

Save Ancient Studies Alliance

January 2023 Texts-in-Translation Reading Group

Caro Tresque: Roman and Southern Cuisine

Week 1 (Introduction/ Collards)

Before Reading, [please add to this document some words, phrases, ideas, or dishes that come to mind when you think of Ancient Roman food and food of the American South.](#)

Readings, Pt 1. **(READ THESE FIRST)**

[Edna Lewis: What is Southern?](#)

[Ovid: Metamorphoses](#)

Readings, Pt. 2

[Greens and Pot Likker](#)

Week 2 (Pork and Identity)

Roman Pork:

[A menu or bar tab from Herculaneum c. 79AD](#)

[A grocery list and draft of a letter from Hadrian's Wall, c.100AD](#)

Modern Pork:

[Southern Foodways Alliance Oral Histories Project: NORTH Carolina BBQ](#)

[Southern Foodways Alliance Oral Histories Project: SOUTH Carolina BBQ](#)

Read the Introductions for North and South Carolina BBQ, listening to the interviews with pitmasters is strongly recommended but not required.

[Miller, Adrian "How Did Eating Pork Become a Way to Judge Blackness" *Bon Appetit*. August 2022](#)

As Edna Lewis notes, southern food is fundamentally associated with Black people, history, and culture. However, eating pork sometimes is a subject of debate. This article above not only provides a good outline of the issue, but links to other elucidating online sources, if you wish to learn more.

["Gimme a Pigfoot and a Bottle of Beer"](#)

Suggested listening, a song from a native daughter of Chattanooga Tn.

Week 3 (Labor)

Slavery In the Roman World

[Seneca: Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales, XLVII](#)

[Here it is in Latin](#) if you like

[Petronius Arbiter: The Satyricon](#)

Read as much of Volume Two (chapters 27-78) as you like. The illustrations that come with this addition are wonderful. Pay special attention to the life history of Trimalchio.

As a bit of a fun detail, the two Roman sources almost certainly knew each other, as they were both members of Nero's court. They were also both forced to commit suicide by their patron.

Slavery In the South

[Sen. John C. Calhoun: Speech to the US Senate, February 6, 1837](#)

[Interview with Rachel Adams: Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia. You can find her account on pgs 5-12](#)

One of the reasons I chose Ms. Adams' account was that she lived in Athens, where I live now. I suspect that the house where this interview was conducted [still stands](#).

Further Reading (For the Curious)

- [The Virginia housewife: : or, Methodical cook by Randolph, Mary, 1762-1828; Plaskitt, John, publisher](#) This is the first regional American cookbook. Contains recipes for BBQ pork, okra, gumbo, lemonade, mac n cheese, sweet potatoes and pepper vinegar.
- An account of Dinner at the White House During the Jefferson Administration by Rev. Manasseh Cutler [Read the entry for Saturday, Feb 6, 1802](#). Keep an eye out for a early version of a favorite of southern food.

Blurb about the topic

What do Huey Long and Cato the Elder have in common? Aside from being charismatic and often controversial politicians, both praised the health-giving qualities of potlikker and published their own recipes for the elixir. This is only one of the many surprising overlaps between the cuisines of the American south and the Roman empire. In this reading group we will investigate the ingredients and cultural forces that shaped these two rich culinary traditions. The texts we

will read include selections from Ovid, Cato the Elder, Apicius, Edna Lewis, and contributors to the Federal Writers Project, Slave Narrative Project.

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