

A CRITIQUE OF CHARLES PERRY'S TRANSLATION OF A  
*BAGHDAD COOKERY BOOK* (published as issue number 79 of  
*Petits Propos Culinaires*) AND HIS RESPONSE.

I am grateful to Ms Nawal Nasrallah (the author of *Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchens*, Brill 2008) for submitting these critiques of Charles Perrys translation of the medieval Arabic cookery book by al-Baghdadi. She has published a review article on the same topic in *Studia Orientalia* (volume 101 pp. 537-47).

This file contains firstly Ms Nasrallah's page by page commentary on the translation (pp. 1–20); this is followed by her review article, which is arranged in a somewhat more narrative form and does not include lines of Arabic text, which many of us may find difficult to read (pp. 21–33). Finally, I have printed Charles Perry's response, which was specifically in answer to the first commentary.

I had great difficulties with some of Ms Nasrallah's transliterations. For some reason the transfer from one platform to another created more complications than I am used to. I apologise, therefore, if a few of the Arabic transliterations are erroneous.

Tom JAINE  
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## NAWAL NASRALLAH'S CRITICISMS OF CHARLES PERRY'S TRANSLATION OF *A BAGHDAD COOKBOOK*.

Compared with Arberry's translation of al-Baghdādī's cookbook, Charles Perry's has been promoted as a more accurate, and more nuanced version in which he corrects many errors and misreadings that had crept into early transcriptions.

Taking into consideration the comments below on Perry's translation, Arberry's version, made more than half a century ago may still be valued as the 'authorized' version. Although, by going back to the original Arabic MS Perry managed to put together a version which distinguishes al-Baghdādī's original text from Ibn Jazlah's additions and marginal comments added later by other hands, and corrected some of Arberry's misreadings, Perry's version still cannot be described as a 'definitive text on which scholars can work.' It is marred by excruciatingly literal and at times erroneous textual renderings. The result is linguistic awkwardness, which sometimes even verges on incoherence, and lack of natural flow and grace, which Arberry's rendering has.

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### **Recipe Terminology and Ingredients (pp. 17-22)**

\* Though Perry's translation is predominantly executed in a literal manner, there are places where he needed to stick to the original but he opted not to do so. A case in point is his unhappy decision to translate *murrī* (cereal-based liquid fermented sauce) as 'soy sauce', an ingredient alien to the Arab Medieval cuisine, and needlessly insisting on 'translating' the clay domed oven *tannūr* as tandoor, even though etymologically the former is the origin of the latter. A cooking technique religiously followed in preparing al-Baghdādī's dishes, namely *tabrīq* (lit. sweating the meat) is translated as 'stewing' a general insipid term that does not truly capture the sense of the method (more on that below).

\* Perry's complaint that it is 'often hard to tell whether 'until it becomes quiet' refers to the pot or the fire' is unjustified. The text is reasonably clear on this issue. In the following sentences, for instance, it is the pot that needs to settle: (رفعت الزار على هدأت اذا) (ترفع ثم ساعة تهدأ حتى الزار على تترك) (تهدأ حتى (الهادية الزار على يترك)).<sup>1</sup>

\* Though Perry may be justified in his puzzlement regarding the meaning of the verb *rabbā*, he is not accurate in saying that the verb in modern sense means 'to beat to liquid consistency.' there no such modern meaning. In fact the culinary meaning involves the sense of thickening the consistency of liquid by boiling it down (as in juices), and hence the word *rubb*, used even today to designate condensed juices as *rubb al-rummān* (condensed pomegranate juice). As used in al-Baghdādī, the stew is thickened with ground almond (باللوز يربى) (المهدوقى), and similarly when pounded almonds are mixed with water before adding them to the pot, they are not thinned with a liquid as Perry suggests, but rather the liquid is thickened with them.

\* Perry is wrong in translating (القدر من اصابع خمس اربع يبقى حتى) as 'until they [ingredients in the pot] remain four or five finger-widths from the (bottom of) the pot.' It clearly means that only four or five finger-widths remain from the pot itself.

\* About the mystery word *gharīq/barīq* : Perry reads it as *gharīq* (lit. drowned, submerged in syrup for instance), and translates it as 'suitable for drowning.' Now what should a reader understand from such as phrase?

It is highly possible that the word is *barīq*, which describes juicy and moist dates (the syrup that oozes from dates is called *baraq*, lit. perspiration).

\* Perry indicates that *āāqa* and *bāqa* refer to the same thing, namely 'bunch' (of herbs). This is inaccurate: the first means 'sprig' and the second 'bunch.' Regarding '*ḥalqat shabat*,' he translates it as 'ring of dill,' this is also inaccurate, because the word *ḥalqa* as used in

this context is not 'ring' but 'a snip' derived from the verb *ḥalaqa* (to cut or snip, such as hair of humans, goats, etc). The word *ḥalqa* is consistently used in conjunction with dill weed even in books other than al-Baghdādī's, such as *Al-Wuṣṣa ila 'l-ḥabīb*

\* About *samīd*, Perry left it untranslated because 'it might refer to a particular kind of wheat.' It sure does, but you also wonder why Perry did not himself try to find out what it is for his readers.

According to medieval sources, *samīd* in the eastern region of the Islamic world is a particular kind of fine flour, bran free, high in starch content, and low in gluten.

\* About the spice-mix al-Baghdādī calls *aṭrāf al-ṭīb*: Writing about this term in his translation of *Wasf al-Aṭ'ima al-Mu'tāda* (published in *Medieval Arab Cookery* p. 284), though Perry correctly identifies the term as 'a spice mixture' his literal translations are inaccurate even in the rigidly literal sense of the words. First of all, *aṭrāf* he translates as sides (of scent), once again a meaningless translation, and not even literal, because the literal sense in this context is 'a number of things put together.' As for *afwāh al-ṭīb* he says it literally means 'mouths of scent,' which is absurd, because besides 'mouths', *afwāh (sig fūh)* also means 'different kinds of,' and in this instance it is 'different kinds of aromatic spices.' As for *afwāh jayyida*, he says literally it translates to 'good mouths' (!!!).

It is no wonder that he describes such Arabic terms as 'odd names,' and speculates that they 'may refer to the paper packets in which spices were sold.' In his Introduction to al-Baghdādī's translation he jestingly, I assume, comments 'I suggest that the herbs may be fresh, because the 'mouths' are never ground' (p. 20).

### **Al-Baghdādī's Introduction** (pp. 28-9)

\* This is an example on how knowledge of other texts could have helped him render a more solid version of the text, simply because al-Baghdādī's text in this part is identical (verbatim) with the thirteenth-century cookbook *Kanz al-Fawā'id* (but this one is longer). For instance, where the text speaks about which kinds of wood to choose,

Perry mentions 'the trees that are for sale,' an incoherent phrase in the given context. By referring to *Kanz al-Fawā'id* it turns out the original Arabic expression is (يتوعية اشجار) which means 'sappy trees.' Now this makes perfect sense: sappy trees are not to be used as fuel because they produce a lot of smoke.

\* *Andarānī* or *darānī* salt is not named after a place called Andarān, as both Arberry and Perry suggest. It is derived from the Arabic noun *dhuraa* (ذُرَاءة) meaning 'excessive whiteness'. The grammatical Arabic name is *dharaānī* (ذِرَانِي).

\* The Arabic expression on salt (عقد و حل ما), Perry translates as 'salt dissolved and thickened.' 'Thickened' is the literal sense of the word, and in the given context it does not sound right in English. Salt does not thicken the way sugar thickens into syrup when dissolved and boiled down. Salt crystallizes when it is dissolved and boiled down. Though in Arabic one word (عقد) conveys both meanings, in English it has more nuances depending on context, and Perry, a seasoned food writer is expected to consider such nuances in the English language.

\* About mastic; Perry reads *diqq* (small pieces, Arberry got it right) as *daqq* (pound), both are basically written the same way in Arabic as (دق), an example on nuances of the Arabic language that need to be noticed.

\* About ginger: (مسوس غيڤر لان ما الذن جبيل من) Perry renders it as 'Of ginger, that which is *maghrūs*, "implanted".' What is an English reader to understand from this? It actually means 'free of woodworm' derived from *sūs* = woodworm.

\* On washing pots, Perry translates the Arabic sentence as 'beat them with brick dust.' How can you beat a vessel with brick dust? Granted the Arabic verb is (يضرِب) whose literal general sense is 'beat,' the verb additionally has other meanings, such as 'to smear and rub.' Cf. Arberry's more accurate phrase 'rubbed with.'

\* On pounding spices, Perry translates (تنعيميها) as 'make them

smooth.’ Although this is correct in other contexts, in talking about pounding dry spices in Arabic *nābim* means ‘finely ground.’ Arberry got it right.

\* حامضها من ألتشر حلودا في Perry translates as ‘whether sweet or sour’ which is inaccurate. It should be as Arberry puts it ‘of the sweet rather than the sour varieties.’

\* About (عروق), which means blood vessels, Perry chooses to replace it with ‘tendons’ because he says there is no way you can remove blood vessels (p. 120). These vessels, especially the arteries, need to be removed because they are muscular and elastic in texture, and they might still contain blood in them. Incidentally while writing this piece, I was cleaning lamb shanks and there it was a visible vessel along the bone, full with blood. Given the Islamic dietary prohibitions, one understands the importance of removing these arteries.

\* Perry has an issue with the technique of (تعريق), literally ‘sweating’, recommended by al-Baghdādī in preparing meat dishes in his book. Perry says, ‘I have chosen to render *barraqa* as “to stew”; not a perfect translation, I am aware, but more idiomatic than “to sweat”’ (115).

Indeed, not only is it not ‘more idiomatic’ but even somewhat misleading, considering the following:

Stewing is a general cooking method that involves slowly cooking food in considerable amount of liquid. *Tabrīq* (lit. sweating), on the other hand, is an initial stage in cooking meat, it can be performed in many different ways, as the recipes reveal, but the basic method boils down to first ‘sautéing’ or ‘frying’ the meat pieces in rendered sheep-tail fat. In the process meat will release its moisture (and hence the name *tabrīq*). A very small amount of water may be added to prevent the meat from drying out, and sometimes some basic spices. The cook needs to occasionally stir the pot until all moisture evaporates and meat pieces start to brown in the fat (*yahmarr*).

*Tabrīq* in medieval times and up until relatively recently was a cooking technique unique to the Arab cuisine. Not all cooks prepared meat this way (Cf. for instance al-Warrāq’s tenth-century cookbook), but it was al-Baghdādī’s favorite. To me, ‘sweating’ meat in sheep-

tail fat when preparing stews was a living daily practice during my growing years in Baghdad. To people familiar with the cuisine past and present, it is a living reality and not an obsolete medieval method of a 'cuisine that is now dead' as Perry declares in his Introduction to *Kitāb Wasf al-Aṭ'ima al-Mu'tāda*, p. 279.

So to bring out the flavor of al-Baghdādī's cuisine, will it not be better to keep the method *tabrīq* untranslated, or translate it as 'sweating,' and explain it in a note? It will still be literal, but literalness with a message.

**\* About Perry's translations of chapter headings:** His wording is artificial and awkward. For instance he translates (مجره يجرى م) as 'and things that serve the same function.' What things and what function? The expression simply means 'and similar dishes.'

In title of the chapter on cookies (ما خالطه مما ذلك مجرى يجرى وما) (الدقيق): Perry translates as 'and things mixed with flour that are analogous to those' (p. 102). How about 'and similar pastries made with flour'?

(يناسبها وما) Perry translates as 'and what is analogous to them.' How about 'and similar dishes'? Or even Arberrry's 'etc' ?

A chapter title (واصنافها الحلاوات ذكر في) Perry translates as 'Mentioning Sweetmeats and their varieties of that (sort)' Is this English?

### **The main body of al-Baghdādī's book:**

p. 30 (واحد باب في يكون ان الجميع حكم) he inaccurately renders as 'but everyone has decided that they should be in one chapter.' Cf. Arberrry's correct rendering: 'It seems best, however, to treat of them all in one chapter.'

In the given context, *حكم* is not a verb but a noun, and *الجميع* does not mean 'everybody' but it refers to 'all the varieties of dishes'.

p. 30 Stylistic awkwardness: 'Throw the spices on it and adjust its salt in it'

p. 30 (النار قطع اراد فانذا) Perry's awkwardly literal rendering 'When

the fire needs to be cut.' Cf. Arberry's 'When ready to take off the fire'.

p. 31 (الزوار حموة تهدأ على حتى) Perry's 'to grow quiet on the heat of the fire.' Cf. Arberry's 'to settle over the heat of the fire'.

p. 31 About the pot, (رفعت): Perry's literal 'take it up' is inaccurate. *Rafaba* has meanings other than the basic 'lift' or 'take up.' Arberry's 'remove' is accurate.

p. 31 (الابازير فيها التي الخارقة تلك نحيت) Perry's awkward: 'remove that cloth that the spices are in.' Cf. Arberry's simple, direct, and readable 'remove the bag of seasonings'

p. 31 Perry attributes the dish *al-Ibrāhīmiyya* to Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī, whereas it is known that they are named after Ibrāhīm bin al-Mahdī, half-brother of the Abbasid caliph al-Rashīd. Arberry got it right.

pp. 31-2 In recipe of *jurjāniyya*, though Perry corrects Arberry's 'cut in halves' to 'equal proportions', neither got the following direction quite right: (ناعم المدقوق المحشدر باللوز ويربى القدر في يلقى شم) (خل من يسير شىء معة وليكن)

Perry: 'Beat peeled sweet almonds pounded fine to liquid consistency with water, then throw them in the pot.' The Arabic statement is still referring to the pomegranate-raisin liquid, before this step. The recipe is saying, 'Let there be with it [i.e. pomegranate-raisin liquid] a little vinegar, thicken it with skinned and finely pounded almonds, and then add it to the pot.' It is a kind of additional information that al-Baghdādī puts as an afterthought.

p. 33 In a recipe, a disjointed chicken is added to the meat after it comes to a boil, so that they both cook at the same time: (غلية القدر غلت فاذا) (بنضجه تنضج اللحم على القاه).

