

## Maître Chiquart, Cook and Master of Ceremonies at the Court of Amadeus VIII of Savoy\*

▼ **ABSTRACT** Maître Chiquart, chief cook in the service of the House of Savoy at the beginning of the fifteenth century, has been studied in the course of the last few decades, in particular his cookbook known as *Du fait de cuisine*: a series of menus and recipes for a court feast and therefore a manifestation of the luxury of the kitchen and the table at the court of Duke Amadeus VIII. This article examines the aspects of this cookbook that most exalt the magnificence of that court. It examines, in particular, the creativity of the cook as expressed through elaborate recipes, rich ingredients and sophisticated culinary techniques, all intended to celebrate the duke. In some preparations, even the choice of colours is meant to present the guests of honour with their coats of arms and thus convey political-diplomatic messages.

▼ **RÉSUMÉ** Depuis plus de trente ans la figure de Maître Chiquart, chef de cuisine au service de la Maison de Savoie au début du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, fait l'objet de plusieurs études. Les recherches concernent principalement son livre *Du fait de cuisine* : une série de menus et de recettes pour un banquet qui apparaît comme une expression du luxe de la cuisine et de la table à la cour du duc Amédée VIII. Le présent article examine les aspects de ce livre qui exaltent le plus la magnificence de la cour de Savoie. La créativité du cuisinier s'exprime dans ses recettes très élaborées. Dans certaines

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préparations, le choix des couleurs représente les armoiries des invités d'honneur en véhiculant des messages dans une tonalité politico-diplomatique.

▼ **KEYWORDS** Chiquart, Cookbook, Amadeus VIII, Court of Savoy, Banquets, Recipes, Menus

▼ **MOTS CLÉS** Chiquart, Livre de cuisine, Amédée VIII, Cour de Savoie, Banquets, Recettes, Menus

Maître Chiquart and his cookbook have been the focus of considerable scholarly attention in the past four decades thus begging the question whether there is still more to be said.<sup>1</sup> Thanks to the work that has been carried out since the mid-1980s we are now well-informed about the culinary adventures of this master chef who flourished in the first decades of the fifteenth century and who worked for Amadeus VIII of Savoy. In 1985, Terence Scully published the edition of the only copy of the manuscript kept at the Bibliothèque cantonale du Valais in Sion (Switzerland), and has repeatedly returned to the topic.<sup>2</sup> Work done in the archives of the House of Savoy allowed us to better understand the figure and the career of this master chef.<sup>3</sup> *Du fait de cuisine*, a “little

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- 1 The present article is an extensive reworking of a paper presented at the *Amédée VIII* Conference, 22-24 September 2016, held at the Château de Chillon, and so far not yet published.
- 2 Terence SCULLY (ed.), “Du fait de cuisine par Maistre Chiquart 1420 (Ms. S 103 de la Bibliothèque Supersaxo, à la Bibliothèque cantonale du Valais, à Sion”, *Vallesia*, vol. 40 (1985), pp. 101-231, now also available in a digitized version ([http://doc.rero.ch/record/21865/files/I-N-268\\_1985\\_06\\_00.pdf](http://doc.rero.ch/record/21865/files/I-N-268_1985_06_00.pdf) - last accessed 12 June 2023). In the following footnotes, the references to this text are to the above-mentioned edition, cited as *Fait de cuisine*, the title preferred by Scully as mentioned in his Introduction, pp. 103-16. For the English translation, references are to *On Cookery*: Terence SCULLY (trans.), *Chiquart's 'On Cookery'. A Fifteenth-century Savoyard Culinary Treatise* (New York/Berne/Frankfurt am Main, 1986). Scully has also published on the topic in various other publications over the years, including: Terence SCULLY, “Aucune science de l'art de cuisiner et de cuisine. Chiquart's *Du fait de cuisine*”, *Food and Foodways*, vol. 2 (1987), pp. 199-214; Terence SCULLY, “Les ‘quatre causes principales’ du *Fait de cuisine* de Maître Chiquart”, in Bernard ANDENMATTEN, Agostino PARAVICINI BAGLIANI (eds), *Amédée VIII-Félix V, premier duc de Savoie et pape (1383-1451). Actes du colloque international, Ripaille-Lausanne, 23-26 octobre 1990* (Lausanne, 1992), pp. 457-62. I nevertheless would like to mention the following translation: Florence BOUAS, Frédéric VIVAS (eds), *Du fait de cuisine. Traité de gastronomie médiévale de Maître Chiquart* (Arles, 2008).
- 3 Unpublished biographical information about this chef can be found in the still fundamental publication by Antonella SALVATICO, *Il principe e il cuoco. Costume e gastronomia alla corte sabauda nel Quattrocento* (Turin, 1999), pp. 17-21: a book with which the present article often compares its results. Among the other publications on this topic, some of which will be mentioned in the following notes, I will only mention Monique LANSARD, “Un cuisinier à la cour d'Amédée VIII : Maistre Chiquart”, *Quaderni di civiltà alpina/Cahiers de Civilisation Alpine*, vol. 8 (1989), pp. 47-75; more recently Annick ENGLEBERT, “Transmission et mise en scène d'un savoir-faire dans le ‘Fait de cuisine’ de

compendium and booklet which has been compiled *On the Matter of Cookery* by Master Chiquart” (*cestui pitit compendi et libret dicté “Du fait de cuisine” par Maistre Chiquart*), composed in the barely normalized Franco-Provençal language of the time, has been examined by applying a variety of approaches and with uneven results: at times, comparing it to other European recipe books of the late Middle Ages, at times highlighting its literary and lexical peculiarities,<sup>4</sup> at times analysing other particular aspects.<sup>5</sup> As things stand, some doubts remain concerning the role of the *clerk*, John of Dudens (*Jehan de Dudens, clericus*) of Annecy, who claims to be the material extensor of the treatise to whom Chiquart in 1420 would have “dictated” the text or passed the necessary notes, as some comments would seem to suggest.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the extensive historiography surrounding the figure of Maître Chiquart and his cookbook, some aspects remain to be examined more closely. The aim here is to contribute to this by drawing attention to the elements that, more or less explicitly, highlight the celebratory intentions of the *Fait de cuisine* addressed to Duke Amadeus VIII of Savoy. The representation of ducal prestige and power, orchestrated by his cook and master of ceremonies, is brought out by the conspicuous number of preparations, sumptuous in terms of the quantity and quality of the ingredients. Some recipes clearly announce the political-diplomatic character of the meals described by Chiquart for a court feast planned to last two days (two lunches and two dinners).<sup>7</sup> This approach is mainly expressed via the use of precious ingredients and scenic devices to construct “princely” courses.

Perhaps the most representative element of Chiquart’s culinary art is, as we shall see, the meticulous use of colour, and not only for its aesthetic value. Rather, the chromatic project is precisely oriented towards the heraldic colours of the guest of honour to whom the feast is dedicated, as will be discussed later.

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Maitre Chiquart”, *Le Moyen Âge*, vol. 114, no. 1 (2008), pp. 93-110; Marie-Claire GÉRARD-ZAI, “Un réceptaire à la cour sabaudienne : le ‘Fait de cuisine’ de Maistre Chiquart”, *Revue historique neuchâteloise*, vol. 147, no. 3-4 (2010), pp. 163-74; Jean Yves SARDELLA, “Approche de la cuisine médiévale. Chiquart à la cour d’Amédée VIII de Savoie”, *Revue savoisienne*, vol. 157 (2017), pp. 25-45; Nadège GAUFFRE-FAYOLLE, “Mieux connaître les carrières et les fonctions du personnel des cuisines princières. Le cuisinier Maître Chiquart à la cour de Savoie sous Amedée VIII (1391-1439)”, *Food & History*, vol. 12, no. 3 (2014), pp. 57-84.

4 For a specific lexicographic examination, see Florian DIEU, *Les ustensiles de cuisine de Maistre Chiquart : étude étymologique et sémasiologique*. Mémoire de Maîtrise (Université Libre de Bruxelles, 2008-2009).

5 See note 41 and corresponding text.

6 *Fait de cuisine...* (Introduction), p. 127. The discussion on this topic was begun by Bruno LAURIOUX, *Le règne de Taillevent. Livres et pratiques culinaires à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1997), pp. 188-89.

7 This is what Chiquart calls the event: sometimes Scully translates the word *feast* as *banquet* (for example *On cookery...*, p. 116). A thorough semantic investigation of feasts and banquets in a context such as the Burgundian court – which shows many similarities with the court of Savoy at the time of Amadeus VIII – is to be found in Yann MOREL, *Approvisionnement, nourrir, représenter. L’alimentation à la cour des ducs de Bourgogne d’après les écrous de la dépense (1459-1477)*, thèse de doctorat (Université de Versailles-Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, 2014-15), vol. 1, pp. 451-91 (pp. 452-55 in particular for the meaning of the term “banquet”). The dissertation is available online (<https://www.theses.fr/2015VERS005S/abes/2015VERS005S.pdf> - last accessed 12 June 2023).

Chiquart builds his menus and recipes, without forgetting the taste of the food – a trait he shared with the cooks of the great courts of the time – devoting much attention to the artifices and special effects that make the true purpose of the event manifest. From this perspective, the *subtelties* stand out as spectacular intermissions that break the meal pattern during the feast which he describes in great detail.<sup>8</sup>

### **“A very honorable feast be given [...] to the honor of the lord who gives it”<sup>9</sup>**

The structure of the book follows the classic scheme of late medieval gastronomic literature.<sup>10</sup> It describes a series of eight menus for a two-day celebration during which each meal includes a couple of parallel menus, respectively based on meat and fish (fat menu and lean menu), to be brought to the table simultaneously to meet the dietary needs and personal tastes of the different guests. The text has been considered by some scholars to be a realistic account of an imposing, convivial event organized under the direction of Chiquart, even though the different hypotheses have not reached consensus on this point.

Scully’s argument, shared by most scholars, refers back to the court ceremony that is supposed to have taken place in 1403 on the occasion of the visit of the Duke of Burgundy, Philip II the Bold, who was accompanying his very young daughter Mary, soon to be bride of Amadeus VIII.<sup>11</sup> Others think it is rather the banquet in honour of Emperor Sigismund, who came to Chambéry in 1416 to elevate the Count of Savoy to ducal dignity.<sup>12</sup> The first hypothesis appears uncertain if we consider that Chiquart himself – at the end of the

8 This will be the subject of the last part of this article.

9 *On Cookery...*, p. 8; [...] *a faire une tres honnorable feste [...] a l'onneur du seigneur qui fait ladictte feste (Fait de cuisine...*, p. 131); see note 20.

