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# IRISH CULINARY MANUSCRIPTS AND PRINTED COOKBOOKS: A DISCUSSION

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Irish culinary history is still at a relatively embryonic stage, despite growing interest in culinary history elsewhere in the world (Messer, Haber et al. 2000). Notwithstanding the work of Sexton (1998; 2005) and Mac Con Iomaire (2009f; 2010), the lack of a comprehensive authoritative study on the history of Irish cuisine has led to the pervasive, but erroneous, belief that Ireland lacks a distinctive cuisine or a tradition of public dining (Cotter 1999; Myers 2002). Absence of evidence does not constitute evidence of absence. Whereas Kelly (2000) has harnessed the law texts of the seventh and eighth centuries to write a comprehensive history of the early Irish farm and the food it produced, the Irish culinary archives of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, despite the seminal work of Clarkson and Crawford, and Cullen, remain relatively unexplored for the information that they may yield. In the Irish context, manuscript cookbooks are of particular importance when one considers Clear's (2000:68) observation, that 'because Ireland was an Anglophone country, most of the household and childcare advice books produced in Britain found their way into the country'. For the eighteenth, nineteenth and much of the twentieth centuries, manuscript cookbooks are the only authentic indigenous culinary voices available to the historian, still bearing in mind Allen's (1983) observation:

when we talk about an Irish identity in food, we have such a thing, but we must remember that we belong to a geographical and culinary group with Wales, England and

Scotland as all countries share their traditions with their next door neighbour.

Wheaton (2006) notes that cookbooks are ‘the exceptional written record of what is largely an oral tradition.’

This paper provides a brief overview of how the food culture of Ireland has changed since pre-Norman times. It also identifies the main influences and the catalysts for change, including the introduction of New World foods and beverages, and the influence of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy on dining habits. An overview of sources of Irish culinary history is provided, but the main thrust of the paper is to discuss the usefulness of Irish culinary manuscripts in discovering what was eaten in the big houses in Ireland and how that differed from similar houses in Great Britain and elsewhere.

The manuscript cookbooks, or receipt books, under discussion in this paper are those handwritten cookbooks that have passed down to the present from the period when printed cookbooks were also in circulation. This discussion is not intended to be of relevance to an understanding of the early manuscripts which went later into print. When manuscripts such as Platina’s *De Honestā Voluptate* and Apicius’ *De Re Coquinaria*, made the transition to print they became available for discussion and analysis in a way that is not available for oral traditions (Goody 1968; Mennell 1996). The culinary manuscripts under discussion here, however, have remained personal and unpublished. In a discussion of the Protestant ascendancy in Ireland, Barnard (2004:16) has remarked on how many have remained ‘if not anonymous, unconsidered because seemingly inconsiderable’. The authors of the books under consideration here are, in the main, from that class due to historical circumstance and have generally suffered the same fate. Bowen (1942:14) explains the relationship towards this class and their houses thus, ‘each of these houses, with its intense, centripetal life, is isolated by something very much more lasting than the physical fact of space: the isolation is innate; it is an affair of origin’.

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The academic fields of food studies, culinary history, and hospitality span many disciplines (Duran and MacDonald 2006:234). Therefore, an interdisciplinary approach is often beneficial. Primary sources include culinary manuscripts, household accounts, memoirs, travellers' reports, private correspondence, and artefacts such as old menus, photographs, paintings, delftware, silverware, and advertisements.

