



News & Notes

No. 108 March-April, 1987

Issued confidentially to members and friends

Not for publication

DIRECTOR'S LIBRARY
ORIENTAL INSTITUTE
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

FOOD IN ANCIENT EGYPT

The civilization of ancient Egypt left behind mummies, intricate works of art, and immense monuments of architecture, all of which survived millennia. Reliefs from these monuments often depict the preparation and propagation of food, as well as its consumption. The conventional agricultural scenes pictured in tomb after tomb, as well as the hunting and fishing scenes, all attest to the importance of feeding the household.

The reliefs and paintings in the tombs give us a great deal of information about the food and the ways in which it was raised, prepared, and served in ancient Egypt, although no written recipes for food preparation have been discovered. Tomb illustrations show men standing over a spit roasting a joint of meat, fish, or fowl. The women are depicted preparing bread and beer. Small clay ovens, on top of which pots could be placed for simmering, were used to bake the bread. Metal braziers have been found that presumably were used for preparing meat, fowl, or fish.

Fuel consisted of either reeds, charcoal, or animal dung. Olives for olive oil were originally imported, but in the late 18th Dynasty their cultivation was introduced into Egypt. Beef fat, goose fat, and sesame oil were in use, and many herbs and spices (see list at end) were available since they have been found in the cavities of mummies, but the extent of their use in food is not known.

Once the food was cooked it would be piled onto a small table not more than 9 inches high, usually made of stone during the early periods. In the early dynasties all Egyptians squatted to eat their meals. In the later dynasties, the wealthy sat on cushioned chairs with a small table in front of them and were attended by servants. Everyone ate with his hands. A basin and a jug of water stood on a high stand nearby. The water would be poured over the hands to wash after eating.

Near the table or under it might be another jug filled with wine. Wine was the drink of the nobility and of the priests during religious ceremonies. In the tomb of Nakht, (Theban Tomb No. 52, Nina M. Davies, *Ancient Egyptian Painting*, 3 volumes, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1936) there is a painting showing the different phases of wine making.

We assume from tomb drawings that the ancient Egyptians loved to eat, drink, and be merry. Drunkenness could be a desirable state for the feasting ancient Egyptians. A tomb drawing from the 18th Dynasty depicts a maid pouring wine for a lady and the inscription reads, "Drink this and get drunk." The lady replies "I shall love to be drunk."

In spite of their seeming love for food, the Egyptians pic-



tured themselves as slender, elegant people. Very few drawings depict obese people and when they do, it is an indication of age and material success.

The wealthy seemed particularly fond of a fine bread, probably prepared locally by special bakers, but for Egyptians of all classes, beer and bread were the most important staples in their diet. They were always mentioned together in prayers for the dead and are associated one with the other, for bread needed yeast to rise and beer needed yeast to ferment.

While the original yeast was doubtlessly a wild variety, the Egyptians devised a method of controlling fermentation. Baked bread was soaked in water to make a mash. This fermented for three or four days. The liquid was then strained and figs or some other sweetener, like honey or fruit syrup, was added to the water for flavor and to provide the sugars needed for fermentation and the production of alcohol. The froth from the fermenting beer was used in bread to make the dough rise. The process would then continue in a circle as the bread was used again to make mash for the beer.

Which came first, the beer or the yeast bread, is not really known. However, it is known that to ferment grain the complex carbohydrate, starch, has to be broken down into a simple sugar, a process called malting.

When grain is soaked in water the germination process and development of sprouts comes from an enzymatic process that breaks down the starch into sugar. This sugar is the basic food for the development of the sprouts. It is speculated that somehow grain was soaked, probably by accident, producing sprouts. In the presence of yeast the sprouts fermented and the

Continued on page 2



Continued from page 1

first beer was produced. This type of beer, made from malted barley, was the beer of the wealthy and the nobility.

Although the ancient Egyptians made beer and wine, both of which contain alcohol, they were apparently not acquainted with the process of distillation. Therefore, they had no liquor or distilled spirits. The earliest mention of distillation which can be traced occurs in Aristotle's *Meteorologica* dating to the fourth century B.C.

Large herds of cattle were kept, as well as sheep, goats, and pigs. Beef and goat were both eaten, usually cooked by roasting over large pits. Sheep (mutton and lamb) was taboo, perhaps because of association with the ram of Amun. Pork was generally avoided, whether because of possible association with the evil god Set or through a fear of Trichinosis. The exception, however, was the great quantity of pork eaten at Amarna.

