se si truova à smaltire è un buon guadagno'.

[25] Henry Blanche, *British Botanical and Horticultural Literature Before 1800* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), vol. I, pp. 3-7 cited in Jill Francis, 'Order and Disorder in the Early Modern Garden. 1558-c.1630', *Garden History*, 36.1 (2008), 22–35 (p. 23).

Paradisi in sole paradisus terrestri (1629), by the English herbalist and botanist John Parkinson (1567-1650).[26] This impressive work is divided into three main sections that cover the flower garden, the kitchen garden and the orchard garden, respectively. The *Paradisi* provides detailed accounts and advice on growing plants of many sorts, and it contains full page illustrations of almost 800 plants.The increasing number of printed works on this topic confirms the growth of interest in gardening and cultivation. The apparatus of the garden is central to the discourse around herbs, roots and fruits and how they were grown, and consumed. For some the garden provided the means for survival; for others it was a mechanism for social distinction, elevation and prestige.

Beside educating on gardening and cultivation, agricultural treatises conveyed medical knowledge, in this case related to vegetables and fruit, outside academic circles as well as to specialists. The burgeoning gardening literature suggests that a wider and less aristocratic audience became more and more interested in having a garden. Rebecca Laroche argues that '[the] physician-herbalist … intends his readership to be of multiple economic strata and educational levels, thus wide and most diverse'.[27] On the same note, historian Jill Francis stressed the fact that authors such as Leonard Mascall (?-1589) and Reginald Scot(t) (c. 1538-1599) – authors respectively of *A Book of the Arte and Maner, Howe to Plant and Graffe* (1572) and *A Perfite Platforme of a Hoppe Garden* (1574) – aimed to address 'all men, rich and poor, learned and unlearned'.[28] Within the household women were typically in charge of the management and application of medical and herbal knowledge. The work done by these women simultaneously reflects what was expected from them in taking care of the household, and their own interests in botanical and herbal remedies.[29]

The learned and the illiterate, men and women, rich and poor, everybody needed either to cultivate or buy herbs, roots and fruit. In the early modern period the garden was becoming a public place of medical knowledge, food provision and,

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[26] John Parkinson, *Paradisi in sole paradisus terrestri. Faithfully Reprinted from the Edition of 1629* (London: Methuen & Co., 1904).

[27] Laroche, p. 153.

[28] Francis, p. 24. The two texts cited are Leonard Mascall, *A Book of the Arte and Maner, Howe to Plant and Graffe* (London: Henrie Denham, 1572) and Reginald Scot, *A Perfite Platforme of a Hoppe Garden* (London: Henrie Denham, 1574).

[29] Rankin, p. 209.

eventually, academic learning and display of luxury. The garden was a place of connection between social strata, and a source for both medical remedies and food. Of course, a healthy and balanced diet remained at the core of any practices of good health maintenance. Thomas Tusser summed it up quite effectively, writing that 'Good diet with wisedome, best comfort the man'.[30] Because this philosophy was absolutely central to the management of good health at this time, the next section will explore the medical reputations of some of the most widely consumed types of vegetables and fruits.

Climate and temperaments in Italy and England

Early modern medical thought about herbs, roots and fruit was extremely varied and fluid. David Gentilcore claims that 'If ever there was an area of diet that illustrates the gap between medical advice and real food consumption, then that of vegetable foods must be it'.[31] This section will reflect on the extent to which physicians warned their readers about the potential drastic effects which they believed these ingredients had on the human body, and about the advice given to prevent such effects. By comparing medical advice with other genres of sources, I will argue that physicians and other authors recognised that these ingredients were consumed widely, and that they provided their readership with useful suggestions about how to address the problematic qualities of herbs, roots and fruit.

Eating herbs, roots and fruit was believed to engender an excessive amount of phlegm and melancholy in the body. Moreover, authors of early modern regimens considered the texture of herbs, roots and fruits to be more problematic than of other ingredients. Ideas about texture related to perceptions of nourishment. According to the early modern medical framework, the more an ingredient was glutinous, or sticky, the more nourishing it was. People believed that food had to remain in the stomach for a certain amount of time in order to be properly concocted and digested – and therefore to be able to produce better blood and

[30] Thomas Tusser, *Fiue Hundreth Points of Good Husbandry* (London: Richard Tottill, 1573), sig. V2v.

[31] Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe*, p. 115. See also David Gentilcore, *Pomodoro! A History of the Tomato in Italy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), pp. 1–65.

juices.[32] Herbs, roots and fruits were looked at with suspicion and were considered potentially pernicious because they have a high percentage of water, which makes them neither glutinous, nor sticky. In order to counterbalance the inherent moisture of herbs, roots and fruits, writers advised moderate consumption.

During the fifteenth and the late sixteenth century a profound change occurred in the consumption of vegetables. Eating vegetables, as Gentilcore and Laura Giannetti have argued, increasingly became a sign of social distinction. Gentilcore contends that medical writing adapted in line with this shift; he argued that 'doctors could now suggest that certain ripe fruits could now be eaten raw without endangering one's health'.[33] However, his argument does not take into account the complexity of ideas about food that health regimens conveyed. Physicians did not abandon existing ideas all of a sudden to stay in line with what happened at the dining table. Instead, as I will show, physicians and other authors tried to explain the humoral complexity of foods and provided advice on how to prevent dangerous side effects, which was widely adopted by consumers. They advocated combining fruit with sugar; consuming herbs with specific dressings; and cooking roots in animal fats or butter in order to make them more digestible and more nourishing. As usual, balance was the key.

For these authors, it was imperative to make readers aware of the dangers of foods and to take action to address them in order to consume them safely. The English physician and traveller Andrew Boorde (1490-1549), in his *Dietary of Health* (1542), strongly argued in favour of herbs, alluding to their medicinal virtues, even before than the culture of gardening became conventional. Boorde wrote: 'There is no Herbe, nor wede, but god haue gyuen vertue to them, to helpe man'.[34] For writers like Boorde, it was necessary to be able to identify the virtues of foods in order to benefit from them. Early modern physicians and authors offered very detailed and specific advice. For example, they discussed which part of the plant was going to be eaten – leaves or roots – and how these elements were best cooked and

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[32] Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance*, p. 12.

[33] Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe*, p. 124. See also Giannetti, 'Italian Renaissance Food-Fashioning'.

[34] Andrew Boorde, *Hereafter Foloweth a Compendyous Regyment or a Dyetary of Helth Made in Mountpyllier* (London: Thomas Colwell, 1542), sig. B3v.

dressed. They believed that many herbs had more good properties than bad, and could be nourishing if understood properly and used accordingly. Physicians were in agreement about frequency of consumption. In England, herbs, roots and fruit were to be consumed in moderation. It was different in Italy, where the extreme heat of the summer months meant it was considered helpful to eat these foods, in order to cool down the body. Advice about consumption also took the temperaments into account. In England, choleric people were thought to be able to accommodate eating uncooked fruit and herbs more easily, with the imperative condition that they were 'moderately used'.[35] The hotness and dryness of a choleric body could – in theory – accommodate the coldness and the moisture of vegetables and fruits.

Herbs, roots and fruit are more dependent on seasonality and climate than many other foods. These two distinct factors are central to fully understanding the humoral connotations of vegetables and fruit in the early modern period. Climate and sun exposure dictated the natural course of growth of plants, which meant that Italy had a much greater variety of these ingredients. At the same time, climate fluctuations introduced variation. Moreover, medical advice still advocated consumption in line with individual humoral complexions. In *The Passenger*, a collection of seven dialogues written with the purpose of teaching Italian to the English by Benvenuto Italiano, an Italian teacher who lived in London for a decade at the beginning of the seventeenth century, there are many useful indications of how food and health management were connected to each other, and herbs and roots were discussed in detail.[36] Sources of this kind are useful to understand to what extent this kind of knowledge was part of a cultural set of notions that educated people, who had not necessarily studied medicine and who were travelling around Europe, were expected to know. In the second dialogue of the book, in a conversation that took place at the dinner table between Mr. Andrea and Mr. Pompilio, the reader learns how 'not to liue like a Creature destitute, but as one with reason endued'.[37] In other words, those who use their reason are able to discern

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[35] Elyot, *The Castel of Helth*, sig. C1v.

[36] Benvenuto Italiano, *The Passenger: Of Beneuento Italian, Professour of His Natiue Tongue, for These Nine Yeeres in London. Diuided into Two Parts, Containing Seauen Exquisite Dialogues in Italian and English* (London, 1612).

[37] Italiano, p. 4r.

which food is wholesome and which is not. When it came to herbs and roots, Mr. Andrea suggests eating a salad of specific ingredients in order to stimulate the appetite. Pompilio's and Andrea's comments reveal the bad reputation of herbs in England:

Pompilio

> To tell you the truth, all hearbes are of little nourishment, of bad and thinne iuyce, and very watrish, with much superfluitie whereof if a man doe eate, yet he must eate but in small quantitie

Andrea

> This rule pleaseth the English man, but it displeaseth the Italian.[38]

Here Pompilio echoes the point made by physicians about herbs, roots and fruit by summing up the major problems that afflicted these foodstuffs. Namely, they provided little nourishment and engendered bad juices in the body. Andrea's response clearly delineates a neat separation between what was believed to be good for the Italians in contrast to the English. This alleged dichotomy between England and Italy in the consumption of these foods relates to climate and the more general weather differences in the two countries and how it affected people's humoral balance or imbalance.

Giacomo Castelvetro (1546-1616) expressed his concerns about the small quantity of vegetables and fruit eaten by the English in the *Brieve racconto di tutte le radici, di tutte l'herbe et di tutti i frutti che crudi o cotti in Italia si mangiano* (A short account of all roots, herbs and fruit that raw or cooked are to be eaten in Italy, 1614). This book, written while Castelvetro was a refugee in England under the protection of Sir Henry Wotton and Lucy the Countess of Bedford, demonstrates how vegetables and fruits were praised and consumed widely. Castelvetro explicitly addresses the question of why a greater variety of herbs, roots and fruit were eaten in Italy than in England: 'When you consider the reasons' says Castelvetro, 'it is hardly surprising that we Italians eat such a profusion of fruit and vegetables, some of them quite

[38] Italiano, p. 4r.

unknown and unappreciated elsewhere'.[39] Italy was not as 'bountiful' in meat as France or 'this fertile Island' [England], and more importantly the heat, 'which persists for almost nine months a year' encouraged a preference for water-based ingredients, such as herbs, roots and fruit, since these were more refreshing and useful in order to stimulate the appetite.[40] Castelvetro may have been trying to please his patron and protector the Countess of Bedford, who was a passionate gardener. Nonetheless, he was anticipated by William Thomas (d. 1554), clerk of the council of Edward VI. In *The Historie of Italie* he said:

> but specially suche plentie of delicate fruites, as would make a man leaue flesshe, foule and fisshe to eate theim: namely in the sommer. I meane the Melons, Pepons, Pomegranett Orenges, Lymmans, Citrous, and sweete grapes: besides theyr figges, apples, peares, peaches, plommes and oliues, with a thousande other of that sorte. And it is not to be meruailed at, though (as the same goeth) the Italian be a small eater of flesshe. For though here before I haue commended the temperature of Italy to be comparable with any other countrei: yet must you vnderstand, that in sommer the sonne is somewhat feruent, and in tyme of that heate, the lightnesse of those sweete fresshe fruites is better to be digested, than the heauinesse of flesshe or fisshe, whiche woulde not there be so lightly digested. As I my selfe haue proued, that before time could in maner brooke no fruite, and yet after I had been a while in Italie. I fell so in loue withal that as longe as I was there, I desyred no meate more: because me thought nothyng more wholesome, specially in sommer. And all be it, the heate be (as I haue saied) somewhat feruent, yet it excedeth not so muche of the hotest, as the winter colde is temperate at the coldest. For at the

[39] Giacomo Castelvetro, *The Fruit, Herbs and Vegetables of Italy. An Offering to Lucy, Countess of Bedford*, ed. by Gillian Riley (Totnes: Prospect Books, 2012), p. 78. This translation edited by Gillian Riley has a different title compared with the original version which does not take into account the problematic terminology around the ways in which early modern herbs, roots and fruit were eaten. The original title clearly points out that fruit were consumed both raw and cooked. Instead, Riley's title does not return the same complexity in approaching the subject.

[40] Castelvetro, p. 78.

> most the colde there endureth not .iii. monethes of the .xii and some yeres in maner you shall feele no winter at all.[41]

In his description of Italy, Thomas fully embraced the humoral discourse around food consumption and climate and explained how his own taste for herbs, roots and fruit had changed during his journey. This account confirms different consumption patterns of these foods in Italy and England and is central to appreciating the extent of the pervasiveness of humoral culture in this period. The Italian culture of the *villa*, where noblemen and noblewomen retired during the summer to cool down and enjoy their time in rest, was known in England as well, and Thomas pointed out specifically the importance for Italians, in such environments, of having the right food at hand:

> Finally in the villages are many faire houses made onely for the owners passetime against the heate of the sommer. For than dooe thei habandon the citees and goe vnto those houses for a moneth two or three, where vnder the fresshe herbers, hedges and boowes, amongest the delicate fruites they triumph in as muche pleasure as maie be imagined.[42]

Many of these ingredients were available in England too. However, they may have looked and tasted quite differently due to environmental differences. For example, discussing 'Of all sorts of pot-hearbs', presumably those herbs that were commonly used in the kitchen such as leaves of the white and red beet, lettuce, endive, sorrel and borage, the translator of *The French Gardiner* pointed out how in France 'their soyle and climate produce more [pot-herbs]'.[43] Because of the natural conditions of those climates, the translator believed that 'their hearbs are a great deal more fair and large, then in other places. I have seen of these amongst them that have been of eight inches Circumference, or little less, and in length proportionable to their thickness'.[44] It is necessary to be cautious when working with these sources, as sometimes they present an exaggerated stereotype in order to make a point. However, despite the differences that might have occurred in the way in which

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[41] William Thomas, *The Historie of Italie* (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1549), sig. A2v.

[42] Thomas, sig. B1v.

[43] Bonnefons, sig. I11r.

[44] Bonnefons, sig. I11v.

plants were grown in Italy and England, herbs, roots and fruit were widely consumed in both countries, and not necessarily against the advice of the physicians. In the next two sections I will explore how herbs, roots and fruit were consumed, and how cuisine and health management interacted within this framework.

The salad: manipulating herbs, roots and fruit

The salad was perhaps the most popular and widely discussed vehicle for herbs, roots and fruit. Salvatore Massonio (1559-1629), historian, physician, humanist and poet, conveyed a sense of attitudes towards salads in early modern Italy in his work *Archidipno. Overo dell'insalata e dell'uso di essa* (Archidipno. Or the salad and its uses), published in 1627.[45] This book in quarto is 425 pages long and aims to define the perfect salad, how it was best dressed and every single vegetable – or herb – that could be used to make one, alongside roots and fruit. The actual word *Archidipno* derives from ancient Greek and is a combination of the suffix *arche*, which means 'at the beginning' and the noun *deipnon*, which means 'large meal' or 'evening meal'. The choice of title may reflect Massonio's wish to celebrate the entire set of herbs as edible ingredients. His use of the word *Archidipno* may have suggested that herbs were the first and most noble of all foods. The literal meaning of the word also indicates how the salad was the first preparation to be served before all the rest, and both Massonio's discourse and descriptions of banquets in Italian courts confirm this assessment. There was a precise medical reason for eating salads as a first course, as they were believed to have an active influence on the body. Starting a meal with a salad was thought to predispose the body to receive food and it helped to start the digestive process in a healthy way. Massonio saw it almost as an exercise to conduct in order to set the body up for the rest of the meal.

Eating a salad involved an active engagement in health management. A dedicatory sonnet written at the beginning of the book says: 'This [salad] prepared with art and rigour, good for supper as much as dinner, it is opinion of everybody, of

[45] Salvatore Massonio, *Archidipno. Overo dell'insalata e dell'uso di essa* (Venice: Marc'Antonio Brogiollo, 1627).

all the salads it is the queen'.[46] The perfect salad, according to Massonio, was nothing other than a dish 'composed of many ingredients, which are all good in nourishment … but it is also true that man always makes use of the salad to get nourishment but also to excite the appetite for food in the body when this is missing'.[47] The salad elevated humans above the rest of living creatures because of its complexity as a preparation and its dual purpose, nourishing the body on one hand and exciting the appetite on the other. Massonio says that 'its use is only relegated to man … while the rest of the animals either eat what their stomachs say to them or what they come across without even thinking, until they feel satisfied'.[48] Historical anthropologist Piero Camporesi's personal interpretation of the Renaissance salad recalled the image of

> a jewel box in which the mysterious virtues of its interlaced herbs were mixed – [the salad] constituted a small treasure of hedonism and pharmacology: a miniaturised masterpiece of ephemeral art, over-elaborate and affected, which, like the apothecaries' prescriptions, required shrewd experience in the "art of manipulation".[49]

A simple preparation based on herbs was therefore elevated to a new, more prestigious, intellectual framework. For Massonio, the salad was not just another preparation to be consumed at the dining table. Instead, the salad was seen as a tool that could be used to exercise control over the human appetite. The salad can also be seen as the result of a transposition of meanings between eating for survival and eating with a specific intention in mind. The etymology of the word *insalata* further points to the importance of this rational exercise. This word is derived from the

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[46] Massonio, p. xx, 'Questa fatta con arte, e con dottrina/ Non men del pranzo che'n la cena è buona/ Et al commun parer d'ogni persona/ Di tutte l'insalate è la Reina…'.

[47] Massonio, sig. A1r, 'Per esser dunque l'insalata composta di più materie, le quali sono tutte atte a nutrire … E ben vero che non sempre per in tutto cavarne il nutrimento si serve l'huomo dell'insalata, ma per eccitar per la maggior parte l'appetito del mangiare, non havendolo'.

[48] Massonio, sig. A2r, 'Et perche l'uso di lei solo all'huomo si ristringe, quindi nasce, che se ne escludono tutti gli altri animali, che senza far veruno conto dell'insalata, o non mangiano nelle loro inappetenze, seguendo solo le naturali passioni, o appetendo, prendono il cibo, finchè si conoscono satij'.

[49] Piero Camporesi, *Bread of Dreams: Food and Fantasy in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), p. 145.

Latin *salata* and literally means 'salted'.[50] The name itself evokes how the dressing of the salad was the key action which counterbalanced the coldness and moisture of the herbs. Dressing the salad, and therefore choosing what to use in order both to make it taste better, and to achieve an ideal balance between the herbs and the dressing agent, was essential in making a healthy consumption of these ingredients possible.

A validation of this rationale can be found in the classification that Massonio proposed for salads and their use on the Renaissance table. There were fundamentally three different types of salads: nourishing salads, healing salads and 'irritating' salads. The first kind, or *insalate di nutrimento* (nourishing salads), were served at the beginning of the meal and were usually left on the table until the very end of the meal, especially in 'those big celebrations held in Milan' and most likely at all Renaissance banquets with large *servizi di credenza*, the cold courses.[51] The second kind were those called *di medicamento* (medicating salads), which were served at the beginning or at the end of the meal. Especially if served at the end of the meal with lettuce-based preparations, their purpose was to lubricate the digestive system and to facilitate the digestion and the 'concoction' of a meal. Finally, the *insalate da irritamento* (irritating salads) were served at the beginning of the meal. They were made up of herbs which were considered to provide very little nourishment, and dressed with strong and hot liquids that generated irritation in the throat of the guests, hence the name. For Massonio 'this, I believe, has the name of real salad'. The *insalate da irritamento* prompted guests to eat more and more of the other courses in order to get rid of the sharp taste of the dressing.[52] As clearly expressed by the author, 'it must be said that in our age it is more customary having it at the beginning of the meal to stimulate the appetite'.[53] Properly dressing a salad meant counteracting the potential bad qualities of some ingredients to avoid bad consequences for the body. People could use countless varieties of herbs, roots and fruit in order to create a humorally balanced salad. In the *Archidipno*, Massonio lists more than fifty types of herbs that

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[50] OED, Salad, Etimology.

[51] Massonio, sig. B1v, 'Di quelle se ne vedono esempi molti, e particolarmente a uno in una descrittione de' grandi apparati, e feste fatte in Milano…'.

[52] Massonio, sig. B4r.

[53] Massonio, sig. B4r, '…ancorche sappia ciascuno a questa nostra età è essersi in uso di mangiarsi nel principio per conciliare l'appetito'; 'Et questa, credo, che si porti il nome di vera insalata'.

could have been used to make salads, and goes on on how to best dress them.[54] Massonio extends this list from capers and lemons, to bulbs, onions, and horseradish, passing through twenty two different types of leaves.

The effort that people were supposed to put into the preparation of salads is indicative of how medical advice advocated addressing the needs of the body in a rational way. People sought to achieve a condition in which the humours were balanced and therefore good health was maintained. Therefore, the adjustments required to prepare the perfect salad were both part of a culinary process, and a medical activity in itself. Castelvetro offered a thorough explanation of this process, writing:

> I have to stress how important it is to know how to wash your greenstuff, and then how to season it, for so many housewives and foreign cooks get everything ready to wash and put them in a bucket of water or some other pot, slosh it all about a little, and then, instead of removing them with their hands, as they ought to do, they tip the leaves and water out together, so that all the soil and grit is poured out with them, which makes eating the salad distinctly unpleasant for the teeth.[55]

The section where Castelvetro discusses the dressing process is of particular importance. After having washed properly every single leaf of salad, the cook had to pat them dry, in order to prepare the ingredients for the dressing phase. It was essential that all the excess water was removed, since the resulting emulsion of oil and water together would not have allowed the dressing to stick to the leaves:

> Some cooks on the other hand put their badly washed, barely shaken salad, into a dish, with the leaves still so drenched with water that they will not take the oil, which they should do to taste right. So I insist that first you must shake your salad really well, then dry it thoroughly with a clean linen cloth, so that the oil will adhere properly. Then, put it into a bowl in which you have previously put a little salt, sprinkling more as you add the leaves, and then add the oil with a generous hand, and stir the

[54] Massonio, sigg. B1r-B2v.

[55] Castelvetro, p. 57.

> salad again with clean fingers or a knife and a fork, which is more seemly, so that each leaf is properly coated with oil.[56]

If washing the leaves properly was necessary to remove all the dirt from them, drying them was just as essential, as it allowed the body to absorb the necessary dressing. Castelvetro also compares his methods with those used in other European countries. The Germans, Castelvetro complained, typically used to put too much vinegar, not enough oil, and too little salt. They were more interested in presenting a nice-looking salad rather than a properly dressed one. He was also critical of how the English prepared their salads, writing:

> Your English cooks are even worse; after washing the salad God knows how, you put the vinegar in the dish first, and enough of that for a footbath for Morgante, and serve it up, unstirred, with neither oil nor salt, which you are supposed to add at table.[57] By this time some of the leaves are so saturated with vinegar that they cannot take the oil, while the rest are quite naked and fit only for chicken food. … The secret of a good salad is plenty of salt, generous oil and little vinegar, hence the text of the Sacred Law of Salads: *Insalata ben salata, poco aceto e bene oliata* (Salt the salad quite a lot, then generous oil put in the pot, and vinegar, but just a jot).[58]

Castelvetro was equally concerned about the taste of the salad, alongside the healthiness of the preparation, and criticised the excessive use of vinegar in particular. However, cuisine and health were two sides of the same coin, and the Hippocratic precepts 'you are your own doctor' and 'what tastes good is good for you' were always valid to Castelvetro.

The ways in which these ingredients were treated before consuming them were discussed by many other writers. The process of preparation was an important step in making sure that herbs, roots and fruit did not put the body in danger, although

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[56] Castelvetro, p. 57.

[57] With this literary reference Castelvetro was arguing against the large amounts of vinegar that the Germans allegedly used to dress their salads. Morgante was a giant, and therefore a vast amount of vinegar was needed to give him a footbath.

[58] Castelvetro, p. 58.

there were contrasting opinions on what and how people do at this stage.[59] Baldassarre Pisanelli suggested to the reader to 'above all, do not rinse it with water', adding that lettuce was dangerous because it 'corrupts the sperm' and deprives the man of his sexual appetites.[60] In this instance it seems that lettuce was preferable when eaten cooked instead of raw, but another option was to eat it alongside herbs with hotter humoral qualities, such as rocket or mint but 'above all [it is best] when it is accompanied with a good white wine'.[61] Agostino Gallo defined lettuce as 'the best amongst all the herbs for salad, because it tastes good, it is of easy digestion … and it is excellent eaten raw at the end of the meal for those in good health and cooked for the diseased'.[62] In Italy, therefore, physicians treated herbs in a different fashion from what food historians have led us to believe.

However, English authors did not necessarily condemn herbs and roots either, especially when used in salads. Here, the steps taken to prepare the salad were considered just as important. In *Healths Improvement*, the English physician Thomas Moffett (1553-1604) echoed Pisanelli's suggestion to avoid cleaning the leaves with water. Moffett explained that in doing so, all the virtues of the lettuce 'that lieth upon the outmost skin' would have been irremediably lost. Instead, he instructed his readers to 'only pluck away the leaves growing near the ground, till you come to the cabbage [heart] of the Lettice, and it is enough'.[63] The English writer Gervase Markham (ca. 1568-3 February 1637) dedicated a large amount of space to salads in his work, *The English Housewife* (1615), a text which went through nine editions in the seventeenth century. Markham's classification of salads is slightly different from Massonio's. More specifically, Massonio identified three different type of salads, while Markham argued that there were only two: 'simple' and 'compound'.

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[59] Hart, sig. G4v.

[60] Pisanelli, p. 6, 'e soprattutto non si lavi nell'acqua'; '… corrompe lo sperma, e lo fa sterile, toglie l'appetito del coito…'; 'Mangiandola con menta, o con la ruchetta, o con altre herbe calde: e più presto cotta che cruda, ma soprattutto se gli beva appresso buon vino bianco'.

[61] Pisanelli, p. 6.

[62] Agostino Gallo, *Le dieci giornate della vera agricoltura* (Venice: Giovanni Bariletto, 1556), sig. N4r, '… è apprezzata per la migliore di tutte l'altre herbe insalatine, si perche è grata al gusto, e facile da digerire … e massimamente mangiandola per questo nel fine della cena cruda a gli sani, e cotta agli infermi…'.

[63] Thomas Moffett, *Healths Improvement: Or, Rules Comprizing and Discovering the Nature, Method, and Manner of Preparing All Sort of Foods Used in This Nation* (London, 1655), sig. F4r.

> your simple Sallats are Chibols pulled, washt cleane, and halfe of the greene tops cut cleane away, so serued on a Fruit dish, or Chines, Scallions, Radish-rootes, boyled Carrets, Skirrets, and Turneps, with such like served up simply: also, all young Lettice, Cabage lettice, Porslan, and divers other herbs which may be serued simply without any thing, but a little Vinegar, Sallet-Oyle, and Sugar: Onions boiled, and stript from their rind, and serued vp with Vinegar, oyle and Pep|per is a good simple Sallat; so is Samphire, Beane-cods, Sparagus, and Cucumbers, serued in likewise with Oyle, Vinegar and Pepper, with a world of others, too tedious to nominate.[64]

'Simple' salads could be eaten on an everyday basis, and their ingredients were easy to find, clean and prepare. The phrase 'with a world of others' is indicative not only of the wide variety of salad ingredients in early modern England, but also how Markham expected his readership to know about them. Compound salads, instead, were considered to be a more complex preparation, that were 'both for use and adornation'.[65] These preparations were usually served 'at great feasts, and upon Princes tables'.[66]

> Your compound Sallats, are first the young Buds and Knots of all manner of wholsome hearbes at their first springing; as Red-sage, Mints, Lettice, Violets, Marigolds, Spinage, and many other mixed together, and then serued vp to the table with Vinegar, Sallet Oyle and Sugar.[67]

The ingredients had to be the best, and gathered at the perfect time, possibly in spring. The arrangement of a salad as shown in these sources reveals the complexity embedded in the humoral scheme when approached from a culinary perspective. The varieties of humoral results achievable by combining different ingredients and dressing them in specific ways were countless.

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[64] Gervase Markham, *The English Housewife* (London: John Harison, 1631), sig. F1r;
[65] Markham, *The English Housewife*, sig. F1r.
[66] Markham, *The English Housewife*, sig. F1v.
[67] Markham, *The English Housewife*, sig. F1v.

Cooking and dressing herbs and roots

Roots and vegetables that were considered to have a tougher consistency than lettuce had to undergo several steps before they could be deemed healthy, fully comestible and potentially tasty. Physicians offered their readership plenty of suggestions to avoid the potential dangers that these foods could bring to the body. This advice aimed to improve the overall amount of nourishment of these foods. For example, raw turnips, in Elyot's opinion, were an excellent stimulator of the appetite, but only offered good nourishment for the body if they were eaten after having been boiled in water (with the side effects of sexually invigorating the adult male and improving the production of sperm).[68] While Boorde gave the same advice, the physician James Hart had a very different view. He admitted that turnips were one of the most commonly eaten roots, but also asserted that 'It is of a flatuous and windy quality, as most other roots', and that it was 'troublesome to a weake stomacke, being hard of digestion', and that the best way to eat them was to finish them off by frying them in beef fat.[69] Italian writers also had contradictory views about turnips. Pisanelli argued that turnips were certainly nourishing, but he also warned the reader about the watery humours their consumption generated in the veins, and of problems in both digestion and concoction.[70] Nonetheless, turnips were widely available in Italy, and were consumed by everybody, usually in pottages, pies, and ravioli. Gallo thought that turnips were excellent when roasted in salads, or cooked and preserved, and of such good properties that they should be recommended for the sick.[71]

Rather than banishing herbs and roots per se, physicians and other authors tried to propose solutions that could make these ingredients not only edible, but also tasty and possibly healthy. Physicians viewed cabbage in a very similar fashion to turnips, in both Italy and England. They focused extensively on how it could be

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[68] Elyot, *The Castel of Helth*, sig. D2v.

[69] Hart, sig. G2v.

[70] Pisanelli, p. 8, 'Da assai nutrimento … Genera ventosità e acquosità nelle vene … è di tarda digestion, e talhora mordica il ventre'.

[71] Gallo, *Le dieci giornate della vera agricoltura,* sig. D2r, 'Questo frutto fu sempre grato a tutti in minestra, in torte, tortelli, et altre simili cose. Et oltre che è perfetto rostito nell'insalata, è caro lessato anco in composta, e altri modi, il quale per esser sano, è concesso più volte agli ammalati'.

treated in order to make it less noxious to the body, easier to digest and ultimately more nourishing. Moffett suggested that the only way to prevent cabbage from 'engender[ing] gross and melancholique bloud' was to boil it in water and let it rest all night in warm milk (I will come back to the nourishing powers of milk in the last chapter), in order to make it 'very nourishing without offence' and ready to be cooked in bone marrow or in 'fat brues' the following day.[72] Likewise, in Italy it was important to 'boil [the cabbage] twice, get rid of the water, and then cook them in fat meat broth, with fennel and pepper'.[73] The hotness and dryness of the pepper was the final touch to counterbalance the coldness and moisture of the cabbage, while the meat broth or the bone marrow made it more nourishing, and possibly even more palatable. Gallo discussed cabbages, 'or the *verzi* as we call them', first in his discussion of the kitchen gardens (*Gli horti communi*) because they were so widely available in Italy. He thought that cabbages should only be gathered in spring, because they were particularly good when the weather was temperate, and not too cold or hot.[74] Cooking these ingredients, or at least finishing the cooking process, with fat-based broths or butter provided these foodstuffs with a nourishing power that, according to the printed texts of the period, these ingredients were inherently lacking. Mr Pompilio, speaking through the pen of Benvenuto Italiano and therefore addressing an English readership, was of the same opinion: 'But they nourish the better if they be sodden in broth, especially in Winter, during which we ought onely to use hot hearbs, and that neuer seeded, for in such a season they are best'.[75] The combination of ingredients and procedures needed to make vegetables suitable for the body were complex and quite diverse, and could change according to the individual nature of the vegetable. Each ingredient had its own way of being prepared, cooked and dressed.

The process of dressing the herbs was considered as important as cultivating and harvesting them properly, and was not confined to the preparation of salads. Discussing the virtues of the asparagus, Mr. Pompilio's advice went like this: 'They

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[72] Moffett, sig. F1v.

[73] Pisanelli, p. 9, 'Se si cuocono a lesso, e la prima acqua si butti, e poi si cuocono bel brodo di carne grassa, con finocchio, e pepe'.

[74] Gallo, *Le dieci giornate della vera agricoltura*, sig. N7v.

[75] Italiano, sig. O2r.

must be boiled, and then you must cast away the first water, or decoction, for so they will abate of their bitternes, then season them with oyle, salt, pepper, and with the iuyce of Orenges, with a little Wine-vineger. If they be boyled in wine, though they are more behouefull, they are very hurtfull for cholericke men, and good for them that are old and cold: they are also the more healthfull sodden in fat broth'.[76] Parkinson, explaining the virtues of the asparagus, stressed the importance of properly dressing it. He viewed the asparagus as 'a principall & delectable Sallet herbe, whose young shootes when they are a good handful high above the ground, are cut an inch within the ground, which being boiled, are eaten with a little vinegar and butter, as a Sallet of great delight'.[77] Castelvetro went even further, explaining how he was used to 'oil them well, roll on a plate in salt and pepper to season them thoroughly, and then roast on a grid. Lavishly sprinkled with bitter orange juice, this makes a most delicate dish'.[78] However, beside their goodness and excellent palatability, there was more to consider, and further possible advantages for the body: 'Quite apart from being good to eat, asparagus is a most health-giving vegetable; it cannot harm any part of the human body, and is positively helpful to those who find urinating painful'.[79] The Flemish physician and botanist Rembert Dodoens (1517-1585) claimed that 'The first tender springs of Asparagus parboyled & eaten with oyle & vineger, prouoke vrine, and are good agaynst the strangurie, and they soften the belly'.[80] In terms of provision of asparagus, Dodoens recalled that 'The manured or tame Asparagus groweth in Burgundie and some other Countries as in Almaigne, in stony places, where as is good earth, and fatte ground: in this Countrie it is planted in the gardens of Herboristes [...] The wilde kinde groweth in certayne places of Italy, and throughout all Languedoc'.[81] These examples show how herbs and roots were celebrated and recommended in similar ways in Italy and England, despite the differences in climate and environment.

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[76] Italiano, sig. O4r.

[77] Parkinson, p. 468.

[78] Castelvetro, pp. 46–47.

[79] Castelvetro, p. 47.

[80] Rembert Dodoens, *A Nievve Herball, or Historie of Plantes* (London: Gerard Dewes, 1578), sig. Fff3v.

[81] Dodoens, sig. Fff3r.

Furthermore, there seems to be an overlap between Italian and English advice and practice in dealing with these herbs.

Physicians and botanists did not only discuss herbs which may have been considered prestigious, such as asparagus and those used in salads. Allen J. Grieco's classification of foods in the Renaissance put onions and garlic at the bottom of the pyramid, and therefore suitable for the lower sorts and for nobody else. Elyot, conversely, had a very different view.[82] For him, garlic and onion shared similar important lubricating characteristics that could benefit everybody: they cut gross humours, dissolved gross winds in the body and, 'openeth the places, which are stopped'.[83] The characteristics that Elyot associated with garlic and onion were particularly important as consumption of these foods offered scope to improve the distribution of humours in the body. Stagnation and putrefaction of bad and thick humours were long-feared side effects that Renaissance physicians usually related to herbs, roots and fruit, when consumed in excess and without the appropriate preparation. Massonio gives very similar advice in his treatise, by quoting contemporary and past physicians. According to Pisanelli, young garlic in salads was particularly welcome, as its hotness counterbalanced the moisture and coldness of the other ingredients.[84] Pisanelli goes on and suggests cooking it enough to make it milder, and eating it with oil, vinegar and alongside other foods as well.[85] By quoting Petronio on garlic, Massonio advanced the view that it was important to adapt individual eating habits to the local environment. Garlic was considered hot and dry, and therefore 'being Rome so hot it can be noxious eating it too often, while it is not bad in colder places'.[86] Petronio gave the same advice as Elyot in suggesting that

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[82] Grieco, 'Food and Social Classes', p. 310.

[83] Elyot, *The Castel of Helth*, sig. D2v.

[84] Massonio, sig. S2v, 'Quando é tenerello, corregge la frigiditá, e l'humiditá dell'insalata'.

[85] Massonio, sig. S2v, 'Cuocesi fin tanto che perda l'acrimonia, e se ha virtù più debili non ritiene malitia, e poi mangiandosi con oglio e aceto, overo con alter vivande'.

[86] Massonio, sig. S2r, 'In Roma per esser cittá calda, é nocevole il mangiarlo spesso: ma ne luoghi piu freddi non é insalubre'.

garlic, because of its hotness, favoured urine's expulsion and 'those who eat it often will clean their body often, and much, not little, like the asparagus do'.[87]

Consumption in the household

> Then hath thy orchard fruit, thy garden flowers,
>
> Fresh as the air, and new as are the hours.
>
> The early cherry, with the later plum,
>
> Fig, grape, and quince, each in his time doth come;
>
> The blushing apricot and woolly peach
>
> Hang on thy walls, that every child may reach.[88]

These verses, extrapolated from Ben Jonson's country house poem *To Penshurst*, written in 1611 and published in 1616 in dedication and admiration of Robert Sidney (1563-1626), 1st Earl of Leicester, are indicative of the attitude that early modern people in England had towards herbs, roots and fruit. These fruits of nature could be picked, and eaten raw straight away, as well as dressed or cooked. But who ate them? The English chronicler Raphael Holinshed (1529-1580) seemed to think that in early modern England eating these foodstuffs had become a habit that was shared across the entire social spectrum:

> Whereas in my time their vse is not onelie resumed among the poore commons, I meane of melons, pompions, gourds, cucumbers, radishes, parsneps, carrets, cabbages, nauewes, turneps, and all kinds of salad herbes, but also fed vpon as deintie dishes at the tables of delicate merchants, gentlemen, and the nobilitie, who make their prouision yearelie for new séeds out of strange countries, from whence they haue

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[87] Massonio, sig. S2r, 'hà valore di muovere l'urina. E per questo a quelli che ogni giorno ne mangiano, e spurgando il corpo spesso, e assai, non poco, come fanno gli asparagi, e altre cose simili'.

[88] Ben Jonson, 'To Penshurst', in *The Works of Ben Jonson*, ed. by William Gifford (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and Company, 1853), pp. 801–808, vv. 39–44. The poem *To Penshurst* is dated 1611.

> them aboundantlie. Neither doo they now staie with such of these fruits as are wholesome in their kinds, but aduenture further vpon such as are verie dangerous and hurtfull, as the verangenes [aubergine], mushroms, &c: as if nature had ordeined all for the bellie, or that all things were to be eaten, for whose mischiefous operation the Lord in some measure hath giuen and prouided a remedie.[89]

For example, during the festivities arranged for Elizabeth I by the Earl of Leicester when she visited Kenilworth Castle in 1575, people picked raw fruit from the orchard, and ate strawberries and cherries directly from the plant, with no adulteration of any sorts.[90] Eating freshly picked fruit was not necessarily an uncommon habit, pernicious as it might have been considered. The family portrait of William Brooke (1527-1597), 10th Baron Cobhan, dated 1567, attributed to the Master of the Countess of Warwick, confirms this (see Fig. 1). The painting depicts William standing next to his wife, with their children seated at the dining table next to them. A basket of fruit is located on the table, in the foreground of the artwork. The basket contains what look like a handful of walnuts, pears, apples, grapes, and some peaches. On the table there is also a golden chalice of wine, which invokes, amongst other things, an important humoral combination that I will discuss in the chapter on wine.[91] However, the most intriguing aspects of this family scene is to be found in the depiction of the children. Four of them are eating raw fruit, namely grapes and apples, from their plates. The fruit is clearly freshly cut, in the case of the

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[89] Raphael Holinshed, *The First and Second Volumes of Chronicles Comprising 1 The Description and Historie of England, 2 The Description and Historie of Ireland, 3 The Description and Historie of Scotland* (London: Henry Denham, 1587), sig. Tj5.

