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Preserving the Last Sturgeon: Appetites for Sustainability in Seventeenth-Century Recipe Books

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Dare we eat a favored animal into oblivion? Witness *The Hudson River Valley Cookbook* (1998), in which restaurateur Waldy Malouf bemoans the fact that sturgeon were once “so plentiful in the Hudson fifty years ago that winter fishermen fishing on the ice would stack them up as a barrier against the wind.” However, by 1993, “just 24 sturgeon permits were issued to Hudson River fishermen, and only half of them were used.... It is sad to think that this great food fish may be lost to us. Try to get it while you can.”^[1] This acquisitive appetite is equally apparent in an early modern food culture which similarly shaped and reflected human relationships to endangered food animals. One might assume that cultural status and economic investment would protect food animals from depopulation, but, according to foodways geographer Lenore Newman, “Historically, culinary species have suffered an extinction rate roughly five times as high as the background rate.”^[2] The increased rareness of sturgeon represents a conundrum for gourmands today, but the tension between culinary enthusiasm and environmental sustainability extends back centuries. Although the total extinction of fish species cannot be positively documented in early modern England, local extirpation was well underway with consequences for the food system.

Growing up to six meters in length and weighing upwards of 400 kilograms, the European common sturgeon (*Acipenser sturio*) had always been an exalted foodstuff in England, but their cachet had made them vulnerable to overfishing, a problem intensified by their low

reproductive rates. In the Tudor period, the Elizabethan physician Thomas Cogan reports that sturgeon were “esteemed of great estates” for their “rareness.” He “remember[s]” that “commonly at great feasts [and “feast[s] royall”] in London and elsewhere, they use to serve up sturgeon last.”^[3] But, as Cogan’s “use to” suggests, sturgeon began to disappear from tables in Elizabethan England. From the late sixteenth century through the seventeenth century, lotic and lentic habitats were increasingly impoverished: channeling and embanking rivers destroyed valuable breeding grounds while sluices and sewers diverted vital waterflow; obstacles such as water mills and locks inhibited migration; and feeding grounds in estuaries and sandy riverbeds were especially susceptible to pollution from growing towns and agricultural run-off aggravated by deforestation.^[4] The economic development of rivers had disastrous effects on anadromous fish such as umber, salmon, and sturgeon that migrate between river and sea.

Nevertheless, following the political upheavals of the English Civil War and the Commonwealth government, the Restoration era witnessed a surge of sturgeon recipes reestablishing this regal fish at the tables of Late Stuart England. An examination of mid-to-late-seventeenth century cookery texts, both in print and in manuscript, demonstrates how great houses sought to repair a lost culture of grand banquets and royal feasting. Printed recipe collections such as Walter Montagu’s *The Queens Closet Opened* (1655), with recipes attributed to the court of Henrietta Maria, and Robert May’s *The Accomplisht Cook* (1660), which details the grandeur of Caroline England, were rooted in nostalgia for an idealized pre-war culinary culture.^[5] More than any other English writer, May inaugurated a renaissance in sturgeon recipes in the print marketplace, with many later writers, ranging from William Rabisha to Hannah Woolley, reproducing his incredible variety of sturgeon preparations.^[6] While these texts sought to revive the imagined bounteous tables of yesteryear, collapsing biodiversity in English waters necessitated increased sturgeon imports from the estuarine fisheries of the Elbe, Rhine, Volga, and Hudson, among other foreign rivers, to satisfy the taste for luxurious fish.^[7]

At the same time, recipe writers in England also adapted to the changing ecological conditions. While the print cookeries of Robert May and others remained rooted in nostalgia, manuscript cookery texts became a space to inscribe the “new.” Contrasted with the great variety of printed sturgeon recipes, household recipe books in manuscript generally contain only two types of recipes: pickled sturgeon and “artificial sturgeon” made from turkey, veal, or other meats. The increased popularity of pickled sturgeon and “artificial sturgeon” recipes at the end of the seventeenth century reveals early modern culinary adaptation to changing foodways. In these recipes, we see a bid to preserve and restore the culinary culture of England’s past while simultaneously seeking to convene a more sustainable and economical table. Thinking with recipe books allows us to understand how households responded to the political and ecological losses of the seventeenth century by rebuilding the gastronomy of the past through culinary analogs.

1. The Prince of Feasts

In *A Survey of the World* (1661), Barten Holyday, Archdeacon of Oxford, attempts to enumerate the globe's creaturely diversity in 1000 heroic couplets. At the head of a list of freshwater fish, Holyday writes, "The Prince of Feasts, the *Sturgeon*, does command / The Ghuests: Th'Obey, that think they understand."^[8] The preeminence of sturgeon in Holyday's litany of fish matches sturgeon's place in many early printed recipe books as the genre emerged in the sixteenth century. Among the fish recipes in his *Opera dell'Arte del cucinare* (1570), Bartolomeo Scappi (c. 1500 – 1577) gives pride of place to sturgeon with "no less than 202 recipes based on [their] flesh, milt, liver, or caviar."^[9] Book III of the *Opera*, "Dishes Proper for Lean and Lenten Days," begins with a list of sturgeon recipes that seem determined to prove that a fast day need not spare magnificence. There are recipes for sturgeon boiled, fried, grilled, spit-roasted, and stewed; sturgeon intestines and sturgeon livers; sturgeon pie with peas, sturgeon pies with sauce, stuffed sturgeon pie, beaten sturgeon pie, sturgeon liver and milt pie, and sturgeon fingerling pie; sturgeon torte, sturgeon crostata; "salted sturgeon back ... brought from Alexandria," and many more besides.^[10] Included in this catalog are a number of recipes in which sturgeon is meant to imitate other meats for anyone, as editor Terence Scully puts it, "who has had enough of eating fish *qua* fish on lean days."^[11]

In England, before recipe writing accelerated between the 1650s and 1670s, sturgeon recipes appear here and there. A translation of Giovanne de Rosselli's *Epulario* (1598) is notable for including the first recipe for sturgeon caviar in English print; Gervase Markham publishes a recipe for sturgeon slow-roasted with cloves; *The French Cook*, a translation from François Pierre de la Varenne's *Le Cuisinier François*, provides a recipe for sturgeon roasted on the gridiron and then poached in a "short," that is, concentrated or enriched, broth.^[12] Cookeries without specific recipes for sturgeon still included them in their lists of bills of fare; for example, John Murrell's *Two Bookes of Cookerie and Carving* (1641) lists jowls of sturgeon on a bill of service for an "extraordinary Feast for Summer season" and a "Bill of fare for Winter season," but gives no instructions for cooking.^[13] It is not until the publication of Robert May's *The Accomplisht Cook* in 1660, contemporaneous to the Stuart Restoration, that English cookeries contain anything approaching Scappi's roster of sturgeon preparations.

The son of a Buckinghamshire cook who ran the kitchens of the Dormer family, Robert May (c. 1588 – c. 1664) followed in his father's footsteps by going to France for five years of culinary training before returning to serve in the households of Royalists. Developed in the kitchens of Richard, Viscount Lumley and Elizabeth, Countess of Kent, among others, *The Accomplisht Cook*, unlike earlier English cookeries, boasts of the author's professionalization in French kitchens and his voracious study of Spanish and Italian authorities, such as Scappi, who certainly influenced his sturgeon (and other) recipes.^[14] The thirty-two methods of cooking sturgeon in *The Accomplisht Cook* represent the greatest variety of recipes of any early modern English cookery, and, to my knowledge, of any English-language cookbook since. But while Scappi led his chapter on fish with sturgeon, May relegates them below sixty pages of recipes for carp, pike, salmon, bass, mullet, turbot, plaice, flounder, lamprey, eel, conger, and sole. Although May himself came from a recusant Catholic family and he mostly served in recusant households, the English politics of fasting were obviously quite different from the papal courts in which Scappi served.^[15] While Scappi promotes sturgeon as a

Lenten dish fit for a pope, May targets a different audience, including those “young Practitioners of the Art of Cookery, to whom this Book may be useful,” those cooks serving in the households of gentry and minor nobles such as the one in which he was raised.^[16] While the sturgeon might still rule as “prince of feasts” in the cultural imagination, they remained a rarity at the table. To this end, May prioritized fish that were much more commonly found in the pond works and within the riparian rights of great estates.

