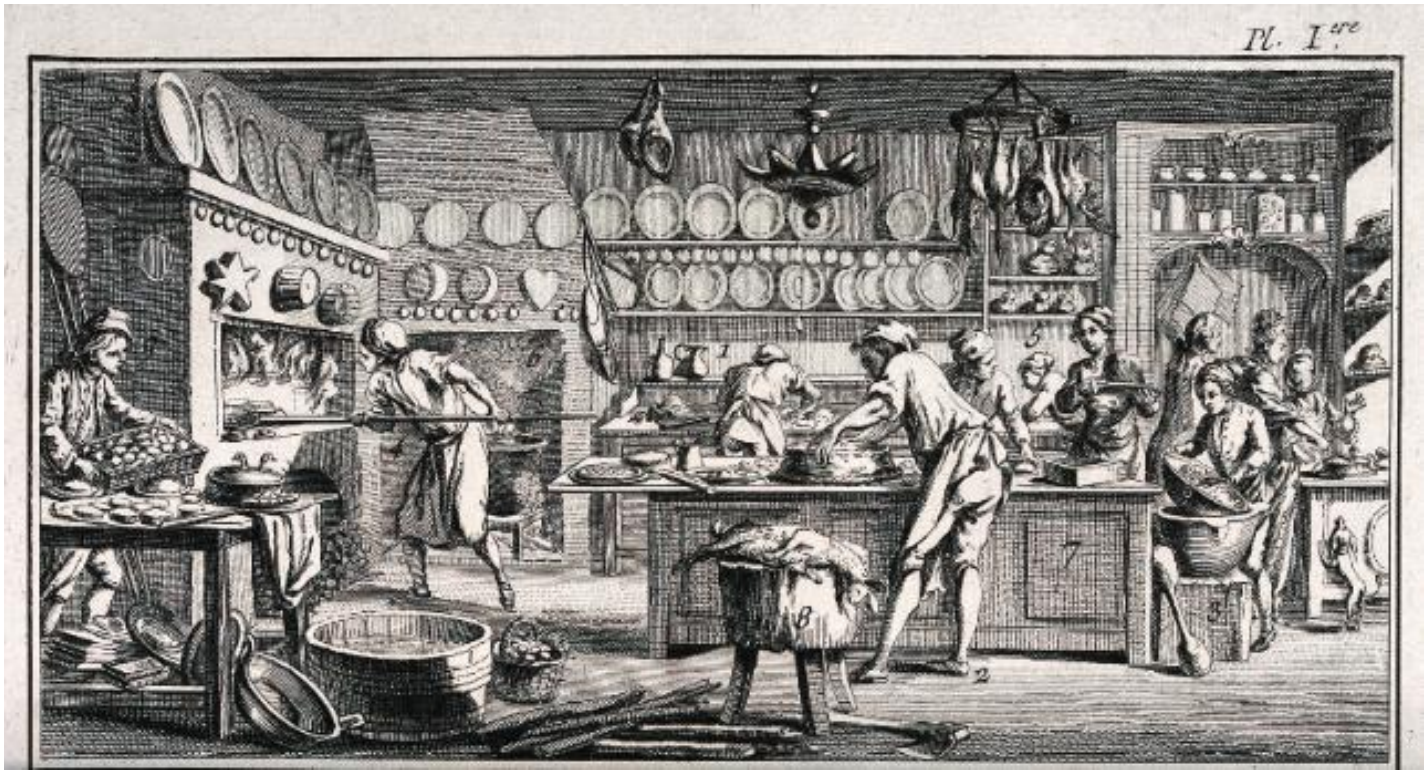
Pastry as a Craft in England from

1500 CE to 1900 CE



By: Merel Nijsse

“Many people are busy in the baker’s kitchen preparing cakes, pastries, pies and bread,” N.D., Wellcome Collection 31301i. Engraving by Bernard. Wellcome Collection. Public Domain Mark. Plate from Denis Diderot, Jean-Baptiste le Rond d’Alembert (eds.): Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers (Paris 1763).

Title: Pastry as a Craft in England from 1500 CE to 1900 CE

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Abstract

This thesis investigates pastry making in England from 1500 to 1900 CE as a skilled craft. It does this because much of the earlier research on food has been focused on diet instead of the knowledge and skills it takes to create these luxury goods. The research involves a literary study on the history of pastry and baking in this period and employs four case studies centered around different case studies: Marchpane, Shrewsbury Cakes, Fine Cakes, and a Creamed Apple Tart. These historical recipes were reconstructed and tested, with the analyses informed by my experience working as a pastry chef.

Key findings reveal that historical recipes often contain significant implied knowledge, the author has the knowledge and embodied skills related to ingredient properties and heat management and assumes that the reader has that as well. The study shows the evolution of how the pastry craftsman shared and acquired knowledge. This ranged from pastry guilds and apprenticeships to the personal recording of recipes and the later booming business of printed cookery books. The change in knowledge transmission is reflected in the recipes themselves which transformed from running sentences with little technical explanation to highly structured, explicit instructions for novices.

The thesis concludes that pastry making embodies a complex craft system defined by material awareness, sensory engagement, and the transmission of skill, with recipe development providing a clear record of its transformation over 400 years.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This research aims to study cooking and specifically baking as a craft. Baking and pastry making involve a great deal of skill. Food practices are often overlooked as a "craft" in archaeological research. The focus lies on things like pottery or metalworking, which produce objects through which the skill is studied, but social identity is often expressed in the *action* of crafting and not just the objects themselves (Costin, 1988). Food practices are more often being looked at in terms of storage and mere sustenance (Elliot, 2019). This can be a narrow perspective to take within archaeology as it discounts the skills involved in pastry making as well as the evolution of knowledge in this area.

The materiality of food is important, the ingredients are a baker's materials with which they engage with, depending on their senses and using both explicit and embodied knowledge. This reflects significant knowledge systems and embodies complex cultural meanings and social distinctions. Techniques are often passed down informally and leaving minimal traces, especially in contexts where written records (for example recipes) are lacking. However, studying pastry allows archaeologists to explore skill, sensory engagement and knowledge. This can serve as a new perspective within archaeology, as it goes beyond the preparation of food as a necessity for survival but shifts towards the production of luxury goods. Pastry often requires more heavily processed ingredients, costing more time and money, commodities which not everyone can easily afford. As a result, pastry making is not based on rationality or efficiency but rather about social identities, status and taste within different communities (Borsato, 2023, p. 11; Mintz, 1985). It's use of refined ingredients such as sugar and chocolate leads back to developments in agriculture, trade routes and technologies.

Prior archaeological research on food is broad. Studies have been done on the food-related artefacts such as grinding stones and storage units, others have focused on diet or the social and economic dynamics of specific foods. Herbert and Walkden (2023) treated pastry and baked goods as meaningful material-culture objects, showing how pies and pastry functioned as preservative technologies, globalized luxury foods, and even memento mori within early modern British and Atlantic contexts. Historical work on pastry guilds, apprenticeships, and institutional regulation documents baking/pâtisserie as an organised craft with formalized training, mastery tests, and strong social rules from medieval through modern France (Charabot, 1904). Studies of modern production and consumption (e.g., cooperatives like Vooruit) trace how bakery and pâtisserie moved from elite to mass consumption through technical innovations, marketing, price policy, and organizational

change, showing social and economic transformations of baking practices in the nineteenth to early twentieth centuries (Scholliers, 2023).

1.1 Research questions

The aim of this research is to look at pastry production as a form of craft, specifically between 1500 CE and 1900 CE in England. Therefore, the main research question is as follows: what can recipes and their development between 1500 and 1900 say about pastry making as a form of craft production? The question is purposefully quite broad to allow for the multiple dimensions of "craft" such as the skill, knowledge and practice to be explored. In order to further support the main question, it is also accompanied by the sub-question: how were pastry-bakers and pastry-baking viewed by English society between 1500 and 1900?

1.2 Research approach

The primary materials used in this study are written texts: miscellaneous writings about food, historical cookbooks or recipe collections, and previous literature on pâtisserie, and craft theory. Furthermore, I will be using my own work experience as a professional pastry chef to aid my analyses and discussion.

The methodology for this thesis consists of two parts, part one will be literary research to come to a contextual and comparative analysis of pastry making throughout time and as a craft. Baking practices will be examined across England starting around 1500 CE up and until 1900 CE to identify variation is skill, access and meaning. Secondly, recipes from historical cookbooks will be used as case studies, recreated and critically analysed to help support the research questions.

1.3 Thesis outline

Following this introduction, chapter two will introduce the theoretical background for this study. This will include the history of pastry in England from 1500 – 1900 CE, as well as the theoretical concepts on craft theory that I will be using. These are especially important for the analysis and discussion of my case studies. In chapter three, I will explain the methodology used and how the case studies were tackled. These case studies, each recipe texts from a different period, will then be described and analysed in chapter 4. Next, in chapter 5, the results of these case studies will be compared,

interpreted, ending with a short discussion on possible limitations and future research. Lastly, chapter 6 concludes this thesis with a summary and answer to the main research question. I will reflect on this thesis and propose ideas for future research.