[90] Letter from Robert Laneham contained in Michael Charlesworth (ed.), *The English Garden: Literary Source*, (Mountfield: Helm Information Ltd., 1993), p. 208, in Dawson, *Plenti and Grase*, p. 142.

[91] Susan E. James and Katlijne Van Der Stighelen, 'New Discoveries Concerning the Portrait of the Family of William Brooke, 10th Lord Cobham, at Longleat House', *Dutch Crossing,* 23.1 (1999), 66–101 (pp. 85–86). The bowl of fruit, and the cup of wine, might also have deep religious meanings. Grape is the fruit of the Christian passion, and the wine is definitely to be associated with the blood of Christ. Walnuts and pears could also be associated with meanings of fertility. A wide plethora of Christian values was included in the paintings. The animals, for example, play a very similar role. The dog mirrors fidelity and loyalty, the child controlling the monkey resembles the virtue triumphant over impurity. A parrot and a goldfinch, which are nicely behaving in the painting, might resemble modesty and education. These were important family values that Cobham wanted faithfully represented in his family portrait.

apple, and just picked, in the case of the grape. Even more interesting is the fact that children are depicted by the painter eating raw fruit, which was not cooked nor baked in any form. From a medical standpoint, this aligns with existing beliefs in humoral medicine. The inherent hotness of children's complexion, would have counterbalanced the coldness and moistness of the fruit. This is further in keeping with accepted humoral knowledge as both male and female children are eating the fruit. Since all of these children are clearly depicted in the painting are of a prepubertal age, gender was irrelevant to the inherent coldness or hotness of the body.

In this section two household accounts will be explored and discussed to evaluate how vegetables and fruits in early modern England were purchased and consumed. The accounts are respectively those of the Cecil family for their house in Hatfield (1634-1635), and of the Radcliffe family for Gorhambury (1637-1639). These were two of the most eminent families of the realm. The amount of money spent by these households on the growing and provision of fresh and dry herbs, roots and fruit will demonstrate how these ingredients were considered to be extremely valuable in seventeenth-century England. The accounts reveal a distinctive pattern that was consistently followed for the purchase of vegetables and fruit. As (un)expected as this might be, it demonstrates how members of the elites consistently bought and ate herbs, roots and fruit, over sustained periods of time. Unfortunately, these documents do not always allow for a full analysis of the medical implications of these foodstuffs. However, they are relevant in showing the pervasiveness of these ingredients on early modern tables, across the whole social spectrum.

The documents highlight a very distinct division between ingredients that were catalogued as 'herbs and roots' and 'fruite'– usually mentioned with no notions of quantity or unity of measurement at all – and other ingredients that were labelled with specific names and precise quantities. Vegetables and fruit came from both the garden and the market, for both families. The accounts were compiled daily but were organised in a weekly format. Expenditure was carefully recorded from Saturday to Saturday for the Cecil account, and from Sunday to Sunday for the Radcliffe account. It is possible that vegetables that were left to grow and mature in the garden did not appear in the provision lists of the household. The same goes for many households in relation to many ingredients beyond fruits and vegetables. This circumstance is an inherent characteristic of this kind of historical evidence, rather

than an exception for vegetables. The historical analysis of milk, cheese, and butter provision raises similar challenges, as I will discuss in the chapter on dairy foods. Since I have already discussed the widespread consumption of herbs, roots and fruit by Italians, more attention will be given here to the English provision and consumption of these ingredients.

In England there was a growing interest in new plants and vegetables, at the turn of the sixteenth century. Collectors, botanists and gardeners travelled abroad to discover and study herbs and plants from all over the world. For example, Robert Cecil, 1st Earl of Salisbury, was the first employer of John Tradescant the elder (d. 1638), 'gardener and collector' for the Cecils at the beginning of the century. In 1611, with the approval of Lord Cecil, Tradescant travelled to the Low Countries, Flanders and Paris in order to research and buy 'trees, flowering shrubs, vines, and bulbs for the gardens at Hatfield'. After leaving the Cecils in 1615, Tradescant worked for Lord Cotton in Canterbury and after 1623 for Lord Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham. In his life Tradescant travelled to Europe in many occasions. The most famous expedition he was part of was led by Sir Dudley Digges in 1618, a delegation to visit Tsar Michael Feodorovich. During his life, dedicated to the cultivation and classification of plants and herbs, he created a collection of his botanical treasures in Lambeth. Among many species, Tradescant is famous for introducing to England the pomegranate and an 'another exotic, the "Algiers apricot"'.[92]

The household of William Cecil, 2nd Earl of Salisbury, reflects a strong interest in these foodstuffs and in their management. The accounts, kept from September 1634 to March 1635, reveal that the quarterly wage of Cadwallider Morgan, the gardener at Quickswood in that period, was £5. His remuneration matched that earned by the chaplain, the yeoman of the horse, two gentlemen of the chamber and the kitchen clerk, which suggest that both the kitchen clerk and the gardener were literate and numerate. These six people were more highly remunerated than other important employees, such as the master cook, who was paid £3.15s, while the butler and the housekeeper received only £1.5s. Members of the household who earned more than the gardener had crucial roles for the life of the family, such as the tutor of the children – paid £7.10s in 1637 – or the receiver general, basically the

[92] ODNB, Tradescant, John, the elder.

treasurer of the household, with £10. Mr Thomas Tudor, the former gardener, was paid the sum of £25, but with that money he had to take care of his two assistants as well.[93] The lowest income of the household was that of the green keeper, in charge of the bowling green at Hatfield, who was paid 10s.[94]

The provision of herbs, roots and fruits for the Cecils is not immediately computable. The Cecils spent significant amounts of money on the maintenance of their gardens, and presumably most of the vegetables came directly from there. Studies conducted on household accounts reveal that the practice of relying on private gardens for the provision of herbs was very typical for this kind of household.[95] In theory, there were three places where the vegetables which were consumed in households of this kind could have come from: the garden, the market, and as gifts from friends, neighbours and people living on the estate.[96] The Cecil papers list the provision of goods from Saturday 27 September 1634 to Friday 27 March 1635. At the end of each week expenses made 'out of the provisions of store' were recorded, sometimes under the entry 'spent this week from the provisions of my Lord's store'.[97] Invariably, the items listed under this entry were dairy foods, mostly milk and butter, 'shugar' with spices and fruit, either 'for the buttler' – the buttery – for the 'kitchin', or 'extreordynary' for candles, and a variety of other things that appeared only occasionally such as almonds or, more rarely, offal.

Expenses for herbs and roots were generally listed under the entries 'rootes' or 'herbes', without going into much detail, and the records show significant differences mostly related to seasonality. The choice to distinguish between roots and herbs might have been a rough attempt to differentiate between tubers and leaf-vegetables. The account reveals that the 'herbes and rootes' provision of the household between the Michaelmas and the Christmas quarters was split between the garden and the market. The expenses for 'roottes and hearbes out of the garden'

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[93] ESHA, Cecil, Wages, p. 65.

[94] ESHA, p. xix.

[95] For similar patterns of vegetable provision in other English households see Dawson, p. 141; Whittle and Griffiths, pp. 92–93.

[96] For more on food exchange and gift-giving in early modern England see F. Heal, 'Food Gifts, the Household and the Politics of Exchange in Early Modern England', *Past & Present*, 199 (2008), 41–70.

[97] ESHA, Cecil, pp. xix, 7.

recorded between the first week and the ninth week of Michaelmas, were recorded in the 'out of provision of my lords store' section. Starting from the tenth week of Michaelmas and up to the last week recorded in the account, the thirteenth week of Christmas, these products were instead purchased 'by bill' – from the market – and were always bought and recorded on Fridays, with the exception of the eighth week of Christmas when they were bought on Thursday 19 February 1635.

There were substantial differences in expenditure between the Michaelmas and Christmas periods. The highest amount paid for vegetables during Michaelmas was 9s, in the eighth week.[98] The lowest amount paid in that quarter was of 2s.6d in the first week, between late September and the beginning of October.[99] The highest amount paid during the Christmas quarter was 16s.8d in the fifth week, on Friday 30 January 1635.[100] The lowest amount of the term was paid two weeks before for 6s.6d.[101] Unfortunately, only the money spent on vegetables was recorded, and not the actual quantity of raw ingredients purchased, which makes it impossible for us to understand whether expenditure was higher during winter because people consumed more vegetables during the Christmas celebrations – because of special preparations required for the festivity or the increased population of the household in those periods – or if it was just a condition dictated by the market fluctuations due to variable availability of ingredients during the colder seasons. What is certain is that during winter most of the vegetables and fruit was bought at the market 'by bill', since a provision of herbs, roots and fruits based exclusively on the garden was not sustainable during these times of year.

The purchasing of fruit for the Cecils followed similar patterns to those for herbs and roots. The accounts reveal that fruit was bought 'out of the provisions of store' every week and was labelled either 'for kitchin' or under the 'extreordinary'. At times, especially during the Christmas celebrations and in the following weeks, more fruit was purchased either 'for the table' or 'for my Lord's table'.[102] In all of these cases, as it was for the herbs-roots labelling, the accounts do not specify which

[98] ESHA, Cecil, p. 21.
[99] ESHA, Cecil, p. 7.
[100] ESHA, Cecil, p. 43.
[101] ESHA, Cecil, p. 38.
[102] ESHA, Cecil, p. 7, but the same pattern was repeated every week.

fruits were bought. The only exceptions were lemons, oranges and pippins, a kind of sweet apple, that were recorded by name and were usually procured on Fridays starting in December. On 5 December, for example, '1 doz of oringes, & 1 doz of lemondes' costed 1s.4d, while '200 pippines' were bought for 5s.[103] The different way in which these fruits were recorded suggests that they were regarded differently from the other fruits purchased for the household, a pattern also found in the Radcliffe account discussed below. Unlike herbs and roots, it is possible to hypothesise how fruits may have been consumed by studying details of the accounts. Every week 'fruite' was regularly purchased alongside 'shugar & spice'. This pattern repeated itself in exactly the same way whether it was bought for use in the kitchen or as part of the extraordinary. By contrast, when fruits were purchased for the table of the Lord instead, nothing else was bought with them. These trends suggest that when fruits were used in culinary preparations they were used and prepared in combinations with spices and sugar whereas those purchased for the Lord's table were eaten fresh. Accordingly, it is likely that oranges and lemons were bought to be used in other preparations alongside all the meats bought for the Cecils (the combination of meat and fruit was quite significative humorally speaking, as I will show in the chapter on meat), while apples were often used in salads in the early modern period. In this regard, on the week ending Saturday 29 November, between the kitchen and the extraordinary, 'shugar, fruite, & spice' were acquired for £1.15s.[104] On the same page an expense of 6s.6d of sugar, fruit and spice 'for a cake' was recorded.[105] This episode is a unique case in the account and it was probably related to a private celebration in the household, but it reveals how these ingredients were acquired together to be consumed together.

The Radcliffe accounts at the time of Edward Radcliffe, 6th Earl of Sussex, returns a more nuanced and detailed picture in this regard. In the Radcliffe accounts there are more details recorded not only for vegetables, but also for other important sets of ingredients such as spices, which are labelled very vaguely in the Cecil accounts. The data gathered in the Radcliffe accounts were divided into three columns, *Venit*, *Expendit* and *Remanet*, that is, what was bought, consumed and left

[103] ESHA, Cecil, p. 25.
[104] ESHA, Cecil, p. 23.
[105] ESHA, Cecil, p. 23.

untouched. This division was applied to all the offices of the house: the larder, the buttery, the cellar, pantry and pastry, wood-yard and coalhouse, the saucery, the spicery and the stable. As with the Cecil account, the information was organised weekly. The account spans from Michaelmas 1637 to the end of March 1638. Each week, the first column comprised in the *Remanet* column of the week before, following the scheme R0 – V0 – E0 – R1 || R1 – V1 – E1 – R2 || R2 – V2 – E2 – R3 …, which helps the reader to understand how the large variety of materials for the household were purchased and consumed over time. However, the columns list all the ingredients and materials purchased and used on a weekly basis and do not reveal anything about daily patterns of consumption.[106] Herbs and roots appear in a variety of forms, mostly registered for the use of the offices of the larder and the saucery. Products such as olives, capers, ginger, mace and saffron were purchased for the spicery as well. It is evident that there were precise intentions about how these foods had to be prepared and consumed. Obviously, many items were purchased and not consumed immediately.

For the Radcliffe family, almost without exception, herbs and roots were purchased on a weekly basis. For example, 'herbs' and 'roots', listed separately, appear frequently in the papers, either together or one at a time. In the first week of October 1637 – the first of the book – 'hearbes' for 4s.6d were purchased and used in the saucery. In contrast, 'Mustarseede' for 3s, with one pound of capers and a quart of olives (two pints) – both at 1s each – were bought and not used at all.[107] Seeds in general, but also pots of olives and possibly capers, lasted longer because of different techniques of conservation. In the same week, the spicery bought 4 oz. of 'Aniseed & coriander seede' at 5d, which ended up being stored for that week, whilst many ingredients that had been purchased in the previous weeks were used, such as nutmeg (2.5 oz), ginger (1 oz), mace (2.5 oz) and cinnamon (0.5 oz).[108] The larder was the office that invariably spent the largest amount of money every week of the year. For that week it featured twenty 'Heartychokes', eighteen of which were consumed, for the value of 3s. Since the *Remanet* column of the week before listed the amount for twenty artichokes at 3s.4d, it seems reasonable to estimate the average

[106] ESHA, Radcliffe, p. 77.
[107] ESHA, Radcliffe, pp. 84-85.
[108] ESHA, Radcliffe, p. 86.

price of 2d for one artichoke alone. Vegetables were scarce in the accounts for Christmas week. The larder expenditure on meat was larger than usual, especially beef, 35 st. and 6 pounds, and mutton, 22 joints. Otherwise, poultry, fish, milk, cream and eggs were used but no cheese, and no vegetables at all were consumed.[109]

According to Lionel Munby, 'It was in the weeks following Christmas Day that celebrations really began', and this pattern is clearly echoed in the wider variety of vegetables bought and consumed in the week ending the 6 January 1638.[110] 'Hearbs and Roots' were bought for the larder for the price of £1.19s.3d. Five shillings were paid for 'collyflowers' and the same price was paid for 'Beet and Scharrets' [carrots]. All of these products were consumed in their entirety.[111] The entire household consumed larger quantities of meat and fish as well. The spicery used large quantities of many ingredients, most of them stored from previous weeks: 0.5 pounds of cloves, bought for 3s.6d; 10 oz of nutmeg, bought for 3s.4d; 4 oz of cinnamon bought for 3s; 1 pound and 6 oz of 'Isinglasse' – a gelatin derived from fish bladder most likely used to make jellies – bought for 3s.6d; 4 oz of 'large ginger', for 10d; 2 pounds and 5 oz of pepper, at 4s.8d. Other ingredients used by the spicery were 'Sampher' – samphire, a plant that grows in coastal regions – 'Carraway seeds' and 'Saphron'.[112] The office of the saucery purchased 6 pounds of potatoes for 4s, and 100 chestnuts for 6d. Both of these items were used only the following week.[113] This variety of purchases and the effective way in which the Radcliffe accounts were compiled help us to understand the different roles of the herbs and roots which were purchased. Some of them were used as ingredients to make sauces, others as spices, and only a minority of them were purchased to be served as a part of a main course. Potatoes, cauliflowers, artichokes, 'beets' and 'scharrets' fall into this latter group.

Many vegetables named in the accounts were tubers: potatoes, carrots, and more general 'roots'. If we accept that 'beet' meant the modern beetroot, we are left guessing what those 'hearbs and rootes' were. They were always recorded together in the Cecil accounts. In the case of the Radcliffe accounts, potatoes, beets, carrots,

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[109] ESHA, Radcliffe, pp. 90-94.
[110] ESHA, p. xii.
[111] ESHA, Radcliffe, pp. 96-97.
[112] ESHA, Radcliffe, p. 99.
[113] ESHA, Radcliffe, see pp. 101, 105.

herbs and roots were bought for the larder, while ginger was used in the spicery. Herbs and roots, especially roots, featured more often in the larder and therefore were being served more frequently at the table as a main course or as a part of it. Roots were purchased by themselves for 8d and then consumed in the week ending 14 January 1638.[114] The following week a root purchase was registered for 6d.[115] In the last week of January roots were bought, and consumed, for the sum of 1s.2d.[116] Roots were purchased for 1s.6d in the first week of February and were all consumed.[117] In the second week there was a new purchase for the large sum of 11s.8d, but only half of it was actually consumed in that very week.[118] In the week ending 17 February, the larder bought roots for 9s.4d. In the same week a very similar amount of money – 8s.10d – was spent, always by the office of the larder, to buy 'Chickens 11 henn'.[119] In all of these cases, 'herbs' were never purchased for any of the different offices of the house, or at least they do not appear in the accounts and it is unlikely that in this period the garden was able to provide food for the household. The Radcliffe accounts suggest that large quantities of roots were consumed during the colder months of the year. This practice made sense from a seasonal point of view and does not necessarily clash with medical advice, which presented roots as dangerous only if not properly cooked and dressed. Nonetheless, the ways in which these foods were consumed should be taken into account. Roots were not eaten raw, and physicians clearly stressed this aspect. For herbs, roots and fruit, the cooking and dressing processes are absolutely central to understand the extent to which medical advice was incorporated into food consumption.

The Radcliffes spent large sums of money on fruit and their accounts name a wider variety of products than the Cecil accounts. Moreover, the approach followed by the compiler of the account, discussed above, helps us gain a deeper understanding of how these foods were used in the kitchen. The Radcliffes purchased fruits mostly for the offices of the spicery and saucery. As in the Cecil

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[114] ESHA, Radcliffe, p. 102.
[115] ESHA, Radcliffe, p. 108.
[116] ESHA, Radcliffe, p. 112.
[117] ESHA, Radcliffe, p. 118.
[118] ESHA, Radcliffe, pp. 122-123.
[119] ESHA, Radcliffe, pp. 126-128.

accounts, fruits for the spicery were often listed alongside many types of sugar. For the last week of the year 1638, during the festive season, the *Remanet* column of the spicery featured sugar in four different formats: single refined, double refined, in lump and powder for a total of 169 pounds, and 11oz for the sum of almost £12. These products were put at the top of the list and were followed immediately by 56 pounds of currants, 74 pounds of raisins, 20 pounds of raisins from Malaga and 45 pounds of prunes.[120] In August of the same year a 'wire sive' – a sieve – was bought exclusively 'to dry plums', which suggest that at least some of them were bought in order to be dried and preserved.[121] Obviously plums might have been consumed fresh as well, or cooked and served as part of a larger preparation. The *Remanet* column for the saucery in the same week reads two pecks – four gallons – of barberries, 'Oringes Lemons' listed together for the amount of 9d, and 18s.2d of apples.[122] Six pounds of currants were bought for 3s the first week of 1638, along with four more pounds of double refined sugar.[123] The large quantity of sugar and fruit in the spicery lasted for many weeks, while the products used in the saucery – especially lemons, oranges and apples – were replaced on average every two or three weeks. The week ending 24 February 1638, four pounds of figs and four pounds of 'blew figgs' [possibly blue figs] were bought for 3s.12d, which was the only time they featured in the account.[124] Eating figs was believed to help people to get rid of the excessive phlegm that naturally came with the colder months of the year.

Other fruits were registered in the extraordinaries section of the accounts. A basket of grapes was received 'by one' person and paid 6d at the beginning of October 1637.[125] Similarly, the footman of Lady Winwood was given 5s in September 1638 because he had arrived with an unspecified quantity of 'graps'.[126] In the week ending 10 December 1637, 1s.6d were paid 'for canves and for portadge

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[120] ESHA, Radcliffe, p. 92.

[121] ESHA, Radcliffe, Extraordinaries, p. 175.

[122] ESHA, Radcliffe, p. 94.

[123] ESHA, Radcliffe, p. 98.

[124] ESHA, Radcliffe, p. 113. The 'blue fig', according to the OED, n. (a), any of numerous cultivated varieties of the fig tree (Ficus carica) having blue or purple fruits (more fully blue fig tree); (also) the fruits themselves.

[125] ESHA, Radcliffe, Extraordinaries, p. 88.

[126] ESHA, Radcliffe, Extraordinaries, p. 176.

for the fruite', the first time when the compiler of the account did not bother to give the specifics of the fruits that were being purchased.[127] Peaches were brought to the household on two different occasions, at the end of August and in mid-September respectively. The former entry was related to 'Lord Car[eys] gardener' who was 'bringing peches' for 6s, while the latter mentions an expenditure of 1s, 'Given to my Lady Jenings boy with peaches'.[128] Cherries provide an interesting insight into different consumption patterns for the household. This fruit can be eaten raw on its own, or cooked and prepared in many different ways, including in ways where the final product was a liquid. Distillates and cordials were preparations that had both culinary and medical connotations. Cherries were registered in two different ways in July 1638. In the week ending 8 July 6 pounds of cherries, costing 3s, were purchased, while the following week 'cherries to still' were bought for 1s. Stilling extracted the essence of the fruit in order to produce a cordial or a liquor. In the chapter on cherries of the *Herball*, the English botanist John Gerard (c. 1545-1612) specified how good the fruit was if 'put to infuse or steep in white wine two or three houres' and gradually made it boil and corrected with cinnamon and sugar, since it worked 'very mightily against the stopping of urine, the stone and gravell, the difficulties and sharpenesse of making water and such like diseases'.[129]

The English farmer Thomas Tusser provided a similar perspective, saying that 'Conserue of the Barbery, Quinces & such/ with Sirops that easeth, the sickly so much'.[130] Therefore, a fruit-based preparation was deemed to have potential good effects on the sick, when the fruit was properly cooked and mixed with sugar. This is a perfect example of how problematic foods that could be potentially dangerous when eaten by themselves, could become healthy and have a restorative role when properly cooked and manipulated. In this case, cooking fruit with sugar was an essential step in order to make it healthier for the body. The manuscript recipe book of Mary Miller, compiled in 1660, includes recipes 'to make cherry wine' – a procedure that took four to five hours and required the cherries to be picked 'from the stalks, but not stoned', which meant that the pit had to be either removed before

[127] ESHA, Radcliffe, Extraordinaries, p. 163.
[128] ESHA, Radcliffe, Extraordinaries, p. 176.
[129] John Gerard, *The Herball or Generall Historie of Plantes* (London, 1636), p. 342.
[130] Tusser, sig. V3v.

being processed, or left in it altogether.[131] Another recipe 'To make Cherry cordiall water' required two quarts of Claret wine, and spices such as cinnamon, nutmeg, 2 oz of 'sugar candy', a handful of rosemary, gillyflowers and marigold flowers.[132] A very similar recipe was used to make black cherry water, using this variety of cherry.[133]

As we have seen, physicians provided advice in their writings on how to counteract the problematic qualities of herbs, roots and fruit and to make them more nourishing. Similar advice features in culinary texts. Robert May (1588-c.1664), a chef who trained in Europe, and travelled between France, Italy and Spain, and eventually returned to England to work for a succession of aristocratic families compiled one of the most famous contemporary culinary books. Section n. 10 of Robert May's *The Accomplisht Cook* is entitled 'To bake all manner of Curneld Fruits in Pyes, Tarts, or made Dishes, raw or preserved, as Quinces, Wardens, Pears, Pippins, &c' and has 49 entries. Recipes for tarts, pies, and preserves are all listed together. Spices and sugar were used in order to preserve fruit so that it could be kept and eaten over lengthy periods of time.[134] The core principles were appropriate combinations of ingredients with a close attention to quantity. This approach was central to humoral medicine. Yet May felt the need to point it out specifically when addressing herbs in its opening remarks, writing:

> Learn of this Cook, who with judgement, reason,
>
> Teacheth for every Time, each thing's true season;
>
> Making his Compounds with such harmony,
>
> Taste shall not charge with superiority,
>
> Of pepper, salt, or spice, by the best pallat

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[131] Wellcome Library, MS3547, c. 42r.

[132] Wellcome Library, MS3547, c. 108v.

[133] Wellcome Library, MS3547, c. 45r.

[134] Robert May, *The Accomplisht Cook or the Art and Mistery of Cookery* (London: R. W., 1660), sigg. Q8v–R8v.

Or any one Herb in his Broths, or Sallat

Where temperance and discretion guides his deeds,

Satis his Motto, where no thing exceeds; [135]

These lines demonstrate not only how cooks put intellectual efforts into their work, but also how the concept of balance, fundamental in early modern medicine, was central to early modern cooking as well. Balancing the ingredients was deemed to be a logical act that the cook had to perform. May stresses the importance of temperance and discretion in achieving good flavours, which had to be harmonious and sensible.

In the seventeenth century the production of marmalade, jam and syrup was one of the most common and easy ways of preserving fruit, herbs and roots. The art of preserving a maturing foodstuff was, probably, a necessity dictated by time. People sought to prevent the ingredients from spoiling. The spread of techniques and the development of traditions of preservation is captured in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century recipes from England.[136] In the same period, the practice of processing fruits in new and elaborate recipes, instead of eating them raw, spread from Italy to other countries in northern Europe.[137] People combined large quantities of fruit with sugar and spices in order to make syrups and jellies.[138] The household accounts studied here suggest that the Radcliffes prepared their own marmalades and preserves, especially those made with lemons and oranges. The week ending 27 January 1639, 'Lemonds and citrons' were bought for the very large sum of £4.17s. With them featured 'A dozen of marmalet glasses 3s; a dozen of gallyglasses 4s; Two great gallyglasses 12d; large plats, dozen 5s; vial glasses, 2 dozens 7s', which suggests that a large quantity of lemons and oranges was cooked in order to be preserved.[139]

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[135] May, sig. B1v.

[136] C. Anne Wilson, *The Book of Marmalade*, 2nd edn (Totnes: Prospect Books, 2010).

[137] Albala, *The Banquet*, pp. 79-80.

[138] Wellcome Library, MS8903, respectively cc. 82r, 99r, 93r, 81r.

[139] ESHA, Radcliffe, Extraordinaries, p. 183.

In Italy, when it came to preserves and marmalades, things were much the same. Marmalades and preserves were greatly appreciated at the Mantuan court. For instance, in a letter dated 16 January 1503, Isabella d'Este (1474-1539), Marquesa of Mantua and one of the most prominent women of the Italian Renaissance, was giving orders to provide fruit for the household, writing 'to please see that [the confectioner] gets as many citrons as possible, and to tell him the price, and we will use it as a credit towards the cost of the preserves we will order from him'.[140] In this instance, Isabella was paying her confectioner with the raw materials she possessed – in this case lemons. Moreover, this particular letter is important because it shows how Isabella was interested not only in fresh fruit and in processed-fruit products, such as lemons and preserves; she was also looking for seeds. Specifically, she wanted to buy seeds for a peach, and seeds for a 'small *cotogna* apple tree'.[141] In another letter, dated 26 August 1522, Isabella requested from the vicar of Reggiolo, a small village less than twenty miles south of Mantua, no less than four or five chests of peaches and, if at all possible, quinces since these were a favourite of hers. She wanted to make sure that the fruit was picked properly since she needed the fruits to be perfect in order to make preserves for her son.[142]

Isabella was particularly fond of preserves made from pears, pomegranates, and apricots, as well as those made from fruit that scholars have traditionally associated with popular consumption, such as chestnuts and figs.[143] Her interest in perserves was not merely for taste and quality, but also extended to medical purposes. In a letter dated 12 February 1497, addressed to Giorgio Brognolo, the ambassador to Venice, she asks for 'two jars of green ginger, preserved while still green and not dried ginger made green. You can have it looked over and discussed

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[140] ASMn, A. G., b. 2993, L. 14, 16 January 1503, in Deanna Shemek, ed., *Isabella d'Este: Selected Letters* (Toronto: Iter Press, 2017), p. 219.

[141] Shemek, p. 219.

[142] ASMn, A. G., b. 2996, L. 29, 26 August 1522, 'We want you to use as much diligence as possible to find us four or five chests of peaches of good quality, and if possible some quinces as well, since these are a favourite of mine and I like them more. Everything picked by hand, so that they are not bruised, since we want to make preserves for our illustrious son the Marquess'.

[143] Giancarlo Malacarne, *Sulla mensa del principe. Alimentazione e banchetti alla Corte dei Gonzaga* (Modena: Il Bulino, 2000), pp. 116–18.

by a doctor'.[144] In this particular instance Isabella was not just looking for something 'good' to eat, but rather for a preserve made in a specific way – with fresh and young ginger and not with fully ripe ginger disguised as fresh. The fact that Isabella also tells Brognolo to ask a doctor for clarification, should it have been needed, confirms the impression that she was thinking about specific ailments to be cured with this green ginger preserve.

Conclusion

Herbs, roots and fruits were a vital set of foods on the early modern table. The spreading culture of botanic discoveries and the changing role of the garden, which in its provision of medicine and food was an essential part of the household in both Italy and England, contributed significantly to the consumption of a greater variety of vegetables and fruits by a wider range of people. Some ingredients which had been – and continued to be – staple foods of the poorer sorts were now celebrated both on the printed page and on the table of the better sorts. Vernacular regimens, and other genres as well, contributed to a flourishing culture of these foods.

Whether identified with their individual names or simply labelled as 'herbs and roots' or 'fruit', these ingredients were purchased or grown on a regular basis, and consumed by both labourers of the household and members of elite families. Moreover, certain herbs, roots and fruit that figure in the main accounts were regularly apportioned for the exclusive use of the masters of the house. The final use of the products listed in the 'extraordinaries' accounts is more difficult to establish. However, the records depict an environment in which herbs and roots were prominent and consumed with close attention to health considerations, through dressing and cooking them in ways that were believed to counterbalance the problematic humoral qualities of the raw ingredients. The purchase of ingredients like peaches, quinces, lemons and oranges, as well as objects like glasses and jars, suggests that people dedicated time and effort to the preparation of conserves and marmalades. Fruits were bought alongside large quantities of sugar and spices, and these ingredients were purchased by many different offices in the house, not just the

[144] ASMn, A. G., b. 2992, L. 8, 12 February 1497, in Shemek, p. 106.

spicery and the saucery. The absence of specificity, in many cases, about the precise 'spices' which had been purchased – when spices were purchased at the same time as fruits – suggests well-known associations between certain fruits and spices which did not merit documentation by the keeper of the accounts. Cooking methods, associations, and combinations in the kitchen or at the table may also have reflected embedded understandings. The increase in the prominence of fruit in cookery books over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries may have been prompted by taste as well as humoral understandings. People of all sorts liked fruit, and the solution of preserving it in conserves was an excellent way to ensure its availability throughout the year, bypassing the problem of seasonality.

Seasons and climate conditions in general are always important within the humoral system but when considering herbs, roots and fruits they become considerably more central than for any other food discussed in this study. Important authors such as Massonio, who was writing for the Italians, and Castelvetro, who was writing for the English, argued that these foods were consumed more widely in Italy because of the heat that persists for a substantial part of the year. These ingredients were mostly cold and moist and this particular combination was believed to counterbalance the discomforts generated by the warm weather and its potential noxious effects on the body. There were also differences between England and Italy in the size and shape of ingredients, and the time of year at which they were eaten. While herbs, roots and fruits were consumed in both contexts, this chapter has highlighted how, broadly speaking, leafy vegetables were more commonly consumed in Italy, while in England there was a preference for roots and tubers. This dichotomy reflects the ways in which climate and health went hand in hand in the Galenic-Hippocratic theoretical framework. The cold damp climate of England suited the growth of subterranean foodstuffs, compared to Italy, where leafy vegetables were much more common because of the hotter climates. Finally, the evidence discussed in this chapter demonstrates that the problematic humoral qualities of herbs, roots and fruit did not preclude their consumption.

The ways in which herbs, roots and fruit were prepared and consumed has broader repercussions for how we think about the application of medical knowledge. It is not enough to think only about the humoral quality of the ingredients and to test, by looking at health regimens, their suitability for certain groups of people. This chapter advances our understanding of how certain foods were consumed by

different social groups. It shows how the ways in which food was prepared and cooked reflect the complexity of the relationship between medical theory and food consumption. Food and medical historians have, for quite some time, argued in favour of a complete separation of food habits across different social strata. I argue that this was not necessarily the case. As shown in this chapter, it was not only a matter of who ate what, but how these foods were eaten. Dressing, roasting and boiling ingredients that were initially considered extremely noxious for the body could make them not only tasty, but healthy, and ideally suited for all sorts of people.

Figure 1. Attributed to the Master of the Countess of Warwick, *William Brooke, 10th Baron Cobham, and his family at the dining table*, 1567, Longleat House near Warminster, Wiltshire

Chapter 2

Meat

Meat consumption and social status in Italy and England

In the *Description of England* (1577), the English clergyman William Harrison (1534-1593) asserted that meat-eating was of particular importance for the English. Talking about their diet, Harrison mentioned that 'In number of dishes and change of meat the nobilitie of England … doo most exceed, sith there is no daie in maner that passeth over their heads, wherein they have not onelie béefe, mutton, veale, lambe, kid, porke, conie, capon, pig, or so manie of these as the season yeeldeth'.[1] Almost forty years later, the Italian author Giacomo Castelvetro described a situation in Italy that was almost the opposite of what Harrison discussed for England. He pointed out how 'Italy, though beautiful, is not as plentifully endowed as France or this fertile island [England] with meat'.[2] While Harrison's quotation attests the enthusiasm of the English for all kinds of meat, and how they consumed it on an everyday basis, in Castelvetro's view herbs and fruit were more prominent in the diet of the Italians.

Whether or not meat was consumed more widely in England than in Italy, there is very little doubt that it was at the centre of the diet of early modern Europeans.[3] In the late 1970s, Fernand Braudel famously conceived the expression 'Carnivorous Europe', to stress how people's diet was based mostly on meat in the early modern period.[4] England's reputation for being a country of meat eaters was

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[1] Holinshed, p. 166.

[2] Castelvetro, p. 78, 'la bella Italia non è tanto doviziosa di carnaggi quanto è la Francia e questa isola'.

[3] Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England*, pp. 237–40.

[4] Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism. Vol. I, The Structures of Every-Day Life: The Limits of the Possible* (New York: Harper and Row, 1981), p. 193.

widespread in early modern Europe and this trope features in plays, chronicles and travel journals, some of which will be explored in this chapter. But this is not to say that Italians did not eat meat. Meat was very much present on their tables, especially beef, pork, mutton and poultry. This chapter will suggest that specific ingredients were the key gastronomic and culinary discrepancy between early modern England and Italy, rather than there being a dichotomy between an English meat-oriented diet and an Italian diet based on vegetables. Beef was a very important type of meat for the English, but the Italians had much more difficulty in getting regular and abundant provision of it, and opted instead for cured meats, cold cuts, offal, stews and broths.[5] The stereotype of the Italians, pushed by Castelvetro, of not being too fond of meat had more to do with his own agenda to enter the graces of the Countess of Bedford, rather than with concrete patterns of food consumption.[6]

Meat was widely eaten across early modern Europe. Most people ate mutton and beef. Pork was the third most commonly consumed kind of meat. A surge in meat consumption took place over the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[7] Lavinia Parziale found that in Milan the level of meat consumption kept increasing until the beginning of the sixteenth century.[8] Some of the growth in consumption and shift towards eating certain kinds of meat was stimulated by broader economic and agricultural developments. Anne Wilson noted that farmers in Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and the Midlands switched from cereal to sheep farming during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, in order to benefit from the growing trade in wool. To create more land for sheep, woods were chopped down which meant that pigs gradually lost their feeding areas.[9] This trend continued throughout the early modern period. In Cornwall for example, pigs, a staple in the Middle Ages, continued to be kept by individuals for domestic consumption in the seventeenth century. All the same, over the course of the seventeenth and the eighteenth

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[5] Karl Appuhn, 'Ecologies of Beef: Eighteenth-Century Epizootics and the Environmental History of Early Modern Europe', *Environmental History*, 15 (2010), 268–87 (p. 278).

[6] Castelvetro, pp. 11–38. Castelvetro was guest of of the Countess of Bedford, and lived under her protection when he first arrived in England.

[7] Massimo Montanari, *The Culture of Food* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), p. 71 ff.

[8] Lavinia Parziale, *Nutrire la città. Produzione e commercio a Milano tra Cinque e Seicento* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2009), p. 141.

[9] Wilson, *Food and Drink in Britain from the Stone Age to Recent Times*, p. 78.

centuries the proportion of Cornish farmers raising swine dropped from 57 to 38 per cent.[10] Pigs were slowly substituted by cattle and sheep, which were kept as more valuable assets, as well as being a source of food. Joan Thirsk argued that this shift from pig to sheep was 'a thoroughly rational choice', which was mostly based on economic reasons, such as wool trade, which was the pillar of English economy in this period.[11] The increased sophistication expressed 'in choosing between varieties and qualities' of wool made the English wool trade a very profitable one. The sheep-based dairy market played a role too, even if less prominently when compared to wool production. The shift towards mutton occurred more or less in the same way and at the same time on the continent, especially in France and Italy.[12] Mutton was, with all probability, the most commonly eaten meat in England. However, beef consumption grew rapidly here during the seventeenth century, across all the social spectrum.[13]

Meat was consumed at all social levels. The prominence of meat in the diet of the poor in the early modern period is certainly striking, considering that this social group obtained most of their energy intake from cereals in the Middle Ages, in processed forms such as bread, and added whole to pottages and soups.[14] Craig Muldrew's research on food consumption and labour in early modern England confirms how labourers acquired most of their calorific intake from animal-based ingredients.[15] Joan Thirsk found that meat consumption – especially of beef – increased both amongst the wealthy and the peasantry in England around 1500.[16] In Italy, veal was the most prestigious type of meat, and it was usually the preferred choice for the nobility and the gentry, while the lower strata were much more oriented towards mutton and pork.[17] All in all, in this period the diets of the rich and

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[10] Mark Overton and others, *Production and Consumption in English Households, 1600-1750* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), p. 45.

[11] Joan Thirsk, *Alternative Agriculture. A History From the Black Death to the Present Day* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 8.

[12] Montanari, *The Culture of Food*, p. 77.

[13] Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England*, pp. 237–40.

[14] C. M. Woolgar, *The Culture of Food in England, 1200-1500* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), pp. 61–65.

[15] Muldrew, p. 86.

[16] Thirsk, *Alternative Agriculture. A History From the Black Death to the Present Day*, p. 8.

[17] Parziale, p. 141.

the poor were differentiated by the variety of meat available, rather than the quantity.[18]

Mass consumption of four-footed animals shifted gradually from pork to beef and mutton in the early modern period, while poultry and game were usually consumed by the elites. However, little research has been conducted on how meat was consumed, and to what extent the medical properties of meat played a role in these patterns of consumption. Some scholars, like Allen J. Grieco and Massimo Montanari, have emphasised differences between the diet of peasants and the richest members of society.[19] These scholars often refer to the 'story of Bertoldo', a famous novel written in 1606 by the Italian writer of poems and ballads Giulio Cesare Croce (1550-1609). In the novel, the peasant Bertoldo dies a horrible death because the lord's physicians fed him with sophisticated foods instead of with beets and beans, the foods considered to be more appropriate for his social status and humoral complexion. This scholarship echoes medieval food historiography, which has often presented the diet of people in medieval England and France as quite static, with rich people eating meat and the peasantry being stuck with a 'monotonous diet'.[20] As Stephen Mennell has found, however, in the medieval period too, 'meat was not a luxury reserved exclusively for the tables of the very rich'.[21]

Paul Lloyd, whose work consistently pays careful attention to social issues, went beyond the gap between the nobility and the lower sorts and found that in early modern England the diet of the middle sorts was strikingly similar to that of the upper class, highlighting patterns of emulation and differentiation based not necessarily on the types of meat consumed, but rather on the way in which meat was prepared, cooked and eaten. Lloyd reveals the prevalence of corrective ingredients, such as fruits, spices and other luxuries, which were added to the main ingredient of

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[18] Muldrew, p. 84.