What, then, are we to make are we to make of May’s cavalcade of sturgeon buttered, sturgeon baked in earthen pans, hot hash of sturgeon, cold hash of sturgeon, fried sturgeon rubbed with garlic, jellied sturgeon, sturgeon pudding, sturgeon toasted against the fire, sturgeon minced with eel and made up “in the forms of balls, pears, stars, or dolphins,” and eleven variations of sturgeon pie? Wendy Wall’s description of *The Accomplisht Cook* as a “spectacle of a culinary Noah” prompts questions about the point of such *unaccomplishable* variety.^[17] Although this proliferation is by no means limited to sturgeon recipes, their inclusion alongside the more common carp and pike is revealing of May’s goals for the volume. Not simply a practical guide to home economics, May’s list of fish recipes provides a glimpse into a bountiful past. May serves up a collection of sturgeon recipes *in memoriam* of a faded culinary culture by conjuring images of the grandest possible festivity.^[18]

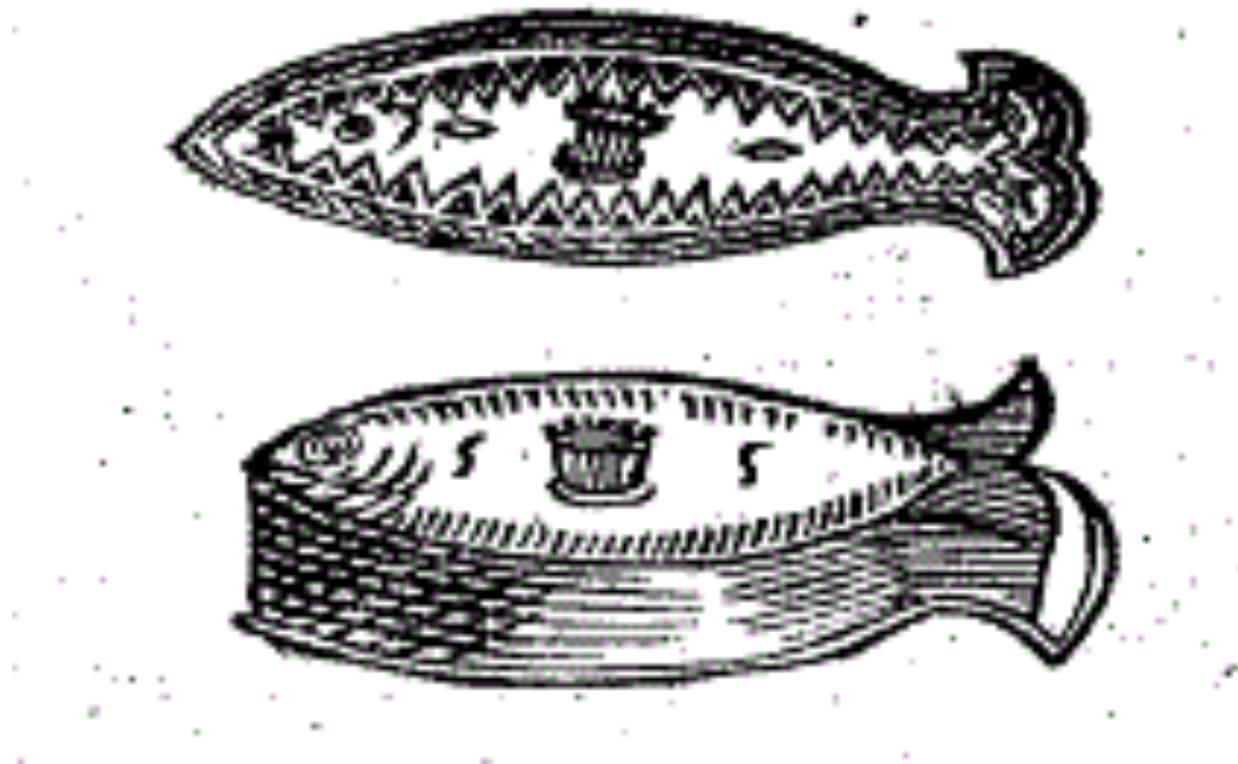


Fig. 1: Figure of a sturgeon pie from Robert May’s *The Accomplisht Cook*, 360

2. Making Sturgeon Last

Several of May's recipes say to take jowls or strips of sturgeon that are "fresh and new," "fresh taken," or "new out of the sea or river."^[19] But the practical cook, even among prominent and well-to-do families, could not expect regular fresh caught sturgeon. Most sturgeon did not come to market fresh, but already butchered and barreled in brine, "cut to keggs, (too big to handle whole)."^[20] Even so, the rareness of an ingredient is no obstacle for inclusion in a recipe book, since these were not instructional manuals for daily dietary practice but manifestations of individual and communal identity and social aspiration. Scholars such as Susan Leonardi, Michelle DiMeo, Sara Pennell, Wendy Wall, and others have described how to read the exchange of recipes as a map of social networks or as part of "the shifting web of social connectivity and obligation."^[21] As recipe writers from the English Civil War through the Restoration sought to find their place in an upended society, recipe attributions helped households navigate the emergent food systems and mediate between the old social order and the new.

With the fabric of social and ecological order torn by revolution, accumulating recipes in manuscript collections became an increasingly popular form of family and self-representation.^[22] As David Goldstein puts it, each manuscript recipe book "becomes a set of instructions for how to create community. Or, put another way, each work shows how to render visible the network of obligations and duties that bind one person – textually, socially, religiously – to another in order to form a society."^[23] Sharing a recipe creates a virtual table, maintaining connections among friends and extended family across time and space. Early modern recipe culture participates in what Marlene Eberhart, Amy Scott, Bronwen Wilson, and Paul Yachnin call "making publics," acts of collectivization that allowed for the emergence of new forms of social relation. I seek to extend their argument, that "nationhood [is] unthinkable without the foundational forms of association without the foundational forms of association among people of different kinds," by factoring in changing relationships between species.^[24] This approach is allied with Bruno Latour's actor-network theory in which the "social" and "society" is constantly being assembled. There are no "groups," only actions of group formation. Such performances of association would include the inscription of a recipe in a cookery manuscript, or the creation of a dish from a printed recipe book. For Latour, a "social network" is, quite literally, a "net" that comes into being through "work," such as acts of writing, cooking, sharing food, etc., that create ties that bind.^[25] Thus, although the spread of sturgeon recipes across social networks during the Restoration may seem innocuous, it participated in a larger project of restoring and re-forming the monarchical English nation in the late seventeenth century, even as it led to the depletion of fishery stocks at home and abroad.

A survey of sixty-nine manuscript recipe books from the seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-centuries found that fifteen of those manuscripts contained twenty-one sturgeon recipes in total – all of them for pickling. The manuscript recipe collections of Late Stuart and Early Georgian England entirely lack the great variety of sturgeon dishes found in printed cookbooks such as those by Scappi and May. Manuscript cookeries contain a wide range of preparations for salmon, pike, trout, carp, and other pond and river fish, but not for sturgeon.

Every recipe writer, it seems, has their own strategy to make sturgeon “keep.” According to Amy Tigner, preservative methods were a central preoccupation of early modern cookeries; preservation “arrested the natural process of decay, chemically altering fruits and vegetables [and fish] to serve the larger cultural aims of expanding the seasons of bounty to year round and ... of enabling long distance oceanic travel necessary to England’s colonial pursuits.” [26] White wine and vinegar were the most common sturgeon pickling liquids before the Restoration, but new recipes emerge in the manuscript collections of the late seventeenth century: equal parts vinegar and fish broth; March beer and ale vinegar; equal parts wine, vinegar, and dill brine; brandy and vinegar; four parts strong beer and one part small beer; four parts small beer and one part strong beer; cider or beer; vinegar, white wine, and madeira. [27] In Folger MS V.a.680, two recipes attributed to a Doctor Thurston and a Mrs. Gibbons both recommend the addition of wheaten bran and “as much sugar as will make it as Soft as a Mouth water” to the pickle. [28] Many of the recipe writers prognosticated on the longevity of their preservation method: Hester Denbigh’s pickle “will keep the sturgeon all the year,” as will Jane Dawson’s. [29] A recipe for boiled sturgeon in the anonymous Folger MS V.a.19 says that it will keep for two to three years, while Lady Grace Castleton’s recipe book offers a method to keep sturgeon for seven years. [30]

Asking what a recipe “allow[s] a person to keep,” Wendy Wall argues that manuscript recipe books allowed their authors to indulge “in dreams of a world where humans might prevent or retard loss in a capacious sense.” [31] By collecting recipes for sturgeon in post-Restoration England, household recipe writers, no less than professional cooks such as May, convoke the imagined wholesomeness, the wholeness, of an idealized past, that contrasted with the apocalypticism of the present. [32] Although household recipe writers pickled sturgeon for practical reasons, not as ecological or political allegory, these recipes nevertheless act as “technologies of memory”: “the act of collecting and transmitting written recipes in a milieu where cooks were conceptualized as preservers combating a cosmic time bomb.” [33]

At the same time, manuscript recipe collections also look forward to the creation of new gastronomic networks and culinary relationships. These manuscript recipe books vary greatly in their organization, but of particular interest to my argument are what Elaine Leong calls “starter collections.” These “starters” were given as gifts, often as wedding presents; when offspring left a household, choice recipes were copied by professional scribes, carefully laid out, and presented as a token of remembrance and familial bond. [34] Starter collections distinguish themselves from other recipe books by leaving ample blank space throughout, anticipating that the owner will continue to forge a new identity by accumulating new recipes and expanding culinary horizons. A starter collection is thus always left unfinished. [35] The starter collection is often rooted in family heritage and culinary tradition, but it is not teleological or territorial. A starter collection offers what Umberto Eco calls an “etcetera,” with its open space creating “incalculable continuity beyond the limits of the frame.” The form opens up for new possibilities, like Eco’s sense of the “maze [as] a non-linear list, which rewinds itself like a ball of wool.” [36] Unlike the culinary arks of Scappi, La Varenne, and May, the starter collection is never complete nor made whole, nor is it committed to a nostalgic recreation of the past. Authors such as May were looking backward; the starter

collection uses family history as its foundation, but then looks to the future, creating space for the new and emerging gastronomical networks of the late seventeenth century.

