

On *Spaghetti alla Carbonara* and Related Dishes of Central and Southern Italy

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I Introduction¹

There is a great deal of popular interest in the origins of famous dishes, who invented them and how and when and where they were invented, and among the famous dishes of Italy, few have been more of an object of speculation and debate than *spaghetti alla carbonara*, the combination of pasta with cured pork and eggs and cheese which is so closely associated with Rome. Though several theories have been advanced concerning the dish's origin, none of these pass beyond the anecdotal or considers the cultural context in which it appears. The goal of this paper is to examine carefully the origins of this dish in terms of the broader socio-economic and aesthetic contexts in which it arose; from this perspective, it can be seen that *spaghetti alla carbonara* is but one member of a family of closely related preparations originating in the Central and Southern Italian highlands.

36 2 Recipes for *Spaghetti alla Carbonara* and theories concerning its origins

Before attempting to consider the origins of *spaghetti alla carbonara* from our own perspective, it will be necessary to examine parameters of variation in the recipe itself, as well as the several theories of its creation that have been proposed.

2.1 *Parameters of Variation in the Recipe.* While it is not surprising that a very popular and presumably 'traditional' dish would appear in many variants, the degree of variation seen in recipes for *spaghetti alla carbonara* seems surprising in light of the simplicity of the basic idea. As mentioned above, it is a dressing for pasta that includes a cured pork product, beaten eggs, grated cheese and, in addition, ground black pepper, but most of the ubiquitous elements are subject to significant variation, including the form of the pasta, and there are, moreover, some other ingredients that some cooks feel the need to include. Our observations are drawn from a very broad survey of recipes for the dish in Italian and English language print and internet sources.²

- *Pasta.* The most common form of pasta used here is spaghetti. Non-Italian sources generally follow the Italian mainstream in this regard but outside of Italian kitchens sensibilities concerning appropriate combinations of sauce or condiment types and different shapes are more relaxed and occasionally wholly lacking. There is, however, a minority of Italian cooks who prescribe the use of *maccheroni* (tubular pasta) with the *alla carbonara* preparation, notably at the *Trattoria La Carbonara* in Rome; they use *penne*.

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- *Pork. Pancetta*, cured pork belly, is probably the most commonly recommended form of pork in recipes, though many Italian writers and increasingly many English-language authors recommend one use *guanciale*, that is, cured pork jowl, if at all possible. Not surprisingly, English-language authors often recommend bacon as a substitute, which introduces a further and fairly assertive smoky flavour to the dish. It must, however, be noted that some Italian internet writers call for the use of *pancetta affumicata*, that is, smoked *pancetta*.

- *Cheese*. There are two hard grating cheeses that appear in recipes for *spaghetti alla carbonara*, namely, *pecorino*, the traditional sheep's milk cheese of Central and Southern Italy, and *parmigiano reggiano*, the famous cow's milk cheese from around Parma and Reggio Emilia. Many recipes, especially ones from Italy, call for just *pecorino* but a great many also call for just *parmigiano* and yet others call for a mixture of the two.

- *Eggs*. Of course, all recipes assume the use of chicken eggs here but variation between recipes does occur with regard to two points.

First, there is some noteworthy variation in the relative amount of egg included per person. Italian recipes generally call for either 2 eggs per 300 grams of pasta (to serve three people) or 3 eggs per 400 grams of pasta (to serve four people). Some call for a relatively smaller presence of egg – for example, the version in the translation of the so-called 'bible of Italian cooking', *The Silver Spoon* (2005: 300), includes but two eggs for four people and so too David (1977: 102) – but one also comes across recipes with a reinforcement of the egg element – Downie (2002: 98–9) uses three whole eggs for four persons plus the yolk of a fourth.³

Second, the treatment of the eggs in the preparation differs across recipes, though it seems generally, if not quite universally stated, that the result is intended always to be roughly this: that the eggs are to yield through gentle cooking a creamy sauce and not the curd-like texture of scrambled eggs. In essence, there are two approaches. The one demands that the beaten eggs be mixed together with the just drained and still hot pasta away from any direct source of heat, in the serving bowl for example, with the residual heat of the pasta and also that of the pork and its fat being intended to cook the eggs sufficiently to form a creamy sauce and no more; this approach seems to be increasingly popular over what seems to me to be an older approach. That older approach typically involves the joining of the drained pasta, beaten eggs and the pork and fat together in the pot used for boiling the pasta and stirring the mixture vigorously over low heat.