[19] Grieco, 'Food and Social Classes', pp. 302–12; Massimo Montanari, *I racconti della tavola* (Rome-Bari: GLF Editori Laterza, 2014), pp. 179-186; Flandrin, 'Seasoning, Cooking, and Dietetics in the Late Middle Ages', pp. 313–27.

[20] Stephen Mennell, *All Manners of Food. Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), p. 44.

[21] Mennell, p. 45.

the recipe and were used to finalise the taste of the recipe.[22] The use of these expensive ingredients is considered by Lloyd as a distinctive sign of social emulation, but I argue that there were important medical reasons that underpinned these choices as well. The work carried out by Lloyd is innovative in going beyond a way of doing food history based on assumptions about the neat separation of different social strata, and in its use of a wide range of sources, from medical regimens, to cookery books and household accounts. However, Lloyd strongly relies on Ken Albala's interpretation of the relationship between cuisine and medicine as a matter of 'social prejudices' alone.[23] In so doing, Lloyd focuses almost entirely on the social role played by food in early modern England, coming to the conclusion that medicine did nothing more than reflect social practices.

Hence, historians of Italy have relied on literary accounts and their presentation of medical ideas to emphasise differences in meat-eating by different social groups as, for instance, in analyses of the story of the peasant Bertoldo. By contrast, recent work by English historians has diminished the sense of a gap between the meat-eating practices of the gentry and the lower sorts, without really taking medicine into account. This chapter attempts to reconcile these two historiographical positions. Far from denying the social implications of food habits, I argue that a closer look at health regimens and cookery books shows how meat consumption was not as rigidly determined as previously thought. Social status and medicine obviously interacted with each other to some extent, but personal taste, fashions and customs also played important roles in shaping meat-eating habits in the early modern period. By looking at the ways in which meat was prepared to be cooked, and by considering the cooking process as an inherently medical practice, my research reveals that meat consumption was characterised by fluidity. That is, people of all sorts ate many different kinds of meat but more specifically, members of the elite were not scared of feeding upon meats that were theoretically not suited for them. In my view, medicine did not simply reinforce and echo pre-existing social structures. Instead, it worked in conjunction with social frameworks. The central argument of this chapter, and of this thesis as a whole, is that medicine, in both its

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[22] Paul S. Lloyd, *Food and Identity in England, 1540-1640* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), pp. 38–140.

[23] Lloyd, *Food and Identity in England, 1540-1640*, p. 58.

preventive and restorative means, was always present on the table, no matter the identity of who was eating or the nature of the comestibles, and that it did something more than reflect and reproduce social and cultural structures.

The first section of this chapter will look at what factors shaped the medical classification of healthy meat. The following sections will evaluate the medical reputation of mutton and beef, as these were the most popular kinds of meat in the early modern period. The last section of the chapter will consider cooking processes and the combination of ingredients. Despite the perceived division between the food of the rich and the food of the poor, medical and cookery books offered a wide range of options that could be applied according to individual taste and medical need. Cooks and physicians understood the medical implications of cooking. Their writings show the understanding that meat could provide healthy nourishment for all, not just the elite, if prepared and eaten in certain ways.

Medical notions of meat

In the early modern medical framework, meat was considered the best foodstuff for the human body of all. Bartolomeo Traffichetti (1523-1579), an Italian physician who worked in Rimini, a small town on the east coast of Emilia Romagna, in Italy, summed up the strength of the relationship between meat consumption and the human body, writing that 'straw is the food for the horses, but not for the man, because the horse get nourishment from the straw, but the man does not; similarly, flesh is food for the man, but not for the horse'.[24] On a similar note, the sixteenth-century court official Domenico Romoli had a clear view of the relationship between meat-eating and people's nature. Romoli served as head of the *Scalco* office, the person who supervised the working of the kitchen, the supply of provisions for the kitchen as well as the layout of the table at banqutes. Romoli held this prestigious position at the court of Pope Leo X, in Rome. In the *Panonto* (1560), a famous culinary treatise on organizing banquets at court, Romoli explored the complexity of

[24] Bartolomeo Traffichetti, *L'arte di conservare la sanità, tutta intiera trattata in sei libri, per Bartolomeo Traffichetti da Bertinoro medico in Riminio* (Pesaro: B. S., 1565), sig. L2v, 'perchè la paglia è cibo rispetto al cavallo, ma non già rispetto l'huomo perchè il cavallo si nutrisce della paglia, e non l'huomo; parimente, la carne è cibo del'huomo, e non del cavallo'.

the kitchen at the Renaissance court, pointing out how 'Those who discovered eating the flesh of animals knew more about what was suitable for human life than those in the first age who gave themselves to eating acorns'.[25] Despite the focus of this text on banquets and life at court, which relates in some respects to alimentary ideas of excessive eating, Romoli's philosophy was rooted in the conservation of health. Early modern people thought that the human body benefited from eating animal flesh because it brought heat and the right amount of moisture to the body, factors that were thought to be pillars of human life:

> However, those who started to eat meat, were interested not only in its taste, but also in their health, because they knew that flesh is generated by flesh, more than any other sort of food, so much that they left eating fruits as soon as they realised how much eating flesh did benefit the body, and only ate fruits again when they had their stomachs comforted with flesh, and being [animal] flesh warm and moist, and soft, generated by blood, and not without cause it is said that it is the closest to human life, based on hot and moist and, and most ideal to the conversion in blood.[26]

The correlation between food and humours was something that could not be ignored or forgotten.

Early modern authors built on the medical notion that blood and meat consumption were inherently related to each other. In the early modern medical framework, it was believed that eating meat engendered the production of blood in the body. Blood was considered the most important of the four humours and its interaction with phlegm, black bile and yellow bile constituted the complexion, or temperament, of the human being. In the early fifteenth century, the Italian

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[25] Domenico Romoli, *La singolare dottrina di M. Domenico Romoli sopranominato Panunto* (Venice: Giovan Battista Bonfadino, 1593), sigg. V4r-v, 'Più seppero delle cose convenienti alla vita humana quei che trovarono il mangiar delle carni de gli animali, che coloro che nella prima età si diedero a mangiare le ghiande'.

[26] Romoli, sig. V4v, 'Ma sia come si voglia, coloro che trovarono il mangiar delle carni, la intesero non solo quanto al gusto, ma quanto alla sanità, perchè conobbero che più facilmente di carne si faccia carne, che di qualunque altra sorte di cibo, che tosto che provarono il gran confortamento che col mangiarla sentiva il corpo lasciarno i frutti, e solo ne mangiarono dopò che si era lo stomaco loro confortato di carne, è la carne corpo caldo, e humido, molle, generato per il sangue, e però non senza causa si dice essere prossimo alla vita humana fondata in caldo, e humido, e di più vicina conversione al sangue'.

physician and philosopher Ugo Benzi (1376-1439) wrote what is believed to be the first work on health management written in Italian vernacular in honour of his master Niccolo III d'Este (1383-1441). The treatise survived in manuscript and circulated in the seventeenth century in a printed edition entitled *Regole della sanità* (1620), expanded and amended by doctor Bertaldi and enriched with annotations by doctor Gallina. In this edition of the text, the section on meat starts by stating that meat 'is readily converted into blood'.[27] Likewise, Michele Savonarola, whose work was published and amended posthumously in the sixteenth century by a doctor from Brescia, in northern Italy, called Bartolomeo Boldo, pointed out that 'there is no food more inclined to the generation of human blood than meat'.[28] If, humorally speaking, meat was good and sound for the body, there were other factors that made it an excellent food from the viewpoint of physicians and humanists.

Meat was highly praised by physicians because of the great amount of nourishment that they considered it to provide. In his discussion of meat, the sixteenth-century Italian physician Baldassarre Pisanelli made a list of the four-footed animals from which meat was derived, highlighting meat's capability to engender blood production, and to nourish the body. Starting with veal, and continuing with beef, mutton, goat, lamb and pork, the benefits for the body were always related to either one or both of these two major benefits for people's health, *nutrimento* and *sangue*, nourishment and blood.[29] In England, the same ideas and concepts related to the benefits of meat for the body were spreading. For example, in 1633, James Hart, argued that 'Of all food flesh is most agreeable to the nature of man, and breedeth most abundant nourishment to the body'.[30] These two factors were of considerable importance, and together constituted the essential notion of what was considered to be good and healthy meat.

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[27] Lodovico Bertaldi, *Regole della sanità et natura dei cibi di Ugo Benzi senese Arrichite di vaghe annotationi e di copiosi discorsi, naturali, e morali, dal Sig. Lodovico Bertaldi medico delle serenissime altezze di Savoia et nuovamente in questa seconda impressione aggiontovi alle medeme materie I Trattati di Baldassar Pisanelli e sue historie naturali e annotationi del medico Galina* (Turin: Domenico Tarino, 1620), sig. N8v, 'il suo cibo è di propinqua conversione in sangue'.

[28] Boldo, *Libro della natura et virtu delle cose*, sig. R3v, 'et cibo niuno è piu propinquo alla conversione del sangue humano come è la carne'.

[29] Pisanelli, sig. K1v, 'Dà grandissimo nutrimento, e genera ottimo sangue'.

[30] Hart, sig. K4v.

As both Pisanelli and Hart indicate, when it came to nourishment, meat was believed to be the most important of foods. Albala, in his analysis of dietary regimens for sick people, showed that the two most important characteristics that defined the diet of sick people was that it had to be extremely easy to digest but at the same time as nourishing as possible. Foods that met these criteria included long cooked gruels, dairy products and concentrated meat broths.[31] Similarly, meat-based preparations were at the core of the diet of convalescents at the Spedale degli Innocenti (Hospital of the Innocents), in fifteenth-century Florence.[32] Meat was an essential part of the food provision of the hospital, which bought kid, lamb, mutton, pork, chickens and capons on a regular basis, as well as an unspecified meat which was purchased to be salted and dried, presumably for purposes of preservation. One of the most popular meat-based recipes was a version of a *blancmange* which was prepared with a meat spread of chicken and capon, and included almond milk and spices.[33] Preparations such as meat-based broths, or the *lapo*, allowed the patient to get the nourishing properties of the meat and at the same time relieved the stomach from having to 'concoct' solid food. The process of concoction, which took place in the stomach and was the first step of the digestion, was thought to be difficult and very energy-demanding for convalescents. The preferred methods of cooking for patients were boiling the ingredients or a gentle process of roasting. The reason behind these beliefs related to the role played by the stomach within the early modern medical framework. In order to avoid too much labour for the stomach, it was necessary to feed the patients with foods that were already processed.

Therefore, if properly cooked and prepared, meat was believed to be the best ingredient for the sick. Not all meats, however, were thought to produce the same amount of nourishment and blood for the body. The first and universal distinction to be made about animal flesh was whether it came from four-footed animals or from fowl.[34] This distinction was not a peculiarity of the early modern period and was not

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[31] Albala, 'Food for Healing: Convalescent Cookery in the Early Modern Era', p. 324.

[32] Grieco, 'Il vitto di un ospedale', p. 90.

[33] Grieco, 'Il vitto di un ospedale', p. 91.

[34] Hart, sig. K4r.

univocally bound to social status either, as proposed by Grieco.[35] In fifteenth-century England, for example, birds were kept and fed in barnyards. Poultry was sold in the streets, both raw and cooked in pies, and was also sold and consumed at popular gatherings, such as the annual feasts of guilds and corporations.[36] Similarly, in Italy Croce depicted taverns scenes in his poems and ballads that show how these meats were largely consumed on an everyday basis, and not only by members of the elites. In the *Lamento de' bevanti* ('The complaint of the drinkers', 1598) the innkeeper is hastily encouraged to bring food to the table: 'bring some capons/bring hens and good roasted veal/meat pie, meatballs, mutton and pigeons'.[37] Poultry was not exclusively present on the tables of the elite, despite being recommended to those who did not entertain an active life. Savonarola recalled how 'the complexion of any bird offers very little nourishment, especially if compared to that of those animals that use four feet, as the flesh of the pig, as nothing exists that brings so much nourishment. And yet, the flesh of the birds is much easier to digest'.[38] The same ease of digestion that made chickens the preferred meat to be served to the sick as a restorative and nourishing preparation, made them also 'convenient to every nature', that is, ideal for everybody even out of the context of the hospital.[39] However, besides the differences between two-footed and four-footed animals, physicians and authors laid out many other important guidelines, that could have been useful for the laity to assess the overall wholesomeness of meat.

The medical debate on meat was based to a significant degree on observations of the quality of life of the animal made by physicians and authors of husbandry treatises. Issues such as how the animal was treated in life, how it was fed, whether it

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[35] Allen J. Grieco, 'Alimentazione e classi sociali nel tardo Medioevo e nel Rinascimento in Italia', in *Storia dell'alimentazione*, ed. by Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari (Rome-Bari: Editori Laterza, 1997), pp. 371–80.

[36] Woolgar, p. 66.

[37] Giulio Cesare Croce, *Lamento de' bevanti per la gran carestia del vino e delle castellate di questo anno* (Bologna: Heredi di Gio. Rossi, 1598), 'porta de' capponi/Porta galline, e buon vitello arrosto/Torta, polpette, castrato e piccioni'.

[38] Boldo, *Libro della natura et virtu delle cose*, sig. P1r, 'La generazione d'ogni uccello volatile presta pochissimo alimento, specialmente se si compara alla generatione d'animali, che vanno in quattro piedi, come alla carne di porco, della quale non si trova che sia di più copioso nutrimento'.

[39] Romoli, sig. X4v, 'E la lor carne temperata, è di più facile, e leggiera digestione; che quella di tutti gli altri, e genera buonissimo sangue, conforta lo appetito, e è conveniente a tutte le nature'.

was domesticated or lived in the wild, were all considered to be essential factors in determining the quality of the meat derived from it. It is useful to think about the animal from which the meat was derived in the same way as an early modern physician thought about the human body. Just like a human, the animal was exposed to a combination of natural and non-natural factors that had a significant impact on its health. The living animal and the conditions in which it lived influenced and determined the final quality of the meat. Bertaldi compiled a list of nine fundamental considerations that were of critical importance in order to understand how to choose what meat was best to be eaten.[40] Should people decide to eat meat, only two of these nine points were at their discretion: namely, the way in which the meat was cooked and the season or period of the year in which it was consumed. The remaining seven points were: the sex of the animal; whether the animal was castrated or not; the age of the animal; whether the animal was domesticated or lived on wild pastures; the general health of the animal; the species of animals; the types of the animal.[41] In theory, all of these factors had to be considered together to identify the healthiest meat for one's complexion.

The categories used in the classification of meat were shared by cooks and physicians. The discussion of capons by the seventeenth-century Italian cook Bartolomeo Stefani illustrates the perceived importance of the domestication of the animal used as a source of food. Meat derived from capons was praised by many authors. It had the advantage of coming from a castrated animal, with the benefits of having a better temperament compared to a rooster, and of being poultry, and therefore an animal not usually subjected to hard labour. Both caged and free-range capons were considered 'commendable' by Stefani, 'provided that they are fed with proper food such as cooked rice, wheat from Apulia, wheat bran, and other things'.[42] However, Stefani, like many other authors and regarding many animals, had a predilection for free-range capons 'because, provided that they have enough food,

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[40] Bertaldi, *Regole della sanità et natura dei cibi*, sig. N8v.

[41] Bertaldi, sigg. O1r-v.

[42] Bartolomeo Stefani, *L'arte di ben cucinare et istruire i men periti in questa lodevole professione* (Mantua: Osanna, 1662), sig. E2v, 'Sono lodevoli tutti i Capponi, così di campagna, come rinchiusi in gabbia, mentre non manchi loro il pasto, come riso cotto, formentone di Puglia, mondature di Formento, crusca, e altre cose'. Apulia is the second largest flatland in the Italian peninsula, famous for its durum wheat.

they come out more tasty, and of better nourishment than the other, as in many occasions I have personally experienced. The reason might be that they get tired walking around and flying about'.[43] As a human person was expected to get the right amount of exercise to be healthy, an undomesticated animal could provide a healthier and more nourishing meat which ultimately tasted even better, because of the exercise that kept the animal in good health. In England, Thomas Cogan (1545?-1607), a Tudor physician who authored a medical treatise entitled *The Haven of Health* (1584), expressed very similar ideas, stating that 'the flesh of those foules which trust more to their wings, and do breede in high countres, is lighter than the flesh of such as seldome or never flye, and be bred at home. Yet the tame byrdes do nourish more than the wylde, and be more temperate'.[44] Ultimately, the choice was between an animal with meat which was more easily digested but less nourishing, or a meat that required a stronger stomach to be properly digested but which offered much more nourishment.

Some authors focused on these guidelines more than others, but the discourse on meat invariably had some connection to them. In the case of four-footed animals, age was a very important factor. Pisanelli, for example, wrote that 'the goodness of meat is revealed by its age, because the younger the animal, the less problematic it is for the body'.[45] The age of the animal affected the texture of the meat, which in turn influenced the ease of digestion. In the mindset of early modern people, just as the human body lost its heat and vigour as it aged, the flesh of the animal was defined by a similar process. Romoli pointed out how 'This is the general rule, that the flesh of animals are much moister when they are young, and therefore they are easier to digest than those animals of perfect age but of tougher flesh, and they will take

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[43] Stefani, sig. E2v, 'ma io stimo più assai quelli di campagna, e mentre non manchi ad essi il cibo, riescono più gustosi, e di maggiore sostanza degli altri, come in molte occasioni l'esperienza mi hà dimostrato. La ragione puol essere, perchè i Capponi di campagna s'affaticano, caminando, e svolazzando quà, e là'.

[44] Thomas Cogan, *The Haven of Health Chiefly Gathered for the Comfort of Students, and Consequently of All Those That Have a Care of Their Health* (London: Anne Griffin for Roger Ball, 1636), sig. K2r.

[45] Pisanelli, sig. L1r, 'avisando che l'età è quella che distingue le carni, perchè quanto è più giovine l'animale; tanto meno nuoce la carne'.

longer to be digested, and they will last longer in the body'.[46] However, if some physicians praised the moisture, and the tenderness of the flesh of younger animals, and therefore the ease with which the meat could be digested, others condemned precisely this very characteristic. In the *Diet of the Diseased* (1633), Hart pointed out that 'A pigge, the younger it be, the worse it is for health, and ingendereth more glutinous and phlegmaticke humours, and by consequent is a great furtherer of obstructions; and is not to be eaten unless it be of some indifferent age', that is, older than one year.[47]

Pork was considered the most nourishing kind of meat, probably because it had been the most commonly eaten kind of meat during the Middle Ages.[48] Many authors quoted Galen's discussion of the similarity between human flesh and pork, and reported the story, as narrated by Galen, of when 'the flesh of a swine hath such likeness unto mans flesh, both in savour and tast, that some have eaten mans flesh in stede of porke'. And again, 'The swines bloude and mans bloud, be so like in everie thing, that hardly they can be discerned'.[49] The reputation of pork for being extremely nourishing was, once again, linked to its texture. In the early modern period it was believed that the tougher a food was, the longer it took to be concocted by the body, and the more nourishment it was thought to release. This notion explains why sedentary people such as students, intellectuals and in general those who did not have an active lifestyle were told to avoid meat that was difficult to digest, which was usually obtained from four-footed animals. Conversely, it was thought that strong people such as labourers could enjoy meat such as pork without any difficulty, so physicians recommended that they eat it. However, being part of the elite also meant taking part in energy-consuming activities. Hunting, gaming, horsemanship, and physical training were all undertakings that, theoretically, had to

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[46] Romoli, sig. V2r, 'Ma questa è la regola generale, che le carni degli animali quanto son più giovani, tanto son più humide, e perciò si digeriscono più facilmente che quando son degli animali di età perfetta che allhora son più dure, e più tarde si digeriscono; vero è, che digeste perseverano più nel corpo, e più tardi si dissolvono dalle membra'.

[47] Hart, sig. K4v.

[48] Hart, sig. K4v.

[49] Hart, sig. K4v.

be properly fuelled by dense foods.[50] Therefore, it is reasonable that members of the elite were eating meats that were supposed to be the staples of lower strata.

The social classification of meat, and food in general, must be understood and contextualized as a combination of wider socio-economic and medical factors. For Traffichetti, for example, rooster testicles and capons were especially suitable for the human body, because 'their texture is neither too soft or too hard making these ingredients easy to take and of easy distribution'.[51] This ease was indicative of how much work the body, in particular the stomach, had to do in order to digest the meat. Once the nourishing substances had been extracted from the food, they were distributed across the body. The processes of digestion and the distribution of juices derived from the food were inherently related to the levels of nourishment of a particular ingredient. Both roosters and capons were animals that were generally inexpensive to keep, even if there was a cultural notion that associated capons with the nobility and the gentry. In fact, physicians very rarely banned a specific ingredient in their texts. Conversely, alongside reflecting the habits of different social strata, medical texts left the consumer to make individual choices, an approach that reflects the necessity of tailoring a specific meal to the single individual.

Michele Savonarola captured this idea of adapting someone's diet to their taste and humoral needs in the *Trattato utilissimo di molte regole per conservare la sanità* (1554). Discussing the nature of ox meat, Savonarola pointed out how this kind of meat was better suited to 'labourers with a robust stomach', since it was thought to be particularly tough to concoct and digest.[52] The *Trattato utilissimo*, despite being printed in the sixteenth century, was actually written in the previous century and dedicated to Savonarola's master and protector, Borso I d'Este (1413-1471), Duke of Ferrara and first Duke of Modena. Savonarola frequently referred to the specific needs and requirements of his master in the text. Thus, despite ox meat being

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[50] For broader reflections on the levels of physical activity as recommended by early modern physicians and how these interacted with social divisions see Alessandro Arcangeli, 'Del moto e della quiete. Esercizio e igiene nella prima Età moderna', *Medicina & Storia*, 4 (2004), 35–55 and Cavallo and Storey, *Healthy Living in Late Renaissance Italy*, pp. 145–178.

[51] Traffichetti, sig. K6r, 'mezo tra il duro e il mole, tra il denso e il raro, deve essere facile da padire e di facile distributione, quali sono li testicoli del gallo, la polpa di cappone'.

[52] Michele Savonarola, *Trattato utilissimo di molte regole, per conservare la sanità dichiarando qual cose siano utili da mangiare, e quali triste: e medesimamente di quelle che si bevono per Italia* (Venice: Heirs of Giovanni Padovano, 1554), sig. F6r, 'E cibo da artesani con un robusto stomaco'.

theoretically ideal for the lower strata, if the carcasses 'were left a few days in winter, dead, hung to age, even my lord could make use of it, and other delicate foods will correct the malice of this meat'.[53] This short passage sheds light on a fundamental aspect of both meat-eating and healthcare management. Amongst the middle sorts and the nobility, eating habits were regulated by a combination of personal taste, feelings of social belonging and identity construction, and habits of preventive and curative medicine.

Beside the major gap between four-footed animals and fowl, the qualities of a piece of meat were not inherent to specific types. Instead, they depended on the general conditions of the animal at the moment of its death, in combination with the complexion of the final consumer and the way in which the meat was prepared and cooked. The argument that certain meats such as game and poultry were only fit for the nobility, while the meat derived from four-footed animals was good exclusively for the labourers and the poor, works on only on a very general and theoretical level.[54] A close analysis of medical texts and other sources shows how rules were often bent. Certain prejudices might have survived in medical texts as well, but rules or prescriptions were applied flexibly in practice. Advice on healthy eating encompassed a significant degree of flexibility. The next sections of the chapter will try to explore the complexity that surrounded eating habits and health management by looking closely at the two most popular kinds of meats in the early modern period: beef and mutton.

Beef

Beef was one of the most discussed, and lauded, meats within the English early modern medical discourse. Galen argued that beef was able to furnish a great amount of nourishment, that it was difficult to digest and that it generated thick blood: thicker than what would have been suitable for humans. It was considered to be a cold and moist food, and those who were naturally predisposed to melancholy

[53] Savonarola, *Trattato utilissimo di molte regole, per conservare la sanità*, sig. F6r, 'Ma pur se stano al tempo de lo inverno alchuni zorni morti: che se frolischano: ancho potera tua signoria usare de quella che ben con altri delicati cibi se correzera la sua malitia'.

[54] See Grieco, 'Alimentazione e classi sociali nel tardo Medioevo e nel Rinascimento in Italia'.

had to avoid eating it, unless they wanted to suffer from diseases such as 'cancer, elephantiasis, the itch, leprosy, quartan fever and what is called, specifically, melancholia'.[55] Galen's own perspective on beef, though, was not fully shared by English physicians in the early modern period.

Early modern authors and commentators believed that beef was the ideal meat for English people. Reflecting on the stereotype of the English as ferocious meat-eaters, beef consumption can be considered the fulfilment of that stereotype. Thomas Elyot talks clearly of 'Befe of England' which is suitable for 'Englishemen'.[56] The reputation of beef, however, went far beyond the association between the English body and its predisposition to the flesh of English cattle. Cogan, for example, celebrated beef in ways that went far beyond the medical virtues of this meat for the English:

> And because biefe of all flesh is most usuall among English men, I will first intreate thereof. I néede not to shewe howe plentifull it is throughout this land, before all other countries, and howe necessary it is both by sea for the vitayling of shippes, and by lande for good house keeping, insomuch that no man of honour, or worthshippe, can be saide to have good provision for hospitalitie, unlesse there be good store of biefe in readinesse. And how well it doth agree with the nature of English men, the common consent of all our nation doth sufficiently proove. Yea that it bringeth more strong nonrishment than other meates, may plainely be perceived, by the difference of strength in those that commonly feede of biefe, and them that are fedde with other fine meates.[57]

Beef was a type of meat that held more than one meaning for the English, connecting health management with a sense of national belonging. Eating beef was an important factor in building and asserting an English identity, up to the eighteenth century.[58] Cogan was discussing the social and cultural meanings of beef

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[55] Galen, p. 115.

[56] Elyot, *The Castel of Helth*, sig. G4r.

[57] Cogan, sigg. P1r-v.

[58] Ben Rogers, *Beef and Liberty: Roast Beef, John Bull and the English Patriots* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2003). See also Anita Guerrini, 'Health, National Character and the English Diet in 1700', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 43 (2012), 349–56.

alongside its humoral qualities and medical reputation, and this passage is indicative of the role played by this particular type of meat in the early modern English social landscape. Discussing the relationship between the genres of medical texts and courtesy books, Steven Shapin argued that despite the differences and the controversies between the two what 'was considered dietetically good *for* you was also accounted *morally*'.[59] Beef in England was illustrative of the combination of medical and moral values which was characteristic of the early modern period. Gervase Markham labelled cattle as a 'noble dish … usefull for every man' precisely because of beef's ever-growing reputation.[60]

In England, cattle livestock was a growing market at the time, and the way in which cows were butchered and consumed generated a clear separation between a family economy model based on pork, characteristic of the medieval period, and a new 'livestock industry' which put the city at the centre of the meat landscape. Social distinctions in the consumption of cows and pigs started to emerge in this period. Butchering a cow was a complex activity, which involved precise structures which went beyond the capability of a single family.[61] Ken Albala argued that unlike elsewhere in Europe, in early modern England cows were 'scientifically' raised for the table.[62] Albala's terminology is odd, but historians agree that there was a significant increase in beef consumption during the early modern period, despite some regional differences that should be taken into account. For example, between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, in Kent the number of households keeping cattle almost doubled from 13 to 21 percent, with an increase in the average number of steers and bullocks per herd from 5.5 to 8.7.[63] A similar change took place in Suffolk at the turn of the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries. Ploughmen and farmers held cows in high regard because they were good for hard work in the

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[59] Steven Shapin, 'How to Eat Like a Gentleman: Dietetics and Ethics in Early Modern England', in *Right Living: An Anglo-American Tradition of Self-Help Medicine and Hygiene*, ed. by Charles E. Rosenberg (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 2003), pp. 21–58 (p. 22).

[60] Gervase Markham, *A Way to Get Wealth* (London: Roger Iackson, 1625), sig. X1v.

[61] Montanari, *The Culture of Food*, pp. 74–76.

[62] Ken Albala, *Food in Early Modern Europe* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2003), p. 63.

[63] Overton and others, p. 44.

fields, and when the animals were sold their owners could make good money from them.[64] Cows therefore had a range of benefits for the English.

When addressing cultural meanings of beef, regionality is a factor that is particularly important. Gentilcore observed how early modern physicians 'domesticated' Galen in their texts, usually in order to promote particular kinds of foods over others, as English writers did for beef.[65] Cogan, for example, argued against Galen and other authorities who, in his opinion, 'have erred in that they make the biefe of all countries alike'.[66] Nonetheless, Cogan did take the problematic complexion of beef into consideration in his discourse. For Cogan, beef was a cold and moist meat, and therefore, as quite strongly asserted by the Greek and Arabic traditions, it had a strong melancholic connotation.[67] All the same, for Cogan, English 'climate, which through coldnesse […] doth fortifie digestion […] requireth stronger nourishment' which in turn meant that people had to eat beef to survive the harsh conditions.[68] In doing so Cogan gave more importance to the nutritional value of beef over its humoral connotations, when compared with the fact that its melancholy qualities could be even more detrimental than usual, in a cold climate such as England's. The stereotype of the English as being tremendous meat-eaters was more closely related to beef consumption than to any other specific form of meat.

The significance of beef for the English went beyond issues of food supply or medical advice, and in time became tied in with ideas of national identity. Hungary and Poland also had a reputation for good beef and veal, but these according to Hart – who was certainly biased in this instance – were nothing in comparison with England since 'there is no countrie in the world that can parallel farre lesse exceed our beeves and veale'.[69] It is also possible to find references to beef and national stereotypes in popular works such as Shakespeare's plays. Beef was thought to be a food which provided strength and ferocity, as the Constable of France notes, talking about the Englishmen, in *Henry V*: 'and then give them great meals of beef and iron

[64] Thirsk, *Alternative Agriculture. A History From the Black Death to the Present Day*, p. 8.
[65] Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 85–86.
[66] Cogan, sig. P1v.
[67] Cogan, sig. P1v.
[68] Cogan, sig. P1v.
[69] Hart, sig. K4v.

and steel, they will eat like wolves and fight like devils'. The Duke of Orléans responds ironically that before the end of the night the French would have captured 'a hundred Englishmen' each, due to the lack of beef in that region.[70] However, the English stereotype of being dependent on meat, and beef in particular, was not necessarily based on these accounts alone. Shakespeare's use of popular accounts that associated beef-eating, Englishness and military voracity was only one aspect of the complex relationship that the English had with beef.

Muldrew has shown how beef was central to the diet of labourers.[71] However, beef was frequently consumed by members of the elites as well, even if this was not advisable in light of contemporary understandings of their complexions. Lady Lisle received a letter from her physician, Dr Le Coop, in 1538, in which the doctor suggest that she should alter her dietetic regimen significantly in order to get better. Le Coop advised Lady Lisle to eat only twice a day, and nothing after supper. More specifically:

> At your repasts or meat, ye shall not use of cold meats as powdered beef that is cold, or cold veal. Ye shall not eat of gross meats, beef of all venison flesh, except of pheasants, nor of mutton, but seldom and little, for it engendereth slymysh humours. Ye may use of capon stewed, of the broth of the same, and also of capon's flesh, and of hens, chickens, perdris [partridges], pigeons, woodcocks.[72]

The physician believed that Lady Lisle should follow a diet that was based on broths, because the texture of broths was appropriate for the weakened stomach of a convalescent. He advised that these broths should be made out of those meats most in line with her complexion, 'a cold complexion, as it appeareth by your colour and your flesh which [is], very delicate'. If these meats were theoretically suitable for her social status, the letter and the worried tone of the doctor suggests that she was very fond of all these meats that he considered to be responsible for the persistence of the disease. She ate beef, both warm and cold, which was considered bad for her health.

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[70] William Shakespeare, *Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. by G. B. Harrison (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1952), *Henry V*, Act III, Scene 7.

[71] Muldrew, p. 38.

[72] Calendar of State Papers Domestic, SP 3/14, f. 92, Dr Le Coop to Lady Lisle, 1538.

However, theory is one thing, practice is another. Despite being considered unsuitable for thinkers and students, according to Erasmus beef was a staple in the diet of Thomas More, along with other foods, since 'His favorite diet is beef, salt meats and coarse brown bread well fermented'.[73] Beef was consistently present in the diet of the Marquess of Exeter as well, as shown in the account of his personal expenses; he also regularly ate pork and mutton.[74]

The approach of English physicians demonstrates that the shortcomings of beef could be overlooked, particularly when considering questions of national identity or prioritising the body over a single ingredient. English authors did not ignore nor neglect the problematic aspects of beef within the humoral scheme. They knew it was cold and moist and that it was not, theoretically, ideal for the English climate. However, eating beef was deemed good precisely because of the body that ate it. In the view of these authors, the English body was specifically made for the hostile English environment, so what was problematic in other circumstances, such as the tough texture of beef, was part of the solution. The difficulties that the body might have had in concocting this meat, and therefore the excessive nourishment that the body gained from it, were the solution to the problem of survival in such a cold and moist environment.

Mutton

While in England mutton was considered fairly consistently to be a good kind of meat for every complexion, Italian medical views about mutton were quite varied. All of these variations were reflected in the vocabulary used by the authors. English authors almost invariably referred to the flesh of sheep as 'mutton', and almost never talked about 'ram', an adult male sheep, or 'wether', a castrated ram. Italian authors frequently made us of the word 'castrato' or 'castrone', which literally means 'gelded', to describe an animal which was butchered and eaten after its first year of life. In Italy, the words 'castrato' and 'castrone' were only used with reference to sheep. Traffichetti, in a section about what people should eat in autumn, when 'the

[73] Calendar of State Papers Domestic, Erasmus to Hutten, 23 July, 1519.

[74] Calendar of State Papers Domestic, The Marquess of Exeter, Personal expenses.

air gets cooler as much as our body', advised his readers to avoid those foods that spoil easily, such as fruits and milk, and to take their nourishment from foods like 'chicken or castrato' instead.[75]

The vocabulary used for mutton reflected the medical ideas of meat discussed above. The different types of mutton were shaped by the age, sex and castration of the animal. In Italy, *montone*, a ungelded wether, or a ram, was considered in a negative way. The consumption of this animal was not thought to be good for health, and physicians aimed to discourage people from eating it; conversely, the *castrone* was assessed in a very positive way. In the *Trattato utilissimo*, Savonarola wrote about 'all of those things that are most commonly eaten and drunk in Italy'. This text exemplifies the extent to which the discourse on the ovine – the meat of the sheep – was very different in Italy and England. Savonarola's medical opinion of these animals varied extensively: in the paragraph 'Della pecora, della carne dell'agnello, del castrone e del montone' he discussed meat which derived respectively from the female sheep, the lamb, the gelded adult male sheep (the wether) and the whole adult male sheep (the ram).[76] Following the order set by the author, the meat of the female sheep (the *pecora*) was too dry to be nourishing and 'molto cativa' – very bad – especially when the animal was old and at the end of her life. Instead, when the *pecora* was younger the meat was thought to be more wholesome. The flesh of the lamb was better, but only if it was not still drinking the milk of the mother, otherwise its meat was too hot and moist and full of 'phlegm' and 'como indigestibile' (almost indigestible). This type of meat was perceived to be noxious because it was perceived to be both hot and moist, qualities related to a sanguine complexion, and therefore blood; and full of phlegm, thereby cold and moist. Savonarola might have used the word 'phlegm' as a substitute for 'bad juices', which was a common way of expressing generic concerns towards some foods by using a humoral vocabulary. The meat of the *castrone* was therefore considered the most wholesome, while the *montone* was considered to be noxious. Savonarola could not be clearer, writing: 'the meat of the *montone* is very unwholesome, of both young and old animals … and since it would be a waste of money to even buy it, I shall not

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[75] Traffichetti, p. 87.

[76] Savonarola, *Trattato utilissimo di molte regole, per conservare la sanità*, sig. F5v.

discuss the issue and I'll maintain my silence'.[77] For him, there was no reason to buy mutton derived from *montone*, because regardless of the way in which it was cooked, it would be bad for the health of the body. Although the vast majority of Italian physicians' opinions of mutton were not positive, there were exceptions for meat derived from the ovines.

In some texts, such as Benzi's *Regole della sanità*, it is possible to find positive views of *montone*, provided it was gelded and younger than one year. In this instance, Benzi did not call it *castrone* probably because the animal was not considered fully adult if it had been killed before the one-year mark. Meat from animals which were older than one year was thought to be too dry to be eaten and Bertaldi wrote that 'it should be left aside'.[78] A preference for meat from young animals was also a feature of a *scalco* handbook which was very popular in Renaissance Italy, the *Libro novo nel qual s'insegna a far d'ogni sorte di vivanda* (1549), by Christoforo di Messisbugo (c. 1500-1548), cook and steward at the house of Este in Ferrara. This treatise was, like the previous text, a guide to managing the kitchen of a big household. Despite the promise of the title to address every way of cutting and preparing any kind of meat, *castrone* and lamb were the only types of meat derived from sheep which featured in the book. This evidence suggests that Renaissance banquet literature, in proposing the consumption of lambs and gelded sheep, instead of the whole adult animal, was in complete accordance with the medical culture of the time.[79]

Conversely, the vocabulary used in English medical and culinary texts which mention mutton did not reflect the complexity and diversity of Italian attitudes toward this type of meat. Instead, the word 'mutton' was used most of the time without discrimination, and the opinions of physicians and other authors were fairly positive about this type of meat. However, despite the differences between the views of mutton in Italy and England, authors expressed their thoughts according to the

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[77] Savonarola, *Trattato utilissimo di molte regole, per conservare la sanità*, sig. F5v, 'La carne del montone e molto cativa, e de zoveni, e de vechij, ma piu e qui da considerare che la loro antiquita, e piu laudata che la zovena. E il perche seria perdere la spesa vogliendola per condimento cuosere. Imperho quello con scilentio lassaro preterire'.

[78] Bertaldi, *Regole della sanità et natura dei cibi*, sig. T6v, 'Lasciandosi di usare la carne de vecchi'.

[79] Cristoforo di Messisbugo, *Libro novo nel qual s'insegna a far d'ogni sorte di vivanda* (Venice, 1559), sig. A4r.

same medical categories and guidelines. In *The Haven of Health*, Cogan noted that despite mutton being present in the work of contemporary physicians, Galen himself did not devote much space to it in his treatises.[80] The medical position of Cogan was situated between classical and medieval medical authorities, such as Galen and the school of Salerno, and the habits and practices of the English people who might read his text.[81] In his opinion, discussing lamb and mutton together made Galen think that both meats were unwholesome by association. According to Cogan, Galen did not consider that mutton derived from different places could have different qualities. In England, Cogan said, experience proved that eating mutton derived from a young and temperate beast engendered the production of good juices for the body, 'And therefore it is used more than anie other meate, both in sickenesse and in health'.[82] Cogan drew heavily on Elyot, who had written that mutton was 'right temperate' and it was common knowledge that it made good juices and good blood and, because of these qualities, it was a beneficial kind of meat for the sick to eat.[83] Elyot also insisted that the uses of the animal while still alive could affect the quality of the meat, once this was killed and butchered. Sheep that provided good wool were believed to have tougher and less sweet meat, but even if the sheep was old, its meat was always preferable to that derived from kid, a young goat, because of its easiness of digestion, and the 'whytenes, tendernesse, and swetenesse' of its flesh.[84]

Mutton was considered such a valuable kind of meat that Hart recommended it to everyone, which goes against the importance of individuality so often highlighted in the Greek medical tradition. The quality of a specific ingredient, whether cold, hot, moist or dry, was not the only consideration to be made. The second factor which was essential in an appropriate dietetic regimen was the individual. Despite the descriptive character of the regimens, with long lists of good and bad foods and the effect that each had on the body, every single ingredient had to be thought about in relation to the man, woman or child who was going to eat it. However, despite the differences between the four complexions mutton remained, in

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[80] Cogan, sig. P2r.

