Charles PERRY (ed./trans.), *Scents and Flavors. A Syrian Cookbook*, Library of Arabic Literature (New York, New York University Press, 2017) 352 pp., ISBN 9781479856282.
Catherine GUILLAUMOND (trans.), *Cuisine et diététique dans l'occident arabe médiéval d'après un traité anonyme du XIIIè siècle. Étude et traduction française. Préface d'Ameur Ghedira*, Histoire et Perspectives méditerranéennes (Paris, L'Harmattan, 2017) 300 pp., ISBN 978-2-343-09831-9.

In light of the relatively small number of publications in the field of medieval Arab cookery, it is always extremely gratifying to be able to report on new arrivals. This past year has seen somewhat of a bumper crop with the publication of not one, but two, primary sources -- one in translation only, and the other combining a critical edition of the Arabic original with an English version. Even more tantalizing is the fact that both works not only date from the "golden age of Arab cookbooks" (13th century), but also come from opposite ends of the Islamic Empire, Aleppo and al-Andalus (Muslim Spain).

The first book is another valuable contribution by the doyen of medieval Arab culinary scholarship, Charles Perry, and is published in the Library of Arabic Literature series, which specializes in bilingual Arabic-English editions of classical works. It is to the credit of the editors – and a recognition of the increased stature of the field – that a culinary work has been included in the series.

The *Syrian Cookbook* of the title refers to *al-Wuṣla ilā 'l-ḥabīb fī waṣf al-ṭayyibāt wa 'l-ṭīb*, a literal translation of which would give something like "Reaching the Beloved through the Description of Delicious Foods and Flavourings" (Perry opts for one inspired by the style of the original, i.e. "Scents and Flavours the Banqueter Favours"). The authorship has been the subject of some controversy; in his seminal essay on Arabic culinary manuscripts the French Arabist Maxime Rodinson was the first to suggest it might have been the Syrian

historian Ibn al-ʿAdīm (1192-1262), though even at the time there was insufficient evidence to support this claim.[1] The intervening half century yielded additional manuscripts, which, rather than solve the mystery, simply added more possible authors/compilers into the mix. However, as Perry points out, "Rare is the cookbook at any time that has even claimed to be the sole product of its author" (p. 10).

Though the first translation in any language, this is not the first edition of the Arabic text; in 1986, the University of Aleppo's Institute for Arabic Scientific Heritage published the introductory volume of an edition prepared by Sulaymā Maḥjūb and Durriyya al-Khaṭīb, with the actual edited text (based on four manuscripts) following two years later. The *Wuṣla* must have been a highly popular and prized text as no other cookery manual has survived in as many manuscripts (about a dozen in total). It stands out in terms of the number of recipes (635), too, as only the anonymous – and as yet undated – *Kanz al-fawā'id fī tanwīʿ al-mawā'id* ("Treasure of Benefits in the Variety of Dishes") can boast more (830).[2]

Perry convincingly argues the case for two distinct text traditions, one of which contains over sixty additional recipes that are stylistically different from the others. Although Perry and Maḥjūb/al-Khaṭīb share some manuscripts, Perry relied most on what is considered the best oldest copy (dated 1330), held at the Topkapı Saray in Istanbul, and much less on the Aleppo manuscript than the Syrian scholars, since it includes a number of marginal recipes.

The translator's introduction provides an overview of the salient features of medieval Arab cuisine, its ingredients, developments, and some of its more famous dishes. This is followed by a discussion of the authorship of the text, the principal manuscripts, and the

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[1] Maxime RODINSON, "Recherches sur les documents arabes relatifs à la cuisine", *Revue des études islamiques*, vol. 17 (1949), pp. 95-165.

[2] Manuela MARÍN and David WAINES (eds), *Kanz al-fawā'id fī tanwīʿ al-mawā'id,* Beirut/Stuttgart, 1993.

contents. All of these are informative and interesting, but rather brief (a mere ten pages) and it would, for instance, have been useful to draw more comparisons of the recipes with other Arabic cookery manuals that preceded and followed the *Wuṣla*. The recipes (pp. 19-296) are arranged in ten chapters (aromatics, beverages, fruit juices, chicken, lamb, sweets, breads, pickles, soap, waters), which are followed by endnotes (pp. 300-302) to the translation, a glossary (pp. 303-318), a list of weights and measures, bibliography (pp. 320-1), and a general index (pp. 322-39). The chapters are of varying lengths, the longest being the sixth, which focuses on lamb recipes (138 in all) and accounts for about a quarter of the book.

