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The Delectable War between Mutton and the Refreshments of the Market-Place. Rereading the Curious Tale of the Mamluk Era

At some point in XV century, or in the decadent period of the Circassian Mamluk era, certain Aḥmad Ibn Yaḥyā Ibn Ḥasan al-Ḥaǧǧār, apparently a resident of Cairo, composed a curious narrative titled *Kitāb al-ḥarb al-ma'šūq bayna laḥm aḍ-ḍa'n wa-ḥawāḍir as-sūq*. In 1932-4 the work was partly translated, under the title *The Delectable War between Mutton and the Refreshments of the Market-Place*, by Joshua Finkel who also provided the translation with the summary of the text and extensive comments.[1] Since that date the tale was summarized a number of times in contemporary studies[2] and there is no need to retell its story once again. In the context of the present study it probably suffices to say that *Delectable War* features a conflict between two camps, each of which is represented by a significant number of

[1] Joshua Finkel, *King Mutton, a Curious Tale of the Mamluk Period*, "Zeitschrift für Semitistik und Verwandte Gebiete", 8 (1932), pp. 122-148 (I); 9 (1933-1934), pp. 1-18 (II). Finkel based his translation on one of the two existing manuscripts – the Damascene one – without consulting the other, the EL Escorial one. El Escorial MS, edited by Manuela Marín in *Sobre alimentación y sociedad (el texto árabe de la 'La Guerra deliciosa')*, "Al-Qantara" 13, 1 (1992), pp. 83-122.

[2] Finkel, *King Mutton*, I, pp. 123-125; Maxime Rodinson, *Studies in Arabic Manuscripts Relating to Cookery*, in: *Medieval Arab Cookery: Essays and Translations by Maxime Rodinson, A.J. Arberry and Charles Perry*, Blackawton: Prospect House 2001, pp. 113-14; Geert Jan van Gelder, *God's Banquet. Food in Classical Arabic Literature*, New York: Columbia Univ. Press 2000, pp. 96-99 (van Gelder translates the title as *The Lovely War…*,); Manuela Marín, *Literatura y gastronomía: dos textos árabes de época mameluca*, in: Manuela Marín, David Waines (eds.), *La alimentación en las culturas islamicas. Una colección de estudios editados por Manuela Marín y David Waines*, Madrid: Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional 1994, pp. 150-51.

personified edible goods. In other words, various meats, animal fats[3] and meat dishes, led by the mutton—called here King Mutton—fight the camp of meat-free foods that is led by King Honey. The cause is not always clear but, according to the most obvious understanding, the prominence over all the foodstuffs is at stake, both of those in the bazaar and those on the table.

For the historical food studies, one of the most evident merits of this work is that its author used the war game stylistics as a pretext to mention all the food articles' names which he knew. And he knew many of them. In effect, the text is so intensively saturated with edibles of every possible kind that it at times resembles an index to a cookery book interwoven with a complete list of food products available in the Near Eastern markets. But the countless names of foodstuffs are not all that the text of the *Delectable War* can be valued for. All the scholars who hitherto discussed the bizarre work noticed the unquestionable importance of the social context hidden in its message. However, since their analysis of this context have introduced a degree of confusion into the problem, some of the points require clarification.

The most vital of the interpretation problems refers to the fact that the war the two "kings" wage tends to be understood as a conflict between the "food of the rich" and the "food of the poor." Such a reading of the text introduces major confusion into both the question of "high and low cooking" and the food-related aspects of social order in medieval Cairo. One is left not only with an impression that the Cairene society was made exclusively of the rich men and the poor men but, also, that the rich men, forming some kind of the leisure class, were all gluttons who did not know limits in stuffing themselves with the most refined dishes, while the poor followed strange vegetarian dietary combination the ingredients of which ranged from honey and imported cheeses to salted fish and pickled turnip.