In the Old Kingdom wild game formed an important part of the diet, including gazelle and hyena. Perhaps due to over-hunting, these exotic animals disappeared from the menu by New Kingdom times. Otherwise food does not seem to have varied much from the Archaic period to the 18th Dynasty.

Garlic and onions were both available. At times the onion was in favor as a food, but at other times it was considered worthless for eating and was used only as a medicine or for making ointments. Garlic was always popular and tomb drawings frequently portray garlands of garlic.

Honey was important as the major sweetener available for the upper classes and was used in bread, cakes, drinks, and medicine. We know, from many tomb drawings, that the Egyptians kept bees and tended to their hives. Unable to afford honey, the lower classes sweetened their food with fruit juices, probably reduced to a syrupy consistency.

No nuts of any variety were known in Egypt until very late; the almond, pinenut, and walnut began to appear around the time of the Persians. The almond was probably introduced by the Greeks, with the pinenut coming from Syria and the walnut from Persia.

The distribution of food to the Egyptian people was governed by their station or job in life. The peasant had to be content with barley, emmer wheat, cheese, onions, bread, and beer. The rich and noble had a wide and varied diet, including many imported foods, such as pomegranates, olives, small oranges, dates, and foreign wines.

The foods listed below were not all available to the common man but they could be obtained by someone in ancient Egypt.

Legumes: beans, chickpeas, lentils, lupine, peas.

Vegetables: radishes, turnips, artichokes, leeks, lettuce, parsley, cabbage, garlic, onions, cucumbers.

Grains: emmer wheat, sesame, barley.

Fruit: grapes, dates, melons, figs, pomegranates, watermelon, oranges.

Meat: beef, pork, goat, game.

Fowl: duck, geese, pigeon.

Spices: anise, cinnamon, caper, coriander, cumin, dill, fennel, fenugreek, laurel (bay leaf), marjoram, mint, mustard, pepper, rosemary, safflower, saffron, thyme.

Beverages: milk, beer, wine.

Miscellaneous: cheese, bread, carob, olives, fish, honey.

Those who wish to read further about food and drink in ancient Egypt might start with:

William J. Darby, Paul Ghalioungui and Louis Grivetti, *Food: The Gift of Osiris*, 2 volumes, Academic Press, London, 1977.

Leonard H. Lesko, *King Tut's Wine Cellar*, B.C. Scribe Publications, Berkeley, 1977.

Mary Jo Khuri

Illustrations from Nina M. Davies, *Ancient Egyptian Painting*.

LECTURE SCHEDULE

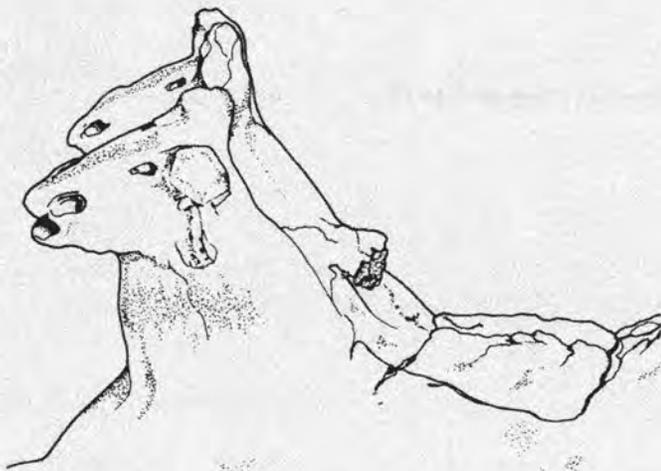
Lectures will be presented at 8 p.m. in Breasted Hall at the Oriental Institute.

Institute members may make dinner reservations at the Quadrangle Club, 1155 East 57th Street, 753-3696 before membership lectures. They will bill the Oriental Institute and we, in turn, will bill you. Please print your name and address at the bottom of your dinner check, as well as signing it, so that we know where to send your bill.

