



# Repast

Quarterly Newsletter of the Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor

## FEASTING AND FASTING IN CLASSICAL GREECE

by Alison Burford Cooper

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**N**o comprehensive cookery book has survived from ancient Greece— only titles and scattered quotations. So how do we know anything about Greek food?

Clues are provided by a wide variety of incidental references in records of sacrificial rituals and historical, scientific, and medical literature. There are also the satirical representations of gastronomic extravagances and stinginesses intended to raise knowing laughter in productions of Classical comedy. However, translating the Greek terms for both the ingredients and the form of a given dish is not always a simple matter, so that some vagueness clouds the subject.

### Peasant Kitchens and Larders

The fantasy meals described in Greek plays indicate what the general public dreamed of being able to eat. The real-life diet of many people was that of farming peasants, not of an urban middle class. Their cuisine was defined mainly by what their own farms and gardens produced— cereals (barley and wheat), vegetables (roots, pulses, greens, herbs), fruit, olives, vines, all of which was supplemented by honey and wild plants.

Aromatic herbs and scented honeys were even more characteristic of Greek cookery in antiquity than they are now. Many of its other ingredients resembled those of today's eastern Mediterranean cuisine, except that there were no citrus fruits (apart from an aromatic but inedible variety), eggplants, or sugar (all of these were introduced later from Asia), and no tomatoes, potatoes, or sweet peppers (which came from the New World).

Food  
in the  
Ancient  
Mediterranean



Part One:  
**Greece**  
and the  
**Holy Land**

The farming people ate meat when they could get it, but for many households this was only an occasional treat. There was not enough pasture for large herds of cattle, so beef usually appeared only when animals were sacrificed at important festivals, a symbolic portion being burned and the rest divided out by the local butchers at public expense. Cow's milk was available if someone's plow-animal calved. Sheep and goats provided most of the milk and cheese, and they too were butchered only on occasion, so as to protect the milk-yield.

The family pig was the main source of meat, although commercial piggeries were known. Other edible meats included horse, donkey and dog, and hunting supplemented the meat supply with deer, boar, hare, rabbit, even fox and hedgehog. Cicadas, grasshoppers, and snails were on some menus. Domestic and wild fowl for the table included poultry, ducks, geese, and numerous game and song birds. Freshwater fish, eels, and so on were available very locally, for Greece is comparatively poor in lakes and rivers. But seafood drew so much attention, especially in the comedies, that it seems to have been an out-of-reach luxury for most people, for whom salt fish or pickled fish was the best they could get.

The Greek kitchen has left just enough traces to suggest that its equipment was very simple. It was mostly portable, so that identifying the kitchen in house remains is not always easy. In some Greek dwellings, often rectangular row houses, the kitchen was located about the middle of the back wall, with a flue and a stone hearth, an earth-packed floor, and perhaps a stone trough or a mortar set in for grinding grain or kneading bread. Portable braziers were popular, however, so that cooking could be done almost anywhere, indoors or out. If there were wooden fittings originally, they have vanished without trace. Water came from the house

# MORSELS & TIDBITS

The annual conference of the Association of Ancient Historians, which took place at the University of Michigan on May 7-9 this year, included two sessions on the theme “Chewing in Context: Food, Drink and Place in Classical Antiquity.” In their call for papers, UM classics professors **Susan E. Alcock**, **Lisa C. Nevett**, and **Sharon C. Herbert**, who together organized these two sessions, noted that “Ancient eating and drinking is a decidedly expanding subfield in our discipline, a trend fed not only by scholarship in the classics *per se* (associated with names such as D’Arms, Davidson, Garnsey, Gowers, Lissarrague, and Wilkins) but stimulated by relevant anthropological and ethnographic studies (for example, by Dietler and Hayden, or Mintz). This session solicits papers that consider food and drink as both ‘good to eat’ and ‘good to think,’ in any period from archaic times to late antiquity.” The presenters were Max Nelson (University of Windsor, ONT), “The Geography of Beer Drinking in Antiquity”; C.L.H. Barnes (Brooklyn College), “*Deliciae Tarantinae*: The Wealth of Food and Roman Tarentum”; Veronika Grimm (Yale University), “Athenaeus and his Roman Dinner Companions”; Zinon Papakonstantinou (University of Oregon), “Laws and Drinks: A Temperance Movement in Archaic Greece?”; Nancy Demand (Indiana University), “Mundane Medicine: The Hippocratic Doctor as Cook”; and Rosemary Moore (University of Iowa), “Eating for an Audience: Roman Military Command and the Presumption of Austerity.”

The Middle East Theme Semesters (Winter and Fall 2004), organized by the International Institute at Schoolcraft College (Livonia, MI), have included two illustrated public lectures related to food history. *Repast* editor **Randy Schwartz** presented on Mar. 24 “From Porridges to Imperial Feasts: Islam and the Foods of North Africa,” and longtime CHAA friend **Carlo Coppola** spoke on Apr. 14 about “Middle Eastern Influences in Western European Cuisine.” Using recipes supplied by the presenters, Schoolcraft’s renowned Culinary Arts program provided exemplary food samples for both audiences.

Writer and CHAA member **Pat Cornett** attended the Symposium for Professional Food Writers, held Mar. 17-21, 2004 at The Greenbrier resort in White Sulphur Springs, WV. This annual conference was founded in 1989 by **Anne Willan**, president of La Varenne cooking school in Burgundy, France and a distinguished authority on cooking history. Among the seminars included this year was “Biting into Historical Food Writing,” led by Anne and fellow food historians Mark Cherniavsky, Barbara Haber, and Laura Shapiro. More information about the conference series is available at <http://www.greenbrier.com/foodwriters/about.html>.

“A Feast of Words: Rare Cookbooks from the Collection of **Anne Willan** and **Mark Cherniavsky**” is an exhibit running Mar. 5 – Aug. 2, 2004 at Copia: The American Center for Wine, Food & the Arts, in Napa, CA. Providing insight into foods and cookery through five centuries, the exhibit includes such rare specimens as Bartolomeo Scappi’s 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Italian cookbook. French and English examples from the same period illuminate the early national differences in food and culture. For more information, call 888-51-COPIA.

CHAA founder **Jan Longone** is curator for the exhibit, “The Ice Man Cometh... and Goeth,” running Jun. 7 – Oct. 1, 2004 at the William L. Clements Library, UM, Ann Arbor. The exhibit will explore the American ice industry from early New England pond ice harvesting to mechanical refrigeration. (Also see Calendar, page 12.) For more information, call 734-764-2347.