Perry translates it as: 'When the pot comes to the boil, throw it [the chicken] on the meat to become done.' What kind of English is this? Cf. Arberry's: 'When the saucepan is boiling, throw it in on top of the meat to cook with it'

p. 34 About *kirafs* (celery): Perry passes a general comment (p. 116) 'during the Middle Ages, only the leaves of the celery plant were eaten.' This is not accurate, there were many kinds of celery. Some varieties are grown for their leaves, similar to parsley, and others were grown for their ribs (*qu'bān*).

p. 35 On the name of the dish *farḥāna*. It does mean 'the happy one' as Perry says, but his speculation on the possibility that it is derived from *farah* 'wedding feast' is not feasible. He is applying modern colloquial Egyptian to the term. This explanation should not be there.

p. 35 Although in the Arabic text a statement is expressed like this: (وحدها والالوية وحده السمين اللحم يقطع) Perry does not have to render it the same way: 'Cut up fat meat by itself, and tail fat by itself.' Unlike Arabic, in English there is one word for this, which is 'separately'. Arberry actually uses it: 'Cut up fat meat and tail separately'

p. 36. In the edited Arabic text (p.18) the following is mentioned: (قراضية وحلوا مبحشرة وقطع), which Arberry translates as 'and pieces of *mubaḥṭhara* and *qurā'iyya* cake (*ḥalwā*).' Perry reads the statement in the Arabic MS as (القراصيا حلوا (من) يسيرة قطع), and translates it as 'and small pieces of sweet prunes.' His objection (p. 119) is that *قراضية* and *مبحشرة* are 'two pastries one of them speculative.'

The objection to his rendering and reasoning is: there is a recipe for *halwa* in *مبحشرة* in the same book he is translating, and *قراضية* is not a speculative dessert. It is mentioned in al-Dhahabī's *ṭārīkh al-Islām*, though no recipe has been discovered yet. Therefore, Arberry is not off in calling the recipe *ḥalawīyya* (cooked with *ḥalwa*). Besides, Perry's reading of the Arabic text sounds a bit forced since he has to insert a word to straighten its sense. By the way, *yasīra* does not mean 'small' but 'not much, a little', and the literal meaning of *قراضيا* is cherries.

p. 36 An example of Perry's awkward rendering: 'Then leave it on the fire, its fire being quiet. Then leave it until it is done, then take it up.' Cf. Arberry's: 'Leave over a slow fire until cooked, then remove'

p. 37 In some of the dishes eggs are cracked and left whole on the cooking food in the pot so that they poach in the remaining heat. This is called in the Arabic recipe (البيض عيون) literally 'eyes of eggs,' the set white is like the white of the eyes, and the set yolk is like its pupil. Perry calls them 'whole raw eggs,' in the text, and explains the meaning on p. 116. Arberry calls them 'poached eggs'.

If there is anything I want Perry to literally translate for me as a reader in this book it would be 'eyes of eggs,' a charming fanciful expression that captures the essence of al-Baghdādī's cuisine. Arberry's 'poached eggs' would be my second choice for it is more accurate and appetizing than 'whole raw eggs'.

p. 40 Perry complains sometimes that it is not apparent whether 'finely pounded' refers to the last spice mentioned or to all the spices. Generally, the text is clear as to what is being pounded, and in the following instance: (المصطكي والكمون والكسفرة الابازير عليهِ وتطرح) (ناعماً المدقوقة والزنجبيل والفاصل والدارصيني Perry translates it inaccurately as: 'throw on the spices coriander, cumin, mastic, cinnamon, pepper, and finely pounded ginger.' It is quite clear in the Arabic sentence here that the word 'pounded' qualifies all the spices mentioned, based on a simple grammatical rule in Arabic: The feminine gender of *madqūqa* qualifies the feminine *abāzīr* (general word for spices) rather than the masculine *zanjabīl* (ginger).

p. 40 In the *nārinjiyya* recipe: (ويزال قشره من فيقشر الزانج ويؤخذ) (قشره الذي غير يعصره الذي وليكن ويصير الابيض شرحه عنه) Perry translates it as 'Take oranges, peel them, take the [white] flesh from them and squeeze them; let him who squeezes them not be the one who peeled them.' Cf. Arberry's less inflated rendering, where style matches subject matter 'Take oranges, peel, remove the white pulp, and squeeze: let one person peel, and another do the squeezing'

Besides, commenting on the squeezing method, Perry says in a note, 'Perhaps so that the dish will be flavored with the juice alone, with none of the oils or bitterness from the peel.' Why 'perhaps'? For those who have actually handled such oranges, as people still do in Iraq, 'perhaps' casts doubts on the necessity of the process, it should be 'certainly.'

p. 41 The recipes in Arabic use the words (يَرمِي) (يَطرَح) (lit. 'throw' and 'toss,' but also carry the general sense of 'add' and even 'put'). Perry invariably uses 'throw' throughout the book. Even, when al-Baghdādī himself chooses another word such as (يَرجِعُ), simply 'put' when adding raw eggs to the simmering pot, Perry, nonetheless, translates it as 'throw.' His version reads, 'throw whole raw eggs on it.' It should be admitted that al-Baghdādī is much more careful than Perry when handling eggs!

p. 43 Perry misreads this statement: ثلاث او باقتان السلق من يؤخذ (اللحم قدر على). He translates it as 'Take two or three bunches of chard for the pot of meat.' He misreads *qadar* (quantity) as *qidr* (pot), both written the same way in Arabic. Arberry got it right: 'according to the quantity of meat'

p. 43 Regarding *'ukayka*, Perry follows Arberry's explanation that it is 'apparently diminutive of *'akka* = magpie.' Actually, the bird in Arabic is *'ak'ak*. So probably it is a diminutive of *'ukka* (= a small leather container for clarified butter, used also metaphorically to describe a plump person, also used to describe something that is thick and dense). The final stew in the recipe is condensed in consistency and since it is also fair in color, it might look like *'ukka*.

p. 44 In the same recipe above, both Perry and Arberry are inaccurate in their renderings of the Arabic expression (اعلاه دمنه ويقتذف): 'Throw away the fat on its surface' (Perry), and 'when the oil floating on top is thrown away' (Arberry). It should be 'and the pot oil separates and comes up to the top'

p. 47 An example on Perry's un-nuanced English. The Arabic (لتركوها) (شديداً الارز ين عقد حتى) Perry translates as 'Do not leave it until the rice has thickened strongly.' I am not aware that we can describe rice in this way. Cf. Arberry, 'Do not leave it so long that the rice becomes hard set.' Besides, compared with Arberry, Perry's version does not make it clear whether al-Baghdādī wants the rice mix to thicken or not.

p. 49 The Arabic (القدر ماتحتتمل بقدر الثوم من له اخذ). Though both in

Arabic and English pot sometimes does refer to the food cooking in the pot and not necessarily the utensil itself, Perry's translation here does not make it clear, 'take as much garlic as the pot will bear.' One might think that the pot can bear a lot, indeed! Cf. Arberry's expression 'add [garlic] as required.'

p. 51 Some expressions Perry got wrong: 'light strips' for 'thin strips' (خفاف شراي ح) (بياضها اخذ التي البيض صفر). 'egg yolks which have been taken with their whites' for 'egg yolks from which the whites have been taken.'

p. 52 Perry's expression 'it becomes done' sounds odd and definitely un-nuanced.

p. 52 (لنذلك ي علم) to tell the reader that this recipe is made like the one above it. Perry's rendering is 'it is made like that.' (Like what?!) Cf. Arberry's 'Make in the same way as the preceding'

p. 55 Awkward expressions: (س لقه في اللحم نضج فاذا) Perry's 'When the meat is done in boiling.' Cf. Arberry's 'When the meat has cooked in its broth'

p. 57 An example on Perry's questionable choices: in the *fākhitiyya* recipe, the following description of meat occurs (أحمر سميين لحم). It does literally translate as Perry's 'cut lean fat meat...' which sounds contradictory and absurd. However, since he acknowledges that it might well have been a scribe's error, he should have amended it somehow, such as by adding [or] to make it more coherent to the reader, and then explain why he is amending the text this way in a note.

p. 58 Perry misunderstands the following instruction about fried eggplant (جيداً بملعقة يضرّب). He translates it as 'mix it well with ladle.' According to instructions described in other sources, the fried eggplant is mashed with the rounded back of the ladle or spoon.

p. 58 About the expression (نعماً يدق) with regard to meat: Perry says, 'take lean meat and beat it well.' Well now, how can you beat meat?

What is meant here is 'pound meat well'

p. 59 About the Arabic expression (عنه المائوية قلت): Perry translates it as 'the liquid decreases from it.' How about using the verb 'evaporate'?

p. 61 Perry translates the verb *yunḥat* as 'hewn' in a recipe about preparing carrots. He says, 'carrots which are hewn (*yunḥat*) until they are peeled; remove their wood from inside them and cut them up into thin small hewn (pieces).'

The Arabic verb in the given context simply means 'scrape.' I wonder whether Perry has ever come across a recipe in English in which carrots are 'hewn' in order to peel them, or are 'cut up into thin small hewn pieces.' Isn't this called 'shredding' in English? Cf. Arberry's more nuanced and idiomatic version: 'carrots, scraped, cored, and then scraped into fine shreds.'

p. 63 Perry, surprisingly enough, does not display in his English renderings the expected command of the verbal gastronomic tools. A case in point is the word *qashshara*. In Arabic, this word is used to mean 'peel' regardless of kinds of peel. The English language is more nuanced in this respect. Besides the general verb 'peel,' an array of verbs may be used to describe removing the skins of different ingredients. Perry invariably uses the verb 'peel' to cover all: walnuts and pistachios are peeled ( 'shelled' is more commonly used ), almonds are peeled (skinned is more commonly used), sesame is peeled (isn't 'hulled' the word to use?)

p. 65 About dates, al-Baghdādī mentions الرطب الطبرزد *ṭabarzad* is the name of a variety of Iraqi dates that is still popular. Today it is called *tabarzal*. If Perry is not to literally translate the name, he might explain it, though, in a footnote. By the way, *ṭabarzad* is not 'sugar-candy,' as Arberry and Perry translate it. It is a kind of excellent-quality white cane-sugar. The dates are called so because they are as sweet as sugar.

Then we have the mystery word that is read as عذيق in the Arabic edited text. It might well mean 'dates in cluster. Arberry takes it to be

a variety of Medina dates, in which case he bases his interpretation on Medina dates called *bidhq ibn t̄āb* (*Tāj al-bārūs*). It is also written as فريق (which might mean loose dates, but Perry literally translates as 'band, party, detachment', p. 113). Perry thinks the word is غريق, which literally means 'drowned', and he proceeds to translate the text as such: '(being) drowned,' and in a footnote he says, 'Or being suitable for immersing in syrup,' which makes little sense in the given context.

My sense is that the word could be عريق, in which case it means 'moist and juicy dates,' and in the given context it definitely does not carry the meanings 'deeply rooted; noble' as Perry says (p. 121).

p. 68 About meatballs, the Arabic text reads: (ونشف نضج و غلى فاذا) و نشف نضج و غلى فاذا (ماء غمرها عليها يطرح ثم دهنه الى وعاء غنه الماء). Perry's rendering is a maze of pronouns: 'Then leave water to cover on them, and when it boils and they are done, and the water dries away from them and they return to their fat...'. Cf. Arberry's clean and lucid version: 'Then cover with water, and boil. When cooked, and the water has all evaporated, so that only the oils remain...'

p. 71 Perry misunderstood the sense of (صنعة في الجهد منتهى وهذا) (الذجاج طبخي), and he translates it as 'This is the most important thing in making chicken dishes.' He thought it belongs to the previous statement only, which cautions against using onion and garlic in chicken dishes. Actually, this statement is a general comment on the whole section dealing with chicken. Cf. Arberry's correct interpretation; 'This is all that needs to be observed in making chicken dishes.'

p. 73 About *sukhtūr* (stuffed tripe): Perry thinks it means 'gut' and 'sausage,' and he proceeds and translates the text having these meanings in mind, and does not even question the detail that some 'jointed scalded chicken' are considered in stuffing the 'intestines'. He does express his puzzlement, though, in his previous translation of *Kitāb al-Aṭ'ima al-Mu'tāda*, where he wonders 'how to get all those meats – apparently on the bone – into sausage casings' (279). I wonder why he does not follow Arberry's rendering which is perfectly correct. Arberry uses a definition given by Steingass: '*sukhtū* is sheep tripe

stuffed with minced meat and rice.'