The second cookbook is a reworking of Catherine Guillaumond's doctoral dissertation, *La cuisine dans l'occident arabe médiéval* (Université Jean Moulin-Lyon III, 1991), which included a critical Arabic edition, as well as French translation of an anonymous – and untitled – Andalusian cookery book, which has also been rendered into Spanish[3] and English (Perry n.d.). The book is of particular significance since it is one of only two culinary treatises to be produced in the Islamic West, the other being *Fuḍālat al-khiwān fī ṭayyibāt al-ṭaʿām wa 'l-alwān* ("Delicacies of the Table as regards the Finest Foods and Dishes"), composed by the Murcia-born jurist Ibn Razīn al-Tujībī (1227-93).[4]

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[3] Ambrosio HUICI MIRANDA, *Traducción española de un manuscrito anónimo del siglo XIII sobre la cocina hispano-magribi* (Madrid, 1966; 2nd ed.); *La cocina hispano-magrebí durante la época almohade*, with preface by Manuela Marín (Madrid, 2005).

[4] Abū 'l-Ḥasan AL-TUJĪBĪ, *Fuḍālat al-khiwān fī ṭayyibāt al-ṭaʿām wa 'l-alwān,* ed. Muḥammad Ibn Shaqrūn (Rabat, 1981); French trans. by Mohamed MEZZINE & Leïla BENKIRANE, *Les délices de la table et les meilleurs genres de mets* (Fez, 1997); Spanish trans. by Manuela MARÍN, *Releves de las mesas acerca de las delicias de la comida y los diferentes platos*, *Ibn Razim al Tugîbî, estudio, traducción y notas* (Madrid, 2007).

Guillaumond's work opens with a preface by her former supervisor, A. Ghedira, (pp. 7-10), followed by a note on the transliteration system (pp. 11-12), a "general" table of contents ("*sommaire*", pp. 13-4), and lengthy introduction (pp. 15-65), which discusses the manuscript and the features of the cookbook. The recipes themselves (472 in total) are arranged in fifteen chapters (*sections*), six of which bear no title (pp. 67-273). A bibliography (pp. 275-280) precedes a second, more detailed table of contents, listing every dish (pp. 281-293).

The textual tradition of this treatise, which was probably composed in the late 1220s or early 1230s by a Cordoban exile who had made his way to Marrakech (pp. 36-7) and then Ifriqiya, i.e. roughly present-day Tunisia (pp. 36-7), is more problematic than its Syrian counterpart. The Arabic editions by Huici Miranda[5] and Guillaumond relied on the (then) only known manuscript of the text belonging to the French Arabist Georges Colin (BNF, mss arabe 7009), copied in 1604. The manuscript comprises the cookbook (fols 1-75v), and a very short (and incomplete) treatise on syrups, electuaries, stomachics, and robs (fols 76r-83). Unfortunately, it was in poor condition, and incomplete – at least one recipe [no. 449] refers to another missing from the manuscript. Furthermore, several of the sheets clearly got jumbled up. Thanks to some commendable sleuthing (explained on pp. 23ff.), Guillaumond reordered the original text for her doctoral dissertation, and it is this version that served as the source text for the French translation. The textual plot thickened with the publication, in 2003, of a nineteenth-century copy of the book, based on a manuscript discovered by the Moroccan scholar ʿAbd al-Ghanī Abū 'l-ʿAzm in the Rabat General Library. Equally anonymous, this copy was titled *Anwāʿ al ṣaydala fī alwān al-aṭʿima* ("Pharmaceutical

[5] Ambrosio HUICI MIRANDA, "Kitāb al ṭabīkh fi-l-Maghrib wa 'l-Andalus fī ʿaṣr al-Muwaḥḥidīn, li-mu'allif majhūl", *Revista del Instituto de estudios islámicos*, vol. IX/X (1961-62), pp. 15-256.

remedies in food recipes"). Initially, it was hoped that this copy predated the Colin manuscript and would be able to solve some of the textual problems. Unfortunately, it soon became apparent that it was, in fact, a copy of the Colin manuscript.

