Wine and Feasting in the Ancient Mediterranean

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Overview
The course explores the social significance of the production and consumption of wine, which is characteristic of the early civilizations of the Mediterranean, including western Asia, and is central to different forms of feasting. We will discuss a range of practices of communal wine consumption and feasting, and especially the role of these phenomena in the construction of cultural identities and the manipulation of social relations in select cultures of the mid 2nd to the late 1st millennium BCE. We will also explore the ways in which these phenomena contributed to the development of shared cultural practices across the Mediterranean, but also generated varied social and cultural meanings over wine consumption in different contexts and parts of the region.

The emphasis on communal wine consumption relates to the value of wine in antiquity. This value derives from the uncommon conditions required for the cultivation of the grapevine, as well as the intoxicating and healing properties of wine. It is because of these properties that wine was associated with feasting, cult practices (especially libations), manifestations of power and patronage, and the definitions of aristocratic identity (e.g. through the symposion) in palaces and cities, and sanctuaries and cemeteries of the ancient Mediterranean.

Pursuing a diachronic and cross-cultural perspective, we will reflect on textual accounts and archaeological correlates of ancient Mediterranean cultural practices centered on wine, as well as on social and anthropological theory on feasting. The course will promote transferrable skills and students’ abilities in critical reading, effective writing, the making of inferences from data, and the appreciation of cross-cultural difference.
Course Requirements

In accordance with the Core Curriculum Academic Guidelines for Students, students are required to attend all lectures, participate actively in recitations, complete all readings in advance of the lecture for which they are assigned, and submit all assignments in a timely fashion. Grades will be assigned in accordance with the Core Curriculum Grading Guidelines and weighted along the following lines:

20%  Active participation and attendance
20%  Midterm exam
30%  Final exam
12%  Two reflection papers (each counts for 6%) based on select objects in the Metropolitan and the Brooklyn Museum.
    • Each paper should be 4 pages long, TNR 12, spaced 1.5.
    • Each paper should comment on select objects linked to the assigned general topic; students will select their focus with help by the TAs.
18%  Three creative essays (each counts for 6%)
    • Each essay should be 4 pages long, TNR 12, spaced 1.5.
    • For each essay, you choose one of two assigned topics. Essays will draw from lecture notes and assigned readings.
Class Schedule

WEEK 1 (Sept 2)

1. **W 9/4** Introduction to the course (LDA+AK)

WEEK 2 (Sept 9)

2. **M 9/9** What is wine? Properties of a healing and intoxicating substance (LDA+AK)
   Readings (pp. 48)

3. **T 9/10** Recitation: The ancient Mediterranean
   Readings (pp. 26)

4. **W 9/11** Feasting: Anthropological and archaeological perspectives (AK)
   Readings (pp. 45)
WEEK 3 (Sept 16)

5. **M 9/16** Wine! Social and geographic context(s) of a discovery (LDA)
   
   Readings (pp. 53)
   
   
   

6. **T 9/17** Recitation: The ‘Urban Revolution’
   
   Reading (pp. 26)
   
   

7. **W 9/18** Palace, temple, feasting, and libations for the gods (LDA)
   
   Readings (pp. 33)
   
   
   
WEEK 4 (Sept 23)

8. **M 9/23** Long distance land trade networks: merchants, luxury goods, and wine trade in the eastern Mediterranean of the 2nd millennium BCE (LDA)
   Readings (pp. 48)

9. **T 9/24** Recitation: Drunkenness in ancient Mesopotamia
   Movie:
   - *The Poor Man of Nippur*, the first movie in Babylonian (with subtitles), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxYoFlnJLoE

10. **W 9/25** The Age of the Palaces in the eastern Mediterranean: War, trade, and diplomacy ca. 1600-1200 BCE (LDA)
    Readings (pp. 41)
    Submission of first creative essay

WEEK 5 (Sept 30)

11. **M 9/30** Wine and feasting in the Hittite empire (1500-1200 BCE): the Anatolian core and Levantine periphery (LDA)
Readings (pp. 58)

12. **T 10/1** Recitation: The Uluburun Shipwreck

Readings (pp. 16)
- Pulak, C. 2008: The Uluburun Shipwreck and Late Bronze Age Trade, in J. Aruz, K. Benzel and J.M. Evans (eds), Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C., New York, pp. 289–305.