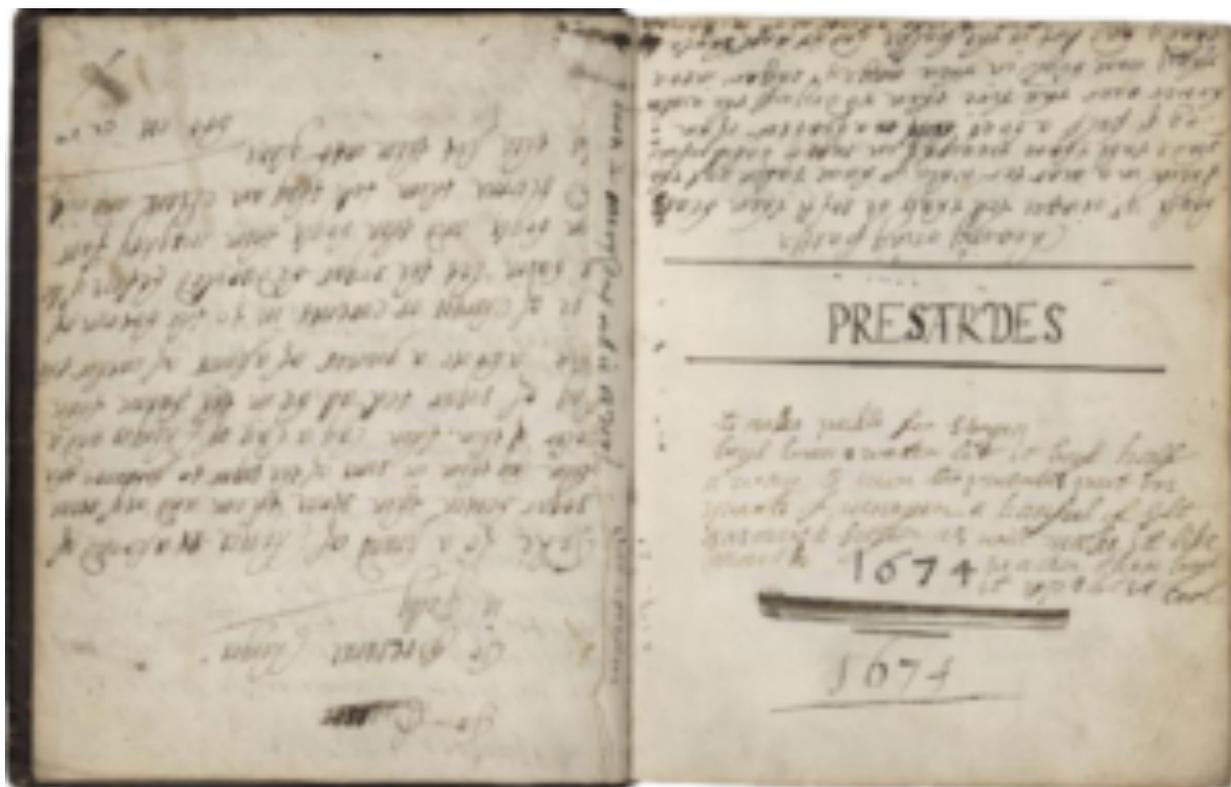


Fig. 2: *The Cookbook of Susanna Packe*, Folger MS V.a.215, fols. 6-7. Around the original layout for “PRESARVES,” or fruit preserves, a second hand has added additional recipes, including “to make pickle for storgen.”

The starter collection provides a framework for organization, but its owner often ignored its own rules. As the collection gathers more and more recipes on blank pages, in the margins, on scraps of paper inserted here and there, the form evolves without regard to the original frame. One such example is the *Cookbook of Susanna Packe*, which bears all of the hallmarks of a starter collection. The book’s initial layout features recipes written out in an elegant scribal hand and neatly organized under headings such as “Presarves [preserves],” “Past[e] & Ca[n]dies,” “Waters and Win[e]s,” “Powders and Syrops,” “Cookery,” “Comfits,” “Gely and Conserve,” and “Oyntments.”^[37] But dozens of recipes added by a second rougher hand, perhaps Packe’s own, discount this organization entirely. Some of the later recipes are left only with headings, or even cut off in midsentence. The accumulation and organization of recipes is prone to interruption, digression, and distraction.

The *Cookbook of Susanna Packe* contains two recipes for pickled sturgeon. The first recipe is cleanly laid out in the original scribe’s hand under the heading of “Cookery”:

To Boyle A Storgen

Take strong Beere & water a Like quantity put in 3 or 4 handfull of salt. Then fit your storgen in tying it vp in Rands [a strip or long slice of meat] & goulds [jowls] Readi; Then let your Liquor Boyle as fast as it is possible. Then put in your fish & let it Boyle 3 or 4 houers; when you it perseue it enough. Take it vp Boyleing peece By peece; Then mix some salt and viniger togatithe & sprinckell it all all ouer; Then with 3 quarte of vin=[egar] or 4 acording to the Bigness of the fish with 2 gallons of whit wine or 6 quarts; To the same Liquor it was Boyld in make a pickell when it is coold & put it in & stop it close. The Last storgon Taken in Cleffton Water 1672 was thus pickled; som Add hearbs But *that* is not so vsull; you may doe as ocaison serues - ∴. proued.