In the same recipe, Perry gets his pronouns muddled when the recipe describes how to sew the tripe pieces: (بخيط وتخييط وتجمع) (يا بس عود من بخلال تغل او لتان). He says: 'Join them and sew them with linen thread, or they make them with a pin of dry wood.' Who are 'they'? By the way *khilāl* is not a 'pin' but a 'toothpick'.

p. 77 About the dish *maṣūṣ*: Perry's explanation that the dish is called so because it is 'made with a suckling kid' is not correct. It is called so because the meat absorbs the sourness and flavor of the seasoned vinegar in which it is kept.

p. 78 In the recipe on meat patties (شم رالاح الوجه اقلب منها وجه نضج فاذا) (ترفع) Perry's translation is awkwardly worded: 'When (one) surface of them is done, then turn over the other surface. Then it is done; take it up.' Cf. Arberry's lucid version: 'When one side is cooked, turn over on to the other side: then remove'

p. 79 About the egg-dish *mufarraka*, both Arberry and Perry translate it literally as 'rubbed.' It should be 'scrambled.'

p. 80 About the Arabic verb جمد (lit. freeze, stiffen) with regard to eggs: In Arabic this verb is used to designate a variety of materials (water, jelly, yogurt, egg, etc.), whereas in English a variety of verbs is used to match the specific ingredient used, such as water freezes, jelly sets, yogurt thickens, and eggs set, etc. I find Perry's usage of the literal 'stiffen' describing eggs, instead of 'set' unidiomatic and unpalatable.

p. 81 Perry's 'we shall mention the ones that are preferred' sounds stuffy and artificial. Cf. Arberry's 'Here we will mention a few select dishes'

p. 82 About the Arabic sentence (من الناس من يجعلها من شيءاً محشواً بشيئاً) (المشوي السمك بحشو): Perry's translation is painfully and unacceptably literal 'Some people make something stuffed with the stuffing of *smak mashwī*.' What is the meaning of 'something' here? 'شيئاً' here simply

means people sometimes make a 'variety' stuffed with the mix used in stuffing baked fish.

p. 84 The Arabic (الزاس بين المشهور الوصف) does not necessarily have to be literal like Perry's 'The recipe famous among the people' It may simply be rendered as 'a popular recipe.'

p. 84 About the dish *tarrīkh maḥsī* or *muḥassā* (in Arberry's version): Perry, following Arberry, takes the fish dish to mean 'soupy in consistency'.

However, I am convinced that the word should be *maḥshī*, but not in the sense we are familiar with, which is 'stuffed.' Medieval cookbooks and lexicons are consistent in using the word *mḥshū* for stuffed, and *maḥshī* for dishes dressed and smothered in sauce.

p. 86 About vinegar, the Arabic expression (حده تنقطع) Perry translates as 'its sharpness is cut' Is this good English? Cf. Arberry's: 'has lost its sharpness'

p. 86 About arranging layers of ingredients in a jar (على بعهه يعبى) Perry's translation: 'pack them one on another.' Cf. Arberry 'put in layers'

p.89 About straining whey from yogurt (فيه الذي الماء من يصفى) Perry awkwardly translates as 'which has been strained from the water which is in it.' Cf. Arberry's 'from which the water has been strained'

p. 89 Perry's note 2 explaining *kamakh rījāl* is not accurate. According to Steingass it is anything made from sheep's milk (this is the third possible meaning Steingass gives, besides the irrelevant, in the given context, of 'electuary' and 'preserved fruit') I wonder why would Perry overlook the third relevant meaning which is right in the same entry!

p. 90 Describing varieties of the condiment: (لا ساذج فمنه انواعه ام) (وشوم شونيز فيه يجل آخر لون ومنه البتة حواي فيه يجل) Perry's rendering of it is typical of his awkwardly literal method: 'As for its

varieties, one of them is the plain, into which no flavorings at all are put. One of them is another variety into which you put nigella and garlic.'

p. 91 *Rāzyānaj* is fennel and not anise. Arberry got it right.

p. 91 About fava beans: (يخشن عن دم) Perry translates it 'as soon as they are rough,' which is inaccurate in the given context, as is Arberry's 'as soon as firm.'

The phrase means, 'when they are fully mature and large.' Perry gives the meaning 'large' in a note as a possibility, because he was not sure.

p. 92 *lubāb* is pith rather than crumb

p. 93 Perry is not accurate in his calculations about *rubb* (quarter). The recipe is quite clear in the instructions it gives: 2 pounds of sugar are used, a quarter of this amount (*rubbihī*) fine flour, and half of its quarter (= 1/8) poppy seeds. Thus 2 pounds sugar, 1/2 pound flour, and 1/4 pound poppy seeds.

p. 94 In a recipe where a filling is put between two thin breads, Perry translates the verb (يعبى) 'stuff' as 'arrange', which is not a happy choice, especially when the filling is a syrupy thick mixture of cooked dates, sugar, honey, bread crumbs, and walnut. How can you 'arrange' this mix?

p. 94 We also come across this sentence by Perry, 'It might also be made without either sugar or honey.' Is this good English? Cf. Arberry's 'It may also be made without sugar or honey'

p. 95 The Arabic expression (واحد موضح في) does not mean 'both at once' or 'at one placing' as Perry says but 'in one place' i.e. in the same pot.

p. 96 بعد طرح الدقيقي، بعده وطرح وغلى الدست في الشيرج طرح فانذا (ويرفع ينعقد ان الى الجلاب يسقى شم. القدرع ذلك) The sense in Perry's

rendering is muddled: 'Then throw sesame oil in the *dist* and boil it, and afterward throw flour. After that, throw the gourd with it, then moisten it with syrup until it thickens, and take it up'

There is a missing step here which the cook takes for granted, and that is after pouring the syrup, the pudding is supposed to boil until it thickens. The translator should have helped the reader understand the text by supplying such missing information. Therefore, the sentence should read like this: 'After you add the sesame oil and it starts to boil, add the flour, and then the gourd. Pour in the rose water syrup [and let pudding cook] until it thickens, and put it away'

p. 98 *ḥalwā yābisa* is pulled candy. Neither Perry nor Arberry are quite clear on how it is done: according to the recipe in Arabic, as I read it, the thickened syrup is put on a tile slab until lukewarm. Then an iron peg is hammered onto a wall, to which one end of the thickened candy mass is hung. Then the candy is pulled and then folded and hung onto the peg. This is to be done repeatedly until the candy whitens.

p. 99 Perry literally translates (ويفور يغلّي حتى) as 'so that it boils (*yaghli*) and boils up (*yafūr*).' The repetition of 'boil' is needless here, since it is just a conventional cook's expression indicating a liquid coming to a full boil.

p. 99 *Lawzīnaj* as described in the recipe is not 'marzipan' as Perry translates it, but more like baklava.

p. 100 In the *fālūdhaj* recipe, there is mention of the need to thicken the consistency of the dessert. Perry renders تقوية literally as 'strengthen,' which in the given context is inaccurate. It simply means 'made more condensed'. However, when he needs to be literal, he translates (إن), which should be 'if,' to 'when'

p. 101 About a syrupy mix (قوام له يصير بأن يبدأ حتى), Perry translates it as 'until it appears to have taken its consistency.' This is not accurate even if taken literally. It should be 'until it starts to thicken'

p. 102 About shaping *khushkanānaj* cookies (العادة على تجمّع ثم)

Perry says, 'then gather them as usual' in a note he speculates that 'this instruction may be connected with shaping the biscuit with a mould.'

From other sources, such as al-Warrāq's tenth-century cookbook, and poetry written describing such cookies, we learn they were usually shaped into crescents: the elongated flattened piece of dough was filled with the nut mix and folded lengthwise and the edges were sealed well to prevent filling from seeping out while baking. The pointed ends were bent to make the cookie look like a crescent.

p. 102 The cookies called *muṭbaq* are not 'enveloped' (Arberry) or 'surrounded' (Perry). They are 'layered' or 'sandwiched' cookies.

Arberry translates the way the cookies are filled thus: 'place between each pair of loaves a quantity of plain *ḥalwā*', made without almonds and pistachios, and with only a little sesame oil.' Cf. Perry's version which sounds jumbled: 'put the necessary amount of *ḥalwā sādhiya* – the kind without almonds and pistachios, with little sesame oil – in the middle of it, between every two cakes.'

p. 103. About the stuffed cookies and shaping them in molds (لها وليكن) (كالبخق قالب): Perry says 'let there be a mould for them like a box.' Cf. Arberry's 'make them into shapes, using an appropriate mould.' *ḥuqq* is not a box but a small bowl made of carved wood, ivory, glass, brass or copper. Besides, Perry mistakenly thinks that Arberry reads the word *ḥuqq* as *ḥaqq*, which he says means 'like what is due,' and adds that both readings, his and Arberry's, are possible (p. 126). This is absurd.

p. 104 In the recipe *aqrāṣ mukarrara* Perry gives the meaning 'repeated' but does not explain what is being repeated in the recipe. Besides, he does not get the directions of what is being repeated right. The actual directions are to dip the nut-sugar paste discs in thin batter, fry them in oil, dip them in syrup, coat them with sugar, and then repeat the process of dipping in batter, frying them, dipping them in syrup, then coating them in sugar, three times. According to Perry: nut-sugar paste is coated in batter, fried in oil, dipped in syrup, dusted with sugar, then returned to syrup and sugar-coating thrice, thus omitting the step of frying them three times in the process.

p. 104 The expression (قوياً .. يعجن) Perry translates literally as 'knead ... strongly.' Cf. Arberry's 'form into firm paste.' Again, in another recipe he translates (قوة عجينه في يكون اللون هذا) as 'There should be strength in the dough of this variety.' Is this good English?

p. 104 The recipe *mubaḥṭhara* Perry translates as 'scattered around.' It actually means 'the crumbly'.

p. 105 (لوانين وتدخل الزمان يبرد حتى) Perry corrects Arberry's 'chafing-dishes are brought in.' However, his version did not get it quite right, 'until the season is cold and it enters the *kānūns* (i.e. the months of *Kanūn* I and *Kanūn* II, December and January)'

Actually it should be 'until the weather is cold and winter begins,' because *kawānīn* in the plural refers to winter in general.

p. 105 About the kinds of dates mentioned in the recipe, namely *azādh* and *maktūm*. Perry translates the first as 'fresh dates' and the second as 'preserved dates'. These are, in fact, names of two popular kinds of dates that can be eaten fresh or dried.

p. 106 The recipe describes adding flour to the cooking pudding as (ذر طرحاً ويلون), Perry translates as 'let its throwing be a sprinkling.' This is too literal. Cf. Arberry 'sprinkle in the flour.'

Now who shows more knowledge regarding the culinary arts, Perry the food writer by profession, or young Arberry, the academic, who 'was interested in literature but not in cookery' as Perry says?

<sup>1</sup> I use a reprint of al-Chalabī's edited text produced by Fakhri al-Bārudi (1964) which Perry also uses in comparing his remarks with those of al-Chalabī's.

AN ABBREVIATED VERSION OF NAWAL NASRALLAH'S  
CRITICISMS, EXCLUDING MUCH OF THE ARABIC  
TYPOGRAPHY, AND COMPOSED AS A REVIEW OF THE  
BOOK AS A WHOLE.

In 1226, thirty-two years before the Mongols' ransack of Baghdad, Shams al-Dīn Abu 'Abdullāh Muḥammad bin al-Hasan bin Muḥammad al-Kātib al-Baghdādī finished writing his cookbook *Kitāb al-ṭabīkh*, a relatively small volume of 54 folios, containing 160 recipes of savory and sweet dishes. In his Introduction, Al-Baghdādī declares himself to be an advocate of the superiority of the joys of food above all other joys, such as clothes, drinks, sex, or music. Interestingly, the incentive for writing a book on the art of cooking, he modestly states, is a self-imposed one – he wrote it for his own use and for whoever may wish to use it. Expectedly, his recipe collection essentially reflects his personal preferences in food and cooking.

Nonetheless, the book soared higher than its creator's humble expectations, for it proved to be a popular culinary source, indeed. Many copies were made of it, and in the fourteenth century, an augmented version (with 260 more recipes) was composed.[1] The first Turkish cookbook, which came out late in the fifteenth century, was made up of al-Baghdādī's translated recipes with some added ones current at the time (Perry's Introduction, p. 13). Even in our modern age, al-Baghdādī's cookbook was for decades our sole key to the recipes of medieval times.

As to who this gourmet cookbook writer was, Perry makes no mention. I was lucky enough to find two biographical nuggets about him, they might not be juicy, but enough to place him in the world of reality. Ibn Abī Uṣaybiba (d. 1270), the Damascene physician famous for his '*Uyūn al-Anbā'*' strikes a personal note between himself and al-Baghdādī by giving his name as an authority on stories he relates in his book, preceded by *ḥaddathani* (he related to me).[2] We also know that he died at the age of 56 (1184–1240), he was originally from Baghdad and lived in Damascus, as well. By profession, he was a secretary (*kātib*) and a literary man (*adīb*) who was well versed in the Prophet's tradition (*muḥaddith*). [3]

The first to discover and edit the Arabic text was the Iraqi scholar Dawud al-Chalabī in 1934,[4] soon to be translated into English in 1939 by the British scholar A.J. Arberry.[5] And now comes Charles Perry, a food writer by profession, and translates it anew using al-Baghdādī's manuscript in Istanbul and not al-Chalabī's edited text as Arberry did. The book, a special issue of *PPC*, is produced as a stand-alone book, small and inexpensive, 'just the thing for a learned lady's handbag,' so the promotional statement goes. The text's translation is augmented with an Introduction, and two appendices, but no index, which, in such a small volume, is not a grave shortcoming.

Going through Perry's version makes one wonder, did the text truly need to be 'revisited,' and is the new rendering in anyway better than Arberry's pioneering version? The answer is yes and no, and here is why.

According to Perry, al-Baghdādī's cookbook needed to be revamped, because by going to the original manuscript he discovered that the text contains some marginal quotations from the eleventh-century medical encyclopedia *Minhāj al-Bayān* by Ibn Jazlah, added to the text by a later hand. Additionally there were some marginal notes and corrections done by al-Baghdādī himself. Al-Chalabī included most of these notes, but he parenthesized them in the same manner, which resulted in a text that is not 'really al-Baghdādī's,' Perry protests. To add insult to injury, 'Arberry's introductory note does not even acknowledge that there is marginal material.'