- *Black Pepper*. Perhaps the only ingredient of *alla carbonara* preparations which has engendered no controversy or debate is the black pepper: by universal agreement, the dish must contain this spice, freshly ground and in substantial measure.

- *Cooking fat*. The majority of recipes for the dish call for the use of a small amount of olive oil to be used in the pan in which the diced pork is then gently fried. Occasionally, butter is the recommended fat, as in, for example, *The Silver Spoon*

(2005: 300) and David (1977: 102). Others recommend the use of lard, which in my opinion was surely commonly used here in the past: Santolini's very traditionally oriented book on Roman cookery (1976b: 98–101) calls for either olive oil or lard in the recipes for both *carbonara* and *bucatini alla matriciana*, while Boni, in her book *La cucina romana*, calls only for lard in the pasta recipes that involve initial frying of cubed *guanciale*.⁴

The ingredients just discussed form the core elements of *spaghetti alla carbonara* and, it seems clear that to the sensibilities of Roman cooks, further additions to the dish are felt to be non-canonical, wrong and even offensive.⁵ Nevertheless, there are three ingredients which are increasingly popular additions.

- *Cream*. The addition of cream to *carbonara* preparations is encountered very frequently in recipes written outside of Italy but one also encounters its inclusion in recipes on Italian cooking and chat sites.⁶

- *Garlic*. As with cream, garlic seems to be more often included in recipes for *carbonara* written outside of Italy; in the case of the United States, the inclusion of garlic here goes along with a widespread misconception about the use of garlic in Italian cookery and a relatively new-found and general love thereof. To some American palates, *carbonara* preparations are improved through a massive addition of garlic and recipes can be found in which two, three or even four whole cloves are included in minced form.⁷ Inclusion of garlic by non-Roman Italian authors is not uncommon but then its use is virtually always limited to the flavouring of the oil in which the cured pork will be fried with one clove of garlic which is then discarded (see, for example, Piras & Medagliani 2000: 303 and *The Silver Spoon* 2005: 300).

- *White wine*. Some cooks include a touch of white wine in the recipe, added to the pan in which the pork has been fried.

2.2 *Theories of its origin*. As mentioned above, several theories have been advanced to account for the origin of the *carbonara* preparation, though to this writer's knowledge no detailed treatment of the subject has been made. The theories can be classified in two groups: a) those that take the name '*carbonara*' as the crucial starting point for the explanation; b) those that do not assign the name '*carbonara*' any special place in their account.

The basic meaning of the phrase *alla carbonara* is 'in the style of the charcoal burners or "wood colliers"'.⁸ Briefly, the outstanding characteristics of the wood colliers' occupation were that they worked in the forests, especially in mountainous areas, and that they would spend extended periods of time in small groups away from any towns or villages. Their work consisted essentially of cutting wood, carefully building a large wood pile (in some dialects called a *carbonara*, standard *carbonaia*), monitoring vigilantly the slow burning of the pile which produces the charcoal, and finally dismantling the remnants of the pile and recovering the charcoal and then transporting it out of the forest for sale. The work thus involved an enormous amount of hard labour and difficult living conditions for most of the year, but also a fairly high level of skill.