Both works provide valuable insights into the mobility of dishes across Islamic territories in the Middle Ages, as well as into culinary developments over time. It is to some of these issues that we shall turn next.

The classification of recipes in *al-Wuṣla* deviates from other Eastern manuals (e.g. al-Baghdādī[6], *Kanz al-Fawā'id*) in a number of interesting ways: for instance, rather than grouping together sour stews or fried dishes, it favours an ingredient-based approach, with chapters devoted to chicken or lamb dishes. The opening chapters are devoted to, respectively, aromatics, beverages, and fruit juices. Other frequently encountered prefatory chapters in Eastern treatises on cooking hygiene and waters are somewhat oddly placed in *al-Wuṣla* (chs 7, 9, 10), but are absent from the Andalusian treatise.

In terms of the dishes, the transfer seemed to take place more from Eastern Islamic regions (Mashriq) to the West (Maghrib) than the other way around, with the notable exception of couscous, which can be found in some Eastern manuals – including *al-Wuṣla* (pp. 154-6). Equally interesting is the fact that a number of the "classic" dishes from earlier Eastern treatises (e.g. al-Warrāq[7], al-Baghdādī) are conspicuous by their absence from *al-Wuṣla*, but can be found in the Andalusian manual: e.g. *būrāniyya* (fried aubergine with

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[6] *Kitāb al ṭabīkh*, ed. Dāwūd al-Jalabī (Mosul, 1934); ed. Fakhrī Bārūdī (Damascus, 1964); ed. Qāsim al-Sāmarrā'ī (Beirut, 2014); English trans. by C. PERRY, *A Baghdad Cookery: The Book of Dishes* (Totnes, 2005).

[7] Ibn Sayyār AL-WARRĀQ, *Kitāb al-Ṭabīkh*, (*Studia Orientalia*, 60), ed. Kaj Öhrnberg & Sahban Mroueh (Helsinki, 1987); English trans. by N. NASRALLAH, *Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchens: Ibn Sayyār al-Warrāq's Tenth-century Baghdadi Cookbook* (Leiden, 2007).

meatballs, named after its alleged originator Būrān, the wife of the Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mūn), *zīrbāj* (a sweet-and-sour meat stew), and *ṭabāhaja* (strips of meat fried with vegetables and spices). The *tharīd* (pieces of bread in a meat broth) – one of the few originally Arab (rather than Persian) dishes – is of note in this regard since it became more popular in the West (al-Tujībī, for instance, included over thirty recipes) than it had been in the East, where it was considered an unsophisticated dish.

As is the case with many historical dishes, an identical name does not necessarily imply identical ingredients and preparation. This is true for both Eastern and Andalusian cuisines. For instance, *al-Wuṣla*'s ingredients (and resultant taste) of the "king of dishes", the *sikbāj* (vinegar stew, no. 6.109), which would eventually transmutate into *escabeche*, are significantly different from those in al-Baghdādī's treatise (compiled in 1226) and the anonymous Andalusian manual (nos 333, 365). The fact that the Andalusian *zīrbāj* bears a close resemblance to al-Baghdādī's, but not to *al-Wuṣla*'s (no. 5.49) may suggest a culinary "split", with at least some dishes from the East spreading to the West by the thirteenth century, before they were discontinued in their native habitat. In other cases, dishes travelled but underwent a name change, with the *tafāya* and *rafīs* being Western versions of the Eastern *isfīdbāj*, (a type of chicken stew) and *raghīf* (flatbread), respectively. The large number of shared dishes in the anonymous treatise and al-Tujībī are further evidence of the existence of a distinctly Andalusian and Maghribi cuisine by the thirteenth century. In addition to recipes that are not found in the East, such as *isfiriyā* (croquettes) or *fidawsh* (a type of pasta, and etymon of the Spanish *fideos*), there is the prevalence of fresh fish recipes, which are relatively few in the East, where fish was considered to have little prestige and nutritional value.