Lucas (1960:8–43) provides a detailed account of food eaten in Ireland before the arrival of the potato in the seventeenth century. Cullen (1981:140–192) provides the first broad discussion on Irish diet, hospitality and menu variety during the early modern period. Cullen (1992) compares various aspects of Irish diets – both rich and poor – and contrasts them with diets elsewhere in Europe. Probably the most descriptive accounts of the daily food habits of the upper classes come from the letters of Mrs Delany written from her various houses in Dublin, Down and London during many decades of the mid to late eighteenth century (Johnson 1925; Maxwell 1979a; Hayden 2000; Cahill 2005; Cahill 2007). Much has been written about the potato in Ireland and its effect on increasing population, decreasing diversity and impoverishing Irish cuisine to a rudimentary art (Connell 1962; Cullen 1981:141–2; Bourke 1993; Ó Gráda 1993; Salaman 2000; Ó Riordáin 2001; Mac Con Iomaire and Gallagher 2009). Indeed, a growing body of literature has appeared in recent years on the use of certain commodities in Irish cuisine and culture, including seafood (Wilkins 2004; Mac Con Iomaire 2006); the pig (Ní Chatháin 1980; Mac Con Iomaire 2003; Fitzgerald 2005; Mac Con Iomaire 2010); milk and butter (Lysaght 1994; Sexton 2003; Downey, Synott et al. 2006); eggs (Lysaght 2000; Lysaght 2003; Mac Con Iomaire and Cully 2007) and other meats (Sexton 1995; Mac Con Iomaire and Gallagher 2010).

Not all Irish cuisine centred on the potato, dairy and occasional pig meat. A parallel Anglo-Irish cuisine existed among the Protestant élite. Evidence of what was consumed in these wealthier households can be ascertained by the various account books used by social and

nutritional historians (Clarkson and Crawford 2001:34; Barnard 2004). One problem with household accounts is that they don't include foods such as fruit and vegetables, or dairy produce that was grown or produced on the mainly self-sufficient estates, or indeed food rents or presents such as venison or rabbits that supplemented the diet of the upper classes. Edgeworth (2008:14) in her novel *Castle Rackrent*, set in the late eighteenth century, mentions 'eggs-honey-butter-meal- fish-game, growse, and herrings, fresh and salt... young pigs... and the best of bacon and hams they could make up, with all young chickens in spring;' among the items the tenants brought as gifts to Sir Murtagh and his lady.

Other sources of evidence include the descriptions of visitors to Ireland and foreign residents, but as with all such sources, these need to be carefully considered since they can often contain prejudice or exaggeration (Maxwell 1979a; Sexton 1998). Barnard (1997) discusses how 'scrupulous observers told what they had seen, but saw what they had been told to expect'. Food and dining are also depicted in art. Both Laffan (2003) and Rooney (2006) provide pictorial evidence of what food was sold on the streets of Dublin in the mid-eighteenth century, and the various social establishments – taverns, clubs and inns – where food was publicly consumed. Guidebooks (McGregor 1821; Wright 1821; Black and Black 1895) and directories (Wilson's Directory 1793; Thom's Directory 1850; 1901; Hardiman and Kennedy 2000) also provide an invaluable insight into the development of commercial hospitality and food industry in Ireland.

#### Gaelic Hospitality

The medieval Irish were deeply committed to the practice of hospitality, which transcended social boundaries and endured for centuries (O' Sullivan 2004:12). The various legal rights to hospitality in Ireland included: 'the right of traveller to food and lodging, the right of a lord to be entertained by his vassals and the right of a king to billet his servants on the inhabitants of his

kingdom' (Simms 1978:68). The native Irish diet of cereal and milk-based products, augmented with pig meat, survived relatively unchanged from prehistoric times to the introduction of the potato, possibly in the late sixteenth century (Sexton 2005:232). The introduction of Christianity, development of towns by the Vikings, introduction of feudalism, better agricultural practices, and guilds by the Anglo-Normans, introduction of new crops by Tudor planters, all affected the quality and quantity of food production. By the late medieval period, a number of dietary systems were in place in Ireland, according to social rank, region and access to the market. The Black Death (1348) affected the English colonists more than the Gaelic Irish and resulted in redistribution of the land among the natives (Kelly 2001:14; Flanagan 2003:30). Henry VIII's reformation may be seen as the beginning of the end for Gaelic Ireland. The Elizabethan administration was the principal agency of the Anglicization of the country (Lennon and Gillespie 1997:56).

