

## From 'Peanut Weddings' to 'Beef Stands': The Socio-Culinary History of Chicago's 'Italian Beef'

*Anthony F. Buccini*

'Italian beef', or simply 'beef', is a dish made throughout Chicago and its suburbs but hardly found elsewhere in the US. It thus represents a particular specialty of the area and, as it has been celebrated in national popular food media in recent decades, Italian beef has become one of a small set of dishes which for many Chicagoans is associated strongly with local identity and civic pride. For tourists, it is considered one of the city's culinary 'musts'. Nowadays, this preparation is primarily a commercial food, sold in a wide array of informal restaurants and fast-food businesses, including local chains, but it is considered best prepared by small establishments known as 'beef stands', which specialize in this product and are often still Italian-American owned. Domestic preparation is still carried out in some families, especially those of Italian origin and with ties to the Taylor Street neighbourhood of the city, for whom the homemade version is generally reserved for festive occasions.<sup>1</sup>

As for the dish itself, Italian beef is always served as a sandwich, of which the filling is a heap of thinly sliced roasted beef. At first blush then, it appears to be just a take on the roast beef sandwich found throughout the US; consequently food writers all seem to assume that Chicago's specialty arose simply as an Italianized version of the Anglo-American mainstream's dish, and, as such, its 'invention' should be attributable to some individual associated with one of the original commercial producers. In this paper, I show this line of thinking to be wrong, for Chicago's beef sandwich is quite distinct from its mainstream analogues in multiple aspects, including the cooking method, seasoning, manner of serving, and canonical condiments, and the dish's origins predate its commercialization as fast-food: Italian beef was a festive dish prepared by Taylor Street's working-class Italian-American families, a preparation most likely popularized by the neighbourhood's strong contingent of people from Naples and the surrounding towns who brought the recipe with them as part of their traditional cuisine. This view is confirmed by the attestation of an unambiguously clear antecedent of the Taylor Street recipe in a mid-nineteenth century work on popular Neapolitan cookery, recorded long before mass immigration brought Italians to Chicago and reflecting a long-standing method of cooking beef in southern Italy.

## Beef, Dipped, Hot and Sweet...

To prepare the meat for Italian beef, one selects a large cut, typically a relatively inexpensive top or bottom round, which is partially trimmed of fat. There are multiple acceptable variations on the cooking method. Some cooks apply dry seasoning to the meat before browning it in a large pan with olive oil; others forego the browning and go directly to placing the seasoned meat in an oven; still others marinate the meat for a long time in a heavily seasoned broth before roasting in the oven. In all cases, it is absolutely essential that, when the meat goes into the oven, there is a substantial amount of seasoned broth in the roasting pan, as this liquid provides the ample amounts of 'gravy' that is a central feature of the dish.

Another key stage in the preparation of Italian beef comes at the end of the oven roasting: both the meat and the gravy are thoroughly cooled, which allows the cook to skim excess fat from the gravy and, more importantly, to slice the cooked meat as thinly as possible. Commercial preparations use large electric slicers, while domestic cooks must do as best they can with a knife. The gravy is then reheated and, preferably just before serving, the sliced beef is bathed in the gravy long enough for it to get thoroughly drenched and hot but not left so long as to break down.

68 Of central importance to the character of the dish is, of course, the seasoning, which always includes aromatic vegetables, especially of the allium family, and spices, though in the commercial setting there is a lamentable tendency to rely on powdered onion and garlic rather than actual fresh ingredients. In addition to garlic, onion, salt and pepper, both hot red chilli (*peperoncini*), usually in flaked form, and dried oregano are universally used in commercial kitchens, but many purveyors employ additional seasonings, and some regard this aspect of their recipes as a closely guarded secret. Some of these flavourings that I have encountered are rosemary, marjoram, fennel seeds, and paprika.