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Curiosity about the history of *carbonara* has led people to imagine a number of possible connexions between it and the *carbonai*, the wood colliers. Perhaps the most widespread theory is that the connexion is direct: the dish was one invented and regularly consumed by wood colliers and it was introduced to Rome in the course of their visits selling charcoal to the urban population. A variant on this basic theory is that the dish was one popular with the *carbonai* but that its popularisation in Rome was a result of a family of charcoal burners moving to the city and opening a *trattoria*, where they naturally offered their beloved dish to an appreciative Roman clientele. This story has been linked specifically to the famous, old restaurant now on the Campo de' Fiori mentioned above, namely, *La Carbonara*, which first opened in 1912. Finally, a third theory that is regularly noted in preambles to *carbonara* recipes but then often given along with expressions of doubt regarding its plausibility is what one might term the poetic theory. The reasoning here is that the dish may or may not have had some actual link to the charcoal makers and sellers but the name was given to the dish on account of the very liberal use of black pepper as its finishing touch: the many black flecks of pepper allegedly evoked the coal dust on the clothes of a *carbonaio* and so, perhaps, the name for the dish was born.

Also taking the name *alla carbonara* as the starting point is another theory, which suggests not a connexion to the people in the charcoal making business but rather to the members of the political society named after the wood colliers, namely, the *Carbonari*. Like the Free Masons, that society, the *Carbonaria*, had its own arcane initiation rites and other ceremonies, secret symbols and a sort of secret code language as well. The political leanings of the group were liberal and patriotic and from 1815 to the 1830s it represented an important source of resistance to the foreign-based, conservative governments that ruled the various parts of Italy. Though there were *Carbonari* through much of Italy, they were most numerous and influential in the South – in the Bourbon Kingdom of the Two Sicilies – and in the Papal States of Central Italy. To my knowledge, any obvious or strong tie between the society itself and the actual pasta preparation is, however, lacking, despite at least one claim that links the dish to the society through an old restaurant where meetings were allegedly held.⁹

The main theory which does not hinge upon the actual name of the dish proposes that *spaghetti alla carbonara* is, in fact, a rather recent creation and more specifically one that dates back only to the last years of the Second World War. According to this view, the crucial factor in the dish's invention was the large presence of American servicemen in Rome after it was liberated from German hands in 1944. In effect, the claim is that there was a joining together of American taste for and supplies of bacon and powdered eggs with the local Roman love of *pasta asciutta*; Roman cooks came up with the recipe to make use of the American supplies and to satisfy the foreign troops, perhaps with some prodding from those troops who missed their familiar bacon and egg combination.

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This theory of the American GIs' rôle in the creation of *spaghetti alla carbonara* is very widely cited in both cookbooks and on internet websites and has, in fact, gained the support of some very distinguished persons. Downie (2000: 96) indicates that Livio Jannattoni, a respected Roman journalist and author of an extensive book on the cookery of Rome and Lazio, subscribed to this view,¹⁰ and Davidson advances this view in the entry on spaghetti in the *Penguin Companion to Food* (2002: 888): 'It has been suggested that this is a traditional dish of the *carbonari*, or charcoal burners, but that is implausible. A more credible explanation is that it was invented in 1944 as a result of the American occupation troops having their lavish rations of eggs and bacon prepared by local cooks. The name would then be from a Roman restaurant, the "Carbonara", which makes a specialty of the dish.'

It should be noted here that Davidson's version of the GI theory goes a step further than the vast majority of versions that one encounters in that he adds the important step of suggesting a way to account for the name of the dish, which this theory otherwise does not do on its own.

One last theory, found on a number of Italian based internet sites, must be added here, namely that *spaghetti alla carbonara* can be traced back to a Neapolitan dish and perhaps specifically to Ippolito Cavalcanti, who includes a recipe in his cookbook of 1839 that is said to resemble the modern Roman dish but is never actually cited by the web-page authors.¹¹ We shall return to Cavalcanti further on.

