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 FOREWORD 

*David E. Schoonover*

Many readers and collectors of cookbooks now agree with the *New York Times* that "Prose, Not Recipes, Sells Today's Food Books" (May 15, 1991) and that "The History of Food [Has Gained] a Scholarly Pedigree" (May 30, 1984).

The cookbooks appearing in our series are selected from the University of Iowa Libraries' Szathmáry Collection of Culinary Arts, which contains more than 20,000 items: printed books dating from 1499 to 1995, more than a hundred culinary manuscripts, some 3,500 ephemeral pamphlets and booklets, and a selection of professional and popular magazines.

The Szathmáry Collection is an extraordinarily varied trove, presenting more than five hundred years' worth of books and manuscripts on all aspects of food and its history. Our series provides today's readers and collectors with much more than recipes. Many of these cookbooks contain introductions, perhaps literary or historical matter, period advertisements, or a variety of illustrations that are interesting in themselves. The cultural context of cookbooks is also important—who prepared or published them, for what audience, in what time period?

*To Set before the King* is the first translation from a manuscript to appear in our series, and, given the nature of this particular manuscript, the contributors to this volume have provided appropriate historical, social, political, economic, artistic, and culinary background. "The king" is Franz Joseph I, emperor of Austria and king of Hungary. The manuscript belonged to the actress Katharina Schrott, whom the emperor addressed as "My dear, good Friend." It is not in her handwriting. Our contributors speculate on who may have written it and for what purposes it may have been prepared. It was undoubtedly intended for private use but is now made available to a much wider readership.

Gertrud Graubart Champe and Paula von Haimberger Arno are native-born Austrians; Chef Louis Szathmáry is a native of Hungary. They are intimately familiar with the countries, languages, cuisines, and customs of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Gertrud Champe's introduction provides not only a full discussion of the Schrott manuscript but also brings to life the very real personalities connected with it. Paula Arno's translation gives an accurate and delicious rendering of the text. Louis Szathmáry's vivid invitation to "Bring Vienna to Your Table!" captures the multiplicity of flavors from the world that he knows and loves.

Royalties from sales of volumes in the series assist the University of Iowa Libraries in purchasing books to enhance the Szathmáry Collection of Culinary Arts. Forthcoming volumes will include an American culinary yearbook containing literary quotations and recipes for every day of the year and an early nineteenth-century English compendium of "Universal Knowledge and Experience."