The reasons why such a confusing image of the Cairene society prevailed seem to have been twofold. On the one hand, it was a result of using the western "rich men food–poor men food" pattern in reference to the culinary culture of Cairo. This opposition, routinely recognized in European history, does not work if applied to define the Arabic-Islamic medieval urban societies – if only because their basic social divisions (at least in the case of Cairo) did not quite correspond to the schemes relating to diet or alimentary choices.

[3] Particularly the sheep's tail fat; as for *samn*, or rendered fat/clarified butter, its "assignment" is not clear: in the beginning of the story it joins the "meat camp," at other times it appears by the side of fresh butter in the camp of non-meat foods.

Like other urban centers of the Arabic-Islamic medieval world, Cairo was by no means a black-and-white, rich-and-poor space. Like in the case of other urban centers of this world, the rather limited circles of the rich on the one hand, and the army of the poor on the other, were not the only strata of the Cairene population. Accordingly, the simple opposition between the "high" and the "low" cooking is not adequate to interpret the alimentary practices of the Cairenes, because the "foods of the rich" and the "foods of the poor" were by no means the only nutritional alternatives accessible in their city. The above is not to contradict the fact that food *is* a marker of social status, or to assert that the notion of "high and low cooking" may not be applicable to Cairo at all. Obviously enough, the city had its rich and its poor. Between the two extremes there was, however, a significant, enterprising, and a very much diverse middle-class. One of the reasons for the fact that the simple "rich men food – poor men food" scheme, disregarding the middle-class, cannot be applied to the medieval Cairene society, is the very existence of this class.

Another reason for that is related to the fact that the medieval Cairenes, unlike most of other urban communities and societies of the time, generally did not cook at home but used the services offered by the public kitchens and street food stands.[4] The street generally catered for everybody and everybody, including the rich and the poor, used the street catering services. Apart from its numerous implications for the process of the local culinary culture, this phenomenon created an interesting context for the social dimension of the menu. What happened was that most of popular dishes on the city bazaar offer could also be found in the menu of Cairene elites.

True, most (but not all!) of the plates proposed by the street cooks could be lacking in subtleness and elegance if compared to the specialties served by the Arabic-Islamic haute cuisine whose recipes were documented in the cookbooks for the well-to-do. But, at the same time, these recipes or, rather, the dishes they featured, were not a form of art for the art's sake, appreciated by a number of snobbish connoisseurs only,[5] and resembling the imperi-

[4] For more details on the public gastronomy of Cairo see Paulina B. Lewicka, *Twelve Thousand Cooks and a* Muḥtasib*. Some Remarks on Food Business in Medieval Cairo,* "Studia Arabistyczne i Islamistyczne" 10, 2002, pp. 5-27; idem, *On Kitchens of Medieval Cairo, or Why Ordinarily the Saracens Did Not Cook at Home and What Ensued From It*," Rocznik Orientalistyczny, t. LVII, z. 1, 2004, s. 95-105.

[5] Cf. David Waines, according to whom "an interest in gastronomy appears to have been a pastime of various patrician personalities including several princes of the ruling Abbasid house. (…) The activity then spread among the bourgeois sectors of Muslim society, creating 'great' written cooking tradition in Arabic distinct from

al Roman or Renaissance kind of luxuriousness and eccentricity.[6] What an average customer bought from the bazaar cooks' stands may have been, for many reasons, of worse or much worse quality than the delicacies produced in any of the palatial kitchens. But the general rules of preparing the dishes were similar, if not indeed the same.[7] The elite food was made of the domestically achievable variety of ingredients, so what mattered was the details – such as, for example, quantity, quality and multiplicity of spices added to a preparation, quality and quantity of meat or oil, quantity and quality of sugar or quality of flour. And, additionally, the way the dishes were presented. The offer of the Cairene street cooks, in some cases excellent and in others much below any acceptable standard, combined the items of the rich medieval Arab haute cuisine with a more modest, simplified (sometimes oversimplified) version of the latter. As such, the Cairene street gastronomy was doubtlessly not an example of "high" cooking. But by no means of a "low" cooking, either.

