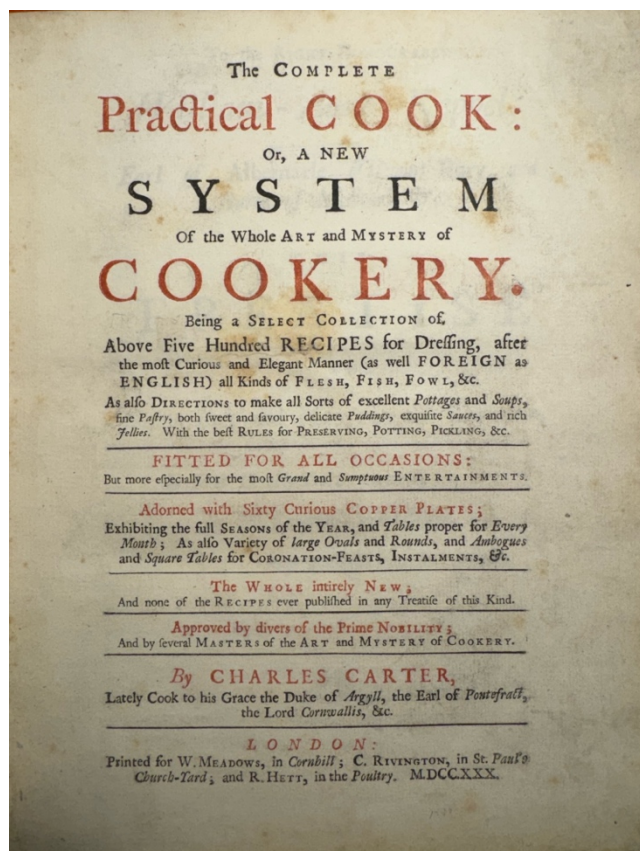


Lainey Battiston
 INFO 689-01 Rare Books & Special Collections
 Descriptive Bibliography
 April 29, 2024

IMPRINT INFORMATION



The Complete Practical Cook was printed in 1730, in London, “for W. Meadows, in Cornhill; C. Rivington, in St. Paul’s Church-Yard; and R. Hett, in the Poultry.” Though not explicitly confirmed in the English Short Title Catalog (a stopgap version that is an independent, temporary search interface created by Nikolai Volger and *Print & Probability*, an interdisciplinary, NEH- and NSF-funded project), I believe this book is a first edition, as I am not able to find editions that have a print date before 1730.¹

W. Meadows, though apparently a prolific printer based on the numerous works linked to his name in online catalogs, seems to not have been particularly famous or important. Though the subjects and genres of works published by Meadows are varied, he published a number of works related to the penal system, including titles such as *The Dying Speeches and Behaviour of the*

¹ English Short Title Catalog (ESTC), “The complete practical cook: or, a new System of the whole art and mystery of cookery [...]” [catalog record], *Print & Probability*, accessed April 10, 2024, https://estc.printprobability.org/record/1773f7cddd9378_dashboard_generated_id.

Several State Prisoners that have been Executed the Last 300 Years; Old Bailey Proceedings: Accounts of Criminal Trials; and Admonitions and cautions to discharg'd debtors: a sermon Preached in the chapel Belonging to the Prison of Ludgate, On Sunday, August 29. 1725.^{2,3,4}

“C. Rivington” is Charles Rivington, the patriarch of a family of printers. According to a book written by Septimus Rivington, Charles’ great-great-grandson, Charles Rivington was born in 1688 and moved to London to apprentice under a theological bookseller named Matthews. In 1711, Rivington bought the (apparently) already well-established and well-known publishing business of Richard Chiswell. In 1714, Rivington moved the business to 62 St. Paul’s Churchyard, where he put up the sign of the Bible and Crown, and mainly published theological and educational works. Rivington died in 1742, at 62 St. Paul’s Churchyard, and was buried in the Churchyard. He and his wife, Eleanor Pease, had thirteen children, six of whom survived him.⁵ Rivington’s son John continued the family publishing business in London, while another son, James, emigrated to America and eventually opened a printshop on Wall Street, in New York. James ultimately became one of the most notorious printers of the Revolutionary War by publishing a fiercely loyalist paper called the *New-York Gazetteer*. Despite his printed beliefs, since 1781 there has been (unfounded) speculation that James was in fact a spy for George Washington, as a member of the famous Culper Spy Ring.⁶

² “The Dying Speeches and Behaviour of the Several State Prisoners That Have Been Executed the Last 300 Years. Being a Proper Supplement to the State-Tryals,” AbeBooks, accessed April 10, 2024, <https://www.abebooks.com/first-edition/Dying-Speeches-Behaviour-State-Prisoners-been/31088271453/bd>.

³ “Old Bailey Proceedings: Old Bailey Proceedings: Accounts of Criminal Trials,” London Lives 1690 to 1800, accessed April 10, 2024, <https://www.londonlives.org/browse.jsp?id=a17180530-1-person256&div=a17180530-1>.

⁴ Wellcome Collection, “Admonitions and Cautions to Discharg’d Debtors: A Sermon Preached in the Chapel Belonging to the Prison of Ludgate, on Sunday, August 29. 1725 [...]” [catalog record], Wellcome Collection, accessed April 10, 2024, <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/fttu8s8h>.

