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# Cookbooks as instruments of empire

Cécilia Leong-Salobir\*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Univ. Wollongong – Australia

## Abstract (in French and English)

British colonial rule in Asia was aided and abetted by the colonial household headed by the colonial wife. The British hybrid colonial cuisine came about as a result of negotiation and collaboration between the British mistress and the Asian cook. The cuisine was a blend of European meals and Asian elements and large numbers of colonial cookbooks were published to ensure the perpetuation of these recipes among the colonies. The cookbooks also served as instruction manuals on how to manage servants: how to ensure not to be cheated by dishonest servants, how to keep an eye on the dirty habits of servants and to ensure that the lazy servants perform their tasks diligently. The fraught mistress-servant relationship was found in the tone and content of cookbooks. The publications helped to spread the colonial cuisine from colony to colony and reaffirm their rulers' status. It was an unspoken rule that it was the colonial mistress' role to assist the colonial project by maintaining her pristine household apart from the colonized land, perpetuating the values and representations of empire. Seen as instruments of empire they helped to strengthen the colonial community via the colonial home, clubs, hotels and hill stations.

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\*Speaker