Actually, applying a "rich man-poor man" pattern to the message carried in *Delectable War* and reading the tale in categories of a class war, was encouraged by a number of phrases used in its text. One of them was the title itself, suggesting that "mutton," as opposed to the popular non-meat "refreshments of the market place," was unavailable from the bazaar cook shops and that therefore it must have constituted a foodstuff of particularly high status. The remark about mutton being "savored by every caliph and sultan"[8] and eaten exclusively by people of means seemed to confirm the impression evoked by the title. Similar effect was produced by the fact that the consumers of "market refreshments" were referred to as "paupers" (*mafālīs*, *ḏū al-iflās*), or as the *vulgus profanum*, or "rabble" (*arāḏil an-*

the unrecorded practices of the plebeian population, both urban and rural." (*Dietetics in Medieval Islamic Culture*, "Medical History", 43/2 (1999), p. 231). While Waines's statement doubtlessly holds true for the Abbasid Baghdad, with its numerous nobles and men of letters concerned about culinaria, it may be less valid for medieval Cairo.

[6] It was, rather, like in Ottoman Turkey, where "few individual items in the cuisine of the Palace were beyond the scope of cooks in lesser households" (Raphaela Lewis, *Turkish Cuisine*, *Oxford Symposium 1981, National and Regional Styles of Cookery. Proceedings*, London 1981, p. 120).

[7] This concerned both the situation when a ready meal was bought from the cook's stand to be taken away, as well as when the dish was prepared at home and carried to the street kitchen or communal oven to be cooked there.

[8] P. 87 of the Arabic text, in: Marín, *Sobre alimentación*; p. 1 of the English text, in: Finkel, *King Mutton*.

[9] Pp. 88, 96 in: Marín, *Sobre alimentación*.

nās).[9] When one adds to these an indication that the "market refreshments" could be bought for just a "penny" or two,[10] the above-discussed interpretation becomes understandable. The fact that in Finkel's translation the term "starving" was interpreted as "(meat)-starved," must also have had its significance.[11]

Geert van Gelder, who basically agrees with the idea of interpreting the conflict as "food of the rich versus food of the poor" battle, nevertheless advices certain flexibility in this respect.[12] Indeed, flexible attitude may be required to reexamine the meaning of the tale, if only because reexamination involves a significant change of approach here. Reading the *Delectable War* in terms of a class war between low and high cooking introduced a major misunderstanding into the social and culinary profile of Cairo: it not only suggested that food of the poor and food of the rich food were the only culinary alternatives available in the city, but also imposed identifying the difference between the two by the contrast between the meet and non-meet foods. "The meats are the foods of the rich while the other dishes fall to the poor, especially the peasants," as Maxime Rodinson neatly summed up Finkel's point of view.[13] In fact, to reveal the correct message behind the discussed text, it probably suffices to define who was who or, rather, what was what of the *Delectable War*'s two titular characters, and what was their true meaning for the food culture of the city.

First, the *ḥawāḍir as-sūq,* or what was translated by Finkel as the "refreshments of the market place." Meat-free and mocked in the narrative as cheap goods purchased and consumed by nobody but "paupers" and "rabble," *ḥawāḍir as-sūq* were actually not as bad or monotonous as it may appear from these remarks. Apart from King Honey itself, apparently the most appreciated item of the group, "the refreshments of the market place" included variety of milks, both imported from Syria and locally produced, as well as Lebanese yogurt preparations, such as Ba'lbakkī curds, or those in which yogurt was mixed with fennel seeds, pistachios and *za'tar*. There were also the preparations in which yogurt was mixed with salty bitter oranges, or green almonds, or sour apples, or cucumbers. And there was also Swiss chard, pumpkin, or eggplant prepared in milk, as well as a variety of cheeses, including cheese imported from Sicily as well as various fried,

[10] P. 88 in: Marín, *Sobre alimentación*, p. 2 in: Finkel, *King Mutton*.