In addition, one finds a less common use of what Americans think of as 'sweet spices', something which I believe is an archaism and, in the commercial sphere, is a distinctive and much commented upon practice of the oldest continually operating beef stand in the Taylor Street neighbourhood, *Al's #1 Italian Beef*. Al's secret seasoning is thought by some to be allspice, but in my judgement it is surely a combination of cloves and cinnamon, perhaps also nutmeg, and, of course, the flavour combination of these three spices together with black pepper is what gave rise to the name 'allspice', a single spice originally produced only in Jamaica and generally alien to traditional southern Italian cookery.

The final preparation of Italian beef sandwiches naturally involves the union of bread, meat, and gravy. The bread for the sandwiches is traditionally a long loaf of a particular sort, called in much of America 'Italian bread' but referred to by Chicago's Italian bakers as 'French bread'; it is cut in sections and opened 'book' style. There are three options for the individual eater to choose: 1) 'dry', with the meat taken from the gravy and briefly drained before placement on the bread; 2) 'wet', with the meat placed on the bread without draining and with additional gravy spooned onto the sandwich;

3) 'dipped', with the composed sandwich entirely dunked for a moment or two into the gravy. Obviously, the bread of wet and especially dipped sandwiches becomes quite soft and the dripping gravy can make quite a mess.

The messy nature of an Italian beef sandwich is usually augmented by the two common additions. One can request the sandwich to be 'sweet', which indicates that roasted or fried ('sweet') bell peppers should be placed atop the meat; instead or in addition, one can request the sandwich to be 'hot', which calls for the addition of a style of *giardiniera* particular to Chicago's Italian-American community. This *giardiniera* is made by taking pickled vegetables, here typically cauliflower, celery, carrot and hot chilli peppers, mincing them and then further preserving them in olive oil, producing what is often a very piquant condiment. Thus, at a beef stand one might order as follows: 'a beef, dry and hot' or 'a beef, dipped, sweet and hot'. The best beef stands prepare these condiments in-house.

Variations on the basic Italian beef sandwich are several and include what is known as a 'combo', which combines the two main products of an old-fashioned beef stand, namely links of grilled southern Italian-style sausage, flavoured with fennel, and the roasted beef. 'Cheesy beef' is surely a more recent variant, with sliced low-moisture mozzarella or provolone topping the sandwich, reflecting the recent American predilection for adding cheese to almost everything. Far more interesting are the two inexpensive variants which do not contain any actual meat. These are known as 'gravy bread', which is simply the bread moistened or soaked with gravy, and the 'potato sandwich', which is gravy bread filled with French fries.

It should be noted that good beef stands typically produce excellent French fries, which are made with freshly cut potatoes and are twice-fried in the old Belgian fashion; they constitute the normal accompaniment to an Italian beef or combo.

### Home Kitchens, Bakeries, and Taylor Street's Peanut Weddings

As mentioned above, food writers who have considered the origins of Italian beef all seem to assume that the dish arose in the States as a sort of peculiar Italian take on the Anglo-American roast beef sandwich. This assumption is manifested in the inclination, so common in popular food writing, to attribute the origins of recipes to an identifiable individual, an 'inventor' of the dish, and in this effort multiple owners of beef-businesses have been happy to cooperate, claiming that an ancestor of theirs, a couple of generations back, who founded their family business, was responsible for creating the dish.

Beyond such questionable claims, a couple of things are indisputable. First, the association of Italian beef with Italians is clear enough, from elements of the dish itself, from the location of the earliest beef stands in the once predominantly Italian Taylor Street neighbourhood, and of course from the name of the dish. Though the names and menus of hole-in-the-wall establishments such as beef stands are often without surviving written records – and, indeed, some, long-closed, exist only in the

memories of old Taylor Street residents – it seems clear that the first such places arose in the years around the Second World War. Some local residents also insist that Italian beef appeared first as a commercial offering in existing small shops whose original and primary *raison d'être* was the making of sausage sandwiches, that is, both Italian sausage sandwiches and the particular Italian take on the Chicago-style hot dog.

