Cooking, Cooking Pots, and Cultural Transformation in Imperial and Late Antique Italy

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Abstract
An examination of archaeological and textual evidence for cooking—specifically, cooking pots—in Italy reveals a significant amount of information about transforming status, culture, and identity under the later Empire and Late Antiquity. There was never a “Roman” diet or form of cooking, even under the early Empire. The diet of the poor was often in flux, and depended on local resources, traditions, and economic conditions. Elite cooking, meanwhile, is easily identifiable both archaeologically and textually, and marked by the use of multiple vessels in conjunction to prepare elaborate, sauce-rich meals.

By the fifth century there was a winnowing of ceramic forms and changes in the vocabulary used for cooking and cooking pots. The aristocratic table was transforming, altered by destabilizing economic factors and the moral standards of Christianity. For a time, elite cooking adapted to changing social and economic conditions, an example of cultural continuity in Late Antiquity. The cooking patterns of the poor became increasingly homogenized. This, combined with skeletal evidence that indicates peasants likely lived longer, suggests a growing stability for the rural communities of Italy. New peoples, including Byzantines and Ostrogoths, brought with them distinct cooking traditions.

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at Grasceta dei Cavallari: The Actors and Architecture in Etrusco-Romano Ritual” - Advised by N. Terrenato. Laura Banducci - “Foodways and Cultural Identity in Roman Republican Italy” - Advised by Nicola Terrenato. Angela Commoto - “Environmental Change and the End of Antiquity in Asia Minor” - Advised by Christopher Ratté. Matt Notarian - “Civic Transformation in Early Imperial Latium: An Archaeological and Social History of Praeneste, Tibur, and Tusculum”. Panagiota A. Pantou - “Mycenaean Society Outside the Palaces: A Study of Late Helladic IIB-IIIB1 Corridor Buildings”. Material Culture as an Indicator of Adoption and Resistance in the Cross-Craft and Cultural Interactions Among Greek and Indigenous Communities in Southern Italy: Loom Weights and Cooking Ware in Pre-Roman Lucania Alessandro Quercia, Lin Foxhall. Archaeological Analysis of Roman Naval Warfare in Iberia During the Second Punic War Eduard Ble Gimeno. Sailing Towards the West: Trade and Traders on the Routes Between the Iberian Peninsula and Campania Between the 2nd Century BC and the 1st Century AD Michele Stefanile. Roman Period Theatres in Sicily: a Structuralist Approach Zeynep Aktüre. A Fish Volume 78. Cooking pots and cooking practice English | Français. Papers of the British School at Rome. 11 This also argues against the use of 23B as a ciblanus (Arthur, P., ‘Pots and boundaries. On cultural and economic areas between late antiquity and the early Middle Ages’, in Bonifay, M. and Treglia, J.-C., Late Roman Coarse Wares, Cooking Wares and Amphorae in the Mediterranean (Oxford, 2007), 15–27 Google Scholar, at p. 18). These vessels were used in cooking by inverting them over the food and covering them with burning charcoal, which would have left its traces on the base.