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| April 1, 1987 | John A. Brinkman, The Oriental Institute, <i>The Laws of Hammurabi</i> . |
| April 15, 1987 | Machteld J. Mellink, Bryn Mawr College, <i>East and West in Anatolian Art of 700 to 500 B.C.: Myth, Cult and Kingship</i> . |
| May 6, 1987 | Israel Finkelstein, Bar-Ilan University, Israel, <i>Shiloh Excavations</i> . |
| May 18, 1987 | Annual Oriental Institute Dinner in the Museum. |

"RAMESSES THE GREAT" TOUR

The "Ramesses the Great" exhibition is coming to the Memphis Convention Center this spring. Several museums in Memphis are also mounting related exhibitions, with material on loan from museums all over the world—including pieces from our own Institute collection. We are offering Oriental Institute members a two day trip to Memphis to view this important group of exhibits. Thomas J. Logan, Curator of the Oriental Institute Museum, will present an evening orientation for tour participants before the trip and will also accompany the group to Memphis. We will leave the morning of Saturday, June 13th and return to Chicago the following afternoon. If you are interested in receiving information on this trip, please send a postcard with your name, address, and daytime telephone number to the Membership Office, The Oriental Institute, 1155 East 58th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60637. Because of the current structure of domestic air fares, reservations must be made well in advance of the June departure to obtain the best rates.



Detail of twin rams heads on zoomorphic vessel excavated at el-Qitar and dating to 1500-1300 B.C. (el-Qitar artifact 431).

On May 18th the annual Oriental Institute dinner will be given for Thomas McClellan's salvage work at el-Qitar, a Middle and Late bronze age fortress on the west bank of the Euphrates River. *News & Notes* readers have read about the work at el-Qitar in issues No. 103 and 106 and may also have seen McClellan's article, "A Syrian Fortress of the Bronze Age: el-Qitar," in the new magazine, *National Geographic Research* [2(4):418-440(1986)].

Although McClellan will be excavating at el-Qitar in May, there will be a display at the dinner of photographs and plans of the site. Save May 18th on your calendar now and watch for your invitation in April to an evening for el-Qitar.

ORIENTAL INSTITUTE 1987 TOUR TO TURKEY

August 21—September 10, 1987

Our tour to Turkey will be led by Oriental Institute doctoral candidate Ronald Gorney who lived in Turkey for a year as a Fulbright fellow. He currently spends his summers as a staff archaeologist at the excavations in Ashkelon, Israel. Our tour will begin in Ankara and then proceed east, first visiting the Hittite center at Bogazkoy, through Cappadocia with its wild rock formations and hidden Byzantine churches, to coastal Turkey, providing unparalleled opportunities for viewing the famed Greek cities of Asia Minor: Didyma, Ephesus, Pergamon, Sardis, and legendary Troy. The tour ends in Istanbul, with its famous mosques, the Topkapi Serai Museum, and the exotic bazaar. Since the late summer weather in Turkey will still be hot, hotel pools and the beaches of the Mediterranean will provide an enticing end to many of the days of touring. A complete itinerary is available from the Membership Office. The cost of the trip from Chicago is:

Land arrangements (per person, double occupancy)	\$1935
Single supplement	\$375
Round trip air fare from Chicago (APEX)	\$1217

Plus a \$350 tax-deductible contribution to the Oriental Institute. This includes first class accommodations and almost all meals. A \$400 deposit is required at the time of booking.

Please enroll me/us in the Institute's 1987 Archaeological Tour to Turkey; August 21-September 10, 1987

- Share room (with?)
 Single room
 Send detailed itinerary

Name (s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime telephone _____ Home telephone _____

Enclosed is \$_____ (\$400 per person) as a deposit to hold my/our place, payable to
 ARCHAEOLOGICAL TOURS, INC.

Mail to: Membership Office, The Oriental Institute,
 1155 East 58th St., Chicago, IL 60637 (312) 702-9513.

Of interest to Institute members is a master class, "The Sumerians: Four Days in May," featuring Samuel Noah Kramer. It will take place in Los Angeles from May 8-11 and is co-sponsored by Pepperdine University and the California Museum of Ancient Art. For information, contact CMAA, P.O.B. 10515, Beverly Hills, CA 90213, (818) 762-5500.