That claims of the invention of the dish by forbears of one or the other owner of a surviving beef business are at best spurious is made clear by the occasional references in autobiographical and anecdotal documents related to the Taylor Street neighbourhood of an old local institution known as the 'peanut wedding', something which drew my attention many years ago because of its similarity to a parallel in my native New York area, the 'football wedding'. These jocular terms both refer to a style of wedding celebration once common among poorer, working-class Italian-American families in the early to mid-twentieth century, characterized in part by the humble fare served at the receptions. In New York, the main food was Italian submarine sandwiches, wrapped in paper, which could be tossed to guests like footballs. For Chicago's peanut weddings, the local folk etymology claims that roasted peanuts were featured, which is possible but not necessarily the full explanation of the name: 'peanut' here may have been more a jocular reference to the overall humbleness of these events, where, in fact, the main fare served was sandwiches of roasted beef with gravy, that is, Italian beef.

70

Some sixteen years ago, I became good friends with a baker, the late Frank Masi, proprietor of the last of the old neighbourhood Italian bakeries of Taylor Street. In exchange for helping out in his shop and filling in for absent employees, Frank taught me how to make all the traditional baked goods featured in his 'Italian Superior Bakery' – various kinds of bread, pan-pizza, *freselle*, *taralli* – and over the years we had many conversations about our shared Neapolitan foodways and about Taylor Street in the old days. Frank's parents came to the US from a small town just northeast of Naples in 1912 and opened their own bakery in Chicago in 1926, where Frank started working as a small child alongside his siblings. One of the most interesting and important parts of the history of Italian beef, something hitherto unnoted in any discussions of the dish, I learned from him.

According to Frank, for decades the bakery regularly was involved in the production of Italian beef for large social gatherings for the local Italian-American community, including events such as weddings and anniversaries, but did so in a now curiously old-fashioned way: the family or families organizing the events would prepare the beef in their home kitchens and bring the meat in oven pans for slow roasting in the bakery's large oven. Such events were good business for the bakery, which would be paid for the roasting and then also supply large numbers of long loaves of their 'French bread', with the beef and bread ultimately served as beef sandwiches at the event, which might be held in a large, rented venue or at a home.

Though today Italian beef is commonly thought of as a fast food, bought and consumed on the go for a quick meal, the dish remains for many Chicagoans, and



## The Socio-Culinary History of Chicago's 'Italian Beef'

especially those of Italian descent, also a quintessentially festive dish for large informal gatherings. Though the 'peanut wedding' is now a fading memory, Italian beef remains extremely popular for all sorts of social events, such as office parties, birthday celebrations, watching the Bears or other Chicago sports teams in important games, etc. If the gathering is not too large, some – especially Italian-American families – might well make their beef in the home kitchen, but virtually all commercial kitchens producing Italian beef offer both small and very large catering kits of beef, gravy, bread, peppers, and *giardiniera*, packed and ready for final assembly wherever customers care to have their celebration. Local grocery stores also commonly offer tubs of prepared beef and gravy for customers who can then purchase separately *giardiniera*, roasted peppers, and, of course, appropriate loaves of bread.

### From Naples to Taylor Street

Despite its key role as a source of Italian influences on mainstream American cuisine and thence on global culinary trends, Italian-American cookery is remarkably misunderstood by both scholarly and popular food writers, who routinely confuse the highly adapted 'Italianoid' dishes of commercial kitchens and pseudo-Italian television chefs, aimed to satisfy the tastes and meal-structures of non-Italians, with the actual cookery of Italian-Americans.<sup>2</sup> This genuine style of cookery is, like the heritage language varieties of the old Italian-American communities, now moribund and in many places quite dead, as the process of cultural assimilation has transformed actual Italian-Americans – that is, Italian immigrants and their descendants who maintained to a noteworthy degree old world cultural traditions – into simply Americans of Italian descent, who perhaps still bear Italian names but are from a cultural standpoint thoroughly American. Members of this latter, fully assimilated group might develop a nostalgic appreciation of their heritage, but they cannot undo the break in the generational transfer of linguistic and culinary tradition, things only acquired through long exposure in an intimate, culturally homogeneous, and closed environment. Italian-American family and community structures long provided such an environment, from the period of the great diaspora, c. 1880-1924, up through the Second World War, but then, gradually at the community level but abruptly at the individual level, these structures began to break down. The ethnic mixing of the war itself, post-war educational and economic opportunities, and the urban upheavals and mass movement into ethnically mixed suburbs spread Italian-American influence into mainstream society but at the same time began the dissolution of both culturally tight-knit Italian-American families and communities, and ultimately led to the death of Italian-American linguistic and culinary traditions.