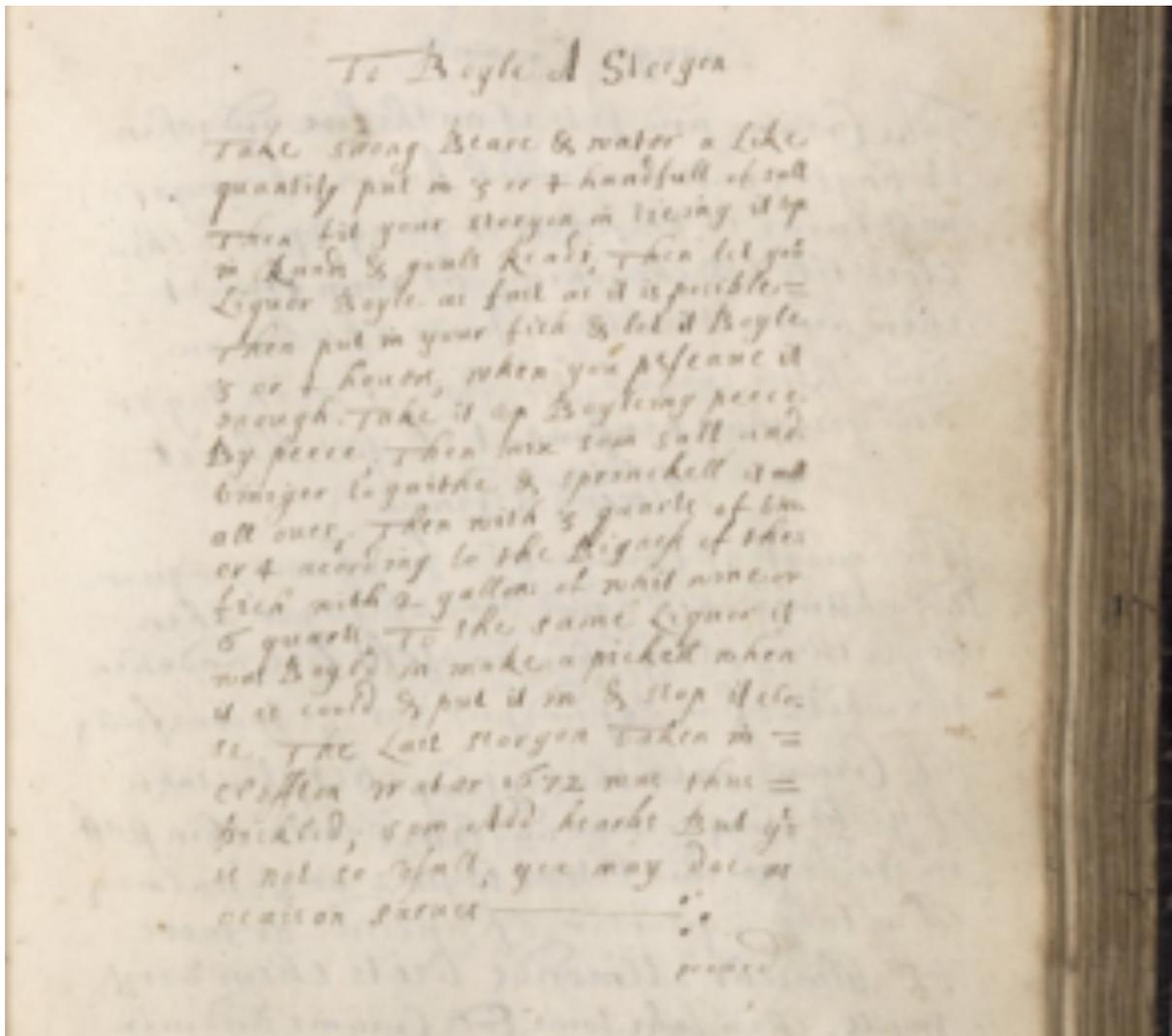


Fig. 3: Cookbook of Susanna Packe, Folger MS V.a.215, fol. 131

Like most recipes, it is written as a set of instructions for future cooks in the imperative mood. Take strong beer... Then fit your sturgeon... And so forth. But then Packe adds a note indicating that this recipe is preserving the memory of a past meal: "The Last storgon Taken in Cleffton Water 1672 was thus pickled." Many of the recipes in the manuscript are marked

“proued,” “probatum est,” “I haue Expearnced it,” but this recipe for the “Last storgon” is the only reference to a specific, dated meal in the 300-page manuscript, perhaps an indication of how grandly significant this meal would have been for the family or families involved. Marking this occasion gives textual permanence to the impermanent meal.

The Susanna Packe whose name adorns Folger MS V.a.215 may be the third daughter of Anne (d. 1658) and Sir Christopher Packe (d. 1682), a wealthy wool merchant, investor in the East India Company, and London alderman. During the Protectorate, Christopher Packe rose to Lord Mayor of London and established himself as a powerful ally to Oliver Cromwell. Following the Restoration, he was forced out of public life but allowed to retire to his adjoining country manors at Cotes and Prestwold in the Soar valley of Leicestershire. Although the uncertain provenance of Folger MS V.a.215 makes it impossible to say for sure, the “Cleffton Water” mentioned in the recipe likely refers to the River Trent piscary held by the Clifton family of Nottinghamshire. The holdings of the Packe family abutted the properties of the Cliftons and records in the Clifton Family Papers show regular business dealings between the families. Susanna’s older brother, Christopher Packe II, heir to his father’s estates, married Jane Clifton, daughter of Sir Gervase Clifton, 1st Baronet Clifton (1582-1666), at Clifton Hall.^[38] It seems likely that many of the recipes in the *Cookbook of Susanna Packe* recall meals in Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire prior to Susanna Packe’s marriage to Sir Thomas Bellot, 2nd Baronet Moreton in February 1674/75.

By recording this meal in the starter collection, the scribe traces evidence of Susanna Packe’s social network and foodshed. As Leong, Wall, Goldstein, and others have shown, gifting recipes as well as food was common practice among families and neighbors in the seventeenth century^[39] And in the Trent watershed, celebrated for its fishing heritage, sharing a prized catch would be especially meaningful.^[40] In Felicity Heal’s reading of account books and other household records, there is “a sense that the gift has to be distinctive, in some measure marked out from the quotidian pattern of household consumption.”^[41] A food gift grown, raised, hunted or caught on a family’s own estate highlights the distinctive of qualities of the giver’s land and riparian rights.^[42] Packe’s recipe for fresh-caught sturgeon, taken in the Trent from the banks of Clifton, is especially noteworthy in this regard and exceedingly rare in manuscript cookeries from the period. This unique reference to a specific fish communicates a yearning to preserve the memory of the “last storgon” in a river system where such creatures were rare wonders.

Although recipe collections preserve family histories or myths of a bountiful past, they also stoke the culinary desires of the present and spur the creation of new foodways. After all, the imperative mood of recipe writing provides instruction for the dish to come: “split *the* head & cut your sturgeon into sizeable pieces,” “put the sturgeon in renew it once in 3 or 4 Month,” etcetera.^[43] By promoting domestic demand for sturgeon, the recipe book can become a kind of early modern wish-list. As Debapriya Sarkar puts it, in the early modern period, “*desiderata* could project futures by appealing to pasts.”^[44] The nostalgic food cultures of the Restoration shaped and severed bonds between humans and environment as recipe writers sought to find their place in the emerging social order. By networking desire for sturgeon through the exchange of recipes, cookeries promoted colonial and mercantile exploitation of

the people and resources of North America and the Caspian basin. In *Tasting Difference*, Gitanjali Shahani argues:

“The household participates in the public realm through different interactions and via different foodstuff... If I trace women’s participation in colonial economies through the realm of the home, it is because the ‘home’ as a conceptual space allows me to map women’s participation in the ‘world,’ in debates about food in the public sphere, and trace their participation in growing colonial encounters.”[\[45\]](#)

As catches of anadromous fish fell in England, sturgeon imports from as far as the Volga and Hudson increased in a bid to restore to the pot what had been lost from the local waters.

3. Eating Sturgeon After Extirpation

For its part, Packe’s sturgeon recipe moves from a set of instructions written in the imperative to a mood of conditional possibility: “You may doe as ocasion serues.” Here is a clear reminder that early modern recipes are only templates, amply allowing for environmental limitations or for the reader’s own innovation. Although recipe culture is often founded upon nostalgia, cookeries also circulate new methods and modern consumer trends. What this meant for Packe’s table is suggested by a second recipe, which appears in a later, messier hand, not under “Cookery,” but under the section heading for “PRESARVES” (fig. 2). While this section was originally laid out with twenty recipes for fruit jellies and preserves, the later writer thought it fit to include a fish recipe in the margins: “to make peckle for storgen boyl bran & water let it boyl half a way to euer[y] too [two] quartes put on[e] quarte of ueneger a handful of salt & as much suger as will make it like mouth water then boyl it vp & let it cool.”[\[46\]](#) Noticeably missing from this recipe is the sturgeon itself. In the absence of fish, this recipe could serve as a template to pickle another meat *like* sturgeon.[\[47\]](#)

Following the Restoration, as printed cookeries continued to circulate recipes for “fresh” sturgeon, manuscript cookeries recorded the popularization of recipes to prepare other kinds of meat “that it will be like sturgeon.”[\[48\]](#) Pickled turkey became the favored stand-in. Upon their introduction to England from North America, turkeys had become an inexpensive addition to country estates and an affordable substitute for sturgeon.[\[49\]](#) The bird would be butchered, pickled, and then rolled and bound into the shape of a fish.[\[50\]](#) A recipe associated with the Hornyold family recommends sousing a young turkey in beer and white wine and then binding up the turkey “like a Ran[d] of Sturgion.”[\[51\]](#) Another recipe in the same book calls for a dressed fat turkey cock seasoned with nutmeg, mace, salt, and pepper and adding lemon peel and cinnamon to the pickle.[\[52\]](#) Folger MS V.b.380 includes a recipe for turkey that will be like sturgeon seasoned with Jamaican pepper, nutmeg, and ginger.[\[53\]](#)

Other cookeries use different species for their imitations of sturgeon. The recipe book of Jane Dawson includes a recipe “to Pickell Samon, to Eate like Storgon.” Dawson’s recipe suggests “tye[ing] euey two peces of samon together” to enhance the size of the fish, making it more comparable to the real thing.[\[54\]](#) Abigail Rand uses turbot for her “artificial sturgeon,” while Deborah Haddock substitutes veal for fish.[\[55\]](#) Haddock also has recipes for artificial sturgeon

made with turkey and one that calls for “a very good black Calues head” boiled “so long till all *the bon[e]’s* comes out.” Once pickled in beer, salt, and vinegar, “yu will find *that* nothing Can look or eat more like sturg’ then it.”^[56] But another recipe, found in Folger MS W.b.456, is more uneasy about the transfiguration. The recipe for “Artificiall Stergon” uses “Tarbett [turbot] or Turkey” tied up “like Rands of storgen” and served with oil and vinegar or the juice of a Lisbon lemon. And yet, the author protests, “I like sturgeon very well but I dont know how I should like this.”^[57]