Chapter 2: Background

2.1 Historical background

Depending on the reigning monarch at the time, the religious situation in England shifted, and with it, its culinary tastes. While Catholic England enjoyed continental aesthetics, the Puritanical spirit favoured more simple and native tastes (Flandrin et al., 2013, p.152). Around the year 1545 recipes for fruit tarts and other pies with edible crusts start to appear in texts, as opposed to the earlier medieval ones (Flandrin et al., 2013, p.151).

In many of the first printed cookbooks, religion played a significant role. Specific recipes and dinner menus would revolve around fasting, with recipes often including multiple variations on a dish and examples of ingredients swaps to use during fasting. Many cookbooks also not only included recipes for food, but also recipes for; distilling and preserving, dyeing cloth, curing ailments and the general virtues a housewife should have. Pastry making was considered one of the most proper skills for a woman to achieve in the seventeenth century (Pennell, 2016, p.79). As such, many good housewives kept their own recipe books, in which they noted their culinary experiments and reworked previous recipes (Werrett, 2023). Many of these manuscripts were also printed for and by different people, with no distinct author being clear. Looking at multiple different archives for example, 'The Queens Closet opend' has many variations, each printed for different people in different years

The constitutional monarchy in England during the end of the 17th century meant dining traditions tied closely to the stately manor and its produce, developed. This was reflected in cookbooks by the simpler ingredients and procedures, and overall, more traditional dishes. Many cookbooks addressed the middle-class, something that differs to other European cookbooks at the time (Flandrin et al., 2013, p.153). This is in correlation to the domestic kitchen seeing a move from a wood-burning kitchen hearth to coal in the seventeenth and eighteenth century and from an open hearth to a closed one in the early nineteenth century (Pennell, 2016, p.61). Designs for domestic ovens were amongst the most frequently submitted patents in the 1780's (Pennell, 2016, p.65). This change in hearth technologies meant different types of baking became more apparent in middle and lower-class households.

The late seventeenth century also came with the widening availability of sugar and ready-milled flour, which according to Pennell (2016), lead Britain to have experienced something of a 'baking bonanza'. This can be seen in the recipe books printed during this time, as around 10 percent of the recipes in Hannah Wolley's: A Queen-like Closet and E. Smith's: The Compleat Housewife are for cakes, biscuits

and breads (Pennell, 2016, p.65). Another 19 percent of Wooley's recipes were for pastry dishes and tarts alike. These books were very popular and intended for the home-baker.

Important to note is that these recipe texts did not explicitly tell a reader *how* to cook with coal, which may have been due to the printed recipes largely came from London, where coal was already in general use before the rest of England, and because the management of the cooking fire was deemed a skill you ought to already have before consulting recipes. Housewives and their servants were meant to have acquired this knowledge through observation and practice with trial and error.

Their kitchen required plenty of knowledge: on the technical, chemical and ergonomic and of course culinary. The amount of practice and understanding of the material is wat leads to the hard-won embodied expertise, where a person knows how to cook something 'til it is done' (Pennell, S., 2016).

The kitchen in general can be thought of not only as a space to produce dishes, but also as a laboratory, where recipes and equipment were constantly trialled and perfected by practice and increasing knowledge (Werret, 2023). From the 19th century onwards, kitchen clocks and watches became increasingly common, signalling the importance of applied literacy and numeracy in the working household (Pennell, 2016, p.98). Alongside this change, there was an increasing standardisation for weight and volumetric measurements. This can also be seen in recipe texts where the intuitive elements are slowly replaced with explicit quantities and measurements. (Pennell, 2016, p.98).

2.2 Theoretical framework

Craft and Skill

Historically, a craft or trade was strictly defined by the statutes of a professional guild or community. Attaining the status of Master (Maîtrise) required an apprenticeship of three to five years, becoming a journeyman and culminating in the execution of a professional test or masterpiece (chef-d'œuvre) to prove ability (Charabot, 1904). These craft guilds oversaw the education and certification of new members to uphold the standards and quality of the profession (Groot & Schalk, 2022).

In French pâtisserie, for example, becoming a master in 1406 required the daily production of 500 oublies, 300 supplications, and 200 esterets. High-level culinary arts were seen as requiring greater intellect and instruction, setting them above common trades that relied only on physical force and routine. However, by the mid-19th century, French police declared pastry making a "free industry" open to anyone who wished to practice it (Charabot, 1904). Charabot treats craftsmanship as

something where precision, aesthetic and material knowledge come together. Since Charabot's published work other authors have had other definitions.

Adamson (2010, p. 2) defines craft as: “the application of skill and material-based knowledge to relatively small-scale production,” whereas Kurlinkus (2014) separates craft into, craft as crafting, craft as a product and craft as a set of rights.

David Pye (1995), only separates craft into two types of craftmanship: one is the ‘Workmanship of certainty’, where the work is predictable and often mechanized or standardized, which is similar to Kurlinkus’ second definition and in contradiction to Adamson’s definition, or the ‘workmanship of risk’ where the work depends on the attention and skills of the maker. The latter involves tactile feedback, which means that the crafters product is constantly at risk of failing, and is similar to how Charabot treats pastry making. Pye favours the second definition and emphasizes that craftsmanship is based on the process of making and not purely the result, supporting Kurlinkus's first definition. He also states that knowledge is ‘baked in’ to the series of operations used to make a product and that specific knowledge of materials used is necessary to be a craftsman (Pye, 1995). This is corroborated by Rissatti (2007) who emphasizes craft as a practice where material, technique, function and expression come together, focussed on the making and not the result.

Sennet's (2008) definition of craft is that it is founded on skill developed to a high degree, which aligns with Pyes second definition, specifically as both authors emphasize that craftsmen have material awareness and have engagement with physical substances. Sennet's definition varies slightly as he further emphasizes that craftsmen are motivated by curiosity about the material at hand and the desire to do something well, concretely, for its own sake. Simply having a passion for the making (Sennett, 2008 and Pye, 1995).

Contrary to Pyes ‘workmanship of risk’ and more similar to his ’workmanship of certainty’, Yanagi Soetsu argues in favour of craft being a product, they argue that craft is the ability to enter a state of ‘no mindedness’, in which the crafter can produce massive amounts of the exact same thing without thinking about it due to their repeated practice and thus improved technique and skill (Kurlinkus, 2014)

While the exact definition of craft varies throughout the literature, they all have aspects in common. Most notably is that the definition requires that a craftsman is skilled in the making of something, and most of them also argue that the craftsman has material awareness. Unlike other crafts, such as pottery and metal work, pastries do not leave physical objects behind, they do however still result in a product, all be it for a shorter amount of time. Moreover, it produces such numerous different

products made from such a large amount of differing ‘materials’ or ingredients, using Soetsu’s definition is not applicable.

I mostly align with Sennet’s definition, Pye’s second definition and Rissati’s view on expression, and thus in this paper I will define craft as: ‘’Craft is the skilled practice of making, in which repeated training and experience allow the maker to control materials and techniques to produce consistent, high-quality results. It requires material awareness, precision, and embodied knowledge developed through practice rather than abstract instruction alone’’.

If my definition of craft leans so heavily on the craftsman being skilled, how is this skill achieved? In a lot of workshops, knowledge is often passed down by ‘showing’ rather than ‘telling’. The master shows the proper way to do something through action and the apprentice is meant to imitate this directly (Sennet, 2008). This, however, can also fail as a pupil might not know what exactly the key movement was. For the master the movement has become intrinsic. If one is not in a workshop however, we need language to convey our knowledge. But language struggles with depicting physical action, there is a gap between instructive language and the body. The verbs in a recipe such as ‘sever’, ‘pull’, ‘loosen’ name acts rather than explain the process of acting. If you ‘write what you know’ it is easy to overlook important things that you take for granted. Not every person understands the same references, this is tacit knowledge, knowledge that has become so self-evident and habitual that is seems just natural and is thus difficult to put into words (Sennett, 2008). A good example of this is when an early eighteenth-century recipe calls for ‘as much will lye on a sixpence’, or to ‘take a piece the size of a large walnut’ (Havard, 2022). This way of phrasing is only useful if the person has held and or seen the reference in their daily lives many times and as such these references can quickly become too contemporary and lead to dead denotation (Sennett, 2008). Lastly, Bamforth & Finlay (2008) stress that skill is the active engagement in action, but also that it is changed through practice and knowledge gained through experience, we can learn to become more skilled.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The methodology of this thesis is the use of four case studies. Each case study is on a pastry recipe from England between the 1500 and 1900. First each recipe text will be analysed on the words used to instruct and its layout, as well as the background of that recipe explained, such as the author, time period and the intended audience. After this, I will reconstruct the recipe.

To get the broadest representation of the pastry craft in England, each recipe is from a different recipe book and was published around a century apart. Recipes were chosen based on a few criteria, some of which were important for the research questions, others which were mainly practical constraints on my part.

The first important aspect I considered is that I wanted to analyse recipes that were included in recipe books that were generally popular at the time. This could mean they were in print for a long time or had several re-writes and editions. The next important aspect was that the recipes had to be 'sweet' as this thesis focuses on the sweet pastry craft. The earliest recipe books I consulted (up until around 1550) included very few pastry dishes, and many of the pies and tarts made were savoury meat dishes. The sweet dishes that were mentioned were often fruit marmalades, jellies or preserves. These recipes, however, were written as instructions for preserving, and I therefore did not want to include them.