[11] P. 3 in: Finkel, *King Mutton*, *ahl al-maǧā'a* in the Arabic text in: Marín, *Sobre alimentación*, p. 89.

[12] Van Gelder, *God's Banquet*, p. 98.

[13] Rodinson, *Studies*, p. 114.

roasted and cooked cheese preparations. Apart from milk and its derivative products, *ḥawāḍir as-sūq* included also an array of vinegar preparations, such as "raisins with sugar and vinegar," pickled turnips and cucumbers, pickled eggplants with mint, capers, variety of olives, salted lemons, etc. Of salted preserves, one could find Alexandrian fish paste, salted sparrows, salted fish, and river mussels in oil and lemon water. In addition to those, there were also various fish dishes as well as numerous river and sea fishes—imported and local, preserved and fresh. There were fried eggs, omelets, hot grilled colocasia, lentils, *ḥummus* and broad beans, the last three still so popular in Cairo of today. And there were *bawārid*, or cold snacks, such as seasoned cauliflower, pumpkin in mustard seeds, beans in olive oil and caraway, fried spinach, and fried eggplant. And, last but not least, there were fruits, flowers and seasonings as well as variety of sweets and sweetening agents such as local and imported honey and fruit molasses. And fats, including clarified butter, sesame oil, *ṭaḥīna,* and fresh butter—but excluding the Fat of the Mutton Tail and the Rendered Fat, the latter being won over by the former to the "meat camp." All in all, a vegetarian's paradise.

These are, of course, not all of the products, semi-products, and dishes called "refreshments of the market place," but sufficient to profile the group. Its adversary in the conflict, the "meat camp" with King Mutton at its head, held in contempt this interesting collection contending that what it consisted of was the food of the "paupers" and of the "rabble." One should remember, however, that these were but the mocking words of an adversary, meant to insult the enemy and not to reflect the reality. Hence, the truth they propose is only partly true. Indeed, it cannot be denied that specialties such as the cooked broad beans, *ḥummus*, or lentils, fried colocasia, salted fish paste, fried eggs and fried cheese, or primitive sweet preparations such as *nayda*, were the food of the poor. As such, they were, above all, to carry the nutritional value and not to satisfy the gustatory fancies of their poor consumers. But it is also true, that despite the fact that they were the cheapest and the simplest of what was available, many of these items had their admirers among the elites. Enough to mention sultan An-Nāṣir Muḥammad and his wife, Ṭuḡāy Ḫātūn, both of whom apparently could not do without fried cheese, otherwise one of the most popular Cairene "refreshments of the market-place."[14]

[14] On this and other non-meat snack consumed by An-Nāṣir Muḥammad or by his wife see Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār. Dawlat al-Mamālīk al-Ūlā,* Beirut 1986, p. 104; also quoted in Taqī ad-Dīn Amad al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-mawā'iẓ wa-l-i'tibār bi-ḏikr al-ḫiṭaṭ wa-al-āṯār,* Cairo: Bulaq 1853-1854; repr. Baghdad: al-Muthanna Library n.d., II, p. 210 (cf. Dreher, "Regard," p. 64); Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb as-sulk li-ma'rifat duwal wa-al-mulk,* ed. M. M.

Another important aspect of the items mentioned in the *Delectable War* as "market refreshments" was that many of them were too refined to be classified as food of the poor. Moreover, they were never meant for the poor. Palmyra olives, Sicilian cheese, honey imported from the Maghreb, Barqa, Rum or from "the country of the Franks," suffice as examples. These goods were obviously not brought to Cairo just to please the local poor or cultivate the nuances of their tastes. The same refers to the array of the finest imported fruits and flowers of which very expensive drinks were made. What is more, many such "market refreshments"—such as simple sour milk preparations, salted fish paste, pickles or cold snacks—had their counterparts in the cookery books whose recipes were not meant for the vulgus profanum. Contrary to what has from time to time been suggested, the meat-free "market refreshments" as presented in the Delectable War cannot, thus be identified with the food of the poor, if only because the latter could not afford most of the foodstuffs included in this category.