Chicago's Taylor Street neighbourhood started in the late nineteenth century as an ethnically mixed immigrant slum on the south edge of downtown, but in time its Italian population expanded westward in a narrow band around Taylor and Polk Streets as older ethnic groups moved out. By the 1920s, the core of the neighbourhood, stretching from around Halsted Street to Western Avenue, was predominantly working-class Italian

and, though these Italians were of mixed regional backgrounds, the most prominent cultural group was from Campania, including Naples, with a strong contingent from the small city of Acerra and neighbouring towns just to the northeast of Naples itself. The Taylor Street neighbourhood served as precisely the sort of place where family and community structures were dense, supporting the maintenance of Old World cultural traditions to a considerable degree, up until a series of targeted urban 'renewal' projects replaced large swathes of residential properties with public institutions in the 1950s and especially the 1960s, forcing much of the Italian population to flee to various suburbs.

Italian beef, starting not as a commercial fast food but as a festive dish for working-class families, is a remarkable cultural relic from when Taylor Street was a poor Italian enclave with a strong Neapolitan cultural element. To understand the dish's history, its socio-economic and socio-culinary aspects are of paramount importance.

As the central point of a productive agricultural zone and capital of one of Europe's largest kingdoms for many centuries, Naples has a particularly rich culinary culture, which includes a style of elite cookery, with its international connexions, and also a traditional, non-elite style, firmly rooted in local food production but obviously open to influences from higher up the socio-economic scale, influences which logically would be manifested almost exclusively in the festive cookery of the non-elite.

If one considers the popular cookery of Naples and more generally of the *Mezzogiorno*, one sees that meat and especially beef plays a limited role, a fact which there, as elsewhere in Europe, reflects the high cost of meat and the poverty of the southern Italian masses until recent times. For most of these people, large pieces of muscle meats were at most to be enjoyed on special occasions, with meat's protein, fat, and flavour obtained more routinely in the form of organ meats, some of which were available as urban street foods. Here one thinks of *carnecotta*, beef offal and other less desirable parts of butchered animals, cooked so as to produce a great deal of broth, or *zuffritto* a.k.a. *zuppa forte*, an intensely seasoned stew made from pig's pluck; one could purchase just the broth or sauce with bread or, if one could afford it, also a portion of the cooked meats. Indeed, the vast majority of traditional southern Italian recipes for muscle meats have two central features: first, they typically involve preparations and cooking methods that render tough cuts of meat quite tender, and second, they all stretch the nutritional and flavour value of the meat by producing ample amounts of a broth or a sauce to be enjoyed with bread and pasta, the local staple foods. The two most prized meat preparations of Neapolitan popular cookery, the famous *ragù alla napoletana* and the less well-known but equally delicious *carne alla genovese* both illustrate the point. These dishes are decidedly festive and even in today's more prosperous times maintain an elevated status as the focus of Sunday or holiday meals. In both cases they yield delicious sauces (the tomato-based *ragù* sauce, the primarily onion *genovese*) which are used to dress a first course of special forms of pasta, with the meat(s) served separately as a second course.