A third aspect I considered when choosing recipes was that the recipes needed to include several different techniques. This way, I could uncover even more about the sensuous and physical elements that would have also taken place in the past. For example, the different ways of incorporating ingredients such as whisking, folding or kneading but also different baking techniques.

Next, I also wanted to recreate recipes I recognized but did not know by heart. The first recipe in my case studies, for example, is that of 'marchepane', which we now know as marzipan. I know from experience how modern marzipan is made and what it is supposed to feel and taste like, however the recipe for this one used a couple extra ingredients that are uncommon for marzipan today. This made it an interesting case study to see where craftsmanship fits in and whether and in what measure intrinsic knowledge is needed.

Another constraint I laid on when choosing a recipe, was whether gathering the correct ingredients was feasible. A recipe including 40 eggs for example would yield a too large amount of food and would have been uneconomical. I could scale the recipe down but would risk losing some of the recipes' integrity when reconstructing it. Another example is that some ingredients used in recipes are simply not readily available for me today. A recipe for *Pome Amber* from *The Treasurie of*

commodius Conceits (1573) for example calls for the use of Ambergris. Ambergris is a rare waxy substance found in the digestive system of sperm whales. It was prized for centuries, especially in perfumeries, for making smells last longer. And used in recipes throughout Medieval and Renaissance Europe to add a musky flavour or help other flavourings like rosewater taste stronger (Bassnett et. al. 2022). I have found mentions of ambergris (sometimes spelled 'amber grease' or 'ambar greece' (The treasurie of commodious conceits, 1573; The Queens closet opened, 1659; Delightes for ladies, 1602)) at least once in every recipe book I consulted. Nowadays, however, the use of ambergris has largely been replaced by its synthetic counterparts due to its rarity and legal restrictions put in place to protect sperm whales. Thus, it no longer is readily available.

Finally, when making the recipes, I will try to follow the instructions as closely as possible. However, I will be using some modern equipment such as an electrical oven and induction stove and scale. The main reason being that I don't have access to a wood fired oven or stove. During the recipe experimentation I will record all my thoughts, feelings, sensory and physical element of the materials and process of the recipe. I will observe and critically analyse what I do and do not struggle with. Which knowledge do I already have that makes understanding and using the recipe simpler? What would this mean for someone without that knowledge? What knowledge is implied in the recipe?

Chapter 4: Case studies

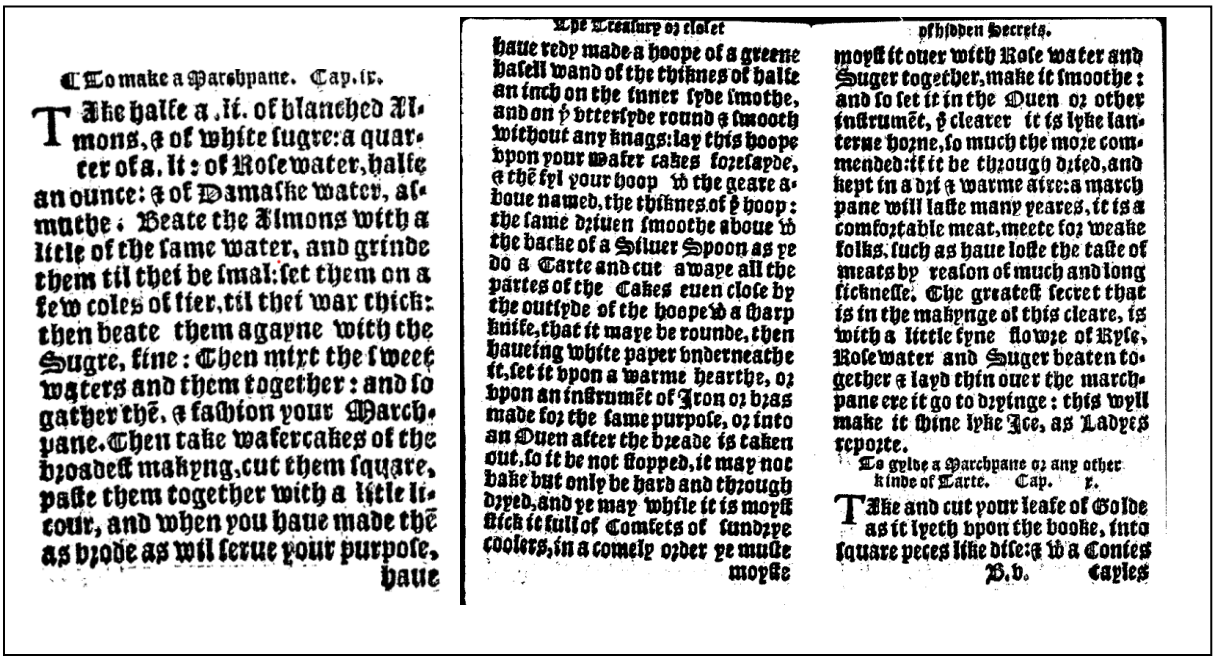
4.1 Case study: Marchpane

Book title: [SIC] The Treasurie of commodious Conceits, & hidden Secrets, and may be called The Huswiues Closet, of health-full prouision. Mete and necessarie for the profitable vse of all estates both men and women: And also pleasaunt for recreation, With a necessary Table of all things herein contayned, Gathered out of ſundrye Experiments lately practised by men of great knowledge. By I. Par.

Recipe title: *To make Marchpane*

Author: John Partridge

Year: 1573



¶ To make a Marchpane. Cap. ix.

Take halfe a .li. of blanched Almons, & of white ſugre: a quarter of a. li: of Roſewater, halfe an ounce: & of Damaſke water, almuthe: Beate the Almons with a litle of the ſame water, and grinde them til thei be ſmal: ſet them on a few coles of fier, til thei war thick: then beate them agayne with the Sugre, fine: Then mixt the ſweet waters and them togither: and ſo gather thē, & faſhion your Marchpane. Then take wafercakes of the broadeſt makyng, cut them ſquare, paſte them together with a litle lycour, and when you haue made thē as brode as wil ſerue your purpoſe, haue

The Treaſury of cloſet of hidden Secrets.

haue redy made a hoope of a greene haſell wand of the thikne of halfe an inch on the inner ſyde ſmothe, and on ẏ vtterſyde round & ſmooth without any knags: lay this hoope vpon your wafer cakes forſayde, & thē fyl your hoop wᵗ the geare aboue nawed, the thikne of ẏ hoop: the ſame driuen ſmoothe aboue wᵗ the backe of a Siluer Spoon as ye do a Tarte and cut awaye all the partes of the Cakes euen cloſe by the outſyde of the hoope wᵗ a ſharp knife, that it maye be rounde, then haueing white paper vnderneathe it, ſet it vpon a warme hearthe, or vpon an inſtrumēt of Iron or braſs made for the ſame purpoſe, or into an Ouen after the breade is taken out, ſo it be not ſtopped, it may not bake but only be hard and throughdryed, and ye may while it is moyſt ſtick it full of Comfets of ſundrye coolers, in a comely order ye muſte moyſte moyſt it ouer with Roſe water and Suger togither, make it ſmoothe: and ſo ſet it in the Ouen or other inſtrumēt, & clearer it is lyke lanterne horne, ſo much the more commended: if it be throughdried, and kept in a dri & warme aire: a marchpane will laſte many yeares, it is a comfortable meat, meete for weake folks, ſuch as haue loſte the taſte of meats by reaſon of much and long ſickneſſe. The greateſt ſecret that is in the makynge of this cleare, is with a little fyne flowre of Ryſe, Roſewater and Suger beaten togither & layd thin ouer the marchpane ere it go to dryinge: this wyll make it ſhine lyke Ice, as Ladyes report.

¶ To gylde a Marchpane or any other kinde of Tarte. Cap. x.

Take and cut your leafe of Golde as it lyeth vpon the booke, into ſquare peces like diſe: & w a Conies

B.b. Caples

Figure 1: Recipe for "To make Marchepane" from The Treasurie of Commodius Conceits by John Partridge (1573)

Background

Little is known about the author, John Partridge. According to various databases he flourished in 1573 as during the years 1566-1582 he was mentioned as the author of various books and poems, with 3 on cookery, confectionery and medicines. These books were reprinted, revised and enlarged as time passed, until well into the next century. The books had slightly varying titles each time, and not all

recorded editions still currently exist in any database, adding to the confusing bibliographic record. (Holloway, 2010).

The cookbook starts off with a chapter of contents at the beginning of the book, which a remarkable amount of the cookbooks I researched of this time either fully omit or leave in the back. The recipes are loosely grouped by type, such as preparing poultry, making conserves and marmalades, or various medicinal recipes. When looking for 'pastry' recipes it is not easy, as sweet and savoury recipes are listed in no particular order. There is no mention of any cakes, and the only sweet tart recipe is that of 'Marchpane' which is what we now call marzipan. One recipe does bake quinces in a 'coffin', a term used to mean a pie crust, these were however too tough to be eaten and more so a way of cooking the contents (Herbert & Walkden, 2023; Bassnett et. al., 2022). The recipe for 'Marchpane' also seemed more representative in its length and complexity compared to the other recipes found in the same recipe book as well as being seemingly almost completely plagiarized in many other cookbooks thereafter (Mintz, 1985) and is thus the best candidate for a case study.

