

and relations. None of the younger generation, in his eyes, ever comported himself as befitted a sober and resolute man (or woman) of business. All of them consorted with company too liberal and pleasure-loving for their own good. What this meant, according to his witness at least, was that most small businesses of his acquaintance were frail, fugitive affairs. He did not reckon much on doctors and apothecaries but relied instead on the beneficial effects of long walks in the early mornings and daily sojourns in his garden after working hours. And he gloried in plain food (and local food): 'was content with simple and plaine meat and drinke, such as was the product of our own country, without any sauces, even potatos without butter.' He got up early (4 a.m. in the summer), discounting the efficacy of one niece's housekeeping because she never rose before 8 o'clock. His domestic arrangements reveal that all the important domestic functions were undertaken, in his house at least, by the family, not by servants. Maids were employed to do the heavy work, the brewing and the cleaning but not, it seems, the cooking and the purchasing. He laid great stress on his female relatives' housekeeping abilities. This may have some relevance to our own ideas of who it was who bought books of receipts, even if Stout himself did not hold with sauces. Recommended.

Jeanne E. Arnold, Anthony P. Graesch, Enzo Ragazzini, Elinor Ochs: *Life at Home in the Twenty-First Century – 32 Families Open their Doors*: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, UCLA, 2012: 172 pp., colour photography, hardback, £22.50.

A voyeur's paradise, this book of modern ethnoarchaeology and material cultures dissects and records the interiors and backyards of 32 middle-class, two-income family homes (each with at least two children, of which one had to be under seven years-old – they mostly have a mother and a father too, but two of the households have two fathers instead). The result at least offers me *post hoc facto* justification for publishing a book called *Messy Cook*. In the main, the study confirms our prejudices with regard to the minimal time spent cooking and eating together in 21st-century America (with not a hint of recreational cooking in these homes either), and the crushing dominance of frozen and processed foods. It is also source of the great fact that a meal cooked from scratch only takes 12 minutes longer (38 minutes) to prepare than a meal composed of processed foods. The time saved is in the planning and shopping, not the preparation. It also

underlines the psychological importance of the modern boutique hotel in our conceptualization of leisure and relaxation. The most popular home improvement or modification among these families was the construction of a new master bedroom with a decent bathroom. Conceived as a refuge from the dire chaos of their daily lives (a hope not always realized, alas), the template is invariably the stylish hotel. One is struck by the insignificance of the kitchen, at least as a physical space – even though the room, cramped and chaotic though it may be, was the beating heart of family life. For the record, the feature the archaeologists on this study got most excited about was the use of the refrigerator door for display and information. And the fact that got me most ventilated was the almost universal abandonment of the garden and outdoors, even in a climate as dulcet as California. A charming book which portrays a society consuming too much for its own good.

Lucius Junius Moderatus Columella; Sten Hedberg, translator: *Tolv böcker om lantbruk*. Stockholm: Kungl. Skogs- och Lantbruksakademien, undated [2012?] ISBN 978-91-85205-77-6

To put Columella in context, he lived under the Roman Empire in the mid-first century AD. He came from a wealthy farming family in southern Spain and also farmed in Italy. Columella was in many ways the best ancient Roman writer about agriculture: his ‘twelve books on farming’ are more systematic than Cato’s work, more businesslike than Varro’s, and include a unique section of recipes for farm-prepared foods and preserves.

You may think, if your Swedish is rusty, that you don’t need this new Swedish translation of Columella. English readers have, after all, a Loeb Classical Library edition in three little volumes, published 1941–1955 and still in print, with a better-than-usual English translation by Ash, Forster and Heffner. Don’t jump to conclusions. Here you have not only a new translation but an explanatory glossary of proper names, then an index of plants (Swedish, botanical Latin, classical Latin) with detailed notes, then an index of animals and fish, then a general subject index. And then thirty-two fine illustrations of Roman agriculture from mosaics, tomb reliefs and manuscripts, some of them quite unfamiliar. And then maps and lists of agricultural products of the Roman provinces. And then a collection of twelve illustrated chapters, almost a book in themselves, adding up to a symposium by Hedberg himself and eleven other authors. The subject is Columella and his world: his work in its literary context; farming in