Additionally, he says that by revisiting the text in the origin he discovered that all other subsequent versions and editions omitted a recipe called *buqūliyya mukarrara* (repeated vegetable stew) which was thought to be just a duplicate of *buqūliyya* mentioned before it. He jubilantly announces that he is reproducing it 'for the first time in history'! [6]

Perry was also 'struck by the degree to which all students of this book, Arberry included, have been at the mercy of the published Arabic text' made by al-Chalabī, who admittedly did solve some of the text's problems, but 'made omissions and questionable readings.' Likewise, he says, while Arberry solved 'a number of problems' presented by the Arabic edited text, he 'inevitably...got things wrong,' and that some

of his mistakes are 'rather shocking,' and concludes that Arberry, like most scholars, is more into literature than cooking (Introduction, pp. 13-14).

Perry's new version surely makes a more accurate version regarding the Arabic text itself. If for some reason a scholar needs to set apart al-Baghdādī's original text from his marginal corrections as well as Ibn Jazlah's quotations put by later copyists, then Perry's version is the rendering to consult. The two appendices are also useful in this respect for they explain where and why he chose to differ with al-Chalabī and Arberry.

However, it is to be regretted that Perry's laborious efforts to straighten the Arabic text, useful as they are, do not make up for the poor quality of his translation of it. Bluntly put, it does not make a good read. And if he accuses both al-Chalabī and Arberry of inevitably getting things wrong, he himself has similarly garnered along the road a good number of misreadings, some of which are even 'rather shocking.' Therefore, to promote his translation as 'more accurate and more nuanced' than Arberry's is an unwarranted hyperbole.

To begin with, one of the reasons Perry gives for translating afresh al-Baghdādī's cookbook is that 'since 1934 other manuscripts derived from al-Baghdādī's original have come to light, and in general much more has been learned about medieval Arab cookery.' On these Perry does not venture to elaborate neither here nor in his previous translation of al-Baghdādī's augmented text *Kitāb Waṣf al-Aṭ'ima al-Mu'tāda*. He rarely uses them in his translation to help him solve some of the text's problems, and when he does, he refers to them vaguely as 'other medieval cookbooks.' [7]

In fact, at the time Perry worked on this text he had at his disposal a number of culinary texts that had been already edited: There was the anonymous thirteenth-century cookbook on al-Maghrib and al-Andalus edited in 1965 by Huici Miranda.[8] In the 1980s three important medieval cookbook manuscripts saw the light, namely the thirteenth-century Andalusian *Fī'ālat al-Khiwān* by Ibn Razīn al-Tujībī (1981), the thirteenth-century *Kitāb al-Wuṣṣla ila al-ḥabīb* attributed to Ibn al-bAdīm (1986), and Ibn Sayyār al-Warrāq's tenth-century *Kitāb al-ṭabīkh* (1987). In 1993 the edited medieval Egyptian cookbook *Kanz al-Fawā'id* came out. In 2001 Perry's translation of the augmented

version of al-Baghdādī's cookbook *Kitāb Waṣf al-Aṭ'ima al-Mu'tāda* was published in *Medieval Arab Cookery*.

The most relevant of these to the present translation, besides *Kitāb Waṣf al-Aṭ'ima*, is the Egyptian cookbook *Kanz al-Fawā'id*, simply because it has some verbatim textual affinities with al-Baghdādī's book, especially the introductory section. For instance, where the text speaks about which kinds of wood to choose, Perry translates a phrase as 'the trees that are for sale' (p. 28), which is irrelevant in the given context. By referring to *Kanz al-Fawā'id* it turns out the original Arabic expression is *ashjār yatūbiyya* (p. 5), which means 'sappy trees.' Now this makes perfect sense: sappy trees are not to be used as fuel because they produce a lot of smoke. Another example where consulting extant medieval cookbooks could have helped him give his readers a more reliable and informative rendering of the text is where shaping of *khushkanānaj* cookies is described as 'then gather them as usual.' In a footnote, Perry speculates that 'this instruction may be connected with shaping the biscuit with a mould' (p. 102). He could have avoided such a shaky hit-or-miss guess had he but referred to al-Warrāq's tenth-century cookbook (p. 272), and Arabic medieval poetry written describing such cookies. Besides using molds, they were more commonly shaped into crescents: the tongue-like elongated flattened piece of dough was filled with the nut mix and then folded lengthwise. The edges were sealed well to prevent the filling from seeping out while baking in the *tannūr*, and the two pointed ends were bent to make the cookie look like a crescent.

About the Arabic term *muḥassā*, as in the fish and eggplant dishes *āarrikh muḥassā* (p. 84) and *Bādhinjān muḥassa* (p. 87). The true meaning escapes both Arberry and Perry, who take the term to mean 'soupy in consistency.' Given the medieval culinary knowledge we have available today, to which Arberry had no access, Perry should have been able to make a more informed guess. Al-Warrāq's tenth-century recipes, for instance, are consistent in using the word *mḥshū* for stuffed, and *maḥshī* for dishes dressed and smothered in sauce. Therefore, the word in al-Baghdādī's recipes should have been *maḥshī*, albeit, not in the sense we are familiar with today, i. e. 'stuffed.'

Translation is built on trust, the reader trusts the translator to have the means and the knowledge to convey to him a given foreign text in a

comprehensive language, and a text he trusts to be reasonably truthful to the original one, unless, of course, the origin is itself erratic or confused, to begin with. Now Perry's courage in confronting medieval Arabic texts even in manuscript form is praiseworthy indeed. It is to be regretted, though, that his method in handling these medieval Arabic texts is by far the most excruciatingly literal renderings I have ever encountered. The result is linguistic awkwardness, which at times even verges on incoherence, and lack of natural flow and grace, which Arberry's rendering, made more than half a century ago, retains.

Literalness makes the simple and normal sound artificial, as in the chapter headings, for instance, 'On Making *Khushkanānaj*, *Mutbaq*, *Crepes* and Things Mixed with Flour that are Analogous to Those' (p. 102); or 'things that serve the same function' (p. 27) for an expression that means 'and similar dishes', or 'Mentioning sweetmeats and their varieties of that (sort)' (p. 98), for what may simply be 'Varieties of *ḥalwā*'. [9] To keep to the Arabic text word for word, here is how one of Perry's sentences sound, 'Then leave it on the fire, its fire being quiet. Then leave it until it is done, then take it up' (p. 36). Compare it with Arberry's 'Leave over a slow fire until cooked, then remove.'

Another interesting instance is the spice-mixes al-Baghdādī calls *aṭrāf al-ṭīb* and *afwāh al-ṭīb*. Commenting on the first term in his translation of *Waṣf al-Aṭ'ima al-Mu'tāda* (p. 284), Perry correctly identifies it as 'a spice mixture', but his literal translation is problematic. First of all, *aṭrāf* he translates as 'sides (of scent)', (?) which is not even literal, because the literal sense in this context is 'a number of things put together.' As for *afwāh al-ṭīb* he says it literally means 'mouths of scent,' which is absurd, because besides 'mouths', *afwāh* (*sig fūh*) also means 'different kinds of aromatic spices.' The expression *afwāh jayyida* (which means 'good-quality aromatic spices'), Perry says literally translates to 'good mouths' (!). It is no wonder then that he describes such Arabic terms as 'odd names,' and he unfoundedly speculates that they 'may refer to the paper packets in which spices were sold.' In his Introduction to al-Baghdādī's translation he comments on these terms, jestingly I assume, saying 'I suggest that the herbs may be fresh, because the 'mouths' are never ground' (p. 20).

Perry impatiently jumps to the most common literal meaning of

the Arabic word, such as using 'take up' for the Arabic *rafaba* when instructions are 'to remove,' which is another valid meaning for the Arabic verb (p. 31). In another instance, the recipe requires the cooked dates to be put aside until cold. The Arabic word for 'put aside' is also *rafaba*, but Perry translates it as 'take them up until they are cold.'

To toss ingredients into the pot, al-Baghdādī uses the verbs *yurmā* or *yuārah*, which literally mean 'throw' but also carry the general sense of 'add' and even 'put'. Perry invariably uses 'throw' throughout the book. Even, when al-Baghdādī himself chooses another word such as *yujbal* simply 'put' when adding raw eggs to the simmering pot, Perry, nonetheless, translates it as 'throw.' His version reads, 'throw whole raw eggs on it.' I should say here al-Baghdādī is much more careful than Perry when handling eggs (p. 41).

The Arabic adverb *shadīdan*, Perry translates as 'strongly' in 'Do not leave it until the rice has thickened strongly' (p. 47). Can rice be described in this way in English? Compare it with Arberry's 'Do not leave it [rice] so long that the rice becomes hard set.' Besides, compared with Arberry's, Perry's version does not make it clear whether al-Baghdādī wants the rice mix to thicken or not. Though both in Arabic and English pot sometimes does refer to the food cooking in the pot and not necessarily the utensil itself, Perry's translation 'take as much garlic as the pot will bear' for '*i-qadr mā taḥtamiluhu al-qidr* does not make the statement clear (p. 49). One might think that the pot can bear a lot of garlic, indeed! Compare it with Arberry's 'add [garlic] as required.'

A recipe describes adding flour to the cooking pudding as *wa yakūn āarḥahu dharran*, which Perry translates word for word as 'let its throwing be a sprinkling' (p. 106). Whereas the expression sounds perfectly normal in Arabic, the English version is too 'elevated' perhaps for a recipe in a practical guide. Compare it with Arberry's 'sprinkle in the flour.' Perry's 'we shall mention the ones that are preferred' (p. 81) for the Arabic *mā waqaba balayhi al-ikhtiyār* sounds a bit too stuffy. Compare it with Arberry's 'Here we will mention a few select dishes'

Though Perry's translation is predominantly executed in a literal manner, there are places where it would have been more meaningful to stick to the original, but he unfortunately opted not to do so. A

case in point is his unhappy decision to translate *murri* (cereal-based liquid fermented sauce) as 'soy sauce', an ingredient alien to the Arab medieval cuisine, and needlessly insisting on 'translating' the clay domed oven *tannūr* as tandoor, even though etymologically the former is the origin of the latter. A cooking technique religiously followed in preparing al-Baghdādī's dishes, namely *tabriq* (lit. sweating the meat) is translated as 'stewing' a general and insipid term that does not truly capture the sense of the method.[10] Besides, if there is anything I would have liked Perry to literally translate in this cookbook it would be 'eyes of eggs,' for *buyūn al-bay*, a charming fanciful expression that captures the essence of al-Baghdādī's cuisine. Perry chose to translate it as 'whole raw eggs'. Moreover, against the lucid instructions of al-Baghdādī (and all other medieval Arab cookbooks) that *burūq* (blood vessels) need to be removed before cooking the meat, Perry uncharacteristically chooses to replace *burūq* with 'tendons' because he says there is no way you can remove blood vessels (p. 120). These vessels, especially the arteries, need to be removed because they are muscular and elastic in texture, and they might still contain blood in them. Incidentally while writing this piece, I was cleaning lamb shanks and there it was a visible vessel along the bone, full with blood. Given the Islamic dietary prohibitions, one understands the importance of removing these blood vessels.

If at times the nuances of the Arabic language escape him, why is it then that the same thing happens with the English ones? In a recipe, a disjointed chicken is added to the meat after it comes to a boil, so that they both cook at the same time. Perry translates it as, 'When the pot comes to the boil, throw it [the chicken] on the meat to become done' (p. 33). Or when the recipe indicates that the dough of a given cookie should be firm, he literally translates *quwwa* as 'strength'. His version reads, 'There should be strength in the dough of this variety' (p. 104). In a recipe where a filling is sandwiched between two cookies, called *muābaq* ('layered,' inaccurately translated as 'surrounded'), Perry's sentence sounds jumbled: 'put the necessary amount of *halwā sādhija* – the kind without almonds and pistachios, with little sesame oil – in the middle of it, between every two cakes' (p. 102). Compare it with Arberrý's 'place between each pair of loaves a quantity of plain *halwā*', made without almonds and pistachios, and with only a little sesame

oil.' Perry's rendering of a recipe describing variations on a condiment is typical of his un-nuanced literal method: 'As for its varieties, one of them is the plain, into which no flavorings at all are put. One of them is another variety into which you put nigella and garlic' (p. 90).

A recipe requires the eggs to set, for which the Arabic word is *jamuda*. In Arabic, the same verb is used in conjunction with water, jelly, yogurt, egg, etc., whereas in English a variety of verbs is used to match the specific ingredient used, such as water freezes, jelly sets, yogurt thickens, and eggs set, etc. I find Perry's usage of the literal 'stiffen' describing eggs, instead of 'set' unidiomatic and unpalatable (p. 80). If the original recipe reads as what Perry translates as 'the liquid decreases from it,' (p. 59) should not he have felt free to express it as 'the liquid evaporates,' which still keeps the original sense?

In a recipe that describes flipping meat patties, Perry's translation is lumpish: 'When (one) surface of them is done, then turn over the other surface. Then it is done; take it up' (p. 78). Compare it with Arberry's lucid version: 'When one side is cooked, turn over on to the other side: then remove.' Besides, why would he use the expression 'grow quiet' for the Arabic *yaskun*, when the pot stops boiling and settles?

Perry translates the verb *yunḥat* as 'hewn' in a recipe about preparing carrots. He says, 'carrots which are hewn (*yunḥat*) until they are peeled; remove their wood from inside them and cut them up into thin small hewn (pieces).' The Arabic verb in the given context simply means 'scrape.' I wonder whether Perry has ever come across a recipe in English where carrots are 'hewn' in order to peel them, or are 'cut up into thin small hewn pieces.' I believe this is called 'shredding' in English. Compare it with Arberry's more nuanced and idiomatic version: 'carrots, scraped, cored, and then scraped into fine shreds' (p. 610).

