

dining. Fox frames her ideas around “rules” based on her own observations and her Englishness. They make a nice duo for anyone who wishes to understand the very complicated social and class structure centred on English food. But what both Vogler’s book and Fox’s book miss is perhaps an even more fascinating discussion of Scottish, Welsh, and Northern Irish food. In *Scoff*, Wales is only mentioned twice, both about breakfast - surely there is more to it than that?

To me, the most engaging sections that support the idea of social class centred around food have more to do with etiquette and dining itself. It’s in looking closely at etiquette and rituals where we can see how trends passed through social classes. They do more to advance the class particulars than talking about gravy or ice cream (although those are both quite interesting in their own right). For example, who knew that the upper classes served white bread rolls at their dinner parties and that a defining form of etiquette was ‘whether you knew to work your way through your roll piece by piece, buttering each piece before eating it, rather than slicing the whole thing before buttering it all, as if you had only encountered slice from a loaf’. It’s hard to know how many people still consider these things to be in poor taste or not polite, certainly, there is still a group of upper-class people who rely on the rituals of food and dining to separate themselves. But like a lot of rituals that have been displaced by technology, lack of time or just a mere dis-interest, who knows how long they will last.

Finally, any future immigrant or traveller to the United Kingdom trying to figure out why everyone eats a sandwich at lunch or what to call the evening meal should be handed a copy of this book at their port of entry. It will serve them well.

JESSE DART

Sally Grainger: *The Story of Garum: Fermented Fish Sauce and Salted Fish in the Ancient World*: Routledge, 2021: 301 pp., hardback, £120.00.

Executive summary: Damned expensive and not really copy-edited. But buy it anyway and start reading. It will be making excellent sense by the time you reach page 60 and, believe me, it will get better and better from then on.

Sally, as Oxford Symposium regulars and *PPC* readers will know, is an ancient Roman cook. She is celebrated for her edition and translation of *Apicius* (jointly with Chris Grocock) which replaces all others and which no scholar or historical cook can afford to ignore. She is equally famous for her work in reconstruction archaeology, specifically the recreation of ancient foods, and for her many Roman banquets, in locations as varied and prestigious as the Institut Bocuse in Lyon and the Getty Villa in Raymond Chandler country.

The Roman fish sauces, to which the two names *garum* and *liquamen* belong, are Sally’s life work. Her book examines the evidence for them from all angles: recipes and culinary texts, medical prescriptions, literary references, the rapidly multiplying archaeological finds, and observation and research of the flourishing Southeast Asian fish sauce tradition. Sally can deal with all of this material as, perhaps, no one else can. There is another angle that she certainly does not forget: the experimental recreation of ancient sauces, bringing together all that the

evidence can teach, and, by its success, demonstrating that the right inferences have been drawn.

The book falls into two natural parts, and chapter 8, 'Modern fish sauce experiments', is the bridge between the two. Chapters 1 to 7 survey the categories of evidence that I have just outlined. Chapters 9 to 12 draw on what has been learned thus far to offer new syntheses in the most crucial areas of current research: 'Fishing in the Mediterranean'; 'The infrastructure of fish sauce manufacture'; 'Fish bones as evidence of sauce and salsamenta'; 'Fish sauce amphorae as functional vessels'. These chapters should assist archaeologists and others towards better-founded interpretations of future finds.

I will pick out just a few gems: the analysis of the crucial fish sauce passage in Manilius's *Astronomica*; the full facts about Japanese *ishiri*, very hard to find elsewhere, a modern analogue to the ancient *haimation*; and then the whole of chapter 8; and then an authoritative survey of the archaeologically known 'infrastructure' of the fish sauce industry; and the fish bones; and finally the amphorae, what their inscriptions can tell us, and how their shapes made sense.

When I began to read I was still unsure that there were two different sauces involved and that those two names, *garum* and *liquamen*, denote the two sauces. This in spite of the fact that the *Geoponika*, which I translated in 2013, provides recipes for both (the only source that does): all the other evidence, persistently vague and inconsistent, confused the issue for me as it has done for many others. And I wriggled while reading the first sixty pages, saying to myself 'She's pushing this too hard'. At about that point I realized I had to surrender. I will only say that not all ancient writers of Latin used the terminology as Sally would have liked them to ... But each inconsistency can be convincingly explained. I am persuaded.

I have one quibble, rather with Sally's predecessors than with Sally's own work, but on this one issue I think she takes her immediate predecessors too seriously. Class-based interpretation of human behaviour has rather gone out of fashion in the grown-up world – people have moved on to race and gender – but classicists and classical archaeologists, pedalling far back in the peloton, still find elites all over the place. Even the *garum* shop at Pompeii – a good and thorough discussion by Sally, incidentally – was apparently selling its best sauces to the 'cooks of elite households'. I suppose it was, but never to other cooks or other households? No harm done, as long as arguments are not based on a sharp distinction between elite and other (is that the technical term?) which is a classicist's construct.

And I have a tiny question, best discussed over a future Roman meal: that 'pilgrim flask' from Petra, found still containing little fish bones from the Red Sea. Why do we think it held 'sauce of low value'? To a traveller on hard rations it may have been the most valuable sauce in the world. Why would it have only yielded one sauce before being discarded? Wouldn't the said traveller pour a helping, top it up with brine, and take it for a long day's walk in the hot sun, to get the best out of the little fish still steeping inside?

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