

Opera: Scappi's best seller
(anastatica edition, Forni Editor, Bologna, 1981)



The name Bartolomeo Scappi is among the champions of the culinary Italian art of all times with Martino from Como, Bartolomeo Platina, Cristoforo Messisbugo, Antonio Latini and Giovanni Vialardi, the chef of the Savoia dynasty. He was born in Dumenza at the beginning of '500, in the Luinese, he went to Rome and there he became the chef of the court, man of letters and manager (as we would say today) of the Pope. In his carrier he served four popes and, at the top of his glory, he wrote the most important culinary treatise of the Renaissance: "the Opera: the art of cooking". It is an anthology of culinary knowledge updated to the XVI century from which we understand how the author mechanized the kitchen of the pope with the use of "mill" to roast chickens, how the employee of the palace were paid and put up. In six monumental chapters, Scappi made a list of more than thousand recipes and he showed to perfectly know the secrets of the international cooking and the best meal of every parts of Italy, indicating the best way to cook them. He perfectly described trout and every kind of fish, he talked about food for every day and for ill or conualescing people. He gave us more than 200 versions of pasta and he even talked about the secrets of Arabian art of pastries. The treatise was printed in Venice in the 1570 by the printer Michele Tramezzino and it instantly became a "best seller", also thanks to the 28 illustrations engraved on copper which showed the different environments of kitchen, the utensils, the furnishing, the pans to use during the trip of the popes and even the ceremony of the refectory service during the conclave. He was reprinted many times between the XVI and the XVII century, the first one in the 1581 by Tramezzino himself. Then, other followed in the 1596, 1598, 1605, 1610 and 1622 thanks to Alessandro Vecchi, correlated with xylographic tables. In 1643 and in 1646 there were new editions made by the printer Combi, always in Venice, with chalcographies.