Interesting to note is that the next recipe following the recipe of 'Marchpane' in John Partridge's book is a recipe on how to guild marzipan or any other kinds of tart. This shows that the recipe was intended for special occasions or reserved for the wealthy, as gilding any foods was expensive and used as a display of wealth (Mintz, 1985; Toussaint-Samat & Bell, 2009).
Only when reading this recipe do you realise that this recipe is used to make a marzipan 'cake' or 'tart'. The modern definition for tart is: an open pastry case with a filling, usually of something sweet such as. This recipe does not follow that rule and is instead a disk made from marzipan that is baked on a low heat, though it is optionally filled with dried fruit.

The recipe for 'marchpane' can be seen in figure 1, and the following instructions are mentioned: it is made with blanched almonds, sugar, and two types of rose water. After which the marzipan is moulded into a round hazel wood form on some wafer cakes and dried. Filling it with dried fruits is mentioned as an option. Lastly it is iced with a paste made of sugar and rose water so that it 'it is lyke lanterne horne' but another way of icing is added immediately after, instead suggesting to add fine rice flower so that it 'shine lyke ice', calling it the greatest secret of ladies.

Recipe reconstruction

The reconstruction of this recipe started with blanching the almonds. The recipe does not explain how to do this, but either assumes you have them pre-blanched on hand or know how to do this already. Other recipes in books such as 'The compleat cook' by Walter Montagu (1655) and 'Royal-

cookery' by Lamb (1710) explicitly tell you to blanch almonds but again do not tell you how to do this. Overall, it took me two minutes to blanch and another twenty minutes to peel the almonds. Peeling the almonds was quite a finicky process, where bits of the almond peel would keep sticking to my fingers and any surface I touched. This process also left the almonds a bit moist.

The next step was to beat the almonds with some of the rose waters. At first, I could not find rose water in my local shops and finished the recipe instead using plain water. I did later find rose water in an Arabic supermarket and made the recipe again to see if there was little difference other than taste, as I had assumed. This was indeed the case.

Beating the almonds would have been done in a mortar and pestle (Havard, 2022), which as I had a much too small one of for the amount of almonds I needed, I used with only part of them. Instead, I ground the rest using an electric food processor. Though the food processor went much quicker, and using the mortar and pestle was a big arm workout, I got the almonds to the same texture both ways. The next step was to set the almonds on a few coals of fire until the 'wax is thick'. I understood this as to warm them until some of the oils started coming out of the almonds. Using a food processor already warms the mixture slightly as well because of the large amount of friction. Still, I warmed the almonds on a low heat on the stove as warmed nuts grind much more easily than those that are not.

The recipe requires you to heat the almonds on a few coals of fire. Coals produce a much gentler heat than the direct heat of a fire, which is why I chose a low heat setting on my stove. The almonds were also harder to grind when moist from the blanching, so removing that through the heat was very helpful. After heating the almonds, they were also much more pasty, clumpy and sticky even before the later addition of sugar. At this stage, the texture already reminded me of marzipan I know today. After beating the mixture again with the sugar, the product was sticky, oily and left residue on the table. The next step was to 'gather the, & fashion your Marchpane' together with the rest of the rose waters, I did this by kneading it on my table. It came together easily and looked a lot smoother than before. Then it was time to prepare the wafer cakes.

The wafer cakes of the time were quite thin and could be easily bought on the street or were made using a special wafer iron (Toussaint-Samat & Bell, 2009, p.249). I found some similar wafers to use, though they were a bit too thick in comparison. I tried to make my wafer cakes thinner by cutting them in half, which resulted in them crumbling apart, and by wetting them, rolling them out thinner, and re-baking them in an oven until they were crisp again. This last approach worked quite well but because the recipe tells you to paste the wafer cakes together with liquor until they are 'as broad as will serve your purpose' and my wafers were unexpectedly the same size as my wooden hoop I was to

then place on top of them, I elected to skip this step. The wafers served my purpose much better as they already were.

After preparing the wafers, I was instructed to place a wooden hazel wood hoop on top, that was round and smooth on the inside and about half an inch thick. I was able to acquire some through the bakery I work at, as we still sometimes use these kinds of hoops to bake and sell our tarts in. Sourcing this tool would have been quite difficult if not for having access to a bakery.

The last steps are to fill the hoop with the marzipan, smooth it with a spoon and cut off any excess so that it is the same height as the hoop and finally put the icing on top. Though the recipe starts off listing all the ingredients and their amounts for the 'Marchpane', it does not do this for the icing. Instead, it says to just mix rose water and sugar together until it is smooth. I added a very small amount of rose water to fine caster sugar. I could have used a rougher sugar, but because the text said it should be 'lyke lanterne horne' I assumed it should be fine.

Finally, the marzipan tart is baked in an oven after the bread is taken out or on a warm hearth. I took this to mean it should be more so dried rather than baked, thus I put it in a low temperature oven (about 100C) until it seemed thoroughly dried out.

The recipe ended up making five small (about a one person sized serving tart) 'Marchepane' tarts. I filled one with ginger confits as was mentioned as an option and left the others plain to be able to taste the difference.

Analysis

Ultimately, the recipe yielded the results I expected. But what had this process told me about pastry at that time? And what knowledge was I inferred to have had before beginning to make this recipe? A few thoughts come up when looking back at my recipe reconstruction.

The first is that when discussing the second method of icing the marzipan, the author refers to it as the "greatest secret" of ladies. This information, however, comes after the end of the recipe, including the instructions for storage and suggestions of when to eat it. This shows that this particular detail was likely added later, or possibly by a different person than the original author of the recipe. It serves as a clear indicator of the evolution of the recipe over time, showing how knowledge and skill were passed down through experience. The person who added this titbit appears to have wanted to share the deeper understanding of the process, recognizing that readers would benefit from knowing more in order to replicate the recipe successfully.

Had I prepared the almonds in advance, I would have allowed them to dry after blanching. This would have made it easier to rub off the skins, without them sticking to everything. As an experienced baker, you know that if you had done it that way, they wouldn't have been moist, which is an important point that the recipe doesn't clarify. This omission reflects an expectation that readers, even back then, already had intrinsic knowledge of the process. It hints at a more craft-based approach, where some information was assumed to be known, supporting the idea that pastry making was viewed as a skilled craft or guild tradition.

The mention of roasting above coals also reflects this need for intrinsic knowledge. Coals produce a gentler heat compared to a direct fire, and while the recipe mentions "roasting above coals," it doesn't specify the exact stage of ignition for the coals. This vagueness suggests that additional knowledge or experience would have been necessary for success. It reinforces the notion that this recipe required prior knowledge and skill, further supporting the idea of pastry making as a form of craft.

I also inferred that "as broad as will serve your purpose" likely refers to standard wafer cake sizes. If larger cakes were needed, it seems one would have to paste them together. I only happened to have a small wooden hoop on hand, which further highlighted the flexibility and personal adaptation required in the baking process.

Finally, the explicit instruction of using a hazelwood wand adds an interesting layer of detail. The choice of wood implies a level of specificity and knowledge about materials, suggesting that the author intended the reader to understand the significance of the tool in relation to the craft.

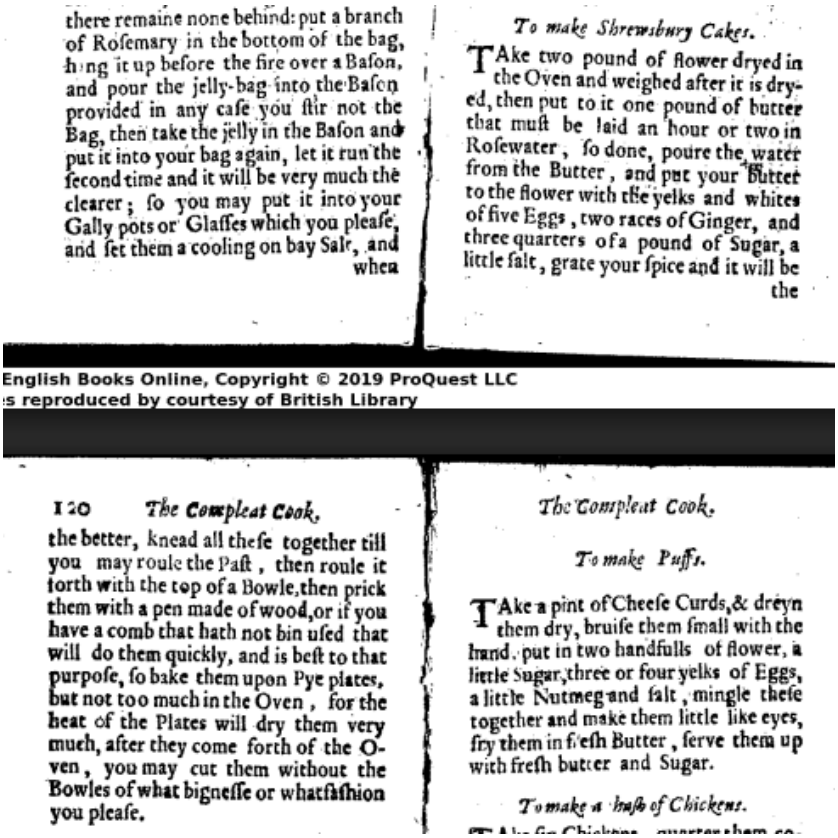
4.2 Case study: Shrewsbury Cakes

Book title: The Compleat cook. Expertly prescribing the most ready wayes, whether, [brace] Italian, Spanish, or French. For dressing of flesh, and fish, ordering of sauces, or making of pastry.

