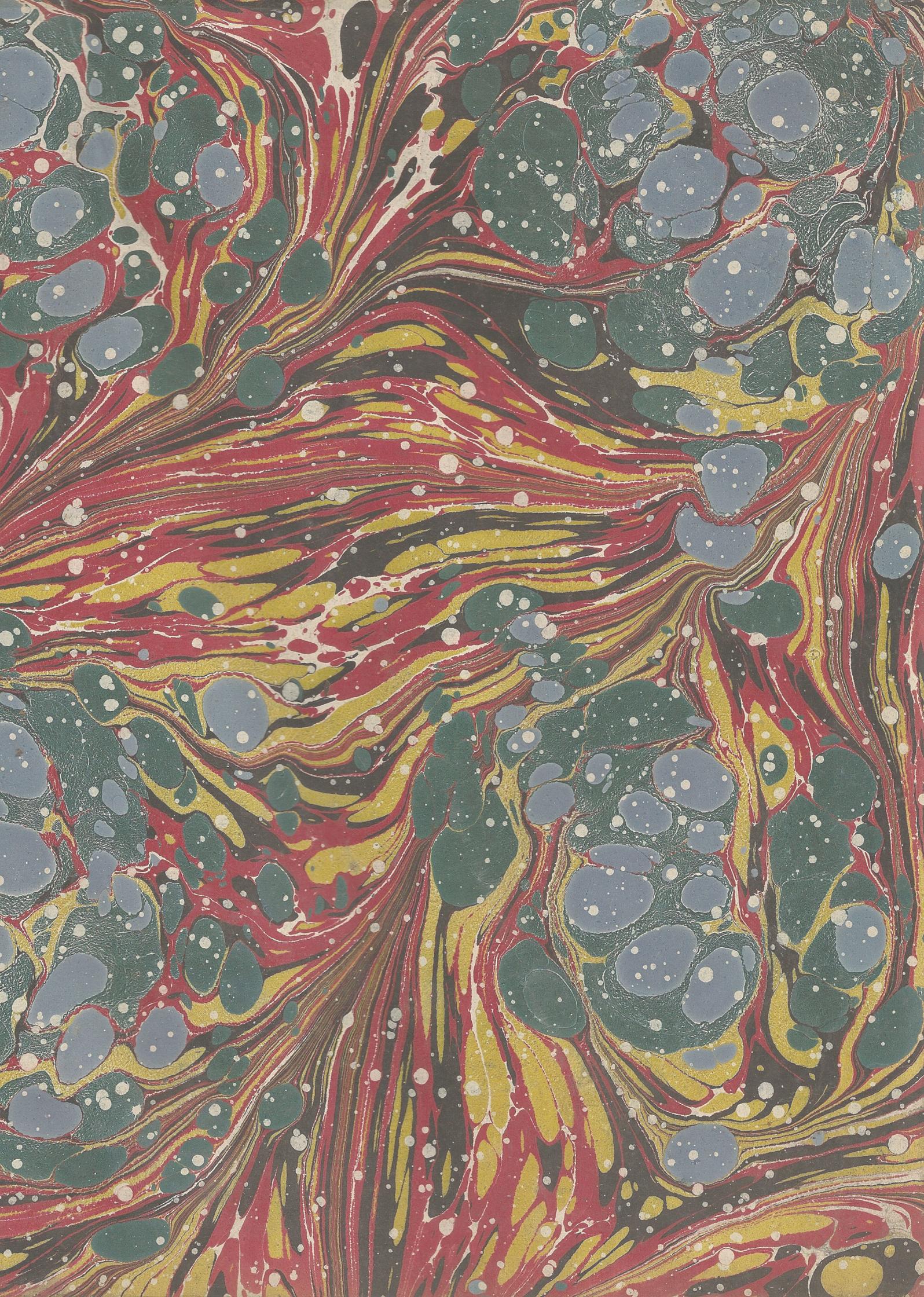


DORSET DICTIONARY
OF
COUNTY BIOGRAPHY



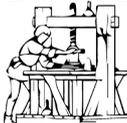
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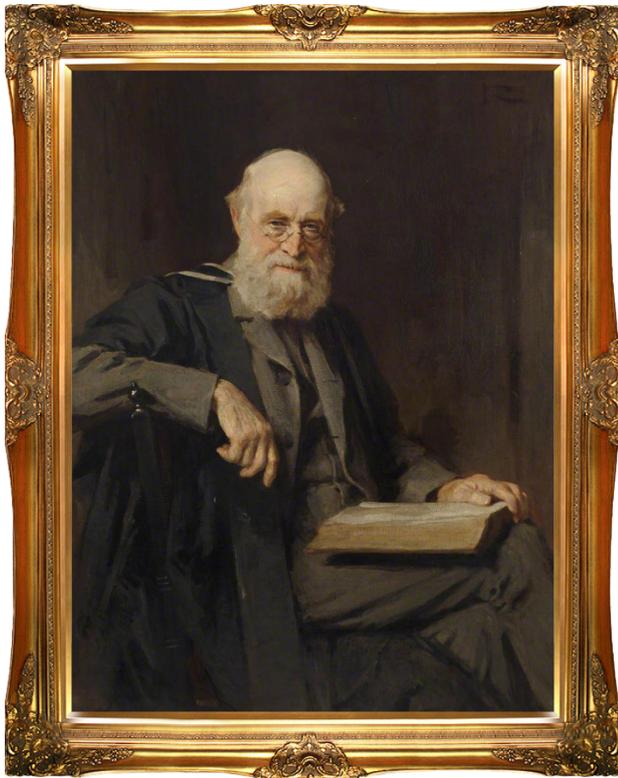
FIRST EDITION 1985
REVISED 1990

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Dr Kenwood Chefe (1898-1982) *Culinary Bioethicist*; born Girton 4th July 1898 to parents Head(ly) Chefe and Sue Chefe (nee Cook); died Cambridge 24th December 1982.



Portrait of Dr Chefe by Januarii John RA. It hangs in the Dining Hall of St Radegund College, Cambridge

The University of Cambridge's leading Culinary Bio-ethics pioneer from whose laboratories a string of mid to late 20th-century pioneer culinary bio-ethicists emerged, Kenwood Chefe has been hailed as one of the most significant food-science conceptualisers of the 20th century with many claiming him to have been the founder of the modern discipline. As comfortable with hands-on experimentation as with more esoteric cerebration, he set out both a framework of understanding and a set of practical rules which guided culinary bio-ethics for more than half a century. Though some of his ideas were displaced by the even more revolutionary work of his most distinguished pupil Professor Brian Thrupiece, much of the foundational work undertaken by Dr Chefe remains valid today.

Educated at Girton Preparatory School before winning a scholarship to the County High, he entered St Pancreas College, Cambridge as a sizer in 1920 having served for two years with the Royal Anglian Fusilliers [Catering Corps] in Northern France. A scurmish with a deranged skillet caused damage to the ligaments of his left hand leaving

him with a limp wrist and an attitude problem which the batchelor life of an undergraduate, post-graduate and Junior University lecturer did little to ameliorate. Known for youthful flashes of temper, it was said that he was lucky to survive his probation and only did so because he could "cook a mean spanish omlette whilst disquisitioning on the ontological status and existential origins of the eggs involved". His brilliantly conceived answers to the question of [a] chicken versus egg and [b] why the former crossed the road was shared with only three people - all of whom, are now dead [though none in suspicious circumstances].