The fact that the poor were not the exclusive consumers of meat-free dishes implies that the rich ate this kind of dishes, too. Which means, again contrary to what has been suggested, that the rich ate also things other than the meat preparations. True, meat was highly valued and the rich, just as any other social group of the Cairene society, would appreciate meaty dishes. The difference between the rich and those of more modest means was that the former would not enjoy just any meat, while the latter could not enjoy every kind of meat. The meat had its hierarchy in which the kind mattered. As illustrated by the narrator of *Delectable War*: "There was a monarch of powerful sway, called 'King Mutton.' (…) In his service were enrolled only people of dinars and dirhams. He had a vizier, called the 'Meat of Goats,' poor men came to him only if they grew richer and stronger. He also had an

Ziada and S. ʻAbd al-Fattāḥ ʻĀšūr, Cairo 1941, II/1, p. 196; Ibn Taḡrī Birdī, *An-Nuǧūm az-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa-l-Qāhira,* Cairo 1929-, IX, p. 58.

For references to *ǧubn maqlī* see, for example, ʻAbd al-Laṭīf al-Baḡdādī, *The Eastern Key. Kitāb al-ifādah wa'l-iʻtibār of ʻAbd al-Latīf al-Baghdādî,* London: George Allen and Unwin 1965, fol. 48r, p. 193; Al-Maqrîzî, *Sulūk,* III/2, pp. 826, 842; III/3, p. 1124; idem, *Ḫiṭaṭ,* II, p. 425; Ibn al-Uḫuwwa, *Kitāb maʻâlim al-qurba fī aḥkām al-ḥisba,* Cairo 1976, p. 207; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'iʻ az-zuhūr fī waqā'iʻ ad-duhūr,* ed. M. Mostafa, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag 1960-75, III, p. 186; IV, pp. 276, 293, 379; V, pp. 270, 282, 357; Jean-Léon Africain, *Description de l'Afrique,* tr. de l'Italien par A. Épaulard, Paris: Libraire d'Amerique et d'Orient 1956, pp. 504, 517; Muṣṭafà ʻAlī of Gallipoli, *Muṣṭafà'Alī's Description of Cairo of 1599.* Text, Transliteration, Translation, Notes by Andreas Tietze, Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 1975, p. 44; Antonius Gonzales, *Voyage en Egypte du Père Antonius Gonzales, 1665-1666,* Cairo: IFAO 1977, p. 189.

emir, called 'Beef', whom every rich man appreciated in case he grew poor."[15] Whoever enjoyed appropriate means would then go for mutton, the most expensive meat in the market, and would rather not eat beef.[16]

As for goat meat, apparently unappreciated and relatively cheap, it seems to be one of the most crucial elements for reinterpreting the whole story. In the narrative, goat meat plays an important part in the "meat camp" generally identified with the "rich food camp." As a matter of fact, had the identification of the "meat camp" with the "rich food" camp been correct, it would inevitably mean that the goat meat was a rich men delicacy. From what is said in *Delectable War*, and from what the other sources say, however, it comes out that this was not the case. Of the entire collection of Arabic-Islamic recipes, very few suggest to use goat meat as an ingredient.[17] Moreover, even the market inspector's manuals which contain instructions referring to the bazaar cooks, do not mention goat meat as an actual or suggested ingredient for any dish. All these manuals say about this kind of meat is that the butchers should mark it with saffron and avoid mixing it with other meats. Goat meat, like camel meat, or like sheep heads or trotters cooked in the market, was the food of those with rather meager income, those who could not afford beef, let alone mutton. Meaty as it was, goat meat by no means belonged to the menu of the rich. In other words, one would never find it in the King Mutton's camp had this camp been indeed identical with the "rich food camp."