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3 *Spaghetti alla Carbonara* in its culinary aesthetic context

The cuisine of the city of Rome is widely regarded as featuring a strong preference for the simple and the rustic. Romans are also known as being particularly fond of simple pasta dishes that are also quick to make. *Spaghetti alla carbonara*, as one of the most popular and typical Roman *primi piatti* reflects well the aesthetics of the cuisine: simple, quickly executed, and in the eyes of many decidedly rustic.¹² Indeed, for the many who subscribe to the theory that *carbonara* is in a direct sense linked to the *carbonai*, the charcoal burners, who spent the better part of each year living in the mountain forests and generally well removed from mainstream society, the rusticity of the dish is self-evident.

3.1 *A Family of Dishes.* In my opinion, it is precisely the 'rustic' character of this dish that is the key to understanding its history and place in the culinary landscape and, indeed, to appreciate its rusticity one cannot regard *carbonara* in isolation but instead one must view it as but one member of a family of aesthetically and historically related preparations. The core members of this family are four dishes which share not only status as traditional and popular Roman *primi* but also can be seen as variations on a basic theme. These dishes are:¹³

- *spaghetti alla gricia*: this dish is typically made with a 'sauce' of just diced *guanciale* or *pancetta* gently fried in either lard or olive oil along with hot dried chile pepper – *pepperoncino* – and, optionally, chopped onion; it is finished with grated

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pecorino and ground black pepper.

- *bucatini alla matriciana*: commonly with the thicker and perforated *bucatini* rather than spaghetti, the cooked condiment for this dish is precisely the same as that of the *alla gricia* preparation with the exception that in this case tomatoes and, optionally, a touch of white wine are added. This dish is also finished with grated *pecorino* and black pepper.

- *spaghetti alla carbonara*: as discussed at length above, the condiment consists of the cured pork (*guanciale* or *pancetta*) cooked in lard or oil and egg beaten together with grated cheese, most often *pecorino*. And again, the dish is finished with more grated *pecorino* and black pepper.

- *spaghetti alla carrettiera*: a wide array of preparations for pasta share this name, including some from distant parts of Italy but in a Roman or Latian setting this name most often denotes spaghetti with a condiment made with a *soffritto* of *guanciale*, *pancetta* or *lardo*, garlic and olive oil, with *porcini* mushrooms and tuna preserved in oil; recipes seem to be divided roughly equally between those that contain also tomato and those that do not. Some people finish the dish with grated cheese.

As can be seen, these are in essence one basic dish with different secondary – though certainly prominent – ingredients featured in each version: as many have observed, *alla gricia* is *alla matriciana* minus the tomatoes, but then *alla carbonara* is in essence *alla matriciana* but with the beaten egg-cheese mixture taking the place of the tomatoes and *pepperoncino*. *Alla carrettiera* can be viewed in either of two ways: in the white version, it resembles *alla carbonara* but with mushrooms and tuna in place of the egg-cheese mixture, while in its red version, one could think of it as a variation on *alla matriciana* in which the mushrooms and tuna fill the slot left by the absent hot chile pepper.

Another noteworthy feature of this group of dishes is its use or non-use of two aromatic staples of the Italian kitchen, namely, onions and garlic. Onion seems to be a possible element in *alla gricia* and, not surprisingly then, also *alla matriciana*, but many traditionally minded cooks do not include it. The *alla carbonara* condiment seems clearly to include neither garlic nor onion, though the occasional use of onion is not surprising, given the relation of this dish to the *alla gricia* / *alla matriciana* pair; use of garlic in some versions of all three dishes looks to be an innovation to the recipes as they have gradually been adopted more broadly by those who have no attachment to the Central Italian tradition. Only in *alla carrettiera* does an aromatic, namely, garlic, seem to be obligatory.

