

CONSTRUCTIVE DRINKING IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE: THE FIRST TO THIRD CENTURIES AD

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as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Classics,
April 2015

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores ancient ideas regarding the constructive properties of intoxicating drinks, as presented in Greco-Roman sources from the first to third centuries AD. In doing so, it responds to Mary Douglas' *Constructive Drinking* (1987), which emphasised that, contrary to anthropological findings, many societies' authorities tend to focus upon, and overemphasise, the destructive aspects of alcohol consumption. This pattern is particularly prevalent in modern Western scholarship.

The same trend can be detected within both Greco-Roman society and classical scholarship. Although many Greeks and Romans undoubtedly consumed quantities of wine, on a regular basis, in a manner which was widely considered 'moderate', the literary evidence from this period tends to focus most heavily upon excessive and/or destructive drinking. Similarly, much of the modern scholarship which addresses drinking in the Roman Empire focuses upon drunkenness and the destructive aspects of drinking.

Yet it is clear that Greco-Roman society considered wine consumption to be significantly beneficial, in a wide variety of ways, provided that moderation was employed. The destructive consequences of drinking were almost exclusively associated with excessive and inappropriate consumption.

In reaction to this bias in the sources and scholarship, this thesis undertakes a re-reading of the ancient evidence through the 'Constructive Drinking' lens. It identifies and explores the ways in which the Greeks and Romans of this period considered drinking to be important, useful, or otherwise 'constructive' to the individual and society. Where possible, this thesis attempts to identify how important and widespread such beliefs were.

This thesis has two main areas of focus. First, the ways in which intoxicating drink was considered to be constructive for an individual's health and wellbeing. Second, the ways in which intoxicating drink was considered to be of social benefit to both individuals and groups. This thesis accordingly provides a fresh perspective on drinking in antiquity, and illustrates the methodological significance of the Constructive Drinking lens for future research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my PhD supervisors, Professor John Wilkins and Dr Martin Pitts, for all of their guidance over the last four years. They were always willing to go out of their way to offer support, and their advice has truly helped me develop as an academic. I am thankful for the breadth of opportunities which they and the Department of Classics and Ancient History at University of Exeter have provided. I am also grateful to the Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust for their continued support of my project.

Above all, I am forever indebted to my family for their years of selfless support. Without my parents and my partner Natalia, their tireless patience and numerous sacrifices, this thesis would not be.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the ways in which the inhabitants of the Roman Empire, living during the first to third centuries AD, considered the consumption of intoxicating drinks to be a constructive act.

The chronological focus is the 'first to third centuries AD'. This is approximately equivalent to the Roman Principate (30 or 27BC-284AD). However, stating the focus in the former format is more appropriate to this study, as it is thus presented in a manner which reflects and facilitates the chronological flexibility of this research. This flexibility is important, as this thesis addresses socio-cultural phenomena, and most socio-cultural changes are gradual processes. The chronological boundaries of this study should be understood as approximate, and they are used in a permeable manner throughout. For example, as the culture of the final years of the Roman Republic largely resembled that of the first years of the Principate, an absolute separation of the two political periods would be artificial. Significant evidence from a few decades outside of this period's boundaries will therefore not be omitted simply on grounds of chronology. Similarly, earlier literary texts with a great deal of longstanding influence reaching into this period (such as the Hippocratic Corpus, Homer, Plato, and so on) shall also be given consideration where appropriate.

Even though this study focuses geographically upon the Roman Empire, it does not focus solely on either Greek or Roman culture, as it follows the sentiments of John Wilkins: that Greco-Roman society is often difficult to separate, especially in areas of food and drinking culture. Indeed, as Roman culture was often integrated, based upon, or pointedly opposed to aspects of Greek culture, separating the two can seem artificial. The increasing interconnectivity of the Mediterranean through the Hellenistic Period, ultimately resulting in a political hegemony under the Roman Empire by the first century AD, further blurred cultural boundaries. To illustrate this we should consider the *Deipnosophistae* of Athenaeus, written around 200AD. Athenaeus was a Greek author, born in Naucratis, Egypt. His work, composed in Greek, describes fictional versions of (sometimes notable) Greeks and Romans at a banquet in Rome. This banquet

appears to fuse aspects associated with both Greek and Roman table culture. In conversation, his guests deploy anecdotes and quotations of both Greek and Roman focus and origin. This thesis shall therefore frequently address Greco-Roman culture, by which it means a culture present in Roman Empire, known at least among the upper-classes, which drew from both traditional Greek and Roman cultures.¹

By focusing upon the 'positives' of drinking, this thesis responds to the anthropological concern highlighted by Mary Douglas in her edited volume, *Constructive Drinking*.² Douglas states that anthropologists find that drink is usually a constructive or neutral act within most societies; problem drinking usually affects only a minority. She provides the example that 'even in the United States where there is so much concern about alcohol abuse, the most pessimistic estimate is that alcohol-related troubles afflict fewer than 10 percent of those who drink'. As such, anthropologists 'do not necessarily treat it [alcohol consumption] as a problem'.

Yet Douglas suggests that many societies' authorities overemphasise problem drinking. This trend is clearly followed by modern Western society and scholarship. Douglas states:

'Anthropologists' evidence suggests that the medical and sociological research exaggerates the problems. In concentrating on the excesses and abuse of alcohol, they are tending to express a strong bias of Western culture ... particularly entrenched in America.'

This study has detected this same trend within both the society of the Roman Empire and modern classical scholarship. Many people consumed intoxicating drink on a daily basis, in a manner which was widely considered 'moderate'. Heavy consumption was doubtless comparatively less common. Greco-Roman society viewed wine as an ambiguous substance which could have either constructive or destructive results depending upon the appropriateness of its use. Moderate and acceptable daily drinking was perceived as beneficial to the individual and society. Yet the majority of literary evidence from this period (with the notable exception of medical literature, as addressed in Chapter 2) has

¹ Wilkins and Hill (2006) 4-5, 9-11, 168, 182. Further on Athenaeus: *Pauly*, s.v. 'Athenaeus, 3'.

² Douglas (1987) 3-15.

a tendency to focus most heavily upon excessive and/or destructive drinking. Similarly, a notable amount of the modern scholarship which addresses drinking in the Roman Empire focuses upon drunkenness and the destructive aspects of drinking. Indeed, in line with Douglas' above comments, much of this negative scholarship on drinking in the Roman Empire comes from medical scholars. Both of these trends are analysed in further detail later in this introduction.

This thesis reacts to this bias in the sources and scholarship by undertaking a re-reading of the ancient evidence through a 'Constructive Drinking' lens. It identifies and explores the ways in which drinking was perceived to be important, useful or otherwise 'constructive' to the individual and society. Where possible, the thesis attempts to identify how important and widespread such beliefs were. In order to put these constructive aspects of drinking fully into perspective, this study considers them in the context of the acknowledged destructive potential of intoxicating drink. This approach also allows the thesis to delineate the boundaries of constructive drinking: assessing the conditions under which alcohol consumption was considered constructive, and likewise those under which it was thought to become destructive. In doing so, this thesis provides a fresh perspective on drinking in antiquity, and illustrates the methodological significance of this Constructive Drinking lens for future research.

The main evidence consists of literary sources, as they facilitate the exploration of ancient ideas and beliefs at a deep level. Yet the vast majority of ancient literature was written by, for, and concerning the elite who lived in areas comparatively central to the Empire (such as Italy, Greece, Asia Minor and the major Mediterranean cities). As a result, the main focus is the Greco-Roman elite at the heart of the Empire.

The main research questions, in order of priority, can be summarised as follows:

1. What did the inhabitants of the Roman Empire consider to be the significant constructive properties of alcohol for the drinker? The rationale behind these beliefs shall be considered where possible.

2. Under what conditions was alcohol consumption considered to foster these constructive effects? This shall be considered in context of the acknowledged destructive properties of alcohol.
3. How significant were alcohol's constructive properties thought to be?

It is clear that the bounds of this thesis offer insufficient space to catalogue and investigate comprehensively *every single* constructive property attributed to intoxicating drinks by ancient sources dating to this period. Indeed, the first-century AD encyclopaedic author Pliny the Elder acknowledged a similar issue when he addressed the medical properties of wine during book twenty-three of his *Natural History*. Pliny assessed that 'there is no topic more difficult to handle, or more full in detail'.³ This thesis does not aim at comprehensive coverage, but rather focuses its attention along two broad fronts, which form Chapters 2 and 3.

As a preliminary to these two main chapters, Chapter 1 serves to introduce knowledge and concepts which will be of recurrent interest throughout. It provides an overview of drinking in the Roman Empire, including: the available intoxicating beverages, contexts of drinking, quantities of consumption, and so on. This chapter then proceeds to emphasise the ancient belief that wine was a potent yet ambiguous substance. It was recognised to have the potential to provide immense benefits, as well as great perils. The outcome was usually thought to hinge upon moderation and the appropriateness of the drinking. This chapter also discusses ancient views on addiction.

Chapter 2 focuses closely on the individual. It analyses the ways in which intoxicating drink was considered to be constructive for an individual's health and wellbeing. The central evidence to this section is the medical literature of this period, including that written by physicians (especially Galen, Soranus and Dioscorides), or encyclopaedic writers compiling the advice of physicians (especially Pliny the Elder and Celsus). This section also considers the Hippocratic Corpus, a collection of texts attributed to the famous fifth- to fourth-century BC doctor Hippocrates of Cos, which had since come to be revered by most as the keystone of Greco-Roman medicine. This chapter ultimately

³ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.31-32.

concludes that the medical authorities viewed wine as an ambiguous substance with the potential for great constructive *and* destructive power. Yet wine was an extremely flexible substance; it could be adapted to almost any situation. So long as it was used appropriately – that is to say, in line with what the medical authorities prescribed – the consumption of intoxicating drinks could be of immense benefit to almost every single individual. Wine was constructive to health both in a preventative sense, when used in daily regimen in health, and in a therapeutic sense during sickness.

Chapter 3 zooms out from the individual to investigate the ways in which intoxicating drink was considered to be socially beneficial. ‘Social benefits’ are here used in two senses. On the one hand, this chapter considers how drink was thought to benefit an individual’s interactions with other people. On the other, it considers the perceived benefits for a group of people or wider society. The main evidence used by this section consists of texts which discuss drinking and its social impact (Seneca’s *Epistle 83* and the final section of *On the Tranquillity of Mind*, Pliny the Elder’s *Natural History*, and Plutarch’s *Table-Talk, Symposium of the Seven Wise Men and Advice about Keeping Well*). It also focuses upon the biographical works of Plutarch and Suetonius, which describe a plethora of banquets and drinking-bouts alongside moralistic comments implying judgement upon the appropriateness of actions. This chapter concludes that the Greco-Roman elite generally considered appropriate wine drinking to be a near-essential element of their socialising. Drinking was further thought to offer a range of specific social uses: helping to illustrate character, build identity, and provide an outlet for competitive attitudes. Appendices 6 and 7 complement this chapter by arguing that although wine was generally considered destructive to work (especially public work) and warfare, it was also acknowledged to offer some specific and significant uses in these areas if consumed in a manner appropriate to the situation.

By utilising this two-front approach focused upon the basic daily needs and interactions of individuals and groups, my thesis aims to present a strong argument that most inhabitants of the Roman Empire considered their own daily consumption of intoxicating drinks to be largely of benefit to themselves. Wine was, of course, recognised to be an ambiguous substance; it could have either constructive or destructive effects. Yet most people drank moderately, most of

the time. Thus, when we use the Constructive Drinking lens to filter-out the biased agendas of ancient and modern writers (who frequently distort the focus towards the negative and sensational), we see the significant benefits which Greco-Roman society attributed to this typical pattern of wine consumption.

Another intention of the two-front structure of this thesis is to further respond to Douglas' findings, thereby bolstering the argument of this thesis. Her above-quoted statement on modern Western medical and sociological research implies that these fields are especially prone to viewing drinking as a problem. It might accordingly be expected that criticisms of the Constructive Drinking methodology and its findings would probably proceed along medical and sociological lines. By focusing on the medically and socially constructive properties of wine, this structure anticipates and preventively counters such attacks. This thesis therefore pitches its argument against areas where it is most likely to encounter the highest resistance, with the intention of further emphasising the soundness of its hypothesis and methodology.

The rest of this introduction is dedicated to two sections, which respectively review the state of classical scholarship and the ancient sources. Their especial concern is to highlight the importance of the Constructive Drinking methodology for the study of drinking in this period.

SCHOLARSHIP ON (DESTRUCTIVE) DRINKING IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Ray Laurence recently concluded that 'for [Roman] drinking, there is not a book-length study of the subject in English'.⁴ Here Laurence oversimplifies the bibliographic tradition, although this appears to be a necessary result of the brief space available to him in this 'Further Reading' section of his monograph (he dedicates only two sentences to outline scholarship on Roman drinking). Yet the essence of Laurence's point is true. There is a lack of scholarship, in any language, that addresses the subject of drinking (in the sense of the social phenomenon of the *consumption* of fluids) in the Roman Empire. A good deal

⁴ Laurence (2009) 185.

of scholarship instead focuses upon other aspects of drink, such as production, trade and material culture.⁵

Laurence subsequently advises Tchernia's 1986 monograph, *Le Vin de l'Italie romaine: Essai d'histoire économique d'après les amphores*, as the 'fundamental' authority on Roman wine consumption. Other scholars appear to follow similar beliefs, as Tchernia's monograph is repeatedly presented as a key authority on this subject, and is frequently cited without supporting references to other works of scholarship.⁶ I do not intend to undermine Tchernia's monograph; his work does give a detailed insight into the types of wines which the Romans consumed, and his first chapter also provides a reasonable overview of drinks and drinkers in Rome. Yet it should be cautioned that his work is primarily concerned with one type of evidence, *amphorae*, and his primary focus is the socio-economic phenomenon of the wine trade. Although he does also consider literary sources and wine consumption, these are secondary concerns, whereas in this current thesis they are prioritised.

It should also be noted that problems can arise when Tchernia's first chapter is used by other scholars as a chief authority on Roman wine consumption. Scholars should instead remember that Tchernia's first chapter is a brief preliminary chapter (31 pages of his 396 page monograph) used to facilitate his subsequent study. It does not appear to be intended as a definitive authority on Roman wine consumption. As such, for example, scholars are mistaken to put a great deal of faith in Tchernia's argument that the average Roman male consumed c.0.8-1L of wine per day. As analysed further in Chapter 1, Tchernia's estimation is based on very sparse evidence. It is conducted, alongside similarly rough approximations of Rome's total population and demographic, for the purpose of a broad estimation of Rome's total yearly consumption of wine. Scholars should not blindly accept this figure as an accurate estimation of average wine consumption.

Other monographs focusing upon Roman wine consumption include Seltman's 1957 *Wine in the Ancient World*, Weeber's 1993 *Die Weinkultur der Römer* and Fleming's 2001 *Vinum: The Story of Roman Wine*. Each is somewhat useful as

⁵ For example, on the Roman wine trade: Purcell (1985); Tchernia (1986). On viticulture: Brun (2003); Amouretti and Brun (1993).

⁶ For example: Jongman (2007) 603; Fleming (2001) 57-58; Garnsey (1999) esp. 145, also 14, 119.

an overview and introduction to the subject, yet they are of less significance for deeper investigation.⁷

Seltman's monograph focuses much more heavily on pre-Roman Greek culture, rather than that of Rome and the Empire. It is generally of minimal investigative depth and far from comprehensive; in the penultimate paragraph Seltman even admits 'that much has been left unsaid and that many a gap is unfilled'.⁸ It largely reiterates information from sources in a descriptive manner similar to an encyclopaedic work. A notable percentage of the monograph consists of lengthy quotations (often several pages long) from ancient literature. For example, the chapter 'Roman Banquet' consists mainly of a translation of Petronius' 'Dinner of Trimalchio', with little further analysis. In the preface to his monograph, Seltman addresses Henderson's 1824 *The History of Ancient and Modern Wines*, which in Part 1 provided a history of ancient wines over 128 pages. According to Seltman, no other Anglophone book (exempting encyclopaedias) had addressed ancient wine in the 134 years between Henderson's publication and his own. Seltman acknowledges that Henderson's work is far from reliable, as the study and knowledge of antiquity had changed significantly since Henderson's publication. Yet, Seltman evidently still held Henderson and his work in high regard. In the body of his monograph, Seltman presents Henderson as a major authority – he is described as 'the only authority of that age competent to discuss the topic [of Greek wine] in English' – and Seltman quotes a lengthy section from Henderson's work verbatim (comprising six pages of Seltman's monograph).⁹ Seltman's methodology and reliability thus appear questionable.

Fleming's monograph seemingly aims at providing a comprehensive overview of wine's place in the Roman world: from viticulture, to trade and consumption. It is a fair introduction to the subject, yet its comparatively short length (133

⁷ Note that Tchernia (1986) 1-7 addresses works of scholarship (including monographs) which focus upon wine in antiquity, dating from 1596 to the time of writing. The works he lists include the 1824 volume by Henderson (discussed in this thesis, below) and Seltman (1957). It should be noted, however, that Tchernia's literature review focuses primarily upon viticulture, wine production and trade, rather than consumption (as done by this present thesis). Thus, for example, Seltman's work is only listed in a footnote as a comparatively recent publication on this subject, rather than being explicitly discussed; his only comment is that it presents no interest for his current study.

⁸ Seltman (1957) 181.

⁹ Seltman (1957) vii, 72-78. An example of encyclopaedia articles on ancient drinking, from the interim between Henderson and Seltman, include those in the 1875 *DGRA* (s.vv. 'Vinum', 'Cerevisia', 'Comissatio', 'Calida', and so on). On non-Anglophone scholarship during this period, see n.7.

pages) leads to a brief and relatively superficial treatment of each subject. For example, Fleming not only accepts Tchernia's estimation of average wine consumption without question, but he misquotes Tchernia's figures (Tchernia correctly states that *CIL*, 6.10234 prescribed 3 *sextarii* of wine per day for the average college member, yet Fleming stated that 'rank-and-file members of the college were provided with ... 2 *sextarii* a day'). Although Fleming admits that Tchernia's estimation, based upon a single inscription, is 'the flimsiest of ancient data', he does not consider any further ancient evidence (even though Tchernia himself considered several further sources). Fleming then uses this 'flimsy' estimation to conclude definitively that the Romans drank large amounts ('by modern standards') on a daily basis.¹⁰

Furthermore, Fleming's work is of dubious reliability; it contains many oversimplifications, errors and misleading comments. In addition to the above noted figure misquoted from Tchernia, two major examples are as follows. First, Fleming repeatedly applies the term 'alcoholism' to Roman society and thought, even though (as discussed in Chapter 1) classical scholars agree that it is inappropriate to use this term in such a study as it implies connotations which were not present in ancient thought.¹¹ Secondly, in a chapter addressing the use of wine in ancient medicine, Fleming states that 'within this framework, wine was characterised as cold'. Here Fleming is undoubtedly in error. As addressed at length in Chapter 2 of this thesis, Fleming's statement is exactly opposed to ideas presented almost unanimously in the ancient sources: the archetypical wine was instead thought to be extremely heating. The evidence which Fleming cites is a conversation from Plutarch's *Table-Talk*, where it is argued that wine was in fact cold in power. Yet Fleming ignores the context of this passage: one guest at a party has suggested that some people consider wine to be cold in nature (at least in certain situations) and the other guests are shocked at this assertion, leading him to explain this point of view and its proponents, and the guests to debate it. The implication is that wine was almost always considered hot in property; hence the shock of the guests, and the need to discuss this at length. This conversation doubtless represents a rhetorical exercise whereby a speaker attempts to argue against a commonly

¹⁰ Fleming (2001) 57-58.

¹¹ See n.17.

accepted notion. Indeed, elsewhere in *Table-Talk* it is casually stated (without incurring debate) that wine's specific power is heat.¹²

The majority of Weeber's monograph forms an encyclopaedia/lexicon of subjects relevant to ancient drinking. It thus resembles Dalby's 2003 *Food in the Ancient World From A to Z*, but with a closer focus upon wine. Subsequent sections resemble a sourcebook, compiling excerpts from ancient literature which are informative of specific themes related to wine; for example wine and love, viticulture, and so on. Weeber's monograph is accordingly a very useful tool for initial research on the subject of drinking in antiquity, yet it lacks scholarly and analytical depth.

Another significant reference work is Austin's 1985 *Alcohol in Western Society from Antiquity to 1800*. The first section features an extensive chronological overview of drinking in Greco-Roman culture, alongside other Mediterranean and Near Eastern cultures, allowing the reader to draw cross-cultural comparisons. Yet this work also has a lack of interpretative depth, which is admitted by the author.¹³

A range of books also attempt comprehensive treatment of the history of wine, addressing production, trade and consumption.¹⁴ Nelson's 2005 monograph *The Barbarian's Beverage: A History of Beer in Ancient Europe* offers a counterweight to these books. Chapter 6 is of particular relevance; 'The Roman Empire and the Rule of Wine' forms the most significant recent study of beer consumption in the Roman Empire. Nelson is a classical scholar, and his work catalogues and discusses the little ancient evidence and scholarship which exist on this topic in an accurate and effective manner.

A vast array of articles exist which address specific aspects of drinking in the Roman Empire. These are too numerous to list here, but the reader is especially directed to the following notable collections. The 1995 volume, *In Vino Veritas*, edited by Murray and Tecuşan, compiles articles which address topics relevant to wine's place in ancient Near Eastern, Greek, Italian and Roman cultures. The 2002 volume, *Vin et santé en Grèce ancienne*, edited by Jouanna and Villard, contains articles addressing the place of wine in ancient

¹² Fleming (2001) 75 citing Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 3.5=651f-652a. On this issue, see Ch.2 p.132 with n.289.

¹³ Austin (1985) xiii.

¹⁴ For example: Hyams (1965); Johnson (1989).

Greek culture, up to the Byzantine period, with an especial focus towards the link between wine and health. One half of volume 53 (2000) of *Pallas* is entitled *Le vin de Rome*. Edited by François and Pitta, it compiles several articles addressing a variety of subjects relevant to wine in Roman culture. The American scholar McKinlay also composed a wide range of short articles addressing various aspects of Greco-Roman drinking. These were published in the 1930s, 40s and 50s. Many of them serve to summarise ancient literary evidence regarding drinking in a particular period.¹⁵ In addition, the 1990 volume, *Symptotica: A Symposium on the Symposium*, edited by Murray, compiles articles addressing aspects of the Greek *symposium*, including the adoption of similar practices by Roman culture. The 1991 volume, *Dining in a Classical Context*, edited by Slater, presents articles addressing various aspects of ancient dining practices.

One trend which must be highlighted is that a significant amount of the scholarship on drinking in the Roman Empire is focused upon excessive, destructive or sensational drinking. This trend has longstanding roots, with Brown – a physician and surgeon (L.R.C.P. and L.R.C.S.) – addressing ‘Inebriety and its “Cures” Among the Ancients’, in the 1898 volume of the *Proceedings of the Society for the Study of Inebriety*. This article compiled extracts from his lecture, delivered the same year, to the aforementioned society. As implied by the title, Brown focuses upon ancient drunkenness, and how ancient physicians tried to alleviate it. In the last few pages, Brown proceeds through subsequent history, up to the present day, cataloguing measures to discourage intoxication. His conclusion, entitled ‘The True Cure’, emphasises that Brown views drunkenness as a problem, and is ultimately searching for a solution.

In 1926, the physician Rolleston (M.D., M.R.C.P., and Medical Superintendent of Western Hospital, London) read the paper, ‘Alcoholism in Classical Antiquity’, to the same Society for the Study of Inebriety. This was subsequently published in 1927 in *The British Journal of Inebriety*. Rolleston acknowledges Brown’s earlier address, stating that it served as the inspiration for his own paper. It is not surprising, then, that this paper displays a similar agenda, and

¹⁵ Note primarily: McKinlay (1932); (1945); (1946); (1947); (1948c); (1948d); (1949b); (1950); (1953b). Note further: McKinlay (1939); (1944); (1948a); (1948b); (1949a); (1951); (1953a); (1953-54).

heavy drinking is again the problem. An early section addresses the 'Prevalence of Alcoholism in Classical Antiquity', and subsequent sections link drunkenness with sexuality, prostitution, hereditary conditions, and miscellaneous 'Other Evil Effects of Drink'. In the final sections of his paper, he addresses the 'various methods for the prevention of drunkenness, most of which are more or less fanciful', and then compares ancient and modern alcoholism. His bullet-point summary makes clear that, like Brown, he is focusing upon drinking as a problem for societies, and seeking to compare the state of this issue in ancient and modern times.

The biological and medical scientist Jellinek was working upon a similar project until his death in 1963. Entitled 'Drinkers and Alcoholics in Ancient Rome', this paper was subsequently edited for publication in the 1976 volume of the *Journal of Studies of Alcohol*. Again, the author views wine as a problem for Roman society. Roman history was divided into five periods: up to c.200BC was a period of 'temperance', 200-100BC was characterised by 'increasing use of wine', the first century BC featured 'the rise of alcoholism and drunkenness', the first century AD was entitled 'widespread alcoholism', before a period of 'declining alcoholism' thereafter. Yet, Jellinek stresses that even in this last period, alcoholism and drunkenness only 'decreased to proportions which today would be regarded as a medium-sized alcohol problem'.¹⁶ Jellinek thought that as the Romans' access to wine and drinking increased, so did alcoholism. Roman heavy drinking was considered extreme by modern standards, and this particular phenomenon of drinking was the author's main focus.

All three of these authors were medical authorities, composing papers for primarily medical audiences. Their articles thus clearly reflect the trend which Douglas outlined, whereby such authorities tend to more heavily focus upon and exaggerate drink as a problem within society. Accordingly, these articles over-represent the extent of Roman society's 'problem drinking'. As these articles form some of the earliest scholarship on drinking in the Roman Empire, they may have influenced subsequent scholarship to emphasise the negative aspects.

This trend can be seen in later scholarship. For example, the two items of scholarship which Laurence's 'Further Reading' section (introduced above)

¹⁶ Jellinek (1976) 1739-1740.

suggests as the key Anglophone authorities on Roman drinking are Purcell's 1985 article on the wine trade, and D'Arms' 1995 article 'Heavy Drinking and Drunkenness in the Roman World: Four Questions for Historians'. The latter article, which addresses consumption, clearly focuses upon excess. Similarly, Fleming's 2001 monograph on Roman wine repeatedly uses terms such as 'alcoholism', and answers the question 'did some Romans drink too much wine?' with the answer 'in modern health and moral terms, probably so'.¹⁷ Weeber's 1993 monograph highlights in its introduction that alcoholism was a dark side of Roman wine consumption, and the first entry in the lexicon section is on alcoholism.¹⁸ Furthermore, the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* has featured an entry on 'Alcoholism' since its 1996 third edition, but has no entry on 'Alcohol' or 'Intoxicating Drinks', thus seemingly skewing focus towards the negative.¹⁹ For readers of all these items of scholarship, this surely creates the impression that Roman drinking was often excessive and destructive. The use of 'Alcoholism' by the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* is particularly perplexing given that this article opens by acknowledging the inappropriateness of its title: 'the ancient Greeks were unfamiliar with modern concepts of alcoholism'. Indeed, this entry cites D'Arms' 1995 article which (along with works by Davidson and Humphries) argues that the modern term of 'alcoholism' is inappropriate for modern scholars to use whilst studying antiquity, as the ancients did not think of addiction in a manner compatible with the connotations inherent in this modern term. (Ancient concepts of addiction, and the use of the word 'alcoholism', are addressed in detail in Chapter 1.)

This trend continues to be particularly prominent in works with a medical author and/or audience. The 'Alcoholism' article from the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* is co-authored by O'Brien, a history professor, and Rickenbacker, a medical consultant on alcoholism and addiction. It may also be telling that D'Arms' 1995 article features 'Doctors and Wine' as one of his four questions for historians, which considers issues such as the use of term alcoholism in classical studies. The physician Leibowitz (M.D.) published 'Studies in the History of Alcoholism –

¹⁷ For example: Fleming (2001) 58, 66-67, 70.

¹⁸ Weeber (1993) 9-10 and s.v. 'Alkoholismus'; see also s.v. 'Rausch'. Note further that even though Weeber notes that there is no dependable source of evidence on the prevalence of alcoholism in Roman society, and highlights the moralising tendencies of Roman sources on drinking (Pliny and Seneca are named), he still states that that the prevalence of alcoholism in Roman society increased in the early Imperial period.

¹⁹ The *OCD*⁴ does, however, contain articles such as 'Wine (Greek and Roman)' and 'Symposium'.

II: Acute Alcoholism in Ancient Greek and Roman Medicine' in the 1967 *British Journal of Addiction*. Two articles were published in 1999 and 2009, in *Alcohol & Alcoholism* and *The Canadian Journal of Pharmacology* respectively, to explore whether fetal alcohol syndrome was recognised by the Greeks and Romans (these were accompanied by a 1997 article exploring the same topic for the ancient Near East).²⁰ A notable exception to the rule is 'Classically Intoxicated', published in 2007 in the *British Medical Journal*. This article considers both the benefits associated with moderation, and the harm associated with excess, although its focus is Classical Greece rather than the Roman Empire. We may suspect that this is perhaps due to two of the three authors (Cook and Tarbet) being classical scholars, rather than medical authorities.²¹

In summary, classical scholarship lacks up-to-date monograph-length works which deploy penetrating analysis to explore the social phenomenon of the consumption of intoxicating drinks by the inhabitants of the Roman Empire during the first to third centuries AD. It is also clear that, of the little scholarship which does exist in this area, a significant amount focuses upon excessive, destructive and problem drinking. This is especially true of scholarship with medical authors and/or audience. As such, my thesis aims to fill this gap in classical scholarship, whilst also correcting the bias of the existing scholarship towards focusing disproportionately upon excessive and destructive drinking.

DESTRUCTIVE DRINKING IN ROMAN LITERATURE

The literary sources of the first to third centuries AD show a tendency to focus more heavily upon excessive and destructive drinking, rather than moderate and normal consumption. For example, Seneca's longest sustained treatment of intoxicating drink is *Epistle* 83, entitled 'On Drunkenness' by modern editors. This work argues against philosophers' use of false syllogism, yet Seneca uses drunkenness as an example to prove his point. He thus exposes false claims made by other authorities regarding the negative consequences of drunkenness, and subsequently proceeds to provide a better argument himself. In this letter, Seneca focuses at length upon the negatives associated with

²⁰ Saunders (2009); Abel (1999); Abel (1997).

²¹ Cook, Tarbet and Ball (2007).

excess, but does not directly address the constructive uses and effects of *moderate* wine consumption.²² Similarly, when Plutarch's *Advice about Keeping Well* turns to address how a man should drink to pursue health, in chapter nineteen, wine is initially presented as *extremely* constructive. Yet, after the first three sentences, the rest of the chapter (two pages in Babbitt's Loeb edition) focuses upon the risks of wine, inappropriate time for its consumption, how to avoid harm, and when to abstain completely.²³ Furthermore, book fourteen of Pliny's *Natural History* compiles knowledge on the vine, grape and wine in an encyclopaedic manner which appears to aim at comprehensiveness. This book lists many specific wines alongside their medical properties and uses, and in book twenty-three Pliny returns to consider the medical utility of wines. Yet in the latter section of book fourteen, Pliny addresses the social aspects of wine consumption. This section focuses solely upon the vices of drunkenness and its destructive consequences.²⁴ The social benefits of moderate wine consumption do not receive a comparable section.

It is doubtless the case that many Greeks and Romans usually drank in a manner which was not considered excessive. This befits the anthropological findings of Douglas, and also the logic that 'excess' is socially defined and so what is regarded as 'excessive' tends to be (by definition) exceptional practice. Indeed, when the ancients consumed normal daily dinners (typically with just family and close friends for company), it was usual to eat and drink much more frugally than when at dinner parties.²⁵ Many dinner and drinking parties were also restrained affairs.²⁶ Chapters 2 and 3 argue that such moderate consumption and sub-excessive consumption was associated with *significant* benefits. As such, the Greco-Roman literary sources appear to over-represent excessive consumption and its destructive consequences. There appear to be three main factors behind this bias.

First, Paul argues that:

²² See Ch.3 n.2.

²³ See Ch.2 n.148.

²⁴ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.137-148.

²⁵ Horace, *Satires*, 1.6.115-117; Balsdon (1969) 31-33, 49; Dupont (1992 [1989]) 272-273. See also Ch.3 n.28, and compare with Plutarch, *Lucullus*, 41.

²⁶ Plato, *Symposium*, 176a-177e; Martial, 10.48; Juvenal, 11.64-76; Pliny the Younger, *Epistles*, 3.12.1, 6.31.13; Carcopino (2003 [1939]) 273-276.

'Though in Greek and Roman society many *symposia* and *deipna* were no doubt unexceptional, it will perhaps occasion little surprise that those described by [ancient] historical [and biographical] writers frequently commemorate discordant behaviour of one kind or another; the historian is seldom concerned with the events of ordinary life, being drawn more to record the unusual, extraordinary or outrageous.'²⁷

Authors are obviously more concerned with the extreme, unusual and shocking. Such events are far more interesting for author and reader. Exceptional practice requires lengthier explanation than commonplace behaviour. It should thus come as no surprise that ancient writers typically focused upon atypical drinking behaviour, sensational accounts of the heaviest drinkers and the worst consequences of extreme excess. The extreme consumption of individuals such as Alexander the Great and Mark Antony was an especially popular topic among later writers, who frequently reiterated sensational anecdotes such as Alexander's drunken murder of his friend Cleitus.²⁸ Accordingly, for example, Pliny's *Natural History* and Seneca's *Epistle* 83 dedicate a good deal of attention to providing condensed drinking-biographies of several infamous drunkards.²⁹ The opposite is also true. As completely teetotal water-drinkers were similarly rare and shocking in Greco-Roman antiquity, they drew the attention of many authors. Athenaeus, for example, provides a catalogue of famous water-drinkers, which forms an analogous counterpoint to Pliny and Seneca's catalogues of drunkards.³⁰

A second underlying factor is the ancient preoccupation with moral decline. Many Greeks and Romans believed that their early ancestors had been more morally virtuous than the society contemporary to themselves. This was reflected in the eating and drinking behaviour attributed to these ancestors, which was typically described as moderate and frugal, in contrast to modern excesses and unnecessary luxury.³¹

In Greek culture, Garnsey argues that this moralising trend developed from the late Classical and early Hellenistic period, alongside the development of an *haute cuisine*. The image of decline is clearly evident in a section from

²⁷ See Ch.3 n.15.

²⁸ Alexander and Cleitus: see Ch.3 n.1.

²⁹ Seneca, *Epistles*, 83.12-15, 19, 22-25; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.144-148.

³⁰ See Ch.3 n.42.

³¹ Garnsey (1999) 72-79.

Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*, which perhaps here draws upon an earlier Greek source (Garnsey inconclusively discusses this latter issue at length). The Homeric heroes are said to have drunk moderately, and consciously avoided excess, as each hero drank from his own cup (in contrast to the Greek practice of drinking from a shared communal bowl) so that he could accurately monitor his own consumption. Socrates in Plato's *Republic* similarly presents the Homeric diet as the ideal military regimen.³²

Furthermore, Plutarch's *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men* presents a fictional account of a banquet and *symposium* conducted by the Seven Sages of Greece, many generations beforehand, in the early sixth century BC. This work generally describes idealised banqueting behaviour from most of the guests. Luxury is very restrained, and the drinking is appropriately moderate, avoiding both excess and abstinence. Yet during conversation, one of the guests (Mnesiphilus) emphasises that the drinking behaviour of the Homeric heroes was measured and minimal; each man shared a precise quantity of wine with his neighbour. Another guest (Cleodorus) then adds that the gods' drinking is also extremely sparing. As such, Plutarch's work implies a hierarchy: these venerated early Sages displayed notably excellent conduct, but they themselves lauded the behaviour of the even earlier generation of Homeric heroes. Increasingly earlier generations were apparently regarded as displaying increasingly better drinking behaviour. This is essentially the negative-impression of moral decline.³³

Roman society had a strong preoccupation with moral decline. Contemporary generations were widely believed to have descended into luxury and excess. This is illustrated by copious literature with a moralistic agenda, and the series of sumptuary laws from the late Republic onwards which aimed at combating luxury. In contrast, the Romans' highest source of moral authority was the *mos maiorum*, the 'way of the ancestors', which comprised exempla from their idealised early ancestors. Rome's early generations were generally considered virtuous, and later generations increasingly base.³⁴

³² Athenaeus, 1.8e-9b; Plato, *Republic*, 3.404-405; Garnsey (1999) 73-77.

³³ Plutarch, *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, 13-14=156e-157a. Restrained luxury: 4=150c-d. Moderation: See Ch.3 p.223ff.

³⁴ Garnsey (1999) 72-73, 77-79; Edwards (1993) 3-5.

This *topos* was strongly associated with diet and wine. Seneca links the frugal diet of early Romans with strong bodies, whilst contemporary generations are said to have fallen to luxury, gluttony, and drunkenness, so that their bodies are ruined by excess wine, indigestion and so on.³⁵ Cato the Elder (234-149BC) was said to have been revered by his own generation, as well as subsequent ones, as he preserved traditional Roman customs during a time of social change. Among his idealised conduct was his frugal eating and drinking, both in terms of quantity and quality.³⁶ McKinlay has outlined that in Roman literature and thought, Rome's early generations were associated with sobriety and a lack of drinking; there being few instances of heavy drinking attributed to these early times.³⁷ Indeed, early laws were believed to have prohibited Roman women, children and slaves from drinking wine.³⁸

Sallust famously presented the Roman army's increasing contact with the Greek world as a key factor behind Roman social decline. Between 87-83BC, Sulla had led an army into Asia to participate in the First Mithridatic War. Sallust claims that in order to secure their loyalty, Sulla allowed his army to experience eastern luxuries which were alien to previous Roman generations. Upon their return to Rome, the army brought this luxury with them, and thus corrupted the Roman people. Wine was evidently thought to play a major role in this moral decline from the very start, as Sallust comments that 'there it was that an army of the Roman people first learned to indulge in women and drink'.³⁹

This *topos* was longstanding, as was wine's position within it. The fourth-century AD historian Ammianus Marcellinus describes the serious riots in Rome caused by a shortage of wine under the Urban Prefect Orfitus (375AD). This leads Ammianus to give an account of the moral decline of the Roman senate and people, from virtuous roots when Rome was first beginning to rise as a world power, to its current baseness. The description of the people in contemporary times begins as follows: 'but of the multitude of lowest condition and greatest poverty some spend the entire night in wine-shops'. In a later book, Ammianus records the Urban Prefect Ampelius (371-372AD), and his

³⁵ Seneca, *Epistles*, 95.15-16.

³⁶ Austin (1985) 28; McKinlay (1948d) 146. See for example: Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 1.7, 3.2, 4.3, 21.3, also 4.1, 6.1, 9.5; *Comparison of Aristides and Cato*, 4.4.

³⁷ McKinlay (1948c). Note also: McKinlay (1948d); (1949b) 27, 35; Austin (1985) 17-18, 27-28; Jellinek (1976).

³⁸ See Appendix 2 n.29.

³⁹ Sallust, *Catiline*, 9-11, esp. 11.4-7; Austin (1985) 31.

measures to cure 'the stain of incurable sins that had overwhelmed most people'. He was particularly opposed to 'appetite and gross gluttony', and his measures included restrictions on taverns. This leads Ammianus to give a second treatment of the faults of the Roman senate and people, where the contemporary poor are again described in a similar manner: 'the idle and slothful commons ... spend all their life with wine and dice'.⁴⁰

A third factor behind the destructive drinking bias of ancient literature is the nature of the writers themselves, and their agendas for writing. As noted above, ancient authors were generally members of the social and political elite, and in the Roman Empire the elite drew their position of authority from their claim of moral supremacy.⁴¹ Claims regarding the inappropriate drinking of others could be a powerful tool for an author to undermine the power of others, and to promote his own status or that of an ally. Allegations of inappropriate drinking were thus common in political invective and character assassination.⁴² Authors who passed judgement on others implied their own moral superiority in contrast, and thus their greater authority. Indeed, this judgemental conduct was traditionally associated with the Roman political office of censor, the pinnacle of the political career path of the Roman Republic. By adopting this critical role, an author exerted high authority over his subject, just as the censors did over Roman society.⁴³ Indeed, Van Hoof notes that Plutarch's interest in writing many works to improve his readers was not entirely selfless. Instead he pursued a personal agenda in works such as the abovementioned *Advice about Keeping Well*, which so clearly shows this bias towards focusing upon destructive drinking. Plutarch derived social capital from these works, as by passing judgement – which is emphasised to be accurate – he presents himself as the chief authority upon the matters he describes. These texts were works of self-promotion, and he gained prestige from them.⁴⁴

Accordingly, these authors of the Roman Empire followed the pattern which Douglas suggested is common of many societies, including our own modern Western society. People in a position of authority often tend to overemphasise

⁴⁰ Ammianus Marcellinus, 14.6, 28.4; Austin (1985) 48. Further on wine riots in Rome, see Appendix 1 n.12.

⁴¹ See Appendix 6 p.421 with n.27.

⁴² See Appendix 6 p.416 with n.9.

⁴³ See Ch.3 pp.235, 237, 250.

⁴⁴ Van Hoof (2010) 261-265.

problem drinking, and these authors (who typically also formed part of the Greco-Roman social and political elite) did likewise. One notable exception is the Greco-Roman medical authorities who, unlike their modern Western counterparts, do *not* show this bias. In the Roman Empire, doctors appear to have shown the opposite trend, focusing much more heavily on the *constructive* aspects of drinking. They usually advised their readers how they *should* drink and how they would benefit. Advice on what behaviour should be avoided, and accounts of the destructive results of negative drinking, were largely left to other authorities such as moralists and philosophers. This issue is analysed at length in Chapter 2.

Therefore, when Greco-Roman literary works of the first to third centuries AD consider the issue of drinking, they are more likely to focus upon and overemphasise the destructive aspects of drinking (exempting medical texts). It is highly likely that this bias in the source material exerted an influence over the modern scholarship. Modern literature addressing Roman drinking is surely more likely to focus upon excessive and destructive consumption as a result.

A clear example of this can be seen in the abovementioned 'Drinkers and Alcoholics in Ancient Rome', written by the biological and medical scientist Jellinek and published posthumously in 1976. Jellinek's account divides Roman history into stages where increasing access to wine was accompanied by a dramatic rise in destructive drinking. Early Rome is presented as a society of temperance, whereas the first century AD is presented as a society with an alcoholism problem which far exceeds modern Western society. Jellinek's argument follows an extremely similar line to that of the Roman *topos* of moral decline. His argument that the first century AD was the peak of destructive drinking probably reflects his sources; indeed a chart (fig. 1) at the start of his article illustrates that the vast majority date from approximately this period.

It is especially telling that Jellinek even implied that increasing Roman alcohol consumption was linked with 'a decline in moral values'. This impression probably rooted directly from the moralistic Roman literature which focuses heavily upon moral decline. In contrast to this, Douglas states that anthropologists predominantly 'challenge the view that alcohol leads to anomie', even though medical and sociological writers often argue or imply the contrary. Jellinek's article thus not only reflects the tendencies of wider medical and

sociological scholarship in its apparent keenness to imply social decline as a consequence of heavy drinking, but also that of ancient literature itself.⁴⁵

It consequently seems probable that Jellinek was misled by accepting such Roman moralistic comments at face value, without considering that, due to their nature, these sources would most likely emphasise any such problems. Just like ancient Roman literature, his article doubtless over-represents the extent of Roman society's problem drinking. Indeed, medical scholars such as Jellinek, who usually have little classical and historical research experience, are surely more likely to misidentify the agendas and misrepresentations present in ancient sources.

Instead, modern scholars should read the ancient evidence in light of this bias, and thus essentially through a 'Constructive Drinking' lens. This methodological approach can help us to identify and emphasise the constructive effects which were attributed to moderate drinking. Although these are less often focused upon in the surviving literature, these were the properties which ancient society acknowledged most people benefited from, most of the time.

This methodology can be illustrated by considering Seneca's *Epistle* 83 'On Drunkenness', mentioned at the start of this section. As D'Arms notes in passing, Seneca implies that slight intoxication promotes a constructive atmosphere of merriment, fit for socialising with friends, when he comments that even his conceptualised ideal man is occasionally 'led on by good cheer [*hilaritas*] which, for a friend's sake, is carried somewhat too far, yet always stops short of drunkenness'. Similarly, when Seneca characterises the ideal drinker as one 'who is satisfied with slaking his thirst' he implies wine's thirst-quenching properties. His comment that 'a man overcome by liquor cannot keep down his food' implies that wine can effectively promote vomiting, and (as addressed in Chapter 2) vomiting was regarded as medically advantageous in certain circumstances. Later in this letter, Seneca's rhetorical question 'what glory is there in carrying much liquor?' implies that, in many people's eyes, this *did* lead to admiration. His subsequent description of the vileness of competitive drinking suggests that prizes can be won in this way; drinking could have material rewards. Finally, Seneca's description of the drunkard Cossus as urban prefect, who fell asleep in the Senate after heavy and late drinking, may

⁴⁵ Jellinek (1976) esp. 1732, 1738-1740; Douglas (1987) 3-4.

imply belief that wine and/or lengthy drinking-bouts promoted sleep; again, this was regarded as medically advantageous in certain circumstances.⁴⁶

Another illustration can also be provided by considering Plutarch's biography of the notorious heavy drinker, Mark Antony. Although the drinking described in this work is frequently excessive and negative, many constructive aspects of drinking can be detected by deploying the Constructive Drinking lens.⁴⁷

Early in this text, it is noted that Antony attracted the scorn of noteworthy people through various inappropriate drinking practices conducted within the city of Rome. This included drinking in public from a soldier's drinking vessel. Yet his behaviour is noted to have strengthened the soldiers' affection for him. Drinking practices could therefore apparently promote support for a military leader. Drinking practices are also implied to have been purposefully selected by Antony as key elements of his own identity construction. He chose to publicly advertise his drinking, as whilst in office he had golden beakers displayed – as if it were a sacred procession – whenever he went on excursions from the city. Similarly, one of Antony's military deputies was also one of his drinking companions, and had gained a nickname derived from drinking ('Cotylon', after a Greek fluid measure). Thus he also (intentionally or unintentionally) had his own identity associated with drinking practices. We may further suspect that his appointment by Antony may have resulted from intimate relations forged or strengthened by drinking together.

Indeed, Plutarch's *Antony* presents drinking together as a key means of flattery and building personal intimacy. Cleopatra used this as part of her tactics to win Antony's affection. Similarly, after their defeat at Actium, Plutarch records that Antony refused to see Cleopatra – either being angry or ashamed – but her servants brought them back to friendly relations through stages which included drinking together; this symbolised a degree of affection. Conversely, offensive drunken behaviour was used by Cleopatra's court in a deviously constructive manner: it was used to pressure unwanted company to leave, without raising suspicion that they were actively trying to send that person away. Heavy drinking was also considered an appropriate element of excessive consumption

⁴⁶ Seneca, *Epistles*, 83.15, 16, 24; D'Arms (1995) 305.

⁴⁷ Plutarch, *Antony*, 4.2, 9.5, 18.4, 29.1, 45.4-6, 51.1-2, 59.1-4, 67.4, 71.1-3, 75.1, 77.3.

justified by impending peril. Antony accordingly asked the slaves to pour wine more generously the night before he intended to die in battle.

Wine was thought to offer extreme therapeutic properties. It is said to be the *only* remedy for an illness encountered on Antony's Parthian campaign. Drinking was also associated with constructively combating anxiety: when Cleopatra is delayed in coming to him, Antony is distressed and so uses wine and intoxication in an attempt to banish distress. Similarly, when Antony's powerbase collapses and he gives up all hope, he turns to drinking-bouts as he lays aside his anxieties. Plutarch also records that Antony asked for wine when mortally wounded, and suggests two reasons: 'either because he was thirsty, or in the hope of a speedier release'. Wine was thus acknowledged to relieve thirst, and be useful for euthanasia.

This thesis accordingly employs the Constructive Drinking lens as its key methodological tool to highlight the often secondary and sub-textual views on the constructive properties of drink. Chapters 2 and 3 will pursue this agenda in earnest, while Chapter 1 will establish the context of this discussion, by providing an overview of the social phenomenon of the consumption of intoxicating drinks in the Roman Empire, during the first to third centuries AD. It serves to establish knowledge and concepts which will be of recurrent interest throughout, including the available beverages, contexts of drinking, quantities of consumption, and ancient beliefs regarding addiction.

CHAPTER 1: DRINKING IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

This preliminary chapter outlines key information regarding the consumption of intoxicating drinks in the Roman Empire which will be of recurrent utility throughout this study. It facilitates later chapters by introducing the reader to information which is fundamental to understanding later analysis and arguments, and contextualising such investigation. This chapter first outlines the intoxicating drinks consumed by the inhabitants of the Roman Empire. It then addresses the modes of consumption, including drinking contexts and quantities consumed. Finally, it introduces ancient ideas and beliefs regarding the ambiguity of wine and wine addiction.

INTOXICATING DRINKS

In antiquity, there were countless types of drinks. These can be divided into three groups, dependent upon their main component. First, beverages made from water, including mead and beer. Second, beverages made from milk. Third, beverages made from fruit juice, such as wine.¹ A beverage would ferment and become alcoholic if it had, or was provided with, the substances required for fermentation. These were primarily yeast and simple sugars which the yeast could consume. Ethanol (also called ethyl-alcohol; the type of alcohol found in drinks) and carbon dioxide then result from the metabolic process of the yeast. Although some foodstuffs (such as berries, fruits and honey) have simple sugars in abundance and thus ferment easily, other foodstuffs (such as cereals and many root vegetables) contain starches. As yeast is unable to process starches, alcoholic beverages made from these products have a more complicated manufacturing process. They require pre-treatment, 'malting', to break down the starches into simple sugars which the yeast can consume.²

As yeast expires in high concentrations of alcohol, fermentation stops naturally at around 12-16% alcohol by volume (ABV). To increase the strength of an alcoholic beverage beyond this requires the use of distillation to separate elements from such beverages. Fluid can then be removed, or concentrated

¹ *Pauly*, s.v. 'Beverages'; also s.v. 'Alcohol, Consumption of'.

² *EFC*, s.vv. 'Alcohol', 'Fermentation'.

ethanol added, thereby raising the ABV. It is uncertain when people began to produce distilled beverages to drink. Scholars generally believe that wine-distilling was invented in mid twelfth century Italy, based upon earlier Arabic distillation techniques going back to c.800AD. By the fifteenth century, distilled beverages (based upon wine or beer) had become popular across Europe. They were extremely harsh, and were generally used as medicines. It was about another century until the process was refined enough to produce beverages which were readily drinkable.

Yet the process of distillation was known in antiquity, from at least the fourth century BC, and was used by experimental chemists (to distil seawater for example). Thus although Hyams searches for, yet cannot find, any evidence for the people of antiquity distilling beverages, he concludes it is possible that they did, and suggests it would have been 'rather odd' if some chemists did not try. More recently, Wilson has researched thoroughly the topic of distillation in antiquity. She also notes that distillation was certainly practiced in antiquity, but concludes that it is more difficult to ascertain whether beverages such as wine were distilled. Wilson rightly notes that 'there are no obvious references to wine-distilling in the works of contemporary [ancient] Greek and Roman authors'. She notes one text from 200AD which gives a recipe for 'boiling' wine to make a liquid which more readily catches fire, and argues that this represents distilling the wine to make a more concentrated alcohol. Whether or not Wilson's argument is correct, this distilled wine was evidently designed to be combusted. There is no evidence that distillation was used in antiquity to produce a stronger drinkable beverage. Indeed, distilled beverages would be at odds with Greek and Roman cultural norms, as it was customary to mix their wine with a majority part of water as they regarded unmixed wine as too strong (wine mixing is discussed in Appendix 1). What then would be the point in producing a fortified wine?

Ancient beverages thus probably reached a maximum strength of around 16% ABV, but were usually far lower in strength. Modern (un-fortified) wines are typically 12-13% ABV, and there is little reason for ancient wine to differ vastly.³

³ Hyams (1965) 198, 225-226; Wilson (2006) esp. 17-20; *EFC*, s.vv. 'Alcohol', 'Spirits'; Johnson (1989) 71, 179; Austin (1985) 38. Note that Johnson (1989) 71 erroneously states that 'distillation was unknown [in antiquity]', although his suggestion that wines of 15 or 16% were 'the strongest drink they knew' appears probable. In stark contrast, note further *EFC*, s.v.

It should be noted that the compound and drug now known as ethanol was unknown in antiquity in its pure form. Furthermore, 'alcohol' is a later term derived from Arabic (*al kuhul*, meaning 'essence'), and Greek and Latin have no comparable word. Yet the Greeks and Romans did clearly understand that fermentation made drinks intoxicating, even if they did not fully understand the chemistry behind this process. Plutarch's *Table-Talk* thus presents a fictional debate on the scientific rationale behind why fresh grape juice is not intoxicating, yet the same substance becomes increasingly intoxicating as it ferments into wine.⁴

The closest noun that the ancients had to 'alcohol' was 'wine' (*vinum*/οἶνος), which some individuals used to also describe a general category including all intoxicating drinks and those of a similar basis to wine. Thus in the first century AD, the Roman law teacher Sabinus proposed that all drinks – specifically including beer and vinegar – should be included within the legal definition of 'wine'. Similarly, Diocletian's famous edict on maximum prices (301AD) includes three types of beer under the heading of 'wine' (*vinum*). Nelson notes that this trend far predated the Roman Empire, as 'the Greeks already had spoken of beers as wines'. He plausibly argues that this was 'not because they [the Greeks] believed them to be essentially the same drink, but only because they lacked a general term to describe all liquid intoxicants and because wine was for them a natural reference point since it was their sole intoxicant'. In any

'Whiskey (Whisky)' states that 'it is likely that whiskey-type distillation originated in Ireland, possibly as early as 500 to 800BCE and mainly within monastic communities' (*sic*); no evidence is cited to support this claim. ABV strengths: *EFC*, s.vv. 'Alcohol' (12-15% maximum strength of un-distilled wine; 10-14% maximum strength of table wine), 'Wine' (16% maximum strength of un-distilled wine); *Pauly*, s.v. 'Alcohol, Consumption of' (17.5% likely the maximum strength of ancient wine, governed by natural fermentation); Dalby (2003) s.v. 'Alcoholic Drink' (16% maximum strength of un-distilled wine and mead, 12-13% usual strength of modern wine and there is no reason why ancient beverages should differ); Curtis (2001) 376 (Roman wines probably under 16%); Johnson (1989) 71 (yeast ceases to ferment at 15 or 16%; the strongest Roman wines were probably of this ABV); Davidson (1997) 40 (Greek wines probably had higher ABVs than those of the modern day, due to the hot weather and lower yields; he suggests close to the upper limit of 15-16%, rather than the modern average of 12.5%); Laurence (2009) 112 (notes a vineyard in Pompeii where wine has been produced since 2001 according to ancient techniques, albeit using modern grape varieties; the wine's ABV is 13.5%, comparable to modern wine). On wines combusting, see further Ch.2 n.292.

⁴ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 3.7=655e-656b; Nelson (2005) 1, 118; Pauly, s.v. 'Alcohol, Consumption of'; Dalby (2003) s.v. 'Alcoholic Drinks'; *EFC*, s.v. 'Alcohol'; *OCW*² s.vv. 'Alcohol', 'Ethanol'; Hyams (1965) 198. On grape juice, see also Appendix 1 n.15.

case, the use of 'wine' in this way was evidently not universal, as in the third century AD Ulpian explicitly argued against Sabinus' proposal.⁵

For clarity, this thesis uses 'wine' to refer only to a fermented beverage made principally from grapes, unless specified otherwise. Similarly, in the absence of a suitable Greek or Latin term, ethanol-based intoxicating drinks are referred to as 'alcoholic' beverages or simply 'alcohol'.

Appendix 1 outlines individually each of the major fermented beverages produced and consumed in the Greco-Roman world. Readers unfamiliar with this topic are advised to consult this section.

It should be noted from the outset that although this study would prefer to address a breadth of intoxicating drinks, it is unavoidable that it focuses almost exclusively upon wine. This is primarily due to wine's overwhelming dominance in the Greco-Roman literary discourse, which is the primary evidence of this research. This dominance is in turn due to wine's longstanding popularity as the preferred staple and luxury drink of the Greeks and Romans, and thus its prevalence in Greco-Roman agriculture and culture. Along with cereals and olive oil, wine formed part of the so-called 'Mediterranean Triad'; the backbone of the Greco-Roman diet.⁶ Other intoxicating drinks, such as beer, are far less frequently discussed in the surviving literature.⁷ A similar situation is seen in the archaeological record. As outlined by Cool, 'of the various different types of beverages consumed [in Roman Britain], it is wine that leaves the most

⁵ *Digest*, 33.6.9 (= Ulpian, On Sabinus, 23); *Diocletian's Edict on Maximum Prices*, 2.1-19, esp. 2.11-12; Nelson (2005) 70-71 (note that, regarding the quote, I would prefer Nelson substitute 'sole' for 'most prominent', so as to acknowledge the possibility of some Greeks accessing a wider variety of intoxicating drinks and substances), 118.

⁶ For an introductory overview, see the following from *The Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World*: Dietler (2007) 255; Osborne (2007) 296; von Reden (2007) 390-294; Harris (2007) 531-532; Jongman (2007) 602-605. Consider also, for example, Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.137 and 14.150 which notes that 'there is no department of man's life on which more labour is spent' than wine, and summarises wine's centrality to both the Greco-Roman diet and mindset by stating that 'there are two liquids that are specially agreeable to the human body, wine inside and oil outside'. Fleming (2001) vii similarly summarises wine's importance: 'For the Romans, wine was something very special: it was a part of almost every aspect of their daily life. Along with grain and olive oil, it was the backbone of their economy, whilst private fortunes often hung upon whether or not an *amphora*-laden ship reached its destination. Wine made herbal medicines palatable and wound-poultices effective; it eased the path of business deals and brought laughter to the dinner table. Among the poverty-stricken, it made life simply more bearable.'

⁷ Compare, for example, Dioscorides' brief treatment of beer at 2.87-88, to his lengthy discussion of wines (and related foodstuffs) at 5.1-5.73.

evidence archaeologically, both in the packaging and in the utensils used for its consumption'.⁸

DRINKING CONTEXTS

The Greeks traditionally took one or two meals per day. The *deipnon* (δείπνον) was the day's main meal, taken in the evening. Some people also took a smaller *ariston* (ἄριστον) around noon. The Romans usually ate up to three meals per day. The main meal was the *cena*; in early Rome this had been taken around midday, but by the late Republic it was the final meal of the day, analogous to the *deipnon*. The Romans also sometimes ate a small breakfast (*ientaculum*) and a lunch (*prandium*). Wine was a common component of these meals. The exception to this rule was the Roman breakfast. The Romans considered the morning to be a time for work aided by frugality. It was thus unusual to drink any wine or eat lavish food in the morning, and public figures (such as the Emperor Vitellius) were criticised for doing so. Accordingly, many Romans drank only water at breakfast (or else a very slight amount of wine) and drank sparingly at lunch; this behaviour was considered to be comparatively frugal and virtuous.⁹

As the day's main meals, the *deipnon* and *cena*, featured greater consumption of both wine and food. Those present reclined to eat and drink. These were the meals to which dinner guests were invited. They were also sometimes followed by a drinking-bout. The Greeks had the *symposium*, traditionally a male-only event (albeit with female entertainers) which formed a significant part of their social life. Equality of all guests was a common feature. The guests were entertained by outside performers, and also shared and competed in sympotic talk and song. This was also a place to educate young men in citizenship, and for older men to engage in amorous relations with them. A

⁸ Cool (2006) 129.

⁹ Dalby (2003) s.vv. 'Meal Times', 'Meals', Symposium (1)'; Pauly, s.v. 'Meals'; Weeber (1993) 8-9. Breakfast: Martial, 11.104.3-4 with Carcopino (2004 [1939]) 156, 263; Cassius Dio, 69.7.3; Dalby (2003) s.v. 'Meal Times'; Weeber (1993) 'Mischverhältnis'; Dupont (1992 [1989]) 247-249, 270-272; Balsdon (1969) 20-21, 24-25, 32-54. Note also: Cassius Dio, 69.7.3; McKinlay (1948d) 148: here Dio describes the typical *ariston* of Hadrian, which was implied to be frugal because it was without wine; the Greek term *ariston* presumably refers either to the Roman *ientaculum* or *prandium*; thus Hadrian is considered frugal because he does not drink wine either at breakfast or at lunch. For figures attacked for eating heavily in the mornings, see for example: Suetonius, *Vitellius*, 7.3, 13.1; Cicero, *Against Piso*, 13; *Philippics*, 2.104; Tacitus, *Histories*, 1.62.

symposium occasionally ended in a *komos* (κῶμος), a drunken revel through the streets, characterised by general noisiness, rowdiness, music and sex.

The Romans often dubbed their dinner parties a *convivium* – an event where invited guests were given lavish food, drink and entertainment. This term could be used to refer to both the main meal aspect (the *cena*, analogous to the Greek *deipnon*) and sometimes also the following drinking-bout (analogous to the Greek *symposium*). This drinking-bout generally followed similar structures and rules to the Greek *symposium*; for example, there were occasions for entertainment, talk, competition and seduction. Yet there were notable differences; for example: Roman drinking-bouts did not necessarily exclude women, and they more frequently had less emphasis on equality. This was sometimes followed by a drunken revel, which was similar to the Greek *komos*. The Romans used the word *comissatio*, which could refer to both the drinking party element (which sometimes formed the later half of a *convivium*; analogous to the *symposium*), and the drunken revel which occasionally followed (the aspect analogous to the *komos*).¹⁰

A notable issue is that many of these terms are similar and overlapping, and the ancient writers do not always use them consistently, clearly and accurately. Paul elaborates on this issue:

[Ancient] writers do not always distinguish clearly between the *symposion* and *deipnon*, or they use terms such as *synousia* [a society/party] or *convivium* where the meaning is not clear cut; in some cases what is called by one writer a *deipnon* will be described by another as a *symposion*.¹¹

Accordingly, this thesis often uses more general English terms when it is not essential to the thesis' argument to define the *exact* event, or when it is not clear precisely which of these events an author is describing. These terms include 'dinner parties' to refer to a social event akin to a *deipnon*, *cena* or *convivium*, in which eating and drinking form a central element. 'Drinking-bouts'

¹⁰ Weeber (1993) 9 and s.v. 'Gelage'; Dupont (1992 [1989]) 269-286; Carcopino (2003 [1939]) 263-276; Balsdon (1969) 32-54; König (2012) 6-7; Fleming (2001) 51-57; Davidson (1997) 43-52; Dalby (2003) s.vv. 'Convivium', 'Comissatio', 'Komos', 'Meal Times', 'Symposium (1)'; Pauly, s.vv. 'Banquet', 'Cena', 'Comissatio', 'Wine'; *DGRA*, s.vv. 'Comissatio', 'Symposium'.

¹¹ Paul (1991) 158.

or 'drinking parties' are used to refer to social events such as a *symposium*, the latter stages of a *convivium* or a *comissatio*, where the focus is upon wine consumption.

In this period, the upper-classes rarely consumed intoxicating drinks outside of these meal contexts. Part of this was surely tradition and practicality (drinking often accompanied or followed meals, which were traditionally conducted in private homes). Yet another key reason behind this was the stigma which the Romans attached to drinking in public. For example, Quintilian records that the Emperor Augustus reprimanded a Roman aristocrat for being seen to drink publicly at the games. Similarly, between AD371-372 the Urban Prefect of Rome decreed that 'no respectable man should be seen chewing anything in public'. Plutarch even implies that the Roman elite could not even drink *water* in public without fear of criticism. Cicero thus had his friends stand so as to conceal him as he drank water in public to quench his thirst. Similarly, when Sabaco was suspected of electoral bribery, as his servant was spotted inside the voters' railings, he denied these allegations saying his servant was merely fetching him water to quench his thirst. Although he was not convicted, the following year the censors expelled him from the senate, reasoning that he had either given false testimony, or showed a lack of self-control through this public consumption.¹²

Accordingly, from the first century BC onwards, the Roman elite considered the main daily context of public eating and drinking – taverns and snack bars – to be unfit for decent people. Taverns were characterised as places for immoral individuals and the lower-classes. Thieves, prostitutes, gamblers, cutthroats, and runaway slaves were all stock-characters of the tavern scene. Taverns were presented as havens for the basest elements of society to engage in drunken debauchery and other dubious activities. Those working in taverns were legally classed as *infames*; essentially an 'immoral' underclass which lost certain rights and protection. Aristocrats who entered taverns could thus be criticised by their rivals; this was a powerful weapon in political invective.

This image is almost certainly a misrepresentation, influenced by the elite's hostility to public consumption and the sociability of the lower-classes. Taverns

¹² Quintilian, 6.3.63; Ammianus Marcellinus, 28.4.4; Plutarch, *Marius*, 5.3-4; *Cicero*, 27.1-2; Balsdon (1969) 152; Laurence (1994) 81.

undoubtedly formed a major context of drinking and sociability for the urban sub-elite. The lower-classes' homes often lacked the facilities to enjoy warm food and drink, and to entertain company. Indeed, Laurence's spatial study of Pompeii has concluded that although brothels clustered together in 'red-light' districts away from dense habitation, taverns in contrast were not pushed into marginal areas of the city, but were scattered throughout, permeating all residential areas with the exception of those dominated by upper-class housing. The implication may therefore be that the wider population considered taverns not to be immoral, but key institutions for daily life.¹³

The dining practice of the Roman army differed substantially from that of Roman civilians. Soldiers usually ate two meals a day: breakfast (*prandium*) and dinner (*cena*). As wine formed a typical part of the Roman military rations (except when they were under strict discipline and were issued vinegar or *posca*), wine consumption formed a regular part of these meals. Roman troops were comparatively well paid, and thus frequently supplemented their rations with more lavish food and drink. Meals were taken on command, allowing a general to modify meal times as befitted the situation. This allowed for troops to eat whilst safely in camp, or before a battle. Soldiers usually took meals seated (in contrast to Greek and Roman civilians of status who reclined) to reflect the frugal life they were expected to lead; yet when discipline was relaxed soldiers were sometimes allowed to recline. They ate with their tent-mates (their *contubernium*). The first meal was usually taken in front of their tents, and their evening meal inside of them.¹⁴

It should be reiterated that this study focuses primarily upon the Greco-Roman upper-classes, and as such primarily upon meals taken in private houses. For this reason, the tavern and military meals are rarely addressed.

¹³ Balsdon (1969) 152-154; Laurence (1994) 70-87; Weeber (1993) s.vv. 'Gastwirt', 'Schankbetrug', 'Schenke', 'Stammlokal'; *Pauly*, s.v. 'Inn'; *OCD*⁴, s.v. 'Inns, Restaurants'; Austin (1985) 33, 38-39, 43-44. Greek hostility to taverns: Davidson (1997) 53-61; Austin (1985) 20. Political attacks, see for example: Cicero, *Philippics*, 13.24; *Piso*, 13; Suetonius, *Grammarians*, 15; *Nero*, 26; *Vitellius*, 13.

¹⁴ Roth (1999) 53-55; for an overview of rationing and personal supplements, see 14-16. Wine in Roman military rations, see Appendix 7 n.33. Note also, *posca* in the Roman military diet: see Appendix 1 n.25.

QUANTITIES CONSUMED

Roman society appears to have considered an intake of one *sextarius*, about 0.54 litres, to be a notably moderate quantity for an adult male to drink, either per day or at dinner. Suetonius' *Augustus* thus claims that Augustus 'was by nature most sparing also in his use of wine ... [at dinner] when he indulged most freely he never exceeded a six *sextants* [one *sextarius*]'. A satire of Horace similarly describes a miserly man as only buying 'bread, greens, a *sextarius* of wine, and such other things as would mean pain to our human nature, if withheld'; one *sextarius* of wine is thus presented as the bare minimum of a healthy life. Justin (epitomising Pompeius Trogus) also highlights the traditional frugality of Hannibal, who is said to have never reclined at meals or to have drunk more than one *sextarius* of wine in one sitting.

This quantity is also supported by Roman military rations. Roth notes a fourth-century receipt which suggests that soldiers were given either one *sextarius* or half a *sextarius* per day. Roth supports one *sextarius* as a standard quantity by noting two accounts, one by Polyaeus and the other by Appian, regarding Scipio's measures to discipline his army. Among other things, Scipio is said to have only allowed his troops to keep one drinking vessel. Polyaeus elaborates that this vessel could measure no more than two *cotylae*, which is equivalent to one *sextarius*. Roth therefore suggests that 'if these two reports stem back to a single event, it suggests that the *sextarius*-sized drinking cup represented a single ration of wine'. Roman military rations provided basic foodstuffs for a frugal yet healthy diet; soldiers had to buy luxuries of their own accord. The military wine ration was thus doubtless perceived as a moderate quantity by wider Roman society.

Similarly, Cato's *On Agriculture* prescribes a farm slave's diet throughout the year. Cato advised issuing between 0.5 and 1.5 *sextarii* of wine per day, dependent on the season (the greater rations were given in summer); although wine was not issued in winter, but rather an unspecified quantity of low-quality *piquette*. One *sextarius* of wine was the most common daily ration during the year. Cato also states that the total amount of wine which a slave should be given over the year should be around 336 *sextarii* (7 *quadrantals*; c.180L), equivalent to a little short of one *sextarius* per day on average (though he states that heavy-labourers should receive more per year, and 10 *quadrantals* = 480

sextarii = c.260L would not be excessive; this is equivalent to c.1.3 *sextarii* per day on average). Like the Roman army, Cato's slaves were supposed to be consuming a frugal diet sufficient for health; therefore this ration probably reflects what Cato perceived to be a moderate quantity. Furthermore, Plutarch repeatedly records that Cato drank and ate the same food and wine as his slaves. As Cato was presented as a paradigm of traditional simplicity and frugality, this would imply that his slaves' rations were moderate.

Roman sources thus repeatedly present one *sextarius* as an especially (and unusually) frugal quantity for an adult male. It was therefore presumably somewhat less than average consumption, and serves as a *terminus post quem* for 'average' consumption.¹⁵

Yet it is uncertain whether these sources refer to undiluted or diluted wine. 'Wine' (*vinum*/οἶνος) can refer to both the raw material of wine and the mixed beverage which most Greeks and Romans consumed on a daily basis. I suggest that the one *sextarius* volume stated in these sources probably refer to undiluted wine, for the following four reasons. First, rations would be far easier to transport and distribute to slaves and soldiers if this was the wine in its raw, unmixed form; this would be less than half of the weight and volume of typically mixed wine.

Second, the 'wine' brought into the drinking context was usually an *amphora* (or other container) of raw, unmixed wine. The drinker(s) then tended to do his/their own mixing with water at the point of consumption. Greeks typically did this in a communal *krater* (κρατήρ) and debated over the mixing ratios. Romans tended to mix their wine in their own cup, to whichever ratio they wished. In both cases, the first 'wine' which the drinker saw at the drinking context was unmixed. If the drinker wanted to keep track of the quantities which he consumed, it would be logical to do it by measuring out a set quantity at this point. Similarly, the quantity of raw-wine consumed by a group of drinkers was more effortlessly measurable than the volume of mixed beverage. The former

¹⁵ Horace, *Satires*, 1.1.74; Suetonius, *Augustus*, 77; Justin, 32.4; Austin (1985) 27; Jellinek (1976) 1731. Cato: Cato, *On Agriculture*, 57; Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 3.2, 4.3; Purcell (1985) 13-15. Military: Polyaeus, 8.16.2 with Appian, *Spanish Wars*, 14.85; Roth (1999) 39-40, see also 14-16 for an overview of military rationing. Tchernia (1986) 23-24 comes to a similar conclusion (i.e. one *sextarius* was a moderate quantity) citing the above evidence from Horace and Suetonius' *Augustus*; he is followed by Weeber (1993) s.v. 'Weinkonsum'. For the volume of a *sextarius*, see: *Pauly*, s.v. 'Sextarius'.

could be calculated simply by counting the number of discarded *amphorae* (or similar), considering that *amphorae* were usually standard measures. Yet the latter relied on the accuracy of several dubious factors, for example: knowing the exact volume of the drinker's cup, assuming that the drinker had always filled his cup exactly full, and accurately remembering the number of refills.

Third, the ancients' concerns regarding excess ultimately hinged upon the amount of raw wine consumed; this was the potentially dangerous and excessive element of the beverage, rather than the water. Thus if one *sextarius* was the benchmark of moderation, it seems likely that this referred to the quantity of raw wine. Indeed, a person who mixed larger quantities of water with his wine was considered to be drinking more moderately than the opposite. It would therefore make little sense if this one *sextarius* volume referred to the final mixed beverage, as this would surely characterise people who drank very heavily diluted wine as drinking excessively, due only to the larger volume of such a weak drink.

Fourth, reading this one *sextarius* volume as referring to the raw wine seems to be more complicit with human physiology. Much of a Greek or Roman person's daily water intake was mixed with wine, and one *sextarius* of wine would be enough to mix with one and a half litres of water to provide two litres of mixed beverage at a weak but reasonable 1:3 consistency. Indeed, this particular mixing-ratio was advised by Hesiod for example. This seems to indicate a very reasonable daily water/fluid intake, as the UK's National Health Service recommends (as of 2011) that adults should drink an average of 1.2 litres of water daily.¹⁶

A *terminus ante quem* can also be established for 'average' consumption. Martial records a drinking game whereby people take turns toasting somebody. They drink one *cyathus* (45ml) of wine for each letter in the subject's name. Martial refers to this game twice. The first appears indicative of more normal practice. Drinkers toast several female names which require between three ('Ida') and seven ('Justina') measures; these vary between 130 and 300 millilitres. The other occasion appears to ridicule the excessive practice of drinking the letter in *all* of a man's names. Martial's example requires nineteen measures (c.850ml). This seems to indicate that 0.85 litres was an excessively

¹⁶ National Health Service (2011). On wine mixing, see Appendix 1 n.14.

large quantity to down in one, although it does not indicate an excessive amount per day, or per drinking party. Another epigram by Martial is informative in this respect. He implies after consuming ten *quincunces* (c.2.27L) he would be recognised as clearly drunk. Tchernia uses this to assert that 2.27 litres was probably more than the average daily consumption.¹⁷

Normal daily consumption for the average Roman male was probably somewhere between these figures. The most famous and influential estimation of Roman wine consumption is probably that by Tchernia. He first notes evidence for *frugal* and *extreme* wine consumption, coming to similar conclusions to those outlined above. Afterwards, Tchernia states that he knows of only one source which could indicate *average* wine consumption for the population of ancient Rome during the Imperial period. This is an inscription from the *Via Appia* (153AD) concerning wine distributed to members of the *collegium* of Aesculapius and Hygia. The average member was given three *sextarii* per day (1.62L). Tchernia concludes that this amount was probably unusually lavish, and men probably consumed less on average. For the purposes of an approximation of the total yearly wine consumption of the city of Rome, he assumes that they drank an average of c.0.8-1L per day, and that women and children probably drank less. He suggests that the women drank half as much, and the children nothing at all. Yet, all of this is done for the purpose of this quick estimation of Rome's total consumption; we should not put too much confidence in Tchernia's estimations of consumption per capita. In the end, Tchernia suggests the average yearly consumption per head to be around 146-182L, which he supports by noting similar consumption figures from the fourteenth to eighteenth century. He then extrapolates this to estimates the total consumption of Rome at between 100-180 million litres per year, depending upon the exact population figure.¹⁸

Tchernia's estimation is followed by several other scholars. Gutsfeld (in the *Brill's New Pauly*), Weeber and Fleming cite Tchernia's estimations. Fleming concludes that 'admittedly on the basis of the flimsiest of ancient data', Roman wine consumption seems to have been several times greater than the average

¹⁷ Martial, 1.27, 1.71, 11.36 (also discussed in Ch.3 n.349); Tchernia (1986) 24; Jellinek (1976) 1736-1737. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.144 also notes that three *congi* (c.10L) is a remarkable amount to drink in one go; Jellinek (1976) 1737.

¹⁸ *CIL*, 6.10234; Tchernia (1986) 21-27.

modern Italian male, who are the current world-leaders in wine consumption.¹⁹ Jongman also cites Tchernia when he argues that the 'Romans drank a lot of wine'. Jongman then proposes that the *average* daily wine consumption was perhaps equivalent to 'a modern bottle of wine' (thus c.0.75L) for adults. For the population as a whole (notably including women and children, who doubtless drank far less than adult males), Jongman suggests an average consumption per head of 100 litres per year, or c.0.27 litres per day. He supports this by referencing average consumption per head in early modern Europe and the approximate wine supply of Pompeii's hinterland per head of population. He also states that 'higher estimates have been proposed' but these overemphasise adult males, who probably tended to drink more.²⁰

Jellinek also follows a similar line. Although he initially states that 'an estimate of the annual consumption of Rome cannot be arrived at, in my opinion' (in part because of the uncertain demographics of Roman society), he supports an estimate of 94 million litres per year for the city of Rome. Jellinek states that this estimate is based on modern Italian consumption, which (contrary to Fleming) he argues 'is a valid basis for the calculation of Roman consumption in the first century'. Assuming that Rome had around a million inhabitants in this period, this would suggest an annual consumption of c.100 litres per head; essentially the same estimate as Jongman's.²¹

¹⁹ Pauly, s.v. 'Wine'; Weeber (1993) 'Weinkonsum'; Fleming (2001) 57-58. Note that Fleming erroneously states that *CIL*, 6.10234 issued the rank-and-file members two *sextarii* per day (rather than three), as discussed in the Introduction on p.19 with n.10.

²⁰ Jongman (2007) 603; Jongman (1988) 132-133. In actual fact, Jongman fails to reference any firm 'higher estimates'. He cites only Purcell (1985), but analysis of this article shows that Purcell is reluctant to accept an average consumption per head of over 100-120L (similar to Jongman's own estimate of 100L). On p.13, Purcell comments that 'the only consumption figure we have is Cato's allowance' of c.250 litres per year, distributed to his slaves. Purcell notes that this 'is high by post-classical standards' but notes it can be supported by eighteenth-century consumption in Rome (c.210-280L per head). However, on p.15 n.74, Purcell notes that 'to provide a million consumers with wine at the rate Cato offered his slaves would require 250,000,000 litres of wine p.a. ... it seems self-evident that this demand could not have been met', claiming that the distribution system would be the limiting factor. In support of lower consumption figures, Purcell p.15 n.71 notes that c.100-120 litres per head was consumed in sixteenth-century Valladolid and eighteenth-century Paris.

Note also, Jongman suggests that: 'children did not drink wine'. I disagree, and would instead prefer the amendment: 'children tended to drink *less* wine than adults', as seems likely that at least *some* children did drink *some* wine. In support of this, the reader should initially consider medical advice regarding children. Celsus, Soranus and some Hippocratic texts advised how best children could consume wine (it was usually advised that it should be more diluted), implying that at least some children, under some circumstances, drank some wine. Galen also seems unusual in advising strict abstinence. On this, see Ch.2 n.85-89, but compare to Appendix 2 n.29 on traditional Roman laws prohibiting children's drinking. See also: D'Arms (1995) 308-312 (= 'Drinking and Childhood').

²¹ Jellinek (1976) 1737.

In support of Tchernia's estimate, it can be noted that the consumption of such large quantities of wine is not unknown in the Mediterranean. Forbes observed that in 1972-1974, adult males in Methana (in the Peloponnese) consumed on average over a litre of wine (home-made *retsina*, c.12% ABV) per day; women consumed considerably less.²² Plutarch and Athenaeus (citing Dicaearchus, the fourth-century BC Greek author) also record the quantities of foodstuffs which a male in Lycurgan Sparta was expected to contribute to his mess-group (σοῦσιτιά) every month. Plutarch claims they provided 8 *choae* (c.24L), and Athenaeus 11-12 *choae* (c.33-36L). These would respectively represent c.0.8 and c.1.1-1.2 litres of wine per head, per day.²³ Assuming these figures are accurate, it is still uncertain how much of this wine a Spartan male would usually have consumed. On the one hand, Plutarch notes that this rationed communal diet was designed to be simple and frugal. It was supposed to benefit a man's body and character. Men were pressured to consume heartily of this communal diet, as Plutarch states that those who ate and drank lightly were criticised as effeminate weaklings. On the other hand, Plutarch notes that Spartan boys were underfed so that they would have to steal food from the men's mess-halls (which was intended as training in stealth). How much was stolen, and how heartily a man had to drink, are uncertain issues.²⁴

Scholars therefore seem to agree that the average Roman male probably drank between 0.75 and one litre per day. Yet the evidence on which this estimate is based is very slight, and I do not believe much faith should be put in it. We also have no reason to expect homogeneity across adult males, and we do not know how common it was for a person's normal consumption to lie outside this bracket. In contrast, we can more reliably accept one *sextarius* (0.54L) as a notably moderate quantity. Average daily consumption was thus probably noticeably greater than half a litre, but it is uncertain how much greater.

²² Foxhall and Forbes (1982) 68.

²³ Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, 12; Athenaeus, 4.141c (= Dicaearchus, fr.72); Foxhall and Forbes (1982) 54, 57-58. Herodotus, 6.57 also notes that Spartan kings received c.0.25-0.27L of wine on a day when not present at a public banquet.

²⁴ Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, 10, 17.4.

AMBIGUITY AND ADDICTION

The Greeks and Romans perceived wine to be an ambiguous substance. It had the power to affect people greatly, yet its effects could be either positive or negative. Constructive results usually depended upon moderation, whilst destructive consequences were often associated with excessive drinking and extreme drunkenness.

This was recognised as far back as Homer. On the one hand, the Homeric generation provide wine for their guests and drank together in a convivial manner.²⁵ When drunk in moderation, wine is described as having pleasurable effects, yet when drunk excessively it is described as something which can cause men great harm.²⁶ Great calamities often befell those who drank excessively, such as the Cyclops Polyphemus who became drunk, was more easily tricked by Odysseus, fell into a drunken sleep, and then was attacked by his captives. Similarly, Odysseus' follower Elpenor became drunk and fell soundly asleep. This meant he nearly missed his crewmates departing, and ultimately caused him to slip whilst climbing down a ladder and fall to his death.²⁷

The ambiguity of wine was reflected in the character of the wine god Dionysus (also known as Bacchus). Wilkins aptly summarises that 'the Greeks believed that Dionysus was a god of ambiguity'; he could be a great help, but was also an unpredictable trickster. In Euripides' *Bacchae*, Dionysus defines himself as 'a god most dreadful to mortals – but also most gentle!'²⁸ Throughout the *Bacchae*, wine is repeatedly said to bring pleasure and joy to mortals, yet the image is confused by the trickery and violence caused by Dionysus' presence.²⁹ The ambiguous status of wine was a central aspect of ancient ideas and beliefs regarding wine, and it is a major and recurrent theme throughout this study.

²⁵ For example: Homer, *Iliad*, 9.224-225; *Odyssey*, 7.164-185, 14.109-110.

²⁶ Homer, *Odyssey*, 21.293-298 and 24.464-466. Both are cited by Galen, *The Soul's Dependence on the Body*, 3=4.777-779K.

²⁷ Homer, *Odyssey*, 9.345-399, 10.551-560, 11.59-65.

²⁸ Dionysus as an ambiguous god: Euripides, *Bacchae*, 859-861; Wilkins and Hill (2006) 168; Weeber (1993) s.v. 'Bacchus'; Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel (1992 [1989]) 206. On Dionysus as a constructive force, see: n.29, Ch.2 n.56; Ch.2 n.57, Ch.3 n.37, Ch.3 n.284, Ch.3 n.289. On Dionysus as a negative force, see: Appendix 6 n.112. On Dionysus introducing the vine and wine drinking customs to Greece, see: Appendix 1 n.3, Appendix 1 n.14. On the iconography of Dionysus, see: Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel (1992 [1989]) 218-222. On individuals identifying themselves with Dionysus, see: Ch.3 n.150, Ch.3 n.156, Ch.3 n.189, Ch.3 n.351.

²⁹ Wine's constructive effects: Euripides, *Bacchae*, 279-286, 380-385, 420-424, 771-774. Further on Dionysus, see n.28.

Another issue which must be considered is addiction. The Greeks and Romans clearly recognised that wine was a highly addictive substance. Aristophanes' *Wasps* opens with two slaves guarding a madman locked unseen in a house. They ask the audience to guess what madness he suffers, and pretend to hear suggestions. One suggestion is an addiction to drink, which is incorrect. Another slave jokes that only gentlemen suffer from that particular condition, implying the man they guard is no gentleman.³⁰

Latin distinguished occasional drunkenness (*ebrius*) from habitual drunkenness (*ebriosus*). Seneca emphasises that 'there is a great difference between a man who is drunk and a man who is a drunkard. He who is actually drunk may be in this state for the first time and may not have the habit'.³¹ Seneca believed that an instance of drunkenness was temporary insanity, but habitual drunkenness (which lasted several days) was undeniable madness.³² Cicero further defines habitual intoxication (*vinolentia*) as a sickness of the soul (along with other conditions such as avarice, ambition and so on).³³ Plautus' *Curculio* appears to describe such a habitual drunkard: Leaena, an old doorkeeper woman, is said to be a great lover of wine (*vinosissima*); she drinks great quantities of undiluted wine, and will rush out of the house to seek wine at the mere smell of it.³⁴

A particularly full account of wine addiction forms the subject of a fable which has been passed down under the name of Aesop, concerning a wife and her drunken husband. The woman wishes to cure him of his habitual drunkenness, so she devises a scheme. She waits until he is in a drunken stupor and then carries him to a mausoleum and seals him within. She then waits until he has sobered up, and expects to find him a changed man. We may imagine her rationale combined detoxifying the body (waiting until it was free of intoxicating drink) and shock therapy (making him face the fact that his drinking would hasten his death). But her scheme does not work; if anything he is now even keener for a drink.³⁵

³⁰ Aristophanes, *Wasps*, 77-80; Davidson (1997) 139-140.

³¹ Seneca, *Epistles*, 83.11; D'Arms (1995) 316.

³² Seneca, *Epistles*, 83.18; *Pauly*, s.v. 'Alcohol, Consumption of'.

³³ Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, 4.26-27; *Pauly*, s.v. 'Alcohol, Consumption of'. Note also: Cicero, *On Duties*, 1.105-106.

³⁴ Plautus, *Curculio*, 77-83; D'Arms (1995) 315.

³⁵ Aesop, *Fables*, 88 Chambry = 246 Perry.

Yet it should be noted that the way in which Greco-Roman society viewed alcohol addiction differed to that of modern-day Western society. In modern society, emphasis is placed on the addictive power of alcohol, with 'alcoholism' usually being characterised as a 'disease', or else an 'illness', 'handicap', 'disability', or similar.³⁶ This characterisation alleviates a degree of stigma and blame from the sufferer, as alcoholism is, to an extent, seen as an affliction. The Greeks and Romans, on the other hand, did not consider intoxicating drinks to be addictive in the same physiological manner as today. Excessive consumption of alcohol was never characterised as a disease in the ancient world, but was rather thought to signify primarily a moral weakness on the part of the drinker, who surrendered to an excess of pleasure.³⁷

Accordingly, Ulpian's compilation of Roman law repeatedly associated problem drinking with a failing of the character or mind, and not with an affliction of the body. One entry notes that although a slave can be returned to his seller as physically defective 'for the reason that he has a defective bladder', it is explicitly noted that 'a man is not less healthy on this account if he passes urine in bed, while overcome with sleep or wine'. This wine-caused medical problem was therefore not associated with any bodily weakness. In further entries of Ulpian's compilation, a slave becoming 'a drunkard' or being 'given to wine' is regarded primarily as a 'debasement of his mind'.³⁸

'Alcoholism' is thus not an appropriate term to use in relation to Greco-Roman antiquity, as it suggests connotations which were not in the minds of the ancient Greeks and Romans. As outlined in the Introduction, many works of scholarship have used 'alcoholism' in this misleading way (including even in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* from 1996, which has an entry on 'Alcoholism', but opens by admitting that 'the ancient Greeks were unfamiliar with modern concepts of alcoholism'). This thesis will refer instead to 'addiction', rather than 'alcoholism', so as to prevent any misleading connotations.

³⁶ Heath (1987) 48; Antze (1987) 154-158. Noted also by D'Arms (1995) 315.

³⁷ D'Arms (1995) 315-317; Humphries (2002) 75 n.4; *OCD*⁴, s.v. 'Alcoholism'; Laurence (2009) 112; Davidson (1997) 37-38, 139-144. A near-exception to this rule is Augustine, *Confessions*, 9.8, where Augustine notes that God helped his mother overcome habitual heavy drinking, which he characterises as a 'cure' to a 'disease'; yet D'Arms (1995) 315-316 argues that this use of disease is 'clearly metaphorical'. On further near-exceptions, note also Plutarch on Alexander and others, and Chamaeleon of Heraclea: see Ch.3 from p.246, esp. p.248.

³⁸ *Digest*, 21.1(= Ulpian, *On the Edict of the Curule Aediles*, 1).4.2, 14.4, 25.6; D'Arms (1995) 317; Austin (1985) 44.

CHAPTER 2: DRINKING FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

This chapter investigates the ways in which Greco-Roman society of the first to third centuries AD considered alcohol consumption to be medically constructive for a person's physiological and psychological health and wellbeing. The chapter also explores the reasons behind such beliefs, and furthermore investigates the perceived criteria for ensuring that an individual's alcohol consumption was medically constructive.

This chapter's primary evidence is the Galenic Corpus; by far the largest surviving medical corpus from antiquity. This dates to approximately the later half of the second century AD (Galen lived from 129 until around 210AD).¹ Galen favoured humoral theory, and professed to successfully practice medicine by accurately interpreting the works of the revered and idealised Hippocrates (a famous Greek doctor attributed to the fifth to fourth century BC).² Galen had a vast literary output. Hundreds of titles are attributed to his name (although not all are genuine), and the portion of his Corpus which survives in Greek represents about ten percent of the total surviving Greek literature from before 350AD. Nutton and King argue that this colossal achievement implies that he must have been responsible for composing about two or three pages per day, throughout his working life.³ Over a hundred of his works survive today; a testament to his Corpus' lasting pre-eminence as a medical authority up until the sixteenth century.⁴

Accordingly, both Galen's beliefs regarding wine and his underlying rationale can be reconstructed in greater detail than for any other single medical authority of antiquity. Galen had grown up close to viticulture: his father had owned a vineyard, and had been particularly interested in experimenting to attempt to increase yields. Perhaps then his significant depth of knowledge and opinions

¹ Hankinson (2008) 1, 25 n.1; *Pauly*, s.v. 'Galen of Pergamum'; Powell (2003) 1.

² Nutton (2004) 219; Powell (2003) 11; King (2001) 38-39, 54; Grant (2000) 5. Note for example: Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 2.4=6.114K, 6.119K. As an example of his reference to Hippocrates' knowledge on wine, see: Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 3.39=6.743K.

³ Hankinson (2008) 1; Nutton (2003) 390 n.22; King (2001) 38.

⁴ King (2001) 38, 53-54. Note also: Nutton (2004) 216.

regarding wine, as explored throughout this chapter, are not unexpected.⁵ This chapter draws upon a variety of works from the Galenic Corpus, but focuses particularly upon three works which address dietary regimen in health: *On the Preservation of Health*, his main work focusing upon appropriate regimen to pursue and maintain health; *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, his main work addressing dietetics; and *The Thinning Diet*, his main work addressing this particular diet.

Yet it should be noted that Galen and his ideas were for the most part not atypical for Greco-Roman medicine of this period, and as such this chapter's focus on his works is not unjustified. Not only was Galen famous and highly revered by many, doubtless influencing the beliefs of many later doctors,⁶ but Galen was also extremely well read on the medical authorities which preceded him. Grant notes: 'that he was able to write so much was, of course, due to his use of other medical works as a core outline'. Grant concludes that 'his overall knowledge of medicine was by no means dissimilar from that of his contemporaries ... his writings on food and diet can be used as a legitimate source of what generally counted for medicine in his time'.⁷ Accordingly, many of Galen's views on drinking most likely reflect the ideas of many doctors before him, as well as his contemporaries, and in turn influenced the opinions of many doctors who followed him. His beliefs are thus likely to be similar to many other doctors from the first to third centuries AD.

One work addressed in this chapter seems to have been written by such a doctor following in the Galenic tradition. *On the Humours* is traditionally included in the Galenic Corpus,⁸ but was probably written by another humoral medical author within a century of Galen's death; it thus probably dates to the third century AD.⁹ This Ps-Galen seems does not seem, for the most part, to stray far from Galen's beliefs. A minor difference is that Ps-Galen preferred to refer to constitutional mixtures in terms of the humours (for example, 'blood'),

⁵ Nutton (2004) 216, 240; Galen, *On Antidotes*, 14.18K; *On the Powers [and Mixtures] of Simple Drugs*, 11.663K. Note also: Powell (2003) 7; Tchernia (1986) 272 (which dubs Galen one of the best connoisseurs of wine in antiquity).

⁶ Galen's reputation in Rome during his life: Nutton (2004) 224. At the end of his life: Nutton (2004) 228-229. On his lasting influence, see n.4.

⁷ Grant (2000) 4-5. Note also: Nutton (2004) 216, 218-219; Powell (2003) 2, 6.

⁸ *On the Humours* is 19.485-496K of the Galenic Corpus. This work is translated and discussed in Grant (2000). A detailed commentary is available in Schmidt (1964), an unpublished thesis.

⁹ Grant (2000) 9-10, 11, 196.

whereas Galen usually referred to them in terms of the mixtures themselves (for example, 'hot and wet'). Humoral theory is discussed further below, but for now it is sufficient to note that this is largely only a difference of emphasis (thus, both authors regard 'blood' as being 'hot and wet').

Yet there are some significant differences, two of which are of note for this chapter. First, Ps-Galen equates each of the four seasons to one of the four humours, but Galen argues against this concept (one he states is followed by the Pneumatic medical school: 'the followers of Athenaeus of Attalia') in *Mixtures*.¹⁰ Secondly, Ps-Galen believes that 'in old age there is phlegm', and the place of this within his work without further comment implies that old age is therefore to be regarded as cold and moist in mixture (note his previous comment that 'phlegm, water and winter are cold and moist').¹¹ Yet although Galen believed phlegm was a prominent excrement in old age, he clearly believed that old age was cold and *dry*, and in *On the Preservation of Health* he acknowledges the existence of other medical authorities who asserted that old age was instead moist. Galen defends his own beliefs, stating that such doctors, being 'deceived by the excess of the [phlegmatic] excrements, have declared indiscriminately that the constitution of old age is moist'.¹² Indeed, the Hippocratic author of the first book on *Regimen* (dismissed by Galen as not an authentic work of Hippocrates) was one such medical authority who believed that old age is cold and moist.¹³ Therefore, in both of these cases, Ps-Galen's divergence from an accurate presentation of Galen's views may suggest that Ps-Galen was also drawing from the teachings of other medical authorities (such as the Pneumatic school and those nameless people who – according to Galen – think old age is wet). Alternatively, these divergences may suggest that *On the Humours* was an early predecessor to the trend of 'Galenism', whereby summarised and simplified versions of Galenic medicine (mixed with the work of the Hippocratic Corpus, Plato and Aristotle) were transmitted after Galen's death.¹⁴

This chapter also focuses upon three other medical works from this period: those of Soranus, Celsus and Dioscorides. The *Gynaecology* of Soranus was

¹⁰ Ps-Galen, *On the Humours*, 19.485-486K; Galen, *Mixtures*, 1.3=1.522-534K.

¹¹ Ps-Galen, *On the Humours*, 19.489K with 19.485-486K.

¹² Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.8=6.349-351K.

¹³ Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 1.33. On Galen's views on *Regimen*, 1: see n.27.

¹⁴ King (2001) 42-43; Pauly, s.v. 'Galenism'.

written around 100AD.¹⁵ This work is of especial utility for this chapter, as it explicitly focuses upon medical matters related to women, pregnancy, childbirth, and infants. These groups are often omitted from the other medical literature of this period, which tends (implicitly or explicitly) to focus almost exclusively upon adult males, or the lifecycle of males.¹⁶ Soranus also offers potential to highlight a greater diversity of beliefs, being the main representative of another medical tradition: the Methodist school (this was probably established in the first century AD, although it drew upon the teachings of Asclepiades and Themison, who lived during the second and first centuries BC).

The medical encyclopaedia of Celsus dates to the first half of the first century AD. Like Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* (introduced below), it is a Latin text, making both comparatively unusual when compared with the other medical texts outlined in this introduction (Galen, Ps-Galen, Soranus, Dioscorides and the Hippocratic authors all wrote in Greek).¹⁷ Celsus himself was primarily an encyclopaedist, and compiled volumes upon a wide variety of subjects, from warfare to philosophy. Only his eight books on medicine survive today. Modern scholars debate whether or not he was a doctor; although he may seem very familiar with medical procedures, Spencer notes that 'the amount of medical knowledge [known in the ancient world, and presented in Celsus' work] was not so great as to be out of the range of an ordinary, educated man of average intelligence'.¹⁸

Dioscorides' *Materia Medica* is the most extensive pharmacological text surviving from the Greco-Roman world.¹⁹ Written in the first century AD, it systematically catalogues various medical materials and their properties, including vines and wines in book five. This work remained highly influential from antiquity until the nineteenth century, being widely circulated and translated (including into Latin by the fifth century), and even being utilised by Galen for his own work on drugs.

¹⁵ For an introduction to Soranus and the Methodist school: *Pauly*, s.vv. 'Asclepiades', 'Methodists', 'Soranus', 'Themison'.

¹⁶ For example: Galen's *On the Preservation of Health* (= 6.1-452K) focuses upon the lifecycle of males. The Hippocratic Corpus' *Regimen* rarely focuses explicitly upon females or reproduction (on this, see 1.26).

¹⁷ For an introduction to Celsus: *Pauly*, s.v. 'Celsus, II.7'; Spencer (1935-38) 1.vii-x.

¹⁸ Spencer (1935-38) 1.viii, 1.xi-xii.

¹⁹ For an introduction to Dioscorides: *Pauly*, s.v. 'Pedanius Dioscorides'; Beck (2011 [2005]) xxii-xxvii; Scarborough (2011 [2005]) xiii-xxi; Nutton (2004) 244; King (2001) 50-51; Rihll (1999) 127; Gunther (1934) v-ix.

Both Celsus and Dioscorides' works have a systematic, minimal and practical approach, meaning that they read like reference guides. Celsus largely structures his work according to medical condition, with each section systematically advising the best courses of action to treat each condition; this is often done by explicitly summarising the treatments used/advised by various doctors. Dioscorides on the other hand uses the medically-useful materials, and their various subtypes, as headings beneath which he succinctly lists a number of their properties and uses. Accordingly, both works indicate a wide variety of medical properties and uses for wine; however the underlying rationales for these beliefs tend either not to be considered in detail or not to be present.

This chapter also considers the Hippocratic Corpus, a collection of texts traditionally attributed to the famous fifth- to fourth-century BC doctor, Hippocrates of Cos, though they are actually thought to have been written by several doctors, largely in the period 420-350BC.²⁰ Hippocrates was highly revered in subsequent periods of antiquity, and his Corpus became regarded by many as a standard tome of medical knowledge. As Nutton states: 'certainly from the early third century BC onwards, the Hippocratic Corpus came to be seen as a standard against which the other types of healing might be measured, then approved or rejected.' This Corpus' lasting authority into the first to third centuries AD is reflected in the fact that Galen was able to draw authority from his own claims that he was best able to interpret the words of the great figure of Hippocrates. Celsus calls 'Hippocrates of Cos, a man first and foremost worthy to be remembered, notable both for professional skill and for eloquence'.²¹ Furthermore, the third-century AD author, Ps-Galen, refers to two case studies from the Hippocratic Corpus in his brief work *On the Humours*. Grant notes that in one of these, the patient's name is almost certainly a misquotation from the *Epidemics* (Philiscus rather than Philistes), which Grant suggests is a result of 'referring to texts by memory rather than opening a book'.²² That Ps-Galen is able to refer to case studies from the Hippocratic

²⁰ For an introduction to Hippocrates and the Hippocratic Corpus: *Pauly*, s.v. 'Hippocrates, 6'; Nutton (2004) 53-71 (quotation from p.71).

²¹ Celsus, pr.8.

²² Ps-Galen, *On the Humours*, 19.493-495K; Grant (2000) 196 n.4. Referring to: Hippocrates, *Epidemics*, 1.26.43-79, 3.4 (on Philiscus).

Corpus by memory in the third century AD further suggests its lasting readership and authority throughout this period.

As such, it is unsurprising that Jouanna's article on wine in Greek medicine argued that, although later medical authorities made additions and modifications to the Hippocratic Corpus' fundamental ideas about wine, 'the Hippocratic position on wine remains essential in the history of Greek medicine and should serve as a basis for a discussion of wine in the medical thought of ancient Greece'.²³ The views on wine presented in the Hippocratic Corpus are thus probably indicative of the core beliefs of many doctors from this period. At the very least, when Hippocratic views contradict those by later medical writers, a probable divergence of opinions can be suggested. This chapter primarily focuses upon the Corpus' main works on regimen which consider wine drinking: *Regimen* ('the fullest discussion of this type in the Hippocratic Corpus'),²⁴ *A Regimen for Health* and *Regimen in Acute Disease*. The second half of *Affections* also focuses upon dietetics.²⁵ *Use of Liquids* is less useful than the reader may suppose from its title, as it focuses upon the application of liquids rather than their consumption.

A brief note should be given on *Regimen*, due both to its recurrent use throughout this chapter, and issues regarding its use which need to be mentioned at the outset. This work is composed of three books, with *Dreams* (which seeks to interpret dreams as indicators of health, and outlines appropriate regimen to implement in each case) often included as the fourth book.²⁶ They seem to date to c.400BC, but their authorship has been debated since at least Galen's time; it is even uncertain whether they were all composed by the same author. By Galen's time, they were often circulated together as a single edition under the name of Hippocrates, although divisions of the books also seem to have been circulated by themselves. Galen makes several references to *Regimen*, yet although he is willing to concede that the second

²³ Jouanna (1996) 413 = (2012) 175.

²⁴ King (2001) 45.

²⁵ Hippocrates, *Affections*, 39-61.

²⁶ Although the reader may expect otherwise, there is no mention in *Dreams* of what it means to dream of wine or other intoxicating drinks. There is, however, a section focusing upon food and drink (93), and some of the advice may be regarded as applicable to wine drinking. It mentions a man dreaming of: eating and drinking in general (a good sign, indicating excess nourishment), eating/drinking his usual food or drink (indicating want of nourishment or depression of the soul), and drinking clean or other water (the former a good sign, the latter indicating harm).

book of *Regimen* may be authentic (it is 'worthy of Hippocrates'), he regarded the first book as a fraud ('the first is very far from his thought').²⁷ Galen implies there to have been debate on the authenticity of this work, yet it is not certain how the majority of first- to third-century AD readers stood on this issue; in any case we should not expect homogeneity. Many doubtless shared a similar opinion to Galen, whilst many others probably accepted that all of the books in the volume circulated under the name of 'Hippocrates' were in fact authentic Hippocratic works; there were almost certainly many besides with alternative opinions.

However, for the purposes of this chapter, all of the books of *Regimen* shall be regarded as a single work, with the author/authors being referred to as a single Hippocratic author. I support the appropriateness of this approach by noting three points. First, all of the books of *Regimen* were attributed to the figure of Hippocrates, and therefore all most likely had a notable degree of influence among many (though certainly not all) doctors. Secondly, the fundamental theoretical framework seems consistent throughout all of the books. Book one explains that two elements, fire and water, comprise everything; this is also explicitly referred to in book two ('it is known that out of fire and water are composed all things').²⁸ Book one explains the basic properties of these two elements in terms of the four opposites of Empedocles (hot and cold, wet and dry), and book two similarly classifies various foodstuffs according to the same four opposites. All four books also tend to describe the various medical situations, diets, and regimen in the same way.²⁹ Thirdly, these books seem logically compatible in their advice regarding drinking, with the same wines being implied to have similar properties throughout. For example, in book two, soft dark wines are considered to be moister than average, and in book three, soft dark wine is advised to counteract cold and dry bowels (thus as part of a warm and moist regime). Similarly, in book two, white wines are indicated to be cool and moist. Book one accordingly prescribes either water or soft white wine to counteract a head mastered by fire (a hot and dry illness), and thus as part of a cold and wet diet. Book four (*Dreams*) advises soft, white, thin, well diluted wine as part of a cold and wet regime to prevent delirium, and also white wine

²⁷ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 1.1=6.473K; Powell (2003) 160-161; Wilkins (2003) xv-xvi; Jouanna (1999 [1992]) 408-409; Jones (1931) xxxviii, xlv-xlvi.

²⁸ Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 1.3-4 (with Jones [1931] xl-xliv), 2.56; Jouanna (1999 [1992]) 408.

²⁹ Jones (1931) xliii.

(both copious and well diluted) to treat excess dryness, and thus as part of a moistening regime.³⁰ As such, it does not seem inappropriate to regard the potentially multiple authors as of a broadly comparable viewpoint, and in this sense as a single entity, at least for the purposes of this particular investigation focusing upon alcohol consumption.

As a secondary concern, this chapter also considers Greco-Roman literature more widely, where it addresses the medical properties of wine. Grant explains that ‘educated Romans were for the most part conversant with current medical theories’, and as such wider literature promises to be informative of popular medical beliefs.³¹ One notable example is Pliny the Elder’s first-century AD encyclopaedic work, the *Natural History*. This work is a recurrent interest in this chapter due to Pliny’s interest in the medical properties of plants and their products.³² He has a lengthy consideration of grapes, vines and wines in book fourteen. This is subsequently followed by another notable section in book twenty-three, which focuses upon the medical uses of wines. Pliny – much like Dioscorides, Celsus and even Soranus – explicitly collected and compiled information written by his predecessors, and presented a synthesis of this medical knowledge.³³ It is notable that, like Celsus, Pliny openly draws upon the works of Asclepiades, a first-century BC physician who preferred to treat illnesses with regimen (rather than medicaments or surgery), and whose medical practice was heavily associated with wine. Asclepiades even composed a medical volume focused upon wine, which is a key source for Pliny.³⁴ Pliny also knew of a pamphlet written by the physician Apollodorus to King Ptolemy which advised the best wines to drink, and seems to have been familiar with Celsus’ work.³⁵

Modern scholarship on this topic is notably sparse; Jouanna noted in his 1996 article that up to that date no study had been published on wine in Greek

³⁰ Soft wines: Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 2.52, 3.80. White wines: Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 1.35, 2.52, 4[= *Dreams*].89.50-70, 4[= *Dreams*].90.50-60. See Appendix 5 for a detailed summary of the evidence.

³¹ Grant (2000) 3. Note also: Plutarch, *Advice about Keeping Well*, 15=129c-130a; Corvisier (2003) 143; Van Hoof (2010) 230; Spencer (1935-38) 1.viii.

³² Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 2.155; King (2001) 34.

³³ Garzya (2002) 191.

³⁴ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.31-58. On Asclepiades: 23.32; Celsus, 5.pr.2; Tchernia (1986) 204; Spencer (1935-38) 1.ix; Temkin (1991 [1956]) xxvi.

³⁵ Apollodorus: Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.76. Celsus: 14.33.

medicine.³⁶ Two items of modern scholarship are of recurrent utility for this chapter. The first is the aforementioned article by Jouanna. The second is the 2002 edited volume *Vin et santé en Grèce ancienne*, which includes several articles specifically focusing upon wine in ancient medicine. Of these, Béguin's article on the medical uses of wine in the Galenic Corpus is of especial note.³⁷

It should be noted at this initial stage that although Touwaide's article 'Vin, santé et médecine à travers le Traité de matière médicale de Dioscoride' may appear to be of significance for this study, is not as useful for this chapter as may be expected.³⁸ After an initial line of investigation which attempts to explain the reason for wine's place near the end of Dioscorides' work (it is suggested that it is placed between natural plants and human-extracted mineral products, as it is a product extracted from plants),³⁹ Touwaide then attempts to explain the various properties which Dioscorides attributes to specific wines by applying two underlying theoretical systems (as Dioscorides himself rarely explains the reasons *why* certain wines have their properties). Touwaide suggests that one framework behind his advice relates to the beverage's sensory properties, whilst another relates to its weight (in a similar way to the Aristotelian school).⁴⁰ Although Touwaide does not provide evidence to support the appropriateness of applying either of these systems to Dioscorides' thought, he does plausibly conclude that neither of these suggested frameworks can, by themselves, explain all of the properties which Dioscorides attributed to the various wines. Therefore, Dioscorides' beliefs regarding beverages and their properties do not appear to be governed by one single theoretical framework. Touwaide suggests that this indicates Dioscorides' encyclopaedic aims: composing his work by adding to it in successive layers and using a wide variety of sources, including those from opposing schools of thought, in an attempt to compile and assimilate all known practical knowledge on the various medical materials.⁴¹ Accordingly, this implies that although Dioscorides' work is

³⁶ Jouanna (1996) 413 = (2012) 175.

³⁷ Jouanna (1996) = (2012); Béguin (2002). Note also: Alessi (2002); Boudon (2002); Garzya (2002); Jouanna (2002); Luccioni (2002); Skoda (2002); Wilkins (2002).

³⁸ Touwaide (2000). The article's reliability is also thrown into question, as it makes a basic error regarding Dioscorides' opinions regarding the best colour of wine; Touwaide states that Dioscorides advised the mid-coloured/tawny wine as preferable for medical use, whereas Dioscorides actually states 'white wine is preferable in both health and sickness'. See: Touwaide (2000) 107-108; Dioscorides, 5.6.2.

³⁹ Touwaide (2000) 102-107.

⁴⁰ Touwaide (2000) 109-110.

⁴¹ Touwaide (2000) 110.

very useful evidence for the wide and eclectic range of medical properties and uses which were attributed to various wine-drinking regimes by Greco-Roman society up to the first century AD, it also implies that it is dangerous to seek a single consistent sub-textual reasoning behind the stated properties, as Dioscorides drew his advice on wine from authorities of a range of (often conflicting) theoretical frameworks.

This chapter firstly considers the places of constructive and destructive drinking within the medical literature of this period. It notes that the former was associated with moderate drinking, the latter with excess, and that the literature has a tendency to explicitly focus most heavily upon pursuing the constructive aspects, rather than avoiding the destructive ones. The chapter then considers wine's place in the humoral theory of Galen and other medical authorities, noting and discussing its various properties and uses, most notably: its hotness, moisture, eliminating and thinning abilities. The reader is also advised to consider Appendix 2, which argues against the idea that the Greeks and Romans recognised wine's ability to make water safer to drink.

CONSTRUCTIVE, DESTRUCTIVE AND MODERATE DRINKING

'Wine relieves us of all sadness and low spirits, as our daily experience shows. Zeno apparently remarked that the effect of wine on him was like that of water on bitter lupines – it makes them sweet. ... We can every day observe wine having exactly the effects which the poets have described. [Homer says:]

“That same wine has softened you sweetly, wine which has always

Harmed men when they drink to the depths, abandoning measure.
...”

'Elsewhere, too, Homer says:

“Miserable thing that causes the wisest of men to go ranting,
To laugh like a soft-cheeked youth and set his feet dancing
And to utter a word which best would remain unspoken.”

'In a similar vein, Theognis:

“Excess drinking of wine is an evil; but if a person
Drinks wisely, then not an evil, a good thing.”

'It is genuinely true that a moderate amount of wine has excellent effects on digestion, distribution of the food, blood production, and nutrition, at the same time as rendering the soul both gentler and more confident.'⁴²

This account of wine, from Galen's work on *The Soul's Dependence on the Body*, is primarily laudatory, implying that drinking wine on a daily basis was considered to have significant physiological benefits to the body, including aiding digestion, distribution of the food, blood production, and providing nutrition to the body. Such drinking is also implied to be excellent for psychological wellbeing, influencing body and soul to ease any sadness and low spirits, whilst simultaneously encouraging cheerfulness, making people more confident and of milder temperament. Galen emphasises this property of wine by stating that this was even supported by the philosopher Zeno (c.333-262BC) who noted the positive effect of wine upon his mood. This argument had particular power, as a Greco-Roman reader would surely expect Zeno to be among the people who were most likely to be hostile to such a view, as his stoic doctrine held that a wise man's soul was not affected by worldly influences (a similar point of view was also stated by Galen's own patient, and follower of stoicism, the emperor Marcus Aurelius in his *Meditations*).⁴³ Although Galen does not provide, within this particular excerpt, an exhaustive list of what he believed to be wine's major benefits (he omits for example wine's diuretic properties, which Galen believed to be very useful for maintaining health, and indeed in a world before such daily diuretics as tea and coffee was ever the more significant),⁴⁴ this passage still serves as a good introduction to Galen's

⁴² Galen, *The Soul's Dependence on the Body*, 3=4.777-779K. The first two quoted passages are of Homer, *Odyssey*, 21.293-298 and 24.464-466. This quotation of Theognis is also mentioned with relation to ancient medicine by Jouanna (1996) 423 = (2012) 183. Similar ideas are stated by Rufus of Ephesus (the physician of the first century AD), see n.71; and by Mnesitheus (the fourth-century BC physician) quoted in Athenaeus, 11.483f-484a (= Mnesitheus, fr.45) discussed by Wilkins (2002) 188-189. On wine's ability to promote happiness and relaxation, see further: Seneca, *Tranquillity of Mind*, 17.4-11; on this issue, see also Ch.3 from p.293. See Austin (1985) 26 for a summary of Mnesitheus' medical views on wine.

⁴³ Singer (1997) 418 n.154; Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, 5.19. Note also: Pauly, 'Zeno [2] Z. of Citium Founder of the Stoic school, c. 300 BC'. Consider also, for example, the hostility of Zeno and other Stoics to drunkenness, as recorded in Seneca, *Epistles*, 83.

⁴⁴ This topic is considered in detail later in this chapter (see p.192ff) and also in Appendix 3. Note that Mnesitheus (the fourth-century BC physician) provides a similar statement to Galen – in praise of wine's physiological and psychological benefits, yet stresses the utility of wine's diuretic properties for removing the acidities which build up within the body: Athenaeus, 11.483f-484a (= Mnesitheus, fr.45); Wilkins (2002) 188-189. On Mnesitheus and wine, see n.42.

beliefs regarding the utility and range of wine's main medically constructive properties.

Galen's chosen excerpt of Theognis clearly presents the view that moderation was the key criterion to ensuring that drinking was conducted in a way which led to constructive results. This is also implied by the first quotation from Homer, where the destructive aspects are associated with when men 'drink to depths, abandoning measure'. Galen then supports this in his own words when he states that 'a moderate amount of wine has excellent effects' upon body and mind, thereby implying that excess had results which were less constructive, and accordingly that moderation was required to ensure wine's constructive use.

Moderation is a recurrent theme throughout this chapter. This was repeatedly stressed by Galen and other medical authorities as the key criterion for the medically appropriate use of wine (this criterion was also true of many other medical and nutritional procedures). Thus Galen explicitly states in *On the Preservation of Health* that 'wine is not good to be drunk by adults, except in due moderation'.⁴⁵ Moderation is also of recurrent interest because the boundaries of 'moderate drinking' are not a quick and simple matter to outline. I am unaware of Galen ever actually defining moderate drinking using firm quantities of volume, unlike the simplistic modern British system of measuring appropriate drinking (of those who are regarded as safe and legal to drink) using 'units' of alcohol (representing volume) and comparing this to the drinker's sex.⁴⁶ Yet it may be inferred from the above passage that a daily intake of wine was not excluded from Galen's concept moderation, at least for the majority of his adult male audience. Instead, Galen preferred to use a more flexible

⁴⁵ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.11=6.55K. Note also: Béguin (2002) 148; Jouanna (1996) 422 = (2012) 182-183.

⁴⁶ According to the UK government's advice (as of 2013): one unit represents 10ml of pure alcohol (i.e. ethanol), and regular drinking should not exceed 3-4 units for men and 2-3 for women per day. This advice assumes that the drinker is legally able to purchase alcohol for themselves (e.g. they are over 18 years old) and are not in a situation for which abstinence is medically advised (e.g. pregnancy). See: Drinkaware Medical Panel (2013b); Drinkaware is an independent UK charity which aims to improve British drinking habits.