This trepidation, coupled with a desire to hold on to the past, can inhibit more sustainable futures, leading to an ongoing cycle of overfishing and colonial expansion. Archaeologist Brian Fagan argues that the whole history of Europe, from Romain exploitation of the Mediterranean to European settlement of North America, is explained by, at least in part, a search for more fish.^[58] In England, the story of cod is well known: overexploitation of the fisheries of the Dogger Bank led fishing fleets to move westward to Iceland and then to Newfoundland and New England.^[59] Extirpation of local populations motivated expansion of colonial sturgeon fisheries as well. By the seventeenth century, sturgeon from the Americas had become such a part of the English cultural imagination that Dekker and Middleton’s *The Roaring Girl* (1611) uses “sturgeon voyage” as a synonym for “long expedition”: “you make as much haste as if you were a-going upon a sturgeon voyage,” Moll Cutpurse says mockingly to a city gallant. “Take deliberation, sir, never choose a wife as if you were going to Virginia.”^[60] Voyagers to America, such as Edward Williams, advertised the “multitude” of “fishy inhabitants” in the rivers of Virginia and the Carolinas to investors back home: “of a more incomparable delicacy in tast and sweetnesse then whatever the European Sea can boast of: Sturgeon of ten feet, Drummes of sixe in length ... and what ever else can be desired to the satisfaction of the most voluptuous wishes.”^[61]

Early colonists in New Netherlands and New England were also astounded by the size of sturgeon which, without the pressure of overfishing, were often able to grow to lengths not seen in England. John Josselyn (1674) reports “multitudes of mighty large *Sturgeon*” in the rivers feeding the Gulf of Maine: “The *Sturgeon* is a Regal fish too, I have seen of them that have been sixteen foot in length.”^[62] Appetites were whetted and sturgeon’s status as a rare delicacy in western Europe “promoted a robust sturgeon fishery in the rivers of northern New England.”^[63] While ancient statutes in England restricted sturgeon catches to royal prerogative, in the American colonies every migration was open season. With no natural predators in the riverways, docile mature sturgeon “were low-hanging fruit on the arbor of marine resources, and they were plucked quite quickly [by colonists] in all of northern New England’s major rivers.... By 1673, less than fifty years after [Thomas] Morton had written that ‘every man in New England may catch what he will,’ men from the Merrimack River towns determined that insufficient sturgeon remained for an open fishery.”^[64] According W. Jeffrey Bolster, “by the mid-eighteenth century, Atlantic sturgeon was the first fish pushed to commercial extinction in some areas of the northwest Atlantic.... [O]nly two centuries were necessary to accomplish what had taken a millennium in Europe – the severe reduction of a huge fish that in a natural state was likely to die of old age”^[65]

Although it does not seem that early modern England had a concept of extinction, the loss of culturally and economically important species *was* felt locally.^[66] Having extirpated the commercial sturgeon fisheries at home, colonial appetites repeated the pattern abroad at an even more voracious pace. But against this destructive pattern, we find in the archives of Late Stuart cookery recipes for “artificial sturgeon” that urge new culinary forms that were more sustainable – ecologically and economically – for Restoration-era England.^[67] I take recipes for artificial sturgeon as evidence of “counter-apocalyptic thinking,” which, as Joanna Zylinska defines it, reconsiders the “structures of mourning” that undergird the Anthropocene.^[68] As the Sixth Extinction accelerates, we need to be wary lest the collapse of favored food species results in the same abuses suffered by the Eurasian and North American rivers exploited by those seeking to replace the collapse of English biodiversity. Following Juno Salazar Parreñas’s call to “decolonize extinction,” we must instead experiment “with other responses and other senses of responsibility than what usually inspires us when we want to do something – anything – to stop what might be inevitable. The challenge of decolonizing extinction, then, is not to end extinction, but to consider how else might it unfold for those who will perish and for those who will survive.”^[69] Admittedly, seventeenth-century recipe collections played a key role in promoting culinary habits based on the exploitation of slaves and colonial landscapes. However, at its most inventive, recipe culture can also provide a framework for thinking otherwise about the relationship between consumer and consumed. The early modern recipe book is a genre that maps the changing contours of community and, although often inspired by a desire to restore what had been lost during the interregnum, recipe culture evolves over the course of the seventeenth century, welcoming new culinary creations as the ecological and economic conditions changed. By examining changes in sturgeon recipes in seventeenth-century England, we discover that, after extirpation, a world of continuous metamorphosis and revision, a world without finality remains.

When it comes to sturgeon recipes today, we may have little choice but to seek alternatives. As the river ecologist David Strayer puts it in his history of the Hudson River, “large harvests [of sturgeon] had the same effect on the population as the clearcutting of an old-growth forest — a decades- to centuries-long depression of population size.”^[70] Today, nineteen of the thirty species of sturgeon and their close cousins the paddlefish are listed as endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature’s (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species. Several species may already be extinct in the wild. Among the most critically endangered, the name of the “European common sturgeon” has become a bitter irony. Once praised and celebrated at English banquets, the common sturgeon has not been seen in English rivers in over a hundred years.^[71] According to the IUCN, there are perhaps as few as twenty mature fish left in a single breeding population in the Gironde-Garonne-Dordogne river system of southwestern France.^[72]

As Ken Albala notes, it was only in the seventeenth century, “when the foundations of the state threatened to crack did the cookbooks and courtly dining guides proliferate.”^[73] Today, as the foundations of our ecosystems fracture, new cookbooks and dining guides for the Anthropocene are badly needed. In Elspeth Probyn’s words, “we thought that we could eat [the ocean] with impunity. Now we are risk of eating it up, devouring it until there’s nothing

left except the not-so-apocryphal jellyfish-and-chips.”^[74] But, by increasing accessibility to historical recipe books, EMROC and its partner libraries have brought unprecedented attention to how writers and cooks responded to changing conditions in the early modern world. The archives of English cookery demonstrate how recipe writers overcame nostalgia for yesterday’s cuisine as oceans and rivers emptied out. Turning to these sources may again be instructive as we face worsening ecological catastrophe. After all, the blank pages in seventeenth-century recipe books are left for futures as yet unwritten.

Notes

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^[1] Waldy Malouf, *The Hudson River Valley Cookbook* (Boston: Harvard Common Press, 1998), 79.

^[2] Lenore Newman, *Lost Feast: Culinary Extinction and the Future of Food* (Toronto: ECW Press, 2019), 18.

^[3] Thomas Cogan, *The Haven of Health* (London: Printed by Anne Griffin for Roger Ball, 1636), 167, 170. Similar wistfulness for the decline of English sturgeon can be found in Raphael Holinshed’s description of the Thames and Medway in *The first and second volumes of Chronicles* (London: Raphael Holinshed, William Harrison, John Hooker, et al., 1586), 52-54. Significant quantitative evidence also affirms the luxury status of fresh-caught river and lake fish. See, Richard C. Hoffmann, “Economic Development and Aquatic Ecosystems in Medieval Europe,” *The American Historical Review* 101, no. 3 (June 1996): 655; and Christopher Dyer, “The Consumption of Fresh-Water Fish in Medieval England,” in *Medieval Fish, Fisheries, and Fishponds in England*, ed. Michael Aston (Oxford, UK: BAR British Series, 1988), 30-35.

^[4] Environmental degradation of inland fisheries began in the high and late medieval period. Hoffmann outlines a number of studies documenting a downward turn in anadromous fish populations in many regions of Western Europe. Declines in thirteenth-century England motivated Edward II to declare that all sturgeon caught in English rivers were the rightful property of the king, but this protected status did not reverse the fortunes of the fish population. The depletion of littoral fisheries and the decline of riparian ecological health continued to accelerate in the early modern period. Hoffmann, “Economic Development,” 638-39, 643-46, 649-52; Richard C. Hoffmann, “A brief history of aquatic resource use in

medieval Europe," *Helgoland Marine Research* 59 (2005): 22-30. See also, W. Jeffrey Bolster, "Putting the Ocean in Atlantic History: Maritime Communities and Marine Ecology in the Northwest Atlantic, 1500-1800," *The American Historical Review* 113, no. 1 (Feb 2008): 25-29. T.S. Willan provides numerous examples of conflicts between inland navigation projects, millers, and fishers in *River Navigation in England, 1600-1750* (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1964), 18-19, 21, 86-87.