10 For the original structure of Chiquart’s book, articulated by menu types followed by recipes, but also for other aspects of the *Fait de cuisine* that will be recalled later, see *ibid.*, pp. 180-95. There is a vast bibliography regarding cookbooks of the late Middle Ages, therefore, I will only refer here to the following publications, which remain essential. Again, by Bruno LAURIOUX, *Les livres de cuisine...*; Bruno LAURIOUX, “Les menus de banquet dans les livres de cuisine de la fin du Moyen Âge”, in Martin AURELL, Olivier DUMOULIN, Françoise THELAMON (eds), *La sociabilité à table. Commensalité et convivialité à travers les âges. Actes du Colloque, Rouen, 14-17 novembre 1990* (Rouen, 1992), pp. 273-82.

11 *Fait de cuisine...* (Introduction), pp. 108-109. For a general overview of the political relations between the dukes of Burgundy and the House of Savoy, see Bernard DEMOTZ, “Les relations burgundo-savoyardes vues de la Savoie à la fin du Moyen Âge. Essai de synthèse”, in Paul DELSALLE, Gilles DOCQUIER, Alain MARCHANDISSE et al. (eds), *Pour la singulière affection qu’avon a luy. Études bourguignonnes offertes à Jean-Marie Cauchies* (Turnhout, 2017), pp. 163-71. Other bibliographical references in footnotes 7, 22, 78, 82, 95.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 111. On the celebrations for the Emperor in Savoy, see Eva PIBIRI, “Des voyages pour un duché. L’accueil de Sigismond de Luxemburg à Chambéry pour l’investiture d’Amédée, entre préparation et cérémonial (1414-16)”, in Laurent RIPART, Christian GUILLERÉ, Pascal VUILLEMIN (eds), *La naissance du duché de Savoie (1416). Actes du colloque international de Chambéry, 18-20 février 2016* (Chambéry, 2020), pp. 65-94.

description of his seventy-eight recipes (as well as some variants) – recounts the real feast, which he claims to have planned personally, precisely for the visit of the Burgundian duke.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, several clues clearly suggest that the *Fait de cuisine* does not describe a specific event, but rather the “planning” of an imposing generic celebration,<sup>14</sup> as a synthesis at the end of the author’s long and qualified career as Amadeus VIII’s chief cook.<sup>15</sup> It was therefore meant to be a project for an exemplary event that in the mind and words of Chiquart, a true master, was to serve as a model for his successors in the Savoy kitchens.

The significance of the book as an expression of the gastronomic splendour at the court of the first Duke of Savoy (the “exalted, renowned and mighty Prince and Lord, Amadeus”)<sup>16</sup> would not be diminished if the theme of the feast that constitutes its structure were a simple narrative expedient to illustrate model banquets bringing together almost a thousand guests: a series of apparatus meals that were a paradigm of the sumptuousness of the kitchen and the table that the princely context required.<sup>17</sup> Its significance would not be lost even were it to be a reconstruction – almost certainly imaginary<sup>18</sup> – of a memorable feast around which to gather and illustrate very rich and often very elaborate recipes.<sup>19</sup>

13 *On Cookery...*, pp. 116-19; *Fait de cuisine...*, pp. 201-202.

14 We find, among other things, passages that call for supplementary adjustments that make no sense if the event had already taken place: “And if the feast should last longer, additional materials should be available”; “If it should happen that the feast is held in winter”; “[...] depending on the season of the year” / *Et se la fest duroit plus si soit on pourveu pour le plus; Et se ansy estoit che la feste se feist en yve; [...]* selonc le temps en quoy l'on sera (*On Cookery...*, pp. 12, 16, 17; *Fait de cuisine...*, pp. 133, 136).

15 The entire *Fait de cuisine* is told in the past tense, as if Chiquart had been off duty at that time. Furthermore, he also recalls, at times, the earlier years, when he had organized official events at the court of Savoy: “[...] and you [Prince and Lord, Amadeus] being occasionally desirous of and inclined to making feast and solemn banquets”; “I, Chiquart, who was his cook at the time, fulfilling my duty, prepared [...]” / *et vous soyés desirant et entendés par aucuns temps aucunes festes et sollenees receues fayre; moy, Chyquart, qui estoye son [Amadeus VIII] queux en ycelluy temps, en moi devoir faysant, appareillay [...]* (*On Cookery...*, pp. 7, 116; *Fait de cuisine...*, pp. 130, 201).

16 *On Cookery...*, p. 7; [...] *treshault, tresrenommé et trespuissant prince et seigneur, monseigneur Aymé (Fait de cuisine...*, p. 130).

17 From here on the reference to recipes will omit the titles of the Scully edition (see note 2) and will, instead, indicate nothing more than the recipe number and page from the English translation, followed by those of the original text.

18 Some clues can be found in expressions such as those already mentioned in note 14.

19 Maître Chiquart’s recipes do not seem to describe a feast that was actually planned for a specific event. As several clues seem to indicate, they rather provide general information about the culinary art he deployed at the court of Savoy in the early fifteenth century on the occasion of feasts and banquets. Thus, for example, see the allusion to the possibility of choosing alternative ingredients according to the season: “[...] and should the feast be held at the time of year when chicks are not available, get a hundred cockerels [...]”; [...] *se ainsi estoit que la feste se feist en temps qui ne se trouvassent poussins si hayés cent estoudeaux [...]* (recipe 21, *On Cookery...*, p. 49; *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 156). Or then “[...] if it should happen that he [the person who will be making it (a gratinée)] is in the season when new peas are available”; [...] *si ainsi est que on soit en la sayson en quoy l'on trouve de pois nouveaux* (recipe 62, *On Cookery...*, p. 93; *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 184). Yet other examples can be found here: recipe 45, *On Cookery...*, pp. 77-78 (*Fait de cuisine...*, p. 174); recipe 57a, *On Cookery...*, pp. 89-90 (*Fait de cuisine...*, p. 182); recipe 63, *On Cookery...*, pp. 94-95 (*Fait de cuisine...*, p. 185). In some cases these concern the

To begin with, God having granted that a very honorable feast be given, at which there may be kings, queens, dukes, duchesses, counts, countesses, princes, princesses, marquesses, marchionesses, barons, baronesses and prelates of various classes, and nobles, too, in large number, the following things are necessary both to cook for the regular household and to do the feast honorably and to the honor of the lord who gives it.<sup>20</sup>

The Savoy dynasty had political relations with the dukes of Burgundy from at least the fourteenth century, ties that were strengthened after the marriage of Amadeus VIII.<sup>21</sup> In the first decades of the fifteenth century, the Savoy tended to imitate the lifestyles and customs, including the dietary and convivial aspects of the Burgundian court, which had become a cultural model for all of Europe.<sup>22</sup>

From this point of view, it is irrelevant to try and establish whether Chi-quart's allusion to the pressure exerted by Duke Amadeus VIII is only a literary topos, even though the duke may have actually required him to deliver some written evidence of his culinary expertise via an organically constructed and reproducible version of the subject matter.<sup>23</sup> Rather than a literary topos, it

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possible exceptions for the days when jousts, tournaments and other "sporting" games were held, on which it was foreseen – contrary to the custom of the court of Savoy – that a lighter meal was prepared for lunch and a more abundant one for the evening: *Et se joustes, tournoyemens ou autres esbatemens se faysoient en ycelluy jour, soient les queux advisés de tant plus legierement appareillier le disner et le soupper soit de tant plus honnourable et habundant* (*Fait de cuisine...*, p. 200). This last passage is in the manuscript between fols 109r-111v but has been omitted in the English translation (*On Cookery...*, p. 115).

20 Ibid., p. 8; [...] *a faire un treshonourable feste en laquelle y soient roys, roynes, ducz, duchesses, contes, contesses, princes, princesses, marquis, marquises, barons, baronneses et prelatz de mains estatz, et nobles aussy a grant nombre, [il] faut, pour le ordinaire de la cuisine et pour faire la feste honnorablement a l'onneur du seigneur qui fait ladicte feste, les choses que s'ensuivent* (*Fait de cuisine...*, p. 131).

21 See note 11.

22 In the context of the ample historiography illustrating the very high levels of the art of cooking and the table at the court of the dukes of Burgundy, I limit my references to some of the most recent publications: Yann MOREL, "Les banquets à la cour de Bourgogne au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle : récits des chroniqueurs et données des comptes", *Food & History*, vol. 4, no. 1 (2006), pp. 67-84; Yann MOREL, "Le banquet à la cour de Bourgogne au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle : essai de définition", in Bruno LAURIoux, Agostino PARAVICINI BAGLIANI, Eva PIBIRI (eds), *Le Banquet. Manger, boire et parler ensemble (XII<sup>e</sup>-XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles)* (Florence, 2018), pp. 185-204; Estelle DOUDET, "Du rituel narratif à la réflexion politique. Festins en Bourgogne dans les mémoires et les chroniques officielles au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle", in Nelly LABÈRE (ed.), *Être à table au Moyen Âge* (Madrid, 2010), pp. 77-92; available online (<http://books.openedition.org/cvz/1549> - last accessed 12 June 2023). For a broader context, see the collected volume by Torsten HILTMANN, Franck VILTART, Werner PARAVICINI (eds), *La cour de Bourgogne et l'Europe : le rayonnement et les limites. Actes du colloque international, Paris, 9-11 octobre 2007* (Ostfildern, 2013). For a brief general overview, see Werner PARAVICINI, "Structure et fonctionnement de la cour bourguignonne au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle", in Jean-Marie CAUCHIES (ed.), *À la cour de Bourgogne. Le duc, son entourage, son train* (Turnhout, 1998), pp. 1-10. See also note 95.