Note also: OCW², s.v. 'Health, Effects of Wine Consumption on', which notes a similar unit-based system in other countries (as of 1999), but highlights a 'wide variation between what constitutes a unit and how many of them may be safely consumed. In the United States, for example, the national standard unit comprises 14g, while its British counterpart contains only 8g of alcohol [note that 10ml ethanol = c.8g]. An intake of as much as 60g alcohol a day is safe for men according to French health authorities, whereas their counterparts in the UK counsel limiting daily consumption to less than half this level.' See further: OCW², s.v. 'Standard Drinks'.

yardstick, stating in *On the Preservation of Health* that ‘the healthy body itself, impelled by the inclinations of its own nature, will discover everything for itself’.⁴⁷ As such, people in ideal health, who also had a healthy and sensible habit of mind, should listen to their bodies to deduce what was most appropriate for them. Accordingly, they ‘will desist from food and drink, when they have been sufficiently filled. So that there is no fear that such a man will ... overeat, if he follows the inclinations of his own nature.’ People who did have some defects of the body or mind, as was considered common, should also aim at ‘desisting from each of these [activities, including drinking] only when it [the body] no longer needs them’. Yet, due to their defects they were thought to find this more difficult to achieve on their own, and so were advised to appoint an experienced trainer. He would help the former type of person (one with a defective body) to interpret what their unsound body needed, and help the latter (a person with a defective mind) to determine what level of drinking was appropriate and to pressure them to stick to this regime. Galen accordingly thought that ‘moderation is not the same to all, for all moderation is relative to the individual’.⁴⁸ As such, the appropriateness of wine consumption was thus thought to vary from person to person, and according to the situations surrounding their drinking, as shall be seen throughout this chapter. Yet it should be noted that appropriate drinking could be extremely flexible; even heavy drinking and drunkenness were not always considered medically inappropriate. Thus, for example, Galen acknowledges that phlegmatic people often need to drink large quantities of wine, to the point of vomiting, so as to be able to successfully digest food without harm.⁴⁹

Galen’s recurrent interest in moderation was also due to an underlying belief that wine was an ambiguous substance, and its consumption thus also had the potential for extremely negative medical consequences. Although Galen is primarily concerned with highlighting the constructive aspects of drinking in the above excerpt from *The Soul’s Dependence on the Body*, recognition of the destructive potential of wine is presented within all three of his quotations of poetic authorities. The first quotation of Homer indicates that wine ‘harms men’ when they drink excessively; the second that wine can have ‘miserable’ effects,

⁴⁷ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 2.7=6.132-133K.

⁴⁸ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.8=6.43-44K.

⁴⁹ Galen, *Mixtures*, 2.6=1.630K. See also: n.639.

leading to the drinker doing foolish things; and the quotation from Theognis explicitly links some unexplained 'evil' to foolish excess, whilst 'if a person drinks wisely, then [it is] not an evil, a good thing'. Later in *The Soul's Dependence on the Body*, Galen explicitly presents an ambivalent attitude to wine through his own voice, and clearly links this to medical matters. He states that 'the above-mentioned activities [mainly those related to the soul and a person's behaviour] are clearly damaged, through the medium of mixture [of the humours, key bodily fluids], by wine drinking; and certain others are assisted'.⁵⁰ Regarding this destructive potential of wine, he leads his elaborated discussion through an interpretation of Plato. For example, he states that 'wine acts like a tyrant, commanding the soul not to think as clearly as it did before, nor to perform its previous actions clearly. And is that not the reason that Plato tells us to protect ourselves against it as an enemy?'⁵¹ In particular, he thought excess wine to pose a particular risk to the mental wellbeing of youths, as it could easily lead to 'immoderate and excessive actions'.⁵² This is in clear contrast to wine's psychological benefits noted in the former quotation analysed from this work. In view of this ambiguity, Galen stresses the importance of moderation in his main work on regimen to maintain health, *On the Preservation of Health*, when he notes that although 'all excesses are to be avoided, this [excessive consumption of wine] especially should be avoided by which harm befalls not only the body but the mind'.⁵³ In the eyes of Galen, moderation was thus not only the key criterion for ensuring that wine drinking had the most constructive effects for the drinker, but also a maximum threshold to ensure that it did not lead to destructive consequences.

Similar underlying beliefs regarding wine's ambiguous potential, and the importance of moderate and appropriate drinking, predated the Roman Imperial period. Centuries beforehand, the Hippocratic Corpus had stated that the foods and drinks which offered the greatest medical benefits also tended to pose the greatest risks of fostering illness if employed excessively or at inappropriate times. Wine was explicitly considered one such foodstuff: very useful for

⁵⁰ Galen, *The Soul's Dependence on the Body*, 10=4.812K.

⁵¹ Galen, *The Soul's Dependence on the Body*, 10=4.811K.

⁵² Galen, *The Soul's Dependence on the Body*, 10=4.810K. Note also: Béguin (2002) 148.

⁵³ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.11=6.54-55K. On affecting head and mind, see also: Jouanna (1996) 416-417 = (2012) 177-178.

strengthening the body, but also potentially very destructive.⁵⁴ *Affections* thus succinctly stated that ‘wine and honey are held to be the best things for human beings, so long as they are administered appropriately and with moderation to both the well and the sick in accordance with their constitution’.⁵⁵

Athenaeus, writing around 200AD, records similar sentiments from Mnesitheus, a fourth-century BC Athenian doctor. This doctor stated that the gods gave wine to mortals to be of the greatest medical utility if used correctly: it could nourish the body and soul, help cure wounds, promote wellbeing, and so on. He thus records that people everywhere call Dionysus ‘doctor’ for this reason. Yet Mnesitheus also noted that these constructive properties hinged on moderation. When drunk in an incorrect manner (in excess, or mixed with too little water), wine could have destructive medical consequences, even resulting in paralysis and madness.⁵⁶ The sentiment of Mnesitheus’ earlier comments can also be seen in Plutarch’s *Table-Talk* of the first century AD. One of the aristocrats states that ‘Dionysus was considered a pretty good physician not only for his discovery of wine, a very powerful and very pleasant medicine’, but also by providing means to help prevent medically destructive intoxication. Another character notes that repeated drunkenness eventually causes paralysis.⁵⁷

In the first century AD, Dioscorides’ *Materia Medica* presented comparable guidelines. It asserted that ‘all drunkenness is dangerous but especially continual drunkenness: for nerves that are assailed every day, finally give up, and daily drinking binges create severe health problems; on the other hand, drinking moderate amounts of wine for a few days is beneficial and especially if one drank water first’. Drinking water after heavy drinking was also advised to aid the recovery from drunkenness.⁵⁸ Like Galen, Dioscorides’ concept of moderation was not fixed: he noted that appropriate ‘amounts [consumed] should be based on the age of the wine, the time of the year, the customs, and quality of the wine’.⁵⁹ He was also willing to condone heavy drinking under

⁵⁴ Hippocrates, *Affections*, 47, 50, 61; Béguin (2002) 143.

⁵⁵ Hippocrates, *Affections*, 61.

⁵⁶ Athenaeus, 2.36a-b (= Comic Adespota, fr.101 = Mnesitheus, fr.41); Jouanna (1996) 434 = (2012) 193; Wilkins (2002) 187. Further on Dionysus, see Ch.1 n.28.

⁵⁷ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 3.1=647a, 3.5=652d-e. Further on Dionysus, see Ch.1 n.28.

⁵⁸ Dioscorides, 5.6.13.

⁵⁹ Dioscorides, 5.6.12.

certain conditions: he prescribed consuming large quantities of wine flavoured with *strobilus* pine cones to assist with tuberculosis.⁶⁰

Pliny the Elder and Celsus' first-century encyclopaedic works both also contain very similar advice on moderation. Pliny notes that 'wine in moderation strengthens the sinews [or "nerves"]; excess is injurious to them',⁶¹ whereas Celsus seems to have believed wine to be notably harmful in conditions related to the 'nerves' (this term covered the sinews, tendons, ligaments and nerves) as well as spasms and paralysis (he thus favoured water drinking in these conditions).⁶² Pliny also believed that consuming water during bouts of heavy drinking was beneficial, and that drinking a large amount of water afterwards immediately banished the intoxication. Celsus similarly advised water drinking afterwards (although he stipulated that nothing should be eaten) in order to break the force of excessive wine consumption.⁶³

In line with his concern regarding moderation, Pliny accordingly summarises popular opinion on the medical ambiguity of wine:

'There is no topic more difficult to handle [as the medical uses of wine], or more full in detail, seeing that it is hard to say whether wine does good to more people or harms them. Besides, a draught is fraught with great risk, it being uncertain whether it will immediately turn out to be a help or a poison.'⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Dioscorides, 5.35.

⁶¹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.38. Note also 14.58: 'there is nothing else that is more useful for strengthening the body, and also nothing more detrimental to our pleasures if moderation be lacking'.

⁶² Celsus, 3.27.2a, 3.27.3a advises water drinking for pains and tremors in the 'nerves' (*nervus*); 4.6.6 notes that in rigour of the sinews in neck (including tetanus) wine should be avoided as it is especially risky; 4.3.1 notes that wine should be avoided whilst treating a spasm in the face accompanied by fever (a 'dog spasm'); 5.26.30b advises that wine should be prohibited in severe wounds if the sinews or muscle were wounded; 3.27.1e notes that in cases of paralysis only hot water without wine should be drunk, and 4.4 advises that when the tongue was paralysed only water be drunk. Note, however Galen, *Method of Medicine*, 6.3=10.402-405K: Galen stressed that water should not be used in any condition involving nerves; his prescriptions include wines in several instances.

⁶³ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.42; Celsus, pr.69-70: cold water (along with sleep and sweating) was advised to treat oppression from intoxication by breaking the force of excess wine (this cure was attributed to the doctor, Cassius); 4.2.8 notes that after treating longstanding pains in the head, a person should forevermore drink water before wine as a preventative action. Note also that 1.2.10 advises that the digestion of a meal was helped by drinking cold water afterwards, but conversely 1.2.9 notes that after excess drinking nothing should be eaten.

⁶⁴ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.31-32.

Pliny was therefore clearly aware that wine had various *extremely* beneficial medical applications, but could be *equally* harmful if used inappropriately.

On the one hand, an extreme therapeutic example is Pliny's note that 'in cardiac disease the one hope of relief lies undoubtedly in wine'.⁶⁵ Pliny records that Asclepiades, the first-century BC physician, 'asserted that the usefulness of wine is hardly exceeded by the power of the gods'.⁶⁶ Pliny himself also implies that vines, grapes and wines are the most medically important substances of fruits and trees,⁶⁷ and presents the myth that Pomona, the Roman goddess of fruit, 'bestowed healing powers on the vine in particular'.⁶⁸ He accordingly states that one of the most significant uses for vines are 'as for medicines, [because] grapes hold such an important place among them that they act as remedies in themselves, merely by supplying wine'.⁶⁹

Wine-drinking and the promotion of health seems to have been so strongly linked in the mindset of Roman society that, although according to Roman tradition women were said to have been strictly prohibited from drinking wine in the earliest generations of their city, an anecdote recorded by Pliny seems to imply that allowances were made for the sake of health. Thus the judge Gnaeus Domitius convicted a woman because she 'appeared to have drunk more wine than was required for the sake of her health without her husband's knowledge'. Drinking wine for medical purposes was thus recognised to be common and justifiable practice.⁷⁰

Other medical authors similarly praised wine's extraordinary medical utility. In a manner similar to the quote from Galen which opened this section, Rufus of Ephesus (a first-century AD medical author) stated that wine is more advantageous for health than anything else, and also promotes the wellbeing of

⁶⁵ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.50. Note also 23.44: 'for cardiac affections it is beneficial to apply to the left breast neat wine on a sponge'. Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 3.5=652b-c also discusses the utility of wine in cardiac diseases. The use of wine to treat cardiac conditions is also implied by Galen, *The Pulse for Beginners*, 11=8.480K.

⁶⁶ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.38. This phrase is highlighted especially by Weeber (1993) s.v. 'Medizin'.

⁶⁷ Consider Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 22.164, which notes that book twenty-three will 'pass onto a discussion of wine, beginning with the vine our discussion of medicines from trees', along with 23.69, which notes that olives are 'next in importance' after his previous treatment of vines, grapes and wines.

⁶⁸ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.1-2.

⁶⁹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.19.

⁷⁰ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.89-90. Further on these early laws, see Appendix 2 n.29.

the soul.⁷¹ Aretaeus of Cappadocia (also a first-century AD medical author) even records a story in which wine formed part of a seemingly miraculous cure. A man with *elephantiasis* (not the modern disease of the same name; the ancient physicians instead used this term to describe a very virulent skin and bone condition, to which they attributed many symptoms resulting from the conditions today called leprosy and filariasis) saw a viper die in new wine/must, and release much of its venom into the barrel. This man wished to commit suicide, so he drank copiously from the barrel until he became very drunk and bloated. He subsequently shed his skin like a snake, and was cured of his illness. Although Aretaeus was dubious of the reliability of this story, he admitted it was *theoretically* possible: an evil – such as drunkenness and poison – could cure an equal evil – such as this terrible disease. Wine was thought to have great medical power, and some individuals surely gave this anecdote enough credit to recount the story so that it reached Aretaeus. This anecdote probably remained popular, as, shortly after Aretaeus, Galen also twice repeated it (without mention of Aretaeus).⁷²

Yet – in line with wine’s ambiguity – Pliny also implies the vine’s potential for extremely destructive medical consequences, noting that ‘the lees of wine then are so potent that they are fatal to any who go down into the vats’. Here, Pliny is presumably referring to the carbon dioxide given off by fermenting wine, which is still a threat to unfortunate modern-day winemakers.⁷³ Pliny was also clearly aware that drunken excess could be extremely detrimental to health and wellbeing. He thus elaborates:

‘Even if all should turn out for the best, drunkards never see the rising sun, and so shorten their lives. Tippling brings a pale face and hanging

⁷¹ Oribasius, *Medical Collections*, 5.7.1-2; Jouanna (1996) 410-411 = (2012) 173.

⁷² Aretaeus of Cappadocia, *Causes and Symptoms of Chronic Diseases*, 2.13.20 = 90.7-22 Hude; Jouanna (2002) 122-123; Nutton (2004) 205. An identical story is also presented by Galen (without mention of Aretaeus) in two works: *A Sketch of Empiricism (Subfiguratio Empirica)*, 10 (= 39-40 Walzer and Frede = 75-79 Deichgräber); *On the Powers [and Mixtures] of Simple Drugs*, 12.312K. On the condition called *elephantiasis*/ἔλεφαντίασις in antiquity, see: Celsus, 3.25 with Spencer (1935-38) 1.343; Nutton (2004) 29-30, 36, 200; Lewis and Short (1879) s.v. ‘Elephantiasis’. Spencer states (regarding Celsus, 3.25): ‘this description (based on hearsay) combines the symptoms seen in Egypt then and now as the result of filariasis and leprosy infections’.

⁷³ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.63. Note also Schreiner (2002) on the deaths of Victor Manola and Frank Supernak at a Canadian winery in 2002; the former fell into a wine vat, presumably overcome by carbon dioxide given off by the fermenting wine, whilst the latter died attempting a rescue.

cheeks, sore eyes, shaky hands that spill the contents of vessels when they are full, and the condign punishment of haunted sleep and restless nights, and the crowning reward of drunkenness, monstrous licentiousness and delight at iniquity.⁷⁴

Similarly, in contrast to Pliny's celebration of wine in treating cardiac illnesses, Celsus was far less positive. He advised that 'unless there is necessity, it is not well to hurry on to wine',⁷⁵ and that once such a patient was thought free of danger, he should be gradually withdrawn from wine and then have his diet slowly built up again, as relapses were considered common.⁷⁶ Celsus' advice was perhaps issued in response to a popular tendency to drink wine in order to benefit heart-related problems, as appears implied by a satire of Juvenal.⁷⁷ One circumstance in which Celsus regarded wine as appropriate was if it was believed that the cardiac patient could faint.⁷⁸ His prescription is especially careful and detailed: the patient should drink a mid-strength, dry, thin, undiluted, lukewarm wine, and also eat bread (or polenta if he was taking less food) crumbled into a similar wine; it was considered appropriate for him to consume three *heminae* (about three quarters of a litre) during one day and night, and more if the man was of a larger build. Like Pliny, Celsus certainly recognised that wine had notably constructive uses in cardiac conditions, but seems to have also been especially concerned that it was used appropriately, presumably due to its potential for significant destructive consequences if it was not. Celsus also probably recognised the fine line between the wine having constructive or destructive effects; hence his careful instructions.

What is probably the most extreme case of medically destructive drinking recognised in antiquity was recorded by the Roman medical author Cassius Felix, a couple of centuries after this thesis' period of focus, in the fifth century AD. He describes what is today considered the most acute of alcoholism manifestations, now known as 'delirium tremens':

'Frenesis is a changing of the mind which persists together with a fever. And it is mainly caused through too much burning ... or from intoxication

⁷⁴ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.142.

⁷⁵ Celsus, 3.19.3.

⁷⁶ Celsus, 3.19.6.

⁷⁷ Juvenal 5.32; Spencer (1935-38) 1.306.

⁷⁸ Celsus, 3.19.4.

from wine. The sick suffer from acute fever, and have a flushed countenance, unsteady movement of the eyes with tension, wakefulness or insomnia, smallness of the pulse, mental disturbance, and ... plucking at the bedclothes ... sometimes they burst into uncontrolled laughter or fall into great sadness and gloom.⁷⁹

Excessive wine consumption was thus explicitly recognised to dramatically injure both body and mind, as Galen had cautioned centuries beforehand. Similar derangements of the mind were also attributed to excessive drinking long before the fifth century. For example, the Hippocratic author of *Regimen* believed that a state known as 'half-mad' could result from intoxication, the Hippocratic author of *Affections* argued that wine be avoided both when a person had head pains or derangement as it could make both worse, and the Hippocratic author of *Regimen in Acute Disease* noted that 'if there is any suspicion of a violent headache or derangement of the mind in these [acute] diseases, wine must be completely avoided', because this 'prevents the strength of the wine going to the head and affecting the mind'. Similarly, the third-century AD medical author Ps-Galen referred to a case study from the Hippocratic Corpus' *Epidemics*, many centuries beforehand, stating that 'Silenus had become ill after drinking', which led to him being 'deranged with singing and laughter'.⁸⁰ Soranus, the first/second-century AD physician, also stressed that inappropriate drinking during contraception, pregnancy, and breast feeding could lead to the baby being 'harmed in soul as well as body', as well as causing abortion or a difficult birth.⁸¹ Bodily consequences were also thought to be similarly varied and potentially extreme. For example, Celsus and

⁷⁹ Cassius Felix, 42; Leibowitz (1967); Austin (1985) 50. As a treatment, Cassius Felix prescribed opium. Celsus also defines phrenesis as insanity in those with fever (2.1.15), and lists some notably similar symptoms (2.6.6: 'the following are also indications of death ... if the patient, in a fever or acute disease, or mad or with pain either in the lung or head, picks with his hands at the flock or pulls at the fringes of the bedclothes, or claws at anything small projecting from the adjacent wall'), but does not link this to wine consumption. Hippocrates, *Affections*, 10 also described phrenitis as involving fever, pain over the hypochondrium, and a deranged mind; he advises that the patient avoid wine as it is not good for any deranged minds.

⁸⁰ Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 1.35, *Affections*, 2, 10; *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, 63; Ps-Galen, *On the Humours*, 19.493-495K (summarising and interpreting Hippocrates, *Epidemics*, 1.26.43-79). On excess wine's extreme destructive effects on body and mind, see also: Jouanna (1996) 416-417, 421 = (2012) 177-178, 182; Alessi (2002) 111-112; Skoda (2002) esp. 127-128; Jouanna (2002) 120-123 (on Aretaeus of Cappadocia).

⁸¹ Milk and body/soul quotation: Soranus, *Gynaecology*, 2.19(88). Intercourse and pregnancy: 1.36, 1.38, 1.39, 1.46, 4.5(57); 2.44(133) also notes a popular belief that drunkenness during conception led to common defects (especially in the city of Rome) of the back and legs, though Soranus challenges this view, arguing it is actually due to bad child-rearing. Note also: Jouanna (1996) 417 = (2012) 179.

Soranus believed that a heavy drinker's wounds healed more slowly or with greater difficulty than a temperate man,⁸² and Soranus believed that people were more prone to illnesses if they moved vigorously whilst drunk.⁸³

Yet although Greco-Roman medicine clearly believed that wine had such an extreme and ambiguous potential, when Galen's regimen-focused works considered drinking, they seem to have focused primarily upon wine's medically constructive properties, along with the parameters of acceptability and moderation to help ensure these beneficial effects. Wine's destructive potential was largely a secondary consideration in these works, mentioned only infrequently, and usually only to stress or support Galen's ideas regarding appropriate drinking.

A succinct example of this is the passage from Galen's *The Soul's Dependence on the Body* which was used to introduce this section. Although this passage is not from a work primarily focused upon regimen, and its primary context is to argue that wine can affect the soul, this passage also forms a tangent into wine's various effects on the body as well as the mind. It seems to attempt to provide a brief, but relatively comprehensive, summary of wine's place in regimen in health, and, as such, this passage can be regarded as, in part, a microcosm of such a (drinking-) regimen-focused medical work. Its focus is largely upon wine's constructive (rather than its destructive) aspects, as although Galen outlines wine's various constructive properties at comparative length, wine's destructive aspects are only alluded to three times in this passage. Out of these three instances, two imply that wine's negative aspects are subordinate to breaching the constructive drinking of moderation. Furthermore, all three of these instances come from the mouths of poets who seem far more concerned with destructive aspects than Galen himself does in this particular passage (they are primarily quoted, along with a reference to Zeno, to support the idea that wine can affect the soul). Similarly, when Galen subsequently discusses wine's negative aspects later in the same work (as outlined above), he does so largely through an interpretation of Plato. In doing so, Galen taps into longstanding Greek cultural beliefs, dating as far back as Homer, regarding the critical importance of moderation in drinking. Yet his use of sources suggests that, in the same way that Galen was especially keen

⁸² Celsus, 5.26.6; Soranus, *Gynaecology*, 1.38.

⁸³ Soranus, *Gynaecology*, 1.26.

throughout his Corpus to draw medical authority from interpreting Hippocrates, he similarly seems especially keen to draw authority on wine's effect on the soul, as well as its destructive properties, from both the poetic authorities of Homer and Theognis, and the philosophical authorities of Plato and Zeno. Galen himself aimed at being holistic; he attempted to draw together everything which he perceived as useful, aiming for a unified art of medicine (rather than specialising in particular areas), integrating his advice into Greek culture more widely (he even wrote several works on the vocabulary of ancient comedy), and believing that there should be no separation between being a good doctor and a philosopher (as is indicated, for example, by his works *The Best Doctor is also a Philosopher* and *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*).⁸⁴ Yet this (at least, attempted) convergence of authorities within the Galenic Corpus was not necessarily true of wider Greco-Roman society in practice; the need for such a synthesis implied that it was not usual. Galen's abovementioned selection of sources implies that, in reality, the various authorities tended to have different utility and influence in respect to their advice on drinking. The negative aspects of drinking, along with wine's influence over the soul, are implied to be more associated with philosophical and poetic authorities than with medical authorities like Hippocrates (indeed, Galen supposedly regards these philosophical and poetic authorities as the most convincing authorities to support this passage's main argument that wine could affect the soul).

This constructive focus can also be seen on a larger scale in *On the Preservation of Health*, Galen's main work on daily regimen. In this work, Galen only explicitly advises that two groups of people completely abstain from all wine: people with especially hot constitutions (such as those caused by very hot illnesses, which, for example, included severe inflammatory fatigue and fevers) and children. As wines were generally considered to significantly heat the drinker, they were regarded as harmful to people whose constitutions were already unhealthily overheated, as they threatened to worsen such conditions.⁸⁵ Children were advised against wine as they 'have no need of the benefits

⁸⁴ Nutton (2003) 218-223, 230-231; *Pauly*, s.v. 'Galen of Pergamum'. For Galen on comedy: Galen, *My Own Books*, 17=19.48K.

⁸⁵ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.12=6.377K (with 6.376-379K).

accruing from wine, but sustain only injury from it'.⁸⁶ Notably, this in turn implies that many adults will derive some benefit from wine.

It should also be noted that Galen's advice regarding children was not unparalleled; it was similar to both the advice of the revered Plato, and the temperate practice attributed to the idealised earliest generations of Romans.⁸⁷ Yet Galen's advice was probably more conservative than that of many other Greco-Roman doctors. Soranus advised that a child take some heavily watered wine (and bread soaked in wine) as soon as he started taking a little solid food, as it was 'good to create a habit for useful things straight from the beginning'. The Hippocratic author of *A Regimen for Health* advised that children drink warm diluted wine, and the Hippocratic author of *Airs, Waters, Places* recommended they drink especially diluted wine. Celsus similarly also permits children to take heavily diluted wine for medical purposes (the circumstances are not stated, though he cautions that wine is a more suitable treatment for adults).⁸⁸ Similarly, although Cato the Elder's second-century BC Latin manual *On Agriculture* did not explicitly discuss children drinking wine, he implies that they could use some (albeit less) wine in some therapeutic courses. He notes that one particular medicine, used to clear out tapeworms and stomach-worms and based on marjoram-flavoured wine (also including incense and honey), could be given to children, but the quantities should be reduced according to their age.⁸⁹

After childhood and in health, Galen considered wine drinking to have the potential to be constructive to almost everyone's health and wellbeing; it was simply a matter of selecting the most appropriate drinking regime for each

⁸⁶ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.11=6.54-55K.

⁸⁷ Plato, *Laws*, 666a-c advises that males should be prohibited wine until the age of eighteen, and drunkenness before the age of thirty. The third-century works of Athenaeus, 10.429a-b and Aelian, *Varia Historia*, 2.38 state, respectively, that in early Rome, males were not allowed to drink wine until thirty or thirty-five; on such laws see further Appendix 2 n.29. Galen's advice regarding wine and age is discussed further by Béguin (2002) 147-148; Jouanna (1996) 419-420 = (2012) 181.

⁸⁸ Soranus, *Gynaecology*, 2.46(115) allows babies to start eating bread in wine and drinking watery wine once they can take solid food; no sooner than six months old; 2.48(117): 'one should not alienate the [weaned] child from anything: neither from drinking wine'. The Hippocratic author of *A Regimen for Health*, 6 advises that 'infants should be ... given their wine diluted and not at all cold. The wine should be of a kind which is least likely to cause distension of the stomach and wind.' The author of *Airs, Waters, Places*, 9 states that: 'I assert that it is better to give children wine watered down as much as possible' rather than milk, as the latter can lead to problems. Celsus, 1.3.32 advises that children's wine should be especially watery, though 3.7.1c notes that in general children should not be treated like adults by doctors, and that wine is not a very suitable treatment for them.

⁸⁹ Cato, *On Agriculture*, 127.

drinker (in terms of wine type, amount and frequency of drinking, dilution ratio, and so on). Thus, for example, Galen states that a person should ‘in the case of wines, [choose] not merely the dilute or warm wine, but also that having the proper correspondence of its own warmth or moisture to [their] type of disability’.⁹⁰ As such, when Galen addresses wine in *On the Preservation of Health*, it is almost always to describe the benefits that certain people could achieve from its consumption, and to advise the drinking regime that is most suited to attain these results. Destructive aspects are rarely dwelt upon more heavily than to simply emphasise a more constructive wine-drinking regime.⁹¹

It is also notable that throughout this work, Galen seems very reluctant to prohibit anyone of adult age from drinking wine, even when this agenda threatened to come into conflict with both his own medical logic and the advice of his medical idol, Hippocrates. Near the end of book five, Galen specifically turns his attention to the abovementioned issue of ‘whether for [people with] warm natures [wine drinking] is not suitable, but water is better for them to drink’.⁹² He notes that Hippocrates ‘declares absolutely in regard to the warm disposition that they require water-drinking’. This advice was due to wine’s believed extreme heating properties, which were thought to aggravate a person with an already hot constitution. Galen states that many people think that this advice is ‘altogether absurd’, and that ‘Hippocrates is in error’, mainly because it implies that an athlete or labourer whose intrinsic heat increases due to his vigorous activities ‘should use only water in his diet’. In response to this, Galen argues in such a way as to defend, simultaneously: Hippocrates, the theory that vigorous exercise increases heat within a person, and the idea that wine drinking was appropriate for many people with reasonably healthy but heated

⁹⁰ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.12=6.379K.

⁹¹ There are three sections in Galen’s *On the Preservation of Health* which can potentially be read as exceptions to this hypothesis, where the destructive aspects of wine drinking are more heavily dwelt upon than to simply emphasise a more constructive wine-drinking regime. Two passages prescribe abstinence for certain people: children (1.11=6.54-55K) and those with *especially* hot constitutions (5.12=6.377K). Yet, as discussed further in the body-text, Galen concedes specific (cooler) wine-drinking regimes for adults with hot constitutions, and those with the especially hot condition, inflammatory fatigue (4.10=6.298-299K, 5.12=376-379K, 6.3=6.392-393K). In the third passage of note (3.12=6.225-227K), Galen addresses illnesses due to the over moistening of the body, which can be caused by over drinking or overconsumption of foods of a moist mixture. Wine is thus explicitly mentioned as a cause of this illness, but presumably so is water as well as wine, as Galen regards both drinks to be moist in mixture. The sufferer is advised to follow a drying regime. Wine is not explicitly prohibited; instead the sufferer is advised to drink less in general (presumably of wine, water, and other drinks). A wine-drinking regime (albeit one featuring less wine than normal) thus seems to be considered appropriate to help treat this condition.

⁹² Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.12=6.6.376-379K. Note also: Béguin (2002) 148.

constitutions (notably including athletes and labourers). He does this by suggesting his own interpretation of Hippocrates, concluding that Hippocrates meant that complete abstinence was only necessary when this hotness was from a bodily disorder, such as a disease or an unhealthy bodily constitution, and not simply due to an increase of intrinsic heat caused by vigorous exercise. Galen notes that beyond such an increase in intrinsic heat, most athletes and labourers otherwise had well-balanced constitutions (they needed them to be healthy enough to successfully undertake heavy exercise), and on account of this he concluded that 'wine should be given in moderation' to athletes and labourers; they were to be treated no differently to normal healthy people.

Following this, Galen concludes that (with respect to the whole adult population) wine only needed to be withheld 'if any constitution, as in a health disorder, were too hot'. Galen does not further define what constituted his benchmark of 'too hot', but, only a few lines later, Galen explicitly permits people with notably hot constitutions and disorders to drink wine according to a specific regime which was cooler in property ('to such disorders we shall give wine in a small amount and dilute: such is that which is white in colour and thin in composition; just as we shall administer to the cold disorders the warmer of the wines'). Similarly, in book six, Galen returns to the topic of drinking regimes for those 'who are especially warm in constitution' and concludes that 'old wine', which was regarded as hotter than the average wine (see fig. 2.1, below), 'is unsuitable for them, but thin white wine is suitable'.⁹³ Accordingly, the category of patients which Galen considered to be 'too hot' for *any* wine surely consisted only of a very small minority of those with the very hottest constitutions, as he even seems willing to permit specifically modified wine-drinking regimes for those with *especially* warm constitutions.

One condition for which Galen did explicitly prohibit wine is mentioned in *On the Preservation of Health*: inflammatory fatigue, which is discussed in book four. Galen presents this as an extremely hot illness, the hottest type of fatigue ('the blood of this form of fatigue is the hottest'), and a condition in which there was a notable risk of an onset of fever. This is the only form of fatigue for which Galen advises complete abstinence from wine, yet even then he seems reluctant to do

⁹³ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health* 6.3=6.392K (trans. based on Green, except that Green's 'hygienic disorder' is here replaced by 'health disorder', in line with the explanation in n.140).

so, and is willing to make some concessions. He resolutely advises absolute abstinence from wine for a minimum of two days following the removal of some of the hot blood by venesection. Following this, he states that it is best to continue drinking only water on the third day, but concedes that 'if he does not tolerate it' the patient can drink either apomel (a honey-water beverage) or a thin white wine, both of which were regarded as cooling in property (as depicted on fig. 2.1, below).⁹⁴

It was therefore only a very small minority of the adult population which Galen was willing to discourage from drinking *any* wine, and even then he seemed very reluctant to do so, preferring instead to modify their wine-drinking regime to make it more appropriate for their condition of health. In addition, Galen's abovementioned comments to address the popular hostility towards the widely revered Hippocrates' advice (that everyone with warm constitutions should abstain from wine) implies that a reluctance to prohibit wine was more widespread among medical authorities of the second century AD (along with those individuals who had enough medical knowledge to be acquainted with this advice of Hippocrates, and feel capable to question his authority).

A very similar approach can also be seen in the first book of Celsus' medical encyclopaedia. This book compiles medical knowledge regarding appropriate regimen for various categories of people in reasonably good health, and is methodologically structured according to the type of person or situation (the subsequent seven books describe therapeutic treatments, divided according to whether they were primarily treated by regimen, medicaments or surgery). Celsus prescribes the most medically suitable regime for each person/situation, often explicitly prescribing a specific wine-drinking regime, and never prohibiting wine completely. Unlike Galen, Celsus even permits children to drink wine (although he thought it more appropriate for adults, and believed theirs should be especially diluted).⁹⁵ Thus, although in subsequent books Celsus followed Asclepiades in regarding abstinence from wine as a common therapeutic aid,⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.10=6.294-300K (wine and abstinence: 6.298-299K).

⁹⁵ See n.88.

⁹⁶ Celsus, 2.14.1, notes that Asclepiades' work on *Common Aids* focused only upon rubbing, water-drinking, and rocking. As general preventative/therapeutic practice, Celsus, 3.2.5-7 advised abstinence from wine for two days when a person noticed the signs of an oncoming illness; after drinking wine on the third day he should generally alternate between one day of wine-drinking and the next of only water. At 2.16, Celsus discusses the therapeutic use of abstinence from all food and drink: he notes that 'to a sufferer [of illness] nothing is more

in book one everyone in reasonable health was allowed to drink wine on a daily basis (or, on some rare occasions, every other day).⁹⁷ Each person in approximate health was thought to derive health benefits from daily wine consumption, so long as they followed Celsus' advice and drank the correct type of wine, in the correct manner, as dependent on their constitution and any weaknesses. For example: 'he whose head is infirm ought ... to drink a light wine, well diluted, rather than water, in order that he may have something in reserve when his head begins to become heavier'.⁹⁸ Although Celsus believed that excess 'is safer in drinking than in eating', he also believed that for drinking to be a constructive part of regimen in health it had to be 'moderate'; notably he regarded both excess and *excessive abstinence* of foodstuffs potentially destructive.⁹⁹ Indeed, an excess of food or wine, as well as a lack of fluids ('thirst'), were both listed among the causes of illness in the preface to Celsus' medical encyclopaedia.¹⁰⁰ Occasional bouts of heavy drinking may have also been regarded as destructive, as Celsus appears to have considered sudden changes in dietary regime to be dangerous (on this subject, Celsus states that 'it is not good indeed to overeat after a long fast, nor to fast after overeating').¹⁰¹

advantageous than a timely abstinence', and explains that as a general rule hunger and thirst should be pursued at the start of disease, whereas moderation should be preferred when it is established. Celsus also specifically advised that many illnesses, including the common cold (4.5.1-3 with Spencer [1935-38] 1.370), were to be treated by avoiding wine. Note also, for example, wine should be prohibited: when chill preceding fever was anticipated, as it was considered especially troublesome (3.11.1); for several days during recovery from pneumonia (4.14.4); in almost all cases of wounds (5.26.25b); in severe wounds until a scar had formed, or whilst there was fever, inflammation, if the sinews or muscle were wounded, or if it was a deep flesh wound (5.26.30b); in cases of lesions originating from corruption within (5.28.1d); in fractures (8.4.2), especially of the skull until the scar is firm (8.4.22), and for a long time following treatment of a fracture of the upper arm or thigh (8.10.7); in dislocations until after the fifth day (8.11.7-8). See also, n.62 on Celsus preferring abstinence from wine in conditions relating to the nerves, spasms and paralysis; n.402 on those related to the head; and n.263 on conditions with fever. Consider also n.97.

⁹⁷ Every other day: Celsus, 1.10 (compare with 3.2.5-7). However, later in his work, Celsus notes some significantly long-term therapeutic exceptions: when a woman's womb was affected so that she prostrated herself in an epilepsy-like stupor (hysteria), she should be cut off from wine for an entire year (4.27.1a-b), and many people successfully combat joint troubles in the hand and feet by abstaining from wine and honeyed-wine for an entire year following the first symptoms (4.31.1-2).

⁹⁸ Celsus, 1.4.

⁹⁹ Celsus, 1.2.8.

¹⁰⁰ Celsus, pr.52-53. Further on thirst: Celsus considered there to be danger of death from diarrhoea when thirst became excessive (2.8.30), and drinking was also thought to be most dangerous for a person with fever once the thirst was greatest (3.6.1; 3.6.4 also notes that thirst usually prevented sleep). However, thirst was also considered to have therapeutic uses: 3.4.2 notes that Asclepiades used fever as remedy against itself, including promoting extreme thirst (not even allowing the mouth to be swilled out), and 3.21.4 advises thirst as a cure for dropsy providing that the patient can stand it (if not, he should drink then vomit).

¹⁰¹ Celsus, 1.3.2.

Yet Celsus was willing to waive these rules for men with an ideal healthy constitution, who were also free to determine their own lifestyle. This was acknowledged to be very rare, as Celsus believed that almost everyone in health had at least some slight bodily weakness. Celsus advised that, unlike everyone else, such an ideal person 'should be under no obligatory rules', and should simply aim at variety in their lifestyle. He could eat, and presumably drink, as much as he liked (providing he could digest it), and even occasional excess was condoned.¹⁰²

Although wine's destructive properties were not explicitly dwelt upon in Celsus' first book, wine was implied to have this potential if his advice was not followed. In the very least, inappropriate drinking would be less beneficial to a person's health. Yet these destructive aspects are sidelined, never being explicitly addressed in this book,¹⁰³ and rarely throughout Celsus' encyclopaedia as a whole;¹⁰⁴ they are a secondary consideration which is largely relegated to the background. This most likely reflects the fact that they were simply not relevant if Celsus' primary medical advice on wine's appropriate use were properly followed. Wine itself was thus primarily considered to be constructive; not at all problematic to people in approximate health, provided that it was used in the most appropriate way to ensure its constructive effects were fully taken advantage of.

¹⁰² Celsus, 1.1.1-2: the ideal man is advised 'to attend at times a banquet, at times to hold aloof; to eat more than sufficient at one time, and at another no more; to take food twice rather than once a day, and always as much as one wants providing one digests it'. On almost everyone having a weakness: 1.3.13-14.

¹⁰³ A near exception to this rule in book one is at 1.3.8: Celsus notes that after a heavy meal including much food and wine, vomiting was beneficial; the implication, although it is not explicitly mentioned, is surely that such excessive drinking is destructive and accordingly required this treatment. Also 1.3.32: 'wine should be diluted for children; for the old men it should be rather undilute: but at neither age be of a kind to cause flatulence'; the implication is surely that flatulent wines are not as constructive (and are potentially somewhat destructive) for the health of children and the elderly. Yet, in line with this chapter's argument, Celsus primarily focuses upon addressing which wine-drinking regime is the most appropriate, and only implies this potentially destructive point to outline the appropriate regime.

¹⁰⁴ The few examples of Celsus explicitly noting wine's medically destructive properties: pr.52-53 lists excess wine and thirst as among the causes of illness. Pr.69-70 notes water as a cure for oppression caused by intoxication (this was devised by Cassius, who is referred to as an ingenious practitioner that had recently died). 4.2.3-5 notes that wine, indigestion, cold, or heat from the sun could cause a severe non-lethal pain in head of short-duration (this was treated, in part, by abstinence from food and drink). 2.6.7-8 also repeats a condition from Hippocrates, *Aphorisms*, 5.5, whereby wine was linked to a potentially lethal and untreatable illness, although it is unclear whether this was causal, whereby a patient lost his speech after becoming drunk and died from a fit unless he became feverish or regained his voice when he sobered up. 5.26.6 notes that wounds heal quicker in 'one who is sober and temperate than one addicted to wine and venery', implying heavy drinking to lead to a body less quick to heal (a similar point is noted by Soranus, *Gynaecology*, 1.38).

Jouanna has come to a similar conclusion with respect to Aretaeus of Cappadocia's first-century AD medical works. These have a clear imbalance; he spends little time on the negative aspects of drinking. Drunkenness is mentioned several times as a cause of disease, but he most often prescribes wine for constructive therapeutic purposes.¹⁰⁵

Accordingly, the works of Galen and Celsus, supported by Aretaeus, imply that although wine was considered to be an ambiguous substance by the Greco-Roman medical authorities, the medical literature focused disproportionately upon the constructive aspects of drinking. They were concerned with advising appropriate drinking in health, and the key parameters of wine's use to achieve desired effects. It was notably less common for regimen-focused medical literature to explicitly address the destructive aspects of drinking.

This trend clearly long predated the first century AD, as a similar approach can be noted among the regimen-focused works of the Hippocratic Corpus.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Jouanna (2002) 120.

¹⁰⁶ *A Regimen for Health* is structured in a similar way to Celsus' book one: by type of person or situation. Wine is advised as part of many regimes to benefit these people/situations; for example: 'fat people who want to reduce should ... before eating drink some diluted wine, not too cold' (4). The destructive aspects of wine are never explicitly mentioned.

Regimen in Acute Diseases is more neutral in tone. The main discussion of various wines (50-52) follows a similar style to Dioscorides' *Materia Medica* (similar also to Pliny's treatment of wine's medical uses in book twenty-three of the *Natural History*), as discussed in the body-text. It lists each wine by type, its constructive and destructive health effects, and which conditions it will aid or harm. For example: 'sweet wine is less likely to produce headache than is heavy wine, it has less effect upon the mind and, as regards the internal organs, it is more easily passed than the other but causes enlargement of the spleen and liver. It is most unsuitable for those with bitter bile for it makes them thirsty' (50). Beyond this section, there is a comment that wine is useful for moistening patients with dry diseases (12), and a section stressing the importance of providing the food and drink that a patient is accustomed to, including wine, reflecting the fear of damage which can be caused by a sudden change to any unfamiliar eating/drinking regime (33-37). On this last issue of (un)familiarity, see further Appendix 2.

Regimen features both of these two styles. Book two follows a similar style to Dioscorides' *Materia Medica*; it lists the properties of various wines in comparison to each other (2.52-53). This is done in a neutral way, without explicitly stating which conditions each wine would help/hinder; for example: 'new wines pass better by stool than old wines' (2.52). Book three and four (the latter also being known as *Dreams*) then follow the constructive focus typical of the other regimen-focused medical works analysed by this thesis, addressing various situations and illnesses, and often suggesting the most constructive wine-drinking regime for these conditions. There is one challenge to applying this hypothesis to *Regimen*: it is noted that a condition near to madness can arise from intoxication (1.35); yet not all wine consumption is regarded as destructive in this situation, as it is noted that a drinking regime involving a particular kind of wine (soft and white) can be part of the cure. It is also advised that an attack of fever means that everything apart from water is prohibited (3.72); yet wine is probably not regarded as especially destructive, as this prohibition also includes all other foods and drinks except water.

Affections features two sections: the first catalogues and describes illnesses (1-38) and the second is an ill-organised dietetic part (39-61). Though the first half does briefly advise regimen in each illness, this largely consists of generalisations and references to the second

Furthermore, the Hippocratic text *Aphorisms* lists four constructive uses of wine (five if a repeated point is counted in each of its two occurrences), in comparison to only two regarding destructive effects.¹⁰⁷ It perhaps also telling that when a hypothetical town full of heavy drinkers is encountered in the Hippocratic Corpus' *Airs, Waters, Places*, this is simply regarded as a factor which it is necessary for a travelling doctor to consider during his treatment of the various illnesses which he encountered among this place's population.¹⁰⁸ Although it is implicit in this section that heavy drinking was, at least in some regards, considered to be a medically destructive factor (it is noted that these people are 'consequently unable to stand fatigue'), such drinking is not condemned, nor is it advised that the doctor should discourage this excess. Combating such unhealthy drinking, and thus preventing the acknowledged consequential illnesses, was not considered by the Hippocratic author to be a primary concern of the travelling doctor addressed at the start of this work. Similarly, Jouanna notes that there is no comment in the surviving Hippocratic Corpus which *explicitly* condemns drunkenness (though obviously, as seen above, heavy drinking was noted to have some potentially destructive consequences, and drinking was regarded as inappropriate in certain conditions). It is not until Plato's *Symposium* (fourth century BC) that we have such a condemnation coming from the mouth of a doctor recorded in the surviving ancient literature (albeit a fictional physician in a leisure context).¹⁰⁹

half of the book or other works (especially the non-extant *Medications Book*). The second half of this work is far more regimen-focused. Accordingly, it is unsurprising that all of the direct references to wine consumption's destructive consequences are located in the first part of this work: it is bad for head pains and should be avoided until the pain stops (2); pleurisy generally arises from a person receiving a chill whilst in a moist state of body, either sober or drunk (7); it is bad for a deranged mind and should be avoided in phrenitis and similar conditions (10); wine can cause the fevers of winter (12); over eating or drinking of wine can cause diarrhoea or cholera (27). Only two indirect references are located in the second half: it is noted that those people who are harmed by drinking wine should refer to the drinks in the *Medications Book* (40); diluted fragrant old wine should be drunk following taking medication unless the patient has fever, thereby implying wine to be destructive in fevers (41).

¹⁰⁷ Hippocrates, *Aphorisms*. Constructive uses of wine/drinking: 2.21 (neat wine alleviates hunger), 6.31 and 7.46 (neat wine treats eye pains), 7.48 (neat wine and deep bleeding relieve urinary problems), 7.56 (wine and water cures distress, yawning and shuddering). Destructive effects: 5.5 (a drunk man who is speechless in a fit will die in a fit unless he has a fever or gets his voice back after his hangover; this is repeated by Celsus, 2.6.7-8), 7.7 (a shivering fit and delirium after excess drinking is bad).

¹⁰⁸ Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places*, 1.

¹⁰⁹ Jouanna (1996) 415 = (2012) 176-177. Referring to: Plato, *Symposium*, 176c-d: 'if practising as a doctor has made one thing plain to me, I'd say it's that drunkenness is bad for people. If it were up to me, then, I wouldn't want to have too much to drink, and I wouldn't recommend it to anyone else either, especially if he's still hungover from the day before!'

Comparison with Pliny's *Natural History* book fourteen (which focuses upon the vine, grapes and wine) suggests that this 'constructive' trend was particular to the literature of medical authorities. Pliny's work also presents medical knowledge on wine's effects as understood in the first century AD, yet neither Pliny nor the *Natural History* are primarily medical authorities in nature. Accordingly, book fourteen also contains information on an eclectic variety of other matters, such as wine's manufacture, storage, history, and so on. Like the medical authorities of this period, Pliny also clearly believed that wine had the potential for extreme and ambiguous effects, stating that 'there is nothing else that is more useful for strengthening the body, and also nothing more detrimental to our pleasures if moderation be lacking'.¹¹⁰ Yet, when presenting medical knowledge regarding wine's consumption, his focus is not primarily upon how it can be best used to benefit a person's health. Instead his tendency is to dwell upon wine's sensational aspects; either positive or negative.¹¹¹

Pliny subsequently returns to focus upon wine once again in book twenty-three. Here he focuses primarily upon wine's effects on health and its use as a medicine, explicitly using medical authorities as sources (notably including Asclepiades, a first-century BC physician who had composed a volume focused upon wine).¹¹² As Pliny's work now temporarily assumes a role more akin to a medical authority, the manner in which book twenty-three addresses wine is far more comparable to that seen in the medical literature. The first half of this section methodically addresses the various different types of wines (according to both their region of origin and their characteristics), and briefly states each

¹¹⁰ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.58.

¹¹¹ Indeed, Bostock and Riley (1855) 3.275 summarises this book as: 'remarkable facts, narratives, and observations, five hundred and ten'. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.20 admits this aim, when he states regarding his primary focus, that as there are countless different wines: 'it will be enough to have pointed out the most celebrated kinds of wines or the ones remarkable for some special property'. Similarly, at 14.69 he implies that he ignores common wines (*plebeia*). At 14.72 he further notes that although there are other wines, in addition to those he has described, which also deserve a high reputation, he has chosen to focus upon 'those on which the general agreement of the ages will be found to have pronounced judgement'.

Obviously, the approach of this book often means it naturally tends to favour sensationally destructive excess, as especially seen in Pliny's attack on excessive consumption and his list of notorious drunkards at 14.137-148. At 14.58 Pliny begins by noting wine's physiological effects in a neutral tone (its heating/cooling effects), but then immediately proceeds to Alexander's famous sensational excesses. At 14.116-118 Pliny presents a variety of wine's 'miraculous properties', and the reader has to pick out the constructive health properties from the destructive; Pliny seems to make no effort to favour either, or to present an advised regimen for anyone in particular. For example: 'one [wine] grown in Arcadia is said to produce ability to bear children in women and madness in men'.

¹¹² Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.31-58. Aims: 23.31-32. On Asclepiades: 23.32.

wine's significant medical properties, both constructive and destructive, without notable prejudice towards either.¹¹³ It accordingly has a very similar style to Dioscorides' (approximately contemporary) *Materia Medica*, which also lists the various types of wines, each with their notable properties, following the same apparently unselective approach in terms of constructive and destructive properties.¹¹⁴ Pliny then proceeds to discuss the place of wine in both regimen and curative treatments.¹¹⁵ In a similar way to the regimen-focused medical literature, Pliny focuses primarily upon the constructive properties and the most appropriate uses of wine. Wine's destructive effects are a secondary focus, only being dwelt upon twice. The first of these instances is used in order to stress Pliny's advice regarding wine's constructive use (he highlights the problems associated with flavoured wines in order to support his assertion that the best wines are generally those to which nothing is added).¹¹⁶ The second reads like a modern-day disclaimer: he notes that wine is rarely useful in fevers (apart from certain specified exceptions), and then lists many types of people who are advised not to drink wine (these are listed without further discussion or explanation).

This 'constructive' bias in the ancient medical literature should act as a caution to modern scholars, as it highlights a fundamental difference between the medical literature of the Roman Empire and the scholarship of modern Western medicine. Like ancient Greco-Roman medicine, modern Western medicine also recognises that alcohol is an ambiguous substance, as different alcoholic drinks (especially red wine) have the potential for both extremely constructive and destructive effects on a person's health.¹¹⁷ Moderation is similarly regarded as the key criterion for ensuring more beneficial and/or less harmful effects. Yet, as Douglas and Heath highlighted, anthropologists have noted that (as of 1987) modern Western medical and sociological scholarship tend to focus disproportionately heavily upon destructive and problem drinking, and how to

¹¹³ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.33-40. Shortly after, Pliny addresses 'artificial wines' (non-grape or heavily flavoured wines) and sour wine/vinegar in a broadly similar way: 23.52-58.

¹¹⁴ Dioscorides, 5.1-73.

¹¹⁵ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.41-51.

¹¹⁶ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.46.

¹¹⁷ For a brief introduction to the health effects of wine consumption: Troncoso, Garcia-Parrilla and Martinez-Ortega (2001); OCW², s.v. 'Health, Effects of Wine Consumption On'. Note also: McGovern (2007 [2003]) 306; Jouanna (1996) 422 = (2012) 183.

combat these issues.¹¹⁸ Indeed, Heath notes that up until at least 1980, ‘the fact that drinking can have negligible – or even positive – effects as well as deleterious ones’ ‘has rarely been recognised in other disciplines [outside of anthropology]’. Admittedly, this trend can be expected to have declined somewhat after the 1991 study that was to become the famous ‘French Paradox’. This linked moderate consumption of red wine to lower rates of coronary heart disease, and it in turn encouraged a series of studies which have increasingly linked red wine to notable health benefits (this trend may also predate the 1990s, as some studies from the 1980s also linked wine consumption to cardioprotective effects).¹¹⁹ Yet, as Douglas notes that this tendency to focus more heavily upon the negatives of alcohol consumption ‘reflects a strong bias in Western culture’, it is most likely that this bias will have not dissipated entirely from modern medical scholarship as a whole. Indeed, this trend can be noted to have continued in the modern scholarship on Roman drinking that is written by medical scholars and/or published in medical journals from the turn of the nineteenth century into the 1990s and 2000s. As outlined in the introduction, the focus of such articles has largely been upon problem drinking, such as alcoholism and fetal alcohol syndrome.¹²⁰ In essence, ancient and modern medical authorities seem to achieve their shared aim of promoting the healthiest drinking in opposite ways: Greco-Roman medicine primarily promoted constructive drinking, whereas modern Western medicine attempts to deter destructive drinking.

What then were the reasons behind the Greco-Roman medical literature’s focus upon the constructive effects of drinking? First, this can be interpreted as the most useful approach to suggest the most suitable use of wine in dietary regimen, as it directly addressed how people should drink in certain situations to get the greatest benefit. The destructive aspects of drinking were associated with inappropriate consumption, and as such they only became a real concern when the drinker breached the primary advice regarding the positive aspects

¹¹⁸ Douglas (1987) 3-4, 14; Heath (1987) esp. 18-19 (quotation from p.19), 36-37.

¹¹⁹ Troncoso, Garcia-Parrilla and Martinez-Ortega (2001) 116-118.

¹²⁰ Alcoholism: *OCD*⁴, s.v. ‘Alcoholism’ – co-authored by Barney Rickenbacker, ‘Special Consultant Alcoholism and Addiction’; Jellinek (1976); Leibowitz (1967) – specifically on delirium tremens; Rolleston (1927). Curing destructive excess: Brown (1898). Fetal alcohol syndrome: Sanders (2009); Abel (1999); also Abel (1997). However, Cook, Tarbet and Ball (2007) consider both the benefits associated with moderation, and the harm associated with excess (though this is specifically concerned with Classical Greek drinking). On this issue, see further the Introduction from p.16.

and appropriate consumption. According to this logic, the destructive aspects and excess were subordinate to the primary advice on appropriate constructive drinking and moderation, and were thus only a secondary concern for the medical authorities who attempted to give the most practical and useful advice.

Secondly, the medical literature's constructive focus also reflects the ancient medical mindset, which tended to prefer preventative regimen above curative medicine.¹²¹ A constructive approach to addressing drinking tends to primarily concern how best to drink to pursue health and, ideally, how to avoid falling into illness in the first place (this approach is represented by the ancient medical works on regimen, discussed above). On the other hand, an approach more heavily focused upon the destructive aspects would necessarily be more associated with discussing the manifestations of medical conditions, and presumably how to cure these problems.

The medical literature's constructive approach also reflects Greco-Roman society, as wine drinking was firmly ingrained within their culture. In both sickness and health, most people needed to consume a diet based upon staple agricultural products in order to have enough food-energy to survive, and wine was already a calorific cornerstone of the staple diet. Along with cereal and olive oil, wine had formed the backbone of the Greco-Roman diet (as the so-called 'Mediterranean Triad') for many centuries, and the centrality of daily wine consumption to the public's diet was recognised by medical authorities such as Galen (as indicated by the passage which opened this section).¹²² Furthermore, in order for medically advised regimen or treatments to be followed by patients and become popular, they would usually need to be based on readily available items. Wine was thus a very appropriate medical prescription in this respect, as it was one of the most widely available drinks in the Roman Empire.

On the other hand, complete abstinence from wine was widely regarded as unusual and undesirable;¹²³ it has already been noted that Hippocrates' advice that certain people avoid wine completely was apparently met with widespread scepticism, and Galen himself seemed reluctant to advise such a regime for any

¹²¹ Grant (2000) 6-7. It is also noted by Cruse (2004) 42 that *Regimen* (the Hippocratic Corpus' main work on dietary regimen) 'covers what is known in modern times as "preventative" medicine'.

¹²² See p.38 and p.63.

¹²³ See: Introduction p.26 with n.30 and Ch.3 p.228 with n.42.

adult in his work *On the Preservation of Health*. It would therefore have been very difficult for medical authorities to successfully dissuade people from drinking wine entirely, or in the particular manner that they were accustomed to, simply by stressing the negatives of something that they and their ancestors had practiced on a daily basis. Above all, this was something which had been observed, over countless generations, to help keep a person alive and healthy as part of their staple diet. Instead, it was surely far more realistic to attempt to *modify* a person's drinking behaviour towards something more positive by advising *what* and *how* a particular person should drink in order to pursue better health and wellbeing, and supporting this by explaining the additional benefits that they would incur from modifying their drinking regime in this way.

The success of such an approach was perhaps also further supported by the flourishing gastronomical interests of the Empire's elite, which included fine wines from renowned regions.¹²⁴ Diagnosis with a particular health condition could be an exciting impetus to try an unfamiliar wine as recommended by a doctor.¹²⁵ Indeed, in a world before official certification or widespread state employment of doctors, with various physicians and treatments in direct competition with each other, the more pleasant treatments were also surely the ones which many patients preferred to try first. A trend of doctors pandering to their patients was described by Galen at the very start of *Method of Medicine*. He notes that in his period the majority of people spend their evenings drinking excessively at *symposia*, and:

'When they become sick, naturally they do not call in the best doctors, whom they never showed themselves eager to pick out when they were healthy. Instead they choose those doctors to whom they are most accustomed [including especially those whom they know from *symposia*] and who are, at the same time, those most inclined to flattery. These doctors will ... set out snow and wine, and will comply with every order, like slaves.'

¹²⁴ Note especially: Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.59-76. Also: 14.87-97 on the growing interest in wine in Roman history up to the mid first century BC. On the quality of various wines, named by region, both from Italy and overseas; Dalby (2003) s.v. 'Wine Regions'. On gastronomy and oenology, see further Ch.3 from p.266.

¹²⁵ Note especially: Galen's advice in *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.5=6.334-339 on many wines (named by region) both from Italy and the Greek world. He addresses their properties, uses, and how to identify similar wines in other regions. Note also: Galen, *The Thinning Diet*, 12=5.4.2.446-450CMG; Dioscorides, 5.6.6-9.

These sycophantic doctors quickly become rich and powerful, gain students and followers, and thus gain more repute in the field of medicine. Galen's *On Prognosis* also begins with a similar claim that the majority of contemporary doctors were unable to treat their patients effectively, as they were more interested in popularity and sycophancy than the medical arts, and they pass on this lazy attitude to their numerous pupils.¹²⁶ Plutarch records a speech of Cato the Elder, which similarly implies that people often choose the physician who prescribes the most agreeable treatments, rather than the one who is most sincere in his aims to cure the patient.¹²⁷ The same trend is perhaps also implied by the Hippocratic Corpus' *Affections*, which advises the doctor to let a patient eat and drink whatever they have 'set their heart on' unless they perceive an associated risk.¹²⁸ Celsus similarly states (with specific regard to leientera, a condition following dysentery, and similar affections) that the doctor should attempt to choose a medicament that the patient likes the most, and if the patient dislikes all of the appropriate medicaments then something should be added to make it appetising; this could presumably include wine.¹²⁹ Indeed, Celsus even notes that when wine was restricted, the patients' longing for it was sometimes so intense that they should not be trusted. He explains that they sometimes pretend to have a weak stomach so that they were prescribed with wine.¹³⁰ Pliny also claimed many doctors followed a 'policy of perpetually advertising themselves by some novelty', which sometimes included unusual wine-drinking regimes; for example, the recent innovation of 'drinking on an empty stomach and preceding meals with a draught of wine'.¹³¹ Furthermore, it is perhaps no coincidence that one of the earliest Greek doctors said to have

¹²⁶ Galen, *Method of Medicine*, 1.1=10.4-5K. *On Prognosis*, 1=14.559-600K: 'How impossible is it, Epigenes, for the majority of doctors to foretell what is going to happen to their patients in each illness. For since those who are eager for the semblance of ability rather than the reality have come to predominate in medicine as well as the other arts, the finer aspects of these arts are now neglected and attention is lavished upon what may bring them a high reputation with the general public – a gratifying word or act, a bit of flattery, a toadying salutation each day of the rich and powerful ... amusing them at dinner. ... They announce that they can teach their arts in a very short time and so assemble a host of pupils through whom they acquire influence in the cities where they live.' This passage is noted also by König (2012) 19. Note that, in contrast to his criticism of other doctors in *Method of Medicine*, Galen himself records, later in this same work (7.4=467K), that he prescribed water cooled with snow to some Roman patients.

¹²⁷ Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 16.3-6.

¹²⁸ Hippocrates, *Affections*, 44.

¹²⁹ Celsus, 4.23.2-3.

¹³⁰ Celsus, 1.8.2.

¹³¹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.143. Note also that at 14.64, Pliny records Tiberius' suspicions that the wines of Sorrento were only recommended by the medical authorities because they were in cahoots to recommend it above its station.

established a reputation in Rome was Asclepiades, who was famous for favouring gentle treatments with wines, baths, massage and so on.¹³² Over time, this preference no doubt led to the favouring of the more agreeable measures (wherever possible) throughout Greco-Roman medical practice, including measures to keep patients feeling content, and measures to help them continue doing the things they were accustomed to and enjoyed; this surely included drinking wine. Indeed, Grant highlights Galen's medical advice provided for a particularly excellent level of palliative care.¹³³

Reflection of this agenda can perhaps be seen in *On the Preservation of Health*, both when Galen states that the foods which a patient thinks taste more pleasant were often the most nourishing and appropriate for them, and when he is reluctant to prescribe specific water-mixing ratios for oxymel or wine because he states that the patient's senses were the best guess of what was appropriate for them, and they should thus choose whatever seemed most pleasant.¹³⁴ This also reflects Galen's emphasis on habitual activity; his medical advice followed the principle that the safest (although not necessarily best) regimen for a person was usually that which was customary to them. In order to mitigate risks, modifications to a person's regimen should usually be gradual, with changes kept as minor as possible. In *On the Preservation of Health*, Galen explains that this is because, over the years and through trial-and-error, most people will have come to reject that which harms them and thus develop a regimen which does not cause them notable harm (although not necessarily the *ideal* regimen for them).¹³⁵

This emphasis on habitual diet long predated Galen, as can be seen in the Hippocratic Corpus. *Regimen in Acute Diseases* states that a *sudden* change from a person's customary regime to another is more dangerous than a *gradual* one, and further stresses that a sudden change from drinking wine (as was usual for most people in health) to only water (as was unusual) was especially

¹³² Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.32; Nutton (2004) 168; Béguin (2002) 141; King (2001) 33. Note also Asclepiades' association with the pleasant treatment of the 'royal illness' (jaundice) in Celsus, 3.24 with Spencer (1935-38) 1.338: this featured things to keep the patient jolly (dice, jest, playacting) and a varied diet (including alternation between dry undiluted wine and salted Greek wine).

¹³³ Grant (2000) 1.

¹³⁴ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.6=6.272-273K, also 6.3=6.396K on pleasanter foods being more nourishing (providing the consumer has a harmonious constitution).

¹³⁵ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.11=6.368-369K. Note also: 5.3=6.323K (customary exercise prevents fatigue), 6.3=6.394K (familiar/accustomed food maintains a person's constitution; this is desirable in harmonious constitutions with only a slight imbalance).

hazardous. *Affections* similarly advised that changes to food and drink should be made gradually, and 'when a person consumes foods or drinks in greater amounts than is his habit, or of a different kind, it is best for him to vomit them up immediately'.¹³⁶ As most Greeks and Romans drank wine as part of their staple diet, this theory helps to explain both Galen's reluctance to prohibit wine drinking for any adults, and his tendency to focus his advice regarding drinking upon how to make it more constructive. (Wine's important place in customary/familiar diet is considered in further depth in Appendix 2.)

As Greco-Roman doctors strongly associated the destructive aspects of drinking with inappropriate and excessive drinking, another line of enquiry regards considering why these medical authorities thought that some people engaged in this behaviour which was so clearly linked with destructive consequences. Galen provides two reasons for why people followed inappropriately excessive regimen in general, stating that 'some [people are], overcome by pleasure or through excessive folly, not perceiving the injury, persist in their vicious customs'.¹³⁷ One possible reason was thus recognised to be ignorance; the drinker did not know that this kind of drinking was inappropriate for them. This was surely best treated by educating the drinker, which would no doubt entrench the existing medical approach of stressing the drinking regime which was most appropriate for them. The second perceived reason was the person knowingly committing excess due to choice or compulsion; this leads on to another major reason behind the medical literature's constructive bias.

The medical literature's constructive focus regarding wine was also most likely due to the way in which Greco-Roman society viewed alcohol's addictive properties (as outlined in Chapter 1). In modern Western society, emphasis is placed on the addictive power of alcohol, with 'alcoholism' usually being characterised as a 'disease'. The Greeks and Romans, on the other hand, never characterised alcoholism as a disease, but was rather thought addiction to primarily signify a moral weakness on the part of the drinker who surrendered to excessive pleasure. Whereas the modern view on alcohol addiction

¹³⁶ Hippocrates, *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, 28, 35-36, 37a; Hippocrates, *Affections*, 44, 61; Jouanna (1996) 427 = (2012) 186-187.

¹³⁷ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.11=6.368-369K. Note also: 5.1=6.307-312K on many doctors being unhealthy themselves due to intemperance or ignorance, 6.8=6.415-416K on obesity/over-thinness due to being weak-willed or ambition/vanity.

facilitates excessive drinking being considered something deserving the attention of medical authorities, the ancient view rather implies something that primarily demands the attention of philosophers and moralists.

Cicero accordingly prescribed advice relevant to drinking in *On Duties*, an educational work on appropriate behaviour that was addressed to his own wayward (and notoriously heavy drinking) son:

‘A man’s mind, however, is nourished by learning and reasoning ... From this we understand that bodily pleasure is not sufficiently worthy of the superiority of man and that it should be scorned and rejected. If there is anyone who assigns some worth to pleasure he must take care to keep his enjoyment of it in proportion. The nourishment and care we give our bodies should therefore be measured by the needs of healthiness and strength.’¹³⁸

Cicero lays the blame for the worst offenders directly at their own feet, implying that they and their minds were less than human; he calls them beasts.

In the medical sphere, Galen showed a very similar characterisation of excess to Cicero, clearly believing that the good and bad minds were linked, respectively, with appropriate and excessive consumption. On the ideal mind:

‘Those of the best constitutions [including perfect body and mind] ... will desist from food and drink, when they have been sufficiently filled. So that there is no fear that such a man will ... overeat, if he follows the inclinations of his own nature. So that, therefore, such a man does not need a supervisor who has come to the peak of knowledge ... For the healthy body itself, impelled by the inclinations of its own nature, will discover everything for itself, and especially if the functions of the mind have been well trained.’¹³⁹

On the worst minds:

¹³⁸ Cicero, *On Duties*, 1.105-106. On his son’s behaviour, see: Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.147. Note also the approximately contemporary letter (both are from 44BC) written by Cicero’s son, addressed to his father’s freedman, defending his own actions: Cicero, *Letters to Friends*, 337(16.21). On Cicero’s son, see further Ch.3 p.232 with n.59.

¹³⁹ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 2.7=6.132-133K.

‘The art of preserving health promises to maintain in good health those who obey it; but to those who are disobedient, it is just as if it did not exist at all. Some disobey it, overcome by the sweetness of the present pleasure, whom we call weak-willed and undisciplined.’¹⁴⁰

As mentioned above, Galen thought that this group of weaker-minded people required trainers to help guide their regimen towards what was appropriate, as they were less able to stop themselves short of excess. This was not considered uncommon; although the first five of the six books which comprise *On the Preservation of Health* address a perfect person who has no major weaknesses of body or mind, it is acknowledged that a great many people have some weaknesses of body and/or mind due to fortune and/or choice, and therefore need the assistance of certain trainers.¹⁴¹ Galen also believed that many people who were born with perfect bodies and minds ruined them in later life due to being ‘brought up with bad habits, living too intemperately or too lazily’.¹⁴² As such, in view of the importance of the mind in ensuring that appropriate regimen was followed, Galen concluded that in order to achieve health, it is best that people should ‘submit their minds to experts in the art of preserving health’.¹⁴³ He explains that:

‘The habit of the mind is impaired by faulty customs in food and drink and exercise and sights and sounds and music. Therefore the person who undertakes the art of preserving health must be skilled in all these [matters affecting the mind], and must not consider that it concerns the philosopher alone to mould the habit of the mind. For to him is assigned above all else the health of the mind, but to the physician that the body should not easily fall into disease’.¹⁴⁴

Yet Galen’s own work *On the Preservation of Health* does not explicitly follow through with this advice. It contains very few explicit practical directions for how

¹⁴⁰ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 6.8=6.415K (trans. based on Green, except that Green’s ‘the hygienic art’ is here replaced with ‘the art of preserving health’, as Green’s use of the English word ‘hygiene’ implies a particular emphasis on cleanliness, which is not present in the Greek ὑγίεια).

¹⁴¹ Note: Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 2.1=6.81-83K (esp. 82K), 6.1=6.381-382K.

¹⁴² Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 2.7=6.133K.

¹⁴³ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 2.7=6.133K (trans. Green, except that Green’s ‘expert hygienists’ is here replaced with ‘experts in the art of preserving health’, in line with the explanation in n.140).

¹⁴⁴ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.8=6.40K (trans. Green, except that Green’s ‘hygienist’ is replaced by ‘the person who undertakes the art of preserving health’, in line with the explanation in n.140).

the practitioner of the art of preserving health should create a good habit of mind (beyond simply making sure that the body is well constituted), or how particular things would affect the mind. Galen's unstated implication is probably for the reader to consult another work in his Corpus which addresses this particular issue. This is a plausible hypothesis, given that Galen frequently refers the reader to his other works for more information on particular topics in order to avoid repetition (indeed, he repeatedly seemed concerned about the length of this work *On the Preservation of Health*),¹⁴⁵ and given also that this issue is discussed elsewhere in the Galenic Corpus (for example, as discussed above, *The Soul's Dependence on the Body* provides some information on how wine will affect a person's soul and behaviour). Yet the absence of this issue from *On the Preservation of Health* supports the idea that consideration of the mind *could* be separated from consideration of bodily regimen, if only temporarily for the practical purposes of writing. The fact that this omission occurs without explanation from the combatively and defensively minded Galen suggests that it did not occur to him that his readers may consider this omission to be a significantly inappropriate one.¹⁴⁶ Accordingly, it probably was not one of the issues which his readers tended to associate with the art of preserving health, and thus not one of the topics which they expected a medical authority to deal with in detail.

Indeed, it should be noted that although Galen states that the practitioner of the art of preserving health 'must not consider that it concerns the philosopher alone to mould the habit of the mind', the need for this note implies that Galen suspected that some readers would likely hold the opposite opinion: that it was the philosopher, and not the doctor, who was primarily responsible for such matters of the mind. This deduction is supported by Galen's methodology in *The Soul's Dependence on the Body*. As noted above, in his argument on wine's effect on the soul, and his discussion of wine's destructive properties, Galen drew authority from famous and widely revered poets and philosophers;

¹⁴⁵ For example: Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.12=6.374K (reference to *The Thinning Diet*), 6.3=6.392-393K and 6.6=6.409-410K (both with references to *The Thinning Diet* and *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*); *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 3.39=6.743K (references to *On the Therapeutic Method*, *On the Preservation of Health*, *On Hippocrates' Regimen in Acute Diseases*). Galen's concern over the length of *On the Preservation of Health*: 3.3=6.181-182K, 5.1=6.305-307K.

¹⁴⁶ On Galen's tone: Powell (2003) 2; Grant (2000) 4. Note for example, on his combative and defensive tone: Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 2.4=6.105-119K, 3.3=6.181-182K, 5.1=6.305-312K.

no doctors are cited. This therefore supports the hypothesis that matters related to the mind, including excessive drinking, were often considered to be more the domain of philosophers and moral authorities. Although Galen believed that the best doctor should also be a philosopher, and that the practitioner of the art of preserving health should also concern himself heavily with the mind, the extent to which the Galenic Corpus pulled all of this together seems to have been somewhat unusual.

The relationship between medical and philosophical authorities in matters of dietetics is at the heart of Plutarch's *Advice about Keeping Well*, which dates to the first century AD. At the start of this fictional dialogue, the character Zeuxippus recalls an argument he had the previous day when discussing the best regimen to promote health. Zeuxippus is not a doctor, but believes that all philosophers should also study medicine, as should all men. He had argued that these disciplines should be united, as both doctors and philosophers would benefit from knowledge of the other field. His opponent, Glaucus, is a physician who believes that 'the subjects of philosophy and medicine are "far remote" from each other'. Glaucus' position is clearly not representative of all physicians. The next day, in the dialogue's present, Zeuxippus tells his friend Moschion of this argument. Moschion is a doctor with an interest in philosophy, and agrees with Zeuxippus' point of view. Van Hoof's analysis of this work has noted that Plutarch is here commenting upon a debate which had existed for many centuries, and throughout the rest of *Advice about Keeping Well* Plutarch (himself primarily a philosophical author with an interest in medicine) attempts to subtly manipulate the reader in favour of Zeuxippus' position. As such, this work highlights two schools of thought present in the Roman Empire. Some people, like Galen, did think that the doctor should also consider philosophical matters, as this was of benefit to medicine. Yet others thought philosophy to have little relevance to the study of 'pure' medicine, and an area where physicians had no responsibility. The mere fact that Plutarch wrote a dialogue with this persuasive agenda implies that there were numerous members of the Greco-Roman elite who were hostile to his point of view.¹⁴⁷

Zeuxippus' subsequent advice on regimen, provided throughout the rest of *Advice about Keeping Well*, essentially reads like a regimen-based medical text.

¹⁴⁷ Plutarch, *Advice about Keeping Well*, esp. 1=122b-e; Van Hoof (2010) 12, 14-15, 211-258; Corvisier (2003) 142-143.

Yet, even though Plutarch promotes a synthesis of medical and philosophical knowledge and authorities, and displays a good deal of medical knowledge, his *Advice about Keeping Well* is characteristically un-medical in the way it focuses more heavily on the *destructive* aspects of drinking. Thus for example, chapter nineteen is the main treatment of drinks in this work. Zeuxippus initially states:

‘Wine is the most beneficial of beverages, the pleasantest of medicines, and the least cloying of the appetizing things, provided that there is a happy combination of it with the occasion as well as with water.’

However, Zeuxippus then moves on to focus at length upon the risks of wine, inappropriate time for its consumption, how to avoid harm, and when to abstain completely. This is in stark contrast to the pattern deduced above, whereby medical authors on regimen tended to focus primarily upon the *constructive* aspects of drinking and how to pursue these. Plutarch and Zeuxippus are primarily philosophical authorities, and their focus appears to be much more on the *destructive* aspects and how to avoid them.¹⁴⁸

In conclusion, it therefore seems probable that there was an approximate dichotomy among many authorities in the Roman Empire regarding drinking. Advice regarding constructive and appropriate drinking, up to the point of moderation, was considered more the domain of the medical authorities. This was the primary focus of their discussion of drinking in works which prescribed dietary regimen in health. On the other hand, discussion regarding drinking destructively, which was strongly linked with consuming wine inappropriately and/or in excess of moderation, was considered more the domain of the philosophical and moral authorities. This chapter primarily investigates constructive drinking in the literature of the former authority, with the latter authority being considered in the next chapter.

¹⁴⁸ Plutarch, *Advice about Keeping Well*, 19=132a-f. The ‘destructive’ bias in this work is also discussed in the Introduction on p.25 with n.23.

WINES IN HUMORAL THEORY AND WIDER MEDICAL PRACTICE

Humoral theory was the underlying theory behind much of Greco-Roman medicine.¹⁴⁹ Humours were essentially fundamental bodily fluids, and it was believed that an imbalance of these fluids could cause illness. Several texts of the Hippocratic Corpus (fifth to fourth century BC) explicitly followed this belief, yet the number and names of the humours varied from work to work; only one text, *The Nature of Man*, exclusively uses the four humours that were popular in later periods.¹⁵⁰ By the first century AD, the humours had become quite widely fixed at four standard humours, and these had become equated with the four elements identified by the pre-Socratic philosopher Empedocles. The Hippocratic Corpus had also become a highly revered, standard tome of wisdom for many doctors. Many believed it to be the work of a single doctor of unparalleled brilliance, called Hippocrates. The Corpus was subsequently read by some doctors through the lens of this current and popular four-humour model. Most notably, the first- or second-century AD *Anonymus Londiniensis* papyrus defended the idea that Hippocrates subscribed to this four-humour belief, against comments made to the contrary a few centuries earlier by Aristotle.¹⁵¹ Between the first and third century AD, the most famous medical authority subscribing to this theory was almost certainly Galen, who professed to successfully practice medicine by accurately interpreting the works of Hippocrates.¹⁵² Like generations of his predecessors, he emphasised the authority of Hippocrates' *The Nature of Man*, with its four-humour model, and also interpreted the rest of the Hippocratic Corpus through the lens of this four-humour model.¹⁵³ Yet, as addressed in the introduction to this chapter, Galen was also extremely well read, basing much of his own works upon the various medical authorities who came before him (beyond merely the Hippocratic Corpus). His practice was also emulated by many others who followed him, such as Ps-Galen. As such, it seems likely that a large number of Galen's

¹⁴⁹ For a succinct overview of humoral theory: *Pauly*, s.v. 'Humoral Theory'. Note also: Nutton (2004) 77-85; Powell (2003) 10-11; Grant (2000) 9-13; *OCD*⁴, s.v. 'Humours'.

¹⁵⁰ Nutton (2004) 77-85. Throughout the Hippocratic Corpus, phlegm and bile were the two most common humours.

¹⁵¹ *Anonymus Londiniensis*, 6.43; *Pauly*, s.v. 'Anonymus Londiniensis', 'Humoral Theory'.

¹⁵² See n.2.

¹⁵³ Nutton (2004) 219; Powell (2003) 11.

views on drinking were similar or identical to those held by a large number of other doctors from this period.

The fundamental underlying philosophical beliefs of humoral theory, as understood during this period, were succinctly explained by Ps-Galen in *On the Humours*. As stated in the introduction to this chapter, although this work was most likely not written by Galen, it was probably composed in the third century AD, and is in the Galenic tradition. For the most part it does not seem to misrepresent Galen's beliefs (except that it should be noted, with specific regard to this quotation, that Galen himself made a point of not equating spring and autumn to specific humours).¹⁵⁴

'The elements from which the world is made are air, fire, water and earth; the seasons from which the year is composed are spring, summer, winter and autumn; the humours from which animals and humans are composed are yellow bile, blood, phlegm and black bile. The humours are all combined with moisture and heat, dryness and cold. Thus blood, air and spring are moist and hot (although some people might disagree with this statement regarding air); yellow bile, summer and fire are hot and dry, whilst black bile and earth and autumn are dry and cold; phlegm, water and winter are cold and moist.'¹⁵⁵

These four fundamental bodily humours were therefore thought to have four opposing 'mixtures'. A substance's mixture primarily consisted of its properties of temperature and moistness, and thus its position on these two scales. These two scales had four extremes between them (hot and cold, wet and dry), which were known as 'the four opposites'. When the bodily humours were in perfect balance the body was considered to be of perfectly average temperature and moistness, and of thus balanced constitutional mixture. An approximately balanced bodily mixture was generally considered to be the ideal state of health.¹⁵⁶ Yet a moderate imbalance could be permissible, and sometimes even desirable. Such an imbalance was thought best maintained through favouring bodily influences of the same mixture as the person's constitution.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ See n.10.

¹⁵⁵ Ps-Galen, *On the Humours*, 19.485-486K.

¹⁵⁶ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.1=6.1-2K.

¹⁵⁷ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.7=6.34-35K notes that infants have a moist bodily mixture, and require this to be maintained by a moist regime; it is not a disease and as such should not be treated by the humoral therapeutic principle of treating opposites with opposites to bring the constitution back towards balance. At 6.3=6.394K Galen notes that it was

On the other hand, a constitution which was severely imbalanced was thought to signify ill health and demand therapeutic treatment. Humoral theory's standard therapeutic principle, which was recognised to date back to the Hippocratic Corpus, held that in order to pursue health 'it is necessary to begin from this therapeutic precept: opposites are the remedies of opposites' (for example, an excessively moist constitution would require a notably drying treatment).¹⁵⁸ Celsus also applied a similar general principle to regimen in health: almost everyone had a bodily weakness (in the sense of a less than ideal constitution), and in order to alleviate it a person's regimen should be the opposite of the weakness (thus, 'a hot man to cool himself, a cold man to make himself warmer; the moist to dry himself up, the dry to moisten himself', and so on).¹⁵⁹

Several factors, including food (as well as age, climate, and lifestyle), were thought to influence the balance of the body's mixture.¹⁶⁰ In the same way as humours, elements, seasons and foodstuffs could also be described by their humoral mixture; for example (as addressed below), Galen regarded barley to be cold and moist. The intake of foods with a significantly imbalanced mixture would usually modify the consumer's bodily constitution in proportion to its mixture; it would therefore reduce or increase a body's constitutional imbalance.¹⁶¹ Accordingly, Ps-Galen writes that 'when we make proper use of

sometimes best to maintain an imbalanced constitution (for example, when 'the man [was] busy with civil affairs, and harassed by many concerns'). This was usually done by giving the patient their accustomed food rather than changing it, or if the patient had a harmonious constitution (when the bodily imbalance was the same throughout the body) the food which tasted more pleasant. Galen specifically elaborates that to maintain such an imbalance required a diet of the same imbalance as the patient ('moist foods are appropriate for moist constitutions and dry for dry' and so on); such foods of the same imbalance as a person were more quickly assimilated by them, were more nourishing, and in a harmonious constitution were the most pleasant. Note also that at 6.2=6.387K Galen states the (hot) constitution of youth to be the best constitution; at 6.3=6.389-390K Galen notes that a slightly warm constitution tends to appear healthier; and at 6.3=6.399-401K writes that the moistest hot constitutions appear to be the longest lived of all (this constitution become more beneficial as a person becomes older, and thus colder and drier).

¹⁵⁸ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.10=6.261-262K. Note also: *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.7-6.34-35K, 5.2=6.313-314K, 6.518K, 6.3=6.394-396K; *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 1.1=6.469-470K; *Method of Medicine*, 8.3=10.557K; Powell (2003) 4, 5.

¹⁵⁹ Celsus, 1.3.13-14.

¹⁶⁰ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 1.1=6.469-470K.

¹⁶¹ For an introduction to dietetics according to Galen: Powell (2003) 2-4; Grant (2000) 8-10. For the place of wine in this system, see: Béguin (2002) esp. 142-143. Note also: Nutton (2004) 240-241.

foods in recipes, the attendant humours follow'.¹⁶² Galen in *On the Properties of Foodstuffs* expands upon this:

'If a human body were precisely average in mixture, it would be maintained in its existing condition by food that is average in mixture. But if it were either warmer or colder, or drier or moister, one would do harm by giving this body food and drink that is average in mixture. For every such body needs to be altered in the opposite direction to the same extent that it has departed from the precisely average condition; and this will occur with foods that are the opposite of the existing ill mixture.'¹⁶³

Galen then provides the example that 'he who knows that barley is cold and moist by nature, and also understands how to recognise the mixtures of bodies, ... will use barley for food appropriately'; the implication being that barley was usually most appropriate for a person with the opposite bodily mixture (an unnaturally hot and dry constitution) which required correction.¹⁶⁴ The understanding of the humoral properties of foodstuffs, and the appropriate use of them in the daily diet, was thus considered crucial both for correcting an unhealthy imbalanced bodily constitution, and for maintaining such a healthy balanced constitution once it had been achieved. This concept was well established in Greco-Roman medicine, being at the heart of the advice on regimen in the revered Hippocratic Corpus.¹⁶⁵

Accordingly, in order to understand the opinions of Galen and many of the humoral Greco-Roman doctors of this period regarding the medically constructive properties of wine, it is fundamentally necessary to explore wine's properties as understood within this system. This section therefore especially considers the works of Galen. As explained above, not only was he the most famous and influential humoral doctor of this period, having a vast influence on medicine from the late second century onwards, but also his works largely built upon the medical theories which came before him, and so many of his theories

¹⁶² Ps-Galen, *On the Humours*, 19.489K.

¹⁶³ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 1.1=6.469K.

¹⁶⁴ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 1.1=6.474K.

¹⁶⁵ For example: *A Regimen for Health*, 2: 'Diets then must be conditioned by age, the time of year, habit, country and constitution. They should be opposite in character to the prevailing climate, whether winter or summer. Such is the best road to health.'

can be thought to reflect, at least to an extent, some of the basic beliefs of his predecessors.

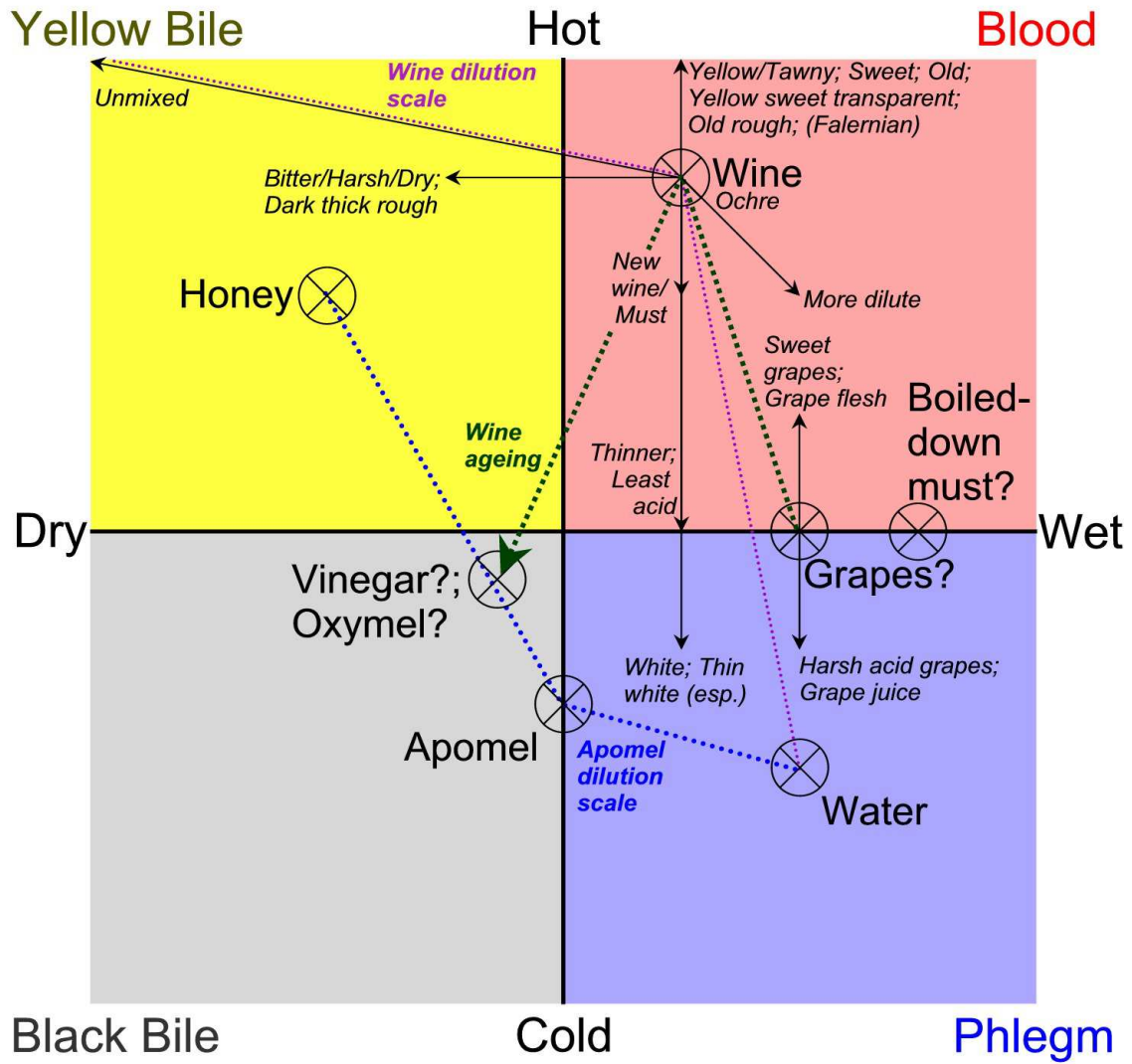
To aid this analysis of Galen's advice, the mixtures of various wines, several other drinks and common ingredients of drinks (such as honey) have been plotted on a Cartesian-style graph which the reader is advised to refer to throughout this section (fig. 2.1; see Appendix 4 for the presentation and discussion of its evidence). The plotting of this chart is not intended to imply that first- to third-century doctors visualised humoral theory in such a graphical way, but rather this is simply intended as a tool to aid modern readers' interpretation of these ideas.¹⁶⁶ Such a chart seems an appropriate aid, as it does not seem to misrepresent Galen's ideas. In a similar way to a Cartesian-style graph, which describes items by two coordinates ('x, y', representing an item's numerical value in relation to two axes), Galen expresses the properties of all things by their mixture, which primarily related to the four opposites (such as 'cold and moist' for barley, as seen above). These four opposites reflect two independent scales of temperature (hot to cold) and moistness (dry to wet), which can be used as a graph's two axes; an item's properties of mixture on both of these scales can be considered its coordinate on the graph. Both scales have a concept analogous to the modern concept of 'zero', a point of balance between the two extremes, which can be represented on this chart as the point where the axes cross. This point represents the perfect balance of mixture; for a person's constitution, this generally represents perfect health. Each quadrant of the chart represents the domain of an element and humour.

Galen's humoral theory also featured a concept of scale compatible with numerical values along a graph's two axes, which makes a Cartesian-style chart seem even more appropriate. Thus Galen provides the examples:

'If the body departed by three measures from the well-mixed and average condition to a warmer one, it would be necessary for the food also to shift by the same amount from the well-mixed condition to the colder one. And if the body moved to a moister state to the extent of four measures, the food should by the same degree be drier than what is well proportioned.'¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ Galen himself was clearly not hostile to the idea of charting his advice; he suggests a chart to explain his logic in *On the Preservation of Health*, 3.9=6.216-217K.

¹⁶⁷ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 1.1=6.469-470K; Luccioni (2002) 169.



Additional:

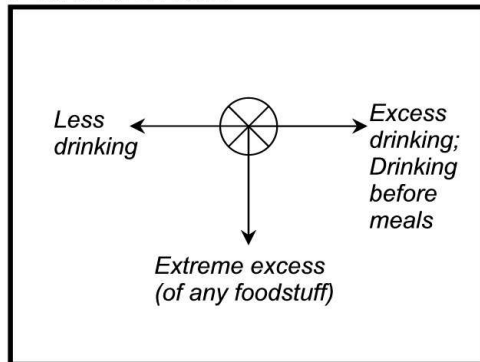
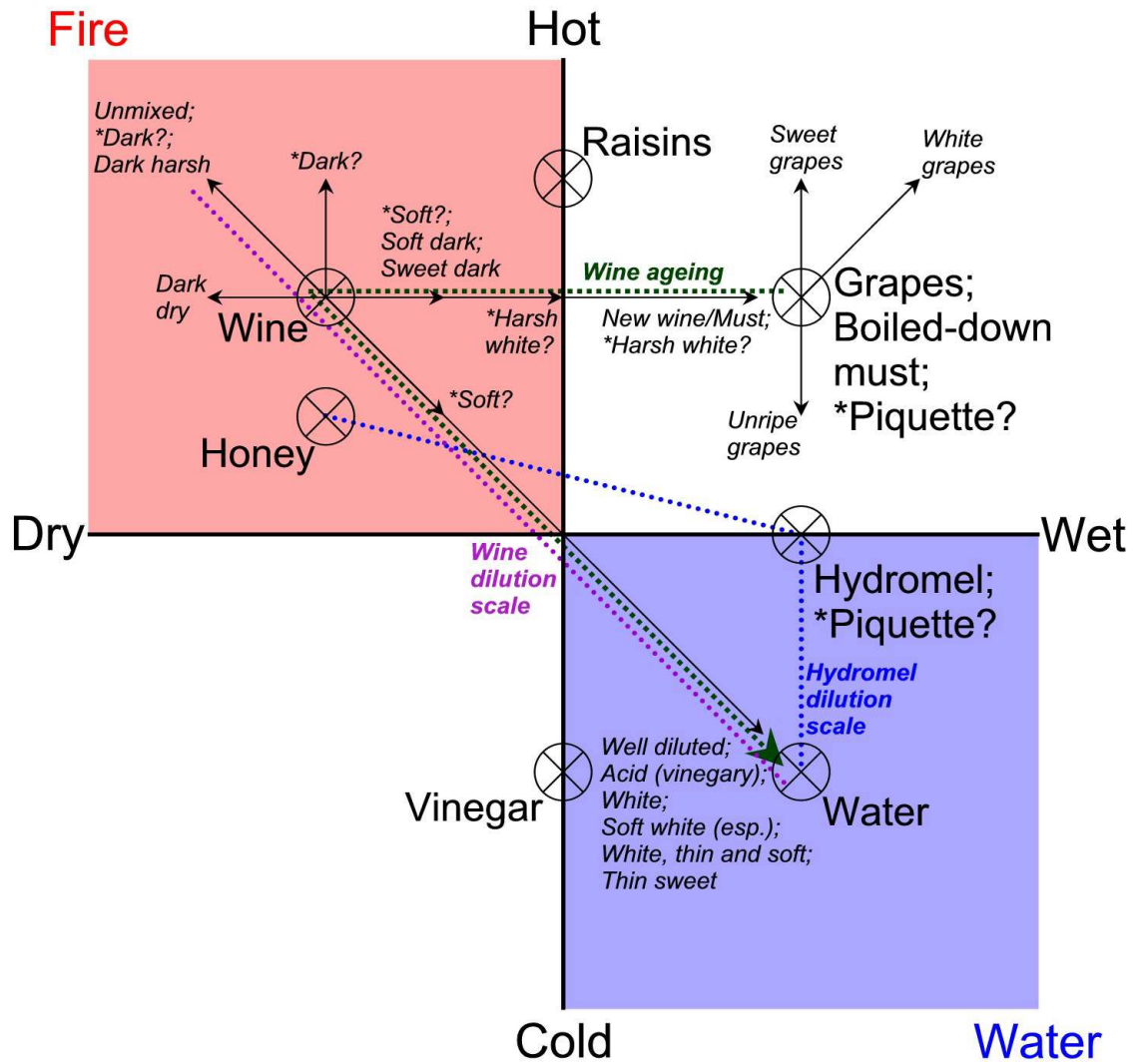


Figure 2.1: The mixtures of various wines and related foodstuffs, as presented by the Galenic Corpus. See Appendix 4 for the evidence.



Additional:

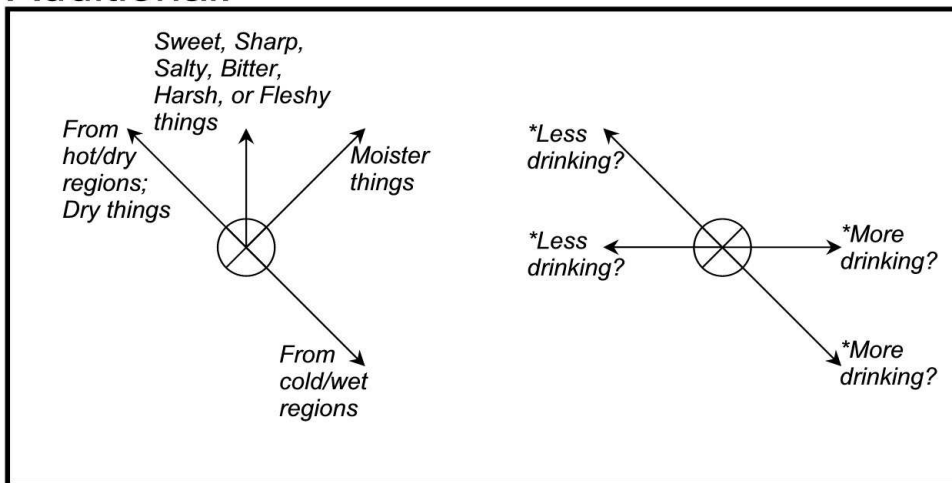


Figure 2.2: The properties of various wines and related foodstuffs, as presented by the Hippocratic Corpus' Regimen (books one to four). Asterisks (*) indicate that a foodstuff is plotted in more than one location (which reflects significant uncertainty regarding the author's true views). See Appendix 5 for the evidence.

In reality, Galen rarely provides actual units of measure to indicate the intensity of something's mixture when describing the properties of foods. He does, however, numerically categorise the intensity of the humoral properties of drugs in the way implied in the previous passage: by up to four degrees of severity.¹⁶⁸ Accordingly, Galen does provide measures of several wines' heating powers when discussing their powers as drugs: new wine is of the first degree, other wines of the second, and old wines of the third. Yet in general, degrees of severity do not seem to be at the front of his mind when addressing their properties and uses as foodstuffs.¹⁶⁹ Nevertheless, a relative concept of scale is present in Galen's work, and some things are noted as being hotter, colder, wetter or drier than other things, or being further towards the extreme of one axis than the other. Therefore, although this chart cannot be drawn to scale, it attempts to give some indication of relative scale between the various drinks and foodstuffs.

The reader should be aware that a similar approach to charting the properties of wine within humoral theory was pursued by van Asseldonk as part of a larger conference paper presented at: *ETM 2007 – European Traditional Medicine International Congress*, Vinci (Italy), October 5-6, 2007.¹⁷⁰ This was based upon the *Tacuinum Sanitatis*, an anonymous work from fourteenth-century Italy which addresses health and wellbeing, and forms part of the humoral tradition. Van Asseldonk's chart appeared basically similar, featuring the same two axes. The food and drinks plotted (and their properties) were: grapes (very wet), juice (very cold and dry), 'most' (I assume this is a typographical error for 'must'; hot and wet), wine (hot and dry), old wine (hot and very dry), and vinegar (cold and dry). As this paper is currently available online, no attempt has been made to reproduce this chart, and the reader is advised to refer to it for an indication of the continuation of these beliefs regarding wine in medieval Europe.

This chapter also considers the Hippocratic Corpus. Although these works were composed long before the first century AD, they remained highly respected textbooks of medical knowledge. They were cited by Galen and others as key authorities, and as such probably therefore indicate some of the

¹⁶⁸ Nutton (2004) 242-245; Powell (2003) 8; Luccioni (2002) 167-169; King (2001) 51. See: Galen, *On the Powers [and Mixtures] of Simple Drugs* (= 11.369-12.337K).

¹⁶⁹ Galen, *On the Powers [and Mixtures] of Simple Drugs*, 12.88K; Béguin (2002) 146; Luccioni (2002) 170-171; Jouanna (1996) 415 = (2012) 117.

¹⁷⁰ van Asseldonk (2007) 7.

fundamental beliefs of doctors from this later period. Where the Hippocratic Corpus clashes with Galen's theories, Galen usually either tried to explain these away in dedicated commentaries or comments in other works (in which he professed to correctly interpret the words of Hippocrates), or else (as was the case with the first book of *Regimen*) he rejected the work as inauthentic due to its incompatibility with what he understood as Hippocrates' (and consequently his own) logic.¹⁷¹ Yet where such clashes occur, and especially when Galen does not attempt to resolve these issues, there is a potential likelihood of disagreement among humoral doctors of this period. Which authority were they to follow: a modern expert such as Galen, or the trusted and long-established advice of Hippocrates?¹⁷²

Although the Hippocratic Corpus features several works which focus upon dietary regimen, *Regimen* will be this section's primary focus. It is the Hippocratic Corpus' most comprehensive work on this topic, and as such it must have been perceived as one of the primary points of reference in this Corpus for doctors interested in the properties and uses of wines. Furthermore, *Regimen* was no doubt especially accessible and appealing to the mindset of humoral doctors of the first to third centuries AD, as its approach to listing the properties of both foodstuffs and medical conditions is very compatible with that found in humoral theory.

Regimen uses the same four opposites as Galen (hot and cold, wet and dry) to describe the properties of elements, foodstuffs, bodily constitutions and illnesses. For example, the Hippocratic author of *Regimen* book two states that 'barley in its own nature is cold, moist and drying', which is the same kind of description, using the same descriptors, as Galen provides of foods (the only difference from Galen's description of barley – cold and wet, as quoted above – is that the Hippocratic author includes an additional quality of dryness, which he seems to imply is as a secondary quality only notable after parching the barley over a fire to remove moistness).¹⁷³ On the other hand, it is true that *Regimen*

¹⁷¹ Note: Béguin (2002) 145-146.

¹⁷² A similar problem arose in sixteenth-century Europe. The Galenic Corpus was a familiar and trusted authority, but the printing press made Latin translations of the Hippocratic Corpus widely available. King (2001) 54 states that when the two contradicted, Galen's authority was such that doctors tended to see the Hippocratic Corpus in the way he suggested.

¹⁷³ Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 2.40. It should be noted that *Regimen*, 1.4 shows a particular inclination to secondary qualities in terms of moisture, noting that the elements of fire and water also have the other extreme of dryness/moistness as a secondary property: thus fire is

was not based upon the four humours and elements popular in the first to third centuries AD. Instead these books seem to be based upon two elements, fire and water, and humours are not mentioned at all (see this chapter's introduction for further discussion of this). Yet these two elements were two of those in the four-element model of Empedocles (which were equated to the standard four-humour model), and fire and water are attributed the same primary properties of mixture in both Empedocles' system and *Regimen*.

As such, many humoral doctors probably found *Regimen* to be an especially appealing and authoritative text on dietetics. It was an ancient and relatively comprehensive dietary work, apparently written by the revered Hippocrates. The content of *Regimen* was readily deployable by these humoral doctors, as its advice was generally compatible with their own humoral framework. Indeed, Galen himself was familiar with *Regimen*, and was willing to accept book two as an authentic work, 'worthy of Hippocrates', because its advice and methodology was generally compatible with his own theories and humoral framework, which he in turn believed to be the correct interpretations of the sentiments of Hippocrates. (In contrast, Galen dismissed book one as falsely attributed to Hippocrates as it was 'very far from his thought'. This is perhaps of little surprise, given that this was the part of *Regimen* which most thoroughly outlined the work's theoretical framework, and thus provided ample potential to clash explicitly with the humoral theory central to Galen's medical beliefs.)¹⁷⁴

The various wines considered in *Regimen*, as well as some other drinks and relevant foodstuffs, have also been plotted on a similar chart as the one of the Galenic Corpus (fig. 2.2; see Appendix 5 for the presentation and discussion of its evidence). A similar sense of relative scale has also been attempted for this chart, as although measures of scale are not given, *Regimen*, 3 explicitly indicates the operation of scale within its theoretical framework when it states that 'the constitutions of men differ; dry constitutions, for instance, are more or less dry as compared with themselves or as compared with one another'.¹⁷⁵ The main difference between this chart and the one produced for the Galenic Corpus is that instead of the four quadrants being equated with the Galenic four humours or four elements, two of the quadrants are instead equated with the

hot and dry, but there is also some moisture, whereas water is cold and moist, but with some dryness.

¹⁷⁴ For Galen's views on *Regimen*, see n.27.

¹⁷⁵ Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 3.67.

two elements mentioned in *Regimen*: fire and water. A glance at both figs. 2.1 and 2.2 confirms how similar the theoretical framework of both Galen and *Regimen* appeared to be, which implies how easily many first- to third-century humoral doctors could have interpreted the advice of *Regimen* through the lens of the current four-humour model.

As can be seen from figs. 2.1 and 2.2 (with accompanying evidence and explanation in Appendices 4 and 5), both Galen and the Hippocratic author believed that different kinds of wines had markedly different properties. Galen usually classified wines according to five main categories: colour, taste, consistency, smell and its faculties/qualities, with age sometimes a sixth category. The Hippocratic Corpus usually described wines by colour, taste, consistency, smell and age. In addition, Galen also frequently described wines by their *crus*/regions of origin. Other medical authors also used a similar breadth of criteria to describe specific wines; this practice continued well into Late Antiquity and the Byzantine period.¹⁷⁶ All of these descriptors were thought to affect a specific wine's individual medical properties; accordingly not all wines were considered equally dangerous or useful in a given situation.¹⁷⁷ Furthermore, as depicted on the charts, the medical consequences of wine consumption were thought to not only vary according to the type of wine drunk, but also according to the manner of drinking (for example, the rate of dilution, the amount consumed, and so on).

Long before this thesis' period of focus, this concept of different wines with different properties had become very well established within Greco-Roman medicine. This was clearly established by the Classical period, as reflected by the Hippocratic Corpus. *Regimen in Acute Diseases* implies that it was so common for Classical Greek doctors to prescribe 'such and such a wine' to treat a given illness that this practice was effortlessly emulated by laymen and quacks, who found it 'easy enough to learn the names of the things given to treat such patients' by genuine doctors. *Affections* also develops this concept to

¹⁷⁶ Béguin (2002) 144-146; Jouanna (1996) 418-419 = (2012) 179-180; Brock and Wirtjes (2000) esp. 456-459; Alessi (2002) 105-106; Boudon (2002) esp. 155-157. Aretaeus of Cappadocia: Jouanna (2002) 116-118. Late Antiquity and the Byzantine period: Garzya (2002) 193-195. Note further that a 'Galen' appears in Athenaeus, 1.26c-27d to describe various wines; several scholars have concluded that these are not the words of the famous Galen; Brock and Wirtjes (2000) base their argument on the fact that the terminology used to categorise the wines is different in this section to that used in the Galenic Corpus; see also: Wilkins (2002) esp. 185-187, 189; Luccioni (2002) 173-174; König (2012) 106 n.47.

¹⁷⁷ Jouanna (1996) 418 = (2012) 179.

include an idea similar to the modern concept of *terroir*. The author argues that it was not only different types of wines which could have different properties, but also that wines from vines grown in different places (with different rainfall, sunlight and so on) could have different properties.¹⁷⁸

The earliest surviving Latin literary account of a 'Greek' doctor is in Plautus' comedy *Menaechmi* (of about 200BC). In order to diagnose the patient's illness, a doctor asks: 'do you drink white or dark wine?'¹⁷⁹ This reflected the fact that different wines were believed to have different properties and effects; in essence, one specific type of wine was believed to be constructive or destructive to a certain person's health where another wine was not. Plautus was writing in a period when Greek medicine was a comparatively new concept in Rome,¹⁸⁰ and that he referred to this concept of different wines having different properties in his comic presentation of this new foreign medicine implies that by the second century BC it had become a crucial precept for Greek medicine. It was at least recognised by Plautus, and was presumably recognisable by his Roman audience.

Cato the Elder, the approximately contemporary Roman traditionalist, also addressed similar topics in his second-century BC instructional work *On Agriculture*. His text forms the main evidence for traditional Roman medicine, and although Cato seems to have overtly disliked Greek medicine, similarities can be drawn with the approach of Greek medicine regarding matters of wine.¹⁸¹ First, Cato's work mentioned a range of different types of wines, even explaining how to modify wines to change their properties. He specifically addressed making a wine's colour lighter, turning a sharp wine into a mild and sweet one, removing bad odours and imparting a sweet one, and how to make a Greek-style or Coan wine (a type of wine which notably included salt or

¹⁷⁸ Brock and Wirtjes (2000) 462. Note especially: Hippocrates, *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, 6 (quotation), 26, 37a, 50-52; *Affections*, 60; *Use of Liquids*, 5; *Regimen*, 2.52. On the modern concept of *terroir*, see: *OCW*², s.v. 'Terroir'. On *terroir*, see further: n.192 and n.193.

¹⁷⁹ Plautus, *Menaechmi*, 915 (trans. based on De Melo, except that the more accurate translation of 'dark' is given here for *atrum* instead of De Melo's 'red'; De Melo admittedly notes the divergence of his translation from the literal on p.521 n.32). Note also: King (2001) 32-33.

¹⁸⁰ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 29.12-13; King (2001) 32-33. Pliny records that the first Greek doctor to set up his practice in Rome was Archagathus in 219BC, and although the influence of Greek medicine may have predated this, at this time Greek medicine's influence in Roman culture was almost certainly in a period of dramatic growth.

¹⁸¹ King (2001) 35-36.

seawater).¹⁸² Secondly, a range of different wines were advised as ingredients in several medicines, to be either drunk or applied, in order to treat the medical conditions of both humans and farm animals (cattle, oxen, sheep and other quadrupeds).¹⁸³ As such, the use of various specific wines seems to have become established in Roman medical practice long before the first century AD. Several centuries later, Greco-Roman medicine still had a similar precept, as Galen himself advised that a doctor should consider a person's wine-drinking regime in order to attempt to identify an illness ('whether he drank sweet instead of aged wine, or thick or turbid instead of thin; or whether he has switched completely from wine-drinking to water-drinking, not once or twice changing in either of the aforesaid, but continuously for a long time').¹⁸⁴ Yet, this notion that different wines were significantly more or less useful for specific medical situations was not just limited to Galen and the Hippocratic doctors, or even the doctors of the humoral theory tradition. Instead, this concept was prominent in the minds of a wide variety of medical authorities, across a broad period of time. This is implied by repeated comments in Pliny's *Natural History* which indicate that various physicians had ranked different wines according to medical utility; a few examples are as follows. Pliny notes that 'no other wine is considered more suitable for medicinal purposes' than the wine of Pizzino (Pliny does not elaborate by who exactly, or why).¹⁸⁵ The physician Apollodorus had apparently composed a pamphlet to advise the Hellenistic King Ptolemy on which wines to favour.¹⁸⁶ The School of Asclepiades ranked the wines of Italy highly but (in the period prior to Pliny) had also favoured the wine of Protagion among those from those overseas.¹⁸⁷ A wine called *bion* (from the Greek for 'life') had 'won a very distinguished name, having been developed for the treatment of a great many maladies'.¹⁸⁸ The wine of Sorrento was apparently recommended for convalescents by a great many doctors 'because of their thinness and health giving qualities' (yet the Emperor Tiberius disliked this wine, and believed that

¹⁸² Cato, *On Agriculture*, 24, 105, 109, 110, 112, 113.

¹⁸³ Humans: Cato, *On Agriculture*, 114-115, 122, 123, 125, 126, 127, 156, 157, 158. Animals: 70, 71, 73, 96. The same treatment advised for both animals (quadrupeds) and humans: 102.

¹⁸⁴ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.4=6.243K.

¹⁸⁵ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.60.

¹⁸⁶ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.76.

¹⁸⁷ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.76.

¹⁸⁸ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.77. This wine is also referred to at 23.53.

these doctors had conspired to promote this wine above its deserved station).¹⁸⁹ Pliny also attributed the custom, recently introduced into Roman culture (forty years before his period of writing, in the reign of Tiberius), of drinking before eating (on an empty stomach) as both the ‘result of foreign methods and of the doctors’ policy of perpetually advertising themselves by some novelty’.¹⁹⁰

Although Pliny notes that wines could generally be divided into categories, such as according to the four main colours (white, brown, blood-red, black),¹⁹¹ a much greater variety of character was perceived among wines. The type of wine produced was thought to differ according to both the type of vine/grape used and, in a manner similar to the modern concept of *terroir*, due to the location and soil in which they were grown.¹⁹² Celsus’ encyclopaedia also presents a similar *terroir*-like concept, with wines and foods in general thought to vary significantly in property depending upon the soil and climate in which they were produced.¹⁹³ Accordingly, innumerable types of wines were thought to exist; Pliny argues that Democritus was the only authority who believed it was realistically possible to count the number of different vines.¹⁹⁴ This meant that there was an almost infinite number of wines of different properties for the medical authorities to address. Furthermore, Pliny notes that wines were thought to easily adopt other smells; they may therefore have been considered a very appropriate base for administering medically useful components as they readily adopted at least some of the added materials’ properties.¹⁹⁵ Accordingly, Pliny noted that almost innumerable kinds of what he called ‘artificial wines’ had been created for medicinal purposes. This category included various flavoured wines along with wine-like drinks which Pliny was

¹⁸⁹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.64.

¹⁹⁰ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.143 and 23.41.

¹⁹¹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.80.

¹⁹² Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.1, 14.10, 14.70. Note also 14.34 on the *venicula* vine, which ‘has no strength of its own but is entirely conditioned by the strength of the soil’. On *terroir*, see further n.178 and n.193.

¹⁹³ Celsus, 2.18.11: wines from vines grown in good soil and a temperate climate were considered more nutritious. Similarly, at 2.18.9 a comparable point is also made for grain (the most nutritious is from hilly soil) and for food in general (damper climates produce lighter foods); 2.18.8 notes, with specific respect to meat, that the properties of this food also depend upon the soil and climate in which it is produced, as well as the part consumed and the habit of the animal; and 1.3.29 notes that consuming food from hot and dry regions makes a person drier. On *terroir*, see further n.178 and n.192.

¹⁹⁴ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.13, 14.15, 14.20. Note also 14.118, which notes that certain wines were thought to alter in character with the rising of the Dog-Star, or when moved overseas. A relationship between wine drinking and the Dog-Star is also advised by Alcaeus, fr.39; quoted by Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 7.1=697f.

¹⁹⁵ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.133.

reluctant to include among wines and more conventional grape-based beverages.¹⁹⁶

The medical authorities' belief in such a large number of wines with such varied properties is reflected in the extensive treatment of this issue by the encyclopaedic works of Dioscorides, Pliny and Celsus, which all gathered their information from a wide variety of Greco-Roman medical authorities. Thus the fifth book of Dioscorides' *Materia Medica* features an extensive and systematic treatment of the various different types of wines, each listed in turn according to their characteristics and regions of origin, with their notable constructive and destructive properties and uses explained beneath each. Pliny the Elder also has a very similar wine-focused 'materia medica' style section in his *Natural History*, which similarly addresses the various wines, each in turn, according to both their characteristics and region of origin.¹⁹⁷ Pliny then proceeds to suggest the best wine-drinking regime, sometimes including specific types of wine, for certain specific medical conditions.¹⁹⁸ Celsus' medical encyclopaedia systematically divides all drinks (including the different types of wine, described by their sensory characteristics, and those from vines grown in different soils and climates) into three main categories according to their varying 'strength' (equivalent to the drink's nutritional properties).¹⁹⁹ This helped the reader to deduce the best use of wine to medical conditions; the 'strongest' drink for the strongest medical condition and so on (this is explained further below; see p.149ff). Celsus also occasionally provides more specific advice on the most suitable wine for certain medical conditions; for example 'a light wine, well diluted' was advised for a person with a head infirmity.²⁰⁰

It should be noted, however, that the medical authorities tended to be more relaxed in their prescriptions when a person was in good health. Thus Pliny the Elder permits that each person 'may drink what [wine] each most fancies, provided that he is in robust health',²⁰¹ and Celsus believed that 'a man in health, who is both vigorous and his own master, should be under no obligatory

¹⁹⁶ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.98. At 14.92-93, Pliny notes that wine flavoured with myrrh was known and valued in Rome since Plautus' time (referring to Plautus, *Pseudolus*, 740-741), but it is not stated whether it was used at this time for medicinal purposes.

¹⁹⁷ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.31-58. Note also, on notable properties of wines from specific named places: 14.116-118.

¹⁹⁸ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.41-51.

¹⁹⁹ Celsus, 2.18.11-13.

²⁰⁰ Celsus, 1.4.5.

²⁰¹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.45.

rules' regarding his regimen'.²⁰² Regarding foodstuffs in general, Celsus believed that he could consume whatever foods he desired, in whatever quantity he wanted (including occasional excess, so long as he could digest it), and attend banquets whenever he wished. The prescription of specific wine regimes was a far more pressing matter when a person's health was poor, and their daily drinking practices needed to be modified in order to serve therapeutic purposes.

It is also significant that Pliny cautions against assuming homogeneity among the Greco-Roman medical authorities regarding the properties of specific wines; he states that 'to treat the various kinds of wine one by one is a vast and baffling task, because medical opinion is very divided'.²⁰³ Indeed, Touwaide's analysis of wine in Dioscorides' *Materia Medica* argues that the properties which Dioscorides attributed to the various types of wines do not seem to be consistently explainable by one single theoretical framework.²⁰⁴ Instead, Touwaide concludes that Dioscorides appears to have indiscriminately used advice which seems plausibly attributable to (at least) two popular but conflicting theoretical backgrounds (one relating to each wine's sensory properties, and the other relating to each wine's weight as was popular among the Aristotelian School). This conclusion subsequently supports Pliny's assertion that, by the time of the first century AD, it was not uncommon for there to be notable discrepancies on this issue between the medical authorities.

