



Aldrovandi on Chickens: The Ornothology of Ulisse Aldrovandi (1600) Volume II Book XIV

By L R Lind, Ulisse Aldrovandi

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*****. Aldrovandi on Chickens The Renaissance man of science, unlike the physicist of today, conceived the value of his work to lie in its applicability to all phases of human activity.

Aldrovandi on Chickens, the first English translation of any work by the Italian naturalist, Ulisse Aldrovandi, exemplifies the spirit and the letter of Renaissance science-the former, in the extensive classical references; the latter, through careful examination of every process concerned with the raising or use of chickens. Writing in 1598, Aldrovandi discusses as common knowledge such twentieth-century concepts as artificial stimulation of egg production, culling, and flock behavior. He traces reproduction in great detail from the competition of sperm in the oviduct to the position of the developed chick. Aldrovandi directs himself particularly to the chicken's beneficial effects on human life. He lists remedies concocted from chickens for many diseases, and although the modern reader may find the cure worse than the curse, the prescriptions provide a fascinating glimpse of the medical practices of the time. Recipes from gourmets of every age...

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