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Review of: Une histoire culinaire du Moyen Âge by Bruno Laurioux

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tary emphasizes the importance of principles of mathematical thought and the need to find unifying patterns.

Part 1 gives an overview of the text, its commentaries and history, and important critical editions and scholarship (both Chinese and Western), as well as an account of the mathematical language of the text and the particular translation problems it presents. For example (p. 101), the terms translated as the “height” (*zong*, “longueur”) and “width” (*guang*, “larguer”) of a rectangle actually refer to the directions northeast and southwest. The term “triangle” (p. 102) is interpolated throughout Chapter 9 (“right-angled triangles”), but the Chinese term is “hook and thigh” (*gougu*). Part 2 contains a facing-page translation of the text and the commentaries of Liu Hui and Li Chunfeng. An introduction to each chapter discusses important mathematical issues. Each includes illustrations, tables, and detailed footnotes to other mathematical texts and important scholarship. Part 3 contains bibliographies, an index, and Chemla’s extensive and detailed glossary of technical terms.

The authors have given exemplary attention to clear presentation of text, translation, commentary, and apparatus, with the result that the book is accessible to a scientific, historical, or general readership. The covers of the book contain tables of units of measure, dates, and a very clear visual representation of the complex history of the *Nine Chapters* and its commentaries. Clear and thorough footnotes provide cross-references to other recent translations and important scholarly works, seamlessly embedding the present translation in a web of recent critical mathematical scholarship. The glossary provides significant essays on the meaning and history of key terms. For example, the entry for the term *lei* (“category,” “to classify” [pp. 98–99]) presents a detailed history of the meaning of this important term, with references to its use in both mathematical and philosophical literature.

There are some differences of emphasis within the volume. Guo’s introductions (Chs. 1, 5, 7, and 8) focus on resemblances to Western mathematics; Chemla’s (Chs. 2, 3, 4, 6, and 9) often highlight the distinctive characteristics and historical contexts—for example, the discussion of procedures of hypothesis or speculation (“la procédure du supposons” [p. 199]) and relations between mathematics and state finance in the Han (Ch. 6, pp. 475–481; this section contains one trivial typographical error on the reign dates for Emperor Wu [p. 475]). This translation and commentary represents a considerable advance in the understanding of this important mathematical

work. It can be highly recommended to historians of Chinese science, historians of mathematics, and mathematicians with historical and cross-cultural interests.

LISA RAPHALS

■ Middle Ages and Renaissance

Bruno Lauriou. *Une histoire culinaire du Moyen Âge.* (Sciences, Techniques et Civilisations du Moyen Âge à l’Aube des Lumières, 8.) 476 pp., illus., figs., table, bibl., index. Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 2005. €65 (cloth).

European scholars began the serious study of food nearly a generation before the current avalanche of research. Their work was largely inspired by the French *Annales* school, which was committed to revealing the experience of ordinary people over long stretches of time. They believed that the largely unwritten history of foodways should proceed scientifically, using methodologies based on quantifiable data. Since that time, economic history, social history, and a variety of subdisciplines have succeeded in staking a claim among the social sciences. Statistical data are available for research on the modern period, but for the Middle Ages the sources are sparse. Apart from archaeology, food historians must rely on culinary texts: cookbooks, literature, household and trade accounts, dietaries, memoirs, market legislation, and the like. These rarely offer anything more than a partial, anecdotal picture of past food practices—and normally only that of elites. Whether food history can ever hope to approach scientific status, or even thoroughly account for the food of ordinary people, thus remains to be seen.

With these limitations in mind, medieval food scholars have had to employ threadbare quantitative methods as well as more useful qualitative assessments of the historical record. This has resulted in widely divergent opinions and some heated arguments over the basic character of medieval cuisine. Bruno Lauriou points out these dilemmas in the introduction to *Une histoire culinaire du Moyen Âge*, and much of the remainder of the book is a series of polemical forays on a wide variety of important topics, including spices, pasta, the Arab influence on medieval cuisine, and broader changes in taste. Readers should not, however, expect a comprehensive culinary history of the Middle Ages. The title is misleading. Rather, this is a series of essays, mostly previously published but here gathered together in a convenient format. The book is in-

tended primarily for specialists, who may know some of Lauriou's works but not their range and depth.