23 "[...] yet nevertheless your devoted servant in great affection and desire, that, the memory of man being insecure and faulty and there being no record of things [...] and you being occasionally desirous of and inclined to making feasts and solemn banquets, I should set in writing some knowledge of the art of cooking and of cookery"; [...] *par maintes fois [vous] me avés requis et commandé que, comme la memoire de l'ome soit labile et deffailant et que des choses ne seroit nulle memoire ne certaineté [...] et vous soyés desirant et entendés par aucuns temps aucunes festes et sollemnees receues fayre, je voulsisse par escript laisser aucune science de l'art de cuisinerie et de cuisine* (*On Cookery...*, p. 7; *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 130).

might be ascribed to the real self-fashioning aspirations of the new duke, sought via literary means. From this latter point of view, it needs to be pointed out that the text communicates a legacy of know-how and experience that was worthy of being conserved as a repository for the future to avert what the author calls the *mentis humane fragilitas*. By recording this know-how it also became possible to hand it down to posterity and recognize the professionalism of the chef of the House of Savoy and with it the glory of the dukedom and its prince.<sup>24</sup> The promptings that came from Amadeus VIII are explicitly linked to a project meant to precisely document that “knowledge of the art of cooking and of cookery” (*science de l’art de cuisinerie et de cuisine*).<sup>25</sup> Chiquart’s knowledge, creativity, techniques and managerial abilities were the obvious result of personal talent and of skills acquired thanks to half a century of experience.<sup>26</sup> Thus a culinary *savoir faire*, a gastronomic memory resulting from his personal experimentation, would have been lost without written evidence, “there being no record of the thing were it not for writing”.<sup>27</sup>

The *Fait de cuisine* does not limit itself to confirming the ostentatious value of the princely banquets – and more generally the conviviality typical of *ancien régime* court society<sup>28</sup> – nor does it limit itself to reiterating the functions of these occasions as one of the instruments of political propaganda, an aspect which we will detail later on in this article. It also incarnates one of the “cultural” expressions that in those years contributed to exalting and to some extent legitimizing ducal power, as did the historical narrative of the dynasty and the interest taken in various artistic forms.<sup>29</sup> Similar to different art forms – and as was the case in other European courts of the time – the culinary art of the master cook (*maître queux*), expressed in all its perfection at gala banquets, was meant to contribute to “the courtesy and honor of his lord”.<sup>30</sup> The very description of the eight menus followed by the detailed explanation of the recipes gives the book an unprecedented cultural depth, closely tied to the figure of Amadeus VIII and to the contingent situation of the duchy. This link is thought to have been one of the reasons for the oblivion into which

24 *On Cookery...*, p. 3; *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 127. The learned Latin expressions in the exergue and in the Introduction are clearly due to the personal intervention of the *clericus*, the self-proclaimed “scribe” responsible for writing up the text.

25 See note 23.

26 Chiquart was in the service of the counts of Geneva for twenty years before entering the court of Savoy, where he stayed for more than thirty years (1402–33): Antonella SALVATICO, *Il principe e il cuoco...*, pp. 17–18; Nadège GAUFFRE-FAYOLLE, “Mieux connaître les carrières...”, p. 75 n. 92 and p. 82.

27 *On Cookery...*, p. 7; *ne seroit nulle memoire ne certainté se ce n’estoyent les escriptures (Fait de cuisine...*, p. 130). See note 23.

28 See Bruno LAURIOUX, “Les menus de banquet dans les livres de cuisine...”, p. 274 ff. As for the types of banquets and their functions, see the bibliography mentioned in notes 12 and 44.

29 An overview on the subject is in Guido CASTELNUOVO, “Amedée VIII et les arts (1391–1451). Stratégies culturelles et service princier dans la Savoie de la première moitié du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle”, in Élisabeth CROUZET-PAVAN, Jean-Claude MAIRE VIGUEUR (eds), *L’art au service du prince. Paradigme italien, expériences européennes (vers 1250-vers 1500)* (Rome, 2015), pp. 199–216.

30 *On Cookery...*, p. 34; [...] *pour faire courtoisie et honneur a son seigneur (Fait de cuisine...*, p. 147).

this manual fell, rapidly forgotten precisely because of the transformations that soon would have invested the princely State of Savoy.<sup>31</sup>

In this atmosphere of crisis, evident from about the middle of the fifteenth century, the *Fait de cuisine* – unlike other late medieval recipe books that circulated all over Europe – probably never left the Savoy territories, and perhaps not even the court sphere itself. A check on the text's circulation, however, is most probably to be sought in its intrinsic characteristics: in particular, the narrative approach, which was highly personalized and addressed to Amadeus VIII, and linked to the brightest period of his duchy. This made it ill-suited to the successive phase of high tension that seriously destabilized the Savoyard State.<sup>32</sup> The ongoing weakening of Savoy power had an impact in several domains, among which the different forms of ritual should not be overlooked, rituals which for a long time had made the power of the sovereign manifest. Regarding the Savoy dynasty, for example, the gradual decline of traditional funerary practices has been well studied.<sup>33</sup> In this regard, it cannot be forgotten that the solemn rites associated with the death of princes also included banquets as “an integral and fundamental part of the ceremonial”.<sup>34</sup> Above all, it is important to remember that Chiquart himself contributed to the preparation of the ritual banquet in memory of Amadeus VIII's consort, Marie of Burgundy, held at Hautecombe in March 1423 (almost six months after the duchess's death).<sup>35</sup> If the rituals of feasts and banquets were also affected by the transformation of the State of Savoy (the topic would require a specific

31 Bruno LAURIOUX, *Le règne de Taillevent...*, pp. 194-95.

32 The reasons for the crisis, which affected the duchy from at least 1440 onward, have been traced to both internal autonomist forces and attacks by powerful neighbouring states. On the subject of the events of the Savoyard State since the mid-fifteenth century, see above all the book by Alessandro BARBERO, *Il ducato di Savoia. Amministrazione e corte di uno stato franco-italiano* (Rome/Bari, 2002), which includes an extensive bibliography. In particular regarding the crisis, see Luisa Clotilde GENTILE, “Dalla costruzione alla crisi dello Stato: festa e politica alla corte di Savoia nel XV secolo”, in Antonio RIGON (ed.), *Atti del Convegno di studio svoltosi in occasione della XVIII edizione del Premio Internazionale Ascoli Piceno (1-2 dicembre 2006)* (Florence, 2009), pp. 171-206.

33 Further bibliography includes: Nadia POLLINI, *La mort du Prince, rituels funéraires de la Maison de Savoie (1343-1451)* (Lausanne, 1994), pp. 57-64; Bernard ANDENMATTEN, Laurent RIPART, “Ultimes itinérances. Les sépultures des princes de la Maison de Savoie entre Moyen Âge et Renaissance”, in Agostino PARAVICINI BAGLIANI, Eva PIBIRI, Denis REYNARD (eds), *L'itinérance des seigneurs (XIV<sup>e</sup>-XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles). Actes du colloque international de Lausanne et Romainmôtier (29 novembre-1<sup>er</sup> décembre 2001)* (Lausanne, 2003), pp. 193-248, available on “Reti Medievali Rivista” (<http://www.rmoa.unina.it/44/1/RM-Ripart-Itinerances.pdf> - last accessed 12 June 2023); Eva PIBIRI, “The Funerals of the Dukes of Savoy in the Fifteenth Century: Between Austerity and Splendour”, in Monique CHATENET, Murielle GAUDE-FERRAGU, Gérard SABATIER (eds), *Princely Funerals in Europe 1400-1700. Commemoration, Diplomacy and Political Propaganda* (Turnhout, 2021), pp. 141-53.

34 Antonella SALVATICO, “Tutte le cose della vita erano di una pubblicità sfarzosa e crudele. Quattro banchetti funebri del tardo medioevo sabaudo (1392-1423)”, in Rinaldo COMBA, Anna Maria NADA PATRONE, Irma NASO (eds), *La mensa del principe. Cucina e regimi alimentari nelle corti sabaude (XIII-XV secolo)* (Cuneo, 1997), p. 65 ff. (p. 67 for the citation).

35 The available sources are interwoven with Chiquart's double funeral menus (*ibid.*, pp. 73-78 and 83-87).



study), it can be understood why a cookbook celebrating the splendours of the Savoy court could have been seen to be inappropriate and was therefore forgotten.

## The contribution of the cook to the magnificence of the court of Amadeus VIII

The encomiastic character of the *Fait de cuisine* is announced by the author when he affirms his wish to honour, with his writing, but even more so with his cuisine, the “Prince and Lord, Amadeus” (*prince et seigneur, monseigneur Aymé*), whose ducal prerogative and prestige he emphasizes repeatedly, with a lexical repertoire that goes beyond the classic deference formally due to his *seigneur*. Chiquart expresses all the pride and dignity of the new duchy, but also the pride for a profession carried out respecting the canons and rituals imposed by the prestige of the duke, for whom “things should be done so honorably as to be to the honor of the lord”.<sup>36</sup> The intent therefore appears clearly to be propagandistic, since it aims to promote the public image of the recent dukedom, through “une stratégie de glorification du nouveau duc”.<sup>37</sup>

Added to the objective of safeguarding the gastronomic memory already mentioned, it is obvious that the material and concrete purpose of the *Fait de cuisine* should not be neglected. It reveals an obvious didactic and informative approach, so much so that it presents itself as a practical manual for the preparation of official banquets, a sort of protocol for court celebrations. The author addresses the readers directly using the pronoun *vous* (and overusing the adjective *votre* [i.e. your] when mentioning each component or instrument used), probably identifying among the recipients of his lessons primarily the cooks who, in the future, would serve the dukes of Savoy,<sup>38</sup> and expressing a manifest desire to cater to the “use, profit and pleasure of many” (*l'utilité, prouffit et plaisir de pluseurs*).<sup>39</sup> Proof of this is that the text omits the details regarding the preparation of simple dishes,<sup>40</sup> which evidently are taken for

36 *On Cookery...*, p. 24; in the original: [...] *les choses se doyvent faire au plus honorablement que faire se puet [pour] l'honneur du seigneur* (*Fait de cuisine...*, p. 141). Regarding rituality as a representation of power at the court of Savoy: Thalia BRERO, *Rituels dynastiques et mises en scène du pouvoir. Le cérémonial princier à la cour de Savoie (1450-1550)* (Florence, 2017).

37 Bruno LAURIOUX, *Le règne de Taillevent...*, p. 185.

38 In fact, the book explicitly addresses the cooks who were meant to organize banquets and solemn receptions: “and you [Prince and Lord, Amadeus] being occasionally desirous of and inclined to making feasts and solemn banquets [...]”; *et vous [monseigneur Aymé] soyés desirant et entendés par aucuns temps aucunes festes et sollenees receues fayre [...]* (*On Cookery...*, p. 7; *Fait de cuisine...*, pp. 120, 130).

39 *On Cookery...*, p. 8; *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 130.