FREE SUNDAY MOVIES AT THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE

All films will be shown at 2 p.m. in Breasted Hall

MARCH	1	Iraq: Stairway To The Gods
	8	Egypt: Gift Of The Nile
	15	Megiddo: City Of Destruction
	22	Ancient Sardis*
	29	Preserving Egypt's Past
APRIL	5	Ancient Sardis*
	12	Turkey: Crossroads Of The Ancient World
	19	Ancient Sardis*
	26	The Big Dig
MAY	3	Egypt's Pyramids
	10	Rivers Of Time
	17	The Egyptologists
	24	Of Time, Tombs And Treasures
	31	Iran: Landmarks In The Desert

*This is a special film made to accompany the Sardis exhibition opening March 18th, at the Oriental Institute.

NEW PUBLICATIONS CATALOGUE

The new 1987 catalogue of Oriental Institute publications has been printed. The catalogue lists books currently available from the Publication Sales Office, as well as books which will be published in the coming year. To obtain a copy, please send a postcard with your name and address to the Publication Sales Office, The Oriental Institute, 1155 East 58th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60637.

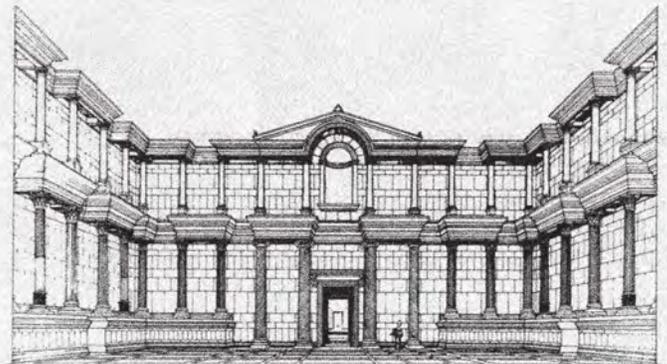
"SKETCHING IS SEEING" WORKSHOP FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AGES 12-18

This six-session drawing workshop will meet on Saturday afternoons from 1-4 p.m. March 21 through April 25. Taught by artist Myra Herr, the workshop will teach students various drawing techniques and give them an opportunity to sketch Museum artifacts. The fee for the workshop, which is supported in part by funds from the Illinois Arts Council, is \$20. Pre-registration is required; call the Education Office, 702-9507, for information or registration form.

EXHIBITIONS AT THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE MUSEUM

"TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF DISCOVERY AT SARDIS" MARCH 18-APRIL 19, 1987

An exhibition of photographs, drawings, watercolors, and text panels, documenting twenty-five years of field excavations at the important site of Sardis in southwestern Turkey, will open in the Museum on March 18th and run through April 19th. Prepared for the silver jubilee of the joint Cornell-Harvard excavations at Sardis, which are co-sponsored by the Corning Museum of Glass and the American Schools of Oriental Research, this exhibition is supported by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. On March 21, in conjunction with the exhibition, the Oriental Institute and the Chicago Society of the Archaeological Institute of America will host a day-long symposium on Sardis.



Restoration drawing of the Marble Court at Sardis in the Severan Age (ca. A.D. 211), D. DeLong, 1967.

"SITE DRAWINGS BY MARTYL: THE PRECINCT OF MUT AT LUXOR" OPENING JUNE 1, 1987

An exhibit of forty works of art by the well-known, contemporary Chicago artist Martyl will be coming to the Museum on June 1st. The drawings, paintings and watercolors were commissioned by The Brooklyn Museum. In the winter of 1985 Martyl accompanied its annual archaeological excavation to Luxor, Egypt, to make the necessary sketchbook drawings and small acrylics on paper of the Theban landscape and of the architectural remains and artifacts unearthed in the temple of the goddess Mut at Karnak. She completed all the works for this exhibit in 1985. In 1986 the exhibition had its first showing at The Brooklyn Museum.

SPRING MEMBERS' COURSES

ANCIENT ELAM

"Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomo`rah, the king of Admeh, the king of Zeboi`im, and the king of Bela . . . went out, and they joined battle in the Valley of Siddim with CHED-OR-LAOMAR KING OF ELAM, Tibal king of Goi`im, Amraphel king of Shinar . . ." (Genesis 14:8)

Long before the spade of archaeologists brought to light Elamite civilization, the West knew its name from Biblical passages. From the beginning of their emergence as a nation state, the Elamites became a force to be reckoned with by their Sumerian, Babylonian, and Assyrian neighbors. For about two thousand years the Elamites often played a decisive role in the shaping of Mesopotamian history and made outstanding contributions to ancient Near Eastern civilization.

