

Save Ancient Studies Alliance

Summer 2021 Texts-in-Translation Reading Group

Food & Feasting in the Ancient World

This reading group explores food and feasting in the ancient Near East, focusing particularly on the social aspects of food preparation and consumption.

We will examine a variety of ancient sources, including paintings of feasts, seal impressions depicting banquet scenes, wooden models of bakers and beer brewers, economic documents, instruction and wisdom texts describing table manners, literary accounts of feasting, the world's earliest recipes, and even a cure for a hangover. We will also address how scholars have used archaeological evidence such as animal bones, plant remains, and ceramics to identify and reconstruct ancient feasting practices.

Your SASA Educational Ambassador:

Michael Moore

mmoore@saveancientstudies.org

mtm18@ucla.edu

Dates (6/29-8/17):

Tuesdays @ 2 PM EDT

- Session 1: June 29
- Session 2: July 6
- Session 3: July 13
- Session 4: July 20
- Session 5: July 27
- Session 6: August 3
- Session 7: August 10
- Session 8: August 17

Location:

Zoom Meeting Link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81126773147>

Zoom Meeting ID

811 2677 3147

Zoom Meeting Password:

458842

Week 1 Introduction: How and why should we study food?

“Important themes in the archaeology of food and diversity” in “The Archaeology of Food and Social Diversity” by Katheryn Twiss (pp. 365-375)

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/r1iqcyyn3bebr17/Archaeology%20of%20Food%20and%20Social%20Diversity.pdf?dl=0>

“Food and Drink” from *The Eastern Mediterranean in the Age of Ramesses II* by Marc Van de Mieroop (pp. 134-152)

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/bjuo4d8ozi2p0do/Food%20and%20Drink.pdf?dl=0>

Week 2 Food fit for a king: Cooking and dining in palaces

“The King’s Table: Food and Fealty in Old Babylonian Mari” by Jack Sasson (pp. 179-214)

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/2wlq79pf8gnqwh6/Food%20and%20Fealty.pdf?dl=0>

Primary source readings

- Dining with the Persian king
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/18rihi7mx7ln0rz/Dining%20with%20the%20Persian%20King.pdf?dl=0>
- Montezuma’s table
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/obl480j1ep2mlmp/Montezuma%27s%20Table.pdf?dl=0>

Further reading

“Parnakka’s Feast” by Wouter Henkelman

http://www.achemenet.com/pdf/news/WH15-02-07_ParnakkasFeast.pdf

Week 3 Beer, wine, and drinking in antiquity

“Wine of Egypt’s Golden Age” by Patrick McGovern

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/3cn7i9u8dbdj34q/Wine%20of%20Egypt%27s%20Golden%20Age.pdf?dl=0>

Primary source readings

- El's Drinking Party
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/v0ho4ft1vykie0q/El%27s%20Drinking%20Party.pdf?dl=0>
- Hymn to Ninkasi
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/tnpwz76zadjv8g9/Hymn%20to%20Ninkasi.pdf?dl=0>
- Sumerian drinking song
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/z9owl9x4r2gdkrq/Sumerian%20Drinking%20Song.pdf?dl=0>

Further reading

- "Beer Brewing in Ancient Mesopotamia" by Kathleen Mineck
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/r2a5duk7yxim6l/Beer%20Brewing%20in%20Ancient%20Mesopotamia.pdf?dl=0>
- "A Toast to Ancient Greek Wine Drinking" by Kathleen Lynch
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T24OFbfNNA>

Week 4 Cooking and food preparation

"Food in Ancient Mesopotamia: Cooking the Yale Babylonian Culinary Recipes"

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/jydmqyoa8eb39j6/Food%20in%20Ancient%20Mesopotamia.pdf?dl=0>

Excerpt from *The Pharaoh's Kitchen: Recipes from Ancient Egypt's Enduring Food Traditions* by Magda Mehdawy and Amr Hussein

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/70j8wf5bn0xmgpg/The%20Pharaoh%27s%20Kitchen.pdf?dl=0>

Excerpt from Book 10 of the Florentine Codex: The Cook, the Cacao Seller, and the Tortilla Seller

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/dntg3bubvzp87c8/Florentine%20Codex.pdf?dl=0>

Further reading

- National Geographic: "Watch the Ancient Art of Chocolate-Making"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3I3TFieqlvk>
- Excerpt from *The Classical Cookbook* by Andrew Dalby and Sally Grainger
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/5o5k81rhcw5rq46/The%20Classical%20Cookbook.pdf?dl=0>

Links from group discussion

- <http://pass-the-garum.blogspot.com/2012/10/moretum.html>
- <https://www.romae-vitam.com/roman-bread.html>

Week 5 Seating arrangements, table manners, and entertainment

Excerpt from the Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial (China, Zhou dynasty, 1st millennium BCE)
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/2vo4v1k7mt53127/Book%20of%20Etiquette%20and%20Ceremonial.pdf?dl=0>

Excerpt from the Instructions of Ptahhotep (Egypt, early 2nd millennium BCE)
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/sel7da2z7naee55/Instructions%20of%20Ptahhotep.pdf?dl=0>

Excerpt from *Historia del Nuevo Mundo* by Bernabe Cobo (Inca empire, 15th/16th century)
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/k1asvbssk4ma250/Inca%20Meals.pdf?dl=0>

Further reading

- Dining and Etiquette in the Assyrian court (8th/7th century BCE)
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/stezjk5bbttezsa/Assyrian%20Dining%20Etiquette.pdf?dl=0>
- Hittite festival scenes from Alaça Höyük (Turkey, 13th century BCE)
<https://www.hittitemonuments.com/alacahoyuk/>
- Banquet scene from the Tomb of Nebamun (Egypt, 14th century BCE)
https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=91061§ion=_unit3.3

Week 6 Food and status

“From Greece to Rome: The feasts of Roman dynasts,” *Food and Drink in Antiquity* by John Donahue
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/h99mhtznps21w2x/Roman%20Dining.pdf?dl=0>

Read if you have the time

- Dining and etiquette in the Assyrian court (if not already read for the previous week)
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/stezjk5bbttezsa/Assyrian%20Dining%20Etiquette.pdf?dl=0>

Further reading

- Reclining and Dining (and Drinking) in Ancient Rome
<https://blogs.getty.edu/iris/reclining-and-dining-and-drinking-in-ancient-rome/>
- The Roman Banquet
https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/banq/hd_banq.htm

Week 7 Feasting with the dead

“Feasts for the dead in the ancient Middle East” (pp. 63-94), excerpt from *In Remembrance of Me: Feasting with the Dead in the Ancient Middle East* edited by Virginia Rimmer Herrmann and J. David Schloen
<https://oi.uchicago.edu/sites/oi.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/shared/docs/oimp37.pdf>

Week 8 Everyday dining: How and what did the average person eat?

“Home cooking in the Hebrew Bible,” excerpt from *Food in Ancient Judah: Domestic Cooking in the Time of the Hebrew Bible* by Cynthia Shafer-Elliott

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/m43c6o3micyof3w/Domestic%20Cooking%20in%20the%20Bible.pdf?dl=0>

Further reading

- “Feeding the Citizens,” excerpt from *The Ancient Mesopotamian City* by Marc Van de Mieroop
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/jt3vhm86nbhdlup/Feeding%20the%20Citizens.pdf?dl=0>
- “Venues and victuals among the people,” excerpt from *Food and Drink in Antiquity* by John Donahue
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/zq6ytm7xsa90o/Everyday%20Dining.pdf?dl=0>