40 Concerning the etiquette at the court of Savoy (but also at those of other dominant lineages in Piedmont) in the late Middle Ages, see Luisa Clotilde GENTILE, “Il cerimoniale come linguaggio politico nelle corti di Savoia, Acaia, Saluzzo e Monferrato”, in Paola BIANCHI, Luisa Clotilde GENTILE (eds), *L'affermarsi della corte sabauda: dinastie, poteri, élites in Piemonte e Savoia fra tardo medioevo e prima età moderna* (Turin, 2006), pp. 55-76.

granted in the case of cooks of proven experience. On the contrary, the recipes mentioned are always linked to preparations of a certain complexity. A lot of time is spent giving the reader detailed descriptions of the various steps and suggesting particular tricks and precautions to be kept in mind; this is a sign of Chiquart's "pragmatism", which confirms the didactic purpose of his book. Many of the recipes open with expressions such as "to instruct the person who will be making these things" (*pour donner entendement a celluy qui fera cestes chose*), or "I, Chiquart, [...], will instruct the master" (*Je Chiquart [...] vueil je enseigner audit maistre*), or yet again "under the direction of me, Chiquart" (*pour le conseil de moy, Chyquart*),<sup>41</sup> since, as the author puts it, "no one is born a master", "not everyone is a master of it",<sup>42</sup> and therefore it would have been necessary to learn from those who are more expert.

The characteristic of the princely feast, a "noble, great and notable feast",<sup>43</sup> as an occasion to exhibit wealth, prestige and power is one of the most studied aspects of pre-modern conviviality, and even more so that of the Renaissance, and is fully consistent with the mentality of the time.<sup>44</sup> The ostentatious character of the *Fait de cuisine*, already mentioned, is apparent from the outset and the long introduction contains a list of not only vast amounts of food but also a considerable variety of foodstuffs that were, at the time, considered a sign of social distinction, together with a conspicuous supply of kitchen utensils. All were elements needed to set up "in a grand and honorable fashion" (*grandement et honnorablement*) sumptuous banquets that – once again – worthily celebrated the ducal court.<sup>45</sup> The supplies of food amount to several hundred animal carcasses (rams, pigs, calves, oxen, lambs and kids, and birds of various species), game and fish of all kinds in impressive quantities, thousands of eggs, quintals of cheese and flour, large stocks of spices in at least ten varieties (in addition to rice and sugar), many baskets of dried or candied fruit, barrels of vinegar, verjuice, mustard, oil.<sup>46</sup> As for equipment, the list includes all sorts of

41 For example, recipe 6, *On Cookery...*, p. 22 (*Fait de cuisine...*, p. 140); recipe 10, *On Cookery...*, pp. 34, 36 ff. (*Fait de cuisine...*, pp. 147, 148).

42 [...] *pour donner a entendre a celluy qui fera ceste ouvre cy, car chescun n'en nest pas maistre* (recipe 29, *On Cookery...*, p. 61; *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 164).

43 *On Cookery...*, p. 97; *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 187.

44 Studies on banquets in medieval Europe are manifold and mostly refer to individual court realities (as is the case of the above-mentioned Burgundian court, see note 22). A review of research on princely eating can be found in Bruno LAURIOUX, "Alimentation de cour, alimentation à la cour au Moyen Âge : nouvelles orientations de recherche", *Food & History*, vol. 4, no. 1 (2006), pp. 9-27. For an overview, it is always useful to consult Gerd ALTHOFF, "Obbligatorio mangiare: pranzi, banchetti e feste nella vita sociale del Medioevo", in Jean-Louis FLANDRIN, Massimo MONTANARI (eds), *Storia dell'alimentazione* (Rome/Bari, 1997), pp. 234-42. For later periods, but with interesting elements of comparison, see Ken ALBALA, *The Banquet. Dining in the Great Courts of Late Renaissance Europe* (Urbana/Chicago, 2007); Pierluigi RIDOLFI, *Rinascimento a tavola. La cucina e il banchetto nelle corti italiane* (Rome, 2015).

45 *On Cookery...*, pp. 3-6; *Fait de cuisine...*, pp. 127-29. One bibliographical reference related to kitchen utensils in Chiquart's time at the Savoy court is found in note 4.

46 A precise analysis of the foodstuffs mentioned can be found in Antonella SALVATICO, *Il principe e il cuoco...*, pp. 101-104.

different implements in imposing numbers, including gold and silver trays, but also tin and wooden ones.<sup>47</sup> Not to mention – among “all other things that are necessary in cooking”<sup>48</sup> – complete batteries of fire vessels for the different types of cooking; service vessels of various types; knives and spits of all sizes, including mechanical ones (“roasters... with rotating spits”);<sup>49</sup> skewers of various lengths; grills for barbecuing and toasting bread; large sauce boats and enormous soup tureens (“two-handled pots” or *cornues*); many hundreds of fine white cloths to cover the serving tables (*dreceurs*) and for various uses in the kitchen; numerous cartloads of wood and coal to feed the fires and ovens, and the list could go on. Nor should they lack – especially if, as one reads, the feast were to take place in winter – significant reserves of torches and candles to illuminate the rooms of the various kitchens or work stations, entrusted respectively to the cooks with their workers (*ouvriers*), assigned to the preparation of different categories of food, and coordinated by the head chef.<sup>50</sup> It was also necessary to prepare the spaces required to set up the kitchens and the warehouses for the storage of food and other things, which, Chiquart warned, had to arrive at the place of the event starting a couple of months before the established date.

The range of food cannot but reflect the tendency of pre-modern aristocratic gastronomy and, as has been demonstrated, is placed more precisely in the wake of French cooking customs, with some traces of the Italian tradition,<sup>51</sup> even though it differs in many ways and reveals marked notes of originality. Compared to other late medieval treatises, the ingredients used in the recipes of the *Fait de cuisine* are both more abundant and more articulated, with dishes that give a more important role to the products most representative of an elite setting.<sup>52</sup> The assortment of spices, for example, is much richer

47 This being a sign of the presence not only of higher-ranking guests, but also people from lower social strata such as the entourage of invited lords including, for example, their grooms and servants, and possibly personal chefs with corresponding staff. The huge purchases for the kitchen planned by Chiquart are considerably larger than those made almost fifty years later for the wedding of Charles I of Burgundy, known as the Bold (Yann MOREL, *Approvisionner, nourrir, représenter...*, p. 484).

48 *On Cookery...*, p. 16. Consider the expression used in the original text where we practically find the title attributed to Chiquart's book (my underlining): [...] *toutes autres chouses que sunt necessaires pour le fait de la cuisine* (*Fait de cuisine...*, p. 136).

49 *On Cookery...*, p. 13; *rustisseurs [...] chievres* (*Fait de cuisine...*, p. 133).

50 *On Cookery...*, pp. 8-17; *Fait de cuisine...*, pp. 131-36. For an efficient organization of work in the kitchen the workers – as the text points out – had to remain idle: *Et pource que les ouvrieres ne se reposent et que ilz naient de riens defaulte* (*On Cookery...*, p. 14; *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 134). The complex structure of the kitchen staff at the court of Savoy was more recently studied by Nadège GAUFFRE-FAYOLLE, “Mieux connaître les carrières...”, pp. 57-84, with bibliography. For the professions ranging from the Middle Ages to the early modern period, see Ken ALBALA, “Professional Cooking, Kitchens and Service Work”, in Fabio PARASECOLI, Peter SCHOLLIERS (eds), *A Cultural History of Food. Vol. 3 In the Renaissance* (London/New York, 2012), pp. 117-34.

51 Bruno LAURIOUX, *Le règne de Taillevent...*, p. 190.

52 On the social connotation of food, see Allen J. GRIECO, “Food and Social Classes in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy”, in Jean-Louis FLANDRIN, Massimo MONTANARI (eds), *Food: A Culinary History*, (New York, 1999), pp. 302-12. See also, Bruno LAURIOUX, “Distinction et alimentation à la fin du

and some varieties – mainly cinnamon and ginger – are often used without parsimony, and even in “great quantity” (*grant foyson*), especially in sauces and gravies accompanying meat or fish dishes.<sup>53</sup> The preference of our *maître de cuisine* for ginger and cinnamon is confirmed by the regular purchases of these spices destined for the *coquina* of the hôtel of Savoy and appearing in their account books.<sup>54</sup> Much the same for the large quantities of sugar delivered to the *coquina*, and in turn generously used in the recipes of the *Fait de cuisine* where this ingredient appears in different varieties and colours. At the court of Savoy, this was a gastronomic fashion that anticipated what would, elsewhere, take hold only later in time.<sup>55</sup>

Another distinctive element of our cookbook concerns the description of the preparations, which, as we have mentioned, is unusually precise and even prolix, with meticulous explanations of the method of execution and an attention to detail that cannot be found elsewhere. Even when the text includes some recipes already mentioned in previous culinary literature with the same title,<sup>56</sup> here the interpretation is entirely personal, appropriate to the context and to the celebratory purposes, which are repeatedly underlined.

Chiquart could well have encountered, during his formative years, some famous texts of haute cuisine, even though he denies it.<sup>57</sup> In particular, he certainly knew the aristocratic recipes of the *Viandier*, a text dating back to at least a century earlier and a cookbook of great success well beyond the

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Moyen Âge”, in Jean-Philippe GENET, Ennio Igor MINEO (eds), *Marquer la prééminence sociale. Actes de la conférence organisée à Palerme en 2011 par SAS en collaboration avec l'École française de Rome et l'Université de Palerme* (Rome/Paris, 2014), pp. 323-46.

