

GB-16 CULINARY HABITS AND DIET IN THE MEDITERRANEAN IN ANCIENT TIMES

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45 CONTACT HOURS/3 SEMESTER CREDITS

THIS CLASS MEETS: TUES/THURS, 5-7pm

CONTENTS

The aim of this Course is to provide students with an introduction to the customs and lifestyles of the peoples who inhabited the Mediterranean during Antiquity using their diet, their culinary habits and their consumer practices as points of departure. Diet, despite being an essential feature of everyday existence, tends to be paid little attention within study plans. In overall terms, it provides us with highly valuable information by which not only the dietary norms and economic practices of historical peoples may be reconstructed, but also a different kind of insight may be provided thereby into the ways in which they were organized socially, the kinds of beliefs they held (taboos, rituals, etc.), as well as what may be gleaned concerning their identities. In a definitive way, then, the study of diet allows us to delve into these people's daily lives and, as a result, identify cultural patterns, forms of social integration (and segregation), as well as processes of change (colonization, culturalization, cultural borrowings) which inevitably come to be signalled via domestic habits.

During the Course attention will be paid to the key cultures that spanned the Mediterranean during Antiquity: Egypt, Greece, the Phoenician-Punic dwellers, Rome, and the indigenous populations of the Iberian Peninsula. Advantage will be taken of literary sources, herbal manuals, geographical treatises, while not forgetting the archaeological and anthropological perspectives involved. To this purpose, account will also be taken of data derived from archaeological excavations in terms of contexts of production and consumption (dwelling places, storehouses, workshops, burial sites), together with information gathered from palaeo-ecological studies (seed types, varieties of pollen, animal remains, etc.). The morphology of serving-ware and kitchen utensilies, methods of food preparation, as well as eating habits, will constitute intriguing features of the syllabus content upon which practical sessions will be centered.

METHODOLOGY

Each unit of syllabus-content will deal with one of the cultures indicated above, while a set scheme will be followed each time: a brief historical introduction including basic concepts of chronology and geographical setting, a description of lifestyles and social organization with the further aim of characterizing the diet, eating habits, sources, means of transportation and

storage, handling techniques (the processing of foodstuffs, cookery methods, etc.), exploring in final place the ways in which tables were spread, together with actual eating habits, as a result of the information provided by literary sources and household goods, as recorded in the very contexts where preparation and ingestion took place. Theoretical class sessions, always with visual back-up, will be complemented by practical sessions during which students will be issued with kitchen utensils, tableware, and pottery jugs belonging to the Iberian and Roman periods, which form part of the collection for practical work owned by the University of Seville's Department of Pre-history and Archaeology.

SYLLABUS

Unit 1. Introduction: historical and cultural context.

Subject-content 1. Diet and nutrition in the Ancient World. Social and cultural implications from within the framework of Archaeology and Anthropology.

Subject-content 2. The Mediterranean as ecological framework: regional geographic configuration, physical and environmental conditions, flora and fauna.

Subject-content 3. Produce and products from land and sea. Farming, animal breeding, fishing, hunting, and gathering within the Mediterranean of ancient times.

Unit 2. Chronological and cultural coverage of the culinary traditions of the Mediterranean of ancient times.

Subject-content 4. Cuisine and diet in Ancient Egypt.

Subject-content 5. Cuisine and diet in Greece.

Subject-content 6. Cuisine and diet in the Phoenician-Punic world.

Subject-content 7. Cuisine and diet among the peoples of the Iberian Peninsula.

Subject-content 8. Cuisine and diet in Rome.

Unit 3. The past and present of Mediterranean cuisine and diet.

Subject-content 9. The legacy of the culture of ancient cuisine in present-day Mediterranean cuisine and diet.

Subject-content 10. The patterning of present-day Mediterranean diet and cuisine: regional peculiarities, transformational processes, and borrowings throughout history.

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