**Elizabeth Driver**, President of the Culinary Historians of Ontario (CHO), informs us that the University of Guelph Library has launched a website devoted to its Culinary Collection, a part of the library’s Archival and Special Collections. The site celebrates one of the premiere collections in Canada for food-history research, and includes “slide shows”— in some cases, full-text access— for a growing number of the books. The portal <http://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/archives/culinary/index.html> includes instructions about how to search or browse the collection. Click on the various “recipe tabs” for information about specific portions of the collection and their donors. Click on “Links” to transfer to Driver’s summary of her extensive research in the history of Canadian cookbooks; the CHO’s own website; Cuisine Canada, a national alliance of Canadian culinary professionals; and other related sites. ■

## Repast

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well, or the nearest public fountain. The usual fuel was charcoal, an expense if the immediate area was not well wooded.

Food to be fried or stewed was cooked in terracotta pots and pans on an open fire, brazier, or a kind of stove. This latter was a portable barrel cooker of terracotta, with a draft-hole at the base for the fire under it, and a round open recess at the top in which the cooking pot was set. Remains of countless cooking pots, pitchers, bowls, lids, sieves, strainers, and storage jars have turned up, but neither metal containers nor metal implements have survived.

Vegetables were mostly eaten boiled or raw, but someone recommends, “Smother onions in hot ashes, moisten with sauce, and eat as many as you like.” Beets might be boiled in vinegar, and leeks boiled or eaten raw; blite (a wild green) and squashes could be boiled—and so on. Fruits were served uncooked or dried; pickles and fruit relishes are not mentioned.

### Bread as the Staff of Life

“First grind your grain”— thus began many a cook’s day, kneeling over the work as statuettes portray. Many portable grindstones have been found on house sites. Barley was the principal grain, widely eaten by rich and poor alike as *maza*— the grains were first parched, then ground and kneaded with water into a fairly solid “cake” and eaten, uncooked. Enriched versions included wine or milk. Gruel was also popular, as were boiled puddings of wheat or barley flour with milk— sheep’s, goat’s, mare’s, ass’s, or cow’s— and honey, salt, wine, or herbs.

Breads of barley and wheat flour, leavened and unleavened, came in various forms. So-called flat breads, of either fine-ground sifted flour, wholemeal, or coarse-ground oats, were highly thought of, but we have no real idea what they were like— whether hard and crisp, chewy, or limp. Leavened bread might be made in animal-shapes for certain ritual offerings; a “mushroom-shaped” loaf coated with poppyseed, oil, and coarse meal was baked to a good color “like that of smoked cheese” (about which we know nothing). Occasionally other flavorings were added, such as suet; honey and oil; cheese or milk; and salt. In a “twist bread,” pepper, milk, and oil or lard were added.

Bread could be baked on a warm hearth or even on a fire-heated patch of floor. The fire would be pushed aside, the dough set down under a terracotta dome, and the hot ashes heaped over it again. “Ashbread” was perhaps cooked directly on or in the warm ashes. Some breads were toasted on spits over the fire. Large loaves were baked in ovens of terracotta, flat-bottomed, domed and open-fronted; they were set over a brazier, whose heat could be easily regulated by an experienced and watchful baker. Built-in ovens are not known; nor have any palatial or commercial bakeries yet been identified.

Translations often refer to breads and even *maza* as “cakes,” and they were, insofar as they might contain oil, honey, poppyseed, or flax seed. But a “flatcake” including “fruit” unspecified was not a fruitcake in our sense, and

“cheesecake” probably resembled *focaccia* more than anything else. Yet if you could have “hot toasted bread and flat breads hissing when honey is dropped on them,” why yearn for anything more?

Cereals could be used in other ways: one of the few detailed recipes to survive shows quite well that Greek cookery had its more complicated side, while yet staying with basic processes and ingredients. This recipe for stuffed fig-leaves called for the finest wheat flour, which was cooked in water (proportions not given) and then kneaded with soft cheese and “a few” eggs. The dough was then encased in fig-leaves, coiled within an enclosure (whether of wood, papyrus, or linen isn’t certain), and cooked in a meat broth until done. “Then it is lifted out, unwrapped and thrown into a frying pan of boiling honey until it is golden-brown; it is then laid on a plate and honey, either from the pan or fresh, is poured over.” Was this sort of dumpling a dessert, or an appetizer, or an in-between dish? Nobody says.

### Meat and Other Extravagances

Meat, most often pork, was boiled— plain, to judge by the silence on other ingredients— or roasted (grilled or broiled) and served with “sauces.” The contents of these sauces are a mystery. There is a disparaging reference to “the spiced-gravy-making people of Delphi” who “trimmed the meat of the sacrifice, cooked it and served it in spiced sauces” (but not curry!), no doubt to disguise the age and size of the portions. One ingredient might have been silphium, a plant whose juice was added with vinegar to a dish of “paunch [pork belly] passed round at Ptolemy’s feast.” Silphium was imported by the jarfull from Libya (where it has long been extinct) into Athens and elsewhere, being much esteemed for its flavor as well as its medicinal powers. If it was expensive, then a little doubtless went a long way, since it seems to have resembled asafoetida.

Meat cookery dealt with every part of the animal, and herbs probably were extensively used to make all the odd bits palatable (as dill, fennel and parsley still do in *mayeritsa*, the Midnight Easter soup of lamb’s intestine, liver, lungs, and heart). Liver might be wrapped in caul, sweetbreads boiled, and spleen stuffed (with herbs?) and baked. Pigs’ feet were served with melted cheese, and sausages with honey.

The most extravagant meat dish we hear of formed just one course of a huge wedding banquet: a whole roast pig, stuffed with roast thrushes, warblers, and ducks. The actual cooking would not have been complicated, only the putting-together of the finished dish, which included puréed peas poured over eggs, oysters and scallops, and a roast kid alongside.

Birds were roasted on spits or stewed. Eggs were fried, soft-boiled or hard-boiled, and also added to fancy dumplings, as mentioned above. They were included in a dessert “of honey-cakes, sesame-cakes, milk-cakes and a hecatomb of eggs,” and could embellish an appetizer: “All the beauties of the constellations were on it— fish, kids, the scorpion... while slices of egg represented the stars.” Some

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authorities recommended goose eggs, but others thought peacocks' eggs superior to both goose and hen eggs. Only the extremely rich kept peacocks, for ostentation not for roasting.

Fish cookery was taken seriously. One philosopher-gastronome allowed that fish was better fried than stewed, and insisted that sea-perch, turbot, "even-toothed fish" and "jagged-toothed fish" should not be sliced, "or the vengeance of the gods will breathe upon you. Bake and serve whole." Big polyps should be boiled after beating, but smaller polyps were better baked (how?). Squid could be done in breadcrumbs, or stuffed with ground meat (and stewed?). Salt fish or mackerel "pickled when three days out of the water" could be stewed in oil, wine, and silphium—surely a pungent dish. Shellfish were well known—a satirist plays on their popularity as well as Athenian stinginess in picturing a dinner consisting of two sea urchins, ten cockles, a small piece of sturgeon, some garlic, and a wine dip.