It is furthermore significant that the medical authorities of this period preferred certain wines in comparison to others. Dioscorides generally preferred middle-aged white wines for consumption in both sickness and health, with Falernian being the preferred Italian wine.²⁰⁵ A similar view was also followed by Pliny, who preferred middle-aged wines, and generally believed the thinnest wines of Campania to be the most wholesome (Falernian was a white wine from around this region). He therefore ranked Falernian quite highly, and he elaborated that Falernian's 'middle-age' began at fifteen years old.²⁰⁶ Yet, as implied above,

²⁰² Celsus, 1.1-1.2.

²⁰³ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.32.

²⁰⁴ Touwaide (2000) 110.

²⁰⁵ Dioscorides, 5.6.1-2, 5.6.6. Note that Touwaide (2000) 107-108 erroneously states that Dioscorides preferred mid-coloured/tawny wines.

²⁰⁶ Falernian and middle-aged wines: Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.33-36, 23.40. Thinnest Campanian: 23.45. Pliny ranks Falernian among the second class of four classes of notable wines at 14.62, and although he notes that its quality and reputation were in decline, Pliny

this was obviously not an absolute rule for all situations, and, for example, Pliny explicitly stated a preference for *older* white wines to treat certain medical conditions (including dysentery and cardiac affections).²⁰⁷ Beyond simply Campanian wines, Pliny generally preferred wines of Italian origin in comparison to those which came from other countries.²⁰⁸ He also preferred diluted wines (under normal circumstances) so that their strength was tempered,²⁰⁹ and wines which had been passed through a linen strainer, as (like the Hippocratic Corpus' *Affections* and the characters in Plutarch's *Table-Talk*) he believed this removed some of their potency.²¹⁰ He was presumably concerned that wines of greater strength had greater potential for destructive consequences. Pliny also preferred that wine consumption was accompanied by eating. As noted above, he implies that some doctors had started to advise drinking on an empty stomach or before meals in the first century AD (forty years before his period of writing, in the reign of Tiberius), and Pliny believed this to have potentially destructive consequences which were mitigated by taking some food before or along with wine.²¹¹ Pliny was also largely dismissive of wines with additives (such as marble, gypsum, lime, resin, sea-water, spices, and smoke; he even disliked the mixing together of two types of wine, and the

states that 'no other wine has a higher rank at the present day'. Falernian's 'middle-age' seems to have been comparatively old in relation to other wines, considering that Pliny also stated that wines in general (presumably those of Italian origin, as implied by the 'overseas' exception noted below) improved up to the age of twenty, and then declined rapidly afterwards; see 14.57. Yet, exceptions include: Pompeii's wine which was thought best at ten (14.70), and Greek/overseas wines which were middle-aged at seven years (14.79). Note that the Galen in Athenaeus, 1.26c-d similarly states that Falernian only becomes drinkable after ten years, but it is best between fifteen and twenty. On wine ageing, see further: Dalby (2003) s.v. 'Wine Storing and Ageing'; Tchernia (1986) 28-32; Weeber (1993) s.v. 'Etikett', 'Falerner', 'Reife'; *DGRA*, s.v. 'Vinum' (pp.1205-2106). On the old and revered Opimian vintage, see Appendix 1 n.10. For Galen's love of Falernian, see further n.219; for others see n.433.

²⁰⁷ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.33.

²⁰⁸ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.8, 14.76, 14.87. Note, however, that at 14.95-97 he implies that from 121 to about 54BC, overseas wines were more revered than Italian. Pliny's main distinction regarding wine regions is between Italian and nearby wines (from Gaul, Spain and so on) on the one hand, and those from 'overseas' (which consisted of the Greek east) on the other; on this distinction see especially 14.73.

²⁰⁹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.149. Note, however, prescribed drinking of neat wine for certain conditions: 23.43.

²¹⁰ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.45. Note, however, at 14.137 Pliny speaks negatively of wine strainers, stating that their use was to enable excessive drinking (which he links to severe negative consequences). Compare to Hippocrates, *Affections*, 52: wine poured from one vessel into another, chilled and strained is both thinner and weaker. Note also the debate in Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 6.7=692b-693e regarding whether it is advantageous or not to filter wine; in either case, it is agreed that unfiltered wine is stronger.

²¹¹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.143, 23.41. Drinking on an empty stomach was considered 'very injurious to those absorbed in business and trying to keep their mind actively on alert'.

lining of the wine-vessels with pitch), as he thought that these carried a significant risk of injury to the drinker; he thus exclaimed that ‘so many poisons are employed to force wine to suit our taste – and we are surprised that it is not wholesome!’²¹² He similarly stated dislike for what he referred to as ‘artificial wines’; this category included various flavoured wines and wine-like drinks that Pliny was reluctant to include among wines and more conventional grape-based beverages. He argued that they seemed unnatural and their employment forced, supporting this argument by noting that ‘all these wines are condemned by Themison [founder of the Methodist school of medicine, and pupil of Asclepiades of Bithynia; he lived during the second and first centuries BC], who is a very high authority’.²¹³ In this sense, Pliny was unlike Dioscorides, whose *Materia Medica* described the notable (constructive and destructive) medical properties of many such flavoured wines, wines with additives, and wine-like drinks at length, without indication of such prejudice.²¹⁴ Yet, Pliny did imply admission that some additives *could* be useful in certain medical conditions, but he usually preferred for this component to be taken alone; he thus states: ‘who would prefer to use wormwood wine rather than wormwood itself?’²¹⁵ Furthermore, Pliny conceded that wines flavoured only with pitch were the least harmful of flavoured wines, and admitted that this type of wine did have some notable uses (including treating ulcerations, ruptures, spasms, asthma, and so on). However, in line with his preference for ‘unadulterated’ wines, Pliny states his preference for one specific type of ‘pitchy wine in the Helvian district’, specifically from Vienne, which had a flavour resembling pitch without any pitch actually being added.²¹⁶ He subsequently concluded that this wine has the

²¹² Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.45-47. See also: 14.16 on smoke flavouring grapes and wines; 14.68 on smoke, herbs, drugs, and wines being used to flavour other wines; 14.73 and 14.75 on seawater (14.78-79 specifically addresses adding seawater to Coan wine); 14.120-130, on various additives used in wine production, cumulating in the quotation used in the body-text, equating wine’s additives to poisons and implying a causal link between their addition and a beverage’s harm to health; 15.124 on myrtle oil; 23.33-34 on celebrated wines being adulterated with impurities; 23.39-40 on smoke and spice. Wines stated to be mixed with other wines in order to improve them included the revered Opimian wine (nearly 200 year old; 121BC vintage; 14.55), and the wine of Mount Tmolus (14.74). On the use of sea-water in wines of this period, see: Brock and Wirtjes (2000) 461. Further on additives to wine, see Appendix 1.

²¹³ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.115; 23.52-53.

²¹⁴ Especially: Dioscorides, 5.20-73.

²¹⁵ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.52. Its manufacture is described at: 14.109. Wormwood wines are also noted by: Dioscorides, 5.39; Apicius, 1.3.

²¹⁶ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.47. This same wine is also discussed by Pliny in the following places. 14.18 specifies that this wine had only become famous recently (within the last 90 years; thus sometime the late first century BC or early first century AD) and was

same useful properties as pitch-flavoured wines, whilst being generally more beneficial to the drinker. This pitchy wine from Vienne may have also offered significant heating *and* cooling properties, depending on how it was served. Thus although pitch-flavoured wines in general (perhaps including this wine from Vienne) were thought to be significantly heating when served and consumed normally (diluted with heated water), Pliny stated that Vienne's pitchy wine 'when drunk cold is believed to be cooler than all the other kinds [of wine]'.²¹⁷

On the whole, Galen's own basic assessment of 'good' and 'bad' wines was similar to his assessment of water: the best wines were generally those with a good smell, or no smell at all.²¹⁸ Other than this basic consideration, Galen's preferred type of wine varied heavily depending upon the circumstances, though it is notable that he too also thought highly of Falernian.²¹⁹ Humoral doctors thought it important to carefully select the best drinking regime for each patient, and (in line with the general therapeutic principle of humoral theory, to treat opposites with opposites) they generally considered that the most appropriate wine for a person with a significantly imbalanced constitution was one of opposite mixture to the patient's constitution, as this would help to correct their existing imbalance.²²⁰ This precept is explicitly stated by Galen, who advises that 'in the case of wines, [choose] not merely the dilute or warm wine, but also that having the proper correspondence of its own warmth or moisture to the type of disability'.²²¹ The Hippocratic author of *Regimen* also follows such a principle, advising that conditions should be treated by a specific drinking regime which is opposite in mixture; for example dark soft wine (earlier

produced in the territory of Vienne, using vines originating from the territories of Monte Taburno, the Sotani and the Helvii. 14.26 notes that Allobrogian grapes produce this wine's pitchy taste, yet this vine cannot be successfully transplanted elsewhere. 14.57 states that this wine is extraordinarily expensive (over a thousand sesterces per cask) and the people of Vienne only sell it among themselves.

²¹⁷ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.57, 23.47.

²¹⁸ Galen, *On Hippocrates' Regimen in Acute Diseases*, 3.1=15.630K; Béguin (2002) 145.

²¹⁹ For a detailed treatment of Falernian wine in Galen, see: Boudon (2002). Note also: Luccioni (2002) esp. 172; Wilkins (2002) 186. See, for example: Galen, *The Thinning Diet*, 12=5.4.2.447CMG considers Falernian to give rise to the best blood; *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.5=6.334-335K considers it to be one of the better wines for old men. See further on the reputation of Falernian: n.206 and n.433.

²²⁰ Béguin (2002) 142; Jouanna (1996) 427 = (2012) 187.

²²¹ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.12=6.379K. Note also: Béguin (2002); Jouanna (1996) 419-420 = (2012) 180-181.

stated to be moister in mixture than the average wine, and thus hot and moist) to treat cold and dry bowels.²²²

This principle was similarly applied to external influences. Thus *Regimen* advises a cooler and moister wine regime to combat the hot and dry season of summer (soft, white, well-diluted wines), and hotter and drier wines to combat the cold wetness of winter (dark, slightly diluted and limited in quantity), with regimes of intermediate property for the seasons between (see fig. 2.2 for more on the mixture of these regimes). This idea of varying drinking regime according to season was also advised by the Hippocratic *A Regimen for Health* and Celsus,²²³ as well as more widely by Greco-Roman society (for example, the early Greek poets Hesiod and Alcaeus, the early Roman author Cato, and Pliny's *Natural History*).²²⁴ Galen himself also noted the same idea that the diet in general should be varied according to season, allowing his readers to deduce the most appropriate drinking regime for each season.²²⁵ Changes in environment due to season were also regarded as analogous to those due to changes in location;²²⁶ this implies that a person's wine-drinking regime should be altered according to the climate, regardless of whether this was due to season or locality.

As seen in figs. 2.1 and 2.2, both the Hippocratic author and Galen thought that by prescribing specific aspects of a person's wine-drinking regime, a doctor

²²² Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 2.52, 3.80.

²²³ Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 3.68; *A Regimen for Health*, 1; Celsus, 1.3.34-38 (also note similar advice as part of a therapeutic course for diabetes at 4.27.2); Jouanna (1996) 428-429 = (2012) 188.

²²⁴ Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 590-596; Athenaeus, 1.22e-f (= Alcaeus, fr.337.1-2, 352); Cato, *On Agriculture*, 57; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.43; Grant (2000) 200 n.1.

²²⁵ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 1.18=6.528-529K, for example: 'in summer you should use moistening and cooling foods'. Note also: *Method of Medicine*, 12.3=10.828-829K: for patient whose fever is caused by the accumulation of crude humours, give him oxymel: in summer give him it cold, in winter make it hot; if he is suffering loss of consciousness, give him wine with water: in hot climate or summer give the wine with cold water, otherwise give it hot.

²²⁶ Note Jouanna (1996) 420 = (2012) 181: wine, being hot, is useful for a person in hot climates (due to either location or season). This comparability is explicitly noted (with specific regard to the pulse) in Galen, *The Pulse for Beginners*, 9=8.466K: 'the changes due to place are analogous to those due to season. The pulse in very hot places is similar to that in midsummer; and that in very cold places similar to that in midwinter. That in well-balanced places is similar to that in mid-spring; and those in places between these differ proportionately.' Consider also the inclusion of regions alongside seasons in Galen's example of honey in *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 1.1=6.472K: the appropriate use of which depends on '[the consumer's constitutional] mixture because of age, nature, region, season or lifestyle'; see also n.225 on oxymel. Similarly: Hippocrates, *A Regimen for Health*, 2: 'Diets then must be conditioned by age, the time of year, habit, country and constitution. They should be opposite in character to the prevailing climate, whether winter or summer.'

could dramatically alter wine's medical properties. The mixture represented by this drinking, and subsequently its effects on the drinker's bodily constitution, could be modified in all four of the main 'directions' of the four opposites (it could be made either hotter or colder, as well as drier or moister), to varying intensities. This made wine an especially appealing medical material for the humoral mindset, as it was a very flexible substance; a wine-drinking regime could be prescribed for almost everyone in almost all conditions.²²⁷ This surely also supported the tendency of medical authorities to focus upon the constructive benefits of drinking, as it supported the idea that a person's drinking would almost always be beneficial if they followed appropriate medical advice.

The ancient medical authorities rarely provided just one specific wine appropriate to each medical situation (for example, simply advising Falernian wine). Instead, they tended to provide a variety of specific wines and/or descriptions of the desired wine's qualities (for example: 'a thin white wine') so that the physician could more easily select an appropriate wine from the range which was available to him. The writer would also sometimes indicate how to select an alternative wine, which was similar in property, if none of the specified wines were available.²²⁸ This provided a degree of flexibility in treatment.²²⁹ This was no doubt appreciated by patients as it offered them an element of choice over their drinking. It was also useful for physicians because if the *best* wine to treat a condition was unavailable, a knowledgeable doctor could identify the most appropriate out of those available. Conversely, wines could substitute for other ingredients in prescribed medical compounds with comparative ease.²³⁰ Furthermore, as it was recognised that the same remedies did not work for all patients, if a wine-drinking regime failed to work as desired, the vast number of medically recognised wines and drinking practices facilitated the

²²⁷ Jouanna (1996) 422-423 = (2012) 183. Note, however, that Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.48-49 lists people who should avoid drinking *any* wine, as it would be destructive to their health.

²²⁸ For example: Galen, *The Thinning Diet*, 12=5.4.2.448CMG on how 'the Pamphylian wine ... can be used as a kind of yardstick to assess similar ones'; *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.5=6.334-335K.

²²⁹ Jouanna (1996) 428 = (2012) 187.

²³⁰ Luccioni (2002); Béguin (2002) 146-147; Alessi (2002) 110.

selection of a different regime of similar (or slightly different) properties to try instead.²³¹

This chapter will refer to these specific wines where appropriate. Yet, for the most part, this chapter will concern itself with the ‘archetypical’ wine. For a more thorough discussion of Galen’s ideas regarding the different effects and uses of *specific* wines, the reader is advised to consult the work of Béguin, which largely focuses upon this issue.²³²

The concept of an archetypical wine beverage is implicit in these works. This was the theoretical typical wine of average characteristics, which was usually simply referred to as ‘wine’. Book two of *Regimen*, for example, firstly considers the properties of ‘water’, then ‘wine’, and then various specific types of wines (dark harsh wines, harsh white wines, and so on); this first ‘wine’ must be assumed to be such an archetype.²³³ Each medical author’s wine archetype would probably be the type of wine beverage that they imagined was most typically encountered by their audience, and so presumably the wine which they thought most people drank, most of the time. Where this chapter discusses ‘wine’ without clarification, the reader should understand this to mean this archetypical wine.

Galen’s views on the archetypical wine beverage’s properties of mixture are presented in *On the Preservation of Health*. Galen states: ‘wine when drunk moistens the body sufficiently and heats it, and fills the head with fumes of the moist and warm character’.²³⁴ The aim of this work is to outline the best regimen to maintain health; the immediate context of this passage is to discuss the place of wine in such regimen. As such, it seems likely that Galen’s comments here refer to an ‘average’ wine beverage consumed in a ‘normal’ manner, as part of the daily life by a ‘typical’ person of the second century AD, who was in good health. Galen therefore seems to address the archetypical wine, which he considered to be hot and wet in mixture. Later in this same

²³¹ Celsus, 3.1.5.

²³² Béguin (2002).

²³³ Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 2.52.

²³⁴ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.11=6.54K; Béguin (2002) 143, 147; also Luccioni (2002) 171 n.23. The translation is based on Green’s; yet his translation is notably misleading when it translates: ‘wine moistens very little but heats the body of the drinker’, for ‘ὕγαινει τε γὰρ ἱκανῶς καὶ θερμαίνει τὸ σῶμα πινόμενος οἶνος’. Green’s translation of ‘ἱκανῶς’ as ‘very little’ is inappropriate; it is instead translated by this thesis as the adverb ‘sufficiently’ (in the sense of ‘adequately’); c.f. Lewis and Short (1940), s.v. ‘ἱκανός’.

work, Galen states that 'wine is most beneficial for [treating excessively] cold and dry natures', again highlighting that (in line with the therapeutic principle of treating opposites with opposites) he considered the average wine beverage to be hot and wet in mixture.²³⁵

Yet a statement from Galen's *On the Powers [and Mixtures] of Simple Drugs* appears initially to contradict this conclusion. In this work, Galen describes wine's hotness: the average wine is hot to the second degree, whilst new and old wines were hot to the first and third degrees respectively, out of a scale of up to four degrees of intensity. Galen then continues that wine is as hot as it is dry.²³⁶ As such, this work asserts that wine is hot and *dry* in mixture, apparently contradicting *On the Preservation of Health* which states instead that wine is hot and *wet*. This contradiction is noted by Luccioni, but no solution is offered.²³⁷ I suggest that this can be solved by considering the contexts of each work. Whilst *On the Preservation of Health* considered wine drunk as part of normal daily life, *On the Powers [and Mixtures] of Simple Drugs* considered each substance in its most basic form. As such, the wine referred to in the former work was probably the archetypal mixed-wine beverage, where the majority-part of the beverage was water, whilst in the latter work the wine discussed was in its pure form, not mixed with water. This theory is compatible with Galen's logic shown throughout his *Corpus*: he considered water to be cold and wet in mixture, and accordingly thought that greater dilution of wine made it cooler and wetter, and vice versa.²³⁸ As such, Galen considered unmixed wine to be hot and dry, whilst the archetypal mixed-wine beverage was considered to share properties of both unmixed wine and water, being both hot and wet. Yet, as the archetypal wine formed a middle-stage between these two opposing constituents of pure wine and water, it was considered less intensely heating than unmixed wine, and less moistening than water.

However, as noted above, it is also possible that Galen considered the two properties of the archetypal mixed-wine beverage – its hotness and wetness – to differ in intensity. In support of this hypothesis it can be noted that Galen's work on *Mixtures* repeatedly emphasises wine's heating properties, whilst

²³⁵ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.12=6.376K.

²³⁶ See n.169.

²³⁷ Luccioni (2002) 171 n.23; he cites Béguin (2002).

²³⁸ See especially Galen, *Method of Medicine*, 7.8=10.503K. See also the evidence compiled in Appendix 4.

omitting to mention its properties relating to drying or moistening. He states that 'wine has a considerable heating effect on the body when drunk'.²³⁹ Galen then subsequently argues that wine was one of the most 'proper' foodstuffs for humans as it was quickly transformed and assimilated by the body; it thus nourished and heated the body extremely rapidly ('properness' is discussed further on p.133).²⁴⁰ *Mixtures* also records that wine's heating property was powerful enough for wine to rank among the heating drugs, yet no such comment is made regarding its moistening properties.²⁴¹ In at least the first two of these three instances, Galen appears to be discussing wine consumption as part of normal daily life; he thus presumably refers to the archetypical mixed-wine beverage. As such, his comments imply that even when raw wine was mixed with water, this mixed beverage was still regarded as *extremely* heating.

In comparison, Galen does not indicate that he regarded a mixed-wine beverage as having a similar intensity of wetness. Mixed-wine's moistening powers are not mentioned in *Mixtures*, which implies that Galen did not consider them as noteworthy as its heating powers. Indeed, in *On the Preservation of Health* and *On the Causes of Disease*, although wine is presented as *extremely* heating (and a specific cause of hot illnesses), Galen seems not to consider wine as *extraordinarily* moistening, but rather as comparable in effect to other moist foods and drinks in general. Both too many drinks and an excess of foods with a notably moistening property were all stated to be likely causes of a person's constitution being excessively moistened. Galen does not specifically highlight wine as an especial risk above and beyond other moistening foods and drinks.²⁴² Indeed, as Galen believed that dilution made a beverage wetter in property, the archetypical mixed-wine beverage would surely be less of a risk to

²³⁹ Galen, *Mixtures*, 3.2=1.658K.

²⁴⁰ Galen, *Mixtures*, 3.2=1.655-659K.

²⁴¹ Galen, *Mixtures*, 3.2=1.659K: 'wine is not only a hot drug, but also a proper food causing heat in the animal'.

²⁴² Galen, *On the Causes of Disease*, compare 7.6K (which highlights old rough wine as a cause of hot illness) and 7.13K (which highlights wine as a material especially prone to boosting bodily warmth) with 7.19-20K (which notes that 'moist illnesses' are caused by 'too many drinks', with no specific mention of wine); *On the Preservation of Health*, 3.12=6.225-227K and 5.2=6.317K (on excess drinking causing excessive bodily moistness), compared with 5.5=6.334-336K and 5.12=6.377K (on certain wines being extremely – sometimes dangerously – heating); though note 1.11=6.54-55K on wine being both notably heating and moistening. Note however that during one of these discussions of over-moistening in *On the Preservation of Health*, wine is briefly specifically mentioned, 3.12=6.227K: 'for whatever moistures remain from wine to damage the head or the stomach are not the concern of the present discussion'. This, however, probably reflects the practical recognition that, of all drinks, a person would be far more likely to drink an excess of wine.

over-moistening than pure water. Furthermore, throughout the Galenic Corpus, wine's ability to moisten is never stated to be intense enough to be drug-like. All of this supports the conclusion that Galen did not consider wine to be of a significantly greater intensity of moistness than most other moistening foods and most common drinks.

However, it should be stressed that it is ultimately uncertain whether there was enough consistency in Galen's thought on this matter between the numerous texts of his Corpus for all of these comments to be compared in this way. Instead, a more cautious conclusion is that Galen certainly considered the archetypical wine beverage to have notable heating and moistening powers, and *if* he did consider these properties to differ in intensity, it seems likely that he would have regarded wine's heating power as of greater intensity.

Ps-Galen, the third-century humoral doctor following in the footsteps of Galen, also indicates similar belief regarding wine's basic property of mixture when he states that 'blood follows on from drunkenness'. As he believed the humour of blood to be hot and wet, this quotation suggests that he thought that heavy drinking fostered a significantly hot and wet bodily mixture. As he believed that consuming a particular foodstuff would promote the corresponding humour (for example, hot and wet foods would promote the humour blood within the body), this in turn implies that Ps-Galen believed wine to be hot and wet in mixture.²⁴³ Though Ps-Galen does not indicate any beliefs regarding the intensity of this mixture, this evidence supports the idea that some other humoral doctors of this period attributed to wine a broadly similar (hot and wet) mixture, like Galen.

Galen's beliefs regarding the archetypical wine's mixture indicate the two broad groups of people which he believed would find wine most constructive. First, as noted above, if a person was considered generally healthy, with their constitution only having a slight imbalance which was thought not to require correction, Galen believed that the best foods for them were those with the same imbalance as their own constitution. Such foods were thought to be more similar to the consumer, and were therefore more quickly assimilated, more nourishing and were often perceived as pleasanter by them.²⁴⁴ Accordingly,

²⁴³ Ps-Galen, *On the Humours*, 19.494-495K. Blood is hot and wet: 'blood, air and spring are moist and hot', 19.486K. Foods' mixtures cause the corresponding humours in the body: 'when we make proper use of foods in recipes, the attendant humours follow', 19.489K.

²⁴⁴ See n.157.

wine's consumption was presumably considered most appropriate for those people in health whose constitutions were slightly hotter and wetter than balanced.

Secondly, as humoral theory's fundamental therapeutic principle held that opposites were best for treating opposites, Galen subsequently considered wine to be very useful for treating excessively cold and/or dry bodily constitutions, by heating and/or moistening them. Thus, for example, Galen considered that overeating, or otherwise being overloaded with food, led to an excess of phlegm which in turn caused indigestion. In his famous encounter with this condition in the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, Galen stated that he would typically treat it with a compound remedy of pepper and wine (although he instead selected an alternative treatment – the 'safest' remedy – for the Emperor himself).²⁴⁵ The wine was presumably intended as a heating element of this heating and drying remedy, which aimed at counteracting the cold and wetness of the excessive phlegm. Yet wine's consumption was considered an even more constructive therapeutic measure when it was used to counteract a constitution which was severely unbalanced towards the exact opposite mixture to wine. Galen thus concludes that 'wine is most beneficial for cold and dry natures', and presumably also those with an excess of (cold and dry) black bile.²⁴⁶

There were numerous internal and external factors which could be responsible for causing such an unbalanced constitution, including a person's age, natural constitution, bodily habit, eating and drinking, the climate, illness, and so on.²⁴⁷ In *The Art of Medicine*, Galen notes two such conditions, 'recovery from illness, and also to old age, [which] is known as the "recuperative" or "convalescent"', and states that in these the 'suitable drink is wine'. Galen explains that 'the

²⁴⁵ Galen, *On Prognosis*, 11=14.658-660K; Hankinson (2008) 18; Grant (2000) 9-10. See also n.455 on excess food causing excess phlegm, and thus a cold illness.

²⁴⁶ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.12=6.376K, note also 6.4=6.401K (hotter wines are highly beneficial to those with a cold disposition); Béguin (2002) 147.

²⁴⁷ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 1.1=6.472K discusses this with specific respect to honey (itself no different from any other foodstuff in this respect, except that Galen considered honey to be warm and dry in mixture; see fig. 2.1): '[honey] is most adverse in those who are dry and warm, but very beneficial in those who are moist and cool – whether they are like this in mixture because of age, nature, region, season or lifestyle'; see also 6.470K. For a fuller introduction to this topic by Galen himself, see: *On the Causes of Disease* (= 7.1-41K); for an even more thorough treatment, see: *On the Preservation of Health* (= 6.1-452K).

The Hippocratic Corpus contains similar beliefs. Most succinctly in *A Regimen for Health*, 2: 'diets then must be conditioned by age, the time of year, habit, country and constitution. They should be opposite in character to the prevailing climate, whether winter or summer. Such is the best road to health.' The same general beliefs can be noted throughout *Regimen*.

state is as follows: good, but with a small quantity of blood ... the solid parts themselves are dry, and therefore the faculties weak, and in consequence of this weakness the whole body is cold. The healthy causes – those which will correct such a state – may be summed up as those which bring about a speedy and safe nourishment'.²⁴⁸ Wine was thus directly opposed to the excessive cold and dryness of these conditions, and would thus help to correct this imbalanced bodily mixture. Furthermore, wine was also considered of use due to its extreme heat, which meant that it was thought to quickly generate blood and bodily strength to help combat these conditions' lack of blood and weakness (see from p.133 further on these properties). The below section on wine's moisture also explains how wine was thought to be of further benefit in these conditions, as it would help to moisten and alleviate the dryness of the solid parts.

As implied by this example, one crucial factor which Galen thought inevitably led to notable changes in every person's constitutional mixture was their age. This was not an unusual idea; it has been noted in this chapter's introduction that the Hippocratic Corpus and Ps-Galen also presented broadly similar views (see p.55). Galen believed that people were necessarily born with a hot and wet bodily mixture, as this was required for generation and growth. Their constitutions were then thought to irreversibly dry and cool throughout their life, with old age's frailty being a sign of over cooling and drying.²⁴⁹ Constructive drinking practice was accordingly anchored to the lifecycle, as Galen notes that 'in matters of wine ... it is proper for different people to indulge differently, according to their various ages'.²⁵⁰ He elaborates:

'The mixture of youth is hot and full-blooded, that of old age lacking in blood and cold. Wine drinking is therefore of use to old men; it brings the coldness due to old age back to an equal balance with warmth. The effect on one who is still growing, though, is the opposite. Here the effect is that of overheating a physique which is already boiling and liable to violent movements, thus precipitating immoderate and excessive actions.'²⁵¹

²⁴⁸ Galen, *The Art of Medicine*, 37=1.405-406K. The two conditions (old age and convalescence) are also noted to be similar in *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.4=6.330K.

²⁴⁹ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.2=6.3-6K.

²⁵⁰ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.11=6.57K.

²⁵¹ Galen, *The Soul's Dependence on the Body*, 10=4.810K. Galen also quotes Plato's *Laws*, 666a-c in support: 'up to the age of eighteen, children should not touch wine at all, for we

Galen therefore believed wine to be most useful to the elderly, as he believed it helped to correct the problems of a cold and dry nature which were naturally associated with old age.²⁵² Their notable coldness was an especial problem as it meant that 'their intrinsic warmth [which was necessary for life] is in danger of being extinguished',²⁵³ and as such Galen advises that they should select wines that were yellow in colour, as these were the warmest in terms of colour, and 'this one thing ... proves most valuable in wine for old men, that it warms their parts.'²⁵⁴ Wine was considered less appropriate for youths, who were of hotter than balanced mixture; drinking risked overheating their bodies and making them hot-headed (this is meant in both senses of the term). Furthermore, Galen thought that 'for children wine is most undesirable', and in *On the Preservation of Health* he advised their complete abstinence from wine, yet the reasons for this statement are slightly different.²⁵⁵ Galen explains that the child's warm and moist mixture is a natural state, crucial for their development; it was not a disease and did not need counteracting as a balanced constitution was not desirable for a child. As such, it was necessary to maintain this hot and wet mixture, particularly by providing 'them with food and drink of as moist a nature as possible'.²⁵⁶ However, in spite of wine being of this exact mixture, Galen considered it to be extremely destructive for children due to its effect on the head, along with the great intensity of its mixture. Thus he states: 'it is not good for their head [a child's] to be thus filled [with warm and dry fumes], nor for them to be moistened and warmed more than normal. For they come to such a degree of moisture and warmth that, if either increases even a little more, they pass into excess.'²⁵⁷

should consider that one must not drive fire into fire, in body and soul ... As he approaches forty ... wine [is] a medicine to aid the harshness of age.'

²⁵² Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.3=6.319K: to correct their cold and dry constitutions, old men should use 'warm baths of sweet waters, and drinking of wine, and such of the foods as are at the same time moistening and warming'. 5.5=6.334-336K: 'As for children wine is most undesirable, so for old men it is most useful ... this one thing, therefore, proves most valuable in wine for old men, that it warms all their parts'. 5.7=6.247K: 'wines which are the warmer and the more diaphoretic [i.e. producing of perspiration] are better for old men'. See also: Béguin (2002) 147-148; Jouanna (1996) 424-425 = (2012) 184-185. A comparable concept is presented in Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 1.7=625f: old men are fond of wine as their cold constitutions are difficult to warm; note also 3.3=650c-e; Corvisier (2003) 124.

²⁵³ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.3=6.320K.

²⁵⁴ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.5=6.336K, 5.7=6.247K. Further on Galen's views on wine's hotness according to colour, see: Béguin (2002) 144.

²⁵⁵ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.11=6.54-55K, 5.5=6.334K (inc. quotation).

²⁵⁶ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.7=6.34-35K (quote: 1.7=6.35K).

²⁵⁷ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.11=6.54-55K.

On the other hand, people who already had a significantly hot and/or wet constitution were thought to find wine least constructive, as it threatened to intensify their current constitutional imbalance, taking them even further from health. It has already been noted that Galen advised those people with extremely hot illnesses (such as inflammatory fatigue) to abstain from wine. Consuming a different drink or specific type of wine which had a notably different property of mixture, ideally opposite to this person's own constitutional imbalance, was thus considered more appropriate. Accordingly, as seen above, water was considered most appropriate during the early stages of inflammatory fatigue as it was considered to be the coolest drink; otherwise apomel (a honey-water beverage, like hydromel) or thin white wine were advised as both were of notable, but comparatively lesser, coolness (see fig. 2.1).

Notably, Grant states that 'one of the main problems that [ancient] doctors tried to combat was fever, always present in infectious conditions like the common cold and transmitted diseases such as malaria'.²⁵⁸ As Greco-Roman society widely considered wine consumption to significantly heat the body (see from p.131 for detailed discussion), the Greco-Roman medical authorities generally considered wines to be dangerous during this common illness, as it threatened to worsen such an overheated febrile condition. Celsus also stated that the medical authorities generally agreed that too great an intake of *any* fluids during a fever was considered destructive. A patient's thirst was misleading: it was greatest when the water was most dangerous. Celsus thus explains that Asclepiades was said to have denied all fluids in fever in order to promote thirst, and thus cure the fever.²⁵⁹

Accordingly, Pliny summarised medical advice to conclude that 'wine should not be given when fever is present', except under certain specified conditions (when the patient was old, when the disease had passed its crisis, and in acute conditions only in remissions during the night).²⁶⁰ The Hippocratic author of *Affections* noted that wine could cause some fevers; he therefore advised that after a patient had taken medication, he should eat and then drink dilute fragrant old white wine *unless* he had a fever; in this case he was not advised

²⁵⁸ Grant (2000) 8. Celsus, 3.3.1 describes fevers as 'exceedingly common'.

²⁵⁹ Celsus, 3.4.2, 3.6.1, 3.6.4.

²⁶⁰ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.48-49.

wine.²⁶¹ Similarly, Cato the Elder's second-century BC manual *On Agriculture* also noted that diluted dark wine could be given as part of a regime to treat colic (a severe pain in the intestines), but it should only be drunk if the person was without fever, otherwise they should drink water instead.²⁶²

Celsus likewise seems to have been reluctant to prescribe wine in conditions which he thought would otherwise benefit from wine, when the patient developed a fever.²⁶³ Although Celsus advised that several specific fevers benefited from some specific and controlled (and usually fairly sparse) wine-drinking,²⁶⁴ his basic regime to treat the average fever did not include any wine consumption. After avoiding all fluids for the first few days,²⁶⁵ the patient was

²⁶¹ Hippocrates, *Affections*, 12, 41. Similar practice is attested in the *Epidemics* as noted by Alessi (2002) 107.

²⁶² Cato, *On Agriculture*, 156; this is also largely repeated at 157, which features a very similar prescription for the same condition. For another of Cato's remedies for colic, again including wine consumption, see n.341.

²⁶³ Note, for example, that the wines normally prescribed as part of the regimen to treat *ignis sacer* (a chronic creeping ulceration; Celsus, 5.28.4d), stomach ulcers (4.12.5), and longstanding dysentery (4.22.4), were only permitted if the patient had no fever.

²⁶⁴ Celsus, 3.12.6 noted that in fevers: 'wine, when any is given, [should be] dry'. Certain conditions in fever were noted to require specific uses of wine: if the body is constricted then although thirst and hunger is beneficial, wine after baths (including Greek salted wine once or twice) is prescribed (3.6.13); if the body is relaxed, dry wine should be served hot if the bowels are loose, and cold if the trouble is sweating or vomiting (3.6.15); for fever in pestilence, fasting is practically useless and this patient instead requires glutinous foods and hot, undiluted wine (3.7.1a); honeyed-wine or food with well diluted wine is given in a slow fever with no remissions (and which thus offers little hope of treatment), in the hope that it will transform into a treatable fever with remissions (3.9.2); in a daily fever, Celsus advised abstinence from food (and presumably drink) for three days, followed by food on alternative days and a bath and wine at the end of paroxysms (3.13); tertian and quartan fevers were treated by a regime involving wine on the third and fifth days after the paroxysm (3.14.2 with 3.15.1); if a quartan fever persisted the subsequent regime involved wine-drinking prescribed on several specific days (3.15.1-2, 3.15.4), wine, along with anointing, rubbing, exercise and food were listed as the key remedies for this condition (3.15.5); double quartan fever was treated by wine after the paroxysms remit (3.16.1); old quartan fevers were treated by frequently altering the diet from water to wine and vice versa, and drinking mustard in Greek salted wine before the paroxysms (3.16.2). Celsus also noted: a rash treatment for fever by Petron of Aegina (placed by Celsus between Hippocrates and the Hellenistic physicians), which was said to have killed many people, which involved issuing cold water and promoting sweating and vomiting, and then pork and wine once the patient was considered free from fever (3.9.2-4; also noted by Galen, *On Hippocrates' Regimen in Acute Diseases*, 1.12=15.436K; this was also prescribed by Erasistratus); Clephantus' ('one of the ancient physicians') treatment for tertian and quartan fevers which involving pouring hot water over a patient's head and drinking wine before a paroxysm (3.14.1); and Asclepiades' treatment for tertian fever which involved a vomit on the fifth day after a paroxysm, with food and wine afterwards (3.14.2).

²⁶⁵ Celsus provides contradictory advice for the first days of fevers in general: at 3.4.4-5 he states that on the first day the patient should drink not too much, but enough not to be distressed by thirst, whereas at 3.6.3 he states that the basic drinking regime consisted of two days without fluids, providing that the patient could bear it.

advised to drink only hot water at around the time of the paroxysms (at about the same time as taking some food).²⁶⁶

Galen was also reluctant to issue wine to febrile patients. He believed that the most useful foods for combating fevers were generally those which were cooling and moistening (such as barley soup).²⁶⁷ The archetypical wine was thus far too hot in mixture to be a constructive therapeutic measure. Fevers could accordingly prohibit the otherwise advantageous consumption of wine, especially the use of the hotter yellow wines. For example, in *Method of Medicine* Galen states that, in general, the only condition which should prevent a physician issuing wine to strengthen a weak patient was fever, yet he thought that fever did not always prohibit wine.²⁶⁸ Similarly, in *The Thinning Diet*, Galen notes that yellow sweet transparent wines were constructively prescribed for treating 'chronic complaints of the chest and lungs, provided they do not involve fever'.²⁶⁹

Dioscorides also showed similar concerns. Various wines were noted to have important constructive uses, but their use was advised only if the patient was free of fever.²⁷⁰ Yet, as noted above, the extensive range of medically recognised wines were thought to feature a similarly extensive (perhaps, near-comprehensive) variety of properties. As such, Dioscorides was able to prescribe specific wines to drink during fevers. The Aminnaian variety of wine, and dry wines mixed with seawater, were said to be good for curing fevers.²⁷¹ *Melitites* honeyed-wine (made from mixing honey with the must) was stated to be good for those with chronic fevers as well as good for those with weak heads (the latter being another condition for which wines were generally considered inappropriate, as wine was intoxicating and thus acknowledged to affect the

²⁶⁶ Celsus, 3.6.8: the best time for drink is when the fever is decreasing (towards a paroxysm) and sweating about to start; hot water should be given. Celsus advises, with respect to food, that although there is no invariable rule as to the days when it should be given (as this depends upon various factors; 3.4.7-8), unless the body becomes weakened it should be given in paroxysms; specifically, when the body is most free of fever, but leaving as long a gap as possible between the food and the next paroxysm (3.16-18).

²⁶⁷ Galen, *On Barley Soup*, 6.824-825K.

²⁶⁸ Galen, *Method of Medicine*, 7.6=10.483K. Consider also: 8.3=10.556K, 10.3=10.677K, 11.11=10.765K; Boudon (2002) 159. Note also that Alexander of Tralles (sixth century AD) similarly advised that wine should always be issued boldly to *almost all* weak patients, as its benefits outweigh its risks; the sole exception was those patients suffering *extremely* ardent inflammation: Alexander Tralles, 1.13=1.525-526; Garzya (2002) 193.

²⁶⁹ Galen, *The Thinning Diet*, 12=5.4.2.447-448CMG.

²⁷⁰ Dioscorides, 5.37, 5.38, 5.44.

²⁷¹ Dioscorides, 5.19.2.

head).²⁷² Pliny also believed that this same honeyed-wine 'used to be given in fever because of its action on the bowels', but he believed that it was no longer administered, as it had not been produced for several generations.²⁷³ Instead, he recommends hydromel (a mixture of just honey and water) as good for 'cooling feverish heat'. As honey itself was also advised for treating certain febrile states ('tongues parched by fever'), the medical authorities presumably perceived honey as particularly constructive for treating fevers.²⁷⁴ Pliny also stated that the grape-skins of the claret-vine had an extremely cold nature, and as such were good 'for cooling attacks of feverish heat'. He may furthermore have intended that 'weak wine' (which 'is made from real wine' but in several stages using lots of water and boiling/evaporation) could be given for fever, as this would meet his stated parameter of it being 'given to invalids for whom it is feared that wine may be harmful'.²⁷⁵ Dioscorides also believed that Pomegranate wine (a wine made from fermenting pomegranates, rather than from simply flavouring a grape wine) was good against very high fevers.²⁷⁶

In a similar manner, Galen (following an example set by Hippocrates) was willing to condone one wine for such febrile conditions: 'aqueous' wines. These were thin, white, and without any marked qualities; they essentially resembled water. Galen notes that they were widely produced (including in the Sabine region of Italy), and unlike other wines they did not need to be mixed with water before drinking.²⁷⁷ Such wines were considered to be weaker than the wine archetype, being regarded as generally closer in property to water; they were thus thought significantly cooler. The harmful properties inherent in wine were considered to be less intense in aqueous wines, yet they were not considered as weak as water. Aqueous wines could benefit a febrile patient with minimal risk. It is most notable that Galen also praised the use of such aqueous wines in health, especially when they were dry in property, as he considered this wine to be the perfectly balanced drink in a humoral sense; the aqueous nature made it cooler, and the dryness drier, so that it was close to the equilibrium of a balanced mixture (see fig. 2.1). Having no significant properties of mixture, it

²⁷² Dioscorides, 5.7.1. On this, and other, types of honeyed-wines, see Appendix 1 p.338.

²⁷³ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 22.115.

²⁷⁴ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 22.108, 22.110.

²⁷⁵ Claret-vine grape skins: Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.99. Weak wine: 14.100.

²⁷⁶ Dioscorides, 5.26.

²⁷⁷ Galen, *Method of Medicine*, 7.6=10.484K, 8=10.556K; *On Hippocrates' Regimen in Acute Diseases*, 3.8=15.648-649K; Béguin (2002) 145, 148, 152; Jouanna (1996) 428 = (2012) 188.

would thus best preserve a balanced constitution. It was essentially perceived as the ideal drink for the middle-aged man of perfect constitution.

As such, wine was acknowledged by Galen to be a substance with a property of mixture, and was treated no different to any other. All influences on the body were only considered constructive to a person's health if they were experienced when appropriate to a person's constitution, and when used with the moderation appropriate for that person. Galen quotes Hippocrates to this effect: "...labours, foods, drinks, sleep and sexual activity – all in moderation",²⁷⁸ and elsewhere succinctly summarises that 'no animal likes excess of anything, but always wants moderation'.²⁷⁹ In this sense, Galen believed that all substances which influenced the body had the potential for both positive and negative medical effects: they were most constructive to a person's health when used at a time, and in the way, which was most appropriate to the consumer's bodily constitution (in therapeutic treatment when the bodily constitution required modification, this was when the substance and body were of exact opposite mixtures), and most destructive if used when most inappropriate (again, therapeutically speaking, this was when the two were of the same mixture).

It is notable that the Hippocratic Corpus' *Ancient Medicine* appears to use wine as the main example, which the author believed everyone would agree with, to support the argument that no single food can *absolutely* be called 'good' or 'bad' for humans, but rather that this judgement varies depending upon the individual circumstances surrounding the food's use by a specific person.²⁸⁰ This Hippocratic author considered it to be a widely accepted belief that wine itself was not to blame for the harm it caused, but rather its excessive or inappropriate use. Yet, as seen previously in this chapter, wine was considered especially notable by the Greco-Roman medical authors due to the potential extremeness of these effects (it was recognised that its consumption could lead to either *extremely* constructive or *extremely* destructive effects), and as such moderation was considered all the more important with this substance.²⁸¹ This is reflected in Galen's statement of the archetypical wine's properties of mixture: it was noted to have the potential to be extremely heating, and was therefore considered very constructive for quickly aiding those who were of an overly cold

²⁷⁸ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 1.1=6.464K.

²⁷⁹ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.8=6.43K.

²⁸⁰ Hippocrates, *Ancient Medicine*, 20 with Jones (1923) 64.

²⁸¹ Béguin (2002) 143.

constitution, but highly destructive for those who already had an excessively hot constitution.

Finally, it should be noted that in contrast to Galen's belief that the archetypical wine beverage was hot and moist in mixture, the Hippocratic author of the second book of *Regimen* had a contrasting opinion. He states that 'wine is hot and dry', and provides no statement regarding intensities.²⁸² The context of this comment seems very comparable to Galen's statement in *On the Preservation of Health*. *Regimen* largely focuses upon giving practical advice regarding daily regimen to maintain and pursue health throughout life, and the specific section of book two from which this quotation is taken addresses the general properties of various foodstuffs which could make up a person's diet. The wine described here also seems to be an 'average' wine beverage consumed in a 'normal' way as part of a typical person's normal diet; indeed this comment regarding 'wine' in general is then immediately followed by specific types of other wines (for example, 'dark and harsh wines', 'soft dark wines', 'thin sweet wines' and so on). As in Galen's *On the Preservation of Health*, the Hippocratic author thus also seems to address a similar concept of an archetypical wine beverage, supporting the appropriateness of a comparison between these two passages. Galen and this Hippocratic author can therefore be seen to have agreed regarding the archetypical wine's warmth, but disagreed about its moistness of mixture, and this disagreement would subsequently lead to differences in wine's most appropriate uses. Thus, according to the humoral therapeutic principle of treating opposites with opposites, the hot and dry archetypical wine of *Regimen* would be considered most appropriate to counter excessively cold and wet constitutions, including phlegmatic people, cold and wet climates (due to both seasons and locations), and women (who were also believed wet).²⁸³ This is in clear contrast to Galen's concept of a hot and moist wine archetype, which was considered most useful for treating cold and dry conditions.

As the figure of Hippocrates was still highly respected during the first to third centuries AD, and as the second book of *Regimen* was circulated in his name during this period, at least some of the more well-read humoral doctors must have been aware of this opinion regarding wine's mixture attributed to the

²⁸² Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 2.52. His statement regarding the basic properties of wine continues: '... and it has something purgative from its original substance.'

²⁸³ Jouanna (1996) 420 = (2012) 181.

revered Hippocrates. From the second half of the second century AD at the latest, when the existence of both of these two divergent yet influential views can be clearly acknowledged in *Regimen* and the works of Galen, some doctors were thus no doubt faced with a conundrum; which view should they favour? As discussed below (in the section on wine's moisture), although some doctors may conceivably have attempted to rationalise this difference (perhaps suggesting that in Hippocrates' period a notably different type of wine was most common, and this was significantly drier than the archetypical wine of the second century AD), it is also conceivable that this difference could have led to a divergence of opinions regarding the humoral properties attributed to wine by doctors of this period. Some doctors, such as Ps-Galen, no doubt followed the view supported by Galen, that wine was wet in mixture. Others no doubt followed the belief attributed to Hippocrates in *Regimen*, that wine was dry in property. Indeed, the idea of wine being hot and dry survived for centuries; a much later example can be seen in the *Tacuinum Sanitatis*, an anonymous work from fourteenth-century Italy which addresses health and wellbeing, and forms part of the humoral tradition.²⁸⁴ Yet due to the paucity of surviving medical sources from antiquity, it is ultimately uncertain whether either view was prevalent.

However, it is almost certain that among the humoral doctors there was no homogeneity of beliefs regarding wine's mixture. Disagreement on this issue can even be detected in the Hippocratic Corpus itself. The Hippocratic author of *Airs, Waters, Places* seems to have favoured similar views to the author of *Regimen*, as he states that 'I assert that it is better to give children wine watered down as much as possible for this neither burns the veins nor dries them up too much'.²⁸⁵ The implication is presumably that the consumption of normally diluted wine had (or, at least, could have) notable heating and drying properties. On the other hand, the Hippocratic author of *Regimen in Acute Diseases* states that 'if a disease is drier than one would like, the patient should be given a drink of either hydromel or wine', thereby implying that wine consumption had (or, at least, could have) notably moistening properties.²⁸⁶ *Affections* does not address the archetypical wine, but rather only specific drinking regimes, which

²⁸⁴ The evidence is summarised by van Asseldonk (2007) 7.

²⁸⁵ Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places*, 9.

²⁸⁶ Hippocrates, *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, 12.

varied from significantly moistening to significantly drying.²⁸⁷ In light of such a fundamental difference between these revered medical authorities regarding even wine's most basic properties of mixture, a variety of opinions on wine's appropriate uses seems probable.

WINE'S HOTNESS, STRENGTH-GIVING AND BLOOD-PRODUCING PROPERTIES

Both Galen and the Hippocratic author of *Regimen* believed that some wines were significantly hotter in property than others (see figs. 2.1 and 2.2). Béguin concludes that in the Galenic Corpus this was especially linked to the wine's colour, with them ranking in descending order of both hotness and strength as: yellow, red, wines with particular qualities of sweetness or softness or mildness, and then white (as well as aqueous wines, which were close in property to water).²⁸⁸ Yet both authors agreed that the archetypical wine had a notable degree of hotness, supporting the idea that this belief was somewhat common among humoral doctors. Furthermore, as discussed below, both Celsus and Dioscorides also believed that wine consumption was notably warming to the body.

The belief in this significantly warm property of wine was widely agreed upon by Greco-Roman society. Plutarch's *Table-Talk* is informative: during a fictional conversation over wine, a guest – who is a physician by profession – mentions that some individuals consider wine to be cold in nature, at least in certain situations, rather than always being hot in character. The other guests are shocked by this, and the physician is asked to explain this concept. The physician notes specific situations where wine behaves like a 'cold' substance, citing ideas from individuals including Aristotle and Epicurus. The latter suggested that wine had some particles productive of heat and others productive of cold. Yet the importance of this conversation is the shock of the

²⁸⁷ Hippocrates, *Affections*, 43, 51, 55: copious drinking and dilute old honeyed white wines, along with fat, rich or sweet foodstuffs in general, were considered to moisten the body; whereas less drinking, drinking a long time after meals and dark dry wines were all considered to dry it. Note also 7: pleurisy is often caused by a person of a moist body state receiving a chill; it is implied that this state can be (but is not always) caused by heavy drinking.

²⁸⁸ Béguin (2002) 144-145. Note: Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 3.39=6.744-745K; *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.5=6.336-338K.

guests and the need for the physician to argue this case; among this elite audience, common-knowledge apparently held that wine was hot in nature.²⁸⁹

Accordingly, for example, Plato, one of the chief philosophical authorities of antiquity, associates drinking wine with 'pouring fire on ... souls and bodies', and this was in turn used as support by Galen to suggest the kinds of people who could appropriately use wine due to its hotness.²⁹⁰ Furthermore, over a century before Galen, Pliny recorded a statement in his encyclopaedic work regarding the basic properties of wine, which was not only compatible with the idea of wine being warm in property, but was near-identical to a comment later provided by Galen in *Mixtures*: 'wine has the property of heating the parts of the body inside when it is drunk, and of cooling them when poured on them outside'.²⁹¹ An association between wine and heat in Greco-Roman society may have been further supported by a fact which Pliny implies was widely known: wine was resistant to cold, and thus 'it is not the nature of wine to freeze, usually it is only numbed by cold'.²⁹²

As such, Galen's beliefs regarding wine's heating properties were not groundbreaking, but were instead based upon observations widely acknowledged by Greco-Roman society. Yet Galen does provide a very detailed explanation of his beliefs regarding wine's extreme warmth. He explains that it is an unusual substance, as 'wine is not only a hot drug, but also a proper food causing heat in the animal'.²⁹³ This statement relies on an understanding of Galen's concept of the difference between foods and drugs (which was based on an older idea from the Hippocratic Corpus). 'Foods' were thought to be substances which were assimilated by the body; they were changed by the body so as to nourish and maintain it. (Celsus had a similar

²⁸⁹ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 3.4=650f-651a, 3.5=651f-652a (note that these two conversations are linked; the 3.5 directly follows 3.4). Note also: 7.3=701f on how wine's specific power is heat. Note further that Fleming (2001) 75 is misled by these conversations into thinking that 'wine was characterised as cold' by Greco-Roman medicine; this is discussed in the Introduction on p.19 with n.12.

²⁹⁰ Plato, *Laws*, 666. Quoted by Galen: *The Soul's Dependence on the Body*, 10=4.809K.

²⁹¹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.58; Jouanna (1996) 431 = (2012) 190. Compare with n.299 on Galen.

²⁹² Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.132; Pliny implies that when a Roman encountered such a sight he tended to regard it as miraculous. 14.62 also records the dubious fact, which could also be seen to imply a link between wine and heat, that Falernian (but only this one among all wines) sets alight from touching a flame. On combusting wine, see further Ch.1 n.3.

²⁹³ Galen, *Mixtures*, 3.2=1.659K. Note further that in *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 3.39=6.743K Galen notes that wine has not only 'properties *qua* food, but [also] rather properties *qua* medicament'.

definition of foods and drinks: those things which act upon the body by nourishing it.) 'Drugs', on the other hand, were things which caused a significant change in the body.²⁹⁴ In addition, Galen thought that some things, like wine, shared some aspects of both foods and drugs, and could therefore be considered to be both simultaneously. According to Galen, this particular group both 'acts [upon the body] and is acted upon, so that they are gradually and completely assimilated'.²⁹⁵ Many of this group of food-drugs could be divided between two major categories: 'hot' and 'cold' food-drugs, reflecting the nature of the change they promoted within the consumer's body. When consumed, wine was firmly in the former group.²⁹⁶

As such, on the one hand, Galen considered wine to be, in part, a drug because its heating properties were beyond that which could be attributed to something that was simply a foodstuff. He explains that 'some substances undergo an enormous change from their original nature as a result of a very small initial influence'.²⁹⁷ In the same way that 'wool, flax, plantain, fennel and all similarly dry, porous substances' are not hot in themselves but 'are easily ignited', a variety of hot drugs are 'not yet properly hot, but have an aptitude to become hot, and in virtue of that are referred to as "potentially hot"'.²⁹⁸ Galen includes wine in this group, noting as evidence the very same curiosity that Pliny recorded before him: that 'wine has a considerable heating effect on the body when drunk, but no such effect when placed on the skin'.²⁹⁹ Later in this same work he again justifies why wine should be included in this group of drugs: 'wine is potentially hot because it easily turns into blood'; as explained below, this signified wine's extreme properness, and therefore an extreme speed of nourishing and heating.³⁰⁰ Wine's hotness was thus considered drug-like as it

²⁹⁴ Galen, *Mixtures*, 3.2=1.656-657K, 1.659K; *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 1.1=6.468K; Powell (2003) 2-3; Grant (2000) 7. Celsus, 2.18.1. Hippocratic Corpus: Hippocrates, *Places in Man*, 45.

²⁹⁵ Galen, *Mixtures*, 3.2=1.656-657K; Powell (2003) 3. Note also: *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 1.1=6.468K.

²⁹⁶ Powell (2003) 3.

²⁹⁷ Galen, *Mixtures*, 3.2=1.657K.

²⁹⁸ Galen, *Mixtures*, 3.2=1.658K.

²⁹⁹ Galen, *Mixtures*, 3.2=1.658K. Compare with n.291 on Pliny. Note that at 3.5=1.688K, Galen's assessment of unheated water as 'cold' in property is based upon the same test, where the substance is put into contact with the skin and its effects observed: 'that cold water does not in itself have a heating effect as is apparent from the first contact; it produces a sensory impression of cold, and indeed cools the skin for as long as cold water is applied to it'.

³⁰⁰ Galen, *Mixtures*, 3.4=1.669K.

was both extreme and potential, only manifesting when consumed (and not when merely poured on the skin).

On the other hand, Galen considered wine to be, in part, a ‘proper food’ (οἰκεία τροφή) for humans.³⁰¹ He explains that ‘every animal is nourished by its own proper foods. And the “proper” ones are any which may be assimilated to the body being nourished.’³⁰² Galen implies wine was widely acknowledged to give nourishment to the body, as although he notes that ‘some physicians assert that one should not call it “food”’, Galen claims that putting aside such linguistic technicalities, ‘everyone agrees that wine is one of the things that give nourishment’.³⁰³ Consuming ‘proper foods’ was consequently considered to foster an increase in the internal warmth of an animal: ‘just as the nourishment proper to fire increases a fire, similarly whatever is a proper, natural food for naturally hot bodies will definitely strengthen and increase their internal heat’.³⁰⁴ This was usually a desirable effect (obviously within the limits of moderation) as Galen believed that every animal had a fundamental intrinsic warmth at its core, which, although it led to a depletion of bodily substances, was required for life. It in turn required appropriate maintenance through ‘food, drink, respiration and pulse’.³⁰⁵ Proper foods were thus thought to encourage both bodily warmth and strength by being assimilated into, and nourishing, the body. Yet proper foods were thought to differ in the level of their ‘properness’, and Galen considered that this led to a food’s hotness/coldness of mixture. He explains in his work on *Mixtures* that ‘some substances are more similar and “proper”, others less so; and therefore some will require a more powerful and longer process [to be assimilated into, and thus nourish, the body], others a weaker shorter one’.³⁰⁶ Less proper foods took longer to assimilate, were slower to nourish, and accordingly transferred heat at a slower rate; foods that were more proper were the opposite in these respects. Yet regardless of how proper they were, all proper foods by definition gave some nourishment to the average person in health, as ‘every kind of nourishment increases the animal’s warmth’; ‘this feature in itself is common to all foods’.³⁰⁷ Therefore, foods described as having

³⁰¹ On Galen’s concept of proper foods, see: Powell (2003) 15.

³⁰² Galen, *Mixtures*, 3.2=1.655K.

³⁰³ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 3.39=6.743K.

³⁰⁴ Galen, *Mixtures*, 3.2=1.659K.

³⁰⁵ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.3=6.7K.

³⁰⁶ Galen, *Mixtures*, 3.2=1.655K.

³⁰⁷ Galen, *Mixtures*, 3.2=1.659K, 1.660K.

a 'cold' mixture (for example barley, as noted above) should in actual fact not be thought of as directly giving 'coldness' to the body *per se*, but rather (as they were perceived as being 'colder than average') they were thought to generate bodily heat at a slower rate than the average foodstuff, and so led to a cooling of the body through providing a relatively slow rate of heat-generation in comparison to the body's inevitable heat-loss.³⁰⁸ Obviously, this concept of properness also meant that some foodstuffs were not considered 'proper' to a specific animal; as Galen explains: 'not every food in all animals is susceptible to digestion in the stomach, but there must be some cognate relationship between that which digests and that which is digested'.³⁰⁹ Eating such improper and thus indigestible foodstuffs led to problematic excrements within the body; generally evacuation should be pursued but Galen noted that 'it is not easy to evacuate undigested ingested material'.³¹⁰

Galen explains the extraordinary hotness of wine within this context: 'what is specific to wine is the speed of change'.³¹¹ Alongside a description of properness in his work on *Mixtures*, Galen notes that 'wine, which needs the least time of all to be transformed and assimilated, is therefore the quickest to nourish and strengthen'.³¹² Galen therefore considered wine to be the most proper of all foodstuffs for humans, and thus among the hottest of foods, as it was the most rapidly nourishing and strength-giving. As noted above, the pulse was also linked with body heat,³¹³ and accordingly Galen noted in *The Pulse for Beginners* that 'the effect of wine [on the pulse] is similar [to other foods], except that the change is immediate'; wine's effects were thus considered of unparalleled rapidity.³¹⁴

Galen's argument on wine's supreme properness can therefore be read to carry the tone that he considered wine to be among the most natural and appropriate of all foodstuff for humans to consume. It was one of the foodstuffs most fit to be a staple part of the human diet. Galen's tone therefore supports the above argument that he primarily considered wine to be a substance which was

³⁰⁸ Galen, *Mixtures*, 3.2=1.659-660K: 'Those foods which require time to be completely assimilated and to nourish the body appear at first rather to be a source of cold than warmth. But in the fullness of time these too have a heating effect, just as any other food'.

³⁰⁹ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.3=6.241K; Powell (2003) 15.

³¹⁰ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.3=6.241K.

³¹¹ Galen, *Mixtures*, 3.2=1.659K.

³¹² Galen, *Mixtures*, 3.2=1.655K. Note also: Béguin (2002) 148-149.

³¹³ See n.305.

³¹⁴ Galen, *The Pulse for Beginners*, 10=8.469K.

extremely constructive for a person's health, providing that it was used appropriately. Its notable destructive potential was considered secondary. This is very similar to Pliny's comment that 'there are two liquids that are specially agreeable to the human body, wine inside and oil outside'.³¹⁵

Wine was considered so proper to humans that its consumption could help people to digest indigestible or hard-to-digest food.³¹⁶ Accordingly, in *On the Preservation of Health*, Galen discusses the treatment of ulcerous fatigue, which 'arises from indigestion of acrid excrements', and which could be caused by 'the patient [having] ingested a surfeit of indigestible foods'.³¹⁷ When this condition was severe, and the whole body was supposed full of such indigestion, the two main aims of the doctor's treatment should be to complete the digestion of the undigested or half-digested foods, and to eliminate further troublesome materials (such as acrid and ulcerous fluids) through urine and perspiration. Galen states that this is best aided by rest and sleep. Galen specifically advises that 'we shall not restrain him from wine, for wine not only helps the digestion of indigestible foods but also encourages perspiration and urine and contributes to sleep' (see p.192ff further on wine's diuretic and diaphoretic properties).

Galen's belief in the extreme properness of wine was supported by sensory evidence.³¹⁸ He believed that the stimulus of appetite worked to encourage an animal to eat foods which were proper for them; accordingly, Powell explains that 'grass is distasteful to a man, and flesh to a donkey'.³¹⁹ Wine was clearly regarded as an especially appealing foodstuff by Greco-Roman society,³²⁰

³¹⁵ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.150 (also noted in Ch.1 n.6).

³¹⁶ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 3.20=6.705K: '[some foods are] medicaments promoting concoction [the digestion/'cooking' of foods in the stomach] of other foods, as a ginger and pepper and, in another way, both wine and vinegar'. Note also: Béguin (2002) 148-149.

³¹⁷ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.4=6.242-243K.

³¹⁸ In a similar way, Béguin (2002) 145-146 discusses Galen's belief that aqueous and white wines were less hot and less strong in their effects (notably the effect on the head, and the tendency to cause fevers), as they were closer to water; Galen's theory was supported by sensory (visual) evidence.

³¹⁹ Powell (2003) 15.

³²⁰ On wines largely being considered 'tasty', consider the following examples. Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places*, 7 states that only a 'little wine is needed to make a palatable drink' out of even the best water; yet this implies that wine is the tasty element (and some wine is needed to make even the best water taste acceptable).

Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.59 states: 'who can doubt, however, that some kinds of wine are more agreeable than others'. At 14.60 and 14.71-72 he notes that everyone has their own favourite wine (though he argues that there is a general consensus on some wines, and Pliny claims to follow this in providing his list of notable wines), and 23.33 states that the very

which would subsequently support the idea that it was a very proper foodstuff for mankind.

Visual evidence also supported Galen's ideas regarding wine's properness.³²¹ After food had been digested/'cooked'/'concocted' in the stomach, using the animal's internal heat to change it into a substance ('chyme') individual to that animal, it was thought to be converted into blood in the liver, which then delivered nutrition to the body by being assimilated into its various parts.³²² Foods which could be more quickly transformed into blood were accordingly considered to be more nourishing, and thus more proper.³²³ Those foods which already resembled blood were thought to require less transformation; for example red foods in general.³²⁴ As wine already closely resembled blood, it was thus easy to support claims regarding its extreme properness. This was especially true among the most blood-like of wines; Galen states that 'the thick red ones are the most useful of all wines for the production of blood, since they require the least change into it'. In general, thicker wines, and also darker/red-coloured wines, were considered to be especially hot in mixture, more nourishing and more strength-giving (though the less thick and dark-/red-coloured a wine, the less notable its properties in this respect; light-/white-coloured, thin, and aqueous wines were at the bottom of this scale).³²⁵

wide variety of claims regarding the best type of wine are due to 'each man ... dictating to everybody else a preference for what he himself finds most pleasant'. Pliny also notes at 23.42 that 'it is to wine that we men should attribute the fact that of animals we alone drink when we are not thirsty', implying that wine was considered especially appealing. At 14.59-76 Pliny lists wines according to merit (according to consensus, as noted above) with the best ranked wines presumably the more pleasant. Subsequently, the underlying belief is probably that wines (or at least wines of quality) were thought to differ in *the extent to which* they were considered agreeable, not (for the most part) whether or not they were agreeable or not. Dioscorides, 5.6.1 also regards older wines as *especially* pleasant to taste; the implication is presumably that most other wines are pleasant to a lesser degree, but still notably pleasant. Note further that Jongman (2007) 603-605 also claims that the significant daily intake of wine (along with olive oil) in the early Roman Empire 'contributed to a better diet', in part due it being 'tasty'/'more attractive' in comparison to grain-based staples.

³²¹ Consider n.318.

³²² On Galen's theories regarding digestion and nutrition, see especially: Powell (2003) 13-18. See also: Galen, *On Black Bile*, 5.140K; Galen, *The Soul's Dependence on the Body*, 9=4.807K; King (2001) 41-42; Grant (2000) 8.

³²³ Note: Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 3.39=6.744K with Powell (2003) 184.

³²⁴ Galen, *On the Natural Faculties*, 1.10=2.21K: 'How could bread turn into blood without having gradually parted with its whiteness and gradually acquired redness.'

³²⁵ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 3.39=6.744K: 'The thick, red ones are the most useful of all wines for the production of blood, since they require the least change into it; and after these are the wines that are dark and at the same time sweet and thick; then the ones that are dark red in colour and thick in consistency, combining with these features some astringent quality. The white, thick, harsh wines are less nourishing than these, and the wines that are white in colour but thin in consistency are the least nourishing of all, very close, I

Similar beliefs may be detectable in the Hippocratic work on *Regimen*, in the only comment which explicitly discusses the link between wine and blood. It is noted that 'white wines and thin sweet wines ... make the blood weak, increasing in the body that which is opposed to the blood'.³²⁶ This comment appears to imply that the Hippocratic author considered blood to be typically other-than thin, perhaps thick (as increasing that which is opposed to blood makes blood thinner).³²⁷ Furthermore, it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that he considered blood to be either red or dark. As such, this Hippocratic author apparently thought that wines which did not look like blood fostered worse blood; it is logically probable the opposite belief was also held, and blood-like wine were considered to promote good blood.

The fact that Galen believed both wine and the humour blood to be of the same general mixture (hot and wet) may have also added strength to his claim regarding wine's extreme properness, being that Galen's argument was based on the idea that wine was among the easiest foodstuffs to convert into blood, and thus quick to nourish. Indeed, writing up to about a century after Galen, Ps-Galen's *On the Humours* links a foodstuff's ability to foster the humour blood to its nutritional quality, in an argument akin to Galen's concept of 'properness'. Although Ps-Galen preferred to discuss constitutions in terms of humours (in contrast to Galen who preferred to discuss properties in terms of mixture), Ps-Galen followed a broadly similar fundamental humoral framework to Galen regarding the effect of nutrition upon bodily mixture. Thus he explains that 'when we make proper use of foods in recipes, the attendant humours follow',³²⁸ implying his belief that consuming food of a certain mixture led to the promotion of the humour which corresponded to that mixture. Accordingly, as he considered blood to be hot and wet in mixture, Ps-Galen implies wine to be

suppose, to the water that is appropriate for what is called *hydromelon*. Their nature indicates, and experience bears witness to the fact, that thick wines are more nutritious than thin ones ... the thick ones are more slowly concocted, just as they are more slowly distributed; but when they chance upon a strong stomach, so that they are well concocted, they provide more nutriment for the body.' Similarly, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.5=6.336-337K: in comparison to thin wines (and also implicitly those of a lighter colour), 'those of ochre or yellow wines which are thick generate blood and nourish the body'. Furthermore, *Method of Medicine*, 12.5=10.837K: from watery wines (which are the weakest and coolest wines) 'least of all is something like blood made from the substance of these'; in comparison, yellow/tawny wines (which are especially hot) nourish well and generate useful blood. Powell (2003) 10; Béguin (2002) 144, 149; Jouanna (1996) 424 = (2012) 184.

³²⁶ Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 2.52.

³²⁷ Certain blood is considered thick by Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 2.46.

³²⁸ Ps-Galen, *On the Humours*, 19.489K.

similarly hot and wet when he states that 'blood follows on from drunkenness'.³²⁹ Where Ps-Galen elaborates further on what types of activities especially promoted the creation of each bodily humour, he states that 'blood is generated by ... all those foods that are both wholesome and easy to cook [in the sense of digest/'concoct']'.³³⁰ Ps-Galen therefore considered that this group of high-nutrition foodstuffs consisted of those foods which especially promoted the humour blood (which is also to say those foods which were hot and wet in mixture). As Ps-Galen thought of wine as among these foods which especially fostered the humour blood, this implies that wine was considered to be among this group of highly nourishing foodstuffs. Thus, in a similar way to Galen's concept of properness, wine was considered among the quickest foods to be digested, the most nourishing, and also one of the foods which especially promoted blood. This therefore implies that Galen's ideas regarding wine's extreme nutritional properties were not entirely anomalous, as similar beliefs were held by at least some other Greco-Roman doctors of the first to third centuries AD.

Yet it should not be assumed that similar ideas were ubiquitous among humoral doctors of this period. As noted above, the second book of *Regimen* was circulated as a work of the revered Hippocrates, and, in contrast to Galen, this stated wine to be 'hot and dry' in mixture. It is possible that many of the first- to third-century humoral doctors who read this statement interpreted it through their own methodological lens of the four-humour model. In such case, this would imply that Hippocrates considered wine to be unlike the humour blood, as wine was considered dry rather than moist in mixture. This dryness would instead imply that wine was actually closer in mixture to yellow bile, and as other foodstuffs were presented as hot and wet by this Hippocratic author, they would appear to be far closer to the humour blood in terms of mixture. As such, it may potentially have been difficult for humoral doctors of this period who revered Hippocrates, and knew of this statement in *Regimen*, to also follow similar logic to Galen in holding that wine was the easiest food to turn into blood. (Note that *Regimen* on wine and blood is discussed further from p.185.)

Due to wine's extreme properness, Galen accordingly believed 'that a moderate amount of wine has excellent effects on digestion, distribution of the food, blood

³²⁹ Ps-Galen, *On the Humours*, 19.494-495K.

³³⁰ Ps-Galen, *On the Humours*, 19.488-489K.

production, and nutrition'.³³¹ He also believed that 'wine in moderation bolsters the natural temperature of the body, as does a proper diet', confirming that he considered wine to be an especially useful part of the diet for maintaining body warmth.³³² Wine's extreme warmth and properness therefore meant that Galen could specifically prescribe wine to treat a wide variety of medical conditions. It was prescribed as a digestive aid, for example when an illness was caused by indigestion, as described above (p.136). Wine was additionally used to treat cold illnesses, such as an abundance of phlegm in the stomach, as noted in the previous section (p.121). Wine was also commonly prescribed as a highly strength-giving foodstuff, and was used furthermore for fostering blood production. In fact, wine was considered so constructively strength-giving that Galen stated wine was 'the only drink you must use for all those bodies requiring restoration that are without fever'.³³³ As seen above (see from p.121), this was the reason for Galen advising wine consumption as especially useful for elderly or convalescent patients, who were typically considered especially cold, weak and lacking in blood. Indeed, for particularly cold conditions, including old age, especially warm wines were sometimes considered appropriate.

Another example is in the case of Diodorus the grammarian, who often had epileptic seizures whilst he was composing his literary works.³³⁴ Galen noted that this patient went for long periods of time without eating whilst engaged in his work, and thus identified the immediate cause as a lack of food; essentially, he was 'greatly harmed by fasting'. Seizures also occurred when 'worry or anger supervened'. Galen established that 'the condition of his body was thin, and on being asked, he acknowledged that his stomach was bilious at all times'. Galen concluded that Diodorus' seizures were due when 'his stomach was disordered', as in turn 'the injured stomach clearly incites the other organs to convulsions'. Galen explains his prescription:

³³¹ Galen, *The Soul's Dependence on the Body*, 3=4.778K.

³³² Galen, *On the Causes of Disease*, 7.13K.

³³³ Galen, *Method of Medicine*, 7.6=10.482-485K.

³³⁴ Galen, *On Venesection against the Erasistrateans at Rome*, 9=11.242K; *On the Preservation of Health*, 6.14=6.448-449K. These cases are extremely similar, and both patients are grammarians; they are almost certainly the same case of Diodorus the grammarian.

‘As a remedy for him I arranged that he should take some bread dipped in diluted wine at the third or fourth hour, and with this treatment he has remained in good health for many years through paying attention to only one thing, the best possible digestion of the food after the meal.’

This wine and bread was accordingly thought to quickly nourish and strengthen the patient (in particular, ‘strengthening the stomach’), presumably in part because the wine was considered easy to digest, assimilate and thus strengthen, and also because the wine helped other foods (such as the bread that it was served with) to be digested. This treatment fit well into his patient’s lifestyle: strengthening Diodorus very quickly and with minimal effort, meaning that he could thus avoid attacks of illness without having to dedicate much time or effort to eating or digesting a meal. As seen below in the section on wine’s property of moisture, the wine would also no doubt have been believed to combat the dryness in the stomach signified by its bilious nature. This treatment also implies that wine’s extremely nourishing property was not only considered applicable when wine was drunk as a beverage, but also when wine was added to other foods; it presumably helped these other foodstuffs to be more quickly digested. This property is also reflected in Galen’s suggestion that a juice made from groats (the hulled whole-grains of cereals) is made more nourishing by taking it with certain wines.³³⁵

This concept of wine as a digestive aid can be seen to have roots hundreds of years beforehand. Galen’s treatment of Diodorus is very similar to one found in the Hippocratic Corpus’ *A Regimen for Health*, which advises that a patient ‘should drink more wine and take it less diluted’ in order to combat a ‘weakness and coldness of the belly [preventing] the greater part of the food from being digested’. The wine was presumably thought to warm and strengthen the belly, and aid digestion.³³⁶

The Hippocratic Corpus’ *Affections* suggested drinking unmixed wine to solve a variety of digestion related problems: flatulence, heat, irritation, fullness, or abdominal pains. The body was thought to be heated through this wine, and thus relieved of its contents.³³⁷ Wine was also noted to be one of the most

³³⁵ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 1.6=6.496K.

³³⁶ Hippocrates, *A Regimen for Health*, 7; symptoms of this condition include vomiting undigested food and a bloated stomach.

³³⁷ Hippocrates, *Affections*, 61.

nourishing foodstuffs.³³⁸ Furthermore, whilst eating or drinking more than could be digested was generally thought to produce flatulence, abdominal pains and fullness, certain wines (sweet, dry, honeyed and aged ones) were said not to produce this.³³⁹

Cato the Elder's second-century BC manual *On Agriculture* similarly advised that a mixture of old wine with pomegranate blossoms and crushed root of fennel could be drunk by a person with dyspepsia as an aid whenever they wanted to digest food.³⁴⁰ He also advised myrtle wine as a remedy for indigestion (as well as colic [a severe pain in the intestines] and pains in the side).³⁴¹

In the first century AD, the medical author Rufus of Ephesus advised that wine could be beneficial to digestion due to its heat.³⁴² Celsus implies that wine was commonly prescribed as a stomach aid, as he states that patients who had their wine restricted should not be trusted, as they were known to sometimes pretend to have a weak stomach in order to be prescribed wine.³⁴³ Pliny associated wine in general with aiding digestion and combating stomach disorders, advising neat wine to treat several conditions related to the digestive organs, including (among other things): 'flatulence and gnawing of the hypochondria, violent vomitings from the stomach, and if the belly or intestines suffer from catarrh'.³⁴⁴ He also prescribed that (following the administering of wine in a remission of cardiac disease) 'if the stomach be disordered, should the food not pass down, the wine must be given once more'.³⁴⁵ Soranus also seems to imply similar beliefs in wine's notable utility as a digestive aid when he advises women not drink wine in the very early stages of pregnancy 'so that the distribution of food may not become violent or overpowering' in their more fragile state.³⁴⁶

Different wines were thought to have different digestive properties. Béguin's analysis of wine in the Galenic Corpus concludes that both the hotter and

³³⁸ Hippocrates, *Affections*, 50.

³³⁹ Hippocrates, *Affections*, 47-48.

³⁴⁰ Cato, *On Agriculture*, 127.

³⁴¹ Cato, *On Agriculture*, 125. For another of Cato's remedies for colic, again including wine consumption, see n.262.

³⁴² Rufus of Ephesus, *On Wine*, fr.1.2; Jouanna (1996) 415 n.24 = (2012) 177 n.24.

³⁴³ Celsus, 1.8.2.

³⁴⁴ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.43.

³⁴⁵ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.50-51.

³⁴⁶ Soranus, *Gynaecology*, 1.46.

thicker wines were considered best for promoting digestion.³⁴⁷ Yellow/tawny wines were considered to be the wine, by colour, which was most conducive to digestion in the stomach, as they were the most heating.³⁴⁸ Galen also noted that 'the sweet wines are more concocted in the stomach and better distributed than the harsh ones'.³⁴⁹ As such, Galen thought the wines which most promoted digestion were (in general) those which were yellow, thick and sweet.

In contrast, Dioscorides considered astringent wines to be the most powerful for assisting digestion.³⁵⁰ Pliny specifically associated dry wines, and pitch-flavoured wines, with being especially easily digested or notably aiding digestion. In addition, thin and dry wines were considered especially nourishing to the stomach.³⁵¹ On the other hand, Pliny regarded rich and dark wines, as well as wine mixed with seawater, as less beneficial for the stomach, and thus presumably less helpful for the digestive process (the latter was considered especially injurious for this organ, along with the bladder and sinews).³⁵² Pliny also believed that fresh grapes and all musts aggravated this organ; perhaps then this was also thought to be the case with the youngest wines.³⁵³

Pliny also addressed the properties of wines from specific regions in respect to the stomach and digestion. The wines of Setinum were noted to ensure digestion, and Pliny also notes that Augustus, and for the most part the Emperors after him, preferred the wines of Setinum as 'injurious attacks of indigestion do not readily arise from this'.³⁵⁴ Pliny elaborates that wines from Surrentum 'have no such bad effects' relating to the stomach and digestion, and 'check catarrhs of the stomach and intestines'.³⁵⁵ He also attributes relevant therapeutic properties to wines from Segni, which 'counts as a medicine, being useful as a stomachic astringent owing to its excessive dryness'.³⁵⁶ On the other hand, sweet Alban wines were considered less beneficial to the stomach, and dry Alban wines (though generally considered better for health than

³⁴⁷ Béguin (2002) 147. See further n.325.

³⁴⁸ Galen, *Method of Medicine*, 12.4=10.837K. Similar logic is attested in the Hippocratic Corpus' *Epidemics* as noted by Alessi (2002) 108; and also by Mnesitheus of Athens (fourth century BC) in Athenaeus, 1.32c-e (= Mnesitheus, fr.46); Wilkins (2002) 186-187. On Mnesitheus and wine, see n.42.

³⁴⁹ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 3.39=6.744K.

³⁵⁰ Dioscorides, 5.6.3.

³⁵¹ Dry: Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.38. Pitch-flavoured: 23.47.

³⁵² Rich and dark: Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.39. Seawater: 23.46.

³⁵³ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.10, 23.29-30.

³⁵⁴ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.61, 23.36.

³⁵⁵ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.35.

³⁵⁶ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.65.

Falernian) were thought to 'aid digestion less and tend to overload the stomach'.

Dioscorides also advised specific flavoured wines for similar purposes: those flavoured with resin for aiding digestion, with germander for treating slow digestion, and with goat's marjoram or Cretan thyme or savory or oregano for combating indigestion.³⁵⁷ Pliny similarly considered wine, must, or raisin wine seasoned with resin be a useful therapeutic measure for treating overly cold stomachs, and the wine called *bion* (from the Greek for 'life'; made from sun-drying unripe grapes) to be extremely useful for treating many illnesses, including disordered stomachs, weak digestion, intestinal problems.³⁵⁸ He also advised ground-up grape stones, sprinkled into a patient's beverage to combat disordered stomachs, dysentery, and problems of the small intestine,³⁵⁹ and a decoction of the root of the wild vine, drunk in Coan wine (a wine made with seawater), to evacuate a problematic watery humour from the belly.³⁶⁰

Pliny also noted that extremely old hydromel (which had become wine-like in flavour, and had thus probably undergone fermentation to become what we would nowadays think of as alcoholic 'mead') caused injury to the stomach (as well as the sinews). Yet Dioscorides, on the other hand, believed that aged hydromel (probably also aged to the point of fermenting into mead) was beneficial for stomach problems and rheum, as well as a lack of appetite.³⁶¹

Celsus similarly believed that certain wines were more beneficial to digestion than others, but his views are more difficult to outline as he divided foods according to three relevant categories. First, he thought some foods contained 'good juices' (*boni suci*), and were thus easily digested; these included sweet or mild wine, raisin wine and boiled-down must. In comparison, everything acrid, sour, bitter or oily was thought to contain bad juices; this included vinegar.³⁶²

Secondly, some foods were also considered better suited to the stomach than others, including dry or harsh wine, wine with added resin, raisins preserved in

³⁵⁷ Dioscorides, 5.34.2 (resin), 5.41 (germander), 5.45 (goat's marjoram), 5.49-52 (Cretan thyme/savory/ oregano).

³⁵⁸ Resin: Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.46. *Bion*: 23.53; this wine is also described at 14.77.

³⁵⁹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.13.

³⁶⁰ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.19. For Coan wine being made with seawater, see: 14.78-79.

³⁶¹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 22.112; Dioscorides, 5.9. Further on hydromel/mead, see Appendix 1 n.29.

³⁶² Celsus, 2.20-21; Spencer (1935-38) 1.200.

jars, very hot or cold food or drink, and foods which are harsh (even if sour) or moderately sprinkled with salt. In comparison, honeyed-wine, boiled-down must, raisin wine, fresh grapes, and milk, and all tepid, heavily salted, stewed or over-sweetened foods were considered alien to the stomach, along with anything causing flatulence.³⁶³ Celsus thus advised that in order to treat a wasting disease caused by overeating, 'the food too should be of the kinds easily digested, which are most nutritious. Hence also the use of wine is necessary, but it should be dry.'³⁶⁴ Celsus also advised that an urgent agitation of the belly should be treated by avoiding slowly digested foods, or food made from many ingredients, such as wine treated with seawater or thin or sweet wines. Instead, such a patient should dry fuller bodied wines; Celsus only permitted honeyed-wine if the honey was boiled.³⁶⁵ Hot and dry wines were also repeatedly prescribed for a variety of stomach conditions.³⁶⁶

Thirdly, Celsus believed that stewed, over-sweetened or over-thin foods readily decompose within the body; including sweet wine, honeyed-wine, boiled-down must, raisin wine, and milk. In comparison, harsh and resinated wines were considered among the foods which did not readily decompose.³⁶⁷ Thus to treat cachexia, a bad bodily habit whereby all food undergoes decomposition, Celsus prescribed foods which less readily decompose, including dry wine (which Celsus thought readily became harsh).³⁶⁸

Celsus combined consideration of these categories in his treatment of paralysis of the stomach, whereby it did not retain food and nourish the body, and the body subsequently underwent wasting. This was treated by cold food, food which is easily digested, and that which did not readily decompose. As such, the most suitable drink was thought to be dry and resinated wine (such as the

³⁶³ Celsus, 2.24-25.

³⁶⁴ Celsus, 3.22.6.

³⁶⁵ Celsus, 1.6.2.

³⁶⁶ Celsus, 1.8.1 advises that wine should be light and dry, that only hot wine (not water) should be drunk on an empty stomach, though after a meal it should be cold (note 1.2.10: the digestion of a meal was helped by drinking cold water afterwards); 4.12.2-3 prescribes hot drinks for problematic flatulence, and dry wine once the flatulence had subsided; 4.12.6 states that when the stomach had been damaged by stomach bile, indigestion must be avoided, the food must be readily swallowed and not disagreeable for the stomach, the wine must be dry; 5.27.3c advises that in therioma (an ulceration within) after the subsidence of inflammation, regimen should include taking digestible foods (avoiding everything acrid) and drinking freely of water and a little dry wine at dinner.

³⁶⁷ Celsus, 2.28.1-2.

³⁶⁸ Celsus, 3.22.7. On dry wines readily becoming harsh: 2.24.

Rhaetic or Allobrogic wines), or else the harshest wine possible (such as the Signine); this should either be served cold or else undiluted and well heated.³⁶⁹

In a similar way, wine also seems to have been associated with solving some problems related to hunger. The Hippocratic text *Aphorisms* advised that neat wine had the capacity to quickly make a very hungry person feel full; this was subsequently discussed by Galen in his commentaries on Hippocrates.³⁷⁰ Galen believed that the cause was a cold and acid imbalance of the stomach, and wine's notable hotness would therefore treat this problem by warming the stomach. Other authors seemed to have linked wine to promoting healthy hunger. Pliny believed wine to be 'a tonic to the stomach and a sharpener of the appetite' (perhaps this belief was a motivating factor behind the Roman drinking game which Pliny mentions, whereby 'one man gets a prize for tipsiness on condition of his eating as much as he has drunk').³⁷¹ He seems to have especially revered boiled honeyed-wine for promoting a healthy appetite: it could revive a failing appetite, and unlike other (un-boiled) honeyed-wines it did not create an inconvenient sense of fullness after drinking.³⁷² Dioscorides also advised certain flavoured wines to stimulate the appetite: those with wormwood, Cretan thyme, savory, oregano, celery, or catmint, pennyroyal and wormwood.³⁷³

Wine was also strongly linked with blood in Greco-Roman thought, at least in a metaphorical way. Thus Pliny records the anecdotes that the philosopher Androcydes reminded Alexander the Great that wine is 'the earth's blood', and that when Mark Antony vomited up a copious amount of wine before the battle of Actium he was metaphorically said to be 'already drunk with the blood of his compatriots'.³⁷⁴

Accordingly, it is not surprising that Galen's medicine heavily links different wine drinking to different blood production. It should be noted that Galen believed there to be two fluids sharing the name 'blood'. One was the unchanging bodily humour 'blood', which was (in Powell's words) 'a theoretical fluid without

³⁶⁹ Celsus, 4.12.7-8.

³⁷⁰ Hippocrates, *Aphorisms*, 2.21; Galen, *On Hippocrates' Aphorisms*, 21=17b.499K; Jouanna (1996) 423 = (2012) 183; Béguin (2002) 152.

³⁷¹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.38. Drinking game: 14.140.

³⁷² Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 22.113.

³⁷³ Dioscorides, 5.39.3 (wormwood), 5.49-52 (Cretan thyme/savory/oregano), 5.64 (celery), 5.52 (catmint, pennyroyal and wormwood).

³⁷⁴ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.58, 14.148.

separate existence'. The other was the tangible bodily fluid seen during bleeding, which contained the humour of 'blood' along with a mixture of various other bodily fluids.³⁷⁵ Hence, due to its various constituent parts, the latter tangible 'blood' often varied greatly from one to another. One person's blood could be regarded as 'good', another person's 'bad', and this could be influenced by the person's drinking regime. The significance of such a strong link between drinking regime and both blood and also milk production is illustrated in Galen's comments in *On the Preservation of Health*. He notes that in order for a wet-nurse to produce good milk, she should have good blood (that which 'has no excess of yellow bile or black bile or phlegm and is not mixed with serous or aqueous fluid'). Galen accordingly implies that she should therefore pay careful attention to her drinking regime, because 'such [good] blood [and presumably also good milk] is produced by ... timely and moderate beverages'.³⁷⁶

Dioscorides, however, implies an opposing view to Galen's belief in a link between drinking which was good for blood and that which was good for milk production. He advises a fig wine for increasing a woman's milk production, even though it is stated to lead to the production of bad blood.³⁷⁷ Other authors also imply a strong link between wine-drinking and milk production, without reference to blood. Celsus implied a belief in a link between a women's diet, including her drinking regime, her milk production, and the effect on a suckling baby. If a baby was suffering from thrush, he advised that the wet-nurse should change her regimen, which should now include drinking diluted wine (providing that the baby was not feverish).³⁷⁸ Soranus noted that a wet-nurse should be self controlled enough to abstain from drink when needed, because excess drink threatened to spoil her milk (heavy drinking threatened to harm the wet-nurse in body and soul, and 'too much wine passes its quality to the milk').³⁷⁹ He noted that in some cases, due to such bad milk, 'the nursling becomes sluggish and comatose and sometimes even afflicted with tremor, apoplexy, and convulsions'. Soranus thus advised that a wet-nurse should have a

³⁷⁵ Powell (2003) 12.

³⁷⁶ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.9=6.45-46K.

³⁷⁷ Dioscorides, 5.32.2.

³⁷⁸ Celsus, 6.11.4 with Spencer (1935-38) 3.591. Similarly at 5.28.15d, Celsus notes that if a baby was suffering from pustules then his wet-nurse should have the treatment applied to her, including modifying her diet.

³⁷⁹ Soranus, *Gynaecology*, 2.19(88).

carefully regulated drinking regime which was changed over time according to the baby's development. After abstinence from wine for forty days following the baby's birth, honeyed-wine should be taken in increasing in quantity, and later she should change gradually onto clear white wine.³⁸⁰ This meant that a baby thought too young to consume wine itself (this was not considered appropriate until at least six months old) 'will be fed without harm by milk affected by wine'.³⁸¹ Soranus also explicitly advised that when the nurse's breast milk was too thin, she should add a little wine to her meals to help produce better milk.³⁸²

Regardless, Béguin's survey of wine in the Galenic Corpus concludes that blood production was thought to be especially fostered by consuming the especially nourishing darker (black and red) and thicker wines, whereas the less nourishing wines were largely thought to produce less blood.³⁸³ Accordingly, Galen prescribes 'those of the ochre or yellow wines which are thick [and] generate good blood and nourish the body' for old men, who, as seen above, were considered to be weak and lacking in good-quality blood.³⁸⁴ For people in general (not specifically the elderly), he considered that drinking 'yellow, sweet, transparent wines', such as Falernian, 'give rise to good blood which is balanced in thickness'.³⁸⁵ Galen therefore considered wine to be highly influential over blood production (as well as breast milk). He thought that varying an individual's drinking regime was a major factor in determining the quality of the blood (and milk) which that person produced. Specific drinking regimes could thus be prescribed accordingly.

Other medical authorities also shared some similar beliefs to Galen regarding wine's heating and strength-giving properties. The Hippocratic author of *Affections* implied unmixed wine to be significantly heating, and listed only wine and water as the drinks which provided a significant amount of strength, health

³⁸⁰ Soranus, *Gynaecology*, 2.26(95).

³⁸¹ On babies not consuming wine until at least 6 months old: Soranus, *Gynaecology*, 2.46(115). Once a baby had started taking solid food, it was advised that he should still take breast-milk until he was teething (2.48[117]); a nurse could presumably drink wine at this stage, as it was advised that if the infant's body was overly heavy and he was short of breath, she should change to drinking water (as well as taking fewer and less rich meals) to keep the baby's flesh within bounds.

³⁸² Soranus, *Gynaecology*, 2.29(98).

³⁸³ Béguin (2002) 144, 149; Jouanna (1996) 424 = (2012) 184. Note: Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 3.39=6.744-745K.

³⁸⁴ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.5=6.336-337K.

³⁸⁵ Galen, *The Thinning Diet*, 12=5.4.2.447CMG.

and good support for growth.³⁸⁶ The best foods for producing strength were also noted to be good for flesh production, thickening blood, and being accepted by the body.³⁸⁷ In particular, dark dry wine, sweet and honeyed-wines, and dry wines were considered especially useful for providing strength (as also were raisins, and fat, rich, sweet foods in general).³⁸⁸ Furthermore, the author recommends diluted old white honeyed-wine to build up a convalescent patient's strength.³⁸⁹ The reason behind the author's careful prescription of a comparatively specific and complicated type of wine surely reflects two things. First, the difficulty of convalescence: the author considered strong foods inappropriate whilst a patient was suffering disease, but useful for restoring a patient.³⁹⁰ Secondly, the great potency of wine's strengthening properties: its significant power meant that it needed to be especially carefully administered in this delicate condition. As such, this specific drink was probably thought to offer a constructive compromise, to be gentle yet strengthening for this patient, by combining the 'stronger' element of the honeyed-wine, with the 'weaker' element of the diluted white wine.

Celsus' views on strength are more systematically outlined. He classifies foods and drinks according to three main categories according to their 'strength': there was a strongest, middle and lightest/weakest class.³⁹¹ These were only broad groupings, and the foods inside each group were recognised to vary in strength to some degree.³⁹² The more nutritious foods were equated with those which were stronger, and the weakest with the least nutritious.³⁹³ Although Celsus believed that a person in perfect health needed no rules regarding their regimen,³⁹⁴ in less ideal circumstances of health Celsus' general rule was that the quantity and quality of the food should be matched to the strength of the

³⁸⁶ Hippocrates, *Affections*, 61.

³⁸⁷ Hippocrates, *Affections*, 47.

³⁸⁸ Hippocrates, *Affections*, 40, 55.

³⁸⁹ Hippocrates, *Affections*, 43.

³⁹⁰ Hippocrates, *Affections*, 52, 61.

³⁹¹ Celsus, 2.18.

³⁹² Celsus, 2.18.4.

³⁹³ This is most explicitly seen at: Celsus, 2.18.2: '... the strongest kind of food (I call strongest that which has most nourishment)'. The synonymous nature of 'strength' and 'nutrition' when discussing these three categories is seen throughout 2.18, as Celsus freely alternates between talking in terms of 'strength' and 'nutrition'; thus, for example: 'water is of all the weakest; and drink from grain is the more nutritious, according as the grain itself is nutritious' (2.18.11).

³⁹⁴ Celsus, 1.1.1-2.

patient.³⁹⁵ Celsus elaborates that ‘for weak patients, therefore, there is needed the lightest food; food of the middle class best sustains those moderately strong, and for the robust the strongest is the fittest’. He also states that ‘of the lightest foods more can be taken; it is rather with the strongest food that moderation should be observed’. This was because the strongest class of food was considered the hardest to digest, and it was thus only constructive for people healthy enough to do so. Yet once it had been digested, it was considered the most nourishing, and thus a smaller volume of foodstuffs from this strongest class was required to sustain a person.

Certain wines were included among the top rank of the strongest foods (those which were sweet, heady, very young [‘still fermenting’], or very old), along with beer, honeyed-wine, raisin wine, boiled-down must and milk.³⁹⁶ Wine of middle-age was of the middle category, along with vinegar. No drinks other than water were of the lowest category. As different wines were classified in two of the three categories, wines seem to have been regarded as suitable in a wide range of health conditions. In addition, Celsus stated that wines could be made even stronger and more nutritious: those from vines grown in good soil and a temperate climate were more nutritious, raisin wine was stronger if it was made from drier grapes, and honeyed-wine could be made even stronger by adding more honey (which was itself considered among the very strongest of foodstuffs).³⁹⁷ Regardless, it is notable that Celsus states absolutely that beer is the strongest and ‘the more nutritious’ of all drinks, explaining that this is because of its production from grain, which he considered to be among the very

³⁹⁵ Celsus, 2.18.13.

³⁹⁶ Celsus, 2.18.11. Note that, as highlighted in Appendix 1 (p.342ff), Spencer is one author who frequently misleadingly translates *mulsum* as ‘mead’. When used alone, as a noun, *mulsum* typically signified a grape wine flavoured with honey, as in Columella, *On Agriculture*, 12.41. *Mulsum* did not signify a fermented mixture of *only* honey and water (without any grape wine), as is typically implied by the modern English term ‘mead’ when it is used in its strictest sense. As such, ‘mead’ is a misleading translation of *mulsum*, and ‘honeyed-wine’ is the preferred translation throughout this thesis. It should be noted that Spencer’s own ‘List of Alimenta’ appendix (which describes the foodstuffs mentioned by Celsus) supports this alternative translation, when he defines *mulsum* as ‘honeyed-wine ... generally consisted of one part honey to two of wine’. Note that for *mulsum* to describe mead (in the sense of a honey-water beverage, without any grape wine) it would typically have to be used in its adjectival form along with a noun (such as *aqua* – ‘water’, or similar), as in Columella, *On Agriculture*, 12.12 which uses *aqua mulsa* for ‘honeyed-water’ (i.e. hydromel). In a similar vein, note that Cato, *On Agriculture*, 157.7 uses *acitum mulsum* for honeyed-vinegar (curiously mistranslated by Ash and Cooper as ‘grape vinegar’). *DGRA*, s.v. ‘Vinum’ (p.1205) cautions the reader to note the difference between the two drinks implied by the Latin terms *mulsum* (s.c. *vinum*) and *mulsa* (s.c. *aqua*), but does not elaborate. See: Lewis and Short (1879) s.vv. ‘mulceo’, ‘mulsum’.

³⁹⁷ Celsus, 2.18.11-12.

strongest of all foodstuffs (along with domesticated quadrupeds, large game, large birds, whales, honey, and cheese).³⁹⁸ Therefore, although Celsus considered some types of wines highly nourishing, it was beer which he considered to be the drink closest to the very pinnacle of nutritional value.

In practice, Celsus seems to have regarded wine as so useful for strengthening patients that he advised it in situations where its consumption would otherwise be considered risky. Celsus explains the rationale behind this: if only one part of the body is ill, then the 'support of the strength of the whole body rather than the curing by itself of the part diseased is of more importance'.³⁹⁹ Thus, he states that in severe wounds, 'many who are actually fainting from loss of blood must, before any treatment, be resuscitated by wine, which in other cases is most inimical to a wound' (at least, in most cases, until a scar had formed).⁴⁰⁰ Similarly, in the treatment of cholera (*cholera nostras*), when the indigestion of the disease had been relieved, Celsus was concerned that there was a greater fear that the patient may faint.⁴⁰¹ As such, he advised administering wine (specifically: thin, aromatic wine, mixed with cold water) at this point in order to lessen this risk of fainting, even though he also considered wine consumption to increase the chance of indigestion in this illness. Furthermore, although Celsus seems reluctant to permit wine consumption for patients with conditions related to the head, he advised that a person with a head weakness 'drink a light wine, well diluted, rather than water, in order that he may have something in reserve when his head begins to become heavier' (he probably specified a *weaker* wine because this property meant that it was thought to affected the head less).⁴⁰² In

³⁹⁸ Discussed by Nelson (2005) 71-72.

³⁹⁹ Celsus, 3.2.4.

⁴⁰⁰ Celsus, 5.26.25b. On the circumstances where wine's consumption was considered appropriate in cases of severe wounds, see: 5.26.30b.

⁴⁰¹ Celsus, 4.18.4; Spencer (1935-38) 3.420. Celsus subsequently criticises Erasistratus' administering of three to five drops of wine mixed in water at the start of cholera (with this beverage becoming steadily stronger throughout the illness), both because Celsus thought that giving wine so early in the disease was especially risky as it threatened to promote indigestion, and also because Celsus thought five drops of wine an insufficient quantity to relieve the patient. Therefore, Celsus presumably thought that an effective strengthening course of wine should employ stronger draughts of wine (i.e. significantly more than five drops of wine mixed with a volume of water).

⁴⁰² Celsus, 1.4.5. For Celsus being reluctant to allow wine drinking during head conditions, see for example: 3.18.24 notes that delirium is the only type of insanity in which wine is appropriate; 3.23.3 advises that wine be avoided after an epileptic fit and 3.28.8 advises that it be abstained from for life if epilepsy becomes a life-long ailment; 3.26 advises a patient who is stunned, and his mind and body stupefied (as when hit by lightning), abstain from wine; 4.2.8 advises that if a patient has longstanding pains in the head he should drink only water, but he can return to wine if the pain disperses, though he should always drink water before his wine in future; 8.4.2 advises that a patient with any fracture should drink only water during

addition, and in a similar way to Galen, Celsus also prescribed a specific wine-drinking regime intended to help build the strength of all convalescent patients, and thus help them avoid slipping into a wasting condition.⁴⁰³ As such, wine's strengthening properties seem to have been thought useful for fostering reserves of strength, strengthening weakened people, and combating fainting and wasting.

Celsus (and perhaps also Soranus) furthermore thought wine consumption to aid the growth of flesh.⁴⁰⁴ As such, his thought was somewhat similar to Galen's, who believed that wine easily turned into blood, and blood easily into flesh.⁴⁰⁵ Celsus also noted that in wounds, inflammation was to be feared whenever there is too little bleeding from a wound.⁴⁰⁶ He suggests that in this case, the bleeding should not be suppressed, and 'if there seems too little bleeding, blood should be let from the arm as well, at any rate when the patient is young and robust and used to exercise, and much more so when a drinking-bout has preceded the wound'. This suggests that Celsus believed heavy drinking of wine promoted either great amounts of bodily strength (like the young, robust, well exercised patients) or greater amounts of blood which needed removing.

Celsus also included wine among the foods with heating properties, stating that stronger wines have greater heating powers, and particularly advising harsh wine among regimen to heat the body. In comparison, vinegar was listed as an especially cooling foodstuff, and he also advised that in order to cool the body a person should have the coldest water to drink.⁴⁰⁷ Celsus puts this belief into

treatment, but this should be all the more so when it is the head which is affected, as the potential danger is greater; 8.4.22 reiterates that in all cases of skull fracture, free use of wine should be avoided until the scar is firm.

⁴⁰³ Celsus, 4.32.2. This wine-drinking regime involved alternating between drinking wine for three or four days, and water for one or two; the intervals of water-drinking were presumably to help make the change of diets less severe (note 2.18.11 with 2.18.13: water is the weakest drink, and thus most appropriate for the weakest conditions of health; the various types of wines are stronger, being of the middle and strongest classes, and thus more appropriate for stronger conditions of health). Indeed, Celsus' concern for a gradual transition of diets when recovering from illness is indicated in this section, as he subsequently advises that after this period of convalescence the patient 'should only little by little leave off what he has been prescribed, and pass to a way of life of his own choosing'.

⁴⁰⁴ Celsus, 5.26.30b: 'when the wound is of the safer kind, only skin deep, wine if not too old, given in moderation, can even aid the growth of flesh'. This property may also be implied by the comments of Soranus, *Gynaecology*, 2.48(117), that a wet-nurse may drink only water in order 'to keep a child's flesh within bounds'.

⁴⁰⁵ Blood turning easily into flesh: Galen, *On the Natural Faculties*, 1.10=2.21K.

⁴⁰⁶ Celsus, 5.26.22.

⁴⁰⁷ Celsus, 1.3.27, 2.27.

practice when he advised that anyone whose body had become overheated (for example, from the sun) should hold vinegar or cold water in his mouth, and anyone who had become chilled should drink undiluted wine.⁴⁰⁸ On a grander scale, he also advised the varying of drinking regimes throughout the year according to season (this follows the same line as very similar advice from the Hippocratic Corpus).⁴⁰⁹ Celsus declared that in the cold season of winter, ‘everything taken should be hot or heat-promoting’, and he especially advised under-diluted stronger wine as constructive for combating the cold of this season. In comparison, during the hot season of summer, he advised that it is best that a person is given ‘wine that is much diluted in order that thirst may be relieved without heating the body’. Celsus also employed wine’s heating powers in the opposite way: he advised three to four cups of honeyed-wine for a patient with a slow fever which offered no chance of remission, and thus little hope, as it was in periods of remission that Celsus generally believed it beneficial to administer treatment to febrile patients.⁴¹⁰ His aim was to augment the hotness of the fever, with the aim of modifying it into a fever which did give hope of remission. Celsus therefore regarded wine’s hotness as significant enough to help prevent and counteract overheating, and also to effectively overheat the body when this was thought medically desirable. Furthermore, like Galen, Celsus also believed that when wine was successfully retained by the stomach, in addition to making the body warmer, it could also significantly influence the pulse, making it more forceful.⁴¹¹

Similarly, Soranus also implies recognition of wine’s strength-giving properties when he advises that in order to treat a chronic discharge from the uterus: ‘during the remissions, however, one should use things capable of giving strength and effecting metasyncrisis [elimination of problematic matter]; for instance ... wine in moderation’.⁴¹²

Dioscorides also attributed many of the same properties as Galen to the archetypical wine. This can be seen by his description of the fundamental

⁴⁰⁸ Celsus, 1.3.10, 1.3.12.

⁴⁰⁹ Celsus, 1.3.34-38. See also: n.223-226.

⁴¹⁰ Celsus, 3.9.2.

⁴¹¹ Celsus, 3.19.5: in cases where the stomach is relaxed and does not take food, the patient should take a cupful of wine and try again; if this fails he should be rubbed with onions, which will help the stomach to retain the wine; as a result, this causes the heat to return over the body, and the return of a forceful pulse.

⁴¹² Soranus, *Gynaecology*, 3.44. Note also, 3.39: in the condition known as ‘mole’, ‘during remissions we strengthen the whole body by ... [among other things] wine’.

properties of wines: 'in general, every pure, unmixed, and naturally dry wine warms, is easily digested, wholesome, stimulates the appetite, is nutritious, soporific [causing of sleep], strengthens and gives good a complexion ... wines are also suitable for people who perspire and who are weakened'.⁴¹³ Furthermore, Dioscorides implies that he considered one specific wine as especially restorative of fatigue, and in this sense strength-giving: wine flavoured with earthnuts (οἶνος διὰ βουβίου). He states that it is beneficial for those 'exhausted from fighting with heavy weapons from much horseback riding'; it was thus useful for treating heavy fatigue encountered during military service.⁴¹⁴ Although this particular example could be interpreted as a reflection of Dioscorides' own background as a soldier,⁴¹⁵ it is also plausible that this represents Greco-Roman medical knowledge more widely, as Pliny records that some physicians (he uses the plural) attribute the exact same primary uses to wine made from adding navew turnips to the must (called *napis vinum*; it is 'beneficial for fatigue after military exercises or riding').⁴¹⁶

Pliny the Elder also presented similar ideas in his *Natural History*. As noted above, he believed wine to be notably warming when consumed. Like Galen, he also considered red/dark wines to be among the more heating (as well as more astringent).⁴¹⁷ Pliny also believed that wine was the single most strength-giving foodstuff, stating 'that there is nothing else that is more useful for strengthening the body', and that 'by wine are improved men's strength, blood and complexion'.⁴¹⁸ Although Pliny notes that other drinks had constructive properties for health, they were each only noted to have narrow benefits for one body part: 'bone is nourished by drinking milk, sinews by beers, and flesh by water'.⁴¹⁹ Wine was thus considered to be a superior drink as its above noted benefits were more useful for the body as a whole; 'accordingly, the drinkers of such [milk, beer or water] have a less ruddy complexion, less strength, and less

⁴¹³ Dioscorides, 5.6.10.

⁴¹⁴ Dioscorides, 5.46. According to Liddell and Scott (1940) s.v. 'βούβιον, τό', this is an 'earthnut, bunium ferulaceum'.

⁴¹⁵ Dioscorides, 1.pr.4.

⁴¹⁶ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.52. Production described at: 14.106. According to Lewis and Short (1879) s.v. 'Nāpus, i, m.', this is 'a kind of turnip, a navew'.

⁴¹⁷ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.46. See also n.216 on pitch-flavoured wine and Vienne's pitchy wine, the former of which was explicitly stated to be heating, and the latter the most cooling of wines when consumed cold.

⁴¹⁸ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.58, 23.37; Jouanna (1996) 424 = (2012) 184. Pliny notably considered the 'Twin sisters' variety of Aminaean vine as of exceptional strength, perhaps implying the same property for wines made from its grapes: 14.22.

⁴¹⁹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.37.

power to endure toil'. Pliny also noted that many doctors regarded the wines of Sorrento as especially beneficial for convalescents. However, rather than linking this use to any particular strengthening powers present in these wines, it was instead stated to be 'because of their thinness and health giving qualities'.⁴²⁰

The belief in wine's constructive use for giving strength was not just limited to medical authorities, but seems to have been fairly widespread in Greco-Roman society. Plutarch records that 'water was what [Cato the Elder] drank on his campaigns, except that once in a while, in a raging thirst, he would call for vinegar, or, when his strength was failing, would add a little wine'.⁴²¹ This suggests that Plutarch also believed wine to be extremely strength-giving, a last-ditch hope when all else failed (Cato's alleged use of wine during wartime is notably reminiscent of Dioscorides' above noted advice to treat wartime fatigue using a specific wine beverage). As Plutarch was providing this anecdote as evidence for Cato's extreme frugality and abstinence, it implies that Plutarch believed that his intended audience – members of the Greco-Roman elite (in the late first century AD) – would not only share similar beliefs on wine's strength-giving potential, but agree that this was an extremely appropriate use for wine. It may also be telling to consider Galen's note in *On the Preservation of Health*, that many people considered the advice of Hippocrates as 'altogether absurd' when he seemed to imply that 'an athlete, or a soldier, or a ditch-digger, or a reaper, or a ploughman, or [he] who does any kind of altogether strenuous work, should use only water in his diet'.⁴²² These people's extreme outrage may perhaps indicate that they considered the appropriate use of wine to be exactly opposite; they instead thought wine extremely useful for such people, as was one of the main foodstuffs which provided sufficient strength to undertake this extremely strenuous work. Furthermore, two ceramic wine-drinking beakers are known from London and Frankfurt, dating to c.180-250AD and made in Trier (Germany), which both displayed the motto 'wine (gives) strength' (*vinum vires*) painted decoratively around their bellies.⁴²³ Far away from the Mediterranean elite (who were for the most part the authors, audience and

⁴²⁰ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.64.

⁴²¹ Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 1.7.

⁴²² Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.12=6.376-377K.

⁴²³ *RIB*, 2.6.2498.24 = Künzl (1997) LON 18; FRA 1. See also: Mudd (2015) 87, 90; Mudd (2014) 96. On Trier Black-Slipped ware, see Chapter 3, n.118.

subject-matter of the majority of the extant ancient Greek and Latin literary evidence),⁴²⁴ at least some individuals on the north-west frontier of the Empire seem to have believed in this property of wine.

As such, I question the appropriateness of Beer's opening statement to his chapter on alcohol in antiquity ('Restrictions upon Alcohol'), which reads:

'When we examine how alcohol was consumed in antiquity, it is important to bear in mind that it differed greatly from other, edible goods. It was not necessary to consume it to survive. Its calorific and vitamin content rendered it a negligible source of nutrition.'⁴²⁵

The findings of this chapter disagree with his first point on calorific content. Firstly, the ancients believed wine to be highly strength-giving, with the influential medical authority of Galen associating this directly with it being highly nutritious. Celsus also seems to have held similar views, regarding certain types of wine, honeyed-wines and beer as extremely strong and thus very nutritious. Secondly, Beer's statement does not seem to be accurate according to modern science. Although ancient wine was an insignificant source of protein and sugar,⁴²⁶ it was highly calorific. It is impossible to accurately suggest the calorific content of the 'average' Roman wine,⁴²⁷ yet a litre of

⁴²⁴ Cool (2006) 32 reminds the reader that even the available food and drink itself differed between the Empire's Mediterranean heartlands (as addressed in the majority of the literature) and the distant province of Britain. Dalby and Grainger (1996) 116 note that little of the surviving Roman literature addresses Britain, and that scholars must turn to archaeology to reconstruct peoples' relationships with food in Roman Britain.

⁴²⁵ Beer (2010) 84.

⁴²⁶ See Zito (1994). As might be expected, milk is generally a far more nutritious drink; it contains all the necessary protein for human life. Ancient wine contained far less. Zito's figures suggest that, at most, milk contained 28 times more protein per millilitre (low-protein wine compared with sheep's milk); the minimum protein difference was 2.2 times (high protein wine compared with a human woman's milk). Beer, on the other hand, was a satisfactory source of protein; it could contain as much protein per millilitre as milk. Similarly, beer contained at least 20 times more sugars per millilitre than wine. Note further that, unlike beer and milk, wine would have been diluted with a majority-part of water, reducing even further its effective contribution of protein and sugars per millilitre of fluid consumed.

⁴²⁷ Note Robinson (1992 [1986]) 10: many grape varieties have evolved or been lost through history. Note also that the recipe for an 'average' wine of the Roman Empire is uncertain, and trying to define an 'average' wine is probably a futile effort. Unlike modern wine, which is made almost exclusively from newly pressed grapes, Appendix 1 highlights the wide range of additives which were frequently added to the fermenting must or resulting wine, such as honey and salt-water. Note, for example, Cato's recipe for a 'slave's wine' (*vinum familiae*; Cato, *On Agriculture*, 104), which was made from a concoction of must, vinegar, boiled must, fresh water and sea-water that was left to ferment. Although free Romans no doubt drank wine of a better quality (probably made from a higher quantity of newly pressed grapes), this should caution the modern reader regarding the fact that a beverage which the ancients

modern wine (either white or red) typically contains about 700 calories (kcal).⁴²⁸ As argued in Chapter 1, Roman society seems to have considered a daily intake of about one *sextarius*, about 0.54 litres, to be a notably moderate quantity. This amount was thus presumably somewhat less than the average daily consumption of an adult male. If we assume a calorific content for Roman wine similar to that of modern wine, this would signify that the average adult male received at least 350-400 calories per day from wine (this figure being an estimate of the calories in a *sextarius* of Roman wine). This is not an insubstantial quantity, and may have represented c.15% of the calorific intake of the average young man's diet.⁴²⁹ To put this into perspective for the modern reader, the UK charity Drinkaware notes that a large slice of pizza is about 197 calories and a slice of sponge cake 195 calories, so this *sextarius* of wine is approximately equal to two slices of either.⁴³⁰

called 'wine' may differ dramatically in its ingredients from that which the modern reader recognises as 'wine'.

⁴²⁸ Foxhall and Forbes (1982) 58, using FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations) data, favour 710 calories per litre of wine when calculating the calories represented by ancient wine rations. Roth (1999) 37 states 700 calories for a litre of 12% wine (no colour is noted). Drinkaware (2013a) states figures which extrapolate to approximately 700 calories per litre: it gives a bottle (700ml) of 13.5% white wine as 555 calories and 11% red as 510 calories. Note also: McGovern (2007 [2003]) 306 notes that fermentation makes the wine more nutritious than the original grapes.

⁴²⁹ Jongman comes to a similar conclusion (stating instead 10-15%) using the rations which Cato issued to his slaves (as pointed out in Chapter 1, these are approximately equivalent to one *sextarius* per day); see n.438.

Foxhall and Forbes (1982) 47 note that 'the number of calories per day needed by a human are also subject to numerous variables such as sex, age, size, rate of activity and individual rate of metabolism'. Nevertheless, they cite FAO standards: a reasonably average young man (weight: 62kg, age: 20-39) requires 2852 calories per day if moderately active, 3337 if very active, and 3822 if exceptionally so (p.49). Jongman (2007) table 22.1 favours a broadly similar daily requirements: c.2900-2600 calories for the average man (presumably moderately active) between the ages of 20 and 60, decreasing with age; women typically decrease from c.2400-2100 calories between the ages of 15 and 60.

Note further that although Foxhall and Forbes (1982) also use a variety of known food distribution figures from Greco-Roman antiquity (along with likely flour-from-corn extraction rates and suggestions regarding the corn's calorific contents) to suggest the daily calorific content that these rations represents, they note (p.73) that these figures cannot be used to deduce actual consumption. It is suggested that, if anything, ancient rations tend to represent *maximum* (not minimum) energy requirements (pp.57, 73), and are thus not informative regarding typical consumption. Indeed, one *choenix*, which is argued to be the size of a typical Greek daily corn ration, represents 2803kcal, or about 98% of a moderately active average male's daily requirements (pp.86-87), and this does not take into account the other foodstuffs which were doubtless consumed, and which probably contributed at least 25% of the calories of most peoples' diets (p.74; also p.56). Similarly, Cato's prescribed corn rations for the average farm labourer (*On Agriculture*, 56) vary between 2964 calories in the quieter season, and 3334 in the more labour-intensive summer, thus representing 78% to 87% of a moderately active average male's daily requirements (pp.88-89); this does not include the relish and wine which they were also issued.

⁴³⁰ Drinkaware (2013a).