Now, how can salt 'thicken,' the reader may legitimately wonder. Al-Baghdādī uses the word *buqida* describing clean salt that has been dissolved in water and then allowed to crystallize through evaporation. If in Arabic one word may convey 'thickening of syrup' and 'crystallization of salt,' Perry should have felt free to break away from the bonds of literalness, simply because his phrase does not make sense.

For what in English might be written as 'cut up fat meat and tail

separately' (Arberry, p. 35), Perry renders as 'cut up fat meat by itself, and tail fat by itself' because this is the way it is expressed in Arabic. To tell the reader that the recipe is made like the one above it, Al-Baghdādī uses the expression *yubmal kadhālik*, which Perry translates as 'it is made like that' (p. 52) Like what one may wonder. Compare it with Arberry's 'Make in the same way as the preceding.'

As a food writer, Perry is expected to practise in his English renderings the verbal tools of his trade, which he does not. A case in point is the word *qashshara*. In Arabic, this word is used to mean 'peel' regardless of kinds of peel. The English language is more nuanced in this respect. Besides the general verb 'peel,' an array of verbs may be used to describe removing the skins of different ingredients. Perry invariably uses the verb 'peel' to cover all: walnuts and pistachios and fava beans are peeled ('shelled' is more commonly used), almonds and lentils are peeled (how about skinned for variety's sake?), sesame is peeled (isn't 'hulled' the word to use?) (p. 63).

At several places in his translation, Perry fails to do the legwork expected of him to help his readers understand the text and appreciate it. A case in point is the mystery word *ghariq/bariq/bādhīq/fariq* describing dates. We may never know for sure the original word al-Baghdādī used, but at least we can explore the possibilities. Arberry is not far off when he took it to be a variety of Medina dates, in which case he based his interpretation on Medina dates called *bidhq ibn ṭāb* (meaning in *Tāj al-bārūs*). *bādhīq* may also refer to dates in clusters, from *bidhq*. The word may well be *fariq*, which means 'loose dates', but Perry dismisses the possibility because he says it means 'band, party, detachment' (p. 113). Perry chooses to read the word as *ghariq* (lit. drowned, metaphorically may be used to describe desserts drenched in syrup), and uses it as such. For instance, in one of his sentences the dates are '(being) drowned', and in a footnote his alternative rendering is 'Or 'being suitable for immersing in syrup'' (65). In a recipe for 'honeyed dates' Perry's rendering of the recipe directions is to 'take drowned ... dates.' What is a reader to understand from such phrases? It is my hunch that the word is *bariq*, which describes juicy and moist dates (the syrup that oozes from dates is called *baraq*, literally 'perspiration').

The ingredient *samīd* Perry leaves untranslated because 'it might

refer to a particular kind of wheat.' It sure does, but one may also wonder why Perry did not try to find out. In fact, according to medieval sources, *samīd* in the eastern region of the Islamic world is a particular kind of fine flour, bran free, high in starch content, and low in gluten. About *kirafs* (celery), Perry passes a general comment (p. 116) 'during the Middle Ages, only the leaves of the celery plant were eaten' (p. 34). This is not accurate because there were many kinds of celery, some varieties of which were grown for their leaves, similar to our parsley, and others were grown for their ribs (*qu'bān*). A variety of Iraqi dates, al-Baghdādī mentions, is *al-ruṭab al-ṭabarzad*, which today is called *tabarzal*. Perry and Arberry needlessly choose to translate the name as 'sugar-candy,' which by the way is not quite accurate. The dates are called so because they are as sweet as *ābarzad*, which is excellent-quality white cane-sugar.

Perry inaccurately says that *āāqa* and *bāqa* refer to the same thing, namely 'bunch' (of herbs). In fact, the first means 'sprig' and the second, 'bunch.' Regarding '*ḥalqat shabat*,' he translates it as 'ring of dill,' this is also not feasible because the word *ḥalqa*, as used in this context, is not the literal 'ring' but 'a snip' derived from the verb *ḥalaqa* (to cut or snip, such as hair of humans, goats, etc).

*Andarānī* or *darānī* salt is not named after a place called Andarān, as both Arberry and Perry suggest. It is derived from the Arabic noun *dhuraa* meaning 'excessive whiteness'. The grammatical Arabic name is *dharaānī* (*Tāj al-bārūs*). About mastic, Perry reads *diqq* (small pieces, Arberry got it right) as *daqq* (pound) (p. 28), both written the same way in Arabic, which is an example on nuances of the Arabic language that need to be heeded. About ginger, the Arabic sentence *min al-zanjabīl mā kāna ghayr musawwas* (ginger free of woodword), Perry renders it as 'Of ginger, that which is *maghrūs*, 'implanted' (p. 29).' What is an English reader to understand from this? On washing pots, Perry translates the Arabic sentence as 'beat them with brick dust.' (29) How can you beat a vessel with brick dust? Granted the Arabic verb is *yu'rab* whose literal general sense is 'beat,' the verb additionally has other meanings, such as 'to smear and rub.' On pounding spices, Perry translates *tanbīmihā* as 'make them smooth.' (p. 29) In contexts of pounding dry spices in Arabic, *nābim* means 'finely ground.'

The expression *fī ḥulwihā akthar min ḥāmi'ihā* Perry translates

as 'whether sweet or sour,' (29) which is inaccurate. It should be, as Arberry puts it, 'of the sweet rather than the sour varieties.' Besides, he inaccurately renders *ḥukm al-jamīb an yakūn fī bābin wāḥid* as 'but everyone has decided that they should be in one chapter,' (p. 30) mistaking *ḥukm al-jamīb* (all dishes are to be treated...) for *ḥakama al-jamīb* (everybody decided). Here is how Arberry puts it, 'It seems best, however, to treat of them all in one chapter.' Perry misreads the statement *yuakhadh min al-silq bāqatān aw thalāth balā qadr al-laḥm* (take two or three bunches of chard according to the quantity of meat), and translated it as 'take two or three bunches of chard for the pot of meat' (p. 43), misreading *qadr* (quantity) as *qidr* (pot), both written the same way in Arabic.

As for the Arabic expression *yaqdhifu duhnahu ablāhu* (and the pot oil separates and comes up to the top), both Perry and Arberry are inaccurate in their renderings: 'Throw away the fat on its surface' (Perry, p. 44), and 'when the oil floating on top is thrown away' (Arberry).

Other expressions Perry got wrong: 'light strips' for 'thin strips' *sharā'ih khifāf* (p. 51), 'egg yolks which have been taken with their whites' (p. 51) for 'egg yolks from which the whites have been taken' *ṣufur al-baydh allatī ukhidha bayādhuḥā*. *Khilāl* is not a 'pin' (p. 74) but a 'toothpick'. About the dish *maṣūṣ*, Perry's explanation that the dish is called so because it is 'made with a suckling kid' (p. 77) is not correct. In fact it is called so because the meat absorbs the sourness and flavor of the seasoned vinegar in which it is kept. About the egg-dish *mufarraka*, both Arberry and Perry translate it literally as 'rubbed' (p. 79) I wonder what they were thinking talking about 'rubbed eggs.' It is simply 'scrambled.' Perry mistakes the name of the cookie *mubaḥthara* (crumbly) for *muba'thara* and translates it as 'scattered around.' (p. 104)

In a recipe of stuffed tripe called *sukhtūr*, which al-Baghdādī also calls *kībā*, Perry mistakenly thinks it is 'stuffed guts' and 'sausage,' and translates the text accordingly. He does not even question the detail that some 'jointed scalded chicken' are considered in stuffing the 'intestines'. He does express his puzzlement, though, in his previous translation of *Kitāb al-Aṭ'ima al-Mu'tāda*, where he wonders 'how to get all those meats – apparently on the bone – into sausage casings'

(279). I wonder why he did not follow Arberry's correct rendering.

The one that takes the biscuit is where directions are to shape stuffed cookies in a mold, and al-Baghdādī suggests something similar to *al-ḥuqq* (a small bowl made of carved wood, ivory, glass, brass or copper). Perry translates the sentence as 'let there be a mould for them like a box,' (p. 103) which is passable. However, his elaboration on the word *ḥuqq* when comparing his version with Arberry's in the second Appendix is absurd. The latter's rendering is 'make them into shapes, using an appropriate mould.' Perry mistakenly thinks that Arberry reads the word *ḥuqq* as *ḥaqq* ('what is due'), and comments both readings are possible. (p. 126)

Apart from the fact that through Perry's laborious efforts al-Baghdādī's text is now in certain respects more accurate than that of Arberry's, *Kitāb al-ṭabikh* still stands in need of a good modern translation that takes into account the new information available to us today. Until then, Perry's version is useful for those who would like to draw the line between al-Baghdādī's text and his additional corrections and Ibn Jazlah's marginal notes. Arberry's pioneering version is still the one to go to for a good read, preferably the reprinted edition in *Medieval Arab Cookery*, in which Perry 'ventured' to correct some of his mistakes. In Arberry's hands the cookbook sound more like a practical lucid recipe book, the way al-Baghdādī intended it to be.

[1] *Kitāb Waṣf al-Aṭ'ima al-Mu'tāda* (the book of familiar foods), English translation by Charles Perry in *Medieval Arab Cookery*, Prospect Books 2001.

[2] pp. 98, 240, 268, 269, courtesy [www.alwaraq.com](http://www.alwaraq.com).

[3] *Al-Ablām* by the twentieth-century biographer al-Zarkalī, p. 908, courtesy [www.alwaraq.com](http://www.alwaraq.com).

[4] Al-Chalabī's edited text was reprinted in 1964 by Fakhri al-Bārūdī (Damascus).

[5] *Islamic Culture*, vol.13, nos. 1 and 2, pp. 21-47, 189-214, reissued in *Medieval Arab Cookery*, Prospect Books 2001.

[6] Actually, it is almost identical with the first *buqūliyya* except for some additional spices and herbs, so in a sense it is a repeated recipe.

[7] As when he wants to prove that the cookie's name should be *urnīn*, p. 113.

[8] Charles Perry's English translation based on the Spanish translation and the Arabic text for this edition is available at [www.davidfriedman.com/Medieval/Cookbooks/Andalusian/andalusian](http://www.davidfriedman.com/Medieval/Cookbooks/Andalusian/andalusian). A new Arabic edition has recently come out in 2003, based on a better manuscript which carries the title *Anwāb al-aydala fī Alwān al-Aṭ'ima* (ed. bAbd al-Ghanī Abu al-bAzm, Rabāt).

[9] My references to the Arabic text are from a reprint of al-Chalabī's edition produced

by Fakhri al-Bārudi (1964) which Perry also uses in comparing his remarks with those of al-Chalabi's.

[10] *Tabriq* is an initial stage in cooking meat by first 'sautéing' or 'frying' the meat pieces in rendered sheep-tail fat. In the process meat will release its moisture (and hence the name *tabriq*). The cook needs to stir the pot occasionally until all moisture evaporates and meat pieces start to brown in the fat (*yahmarr*).

## CHARLES PERRY'S RESPONSE TO NAWAL NASRALLAH'S CRITICISMS

I am grateful to Ms. Nasrallah for reading my translation closely and pointing out several errors. I regret to say that the great majority of her criticisms strike me as either mistaken or unpersuasive. I will comment on her points here.

However, I will not reply individually to all the criticisms of my writing style. It was the result of a deliberate decision. As I compared al-Baghdadi's manuscript with A.J. Arberry's translation and realized how many mistakes Arberry had made and how many textual problems he had blandly swept under the rug, I felt mounting irritation and determined that I would play fair with my readers about the literal meaning of this text.

I came to feel that Arberry's fluid, graceful style, so characteristic of a product of an English public school who had gone on to read Classics at an Oxbridge university, symbolized exactly what was wrong with his translation. Arberry had no real interest in cookery (as shown by the fact that he never published any further research on the subject, despite having inspected Ibn Sayyar's *Kitāb al-Ṭabīkh* at the Bodleian). He simply did not consider recipes worthy of scrupulous translation; fluidity and grace were quite good enough, so far as he was concerned. That's the only possible explanation for his shockingly unscholarly step of omitting Chelebi's parentheses and concealing from the reader the existence of marginal material in the text (most of it not belonging to al-Baghdadi's manuscript).

Plainly, Arberry saw 'A Baghdad Cookery-Book' as no more than an entertainment for people like himself. ('Jolly, what? The chaps in Old Baghdad had recipes!') His charming but ultimately patronizing, dilettantish translation cannot satisfy anyone with a real interest in medieval food. It is strange for Nasrallah to champion it.

Now to the criticisms of the substance of my translation.

On *murrī*: Nasrallah merely denounces my translation without addressing the argument I presented in my introduction. I have tried the *murrī* recipe on several occasions and, as I wrote, the result tastes quite like soy sauce; there is no reason to conceal its flavor behind

a mysterious word (which is meaningless even in Arabic today). In any case, Nasrallah's objection is scarcely a defense of Arberry's translation. He left the word *murrī* untranslated because he didn't know what it was like – he believed it was something made from ground pennyroyal.

On the 'pot becomes quiet' versus 'fire becomes quiet' issue: Nasrallah claims to find fault with my translation, but in the translation itself (as against my introduction) I rendered all the relevant passages literally, so her complaint is groundless.

On the verb *rabb(ā)*, Nasrallah is entirely wrong. First, I did not make up the definition 'to beat to a liquid consistency' out of thin air. It can be found on p. 321 of *A Dictionary of Egyptian Arabic, Arabic-English*, Martin Hinds and El-Said Badawi (Librairie du Liban, 1986).

