

L-ikla t-tajba-Guten Appetit: 17th century Maltese cuisine through the “Regole per la lingua maltese” - With some linguistic considerations

In this paper, I identify the terminology in the *Regole per la lingua maltese* that refers to food products. Broadly speaking these terms have been sub-divided into twelve different categories, which go by the name of: *Bread; Pasta products and other starters; Cereals; Drinks; Fruit; Vegetables; Pulses; Spices; Milk products; Poultry; Typical Maltese products and Miscellaneous.*

I then refer to Agius de Soldanis's *Damma* and Joseph Aquilina's *Maltese-English Dictionary* to verify the historical evolution of the term originally recorded by the *Regole* in the course of the 17th century.

While a good number of the terms have survived today in their original meaning, some of them have changed meaning or indeed have become obsolete.

Here, I shall limit myself to the "*Bread*" category. For example, the *Regole* records *fetul, fetietel, guastella, longa* (M 1091) / *guastella, longa, fetul, fetieiel* (I 1709)

The term appears in Agius de Soldanis, s.v. *fettul*, but he gives 'pastella' [batter] as meaning of *fettul*, which has nothing to do with 'guastella longa'. On the other hand, Aquilina completely ignores the culinary meaning and gives only the meaning: "Strip (of wool, etc.) twirled by one's fingers; distaff; cigarette".

ħobz bel feugia is given as 'pane mal conciato nel forno' (M 1783) / *pane mal conciato nel forno, ħobs bel feugia* (I 2498), in the *Regole per la lingua maltese*. The meaning here is 'badly baked bread'. Agius de Soldanis gives 20 different types or parts of bread in his *Damma*, but he makes no reference at all to *ħobz bil-fewġa*. Aquilina also makes no reference at all to it in his dictionary. Had the term already disappeared in the relatively short span of a century?

The case of *ħrida*, *pannata, pangrattato* (M 2969) / *panata, ħrida, pan grattato* (I 2488), meaning 'breadcrumbs', is even more drastic since there is no mention at all of it in Agius de Soldanis and Aquilina.

The paper should therefore come up with a terminological list of food products that, having been listed by the *Regole*, still survive today, but also those that have got lost in the course of the past four centuries, thus becoming obsolete.

Arnold Cassola

Malta, 18 March 2023