It should be noted that Jongman (in an assessment of consumption in the Roman Empire) attempted similar calculations regarding wine's nutritional qualities, but came to different conclusions.⁴³¹ As discussed in Chapter 1 (from p.47), he first proposes that *average* daily wine consumption for Roman adults was perhaps equivalent to 'a modern bottle of wine', 0.75 litres. As he accepts that children (and perhaps women) will have consumed far less, he concludes that the average consumption per head in the city of Rome would be around 100 litres per year (or c.0.27 litres per day), in comparison to adult males who would consume about three times this amount. My suggestion of c.0.54 litres per day as a moderate quantity for adult males would thus fit well with this, being notably less than what Jongman suggests was usual consumption.

However, as his estimate for the typical Greco-Roman wine's calorific content, Jongman uses a vastly different figure to my own: c.1650 calories per litre (or c.800 calories per *sextarius*). This is approximately double the number of calories per unit to the estimate which I used above in my own calculations. It should be noted that my estimate of c.700kcal/L for ancient wine is also supported by both Foxhall and Forbes, and Roth, whereas I can find no other scholars supporting Jongman's larger estimate.

Jongman explains his high estimate by noting that the Romans preferred sweet white wines. These are indeed significantly more calorific than red and dry white wines (and this is noted by Jongman).⁴³² Similarly, this Roman preference does indeed seem to be true; sweet yellow wines (such as the famous Falernian) were highly regarded.⁴³³ Yet this subsequently means that Jongman's estimate over represents the high-status wines which were perceived as superior, and accordingly his estimates surely over represent the drinking habits of the elite who were more able to select such choice (and more calorific) wines. This is supported by Pliny the Elder, who states, in reference to

⁴³¹ Jongman (2007) 603.

⁴³² Jongman (2007) 603 states that 'the calorific contribution of 100 litres of (sweet white) wine would be 160,000 kilocalories'.

⁴³³ As noted by Fleming (2001) 50: 'Roman taste, at least during the Republic and early Imperial eras, leaned heavily towards sweeter wines'; also noted by Tchernia (1986) 204. See for example: Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.62 where Falernian is placed in the second of four ranks of merit (although he notes that its quality and reputation were in decline, Pliny states that 'no other wine has a higher rank at the present day'), and 23.33-35 where such a preference for Falernian is explicitly attributed to the past, yet a significant degree of this popularity is implied to have continued into the present; Dioscorides, 5.6.6 places Falernian first among Italian wines. See further Weeber (1993) 10 and s.vv. 'Falerner', 'Spitzenwein'; *DGRA*, s.v. 'Vinum' (p.1207). On the reputation of Falernian and its ageing, see further n.206. On Galen's love of Falernian, see n.219.

those wines which were preferred as most pleasant, 'how small a part of mankind could make use of these kinds of wine'.⁴³⁴ The wider population doubtless drank the less-acclaimed wines, including a larger proportion of the less-calorific red and dry white wines (both of which were clearly common in antiquity, as they repeatedly feature in the ancient evidence). Indeed, Galen implies that certain wines were widely perceived as undesirable ('no one is going to serve a sour, thick, dark wine at a drinking party, at a wedding, at a religious festival, or indeed at any other kind of celebration'), but as a notable amount of them were manufactured (enough of the former undesirable wine to be worthy of inclusion as a medical material in Galen's advice), some of the population surely drank them.⁴³⁵ Jongman's focus upon the best wines also ignores the fact that many Romans who did have sufficient wealth to afford better food and drink may regularly choose to consume foodstuffs which were perceived to be of lesser quality (as did, for example, Horace when he was not attending a dinner party).⁴³⁶ As such, Jongman probably over estimates the calorific content of the 'average' wine consumed, especially when the population of a diverse and sizeable district (such as the city of Rome) was taken as a whole. It is likely that my estimate (which is supported by both Foxhall and Forbes, and Roth) is more closely representative of the 'average' wine consumed.

Accordingly, Jongman's improbable estimation seems to have led to likely errors. He comes to the conclusion that (using both his own estimate of c.1650 calories per litre, and the consumption of 100 litres per head, per year) in Rome the average person (including women and children) would derive c.165,000 calories per year from wine consumption. This equates to c.450 calories per day. Given that Jongman had previously calculated the average minimum daily requirements per head (including women and children) at c.2000 calories, he states that his own estimate signified 'almost a quarter of annual caloric intake'. However, replacing Jongman's high estimation of the calorific content of ancient wine with the more likely estimation of 700kcal/L would give a figure less than half of this: c.200 calories per day per head, which would instead signify about a

⁴³⁴ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.33.

⁴³⁵ Galen, *The Thinning Diet*, 12=5.4.2.448-449CMG.

⁴³⁶ Horace, *Satires*, 1.6.115-117, 2.7.34-36.

tenth of this 'average' calorific intake (which, again, includes women and children).⁴³⁷

Regardless, all these estimations indicate that wine contributed a significant amount of the calories of the average Greco-Roman person's diet; somewhere between about 10 and 25% of daily requirements.⁴³⁸ Jongman subsequently concludes 'that [this drinking] may have been enjoyable, but was certainly not healthy'. This absolute and simplistic statement regarding wine's effect on health is not explained or supported, beyond Jongman later equating the unhealthy part of the Roman diet with it being 'alcohol-rich'.⁴³⁹ I do not deny that such drinking by the people of the Roman Empire could have some negative effects on health (although it is not the purpose of this chapter to focus upon them). Yet, in opposition to Jongman, I assert that drinking also had at least some notable benefits for at least some people's health. These are recognised both by modern science, as well as ancient Greco-Roman medical literature (for the former, the reader should note, in particular, the role of phenols as discussed in the following paragraph). As such, the Romans' drinking habits cannot wholly be dismissed as unhealthy.

It seems likely that Beer and Jongman's comments are another manifestation of the trend in modern scholarship (as was highlighted by Mary Douglas) towards focusing disproportionately heavily upon the destructive aspects of drinking. Most significantly, Jongman's statement seems to contradict his earlier argument that 'in its simplest form subsistence may be equated with the calories necessary for the survival of the average person ... to survive in decent

⁴³⁷ It should be noted that other quantities of wine rations are known from ancient sources, and are discussed both above in this thesis (Ch.1 p.48), and in Foxhall and Forbes (1982) 54, 58-59. However, all are 'unusual' or problematic in some way, and are thus not reliably informative of normal consumption. Herodotus, 6.57 notes that Spartan kings received c.0.25-0.27L of wine (= c.178-192kcal, using Foxhall and Forbes' preferred 710kcal/L for wine) on a day when not present at a public banquet; this was obviously an atypical ration. Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, 12 and Athenaeus, 4.141c (= Dikaiarchos, fr.72) note that each Spartan contributed wine to his mess-group (*syssitia*) at an equivalent of 0.8L/1.1-1.2L (= c.550/780-850kcal) per day. Yet, as explained in Chapter 1, it is unclear how much of this a Spartan actually consumed. On the other hand, it is not impossible that such large quantities of wine were regularly consumed. Forbes observed that in 1972-1974, adult males in Methana (in the Peloponnese) consumed on average over a litre of wine per day (= over 710kcal, using Foxhall and Forbes' preferred estimate on wine's kcal/L).

⁴³⁸ Jongman himself had come to similar conclusions in a previous work. Jongman (1988) 79-80 analyses Cato's wine rations, which (as discussed in Chapter 1) provide on average about half a litre of wine per day. He concludes that 'Cato's rations provide 300-500 calories per day, or some 10-15% of daily needs.

⁴³⁹ Jongman (2007) 605.

health'.⁴⁴⁰ Due to wine's notably calorific nature, the Greeks and Romans' daily wine consumption was surely one of the main foodstuffs which helped meet this fundamental requirement for assuring a basic level of health, at least at subsistence levels. This is implied by Foxhall and Forbes, who note that 'in a society where there is no readily available back-up corn supply in case supplies or estimates fall short of consumption needs, the *most* needed to get by is much more important than the *least* needed to get by'; accordingly they note that 'both olive oil and wine are high in calories, so that even if consumed in smaller amounts than at present [in the modern world], they would still have made significant contributions of calories'.⁴⁴¹ Wine thus formed a valuable source of nutrition in a world where not having enough calorific energy to survive was a major and realistic threat to health. Furthermore, I can conclude that in contrast to Beer's statement that '[wine's] calorific ... content rendered it a negligible source of nutrition', Roth seems far more justifiable when (in his study of Roman military logistics) he highlights the fact that 'wine is not only a source of liquid necessary for the body, but also nutrition'.⁴⁴²

Beer's second point on vitamins may also be considered problematic. Firstly, although modern science finds that wine only contains low levels of most vitamins, red wine contains significant amounts of phenolic compounds; these are antioxidants which are believed to have a wide variety of health benefits, including significant anti-cancer and anti-cardiovascular disease properties ('the two main causes of human death in [modern] developed countries').⁴⁴³ Indeed, the *Oxford Companion to Wine* concludes that 'moderate drinking reduces deaths from cardiovascular disease by about 30 percent ... healthy and prudent drinkers can expect that two to three glasses of wine a day will make them feel better and live longer'.⁴⁴⁴ This is believed to be supported by the real-world case study of modern-day France.⁴⁴⁵ According to the 'French Paradox', the populations of some French regions have notably low rates of coronary heart disease in face of a high intake of saturated fat; wine is believed to be the main

⁴⁴⁰ Jongman (2007) 598.

⁴⁴¹ Foxhall and Forbes (1982) 57, 75.

⁴⁴² Roth (1999) 37.

⁴⁴³ Troncoso, Garcia-Parrilla and Martinez-Ortega (2001), quotation in parentheses from 122; OCW², s.vv. 'Health, Effects of Wine Consumption On', 'Vitamins'. Note also: McGovern (2007 [2003]) 306.

⁴⁴⁴ OCW², s.v. 'Health, Effects of Wine Consumption On'.

⁴⁴⁵ Troncoso, Garcia-Parrilla and Martinez-Ortega (2001) 117-118; OCW², s.v. 'Health, Effects of Wine Consumption On'.

aiding factor. Secondly it should be noted that applying comments regarding wine's vitamin content to ancient thought is an irrelevant issue (although this does not actually seem to be implied by Beer). This appears to be anachronistic as I cannot find any concept in ancient thought which is comparable to the modern concept of 'vitamins' (which was developed from the eighteenth century onwards).⁴⁴⁶ I therefore believe Beer's statement to be notably misleading, and inappropriate to apply to the study of alcohol consumption in antiquity. Beer's fault seems to have been due to his reliance on a dated article from the 1980 edition of the *Journal of Public Health Policy*.⁴⁴⁷ As outlined above, 1980 was a decade before the trend of research into wine's constructive properties sparked by the 1991 study which led to the coining of the 'French Paradox' (though early works recognising a link between wine and cardioprotective effects were published shortly after this 1980 article, in 1981 and 1986).⁴⁴⁸ As such, it is not surprising that an article published in 1980 and entitled 'Effects of Alcohol Consumption on Health' focused solely upon the negative consequences of alcohol, and it is not surprising that Beer was misled by it towards focusing primarily upon these destructive aspects.

Yet it cannot be denied that the ancient medical authorities recognised that wine consumption could have negative consequences, some of which were thought to be due to wine's hotness. Thus although Galen thought all proper food to be nourishing, overconsumption of any was considered to lead to over-nourishment, which was considered to be potentially destructive as it could lead to illness through overheating the body. Wine was especially associated with this problem because it was considered so extremely hot and nourishing, and as such it was considered very easy for a person to slip into destructive excess in this way. Thus, Galen explains that a 'cause of excessive heat lies in foods

⁴⁴⁶ The closest concept to 'vitamins' in the Galenic Corpus is probably that of 'drugs', which (as discussed further on p.133) are substances recognised to foster significant changes in the body, without necessarily nourishing the body. Galen recognised that some foods also worked as drugs; their effect on the body was thus recognised to go beyond mere nutrition, in a manner broadly comparable to the modern concept of vitamins. Wine was thought significant in this regard, being both a powerful heating drug as well as a highly nutritious foodstuff.

Seltman (1957) 154 similarly highlights that the modern concept of vitamins was alien to ancient thought (though, it should be noted, he is extremely dismissive of Greco-Roman medical and pharmacological expertise): 'medical authorities, like Galen, were given to commending the use of wine in moderation to their patients, and this was natural, since no elaborate system of drugs, compound medicines and tonics had been evolved, and any Greek and Roman science of chemistry was elementary. Vitamins and calories had not been discovered.'

⁴⁴⁷ Schmidt (1980).

⁴⁴⁸ Troncoso, Garcia-Parrilla and Martinez-Ortega (2001) 117-118.

that have hot and harsh powers ... people have in fact fallen to a fever as a result of hot drinks, for example when drinking too much old rough wine on a weak constitution'.⁴⁴⁹ Up to around a century after Galen, Ps-Galen showed similar concerns regarding the strong link between wine and destructive overheating. He explains that the various diseases related to an excess of 'blood follows on from drunkenness and gluttony'.⁴⁵⁰ As noted above, Ps-Galen talked in terms of humours (here, blood) where Galen preferred to talk in mixtures (hot and wet), yet his argument is essentially the same as Galen's: that the heavy drinking of wine was considered to be one of the main things which caused the body to be overly inclined to the mixture represented by the humour of blood, and thus overheated and over-moistened to the point of illness.

Yet, according to Galen, wine's extreme hotness was not only potentially destructive as its consumption threatened to modify a person's constitutional mixture towards being excessively hot, but also because it threatened to produce problematic amounts of bile. (This view does not seem to be shared by Ps-Galen, who only links wine's excessive consumption to copious amounts of the humour blood.)⁴⁵¹ An understanding of this relies on comprehending Galen's concept of the genesis of the humours, which he outlines in *On the Natural Faculties*. Food was thought to be altered into the humours in the veins, by the body's innate heat. Under ideal healthy circumstances, the body produced a predominance of nutritious blood from the food; this situation was most desirable. However, various factors were thought to influence this, including the hotness of the food, the age, occupation and nature of the consumer, and the location and season in which this was taking place. If all such factors, combined, produced a situation that was notably colder or hotter than average, a predominance of phlegm or yellow bile was produced, respectively. This was considered undesirable, as the overproduction of these humours was thought to lead to cold or hot illnesses, respectively. As an example, Galen discusses honey, a food which was also considered notably hot in mixture (see fig. 2.1), and was thus thought to carry a particular risk of turning

⁴⁴⁹ Galen, *On the Causes of Disease*, 7.6K.

⁴⁵⁰ Ps-Galen, *On the Humours*, 19.494-495K.

⁴⁵¹ Ps-Galen's views on the genesis of the humours are briefly addressed at Ps-Galen, *On the Humours*, 19.488-489K. They seem notably different to Galen's views as explained here by this thesis (in the body-text). Note for example that Ps-Galen states yellow bile is created through fasting and hunger.

into copious amounts of yellow bile. As wine was also considered notably hot in property, this passage is also somewhat applicable to the archetypical wine:

‘Honey produces yellow bile ... because it undergoes change, becoming altered and transmuted into bile. ... In those who are in the prime of life, especially if they are warm by nature and are leading a life of toil, the honey changes entirely into yellow bile. Old people, however, it suits well enough, inasmuch as the alteration which it undergoes is not into bile, but into blood.’⁴⁵²

Hotter wines (including, for example, red, thick, or sweet wines) were thus especially associated with the production of yellow bile.⁴⁵³ Accordingly, wine drinking, especially of the hotter wines, was thought to become increasingly appropriate with age, as a person’s body became cooler in constitution and thus less prone to transform the wine into destructive quantities of yellow bile.

An even more extreme excess of hotness was considered to lead to even worse consequences: such overheating was thought to convert the hot yellow bile into cold black bile.⁴⁵⁴ Accordingly, as Galen states, ‘an excessive consumption of food, however nutritious and excellent, is the cause of cold diseases’, as the over nourishment led to overheating.⁴⁵⁵ As such an extremely nourishing property was associated with wine, its tendency to lead to such cold conditions was explicitly discussed by Galen:

‘Even wine does not always heat the animal – just as olive oil does not always catch light, in spite of the fact that it is the most proper nourishment for fire; if you pour a large quantity of oil all at once on to a

⁴⁵² Galen, *On the Natural Faculties*, 2.8=2.114-118K; Powell (2003) 13. Note that a foods’ role in the generation of the humours can be directly compared to its role in the modification of the body’s constitutional mixture through the example of honey. Honey is used here in *On the Natural Faculties* (quoted here in the body-text of this thesis) as the illustrative example to outline the generation of the humours. Honey is also used to explain modifications made to bodily mixture in *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 1.1=6.472K: ‘[honey, being hot and dry in mixture] is most adverse in those who are dry and warm, but very beneficial in those who are moist and cool – whether they are like this in mixture because of age, nature, region, season or lifestyle’.

⁴⁵³ Red wine and yellow bile: Béguin (2002) 144. Red, black and thick wines and bile: 147. Sweet wine and bile: 150. Thick black wine and black bile: 149.

⁴⁵⁴ Galen, *On Black Bile*, 5.112K: ‘black bile which results from an excessive heating of yellow bile’; Powell (2003) 13.

⁴⁵⁵ Galen, *On the Causes of Disease*, 7.13K. Note also: Galen, *On Uneven Bad Temperament*, 7.750-751K, where illness caused by eating large quantities is associated with a cold phlegmatic humour. See also n.245 on Galen diagnosing an excess of phlegm in Marcus Aurelius caused by an abundance of food.

small, weak flame, you will suffocate and completely extinguish it, not increase it. And so it is with wine: when so much is drunk that it cannot be broken down, so far from heating the animal it actually engenders extremely cold illnesses. Apoplexy, for example, paraplexy, torpor, deep sleep, paralysis, epilepsy, convulsion, and convulsive tension all follow from excessive wine-drinking; and all are cold illnesses. In general, all substances which are taken into the body and which as nourishment heat it are also sometimes found to cool it.⁴⁵⁶

Such overheating through wine drinking was an even greater risk when the drinker had a notably hot constitution, or when drinking the very hottest wines; this was essentially a case of treating like with like, the opposite to the basic humoral therapeutic precept. Accordingly, thick black wines were considered both notably hot in mixture and particularly prone to fostering the production of cold black bile (rather than nutritious blood) inside the body of the drinker.⁴⁵⁷

Moderation in drinking was accordingly considered to be extremely important; the constructive use of wine was thought to hinge upon it. As seen above, the amount which constituted moderation was thought to vary from person to person, and situation to situation. Some, such as the elderly, were thought to find wine's heat most constructive as they drew greatest benefit from it. It helped to heat their cold constitutions, bringing them back towards a healthy balanced temperature. It was also safest for them as they could drink a greater quantity without risking excessive heat, and the overproduction of bile. On the other hand, those people whose bodily mixtures were already hotter than average were thought to find wine's heat least constructive. Wine was dangerous for these individuals, as it was very easy for them to fall into a destructive excess of heat, and for the wine to turn into a problematic quantity of bile. This is reflected in Galen's advice, discussed above (see from p.76), that people with hot constitutions should pursue a specific wine-drinking regime, carefully tailored to be significantly cooler in property, whereas those people with *extremely* hot constitutions (such as those with inflammatory disease, for at least the first two days of treatment) should avoid wine altogether.

Greco-Roman society also strongly linked wine to an ability to influence the head and thus produce intoxication. Indeed, Pliny states that only wine from

⁴⁵⁶ Galen, *Mixtures*, 3.2=1.660-661K. Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 3.5=652d-e also notes that excessive (hot) wine often leads to illnesses which are cold in nature; note also *Alexander*, 69.3-70.1 for a case study example.

⁴⁵⁷ Galen, *On Affected Parts*, 3.9=8.184K; Béguin (2002) 149, 152.

one specific region does not produce intoxication. Although Pliny thus celebrates this particular wine as 'though strong it has no ill effects', popular opinion seemed to be less positive, and the grape variety had been named 'the good-for-nothing'. Most people apparently considered this mind-affecting property of wine to be desirable.⁴⁵⁸

Wine's intoxicating effects were often thought to derive from its hotness. This link can be seen, for example, in the above-discussed quotation of the revered philosophical authority of Plato's *Laws*: drinking wine is like 'pouring fire on ... souls and bodies'.⁴⁵⁹ It is also implicit in Plutarch's *Table-Talk* 3.1. One of Plutarch's characters argues that pure wine distresses men by attacking their head and reducing the control that their mind had over their body. Ivy crowns were one tactic to prevent this. They were worn at *symposia* because ivy was cold in property. Thus, when placed in contact with the head, it was thought to help counteract the hot fumes from the wine which were going to the head and creating mind-affecting intoxication.⁴⁶⁰ Furthermore, a link between wine's hotness to its ability to promote confidence is also indicated by a passage from Tacitus' *Histories* (early second century AD).⁴⁶¹ He describes a battle where a large number of barbarians hurled themselves against siege works well into the night to no avail, drawing something akin to 'Dutch Courage' from drink. Tacitus states that during the battle 'they feasted, [and] as man after man became inflamed with wine, they rushed to battle with unavailing recklessness'. Wine's hotness promoted their confidence. (The link between wine and confidence is explored further in Chapter 3; the military implications of this are addressed in Appendix 7.)

Galen himself also believed that wine's innate hotness was linked to its intoxicating properties: hotter wines were thought to be stronger, thus having a

⁴⁵⁸ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.31. Pliny also mentioned several other wines which had an unusual degree of influence on the head (when compared with the average wine); for example: the wines of Pompeii (14.70) and Mesogis (14.75) frequently led to headaches; the wines of Surrentum (23.35) and sweet wines (23.52; as noted in Appendix 1 p.333, this included new wines) go less to the head and cause less intoxication. The non-grape date-palm wine was also noted to injure the head (23.52); further on date-palm wine, see Appendix 1 p.339.

⁴⁵⁹ Plato, *Laws*, 666. Quoted by Galen: *The Soul's Dependence on the Body*, 10=4.809K.

⁴⁶⁰ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 3.1=647a-d; Skoda (2002) 135. Note, however, *Table-Talk*, 3.2=648b-649f which questions the generally accepted properties and uses of ivy in relation to drunkenness.

⁴⁶¹ See Appendix 7 n.29.

greater effect on the head.⁴⁶² The reasons for this link are partly explained in *The Soul's Dependence on the Body*, when Galen calls upon and interprets the authority of Plato to support his argument that 'the faculties of the soul depend on the mixtures of the body', as, for example, 'nourishment has the power to make men more or less temperate, more or less continent, brave or cowardly, soft or gentle or violent or quarrelsome'.⁴⁶³ In doing so, he suggests his belief in the idea that all foods affect people's temperaments and behaviour through giving nourishment to the body as a whole; he believed that temperament was controlled by the soul, which was in turn influenced by the body's mixture, and this was in turn influenced according to the food which nourished it. And as wine was thought of as extremely nourishing (affecting the body greatly), it would surely follow that wine would have a similarly notable effect on people's temperaments and behaviour. Galen confirms this when he presents his own view, shortly afterwards in the same work, stating that 'the above-mentioned activities [mainly those related to the soul and a person's behaviour] are clearly damaged, through the medium of mixture [of the bodily humours], by wine drinking; and certain others are assisted'. Galen therefore thought that wine affected human behaviour by altering the mixture of the body.⁴⁶⁴

In *On the Humours*, Ps-Galen presents similar beliefs which are perhaps indicative of the opinions of other third-century humoral doctors. Like Galen he implies that wine modifies the body to be hotter and wetter, with a greater quantity of the humour blood (in Ps-Galen's own words: 'blood follows on from drunkenness'). His views then continue along a similar logic to Galen's; thus he states that 'the characteristics of the soul change. Even that is delineated by the humours.' He explains the characteristics of the soul are modified according to an excess of any of the bodily humours, and explains the characteristics of the condition belonging to each. Thus he states that 'blood causes a cheerful nature', and also associated blood with 'singing and laughter'. Ps-Galen therefore believed that wine nourished the body in a way which heated and moistened it, and thus favoured the humour of blood, which would modify a person's soul in a way that promoted intoxicated behaviour: cheerfulness, singing and laughter. It is easy to see how in moderate amounts,

⁴⁶² Galen, *Method of Medicine*, 12.4=10.835-836K; Béguin (2002) 145.

⁴⁶³ Galen, *The Soul's Dependence on the Body*, 1=4.767K, 9=4.808K.

⁴⁶⁴ Galen, *The Soul's Dependence on the Body*, 10=4.812K.

wine could promote a moderate quantity of this constructive behaviour. Yet, in excess, wine could lead to similar but destructive effects, as seen in the case study from the Hippocratic Corpus' *Epidemics*, which Ps-Galen summarises and interprets. The regarded a certain 'Silenus [who] was deranged with singing and laughter ... [he] had become ill after drinking'. Excess was thus considered to damage the soul, leading to derangement.⁴⁶⁵

Yet in *The Soul's Dependence on the Body*, when Galen then turns to address wine's effect on behaviour in more detail, he provides another explanation for how wine affects people's behaviour. He develops his argument through paraphrasing Plato, yet his reverence of Plato, his selection of these particular passages, and his own interpretation supports the conclusion that his own beliefs were similar to those of Plato presented here. His interpretation of Plato implies that wine has a more substantial influence over the head, acting not just through nourishment, but also through 'vapours': 'Plato's view is that wine fills the whole body, especially the head, with hot vapours, that it is the cause of immoderate action on the part of the desiderative and spirited parts of the soul, and of hasty judgement on the part of the rational'.⁴⁶⁶ In *On the Preservation of Health*, Galen states his own views more directly, and shows very similar beliefs to his interpretation of Plato, but he also includes wine's moisture within this framework: 'wine when drunk moistens the body sufficiently and heats it, and fills the head with fumes of the moist and warm character ... wherefore wine is not good to be drunk even by adults, except in due moderation, for it renders them prone to anger and impulsive to insolence, and makes the rational part of the mind sluggish and confused'.⁴⁶⁷ Galen therefore believed that a drunken mental state was due partly to wine's (very hot and slightly wet) nourishment of the body, but also due to the hot and moist fumes created in the body of a wine-drinker, which he believed directly influenced the head.⁴⁶⁸

Galen can be seen clearly stressing the concept of moderation in the previous quotation. If this parameter were followed, it is implied that these fumes would not have destructive effects, and it may be assumed that they instead led to the

⁴⁶⁵ Ps-Galen, *On the Humours*, 19.492-495K, with 19.486K on blood being moist and hot. Ps-Galen is here summarising and interpreting Hippocrates, *Epidemics*, 1.26.43-79.

⁴⁶⁶ Galen, *The Soul's Dependence on the Body*, 10=4.812K.

⁴⁶⁷ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.11=6.54-55K (trans. modified from Green; see n.234).

⁴⁶⁸ Béguin (2002) 148.

constructive psychological properties that were stated earlier in the same work (as seen near the start of this chapter): relieving the drinker 'of all sadness and low spirits' and 'rendering the soul both gentler and more confident'.⁴⁶⁹ Galen's views are similar to the advice of other Greco-Roman medical authorities; this is summarised by Pliny's treatment of the medical uses of wine in his *Natural History*. Pliny concludes that one of the most significant medical properties of wine in general is that it 'dulls sorrow and anxiety' (*tristitia, cura hebetatur*); though he later narrows its perceived utility by stating that wine-drinking is inappropriate 'in sudden frights' (*expavescentibus repente*), perhaps meaning that wine is unsuitable in what are today popularly known as 'panic attacks'.⁴⁷⁰ In support of this assertion, he notes evidence from Homer: 'in order to induce sleep, however, and to banish worries wine was so taken [without/before eating] long ago, as we see from Homer's Helena, who served wine before food'.⁴⁷¹ Similarly, the Hippocratic Corpus' *Aphorisms* notes that the appropriate prescription of a strong wine beverage (half wine, half water) would cure distress if present (along with yawning and shuddering).⁴⁷² Wine's powers in this area were surely considered especially important as, not only did this promote wellbeing, but some people were thought to have died from grief and annoyance.⁴⁷³ (Wine's link with relaxation, anxieties and sorrows is considered further in Chapter 3.)

However, as previously addressed, the ancient medical authorities (including the Hippocratic Corpus) generally presented the view that excessive drinking led to derangements, and any drinking was usually inappropriate when the patient had infirmities of the head or mind. Thus Galen believed that if wine was used in a way that was considered excessive for a particular person, not only would this individual suffer in both body and mind due to being over-nourished (by hot and wet foodstuffs), but an excess of warm and moist fumes would directly overheat (and also over-moisten) the head and soul. As such,

⁴⁶⁹ Galen, *The Soul's Dependence on the Body*, 3=4.777-779K.

⁴⁷⁰ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.38, 23.49.

⁴⁷¹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.41. Referring to: Homer, *Odyssey*, 4.219-220. Note, however, that Pliny was generally hostile to the custom of drinking before eating/on an empty stomach; see 14.143 and 23.41. Although Pliny noted this practice in Homer, he stated it had only recently been introduced to Roman culture (forty years before his period of writing, in the reign of Tiberius). He believed it was a 'result of foreign methods and of the doctors' policy of perpetually advertising themselves by some novelty', and was 'very injurious to those absorbed in business and trying to keep their mind actively on alert'.

⁴⁷² Hippocrates, *Aphorisms*, 7.56; Jouanna (1996) 429 = (2012) 188-189.

⁴⁷³ Suetonius, *Poets*, 'Terence', 5.

Galen believed that wine was a particularly bad substance to abuse, as although 'all excesses are to be avoided, this especially should be avoided by which harm befalls not only the body but the mind'.⁴⁷⁴ As seen above, Galen believed that wine drinking was especially dangerous for the heads of youths and children. He considered youths to have a 'physique which is already boiling', and accordingly their heads were easier to fall to excessive heat from over-drinking. At such point the youth was prone 'to violent movements, thus precipitating immoderate and excessive actions'.⁴⁷⁵ In a similar way, there was potential for damage to children; they could easily overheat as they were naturally also hot in mixture, and Galen also states that 'it is not good for their heads to be thus filled' with the hot and wet fumes.⁴⁷⁶

One final point remains to be considered regarding wine's hotness, strength-giving and related properties. When and how was it believed that wine generated these properties? Although Galen seems to have thought that grapes were in a process of becoming hotter as they ripened,⁴⁷⁷ several comments in *On the Properties of Foodstuffs* seem to indicate that Galen did not regard grapes as having the same potential for extreme warmth or nutrition as wine. First, although Galen states that 'figs and grapes... are more nutritious than all the seasonal fruits', he also notes that 'grapes are less nourishing than figs'.⁴⁷⁸ Grapes were therefore unlike wine, as they were considered at most second-class in their nutritional properties, supporting the idea that Galen must have perceived some increase in temperature (and thus nutritional content) as the grapes turned into wine. (This is in fact in line with modern nutritional science which recognises that fermentation increases the nutritional value of the original grapes.)⁴⁷⁹ Secondly, Galen notes that grapes of average character (the 'vinous' in comparison to the extremes of the 'sweet' and the 'harsh and

⁴⁷⁴ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.11=6.54-55K.

⁴⁷⁵ Galen, *The Soul's Dependence on the Body*, 10=4.810K. Galen also quotes Plato's *Laws*, 666a-c in support: 'up to the age of eighteen, children should not touch wine at all, for we should consider that one must not drive fire into fire, in body and soul ... As he approaches forty ... wine [is] a medicine to aid the harshness of age.'

⁴⁷⁶ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.11=6.54-55K.

⁴⁷⁷ For grapes becoming sweeter as they ripen, see Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 2.9=6.578-589K: 'sweet grapes have juice that is warmer' and 'the harsh and the acid ones are colder', the latter being 'unsatisfactory' in many respects. Grapes achieve the warmest mixture (the least chance of being acid and harsh, and thus unsatisfactory) 'when they are fully ripe, whether they have been ripened on the vine to the greatest extent, or from being hung have added what was lacking'. In this way, 'some of the harsh ones change to a sweeter condition when hung for a long time'.

⁴⁷⁸ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 2.9=6.573-574K.

⁴⁷⁹ McGovern (2007 [2003]) 306.

acid ones') has a middling property of temperature: 'midway between warm and cold' in mixture (the other two were colder and hotter, respectively).⁴⁸⁰ Thirdly, Galen also states that eating 'the grape that has been hung to dry does not affect the head at all', implying that this foodstuff did not yet have had sufficient contained heat to affect the consumer's head with drunken symptoms.⁴⁸¹ Grape-juice may even have been considered cooler in property than the grape as a whole.⁴⁸²

In contrast, Galen associated a notable degree of hotness with even the very early stages of fermentation, as can be seen in *On the Natural Faculties* when Galen alludes to 'wine which has been not long ago pressed from the grape, and which is fermenting and undergoing alteration through the agency of its contained heat'.⁴⁸³ As such it seems that a greater than average property of heat became manifest during fermentation, and subsequently fuelled further alteration and fermentation of the wine. New wine was thus considered heating, but less heating than the archetypical wine.⁴⁸⁴ Wine seems to have been thought to continue getting hotter in property as it continued to mature, even past the age of the archetypical wine beverage. Old wine was thus thought hotter than the average wine, and Galen accordingly cautioned both that old wine is particularly unsuitable for people with an extremely warm constitution, and that those drinking an excess of old rough wine were especially prone to fever due to overheating.⁴⁸⁵ Indeed, Béguin came to this same conclusion: Galen thought that wine's heat continued to increase throughout its life.⁴⁸⁶

Yet, it was obviously recognised by Greco-Roman society that old wines would eventually deteriorate into vinegar, and although steps were followed to slow

⁴⁸⁰ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 2.9=6.578K. Also noted by Béguin (2002) 143.

⁴⁸¹ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 2.9=6.577K. In comparison, when grapes had been prepared in a more complicated manner, using other substances as storage mediums (such as must or the pressed solids of grapes), Galen considered these grapes to affect the head with headaches: 6.576-577K.

⁴⁸² Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 2.9=6.575-576K notes that the juice of grapes, by itself, gives 'some nutriment from it for the body, but there is more from the fleshy substance', implying that the grape as a whole (with both flesh and juice) give greater nutrition to the body. A difference in the speed at which this nutrition is given to the body is not noted by Galen; if it is presumed any difference was negligible, this would imply that grape juice was logically perceived as cooler in property than the grape as a whole, as it gave less nutrition to the body in a period of time.

⁴⁸³ Galen, *On the Natural Faculties*, 2.9=2.135K.

⁴⁸⁴ Galen, *On the Powers [and Mixtures] of Simple Drugs*, 12.88K.

⁴⁸⁵ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 6.3=6.392K; *On the Causes of Disease*, 7.6K; *On the Powers [and Mixtures] of Simple Drugs*, 12.88K; Béguin (2002) 146.

⁴⁸⁶ Béguin (2002) 146.

this process and extend the life of the wine, this transition into vinegar was considered the inevitable final stage in the lifecycle of wine (providing that it did not first succumb to mould). Today a similar inevitable and natural process is also recognised, against which measures are taken; thus wine is generally stored sealed air-tight in bottles (using corks or similar), as when it is exposed to the air the wine starts to turn into a wine vinegar, due to the ethanol in the wine reacting with oxygen in the air to turn into acetic acid.⁴⁸⁷ Galen believed that when wine became vinegar it was no longer warm in property,⁴⁸⁸ and as such he most likely thought that wines would eventually cool in property as they aged excessively and turned acidic.

Galen therefore broadly linked the hotness of these various grape-products not only to the stages of production and aging, but broadly to what the modern reader would recognise as the product's alcohol content. As such, and in view of the above explanation of Galen's ideas linking wine's intoxicating effects to its hotness, perhaps Galen thought that the level of a wine's hotness was linked to the level of its intoxicating properties.

Pliny seems to have held broadly comparable views. He regarded grape juice and vinegar as essentially the same foodstuff as wine, but at a different period of the grape-beverage's lifecycle. He notes that 'we must remember that wine is grape juice that has acquired strength by fermentation' and that 'even when sour, wine still has uses as a remedy. Vinegar has very great cooling qualities'.⁴⁸⁹ Each stage of this lifecycle was thought to have different medical properties. Fermentation was a process associated with the grape-beverage becoming stronger, until, as noted above, wine became the most strength-giving foodstuff ('there is nothing else that is more useful for strengthening the

⁴⁸⁷ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.131, 23.54; *OCW*², s.v. 'Vinegar'. Note also Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.57, which alludes to the inevitability of the same wine-to-vinegar process when it notes that fine wines (presumably well kept) tend to improve up to the age of twenty, yet decline very rapidly afterwards; Cato, *On Agriculture*, 104, described the lifespan of a batch of 'servant's wine' (*vinum familiae*), stating that 'whatever is left over after the [summer] solstice [about nine months after the vintage] will be a very sharp and excellent vinegar (*acetum*)'. On the wine-making process and the generation of vinegar, see further Appendix 1.

⁴⁸⁸ Note: Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.6=6.275K: 'foods that thin without warming, like capers, if taken with oxymel or with vinegar and oils'. In 4.5-6=6.263-276K, various other foodstuffs are advised for this cool and thinning diet (to treat ulcerous fatigue, an especially hot condition with excrements), including vinegar in other ways: ginger soaked in vinegar and as part of oxymel. Note also: *On Barley Soup*, 6.829K: 'they have cutting powers and so cannot moisten and nourish – for example honey and oxymel and other such things' (trans. based on Grant's, except 'vinegar sauce' is replaced with 'oxymel' for ὀξύμηλι).

⁴⁸⁹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.45, 23.54.

body').⁴⁹⁰ As Pliny believed that wine had notable heating properties when consumed, and cooling powers when applied on the skin,⁴⁹¹ yet vinegar was simply regarded as having 'very great cooling qualities', this seems to imply that the decline of wine into vinegar was associated with a loss of wine's significant heating powers, and a growth in its cooling powers.

Yet the views which the Hippocratic author of *Regimen* held on this matter cannot have been compatible with those of Galen. Although he explicitly shared the view that grapes increased in hotness as they ripened,⁴⁹² and that vinegar and acid wines are cool in mixture,⁴⁹³ these are where the similarities end. The Hippocratic author states that 'grapes are warming and moist', and so grapes are already notably hot.⁴⁹⁴ Here the author is surely discussing regular ripe grapes of average property, as he then proceeds to discuss other specific types of grape (white, sweet, unripe and raisins), highlighting their differing properties in comparison to this archetype. The Hippocratic author also states that must (γλεῦκος) 'heats' and 'moistens', and so implies this to also already be notably hot before fermentation. New wines (νέοι) said to have similar properties to must (at least regarding evacuation) as they are 'nearer the must'; they were probably also considered hot and moist.⁴⁹⁵ As such, this Hippocratic author believed that after the grapes had matured, all of the stages in wine production before the decline into vinegar, from ripe grapes to must to wine, were notably hot in mixture. There is no indication that wine was considered to be significantly hotter than these other stages, suggesting that grapes were probably therefore regarded as just as constructive for heating the body, and just as risky for overheating the body, as wine. Accordingly, in book three a warm and moist diet is advised to treat cold and dry bowels, and among the key prescribed foodstuffs are both grapes and dark soft wine (stated in book two to be a moister wine, and thus closer to a hot and wet mixture than the wine archetype); both were thus considered notably warming (as well as

⁴⁹⁰ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.58. See also: 23.37; Jouanna (1996) 424 = (2012) 184.

⁴⁹¹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.58.

⁴⁹² Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 2.55: 'unripe grapes are less warming'.

⁴⁹³ Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 2.52.

⁴⁹⁴ Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 2.55.

⁴⁹⁵ Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 2.52, 2.55. On must (γλεῦκος) being hot and moist, consider especially: 'wine from grape-husks moistens ... must (γλεῦκος) also does the same'; 'must causes wind, disturbs the bowels and empties them. It causes wind because it heats'; see further Appendix 5. On new wines (νέοι) also probably being considered hot and moist (like must), see Appendix 5.

appropriately moist).⁴⁹⁶ Consequently this Hippocratic author was unlikely to share Galen's view that wine's hotness led to its intoxicating properties (unless he also attributed similar intoxicating property to both grapes and must, but there is nothing to support such a hypothesis in *Regimen*). Instead, the Hippocratic author seems to have mainly associated the process of fermentation with a change in dryness of mixture (see fig. 2.2); this is the key difference in mixture between 'moist' grapes and must/new wine on the one hand, and the 'dry' wine archetype on the other. Furthermore, both vinegar and acid wine beverages were considered moister than the wine archetype (the former seems to be of balanced moisture, and the latter moist).⁴⁹⁷ As such, this Hippocratic author was more likely to associate the level of dryness with the level of wine's intoxicating properties: dryness increased as the wine fermented, it peaked, and then decreased as the wine turned to acid.

Furthermore, the opinions of some individuals among the wider Greco-Roman society on these matters were clearly not always entirely compatible with those of Galen, and were perhaps sometimes more compatible with those in *Regimen*. Plutarch and Macrobius (the latter largely paraphrased the former's discussion of this issue in the fifth century) considered new wine/must ($\gamma\lambda\epsilon\tilde{\iota}\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ /*mustum*) – grape juice which was either unfermented or very slightly fermented (the latter making a sweet new wine) – in an attempt to suggest the reason why it did not make a person drunk, or at least not as quickly as properly fermented wine.⁴⁹⁸ One reason suggested was because of its extreme sweetness, which was believed to weaken or counteract that which caused drunkenness. It is accordingly suggested that after drinking a great deal of wine, a way to avoid drunkenness is to vomit it up and eat lots of sweet honey. A similar idea seems to be present in the Hippocratic Corpus' *Regimen in Acute Diseases* (subsequently quoted by Athenaeus), which notes that 'sweet wine is less likely to produce headache than is heavy wine, it has less effect upon the mind', thereby implying a link between sweetness and a lack of intoxicating strength.⁴⁹⁹ Similarly, Pliny notes that 'sweet wine is less inebriating but floats

⁴⁹⁶ Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 3.80. Soft dark wine: 2.52.

⁴⁹⁷ Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 2.52; see further Appendix 5.

⁴⁹⁸ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 3.7=655e-656b (which cites Aristotle, fr.220 Rose at 656b); Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, 7.7.15-20. Dioscorides, 5.9 also notes that must/new wine inebriates less, but offers no explanation.

⁴⁹⁹ Hippocrates, *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, 50; Athenaeus, 2.45e-f.

in the stomach'.⁵⁰⁰ Another suggestion in the same discussion by Plutarch and Macrobius comes from an interpretation of Aristotle.⁵⁰¹ This centres on the heaviness of must/new wine, which was believed to be due to its high water content. This water content counteracted the must's less substantial gas content, which was the thing which caused drunkenness. As the must aged into wine, its water content decreased, leaving the gas content to affect the person to a greater extent. This explanation is notably similar to *Regimen*, as it can be read to support the concept of fermentation as a drying process, with a grape-based beverage's intoxicating strength being related to its dryness. This belief may also be reflected by Dioscorides, who particularly associated dry wine with heavy effects upon the head (being particularly prone to causing drunkenness and headaches), and conversely sweet wines were thought significantly less potent than other wines in this respect (they inebriate less); this perhaps implies a (conscious or subconscious) link between a wine's moisture content and its intoxicating power.⁵⁰² None of these explanations are very similar to the beliefs of Galen, who seemed to have primarily linked a wine's intoxicating properties with its hotness and hot moist fumes (Galen's concept of intoxicating fumes, along with his belief that younger wines were more watery,⁵⁰³ seem to be the only notable similarities).

Yet Galen's basic ideas on this matter are indicated to have had a long-lasting influence by the *Tacuinum Sanitatis*; this is an anonymous work on health and wellbeing from fourteenth-century Italy. This author's ideas regarding the warmth of grapes, wine and vinegar are all similar to those believed by Galen; even the juice of a grape was regarded as cooler than the whole grape.⁵⁰⁴ A difference, however, was that in the *Tacuinum Sanitatis* must was regarded as hot like wine. Yet Galen clearly regarded must/new wine as notably cooler than wine, although still somewhat heating (must/new wine was heating to the first degree of intensity, whilst the archetypical wine was heating to the second

⁵⁰⁰ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.38.

⁵⁰¹ Aristotle: Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 3.7=656b cites Aristotle, fr.220 Rose; Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, 7.7.18 appears to paraphrase Plutarch.

⁵⁰² Dioscorides, 5.6.2; Jouanna (1996) 419 = (2012) 180.

⁵⁰³ Béguin (2002) 146.

⁵⁰⁴ This evidence is summarised by van Asseldonk (2007) 7. Note that 'most' is taken to be a typographical error for 'must'.

degree).⁵⁰⁵ Accordingly, Galen clearly associated the increase in temperature with the process of fermentation, whilst the author of the *Tacuinum Sanitatis* did not appear to do so. Furthermore, in the *Tacuinum Sanitatis* the properties of moisture attributed to these foodstuffs are notably different from those stated by Galen, being in fact closer to those in *Regimen*. For example, wine is believed to be dry in mixture. Therefore, this later work has notable similarities and differences to the ideas presented in both the Galenic Corpus and the Hippocratic Corpus' *Regimen*.

WINE'S MOISTNESS, HYDRATING AND THIRST-QUENCHING PROPERTIES

Medical opinions regarding wine's properties of moistness were probably far less commonly agreed upon than those regarding its temperature. In the eyes of many first- to third-century readers, the chief medical authorities could be seen not only to disagree with each other, but among themselves. As explained above (p.129), the Hippocratic Corpus' *Regimen*, probably supported by *Airs, Waters, Places*, considered wine to be notably dry in mixture. In stating this, they disagreed not only with the works of Galen (who ostentatiously claimed to base his knowledge on a loyal interpretation of the advice of Hippocrates), but also with another work of the Hippocratic Corpus: *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, which also seems to have considered wine consumption to be moistening. I do not mean to suggest that consistency was, or should be, expected within the Hippocratic Corpus (indeed these works were composed by several authors), or that Galen and others accepted all these texts as authentic works of Hippocrates (we have already seen that Galen rejected the first book of *Regimen* as spurious), but merely that noteworthy proponents could be found on both sides of this disagreement regarding wine's moisture/dryness of mixture. These included the authors of different Hippocratic texts; this disagreement was apparently longstanding.

As discussed above (from p.117), Galen appears to have considered unmixed wine to be dry in mixture, but a typical mixed-wine beverage to be moist. Galen

⁵⁰⁵ On Galen's views, see fig. 2.1 with Appendix 2. Note especially *On the Powers [and Mixtures] of Simple Drugs*, 12.88K for Galen's ideas regarding the degrees of heating intensity associated with wine and must/new wine.

also firmly linked grapes and the genesis of wine with a quality of moisture when he noted that ‘the substance of the berries [i.e. grapes] is compounded from their flesh-like material and the moisture interspersed in it from which wine arises’; the grapes’ moisture was thus thought responsible for wine’s very creation.⁵⁰⁶ Galen’s logic on the archetypical wine beverage was followed by Ps-Galen, who believed it to promote the humour blood, which implied it was similarly hot and wet in mixture. As such, both Galen and Ps-Galen thought that consumption of the archetypical mixed-wine beverage could influence the general mixture of a person’s body by giving it moist nutrition.

Celsus seems to have had similar views, although he does not explicitly mention wine. Instead, he rather states that copious drinking made the body more humid, especially when followed by walking in the late hours. This presumably included the heavy consumption of almost any common drink (except cold water, as indicated subsequently). In contrast he believed that hunger, drinking cold water, and taking food from hot and dry districts made the body drier.⁵⁰⁷ Thirst and drinking less than usual were also probably considered to dry the body; thus thirst was prescribed to treat the retaining of water in dropsy, and after the removal of fluids from the belly to treat tympanites (a type of dropsy with much water in the belly) Celsus advised a regime including drinking only a little undiluted wine.⁵⁰⁸

Galen also thought that, in the same way as with wine’s warmth, its moistness could also affect a person’s mind and soul, both through modifying the body’s constitution and also through creating hot and dry fumes which led to intoxicated behaviour (as explained above). Galen confirms that moisture could have an active role in influencing the head when he notes its effect in extremity: that when a person drank wine excessively, ‘moistures remain from wine to damage the head or stomach’.⁵⁰⁹ This quotation also reiterates that moderation was the crucial factor for ensuring that wine’s moisture was used beneficially for the head (leading to constructive intoxicated behaviour, including happiness and confidence), as in excess the moisture could be destructive.

⁵⁰⁶ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 2.9=6.574K.

⁵⁰⁷ Celsus, 1.3.28-29.

⁵⁰⁸ Tympanites: Celsus, 3.21.14-17. Thirst: 3.21.4. Diuretics were also prescribed to help expel the fluids (including thin dry wine) at 3.21.6-8.

⁵⁰⁹ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 3.12=6.227K (with 6.225-227K).

In *On the Preservation of Health*, Galen explains that wine's wetness was especially beneficial as a therapeutic measure for people whose bodily constitutions were overly dry. The Hippocratic Corpus' *Regimen in Acute Diseases* follows this same concept, stating that 'if the disease is drier than one would like, the patient should be given a drink of either hydromel or wine'.⁵¹⁰ Galen elaborates on the rationale behind this, stating that 'dryness is treated by nutrition, and especially moist nutrition';⁵¹¹ wine would thus be considered appropriate as Galen thought it to be a proper food with a wet mixture. Indeed, elsewhere in *On the Preservation of Health* Galen explicitly confirms this use: 'wine moistens and nourishes whatever is excessively dry'. Wine consumption would therefore work to counteract and alleviate such a person's overly dry constitution, helping to bring them back towards a balanced mixture and thus better health. Galen explicitly indicates three categories of common suitable candidates for this moistening dietary treatment when he states that 'to adults wine is useful for the softening and elimination of biliary excrements; and no less for the dryness which occurs in the solid organs of the animal from extreme toil or from the constitution of age'.⁵¹²

A first category of susceptible people thus consisted of the elderly along with convalescent patients. Galen believed that people's constitutions inevitably dried throughout their lifecycle to become excessively dry in old age, as was outlined above. Galen does not explicitly mention convalescents in the above quotation from *On the Preservation of Health* (which suggested three types of people especially benefiting from wine's moistness), but they should be included along with the elderly, as their conditions and basic treatments (including their need to be moistened) were approximately equated in *The Art of Medicine* (as seen below) and also in *On the Preservation of Health* itself.⁵¹³ This is therefore part of the reason that Galen stated in *The Art of Medicine* that wine was an especially useful part of the diet for elderly or convalescent patients: because (in addition to other factors) its moistening properties

⁵¹⁰ Hippocrates, *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, 12.

⁵¹¹ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 3.8=6.206K.

⁵¹² Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.11=6.55K.

⁵¹³ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.4=6.330-331K: 'we must understand the condition of old men's bodies, because, slipping into disease from slight causes, their former health must be restored like those convalescent from illness.'

counteracted the troublesome fact that among these patients 'the solid parts themselves are dry'.⁵¹⁴

A second group of suitable candidates were those who were considered to have an excess of either bile. Both yellow and black bile shared 'dryness' as their common imbalance of mixture, and so wine's moisture would help to counteract either one's dryness. An example of this has already been seen in the case of Diodorus the grammarian. One of the factors which Galen notes made his prescription of bread and wine so appropriate was that Diodorus' stomach 'was bilious all the time'.⁵¹⁵ The implication is presumably that the wine would help counteract the dryness of this bilious stomach in order to help it digest the bread given with it. In *Mixtures*, Galen provides another example:

'I have known cases of very phlegmatic individuals in whom a great quantity of yellow bile gathered in the stomach; before eating they would have to induce vomiting of this, by drinking large amounts of water or wine. If they ever did take food before having vomited, this food would be wasted, and would cause pain in the head.'⁵¹⁶

Consuming large quantities of wine or water in this way was thus considered constructive for such people's health, as in such a large quantity they were believed to have worked like emetics, at least against stomach bile.

Celsus also advised vomiting for people with bilious stomachs (which he notes could be caused by both overeating and poor digestion).⁵¹⁷ For inducing vomiting in the morning, the emetic procedure he suggests involved either drinking honey or hyssop in wine, or eating a radish, followed by tepid water, possibly with salt or honey added (however, to induce vomiting after a meal, the wine/radish could be omitted). Celsus' advice allows the conclusion that wine's utility as part of an emetic treatment to counteract stomach bile was more widely recognised by Greco-Roman medicine, and preceded Galen.

Galen also regarded sweeter wines (possibly also included those sweetened with honey) as particularly appropriate for some emetic purposes, as he explicitly advises this to evacuate recently consumed food which was putrefying

⁵¹⁴ Galen, *The Art of Medicine*, 37=1.405-406K.

⁵¹⁵ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 6.14=6.449K. See further n.334.

⁵¹⁶ Galen, *Mixtures*, 2.6=1.630K.

⁵¹⁷ Celsus, 1.3.17-22.

in the stomach.⁵¹⁸ For humoral doctors, wine and water were particularly appropriate for expelling bile due to their moisture; they therefore helped to combat yellow bile's dryness rather than worsening the dryness of these people's stomachs. In *On the Preservation of Health*, however, Galen notes slightly more specific advice on evacuating yellow bile from the stomach, stating that 'I do not recommend using wine at that time ... unless it is difficult to make them vomit with water'.⁵¹⁹ Galen's preference for water reflects the fact that its mixture was more appropriate, as (unlike wine) its mixture was the opposite of yellow bile, and (as stated above) one of the main precepts of humoral medicine was that opposites best treated their opposites. Accordingly, Galen's comment also suggests that he believed that excessive wine had a notably more powerful emetic property than water; why else would someone employ it after water had failed? Galen thus implies that wine's appropriate use in evacuating yellow bile was in treating the more severe conditions, where water would not work. Perhaps, in a similar way, this emetic property of excessive wine may also have been considered appropriate to treat a recent over-consumption of dry foods from the stomach, as Galen states in *The Art of Medicine* that 'an excessive intake of food or drink – provided that it is recent – should be corrected by evacuation'.⁵²⁰

A third group included people who had over-exercised, as Galen thought that this could lead to drying the muscles more than desired, and thus a 'thinness and dryness' in the body. This condition occurred 'in well-constituted bodies when they exercise excessively and are not well treated with apotherapy' (by which he meant measures taken after exercise 'to evacuate the excrements and to keep the body unwearied' and 'to prevent and remove the fatigue following exercise'), 'for thus the excrements are eliminated, and the tensions relaxed, and nothing else remains in the body except the dryness which comes from the too excessive exercise.' Galen explains that in this fatigue, 'such a body, I think, needs to be nourished and at the same time moistened, both of which will be best accomplished for it by means of moist nourishment'.⁵²¹ This particular condition was fatigue-like, but was not technically classified by Galen as one of

⁵¹⁸ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 6.7=413-414K (note also 6.410-411K on drinking sweet and relaxing wines to purge the abdomen).

⁵¹⁹ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 6.3=6.391K.

⁵²⁰ Galen, *The Art of Medicine*, 33=1.392K.

⁵²¹ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 3.5=194-195K, 3.7=6.201-202K. On apotherapy, the final part of well-completed exercise, see: 3.2=6.167-168K.

his three categories of simple 'fatigues' (κόποι); the causes of these are more complex.⁵²² Yet he does explicitly link fatigue to dryness when he notes that 'if a man has toiled so much that his nature has become completely dry, he will be seized by fatigue and fever'.⁵²³ Furthermore, when considering the diet proper to these three categories of simple fatigue, two are explicitly stated to be best treated using a diet of moist nourishment, and as such wine's moistness could be appropriate.⁵²⁴

Celsus similarly advised a moister diet and a wine-drinking regime to treat fatigue, specifically prescribing 'food of a fluid consistency; [and] he should be content with water to drink, or if wine, certainly diluted, of the sort to promote diuresis'. When there was oppression due to persistent fatigue (especially after excessive consumption the previous day), he prescribed drinking water and wine alternately.⁵²⁵

Yet, in contrast to Galen's therapeutic use of wine to oppose an imbalance, Galen also believed that people who had slightly moist or dry constitutions, yet were broadly speaking in health and did not need to modify their constitution, found the foods of the same imbalance of mixture as their own constitution to be most appropriate for them, as well as best for maintaining their acceptable constitution. He thus states that, in essence, 'dry things are more quickly assimilated to dry [bodies] and moist to moist [bodies]'.⁵²⁶ As foods of similar moistness to these peoples' constitutions were thought to be more quickly assimilated, presumably because they required less changing into a state similar to the consumer's body, they thus nourished such peoples' bodies more quickly. Such foods were also thought to generally taste more pleasant to them (providing that their slight imbalance of mixture was homogenous across their

⁵²² On 'fatigues' (κόποι) in Galen, see *On the Preservation of Health*, books 3 and 4 (= 6.164-304K). See further n.569.

⁵²³ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 3.12=6.227K.

⁵²⁴ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 3.8=6.203K: 'Ulcerous fatigue, if it has been adequately treated with apotherapy, needs the customary nourishment, or a little less, but moister at the same time as less ... tensive fatigue needs a scantier diet even more. And inflammatory fatigue above all needs the moistest and minimum diet and one that also contains something cool.' Note that for the third simple fatigue, inflammatory, Galen is reluctant to prescribe wine due to its hotness, but prescribes a specific wine-drinking regime which is cooler in property; see *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.10=6.298-299K, 5.12=6.376-379K, note also 6.3=6.392K.

⁵²⁵ Celsus, 1.3.6, 1.3.8.

⁵²⁶ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 6.3=6.394K. This procedure is also noted to be the same procedure as to maintain a constitutional imbalance, 6.395-396K: 'if you should wish to maintain constitutions, moistening foods being most appropriate for moist constitutions, and drying foods for drying constitutions; but if you should wish to change them, the opposite'.

entire body); they therefore seem to have been considered more 'proper' foodstuffs for these particular individuals ('properness' is discussed further above, from p.133). The implication of this is that wine's moistness was probably considered more appropriate for those people with a slight and reasonably healthy wetness of constitution, and as such wine would most likely be considered even more 'proper' to such people in health.

However, if a person's unbalanced constitutional moistness was considered undesirable, if it became too extreme for example, it would need to be modified towards balance. This was achieved, in part, by switching to foods of the opposite imbalance to the person's constitution. Accordingly, wine was considered less appropriate for those whose constitutions were *excessively* wet. Such people could derive fewer benefits from wine's moisture, and the consumption of wine beverages threatened to worsen their existing unhealthy bodily imbalance. It was surely also easier for these individuals' wine consumption to pass into excess with respect to moisture. Galen explains this in detail for the case of children: 'children, who do not secrete such bile and who have a much greater natural moisture, have no need of the benefits accruing from wine, but sustain only injury from it. Therefore no one in his right mind will permit children to use such a beverage, which, besides doing no good, may have great harm ensuing.'⁵²⁷ It is notable that Galen also refers to the fact that children do not secrete excess bile, and so wine's use was even less justified for them, as it was not needed to counteract bile's dryness.

Women were also considered to have significantly moister constitutions both by the Hippocratic Corpus and Galen. They thus required drier diets. For Galen this meant that wine (which he considered to be moist in mixture) was more harmful for females, as it risked over-moistening their constitutions. The Hippocratic author of *Regimen* would surely have less of a problem with women drinking wine, as he considered wine to be dry in mixture; it would thus help to reduce this imbalance. Jouanna even suggests that the Hippocratic authors would consider unmixed wine *especially* appropriate for women, due to its greater dryness.⁵²⁸ Plutarch's *Table-Talk*, on the other hand, records the

⁵²⁷ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.11=6.54-55K.

⁵²⁸ Galen, *Method of Medicine*, 3.4=10.195K; *On the Composition of Drugs according to Places*, 12.1004K; *On the Composition of Drugs according to Kind*, 13.554K; Béguin (2002) 147. Hippocratic Corpus: *A Regimen for Health*, 6; *Regimen*, 1.27; Jouanna (1996) 420-421 = (2012) 181-182.

alternative theory that women's moister nature meant that wine became more watered-down once inside their body, and passed quickly through them. They were thus less affected by intoxication, and thus less susceptible to some of wine's destructive consequences. Another theory, also presented in *Table-Talk*, is that women had a colder nature than men, and wine thus helped to counter this imbalance.⁵²⁹

Yet as water was similarly considered notably wet in mixture,⁵³⁰ excessive consumption of water was probably also thought to pose a similar potential risk to the body as did wine. Indeed, in *On the Causes of Disease*, Galen states that 'too many drinks', and thus presumably drinks *in general* (including both wine and water), were among the causes of moist illnesses.⁵³¹ Similarly, *On the Preservation of Health* states that over-moistening is due to 'too much drinking', and 'untimely use of moist foods', as well as other causes.⁵³² Furthermore, up to about a hundred years after Galen, the humoral doctor Ps-Galen noted that a predominance of 'phlegmatic bile comes about from sleep, drinking water, the consumption of seafood and moist diets in general'. The heavy drinking of wine was instead linked to the favouring of the humour blood instead. The humours blood and phlegm had wetness as their shared property of mixture, and as such an excess of either wine or water were both considered to lead to excessive moistening of the body.⁵³³

Although moderation was considered necessary for the medically constructive use of wine's property of moistness, 'moderation' was an extremely flexible category dependent upon the individual and their specific constitutional mixture. As seen above, in the case of people with bilious stomachs, medically constructive drinking in terms of wine's moistness could even include heavy drinking to the point of vomiting. Yet wine undoubtedly had boundaries of acceptable use regarding its wetness; Galen considered wet foods to be potentially destructive in excess, as they could both unbalance a person's constitutional mixture to be unhealthily moist, and could also damage the head

⁵²⁹ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 3.3=650a-c; 3.4=650f-651a; Corvisier (2003) 124-125.

⁵³⁰ Galen, *On Barley Soup*, 6.819K: 'water is cold and moist'.

⁵³¹ Galen, *On the Causes of Disease*, 7.19-20K. Note also: *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.2=6.317K.

⁵³² Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 3.12= 6.225-227K.

⁵³³ Ps-Galen, *On the Humours*, 19.488K. Wine: 19.494-495K. Mixtures of blood and phlegm: 19.486K.

through over-moistening.⁵³⁴ Galen explains that in such cases, in general ‘one must correct the moistures which develop in the constitution either from too much drinking or from other occasion; for the objective in such conditions is dryness’, by which Galen meant that such a person’s mixture should be modified towards balance by drying it. Galen elaborates that there are two different cases of inappropriately excessive wetness due to drinking, each requiring different specific treatments.

The first was attributed to a short-term cause, where ‘from too liberal drinking indulged on the previous day, there has developed in addition any disturbance of the head or of the stomach’. This illness the morning after a night of heavy drinking was thus believed to cause something that a modern reader would probably recognise as a ‘hangover’. Yet it is notable that Galen attributed this to an excess of moisture, rather than to dehydration as the modern reader would probably reason.⁵³⁵ Galen thought that after such excessive wine consumption, ‘moistures remain from wine to damage the head or stomach’, and as such, excessive exposure to wine’s wetness could imbalance and damage both body and mind. Galen states that ‘it is possible to cure this completely in one day, by increasing the amount of dry massage, and exercising more swiftly, and by using less drink and drier foods’. Thus, as the cause of the hangover was simply thought to be an excess of moisture, its cure was simply a one-day regime which favoured the dry: avoiding wet foods as far as possible (presumably including drinking), favouring dry foodstuffs, and engaging in activities promoting dryness (dry massage and quick exercise, promoting perspiration and thus evacuation of the excess moisture).

The second case was thought due to a longer-term cause, where ‘the moisture has developed from prolonged intemperance and from the excessive and untimely use of moist foods’.⁵³⁶ This long-term excess of wine was therefore thought to lead to an imbalance in the bodily constitution towards the moist. Galen explains that this ‘requires longer correction’, and ‘it is not possible to cure them immediately’. He advises that this should be treated with ‘the same forethought for the acquired conditions as for the natural dyscrasias [i.e. a

⁵³⁴ Throughout the following paragraphs, see: Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 3.12=6.225-228K.

⁵³⁵ *OCW*², s.v. ‘Hangover’; *OCB*, s.v. ‘Hangover’.

⁵³⁶ Similarly (in addition to n.534), the belief that moist foods and copious drinking caused moist illnesses is also raised by Galen in *On the Causes of Disease*, 7.19-20K.

significantly imbalanced bodily mixture]'. This indicates that this condition was to be treated as if the person naturally had a significantly wet bodily mixture, and thus through promoting a long-term regime which counteracted this imbalance through promoting a similar intensity of dryness in the body. Wine, being considered wet, was thus presumably considered less appropriate during such treatment; this person should therefore drink it more sparingly, and ideally drink wine beverages which were drier in mixture (for these, refer to fig. 2.1).

The Hippocratic author of *Regimen* book two, on the other hand, believed that wine had a dry mixture. Galen wrote many commentaries on the books of the Hippocratic Corpus in order to (among other things) resolve any apparent differences between his own theories and those of the idealised Hippocrates. As such, a commentary on the second book of *Regimen* would be extremely insightful into how Galen would explain this major difference regarding wine's moisture (as stated in this chapter's introduction, Galen is willing to accept that the second book of *Regimen* may be an authentic work of Hippocrates). Indeed, a parallel example of this can be seen in *On the Preservation of Health*, when Galen equates the wine which his own generation call 'yellow' (ξανθός) with those which 'Hippocrates used to call "tawny"' (κιρρός).⁵³⁷ Yet such a commentary does not survive, and as such it is ultimately uncertain how Galen rationalised this discrepancy, if he did so at all. It should be noted, however, that plausible solutions are possible. The most straightforward would have been for Galen to reason that Hippocrates here referred to *unmixed* wine, without making this explicitly clear. This would comply with Galen's belief that unmixed wine was typically hot and dry in mixture. Alternatively, Galen could have reasoned that the Greeks of Hippocrates' era drank a different type of wine, or in a different manner, to Greeks and Romans of his own day. Galen could then argue that this difference made the archetypical beverage significantly drier in Hippocrates' day.

⁵³⁷ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.5=6.335-336K. 'Tawny' wine was also mentioned at 4.7=6.281K (in the context of 6.279-286K), where 'thin tawny wine' (οἶνος κίρρος καὶ λεπτός; Green here mistranslates this as 'light, thin wine', which is also inconsistent with his translation of κίρρος as 'tawny' at 5.5=6.335K) was regarded as advantageous for patients in ulcerous fatigue when an excess of fluids had been absorbed in to their system as a whole (rather than being confined to the veins). On tawny wine, see further: Liddel and Scott (1940) s.v. 'κίρρος': in the Hippocratic Corpus this refers to an 'orange tawny' wine, between flame-coloured, yellowish-red and yellow.

Regardless, the conflicting advice of these two major medical authorities implies that some variety of beliefs should be expected among first- to third-century AD humoral doctors; some no doubt followed the belief in wine's dryness as transmitted through this text attributed to the well respected Hippocrates. Although, unlike Galen, this Hippocratic author does not elaborate on the reasoning behind why he attributes this mixture to wine, and as such it cannot be known for certain why his beliefs differed from many other authorities (including Galen, Ps-Galen and the Hippocratic author of *Regimen in Acute Diseases*), I can suggest some plausible potential factors behind this.

First, it should be noted that the description of wine's mixture in *Regimen* immediately follows a similar but opposite description of water's mixture: 'water is cooling and moist. Wine is hot and dry'.⁵³⁸ The Hippocratic author's view on water's property of mixture is not surprising; 'water' was commonly assigned as cold and wet element by Greco-Roman medical authorities and philosophers (including both this Hippocratic author and those who followed the four-humour/element model of Empedocles, including Galen). Yet, the Hippocratic author's presentation of these two drinks in this way – side by side, in the same succinct format, yet as polar opposites – may reflect the Hippocratic author's keenness to render wine and water as direct opposites. Indeed, as wine and water were the main two main drinks of the ancient Greek diet, it is easy to see how wine could be regarded as the 'opposite' beverage to water, especially as water and wine were used in the daily drinking ritual as opposite components of the same mixed wine-water beverage. This was also presumably appealing to the medical mindset, as an appropriate balance of these opposites, wine and water, was pursued to make an appropriately balanced mixed wine beverage; effectively the same process as treating an illness by implementing a cure of the exact opposite mixture. It is also notable that water and wine share the same properties of mixture as the two elements favoured by the author of *Regimen* (as discussed above, fire was considered to be mainly hot and dry, and water mainly cold and wet). In an analogy with the two fundamental elements, it is possible that these two common beverages became regarded as the two fundamental drinks of humans, and accordingly attributed the same mixtures as the elements fire and water. According to this theory, wine would thus be regarded as the fire-like beverage, and attributed a hot and dry mixture. In

⁵³⁸ Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 2.52; Jouanna (1996) 415 = (2012) 117.

support of this theory, it can be noted that, as seen above, other Greco-Roman authors linked wine with fire; such authors notably included Plato, writing shortly after this Hippocratic author.⁵³⁹ However, without further evidence, the accuracy of this argument must ultimately remain uncertain.

Secondly, it should also be noted that, if the theory is accepted that Galen may have believed wine's heating properties to be more intense than its moistening properties (see p.119), then both the Hippocratic author and Galen can be seen to show the same basic relationship between wine's properties of mixture: essentially, they both regarded a mixed-wine beverage as more heating than it was moistening. When interpreted in this way, the difference is that the Hippocratic author simply took this view further than Galen; wine was simply stated to be drying in property (rather than entering into the issue of implying differing intensities of properties of mixture). If this interpretation is correct, perhaps it reflects the Hippocratic author's greater simplicity; thus, for example, *Regimen* has half of the elements of Galen, and the Hippocratic author almost entirely avoids even implying relative intensities of mixtures between various foodstuffs.

A third point may be suggested by noting the Hippocratic author's discussion regarding the properties of meat from various animals.⁵⁴⁰ He notes that animals are drier when, among other things, they are smaller drinkers and when they have lots of blood. This may suggest that the author considered blood to be dry in mixture, unlike the later four-humour model which believed blood to be a humour that was wet in mixture.⁵⁴¹ As such, perhaps both Galen and the Hippocratic author wanted to equate the properties of wine with blood, but had to conclude different views on wine's moisture due to their differing opinions on blood's properties. This agenda is supported by the above-mentioned point that Galen seemed keen to equate the wines which were more 'blood-like' in appearance with those which fostered blood production, as well as a tendency

⁵³⁹ Plato, *Laws*, 666a-c.

⁵⁴⁰ Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 2.49.

⁵⁴¹ It is not unparalleled for ancient medical authorities to attribute properties to blood which conflicted with Galen's belief that it was hot and wet; for example, Celsus, 4.6.2 argues that blood is neither hot nor cold, but simply the quickest body part to alter between temperatures (though, perhaps in contrast, at 5.26.20c he notes that the best blood, when seen coming from a wound, is that which is hot).

for humans to equate blood with wine from an early point in history due to its visual similarities and remarkable (intoxicating) properties.⁵⁴²

A further issue related to wine's moisture include its hydrating and thirst-quenching properties. In *On Barley Soup*, Galen implies that neither a substance's hydration nor its ability to quench thirst, were *directly* linked to its water content.⁵⁴³ Instead, he explains – regarding his preferred recipe for barley soup – that 'its hydration is derived from the moistness, since this is more thirst-quenching than water ... and because its moistness lingers through stickiness' his barley soup was believed to be even moister and more hydrating. Accordingly, Galen probably considered wine to be hydrating and thirst-quenching, as its mixture had a notable degree of moistness (perhaps also, in a similar way to Galen's 'sticky' barley soup, stickier wines – such as honeyed-wines – were considered more hydrating as their moistness was thought to linger longer). This link between wine's notable moisture and thirst-quenching properties seem further strengthened by *On the Preservation of Health*, as Galen links dryness of mixture to thirst when he discusses the treatment of 'dryness which derives from anger or from thirst'.⁵⁴⁴ Although he does not explicitly mention any drinks among the cure, he does immediately afterwards discuss the opposite condition of over-moistening, the causes of which included consuming an excess of drinks (wine is at one point explicitly mentioned), with the advised cure including drinking less. Galen states that these two conditions are opposites, requiring opposite treatments, and thus it could be inferred that Galen probably believed that a great deal of drinking relieved thirst.

However, Galen's discussion of grapes in *On the Properties of Foodstuffs* complicates this matter. He notes that 'sweet grapes have a juice that is warmer [than the average grape], which is why they are thirst-producing'.⁵⁴⁵ This would seem to imply that wine, a similar grape-based foodstuff, may also produce a degree of thirst as it was also hot in temperature. If Galen did consider wine's heating properties to be more intense than its moistening properties, then he may also have considered the hotness of wine to take precedence in this issue, perhaps suggesting that the archetypical wine, overall, generated thirst (and perhaps also reduced hydration) rather than quenched it.

⁵⁴² Equating blood and wine, note especially: McGovern (2007 [2003]) 303.

⁵⁴³ Galen, *On Barley Soup*, 6.824-825K.

⁵⁴⁴ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 3.12=6.226K.

⁵⁴⁵ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 2.9=6.578K.

If, on the other hand, wine's hotness was not considered significantly more intense than its moistness, wine's ability to quench thirst (derived from its moistness) may simply have been cancelled out by an ability to generate thirst (derived from its hotness). Yet, due to a lack of evidence, the resolution of this matter is ultimately uncertain.

Other medical authorities also considered wine beverages to be potentially hydrating and thirst-quenching. Soranus notes that an infant that was very thirsty after a meal should be given either water or watery wine; both of these drinks were thus presumably considered significantly thirst-quenching.⁵⁴⁶ Soranus further indicates his opinions during advice regarding treatment of atony of the uterus. He prescribes astringent foodstuffs, including that 'one should give moderately dry astringent wine. The amount of fluids drunk ought to be small, for thirst is beneficial in this disease.' This therefore implies that he considered all or most fluids as somewhat relieving of thirst, probably including the typical wine beverage. Indeed, it is likely that the reason he specifically prescribed *dry astringent* wine as part of this particular diet was that he considered it to be both significantly drier (he had earlier included dry wine among the foodstuffs causing dryness) and also more encouraging of thirst than the average wine.⁵⁴⁷ Soranus probably therefore considered dry wine to be notably thirst-causing, watery wine significantly relieving of thirst, and the average wine presumably somewhere between.

Celsus also considered wine drinking to be thirst-quenching, as is indicated by his prescription of drinking 'three or four cupfuls of wine through a fine reed' for those who are often thirsty on account of heat.⁵⁴⁸ Similarly, Celsus also advised that in a condition today recognised as diabetes ('when the urine exceeds in quantity the fluid taken ... [which] gives rise to wasting'), if the patient's urine was thin he should take 'the wine dry and undiluted, cold in summer, lukewarm in winter, and in quantity the minimum required to allay thirst'.⁵⁴⁹ Celsus thus implies he believed that wine had the power to quench thirst. As Celsus elsewhere defines bouts of excessive drinking as those 'which have somewhat exceeded the demands of thirst', he also thought that a *moderate* amount of

⁵⁴⁶ Soranus, *Gynaecology*, 2.46(115).

⁵⁴⁷ Soranus, *Gynaecology*, 3.48. Dry wine and dryness: 3.46.

⁵⁴⁸ Celsus, 1.8.3. An alternative procedure to relieve thirst was swilling the mouth out with fluids without swallowing it (3.4.2), which could also be done to relieve a bad taste (3.4.4-5).

⁵⁴⁹ Celsus, 4.27.2.

wine consumption usually had the power to relieve thirst.⁵⁵⁰ Although Celsus seems to have linked heat with the generation of thirst, he also believed that hot beverages relieved thirst to some extent.⁵⁵¹

Furthermore, Celsus also presented advice on seasonal drinking regimes which were similar to that presented in the Hippocratic Corpus. *A Regimen for Health* linked a wine's thirst-quenching properties with its temperature and dilution by advising very cold and very diluted wine to relieve a thirst. Accordingly, when this same work advises on how a man should alter his drinking regime according to season, the author advises that in summer he should drink 'watered wine in large quantities'; this is in comparison to winter, where man should 'drink as little as possible and this drink should be wine as undiluted as possible' in order to stay warm and dry. Very similar advice is also given in the Hippocratic text *Regimen*, and Celsus similarly stated that in summer wine should be very dilute 'in order that thirst may be relieved without heating the body'.⁵⁵² This advice probably reflects some recognition of a person's greater hydration needs in summer, and the ability of large quantities of watery wine to provide this. This concept may even have been recognised by traditional Roman authorities, as, in the second century BC, Cato advised issuing slaves three times as much wine per day during the hotter seasons, in comparison in the colder ones.⁵⁵³

Pliny also regarded wine beverages as notably thirst-quenching, though he seems to imply that the mixed-in water was the key component providing this property. He thus states that old wine quenches thirst less effectively than normal wine regardless of the fact that it is usually diluted more heavily than the average wine.⁵⁵⁴ Pliny also links wine to thirst when he states that 'it is to wine that we men should attribute the fact that of animals we alone drink when we

⁵⁵⁰ Celsus, 1.2.9; he suggests that following this, nothing should be eaten.

⁵⁵¹ Referring to hot water: Celsus, 5.26.25a, 3.15.2.

⁵⁵² Hippocrates, *A Regimen for Health*, 1, 7; Celsus, 1.3.36. See also: n.223-224.

⁵⁵³ Cato, *On Agriculture*, 57. His wine ration in January/February (Cato describes this as the fourth month after vintage; this is January/February, taking the vintage in Italy as September/October as in Columella, 11.2.62-75) is 0.5 a *sextarius*, February/March to May/June is 1 *sextarius*, and June/July to September/October is 1.5 *sextarii*. In central Italy today, the hottest month is usually around July/August (near the middle of the period of greatest rations), and the coldest is around January (the period with the smallest rations). Note, however, the wine rations also probably reflect workload, which (as implied by Cato's work) decreased dramatically shortly after the wine harvest, and then gradually increased again towards summer. Cato, *On Agriculture*, 2 also implied that rations should be decreased when a worker was ill.

⁵⁵⁴ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.38.

are not thirsty'.⁵⁵⁵ Pliny's argument would simply not work properly if wine was not widely regarded as (at least, somewhat) thirst-quenching (man's behaviour is only regarded as unusual for an animal because this fluid is consumed *in excess* of its ability to quench thirst; if wine were not considered *at all* thirst quenching, consuming *any* wine would surely be considered unusual given that animals usually drink only to satisfy thirst). However, in contrast to wine quenching thirst, Pliny also repeatedly linked excessive drinking to generating thirst: he noted that the object of drinking matches is 'to raise a thirst!', that when Antony vomits from wine before the battle of Actium it is stated to make 'him only the more thirsty for it', and that a Scythian ambassador once observed 'that the more the Parthians drank the thirstier they became'. However, it seems that the 'thirst' which Pliny implies is generated by heavy drinking is at least somewhat metaphorical, as alongside the latter two of these anecdotes, Pliny notes that 'the inevitable result of this vice is that the habit of drinking increases the appetite for it'; the 'thirst' thus seems to be used as a metaphor for the desire for more wine.⁵⁵⁶ Dioscorides, on the other hand, only notes that wine causes thirst when mixed with seawater.⁵⁵⁷ This implies that when wine was not mixed in such a way, it did not have such an effect; wine was thus probably considered either thirst-quenching or neutral with regard to thirst.

Many further ancient literary texts record actions and sayings of Greeks and Romans which imply these individuals' beliefs that wine quenched thirst.⁵⁵⁸ Furthermore, a second- to third-century AD wine-drinking beaker (Trier Black-Slipped ware) from York has a decorative motto reading 'don't be thirsty!' (*nolite sitire*).⁵⁵⁹ For this motto's humour to work, it would likely suggest that at least the composer of this message, and probably the end-user who chose to purchase it, recognised that a wine beverage could quench a drinker's thirst.

Yet, on the other hand, the Hippocratic *Regimen in Acute Diseases* explicitly distances a thirst-quenching property from a substance's water content, declaring that water 'does not even quench thirst' (though admittedly this may specifically refer to thirsts in acute diseases).⁵⁶⁰ Notably thirst-quenching drinks

⁵⁵⁵ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.42.

⁵⁵⁶ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.140, 14.148.

⁵⁵⁷ Dioscorides, 5.6.3.

⁵⁵⁸ For example: Seneca, *On Tranquillity of Mind*, 9.2; Suetonius, *Augustus*, 42.1; *Tiberius*, 59.1; *Nero*, 34.3-4; Plutarch, *Alexander*, 75.3-4; *Antony*, 77.3.

⁵⁵⁹ *RIB*, 2.6.2498.18. Further on Trier Black-Slipped ware, see Ch.3 n.118.

⁵⁶⁰ Hippocrates, *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, 62.

seem to be oxymel and hydromel with water (considered appropriate during acute thirsts); wine is not mentioned.⁵⁶¹ Instead, types of wines were included among the drinks which caused thirst: neat wine (especially when moving directly onto it from water drinking), and usually also sweet wine (when the drinker has bitter [yellow] bile and when it does not produce much sputum; on average it produces more thirst than honey-water).⁵⁶²

Yet, in any case, vinegar was considered more thirst-quenching than wine by many. Regarding Cato the Elder's austere and traditional minimalism, Plutarch states: 'water was what he drank on his campaigns, except that once in a while, in a raging thirst, he would call for vinegar, or, when his strength was failing, would add a little wine'.⁵⁶³ Vinegar was thus perceived as the drink which was more thirst-quenching than water and (presumably) wine; wine instead remained more strongly associated with its strength-giving properties as outlined in the previous section.

WINE'S ELIMINATING AND THINNING PROPERTIES

Wine was considered to have a variety of properties to assist in the elimination of undesirable substances from the body, including diuretic, purgative, diaphoretic and emetic effects. For Galen, these properties of wine were crucial in a person's daily fight against excrements, as well as alleviating excrementary retardation. (It should be noted that 'excrements' is used by this thesis for Galen's περιπτώματα, meaning residual bodily substances which needed to be disposed of. These were often humours, or humour-related matter that were in inappropriate places. 'Excrements' is not meant to carry the particular association, present in modern English, of relating primarily to waste-matter in the bowels/stools/faeces.)⁵⁶⁴

This section addresses wine's second major group of functions in daily regimen. Those considered up to now were mainly associated with nutrition, whereas this

⁵⁶¹ Hippocrates, *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, 19, 58; *A Regimen for Health*, 7.

⁵⁶² Hippocrates, *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, 37a, 50, 53.

⁵⁶³ Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 1.7. By 'vinegar' (ὄξος), Plutarch probably refers to the Roman drink *posca*; see Appendix 1 n.25.

⁵⁶⁴ Brock (1916) 35 n.3 prefers the translation 'superfluities', with the note that it is 'not quite our "waste products", since these are considered as being partly synthetic, whereas the Greek *perittomata* were simply superfluous substances which could not be used and were thrown aside'.

second group is largely associated with waste removal. Similarly, along with this change in purpose, Galen's views regarding the most powerful type of wine largely shift from the black, red and thick wines that were considered highly nutritious, to the thinner, whiter, and more water-like wines, as well as the acrid ones, which were often (but not always) thought to have the most powerful waste-eliminating properties.⁵⁶⁵ Accordingly, Galen summarises that 'it is clear that, just as [thicker] wines are better than the thinner wines for nutrition, so they are worse for the production of urine'.⁵⁶⁶ Various different wines were thus thought to promote the removal of unevacuated substances through sweating, urine, faeces and vomiting.

We should begin by outlining Galen's concept of excrements. Galen states: 'since, therefore, eating and drinking are essential for animals, therefore follows the formation of excrements'.⁵⁶⁷ Regarding these excrements, Galen notes that usually 'we know that nature controls the body and does everything to preserve life; [therefore] we can also observe the passages which act towards the evacuation of whatever is useless in food and drink'.⁵⁶⁸ However, such natural evacuation could be retarded, with these excrements being retained within the body; this was unhealthy and if not evacuated it was thought to potentially lead to extreme medical consequences, including 'fatigues' (κόποι).⁵⁶⁹ Excrementary retardation was strongly linked to a person's consumption of foodstuffs: they were often thought to 'arise from fault in the food and drink taken',⁵⁷⁰ and problems were also thought remedied by suitable foodstuffs.⁵⁷¹ Indeed, Galen considered it 'a universal doctrine for all excrements, to employ the opposite to the cause of their retention [as treatment]: specifically, [for example] if the abdomen is obstructed from insufficiency and the dryness of food, to give more

⁵⁶⁵ Béguin (2002) 144, 147, 150. On eliminating properties in the Hippocratic Corpus: Jouanna (1996) 426-427 = (2012) 186-187.

⁵⁶⁶ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 3.39=6.744-745K.

⁵⁶⁷ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.3=6.7K.

⁵⁶⁸ Galen, *On Black Bile*, 5.114K.

⁵⁶⁹ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.13-14=6.68-77K. Note that κόποις is generally translated into English as 'fatigue', but in ancient medicine this term had much wider implications than is implied by this translation. 'Fatigue' essentially comprised bodily distress/weariness (typically from a drying and contraction of these parts, and often with problematic excrements retained in these parts) which could not only be due to over-exercise, but also several other causes (including, for example, indigestion). On Galen's concept of fatigues, see especially: 3.5-7=6.189-202, 4.3-4.6=6.241-279K. Further on fatigues in Galen, see also p.180.

⁵⁷⁰ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.13=6.68K.

⁵⁷¹ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.14=6.74-77K.

and moister [food]';⁵⁷² he thus applied the fundamental humoral therapeutic principle of treating opposites with opposites to matters related to excrements. Due to its hot and wet mixture, wine would thus be considered extremely appropriate for retardation caused by a cold wet problem, as in the case of old men's cold and dry constitutions, as noted below. Such measures would prevent such a condition, or stop it becoming worse, yet Galen believed that if excrements had been retained 'it is necessary to evacuate or modify it'.⁵⁷³ Modification was usually thought appropriate for half-digested foodstuffs which the body could be encouraged to digest, often by prescribing substances which encouraged digestion of other foods; these included wine.⁵⁷⁴ Yet, Galen notes that 'not all excrement is susceptible of modification by nature', for example ulcerous fluids; 'when, therefore, the excrement is altogether foreign, there is no mechanism whereby it can be modified by nature, but it is necessary to try and evacuate it quickly'.⁵⁷⁵ The treatment to evacuate such fluids could consist of measures to promote urine, perspiration, purgation, and (especially if the excrement was due to foodstuffs recently consumed) vomiting.⁵⁷⁶ As such, Galen explicitly advises that in ulcerous fatigue, 'we shall not restrain him from wine, for wine not only helps the digestion of indigestible foods, but also encourages perspiration and urine and contributes to sleep' (rest and sleep were also thought to help in the digestion of half digested excrements). Galen thus prescribes specific wine-drinking regimes for many patients suffering from ulcerous fatigues; these especially favour thin wines.⁵⁷⁷ Thus wine's eliminative (and digestive-aiding) properties were often considered useful both for preventing and treating excrementary retardation.

Galen recognised that such excrementary retardation was a particular risk for the elderly, as they produced a large amount of excrements and had trouble eliminating them due to their cold and dry body (which signified difficulty in modifying excrements that needed to be digested, and slowness in most other processes). Accordingly, Galen notes that 'anyone exercising reason, hearing

⁵⁷² Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.14=6.73-74K.

⁵⁷³ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.3=6.241K.

⁵⁷⁴ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.4=6.246-247K, 6.258K.

⁵⁷⁵ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.3=6.241K. On ulcerous fluids: 4.4=6.258K, also 6.247K.

⁵⁷⁶ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.4=6.247K, but note the caution advised at 6.261-262K. Vomiting: 6.7=6.413-414K.

⁵⁷⁷ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.4=6.247K (quotation) with 6.258K, 6.261K, 4.6=6.275-276K. Note, however, 4.4=6.261-262K cautioning against diuretics in some circumstances.

that the old man's body is cold and dry in all its parts, and is easily filled with serous and phlegmatic excrements on account of the impairment of its strength, will endeavour to drive these out and to warm and moisten the solid parts of the body themselves'.⁵⁷⁸ Galen therefore advises that 'because both phlegmatic and serious excrements collect in the body of old men, it is necessary to provoke urination daily, not with drugs, but with barley and honey and with diuretic wines, and to move the bowels' with various foodstuffs including figs soaked in honeyed-wine.⁵⁷⁹ Yet daily wine consumption was also considered useful for preventing excrementary retardation in adults more widely: Galen states that 'to adults wine is useful for the softening and elimination of biliary excrements ... [as it] promotes elimination through perspiration and urine'. Indeed, it was only children that Galen considered to usually have no use for this property of wine as they rarely suffered from excrementary problems: they 'do not secrete such bile ... [and therefore] have no need of the benefits accruing from wine'.⁵⁸⁰

In Europe before the discovery of tea and coffee (mild diuretics used on a daily basis in the modern Western world), wine's diuretic properties made moderate daily consumption a useful way to remove toxins from body by promoting kidney activity.⁵⁸¹ Galen himself believed that urine was fundamental to the process by which certain fluid excrements were removed from the body, including an excess of serum (which was believed to be a transporting agent) from the blood.⁵⁸² Accordingly, as seen above, he advised that old men needed to provoke urination daily by using diuretic wines; he thus elaborates that in old age 'for the most part, men at this time of life need the diuretic wines, on account of the prevalence in them of aqueous excrement'.⁵⁸³ As Galen believed thinner wines to be significantly more useful than thicker wines for promoting urine,⁵⁸⁴ he advised that old men should 'select always the [wine] thinnest in substance' because one of the most crucial benefits of wine drinking for old men was 'that through urine it purifies the serum of the blood. ... And such is [especially promoted by] that [wine] which is thin in composition, for

⁵⁷⁸ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.8=6.350K.

⁵⁷⁹ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.9=6.353-354K.

⁵⁸⁰ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.11=6.55K.

⁵⁸¹ OCB, s.v. 'Diuretics'.

⁵⁸² Powell (2003) 17.

⁵⁸³ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.5=6.336-337K.

⁵⁸⁴ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 3.39=6.744-745K.

these provoke urine.⁵⁸⁵ Accordingly, although thick yellow wines were regarded as extremely nourishing and heating, and thus offered to be extremely constructive for combating the cold frailness of old age, they were nevertheless thick wines which would not promote urination as successfully as thinner wines. As such, Galen advised that they were only 'beneficial to old men, of course, at a time when they have no serous fluid in their veins [and thus have less need to promote urination] and need more abundant nutrition'.⁵⁸⁶

Wine's diuretic properties were also thought significant in other medical conditions. As seen above, these included using wines, especially thin wines, to combat excrementary retardation (such as the indigestible ulcerous fluids of ulcerous fatigue) by promoting expulsion.⁵⁸⁷ Galen also explains that although people with a slightly moist constitution are widely recognised to be healthier and tend to have a longer lifespan than most other people (and as such this condition is praised by both philosophers and physicians), particular care should be taken to monitor their excrements, as it is particularly difficult for them to maintain the correct proportion of that which is expelled.⁵⁸⁸ As such, Galen recommends the use, when appropriate, of 'well-balanced foods and the drinking of wines which promote urination'.

In *On the Natural Faculties*, Galen explains why he believed wine to be especially diuretic.⁵⁸⁹ He explains that wine is 'rapidly absorbed through the body and almost the whole of it is passed by the kidneys within a very short time. For here, too, the rapidity with which the fluid is absorbed depends on appropriateness of quality [its 'properness', as explained above], on the thinness of the fluid', and also on factors related to the person's body (especially the width of their body's vessels, and the power of its parts to attract nutrition). Galen continues that 'it is in no way surprising that wine is taken up more rapidly than water, owing to its appropriateness of quality [its properness], and, further, that the whitest kind of wine is absorbed more rapidly owing to its thinness, while black turbid wine is checked on the way and retarded because of its thickness'.

⁵⁸⁵ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.5=6.335-336K; Béguin (2002) 148.

⁵⁸⁶ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.5=6.336-337K.

⁵⁸⁷ See n.577.

⁵⁸⁸ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 6.3=6.399-401K.

⁵⁸⁹ Galen, *On the Natural Faculties*, 3.15=2.212-214K.

Galen's logic implies that a more diuretic wine would have one of two properties. Either it would be more 'proper' than average (and therefore also more heating, as explained above), else it would be thinner than average. Yet thinness was apparently the more crucial property for a diuretic wine. Accordingly, aqueous wine was considered 'the most diuretic of all wines' as although it was a cool wine (and thus presumably less 'proper') it was especially thin and quick to pass through the body. Second place went to thin and white wines, or those of straw-colour; these were considered useful daily diuretics for old men. Galen also advised that wines which were astringent, whilst simultaneously being 'of good quality' – that is to say older, more vinous and stronger – were notably diuretic. Their diuretic property was thought to root from their 'properness': this wine was quick to nourish and pass through the body. In contrast, Galen states that sufferers of ulcerous fatigue 'must reject both the thick and the dark wines as indigestible and slow in passage'; these descriptors signified a wine's lack of diuretic potency.⁵⁹⁰

Although Galen generally regarded thick wines as slow in passage, certain ones were thought to have notable purgative properties. He states that when dark thick wines were non-astringent, 'such [as] Scybeline and Theraean [wines, they] stay less long in the abdomen; but these do not provoke urine, but hasten downward; wherefore also people drink them before eating. But these are not beneficial to old men', who, as noted above, instead benefit especially from wine's diuretic properties.⁵⁹¹ As these wines were considered largely indigestible, and inappropriate for the elderly, Galen seems to regard this wine as passing quickly through the body in a different way to thin diuretic wines; indeed, this wine is stated to not provoke urine like the archetypical wine. As its indigestibility meant it would not be properly digested in the stomach, its quick passage downwards through the body would surely be through the digestive tract as waste, thus passing quickly by the bowels rather than as urine. Galen's comment that people frequently drink this type of wine before eating supports the inference of its use as a purgative; these drinkers may have wished to clear

⁵⁹⁰ Galen, *Method of Medicine*, 7.6=10.484-486K, 12.5=10.837K; *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.6=6.276K; *The Thinning Diet*, 12=5.4.2.447-449CMG; Béguin (2002) 146.

⁵⁹¹ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.5=6.337-338K; Béguin (2002) 150. In comparison, the properties of *astringent* versions of this type of wine were described by Galen as follows: 'dark and thick and astringent [wines] remain in the abdomen/belly a long time and produce waves in it, like the Sybatine in Cilicia and Aegeatic and Perparine in Asia' (trans. based on Green's, except without Green's addition of 'peristaltic waves'; Galen does not mention peristalsis, but instead only states 'waves', κλύδωνας).

their stomach and digestive tract before eating again. Must/new wines were also considered laxative for a similar reason; as they were watery they were considered less able to undergo concoction, and as such passed to stool more quickly.⁵⁹²

The importance of non-astringent – and especially sweet – wines to a laxative regime is further highlighted by Galen's prescription that people with bilious abdomens should generally avoid astringent foods and dry wines, and to 'always let the first of their foods and drinks be those that purge the abdomen, of wines that are sweet and relaxing [those which relax obstructions]'.⁵⁹³ The laxative properties of thick sweet wines is explicitly emphasised in *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, when Galen states that some foods 'have pharmacological properties of the same group as the purgative drugs ... one could also put mulberries and sweet cherries in this class, as also the thick, sweet wines'.⁵⁹⁴

Sweet wines notably included honeyed-wines. On the one hand, Galen thought that when such wines were inappropriately used they lingered in the stomach and led to both yellow and black biles which could cause obstructions (as well as being harmful to people with bad livers).⁵⁹⁵ Yet, on the other, he noted that 'people eat [sea urchins] with honeyed-wine, and with fish sauce to move bowels'.⁵⁹⁶ Galen similarly advises that although plums (boiled in honey water and eaten with more honey) empty the stomach, this property is emphasised if honeyed-wine is drunk along with the plums. Furthermore, he notes that drinking a little sweet wine after this, and then abstaining from food for a short while, subsequently promotes gastric emptying.⁵⁹⁷ In *On the Preservation of Health*, Galen shows a similar preference for prescribing honeyed-wine for its purgative effects. He advises that old men needed to take action every day to move their bowels and thus promote the removal of excrements, and among the foodstuffs that Galen then prescribes to achieve such appropriate daily purgation are figs and plums soaked in honeyed-wine, and aloes powdered in water or honeyed-wine. The former of these is very similar to his above-noted

⁵⁹² Béguin (2002) 146.

⁵⁹³ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 6.7=6.410-411K.

⁵⁹⁴ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 1.1=6.465K.

⁵⁹⁵ Béguin (2002) 149-150.

⁵⁹⁶ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 3.37=6.738K.

⁵⁹⁷ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 2.31=6.614K.

advice from *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*.⁵⁹⁸ Furthermore, in *On the Properties of Foodstuffs* Galen also noted that hydromel (μελίκρατον; a honey-water beverage) is irritant to the bowels, and thus stimulates evacuation.⁵⁹⁹

It is possible that ancient physicians considered many of wine's laxative and purgative properties to come from the beverage's origin as grapes. In *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, Galen states, regarding grapes, that 'their greatest benefit is that they are quickly excreted. Consequently, if they are ever retained, they are quite harmful'. He believed that 'the laxative effect [of grapes] is greater when only the flesh of the berries has been swallowed with the juice, without the pips and skin; and is still more so when the juice itself is expressed and drunk on its own. People call it "must" (γλεῦκος)'. Here, Galen is describing pressed grapes (the 'must') after the solid elements (the 'marc') have been removed. In modern vernacular, this liquid is most aptly described as 'juice', as the term 'must' can confusingly signify a liquid of whole squashed grapes both before and after the solid elements (the marc) have been removed. As removing everything apart from the fluids was a stage of wine production, perhaps this was the root of some wine's laxative and diuretic properties, as grape juice was believed to pass quickly through the body.⁶⁰⁰ Yet, unlike obstructions from grapes, which were believed to be 'quite harmful' when they did not pass quickly through the body, Galen notes that 'obstructions from wines are moderate'; they were not considered severe, and thus did not tend to produce thick or viscid juices that were difficult to cure.⁶⁰¹ Admittedly, this was obviously not the case for all wines consumed by all people, however, as Galen considered dark thick wines to be inappropriate for old men as they caused notable obstructions of the liver, spleen and kidneys, and cause both dropsy and stones in organs.⁶⁰²

Wines were also believed to have notable diaphoretic effects, which made them especially useful for treating certain conditions where excrements needed to be evacuated. Thus Galen advises that in ulcerous fatigue 'we shall not restrain

⁵⁹⁸ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.9=6.353-354K. *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*: see n.597.

⁵⁹⁹ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 1.1=6.466-467K.

⁶⁰⁰ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 2.9=6.574-576K.

⁶⁰¹ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.6=6.339K.

⁶⁰² Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.5=6.337-338K.

him from wine, for wine ... [among other things] encourages perspiration'.⁶⁰³ As may be expected, Galen states that 'the warmer and the more diaphoretic [wines] are better for old men', both linking the wine's property of warmth and its ability to encourage perspiration, and also advising this specific type of wine to old age, a condition especially associated with the need for a diet promoting elimination.⁶⁰⁴ Accordingly, in *On the Preservation of Health* when Galen returns to discuss diet in ulcerous fatigue more thoroughly, he states that if after a few days of successful treatment of ulcerous fatigue 'you should suspect that the raw fluids have now been sufficiently thinned', and are thus in a state to be more easily expelled from the body, 'give wine, thin in composition, and yellow or white in colour; for the latter is good for secretion and digestion, and the former for a diuretic'.⁶⁰⁵ A hotter wine was thus advised to promote secretion and aid in the elimination of the ulcerous excrement.

Wine's emetic properties have already been considered above in the section on wine's moisture (p.179): both Galen and Celsus prescribed wine drinking to help evacuate a bilious stomach by vomiting before eating, so that what was eaten afterwards could be properly digested. Galen also advised the emetic use of wine to evacuate food which was putrefying in the stomach. As noted above, sweeter wines seem to have been advised as especially appropriate.

The other Greco-Roman medical authorities shared broadly comparable beliefs to Galen regarding wine's notable eliminating powers. In general, these authors merely disagreed about which type of wine-drinking regime best achieved the desired medical effect. As such, Greco-Roman medicine appears to have agreed upon the significant eliminating properties offered by wines, and therefore their medical utility in this area. Yet individual physicians appear to have drawn varying conclusions regarding the specific applications of certain wines. On this subject, the reader is referred to Appendix 3, which provides a survey of the eliminating properties of various wines, as presented in the other ancient medical texts upon which this chapter focuses.

⁶⁰³ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.4=6.247K.

⁶⁰⁴ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.7=6.247K.

⁶⁰⁵ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.6=6.275-276K.

Galen also believed that the bodily fluids/humours could become overly thick, which could notably lead both to retaining excrements and obstructions.⁶⁰⁶ In order to treat this problem, a thinning diet should be prescribed, which consisted of 'any food which irritates and bites the senses and endowed with the ability to cut through the thickness of the humours'.⁶⁰⁷ Galen describes this diet in detail in his work *The Thinning Diet*, noting that several wines have significant thinning properties.⁶⁰⁸ He notes that 'the thinning diet is indicated for the majority of diseases, which can, indeed, frequently be treated by such means alone, without recourse to drugs ... even [for example] with complaints of the kidneys and joints'.⁶⁰⁹ Furthermore, in *On the Preservation of Health* Galen added that in general, people 'who are cold and moist in constitution, need to have more vigorous exercise and a thinner diet'; he then refers such people to his work *The Thinning Diet*.⁶¹⁰ As such, Galen believed that many medical conditions featured an underlying problem with certain thick fluids, and accordingly such thinning wines were of notable medical importance.

Vinegar was considered especially thinning; therefore wines were apparently most thinning when extremely old and turning to acid. The most thinning among what are more commonly called 'wines' (before their deterioration into vinegar) were the 'white, thin ones [which] cut the thick humours and cleanse the blood through urine'.⁶¹¹ Similarly, in *On the Preservation of Health*, thin 'tawny'/yellow wine was advised as the best drink for regimen to treat ulcerous fatigue when an excess of fluids had been absorbed in to their system as a whole (rather than being confined to the veins). This diet aimed at thinning the humours whilst warming the skin; 'tawny'/yellow wine was probably considered the optimum choice because its reasonably light colour and thinness signified reasonable thinning properties, whilst Galen considered yellow to be the colour of wine which was most heating.⁶¹²

⁶⁰⁶ Galen, *The Thinning Diet*, 1=5.4.2.433-434CMG. On related problems, see for example: *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.13-14=6.68-77K (note esp.1.15=6.74-75K), 3.10=6.218-219K, 4.5=6.263-264K.

⁶⁰⁷ Galen, *The Thinning Diet*, 1=5.4.2.433CMG.

⁶⁰⁸ Galen, *The Thinning Diet*, esp. 1=5.4.2.433-434CMG and 12=5.4.2.446-450CMG.

⁶⁰⁹ Galen, *The Thinning Diet*, 1=5.4.2.433CMG.

⁶¹⁰ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.12=6.373-374K.

⁶¹¹ Galen, *The Thinning Diet*, 11-12=5.4.2.446-450CMG (quote 11=5.4.2.447CMG).

⁶¹² Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.7=6.281K (in the context of 6.279-286K; Green mistranslates this section, see n.537). 'Tawny'/yellow wine is also further discussed at 5.5=6.335-337K (this section discusses its heating properties).

On the other hand, the most thickening wines consisted especially of the thicker and darker wines. Accordingly Galen considered these least appropriate for old men, due to their problems with retaining excrements, advising that ‘it is best to avoid altogether all such wines as are thick, sweet, and dark, because these obstruct the viscera’, and that dark and thick wines ‘are not beneficial to old men ... [as they] make old men’s juices thick’.⁶¹³ But thickening wines were clearly not useless; sometimes the humours became too thin and needed to be thickened, as was the case after sexual intercourse.⁶¹⁴ In *On Black Bile*, Galen explains a reason why certain wines thicken the humours. He states that that thick and rough dark wine in itself has especially thick and dry juices.⁶¹⁵

The degree of a wine’s thinness was thus mainly indicated by the lightness of its colour, and the thinness of its viscosity. Yet, a wine’s thinning/thickening power was also somewhat indicated by its sweetness. Thus Galen states that ‘sweet wines ... have a marked tendency to produce thick blood’, and especially notes this property of those sweet wines which were also dark and thick in consistency.⁶¹⁶ However, this rule was clearly not absolute. In *On the Preservation of Health*, Galen prescribes a ‘relaxing’ regime to help counteract any suspected obstructions, advising that a specific regime of food be taken with one of a choice of two sweet wines: ‘honeyed-wine or with Falernian wine’.⁶¹⁷ It seems unlikely that these wines would be regarded as very highly thickening, as if they were, their consumption would be thought to carry the risk of worsening the obstruction. Honeyed-wines were probably thought of as exceptional to this rule because their sweetness was (at least somewhat) due to their honey content, and Galen notes that ‘honey is virtually unique among sweet foods (or for that matter sweet drinks) in being productive of a humour

⁶¹³ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.5=6.337-339K.

⁶¹⁴ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 3.11=6.223-224K; note that after sex, Galen also thought that the body was colder and drier (as well as being weak and thinned), so he needed to consume foods which were also hot and moist (he needed agents to thicken, warm, strengthen and moisten).

⁶¹⁵ Galen, *On Black Bile*, 5.114-115K. Note that Grant mistranslates παχυχύμοις τε και σύχμώδεσιν as ‘thick particles which are dry’, rather than ‘thick juices which are dry’.

⁶¹⁶ Galen, *The Thinning Diet*, 12=5.4.2.446CMG.

⁶¹⁷ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.8=6.352-353K. The ‘honey-wine’ of Green’s translation (for οινόμελιτος) is replaced with ‘honeyed-wine’, so as to better convey the sense of a grape wine flavoured with honey. This avoids any confusion with the drink known as ‘mead’ in modern English (which usually refers to a fermented mixture of only honey and water; without grapes), which is (confusingly) sometimes also called ‘honey-wine’. On the issue of both hydromel/mead and honeyed-wine, see further Appendix 1.

which is genuinely thin'.⁶¹⁸ Falernian wine's lack of thickening potential seems to be due to the counterbalance provided by its other characteristics. In *The Thinning Diet*, Falernian is described as 'sweet, yellow and transparent', and it is stated that 'they do not thicken the humours'. As noted above, lighter colours were thought to indicate thinning powers, and, as such, Falernian's transparent yellow colour may have helped to offset the thickening power indicated by its sweetness. Indeed, this kind of wine was recommended for people in health as the best preventative wine in order to produce the most balanced thickness of humours (neither too thick or thin): 'sweet wines which are clear and transparent, of a light or bright yellow colour, are the least to be feared ... [as] all these kinds of wine produce a humour of a medium composition'. Falernian, along with similar sweet and transparent yellow wines, were also particularly advised because they 'give rise to good blood which is balanced in thickness'.⁶¹⁹

Specific wine-drinking regimes were thus prescribed to treat conditions marked by thick fluids. For example, Galen considered ulcerous fatigue to carry the risk of pores becoming blocked by 'thick and glutinous juices' (just as in phlegmatic patients). As such, 'thin white wine' was advised as part of a diet which tried to prevent the thickening of these ulcerous excrements as the body worked to digest and expel them accordingly. The diet should thus consist of 'whatever is well-balanced and detergent and not glutinous, nor thickening, nor unduly nutritious'.⁶²⁰ Yet this condition could be more severe, with the patient having 'blood which, though good, is scanty, and a great deal of undigested juices'. In this case, the juices were too thick to force their expulsion (through purgation for example), and venesection was inappropriate; this meant that the fluids had to be thinned before being expelled. As such, this condition required 'food and drink and drugs that thin and cut and reduce the thickness of the juices, without warming appreciably' (the latter point was a concern because the condition was already overly warm). Galen's prescription notably included vinegar and oxymel, but also wine (the wine specified was 'the least acid wines'; this choice does not reflect the fluid's thickness, but rather a fear that such a patient may

⁶¹⁸ Galen, *The Thinning Diet*, 12=5.4.2.446CMG. On honey and oxymel, note also: *On Barley Soup*, 6.829K; *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.6=6.271-274K.

⁶¹⁹ Galen, *The Thinning Diet*, 12=5.4.2.447CMG.

⁶²⁰ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.4=6.260-261K.

also suffer from hyperacidity).⁶²¹ Furthermore, if these thick excrements became drawn into the flesh from the blood, Galen advises that thinning foods should continue to be prescribed, specifically including: 'light, thin wine'.⁶²² A variety of other conditions were also believed to be treated by using thinning wines to tackle some bodily thickness. Thus Galen notes that yellow sweet transparent wines are good for 'chronic complaints of the chest and lungs, provided they do not involve fever', (as wine's hotness would be detrimental to such a hot condition) because 'substances which need to be coughed out require not only to be cut and heated, but also moderately wetted'.⁶²³

In a similar vein, Dioscorides believed that certain wines (such as ὄμφακίτης from Lesbos, made from unripe grapes) were particularly useful for treating intestinal obstructions.⁶²⁴ Celsus also had a similar belief system to Galen, as he thought that bodily fluids could become thicker or thinner. They could be modified by a patient's regimen, and this could be desirable in certain medical conditions. Thus in all cases of ophthalmia, which featured an abundant discharge of thin humour from the eyes, Celsus believed that the patient should avoid thinning foods and favour thickening ones.⁶²⁵ Milk and almost all glutinous substances were thought to make phlegm thicker, and all salted, acrid and acid things to make it thinner.⁶²⁶ As such, the wine with the corresponding characteristics could be selected for the appropriate regime; a salted wine to promote thinning, and a glutinous wine (which perhaps included sweet wines) to promote thickening,⁶²⁷ for example.

FURTHER PROPERTIES AND USES OF WINE

Wine was also recognised to have a great deal of additional beneficial physiological and psychological uses; too numerous to address here. They range from belief that rinsing out the mouth with wine, or holding wine in the

⁶²¹ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.5-4.6=6.263-276K.

⁶²² Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.7=6.281K (in the context of 6.279-286K; Green mistranslates this section, see n.537).

⁶²³ Galen, *The Thinning Diet*, 12=5.4.2.447-448CMG.

⁶²⁴ Dioscorides, 5.6.14. On this wine, see further Appendix 1 p.334.

⁶²⁵ Celsus, 6.6.17.

⁶²⁶ Celsus, 2.23.

⁶²⁷ On sweet wine possibly being considered glutinous: Celsus, 3.21.11-13 notes that in leucophegmasia (a type of dropsy in specific parts) the food should be nutritious and glutinous, and the drinking regime should favour sweet wine.

mouth for a period of time, offered dental protection and could be useful as part of dental treatments,⁶²⁸ to wine's use to treat eye conditions.⁶²⁹ From wine's use to treat asthma,⁶³⁰ to its use to combat coughs,⁶³¹ and its consumption in order to strengthen the voice.⁶³² From wine's use for, or as part of, an anti-

⁶²⁸ Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 3.14=6.688-689K: Galen believed milk to damage the teeth and gums, and so advised rinsing a person's mouth out with wine after drinking milk; astringent undiluted wine with added honey was especially advised. Similarly, Celsus, 7.12.1a advises swilling the mouth out with honeyed-wine as part of the treatment for loose teeth (after cauterising the gums and smearing them with honey), 7.12.1e advises holding undiluted wine in the mouth at frequent intervals to help treat a rough tooth (after scraping the rough part and applying a specified medical mixture), and also advises holding in the mouth a repressant made from wine in which pomegranate rind was cooked in order to treat teeth which had become loose after receiving a blow (after first tying the loose tooth to firm ones using a gold wire). This, however, is in contrast to Celsus, 6.9.1, which implies wine consumption to be potentially destructive to the teeth when he advises that a patient should be entirely cut off from wine when he has a pain in the teeth; though wine is also prescribed as an ingredient of several medical remedies to treat this same condition (6.9.2). See further Garzya (2002) 196 on the dental uses of wine in the medical literature of Late Antiquity and the Byzantine period, but note also p.199 on how toothache and oral-cavity diseases prevented wine's use.

⁶²⁹ Hippocrates, *Aphorisms*, 6.31, 7.46 states that drinking neat wine could combat eye pains; Galen claims to have followed this advice (*Method of Medicine*, 3.2=10.171K; 12.3=10.819-820K). Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.43 states that slightly diluted wine combats eye-fluxes; yet 23.38 cautions that excess wine injures the eyes, and 23.49 that it should not be given when the eyes are in certain infirm states (if rigid, staring, weak, heavy, 'full of light', bloodshot, when the lids do not cover them, or if rheum forms in the corners). Dioscorides, 5.6.8 notes that Chian wine was an especially useful element in eye medications. Celsus, 6.6.1e notes that 'according to Hippocrates, the oldest authority, the treatment of the eyes includes bloodletting, medicaments, the bath and wine'. Celsus then prescribes various uses of wine to treat eye conditions, many of which are as part of applications (e.g. 6.6.1i-k, 6.6.9a, 6.6.10, 6.6.31c, 6.6.39c), but his advice includes (6.6.8c) drinking a moderately old mild wine, which was not too dry, in order to induce sleep without causing indigestion, and contribute to a regime to relieve the other symptoms of illness once a discharge of rheum had been checked. 6.6.8f also advises drinking this same wine, well diluted, if the condition becomes longstanding, as this could contribute to helping terminate this condition. 6.6.15 furthermore notes that lice between the eyelashes are treated by (among other things) gargling honeyed-wine, applying vinegar, and drinking milk and sweet wine. 6.6.17 also notes that baths and wine are of service after the subsidence of an eye disease caused by inflammation which persist after the inflammation has been relieved. On the other hand, Celsus seems to have regarded wine consumption as potentially destructive during the surgical treatment of cataracts, as 7.7.14b specifically advises water drinking before, and for a long time after, the operation. See further Garzya (2002) 196 on the use of wine in ocular treatments (including eye drops and washes) in the medical literature of Late Antiquity and the Byzantine period, but note 198 on how some conditions made wine's use impossible.

⁶³⁰ Celsus, 4.8.3-4: the regimen prescribed for asthma included light dry wine being drunk at intervals, and one remedy included sulphur and southernwood pounded up and sipped in a cupful of wine.

⁶³¹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.46 on the thinnest Campanian wines treating coughs and catarrhs; 23.43 on neat wine treating sweats after prolonged coughing. Celsus, 4.13.6 on sipping cupfuls of wine (sweet or light) at the start of a cough; 4.10.3 on drinking cupfuls of dry wine (three or four times at long intervals) for troublesome dry coughs; 4.10.4 advises that for all coughs alternate between water one day and wine the next. Note also: 4.13.2 on when a patient has a pain in the side, and his cough is relieved, he should drink undiluted wine; but 4.13.5 notes that if this pain in the side is acute (called pleurisy) wine should not be sipped in this way (pearl barley gruel should be used instead).

⁶³² Celsus, 5.25.15 notes that the voice is strengthened by drinking 4g (1 *denarius*) of frankincense in 84ml/2 cupfuls (2 *cyathi*) of wine. However, at 2.6.7-8 Celsus also notes a more destructive link between wine consumption and the voice (also noted by Hippocrates,

poison/-venom,⁶³³ to its use as part of a contraceptive or abortive course (as well as purging after childbirth and miscarriage).⁶³⁴ From wine's use for treating kidney stones, gout and arthritis,⁶³⁵ to its use as a hypnotic/soporific (used in the sense of a substance which encourages sleep).⁶³⁶ From wine

Aphorisms, 5.5): that a man who loses his speech when he becomes drunk will die in a fit unless he has a fever or his voice comes back when the intoxication wears off. Note, however, Plutarch believed that excessively cold liquids, or drinking too soon after strenuous activity, damaged the voice: *How to Tell a Flatterer*, 17=59f=60a; *Cleomenes*, 15.2; Corvisier (2003) 130. On Celsus' measures, see: Spencer (1935-38) 2.lxv-lxvii.

⁶³³ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.58 and 14.138 on wine in general as an antidote for hemlock (the latter of these records that men drink hemlock to compel their own excessive wine consumption), 14.117 specifies one particular wine (from the 'wild-animal vine' of Thasos) to cure snake bites, 23.43 on neat wine to cure various poisonings and bites; note also the use of vinegar for similar purposes at 23.56-57, all musts at 23.29-30, white *sapa* (boiled-down must) at 23.62, and wine lees taken in a person's drink at 23.65. Celsus, 5.27, especially 5.27.2b: 'much wine, undiluted, which is an antidote to all poisons'; 5.23 also describes three 'antidotes' which are frequently referred to in 5.27, they have various uses 'but they are chiefly necessary against poisons' (one of these was believed to cure rabies as noted at 27.2d, and another was the famous antidote of Mithridates which it is said he took daily and which made him immune to poisoning), and all three of these mixtures are to be taken in specified types of wine. Dioscorides, 5.6.4, 5.6.10, 5.53; vinegar was also noted as useful for poisonous bites at 5.13.2-3, and wine flavoured with the resin of Syrian cedar or allheal was noted to be useful for treating wild animals' bites in general at 5.37, 5.62. Cato, *On Agriculture*, 102, also advised fennel flower in old wine, both applied to the affected region and poured through the nostrils, as a cure for snake bites on both animals (quadrupeds) and humans. Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 3.5=653a-b notes that wine is used as an antidote for hemlock. Note also: Jouanna (1996) 430 = (2012) 190; McGovern (2007 [2003]) 306.

