

# Sawse Camelyne in some 14th and 15th Century Cooking Manuscripts

UlfR Ketilson\*

## Sawse Camelyne

There are some dishes that can be found in a number of 14th and 15th century cooking manuscripts. One of them is the Sawse Camelyne, as it is entitled in the *Forme of Cury* manuscript[4], a cold sauce made with a base of wine, vinegar and/or verjuice and bread<sup>1</sup>, with spices among which cinnamon clearly is the most dominant. According to Scully it has gained its name from the fact that the color is that of the camel[13], which it gains from the cinnamon.

## The different sources

I have compared several different versions of the recipe in this paper, from English, Italian, Danish, and French sources (see table 1 on the following page). They all differ in details which I see as more or less significant (tables 2 on page 6 and 3 on page 8).

## Dansk kogebog A

This is supposedly the oldest surviving European cookbook, dating to approximately the year 1300. It most likely was a translation of a Low German translation of a French original and was written by a Danish monk by the name of Knud Jul[18].

Quomodo temperetur salsum dominorum et quam diu durat  
Man skal takæ gørfærs nathlæ. oc muskat. cardemomum. piper.  
cinamomum thæt ær kaniæl. oc ingifær. allæ iæfn wæghnæ. tho  
swa at kaniæl ær æm mykæt sum allæ hinæ andræ. oc slyk tu stekt  
brøth sum allæ hinæ andræ. oc stötæ thæm alla samæn. oc malæ  
mæth stærk ædykæ oc latæ .i. en leghæl. That ær hærræ salsæ. oc  
ær goth et halft aar. [19]

---

\*Pär Leijonhufvud, Näsbydalsvägen 2, 6 tr., SE 183 31 Täby, Sweden. Phone +46-(0)708-587 586, email: ulfr@eryn-lasgalen.org. Copies of this document can be downloaded from <http://eryn-lasgalen.org/sca/camelyne.html>

<sup>1</sup>With one exception; the two versions given by Chiquart, which use either almond milk made from meat broth, or mashed boiled peas.

Table 1: Source manuscript dates and locations

Manuscript	Date	Location
Dansk kogebog A	app. 1300	Denmark
Forme of Cury	app. 1380–1390	England
Le Menagier	1395	France
Chiquart	1420	France
Ashmole MS 1439	1450	England
Harleian MS 4016	1450	England
Vivendier	mid 15th C	France
Platina	1460s	Italy

## Forme of Cury

This is the British Library Additional 5016. In this paper I’m using it as printed in Curye on Inglysch[5]. According to the headnote of the manuscript it was “compiled of the chef maister Cokes of Kyng Richard the Se[cu]nde kyng of [En]land aftir the Conquest”[6] who reigned between 1377 and 1399. The text of the recipe is given as

Take raysons of courance & kyrnels of notys & crustes of brede & powdour of gynger, clowes, flour of canel; bray it wel togyder and do perto salt. Temper it up with vyneger, and serve it forth. [4]

## Maistre Chiquard: Du Fait de Cuisine

This manuscript is dated to 1420 in the manuscript itself, and contains two versions of the camelina sauce; one for meat and one for fish. I have used Elizabeth Cooks translation of Scullys edition[1].

### 7. Camelin bruet

And to give understanding to him who will make the camelin bruet, he should take his poultry and his meat – pork or kid or veal or lamb – according to the quantity which he is told to make and put to cook well and properly in fair and clean cauldrons or pots, and also a good and large piece of large salt pork which has first been cleaned, washed, and broiled(?). And then arrange that you have a great quantity of almonds according to the quantity of the broth which you have been told to make, and clean them well from the shells and all other things that there may be, and wash them well and firmly in good hot water as was said above for the bruet of Almayn, and grind them well and carefully without blanching and sprinkle them with the broth of the said meat. And then one will be well advised to pay attention to your meat so that it is neither too little or too much cooked; then take your spices, that is: a great deal of cinnamon, white ginger, grains of paradise, pepper in such fashion that it is not too sharp, galingale, mace, cloves, and nutmeg; and when your meat is cooked draw it out and put it in fair and clean *cornues*, and then take your broth and strain it well and carefully

into fair and clean *cornues*, and then add your said almonds and spices and, this done, put into your broth of wine and verjuice what is necessary to have a good taste, and always make sure that there is not too much or too little of salt or anything else; and then put it to boil in fair and clean cauldrons or pots in which it has room to boil, and put in a great quantity of sugar according to the broth which you have. And, this done, to arrange for serving take your meat and put it in fair serving dishes and the said broth on top. [2]