⁵ Septimus Rivington, *The Publishing Family of Rivington* (United Kingdom: Rivingtons, 1919).

⁶ Autumn Lorimer Linford, “Rivington Revisited: A Nuanced Look at James Rivington, America’s ‘Tory’ Printer,” *Journalism History* 47, no. 3 (2021): 285–301, doi:10.1080/00947679.2021.1945872.

Returning to the printers listed in *The Complete Practical Cook*, R. Hett also published under the sign of the Bible and Crown, according to other works linked to a R. Hett in the Poultry in online catalogs.^{7,8} According to the aforementioned book by Septimus, Rivington's son John (who continued the family printing business) established a "Conger or Society of Booksellers" in 1742 that consisted of ten booksellers, including one Richard Hett.⁹ Common in 18th century London book publishing, congers were syndicates of booksellers who bought shares to finance the printing of books.¹⁰ Though this book was printed prior to the establishment of the Conger which included Hett and Rivington's son John, it is imaginable that by 1730 Hett was already linked to the elder Rivington in some other way, particularly since they printed under the same sign.

The Complete Practical Cook was authored by Charles Carter. Unfortunately, there is not much information about Charles Carter available other than his title listed on the book's title page: "Lately Cook to his Grace the Duke of Argyll, the Earl of Pontefract, the Lord Cornwallis, &c." Other works by Carter similarly refer to his title on the title pages. Moreover, as noted in pencil by an unknown person on one of the binding pages and confirmed in a section titled "To the Reader," Carter, in addition to those listed on the title page, also served the "brave and hospitable" General Wood during some of Wood's "Glorious Campaigns" in Flanders; the "excellent" Lord Whitworth in several of his "splendid Ambassies" including to Berlin and the Hague; Esquire Poley, Envoy to the Court of Hanover; "his Excellency" General Wade in Spain

⁷ "Humility Represented in the Character of St. Paul : The Chief Springs of It Opened, and Its Various Advantages Display'd : Together with Some Occasional Views of the Contrary Vice," Yale Library, accessed April 10, 2024, <https://search.library.yale.edu/catalog/518173>.

⁸ "The True Scripture Doctrine of Justification, and the True, and Proper, Priesthood and Satisfaction of Christ, Farther Explained and Vindicated," National Library of Australia, accessed April 10, 2024, <https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/catalog/4882597>.

⁹ Rivington, *The Publishing Family of Rivington* 77.

¹⁰ Frank Arthur Mumby, *Publishing and Bookselling: A History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (United Kingdom: Jonathan Cape, 1956), 141.

and Portugal; Lord Lempster; and “other Truly Noble Peers.” In the same section, Carter notes that he is “most indebted” to his father, “who was excellent in this Profession.” Presumably, there is no secondary-source information about Carter that was recorded and/or saved since he was merely a cook (albeit a relatively “famous” cook in that he published books) and not of noble birth.¹¹

In terms of why this book was written, Carter himself (in his address to the reader) notes that, given the “many Books already publish’d on the Subject of COOKERY,” some people may find his undertaking “useless.” However, Carter argues that “no Occupation in the World is more oblig’d to Invention” and “every ingenious Artist” is “constantly produce-ing New Experiments to gratify the Taste of that Part of Mankind.” Given the continual developments in cooking, Carter felt he must share his recipes “without any other Consideration than the Publick Service.” Carter also notes he wishes to share secrets and “Mysteries” about cooking in order to acquaint benefactors with “some of the Sovereign Rules of this Noble Art” so as to have them “less depend upon the unartful Management of a dark-proceeding, and often ignorant Juggler” whom is “perhaps [a] Tavern-bred Dabbler in the Science” and may “waste and destroy the most costly Ingredients to no manner of Purpose.” In other words, Carter hopes that his book will help expose lowly, unskilled cooks who hoard the secrets of their profession so that their masters will not discover how bad these “Tavern-bred Dabbler[s]” are at cooking.¹²

The Complete Practical Cook likely had some level of commercial success, as Carter authored a second book, *The Compleat City and Country Cook: Or Accomplish’d Housewife*,

¹¹ Charles Carter, *The Complete Practical Cook: or, a New System of the Whole Art and Mystery of Cookery [...]* (London: Printed for W. Meadows [...]; C. Rivington [...]; and R. Hett [...], M.DCC.XXX. [1730]), Schwarzman Rare Book Division, New York Public Library, New York, NY.

¹² Ibid.

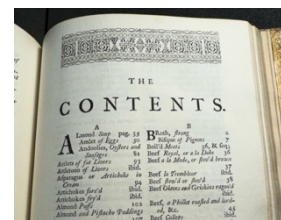
which (according to the “interim” ESTC) was first printed in 1732,¹³ with a second edition printed in 1736,¹⁴ and a third edition “revised and much improved by a gentlewoman” and titled *The London and Country Cook: or, Accomplished Housewife* was printed in 1749.¹⁵

DESCRIPTIVE & ANALYTICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Collation formula: 4^o: [A] ⁴ a⁴ B-2F⁴ [\$2]. 120 leaves, pp. [17] 2-212 [213] 214-224 [=240]

The Complete Practical Cook is a quarto in fours. I was able to determine this by the horizontal chainlines and a watermark that was present on some leaves in the center of the gutter. Additionally, there are four leaves in each gathering and half of the gathering – the first two leaves – is signed. The first gathering is not signed and the second gathering is signed with a lowercase a in brackets (i.e. [a], [a2]). The rest of the gatherings are signed with uppercase letters beginning with B, and excluding J, V, and W.