At the other end of the scale is the banquet of 29 appetizers, 20 kinds of fish, 30 assorted breads, fruits and vegetables, seven kinds of shellfish, and 10 different birds. Similar spreads include eels, squid, lamb, sausage, boiled foot, liver, rib, "a vast number of birds, cheese with honey on it, and a portion of beef," "snowy-topped barley cakes" (flour-sprinkled?), "a tankerful of soup," "a soused ray of perfect roundness," "little kettles full of shark and stingray," shrimps, "a hot entrail and intestine of a home-grown pig," hot dumplings, "boiled meat ends," "snouts, heads, feet and a tenderloin spiced with silphium," jugged hare, cockerels (young roosters), partridges, ring doves, bread, honey and curds, and soft cheese. Here, vegetables and fruit are apparently too cheap to be worth mentioning.

### Lectures from the Doctor

None of these feast dishes is totally unreasonable in itself, and even the comic effect of heaping up one food after another probably reflects the popular concept of what a really good meal should be— a variety of dishes to go at. But views on pleasurable eating overlapped with theories, of which there were many, about nutrition and correct eating.

One follower of Hippocrates criticizes that

cooks prepare for men dishes of ingredients that disagree while agreeing, mixing together things of all sorts, from things that are and things that are not the same, to be food and drink for a man. If the cook makes all things alike there is no pleasure in them; and it would not be right either if he were to compound all things in one dish.

Elsewhere he remarks that a meal should include "sharp, moist, sweet and salt." He offers that "foods from groats boiled or fried in honey and oil are heating and windy," and bad because "in one place are fat, sweet and ill-assorted ingredients which should not be cooked in the same way." This was surely no more popular than his view that "stale and putrid things are easier to digest."

A true connoisseur, this same writer notes, should know the property not only of a food itself but of its place of origin— for the sake of health, not flavor. A good diet must

keep the basic elements— dry, wet, cold, hot— in balance, both in what one eats and, thereby, in the body itself. The diet should also be adjusted as the seasons change. Thus, in winter one eats a lot of bread and roast meat, but very few vegetables, and drinks little, whereas in summer, all foods should be soft— meats boiled, barley-cake wet, and vegetables raw.

Certain diets are prescribed for specific weaknesses. Someone who has overeaten should take "warm fermented bread in dark wine or pork broth, fish boiled in acrid wine, well-boiled pigs' feet and fat roast pork— but lay off sucking pigs and puppies and kids." Even someone unable to digest food properly is recommended baked bread, fish in sauce, boiled pork, boiled ears etc., fat meats roasted, acrid salt foods, piquant sauces, grapes and figs— "and a small lunch." Neither of these prescribed diets seems well-suited to the condition being treated.

In any case, these prescriptions were surely the concerns of the rich, who could afford to diet on quantities of meat. The less affluent lived on things like *maza*; dried figs; millet-and-honey bars, "nourishing food for hard workers"; or sesame and honey, the emergency provisions that divers once rushed to some Spartan troops stranded on an island. When the Athenian army went on campaign, millers went too, not to make bread but to grind the basic raw cereal for the troops' meals.

The real-life feasts of ordinary people would have resembled at best one recorded family dinner to celebrate a birth, which included "a slice of toasted cheese from northern Greece, cabbage boiled in oil, grilled lamb chops, ringdoves, finches and thrushes, cuttle-fish, sprats, polyps and wine not over-diluted." In Sparta, renowned for the awfulness of its food, a public feast supposedly consisted of bread, cheese, a slice of paunch or sausage, dried figs, and beans. The neighboring Arcadians were able to provide in addition entrails, hash, broth, wine, and two slices of meat; young men with hearty appetites were allowed more broth and bread— but *not* more meat. Plato's prescription for a simple country meal— bread, cheese, salt, olive oil, vegetables, wine, figs, and roasted acorns— reflects therefore not a philosopher's austerity-program but real-life Greek eating. ■

*In our Fall 2004 issue:*

### Food in the Ancient Mediterranean Part Two: The Roman Empire

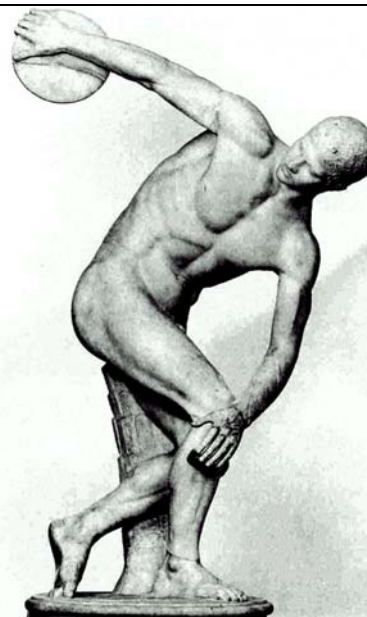
- Charles Feldman on stews, sauces, and other blended Roman foods
- Philip Zaret on the production and use of *liquamen* (*garum*) in ancient Rome
- Randy Schwartz on the Roman food industry in North Africa.



# DIET AND TRAINING OF THE ANCIENT OLYMPIANS

by Louis E. Grivetti

*Prof. Louis Evan Grivetti is based at the University of California-Davis, where he teaches Nutritional Anthropology and other courses in the Department of Nutrition. His Ph.D. field research in the 1970s focused on social aspects of food use among tribes in Botswana. Since then, his studies of the history and culture of nutrition have taken him not only across Africa but to every other continent, as well as to numerous ethnic groups in North America. He recently created an exhibit, "America the Bountiful: Classic American Food from Antiquity to the Space Age" (Peter J. Shields Library, UC-Davis). He has written and lectured extensively on ancient Greek and Roman food and health, including a presentation on "Diet, Training, and Ergogenic Aids: The Evidence from Antiquity" given last October at the IOC-sponsored VIIIth Olympic World Congress on Sport Sciences in Athens, Greece. This spring and summer, Dr. Grivetti is on sabbatical leave at Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, and Harokopio University, Athens.*



related, while the origins of the discus event ("hurling a lump of iron") remain obscure (Homer, *Iliad* 23:256 - 24:6).

The initial Olympiad, which was held at the sanctuary to Zeus at Olympia in 776 BCE, crowned only one victor (Sextus Julius Africanus, *Victor Lists*). Over time, many types of sport were incorporated into these Pan-Hellenic games, which were timed to mark religious festivals. By 573, they were being held every two or four years at each of four sites: Delphi, Isthmia, Nemea, and Olympia.

## Physical Requirements of Athletes

Heralds traveled throughout the Greek-speaking world and "called" the athletes to Olympia. Pausanias of Lydia wrote that adult male athletes were required to swear to Zeus that "they had adhered strictly to their training for ten successive months" (Pausanias, *Description of Greece* V:24:9-10). Once the period for the Olympic games was announced, athletes assembled there for a 30-day training period in advance of the games, a practice that might have served as a filtering mechanism to weed out "less proficient" athletes (Golden, 1998: 16).