⁶³⁴ Soranus, *Gynaecology*, 1.63-65 on the uses of wine in contraceptive and abortive courses; Dioscorides, 5.67 gives instructions for an 'abortifacient wine', 5.69 spurge olive flavoured wine helps women difficult to purge after childbirth, 5.72 various hellebore flavoured wines cause miscarriage, destroy the embryo/foetus, and purge from birth and miscarriage; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.110 on the same abortive wine as in Dioscorides, 14.116-117 notes a wine from Achaia which prevents child birth (even when pregnant), one of Troezen which causes infertility, yet one from Arcadia is said to be a fertility-aid for women (though it causes madness in men), 14.118 on an Egyptian 'delivery wine' which causes abortions. Note further: Soranus, *Gynaecology*, 1.38 'heavy drinking hinders the attachment of the seed to the uterus', 1.46 drunkenness during pregnancy can cause the seed to evacuate; Jouanna (1996) 425-426 = (2012) 185-186.

⁶³⁵ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.5=6.338-339K on honeyed-wines treating kidney stones, gout, and arthritis; also note 4.8=6.290K on the preparation of various flowers and seeds by boiling in wine to benefit gout and arthritis. Cato, *On Agriculture*, 123 also advises taking old wine with juniper wood boiled in it, drank in the morning before eating, as a remedy for gout.

⁶³⁶ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.4=6.247K on the use of wine's soporific properties to help treat ulcerous fatigue; Dioscorides, 5.6.10 on all pure, unmixed and dry wines, 5.71 on wine flavoured with mandrake; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.117 notes that Thasos made two wines, one which acted as a soporific, the other an anti-soporific/stimulant, 23.38 on wine in general, 23.41 on wine's use for this purpose this in Homer, *Odyssey*, 4.219-220; Béguin (2002) 152. Although Celsus, 2.32 does not include wine or related drinks among foodstuffs which are useful 'for producing sleep', 6.6.8c notes that in eye conditions, after discharge of rheum has been checked, in order to relieve other symptoms, 'he should drink mild wine, not too dry, and moderately old, taking it neither too freely nor too sparingly, so that, without causing indigestion, it may nevertheless induce sleep and mollify the internal latent acrid humour'. Similarly, at 6.6.8f the same wine was advised, well diluted, as part of regimen to treat a discharge of rheum from the eye when it became longstanding; it is noted that this problem is often solved by promoting sound sleep, sweating and the clearance of the bowels. Note also: Plutarch, *Marius*, 45.3 on drunkenness used to help induce sleep; *Theseus*, 22.4-5 on strong wine promoting mellowness in sleep; *Symposium of the Seven*

consumption being noted to promote the growth of flesh,⁶³⁷ to its use to combat obesity.⁶³⁸

Large draughts of wine could even serve as a remedy for plague-like illnesses, caused by eating strange foods, which swept a population. In one specific example – an illness encountered by Antony's army campaigning in the East – Plutarch asserts that wine was the *only* remedy.⁶³⁹ Furthermore, even the poison-like consequences of inappropriate wine consumption were thought to offer a constructive use in euthanasia. Plutarch thus records that Antony may have drunk wine on his deathbed so as to speed his death, and the Spartans traditionally bathed babies in wine so that the weaker ones would be euthanized.⁶⁴⁰

A greater sense of the wide variety of wine's believed constructive medical uses can be gained by consulting the section of Dioscorides' *Materia Medica* which concerns itself with wines and related drinks and materials.⁶⁴¹ Dioscorides notes such a great number of uses for various types of wines in a minimalistic and systematic way that for further information on this issue the reader is advised to consult this work directly. A few illustrative examples include Dioscorides' advice that certain wines were useful to combat pica (the ὄμφακίτης wine from Lesbos, made from unripe grapes),⁶⁴² as a painkiller (wine flavoured with mandrake),⁶⁴³ to treat bruising (sage-flavoured),⁶⁴⁴ and to treat intestinal worms (flavoured with resin of Syrian cedar, or wormwood).⁶⁴⁵

Wise Men, 15=158f-159a on food and drink facilitating sleep and dreams; *Table-Talk*, 3.5=652c-d on wine's use in soporific treatments to temper the power of these soporific drugs, and 3.9=657d on how the best mixed wine induces sleep; also 3.1=647d on various flowers suggested to help lull a drinker into troubled sleep, 3.8=657a on how a small amount of wine excites the mind but more lays the mind to rest, 5.4=678b implies that heavy drinking fosters lengthy bouts of sleeping, 6.pr=686a-c implies that drunkenness makes sleep disturbed. Athenaeus, 1.26a notes that old wine produces undisturbed sleep. The soporific property of wine is also recognised by Euripides, *Bacchae*, 380-385.

⁶³⁷ See n.404.

⁶³⁸ Celsus, 1.3.16 notes that regimen which thins the body (in the sense of that which does the opposite of fattening it) includes drinking wine, not too cold, on an empty stomach.

⁶³⁹ Plutarch, *Alexander*, 67.1-2; *Caesar*, 41.3; *Antony*, 45.4-6.

⁶⁴⁰ Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, 16.1-3; *Antony*, 77.3.

⁶⁴¹ Dioscorides, 5.1-73.

⁶⁴² Dioscorides, 5.6.14. On this wine, see further Appendix 1 p.334. Note also Soranus, *Gynaecology*, 1.48-52 on the various uses of wine in the stage of pregnancy signified by pica.

⁶⁴³ Dioscorides, 5.71.

⁶⁴⁴ Dioscorides, 5.61.

⁶⁴⁵ Dioscorides, 5.37, 5.39. Similarly: Cato, *On Agriculture*, 126 advises strong black wine flavoured with pomegranates as a treatment for tapeworms and stomach-worms (as well as gripes and loose bowels); 127 advises honey and incense added to wine of wild marjoram to clear out tapeworms and stomach-worms (the patient should first fast during evening, and this

Being a familiar fluid, wine was also used as a vehicle for a wide variety of imbibed compound medicines. Sometimes the wine was considered useful, but often its medical properties were not considered to contribute significantly to the medicine's effects; it was simply a useful and palatable base.⁶⁴⁶

In addition, wine was also commonly applied to affected parts, either alone or as an element in compound medicaments. For example, solely on the theme of ears: Galen prescribed wine as part of an application (along with roses, crocuses and nard) to strengthen the ears, Celsus included various types of wines (especially raisin wine) among numerous medical mixtures to wash out or be dropped into the ear in order to treat various ear ailments, and Cato the Elder's second-century BC didactic manual *On Agriculture* had even prescribed that cabbage macerated with wine should be inserted into the ears in order to cure deafness (after the juice had been pressed out, though whilst still warm).⁶⁴⁷ Soranus also used wine in a similar way in his *Gynaecology*; for example, he advised wine as part of an application (along with cypress and saffron) to dry up the milk in breasts.⁶⁴⁸ The application of wine was also commonly advised by Greco-Roman medical authorities in order to wash out wounds.⁶⁴⁹ The Hippocratic author of *Affections* furthermore prescribed that when a patient could not be washed they should be anointed with wine and oil every second day.⁶⁵⁰

Celsus' encyclopaedia attributes a very wide range of basic medical properties and uses to wines when applied. These include: to suppress bleeding (wine,

mixture should be administer the next day before he eats; the amount taken should be decreased for children according to their age).

⁶⁴⁶ Béguin (2002) 153; McGovern (2007 [2003]) 306; Fleming (2001) 76-77; Jellinek (1976) 1733. Note, for example, the first known example of a drug administered to ease the soul is delivered using wine: Homer, *Odyssey*, 4.219-220; Jouanna (1996) 410 = (2012) 173. On wine's use as a vehicle, see also n.659.

⁶⁴⁷ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 6.12=6.439-440K; Celsus, 6.7, on raisin wine see especially 6.7.1c-f. Cato, *On Agriculture*, 157. Dioscorides, 5.37 also notes that putting wine flavoured with resin of Syrian cedar into the ear is useful for treating earache. Note, however, that although wine featured in many of his ear applications, Celsus seems to have regarded wine's consumption as more harmful than good during many ear conditions: at 6.7.8c advises that a patient with ringing in the ears due to lesions should abstain from wine until the noise ceases, and 6.7.7c advises that drinks should be especially diluted for people with dull hearing along with heaviness of the head. See further Garzya (2002) 196 on the use of wine to treat ear worms in the medical literature of Late Antiquity and the Byzantine period, but note 198 on how some conditions prevented wine's use.

⁶⁴⁸ Soranus, *Gynaecology*, 2.8(77).

⁶⁴⁹ See Appendix 2 n.9-11.

⁶⁵⁰ Hippocrates, *Affections*, 42.

vinegar, or cold water),⁶⁵¹ to clot wounds (when a sponge or unscoured-wool was squeezed out of wine, vinegar, or cold water; or cooked honey),⁶⁵² as corrosives (wine, honey, or vinegar),⁶⁵³ to disperse whatever has collected in any part of the body (raisin wine, or honey),⁶⁵⁴ to repress and mollify the body (greasy wool with oil and wine or vinegar added, or brain boiled in vinegar or salt water),⁶⁵⁵ and to repress and cool (wine, vinegar, or cold water, and everything soaked in them).⁶⁵⁶ Celsus also noted that heating poultices made of meal were made more potent by cooking them in honeyed-wine rather than water,⁶⁵⁷ and (if nothing better was available) raisin wine (or yeast) was also regarded as an acceptable treatment to disperse boils and promote suppuration.⁶⁵⁸ Spencer concludes that in Celsus' encyclopaedia, 'wine was the commonest pharmaceutical excipient [non-active ingredient] in compounding prescriptions, and wine with oil and water was the commonest application to wounds'.⁶⁵⁹

The vast range of wine's utility in both applied and consumed medicaments is indicated by Soranus' advised treatment of flux (a chronic flow of bodily fluids) in the uterus: wine was prescribed for the preparation of plasters to be applied to the skin, in vaginal suppositories, and as a drink for when the patient was starting to recover.⁶⁶⁰ Soranus even notes that many other doctors considered washing newborn babies in wine to be appropriate.⁶⁶¹ However, such properties and uses of wine as an application are not considered in detail in this chapter, due both to the constraints of available space and the fact that they would be superfluous for this study which focuses upon consumption.

⁶⁵¹ Celsus, 5.1, 5.26.21. Note also 4.11.5: when blood was escaping from the mouth, Celsus advised that the patient hold undiluted wine or vinegar in his mouth.

⁶⁵² Celsus, 5.2.

⁶⁵³ Celsus, 5.6-8; Spencer (1935-38) 2.7. Celsus divides corrosive medicaments into three categories according to intensity: erodents (*rodere*), excedents (*exedere*) and caustics (*adure*). Wine and uncooked honey are defined as erodents; wine, vinegar and honey as excedents; caustics (the most intense substances) include burnt wine lees. It should be noted that some medicaments, such as wine, appear in several categories. An example of the prescription of such medicaments is in the removal of fungation from flesh (5.26.30c).

⁶⁵⁴ Celsus, 5.11.

⁶⁵⁵ Celsus, 2.33.2.

⁶⁵⁶ Celsus, 2.33.2-4. Note also 3.10.1-2: when a patient had fever with a headache, refrigerants were prescribed, including vinegar poured on the head.

⁶⁵⁷ Celsus, 2.33.5.

⁶⁵⁸ Celsus, 5.28.8.

⁶⁵⁹ Spencer (1935-38) 1.497. On wine's use as an excipient/vehicle, see also n.646.

⁶⁶⁰ Soranus, *Gynaecology*, 3.41. On wine in ancient gynaecology, see: Jouanna (1996) 432-433 = (2012) 191-192.

⁶⁶¹ Soranus, *Gynaecology*, 2.21(81); though Soranus himself disapproves, due to wine's intoxicating properties. Consider also n.640 on Spartan practice.

However, it should briefly be noted that when wine was applied to the body, rather than consumed via the mouth, it was often considered to have a variety of different properties and uses. The extent of these differences can be understood by considering that wine's hotness was widely recognised as one of its most significant properties when drunk, yet (as explained above) Pliny and Galen noted that wine was instead cooling when applied to the skin. Further on such issues, the reader is referred initially to the Hippocratic Corpus' *Use of Liquids*, and in the modern scholarship both Béguin's section on Galen's views on the therapeutic uses of wine and Jouanna's on the external uses of wine in Greek medicine.⁶⁶²

In conclusion, the Greco-Roman medical authorities of the Roman Empire largely presented their advice on drinking in a positive light. Moderate wine consumption was thought to have a wide variety of medically constructive effects, which (when used appropriately) were a significant factor in helping to maintain a person's health and wellbeing, thereby helping to prevent situations of illness. Wine's medically constructive properties were also thought to offer a wide range of therapeutic uses, and the consumption (and application) of wine was thus commonly prescribed as part of treatments to remedy numerous illnesses. These perceived constructive effects most notably included its nutritional, strength-giving, diuretic and psychological properties, and like the innumerable types of people and medical conditions, there was also an innumerable variety of wines and drinking regimes.

Through careful deliberation of medical advice, it was thought that almost anyone could find a means of alcohol consumption which was considered suitable for their particular circumstances (including their condition of health, bodily constitution, age, gender, habit of life, their surrounding environment, and so on). As such, almost everyone was medically permitted, and indeed advised, to drink wine by the Greco-Roman medical authorities. It was thought that they would benefit from this alcohol consumption so long as they remained within the limits of what was appropriate and moderate to their situation of health. Widespread disbelief could follow advice to the contrary, even when it

⁶⁶² Hippocrates, *Use of Liquids*, 5; Béguin (2002) esp. 150-153; Jouanna (1996) 431-434 = (2012) 190-192. Note also, on Aretaeus of Cappadocia: Jouanna (2002) 123-124.

was from the most highly respected medical authorities, as is seen by the above noted reaction to Hippocrates' apparent advice that athletes should not drink wine.

The medically destructive effects of intoxicating drinks were thought easily avoidable so long as the drinker remained within what was moderate and appropriate for them. Excessive and inappropriate drinking was thus thought responsible for alcohol's destructive consequences, with the roots of this signifying either the drinker's ignorance regarding what was medically appropriate or their moral weakness. The former encouraged the medical authorities to stress more heavily what was appropriate, entrenching the bias of the medical literature towards focusing upon the constructive aspects of drinking, and what benefits could be achieved if this advice were followed. The latter was an issue which many physicians largely left to philosophical and moral authorities, who shall be considered to a greater extent in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3: THE SOCIAL BENEFITS OF DRINKING

In comparison to the previous chapter, which focused upon the constructive effects of intoxicating drink on the fundamentals of an individual's health and wellbeing, this current chapter now zooms out to consider alcohol's wider 'social' benefits. This focus will comprise two closely related aspects which shall be simultaneously investigated. First, the ways in which Greco-Roman society of the first to third centuries AD considered intoxicating drink to be of benefit to an individual's interactions – broadly defined – with other people (for example, facilitating communication between people). Secondly, alcohol's perceived benefits to a group of people or wider society (for example, the construction or reinforcement of a group or society's identity, and helping the display of such). Like the previous chapter, this current chapter also explores the rationale behind these Greco-Roman beliefs, and furthermore investigates the perceived criteria for ensuring that an individual's alcohol consumption was socially constructive.

This chapter's main evidence forms two main groups. First, it analyses works written during the first to third centuries AD which discuss drinking and its social impact. Three authors will be of key importance in this respect: Seneca, Pliny the Elder and Plutarch.

Seneca (also referred to as Seneca the Younger) was a Roman author who lived during the first half of the first century AD; he was born a few years before 5AD. He was a Stoic philosopher, but also wrote in other genres. He acted as advisor to Nero (from 49AD), who later became Emperor, and who ultimately forced Seneca to suicide in 65AD.¹ One of his letters, *Epistle* 83, has been dubbed 'On Drunkenness', though this hides the complexity of the content. Seneca argues against philosophers' use of false syllogism, uses drunkenness as an example to prove his point, and then he proceeds to give his own, better, argument against drunkenness.² His letters, including this one, were written in the last years of his life; c.63-65AD.³ Also of importance is his work *On the Tranquillity of Mind*. This was written c.58-61AD, and gave instruction to

¹ *Pauly*, s.v. 'Seneca, 2'; Gummere (1917-25) 1.vii-ix. For Seneca's relationship with wine, see initially Motto and Clark (1993).

² Richardson-Hay (2001) esp. 12, 17-18.

³ Gummere (1917-25) 1.ix-x.

Serenus, a man in a state of restlessness, on how to obtain tranquilly of mind and thus true happiness.⁴ Of key importance is the final section (from 17.4), which praises and advises moderate intoxication.⁵

Pliny the Elder was a Roman author of the following generation, living 23/4 to 79AD. His major work was the *Natural History*, an encyclopaedic work which thematically catalogued knowledge related to nature and man's interaction with it. Book fourteen of this history focused upon vines, grapes and wine. Due to Pliny's medical interests, it was repeatedly used in the previous chapter (along with book twenty-three). Yet, this book is also of relevance to this current chapter, as it also considers social aspects of wine consumption: he catalogues the history of wine consumption in Rome and Italy, and gives an account of the social phenomenon of heavy drinking.⁶

Plutarch was a Greek author from a generation following Pliny; he lived c.45 to before 125AD. Born in Chaeronea (central Greece), he gained Roman citizenship and travelled widely, yet spent most of his life in or near his hometown. He produced a vast literary output across many genres, yet his works can be broadly divided into two categories: philosophical (he was primarily a follower of Plato's Academy) and historical-biographical.⁷ Plutarch revered the *symposium*, believing that if it were properly conducted it could have significant health and social benefits, as well as being a means to celebrate Greek cultural heritage.⁸

Plutarch's nine books on *Table-Talk* have this issue at their heart. They have a strong didactic function. The body of these books comprises 95 questions, each of which presents an example of a sympotic scene, focused upon the guests' discussion of a particular conversation. These conversations are generally examples of ideal sympotic conduct. About a sixth of the questions specifically focus upon discussing drinking issues. Furthermore, each book has a preface which (with the exception of the preface to book nine, which is unusually brief) also has a strong didactic character. In these, Plutarch directly

⁴ Motto and Clark (1993) 133-135; Basore (1928-35) 2.ix-x.

⁵ On this section, see primarily: Richardson-Hay (2001) 39. See also: Motto and Clark (1993) 137, 150, 154 n.30; Berger (1960).

⁶ Pauly, s.v. 'Plinius, 1'. Social aspects: Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.87-97; 14.137-148.

⁷ Pauly, s.v. 'Plutarchus, 2'; Duff (1999) 1-2.

⁸ König (2012) 17, 20, 30-32, 40, 60-64; Van Hoof (2010) 242; also Paul (1991) 157.

gives the reader advice on ideal sympotic behaviour. These prefaces are accordingly of major utility for this chapter.⁹

Beyond *Table-Talk*, Plutarch's most extensive treatment of the *symposium* is in the *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*. This presents a fictional account of the fabled dinner of the Seven Sages of Greece. In Plutarch's account, the seven are hosted by the tyrant Periander of Corinth. Several other individuals are also present; in total there are nineteen characters in the dialogue. As an example of *symposium* literature, it follows in the footsteps of Plato and Xenophon's *Symposia*. Like his *Table-Talk*, this work presents an idealised *symposium*, where the guests repeatedly discuss drinking issues.¹⁰

The social functions of wine and *symposia* are also repeatedly considered in Plutarch's *Advice about Keeping Well*. This work was considered on occasion in the previous chapter due to its medical aims. These aims are immediately apparent: the work forms a regimen-based medical treatise which is primarily concerned with advising preventative medicine, in much the same way as the texts analysed in the previous chapter. Yet this work also considers the role of a man within society, and ultimately has deeper moral and political aims befitting its philosopher author.¹¹ As such, it forms part of a section of the Plutarchian corpus dedicated to offering practical advice on how an elite male should conduct his life; Van Hoof dubs these works his 'Practical Ethics'.¹²

The second group of evidence which this chapter analyses are the biographical works of Plutarch and Suetonius. Plutarch's *Lives* were the last works that he wrote. First he composed the *Lives of the Roman Emperors*, a series of biographies which in turn addressed each emperor from Augustus to Vitellius. Only the *Galba* and *Otho* survive. After this, he turned to the *Parallel Lives*, written after 96AD. This was a vast project; 23 books are known, 22 of which survive. The format consisted of a series of parallel biographies, each of both a Greek and a Roman individual, prefaced by a shared introduction and concluded by a comparison of the two individuals.¹³

⁹ König (2012) 16, 30-32, 60-89. Questions focusing upon drinking (16 of 95): 1.6-1.7, 3.3-3.9, 5.4, 6.1, 6.3, 6.7, 7.1, 7.3, 7.9-7.10; note also 3.1-3.2.

¹⁰ Mossman (1997) 120-123; König (2012) 62-63; Babbitt (1928) 346-347.

¹¹ Corvisier (2003) 115-116, 120, 143-145; Senzasono (1997) 115-116; Babbitt (1928) 214-215.

¹² See Van Hoof (2010) 1-15 for an overview.

¹³ *Pauly*, s.v. 'Plutarchus, 2'; Duff (1999) 2.

Suetonius was a Roman author who was born about a generation after Plutarch; he lived c.70 to after 121AD. He wrote a variety of works on subjects from manners and customs to grammar, but he is most remembered for his biographical works. He composed the *Lives of the Caesars*, twelve sequential historical-biographical accounts of the lives of Julius Caesar followed by the first eleven Roman emperors. His position as secretary to the Emperor Hadrian no doubt gave him increased access to court records. Suetonius also compiled other similar works, and several sections of his *On Illustrious Men* survive. This comprised accounts of the lives of eminent men from five fields of literature: poets, orators, historians, philosophers, and grammarians/rhetoricians.¹⁴

These biographical works are of major use to this chapter as they frequently describe an individual's eating and drinking behaviour, as well as repeatedly describing banqueting and drinking-bouts. This phenomenon can be explained by noting that certain ancient people thought that wine helped to reveal a man's true character, and banquets sometimes revealed a man's character most clearly; these issues are considered in detail later in this chapter. Admittedly, however, most of the banquets and drinking-bouts described in these biographies fall far short of ideal practice. Many descend into disorderly conduct, excess, treachery, deception and murder. Yet most such events in Greek and Roman society were no doubt unremarkable, and as such these biographies largely ignore the mundane majority to focus upon the exceptional. In this sense, the banquets they describe are not fully representative of reality, and accordingly these biographies may immediately appear unnecessarily difficult evidence for this chapter to focus upon. Yet, as Paul notes, 'the same is largely true of those [banquets and drinking-bouts] recorded by other historical writers'; 'the historian is seldom concerned with events of ordinary life, being more drawn to record the unusual, extraordinary, or outrageous'. This over-representation of exceptional and negative drinking and banquets was not unique to biography. Instead, it is endemic to the ancient literary source material.¹⁵

This chapter first highlights that wine was thought to offer significant socially constructive properties, both for an individual himself and a group as a whole,

¹⁴ *Pauly*, s.v. 'Suetonius'; Rolfe (1951 [1913-14]) 1.ix-xix, 2.388-393. Note also: Duff (1999) 7-8.

¹⁵ Paul (1991) esp. 157-159, 166. This bias is also discussed in the Introduction from p.25. Note also: König (2012) 61; Humphries (2002). Compare, however, to Duff (1999) 58-59: Plutarch felt it was his role 'to record, as far as possible, good and uplifting events'.

yet these depended upon appropriate and moderate consumption. Moderation worked both ways: both abstinence and excess were considered to be destructive to an individual's ability to socialise, and the promotion of an atmosphere congenial to a group's socialising. Following this initial section, the chapter then proceeds to analyse in greater detail a variety of ways in which wine consumption could be regarded as socially constructive.

The next three sections of this chapter explore issues of key relevance to an individual's social persona: morality and character, education and memory, and identity. This chapter subsequently proceeds to consider wine's role in the creation of an atmosphere of conviviality, which was thought requisite for appropriate leisure and socialisation. This section specifically focuses upon conviviality's constituent components of: happiness, pleasure, celebration, relaxation, softening/banishing anxieties and sorrows, friendliness/friendship, and generosity. The final section of this chapter presents the constructive roles of wine in wider social interactions: in competition, sex, the promotion of confidence and the display of masculinity. Appendices 6 and 7 complement this chapter by considering the constructive uses of wine in work (including politics) and warfare.

THE SOCIAL IMPORTANCE OF MODERATE DRINKING, AND THE PROBLEMATIC NATURE OF ABSTINENCE AND EXCESS

'Some of the preparations which are made for dinners and drinking-parties rank as necessities, my dear Sossius Senecio; such are the wine, the food, the cuisine, and of course the couches and tables. Others are diversions introduced for pleasure's sake, and no essential function attaches to them; such are music, spectacles, and any buffooning Philip-at-Callias's [Philip is the buffoon at Callias' party in Xenophon's *Symposium*]. With these latter, if they are present, the guests are pleased, but if they are absent, the guests do not very much desire them or criticise the party as being very deficient. So it is with conversation; some topics are [necessities, others only pleasurable diversions.]'¹⁶

As a philosopher of the first to early second century AD, who venerated the *symposium* and has left a large corpus of surviving works reflecting his interest

¹⁶ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 2.pr=629c.

and knowledge in both medicine and practical ethics,¹⁷ Plutarch offers a suitable 'bridge' for this thesis to move from the previous chapter to the current one, and, in doing so, illustrate the fundamental issues surrounding the use of wine for its social benefits.

Plutarch uses the above words to introduce the second book of his *Table-Talk*, a work (dedicated and addressed to his friend Sossius Senecio) which provides accounts of exemplary conversation at numerous *symposia*. Wine is presented as an essential part of a party: it is on a par with the food, the basic furniture for the seating of guests, and good conversation. It is considered more fundamental than the 'optional' entertainment – music, specials, and clowns – elements which *can* add to the party, but which are not essential for a successful event. Wine is thus not just a superfluous social diversion, but rather it is key for ensuring a constructive social experience at the *symposium*, both for host and guests, as Plutarch implies that without the provision of wine the guests will find the party very deficient and complain about the host's event.

Yet, just like wine's medical properties, its social potential was also generally thought to offer the prospect for both constructive and destructive facets, which hinged upon the twin parameters of moderation and appropriate use. Plutarch illustrates the first of these parameters in his introduction to book three of *Table-Talk*, where he associates good social behaviour with the moderate drinker, and bad with the drunkard: 'song, laughter, and dancing are characteristic of men who drink wine in moderation; but babbling and talking about what is better left in silence is at once the work of actual intoxication and drunkenness'.¹⁸ This parameter of moderation functioned in broadly the same way as outlined for wine's medically constructive effects in the previous chapter: excess was generally considered socially destructive, and moderation constructive (though, as discussed below, socially appropriate moderation was sometimes thought to

¹⁷ Plutarch's knowledge of medicine: Boulogne (1996) esp. 2768-2769 on his beliefs regarding wine's medical uses; Van Hoof (2010) 211-213; Corvisier (2003) esp. 115-117, 123-125, 127-128, 133, 138, 142-143; Babbitt (1928) 214. Love of the *symposium*: see n.8. Practical Ethics: see n.12.

¹⁸ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 3.pr=645a. At 6.pr=686a-c, Plutarch also associates a variety of medical advantages with drinking moderately, rather than excessively, at dinner, including: avoiding fever (or heating/inflaming the body), avoiding undisturbed sleep, fostering a calm and tranquil state, suffering no ill effects the day after (including being able to recall table-talk from the night before), and promoting balance in body (which leads to happiness, health, bodily lightness, and readiness for all activities).

exceed what was medically ideal, occasionally including mild levels of intoxication).

A second parameter, comprising a range of factors related to ‘appropriateness’, also governed how socially constructive alcohol consumption was perceived to be. These included, for example, the time, place, manner of drinking, and so on. These factors are far too numerous and varied to analyse in detail here, and instead they will be discussed as they arise during this chapter. Yet, one example, drawn again from *Table-Talk*, will suffice for present purposes: in book four, Plutarch explains that the subject of this work – proper table-talk – is essential to wine’s socially constructive use:

‘It is through conversation that wine channels from the body and distributes through the character a generous influence that permeates the whole man. Otherwise the wine, circulating uncontrolled in the body, produces nothing better than mere repletion [i.e. nourishment]. ... Table-talk prevents the complete dissipation of the drinkers’ minds under the influence of the wine. Conversation steadies those who drink, adding through relaxation an element of gaiety and – yes – of kindly sociability, if people go about it in the right way, since the wine makes the company pliable and ready to take an impression, as it were, from the seal of friendship.’¹⁹

Here, Plutarch acknowledges that even without table-talk, wine consumption is still medically constructive in the sense that it gives nourishment to the body, but it can only fulfil its proper constructive social potential when drunk appropriately in the way he outlines. Correctly conducted table-talk is thus presented as fundamental for channelling wine’s constructive social potential, thereby promoting gaiety, sociability, and friendship. Without it, the drink will lead to socially destructive consequences: the temporary dissolution of the drinker’s mind, which is a clear hindrance in social situations.

Plutarch’s *Advice about Keeping Well* expands further upon these issues. In this work, Zeuxippus (who seems to be largely a mouthpiece relating Plutarch’s

¹⁹ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 4.pr=660b-c. Plutarch, *Advice about Keeping Well*, 20=132f-133f also presents a similar concept: introducing appropriate diversions (such as good table-talk) during a meal helps to control the diners’ appetites (as well as aiding their digestion), and as such helps to prevent excess and its inherent undesirable effects (he also refers to the similar practice of the Lydians in Herodotus, 1.94); Van Hoof (2010) 239-240.

own views) provides regimen-based medical advice.²⁰ The advice presented on wine is largely in line with typical Greco-Roman medical thought, as outlined in the previous chapter:²¹ the most healthy and medically beneficial drinking regime is one featuring moderate wine consumption (except during certain specified illnesses),²² of simple and cheaper wines rather than more expensive ones such as the famed Falernian wine,²³ and as part of an individualised ideal diet (tailored to be most constructive to that individual's constitution) which is made familiar, and thus more agreeable to this person, through daily repetition.²⁴ In contrast, excess food and drink is regarded as promoting illness,²⁵ and in particular, breaking one's familiar moderate diet at a party, and gorging oneself with unfamiliar foods and drinks, was thought to lead to 'hangover'-style indigestion the next morning.²⁶

However, Plutarch encounters problems, as his *Advice about Keeping Well* also considers the social obligations of its audience (the target audience for this work were the elite, specifically scholars and men in public life).²⁷ This was unlike other ancient medical dietetic texts. Doctors generally avoided advising readers how to behave at the *symposium*, and they typically left no room in their prescribed ideal lifestyle to attend such events. Yet Plutarch's advice in this area was innovative; he considered both the physiological health and social wellbeing of the individual. He accepted that his readers would be expected to attend banquets, and such parties carried a social obligation for guests to consume a notable amount of food and drink. The host provided this in order to keep good cheer, and guests were expected to be seen consuming it so as not to give offence, not gain the stigma of being tiresome, and not feel shame from not participating as fully as others desired. It is thus acknowledged that

²⁰ On the relationship between Zeuxippus' and Plutarch's views, see: Van Hoof (2010) 215-216, 250-254; Babbitt (1928) 215.

²¹ On Plutarch's *Advice about Keeping Well* being, in general, largely consistent with ancient medical advice, see: Corvisier (2003) esp. 116, 121-123, 141-142.

²² See especially: Plutarch, *Advice about Keeping Well*, 19=132a-f; Corvisier (2003) 136. Plutarch's *Advice about Keeping Well* promotes moderation as an important concept throughout: Van Hoof (2010) 240.

²³ Plutarch, *Advice about Keeping Well*, 4=123d, 7=125b-126b. Consider also 6=124d-125b on foods related to pleasure, luxury and notoriety destructively increasing appetites.

²⁴ Plutarch, *Advice about Keeping Well*, 3=123c-d. Note however 3=123a-c where he advises occasionally abstaining from wine to make a water-drinking regime more familiar in preparation for illnesses which require it.

²⁵ Plutarch, *Advice about Keeping Well*, 10=127b-d.

²⁶ Plutarch, *Advice about Keeping Well*, 7=125b-126b.

²⁷ Target audience: Plutarch, *Advice about Keeping Well*, 27=137c; Babbitt (1928) 214; Van Hoof (2010) 6, 11-12, 220-223, 255, also 13. Note also: Corvisier (2003) 141.

engaging properly in such parties will inevitably lead men to break ideal medical regimen. Men at parties will doubtless consume some unfamiliar foods and drinks offered by their host, some of which may be lavish, and there may be peer-pressure to consume to excess (there may also be pressure to go to a party when simply in no fit state, such as when already overloaded with food and drink, or during an illness which requires fasting or a light diet). Thus, although excess wine is acknowledged as *medically* harmful, abstaining from a degree of lavish drinking is recognised as *socially* harmful. Plutarch's Zeuxippus offers two specific solutions to his readers on how to balance these competing concerns.²⁸

The first is simplest and preferable: it is suggested that at a party a man should tread the line between socially harmful abstinence and medically harmful excess, by consuming in a comparatively moderate way. As even comparatively moderate consumption at a party is doubtless in excess of what the individual is accustomed to in his daily life, it is suggested that an individual should prepare himself in anticipation of a party by eating and drinking less heavily beforehand, so he can bring 'an appetite fresh and willing' for strong drink and lavish foods, and thereby benefit socially from this consumption. Later in this same work, Plutarch's Zeuxippus elaborates further on the relationship between medical and social priorities, explicitly stating that a man can and should occasionally relax his ideal medical regimen to a degree, in order to give priority to socially beneficial consumption at a party. He argues that a man following a medically ideal diet with too much stringency is bad in a social sense, as 'it is fitting only for men who have reduced and restricted themselves to a retired, idle, solitary, friendless, and inglorious life, far removed from the duties of citizenship'. By allowing a certain degree of freedom with his diet, the man can experience the social benefits of wine and food at parties

²⁸ For this and the following paragraphs on Plutarch's *Advice about Keeping Well*, see primarily 4-5=123d-124d with Van Hoof (2010) 220-223, 242-245, 248-249, also 33. Seneca also presented dining in private houses and public events as a duty of a citizen: Seneca, *On Tranquillity of Mind*, 4.3-4. Consider further Paul (1991) 158 on Plutarch's rare exceptions of Pericles, Nicias and Sertorius (the first two avoided banquets, the latter avoided all heavy drinking); they are exceptions which prove the rule: men were typically expected to go to banquets and dine lavishly. Note, however, that in Plutarch, *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, 2=147f-148b Thales argues that a banquet without wine is less offensive than one with bad wine or bad guests.

which are regarded as key to the friendly socialising required of a good citizen; and he does so without noticeably compromising his health.²⁹

The second suggestion should be used only if a man does not have time to, or cannot, prepare for a party as outlined; for example, when an invitation or occasion comes by surprise, when having to go to a party immediately after a previous excess, or when compelled to go whilst also suffering or predicting illness. He explains that it is possible either to decline an invitation, or to socialise without eating and drinking heavily, and not suffer notable social stigma. Admittedly, this is implied to be more difficult and not always wholly effective, but the potential for shame and being considered ill-bred is presented as a far more desirable option than risking one's health through illness (Plutarch comments that such illness is the true sign of being ill-bred). Plutarch's Zeuxippus states:

'[Many men do not know] how to [consort with men without the wine-glass and the savour of food. For a request to be excused, if characterized by cleverness and wit, is no less agreeable than joining in the round of gaiety; and if a man provides a banquet in the same spirit in which he provides a burnt-offering which it is forbidden to taste, and personally abstains when the wine-cup and the table are before him, at the same time volunteering cheerfully some playful allusion to himself, he will create a pleasanter impression than the man who gets drunk and gormandizes for company.'

As such, abstaining from wine at a social event without incurring stigma requires the diner to deploy excellent social skills (clever wit) in order to excuse his social *faux-pas* (abstinence) and make it appear agreeable. This was surely a difficult manoeuvre; Zeuxippus himself admits that many men did not know how to do this, and as such they presumably attracted social stigma when they abstained. Furthermore, Zeuxippus' comment that such an abstinent host is at least better than a drunkard implies that, although abstinence is not as destructive as gross excess, neither is it as socially constructive as moderate drinking.

²⁹ In addition to n.28, see: Plutarch, *Advice about Keeping Well*, 23=134f-135c; Van Hoof (2010) 242. Consider further: 18=131e where the reader is permitted to cautiously partake of less healthy foods (that which is solid and very nourishing) providing he is careful to avoid anything too extreme, 'for it is hard work to decline all the time'.

Accordingly, Plutarch seems to have thought that the social benefits of drinking were significant enough to justify occasionally relaxing ideal medical regimen, to allow for unusually lavish wine consumption (albeit short of 'excess') at parties. These social benefits were most usually fully experienced when the wine was drunk in appropriate moderation, which was the ideal. Both over- and under-drinking were generally considered less socially constructive, and sometimes destructive.

These views can be seen in practice during Plutarch's own fictional account of a *symposium*, hosted by Periander tyrant of Corinth, who invited Archaic Greece's Seven Sages among other guests; the *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*. The physician-guest Cleodorus voices medical praise for wine (talking when soaked with wine, like rubbing down when dry, is regarded as most agreeable), and shows indication that moderation must be employed (he holds up Hesiod as an authority on mixing wine with water).³⁰ Similarly, wine is regarded as having various social benefits, including aiding appropriate conviviality (pleasant and enjoyable association between guests), bringing good cheer and friendly feelings between a group of men (relaxing and softening their characters to aid this; it is especially useful as an 'ice-breaker' among men who do not know each other well; it provides a foundation for union and friendship), and as a fundamental act of communion and hospitality between men.³¹ During conversation, the drinking behaviour of two stock paradigms of virtue are referred to, to provide instruction on appropriate drinking behaviour (the first actually serves to defend Solon's drinking *faux-pas*, as explained below); unsurprisingly both are argued to have drunk lightly.³² The heroes of Homeric society are said to have drunk sparingly: only one goblet of measured quantity which they shared with their neighbour (repeated toasting to other guests' health, with its heavy drinking, is argued to have not been in vogue at that time). Similarly, the Olympian Gods are said to drink lightly of nectar as Zeus only receives limited quantities of it, and so he distributes it to the others sparingly. As such, in the *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men* wine's significant medical and social constructive uses are firmly associated with moderation in use.

³⁰ Plutarch, *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, 7=152d-e, 14=158a-b. Hesiod, *Work and Days*, 368-9 and/or 744-745 may be referred to.

³¹ Plutarch, *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, 2=147f-148b, 13=155e-156e, 15=158b-f. See also p.307ff with n.327.

³² Plutarch, *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, 13-14=156e-157a; referring to Homer, *Iliad*, 4.262.

In a typically Greek fashion, this work also repeatedly stresses the importance of democratic-style equality among all party guests, in all matters, including wine; Mnesiphilus the Athenian states this most clearly: 'I think it is no more than fair, Periander, that the conversation, like the wine, should not be apportioned on the basis of wealth or rank, but equally to all, as in a democracy'.³³ This follows a norm of the Greek *symposium*, whereby all guests drank equally from a communal mixing-bowl, with the mixing ratio being decreed for all by group decision.³⁴ The strength of wine, speed of drinking, and thus consequently (in theory) the approximate rate of intoxication were equal to all. In essence, the level of drinking considered socially appropriate was decided by each individual party of symposiasts behind the closed-doors of each *symposium*, and was enforced by its members accordingly. Drinking more or less than this would be a breach of the equality, and thus a social *faux-pas* due to the breach of moderate drinking.

The importance of moderation is tested, and reasserted, on two occasions in this work when people deviate from appropriate moderation: once when a guest is said to have drunk excessively, and the other when a guest drinks too little. In the former of these, Pittacus of Mytilene (a guest at the *symposium*) is noted to have passed a law in his city which decreed: 'if any man commit any offence when drunk, his penalty shall be double that prescribed for the sober', and in passing Anacharsis the Scythian (another guest) implies criticism by stating that he finds this law 'harsh'.³⁵ In response, Pittacus attacks Anacharsis (albeit in a jovial manner) for having drunk and behaved inappropriately at a party in Mytilene (in the house of Alcaeus' brother) the previous year. Anacharsis is said to have very quickly become drunk, far in advance of the other guests, and demanded a prize for winning a drinking contest which was planned for the evening. Pittacus argued that by this drunken behaviour, Anacharsis had 'showed such insolent disregard for the law'. Anacharsis then defends his actions by claiming that 'prizes were offered for the man who drank the most,

³³ Plutarch, *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, 11=154c-d; also: 7=152c-d on free-speech and equality, and 13=155e on Solon's cup not being 'democratic' as explained below.

³⁴ On mixing, see Appendix 1 p.332ff.

³⁵ Plutarch, *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, 13=155f-156a; Athenaeus, 10.437f. On Pittacus' law, see further: Aristotle, *Politics*, 2.12.1274b; *Nicomachean Ethics*, 3.5.1113b; *Rhetoric*, 2.1402b; Diogenes Laertius, 1.4(Pittacus).76; McKinlay (1953b) 861; Rolleston (1927) 104. Note also the comment of Mossman (1997) 124 that Plutarch repeatedly 'makes play with Anacharsis' barbarian origin'. Pittacus' law, and a similar one from Alexandria, are discussed further in Appendix 7 p.450 with n.15.

and I was the first to get drunk'. Athenaeus also preserves an account of this same incident which clarifies this issue further: 'Anacharsis the Scythian was visiting Periander, and when a drinking-contest was held, he tried to claim the prize on the ground that he was the first person there who got drunk, as if this were the goal and a drinking-contest could be won in the same way a footrace is.'

As such, the Scythian seems to have misunderstood Greek drinking etiquette due to erroneously equating the stated aim of the contest, *drinking the most*, with the seemingly similar aim of *drunkenness*, and also having overlooked the importance of democratic equality to the drinking. In his flat-out racing to drink the most, rather than competing by drinking in turn with the others, Anacharsis breaches etiquette by drinking a gross excess relative to the temporal progression of the evening, as defined by the drinking-pace democratically set by the rest of the party. This excess was clearly regarded as entailing socially destructive consequences, as Anacharsis' behaviour became so obnoxious that Pittacus can recall his insolent drunken demands for an undeserved victory prize a year afterwards. Stigma attached, even if it was taken in good humour. Accordingly, both Pittacus' law and Anacharsis' alleged behaviour imply a link between excessive drinking and becoming intoxicated in advance of others on the one hand (the latter essentially being excess in a temporal sense), and transgression of social rules and etiquette (including increased criminality) on the other.

The second occasion regards the scandal caused by Solon's lack of drinking.³⁶ After the female guests withdrew from the dining room, the male guests began to drink more heavily, sharing large beakers of wine which they passed around in order to toast each other. This drinking behaviour is associated with the 'democratic' equality of all party guests; thus when Ardalus is left out of the toasting he complains regarding this exclusive behaviour and asks them to send a cup his way so he can participate. Similarly, when it is noticed that Solon has been abstaining from drinking, and not sharing his beaker like the others, Aesop

³⁶ Plutarch, *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, 13=155e-f, 13=156a-e. The reason for Solon's abstinence is not made explicit, but this is probably explained by his arguments later in the evening (15-16=158b-160c), that it is best to abstain from food and drink as far as possible, as food and drink cause significant troubles for the body and soul, and restrain the latter from turning to noble things; several other guests argue against this idea, and none support Solon's view. On Mnesiphilus' defence of Solon, see further p.294 with n.271, and p.307ff with n.327; note also p.297 with n.284.

states that 'this cup is not democratic either, since it has been resting all the time by Solon'. Solon's abstinence then becomes a talking-point for the whole company, and the guests' criticism of his behaviour is heightened when Pittacus notes hypocrisy on Solon's part: he himself had written poetry seemingly praising wine's socially constructive properties (the verse noted that Dionysus, god of wine, brought cheer among men). Furthermore, it is implicit that as a representative of Athens, Solon was also expected to be representative of democratic equality; indeed Mnesiphilus, another Athenian guest who was in Plutarch's words 'a warm friend and admirer of Solon's', had (as quoted above) praised the drinking of wine in a democratic fashion just a few moments beforehand.³⁷

The stigma of unequal/undemocratic drinking is notable and lasting for Solon; thus even after the conversation digresses onto other matters (including the above noted discussion of Pittacus and Anacharsis), it is brought back to Solon's conduct. Other guests repeatedly request that Mnesiphilus defend Solon's actions, presumably selecting him to act as a mediator due to his allegiance to both sides: democratic drinking on the one hand and Solon on the other. Mnesiphilus uses a lengthy monologue to attempt to mitigate the *faux-pas* of Solon's abstinence through eloquent speech, just as we have seen Plutarch advise in *Advice about Keeping Well*. Excellent spoken social skills are thus deployed to make this abstinence appear more agreeable. Mnesiphilus' argument is a powerful one, as it works by qualifying a widely accepted property of wine, its ability to promote friendship and an associated convivial atmosphere, the importance of which we have already seen highlighted in Plutarch's *Table-Talk* and *Advice about Keeping Well*. Mnesiphilus argues that although wine does indeed have this ability, it is far more useful at social gatherings of people who are not already close friends as they have the most to gain from this property of wine. Drinking is implied to be near-essential for promoting friendly social gatherings of strangers ('Dionysus softens and relaxes their characters with wine, as in a fire, and so provides some means for beginning a union and friendship with one another'), but lighter drinking is the true mark of existing close friendship among a company. Thus Mnesiphilus asserts that 'when such men as you, whom Periander has invited

³⁷ See n.33. Note that Mnesiphilus' references to Dionysus invoke the nature of the ideal *symposium*; Mossman (1997) 131. Further on Dionysus, see Ch.1 n.28.

here, come together, I think there is nothing for the wine-cup or ladle to accomplish', and the convivial atmosphere can instead be created by their interesting and friendly conversation. In support of his argument, he deploys the above noted example of the Homeric heroes who, Mnesiphilus argues, drank lightly and did not toast each other.

The other guests can do little to argue against this point without either insulting their companions or showing disrespect to what Mnesiphilus implies to be Solon's display of intimacy with his fellow-diners. Indeed, Mnesiphilus appears largely successful, as the conversation then flows away from Solon's lack of drinking, and this topic is not mentioned again. Accordingly, here we see in (fictional) practice how in Plutarch's mind drinking *less* than what was moderate was generally socially destructive behaviour, though it could be successfully excused – albeit with effort and difficulty – through excellent social skills. Yet this excuse would no doubt have been more effective in the eyes of the modern reader, and perhaps also to the ancients, if Solon had deployed such etiquette *himself* to defend *his own* conduct, rather than depending upon his supporter Mnesiphilus.

These views associating moderate drinking and social benefits were not limited merely to Plutarch himself, or only the 'Greek' section of the ancient Mediterranean. In the Roman sphere, similar ideas can be clearly seen in the works of Seneca, who provides an appropriate Roman counterpart to Plutarch for this current purpose.

On the face of it, Seneca may seem unusually hostile to wine. He himself claims that he had been teetotal ('my stomach is unacquainted with wine') since his youth. He had resolved to limit his food and drink after hearing the stoic philosopher Attalus attack pleasure and preach moderation in diet, and although he had abandoned many of his self-imposed dietary rules since then, abstaining from wine was one which he apparently retained into old age.³⁸ Accordingly it is not surprising that Seneca despised excess drinking and gross drunkenness, considering it highly destructive practice. In *On the Shortness of Life*, he succinctly states 'among the worst [of people] I count also those who have time for nothing but wine and lust; for none have more shameful engrossments', with

³⁸ Seneca, *Epistles*, 108.14-16; Richardson-Hay (2001) 35. Seneca, *Epistles*, 83.12 also notes that, in a similar manner, Cassius (the conspirator against Caesar) 'throughout his life drank water'. Dating of the *Epistles*: see n.3.

philosophy being one of the notable things which they have no time for.³⁹ In *Epistle* 59 he emphasises the medically destructive consequences of excess by describing drunkenness as ‘a single hour of hilarious madness [paid for] by a sickness of many days’.⁴⁰

Significantly, much of *Epistle* 83 (called ‘On Drunkenness’ by modern editors) aims to ‘arraign drunkenness frankly and expose its vices’, and in doing so Seneca lists a range of severe medical and social consequences resulting from temporary and habitual drunken excess. These include: unsteady movement and dizziness, stomach problems and indigestion, unrestrained talk and actions (including slander, arrogance, cruelty and so on), the promotion of vices, shameful behaviour, and bad decorum. Seneca notes that drunkenness even has the power to ruin a nation (through the excess of a leader, drunkenness of warriors, and so on).⁴¹

Yet teetotallers like Seneca were extremely rare in Greco-Roman antiquity,⁴² and there seems to be an implicit admission from Seneca that his own behaviour was extreme and somewhat unnecessary as he never even hints that anyone else should follow him in abstaining from wine. On the contrary, in a significant passage of *Epistle* 83 Seneca admits that the ideal sage should be permitted to drink wine in moderation in order to receive the physiological benefit of it quenching their thirst.⁴³ Furthermore, Seneca even permits his ideal man, the sage (*sapiens*), occasional intoxication, so long as it is done ‘for a friend’s sake’ and he stops short of true drunkenness. In writing this, Seneca shows some appreciation of a constructive social use of wine: its ability to aid friendship, just as we saw highlighted in the works of Plutarch. Seneca’s comments also show an appreciation (in a manner similar to Plutarch) that wine’s socially constructive use hinges on appropriate moderation, which can sometimes include mild degrees of intoxication. It was thought that this could

³⁹ Seneca, *On the Shortness of Life*, 7.1, with Basore (1928-35) 1.304n on ‘the engrossed’ (*occupati*) in this essay.

⁴⁰ Seneca, *Epistles*, 59.15; Motto and Clark (1993) 156.

⁴¹ Seneca, *Epistles*, 83 esp.17-23 (quoted passage from 17); Motto and Clark (1993) 156.

⁴² Athenaeus, 2.44f-45d; Rolleston (1927) 106-107; Wilkins and Hill (2006) 166; Motto and Clark (1993) 154 n.30. Novel descriptions of water-drinkers as alien: Appian, *Punic Wars*, 11; Caesar, *Gallic Wars*, 2.15, 4.2; Roth (1999) 17, 36; Lucian, *The Cynic*, 5; Bible, ‘Luke’, 7:33. Consider, however, that Seneca claims that Cassius was also a teetotaler like him; see n.38.

⁴³ Seneca, *Epistles*, 83.17: ‘even the middling good man avoids them [drunkenness and its vices], not to mention the perfect sage, who is satisfied with slaking his thirst; the sage, even if now and then he is led on by good cheer which, for a friend’s sake, is carried somewhat too far, yet always stops short of drunkenness’; see also D’Arms (1995) 305, 307.

sometimes be excused as socially constructive, although heavy intoxication is in all ways excessive and has no such excuse in Seneca's eyes.

Seneca's *On Tranquillity of Mind* is also informative. Half way through this work, Seneca stresses the importance of restraint and self control in diet, and suggests that a person's main dietary consideration should be that 'food subdue hunger, drink quench thirst', and not 'their decorative qualities'.⁴⁴ Yet it is noted at the very end of the work that 'the mind must be given relaxation ... [because] constant labour will break the vigour of the mind, but if it is released and relaxed a little while, it will recover its powers'.⁴⁵ Seneca accordingly states that the mind must occasionally be given 'the leisure that serves as its food and strength', comprising relaxation, rest and diversion by amusements. He argues that wine can facilitate this very well, and provides as evidence the respected figure of Cato the Younger, who 'when he was wearied by the cares of the state, would relax his mind with wine'. Seneca therefore advises the following drinking regime:

'The mind may be strengthened and refreshed by ... festive company and generous drinking. At times we ought to reach the point even of intoxication, not drowning ourselves in drink, yet succumbing to it; for it washes away troubles, and stirs the mind from its very depths and heals its sorrow just as it does certain ills of the body ... it frees the mind from bondage to cares and emancipates it and gives it new life and makes it bolder in all that it attempts. But, as in freedom, so in wine there is a wholesome moderation ... we ought not to do this often, for fear that the mind may contract an evil habit, nevertheless there are times when it must be draw into rejoicing and freedom, and gloomy sobriety must be banished for a while.'

Here, Seneca acknowledges that wine consumption, and even occasional intoxication, has medical and social benefits: it cures some illnesses, relaxes the drinker, promotes an atmosphere of festive leisure, and refreshes a mind exhausted by labour so it is once again able to work productively. Moderation is

⁴⁴ Seneca, *On Tranquillity of Mind*, 9.2.

⁴⁵ Seneca, *On Tranquillity of Mind*, 17.4-11; Motto and Clark (1993) 137, 139, 160 n.16. See also: Berger (1960); D'Arms (1995) 305. Note further that Mnesitheus (the fourth-century BC physician) provides a similar statement; he suggests that drinking excessively is generally an evil for body and soul, but doing it from time to time is beneficial as it purifies and relaxes the soul, and it also promotes urination which releases the acidities which build up within the body: Athenaeus, 11.483f-484a (= Mnesitheus, fr.45); Wilkins (2002) 188-189. On Mnesitheus and wine, see Ch.2 n.42.

again the benchmark of constructive practice, with both extremes associated with destructive consequences: frequent drunkenness leads to an evil habit, and avoidance of leisure (which frequently employs wine in a constructive manner) will exhaust the mind.

In conclusion, the works of Plutarch and Seneca suggest that wine was thought to offer a variety of significant socially constructive properties which hinged upon its moderate and appropriate use. Significantly, the drinking which was considered socially moderate and appropriate was flexible; sometimes it was communally decided and drinkers had to follow the behaviour of the rest of the party, and sometimes degrees of intoxication were considered appropriate. The remainder of this chapter systematically investigates the main ways in which the consumption of intoxicating drinks was perceived to be socially constructive, the rationale behind the belief in these properties, and the limits of their effects.

VICE, VIRTUE AND CHARACTER

Inappropriate drinking was typically regarded as a worrying vice by Greco-Roman society. The biographers Suetonius and Plutarch accordingly prominently list such behaviour among their subjects' vices. Suetonius gives Tiberius' life-long 'excessive love of wine' as first in a list of his vices, and in a comparison of Vitellius and Otho, Plutarch lists drunkenness among the prominent undesirable characteristics of the Emperor Vitellius, on a par with his gluttony, and comparable to the luxury and licentiousness of Otho.⁴⁶

In antiquity, youth was perceived as *the* critical age, when people were especially prone to vice, as they were thought to develop the ability to reason in puberty.⁴⁷ Horace thus characterises 'the beardless youth, freed at last from his tutor ... soft as wax for moulding to evil ... lavish of money, spirited, of strong desires'.⁴⁸ Greco-Roman society perceived inappropriate drinking to be one of the most common and worrying of these vices, as indicated by Pseudo-Plutarch's *The Education of Children*:

⁴⁶ Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 42; Plutarch, *Otho*, 9.3-5.

⁴⁷ Throughout the following paragraphs on youth, vice and wine, see primarily: Eyben (1993 [1977]) esp. 11-19, 28-41, 103-107, 206-214. Also: D'Arms (1995) 308-312; Booth (1991).

⁴⁸ Horace, *Art of Poetry*, 156-178.

'The iniquities of youth are often monstrous and wicked – unlimited gluttony, theft of parent's money, gambling, revels, drinking-bouts, love affairs with young girls, and corruption of married women.'⁴⁹

As noted in the previous chapter, the medical rationale behind this was that both youths and wine were considered to be significantly 'hot' in mixture, and as such youths' drinking was thought to more easily become excessive and thus medically destructive. Aristotle also explained wine's destructive social consequences as due to the similarity of the hot characters of each:

'The young, as to character ... are passionate, hot-tempered, and carried away by impulse, and unable to control their passion ... for they are naturally as hot-blooded as those who are drunken with wine.'⁵⁰

Ptolemy similarly outlines youth (ages 14-22) as a time when 'frenzy enters the soul' and it becomes full of 'burning passion'.⁵¹ Jerome, the Christian author of c.400AD, also implied comparable beliefs when he described 'the fire of youth' and the 'wine cup' as similarly producing 'hot blood' and leading to 'strong and lusty habit of body'.⁵² Accordingly, Greco-Roman literature abounds with accounts of youths becoming overly fond of wine, sex and other vices. These accounts frequently associate this behaviour with situations where the youth had recently gained a newfound degree of freedom which they were keen to exploit; for example, after a Roman boy adopted the *toga virilis*, or after he temporarily moved away from home to undertake studies.⁵³

Many adults were willing to tolerate a degree of youthful freedom in adolescents, allowing them to attend raucous parties and indulge in pleasure, providing their actions were not too extreme.⁵⁴ Mild youthful vice frequently had no lasting effects. Indeed, it was only as time went on and he approached

⁴⁹ Ps-Plutarch, *The Education of Children*, 16=12a-c.

⁵⁰ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 2.12.

⁵¹ Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, 4.10.14-22.

⁵² Jerome, *Letters*, 52.11.

⁵³ For example (in addition to those discussed in the chapter's body-text): Plautus, *Mostellaria*, 959-961; Horace, *Satires*, 1.4.48-52; Juvenal, 3.278-301; Apuleius, *Apology*, 98; Tacitus, *Annals*, 13.25 (on Nero), 13.47; Livy, 31.25.4-5; Cassius Dio, 61.8.1, 61.9.2-4 (both on Nero); Suetonius, *Claudius*, 40.1; *Nero*, 26.1-2; *Otho*, 2.1; Plutarch, *Pericles*, 30.4; *Alcibiades*, 18.3-4, 19.1-2; *Alexander*, 48-49; *Cato the Elder*, 22.3; *Crassus*, 4-6.1; *Cicero*, 24.6-7; *Aratus*, 6.4-7.2; *Antony*, 28.1-2, 29.1-30.1; *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, 3=149b-c. On Nero, note further: Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 13.136.

⁵⁴ Terence, *Adelphoe*, 101-102; Cicero, *Defence of Caelius*, 42.

maturity that Gaius Gracchus was said to have revealed a nature which was adverse to heavy drinking and other vices.⁵⁵ Plutarch regarded it as better for a youth to display bad conduct but become better as he matured, rather the other way around.⁵⁶ Such youthful vices were less forgivable in later ages. Thus Themistocles, Marius, Fulvius, and Sulla all attract criticism in Plutarch's *Lives* for inappropriate drinking which, although this would have been excusable in a youth, was considered disgraceful due to their mature ages.⁵⁷

Yet some parents feared for their children's virtue, and took actions to combat their base behaviour. Plutarch records that when Phocion's son showed a fondness for wine and irregular bodily habit, he strove to make him 'a better man' through promoting his son's interest in competing in sports. After this led to his son winning a victory at the Panathenaic festival, and new luxuries now opened to his son because of it – including banquets with copious amounts of spiced wine – Phocion advised his son not to let his friends ruin his victory. In the end, he resolved to remove him from this life entirely, by taking him to Sparta.⁵⁸ Similarly, although Cicero had previously publicly defended Caelius' adolescent vices as permissible in youth, when he heard of his own son's frequent heavy drinking, he dismissed his son's tutor who he had been led to believe was responsible for leading him into such a life of pleasure. Shortly afterwards, he wrote *On Duties*, addressed to his son, where he advised him on proper conduct; in it he stressed the importance of avoiding bodily pleasures or at least keeping them in moderation.⁵⁹

Bad drinking behaviour was thus considered a major and worrying vice, even in the age of life where vices were thought, almost inevitably, to run rampant. Yet, in line with many of the above examples, Jouanna observes that in Greco-Roman literature 'excess of wine is often cited among other possible excesses', especially food and sex.⁶⁰ Suetonius follows this pattern in his *Augustus*, when he notes that Augustus found his daughter Julia 'guilty of every form of vice', which most famously included copious adultery, as well as revelling and

⁵⁵ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, 1.2.

⁵⁶ Plutarch, *Comparison of Cimon and Lucullus*, 1.1-4.

⁵⁷ Plutarch, *Themistocles*, 5.2-3; *Marius*, 45.3; *Gaius Gracchus*, 14.4-15.1; *Sulla*, 2.2-3 (on this passage, see further n.89).

⁵⁸ Plutarch, *Phocion*, 20.

⁵⁹ Cicero, *Letters to Friends*, 337(16.21); Cicero, *On Duties*, 1.105-106; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.147; Plutarch, *Cicero*, 24.6-7; Eyben (1993 [1977]) 210-212; D'Arms (1995) 311. On Caelius: see n.54. On Cicero's son, see further: Ch.2 p.91 with n.138.

⁶⁰ Jouanna (1996) 422 = (2012) 182-183.

drinking-bouts. Augustus exiled her, and Suetonius records that for the first five years his two main regulations as to her living conditions were to severely limit the number of men she came into contact with, and to deny her the use of wine and other luxuries. Wine and sex ranked among Julia's worst vices, and were thought to have notable potential to inflame immorality.⁶¹

Heavy drinking was thus seemingly regarded as a common 'gateway vice' or catalyst, in that it had a tendency to engender further vices. Seneca states this explicitly:

'Drunkenness kindles and discloses every kind of vice, and removes the sense of shame that veils our evil undertakings. For more men abstain from forbidden actions because they are ashamed of sinning than because their inclinations are good. When the strength of wine has gained control over the mind, every lurking evil comes forth from its hiding place. Drunkenness does not create vice, it merely brings it into view ... [it] gives free play to the demands of passion.'

Seneca was concerned for the drunkard's loss of self-control, especially control over his *animus* (mind/soul). This comprised his wisdom and his means to pursue the highest good. It also made him readily open to further vices, and ultimately degeneration. Seneca thought that any man advancing towards wisdom would realise these dangers: he would almost always avoid *any* excess, and *always* stop short of true drunkenness. He ranked drunkards as among the worst of people because he considered this vice to be, in itself, one of the worst. He regarded it as shameful, dishonourable, unseemly, effeminate, and a complete waste of time.⁶²

In Plutarch's *Alcibiades*, the Classical Athenians are said to have also believed in a causal link between wine and further vices. They believed that the outrageous acts which wine-sodden youths frequently committed were primarily due to intoxication inspiring them to go too far in their sport.⁶³ Plutarch's *Philopoemen* states a causal link on a more general level, when he explains

⁶¹ Suetonius, *Augustus*, 65.1-3, *Tiberius* 11.4; D'Arms (1995) 305.

⁶² Seneca, *Epistles*, 17, 19-20; *On the Shortness of Life*, 7.1-2; Richardson-Hay (2001) 31-32, 35, 36-37; Motto and Clark (1993) 155-159.

⁶³ Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 18.3-19.1-2.

that extravagances in trivial matters, such as banquets and table arrays, lead to the vices of luxury and effeminacy.⁶⁴

Suetonius gives us an insight into popular Roman ideas on this issue when he quotes a popular pejorative verse against Tiberius from the period of his reign:

‘Nothing for wine cares this fellow, since now ‘tis for blood he is thirsting;
This he as greedily quaffs as before wine without water.’⁶⁵

This plays upon Tiberius’ renowned longstanding heavy drinking. It is implied that as his drinking vice worsened, and it became more-and-more habitual, this led to his increasing violence as wine alone could now no longer quench his ‘thirst’ for vice. This satirical verse appears to play upon two beliefs which were popular among Rome’s population: first that a person’s inappropriate drinking was generally in correlation with his other vices, and second that bad drinking could lead to further vices.

The importance of character and behaviour to ancient morality should be considered at this point. It should first be noted that there is no direct equivalent of ‘morality’ in ancient Greek or Latin. In Greek culture, ‘character’ was a near-equivalent which they understood to have a moral element. As Duff concludes, character was ‘less centred on the private, inner world of the individual; more with actions and their evaluation’. As such, ‘understanding character was less about what somebody was like, more about recognising right and wrong deeds’. The Romans, on the other hand, spoke of *mores*, a complex of normative requirements in behaviour, which an individual was expected to adhere to. *Mores* comprised customs and morals, as well as political responsibilities. They were intrinsically conservative; *mores maiorum* were the ‘customs of the ancestors’, the highest source of moral authority which displayed exempla from their idealised ancestors. The Roman state traditionally appointed censors to scrutinise the people’s behaviour, and reprimand any whose conduct indicated immorality. As such, Greeks and Romans attached much significance to the analysis of a person’s behaviour, as this indicated the kind of person they were.

⁶⁴ Plutarch, *Philopoemen*, 9.3-7.

⁶⁵ Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 59.1.

It should also be noted that Greek and Roman expositions on what constituted virtuous behaviour do not differ greatly.⁶⁶

It is therefore unsurprising that Greeks and Romans considered banquets and drinking-bouts to be one of the places where character was often most clearly revealed. Ancient literature reflects this concept, and frequently provides anecdotes of great men's table conduct. For example, many of Suetonius' *Lives of the Caesars* include sizable sections explicitly focused upon their subject's dining and drinking behaviour, so as to help them present a full portrait of the individual; *Caesar* 53, *Augustus* 76-77 and *Tiberius* 42 are examples taken from the first three works in this series. 'Bad' drinking behaviour would generally suggest a bad character, one susceptible to and/or harbouring further vices, and vice versa.⁶⁷

Throughout his *Lives*, Suetonius repeatedly implies this indicative link between drinking/dining behaviour and character. A clear example of this is in his *Titus*. He records that the population at first falsely suspected the Emperor Titus of having a bad character, though they later realised he was actually extremely virtuous. Both of these popular perceptions are said to have been rooted, in part, in widespread allegations regarding the Emperor's drinking behaviour. He was at first suspected of 'riotous living' due to rumours of his inappropriate drinking parties (*comissationes*); these were protracted excessively late and conducted with immoral friends. When the truth later emerged and these rumours were dismissed, Titus was in fact discovered to have the highest virtues. This was again linked to accounts of his dining behaviour, which was now idealised: his banquets (*convivia*) were pleasant rather than extravagant, and his friends were in fact virtuous.⁶⁸ Indeed, Seneca stated that the duties of the ideal citizen included displaying good dining conduct in private houses and at public festivals: 'at feasts let him show himself a good comrade, a faithful friend, a temperate feaster'.⁶⁹

In a similar vein, when Suetonius discusses Vitellius' 'besetting sins [of] luxury and cruelty', the first group of evidence which he provides concerns scandals in

⁶⁶ Edwards (1993) 3-5, 21-22; Duff (1999) 13-14, consider also 72-78; *Pauly*, s.v. 'Mores'.

⁶⁷ König (2012) 236-237; Laurence (2009) 112-113; Wilkins and Hill (2006) 269-273; Shipley (2000) 67.

⁶⁸ Suetonius, *Titus*, 7.1-2.

⁶⁹ Seneca, *On Tranquillity of Mind*, 4.3-4.

his dining practice.⁷⁰ Suetonius also states that the Emperor Tiberius first discovered the young Caligula's extremely bad character – and thus predicted the ills which he would inflict upon the Roman people – by observing his excessive and immoral behaviour, including 'revelling at night in gluttony'. Later, when Emperor, Caligula's cruel character could be observed during his banqueting.⁷¹

Plutarch also implies a similar connection. He notes that over time Gaius Gracchus' good and desirable character revealed itself more and more. This change is associated by Plutarch with a change in the behaviour which the public – correctly or incorrectly – ascribed to him: he became less associated with ostentatious luxury, and increasingly with an *aversion* to heavy drinking.⁷² Similarly, in his *Cato the Elder*, Plutarch represents Cato as a paradigm of traditional Roman simplicity and virtues; these are reflected, in part, by Cato's sparing consumption of basic-quality wines. This work also implies Plutarch's opinion that excess pleasures are incompatible with virtue (he states that in old age Cato did not dismiss his virtue and retire to a life of pleasure), which he supports through accounts of similar assertions by philosophical authorities (he records that Nearchus the Pythagorean of Tarentum spoke in the language of Plato to condemn pleasure as 'the greatest incentive to evil').⁷³ The link between wine and character was further invoked by the language used by Plutarch. He considered the appropriate mixture of the soul to be crucial to forming a person of good character. Like wine, a man's character was thus sometimes simply said to be 'mixed', 'well-mixed', 'and unmixed'; these served to comment upon its quality. It is particularly telling that he compares a man's character to 'unmixed wine'. Plutarch's perception of the closeness of wine and character is further implied in his *Phocion*, when he makes an analogy between the two: either can appear sweet, but actually be injurious.⁷⁴

Plutarch attributes this perceived link between drinking/dining and character to the ancient ancestors of the Romans when he explains the origins of the Roman political office of the censors to his Greek-reading audience (many of

⁷⁰ Suetonius, *Vitellius*, 13.

⁷¹ Suetonius, *Caligula*, 11, 32.

⁷² Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, 2.3; *Gaius Gracchus*, 1.2.

⁷³ Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 2.3, 11.3. On Cato's drinking: 1.7, 3.2, 4.3, 21.3, 25.2-3; *Comparison of Aristides and Cato*, 4.4.

⁷⁴ Plutarch, *Cato the Younger*, 46.1, *Phocion*, 10.3; Duff (1999) 89-94, 139-141, also: 145-146, 147, 160, 210-211, 304.

whom were admittedly Romans, but many also doubtless less familiar with traditional Roman customs). He states that the early Romans had created this office, with its function of investigating and reprimanding the behaviour of citizens, as they thought that 'no one should turn aside to wantonness and forsake his native and customary mode of life'. He elaborates:

'Its creators thought that no one should be left to his own devices and desires, without inspection and review, either in his marriage, or in the begetting of his children, or in the ordering of his daily life, or in the entertainment of his friends. Nay, rather, thinking that these things revealed a man's real character more than did his public and political career, they set men in office to watch, admonish, and chastise, that no one should turn aside to wantonness and forsake his native and customary mode of life.'⁷⁵

Similarly, in his introduction to his *Alexander-Caesar*, Plutarch deploys a programmatic statement to explain that his biographical *Lives* are not works of 'history', and as such he may omit important political and military events in favour of smaller private details. In his argument to justify the merit of this approach, he implies belief in similar principles to those which he attributed to the traditional Roman society:

'In the most illustrious deeds there is not always a manifestation of virtue or vice, nay, a slight thing like a phrase or a jest often makes a greater revelation of character than battles when thousands fall, or the greatest armaments, or sieges of cities.'⁷⁶

On a grander scale, Paul argues that the attention which the Greco-Roman historians and biographers give to *deipna*, *symposia* and similar institutions suggest they viewed them as important social institutions. He continues: 'the appearance of disturbing *symposia* and *deipna* in myth may suggest that these institutions were seen or felt to be bastions of civilisation in a war against barbarism that constantly threatened to overwhelm it'. As such, Paul concludes that the moral outrage which frequently accompanies accounts of discordant

⁷⁵ Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 16.1-2.

⁷⁶ Plutarch, *Alexander*, 1.1-3; note however Duff (1999) 14-22 cautions that this programmatic statement refers specifically to Plutarch's focus in the *Alexander*, and cannot be applied to his other works, even its paired work the *Caesar*. See also: n.124; *Nicias*, 1.5 with Duff (1999) 22-30.

symposia and *deipna* suggest that ‘a properly conducted *symposium* or *deipnon* was an index of civilised behaviour’. In essence, ancient writers believed that the careful assessment of the appropriateness of eating and drinking behaviour served to indicate the level of morality/moral decline within an individual, group and/or society.⁷⁷

Wine was recognised to be a powerful factor in the ability of banqueting to reveal character. In book eight of *Table-Talk*, Plutarch implies that, when we ignore the powerful influence of table-talk (its power over character and conduct is discussed further below), wine consumption will *always* reveal the true character of a party of drinkers. He argues that nothing (table-talk aside) can stop ignorant and uncultured men from acting accordingly when they drink at a party – that is to say in an uncultured and disorderly manner, and their party unrefined. Yet, on the other hand, moderate and prudent men will always act accordingly – and thus with the opposite results – due to these drinkers’ self-respect.⁷⁸

An example of the former is Deinocrates the Messenian, discussed by Plutarch in his *Lives*. His baseness of character and unrestrained lifestyle would show itself, in part, through his inappropriate conduct whilst drinking. Even when he came to Rome as an embassy on matters of great importance for Messene, he found himself at a drinking-party the night before he approached Flamininus on the matter. He could not restrain himself from drinking far too much wine and making a spectacle of himself (singing and dancing around in women’s clothing). This was considered so scandalous, and Deinocrates so obnoxious, that word spread quickly; it even beat him to Flamininus.⁷⁹

In his preface to book three of *Table-Talk*, Plutarch explains at length how it is that wine is so potent in revealing a man’s true character.⁸⁰ He explains that it hard to conceal ignorance when relaxed by drink, as wine makes people talkative. He continues:

⁷⁷ Paul (1991) 166.

⁷⁸ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 8.pr=716d-e.

⁷⁹ Plutarch, *Flamininus*, 17.2-5; *Philopoemen* 18.3.

⁸⁰ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 3.pr=644f-645c. Similar ideas are suggested at 7.10=715e-f. Consider also: Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 7.2: ‘men’s characters are revealed much more by their speech than, as some think, by their looks’.

'The fact is there is no way of getting to know a man who eats and drinks in silence; but, since drinking leads to talk, and talking involves further the laying bare of much that is otherwise hidden, drinking together does give men a chance to get some understanding of each other.'

He also implies there to be an important element of truthfulness inherent in the loquacity which wine encourages:

'Wine reveals us and displays us by not allowing us to keep quiet; on the contrary, it destroys our artificial patterns of behaviour, taking us completely away from convention's tutorship, so to speak.'

Accordingly, Plutarch concludes wine to be a kind of 'window through which one man will discern another's mind'. For this reason, he argues that wine would be an excellent tool for the cross-examination of men, but at friendly parties men must take precautions (choosing appropriate topics of conversation) to make sure that they 'conceal the mean parts of their soul' and do not accidentally reveal these elements which people typically harbour.

For support, Plutarch comments that 'Plato, too, holds that most men show their real natures most clearly when they drink'. Plato's *Laws* does indeed contain very similar ideas, which may have served as inspiration for Plutarch and, no doubt, countless other Greek and Roman readers of this revered text. The Athenian character of this work suggests that socialising over wine can be used as a way by which a man may 'scrutinise the character of his [another man's] soul' whilst he is relaxed over drink. This is presented as 'a pretty fair test of each other, which for cheapness, safety and speed is almost unrivalled'; the Athenian also praises the lack of harm to the tested subject. An example given of its potential use is to vet a man who appears irritable and savage *before* making a business contract with him; using this wine-test to reveal his true character, the risk can be more accurately gauged, and the first man is thus less likely to make a contract with an unreliable man who is likely to default. Similarly, he suggests you may wish to scrutinise a man with a reputation for pursuing sexual pleasures before entrusting him with members of your family.⁸¹ Seneca can be seen to have held comparable beliefs. As indicated by the

⁸¹ Plato, *Laws*, 1.649d-650a; Duff (1999) 15. Also discussed in Appendix 6 p.434 n.93.

passage quoted above, he thought that intoxication reduced a man's capacity to conceal his vices, so that they became clear to any observer.⁸²

Plutarch's account of Cato the Younger's resolution to suicide, following defeat at Utica, further implies Plutarch's reverence of wine for cross-examination purposes. Cato attempted to keep his resolution secret, and thus maintained his normal daily routine. Yet his friends came to suspect his plan because his table-talk over wine became uncharacteristically violent, implying severe inner turmoil. The wine hindered his ability to hide his true thoughts and emotions.⁸³

Yet Plato's comment that this is 'a pretty fair test' betrays a notable issue: it was not considered flawless, as character and drinking behaviour were acknowledged to not *always* directly correlate in every individual. This can be illustrated by two opposite examples. First, Cato the Younger was regarded as having an excellent character by his supporters (notably including Seneca), yet even they could not deny his famous heavy drinking. Instead they had to try and excuse his inappropriate drinking using their spoken eloquence in a manner similar to what we saw in the previous section of this chapter (there it was advised and used to excuse inappropriate abstinence).⁸⁴

Second, Suetonius characterises Caligula as an emperor of very bad character, yet inappropriate wine drinking is not included among the bad behaviour attributed to him. In fact, the word '*vinum*' (wine) does not occur at all in the *Caligula*. The *Caligula* stands in stark contrast to the three lives which immediately precede it – the *Caesar*, *Augustus* and *Tiberius* – which, as noted above, each had a section dedicated to this man's drinking and dining habits. The *Caligula* breaks this trend, as it has no such section. The closest near-parallel is a brief mention of 'his unnatural varieties of food and feasts' which is deployed as part of a description of his wider extravagances; this contains no reference to drinking except that he used to 'drink pearls of great price dissolved in vinegar'.⁸⁵ The *Claudius*, which immediately follows the *Caligula*, returns to the previous pattern, and includes a section addressing his behaviour regarding food and drink.⁸⁶ Similarly, in the following treatment of Nero, who

⁸² See n.62.

⁸³ Plutarch, *Cato the Younger*, 67-68.2. Also discussed on p.279 n.207, and Appendix 6 p.443 n.129.

⁸⁴ Plutarch, *Cato the Younger*, 6; Pliny the Younger, *Epistles*, 3.12; D'Arms (1995) 304-308.

⁸⁵ Suetonius, *Caligula*, 37.1.

⁸⁶ Suetonius, *Claudius*, 33.1, note also 5.

Suetonius characterised as a 'bad' emperor like Caligula, Suetonius reinforces this characterisation through examples of Nero's drinking behaviour: when his vices become stronger and more open, his scandalous drinking and dining are the first vices focused upon. Likewise, after Nero has his mother killed, Suetonius states he handled her corpse, commending her limbs, whilst calmly sipping wine; this unusual context of drinking surely serves to reinforce the portrait of his monstrous character.⁸⁷

A plausible explanation for why the *Caligula* breaks Suetonius' established trend may be that Caligula's drinking was not 'bad' enough to include in this portrayal of Caligula as an emperor of notoriously bad character. Indeed, when Caligula's drinking-behaviour is alluded to, it appears to have been conducted in a way which was not altogether unacceptable. For example, Suetonius records that he was so passionately devoted to the Green Faction of charioteers that he constantly joined dinner (*cena*) and drinking-party (*comissatio*) with them in their club-house.⁸⁸ The following description of his behaviour appears largely appropriate: he socialised with his friends in a typically convivial way, with generous gift-giving, and kept this within the private space. Admittedly, his conduct was in some respects inappropriate: his choice of friends was too base, his gift-giving was taken too far, and he often stayed too long at table, but his behaviour at these events does not appear overwhelmingly negative. It thus appears that drinking was not one of his vices, and as such Suetonius could have purposefully omitted mention of Caligula's drinking as it clashed with – and would thus weaken – his characterisation of Caligula's notoriously bad character. Such a reading would also further support the argument that a typical Roman reader would consider the appropriateness of a person's drinking as usually reflecting the quality of that individual's character.

A further complication was that the same character was not consistently displayed by a given individual in all situations. Although Sulla appeared austere and ferocious in his public life, his character completely changed at table where he turned to drinking and merriment; the latter attracted the favour of his dining companions. Demetrius was similarly able to compartmentalise the two halves of his life and character. During leisure time he devoted himself

⁸⁷ Suetonius, *Nero*, 27, 34.3-4. C.f. *Vitellius*, 10.3 on the monstrous conduct of drinking wine whilst observing the dead; also Plutarch, *Demosthenes*, 20.3 on Phillip II displaying insolence by dancing drunkenly over Greek corpses; see further p.288 with n.249.

⁸⁸ Suetonius, *Caligula*, 55.2.

to grand excesses in drink and sex, and thus gained the favour of his companions. Yet he was able to cast this aside when engaged in public life and in times of crisis; he was no less formidable, fearsome and efficient that he would have been if he were a teetotaler. Plutarch also attributed a similar power to Mark Antony, when he was not under the corrupting influence of Cleopatra. In times of crisis and military need, Antony was able to put aside his lavish character and adopt a soldierly character appropriate for war. Some individuals were thus evidently considered notably unusual in that they effectively displayed a different character whilst at drinking parties than they did at other times.⁸⁹

Regardless, wine's close relationship with character was considered reliable enough to offer a constructive use in allowing observers to assess other people's characters, in an unobtrusive way. We hear of examples of 'wining and dining' being used for just this vetting purpose in Plutarch's *Lives*. Valerius Flaccus was renowned for his 'power to discern excellence in the bud, and the grace to cultivate it and bring it into general esteem'. When he heard of the young Cato the Elder, and thought he may be such a person, he invited him to dinner. During conversation at table, and presumably over wine as was normal, Valerius discovered that Cato was indeed such an individual, and thus set about helping him develop a public career.⁹⁰

Similarly, Plutarch tells us that Tiberius Gracchus displayed such excellent virtues that he was appointed an augur due to his character, rather than high birth. At the Banquet of the Augurs which presumably marked Tiberius' inauguration, Appius Claudius addressed Tiberius with words of great friendship and, without having consulted his wife and family beforehand, asked Tiberius to marry his daughter. It is possible that Appius had resolved to deliver this proposal to Tiberius before the banquet, but the ire he attracts from his wife for

⁸⁹ Plutarch, *Sulla*, 2.2-3 (also discussed on p.232 n.57, p.279 n.210, Appendix 6 p.416 n.9, Appendix 6 p.420 n.26, Appendix 6 p.429 n.65); *Demetrius*, 2.3 (also discussed on Appendix 6 p.423 n.35, Appendix 6 p.429 n.64), 19.3-6 (also discussed on Appendix 6 p.423 n.35); *Antony*, 17.2-3 (also discussed on Appendix 7 p.456 n.42); *Comparison of Demetrius and Antony*, 3.1-3 (also discussed on p.260 n.142, Appendix 6 p.423 n.35, and Appendix 7 p.456 n.42). Note further *Lucullus*, 39: Lucullus' life is characterised as featuring a chronological division between two characters, the first given to political and military successes, the second to drinking-bouts and similar leisure activities.

⁹⁰ Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 3.1-4. Note that this is the application of the ideas from 16.1-2 (banqueting is one of the things which is most useful for revealing a man's character) and 7.2 (character is especially revealed by speech). Also discussed in Appendix 6 p.431 n.72, and Appendix 6 p.434 n.93.

not consulting her – even though she too thought Tiberius the most fitting candidate – makes this seem less likely. Instead, the meal-time context of Appius' proposal appears significant in his decision-making. As seen above, Plutarch and others would agree that a banquet with wine would offer a context for Tiberius' virtue – his greatest trait – to be most clearly displayed to others. Perhaps this banquet was consciously or subconsciously used as the final 'tipping-point' for Appius' acceptance of Tiberius as the ideal candidate to become his son-in-law. In such case, this event would serve a similar purpose to the 'betrothal *symposium*' of early Greece: an event where young men asked the father or brother of a girl to match them for marriage. This occasion comprised a festival with drinking, sacrifice and games, and was designed for young men to compete in illustrating their eligibility.⁹¹

Drinking and banqueting were also thought to have the power not just to *reflect* character, but to directly *influence* it for better or worse. In his *Precepts of Statecraft*, Plutarch writes that 'wine is at first controlled by the character of the drinker but gradually, as it warms his whole body and becomes mingled therewith, itself forms the drinker's character and changes him'.⁹² Accordingly, Plutarch argues that Lycurgus instigated Sparta's common messes because he believed that luxury and excessive meals taken at home were ruining characters and bodies alike. It is thus implied that the diet which he imposed to solve this, based around a core of measured quantities of barley and wine, did no such harm to character.⁹³ Yet wine was considered more harmful to character if consumed excessively; thus Plutarch argues that King Ptolemy III Euergetes' plunge into drunkenness and depravity following his accession led to his spirit becoming corrupted by both wine and women.⁹⁴ Plutarch also implies that the meals which Crassus and Periander attended had the lasting effect of instilling virtue into their characters.⁹⁵

Between the prefaces to books four, seven and eight of *Table-Talk*, Plutarch elaborates further on elements of this issue (the first of these passages is quoted near the start of this chapter). He argues that wine has the capacity to

⁹¹ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, 4.1-2 (also discussed on Appendix 6 p.424 n.36, Appendix 6 p.431 n.72, and Appendix 6 p.434 n.93). *Betrothal symposium*: Robertson (1991) esp. 25.

⁹² Plutarch, *Precepts of Statecraft*, 3.1=799b-c.

⁹³ Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, 10; see also 12 on the diet which he imposed.

⁹⁴ Plutarch, *Cleomenes*, 33.1-2 (also discussed on p.260 n.144, and Appendix 6 p.422 n.32).

⁹⁵ See n.122 and n.123.

distribute a generous influence throughout the drinker's character, but only if it is channelled via appropriate conversation. Plutarch further stipulates that conversation should be carefully regulated, as only quality table-talk leads to positive effects, whilst regarding the opposite: 'chitchat over wine means for most people a wild plunge into the life of feeling and tends to warp the character'. He specifies that table-talk over wine should have a speculative and instructive element, because such conversation hides the 'wild and manic element' of a man, and thus prevents him from actions such as violence.⁹⁶ Thus wine was believed to have influence over the drinker's character in both the long and short term, but its consumption needed to be conducted in an appropriate way – including being accompanied by suitable table-talk – for the effects to be constructive. Yet, so long as it was used in an appropriate way, over time wine was believed to help a person achieve a virtuous character; this 'educational' use of wine shall be considered further in the following section.

The close connection of wine and dining with character therefore offered a subsequent constructive use. A person could utilise a drinking-context (such as a *symposium*) to publicise a very excellent character, though – like a competing athlete – this required copious preparation. This is suggested by Thales in the *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*.⁹⁷ He argues that the most important preparations of a man invited to dinner should always be made regarding his character. This required a great deal of time and effort; Thales implies that ideally this took over a year of preparation. In comparison, he dismisses preparing bodily adornments, such as fine jewellery and clothing, as useless. Character was therefore believed to be prominently displayed at dinner, more so even than a person's physical presence, and it is suggested that the sensible man will do whatever is within his power to make sure that the character which he will inevitably present is as good as possible.

Notably, however (in line with the above note that wine was recognised to not *always* be accurate measure of character) this could be falsified. A person could manipulate his drinking and dining habits, making the effort to purposefully display 'excellent' conduct in front of others, in order to give the

⁹⁶ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 4.pr=660b-c, 7.pr=697d-e, 8.pr=716f-717a. Similar ideas regarding wine's influence over the mind and soul have also already been discussed in Chapter 2. For example, Galen considered 'a moderate amount of wine' to constructively influence 'the soul' in making it 'gentler and more confident; see Ch.2 n.42.

⁹⁷ Plutarch, *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, 2=147d-148b.

impression that he had a better character than he actually did. Plutarch records that the drunkard tyrant Dionysius II of Syracuse changed much of his excessive behaviour to the opposite, including his dining behaviour, so as to impress Plato when he visited.⁹⁸ In the Greek past through Plutarch's eyes, large and lavish banquets were typically thought indicative of excessive ostentation (unless otherwise justified), and Plato's Academy was characterised by extremely frugal meals. Accordingly, Dionysius' new banquets displayed an uncharacteristic air of modesty. This bluff was short-lived, but in the meantime his changes were at least enough to convince some of his citizens that he was undergoing a marvellous reformation of character (akin to the one which Plutarch's fictional Thales attributes to Periander).

Later, after a coup, Dionysius was exiled to Corinth. Here he aimlessly idled away his time drinking in taverns, carousing with prostitutes, and so on. This gained him the contempt of the Corinthians, as they interpreted his despicable conduct as indicative of a bad character, one which was overly relaxed and too fond of license. Yet Plutarch notes two explanations for why he may have led such a life, which the Corinthians at the time apparently debated: either this was indeed due to his bad character, or else he manipulated his conduct for his self-preservation as he correctly reckoned that this would make the Corinthians hate, rather than fear, him. Accordingly, the Greeks and Romans seem to have believed that although drinking and dining behaviour tended to reflect a person's character, a shrewd individual could take advantage of this link and purposefully manipulate his own drinking conduct so as to make his character appear better or worse than it really was. Some people considered Dionysius II to be such a cunning manipulator.

One final point should be considered in this section. As wine was considered to have the power to influence character, the soul and a person's conduct, some people also seem to have recognised the possibility of using drunkenness to 'take the blame' for a person's negative character and/or bad behaviour. Athenaeus presents a section of Chamaeleon of Heracleia's *On Drunkenness*, itself dating to around 300BC. Chamaeleon argues that Homeric tales generally contain accounts of their heroes drinking large quantities of wine from the

⁹⁸ Plutarch, *Dion*, 13.1-2; *Timoleon*, 14. For Dionysius' typical drunken behaviour as tyrant, see: 7, 34.1. Large banquets typical of ostentation: *Themistocles*, 5.2-3. Plato's Academy: *Dion*, 52.1-2; *Comparison of Cimon and Lucullus*, 1.1-3. Periander: see n.123.

largest vessels ever known. He recognises that some people may find this perplexing, but he explains the rationale behind the allegations of their heavy drinking. He asserts the Homeric heroes are typically perceived as harsh, violent, and more associated with the night than the day. He thus argues that 'in order that they might appear to act thus not by inclination, but because they are drunk, they are depicted as drinking out of large vessels'. Their negative behaviour was thought undeniable, yet it was more palatable for later generations to consider their idealised Homeric heroes as drunkards, rather than people given to vice. Drunkenness was thus used constructively to excuse their behaviour, and prevent giving the impression of immoral characters.⁹⁹

Furthermore, Chamaeleon also comments that 'this image reflects the fierceness typical of appearances by minor divinities'. Homeric heroes were considered to have a 'hot' nature, and were thus considered prone both to such hot-headed behaviour and drinks of hot character like wine. He therefore implies that both their bad conduct and their drunkenness were somewhat beyond their control; although they do great things, they were also naturally susceptible to these negative things.

Plutarch also believed in a similar concept. In his introduction to his *Demetrius-Antony*, he introduces these two men as examples of 'great natures'. 'Great natures' are explained as those which have great potential for both good and evil, and thus tended to exhibit great vices as well as great virtues. Such vices are explicitly stated to include over fondness of drink and sex. In this theory, Plutarch claims to be following a Platonic doctrine; Duff suggests that he is probably alluding to ideas in the *Republic*, which assert that the nature of a true philosopher is often corrupted, and such souls can be responsible both for great good and great evil.¹⁰⁰ Plutarch thus excuses their heavy drinking, at least to an extent. Like Chamaeleon's Homeric heroes, Plutarch presents their inappropriate drinking as somewhat beyond their control, and as not implying a negative character.

⁹⁹ Athenaeus, 11.461a-d (= Chamaeleon of Heraclea, fr.9); König (2012) 115-116. Also discussed in Appendix 7 p.448 n.4. Note, however, that some people thought that the Homeric heroes and gods drank comparatively lightly; see n.32 on the view of Plutarch's fictional Mnesiphilus.

¹⁰⁰ Plutarch, *Demetrius*, 1; Duff (1999) 45-51, 55-56, 60-65. According to Duff, Plutarch probably refers to Plato, *Republic*, 6.491-492. See further for Plutarch on kingship and Demetrius: Shipley (2000) 62-63.

Similarly, near the start of his *Alexander*, Plutarch also explains and mitigates Alexander's drinking and hot-headed behaviour in a very similar manner by referring to his naturally hot temperament:

'The temperament of his body, which was a very warm and fiery one ... and in Alexander's case, it was the heat of his body, as it would seem, which made him prone to drink and full of spirit'.¹⁰¹

Like Plato, Plutarch considered the soul to be divided into three parts: the rational, and the two irrational elements of the appetitive and spirited. He considered character to be a quality of this irrational part of the soul, and thought that this was related to the nature that a man was born with, but it is subsequently modified by his life. It is this part of the soul which was also considered to be necessary for exercising virtues, but which could also lead one into vice if not properly controlled.¹⁰² As such – although it is not explicitly underlined by Plutarch – Alexander's hot bodily temperament could be thought to have given him a great character of the type attributed to Antony and Demetrius, as it made him heavily spirited, and subsequently gave him a tendency to great virtues and vices, including drunkenness. Indeed, Duff argues that we can assume all of Plutarch's subjects as having 'great natures', but Antony and Demetrius were selected as examples of those whose lives were particularly flawed. Duff also notes that Alexander's life presents a clear example of one lying between vice and virtue; he is not even presented as a paradigm of immoral drinking.¹⁰³ It appears probable that Plutarch intended the above passage to work in defence of Alexander, as throughout this work he is repeatedly keen to dismiss, mitigate and defend accounts of Alexander's drunkenness.¹⁰⁴ Indeed Plutarch explicitly pits himself against the majority of

¹⁰¹ Plutarch, *Alexander*, 4.3 (trans. Perrin, except that θυμοειδής is changed from 'prone to choleric' to 'full of spirit', in line with Duff); Corvisier (2003) 124-125; Duff (1999) 83-86, 93. On Plutarch's views on Alexander's temperament and drinking, note also: *Table-Talk*, 1.6=623e-f.

¹⁰² Duff (1999) 73-75.

¹⁰³ Duff (1999) 60-65.

¹⁰⁴ Plutarch, *Alexander*, 4.3 (excess due to his character); 23.1 (less addicted than people think; his excess is mitigated by conversation and not letting it interfere with work); 23.2 (drinking mitigated by table-talk); 38 (the drunken burning of Xerxes' house: note Thais' persuasion, Alexander's desire to please his guests, and his immediate repentance); 39.1-2 (drinking to one of his captains: mitigated by drinking as a reward, a show of generosity, and toasting to another's health); 50-52 (the killing of Cleitus: mitigated by claims that the cause/fault lay with Cleitus); 67 (his army's revel after famine: mitigated by the famine which immediately

people when he states 'to the use of wine also he was less addicted than was generally believed'.¹⁰⁵

There is, however, one significant difference in Alexander's case: Plutarch attributes the cause of Alexander's fondness for drink to a *bodily* condition, unlike the above examples which attribute winebibbing to conditions in the mind and soul. In doing so, he approaches modern theories of addiction, which characterise alcoholism as a 'disease', with a physiological element, and thus mitigates a degree of blame from the sufferer. As noted in Chapter 1, Greco-Roman society did not hold similar views; instead habitual drunkenness was generally regarded as primarily a mental or moral failing, rather than a physiological one. Though Plutarch does not call Alexander's condition a 'disease' or similar, here we see him alleviating a degree of blame from a man's habitual heavy drinking, as it was due to the man's natural bodily condition, which was outside of the man's control. Furthermore, the comments of Chamaeleon, and Plutarch's wider concept of 'Great Natures', also imply that a significant degree of blame could be mitigated from a heavy drinker's behaviour.¹⁰⁶

In summary, observations regarding other peoples' drinking behaviour were considered useful indicators of their characters. However, in practice this could be complicated, as inappropriate drinking could not only imply a character of great vice, but also occasionally a person with the potential to accomplish great deeds. The above individuals' heavy drinking was used by later observers to attribute to them characters which set them above other men. Excess wine could thus help to construct an identity of greatness. This raises an interesting idea: if some people accepted that heavy drinking was occasionally indicative of certain brands of greatness, and it was recognised that some people like Dionysius II of Syracuse could control their drinking behaviour in order to influence peoples' perceptions of their character, what was to stop an individual taking eagerly to wine to imply that *he himself* had such a character? Perhaps, given Alexander's keenness to portray links to Homeric heroes and gods,¹⁰⁷ he

preceded it, which lasted much longer and was more severe); 69.3-70.1 (the drinking contest, of neat wine, which causes illnesses and deaths: mitigated as this event is the death-wish of a friend, which Alexander honours); 75.2-3 (the drinking-bouts which lead to his own death: mitigated by oracular response telling him to honour the recently deceased Hephaestion).

¹⁰⁵ Plutarch, *Alexander*, 23.1.

¹⁰⁶ On alcoholism, see Ch.1 p.51ff.

¹⁰⁷ For example: Plutarch, *Alexander*, 15.4, 27.6, 28.

was encouraged to heavier drinking so as to imply that he had such a Homeric or 'divine' character. This ultimately remains speculation, but in a similar way – and as discussed later in this chapter – individuals *did* drink heavily both to construct an identity as a heavy drinker, to compete with others, and to imply their superior masculinity.

EDUCATION AND MEMORY

By having compared wine to a 'window through which one man will discern another's mind',¹⁰⁸ Plutarch invokes an existing tradition whereby anything which reveals a man's true nature can be compared to a mirror. Songs, time, and sayings are just a few of the things compared to mirrors in Greco-Roman literature. Moralising literature tended to focus upon using such mirrors so that the observer could make important modifications to his own life. The conduct of virtuous men were also often presented as such mirrors. As Duff successfully argues, Plutarch himself bought into this 'moralising' trend, and presented his *Lives* as mirrors by which his readers could reflect on how their conduct differed and thus work on self-improvement.¹⁰⁹

Wine was one of the things which had been repeatedly compared to mirrors, or similar, in Greek literature. For example, among the authors of Archaic and Classical Greece, Aeschylus commented that 'wine reflects the mind', Theopompus that wine is 'a mirror of an individual's character' and Alcaeus that 'wine is a peep-hole into a man'. Plutarch's ideas on attributing this property to wine were thus certainly not unique. In reiterating this belief, Plutarch gave wine no small honour: he accepted that wine had a mirror-like property, just like the one he intended for his *Lives*. The latter formed a vast literary project of over twenty books which aimed at improving his readers' characters through observing the conduct of others; this surely required a great deal of effort from Plutarch in composition, as well as the reader. Yet in *Table-Talk*, Plutarch implies that similar effects could be achieved with far less effort, merely through conversation over wine. If properly conducted, this practice was said to accurately reveal other guests' souls. Wine was thus thought to offer an

¹⁰⁸ See n.80.

¹⁰⁹ Duff (1999) 31-33 with Plutarch, *Aemilius*, 1.1-4. See also n.110.

educational function in allowing diligent observers to make modifications to their own conduct.¹¹⁰

Plutarch also believed that wine's mirror-like property offered significant physiological benefits. Zeuxippus, Plutarch's mouthpiece in *Advice about Keeping Well*, presents the general advice that a man should establish the habit of looking both at other peoples' lifestyles, and his own, in order to identify areas which should be improved. Zeuxippus gives several pieces of advice on how a man may accomplish this in practice. For one, he advises that people should emulate Plato, who is said to have used wine-drinking events in a mirror-like way when he reflected upon his fellow diners' faults on his way home from entertainments, and asked whether he too needed to improve in similar areas. Similarly, Zeuxippus advises that when either you yourself or a friend are ill, you should consider the wrongdoings which have caused this illness so that you will learn to avoid this misbehaviour in future. For example, you may conclude that you have ruined your own health merely for the sake of an ill-timed drink or raucous party, and thus be deterred from doing it again. Wine, banquets and drinking-bouts were thus explicitly advised for an educational purpose: to help people to improve their future health.¹¹¹

For traditional Roman society, the censors were, in theory, both tangible role-models which men could mirror, and an impetus for education in virtue. As discussed above, this office prioritised the responding to vices detected in citizens' drinking and dining practices, as it was thought that men's true characters are most clearly revealed in such activities. Plutarch's *Lives* thus record several instances of censors reprimanding Romans for their bad drinking and dining behaviour.¹¹² Although the censors themselves theoretically drew authority to undertake such corrections of the citizenry from their own paradigm-like virtue in all areas, their drinking and dining conduct were areas of particular significance. Accordingly, the Emperor Tiberius drew popular criticism for drinking and feasting excessively – for two whole days and the night between –

¹¹⁰ Wine as a mirror: Athenaeus, 10.427e-f (= Aeschylus, fr.393); Alcaeus, fr.333 = Tzetzes on Lycophron, Alexandra; Athenaeus 11.470f-471a (= Theopompus, fr.33.3); Rolleston (1927) 104. Aim of the *Lives*: Duff (1999) esp. 5, 13-14, 50-51; Van Hoof (2010) 10. See also n.109.

¹¹¹ Plutarch, *Advice about Keeping Well*, 9=126d-f, 15=129c-130a; Van Hoof (2010) 230. Further on Plato's practice, see: Plutarch, *On Listening to Lectures*, 6=40d; *How to Profit by One's Enemies*, 5=88e; *On the Control of Anger*, 16=463e.

¹¹² Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 17.1-5; *Flaminius*, 18.2-19.2; *Marius*, 5.3-4. Note also: Cicero, 27.1-2. Note further on Lucius Quintus: Cicero, *On Old Age*, 12.42; Livy, 39.42; Dupont (1992 [1989]) 284-285; see also Appendix 7 p.449 n.12.

whilst he was supposed to be undertaking these duties; this base behaviour undermined the office's authority.¹¹³ Similarly, Cicero ridiculed Cotta's position as the censor due to his renown as a heavy drinker; he implies that Cotta will obviously overlook immoralities in drinking.¹¹⁴ On the other hand, Tiberius Gracchus' father was highly praised as censor, and his own virtuous dining behaviour was thought to have served to improve the conduct of the Roman people. He typically left supper at a reasonable time and walked home through the streets. In doing so, he created a 'state of fear' which promoted moderate drinking, as citizens put out their lights before he walked past out of fear that he, as censor, would suspect them of indulging in excessive drinking-bouts and reprimand them.¹¹⁵

In Greek society, the *symposium* traditionally pursued a highly self-reflexive atmosphere for similar educational purposes. In particular, it was often represented as an arena to teach young men of the responsibilities of citizenship. König explains that 'proper behaviour at the *symposium* ... was viewed as something which needed careful attention'. As such, guests were repeatedly invited to reflect upon their own drinking behaviour, and that of others, at the time of drinking. This reflection was accomplished through a variety of means; for example, during the Archaic and Classical periods, *symposia* were repeatedly the focus of the artistic life-scenes painted upon ceramic vessels (including the drinking vessels themselves), the conversation conducted at *symposia*, and the poetry performed there too (by poets such as Theognis and Anacreon). These various depictions often focused upon ideal conduct in this arena, thereby giving the guests a positive mirror to measure their own conduct against, and resolve to emulate. In effect, the *symposium* serves to educate its guests in proper decorum; 'how to behave as a member of the elite' and display the virtues valued by this group.¹¹⁶

The literary *symposium* also served a very similar mirror-like purpose, as explicitly realised by Plutarch in the preface to book six of *Table-Talk*. This was a Greco-Roman literary genre which provided accounts of men at dinner. The most famous examples (for both modern readers and the ancients) are Plato's *Symposium* and Xenophon's *Symposium*; other examples notable for this study

¹¹³ Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 42.1.

¹¹⁴ Plutarch, *Cicero*, 27.1-2.

¹¹⁵ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, 14.3.

¹¹⁶ Mudd (2015) 87, 91; König (2012) 6-11; Wilkins and Hill (2006) 174-177.

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Figure 3.1: Two Trier Black-Slipped beakers, each 10.2cm tall, found in Colchester (southeast Britain). They were produced in Trier (modern-day Germany), c.180-250AD. Their mottos read 'Drink!' (pie – transliterated Greek) and 'I overcome you!' (vinco te). Both are housed by the Colchester Castle Museum. Inscriptions: RIB, 2.6.2498.20, 23; Mudd (2014) 102-103. Photo reproduced from Mudd (2015) fig. 3 on p.74.

are Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae* and the numerous short accounts of *symposia* in Plutarch's *Table-Talk*. These fictionalised literary accounts of drinking thus also had an educational purpose, as readers could see both ideal practice and cases of individuals transgressing the boundaries of proper conduct. A sensible reader could thus reflect on his own conduct, and improve accordingly.¹¹⁷

A very similar self-reflexive drinking context may also be detectable, among the sub-elites on the northern fringes of the Empire during the Roman Imperial period, through consideration of Trier Black-Slipped ware (see fig. 3.1). This is a distinctive type of fine-ware pottery produced and distributed across the Rhineland and Britain in c.180-250AD. Although comparatively expensive for ceramics, their ownership was not restricted to the upper classes. This form predominantly consists of wine-drinking beakers which were often used both for regular drinking, as well as in funerary contexts. Most significantly for this investigation, the beakers typically feature short decorative mottos painted prominently upon their bellies. These mottos usually refer to beliefs regarding wine, wine drinking, and the associated socialising. As may be expected, the

¹¹⁷ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 6.pr=686d; König (2012) esp. 9-17.

mottos imply that all of these things were held in very high regard. Examples of these mottos include: 'serve unmixed wine!' (*da merum*), 'mix for me!' (*misce mi[hi]*), 'I overcome you' (*vinco te*; probably referring to competitive drinking or wine's intoxicating powers), and 'wine (gives) strength' (*vinum vires*). As such, the decoration of these vessels appears comparable in subject to those Archaic and Classical drinking vessels, which – as noted above – depicted sympotic scenes. In a recent article analysing these vessels, I concluded that they indicate owners who 'found it appealing to reflect upon their drinking, and they probably even did this whilst using these motto beakers to drink from.' The drinking contexts in which they were used were thus seemingly regarded as apt times for self-reflection. Hundreds of these vessels survive today, commonly found across several modern-day countries, and dating to a period spanning several centuries; this was not a negligible phenomenon.¹¹⁸

Given that the Romans viewed drinking and dining as areas where men's characters are especially clearly displayed, and given that many considered wine to have the power to influence character, it logically follows that an education in proper drinking-etiquette and table-manners could have been thought to form a significant element of a man's wider development. Such ideas can be detected in Plutarch. In the introduction to his *Demetrius-Antony*, Plutarch implies that both he and the traditional Spartans believed an education in appropriate drinking formed part of an education in virtue. He explains that these two biographies focus upon men who are famous for displaying 'great natures', as they lived reckless lives of vices and failures, but also displayed great virtues and successes. As such, these two men's lives contain much conduct which is not worthy of emulation, and these aspects serve as 'negative' mirrors displaying behaviour which his readers should avoid. Plutarch argues that having accounts of *both* positive and negative conduct makes it easier for a student to gain an understanding of excellence, and pursue it.¹¹⁹ In his

¹¹⁸ Mudd (2015) esp. 87 and 91. See also: Mudd (2014). Examples of the quoted mottos can be found in: *RIB*, 2.6.2498.4, 5, 16-17, 23-24. Further on Trier Black-Slipped ware, see the following. For catalogues of surviving mottos, see: Künzl (1997) 252-259; Symonds (1992) 112-121; *CIL*, 13.10018; the British set are compiled in Mudd (2014) 102-103 which updates *RIB*, 2.6.2498. On this ware, see especially: Tyers (1996) 138-140; Symonds (1992) 46-49. On its mottos, see especially: Mudd (2015) 88-91; Mudd (2014) *passim*; Künzl (1997) 94-101; Harris (1986) *passim*; Bös (1958) *passim*. In general, see further: Cool (2006) 147-151, 164-165; Künzl (1997) *passim*; Weeber (1993) s.vv. 'Mosel', 'Spruchbecher', 'Trinkspruch'; Symonds (1992) *passim*; Richardson (1986) 118-120; Greene (1978a) 18-19, 25; Greene (1978b) 56; Wightman (1970) 200-201; Loeschcke (1933) *passim*.

¹¹⁹ See n.100.

explanation of the rationale behind this, Plutarch presents, as support, the Spartans' comparable practice of forcing helots to become very drunk in front of groups of their citizen youth. The helots were made to sing and dance in a ridiculous and base way, so as to teach these future citizens of the vices of drunkenness, and thus scare them away from it. Plutarch presents this practice as a comparable means of teaching virtuous conduct using illustrations of vice; as such the Spartans are thus presented as having used extreme drunkenness as a negative mirror to educate their citizens in virtue.¹²⁰ Though Plutarch regards this practice as harsh and cruel due to what was forced upon the helots – effectively perverting some lower-status individuals in order to secure the righteousness of the citizenry – there is no indication that Plutarch does not think it successful. In fact, his argument hinges upon the belief that this educational practice worked.

Plutarch provides further details on Spartan boys' education in his *Lycurgus*, which similarly place emphasis on the use of wine and meals. Boys attended the adults' communal messes, which were well-stocked with wine (although the members are said to have only drunk moderately). Here they would learn sobriety and appropriate conduct through witnessing their elders' discussions and displays of correct manners. The boys would also have suppers together in several companies, away from the adults. Each would be led by a youth who was twenty years old, and had only graduated from boyhood two years earlier. He would arrange these meals in such a way that the boys' table-talk would educate them in judging the conduct of citizens and the correct manner of speaking. These meals doubtless also featured wine consumption, as the boys were supposed to provide their own food by stealing whatever they could from the adults' mess-groups, which in turn (as just noted) sported significant quantities of wine.¹²¹

In his presentations of Crassus and Periander, it is emphasised further that Plutarch perceived an education in good table manners to be an education of importance to a man's whole manner of life; its virtuous consequences were not just limited to his conduct in the dining room. He asserts that Crassus' parents' practice of making all of their family eat together at the same table on a daily basis, regardless of their large numbers (including his brothers, and their wives

¹²⁰ Plutarch, *Demetrius*, 1.2-5; *Lycurgus*, 28.4; Duff (1999) 45-51.

¹²¹ Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, 12, 17-18.

and families), was the main factor behind his temperate and moderate character in later life.¹²² Similarly, at the start of Plutarch's *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, Thales notes that their host-to-be, the tyrant Periander, is making fair progress in his recovery from hereditary despotism due to his keeping good company and talking with wise men. Thales' comment surely serves, at least in part, to highlight the important role of convivial dinner parties with philosophical table-talk over wine, such as the one featured in this work. They could have a potent effect on a man's character, even influencing a man like Periander, who was predisposed to tyranny.¹²³

Beyond merely displaying character, the content of the table-talk itself was also thought to offer significant educational utility. Plutarch paraphrases the introduction of Xenophon's *Symposium* to support ideas to this effect: 'Xenophon says that in the case of noble men, there is much that is worth recording even in what they say and do at their wine and in their sports, and he is right'.¹²⁴ As such, virtuous men were thought to impart elements of wisdom to their drinking companions. Plutarch records this as a reason behind why Cato the Elder's contemporaries (both the young and old) found him a much-desired dinner companion. They relished the opportunity to hear his table-talk as he had much knowledge which was considered worthy of hearing, and he chose to focus conversation exclusively upon honourable and praiseworthy citizens.¹²⁵ We may also suspect a similar idea lying behind Plutarch's statement that Cornelia – the Gracchi's mother – was considered to offer excellent hospitality at table, even after her sons' deaths. This was due to the scholarly men which she kept in her company, and the stories she readily told about her virtuous father and sons. Plutarch thus essentially presents table-talk with Cato, and perhaps also with Cornelia and her circle, as a lesson in virtue.¹²⁶

The educational properties of wine and drinking-bouts hinged upon their appropriate use and moderation. As seen above, Plutarch, in the preface to book seven of *Table-Talk*, emphasised how table-talk and wine were mutually dependent in their ability to influence the character in both the long and short

¹²² Plutarch, *Crassus*, 1.1.

¹²³ Plutarch, *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, 2=147c-d; Mossman (1997) 129. See also p.307ff with n.327.

¹²⁴ Plutarch, *Agessilaus*, 29; Xenophon, *Symposium*, 1.1. Compare to Plato, *Laws*, 649d-652 with Duff (1999) 15: a man's drunken conduct reveals his character. See also n.76.

¹²⁵ Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 25.2-3.

¹²⁶ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, 19.

term. Yet the constructiveness of their effects depended upon the appropriate implementation of these elements. Inappropriate practice could easily warp a character; philosophy was thus recommended as the most suitable topic for the conversation. Plutarch doubtless also intended the wine to be drunk in moderation.¹²⁷

Above all, memory was considered essential to whatever was learnt. Thus the preface to book six of *Table-Talk* praises philosophy as the one category of table-talk which is both of educational benefit to those who experience it, and of lasting utility as the memory of it does not begin to fade into triviality after the banquet has finished (unlike, for example, discussion of the food and drink). He cites Xenophon and Plato's literary *symposia* as evidence for these conversations' 'freshness' which can last across centuries, and continue to educate people in proper conduct. Yet excess drink is characterised as the enemy of this process. Being sodden with wine hinders the ability to recall at a later date what had been said at a banquet. Indeed, book three of *Table-Talk* presents drunkenness as associated with forgetfulness. Pliny succinctly records comparable beliefs: the morning after heavy drinking 'everything is forgotten – the memory dead'. Plutarch thus presents Plato and the Academy as ideals: they drink moderately whilst discussing philosophy. As such, they are therefore educated via the banquet, and (with their memories unhindered) can continue benefitting from this learning far into the future.¹²⁸

In contrast, however, drinking – when not excessive – was sometimes considered to aid certain memory and reflection. Suetonius records that Vespasian had been brought up under his grandmother's care, and later in life, on religious and festival days, he would always drink from a small silver cup which had belonged to her to show devotion to her memory. This drinking practice, linked in a material way with his grandmother, helped to spark his memories of her. Suetonius also records that during the Emperor Claudius' hearing of a debate between butchers and vintners, he interrupted the proceedings to nostalgically describe the antics of his youth, when he used to tour Rome's taverns.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ See n.96.

¹²⁸ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 3.3=650e, 6.pr=686a-d; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.142.

¹²⁹ Suetonius, *Claudius*, 40.1; *Vespasian*, 2.1.

Boudon also suggests a similar relationship between Galen and Falernian wine. Galen rated this wine especially highly, and repeatedly praised its medical benefits. Yet, Boudon argues that its perceived therapeutic properties cannot fully explain Galen's adoration of it. She suggests that Galen's objective reasoning may have mingled in his mind with more obscure personal memories to elevate the status of Falernian. Boudon notes that in *Diagnosis by Pulses*, Galen tells us that he first tasted Falernian when he initially came to Rome from his native Asia Minor. Although he had never drunk Falernian before, he says he was immediately able to recognise it upon his first taste, due to the descriptions of it which he had heard from other medical authorities. This work was written significantly later in Galen's life. Galen had initially come to Rome in his early thirties, and the scattered references to his early career suggest that his life then was fairly difficult. After leaving the city for several years, he returned to Rome for a second time, whereupon he rose to fame, and composed many works including *Diagnosis by Pulses*. Boudon therefore suggests that Falernian wine summoned fond nostalgia for his youth; it was a strong positive memory of an otherwise difficult initial period in Rome.¹³⁰ In summary, in Suetonius' work, and perhaps also in Galen's case, drinking or the thought of drinking in the present was recognised as being easily able to spark the memory of, and reflection upon, past drinking.

Suetonius provides practical examples of Romans using the banquet's self-reflexive atmosphere for educational means. The Emperor Titus is presented as having used the *cena* as a time to reflect upon his conduct, noting where he found fault. Suetonius preserves a specific example: Titus apparently aimed to do a good deed every day, and once exclaimed out loud at dinner when he could not remember having doing so that particular day. Although Titus' passionate outcry and subsequent dejection over such a minor issue is presented as an extreme overreaction, there is no indication that his process of introspection was in itself unusual. On the contrary, Titus is here presented as a paradigm of extreme virtue, implying that Suetonius (and perhaps others from whom Suetonius heard this anecdote) considered it fitting for a man to reflect regularly upon his own conduct in this way over wine. He could learn and improve from this introspection.¹³¹ Similarly, Suetonius preserves a letter from

¹³⁰ Galen, *Diagnosis by Pulses*, 8.774-775K; Boudon (2002) 161-163.

¹³¹ Suetonius, *Titus*, 8.1.

Augustus to Livia, where the former agreed to invite the young Claudius to dine with him every day whilst she was away, so that he would be forced to cease dining with his ill-chosen friends. Claudius would thus have better people to imitate in his movements, behaviour and bearing.¹³² The Imperial household thus perceived banquets as an ideal context in which to learn correct manners and decorum, through emulation of others. All of this was best learnt over wine.

As such, the careful selection of dining/drinking companions was considered a key issue. This was especially true for youths, who were undergoing a period of intense moral and intellectual growth.¹³³ Not only could bad friends hinder a person's moral education by fostering bad drinking, dining, conversation and behaviour, but they could also be a destructive influence upon other guests. Essentially, this was perceived to be the exact opposite of what has been outlined above: a 'destructive' education in bad manners, base character, and vice, attained through an absence of 'good' role models and practice to mirror, leading to the mirroring of the 'bad'. Thus the link between spending time with bad friends and becoming morally corrupt was well established in Greco-Roman thought, and was associated with negative drinking behaviour. Apuleius' *Apology*, dating to the first century AD, associates a youth's preference for immoral friends – despising anyone serious – with his slide into the vices of drink and sex.¹³⁴ Similarly, Ps-Plutarch believed that youths tended to ignore the good advice of their parents if they had base friends to encourage them to drink excessively.¹³⁵ Many adults therefore considered it sensible and normal for a parent to monitor and dictate the friends a youth should have.¹³⁶ Similarly, teachers given to excess drink, luxury and similar vices were considered unfit to be trusted with correctly educating youths.¹³⁷

Examples of this concept can be provided from Suetonius' treatment of the two abovementioned Emperors. First, he writes that Claudius was assumed to have bad behaviour, and thus gained the reputation of a drunkard and a gambler, simply because he kept company with the basest of men.¹³⁸ Secondly, Roman popular beliefs regarding Titus first attributed vices to his character and then

¹³² Suetonius, *Claudius*, 4.5.