By the reign of Elizabeth I, Dublin was renowned for its taverns and ale-houses (Maxwell 1979:26). However, the Anglicization of eating habits did not take hold among the Gaelic Irish outside the capital until the sixteenth century, when new ingredients were introduced, most notably the potato (Sexton 2005:232). A recipe for leg of mutton 'roasted the Irish way' published in de Casteau (1604) suggests that sophisticated cooking techniques and imported luxury ingredients were employed in Ireland by the late medieval period. The eating habits of both the English upper classes, and subsequently the new Anglo-Irish upper classes were influenced by their Continental neighbours. The first two Stuart kings emulated Spanish, French and Italian fashions and ideas, including cooking (Spencer 2004:134). The battle of the Boyne (1690) marked the beginning of the reign of a powerful ascendancy which controlled Irish affairs in England's interest until the Act of Union in 1800 which abolished the separate Irish parliament and established direct rule from Westminster. Many of the ascendancy families

led indulgent hedonistic lifestyles, building large, richly furnished houses with ornate gardens, and life, for their women in particular, was 'a constant round of pleasure' (Robins 2001:6). The Anglo-Irish ascendancy adopted some of the 'extraordinary hospitality' that had been part of the Gaelic tradition, but the conspicuous consumption was much more sophisticated, emulating eating patterns in London and Paris. Barnard (1997:141) points out that the recently arrived and the survivors of the older orders:

rebutted the slurs that they were sunk into boorish primitiveness or that they had gone native. Instead they promoted themselves as the last custodians of the famed hospitality of Old England. Through their largesse, gentlemen of variegated pedigree, Old Irish, Old and New English, asserted their gentility and rebutted the parsimony of the moderns who affected to be, but were not truly gentlemen.

#### ARISTOCRATIC HOSPITALITY

An Anglo-Irish gentry class emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with a rich and varied cuisine, influenced by the professional French chefs who had become a fashionable addition to their kitchens. Keeping a male cook was the height of sophistication, but a French cook carried extra cachet (Sexton 1998a:12; Barnard 2004:300; Cahill 2005:68). Lady Essex was the first vicereine to entertain as a great hostess. James, Duke of Ormond, who succeeded Lord Essex (1672–1677) as viceroy, is credited with creating a brilliant court by the time he left office in 1685 and setting patterns of exclusivity and hospitality that were carried on by his successors. The Irish court at Dublin Castle followed the rituals and extravagances of the London court of St James's with balls, banquets, drawing-rooms, levées and elaborate festivities celebrating royal birthdays and other anniversaries (Robins 2001:7).

Profuse, even excessive, hospitality was the first distinctive quality credited to the Protestant élite in Ireland in the mid-

eighteenth century, the second being philanthropy (Barnard 1999: 66). Maxwell (1940:24) remarks on the 'extraordinary hospitality' of the Irish gentry and 'the conviviality of their manners' as the first thing to strike an English traveller in eighteenth-century Ireland. Assuming thirty per cent of upper-class incomes went on food and drink, Clarkson (1999:101-2) calculated a workforce of 168,000 brewers, butchers, bakers, millers, cooks, and dealers dedicated to the service of feeding the upper classes in 1770. Simms (1978:94-5) proposes that the 'riotous hospitality' of the eighteenth-century Anglo-Irish was not imported from England, where in 1752 Henry Fielding reported 'acquaintance is of almost as slow growth as an oak'. Simms concludes that the narratives of eighteenth-century English travellers in Ireland are closer to the Stanihurst (1584:33) account of the Gaelic Irish chieftains:

They have fixed manors and habitations, which are daily filled with a great throng of guests. They are without doubt the most hospitable of men, nor could you please them more in anything than by frequently visiting their houses willingly of your own accord, or claiming an invitation from them.