In 1930 he was given his own laboratory and the position of Chief Culinary Bio-ethical Scientist in the Cambridge Institute for Advanced Critical Domestic Science and at the same time elected to a Fellowship at St Radegund's. Taking a sabbatical year as soon as he was able, he travelled to France to study with the renowned Professeur Moulinex whose work at the Sorbonne with powdered hazelnuts was garnering international interest. Here, he later said, he learned both discipline and flair, bringing back with him to Cambridge expertise, a persistent infection and a very large marmite, the smell of which came to characterise him in his later years. [It was said his not-so-imminent presence could be detected up to five minutes before he arrived.]

In 1938, aware of the likelihood of international conflict, he began secret work for the Ministry of Supply, establishing an experimental programme which yielded little in the way of nutritional benefit but accidentally created a source of explosive power capable of projecting a 12 mm shell three-and-a-half miles. (The striking similarities between Dr Chefe's career and that of Professor Thrupiece (particularly the latter's work on both fluff and rocket fuel) are almost too extraordinary to be true though may reflect the esteem in which the latter undoubtedly held the former.

After distinguished War work (for which he was considered for a knighthood by King George VI and might have received one had he not broken wind before Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother as she raised a Dubonnet to her unsuspecting lips) he went on to found the Society for Culinary Bio-ethical Research, the forerunner of the later more famous and far more successful Royal Society of Culinary Bio-ethics. He served as the SCBR's President for nearly 20 years and on retirement was presented with a Distinguished Service Medal, a fob watch and a year's supply of

disinfectant powder, only the last of which he declared "*remotely useful*".