[81] Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance*, pp. 39–40.

[82] Cogan, sig. P2r.

[83] Elyot, *The Castel of Helth*, sigg. G4r-v.

[84] Elyot, *The Castel of Helth*, sigg. G4r-v.

Hart's view, 'a very good nourishment for any age or sex, and is very wholesome for the body of man'.[85] In England, medical notions may have been influenced by what was considered to be usual and typical, leading to this perception of mutton as good for everyone. As previously discussed, English physicians also considered beef to be ideal for every complexion.

Gervase Markham commented on the overall fame of mutton in England by saying that 'The good housewife' should be able to 'feed the poore as the rich', and Markham started his discussion on boiled meats with mutton for this very reason.[86] In Markham's view, mutton was popular with rich and poor alike because it was one of those 'ordinary wholesome meates, which are of use in every good mans house' and its legs 'are the best'.[87] Markham's argument is completely detached from the medical view of the time, and it suggests that a type of meat that had been considered as a non-staple for the elites for a long time were widely consumed by all social strata. The importance of the wool trade for England in this period may have stimulated this interest in mutton. Wool production and export was a pillar of the English economy, which seems to have affected interest in mutton, leading to it being highly regarded even beyond its good medical properties. Beef and mutton were consumed by poorer people as well as by members of the elite, and this was not only socially accepted, but also medically tolerated. In the next section I will explore cooking processes and combinations of ingredients which were considered medically sound, to demonstrate how meat-eating was much more common across the social spectrum than previously thought, as well as how elites in Italy and England ate red meat as well as poultry.

Cooking and consumption

The opening of this chapter discussed the view that the English were strongly associated with meat consumption, whereas Italians were more oriented towards herbs, roots and fruit. In Castelvetro's view, the summer heat in Italy was so strong that 'in such a temperature one can hardly bear to look at [meat], let alone eat

[85] Hart, sig. L1r.
[86] Markham, *The English Housewife*, sig. F7v.
[87] Markham, *The English Housewife*, sig. F7v.

[it]'.[88] Castelvetro was worried that eating meat under the sun of the Italian summers could thicken the blood with serious consequences for people's health.[89] According to Castelvetro, the reasons for this position were straightforward: first, the soil in Italy was thought to be not as fertile as in England or in France, and therefore it was not possible to provide enough pasture for the cattle; second, it was dangerous to eat meat in the extreme heat that pervaded Italy in the summer months. However, these remarks were influenced by his agenda of promoting vegetable consumption in England more than anything else. In the *Brieve racconto* he expended a great of effort in trying to convince people to eat more herbs, roots and fruit by suggesting effective combinations of ingredients, as in the section on salads discussed in Chapter one. Similarly, Castelvetro suggests many cooking methods to persuade his readership that a healthy consumption of such ingredients was indeed possible. He did not, however, do the same for meat, but simply because he was not that interested in doing it, not because it was not considered possible. This last section of the chapter will examine overall patterns of meat consumption that, I argue, resonate with the medical philosophy of the time.

Procedures of cookery and preservation were significant in dealing with meat, and were closely related to the importance of humoral balance and to the physical characteristics of the single individual. In England, Boorde agreed with Elyot's medical views on beef, but he pushed even further in recommending eating beef which had been 'moderatly poudered', in order to counterbalance the innate moisture of this meat.[90] Powdering was a process of preservation that involved dressing the food with salt in order to make it last for long periods. In this instance, salt was thought to balance beef's humoral qualities. At the same time, however, Boorde's recommendation that it should be used in moderation reflects a concern that excessive salt could be harmful, probably because it might dry up the body. Boorde shared his opinion of beef with many other English doctors: 'Befe is good meate for the Englysch man', provided that the beef was not eaten when smoked, otherwise it induced the desire to drink, and it was thought, when excessively

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[88] Castelvetro, p. 78, 'è per lo caldo grande che nove mesi dell'anno vi fa, che ci fa in guisa venire a noia la carne … che non la possiam vedere, non dico mangiare'.

[89] Castelvetro, p. 78.

[90] Boorde, sigg. F1v-F2r.

smoked, to be bad for the kidneys and that it was of 'evyl digestion'.[91] The process of smoking, like salting, was believed to remove some of the meat's excessive inherent moisture, which made it less noxious for the phlegmatic body.

Cooks and physicians shared a responsibility to ensure that their patrons and readers could benefit from their food in terms of their health. The process of cooking was closely correlated to the complexion of specific types of meat, in order to produce a dish which was as enjoyable and as nourishing as possible. When meat was overcooked, the excessive dryness led people to believe that its nourishing power had been lost, whereas an undercooked piece of meat was believed to be noxious. Medical regimens and household handbooks are full of very specific cooking advice. According to Markham, for example, roast lamb was expected to be white, 'yet thoroughly roasted', and spit roasted pork was considered perfectly cooked when its eyes had fallen out, an excellent indicator of the ideal cooking point of pork that could be understood, remembered and applied quite easily even by non-professionals.[92] Importantly, any cooking method was dependent on fuel. Households of different backgrounds chose between different cooking methods, at least at certain times of the year. Households with lower incomes may have had to rely on cheaper fuel, which risked depleting the medical benefits of their food. For example, meat could be easily boiled over coal, which required less wood and also permitted the making of soups and broths. However, while boiling meat was the cheapest option, it also depleted the ingredients of some of their nourishing qualities. Roasting, on the other hand, had the dual benefit of using wood for cooking purposes and for warming the room or the house. Furthermore, the roasting process was less invasive than boiling meats, and the fat lost during the roasting process could be collected and re-used for a multitude of different purposes, thereby preserving calories.[93] Cooking meats in the appropriate manner helped them to retain their medical potential, in terms of both the quality of the humours that were engendered in the body and the amount of nourishment that meat could provide.

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[91] Boorde, sigg. F1v-F2r.

[92] Markham, *The English Housewife*, sigg. G4v-G5r.

[93] Muldrew, *Food, Energy*, p. 101.

According to the Galenic-Hippocratic framework, eating food that tasted good helped an individual maintain good health. This notion was still very much in place in the early modern period and was constantly reasserted by physicians, promoting the idea of health management more widely. Traffichetti, for example, argued that 'Good foods are recognizable by their good taste'.[94] The ability to evaluate if what people were eating was good for them was essential, especially when considering the perfect cooking point of meat. In his discussion of mutton, Cogan said that it should be eaten under-roasted 'for it is seldome seene that any man hath taken harme by eating rawe mutton, so light and wholesome it is in digestion'.[95] Despite the terminology used here by Cogan, it is unlikely that he was seriously suggesting eating raw mutton. By comparing mutton's flesh to veal he remarked that the former would have been better 'under roasted' in comparison to the latter.[96] This precise statement has been labelled by Albala as 'blatantly outlandish' and used to argue that this kind of unusual advice in this literature can be read as an indicator of the increasing problems that the Galenic framework was undergoing in this period.[97] Even so, Cogan remained in line with other English authors in highlighting the fame of mutton in England and his statements around the cooking process should be read more as an invitation to process and adulterate mutton's flesh as little as possible precisely because of its inherent good qualities. The importance of wholesome foods for the body, and how these should not be heavily altered through cooking processes, was a notion that was already in place in Galen's time.[98] However, medical advice or not, it was clear in the mind of mutton-eaters that eating raw meat was neither healthy nor good and they deliberately avoided doing so. On 3 February 1660, for instance, Samuel Pepys ordered his dinner, a leg of mutton and a bottle of wine, at Wilkinson's, his favourite restaurant in King Street. Pepys states how he and his friends ordered it 'to be roasted as well as it could be done', but once the meat arrived he sadly realized that it was raw, and had to wait for it to be stewed.[99] Despite the difference in Pepys' account between the roasting – as the mutton was

[94] Traffichetti, sig. K7r, 'Li buoni cibi si conoscono dalli buoni sapori'.

[95] Cogan, sig. P2v.

[96] Cogan, sig. P2v.

[97] Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance*, p. 272.

[98] Galen, p. 15.

[99] Pepys, 3 February 1660.

ordered – and the stewing of the meat – the cooking method recorded by Pepys to finish cooking the meat – the diary entry is still revealing of attitudes towards undercooked meat in this period.

Eating overcooked meat also seemed undesirable to early modern people. An exchange in Act IV of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* reveals a shared view that meat had an ideal cooking point. When Petruchio was served overcooked meat, he points out quite explicitly why eating it would be a mistake. His reaction of throwing food and cutlery all over the stage was a deliberate attempt to tame Katharina by preventing her from eating, and his reasoning on humours, overcooked meat, and choleric complexion reads like an extract from a medical regimen of the time.

Petruchio

> [The mutton] 'Tis burnt; and so is all the meat.
>
> What dogs are these! Where is the rascal cook?
>
> How durst you, villains, bring it from the dresser,
>
> And serve it thus to me that love it not?
>
> Theretake it to you, trenchers, cups, and all;
>
> [*Throws the meat, & c. about the stage*]
>
> You heedless joltheads and unmanner'd slaves!
>
> What, do you grumble? I'll be with you straight.

Katharina

> I pray you, husband, be not so disquiet:

The meat was well, if you were so contented.

Petruchio

I tell thee, Kate, 'twas burnt and dried away;

And I expressly am forbid to touch it,

For it engenders choler, planteth anger;

And better 'twere that both of us did fast,

Since, of ourselves, ourselves are choleric,

Than feed it with such over-roasted flesh.[100]

This example confirms how ideas of how meat was supposed to be eaten were not confined to the elite. Quoting this very same passage from the play, Albala commented that people witnessing this scene in the theatre 'had probably already learned to ignore and ridicule dietary dogma', as the scene as Shakespeare wrote it is intended to be a comic one.[101] Regardless of whether people ridiculed or ignored these medical precepts, the passage certainly highlights ways in which people had the chance to learn, assimilate and apply these medical and culinary notions. In any case, besides the importance of reaching the perfect cooking point, the meat had to be dressed properly, and consumed in combination with ingredients that could effectively match its humoral qualities, in order to be healthy and nourishing for the consumer.

In England today, beef is often eaten with mustard or horseradish. These combinations demonstrate how humorally sound food arrangements were so

[100] Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, Act I, Scene I.

[101] Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance*, p. 3.

important and widespread that they became cultural references of England in the world. Beef, probably because of its popularity and because any cook was expected to be able to roast it, did not feature extensively in English cookery books of the time. Nonetheless, the combination of beef and mustard features in *The Taming of the Shrew*. In this scene, Katharina is being starved by Petruchio, in an attempt to calm down her temper. As a consequence of Petruchio's actions, Katharina is now looking for something to eat, preferably something healthy. However, she is confronted with the medical meticulousness of the servant, Grumio, who decides not to feed her any meat that could harm her:

Katharina

I prithee go and get me some repast;

I care not what, so it be wholesome food.

Grumio

What say you to a neat's foot?

Katharina

'Tis passing good: I prithee let me have it.

Grumio

I fear it is too choleric a meat.

How say you to a fat tripe finely broil'd?

Katharina

I like it well: good Grumio, fetch it me.

Grumio

I cannot tell; I fear 'tis choleric.

What say you to a piece of beef and mustard?

Katharina

A dish that I do love to feed upon.

Grumio

Ay, but the mustard is too hot a little.

Katharina

Why then, the beef, and let the mustard rest.

Grumio

Nay then, I will not: you shall have the mustard,

Or else you get no beef of Grumio.

Katharina

Then both, or one, or any thing thou wilt.

Grumio

Why then, the mustard without the beef.

Katharina

Go, get thee gone, thou false deluding slave,

[*Beats him*][102]

This passage indicates the extent to which humoral theory pervaded everyday life and thought in the early modern period. The accessibility of these medical concepts is underlined by Shakespeare's placing of these words in a servant's mouth. Grumio is responsible for ensuring that Katharina eats something healthy. Having decided that both tripe and a neat's foot were far too choleric, and therefore dangerous for Katharina's temper, he chooses beef, and decides to temper its cold and moist qualities with something hot and dry, preferably something hot up to the fourth degree, like mustard, which he cannot give her, because it is hot like her temper.[103] Beef and mustard were certainly popular. Numerous other types of meat were also combined with other ingredients, often with herbs and fruit, in accordance with humoral thinking.

In recipe books it is possible to find strong and recurrent associations of ingredients. In England, mutton was consumed widely, and sometimes in expensive preparations which would have been beyond the means of the lower sorts, by associating it with citrus fruits for example. The chef Robert May used mutton and other meats, to make stuffing for several recipes, especially using meat from the legs

[102] Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, Act I, Scene III.

[103] Dodoens, sig. Fff4r.

of the animal.[104] It is also directly relatable to what Harrison said about cooks from the continent coming to England: 'whose cookes are for the most part musicall headed Frenchmen and strangers'.[105] In this period, foreign cooks who travelled to England to work in English households introduced a number of culinary fashions and habits to the English gastronomic landscape. Mutton was also consumed roasted and shredded. Recipes of French or Scottish traditions with mutton are also recorded. They go along with what is sustained by Cogan, the cook had to be careful to 'broil them not too dry', paying attention when the meat started to release blood in order to stop the cooking process at the perfect point.[106] All of these recipes, nonetheless, involved the use of a large amount of spices, and very often red or white wine or alternatively broth made from of the same meat in advance. All of these ingredients contributed to the final humoral outcome of the meal, in their unique and distinctive ways. For example, to roast a rack of mutton a pint of Claret, the same quantity of water, salt, pepper, onions, and several unspecified sweet herbs 'bound up hard' were needed. 'For change', ingredients could be added to the meat, such as warm 'Gooseberries, Barberries, Grapes, or Lemon'. Again, the possibility of modifying recipes using herbs or dressings to make them suit specific complexions confirms how the medical and the social came together. Mutton was also cooked with raisins, prunes, currants, dates, sliced lemon, whipped butter, nutmeg, cloves, ginger, pickled cucumbers, and samphire. The combination of mutton and oysters features in a number of texts. For example, May's work contains a recipe entitled 'To roste a Shoulder of mutton in a most excellent new way with Oysters and other materials'. The ingredients include anchovies, artichokes, cream, butter and the marrow of six bones to make the sauce to serve on top of the meat.[107]

Mutton and lemon was a very well-known combination. One recipe involving this combination appeared in a small book written by a certain A. W. in 1587, entitled *A Book of Cookrye: Very Necessary for All Such as Delight Therein*.[108] This text also

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[104] May, sig. D8r.

[105] Holinshed, p. 166.

[106] May, sigg. F7v-F8r.

[107] May, sig. K6r. See also Wilson, *Food and Drink in Britain. From the Stone Age to recent times*, p. 313.

[108] A. W., *A Book of Cookrye: Very Necessary for All Such as Delight Therein* (London: Edward Allde, 1587), sig. B3r.

proposed that mutton also went well boiled with endive, borage or lettuce, while in order to make a broth out of mutton for sick people it was necessary to cook the meat with a crust of bread, fennel roots, parsley, coriander and 'herbs according as the pacient is'.[109] This last passage indicates the uniqueness of each individual complexion and condition, and confirms the role played by herbs and spices, used as corrective ingredients, in relating specific kind of foods to specific needs of the body. From a medical perspective, lemon was believed to be wholesome for the digestive process and useful to cure diseases and complications related to eating. John Pechey, a physician who graduated from Oxford and who was a member of the London College of Physicians, argued in his *A Plain Introduction to The Art of Physick* that lemons 'excite Appetite, stop vomiting, cut gross Humours, are good in malignant Fevers, and kill Worms'.[110] Lemon was thought to help the body to digest foods that it might have struggled to deal with. However, meat was served with all sorts of fruit and herbs, not just lemons. John Murrell, an English cook trained on the continent, lists many recipes of different types of meat to be either served or cooked along many different types of fruit in his *Two Books of Cookerie*. For example, there is a recipe to bake a pig with parboiled currants on top of it, and another on how to bake a whole chicken with grapes.[111] A recipe for 'A Florentine of a Cony, the wing of a Capon, or the Kidney of Veale' indicates to 'Mince any of these [meats] with sweet herbs, parboyld currans, a date … and a piece of a preferred orange or lemmon'.[112] These combinations of ingredients were not confined to the thoughts of recipe compilers, nor were they only the expressions of the strange desires of rich English people. Instead, these recipes promoted, although not explicitly, the potential to humorally tailor meat-based preparations according to the health necessities of the consumers.

Across Europe, this idea of cooking meat with a whole range of fruit was shared and accepted as the norm. The Italian painter Vincenzo Campi (c. 1530/35-1591) and his Flemish colleague Joachim Bueckelaer (c. 1533-c. 1570/74) depicted scenes based on everyday life and captured the combinations of ingredients that

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[109] A. W., sigg. B3r-v.

[110] John Pechey, *A plain introduction to the art of phisick … Also a collection of choice medicines chymical and Galenical* (London: Henry Bonwicke, 1697), sig. F4r.

[111] John Murrell, *Two Books of Cookerie and Carving* (London: John Marriot, 1638), sigg. C3r, C4r.

[112] Murrell, sig. B7r.

were inspired by the medical philosophy of the time. Figure 1 shows *The Poultry Seller* (1590-91) by Campi. In this painting a woman and a young man are busy killing birds and preparing them for butchering. The scene is characterised by a wide range of different animals both alive and dead, free and caged. Most of them are poultry of many different sorts, but there are also a couple of sheep and what looks like a dead hare. On the top, across a set of hung birds, Campi painted a lemon, which is the only reference to the plant world in this painting, and which specifically recalls the combination of ingredients discussed above. Figure 2 shows *The Well-stocked Kitchen* (1566) by Bueckelaer. This painting also depicts a number of different animals, including poultry, rabbits, and a hare, with a piece of what looks like a butchered cow in the foreground. Bueckelaer stresses the relationship between meat and herbs, roots and fruit in a much stronger fashion than Campi. In the foreground it is possible to see a wide variety of these food which were often eaten in combination with meat: roots, grapes, peaches, apricots, artichokes, cucumbers, a melon, and a whole tray of lemons next to the poultry in the background. All of these ingredients were thought to cool down the hotness of the meat, or to alter its qualities in a significant way. The associations of meat with these ingredients was not a coincidence. Instead, these two paintings indicate how medical knowledge was deeply embedded in culinary traditions.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted medical notions of meat and emphasised techniques and theoretical ideas that early modern people had to master in order to choose a healthy type of meat for their own complexion and health conditions. Scholarship on meat has suggested that the consumption of this ingredient was especially bound up with social status. Specifically, scholars have argued that the elites ate poultry while the poorer mostly ate four-footed animals. This major differentiation relied on the distinction made between meats that were easy to digest and meats that, theoretically, were instead considered more appropriate for the complexions of the labourers. My research has challenged the rigidity of these ideas and explored how culinary and medical literature was open to variations and adjustments in everyday life. I have also revealed that people were willing to buy and consume meat in ways that were both in line with and in deliberate contravention of medical advice.

Whether it was Savonarola's master in the fourteenth century, Lady Lisle in the sixteenth century, or Pepys in the seventeenth century, it is clear that elites consumed meat of all sorts, from poultry down to beef and mutton. There were theoretical boundaries rooted in social habits that reflected medical advice and vice-versa. However, these boundaries between social groups were flexible and not always respected. Beef was central to Englishness, and many recipes featuring mutton, a very cheap type of meat, were written in fashions that were not cheap, nor easily affordable. A close reading of medical texts and recipe collections has shown how most of the combinations of meat with fruit, herbs, and spices were rooted in the medical theory of the time. Moreover, both literary and visual sources demonstrate the extent to which such combinations of ingredients were common knowledge, and how easy it was for anybody to capture the medical implications of what they were witnessing. These ideas and practices underpin the continued popularity today of common combinations, such as gammon and pineapple in England, and prosciutto and melon in Italy.

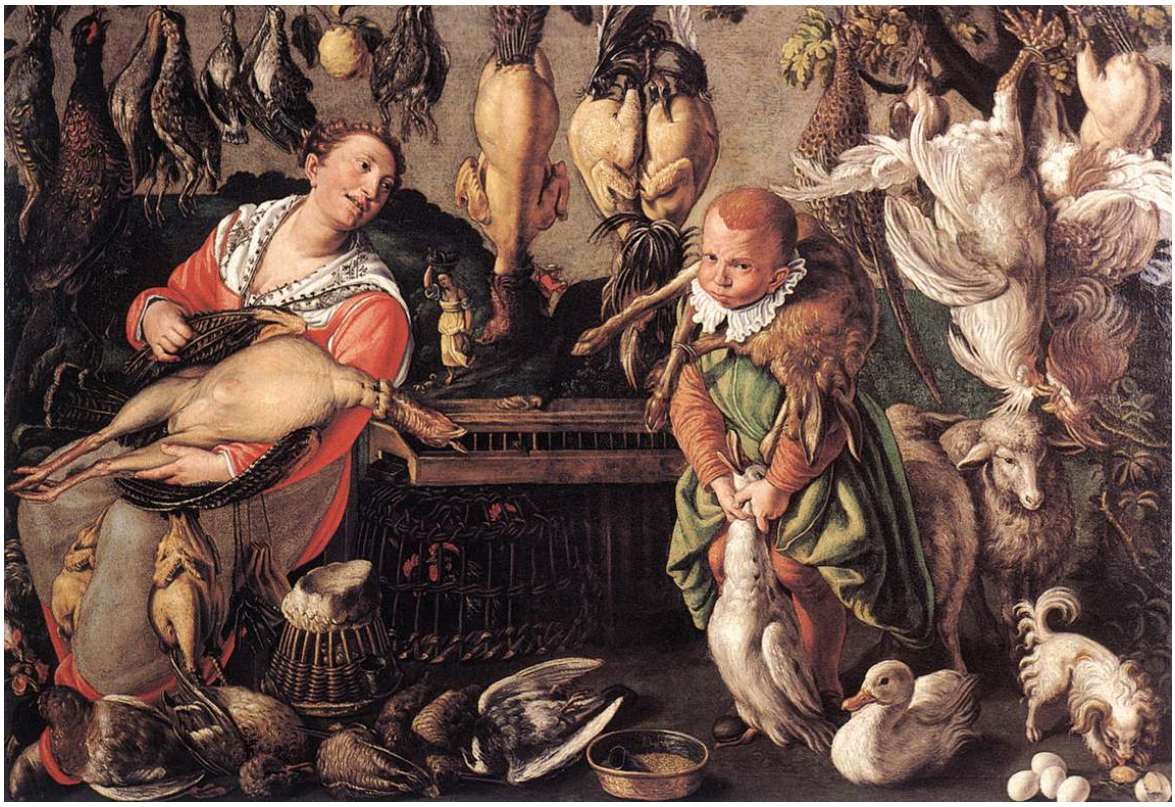

Figure 2. Vincenzo Campi, *The Poultry Seller*, 1590-91, Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan

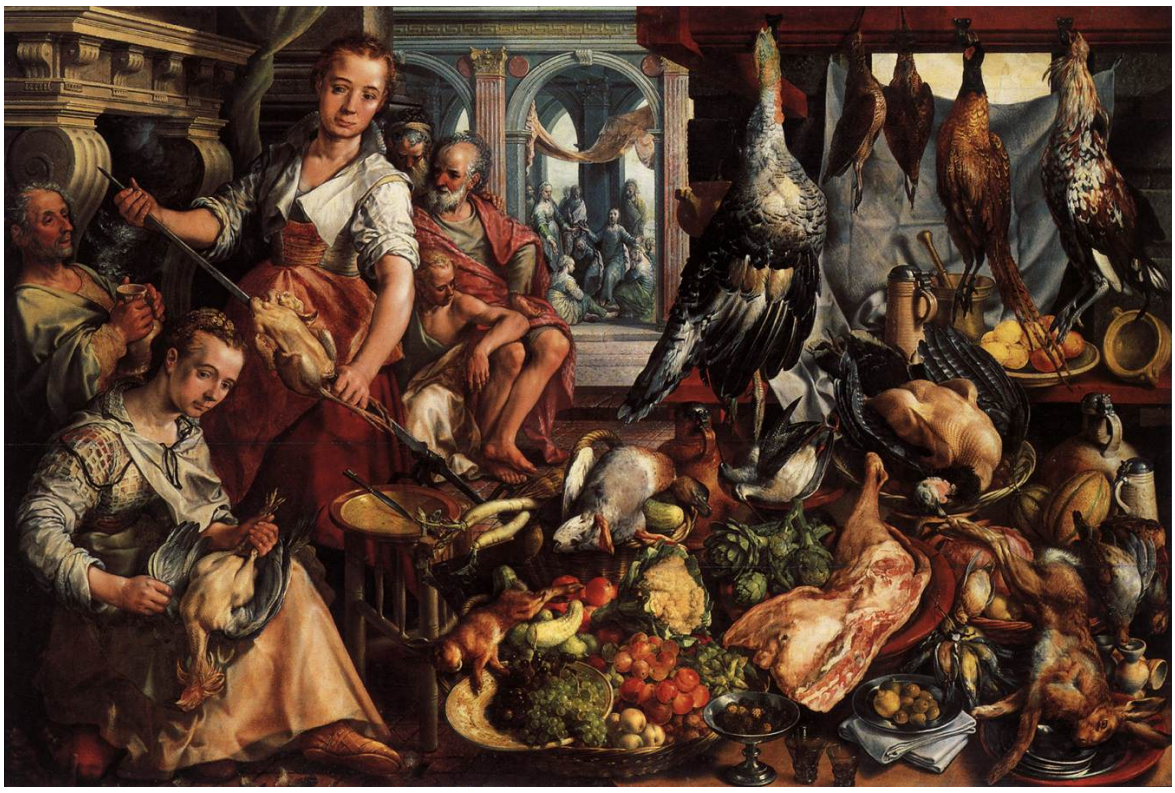

Figure 3. Joachim Bueckelaer, *The Well-stocked Kitchen*, 1566, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

Chapter 3

Wine

Alcohol in early modern Europe

Alcohol was an important component of early modern people's diet. In England, for example, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, hopped ale replaced the previous drink made of unhopped ale. This new stronger beverage was used by labourers as an important source of energy for their work, a point which was often noted by physicians and other authors writing in this period.[1] In Italy, instead, wine was a major commodity for a wide range of people who needed nourishment for their daily activities. For example, workers in the Venetian Arsenal, an institution defined by Frederic C. Lane as 'the biggest industrial establishment in all Christendom, perhaps the biggest in the world', were provided with large quantities of wine on each working day.[2] This arrangement was in place, according to the historian Robert Davis, to improve 'workplace tranquillity' and 'civic harmony', and was also an important 'source of stimulation' for the workmen.[3] Early modern labourers in Italy drank wine extensively, especially during their working hours. They generally drank wines with a strong dark colour and of a low quality, when compared with those made with more prestigious grapes which were destined for the patricians, who preferred more fortified wines with a much higher alcohol content.[4]

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[1] Muldrew, pp. 65–68.

[2] Frederic Chapin Lane, *Storia di Venezia. Ascesa e declino di una Repubblica marinara* (Turin: Einaudi, 1978), p. 362.

[3] Robert C. Davis, 'Venetian Shipbuilders and the Fountain of Wine', *Past & Present*, 156 (1997), 55–86 (pp. 85–86).

[4] Ugo Tucci, 'Commercio e consumo del vino a Venezia in Età moderna', in *Il vino nell'economia e nella società italiana medioevale e moderna. Convegno di studi in Greve in Chianti, 21-24 Maggio 1987* (Florence: Accademia economico-agraria dei Georgofili, 1988), pp. 185–202 (p. 189). See also Jean-Louis Gaulin and Allen J. Grieco, 'Prefazione', in *Dalla vite al vino. Fonti e problemi della viticoltura italiana medievale*, ed. by Jean-Louis Gaulin and Allen J. Grieco (Bologna: Clueb, 1994), pp. 7–14.

If wine, ale and beer were the most widely consumed alcoholic beverages across Europe, a wide variety of alcoholic distillates usually made out of herbs was also available, probably introduced by the apothecaries of Salerno around 1100.[5] Another possibility is that these distillates came to Europe through the Islamicate world. New distillates appeared during the early modern period, probably a consequence of alchemical experiments, and become known as *aqua vitae*, which was already known in thirteenth-century Italy. Eventually, these liquids led to the production of spirits such as *grappa*, whisky, and gin. The final appearance and taste of these spirits depended on the ingredients used in the distillation process.[6]

In the second chapter, I discussed the medical reputation of meat in the early modern period and how it was generally believed to improve the generation of blood in the body. Like meat, wine was thought to be an essential ingredient for the body, as it was converted into blood during the concoction which took place in the stomach at the beginning of the digestive process. Precisely because blood was considered the most important of the four humours, wine was regarded by physicians as an essential nourishing substance for life. Authors stressed the religious connotations of wine in many early modern printed texts. Wine was thought to be the blood of Christ and the etymological connection between the Latin word *vitae*, life, and the Italian name for grapevine, *vite*, was often used as an argument to validate the importance of wine for human life.[7]

There are two main reasons behind the choice of focusing on wine for this chapter. First, wine was central to the early modern understanding of how blood was generated in the body. Second, despite the strong association between England and beer and ale, wine was widely drunk by the English as well. A clear focus on wine offers the most useful point of comparison, since ale and beer were without a doubt less widely consumed in Italy than wine was in England, and spirits were usually related to the locality in which they were produced. Although in England ale was overall more consumed than wine, wine was not something destined exclusively for the English nobility and gentry: it was a commodity accessible to, and consumed by,

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[5] Wilson, *Food and Drink in Britain from the Stone Age to Recent Times*, p. 381.

[6] Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe*, p. 169.

[7] See for example, Theodor van Meyden, *Trattato della natura del vino, e del ber caldo e freddo* (Rome: Giacomo Mascardi, 1608), sig. A4r.

the middle ranks of English society as well. Despite the fact that a wide range of people consumed wine, not all wines were the same, and different social groups did not necessarily consume wines of the same quality. Alfonso Pini argued that the dichotomy between wine drank by the poor and by the elite is so historically consistent, regardless of how far back in time you go, that any historical analysis about wine consumption inevitably results in a study of the wealthiest and their wines.[8] This chapter seeks to investigate wine consumption and how it related to health concerns for the human body across the entire social spectrum.

The first part of this chapter is dedicated to a comparison of alcohol consumption in England and Italy. Wine-drinking in the early modern period had a plethora of different meanings. It certainly helped people to escape the tribulations of life, and it also fuelled social interactions in taverns and inns. Moreover, especially in England, it was an important marker of social identity, as the middle sorts drunk it in an imitiative fashion of the elites.[9] Wine also brought nourishment to the body and was a significant medical tool in achieving and maintaining good health. The second part of the chapter considers the variety of wines available in Europe in the early modern period. The third section of the chapter analyses medical writing on wine in early modern Italy and England. This section is centred on physicians' advice about suggested patterns of consumption and about the qualities of wine they advocated. It argues that medical and lay understandings of the qualities of good wine overlapped. The fourth part of the chapter will focus on actual patterns of consumption. Evidence from personal letters, and household accounts of the Ducal Palace in Mantua, of Cardinal Ippolito II in Ferrara and of the Cecils and Radcliffes in England will shed new light on how wine was bought and consumed.

Wine-drinking in early modern Italy and England

In Italy, regionality was an important factor in access to wine and wine production in general, but the situation in England was very different, in the early modern

[8] Antonio Ivan Pini, 'Il vino del ricco e il vino del povero', in *La civiltà del vino. Fonti, temi e produzioni vitivinicole dal Medioevo al Novecento. Atti del convegno, Monticelli Brusati, Antica Fratta, 5-6 Ottobre 2001*, ed. by Gabriele Archetti and others (Brescia: Centro culturale artistico di Franciacorta e del Sebino, 2003), pp. 585–98.

[9] Lloyd, *Food and Identity in England, 1540-1640*, pp. 71–74.

period. In the late medieval period, the English were still able to grow their own vines, and therefore to make their own wine. Nonetheless, England began to reduce wine production in the fourteenth century, when the climate was slowly starting to cool. English wine producers also came under increasing pressure due to the strengthening of Bordeaux as a centre for wine production.[10] After a couple of centuries, and by the beginning of the period focused on in this thesis, grapes were mostly used as a fruit and for dessert-related use, rather than for making wine. Grapes had been cultivated in England since Roman times, and during the Middle Ages the fortunes and misfortunes of wines were affected by changes in trade relations with France. Things started to change only towards the end of the seventeenth century.[11] In 1493, the Venetian ambassador Andrea Trevisan informed the Venetian Senate that the English 'are not without vines; and I have eaten ripe grapes from one, and wine might be made in the southern parts, but it would probably be harsh'.[12] Around half a century later, the ambassador Giacomo Soranzo wrote that the English 'don't make wine, even if there are vines, but these are more for garden ornaments. The grape is never fully ripe, if not in the smallest quantity, due to the weakness of the sun and of the strength of the winds, which are really cold and ruin the grapes'.[13] As a result of the less than ideal conditions for growing vines, wine was imported to England, rather than produced there. Wine imports to England were substantial in the period of time discussed in this chapter (1500-1650).[14] The vast majority of imported wine came from Spain and France.

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[10] Le Roy Ladurie, *Tithe and Agrarian History*, p. 107.

[11] Thirsk, *Alternative Agriculture. A History from the Black Death to the Present Day*, pp. 135–38.

[12] Charlotte Augusta Sneyd, *A Relation, or Rather a True Account, of the Island of England: With Sundry Particulars of the Customs of These People, and of the Royal Revenues under King Henry the Seventh, about the Year 1500* (London: Camden Society, 1847), p. 9, 'Non sono senza viti: Et io ho gustato dell'una matura, et in le parti astrali fariano del vino, ma saria forse austero'.

[13] <http://www.storiadivenezia.net/sito/testi/1554%20Soranzo.pdf> [accessed 15 February 2017], p. 7, 'Vini non ne fanno sebbene vi sono delle viti, ma piuttosto per ornamento dei giardini che per altro, non si maturando mai l'uva che in pochissima quantità, il che procede parte per la non molta forza del sole, parte perché appunto quando è il tempo di maturarsi, quasi per ordinario sopravvengono alcuni venti, li quali fanno molto freddo, e le uve si disperdono', based on Eugenio Albèri, *Le relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato durante il secolo Decimosesto* (Firenze: Società editrice fiorentina, 1853), pp. 29–87.

[14] W. B. Stephens, 'English Wine Imports c. 1603-40, with Special Reference to the Devon Ports', in *Tudor and Stuart Devon. The Common Estate and Government*, ed. by Gray Todd, Margery Rowe, and Audrey Erskine (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1992), pp. 141–72 (p. 141).

The social aspect of alcohol consumption was important for all sorts of people. As with many comestibles, wine contributed to the demarcation between different social strata, but the strict division for England between rich people drinking wine and poor people drinking beer may be less rigid than previously thought. According to Adam Fox, the importation of wine to England underwent a significant transformation only in the period following the Restoration, when luxury products such as Champagne, Port, Clarets, Bordeaux, 'Shably' from Burgundy and Hermitage from the Rhine Valley were introduced to the country and added 'new levels of sophistication' to the tables of those who could afford it.[15] The connotation of wine as a marker of social identity in the second half of the seventeenth century was certainly important, but this evolution in the market for imported wine does not preclude the fact that wine was widely consumed in England far earlier. Phil Withington shows that in the first half of the sixteenth century what he called the 'city's economy of intoxication' was not merely based on ale or beer.[16] Instead, wine was a very prominent item and the wine market expanded considerably from the beginning of the seventeenth century. If wine in the south of Europe was generally more widely available because the climate was more favourable, in England it was a product which was available to those who could afford to make health-oriented choices in their diets, besides thinking of prestige and social differentiation from the poor. The schematic division often invoked by food historians between a southern European/Mediterranean dietetic model based on wine, bread and oil and a northern European diet based on butter, meat and beer does not match the evidence of alcohol consumption.[17]

As for patterns of social drinking, people could gather together and drink alcohol in inns, taverns or alehouses. These places have been regarded as critical

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[15] Adam Fox, 'Food, Drink and Social Distinction in Early Modern England', in *Remaking English Society. Social Relations and Social Change in Early Modern England*, ed. by Steve Hindle, Alexandra Shepard, and John Walter (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2013), pp. 165–88 (p. 185).

[16] Phil Withington, 'Intoxicants and the Early Modern City', in *Remaking English Society. Social Relations and Social Change in Early Modern England*, ed. by Hindle, Shepard, and Walter, pp. 135–64 (pp. 149–50).

[17] Allen J. Grieco, 'Food Production', in *A Cultural History of Food in the Renaissance*, vol. 3, ed. by Ken Albala (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), pp. 29–44 (p. 34).

catalysts for social bonding on one hand, and disorder and rebellion on the other.[18] From the twelfth century onwards, the English tavern was a place where both the middle sorts and the upper ranks of society could drink wine and share a space specifically designed for this purpose, as taverns specialised in the sale of wine alone.[19] Interestingly, in Italy wine evolved from being a luxury commodity to a beverage which was consumed across the social spectrum in the same period.[20] In the later Middle Ages wine consumption in Bologna was roughly three or four times today's levels, which underscores that wine drinking was not a specific privilege for the few.[21] However, as noted by Michelle O'Callaghan, 'respectable taverns could provide a relatively privileged space for the performance of a range of elite social identities', but these performances were not necessarily related to episodes of drunkenness and misbehaviour. Instead, taverns were more about a combination of 'convivial pleasure and rational deliberation'.[22] This attitude did not only characterise taverns and elite wine drinkers. Alehouses, places usually dedicated to the social gathering of the lower sorts, also witnessed behaviours and patterns of drinking that did not have the exclusive goal of achieving drunkenness or instigating debauchery.[23] If taverns and alehouses shared similar social connotations, it was also because the products served in these places were not of a socially exclusive nature, whether they were wine, ale or beer. After all, all of these drinks were served in inns

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[18] Adam Smith, 'Introduction', in *A Pleasing Sinne. Drink and Conviviality in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. by Adam Smith (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), pp. xiii–xxv (p. xiv).

[19] Mark Hailwood, *Alehouses and Good Fellowship in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2014), p. 2.

[20] Antonio Ivan Pini, 'Il vino nella civiltà italiana', in *Il vino nell'economia e nella società italiana medioevale e moderna. Convegno di studi in Greve in Chianti, 21-24 maggio 1987* (Florence: Accademia economico-agraria dei Georgofili, 1988), pp. 1-12 (p. 12).

[21] Alfio Cortonesi, 'Self-Sufficiency and the Market. Rural and Urban Diet in the Middle Ages', in *Food. A Culinary History from the Antiquity to the Present*, ed. by Flandrin, Montanari, and Sonnefield, pp. 268–75 (p. 272).

[22] Michelle O'Callaghan, 'Tavern Societies, the Inns of Court, and the Culture of Conviviality in Early Seventeenth-Century London', in *A Pleasing Sinne. Drink and Conviviality in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. by Smith, pp. 37–54 (pp. 38, 51).