¹³³ See n.47.

¹³⁴ Apuleius, *Apology*, 98.

¹³⁵ Ps-Plutarch, *The Education of Children*, 17=12f-13c; Eyben (1993 [1977]) 209.

¹³⁶ Plutarch, *Galba*, 13.3. Consider also n.132.

¹³⁷ Suetonius, *Grammarians*, 23. Consider also p.232 with n.59, and p.239 with n.81.

¹³⁸ Suetonius, *Claudius*, 5.

virtues. These were linked not only to claims regarding his negative/positive dining behaviour (as discussed further above), but also by allegations of him keeping company with bad/good friends.¹³⁹ As such, Titus and Claudius were, at different points, said to have experienced the full range of the constructive and destructive educational potential of wine and banqueting.

Plutarch's works allude to similar beliefs. In his *Lives*, when Phocion and Cicero were concerned regarding the moral corruption of their sons; each identified the corrupting factors as both the copious wine at luxury parties, and the people they associated with who led them into such bad behaviour (in the former case his friends, in the latter a dubious tutor).¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, at the start of the *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, Thales asserts that a bad guest ruins a dinner party more than anything else as their negative influence is very difficult to ignore. Good companions were considered even more fundamental for a good banquet than good wine, as when the wine was bad water could be drunk instead. Thales therefore argues that a man should be very selective in who he dines with, and ideally only accept an invitation to dinner after he's learnt and analysed the entire guest list. Indeed, in his *Antony*, Plutarch notes that a banqueter once received a very large gift from Antony's son for skilfully and humorously silencing a guest who was annoying the others.¹⁴¹

Plutarch's presentation of Antony is particularly informative. Antony's association with immoral, inappropriate and base friends gives further support for allegations regarding his vices. His road to moral corruption is said to have all started in his friendship with Curio; this follows the above model in that this bad friend led him to unrestrained pleasures, including drinking-bouts, and thus Antony began to learn vice. Yet, even after this initial education in immorality, Plutarch so frequently stresses the link between Antony's failings and such friends that his *Life* almost goes beyond explanation to read as a mitigation of his vices. Antony's behaviour is repeatedly presented as out of his own control and under the influence of others, especially Cleopatra. Cleopatra's control is described as akin to magic or a drug; Antony is essentially her puppet. Indeed, the strong link between bad associates, drink and corruption is reiterated when Antony does temporarily break free of Cleopatra's control, as he sets out to

¹³⁹ See n.68.

¹⁴⁰ See n.58 and n.59.

¹⁴¹ Plutarch, *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, 2=147f-148b; *Antony*, 28.4-7.

confront growing political and military problems: he was 'like a man roused from sleep after a deep debauch'.¹⁴² Seneca follows a similar line in associating these three things when he argues that Mark Antony's corruption into vice was caused, equally, by drunkenness and Cleopatra.¹⁴³ In a similar way, Plutarch also associates the vices of King Ptolemy IV both with his drunkenness and with his mistress Agathocleia and her brothel-keeper mother.¹⁴⁴

It is interesting, however, that Seneca breaks the established Greco-Roman trend of presenting youth as a negative age, one simply of corruption, when he venerates it as the best age of man. His rationale behind this is 'because this is the time for work, the time for keeping our minds busied in study', because he argues that 'in our youth we are able to learn; we can bend to nobler purposes minds that are ready and still pliable'. It is perhaps telling that the analogy he used to support his argument is wine: 'just as the purest wine flows from the top of the jar and the thickest dregs settle at the bottom, so in our human life, that which comes first ... is best'. Perhaps then, in choosing wine as the analogy, there is a conscious or subconscious association that wine, like youth, had key educational importance.¹⁴⁵

IDENTITY

In the Greco-Roman world, a person's drinking practice could inform aspects of their identity formation and reproduction. Suetonius presents a very tangible example of this, as early in Tiberius' military career, his obvious love of wine led to him being given the humorous nickname 'Biberius Caldius Mero'. This plays on his name of Tiberius Claudius Nero, but with the substituted words relating to wine consumption; the sense is approximately 'drinker of hot wine with no water added'.¹⁴⁶ It is unclear whether Tiberius approved of his heavy drinking becoming attached to his identity by others; the fact that Suetonius implies he unsuccessfully tried to hide his excess drinking suggests at least a degree of

¹⁴² Plutarch, *Antony*, 2.3, 9.3-4, 21.2, 24.2, 25.1, 30.1-2 (quotation), 36.1, 37.4, 60.1, 62.1; *Comparison of Demetrius and Antony*, 3.3 (on this passage, see further n.89).

¹⁴³ Seneca, *Epistles*, 83.25.

¹⁴⁴ See n.94

¹⁴⁵ Seneca, *Epistles*, 108.26-27; Eyben (1993 [1977]) 40.

¹⁴⁶ Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 42.1; Rolfe (1951 [1913-14]) 2.501: 'A name coined in jest after Tiberius Claudius Nero, from *bibo*, drink, *cal(i)dus*, hot, and *merum*, unmixed wine'. Also discussed in Appendix 6 p.430 n.70.

shame. In a similar manner, Pliny states that Novellius Torquatus of Milan owed his *cognomen* (familiar name) 'Tricongius' to a time when he apparently drank three *congii* (over ten litres) of wine in one go. By Pliny's reckoning, this was the largest draught ever consumed in one go, and Torquatus had also added to the record many smaller but still impressive draughts.¹⁴⁷ Yet, it is clear that having one's public identity associated with an element of drinking behaviour could have destructive social consequences. According to Plutarch, Otho's reputation as a heavy drinker made Rome's soldiers regard him as a far less desirable candidate for Emperor.¹⁴⁸

Plutarch presents Antony and his friends as more willing candidates to have their identities associated with wine. When left in charge of the city of Rome by Caesar, Antony apparently chose to advertise his affinity to drink in a very bold and public manner, although it gained him popular hatred: by having golden drinking-beakers carried before him on trips from the city, in a manner characteristic of a sacred procession. In doing so, he overtly symbolised his reverence of alcohol before all observers.¹⁴⁹ Similarly, whilst Octavian, his chief political rival, identified himself with Apollo, Antony chose to identify himself with Dionysus, the god of wine.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, in a similar manner to Tiberius, Varus – one of Antony's drinking companions and one of his captains during the civil wars – had gained the nickname 'Cotylon', which doubtless referred to some element of his drinking practice as it was derived from the Greek fluid measure of a κοτύλη (approximately half a pint/quarter of a litre).¹⁵¹ Due to Varus' place within Antony's drinking-circle and his continued favour with Antony, this nickname was probably affectionate rather than derogatory.

Pliny the Elder even asserts that 'Antony had strained every effort to win the championship in this field before him, by actually publishing a book on the subject of his own drunken habits ... venturing to champion his claims in this volume.'¹⁵² This book is not extant, and so its contents are uncertain. Augustus claimed that, in general, Mark Antony primarily wrote to be admired, rather than understood, making it perhaps more likely that he intended this work to

¹⁴⁷ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.144, 14.146.

¹⁴⁸ Plutarch, *Otho*, 9.3-5.

¹⁴⁹ Plutarch, *Antony*, 9.5.

¹⁵⁰ Plutarch, *Antony*, 24.3, 60.3. Octavian: Suetonius, *Augustus*, 70. On Dionysus, see Ch.1 n.28.

¹⁵¹ Plutarch, *Antony*, 18.4. Also discussed in Appendix 6 p.430 n.70.

¹⁵² Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.148. See also Zanker (1988) 60.

advertise chosen elements of his own drinking practices which he was especially proud of.¹⁵³ Yet regardless of whether this was indeed his book's primary intention, or whether it instead had the purpose of defending against allegations of inappropriate drinking, his mere composition of such a book focused upon his own wine consumption reflects Antony's belief that other people's perceptions regarding this issue were significant. His relationship with wine was not only important to him, it was also one of the key factors in how other Romans perceived him, and a central element of his identity within Roman society.

Plutarch also attributes similar practice to the Hellenistic world when he implies that King Philip II of Macedon wished to be known as a man who was able to hold large quantities of drink. His desired drinking identity was publicised widely enough that members of an Athenian embassy, wishing to gain his favour, thought it useful to play upon this in their flattery of him (alongside praising his speaking and handsomeness).¹⁵⁴ Pliny the Elder similarly states that the Parthians, as a race, tended to seek fame through their prowess in drinking large quantities, that Alcibiades had won reputation in Greece through similar practice, and that Cicero's son was famous for his habit of downing two *congii* (c.7L) in one draught.¹⁵⁵ It has also been argued (see from p.245) that some people could interpret a person's excessive drinking in such a way as to promote an identity of greatness for them. Such was the practice of Plutarch with respect to Antony, Demetrius and Alexander, and others with respect to the Homeric heroes. It is thus possible that an individual could have also modified *his own* identity accordingly, through drinking heavily.

We should, of course, be cautious in accepting claims regarding Antony's excesses, due to the strong influence of Augustan propaganda upon the historical record and later Roman culture. Yet we should also take care not to think it impossible that Romans may have taken great pride in their own drinking, and thus promoted it as an element of their identity. Antony *did* indeed set up statues, at least in the east of the Empire, of himself in the guise of the wine-god Dionysus. Similarly, a broadly contemporary Italian relief displays a togate Roman man with iconography openly indicating that he valued drinking

¹⁵³ Suetonius, *Augustus*, 86.2.

¹⁵⁴ Plutarch, *Demosthenes*, 16.

¹⁵⁵ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.144, 14.147.

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Figure 3.2: A depiction of a togate Roman man with symbols suggesting devotion to Dionysiac symposia (an ivy wreath, a cantharus/κάνθαρος and a vine); a relief from Carrara (north-western Italy), c.50BC. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts (inv. 00.311). Museum catalogue photo, reproduced by Zanker (1988) fig. 46.

at Dionysiac *symposia* (fig. 3.2). As such, there were surely a number of Romans who, like Antony and this anonymous Roman, revered wine and specific drinking customs, and purposefully publicised their love of them.¹⁵⁶

Greeks and Romans also frequently chose to depict themselves as drinkers in their funerary monuments; this can be seen both in depictions of their image and the inscriptions. One of the more common schemes is the Totenmahl ('meal of the dead'), where the individual reclines on a couch, holding a drinking vessel. In addition, there is often a table with food, a seated woman, and a servant bringing more drink. Further variations are not uncommon, though the basic scene remains the same. This scheme dates back to the late Archaic period, but becomes extremely popular by the Hellenistic period, when Dunbabin argues that 'it becomes perhaps the single most common subject of funerary reliefs'. Its popularity continues into the Roman period, being found across the Empire, and forming one of the more common themes for funerary

¹⁵⁶ Zanker (1988) 58-60. On the iconography of Dionysus, see Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel (1992 [1989]) 218-222. Further on Dionysus, see Ch.1 n.28.

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Figure 3.3: The funerary monument of Flavius Agricola; a statue with obliterated inscription from the Vatican Necropolis (Rome), c.160AD. Indianapolis Museum of Art (inv. 72.148). Museum catalogue photo. Inscription: CLE, 856 = CIL, 6.17985a.

reliefs. Regardless of the exact significance of this scheme for each individual – and given the longevity and widespread use of this scheme, this doubtless varied – it certainly presented to observers a connection between the deceased and wine; drinking was essentially an element of the identity which he displayed.

For example, the funerary monument of one Flavius Agricola from Tibur, dated to c.160AD and discovered in Rome (beneath the Vatican), consists of a statue of Flavius reclined on a couch with a drinking cup in hand (fig. 3.3). The urn with Flavius' ashes was held in the foot of the couch. A hexameter inscription on the base of the couch (obliterated by Pope Urban VIII) reads:

'I am reclining here, as you see me, just as I did among the living in the years which fate gave me, I nurtured my little soul and wine was never in short supply ... friends who read this, I advise you, mix up the wine and drink far away, binding your brows with flowers, and do not spurn the pleasures of venery with beautiful girls; all the rest after death the earth consumes and fire.'

The identity which Flavius chose to present, and to summarise his whole life to observers, is not his career or achievements, but simply one of an eager drinker, fond of the pleasures of wine and sex, who even in death tries to recruit others to a similar life.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ Dunbabin (2003) 103-140, esp. 103-110. Inscription: *CLE*, 856 = *CIL*, 6.17985a (trans. Dunbabin [2003] 103, 230).

The Trier Black-Slipped beakers, introduced in the previous section, imply another group of individuals (c.180-250AD, mainly along the Rhine and in Britain) who liked to overtly and purposefully display a fondness for wine. These vessels were intended for wine-drinking, were usually decorated with a wine-grape and vine motif, and featured a prominent drinking motto which spoke positively regarding their owner's relationship with wine and the associated socialising. Being fine-quality and expensive ceramics with copious decoration, they were surely bought and proudly flaunted by their owners for their significant display-value. Indeed, the surviving examples seem to have been used both for regular drinking and used as grave-goods. In doing so, the owner would construct an identity for himself in relation to his advertised drinking behaviour.¹⁵⁸

Some of the individual mottos suggest further how aspects of drinking behaviour were promoted as significant elements of their owners' identity. 'I overcome you' (*vinco te*) may serve to indicate the owner as a ready competitor in drinking competitions.¹⁵⁹ As ancient people, especially the Greeks, devoted much attention to arguing about mixing ratios, some mottos could identify their owners in relation to this common debate. The mottos 'spare the water!' (*parce aquam*) and 'serve unmixed wine' (*da merum*) could have served to identify their owners as drinkers of especially strong wine. This may have been in contrast to mottos such as 'mix for me!' (*misce mi[hi]*) which may imply a drinker of wine mixed to a more normal ratio. In addition, all three of these mixing-related mottos may serve to identify their owner as those who preferred to mix their wine in a more characteristically 'Roman', rather than 'Greek', fashion. Whereas parties of Greeks tended to mix their wine to a communally decided ratio in a shared mixing bowl, the Romans preferred to allow every guest to mix his own wine, in his own cup, to whatever ratio he himself decided. As such, these mottos may imply that water and wine were each added individually into the drinker's beaker, at his discretion, and the mixing done therein.¹⁶⁰

Banqueting and drinking practice could also be key components in attempts to construct an identity on the scale from an especially frugal individual to a luxury

¹⁵⁸ Mudd (2015) esp. 87-91; Mudd (2014) esp. 95-96. Further on Trier Black-Slipped ware, see n.118.

¹⁵⁹ *RIB*, 2.6.2498.23, Mudd (2015) 89; Mudd (2014) 93.

¹⁶⁰ *RIB*, 2.6.2498.4-5, 16-17, 19, also consider 33; Mudd (2015) 89; Mudd (2014) 94-96. On mixing, see Appendix 1 p.332ff.

diner; in modern vernacular the latter would be a connoisseur, gastronome or oenophile. A host's display of luxury was an accepted part of banqueting. It was commonly expected – even by the especially frugal Spartans and Cato the Elder – that dining with outside company merited more lavish food and wine than when dining alone. It is for this reason that a poor plebeian, who was hiding Mark Antony's grandfather from proscription, hurriedly sent his slave to buy superior wine to that which they usually consumed. Conversely, the solo *symposium* proposed by Timon of Athens is presented as a shocking concept to the reader.¹⁶¹

A degree of luxury was so fundamental to dining practice that *both* extreme excess *and* extreme frugality could both be criticised. Instead, the employment of moderate luxury on the part of the host, with moderate but not extreme expenditure, was usually regarded as the ideal.¹⁶² Both poverty and avarice were respectively implied by extremely simple and lavish banqueting practice.¹⁶³ The typical host thus tried to imply through his dining outlay he was neither of these extremes, but of comfortable means and responsible with his resources.

The wine served was a key factor in this display. Thus, for example, when Plutarch's fictionalised tyrant Periander hosted the Seven Sages at dinner, and he wished to make an impression on these men through displaying his simplicity and restraint in expenditure, he did away with the luxury things commonly served at dinners in his court, including costly wines which he now replaced with cheaper ones. Similarly, Cato the Elder's practice of drinking the

¹⁶¹ Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 21.3, 25.2-3; *Marius*, 44.1-2 (Mark Antony's grandfather); *Lucullus*, 41; *Cleomenes*, 13.3-5 (Spartans); *Antony*, 70.1-2 (Timon of Athens); Weeber (1993) s.v. 'Spitzenwein'. Compare to Horace's practice when dining without guests: Horace, *Satires*, 1.6.115-117, 2.7.29-37. Note also: Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 7.pr=697c.

¹⁶² Plutarch, *Themistocles*, 5.1; *Pompey* 2.5-6; *Lucullus* 40.2; *Phocion*, 20; *Cicero*, 36.2-3; *Demetrius*, 27.2; *Galba*, 3.2, 11.1-2, 16; Suetonius, *Galba*, 12.3, 14.2, 22; Dupont (1992 [1989]) 272-278; Paul (1991) 160-162. Good cheer regarded as more important than luxury/expense at dinner: see n.218 (on Plutarch's *Crassus* and *Eumenes*); also Plutarch, *Comparison of Aristides and Cato*, 4.1. It was recognised, however, that 'moderation' in luxury was a subjective and socially defined parameter, in that it relied on comparison with the practice of peers: Plutarch, *Cato the Younger*, 3.5-6; *Tiberius Gracchus*, 2.3-4. Note also Edwards (1993) 186 who suggests that 'attacks on [excessive] luxury often focus upon food' perhaps because this 'best symbolises the ephemeral nature of prodigal pleasures'. Note further, the Emperor Tiberius encouraging the Romans to frugality at dinner: Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 34.1

¹⁶³ Plutarch, *Crassus*, 2.1-2; Suetonius, *Domitian*, 1.1.

same wine as his slaves was interpreted as *extreme* moderation, indicative either of miserliness or action to correct the extravagances of others.¹⁶⁴

Yet gastronomy was an interest which had grown alongside the Empire. Pliny the Elder claims that just a few generations earlier, Greek wine was so highly esteemed in Rome that it was served very sparingly at elite banquets (just one cup per guest), and Caesar ostentatiously used foreign wines to celebrate his triumphs. By Pliny's own era, in the first century AD, many members of the Greco-Roman elite were selective over the wines which they drank; they were importing them from selected regions across the Empire, and could knowledgeably discuss the merits of different wines. Book 14 of his *Natural History* thus dedicates much space to providing a lengthy ranking of over 80 wines from Italy and further afield (the latter especially including those from 'overseas' – that is, from the Greek east), alongside encyclopaedic descriptions of their characteristics, properties and uses. Pliny even appreciates the importance of *terroir* – the natural environment in which the vine was produced (including soil, topography and climate).¹⁶⁵

The bases of such gastronomic identities are explained in *Advice about Keeping Well*. Zeuxippus records that love of notoriety leads many people to consume foods and drinks which are lavish.¹⁶⁶ He states that such individuals are motivated by arguments that:

'It is absurd not to take advantage of the presence of some rare and expensive thing ... for things of this sort do indeed often induce people to use what is renowned and rare, since they are led on by empty repute ... so that they may have a tale to tell to others, and may be envied for their enjoyment of things so hard to obtain and so uncommon.'

Accordingly, such people were led to make a show of drinking choice wines, such as Falernian, due to the social capital which they would gain through their

¹⁶⁴ Plutarch, *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, 4=150c-d; *Cato the Elder*, 4.3, 5.12. Like Plutarch's Periander, the tyrant Dionysius II restrained himself to similarly frugal preparations when hosting Plato: Plutarch, *Dion*, 52.1-2.

¹⁶⁵ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.59-79, 14.95-97; Dalby (2003) s.v. 'Wine Regions'; Dalby (2000) 133-138, 248-249; Cool (2000) 130; Edwards (1993) 203-204; Weeber (1993) s.v. 'Spitzenwein'; Dupont (1992 [1989]) 280-282; Tchernia (1986) 28-37 (esp. 32), 201-203, 345-347, 350; Austin (1985) 39; Seltman (1957) 153-154, 158.

¹⁶⁶ Plutarch, *Advice about Keeping Well*, 6=124d-125b; Van Hoof (2010) 224-225; Edwards (1993) 186-187, 204. Falernian: see n.23.

association with these drinks. If properly advertised, the consumption of renowned yet uncommon and fine food and drinks could make the consumer similarly famous, and seemingly remarkable in his access to them.

Bodily pleasure – especially that of eating and drinking – could be regarded as a ‘great equaliser’, as poor and rich alike could engage in it to the shared end of happiness. Pleasure thus threatened the social hierarchy. Yet gastronomy prioritised a more desirable pleasure with gradations of restricted access. Outsiders were effectively excluded from this gastronomical group not only by an increasing spiral of obligatory expenditure, but by a similar increase in the required detailed knowledge of manners which accompanied consumption. Access was thus effectively limited to the upper echelons of society, who competed for prominence. Even the austere Cicero was willing to give increased merit to the activities of gastronomes. He defines two types of voluptuaries: the former simply eats and drinks to excess, whilst the second focuses his luxury into consuming the finest wines and foods. Though Cicero regards both as shameful and a hindrance to virtue, he regards the latter more worthy of a freeborn man, as it is more refined. Accordingly, gastronomy reinforced the social hierarchy which the pleasures of eating and drinking otherwise undermined. It created a shared identity of privilege between the select few who could choose to partake.¹⁶⁷

The Roman moralists’ descriptions of the prodigal as motivated by the desire for display, and the pursuit of notoriety through their extravagance, attest a group of people who wished to exceed their peers and build a reputation as a man of luxury. In doing so, they competed for social status among others who were interested in the same identity.¹⁶⁸ A prominent example of this is Lucullus, who in the first century BC had purposefully promoted a reputation as a phenomenally luxurious diner through his investment of great wealth and effort into all areas of dining. His renown was significant enough to survive over a century to Plutarch’s era; Plutarch thus assessed that ‘Lucullus took not only pleasure but pride in this way of living’. Although some of his contemporaries (Pompey and Cato for example) criticised his extravagance, others (especially the newly rich) are said to have found Lucullus’ mode of behaviour appealing.

¹⁶⁷ Cicero, *On the Ends of Good and Evil*, 2.8.23; *Against Piso*, 67; Edwards (1993) 190-206; König (2012) 3-4, 233-236, 258; Tchernia (1986) 32-33.

¹⁶⁸ Edwards (1993) 190, 204. For example: Seneca, *Epistles*, 122.14; Martial, 12.41.

Just like Zeuxippus suggests, they envied his conduct and strove to emulate it as far as possible given their more limited means. Significantly, it is recorded that Cato insulted the intemperance of a young senator by saying 'you live like Lucullus'. Due to his own volition, Lucullus' own name had thus become a byword for luxury, and his identity thus firmly associated with luxury eating and drinking.¹⁶⁹ Other later examples (from the first century AD) include Aulus, uncle of Vitellius, who rose to consular rank yet gained especial notoriety for the magnificence of his feasts.¹⁷⁰ Similarly, the Emperor Nero invented his own rare luxury beverage which heightened his association with luxury. His drink was distilled water, cooled with snow; this was understandably rare considering the expense and difficulties inherent in transporting snow to Rome, and the process of distillation.¹⁷¹

As a side note, it should be considered that the important economic benefits of the upper-classes' luxury dining were recognised by at least some individuals. Suetonius records that Vespasian's constant formal dinner parties were conducted with the intent of financially helping traders. Luxury drinking was thus understood to be of significant monetary benefit to numerous members of wider society who provided the wine and other items of use to drinking parties.¹⁷²

Drinking could also play a part in informing group identities. It is one of the most fundamental of human activities as every person needs to consume a quantity of fluid at least every few days. Distinctive practices in this area displayed identity on a daily basis, and behaviour shared by several people could obviously help this group to bond together by making these people appear similar and relatable, and united through shared beliefs and practices. This was surely especially true given that in antiquity drinking behaviour was thought to imply character.

Indeed, the *symposium*, *convivium* and other banquets and drinking-bouts were events where guests engaged in shared drinking, talk and entertainments, which were recognised as community-forming activities. König's recent research into Greco-Roman literary *symposia* suggests that the self-reflexive

¹⁶⁹ Plutarch, *Lucullus*, 40-41; *Pompey*, 2.5-6.

¹⁷⁰ Suetonius, *Vitellius*, 2.2.

¹⁷¹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 31.40; Suetonius, *Nero*, 48.3 with Rolfe (1951 [1913-14]) 2.176.

¹⁷² Suetonius, *Vespasian*, 19.1

nature of the *symposium* (introduced in the previous section) had a deeper purpose than merely educating its participants in proper dinner etiquette. The careful attention which was invested in reflecting upon ideal dining conduct, as a group, reflects the utility of this institution for creating a sense of group identity. König thus states that ‘the *symposium* was a way of enacting membership of a community, united by shared sympotic ethics’. The drinking scenes depicted/discussed in the conversation, poetry and art at the *symposium*, and in literary *symposia*, were thus all tools which helped to construct a complex code of manners, which in turn built a stronger, more exclusive, shared identity. After analysing a series of literary *symposia* and related phenomena, König’s research succinctly concluded:

‘Descriptions of consumption and commensality in ancient literature often draw attention to the way in which eating and drinking and talking contribute to the formation of community, and to the experience and projection of identity’.

The banquets regularly held by guilds, unions, funerary clubs and other groups served to promote communal identity in a similar manner.¹⁷³

Trier Black-Slipped ware may also imply the construction of group identity through their owners’ shared drinking practices. As argued above (see from p.252), these beakers imply that their owners shared a culture of drinking, a fondness for displaying their positive relationship with wine, and a tendency to become self-reflexive during drinking. The beakers themselves may have helped to construct a group identity through inspiring this self-reflexion via their drinking mottos, in a similar manner to the Greek drinking vessels which depict sympotic scenes to inspire the drinkers’ reflection.

Drinking behaviour could not only be used by insiders to build a shared identity for a group which they were part of, but also by outsiders to identify the notable shared characteristics of a group which they were observing. An example of the latter can be seen in Plutarch’s *Pompey*. According to Plutarch, before Pompey’s actions to combat the Mediterranean’s pirates (who were especially prominent in Cilicia), they had established a reputation which sounds

¹⁷³ König (2012) 7-10, 25, 355.

remarkably similar to the modern popular culture's stock-image of Caribbean piracy in the seventeenth century:

'More annoying than the fear which they inspired was the odious extravagance of their equipment, with their gilded sails, and purple awnings, and silvered oars, as if they rioted in their iniquity and plumed themselves upon it. Their flutes and stringed instruments and drinking-bouts along every coast, their seizures of persons in high command, and their ransoming of captured cities, were a disgrace to the Roman supremacy.'¹⁷⁴

The pirates in Longus' second-century AD Greek novel *Daphnis and Chloe* also show a fondness for drink, as fragrant wine is first in the list of items they plunder. It is also potentially significant that these violent and well-equipped pirates choose to raid a farm, rather than a more affluent type of site, just as the grapes are maturing in high autumn.¹⁷⁵

Thus in the minds of at least some non-pirates like Plutarch and Longus, the pirates' alleged rowdy drunken behaviour was a key element in the construction of a powerful and memorable group identity. This conduct served to identify pirates as a notably 'different' group, because it was considered inappropriate by the Greco-Roman upper-classes – the social group to which these authors and their audiences belonged. Obviously, outsiders such as Plutarch and Longus may have misconstrued and villainised the strange behaviour of these dubious characters upon the fringe of civilised society, in order to emphasise these differences. Yet, as argued above for Antony, there is little reason why the kernel of these characterisations could not be true, even if exaggerated. Plutarch tells us the pirates apparently prided themselves upon their drinking; this is not improbable, given that many other people in Greco-Roman society did likewise. Furthermore, his account of their noisy song-filled revelling, in a wide variety of locations, may – if true – imply that they held a degree of pride in their conduct, as they showed little attempt to hide their drinking from outsiders. Perhaps they even purposefully promoted this image on a conscious or subconscious level, intending to display their increased affluence, gained through their shared occupation of piracy.

¹⁷⁴ Plutarch, *Pompey*, 24.1-4.

¹⁷⁵ Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe*, 1.27-29.

It was also recognised that an outsider was more likely to be accepted by a group which he was not a part of if his drinking practice was comparable to this group's own. Plutarch thus presents Alcibiades as a kind of cultural chameleon, in that he could very easily fit into a new group by imitating and practising their alien customs. Plutarch explicitly notes that this included emulating drinking behaviour: in Thessaly he adopted heavy drinking, as the people in this region drank particularly heavily. Similarly in Sparta he practiced simplicity, in Ionia luxury, and in Persia lavishness; all of these things could – and probably in part were – displayed through his drinking practice. Alcibiades' manipulation worked in a similar way to the subterfuge of Dionysius II described above (see from p.244): Plutarch notes that although Alcibiades modified his outward behaviour, and thus the identity which he presented, his character never changed. The ability to temporarily emulate alien drinking conduct, without actually undergoing any actual changes in mind and soul, was therefore recognised as a useful social skill.¹⁷⁶

As implied by this example, drinking practices were also used to help construct identity on national and ethnic levels. Evidence for this dates back to Homer, where the portrayal of the Cyclopes as a very alien culture is aided by comments on the unusual elements of their drinking culture as witnessed by Odysseus and his men. The Cyclopes frequently drink milk. When they do produce wine, they do not cultivate the vine properly, but instead used wild vines. Their representative, Polyphemus, shows his inclination towards extreme drinking when he downs a large quantity of wine without a thought and then demands more. This story remained memorable throughout antiquity, and is discussed, for example in Athenaeus (he refers to Chamaeleon, who wrote around 300BC).¹⁷⁷

Subsequent Greek literature repeatedly associated the Scythians and other northern barbarians with drinking in a manner which would be considered strange, inappropriate and excessive by Greek society. The Hippocratic Corpus' *Airs, Waters, Places* describes them as milk drinkers, like the Cyclopes. Elsewhere they are particularly associated with the Greco-Roman taboo of drinking unmixed wine. Herodotus' comment that King Cleomenes of Sparta

¹⁷⁶ Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 23.4-6. Also discussed in Appendix 6 p.432 n.79.

¹⁷⁷ Homer, *Odyssey*, 9.106-15, 246-250, 345-360; Athenaeus, 11.461a-d (= Chamaeleon of Heraclea, fr.9).

drank wine in a 'Scythian fashion' – that is to say neat – highlights how, for the Greeks, Scythian identity had become a byword for such drinking, which was distanced from Greek culture and identity. Cleomenes essentially became characteristically 'Scythian' in his drinking practice. As Garnsey concludes, to the Greeks 'wine is a civilised drink, but it is the mark of a savage to drink it ... in excess, and neat'; proper sympotic drinking was part of Greek identity.¹⁷⁸ Accordingly, in this context it is of little surprise that in Plutarch's *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, the only guest who is described as having become excessively drunk (albeit at a previous party) is the Scythian Anacharsis.¹⁷⁹

What is fundamentally the same 'stock' drinking identity was also applied to the Gauls and Germans. Tacitus records that although the Germans usually drank beer, those living next to the Romans' Rhine frontier have come to love the wine which is imported; they are said to drink it to excess, displaying no self-control. He even suggests that cunning generals could exploit this vice to gain easy victories. Posidonius (preserved in Athenaeus) states that although Gallic common-people drink beer, their chieftains were obsessed with wine, which they drink unmixed and with added cumin. Plutarch notes that when the Gauls first tasted wine they became so extremely besotted with it that they fought wars in order to secure more. Ammianus Marcellinus describes the Gauls as a race greedy for wine and continual drunkenness, which has served to dull their wits. The Roman consul and writer Cassius Dio even applies this identity to a regional group living *inside* the Roman Empire itself, albeit away from its cultural 'core', when he describes the Pannonians as being barbarous and bloodthirsty due to their lack of a civilised Greco-Roman life. Among the things they lack is wine; their territory can produce only a small quantity of poor quality wine, and instead they mainly drink beer.¹⁸⁰

In comparison, Greeks and Romans often considered peoples further east than themselves to be more lavish than they themselves were. The image was

¹⁷⁸ Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places*, 18; Herodotus, 4.64-66, 6.83; Garnsey (1999) 66; Dalby (2003) s.v. 'Wine-Mixing'; Wilkins and Hill (2006) 178; König (2012) 6.

¹⁷⁹ See n.35. Note, however, 3=149b-c: Thales describes an event where Alexidemus (son of the tyrant of Miletus) had previously drunk in an inappropriate and heavy manner whilst still a boy; although Alexidemus was invited as a guest to Periander's event, he does not participate as he becomes offended before the start, and leaves in anger; Anacharsis is therefore the only true guest (i.e. who actually participates in the party) whose drunkenness is described.

¹⁸⁰ Tacitus, *Germania*, 23; Athenaeus, 4.151e-152d; Plutarch, *Camillus*, 15; Ammianus Marcellinus, 15.12.4; Cassius Dio, 49.36.4; Garnsey (1999) 65-72. On the passage by Ammianus, see further: Appendix 6 p.418; Humphries (2002) 78. On the drunkenness of barbarians, see further: Appendix 7 n.41.

probably strengthened by the fact that many of their luxury substances, and luxury practices, were imported (or said to be) from eastern lands.¹⁸¹ Thus the Hippocratic Corpus' *Airs, Waters, Places* describes Asia's people as more luxurious than those of Europe.¹⁸² Plutarch's *Cato the Younger* refers to the commonly perceived 'softening' effect of the east and its luxuries when it presents Curio's prediction that, after going on a trip to Asia Minor in order to study the area, Cato would come back to Rome more agreeable and tame from having experienced its luxuries. Even though Cato was invited to many lavish suppers, he managed to avoid fulfilling this prediction, but only with much effort – through ordering his friends to keep a close watch upon his behaviour.¹⁸³ A degree of continuity can be detected across Plutarch's *Lives* in implying more easterly armies to be significantly more lavish in their drinking practices; thus the Persian army which Alexander's Macedonians defeated, the Pontic and Armenian forces which Lucullus' Romans conquered, and Pompey's army (containing eastern levies) which Caesar's Romans defeated were all said to contain vast arrays of lavish drinking vessels and other fine dining materials.¹⁸⁴

In the Roman world, a literary *topos* shows concern that Roman soldierly virtues were contaminated through contact with eastern peoples. Sallust, in the first century BC, presented the idea that the Roman people first started to indulge seriously in heavy drinking and luxury after their army had experienced these things in Asia Minor during the First Mithridatic War.¹⁸⁵ Later, during the Roman Imperial period, the Syrian Legions attracted repeated allegations of lax behaviour, which Wheeler has established as part of this *topos*. Two allegations from Fronto in the 160s connect the Legions' moral corruption with their inappropriate drinking practices: he stated that Syria's troops were regularly drunk all day and frequently consumed wine whilst on guard duty, both of which were apparently against military discipline.¹⁸⁶ Similar beliefs in the corrosion of soldiers' national identity may be also detectable in the Greek world through Plutarch's *Agesilaus*. According to Plutarch, the Spartan general Agesilaus (who reigned as king: 400-359BC) is said to have gained much

¹⁸¹ Edwards (1993) 187.

¹⁸² Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places*, 12.

¹⁸³ Plutarch, *Cato the Younger*, 14.3-4. Note also: Edwards (1993) 22-24.

¹⁸⁴ Plutarch, *Alexander*, 16.8, 20.6-8; *Lucullus*, 34.3-4, 37.3-4; *Pompey*, 72.4.

¹⁸⁵ Sallust, *Catiline*, 11.4-11.7.

¹⁸⁶ Fronto, *Ad Verum*, 2.1.19; *Principia Historiae*, 12; Wheeler (1996) esp. 229-233, 271; Pollard (2000) 35. Discussed further in Appendix 7 p.456 n.42.

admiration and affection from his fellow citizens, as he did not befall the typical pattern of armies and generals going abroad; they frequently became corrupted by foreign customs, and accordingly changed various elements of their conduct, including their drinking behaviour.¹⁸⁷

In fact, for many Romans, foreign drinking customs could surely only be less virtuous than their own, as they had constructed an identity for themselves as the most virtuous race on earth. This supreme Roman virtue is explicitly stated by Pliny, and is also implied in Livy's introduction.¹⁸⁸ The Augustan character-assassination of Antony was accordingly able to play not just upon his excessive drinking, but also upon his identification with the Greek wine god Dionysus and his adoption of Hellenistic drinking culture, alongside his affair with the Ptolemaic Queen Cleopatra. His increased foreign identity and his reputation for inappropriate drinking were mutually-supporting in the Roman mind. Accordingly, in the first century AD, Seneca accepted the view that Antony's corruption was due to both alcohol and foreign vices.¹⁸⁹

The Greeks and Romans thus used drinking practice to create identities for other cultural groups. They attributed certain drinking practices to foreigners to help conceptualise these aliens, and to construct definite identities for them. Furthermore, in repeatedly associating foreigners with inappropriate and excessive drinking practice, Greco-Roman society thereby affirmed the importance of its own 'correct' and 'cultured' wine-drinking norms and practices. Drinking practices thus helped individuals to reassert their own national identities, and superior level of civilisation, in contrast to 'the other'. In a similar manner, König highlights how drinking practices could help individuals enter into community with past generations. By engaging in *symposia*, and participating in drinking and table-talk which emulated that described in early Greek texts (such as Homer, Plato and Xenophon), individuals connected with their cultural heritage in a tangible manner. Table-talk also frequently recounted the words of ancient authors, and the Romans also seem to have viewed feasting as a time

¹⁸⁷ Plutarch, *Agessilaus*, 19.4-5.

¹⁸⁸ Livy, 1.pr.11; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 7.130; Edwards (1993) 20-21.

¹⁸⁹ Seneca, *Epistles*, 83.25-26; Zanker (1988) 57-65. On Dionysus, see Ch.1 n.28.

to remember ancestors. Drinking contexts and specific drinking practices could thus help to strengthen an individual's sense of cultural identity.¹⁹⁰

Within a group or society, differences in drinking practices are anthropologically significant in helping to demark different statuses, according to age, role, prestige, gender and so on.¹⁹¹ Indeed, as Laurence summarises with respect to Roman society, 'the type or variety of wine might define a person's social status. Pliny [the Younger] could precisely equate the status of a guest with the quality of the wine he would serve them'. Some Romans (including Pliny the Younger himself) disapproved of this practice. Yet various hosts highlighted their own superiority by consuming better wines and food than their guests, or forcibly demarked the differing status of guests by issuing varying qualities of wine and other foodstuffs. Pliny the Elder even attests the application of this status-demarkation to medical theory: it was thought that healthy members of the lower-classes could safely drink whatever wines they wished (and could afford), but Pliny records that the aristocracy would find the thinnest Campanian wines best for their own health.¹⁹²

Although investigation of the intricacies of wine in relation to each of these statuses is beyond the scope of this thesis, wine's role in this area can be succinctly highlighted by briefly considering women. In traditional Greek culture the *symposium* was the preserve of the free adult male (debatably the *elite* adult male).¹⁹³ Although there are some exceptions to this rule,¹⁹⁴ women were typically excluded as guests – they could usually only serve as courtesans – and sympotic drinking thus helped to assert the status of males. Indeed, Plutarch's *Table-Talk* records no female guests, and in the *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men* the two women present exit the dining room before the

¹⁹⁰ König (2012) 40-43, also 80, 87, 95, 106-107, 112, 352; Laurence (2009) 109, 112; Garnsey (1999) 62-72, 79-81. Note that scholars recognise that there were no true *symposia* in the Homeric world, yet the Greeks and Romans clearly found much of relevance to the *symposium* in these texts; see for example: Athenaeus, 5.186d-193c with Wilkins (2002) 184.

¹⁹¹ Dietler (1990) 364-365.

¹⁹² Pliny the Younger, *Epistles*, 2.6; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.45; Laurence (2009) 112; Tchernia (1986) 35-36 (in the context of 28-37). On hosts serving different foods to different diners, see further: Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.91; Martial, 9.2; Carcopino (2003 [1939]) 270.

¹⁹³ Wilkins and Hill (2006) 177-178.

¹⁹⁴ For example: Plutarch, *Pyrrhus*, 5.3-6 (the Macedonian King Neoptolemus holds a revel at his sister's house; women and wives are also invited); *Demetrius*, 27.2-4 (Demetrius' Athenian courtesan Lamia hosted certain parties); *Philopoemen*, 2 (a man's wife prepares food for a guest, but it is not clear whether she joined their company). For further evidence on women at *symposia*, see Mossman (1997) 124-125, 137 n.28.

drinking becomes heavier. These two females are the only ones excluded from the male guests' ritualised toasts to each other, which the guests themselves later acknowledge has served to create a bond of group intimacy between them.¹⁹⁵

This was not the case in the Roman world, where women could attend dinner parties featuring wine; they even hosted them.¹⁹⁶ Women could even attend the *comissatio*, the Roman drinking party and closest equivalent to the Greek *symposium*, although female guests appear less common.¹⁹⁷ Yet some differences could be expected in conduct. Although at Roman banquets female guests typically reclined alongside males, at a smaller number of banquets their lower status was marked by their different dining posture. Whilst men reclined, women sometimes sat – rather than reclined – next to a male relation, in a manner similar to that which was often expected of children invited to dinner. The Romans believed that this practice was ubiquitous among their idealised early ancestors, and it implied traditional female virtue (especially a lack of promiscuous tendencies). They believed it had since lapsed into discontinuity, as part of the moral decline which they habitually attributed to Roman society.¹⁹⁸ Similarly, the Romans widely acknowledged that their idealised early ancestors had prohibited women from drinking wine.¹⁹⁹ How far these early laws and customs were a historical reality, and how far they were a later ideological construction, is ultimately uncertain. However, this legal prohibition was clearly not enforced in later times (apparently lapsing before the end of the second century BC). Ovid's description of the Anna Perenna festival attests both men and women becoming drunk *en masse* and reclining next to each other on the banks of the Tiber. Soranus records that the women of Rome were frequently having sex whilst drunk. Furthermore, there are female drinkers described in the works of Terence, Martial and Juvenal, among others.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁵ Plutarch, *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, 13=155e. On Greco-Roman toasting: Weeber (1993) s.v. 'Trinkspruch'.

¹⁹⁶ Women hosts in Rome, see for example: Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, 19; *Antony*, 54.2.

¹⁹⁷ Suetonius, *Galba*, 17.5; Petronius, 73-74; Pauly s.v. 'Comissatio'. Note also: Rolleston (1927) 111.

¹⁹⁸ Dunbabin (2003) 18-23, 114-120; Roller (2006) 153-156, 175-179. Compare, for example, Suetonius, *Augustus*, 64.3 and *Caligula*, 24.1 with Petronius, 67. Compare also with boys in Crete, Cyprus, Macedonia and Persia: Bremmer (1990) 136-137, 139.

¹⁹⁹ See Appendix 2 n.29.

²⁰⁰ Ovid, *Fasti*, 3.523-542; Soranus, *Gynaecology*, 2.44(113); Juvenal, 6.425, 9.115-117; Martial, 5.4; Terence, *Andria*, 200-246; McKinlay (1945); Tchernia (1986) 60; Weeber (1993) s.v. 'Weinberbot für Frauen'; Fleming (2001) 69-71; Austin (1985) 29, 40; Rolleston (1927)

Yet the Romans conceptualised their society's virtuous roots as one where wine was firmly associated with male identity, and abstinence with females. The fact that these early laws were repeated time and again in Roman literature implies that the underlying concepts were understandable to contemporary Romans. Accordingly, it was probably accepted by many Romans that virtuous women should consume less wine than virtuous men. Martial's implications that some women of the first century AD used substances to hide the smell of alcohol on their breath suggests that their drinking was still seen as somewhat inappropriate, and thus needed hiding.²⁰¹ Pliny's comment that in cardiac disease, a remedy of wine is safer for men than women perhaps also roots from this Roman view that larger quantities of wine were more appropriate for males.²⁰² Furthermore, Augustus' stipulation that Julia be prohibited from consuming wine whilst in exile may reflect his attempt to impose this traditional female ideal upon her, in order to combat her gross immorality.²⁰³ Similarly, Horace's Neobule and Ovid's Hero lament the fact that they are prohibited wine; their families thus presumably considered wine to be bad for these women, and imposed traditional female abstinence upon them.²⁰⁴

THE ATMOSPHERE FOR SOCIALISING

The creation of a suitable atmosphere was a fundamental concern of Greco-Roman banqueting. Dupont elaborates on this in Roman society:

'At dinner-parties, good humour – for which the Romans had a special term, *hilaritas* – was not an optional extra: it was a must. On stepping into the dining room, guests had to leave their cares behind and bring no worries about politics or wars to the table. ... Hosts too had to look relaxed'.²⁰⁵

111. Date of the prohibition's lapse: the latest recorded datable instance of this law being implemented is by the Judge Gnaeus Domitius, who was judicially active around 130BC (Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.90 with *Pauly*, s.v. 'Domitius'); but note a female heavy drinker in Plautus' *Curculio* in the early second century BC (see Ch.1 n.50).

²⁰¹ Martial, 1.87, 5.4; Rolleston (1927) 111.

²⁰² Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.50-51. See further Ch.2 n.65.

²⁰³ Suetonius, *Augustus*, 65; Weeber (1993) s.v. 'Weinberbot für Frauen'.

²⁰⁴ Horace, *Odes*, 3.12; Ovid, *Heroides*, 19.14; McKinlay (1953b) 863.

²⁰⁵ Dupont (1992 [1989]) 282-283. Dupont principally cites: Horace, *Odes*, 3.8; *Satires*, 2.8.35-39. Note that, largely in contrast to this section, the constructive uses of drinking for work, politics and warfare are considered later in this thesis, in Appendices 6 and 7.

Appropriate drinking and conversation were major factors in the creation of this atmosphere, and, as Dupont concludes, 'a successful dinner was a collective achievement, the work of both guests and host'. It is for this reason that even the teetotal Seneca permitted his conceptualised ideal man (the sage/*sapiens*) occasional bouts of mild intoxication. He was allowed to come close to drunkenness when this was 'for a friend's sake'; that is, when it was done so as not to break the atmosphere a banquet.²⁰⁶

Although this atmosphere was the responsibility of all present, it was the especial obligation of the host to pursue and maintain it under *all* conditions. Thus when Cato the Younger resolved on suicide after defeat at the battle of Utica, Plutarch states that Cato tried to hide this from his guests when banqueting. When he accidentally ruined the conversation by leading them to suspect correctly that he had decided upon this path, he attempted to dismiss their fears and revive the conversation.²⁰⁷ In a similar manner, in Plutarch's *Artaxerxes*, after one guest at an aristocratic Persian banquet tricks another into drunkenly revealing a weighty secret, the convivial atmosphere is destroyed and turns to sorrow as the guests realise that this revelation means that the King will now have to kill him. The host then desperately tries to revive the mood, by telling them to avoid heavy conversation and instead turn back to food and drink.²⁰⁸ Furthermore, Thais' speech at a banquet hosted by Alexander convinces him to burn Xerxes' house by imploring him to think of his guests' pleasure; their enjoyment was supposed to be a key concern for the host.²⁰⁹

A wide range of interlinked elements were thought to comprise this good banqueting atmosphere, including merriment, friendliness, humour, relaxation, and so on. Many of the banquets and drinking-bouts described in Plutarch's *Lives* and by Suetonius are thus attributed various elements of this atmosphere.²¹⁰ In the English language, the elements can be broadly and

²⁰⁶ See n.43.

²⁰⁷ See n.83.

²⁰⁸ Plutarch, *Artaxerxes*, 15.

²⁰⁹ Plutarch, *Alexander*, 38. This is also discussed in Appendix 6 p.433.

²¹⁰ For example (in addition to those mentioned in the body-text): Plutarch, *Numa*, 15.2 (dinners with fun tricks); *Cato the Elder*, 25.2-3 (friendly, merry and sociable banquets); *Pyrrhus*, 20.3-4 (witty attacks at dinner); *Sulla*, 2.2-3 (jest, drinking and good-fellowship at dinner; on this passage, see further n.89); *Crassus*, 33.1-4 (joy at banquet); *Alexander*, 38 (merry drinking-bout); 39.4 (humorous people at drinking parties); *Cato the Younger*, 9.1-2 (joke at the end of supper); *Demosthenes*, 20.3 (joy in drunken revel); *Cicero*, 36.2-3 (agreeable and pleasing banquets); *Antony*, 32.3-4 (friendliness and joking); 59.1-4 (drunken buffoonery at banquets); *Dion*, 7 (drinking-bout with drunkenness, joking, music, dancing and buffoonery; also

conveniently combined under the umbrella-term of a 'convivial atmosphere'; this section will therefore use this term, in this way, to aid investigation.

As discussed in the first section of this chapter, Plutarch's *Advice about Keeping Well* highlighted the importance of shared wine consumption in creating good cheer and promoting friendship among a party. The shared activity of drinking could be representative of democratic equality, and guests who abstained risked appearing offensive or tiresome to others. It was acknowledged that, although wine was not absolutely essential, it was far more difficult to maintain merriment without wine; Plutarch advises that a teetotal man should make efforts to compensate. For example, the abstainer could deploy good humour, such as witty remarks, in defence of his behaviour; this would serve to soften the otherwise cold demeanour which he had presented through his abstinence from the merriment inherent in drinking. However, wine was considered so significant to the atmosphere of a party that Plutarch's advice was to strive to join in with the drinking whenever possible (whenever it would not significantly hinder your health), even if this meant making notable alterations to your accustomed daily life in preparation for a banquet.²¹¹

Plutarch's *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men* also shows similar ideas. On the way to dinner, the fictional Thales discussed the elements which must be considered in order to create a convivial atmosphere at a banquet. Company was argued to be most important, but wine was implied to hold second place. It is accepted that both of these will make the party significantly more enjoyable if they are good. But good company should be the main concern as, although unsavoury wine can be ignored and water consumed instead, boorish guests cannot easily be ignored and they give the others headaches.²¹² Thales then considers banqueting in Egyptian society, where, he claims, they exhibited a skeleton to the guests. Although Thales thought this practice had pros and

discussed on p.298 n.286, and in Appendix 6 p.422 n.32); Galba, 12.1-3 (laughter rather than anger at banquets; c.f. Suetonius, *Claudius*, 32); *Artaxerxes*, 26.3-5 (supper with sport and jest); Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 61.6 (jokes and jesters at *convivium*); *Caligula*, 17.2 (the Saturnalia [which featured feasting] fostered public merriment), 27.4 (host trying to rouse a dejected man to gaiety and jesting by a great show of affability), 32 (feasting associated with relaxation and amusement; laughter at a *convivium*); *Claudius*, 8 (jesters and guests commit pranks against each other at the *cenae* of Caligula; also discussed on p.293 n.268, and Appendix 6 p.440 n.116), 32 (c.f. Plutarch, *Galba*, 12.1-3); *Domitian*, 14.1 (witty ridicule at a *cena*); *Titus*, 7.1-2 (implies that the ideal *convivium* is a pleasant one with good company, rather than extravagant); *Rhetoricians*, 5 (humour leading to friendship at drinking parties).

²¹¹ See n.28.

²¹² See n.141.

cons, his objection is based along the above lines. The skeleton is effectively an inappropriate dining companion, which hinders a time dedicated to merriment. It discourages enjoyment and drinking, with the latter being a key agent in creating a merry atmosphere.²¹³

Later in this same work, during the fictional banquet itself, Solon is noted to be abstaining from wine; this is a clear breach of etiquette which the other guests find offensive in the way which *Advice about Keeping Well* predicted. This scandal is made worse when one guest notes that Solon had composed a poem which praised the role of wine in bringing cheer to men. Mnesiphilus, a close friend of Solon, is asked to defend Solon's abstinence. He agrees that wine was indeed essential for groups of strangers; they needed it to relax and soften them, therefore 'breaking the ice', and creating an atmosphere conducive to friendship. Yet he subsequently argues that well-acquainted groups could create this atmosphere without wine, if needed. This argument seems plausible, but it is uncertain whether Mnesiphilus' comments are meant to represent ideas which Plutarch wished to disseminate, or are merely presented as sophistry in defence of the fictional Solon's actions.²¹⁴ In either case, wine was perceived as almost essential in creating an appropriate atmosphere for most groups of people, and of some degree of use – even if it was not vital – for very well-acquainted parties.

Plutarch's *Lives* also present numerous comments indicating the perceived importance of wine in constructing a proper convivial atmosphere. He implies the indispensable role of drinking in creating fundamental daily merriment when he notes that 'not even Lycurgus himself was immoderately severe; indeed ... [he] introduced seasonable jesting into their [Spartan] drinking parties and like diversions, to sweeten, as it were, their hardships and meagre fare'.²¹⁵ The extreme power of wine in fostering a constructive convivial atmosphere, even in adverse situations, is highlighted by Plutarch's *Brutus*. In this work, one of Brutus' banquets falls into conflict and awkwardness when Flavonius, a cynic philosopher, breaches etiquette by attending the party without an invitation, and

²¹³ Plutarch, *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, 2=148a-b. On the Egyptian skeleton, see also p.307 with n.327.

²¹⁴ See n.36.

²¹⁵ Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, 25.2. Note also: 12, in the communal messes of Sparta and Crete, the give and take of jest is conducted so as to not give displeasure or abuse, and the victim can ask a jester to stop if he goes too far.

– when Brutus does allow him to join – he reclines in a much higher-status place than the one he was directed to. Yet Plutarch subsequently tells us that later ‘over the wine mirth and jest abounded, seasoned with wit and philosophy’. Thus when both wine and philosophy were appropriately combined, even animosity could be disarmed and a constructive atmosphere fostered.²¹⁶

Even especially restrained banquets aimed at creating this atmosphere in the same manner. Plutarch idealises Sertorius’ banquets, telling us that were *always* characterised by mirth and merriment, even though he had especially high standards of decorum and restraint. Moderate wine drinking is implied to have contributed to creating such a merry yet restrained banquet, as Sertorius is noted to have considered drunkenness to be disgraceful, and thus would not keep company with people who became drunk.²¹⁷ Cleomenes, Crassus and Eumenes (the latter whilst he was besieged at Nora) are said to have hosted notably frugal banquets. Plutarch felt them noteworthy cases as, in their guests’ eyes, these hosts manage to make up for their lack of expenditure because they still managed to promote a good convivial atmosphere. In two of these accounts good conversation is noted as the key factor behind this atmosphere, and one also notes the role of moderate wine drinking (where anyone could drink if they wished, but no one was compelled to).²¹⁸

The final section of Seneca’s *Tranquillity of Mind* also praises highly the convivial atmosphere which wine created. Here, Seneca urges his readers to occasionally consume enough wine to create mild intoxication, especially when this was done alongside a change of place and in festive company, such as would be experienced by a guest at a banquet in another man’s house. He advises that this intoxication should not be too extreme, nor done too often, but when moderation was deployed it was thought to offer the benefits of promoting an atmosphere of relaxing and festive leisure. This was thought to aid in the relaxation of the mind after heavy work, the promotion of happiness, and in forgetting troubles; all of these carried the subsequent benefit of revivifying the man for more productive future work. As Seneca memorably summarises,

²¹⁶ Plutarch, *Brutus*, 34.4.

²¹⁷ Plutarch, *Sertorius*, 26.3-6.

²¹⁸ Plutarch, *Crassus*, 3.1; *Eumenes*, 11.1-2; *Cleomenes*, 13.3-5. See also n.162.

‘there are times when [the mind] must be drawn into rejoicing and freedom, and gloomy sobriety must be banished for a while’.²¹⁹

Considering separately some of the elements which comprised this convivial atmosphere leads us to a deeper understanding of wine’s social significances.

Happiness, Pleasure and Celebration

Happiness, pleasure and other near-synonyms were considered to be one of the fundamental aspects of a good banquet. Aemilius Paulus is thus said to have described the main aim of the banquet host as: ‘to give most pleasure to the company’.²²⁰ Drinking wine with friends was widely considered to be an activity which was pleasant and promoted much happiness, and was thus a significant element at social events.

Admittedly however, this property can be applied – to an extent – to food and drink in general. In Plutarch’s *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, Cleodorus argues that pleasures derived from eating and drinking are the most justifiable of bodily pleasures, and Diocles states that without food and drink ‘life will have a monotonous sameness’.²²¹ Similarly, *Table-Talk* implies that our souls feel pleasure when eating and drinking in general.²²² *Advice about Keeping Well* lists pleasure among the reasons why people eat and drink excessively or overly lavishly,²²³ and Plutarch concludes that Lucullus took pleasure from his behaviour in later life, which included lavish and heavy eating, drinking, banquets and drinking-bouts.²²⁴ According to Suetonius, the heavy drinking Emperor Tiberius took special pleasure in socialising with his Greek companions over dinner. He conversed with them – presumably over wine – discussing various intellectual subjects which he had spent the day preparing.²²⁵

Furthermore, Greek society’s belief that banqueting in general led to great happiness is underlined by the famous anecdote of Solon’s advice to Croesus, when he asserted that a man’s life cannot be judged truly happy until his death

²¹⁹ See n.45.

²²⁰ Plutarch, *Aemilius*, 28.3-5.

²²¹ Plutarch, *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, 15=158b-159a.

²²² Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 5.pr=672f-673a.

²²³ Plutarch, *Advice about Keeping Well*, 6=124d-125b.

²²⁴ Plutarch, *Lucullus*, 38.2-4, 41.

²²⁵ Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 56.

is known. His judgement that Cleobis and Biton were among the happiest of men was based on the fact that after they safely took their mother to sacrifice, and after feasting with her, they then painlessly died. Both sacrificing (illustrating piety) and banqueting with their mother (highlighting commensality) were assumed to have been very happy experiences.²²⁶ Similarly, in his *Flamininus*, Plutarch implies that pleasure will probably follow and increase along with communal banqueting (δειπνον) and drinking-bouts (ποτός).²²⁷

Yet wine and its intoxicating properties were considered especially powerful in promoting enjoyment. Although in a letter Seneca condemns drunkenness as only a short-lived pleasure unfit for the wise man ('a single hour of hilarious madness [paid for] by a sickness of many days'), his attitude to more moderate wine consumption was very different.²²⁸ In *Tranquillity of Mind*, Seneca similarly condemned excess drinking, but promoted moderate wine consumption above all else for the necessary task of regularly returning pleasure to a man's mind (as discussed above); Seneca's concept of moderation here explicitly included occasional mild intoxication. As seen in Chapter 2, Galen also provided similar advice in *The Soul's Dependence on the Body*.²²⁹ Plutarch surely had comparable beliefs. In *Advice to the Bride and Groom* he uses wine drinking as an example of a situation characterised by enjoyment (he advises against using the lyre to accompany drinking, as it should accompany grief and anger, rather than pleasure).²³⁰ Furthermore, several Trier Black-Slipped beakers display mottos attesting the enjoyable nature of drinking-bouts. These include, for example, 'enjoy me' (*frui me*), 'sweet' (*suavis*) and 'rejoice!' (*gaude*). The former probably refers to the wine held within the vessel, the second probably to either the wine or the whole context of socialising, and the third to the general merriment (it may have also been a toast).²³¹

Plutarch's *Lives* put these views behind the words and actions of many other people. For example, upon the eve of war, Pyrrhus and his friend Cineas reflect

²²⁶ Herodotus, 1.31; Plutarch, *Solon*, 27.

²²⁷ Plutarch, *Flamininus*, 11.1-2: '... they betook themselves to banqueting and carousing/drinking with one another. And here, their pleasure naturally increasing, they were moved to reason and discourse about Greece' (πρὸς δεῖπνα καὶ πότους ἐτρέποντο μετ' ἀλλήλων. ἐν ᾧ καὶ μᾶλλον, ὡς εἰκός, ἡδομένοις ἐπήει λογίζεσθαι καὶ διαλέγεσθαι περὶ τῆς Ἑλλάδος).

²²⁸ Seneca, *Epistles*, 59.14-15; Richardson-Hay (2001) 35.

²²⁹ Galen: see Ch.2 n.42.

²³⁰ Plutarch, *Advice to the Bride and Groom*, 38=143d.

²³¹ *RIB*, 2.6.2498.10-12, 21; Mudd (2015) 89; Mudd (2014) 98-101. Note that 'sweet' (*suavis*) may also be a pet-name given to a lover. On this ware, see further n.118.

upon what they will do when they have accomplished their goals. Their ideal of the great happiness, which they look forward to, consists of spending days reclined at table, drinking heavily, and talking only of matters which amuse each other.²³² Similarly, Dionysius II, the heavy drinking tyrant of Syracuse, implied his father to be comparatively unhappy, as he had neglected periods when happy men were busy drinking together, and instead spent this time composing poems and tragedies.²³³ Plutarch also notes the Scythian warriors' practice of twanging their bowstrings whilst drinking, as drunkenness was thought to bring pleasure, which in turn banished their warrior courage.²³⁴ Furthermore, he records that when wine was first imported from Italy to the Gauls, 'they admired the drink so much, and were all so beside themselves with the novel pleasure which it gave' that entire tribes launched wars to acquire land suitable to grow grapes, and thus secure regular access to this source of happiness.²³⁵

Plutarch thought that the amount of pleasure a drinker received was inversely proportional to the amount consumed. Thus he records that King Artaxerxes of Persia, when dying of thirst and having been given vile and polluted water to drink, 'swore by the gods that he had never drunk wine, or the lightest and purest water, with so much pleasure'.²³⁶ At the other extreme, in *Advice about Keeping Well*, Plutarch gives longer-term advice. He argues that pleasure-seeking people, who rank experiencing the pleasures of food and wine most highly, should be among those who think most carefully about their health, and are most keen to avoid excesses. His logic is that health is necessary for the experience of pleasure, and excesses hinder health and lead to illness. An example he provides is effectively that of a hangover: after an extreme debauch, with copious pleasures including food and drink, anything can cause an upset stomach (as it loses its intrinsic agreeableness and freshness), and thus eating and drinking have less pleasure. He thus urges people to reflect upon how, for the brief pleasure of a drink or a social party, they can throw

²³² Plutarch, *Pyrrhus*, 14.6-8. Note that Pyrrhus thus realises ambition is leading away from this happiness, as he could instead already be living this happy life; c.f. *Demetrius*, 52; Duff (1999) 115-118. See also Appendix 6 n.34.

²³³ Plutarch, *Timoleon*, 15.3-4.

²³⁴ Plutarch, *Demetrius*, 19; *Advice about Keeping Well*, 20=132f-133f. This is discussed also on Appendix 6 p.418, and Appendix 6 p.456.

²³⁵ Plutarch, *Camillus*, 15. On Gauls and wine, see further: p.273 with n.180.

²³⁶ Plutarch, *Artaxerxes*, 12.2-4. Note Seneca, *Epistles*, 12.4-5 states that the last drink is the most pleasant for the heavy drinker, as it completes his drunkenness.

away their health and thus their future ability to experience further pleasures.²³⁷ The preface to book six of *Table-Talk* likewise highlights how excess wine has consequences upon the next day including ruining a man's happiness, whereas moderate drinking at dinner – in the manner of Plato and his Academy – has no such ill effects.²³⁸ Plutarch's *On Exile* offers a summary of wine's ambiguous capacity to promote pleasure: excess ultimately caused misery, but an appropriate amount of well-mixed wine made lives more pleasant.²³⁹

Plutarch followed a very similar line to the advice which Seneca offered to other philosophical authorities. In *Epistle* 83, Seneca advised that if a philosopher wished to convince people away from drunkenness in the most effective manner, he should tackle their main motivation for excess – the pursuit of pleasure – and turn this motivation against them. Philosophers should thus 'demonstrate that what men call pleasures are punishments as soon as they have exceeded due bounds'.²⁴⁰ Accordingly, although Seneca's *Tranquillity of Mind* stressed that *moderate* intoxication produced happiness, it also stressed that *excess* would only promote an evil habit. Yet the mere fact that Plutarch and Seneca had to argue their cases implies that many inhabitants of the Greco-Roman world either did not hold comparable beliefs, or simply did not care, and thus often drank wine excessively in pursuit of further short-term pleasure.

Wine's perceived link with happiness was thought to work both ways; not only did drinking help create a merry atmosphere, but atmospheres of significant celebration called for drinking. Lavish drinking was considered more appropriate at celebratory events. Horace made a point of celebrating significant personal and religious festivals with choice vintage wines.²⁴¹ Galen notes that good-quality wines were served at 'a drinking party, at a religious festival, at a wedding, or indeed any other kind of celebration'.²⁴² Cato even gave copious quantities of wine (3.5 *congi* per head; c.11.5L) to his slaves to celebrate the Saturnalia and the Compitalia.²⁴³

²³⁷ Plutarch, *Advice about Keeping Well*, 8=126b-d, 9=126d-f, 11-12=128c-e; Van Hoof (2010) 226-227.

²³⁸ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 6.pr=686a-c.

²³⁹ Plutarch, *On Exile*, 4=600d; Van Hoof (2010) 128.

²⁴⁰ Seneca, *Epistles*, 83.27.

²⁴¹ Horace, *Odes*, 3.8, 3.28; Dupont (1992 [1989]) 214.

²⁴² See Ch.2 n.435.

²⁴³ Cato, *On Agriculture*, 57.

Plutarch presents this merry drinking behaviour as an almost inevitable reaction from the soul, in response to joy (especially when this was unexpected). Thus he writes of the reaction of Antigonus II Gonatas, once he finally succeeded – after much effort – in capturing the strategically important citadel of Corinth:

‘Thus master of the place, he could not contain himself for joy, but drank and disported himself in the streets, and with music-girls in his train and garlands on his head, old man that he was and acquainted with so great vicissitudes of fortune, revelled through the market-place, greeting and clasping hands with all who met him. Thus we see that neither grief nor fear transports and agitates the soul as much as joy that comes unexpectedly.’²⁴⁴

In a similar manner, Plutarch describes the revolutionary army of Syracuse, who achieved a notable victory against the tyrant Dionysius – who they were trying to overthrow – when they defeated a fleet of ships sent to supply Dionysius’ faction. Even though they were still fighting a war, and were besieging Dionysius’ supporters in the acropolis, the whole revolutionary army turn to celebration. Plutarch explains that ‘they were made wanton by their victory, and in their utter lack of discipline turned their rejoicing into drinking-bouts and mad carousals’. Even the generals were reluctant to order their men to stop, and ultimately joined in the drinking themselves. Predictably, this lack of military sense led to catastrophe, as Dionysius’ faction used this opportunity to attack with great effect. Again, Plutarch presents the power of unexpected joy in almost inevitably promoting drinking and related celebration; resisting celebratory drinking is implied to be very hard to resist.²⁴⁵

Numerous examples of wine drinking which formed a part of celebrations accordingly occur in Plutarch’s and Suetonius’ biographical works. Roman armies typically celebrated victorious encounters immediately after retiring from battle by drinking in their tents, whilst taking supper, accompanied by friendly conversation, the singing of victory paeans, and eventually gentle sleep.²⁴⁶ Similarly, generals celebrated great military victories with various celebrations, including wine drinking and lavish feasts. Yet the success had to be great and

²⁴⁴ Plutarch, *Aratus*, 17.3-5.

²⁴⁵ Plutarch, *Dion*, 41. Discussed also on Appendix 7 p.455 n.38, and Appendix 7 p.456 n.41.

²⁴⁶ Plutarch, *Marius*, 20.1-2. Note also: *Aemilius*, 22.3; *Pelopidas*, 33.1-4 (a fourth-century BC Greek army).

decisive enough to justify the merriment. A leader who used such means to celebrate even the most minor successes and good news during a war could be seen as guilty of laughable overreaction; Plutarch attributed such behaviour to Metellus, and Suetonius to Nero. At the opposite extreme were the celebrations of a formal triumph in Rome, which typically included lavish public banquets and feasts, alongside a variety of other events. Caesar served copious Falernian and Chian wines to large numbers of people at the public banquets celebrating each of his triumphs (he also provided Lesbian and Marmertine, in addition to the above two wines, at the banquet celebrating his triumph over Spain in 46BC).²⁴⁷ Similarly, Plautus' Pseudolus declares his triumph with a celebratory drink which ultimately leads to gross drunkenness; the matter in which he is victorious is only a wager, although the affair is characterised as warfare.²⁴⁸

However, such celebrations were considered unfit for civil conflicts, no matter how decisive, due to the nation's loss of life. Suetonius characterises Vitellius as monstrous when he drinks heavily and joyously over the aftermath of a civil war battlefield. Shortly after, just before triumphantly entering the city of Rome, Vitellius hosted an all-night festival (*pervigilium*), which probably featured copious feasting. This was most likely in celebration of his recent civil war victory, and Suetonius interprets it as indicative of his 'bad taste and arrogance'. Similarly, Plutarch criticises Philip II for displaying insolent joy when he celebrated his important victory against the Greeks at the Battle of Chaeronea (near-enough a civil conflict in Plutarch's eyes) by drinking to drunkenness and revelling over the dead bodies.²⁴⁹

Festive eating and drinking were also employed to celebrate politically, religiously and personally important events. In Rome, public banquets were frequently hosted not only to commemorate triumphs, but also to mark events ranging from state religious festivals to funerals of individuals. Sulla was said to

²⁴⁷ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.97; Plutarch, *Sertorius*, 22.1-3; *Antony*, 33.4; Suetonius, *Nero*, 42.1-2. This practice also attributed to the Parthians: Plutarch, *Crassus*, 33.1-4. Further on banquets to mark victories and triumphs, see for example: Plutarch, *Aemilius*, 28.3-5, 32.5, 33.1-2; *Lucullus*, 34.3-4, 37.3-4; *Caesar*, 55.1-2; Suetonius, *Caesar*, 38.1-2; *Vitellius*, 10.3.

²⁴⁸ Plautus, *Pseudolus*, 1051; Stewart (2008) 84.

²⁴⁹ Suetonius, *Vitellius*, 10.3 with Rolfe (1951 [1913-14]) 1.486, 2.262 and Lewis and Short (1879) s.v. 'Pervigilium'; Plutarch, *Demosthenes*, 20.3 (note that this battle between Macedonians and Greeks was apparently near-enough a civil conflict in Plutarch's eyes; indeed some considered the Macedonians to be ethnically Greek as noted, for example, by Herodotus, 5.20-22; compare however with the opposite view of Demosthenes, *Third Philippic*, 9.30-31). On drinking over corpses, note also: Suetonius, *Nero*, 34.3-4.

have served vintage wine (over forty years old) at a public banquet to commemorate his dedication of a tenth of his property to Hercules. Rather than a formal banquet, some celebrations instead featured distributions of food, drink, and other goods to the masses. Statius thus records the abundant quantities of wine distributed at a set of games held by Domitian.²⁵⁰

The Greek and Hellenistic world followed similar practice, with wine and banqueting being commonplace at celebrations and festivals. For example, the Greeks celebrated Flamininus' declaration of the 'Freedom of the Greeks' with banqueting and drinking-bouts. A feast was held to celebrate the reconciliation of the King of Egypt and his sister Cleopatra. Newly elected senators in Lycurgan Sparta were said by Plutarch to traditionally receive several meals (provided by each of his relatives, friends and mess-group) in celebration. A banquet – featuring copious spiced wine – was held to celebrate the victory of Phocion's son at the Panathenaic festival. Plutarch also implies that festivals which used wine were common and popular in Greek cities (hence why the Lesbians gifted Alcibiades copious wine so that he could show liberality to the masses), and Macedonian festivities featured copious wine (hence the conduct of Alexander and his army on the way to, and at, Gedrosia).²⁵¹

The use of wine as a key part of both public banquets and distributions can be seen in an inscription from the first century AD, which records the numerous benefactions given by Epaminondas, a wealthy individual, to the city Acraephia (in Boeotia). In one year, as part of the festival in honour of Apollo Ptous, he is said to have given half a jug of wine with a basket of grain to each citizen, resident and property-holding alien. He also continuously offered sweet wine (γλυκισμούς), banquets, snacks and meats, as well as holding lunches (ἄριστον) for several groups. Later, he distributed a snack containing sweet wine (ἐγλύκισεν) to all of those in the theatre during a contest. Later still, he helped to fund a public banquet, and distributed old wine and money to each

²⁵⁰ Futrell (2006) 111-113. Wine at public entertainments, banquets and festivals in Rome, see for example: Statius, *Silvae*, 1.6.9-50; Plutarch, *Sulla*, 35.1-3; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.97; Aulus Gellius, 2.24.2. Conversely, Augustus was presented as unusual when he refused to pander the masses by distributing wine during a shortage in Suetonius, *Augustus*, 42; on this see further Appendix 1 n.12.

²⁵¹ Plutarch, *Flamininus*, 11.1-2; *Caesar*, 49.2; *Lycurgus*, 26.3-4; *Phocion*, 20; *Alcibiades*, 12.1; *Alexander*, 67; Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel (1992 [1989]) 107. See also: Athenaeus, 5.196-203b (on a day-long procession of Ptolemy II, featuring with much wine and drinking paraphernalia) which is summarised and discussed by König (2014) 109-111; Plutarch, *Theseus*, 23.2-3 (on the vintage festival in Athens); *Dion*, 29.1 (wine commonplace in sacrifices at Syracuse).

participant. The distribution of sweet wine, twice referred to here, was widespread practice at festivals in the Greek world. Often called *glukismos* or *glukus* in inscriptions, the sweet wine was frequently the key element of a larger snack. This light meal was typically separate from the public banquet proper, which sometimes followed later in the day.²⁵²

Birthday celebrations were thought to justify a banquet of unusual splendour, including copious drinking. One of Brutus' birthday parties included competitive toasting with large beakers of wine.²⁵³ Weddings did likewise; Antony attended a wedding feast where he ate and drank so excessively that the next day he vomited in full public view, and the nuptial festivities of Demetrius II and Nicaea of Corinth featured days of pleasurable banquets and entertainments.²⁵⁴

The use of wine in celebrations continued well into the Christian era. The early sixth-century Christian rhetor Choricus of Gaza thus describes this city holding regular public festivals, and specifically records two such events which were held to celebrate the inauguration of two (new or restored) churches. All of these events included lavish food and wine; Choricus thus states regarding one of the church openings: 'this is a lavish [public] festival, and the tables everywhere are laden with delicacies, so we will need many cooks and many wine-pourers to pour the wine in a refined and elegant manner'. Choricus recognised these events, with their drinking, promoted pleasure. He believed in this to such an extent that he describes how he took his own son to a public banquet, because he thought his son depressed and he reckoned that this would give him much-needed pleasure.²⁵⁵

Wine was considered pleasurable enough not only to be used in celebration, but also as a reward, an honour, or a token of gratitude. Many people felt that great deeds, accomplished through toil, deserved and justified ease, luxury and happiness, such as that which wine offered. Plutarch states this explicitly, albeit without specifically mentioning wine itself, in his *Dion*. He describes 'captains of

²⁵² *IG*, 7.2712 (esp. 60-78); translation and commentary in Oliver (1971); Schmitt Pantel (1992) 263, 266, 344-338; König (2012) 82-84.

²⁵³ Plutarch, *Antony*, 73.3; *Brutus*, 24.3-4, 40.1-2. Note also: *Cato the Younger*, 2.5-6; *Brutus*, 40.2.

²⁵⁴ Plutarch, *Antony*, 9.4; *Aratus*, 17.3-5. Note also: Plutarch, *Theseus*, 30.3; *Lycurgus*, 15.3-5; *Pericles*, 7.4-5 (discussed further in Appendix 6 p.420). See also Ch.2 n.435.

²⁵⁵ Choricus of Gaza, *Preliminary Talks*, 1.1-3 with *Orations*, 1; *Preliminary Talks*, 2 with *Orations*, 2; *Declamations*, 5.5-7; *Declamations*, 6.7-8, 47; Cameron (1993) 175-176; König (2012) 197-180 n.10. On Choricus and his world, and for translations of the *Preliminary Talks* and *Declamations*, see: Penella (2009).

mercenaries and paid soldiers, who find in their daily feasting, and other enjoyments, a solace for their toils and perils'. This comment served to highlight popular shock when Dion was seen to break expectations: after his remarkable successes, he continued to live and dine in moderation and simplicity, rather than taking the rewards which it was felt he had earned.²⁵⁶ Furthermore, Plutarch's Pyrrhus and Demetrius also realised that – beyond the pursuit of virtue – securing a life of happiness and luxury is the most which a man can hope to achieve in return from his life's work. They specifically desired a life filled with pleasurable drinking-bouts, but instead they continued their ambitious warfare long after they could have retired to such a life. Eventually they meet their downfall, and thus realise too late that they have failed to reap fully the deserved reward of their successes.²⁵⁷

More expected behaviour is represented by Plutarch's accounts of Lucullus and Demetrius (the same Demetrius as above, considered in a different light). Many contemporaries thought that Lucullus had retired from a successful public life, to pursue instead a regime of daily grand banquets with copious wine, because he believed his life's toils meant that he was now entitled to experience pleasure.²⁵⁸ Regarding Demetrius, Plutarch states that due to his accomplishments in warfare, he 'made himself so great that men thought him worthy of greater things than he desired'; his frequent revelling and debauchery was thus widely considered understandable as something deserved.²⁵⁹ Similarly, Plato's *Republic* – reiterated by Plutarch – claimed that the Orphic and Eleusinian Mysteries promised virtuous people everlasting intoxication as their reward in the afterlife. The accuracy of this comment is of little significance compared to the implications of this suggestion. Although both of these authors ridicule the idea of such a base reward, many ancient people doubtless found this an appealing concept, hence why this rumour regarding the Mysteries' beliefs had gained traction.²⁶⁰ In all of these cases, many people are implied to have considered pleasurable luxuries, including wine consumption, to be a deserved reward for greatness.

²⁵⁶ Plutarch, *Dion*, 52.1-2.

²⁵⁷ Plutarch, *Pyrrhus*, 14.6-8; *Demetrius*, 52. See also: n.232.

²⁵⁸ Plutarch, *Lucullus*, 38.2-4.

²⁵⁹ Plutarch, *Comparison of Demetrius and Antony*, 1.3.

²⁶⁰ Plato, *Republic*, 2.363; Plutarch, *Comparison of Cimon and Lucullus*, 1.1-3.

Caesar is thus said to have repeatedly rewarded his troops for great victories by relieving them of all duties and giving them full licence to revel as they wished. Similarly, after they loyally endured the great hardship of famine and still managed to capture the city of Gomphi, Caesar temporarily relaxed military discipline and allowed them to revel with copious wine and food as they marched. Suetonius also records that after the civil wars resulting in Vespasian becoming emperor, the many soldiers turned to a life of sensual vices, presumably including drunkenness. Some regarded this lifestyle as a deserved reward for their victory; others considered it suitable consolation for their defeat.²⁶¹ In a similar manner, invitations to dinner with higher status people could be highly valued for the social prestige it bestowed upon the guest.²⁶² As such, inviting somebody to dinner could be a sign of gratitude. Indeed, when envoys delivered to Nero all of the prizes from all cities holding lyric contests, he invited them to dine with him. Similarly, Plutarch notes that when Themistocles lived at the Persian court he received greater honours than any other foreigner; these included participating in royal dinners.²⁶³ People also celebrated and gave thanks to gods and mortal leaders who they believed had aided them, by giving offerings of food and drink; Dion and Marius received such honours for their military victories.²⁶⁴

Finally, it should be noted that wine could further help to promote an atmosphere of merriment as many people clearly found the sight of drunken behaviour amusing, and some also felt compulsion to join in with conviviality even when they themselves were not drunk. Meton of Tarentum was said to have come to an assembly pretending to be a drunken reveller (his aim was to illustrate the fun which would be denied to the citizenry if they pursued war by inviting Pyrrhus to be their champion). When the citizens saw him, Plutarch explains 'then, as will happen in a throng of free people not given to decorum, some clapped their hands at sight of him, and others laughed, but none tried to

²⁶¹ Suetonius, *Caesar*, 67.1, *Vespasian*, 8.2; Plutarch, *Caesar*, 41.3. Note also: Alexander is said to have rewarded a Paeonian captain for slaying an enemy by drinking to his health and gifting him a golden beaker; Plutarch, *Alexander*, 39.1-2.

²⁶² Suetonius, *Caligula*, 39.2; *Vespasian*, 2.3.

²⁶³ Suetonius, *Nero*, 22.3; Plutarch, *Themistocles*, 29.4, 29.7.

²⁶⁴ Plutarch, *Dion*, 29.1 (wine and foods offered to him by the liberated Syracusans, in celebration and as thanks, as if he is a god); *Marius*, 27.5-6 (due to his triumph over the Germans, the people, in their personal celebrations at home, offered libations and food to him as if he were a god). C.f. *Pompey*, 57.1-3 (Italian towns celebrate Pompey's recovery from illness in a similar way).

stop him'.²⁶⁵ Similarly, those watching comedies clearly found depictions of drunken behaviour to be funny: the final scenes of Aristophanes' *Wasps* and Plautus' *Pseudolus* presents Philocleon's and Pseudolus' drunken behaviour, respectively, as the main sources of comedy.²⁶⁶

The lack of coordination which drunkards displayed also seems to have made them a more fitting butt of jokes. The young Otho used to target feeble and drunk people for his pranks when he was roaming the streets at night; he would toss them in a blanket.²⁶⁷ Claudius was the butt of many jokes at Caligula's banquets; perhaps he was considered especially suitable for this role due to his fondness for heavy drinking, and otherwise poor display of decorum at banquets, including falling asleep mid-meal.²⁶⁸ Indeed, a scholiast to Lucian explains that a metaphor in his *Symposium* – 'besprinkle philosophers with the copious dregs of their stale cups' – referred to the sympotic trick of pouring wine dregs over guests who fell asleep whilst drinking. If a man could not hold his wine, it was apparently humorous to splash him with the leftovers.²⁶⁹ Accounts of past intoxication could also provide humorous anecdotes for the future. In Plutarch's *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, a witty discussion between Anacharsis and Pittacus mentions Anacharsis' inappropriate drinking at a party the previous year; recollection of this event quickly leads to laughter.²⁷⁰ A drunkard could thus unwittingly construct an atmosphere of merriness, simply by being a source of humour.

Relaxation, and the Counteraction of Anxieties and Sorrows

Wine drinking was also thought to aid relaxation. As seen above (see from p.225 and p.281), in Plutarch's *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men* Mnesiphilus presents the view that wine relaxes and softens the souls of a party of men, and all the other guests appear convinced by this idea. This relaxing effect of wine

²⁶⁵ Plutarch, *Pyrrhus*, 13.3-5. On Meton, see further Appendix 6 n.11 (noting especially the comparison with Plutarch, *Nicias*, 7.4-5, on Cleon coming to an Athenian assembly dressed for dinner, which the people found funny) and Appendix 6 n.57.

²⁶⁶ Aristophanes, *Wasps*, 1292ff; Plautus, *Pseudolus*, 1051, 1245ff; Stewart (2008) 69, 84.

²⁶⁷ Suetonius, *Otho*, 2.1.

²⁶⁸ Suetonius, *Claudius*, 8 (also discussed on p.279 n.210, and Appendix 6 p.440 n.116). On Claudius' heavy drinking and bad banqueting decorum: 4.3, 5, 8, 32, 33.1, 44.3; but note, however, 30 which praises his decorum when lying down.

²⁶⁹ Lucian, *Symposium*, 3; König (2012) 250.

²⁷⁰ See n.35.

is presented as fundamental to creating the necessary convivial atmosphere, except in rare cases of the most well-acquainted of men, who can generate this atmosphere without drinking much wine.²⁷¹ The preface to Plutarch's third book of *Table-Talk* also quoted the pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus, who referred to the 'relaxation of drinking'.²⁷²

To an extent, this relaxing property was attributed to all eating and drinking during periods of rest. In Plutarch's *Advice about Keeping Well*, Zeuxippus presents the view that regular meals and periods of ease are all essential to health and wellbeing as they allow the body the time to recuperate from the stresses of work. It is thus particularly advised that men should not neglect the much omitted lunchtime meal.²⁷³ Suetonius similarly associated relaxation with feasting in general during a description of Caligula's leisure activities.²⁷⁴ Furthermore, when Augustus was travelling, he caught the illness which ultimately resulted in his death. He thus paused for four days in Capreae to rest and allow his body to recuperate. Suetonius notes that his restful behaviour included banqueting with the youths of the city, and banqueting in private until well after dark.²⁷⁵ Plutarch's *Pericles* presents a further example: when Pericles was besieging Samos his men were eager to press a fight, whilst Pericles himself preferred to maintain the siege. He thus enforced rotating days of feasting, whereby the soldiery was divided into eight parts, and every eighth day each group would have a day of feasting and ease. Pericles thus used regular feasts to relax and calm large numbers of people.²⁷⁶

Yet, as with merriment, wine's ability to aid relaxation was thought to be especially powerful. Zeuxippus admits this in the aforementioned passage from *Advice about Keeping Well*. Both wine and sex are acknowledged to make the body significantly relaxed (and flaccid), and he implies that many people regularly turn to both in order to create for themselves an atmosphere of extreme leisure in which to relax after heavy work. Yet he cautions that the

²⁷¹ Plutarch, *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, 13=156a-e. See further p.225 with n.36, and p.307ff with n.327.

²⁷² Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 3.pr=644f: 'As Heraclitus [fr.108] remarks, "it is certainly better to conceal ignorance" – and it is a task to do so in the relaxation of drinking'.

²⁷³ Plutarch, *Advice about Keeping Well*, 25=136a-e.

²⁷⁴ Suetonius, *Caligula*, 32.1.

²⁷⁵ Suetonius, *Augustus*, 97.3-98.

²⁷⁶ Plutarch, *Pericles*, 27.2 (feast and take ease: εὐωχεῖσθαι καὶ σχολάζειν). Also discussed in Appendix 7 p.456 n.43. Compare to Herodotus, 1.94 on Lydians during times of famine, who rotated a day of eating with a day of games.

constructiveness of this property of wine – like many other things – also depended upon moderation. Rapid and extreme changes from work to leisure, and thus from relaxation to tension, were thought to strain the body and eventually wear it out. The soul was thought to experience similar effects: swift changes from business to extreme wantonness, leisure and enjoyment, and vice versa, were thought to disturb and derange through irregularity. Drunkenness was one such thing which was thought to relax to an immoderate extreme. This was in excess of the rest which the body required, and also prevented the body from attaining the *appropriate kind* of rest – characterised by calmness and composure – so as to be fully refreshed for the next day's labour. Essentially, Zeuxippus here seems to be using the hangover as evidence; such a man was clearly not appropriately rejuvenated by last night's drinking.

Zeuxippus thus advises that a man should ideally avoid both unnecessary work and pleasures. With respect to wine, this meant that he should enjoy regular relaxing meals including moderate amounts of wine, such as the above noted luncheons. Even though wine was relaxing, he should avoid the excessive relaxation of drunkenness, as this was thought to have destructive consequences. This was especially true in times of heavy work, as the change from work to leisure was more extreme. To help banish such temptations, Zeuxippus advises that a man busy with much public or philosophical work should utter the mantra: 'what time has this man now for indigestion or drunkenness or carnal desires?' In doing so, he pressures the reader to pursue appropriate relaxation by binding together medical, moral and political concerns.²⁷⁷

The final section of Seneca's *Tranquillity of Mind* also presents very similar advice. As outlined above (p.229 and p.282), he argues the mind needs to be relaxed on occasion so as to keep it healthy and refresh it for future work. Wine is emphasised as a very constructive tool through which to achieve such relaxation. Unlike Zeuxippus, Seneca advises that mild intoxication is appropriate for this role. Yet, like Zeuxippus, Seneca also cautions moderation; the reader is advised not to become too drunk, or do this too often, as these had destructive consequences. Seneca provides Cato the Younger as an

²⁷⁷ See n.273 with Senzasono (1997) 117.

example of a notable follower of this practice. Mnesitheus, a fourth-century BC Athenian physician went one step further. He suggested that although drinking excessively is generally an evil for body and soul, doing so from time to time is beneficial as it purifies and relaxes the soul, and it also promotes urination which releases the acidities that build up within the body. Occasional excess was thus recommended by this author to promote relaxation.²⁷⁸

Plutarch's *Cato the Younger* elaborates upon this matter. Cato is said to have originally been a very light drinker, who usually left table early in the evening. Yet, as his involvement in public affairs grew, so did his drinking; he drank until a later hour, and sometimes drank through the night. His friends apparently defended his conduct by claiming that he only drank so late because of his heavy work, which had detained him for much of the day; he only desired a leisure-period where he could talk over wine with his friends. As such, Zeuxippus' observations of Greco-Roman society are here illustrated: this defence of heavy drinking plays upon the understanding that people generally thought that wine was an appropriate activity to aid relaxation, and that heavier work merited more extreme relaxation.²⁷⁹ Seneca and the defence of Cato thus imply that – contrary to Zeuxippus' advice – many Romans considered degrees of intoxication to be appropriate for aiding relaxation after heavy work. Indeed, some Trier Black-Slipped beakers allude to wine's use in promoting relaxation. One motto reads 'you relax' (*laxas*), and another may have the sentiment 'I distract you' (*avoco te*), presumably referring to the wine contained within.²⁸⁰

Plutarch's *Pelopidas* shows further recognition of this relaxing power of wine, as well as another practical use for it. Pelopidas and his companions plot to assassinate Thebes' tyrants during a drinking-bout, after they had become drunk. This was considered a fruitful time for such actions; their rationale was that 'when they [the tyrants] were full of wine and completely relaxed in their pleasures, he [Phillidas, their inside man] would deliver them into the hands of

²⁷⁸ Athenaeus, 11.483f-484a (= Mnesitheus, fr.45); Wilkins (2002) 188-189.

²⁷⁹ Plutarch, *Cato the Younger*, 6. See also: D'Arms (1995) 304-308; Duff (1999) 142-143.

²⁸⁰ *RIB*, 2.6.2498.14; Künzl (1997) TRI 21, KÖL 16 (discussed on p.96 and listed also on p.253); Mudd (2015) 89; Mudd (2014) 99. Note also that Bös (1958) 22-23 provides an alternative interpretation of the motto *calo*, suggesting it is a transliteration of *καλαώ* ('I let down'; here carrying a sentiment similar to 'I relax'), rather than *καλέω* ('I call'; probably 'I invite [you to drink]' in this context) as followed by the editors of *RIB*. *Calo* is found on several Trier Black-Slipped beakers and a Samian motto beaker from Kent, England; see: Künzl (1997) KÖL 279, TRI 156, WIE 1 (see p.253); Symonds (1992) 114; *RIB*, 2.6.2500.1. On this ware, see further n.118.

their assailants'.²⁸¹ Their plan eventually succeeded, even though the tyrants received word of the impending assassination attempt; drunkenness was thus thought to relax a person significantly enough so that their guard was lowered and they became more vulnerable.

This relaxing property of wine was thought to have two roots. First, wine made the man and his mind/soul softer. Secondly, it banished the anxieties and sorrows which a man encountered during his day. These are implicit in many of the above noted passages. In particular, Galen's *The Soul's Dependence on the Body* succinctly states that 'wine relieves us of all sadness and low spirits, as our daily experience shows', and wine also benefits us by 'rendering the soul both gentler and more confident'.²⁸² Similarly, Seneca's *Tranquillity of Mind* notes that wine 'washes away troubles' and 'frees the mind from bondage to cares'.²⁸³ Furthermore, in Plutarch's *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, Mnesiphilus' agrees that in the majority of cases 'Dionysus softens and relaxes [men's] characters with wine'.²⁸⁴ Yet, additional examples illustrate further these properties of wine.

Although wine was considered especially powerful in softening people, pleasures in general were thought to have a softening effect. Thus when Cato the Younger planned to travel in Asia Minor – a region renowned for its vast luxuries – his intimate friend Curio predicted that 'you will come back from there a more agreeable man and more tame'. Cato was evidently also concerned about this risk, and thus urged his companions to prevent him from too much luxury and pleasure when he attended banquets in this region.²⁸⁵

Wine's extreme softening powers were utilised by the Syracusan courtiers under Dionysius II, in order to secure better conditions for themselves and their kingdom. His father, Dionysius I, had been a harsh tyrant, who held his kingdom under firm control and administered it with severity. When Dionysius II came to power at a young age, the courtiers identified that he had been badly reared, due to his experience of excessive pleasures and flattery whilst growing up. Plutarch explains that the courtiers' two aims, which they were ultimately

²⁸¹ Plutarch, *Pelopidas*, 9.2-11.2.

²⁸² See Ch.2 n.42.

²⁸³ Seneca, *On Tranquillity of Mind*, 17.8. See further n.45.

²⁸⁴ Plutarch, *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, 13=156d. See further: n.36. Further on Dionysus, see Ch.1 n.28.

²⁸⁵ Plutarch, *Cato the Younger*, 14.3-4. See further n.182-187.

successful in, were to build increasing friendships with Dionysius, and to soften his tyranny. They accomplished this by feeding his desire for wine and women. Plutarch thus explains that, due to their actions to feed his love of ease, he became more kindly disposed to his courtiers and subjects. Although he had no permanent reformation of character, this life of leisure temporarily softened him and his regime. Dionysius did not truly become clement; instead the cruelty which he displayed declined as he relaxed his control over the kingdom, and instead increasingly turned to pleasures. Plutarch thus notes, as an example, that he once apparently held a ninety-day drinking-bout, during which he remained drunk and considered no affairs of state. Eventually he came to be characterised as a 'drunken tyrant', which was far more preferable to the 'watchful and sober master' he otherwise could have been. Heavy wine consumption was thus thought to have significant ability to soften a person, and when this drinking was undertaken by a leader, to soften his rule.²⁸⁶

The second root of wine's relaxing powers was its ability to banish worries and sorrows. The medical theory of this was outlined in the previous chapter, where it was shown that medical authorities such as the Hippocratic Corpus, Pliny the Elder and Galen attributed these psychological powers to wine, and recommended wine in both daily regimen and certain therapeutic regimes so that an individual may benefit from these constructive effects.²⁸⁷ The recognition of this property had longstanding roots. Helen used wine for the purpose of banishing worries and as a soporific in the *Odyssey*.²⁸⁸ The Archaic poet Alcaeus stated that '[Dionysus] gave men wine to make them forget their sorrows', and Euripides' *Bacchae* repeatedly praised wine's ability to banish grief and sufferings in everyone, rich and poor alike, as well as fostering sleep. Indeed, the importance of this ability is emphasised when the play claims that there is no other cure for sorrow.²⁸⁹

Similar beliefs can be detected in Plutarch's thought, although he places greater emphasis on the social contexts of drinking-bouts and banquets. Thus, during his discussion of Demosthenes' speech, Plutarch states:

²⁸⁶ Plutarch, *Dion*, 7 (also discussed on p.279 n.210, and in Appendix 6 p.422 n.32), 34.1.

²⁸⁷ See Ch.2 from p.169 with n.469-473; also Weeber (1993) s.v. 'Sorgenlöser'.

²⁸⁸ Homer, *Odyssey*, 4.219-220. Later recognised by Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.41.

²⁸⁹ Alcaeus, fr.346; Euripides, *Bacchae*, 279-286, 380-385, 420-424; Weeber (1993) s.v. 'Bacchus'. Further on Dionysus, see Ch.1 n.28.

[The speaking style of] Demosthenes, which had no prettiness or pleasantry, and was condensed with a view to power and earnestness, did not smell of lamp-wicks, as Pytheas scoffingly said, but of water-drinking and anxious thought'.²⁹⁰

This implies that lengthy drinking-bouts (here indicated by the 'lamp-wicks' of late nights) were thought to banish anxious thoughts, whilst sobriety (indicated here by 'water-drinking') in comparison did not. Demosthenes was elsewhere presented as hostile to heavy drinking,²⁹¹ and here he is similarly characterised as a light-drinker or teetotaler. Demosthenes is thus implied to have suffered the ill-effects of anxiety because of his avoidance not only of wine, but of occasional merry drinking (implied by 'pleasantry') with friends, which could last late into the evening (hence, again, the 'lamp-wicks'). It is thus implicit that if Demosthenes had drunk more wine and experienced more drinking-parties, he would surely have been less anxious.

Plutarch records several individuals putting this advice into practice. Sulla is said to have turned to extravagant drinking parties and convivial banquets to reduce his sorrow following his beloved wife's death. When Marius was terrified that Sulla would march against him, and thus experienced sleepless nights and anxious dreams, he turned to 'drinking-bouts and drunkenness at unseasonable hours', both to help escape his anxiety and induce sleep (wine was also thought to be a soporific). Antony is said to have been full of distress when, after campaigning away from his beloved Cleopatra, she was late in coming to meet him. He thus dedicated himself to drinking to the point of intoxication, which was not entirely effective as he often left the table to check the sea for her arrival. Cleopatra also used lavish dining as a kind of distraction technique, to divert Antony from suspicion and worry that Cleopatra had been sexually unfaithful to him. Plutarch's narrative of Antony's life further associates drinking with a lack of anxiety when it describes how, after Antony's powerbase dissolved following his defeat at Actium, and he finally laid aside all of his hopes and anxieties, he turned once again to a life of lengthy and lavish banquets with

²⁹⁰ Plutarch, *Comparison of Demosthenes and Cicero*, 1.3-4.

²⁹¹ Plutarch, *Demosthenes*, 16: although King Philip II took pride in his ability to hold much drink, Demosthenes dismissed it as pointless; it was fit only for a sponge.

drinking-bouts. In both of these cases, Antony's drinking represents and aids the banishment of his worries.²⁹²

Both of these roots of wine's relaxing power are attested in the case of Demetrius' later life. When Demetrius was captured by Seleucus and spent the remaining years of his life in captivity, Plutarch says in his *Demetrius* that he grew increasingly accustomed to this life, and eventually spent most of his time drinking and playing dice. Demetrius must thus have been frequently drinking with company – how else would he have played dice? Plutarch suggests two reasons behind this life of intoxication: either he realised that this relaxing luxury life was the one he had desired all along, or he used drunkenness for its psychological benefit of promoting temporary mental escapism. Regarding the latter, Plutarch proposes:

‘He sought escape from the thoughts on his present condition which tormented him when he was sober, and tried to smother his reflections in drunkenness’.

This excess also had destructive consequences; after three years it led to Demetrius' death. Yet Plutarch also implies the manipulative role of Seleucus when he was said to be in ill repute for this inhumane treatment of his captive. Indeed, Plutarch's *Comparison of Demetrius and Antony* further implies the role of Seleucus. Although Plutarch emphasises Demetrius' fault when he states that he ‘suffered himself to be taken prisoner’, drank this wine and ‘was well content to add to his life three years of imprisonment’, Seleucus' hand is implied in this. Plutarch concludes that Demetrius was ‘tamed, like a wild beast, by the way of his belly and by wine’, thereby implying the presence of a ‘tamer’ who was purposefully trying to tame his captive. Wine is thus implied to have been a tool which was *purposefully* used by Seleucus for the intention of relaxing an individual. Over time, this heavy drinking, conducted in a merry convivial atmosphere, relaxed and placated the captive Demetrius, as it made him forget about his troubles, and it also softened and tamed his hostile character.²⁹³

²⁹² Plutarch, *Sulla*, 35.1-3; *Marius*, 45.3; *Antony*, 51.1-2, 73.3, 71.1-3. Wine as a soporific: see Ch.2 n.636.

²⁹³ Plutarch, *Demetrius*, 52; *Comparison of Demetrius and Antony*, 6.2. Also discussed in Appendix 6 p.427 n.55. C.f. n.232 on luxury being the most a king can gain.

Indeed, in a similar manner, Plutarch's *Aemilius* describes the end of the Second Macedonian War in 197BC, when Philip V was defeated by Flamininus. The Romans enforced a heavy indemnity on him, but permitted him to continue as ruler. Plutarch tells us that Philip was initially content with this arrangement, but later became unhappy, thinking that his rule by Roman consent was analogous to 'the part of a captive satisfied with meat and drink'. The words which Plutarch puts into Philip's mind implies the belief that captives often became more relaxed and satisfied with their condition if they were given good food and drink.²⁹⁴

In a more morbid role related to banishing sorrows, heavier eating and drinking were considered fitting when an individual was facing death. It should first be noted that luxury banquets and heavy drinking were generally considered inappropriate during times of great tragedy and peril for the state. Instead, an individual should be seen to be in mourning or anxiety, and those who drank or ate heavily during this period could be criticised.²⁹⁵ Yet, when an individual himself was thought close to death, many believed that they were due lavish eating and drinking. Antony had a more generous feast than normal the night before he intended to face the vastly superior forces of Octavian, where he feared he would die. Plutarch also records that in the anxious night before the skirmish which resulted in Gaius Gracchus' death, Fulvius and his supporters became very drunk. Similarly, Dion offers his mercenary soldiers a very lavish meal immediately before sending them to war. In all these cases, the excess was probably thought condoned by the great risks which they were to undertake. Indeed, mercenaries were renowned for their daily lavish feasting and enjoyment of pleasure, which they believed compensated for their daily perils.²⁹⁶ Gladiators similarly had a lavish meal the night before fighting in the arena.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁴ Plutarch, *Aemilius*, 8.3-4; c.f. 27.1-3.

²⁹⁵ Suetonius, *Caligula*, 5, 23.2, 24.2, 27.4, 45.2; *Nero*, 34.3-4; *Vitellius*, 10.3; Plutarch, *Pyrrhus*, 16.1-2; *Alexander*, 75.2-3; *Demosthenes*, 20.3; *Antony*, 9.6. Note, conversely: Plutarch, *Artaxerxes*, 15 (mourning and sorrow is inappropriate at a lavish banquet). Note also: Plutarch, *Themistocles*, 3.3-4 (too anxious with jealousy to go to drinking parties). Compare to Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, 19, where – in the long-term – banqueting as normal following the death of loved-ones is interpreted as indicative of virtue.

²⁹⁶ Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, 14.4-15.1; *Antony*, 75.1; *Dion*, 23.3-24.1, 52.1-2.

²⁹⁷ Plutarch, *That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible*, 1099b; Tertullian, *Apology*, 42.5; Futrell (2006) 86-87, fig. 3.1.

Friendliness, Friendship and Generosity

Dining contexts were strongly associated with friendliness and affability. One of Plutarch's two etymological explanations for the name of the Spartans' communal messes – φιδῖτια – is 'because they are conducive to *friendship* and friendliness'.²⁹⁸ Similarly, the Romans are said to have so closely associated 'dining' with being in company that – as Plutarch records – they 'are fond of quoting a witty and sociable person who said, after a solitary meal, "I have eaten, but not dined today"'.²⁹⁹ Both Cato the Elder and Plutarch praised the dining-table as among the very best promoters of friendship.³⁰⁰ One character in Plutarch's *Table-Talk* presents the idea that men do not invite each other to dinner to eat and drink, but rather with the intention of doing this *together*; sociability was the key aim.³⁰¹ Friendly socialising was also recognised as a key element of the *symposium*. Thus the behaviour of Timon of Athens is portrayed as shocking, as he rarely feasted with company, and claimed that his ideal *symposium* would have him drink alone.³⁰² Dinners, banquets, festivals and similar entertainments are thus repeatedly noted as the contexts of people being affable, displaying friendliness, and trying to promote positive relations between each other.³⁰³

Banquets, *symposia* and similar events featuring commensality were clearly seen as *the* main time to socialise, thereby increasing intimacy with friends and making new ones. Plutarch's *Advice about Keeping Well* argues that a man should not avoid participating in social events because he is overly strict in implementing his *best* medical regimen. This austere manner of life is characterised as 'fitting only for men who have reduced and restricted

²⁹⁸ Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, 12.

²⁹⁹ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 7.pr=697c.

³⁰⁰ Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 25; *Table-Talk*, 1.pr=612d.

³⁰¹ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 2.10=642f-643a. Note also 644d: the most important parts of a social gathering are conversation, toasts using wine, and good fellowship.

³⁰² Plutarch, *Antony*, 70.1-2.

³⁰³ For example, in addition to those otherwise mentioned in this section: Plutarch, *Numa*, 20.3-4 (friendly converse as part of ideal festivals and feasts); *Antony*, 67.4 (an early sign of Antony and Cleopatra's restored affection is their eating together); Suetonius, *Augustus*, 53.5 (he exchanges social calls with many senators, and attends all their anniversaries); *Caligula*, 27.4 (he tries to rouse a man with display of affability), 55 (his partiality to the Green Faction of charioteers is shown by frequently dining with them, and bestowing gifts upon them); *Vespasian*, 2.3 (he thanks the Emperor Caligula for an invite to dinner, before the Senate, to win Caligula's favour); 21-22 (dinner was the time when Vespasian was most good-natured and indulgent, so his household waited for this time to make requests of him); *Titus*, 8.1-2 (he used this period to reflect upon the good and friendly acts which he had achieved during the day). Note also: Suetonius, *Caligula*, 39.2 (a rich provincial pays 200,000 sesterces to secure an invite to one of the Emperor's *convivia*).

themselves to a retired, idle, solitary, friendless, and inglorious life, far removed from the duties of citizenship'. Eating together is thus implied to be *crucial* to daily sociability and the display of friendliness.³⁰⁴ In this vein, Plutarch records that Chalcus emphasised Nicias' service to Athens by claiming that he had allowed himself to fall into such an undesirable life of near-isolation. Due to his diligent attention to public business, Nicias was unable to dine without interruption. His selfless forsaking of banqueting was presented as the reason why Nicias himself 'is not affable or pleasant to his friends, nay, he has actually lost these too ... in the service of the city'.³⁰⁵ The promotion of friendship was thus considered a key element and benefit of conviviality.

In itself, dining together was symbolic of friendly relations. Hosting a banquet for someone was also perceived as a friendly and kind act, as well as an obligation of friendship.³⁰⁶ Conversely, accepting a dinner invite was also perceived as a friendly act, whilst refusing could be interpreted as indicative of dislike or annoyance.³⁰⁷ Furthermore, when enemies intend to reconcile and become friends, they often marked it by dining together in a friendly manner.³⁰⁸ Suetonius also tells us that when two patricians were found guilty of conspiracy against the Emperor Titus, he told them to abandon these hopes and – wishing to dismiss any fears that he would take violent retribution against them – invited them to dine among his friends. On the other hand, Suetonius says that when Agrippina openly showed that she suspected Tiberius of trying to assassinate her, he stopped inviting her to dine with him; their intimacy and trust was thus depicted as broken.³⁰⁹

Yet specific practice offered many opportunities to further promote friendship within the dining context. For example, choosing to recline next to someone implied friendship,³¹⁰ and the Emperor Tiberius was noted for his custom of standing and addressing each of his guests by name as they left the dining

³⁰⁴ See n.29.

³⁰⁵ Plutarch, *Nicias*, 5 (also discussed on Appendix 6 p.415 n.5, and Appendix 6 p.437 n.104).

³⁰⁶ Plutarch, *Theseus*, 12.1; *Alcibiades*, 5; *Dion*, 20 (also discussed on Appendix 6 p.425 n.45, p.441 n.118). Obligation: Plutarch, *Antony*, 54.2.

³⁰⁷ Plutarch, *Alexander*, 53.3; *Antony*, 26.3-27.1; *Pompey*, 33.4-5; *Cato the Younger*, 37; *Advice about Keeping Well*, 5=124a-124d. Note also: Plutarch, *Solon* 24.3 (also discussed on Appendix 6 p.424 n.36).

³⁰⁸ Plutarch, *Coriolanus*, 23.1-2, 23.5; *Cleomenes*, 37.1-2; Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, 6.1-3; *Cicero*, 26.1; *Antony*, 32.3-4.

³⁰⁹ Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 53.1; *Titus*, 9.1-2.

³¹⁰ Plutarch, *Aratus*, 43.3-5; *Cato the Younger*, 37; Suetonius, *Titus*, 2.

room, which was regarded as a display of affability.³¹¹ Good conversation could aid in this. Suetonius notes that Augustus' ability to draw everyone equally into conversation promoted good-fellowship, and Plutarch states that Eumenes managed to make life pleasant for his associates whilst besieged at Nora by inviting them to dine with him and making conversation which was notably friendly and charming.³¹²

Banquets were also regarded as the time for generosity and gift-giving, which further helped to promote friendly relations. Hosts in particular strove to present an image of liberality to their guests. In general, both excess generosity and excess frugality were considered bad practice; both could attract criticism. Instead giving in moderation was usually seen as the ideal.³¹³ Although by the first century AD, wine was regarded as an especially simple gift to be given to individuals (too simple, at least, to be commonly given to actors at public specials in Rome),³¹⁴ as noted above, political figures did still commonly distribute wine and other foodstuffs *en masse* as gifts to the people.³¹⁵ Furthermore, wine formed part of the generosity displayed within private banquets. The lavishness of the wine and other foodstuffs provided implied the generosity of the host. Hesiod thus advised, and Plutarch repeated: 'at the start of the cask, and at the end of it, take your fill, in the middle be sparing: parsimony at the bottom is mean'. An interpretation of this is that men with the ability to provide copious wine – like the elite classes – should not be sparing, as this was thought to make them appear stingy.³¹⁶ Furthermore, as discussed above, wine and opportunities for intoxication were sometimes even thought generous enough to be issued as rewards, honours, and tokens of gratitude.

³¹¹ Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 72.3. Note that addressing people by name offhand (without a prompter) was presented as a display of affability in the cases of Augustus and Nero (albeit outside of the dining room): Suetonius, *Augustus*, 53.3; *Nero*, 10.2.

³¹² Suetonius, *Augustus*, 74; Plutarch, *Eumenes*, 11.1-2. See further p.282 with n.218 (noting especially Plutarch, *Crassus*, 3.1 on good-cheer making up for a lack of expenditure).

³¹³ Edwards (1993) esp. 190-195, 202. See for example: Suetonius, *Caesar*, 38.1-2; *Caligula*, 37.1, 55; *Nero*, 30.1-31.2; *Galba*, 12.3, 14.2, 16.1-5 with Duff (1991) 159-160; *Vitellius*, 12; *Domitian*, 21; Plutarch, *Lysander*, 4.3; *Lucullus*, 41; *Comparison of Cimon and Lucullus*, 1.4-7; *Alexander*, 23.2, 23.6, 39.1-2; *Cleomenes*, 13.3-5; *Gaius Gracchus*, 19; *Cicero*, 36.2-3; *Antony*, 27.1, 28.4-7, 73.3; *Artaxerxes*, 22.6. Note also, generosity and gifts to servants and guards: Suetonius, *Galba*, 22; *Otho*, 4.2; Plutarch, *Pyrrhus*, 5.3-6; *Antony*, 24.4; *Galba*, 20.4. Note further, vice shown by forcing others to show generosity: Suetonius, *Nero*, 27.3; *Vitellius*, 13.1-2.

³¹⁴ Plutarch, *Cato the Younger*, 46.1-4. Note also the simplicity of water as a gift in the Persian world: *Artaxerxes*, 5.1.

³¹⁵ See n.250-252.

³¹⁶ Hesiod, *Work and Days*, 366; Plutarch, *Galba*, 16.4. This section of Hesiod is also discussed, to a different end, by Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 7.3=701d-e.

In particular, wine itself was thought to have a crucial role in promoting friendship. Drinking was thought to inspire friendly feelings; thus Plutarch notes that when Alexander was in Phaselis, after drinking heavily he was inspired to lead a band of revellers to a statue of Thodectas, and crown it with many garlands, in order to pay tribute to their shared tutor Aristotle.³¹⁷ Drinking together was also considered a means of flattery which helped to build intimacy; Cleopatra is said to have implemented such a regime in order to win Antony's affection.³¹⁸ Certain drinking behaviour could also specifically symbolise friendship. As a key proof of the young Titus' friendship and intimacy with Britannicus, Suetonius notes that they reclined next to each other at dinner, and sometimes even drank from the same cup (Titus thus received a small dose of the poison administered to Britannicus).³¹⁹ Similarly, in *Table-Talk* it is suggested that whilst *sharing* a common mixing bowl aids sociability, if every man had his own *personal* supply of wine this would hinder such aims.³²⁰

A Latin graffito on a Roman-era jar found in Cambridgeshire (south-east Britain) succinctly refers to the association between drinking and friendship, as it reads 'friends drink here' ([*h*]ic amici bibun[*t*]). In a similar manner, the mottos of several Trier Black-Slipped beakers also attest the use of drinking to display friendly relations, as they appear to record genial toasts being given in honour of other guests. 'Long life to you!' (*vivas, vivatis, vitam tibi*, and so on) is a very common sentiment (*vivas* being the most commonly attested motto on surviving Trier Black-Slipped vessels). The motto 'rejoice!' (*gaude*) may also be another example; indeed, a similar toast is given by Odysseus in Homer's *Iliad* ('rejoice Achilles!': χαῖρ' Ἀχιλεῦ).³²¹

This link between wine and friendliness was perceived widely enough that some used claims of pursuing 'friendship' in defence of their inappropriate drinking behaviour. Indeed, in *Epistle* 83, the one situation in which Seneca explicitly

³¹⁷ Plutarch, *Alexander*, 17.5.

³¹⁸ Plutarch, *Antony*, 29.1-30.1.

³¹⁹ Suetonius, *Titus*, 2.

³²⁰ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 2.10=643a-b.

³²¹ *RIB*, 2.6.2498.12, 27, 29, 30, 31, 2.8.2503.103; Homer, *Iliad*, 9.224-225; Mudd (2015) 89; Mudd (2014) 98, 99, 101; Steures (2002) 175; Künzl (1997) 98; Bös (1958) 21, 23. On the commonness of *vivas* see: Mudd (2014) 91; Künzl (1997) 96, 259 (who records 109 examples, with nine or ten further seeming likely); Symonds (1992) 119-120 (who records 45 examples). Consider also *feliciter* ('be happy/lucky', e.g. *RIB*, 2.6.2498.32) as a potential toast, with reference to Petronius, *Satyricon*, 60; Mudd (2014) 101; Walsh (1997) 176; though admittedly this motto was a common 'stock-inscription', and is frequently found upon a wide range of seemingly unrelated objects. On this ware, see further n.118. On Greco-Roman toasting: Weeber (1993) s.v. 'Trinkspruch'.

allows his ideal sages to become slightly intoxicated is if they are doing it 'for a friend's sake'.³²² According to Plutarch, Cato the Younger's friends thus deployed 'friendship' in order to defend his famous heavy drinking. It was argued that in the evenings, after giving studious attention to public matters, he wished to pursue philosophical table-talk, over wine, with his friends.³²³ In a similar manner, a character in Plutarch's *Table-Talk* suggests that Alexander was not as heavy a drinker as people often think, but rather he enjoyed lengthy conversation with his friends over drinks. Plutarch's *Alexander* repeatedly appears to mitigate Alexander's drinking excesses by implying he was led to this action for reasons of friendship. He even attributes to acts of posthumous friendship the two notoriously heavy drinking-bouts which ultimately led to the death of many of his officers, friends and Alexander himself. The former was done at the request of Calanus (an Indian philosopher following Alexander) who, upon his deathbed, urged the Macedonians to spend a day revelling in pleasure with the king. The latter followed an oracular response ordering him to honour his deceased friend Hephaestion as a hero with a sacrifice, and so Alexander laid aside his grief to sacrifice and celebrate with extreme gusto. Alexander was also presented as very susceptible to pressure from his friends, or a desire to please them, during times of drunkenness. Thais and Alexander's drinking companions were thus able to convince Alexander to lead them to burn Xerxes' house; though he later regretted it, at the time he eventually yielded to their eager requests. Similarly, although Alexander usually avoided sexual behaviour, especially when in public view, whilst drunk during a festival he allowed the crowd to convince him to kiss tenderly his favourite boy in front of them.³²⁴

Plutarch explains this use of wine, in further depth, in his *Table-Talk*. In the preface to book four, he states that amiability and friendship, along with the conversation and fun which this entails, make a social occasion more complete. Banquets could thus be rewarding for the mind, and not just the stomach. Plutarch accordingly advises that the intelligent man should aim to both please

³²² See n.43.

³²³ See n.279.

