

about accounting and finance. Here, Taylor's writing is clear and logical and, at least for this reviewer, reinforced the wider arguments she had made up to that point.

The final chapter, "The Shape of the State in Medieval Scotland, 1124–1290," although the book's shortest, is crucial to reinforcing and bringing together everything that came before. In it, moreover, Taylor describes her vision for reimagining the changing government of medieval Scotland during the period, together with the casualties who fell by the wayside.

Taylor concludes with a useful two-part appendix. The first section provides an informative narrative about the early laws of Scotland, the recovery of which is largely down to Taylor. The second, an illustrative table, helpfully summarizes the previous narrative in tabular form.

The publication has been well served by Oxford University Press and is presented in an attractive format with footnotes, though it would have benefited from more illustrative materials (there are only four maps) for readers unfamiliar with the regional minutiae of medieval Scotland.

All told, this is an impressive book. It should appeal to many historians of different hues, ranging from those interested in high politics to legal experts. It also raises a number of new and hugely interesting questions that will occupy us for some time to come. There will be dissenters who do not agree with everything Taylor has proposed—that is inevitable given the nature of the evidence. But with this book Taylor simultaneously raises the bar and provides a new baseline for future discussions. It is a big step forward in our understanding of the surviving legal material, and I can award Taylor's book no higher honor than a place upon my bookshelf alongside A. A. M. Duncan's inimitable *Scotland: The Making of the Kingdom* (1978).

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WENDY WALL. *Recipes for Thought: Knowledge and Taste in the Early Modern English Kitchen*. Material Texts. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016. Pp. 328. \$69.95 (cloth). doi: 10.1017/jbr.2017.115

Wendy Wall's *Recipes for Thought: Knowledge and Taste in the Early Modern English Kitchen* is about recipe books, in both published form and in manuscripts from the late sixteenth century through the end of the eighteenth century. Although there were some cookbooks as we would recognize them today, purely devoted to culinary concerns, many also contained recipes for medicine, cosmetics and perfumes, conserves and distillates, ink, and anything that a woman might be expected to make herself in a household setting. One can easily see that the do-it-yourself or craft aesthetic current today among hipsters and leisured classes had its parallel many centuries ago. The comparison is not meant to be facetious. Literate people in the past who enjoyed cooking, making jam, homemade hooch, and even curing their own maladies, believed that it was not only pleasurable but worthy of time and attention and something not best left to professionals. These people were, then and now, *makers*.

Wall's major theme is that recipe writing constituted a form of experimentation, that it was an intellectual activity wherein authors could comment in marginalia, edit, correct, approve, and even garner status through association with noble personages from whom the recipes were received. Thus, the authors constituted a kind of community, even across time, as recipe books were handed down through generations and across social networks. Even though so many recipes in print cookbooks and manuscripts were merely copied out of earlier ones, Wall sees these as a neglected form of literature in which women could express

their creative energies. Most importantly, rather than a means of domesticating or controlling women's activities, these books were liberating and kitchen work can be seen as productive rather than mere drudgery.

This is not primarily a history of recipes themselves, though, and in fact Wall is not very interested in the particular contents of these books. Nor does she read between the lines for contextual clues that might be found in quantities of ingredients, cost, provenance, or other details that might be revealing about the authors and their projected audience. She offers very little about cooking practices or changing taste, although there are evocative details about witty conceits, the sugar work and imitation foods so beloved in the first half of this period. She provides are some details about cookbook authors geared toward the court and professionals versus those for smaller households, but this is not a history of cooking as revealed in the books, though the first few chapters nod in this direction.

Since this topic also veers into the history of medicine, one might also wonder about the context of the home pharmacy: Why would women have had the confidence to take medicines they mixed up in the kitchen, even for serious illnesses? Was it because the professionals could do no better, or because there were no druggists on hand? Or was it really a kind of closet science which they tested on their own children, even though, as the recipe books themselves often record, they died at an alarming rate. All this is to say, Wall does not discuss the social setting, who took the medicines, ate the food, or even who shared the preserves with whom. That is, of course, central to understanding how these texts functioned and why they were written. I would argue that to grasp what these people were doing one might need to just follow the recipes carefully and taste them, maybe only stopping short with the medical nostrums. (Although John Partridge's Oil of Earthworms for pains in the joints sounds enticing.)

Instead, Wall looks mostly at the prefaces, the frontispieces, the marginalia and the words used in the texts. This is primarily textual analysis that seeks to question larger issues such as literacy rates, communities of learning, and the size and scope of scientific inquiry in the seventeenth century. At times, she veers into Shakespeare and other authors like Ben Jonson to corroborate a particular gloss on a phrase or concept. Her arguments are persuasive, detailed, and supported with painstaking evidence. The subjects she covers range widely from analyzing doodles, to confections made in the shape of letters to the culinary metaphors found in literature.

But the lingering questions remain: What are these recipes really for? Are they primarily entertaining diversion for the authors and even readers who flip through only to imagine what it would be like to throw glittering parties where ladies pelt each other with rosewater filled eggshells? Maybe they should be considered a literary form and nothing more. Or did people take these seriously, storing up marmalades and potions for their family's agues and dropsies? The marginal comments in the manuscripts do evidence real interaction, trials, and, to some extent, experimentation. Were these recipes a way to preserve memories of ancestors through the food they prepared, and treasured as heirlooms that express social and cultural identity? Or maybe they were just a way to generate income for professional food writers and while away time for elite women who liked to tinker around on occasion and then share their recipes much as people do today on Facebook and Instagram, as a form of cultural capital. These are perhaps questions that cannot be answered, or maybe they are all true, which is precisely why recipes are so engaging as a topic.

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