IN THIS ISSUE - Food, drink & dining across the ancient world

EAT, DRINK & BE MERRY
FOOD IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

THEME - GARUM, ROME’S FAVOURITE CONDIMENT // THE POWER OF WINE // LUXURY DINING
SPECIALS - ROMAN TOGAS // WAS DIAGORAS OF ATHENS AN ATHEIST? // THE HEROINE ATALANTA
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FOOD & DRINK IN THE ANCIENT WORLD
Eat, drink, and be merry! This issue deals with what people ate and drank in the ancient world and also touches upon dining customs.

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SMELLY AND REVOLTING
Garum is one of those types of food where you don’t really want to know how it’s made.

DEATHS OF EMPERORS
Many Roman emperors died in an unnatural way. Here are ten of the strangest deaths.
You might be looking at the picture to the right and wondering what I am doing there. Let me explain. Jona Lendering, the original editor of Ancient History magazine, has decided to step down for a variety of reasons, including some surgery. We were looking for a replacement until I figured that it might be a good idea to take the helm myself. As one of the original founders of the magazine, co-editor of our preview issue (‘issue 0’), and contributor to the very first issue, I was eager to see what I could do to grow and further develop the magazine.

For the past four years, I’ve been the editor of Ancient Warfare, replacing Jasper Oorthuys back in late 2012. With me managing the store, as it were, Jasper was left to sort stuff out in the Karwansaray Publishers office from an administrative point of view. But with most issues sorted out, Jasper was feeling the itch again to edit, and with Jona leaving, the opportunity presented itself to engage in a mutually beneficial session of three-way musical chairs, as Jasper has called it: I would take over Ancient History while he would again edit the magazine he originally founded in 2007.

Here, I must express my heartfelt thanks to Peter Konieczny, the editor of Medieval Warfare, who has taken the lead on this issue when it came to contacting authors and illustrators, sorting out material, and making sure that it has come together in a satisfactory way, with me looking over his shoulder while also finishing up my last issue of Ancient Warfare (X.6, if you’re curious, on the Year of the Four Emperors). I know from experience that handling two magazines at once is rather gruelling, so I have nothing but the greatest respect for how Peter has handled things. My transition into this new(ish) job has been made a lot easier as a result.

This issue is a bit different from the ones that you may have read before, which is natural when a magazine changes editors. In general, it has been brought more in line with our other periodicals. For example, each article now has more detailed further reading sections (with no need anymore to go online for more information), there’s a longer ‘On the cover’ article on page 58, and most articles are now shorter and more focused. You’ll see further changes in the next issue, including the introduction of two regular departments that I’m taking with me in my move from Ancient Warfare: ‘Hollywood Romans’ (about movies) and ‘Graphic History’ (featuring a one-page comic about a particular event, person, or anecdote).

Most of this issue’s content had already been picked by Jona before he left, but Peter has skilfully filled the gaps that remained, and I was happy to contribute a two-page bibliographic essay. The theme, food in the ancient world, is one that I think we’ll probably revisit in future, but the present collection of articles give a good idea of the kinds of meals prepared by people in the past. For modern cooking enthusiasts, we’ve also included a number of recipes; enjoy!

—Josho Brouwers
Editor, Ancient History
FARMING RICE IN INDIA MUCH OLDER THAN THOUGHT

Previously thought to have arrived from China in 2000 BC, new research shows that domesticated rice agriculture in India and Pakistan existed centuries earlier, and suggests systems of seasonal crop variation that would have provided a rich and diverse diet for the Bronze Age residents of the Indus Valley. It may have developed in tandem with – rather than as a result of – rice domestication in China.

The Indus Valley Civilization, which stretched across what is now Pakistan and northwest India during the Bronze Age, was the earliest people-group to use complex multi-cropping strategies across both seasons, growing foods during summer (rice, millet, and beans) and winter (wheat, barley, and pulses), which required different watering regimes. The findings suggest that a network of regional farmers supplied assorted produce to the markets of the civilization’s ancient cities.

Evidence for very early rice use has been known from the site of Lahuradewa in the central Ganges basin, but it has long been thought that domesticated rice agriculture didn’t reach South Asia until towards the end of the Indus era. The study, now published in the journals Antiquity and Journal of Archaeological Science, found evidence of domesticated rice in South Asia as much as 430 years earlier.

Jennifer Bates of the University of Cambridge, one of the co-authors of the study, explained, “We found evidence for an entirely separate domestication process in ancient South Asia, likely based around the wild species Oryza nivara. This led to the local development of a mix of ‘wetland’ and ‘dryland’ agriculture of local Oryza sativa indica rice agriculture before the truly ‘wetland’ Chinese rice, Oryza sativa japonica, arrived around 2000 BC.

Fellow Cambridge archaeologist Cameron Petrie added that the location of the Indus in a part of the world that received both summer and winter rains may have encouraged the development of seasonal crop rotation before other major civilizations of the time, such as ancient Egypt and China’s Shang Dynasty.

“Most contemporary civilizations initially utilized either winter crops, such as the Mesopotamian reliance on wheat and barley, or the summer crops of rice and millet in China – producing surplus with the aim of stockpiling,” says Petrie. “However, the area inhabited by the Indus is at a meteorological crossroads, and we found evidence of year-long farming that predates its appearance in the other ancient river valley civilizations.”

This variety of crops may have been transported to the cities. Urban hubs may have served as melting pots for produce from regional growers, as well as meats and spices, and evidence for spices have been found elsewhere in the region.

UPCOMING THEMES

Here are some of the upcoming themes we have planned for Ancient History magazine along with the proposal deadlines for these issues:

- March 2017: Athens in the age of Plato (deadline passed)
- May 2017: Royalty in the ancient world (deadline passed)
- July 2017: The end of Antiquity (1 February 2017)
- September 2017: Health and medicine in the ancient world (1 April 2017)

If you’d like to write for one of these issues, please send an e-mail with a short abstract of your proposed article to Josho: editor@ancienthistorymagazine.com

Excavating a pit from which archeobotanical samples were collected at the Indus Civilization site of Masudpur I in northwest India. © University of Cambridge