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PICTURING THE KITCHEN

During my semester at the Italian Academy I will be completing a book manuscript tentatively called *Bartolomeo Scappi's Paper Kitchen: Food and Knowledge in Early Modern Europe*: Scappi's *Opera* was first published in Rome and Venice in 1570 by the Tramezzino press and reissued seven times before 1643. Essentially a cookbook, it features a large number of recipes, from simple preparations to elaborate banquet presentations; it also includes 112 menus, some of which claim to record actual meals, and a chapter on dishes appropriate for convalescents and the infirm. But the book's most significant and novel element is its illustrations, which fall into three categories: kitchen interiors; tools, implements, and machines, by far the largest group; and food service for a papal conclave. These images are the first of their kind and remained unparalleled until the eighteenth century.

Though the identification of the artist or artists responsible for the prints has proved elusive (doubtless contributing to their exclusion from art historical studies), the very fact that they are not signed is a further index of their unusual status as documents. My research suggests that the images were commissioned from a Roman printmaker who worked closely with the Tramezzino publishing house on other projects, and their relation to other types of illustrated books, from medical treatises to machine books, is the subject of one of the chapters. The unique illustrations in Scappi's *Opera* signal a new attitude about the relationship of knowledge and practice on the part of the patrons and users whose needs it was meant to serve. With the increasing professionalization of many skills and trades, and the self-conscious articulation of these emerging categories taking place all around him, Scappi and his handlers pioneered not just a new way of looking at the kitchen—as workshop or laboratory—but new forms of visualizing and disseminating artisanal knowledge. If the advice on recipes and menu planning in Scappi's *Opera* belongs to the well-established tradition of cookery books, household manuals, and courtesy books, the illustrations suggest connections to an entirely different and emergent world of knowledge embodied in new genres including the mechanical or engineering treatise, the how-to book, and the proto-ethnographic text. It is only through close study of Scappi's illustrations that these connections can be discerned, explained, and interpreted.