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might eat something unsuitable, such as wheat porridge (ib. 1.7), or invite a patient to his house and cure him by reversing the order of dishes in the meal (ib. 2.22). In his travels, he might ask Thracian farmers what sort of grain they are growing (ib. 1.13). His life and medicine revolved around food: we might expect the physician to the emperors Marcus Aurelius and Commodus to have much comment on imperial dinners and rich men's foods, but not a bit of it. As Mattern brings out, there is much more material on endemic food shortages in the Empire every spring (*On Good and Bad Juices* 1), one consequence of which was passing on skin ulcers to (wealthy) babies by wet nurses who suckled them (*On the Powers of Foods* 3.14). Galen was interested in both ends of the food spectrum: he had a home in Campania, producer of Rome's best vintages, on which he commented, while he studied most the agricultural poor, since their being forced down the food chain in the spring to eat acorns and vetch normally reserved for their animals was scientifically revealing. When it came down to it, he had no time for the livers of red mullet (ib. 3.26) or cooks preparing foods for pleasure rather than health (ib. 2.51).

John Wilkins

Anna Martellotti: *Linguistica e Cucina*: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2012: 170 pp., €20.

The chance survival of manuscripts – some elegant presentation copies, often in Latin, others grease-stained craft manuals in the vernacular that were sometimes copied out before being chucked away – leaves us with puzzles about how they might relate to each other, and to the wider world of provisions and how they were cooked and eaten. Linguistics can clarify some aspects of medieval Italian food history; and Martellotti explains how linguistic analysis has allowed her to form her own opinions of Italian culinary development as well as detailing those conclusions and opinions with fluency and enthusiasm. Language, however, is only one means of approach to the question.

The disciplines outlined in this book explain how all this scholarship might work and are brought out to buttress Martellotti's passionate and erudite, but not uncontested, arguments about the influence of Arab gastronomy on the cuisines of medieval Europe. It is hard to do justice to the complexities of her exciting and innovative argument. Briefly, she finds evidence, based on versions of a now-lost MS written in Sicily for the Emperor Frederick II by one of his renowned Arab cooks, that the whole of medieval European gastronomy was Arab in origin, with a certain Swabian input from Germany. Versions of this cuisine filtered down via Norman England (from direct contact with the Norman presence in Sicily), finding its way into all the known manuscript sources from Italy and the rest of Europe.

The charismatic Frederick, known as *Stupor Mundi*, Hohenstaufen (or

Swabian as Martellotti prefers) by birth and allegiance, had his power base in Sicily; there he grew up, speaking six languages, one of them Arabic, and when not rampaging around Europe harassing kings and popes, was at ease in the hedonistic cultural hothouse of Palermo, where the *douceur de vivre* included falconry, poetry, and refined dining. According to Martellotti the cultural and political hegemony of the Normans was the vehicle for this splendid Arab cuisine, which in word as well as deed, in kitchens and cauldrons as well as texts, was to be for centuries the main influence on European gastronomy. Martellotti traces the impact of this courtly Arab cuisine in its transmission from a master chef's lost manuscript through a text, *Liber de coquina*, copied later in several versions, to other surviving cookery texts, from a 14th century version of the *Meridionale*, published by Bostrom in 1985, to a later version in the BNF, and compares it with material from the late 12th century in the British Library, edited by Constance B. Hieatt in 1986. According to Bruno Laurioux, Hieatt's 'seductive hypothesis', outlined at the Oxford Symposium in 1996, that the *Liber de coquina* was the vehicle for this transmission of the Arab cuisine of Sicily to the rest of Europe, via Anglo-Norman MSS, is debatable.

Readers of *PPC* will enjoy comparing Martellotti's enthusiastic and carefully argued position with the equally scrupulous, but sceptical, view of the Arab influence by Bruno Laurioux in *Une histoire culinaire du Moyen Âge* (Honoré Champion, Paris, 2005) where his essay on pp. 305–335, 'Le goût médiéval est-il arabe? À propos de la "Saracen connection"' summarizes a different point of view. Laurioux examines over half a century of different takes on the Arab influence, from Maxime Rodinson to C. Anne Wilson and Charles Perry, and finally Martellotti, and eventually gives them all a clear well-reasoned thumbs down.

Gillian Riley

Tony Kitous & Dan Lepard: *Comptoir Libanais: a feast of Lebanese-style home cooking*: Preface Publishing, Random House, 2013: 288 pp., hardback, £20.
The current civil war in Syria has seen a large influx of Syrian refugees into Lebanon. One project to help them has been run in conjunction with the restaurant Tawlet Souk el Tayeb in Beirut. Established by Kamal Mouzawak, who has a short essay in Tony Kitous' new book, the restaurant promotes foods from different parts of Lebanon and encourages cooks from across Lebanon to come and cook, highlighting the variations between coastal, mountain and inland cooking. They also have international themed dinners when visiting chefs demonstrate the foods of other regions of the world.

Mouzawak also founded the first farmers market in Beirut, promoting local foods and produce. His work encapsulates many aspects of Lebanese cuisine; the use of fresh ingredients, its simplicity, its connection with the land, but also its openness to other influences and the ability for it to travel. The