

### “How to Read a Renaissance Manuscript Cookbook”

In this Material Witness session, we interrogate manuscript cookbooks to see what they reveal about available ingredients and patterns of trade, cooking technologies and techniques available in various settings, as well as the social meaning of cooked dishes. Who wrote them and why? How were intended to be used; what might they tell us about other peripheral details about the daily life of early modern people? Were these manuscripts actually meant to be used? Were people reading them cooking from them, or perhaps instructing servants, or were they merely keepsakes to be handed down in within families? Or were they simply copied out of printed books for the sake of amusing armchair chefs?

Finally, we must consider the practical hurdles in preparing and serving recipes in these cookbooks beginning with questions of paleography and orthography, levels of knowledge and expertise assumed by the authors. How might we come as close as possible to original dish without cutting corners or making substitutions?

### Bibliography

1. John Spearman, “English receipts & notes on celestial and terrestrial globes,” 1689, 3 Dec. 1703, W.a. 521
2. Lettice Pudsey, “Cookery book of Lettice Pudsey,” 1675, V.a. 450
  - See recipes in appendix
3. Sarah Longe, “Receipt book of Sarah Longe,” 1610, V.a. 425
4. “Cookbook,” 17th century, V.a. 19
5. Jane Stavelly, “Receipt book of Jane Staveley,” 1693-1694, X.d. 457 (1-19)
6. “Receipt book,” circa 1690-1750, V.a.680
7. Susanna Packe, “Cookbook of Susanna Packe,” 1674, V.a. 215
8. Elizabeth Fowler, “Cookbook of Elizabeth Fowler,” 1684, V.a. 468
9. Jane Buckhearst, “Cookbook of Jane Buckhurst,” 1653, V.a. 7
10. Jane Stavelly, “Receipt book of Jane Staveley,” 1693-1694, V.a. 401