13. **W 10/2** Greece and the Mycenaean culture of the 2nd millennium BCE (AK)

Readings (pp. 32)

Submission of second creative essay

**WEEK 6 (Oct 7)**

14. **M 10/7** The feasts of Mycenaean kings (AK)

Readings (pp. 55)
15. **T 10/8** Recitation: A Great Feast in a Mycenaean Palace

Readings (pp. 16)

16. **W 10/9** Mid-term recitation

**WEEK 7 (Oct 14)**

**Mon Oct 14: NO CLASS**

17. **T10/15** Mid-term exam

18. **W 10/16** The collapse of the palaces in the ancient Mediterranean ca. 1200 BCE and the emergence of a new world (LDA+AK)

Readings (pp. 40)

**WEEK 8 (Oct 21)**

19. **M 10/21** Anatolia After the empire: New elites, the exclusivity of male wine drinking and a god of the vineyard (LDA)

Readings (pp. 30)

20. T 10/22 Recitation: Representing a new empire: The Palace of Assur-nasirpal II, Great King of Assyria (LDA)
   Readings (pp. 38)

21. W 10/23 Banqueting for a new empire: The wine banquette for the inauguration of the Assyrian Royal Palace of king Assur-nasirpal II (LDA)
   Readings (pp. 35)

WEEK 9 (Oct 28)

22. M 10/28 A Near Eastern culture of feasting spreads West? (AK)
   Readings (pp. 44)

23. **T 10/29** Recitation: A royal funeral banquet between East and West

   Readings (pp. 35)

24. **W 10/30** History and Culture of Classical Greece (AK)

   Readings (pp. 36)

   Submission of first reflection paper

**WEEK 10 (Nov 4)**

25. **M 11/4** Dionysus god of wine (AK)

   Readings (pp. 25)
   - Read the digital entry on Dionysus at:
     https://www.theoi.com/Olympios/Dionysos.html (up to section X. Travels the Aegean…)
   - And compare the associated images:
     https://www.theoi.com/Olympios/Dionysos.html#Gallery
26. **T 11/5** Recitation: Wine and the City
   Readings (pp. 28)

27. **W 11/6** Feasting in Homer’s epics (AK)
   Readings (pp. 45)

**WEEK 11 (Nov 11)**

28. **M 11/11** The Greek symposion (symposium) between aristocracy and democracy (AK)
   Readings (pp. 46)

29. **T 11/12** Recitation: Greek authors on the symposion
   Readings (pp. 25)
   Select Greek texts on feasting and the symposion:
- Homer: Odyssey 20.248-284 (the nobility of Ithaca feasting back-to-back), 8.55-109 (a royal feast in the land of Scheria)

Play the British Museum animation game on the Greek Household and the Symposium: [http://www.ancientgreece.co.uk/dailylife/challenge/cha_set.html](http://www.ancientgreece.co.uk/dailylife/challenge/cha_set.html)

30. **W 11/13** Wine, soul, and mortuary banquet (LDA+AK)

Readings (pp. 42)

**Submission of second reflection paper**

**WEEK 12 (Nov 18)**

31. **M 11/18** Mortuary banquet in Syro-Anatolian context and the stele of Kutamua (LDA)

Readings (pp. 32)

32. **T 11/19** Recitation: Introduction to the Etruscan culture of Italy
Watch the video (50 mins) introducing the Etruscan culture of early Italy:

33. **W 11/20** From Greece to Italy: Etruscan men and women at the symposion (AK)

Readings (pp. 17)
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bvOBB9hP_c (watch the first 7.30 mins)

**Submission of third creative essay**

**WEEK 13 (Nov 25)**

34. **M 11/25** Guest lecture by renown Chef Maria Loi: Foodways and the Ancient Greek Feast

Readings (pp. 24)

35. **T 11/26** Recitation: A philosopher’s symposion

Readings (pp. 25)
Plato’s *Symposium* (excerpts in translation)

**Wed NOV 27: NO CLASS**
WEEK 14 (Dec 2)

36. M 12/2 The spread of wine culture to the western Mediterranean (AK)
Readings (pp. 27)

37. T 12/3 Recitation: The Persians and the Greeks: Military conflict and cultural interaction
Readings (pp. 39)

38. 12/4 Core and periphery of a new empire: The Persian symposium (LDA)
Readings (pp. 22)
http://www.getty.edu/research/exhibitions_events/events/ancient_mediterranean/miller.pdf

WEEK 15 (Dec 9)
39. M 12/9 Feasting with Alexander the Great and his successors: The Hellenistic symposion
(AK)
Readings (pp. 47)
- Borza, E. 1983. The Symposium at Alexander’s Court, in Archaia Makedonia 3,
  Thessaloniki, pp. 45-55.
  Hannestad, and J. Zahle (eds), Aspects of Hellenistic Kingship (Studies in Hellenistic
Civilization 7), Aarhus, pp. 15-27.
- Rotroff, S. 1996. The Missing Krater and the Hellenistic Symposium: Drinking in the
  Age of Alexander the Great, Christchurch, pp. 4-29.

40. T 12/10 Recitation: The funeral banquet across the ancient Mediterranean world
Readings (pp. 31)
- Fabricius, J. 2016. Hellenistic Funerary Banquet Reliefs – Thoughts on old Problems
  Old and New, in C.M. Draycott and M. Stamatopoulou (eds.) Dining and Death:
  Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the ‘Funerary Banquet’ in Ancient Art, Burial and

41. W 12/11 Final recitation

Final exam as scheduled by registrar