The Andalusian treatise also distinguishes itself by the presence of Berber dishes (nos 33, 194, 251, 285, 286, 287), "Christian" dishes (e.g. no. 217), and Jewish dishes (nos 156, 158,

164, 169, and 172). The only other cookery book to include a dish designated as "Jewish" is the anonymous *Waṣf al-aṭʿima al-muʿtāda* ("Description of Familiar Foods"), composed in the fourteenth century in Egypt, which includes a recipe for "Jewish meatballs" (though one manuscript calls them "cursed by the Jews").[8] The inclusion of the Jewish recipes gave rise to conjecture about the religious affiliation of the author, but Guillaumond is right to dismiss non-Muslim authorship due to the use of Islamic formulae.

Most of the culinary treatises contain recipes destined for the tables of rulers and nobles – here, too, the Andalusian manual is unusual in that it combines both "high" cuisine and that of the common folk, such as dishes eaten by shepherds (nos 252-4), servants (no. 113), and even slaves (nos 95, 117 and 387).

A comparison of the ingredients also reveals interesting discrepancies, with the absence in Andalusian recipes of, for instance, purslane, ambergris, costus, coconut, bananas and tamarind. The lack of parsley, which is used in about thirty dishes in *al-Wuṣla*, can be explained by the fact that it was considered a "Christian" herb in the Muslim West. Several Andalusian recipes also require alcohol, wine (*khamr*, no. 11), or *nabīdh* (a type of wine or mead, made from honey, dates or fruit preserves, nos 137, 357, 365). However, it is odd, to say the least, that Guillaumond does not mention the alcoholic nature of the latter, whereas her (unglossed) translation of *nabīdh rayḥānī* as "*nabîd odorant*" is somewhat puzzling as *rayḥānī* is an adjectival form of *rayḥān*, sweet basil.

The translation of medieval Arabic cookery terminology often poses problems; in the absence of direct equivalence, Perry sensibly opts for an exegetic transliteration, rather than "naturalizing" dishes. Guillaumond, for her part, Gallicizes many of the dishes, sometimes

[8] Cairo, Dār al-Kutub, mss Taymūr Sināʿa 51 (pp. 187-189), 52 (pp. 158-159); trans. Maxime RODINSON, A. J. ARBERRY, and Charles PERRY, *Medieval Arab Cookery* (Totnes, 2001), pp. 379.

with mysterious results, as in the case of a stew referred to as "*doré*" (no. 190) to translate the Arabic *rāhibī* ("monk's [dish]"). Equally problematic are the cases of ambiguity; for instance, *aṣīda* (almond pudding), "*qazâyf*" (sweet pudding) and *jashīsha* (type of pudding) are all translated as "*bouillie*", while *tharīds* are "*panades"*.

The transliteration is by far the most problematic issue in Guillaumond's text. Firstly, the system used by the author goes against all conventional scholarly practice, with *khā'* (a velar fricative) being represented by "ḫ", which in other transliteration systems represents an entirely different sound (the pharyngeal fricative). This is exacerbated by the multitude of inconsistent, erroneous and/or unintelligible transliterations, such as "*siffa mâ' 'assal*" (for *ṣifa mā' ʿasal*), *qaẓâîf / qazâyf* (for *qaṭā'if*), "al-Hass" (for "al-Ḥashshā*"*").

Perry's Arabic text is carefully edited, but it is unfortunate that the explanatory notes to the translation are minimal, without references to the eight known Arabic cookery manuals, four of which Perry, himself, has translated. The glossary is an odd mixture of technical terms, ingredients, dishes, place names (including, for instance, "Aleppo"), and personal names.

Guillaumond's introduction is very thorough, and contextualizes Andalusian cuisine within the Arabic tradition, with references to three other treatises (al-Tujībī's, al-Baghdādī's and *al-Wuṣla*). The poor editing of Guillaumond's text also manifests itself in odd font shifts, and the absence of an index. Finally, it is hoped that Guillaumond's Arabic edition will be published at some point, as the present one (Huici Miranda) leaves room for improvement.

Despite these shortcomings, both editors/translators are to be congratulated on making these works available to food historians who cannot access the original Arabic, while lay audiences will find much to enjoy in them as well. Both treatises offer valuable insights into the movement of dishes across the Muslim world, and will no doubt serve as a basis for future research.

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