[23] Hailwood, p. 169.

as well, which in the hierarchy of public spaces occupied the highest position, followed by taverns and then alehouses.[24]

Even if beer and ale were the drinks most associated with the national stereotype of the Englishman, they were not the only alcoholic beverages which were consumed in England. Ambassador Trevisan noted that the English:

> take great pleasure in having a quantity of excellent victuals, and also in remaining a long time at table, being very sparing of wine when they drink it at their own expense. And this, it is said, they do in order to induce their other English guests to drink wine in moderation as well; not considering it any inconvenience for three or four persons to drink out of the same cut.[25]

The moderation suggested by the ambassador seemed to be more related to a strategy to limit the expense rather than something driven by health concerns or by taste, which in turn suggests that there was a strong interest in wine. In fact, the reports went on: 'Few people keep wine in their own houses, but they buy it, for the most part, at the tavern; and when they mean to drink a great deal, they go to the tavern, and this is done not only by the men, but by ladies of distinction'.[26] It must be said, however, that on a general level these considerations about taverns being places of conviviality for all sorts of people, where conversations and public activities could be carried out with dignity are valid for England only.

In Italy, where wine was more widely available, these places were seemingly less well-mannered. According to Philip Skippon (1641-1691), an English traveller who made a journey through the Low Countries, Germany, Italy and France

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[24] Charlotte McBride, 'A Natural Drink for an English Man: National Stereotyping in Early Modern Culture', in *A Pleasing Sinne. Drink and Conviviality in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. by Smith, pp. 181–92 (p. 182).

[25] Sneyd, p. 21, 'e quando mangiono qual cosa di buono insieme con un forestiero, domandono, se di quella tal cosa se ne fa nel paese del convitato: et si prendono gran piacere di havere molte e buone vivande, come anco di stare lungo tempo a tavola, usando parsimonia nel vino, quando lo bevono alle loro spese: se questo si dice che fanno a ciò che il vino sia bevuto da gl'altri Inglesi convitati con più modestia, non tenendo per cosa inconveniente il bere tre, o quattro, ad un medesimo bicchiere'.

[26] Sneyd, p. 21, 'E pochi sono quelli, che tenghino il vino in casa, ma lo comperano la maggior parte alla taverna: E quando voglino bere del vino in abondanza, vanno alla taverna non solo gl'huomini, ma ancora le donne di honore'.

between 1663 and 1666, in Florence 'no person of quality will drink in a tavern or inn'.[27] Skippon reported that nobles passed a flask to be filled with wine through a hole in the door and waited outside, in order to not mingle with poorer members of society. This difference is probably because wine in Italy was much more widely available and those who could afford it preferred to stay away from the poorer sort.[28] A poem by the popular Italian poet and writer Giulio Cesare Croce stresses Skippon's impressions of those people who attended such places, although these might have been depicted in quite a stereotypical, and therefore satirical, way. In the *Lamento de' bevanti* (The complaint of the drinkers, 1598), the characters express their worries at the fact that the yearly harvest was quite poor, which contributed to the rising of wine prices. Eventually, a character named Basalorcio (kiss-the-pot) made them forget their fears and convinced everyone to go to the tavern, bragging that he would be willing to pay with one of his eyes, making him blind, rather than being left with no wine, since 'those who do not like wine are like capocchio'.[29] By using the word 'capocchio', Basalorcio was conveying two messages. First, Capocchio was an alchemist who was condemned as heretic and burnt at the stake on 15 August 1293, and was put by Dante in the circle of the *malebolge* – the 'evil ditches', the eighth circle of hell in Dante's *Inferno* – amongst the falsifiers because he was a deceiver in both his life and his profession.[30] Second, 'capocchio' means, more generally, 'stupid, with no judgement, foolish'.[31] Whether Basalorcio referred to those who did not like wine as people unworthy of his trust, or whether he simply considered them stupid, the bottom line was that drinking wine to the excess could be culturally associated with taverns. In fact, the second part of the poem is a rather vulgar celebration of tavern culture and spasmodic wine-drinking. Obviously, Croce's rhetoric must be taken as what it is. As an exponent of the *letteratura carnevalesca*, his poetry was meant to ridicule and exaggerate everyday attitudes, but there is no doubt that contemporary readership could see itself mirrored in these poems.

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[27] Philip Skippon, 'An Account of a Journey', in *A Collection of Voyages*, ed. by A. Churchill and J. Churchill (London, 1732), vol. 6, pp. 359-736 (p. 641).

[28] Skippon, p. 641.

[29] Croce, *Lamento de' bevanti*, 'E s'io dovessi ben comprarlo un occhio/Il gotto, vo' più tosto restar guerzo/Che, chi non gusta il vino ha del capocchio'.

[30] Pietro Mazzamuto, 'Capocchio', in *Enciclopedia Dantesca* (1970). See also Dante, *La Divina Commedia, Inferno*, XXIX, 124–139 and XXX, 1–30.

[31] CRUSCA, 'scimunito, che anche diciam, balordo, cioè senza senno'.

Wines in early modern Italy and England

Venice was the major hub for the commercialization of wines in this period. Malvasia, malmsey, was popular in the Mediterranean and in the north of Europe alike.[32] In Europe, as noted by the alchemist and physician Leonardo Fioravanti (1517-1588) in his *De secreti rationali*, no country surpassed France as far as wine production was concerned.[33] The fame of French wines was widespread across Europe, and it was not solely limited to physicians, or travellers. The Mantuan courtier Giovan Francesco Vigilio wrote a letter to Federico II Gonzaga (1500-1540) at the time of his enforced stay at the French court in 1516, in which he compared French wines favourably with those from Mantua. With all probability, this letter was an attempt by the courtier to make the prince remember the glories of his native lands and to gain favour in his eyes: 'With grace of all France' wrote Vigilio, 'neither the wine from Beon, nor that from Anjou, nor other excellent wines that they have there […] are equals to this [Mantuan] divine nectar'.[34] Vigilio's nostalgic rhetoric, and his praise of Mantua and its products on behalf of the young Federico, confirms the prestige of French wines in Europe. Furthermore, the medical connotations of that 'divine' Mantuan wine were also explicitly expressed in this letter. Referring to a certain Thebaldeo, who was supposedly ill or notoriously unhealthy, a sip of that wine is said to be enough to 'settle in his humours'.[35]

In England wine was imported from many places. Ambassador Trevisan reported that the 'natural deficiency of the country [England]' in making their own wine 'is overcome by the supply of a great quantity of excellent wines from Candia,

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[32] Michela Dal Borgo and Danilo Riponti, 'Malvasia. Un vino tra legislazione, commercio e diffusione nella Repubblica di Venezia (Secoli XIII-XVIII)', in *Il vino nella storia di Venezia. Vigneti e cantine nelle terre dei dogi tra XIII e XXI secolo*, ed. by Carlo Favero (Cittadella (PD): Biblos, 2014), pp. 218–35 (p. 224).

[33] Leonardo Fioravanti, *De' secreti rationali* (Venice: Ghirardo Imberti, 1640), sig. P1r, 'Et questo artificio si fa più in Francia, che in ciascun' altro luogo, per la grande quantità del vino, e vinaccie che hanno in quel paese'. In this case wine and grape marcs were used to make Verdigris.

[34] ASMn, A.G., b. 2494, c. 10r, 16 July 1516, Giovan Francesco Vigilio, from Mantua, 'Cum gratia de tutta la Francia, ne el vino de Beona, ne di Angio, ne altri che ivi son tenuti excellenti li starian al pare […] di sapore de divino nectare', quoted in Malacarne, p. 133.

[35] ASMn, A.G., b. 2494, c. 10r, 16 July 1516, Giovan Francesco Vigilio, from Mantua, 'a misser Thebaldeo assettaria tutti li humori', quoted in Malacarne, p. 133.

Germany, France, and Spain'.[36] John Eliot confirmed the prominence of France in the wine market in his *Ortho-epia Gallica* (1593), a manual for English gentlemen who wanted to learn French.[37] As we have seen in the previous chapter, with Benvenuto Italiano and the different attitudes of Italian and English people to salads, cultural and geographical comparisons were practical and effective tools used to teach foreign languages. In a dialogue between a Frenchman and an Englishman, we learn that 'The Frenchmen, they drink wine' and that in France it was possible to find wine in 'great aboundance'.[38] France was at the top of the list, followed by Spain and Candia. There was so much wine coming from the region of the Rhine to make people 'bellyfull' with it. The geographical distance that wine had to cover in order to reach England affected the price, which, in any case, was 'not to deare' but rather 'indifferent', which means reasonable. According to Eliot's Frenchman, in some regions of France wine was 'truely dearer', more expensive compared to England.

According to Eliot, in London it was possible to buy Claret (wine from the Bordeaux region), for 'six pence a quart'. Sack from Spain, Eliot's Frenchman went on, was sold for eight pence while Muscadine and Malvasia were sold for ten, which indicates that Malvasia in particular, but also wines from the far Mediterranean areas in general, were regarded highly in England. For comparison, a loaf of bread bought in London in the first decade of the seventeenth century would have cost, roughly, 4.02d.[39] The ambassador Giacomo Soranzo reported reported on the wine-drinking habits of the English to the Venetian Senate in 1554, along with the prices at which wine was sold in England. In his account, Soranzo mentioned how 'it is not the case that they [the English] do not drink large quantities of wine, which is imported from Candia, Spain, from the Rhine and France, which the most appreciated amongst the others, but it is sold at such an expensive price that the

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[36] Sneyd, p. 9, 'Ma alla naturale desidia del paese sopragiunge gran copia d'ottimi vini Candiotti, di Germania, di Francia, e Spagna'.

[37] For the use of early modern dictionaries and language manuals as good sources for everyday life examples see Frances Yates, 'The Importance of John Eliot's Ortho-Epia Gallica', *The Review of English Studies*, 7.28 (1931), 419–30 (pp. 420–21).

[38] John Eliot, *Ortho-Epia Gallica. Eliot Fruits for the French* (London: John Wolfe, 1593), sig. I4v.

[39] Jeremy Boulton, 'Food Prices and the Standard of Living in London in the "Century of Revolution", 1580-1700', *Economic History Review*, 53 (2000), 455–92 (p. 459). The differences in the nourishment offered by wine and bread should also be considered. A quantity of bread provided more energy than its monetary equivalent in wine; although early modern people believed that wine was more nourishing than it is considered to be today.

ordinarily one pays thirty six, up to forty *scudi* the barrel, and in my times [when he was in England in mission for Venice] up to fifty'.[40] The data found in contemporary port books show that wine imports were at an annual average of 9403 tuns between 1539 and 1546.[41] However, the wine trade grew significantly during the first half of the seventeenth century, reaching a peak in 1638 with a total of 30420 tuns of French and Spanish wine imported into London.[42] Wine prices will be examined in more detail in the section on household accounts, but the tone of the conversation written by Eliot and the ambassador's report indicate how wine and wine-drinking habits, in all their most famous varieties, were not only a widely recognised topic of interest, appropriate for gentlemen willing to travel in Europe, but also carried a political interest. Political and diplomatic relationships between England and the continent were important for the wine trade and its survival, along with customs duties and piracy.[43] The numbers discussed above, which are retrieved from port books, are confirmed by Raphael Holinshed in his *Chronicles*. Holinshed stressed the notion that the English were eager wine drinkers and made ample provisions of many types of wine, and that at the time there were up to eighty-six types of wine in circulation on the market:

> But among all these, the kind of meat which is obteined with most difficultie and cost, is commonlie taken for the most delicat, and therevpon each guest will soonest desire to feed. And as all estats doo exceed herin, I meane for strangenesse and number of costlie dishes, so these forget not to use the like excesse in wine, in somuch as there is no kind to be had (neither anie where more store of all sorts than in England, although we haue none growing with vs but yearelie to the proportion of 20000 or 30000 tun and upwards, notwithstanding the dailie restreincts of the same brought ouer unto us) wherof at great méetings there is not some store to be had. Neither doo I meane this of

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[40] <http://www.storiadivenezia.net/sito/testi/1554%20Soranzo.pdf> [accessed 15 February 2017], p. 7, 'non è però che essi non consumino ancora molto vino, il quale gli vien condotto di Candia, di Spagna, dal Reno e di Francia, il quale sovra tutti gli altri è apprezzato, ma si vende così caro che per l'ordinario si paga trentasei e fin quaranta scudi la botte, e in mio tempo si pagava fino a cinquanta', based on Albèri, pp. 29–87.

[41] Stephens, p. 142.

[42] Stephens, p. 167.

[43] Stephens, p. 149.

> small wines onlie, as Claret, White, Red, French, &c: which amount to about fiftie six sorts, according to the number of regions from whence they come: but also of the thirtie kinds of Italian, Grecian, Spanish, Canarian, &c: whereof Ueruage, Cate pument, Raspis, Muscadell, Romnie, Bastard Tire, Oseie, Caprike, Clareie & Malmeseie are not least of all accompted of, bicause of their strength and valure. For as I have said in meat, so the stronger the wine is, the more it is desired.[44]

This wide variety of wines was not exclusive to England, however, because wine travelled across all Europe, despite differences in climate or the general accessibility of wine.

In Italy there were so many wines mainly because most regions grew their own kind of vines and because some of it was imported. In his travel journals Skippon noted that some of the most renowned wines in Italy were '1. *Moscatello*, a sweet white wine, which hath a taste of musk; 2. *Vino Garganico*, which is a rich white wine, not so strong as the other; 3, & 4. *Vino Negro*, *Grosso & Picciolo*'. With all probability *grosso* and *picciolo* meant old and young wine respectively. Allen J. Grieco defines these two characteristics as 'strong' and 'weak' respectively, a form of classification that goes hand in hand with that of age and maturation.[45] Another famous wine was the *Vino Greco*, so called because it was made from grapes from vines which has been imported from Greece in antiquity and which continued to be cultivated in both southern and central Italy.[46] German wines that were extremely celebrated outside of Italy were those made of grapes cultivated along the major rivers: the Rhine, Neckar, Main and Mosel.[47]

It was possible to buy a large variety of wines in early modern Italy and England. The availability of a resource such as wine, whether it had to be imported or not, made wine one of the commodities that people were most keen to spend money on. However, wine-drinking was also an extremely significant health-related activity, and choosing how, when and what to drink was just as important for its

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[44] Holinshed, p. 167.

[45] Grieco, 'Medieval and Renaissance Wines', p. 25.

[46] Skippon, p. 548.

[47] Giovanni Vittore Soderini, *Trattato della coltivazione delle viti. E del frutto che se ne può cavare* (Firenze: Filippo Giunti, 1600), sig. A1v.

bodily implications as it was for its social. The next section will compare medical literature on wine, and will argue that definitions of what was considered a good wine were not intrinsically related to the vocabulary of humoral theory. As a result, everybody could easily understand what they had to look for when choosing and drinking a certain wine.

Medical literature on wine

It was widely recognised that wine was a substance that nourished the body and was thus essential to life. The necessity of drinking wine was expressed in various ways. Wine made people merry and happy, it had various culinary uses and was thought to have the capacity to nourish the body without having the disadvantage of hard foods, especially the need for digestion. On the other hand, drunkenness and compulsive drinking were problems which were recognized and discussed. In everyday life, wine consumption had seasonal characteristics that needed to be highlighted and compared. Wine was a substance that was believed to engender hot vapours in the body, so consumption had to be adjusted to both climate and individual complexion, as the Italian botanist and physician Castore Durante suggested. For Durante, those people who had a weak brain and a hot stomach or liver and who lived in hot countries 'must drink little wine and watery', while those who had a colder temperament and lived in colder countries 'must drink stronger, and more powerful wine'.[48] To fail to do so could cause bad side-effects for the body and one's reputation alike.

There were many factors that influenced physicians' views regarding wine, including the colour, odour, temperature, provenance, quality of the grapes, and the large number of varieties of wine available. Debates were also influenced by religious beliefs, moral concerns, regional interests and identity. For example, many published texts that focused specifically on wine came from Verona, which was, and still is, one

[48] Durante, sig. V3v, 'Quelle che hanno il cervello debole, & lo stomaco, ò il fegato caldo, & habitanti in caldi paesi, devono bere poco vino, & acquoso, ma in quelli che son di frigida complessione, & stanno in paesi freddi, & più forte, & più potente vino devono bere.

of the most important regions for wine production in Italy.[49] But how could people recognise a good wine, and what were the most important things to look for? From a medical standpoint, wine had to display a few essential characteristics in order to be recognisable as a product of quality, and therefore healthy and good to drink. The stress placed on the physical qualities of wine is common to both English and Italian authors. In Boorde's view, drinkers had to make sure that their wine was 'fyne, fayre, & clere to the eye'. Colour and odour had to be right too, and it had to be pleasant in the mouth and taste good. Finally, it was supposed to be strong and of clear substance, and it 'must spryncle in the cup whan it is drawne'.[50] For 'sprincle', the OED suggests that a fluid had to 'scatter in drops' or, more interestingly, 'to strew thinly or lightly'.[51] What Boorde might have intended in this passage is that the wine had to be fluid enough to gush in the cup, which in turn was probably related to the density and clarity of the wine: a clear and fully matured wine with no sediment rather than something more similar to must. In Italy, we find very similar ideas on what made a good wine. Giovanni Vittore Soderini (1526-1596), author of the *Trattato della coltivazione delle viti, e del frutto che se ne può cavare*, a treatise on the art of planting and growing vines which was published in Florence in 1600, wrote that a wine 'in an exceeding state of perfection had to sparkle in the glass, should stream in the air when the bottle was opened, and when people were tasting and drinking it they had to distinguish immediately whether it was good or not, with neither uncertainty nor ambiguity'.[52] In the English-Italian language manual *Second Frutes* (1591), John Florio (1553-1625) reported that a good wine, one 'of the best' sort, even useful to wash the mouth after dinner and to settle the stomach, had to smell

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[49] Ken Albala, 'To Your Health. Wine as Food and Medicine in Mid-Sixteenth-Century Italy', in *Alcohol: A Social and Cultural History*, ed. by Mack P. Holt (Oxford: Berg, 2006), pp. 11–24. See also Annalisa Albuzzi, 'Medicina, Cibus et Potus. Il vino tra teoria e prassi medica nell'Occidente Medievale', in *La civiltà del vino. Fonti, temi e produzioni vitivinicole dal Medioevo al Novecento (Atti del convegno, Monticelli Brusati - Antica Fratta, 5-6 Ottobre 2001)*, 2001, pp. 675–712.

[50] Boorde, sig. F1r.

[51] The OED reports for "sprincle": *trans* (1.a) 'To scatter in drops; to let fall in small particles here and there; to strew thinly or lightly'.

[52] Soderini, sig. N1r, 'Volendo fare un vin buono in eccedente sovranità di perfezione; e che schizzi in aria non che brilli nel bicchiere, e che bevendone, e assaggiandone ti bisogni presto risolvere ò a mandarlo giù, o à sputarlo'.

'sweetelie', be 'coloured featly' and 'smacking neately', that is, have a pleasant colour and a specific and definite taste.[53]

The striking similarity of these views, found in sources of different genres, shows how the opinion of physicians percolated down and reached wine experts as well as language teachers, along with their readership, not to mention the less wealthy and the illiterate. In Croce's *Lamento de' bevanti*, the foolish character Basalorcio uses the same vocabulary of the physical qualities of wine when expressing his tastes: 'and I like to see inside the cups/ those jumping wines, which looks like gold/ that lighten up my vital spirits'.[54] The wines were 'jumping', like those mentioned by Soderini, which were supposedly streaming in the air. This might have had something to do with the percentage of carbon dioxide that was formed in the fermentation of sparkling wines. Another possible explanation might be the texture. As noted before, a good wine had to be fully liquid and clear, without particles, not dense and full of residue and deposit from the grape-pressing phase. Colour and taste were always important, as is shown in letters written by Isabella d'Este regarding wine provisions for her table. Writing to her suppliers Vincenzo and Luigi de Albani, Isabella complained about the sourness of some Malvasia that they sent her only a few days before. Despite being 'good enough', it was 'not very good for our taste, as it seems too much wild and raw'.[55] Similarly, when she wrote to the vicar of Volta to order some wine from Padenghe, a village near Lake Garda, she made clear that the wine had to be 'white and of a good smell'.[56] Clearly, the

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[53] John Florio, *Second Frutes* (London: Thomas Woodcock, 1591), sigg. I3v-I4r, the dialogue goes as follows: 'M: Dammi un bicchiere di vino, ma del buono per lavarmi la bocca, e rassettarmi lo stomaco - H: Dunque lo volete di buon'odore, di vago colore, e di soave sapore - M: Si, acciò mi diletti al naso, compiaccia all'occhio, e contenti al gusto'. The OED reports for "smack": *adv* (1.a) 'A taste or flavour; the distinctive or peculiar taste of something, or a special flavour distinguishable from this'; (1.c) 'Pleasant or agreeable taste or relish'; (2) 'Scent, odour, smell'. For "featly": *adv* (1.a) 'Fitly, properly, suitably, aptly; neatly, elegantly'. For this specific entry the OED quotes this very passage of Florio.

[54] Croce, *Lamento de' bevanti*, 'E piacemi veder dentro i boccali,/Quei vin saltanti, somiglianti a l'oro,/Che m'allegrano i spiriti vitali'.

[55] ASMn, A.G., b. 2997, L. 36, c. 51r, 22 April 1519, Isabella to Vincenzo and Luigi de Albani, 'malvasia garba [aspra] de la quale mai non havemo gustato se non al presente; et anchor che la sii bona pur non e al proposito del gusto nostro, peroche ni pare chel'habbi troppo del agrestino et sii troppo cruda'.

[56] ASMn, A.G., b. 2999, L. 45, c. 54v, 7 January 1524, Isabella to the vicar of Volta, 'd'un carraro de bianco che habbi bon odore'. Volta Mantovana is half way to the north between Mantua and the south of Lake Garda, where Padenghe is located.

categories applied in the medical analysis of wine could be understood easily by the non-professionals. A good wine had to satisfy the senses, be good to the eyes, nose and mouth. These categories, as debatable and subjective as they sound, were easy for all to understand.

A perfect example of the ubiquity of these categories of analysis of wine can be found in the ways Skippon described and discussed the different wines he tried during his travels in Italy. However, his focus was not necessarily on the origin of the wine but on factors such as taste, colour and strength, and the general implication of his reports is that every city or location drank a wine with different qualities. In Bologna, for example, people drank a wine that was 'generally white, and of a sweet taste'.[57] In Reggio they drank white wine too, called 'verdone', which was even sweeter than the wine from Bologna. *Verde* means green, and the name probably referred to some green sheens of the wine, typical of some stronger white wines.[58] 'A white Muscadine wine' was made in Piacenza.[59] Montferrat wine was drunk in Genoa, 'red, and of a very pleasant taste, as if made with rasp-berries'.[60] In Livorno people habitually had 'red Florence wine, which is somewhat like, but stronger than French wine' and 'mingles well with Pisa water', a healthy water that was sold by many apothecaries and criers in the city. Another wine sold in Livorno was 'verdea', another wine with a green sheen, 'a whitish wine of a pleasant taste'.[61] Skippon's opinions on these wines resemble the notions expressed in the medical texts of the period.

What differentiates alcohol, and specifically wine, from the other foods examined so far, beside its physical form, is the way in which its use and abuse had a visible impact on the human body. People did not have to be learned physicians or distinguished humanists to understand the basic effects of these substances on the body and the risks of immoderate consumption. The consequences of alcohol abuse were recognised in early modern society, as indicated by the topos of drunkenness in songs, ballads, stories and popular poems. In Croce's *Cantilena graziosa sopra il primo dí*

[57] Skippon, p. 563.
[58] Skippon, p. 567.
[59] Skippon, p. 569.
[60] Skippon, p. 587.
[61] Skippon, pp. 595–96.

d'agosto ('Gracious song on the first day of August', 1622), we can see not only how people disgraced themselves in front of the rest of the village because of drinking too much, but also how the necessity of moderation in wine drinking was perceived to be intuitive and clear. Anything brutal or disturbing that happened on this day was to be forgiven, because it was a celebratory occasion, when all the wine barrels were finally opened: 'if someone takes relieve of their bladders on you, do not worry, it is due to the wine; if someone is quarrelling do not disturb them, it is the wine; if you see people dancing or screaming and yelling do not bother, the wine is doing it for them'.[62] Having highlighted the consequences of wine abuse, Croce outlined the approach needed in order for drinkers to stay healthy: to drink in moderation, because drinking too much brought shame on people, and could easily kill.[63]

Moderation was very prominent in discussions of wine consumption in physicians' treatises. The naturalised Italian author Theodor van Meyden claimed that the best way to consume wine was to drink it no more than three times per meal in winter, and no more than four to five times per meal in summer. Nonetheless, if you were thin and your complexion hot and dry you could also 'do some excess, being allowed to drink much more'.[64] Ultimately, it was all about 'the judgement of the drinker' and how well they knew their own complexion and body.[65] A similar argument was expressed by Tobias Whittaker in his *The Tree of Humane Life, or, The Bloud of the Grape,* published in 1638. Whittaker argued that to follow a diet centred on your complexion, as the ancient medical authorities recommended, was relatively easy since the humoral system worked in a rational way, with the health of the body

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[62] Giulio Cesare Croce, *Cantilena graziosa sopra il primo dí d'agosto e letitia di quello con gli accidenti piacevoli che corrono in tal giornata fatti ad istanza di chi li piace il buon vino* (Bologna: Heredi del Colchi, 1622).'S'in tal dì sei bastonato, Tieni haverne buon mercato, Né far rissa, né tenzone, Perché il vin mena il bastone; E nel grembo t'orinasse, Non gli far onta, né oltraggio, Ch'egli è il vin che fa passaggio; Se tu vedi alcun che balla, E che salti e che tramballa, Non turbar il suo pensiero, Ch'egli è il vin che fa' ruggiero; Se tu senti alcun che grida, Com'un pazzo senza guida, E tu tosto via cammina, Ch'egli è il vin che fa marina; Se tu senti alcun cantare Per le strade e poetare No'l turbar in simil caso, Ch'egli è il vin che va in Parnaso'.

[63] Croce, *Cantilena graziosa*, 'Però ogn'un stia su l'avviso, Di non far cose da riso, Ma ber quanto gli bisogna, Che 'l ber troppo è gran vergogna; Mangiam dunque allegramente, E beviamo honestamente, Che 'l mangiar il corpo aita, E 'l ber troppo tol la vita'.

[64] Van Meyden, sig. B7v, 'essendo più lecito di bere assai, à li calidi, ch'à li frigidi, à li secchi e magri, ch'à li grossi, è grassi'.

[65] Van Meyden, sig. B8r, 'onde ciò s'ha da rimettere al giudicio di chi ne beve'.

being related to the balance of the humours. Instead, deciding the amount of wine to be consumed was more problematic. Ultimately, he concluded, it was a decision that had to be 'left to the free choice of Nature, because naturall choice is never *ultra capacitatem recipientis*'.[66] In other words, the body cannot have more wine than it can take. Likewise, 'Howe sufficient unto a learned man is a small quantitie of wine?' asks Thomas Elyot in *The Banket of Sapience* (1564).[67] The answer is, again, not prescriptive and fairly open to the interpretation of the reader. Quoting the Book of the Ecclesiasticus he says: 'for therewith whan thou slepest, thou shalt not be troubled, nor feele any paine'.[68] Isabella d'Este was very aware of the consequences of too much drinking, for both the maintenance of good health and to keep social behaviours under control. Addressing her brother Alfonso I Este (1473-1534) in 1528, she recommended that he kept an eye on the court jester, and that 'he was not given too much to drink, as he get warmed much more from the wine that from the sun', in what is a striking resemblance of the messages in both Croce's poetry and health regimens.[69] The notions of wine being a heating substance and the risks related to its abuse were very clear. According to Francis Bacon (1561-1626), an abuse of 'strong wines' could easily 'burne the spirits and shorten life'. Being inherently hot, wine could easily overheat the body and therefore dissipate its strength and vital spirits.[70] If on one hand wine could bring nourishment, life and energy, on the other its abuse could have the opposite effect. Personal agency, taste, needs and self-awareness played an even more important role with wine than with solid food. The line between use and abuse was a difficult one to draw, and physicians often preferred to make general recommendations of moderation over precise prescriptions of quantities.

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[66] Tobias Whitaker, *The Tree of Humane Life, Or, The Bloud of the Grape Proving the Possibilitie of Maintaining Humane Life from Infancy to Extreme Old Age without Any Sicknesse by the Use of Wine* (London: John Dawson, 1638), sig. B3v.

[67] Thomas Elyot, *The Banket of Sapience* (London, 1564), sig. C2v.

[68] Elyot, *The Banket of Sapience*, sig. C2v.

[69] ASMn, A.G., b. 2999, L. 48, cc. 4v, 5r, 9 May 1528, Isabella d'Este to the Duke of Ferrara, 'Che non gli sii dato troppo bevere, perchè molte volte si scalda più pel vino che per il sole'.

[70] Francis Bacon, *History Naturall and Experimentall, of Life and Death, or the Prolongation of Life* (London: Printed by Iohn Haviland for William Lee, and Humphrey Mosley, 1638), sigg. K9v-K10r.

The overall quality of any wine that was consumed was shaped by two factors. The first was its condition before it was prepared for drinking, which was determined by two interrelated elements: the alcohol content and the age of the wine. Second, in the early modern period most wine was altered by the addition of water before it was consumed. Wine and water were mixed together for many reasons, in what was an act of temperance. In tune with religious concerns about the moral risks of excessive drinking and with the medical language of the time, being temperate referred to a plethora of different behaviours or conditions. For example, if you were a temperate person you were a good Christian who was able to behave properly. The second book of Edmund Spenser (1552-1599)'s *Faerie Queene* for instance, is centred on the figure of Sir Guyon, The Knight of Temperance.[71] In his quests, Guyon must fight many evils and resist many temptations, such as violence, lust and carnal desire, as well as idleness. Thus, there was also a moral dimension to the adulteration of wine with water, as it was certainly a way to avoid, or at least delay, drunkenness. At the same time, being temperate also meant being humorally balanced, in good health and that your complexion was neither too hot nor too cold, and neither too dry nor too moist.[72] As we saw in the chapter on meat, the language used by cooks, *scalchi*, and other authors in descriptions and discussions of recipes reflected the idea of tempering, that is modifying, some inherent humoral characteristics of main courses with spices or, as shown in the chapter on meat, fruit, especially lemon and oranges.[73] The same thing occured with wine.

There were practical reasons for mixing wine with water, such as diminishing the alcohol content, if the wine required it. As Andrew Boorde suggested, cutting wine with water was essential because 'wyne is full of fumosyte', and the fumes (of the alcohol) might reach the brain and cause diseases and discomfort.[74] Adding water also made wine more drinkable, and the youngest wines were usually a combination of water and pressed grapes left to ferment for several weeks.[75] This

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[71] Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene Disposed into Twelve Books, Fashioning XII Morall Vertues.* (London: William Ponsonbie, 1590).

[72] Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 164–65.

[73] See Ch. 2, Meat, p. 119.

[74] Boorde, sig. F1v.

[75] Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 164–65.

process influenced the final taste of wine and defined its qualities and effects on the body. Water had to be added according to the strength of the wine when it was purchased and consumed. The strength of the wine was mostly related to the kind of grapes used and for how long the must had been left to mature. The longer a wine had matured, the more water was needed. Sandra Cavallo and Tessa Storey highlighted how the Spada-Veralli family, in Rome, was inclined to the habit of tempering wine with water.[76]

Knowing when a particular wine had reached its complete maturation and was therefore ready to be drunk seems to have been particularly problematic. As we will see for cheese, the age of the product, that is the length of the process of fermentation, was one of the major concerns for authors and physicians of the period. It seems that wines, as much as cheese and meat, were thought to be living, and treated accordingly in the medical literature of the time. Interestingly enough, we now know that these products are, indeed, alive and that this particular process was, and still is, extremely significant in determining the final quality of a matured product. This process had an impact on the final qualities of the beverage, in particular its thickness, which was not to be confused with the strength of the wine. In a parallel with their considerations about what happened to the texture of meat, early modern authors were worried about the overall subtlety or texture of wine. Authors often stressed the importance of drinking wine that had matured fully. In *A New Boke of The Natures and Properties of All Wines That Are Commonly Used Here in England*, published in 1568, the physician William Turner (1508-1568), for example, was highly critical of 'the maner of our delicate Englishmen and women that drinke the Rhennish wine only for pleasure', while it was still as thick as 'a puddle or horsepisse'. Turner argued that people were not paying enough attention to what they were drinking. In the long term, drinking wine that had not reached full fermentation – or even when it was only must mixed with water – was therefore full of 'earthlynesse', which was thought to cause diseases such as kidney and bladder stones.[77] Turner's overall goal was to promote the consumption of white German

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[76] Cavallo and Storey, *Healthy Living in Late Renaissance Italy,* p. 212.

[77] William Turner, *A New Boke of the Natures and Properties of All Wines That Are Commonly Vsed Here in England with a Confutation of an Errour of Some Men, That Holde, That Rhennish and Other*

wine over red French wine. In Turner's opinion, both Rhenish and Claret wine were 'commonly drunken in Gentlemens houses and Citizens houses'.[78] Rhenish wine was usually at least one-year-old when consumed and if younger than that, it was usually racked for a certain time in order to make it age properly. Conversely, Claret wine tended to 'dureth not commonlye aboue one yeare'. The result was that Claret was thicker and less refined, while Rhenish wine had 'lesse terrestritie or grosse earthlynesse', as the ageing made the wine purer and thinner. The final conclusion was that 'Clared or red wines breede the stone more than white wines do'. The fermentation process of wine was somehow the opposite to that of cheese. We will see how for cheese the longer the fermentation was, the hotter and drier it was believed to become, making it especially risky for choleric people. Conversely, the longer the wine was left to mature the purer and healthier it became, losing with time the earthy components of the grape-pressing procedure. An Italian saying recommended: 'An egg of an houre, bread of a daie, kidd of a moneth, wine of sixe, flesh of a yeare, fish of ten, a woman of fifteene, and a friend of a hundred, he must have that will be merrie'.[79] In his correspondence with Charles V, Imperial ambassador Eustace Chapuys (1489-1556) described how the pregnant Anne Boleyn was struggling with her health and how the King had forbidden her servants to provide her with 'new wine on account of her health, and those who have charge of her expenses will not provide old wine'.[80] Choosing wines neither too young nor too old was, from a medical standpoint, absolutely essential in order to preserve good health.

Food was often consumed alongside wine, and writers reflected on how it related to the age and strength of the wine. Advice worked on the premise that the nature of the wine had to match the nature of the food, in order to achieve a balanced meal which would not cause problematic side-effects. According to Bacon,

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Small White Wines Ought Not to Be Drunken of Them That Either Haue, or Are in Dau (London: William Seres, 1568), sig. B4r.

[78] Turner, sig. B8r.

[79] Florio, sig. I2r, 'Uovo d'un hora, pane d'un dì, capretto d'un mese, vino di sei, carne d'un anno, pesce di dieci, donna di quindici, e amico di cento, bisogna havere, chi vuol ben godere'.

[80] Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, vol. 7, 1534 (337. 17 March 1534, Chapuys to Charles V).

old wine was advantageous because it 'engenders subtilty in the parts of the liquor', but also had the disadvantage of creating 'acrimony' in the body.[81] This dichotomy resembles what has been said about the earthiness of wine and how it related to maturation. Older wines were considered purer because all the particles present in the must had time to settle. At the same time, the longer the maturation, the more fermented, and therefore more alcoholic, the wine became. In Bacon's words, ageing the wine made its spirits 'much more sharp, and eager'.[82] Adding pieces of boiled meat, especially pork or venison, to the drinking vessel was offered as a possible solution. For Bacon, this practice allowed the wine 'whereupon to ruminate, and feed, and so lay aside their mordacity'.[83] In a way, Bacon was suggesting giving the wine the possibility to discharge its bad qualities on to something else other than the body of the drinker. The rationale of consuming wines with food in order to temper the effects of the former with the latter, may have something to do with the association of strong, old wines with substantial and dense meals, such as meat-based recipes, especially game, which still survives today. The same precepts were to be found in the *Tesoro della sanità* by Castore Durante, even if in this instance the author stressed how the food had to match the wine. Those who were in the habit of eating foods that were humorally cold had to drink a stronger wine. Conversely, lighter and hotter foods that were easier to digest had to be eaten alongside a weaker wine.[84] In his discussion of wine, Durante did not talk specifically about the properties of the wine and how they reacted with the food. Bacon's observation on the components of wine and how they act over time was much more refined and complex, especially in comparison to the brief instructions on how to drink wine which Durante provided. This disparity is hardly surprising, given the different nature of the two texts. Bacon wrote an encyclopaedic natural history of the body in Latin, which was later translated into English. Durante published a very popular vernacular health regimen which focused on food and drink alone. Nonetheless, despite these differences, the

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[81] Bacon, sigg. N8v-N9r.

[82] Bacon, sig. P5r.

[83] Bacon, sig. N9r.

[84] Durante, sig. V3v, 'quanto il cibo è piu grosso, e piu, frigido tanto si conviene il vino piu gagliardo ma quando il cibo sarà piu sottile, più caldo e piu digestibile, tanto piu il vino sia debole, e per questo quei che mangiano carne di vaccina, e pesce devono bevere il vino piu gagliardo di quelli che mangiano le galline'.

underlying advice was similar: food and wine were to be combined and consumed accordingly. Strong wines were therefore recommended for heavy foods, and light wines were to be drunk alongside lighter foods.

This advice was not merely about the balance of taste and flavours between what one drank and ate. It was believed to directly impact the balance of heat in the body on one hand, and on the digestive process, on the other. If the food was cold, the body needed a stronger and hotter wine. Conversely, a hotter food required a colder, and therefore weaker, wine. The relationship between the strength of the wine and how it affected the digestion of certain heavy foods was clearly outlined in Holinshed's *Chronicles*, in a section describing the English fondness for brawn [a meat-based jelly]:

> With us it is accounted a great péece of seruice at the table, from Nouember untill Februarie be ended; but chéeflie in the Christmasse time. With the same also we begin our dinners ech daie after other: and because it is somewhat hard of digestion, a draught of malueseie, bastard, or muscadell, is usuallie droonke after it, where either of them are conuenientlie to be had.[85]

If the strength and age of wine were two major features that recurred often in the medical literature of the time, the strength and age of the drinker were of equal importance. Food and medical historians have highlighted these opinions about wine consumption in the early modern period, and stressed how all authors agreed on the fact that wine was not recommended for children.[86] Humoral theory indicated that as people got older they became drier and colder. The bodily heat of the youth dissipated with the years and wine was considered an excellent ingredient against the condition of ageing, being a drink that naturally engendered blood and brought heath to the body. On the other hand, young people were hot by nature and it was counterproductive to enhance their heat with wine. A close analysis of some texts, however, shows that there were cases where wine was prescribed to

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[85] Holinshed, sig. Uyv.