- 53 The importance of sauces in medieval cooking is well known and is linked to the relationship between gastronomy and dietetics. It is no coincidence that in the *Fait de cuisine* we find some of them taken from the treatise *De peste* by Antonio Guaineri, a doctor to the House of Savoy who overlapped with Chiquart: ANTONII GUAYNERII *Opus praeclarum ad praxim non mediocriter necessarium* (Lugduni, 1525), fols 109v, 229r. See, in particular, various kinds of “broth” (*broet*): recipe 1, *On Cookery...*, pp. 17-18 (*Fait de cuisine...*, p. 137); recipe 15, *On Cookery...*, pp. 41-42 (*Fait de cuisine...*, p. 151); recipe 23, *On Cookery...*, p. 55 (*Fait de cuisine...*, p. 160); recipe 37, *On Cookery...*, pp. 70-71 (*Fait de cuisine...*, pp. 169-70). On the connection between cuisine and dietetics during the Middle Ages, with specific reference to courts, see Marilyn NICLOUD, “Les savoirs diététiques, entre contraintes médicales et plaisirs aristocratiques”, *Micrologus*, vol. 16 (2008), pp. 233-55.
- 54 These accounts, among other things, list a wide range of spices and large quantities of sugar, the storage and administration of which was under the care of an apothecary: Irma NASO, “Sapori d'Oriente alla corte sabauda. Le spezie in cucina al tempo di Amedeo VIII”, in Rinaldo COMBA, Anna Maria NADA PATRONE, Irma NASO (eds), *La mensa del Principe...*, pp. 121-44; Irma NASO, *La cultura del cibo. Alimentazione, dietetica, cucina nel basso Medioevo* (Turin, 1999), pp. 181-205. Also Fanny ABBOTT, *Des comptes d'apothicaires. Les épices dans la comptabilité de la Maison de Savoie (XIV<sup>e</sup> et XV<sup>e</sup> s.)* (Lausanne, 2012).
- 55 Chiquart is considered the pioneer of certain gastronomic fashions. This characteristic, which is self evident thanks to the innovative character of the contents of his cookbook, has been judged as another of the potential reasons for the work's limited fortune: a hypothesis that can certainly be agreed upon (see notes 31 and 32).
- 56 For some examples, see notes 70 and 76.
- 57 “[...] nor have I any books or writings bearing on this subject”; [...] *je n'ay nuls livres ouz escriptz faysans de cecy [de l'art de cuisinerie et de cuisin] mencion ne memoyre* (*On Cookery...*, p. 7; *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 130).

Middle Ages into the Renaissance. He might also have known the recipes of the *Ménagier de Paris*, more or less contemporary to him, although this treatise has to be linked to an upper middle-class setting. Indeed, in the *Fait de cuisine* some clues point in this direction: for example, some recipes were already present in the two cited cookbooks, where they were called the same thing and used analogous ingredients, but lacked the additional information given by Chiquart concerning the procedure to be followed. A detailed and systematic comparison of all the recipes would be required to verify this hypothesis but cannot be pursued here since it would take us too far from the topic of the present article.

In any case, whether or not Chiquart was partially inspired by the recipes of other practitioners, he had undoubtedly built up a remarkable technical level and a repository of ideas by drawing on knowledge and practices widely circulating across Europe in elite cooks' circles at that time. More to the point, his long, qualifying career enabled him to demonstrate a certain autonomy and originality, both in the kitchen and in the organization of important banquets at court.<sup>58</sup>

## Cookery as an exaltation of power

Luxury emerges in its highest expression with the most sophisticated preparations in which the preciousness of cookery is made manifest in various ways. In this sense, the gilding of certain foods, above all poultry or parts of other roasted animals, is particularly significant: the procedure for the execution of the gilding (*doreure*) described by Chiquart does not deviate from the culinary tradition, in particular the French one,<sup>59</sup> though he does use it more extensively. The visual impact of the golden crust, obtained by applying a coating of thin sheets of gold leaf or – as was the custom among late medieval cooks – a golden-yellow coating of egg yolk and saffron,<sup>60</sup> conveys

<sup>58</sup> Among the numerous editions of the *Viandier* and the *Ménagier de Paris* previously mentioned, I will only use the following ones: Terence SCULLY (ed.), *The Viandier of Taillevent. An Edition of All Extant Manuscripts* (Ottawa, 1988); Georgine Elizabeth BRERETON, Janet MACKAY FERRIER (eds), *Le Mesnagier de Paris* (Paris, 1994). More recently and with a different approach, see Jean-François KOSTA-THÉFAINE (ed.), *Le Viandier. Recettes de cuisine du Moyen Âge* (Clermont-Ferrand, 2011). On the interaction of the *Fait de cuisine* with French recipe books, and probably also Italian ones, see Bruno LAURIOUX, *Le règne de Taillevent...*, pp. 190-91.

<sup>59</sup> Terence SCULLY (ed.), *The Viandier of Taillevent...*, pp. 122-23.

<sup>60</sup> Chiquart specifies that saffron made the gilding with egg yolk more stable: “[...] and a little saffron only to sustain the colour of the egg yolks”; [...] *et ung pou de saffran soulement pour tenir la couleur de moyons des oeufs* (recipe 62, *On Cookery...*, p. 93; *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 184). Regarding the use of saffron in cookery as a symbol of gold, see Bruno LAURIOUX, “Un désir d’or. Remarques sur la production et les usages alimentaires du safran au Moyen Âge”, in Aline DURAND (ed.), *Plantes exploitées, plantes cultivées: cultures, techniques et discours. Études offertes à Georges Comet* (Aix-en-Provence, 2007), pp. 77-94. It should be pointed out that medieval dietary theories attributed therapeutic value to gold, and this is picked up on by Chiquart in one of the recipes he mentioned among the dishes for sick people grouped together at the end of the *Fait de cuisine*. I am referring to the recipe he labelled as

an unmistakable image of the magnificence of the ducal court, emphasized by the large serving trays, also made of gold.<sup>61</sup> The image of opulence is also expressed by redundant dishes that literally piled up on serving platters large pieces of meat or costly fish, cooked and prepared in different ways, creating a profusion of food meant to amaze the diners and celebrate the prince.

Another of the guidelines that inspire Chiquart's culinary practice is the idea of beauty, which pervades the entire cookbook, expressing itself, in this case as well, with an uncommon emphasis. The search for aesthetic perfection concerns not only the appearance and presentation of the courses, including the use of colours, but also every phase of kitchen technique behind the scenes. A princely court, it is said, must have beautiful kitchens, that is rooms, equipment and materials in perfect order, from every point of view. And so the vocabulary of the *Fait de cuisine* adapts itself to the insistent use of the term *beau/belle* (i.e. beautiful), variously declined and used in numerous ways. Thus, obviously, all the ingredients will be beautiful, that is to say of the best quality and in any case the choicest that can be found. Everything from utensils to tableware, from the cooking embers to the water used to wash the vegetables, was said to be beautiful. It is clear that the semantic field of the concept of beauty, obsessively reiterated, is identified more than anything else with that of neatness, just as frequently rendered with the word "clean" (*nect*) and its derivatives such as "cleanly" (*nectement...*), with which the term "beautiful" is often combined. The extreme attention paid to the respect of hygienic norms is reiterated with continual recommendations regarding the cleanliness of the environments frequented by the cooks, while insisting on the importance of carefully cleaning and washing the ingredients, rinsing them several times in cold or warm water.<sup>62</sup> Chiquart, therefore, distinguished himself for his

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"Restorative" (*restaurand*), a very rich restorative preparation that contained gold and precious stones, practically a medical-alchemical mixture of ingredients (recipe 65, *On Cookery...*, pp. 98-100; *Fait de cuisine...*, pp. 188-89).

61 For some examples, see *Fait de cuisine...*, pp. 141-42. Other than the serving platters of precious metals (gold and silver) there is also mention of platters made with base metals and other materials, such as tin and wood, clearly meant to be used for serving at the tables occupied by socially less important commensals who, it might be pointed out, were also served smaller portions (Antonella SALVATICO, *Il principe e il cuoco...*, p. 130).

62 In fact, it is suggested that the ingredients be rid of all impurities and then washed as much as four or five times. There are several examples, including the method for cleaning the almonds to be used in the preparation of "Camelin Broth" (*broet camellain*): "take an amount of almonds [...] and have them well cleaned and well washed in four or five changes of good warm water"; *prennes la quantité d'amendres [...] et les faictes tresbien nectoier et tresbien laver .IIII. ou .V. fois en belle eaue tede* (recipe 31, *On Cookery...*, p. 64; *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 165). The attention to detail with regard to hygiene is also evident in the advice to cover – with nice, white, clean cloth – every vessel containing processed ingredients, especially cake fillings: recipe 21 mentions "an immaculately clean two-handed pot, and have it covered with a good clean white cloth so that nothing unclean can fall into it"; *une cornue belle, blanche et necte, et si soit bien couverte d'une belle, blanche et necte toile affin que riens qui ne fust nectz ne tombe dedans* (*On Cookery...*, p. 50; *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 157). Or, to mention another example, recipe 40 recommends removing the pedicel from candied grapes: "candied raisins [...] be carefully seeded"; *les raisins [confits] soient tresbien espicollés* (*On Cookery...*, p. 73; *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 171).

extreme care in the hygiene of the environment and the food: a preoccupation that was perhaps not foreign to the advice of the court physicians in those times of epidemics, and it is not by chance that one finds an echo of these doctors in the accounts of the House of Savoy.<sup>63</sup>

The *Fait de cuisine* presents another interesting characteristic: the importance given to colours, often in sauces and broths to be served with dull coloured foods, but also in some pottages/sops (*sauce/saulce/salse, broet/brouet, potaige/potayge*). If “the pleasure for the eyes” has always been considered important by great chefs,<sup>64</sup> Chiquart himself pays great attention to the aesthetic effect of his dishes which are certainly to be admired even before being tasted. While it is true that in late medieval Europe colour played an important role for the highest of the elites, especially as a form of spectacle,<sup>65</sup> in this regard Chiquart’s style is even broader and more complex. On the one hand, in his menus he alternates courses of different colours, which are relatively simple in execution and in themselves not very showy. In this case, the aim is not just to create a chromatic balance within every course and every meal. The play of colours in his dishes, besides making the refinement and wealth of the court even more obvious (due, as well, to the high cost of the colouring materials used), also becomes – more clearly than elsewhere – a way to represent and communicate ducal power. On the other hand, from this point of view Chiquart enhances the propagandistic character of some more complex and truly spectacular recipes:<sup>66</sup> an aspect that, while not foreign to the great medieval princely banquets, appears, in our view, here with greater clarity. Chiquart’s use of the language of heraldry to name certain chromatic tonalities, in particular the choice of the terms such as *goules/gueules*

63 Irma NASO, *Medici e strutture sanitarie nella società tardo-medievale. Il Piemonte dei secoli XIV e XV* (Milan, 1982), pp. 27-28. Chiquart might well have listened to the recommendations of Antonio Guaineri, the court doctor, whose treatise *De Peste* (see note 53) he seems to have known. In any case, the influence of the “prescriptions and orders of the noble, good and worthy lord doctors” (*reservé les ordonnances et dictés des nobles, bons et vaillans seigneurs mediciens: On Cookery...*, p. 97; *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 187) on the cook of the House of Savoy is confirmed by the recipes dedicated to the guests who might have fallen ill during a banquet; these are given in the *Nota pro infirmis*, at the end of the *Fait de cuisine* (recipes 65-78, *On Cookery...*, pp. 98-114; *Fait de cuisine...*, pp. 188-97).