Recipe title: *To make Shrewsbury Cakes*

Author: Walter Montagu (attributed name)

Year: 1655



there remaine none behind: put a branch of Roſemary in the bottom of the bag, hang it up before the fire over a Baſon, and pour the jelly-bag into the Baſon provided in any caſe you ſtir not the Bag, then take the jelly in the Baſon and put it into your bag again, let it run the ſecond time and it will be very much the clearer; ſo you may put it into your Gally pots or Glaſſes which you pleaſe, and ſet them a cooling on bay Salt, and when

To make Shrewsbury Cakes.

TAke two pound of flower dryed in the Oven and weighed after it is dryed, then put to it one pound of butter that muſt be laid an hour or two in Roſewater, ſo done, poure the water from the Butter, and put your butter to the flower with the yelks and whites of five Eggs, two races of Ginger, and three quarters of a pound of Sugar, a little ſalt, grate your ſpice and it will be the

the better, knead all theſe together till you may roule the Paſt, then roule it forth with the top of a Bowle, then prick them with a pen made of wood, or if you have a comb that hath not bin uſed that will do them quickly, and is beſt to that purpoſe, ſo bake them upon Pye plates, but not too much in the Oven, for the heat of the Plates will dry them very much, after they come forth of the Oven, you may cut them without the Bowles of what bigneſſe or whatfaſhion you pleaſe.

To make Puffs.

TAke a pint of Cheeſe Curds, & dreyn them dry, bruiſe them ſmall with the hand, put in two handfulls of flower, a little Sugar, three or four yelks of Eggs, a little Nutmeg and ſalt, mingle theſe together and make them little like eyes, fry them in freſh Butter, ſerve them up with freſh butter and Sugar.

To make a hutch of Chickens.

Figure 2: Recipe for "To make Shrewsbury Cakes" from The Compleat Cook by Walter Montagu (attr.) (1655)

Background

The name of the author of this book is debatable and only Walter Montagu is mentioned as a contributor by Wing (EEBO)

He was an author, theological and political and linked to the university of Cambridge. He was at the very least well off (ACAD). The book covers a wide variety of recipes on meats, fish, breads and pastries, from various European cooking traditions, such as Italian, Spanish and French. There is not a lot of front matter in this book, after the title it jumps straight into a recipe for a posset, continuing

with recipes in no particular order. The table of contents can be found in the back of the book. The titles of recipes are mentioned in the same order in which they appear in the book instead of alphabetically, which I saw in many of the other recipe books I combed through during my research. Also, some page numbers seem to be listed incorrectly, and a few recipes, like the one for 'Almond Caudle', are listed twice with the exact same recipe just with a slightly different sentence structure. This, together with the unclear order, leads me to believe this book is more so a compilation of recipes from other works than an original contribution. This was not uncommon for the time as recipe collections sometimes had secondary authorship and without clear attributions the individual contributors become quite unclear to us today (Kernan & Müllnerritsch 2024).

Both complex and elaborate recipes such as the Italian way to prepare veal, as well as more general everyday recipes such as different types of pottages are mentioned. This suggests the work likely serves both the more and lesser experienced cooks as an inspiration as well as a recipe guide for the more sophisticated class.

Recipe reconstruction

As I did with the first recipe, I started this reconstruction by reading through the whole recipe again first. This showed me that though the recipe is titled 'cakes' the liquid to dry ingredient ratio, the flour and sugar, versus the wet ingredients, the butter and eggs, would lead to a more dough like consistency.

The recipe is quite simple and condenses down to kneading all the ingredients together in one go, but is hard to read, as it is entirely one run-on sentence with many commas. The text takes the time to explain exactly in what 'state' some of the ingredients should be and how they should get there. First, it tells you to use flour that is weighed only after it is dried in an oven as well as using butter that should have been left in rose water for an hour or two. The latter, giving the butter a pleasant flavour and though commonly used, was also seen as luxurious (Vroom et. al., 2017)

The recipe does not mention room temperature butter, but I assume that this would be standard of the time due to a lack of refrigeration. Even if kept in a cellar, butter is already quite pliable at the 12C mark.

I found, when making this recipe, that this pliable/room temperature butter was very important to how easily the dough was formed. Kneading all the ingredients took quite a bit of time, and the resulting dough ended up feeling a bit tough and even springy to the touch. This springy effect is due

to the gluten network that developed during my kneading, something I did not assume was a favourable quality wanted for a biscuit.

After the ingredients are kneaded and rolled into a ‘paste’, the next step is to ‘role it forth with the top of a bowle’. This sentence confused me for some time; it reads as though I should roll it out with the side of a bowl but doing this felt very unpractical. It was not easy to hold the bowl and roll it over the dough at the same time. It also seemed unlikely to me that this was what was supposed to happen because rolling pins were already in use since from the Etruscan period (Laskshmi & Ratna, 2013). I also thought that it may mean that I was supposed to roll out the dough into the *shape* of a bowl, a circle. This is however somewhat unassured in the last sentence of the recipe, where it tells you to ‘cut them without the bowls in what bigness or wat fashion you please.’ In the end I cut them into rectangles because this was easiest, however, looking up images of what Shrewsbury cakes look like today, they were likely round.

After rolling out the dough, the recipe tells you to prick the dough with a wooden pen or an un-used clean comb, if you want the decorative task to go faster. This was helpful in knowing what the final cakes should look like. Then the dough is baked on pie plates for not too long so that they don't dry out. Lastly the dough is cut into any shape you like.

I opted to bake the Shrewsbury cakes at 175C, as this is the temperature I bake most other biscuits. Then I checked on them after 10 minutes, but they seemed still a bit too soft, thus I baked them for another three minutes. After this the edges seemed crisp, while the middle did not, but because the recipe says the pie plates will dry them out, I took them out of the oven and left them to cool on the pie plates, expecting them to crisp up further as they cooled.

Analysis

The explicit instructions for the preparation of the flour and butter are important to note because, for one, the moisture content in flour plays a major role in the quality and consistency of bakes the flour provides (Kazmi et al. 2022). It is also important for giving it a more stable and longer shelf life (Kazmi et al. 2022; Toussain-Samat & Bell, 2009). This is not something that we considered today when we buy our flour, as it comes thoroughly pre-dried already. It is something that professional bakers still consider, as they need to keep a much larger stock of flour from spoiling. As I have seen around me in the pastry-chef profession, more artisanal (bread)bakers will get different flours from small and local flour mills for their different moisture and protein or gluten contents, often purely to stand out in the

modern market. The recipe acknowledging the importance of the moisture content in the flour highlights the author's material awareness.

The increased gluten network that was created, which is unfavourable for a biscuit (at least for what we call a biscuit today), resulted from not kneading the butter and flour separately before adding any liquids (in this case the eggs). It is possible that the milled flour then, had a different protein content compared to what we have today, resulting in a different amount of gluten created, and thus the baker in the past would not have had this issue. Another possible explanation is that this knowledge was something the author assumed should be already intrinsic before attempting to make the recipe. The fact that the recipe uses expressive language such as ‘not to much’ for how long the Shrewsbury cakes should be baked, and no language at all on at what temperature they should be baked, again implies one should have prior skills and knowledge, before attempting this recipe. Because I have a lot of experience with baking biscuits and recognised the structure and texture of the dough, I was able to make an educated guess on the temperature and time needed to bake these well. Something that would be more difficult for those with less experience.

Some of the recipe uses explicit instructions, such as the use of a comb for pricking the dough, but which was only helpful if you had also seen these biscuits before. As such the cultural context is important, I have no references of Shrewsbury cakes in mind, something a person in 1655 in Britain would have had. This shows us how, as Sennet (2008) mentions, words and references can quickly become outdated or are very specific to the social context one lives in.

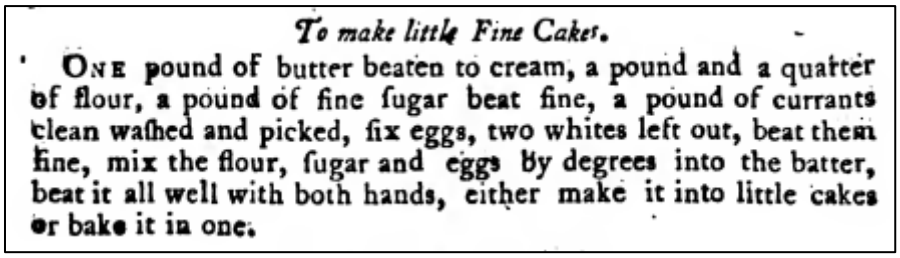
4.3 Case study: Little Fine Cakes

Book title: The Art of Cookery, made Plain and Easy; which far exceeds any Thing of the Kind ever yet Publiſhed. BY A Lady.

Recipe title: To make little Fine Cakes

Author: Hannah Glasse

Year: 1747



To make little Fine Cakes.

