

## Recipes from the *Opusculum de Saporibus*

The *Opusculum de Saporibus* is a short text about the preparation of sauces appropriate to certain meats or fish, preparations and seasons. It is ascribed to a physician Maino de Maineri and thus probably dates to the first half of the thirteenth century. It was originally part of a broader *Regimen Sanitatis*. The Latin text based on the 1934 Thorndike edition is available online at <https://www.uni-giessen.de/fbz/fb05/germanistik/absprache/sprachverwendung/gloning/tx/sapor.htm>. This translation is based on that text.

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[lengthy foreword omitted...]

Now it remains to be determined which condiments and sauces are appropriate to which foods. The sauce for meat of castrated rams, veal, and kid that is boiled is green sauce which is made thus: Take parsley one m (unit), rosemary a quarter m, of toasted bread the quantity of one egg, of white ginger one drachm, twelve cloves. The sauce is made with vinegar, but in summer, fewer spices are put in and in winter more. Also in winter a little wine is put into the aforesaid sauce since the vinegar is less strong.

Item in winter may suffice sweet mustard prepared with reduced wine (*vino cocto*) and a little honey or rocket prepared with almonds and vinegar that is not too strong.

Item the meat of a milk-fed kid can be prepared in a *cinefium*. Take toasted black bread soaked in vinegar, an ounce of ground black pepper, a pound of melted fat, in which fat you fry the meat (the white part) of fifteen white onions and the onions are cooked and *cinefium* is made with the broth of the abovesaid meat and bread and the onions are perfectly mashed in a mortar and the abovesaid spices added and all is boiled together to (proper) thickness.

Item kid meat may be prepared with white sauce (*brodio albo*). Take a pound of sweet almonds, an ounce of ground white ginger, half of a quarter (unit) of *agresta* (verjuice) and this is mixed with meat broth.

Item the sauce for beef is peppered boiled saffron sauce that is made of pepper and saffron and bread that is soaked in vinegar in winter and in *agresta* (verjuice) in summer with meat broth and it

is all boiled together, and rocket may suffice (instead?).

Item beef may be eaten with white garlic sauce (made) from nuts and white ginger and garlic mixed with meat broth and boiled.

Item the sauce for boiled pork is rocket and mustard. But if the abovesaid meat is put into pastries, sweet and strong spices and and *agresta* (verjuice) and pork lard well ground in a mortar are added. And some (also) add white onions and buttery (i.e. fat) cheese and beef marrow.

And if pastries are made of more subtle meats. Almond milk is put in with pomegranate wine or *agresta* (verjuice) and sweet spice powder. And at the end, beaten eggs with *agresta* (verjuice) may be added.

The appropriate seasoning for roast pork is the juices that descend from the roast beaten with a little wine and with cooked onions. And that (is) in winter, or the abovementioned green sauce. And mustard or rocket may suffice.

But the seasoning appropriate to roast rabbits and small chickens is cameline sauce (made) of cinnamon and breadcrumbs with *agresta* (verjuice) in summer but with wine and a little vinegar that is not strong in winter.

Roast of turtledoves, partridges, pigeons, and quails suffer no other seasoning but salt and lemon (*pomo citrono*).

But the sauce for boiled capon and pheasant is their broth with sweet spice powder and especially in winter, hyssop, sage and parsley are added to their cooking broth with the juice of green sorrel or the shoots of vines. Or white sauce may be made with almonds in place of nuts and with white sugar added.

If capons and chickens and pheasants are put into pastries entire, spice powder is put in and *agresta* (verjuice) is added in summer, and in winter, a little good wine may be added.

Item if they are put into pastries not entire, but cut up, fat may be added and sage and hyssop and parsley with sweet and strong spice powder. But the seasoning appropriate to the above when roasted is garlic sauce with almonds described above, or sweet wine beaten with the same in winter

and a little spice, or with *agresta* (verjuice) in summer, but then (still) less spice is put in.

But the seasoning for roasted ducks and geese and waterfowl of similar kind is black pepper sauce made of black toasted bread soaked in vinegar and their roasted liver pounded together and mixed with the drippings and *agresta* (verjuice) and all is boiled together to (proper) thickness.

