

in all relevant fields is being published year by year: ancient Indian Ocean trade was described 15 years ago as an emerging field, but you couldn't say that now. And partly because we all write a bit too much. But never mind that. Read McLoughlin on ancient travellers; trust Sidebotham on Berenike.

ANDREW DALBY

William Sitwell: *A History of Food in 100 Recipes*: Collins, 2012: 352 pp., hardback, £20.00.

If you like your facts in bite-sized chunks, then this is the book for you! Almost certainly inspired by Neil MacGregor's excellent *History of the World in 1000 Objects*, William Sitwell, food writer and editor of *Waitrose Kitchen* magazine canters through four thousand years of food history from bread and beer in ancient Egypt to Heston Blumenthal's *Meat Fruit* today.

However, the term 'recipes' seems a misnomer, as this is not really a cookery book as most would understand it. Each short chapter begins with a 'recipe', which is used to provide an insight into the position of food at that particular time, and as such, is as much a socio-cultural history as a culinary one.

The recipes are in chronological order beginning with the ancient world and progressing through the Middle Ages, Early Modern, Georgian, Victorian and right up to the current era complete with Jamie Oliver and Delia Smith. Many of the foods discussed have a distinctly British flavour such as Oxo, roast beef, Yorkshire puddings and jam roly-poly, but others are drawn from around the world including the USA and Europe and from all time periods.

The book is liberally cross referenced, and has a useful bibliography and website list. It is well illustrated, using both line drawings and historical documents including advertising material. One delightful illustration from General Electric shows a woman in hat and gloves gazing longingly at an open and empty refrigerator while her husband (in suit and tie) looks on!

Irritating as the jokey, journalese prose can be, William Sitwell has written an accessible book for general readers who may well find some nuggets of food history that had escaped them in the past.

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