³²⁴ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 1.6=623d-e; *Alexander*, 38, 67.3-4, 69.3-70.1, 75.2-3. Note that Antony's behaviour in *Antony*, 9.4 and 28.1-2 could perhaps be defended in a similar way by Plutarch (i.e. by citing the desire to please friends and the friendliness of this association), but no such attempt is made. Note also Suetonius, *Caligula*, 58.1 on the pressure of friends in encouraging a man to *eat* to excess.

his current friend and make new ones at every party he attends. Making a new friend – providing he is a good and appropriate one – is regarded as both a pleasure and a distinction, and makes attending the event worthwhile. Plutarch then explains the two key tools in promoting friendship: ‘the holds of friendship are won by a blend of wine and conversation’, which together influence men’s characters to make them more generous. In this way, whilst appropriate conversation constructively focuses the drinkers’ minds, the ‘wine makes the company pliable and ready to take an impression, as it were, from the seal of friendship’.³²⁵ Yet, in his preface to book seven, Plutarch cautions regarding the volatile power of this property of wine. His sentiment is that although wine, conversation and friendship do all help to make an excellent banquet, each element needs to be fully appropriate for the banquet to be a constructive event. A bad friend, bad conversation, or bad drinking behaviour can lead the banquet to have destructive effects, even warping guests’ characters.³²⁶

The *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men* serves as a case study, where a range of Plutarch’s beliefs on this subject can be seen in practice.³²⁷ On the way to dinner, Thales implies the importance of a friendly atmosphere to a good banquet when he argues that the Egyptian practice of displaying a skeleton during meals hinders an atmosphere of friendliness. Thales believed this atmosphere to offer constructive effects; he thus argues that the character of the tyrant Periander was being improved via friendship and good conversation, such as is found at this dinner of wise men. Thales subsequently highlights how friend-making should be a priority objective at dinner. He advises guests to *never* show displeasure at being given a particular place at table, even if it is of lower status than one merited, as a guest expressing this offends his host and neighbours; he thus incurs their hatred. Instead, Thales advises that a guest show open satisfaction over being placed next to his neighbours, and use this as an opportunity to try and make a new friend. Thales’ advice is contrasted by

³²⁵ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 4.pr=659e-660c; Paul (1991) 157. Note: Plutarch clarifies that here he is not using ‘friend’ in the strictest sense; true ‘friendship’ requires lengthy effort, whilst at parties and similar social events we instead pursue ‘good will’. Note also: *Table-Talk*, 2.10=643b.

³²⁶ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 7.pr=697d-e.

³²⁷ Throughout the following paragraphs, see: Plutarch, *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, 2=147c-d (Periander and dinner, see also p.255 with n.123), 2=148a-b (the Egyptian skeleton, see also p.281 with n.213), 3=149a-c, 4=149f (flattering neighbours at table, see Appendix 6 p.433 with n.85), 13=156a-e (Mnesiphilus on wine and commensality; see further p.225 with n.36, and p.294 with n.271), 15=158b-f (Cleodorus on commensality); Mossman (1997) 128, 131. See also p.223 with n.31.

another guest's actions: Alexidemus leaves the *symposium* as he is unhappy with the low-status of his allocated place. This was a *topos* of *symposium* literature. Thus when Thales enters the dining room, he puts his own advice into practice and illustrates how to avoid becoming like the repugnant stock-character of *symposia*. He takes up the place which Alexidemus had refused, and then proceeds to praise and flatter his neighbour (Ardalus).

During the latter part of the evening, during the heavy drinking, Cleodorus and Mnesiphilus explicitly state the constructive functions of wine and banqueting in creating the atmosphere of friendship which Thales revered. Cleodorus regards the dinner table as 'an altar of the gods of friendship and hospitality', and argues that wine, hospitality and all entertainments are 'the most humane and the first acts of communion between man and man'. Similarly, Mnesiphilus regards wine's ability to relax and soften as essential so as to 'provide some means for beginning a union and friendship with one another'. This was considered especially useful among groups that were not well acquainted; they needed wine in effect to 'break the ice'.

Yet, Plutarch's Thales also felt that *inappropriate* drinking could *hinder* friendship. He describes how wine can lead to insults and anger, which result in guests forming a mutual lifelong dislike of each other. Thales also implies further beliefs on this when he discusses the crazy and uncouth nature of Alexidemus, and provides as evidence a story from Alexidemus' boyhood. When Alexidemus' father, Thrasybulus the tyrant of Miletus, was sent some especially fine perfume, Alexidemus stole it, mixed it with strong wine, and quickly drank it. Thales notes that Alexidemus' inappropriate drinking behaviour reflected badly upon his father, and created enmity rather than friendship.

In Greek culture, excess drink's ability to hinder friendship was immortalised in the legend of the Lapiths and Centaurs. The Lapiths invited the Centaurs to a wedding feast, yet the Centaurs drank excessively, which led to their inappropriate behaviour – they attempted to rape several women. The friendly atmosphere was thus broken, and a brawl resulted between these two peoples, all ultimately due to the influence of excess wine.³²⁸

Similar thoughts on inappropriate drinking hindering an atmosphere of friendliness can be detected in later Greco-Roman culture. Domitius, Nero's

³²⁸ Plutarch, *Theseus*, 30.3.

father, is said to have ordered his own freedman to drink a certain amount, and when the freedman refused he had him slain. According to Suetonius, due to this and similarly cruel actions, Domitius made himself appear 'hateful in every walk of life'. Domitius subsequently lost important friends; he was currently on the staff of the young Gaius Caesar in the East, yet when Gaius heard of this he dismissed Domitius from his friends. In this example, inappropriate conduct whilst drinking twice led to friendship being replaced with enmity: Domitius apparently judged his freedman's lack of drinking to be insubordinate and insulting, whilst Gaius in turn thought Domitius' drunken violence to be detestable.³²⁹ In a similar manner, Plutarch's *Table-Talk* records that Callisthenes could not stand to dine with Alexander due to the strong drink which he served, and at one meal where both were present, Callisthenes refused to drink. Callisthenes' drinking behaviour was considered inappropriate by Alexander, and it is noted that this gained him Alexander's enmity.³³⁰

Sometimes, however, vices could promote friendship between those who shared them. Plutarch claims that Otho's lavish prodigality was why Nero made him an intimate friend. Nero was pleased that, by comparison, he appeared less prodigal. Similarly, Suetonius attributes Vitellius' favour with three emperors – Caligula, Claudius and Nero – to three vices he shared with them – chariots, dice and flattery, respectively. Vitellius is also thought to have won over Galba's adviser Titus Vinius through a shared love for chariots, and thus gained an appointment in Lower Germany. Tiberius also frequently appointed his friends and intimates as advisors; he thus promoted his drinking companions Lucius Piso and Cossus to urban prefects, and Pomponius Flaccus to governor of Syria. These three were said to be heavy drinkers like Tiberius, apparently keeping up very lengthy drinking-bouts. Despite their apparent competence in public affairs, drinking was rumoured to have recommended them to Tiberius (as reported by Suetonius, Pliny the Elder and Seneca). Suetonius even claims that Flaccus and Piso's appointments were a direct result of a two-day binge they shared with the Emperor. We might assume it was their shared vice of wine which fostered intimacy between them. Indeed, Suetonius also notes that – in the opposite manner to Domitius' freedman – Tiberius gave preference to a very obscure candidate for quaestorship simply

³²⁹ Suetonius, *Nero*, 5.1. Also discussed in Appendix 6 p.431 n.74.

³³⁰ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 1.6=623e-f.

because at a *convivium* the man had downed a large *amphora* of wine at the Emperor's own challenge. This young man was already within the Emperor's drinking circle, and showed a capacity for drinking heavily like the Emperor himself; Suetonius attributes this shared vice as the sole reason he received the Emperor's favour over more obvious candidates from the noblest families. *Shared* excessive drinking could thus sometimes *promote* friendship and favour.³³¹

For certain unscrupulous people, the ability of inappropriate drinking – which was not shared by all of the party – to *hinder* friendship could also offer constructive uses. Plutarch claims that Cleopatra's court used bad drinking and dining behaviour with the explicit purpose of driving away unwanted company – specifically, Roman visitors who she suspected of trying to draw Antony away from her. Geminus 'was always put upon with jokes at supper and insulted with places of no honour at table', and 'Cleopatra's flatterers drove away many of the other friends of Antony also who could not endure their drunken behaviour [παροινίας] and coarse jesting [βωμολοχίας]'. Merriment, inspired by intoxication, was a normal part of banqueting; Cleopatra's companions carried on far enough that it became offensive and irritating to decorous outsiders, but not so far that it raised suspicion of ulterior motives. In essence, they simply portrayed themselves as base, unpleasant and unfriendly company, so that these undesired guests would not wish to remain with them for long.³³²

Similarly, the assassins of Sertorius are said to have feigned disgraceful drinking and dining conduct to aid their attempt on his life. Sertorius' suppers were usually renowned as paradigms of restraint and decorum – 'he would not consent to see or hear anything that was disgraceful' – and as such the assassins decided to be so inappropriate as to provoke him. Suetonius describes them as 'pretending to be drunk, [they] committed many indecencies', and 'openly indulged in dissolute language', overly-bold talk, contempt for others' wishes, clumsily dropping cups of wine, and so on. Ultimately their plan to provoke him failed. Suetonius reasons that their behaviour was *too* extreme;

³³¹ Plutarch, *Galba*, 19.3; Suetonius, *Vitellius*, 4, 7.1; *Tiberius*, 42, 55; Seneca, *Epistles*, 83.15; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.145. Also discussed in Appendix 6 p.431 n.74.

³³² Plutarch, *Antony*, 59.1-4 (trans. adapted from Perrin).

it either made him realise their plan, or stunned him into silence. Yet they still managed to kill Sertorius.³³³

COMPETITION, MASCULINITY, CONFIDENCE AND SEX

Banqueting carried competitive associations. Many individuals vied with each other to eat and drink items which were renowned, lavish and rare, regardless of their taste or properties. They desired notoriety and distinction, an interesting story to tell others, and the envy of the majority who had not tasted such things.³³⁴ As discussed above, individuals such as Lucullus dedicated themselves to such a lifestyle, hoping to promote an identity of a gastronome, someone who dined 'better' (however this was defined) than his peers.

Similarly, hosts vied with each other to outdo each others' generosity and provide the most lavish outlay for their guests. When political figures such as Augustus, Antony and others met for negotiations, they even vied with each other simply for the honour of being the first host. When Antony first met Cleopatra, he first invited her to dinner, but when she insisted that she be the host he submitted as an act of kindness. On the second evening, Antony was ambitious to surpass her lavish banquet, and was dissatisfied when he was unable to do so. Plutarch writes that Themistocles tried to rival Cimon's lavish banquets, and before the reforms of Philopoemen the people of the Achaean league eagerly vied with each other for distinction in luxurious eating and the table arrays which they presented to guests.³³⁵

Table-talk also revolved around competition and displays of prowess. Suetonius implies that the Emperor Tiberius was especially competitive in his table-talk over wine. He used to spend his days reading relatively obscure works with the intention of setting difficult questions and topics before his educated companions. When he learnt that one of his companions, the grammarian Seleucus, had bribed an Imperial attendant to inform him of the Emperor's reading, Tiberius banished him and forced him to suicide. Tiberius was both proud and defensive of his table-talk prowess, and others were

³³³ Plutarch, *Sertorius*, 26.3-6.

³³⁴ See n.166 and n.168.

³³⁵ Plutarch, *Themistocles*, 5.2-3; *Philopoemen*, 9.3-7; *Antony*, 27.1, 32.3-5, 35.3-5.

similarly competitive, undergoing effort and risk to gain an advantage.³³⁶ Plutarch argues that business cares and pseudo-learned disputations were inappropriate topics of table-talk, as they promoted rivalry. Yet this implies that many people discussed such things over dinner and thus fostered a competitive atmosphere.³³⁷ Indeed, at a dinner hosted by Caligula, allied kings began to dispute regarding their comparative nobility and descent. When Caligula finally overheard, he interrupted and won the argument.³³⁸

At *symposia* it was typical to have repeated competitions among fellow-drinkers. A common element were displays of eloquent speech, whereby guests took turns to improvise a composition – sometimes in verse – on a chosen subject; those who were successful gained praise and applause.³³⁹ Competitive conversation is also attested in Roman *convivia* and *cenae*; for example in Petronius' 'Dinner of Trimalchio' each speaker tries to surpass the previous ones in providing the most tantalising gossip.³⁴⁰ Guests at *symposia* also participated in competitions of physical skill, such as κότταβος, the famous game involving flinging wine dregs at a target.³⁴¹

Furthermore, in *Table-Talk*, Plutarch implicitly admits a competitive atmosphere, even at his conceptualised ideal dinner parties, when he suggests harnessing this in a more constructive direction: making new friends should be the aim of men at a dinner party, 'at least if they're intelligent'. He concludes that 'it is both a pleasure and a distinction to come away with a profitable addition to the number of one's friends. On the other hand, anyone who neglects to do so makes the social occasion incomplete and unrewarding to himself.' The profitable friend is essentially a trophy for the banqueter: the friend has intrinsic worth and acts as a mark of distinction to prove that the banqueter is such an intelligent man. He is something that the unintelligent man, the unsuccessful loser, did not gain. For Plutarch, the banquet always featured competitive

³³⁶ Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 56. Note also: 70.3 (Tiberius prided himself on his knowledge of mythology, and used to test himself against grammarians; he was especially interested in grammarians).

³³⁷ Plutarch, *Advice about Keeping Well*, 20=132f-133f; Van Hoof (2010) 238.

³³⁸ Suetonius, *Caligula*, 22.1.

³³⁹ Aristophanes, *Wasps*, 1220-1249; Plutarch, *Alexander*, 53.3-5. This practice can also be seen throughout much of Plato's *Symposium* and Xenophon's *Symposium*; Plutarch's *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men* also repeatedly follows this pattern.

³⁴⁰ Petronius, 42-47.

³⁴¹ Athenaeus, 10.427d, 15.666d-e, 15.668a-c; Pauly, s.v. 'Kottabos'; Wilkins and Hill (2006) 177, fig 6.3; Weeber (1993) s.v. 'Neige'.

elements; in its ideal form this included competition to make friends, and therefore prove intelligence.³⁴²

As we have seen above, certain individuals such as Cicero's son, Novellius Torquatus, Philip II and probably Mark Antony took pride in their ability to drink and hold large quantities. Given this, and the competitive atmosphere of dining, it is unsurprising that wine consumption at banquets often became competitive. These were occasions for 'permissible insobriety'.³⁴³ On separate occasions, Tiberius and Nero's father Domitius challenged fellow drinkers to down a specified large quantity of wine. In Tiberius' case, the young man succeeded and was rewarded with a quaestorship. In Domitius' case, his freedman refused and was punished by death. Both examples are extreme cases which caused public outrage, but it is the scale of the reward and punishment which were scandalous, and this is the reason they were recorded by Suetonius. There was nothing unusual, in itself, about a party featuring competitive heavy drinking with prizes.³⁴⁴ Similarly, one of the most renowned drinking contests of antiquity is so famous because of its extremity. This was held by Alexander the Great, used neat (rather than mixed) wine, and its vast prize – a victor's crown worth a talent – surely explains why so many individuals (allegedly) drank sensationally heavily. Over forty men are said to have died as a result. The winner, who apparently drank four *choes* (c.4.5L), is said to have lived only three days afterwards.³⁴⁵

A less extreme drinking competition is described in Plutarch's *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*. Reference is made to a drinking contest at another party, where a wreath of victory was offered as a prize for the man who drank the most. When one man turns the competition into a ridiculous 'sprint' to drunkenness, he attracts the ridicule of the other guests. These guests expect a sensible degree of order to the competition; they expect to drink and become intoxicated together, at a reasonable pace.³⁴⁶

This practice spread widely across the Roman Empire. Inscriptions on several Roman drinking vessels from the north-west of the Empire appear to record

³⁴² Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 4.pr=660a-b.

³⁴³ D'Arms (1995) 307. On these drinkers, see especially the above section on 'Identity' (from p.260).

³⁴⁴ Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 42.2; *Nero*, 5.1. C.f. *Caligula*, 18.3.

³⁴⁵ Plutarch, *Alexander*, 69.3-70.1.

³⁴⁶ See n.35.

phrases from drinking games, and thus display their owner's fondness for competitive drinking. A vessel from Tongeren (Belgium) reads 'I win the drinking' (*vinco bibentes*), whilst several Trier Black-Slipped beakers, including one from Colchester (south-east Britain), read 'I overcome you' (*vinco te*).³⁴⁷

Pliny refers to competitive games with prizes as a common phenomenon in his era, the first century AD. But he implies that they had various rules to test how much each man could drink. He states (with obvious hostility towards the practice):

'A prize is offered to promote drunkenness – heaven help us, it is actually purchased. One man gets a prize for tipsiness on condition of his eating as much as he has drunk; another drinks as many cups are demanded of him by a throw of the dice.'³⁴⁸

Galen records that the *symposia* of his day had diverted from the traditional entertainments of music and table-talk. Now guests 'drink toasts to one another, competing over the size of their draughts'; the best among them is the one who downs the biggest bowl of wine. Plutarch appears to attest this practice at one of Brutus' birthday parties. Martial also mentions another comparable Roman drinking game, which required participants to toast an individual, and drink a *cyathus* measure (c.45ml) for each letter of their name. Martial refers to this game twice; once he appears to point to more normal games, mentioning several female names which require seven measures at most (c.300ml). The other occasion seems to ridicule the excessive practice of drinking *all* of a man's names; his example requires nineteen measures (c.850ml). Such individuals appear to have engaged in competitive toasting in a manner similar to modern-day Georgian society, whereby guests take turns to

³⁴⁷ *RIB*, 2.6.2498.23; *CIL*, 13.10018.182; Mudd (2014) 93; Künzl (1997) 258. Note that the first-person motto 'I overcome you' (*vinco te*) may either record the voice of one drinker beating a rival in a drinking competition, or the voice may instead be that of the beaker itself whose intoxicating contents have overcome the drinker. On this second interpretation, compare with Seneca in n.350: 'you are vanquished by the cask' (*vinceris a dolio*). Further on Trier Black-Slipped ware, see n.118.

³⁴⁸ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.140.

state a person or concept which they will drink to, and some individuals attempt to drink a larger quantity than the previous toast-givers.³⁴⁹

Seneca's comments are informative regarding drinkers' motivations:

'What glory is there in carrying much liquor? When you have won the prize, and the other banqueters, sprawling asleep or vomiting, have declined your challenge to still other toasts; when you are the last survivor of the revels; when you have vanquished everyone by your magnificent show of prowess and there is no man who has proved himself of so great capacity as you, you are vanquished by the cask [*dolium*].'³⁵⁰

His arguments imply that many people followed the suggested pattern: engaging in competitive drinking both for material prizes and immaterial glory.

The desirability of such prestige should not be underestimated. Plutarch's *Table-Talk* claims that King Mithridates the Great of Pontus held and won competitions in both drinking and eating; he thus gained the nickname 'Dionysus'. As he apparently organised these competitions, it is difficult to see how Mithridates would have benefited beyond attracting esteem. Whether or not this account is historically accurate is unimportant; what is more important is that it was presumably repeated as it was considered plausible. Competitive drinking could accordingly be extremely cut-throat. Drusus, the son of Tiberius, regularly engaged in competitive drinking with his companions, yet one of them – a doctor – cheated by secretly taking a substance to prevent intoxication. He thus appeared the best drinker and gained prestige accordingly. Yet, when his trick was discovered, the others became resentful, and forced him to drink copious amounts without this substance to prove he was unable to win competitions without it.³⁵¹ Wine drinking thus offered an outlet for the extreme competitiveness of men, and supported the competitively-charged atmosphere of dining.

³⁴⁹ Galen, *Method of Medicine*, 1.1=10.3K; Plutarch, *Brutus*, 24.3-4; Martial, 1.71, 11.36 (also discussed in Ch.1 p.45 with n.17); Jellinek (1976) 1736-1737. Georgia: Mars and Altman (1987) esp. 272-275. On Greco-Roman toasting (competitive or otherwise), see: Weeber (1993) s.vv. 'Gelänge', 'Trinkspruch'.

³⁵⁰ Seneca, *Epistles*, 83.24 (note that a *dolium* was a large ceramic storage and shipping container). On the phrase 'you are vanquished by the cask' (*vinceris a dolio*), compare with the motto found on a Trier Black-Slipped beaker, which states 'I overcome you' (*vinco te*); on this see n.347.

³⁵¹ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 1.6=624a-d. On Dionysus, see Ch.1 n.28.

Beyond prestige and material prizes, the ability to drink large amounts could also imply masculinity. Plutarch's *Artaxerxes* records that when Cyrus wrote asking the Spartans for help in a civil war against his brother, he attempted to make himself seem the more appealing candidate for them to support by an informative piece of propaganda. He claimed that his brother was too effeminate and cowardly for the throne, whilst he was ideal. Among his evidence was his claim that he himself 'could drink and carry more wine than [his brother]'. The Spartans evidently believed his logic, as they chose to support him.³⁵² Similarly, Pliny may also allude to drinkers' belief that consuming large quantities implied virility in his description of the typical heavy drinker. He states that 'they snatch up huge vessels as if to show off their strength, and pour down the whole of its contents', and then do it again and again.³⁵³

Yet, some Romans may have had different beliefs. Their word for virtue, *virtus*, also had the sense of 'manliness'; it thus seems unlikely that excessive drinking – a vice – would have been considered compatible with a sense of masculinity. Indeed, in *On The Good Life* Seneca characterises virtue as dry, hard, sunburnt and having roughened hands; clearly a description with masculine overtones. Seneca then provides a characterisation of the opposite, pleasure, which is wet, soft and 'reeking with wine and perfume'. Here Seneca implies that excessive drinking is opposite to masculinity. In a similar manner, Caesar records that some Gallic tribes of the first century BC had comparable beliefs: the Suebi thought that wine made men effeminate and unable to bear fatigue, whilst the Nervii thought it impaired men's courage; both prohibited the importation of wine. Yet, on the other hand, in a letter Seneca characterises excessive drinking as a masculine vice. He notes that women traditionally did not engage in such things, but by doing so they now contract illnesses which women used to be immune to. Seneca's views on drink and masculinity thus do not seem consistent; perhaps the same was true for wider Roman society.³⁵⁴

³⁵² Plutarch, *Artaxerxes*, 6.2-3. Compare with Ch.1 n.24 on Spartans regarding light eaters/drinkers as effeminate.

³⁵³ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.139.

³⁵⁴ Seneca, *On the Good Life*, 7.3; *Epistles*, 95.20-21; Edwards (1993) 20, 87-88, 173-175. Gauls: Caesar, *Gallic Wars*, 2.15, 4.2 (also discussed in Appendix 7 p.456 n.40). Note also: Plutarch, *Philopoemen*, 9.3-7 (extravagances in trivial matters such as banquets and table arrays, leads to effeminacy).

Wine consumption and intoxication were also thought to promote confidence, as noted by Galen in *The Soul's Dependence on the Body*.³⁵⁵ Plutarch's *Table-Talk* asserts that wine promotes conversation, as it makes men more confident to talk whilst ridding them of their timidity.³⁵⁶ Suetonius similarly recorded that Nero drunk wine before a performance, probably with the intention of making his voice more confident. He dined in the orchestra, saying that he would sing louder after a few drinks.³⁵⁷ Furthermore, Plutarch also writes that when Galba's troops wanted to proclaim him emperor he would normally have declined, yet at that time he was hosting a banquet and was especially fortified by copious wine and food. Intoxication gave him the confidence to accept.³⁵⁸ Further to this, Appendix 7 explores Greco-Roman beliefs that intoxication led to over-confidence and related negative behaviour (such as arguments, anger, violence, criminality and so on). Yet, as highlighted in this appendix, inebriated brashness was thought to have certain constructive uses in the military arena: some individuals considered drunks to be better at sword fighting because of their boldness, and there are several instances of soldiers being plied with copious wine before a desperate battle so as to boost confidence (akin to the modern concept of 'Dutch Courage').

Wine was also associated with sexual activity.³⁵⁹ This had deep roots in Greek and Roman society. In Greek myth, it was drunkenness from wine which famously caused the Centaurs to rape the Lapiths' women.³⁶⁰ Similarly, Aristophanes writes of drunken Athenian youths abducting a woman.³⁶¹ In the Roman Imperial period, Achilles Tatius' novel even used wine metaphors to describe Cleitophon's gazing upon his beloved: 'sated with undiluted gazing upon her. Indeed, I was drunk with love'.³⁶²

The traditional Greek *symposium* of the Archaic and Classical periods was a male-focused space, and usually the only women present were performers/courtesans (*hetairai*) who were meant to be sexually appealing and

³⁵⁵ See Ch.2 n.42.

³⁵⁶ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 5.7=682b-c, 7.10=715d-e.

³⁵⁷ See Appendix 7 n.10.

³⁵⁸ Plutarch, *Galba*, 22.6.

³⁵⁹ For an introduction to the link between wine and love/sex in Roman culture, see Weeber (1993) 99-117.

³⁶⁰ Plutarch, *Theseus*, 30.3. Note also the drunken eroticism of satyrs and maenads: Weeber (1993) s.vv. 'Mänade', 'Satyr'.

³⁶¹ Aristophanes, *Acharnians*, 524-525; mentioned by Plutarch, *Pericles*, 30.4.

³⁶² Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon*, 1.6.1.

were often available for the guests' sexual pleasure. Thus, at the end of Aristophanes' *Wasps*, a character reappears from a *symposium*, having abducted a flute girl; he shows clear amorous intent. The *symposium* was also where older men also often engaged in homosexual courtship of their younger companions.³⁶³ In Plato's *Symposium*, Socrates and Alcibiades recline next to each other and discuss their love affair.³⁶⁴ In Xenophon's *Symposium*, Socrates notes the guests' delight at the sight of an attractive boy and girl; he subsequently comments explicitly on their good looks, and later that their entertainment rouses thoughts of sex. At the end of the party the guests have the two child entertainers enact a marriage scene, complete with kissing and embracing.³⁶⁵ In both works, the guests discuss Love (*Eros*) for lengthy periods. Love was a key theme of all *symposium* literature, and can also be detected in Plutarch's *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*. The event was held by the sanctuary of Aphrodite and was preceded by an omen interpreted as due to Periander's servants having sex with their horses. Plutarch also subverts the traditional love theme to hint how Periander will murder his wife (who is also present at this *symposium*) later in life.³⁶⁶

In Roman society, several sources attribute a link between wine and sex as motivation for the alleged early laws to prevent women drinking wine. Dionysius of Halicarnassus explains that Romulus was particularly opposed to adultery, and he believed 'drunkenness as the source of adultery'. Isidore of Seville believed that these laws were inspired by the belief that wine heats the heart, and thus undermines chastity. Cato the Elder (according to Gellius) similarly declared that women who drank wine were to be punished just as if they had committed adultery.³⁶⁷

As noted earlier in this chapter, youths were considered especially hot-blooded, and thus particularly drawn to behaviour which was notably 'hot' in nature. Drunkenness and lustful sex were two major examples; they feature prominently in stock descriptions of the passions of youth. Plutarch explains

³⁶³ Aristophanes, *Wasps*, 1326ff; König (2012) 6-7, 12, 269-270; Wilkins and Hill (2006) 178-179; Davidson (1997) 91-97; Bremmer (1990) esp. 142; Seltman (1957) 95-96.

³⁶⁴ Plato, *Symposium*, 213b-e.

³⁶⁵ Xenophon, *Symposium*, 2.1-2, 2.15, 3.1, 9.

³⁶⁶ Plutarch, *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, 2=146d, 3=149c-f; Mossman (1997) 126-127, 130, 134.

³⁶⁷ Dionysius Halicarnassus, 2.25.6; Isidore, *Etymologiae*, 20.3.2; Aulus Gellius, 10.23. On this law, see further Appendix 2 n.29.

that the typical behaviour of youths was to combine sex and drink, drinking freely with their mistresses. Furthermore, the Christian author Jerome clearly associates the constitution of a youth with that of an individual intoxicated from wine, as both have the glow of fire, and produce 'a strong and lusty habit of body'.³⁶⁸

Pliny considered drunkenness both to *encourage* and *result from* sexual lust; he writes:

'Think of the vessels engraved with scenes of adultery, as though tipping were not enough by itself to give lessons in licentiousness/lustfulness [*libidines*]! Thus wine-bibbing is caused by licence/lust [*libidine*]. ... [During drunkenness,] then it is that greedy eyes bid a price for a married woman; then it is that the secrets of the heart are published abroad'.³⁶⁹

Accordingly, many banquets of the first to third centuries AD continued to feature love affairs and sexualised performers.³⁷⁰ Soranus notes that the women of Rome were frequently having sex whilst intoxicated.³⁷¹ Similarly, the biographies of Suetonius and Plutarch repeatedly present banquets and drinking-bouts as sexualised contexts, where love affairs were conducted.³⁷² The power of wine to encourage sexual conduct was implied to be significant by Plutarch in his *Alexander*. Alexander usually avoided all bodily pleasures, especially sex, but at a festival in Gedrosia he became very drunk and was convinced to kiss tenderly a favourite boy.³⁷³

The obvious constructive outlet for this believed property of wine was that it could be thought to make seduction quicker and easier. As such, Plutarch writes that the concubine Stratonice was able to rapidly seduce Mithridates, and take him to bed, when he was drunk with wine.³⁷⁴ Similarly, Cleopatra's tactic to build intimacy with Antony included drinking with him and encouraging him to

³⁶⁸ Plutarch, *Alexander*, 48-49; Jerome, *Letters*, 52.11. See further: n.47-53.

³⁶⁹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.140-141.

³⁷⁰ Dupont (1992 [1989]) 284-286; Edwards (1993) 188-189.

³⁷¹ Soranus *Gynaecology*, 2.44(113).

³⁷² Suetonius, *Caesar*, 49; *Caligula*, 25.1, 36; *Vitellius*, 10.3 with Rolfe (1951 [1913-14]) 1.489, 2.486; *Poets*, 'Terence', 1; Plutarch, *Romulus*, 5.1-2; *Pelopidas*, 9.2-11.2; *Flaminius*, 18.2-19.2; *Pyrrhus*, 5.3-6; *Sulla*, 36.1-3; *Alexander*, 38; *Artaxerxes*, 26.3-5.

³⁷³ Plutarch, *Alexander*, 22.1, 67.3-4.

³⁷⁴ Plutarch, *Pompey*, 36.2-6.

enjoy himself.³⁷⁵ Thus Seneca could describe the reasons behind Mark Antony's corruption as twofold: 'drunkenness and – no less potent than wine – love of Cleopatra'.³⁷⁶

Yet wine was not always considered conducive to *all* sexual activities. In one conversation of Plutarch's *Table-Talk* this contradiction is quite clearly stated: even though wine should make men more lusty because of its hotness, men who drink much wine are duller at sex, and their semen less strong and efficient. In another conversation, a character argues that Alexander was a drunkard (in contrast to those who say he was not), and as evidence states that he slept a lot and was a lazy lover. In one further conversation, it is noted that Epicurus asserted that drunkenness is an unsuitable state for sexual intercourse, as engaging in sex whilst suffering an excess is harmful.³⁷⁷

Such ideas were more widely held. Soranus, for example, believed that sex in a state of drunkenness hindered conception, and records a popular belief – which he himself disagreed with – that this led to common defects among Rome's children.³⁷⁸ Plutarch's *Lives* may imply that traditional Spartan society held similar beliefs when he highlights two unusual aspects of traditional Spartan weddings. Firstly, women there were not wed in youth, but instead when 'in full bloom and wholly ripe'. Second, whereas in most places the groom ate and drank much more heavily than usual after the ceremony, in Sparta he simply ate with his mess-group as usual. He continues:

'Then the bride-groom, not flown with wine nor enfeebled by excesses, but composed and sober, after supping at his public mess-table as usual, slipped stealthily into the room where the bride lay, loosed her virgin's zone, and bore her in his arms to the marriage-bed.'³⁷⁹

Plutarch may here imply a link in the Spartan mindset between sobriety and lack of excess on the one hand, and fruitful sex on the other.

³⁷⁵ Plutarch, *Antony*, 29.1-30.1.

³⁷⁶ Seneca, *Epistles*, 83.25.

³⁷⁷ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 1.6=623e, 3.5=652d, 3.6=655a-b; Corvisier (2003) 130-131.

³⁷⁸ Soranus, *Gynaecology*, 1.36, 2.44(113).

³⁷⁹ Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, 15.3-5.

In conclusion, wine consumption was not only considered advantageous for a man's social life; it was thought near-indispensable for the adult male aristocrat. Both excess drinking and abstinence could carry stigma, and were thought socially destructive in a variety of ways, but drinking in moderation was believed to help create an atmosphere which was conducive to socialising. It was thought to help a man experience happiness and pleasure in his daily life. In times of celebration, unusually lavish drinking helped to mark the occasion. Daily wine consumption was also thought to help a man forget his troubles, and to relax and refresh him in preparation for the following day's work. Regular shared wine drinking was also regarded as key to a man's ability to gain new friends, and strengthen his relationships with existing ones. Wine and drinking-bouts were also thought to facilitate amorous activities. Conversely, wine was also recognised to offer an outlet for competitive attitudes: individuals competed not only over quantities consumed, but also over the rare wines they served and drank.

As the Greeks and Romans thought drinking practice especially indicative of character, and considered wine to further help reveal a man's true nature, drinking-bouts offered occasion for individuals to assess each other. Consequently, shrewd individuals could attempt to manipulate their drinking practice to bluff a different character. Drinking-bouts were also times for continuing education, where individuals could more easily emulate the character of others. Given this strong link between drinking manners, character and education, it is unsurprising that drinking practices were also frequently used by Greeks and Romans to construct and reinforce their individual, group and national identities, as well as to conceptualise groups of others by building alien drinking identities for them.

Appendices 6 and 7 also highlight how wine consumption offered a variety of specific uses relevant to the workings of ancient society. It was thought to aid a man's work (including politics) in a variety of ways: from promoting favour and support, to aiding bluffing, and even to facilitating plots and assassinations. Similarly, although wine's ability to promote a confident and violent character was generally considered a negative result, some people thought it offered some specific advantages in warfare and other situations which required a headstrong attitude.

CONCLUSION

Greco-Roman society regarded wine as an ambiguous substance; it was thought to offer the potential both for extremely positive and extremely destructive consequences. The constructiveness of an individual's wine consumption was thought to hinge upon the totality of the situation of drinking. This comprised a wide range of factors, including the drinker himself (his constitution, age, gender, and so on), the type of drink consumed, the amount drunk, the context of drinking, and so on.

Moderation was the most common criterion for ensuring that the drinker benefited from his wine consumption. Although drinking excessively was occasionally perceived as having certain constructive uses (for example, for euthanasia purposes, as the only remedy against certain plague-like illnesses caused by consuming strange foods, and to help subtly drive-away unwanted guests),¹ excess was usually perceived as leading to a number of destructive effects. As seen in Chapter 3, moderation worked both ways. Drinking too little in a situation where there was a social obligation to join in drinking was also thought to lead to social stigma. Similarly, Chapter 2 finds that wine consumption was regarded as medically constructive for almost every single adult (providing that specific regimes were followed). Consequently an abstainer would not gain the significant medical benefits offered by regular wine consumption.

The Greeks and Romans attributed a plethora of constructive uses to intoxicating drinks. This study has focused upon two key areas. Chapter 2 discovered that appropriate wine consumption was considered to significantly aid an individual's health and wellbeing. This worked on a daily basis; if an individual drank appropriately (that is to say, as prescribed by the medical authorities) his daily wine consumption constituted a major part of preventative regimen, which helped to promote health and happiness. Wine was also a key part of therapeutics, both being commonly prescribed in dietetic medical regimen to help alleviate illnesses, and in medicaments (both as a common active ingredient and typical vehicle for administering the medical agents). In

¹ Euthanasia: see Ch2. n.640. Plague: see Ch2. n.639. Unwanted company: see Ch.3 n.332.

particular, the Greco-Roman medical authorities considered wine to be significantly heating in property. Wine was consequently thought to promote characteristically 'hot' activities within the body, such as digestion, bodily strength, blood production, as well as combating characteristically cold illnesses (such as an excess of phlegm) and bodily habits (such as old age). Wine consumption was also thought to quench thirst, moisten or dry a body (depending upon the exact manner of drinking), assist elimination of unwanted bodily substances, and help in a wide variety of specific medical situations (ranging from anti-poisons/-venoms to abortive courses).

Chapter 3 discovered that appropriate wine consumption was thought to aid an individual's social life. Wine could be considered almost indispensable in this regard, due partly to the aforementioned social stigma of abstinence. Yet wine was also thought near-essential to create an atmosphere suitable for merry socialising, friendship and relaxation. Drinking was also perceived as a fundamental aspect in the construction of a celebratory ambiance. Wine was also thought to help individuals construct an identity for themselves and others, and offered a means for competition among peers (in consumption, expertise in oenology, and the display of generosity by a host). The truthful atmosphere associated with intoxication was thought to help people accurately observe and understand each others' characters, whilst (as explained further in Appendix 6) cunning individuals exploited this association for the purposes of bluffing, plotting and assassinations. Beyond this, Appendices 6 and 7 emphasise how wine also offered a variety of specific uses relevant to the workings of ancient society, in areas such as work, politics and warfare.

Therefore, so long as wine was consumed in an appropriate manner, it was thought to offer the drinker very significant benefits in the key 'everyday' areas of health, wellbeing, and social interaction. As many Greeks and Romans doubtless drank moderately on most occasions, many people were surely thought to benefit significantly from wine on a daily basis. Yet, even though Greco-Roman society associated intoxicating drinks with such powerful constructive properties, there is an undeniable bias in the ancient literary evidence towards focusing upon excessive drinking and its destructive consequences. This bias roots from three main factors. First, ancient literature was generally most concerned with the extreme, unusual and shocking; this

Conclusion

was more interesting, and merited deeper explanation. Second, ancient literature often shows a preoccupation with moral decline; this attitude was seemingly prevalent among the Greco-Roman elite of the first to third centuries AD. Third, this bias often reflects the writers themselves, and their agendas for writing; they could derive status from their own moral superiority and capacity to pass judgements on others.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the ancient medical authorities formed an anomalous group, as their regimen-based writings show a clear tendency towards the opposite bias. They focus almost exclusively upon the constructive potentials of intoxicating drinks, and how an individual should consume them in order to secure these desirable effects. The destructive potentials are clearly recognised by the authors, but are sidelined. This was seemingly due to the comparatively unique agendas and priorities of medical authorities in these works; they aimed at prescribing the ideal regimen for life, and drew their authority from excellence in this area. Excess, and how to avoid it, was typically regarded as a moral failing, and thus an issue for philosophical and moral authorities; many people thought that it did not traditionally fall under the remit of dietetic doctors.

Regardless, the 'destructive' bias present in much of ancient literature, combined with a similar bias present in modern Western culture and academia, has led much of the scholarship on drinking in the Roman Empire to similarly focus upon excessive and destructive drinking. This appears to be the subject which scholars (especially medical scholars looking at ancient Rome) are most keen to investigate. Modern scholarship also has the occasional tendency to overstate the significance of problem drinking. This was shown in the Introduction, which also highlighted the dangers of reading ancient sources without appreciating the agendas and biases of their authors with respect to intoxicating drink.

This thesis has argued that a central tool to the analysis and interpretation of such literature is the Constructive Drinking lens. By acknowledging that Greco-Roman literature was likely to marginalise moderate consumption, and focus disproportionately upon excessive and destructive drinking, scholars are more able to identify the constructive benefits which Greeks and Romans frequently associated with moderate wine consumption. This lens helps identify the

effects which were thought to accompany many peoples' comparatively moderate (and far from 'excessive') daily drinking.

I hope that my thesis has highlighted the methodological significance of the Constructive Drinking lens for combating the prevalent bias towards the excessive and destructive. I believe it is of paramount importance for future research into the consumption of intoxicating drinks, and deeper research into ancient literature discussing this subject. I especially promote the utility of this methodological lens for further study of the Greco-Roman world. However, I also advise scholars to consider its utility when investigating drinking in other societies, especially those whose cultural roots include ancient Greece and Rome.

APPENDIX 1: FERMENTED BEVERAGES CONSUMED IN ANTIQUITY, AND RELATED FOODSTUFFS

This appendix supplements Chapter 1. It provides an overview of the history, production and consumption of, and ancient attitudes towards, each of the major fermented beverages consumed in antiquity. It addresses: wine, wine-like and wine-based beverages, beer, hydromel/mead, and fermented milk.

WINE

By the first century AD, wine was very well established in the Mediterranean. Viticulture had been practised in the Near East since at least the Neolithic period, as proved by the discovery of fermented grape wine near the Zagros Mountains (modern western Iran) dating to c.5400BC.¹ From here, viticulture gradually spread throughout the Fertile Crescent and then westwards, arriving in Egypt and lower Mesopotamia by the fourth millennium, and Crete by 2200BC. Viticulture arrived in mainland Greece by c.2000BC; here it began to displace mead (and possibly beer) as the main alcoholic beverage. Greek and Phoenician traders and colonists helped viticulture to spread westward around the Mediterranean's coast. For example, from the eighth and seventh centuries BC onwards, Greek colonists were responsible for introducing the practice to Sicily, southern Italy, and southern Gaul (modern-day France). Following this, the wine trade and viticulture steadily spread in land, primarily along Europe's rivers.²

The Greeks themselves clearly acknowledged that their culture had a longstanding relationship with wine. It was believed that the wine god Dionysus had introduced wine, viticulture and drinking customs into Greece; sometimes

¹ McGovern (2007 [2003]) 14-15, 72-74, 310; Nelson (2005) 10; Dalby (2003) s.v. 'Grape'; *EFC*, s.v. 'Wine: Wine in the Ancient World'. See also: Johnson (1989) 14-18; Austin (1985) 3; Hyams (1965) 15, 30-31, 33; Seltman (1957) 14-15. Note, however, that *EFC*, s.v. 'Wine: Wine-Making in Ancient Greece' implies the Greeks to have adopted viticulture far later: 'the beginnings of wine-making in Greece by about 1000BCE'.

² *Pauly*, s.v. 'Wine'; Dalby (2003) s.v. 'Grape'; McGovern (2007 [2003]) 14; Curtis (2001) 373-374; Johnson (1989) 24-40, 59; Austin (1985) 8, 15; Hyams (1965) 21-22, 31-34, 133; Seltman (1957) 17-21. For a more cautious view (which suggests that wine cultivation could have developed independently, in a variety of locations), see Wilkins and Hill (2006) 170-172.

he was regarded as having brought these from the east.³ The Homeric generation were acknowledged to have practiced viticulture, and drunk wine as part of their diet.⁴

The Romans adopted viticulture at an early date in the history of their city. Scholars have suggested that this probably predates the arrival of Greek colonists in Southern Italy, and the Romans probably instead adopted this knowledge from the Etruscans. As evidence, scholars note that the fundamentals of Roman wine culture are seemingly independent of Greek influence. For instance, Jellinek summarises the argument that:

‘The Latin terminology relating to wine making is entirely independent of the Greek terminology. Compare for instance the Greek τροπέϊον (wine press), γλεῦκος (must); τρύξι (lees) with the Latin terms: *torcular*, *mustum* and *lora*.’

Wine may instead have been first introduced through contact with Phoenician traders. In any case, some Romans were clearly consuming wine by least the seventh century BC, as indicated by imported Phoenician wine *amphorae* found within the city. Similarly, drinking vessels – which are similar to Greek forms used for wine – have been found in central Italian tombs dating to the late eighth or early seventh century.⁵

The Romans themselves firmly believed that wine had been consumed and produced since at least the city’s first generations. Yet, in these early times, wine was thought to have been scarce, consumption generally very moderate (due both to wine’s scarcity and the ideal morals of early Romans), and local produce far from excellent in quality. Anecdotes accordingly describe Romulus

³ Euripides, *Bacchae*, 1-42, 482; Ps-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, 3.14.7; Nonnus, *Dionysiaca*, 47.1-55; Athenaeus, 2.38c; Wilkins and Hill (2006) 168, 170-172; Johnson (1989) 52; Hyams (1965) 69-72. Further on Dionysus, see Ch.1 n.28.

⁴ In Homer, note for example: *Iliad*, 9.224-225; *Odyssey*, 9.110-135; see also Ch.1 p.49. See: Austin (1985) 11; Johnson (1989) 36-37; Hyams (1965) 65 noting also 84; Seltman (1957) 32-48. For later Greek reception of Homeric drinking, see for instance: Introduction, n.32-33.

⁵ Pauly, s.v. ‘Wine’; Curtis (2001) 373-374; Johnson (1989) 59-60; Austin (1985) 17-18; Jellinek (1976) 1721-1723; Hyams (1965) 93-97; Seltman (1957) 152. Jellinek also argues that the Roman wine god Pater Liber was independent of the Greek wine god Dionysus, and Liber’s worship predated Greek settlements in Italy. Since Jellinek’s publication, scholars have much debated Liber’s origins, and it appears doubtful whether he predates Greek colonisation of Italy. He is first attested archaeologically in the fourth century BC, and Dionysius Halicarnassus, 6.17.3-4 states that a temple to Liber was constructed in Rome in 496BC; see Pauly, s.v. ‘Liber, Liberalia’; *OCD*², s.v. ‘Liber Pater’. On Liber and wine note also Seltman (1957) 156.

and Numa's dealings with wine, and laws passed on drinking and viticulture.⁶ Indeed, those Romans who believed the Aeneas myth may have attributed viticulture in Latium to several generations before Rome's foundation. The Trojans were clearly acquainted with wine, so some Romans may have considered that if Latium was unfamiliar with wine at this date, viticulture was introduced to the region along with Trojan settlement.⁷

The growth of Rome and its empire promoted an Empire-wide thirst for wine, and facilitated the further spread of viticulture. Northwest Europe – including much of Gaul, Germany and Britain – was one of the last European areas to adopt viticulture. Although wine had been produced on Gaul's Mediterranean coast (especially around Massalia/Marseilles) since Greek colonisation in c.600BC, viticulture was so sparse further inland that a Roman law from around the mid first century BC sought to prevent the spread of viticulture beyond the Alps. Yet around a century after Caesar's conquests, by the second half of the first century AD, Central Gaulish tribes were producing large quantities of wine. The Moselle and Rhine rivers developed into powerhouses of viticulture in the second and third centuries AD, and a Roman-era vineyard has even been discovered in Britain.⁸

The Greco-Roman process of wine production was relatively simple one, and the fundamentals have remained relatively consistent from antiquity to the modern day.⁹ Grapes would first be grown and picked. The grape harvest, or 'vintage', in Roman Italy was usually in mid to late September, though Columella notes that in different vineyards and districts the vintage frequently ranged from early September to mid October. Cooler regions would generally harvest the grapes at a later date, and vice versa. This was relatively late in the

⁶ For example: Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.87-91. These anecdotes are compiled by McKinlay (1948d); also by Austin (1985) 17-18, 26, 27-28; Jellinek (1976) 1722-1723, 1728-1730.

⁷ For example: Virgil, *Aeneid*, 1.190-200.

⁸ Mudd (2015) 75-76; Cool (2006) 130-140, esp. 136; Dalby (2003) s.v. 'Grape'; Weeber (1993) 10-11 and s.vv. 'Anbaugebiet', 'Handel', 'Händler', 'Mosel'; Wightman (1970) 55, 188-192, 206; Hyams (1965) 136-148; Laurence (2009) 110; Fleming (2001) 5-8; Seltman (1957) 156-158.

⁹ Throughout the following paragraphs on wine production, principally see the following. Ancient wine production: Cato the Elder, *On Agriculture*, esp. 23-26; Varro, *On Agriculture*, 1.54; Columella 11.2. 62-75 (vintage), 12.18ff (on wine-making); Curtis (2001) 376-380; Dalby (2003) s.vv. 'Vintage', 'Wine-Making'; Pauly, s.v. 'Wine'; Weeber (1993) s.vv. 'Gärung', 'Haltbarkeit', 'Kelterung', 'Korken', 'Lagerung', 'Rebschnitt', 'Spätlese', 'Weinkeller', 'Weinlese'; Fleming (2001) 44; *OCD*⁴, s.v. 'Wine (Greek and Roman)'; *DGRA*, s.vv. 'Torculum', 'Vinum'. Modern wine production: *EFC*, s.vv. 'Alcohol', 'Fermentation', 'Wine'.

year when compared with modern-day practice (in the modern-day northern hemisphere, the vintage typically falls between late August and early October).

The grapes themselves contain everything needed to ferment into a basic wine. The Greco-Roman vintner only needed to ensure that the skins (containing the wild yeasts, colour pigments, flavours and tannins) were broken so that they contacted the pulp (containing water, sugars, fruit acids and pectin), and that this mixture was left in an appropriate condition to ferment. The yeast from a grape's skin releases an enzyme which converts sugars from the pulp into ethanol and carbon dioxide. Unless fermentation is terminated by the vintner (by removing the yeast), fermentation continues until all of the sugars have been consumed, or the alcohol reaches a high-enough level to kill the yeast.

The Greeks and Romans usually first crushed grapes by foot (although some were left to ripen, and extrude juice of their own accord); this produced a 'must' (a juice containing the skins and seeds). The solid elements of this must (the seeds, skins and pulp) – know today as the 'marc' or 'pomace' – were removed from the liquid, and usually placed in a mechanical press to extract further liquids. The first pressing of the marc (whereby the solids were squeezed in a press to produce additional liquid) was often added back into the main vat of trodden grape juice. This liquid was placed in a suitable container (usually a *dolium* – a large ceramic jar) and left to ferment for a set period (Cato the Elder specified thirty days). During this time, vintners variously added different additives to deacidify the wine (such as chalk and marble dust), make it less cloudy (such as gypsum), flavour it (such as pine resin and myrrh), or act as a preservative (such as salt water and boiled must). The wine was then separated from the 'lees' (the solid residues, including dead yeast, which had settled at the bottom during this period), and left to mature for several months. In spring, the wine was poured into *amphorae* or wooden barrels (the latter especially in northern Europe) to be stored and/or transported. *Amphorae* were lined with pitch to prevent seepage, and sealed with a cork to make them airtight. This prevented the wine from degrading, as fermented wine in contact with the air undergoes a secondary fermentation to turn into vinegar (acetic acid).

A wide range of different wines were produced, which were thought to vary in quality. Wines were described and labelled using a range of criteria including

colour, taste, and geographic origin (the issue of wine classification is discussed further in Chapter 2; see especially from p.107). Roman wines were also sometimes even labelled with their vintage year, as certain wines (such as Falernian) were thought to improve with age, and certain vintages were considered superior (the Opimian vintage of 121BC, for example, was Pliny's benchmark for excellence, as the weather had been ideal, which led to extraordinary wines). Some wines were luxury goods. An interest in gastronomy had flourished with the Roman Empire's growth, and the elite chased after famous high quality wines (this is discussed further in Chapter 3; see from p.267). Wines of highest quality and renowned were shipped far afield; their status was reflected by limited availability and soaring price. The majority of wines, however, were simple table wines, perceived to be of no great quality, and shipped in bulk to wherever was commercially viable. They formed a staple part of many peoples' daily diet.¹⁰

Yet a thirst for wine was seemingly universal across the social strata of Greek and Roman society; as Paterson aptly summarises, 'wine was the everyday drink of all classes in Greece and Rome'.¹¹ In the city of Rome, for instance, when the lower-classes struggled to acquire wine – either due to shortage and/or inflated prices – they were willing to protest and even turn to riot.¹² From the time of Aurelian (270-275AD), wine joined other dietary staples (bread, olive oil, and small quantities of pork) as part of the regular state distributions of food to the city's people. Volumes were originally distributed for free, but at a later date it appears to have instead been sold at a heavy discount (a quarter of the market price). These distributions continued up to the Ostrogothic period.¹³

¹⁰ *Pauly*, s.v. 'Wine'; Dalby (2003) s.vv. 'Wine-Making', 'Wine Regions', 'Wine Storage and Aging'; *OCD*⁴, s.v. 'Wine (Greek and Roman)'; Cool (2006) 130; Weeber (1993) s.v. 'Preis'. Opimian vintage: Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.55; Dalby (2003) s.v. 'Wine Storing and Ageing'; Weeber (1993) 10 and s.vv. 'Etikett', 'Falerner', 'Jahrgangswein'; Johnson (1989) 61; *DGRA*, s.v. 'Vinum' (p.1206). The ageing of wines (specifically including Falernian): see Ch.2 n.206.

¹¹ *OCD*⁴, s.v. 'Wine (Greek and Roman)'.

¹² Suetonius, *Augustus*, 42 and Cassius Dio, 54.11.7 (under Augustus); Ammianus Marcellinus, 14.6 (375AD), 15.7 (375AD); *Pauly*, s.v. 'Wine'; Lançon (2000 [1995]) 118; Weeber (1993) 8 and s.v. 'Weinkonsum'.

¹³ *Historia Augusta*, 'Aurelian', 48.1; Weeber (1993) s.v. 'Weinspende'; Rickman (1980) 197, 206; Tchernia (1986) 17-18, 27-28; Lançon (2000 [1995]) 115-118; Purcell (1985) 14; Garnsey (1998 [1991]) 241; *Pauly*, s.v. 'Wine'. Note that, prior Aurelian, Antonius Pius issued an exceptional distribution of wine to relieve a shortage (*Historia Augusta*, 'Antonius Pius', 8.11), whilst Augustus refused to do so in a similar situation (Suetonius, *Augustus*, 42; Cassius Dio, 54.11.7).

In both Greek and Roman culture, it was standard practice for wine to be mixed with a majority-part of water, immediately prior to consumption.¹⁴ The water mixed with the wine was often heated; this was especially popular in winter. Yet the water was sometimes room-temperature or even cold; the latter was more popular in summer, and the elite developed an expensive trend for cooling wine using snow. Athenaeus preserves the claims of Philochorus (a third-century BC Greek historian), that this practice originated from the god Dionysus, who had prescribed that this was the only safe way to drinking wine. Common mixing ratios include 1:2, 2:3, 1:3 and 1:4 (wine:water), though many other ratios are known.

In contrast, an equal proportion of wine to water (1:1) was usually regarded as especially strong. Furthermore, drinkers of undiluted wine were usually considered excessive and barbarous, except when it was drunk in certain justified circumstances (such as during libation rituals, and for medical purposes). Consuming neat wine was thought to lead to disastrous mental and physical consequences, including insanity and death. This practice was especially associated with uncultured barbarians such as the Scythians.

Dunbabin (followed by Dalby) has identified that although the Greeks and Romans had similar attitudes regarding wine mixing, they had differing means of achieving this. At social events, the Greeks accomplished this mixing in a communal bowl; thus all drinkers had to share wine mixed to the same ratio. Yet at Roman parties, equipment (such as water heaters) was often provided so that the wine and water could be stored separately, and the mixing achieved by each drinker in his own individual vessel. Each drinker was thus free to choose his own individual mixing ratio. This difference in practice is mirrored in ancient

¹⁴ For the following paragraphs on wine-mixing, see principally: Dalby (2003) svv. 'Wine', 'Wine-Mixing'; Weeber (1993) s.vv. 'Kühlverfahren', 'Mischverhältnis', 'Opfer', 'Rausch', 'Trinkkönig'; Pauly, s.v. 'Wine'; *OCD*⁴, s.v. 'Wine (Greek and Roman)'; Mudd (2014) 94; Mudd (2015) 89; Steures (2002) esp. 178; Fleming (2001) 53-55; Davidson (1997) 46-47; Austin (1985) 12, 41-42, 46; Jellinek (1976) 1738-1739; Balsdon (1969) 43-44; Rolleston (1927) 107-108; *DGRA*, s.v. 'Calida'. On the differences between Greek and Roman mixing practices, see also: Dunbabin (1993) 127-129; (1995) 258-261; this difference was subsequently noted by several of the above works (Dalby, Fleming and Mudd). On mixing and ratios, see for example: Hesiod, *Work and Days*, 591-596; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.149; Martial, 11.6 (1:1 is presented as especially strong); Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 3.9=657b-e; Athenaeus, 2.38c-d (on Dionysus; = Philochorus, fr.328), 10.426b-f (on ratios). Libation rituals, see for example: Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.119; Athenaeus, 2.38c-d; for an overview of libation practices see Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel (1992 [1989]) 39-41. Medical prescriptions of undiluted wine, see for example: Hippocrates, *A Regimen for Health*, 5; Celsus, 1.3.10, 1.3.24, 1.3.32; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.43. Insanity and Death, see for example: Herodotus, 6.84; Plutarch, *Alexander*, 70. Scythians: see Ch.3 p.273ff. Further on Dionysus, see Ch.1 n.28.

literature and thought. The Greeks seem far keener to discuss and debate specific mixing ratios, whereas the Romans show little interest in debating them. The former regarded this as a subject for group debate, whilst the latter thought it a matter for quiet personal choice.

WINE-BASED AND WINE-LIKE BEVERAGES

A wide range of other beverages were also consumed which were related to wine and its production. Several of these are addressed here.

Unfermented grape juice was consumed by some. This was simply must with the marc removed. It was known in Latin as *mustum*, and Greek as γλεῦκος. As noted in Chapter 1, the Greeks and Romans acknowledged that newly pressed grape juice was not intoxicating, yet it was also recognised that it quickly became somewhat intoxicating if left in normal conditions, as it naturally fermented. As such, these terms (especially γλεῦκος) were also frequently used to describe a sweet new wine, which was somewhat fermented and intoxicating. This aptly reflects the recognised ambiguity between unfermented grape juice and a new wine.¹⁵

Pliny further notes that the Greeks and Romans produced a grape juice which was stored in a very careful way (by submerging the *amphorae* in cold water) so that conditions were adverse to fermentation. It thus did not become alcoholic, or at least not quickly. In Latin this was called *semper mustum* ('permanent must') and Pliny notes that the Greeks called it *aigleucos*.¹⁶

The Greeks and Romans also boiled-down this must/grape juice to produce a more stable product. This removed some of the water, any alcohol content, and prevented further fermentation. When boiled-down to two-thirds of its original volume, it was usually called *carenum* (or *caroenum*)/κάροινον. When boiled-down to a half, it was usually called *defrutum*. When boiled-down to a third, it was usually called *siraeum*/σίραιοι, *hepsema*/ἔψημα, or *sapa*. These became viscous syrups, rather than true beverages. Yet as they were sweet and

¹⁵ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 3.7=655e-656b; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.29, 23.45; Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 2.9=6.575-576K; *On the Powers [and Mixtures] of Simple Drugs*, 12.88K; Dalby (2003) s.v. 'Must'; Curtis (2001) 376; DGRA, s.v. 'Vinum' (pp.1201-1202). Note, however, that Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 2.52 differentiates between new wines (νέοι) and must (γλεῦκος).

¹⁶ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.83; Johnson (1989) 71.

flavoursome they had a variety of uses. They were used to flavour other wines, as cooking ingredients, to preserve and ship other foodstuffs (such as olives), and as foodstuffs in their own right. Dioscorides also describes a similar beverage called ἀδύναμος, which seems to have been intended as a medical material. This beverage comprised boiling-down equal parts of water and must.¹⁷

Whilst wine was typically made using the common grape vine (*vitis vinifera*), wines were also made from the grapes of the wild grape vine (*vitis silvestris*). Pliny and Dioscorides record such wines (*oenanthinus* and ἀγριοσταφυλίτης, respectively) which were used for medical purposes. They were probably not common daily beverages.¹⁸

Wines were also made out of grapes which were not entirely ripe. Such beverages were usually called *omphacium* in Latin, and ὄμφακίτης, ὄμφακίας, or similar in Greek (note that the same Latin and Greek terms are also used for the juice of unripe olives). These were used both as a culinary ingredient, and as a medical agent. Thus, for example, Pliny describes a Greek wine called *bion* (from βίος – ‘life’) which is used to treat many illnesses; this was made from unripe grapes which were dried for three days in the sun before pressing. Yet Cato the Elder implies that this beverage was sometimes a low-quality daily drink for lower-status individuals. In his *On Agriculture* he advises that a farm owner should gather the inferior early-ripe grapes to make a sharp wine (called *vinum praeliganeum*), so as to issue this to the grape-pickers during the vintage.¹⁹

Raisins – dried grapes – were also made into wine. Grapes were either left to dry in the sun (either on the vine or after being harvested) or ripened in boiling oil. This drink was especially popular with the Romans, who called it *passum*.

¹⁷ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.80, 14.121, 23.62; Cato the Elder, *On Agriculture*, 23 (use in *vinum praeliganeum*; on this see below), 105 (in ‘Greek wine’); Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 3.1=6.667K; *The Thinning Diet*, 12=5.4.2.446CMG; Dioscorides, 5.6.4, 5.6.16-17; Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 2.52; Dalby (2003) s.v. ‘Must’ (note that [in contrast to Pliny, Curtis and others] Dalby states that *hepsema* is boiled down to half [rather than a third]); Cool (2006) 22, 67-68; Curtis (2001) 376; Fleming (2001) 45; Weeber (1993) s.v. ‘Süssmost’; Johnson (1989) 70; *DGRA*, s.v. ‘Vinum’ (pp.1203-1204).

¹⁸ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 12.130-131, 14.98, 23.7; Dioscorides, 5.6.17; Dalby (2003) s.v. ‘Grape’. Palladius, *On Agriculture*, 7.11 (a fourth- or fifth-century Roman agricultural author) also gives a recipe for a wild grape conserve (wild grapes preserved in honey, called *oenathe*).

¹⁹ Dioscorides, 5.6.14; Athenaeus, 1.27a; Dalby (2003) s.v. ‘Must’. *Bion*: Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.77, 23.53. *Vinum praeliganeum*: Cato the Elder, *On Agriculture*, 23.

The Romans believed that in the earliest generations of the city, women had been legally prohibited from drinking wine; yet some authors state that women were allowed to drink raisin wine. This was a lower-status drink, but it could be consumed as a daily beverage.²⁰

Sometimes, during wine manufacturing, the grapes were not trodden or pressed, but were instead left until fluids naturally seeped from the grapes. Wine produced from this un-trodden and un-pressed must was called *protropum*.²¹

If the grapes were trodden and the marc then pressed to obtain fluids (the usual manufacturing process, explained above), some individuals also conducted a second pressing of the marc. After the first pressing, the marc was chopped-up and then simply pressed again. This produced a liquid which would make an inferior wine of sharp character. It was *not* usually added to the rest of the liquid drawn from the grapes, but instead stored separately. Small quantities of this liquid could be added to other fermenting wines to flavour them (Cato advises its use in his *vinum praeliganeum*). Columella also advises fermenting this must by itself (with added dried rosemary), so as to make a sharp medical wine.²²

After pressing the marc once or twice to make the primary- and perhaps a secondary-wine, the leftover marc could be macerated to make a kind of after-wine. Such a product is today known by the French term *piquette*, but in antiquity it was known in Latin as *lora* and Greek as δευτερίας ('seconds'; Dioscorides states it was also known as πότιμος; Galen states that it was called δευτερίας by Atticisers, but the Greeks of his day had come to call it τρύξι, which in Attic meant 'lees'). This beverage is attested as early as the Hippocratic Corpus' *Regimen*. The exact manufacturing method varied: water was added, sometimes along with a small quantity of must or salt, the mixture was usually pressed, sometimes boiled down, and frequently left a while to mature. Pliny,

²⁰ Columella, *On Agriculture* 12.39.1; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.81-82; Dalby (2003) s.v. 'Grape'; Curtis (2001) 376; Fleming (2001) 49; *DGRA*, s.v. 'Vinum' (p.1203). Roman Laws: Aulus Gellius, 10.23; Athenaeus, 10.429a-b, 10.440e-441a (= Polybius, fr.6.11.4); see further Appendix 2 n.29.

²¹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.85; Curtis (2001) 376.

²² Cato the Elder, *On Agriculture*, 23.3; Varro, *On Agriculture*, 1.54.2-3; Columella, *On Agriculture*, 12.36; Curtis (2001) 378. See also: Weeber (1993) s.v. 'Kelterung'; Fleming (2001) 44 (note that Fleming's interpretation of Columella is incorrect; here he is here describing a second pressing of the grapes, after it has been pressed a first time and then cut-up with a knife); *DGRA*, s.v. 'Vinum' (pp.1201-1202).

Dioscorides and Galen all thought it was undrinkable after a year (although Dioscorides thought it became weaker, and Galen stronger, with age); only Columella thought it could last up to two years. Galen, at least, considered it intoxicating: it affected the head. Pliny implies that such beverages were popular among the lower classes, but not among the elite; he claims that these 'cannot rightly be styled wines, but nevertheless are counted among the wines of the working classes (*vina operaria*)'. Cato and Varo similarly advised reserving this wine for farmhands to drink over winter, whilst the current vintage was still in production and wine supplies were low. *Lora* was also another low-status beverage which women were believed to have drunk when (according to Aulus Gellius, citing Cato the Elder) in the earliest generations of Rome they were legally prohibited from consuming wine. Modern Western society also appears to regard *piquette* as a low-status beverage. The European Union law allows vintners to produce *piquette* for distillation purposes and family consumption, but it cannot be sold.²³

Cato also advised making *vinum faecatum* from the lees leftover from wine production. Cato does not explain who is to drink it, or when, yet Pliny includes this wine in his category of *vina operaria* ('workmen's wine') alongside *lora* proper. It was thus implied to be drunk by the lower-classes. Furthermore, one of the Vindolanda Tablets attests several purchases of lees wine on the northern-most frontier of the Empire.²⁴

When any solution containing low concentrations of ethanol (under c.15%) is left in contact with the air, it eventually undergoes a secondary fermentation and turns into vinegar (acetic acid; after first being oxidised into aldehyde). This process gradually makes the beverage sourer, and reduces the alcohol content. In the ancient world, as today, this process is often not desirable. Hence the Greeks and Romans often took care in storing alcoholic drinks so as to slow this process.

²³ Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 2.52; Cato, *On Agriculture*, 7, 25, 57; Varro, *On Agriculture*, 1.54.3; Columella, *On Agriculture*, 12.40; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.86; Dioscorides, 5.6.15; Galen, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 2.9=6.579-581K; Tchernia (1986) 19-20; Weeber (1993) s.vv. 'Kelterung', 'Tresterwein'; Fleming (2001) 44-45; Johnson (1989) 71; *DGRA*, s.v. 'Vinum' (p.1203). Note that Dalby (2003) s.v. 'Wine-Making' erroneously states that 'Greek *deuterias* was made by diluting the must [sic] and then cooking it'; Dalby's 'must' is perhaps a typographical error for 'marc'. European Union law: Council Regulation (EC) no.1493/1999, p.24. Aulus Gellius and laws, see n.20.

²⁴ Cato, *On Agriculture*, 153; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.86; *Vindolanda Tablets*, 2.185; Dalby (2003) s.v. 'Wine-Making'.

Yet large quantities of vinegar were used by the Greeks and Romans. It was a common culinary ingredient, preservative, and medical material. Vinegar was almost always made from wine, and this was often the result of ‘recycling’ old wine which had turned sour. For example, Columella’s recipe for vinegar presumes the reader will have on hand, and use, wine which has turned sour. Similarly, Cato the Elder suggests producing large quantities of *vinum familiae* (‘servants’ wine’), a low-quality wine (made from a mixture of must, water, vinegar and seawater) to be issued as part of a farm slave’s daily diet for most of the year. He notes that the quantities which are unused by the next year’s harvest season will have naturally turned into excellent vinegar.

Vinegar was called *acetum* in Latin and ὄξος in Greek. Yet it should be noted that (in a similar manner to *mustum* and γλεῦκος) the language reflected the ambiguity between wine and vinegar, and these terms were also frequently used to refer to wines which were in the process of turning to vinegar (these are sometimes dubbed ‘sour wines’ by English scholars and translators). Some authors even used these terms metaphorically for ‘bad’ wines or *vin ordinaire*. Other authors, however, were more specific with their language. For example, book two of the Hippocratic Corpus’ *Regimen* differentiates between beverages made from acid/vinegary wines mixed with water (ὀξίνα οἶνοι), and vinegar proper (ὄξος). A conversation in Plutarch’s *Table-Talk* confirms that at least some Greek aristocrats conceptualised a difference between sour wine (wine which had soured notably) and vinegar proper (wine which had soured even further, so that it could no longer be called wine), and expressed this in the same language as *Regimen*.

As implied by *Regimen*, the Greeks and Romans sometimes consumed beverages of vinegar mixed with water. The Greeks called this ὀξύκρατον, and it was frequently used medicinally. Honey was often added to this mixture, in which case it was known as oxymel (ὀξύμελι or ὀξυμελίκρατον in Greek, and *oxymeli* in Latin); this was also used a medical material. Roman society, on the other hand, had *posca*: a popular low-status drink, comprising heavily diluted vinegar flavoured with herbs (*posca* too is sometimes misleadingly translated into English as ‘sour wine’). This was an everyday drink for the urban poor, the Roman army (especially when on campaign or under a strict general), and Romans (such as Cato the Elder) who liked to display their traditional simplicity.

All of these beverages would be insignificantly alcoholic, as even if the vinegar's secondary fermentation was not fully complete, it was very heavily diluted with water.²⁵

The Greeks and Romans produced wines which were flavoured with additives. The flavouring elements could be added throughout the various stages of production: to the must before or during fermentation, to a fermented wine before being sealed in an *amphora*, or just prior to serving. Salt (often using saltwater) and honey were very common additions. A heavily salted wine was often called Coan wine, as this practice was common in Cos; Cato the Elder simply called it Greek wine. A honeyed-wine was typically called οἰνόμελι, μελιτίτης/*melitites* or *mulsum* (short for *mulsum vinum*). Pliny and Dioscorides agree that μελιτίτης/*melitites* was honeyed-wine made by adding honey to the must *before* fermentation, whilst οἰνόμελι and *mulsum* were honeyed-wines made by mixing honey with the wine *after* fermentation (Columella's recipe further confirms the manufacture of *mulsum*). Pliny suggests that certain wines (the Apamea and Praetutian) were considered especially appropriate for making into *mulsum*, and boiled-down musts also frequently had honey mixed with them.

Yet the range of flavourings used was immense, as indicated by the variety listed by Pliny and Dioscorides. These include various plants and flowers (roses, wormwood, hyssop, myrtle), the wood, bark or resin of shrubs and trees (myrrh, cedar, mastic, reed), herbs and spices (cinnamon, saffron, cardamom), fruits and vegetables (dates, pears, carrots, celery), and so on; this list is far from exhaustive. Wines were also flavoured and coloured by smoking during fermentation. Pliny summarises that 'aromatic wine is constantly made from almost exactly the same ingredients as perfume'. Many of these flavoured

²⁵ Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 2.52; *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, 58-60; Cato, *On Agriculture*, 57, 104; Columella, *On Agriculture*, 12.5; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.64, 14.114-115, 23.54-58, 23.60-61; Dioscorides, 5.13-14; Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 8.9=732b; Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, esp. 4.6=6.271-274K, also 4.5=264K (with 266-267K and 271K), 6.3=6.393-394K, 6.7=6.413K, 6.10=6.430-431K; Dalby (2003) s.vv. 'Posca', 'Vinegar', 'Wine-Making'; Tchernia (1986) 11-19; Cool (2006) 132; Roth (1999) 37-40; OCW² s.v. 'Vinegar'; Fleming (2001) 45; Johnson (1989) 71. See also: Austin (1985) 37. Note that initial Greek unfamiliarity with *posca* means it is misleadingly dubbed 'vinegar' (ὄξος) in some Greek literature, for example Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 1.7 and *Bible*, 'Mark', 15:36 (the drink given to Jesus in the crucifixion scene). Further on vinegar and *posca* in the Roman military diet, see also: Appian, *Spanish Wars*, 54; Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 1.7; Vegetius, *Epitome*, 3.3; *Historia Augusta*, 'Hadrian', 10.2; 'Avidius Cassius', 5.3; 'Pescennius Niger', 10.3, note also 7.7-8; 'Three Gordians', 28.2; consider also 'Thirty Pretenders', 18.6-9 and 'Claudius', 14.3; Justinian, *Codex*, 12.38.1; Davies (1971) 124-125; also Goldsworthy (1996) 261.

wines were attributed specific medical properties, and were probably used chiefly as medical materials, though some were doubtless consumed for pleasure. The Romans sometimes used the term *conditum* (or *piperatum*) for a spiced wine. Apicius' recipe book (fourth or fifth century AD) gives two recipes for these: a *conditum paradoxum* ('surprise spiced wine') and a *conditum melizomum* for travellers.²⁶

Fermented beverages can also be made out of a variety of foodstuffs other than grapes using a similar process to winemaking. In modern English these drinks are often called 'non-grape wines'. The main challenge is to ensure that the foodstuff to be fermented has sufficient simple sugars; fruits and berries are thus among the easiest to ferment as (like grapes) they often contain appropriate sugars. Pliny and Dioscorides record date-palm wine (φοινικίτης) made in a similar manner to grape wine: the dates are soaked in water and pressed. Pliny says that this drink is popular among the people of the East, including the Parthians and Indians. Dioscorides implies its use as a medical material in Greco-Roman culture. These two authors mention several other wine-like drinks, seemingly made without the use of grapes, including those from figs, pears, apples, pomegranates and various berries. The people of antiquity no doubt fermented a wide range of foodstuffs at one time or another, but these drinks receive almost no attention in the ancient literary evidence. These beverages were apparently not regularly consumed by the upper-classes in the Empire's major cities, but were instead generally used as medical materials, and perceived to be the daily drinks of people on or beyond the fringes of the Empire.²⁷

²⁶ Hippocrates, *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, 58; Cato the Elder, *On Agriculture*, 24; Columella, *On Agriculture*, 12.41; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.68, 14.75, 14.78-80, 14.85, 14.92-93, 14.105-112, 15.123-124, 22.113-115, 23.52-53; Dioscorides, 5.6.9, 5.7-5.8, 5.20-73; Dalby (2003) s.vv. 'Conditum', 'Wine-Making'; Weeber (1993) s.vv. 'Gewurzwein', 'Harzwein', 'Mulsum', 'Naturreinheit', 'Panscherei', 'Räucherammer'; *DGRA*, s.v. 'Vinum' (pp.1204-1205); Fleming (2001) 45-46; Davidson (1997) 40; Johnson (1989) 70-71. On 'strainers' which, it is argued, were used to serve infused wines: Cool (2006) 143-147. On Pliny, see further Ch.2 n.212.

²⁷ Hippocrates, *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, 64; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 13.106, 14.102-103; Dioscorides, 5.26, 5.31; Dalby (2003) s.v. 'Date'; *EFC*, s.vv. 'Fermented Beverages other than Wine and Beer', 'Wine, Nongrape'; Cool (2006) 129.

BEER

Beer can be most widely defined as a fermented beverage made from starchy foodstuffs; these are often, but not always, cereals. Before fermentation, these foodstuffs must be processed to break the starches down into simple sugars for the yeast to ferment. A basic method is to masticate the foodstuffs, relying on enzymes in the saliva to break down the starches. Yet in more advanced societies, the process generally consists of malting and mashing. First, the grains are malted by softening them in water and allowing them to germinate. The resultant 'malt' is often ground and then mashed in warm water. A liquid is then separated from the solids; this is called the 'wort', and it is subsequently fermented. Modern brewers add special yeasts and hops at this point. Yet in antiquity brewers probably depended upon wild yeasts from the atmosphere, and hops (which add bitterness and work as a preservative) were not used in European brewing until the twelfth century.

In antiquity, beer was made from a range of cereals including barley, wheat, millet and rye. It had been produced in Egypt from the fourth millennium BC (the earliest evidence dates to 3500-3400BC at Hieraconpolis) and in Mesopotamia from at least the third millennium BC and probably the fourth. In Pharaonic Egypt, beer was an important daily beverage.

Beer was known to the Greeks and Romans. The ancient sources attest different beers produced in many different regions, under different names, and presumably made using different recipes. Yet beer seems to have been rare within mainland Greece and the city of Rome itself. These were bastions of wine-culture; not traditionally beer-drinking societies. Thus, for example, when Xenophon tasted beer whilst in Armenia (401/400BC), he described it in detail as a novelty. Similarly, Nelson concludes that 'there is no evidence, literary or archaeological, for the use of beer in Italy at any time in its ancient history'.

It is thus little surprise that beer was generally disliked by the elite of the Roman Empire. It was alien to them, was considered inferior to wine, and was characterised as a low-status drink fit for barbarians (mainly the Celts and Egyptians) on the fringes of the Empire. There is not sufficient space here to address the Greco-Roman literary evidence on beer in an exhaustive manner (indeed, this is surveyed and analysed at length by Nelson), but a few brief examples will serve here to illustrate the situation. Strabo (writing during

Augustus' reign) described beer being drunk within the Empire in Egypt, Liguria, Iberia and Britain, and by the Ethiopians and (probably) Indians outside of the Empire. Dioscorides claims that ζῦθος and κοῦρμι are two different types of beers made from barley; although in Spain and Britain κοῦρμι, at least, is said to be made from wheat. Pliny notes that people from various places make intoxicating beers out of cereals soaked in water; *zythum* is an Egyptian beer, *caelia* and *cerea* are Spanish, and *cervesia* is made in various provinces including Gaul. Ammianus Marcellinus describes *sabaia*, a liquor made of grain (he tentatively suggests barley) and drunk by the poor in Illyria. The fourth-century Emperor Julian composed an epigram which stated that whilst wine smells sweet, beer smells of goat, and it was only the Celts' lack of grapes which forced them to brew it.

Yet the Roman elite were clearly aware of beer, and considered it to be a significant enough drink for the Empire as a whole that they attempted to define legally its position within Roman society. As discussed in Chapter 1, in the first century AD the Roman law teacher Sabinus proposed that, for the purposes of interpreting wills, the term 'wine' (*vinum*) should be defined so that all drinks were included under it. Sabinus specifically highlights several drinks, including the beers *zythum* and *camum*. Ulpian who later (in the third century) wrote a commentary disagreeing with Sabinus' suggestion, also adds the beer *cervesia* to this list. Similarly, Diocletian's price edict of 301AD prescribed maximum prices for the same three beers: *cervesia*, *camum* and *zythum*. The edict places beer at half to a quarter of the cost of the cheapest wine (per *sextarius*), which seems to reaffirm the low-status of beer, and perhaps imply that it was a drink for the lower-classes.

All three sources fail to explain exactly what is meant by each of these three terms, with the exception of Ulpian who defines only *zythum* (a beer made in some provinces from wheat, barley or millet). Nelson argues that this shows that the authors 'presumably expected [their] readers to understand what [these drinks] were'. In support of this, Nelson notes that these three terms frequently appear in vocabulary lists composed by Roman school teachers of the Imperial period. Thus Nelson concludes that even though Greeks and Romans seem to have avoided drinking beers, these beverages seem to have been popular in the provinces, and 'legal experts from the first century AD felt the need to

discuss the drinks of provincials'. It is also clear that beer was popular with some army units. The Vindolanda Tablets attest large volumes of beer being consumed by the soldiers there, as well as resident brewers and maltsters.

Due to the lack of hops and pressurised airtight containers, ancient beers probably did not keep long, and were thus probably produced locally rather than being shipped long distances (as were certain wines). In contrast to this, Pliny claims that the Spanish had perfected a method of keeping their beers for long periods (he does not elaborate further). Yet Pliny's comment supports, by implication, the idea that beers *generally* did not keep for long. Pliny also notes that beers were drunk neat, although Xenophon states that the beer he drank in Armenia was too strong to take without water. Furthermore, as noted by Xenophon, in antiquity new beers would often have had surface residue, meaning that people often chose to drink them through straws.²⁸

HYDROMEL AND MEAD

Hydromel is a simple beverage made from mixing honey with water. As honey has a large amount of sugars, this mixture readily ferments to become mead. Due to the simplicity of this beverage's manufacture, mead is thought to be one of the (and perhaps *the*) first alcoholic beverage produced by mankind.

Hydromel and mead were certainly available in Greco-Roman antiquity. Aristotle, Columella, Dioscorides and Pliny all agree that a beverage was made from only honey mixed with water. Boiling was sometimes part of the process; either the water was boiled before adding the honey, the mixture boiled-down before fermentation, or the whole beverage boil-down before use. Hydromel was sometimes fermented to make an alcoholic beverage of up to 15% ABV. Pliny and Columella elaborate on the process, stating that it was simply left in the sun for forty days. Pliny also notes that some people only leave it for nine days, and Columella adds that afterwards the hydromel should be smoked.

²⁸ Xenophon, *Anabasis*, 4.5.26-27; Strabo, 3.3.7, 4.5.5, 4.6.2, 17.1.14, 17.2.5; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.149, 22.164; Dioscorides, 2.87-88; Ammianus Marcellinus, 26.8.2; Julian, *Epigram*, 1; *Vindolanda Tablets*, 2.102, 2.182, 2.186, 2.190, 3.628; Nelson (2005) esp. 9-11, 16-17, 25-37, 67-77 (quotes p.67, p.70 and p.71); Dalby (2003) s.v. 'Beer'; Cool (2006) 140-143; *Pauly*, s.v. 'Beer', 'Intoxicating Substances'; *EFC*, s.v. 'Beer', 'Fermented Beverages other than Wine and Beer'; Austin (1985) 3-10, 47; *DGRA*, s.v. 'Cerevisia'. On laws, see Ch.1 n.5.

Pliny highlights the instability of hydromel, which (like oxymel) did not keep for more than a year, and often it would not keep more than a month.

This beverage was typically called *hydromeli*/ὕδρόμελι or μελίκρατον, though Columella instead calls it 'honey-water' (*aqua mulsa*). As with must/new wine and sour wine/vinegar, the ambiguity of the fermentation process was reflected by the language; these words could refer alike to both to unfermented hydromel and fully fermented mead. This is aptly summarised by Pliny: 'there are two kinds of [hydromel]: one is made for the occasion and is used fresh, and the other is matured'. Pliny recognised that matured hydromel became intoxicating, as he continues that 'when however it has kept for a long time, [hydromel] turns into a wine', and elsewhere he states that 'with age [hydromel] attains the flavour of wine'. Similar views can be seen by Aristotle and Dioscorides. Aristotle comments that after hydromel is left to ferment for a long time it becomes 'vinous (οἰνώδες), sweet and strong ... so that it shows no difference from old wine'. Dioscorides similarly notes that when hydromel is left to ferment, as it ages it becomes stronger; for example, it gains strength-giving properties equivalent to *piquette* at an average maturity.

Yet hydromel/mead is rarely mentioned in the ancient literature except as a medical material. Archaeological evidence is also lacking, presumably in part because of the lack of materials needed to produce this simple beverage. Thus Cool (writing specifically on drinking in Roman Britain) states that 'it might also be suspected that mead would have been consumed, but the evidence for this is even rarer than evidence for honey [which is in itself sparse]'. Instead, the ancient literature attributes the consumption of hydromel to barbarians and those living in distant territories. Pliny states that 'it is nowhere rated more highly than Phrygia', and Aristotle attributes the consumption of this drink to certain Illyrians (the Taulantii). Aristotle also notes that some Greeks have produced this beverage, though he does not elaborate further.

Indeed the Greeks used hydromel as a medical material since at least the Hippocratic doctors. *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, for example, addresses hydromel (μελίκρατον) at length, describing its various medical properties and noting that its medical utility could be altered by varying the ratio of honey to water. Pliny also lists a range of hydromel's medical properties, which could be varied according to whether it was served hot or cold. Yet it should be noted

that hydromel's medical utility was not universally accepted by the Greeks and Romans. *Regimen in Acute Diseases* implies that it has gained a reputation for enfeebling patients to the point of death. Pliny states that 'the use of matured hydromel has been condemned by recent authorities as being less harmless than water and keeping less well than wine', and further notes that Themison (the founder of the Methodist school of medicine; he lived during the second and first centuries BC) adamantly condemned hydromel's use.

Thus, although some physicians prescribed hydromel/mead as a medical material, it was evidently not a popular daily drink, at least among the upper-classes of the Roman Empire's cultural 'core' (largely Italy, Greece and the major Mediterranean cities). Dalby plausibly argues that this was because of the prevalence of viticulture in the ancient Mediterranean world; grapes and must were far more available, and presumably far cheaper, than honey.

Apomel (ἀπόμελι) was a beverage similar to hydromel which is mentioned by both Dioscorides and Galen. Dioscorides elaborates that it was made from washing honeycomb with water, and then storing the liquid; some people were also said to boil this down. Dioscorides believed that it was less useful than hydromel, as the greater quantity of pollen within it made it unsuitable for the sick. Yet Galen repeatedly prescribed apomel as a medical material.

Readers should be cautioned that in modern English, the usage of the term 'mead' is potentially confusing. In its strictest sense, 'mead' means a fermented mixture of honey and water; fermented hydromel. Yet, as Dalby notes, 'the English word is now used commercially for grape wines flavoured with honey [i.e. honeyed-wines]'. Accordingly, English translations of Latin texts are often misleading in that they translate *mulsum* as 'mead'. Examples of this include the Loeb translations of Celsus (by Spencer) and Columella (by Forster and Heffner). As described above, *mulsum* (short for *mulsum vinum*) typically signified a honeyed-wine made by mixing honey with must. It did not mean 'mead' in the stricter sense of a fermented beverage made from just honey and water (the closest parallel would be *mulsa aqua* used by Columella). To avoid any confusion, this thesis translates *mulsum* as 'honeyed-wine' throughout, and follows the ancient literature by referring to honey-water mixtures as 'hydromel',

specifying whenever it is clear whether or not the hydromel had been fermented.²⁹

MILK

The Greeks and Romans usually drew milk from sheep, goats, cows, and sometimes horses or asses. Yet, in a world before refrigeration or pasteurisation, it was difficult to keep. In large urban centres only the upper-classes could afford its express delivery. Milk was also sometimes prescribed as a medical material. Rural people, on the other hand, had greater access to fresh milk. Shepherds (such as the Cyclops Polyphemus), barbarians and nomads (such as the Scythians) were thus associated with milk drinking. Most milk was therefore turned into cheese, or else yoghurt, curds or a similar product which had a longer life.

Milk can be fermented. Yet only the milks from horses/mares and humans have relatively high sugar contents (6.9% lactose, compared to 4.9% in cow's milk), meaning that these are far easier milks to ferment, and produce drinks with a higher ABV. Cultures which produce fermented milk thus often traditionally use horse milk; for example the people of central Asia and Mongolia who produce *kumiss*. The milk usually needs stirring during fermentation, which was often traditionally achieved by keeping the milk in a saddlebag whilst riding so that it was naturally shaken around.

It is difficult to state whether fermented milk was produced in antiquity, but we may suspect that the Scythians did so. The Hippocratic Corpus' *Airs, Waters, Places* records that they 'drink the milk of mares'. As they were nomadic horsemen who frequently moved their camps, this would allow ample

²⁹ Hippocrates, *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, 53-57; Aristotle, *On Marvellous Things Heard*, 22=832a; Columella, *On Agriculture*, 12.12; Dioscorides, 5.9; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.113-115, 23.110-114; Dalby (2003) s.v. 'Mead'; Cool (2006) 129-130; *Pauly*, s.vv. 'Intoxicating Substances', 'Mead'; *EFC*, s.v. 'Fermented Beverages other than Wine and Beer'. Apomet: Dioscorides, 5.9; Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, esp. 4.6=6.274-275K, also 4.10=6.298-299K; Liddell and Scott (1940), s.v. 'ἄπόμηλι'. Misleading translations of *mulsum* as 'mead', see: the Loeb translations of Columella, *On Agriculture*, 12.41 by Forster and Heffner (compare to 12.12) and Celsus, 2.18.11 by Spencer; on this issue, see further Ch.2 n.396.

opportunity to shake the milk in saddlebags. Herodotus even describes how the Scythians made their slaves and prisoners stir/shake buckets of milk.³⁰

³⁰ Homer, *Odyssey*, 9.244-247; Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places*, 18; *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, 2; *Aphorisms*, 5.64; Herodotus, 4.2; Dalby (2003) s.v. 'Milk'; Garnsey (1999) 67-68; *EFC*, s.v. 'Fermented Beverages other than Wine and Beer'.

APPENDIX 2: WINE AND SAFER DRINKING WATER

Wine was described as ‘the most healthy and hygienic of all drinks’ by Louis Pasteur, the famous nineteenth-century microbiologist, and inventor of pasteurisation.¹ It is today commonly known that in societies where water supplies are potentially unsafe, drinking alcohol, wine in particular, is a much safer option.² A greater degree of safety can also be achieved by simply mixing a little wine with one’s daily drinking water. *The Oxford Companion to Wine* explains the scientific reasoning behind this, stating that ‘modern research [indicates] that wine contains substances which make it a more effective antibacterial agent than pure alcohol’.³ ‘No known human pathogenic bacteria can survive in wine ... which is one of the reasons why it has been such a safe drink (safer than water at some times and in some places) through the ages.’⁴ In more recent times, wine has been purposefully used with this scientific knowledge in mind, and ‘wine was still being added to sterilise water as late as the 1892 cholera epidemic of Hamburg’.⁵

The Greeks and Romans practiced mixing wine with much, if not all, of their daily water intake (as described in Appendix 1). This would undoubtedly make water safer to drink, especially when away from larger cities (such as Rome) which featured comparatively safe water supplies provided by aqueducts. However, it is debatable how far this particular health benefit was realised by Greco-Roman society, and how far it was incidental; was the increased safety of drinking water in any way used to motivate, encourage, or justify wine consumption? Modern scholars are silent on this issue – I know of no study which explicitly addresses this topic – yet it is plausible that many modern readers may be misled by classical scholars who comment on this ‘safety’ property of wine without addressing whether or not the Greeks and Romans explicitly recognised it. The introduction to Cool’s chapter on ‘Drink’ in Roman Britain is a good example; the very start of her chapter begins:

¹ Troncoso, Garcia-Parrilla and Martinez-Ortega (2001) 116.

² McGovern (2007 [2003]) 305-306; OCW², s.vv. ‘Health, Effects of Wine Consumption On’, ‘Water’.

³ OCW², s.v. ‘Medicine, Wine in’.

⁴ OCW², s.v. ‘Bacteria’. Note also: s.vv. ‘Diet, Wine as Part of’, ‘Health, Effects of Wine Consumption on’, ‘Medicine, wine in’; Dalby (2003) s.v. ‘Wine’; McGovern (2007 [2003]) 305-306.

⁵ OCW², s.v. ‘Medicine, Wine in’.

‘Prior to the advent of tea and coffee, much of what was drunk in Britain was alcoholic, and this is likely to have been the case during the Roman period as well. One of the advantages of alcoholic drinks was that they were frequently safer to drink than water. Though Roman engineering associated with water supply is often admired, it does not necessarily follow that pure and healthy product was being delivered. Ancient writers were well aware of the problems that impure waters could bring. Pliny noted that everyone agreed water was better when boiled.’⁶

Here, Cool clearly highlights the link between the Roman practice of adding wine to water and its ‘safety’ benefits, and acknowledges that the Romans were concerned with drinking water’s safety, but does not comment on whether wine’s benefit in this regard was recognised by the Romans. I stress again that I do not mean to suggest that Cool is trying to imply that the Romans recognised this ‘safety’ advantage of wine-mixing, merely that her silence upon this issue could plausibly mislead many readers into thinking that the Romans did recognise them. As such, this section intends to investigate this issue.

It is entirely possible that the popularity of mixing drinking water with wine could have been partly due to its safety benefits without this being consciously realised by the drinkers. Galen’s words can be used to support this possibility, as he notes that ‘most of those accustomed to anything choose whatever custom is suitable to their nature, because, having been often injured by unsuitable things, they have abjured them’.⁷ Thus, according to Galen, in Greco-Roman society the majority of most people’s regimen was not based on any particular conscious reasoning, but rather was subconsciously based on the rejection of that which had harmed their health, and thus a favouring of things which either did not harm their health or benefited it. McGovern applies very similar logic to the matter of wine and water, succinctly arguing for a subconscious breeding-in of this habit into ancient culture, stating that ‘people who drank alcoholic beverages, as opposed to straight water, in antiquity were more likely to live longer and reproduce more’.⁸

On the other hand, it is also possible that a link was perceived between the addition of wine to water and the water becoming safer to drink. It is admittedly true that the Greco-Roman society did not have the microbiological knowledge

⁶ Cool (2006) 129 with citation of Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 31.23.

⁷ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.11=6.368-369K. It should be noted that this is not said with specific reference to wine.

⁸ McGovern (2007 [2003]) 305.

to understand the reasons behind this in the same way as understood by modern science, but a causal relationship could have nevertheless be realised between adding wine to a person's daily drinking water and their greater safety from illness. A comparable example is Greco-Roman society's recognition that wine was useful for applying to, or washing out, wounds before further treatment; the modern reader would recognise this as another use of wine's anti-bacterial (or, bactericidal antiseptic) properties for microbiological sterilisation.⁹ Accordingly, Galen called wine the best medicament for all wounds. He used it to clean them, and also prescribed using wine and vinegar in applications to ruptures, wounds and inflammations. Celsus stated that it is beneficial to first clean a wound using a sponge squeezed out of wine or vinegar. Dioscorides advised the application of wine (especially old and sweet wines) or vinegar for wounds and inflammations. Furthermore, long before these later physicians, the Hippocratic *Use of Liquids* also recorded the benefits of applying vinegar and wines to wounds.¹⁰ In a similar way, the 'Good Samaritan' of the first-century AD *Gospel of Luke* (now included in the Christian *Bible*) was said to have immediately applied wine upon the wounds of an injured man.¹¹ The Samaritan was not stated to be a professional doctor, and this was a religious parable rather than a medical text; the inclusion of this treatment as a minor part of the narrative was meant as an indication of the action that all good Christians should aspire to emulate in this situation. This parable therefore implies that this particular constructive property of wine was not just

⁹ Béguin (2002) 150-151; Jouanna (1996) 432 = (2012) 191; Weeber (1993) s.v. 'Medizin'; Fleming (2001)76; *OCW*², s.v. 'Medicine, Wine in'. Note also: McGovern (2007 [2003]) 305-306.

¹⁰ Galen, *Method of Medicine*, 4.4=10.192-193K, 6.3=10.402K-405K; also 5.5=10.329-330K, 6.4=10.419K, 13.12=10.905K, 14.7=10.966K; Celsus, 5.26.23e; Dioscorides, 5.6.11, 5.13.1; Hippocrates, *Use of Liquids*, 128(4-5); Béguin (2002) 150-151. Hippocrates, *Affections*, 38 also advises meal in water or wine as a plaster for inflamed wounds if nothing else was available. Note also: Spencer (1935-38) 1.497 states that in Celsus, 'wine with oil and water was the commonest application to wounds'. Celsus, 5.26.30a explains a reason for cleaning the wound: 'when the wound is clean, there follows the growth of new flesh'. Celsus also advised the application of wines in treating other lesions, for example: if from a wound bones projected from the skin they should be covered by layers of linen soaked in wine and oil (8.8.2c, 8.10.1f, 8.10.7d-e); some people were noted to treat all penis ulcers with an application of lycium and wine (6.18.2g); 'cancer' in the groin region (Spencer [1935-38] 3.589 argues that Celsus' 'cancer' is not the same as what is now generally known as cancer, but includes septic and foul ulcerations, erysipelas and ignis sacer, and gangrene) was advised to be washed with honeyed-wine when the gangrene comes to a standstill (7.27.3). Celsus also advised wines for mouth lesions, for example: holding undiluted wine or vinegar in the mouth when blood was escaping (4.11.5); gargling fig, honey and wine to treat the inflammation of tonsils (6.10.3); drinking sweet wine and bland food as part of a regime to clean ulcerated tonsils with swelling (6.10.4); gargling hot wine to treat inflammation of the uvula, when the free flow of phlegm had stopped (6.14.1).

¹¹ *Bible*, 'Luke', 10:34.

recognised and practiced by medical authorities, but more widely throughout Greco-Roman society in this period.

Evidence to support the idea that a causal relationship was noticed between safer drinking water and the mixing-in of wine is (coincidentally) also most clearly found in the *Bible*, in the *First Epistle to Timothy*. Paul advises Timothy to 'drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities'.¹² This shows recognition that adding just a small quantity of wine to a person's daily drinking water would reduce the likelihood of illness. This Greek letter is traditionally attributed to the Apostle Paul, who is named in the text as its author,¹³ accordingly the letter is traditionally dated to the first century AD. However, this attribution is now commonly regarded as not authentic,¹⁴ yet the letter cannot date to later than the end of the second century AD, when it was included in the Muratorian Fragment – the oldest existing record of the Christian canon.¹⁵ This letter therefore implies that at least the author of this text, a single Greek-writing inhabitant of the Roman Empire who lived at some point during the first two centuries AD, mixed wine with his daily drinking water because he believed it was better for his health than raw water alone. This advice may also imply religious approval of daily wine consumption in response to a significant property of wine which was recognised by many inhabitants of the Empire. In any case, this belief and practice was surely propagated through Christian canon from at least the end of the second century onwards.

Yet it is difficult to deduce any link between wine and safe drinking water in Greco-Roman medical literature. The Greeks and Romans clearly considered some waters to be healthy and others dangerous. Thus, for example, Galen considered safe and dangerous waters in his work *On the Preservation of Health*, the late Roman military writer Vegetius linked bad water with bad health, and the Hippocratic Corpus most notably focused at length on this issue in *Airs, Waters, Places*, listing various water sources and describing the medical conditions which they would likely foster in their drinkers.¹⁶ The severity of the

¹² *Bible*, '1 Timothy', 5:23; McGovern (2007 [2003]) 305-306; Austin (1985) 35. In a similar vein, consider also the advice of Diocles (a fourth-century BC physician), quoted in n.42.

¹³ *Bible*, '1 Timothy', 1:1.

¹⁴ *Pauly*, s.v. 'Paulus II.2'.

¹⁵ *Pauly*, s.v. 'Muratorian Fragment'.

¹⁶ Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places*, esp. 7-9; Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.11=6.56-57K; Vegetius, 3.2. Athenaeus, 2.40-44b also compiles similar information.

Hippocratic author's concerns regarding the dangers of drinking raw water are highlighted by noting that he thought that even rain water, 'likely to be the best of all water, ... needs to be boiled and purified' to make it suitable to drink without causing harm.¹⁷ Boiling was thus recognised as a measure to improve the safety of drinking water. Wine was also linked to improving water when the author discusses another source of 'the best water' (that 'from high ground and hills' which is 'sweet and clean'); he states that 'but little wine is needed to make a palatable drink' out of this water.¹⁸ Yet there is no implication that wine was thought to make the water *safer* to drink; only that wine was thought to make the water more *pleasant*. Heating also seems to be indicated by Galen as a method to make poor-quality water safer, yet he does not state anything about using wine to combat dangerous water.¹⁹ Indeed, Roth cautions that 'one should not overestimate the ancients' understanding of the health hazards of water: Dio Cassius also believed that drinking very cold water injured soldiers during Pompey's Colchian campaign of 65BC'.²⁰

Furthermore, Celsus issued advice which initially seems contrary to the idea that wine was thought to make water safer to drink. He states that:

'There are also observances necessary for a healthy man to employ during a pestilence, although in spite of them he cannot be secure. ... [Among other things,] he should drink, one day water, the next day wine ... Such then are the things to be done in pestilence of all sorts, and particularly in one brought by south winds. And the same precautions are needed by those who travel, when they have left home during an unhealthy season, or when entering an unhealthy district. Even when something prevents observance of other rules, yet he ought to keep up the alteration, mentioned above, from wine [on one day] to water [on the next day], and water to wine [on the third day].'²¹

This may seem like bad advice to a modern reader, as if there was a sudden pestilence, or a particular district was considered notably unhealthy, it may be

¹⁷ Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places*, 8.

¹⁸ Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places*, 7.

¹⁹ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.11=6.56-57K.

²⁰ Roth (1999) 36 citing Cassius Dio, 37.3.6. Compare to Plutarch's belief that excessively cold liquids damage the larynx: *How to Tell a Flatterer*, 17=59f=60a; Corvisier (2003) 130.

²¹ Celsus, 1.10. However, if a man became feverish during a pestilence, Celsus' advice was different (3.7.1a): he required hot and undiluted wine, and no mention was made of alternating days of wine drinking with those of water drinking (in addition, all of the patient's food should be glutinous, bloodletting and baths were thought especially useful, but the common treatments of fasting, medicines and clysters were regarded as practically useless).

suspected that this was due to an unhealthy or contaminated water supply; the abovementioned 1892 cholera epidemic of Hamburg is an example of this. In such a case, abstaining from wine could be a very dangerous thing to do; it would certainly be more risky than the normal Greco-Roman practice of mixing water with wine. Yet ancient medicine was not fully aware of contagion in the modern sense: the Greeks tended to attribute the spread of infectious disease to bad air, and Roman doctors were more inclined to notice person-to-person transfer.²² Little was said about disease travelling through the water supply. Indeed, Thucydides' account of the 430BC Plague of Athens noted that at first (before they realised the illness was a plague) the Athenians suspected that the water supply had been poisoned, but later when the illness was discovered to be a plague no link seems to have been maintained between the water supply and the disease's transmission, even though Thucydides tells us that many of the feverish infected people jumped into the reservoirs and the dead were piled around fountains.²³ Modern readers may suspect that the water supply aided transmission, but Thucydides' account supports the conclusion that the Greeks did not commonly consider that contagious diseases were spread through the water supply. As such, Celsus' advice on abstaining from wine during a pestilence does not necessarily challenge the hypothesis that the Greeks and Romans could have thought wine made water safer to drink, as there is little reason to think that they would have questioned the safety of water any more than usual during a pestilence.

However, pestilence aside, Celsus also recommends the same regime of limited abstinence from wine when visiting unhealthy districts. It has already been seen that Greco-Roman society commonly thought that bad drinking water led to bad health; it therefore seems to be the next logical step for a Greco-Roman doctor to question the healthiness of the water supply of an unhealthy district. Indeed, Hippocrates explicitly linked a town's water supply with the general health and characteristics of the population in *Airs, Waters, Places*: a town with good water supplies was stated to lead to a healthier population which was were less susceptible to disease, and one with a bad water supplies

²² Nutton (2004) 26.

²³ Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, 2.48-49, 52. Diodorus Siculus, 12.45.2 lays the blame on the cramped quarters leading to people breathing polluted air. See also n.38 on Plutarch's views.

to less healthy, sickly people.²⁴ There is the possibility that (although he does not explicitly state this) Celsus may have only been considering places where his elite readers would have been likely to visit: more affluent districts which most likely featured relatively safe water supplies, where the chance of contracting an illness from drinking water was minor. In such places drinking water without wine would be a relatively negligible risk, and as such his comment regarding drink water in sickly regions would not *necessarily* imply that he did not recognise a link between mixing wine with dubious water supplies and an increase in the water's safety. Yet this interpretation would also surely signify that such a link was less likely to be noticed and/or considered important by the Greco-Roman medical authorities, as their elite patients were highly unlikely to become ill from drinking their comparatively safe water supplies. If the alternative possibility is considered, and it is assumed that Celsus' advice considered a wide variety of places with water supplies of various qualities, as Celsus was a well-read compiler of Greco-Roman medical literature his advice on this matter would suggest two consecutive conclusions.²⁵ First, as either Celsus himself or some of the works that he based this advice upon would almost certainly have been aware of the commonly perceived link between the quality of a person's water and their health, Celsus' advice that a person who was visiting an unhealthy region should drink only water for entire days at a time would surely imply that he did not recognise (or consider it significant) that mixing wine with water reduced sickness by making potentially unsafe water safer to drink. This would in turn imply that this property of wine was probably not commonly realised by Greco-Roman medicine up until at least the time of Celsus (the first century AD).

Furthermore, Dioscorides, Pliny, Celsus and Plutarch all advised regularly drinking raw water – variously before, during or after wine consumption – in order to experience the health benefits of wine whilst mitigating the potentially harmful consequences of its strength.²⁶ Neither Pliny nor Dioscorides listed wine's ability to make water safer to drink in their encyclopaedic works which consider the notable medical properties of both wine and water. This therefore implies that they either did not recognise the safety benefits of adding a little

²⁴ Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places*, 5-6.

²⁵ *Pauly*, s.v. 'Celsus II.7'.

²⁶ Dioscorides, 5.6.13; Plutarch, *Advice about Keeping Well*, 15=129c-130a, 19=132a-f; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.42; Celsus, pr.69-70, 4.2.8.

wine to a person's drinking water, or considered it insignificant in comparison to the more substantial risks posed by excessive and inappropriate drinking. In a similar way, Plutarch recorded that Cato the Elder almost exclusively drank raw water whilst on military campaign, and so presumably when away from safe water supplies.²⁷ However, this does not definitely imply that wine's safety benefits were not realised; Plutarch's comments could equally have been intended to highlight Cato's stubborn traditional minimalism, even in view of any perceived health risks.

Douglas suggests an informative anthropological observation which can be applied to Greco-Roman society: 'in many societies women are habitually excluded from taking strong alcohol ... [and thus] thirsty women or women wanting to celebrate [via drinking] might be driven in default to very unhealthy alternatives'.²⁸ This practice of limiting women's access to wine was known in antiquity, for example women were prohibited from *symposia* in Archaic and Classical Athens and other Greek city-states (on this see the Introduction p.39, and Chapter 3 from p.276). Even more drastically, Roman tradition held that in the early days of their city, their ancestors had strictly prohibited women from drinking wine. This prohibition is known to have been discussed by several authors and speakers from second century BC (with Fabius Pictor and Cato the Elder, recorded of which survives in Pliny's *Natural History*), up to the third century AD (with Athenaeus and Aelian); it is subsequently mentioned much later, in the seventh century, by Isidore's *Etymologies*.²⁹ Athenaeus and Aelian also stated that this traditional Roman law extended to prohibiting young men (Athenaeus: under 30; Aelian: under 35) and slaves (Aelian implies only *female* slaves when he uses the feminine οἰκέτις; Athenaeus implies *all* slaves when he uses the masculine οἰκέτης) from drinking wine, and attributed similar prohibition laws focused upon women to traditional Massalia and contemporary

²⁷ Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 1.7.

²⁸ Douglas (1987) 7.

²⁹ Cicero, *On the Commonwealth*, 4.6; Dionysius Halicarnassus, 2.25-26; Valerius Maximus, 2.1.5, 6.3.9; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.89-90; Plutarch, *Comparison of Numa with Lycurgus*, 3.5; Plutarch, *Roman Questions*, 6=265b; Aulus Gellius, 10.23; Tertullian, *Apologeticus*, 6; Athenaeus, 10.429a-b, 10.440e-441a (= Polybius, fr.6.11.4); Aelian, *Varia Historia*, 2.38; Isidore, *Etymologiae*, 20.3.2; Pailler (2000); McKinlay (1953b) esp. 861-863; McKinlay (1948d); McKinlay (1945). See also: Ch.2 n.87; Ch.3 p.277; Fleming (2001) 69-71; Weeber (1993) s.v. 'Weinberbot für Frauen'; Tchernia (1986) 60; Austin (1985) 18, 29. Soranus on pregnancy: see Ch.2 n.81. For evidence of Roman children drinking wine (before the adoption of the *toga virilis*), see D'Arms (1995) 308-310. On the prohibition's lapse, see Ch.3 n.200. On these women drinking raisin wine (*passum*), see Appendix 1 p.335 with n.20.

Miletus. As noted in Chapter 3 (p.277), it is uncertain how far these early laws were actually a historical reality, and how far they were a later ideological construction. Similarly, assuming that these laws were a historical reality, it is also uncertain how accurate these later accounts of early Roman (and Massalian) drinking customs were. Indeed, some authors explicitly attribute these laws to several centuries before the earliest Latin literature, as early as the (at least semi-mythical) generation of Romulus. Regardless of these laws' historicity, what is important here are the interpretations of these alleged prohibitions by these later authors: why did they think their ancient ancestors had enforced these rules, and did they think this would have an effect on these water-drinkers' safety?

Douglas notes two plausible anthropological rationales behind such restrictions to women's access to alcohol: either they are (consciously or subconsciously) a result of a desire to protect unborn fetuses, and/or are due to the social values of a society partitioned by gender. Accordingly it surely follows that such societies either put little value in the wellbeing of women – less so, at least, than an unborn foetus – or they recognise little to no practical worth in the ability of alcohol to improve the safety of a woman's daily fluid intake – at least seeing this as less of a concern than other issues. As noted in Chapter 2, Soranus did recognise that wine-drinking could be harmful during pregnancy,³⁰ but there is no explicit reference in the accounts of these traditional Roman laws regarding the protection of the foetus, and concern for fetuses cannot explain the prohibition of wine for young men and male slaves. As such it seems probable that social values lay behind this particular restriction. Indeed, some authors link this law to having the aim or effect of limiting adultery (see Chapter 3 p.318), and this alleged practice was regarded by later Romans as a paradigm of their ancestors' traditional sobriety. In stark contrast, there is no indication of concern for the health of the women, young men and slaves due to their drinking of water without wine. Furthermore, as noted above, Pliny the Elder stated that under these laws women were permitted to drink as much wine as was 'required for the sake of her health'. It thus seems unlikely that – at least in Pliny's eyes – mixing wine with one's daily drinking water was widely considered especially advantageous for health, as if it were this would surely provide a

³⁰ See Ch.3 n.81.

large legal loop-hole, seemingly incompatible with a prohibition law described by numerous authors as *strictly* enforced.

Regardless of whether or not they had ever been strictly prohibited wine, in later periods Roman women were drinking wine on a regular basis (see Chapter 3 p.277); Seneca the Younger even states that in his period Roman women drank as excessively as Roman males. In one of his *Moral Letters*, Seneca makes the observation that although early medical authorities recorded that women never suffer foot pains (including gout) or hair-loss, in contemporary Roman society they were known to suffer from such illnesses. Seneca's explanation is not that these early medical authorities were incorrect, nor that women's physiology had changed, but rather that by succumbing to the immoral vices which men typically indulged in, Roman women had subverted their natural gender role and thus simultaneously opened themselves to these illnesses characteristic of males. Although Seneca's argument has an obvious moralising agenda, the significance of this argument is that it implies that – at least in Seneca's mind – women's increasing access to wine was not primarily linked with a *significant improvement* in their day-to-day health, but rather with their increased susceptibility to the specific conditions of gout and alopecia.³¹ As such, due to all of this evidence on Roman attitudes to traditional and contemporary female drinking, it seems likely that Roman society failed to appreciate that daily wine consumption was of paramount benefit for health, due to its ability to make an individual's daily drinking water considerably safer to consume.

Notable evidence also comes from the recipe book of Apicius, written slightly after this thesis' period of focus, in the fourth or fifth century. This contains a recipe for *conditum melizomum*, a long-lasting concentrate which was stated to be used by 'travellers on the road' in order to make a spiced honeyed-wine out of whatever wine was locally available.³² The recipe advises that its user add a

³¹ Seneca, *Epistles*, 95.20-21; Edwards (1993) 87-88.

³² Apicius, 1.1.2; Dalby (2003) s.vv. 'Conditum', 'Travellers' Food'. Note also Garzya (2002) 195 on the medical use of *conditum* (specifically flavoured wines) in Late Antiquity and the Byzantine period. Note Grocock and Grainger (2006) 135 n.1, that *viatorium* 'is not part of the title in the MSS here or at the start of Book 1' (i.e. making *conditum melizomum viatorium* 'traveller's honeyed-wine'), but is often included in editions and translations due to the description; for accuracy it is omitted here.

Note further that Apicius' traveller's drink is similar in concept to Diocles' (a fourth-century BC physician) drink for travellers: 'for someone who must continue travelling without interruption and who is thirsty, [it is appropriate] to drink a mixture of fine barley-groats with water and with

small amount of this concentrate to whatever wine he had access to, and to use it with 'as much wine as is to be drunk'. The ingredients consisted of honey and pepper. Wine was not essential to the recipe, but was advised to be included only 'if you use a thin-necked vessel', in order to reduce the viscosity of the mixture and thus help 'the [peppered] honey to pour freely'. The hypothetical traveller clearly does not carry this *conditum* in order to combat potentially dangerous water through adding concentrated wine, because the wine is a secondary consideration; it is not always included in the recipe. Yet this does not pose a challenge for the idea that travellers may have recognised that wine was useful for making unfamiliar (and thus potentially unsafe) water supplies safer to drink; the mere fact that he was carrying this long-lasting concentrate to add to wine implies that wine-drinking was considered a priority, and he intended to regularly (if not always) have access to wine whilst travelling. Instead, this concentrate reflects the traveller's fear of foreign wines, and the concentrate's importance was probably that it added a familiar mixture of honey and pepper to these wines. Perhaps the traveller's worry was merely that the wines that he encountered may be distasteful, and as such this mixture could have been added simply to make the wine taste better. The *conditum* could thus be a light-weight compact version of the wines (such as Opimian wines, and wine from Mount Tmolus) which, although distasteful in themselves, were added in small quantities to other wines to improve their taste; a wide variety of other substances are also known to have been commonly added to wines in order to improve them.³³ On the other hand, the traveller's fear may have reflected a deeper concern that drinking unknown wines could have health risks, or may simply not be as healthy as more familiar wines.

A hypothetical case study from Galen's *On the Preservation of Health* supports the latter theory. Galen describes 'a naturally well constituted youth, previously living wholesomely in every respect, but who now, through some urgent necessity, has made a journey of long duration, [and among other things] ... has used unsuitable food and drink'; he subsequently develops indigestion as a

moderate salt' (*A Regimen for Travellers*, fr.184.15-16). This, in turn, is similar to another mixture described by Diocles, consisting of 'white barley-groats with a good mixture of white, sweet-smelling wine and not too much honey, and water', which can be used in daily regimen to give strength and assist digestion (*A Regimen for Health*, fr.182.82-87). On Diocles, see also n.42.

³³ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.55, 14.74. On the variety of other additives, see Ch.2 n.212-217, and Appendix 1.

result.³⁴ This case study clearly links travelling with a real fear that a change in drinking regime could lead to illness, particularly harming the stomach. Yet, alongside this case study, Galen also explains that one factor which caused bad digestion was a significant change to a person's wine drinking regime. Galen lists several examples of such changes, including if he has 'switched completely from wine-drinking to water-drinking', along with other examples such as 'whether he drank sweet instead of aged wine, or thick or turbid instead of thin'.³⁵ Therefore, Galen's link between travelling and stomach illnesses did not reflect a fear of raw water in the same way as implied by the *First Epistle to Timothy*, but rather simply reflected a fear of sudden changes to *any* unfamiliar regimen in general. This conclusion is supported by Galen's advice, from elsewhere in *On the Preservation of Health*, that a patient should usually be allowed to select their own wine-mixing ratio, as their stomach could be upset if an unfamiliar ratio was suddenly thrust upon them.³⁶

Comparable views were present in the Hippocratic Corpus. *Regimen in Acute Diseases* and *Affections* argued that a person's stomach could be upset by *any* sudden changes in diet. The former noted that this could include the drinking of unfamiliar beverages, changing the type of wine, and altering wine-mixing ratios. Changing from normally-mixed wine beverages to raw water was only considered a particular risk as it was thought an especially extreme change.³⁷ Indeed, Plutarch even believed that the above noted Plague of Athens was an illness caused due to a change of place and unfamiliar regimen, when many people were forced to move into the city from the countryside. Plutarch also attributes other plagues and mass-illnesses to similar causes.³⁸

Similarly, in Xenophon's fictitious work, the *Life of Cyrus* (fourth century BC), the logic behind Cyrus' plan to move *gradually* an entire army onto a water-drinking regime is that it was thought that many would fall to sickness if a complete change to water-drinking was made rapidly, but not if measures were taken to make the change slowly (Cyrus uses the analogy of the gradual changing of temperature across the seasons).³⁹ Cyrus therefore plans to

³⁴ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.4=6.245-246K.

³⁵ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.4=6.243K.

³⁶ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.6=6.272-273K.

³⁷ See Ch.2 n.136.

³⁸ Plutarch, *Nicias*, 6.3; *Caesar*, 52.4; *Demetrius*, 46.5-47.1; *Antony*, 49.4; Corvisier (2003) 121-123. See also: *Advice about Keeping Well*, 3=123a-c, 7=125b-126b.

³⁹ Xenophon, *Education of Cyrus*, 6.2.26-29.

steadily wean the army off of their customary wine by two measures. First, he plans that they will immediately start taking only water with their meals, which is not seen as a problem because his army is accustomed to eating food containing water (Cyrus notes that bread is made using water, as are boiled foods). Secondly, because his troops are accustomed to daily consumption of wine, Cyrus decrees that they will take a measure of wine after their meals, gradually decreasing this quantity day-by-day until this custom is completely removed, in order to ease the transition to becoming teetotallers. There is clearly no fear of the greater risk of consuming water without wine, as the army plans to drink beverages of raw water (without any wine mixed in) from day one of this plan, even whilst crossing foreign territory on military campaign, and thus away from urban infrastructure and their familiar homeland (which doubtless featured more trustworthy water sources). Xenophon's Cyrus only considered wine-drinking to have safety benefits because it was customary, rather than because of anything intrinsic to wine itself.