Summing up, reading *Delectable War* in terms of allegories which reduce the meaning of the tale to a conflict between the food of the rich and the food of the poor, or high and low cooking, seems to be pointless in the

[15] Based on Finkel's translation, which reads: "He had a vizier, called the 'Meat of Goats,' to whom no poor man came but he fortified him and supplied his want"; *King Mutton*, II, p. 1; Arabic text in: Marín, *Sobre alimentación*, pp. 87-88.

[16] According to Ibn al-Uḫuwwa, the difference between the mutton and all other kinds of meat consisted in that the mutton was healthy, while other meats were detrimental, particularly for the sick; Ibn al-Uḫuwwa, *Maʿālim*, p. 173; also Ibn Bassām al-Muḥtasib, *Nihāyat ar-rutba fī ṭalab al-ḥisba,* Baghdad 1968, p. 44.

[17] *Kanz al-fawā'id fī tanwī' al-mawâ'id (Medieval Arab/Islamic Culinary Art),* ed. Manuela Marín and David Waines, Beirut: Franz Steiner 1993, p. 79, n. 199, and a few recipes in which meat of the suckling kid is called for; see Charles Perry, *The Description of Familiar Foods (Kitāb waṣf al-aṭʿima al-muʿtāda),* in: *Medieval Arab Cookery,* pp. 320, 355, 374, 377, 378. Meat of the suckling kid was sometimes recommended for health concerns; see, for example, Michael Dols, *Medieval Islamic Medicine. Ibn Riḍwān's Treatise "On the Prevention of Bodily Ills in Egypt"*, Berkeley: UCP 1984, p. 132; *Al-Wuṣla il-l-ḥabīb fī waṣf aṭ-ṭayyibāt wa-aṭ-ṭīb,* Cairo: Dâr al-Kutub, MS Ṣinâʿa 74, fol. 110a.

context of the medieval Cairene environment. First, the rather limited circles of the rich on the one hand, and the army of the poor on the other, were not the only strata of the Cairo population. Second, since the rich were not the only ones to consume meat, the "meat camp" cannot be identified with the "rich food camp." Similarly, since many of the "subjects" of the King Honey's vegetarian kingdom were delicacies expensive enough to be beyond the reach of "paupers", the non-meat *ḥawāḍir as-sūq* cannot be labeled as the "food of the poor." Moreover, the fact that the "market refreshments" were available in the market place did not imply that they could not be appreciated by the elites. This rule also worked the other way round: many of the numerous items listed in the tale as belonging to the King Mutton meaty domain were easily available from cook shops, the "royal mutton" included.[18]

In other words, medieval Cairo was by no means comparable to a manor whose lord ate juicy roasts and *foie gras* pâtés while his poor peasant serfs had to be happy with crusty dark bread and onions. Similarly, the Cairene *Delectable War* was not the Bruegelian battle between the Carnival and the Lent,[19] nor was it a European medieval calendar whose illuminations contrasted details of daily life at opposite ends of the social scale.[20] Having found that *Delectable War* could not have been patterned after "rich man food-poor man food" scheme, one has no choice but to simply take it for what it really is: a dispute over the superiority of one category of food over another. In fact, the titular "war" between the meat and the non-meat foods, or between the meat that was *the* food, and the non-meat foods that were but snacks (or "refreshments," if one prefers to use Finkel's interpretation of the term *ḥawāḍir*), must have reflected some ongoing controversy about whether the meat-free snacks could be considered a real food or not.[21] In this context, Delectable War may be comparable to European "Tale of the

[18] See, for instance, chapters on roast meat sellers (*shawwā'ūn*) in *ḥisba* manuals by ʻAbd ar-Raḥmān Naṣr aš-Šayzarî, *Kitāb nihāyat ar-rutba fî ṭalab al-ḥisba,* Cairo 1946, p. 30 (Engl. trans. R. P. Buckley*, The Book of the Islamic Market Inspector,* Oxford: OUP 1999, p. 54) and Ibn Bassām, *Nihāya,* p. 37.