With this in mind, let us consider the following recipe which appeared in one of

the editions (1841) of the extraordinary book on Neapolitan cookery written by Ippolito Cavalcanti, a high nobleman keenly interested in his native city's cookery, both elite and non-elite. Most of the work describes the former and is written in Italian, but he also includes a section of popular, home-style cooking of the broader population which he wrote in the Neapolitan language. The recipe, simply called *Stufato*, opens with a brief discussion of appropriate top and bottom round cuts for the dish, and then continues:

*Miettarraje dinto a nu tiano na fella de lardo pesato, na cepolla fellata, e ncoppa po nce miette la carne cu lo ssale, pepe, tutte spiezie, nu spiccolo d'aglio, si te piace; lu farraje zuffrijere buono buono, e ogne ntanto nce miettarraje nu poco d'acqua, votanno sempe: quanno vide ca la carne s'è ffata rossa rossa, nce miettarraje l'acqua pe ffà lu brodo, che te pò sservi pe li maccarune, pe la pasta menutola, pe na zuppa e pe nzò che buò.*

You'll put into a casserole a slice of pounded *lardo*, a sliced onion, and on top then put the meat with salt, pepper, *all spices* [emphasis added], a clove of garlic if you like; gently fry it well, and every now and again you'll add a little water, always mixing; when you see the meat is well browned, you'll add water to make the broth, which can be served with macaroni, with tiny pasta, as soup, and for whatever you want.<sup>3</sup>

Very similar recipes for substantial pieces of meat cooked with liquid are known throughout Italy and beyond under different names – *stracotto*, *brasato*, *fricandò* – and this kind of dish often includes the sweet spices of cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg, alongside black pepper. Cavalcanti's inclusion of *tutte spiezie*, normally written together in Neapolitan lexicographical works as *tuttaspiezie*, surely refers to the combination of the three 'sweet' spices ground, a mélange that was available commercially in shops of the time, a practice also found in France, where the mélange was referred to as *tout-épice* or *quatre-épices*. Note too that in Cavalcanti's Neapolitan language recipe for *la genovese* of 1852, he includes as an ingredient *tutta spiezie* (p. 431). The use of these spices by Naples's lower classes was clearly reserved for special occasions.

In considering the relationship between Cavalcanti's *stufato* recipe and the variants which in Chicago's domestic and commercial cookery must all be considered genuine realizations of 'Italian beef', we note the following. Regarding the essential primary ingredients – top or bottom round of beef, water, onion, garlic – and the nature of the final product – a large, fully cooked piece of meat intended for slicing and copious amounts of flavourful liquid (*brodo* or 'gravy') to dress a starch, the *stufato* recipe and Italian beef recipes are identical. As for the cooking method, Cavalcanti's dish calls for browning the meat with the onion (and optional garlic) and gradually adding water with a final addition of a large amount of water before long, slow cooking on the stovetop. In Chicago, variation allows for optional browning and, though oven-roasting after the addition of the large volume of liquid is nowadays the norm, it seems

quite likely that in the early days of the Taylor Street neighbourhood, when surely not all dwellings were equipped with ovens, the stovetop method was widespread; in any event, given the robust seasoning, the difference in the final taste profiles using the two finishing methods is small.

As for the seasoning, we call attention to the following. First, Cavalcanti suggests garlic as an option – *si te piace* ‘if you like’ – whereas in Chicago’s beef recipes garlic seems now obligatory. and in many recipes, including all commercial versions, garlic is prominent, which accords with the rising use of this ingredient in Italian-American and especially pseudo-Italian cookery in the United States. Along similar lines, while Cavalcanti’s *stufato* includes neither dried oregano nor *peperoncini*, these additions must now be viewed as canonical elements of Italian beef and perhaps represent accretions in the (Italian-)American culinary context, just as the increased use of garlic might be. Yet, we must also bear in mind that the culinary sensibilities of Cavalcanti himself, a nobleman, may have guided his formulation of the *stufato* recipe, and that his lower class contemporaries in the Naples region may have been adding to this dish more garlic, oregano or other herbs, and *peperoncini* from the garden for some piquancy in place of substantial amounts of store-bought black pepper. Finally, while today most domestic and commercial recipes for Italian beef eschew the addition of sweet spices, it is surely not coincidental that the oldest of Taylor Street’s beef stands still employs them. Omission of these spices may, however, be an old (pre-emigration) practice among the poor.