In addition to the signatures, this book has pagination (starting on the recto of the 9th leaf, the first leaf of the book, after the preliminaries and the “To the Reader” section) and catchwords. Signatures, pagination, and catchwords were all remarkably consistent, with no errors or aberrations, except for page 213, which was not paginated presumably because it would interfere with a woodcut print decoration at the head of the page (see image right).

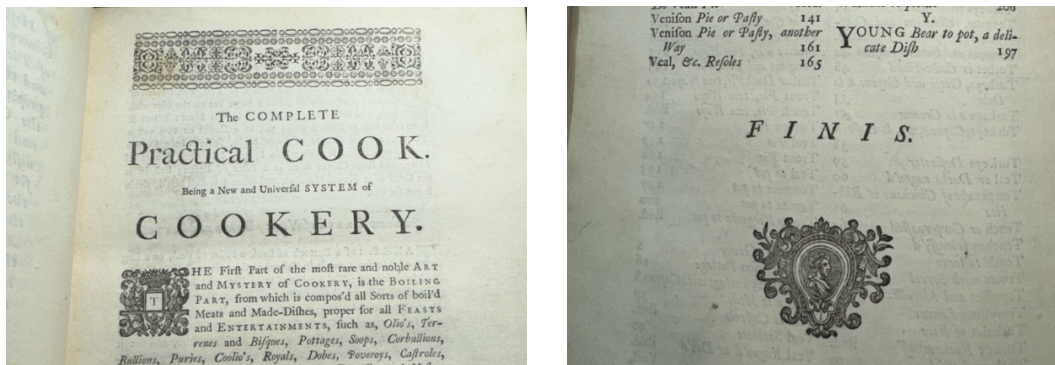


¹³ English Short Title Catalog (ESTC), “The compleat city and country cook: or, accomplish'd housewife [...]” (1732) [catalog record], Print & Probability, accessed April 10, 2024, https://estc.printprobability.org/record/1abb6e886fcd05_dashboard_generated_id.

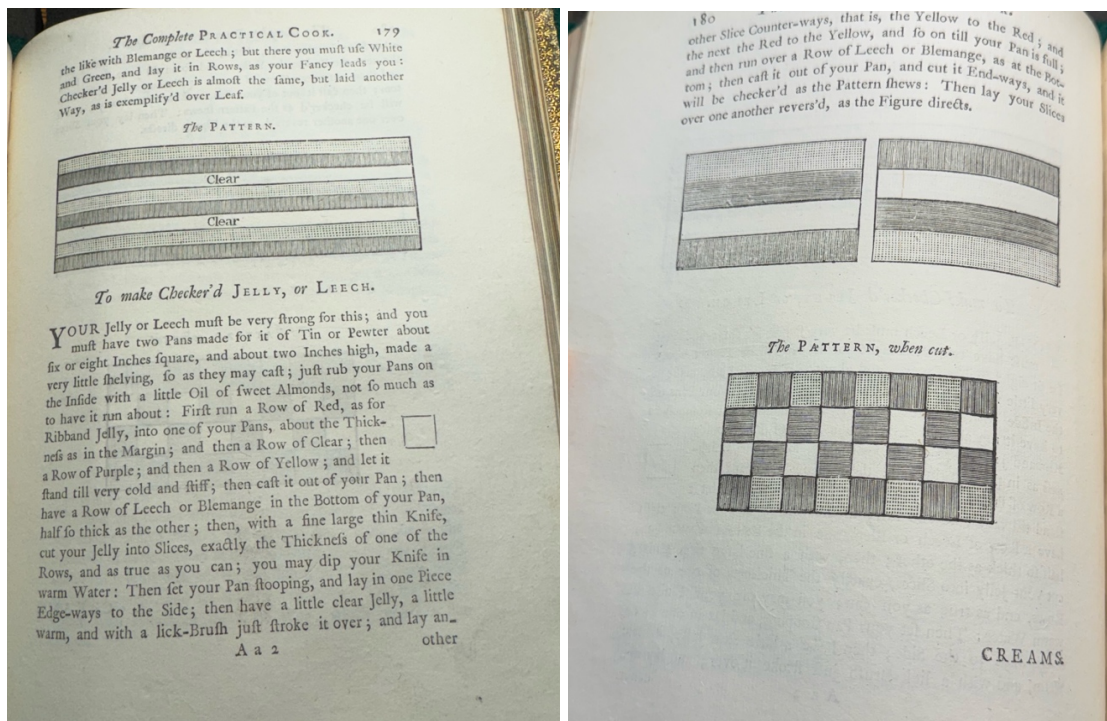
¹⁴ English Short Title Catalog (ESTC), “The compleat city and country cook: or, accomplish'd housewife [...]” (1736) [catalog record], Print & Probability, accessed April 10, 2024, https://estc.printprobability.org/record/17a725fe355b15_dashboard_generated_id.