It may be that this sense of the word is unknown in Iraq today, but it does not follow from this that al-Baghdadi was unaware of it 780 years ago, for the following reasons: 1) Modern Baghdad Arabic is not a good guide to medieval usage, not only because of the long passage of time but because the modern dialect is not descended from medieval Baghdad Arabic. About 30 years after al-Baghdadi wrote, the Mongols demolished Baghdad. When it began to revive in the eighteenth century, it was repopulated by Bedouins who had no cultural or linguistic continuity with old Baghdad; see Haim Blanc's *Communal Dialects in Baghdad* (Harvard University Press, 1964). 2) In any case, medieval cookery books were cosmopolitan. Like other authors, Al-Baghdadi did not write his own recipes but copied them (or at least a great number of them) from other manuscripts, some of which could have come from Syria or Egypt.

I did not think it peculiar that al-Baghdadi wrote *yurabbā bil-lauz* – to be excruciatingly literal, 'it is beaten to a liquid consistency with almonds' – rather than *yurabbā al-lauz* 'almonds are beaten to a liquid consistency,' because many Arabic verbs are construed idiomatically with the preposition *bi* instead of the accusative case. Nasrallah's reading, 'to boil (a stew) down with ground almonds,' is dubious on its face. It is inherently more likely that the process is something that is being done to the nuts, rather than to the stew, and I will demonstrate here that this is the case.

In the first recipe using this verb, Ibrāhimiyya, her reading is superficially appealing because al-Baghdadi has omitted the instruction to add the pounded nuts to the stew: *yurabbā bil-lauz al-ḥulw al-madqūq bil-mā' nā'iman bil-mā' wa-yuṣabb 'alaihi mā' al-ḥiṣrim*, 'Beat sweet almonds which have been finely pounded with water to a liquid consistency with water [dittography] and pour sour grape juice on them.' In my translation I was obliged to add the parenthetical words '(Sc. Add to the pot.)'

(Now that I think of it, the pounded almonds are probably added to the stew first and then the sour grape juice is poured in, the dittography *bil-mā'* representing where a missing instruction such as 'add to the pot' originally went. Al-Baghdadi's mind slipped a gear as he was about to copy *yulqā fil-qidr* or whatever and he wrote *bil-mā'* instead. This is merely a textual scruple; the resulting dish would not taste any different.)

However, if Nasrallah had examined any other recipes than Ibrāhimiyya, she would have discovered that every one of them accords with my reading, rather than with hers. The following examples show ways in which recipes make it clear that the procedure *lyurabbā bi-l* is performed on the almonds before they go into the stew:

Jurjāniyya: *yurabbā bil-lauz al-ḥulw al-muqashshar al-madqūq nā'iman, thumma yulqā fil-qidr*. 'Beat peeled sweet almonds pounded fine to a liquid consistency, **then throw them in the pot.**'

Ḥummādiyya: *yu'khad min al-lauz al-ḥulw al-muqashshar al-murabbā bil-mā' ba'd daqqihi nā'iman, wa-yuḍāf ilahi*. 'Take peeled sweet almonds which have been beaten to a liquid consistency with water after being pounded fine, **and add them to it**' (that is, to the contents of the pot).

Tuffāhiyya: *thumma yurabbā lahu shai' min al-lauz al-muqashshar wa-yulqā 'alaihi*. 'Then beat some peeled almonds to a liquid consistency for it **and throw them on it.**'

Ḥiṣrimiyya: *thumma yudaqq al-lauz al-ḥulw al-muqashshar wa-yurabbā bi-shai' min al-mā'*. *wa-yu'addil* [sic verb in active voice] *ṭa'mahu bil-mā' wa-ḥalīb al-lauz 'alā ḥaṣb al-idāra*. 'Then pound peeled sweet almonds and beat them to a liquid consistency with a little water. Adjust its taste (i.e., the taste of the stew) with water and the desired amount of **the almond milk.**' (My published translation

is slightly abbreviated – I rendered it ‘then beat pounded peeled sweet almonds to a liquid consistency.’)

I observe that Nasrallah's interpretation differs not only from mine but from Arberry's, so it scarcely serves her stated purpose of showing the superiority of his translation.

On the translation of finger width: Again Nasrallah merely denounces my translation and does not address my arguments.

On the issue of *gharīq* 'arīq: It is true that 'araq al-tamr means date syrup, but I do not find 'arīq in dictionaries with the sense of 'juicy,' only of 'deeply rooted, noble.' In any case, this word is unambiguously spelled *gharīq* (with a dot over the first letter) in both of the recipes in which it appears, and the same spelling is followed in the London text of al-Baghdadi and both MSS of *Kitāb Waṣf al-Aṭ'ima al-Mu'tāda*. So we are not dealing with the word 'arīq at all. Again, Nasrallah's suggested reading is scarcely a defense of Arberry's translation, which was 'Medina dates.'

By the way, *pace* Nasrallah, I did explain my tentative translation 'suitable for drowning' – to drown (*gharraqa*) was the medieval term for covering (and storing) a sweet in honey or syrup, and this is what the reader is supposed to understand from that.

On the translation of *ḥalqat shibitt*: I have grave doubts about Nasrallah's reading as 'a snip of dill.' The verb *ḥalaqa* does not mean 'to snip' but 'to shave, to shave off.' I'll stay with my reading 'a ring of dill,' because dill was always scrupulously removed from a stew before serving, and a 'snip' (and even more, 'shavings') would be much harder to remove than a ring.

On *samīd* I must differ with Nasrallah. *Samīd* referred to a coarser product than flour, as shown by the fact that poppy seed is ground to *samīd* (meal) in several recipes, rather than to flour (*ṭaḥīn* or *daqīq*), just as poppy seed is typically ground to meal today.

On 'sides of scent' and 'mouths of scent' as translations of *aṭrāf al-ṭīb* and *afwāh al-ṭīb*: Nasrallah may think these are meaningless expressions, and they are if taken literally, but that is why I suggested they referred to the paper packets in which the flavorings were sold in markets. (Rodinson inclined to this view as well.) I find no corroboration for her assertion that *aṭrāf* and *afwāh* mean 'various kinds.' Of course, Arberry followed Chelebi's mistaken reading *azfār*

*al-ṭīb, blattes de Byzance.*

On 'sappy woods': This point of Nasrallah's is well taken.

On *andarānī* vs. *al-dharānī*: Once again, Nasrallah is denigrating Arberry's translation. I confess that I followed Arberry on this, and I still incline to read it as *Andarānī* because no dot is written above the letter *dāl*, as would be necessary for this to be read as *al-dharānī*. My interpretation is that al-Baghdadi is recommending the purest salt available to the cook: by preference, rock salt from mines, such as *Andarānī* salt, and if that is not available (*Kitāb Waṣf al-Aṭ'ima al-Mu'tāda* says 'if it is expensive'), then ordinary salt – that is sea salt, which naturally contains impurities – which has been clarified by dissolving, allowing sediment to settle and re-crystallizing. In passing, I note that the (irregularly derived) word *dharānī* does not appear in *Lisān al-'Arab*.

On the verbs related to sea salt: This is merely captious.

On *diqq* and *daqq*: Being derived from the same verb, they give essentially the same sense: 'small grains,' 'pounded.' Nasrallah cannot demonstrate that one reading or the other is the only possible one (nor can I; this is one of the rare words on which al-Baghdadi does not write the vowel, whether by inadvertence or out of uncertainty).

On the mysterious fault that must be avoided in ginger: Nasrallah reads the puzzling word as *musawwis*, 'worm-eaten,' an attractive reading (the same word also refers to dental caries and could be rendered 'decayed, rotten,' which is even more appealing). I do not happen to know whether dried ginger root is subject to worm infestation. The insuperable problem is that al-Baghdadi's marginal note is plainly written and cannot be read any other way than *ghair maghrūs*. The careful London MS of al-Baghdadi also writes *ghair maghrūs*. In one manuscript of *Kitāb Waṣf al-Aṭ'ima al-Mu'tāda*, it is emended to *ghair musawwis* (or possibly *ghair masūs*, 'untouched'), but this is not what al-Baghdadi wrote (the other *K. Waṣf* manuscript writes it *ghair mughras*). By the way, Arberry did not weigh in on this issue, because he was working from Chelebi's faulty published text, which omitted the passage about ginger altogether.

On to 'beat (the pot) with brick dust': I have always assumed that this does mean something like to rub it, perhaps rather forcefully.

On making the spices 'smooth': This point is arguable; 'make

them powdery' might have been a better reading, but I don't think the sense of the translation is weakened. We can speak of grinding things smooth in English.

On 'whether sweet or sour' vs. 'the sweet more than the sour': Here Nasrallah makes an excellent point. I missed the marginal word *aktharahu*.

On the translation of '*urūq*, Nasrallah makes an interesting point. I was under the impression that Arabic distinguished between *sarayān* 'artery' and '*irq* 'vein,' but this distinction may not have been scrupulously observed in, say, cookbooks. (Veins are smaller than arteries and it seems to me that they would be hard to remove.) But I am not persuaded. You do not need to remove either arteries or veins to remove the blood in cooking, because it comes out during boiling in the form of that scum which is so carefully removed in many recipes. Furthermore, if it were necessary to remove blood vessels in order to remove blood, that process would be specified in all recipes that involve boiling meat, just as skimming is.

On the translation of the verb '*arraqa*: Once again, Nasrallah denounces my translation without addressing my arguments. She and I are actually in agreement that it basically meant frying. As I explain on pp. 114-115, I used 'stewing' rather than the truly excruciatingly literal 'sweating' to underline the fact that this process has a different place in medieval Arab cookery than frying as the sole procedure in cooking a dish. (In passing, I note that Nasrallah does not attempt to defend the half-baked translations Arberry gives in certain passages such as 'to be juicy' and 'to give off its juices.')

On my literal rendering of chapter titles: Nasrallah's objection does not display a scholarly spirit. I argue that it is significant that the different chapter titles use different formulas. For instance, 'On *Harīsa*, *Tannūriyya* and Other Dishes Made in That Way' is a chapter of dishes united by a single cooking technique: baking in the tandoor. The chapter 'Mentioning Fish and What Is Made From Them' consists of dishes united by a kind of ingredient. But 'On *Muṭajjana*, Cold Dishes, *Maqlūba*, *Samosa* and What Is Analogous to Them' includes recipes made from various sorts of ingredients, cooked in various ways. I have suggested that these are called 'analogous' because they were all served in the same way: to wit, as snacks, like today's *mezze*.

The table of contents entry is even more explicit in this regard: 'On *Muṭajjanas*, Cold Dishes, *Maqlūba*, *Samosa* and Things Which Serve the Same Function (*mā yajrī majrāhā*).' We know that such dishes, together with *ṣibāghs*, went into the 'basket of cold dishes' (*sallat al-bawārid*) which featured at picnics and other informal gatherings. (The kid dishes are a little puzzling, I admit, but having been boiled in vinegar, fried and then covered with soy sauce and lemon juice, they probably would resist spoilage and could safely be served cold, so *muṭajjana* could have served as a *mezzeh*.) The pastries of chapter 10 are also said to 'serve the same function,' presumably also referring to how they were served, viz. separately from a meal.

The rest of the criticisms of my chapter headings are merely captious.

On *ḥukm* (p. 30): Yes, this word is in fact a noun and not a verb (al-Baghdadi writes the vowel u over the first consonant), and the sentence means 'everyone has decided (the judgment of all is) that they be put in one chapter.' I note that my translation is closer to Arberry's than hers is.

The next three criticisms are merely captious.

On *rafa'a* ('take up'): The sense is obviously to remove the pot from the fire. In some recipes, however, the verb used for this action is *nazzala* 'take down.' I have translated these verbs literally with a view to full disclosure to the reader – the choice of verb may have some subtle or forgotten significance, or it may simply show that Baghdadi is copying a particular recipe from a manuscript that preferred one or the other verb. (By the way, why is 'take up' horribly literal while 'sweat' gives a feeling for al-Baghdadi and his times? I think the reverse – 'take up' or 'take down' gives a sense of the medieval kitchen.)

On Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī versus Ibrāhīm b. al-Mauṣilī: Nasrallah is quite correct, this is my error.

On the recipe for *Jurjāniyya* (p. 31-32): The pounded almonds are not added to the pomegranate/raisin juice, because it has already been thrown into the pot along with a little vinegar. It is after this that the almonds are pounded to a liquid consistency and thrown in. (*thumma yulqā fi al-qidr, wal-yakun ma'ahu shai' yasīr min khall. wa-yurabbā al-lauz al-muqashshar al-madqūq nā'iman, thumma yulqā fi al-qidr.*) Why, if the almonds are supposed to be boiled down with

the vinegar, does the recipe not say something like *yurabbā bil-khall* (using Nasrallah's interpretation of *yurabbā*)? On the plain wording of the recipe, and since no other recipe suggests pounding almonds with anything but water, I stand by my translation.

On celery: Again, Nasrallah denounces my note without addressing my argument. Apparently she is unaware that medieval celery was an herb, not a vegetable. Until modern celery was developed in seventeenth-century Italy, the leaves were the only edible part; the stems of wild celery are so bitter they make your mouth numb. This is why some languages adopted the Italian dialect word *selderi* for modern celery and abandoned their own medieval names (such as French *ache* and English smallage) for the bitter wild celery. Arabic happens to be one of the languages that retained the old name when vegetable celery was introduced.