Body type and physical conditioning were the primary factors for success in ancient competitions. Greek trainers used cues of strength, size, speed, and body shape to select the athletes and to match them to specific events:

Athletic excellence is defined in terms of strength, size, and speed, for to be swift is to be strong. One who can move his legs rapidly and in long strides makes a good runner. One who can grab and grapple makes a good wrestler. One who can thrust away his opponent by a blow of the fist makes a good boxer. One who excels in both boxing and wrestling makes a good *pankратиast* [combining the two events]. But he who excels in everything is fit for the pentathlon (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1361B).

Galen of Pergamum (2<sup>nd</sup> Century CE) was a physician who made important and wide-ranging commentaries on health, nutrition, and exercise, extending the work of his predecessor Hippocrates of Cos. In reporting on the training techniques of athletes, Galen condemned immoderate practices:

Hippocrates said something else which is liked by all: "Healthy training is moderation in diet, stamina in work." But athletes over-

**W**hen the Olympic athletes of the world gather in modern Athens this summer, food, dietary supplements, training, and psychology will all play important roles in separating winners from other participants. But these factors also were important for athletes of the Pan-Hellenic games of antiquity. This article explores what can be learned about the diet, physiology, and training of the ancient Greek athletes.

Elite athletic competition, because of its intense physiological requirements, provides especially fertile ground for the study of historical attitudes and practices related to health and nutrition. A variety of surviving Greek and Latin texts throw light on this subject. In addition to dietary and training-related issues, they also document social issues of sport, such as winning at all costs and social readjustment after retirement from competition. These latter factors, however, lie beyond the scope of the present article and are discussed elsewhere (Applegate and Grivetti, 1997).

Athletic competition in ancient Greece had roots in mythology, where gymnastics, running, and wrestling were prominent themes. The mythical Theseus is credited with the development of weight-lifting, wrestling, and bull-leaping (a form of gymnastics); when he walked from Troezen to Athens to reclaim his birthright, for example, he is said to have wrestled with and defeated the giant Cercyon by leverage and wit (Plutarchus, *Lives: Theseus* 15:1 - 20:3). Suitors of Atalanta, daughter of Schoeneus, king of Scyros, were required to run a race against her: if successful, the prize was marriage—but if the suitor lost, the prize was death! (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10:4:585).

The transition from mythical to historical accounts of athletic events begins with Homer (c. 900 BCE), who in his epic stories of the Trojan War describes a competition held at the funeral of Patroklos, a slain Greek warrior. In the funeral games dedicated to him at Troy, the Achaean heroes competed in eight events: archery, boxing, combat (sham close-combat in military gear), discus, horsemanship, javelin, running, and wrestling. Seven of these eight events obviously were military-

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**ANCIENT OLYMPIANS** *continued from previous page*

exert every day at their exercises, and they force-feed themselves, frequently extending their meals until midnight. Hippocrates also said "Excess is the enemy of nature." But athletes pay no attention to these or others of his wonderful sayings which they transgress, and their practices are in direct opposition to his doctrines of good health. Thus athletes' bodies are in good shape while they are competing, but as soon as they retire from competition degeneration sets in. Some soon die, some live longer, but do not reach old age. Many athletes with well-proportioned limbs are made exceedingly fat by their trainers who take them and stuff them with blood and flesh. Indeed, the faces of some are beat up and ugly, especially of those who have practiced the *pankration* or boxing... But perhaps their strength is good for warfare? Euripides will tell us, for he said no: "Do men fight battles with *diskoi* in their hands? They are weaker than newborn babies" (Galen, *Exhortation for Medicine* 9:14).

Galen wrote a second treatise that suggested exercise, like all things, should be conducted in moderation, and that training should be based upon finesse. He argued against running as a component of an athlete's training program and wrote that serious athletes should shun this activity because running overworked specific parts of the body while other areas (i.e., muscle groups) remained untrained. In contrast, Galen recommended an approach to training through ball-handling and ball-related exercises, and claimed that all body parts were then exercised equally (Galen, *On Exercise with a Small Ball* 5: 899-910).

Lucian of Samosata, on the other hand, recommended that athletes run in sand and jump over ditches, combining long-distance and speed workouts:

We train young men to run, getting them to endure long distances as well as speeding them up for swiftness in the sprints. This running is not done on a firm springy surface but in deep sand, where it is not easy to place one's foot forcefully and not to push off from it, since the foot slips against the yielding sand. We train them to jump over ditches or any other obstacles and we train them to do this even when they carry lead weights as large as they can hold (Lucian, *Anacharsis* 27).

Philostratos of Lemnos, who flourished after Pausanias during the late 2<sup>nd</sup>/early 3<sup>rd</sup> Century CE, described "cross training" that combined endurance activities such as running, short-hard exercises such as weight-lifting, and other activities that included wrestling with beasts:

Some athletes in the past trained by carrying heavy weights, others by chasing hares and horses, or by bending and straightening thick rods of wrought iron. Others yoked themselves with strong oxen to pull wagons, or bend back the neck of bulls, and some did the same with lions. The boxer Tisander from Naxos used to swim around the headlands of his island and went far out to sea using his arms, which in exercising the rest of his body also received exercise themselves (Philostratos, *Concerning Gymnastics* 43). [NOTE: Tisander of Naxos won victory crowns at four Olympiads (52<sup>nd</sup> - 55<sup>th</sup>), 572 - 560 BCE.)]

Philostratos identified the core of traditional Greek athletic training as a four-day cycle of alternating hard-easy days, a system called the *tetrad*:

By the *tetrad* we mean a cycle of four days, each one of which is devoted to a different activity. The first day prepares the athlete, the second is an all-out trial; the third is relaxation; and the fourth is a medium-hard workout. Exercise of the first day is made up of short, intense movements that stir up the athlete and prepare him for the hard workout to follow on the next day. This strenuous day

is an all-out test of his potential. The third day employs his energy in a moderate way, while on the day of the medium workout [or last day], the athlete himself practices breaking holds and preventing his opponent from breaking away (Philostratos, *Concerning Gymnastics* 47).

### The Shift Toward Meat Diets

It is safe to conclude that most athletes in antiquity were sons and daughters from wealthy families. Wealthy family origins allowed support of athletic training, and the associated access to better dietary patterns could have established the physiological foundation for competitive advantage during athletic competition later in life. The hypothesis has been advanced that there were few if any elite athletes among the poor (Golden, 1998: 160).

Texts that identify actual food patterns of ancient Greek athletes are rare. Among the first is the account by Diogenes Laertius of Cilicia, who flourished during the early decades of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century CE. He speaks of the emergence of a meat-based diet for athletes:

Pythagoras is said to have been the first to train athletes on a meat diet. The first athlete he did this with was Eurymenes. Formerly, [athletes] had trained on dried figs, moist cheese, and wheat (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* 8:12). [NOTE: Eurymenes of Samos was awarded the olive crown of victory at the 62<sup>nd</sup> Olympiad (532 BCE), but it is not certain in which event.]