In addition to the traditional ambivalence toward onion and garlic in this group of dishes, there is a complete absence of any herb, including the almost ubiquitous ingredient of Italian cooking, parsley. In point of fact fresh ingredients are – with two exceptions to be discussed below – not required here, making these four dishes which can be made wholly from the larder, with no need for short term access either to any shop or a vegetable garden. Of course, fresh tomatoes can be and are used in *alla*

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matriciana and *alla carrettiera*, but canned or bottled tomatoes are appropriate and in no way to be considered an unhappy substitute for fresh. In the case of the *porcini* mushrooms in *spaghetti alla carrettiera*, many recipes call for the fresh item, though others allow for use of the larder-friendly dried item. But we should call attention to the fact that fresh *porcini* mushrooms in Central Italy can be and regularly are picked by individuals in the forests where they grow, rather than bought in stores. The one remaining fresh item to be considered is the eggs for *carbonara* which are fairly perishable, as well as fragile, but these two problems are easily resolved for him who has an egg-laying chicken or two near at hand.

There are two conclusions to be drawn from the nature of the ingredients of these four dishes: 1) they are either items to be found in the larder or else relatively easily obtained, including by people living away from any towns and markets and in a forest; 2) they are, given the possibility of substituting dried for fresh mushrooms, almost completely free of any ties to the seasons. And one further unifying characteristic of this family of dishes is that each of them combines substantial portions of starch, fat and protein and thus can serve as a one-plate meal, as a *piatto unico*. Whether they originated amongst charcoal burners and other denizens of the forests or not, these four hearty dishes are certainly at home among hard-working mountain people.

3.2 *A Family of Names.* Just as the four dishes under consideration here display striking resemblances in their composition, so too are their names linked together semantically.

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As already observed, the name of *spaghetti alla carbonara* evokes the charcoal burners of the region. One of the other names in the group, *alla carrettiera*, similarly evokes the men of a humble occupation, namely that of the wagon-driver. Though many wagon-drivers in Rome and the surrounding territory may well never have been involved in work that took them to the highland forests, it is worth noting that many wagon-drivers were so occupied, hauling wood, charcoal and other forest products to centres of population, and as a consequence, *carrettieri* were often in contact with other woodsmen, such as the *boscaioli* ('woodcutters') and *carbonai*, and were associated with them in the minds of city and town-dwellers.

Contrasting with these two names is that of *bucatini alla matriciana*; *alla matriciana* is Roman dialect and is undoubtedly the result of misparsing of the phrase *all'Amatriciana*, which is to say, in the style of Amatrice, a town of Rieti province in mountainous north-eastern Lazio, near the border of Abruzzo and Le Marche. Incidentally, Amatrice is famous for its pork products, especially its *mortadella*, and it also lies amidst areas where the *carbonai* did their work, up in the Apennine forests. Thus, though the *alla matriciana* name is of a geographical nature and stands out over against the two occupational names of *alla carbonara* and *alla carrettiera*, there is an obvious relationship between the three.

The fourth name, *alla gricia*, presents a more complicated situation. There are two frequently cited explanations of this name (e.g. Downie 2000: 84): 1) that it is,

like the name *alla matriciana*, a geographical reference, specifically, in the style of the town of Grisciano, which lies in fact just a little bit to the north-east of Amatrice; 2) that the adjective is just the Roman dialect pronunciation of the word 'grey', Standard Italian *grigio*, Romanesco *gricio*, with the name of the dish being then 'spaghetti made the grey way', in reference to the alleged colour of the preparation. A third possibility should, however, also be considered, namely that the reference is to another humble occupation, that of the *gricio*, a Roman dialect word for a vendor of basic household goods, such as pasta, flour, bread, oil, soap, also known as an *orzarolo*.¹⁴ An important but hitherto neglected fact can help to clarify the situation. Writing in the 1920s, Boni (1983: 46) doesn't use the name *alla gricia* for this recipe nor the more prosaic *spaghetti al guanciale* that one sees on occasion but rather the name *spaghetti alla marchiciana*, that is, 'in the style of Le Marche'. Given that the town of Grisciano lies practically on the border of Lazio and Le Marche, it seems reasonable to conclude that the recipe genuinely was associated with the area around that border zone and that the term *alla gricia* is a reinterpretation of an older (and perhaps excessively obscure) *alla grisciana*, in other words, that the name was probable adapted to fit the existing pattern of occupational names that included two of the dishes in the family, *alla carbonara* and *alla carrettiera*. In the case of *alla matriciana*, the reference to a larger and better known town presumably assured that no renaming would occur. Thus, while the occupational sense of *alla gricia* seems to be at odds with the mountain-forest associations of the other three names, it can be seen that *spaghetti al guanciale* once also bore names closely tied to the others, namely the attested *alla marchiciana* and the presumed *alla grisciana*.¹⁵