[5] Many scholars have written about the politics of recipe culture during the interregnum and Restoration, with special attention paid to the transmission, purchase, and use of certain cookbooks associated with Royalist values, such as W[alter] M[ontagu]'s *The Queens Closet Opened* (London: Printed by Nathaniel Brooke, 1655) and the anti-Cromwellian satire of *The Court & Kitchin of Elizabeth, Commonly Called Joan Cromwel* (London: Printed by Thomas Milbourn for Randal Taylor, 1664). Other recipe collections by noted Royalists, such as Sir Kenelm Digby, or those who claim connections to Royalists, such as Robert May and William Rabisha, are part of what Wendy Wall calls a "new breed of recipe collection [that] collectively lamented the decline of hospitality and aristocratic housekeeping caused by the civil war... As they conjured up the particular closets of renowned persons, these books were explicitly rooted in the worlds of the past." In recipe books we see traces of a vanishing world, as in May's "Triumphs," which describe some of May's most memorable pre-war culinary creations. Wendy Wall, *Recipes for Thought: Knowledge and Taste in the Early Modern English Kitchen* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 34, 76. See also, Jayne Archer, "The Queens' Arcanum: Authority and Authorship in *The Queens Closet Opened* (1655)," *Renaissance Journal* 1, no. 6 (2002): 14-25; Madeline Bassnett, "Restoring the Royal Household: Royalist Politics and the Commonwealth Recipe Book," *Early English Studies* 2 (2009): 1-32; David B. Goldstein, *Eating and Ethics in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Priya Grant, "Politicized Spaces and Public Intimacy: The Cookery Books of Henrietta Maria and Elizabeth Cromwell," *Cuizine: The Journal of Canadian Food Cultures* 4, no. 2 (2013); Laura Lunger Knoppers, *Politicizing Domesticity from Henrietta Maria to Milton's Eve* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Claire Saffitz, "Constructing the Politics of Cookery: Authorial Strategy and Domestic Politics in English Cookery Books, 1655-1670," *Cuizine: The Journal of Canadian Food Cultures* 4, no. 2 (2013), 1-22.

[6] Other cookeries participated in the transmission of May's sturgeon recipes. The anonymous *Compleat English and French Cook* (London: Printed for William Miller, 1690), for example, contains eleven sturgeon recipes lifted nearly verbatim from May with a few adjusted measurements and herbal substitutions. Other recipe writers circulated cooking methods not found in May, such as Hannah Woolley's "grand sallet" topped with minced sturgeon, shrimp, and roast hen, found in *The Accomplish'd Ladies Delight* (London: Robert Midgley, 1686), 141.

[7] In early modern England, most sturgeon was imported. Reports from Russia by merchant adventurers such as Samuel Collins, Giles Fletcher, and Anthony Jenkinson extolled the sturgeon market of Astrakhan, at the mouth of Volga on the Caspian Sea. The popularity of sturgeon in the late-seventeenth century may have also been influenced by Russian

marketing. When Peter the Great became tsar in 1682, the caviar trade became a central feature of his European diplomacy strategy. See, Richard Adams Carey, *The Philosopher Fish: Sturgeon, Caviar, and the Geography of Desire* (New York: Counterpoint, 2005), 63; Matthew P. Romaniello, *The Elusive Empire: Kazan and the Creation of Russia, 1552-1671* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), 87-111; Richard Hakluyt, *The principal nauigations, voyages, traffiques and discoueries of the English nation made by sea or ouer-land, to the remote and farthest distant corners of the earth* (London: George Bishop, Ralph Newberie, and Robert Barker, 1599), 325-335, 478. Andrzej Mamcarz discusses the exploitation and export of sturgeon in the Polish Baltic to England and other western European countries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in "Decline of the Atlantic sturgeon *Acipenser sturio* L., 1758 in Poland: An outline of problems and prospects," *Boletín Instituto Español de Oceanografía* 16, nos. 1-4 (2000): 195-99.

[8] Barten Holyday, *A Survey of the World in Ten Books* (Oxford: Printed by William Hall for the Author, 1661), 14.

[9] Ken Albala, *The Banquet: Dining in the Great Courts of Late Renaissance Europe* (Champaign: University of Illinois, 2017), 40.

[10] Bartolomeo Scappi, *The Opera of Bartolomeo Scappi (1570)*, trans., Terence Scully (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 276-288, 350-351, 502-505, 518-519, 282fn12.1.

[11] Scappi, 282fn12.2.

[12] Giovanne de Rosselli, *Epulario, or The Italian Banquet* (London: Printed by A.I. for William Barley, 1598), sig. H2r-H2v; Gervase Markham, *Country contentments, or The English Huswife Containing the inward and outward vertues which ought to be in a compleate woman* (London: Printed by John Beale for R. Jackson, 1623), 84-85; François Pierre de La Varenne, *The French Cook*, trans., I.D.G. (London: Printed for Charles Adams, 1653), 187.

[13] John Murrell, *Murrels Two Bookes of Cookerie and Carving* (London: Printed by M.F. for John Marriot, 1641), 3, 5; Similarly, William Rabisha suggests serving sturgeon on four separate bills of fair and Hannah Woolley does the same in six different courses. See, Rabisha, *The Whole Body of Cookery* (London: Printed by R.W. for Giles Calvert, 1661), sig. A1r-A3r, and Woolley, *The Queen-Like Closet* (London: Printed for R. Lowndes, 1670), 354-359.

[14] Tom Jaine, "Robert May (b. 1588?, d. in or after 1664)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004). <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/41327>

[15] Scully traces Scappi's biography and record of service in Rome in *The Opera*, 7-32. On changing English perceptions toward fish days during the mid-seventeenth century, see Alec Ryrie, "The Fall and Rise of Fasting in the British Reformations," in *Worship and the Parish Church in Early Modern Britain*, eds., Natalie Mears and Alec Ryrie (New York: Routledge,

2013), 89-108; David Grumett and Rachel Muers, *Theology on the Menu: Asceticism, Meat, and Christian Diet* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 53-63, and Thomas Cornell Doumaux, "Fast Days and Faction: The Struggle for Reformation, Order, and Unity in England 1558-c.1640," PhD diss. (Vanderbilt University, Nashville TN, 2008), 559-71.

[16] Robert May, *The Accomplisht Cook, or The art and mystery of cookery* (London: Printed for Nathaniel Brooke, 1660), sig. A4r.

[17] Wall, 36.

[18] May, 353-360.

[19] May's call for "fresh" sturgeon may simply be a demonstration of his connection to royal prerogative, since the royal household had the right of first refusal for any sturgeon caught in any English river. Markham's *Countray Contentments* and Woolley's *Accomplish'd Ladies Delight* also include recipes for "fresh" sturgeon. But several recipe writers maintain that sturgeon actually tastes better if it is allowed to age. One recipe recommends hanging sturgeon "up a day or two to make it tender" ([*Cookbook*], ca. 1720, Folger MS W.b.100, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC, fol. 25). As the twentieth-century *Great American Seafood Cookbook* puts it, Atlantic sturgeon have an earthy taste that toughens when grilled, much like turkey. Lower heat is recommended and the meat is said to taste better after two or three days. The sixteenth-century Italian chef Giovanne de Rosselli agrees: for dressing sturgeon, he recommends that "If you will haue it good and in perfection, let it not bee too new, but let it mortifie for a time." Susan Herrmann Loomis, *Great American Seafood Cookbook* (New York: Workman Publishing, 1988), 294; Rosselli, sig. F4v.

[20] Michael Drayton, "Song 25," *The Poly-Olbion Project*, accessed September 10, 2022, <https://poly-olbion.exeter.ac.uk/the-text/full-text/song-25>, l. 171.

[21] See, Susan J. Leonardi, "Recipes for Reading: Summer Pasta, Lobster a La Riseholme, and Key Lime Pie," *PMLA* 104, no. 3 (May 1989), 340; Wall, 3; Goldstein, 152. See also, Sara Pennell, "Perfecting Practice? Women, Manuscript Recipes, and Knowledge in Early Modern England," in *Early Modern Women's Manuscript Writing*, eds., Victoria E. Burke and Jonathon Gibson (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2004): 237-253; Sara Pennell and Michelle DiMeo, "Introduction," in *Reading & Writing Recipe Books 1550-1800*, eds., Michelle DiMeo and Sara Pennell. Manchester (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2013): 1-22; Sara Pennell, "Making Livings, Lives and Archives: Tales of Four Eighteenth-Century Recipe Books," in *Reading & Writing Recipe Books 1550-1800*, eds., Michelle DiMeo and Sara Pennell. Manchester (Manchester University Press, 2013): 225-246; and Michelle DiMeo, "Reimagining Early Modern English Recipes," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 80, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 173-177.

[22] On collecting as a mode of identity formation, see Marjorie Swann, "'The Compleat Angler' and the Early Modern Culture of Collecting," *English Literary Renaissance* 37, no. 1 (Winter 2007), 105-106; Wall, 30-31.

[23] Goldstein, 127. Catherine Field's analysis of the many hands that participate in the creation of recipe collections is foundational for understanding early modern culinary culture as a reflection of community and collaboration rather than purely individual expression. Building on Field's work, Goldstein views the practice of recipe attribution as a vital part of the "culinary ethics" that began to emerge in the 1620s and 1630s, blooming to full flourish after 1660. See, Field, "'Many hands hands': Writing the Self in Early Modern Women's Recipe Books," in *Genre and Women's Life Writing in Early Modern England*, eds., Michelle M. Dowd and Julie A. Eckerle (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2007): 49-63.