Laertius's text, however, is controversial. Pythagoras of Samos, the famed philosopher, was a vegetarian. He was born c. 582 BCE and competed at Olympia in 564 BCE at the age of 18 (Wright, 1963: 537). Olympic victor lists report that an athlete named Pythagoras from Samos was awarded the olive crown at Olympia for boxing during the 48<sup>th</sup> Olympiad (588 BCE). If both Pythagoras's birth date and the Olympic victor list are correct, then clearly this athlete cannot be the philosopher/vegetarian. It could be, therefore, that credit for introducing meat to the diet of athletes was due not to Pythagoras the philosopher/vegetarian, but to another with the same name, perhaps an athletic trainer. Inspection of the victor list reveals the names of three other athletes named Pythagoras who won events at Olympia: Pythagoras from Sparta (victor of the *stadion* or foot race in 716 BCE), Pythagoras from Mantinea (victor of the boy's *stadion* in 464 BCE), and Pythagoras of Magnesia (or possibly Maiandros) who was victorious twice in the *stadion* (300 and 296 BCE).

Adding to the controversy is the report by Pausanias (a near-contemporary of Diogenes Laertius), who suggested that another should receive credit for the shift to a meat-based diet:

The record of Dromeus of Stymphalos as a long-distance runner was exceptional; he won two victories in the *dolichos* [long foot-race] at Olympia, the same number in the Pythian games, three at the Isthmian, and five at the Nemian. He is said to have first thought of eating meat as part of his training diet. Until then, the food for athletes was cheese fresh out of the basket (Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 6:7:10).

Philostratos's treatise on athletic training also contrasted early and contemporary athletic diets:

These athletes [in olden times]... their food was bread made from barley and unleavened loaves of unsifted wheat. For meat they ate the flesh of oxen, bulls, goats, and deer; they rubbed themselves with the oil of the wild olive. This style of living made them free from sickness and they kept their youth a long time. Some of them

competed in eight Olympic games, others for nine; they were also excellent soldiers (Philostratos, *Concerning Gymnastics* 43).

circuit" once received the honorable title *periodonikes*. To achieve this feat once was notable; ten times—unimaginable!]

### Softness and Gluttony?

Philostratos also described how athletic training and popular attitudes toward athletes changed through the centuries. He lamented that the men of his time had become "civilians" instead of soldiers, lazy instead of energetic, soft instead of tough:

[Since] the Sicilian style of fancy food [recently has] gained popularity, the guts went out of athletics and more important, trainers became too easy on their pupils... Doctors introduced permissiveness... [and] gave us chefs and cooks to please our palates. They turned athletes into gluttons with bottomless stomachs. Doctors fed us white bread made of ground meal sprinkled with poppy seeds, and introduced the eating of fish, contrary to previous medical practice... They also introduced [to athletes] the use of pork [and] a collection of wonderful theories (Philostratos, *Concerning Gymnastics* 44).

That ancient Greek athletes ate considerable quantities of food is well documented. Some passages appear plausible when compared against food intake requirements of elite athletes of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century:

For all who go in for athletic contests are taught to eat heartily in connection with their gymnastic exercises (Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophists* X:413:C);

Are you speaking to a religious deputation, or to contestants? I am speaking to people who eat a great deal, as is the way of men in training (Achaeus, *The Games*, cited by Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophists* X:417:F - X:418:A).

Other texts, however, identified athletes and other Olympic competitors as gluttons with hyper-inflated food intakes:

Theagenes, the athlete from Thasos, devoured a bull all alone [i.e., by himself] (Poseidippus, cited by Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophists* X:412:D). [NOTE: This Theagenes won two Olympic crowns, one for boxing at the 75<sup>th</sup> Olympiad (480 BCE), and the second for the *pankration* at the 76<sup>th</sup> Olympiad (476 BCE)];

Milon of Croton used to eat twenty pounds of meat and as many of bread, and he drank three pitchers of wine [at one sitting]. And at Olympia he put a four-year-old bull on his shoulders and carried it around the stadium; after which, he cut it up and ate it all alone in a single day (Theodorus of Hierapolis, *On Athletic Contests*, cited by Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophists* X:412:E-F). [NOTE: Milon of Croton, one of the greatest wrestlers of all time, won his event six times at Olympia: the boys' wrestling crown at the 60<sup>th</sup> Olympiad (540 BCE), and subsequent victories in the next five Olympiads (532 – 516 BCE)];

Herodorus, the trumpeter of Megara, was only three and a half cubits tall [i.e., five feet three inches], but strong in his ribs; he would eat six measures of wheat bread and twenty pounds of whatever meat he could find; he would then drink two pitchers of wine [i.e. nearly 6 quarts], and could sound two trumpets at one and the same time (Amarantus of Alexandria, *On the Theater*, cited by Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophists* X:414:F). [NOTE: In addition to athletic events, each of the games also hosted parallel competitions in such performance arts as theater, oratory, singing, and musical composition (lyre, trumpet, etc.). Herodorus of Megara was the most renowned trumpeter in the ancient world. During a 36-year period (328-292 BCE) he won crowns at Olympia 10 times in succession from the 113<sup>th</sup> through 122<sup>nd</sup> Olympiads. Even more significant, Herodorus won the "circuit of the games" (i.e., at Olympia, Delphi, Nemea, and Isthmia in successive years) ten times in succession. Athletes who won "the

Experienced athletes in antiquity (as today) sometimes obtained competitive advantage over opponents through keen observation. Philostratos identified several visual cues that revealed an opponent's excessive consumption of food and drink:

You can recognize an athlete who overeats by his thick eyebrows, gasping breath, and prominent collarbones, as well as rolls of fat around his waist. Those athletes who drink too much wine have an excessive paunch and too much drinking is discovered by a fast pulse (Philostratos, *Concerning Gymnastics* 48).

### Medicinal Plants and Stimulants

The ability to subvert and manage pain during the course of competition would have been a challenge, and sometimes made the difference between winning and losing. Aelian, writing in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> Century CE, described pain management in boxers and revealed how important it was for injured athletes to not let opponents know the pain they suffered:

Eurydamas of Cyrene won the boxing, even though his opponent knocked out his teeth. To keep his opponent from having any satisfaction, he swallowed them (Aelian, *Various History* 10:19). [NOTE: Eurydamas of Cyrene appears on the Olympic victors list as a boxer. The Olympiad and year are not legible.]

