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the discussion of basement kitchens: in Pennell's eagerness to show that they were not necessarily cramped spaces, neither of the two specific examples of kitchens larger than the 'polite' rooms of the house was in the basement (52–3). Another is the choice of Susanna Whatman to illustrate the mistress exercising close 'managerial scrutiny' over her kitchen (143); in fact, Susanna Whatman delegated this to her housekeeper, Hester Davis, on the grounds that, since the mistress did not have the time to supervise the servants, 'she must depend upon the Housekeeper to see all her orders enforced and every rule kept up.' A mistaken reference is to Martha Bradley as well as Elizabeth Raffald 'setting up their own eating establishments [and] cookery school businesses' (121–2); Martha Bradley did nothing of the sort, and the secondary source given as a reference does not suggest this at all. I was surprised to find no references to the diaries of James Woodforde or Ralph Josselin, the first valuable for evidence of the constant stream of visitors through his kitchen, the second for the intertwining of domestic culinary, medicinal and religious practice, but given the wealth of primary sources consulted for the book, this is a minor and somewhat churlish cavil. At times the syntax gets away from the author, and we find missing or extra words. 'The cottage kitchen … bore the brunt of wretchedness caused [?by] the effects of high food prices…' (152); 'one did not need to be in kneeling at prayer in church' (135). There are a couple of exotic spellings: 'Victorian womenhood' (130), 'olia podrida' (166). Not all the works cited in the text appear in the bibliography, and the endnotes are annoyingly referenced by chapter only, with no running pagination at the top of the page to guide the reader in chasing up references. All these are passing irritations, but the reader is amply compensated by the densely referenced text, the wealth of sources and the detailed analysis. Pennell has thought about the kitchen to some purpose, and studies of the kitchen, whether as domestic space and its equipment, or for its inhabitants, its practices and rituals, will never be the same again.

Gilly Lehmann

Charles Perry: *Scents and Flavors: A Syrian Cookbook*: New York University Press, 2017: 352 + xvi pp., hardback, £25.00.

This is a very significant contribution to culinary history in general and, in particular, to the understanding of medieval Arabic cuisine, which was far more sophisticated and advanced than western European cuisine in the same era. Arabic cookbooks date back at least as far as the ninth century but, unlike medieval European cookbooks, few are available in modern editions and even fewer have been translated; some of the translations have been judged problematic. Charles Perry's edition and translation of *Scents and Flavors* goes a long way towards redressing this imbalance.

In his introduction, Perry describes the thirteenth century as 'the golden

age of cookbooks', with five major Arabic recipe collections produced and copied, all substantial works with many more recipes than European recipe collections of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. With more copies of it surviving than of all medieval cookbooks combined, *Scents and Flavors* was, in Perry's words, the 'bestseller of the age'. Perry ascribes this success to its comprehensiveness (635 recipes, 700 in some manuscripts); to its systematic organization (chapters arranged roughly in the order of a banquet); its title (which translates as 'the link to the friend, concerning good things to eat and perfumes'); and perhaps the author's reassurance that 'I have included nothing without having tested it repeatedly, eaten it copiously, having worked the recipe out for myself, and tasted and touched it personally'. (Would that all cookbook authors could make this claim!)

Scents and Flavors presents both the Arabic text and a facing-page English translation. Its recipes are not for ordinary, everyday dishes but represent instead the elaborate fare of luxurious banquets, dishes that call for a variety of ingredients and often multiple cooking operations. Rosewater and musk are common, as are herbs – parsley, mint, coriander, rue – and spices, including both Ceylon and China cinnamon, ginger, cumin, saffron, sumac and pepper. Chicken is often combined with fruit – cherries, mulberries, barberries, rhubarb, quinces, pomegranates, lemon, sour orange – and nuts – almonds, pistachios, hazelnuts. Sugar and honey, and sometimes both, are added to savoury dishes, often in association with a sour ingredient such as lemon juice; they also feature strongly in the 111 recipes of the chapter on 'The many kinds of sweets, baked goods, and the like'. Even vegetables are enhanced with spices, herbs and nuts.

For students of medieval European cuisine this book helps to solve some of the little mysteries of medieval manuscripts, such as the improbable and totally unrealistic images of bananas in the various northern Italian manuscripts of the *Tacuinum Sanitatis*, a text derived from an earlier Arabic manual of dietetics. *Scents and Flavors* has several recipes for bananas, treating them as a vegetable or frying them like banana fritters, suggesting that bananas were commonly eaten in the medieval Middle East. The Italian copyist and illustrator simply did his best for an ingredient he had never seen and of which he was totally ignorant.

According to Perry, meat and poultry were cooked and eaten the same day they were killed, which meant they were relatively tough. Cooks overcame this by subjecting the meat to a succession of cooking processes, usually boiling followed by frying. This custom illuminates the ancestry of the medieval Catalan *Mig-raust*, praised by Platina who wrote 'I do not remember having eaten a better dish'. For this dish, which was later adopted in Italy, the chicken was part-roast then simmered in a sweet-sour sauce thickened with almonds and chicken livers. The Arab influence is undeniable.

Then there's the medieval Catalan recipe for aubergines, *Albergínies a la morisca*, which is unusual in its use of coriander. The fact that all seven of the cooked eggplant recipes in *Scents and Flavors* use coriander, fresh leaves and seeds, supports an Arab derivation. Several other recipes in this thirteenth-century collection could also serve as the source of or inspiration for subsequent European dishes, such as the recipe for *Al-dinnaf*, nougat in all but name.

These few examples serve to demonstrate the significance of *Scents and Flavors* to European culinary historians, though this is almost secondary to its value as a depiction of a different face of Islamic culture, a society that developed and cultivated a discerning art of eating based on the appreciation of sensual pleasure.

Barbara Santich

Vicky Hayward: *New Art of Cookery, a Spanish friar's kitchen notebook by Juan Altamiras*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2017: 294pp., hardback, £24.95
Vicky Hayward: *Nuevo Arte de la Cocina Española de Juan Altamiras*, traducción de Cristina Macía, Ariel, 2017: 494pp., hardback, £32.35

This book is a thundering good read. Start at the beginning with Vicky Hayward's Introduction then let yourself be carried on by her vivid narrative, in spite of the irksome obstacles in our way due to the publisher's incompetent typography and sloppy editing. Juan Altamiras was just a pen-name on a title page until Hayward brought him to life, and now, after years of research and wandering along bramble infested footpaths, talking to cooks and friars, archivists and historians, shop-keepers and market people, and then getting to work in her own kitchen, she introduces us to a quirky and warm-hearted individual and his inspired cooking. His text is almost untranslatable, with its vernacular and obsolete expressions, deploying familiar culinary terms along with procedures we no longer use, interspersed with sometimes baffling little jokes. It takes the skills of an investigative journalist, the insights of a novelist and the intuitions of a good cook to unravel the narrative and explain the gastronomy. Hayward does this by following Altamiras's text as he published it. First the title of the recipe, and her version of this title, followed by a straight translation of the text of the recipe, then her comments on the background or contents, and finally her version of the recipe, often with input from chefs and home cooks. Thus the story of Altamiras unfolds, as landscapes, place names, ingredients, and cooking methods in the recipes yield up clues, eventually revealing the author as Raimondo Gómez, a Franciscan friar in La Almunia, in the south-west of Aragon. To say more would spoil it for the reader, who can look forward to enjoying two versions of the work, the English translation reviewed here, and the Spanish language edition, which gives us access to Altamiras's text as he wrote it, along with Hayward's commentary, and is having a huge success in Spain at the moment. It is well