¹⁵ English Short Title Catalog (ESTC), “The London and country cook: or, Accomplished housewife [...]” [catalog record], Print & Probability, accessed April 10, 2024, https://estc.printprobability.org/record/10911a16ac7bed_dashboard_generated_id

There are a number of prints in this book. They are all woodcut, since it was printed before the invention of wood engraving techniques, but they are nonetheless impressive in their detail and fine lines. The majority of the prints are decorative, but one leaf has illustrations on the recto and verso that are meant to be instructive rather than decorative.



Examples of decorative illustrations

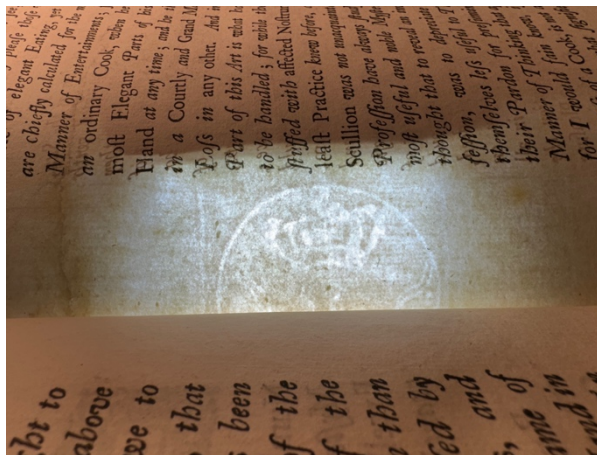


The instructional illustrations

The majority of the book is in roman type, though italic is also used throughout, seemingly both for emphasis/differentiation and decoration. However, in the address to the

reader, the opposite is true (most of the text is in italic, with roman used for emphasis and/or differentiation). The title page is printed in both red and black.

The paper is laid, apparent by the discernible chainlines (horizontal, as previously noted) and watermark, as well as the fact that the book was printed in 1730, before the advent of wove paper. A watermark is partially visible in the center of the gutter, and it appears to be a coat of arms contained within a circle that has a crown at the top of the circle (see image right).



Unfortunately, as of the time of writing, I have not been able to identify the papermaker.

The binding seems to be morocco, because it has a very visible grain, which is a characteristic of morocco leather (and unlike calf), per a blog post by Bauman Rare Books.¹⁶ The binding has gilt tooling, on the upper and lower covers as well as on the spine and the inside edges of the covers. Additionally, the spine has raised bands, the book's edges are gilded, and the book's endpapers are marbled. I think it likely that this book was rebound specifically for a collector, as the gilt decorations on the upper and lower covers features a coat of arms that says "BIBLIOTHEQUE DE MELLO." However, there is no signature anywhere on the binding. Aside from the coats of arms, the gilt tooling on the covers is very simple, just a border of three lines. The more intricate gilt decoration is on the spine and the interior edges of the covers.

¹⁶ Rebecca Romney, "The Secret Language of Rare Books: Morocco," Bauman Rare Books, March 10, 2015, <https://www.baumanrarebooks.com/blog/the-secret-language-of-rare-books-morocco/>.



Gilt tooling on the spine, the coat of arms on the front cover, and gilded edges

In terms of provenance, I started by looking up *Bibliothèque de Mello*. According to a catalog from 1887 by Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, *La Bibliothèque de Mello* was a “very choice library” that belonged to Baron Seillière.¹⁷ The Baron in question seems to be Florentin-Achille Seillière who (according to a blog post that references an 1873 publication of “*Bulletin du bibliophile et du bibliothécaire*,” which I have unfortunately been able to track down online or in physical form somewhere near New York) was the son of a wealthy financier/entrepreneur. Seillière apparently became financially successful in his own right, founding banks and acquiring valuable items including furniture, art, clocks and watches, precious stones, antiques, jewelry, and books. He displayed these objects at a property his father had purchased in 1819, *Château de Mello*, which Seillière operated as a museum. Eventually, Seillière was prosecuted for fraud and

¹⁷ Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, *La Bibliothèque de Mello. Catalogue of an Important Portion of the Very Choice Library of the Late Baron Seillière*, (London: Dryden Press, 1887), accessed April 14, 2024, <https://archive.org/details/LaBibliothèqueDeMello>.

ultimately committed suicide on May 14, 1873.¹⁸ It seems that his heirs then gradually dispersed the collections of Mello, hence the Mello Library sale catalog in 1887.

Within the Sotheby et al. catalog, there is a description of a book by Charles Carter with the same title as the book I have been working with. Given that “my” book is bound with the Bibliotheque de Mello coat of arms, I am operating under the assumption that the book listed in the catalog is the same exact copy as the one I was assigned. I believe that this is a safe assumption given the description of the binding (discussed further below) and the fact that the catalog does not indicate that Seillière had multiple copies of *The Complete Practical Cook*.