A man "*rather out of his time, whatever the time was*", Dr Chefe struggled with "*modern*" post war methods though he continued to teach and created around him a small circle of graduate students who he continued to mentor even after his retirement. Apart from Professor Thrupiece, he was supervisor to Ms Audrey Badminton Court and briefly a consultant to the team tasked with commercialising *the thrupiecediet*.

It was once said of him that "*there was little of which he didn't know except for the world of which he knew very little*". Indeed so unworldly could he be that he once attended a Governing Body in St Radegund's wearing only a bolero jacket and castanets - the explanation given at the time was that he had lost track of which day of the week it was and believed he was giving a seminar to a troupe of mendicant Irish trombonists.

In later life, he basked privately in the glory of his role as both mentor and benefactor to his most remarkable pupil Professor Thrupiece who readily acknowledged Chefe's influence whenever he could and dedicated his second book "*Heuristic Bio-ethics: Axioms, Frameworks, and Prosthetics*" to Dr Chefe. Hearing that Dr Chefe had fallen upon hard times after a series of catastrophic investments in microwaveable snooke had gone seriously wrong, Professor Thrupiece sent him 200 Green Shield Stamps and a postal order for £15.

Outside of his academic interests, Dr Chefe enjoyed naked swimming, boules, "*photography*" (he had his own "*dark room*" into which only close intimates were invited) and beach volleyball (spectating only). He was an avid collector of specialist illustrated magazines. His vast collection of continental (particularly German) titles was incinerated by his niece on his death.

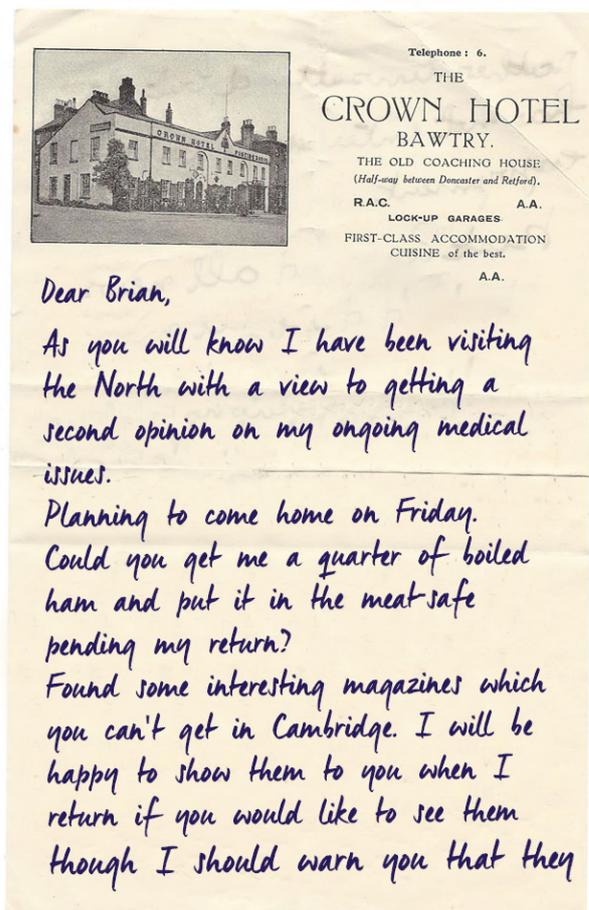
Dr Chefe's two younger siblings Comis and Fry - with whom he did not communicate after 1935 - both enjoyed successful careers of their own: Comis founded a lychee canning dynasty and Fry became a successful cinematographer working on many award-winning British art films including *Carry on Up the Cleavage* (1956).

Dr Chefe lived in the same rooms in St Radegund's for over 50 years and is buried under the kitchens. On his death his estate was valued at £543,000.

The beneficiary was never disclosed. Dr Chefe said of life that he had "*lived it to the full and occasionally beyond, finding interest wherever I could and pleasure when others let me*". He never married.