4 Origins of *Spaghetti alla Carbonara* reconsidered

We have demonstrated that in examining the origins of *spaghetti alla carbonara* one must consider the whole family of pasta dishes to which it belongs. We've also shown that this family of dishes has had in the minds of Romans strong connexions, real or imagined, with forested areas well outside of Rome and occupations associated with the forests. In light of this, it seems that the theory of the crucial rôle of American GIs in the invention and/or popularisation of the dish loses much force. Indeed, though the theory has had some distinguished supporters, it has little in the way of compelling evidence and seems rather to be motivated by two questionable assumptions.

Perhaps the primary motivation for the GI theory is that *spaghetti alla carbonara* is apparently not described or mentioned by name in any sources from before the Second World War; even in Boni's book on Roman cooking from the 1920s no such dish appears. Two factors strongly mitigate the weight of this argument. First, there is the matter of the nature and volume of descriptions of popular – and especially rustic – cookery which are preserved from the first part of the twentieth century and before. There is no question but that our knowledge in this regard is limited and full of holes. Second, there needs to be a distinction made between the invention of a dish and the

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invention of a particular name for a dish. We've seen that in the case of *spaghetti alla gricia* the current popular name, referring to an occupation, seems to have been preceded by the older prosaic name and ones referring to geographical points. Might it be the case that all three of the names of our family of dishes with occupational references owe those names to a fashion in renaming dishes that arose some time in the mid-twentieth century? If so, casual references to *pasta alla carbonara* or *gricia* or *carrettiera* cannot be expected to turn up in older sources. Anecdotal evidence offered by Downie (2000: 96–7) suggests that both of these claims are right: older native Romans he cites recall *carbonara* from before the Second World War though not under that name: lack of textual references to *carbonara* before the war don't prove the dish didn't exist.

A second reason that many people, including students of culinary history, have perhaps embraced the GI theory and found the connexion to the *carbonai* dubious or implausible is that the pork and egg combination of *carbonara* seems more akin to the bacon and egg pairing of the Anglo-Saxon world and quite far from what one usually thinks of as characteristic for Central and Southern Italian fare. Food writers are well aware of the concept of *cucina povera* and many dishes associated with it but there are different levels of poverty in the kitchen. What is most often discussed these days of poor recipes are ones that appeal to people today, dishes based on vegetables and olive oil and fish. But until the mid-twentieth century, many poor Italians, especially those living in the mountainous areas away from the coast, ate little fish and olive oil and for them pasta was reserved for special occasions. Polenta, corn bread and potatoes were the main staples, boosted in flavour and nutritional value with pork or pork fat, cheese and eggs.

From this perspective, the modern *spaghetti alla carbonara* seems like a rich and festive dish, even in its more austere traditional versions, which eschew such additions as butter and cream and, for that matter, the 'foreign' *parmigiana* that many use in place of the traditional local *pecorino*. But the dish is clearly just a variant of or close analogue to a dish that is and long has been enjoyed widely in Central and Southern Italy, namely, pasta *cacio e uova*, that is, pasta dressed with melted lard and mixed with a combination of beaten eggs and grated cheese. This dish appears regularly in Neapolitan cookbooks and is, in fact, the dish in Cavalcanti's Neapolitan cookbook of 1839 occasionally referred to in connexion with the origins of *carbonara*.¹⁶ Interestingly, Downie (2000: 96) indicates that one of the names older Romans associate with *alla carbonara* from before the War is *cacio e uova*.