### 31. Camelin bruet

And opposite the cameline bruet of meat, a cameline bruet of fish: and to give you understanding of making it, take the quantity of almonds according to the quantity which you are charged with making, and have them very well cleaned and very well washed four or five times in fair lukewarm water, and have them very well brayed and have them moistened with the purée of peas. And when they are well brayed, according to the quantity which you have take the purée of peas, and take wine according to the quantity of broth, and verjuice; and then take your spices: a great deal of cinnamon so that it bears the color of cinnamon, and white ginger, grains of paradise, nutmeg, mace, cloves – and put in these minor spices in reason – and pass this through a fair strainer; and, being passed, put it to boil in a fair and clean and clear pot or cauldron in which it can boil, and put in a great deal of sugar according to the quantity which you have and salt – and all these things in reason – and then boil. And, being boiled, carry it to your sideboard, and take your fish and put on your fair serving dishes and the said broth on top; and do not forget the sugar-spice pellets which it is appropriate to scatter on top.[3]

## Le Menagier de Paris

This French manuscript is dated to 1395, and I have worked from the translation of Janet Hinson[7]

Cameline. Note that at Tournais, to make cameline, they grind together ginger, cinnamon and saffron and half a nutmeg: soak in wine, then take out of the mortar; then have white bread crumbs, not toasted, moistened with cold water and grind in the mortar, soak in wine and strain, then boil it all, and lastly add red sugar: and this is winter cameline. And in summer they make it the same way, but it is not boiled.

The other commonly available translation is by Power and Coulton under the title “The Goodman of Paris”<sup>2</sup>. I have not personally seen this translation but the quotes of the recipe from that book that I have seen agrees in all but stylistical details (the use of bray rather than grind and that the sugar is identified as brown rather than red) with the Hinson translation.

<sup>2</sup>Power and Coulton, “The Goodman of Paris”, Routledge and Sons, 1928

## Ashmole MS 1439

This manuscript is dated to approximately 1450 [11].

6 Sauce camelyne. Take faire brede, and cut it, and toste it; and take vynegre and wyne, and stepe hit þer-in, and draw it þurwe a straynour wiþ poudre canel, and draw it .ij. or .iij. tymes, til it be smothe. And þanne take poudre ginger, sugre, and poudre of clowes, and cast þer-to. And loke þat it stonde wil by clowes, & and by sugre; and þanne put þer-to a litil safroune, and salt, and serue hit forþ þike y-knowe.[12]

## Harleian MS 4016

This is also dated to approximately 1450[11]. It is easy to see that these are almost word for word identical, and can be treated as one.

37 Sauce gamelyne. Take faire brede, and kutte it, and take vinegre and wyn, & stepe þe brede therein, and drawe hit thorgh a streynour with powder of canel, and drawe hit twies or tries til hit be smoth; and þen take powder of ginger, Sugur, and powder of cloues, and cast þerto a littul saffron and lete hit be thik ynough, and thenne serue hit forthe.[12]

## The Vivendier

This manuscript is dated to the middle of the 15th century, probably from the north or north-east of France[14]. It contains three different versions of the recipie (numbers 6, 36 and 37). The author gives one which may be boiled and two unboiled versions, one of the latter containing garlic. All translations are those of Terrence Scully.