ONE pound of butter beaten to cream, a pound and a quarter of flour, a pound of fine ſugar beat fine, a pound of currants clean waſhed and picked, ſix eggs, two whites left out, beat them fine, mix the flour, ſugar and eggs by degrees into the batter, beat it all well with both hands, either make it into little cakes or bake it in one.

Figure 3: Recipe for "To make little Fine Cakes" from The Art of Cookery by Hannah Glasse (1747)

Background

This recipe book was one of the most important references for culinary practices in England as well as the American colonies during the late 18th and early 19th century (Goodall, 2022). The book remained popular and was updated and in print for almost a century even long after her death, which was mentioned in later editions. The writing style is much more conversational than most of the earlier works, showing how this book was aimed at home cooks and the domestic servants or “lower sort”, as Hannah Glasse writes in the opening pages of the recipe book (Internet Archive, TheArtOfCookery, 1747, ark:/13960/t3226sf9w)

Many of the recipes are still recognised today as distinctly English food, such as Yorkshire pudding and gooseberry fool. That this book is distinctly English is also marked by Glasse's marked disapproval of French cooking styles and her persistence in avoiding French culinary terms (Internet Archive). Many of Glasse's recipes were plagiarised in other works introduced in later periods, for example; this exact recipe can be found in Richard Briggs' 'The New art of Cookery’ from 1792, though some say that Glasse also plagiarised much of her work in the first place (Monnickendam, 2018). The book also includes directions on how best to shop at the market and highlights when produce is in season and why this is important when cooking and or baking.

Recipe reconstruction

This recipe (Figure 3) is again a run-on sentence, though much shorter than the previous one in Figure 2. I had to read the recipe numerous times to understand the order in which to add the ingredients. The recipe is easiest understood if seeing the creamed butter as an ingredient you have at the ready, and not a first step you should take. To 'beat the butter to a cream', is something I would normally like to do in a stand mixer but now did by continuously rubbing the butter with the palm of my hand on my kitchen counter and scraping it back together. When the butter was much lighter in colour and, felt soft and fluffy, I knew it was done. Next, I needed flour, fine sugar, currants, and eggs. The recipe says to mix the flour, sugar and eggs by degrees into the batter. Here I assume 'batter' means the creamed butter. I added each ingredient in three phases and mixed in between each step. I did this on my table as well, as it seemed impractical to dirty a bowl when the table worked well with creaming the butter. Then the recipe tells you to make it into little cakes or bake it in one and totally skips past what to do with the currants. As such, I fully incorporated them into the batter at the end. It also does not mention whether the currants are fresh or dried, so because I made this recipe in December and currants are in season in June through August, I had to make do with dried currants. Lastly, this recipe again does not give you instructions on how long or at what temperature to bake the cakes for. I opted for 180C for 15 minutes.

Recipe analysis

This recipe might not have been most representative as it is quite short and does not have a lot of extra instructions. The reason for the lack of instruction could indicate that this recipe was seen as so simple, it needed no extra clarification. In other chapters of the book for example she mentions the 'general rules to be observed', in pickling or in making puddings for example, where Glasse explains techniques or materials used more in depth. But here some instructions on what to do with certain ingredients are left out entirely.

Beating the batter with both hands is something I was still taught how to do in pastry school, even though we all have access to, and largely use, electric mixers nowadays. This was explicitly done by our instructors so we would learn to feel and see when the butter was 'creamed' or 'beaten light' enough, without going based on strict mixing times we often see in modern recipes that use electric mixers. This is because electric mixers can vary in power and reach, meaning even if you follow the recipe exactly, you may not achieve the same result as someone who knows what texture to look and

feel for. This is supported by Sennet (2008), who says that bodily practice leads to quicker building of skill.

I would have normally mixed either the sugar and butter together or the sugar and eggs, so the sugar dissolves more into the batter and adding two ingredients in degrees is easier to do than three. The recipe explicitly tells you to ‘beat it all well with both hands’ making it clear it should be mixed with a lot of power.

Fresh currants are only available in some months of the year, and the recipe could mean either without any further instruction. Dried currants were popular imported goods since the 15th century (Bassnett, 2022), but this recipe book also has a recipe on how to preserve currants yourself. These are, however, fresh currants that are covered with a sugar syrup instead of dried to preserve. A recipe for plum-cake from ‘Royal-Cookery’ by Lamb (1710), mentions the currants should be ‘plump'd before the Fire’, suggesting they were dried and rehydrated with warm water before using in the recipe. Other recipes from Hannah Glasse's recipe book, such as the one for ‘a pretty cake’ and ‘plum porridge’ call for boiling the currants ‘till they swell’ before using, but a recipe for vermicella pudding does not. All these available options means the types of currants you used would be up to your own interpretation, either using your prior knowledge for picking the right one for your desired outcome of the product or simply using what was available during the time of the year. In my case, I instinctively wanted to soak my currants overnight first, as I thought they would be too dry otherwise. This is also what ended up being the case.

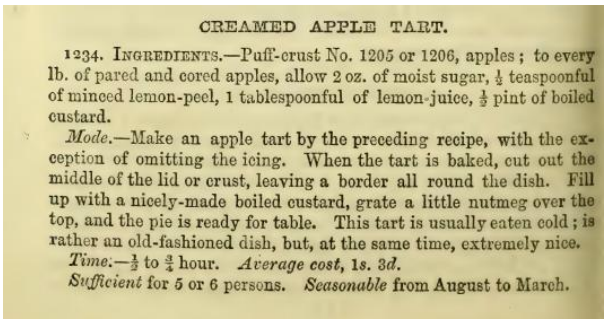
4.4 Case study: Apple tart

Book title: [SIC] The book of household management [electronic resource] : comprising information for the mistress, housekeeper, cook, kitchen-maid, butler, footman, coachman, valet, upper and under house-maids, lady's maid, maid-of-all-work, laundry-maid, nurse and nurse-maid, monthly, wet, and sick nurses, etc. etc. also, sanitary, medical, & legal memoranda with a history of the origin, properties, and uses of all things connected with home life and comfort.

Recipe title: creamed apple tart

Author: Mrs Beeton (Isabella Mary)

Year: 1861



CREAMED APPLE TART.

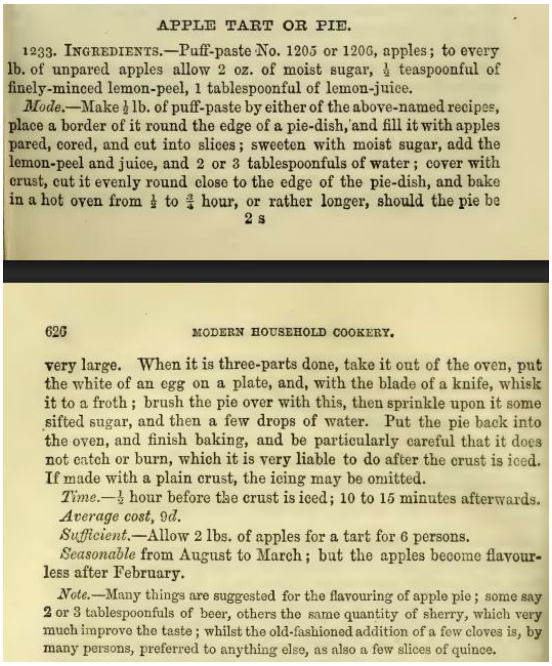
1234. INGREDIENTS.—Puff-crust No. 1205 or 1206, apples; to every lb. of pared and cored apples, allow 2 oz. of moist sugar, ½ teaspoonful of minced lemon-peel, 1 tablespoonful of lemon-juice, ½ pint of boiled custard.

Mode.—Make an apple tart by the preceding recipe, with the exception of omitting the icing. When the tart is baked, cut out the middle of the lid or crust, leaving a border all round the dish. Fill up with a nicely-made boiled custard, grate a little nutmeg over the top, and the pie is ready for table. This tart is usually eaten cold; is rather an old-fashioned dish, but, at the same time, extremely nice.

Time.—½ to ¾ hour. *Average cost*, 1s. 3d.

Sufficient for 5 or 6 persons. *Seasonable* from August to March.

Figure 4: Recipe for "CREAMED APPLE TART" from The book of household management by Isabella Beeton (1861)



APPLE TART OR PIE.

1233. INGREDIENTS.—Puff-paste No. 1205 or 1206, apples; to every lb. of unpared apples allow 2 oz. of moist sugar, ½ teaspoonful of finely-minced lemon-peel, 1 tablespoonful of lemon-juice.

Mode.—Make ½ lb. of puff-paste by either of the above-named recipes, place a border of it round the edge of a pie-dish, and fill it with apples pared, cored, and cut into slices; sweeten with moist sugar, add the lemon-peel and juice, and 2 or 3 tablespoonfuls of water; cover with crust, cut it evenly round close to the edge of the pie-dish, and bake in a hot oven from ½ to ¾ hour, or rather longer, should the pie be

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very large. When it is three-parts done, take it out of the oven, put the white of an egg on a plate, and, with the blade of a knife, whisk it to a froth; brush the pie over with this, then sprinkle upon it some sifted sugar, and then a few drops of water. Put the pie back into the oven, and finish baking, and be particularly careful that it does not catch or burn, which it is very liable to do after the crust is iced. If made with a plain crust, the icing may be omitted.