[24] Marlene Eberhart, Amy Scott, and Paul Yachnin, "Introduction," in *Forms of Association: Making Publics in Early Modern Europe*, eds., Paul Yachnin and Marlene Eberhart (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015), 5. See also, Bronwen Wilson and Paul Yachnin, eds., *Making Publics in Early Modern Europe: People, Things, Forms of Knowledge* (New York: Routledge, 2010). On how manuscript networks "could bond a community, fostering values which were tailored to the particular situation in which its members found themselves and allowing individuals to make their mark on the group through the materials that they introduced for its consumption," see Jason Scott-Warren, "Reconstructing manuscript networks: the textual transactions of Sir Stephen Powle," in *Communities in Early Modern England: Network, Place, Rhetoric*, eds., Alexandra Shepard and Phil Withington (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2000), especially, 19.

[25] Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007), especially, for his definition of "network," 128-133.

[26] Amy L. Tigner, "Preserving Nature in Hannah Woolley's *The Queen-Like Closet; or Rich Cabinet*," in *Ecofeminist Approaches to Early Modernity*, eds., Jennifer Munroe and Rebecca Laroche (New York: Palgrave, 2011), 130-31.

[27] For example, respectively, Margaret Eyre, *Cook-book of Margaret Turner*, ca. 1709, Folger MS W.a.112, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC, fol. 166; Hornyold Family, *[Cookery and medical commonplace book]*, 1662-1722, William Andrews Clark MS 2012.011, William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, Los Angeles, fols. 49-50; *[Cookbook]*, seventeenth century, Folger MS V.a.19, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC, fols. 7-8; Hester Denbigh, *Cookery and Medical Recipes*, 1700, Whitney Cookery Collection MS 11, Manuscript and Archives Division, New York Public Library, New York City, fol. 112; Willoughby Family, *[Household Books of Margaret Willoughby and the Willoughby Family]*, 1737-ca.1790, University of Nottingham MS 87/4. Manuscripts and Special Collections, University of Nottingham Library, Nottingham, UK, fol. 75; *[Cookery book written in several hands]*, eighteenth century, William Andrews Clark MS

1968.004, William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, Los Angeles, fol. 32; [Cookbook], Folger MS W.b.100, fol. 25.

[28] [Receipt Book], ca. 1690-1750, Folger MS V.a.680, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC, fols. 33, 109.

[29] Denbigh, fol. 112; Jane Dawson, *Cookbook of Jane Dawson*, Late seventeenth century, Folger MS V.b.14, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC, fol. 14v.

[30] [Cookbook], Folger MS V.a.19, fol. 7-8; Grace Saunderson, Viscountess Castleton, *The Lady Grace Castleton's Booke of Receipts*, seventeenth-century, Folger MS V.a.600. Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC, fol. 9.

[31] Wall, 167.

[32] Katie Kadue, especially through an astute reading of Marvell's "Upon Appleton House," provides a parallel example of how recipe culture and preservation technologies such as conserving, candying, and distilling seek to stave off the collapse of socioecological order. See, *Domestic Georgic: Labors of Preservation from Rabelais to Milton* (University of Chicago Press, 2021).

[33] Wall, 189-190.

[34] On recipes and recipe books as gifts, see also, Goldstein, 153; Pennell, "Perfecting Practice?" 251-252; Elaine Leong, *Recipes and Everyday Knowledge: Medicine, Science, and the Household in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 22, 39, 145.

[35] A parallel can be found in *alba amicorum*, or friendship books, that were popular in German- and Dutch-speaking regions of Europe from the late sixteenth century through the seventeenth century. Users collected lists of signatures and other mementos on their travels, an example of not only how social networks were recorded but came into being through acts of inscription. See, Jason Harris, "The Practice of Community: Humanist Friendship during the Dutch Revolt," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 47, no. 4 (2005): 299-325 and June Schlueter, *The Album Amicorum & the London of Shakespeare's Time* (London: The British Library, 2011).

[36] Umberto Eco, *The Infinity of Lists*, trans., Alastair McEwen (New York: Rizzoli, 2009), 240-41.

[37] Susanna Packe, *Cookbook of Susanna Packe*, 1674, Folger MS V.a.215, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC.

[38] "Alderman Packe" – as the elder Christopher was called (rather than Lord Mayor) by his new Royalist neighbors – is referenced in the Clifton family account books on multiple

occasions. Marriages between the various sons and daughters of the Packe and Clifton families suggest that they remained closely allied well into the 1700s. See, *Accounts and Rentals relating to members of the Clifton family and their estates*, University of Nottingham MSS Cl A 16 and Cl A 6 / 21, Manuscripts and Special Collections, University of Nottingham Library, Nottingham, UK.

[39] In Tudor and Stuart England, giving the gift of food to a local household was a way of currying patronage or maintaining good relationships with business partners and landlords. This tradition became less common after the Civil Wars, a shift that may be explained by the popularization of residences for the rich and powerful in London, where the markets afforded greater varieties of food. But even if class mobility and capitalism disrupted the gift economy, gift-giving still had an important cultural function. See, Felicity Heal, "Food Gifts, the Household, and the Politics of Exchange in Early Modern England," *Past & Present* 199 (May 2008): 41-70.

[40] Freshwater and anadromous fish (especially salmon) and marine curiosities, such as porpoise, were frequently given as gifts. See, Heal, 53-54.

[41] Heal, 56.

[42] The use of food gifts to seal bonds is seen clearly in country house poems such as Jonson's "To Penshurst," which, as Marjorie Swann puts it, represents "the early modern English landscape as a collection" of prized cultivars and varieties assembled by the gentleman farmer. *Curiosities and Texts: The Culture of Collecting in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 148.

[43] [Cookery book written in several hands], William Andrews Clark MS 1968.004, fol. 32; Hester Denbigh, *Cookery and Medical Recipes*, 1700, Whitney Cookery Collection MS 11, Manuscript and Archives Division, New York Public Library, New York City, fol. 112.

[44] Debapriya Sarkar, "Imagining Early Modern Wish-Lists and Their Environs," in *Object Oriented Environs*, eds., Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Julian Yates (Santa Barbara, CA: punctum books, 2016), 123-24.

[45] Gitanjali G. Shahani, *Tasting Difference: Food, Race, and Cultural Encounters in Early Modern Literature* (Cornell University Press, 2020), 25. In addition to Shahani's work on spice, coffee, and other foodstuffs, the role of cookery texts in the promotion of colonial projects by increasing demand for foreign produce has been discussed at length by Kim F. Hall, on sugar, in "Culinary spaces, colonial spaces: the gendering of sugar in the seventeenth century," in *Feminist Readings of Early Modern Culture: Emerging Subjects*, eds., Valerie Traub, M. Lindsay Kaplan, and Dymphna Callaghan (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 168-90, and Tigner, on chocolate, in "Preserving Nature." See also Edith Snook's discussion of how Canadian colonizers promoted maple sugar as an alternative to Caribbean cane sugar in "'A New Source of Happiness to Man': The Maple Tree, Settler Colonialism, and Sugaring in the Early Modern Maritimes," in *In the Kitchen, 1550-1800*:

English Cooking at Home and Abroad, eds., Madeline Bassnett and Hillary M. Nunn (Amsterdam University Press, 2022).

[46] Packe, fol. 7.

[47] According to Hoffmann, the collapse of fisheries in the late-medieval Mediterranean led to the popularization of artificial sturgeon dishes made from more readily available species: “By the fourteenth century, chefs in those countries were circulating a recipe to ‘make sturgeon’ from veal, a distinct mark of the prestige and favor still attached to an almost extinct food fish” (“Economic Development,” 649). These recipes also show the ambitions of households with upwardly mobile aspirations. As Sara Mueller puts it, these recipes demonstrate the housewife’s “wealth through her spectacle’s vast consumption of expensive goods, and appearing to cheat nature in the verisimilar forms she created out of food” (“Early Modern Banquet Receipts and Women’s Theatre,” *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England* 24 (2011), 119). Few examples of recipes for artificial sturgeon exist in English prior to the Restoration, but they do appear infrequently among the earliest Anglophonic recipe collections. British Library MS Sloane 1108, a fifteenth-century collection of recipes, has a recipe for sturgeon made out of veal and calves’ feet. See *Curye on Inglysch*, eds., Constance B. Hieatt and Sharon Butler (London: Early English Text Society, 1985), 155-56. A comparable example can be found in recipes for artificial red deer which did circulate widely throughout the early modern period. As the largest cervid native to the British Isles, esteemed by hunters, red deer, like sturgeon, faced the dual ecological pressures of overexploitation and habitat fragmentation. Rather than hunt an animal protected by forest law, it was simply more economical to make red deer venison out of more widely available species such as beef. See, for example, Gervase Markham’s recipe for “Red Deer Venison of Hares” in *Countrie Contentments*, 98-99.