74 All in all, Chicago’s Italian beef is in essence the same dish as Cavalcanti’s *stufato*, and the ways in which Taylor Street’s versions deviate from the recipe recorded by the Duke of Buonvicino may reflect changes of seasoning brought about in the New World or they may simply continue practices of non-elite cookery in Naples and other towns surrounding Mount Vesuvius, practices which Cavalcanti was unaware of or rejected as unappealing.

## Italian Beef in Broader Historical Context

This last point gives us cause to consider, albeit here only briefly, the intended audience of Cavalcanti’s masterpiece. The literacy rate in the mid-nineteenth century Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (the *Regno*) was low, the vast majority of the population only poorly, if at all, educated and speaking habitually a local dialect of Neapolitan, Sicilian, etc. However, Naples itself was the capital of the Regno with a sizable educated population, comprised of noble families, clerics, elite bankers, merchants, etc., as well as a middle class of merchants, professionals, bureaucrats, etc., who were fully competent in Italian; a significant proportion of them were also able to speak Neapolitan. It is surely these elite and bourgeois sectors of local society which were Cavalcanti’s primary target audience. His inclusion of the section in Neapolitan of local non-elite home-cooking (*cucina casareccia*) appears to reflect a desire to preserve and share this aspect of popular culture with the Italianising upper echelons of Neapolitan society and with interested readers from elsewhere in the Regno and beyond.

## The Socio-Culinary History of Chicago's 'Italian Beef'

The accuracy of Cavalcanti's portrayal of popular Neapolitan cookery – a traditional cuisine passed down from generation to generation in intimate settings and most assuredly not through cookbooks – cannot be disputed; from my own standpoint, the aesthetics, methods, and many individual recipes accord completely with the cookery of my (non-elite) Campanian grandparents who emigrated to New Jersey around 1900. It would be absurd to think that the Neapolitans and other Campanians of Taylor Street did not bring this same cuisine to Chicago.

The *stufato* recipe that gave rise to Chicago's Italian beef must then be regarded as one of the traditional dishes of popular Neapolitan cookery and yet one may reasonably wonder why we do not find continuations of this preparation in other communities with Neapolitan culinary backgrounds. However, we do find this recipe widely diffused – but primarily, perhaps exclusively, in a variant form in which tomatoes replace the large dose of water for slow cooking the beef. It appears that by the nineteenth century, and surely already much earlier, this alternate version was winning out in popularity over the old, tomato-less *stufato*. There can be no doubt that this expanding use of tomato was much older in the cookery of non-elite urban and rustic circles, and in Cavalcanti's time we see it well established in the bourgeois and even elite cookery of the Regno's capital. Indeed, the recipe cited above, from the 1841 (third) edition of Cavalcanti's cookbook, and the essentially identical, tomato-less *stufato* recipe in the seventh edition of 1852 (p. 448) must be considered alongside the *stufato* recipe which appeared in the second edition of 1839 (p. 367-68) and which is identical to the others not only in name but in all aspects of preparation, including the addition of *tutta spiezie*, up until the addition of a large quantity of water, here replaced by fresh tomatoes (if in season) or *conserva de pommadore*. From an Italian-American perspective, the *stufato* with tomato described by Cavalcanti corresponds perfectly to what in my experience was commonly referred to as 'meat sauce' or 'gravy', i.e. *sugo di carne*, a typical Sunday preparation to be served with a special form of pasta.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, the Italian beef recipe reflects the older, 'pre-Columbian' Neapolitan *stufato* which, especially as a source for a sauce to dress pasta, was giving way to the post-Columbian version with tomato. We might conjecture that the reason this older recipe not only survived in Chicago but ultimately became established as an iconic local dish is because of its particular suitability to the institution of the peanut wedding. Home-catered in a rented venue, this form of celebration was not well suited to the serving of *maccarune e carne*, the classic celebratory meal of non-elite southern Italians, for the serving of pasta would have necessitated a further stage of cooking of the pasta and also the use of plates and utensils at the venue. The older *stufato* recipe, however, still offered a festive food – muscle meat seasoned with spices – but in a far more easily transported and served format. Once this style of celebration became established in the Taylor Street neighbourhood, the stage was set for the eventual commercialization of Italian beef alongside other Italian sandwich-style fast foods.