64 Regarding the pleasure of “sight” as a sensory approach, documented above all in late medieval France, see Mireille VINCENT-CASSY, “La vue et les mangeurs : couleurs et simulacres dans la cuisine médiévale”, in *Banquets et manières de table au Moyen Âge* (Aix-en-Provence, 1996), pp. 159-75 (<http://books.openedition.org/pup/3557> - last accessed 12 June 2023). For an historical-artistic interpretation, and specific reference to the court of Burgundy in the fifteenth century, see Christina NORMORE, *A Feast for the Eyes. Art, Performance, and the Late Medieval Banquet* (Chicago, 2015).

65 This is one of the approaches to colour in association with food across late medieval Europe discussed by Christopher M. WOOLGAR, “Medieval food and colour”, *Journal of Medieval History*, vol. 44, no. 1 (2018), pp. 1-20, in particular pp. 14-18 (<https://doi.org/10.1080/03044181.2017.1401391> - last accessed 12 June 2023). The author provides an interesting overview, that is actually rather overlooked by scholars of food history.

66 I quote here only one example among those that will be found further on, that is a part-coloured dish: see text corresponding to notes 74-76.

to describe red and “silver” (*argent*) for white, reveals the function attributed to colours – as we shall see more clearly below – even in a political context.<sup>67</sup>

In this collection of recipes for Amadeus VIII, green is the most frequent colour. It is obtained by crushing or mincing aromatic herbs, almost always parsley.<sup>68</sup> The dominance of green, compared to yellow would seem to be more present in other contemporary texts, was probably due to the Savoy dynasty’s preference for this particular colour. Among other things, a predilection for green clothing appeared from at least the mid-fourteenth century.<sup>69</sup> And perhaps it is not by chance that Chiquart lingers on a specified shade of light and bright green (*vert/verd gay*), a colour more in keeping with the joyful atmosphere of the feast rather than dark green.<sup>70</sup> This choice of terms shows extreme precision in the search for the desired *nuance*, such as the rare shades of pink or violet, which he mentions as well but that are problematic to reconstruct today.<sup>71</sup>

Another colour characterizing many dishes is “gold”, or even just yellow (*or/jaune*): it was obtained – as usual in medieval cookery – by using precious

67 Chiquart chooses terms such as “silver” (*argent*) for white and *goules/gueules* to describe a particular shade of red, a bright red colour (*On Cookery...*, pp. 166-67; *Fait de cuisine...*, pp. 143-44). The latter colour is obviously different from the lighter rosy red of some recipes, as in the “pink broth” / *broet rossee*: “[...] so that the colour of that broth is more pinkish than red”; [...] *que si la couleur dudit bouillon soit plus sur la couleur rosee que de goules* (recipe 8, *On Cookery...*, p. 28; *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 143; recipe 32, *On Cookery...*, p. 65; *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 166). For the use of colour in connection with heraldry, see Christopher M. WOOLGAR, “Medieval food and colour...”, p. 18.

68 The composition of the green sauce – already to be found in earlier texts – can vary from one cook to another, as can the shade: see Enrico CARNEVALE SCHIANCA, *La cucina medievale. Lessico, storia, preparazioni* (Florence, 2011), pp. 171-72, *sub voce* “Colore”. Chiquart’s knowledge of the properties of aromatic herbs, which led him to give them an important role, maybe also for dietetic purposes, would deserve a digression which is not possible here. With reference to the colours, from now on I will avoid the generic references to the edition of the text, as these are easily found through the “Index” (*On Cookery...*, pp. 127-38; *Fait de cuisine...*, pp. 207-31).

69 We must not forget that Amadeus VI was called the “Green Count” because he had chosen this colour to stand for him, even in his clothing: Agnès PAGE, *Vêtir le Prince. Tissus et couleurs à la Cour de Savoie (1427-1447)* (Lausanne, 1993). On the symbolic meaning of colours, in particular of green from a more general point of view, see Michel PASTOUREAU, “Une couleur en mutation : le vert à la fin du Moyen Âge”, *Comptes rendus des séances de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, vol. 151 (2007), pp. 705-31 (esp. p. 727 and note 65, with bibliography). By the same Michel PASTOUREAU, “Le vert à la fin du Moyen Âge. Une couleur en mutation”, in Michel PASTOUREAU, *Les signes et les songes. Études sur la symbolique et la sensibilité médiévales* (Florence, 2013), pp. 209-36.

70 Chiquart points out that the dark green colour of a kind of “broth” (*broet*) made with chicken or fish, the “Savoy Broth” (*broet de Savoye*) – already to be found in the *Ménagier de Paris* (see note 58), but not in the *Viandier* (see *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 138 note 53) – could turn out too sombre and funereal due to the presence of parsley in great quantity (*grant foyson*). For this reason, he suggests making it more luminous and “nice” (*gentil*) by adding a bit of saffron: “Should it turn out that the pottage is too green, add in a little saffron and it will be a merry green”; *Et se ainsy est que le potaige soit tropt vert, sy y mectés ung pou de saffran, si sera sur le verd gay* (recipe 3, *On Cookery...*, p. 20; *Fait de cuisine...*, pp. 138-39; recipe 26, *On Cookery...*, pp. 57-58; *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 161-62).

71 Bruno LAURIQUX, “Cucine medievali (secoli XIV e XV)”, in Jean-Louis FLANDRIN, Massimo MONTANARI (eds), *Storia dell’alimentazione...*, pp. 356-70 (esp. pp. 365-66). Although an English language version of this article may be found in Jean-Louis FLANDRIN, Massimo MONTANARI (eds), *Food: A Culinary History...*



saffron in different quantities. In this case, however, saffron was used only for the purpose of giving colour (*donne couleur*) to some dishes and especially to some sauces.<sup>72</sup> The golden yellow colour is also magnificently apparent in the gilding practised on some of the dishes already mentioned.

Less recurrent, even though not less representative, is the red colour, already mentioned, that came in different shades, from “pinkish” to “reddish” (*rosee, goules*), obtained with alkanet (*orcanette*), the powdered root of *Alkanna tinctoria*. Occasionally we find blue (*azur*), in this case obtained with orchil (*tornesaut/tournesaut/tornesauz*).<sup>73</sup> Red and blue were quite marginal colours in the aristocratic cuisine of the late Middle Ages (the English being an exception), since, on the whole, the cuisine of the period seemed more attracted to “white” foods. In the cookbook in question, as is the case of other late medieval examples, the colour white with silvery reflections was produced with ingredients such as almonds (taking care to remove their skins), the milk made from them, the white meats of chickens and other kinds of birds, as well as starch dissolved in broth, rice and sugar. This was the colour that usually characterized, above all, the recipes for *blancmange* in its different versions,<sup>74</sup> and various other dishes.<sup>75</sup> However Chiquart, not unlike other chefs of the late Middle Ages, also proposed it in some coloured variants.

Not as obvious is the polychromy of a *blancmange* divided into four separately coloured parts, all on one plate (*blanc mangier parti de quatre couleurs tout en ung plat*):<sup>76</sup> it is one of Chiquart’s most interesting recipes

72 For example, see recipe 33 (*On Cookery...*, pp. 65-66; *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 166); recipe 40 (*On Cookery...*, p. 73; *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 172).

73 “To make the blue preparation, take a large amount of orchil lichen and put it to soak in the milk of the pot in which the blue is to be made”; *Et pour faire la potagerie de l’azur, prennés de tornesaut grant foyson et mectés tremper dedans le lait du pot ou l’on le doit faire* (recipe 9, *On Cookery...*, p. 30; *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 145; recipe 33, *On Cookery...*, p. 66; *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 167). For an analysis of colouring agents in food to be found in some late medieval cookbooks (but not the *Fait de cuisine*), see Mireille VINCENT-CASSY, *La vue et les mangeurs...*, pp. 20-28; and now Christopher M. WOOLGAR, “Medieval food and colour...”, pp. 15-17.

74 Medieval cookbooks usually indicate these dishes as food for sick people and the *Fait de cuisine* does as well: here we find two recipes, respectively of capon and partridge (recipes 74 and 74bis, *On Cookery...*, pp. 109-10; *Fait de cuisine...*, pp. 194-95). For the different meanings of preparations indicated by this term, see Enrico CARNEVALE SCHIANCA, *La cucina medievale...*, pp. 70-75, *sub voce* “Bianco mangiare”. See also Constance B. HIEATT, “Sorting through the Titles of Medieval Dishes: What Is, or Is not, a *Blanc manger*”, in Melitta WEISS ADAMSON (ed.), *Food in the Middle Ages. A Book of Essays* (New York/London, 1995), pp. 25-43. See also the still useful essay by Jean-Louis FLANDRIN, “Internationalisme, nationalisme et régionalisme dans la cuisine des XIV<sup>e</sup> et XV<sup>e</sup> siècles. Le témoignage des livres de cuisine”, in Denis MENJOT, *Manger et boire au Moyen Âge. Actes du colloque de Nice, 15-17 octobre 1982* (Paris, 1984), vol. 1, pp. 75-91.

75 Recipe 1, *On Cookery...*, pp. 17-18 (*Fait de cuisine...*, p. 137); recipe 23, *On Cookery...*, p. 55 (*Fait de cuisine...*, p. 160).

76 Chiquart’s cookbook contains two practically identical recipes, one for a meat-based menu and the other for a fish-based one (recipe 9, *On Cookery...*, pp. 28-30; *Fait de cuisine...*, pp. 144-45; recipe 33, *On Cookery...*, pp. 65-67; *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 167). A recipe for “Blancmange divided in four colours all in one plate” (*blanc-mengier party*) mentioned in a late manuscript of the *Viandier*, almost contemporary to the *Fait de cuisine*, is very lapidary: Terence SCULLY (ed.), *The Viandier of Taillevent...*, pp. 167-68.

and undoubtedly one of the most famous, whose description is unusually long and detailed. This quadripartite blancmange, in which the dominant colours mentioned above are combined, denotes careful thought being given to the chromatic combination, not only for aesthetic and spectacular purposes but also for symbolic ones. Here the semiological intent of Chiquart's gastronomy would seem more explicit than ever, since placing red and silver side by side in the serving dish meant reproducing and presenting at the table the main colours of the Savoy coat of arms.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, combining these colours with golden-yellow and blue, the dominant colours of the coat of arms of the dukes of Burgundy, takes on a symbolical meaning that is even more evident: a kind of homage to the house of Mary of Burgundy, the wife of Amadeus VIII.