Archaeological excavations have shown that the plain of Susiana, in modern Khuzestan, southwestern Iran, was a major Elamite center. Elamite studies have taken on a 'Susa-centric' orientation because that site, as the capital city of Susiana, has been the focus of large scale excavations by the French for over a century. But recent archaeological investigations in regions north and southeast of Susiana have indicated that Elamite polities were even more extensive, complex, and varied than the finds from Susiana plain had suggested.

This course will survey history, art, architecture, and religion of the Elamites from the third millennium B.C. to the beginning of the Persian period. Since from the advent of the Elamites their history became interwoven into that of Mesopotamia, comparisons will be made with different aspects of Mesopotamian civilization.

INSTRUCTOR: Abbas Alizadeh, Ph.D. Candidate at the Oriental Institute, has studied in Iran as well as at The University of Chicago, and has excavated at various sites in Iran and elsewhere in the Middle East. His dissertation concentrates on prehistoric Iran.

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN HISTORY: PART III

This course will treat the New Kingdom period, and is a continuation of the Ancient Egyptian History started in the Fall. Those already enrolled in the series will have priority for the spaces, which are limited, but new class members may be enrolled as space permits.

INSTRUCTOR: Frank Yurco is a Ph.D. Candidate in Egyptology at the Oriental Institute. He has taught numerous courses in Egyptian history and hieroglyphs at the Oriental Institute and the Field Museum.

Classes will meet Saturday mornings 10 a.m.-12 noon March 28 through May 16. Tuition is \$60. Please register by Wednesday, March 25th.

EGYPTIAN HIEROGLYPHS: PART II

This course will emphasize the verbal system of Middle Egyptian. Prerequisite is Introductory Hieroglyphs or consent of instructor Frank Yurco. Call Education Office, 702-9507 for further information.

Class will meet Saturday afternoons, 1-3 p.m. March 14-May 9. Tuition is \$70.

Please note the different starting dates for these courses. For further information on these courses call the Education Office at 702-9507.

Please register me for the course(s)

- Ancient Elam, \$60
 Ancient Egyptian History, III, \$60
 Egyptian Hieroglyphs, II, \$70
 I am a member and enclose a check for the proper amount for the course(s) checked.
 I am not a member but enclose a SEPARATE check for \$25 to cover a one year Oriental Institute membership.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime telephone _____

Please make checks payable to THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE.

Mail to: EDUCATION OFFICE, The Oriental Institute, 1155 East 58th St., Chicago, IL 60637.

COURSE FOR NEW DOCENTS

The Oriental Institute course for new docents will begin at the end of March. The course which meets on Mondays consists of lectures by Institute faculty members on the history, art, and archaeology of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, Anatolia, and Syria-Palestine. Lectures are followed by gallery workshops led by experienced docents.

Docents introduce visitors to the Museum's collection of ancient Near Eastern artifacts. The guides lead a variety of groups including grammar school through college students, art center members, and senior citizens.

There is no fee for the course, but after taking the course docents must be willing to lead tours in the Museum for half a day a week for at least a year. For more information, or to arrange for an interview, call Janet Helman, volunteer coordinator at 702-9507.

THE SUQ

STYLIZED EGYPTIAN ENAMEL JEWELRY

Design, probably taken from the cedar throne of King Tut, depicts the kneeling god of eternity, Heh, with a winged scarab on his head. Made of cloisonné and electroplate, it measures approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ " \times $1\frac{1}{4}$ " and is available in either a red or blue background.



French wire earrings	\$10.50
Key chain	\$ 7.50
Bookmark	\$ 7.00

Members—10% discount
 Illinois residents—8% sales tax
 Postage **\$1.75**

TO ACCOMPANY THE SARDIS EXHIBIT

Sardis, Andrew and Nancy H. Ramage, 24 page color booklet, postage 75¢ **\$3.00**

Color notecard of the Temple of Artemis and the Acropolis at Sardis, postage 50¢ **\$1.00**

Letters from Sardis, George M.A. Hanfmann, postage \$2.00 **\$27.50**

Sardis from Prehistoric to Roman Times, George M.A. Hanfmann, postage \$2.00 **\$45.00**

Members—10% discount • Illinois residents—8% sales tax • Please include proper postage



The Oriental Institute

The University of Chicago
 1155 East 58th Street . Chicago, Illinois . 60637

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID
 BULK RATE
 CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
 PERMIT NO. 1504

Dated Material