No surviving texts confirm use of medicinal balms, droughts, or lotions by athletic trainers, and no records identify specific compounds used to manage pain. Alcohol (wine) would have been available, but overindulgence by athletes was not recommended. Opium would have been available, but there is no evidence for use. Dioscorides recommended applications of different types of soils and plants to reduce soreness/swelling of nodes and joints. While these texts do not state that such compounds were used by athletes or applied by trainers, the conjecture may be advanced that clever trainers would have known of such possibilities. Products recommended included: dust from the floor of a wrestling school (Dioscorides, *Herbal* I:35), and concoctions of henbane (*Hyoscyamus niger* or *H. albus*) smeared on the body (Dioscorides, *Herbal* IV:69). Theophrastus identified herbs grown in Thrace that, when applied to cuts, stanching the flow of blood, but he made no direct linkage between their use and the care or treatment of athletes (Theophrastus, *Enquiry Into Plants* IX: 15: 3).

Athletic trainers also could have used other plants or plant products for their presumed stimulant or endurance-enhancing properties. Included in the Mediterranean flora are several species that when attenuated and prepared as medicines, could have provided modest to powerful effects on the physiological systems of ancient athletes, among them: dandelion, hellebore, various mushrooms, nightshade, pennyroyal, and purslane (Theophrastus, *Enquiry Into Plants* IX: 15: 1-8 through IX: 16: 1-9).

### "Keep Away From Desserts"

Athletic success is predicated upon a blend of genetics, training regimen, diet, and intangibles. Exactly what part each played in producing Olympic champions in antiquity (or today in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century) cannot be determined. It may be that in antiquity (as today), the intangibles of motivation, desire, and

*continued on page 11*

# MILK PRODUCTS OF ANCIENT ISRAEL

by Daniel S. Cutler

*The following are excerpts from Daniel Cutler's The Bible Cookbook: Love of Food in Biblical Times Plus Modern Adaptations of Ancient Recipes (William Morrow & Co., 1985), about which the author addressed our group at our April 1985 meeting. Mr. Cutler studied the lands of the Bible at the Midrasha College of Jewish Studies (Southfield, MI) and at Hebrew University (Jerusalem). He earned a B.F.A. at Wayne State University (Detroit) and an M.S. at the University of Michigan, and has been employed for 20 years as a medical illustrator at the UM Medical Center. The excerpts below appear by permission of Mr. Cutler, who holds sole copyright to the book.*

Although, as mammals, all people begin life with a diet of milk, few cultures esteem it as food for adults as do those of the Middle East. A Czech anthropologist, Alois Musil, documenting the life of the Rwala tribe of Bedouin Arabs at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, recorded:

Milk is the chief nutrient of the Rwala. Many families live exclusively on it for months at a time, they suffer hunger when there is no abundant pasture and the camels accordingly have little to eat.<sup>1</sup>

The nomadic Hebrews, long before Mosaic law promulgated dietary restrictions, probably also prized the milk of their camel herds.<sup>2</sup> An allusion to camel's milk is made in a story of the patriarchs. Before re-uniting with his brother, Esau, Jacob sent a reconciliatory gift that included "thirty milch camels and their colts" (Genesis 32:15).<sup>3</sup>

Another observer of desert nomads recorded:

The Bedouin speak thus of the several kinds of milk: "Goat milk is sweet, it fattens more than strengthens the body; ewe's milk very sweet, and fattest of all... ." Camel milk is they think the best of all sustenance...<sup>4</sup>

All the commentators with first-hand experience have been moved to one remark: camel's milk has a powerfully purgative effect on the uninitiated gut; some people are incapacitated for days after their first draft. Even some Bedouin children never accommodate to it. They get pegged with a taunting nickname.<sup>5</sup>

As they do for present-day Bedouins, flocks of sheep and goats provided nourishing milk throughout the biblical period. The milk of cows was also well known in ancient Israel. Cattle husbandry presumably followed quickly after the domestication of the powerful wild *Bos primigenius*, a landmark cultural achievement which is thought to have occurred in the Near East sometime around 6000 BC. (A plaque excavated near Ur, Abraham's birthplace, depicts a Sumerian dairy c. 2500 BC. The cow, notably, is depicted being milked from the rear the way sheep and goats are, rather than from the side as cattle are today.) However, cattle were pretty much confined to limited pasture-rich areas of the

country and never figured centrally in the daily nourishment of most people. Most of the dairy products mentioned in the Bible were obtained from the milk of sheep and goats rather than from cows.

## Churning and Curdling

Since butter does not keep well in hot climates, most likely the "butter" of the Bible was clarified. Its preparation involves heating fresh butter to a froth, skimming it, and storing the residue, which keeps well unrefrigerated. Clarified butter, called *samneh* in Arabic cookery, is used in Indian cuisine too, where it is called *ghee*.

First the butter is produced by churning milk in a bag made of leather, usually goatskin. Another ancient and important milk food prepared in the same way is *leben*, a substance very much like a thin and lumpy yogurt (which is a Turkish word). Milk placed in the bag is soon clabbered by the residue culture clinging to the inside. Musil described the process:

The milk is either drunk warm immediately after it has been obtained... or is heated... if it is poured into a leather bag... it is called *leben* even though it may still be sweet. In the bag it becomes sour very quickly.<sup>6</sup>

In order to assure thorough clabbering, the skin is usually shaken, or suspended by a tripod and rocked: "Before dawn I heard... though it was still dark, the goatskin of milk, rocked by one of the women to make curdled milk [*leben*] and butter..."<sup>7</sup>

There is a famous biblical story which features just such a leather-bag milk bottle. In the days of the Judges, when battles for territory were frequent, a contest took place at Mount Tabor in northern Israel. On that day the Israelite tribesmen under Barak and the "prophetess" Deborah routed an army of Canaanite charioteers and infantry. The Canaanite commander, Sisera, fled in the opposite direction on foot. He made his way to the camp of a nomad, a non-Israelite of undetermined loyalties, and was greeted by the nomad's wife, Jael. Uncertain of his reception, Sisera called to her: "Pray, give me a little water to drink; for I am thirsty." So she opened a skin of milk and gave him a drink... (Judges 4:19). Given the fact that milk skins were never washed, let alone sterilized, the "milk" Jael offered Sisera would probably more accurately be called *leben*. Jael's hospitality was a ruse. After lulling Sisera with food and drink, she drove a tent peg through his temples. Details of the battle and Jael's cleverness in dispatching the enemy are described in a fragment of ancient Hebrew poetry called the Song of Deborah: "He asked for water and she gave him milk,/ She brought him curds in a lordly bowl" (Judges 5:25). Here, the Hebrew word *hema* was represented as "butter" in the King James translation, but modern scholars think "curds" more accurately reflects the foodstuff the poet meant. Curds are obtained by separating the liquid whey from the clabbered milk, or *leben*.

## Cheese

The process of evaporating the liquid from the curds can be hastened by heating. When the Rwala Bedouin had any extra camel's milk, "they boil it and from the curds make small cheeses which they eat either dry or stewed with



bread.”<sup>8</sup> Such curds were a standard food item in biblical times. They were featured on the menu that Abraham offered to three dusty travelers: “Then he took curds, and milk, and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them...” (Genesis 18:8).