[19] Cf. the argument put forward by Rodinson, "Studies," p. 115; also van Gelder, *God's Banquet*, p. 98.

[20] See Phyllis Pray Bober, *Art, Culture and Cuisine: Ancient and Medieval Gastronomy*, Chicago, London: UCP 1999, pp. 226-229.

[21] In the *Delectable War* story the "meat camp" army is called "army of foods" (*ǧuyūš al-aṭ ʻima,* Marín, *Sobre alimentación,* p. 117), which suggests that the adversary "non-meat camp" was formed of something not necessarily acknowledged as food.

Four Offices" by the French XIV-century poet Eustache Deschamps. With the title "offices" being the kitchen, cellar, bakery, and saucer, the "Tale" constitutes a mock-rhetorical encounter in which each of the "offices" is endowed with the gift of speech so as to attack the others and proclaim its own superior worth.[22]

Indeed, in the Arabic-Islamic culture, vegetarian dishes were not really dishes. While constituting a rightful part of the Arabic-Islamic medico-culinary tradition, never became a rightful part of the Arabic-Islamic cuisine. Considered a therapy for invalids,[23] they were, in fact, nothing more than that. Nothing can probably reveal their position better than the Arabic term designating them, "*muzawwarāt*." As "*muzawwarāt*," or "counterfeit dishes," they only simulated or imitated those which contained meat.[24] The fact that the title war was finally won by the "meat camp" stresses the meat's unquestionable rights to supremacy and superiority over all the foodstuffs. It finally and definitely confirms that the meatless edibles did not deserve to be called meals, and that they were nothing but *hors d'ouevres*, snacks, or refreshments. What the *Delectable War* says is that it was only the meat that truly counted on the table and that Cairo was as carnivorous as the rest of the Arabic-Islamic world of the Middle Ages.

[22] See Jack Turner, *Spice: The History of a Temptation*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf 2004, pp. 107-8.

[23] See Charles Perry, "The Description of Familiar Foods (*Kitāb waṣf al-aṭ'ima al-mu'tāda),* in: *Medieval Arab Cookery*, p. 283; see also David Waines and Manuela Marín, *Muzawwar*: Counterfeit Fare for Fasts and Fevers*,* in: David Waines, (ed.) *Patterns of Everyday Life,* Aldershot: Ashgate 2002, pp. 303-316; Cf. a phrase pronounced by one of the characters of Al-Ḥaǧǧār's *Al-Ḥarb al-ma'šūq*: "Never as yet has a physician prescribed meat for the sick"; p. 97 of the Arabic text in Marín, *Sobre alimentación*; English transl. in Finkel, *King Mutton,* p. 10.

[24] The idea of therapeutic qualities of meatless food first appeared in the Arabic-Islamic culinary culture in two forms, both involving the so-called *muzawwarāt*, or meatless dishes imitating those which contained meat. One, popularized as "the *muzawwarāt* dishes which the Christians eat in the time of fasting," was an import from the local Christian Nestorian tradition of fasting. The other, simply called "the vegetable *muzawwarāt* eaten by the sick," reflected the Greek idea of curing certain illnesses by vegetarian diet. Both seem to have been inserted into the Arabic-Islamic culinary corpus by the Christian Nestorian physicians who, working in III/IX century Baghdad or Gondeshapur, translated the Hippocratic-Galenic medical texts into Arabic. For comments on Christian contribution to the Arabic-Islamic medical tradition see, for example, Dols, *Medieval Islamic Medicine*, pp. 5-9; Emilie Savage-Smith, "ṭibb," *EI*, X.