Clarkson and Crawford (2001:35, 53), however, suggest that eating patterns among the upper classes in both Ireland and England had much in common – both high in meat consumption – and that the drunken reputation enjoyed by the eighteenth-century Irish gentry was not always deserved. The short viceroyalty of the Earl of Chesterfield in 1745 is said to have impacted on the manners and civility of Irish society more than any of his predecessors. The 'pernicious and beastly fashion of drinking' was discouraged, duels declined in number and both politeness and literature progressed (Robins 2001:27-8). The second half of the century witnessed a relentless pursuit of style and cultivation of elegance and sophistication among Anglo-Irish society, which considered itself equal to the wider brotherhood of European aristocracy. At a court ball in London in 1760, Lady Sarah Lennox told the Prince of Wales



that the court balls in Dublin were far more enjoyable and frequent than those of St James's (Robins 2001:31–3). Following the Act of Union 1800, most of the aristocracy left for London or the provinces. The viceregal court at Dublin Castle continued to entertain lavishly, albeit with fewer aristocrats in attendance. Lady Morgan, a contemporary and acquaintance of Carême's, was considered 'the gayest among the gay in Lady Anglesey's Court' (Mennell 1996:147; Robins 2001:113). Court life became more formal following Victoria's accession in 1837, but throughout the nineteenth century successive lord lieutenants employed leading French or French-trained chefs whose *haute cuisine* was emulated by the upper and middle classes (Anon 1896b; Anon 1896c; Robins 2001:116). Many of these chefs and other senior servants went on to open their own commercial hospitality establishments (Mac Con Iomaire 2009a).

#### CULINARY MANUSCRIPTS VERSUS PRINTED BOOKS

A fundamental difference exists between printed and manuscript cookbooks in their relationship to the public and private domain. Printed cookbooks draw oxygen from the very fact of being public. Manuscript cookbooks are of their very essence intimate, relatively unedited, and written with an eye to private circulation. Folch (2008) observes that 'cookbooks assume a literate population with sufficient discretionary income to invest in texts that commodify knowledge'. This process of commoditization takes knowledge from the private to the public sphere. There exists a subset of cookbooks that have straddled this divide, notable among these being Mrs Rundell's *A New System of Domestic Cookery* (1806), which brought to the public domain her distillation of a lifetime of domestic experience, originally intended for her daughters alone. Rundell's book was reprinted regularly during the century with the final edition printed in 1893, when Mrs Beeton had been enormously popular for over thirty years.

Culinary manuscripts follow closely the diurnal and annual tasks of the household. In them one finds recipes for cures and

restoratives, recipes for cleansing products for the house and the body, as well as the expected recipes for preserving and cooking all manner of food. Just as contemporary published texts, the recipes in the manuscripts serve as a reminder that the production of food in a pre-industrialized world was long and laborious (White 2001). Sherman (2004) observes how domestic manuscripts have an organic capacity to evolve, becoming personalized through corrections and renovations, as evidenced by the many different styles of handwriting they often contain. Sherman (2004:121) argues that this continual revision is 'empowering, confirming the reader/writer's pedagogic relation to the texts through acts that tailor it to her needs'. The relationship of the author and the printed text in a published cookbook is such that to amend or annotate is a transgressive act, its 'graphic uniformity... discourages spontaneous performance', whereas manuscripts embody the ability to be serially personalized.

Clarkson and Crawford (2001) have identified the importance of sources such as manuscript cookbooks in their analysis of food and nutrition in Ireland. Noting that much of the commentary surrounding social history in Ireland has tended to focus on famine rather than feasting, they have endeavoured to redress the balance by 'writing a social history of Ireland where the food is left in and not left out'. Vickery (2009) has remarked on the ability of the history of home to 'hide in plain sight'; Clarkson and Crawford have anticipated Vickery by endeavouring to explore the 'contents of the basement and the kitchen', while being specific in their statement that their work is not a history of cooking in Ireland. Highlighting the economic significance of choices made, the authors argue for the vitality of that 'intermediate group who ate, not lavishly but well'. Cullen (1981) appears to agree with Clarkson and Crawford, observing how this group are ignored in discussion surrounding Ireland's culinary heritage with 'the assumption that bulk of the population had been degraded to the lowest social level' (Cullen 1981:146).