If *alla carbonara* is then just a new name for the old *cacio e uova*, a direct link between the dish and the *carbonai* may not have existed and, as in the case of the apparently renamed *spaghetti al guanciale*, the occupational name may be more poetic than socio-historical in nature. Further exploration of the nature of this link had, due to space restrictions, to be reserved for my presentation at the Symposium, where I discussed the evidence for the cuisine of poor Italians living in mountainous areas in times past and in particular the evidence for the lifestyle and diet of the *carbonai*.

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Notes

1. Many thanks are due to Amy Dahlstrom and Ernest Buccini Jr. for their help with various aspects of the preparation of this paper.
2. The printed sources will be cited as appropriate in the text below with bibliographical references given at the end of the paper. Internet sources have been for the most part used not as research resources for specific issues but rather to get a rough sense of what common opinion is among people interested in this particular dish. Internet searches were conducted using the Google search engine with key word combinations such as «spaghetti carbonara recipes», «spaghetti carbonara ricette», «carbonara guanciale», etc. In instances where a specific web page needs to be cited herebelow, appropriate documentation is provided.
3. It should be noted, however, that reduced amounts of egg in many recipes is paired with the addition of heavy cream to the dish, as in Callen's version in her Abruzzese cookbook with 3 eggs for six servings (1.5 lbs. of pasta) but (optionally) a half cup of cream (1998: 114–5). In the case of the *Silver Spoon* recipe (p. 300), the relatively small amount of egg seems to be compensated with relatively generous quantities of other fatty elements, namely butter, pancetta and a mixture of the two grated cheeses. Martini's (1983: 132–3) version is noteworthy for its comparatively heavy use of egg – 4 eggs for 350 grams of pasta – which is further supplemented with a touch of cream (2 tablespoons).
4. Note that Boni does not include a recipe for *spaghetti alla carbonara* in this book. There are, however, recipes for two other dishes – dishes which are in this writer's opinion to be viewed as direct relatives of the *carbonara* preparation – for which she indicates the use of lard, namely *spaghetti alla «matriciana»* and *spaghetti alla «marchiciana»* (1983: 45–6).
5. Downie (2002: 96–8) offers a brief and amusing account of the controversies surrounding the dish and the passions that they sometimes enflame. His own recipe (pp. 98–9) for the dish sticks to the core ingredients as indicated here, as do the recipes of other authors who are either natives of Rome or clearly students of the city's culinary traditions, e.g. Santolini (1976b: 100–1), Manuelli (2005: 16).
6. Callen's (1998: 114–5) recipe which calls optionally for cream has been mentioned above. An especially rich version can be seen in Root (1974: 54), where in addition to four eggs there are also

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included 6 tablespoons of cream and both butter and oil.

7. Three cloves are suggested in the recipe that was apparently shown on the PBS show (2001 season) *America's Test Kitchen* in the United States; the recipe is also published on the related Cook's Illustrated website but it is available for viewing only by subscribers. A recipe which includes four cloves of garlic can be found at the following web-address: http://starchefs.com/chefs/MGiraldi/Minnies_Kitchen/html/recipe_01.shtml.

The author, Minnie Giraldi, claims to have learned the recipe from Giuliano Bugialli but I find it hard to imagine that any version of *carbonara* suggested by Bugialli, a well-known traditionalist, would have included so much garlic, if any at all.

Onion is relatively rarely encountered as an ingredient for *spaghetti alla carbonara* but it is worth noting that the recipe which appears in the regional section for Lazio on the Italian website [cookaround.com](http://www.cookaround.com) – a section which includes many interesting, traditional recipes – is one in which a finely chopped onion is added in with the *guanciale* as a *soffritto*. The web-address (accessed on 7 May, 2006) is: http://www.cookaround.com/cucina/regionale/lazio/confro-1.php?id_ric=94.