### Cooking and art: towards a heraldic reading of the subtlety

The courses that gradually follow one another in Chiquart's menus are progressively loaded with symbolic meanings and reach their apex with the culinary *entremets* or subtleties (*entremés* as the *Fait de cuisine* calls them).<sup>78</sup> This moment of the meal is the most spectacular and emblematic of the feast. Here we find the synthesis of preciousness, beauty and colour, while the apotheosis of the staging of ducal power is brought to fruition. However the *entremets* are the clearest demonstration of the ability of great chefs to interpret and match colours for specific heraldic purposes.<sup>79</sup>

It is well known that these *entremets* were inserted between one course and another, usually after the main one, and were very challenging and magnificent affairs.<sup>80</sup> They represented a specific performance, consisting of constructions,

77 Silver cross on a red field. On the subject, with regard to the Savoy dynasty, and in particular the years of Amadeus VIII, see Michel PASTOUREAU, "De la croix à la tiare. Amédée VIII et l'emblématique de la Maison de Savoie", in Bernard ANDENMATTEN, Agostino PARAVICINI BAGLIANI (eds), *Amedée VIII-Félix V...*, pp. 89-104; also Michel PASTOUREAU, "L'emblématique princière à la fin du Moyen Âge. Essai de lexique et de typologie", in Bernard ANDENMATTEN, Agostino PARAVICINI BAGLIANI, Annik VADON (eds), *Héraldique et emblématique de la Maison de Savoie (XV-XVI<sup>e</sup> s.)* (Lausanne, 1994), pp. 11-43; more generally, Luisa Clotilde GENTILE, *Riti ed emblemi. Processi di rappresentazione del potere principesco in area subalpina (XIII-XVI secc.)* (Turin, 2008).

78 Extensive studies on the subject of *entremets* have been conducted mainly by French medievalists, in particular on the Burgundian court thanks to the wealth of sources, especially narrative ones such as the chronicles. Always useful for the definition and different types of *entremets* is the essay by Bruno LAURIOUX, "Banquets, entremets et cuisine à la cour de Bourgogne", in Danièle RÉGNIER-BOHLER (ed.), *Splendeurs de la Cour de Bourgogne. Récits et chroniques* (Paris, 1995), pp. 1027-1127 (esp. 1030-31).

79 Christopher M. WOOLGAR, "Medieval food and colour...", p. 18.

80 On menus, organized in multiple services or courses: Jean-Louis FLANDRIN, "Structure des menus français et anglais aux XIV<sup>e</sup> et XV<sup>e</sup> siècles", in Carole J. LAMBERT (ed.), *Du manuscrit à la table. Essais sur la cuisine au Moyen Âge et répertoire des manuscrits médiévaux contenant des recettes culinaires* (Paris/Montréal, 1992), pp. 173-92; Jean-Louis FLANDRIN, *L'ordre des mets* (Paris, 2002); Mohamed OUERFELLI, "Le banquet en France et en Italie à la fin du Moyen Âge : entre convivialité et propagande", in Élisabeth MALAMUT (ed.), *Dynamiques sociales au Moyen Âge en Occident et en Orient* (Aix-en-Provence, 2010), pp. 117-34.

sometimes nothing less than an apparatus, that were both sumptuous and of stunning complexity, meant to provide impressive scenic effects. In the context of a princely feast, Chiquart regarded them as fundamentally important, not so much from the gastronomic point of view,<sup>81</sup> but rather – as we shall see – as perfect instruments of spectacularized cuisine; in this, he was a little ahead of the gigantic spectacles of the Burgundian court banquets of the mid-fifteenth century.<sup>82</sup> He paid extraordinary attention to these *entremets* or subtleties, far more so than the great chefs preceding him,<sup>83</sup> and describes them in “instructions” grouped in a separate section of the manuscript, not in the menus themselves.

If it should happen that this feast lasts longer than the two days mentioned, one should use the meats, dishes and *entremets* whose descriptions follow. Firstly, a Coquard Pastry, the Pilgrim Capon, a Cold Sage, Calaminee, a Calunafree of Partridge, the Norse Pasty, Rissoles, a Party Hot-Dish, a Monteyruel, Green Shoulders of Mutton which are eaten with a sauce of the blood of those shoulders, Breast of Boar, Mortoexes, a Vinaigrette, a Jance, a Gruel Broth of capons, Glazed Kid Heads, Crow, a Gratunee, a Spanish Gratunee, and Shoulder of Mutton stuffed and glazed.<sup>84</sup>

In this quotation the category of *entremets* is generically mentioned mixed with actual dishes (*souies, mets*). Many of his recipes share with the *entremets* a complex execution technique as well as the variety and preciousness of the

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- 81 On the ambiguity of the category of *entremets*, always balanced between gastronomy and art, see the following publication mainly based on the analysis of late medieval literary sources: Agathe LAFORTUNE-MARTEL, “De l’entremets culinaire aux pièces montées d’un menu de propagande”, in Carole J. LAMBERT (ed.), *Du manuscrit à la table...*, pp. 121-29. For an interesting overview of the various types of *entremets*: Enrico CARNEVALE SCHIANCA, *La cucina medievale...*, pp. 315-21, *sub voce* “Intermisso”.
- 82 Descriptions of the imposing and scenic Burgundian banquets were composed a few decades after the time of Chiquart, although they are incomparable in their magnificence as can be deduced from Bruno LAURIOUX, “Banquets, entremets et cuisine...”, pp. 1037-90. We find here an extensive description of spectacular court banquets during the fifteenth century, like the famous “banquet du Faisan”; on this very famous banquet, see Agathe LAFORTUNE-MARTEL, *Fête noble en Bourgogne au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle. Le banquet du Faisan (1454). Aspects politiques, sociaux et culturels* (Montréal, 1983).
- 83 In the *Viandier* most of the *entremets* recipes (an entire chapter is dedicated to this type of preparation) refer to not very elaborate and even inconspicuous preparations compared to Chiquart’s *entremets*, which are much more lavish and spectacular: Terence SCULLY (ed.), *The Viandier of Taillevent...*, pp. 112-38. See also Antonella SALVATICO, *Il principe e il cuoco...*, pp. 73-75.
- 84 *On Cookery...*, p. 74; *Et se ainsi estoit que la feste dessusdicte durast plus desdistz deux jours si prenne on des viandes, souis et entremés yci ensuyvans escrips. Et premierement ung paté coquart, le chapon pelerin, une froyde sauge, une calaminee, une calunefree de perdrix, le paté nurry, les roseoles, ung chaut mengier party, ung morteyruel, les espalles de moustons verdes qui soient mengees a la saulce du sanc dessdictes espalles, le bourbulleys de cenglier, les martoexes, une vinaigrete, une jense, ung broet grué de chappons, les testes de caprilz dorees, la fraze, une gratunee, une autre gratunee d’Espaigny, les espalles de mouston farciees et dorees* (*Fait de cuisine...*, p. 172). For the title of the recipes the reader may turn to the entries in the “Index” (*On Cookery...*, pp. 127-38; *Fait de cuisine...*, pp. 207-31). A description of the single preparations can be found, once again, in Antonella SALVATICO, *Il principe e il cuoco...*, pp. 57-78. In particular, the word *mortoexes* is explained as “a sort of spiced sausage” (*On Cookery...*, p. 87, n. 173).

ingredients used (partridges, kids, a profusion of gilding, etc.). However, when it comes to the *entremets*, Chiquart's creative imagination and flair is expressed along with his exceptional mastery. It is important to remember that there are only two preparations that Chiquart clearly calls *entremets* within the corpus of recipes.<sup>85</sup> Both are part of the fat menu and were meant for the solemn inaugural dinner held on the first day, this being the great banquet of honour, the richest in courses, as well as the only one organized in a double services menu (*assise*).<sup>86</sup> The first service ends with the *entremets* called "Boars' Heads, glazed and emblazoned", while the second service ends with a spectacular *mise-en-scène*: "A raised *entremets*, a Castle" (*entremés eslevé ung chastel*).<sup>87</sup>

It is in the same *entremets* and equivalent preparations (not labelled with this term), served in such a way as to obtain a surprising visual impact, that the project of the princely feast as an opportunity for political propaganda, repeatedly mentioned here, finds its most effective support. From this point of view, the heads of roasted boar, in addition to being half covered in gold leaf (*or parti*, which in English heraldic terminology would be "party per pale") to astonish the commensals, also "shoot fire from their mouths" (*lancent feu par la gorge*); this would have been particularly representative since they were also decorated with coats of arms and flags (*armees et embanderees*).<sup>88</sup> On the basis of the information collected by the master of the kitchen, each of the boars' heads (*hures de sengliers*) was, correspondingly, decorated with the coat of arms of the individual guests to be honoured:

The Master Cook should ask the heralds to inquire of their lord who will be at that feast to find out what arms each of them has, so that those arms can be put on banners, in order to set on each Boar's Head the banner of the lord in front of whom it will be placed.<sup>89</sup>

The master cook was meant to ascertain – with help of the heralds – the respective ranks of the guests and their coats of arms, a procedure needed to properly prepare the individual dishes. Chiquart's scrupulous attention, rarely practised by other cooks, shows how difficult the job was: he proposed himself as nothing less than an interpreter and executor of a ducal strategy bent on strengthening political links and alliances with neighbouring powers.

Bearer of a similar heraldic message, with much the same emblematic value, is another *entremets* characterized by an extremely complex execution. These are the refined "Parmesan Pies" (*tortes/tortres parmeysines*), a typical medieval

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<sup>85</sup> However, see note 91.

<sup>86</sup> The following meals are progressively lighter (*Fait de cuisine...*, pp. 116-18), in particular the *soupper*.

<sup>87</sup> Recipe 10, *On Cookery...*, pp. 30-37; *Fait de cuisine...*, pp. 145-48.