For a general introduction, Lauriou's *Man-ger au Moyen Âge* (Hachette, 2002) is preferable, as is the work of some of the authors he contends with—Terence Scully's *The Art of Cookery in the Middle Ages* (Boydell, 1995) and Melitta Weiss Adamson's *Food in Medieval Times* (Greenwood, 2004)—and cookbooks such as *The Medieval Kitchen*, by Odile Redon *et alia* (Chicago, 1998), *The Original Mediterranean Cuisine*, by Barbara Santich (Chicago Review Press, 1995), and *Pleyn Delit*, by Constance Heiatt *et alia* (2nd ed.; Toronto, 1996).

The first section of this book offers a medley of starters: a discussion of the earliest medieval culinary texts, including a description and transcription of the fifteenth-century Latin *Le register de cuisine* by Jean of Bockenheim, which is among the most fascinating culinary texts of any era. It lists recipes by the type of person to whom they should be served—whether Roman or German, rich man or ruffian, cleric, rustic, or even whore. There follow articles on the reception of the Roman cookbook of Apicius in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, plus another on culinary Latin. These contain extensive and extremely useful word lists and appendixes. Lauriou is actually one of just a few food historians who work with medieval Latin cookbooks.

Then come the more polemical essays. We are given a statistical breakdown of the frequency and patterns of spice use in medieval cookbooks—again keeping in mind that the sources are relatively scant and do not reflect popular practice. They do reveal national preferences and interesting changes over time, however. Another chapter unravels the fascinating ancestry of lasagna and noodles from antiquity through the Arab world by examining the dietary literature. Other essays examine wine and beer in cookery and stuffings. The final chapters look at broader gastronomic changes, the question of Arab influence, taste preferences in various European regions, and the connections between late medieval Catalonia and Renaissance Italy. While the book does not offer a complete analysis of medieval cuisine, it meticulously addresses many of the most pressing questions that concern scholars and makes available in a convenient format the best articles by one of the leading food historians writing today.

KEN ALBALA

Barbara Obrist. *La cosmologie médiévale: Textes et images*. Volume 1: *Les fondements an-*

tiques. 380 pp., illus., bibl., index. Florence: Sismel Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2004. €72 (paper).

In her new book, Barbara Obrist (CNRS/Paris) reviews the classical foundations of early medieval science, with a special emphasis on scientific diagrams and illustrations. One hundred thirty-four excellent photographs accompany her text, sixteen of them in color. Observing that Western science at its base was essentially visual, she stresses the importance of mechanical models, globes, and drawings as tools of ancient cosmology. The reader may recall the complex machinery of the universe described by Plato at the end of *The Republic*—Obrist asserts that Plato was describing a working model. None of the models has survived, there remain only a few of the celestial globes, and the drawings are all medieval copies. Obrist is interested in tracing the survival of classical concepts into the Middle Ages but also in imagining what the original depictions must have been like. She places scientific illustrations into three categories: geometrical proofs, simplified pictures or graphic presentations of data, and illusionistic or figurative types, such as the personifications of the planets or constellations. The first type virtually disappeared in the early medieval period, but the simplified image, often adapted from this, appeared in many medieval manuscripts about science. Some of these were separated from their original context, and some were modified, either to reflect new interests of the copyist or owing to a lack of understanding of the original. A good example is Isidore of Seville's "figura solida" in *De natura rerum* (613). It was supposed to depict the relationships of the four qualities of the four elements (earth, water, air, and fire). Originally a cube, it morphed into two squares standing side by side, with the original connecting lines lost and the point as well. Other illustrations, such as those in Macrobius's *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* (430–440), were more fortunate, and Obrist believes that there is a clear transmission of these from their origin to the Middle Ages.

Early medieval science usually receives little attention in accounts of the history of science. Certainly it was not a creative period of scientific thought, but Obrist points out that there was an ongoing tradition stretching from the Greeks right through to the Carolingian Renaissance, with both texts and images on the physical composition of the universe and the causes of natural phenomena. The sphericity of the universe, its centering on the earth, the sphericity of the earth itself, and the functioning of gravity are ideas