To return to the question of binding, interestingly, in the catalog’s introduction, Sotheby et al. specifically highlight “the exquisite taste of the bindings” of the entire Bibliotheque de Mello collection.¹⁹ Moreover, the catalog confirms that the binding of *The Complete Practical Cook* is morocco, specifically “olive morocco super extra.”²⁰ According to Conservation OnLine’s Dictionary of Descriptive Terminology “extra binding” is a “term originally applied to the binding of books in full leather, usually morocco, in which the best materials and workmanship were used throughout. The term also implied extra care in finishing and extensive use of gold tooling.”²¹ This book certainly has a binding that seems to have been made using excellent materials and craftsmanship.

Additionally, though the book’s binding is not signed, the catalog has the note “g. e. by Petit” included in the line that describes the binding.²² Though I have not been able to determine what “g. e.” stands for, other descriptions in the catalog use the term followed by various other

¹⁸ Jean-Paul Fontaine, “La Bibliothèque Du Baron Achille Seillière,” *Histoire de la Bibliophilie*, January 29, 2014, <https://histoire-bibliophilie.blogspot.com/2014/01/la-bibliotheque-du-baron-achille.html>.

¹⁹ Sotheby et al., *La Bibliothèque de Mello*, iii.

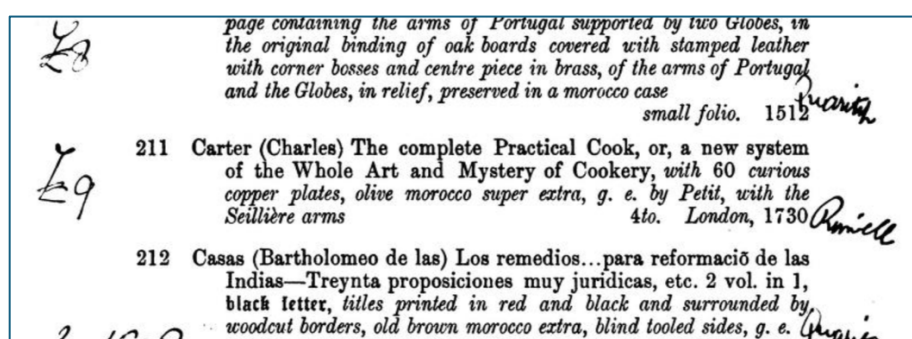
²⁰ *Ibid*, 28.

²¹ *Conservation OnLine Dictionary of Descriptive Terminology*, s.v. “Extra binding,” accessed April 14, 2024, <https://cool.culturalheritage.org/don/dt/dt1233.html>.

²² Sotheby et al., *La Bibliothèque de Mello*, 28.

names (e.g. “g. e. by Chambolle-Duru,” etc.) Some of these names, such as Chambolle-Duru, are highlighted in the catalog’s intro as “famous” binders.²³ Thus, I am assuming that “g. e. by” is the equivalent of “binding by,” and *The Complete Practical Cook* was therefore bound by someone with the name Petit. Despite trying to look into this further, it appears that there were a lot of binders with the name Petit, and I have been unable to figure out which one may have bound this book. Nonetheless, Petit was not a name highlighted in the catalog’s intro as a “famous name.” Presumably when the book was described by Sotheby et al., it included some sort of note or description that had the binder’s name (and perhaps further details) such that this information could be included in the catalog.

In the margins of the catalog I looked at on the Internet Archive (which notes the catalog was uploaded by ARLIMA, Les Archives de littérature du Moyen Âge, or, The Archives of Middle Ages Literature), “£9” is written next to the description, as well as (what I believe is) a name beginning with the letter R that I’ve not been able to discern. This is perhaps the price the book sold for in 1887, as well as possibly the name of the buyer, however, I have not been able to confirm this.²⁴



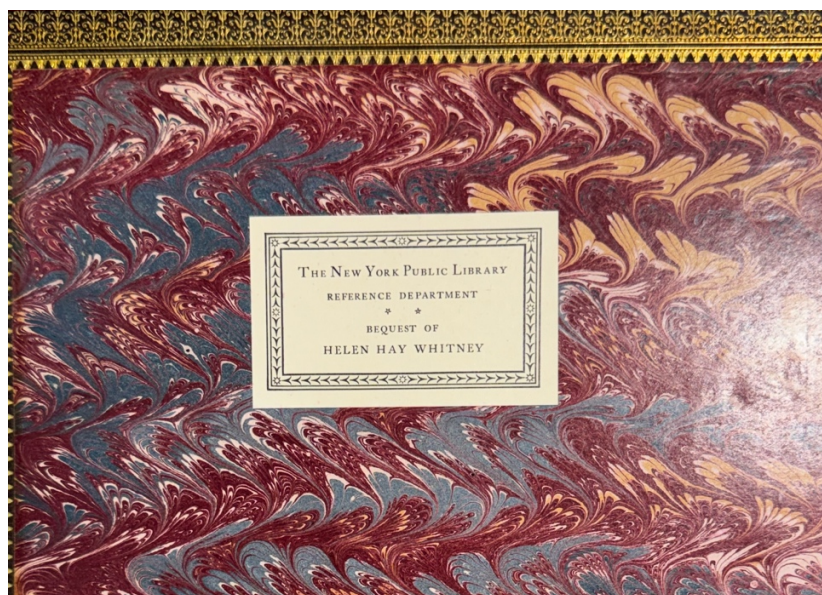
Screenshot of the book’s description from the Sotheby et al. catalog²⁵

²³ Sotheby et al., *La Bibliothèque de Mello*, iv.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 28.