Curds are listed among the provisions brought to feed King David and his loyal retinue while hiding out from Absalom’s forces after the coup: “...honey and curds and sheep and cheese from the herd, for David and the people with him to eat...” (II Samuel 17:29). It wasn’t David’s first experience with “cheese.” When he was still a shepherd boy tending his father’s flocks, David’s older brothers were in the army fighting under the leadership of the new king, Saul. They were bivouacked on a hillside across the Elah Valley from the Philistine enemy. Jesse, David’s elderly father, sent his youngest with a food package for his boys at the front. He included a gift for their officer: “...also take these ten cheeses to the commander...” (I Samuel 17:18). The Hebrew words here *haritze hehalav* (“slabs” or “slices of milk”) suggest this kind of cheese was firmer than curds. David arrived with the gift in time to hear Goliath’s taunts of the men of Israel, to which he responded with well-known results.

Pliny, the Roman naturalist of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century (he died in the eruptions of Vesuvius in AD 79), in a discourse on lactating mammals details products made from milk. He describes the various cheeses available in Rome, “where the good things of all nations are estimated at first hand,” singling one out for special praise: “...of the cheeses from overseas the Bithynian is quite famous.”<sup>9</sup> The highly praised cheese of Bithynia, a Roman province on the shores of the Black Sea, was specifically forbidden to Jews by the collection of rabbinical commentary called the Mishnah. The reason was that it was prepared from rennet obtained from the stomachs of calves used in heathen sacrifices. (Another Bithynian specialty, the factory-made Roman fish sauce called *garum* or *liquamen*, was also eyed with suspicion by Jews because, unless supplied by a fellow Israelite who could vouch for its contents, it was presumed to have been made from species of fish not permitted in the Israelite diet.)

Also forbidden are cheeses or milk prepared by a Gentile who, unfamiliar with Jewish concerns, might try to improve the flavor of a dairy product by adding some forbidden substance. A 1<sup>st</sup>-Century Jew might have done well to avoid cheese sold by Pliny himself. The Roman wrote: “The curds of the roebuck, hare and goat are praised, but that of the rabbit is the best, and is even a cure for diarrhea...”<sup>10</sup>

Presumably, local cheese was less suspect. The Judaeen cheesemakers were evidently organized into a guild and plied their trade in a valley which ran through Jerusalem, separating the Hill of Ophel (City of David) from the Upper City. Josephus calls this area the Tyropoeon (“Cheesemakers”) Valley. A bridge once spanned the valley, and below the bridge was a secret tunnel through which Roman soldiers could rush to quell the popular uprisings which frequently flared in the Temple precincts.

### Separate Places for Milk and Meat

The prophet Joel lived during the Persian period in Israel, the late 4<sup>th</sup> Century BC. His book begins with a vivid

description of a locust plague that was laying waste to the land, which was slowly being reclaimed in this postexilic period. After a call to repentance and sanctification through service at the rebuilt Temple, Joel expands his vision, describing the locust plague as foreshadowing a Day of the Lord, a day of judgment. An apocalyptic holy war will be followed by an age of wondrous fecundity, “And in that day the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and the hills shall flow with milk” (Joel 3:18).

The language in these passages led scholars in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century to wonder whether the vivid images were derived from some Mesopotamian mythology. There are parallels in Babylonian and Assyrian texts, but they point to nothing more than a similar phraseology current among peoples who had similar ethnic roots. More intriguing were similarities in Greek mythology. The infant Zeus, for example, was described as being fed on curds and honey. The Greeks and Hebrews, those twin pillars on which Western civilization rests, were long thought to have developed in two mutually exclusive spheres.

An Arab peasant changed that thinking in 1924. Plowing his field in northern Syria, near the Mediterranean coast, the farmer accidentally turned up a tomb from the city-state of Ugarit, which had flourished in that spot 3,400 years earlier. The material remains of this rich Canaanite civilization definitely reveal that there were links between the Aegean world and the ancient Near East much earlier than anyone had thought. At the peak of Ugarit’s activity (1400-1200 BC) its merchants dealt with both the Hebrews and the forerunners of the classical Greeks. The great archaeological treasure of the site, however, was a number of clay tablets that shed light on Israelite concepts and practices.

“You shall not boil a kid in its mother’s milk.” The thrice-repeated prohibition (Exodus 23:19 and 34:26, Deuteronomy 14:21), later elaborated by the Jewish sages into a whole system of dietary regulations concerning the separation of meat and dairy products, had long puzzled thoughtful people. As early as the Middle Ages, the great scholar Maimonides speculated: “I think that most probably it is prohibited because it is somehow connected with idolatry. Perhaps it was part of the ritual of certain pagan festivals.”<sup>11</sup>

Maimonides seems to have been exactly right. Among the Ugaritic texts is a libretto, including stage directions, to a religious drama telling of the births of certain Canaanite gods (one pair, the goodly sea gods, were created to be placed gaping with one lip in heaven and the other to earth, sucking up fowl and fish). To the accompaniment of musical instruments, seven times a chorus sang out a recitation, once for each time the sacrificial meal they were describing was enacted on stage:

By the fire, seven times the heroes  
Coo[k a ki]d in milk  
A lamb in butter...<sup>12</sup>

While fragmentary and inconclusive, these lines are believed by scholars to refer to a particular Canaanite rite which the Bible was warning the Children of Israel against emulating. ■

# THE USE AND ABUSE OF FOOD, THEN AND NOW

by Susan E. Alcock

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There were no real food pages in the ancient world. For that matter, there was no press. And for many in the economically underdeveloped societies of Greece and Rome, concerns about food never got far beyond the question of sufficient calories.

In other words, you can see why my remarks were scheduled last in today's event.

Actually, a blast from the past does have some bearing in this context. There were no food pages *per se*— but the ancient world was food-obsessed in a fashion that matches, if not surpasses, our own American scene. There was no "culinary press"— but public food commentary (at least about elite practice) is to be found everywhere, in the words of poets, historians, comedians, politicians. What you ate (or what people *said* you ate) made you or broke you; food choices, perhaps better than any other single index, mapped out the boundaries for behavior in the ancient world.

To illustrate this point, let me tell you four short food stories from classical antiquity, two from the Greek world, two from the Roman. Among the innumerable great and terrible tales I could have chosen, the four are connected by their emphasis on social acceptance (or deviance), and by their overt political spin.

#1. In the city of Athens, more or less around the year 500 BC, if you ate a lot of fish— if you were (as they would say) an *opsophagos*— both your politics and your morals would come into question. To the Athenians, there was, by its very nature, something "fishy" about fish (that's not a new idea). Even worse, the consumption of expensive sea foods broadcast a signal of individual ostentation— an anti-democratic message in a tensely democratic Athens. As a result, political outsiders were labeled as fish-lovers, and therefore mocked as shameless gluttons. The man who gargled in boiling water to "asbestos treat" his throat, allowing him to knock back the fish at table before fellow diners could even touch it: such a man was not a fool (or not only a fool), but a potential dissident, a danger.