### 6. Saulse cameline

Pour faire une saulse cameline : prenez pain blancq harlé sur le greil, sy le mettez temprer en vin rouge et vin aigre, passé parmy l'estamine, canelle assez, et gingembre, clou, graine, macis, poivre long et saffren un poy et sel ; faicetz boullir un non boullir comme vouldrez ; aucun y mettent du chucqre.[13]

To make Cameline Sauce. get white bread toasted on the grill, set it to temper in red wine and vinegar, and strain it, along with a good deal of cinnamon, and ginger, cloves, grains of paradise, mace long pepper and a little saffron. Finish it off either boiled or not as you like. Some people put sugar in it.[13]

### 36. Saulce non boullie dicte cameline

Saulce non boullie ditte cameline : canelle, gingembre, clous et graine et pain passé harlé bien noir, deffait vergus, vin et vinaigre.[15]

Unboiled sauce called Cameline. Cinnamon, ginger, cloves, grains of paradise, darkly toasted bread, sieved, distempered with verjuice, win and vinegar.[15]

### 37. Sauce aux aux camelins

Aux camelins se font pareillement, mais il y fault dex aux poignant le vinaigre.[16]

Cameline Garlic Sauce is similarly made, but needs garlic buds cutting through the vinegar.[16]

## Platina

This manuscript was composed between 1463 and 1465 by Bartolomeo Sacci, who was called Platina. The original is in Latin, and I have been working from the translation of Milham[9]. The original title was “De honeste vulpate et valetudine” (On Right Pleasure and Good Health). As usual with recipes from Platina we not only get the recipe, but also hints on the medical properties<sup>3</sup> of the dish, as well as a personal commentary.

### 3. Camelline sauce

Pound well with raisins three pieces of bread, toasted and soaked in red wine. When they are pounded, soak in red wine, must or verjuice, or vinegar, if you prefer. Put in as much as in enough of ground pepper, cinnamon, and cloves. When it has been passed through as sieve into a bowl, serve to your guests when you wish. It is easily digested, is nourishing, is digestible, makes the body fat, stimulates passion, and helps the stomach and liver. I remember that I have eaten this most enjoyably as a guest of Filelfo.[10]

## Ingredients of the various versions

While almost all versions are very alike, there are some differences between them, and one author (Chiquart) retains the distinctive spicing but replaces the base of the sauce. We can also see some slight trends in how the recipe changes over the century and a half that the present sources span.

### Sweeteners

The most common sweetening agent in the sauce is sugar, but two versions (Forme of cury and Platina) use rasins instead. If used in sufficient quantity the sugar or raisins would tend to mask the sour flavour that the vinegar or verjuice base imparts.

---

<sup>3</sup>The concept of “functional food” is not new.

Table 2: The spices used in the different manuscripts

<b>Dansk kogeboog A</b>	cloves, nutmeg, cardamons, pepper, cinnamon
<b>Forme of Cury</b>	ginger, cloves, cinnamon, raisins
<b>Le Menagier</b>	ginger, cinnamon, saffron, nutmeg, sugar
<b>Chiquart, nr 7</b>	cinnamon, ginger, grains of paradise, pepper, galingale, mace, cloves, nutmeg
<b>Chiquart, nr 31</b>	cinnamon, ginger, grains of paradise, nutmeg, mace, cloves, sugar
<b>Ashmole MS 1439</b>	cinnamon, ginger, cloves, saffron, sugar
<b>Harleian MS 4016</b>	cinnamon, ginger, cloves, saffron, sugar
<b>Vivendier, nr 6</b>	cinnamon, ginger, cloves, grains of paradise, mace, long pepper, saffron
<b>Vivendier, nr 36</b>	cinnamon, ginger, cloves, grains of paradise
<b>Vivendier, nr 37</b>	cinnamon, ginger, cloves, grains of paradise, garlic
<b>Platina</b>	pepper, cinnamon, cloves, raisins

## Spices

The spices vary between the different versions, from the quite limited ginger, cloves and cinnamon in the *Forme of Cury* to the longer list in e.g. the Danish manuscript, *Chiquart* and the *Vivendier* (see table 2).

## Other ingredients

In *Forme of Cury* we have nuts, which does not appear in any other version I have seen. Several of the mid 15th century recipes specify saffron, which none of the earlier – pre 1400 – ones do (see table 3 on page 8).