²⁵ *Ibid*.

This book's other indication of provenance is a bookplate in the interior of the upper cover from The New York Public Library noting that the book was a bequest of Helen Hay Whitney. Whitney was a philanthropist, sportswoman, and poet, who was born in 1875 and died in 1944.²⁶ In 1945, the Whitney cookery collection was donated to NYPL via Whitney's Estate.^{27,28} It is likely that Carter's book was acquired by NYPL as part of that collection. Given that Whitney was only 12 years old at the time of the Bibliotheque de Mello sale, we can assume that the book was purchased and owned by someone else before coming into her possession. However, there is no evidence in the book to indicate whom that person may have been.



Inner upper cover with bookplate, marbled endpaper and gilt tooling

²⁶ "Whitney, Helen Hay (1876–1944)," *Women in World History: A Biographical Encyclopedia*, *Encyclopedia.com*, accessed April 15, 2024, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/women/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/whitney-helen-hay-1876-1944>.

²⁷ Francesca Pitaro, "Whitney cookery collection," [finding aid], 1986, The New York Public Library Archives & Manuscripts, New York, NY, accessed April 15, 2024, <https://archives.nypl.org/mss/3318>.

²⁸ "Culinary History," The New York Public Library, accessed April 15, 2024, <https://www.nypl.org/node/5629>.

RESEARCH VALUE

The Complete Practical Cook would be of interest to those researching or looking into recipes from the 18th century, specifically food prepared for nobles and people wealthy enough to employ chefs and kitchen staff. It is possibly more expansive than the typical English cookbook from that period, as Carter travelled extensively throughout Europe while working under different benefactors, and was thus exposed to a variety of foreign cuisines. For example, Carter includes recipes such as “Kibob of Lamb, a Turkish Dish” and “Beaniat a la Switz.”²⁹ However, the book still has a decidedly English lens, given the audience Carter was writing for. Researchers interested in English culinary heritage would also likely find helpful the 60 engraved plates in the back (discussed further below) showing diagrams for various dinners according to season or event.

This book seems like a good candidate for lending to other institutions, as it is in relatively good condition and there are a number of known, cataloged copies of the same edition in existence – 19 according to ESTC (two of which are held at NYPL, including this copy), and 23 according to WorldCat (with relatively little overlap between the two lists).^{30,31} Even assuming that these catalogs are out of date, or that certain copies have changed hands between institutions and thus are being counted twice, it is apparent that this book is not so scarce that only a handful of copies exist. Therefore, and especially since NYPL has another copy, this book could be lent to another institution with relatively little risk.

²⁹ Carter, *The Complete Practical Cook*, 213-216.

³⁰ ESTC, “The complete practical cook: or, a new System of the whole art and mystery of cookery [...]” [catalog record].

³¹ WorldCat, “The complete practical cook : or, A new system of the whole art and mystery of cookery [...]” [catalog record], WorldCat, accessed April 19, 2024 <https://search.worldcat.org/title/6193374>.

VALUATION & CONDITION

Despite the prevalence of this book according to ESTC and WorldCat (likely around ~20+ copies, as discussed above), there are no copies of the first edition that are currently for sale. One first edition copy of this book sold at a Sotheby's auction in 2010 for £4,000.³² On average, one British Pound was equal to approximately \$1.55 in 2010,³³ so the copy sold by Sotheby's sold for about \$6,200 in 2010. Adjusting only for inflation, that same book would be worth \$8,880 today.³⁴ However, if we assume that rare books (on average) appreciate at a higher rate than inflation, it is likely that the copy sold by Sotheby's (and thus other first editions of *The Complete Practical Cook* in good condition, including this copy) would now be worth more than \$8,880.³⁵

A previously noted, this book is in relatively good condition – it has all of its pages (including all 60 engraved plates inserted at the back of the book) and the binding is intact, but worn and starting to crack on the head of the spine. A few leaves have some sort of staining, possibly from hot oil (since it seems to have caused the ink to spread slightly), perhaps spilled whilst the book was used in a kitchen. Moreover, there is some sort of number or code (that was clearly not part of the original printing) stamped on one of the pages in the bottom right corner. It is not clear what this number represents, though it possibly had to do with cataloging at some point.

³² “Lot 57: Carter, Charles,” Sotheby's, accessed April 19, 2024, <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2010/books-for-cooks-110410/lot.57.html>.

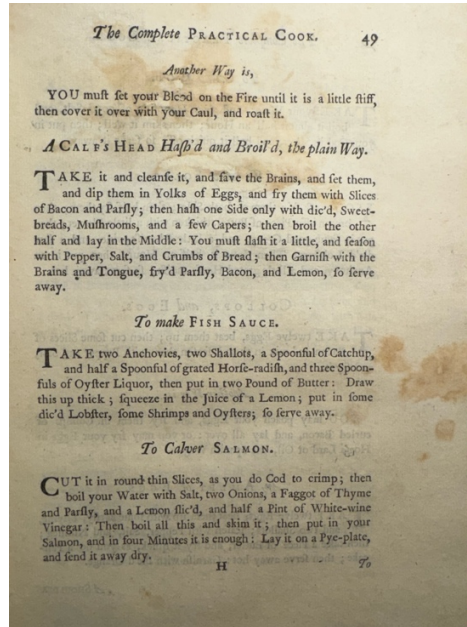
³³ “British Pound (GBP) to US Dollar (USD) Exchange Rate History for 2010,” Exchange-Rates.org, accessed April 19, 2024, <https://www.exchange-rates.org/exchange-rate-history/gbp-usd-2010>.