About fish one must know that the grosser of flesh, the harder to digest and of greater superfluity and humoral nature (i.e. the more out of balance) they are, the more they need hotter and sharper condiments. And this is true not only for fish, but also for meat. From this follows that 'bestial' (animal-like) fish and especially the porpoise (lit. sea pig, *porcus marinus*), whether roasted or boiled, need hotter and sharper sauces. And this is similarly understood for other fish according to how much or little they resemble the sea pig (porpoise).

The condiment that is appropriate for the sea pig (porpoise) is strong boiled black pepper sauce whose composition is to be of black pepper and cloves and toasted bread soaked in vinegar, and mixed with broth of fish.

And if one should wish to preserve them for several days, a galantine is made whose composition is: Take cinnamon, galingale, and cloves and mix each two m. (unit), (and a) toasted bread, half a loaf of two imperials (price), the bread has boiled wine vinegar poured over it. (*quamtenum* - thus?) galantine is made with the cooking liquid of water and wine (used for) the fish. And the fish are cooked in water and wine, and the galantine is to be sufficient for ten people.

The condiment for sturgeon is cameline sauce whose composition is: Take white ginger, cloves, cinnamon, grains of paradise each 3 m (unit) and bread that is not toasted soaked in strong vinegar, and the sauce is made with *agresta* (verjuice). Or a white condiment may be made whose composition is: As much white ginger as you please, of blanched sweet almonds 2 ounces, and of peeled garlic one head. It is mixed with *liguto* (?) or *agresta* (verjuice) and the broth of the fish that is strained through a sieve and boiled.

For large roasted lampreys and moray eels, take white ginger, cloves, galingale and grains of paradise, each 3 m. (unit), and half a toasted bread loaf soaked in vinegar. It is mixed with the fat (drippings) of the fish and with *agresta* (verjuice) and boiled. Or a galantine may be made as described above. And as is said of the lamprey, so it may be understood of the moray.

The appropriate condiment for eels that are boiled or in a pastry is the white sauce for sturgeon, but in place of almonds, nuts are put in. Or it may be the green sauce described above for the meat of castrated rams, and especially for eel that is cooked by roasting. And this must be understood for the conger eel similarly as for the eel.

The appropriate condiment for boiled salmon and trout is pepper sauce with saffron whose composition is thus: Take pepper and white ginger each 3m (unit), bread that is toasted (but) not black, soaked in vinegar, and the broth of the fish. Half of a bread loaf, of saffron the weight of 2 (or 3?) grains of wheat. All is mixed together with the broth of the fish and boiled.

But the appropriate condiment for roasted (salmon and trout) is *agresta* (verjuice) or the juice of bitter oranges with sweet spice powder, and similarly for those in pastry.

The appropriate condiment for boiled (*eterlogi* (?)) is white sauce whose composition is: Take of white ginger one ounce, one head of garlic, and half a loaf of bread soaked in *agresta* (verjuice). It is mixed in *agresta* (verjuice). But the appropriate condiment for roasted ones is the above named green sauce.

The appropriate condiment for boiled red mullet (*roxetus*) is the above described cameline sauce, and it is to be similarly understood for gurnard (*gormatus* ?). But for roasted ones, the appropriate condiment is wine which is mixed with white ginger and thrown over the roasted fish and afterwards boiled up once. But in the summer, *vergutum* (verjuice) may be used in place of wine.

The appropriate condiment for *emeri* (a kind of crustacean?) is their cooking water with sweet spice powder.

The appropriate condiment for lobster is the above described green sauce, and that same sauce also suits boiled tench (read *tenca* for *tenea*?). But roasted tench is filled with parsley and spice powder and *agresta* (verjuice) inside and out. And a little olive oil is added to the *agresta* (verjuice) that is put on outside. And it must be similarly understood with *pigo* (?).

The appropriate condiment for carp is cameline sauce with the juice of bitter oranges. The composition of cameline sauce is written above.

The appropriate condiment for small fish is green sauce or sweet mustard. And for river crawfish, it

is vinegar with much salt.

The appropriate condiment for fried oysters is *agresta* (verjuice) with spice powder. But a boiled saffron sauce may be made as written above. And that is enough of condiments and sauces for diverse foods.

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