[48] Two notable exceptions of early printed recipes for artificial sturgeon are found in Kenelm Digby, *The Closet of the Eminently Learned Sir Kenelm Digbie kt Opened* (London: Printed by E.C. for H. Brome, 1669) and Woolley’s *Queen-like Closet* (1670), which include, respectively, a recipe to tie soused turkey “up in the manner of sturgeon” and “To souce Veal to eat like Sturgeon.” In the eighteenth-century, Hannah Glasse’s recipe for turkey pickled like sturgeon advanced the popularity of print recipes for artificial sturgeon. These imitations remained popular well into the nineteenth century, with many later cookbooks plagiarizing Glasse’s recipe from *The Art of Cookery* (London: Printed for the Author, 1747), 265.

[49] How and when exactly turkeys were introduced to England is uncertain, but it was no later than 1541, when Thomas Cranmer recommended them as fit food for ecclesiastics. By the end of the sixteenth century, turkey was common in England, with husbandry manuals offering instruction on how to rear them and cookery texts reproducing recipes. On the popularization of turkey in England, see Andrew F. Smith, *The Turkey: An American Story* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 26-38. In her analysis of “disguised” food in seventeenth-century French cuisine – e.g., frying frogs in the guise of chicken or ham made from mashed salmon – Jennifer J. Davis shows how cooks could not only follow Catholic dietary rules with skill and artistry, but also frugality. Farced onions, root vegetables, and

mushrooms were molded into the shape of fish. See, *Defining Culinary Authority: The Transformation of Cooking in France, 1650-1830* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013), 20-24. Patricia Roberts similarly discusses how nineteenth-century recipes for mock oysters and mock turtle were first developed in response to collapsing populations of real oysters and turtles, but endured because the recipes proved more economical. See, "In Praise of Mock Food," *Gastronomica* 3, no. 2 (2003): 17-21.

[50] *[Pharmaceutical and Cookery Recipes]*, ca. 1675, Folger MS V.a.21, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC, fol. 207.

[51] Hornyold Family, fol. 49.

[52] Hornyold Family, fols. 49-50.

[53] *[English Cookery and Medicine Book]*, ca. 1677-1711, Folger MS V.b.380, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC, fol. 264

[54] Dawson, fol. 14v.

[55] Abigail Rand, *Domestic Cookery*, Seventeenth century, Whitney Cookery Collection MS 7, Manuscript and Archives Division, New York Public Library, New York City, fols. 26r, 29r; Deborah Haddock, *Recipe Book of Mrs Deborah Haddock*, 1720, Western MS 7987, Wellcome Library, London, UK, fol. 34v.

[56] Haddock, fols. 26v, 27v.

[57] Lettis Vesey, *Cookery Book of Lettis Vesey*, ca. 1725, Folger MS W.b.456, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC, fols. 140r-141r.

[58] Brian Fagan, *Fish on Friday: Feasting, Fasting, and the Discovery of the New World* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 194-284.

[59] Richard Ellis, *The Empty Ocean: Plundering the World's Marine Life* (Washington: Island Press / Shearwater Books, 2003), 58-65; Mark Kurlansky, *Cod: A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World* (London: Vintage, 1999), 26-75; Peter E. Pope, *Fish into Wine: The Newfoundland Plantation in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012); and Edward M. Test, "The Tempest and the Newfoundland Cod Fishery," in *Global Traffic: Discourses and Practices of Trade In English Literature and Culture from 1550 to 1700*, eds., Barbara Sebek and Stephen Deng (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008): 201-220.

[60] Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker, "The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse," ed., [Coppélia Kahn, in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, eds., Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino \(Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 2007\), sc. 4, ll. 70-73.](#)

[61] Edward Williams, *Virgo triumphans, or, Virginia in generall* (London: Printed by Thomas Harper for John Stephenson, 1650), 2.

[62] John Josselyn, *An Account of Two Voyages to New-England* (London: Printed for Giles Widdows, 1674), 105, 205.

[63] Bolster, 36; William B. Leavenworth, "The Changing Landscape of Maritime Resources in Seventeenth-Century New England," *International Journal of Maritime History* 20, no. 1 (June 2008), 33. Samuel Hartlib, for one, was frustrated that colonists in New England had not yet learned to make sturgeon caviar nor pickled sturgeon fit to ship as "handsomely" as the Muscovites of the Volga in *Samuel Hartlib His Legacie* (London: Printed by H. Hills for Richard Wodenothe, 1651), 81.

[64] Bolster, 38.

[65] Bolster, 36-39.

[66] Boars, beaver, and wolves disappeared from Britain during the medieval period, but other subspecies survived elsewhere in Europe, inhibiting the conceptualization of extinction. The disappearance of a species from the planet is often a slow-motion disaster that, without a concept of planetarity and hypertaxonomy, escapes recognition as such. Extinction does not become intelligible until the emergence of global empire. The early nineteenth-century French naturalist George Cuvier could only develop his theory of extinction because he had the resources of Napoleon at his disposal, allowing him to study mammoth fossils from the Ohio territories and mastodon from Siberia. See Mark V. Barrow Jr., *Nature's Ghosts: Confronting Extinction from the Age of Jefferson to the Age of Ecology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 15-46; Ellis, *The Empty Ocean*, 7, 121-122; Richard Grusin, "Introduction," in *After Extinction*, ed., Richard Grusin (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2018), viii; Nicholas Mirzoeff, "It's Not the Anthropocene, It's the White Supremacy Scene; or, The Geological Color Line," in *After Extinction*, ed., Richard Grusin (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2018), 134; Newman, 31; Thom Van Dooren, *Flight Ways: Life and Loss at the Edge of Extinction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 2-7.

[67] Although turkey and the artificial sturgeon made thereof also results from European colonization and exploitation of North America, turkeys were not slaughtered and shipped across the Atlantic like fish. By the Restoration, turkey flocks had been well established in England for over a hundred years.

[68] Joanna Zylinska follows Catherine Keller's critique of the Anthropocene's "'apocalypse habit.'" This habit manifests itself in a 'wider matrix of unconscious tendencies' that shape finalist thinking, with its moralistic underpinnings, whereby moralism comes at the expense of the analysis of power relations on the ground." Pushing back against an Anthropocene "tragic worldview," Zylinska proposes instead "a feminist counterapocalypse that takes seriously the geopolitical unfoldings on our planet while also rethinking our relations *to* and

with it precisely as relations." In this framework, humanity is no longer a *homo deus* presiding over the world facing oblivion, but is fully entrenched as part of the world. See, *The End of Man: A Feminist Counterapocalypse* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018), 6-7, 53.

[69] Juno Salazar Parreñas, *Decolonizing Extinction: The Work of Care in Orangutan Rehabilitation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), 9.

[70] David L. Strayer, *The Hudson Primer: The Ecology of an Iconic River* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 163-164.

[71] "Sturgeon (European) – acipenser sturio," Marine Conservation Society, accessed October 13, 2019, <https://www.mcsuk.org/30species/sturgeon>.

[72] "European Sturgeon," International Union for the Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species, Accessed October 14, 2019, <http://www.iucnredlist.org>. Laurent Brosse, Catherine Taverny, and Mario Lepage discuss the surviving population of common sturgeon in "Habitat, Movements, and Feeding of Juvenile European Sturgeon (*Acipenser sturio*) in Gironde Estuary," in *Biology and Conservation of the European Sturgeon Acipenser sturio L. 1758*, eds., P. Williot, et al. (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 2011): 153-163. Many other species face culinary extinction, including other species of sturgeon such as the Caspian's beluga, as well as Chinese giant salamander, pangolin, European eel, Eastern lowland gorilla, and indri lemur. According to David Macdonald, culinary desires have placed 301 land mammals under the threat of extinction. In recent years, restoration ecologists in Germany and the Netherlands have attempted to reintroduce sturgeon to the river systems of Northern Europe. Since sturgeon do not reach sexual maturity for twelve to fourteen years, the success of these efforts remains to be seen. See, Dale Berning Sawa, "Deadly appetite: 10 animals we are eating into extinction," *The Guardian*, April 3, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/food/2019/apr/03/deadly-appetite-10-animals-we-are-eating-into-extinction>; "Saving the Sturgeon," Bundesamt für Naturschutz, accessed October 13, 2019, <https://www.bfn.de/en/activities/marine-nature-conservation/films/saving-the-sturgeon.html>; "Sturgeon.," ARK Natuurontwikelling, accessed September 11, 2022, <https://www.ark.eu/en/projects/sturgeon>

[73] Albala, 6.

[74] Elspeth Probyn, *Eating the Ocean* (Durham, NC: Duke University, 2016), 2.