#2. Around the same time (mid-first millennium BC), an unusual religious sect, the Pythagoreans, left Greece to establish their own separate colonial community in Italy. Among their tenets was a rejection of blood-sacrifice (the central act of ancient paganism) and a belief in the transmigration of the soul— its movement, with death, from one form of life to another. Various dietary rules were assigned to this sect by later, and normally hostile, sources. Most famous of these rules is an avoidance of the "broad bean": eating the broad bean, to a Pythagorean, was akin either to gnawing on your parents' heads or on someone's testicles— pick your poison. Pythagoras himself, we are told, refused to cross a field of such beans, even while being pursued by an angry mob. Obeying this food taboo, he was butchered at the field's edge.

#3. In the city of Rome, more or less around the year "0," Mark Anthony (of Anthony and Cleopatra fame) was engaged in a deadly competition for political power. His appetites came in for much comment by contemporaries: this was a man who would have eight wild boars cooked, to make sure that at least one was done *al dente* (if that is the correct term, I'm not much of a cook); this was a man who had lost control and vomited his dinner all over political supporters in the Roman Forum. His partner Cleopatra had equally excessive food habits, which were even more deplorable in a female (explaining, in part, why she is one of very few ancient women whose diet came in for public remark). By contrast, their opponent, and ultimate conqueror, the emperor Augustus, liked fruit and bread— whole-meal bread, if you please.

#4. In the tumultuous year of AD 69, the Roman empire had four emperors— one right after another. This was not good. One of the four, Vitellius, sought to make a bold claim about his rule through the medium of a dream meal. He had a vast silver platter loaded up with prized foodstuffs from all parts of his imperial domains: flamingo tongues, peacock brains; goodies brought in from Syria and Spain, from Britain and Egypt. A splendid table indeed. Putting the "world on a plate," Vitellius proceeded to eat the whole thing. As a display of imperial power through individual consumption, this meal takes some beating; and it helps explain the size of the imperial corpse that, shortly thereafter, was dragged, abused, through the streets of Rome.

Four food stories. We can, of course, see here parallels to current food practices and attitudes— for example, from the arrogant purchase of endangered species; to comparing Mark Anthony's appetites with Bill Clinton's jogs to McDonald's; to thinking of those ghastly United States Senate cookbooks, with Spam recipes from all fifty states, as a debased American version of Vitellius's imperial spread. And that's great fun— and one reason why teaching "Food in the Ancient World" is popular with undergraduates at the University of Michigan. More significant, of course, are the ineluctable links between food and power; food and status; food and security.

We are not talking here, however, about a simple case of *plus ça change...* Disconnects exist everywhere between

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USE AND ABUSE *continued from previous page*

then and now. We can critique the ancient “food story” by noting its highly rhetorical, and usually biased nature; the relative invisibility of women and children and what they do with food; the overall neglect of the many who would, at least occasionally, go to bed hungry. To the Greeks and Romans, the more wide-ranging, more democratized discourse of this session on “The Food Page: The Press and Public Policy” would be an alien language.

Finally, there is an apparent disconnect on one very key term. For most of us casual foodies, “diet” means that thing we are always on, that battleground of the paperback bestsellers. In the ancient world, by contrast, diet meant not only what you ate, but your very “way of life”; diet was “what one does *collectively*.” In antiquity, therefore, public food critique was the most profound of all social assessments. Having listened to the speakers today, it seems to me that— though vocabulary and much much else has altered— the “then” and the “now” have this in common. In all its manifestations, the food page matters. ■

ANCIENT ISRAEL *continued from page 9***Endnotes**

1. Alois Musil, *The Manners and Customs of the Rwala Bedouins* (New York: American Geographical Society, 1928), p. 90.
2. Based on Old Testament law, observant Jews cannot partake of the milk or meat of quadrupeds that lack cloven hooves, such as camels, horses, and hares.
3. “Milch” is an obsolete spelling of “milk” that is retained even in some modern translations. All biblical quotes in this essay are from *Revised Standard Version of the Bible* (National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America, 1973).
4. Charles Montagu Doughty, *Wanderings in Arabia*, Vol. 1 (New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1924), p. 56.
5. Musil, p. 89.
6. Musil, p. 89.
7. Harold Richard Patrick Dickson, *The Arab of the Desert: A Glimpse into Badawin Life in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1949).
8. Musil, p. 89.
9. Pliny, the Elder, *Natural History*, XI, 97: 241 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, Loeb Classical Library edition).
10. *Ibid.*: 239.
11. Maimonides, *Guide to the Perplexed*, 3: 48.
12. Ugaritic text 52: 14-15, found in Cyrus Herzl Gordon, trans., *Ugaritic Literature: A Comprehensive Translation of the Poetic and Prose Texts* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1949), p. 59.

ANCIENT OLYMPIANS *continued from page 7*

ability to manage the pain of competition made the difference between winning accolades and olive crowns at Olympia (alternatively gold, silver, or bronze medals in modern times) vs. fading into obscurity. With these thoughts in mind, it is appropriate to conclude this essay with a passage written by the philosopher Epictetus of Hierapolis, who addressed athletes aspiring to be Olympic champions:

You say “I want to win at Olympia.” Look at what is involved both before and after, and only then, if it is to your advantage, begin the task. If you do, you will have to obey instructions, eat according to regulations, keep away from desserts, exercise on a fixed schedule at definite hours, in both heat and cold; you must not drink cold water nor can you have a drink of wine whenever you want. You must hand yourself over to your coach exactly as you would to a doctor. Then in the contest itself you must gouge and be gouged; there will be times when you will sprain a wrist, turn your ankle, swallow mouthfuls of sand, and be flogged. And after all that there are times when you will lose. And you still say, “I want to win at Olympia” (Epictetus, *Discourses* 15: 2-5). ■

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# CHAA CALENDAR

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Saturday, July 31, 2004

Theme Picnic, "Foods of the Presidents"  
3:00 – 7:00 pm at the home of members  
Octavian Prundeanu and Jan Arps  
on Base Line Lake  
(7778 Base Lake Drive, Dexter, MI)  
(further details forthcoming)

Sunday, September 19, 2004

"History of Refrigeration in America"  
by Jan Longone, curator of the exhibit  
"The Ice Man Cometh... and Goeth"  
(Univ. of Michigan Clements Library),  
3:00 – 5:00 p.m. at the Clements Library  
(co-sponsored by Clements Library)

REPAST  
1044 GREENHILLS DRIVE  
ANN ARBOR, MI 48105-2722



Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor

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*First Class*