Culinary manuscripts are primary sources for exploring the role of hospitality and Irish cultural values counterpoised against English rules of decorum. Thomas (2009:115) observes that during the seventeenth century in England, 'there was a shift away from old-style rural, open house hospitality towards a more private and (for the year) urban form of living'. Historians have argued that social differences are expressed by the way and type of food we consume (Wheaton 1983; Mennell 1996; Sutton 2001; Thomas 2009). The question arises as to whether the manuscripts rebut the frequently critical commentary about Irish culinary standards and to what extent the commentary is founded on fact or is an expression of cultural difference.

As repositories of knowledge of literacy levels and economic realities, the manuscripts educate regarding the existence or non-existence of cultural differences between the upper and middling classes in Ireland and England. Mitchell (2001) and Gold (2007) have both argued successfully for the legitimacy of regarding printed cookbooks as valid socio-historic and cultural documents, and Gold has traced the connection between literacy levels and the Protestant tradition through cookbooks. This connection merits discussion in the context of the Protestant ascendancy.

#### WHEATON'S FRAMEWORK FOR READING HISTORIC COOKBOOKS

Wheaton (2006) describes cookbooks as 'magician's hats' in their ability to reveal much more than they seem to contain. She suggests that when cookbooks are read carefully with due effort in understanding them as cultural artefacts they are 'rewarding, surprising and illuminating.' Cashman (2009) applied Wheaton's framework for studying cookbooks to printed cookbooks in Ireland. This framework recognizes the logistic difficulty in absorbing information from cookbooks:

One may read a single old cookbook and find it immensely entertaining. One may read two and begin to find intriguing

similarities and differences. When the third cookbook is read, one's mind begins to blur, and one begins to sense the need for some sort of method in approaching these documents' (Wheaton 2006).

Wheaton developed such a framework which she teaches in workshops to culinary historians. She breaks down the culinary text into five different groupings to wit, ingredients, equipment or facilities, the meal, the book and finally the world view. By studying the text under these headings it is possible to analyse the book in a structured manner. Wheaton (2006) explicitly placed her framework within the genre of 'cookbook writing', with the emphasis on the printed text in her seminars. It is proposed that a study of the Irish manuscript cookbooks would explore whether Wheaton's framework may be successfully applied outside the context of printed texts. Manuscripts, of their nature, tend not to be as ordered as printed works, often less technical, and usually lacking frontispieces, title pages, and illustrations. On the other hand they are rich in personal detail, amendments and an interactive quality that is generally lacking in cookbooks, unless the owner has added the patina of personal comment in the margins. Manuscripts will often provide a perspective on personal and social relationships, no less valid for being microscopic in nature.

#### THE MANUSCRIPT COOKBOOK COLLECTION IN THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF IRELAND

The National Library of Ireland is in possession of several manuscript cookbooks along with a diverse amount of material of value in reconstructing Ireland's culinary history. One of the earliest documents is dated 1690 and titled Smythe of Barbavilla (MS List No. 120, 41,603/2). The Smyth family (the 'e' was added in 1810) settled in Ireland in c. 1630 in counties Down and Antrim. The founder was the Rt Rev William Smyth (1638–1699), successively dean of Dromore, bishop of Killala, bishop of Raphoe and bishop

of Kilmore. In 1670, two years before his marriage to Mary Povey, he purchased what became the Barbavilla estate in Collinstown, Co. Westmeath (Malcomson 2006). Barnard (2004) also mentions the Povey family in the context of the gradual decline of fortune and status that the Irish ascendancy class often embodied. MS 41,603/2/1-2 has two recipe books, MS 41,603/3-6; c. 1690-1750 is a collection of four folders of recipes and prescriptions. MS 41, 603/2 bears the name 'Eliz. Hughes' on the cover. Physically it is small, similar to a copybook, with evidence on the cover of words written as part of a spelling lesson. The penmanship is excellent. Spelling variants are interesting, examples being renit for rennet, silly bub for syllabub and oring for orange. None of these alone are evidence of oral dictation of the recipes, however, taken with the physical nature of the book and the way the recipes read, it is reasonable to assume that the recipes were in some way being dictated to a less experienced Eliz. Hughes. Two examples will serve as illustration, her recipes for Trifell (sic) and Syllabub:

