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# How to Milk an Almond, Stuff an Egg, and Armor a Turnip: A Thousand Years of Recipes. by David Friedman and Elizabeth Cook.

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a stove rather than in front of a computer, in the end *Four Kitchens* contributes relatively little to the field of professional food writing.

—Neil L. Coletta, University at Buffalo, State University of New York

*Alcohol in Popular Culture: An Encyclopedia*

Edited by Rachel Black

Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2010

xxx + 229 pp. Illustrations. \$85.00 (cloth)

Reading Rachel Black's recent book, one immediately becomes aware of how contested the use of alcohol in the United States has been and continues to be today. *Alcohol in Popular Culture* takes an encyclopedic rather than narrative approach to this subject, but its strength lies in the ways it contextualizes both contemporary and historical uses of alcohol in American culture (the "popular culture" that the book documents, on this note, is decidedly American). In editing this volume, Black succeeds in culling a coherent voice out of her diverse contributors, which include academics and bloggers, ethnobotanists and advertising directors.

The book ranges widely in the history of alcohol it offers readers. I was initially surprised, for example, to find an entry for "African Americans." But that entry provides a fascinating account of African American experiences of alcohol—from legal restrictions on access during slavery to the racially inflected marketing of certain alcohol brands today. The entry also discusses how Prohibitionists leveraged racist fears to garner support for their political agenda. To this point, the book traces the contradictions underlying the regulation, distribution, and consumption of alcohol in American society—contradictions that the Prohibition era draws into stark relief. Almost every entry touches on this era, in which the legal prohibition and popular uses of alcohol were out of step, to say the least. The contributors admirably delineate the historical underpinnings of the Prohibitionist movement, detailing how its temporary success owed as much to an agenda of race and class control as to hopes for national sobriety.

Some entries remain obscure and disconnected from the volume as a whole, however. "Men and Boys Drinking," for instance, will likely be opaque to anyone unfamiliar with critical theory. At one point, the author refers to "the lens of 'hegemonic masculinity'" to explain "the problematic relationship between men, boys, and alcohol" (p.132). In such entries, overly academic diction often pairs with

fairly basic points about the social problems connected to alcohol. The book's other chief weaknesses are a tendency to sloppy errors and a casual approach to citation. While each entry includes references for further reading, in several cases, actual citations would be useful. I found myself wanting evidence for claims like the one made in the "Music" entry that heroin was "more popular than alcohol" for Billy Holiday and Jimi Hendrix (p.137). The book's price also puts it out of reach for most lay readers.

These faults notwithstanding, the book does accomplish what the editor seems to have aspired to: a useful and thought-provoking resource for anyone interested in the social history and popular debates around alcohol use in the United States.

—Matthew Reid, Calistoga, CA

*How to Milk an Almond, Stuff an Egg, and Armor a Turnip: A Thousand Years of Recipes*

David Friedman and Elizabeth Cook

Copyright by the Authors, 2011

164 pp. \$9.00 (paper)

Many translations of medieval cookbooks have been published in printed format in the last few decades by scholars such as Constance Heiatt, Terence Scully, Barbara Santich, Charles Perry, Odile Redon, Françoise Sabban, and Silvano Serventi. Yet an equally interesting crop has appeared electronically, under the aegis of the Society for Creative Anachronism. This book, also available online, is the product of many years of gathering among these folk. On the one hand it is broader than most collections, including many Arabic, and a few Chinese, Icelandic, and Russian recipes, as well as the more familiar English, French, German, and Italian sources—many of which can also be found online now in their entirety. Many are borrowed from printed translations, others transcribed and translated by Society members, replete with colorful pseudonyms. Some of the translations are excellent, some not. Some use translations that have been long ago superseded—Platina/Martino especially, and more recently the *Menagier de Paris*. Presumably copyright restrictions have prevented the authors from using many of the latest translations, of the Catalan *Libre Sent Sovi*, for example, and Scully's revised edition of Chiquart. In many respects this collection is simply behind on the latest scholarship, perhaps unavoidably.

The original texts are accompanied by redactions in modern recipe format, with lists of ingredients and

measurements. Most stick as closely as possible to the original and clearly have been made by people with active experience in the kitchen. This is certainly the book's strength. There are also practical guidelines, miscellaneous glossaries, and instructions for throwing a feast. On occasion a rough translation may lead the medieval reenacter into serious blunders, but as an introduction to the period and its cooking, rather than a work of scholarship, this work is recommended. Better yet, rather than spend a lot on the many printed sources, you can download this book for free at [www.daviddfriedman.com/Medieval/To\\_Milk\\_an\\_Almond.pdf](http://www.daviddfriedman.com/Medieval/To_Milk_an_Almond.pdf), and if you like you can buy a printed version—a fine way to get people to begin exploring these fascinating and largely unknown culinary traditions.

—Ken Albala, University of the Pacific

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