[86] See amongst the studies mentioned above, Albala, Gentilcore. In addition see Louise Hill Curth and Tanya M. Cassidy, '"Health, Strength and Happiness": Medical Constructions of Wine and Beer in Early Modern England', in *A Pleasing Sinne. Drink and Conviviality in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. by Smith, pp. 143–61.

children for specific medical reasons. Leonardo Fioravanti, for example, suggested that children should be allowed to drink wine to some extent. In his *De secreti rationali*, Fioravanti collected 'the most beautiful secrets that are provable by reason and by experience'.[87] He suggested giving wine to children in the final stage of his recommended treatment for smallpox, along with 'excellent foods and similar things'.[88] In this scenario, he focused on wine's curative and restorative functions and suggested that it was suitable for children because it helped to restore health in the body. In England as well, children were believed to benefit from remedies based on wine. However, Humphrey Brooke (1617-1693) in the *Conservatory of Health* (1650) did not recommend any specific quantity of wine for any age but reported that the elders, although wine was good for them, were 'generally too bold with it'.[89] As a general rule, adults were better off drinking strong and thick wines, while the elderly were supposed to drink wines of thinner substance, preferably white, probably because their bodies were not thought capable of handling the heat and the thickness of red wine.[90] Medical notions of wine were probably well understood by many, whether these were applied or not. This argument is valid for both of the cases made here: tempering wine with water on one hand, and that children were absolutely forbidden to drink wine, except for medicinal purposes, on the other. On this note, Anne Stobart found that wine was the second most commonly used ingredient in the preparation of health remedies for children, as it was included in 209 recipes within her sample.[91]

Wine-based medical remedies were suggested by physicians to patients who needed particular cures. Despite all the considerations of the qualities of wine such as age, strength and provenance, the belief that wine was an excellent source of nourishment and that it engendered blood production in the body made it a valuable restorative ingredient. On Wednesday 1 October 1635, the Cecils' clerk

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[87] Fioravanti, sig. A1r, 'perché è tutto pieno di bellissimi secreti, che si possono approbbare con la ragione, & con l'esperienza'.

[88] Fioravanti, sig. 8v, 'avertendo che non se gli faccia fare dieta, ma nedrirsi di bonissimi cibi, e dargli vino a bere, e simil cose…'.

[89] Humphrey Brooke, *A Conservatory of Health* (London: G. Whittington, 1650), sig. C3v.

[90] Elyot, *The Castel of Helth*, sig. F1v.

[91] Stobart, p. 137.

noted that 4s were to be spent for some generic 'wyne for Mrs Francklyne to still'.[92] The notation 'to still' indicates that this particular batch of wine was destined to be distilled, almost certainly to produce some medical remedies. Distillation was a long, expensive and demanding process, reserved for the wealthiest households, who could afford the time and the people – not to mention the equipment – needed to prepare the remedies.[93] Distilled wine may have been used to preserve food for longer periods. It is not entirely clear for how long these foods could last, but the method was very popular. Bacon himself recommended wine and 'spirit of wine' for this very purpose.[94] Distilled wines were also used as a medicinal. Cordials and curative waters of all sorts were made with infusions and distillations. Distillations of wine could be extremely useful to those who suffered from 'catalepses, or astonishment'.[95] Episodes such as these could leave a person in desperate need of some sort of quick rehabilitation to help them recover from the shock: wine and spirits were thought to be an ideal solution for restoring the body to its previous state.

If mixing water and wine was a long-established habit supported by physicians, there were significant cases in which this action was neither followed, nor suggested in the first place. In 1473, having heard that his son Gianfrancesco I (1446-1496) had fallen sick because of his obesity, Ludovico II Gonzaga (1412-1478) wrote him a letter filled with medical advice. Ludovico II himself had been extremely overweight in his youth, and he emphasised the importance of lifestyle and food and drink intake to Gianfrancesco, advising him that he 'should eat little, drink plenty of water and sleep less'.[96] As difficult as it might have been, for Ludovico the solution was persevering and getting slowly accustomed to change, without abrupt amendments to his diet. Ludovico urged his son to stop drinking unwatered wine, confessing that when he was young he could not bear even a drop of water in his own wine. It took

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[92] ESHA, Cecil, p. 6. According the OED, 'still' is both a verb and a noun. V.2.3.a: 'To subject to the process of distillation'; and N.1.1.a: 'An apparatus for distillation, consisting essentially of a close vessel (alembic, retort, boiler) in which the substance to be distilled is subjected to the action of heat, and of arrangements for the condensation of the vapour produced. Also applied to the alembic or retort separately'.

[93] Stobart, p. 118.

[94] Bacon, sig. C9v.

[95] Bacon, sig. R6r.

[96] ASMn, A.G., b. 2892, L. 73, cc. 95r-v, 9 December 1473, from Goito, quoted in Malacarne, p. 138, 'manzare poco, bevere aqua asai et dormire manco'.

years for Ludovico to accustom his stomach to the process and he persistently supported his son in this difficult task:

> do not think that we want you to drastically reduce your diet immediately. We remember how our stomach could not bear one single drop of water in our wine. We started slowly, now adding a quarter [of water], now a third, now half, until we reduced ourselves that we could not drink straight wine, nor we would like it, without water. You will do the same, if you are to go down this path, if you are willing, that it shall not taste good otherwise.[97]

Ultimately, the main idea behind this sharing of medical knowledge between father and son is that tempering wine with water was ideal if one was to conduct a good and healthy life. Nevertheless, actual behaviour could vary quite considerably and this document reveals the transhistorical struggle between what is supposedly good for you and what you like the most on one hand, and what you are most accustomed to on the other. Drinking unadulterated wine was not the healthy thing to do, but it was done nonetheless. If some nobles struggled to become accustomed to tempering wine, Croce's works suggest ordinary people were ambivalent about this practice. The character Basalorcio was strictly against it and reminded the reader that 'I like to drink, and cannot bear/ to see any water, that rots the poles/ as we know the old saying tells'.[98] Tempering wine was not necessarily the ideal for tavern drinkers. In the ballad 'On the first day of August', Croce reminded the drinkers 'not to be so ignorant/ to let their wine to be watered/ that on that day is forbidden'.[99] A possible explanation lies behind the process of fermentation of wine. Usually, a younger wine has less alcohol in it, making it easier to be drunk without adding any water.

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[97] ASMn, A.G., b. 2892, L. 73, cc. 95r-v, 9 December 1473, from Goito, quoted in Malacarne, p. 279, 'Nui se ricordamo che s'el stomaco nostro havesse sentito una goza d'acqua nel vino non lo potea patire. Nui comenciassemo a poco, hora a metterne un quarto, hora un terzo, hora la mitate, tanto che siamo riducti ch'el vino non ce saperia bono schieto, ne ce gustaria, ne lo poressemo bevere senza aqua. Cuss' farai anche tu, se comenzarai per questa via, ché, se ben voresti, non lo potresti poi bevere altramente, ché il non te saperìa bono'.

[98] Croce, *Lamento de' bevanti*, 'Il ber mi piace, e non posso patire/Di veder l'acqua, ch'ell amarcia i pali,/Sì come per proverbio si suol dire'.

[99] Croce, *Cantilena graziosa*, 'E raccordo agli bevanti/Che non sian tanto ignoranti/Di lassarselo adacquare/Ch'in tal dì non si può fare'.

A wine that was able to maintain its qualities over time was considered to be valuable, rare, precious and particularly good. We learn this from a letter sent by the courtier Forno to Francesco II Gonzaga (1466-1519) in 1518. Forno praised the goodness of some Hungarian wines, despite the fact he knew that his master was not going to like it. Forno wrote that he 'received a [letter?] in which you tell me about that most terrible wine, and that the stomach of your excellence could not tolerate. You must know that this wine will last for one hundred years in those wicker bottles, and if you will ever need those bottles, you will pour the wine in some others, and it will last as well'.[100] If a wine with these long-lasting properties was precious, it was also, with all probability, very strong, *grande*, with a higher alcohol content because of the long fermentation process. This is also the reason why these wines could travel all over Europe in an age of a slower transportation and remain safe to be drunk. The problems that Francesco II had with this kind of wine were not a novelty. Already 23 years before this letter, in 1495, the Duke's intolerance for strong wines was openly manifest. Isabella sent to her husband some wines and melons, along with this explanation: 'Although I know that in that village [near Parma, approximately 38 miles from Mantua], they have good wines, and knowing that the strong ones are not liked by your lordship, I thought it was good to send you some of our wines, hoping that these will satisfy you'.[101] There was a clear distinction between strong and weak wines, between those younger and lighter with less alcohol, and those that had been matured for a long time. Those who could, chose accordingly. Naturally, the food that was going to be consumed with wine also had to be chosen accordingly.

Wine and melon was a combination that was well thought of in Italy. Despite Ken Albala's assertion that the hypothetical campaign carried out by physicians against melons in the early modern period worked, melons were instead highly

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[100] ASMn, A.G., b. 1246, cc. 730r, 3 September 1518, quoted in Malcarne, p. 145, 'Ho rece[vuto] [la carta e strappata] una de V. S. per la qualle ho visto quanto quella me scrive cercha [circa] el vino e tropo teribile, e che el stomaco de V. S. non poteria tolera[re]. […] sappi quella che se conservara quello cento anni in quella fiaschiere e se V. S. vorà servirse de la fiaschiera, quella lo faccia transvudare in uno altro vaso che similiter se conservarà'.

[101] ASMn, A.G., b. 2992, L. 5, cc. 6r, 25 July 1495, Isabella to the husband Francesco II, quoted in Malacarne, p. 149, 'Benche sapia in quello paese siano vini boni, non di meno sapendo che li grandi non gustano a la Ex. V., m'e parso mandarline de piu sorte de questi nostri, sperando che gli debbano satisfare'.

esteemed.[102] On 25 July 1495 Isabella sent to her husband, amongst other things, melons accompanied by wine. She was very apologetic about the condition of the melons, writing that if they were ruined, it was because of the heavy rains. Alongside the melons, she sent two barrels of 'sweet wines for melons'.[103] Croce's lyrics, once again, confirm that this particular combination was established in the culinary landscape of early modern Italy, and thus not simply the personal taste of Francesco II Gonzaga. The first verse of the *Cantilena graziosa* reads 'Come on, let's hit August/ With good roast beef/ And good wine and good melons/ Good mutton and good pigeons/ … With good wine, melons and figs/ As the ancient people did'.[104] Croce put together specific combinations of foods and wine. Specifically, in the *Cantilena graziosa* Croce writes *buon vino e buon meloni*, that is good wine and good melons, and again, *con buon vin, poponi e fichi*, that is with good wine, melons and figs. As shown in the first chapter on herbs, roots and fruit, these foods were believed to be cold and moist in their humoral qualities on a general level. The hotness of the wine would have easily counterbalanced the coldness of the fruit. This particular combination became popular in the hottest regions of the Mediterranean. Even today in areas such as Spain or southern Italy, fruit-infused wine is a popular drink in summer. Figure 3 shows a painting by Christopher Berentz, *Preparations for a Banquet*, created at the turn of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. The food arranged on the table displays popular combination of ingredients. The table is beautifully dressed, and on top of it there are several glasses of wine, with a jug and a *fiasco* (wicker wine bottle) of wine next to them. All over the table and on the floor there is a profusion of melons of different sorts, alongside what looks like a tray of figs, and peaches, grapes and pears. It is not obvious what environment the painting depicts, but the context is supposedly that of an Italian villa.

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[102] Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance*, p. 12.

[103] ASMn, A.G., b. 2992, L. 5, c. 6r, 25 July 1495, Isabella to the husband Francesco II, quoted in Malacarne, p. 149, 'Se li melloni non serranno in perfectione lo imputara a l'aqua piouta questi di & a la longheza de la via[…]. Nota de le cose che mando: Barili quatro de vino da Revero bruscho Barili dui de vino dolce da melloni Vasselletti dui de vino biancho da sacho Una soma de melloni'.

[104] Croce, *Cantilena graziosa*, 'Su, su, feriamo Agosto/ Con vitella e buon arrosto/ E buon vino e buon meloni/ Buon castrato e buon piccioni', and again, 'Con buon vin, poponi e fichi/ Come già facean gli antichi'.

Wine, like most foods, was a complex ingredient to evaluate from a medical standpoint, particularly as it could be both extremely good for and damaging to the body. I have shown how medical and popular understandings and definitions of wine overlapped. The result of this shared vocabulary was that the medical ways of defining and recognising a good wine were popular and used even outside of medical and scientific circles. The next section will look at how wine was consumed in the household, in Italy and England, and it will build on the notion that wine was regarded as both a powerful substance with important medical implications, and as an essential identity marker and sign of distinction.

Wine consumption, labourers and the household

In Mantua, all the offices of the palace were obliged to keep registers in which all the expenses had to be meticulously noted, and the *caneva*, or cellar, was no exception.[105] The *caneva* was an independent office which regulated the acquisition and use of wine for the household. The *canevaro*, the wine-master, oversaw the wine management for the house, or for specific persons of the house, from its delivery to the service. In fact, one of the duties of the *canevaro* was to make sure that the wines delivered to the household were 'good and superior'. The wines were immediately taken into the cellar and openly shown and tested, probably by *il signor maestro di casa,* the master of the house, who was in charge of the household. If the wines that the *canevaro* admitted into the house were found to be somehow of bad quality, the *canevaro* had to refund the expenses of the cellar himself.[106] On a day-to-day basis, he had to manage the wines that were being consumed at the table of the dukes, their family and their guests. In order to keep track of the types and quantities of wines around the household, he worked in constant collaboration with the *superior*, who was probably the *scalco della caneva*, and the *bottigliero*, who was in charge of the wine served to the dukes. However, this section will not focus on the wine served at the table of the dukes, but on the wine served to the rest of the household. It will be

[105] ASMn, AG, b. 394, c. 737r, quoted in Malacarne, p. 243.

[106] ASMn, AG, b. 394, c. 745r, quoted in Malacarne, p. 245, 'Che il Canevaro non possa accettar vini che non siano buoni et elletti, da qual si voglia persona, et che prima non ne porti la mostra in Scalcheria; il qual Canevaro, contravenendo, et che in detta Caneva ne siano trovati di cattivi, si faranno pagare al detto Canevaro'.

argued that the household, in Italy, took care of the health of its employees by providing them with wine on a daily basis as a form of payment, precisely because of the nourishing characteristic of this beverage outlined previously in the chapter.

Those employees who were particularly high in the ranking of the household, and who probably lived there as well, were given both food and a wage. Others were given food only. The *spese*, the expenses allowed to the workers of the household which included pre-allotted quantities of wine, were strictly regulated. Even if the wine served to these people was not the most prestigious one, it came nonetheless from the estate of the Dukes.[107] It is worth focusing on a specific individual that features in the accounts. The name of Bartolomeo Stefani appears in these 'extraordinary' accounts, amongst other workers and guests. Stefani was master cook for the Gonzaga under Duke Carlo II in the mid seventeenth century, and author of the *L'arte del ben cucinare* which was published in 1662 and became one of the most popular Italian cookbooks of the early modern period. However, when these records were written, he was just 'Cuoco di Forestaria', cook of the guest quarters. Alongside his wage of 48 *danari* per month, Stefani received two pounds of veal for each flesh day, and 'three *bozzole* of wine and two pieces of bread' per day.[108] A *bozzola* was a unit used to measure liquids, especially wine, according to Malacarne, but it could also mean a bottle. In 1606, in Mantua, ninety *bozzole* made up a *soglio* of wine.[109] A *soglio* was a large unit that contained 108 *boccali*. A *boccale* was roughly a litre of wine.[110] This means that a *bozzola* was about 1.2 litres of wine. Thus, these workers clearly received and likely drank many litres of wine per day. The amount of meat, wine and bread which was supplied to employees of the palace varied considerably, but almost all employees seem to have received something. Gregorio Campolongo, helper to the bakery, got two pounds of beef, two pieces of bread and two *bozzole* of wine, every day. The court jester Palò earned 38 *lire di danari* per month, two pieces of bread and three *bozzole* of wine per day. Prestige was likely an important factor in

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[107] ASMn, AG, b. 394, c. 766r, quoted in Malcarne, p. 250.

[108] ASMn, AG, Scalcheria e amministrazione Palazzo Ducale, b. 1, Spese Straordinarie, 'La spesa di Bartolommeo di Steffani, Cuogo della Forestaria … numero 3 Bozzolle di Vino, numero 2 pani, al giorno'.

[109] Carlo D'Arco, *Economia politica del Municipio di Mantova* (Mantua: F.lli Negretti, 1842), p. 224.

[110] Malacarne, pp. 307, 310, a *boccale* consisted also in half of a *fiasco* or two *mezzette*.

determining quantities since M. Vincenzo Gandolfi, one of the cooks and thus a person under Stefani, was allowed only two *bozzole* of wine, instead of three. The documents do not specify what kind of wine was served to these members of the household, but they likely drank nothing more than local wine, a young wine, with low alcoholic content, but quite dense and not refined.

The *Libro de la Caneva del card. Ippolito II*, for the years 1540-41, returns a similar picture. Son of Lucrezia Borgia (1480-1519) and nephew of cardinal Ippolito II d'Este (1509-1572), Ippolito II d'Este (1509-1572) was a major figure in Renaissance Italy. These documents recorded the amounts of wine bought for the staff who looked after the cardinal, such as stablemen and servants.[111] Each worker was identified by role and name, and their individual provision of wine noted. After that, the records reveal the names of the *brentadori*, who were in charge of delivering the wine to the palace. Each single page of the register was dedicated to a different person, with the wine provisions that were made usually every two months, starting from September. As in Mantua, different people got different amounts of wine. The exact quantity of wine that these measures indicate is very difficult to understand today, because of the many regional variants that were in place at the time. For example, the cardinal's stable boy Altobello Mantovano received one *mastello* and two *secchie* of wine on 2 September 1540, and one *secchia* on 5 October. These terms were used as units for measurements of liquids, mostly wine. In current Italian these two words are synonyms, and they mean bucket, tub, tank. Originally, the *mastello* was the bucket where the grapes were pressed, in order to make wine. The *secchia* can be more easily related to the bucket of the well. The size is the only factor that differentiates them. In Ferrara, one *mastello* was roughly around eighty litres of wine, around eight *secchie*.

The master cook Andrea was given fifteen *mastelli* of wine between September 1540 and 27 June 1541.[112] The *maestro di casa* Alessandro Gerbinato received sixteen *mastelli* over the same period.[113] The record, despite its detail, does not reveal the type of wine that was served. Once again, the documents talk only of a generic wine

[111] ASMo, ASE, Camera, Amministrazione Casa, Caneva – Cantina, Buste, b. 32, 1540-41, Libro de la Caneva del card. Ippolito II.

[112] ASMo, ASE, Camera, Amministrazione Casa, Caneva – Cantina, b. 32, c. 1r.

[113] ASMo, ASE, Camera, Amministrazione Casa, Caneva – Cantina, b. 32, c. 2r.

and the quantities of wine allotted do not fit into any particular pattern. A certain Alfonso, apparently a servant of the cardinal, received twenty-six *mastelli* and two *secchie*, the same amount allotted to the musician of the cardinal.[114] Marco Antonio Testino, the cellarer himself, was allowed only fifteen *mastelli*.[115] The chaplain Jacopo Magnanin, instead, was given a much larger amount of wine, and of better quality too, since from August 1540 to August 1541 he received thirty-five *mastelli* of wine 'with *graspe*'.[116] Malacarne defines the *graspia* as 'a kind of common wine, of unprecise nature', but it had to be somehow better than the common wine listed in the register for these workers, if the record keeper specified the difference from the rest of the wine discussed in the register. The quantity was also much larger, probably because the chaplain was of higher status than the labourers of the household.

Much more significant amounts of wine were listed in the section of the 'extraordinary'. Persons or institutions not strictly related to the house, such as convents and monasteries, or actors who played comedies at the palace, featured in this section of the register. In these cases the wine was managed by Filippo Fiorino, *factore general*, or the general manager of the household.[117] Two entries were significantly different from the rest. On 13 May 1541 Fiorino ordered the potter and and porter to throw away thirty *mastelli* from the *caneva* because they were *marzi* (rotten). There are no further details of this case, but probably the wine had aged badly and become undrinkable. Instead, fifteen *mastelli* were destined to be used to make vinegar, 'for the needs of the house of the Cardinal d'Este'.[118] Wine was also used as a form of payment for occasional labourers in the household, as in the case of Benedetto Malvezzo, who received one *mastello* and two *secchie* of wine because 'his

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[114] ASMo, ASE, Camera, Amministrazione Casa, Caneva – Cantina, b. 32, cc. 3r, 15r.

[115] ASMo, ASE, Camera, Amministrazione Casa, Caneva – Cantina, b. 32, c. 25r.

[116] ASMo, ASE, Camera, Amministrazione Casa, Caneva – Cantina, b. 32, c. 34r.

[117] ASMo, ASE, Camera, Amministrazione Casa, Caneva – Cantina, b. 32, c. 36r.

[118] ASMo, ASE, Camera, Amministrazione Casa, Caneva – Cantina, b. 32, c. 40r, 'Adi 13 di magio fece buttare alla dozza per piero fachino nostro presente maestro farancesco carello vaselaro di commisione del maestro general filippo fiorino mastelli trenta di vini boidi marzi di quello della Caneva del paradixo'; 'mastelli quindese de vini et quistj per fare aceto per bisogno di Casa dil soppradetto signore gardinal daeste'.

service of some days in the household'.[119] The total amount of money paid from the *canevaro* in the expenses of wine for the workers of the household at the end of the period under examination, August 1540 – September 1541, was 877 *livree*, 16 *soldi* and 8 *dinari*, for 1588 *mastelli* of wine. A strikingly similar amount of 821 *livree*, 6 *soldi* and 4 *dinari* was spent by general manager Filippo Fiorino for the same period.[120]

The habit of paying the household's employees with wine, alongside bread, meat and money, can be viewed in many ways. Certainly, there was a sense that wine was an important commodity in the early modern period. Even if there were no fountains of wine in the ducal palace in Mantua or in Ferrara, at the court of Cardinal Ippolito II, like the one in the Venetian Arsenal, the employees who worked for the dukes or for the cardinal could benefit from the daily supply of wine which was included in their wages. The provision of bread and wine, an addition to the salary that these people gained from their labour, was a benefit that was seen as the responsibility of masters in this period. In his *Vinti giornate dell'agricoltura* Agostino Gallo outlined the ways in which a master should take care of their servants not only with good manners and good wages, but also in more physical, or bodily, ways. The *bifolco,* the peasant, was the person upon whom everything depended in the micro-economy of the household. It was the master's duty to care of him, and one of the most important steps being providing the labourer with food, water, and wine:

> and as soon as they get home, tired, you will give them wine for their mouth, and you will wait until they are rested, to give them food and according to what they eat, water as well, as they will drink according to their own needs.[121]

In this instance, the provision of wine was not necessarily, or exclusively, part of a larger economic reward, but a way in which masters took care of the health of their employees.

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[119] ASMo, ASE, Camera, Amministrazione Casa, Caneva – Cantina, b. 32, c. 39v, 'mastelli uno sechie doe di vino per il suo servire alchunj giorni del mese di Luglio passato'.

[120] ASMo, ASE, Camera, Amministrazione Casa, Caneva – Cantina, b. 32, cc. 40v-41r.

[121] Agostino Gallo, *Vinti giornate d'agricoltura* (Venice: Gioseffo Imberti, 1628), p. 12, 'Et come faranno giunti a casa scalmanati, li spruzzarà del vino in bocca, non li legherà alla mangiatora, sin tanto che non haueranno cessato di sudare e di ansare: Dandoli da poi il loro cibo e secondo che di mano in mano lo mangiano, e come ne haveranno mangiato una parte, li condurrà all'acqua, o accioché bevano secondo il loro bisogno'.

In England, the Cecil accounts feature wine in two different sections: weekly purchases, and, much more consistently, expenditure from stored provisions. Wine was the most expensive product of the entire account, but remained listed alongside the rest of the groceries. With almost no exceptions, there is no clear definition in the main corpus of the account as to what kind of wine it was and for whom. For example, we know that certain kinds of meat such as beef or pork, and fruits, were bought specifically for the Lord and the family. When this circumstance occurred, the formulae 'for my Lord's table', or 'of my Lord's store' were used. This particular phrasing never appears for wine, probably – as we will see – because it was expected that the Lord and his guests were the only beneficiaries. Despite these imprecise recording habits, wine was consumed weekly, on a regular basis. In fact, a close analysis of the account reveals that wine was consumed quite consistently throughout the year, and that it was something reserved exclusively for the Lord, the family and their guests.

As small as these purchases are, these occurrences are extremely helpful because they reveal the volume of wine that the household was consuming, since some of these were recorded with both price and quantity. This kind of expense was recorded in the 'provision' section of the household. The first case was discussed in the section above: 4s were spent for wine to be distilled by Mrs Francklyne. On the same day, however, one quart (two pints) of Claret wine, this time specifically defined as Claret and not as generic and unlabelled wine, was purchased for 8d.[122] Similarly, on Tuesday 24 March a purchase of 3d was registered for an unspecified amount of white wine.[123] The latter can be easily compared with the only other recurrence of white wine in the account, which happened precisely nine days before, on Sunday 15 March, when a quart of white wine was purchased for 6d, alongside 4s of lobsters, probably to be cooked or served together.[124] Robert May's *The Accomplisht Cook* lists many recipes for lobsters, and most of them feature wine, either Claret or unspecified white wine. For example, in order to stew lobsters one could use a broth made with Claret and vinegar, warm it up once cooked in a sauce made with butter and white wine, and immerse it once again into a pipkin (cauldron,

[122] ESHA, Cecil, p. 6.
[123] ESHA, Cecil, p. 61.
[124] ESHA, Cecil, p. 59.

usually an earthenware pot) filled with Claret or grape juice.[125] From a humoral perspective this combination made absolute sense. The cold and moist characteristics of the lobster, a water creature, were balanced by the hotness of the wine.

It is impossible to connect with certainty the Claret wine and the white wine bought on these occasions to the generic wine that figures so consistently in the other section of the account. Nevertheless, on Sunday 1 March the catering bill featured an expense of 9d for '3 pintes wyne'.[126] Since the Cecil accounts report expenses for wine under labelling such as 'Claret' and 'white', these three pints of wine were probably of the same kind as the generic wine recorded in the expenditure section. If a pint of this wine cost 3d, it meant that for those occasions, between October and November 1634, when the household spent £3 each week, something around 240 pints of wine were purchased each time. In turn, the household consumed slightly less than 1000 pints of wine alone in October 1634, around thirty-two pints of wine per day. It emerges that for the rest of the period, until March, the average consumption of wine of the household was around 15 pints per day. Considering these numbers, the quantities of wine that were purchased in single instances in the cater bill as those discussed above were necessarily destined to individual consumption. They suggest that there was a specific interest in having small measures of Claret and white wine, probably influenced by specific instances and situations. It also indicates that the vast majority of wine consumed throughout the year was red.

The total amount spent on wine by the household 'since the xxixth of September 1634' added up to £36.10s.6d.[127] Since the first acquisition was made on the 11 December, the large amount of wine that was consumed in October came from surpluses already in stock at the time. In fact before the weekly recording of expenses and purchases started on the 27 September, the clerk noted the remaining stock from the previous term. In this instance there were two hogsheads and twelve

[125] May, sig. Dd1r.
[126] ESHA, Cecil, p. 55.
[127] ESHA, Cecil, p. 55.

gallons of 'French wyne' worth £11, and thirty gallons of 'sacke', worth £5.[128] In the house in London were left 'in sacke 1 pipe from Sir John Worsnam' and 'in claret 2 hogsheads from Mr Gleman'. The account reporting all the 'Stocke remayneing the 27th of March', at the very end of the account, lists that all the sack was consumed between September and March, while there was still 'halfe a tunn' of claret left, for the value of £12, which would be one pipe.[129] The tun was the largest vessel used for liquids, mostly wine, and it equals two pipes. However, this is the only instance in which this particular unit was used in the account, which suggests that the clerk was much more worried with actual quantities of product and the respective monetary value, rather than with phraseological consistency. Sack was a Spanish wine, so the simultaneous use of nomenclatures such as 'French wine' and 'clarett' is much more problematic, as they both came from France. Considering how the phraseology of the accounts varies to some degree, the wine consumed throughout the term by the Cecils was a mixture of Spanish and French wine.

There are no amounts of money listed for the two entries of sack and claret that went unconsumed at the London house. Instead, the word 'presented' was used by the clerk, which suggests, in all probability, that these wines were gifts made to the Cecils during their stay in London. Thus, the sack at Quickswood was roughly around 150 gallons, that is 1200 pints. The French wine was 120 gallons, that is 960 pints. In London, both claret and sack were 108 gallons respectively, 864 pints each.[130] All in all, the total amount of wine the Cecils had ready to be consumed between London and Quickswood when the account started in September 1634 was around 3888 pints. Subtracting from this amount the half tun, one pipe, of sack left at the end of the account mentioned above, we can see that in the twenty-five weeks from the end of September to the end of March 1634 a rough total of just over 3000 pints of red wine were consumed. The records only specify that three pints of white wine were bought and drunk. These figures indicate that the Cecils consumed an average of 17.14 pints of wine per day. Therefore, the information about the wine in stock at the beginning of the year compared with the wine left untouched at the end of the term match the drinking rate shown in the graph quite consistently,

[128] ESHA, Cecil, p.3.
[129] ESHA, Cecil, p. 76.
[130] ESHA, Cecil, p. 3.

extrapolated by the weekly expenditures. The amount of wine, despite being the most expensive entry in the account, suggest how it was an item exclusively reserved for the family and, probably, for its guests.

The accounts of the Radcliffes reveal much more detail about what kind of wine was consumed, beyond the quantity and nation of origin of the wine itself. The types of wines consumed were Sack, Canary, Mallaga, Claret, Muskadine, Vindee and a not better specified 'Whitwine'. The period under consideration here goes from the week ending on Sunday 30 December 1638 to Sunday 24 March 1638.

Claret was the wine which was drunk the most throughout the period under analysis, with the only exceptions being the first and last week of the accounts, when Canary wine prevailed. Clearly, Claret was the first wine of choice and Canary followed. Muskadine wine was consumed occasionally, five times in the period recorded in the account. Vindee wine, with all probability a wine coming from the region of Vendée, in west-central France, was consumed only on one occasion in the first week of the year: six bottles to the value of 6s are recorded. A total of six bottles of white wine were consumed. Four were consumed during the Christmas celebration at the beginning of the year, one in mid-March, and the final one the following week. The weekly amount of Claret that was consumed was between two and four gallons, that is sixteen and thirty two pints per week. Canary was drunk in the order of one to two gallons per week. Therefore, on average, thirty six pints of wine were consumed weekly, roughly an average of five pints per day. In comparison with the Cecils' household, less wine was consumed by the Radcliffes, but with much more consistency. These amounts are quite small which suggest that no wine was given to workers in the household. The total amount of money spent by the Radcliffes on wine from the last week of December to 24 March was £14.91. The accounts also reveal the total expenditure in wine for the period from Michaelmas 1637 to Michaelmas 1638, and the same for the following year: £55.3s.2d and £42.17.10d, respectively. The first total is the one that is relevant to the period under analysis here. Given the fact that £14.91 of wine were spent over little more than three months, it is possible that beside special events and celebrations the rate of consumption showed here was observed throughout the year.

The variety of wines drunk by the Radcliffes was also much more diverse in comparison with the Cecils. In any case, the denominations used for the different

typologies of wine were quite unspecific at every level. Even port books recorded, at times, just 'French' or 'Spanish' wines.[131] 'Sweet' and 'Spanish' were also used alternatively as synonyms. Sack, for example, was bought by the Radcliffes but it was not consumed in this particular period. There were 4 gallons of Sack in the cellar, for example, at the beginning of October 1637.[132] In the following week a gallon and a quarter of Sack was drunk, alongside two and a half gallons of Claret.[133] The types of wine listed in the Radcliffes' records and the way in which they appear match the trends of wine imports highlighted by Stephens in relation to the port of Exeter in 1638. The most imported wine was French at 64%; Sack followed at 24%, with Canary representing only around 6%.[134] Obviously these figures varied constantly, year by year, according to the factors discussed above. The 1630s, however, witnessed the highest amount of wine imported to England, which means the cost of wine was cheaper in the period covered by the accounts discussed here, in comparison with what came before and what came after.[135] The figures extrapolated from the English accounts are useful because they return a very different picture from the Italian ones. In Italy wine was seen, among other things, as a healthy and nourishing substance, useful to fuel the labourers of the household. Conversely, in England, wine consumption in aristocratic households was confined to masters, their family and guests, although there was a widespread consumption of wine across the social spectrum thanks to institutions such as inns and taverns.[136] And yet, both physicians and laypeople praised beer as the most beneficial drink for the English. From a medical perspective, English physicians argued in favour of beer by considering the benefits for English bodies, stressing that the beer had to be aged enough and preferably of medium strength. Writers also stressed the nutritional benefits of beer. For example, an anonymous pamphlet published in London in 1647

[131] Stephens, p. 155.
[132] ESHA, Radcliffes, p. 79.
[133] ESHA, Radcliffes, p. 84.
[134] Stephens, p. 154.
[135] Stephens, p. 161.
[136] Muldrew, pp. 66-67.

asserted that beer was essential for the poorest labourers because it provided energy for their work.[137]

Conclusion

This chapter has compared medical and lay attitudes towards wine in early modern Italy and England. On the one hand the medical value of wine was in its nourishing content and, humorally speaking, in the properties of blood generation; on the other, there was a strong emphasis placed on the dangers of wine abuse. The main finding of this chapter is that medical and lay understandings of wine overlapped, and that the language, vocabulary and categorisations used in educated discourses on wine were also deployed in everyday contexts, as evidence from literary sources and private correspondence corroborates. People without a medical background could easily understand if a specific wine was good or bad. In this instance, the medical experience of discerning the quality of an ingredient and its many degrees of hotness and coldness was not required. The age and strength of wine were two inseparable characteristics, and both were thought to contribute towards the effects wine had on the body. Wine was supposed to be drunk at certain ages and in certain quantities. This chapter has shown how these notions were clearly understood by a multitude of people from all sorts of social groups, including the gentry, labourers, tavern drinkers and educated travellers. Writers also made it clear that people had to decide for themselves how much to drink and how. As this chapter has shown, tempering the wine was considered to be essential in theory, but wine-drinkers did not always follow this precept in practice. Tempering was up to the individual, as was eating foods which were humorally appropriate for different types of wine.

Finally, the chapter considered the difference in the everyday use of wine in England and Italy. Wine was a widely available commodity in Italy because the climate and weather were highly suitable for growing vines. In this context, it was a master's responsibility to take care of the health of his employees by providing them with specific amounts of bread and wine as well as a respectable wage, so they were able to do their job in a proper and healthy way. In England, where wine had to be

[137] Muldrew, *Food, Energy*, p. 67.

imported, this was not the case. Here, labourers found the necessary energy to conduct their duties in ale and beer. In England wine was considered much more of a luxury and was used as a social tool to impress guests at large dinners, banquets and festivities. Wine was the most expensive item purchased by the Radcliffes and Cecils purchased. Nonetheless, members of the gentry enjoyed wine on an everyday basis. Humorally speaking it was wine, and not ale or beer, that engendered the best production of blood in the body and was the best source of nourishment among the alcoholic beverages. However, in England climate and the prices of imports made ale and beer much more favourable as a source of energy. The dichotomy between beer or ale and wine that has emerged from this analysis does not offer evidence of the breakdown of the humoral scheme in early modern Europe. Instead, it is quite the opposite. The Galenic-Hippocratic theoretical framework advocated eating and drinking local foods and drinks, made from local raw materials, which were of greatest benefit to those born and living in these localities. From this perspective, the climate of Italy induced more wine consumption. In turn, Italian physicians stressed the good qualities of wine over those of beer. In England, however, precisely the opposite occurred. This shows how geographical and economic conditions affected the ways in which good health was pursued and maintained in early modern Europe.

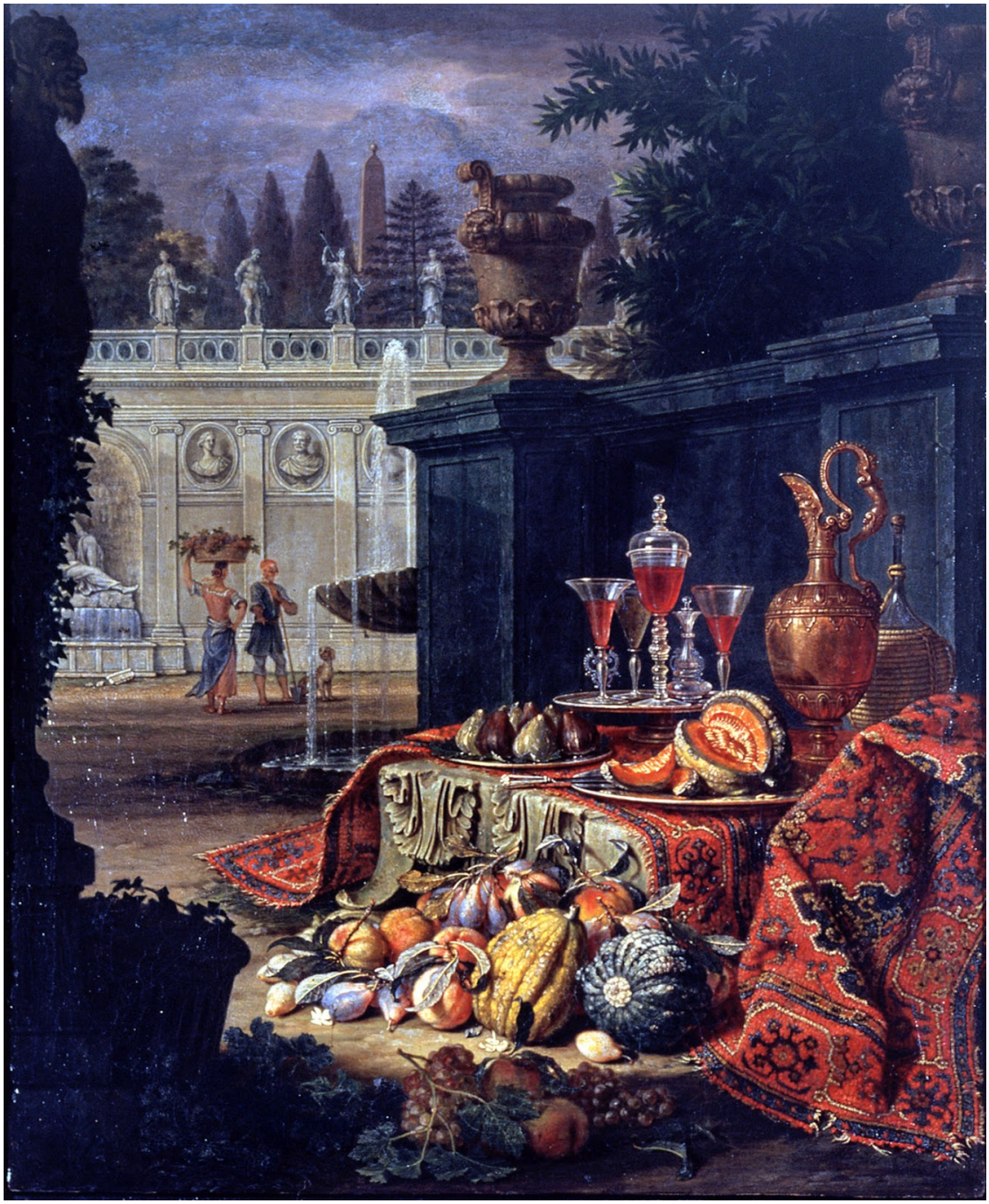

Figure 4. Christian Berentz, *Preparations for a Banquet*, late 17th-early 18th century, Galleria Corsini, Rome (inv. 142)

Chapter 4

Dairy Foods

Dairy foods in the early modern period

Dairy foods were a staple in the diet of early modern people. People drank milk on a regular basis, ate cheese and butter, and dined on dishes made with cream and custard. All the by-products of milk, such as buttermilk, were consumed in a variety of ways. Medical regimens, as well as household handbooks and husbandry treatises, discussed the complexions of dairy foods as much as those of any other ingredient. People's perception of dairy foods, especially cheese, underwent considerable change during this period, as they shifted from being peasants' food to delicacies which were prized by the nobility. This shift was part of the same culinary revolution that embraced the use of butter in the creation of sauces and creams to serve with any kind of preparation: a significant change from the medieval way of making sauces, which were made with juices, wine, and breadcrumbs, and never with fat.[1] This 'taste revolution' was driven first and foremost by the desire for something new. The fashion for dairy products in this period was due to this phenomenon.