³⁴ US Inflation Calculator, accessed April 19, 2024, <https://www.usinflationcalculator.com/>.

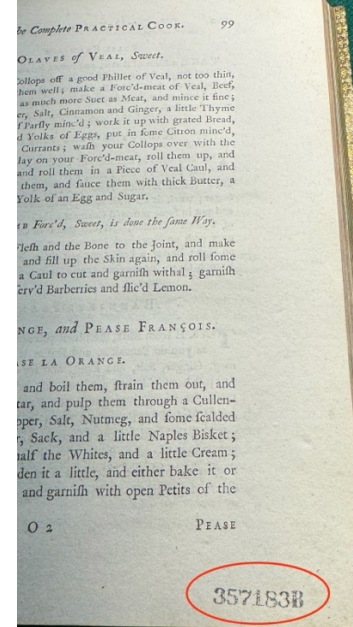
³⁵ Vikram Barhat, “Rare Books Are a Hot Collectible. Here's How to Get Started,” *The Wall Street Journal*, January 3, 2024, <https://www.wsj.com/arts-culture/books/are-books-collector-guide-98ac3e4a>.



Cracking in the binding



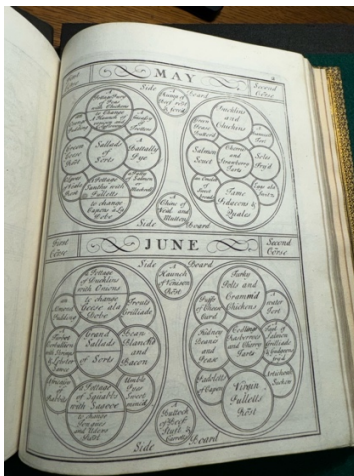
Staining on one of the pages



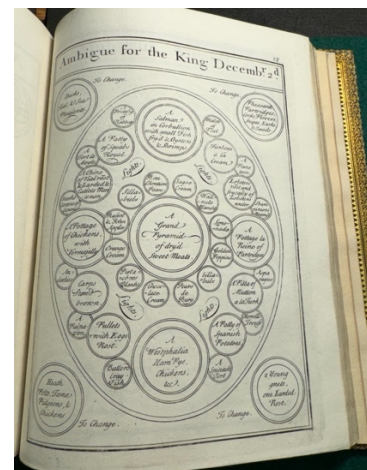
Unknown number/code

INTERESTING ELEMENTS

Part of the appeal of this book, as briefly noted above, is that there are 60 engraved plates included in the back. These are diagrams for table layouts and meals. Carter thus provides examples of menus according to the season, as well as past events that he catered. All 60 plates are included in this copy, and all are in remarkably good condition, especially considering that five of these fold out and thus are at greater risk of wear and tear.