In *Vivendier* and *Le Menagier* we also find garlic, and we are urged to make it strong enough that it will be “cutting through the vinegar”. *Le Menagier* suggests a garlic version, for when it is served with ray[8], as does the author of *The Vivendier*[17].

The most different versions are those of *Maistre Chiquart*, which does not use bread, but rather almond thickened broths, either a meat or from boiled peas as the basis for the sauces, and his versions are always boiled.

## Liquid choices

Almost all versions of the sauce use wine or vinegar – or a combination of the two – as the liquid, with the only exception is being *Platina* who gives you a wider range of choices and *Le Menagier* which moisten the bread with water prior to grinding it. We also have *Chiquart*, who use almond milk made with broth – either of meat or of peas for the fish version – and then adding wine and verjuice to flavour the sauce. These are also the only versions that does not include bread.

Table 3: Some varying factors between the recipes

Manuscript	Boiled	Sweetener	Extra ingredients
Dansk kogebug A	no	none	
Forme of Cury	no	raisins	nuts
Le Menagier	optional	sugar	
Chiquart (no 7)	yes	sugar	broth based almond milk
Chiquart (no 31)	yes	sugar	pea broth based almond milk
Ashmole MS 1439	no	sugar	saffron
Harleian MS 4016	no	sugar	saffron
Vivendier (no 6)	optional	none	saffron
Vivendier (no 36)	no	none	
Vivendier (no 37)	no	none	saffron
Platina	no	raisins	

The choice of liquid varies slightly, and one source (Platina) gives you several options. Three of the versions are colored with saffron, the others would take on a brownish color from the red wine and cinnamon.

## How it was used?

Only three of the present sources (Chiquart, Le Menagier, and Dansk Kogebug) give any indication of how the sauce was used. Chiquart is rather brief; “. . . to arrange for serving your meat and put it in fair serving dishes and the said broth on top”[2] (the text for using the fish version is perfectly analogous, with the addition “. . . and do not forget the sugar-spice pellets which it is appropriate to scatter on top”[3]).

Compared to this brevity we have many more mentions in Le Menagier. Apart from the menu sections he suggests it with, among other things, venison, beef tongue, stuffed piglet, rabbit, roast veal, lamb, wood pigeons, several kinds of fish and hedgehog. For the ray he gives a recipe for Garlic cameline sauce <sup>4</sup>, and as mentioned above also the Vivendier notes that ray is supposed to be eaten with garlic cameline sauce[17].

The Danish manuscript suggests that one should take a roast of venison or goose, slice it and marinate in the sauce for three weeks[19]. Presumably the acidic sauce (we are advised to use strong vinegar) would serve to preserve the meat.

## Modes of preparation

Apart from the camelyne bruits of Chiquart we can see two different ways in which the sauce is prepared: boiled and unboiled. If we were to create a “proto-camelyne” sauce it would read pretty much like the Forme of Cury one, with the

<sup>4</sup>For Ray. Grind ginger, garlic and crusts of white bread soaked in vinegar, or toasted bread, and soak in vinegar; and if you add liver it will be better.

exception that it would not contain the nuts, and most likely a few additional spices (cloves and nutmeg being the most popular ones).

The Chiquart versions differ here, in that they have the same spices, but due to the different basis turns out significantly different from the more traditional camelyne sauce.

### **Boiled or not**

Several French versions either allow boiling as an alternative, or specify it, a method which apparently is not used outside France (table 3 on the next page). Even if we exclude the Chiquart versions as being perhaps more of a camelina derived sauce than a camelyne sauce in the terms the orthodox way we find that optionally boiling it appears to be a French idea, that did not spread outside France.

## **Summary and Conclusions**

While there is a large number of culinary manuscripts available the material is by its nature not complete, and we have no way to determine if the material that is available is representative of culinary practice during the 14th and 15th century. With that limitation it is clear that we see three trends in the material, one over time, and two geographical.