In contrast to what has been suggested by David Gentilcore, milk and its derivatives were not neglected or ignored by medical writers in the early modern period. Rather, in the early modern period there was a renewed interest in milk. Italian humanists recalled milk in a mystical and spiritual way in their works, in an attempt to reconnect with the bucolic scenes and experiences articulated in classical literature, so central to the culture of the Renaissance. In the eyes of Italian writers of the early modern period, milk embedded concepts of purity and comfort in

[1] Massimo Montanari, *La fame e l'abbondanza: Storia dell'alimentazione in Europa* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1997, 1st ed. 1993), pp. 147–148. See also Albala, *The Banquet*, p. 50.

nature.[2] This interest in milk connected with wider patterns of the study of the body and how it worked, with increasing curiosity being directed towards other vital bodily fluids that were not necessarily humours, such as urine, blood and sperm.[3] Nonetheless, early modern medical ideas about dairy foods have attracted limited scholarly attention, especially if compared to other foodstuffs, such as meat, cereals and wine. The sparse historiography on the topic argues that the medical reputation of dairy foods was ambiguous at best, and that consumption of these products was limited because of their poor reputation. This chapter will advance existing scholarship by showing that dairy foods were consumed in many forms, and how certain patterns of consumption took the potential risks that these foodstuffs were believed to pose to health into consideration, and worked to moderate them.

Gentilcore focuses on dairy foods and health, but tends to concentrate on the negative connotations of cheese and milk, with no or little emphasis on milk's other by-products. When historians such as Ken Albala or Massimo Montanari bring some positive medical evaluations of dairy foods into the discussion, they tend to question the possibility that these ingredients were consumed widely, and also downplay the vitality of medical debates in this period. The evidence presented in this chapter challenges Gentilcore's view that 'milk was hardly considered at all in the regimens, aside from references to a Dutch fondness for it, excepting breast milk, which was regarded as indispensable in the diet of infants'.[4] Rather, animal milk was very much part of the conversation, alongside human milk. Discussions and debates on milk and dairy foods date back to Aristotle (384 BC-322 BC). The treatise on dairy foods written in 1477 by the fifteenth-century Italian physician Pantaleone da Confienza, the *Summa lacticiniorum*, became extremely popular and continued to be read and discussed in the early modern period.[5] Pantaleone's argument in favour of dairy foods, and cheese in particular, resolved the debate between Mediterranean and Arabic authors who historically held opposing positions on the uses and effects

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[2] Deborah Valenze, *Milk. A Local and Global History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), pp. 71–78.

[3] Piero Camporesi, *Le vie del latte. Dalla padania alla steppa* (Milan: Garzanti, 1993), ch. 'La via lattea'.

[4] Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe*, p. 157.

[5] Pantaleone da Confienza, *Trattato dei latticini (1477), Translation by Walter Lapini and Adriano Toti*, ed. by Emilio Faccioli and Irma Naso (Bra: Slow Food Editore, 2001), p. 9.

of milk and its derivatives on the human body, and whether cheese was best and more wholesome when made with goat milk rather than cow milk.[6]

Nevertheless, the ambiguity as to whether dairy foods were good or bad for the preservation of health persisted throughout the early modern period. Albala has conducted the most thorough analysis to date on the early modern medical reputation of milk, and ultimately defined milk as both 'nutritious and dangerous'.[7] This dual legacy attributed to milk, extremely nourishing on one hand and very dangerous for the body on the other, was fuelled by 'strident warnings and numerous variables and conditions under which it should be consumed' that 'probably left serious readers petrified for their lives at the very thought of drinking milk'.[8] Albala has argued that people either 'blithely' ignored physicians' advice or avoided milk entirely.[9] These views of patterns of milk consumption do not to take into consideration the fact that medical advice on milk was so wide and varied precisely because physicians regarded milk as worthy of consideration.

Scholarship on cheese consumption has been similar to studies of milk. Historians have stressed the medical and cultural ambiguity of cheese and drawn attention to anxieties related to its consumption. Piero Camporesi highlighted the extent to which physicians addressed cheese with suspicion and fear in the early modern period. In his analysis, Camporesi contended that educated people and physicians proscribed cheese consumption. Camporesi's argument relies on the concept that 'the pre-modern thinking was left perplexed in front of the phenomenon of the coagulation of milk, astonished by the transformative processes, the alchemy of change'.[10] Nonetheless, however mysterious or misunderstood cheese might have been in the eyes of physicians, Camporesi did acknowledge that cheese and other dairy foods were eaten by all, 'from huts to courts, from taverns to the

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[6] Confienza, p. 10.

[7] Ken Albala, 'Milk. Nutritious and Dangerous', in *Milk. Beyond the Dairy. Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 1999*, ed. by Harlan Walker (Totnes: Prospect Books, 2000), pp. 19–30.

[8] Albala, 'Milk. Nutritious and Dangerous', p. 27.

[9] Albala, 'Milk. Nutritious and Dangerous', p. 27.

[10] Piero Camporesi, 'Il formaggio maledetto', in *Le officine dei sensi: Il corpo, il cibo, i vegetali. La cosmografia interiore dell'uomo*, 3rd edn (Milan: Garzanti, 1985), pp. 47–77 (p. 47), 'Il pensiero premoderno rimaneva perplesso davanti alla coagulazione del latte, stupito per i processi trasformativi, per l'alchimia del cambiamento'.

clerical palaces'.[11] In England historians shown that cheese was highly esteemed by the elites and the clergy by the fourteenth century.[12] Gentilcore emphasises how cheese was a significant part of everybody's diet in early modern Europe, arguing that the widespread appreciation for cheese embarrassed physicians, who found themselves caught between their suspicious views of cheese and its considerable popularity across Europe.[13] Cheese was particularly appreciated by the elites, says Gentilcore, because of their love of indulgence and because they were either detached from, or did not listen to, medical advice on this foodstuff.[14] As this chapter will show, the picture was more complex. The use of particular combinations of dairy foods alongside other ingredients, such as fruit and herbs, show how some well known and common ways of consuming dairy foods respected the medical theories of the time. Moreover, these ways of consuming cheese and milk were popular across the entire social spectrum, in both England and Italy.

This chapter has three main sections. The first part focuses on milk. Milk was of great importance in the early modern medical framework because it was thought to be blood twice concocted, and therefore a derivative and purer version of blood itself. Milk was deemed worthy of close attention by physicians precisely because of this strong connection with blood and its role in feeding newborns, even if this was not its exclusive use.[15] The second part of the chapter focuses on two milk-based preparations of long-lasting popularity in Italy and England: the *capo di latte* and posset. In contrast to the general medical attitude to dairy foods, these two preparations enjoyed an excellent medical reputation, whilst at the same time being recipes which reflect the increasing culinary sophistication of early modern European elites. The third and last section focuses on cheese. I will evaluate how the ways in which cheese was consumed were not only informed by medical theory, but

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[11] Camporesi, 'Il formaggio maledetto', p. 71, 'Però, nonostante la riprovazione della scienza medica, i latticini circolavano liberamente dalle capanne ai palazzi, dalla taverna alla curia'.

[12] Woolgar, pp. 76–78.

[13] Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 66–68.

[14] Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe*, p. 68.

[15] Confienza, pp. 39–46.

were also important notions of popular culture. Since I focus on animal products, I will not cover almond milk.[16]

This chapter will contribute to the scholarship on dairy foods and medicine in the early modern period by providing a more nuanced perspective on contemporary medical attitudes to dairy (part of which were positive) and by evidencing patterns of consumption that accorded with humoral principles that were articulated in contemporary medical advice. Medical advice about food is often associated with ideas of restraint or prohibition. While humoral medicine recommended many restrictions, there was still room for indulgence and gratification in the ways in which dairy foods were consumed. The chapter will therefore suggest that dairy foods are the perfect examples of how dietetic advice was not exclusively about monitoring and regulating food consumption only because something was inherently conceived as bad or good. In fact, this dichotomy that pervades contemporary scholarly work on dairy foods is almost never to be found in actual health regimens. Instead, regimens spread the idea that eating habits were to be shaped around certain conditions such as complexions, the physical needs of individuals, tastes, and external factors such as what was being eaten and where it came from. Moreover, both milk and its by-products were consumed at all levels of society and in a variety of ways. Finally, through a close analysis of diaries, letters and household manuals, I shall argue that certain patterns of consumption of dairy foods reflected the dietary advice as it was given in medical sources of the period.

Milk, or the essence of life

Physicians treated milk as an important and essential foodstuff for life. In the classical medical framework, and therefore in the minds of the early modern physicians who studied it, milk was thought to be blood twice concocted in the breast of the mother. The most important and obvious reason for its existence was to feed and nurture the infant, in a similar way as the blood from which milk was produced nourished and strengthened the mother. Milk was considered an extremely

[16] For more on almond milk see Caroline Yeldham, 'Use of Almonds in Late-Medieval English Cookery', in *Milk. Beyond the Dairy. Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 1999*, ed. by Walker, pp. 352–60.

nourishing substance, since it is the only foodstuff that constitutes the diet of a baby, that ultimately makes possible the first months or years of life.[17] Galen himself placed milk's medical properties above those of all other ingredients, as 'the best milk is just about the most wholesome of any of the foods we consume'.[18] This passage indicates that milk was consumed by both adults and babies in Galen's time, as was also the case in the early modern period. This is evident by the use of the plural as an indicator of readers, writers and other human beings, but more importantly by Galen's considerations of milk on a larger scale. For Galen, milk could become a treacherous substance too, since 'unwholesome milk is so far from producing healthy humour that even when people with healthy humour use it, it makes them full of unhealthy humour'.[19] The message was that milk had to be considered as an essential substance for life, but that at the same time it had to be treated like any other foodstuff. Obviously, spoilt milk could be dangerous for the body, and could seriously endanger someone's health. But this dichotomy does not make milk particularly different, or more dangerous, than any other ingredients. Instead, Galen concludes:

> As with all other foods, so it is also with milk. You should understand that the properties are not described as applying to every specimen but only to that one that is best. The specimen in each class that falls short of the best must to the same extent fall short in its benefit to us.[20]

This way of thinking about milk was fully adopted in the early modern period. A multiplicity of factors were to be taken into account in order to decide whether the qualities of the milk were more or less suitable for the complexions of those who drunk it.

As often happens in early modern health regimens, the nature of the advice on individual foodstuffs varied considerably from author to author, and milk was no exception. One of the few aspects on which early modern physicians and commentators agreed was that milk was made of blood twice concocted. However,

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[17] Albala, 'Milk. Nutritious and Dangerous', p. 21.
[18] Galen, p. 125.
[19] Galen, p. 125.
[20] Galen, p. 125.

the humoral nature of milk and its alleged uses were another matter. One of the most discussed and debated disputes on milk was related to the nature of the animal that produced it and where it came from. Certainly, not all milks were equal. Since milk ultimately comes from a living animal, medical advice for milk reflected the same opinions and beliefs that were given for meat. For example, the age of the animal, a factor that I discussed in the second chapter and that influenced the qualities of the meat derived from it, was central to determining the quality of milk as well. According to Thomas Elyot, the best milk was that of young cows, produced when they were still strong and healthy, and therefore able to generate a more nourishing milk. However, he believed that milk coming from very young cows was quite dangerous for the phlegmatic.[21] Milk that came from young animals was believed to be hotter than that coming from old and potentially exhausted animals. This dynamic is exactly mirrored in the quality of the flesh of the animal, where a young animal could provide hotter and moister flesh, whereas the older ones had a meat that was thought to be dryer and colder. This similarity delineates a certain degree of continuity and common patterns used by early modern physicians when thinking about food derived from animals.

Any ingredient or foodstuff that came from anything that once was alive had to be almost theoretically dissected, in order to evaluate its humoral qualities. People wanted to know where their food came from. Like meat, dairy foods came from living creatures and therefore they were considered to be foods which were – in some way – alive. Milk and its by-products were complex substances and their humoral nature had been under scrutiny for centuries. According to Galen, milk was composed of three different parts. These three components were whey, cheese and butter, respectively. The proportions of these three different parts of milk determined to what extent the milk was heavy and fatty and therefore considered more nourishing, or thin and easier to digest. As Galen wrote:

> For the most liquid milk has the most whey, and the thickest milk the most cheese. For this reason, naturally, the more liquid milk moves the

[21] Elyot, *The Castel of Helth*, sig. E4r.

> bowels more, and the thicker less. On the other hand, the thicker is more nourishing and the thinner less so.[22]

When the whey was preponderant, milk was thought to relax the stomach and dilute the thick juices. Conversely, when the curds were more abundant, the milk curdled in the stomach and increased the amount of bad juices. The latter condition was believed to generate stones in the kidneys and blockages in the liver. Beside these two elements there was 'an oily juice' that made cow's milk the thickest among any other milk, and 'people make from it what is called butter'.[23] According to Pantaleone, the combination of these three different substances made milk a humorally balanced ingredient, as Galen suggested, despite some uncertainty surrounding the final humoral qualities of the single components. The oily part was thought to be hot and moist, while the cheesy part was allegedly dry and cold. Alongside that, there was a fierce debate on whether the whey was to be considered cold or hot.[24]

Pantaleone did not really give a definitive opinion on milk to his readers. Instead, he reflected the conflicting ideas about milk in the work of earlier medical authorities, stating that 'according to the formulations of the experts, we should consider milk as temperate, or close to temperate, and nevertheless it is inclined to coldness'.[25] Since classical medicine thought that milk was nothing less than blood that was twice concocted in the breast of the animal, commentators on Galen and other medical authorities such as Avicenna and the Persian polymath and physician Rhazes (854 AD-925 AD) stated that milk was 'temperate humorally'.[26] Pantaleone noticed that somehow this opinion was against what Galen said about milk in the fifth book of the *Teorica* where he noted that it was actually cold and moist. Despite the multitude of opinions that surrounded milk and its qualities, it seems that what Galen expressed in the *De alimentibus* reached humanists and physicians of the

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[22] Galen, p. 124.

[23] Galen, p. 124.

[24] Confienza, p. 43.

[25] Confienza, p. 44, 'Ma per ora lascio da parte questa sottigliezza. Conformandoci alle affermazioni degli esperti bisogna considerare che il latte è temperato o vicino a una temperatura tiepida, ma che tuttavia tende in una certa misura al freddo'.

[26] Albala, 'Milk. Nutritious and Dangerous', p. 25.

Renaissance in a stronger way then his own statements from the *Teorica,* at least as Pantaleone reported them. This preference for the idea that milk was mostly thought to be hot and moist, or well tempered, was probably due to the insistence of commentators on Galen that pushed this opinion further. Bartolomeo Boldo (16th century), a doctor from Brescia, reported Galen's considerations about the triple nature of milk almost line by line in his commentary on Savonarola, published in 1576. Furthermore, Boldo concluded that milk had to be considered hot and moist because it was blood that had been concocted twice.[27] The uncertainty of the ultimate goodness of milk for the body, and therefore its humoral connotations, depended on many factors but first and foremost on the animal from which it came from.

The humanist Bartolomeo Sacchi wrote that milk 'has the same qualities of the animal that produces it: goat's milk is considered excellent … in the second instance there is sheep's milk and finally cow's milk'.[28] This hierarchy was one of the many legacies of the Greek tradition that survived throughout the Middle Ages. It was Galen's opinion that among the variables that had power in defining the qualities of milk, the type of animal itself would have been 'at once apparent with the observer'.[29] Cow's milk appeared to be the 'thickest and oiliest' while camel's milk provided the most watery milk of all, which was followed by the milk of horses and asses. Since the physical density and texture of foods were fundamental to determine the nourishment of an ingredient, it was better to choose a milk that was not as greasy as a cow's nor as weak as a camel's. Goat's milk, for Galen, 'is well proportioned in its composition, but ewe's milk is thicker'.[30] It is not clear whether Galen arranged this list according to medical properties of the different kinds of milk or to contemporary patterns of consumption. However, Pantaleone named the same animals in the fifteenth century, explaining how these were the most common kinds of milk in use, as well as adding milk of sows and women. In the *Tesoro della sanità* (1643), Castore Durante put women's milk above all in terms of wholesomeness for

[27] Boldo, *Libro della natura et virtu delle cose*, p. 160.

[28] Montanari, 'L'Europa medievale e rinascimentale', p. 265, 'Il latte ha le stesse qualità dell'animale da cui viene munto: si reputa ottimo quello di capra … per secondo viene quello di pecora, per terzo quello di mucca'.

[29] Galen, p. 124.

[30] Galen, p. 124.

the body, immediately followed by cow's milk and ewe's milk. Goats were fourth in the list and buffalo's milk was the least worthy of drinking.[31]

It was therefore common to drink the milk of many different animals in the early modern period, but cow's milk was undoubtedly the most popular, at least in England. The English physician Thomas Moffett wrote that cow's milk was 'so generally used of us', even if moderation remained of extreme importance in regulating its consumption:

> The like may I say of Cow milk … that being now and then taken of sound men (not subject nor distempered with hot diseases) it nourisheth plentifully, encreaseth the brain, fatneth the body, restoreth flesh, asswageth sharpness of urine, giveth the face a lively and good colour, encreaseth lust, keepeth the body soluble, ceaseth extream coughing, and openeth the brest.[32]

According to James Hart, in Spain milk from camels and asses were used 'both in [the diseases of] consumption and dropsies'.[33] The milk of donkeys was widely consumed in those countries where these 'beasts abound', such as France, Italy and indeed Spain. Thus, in England in the first half of the seventeenth century milk consumption was mostly based on cow's milk since – in Hart's words – 'of all others, Cowes milke both in sicknesse and in health with us is most usually ordinary'.[34] The health and age of the animal and even the pasture it was fed on, alongside the environment in which the animal lived, were all important factors that had to be considered carefully. The best milk had to be white and fresh, milked from a middle-aged beast, which should be fed on green grass, in the spring or at the beginning of summer.

However, the colour of the coat of the animal was deemed to play a very important role in defining the humoral connotations of milk. Hart did not provide any explanation whatsoever for his readership, but apparently black cows produced the finest quality of milk, 'howbeit some like as well of a red or kindled coloured, as

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[31] Durante, sig. P3v.
[32] Moffett, sig. R3v.
[33] Hart, sig. L2r.
[34] Hart, sig. L2r.

they call it'.[35] Some people actually preferred milk derived from brown cows, 'as being of strong constitution of body', but according to the author milk coming from black cows was 'rather best than otherwise'. Conversely, there were no doubts about the nature of milk derived from white cows. These animals provided a kind of milk that was the 'worst and weakest'. These beliefs about the colour of the cattle and how it related to the quality of milk were not just held by medical writers, but by authors of husbandry manuals too. Gervase Markham praised black cattle as the best since they 'bringeth forth the goodliest calf'.[36] He saw red cows as the best for their milk, attributing other writers' praise for 'native cows' to 'local patriotism'.

In Italy, the importance of colour in assessing the quality of the milk coming from a cow emerges quite clearly in Pantaleone's treatise. In the *Summa*, Pantaleone reported that milk that came from black cattle was 'hotter and more nourishing than milk coming from a white animal'.[37] For the same reason, red cattle were supposedly able to provide a well-tempered milk, as their complexion lay in between the hotness of the black cattle and the coldness of the white. Most important, says Pantaleone, 'this notion is well known among housewives, who when looking for milk for convalescents wish it to be milked from a red goat, and although they do not know the reason, their preference does not lack good reasons (maybe they heard it from the physicians)'.[38] Pantaleone's explicit consideration of the potential reach of medical advice is important. The colour-based codification of complexion of milk may have had probably nothing to do with being able to access medical literature. You did not have to be a physician, or to be even able to read, to understand what kind of cow could produce the best milk for your own complexion. This line of argument from Pantaleone not only confirms the popularity of these ideas across Europe in this period, but it also highlights potential patterns of dissemination of

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[35] Hart, sig. 21v.

[36] G. E. Fussel, *The English Farmer: 1500-1900* (London: Frank Cass & Co, 1966), p. 13; Gervase Markham, *Cheape and Good Husbandry* (London: 1614) quoted in Fussell, p. 13.

[37] Confienza, p. 53, 'il latte di un animale nero sarà, a parità di condizioni, più caldo e nutriente del latte di un animale bianco'.

[38] Confienza, p. 53, 'Questa nozione è diffusa tra le massaie, le quali, se cercano latte per i malati, desiderano che sia munto da una capra rossa e, sebbene non ne conoscano il motivo, la loro preferenza non è priva di buone ragioni (forse lo hanno sentito dire dai medici)'.

medical knowledge among lay and even illiterate people. This kind of knowledge was likely to have been shared through oral transmission.

The idea of milk nourishing and strengthening the body of the sickly adult was shared and adopted by religious writers as well. For example, the cult of Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) exemplified a strong connection between milk and Christianity. It was believed that St. Bernard was fed with the milk of the Virgin in response to his request of help, and the resonance of this miracle became widespread in the late Middle Ages.[39] As much as milk provided nourishment and therefore protection for the vulnerable new-born, religion and 'fear of God' could nourish the lost soul hoping for salvation. Similarly to what happened with wine, physicians used religious arguments to express and reinforce positive views of milk as well. For example, the Italian agronomist Vincenzo Tanara, author of the *L'economia del cittadino in villa*, an economic treatise about ruling a country household, published for the first time in 1644, was a marquis from Bologna, a passionate hunter and soldier who served in several Italian courts. In the third book of the *L'economia*, Tanara dedicated several pages to dairy products, and provided a positive view of milk using religious arguments, writing that 'God, talking about the Promised Land, said that there were rivers made of milk and honey'.[40] Even the harshest literature about milk admitted that it was a nourishing element for the body, regardless of any sickness which it might cause. Tanara delivered the same message but in his own terms. He discussed the nutritious potential of milk, using the example of St. Paul. Apparently, once beheaded, more milk than blood came out from the wound of the martyr. The milk was a clear signal of God's desire for St. Paul to be the main 'nourishment of the Church'.[41] The idea of milk as a nourishing substance was therefore pervasive in the early modern period even beyond the medical community. This is another example of how medical notions about certain ingredients could travel and be shared within lay networks, and not just in academic circles.

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[39] Valenze, pp. 43–48. For more about the relationship between blood, milk, childbirth and fecundity see Gillian Riley, 'Food in Painting', in *A Cultural History of Food in the Renaissance*, vol. 3, ed. by Albala, pp. 171–182 (p. 179).

[40] Vincenzo Tanara, *L'economia del cittadino in villa* (Bologna: Dozza, 1651), sig. L3v.

[41] Tanara, sig. L4r.

However, in the minds of early modern people, when milk was regularly drunk during childhood it brought excellent nourishment to the body. The importance of habit was, once again, fundamental in shaping the perceived capability of the body to tolerate certain foods. Milk was no exception here; as Elyot wrote: 'where men and women be used from their chyldhode, for the more part, to mylke, and do eate none or lyttell other meat, but mylke and butter, they appear to be of good complexion and facion of body'.[42] Elyot considered milk consumption to be particularly good for 'chylderne, olde menne, and to them, whiche be oppressed with melancolye, or haue the fleshe consumed with a feuer ethike, mylke is conuenien'.[43] Albala's analysis of medical texts seems to only partially confirm this, as ultimately, says Albala, 'milk remained indexed for adults', by which he means that adults were advised against drinking milk.[44] Albala seems not to have taken account of how factors other than age were also considered to affect the health of the body. The heat and nourishment of milk was believed to help babies to grow. At the same time it gave strength to the elderly and convalescents, releasing heat and moisture to bodies that were dry and cold because of their old age and ailments. It was believed that healthy adults did not need the kind of nourishment that milk could provide to them. Montanari reached a similar conclusion. Despite claiming that cow's milk was becoming increasingly popular in Italy during the early modern period, he argued that 'raw milk was basically never drunk. The best way to have it (and at the same time to store it) was to make cheese out of it'.[45]

Nonetheless, contrary to what Montanari and Albala argue, milk was consumed by healthy adults too, and cooks and physicians adopted many strategies to overcome its possibly noxious effects. Elyot suggested that those who 'euer hath an appetit to eate or drynke mylk' should adopt a strategy in order to prevent the milk from curdling inside the stomach. The trick consisted in putting some leaves of mint into the milk, and then adding sugar or honey.[46] Drinking milk for non-medical

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[42] Elyot, *The Castel of Helth*, sig. C5r.

[43] Elyot, *The Castel of Helth*, sig. C5r.

[44] Albala, 'Milk. Nutritious and Dangerous', p. 21.

[45] Massimo Montanari, 'L'Europa medievale e rinascimentale', in *Storia e geografia dell'alimentazione: risorse, scambi, consumi*, ed. by Massimo Montanari and Francoise Sabban (Turin: Utet, 2004), pp. 251–71 (p. 265).

[46] Elyot, *The Castel of Helth*, sig. C5r.

reasons was clearly tolerated. Obviously, people had to be careful in order to counterbalance its potential harmful effects but this was true for the great majority of foods in the humoral system. In England, Joan Thirsk found that milk 'featured as a drink in the diet of all classes'.[47] Adding ingredients such as crumbs, ale, wine or sugar to buttermilk was believed to make the preparation even more filling and nourishing. According to Thirsk, these stratagems were still used regularly by the lower sorts in the nineteenth century. But already in the seventeenth century milk and its by-products were clearly drunk on a daily basis both for pleasure or as proper meals which were intended to nourish the body.

Milk consumption in early modern England was widespread, and the following examples demonstrate an awareness of how consuming dairy could have side effects. For instance, Samuel Pepys enjoyed drinking milk and cream. On 29 May 1661 Pepys 'went to Mrs. Shipman's, who is a great butter-woman, and I did see there the most of milk and cream, and the cleanest that ever I saw in my life. After we had filled our bellies with cream, we took our leaves and away'.[48] Sometimes Pepys consumed milk for its therapeutic effects. On 15 July 1666, he went on with his wife and some friends to drink 'a great deale of milke, which I drank to take away my heartburne, wherewith I have of late been mightily troubled'.[49] However, on his way home Pepys found himself distressed by 'abundance of wind behind', which he attributed to a cold he might have got. Later Pepys 'was in mighty pain all night long of the winde griping of my belly and making of me shit often and vomit too, which is a thing not usual with me, but this I impute to the milke that I drank after so much beer'. Pepys did not attribute his pain to milk alone, but rather to a combination of factors including 'the cold, to my washing my feet the night before', and the excessive consumption of beer. In any case, milk and cream were clearly appreciated by Pepys, despite any side effects. On this note, Moffett (1554-1604) clearly discussed the consequences of mixing alcohol and milk together: 'to be sure that milk shall not

[47] Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England*, p. 272.

[48] Pepys, Wednesday 29 May 1661.

[49] Pepys, Sunday 15 July 1666.

curdle, season it with salt, suger, or hony', and be aware that drinking wine, sleeping and eating immediately after having drunk milk was extremely dangerous.[50]

Especially in those instances where milk-drinking was advocated, it was important to ensure that the animal, or the person, that was providing the milk was of a good complexion, and ultimately capable of producing healthy milk. For this reason, Moffett recommended to drink milk of women, asses or mares in particular, since all of these kinds of milk 'need no other fire to prepare it, for it will never curdle into any hard substance'.[51] Moffett also pointed out to his readers that cows had to be pampered and taken care of: 'remember to rub and stroke down your Cow every morning, and her milk will be both sweeter and more nourishing'. This idea was widespread. The same advice went for women who had to be of a cheerful and healthy complexion, in order to provide excellent milk for infants and for adults in poor health.

This latter practice should not sound too surprising. After all, women's milk had been considered to be the best milk to be drunk as medicine since Galen. Furthermore, this method stressed the importance of drinking milk that was as fresh as possible. For instance, Elyot wrote that 'milke newe milked, dronke fastynge' was among those substances that engendered good juices, while milk that was boiled, or processed in some ways, was thought to engender thick juices, which was never perceived as a good thing for the body.[52] Obviously, the freshest milk was the one that was consumed directly from the breast of the woman or the animal, or as soon as possible after it had been expressed. It was believed that when milk was drunk directly in this way the complexion of the consumer shifted and mutated in accordance with the complexion of the milk-giver. Pepys and his friends discussed one case at a meeting at Gresham College in 1667. John Caius, co-founder of Gonville and Caius College in Cambridge, reportedly lived the last years of his life sucking milk out of an 'angry, fretful woman' and ended up being like her, developing a complexion that apparently was not very pleasant. Hence, Caius was advised to continue his therapy with a 'good-natured, patient woman' and he

[50] Moffett, sig. R3r.

[51] Moffett, sig. R5v. For a broader discussion on animals, emotions and humours see Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance*, pp. 141–42.

[52] Elyot, *The Castel of Helth*, sig. B4v.

magically 'become so, beyond the common temper of his age'.[53] Whether the story went as narrated by Pepys, the medical notions that characterised the story itself were expressively outlined and understandable by all.

Sometimes physicians stressed the quality of milk itself, rather than the process of cooking milk or with it. For example, the physician Alessandro Petronio (1510-ca. 1581) argued that consuming milk in early summer, when it was less thick, was more suitable for the human body.[54] If this was not possible, Petronio recommended drinking it in its full form, with the whey. The serous part of the liquid was thought to neutralize the side effects of the buttery and the oily parts. When milk was consumed in this way, it was believed to open the belly and the stomach, without causing any blockages or risk that it would spoil in the stomach.[55] In a way, Petronio was advocating that milk consumption was healthier than eating milk's own by-products, since in this case the inherent equilibrium of milk between the watery part (whey) and the fatty parts (cheese and oil) was lost.

As we have seen, milk was used in a variety of ways in the early modern period, and its effects on the body, both good or bad, were widely discussed by both physicians and lay people. Early modern authors built on the writings of Galen and his commentators, and developed their ideas. The nourishing nature of milk was widely appreciated, even beyond academic circles. Moreover, the goodness of milk was connected with the health of the animal or human who produced it. This association shows that for both meat products and dairy foods people had to look for more or less the same things in the animal. For this reason, if a person was able to understand the wholesomeness of dairy, they had also the theoretical tools to evaluate the goodness of meat-related products, as they belonged together. The next section will show how milk's by-products could be consumed in a healthy way, and that the association between indulgence and dairy foods could also be affected by positive health management attitudes.

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[53] Pepys, 21 November 1667. Albala could not identify the passage in Moffet's *Healths Improvements*, when he published *Eating Right in the Renaissance* (see p. 75). The actual story of John Caius, who was Moffet's mentor, is told in Moffett (published in 1655 but written at the beginning of the century), *Healths Improvement*, sig. R2r.

[54] Alessandro Petronio, *Del vivere delli romani* (Rome: Domenico Basa, 1592), sig. Aa1r.

[55] Petronio, sig. Aa1r.

Posset and *capi di latte*: liquid dairy in Italy and England

In England, one of the most popular preparations made with milk was posset. Posset was a restorative warm drink, prepared with boiled milk, which was curdled by adding an acidic fluid, usually wine or ale, or lemon juice, and finished by adding spices, sugar or honey. This process paralleled Elyot's remarks on milk drinking for adults, and shows how by adding these corrective ingredients the alleged dangerousness of milk was theoretically kept under control. The difference between posset and simply mixing wine and milk comes from the cooking process, and in the adding of spices, sugar and honey. Once again, posset is a good example of how cooking procedures often inflected a health dimension. The simple process of heating the milk exemplifies how similar ways of feeding the body could lead to opposite results. One of the most common anxieties of early modern physicians related to milk was that it could spoil and putrefy in the stomach, creating noxious vapours and fumes that could reach the head, making the body sick. Preparing the posset meant that the actual process of curdling took place outside the stomach, and not inside it. Therefore, the danger of noxious vapours going to the head was removed altogether.

Posset had many uses. According to Humphrey Brooke, posset was excellent for easing the evacuation of faeces.[56] Thomas Cogan recommended it for a variety of other purposes, mostly to induce sleep. He observed that it was very popular in Lancashire, where he was living at the time, 'where it is most usual … that they supply a great part of phisicke' with it, because it was thought to promote a speedy recovery.[57] Posset was used to treat specific diseases, as well as for general restorative purposes. This can be seen in the advice of A. T., an English physician who wrote *A Rich Storehouse or Treasury for the Diseased*, 'A booke (Right Honorable) very necessary, and convenient to bee used of the poorer sorte of people (for the preservation of their health) that are not of abilitie to go to the Phisitions', in 1596.[58] The author believed that ale-based posset could be extremely beneficial against many diseases of the urinary system. The text suggests using posset against the stone [kidney or bladder

[56] Brooke, sig. I6r.

[57] Cogan, sig. Z3v.

[58] A. T., *A Rich Store-House or Treasury for the Diseased* (London: Thomas Purfoot and Ralph Blower, 1596), sig. A2v.

stones] and colic, and also to 'provoke Urine very speadely' and 'to clense the backe and purge the reines'.[59] Posset cooked with a good quantity of 'greene wheate', both roots and leaves, was finally regarded as helpful to increase milk production in a woman's breast, and A. T. noted how 'this has been proved' to be an effective remedy.[60] Whether people drank posset as a general pick-me-up, or used it to fight specific diseases, this milk-based beverage was so customary in early modern England that it played an important role in social use in everyday life.

Posset was commonly drunk by the elites, as the quality of many of the surviving English posset-serving sets demonstrate (see figures four and five). The posset pot was built in a way that allowed people to eat the solid parts, which floated above the warm acidified milk, with a spoon. Then, a spout attached at the base of the pot allowed the liquid solution to be poured, so it could be drunk from cups or glasses. Figure 5 shows a posset pot made of soda-glass, imported from Venice. Besides the social statement that this pot made when used and displayed at social gatherings, the transparency of the glass may have allowed people to witness the curdling of milk. Posset was a flexible preparation which could be adjusted to specific social needs and requirements. In order to curdle the milk, people could use cheap ale or expensive wines, sack being the most popular. It was also possible to use lemon or orange juice. The final step, when spices, sugar or honey were added, could also be adapted to individual needs and tastes. The ways in which posset was prepared meant that social and health factors worked together.

The same can be said for similar milk-based preparations in the Italian gastronomic tradition, where their social use in banquets and on the tables of the elites was shaped by medical ideas. Petronio, for example, immediately after the section on milk, discussed the *capo di latte*, a preparation that is essentially the early modern equivalent of whipped cream. Since this preparation was extremely dense and derived from the thickest parts of the milk, it should have been catalogued as potentially noxious, with the risks of creating bad vapours for the head. However, the only argument that Petronio proposed to promote this preparation in his book is that this 'is an extremely gratifying food, that relaxes the body and that, remaining in

[59] A. T., sigg. Q4r, I3r, F4r.
[60] A. T., sig. L3v.

the stomach for only a few moments, it could not cause any harm to the head'.[61] This brief section on the *capo di latte* – only six lines in length – is interesting for many reasons. First, there is a new argument in favour of milk-based preparations that was based on personal taste and on a shared reputation of this recipe and of dairy foods in general. Second, Petronio made an arbitrary choice not to use the humoral scheme. In fact, his analysis of milk is not presented in the usual format which listed the qualities of a specific food and divided them into those which were good and bad for the body. Furthermore, the typical list of advice with suggestions for how to counterbalance the noxious effects of the recipe is missing for this entry. Petronio's choice in ignoring the humours with this preparation was arbitrary, because the text is totally filled with humoral theory. Tanara, on a similar note, considered the cream to be the most virtuous part of the milk because it comes up and flows to the top of the liquid: a physical elevation that somehow mirrored its qualities, as much as virtuous people elevate themselves morally.[62]

Milk-based preparations were used in several ways in the kitchen of the Gonzagas. Milk was the main liquid in which meats were boiled, and was also used for specific courses as with the *capi di latte*. Two examples will suffice, but many others are available in both the papers of the *Scalcheria* kept in the State Archive in Mantua and in Stefani's book. The scalcheria was in charge of food provision as well as buying necessities such as candles and many kinds of tools for the servants. The list of the everyday meals of the dukes, as opposed to special banquets, regularly distinguished between lean days and meat days: *addì de magro* and *addì de grasso*. These banquets were composed of courses of *credenza* and courses of *cucina*. The *credenza* was responsibility of the official *credenziere* and it comprised the first and the last services of the meal, when cold and raw foods were served to the guests.[63] The courses of *cucina*, instead, involved cooked food and were supervised by cooks themselves. The records indicate the *condimenti*, namely the ingredients bought to dress and prepare the main courses. This last category helps us to understand which ingredients were used in the preparation of foods and in what quantities, since the quantity is always

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[61] Petronio, sig. Aa1r.

[62] Tanara, sig. L4r.

[63] For the office of the *Credenza* see Claudio Benporat, *Cucina e convivialità italiana del Cinquecento* (Città di Castello: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2007), pp. 51–53.

reported next to the single ingredient, expressed either in single unities or in pounds, according to the type of product.

Dairy foods were not consumed at the table of the dukes on lean days as extensively as for when. This casts light on the social, if not economic, role played by dairy in the early modern period. Dairy foods had been assigned a similar meaning to meat on both the corporeal and social levels. Fasting from dairy and meat was useful to self-discipline the body, since both were generally considered as nourishing foods. The mortification of the social practice of eating as advocated by religious practices, common on fasting days, was partially solved by cooks through imaginative, complex and elaborate preparations based on fish. Fish and shellfish such as trout, sturgeon, prawns and mussels, appeared on the table of the Gonzagas on lean days in a variety of forms.[64]

Although milk-related foods were ultimately of animal origin, they were served at table on lean days, and butter was used to cook or dress the fish. The normal purchase of butter for an *ordinario* amounted roughly to 6.5 pounds of butter for dressing. The *ordinario* was the programme for a certain number of scheduled meals for the dukes, which usually lasted a week: four days of lean and three days of *grasso*. 4.5 pounds of butter were dedicated to lean days, an average of a little more than one pound per day, and the remaining amount was left for the other days of the week.[65] Two pounds of cheese were bought with butter, but the records do not specify whether these were intended for lean days or not. One portion of *capi di latte* was served to each guest during lean days at the table of the *duchessa*, in the *credenza* course. The size of the portion is not reported but it was probably being served in a little cup, since it was a preparation which was eaten with a spoon. A note reported that they had to be eaten, once a day, for the entire month of May, which matches with what Petronio suggested about consuming milk and milk-based preparations in spring.[66] Milk was considered to be better in warmer seasons than in autumn or

[64] ASMn, Scalcheria e amministrazione di palazzo ducale di Mantova (Scalcheria), Carte cucina 1630-1650, Ordinario de Ser.mi Prencipi per giorni 4 da grasso et 3 da magro, undated.

[65] ASMn, Scalcheria, Carte cucina 1630-1650, Ordinario de Ser.mi Prencipi per giorni 4 da grasso et 3 da magro, undated.

[66] ASMn, Scalcheria, Carte cucina 1630-1650, Piatto da' grasso della Ser.ma Sig.ra Arciduchessa con quello da magro, per la quaresima, undated.

winter. The *capo di latte* had to be served cold, which is why it figures in the *credenza* course. Nine ounces of sugar were arranged together with these *capi di latte*, for the same course.[67] In a banquet held sometime between February 1617 and June 1627 in memory of Caterina de Medici (1519-1589) duchess of Mantua, the *capi da latte* were served in the first *credenza* course, with 'sugar and snow below'.[68] For the medical philosophy of the time the sugar would have certainly helped to counterbalance the qualities of the milk and avoid its spoiling in the stomach, while the snow helped in keeping the food from spoiling, especially if consumed in early summer.