Time.—½ hour before the crust is iced; 10 to 15 minutes afterwards.

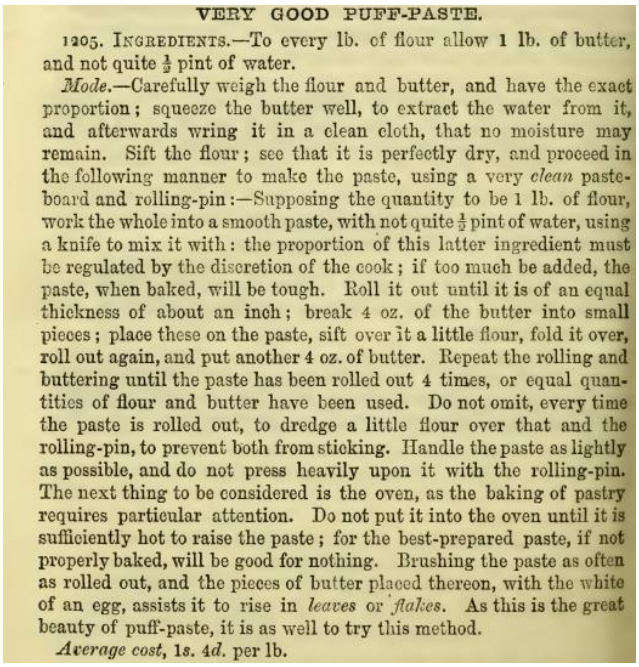
Average cost, 9d.

Sufficient.—Allow 2 lbs. of apples for a tart for 6 persons.

Seasonable from August to March; but the apples become flavourless after February.

Note.—Many things are suggested for the flavouring of apple pie; some say 2 or 3 tablespoonfuls of beer, others the same quantity of sherry, which very much improve the taste; whilst the old-fashioned addition of a few cloves is, by many persons, preferred to anything else, as also a few slices of quince.

Figure 5: Recipe for "APPLE TART OR PIE" from The book of household management by Isabella Beeton (1861)



VERY GOOD PUFF-PASTE.

1205. INGREDIENTS.—To every lb. of flour allow 1 lb. of butter, and not quite ½ pint of water.

Mode.—Carefully weigh the flour and butter, and have the exact proportion; squeeze the butter well, to extract the water from it, and afterwards wring it in a clean cloth, that no moisture may remain. Sift the flour; see that it is perfectly dry, and proceed in the following manner to make the paste, using a very *clean* paste-board and rolling-pin:—Supposing the quantity to be 1 lb. of flour, work the whole into a smooth paste, with not quite ½ pint of water, using a knife to mix it with: the proportion of this latter ingredient must be regulated by the discretion of the cook; if too much be added, the paste, when baked, will be tough. Roll it out until it is of an equal thickness of about an inch; break 4 oz. of the butter into small pieces; place these on the paste, sift over it a little flour, fold it over, roll out again, and put another 4 oz. of butter. Repeat the rolling and buttering until the paste has been rolled out 4 times, or equal quantities of flour and butter have been used. Do not omit, every time the paste is rolled out, to dredge a little flour over that and the rolling-pin, to prevent both from sticking. Handle the paste as lightly as possible, and do not press heavily upon it with the rolling-pin. The next thing to be considered is the oven, as the baking of pastry requires particular attention. Do not put it into the oven until it is sufficiently hot to raise the paste; for the best-prepared paste, if not properly baked, will be good for nothing. Brushing the paste as often as rolled out, and the pieces of butter placed thereon, with the white of an egg, assists it to rise in *leaves* or *flakes*. As this is the great beauty of puff-paste, it is as well to try this method.

Average cost, 1s. 4d. per lb.

Figure 6: Recipe for "VERY GOOD PUFF-PASTE" from The book of household management by Isabella Beeton (1861)

Background

Mrs. Beetons book was published in 24 parts between 1859 and 1861, with a book version published in 1861 (Ex-classics Project, 2009). It had a very successful run, selling 60,000 copies in its first year (*The Book of Household Management by Mrs. Beeton*, 2024). The book has long been recognised as the quintessential Victorian cookery and household management book. The book was clearly aimed at housewives and her servants, with Beeton writing in the preface that she began writing the instalments due to her discomfort at the household mismanagement she saw around her and found that there was no more source of discontent for a family than a housewife's bad dinners and manners (Beeton, 1861). More than recipes, the book also contains cleaning instructions, medical advice, servant management and instructions on other household duties. It even goes as far as giving the (natural) history of some of the animals, plants and ingredients used in the recipes including coloured plates to go along with them. Some recipes also include an image with the end product.

This is the first book I encountered that lists all the ingredients first, and the method (or mode, as Beeton writes) second. At the end of each recipe the amount of time you should bake it for, the average cost, how many portions the recipe makes and when the recipe is seasonable is mentioned.

Again, many of the recipes in the book are plagiarised and can be found in earlier books but they were not blindly copy pasted. Each recipe is written using the same lay-out and highly structured,

something that is new for cookery or household books of that time. The whole book itself is highly structured as well.

Recipe reconstruction

I chose this recipe not only because it sounded nice and only slightly different than what I am used to, but also because even though the recipe is not even half a page, it actually requires you to make three recipes which you combine to make one dish.

First, the ingredients list refers you to a recipe for puff-crust (or puff-pastry as we know it today) and lets you choose between two different methods. I chose to make recipe no. 1205 because it did not include lard, which the other option did. It does not tell you how much puff-crust you need, but in the instructions it says to make this recipe the same way as in the recipe above. There, it said I would need half a pound of puff crust. The puff-crust recipe is based on one pound of flour and is in total about two and a half pounds, so more than I need, so I divided the recipe into three.

I started by making the dough, knowing I should leave it in a cool place while I prepare the rest to prevent the butter from melting, though this is not mentioned in the recipe. The recipe explains all the steps in a lot of detail, including why you should do certain things. For example, the butter should be well dried, and your butter should contain no water. My ingredients were bought this way already. To make the dough, I first added the water to the flour and kneaded it with a knife as instructed, the dough was quite dry, and I could not roll it out which was needed for the next step, so I added a small amount of more water. Next, the dough was rolled out, and butter was folded into the dough four times. While it was not stated in the recipe, it felt intuitive to roll the dough in to a rectangle, place the butter on, and roll it into a rectangle the other way. I have made puff pastry many times before, and I know that rolling it in different directions leads to less shrinkage of the dough in the oven. The resulting puff-paste looked very nice and uniform, and much like the dough I am used to making today.

Next, I went back to the apple tart recipe to start on the apples. It says to use a pound of pared and cored apples, so I bought a little more to account for that. However, there is a bit of a discrepancy in how many apples to use for how many people. Recipe 1233 for ‘apple tart or pie’, which we are meant to follow first, suggests using two pounds for a six-person tart, whilst the ingredient list is based on one pound of apples. I only saw later that the different recipes did not all follow the same portion size, meaning I had to weigh out more of my ingredients later.

After my apples and other ingredients were ready, I lined my pie dish with the puff pastry. The recipe does not mention how much of the pastry to use for the base and how much to use for the lid, so I guessed and used two-thirds for the bottom. The recipe also does not say to butter the dish first, something I instinctively did, but it is mentioned on page 609 of this book, in a chapter on the general observations on puddings and pastry.

Finally, I filled my pie dish, put on a top circle of puff pastry and put it in a brisk oven (I chose 220C) as instructed in the recipe for the puff-paste.

While the apple tart was in the oven, I opted to make the custard. I did not prepare this ahead as an ingredient because it only needed to be added after the tart was baked. Unfortunately, there is no recipe for boiled custard anywhere in the book. I could only find a recipe for custard sauce for pies (which seemed too thin because the creamed apple tart was said to be eaten cold and was served in a tureen) or for boiled custard but which is boiled it in a cloth and served as a separate dish. I chose the boiled custard recipe, but instead of boiling it in a cloth, I boiled it in a pan and then poured it into the pie when it came out of the oven. The apple pie out of the oven was very hot and a lot of the butter seeped out. The crust fell apart when trying to cut out the middle, but it was very flaky and looked a lot like the puff pastry we use today. The taste of the custard was not sweet at all and tasted more like a béchamel sauce. This was likely because the recipe said to grate nutmeg on top, and I grated too much of it on.

Analysis

This recipe (or recipes) is distinct from the previous case studies in that it has a clear structure. Starting with a list of ingredients, then method, and including all the bake times, serving sizes, seasonality and approximate cost. While older recipe collections have included seasonality as well, listing the time it takes to bake something is very new, and is largely due to the closed stoves or ovens becoming more and more widespread in the 19th century (Pennell, 2016).

Furthermore, this book has many general observation pages with instructions such as general directions on pies and what kitchen equipment is needed for them. This does mean you have to constantly consult other pages in the book if you want to be able to make a singular recipe wel. In this case the book is purposely set up as more of a reference book to teach you the things that were normally learnt through working next to and, observing and copying a master. While the book is also not small, not repeating instructions that could be used for multiple recipes was more efficient and it reduced the number of pages that needed to be printed, keeping it slightly more economical.