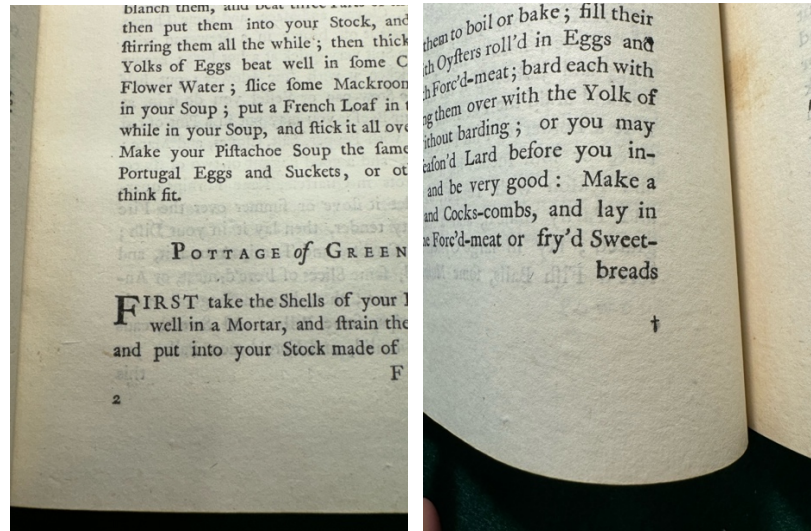


An engraved plate illustrating seasonal menus



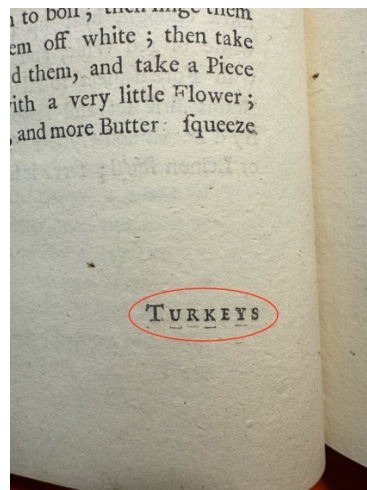
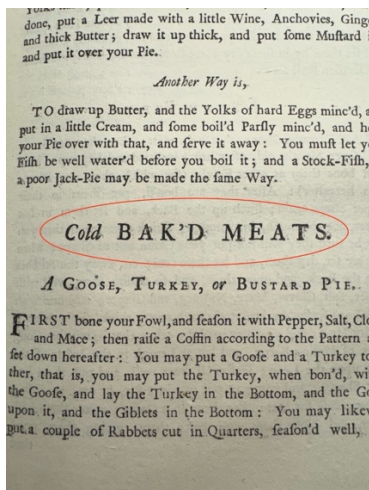
An engraved plate showing an "Ambigue for the King"

Another interesting element in this book is the presence of press figures. I saw two press figures: the number “2” and a symbol (†) that is possibly a cross, or possibly a dagger.

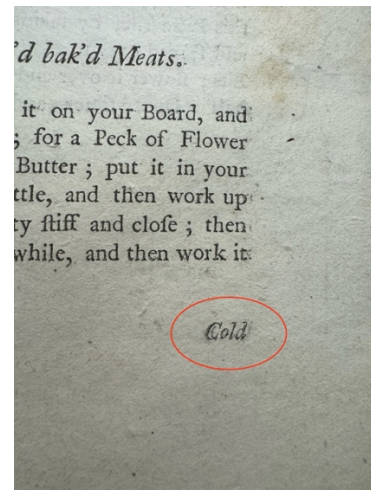


Press figures

Additionally, this book has relatively inconsistent inking – some parts are over-inked which caused the ink to get splotchy or push past the edges of the type, while some sections are under-inked and appear almost faded.

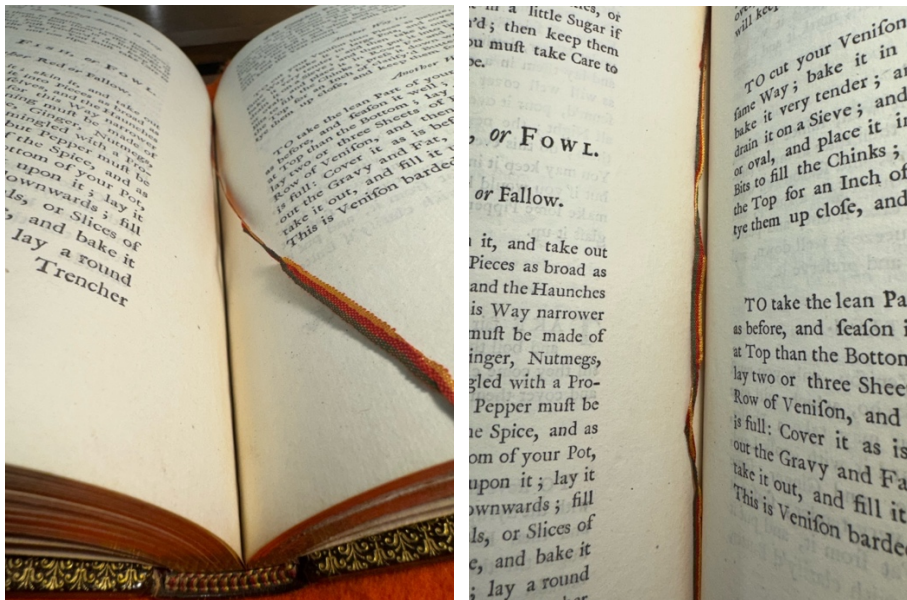


Examples of over-inking



An example of under-inking

The final interesting element I noted was a bookmark ribbon that seemed to be sewn into the binding, as it matched the stitching in the spine.



The ribbon bookmark

EXPERIENCE

Overall, I had a very positive experience in the Astor Reading Room and researching for this project in general. I find the reading room beautiful, and the librarians and the staff make the space welcoming. Everyone I interacted with was friendly and helpful (special shoutout to Leah!) and I liked that the room normally had a number of other researchers, because I never felt that I was being overly scrutinized or monitored (as contrasted to the Grolier Club, where you sit at one small table directly across from the librarian).

My only (very small) critique is that there was one rule that I wasn't aware of before coming to the reading room: that patrons are not permitted to have anything on the back of their chairs. Thus, when a staff member told me I needed to remove my blazer from the back of my chair (but still did not explain the rule or the reasoning), I felt defensive, mostly because I hate

breaking rules and would not have done so if I knew the rule existed. Again, this is a very minor gripe, and I truly had only positive experiences in the reading room other than this blip.

In terms of interacting with the book, I found it incredibly fun to pore over a rare book for hours. (And it was downright exhilarating to see the book's watermark for the first time!) Furthermore, the process of going through the book again and again to gather data for the collation formula (and beyond) was meditative and satisfying in a way that I did not expect. It was extremely gratifying to have the physical and research pieces click together and create a complete picture of the book. Though I was disappointed by the lack of marginalia (no recipe notes?!), this project was overall super enjoyable.

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