<sup>88</sup> "Next, as an *entremets*, Boars' Heads, glazed and emblazoned and breathing fire"; *Ancor plus, pour entremés, hures de sengliers dorees et armees et embanderees et gictans feu* (recipe 5, *On Cookery...*, p. 22; *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 140; recipe 6, *On Cookery...*, pp. 22-24; *Fait de cuisine...*, pp. 140-41).

<sup>89</sup> Recipe 6, *On Cookery...*, p. 24; [...] *demande le maistre queux les heraux qui seront en la dicte feste et quelles armes ung chescun de eulx a, affin que les dictes armes se mectent en banderés, pour mectre sur chescune hure la bandiere du seigneur devant qui elle sera mise* (*Fait de cuisine...*, p. 141).

recipe containing meat or fish and very rich in ingredients.<sup>90</sup> “For the *entremets*, Parmesan Pies each one glazed and embanded with the arms of the lord before whom it is set”<sup>91</sup> were thus, again, served to the aristocratic diners decorated with their respective arms.

The political, propagandistic significance of Chiquart’s feast, as well as the ostentation displayed, the spectacularity and the symbolic representations, reach their highest level with the artistic and majestic “raised *entremets*” resting on a framework and mentioned above. These subtleties revisit themes such as the *entremets de paintrerie*,<sup>92</sup> including the “castle of Love” (*chastel d’Amours*) and the “fountain of Love” (*fontaine d’Amours*), hence with explicit references to the imaginary found in much courtly literature.<sup>93</sup> *Entremets de paintrerie*, inspired by the same literary themes, are also to be found in medieval banquets described elsewhere, even though there they take on much simpler forms.<sup>94</sup> An example as complex as that cited in the *Fait de cuisine* is not to be found in any earlier cookbook.

As we know, the accounts of the banquets at the famous Burgundian court – which was a “véritable laboratoire de création” (nothing less than a creative workshop)<sup>95</sup> – are later, as they must be dated to several decades after Chiquart’s life and times.<sup>96</sup> This is not the place to discuss the symbolic meanings and allegorical images of the multitude of elements assembled in a grandiose *entremets de paintrerie*. A masterpiece of craftsmanship which is,

90 “Parmesan Pies [of meat]”; *tortes parmeysines [de chars]* (recipe 21, *On Cookery...*, pp. 49-53; *Fait de cuisine...*, pp. 156-58); “Parmesan Fish Pies” / *les tortres parmeysines de poyssons* (recipe 40, *On Cookery...*, pp. 72-74; *Fait de cuisine...*, pp. 171-72).

91 *On Cookery...*, p. 117 / *Et pour entremés les tortes parmeysines dorees et entrebandees chescun des armes du seigneur devant qui elles doivent estre mises* (*Fait de cuisine...*, p. 202). The citation is taken from the brief narration of a banquet written at the end of the manuscript, but the reference to the word *entremets* is not in recipes. The detailed cooking instructions for making the two recipes for “Parmesan Pies” (*tortes parmeysines*), respectively with meat and fish, can be found in the main section of the text: see previous note. The Parmesan pies are particular preparations present in almost all cookbooks of the fourteenth and fifteenth century. However, it is not easy to find recipes for them entailing the same complexity and role as those encountered in the *Fait de cuisine*: Enrico CARNEVALE SCHIANCA, *La cucina medievale...*, pp. 668-70, “Torta parmigiana”.

92 This is a term that Scully does not translate but defines as “a ‘painted’, artificial construction” (*On Cookery...*, p. 30, n. 60).

93 “[...] a raised castle in the middle of which is the Fountain of Love”; [...] *ung chastel eslevé ou quel soit ou milieu la fontaine d’Amours*: recipe 6, *On Cookery...*, pp. 25-26 (*Fait de cuisine...*, p. 142); recipe 10, *On Cookery...*, pp. 30-37 (*Fait de cuisine...*, pp. 145-47). Concerning the allegorical meaning of the *entremets de paintrerie* and their connection to courtly poetry, see Antonella SALVATICO, *Il principe e il cuoco...*, p. 115.

94 Terence SCULLY (ed.), *The Viandier of Taillevent...*, pp. 269-72.

95 “La Cour de Bourgogne a constitué un véritable laboratoire de création” (Bruno LAURIOUX, *Le règne de Taillevent...*, p. 184); moreover, Danielle QUÉRUÉL, “Des entremets aux intermèdes dans les banquets bourguignons”, in *Banquets et manières de table au Moyen Âge...*, pp. 141-57 (<http://books.openedition.org/pup/35656> - last accessed 12 June 2023); Lia B. ROSS, “Beyond Eating: Political and Personal Significance of the ‘Entremets’ at the Banquets of the Burgundian court”, in Timothy Joseph TOMASIK, Juliann Marie VITULLO (eds), *At the Table. Metaphorical and Material Cultures of Food in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Turnhout, 2007), pp. 145-66.

96 See note 82.

suffice it to say, a perfect synthesis of literary culture, entertainment, pictorial and plastic art, architecture and music. These elements informed different aspects of princely culture and represented the multiple artistic and cultural expressions characterizing the court of Amadeus VIII, the new duke of Savoy.

Beyond the function of the *entremets* as a customary pause for entertainment and exhibition, it is important that in this case we highlight its importance from the point of view of diplomatic relations. The guests of rank, who sat at the duke's table, were in fact once again honoured by the display of their respective heraldic insignia waving on the banners, flags and flagpoles hoisted on the castle<sup>97</sup> and arranged according to a precise order. Nevertheless, the gastronomic function of this gigantic *entremets* is by no means negligible and not always adequately considered by scholars. Simply being mentioned in Chiquart's text would be sufficient proof of its importance, but such a function is also confirmed by the author's careful directions, when he dedicates his usual attentive commitment as a cook to the edible segments that are an integral part of the subtlety in question. The edible elements, destined to be removed from the rest of the subtlety after presentation, are brought back to the table. They consist in a large pike, cooked in three different ways (with the respective accompanying sauces), a large, gilded boar's head (similar to those mentioned above) and a swan covered in its plumage, all three of which breathe fire. The fourth element was a "counterfeit" roast goose covered with the feathers of a peacock.<sup>98</sup> In practice, these four dishes, meant to be fully edible (*se doit mangier*),<sup>99</sup> were placed at the foot of the four corner towers of the castle and were presented as minor subtleties in their own right.

This monumental *entremets*, contributing to the festive apparatus as it entered the banquet hall, came with the accompaniment of melodies and songs.<sup>100</sup> The symbolism of power was further exalted by a rich choice of trees, flowers, fruits and birds of all kinds, as well as water – or better still wine – that flowed from the "Fountain of Love" placed in the centre of the composition. All of this not to mention the great variety of figures, animals, fish and shellfish, most probably modelled with meat stuffing, sculptures of a sort also to be consumed. Such a masterpiece represents the essence of Chiquart's culinary art and summarizes his contribution to the honour and glory of the first Duke of Savoy.

97 "At the highest points of the castle there should be standards, banners and pennants"; *Et ou plus hault dudit chastel hait estendars, bampnieres et penmons* (*On Cookery...*, p. 34; *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 147).

98 The peacock is the noble bird par excellence, but according to Chiquart its meat is not very interesting from a gastronomic point of view (*Fait de cuisine...*, p. 147, n. 102). On gastronomic artifices used to modify the nature of food, well documented in medieval tradition, see Massimo MONTANARI, *Gusti del Medioevo. I prodotti, la cucina, la tavola* (Rome, 2012), pp. 20-25.

99 *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 146.

100 "For a raised *entremets*, that is a castle, you need for its base a good big four-man litter"; *Pour ung entremés eslevé, c'est assavoir ung chastel, y fault faire pour son fondement une belle letiere grande a porter a quatre hommes* (recipe 10, *On Cookery...*, p. 30; *Fait de cuisine...*, p. 145).

## Conclusion

Having resurfaced after remaining almost six centuries in the shadows, buried among the manuscripts in the library of Walter Supersaxo (1457–82), Bishop of Sion in Switzerland, the *Fait de cuisine* is a text that continues to reveal new aspects worth examining.<sup>101</sup> In 1420 Chiquart was finally ready to meet what were allegedly the repeated demands of “his lord”, the new Duke Amadeus VIII, who was determined to promote himself in various ways and thus establish the importance of his state. By then our cook and master of ceremonies had practically come to the end of his career or, at least, had greatly curtailed his activity.<sup>102</sup> He therefore undertook the task of communicating his knowledge and culinary know-how, which had been at the service of his duke and contributed to the construction of the latter’s princely power. His menus and recipes, a courtly haute cuisine, may thus be seen as a synthesis of the personal contributions of this talented cook combined with the skills he had acquired thanks to half a century of culinary practice in courtly kitchens. The importance attached to the “beauty” of the dishes to be presented, which would be more remarked upon even than their taste, is particularly evident in the care he took in using colours and their various nuances, with attention also paid to their symbolic and political language.<sup>103</sup>

In addition to the strictly culinary component – an obvious priority – the *Fait de cuisine* also reveals the experience Chiquart acquired as a polished organizer of solemn feasts choreographed around the planning of grand banquets. The author reveals himself to be more than the court’s master chef, he is also a true master of ceremonies: a complex character, possessing not only technical skills and original ideas, but also endowed with managerial skills that seem to have been conducted with a certain autonomy.<sup>104</sup> As a coordinator of the events aimed at publicizing ducal prestige and power, Chiquart reveals himself not only through the dishes themselves but also in the creation of scenic *entremets*. In the description of their complex construction, we find him supervising the work of a team of collaborators: carpenters, musicians and craftsmen of various kinds. He therefore appears to be responsible for the most spectacular phases of the official banquet, perhaps even a forerunner of the unrivalled banquets that would enhance the history of the Burgundian

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101 The manuscript was deposited in 1962 at the Valais Cantonal Archives which had already housed most of the Supersaxo family library since 1930: *Fait de cuisine...* (Introduction), p. 103.

102 At the time Chiquart’s text was written down, he would have been some fifty or sixty years old, having already spent no less than forty years working in the ducal kitchens, as has been repeatedly been pointed out.

103 See note 67. It has been pointed that, in late medieval cookery, different colours might occasionally mark “a contrast in taste, as in some parti-coloured dishes” (Christopher M. WOOLGAR, “Medieval food and colour...”, p. 20).

104 See notes 26 and 58.

court in later years, in the mid-fifteenth century. This, however, merits further comparative investigation to better identify and understand the close links between the courts of Savoy and Burgundy, without excluding other European courts of the time.