#### How to make a Trifell

Let your milk be as warm as the milk from the cow. Then put a spoonful or half a spoonful according as your rennit is in goodness, then put sack and oring flower water as much as you like then put it in your trifell dish

#### How to make a Silly bub

Take your wine or ale and put it in your pott; and putt a little nutt meg and almost a spoon full of vinegar and sweeten it as much as you please let your milk be warm then pour it in as high as you can without being spilt

The manuscript contains a most unusual recipe for concealment, 'How to have a letter within a egg', advising 'steep your egg in good vinegar for the space of 12 hours then cut it down with a thin knife and put your letter in then put it no more in vinegar but in water and it will be as hard as ever'. Recipes are variously attributed

to Mary Hussey and Mrs Asty, and Lady Cugnac is credited with the recipe for making red lip salve. The Smythe of Barbavilla collection allows the reader several glimpses into day-to-day life as experienced by the writer, with all its social obligations and interruptions; a charming example of this being the reference in a letter with a recipe for Quince marmalade to the failure to send it earlier as the writer 'was called to a labour'.

One of the most comprehensive of the manuscripts consulted in the National Library is that entitled *Mrs. A.W. Baker's Cookery Book, Vol 1*, dated 1810. Nevin (1979:6) describes buying the book (one of two notebooks, the other being an inventory notebook) from a Dublin bookseller and sets out how 'this simple household notebook allows us to view from the inside the life of a well-to-do family of the Irish country gentry'. The Bakers lived in Ballaghtobin, a townland in the barony of Kells, county Kilkenny. Nevin (1979) observes of the Bakers that 'they were no doubt typical of many Anglo-Irish families who were content to live on their estates. Since they never held high office nor sent a member to Parliament references to them in either printed or manuscript sources are few.' In her reconstruction of the Baker household through an examination of its material culture, Nevin prefigures the later work of historians such as Barnard (2004) and Dooley (2001). Mrs Baker regularly cites the pedigree of the recipe given, for example, to her grandmother, to Lady Tyrone, to 'Mrs. Eyre, who lived with old Mr. Evans, who gave it to my grandmother'. Her instructions for making leavened bread are extensive, from making the leaven through to the baking, 'the dough must be neither (illegible), nor opened on the sides with a knife as is the custom in Ireland. I know that 60zs of leaven are not (sic) more then sufficient for a quart of flour. If you are in a hurry or the weather is cold you will require more.' By remarking that the custom in Ireland is not to be followed, the author hints at the complexity of the relationship of the Anglo-Irish to their place of residence. Nevin (1979) traces through the two books the changing patterns of living, from the earliest entry of

1808 in the inventory, to the last entry in 1838. The life moves from one based on home and the surrounding countryside to one where the circle is widening out, both socially and commercially. Nevin notes that while there were two ladies answering to the name of Mrs A.W. Baker living at Ballaghtobin in 1808, the likelihood is that the entries were penned by Charity Baker, born Charity Chaloner of Kingscourt, county Meath. Charity's recipes and accounts are meticulous, precise but never dull, her command of language and figures thorough and amusing, 'there are 18 cut tumblers and 3 small ones – Red head broke one of the large ones'. Charity Baker died in 1839, 'as a result of a tragic accident at Spa in Belgium and her body was embalmed and brought home to lie within a stone's throw of her stylish and elegant home' (Nevin 1979:17).

Other collections in the National Library include the medical and recipe books of the Pope family of Waterford (MS 34, 932/1–3, 1823 to 1829), the recipes and remedies of Marianne Armstrong of Kiltoom Glebe (MS 27,969, dated 1849), the receipt book of Anna Irvine of Rosebank, MS 19729 (an eighteenth-century volume devoted in large part to the work of housekeeping) and three menu books, part of the Headford papers (MS 25,370, dated 1953).