The relationship between the Neapolitan *stufato* and Chicago's Italian beef is clear,

and while the family behind Al's beef stand can hardly be said to have invented the dish, they are to be commended for maintaining the old manner of seasoning that is otherwise receding not only from the commercial beef business but from local domestic cookery as well. The common assumption that Italian beef is in origin an Italian take on the Anglo-American roast beef sandwich is proved wrong not only by the very different manner of traditional seasoning but also by the central importance of the production of a large amount of thin gravy to serve, as Cavalcanti says, *pe nzò che buò* 'for whatever you want', which in Chicago – and probably already in Naples and Acerra – included flavouring large pieces of bread. Finally, we must note the socio-culinary role of Italian beef, which, though now regarded primarily as a portable fast-food, still retains its festive association as a food appropriate for large social gatherings, even ones of considerable importance. In this way, Chicago's Italian beef evokes the special place that such meat dishes held in the cuisine of the non-elite classes of Naples and more generally of the Mezzogiorno who were driven by poverty to emigrate to America where, at least in Chicago, they celebrated their humble peanut weddings with gravy-drenched beef sandwiches.

## Notes

- 1 Aspects of this paper have been informed by decades of conversations with lifelong residents of Chicago's Taylor Street neighbourhood; special thanks to the late Frank Masi, Michael DiCosola, Joseph Assenato, Freddy Mancini, and the late Frankie 'Moon'. Further thanks to Zachary Nowak, Ernest Buccini, and Amy Dahlstrom. Appropriate disclaimers apply.
- 2 For further discussion of my heretical views on Italian-American cookery, see Buccini 2015 and 2021.
- 3 This recipe appears in the Neapolitan section of the 1841 (third) edition, reprinted in 2005: 22.
- 4 Of interest here are some recipes appearing in the Italian cookbook for Americans by Gentile (1919), who seems to have been an immigrant but of neither working-class nor southern-Italian origin. First, we note her recipe for 'Brown Stock (*Sugo di Carne*)' (p. 15), almost identical to Cavalcanti's tomato-less *stufato* and seasoned with cloves. Second, in a section presenting several *stufato* recipes there appears a *stufato alla francese* (p. 119), again very close to Cavalcanti's tomato-less version with both cloves and cinnamon (though also pieces of 'ham' and 'bacon').

## References

- Buccini, Anthony F. 2015. 'Italy', in *Ethnic American Food Today: A Cultural Encyclopedia*, ed. by Lucy Long (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Little), pp. 314–23.
- . 2021. 'Prejudice, Assimilation and Profit: The Peculiar History of Italian Cookery in the United States', in *Food, Social Change and Identity*, ed. by Cynthia Chou and Suzanne Kerner (n.p.: Palgrave Macmillan), pp. 73–90.
- Cavalcanti, Ippolito. 1839. *Cucina teorico-pratica*, 2nd edn (Naples: G. Palma).
- . 1852. *Cucina teorico-pratica*, 7th edn (Naples: Domenico Capasso).
- . 2005. *Cucina casareccia in lingua napoletana*, ed. by Raffaele La Capria (Milano: Polifilo). [Excerpted from the third (1841) edition of *Cucina teorico-pratica*.]
- Gentile, Maria. 1919. *The Italian Cookbook. The Art of Eating Well* (New York: Italian Book Co.; repr. London: Forgotten Books, 2012).