Another aspect that differed greatly from the previous case studies, is that a lot of reasoning is added behind certain instructions. For example, the recipe for puff-paste tells you to knead the flour and water with a knife and not to add too much water or the dough will become too tough. The author here clearly knew that water and kneading too vigorously led to too much gluten development. Mixing with a knife does not go very fast, and in telling the reader to do so meant it would be difficult for someone to over mix the dough even by accident.

All in all, this recipe book is clearly geared towards people with little to no prior knowledge of baking or cooking. It is aimed to provide you with knowledge he assumes you do not have and be kept as a reference for later.

It is interesting in that sense that I could not find an exact recipe for the boiled custard. My only explanation for this is that as the recipe mentions it is an old fashioned one, it was either deemed something you should have had prior knowledge on because it was common, or it was not important enough to mention, and instead had to make way for other new and more fashionable recipes.

Chapter 5: Results and Discussion

Each case study I analysed required different amounts of skill and craft knowledge to execute them properly. This was due to the different writing styles, how much explicit versus expressive language was used, and how much of the recipe was to be inferred from previous experience.

In case study 1 we see vague instructions such as ‘a few coals of fire’ and ‘as broad as will serve your purpose’. Much of how to execute the recipe is up to the reader to decide. Thus, they should have at least some prior knowledge of the product, such as having seen it or been seen it made before. This relies heavily on the culture of a person, I for example know what marzipan should feel, see and taste like, but never in combination with wafer cakes, which are much less popular today than they were in 16th century England. Furthermore, expressive language is used at the end where the author tells you the icing should make the marzipan look like ‘lanterne horne’ or that it will ‘shine lyke ice’. Again, relying on cultural references to relay information well. Some of the recipe does also use explicit language when talking about what kind of hazel-wood hoop you should use, mentioning it should be smooth and round, and half an inch high. In this case, the author did not expect the reader to already know what tools to use, because it was less common, and shows how using the right tools and materials was deemed important. Lastly, the inclusion of a second icing method suggests that recipes evolved and were added upon as knowledge was gained through practice. In the end understanding and executing the recipe was not difficult, but instead the difficulty lied in sourcing the ingredients that were common in that time, but now hard to get. This was the case even though I purposefully sought out a recipe that used ingredients available to me.

In case study 2 the explicit instructions to dry flour well before use, shows that the author had a lot of material awareness in how moisture content affected the baking process and shelf life. With only vague instructions on baking temperatures and times, the recipe relies on previous experience and knowledge of the reader. Lastly, like in case study 1, the shape and form are up to the creative licence of the reader. This reliance on unstated expertise and cultural context reinforces the idea that pastry making was seen as a skilled practice that went beyond following written instructions.

Case study 3 is short and might not have been the most representative recipe in Glasse’s book. It is however still a run-on sentence and tells you to ‘cream’ the butter, which is a term still used today to describe mixing butter very well until it becomes much lighter in colour. The recipe implies that the reader knows this as well already. Again, no baking times or temperatures are mentioned, and a whole ingredient is mentioned once but then left out. This book was however, just like the recipe book in case study 4, a best seller for a really long time. This is because it was written in ‘plain’ language and geared to servants as well, thus reaching a much larger audience.

Lastly, case study 4 shows a significant shift in how pastry knowledge was communicated. Though, like in case study 3, the book is aimed at house-wives and servants, this book is much more structured and explicitly teaches skills to readers with no prior knowledge. It does this by providing more reasoning behind techniques and many more images. Where images before were diagrams of table settings, now it was of the dishes and tools used to make them.

Over time we see that recipe books change from assuming the reader has prior knowledge and skill and relying on cultural references, to being geared towards the lower class and those less knowledgeable or not in the profession. This shift happens at the same time when literacy among society rapidly increases and guilds start disappearing. Where first one could only learn the technical skills and reasonings behind pastry baking through apprenticeships or other side-by-side observation and copying, now home-makers and lower class got access to the knowledge of pastry chefs and cooks or very experienced housewives. This shift changes how recipes are written, through clearer structure by using fewer run-on sentences and listing ingredients first, and the use of more explicit language and extra information on the techniques and materials used for different categories of dishes. Cookery books were now written by working cooks, some issued by London's guilds. All these contained far more technical knowledge than before (Sennet, 2008).

All the recipe books focus not only on food recipes but also on medicinal recipes, seasonality and storage of food, and how one should present themselves in society. In later periods, religion plays a smaller role in recipe books, though seasonality of ingredients remained important. Also, where in older recipe books much of the technical reasoning behind the recipes is omitted and assumed as intrinsic knowledge, we see that the later books start including more explicit directions and reasonings. From these recipes themselves we can infer that at least the original author of the recipe had the amount of experience needed to become skilled. The person reading the recipe might not have needed to be skilled themselves, but with the help of the recipes they at least have access to the knowledge needed outside the physical bodily practices. This fits the core concept Sennet (2008) describes, where thinking and feeling are contained within the process of making. This is something also I experienced. Reading the recipe led me to think about how the process would go, but when reconstructing the recipe, I encountered problems which needed solving some of which I did almost instinctively. They felt natural to me because of past experience and practice, whilst others were new. This fits very well with what Sennet (2008) says on skill, that skilful judgment emerges from the interplay between the tacit embedded knowledge and explicit self-conscious awareness.

Searching for understanding *why* something does or does not work, or *why* something may work, leads to experimentation and recording and is an important part of craft. An example of this can be

seen in case study 1 where a second method of icing is mentioned at the end of a recipe. It shows us how recipes changed trough time and were added upon at a later date, after new knowledge and skills were acquired and was not always done by the same author.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The aim of this research was to look at pastry production as a form of craft in England between 1500 and 1900. This was done by asking the following main research question: “What can recipes and their development between 1500 and 1900 say about pastry making as a form of craft production?”. This main question is supported by the sub question: “How were pastry-bakers and pastry-baking viewed by English society between 1500 and 1900?

The research approach first involved a literary study on craft, skill and knowledge with afterwards an analysis of four recipes from historical cookbooks and recipe collections which were then recreated.

The results show that cookery and pastry knowledge changed over time, reflecting broader societal shifts. The earliest recipes within this time frame, such as the one for ‘Marchpane’ in case study 1, relied heavily on embodied knowledge together with expressive instructions, assuming the reader possessed prior experience and knowledge. In case study 2, halfway through the 17th century, still a lot of skill was assumed, with no or vague instructions on baking times and temperatures.

By the 18th and 19th centuries, a clear transition towards more explicit instruction emerged. Hannah Glasse's work (1747) was aimed at a wider and more inexperienced audience than the works before. This trend continues with Mrs. Beeton's *Book of Household Management* from 1861, which was highly structured, with separate ingredients lists, more precise timings and explanations of techniques. This coincided with the increasing literacy in the country and disappearance of the guilds. The recipes books changed from serving as inspiration for the grand feasts of wealthy nobleman and geared towards their pastry chefs, to being aimed at housewives and their servants who had had no formal education on the subject but were expected to perform well.

The tone of the recipe books shifted as well. At first, the recipes were heavily influenced by religion focusing in in many parts of a book on the different substitutions for Lent, as well as the good health of those you cook for. Later, more recipes and recipe books were geared towards the lower class. The craft knowledge became more accessible, something that could be seen as the craft becoming less skillful. However, it also meant knowledge was more easily built upon, with print shops publishing books with the best tips and tricks on recipes from many different authors combined. Where first housewives would only add new insights into their or their mothers recipe notes, they could now be easily shared amongst each other.

Pastry making is an evolving craft, where pastry makers apply skills and material-based knowledge, which they have learned through repeated practice as well as through communication with others practicing the same craft. In the first case study, the choice of wood implies a level of specificity and

knowledge about materials and tools and the “Greatest secret” indicates this communication between craftsman. In the second case study the use of pie plates stood out as an example of the tools that were developed over time. In the third case study I noted that some methods and skill remain practically the same over time. Another example is that most all the recipe books at least somewhere mentioned the importance of the seasons when cooking.

As a final note, I want to highlight some problems that came up during the conducting of my case studies. The first is that there are quite a few discrepancies between the sources for these late medieval and early modern recipe books. For example, the book Sweetness and Power (Minzt, 1985) mentions the exact book by Partridge but claims it as from 1584, the scanned copy I consulted came from 1573, a whole decade earlier. This happens for many of recipe books I encountered as well, where the scanned manuscripts dates and or authors do not match the archives data. It thus makes it very difficult to decipher who plagiarised who in the cookbooks printed of this time. Many were printed with only slightly varying running titles and only a few small changes could be made but then printed in an entirely different book, leading to many different sources in the archives.

I also considered that though the recipes I chose were for a broad variety of products and included a broad variety of techniques, they ended up maybe not being fully representative of the recipe books they came from. This could be helped in further research by choosing recipes on only ‘cakes’ for example. The struggle with this is then that the term cakes was used for a much larger number of bakes than we do today. As further research, I also think it would be interesting to not only have me, someone who has a background in pastry, but another person with no such background also recreate the recipes. Because though I tried to remain as objective as possible when going into a recipe, I found my self doing certain tasks like putting the puff-paste in the fridge to chill and choosing the temperature for the oven almost automatically. I would be interested to see if then the recipes would reveal if a different level of intrinsic knowledge is needed. Lastly, vocabulary is a large part of reading comprehension, and I found that I struggled more with understanding the earliest recipes because of that.

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