There also exists a wealth of culinary detail, including recipes, in other collections in the National Library. While these documents are not recipe books of themselves, they are of enormous importance in reconstructing an accurate picture of Irish culinary heritage and the discussion surrounding it. An example of this is in the Westport Collection, MS 40,911/5(1), which *inter alia* contains a recipe for the elixir of long life. Addressed to Mrs Howe, it begins, 'this is the recipe for the elixir of long life taken from the French recipe Mrs. Pitt brought from France in 1771'. Similarly, the O'Hara of Annaghmore Papers (MS List No. 66, 36, 375/1/2/3), dated *c.* 1794, includes a list of the game and wildfowl killed in the 1754 season, the O'Hara's residence being in the Collooney area of county Sligo, an area to this day noted for its quality of wildfowl shooting. The papers contain receipts for asthma and strengthening

<i>Date</i>	<i>England</i>	<i>America</i>	<i>Ireland</i>
1690			MS 41,603/2/ (Smythe)
1692(?)	<i>The Whole body of cook- ery dissected</i> / Rabisha		
1730	<i>The complete practical Cook</i> / Carter		
1747	<i>The Art of Cookery</i> / Glasse		
1755	<i>A New and easy method of cookery</i> / Cleland		
1759	<i>A Complete System of Cookery</i> / Verrall		
1760	<i>The British Housewife</i> / Bradley		
1764	<i>English Housewifery</i> / Moxton		
1769	<i>The English housekeeper</i> / Raffald		
1788	<i>Honours of the Table</i> / Trussler		
1794			MS36, 375(O'Hara) MS19729
1796		<i>American Cookery</i> / Simmons	
1810			MS34952 (Baker)
1823/90			MS34932 (Pope)

*Timeline of Irish manuscripts with English and American cookbooks.*



jellies, hydrophobia and the bite of a mad dog, all in line with the medical tradition of early receipt books and the requirements of self-sufficiency. There are also measurements by money as well as weight, for example 'three pennysworth of isinglass' and again the references to the lineage of a recipe, a recipe for port being ascribed to 'Lord Pembroke's receipt book'.

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This paper has briefly outlined how the food culture of Ireland changed from pre-Norman times. It has also charted the growth of research in the field of culinary history in Ireland but suggests that a comprehensive authoritative study is long overdue. Different sources of evidence have been briefly discussed but the main thrust of the paper was to promote the use of Irish culinary manuscripts as primary sources to improve our understanding of the diet and dining habits of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy class and the growing Catholic bourgeoisie that grew steadily after the Act of Union. This paper has described how culinary manuscripts differ in several respects from the printed cookbook. Both contain recipes, but the differences and distinctions between the commercial and public domain of the printed cookbook and that of the private world of the manuscript deserves exploration. Added to this is the inherent value of studying these manuscripts as primary sources for a real discussion of Ireland's culinary history and the roles played in it by the different classes. Of particular interest here is an understanding of the importance of the ascendancy class in that discussion. It is suggested that for much of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, manuscript cookbooks are the only authentic indigenous culinary voices available to the historian. The National Library of Ireland has several collections that are important in this regard. However the paper draws attention to the dearth of specific archival work carried out as regards the existence of private culinary manuscripts in the landed estates of Ireland. It is proposed that a detailed cataloguing of the culinary manuscripts in the possession

of the National Library of Ireland and in private ownership on the landed estates would be extremely beneficial for future scholars of Ireland's culinary heritage.

The validity of studying cookbooks as social and historical documents has been established (Mitchell 2001; Folch 2008). It is suggested that much may be learned from the academic application of Wheaton's framework to manuscript cookbooks. These manuscripts allow access to the intimacies of private life, a part of Irish life that is appropriate to study to counterbalance our understanding of the past. These culinary manuscripts do well to raise their voices above the more received discourse of revolution and rebellion. We propose it is equally important to research the feasts as well as the famines.

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