Sugar and cinnamon were often used to counterbalance the qualities of milk. The dryness of the cinnamon helped to counteract the inherent moisture and coldness of the milk. The sugar was a foodstuff needed to sweeten other ingredients, but was also used to make syrups, the perfect vehicles for medicines, and to make preservatives and desserts.[69] The ice was physically necessary to stop the cream from separating and its coldness also stopped the milk from spoiling. On the same occasion, cream was mixed with sugar, and biscuits from Naples were boiled in it to be served with 'Indian chicken' (turkey).[70] Another banquet organised by Stefani and held in 1655 at the ducal palace in Mantua in honour of the queen of Sweden included a soup of fat pigeons, which were cooked in a solution of milk and *malvasia*. The final touch was to cover the meat of the pigeons with sugar and cinnamon, achieving a perfect balance against the side effects that milk could have on the meat and on the commensals.[71]

Both *capi di latte* and posset were two important liquid milk-based preparations widely consumed in Italy and England, respectively. Despite their different reputations and intended purposes, they both underwent their own specific, albeit different, cooking processes, which counterbalanced the possible risks associated with milk-drinking. The most feared risk was of the milk spoiling and curdling in the

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[67] ASMn, Scalcheria, Carte cucina 1630-1650, Piatto da' grasso della Ser.ma Sig.ra Arciduchessa con quello da magro, per la quaresima, undated.

[68] Malacarne, p. 289.

[69] Wendy Wall, 'Just a Spoonful of Sugar: Syrup and Domesticity in Early Modern England', *Modern Philology*, 104 (2006), 149–72, (p. 156).

[70] Malacarne, p. 289.

[71] Malacarne, p. 291.

stomach. In the case of the *capi di latte*, snow and ice, alongside sugar and cinnamon, were used in large quantities to make their consumption safe. In the case of the posset, the addition of an acidic liquid to the warm milk made it curdle outside of the stomach, and therefore solving the problem before it could present itself. At a later stage, once the milk had set and curdled, the posset was finished by adding sugar, cinnamon and different spices. In this section I have drawn attention to positive views of milk-based preparations, highlighting their medical and culinary uses, alongside their fame in early modern Italy and England. The next and last section of this chapter will look at cheese, and in order to focus on the medical connotations of cheese consumption I will analyse how and when cheese was consumed.

The 'medical' popularity of cheese

From a purely medical standpoint, cheese posed two major problems. First, it was derived from milk, which had its own complications; second, it looked, and probably smelt, like rotten food. The coagulation of milk, which was inherent to the nature of cheese itself, meant that people were eating something that looked like spoiled food. In his essay 'Il formaggio maledetto', (The cursed cheese), Camporesi discussed the major medical theories about cheese in Europe and Italy during the early modern period, and related them to the perspectives of popular culture.[72] The picture that emerges from Camporesi's analysis is harsh. The main concerns that were expressed by physicians and other authors about cheese in the early modern period were about what Camporesi called the *Mysterium casei*: the prodigious phenomenon of the fermentation of milk that transformed the white liquid into cheese. Italian writers such as like Campanella and Pisanelli shared very similar concerns.[73]

However, such a strong focus on early modern anxieties about cheese consumption has more to do with Camporesi's own interests, rather than with a decisive and incontrovertible set of arguments supposedly proposed by physicians. In all of his works, Camporesi paid particular attention to those aspects of early modern life related to the supernatural and the magical. As an historical anthropologist, the

[72] Camporesi, 'Il formaggio maledetto', pp. 47–77.

[73] Camporesi, 'Il formaggio maledetto', p. 48.

ways in which popular culture and beliefs, myths, legends and religion all came together in everyday life were at the core of his analysis. The Italian philosopher, semiologist, and novelist Umberto Eco described the nature of the work of Piero Camporesi with words that, given the topic and Camporesi's own views on early modern cheese, I find particularly interesting:

> Camporesi is a man that enters a room where there is a carpet on the floor, embroidered with beautiful colours and patterns, and everybody agree that the carpet is a masterpiece. Camporesi picks up the carpet and turns it over, showing us that under the carpet there is a universe of worms, cockroaches, larvae, an entire unknown and subterranean life. A life that nobody knew was there, and yet, there it was, under the carpet.[74]

Within such an intellectual framework, it is evident that the most noticeable beliefs about dairy food are mostly related to scary tales transmitted orally, such as miraculous healings after some doctors applied soft cheese on wounds, or fears of growing *animacula*, little animals such as worms, in the belly of cheese eaters.

After all, these were the same worms born in that very cheese wheel recalled by Menocchio in front of the inquisitors, during his trial for heresy. Menocchio, a sixteenth-century Italian miller who was accused of heretical behaviour, argued openly with the inquisitors about his own personal cosmology. Rejecting the doctrine of the Church, he argued that God and the angels were born out of the primordial chaos as happens with the worms that come out of putrefied cheese. In a later interrogation, the inquisitors, petrified by Menocchio's ideas, asked him almost in medical terms about the quality of his 'soul, being plenty of this bad humours and doctrines'.[75] Nonetheless, it is simply not the case that early modern people ate rotten cheese, and drank putrid milk. Cheese with maggots might have been a delicacy in some German regions, but in England Andrew Boorde, who, while travelling across Germany, had the chance to see the locals eating such cheese quite

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[74] Umberto Eco, *Sulla letteratura* (Milan: Bompiani, 2002), p. 147, 'Camporesi è un signore che entra in una stanza dove c'è un tappeto, dai disegni e dai colori bellissimi, che tutti hanno sempre considerato come un'opera d'arte; lo prende per un lembo, lo rivolta, e ci mostra che sotto quel tappeto brulicavano vermi, scarafaggi, larve, tutta una vita ignota e sotterranea. Una vita che nessuno aveva mai scoperto. Eppure era sotto il tappeto'.

[75] Carlo Ginzburg, *Il formaggio e i vermi: Il cosmo di un mugnaio del '500* (Milan: Einaudi, 2009, 1st ed. 1976), p. 16.

happily, openly rejected it. In Boorde's view, cheese with maggots was nothing but the definitive proof of how 'grossly' the Germans ate.[76] For Camporesi, cheese was something mysterious, at least, if not frightening. This was the 'horrible truth' about cheese: those who ate it had to expect the growth of legions of worms and bugs in their stomachs.[77] Only with the publication of the *Osservazioni intorno agli animali viventi che si trovano negli animali viventi* (Observations on the nature of animals living inside living animals, 1684) and the *Esperienze intorno alla generazione degli insetti* (Experiences on the generations of insects, 1668), was a new understanding of the phenomenon of fermentation developed.

The diversification of cheese production demonstrates a development of advanced skills in managing something that was not yet recognised as a perfectly natural process, and was often confused by physicians and naturalists with the putrefaction of food.[78] Cheese production was quite diversified and advanced in the early modern period. Most of the cheeses that were exported across Europe – such as parmesan, Dutch cheese, Cheshire cheese – are still quite popular today. Because of the inherence of its local nature, cheese can be an extremely diverse product, despite being made from the same raw material. In the *Summa*, Pantaleone counted at least thirteen Italian cheeses, as well as succinctly describing cheeses coming from France, England, Flanders, and Germany.[79] The most popular cheeses in early modern Italy were the *Piacentino*, the modern Parmigiano Reggiano, and the *Lodigiano*. These are hard granular cheeses, which were matured for at least one and up to four or five years. Another cheese that was particularly famous in early modern Italy was the *Marzolino*, also called *Fiorentino*. Naturally, there were countless varieties of cheese and this is mostly due to the multitude of factors involved in its production: qualities of the milk, differences in the manufacturing processes, differences in the seasoning and maturing processes of the cheese, environmental characteristics that differ from place to place, such as climate and humidity, only to name a few. These factors led to a production of extremely different cheeses from region to region, but almost from village to village. Despite the variations in cheese

[76] Quoted in Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England*, p. 279.
[77] Camporesi, 'Il formaggio maledetto', p. 54.
[78] Camporesi, 'Il formaggio maledetto', p. 50.
[79] Confienza, pp. 77–97.

production, Pantaleone stressed the importance of these three cheeses in the Italian gastronomic landscape. *Marzolino* cheeses were 'given to people as precious gifts', and they were 'delicious cheeses' 'exported in very far countries'; Pantaleone himself could taste some of it in France.[80] The *Piacentino* and the cheeses produced in those lands were renowned and appreciated for their appearance and their goodness. [81] Early modern people were familiar with these products and I will provide examples of how common it was for people to share knowledge and advice about the qualities of these products alongside suggestions about the best way to consume them.

In England, the most renowned centres of cheese production were Cheshire and Suffolk. Pantaleone was left impressed by the variety and the appearance of English cheeses which he found in a street fair during a trip to Antwerp. He did not mention where those particular cheeses came from, but noticed instead that they were 'not solid in their core as in the external parts'.[82] They had a 'clean crust' and apparently the more they were transparent the better was the taste. Pantaleone observed how 'most of them are good' and that the vast majority were made with cow's milk. The use of goat's milk in the process, however, made the cheese a bit crumbly. In the author's opinion, this crumbliness made the cheese slightly difficult to digest, and he recalled that more butter was needed in order to solve this particular problem.

Finally, Pantaleone noticed how the cheese wheels were decorated with flowers, and imprinted with designs of animal figures and letters. This particular degree of detail suggests that farmers were keen to sell a product with a specific identity, so it would be recognized beyond national boundaries. Cheese marking was already a practice in England in the late medieval period. When a man named Thomas Billop sent some wheels of cheese to Sir William Plumpton in August 1469, he noticed how six of them were marked, probably to indicate those which were higher quality.[83] According to William Camden's *Britannia* (1586), it is likely that

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[80] Confienza, p. 77.

[81] Confienza, p. 78.

[82] Confienza, p. 95, 'Non sono massicci e lo sono di meno al centro che alle estremità. Hanno crosta pulita e sono diafani o trasparenti soprattutto se sono buoni … Certamente i più risultano buoni, e sono abbastanza simili ai piacentini sia quanto a colore che a sapore'.

[83] *The Plumpton Letters and Papers (8)*, ed. by Joan Kirby (Camden: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 41. Quoted in Woolgar, p. 77.

Pantaleone was actually talking about Suffolk cheese, although he did not actually mention which kind of cheese he saw in Antwerp. At the very beginning of the section on Suffolk, Camden described the geographical features of the county and while discussing the 'fertile soil' he mentioned that 'great store of cheeses are there made, which to great commodity of the inhabitants are vented into all parts of England'.[84] Furthermore, Suffolk cheese was exported into 'Germanie, France and Spanie also, as *Pantaleon* the Phisitian writhe'. What seems even more important for Camden is that Pantaleone 'stuck not to compare these [cheeses] of ours for colour, and tast both with those of *Placentia*'. Camden associated his reading of Pantaleone to Suffolk cheese, but the section on Cheshire in the *Britannia* reveals that in Cheshire the 'grasse and fodder' were of such 'goodnesse and vertue' that could give birth to 'The most commendable cheeses', which were 'of a most pleasing and delicate tast, such as all England againe affourdeth not the like'.[85] Suffolk and Cheshire cheese were just two of the most popular kinds of cheese, but physicians and commentators had to manage the fact that dairy foods varied tremendously from place to place and over time.

Large amounts of space were dedicated to cheese in books and treatises on preservation of good health. For this reason, drawing specific and unambiguous conclusions was neither simple, nor recommendable. Possible variations included different ways in which the cheese was processed. In turn, these diversities had a different impact on the human body, according to its specific complexion, and even when a cheese was considered extremely dangerous there were factors that needed to be taken into account that could reverse the final outlook on any given cheese. Fundamentally, the solution generally adopted was to make different considerations between soft and hard cheese on one hand, and to judge the wholesomeness of cheese by its taste on the other.[86] Galen himself acknowledged that there was a clear distinction to be made between hard and soft cheese in which the latter was better than the former.[87] For the taste, 'best of all is the one without any strong quality,

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[84] William Camden, *Britain or a Chorographicall Description of the Most Flourishing Kingdomes … Translated into English by Phìlemon Holland* (London: Bishop and Norton, 1610), p. 459.

[85] Camden, p. 601.

[86] Galen, p. 130.

[87] Galen, p. 130.

with a sweetness that to a small extent surpasses the others; but the tastier cheese is also better than the distasteful one'.[88] Therefore, it would have been easier for the lay person to reach a conclusion about whether a particular cheese was good or bad for their health if compared with another foodstuff, such as meat. After all, everybody could notice the texture of a given cheese, and to judge by themselves if the taste suited their complexion. There was a clear line of thought that expressed serious concerns about the benefits of cheese for the human body in a very consistent way. Alongside this anxiety, doctors and agronomists argued that the body could benefit from certain kinds of cheese under particular circumstances and always in moderate quantities, especially when consumed at the end of the meal, when it was thought to be good to seal the stomach.[89] Since cheese was considered extremely nourishing because it derived from the most creamy and dense part of the milk, it was even possible to have it as the main course of a meal.[90]

The ideal way of consuming cheese, however, was at the start or the end of a meal. It was believed that it could both open the stomach and stimulate the appetite in the body, and also seal the stomach in order to secure the beginning of the digestive process.[91] In the latter case the cheese acted as a seal between the stomach and the oesophagus, preventing any obnoxious fumes or vapours from reaching the head.[92] There is convincing evidence to believe that eating cheese at the end of the meal was quite established as a pattern in this period. On three different occasions Pepys recorded a large meal he had at his house with guests, at which cheese was consumed as the final course. On 26 January 1660 Pepys 'had got ready a very fine dinner'. The menu listed 'dish of marrow bones; a leg of mutton; a loin of veal; a dish of fowl, three pullets, and two dozen of larks all in a dish; a great tart, a neat's tongue, a dish of anchovies' and to conclude 'a dish of prawns and cheese'.[93] On 26 March 1662 Pepys' guests and masters could enjoy 'a pretty dinner', featuring in order 'a brace of stewed carps, six roasted chickens, and a jowl of salmon, hot, for

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[88] Galen, pp. 130–31.
[89] Durante, sig. P3r.
[90] Tanara, sig. L6r.
[91] Confienza, p. 117.
[92] Cogan, sig. W4r.
[93] Pepys, 26 January 1660.

the first course; a tanzy [a fried pancake-like preparation, probably dressed with tanzy, an aromatic plant used for medicinal purposes and as an aroma in cooking] and two neats' tongues, and cheese the second; and were very merry all the afternoon'.[94] Later on in January 1663 Pepys held what was probably one of the most luxurious lunches recorded in the diary. For the occasion, a cook was called on purpose to help preparing the dinner for eight people including the master and mistress. After the oysters as starter, were served for 'first course, a hash of rabbits, a lamb, and a rare chine of beef. Next a great dish of roasted fowl, cost me about 30s., and a tart, and then fruit and cheese'.[95] In the evening the party went on with 'a good sack posset and cold meat' and, as I will show, the timing of the consumption of this final combination of ingredients was no coincidence.

The timing of eating dairy-based products – not just cheese – was felt to be crucial. Posset was also usually consumed before sleeping, in the late evening. The popularity of having posset late at night is illustrated by the references to the beverage by Shakespeare in his plays. Lady Macbeth, for example, drugged the posset of King Duncan's servants, given to them at night, as was customary and suggested by physicians, in order to get access to Duncan's apartments.[96] In the *Merry Wives of Windsor* posset is mentioned twice, and on both occurrences it was destined to be consumed at night. In one case Hostess Quickly says to Rugby: 'Go; and we'll have a posset for't soon at night, in faith, at the latter end of a sea-coal fire'.[97] In another instance it is Page that tells Rugby to 'Yet be cheerful, knight: thou shalt eat a posset/to-night at my house'.[98] When in October 1586 the French ambassador in Scotland, Monsieur Curcelles, was robbed of his cipher and his writings by his Englishman servant Mr Brown, he was actually 'at chese', 'after dynal'.[99] The servant took advantage of his master being distracted while eating cheese, once he was finished with his dinner, and ran off to Edinburgh on a horse. Similarly, in the culture of the Italian banquet cheese was often served at the end of

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[94] Pepys, 26 March 1662.

[95] Pepys, 13 January 1663.

[96] Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Act II, Scene II.

[97] Shakespeare, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act I, Scene IV.

[98] Shakespeare, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act V, Scene V.

[99] *The Border Papers: Calendar of letters and papers relating to the affairs of the borders of England and Scotland 1560-1603*, vol. 1, 1560-1594. 549, Oct. 6 1587. Berwick. Hunsdon to Burghley.

the celebrations, either with the *frutte*, the fruit course, or in the last *servizio di credenza*, the cold foods course. It was mostly hard cheese such as parmesan or *piacentino*, but not exclusively. At the banquet organised for the marriage of Vincenzo Gonzaga and Margherita Farnese in Mantua in 1581 cheeses such as parmesan, *marzolino*, and 'Casciotti romagnoli', caciotta cheese from Romagna, were served as a final course.[100]

Having cheese, or posset, at the end of the day was part of popular culture, in the early modern period. The shared view of cheese as the ideal way of concluding a meal is exemplified in popular proverbs and sayings in both England and Italy, which confirms how these medical views were readily incorporated in the eating habits of early modern people. For example, in the collection of proverbs *Dialogue Conteinyng [...] All The Prouerbes in The English Tongue (1546), by* John Heywood (c. 1497-c. 1580), there is a phrase that succinctly explains how each meal should start and end: 'In poste pace we past from potage to cheese'.[101] In the Italian regional culture the same old saying changes according to each dialect, but the content is pretty much the same: 'Do not get off the table if your mouth does not taste like cheese', or 'the mouth is not tired until it tastes of cow [dairy, not beef]'.[102] Proverbs can permit a degree of recovery of lay culture, since they not only spread knowledge and, in certain cases, medical theories, over time, but also tend to reinforce social norms and make them accepted wisdom that travels orally and very widely.

The characterisation of cheese as extremely good but forbidden may even have encouraged its consumption. The agronomist Vincenzo Tanara (d. 1667) seemed to have enjoyed eating cheese since he asked, rhetorically, how could it be that some people did not like it, apart from when they had it grated on foods. Therefore, when cheese was used as an ingredient in preparations rather than by itself, these people were extremely happy about the final taste of such foods.[103] Giulio Landi, a count from Piacenza and member of the *Accademia della Virtù* in

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[100] Benporat, p. 314.

[101] John Heywood, *Dialogue Conteinyng [...] All the Prouerbes in the English Tongue* (1546), sig. F2r.

[102] Massimo Montanari, *Il formaggio con le pere. La storia in un proverbio* (Rome-Bari: Editori Laterza, 2008). In the dialects of Bologna and of the Veneto, respectively: 'Sò da tèvla an t livèr mâi se la bâcca la n sa d furmâi', and 'La boca no l'è straca se no la sa da vaca'.

[103] Tanara, sig. L6r.

Rome, centre of the literary burlesque at the time, loved cheese beyond anything else. In 1538, Landi wrote a comic poem in honour of cheese entitled *La formaggiata di sere Stentato al serenissimo re della virtute* [The Cheese Feast of Sir Stentato to the Most Serene King of Virtue], which was printed in 1542. This work was dedicated to Ippolito Medici and Landi attached a wheel of cheese to the gift. Landi discussed the strategy of gift-giving in exchange for favours explicitly in the text, writing that those 'who has to negotiate with lords … and bring a good cheese, immediately they are honoured, immediately the doors open in front of them'.[104] Cheese was often given as a gift to other important people in foreign courts, such as princes and cardinals, as well as to relatives.

Isabella d'Este gifted and exchanged food with many people on a regular basis, and cheese occupied a special position in this activity. With these gifts Isabella sent more than food. She wanted to send a message that summed up the quality of the lands and therefore the prestige of Mantua and the Gonzagas. Isabella often commented on the quantity and quality of the cheese, talking positively about it.[105] In a letter sent to the cardinal of Saint Prassede, she talks about a 'cheese of this our country' and then about 'eight big wheels of cheese'. The dignity of the cheese, however, was not as noble as that of the cardinal, Isabella concluded.[106] In another letter she sent two half wheels of cheese to her father Ferdinando d'Este and to her brother Alfonso, 'to have it for my love'.[107] In a letter dated 14 March 1514, Isabella sent two pieces of *piacentino duro* to her agent Taddeo Albano who was working for her in Venice. The marquesa was seriously worried about the 'guerre', the wars of the League of Cambrai between 1508 and 1516 which aimed to counter the Venetian expansion in northern Italy, and whether they had caused cheese shortages in the capital of the Venetian Republic.[108] The papers of the Mantuan *Scalcheria* report several purchases of cheese without mentioning the place of provenance, using very general terms such as *formajo*, *formaglio* and *formaggio*. Analysing the prices

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[104] Quoted in Montanari, *Il formaggio con le pere*, p. 42.

[105] Malacarne, p. 98.

[106] ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga (A. G.), b. 2994, L. 17, c. 5r, 18 January 1504, quoted in Malacarne, p. 98.

[107] ASMn, A. G., b. 2994, L. 17, c. 33r, 20 August 1504.

[108] ASMn, A. G., b. 2996, L. 30a, c. 88r, 14 March 1514.

reported in the tables of the raw materials purchased for the kitchen it is possible to deduce that the cheese purchased for the palace was *Lodesano*, or Lodi cheese. This cheese was priced at one *lira* per pound, while the local cheese was priced at eighteen *denari* per pound.[109] Since the document which lists the total prices for the food provided for the duke reports a purchase of eighteen pounds of cheese for eighteen *lire*, it is evident that the cheese had to have come from Lodi, a city situated roughly 116km west of Mantua, towards Milan.[110] This makes even more sense, since the palace provided for its own local cheese and milk from the farms that belonged to the dukes.

Isabella's correspondence also helps to cast some light on possible health-oriented consumption habits for cheese. In order to thank a man called Socio Bonleo for his gift of thirty sausages for the marquis, Isabella sent a letter, dated 9 May 1501, with a wheel of *formazo duro*, hard cheese. This time, she added a particular suggestion: 'To show you our gratitude we send you a wheel of hard cheese to be eaten with fava beans'.[111] The historian Giancarlo Malacarne interpreted this example as evidence that Isabella had good taste, and that in the sixteenth century, like today, people combined different flavours in their cooking. However, taste and culinary pleasures alone do not fully explain Isabella's suggestion. Isabella sent a gift of hard cheese: the letter does not specify whether it was *lodigiano* or *piacentino*. Hard cheese, which rested for several years for seasoning purposes, had a strong hot and dry complexion and it was thought to risk generating kidney stones and harm to gums and teeth. The combination with the fava bean, then, may not have been a simple coincidence, especially considering that late spring and summer is the ripening time for this bean. Castore Durante, for example, suggested that a decoction of fava beans would have solved the problem of kidney stones and together with Boldo defined the fava as cold and dry in the first degree and wrote

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[109] ASMn, Scalcheria, Carte cucina 1630-1650, Tavola e tariffa de i prezzi delle robbe condenude nel presente calcolo della spesa fatta per la corte del Ser.mo duca di Mantova, no date.

[110] ASMn, Scalcheria, Carte cucina 1630-1650, Tavola e tariffa de i prezzi delle robbe condenude nel presente calcolo della spesa fatta per la corte del Ser.mo duca di Mantova, Calculo della spesa che vien fatta per la corte del Serenissimo duca di Mantova, no date – same file.

[111] ASMn, A. G., b. 2993, L. 12, c. 43v, 9 May 1501 quoted in Malacarne, p. 97.

that it could be counterbalanced in its bad effects by something hot, like cheese.[112] This particular combination of ingredients survives today. The combination of pecorino cheese and fava beans features in many twenty-first century recipes and at several festivals in different cities in Italy every year.[113] Isabella also referred to other combinations in her correspondence. In another letter she let the recipient know that the hard cheese 'is not less good if consumed with salad or melon'.[114] Similarly, the suggestion makes sense from an early modern medical perspective: eating a hard cheese with a cold and moist accompaniment was a humorally balanced preparation. Two potentially dangerous ingredients, when consumed alone, became suddenly not only a perfectly humorally balanced meal but, according to Isabella, a delicacy too. Throughout this thesis I have shown how many combinations of ingredients, widely shared across Italy and England, were not only excellent preparations taste-wise, so much so that many have survived until today. They were also perfect examples of the most basic level of medical knowledge that a lay person could handle: the humoral concept of balance.

Within the Italian tradition of dairy foods, perhaps the most enduring combination that is rooted and engrained in the humoral scheme is that of cheese with pear. Montanari dedicated an entire volume to the history of a famous proverb of the Italian popular tradition: 'Do not let the peasants know the goodness of cheese and pear'.[115] The hot and dry properties of cheese were balanced, once again, by the coldness of the pear. These two humorally opposite ingredients complemented each other, from both a medical and a culinary standpoint. The rationale behind this old saying is that the social elite tried to conceal their love for a set of ingredients so that they did not have to compete with the lower sorts to acquire them. What is even more relevant, though, is that looking at descriptions of banquets reveals that the association of cheese and pear evolves towards a more complex notion of cheese and fruit in general, and at times even cheese and vegetables. In the *Singolare Dottrina*,

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[112] Durante, sig. E4v; Boldo, *Libro della natura et virtu delle cose*, sig. C4v.

[113] The *Fave e pecorino* festival celebrated annually in May, in Monterotondo, just outside Rome, is particularly famous.

[114] ASMn, A. G., b. 3000, L. 49, cc. 110v, 5 August 1529 quoted in Malacarne, p. 100, 'Et vi raccordo che non è meno buono usarlo con le salate che con li meloni'.

[115] See Montanari, *Il formaggio con le pere*, pp. 3-8, 'Al contadin non far sapere quanto è buono il cacio con le pere'.

Romoli listed a few proposals for menus for suppers, dinners, general meals and breakfasts over the course of a week. The fruit course often contains combinations such as fresh *marzolino* cheese, *ghiacciaiuole* pears, cooked artichokes and fennel.[116] Another frequent combination is that of apples, parmesan, roasted chestnuts and fennel.[117] At a large banquet organised in Milan in 1559 by the governor of the state of Milan duke of Sessa, *marzolino* cheese and parmesan featured along stewed apples and pears, and everything was dressed with cinnamon and sugar, alongside nuts, pistachios, asparagus jelly, chestnuts, and more.[118] Even the most luxurious social conventions of the Renaissance banquets – hypothetically far from medical awareness – could benefit from ways of adhering to the medical theories of the time. Serving foods in certain orders and in certain ways thus demonstrates the pervasiveness of the humoral framework.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how dairy foods were an important part of the diet of early modern people and that patterns of preparations of foodstuffs and ways of consuming it respected and reflected medical notions expressed in contemporary and ancient health regimens. The early modern period witnessed the elevation of dairy foods from a staple of the lower strata to part of the extravagant banquets of the Italian renaissance. Physicians and commentators on the ancient medical authorities provided a view on dairy that was only followed partially. Dairy foods were complicated in their humoral formulation, even more than meat, because they were considered to be living things.[119] The process of coagulation and fermentation of dairy foods made them look as they were only another part of the animal from which they came from. Despite the horror depicted in monstrous allegories and phantasmagorias, so heavily accentuated by twentieth- and twenty-first-century

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[116] Romoli, sigg. 32v-127v, quoted in Benporat, p. 230.

[117] Romoli, sig. 32v-127v quoted in Benporat, p. 235.

[118] Ascanio Centorio, *I grandi apparati e feste fatte in Melano* (Milan: degli Antoni, 1559), quoted in Benporat, p. 246.

[119] See <http://chethamslibrary.blogspot.com/2012/06/is-cheese-rational.html> [accessed 14 June 2018].

scholars, by the sixteenth century, dairy foods were not solely a staple food of the lower sorts and their prestige was elevated.

However, what might look like a victory of taste and gastronomic indulgence over practices of health management and preventive healthcare reveals, instead, the extent to which medical notions were embedded into elements of popular culture such as proverbs, and also in actual alimentary practices. Milk was consumed according to advice which sought to prevent it curdling in the stomach, whether in the form of posset as in England, or by dressing it with sugar and spices, as in Italy. Eating cheese after dinner was a medical practice that was widespread, and that is still reflected today in proverbs and food habits spread all over Europe. Finally, the frequency with which cheese was eaten alongside fruit and vegetables, as conveyed in letters and traditions discussed above, was shared and spread in both Italy and England.

The main medical doctrines related to dairy foods were quite clearly established already by the time of Galen himself. The Hippocratic and Galenic philosophy of the world suggested that each physician, or even each person, should value their first-hand experiences, rather than blindly apply notions that were to be found in translations and commentaries of physicians' works. Early modern physicians did precisely that. They experienced their world and conveyed this knowledge in their regimens. This chapter, more than others, has stressed the extent to which some of these notions were part of a way of thinking about food specific to the early modern period that was neither exclusive of high-status or literate people, nor quintessentially academic. Historians who have worked on these foodstuffs have argued that people enjoyed these products because they did not care about their health, or because they had not had the opportunity to learn how to stay healthy. Instead, this chapter has demonstrated how cheese, milk and other dairy foods could be eaten in a healthy way, and – more importantly – how medical notions about dairy foods were ingrained and completely assimilated into early modern culture.

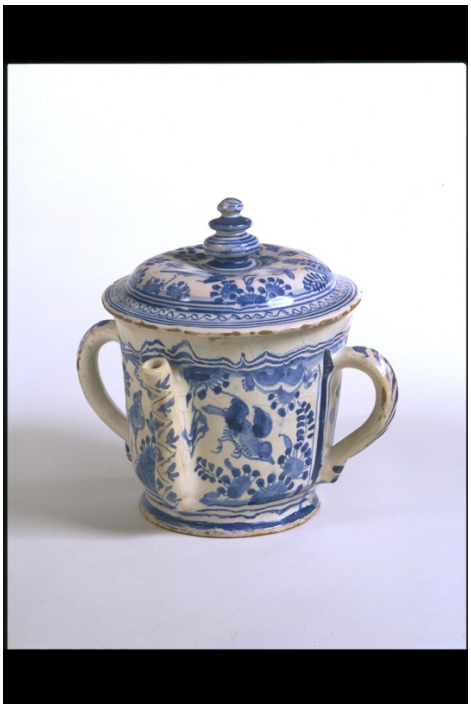

Figure 5. Posset pot with cover, tin-glazed earthenware, painted decoration of birds, rocks and flowers, London, c. 1630-1635, Victoria and Albert Museum, London

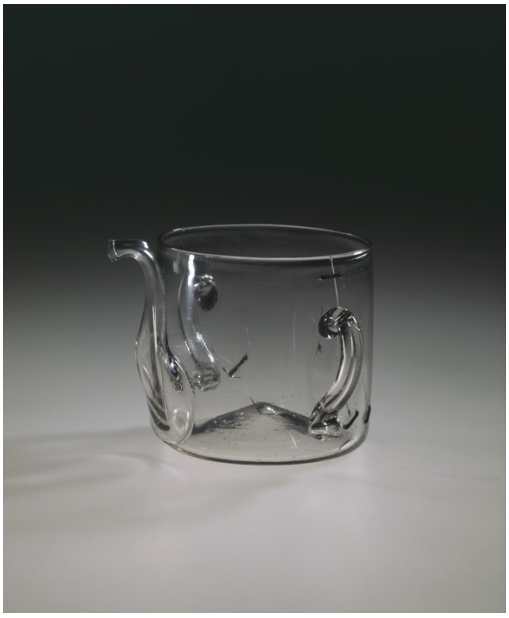

Figure 6. Posset pot, Italy or England, Probably made in the glasshouse of George Villiers, 2nd Duke of Buckingham at Greenwich, London, c. 1660-1670, Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Conclusion

In this thesis I have examined the application of early modern medicine in food consumption in Italy and England, demonstrated the pervasiveness of humoral thought in food consumption in early modern Europe, and shown how the presence of these ideas was acknowledged, although not always explicitly, across the social spectrum. The comparison between England and Italy has revealed new differences and similarities in how the early modern medical discourse on diet could be adapted according to national, regional, urban and individual circumstances. By looking at several geographical and social contexts in two different countries, a picture of flexibility emerges in the ways in which medical advice was conveyed in early modern health regimens, and in relation to its reception and application in everyday contexts. Moreover, this thesis has shown how authors of health regimens in both countries were not particularly concerned with piety, or with intersections between confessional and national identities, in treating and discussing medical properties of foodstuffs, or health issues related to the intake and management of foodstuffs. This thesis touches on four different, and yet connected themes: the inconsistent nature of medical advice on food and drink conveyed by early modern health regimens in England and Italy; the food habits of different social groups and how health management related to them; renowned food preparations rooted in the humoral theory that were widely shared in both countries; and the order and timing of eating specific foods, which mirrored medical ideas on how to eat foods to avoid noxious side-effects on the body.

The first instance in which the concept of flexibility emerges is related to the nature of medical advice itself. Early modern health regimens, alongside other genres of texts that touched upon matters of health, were anything but consistent in the advice that they gave about food and drink. If the overall medical theory in this period was rooted into the humoral theory, detailed opinions about the qualities of specific foods varied quite considerably from author to author. These differences mostly related to the classification of the humoral qualities and their intensity in different foods and drinks. There were many cases where medical advice on specific foods differed in early modern Italy and England. This issue has been explored in depth in the second chapter, where my analysis of beef and mutton revealed how

perceptions of the healthiest meat for the human body were different in different national contexts. The consumption of beef in England demonstrated how medical advice about specific ingredients could be manipulated, but not ignored. English physicians admitted that beef was considered problematic, but they did not believe that it could cause harm to the English body. Conversely, the consideration that Italian doctors gave to beef was very limited. This close analysis of medical texts, and the focus on specific ingredients also revealed how medical advice about specific ingredients was expressed with different degrees of precision and sophistication. English regimens stressed that mutton was good for every complexion. By contrast, Italian texts emphasised major differences between mutton derived from male or female animals, or whether the male was castrated or not. However, this high degree of precision was not unique to Italian texts. The fourth chapter shows how, despite preferring cow's milk over that of any other animal, English physicians analysed a multitude of different milks in depth in their regimens, discussing their supposed effects on the human body. By contrast to some of the variations traced elsewhere in this thesis, physicians' opinions of wine were similar in both countries.

The second instance in which this idea of flexibility occurs is that of the separation of dietary customs between different social strata, in both countries. Scholars have used the lens of medicine to delineate a neat separation between the diet of the rich and the diet of the lower sorts. This separation was mostly defined according to theories of digestion of the time. These theories took the texture and the density of the food into account and compared them to the ability of people of different social groups to digest it. Dense foods were thought to be too difficult for the elites to digest; these foods were therefore destined for the lower sorts. I argue that this approach, although in line with the medical theory of the time, is quite reductive as it does not consider important factors that defined the culture of food in everyday life. This way of thinking, which characterises much previous scholarship on food and medicine, does not take into account important factors such as the quantity of food consumed, or how and when the food was consumed. If these factors are not considered, the resulting analysis exaggerates the rigidity of the dietary habits of early modern people, especially the elites. In this thesis, I have argued that the management of ingredients and different cooking procedures were as important for health management as the ingredients themselves. The chapter on dairy foods demonstrates why medical historians should rethink definitions of

healthy food and drink altogether according to individual necessities and strategies in place to counteract bad effects of the food on the body. My research has highlighted the multifaceted nature of medical advice on food consumption, and some of the trajectories of reception and application of that advice in early modern England and Italy.

Third, by focusing on the concept of humoral balance rather than on the nature of the digestive process alone, this thesis explored, across a diverse number of sources, popular food preparations made with combinations of ingredients that were humorally balanced. These combinations of ingredients were widely shared beyond close social and kin networks. These recipes were so popular that many continue to be used today. Elites of both countries shared and consumed these kinds of preparations, even if they featured ingredients that were theoretically destined for the lower sorts. In England, beef and mustard, for example, was a combination which was universally recognised as wholesome for the body and also as a sign of Englishness. In Italy, popular combinations including cheese and fruit, cheese and herbs, and wine and fruit, were discussed, shared and consumed by the elites who were not anxious about consuming these ingredients when they were prepared and combined in what they thought was a healthy way. With these combinations, the upper sorts did not consume foods that were theoretically deemed unhealthy for their lifestyle because of their alleged love for indulgence or due to carelessness with their health. Instead, members of the elites managed to eat foods that their body was supposedly unable to handle, while remaining in line with the fundamentals of healthy eating within the humoral framework.

Lastly, by highlighting the ways in which food and drink were consumed in specific moments and in specific ways, I have shown how it was possible to comply with the main precepts of the humoral framework and overcome the double dichotomy that separated food for the rich from food for the poor, and that deemed a food to be either good or bad. For example, the arrangement of banquets and the ways in which certain ingredients were eaten in a specific order were other important aspects of early modern medical advice. English and Italian elites ate both their everyday meals and celebratory banquets with attention to the order in which food was eaten. This finding is especially significant as banquets are often used by food and medical historians as examples of the rejection or neglect of medical advice regarding food consumption. This thesis established how salads and dairy foods were

served at banquets in Italy in a specific order that allowed people to consume these problematic foods in what was believed to be a healthy way. Salads were usually served at the beginning of the meal to stimulate the appetite. Cheese was consumed last so that it could seal the stomach and let the body start the digestive process. Furthermore, the consumption of cheese at the end of the meal in domestic settings occurred in both countries in this period. It is clear that humoral ideas reached and influenced early modern food cultures in ways that encompassed written and oral patterns of dissemination of medical knowledge. Important notions of humoral medicine ended up being embedded in long-lasting culinary traditions, that did not necessarily reflect at a first glance their medical significance. This implicit reception and application of medical knowledge is another example of the diverse ways in which medicine had an impact on everyday life in early modern Europe.

The humoral model of the body was flexible.[576] I suggest that the implications of this flexibility should be taken more prominently into account when conducting further studies of this sort, and that conducting comparative analysis can significantly improve our understanding of how lay people managed medical knowledge at the micro-level. My approach can be applied to the study of the other non-naturals, to extend our understanding of how medicine shaped everyday lives. The same approach can also be used to explore foodstuffs that this study has not considered, such as cereals or fish. Most importantly, similar comparative research must be carried out for other countries in order to gain more knowledge about patterns of transmission and reception of medical advice in early modern Europe. If, on the one hand, we are well aware of the pervasiveness of the humoral scheme across Europe in this period, more still remains to be studied on a local level, and new research should focus on addressing differences and similarities in the ways in which medical knowledge was expressed and assimilated in different contexts and periods. This methodology is widely applicable due to the ever-lasting presence of the humoral medical frameworks, both chronologically and geographically.

This thesis makes several original contributions by stressing the importance of fluidity over rigidity when conducting historical studies of the reception and

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[576] E. N. Anderson Jr, 'Why Is Humoral Medicine so Popular?', *Social Science & Medicine*, 25.4 (1987), 331–37. See also Walter Pagel, *Paracelsus. An Introduction to Philosophical Medicine in the Era of the Renaissance*, 2nd edn (Basel: Karger, 1982).

application of medical knowledge. Both food and medicine, especially when considered within the preventive paradigm, are ongoing processes that affect people's lives in a continuous way, and it is not always possible, nor advisable, to adopt universal approaches in an attempt to explain detailed phenomena. This fluidity was expressed by early modern people in their approach to food by sharing, accepting, adapting or rejecting medical ideas in their dietary habits. By comparing early modern Italy and England, this thesis has shown the ways in which people ate, collected, recommended and shared recipes, and how they discussed medicine and food in their correspondence in an informed and knowledgeable manner. It has shown how the humoral conceptualisation of food and drink management outlived the slow but relentless breakdown of the humoral medical framework.

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