On *ḥulwiyya/ḥalawiyya* (p. 35): Nasrallah's defense of the Chelebi-Arberry reading of this dish name is quixotic. This recipe occurs in six manuscripts that I know of: al-Baghdadi's autograph manuscript of *Kitāb al-Ṭabīkh*, the British Library manuscript of *Kitāb al-Ṭabīkh* (Oriental 5099), the three *Kitāb Wasf al-Aṭ'ima al-Mu'tāda* manuscripts (Dar al-Kutub Taimur Şina'a 51 = Topkapi Saray 62 Tip/1992, Dar al-Kutub Taimur Şina'a 52 = Topkapi Saray 22/74 Tip/2004, Incebey manuscript library (Bursa) Hüseyin Çelebi 840) and Şirvani's fifteenth-century Turkish translation of al-Baghdadi (Ali Emiri Mütferrik #143, Süleymaniye Millet Kütüphanesi, Istanbul). In every single manuscript – even the ones that scarcely ever write out vowels – its name is spelled *ḥulwiyya* with the vowel sign *ḍamma* explicitly written over the first letter. The spelling *ḥalawiyya* does not occur in a single manuscript. I include a printout of my photocopy of the relevant page of al-Baghdadi for her perusal.

She criticizes me for offering an explanation for the peculiar name *farḥāna*. Since nearly all other dish names come from Persian words, names of important Abbasid figures, ingredients, cooking techniques or fanciful comparisons, a name which refers to a human emotion does rather cry out for an interpretation. I offered mine merely as speculation, but I am not prepared to accept Nasrallah's criticism that *farah* is exclusively an Egyptian word for wedding. As I've noted, modern Iraqi usage is not a reliable guide to thirteenth-century Baghdad.

On the disputed passage in this recipe, Nasrallah once again denounces my translation without addressing my arguments. However, because this is such an interesting passage, I will rehearse them here in greater detail.

First, I acknowledge my error in translating *yasīra* as 'little,' rather than 'a few.' I have been gnashing my teeth about this mistake ever since I noticed it after my translation appeared.

However, I do not accept Nasrallah's dismissal of my translation of *qarāṣiya* as 'prunes.' Again, I did not make my translation up; it comes from my observation in Syria and Lebanon, and the definition 'prunes (eg.); small black plums (syr.)' may be found on p. 882 of Hans Wehr's *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden 1987). In some dialects, I am informed, *qarāṣiya* means 'pears,' but that is an unlikely sense here (if for no other reason, because of Şirvani's Turkish translation). *Pace* Nasrallah, the usual Arabic word for cherries is *karaz*.

I have reconstructed the original text of the disputed passage as *wa-qiṭa' yasīra min ḥulw al-qarāṣiya*, 'and a few pieces of sweet prune' (that is, of the sweet kind of prune). I believe that some scribe in the early history of this recipe mistakenly wrote *wa* ('and') instead of *min* ('of'), changing the passage to *wa-qiṭa' yasīra wa-ḥulw al-qarāṣiya*, 'and a few pieces **and** sweet prune,' and that subsequent copyists made further changes in an attempt to give the corrupt passage a plausible meaning. One change was to alter the *tā marbūṭa* of *yasīra* to *alif*, which can only be read as indicating the accusative case; I presume the intended reading was *wa-qatti' yasīrā* (or, when *tanwīn* is pronounced, *yasīran*), 'and cut a few up,' referring to the red raisins previously mentioned. Another change was to add an *alif* after *ḥulw*, making it *ḥalwā*, a common spelling of *halwā*, 'sweetmeat.'

The passage happens to occur on the one page of al-Baghdadi's manuscript which is in another scribe's hand, and this adds a layer of uncertainty. The unknown scribe generally seems to copy al-Baghdadi accurately, though writing fewer vowels. My printout from al-Baghdadi includes this passage, and Nasrallah may study it for herself.

Here is how it reads: Following the word *qiṭa'* 'pieces' is a word in which neither vowels nor dots are written. I interpret this as indicating that al-Baghdadi realized that he was copying a corrupt manuscript,

and I imagine that he was planning to write out the dots and vowels when he found the correct reading (evidently he didn't, or perhaps he forgot the issue). The first letter of the word is ambiguous; it could be read as the letter m or as the vertical 'tooth' of one of the letters b, y, n, t or th. (I cannot say when the first letter of *yasīra* started being written as m; it might have been an inspiration of the unknown scribe.) There follow three 'teeth,' then a horizontal extension (since we are approaching the end of a line), then a 'tooth,' the letter r and *alif*. For reasons explained, I read it as *yasīrā* (*yasīran*).

The text inserts an *alif* between the next two nouns (as will be seen, it does not clearly belong to either word) and omits any dots on either the first letter of the second word (technically, it could be read as either f or q) or the 'tooth' before *tā marbūṭa*, but it does place one over the letter *šād/ḏād* (unless it belongs over the final 'tooth,' giving something like \**qarāšina*). You could read this as *wa-ḥalwā qurāḏiyya*, as Chelebi did, but, as we shall see, every subsequent copy of the manuscript disagrees with this reading.

In the very careful British Library manuscript, which is mostly written *scriptio plena* and on internal evidence was based on a comparison of several manuscripts, the questionable passage is written *qīṭa' (qāṭṭi') masīrā wa-ḥulw aqrāšīyya*. Exceptionally for the British Library text, the word I speculatively represent as *masīrā* is undotted. The first letter looks rather more like an m than in al-Baghdadi's manuscript and there is no dot under the tooth before the letter r, which suggests the scribe is confessing that he does not know how to read this word. Nevertheless, this scribe did *not* accept the dot written over *šād/ḏād*, and calls for 'the sweet (kind or part) of *aqrāšīyya*,' evidently imagining a dish with a name derived from *aqrāš*, the plural of *qurša* 'cake' (in itself, this implies that no sweet named *qurāḏiyya* seemed likely to the scribe).

In Topkapi Saray 62 Tip/1992 it is *qīṭa' (qāṭṭi') musayyirā wa-ḥalwā qarāšīya*. In *musayyirā*, the vowel u is explicitly written over the m and there is a *shadda* over the y, indicating a doubled consonant. *Musayyirā* might be read *musayyarā*, with some sense such as 'cut into belts,' except that the idea of cutting raisins into belts is absurd. *Qarāšīya* is so written, with no dot over the letter *šād*.

In Topkapi Saray 22/74 Tip/2004, the scribe first wrote *wa-qīṭa'*

(*qatti'*) *masīran* – here the vowel sign over the m is explicitly *fatha* (short a) and the *tanwīn* is written – and then crossed these words out, evidently considering the passage corrupt. Then he proceeded to write *wa-ḥulw qarāṣiya*, ‘and sweet prune’ with the vowel u explicitly written in *ḥulw* and no *alif* following it (and no dot indicating a *ḍād*). In short, this scribe read the passage as ‘and sweet prune’ but with no thought of cutting them into pieces.

I regret to say that when I examined the Bursa manuscript of *K. Wasf*, I didn't have time to study all the wording of this recipe there. I would be most interested to see how that scribe dealt with this troublesome, clearly corrupt passage.

I have one last manuscript to adduce: Şirvani's fifteenth-century Turkish translation of al-Baghdadi's book. At the very end of the left-hand page, we find the words *ve qizil ūzüm ve qara arsalani erük* (in Modern Turkish orthography this would be *ve kızıl ūzüm ve kara arsalani erik*), ‘and red raisins and black Arsalani plums.’ With this I rest my case.

Now, how did Chelebi and Arberry read this? Chelebi read the first letter of *yasīrā* as an m, just as the other Arab scribes did, but he went out on his own with the rest of the word (I have a feeling he did this when he was back in Iraq, uncertain about how to read his handwriting and unable to compare his copy with the original manuscript). Evidently he read the first ‘tooth’ of the letter *sīn* as b, then the second and third ‘teeth’ as the two points that some scribes make when writing the letter ‘*ain*’ (as my first printout shows, he was entirely mistaken in this reading; we must surely blame Chelebi's handwriting for this error) and the following (undotted) y as th, finally ‘correcting’ the *alif* to *tā marbūṭa*, thus converting *yasīrā* first to *muba'tharā* and then to *muba'thara* (which happens to be an actual food word; it means scrambled eggs). Finally he ‘corrected’ *muba'thara* further to *mubaḥthara*, the name of a puddingy sort of sweet that appears in Chapter X (it consists of breadcrumbs and ground almonds fried together and then covered with syrup). As we have seen, neither the letter ‘*ain* ع nor (a fortiori) the letter *ḥā* ح appears in this word in any of the four manuscripts I have studied.

In short, Chelebi ‘corrected’ the corrupt passage to something that seemed to make sense to him, but he was actually corrupting it

far more. Here is my reconstruction of the Arabic spellings: *yasīrā* > *muba'tharā* > *mubaḥthara*: مبحثرة > بعمثرا > يسيرا.

Chelebi's reading obliged him to believe that that al-Baghdadi had simply misspelled the name of his own recipe (as I have observed, Al-Baghdadi spelled it *ḥulwiyya*, as does every other scribe). The errors in Arberry's translation are entirely those of Chelebi and unknown medieval scribes, and he cannot be blamed.

On p. 37 I translate 'eyes of eggs' as 'whole raw eggs.' Obviously they will cook in the heat of the stew. Arberry translated them as 'poached eggs,' which wrongly suggests that they were poached separately and then transferred to the pot. By the way, I think it's going too far to say that 'eyes of eggs' is a charmingly fanciful expression of al-Baghdadi's; it was the ordinary culinary term for eggs with the yolks unbroken.

On p. 40: Nasrallah is correct, all the spices are pounded. I was again leaning over backward to be literal, since the gender agreement of adjectives is sometimes irregular. This does not seriously harm my translation, because I indicated in my notes that all spices should be presumed to be pounded except when a measurement of a whole spice is specified, such as 'stick.'

The criticisms about *nāranjiyya* and the translation of verbs meaning 'to throw' strike me as captious.

On the *mujazza'a* recipe on p. 43, Nasrallah is right again. I misread al-Baghdadi's text, he did indeed write *qadar* and not *qidr*, and the passage should read 'take two or three bunches of chard for the quantity of meat.'

On '*ukaika*: The name of the magpie is clearly onomatopoeic, and Steingass's Persian dictionary lists not only '*ak'ak* but '*aq'aq*, '*akak* and '*akka* – all, of course, Arabic words, though not necessarily found in Arabic dictionaries. So '*ukaika* could indeed be a diminutive of '*akka* (or of '*akak*). Or it could be a diminutive of '*ukka*, 'leather sack for keeping butter' (by the way, I can see that the butter is 'fair in color' but not that the sack itself would be, and I have never found butter used as a metaphor for tail fat in medieval Arab writings). Neither derivation seems very obvious, and it did not seem obvious 500 years ago, either, because Şirvani spelled it '*akika*, as if it were a word meaning 'sultry, muggy.' I'm inclined to go with Arberry's translation, simply because

there are two other recipes in this book named for birds, *hubaishiyya* and *fākhitiyya*.

On the fat on the surface issue, p. 44: We have a difference of interpretation in this recipe. Arberry and I think the fat is thrown away, Nasrallah thinks it remains.

On p.47: Yes, we can indeed say 'Do not leave it until the rice has thickened strongly,' though I agree that 'so long that the rice thickens' would be more idiomatic.

The criticism of my literal translation of the verb 'bear' is captious. I cannot imagine that anyone reading the recipe would fail to understand that it refers to the proper amount of garlic.

On the 'light strips,' p. 51: I know that *khafif* can mean 'light in weight, insignificant, sparse, weak,' but I have never known it to mean 'thin'; that would be *raqīq*. I naturally imagined that these strips are more or less thin, but I thought it better to translate the passage literally.

On the egg yolk issue, Nasrallah is correct. The sense is that the whites have been taken from the yolks.

The next two criticisms are captious. The third is not quite captious – 'when the meat has boiled until done' might have been better than 'when the meat is done in boiling.' Of course, Arberry's translation refers to a 'broth' not mentioned in the text. Arberry and I both get the meaning across.

The criticism of how I handled the evident scribal error of calling for 'lean fat meat' is captious -- I do explain it in my footnote, right there on p.57. She ignores the fact that Arberry did not realize that 'red' meat is lean meat.

On p. 58, I certainly did err in translating 'beat' as mix. And 'pound' would have been more idiomatic than 'beat' in referring to meat.

On the issue of 'hewn' vs. 'scraped': There is no question that the procedure described does amount to peeling the carrots. This was done with an ordinary kitchen knife, not a specialized utensil, so it really was a sort of hewing. I stuck with the literal translation of *yunḥat*, since in American usage we say carrots are 'peeled,' not 'scraped,' and the next instruction in the recipe is to follow this procedure 'until they are peeled.'

On *tabarzad*: Nasrallah is right, my and Arberry's translation 'sugar

candy' is not correct for this term, although both *ṭabarzad* and *nabāt* (the proper term for sugar candy) are highly refined kinds of sugar and would serve. *Ṭabarzad* is really the highest-quality white loaf sugar. The name comes from Persian and means 'struck with a hatchet,' since that is, in effect, how a sugar loaf has to be broken up. I am grateful for the information that *ṭabarzal* is the name of a variety of date.

About meatballs 'returning to their fat' (p.68): I explained this technical usage in my notes.

On making chicken (p. 71): I believe Nasrallah makes a good point here, 'This is all that needs to be observed in cooking chicken dishes' (*hādihā muntahā al-jahd fī ṣun'at ṭabīkh al-dajāj*) is the sort of statement al-Baghdadi would make to summarize a section, so my translation 'This is the most important thing in making chicken dishes' is probably wrong.

On *sukhtūr* (p 73): My translation of the Persian words is literal to indicate the etymology, as in other footnotes. Obviously, the meat has to be chopped up (and boned) to fit in a casing. Arberry made the same literal translations.

The quibble about 'they' and 'pin' vs. 'toothpick' is captious.

