

A Mixture of Sugar and Tail Fat: 17th Century Recipes for Pastry and Medicine

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Context

This contribution consists of three different recipes found in a miscellany in the Esad Efendi Collection in Süleymaniye Library (Esad Ef. 3479). The date of the miscellany and recipes is not specified. The first recipe is for a sweet sugar pastry (*şeker börek*) and the other two are for medicines for a dry throat and hypochondria respectively. The pastry recipe was written on the edge of the page and some of the ingredients and instructions are missing (possibly due to a cut during bookbinding?). However, the recipes for the medications are complete. They mostly contain plants. While gargling, a practice also found in modern medicine, is recommended for a dry throat, an inhalation made from a mixture of senna, anise, and fennel, known for their calming effect, is recommended for anxiety. These three recipes show the similarity between food and medicine preparation in terms of enumerating ingredients and the provision of brief instructions. The recipes use both accurate and approximate measures, such as a handful and a cup, and units of measurement, like *okka* and *dirhem*.¹

The first recipe is a pastry recipe. Today, although pastries (*börek*) are mostly prepared with cheese, potatoes, spinach, or minced meat, it is still possible to come across sweet pastry recipes such as Laz pastry and Kurdish pastry in Anatolia that are just like this sugar pastry. Pastry is a food made over a wide range of geographical areas and each society makes its own type of pastry. The basic component of pastry is the dough and the filling, whether sweet or savory is placed between this dough. More extensive research on sweet and savory pastries and perhaps more new recipes discovered in manuscripts may give us more information on changes in tastes from the Ottoman Empire to the present day. These days butter and oil are used in pastry instead of tail fat, so it is difficult to find a pastry like the one in the miscellany. However, this is not the case for the recipes for medicines, as the ingredients in them are still used today in herbal

¹ A *dirhem* is equal to 3.148 grams although it changes from time to time or from place to place, and an *okka* is equal to 1283 grams. See *Kitâb-ı Mekûlât*, ed. Günay Kut (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2023), 23.

or alternative medicine to treat the diseases mentioned. The miscellany appeals to readers from all eras with these recipes.

Transcription (157a, recipe 1)

Terkīb-i şeker börek

190 m² sükker

400 m daķik-i hāşş

180 m revġan-ı sāde

40 m kıyruk yaġı

[...]³

Cümlesin bir yirde ĥalt idüb muĥkem ova tā ki ĥall ola ba '[dehū]

bādāmı döküb bir miķdārçe şekerle ova ve içine [...]

ķoyub bir tepsi üzerine dizüb furuna ķoy[ub]

[...] ĥar[ā]ret pişürüb çıkara ve's-selām

Translation

Recipe for Sugar-Pastry (*Börek*)⁴

190 *dirhem* sugar

400 *dirhem* pure flour

180 *dirhem* ghee

40 *dirhem* tail fat

[Almonds] (May be forgotten or omitted)

Mix all of the ingredients and rub them well in until they are mixed. Then take the almonds, rub them with some sugar, and put [...] in it. Put on a tray, put the tray in the oven, [...] and bake it. That is it.

² The letter *mim* is the abbreviation of *dirhem*.

³ The almonds might be forgotten or omitted.

⁴ In this recipe the unit of measurement used is *dirhem*. The amount of ingredients used is too much if *dirhem* has no other meaning?

Transcription (158b, recipe 2)

Boğazda olan uruluĐa nāfi ‘ bir ‘ilācdır

Bir avuc arpa bir miĐdār ul urusı bir fincān ‘asel ve bir vakiyye mā ile ab olınub argara olına

Translation

A useful medicine for a dry throat

Boil a handful of barley, some dried rose petals, a cup of honey, and a *vakiyye*⁵ of water and gargle them.

Transcription (158b, recipe 3)

Merāa nāfi ‘ olan mu ‘ālecedir aflet olunmaya

40 direm sināmekī

25 direm ırım artar

5 direm dārīn

5 direm anīsūn

5 direm rāziyāne

Bir miĐli Őeker ile safūf olınub ũ [?] nesem isti ‘māl olınub ũzerine Őıca bir fincān Őu ie

Translation

A useful medicine for hypochondria – Keep it in mind!

40 dirhem senna

25 dirhem cream of tartar / potassium bitartrate

5 dirhem cinnamon

⁵ An ancient unit of weight measurement.

5 *dirhem* anise

5 *dirhem* fennel

Dilute with some sugar, inhale deeply three times and after that, drink a cup of hot water.

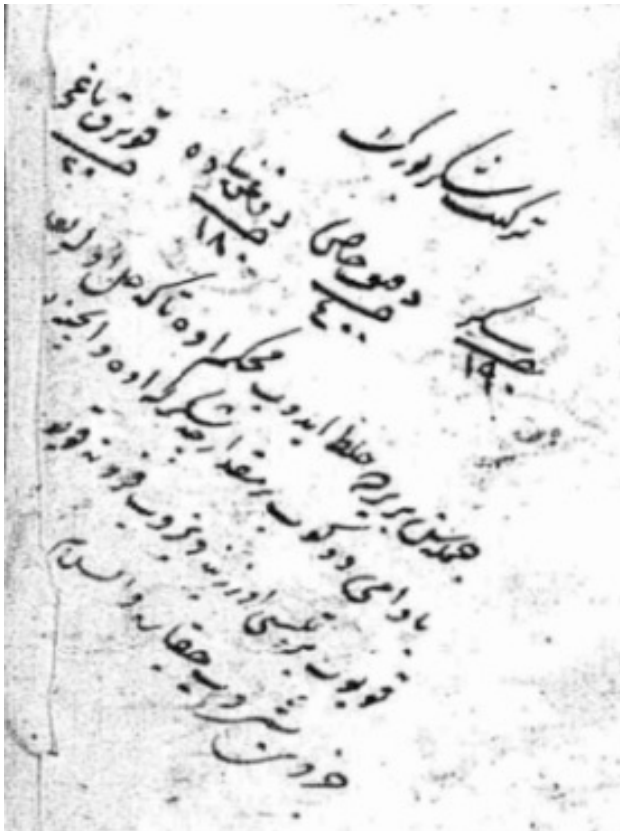
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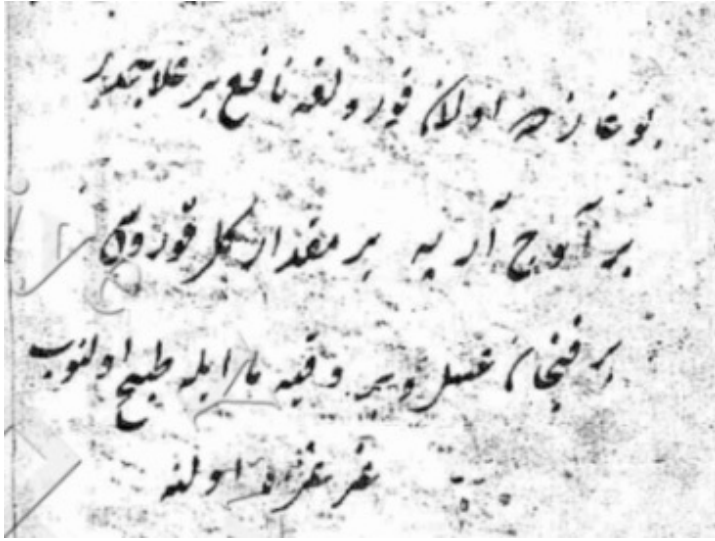
Günay Kut (ed.). *Kitâb-ı Mekûlât*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2023.

Facsimilia

Recipe 1



Recipe 2



Recipe 3