### **Saffron enters the camelyne sauce during the mid 15th century**

In the manuscripts from the mid 15th century (Ashmole, Harleian, and Vivendier) we find that saffron is given as an ingredient in camelyne sauce. This is a break with the traditions of the sauce, which even derived its name from the brownish color. One can speculate if this was a first step in the process that led away from medieval cooking toward that of the renaissance, but due to the incomplete material available I feel that once would have to remain with it as an intriguing speculation.

### **Cooked or uncooked**

In the question of methods of preparation we see that the French sources have the least orthodox view of how the sauce was to be made. We have the camelyne bruets of Chiquart, and we are given the option of boiling the sauce by both Le Menagier and – in one case – the Vivendier.

## References

- [1] CHIQUART, *Du fait de cuisine*, [http://www.best.com/~ddfr/Medieval/Cookbooks/Du\\_Fait\\_de\\_Cuisine](http://www.best.com/~ddfr/Medieval/Cookbooks/Du_Fait_de_Cuisine)
- [2] ———, *Du fait de cuisine*, [http://www.best.com/~ddfr/Medieval/Cookbooks/Du\\_Fait\\_de\\_Cuisine/du\\_](http://www.best.com/~ddfr/Medieval/Cookbooks/Du_Fait_de_Cuisine/du_) ch. 7.
- [3] ———, *Du fait de cuisine*, [http://www.best.com/~ddfr/Medieval/Cookbooks/Du\\_Fait\\_de\\_Cuisine/du\\_](http://www.best.com/~ddfr/Medieval/Cookbooks/Du_Fait_de_Cuisine/du_) ch. 31.
- [4] C. B. HEATT AND S. BUTLER, eds., *Curye on Inglysch, English Culinary Manuscripts of the Fourteenth Century (Including The Forme of Curye)*, Oxford University Press, London, 1985, p. 131.
- [5] ———, eds., *Curye on Inglysch, English Culinary Manuscripts of the Fourteenth Century (Including The Forme of Curye)*, Oxford University Press, London, 1985.
- [6] ———, eds., *Curye on Inglysch, English Culinary Manuscripts of the Fourteenth Century (Including The Forme of Curye)*, Oxford University Press, London, 1985, p. 20.
- [7] J. PICHON, *Le Menagier de Paris*, [http://www.best.com/~ddfr/Medieval/Cookbooks/-Menagier/Menagier\\_Contents.html](http://www.best.com/~ddfr/Medieval/Cookbooks/-Menagier/Menagier_Contents.html), 1846.
- [8] ———, *Le Menagier de Paris*, [http://www.best.com/~ddfr/Medieval/Cookbooks/-Menagier/Menagier\\_Contents.html](http://www.best.com/~ddfr/Medieval/Cookbooks/-Menagier/Menagier_Contents.html), 1846, ch. Sauces made without boiling.
- [9] PLATINA, *On Right Pleasure and Good Health*, Pegasus Press, The University of North Carolina at Ashvile, 1999.
- [10] ———, *On Right Pleasure and Good Health*, Pegasus Press, The University of North Carolina at Ashvile, 1999, p. 152.
- [11] C. RENFROW, *Take A Thousand Eggs or More*, United States of America, 1990, p. iii.
- [12] ———, *Take A Thousand Eggs or More*, United States of America, 1990, p. 312.
- [13] T. SCULLY, ed., *The Vivendier*, Prospect Books, Devon, England, 1997, p. 35.
- [14] ———, ed., *The Vivendier*, Prospect Books, Devon, England, 1997, pp. 11–12.
- [15] ———, ed., *The Vivendier*, Prospect Books, Devon, England, 1997, p. 64.
- [16] ———, ed., *The Vivendier*, Prospect Books, Devon, England, 1997, pp. 64–65.
- [17] ———, ed., *The Vivendier*, Prospect Books, Devon, England, 1997, p. 62.
- [18] H. VEIRUP, *Til taffel hos Kong Valdemar*, Systime A/S, Viborg, Denmark, 1994.

- [19] ———, *Til taffel hos Kong Valdemar*, Systime A/S, Viborg, Denmark, 1994, p. 58.