On *maṣūṣ* (p. 78): The idea that the dish gets its name because it 'sucks up' flavorings does not persuade me, because this is not the only dish in which this process happens; for instance, *mamqūr* is also soaked in flavoring liquid. I associate it with suckling kid simply because the recipe specifies suckling kid.

Next objection is captious.

*Mufarraka* (p. 79) is not the word for 'scrambled.' That would be *muba'thara*. In any case, my footnote merely indicates the derivation of the name and no one reading my translation of the recipe would be under any misapprehension about what this dish is like.

The next four objections are captious.

As for *maḥsī* (p, 84), the problem is that al-Baghdadi and Ibn Sayyar's ninth-century book both spell this word without the three dots that would make it possible to read it as *maḥshī*. I believe that Arberry's *muḥassā* indicates the sense correctly, although al-Baghdadi's manuscript shows that *maḥsī* was the form of the word that cooks used. Later scribes did use the spelling *maḥshī*, perhaps indicating that usage had adopted this more familiar word.

Next three objections are captious.

The following objection is beyond captious. It is absurd to say my footnote on p. 89 explaining *kāmakh rījāl* is ‘not accurate.’ It begins by accurately describing the culinary meaning of *kāmakh* (which was not understood by any scholar – very much including Arberry – until a few years ago, when I tried the recipes out). Then I accurately give some of the other meanings the word *rījāl* has had. What she faults me for is not mentioning Steingass’s third definition of *rījāl* as ‘anything made from sheep’s milk,’ which is a classic example of a lexicographer mechanically repeating a definition from an earlier dictionary without understanding it (Steingass is notorious for this, by the way). There is no reason to think *rījāl* has ever meant ‘anything made from sheep’s milk.’

Next objection is captious.

Nasrallah is correct that *rāziyānaj* (p. 91) means fennel, not anise. I was misled by the fact that anise is sometimes known as *rāziyānaj rūmī*, ‘European fennel.’

I have always been quite sure that the sense of ‘as soon as they (fava beans) are rough’ (p. 91) means ‘as soon as they are ripe’; scarcely any other meaning is imaginable. However, nothing like this sense is recorded for the verb *khashina* in any of the dictionaries I consulted; hence my quibble. Again, I erred on the side of literalness.

Having repeatedly faulted me for not translating in an idiomatic way, in *jūdhāb al-khubz* (p. 92) Nasrallah faults me for translating *lubāb* as ‘crumb’ rather than ‘pith.’ ‘Crumb’ is the usual English term for the soft part of leavened bread, as against the crust.

In the recipe for *jūdhāb al-khashkhāsh* (p. 93), Nasrallah says my calculations about *rubb* (quarter) are not accurate. My reading has two advantages over hers: al-Baghdadi’s own manuscript, which says *rubb samīd*, not *rubbīhi*, and the London manuscript of *Kitāb al-Ṭabīkh*, which (as my footnote mentions) adds, by way of explanation, (a quarter) ‘of a pound.’

Next objection is captious.

The following objection is very curious. Nasrallah thinks a passage in *ṣifa ukhrā* (p. 95) means ‘mix it with an ounce of rose water and a pound of honey, both in one place.’ Why would that be important enough to spell out? Recipes commonly specify mixing several

ingredients at one time, but rarely the use of a single vessel. (I cannot even imagine anyone thinking rosewater should be added to the oil and water in one vessel, then the mixture should be transferred to another for adding the honey.) I rendered *fī maūḍi' wāḥid* (in one putting) as 'both at once,' since *maūḍi'* does have the sense of 'a time of putting (or occurring)' as well as 'a place of putting.'

On p. 96, I don't quite agree with Nasrallah that a cook would have to supply a missing instruction to boil the *khabīṣ al-qar'* until it thickens'. The pot is already on the fire and the contents are already boiling; the instruction 'moisten with syrup until it thickens' – that is, until it is the thickness you desire – is sufficient.

On *halwā yābisa* (p. 98), it is most extraordinary for Nasrallah to say that 'neither Perry nor Arberry is quite clear on how it is done' – Arberry had *no idea at all* how it was done, because al-Baghdadi's text omitted the instruction to drive the iron peg into a wall, whereas I am the very person who has restored that passage, at last making this recipe clear.

In the *makshūfa* recipe (p. 99), it would have been unscholarly of me not to translate this strange passage literally, because *ḥattā yaḡhlī wa-yafūr* ('until it boils and boils up') is not a regular culinary formula. Arberry read *yafūr* as *yafūh*, 'and is fragrant,' and I don't discount the possibility that that is the correct sense.

On *lauzīnaj* (pp. 99-100): Again Nasrallah merely dismisses my translation, saying that *lauzīnaj* was 'more like baklava,' without addressing my arguments.

She might be thinking of the modern Iraqi *lauzīna*, one variety of which, I am told, is a pastry cut into diamond shapes in the baklava manner. However, *lauzīna* is not descended from *lauzīnaj*, though they share a distant common ancestor in the sixth-century Persian product *lauzēnag* (for which, regrettably, we have no recipe). The fact that the word *lauzīna* does not end in *-j* shows that the Iraqis took the word (and learned the pastry) from the Persians some time after the tenth century, when the Middle Persian suffix *-ag* had come to be pronounced *-ah*, whereas they had learned of *lauzīnaj* in the ninth century or before (Ibn Sayyar's *Kitāb al-Ṭabīkh* has a recipe associated with the caliph al-Mu'taṣim, d. 842).

*Lauzīna* actually looks like a new dish developed after the thirteenth

century, since there are no medieval Arab recipes for it, the earliest being the *levzine* that Şirvani recorded in the late fifteenth century. Diamond-shaped foods are typical of the Ottoman era (medieval Arab recipes and poems refer primarily to square and triangular shapes), so the Iraqis may actually have learned of *lauzīna* by way of the Turks.

Here are the basic varieties of *lauzīnaj* we find in thirteenth-century cookbooks from the eastern Arab world. 1) 'Crisp' *lauzīnaj* (a relatively uncommon variety) is a kind of *pralin* made by melting sugar on the fire and throwing in pounded almonds; it is cut into triangles. 2) 'Dry' *lauzīnaj*: One part ground almonds, one part sugar and one third part rose water are cooked together until they thicken, then an additional one part sugar is added. This is, roughly speaking, a heavily sugared marzipan. 3) 'Persian' *lauzīnaj* is made like 'dry' *lauzīnaj* except that the sugar, almonds and rose water are mixed without cooking. 4) 'Moist' or 'drowned' *lauzīnaj* is Persian *lauzīnaj* in a luxurious presentation, rolled up in delicate crepes, cut into pieces and covered with syrup and sesame or almond oil.

Moist *lauzīnaj* was the most esteemed kind, to judge from the fact that the narrator of al-Hamadani's *maqāma baghdādiyya* demands it in the market. It is the only kind that involves pastry. This pastry is variously described as a crepe (*qaṭā'if*), an especially thin bread (*kunāfa*), *lauzīnaj* bread (*khubz lauṣīnaj*) or 'the bread used for this purpose.' Here are characteristics of moist *lauzīnaj* that show it was nothing like baklava:

1. It was not diamond-shaped. The recipes say to roll up ground almonds in the crepe or bread and then cut the roll into pieces, the way a roly-poly or jellyroll is cut. The Arabic phrase which I translate as 'roll up like a belt' (and Arberry meaninglessly rendered 'fold round strip-wise') is *yūṭwā kal-sair*. I translated *yūṭwā* as 'roll up' because that meaning was demanded by the sense of the recipe; I grant that *yūṭwā* is properly translated 'fold,' but there is powerful evidence that this pastry was rolled.

First, the jellyroll shape was well known to the thirteenth-century Arabs. To make the canapé *auṣāṭ*, you would roll the flatbread *jardaḡ* around a savory filling and then cut it into pieces; the instruction was 'fold nicely and roll up tight' (this formula makes me suspect that the recipe which al-Baghdadi copied originally read something like

'fold it over and roll it up like a belt' and some scribe failed to copy the words *wa-yulaff*, 'and roll it'). As *auṣāṭ* was a canapé, it did not get covered with syrup, nor was it made with an ultra-thin bread, but it was analogous in form to moist *lauzīnaj*. In effect, it was a savory *lauzīnaj* (or perhaps *lauzīnaj* was a sweet *auṣāṭ*).

Second, this shape is known to have been used for sweets also. It is called for in the *mukaffan* and *fālūdhaj yābis* recipes in the *ziyādāt laisat min al-kitāb* which appear in the various texts of *Kitāb al-Wuṣṣla ilā al-Ḥabīb*; they leave no doubt that these two products were rolled up. The instruction is 'roll it up in the form of *auṣāṭ*' (*yulaff 'alā hai' at auṣāṭ*). The *mukaffan* recipe specifies cutting the roll into pieces three or four finger-widths long. Baghdadi's recipes for *mukaffan* and *fālūdhaj* use the same procedure: 'roll it out (and cut it) into small square pieces the size of the palm. Then put some of that kneaded sugar and almonds on it and roll it in the form of *auṣāṭ*'; 'knead hard and make *auṣāṭ*, melons, triangles and other shapes from it.' If *mukaffan* and *fālūdhaj yābis* were rolled up like *auṣāṭ*, there is no reason to doubt that that *lauzīnaj* was also.

2. The pastry is nothing like the filo dough used for baklava, which would not be invented until the Ottoman period. The recipes make this clear, but some people (I was once one of them) have imagined that it was like filo because of Ibn al-Rumi's description of *lauzīnaj*:

It is densely stuffed but has a crust more delicate than the eastern breeze,

As if its robes were tailored from the finest syrup heaped up.

From the thinness of its skin you would think it shared the wings of grasshoppers.

But the following lines make clear what the poet is really up to:

If a mouth were pictured of its bread, it would be the conspicuous, white-toothed (mouth)

Of every fair maid for whom a young man wished to make the palm of his hand a sailing boat.

The comparison is to the radiant smile of the beloved, a conventional

feature of which is brilliant white teeth. Ibn al-Rumi's real focus is the generous almond filling, compared to which the pastry is as insubstantial as snakeskin, grasshopper wings or a gentle breeze. In other words, his characterization of the 'skin' of *lauzīnaj* is extravagant hyperbole, not sober description. He was praising the stuffing because almonds are a luxury ingredient by comparison with flour. Also note that he neither mentions nor suggests the layering and crispness so characteristic of filo pastry.

3) The decisive fact is that *lauzīnaj* was not baked. Not one recipe in any book describes cooking moist *lauzīnaj* in any way; the crepe or bread is already cooked when it appears. Moist *lauzīnaj* was not baklava, nor was it an ancestor of either *lauzīna* or baklava (which actually has Central Asian antecedents). In short, I can think of no sense in which *lauzīnaj* was 'like baklava' except that both are pastries with an almond filling.

On the *fālūdḥaj* recipe (p. 100), Nasrallah makes one good point – the instruction should be 'if it needs to be strengthened,' not 'when.'

In *samak wa-aqrās* (p. 101), Nasrallah is quite right – I misread the verb *yabda'* as *yabdū*, and the passage should read 'until it starts to take its consistency,' not 'until it appears to.'

On *khushkanānaj* (p. 102), Nasrallah makes a good point and I withdraw my footnote suggestion that a mould had anything to do with the 'gathering' of this cookie.

Nasrallah makes an interesting suggestion that it would be better to translate *muṭbaq* (p. 102) as 'layered,' rather than 'enveloped' (Arberry) or 'surrounded' (my rendering), but I am not persuaded. 'Layered' would certainly be the sense if *muṭbaq* had multiple layers, but it consists simply of two cookies enclosing (enveloping, surrounding) one filling.

Her next objection is captious.

On p. 103, I rendered *ḥuqq* as 'box' because it can mean 'small box, case, pot or jar; receptacle, container' (Wehr). I do incline to Nasrallah's suggestion that in this case it is a round receptacle. (But I do not understand her insistence that Arberry did not read this word as *ḥaqq*, 'what is right.' Did he read it as *ḥuqq* and then decide that 'a box or pot' means 'what is due'?)

Nasrallah correctly calls attention to a serious error in my translation

of *aqrās muqarrara* (p. 104). I read 'that dough' as 'that syrup,' so my rendering does not show the reader that the cakes are dipped in dough three times.

Next criticism is captious.

Neither Wehr's dictionary nor *al-Munjid* gives any definition for *mubaḥṭhara* (or *muba'thara*, for that matter) suggesting 'crumbly.' The sense is 'scattered, dispersed, tousled, squandered,' possibly 'uncovered.' In *Lisān al-'Arab*, *ba'thara* can mean for horses to gallop suddenly after something.

Next criticism is captious. If *kawānīn* means 'winter,' it's because of the two months Kānūn I and Kānūn II.

I am grateful for the information that *āzādh* and *maktūm* in the *ḥais* recipe on p. 105 are the names of date varieties. Nasrallah does not mention the fact that Arberry translated these words the same way I did.

Her final criticism is again captious.

As will have been seen, I do not claim that my translation is faultless, only that it is vastly more honest and reliable than Arberry's, which contains more than 80 substantial errors on top of the 40 or so errors in Chelebi's Arabic text. Since publishing my translation, I have found some errors in my translation that Nasrallah has missed:

*Summāqiyya* (p. 37): The 'finely mastic' should, of course, be 'finely pounded mastic.'

*Būrāniyyat al-Qar'* (p.62): After 'take onions in proportion to the meat,' we should insert '(sc. cut them up and)' before 'wash them in warm salted water.'

*Ṣifat 'amal al-Kābūlā* (p. 106): In 'If you want, put clarified butter on it instead of almond oil,' the 'almond oil' is actually the sesame oil referred to previously in the recipe.