8. The phrase is often incorrectly indicated in English language sources to mean 'in the style of the coal miners' rather than the correct 'wood colliers' or 'charcoal burners'.
9. I have encountered this theory on a few websites as part of the commentary accompanying recipes. The only version I have seen which offers some sort of detailed account for the application of the society's name to the dish is one cited on a website 'Carbonara Club' which was originally published in an Italian magazine. The owners of an old restaurant in a town in the province of Rovigo (between Ferrara and Padova) claim that in the early eighteenth century, Carbonari would regularly hold meetings there and consume the dish; in effect, the story is the basis for the restaurant's claim to be the place where the dish was invented. This story is related at the following web address: <http://www.carbonaraclub.it/dintorni.htm>.
10. At the time of this writing, I have not yet been able to see any of Jannattoni's writing on cooking, including his *La cucini romana e del Lazio*, a book of very considerable length on the topic.
11. One such website is Cibo360, which offers a brief review of the various theories on the origins of *carbonara* at the following address (last accessed 12 July 2006): http://www.cibo360.it/cucina/mondo/spaghetti_carbonara.htm.

Cavalcanti is also mentioned as possible inventor of *carbonara* (along with other theories) in an Italian Wikipedia entry for the dish (last accessed, 12 July 2006): http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pasta_alla_carbonara.

The Swiss BettyBossi site also refers to the Cavalcanti recipe (without citing the recipe itself) in a run-down of the various theories (last accessed 13 July 2006): http://www.bettybossi.ch/de/schwerpunkt/iwb_spkt_reze_20050426170015_arc.asp.

12. Cf., e.g., Boni (1983: 13): 'Nella cucina romana si preferiscono le cose semplici e genuine: tutto quello che rappresenta la complicazione della cucina internazionale viene inesorabilmente bandito. Il romano ha una cordiale antipatia per le vivande troppo elaborate e, severo conservatore, non accoglie che con diffidenza ciò che si distacca dai suoi cibi consueti.'
13. Recipes for *alla gricia* appear in Downie (2000: 84) and Manuelli (2005: 73); Santolini (1976b: 84) and Boni (1983: 46) give virtually the same recipe but not under that name. Recipes for *alla matriciana* are also found in each of these books, as well most books on Italian cuisine. The *alla carrettiera* dish is not included in the aforementioned works but is known to many in Lazio; the recipes I've consulted have all been found on Italian language sites on the internet, e.g.: <http://www.lericattedicucina.it/ricetta-scheda.php?idric=222>; <http://www.amando.it/ricette/paste-asciutte/spaghetti-carrettiera.html>; <http://digilander.libero.it/macromix/Ricette%20Word/Ricettario%20Cucina%20de%20Roma.htm>.
14. Chiappini (1945: 152–3, 220–1) explains that the term *gricio* 'grey' was applied to these grocers because the majority were (at some point) from the Valtellina, near the Grisons or *Grigioni*. According to him, they were in the Roman popular mind renowned for their avarice.

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15. One could imagine that the reinterpretation of *alla grisciana* to *alla gricia* was, however, semantically motivated, either by the alleged avarice of the *orzaroli* (given the simplicity of the dish) or through some other association, based on the nature of the occupation and the foodstuffs the *grici* sold.
16. Cavalcanti (1839: 365): 'li [maccarune] può fa pure co caso e ova sbattute.' For more recent and detailed recipes, see Santolini 1976a: 95, Rutigliano (ed.) 1993: 63 and Schwartz 1998: 137. Rutigliano (p. 34) and Schwartz (p. 139) also include recipes for another related dish, '*o vermicelli 'a puverello*', which combines lard, garlic, grated cheese and fried eggs.