Selected Publications:

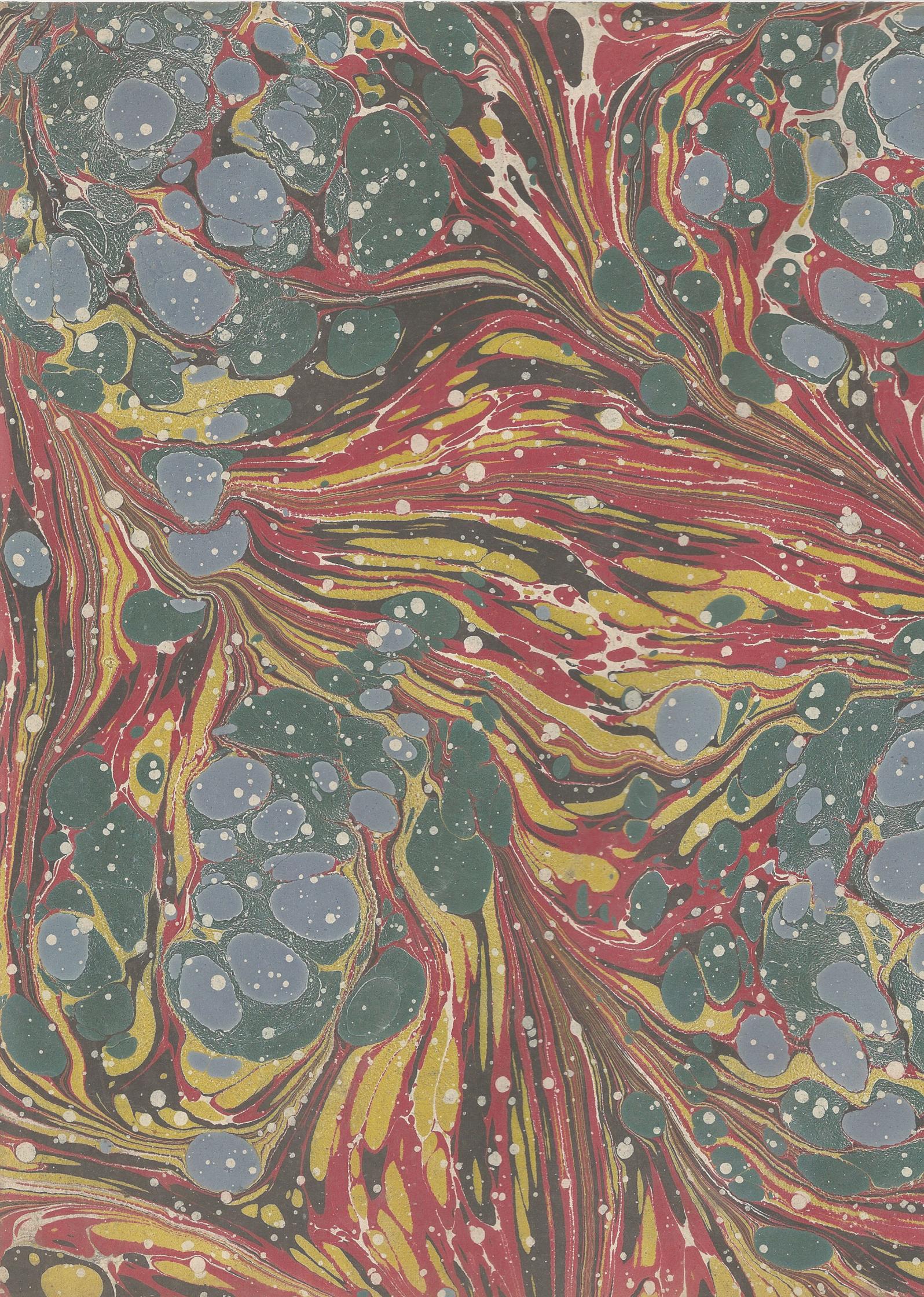
- Culinary Bio-ethics: A Modern Science* [1928]
- Principles and Foundations for Modern Culinary Bio-Ethics* [1934]
- Modern Culinary Bio-ethics: Principles and Foundation* [1946]
- The Science of Modern Culinary Bioethics* [1954]
- The Boys Book of Culinary Bio-ethics* [1957]
- The Family Encyclopedia of Culinary Bioethics* [1959]
- Everything You Wanted To Know About Culinary Bio-ethics* [1961]
- I-Spy Modern Culinary Bio-ethics* [1965]
- The A-Z of Modern Culinary Bio-ethics* [1970]
- Modern Culinary Bio-ethics: A Definitive Guide* [1996] [posthumous updated and completed by Professor Brian Thrupiece]



Letter sent by Dr Chefe to pupil and protege Professor Brian Thrupiece. It underlines the intimacy of their relationship

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