Plutarch similarly records in *Advice about Keeping Well* that the reason people sometimes become ill after drinking raw water is that they are not used to it. People are thus advised to make a habit of occasionally abstaining from wine and instead drink only raw water. By doing so, they accustom themselves to this drink. If these individuals are later compelled by circumstance to drink only raw water, it would thus not feel strange or make them ill.⁴⁰ Indeed, across several works, Plutarch also records that on three instances wine had been used to combat population-wide illnesses created by the eating of unfamiliar foods. Presumably, the familiarity of wine was thought to help reassert some familiarity within the individual's accustomed regimen, thereby removing the cause of their illness.⁴¹

As such, Apicius' *conditum* could have been designed to make the various unfamiliar wines which a person encountered during his travels taste more uniform and familiar. This would limit the changes to his drinking regime, and thus also limit the risks to his health.⁴² Dalby takes this view one step further.⁴³

⁴⁰ Plutarch, *Advice about Keeping Well*, 15=129c-130a.

⁴¹ See Ch.2 n.639.

⁴² In a similar manner, note the advice of Diocles (a fourth-century BC physician) in *A Regimen for Health*, fr.182.202-207, that 'one should always be on one's guard against foods that are unaccustomed ... one should not drink water one is not used to as it comes to hand, for this is bad and risky, but in combination with honey, or wine, or vinegar, or flour and salt'. Diocles' fear is that any unfamiliar regimen (here, specifically, unfamiliar food and drink) can be

He interprets Apicius' recipe as 'evidence of the important health benefits expected from adding spices and herbs to wine in the correct proportions', and notes similar recipes in Oribasius' fourth-century *Medical Collections* and Byzantine compilations. Greco-Roman doctors did indeed frequently prescribe spiced wines, with the spices being considered medically constructive additions, and *Ypocras* (possibly named in reference to Hippocrates) was a spiced wine of the Middle Ages which was thought to have medicinal properties, illustrating the persistence of this tradition.⁴⁴ This practice can also be clearly seen (in the first century AD) by Dioscorides' extensive catalogue of a wide variety of flavoured wines with medically constructive properties and uses (from that flavoured with resin, to that with sage, celery, groundnuts, hellebore, and so on).⁴⁵ Furthermore, several times in *On the Preservation of Health*, Galen prescribes adding various herbs to beverages in order to treat various medical problems. These repeatedly include pepper (one of the two ingredients of Apicius' *conditum*), which Galen sometimes prescribes to be powdered and simply added to a patient's beverages.⁴⁶ Galen clearly believed that pepper had significant power in assisting the concoction of foodstuffs in the stomach.⁴⁷ Most significantly, Galen provides a recipe for a medicinal beverage to give to old men after their baths to aid their stomachs; the recipe is almost exactly the same as Apicius' *conditum* would be after mixing it with wine (wine, honey, rue and pepper; rue is not in Apicius' recipe).⁴⁸ It has been shown, above, that the widespread fear of unfamiliar drinking was commonly based on the idea that it may afflict the drinker's digestion and/or stomach, and the Hippocratic author of *Regimen in Acute Diseases* also explains that 'it [the belly] has difficulty in

destructive to health; unfamiliar water is simply one such risk which people very frequently encounter. Diocles attempts to mitigate this risk by advising that people mix common foodstuffs with any unfamiliar water which they intend to consume, presumably to make the water more familiar to the drinker; wine is just one of these familiar foodstuffs. On Diocles, see also n.32.

⁴³ Dalby (2003) s.vv. 'Conditum', 'Travellers' Food'. Note also: Garzya (2002) 195.

⁴⁴ D'Arms (1995) 314.

⁴⁵ Dioscorides, 5.6.5, 5.20-73.

⁴⁶ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.5=6.265-271K (the various properties and uses of various peppers), 4.7=6.282-285K (the medical use of pepper alone sprinkled into a drink, and a mixture based on pepper), 5.5=6.338-339K (herbs, including pepper, added to honeyed-wine for various health benefits), 5.6=6.340-341K (the medical use of pepper on food or sprinkled in a beverage), 5.9=6.354K (sprinkling herbs into drinks, or taking them with honey, to help promote daily bowel movements), 6.7=6.413K (oxymel and pepper), 6.10=6.428-430K (pepper-based medical treatments, including powdered pepper in water).

⁴⁷ For example: Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 4.5=6.265K, also 5.6=6.339-341K; *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*, 3.29=6.725-726K (on helping to digest fish which is troublesome for the stomach).

⁴⁸ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 5.5=6.339K.

digesting food and drinks to which it is unaccustomed even if they are not bad in themselves'.⁴⁹

As such it is perhaps appropriate to interpret Apicius' *conditum* as, in part, a medical concoction to help strengthen and protect the stomach against the inevitable unfamiliar (but not necessarily 'bad' or unhealthy) drinks encountered during a person's travels, and as a digestive aid to help the stomach digest these unfamiliar drinks (wine's use as a digestive aid is considered, at length, in Chapter 2; see from p.131). A comparable example (though not involving added flavourings) is Pliny's example of *bion* (or 'life') which was a wine made from sun-drying unripe grapes; its notable properties included being 'good for a disordered stomach or a weak digestion', and also 'in times of plague too, and on travels, it is said to be a powerful aid'.⁵⁰

This subsequently suggests that even if the increased safety of drinking a mixed-wine beverage was noted by the Greeks and Romans, it may not have been suspicious water which was perceived as dangerous, but rather simply the unfamiliar drinking regime. Secondly, it may have been other elements of the beverage, rather than the basic nature of wine itself, which were considered to be primarily responsible for any safety benefits; as suggested above, this could include the various added flavourings, or, as suggested by Pliny's example, only a single specialist type of wine.

Another point is provided by Galen's *On the Preservation of Health* and its treatment of children under seven years old. Galen explains that:

'Wine moistens and nourishes whatever is excessively dry, softens the harshness of bitter bile, and promotes elimination through perspiration and urine. But children, who do not secrete such bile and who have a much greater natural moisture, have no need of the benefits accruing from wine, but sustain only injury from it. Therefore no one in his right mind will permit children to use such a beverage, which, besides doing no good, may have great harm ensuing.'⁵¹

Wine is thus stated to have no useful benefits for children; it can only do them harm. If Galen considered wine to make drinking water safer to drink, we may

⁴⁹ Hippocrates, *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, 36.

⁵⁰ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.53; this wine is also described at 14.77.

⁵¹ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.11=1.55K (with 1.11=1.54-55K).

therefore expect him to mention it here as one benefit that children would receive by drinking wine. This is especially likely as immediately following this discussion of wine and children, Galen then proceeds to discuss the types of water that are beneficial and harmful to children. Galen even considers how to limit any risks from water, stating: 'I enjoin abstention from these waters altogether when cold, but I do not forbid their use when warm'.⁵² As such, Galen was also clearly considering how to increase the safety of a person's water supply just a few lines after he had written on the benefits of wine. Therefore, both the benefits of wine and practical advice regarding the safety of water were clearly in Galen's mind when writing this section, but he does not seem to have recognised, or considered it worth noting, that the former offered a solution to the latter problem. If Galen believed wine to have a similar benefit, this would be an extremely natural and appropriate place to mention it. The fact that he does not, as well as the fact that he explicitly states that wine drinking can have absolutely no benefits for children, heavily challenges the suggestion that Galen believed that mixing-in a little wine increased the drinking water's safety.

Furthermore, the first-century AD encyclopaedist Pliny the Elder launches an attack on excessive drinking by stating: 'as if nature had not given us the most healthy of beverages to drink, water, which all other animals make use of.' This implies that he did not recognise wine's potential to make water safer to drink.⁵³ Wine is simply presented as a luxury addition to the already 'healthy' beverage of water; this addition which threatened to be destructive, as in excess it 'perverts men's minds and produces madness'. Pliny fails to provide any indication of this safety-promoting use of wine throughout his entire work, even though his *Natural History* methodically addresses a wide range of the commonly believed notable properties of various substances, including both water and wine. Book thirty-one focuses upon the properties of various waters, including their constructive and destructive effects upon health. This book would have been a particularly appropriate place to record this beneficial property of wine. Yet the only connections made between wine and water are three anecdotes borrowed from other authors: that drinking the water of one

⁵² Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.11=1.56-57K.

⁵³ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.137. Note also a statement of supporting purpose (though not useful for the particular argument of this chapter) at 23.42: 'it is to wine that we men should attribute the fact that of animals we alone drink when we are not thirsty'.

particular lake results in distaste for wine, that the water of one particular spring causes drunkenness, and that one particular spring of Pater Liber allegedly flows with wine on occasion.⁵⁴ This property is also not mentioned in book fourteen, which focuses upon wine, with discussion ranging widely from its very basic to its most miraculous properties,⁵⁵ or the section of book twenty-three which discusses wine's medically relevant properties and uses. As Pliny does not mention this property, and seems to regard water without wine as perfectly healthy, it is likely that Pliny did not recognise that mixing wine with drinking water made the latter significantly safer to drink. Consequently, this implies that this belief was not held widely enough in Greco-Roman society for Pliny, the well-read scholar and compiler of information, to become aware of it.

To summarise, although Greco-Roman society seems to have been well aware that drinking water could be dangerous, there is very little to suggest that the Greeks and Romans commonly believed that their usual practice of mixing wine with their drinking water made the latter safer to consume. This property did not come to the attentions of the wide-read Pliny or Celsus, or be considered worthy of inclusion in their encyclopaedic works which methodically address a variety of properties of wine, water and health. The only item of compelling evidence from this period is in a Christian letter dating to the first or second century AD, and although this implies recognition that mixing a small quantity of wine with drinking water was healthier, nothing confirms that this idea was very widespread among the greater Greco-Roman population.

Indeed a second reading of this letter, in the light of this investigation, makes it seem possible that its author did not intend to imply that wine made water safer to drink. Rather he may simply have intended to present moderate wine consumption (of well-mixed wine) as advantageous for a person's health. In support of this, the reader should note especially the author's focus on the benefits for the stomach. This is in line with the repeated concern shown by the above noted medical authorities, who thought that water-drinking would harm most peoples' stomachs, whilst the use of wine could prevent/cure this problem. The medical sources are notably silent upon this important 'safety' issue, and Celsus even issues advice that seems contrary to an awareness of this property

⁵⁴ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 31.16.

⁵⁵ For this range, note for example: Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.58, 14.116-118.

of wine. Perhaps this simply reflects the fact that water safety was not commonly a major issue for these prominent doctors; they tended to practice among the urban elite of the more prosperous cities, places with comparatively safe water supplies at least for their affluent clientele. Such a relationship was therefore unlikely to be noticed by these medical authors, and was also less worthy of their comment. Alternatively, perhaps they were simply unaware of the benefits of their daily practice.

APPENDIX 3: MEDICAL AUTHORS, OTHER THAN GALEN, ON WINE'S ELIMINATING PROPERTIES

As stated in Chapter 2 (p.200), the other Greco-Roman medical authorities shared broadly comparable beliefs to Galen in attributing significant eliminating powers to various wines. In general, these authors merely disagreed about which type of wine-drinking regime best achieved the desired medical effect. This section supports Chapter 2 by surveying the views of these other medical authorities regarding the eliminating properties of wine. It considered the Hippocratic Corpus (as well as the broadly contemporary physician Mnesitheus of Athens), and the works of Cato the Elder, Celsus, Dioscorides, Soranus and Pliny the Elder.

The statement by the Hippocratic author of *Regimen* which introduced the fundamental properties of wine read: 'wine is hot and dry and it has something purgative from its original substance' (as previously discussed on p.129). This highlighted the importance attached to the eliminating property of wine. Only a few lines later, the author then proceeds to explicitly lists wines by their diuretic and purgative properties, implying that he considered wines appropriate to be promote varying levels of urine and purgation. Like Galen, he also considered the thinnest wines to be most diuretic, yet his ideas regarding the speed with which they passed to stool were not entirely similar. He states that 'among wines of similar age, those with bouquet pass better by stool than those without, because they are riper', but, as this factor in itself indicates, the primary factor was the age of wine. New wines (νέοι) were considered to be the most purgative of wines, but must (γλεῦκος) was thought even quicker to pass by stool; new wines derived their excrementary potency from being 'nearer the must'. The Hippocratic author explains his beliefs regarding must's extreme purgative properties: 'it causes wind because it heats; it empties the body because it purges; it disturbs by fermenting in the bowels and passing by stool'. Its notable purgative power therefore seems linked not only to its youth and ripeness, but also to its heat which caused flatulence, and furthermore its liability to undergo fermentation in the bowels and thus promote stool. The Hippocratic author also attributed purgative properties to boiled-down must.

Presumably, this was considered purgative for many of the same reasons as must, but he states that it 'sends to stool because it is sweet and moreover boiled-down'. He thus linked its purgative property to its sweetness, as did Galen when he regarded thick sweet wines as akin to purgative drugs.¹

Other Hippocratic texts also emphasise the role of wines in the various types of bodily elimination.² *Affections* lists several wines in relation to a variety of eliminating properties.³ Sweet, dry, honeyed, and aged wines were considered to be laxative, diuretic and nourishing, as well as not producing flatulence, colic or fullness. The wines with the most intense eliminating properties combined multiple of the aforementioned characteristics; thus the author notes that a dry white wine was considered to be notably diuretic when also thin and aged. Hydromel (μελίκρατον) was also considered useful for evacuating the bowels and bladder. In contrast, diluted, light, dry, white wine was considered to constrict the body, and presumably confine urine and stools. It is curious, however, that the author advised sweet wine for a patient with diarrhoea; surely this would increase their loose bowels.⁴ In *Epidemics* and *Affections* it is noted that excess or strong wine can cause diarrhoea.⁵

Regimen in Acute Diseases particularly emphasises the importance of a drink's diuretic properties, and also its purgative properties, for a sufferer of acute diseases. It advises white strong wine to be taken by such patients, because, 'as it passes more easily to the bladder than the other kind [sweet wine] and is diuretic and purgative, it is always very beneficial in acute diseases. For even though it is less suitable than the sweet in other respects, yet the cleansing through the bladder which it causes is beneficial so long as it is administered correctly'.⁶ *Regimen in Acute Diseases* also indicates hydromel and oxymel to

¹ Hippocrates, *Regimen*, 2.52. Note especially: 'New wines (νέοι) pass by stool better than other wines because they are nearer the must (γλεῦκος), and are more nourishing; of wines of the same age, those with bouquet pass better by stool than those without, because they are riper, and the thicker wines better than the thin. Thin wines pass better by urine. White wines and thin sweet wines pass better by urine than stool'. Galen: see Ch.2 esp. n.594.

² For the Hippocratic Corpus on this issue, and throughout this section, see also: Jouanna (1996) 426-427 = (2012) 186-187.

³ Hippocrates, *Affections*, 40, 48, 55. Note also 55, 59: hot and moist foods were believed to be purgative; cold and dry were thought diuretic; hot and dry, and sour foods were thought costive.

⁴ Hippocrates, *Affections*, 27.

⁵ Hippocrates, *Affections*, 27 (excess food and drink can lead the body to overheat and causes cholera or diarrhoea); *Epidemics*, 7.82 (choleric with diarrhoea can be caused by fragrant old wine); Jouanna (1996) 417 = (2012) 178.

⁶ Hippocrates, *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, 50-51.

be diuretic, and thus useful during acute diseases. Water on the other hand is regarded as hindering urine and stools; it is therefore to be largely avoided during such illnesses.⁷ *Aphorisms* also suggests a link between wine and constructive urinary elimination when it suggests that neat wine, along with deep bleeding, is able to relieve urinary problems (specifically, dysentery and strangury).⁸ Wine regimes are also prescribed to treat various types of problematic stools in *A Regimen for Health*. Drinking 'two or three kinds of wine' is advised to relax the belly and aid the passage of stools; the opposite (presumably drinking only one type of wine) is stated to have the opposite effect (apparently treating relaxed bellies and loose stool).⁹ The treatment of diarrhoea and 'undigested stools resembling food' consists of eating heavily of baked bread crumbled into wine, and drinking 'the smallest quantity of practically diluted wine'.¹⁰ Similarly, *Regimen in Acute Diseases* advises a sufferer of such illnesses to drink tawny or bitter red wine 'if the stools are rather too loose and full of shreds'.¹¹ *A Regimen for Health* also advises wine's use as an emetic (neat wine before a meal, and afterwards sips at intervals of an increasingly diluted mixture made from three wines: bitter, sweet and acid),¹² and *Regimen in Acute Diseases* notes that sweet wine produces a notable amount of sputum (so long as this wine does not cause thirst, else strong white wine is better for this purpose).¹³ Wine was also thought to cause flatulence. *A Regimen for Health* and *Regimen in Acute Diseases* state (respectively) that wine and watered wine often cause wind. The former work implies that this was particularly troublesome to children. The latter notes that sweet wine, in particular, causes troublesome wind in the upper intestine that lingers and does not easily escape.¹⁴ Oxymel, on the other hand, was believed to be good for breaking up wind.¹⁵

The broadly contemporary physician Mnesitheus of Athens (fourth century BC) similarly emphasised the diuretic utility of wine. Although he acknowledges that drinking excessively is generally an evil for the body and soul, he advises doing

⁷ Hippocrates, *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, 53, 58, 62.

⁸ Hippocrates, *Aphorisms*, 7.48.

⁹ Hippocrates, *A Regimen for Health*, 5.

¹⁰ Hippocrates, *A Regimen for Health*, 7.

¹¹ Hippocrates, *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, 52.

¹² Hippocrates, *A Regimen for Health*, 5.

¹³ Hippocrates, *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, 50.

¹⁴ Hippocrates, *A Regimen for Health*, 6; *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, 37a, 50.

¹⁵ Hippocrates, *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, 58.

so on occasion as it promotes urination which releases the acidities that tend to build up within the body. He regarded white wine as the most diuretic wine, and thus the most medically useful in this regard.¹⁶

Cato the Elder's second-century BC manual *On Agriculture* also implies that certain wines could constructively influence bodily elimination. Cato noted wine flavoured with hellebore as a laxative wine, and also advised that a similar laxative wine was made from vines whose roots were covered with hellebore root; these wines should be diluted, or put into another drink, and taken before dinner.¹⁷ Coan wine was also implied to be 'sufficient to move the bowels', and was thus included among many other purgative ingredients in a concoction which was stated to be both especially thorough in moving the bowels and also agreeable.¹⁸ Drinking diluted Coan wine was considered suitable as part of a purgative regimen to accompany this particular concoction, and diluted mild wine was advised to accompany another purgative regime featuring macerated cabbage.¹⁹ On the other hand, a strong black wine flavoured with pomegranates was prescribed to treat overly loose bowels (as well as gripes and worms); this should be drunk before eating.²⁰ Cato also prescribed wines to treat difficult urination: wine with capreida or Jupiter boiled in it to combat retention of urine (drank in the morning before eating), and a mixture of old wine with pomegranate blossoms and crushed root of fennel to aid a person with strangury (frequent painful urinations of small volume; this was to be drunk whenever the sufferer wanted to urinate).²¹

Celsus also believed that wine had a variety of constructive eliminating powers. As noted in Chapter 2 (p.179), Celsus prescribed a specific use of wine for emetic purposes.²² He advised that a patient drink water if he needed to vomit after a meal, but if he needed to vomit in the morning then beforehand he should also either drink honey or hyssop in wine, or eat a radish. Celsus regarded this as a risky treatment: it did not always help ill patients, but was

¹⁶ Athenaeus, 1.32c-e (= Mnesitheus, fr.46), 11.483f-484a (= Mnesitheus, fr.45); Wilkins (2002) 186-189. On Mnesitheus and wine, see Ch.2 n.42.

¹⁷ Cato, *On Agriculture*, 114-115.

¹⁸ Cato, *On Agriculture*, 158.

¹⁹ Cato, *On Agriculture*, 157.

²⁰ Cato, *On Agriculture*, 126.

²¹ Cato, *On Agriculture*, 122, 127.

²² See Ch.2 n.517.

always harmful to those who were healthy.²³ In a similar way to Galen, this emetic treatment was considered appropriate to treat people with a bilious condition (which could be due to either overeating or poor digestion), but it was also advised for a variety of other conditions, including plethoric patients (people with an excess of bodily fluids), those with bitter belches or taste in the mouth, heartburn or pain and weight over the heart, copious salivation, nausea, ringing in the ears, watering of the eyes, and for anyone who was changing climate or locality. Although Celsus notes that vomiting was considered destructive if used for gourmandising, he also prescribes it following a very heavy meal, with copious food and wine.²⁴

In addition, Celsus thought that wine had a powerful diuretic effect; thus he notes that dropsy is least alarming 'if the urine is altered both by a change of the wine and of certain medicinal draughts'.²⁵ He believed thin wine to be especially promoting of urine,²⁶ and accordingly prescribed thin dry wines as part of a regime of diuretics and harsh foods in order to treat dropsy.²⁷ Diluted 'diuretic' wine was also prescribed as an alternative to water-drinking in order to treat fatigue.²⁸ On the other hand, however, some wine-drinking regimes were regarded as significantly less diuretic. Thus, specific wine-drinking regimes (including small amounts of light or diluted dry wines) were prescribed as part of a diet which avoided anything that promoted urine in order to treat a condition today recognised as diabetes (when urine was noted to exceed the quantity of fluids drunk).²⁹ The treatment for longstanding kidney conditions did not require a specific beverage, but simply the drinking freely of fluids.³⁰

Celsus also noted significant purgative property of certain wines when he states that when the bowels were constipated and as a result flatulence increased, wine and foods which promoted stools should generally be used as the first measure of treatment.³¹ He noted that the bowels are loosened by more food and drink, drinking during meals, sweet or salted wine, honeyed-wine, fresh

²³ Celsus, 2.13.3.

²⁴ Celsus, 1.3.8.

²⁵ Celsus, 2.8.9.

²⁶ Celsus, 2.31.

²⁷ Celsus, 3.21.6-8.

²⁸ Celsus, 1.3.4-6.

²⁹ Celsus, 4.27.2 with Spencer (1935-38) 1.450: if the urine was thin then the wine should be dry and undiluted (cold in summer, lukewarm in winter, and the minimum quantity to calm thirst), if thick then the wine should be light.

³⁰ Celsus, 4.17.1.

³¹ Celsus, 1.3.25-26.

grapes, raisins preserved in jars, everything made with milk, soft water, and everything sweetened, tepid, boiled, salty and watery.³² Accordingly, he prescribed the use of salted wine: for three days following purgation in the treatment of jaundice in order to keep the bowels loose,³³ in longstanding paralysis every fourth or fifth day to purge,³⁴ and along with milk to loosen the bowels in the treatment of coeliacus (a condition which combined pyloric spasms with intestinal atony, where the bowels refused to void anything including wind).³⁵ In comparison, he noted that the bowels are confined by: fewer meals, a scantier diet, only drinking a little after eating, resinated, harsh or undiluted wine, heated honeyed-wine, raisin wine, boiled-down must, vinegar, certain waters (tepid, very cold or hard), and everything hard, harsh, or rough.³⁶ Dry wines, being the opposite of sweet wines, were also presumably considered less loosening of the bowels and perhaps even costive; indeed, intestinal gripings such as dysentery were thought to be treated by things astringent to the bowels,³⁷ and Celsus advised drinking light dry wines when this condition was longstanding (providing the patient had no fever).³⁸ The costive property of certain wines was certainly considered to have medically constructive uses, especially in stopping diarrhoea.³⁹ Accordingly, in general he advised that such a patient favour dry and resinated wines (especially the Signian and those mixed with pomegranate rind).⁴⁰ If the condition had become especially difficult to relieve due to neglect, he advised drinking the sourest undiluted wine.⁴¹ The advised daily regimen for a diarrhoea patient also included drinking which confined the bowels: either taking undiluted wine along with astringent food on the third day of treatment (following a day of abstinence from food and drink), or

³² Celsus, 1.3.31, 2.29. It can also be deduced that mild wine was thought not to constipate, as in Celsus' discussion of the treatment of radigia (where the anus' skin is fissured in several places) it is stated that food should not be taken if it constipates, and then shortly afterwards that 'there is nothing to prevent the use [in the sense of its consumption as a part of the diet] of mild wine' (6.18.7b).

³³ Celsus, 3.24.4.

³⁴ Celsus, 3.27.1e.

³⁵ Celsus, 4.19.1-2 with Spencer (1935-38) 1.425.

³⁶ Celsus, 1.3.30, 2.30.

³⁷ Celsus, 4.22.1-2 with Spencer (1935-38) 1.431.

³⁸ Celsus, 4.22.4.

³⁹ Although Celsus considered diarrhoea sometimes to be good for a patient if it was of short duration (under seven days) as it purged troublesome matter from the body, its persistence was considered dangerous as it could lead to death related to excessive thirst; see: Celsus, 2.8.30, 4.26.1.

⁴⁰ Celsus, 4.26.9.

⁴¹ Celsus, 4.26.4.

alternatively taking Aminaeon wine mixed with rainwater and eating bread soaked in undiluted Aminaeon wine on the second day.⁴²

Celsus also believed that different wines and drinks caused different amounts of flatulence: it was especially produced by must, wine not fully fermented, milk, and almost everything sweet, whereas old wine was the least causing of flatulence.⁴³ Furthermore, Celsus advised drinking sweet wine to help treat stomach ulcers, but noted that this should be changed to light wine if it caused flatulence; sweeter wines were thus presumably believed to be more likely to cause flatulence, and lighter ones less so.⁴⁴ Soranus similarly stated that sweet wine and fresh grapes cause flatulence, which is perhaps somewhat comparable to Galen's belief that these two particular grape-products had significant purgative properties.⁴⁵ The identification of flatulence-producing wines was considered important in the treatment of some conditions: for example, Celsus advised avoiding flatulence-causing foodstuffs, presumably including younger and sweeter wines, when a person had a weak colon.⁴⁶ Similarly, Celsus also stated that 'wine should be diluted for children; for the old men it should be rather undilute: but at neither age be of a kind to cause flatulence', indicating the destructive potential of younger and sweeter wines for young and elderly people.⁴⁷

Dioscorides also paid notable attention to wine's excrementary-related properties in his catalogue of the various types of this beverage. Several specific wines are listed as significantly diuretic: those which were very old, white and light, or else new and/or dry wines; Istrian wine is also implied to be notably diuretic.⁴⁸ On the other hand, weak wines were described as less diuretic than the average wine.⁴⁹ Aged and sweet wines were also stated to be the best wines to treat bladder and kidney conditions, which presumably including severe urinary problems; yet sweet wines (and sweet new wines) were considered to upset the belly and bowels, and so were presumably

⁴² Celsus, 4.26.2-3.

⁴³ Celsus, 2.26.1-2.

⁴⁴ Celsus, 4.12.5. Indeed, Celsus may have favoured dry wine in dysentery/intestinal gripings (4.22.4) for this reason: that lighter wines were considered less flatulent than other wines; note the concern in *leientera* (a condition which sometimes followed from dysentery) that care must be taken so as not to cause excess flatulence (4.23.2).

⁴⁵ Soranus, *Gynaecology*, 1.51-52. Galen: see Ch.2 from p.198.

⁴⁶ Celsus, 1.7.

⁴⁷ Celsus, 1.3.32.

⁴⁸ Dioscorides, 5.6.1 (new), 5.6.3 (dry), 5.6.8 (Istrian), 5.6.12 (very old, white and light).

⁴⁹ Dioscorides, 5.6.3.

regarded as inappropriate for problems with stools.⁵⁰ Conversely, the otherwise praised Falernian was considered 'unsuitable for the bladder', as was white wine mixed with gypsum.⁵¹

Wine in general was thought useful for treating many types of excrementary excess, including people who overly perspire, have chronic flatulence, or have swollen or loose stomach and bowels, including diarrhoea.⁵² Astringent wines were considered especially useful for treating 'a runny bowel and other discharges' (it also helped with the digestion of food).⁵³ In a similar manner, Soranus also specifically advised astringent wines and foods as part of a regime to treat atony of the uterus (a loss of muscle tone in this region); his treatment specifically required avoiding anything which purged or loosened the bowels.⁵⁴ Both authors thus seem to associate astringent wines with constricting at least the bowels, and in Soranus' case perhaps also the uterus. Dioscorides also considered darker wines called *melampsinthios* to be constructive for treating intestinal diarrhoea (vinegar was noted as good for abdominal diarrhoea).⁵⁵

Some wines were also thought to be purgative, and were thus useful for treating excrementary retardation. Wine mixed with seawater (or salt-water froth) was thought especially appropriate for loosening the bowels but especially causing of flatulence, white wines were thought to soften the bowels more than others, and several regional wines were attributed such loosening and softening properties (the Albanian, Lesbian and Phygelies from near Ephesus).⁵⁶ Honeyed-wines were especially useful for promoting excrementary evacuation, as they were regarded as both notably diuretic and useful for passing stools (softening them or easing the bowels).⁵⁷

Regarding flatulence, wines in general were thought to 'cause a great deal of flatulence' (as well as being 'bad for the stomach').⁵⁸ Some wines were

⁵⁰ Dioscorides, 5.6.2, 5.6.11.

⁵¹ Dioscorides, 5.6.6 (Falernian), 5.6.9 (Gypsum).

⁵² Dioscorides, 5.6.10.

⁵³ Dioscorides, 5.6.3.

⁵⁴ Soranus, *Gynaecology*, 3.48.

⁵⁵ Dioscorides, 5.6.5. Vinegar: 5.13.1.

⁵⁶ Seawater: Dioscorides, 5.6.3, 5.19.2. White: 5.6.9. Albanian: 5.6.6. Lesbian and Phygelies: 5.6.9. Wine made with salt-water froth is noted to be even more purgative than that with seawater, but should be avoided as it is very harmful to several body parts: 5.66.

⁵⁷ Dioscorides, 5.7-8.

⁵⁸ Dioscorides, 5.6.5.

especially noted as promoting flatulence, including wine mixed with seawater (as just noted), heavy and dark wines, new wines, and unflavoured wines with concentrated must added in.⁵⁹

Dioscorides also briefly addresses two kinds of beer, one of which he explicitly states was diuretic but prone to causing flatulence (the properties that Dioscorides lists for them were otherwise destructive, including a belief that one caused *elephantiasis* [not the modern disease of the same name]).⁶⁰ He also discussed the properties of old hydromel, which was perhaps aged to the point of fermenting into the alcoholic drink today known as 'mead'.⁶¹ This drink was believed to be bad for constipated people (as well as those with inflammation), but good for people weakened through sweating, as well as those with stomach problems/rheums, or without appetite; this perhaps implies costive properties regarding stool, perspiration, and the stomach.

He furthermore focuses heavily upon flavoured wines, which were also noted to have a wide variety of excrementary properties. A notable example is fig-flavoured wine which had a variety of such properties, being diuretic, easing the bowels, drawing down menstrual fluids, whilst also causing flatulence (and being bad for the stomach).⁶² Similarly, mastic-flavoured wine was considered constructive for combating fluxes in various regions, including the bladder, anus and uterus.⁶³ A wide variety of flavoured wines were suggested to be either diuretic,⁶⁴ beneficial in cases of difficult urination,⁶⁵ or during kidney problems.⁶⁶ Wine made from fermented pomegranates (a non-grape wine) was also considered diuretic.⁶⁷ In a similar manner to Cato the Elder, Dioscorides advised that Hellebore-flavoured wines were useful for loosening the bowels (when used along with vomiting after dinner), and also noted that scammony-

⁵⁹ Seawater: see n.56. New wines: Dioscorides, 5.6.1. Heavy and dark: 5.6.12. Added must: 5.6.9.

⁶⁰ Dioscorides, 2.87-88; Nelson (2005) 72. Note, in contrast to this, that Celsus, 3.25.3 states that wine is properly given during the treatment of *elephantiasis*, except on the first day. On the condition called *elephantiasis*/ἑλεφαντίασις in antiquity, see: Ch.2 p.70 with n.72.

⁶¹ Dioscorides, 5.9. Further on hydromel/mead, see Appendix 1 n.29.

⁶² Dioscorides, 5.32.2.

⁶³ Dioscorides, 5.30.

⁶⁴ Resin-flavoured wine: Dioscorides, 5.34. Cedar/juniper/cypress/sweet bay/*pity*s pine/fir: 5.36. Wormwood: 5.39. Catmint, pennyroyal and wormwood: 5.52. Elecampane: 5.56. Hazelwort: 5.58. Ground pine: 5.70.

⁶⁵ Wine made using squills: Dioscorides, 5.18.3. Wine flavoured with quince: 5.20. Cretan spikenard: 5.59. Yellow flag/licuorice: 5.63. Celery/fennel/dill/parsley: 5.64-65.

⁶⁶ Wine made with various aromatics: Dioscorides, 5.54. Wine flavoured with Syrian spikard, Celtic spikenard and leaf of Malabar: 5.57.

⁶⁷ Dioscorides, 5.26.

flavoured ones were constructive for purging the bowels (driving out bile and phlegm).⁶⁸ Wine flavoured with roses is suggested to be good at treating both diarrhoea and dysentery.⁶⁹ The later condition often featured diarrhoea, and several other flavoured wines were suggested by Dioscorides to treat this condition (those flavoured with quinces, flowers of wild grapes, or resin).⁷⁰ Squill wine and wine flavoured with Cretan spikenard were presented as good for treating the flatulent.⁷¹ Wine flavoured with *daucos* was stated to promote belching (in addition to being diuretic and drawing out menstrual periods).⁷² Various flavoured wines were also considered useful for helping to evacuate menstrual fluids (and after childbirth or miscarriage).⁷³ Furthermore, wine flavoured with myrtles was thought of as especially good at restraining perspiration.⁷⁴

Pliny also believed that wine had significant properties regarding elimination; he noted that the main properties of wine in general included expelling urine (along with chills) and stopping vomiting.⁷⁵ Yet, Pliny subsequently states that wine should be prohibited if it was difficult to produce urine (*si urina difficile reddetur*).⁷⁶ As wine was considered to promote urine, the rationale behind this comment is not immediately clear. It could be assumed that he was implying that wine was not at all suitable (either in regimen or as a therapeutic measure) for such urine-related conditions. Perhaps it was thought that forcing the urine in this way was destructive. If this interpretation is correct, it would be in stark contrast to Dioscorides who prescribed a variety of wine-based drinks for a variety of urine-related problems.⁷⁷ However, this interpretation seems very unlikely, as Pliny advises a remedy for strangury, the frequent and painful passing of small quantities of urine, which was composed of wine lees mixed in

⁶⁸ Dioscorides, 5.72-73.

⁶⁹ Dioscorides 5.27.

⁷⁰ Dioscorides, 5.20, 5.25, 5.34.

⁷¹ Dioscorides, 5.18.3, 5.59.

⁷² Dioscorides, 5.60.

⁷³ Wine flavoured with wormwood: Dioscorides, 5.39. Hyssop: 5.40. Dittany of Crete (also helps expel discharges after birth): 5.47. Wine made with various aromatics: 5.54. Wine flavoured with sage: 5.61. Allheal (also expels the embryo/foetus): 5.62. Spurge olive flavoured wine is noted to help purge women after childbirth: 5.69; as is that flavoured with hellebore: 5.72.3.

⁷⁴ Dioscorides, 5.29.

⁷⁵ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.38.

⁷⁶ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.49.

⁷⁷ See n.48 and n.50.

wine.⁷⁸ As such, wine cannot have been considered *wholly* inappropriate as a therapeutic measure for times when it was difficult to pass urine. A better interpretation of Pliny's comment considers both his realisation that wine had powerful diuretic properties, and his recognition that the medical consequences of wine could be both extreme and bipolar (in Pliny's words, administering wine 'is fraught with great risk, it being uncertain whether it will immediately turn out to be a help or a poison').⁷⁹ As such, I suggest that Pliny's sentiment was that, due to its extreme powers in encouraging urine, extra caution should be exercised with wine when a person found it difficult to urinate: wine should be removed from a person's regimen, unless specifically and correctly prescribed as a therapeutic measure, as, for example, in the strangury remedy just noted. Regardless, Pliny considered thin and dry wines to pass especially rapidly by urine (this wine was also considered less flesh-forming, more nourishing to the stomach, and went more quickly to the head),⁸⁰ and a wine beverage's diuretic properties were thought to be amplified by heavy dilution with water (in this vein, Pliny notes that old wine 'is a more powerful diuretic' as it is 'diluted with a larger proportion of water' than the average wine).⁸¹ All musts were also thought to be good for the bladder, along with the kidneys and intestines, because, according to Pliny, 'it makes these organs smooth'.⁸² As such, younger wines (which were closer to the must) may also have been considered more beneficial in this respect than the average wine.

Pliny also considered neat wine to be especially useful for combating a wide variety of problems related to stools and the bowels, including 'flatulence and gnawing of the hypochondria [upper abdomen], for violent vomiting from the stomach, and if the belly or intestines suffer from catarrh; for dysentery [which featured diarrhoea], and for sweats after prolonged coughing'.⁸³ Modifying a person's wine-drinking regime was also considered to have significant therapeutic effects related to the bowels. Constipated bowels could be significantly relaxed by drinking during meals, and loose bowels could be

⁷⁸ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.65.

⁷⁹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.31.

⁸⁰ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.39.

⁸¹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.38.

⁸² Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.29-30. The juice of the coccolobis grape was also noted to be 'very good for disorders of the bladder' (though 'apt to go to the head') at 14.30-31.

⁸³ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.43.

helped by drinking sparingly.⁸⁴ Certain types of wines had a wide variety of notable properties in this area, and could be used accordingly. The most extreme contrast was between a wine of Egypt curiously called ‘wine of Thasos’ which was believed to cause diarrhoea, and Lycian wine which had an astringent effect on the bowels, binding them.⁸⁵ Pliny also notes similar effects for a number of other wines: wines from Signia were considered especially beneficial to disordered bowels,⁸⁶ pitch-flavoured wines were beneficial to the bowels and helped with flatulence (as well as a variety of other properties, including helping to digest, cleanse, and helping with chronic catarrh),⁸⁷ and a mixture of ground-up grape stones sprinkled into a person’s beverage (presumably most often a wine beverage, the Greco-Roman staple drink) was also thought to combat dysentery, as well as problems of the stomach and small intestines.⁸⁸ The thinnest Campanian wines, which Pliny praised so highly, were also generally considered to be good at treating dysentery and problematic menstruations of women (as well as coughs and catarrh).⁸⁹ Falernian wine in particular was regarded as ‘astringent to the bowels’, binding them; but, like Dioscorides, Pliny also thought that it was not good for the bladder.⁹⁰

Wine was also linked to influencing perspiration, vomiting, and possibly also spittle. Pliny noted that one group of doctors considered wine to be especially constructive to control sweating in cardiac disease, and thus administered it during attacks of this disease (though another school of thought also considered wine to be constructive in this illness, but thought the wine most safely administered during remissions instead; this latter opinion was supported by Pliny).⁹¹ Excess drinking was implied to make vomiting more likely, and it is possible that another of Pliny’s comments – that spitting was a *faux pas* commonly committed during drinking – may in turn imply that wine was thought to promote excessive spittle.⁹²

⁸⁴ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.41.

⁸⁵ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.118.

⁸⁶ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.36.

⁸⁷ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.47.

⁸⁸ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.13.

⁸⁹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.46.

⁹⁰ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.35.

⁹¹ See Ch.2 n.65.

⁹² Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.146. Note also, Mark Antony vomiting when drunk: 14.148.

Another beverage, which Pliny included among his category of 'artificial wines' (this included various flavoured wines and wine-like drinks which Pliny was reluctant to include among wines and more conventional grape-based beverages) was date-palm wine. Pliny believed it to be of use as a laxative. It consisted only of dates (no grapes), pressed and soaked in water. This beverage was said to be a common drink in the East (including Parthia and India). Dioscorides also mentions the same date-palm wine, made in a similar way without grapes. Although Dioscorides does not explicitly mention the beverage's laxative properties, he may imply them when he notes that it is suitable for people with intestinal/colon problems. Indeed, both Dioscorides and Pliny had near-identical views regarding the beverage's other notable properties (both thought it to relieve blood-spitting, but to be troublesome for the head).⁹³

In a similar manner to Dioscorides, Pliny also regarded honeyed-wine as having notable properties relating to the bowels. When served cold, honeyed-wine (like cold hydromel) was considered to loosen the bowels; conversely, served warm it was thought usually to bind them (though Pliny did not attribute this property to warm hydromel, which was instead thought to promote vomiting).⁹⁴ Pliny also implies that honeyed-wine also usually promoted flatulence in the stomach, as he notes that when honeyed-wine was made from dry wine, or when it was boiled, it did not have such an effect; presumably it otherwise did.⁹⁵ Although he believed that this beverage had not been produced for generations, Pliny furthermore addressed *melitites* honeyed-wine, which was made from honey mixed in the must.⁹⁶ Dioscorides had also mentioned this particular wine, along with the more common type of honeyed-wine, and had attributed it the notable properties of being diuretic, purging the stomach, and treating hard stool.⁹⁷ Regarding this wine, Pliny himself states that 'it used to be given in fever because of its action on the bowels', which implies that at least some doctors, prior to the first century AD, regarded this particular type of honeyed-wine as having significant power to influence evacuation.

⁹³ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.52 (production described at 14.102); Dioscorides, 5.31.

Further on date-palm wine, see Appendix 1 p.339.

⁹⁴ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 22.114. Hydromel: 22.110, 22.112.

⁹⁵ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 22.113.

⁹⁶ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 22.115. On this wine, see further Appendix 1 p.338.

⁹⁷ Dioscorides, 5.7.

On the other hand, Pliny believed that the inappropriate use of wine could be destructive with respect to elimination. He stated that wine mixed with seawater was especially damaging to the bladder (along with the stomach and sinews),⁹⁸ and that a wine, must or raisin wine flavoured with resin was especially unsuitable for those who had a tendency to vomit (though it was considered beneficial for treating cold stomachs).⁹⁹ Fresh grapes were also thought to aggravate the bowels (as well as the stomach) by causing flatulence; this property may therefore have been considered more present in younger wines which were closer to the grape.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.46.

⁹⁹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.46.

¹⁰⁰ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 23.10.

APPENDIX 4: THE MIXTURES OF VARIOUS WINES IN THE GALENIC CORPUS

This appendix surveys the evidence regarding the mixtures of various wines and related foodstuffs, as presented in the works of Galen. The findings of this appendix are depicted graphically in fig. 2.1. Regarding the evidence and notes, it should be remembered throughout that substances were usually believed to treat conditions of the opposite mixture, in regard to the four opposites (dry and wet, cold and hot; see Chapter 2). A question mark (?) after a property signifies a reasonable level of uncertainty.

Foodstuff	Mixture	Evidence and Notes
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Water:

Water	Cool and moist	<i>On Barley Soup</i> , 6.819K: 'water is cold and moist'. <i>On the Preservation of Health</i> , 5.12=6.376-379K: if a constitution is too hot, avoid wine and drink water instead. <i>Mixtures</i> , 3.5=1.688K: water is not heating.
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Grapes:

Grape (archetype)	Balanced temperature and moist?	<i>On the Properties of Foodstuffs</i> , 2.9=6.578K: 'the vinous [grapes; essentially the "average" grapes] are midway between warm and cold'. <i>On the Preservation of Health</i> , 3.12=6.227K: Galen states that most fruits are moist in mixture; thus grapes were probably considered
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		moist.
Sweet grapes	Warmer	<i>On the Properties of Foodstuffs</i> , 2.9=6.578K.
Harsh acid grapes	Cooler	<i>On the Properties of Foodstuffs</i> , 2.9=6.578K.
Grape juice	Cooler?	<p><i>On the Properties of Foodstuffs</i>, 2.9=6.575-576K notes that the juice of grapes, by itself, gives ‘some nutriment from it for the body, but there is more from the fleshy substance’, implying that the grape as a whole (with both flesh and juice) give greater nutrition to the body. A difference in the speed at which this nutrition is given to the body is not noted by Galen; if it is presumed that this is because any difference was taken to be negligible, this would imply that grape juice was logically perceived as cooler in property than the grape as a whole, as it gave less nutrition to the body in a period of time.</p> <p>Note that Galen states that ‘people call it [the juice of grapes] “must” (γλεῦκος)’, though his description makes it clear that his is describing just the juice of the grapes without the fleshy parts, pips or skin. In modern vernacular, this substance is most clearly described as ‘juice’, as the term ‘must’ can signify a liquid of whole squashed grape both before</p>

		and after the solid elements (the 'marc') have been removed; see Appendix 1 further on wine manufacturing and the term γλεῦκος. Compare with 'New wines/Must', below.
Grape flesh	Hotter?	See 'Grape juice'; the opposite argument applies to the flesh.
Boiled-down must	Moister in comparison to wine?	<i>On the Properties of Foodstuffs</i> , 3.1=6.667K: meats 'prepared with plenty of wine and fish sauce are drier than those prepared without them. But those items with rather less of such seasoning are far moister than the last-mentioned foods if the seasonings contain more boiled new wine [σίραιον], which some call <i>hepsema</i> [ἔψημα]'. See Appendix 1 further on boiled-down must.

Wine:

Wine (archetype)	Hot and moist; probably less moistening than water, and less heating than unmixed wine; possibly hotter in intensity than moist?	<i>On the Preservation of Health</i> , 1.11=6.54K: 'For wine when drunk moistens the body sufficiently and heats it, and fills the head with fumes of the moist and warm character' (trans. modified from Green; see Ch.2, n.234). 5.12=6.376K: 'wine is most beneficial for cold and dry natures', thus implying that wine is hot and
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		<p>wet by contrast.</p> <p>On wine's notable heating properties, see also: Galen, <i>Mixtures</i>, 3.2=1.658K: 'wine has a considerable heating effect on the body when drunk, but no such effect when placed on the skin', and as such Galen thought that a wine, as a beverage, had great hotness; along with 3.2=1.655-659K on wine being one of the most heating foods, as it was one of the most quickly transformed and assimilated by the body; it thus heated the body most rapidly.</p> <p>Note further: Galen lists wines among the heating drugs in <i>On the Powers [and Mixtures] of Simple Drugs</i>, 12.88K and <i>Mixtures</i>, 3.2=1.659K. Note that the former also states that wine is <i>dry</i> in mixture, but (as explained both in Chapter 2 and in the 'Unmixed' section below) this work probably discusses <i>unmixed</i> wines, which were drier in property than mixed beverages.</p> <p>On wine's moistening properties, see also: Galen, <i>On the Preservation of Health</i>, 3.12=6.227K: 'for whatever moistures remain from wine to damage the head or the stomach are not the concern of the present</p>
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		<p>discussion’.</p> <p>For the argument that Galen probably considered a mixed wine beverage to be less intensely heating than unmixed wine (hot and dry in mixture; see ‘Unmixed’) and less intensely moistening than water (cold and wet in mixture, see ‘Water’); see <i>Method of Medicine</i>, 7.8=10.503K which implies that wine beverages become cooler and wetter as they are more diluted, and vice versa. Consider further the logic that as this beverage was made of a mixture of water and pure wine, its property of mixture was probably regarded as between these two ‘extremes’. The mixed beverage was doubtless considered less intense in mixture than these opposing constituents.</p> <p>For the argument that wine’s heating effect was possibly more intense than its moistening property, consider that the heating effect of wine (at least in its unmixed form) was thought to be intense enough to be drug-like (as above), yet a wine beverage’s moistening effect is never stated to be similarly drug-like. Furthermore, Galen seems not to consider wine as <i>extraordinarily</i> moistening, but rather considers it similar in effect to other generally</p>
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		<p>moist foods and drinks; he thus seems to regard all of these things as posing a similar risk to over-moistening a person's constitution; see: <i>On the Causes of Disease</i>, comparing 7.6K and 7.13K (on wine and hot illnesses) with 7.19-20K (on drinks and cold illnesses); and <i>On the Preservation of Health</i>, 3.12=6.225-227K and 5.2=6.317K (both on drinks and cold illnesses; note the one time wine is briefly mentioned at 3.12=6.227K) compared with 5.5=6.334-336K and 5.12=6.377K (on certain wines being extremely – sometimes dangerously – heating).</p>
<p>Yellow/Tawny wines</p>	<p>Hotter (the hottest wine by colour)</p>	<p><i>On the Preservation of Health</i>, 5.5=6.336K: the warmest category of wine, when divided by colour. <i>Method of Medicine</i>, 6.3=10.402K-405K: wines which are hot above average include sweet and tawny wines, such as Falernian. 12.4=10.830K: tawny, thin, old and naturally fragrant wine is prescribed as a wine which is hot in nature to all. 12.4=10.834K: yellow/tawny wines are hotter than white wines. 12.4=10.837K: yellow/tawny wines are more conducive to digestion as they are more heating.</p> <p>Note that Galen equates the wine which his own generation calls</p>

	<p>‘yellow’ (ξανθός) with those which ‘Hippocrates used to call “tawny” (κιρρός). See further: Liddel and Scott (1940) s.v. ‘κιρρός’: in the Hippocratic Corpus this refers to an ‘orange tawny’ wine, between flame-coloured, yellowish-red and yellow.</p> <p>Note further that <i>On the Preservation of Health</i>, 4.7=6.281K (in the context of 6.279-286K): thin tawny wine was advised as the best drink for regimen to treat ulcerous fatigue when an excess of fluids had been absorbed into a patient’s system as a whole (rather than being confined to the veins; Green here mistranslates οἶνος κίρροσκαὶ λεπτός as ‘light, thin wine’, which is both misleading and inconsistent with Green’s translation of 5.5=6.335K). This diet aimed at thinning the humours whilst warming the skin; tawny/yellow wine was probably considered the optimum choice because its reasonably light colour and thinness signified its moderate thinning properties (on this, see <i>The Thinning Diet</i>, 12=5.4.2.447CMG with <i>On the Preservation of Health</i>, 5.5=6.335-338K), whilst Galen considered yellow to be the colour of wine which was most heating (on this, see <i>On the Preservation of Health</i>,</p>
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		5.5=6.336K). As such, tawny/yellow wine was considered inappropriate for cool therapeutic regimes, but useful for heating the skin.
White wines	Cool	<i>Method of Medicine</i> , 12.4=10.834K: none of the white wines are hot. <i>On the Preservation of Health</i> , 5.5=6.336K: the least heating category of wine, when divided by colour.
Ochre wines (a middle colour between yellow and white)	Middling property of hotness in comparison to yellow/tawny and white wines	<i>On the Preservation of Health</i> , 5.5=6.335-336K: ochre (ὠχρός) is the middling category of wine when divided by colour. It is between yellow/tawny (ξανθός or κιρρός) and white (λευκός). It is also between them in the power of its heating property.
Sweet wines	Hotter	<i>Method of Medicine</i> , 6.3=10.402K-405K: wines which are hot above average include sweet and tawny wines, such as Falernian. <i>On the Properties of Foodstuffs</i> , 3.39=6.744K: 'the sweet wines are more concocted in the stomach and better distributed than the harsh ones, since they are warmer in property'. <i>On the Preservation of Health</i> , 5.5=6.338K: sweet wines are stated to be appropriate for old men; shortly beforehand (6.334-338K), Galen had argued that old men above all needed to select the

		<p>hottest wines (and secondly those promoting urine).</p> <p>Note also that in <i>On the Properties of Foodstuffs</i>, 1.6=6.496K, goats were considered to be more nutritious if taken with honeyed-wine or sweet/astringent wine.</p>
Bitter/Harsh/ Dry wines	Dry	<p><i>Method of Medicine</i>, 7.7=10.501K: to combat a cold and dry imbalance, use especially honey, and prefer older wines; but avoid sharp/bitter [πικρός; see Liddel and Scott (1940) s.v. 'πικρός'] wines, as these dry more than is required. <i>On the Properties of Foodstuffs</i>, 1.11=6.507K: regarding barley meal, 'when drunk with a dry [αύστηρός; harsh, rough, bitter; see Liddel and Scott (1940) s.v. 'αύστηρός'] wine it dries the stomach'.</p> <p>(Note also that Soranus, 3.46 considered dry wine to be a notably dry foodstuff, and presumably drier than the average wine.)</p>
Thinner wines	Not warm (cold?)	<p><i>On the Preservation of Health</i>, 4.4=6.261K: thinner wine is prescribed as part of a small simple meal on the second and third days of the treatment of ulcerous fatigue. The aim of this meal is to give something well-balanced but which is not unduly nutritious, diuretic, and does not warm and dilute the blood.</p>

		<p>As such, this wine seems to be implied not to warm notably the blood, suggesting it is at least balanced in mixture of temperature, if not cold. In support of this, it can be noted that at 4.6=6.275K a diet for the treatment of ulcerous fatigue is again addressed; a priority again is foods which thin without warming; thin wine is again prescribed.</p> <p>Note also: 'Thin white wines' in comparison to 'White wines'. The former seems to be cooler than the latter, supporting the conclusion that thinner wines are cooler.</p>
Old wines	Hotter	<p><i>Method of Medicine</i>, 7.4=10.468K: Galen used to heat his patients with: old wines of sufficiently hot potency.</p> <p>7.7=10.501K: use old wine to combat a cold imbalance.</p> <p>12.4=10.830K: tawny, thin, old and naturally fragrant wine is prescribed as a wine which is hot in nature to all people. <i>On the Preservation of Health</i>, 6.3=6.392K: old wine is unsuitable for extremely warm constitutions. <i>On the Powers [and Mixtures] of Simple Drugs</i>, 12.88K: new wine is hot to the first degree, other wines to the second, and old wine to the third. See also 'old rough wine'. (On this last passage, note also the discussion under 'Unmixed' wine: it probably refers to</p>

		this wine being consumed unmixed.)
New wines/Must	Cooler	Galen, <i>On the Powers [and Mixtures] of Simple Drugs</i> , 12.88K: new wine (γλεῦκος) is hot to the first degree, other wines to the second, and old wine to the third. (On this passage, note also the discussion under 'Unmixed' wine: it probably refers to this wine being consumed unmixed.) Compare with 'Grape juice', above.
Least acid wines	Not warm (cold?)	<i>On the Preservation of Health</i> , 4.6=6.275K, treatment for the especially hot ulcerous fatigue includes the least acid wines and foods that thin without warming, implying this wine does both. It is thus presumably at least balanced in mixture of temperature, if not cold.
Thin white wines	The coolest of wines (but not quite as cool as water and apomel)	<i>On the Preservation of Health</i> , 4.10=6.294-300K (esp. 6.298-299K): in inflammatory fatigue, a patient's blood is the hottest; thus avoid wine, and use water. If a patient cannot use water, he should use apomel instead (implied to be second most cooling drink), or else thin white wine (implied to be third). 5.12=6.378K: thin white wine (small amount and dilute) is prescribed to counter a hot and moist constitution (which implies that this wine is cool and/or dry). 6.3=6.392K: thin white wines are

		suitable for extremely hot constitutions (unlike old wine). <i>Method of Medicine</i> , 12.4=10.834K: none of the white wines are hot.
Dark, thick, rough wines	Dry	<i>On Black Bile</i> , 5.114-115K: 'dark wine that is thick and rough' has 'thick juices which are dry' (trans. based on Grant's, except that Grant mistranslates παχυχύμοις as 'thick particles' rather than 'thick juices').
Old rough wines	Hotter	<i>On the Causes of Disease</i> , 7.6K: fever is caused by excessive heat, which can be due to excessive drinking of old rough wines.
Yellow, sweet, transparent wines	Hotter	<i>The Thinning Diet</i> , 12=5.4.2.447CMG: this wine is hotter than most, and accordingly affect the head more; it should be avoided by headache sufferers. This category is explicitly noted to contain Falernian wines (see 'Falernian wines').
Falernian wine	Warmer	<i>Method of Medicine</i> , 6.3=10.402-405K: wines which are hot above average include sweet and tawny wines, such as Falernian. 7.4=10.468K: Galen used to heat his patients with old wines of sufficiently hot potency, including Falernian. 12.4=10.831-832K: Falernian is prescribed as an especially hot and wholesome wine. <i>On the Preservation of Health</i> , 5.5=6.334-

		<p>336K: Galen describes three tiers of warm wines, giving the names of several wines for each group. Falernian is included among the top rank of hot wines, and is thus indicated to be far hotter than the average wine. Note also ‘Yellow, sweet, transparent wines’, of which Falernian is one.</p> <p>Although this appendix and chart avoids listing individual wines according to region, Falernian is included because of its notable fame and popularity in the Roman world (see for example Pliny, <i>Natural History</i>, 14.62, 23.33-35) along with Galen’s notable preference for it (see Boudon [2002] and also <i>The Thinning Diet</i>, 12=5.4.2.447CMG).</p>
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Drinking Regimes:

More dilute	Colder and wetter	<p><i>Method of Medicine</i>, 7.8=10.503K: to combat a hot and dry imbalance, make the wine more watery, less old and cooler temperature. More diluted wine is thus implied to be cooler and wetter (thus closer in mixture to water, as explained further below).</p> <p>Note also <i>On the Preservation of Health</i>, 5.12=6.378K: thin white wine (small amount and dilute) is prescribed to counter a hot and</p>
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		<p>moist constitution, thereby implying very diluted wine's comparative coldness.</p> <p>Consider further the logical argument that as a mixed wine beverage was probably considered between water and wine in mixture as it consisted of both (see 'Wine [archetype]'), Galen probably considered a mixture with more water to pertain more closely to the corresponding mixture. Galen thus probably considered a more dilute wine beverage to be colder and wetter than the archetypical one. <i>Method of Medicine</i> implies this (as discussed above), and the advice of the Hippocratic Corpus' <i>Regimen</i> followed this same logic; (see Appendix 5, under 'Well diluted wine' and 'Unmixed').</p> <p>Note that the general lack of evidence for Galen's views on how the mixture of a beverage was altered by changing its dilution ratio is most likely due to Galen's dislike of prescribing specific mixing ratios. He believed that this could lead to a patient consuming a significantly unfamiliar beverage which could injure them. He thus rarely advised such practice, altering instead other aspects of the beverage (such as the type of wine used); he preferred</p>
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		to let the patient's own senses choose the most agreeable mixing ratio for them. See: Galen, <i>On the Preservation of Health</i> , 4.6=6.272-273K.
Unmixed	Hot and dry; as dry as hot; hotter than a mixed-wine beverage	<p>Galen, <i>On the Powers [and Mixtures] of Simple Drugs</i>, 12.88K: the average wine is hot to the second degree; it is as hot as it is dry. Here, in <i>On the Powers [and Mixtures] of Simple Drugs</i>, Galen is probably discussing 'wine' in its simplest form (as a simple drug), and thus unmixed.</p> <p>Note that, on the other hand, when Galen discusses the mixture of 'wine' in his regimen-based work <i>On the Preservation of Health</i>, and in contrast he describes 'wine' as hot and moist in mixture (as discussed above in 'Wine [archetype]'), due to this work's practical and regimen-based focus, here he is probably discussing 'wine' in the manner which most people would consume it on a daily basis – thus presumably as a typically-mixed beverage. Thus Galen probably regarded unmixed wine as drying, but an archetypical mixed-wine beverage as moistening. The addition of water (cold and wet in property; see 'Water') presumably made the mixed beverage wetter and probably also colder in mixture</p>

		<p>in comparison to the unmixed wine.</p> <p>Following this, and in line with the argument provided in 'More dilute', Galen considered unmixed wine to be hotter and drier than when it was mixed with water (as in the archetypical wine beverage).</p>
Excess drink	Excess moistness	<p><i>On the Preservation of Health</i>, 3.12=6.225-227K; <i>On the Causes of Disease</i>, 7.19-20K.</p>
Extreme excess (of any foodstuff)	Cold disease	<p><i>On the Causes of Disease</i>, 7.13K: in excess, wine can lead to excessive bodily coldness (cold illness), as with all foods. Galen, <i>Mixtures</i>, 3.2=1.660-661K: too much warmth (including warmth from wine) causes extreme coldness.</p>
Less drinking	Drier	<p><i>Method of Medicine</i>, 7.4=10.468K: Galen dried patients by giving them very little to drink. <i>On the Preservation of Health</i>, 3.12=6.225-227K: an overly moist bodily mixture should be treated (in part) by drinking less. 5.12=6.378K: thin white wine (small amount and dilute) are prescribed to counter a hot and moist constitution.</p>
Drinking before meals	Moister	<p><i>On Barley Soup</i>, 6.828K: drinking before meals moistens a dry disease.</p>

Other Food/Drink:

Vinegar	Not warm; not moist (perhaps cold and dry?)	<p>Galen, <i>On the Preservation of Health</i>, 4.6=6.275K: 'foods that thin without warming, like capers, if taken with oxymel or with vinegar and oils'. 4.5-6=6.263-276K: various other foodstuffs are advised for this same cooling and thinning diet to treat ulcerous fatigue (an especially hot condition with excrements), including vinegar used in other ways (ginger soaked in vinegar, and as part of oxymel).</p> <p>See also 'Oxymel', below.</p>
Honey	Hot and dry	<p><i>On the Properties of Foodstuffs</i>, 1.1=6.472K: 'Just as it is not proper to speak about honey in a general way, but rather ... that it is most adverse in those who are dry and warm, but very beneficial in those who are moist and cool – whether they are like this in mixture because of age, nature, region, season or lifestyle'. <i>Method of Medicine</i>, 7.7=10.501K: use honey to combat a cold imbalance; 5.11=10.356-357K: honey is an appropriate vehicle for drying medicaments. <i>On the Natural Faculties</i>, 2.8=2.114-118K: honey tends to be converted into copious yellow bile as it is a significantly hot food. <i>On Barley Soup</i>, 6.829K: honey has cutting powers and so cannot moisten and</p>

		nourish.
Oxymel (vinegar and honey)	Not warm; not moist (perhaps cold and dry?)	<p><i>On the Preservation of Health</i>, 4.5=6.264K: foods which thin without warming include oxymel (this discussion concerns the treatment of ulcerous fatigue). 4.6=6.275K: ‘foods that thin without warming, like capers, if taken with oxymel or with vinegar and oils’. 6.3=6.393-394K: oxymel is good for extremely warm constitutions (in contrast to old wines), implying it is not warm. 6.10=6.331K: oxymel used to cut phlegm without heating. <i>On Barley Soup</i>, 6.829K: ‘they have cutting powers and so cannot moisten and nourish – for example honey and oxymel and other such things’ (trans. based on Grant’s, except ‘vinegar sauce’ replaced with ‘oxymel’ for ὀξύμελι).</p> <p>On oxymel’s constituents: <i>On the Preservation of Health</i>, 4.6=271-272K states that it consists of vinegar and honey, with water added for use. See Appendix 1 further on oxymel.</p>
Apomel (a honey-water, like hydromel)	Cool (almost as cool as water, but cooler than thin white wine)	<p><i>On the Preservation of Health</i>, 4.6=6.274K: it is drunk in summer as a cooler. 4.5-6=6.263-276K: this treatment of ulcerous fatigue includes ginger in vinegar, oxymel, apomel; foods taken should thin and should not warm. 4.10=6.294-300K</p>

		<p>(esp. 6.298-299K): in inflammatory fatigue, the patient's blood is the hottest; thus avoid wine, and use water. If a patient cannot use water, he should use apomel instead (implied to be second most cooling drink), or else thin white wine (implied to be third).</p> <p>On apomel's constituents: <i>On the Preservation of Health</i>, 4.6=6.274-275K contains surprisingly little on its production, other than noting that it 'is best prepared in water'.</p> <p>Dioscorides, 5.9.2 states that apomel is similar to hydromel, but is made of honeycomb washed with water then stored, sometimes after being boiled down. See Appendix 1 further on apomel and hydromel.</p>
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APPENDIX 5: THE MIXTURES OF VARIOUS WINES IN THE HIPPOCRATIC CORPUS' *REGIMEN*

This appendix surveys the evidence regarding the mixtures of various wines and related foodstuffs, as presented in the Hippocratic Corpus' *Regimen* (books one to four). The findings are depicted graphically in fig. 2.2. Regarding the evidence and notes, it should be remembered throughout that substances were usually believed to treat conditions of the opposite mixture, in regard to the four opposites (dry and wet, cold and hot; see Chapter 2). A question mark (?) after a property signifies a reasonable level of uncertainty.

Foodstuff	Mixture	Evidence and Notes
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Water:

Water	Cool and moist	2.52.
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Honey:

Honey (raw/unmixed)	Warm (less warm than wine?) and dry	2.53. Less warm than wine, see 2.41: Cyceon (a barley meal) heats and nourishes with wine or honey, but less with honey.
Hydromel (honey mixed with water)	Moist	2.53. Note that this section does not explicitly use a word meaning 'hydromel', but rather discusses honey 'mixed with water' as opposed to that which is 'unmixed'. Note also: <i>Regimen in Acute</i>

		<p><i>Diseases</i>, 12, which advises wine or hydromel when a disease is too dry, implying that both are moist in property.</p> <p>Dilution scale: this was probably envisaged in the same way as wine. Note that the Hippocratic author of <i>Regimen in Acute Diseases</i>, 54 describes this explicitly (the benefits of greater and less dilution of the honey). As in <i>Regimen</i>, honey is hot and dry, and water wet and cold, it logically follows that as the ratio of honey to water is varied, the hydromel was probably thought to become closer in mixture to the dominant element.</p>
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Grapes:

Grapes (archetype)	Warm and moist	2.55. Note also 3.80: to counteract cold and dry bowels, grapes (and figs) should be taken with food.
White grapes	Warmer and moister	2.55: 'Grapes are warming and moist, passing easily by stool; white grapes are especially so.'
Sweet grapes	Warmer	2.55: 'because by the time they are sweet they have absorbed much heat'.
Unripe grapes	Less warm	<i>Regimen</i> , 2.55.
Raisins	Very warm	<i>Regimen</i> , 2.55 – 'raisins are burning [καυσώδης]'; Liddell and Scott (1940)

		state that this signifies 'suffering from heat'/'parched'.
Boiled-down must	Warm and moist	<p>2.52: it 'moistens because it is nutritious'.</p> <p>Note: ἔψημα is misleadingly translated by Jones (1931) as 'boiled-down <u>wine</u>'. Liddell and Scott (1940) translate it as '<u>must</u> boiled down' (to a third), which is a more apt translation. See Appendix 1 further on boiled-down must.</p>

Wine Types:

Wine (archetype)	Hot and dry	<p>2.52.</p> <p>Note that all of the 'wines' mentioned in <i>Regimen</i> (or at least 2.52) seem implied to be mixed-wine beverages (including water). This is indicated by the author's note on 'acid (vinegary) wines', that 'they moisten from the water that enters with the wine' (<i>Regimen</i>, 2.52). This is in contrast to vinegar itself which has no similar property, presumably because it lacks water. This implies that these 'wines' were thus assumed to have some water mixed with them.</p> <p>Note also: this is seemingly supported by the Hippocratic author of <i>Airs, Waters, Places</i>, 9: 'I assert that it is better to give children wine</p>
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		<p>watered down as much as possible for this neither burns the veins nor dries them up too much'; the implication is presumably that normally diluted wine is notably hot and dry (thus causing a degree of burning and drying inside the body). (Compare, however, to the Hippocratic author of <i>Regimen in Acute Diseases</i>, 12: 'if a disease is drier than one would like, the patient should be given a drink of either hydromel or wine'; this author thereby implies that he considered wine to be <i>moist</i> in mixture.)</p>
<p>Soft wines</p>	<p>Moister, and possibly also colder?</p> <p><i>* This wine is plotted in two places on Chart 2.2, to reflect the degree of uncertainty over its mixture.</i></p>	<p>Soft wine is certainly associated with moistening regimes; it thus appears to have been regarded as moister in property. 2.66: a fatigued (over dried) body is treated by regime to moisten (without excess), including drinking soft wines (copiously and well diluted wine). 3.83: to treat a head and body emptied of moisture requires plenty of soft wine.</p> <p>Soft wine, well diluted, is also prescribed for moistening and cooling regimes; yet as well diluted wine was regarded as moister and cooler (see 'well diluted wine'), it is not certain whether soft wine was regarded as also having both of properties, or whether the cooling property of such a beverage was</p>

		<p>entirely due to its greater dilution.</p> <p>3.68: softer food is advised in spring compared to winter, and soft wine in summer and autumn, implying that soft wine is moister and/or colder (to combat the hot dryness of summer); this wine is also advised to be whiter in colour and more diluted in summer compared to winter. 3.82: a regime to stop dry heat includes soft wine, well diluted. 3.84: a regime of moister and cooler food is said to be complemented by ‘drink of the softer sort, well diluted’ (καὶ τοῖσι πομασι μαλακωτέροισι καὶ ὑδαρεστέροισιν; Jones here inconsistently translates this as ‘drink of the <i>milder</i> sort’, although he otherwise consistently translates οἶνος μαλακός more accurately as ‘soft wine’ throughout <i>Regimen</i>; on the translation of this word, see further Liddell and Scott (1940) s.v. ‘μαλακός, ἤ, ὄν’).</p> <p>See also: ‘Soft dark wines’ (moister); ‘Soft white wines’ (cold and wet); ‘White, thin and soft wines’ (cool and moist).</p>
Dark wines	<p>Warmer, and possibly also drier?</p> <p><i>* This wine is plotted in two places on Chart 2.2, to reflect the degree of uncertainty over its</i></p>	<p>Dark wine seems to be associated with a notably warm property of mixture at 3.75: dark wine (with warm fermented bread crumbled in) is used to produce warmth in belly.</p> <p>At 3.68 dark wines are associated with notable warmth and/or dryness.</p>

	<p><i>mixture.</i></p>	<p>It is stated that dark wines are required in winter along with drying and warming foods (to counteract the cold wetness of the season). Whiter wines are needed in spring when moving towards a warmer and drier season. White wines advised in summer, but dark in autumn when food should be warmer and less moist. This pattern therefore implies that dark wine was regarded as warmer and/or drier than the average wine, in order to counteract the cold wetness of winter, and to be regarded as inappropriate during the hot and dry summer. It is uncertain whether darker wines were considered <i>both warmer and drier</i> than the archetypical wine, as the advised seasonal changes in drinking-regime also involved other factors, which could modify both the hotness and dryness of the beverage. Most notably, wine in winter was advised to be mixed only with a little water, in comparison to summer when it was to be heavily diluted; this was thought to have the effect of making the wine significantly hotter and drier in winter (see 'Unmixed, undiluted, or slightly diluted wines'). As dark wine is implied to be notably hot at 3.75, the uncertain issue is whether dark wine was also regarded as drier than the</p>
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		<p>archetypical wine.</p> <p>See also: ‘Dark and harsh wines’ (drier and hotter?); ‘Soft dark wines’ (moister); ‘Sweet dark wines’ (moister); ‘Dark and dry wines’ (dry). Note that these wines include a variety of mixtures of moisture (dry, balanced or unstated, and wet), but only those of hot and balanced temperature (there are no cold wines in this list), supporting the idea of dark wine’s association with warmth.</p>
<p>New wines/Must</p>	<p>Moist and warm</p>	<p>2.52: ‘wine from grape-husks moistens ... must (γλεῦκος) also does the same’; ‘must causes wind, disturbs the bowels and empties them. It causes wind because it heats.’</p> <p>New wines (νέοι) are said to have similar properties to must (γλεῦκος) – at least regarding evacuation – as they are ‘nearer the must, and more nourishing’ than the archetypical wine. Shortly after, the author states that ‘boiled-down must ... moistens because it is nutritious’. This seemingly equates moistness with nourishment; new wines and must were thus presumably considered moistening by virtue of being highly nutritious. This equation is further supported by 1.3, which notes that the element of water, which is cold and wet in mixture, ‘can nourish</p>

		things always', and by Jones (1931) xliii, who analyses <i>Regimen</i> to conclude that 'want of nourishment [is supplemented] by a "moist" diet'.
White wines	Cool and moist	2.52. Note also: 4[= <i>Dreams</i>].90.50-60: to treat dryness, drink copious white wine, well diluted.
Harsh white wines	Hot and not dry (either dry or of balanced moistness) <i>* This wine is plotted in two places on Chart 2.2, to reflect the degree of uncertainty over its mixture.</i>	2.52.
Soft white wines	Cold and wet (more intense than other wines, next only to water)	1.35: soft white wine is the next best drink to water for a regime which needs to be very inclined to water.
White, thin and soft wines	Cool and moist	4[= <i>Dreams</i>].89.50-70: for a watery regime which is non heating and drying (a cool and moist regime), the patient should abstain from wine unless it is white, thin, soft and diluted.
Thin sweet wines	Cool and moist	2.52.
Soft dark wines	Moister	2.52. Note that a property of coldness is also a possibility, as indicated at

Appendix 5: Wines in the Hippocratic Corpus

		3.80: to counteract cold and dry bowels (thus presumably as part of a warm and wet regime) the author advises dark and soft wine (also grapes and figs taken with food).
Dark harsh wines	Drier and hotter	2.52: 'Dark and harsh wines are more dry ... they dry by reason of their heat'; this implies that they are also hotter than the archetypical wine.
Sweet dark wines	Moister	2.52.
Dark dry wines	Dry	3.79: to counteract cold and moist bowels requires wine that is dark, dry, little diluted. 3.81: a regime to cool and dry belly requires dark and dry wine

Piquette:

<i>Piquette</i> ('wine from grape-husks')	Moist (and possibly hot?) <i>* This wine is plotted in two places on Chart 2.2, to reflect the degree of uncertainty over its mixture.</i>	2.52. Possibly hot: <i>Piquette</i> 'moistens, sends to stool and fills with wind because must also does the same'. Must also 'heats', and must's property of heat is said to be a reason for its excrementary properties, so perhaps this implies that <i>piquette</i> was also thought to share this heating property with must. Compare with 'New wines/Must'.
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Vinegar:

<p>Acid (vinegary) wines (mixed with water as with a normal wine beverage)</p>	<p>Cool and moist</p>	<p>2.52. Acid/vinegary wines (ὄξιναὶ οἴνοι), mixed with water: ‘cool and attenuate by emptying the body of its moisture [this is the effect of the vinegar part of the beverage, as vinegar is immediately after said to be ‘refreshing, because it dissolves and consumes the moisture in the body’]; they moisten from the water that enters with the wine [the water element has this effect]’. On acid/vinegary wines, as different from vinegar, see Appendix 1, p.336.</p>
<p>Vinegar</p>	<p>Cool and presumably of balanced moisture</p>	<p>2.52. Coolness: Acid wines cause coolness by ‘emptying the body of its moisture’; similarly, vinegar ‘is refreshing, because it dissolves and consumes the moisture of the body’, implying that it too is cooling. Note also that 2.56 has two references indicating that ‘meats preserved in vinegar are less warming because of the vinegar’, and ‘are not burning [καυσῶδης]’, supporting the idea of vinegar’s coolness. Note also, 3.81: cooling wild vegetables include beet boiled in vinegar Presumably of balanced moistness:</p>

		<p>Vinegar is unlikely to be notably moist, as acid wines were only indicated to be moist by virtue of being mixed with water (see ‘Acid [vinegary] wines’). Similarly, moistness is said to lead to nutrition in the description of boiled-down must (2.56); as vinegar is said to ‘afford no nourishment’, it implies that it is probably not moist.</p> <p>Furthermore, 2.56 indicates that whilst ‘meats preserved in wine are... drying because of the wine’, those preserved in vinegar are simply ‘less warming because of the vinegar’; vinegar is thus surely not notably dry like wine.</p>
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Food (in General):

Food from waterless, dry, torrid regions	Drier and warmer	2.55.
Food from moist, cold, well-watered regions	Moister and colder	2.55.
Sweet, sharp, salt, bitter, harsh, or fleshy things	Hotter	2.55.
Drier things	Warmer and drier	2.55.
Moister things	Warmer and moister	2.55.

Drinking Regimes:

<p>Less drinking</p>	<p>Drier (perhaps also hotter?)</p>	<p>2.49: animals that drink less are drier (when their meat is eaten). 3.68: in winter, use drying and warming foods, including a limited quantity of wine (dark, slightly diluted) in contrast to summer (see 'More drinking').</p>
<p>More drinking</p>	<p>Moister (perhaps also cooler?)</p>	<p>2.66: a fatigued (over dried) body is treated by a regime to moisten (without excess), including drinking copiously (of soft, well diluted wine). 3.68: in summer (a hot and dry seasons) drink plentiful wine (though mostly with food and not during the day); contrast to winter (see 'Less drinking'). 3.83: a head and body emptied of moisture requires plenty of soft wine. 4[= <i>Dreams</i>].90.50-60: to treat dryness, drink copious white wine, well diluted.</p>
<p>Well diluted wine</p>	<p>Moister and cooler (but less intense than water)</p>	<p>1.35: to counter a hot and dry condition requires a regime inclined towards water, including well diluted drink. If it is even hotter and drier, this needs an even more water inclined regime, including only water to drink. 2.66: a fatigued (over dried) body is treated by a regime to moisten (without excess), including drinking copiously of (soft) well diluted wine. 3.82: a regime to stop dry heat includes soft wine, well diluted. 3.84: a regime of moister</p>

		<p>and cooler food, complemented by 'drink of the softer sort, well diluted' (note that Jones here inconsistently translates 'milder' rather than 'softer'; see 'Soft wines' further on this issue). 4[= <i>Dreams</i>].89.50-70: for a watery regime which is not heating and drying (a cool and moist regime), the patient should abstain from wine unless it is white, thin, soft and diluted. 4[= <i>Dreams</i>]. 90.50-60: to treat dryness (a moist regime), drink copious white wine, well diluted.</p> <p>See 'Unmixed, undiluted, or slightly diluted wines' for further evidence (especially 3.68 on seasonal variation of drinking), and the comparable situation in 'Honey' (becoming cooler and wetter as it is mixed with increasing quantities of water).</p> <p>On 'wines' mentioned in <i>Regimen</i> usually being wine beverages mixed with water to a usual ratio, see 'Wine (archetype)'.</p> <p>Note this is also supported by the Hippocratic author of <i>Airs, Waters, Places</i>, 9: 'I assert that it is better to give children wine watered down as much as possible for this neither burns the veins nor dries them up too much'; heavily diluted wine is thus implied to be the opposite:</p>
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		cooler and moister.
Unmixed, undiluted, or slightly diluted wines	Hotter and drier (than a normally-mixed beverage)	<p>Because wine is hot and dry, and water cold and wet, any unmixed wine beverages would probably be significantly drier and hotter.</p> <p>Compare to 'Honey' which is hot and dry when unmixed, but when mixed with (cold and wet) water it becomes cooler and wetter (to become wet and probably of balanced moisture). 3.68 supports this, as wine's dilution follows the seasons; in particular the author advises the use of drying and warming foods in winter, including slightly diluted wine (also dark and limited quantity). This is in comparison to the other seasons: spring features a move towards a warm and dry season (summer) and thus more diluted drink; summer requires diluted drink; in autumn food should be warmer and less moist with wine not diluted. (The same idea regarding varying the dilution of wine according to season is also in the Hippocratic text <i>A Regimen for Health</i>, 1, and seems to be later followed by Celsus, 1.3.34-39.)</p> <p>Note also 3.75: undiluted drink, and neat wine with figs, are advised to produce warmth in belly. 3.79: to counteract cold and moist bowels wine should be dark, dry and little</p>

Appendix 5: Wines in the Hippocratic Corpus

		<p>diluted.</p> <p>See 'Well diluted wines' for further evidence.</p> <p>On 'wines' mentioned in <i>Regimen</i> usually being wine beverages mixed with water to a usual ratio, see 'Wine (archetype)'.</p>
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APPENDIX 6: WORK AND WINE: FROM TRUTH TO TRICKERY, FROM POLITICS TO ESPIONAGE

The Greco-Roman elite generally considered drinking and work – especially public service – to be mutually incompatible. Plutarch records that, at the drinking-party where they were assassinated, the tyrants of Corinth twice received word of Pelopidas' plot, yet both times they postponed looking into this matter. One of the tyrants stated: 'serious business for the morrow', and Plutarch notes that this had since become popular as a Greek proverb. The sentiment of a separation between wine and work was thus surely considered pertinent by many Greeks.¹ Hence when Herodotus stated that the Persians debated each important matter twice, once when drunk and once when sober, he presents this behaviour as unusual, intriguing, and ultimately 'un-Greek'.² In comparison, Plutarch regarded all business cares as inappropriate topics of conversation during drinking because they are strenuous and summon rivalry. This was considered destructive to the friendly convivial context which wine had created, and this in turn had the consequences of hindering digestion of the food and drink consumed, and not allowing the body and spirit to relax and be restored for the next day's work.³

In both Greek and Roman society, public work was generally thought to come first; leisure should not hinder it. A person should only enjoy leisure, including drink, when he had the free time to do so.⁴ Plutarch thus defends Alexander's infamous fondness for wine by claiming that it was less severe than people thought, as when he had important work he would let nothing detain him; he would simply cast wine aside for the time being. Nicias, Cato the Elder and Demetrius are said to have followed similar practices.⁵ For the Romans, the life of Cato the Elder provided the proper model for daily life, where conviviality

¹ Plutarch, *Pelopidas*, 9.2-11.2, esp. 10.4.

² Herodotus, 1.133.

³ Plutarch, *Advice about Keeping Well*, 20=132f-133f; Van Hoof (2010) 238.

⁴ D'Arms (1995) 305-308; Humphries (2002) 76-79, 81-82.

⁵ Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 3.8, 8.9, 20.2; *Nicias*, 5 (also discussed on p.437 n.104, and Ch.3 p.303 n.305); *Alexander*, 23.1. Demetrius: see n.35. Note further: Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 9.5 (Cato attacks a fat knight as, due to gluttony, his body cannot be of service to the state), 21.2 (Cato values the body always being ready for work); *Pompey*, 55.3 (he is criticised for his neglect of public work, due to his marriage at an inappropriate time).

should only be conducted after everyone had finished work, in the late afternoon and evening.⁶ If a Roman had a large amount of work, this meal was typically pushed back further into the evening, so that it did not form an 'island' between two periods of work.⁷ The *cena*, with its festive wine-drinking, demarked the latest point by which *everyone* present must have finished the abstemious 'work' segment of their day, and moved on to the wine-drinking 'leisure' period.⁸

In the Roman world, many public figures were attacked because they inappropriately mixed wine with work. Unsuitable conduct firstly included drinking and being intoxicated whilst they performed public duties. Yet, displaying a hangover was also considered improper; a man in public office thus also had to avoid excessive drinking when 'off-duty'. Instruction was provided by an anecdote told of Romulus: when he attended a drinking-party he refused to drink heavily as he had to undertake public business in the morning. Pliny the Younger also applied this behaviour to the private sphere when he refused to drink heavily at a party, because he was worried that a hangover would reflect badly upon him when his clients came to see him at around dawn the following morning. Examples of figures attacked for their mixing of wine and work, in various ways, include: Sulla the dictator, Cato the Younger, Mark Antony and the Emperor Tiberius. Their drinking behaviour was considered to interfere with their duties and disgrace their office. Indeed, when an embassy from Messene came to Flamininus, the morning after the former had been in a drinking-bout, Flamininus stated: 'I am amazed that when thou hast matters of so great moment in hand, thou canst dance and sing at a drinking-party'.⁹

⁶ Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 3.2, 4.3; Plutarch, *Comparison of Aristides and Cato*, 4.4.

⁷ Plutarch, *Cato the Younger*, 6, 44.1; *Cicero*, 3.4-5, 8.4-5. Note however that Augustus finished what was left of the day's work after dinner, and this is not explicitly criticised: Suetonius, *Augustus*, 78.1.

⁸ Garnsey (1999) 136.

⁹ Aulus Gellius, 11.14; Cicero, *Philippics*, 2.63; Plutarch, *Flamininus*, 17.2-5; *Sulla*, 2.2-3 (on this passage, see further Ch.3 n.89); *Cato the Younger*, 6, 44.1; *Antony*, 9.3-4; Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 42.1; Pliny the Younger, *Epistles*, 3.12; Quintilian, 8.6.68; Edwards (1993) 191-192, also 26-27; Gowers (1993) 19; Humphries (2002) 78-79, 81-82; Weeber (1993) s.v. 'Alcoholism'; Fleming (2001) 66. Note also: Suetonius, *Claudius*, 33.1 (on the scandal of his eating during court cases); Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 36.1-3 with Duff (1999) 238 (Alcibiades' alleged heavy drinking led to him neglecting state work; this behaviour is typically associated with tyranny); *Tiberius Gracchus*, 14.3 (Tiberius was alleged to disgrace his exemplary father's memory, who reduced the citizens' drinking-bouts through fear, whereas Tiberius befriends the poorest and rowdiest of people). Note further that Antony's inappropriate drinking is discussed further below, on p.421 with n.28.

An attack on Cato the Younger illustrates just how finicky the Roman elite's separation of wine and work could be. Cato was criticised for allegedly transacting public business *after* his midday meal, rather than in the morning as befit usual practice. The crux of this criticism was that as part of his lunch he drank a little wine – as indeed many people did at lunchtime – yet it was thought that this made it inappropriate for him to conduct work afterwards. The quantity of wine was insignificant, what mattered was that wine was fresh within him.

Similarly, undertaking public work in a banquet context, whilst drinking, was considered inappropriate. Lucius Quinctius Flamininus was famously expelled from the senate because he had administered capital punishment whilst at a banquet. Also, the doormen of Crassus and Cyrus would not bring important letters and guests to their masters whilst they were dining.¹⁰

The Greek aristocracy also generally considered intoxication to be inappropriate during times of public work. Yet it is important to note that antiquity's lower-classes may not have shared these same principles, or not valued them as highly. Such is implied by Plutarch's *Pyrrhus*, when Meton of Tarentum pretended to be drunk and paraded through an important public assembly as if in a revel. Plutarch explains: 'then, as will happen in a throng of free people not given to decorum, some clapped their hands at sight of him, and others laughed, but none tried to stop him'. The upper-classes found this public display of drunken behaviour disgraceful, especially as it was conducted in a place of public work. They therefore chastised the people for listening to a drunken reveller. Plutarch's account, however, implies that lower-class individuals were far less likely to criticise this behaviour; some were even likely to support it and join in. Plutarch also notes that the Athenian people similarly found it funny (rather than scandalous) when Cleon attended an Athenian assembly dressed for dinner and dismissed all public business as he was busy with a banquet that day.¹¹

Regardless, there appear to have been several factors behind the upper-classes' belief that wine was incompatible with their work. First, although wine was perceived to be significantly strengthening and could thus be of use to

¹⁰ Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 17.1-5; *Flamininus*, 18.2-19.2; *Lysander*, 6.5-7; *Cicero*, 15.1-2. Note, however, that Caesar often signed letters whilst at table, and this is not explicitly criticised: Plutarch, *Caesar*, 63.4.

¹¹ Plutarch, *Nicias*, 7.4-5; *Pyrrhus*, 13.3-5. On Meton, see also n.57 and Ch.3 n.265.

some physical labour (as addressed in Chapter 2), the work of the Greco-Roman elite generally required mental activity. Many considered wine to hinder this. In Plutarch's *Table-Talk* a character takes inspiration from Aristotle, and suggests that the perceptions of a man who drinks too much are suppressed and destroyed, and he is unable to act on his impulses.¹² In the *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, Plutarch presents a debate on this issue. Thales and Bias disagree upon whether drunkenness hinders wisdom, cleverness, and the ability to solve puzzles. Thales believes that intoxication *significantly* hinder these skills, whilst Bias argues that wine does not lessen them in the least.¹³ Plutarch himself seems to have followed the former school of thought. He viewed men who conducted serious work when enjoying wine and women as unbalanced. Industrious men were thought to do no such thing, and as such benefit from 'sober judgement and surpassing sagacity'.¹⁴ According to Plutarch, the Scythians also thought that intoxication 'unstrung' people's senses. Their warriors were thus said to twang their bowstrings whilst drinking, so that these tools of their profession temporarily summoned-back a work-like mind, meaning that these fighters are never fully 'disarmed' by intoxication.¹⁵ In a similar manner, Ammianus Marcellinus describes the Gauls' continual drunkenness; this is regarded as a voluntary kind of madness which has dulled their wits.¹⁶ Furthermore, Plutarch also notes that when Geminius wanted to discuss a delicate matter with Antony, and was reluctantly forced to discuss it at dinner over wine, he tried to excuse himself by saying that 'his communication required a sober head'; tactfulness was thus considered hindered by wine.¹⁷ As seen in Chapter 2, Galen summarised these beliefs by stating that excess drink 'makes the rational part of the mind sluggish and confused'.¹⁸

In a similar manner, wine and drunkenness were commonly associated with untactful truthfulness. This is most famously attested in the Roman proverb *in vino veritas*, 'there is truth in wine', referred to by Pliny. This maxim was also understood more widely across the ancient world. Plutarch not only records it in Greek, and claims it to be a Greek proverb, but also puts an understanding of

¹² Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 3.8=656c-d.

¹³ Plutarch, *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, 4=150b-c.

¹⁴ Plutarch, *Cicero*, 18.4-5.

¹⁵ See Ch.3 n.234.

¹⁶ See Ch.3 n.180.

¹⁷ Plutarch, *Antony*, 59.1-3.

¹⁸ Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.11=6.54-55K; this is said to be because wine 'fills the head with fumes of the moist and warm character'.

this in the mouth of a Persian from around 400BC. Indeed, this expression is attested at a very earlier date: the sixth-century BC Greek poet Alcaeus states 'wine is a peep-hole into a man' and 'wine, dear boy, and truth'. Similarly, in the third century BC, Theocritus opened a poem with lines also linking wine with truth.¹⁹ The very fact that Seneca feels he has to argue at length that *some* habitual drunkards can be (and *sometimes* are) entrusted with secrets, implies that many people had reservations. Indeed, Seneca himself ultimately sides with the masses and admits that a drunk man not being able to keep back a secret 'is what commonly happens'; drunkenness does indeed usually make a man's 'tongue unsteady'. Seneca's argument is simply to stress that it is not *inevitable*; there are a few exceptions to the rule.²⁰ Aristotle even noted that wine had a similar effect on talking parrots. He writes that 'the Indian bird, the parrot, that is said to be human-tongued, and it becomes even more unrestrained after drinking wine'.²¹

Likewise, Plutarch emphasises the ability of wine to promote talkativeness in the preface to book three of *Table-Talk*. In moderation, drinking is presented as constructive in allowing a company to become intimately acquainted: 'wine reveals us and displays us by not allowing us to keep quiet'. Yet it is destructive in excess, leading to tactless revelations: 'babbling and talking about what is better left in silence is at once the work of actual intoxication and drunkenness'. Indeed, throughout *Table-Talk*, wine is repeatedly characterised as associated with excessive talkativeness, bold talk, chattering, and truthfulness.²²

In Plutarch's *Lives*, drunkenness was repeatedly associated with clouding judgement, making bad decisions, a lack of political tact, revealing secrets which must not be spoken, regretful actions, and so on. For example, Tigranes of Armenia's overconfidence against the Romans meant that he interpreted their pre-battle manoeuvres in the most positive manner possible: as a retreat. When his ignorance finally lifts, and he realises the gravity of the situation once the Romans are finally lined up for battle, his newfound understanding is likened

¹⁹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.141; Plutarch, *Artaxerxes*, 15; Alcaeus, fr.333 (= Tzetzes on Lycophron, Alexandra), fr.366 (= Scholiast on Plato, *Symposium*, 217e); Theocritus, 29.1-2; Rösler (1995); Weeber (1993) s.v. 'Zungenlöser'.

²⁰ Seneca, *Epistles*, 83.12-17, 27.

²¹ Aristotle, *History of Animals*, 7(8).12=597.25-30. Trans. based on Balme's, but substituting Balme's 'outrageous' for 'unrestrained'; Aristotle uses ἀκολαστότερον, meaning 'uncontrolled/unbridled' (often used with the sense of 'licentious'); see Liddell and Scott (1940) s.v. 'ἀκόλαστος'.

²² Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 3.pr=645a-c. Also: 3.3=650e, 5.7=682b-c, 7.10=715a, 7.10=715e-f.

to 'coming out of a drunken stupor'. Drunkenness is thus associated with Tigranes' complete misreading of the situation. Intoxication was said to have inspired youths to shout abuse about Pyrrhus, and a malicious Persian courtier used the opportunity of an aristocrat's drunkenness to goad him into revealing a secret which he must keep on pain of death.²³ Similarly, Suetonius records that Cassius Patavinus was banished following a *convivium* where he tactlessly declared that 'he lacked neither the earnest desire nor the courage to kill [the Emperor Augustus]'; many people surely suspected the role of wine in inspiring this comment.²⁴ In extreme circumstances, wine was even thought to inspire criminality, as discussed in Appendix 7.

Secondly, intoxication was thought to interfere with the authority of a man in public office. Pericles apparently avoided all heavy drinking and dinner parties whilst he was head of state as he believed conviviality to weaken the façade of dignity which he thought was both required of politicians and difficult to maintain. On the one occasion when he *did* attend a wedding banquet, he was extremely moderate in his consumption and left early.²⁵ Sulla followed the very opposite practice to Pericles, and incurred the predicted results. Even when he became dictator, he would continue daily participation in merry banquets. During this time, his demeanour completely changed from a ferocious and austere man of business, to a merry and friendly companion. As word spread, people thought that his conduct dishonoured his high office. Due to his occasional dropping of a politician's façade of dignity, Sulla was considered less suitable for political office.²⁶

In the Roman Empire the political elite drew their position of authority from their claim of moral supremacy; private immorality could thus lead to public disgrace. In addition, as indicated by the focus of Cicero's *On Duties*, public office was also thought to require the display of *decorum* – the code of proper behaviour and gesture adopted by the aristocracy. Even the slightest gesture could, in turn, suggest the subject's moral disposition. Excessive and inappropriate drinking could threaten both of these elements: as argued in Chapter 3, bad drinking behaviour could imply an immoral character, and (as argued by

²³ Plutarch, *Pyrrhus*, 8.4-5; *Lucullus*, 27.4-6; *Alexander*, 9.4-5, 13.2-3, 38, 48-49, 51.5, 52.1, 59.1-3; *Demosthenes*, 20.3; *Artaxerxes*, 15. Note also: *Lucullus*, 25.1-2.

²⁴ Suetonius, *Augustus*, 51.1.

²⁵ Plutarch, *Pericles*, 7.4-5. On wedding banquets, see Ch.3 p.290 with n.254.

²⁶ See Ch.3 n.89.

D'Arms) it was also considered to be a breach of *decorum*. Such drinking could undermine the authority of a member of the elite. He could thus be considered unfit for public office, and in Rome the censors could even degrade him from formally being part of the upper-class (as they did with Lucius Quinctius Flaminius, following the execution which he conducted at dinner). Accusations of this kind of immoral behaviour were thus commonplace among Rome's political classes.²⁷

Humphries accordingly concluded that literary sources which highlight public figures as heavy drinkers often sought to undermine these individuals' political legitimacy. This can be clearly seen in Cicero's attack on Antony's heavy drinking at a friend's wedding. In itself, this behaviour was inappropriate as a private vice, but Cicero emphasises Antony's political incapacity when he stresses the context. This was the night before making a speech to the people, and his excess was made significantly worse by an embarrassing and undignified consequence: he vomited in full public view, a very overt display of his excess. Antony's heavy drinking was thus implied to make him unfit for public office; he showed a lack of moral restraint and could not display the required *decorum*. Similarly, literary accounts of certain emperors emphasised their negative drinking behaviour in an attempt to undermine their legitimacy. Humphries thus illustrated that writers favourable to Constantine present his enemies as prone to drunkenness whilst presenting Constantine as a model of *decorum*, yet those writers hostile to Constantine present his reign as pervaded by a drunken atmosphere.²⁸ In a comparable manner, König has argued that Diogenes Laertius' biographies of philosophers (third century AD) generally present these philosophers as extremely abstemious. Yet, 'in some cases Diogenes aims to undermine and parody these philosophers' reputations for virtue' by attributing to them 'reputations for drunkenness and indulgence ... [or] a rather eccentric relationship with sympotic norms'.²⁹ As such, many individuals' status and power derived – to an extent – from the constructive drinking behaviour which they displayed.

²⁷ Morality: Edwards (1993) esp. 24-28, also 190-198; see also Ch.3 n.66. *Decorum*: Humphries (2002) 76; D'Arms (1995) 304-308; also König (2012) 268. Further on gesture and morality: Seneca, *Epistles*, 52.12; Edwards (1993) 89-90.

²⁸ Humphries (2002); also Edwards (1993) 27-28. Antony: see further n.9 (noting especially Cicero's *Philippics*, Plutarch's *Antony*, and Edwards).

²⁹ König (2012) 238-239, 265.

Thirdly, a love for wine was considered to be a distraction. Pliny records that the famous drunkard Novellius Torquatus of Milan was extremely unusual as when in positions of state he 'always turned up for duty with the morning guard without anything going wrong'.³⁰ Plutarch similarly implies in his *Cimon* that men who enter public life, and are overly fond of wine and slothful during this period of public service, will accomplish far less (fewer victories, conquests, and so on) than if they had been sober and mindful of their business. Plutarch concludes that Cimon's enemies only served to highlight Cimon's greatness when they alleged that he had been a lazy drunk, because it implied that he had been able to achieve so much *even with* the burden of these bad habits; he would probably have achieved even greater deeds without them.³¹

Excess wine was not only thought to distract a person's attention from work, but also corrupt his spirit. If this individual was engaged in public life, this excess could significantly hinder his ability to exercise power correctly. Plutarch attributed this pattern to Ptolemy IV and Dionysius II. The former was so corrupted by drunkenness and sex that his court was similarly corrupted by such antics, and he even allowed his mistress – the daughter of a brothel-keeper – to wield power. Ptolemy's power and his kingdom declined from the state in which he had inherited it. In the case of the latter, Dionysius' own courtiers purposefully pursued a similar pattern: as Dionysius' father had been a strict and cruel tyrant, they fed his love of wine and other vices, so that he neglected exercising his power and his rule thus became softer through his negligence. Plutarch records that he once held a ninety-day drinking-bout, during which he considered no affairs of state.³² Seneca also notes a more extreme consequence for ruler and state: drunkenness could cause calamities in entire nations, such as the one which befell the Macedonians: Alexander was invincible in the field, yet due to his love of wine was killed due to intemperance at a drinking-bout.³³

In a similar but opposite vein, Plutarch's *Lives* present the over-zealous pursuit of work as detrimental to leisure, including a person's sympotic activities. Pyrrhus and Demetrius realise this too late. Beyond philosophical goals, luxury

³⁰ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.146.

³¹ Plutarch, *Cimon*, 15.1-3.

³² Ptolemy: see Ch.3 n.94. Dionysius II: Plutarch, *Dion*, 7 (also discussed on Ch.3 p.279 n.210, and Ch.3 p.298 n.286).

³³ Seneca, *Epistles*, 83.22-23.

is the most that such rulers can hope to achieve; their empty ambitions are futile. Pyrrhus comes to this realisation when he commits to fighting a war, but then realises that his ultimate aim is to achieve an idealised life of luxurious *symposia* which he can already experience; Demetrius realises this when his ambitions lead him to be imprisoned, yet he is able to dedicate his captive life to drinking-bouts just as he pursued during his reign. Demosthenes' heavy working is associated primarily with anxiety, and a lack of socialising in the evenings. Lucullus, on the other hand, had to retire entirely from his successful public life in order to experience the life of leisure and luxurious dining which he felt that he had earned. Antony similarly retired into a life of banquets and drinking-bouts after he lost the battle of Actium, and finally gave up all ambition and hope for political gains.³⁴

Plutarch presents Demetrius as the exception who proves the rule; his abilities were extremely unusual. Demetrius was fond of raucous leisure, including extreme drunkenness and sex. Yet when state concerns or warfare needed Demetrius' attention, he never missed the time for action, regardless of all his pleasures. Demetrius was thus very unusual in being able to compartmentalise the two parts of his life – state duties and war on the one hand, leisure on the other. He could live each life completely, without either hindering the other. He could thus conduct great political matters successfully, and was as formidable in war as if he were a teetotaller. Antony was provided as a direct comparison who was *not* of Demetrius' unusual pattern (although Plutarch implies that Antony could have been, if it were not for the corrupting influence of Cleopatra). He was also renowned for his devotion to leisure activities such as wine and his love for Cleopatra. Yet, in the end, he was not able to keep work and leisure completely separate, and as such his devotion to leisure meant his prowess in public life and war were stunted.³⁵

Yet, banqueting and wine were clearly not considered completely incompatible with work; they were thought to have several uses. On a basic level, dining could be, in itself, a political duty. In the Greek and Roman world, public officials were sometimes expected to eat together; for example the 'Banquets of the Augurs' in Rome, and the communal dining of magistrates inside public

³⁴ Plutarch, *Pyrrhus*, 14.6-8; *Lucullus*, 38.2-4; *Comparison of Demosthenes and Cicero*, 1.3-4; *Demetrius*, 52; *Antony*, 71.1-3. See also: Ch.3 n.232.

³⁵ See Ch.3 n.89.

buildings in the Greek city-states. Solon emphasised the importance of such dining, when he legislated that a man be punished with a fine if it was his 'duty' to dine at the public table in the townhall, but did not do so. He considered such absences as 'contemptuous of the public interests'; their dining together was for the good of the state.³⁶ Indeed, it can also be conjectured that this practice had the advantage of combating Pericles' above noted fears: if magistrates dined together frequently enough, conviviality would only weaken their façade of dignity in front of their political peers; this could be less destructive to their political legitimacy. Furthermore, König has counted that nearly 25 percent of the *symposia* described in Plutarch's *Table-Talk* 'are explicitly set at specified festival occasions or at banquets otherwise connected with public office-holding. In these cases the *symposium* hosts are often festival officials or local priests, holding small banquets for their friends and local notables in their own homes.' In many of these cases, hosting a banquet was presumably a responsibility or expectation of these individuals' political/religious positions.³⁷

Similarly, as eating and drinking together was symbolic of friendly relations, a variety of friendly political statuses were marked by banqueting. Embassies were invited to dinner,³⁸ and both fugitives and defectors were likewise thrown abundant meals, probably to symbolise the friendship and protection of their new host.³⁹ Negotiations could require political figures to engage in banqueting together; the banquet could build a constructive atmosphere of friendliness. Banquets were also used to mark alliances, truces and reconciliations between states or individuals, and they were also used as good-will gestures to keep friendly relations strong. In situations where status was thought to be approximately equal, reciprocal hosting could be expected, whereby each party took turns at inviting the others to dine with them. At a negotiation, Antony, Octavian and Pompey Sextus thus even had to cast lots to see who received the additional honour of hosting the others first.⁴⁰ Leaders were also expected to host their subordinates at dinner as a display of hospitality; in Roman society

³⁶ Plutarch, *Solon* 24.3 (also discussed in Ch.3 n.307); *Cimon*, 1.2-4 (also discussed on p.442 n.123, and Appendix 7 p.452 n.27); *Tiberius Gracchus*, 4.1-2 (also discussed on p.431 n.72, and on Ch.3 p.243 n.91).

³⁷ König (2012) 85.

³⁸ Plutarch, *Pyrrhus*, 20.3-4.

³⁹ Plutarch, *Coriolanus*, 23.1-2, 23.5; *Marius*, 44.1-2; *Crassus*, 4-6.1.

⁴⁰ Banquets for negotiations, alliances, truces, reconciliations and reciprocity: Plutarch, *Crassus*, 33.1-4; *Cleomenes*, 37.1-2; *Cicero*, 26.1; *Antony*, 32.3-5, 35.3-5, 26.3-27, 67.4.

a patron was thus honour-bound to invite his clients to dine with him on occasion.⁴¹

The importance of dining to good political relations is highlighted when Plutarch describes Antony's conduct in the immediate aftermath of Caesar's assassination. He was said to behave 'in a most prudent and statesmanlike manner'. One such action was to invite the conspirator Cassius to dinner, whilst Antony's ally Lepidus invited Brutus to dine with him; the result was that they symbolically reiterated the amnesty which Antony had declared for the assassins.⁴² Similarly, immediately after defeating the Romans, the Numantines wanted to retain friendly relations with Tiberius Gracchus. They therefore invited him into their city, made him a banquet and implored him to 'eat something in their company'.⁴³ Conversely, when Pompey accepted Armenia's surrender with clemency, and allowed the king to remain in position as a client ruler, he invited the king and his son to dine with him to cement their newfound friendly relationship. Yet, when the king's son refused, Pompey took this as an insult and friendly relations crumbled. Pompey withdrew his original clemency; he had the son captured, chained and taken to Rome for the triumph.⁴⁴ Dionysius II even used banqueting to refute publicly allegations of enmity towards his guest Plato. In reality, Plato was effectively kept captive by Dionysius, but Dionysius bluffed friendly relations by overtly throwing a lavish banquet in Plato's honour.⁴⁵ Wine's almost indispensable role in promoting a convivial atmosphere was thus surely a boon to these particular uses of dining to aid political friendliness.

In a similar manner, banqueting could increase an individual's support: he could host powerful figures at banquets to gain their favour, or grand public banquets to gain the goodwill of the masses. When the Roman upper-classes considered which political figure to support, they often considered qualities such as liberality and refinement which (as shown in Chapter 3) were readily illustrated through hosting banquets. Such events had to be carefully gauged; too much expenditure implied excess luxury, too little implied avarice. Cicero thus argues

⁴¹ Shipley (2000) 67; Carcopino (2003 [1939]) 171, 270.

⁴² Plutarch, *Antony*, 14.1-2.

⁴³ Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, 6.1-3.

⁴⁴ Plutarch, *Pompey*, 33.4-5. See also: *Cato the Younger*, 37.

⁴⁵ Plutarch, *Dion*, 20 (also discussed on p.441 n.118, and Ch.3 p.303 n.306).

that Aelius Tubero failed to be elected praetor because he hosted a banquet which was too modest.⁴⁶

Plutarch's *Lives* contain several examples of banqueting being used to gain support. He assesses that the root of Caesar's political influence was his offering of lavish hospitality to many people, and after Nero's death a praetorian prefect tried to gain power by banqueting the most powerful men in the city.⁴⁷ Cimon was also judged as trying to win over the poor through a course of giving free daily meals to whoever wished them, and frequent amusements including lavish public banquets.⁴⁸ Plutarch emphasises this role of food and drink when he states that 'it has been well said that he first breaks down the power of the people who first feasts and bribes them'.⁴⁹ Here he assesses the political history of Rome: as public figures increasingly gave money, gifts and banquets, the people's political power decreased; such individuals essentially bought votes, courts and armies, until Rome eventually became a monarchy. In Plutarch's mind, hosting people at banquet was seen as *highly* support-winning, to the point where rich men could become effective-monarchs in a republic. In a similar manner, after the death of Alexander, each of the Macedonian leaders tried to win the support of soldiers through extravagant flattery including splendid feasts and festivals; Plutarch assesses that they turned camps into tavern-like places of celebration.⁵⁰ On a smaller scale, the banquet's capacity to foster support, protection and loyalty is also implied when guests in the *Lives* show concern and outrage at the sight of their host being mistreated (Anytus by Alcibiades, and Pompey by one of his own freedmen).⁵¹

In the *Cleomenes*, Plutarch implies some of the ways in which he considered banqueting to foster support. He notes that the normal method, which most political figures practiced, was to give gifts to guests. Yet Plutarch states that Cleomenes took a less conventional path, considering it nobler instead to win his guests' support through pleasurable company and conversation.⁵² Plutarch also acknowledged that reciprocal obligation also played a role in the use of banqueting to gain support: when the Persian King Artaxerxes showed favour to

⁴⁶ Cicero, *Defence of Murena*, 75-76; Edwards (1993) 202-203; König (2012) 5.

⁴⁷ Plutarch, *Caesar*, 4.3, 5.5, 57.5; *Galba*, 8.1.

⁴⁸ Plutarch, *Pericles*, 9.2, 11.4.

⁴⁹ Plutarch, *Coriolanus*, 14.2-4.

⁵⁰ Plutarch, *Eumenes*, 13.4-5, 14.

⁵¹ Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 4.4-5; *Pompey*, 40.4.

⁵² Plutarch, *Cleomenes*, 13.3-5.

Timagoras of Athens whilst at his court, by sending him very lavish meals, the King's brother reminded Timagoras that he was now obliged to do great favours for Artaxerxes in the future.⁵³

Wine was considered a key factor in a banquet's capacity to generate support in these ways. Indeed, as shown in Chapter 3, wine was thought near essential for a proper convivial atmosphere with good company and conversation, and provisions of wine were seen as acts of generosity and sometimes even issued as rewards. Accordingly, Plutarch notes that the Lesbians gave Alcibiades a great honour when they provided copious wine so that he could lavishly entertain the masses; presumably the true capital of their gift was that the wine gave Alcibiades an easy means through which to enhance his own standing.⁵⁴

The ability of food, wine and banqueting to promote support and friendly relations could also be used for further, more specific, political purposes. For example, as described in Chapter 3, regimes of lavish food and drink were thought to soften prisoners and make them more accepting and congenial to their situation and capturer.⁵⁵ Furthermore, as regent of Sparta, Lycurgus had his brother's son brought immediately upon birth to a banquet where he had gathered many influential Spartans. Lycurgus used this occasion to have the baby proclaimed King by these important figures, thereby reducing the risk of the baby's assassination.⁵⁶

Banqueting with wine was also acknowledged to offer wider propagandist uses. This was particularly due to the fact that public celebrations, especially those featuring intoxication, were recognised to grasp public attention. It is partly for this reason that Meton of Tarentum entered a public assembly in a pretend drunken revel: this demonstration instantly gained the attention of those present, with some even clapping along in support.⁵⁷ Furthermore, banquets were key daily opportunities for socialising, where news and rumours frequently spread throughout society; from this root, news could quickly spread abroad. In the first century AD there were even professional newsmen who earned their

⁵³ Plutarch, *Artaxerxes*, 22.6.

⁵⁴ Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 12.1.

⁵⁵ See Ch.3 n.293 and Ch.3 n.294.

⁵⁶ Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, 3.3-4.

⁵⁷ Plutarch, *Pyrrhus*, 13.3-5. On Meton, see also n.11 and Ch.3 n.265.

dinners – in a style similar to Classical Greece’s parasites – by telling news.⁵⁸ Political figures thus used large banquets as opportunities to make displays or speeches to great numbers of their subjects, with the knowledge that these words would quickly disseminate wider afield. Thus Plutarch records that when the Macedonian king Antigonus wanted either to bring himself into friendship with Aratus of Sicyon, or alienate Aratus from King Ptolemy, he used the occasion of a banquet following a sacrifice to announce his friendliness towards Aratus before many of his subjects, knowing that word of this would rapidly spread to Ptolemy.⁵⁹

In the Greco-Roman world, leaders typically used splendid public and private banquets to emphasise positive aspects of themselves and their rule before vast numbers of their subjects and important individuals, respectively. Their impressive provisions, including lavish wine, could highlight the power, affluence, generosity and the stability of their leadership, dynasty or state.⁶⁰ Indeed, in Plutarch’s mind there was apparently a link between good rule, happy people, and copious banqueting; one could imply the others. In his description of the reign of the righteous and mild King Numa, Plutarch states that Numa inspired peaceful and friendly relations in Rome and across Italy, which were symbolised by ‘festivals and feasts, hospitalities and friendly converse between people ... throughout Italy’.⁶¹ The memory of lavish public banquets could even serve as a legacy of the greatness of a political figure, if extravagant and costly enough to leave a lasting impression in the public mind. Thus the only memorable achievement from the consulship of Pompey and Crassus (according to Plutarch) is that Crassus made a great sacrifice to Hercules, accompanied by an especially large public banquet and a distribution of three-months’ grain to each man.⁶²

A public figure displaying specific drinking behaviour could also gain favour. It has been noted above that the elite drew their authority from their claims of moral superiority, and that the display of moderate decorous drinking could imply such a virtuous character which could be entrusted with authority. Yet,

⁵⁸ Martial, 9.35; Tacitus, *Annals*, 3.54; Friedländer (1908-13) 1.219-224. Note also: Suetonius, *Domitian*, 15.3.

⁵⁹ Plutarch, *Aratus*, 15.

⁶⁰ Shipley (2000) 67-68. Consider, for example: Plutarch, *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, 4=150c-d.

⁶¹ Plutarch, *Numa*, 20.3-4.

⁶² Plutarch, *Crassus*, 12.2; *Comparison of Nicias and Crassus*, 1.4.

even though it implied a less ideal character, displays of heavy drinking could also apparently draw support from some individuals. Indeed, even though Plutarch states that rulers who were *overly* devoted to wine must be despised by all of their associates,⁶³ in practice he seems to have acknowledged that lavish consumption could lead to favour. The heavy drinking Demetrius was able to 'inspire in men ... favour. For ... he was a most agreeable companion, and most dainty of princes in the leisure devoted to drinking and luxurious ways of living'. Demetrius' luxurious drinking behaviour made him good company, and this gained him his companions' support.⁶⁴ Similarly, although Sulla's renowned daily bouts of merry drinking led to outsiders questioning his suitability to undertake public work, this conduct apparently gained him the total support of his companions who were 'ready to listen and yield to every request'.⁶⁵ Caesar is said to have gained increasing political influence not only due to his lavish hospitality, but also 'the general splendour of his mode of life'; presumably Caesar's luxury made him an especially enjoyable dining companion.⁶⁶

A public figure who displayed indulgence in popular pleasures could establish a bond with the lower-classes (although this in turn could make other members of the upper-classes uneasy).⁶⁷ In particular, the support of soldiers was repeatedly won by generals who displayed a fondness for heavy drinking. Plutarch attributes this pattern to Antony. Whilst in Rome, he publicly displayed behaviour which resembled that of common soldiers, including dressing as a soldier, carrying a sword, jesting, boasting and drinking from a soldier's cup whilst in public. He even found soldiers to eat alongside, standing rather than reclining (as was typical of soldiers, but not civilians). This produced good will and affection from his soldiers, but others found it offensive. Whilst on campaign he was said to share his soldiers' toils, give them gifts, and to engage in socialising and pleasures with a ready wit. This gained their respect.⁶⁸ In a similar manner, Suetonius notes that Vitellius had a good reputation with his

⁶³ Plutarch, *Comparison of Dion and Brutus*, 4.1: 'Dionysius must have been despised by every one of his associates, devoted as he was to wine, dice, and women'. Here Plutarch's views are contrary to Seneca, *Epistles*, 83, which argues that some drunks can be respected and trusted as leaders.

⁶⁴ Plutarch, *Demetrius*, 2.3. On this passage, see further Ch.3 n.89.

⁶⁵ Plutarch, *Sulla*, 2.2-3. On this passage, see further Ch.3 n.89.

⁶⁶ Plutarch, *Caesar*, 4.3.

⁶⁷ Edwards (1993) 194. For example, Nero: Tacitus, *Annals*, 14.14; Suetonius, *Nero*, 53.

⁶⁸ Plutarch, *Antony*, 4.2, 43.2-3. Note also: 6.5, 8.1 27.1, 40.5. Note further, the great numbers of lavish drinking vessels and bowls whilst on campaign, at 48.1-2.

army due to his 'easy-going and lavish disposition', and this was enhanced because of his behaviour on his initial journey to take control of them. He kissed any soldiers he met along the way, and whilst staying in inns he would ask travellers if they had breakfasted, and belch in their faces to show he had eaten especially heavily. Suetonius thus implies that the soldiers' favour was won by his lavish behaviour, direct displays of friendliness towards them, and – crucially – his indecorous dining practice and heavy consumption.⁶⁹ Furthermore, Plutarch's comments on Demetrius winning affection due to his heavy drinking are presented alongside his success and aptitude in warfare. Plutarch's explicit point is that Demetrius was unusual in that his leisure did not hinder his capacity for work, yet another connection may be implicit in this passage: the lavish drinking which fostered favour may have also influenced his army, making his soldiers more loyal to their general and thus more effective. This association between drinking and soldiers' favour makes it appear more likely that the drink-related nicknames which Tiberius and Antony's lieutenant Varus gained (the former from his soldiers, the latter possibly also from his troops) may signify an army's affection towards a leader fond of drinking.⁷⁰

Displays of inappropriate drinking behaviour could also serve to reinforce an individual's position. Edwards argues that a public figure may 'draw attention to his own transcendence of social rules by temporarily embracing a curiously low social role' without negative consequence. As an example he notes Nero's behaviour: he took pleasure in frequenting taverns (an inappropriate drinking context for a member of the upper-classes) and starting bawls. This was widely known – his disguise apparently fooled no one – and there was no danger he would be confused with an individual of lower status. Similarly, Juvenal records the double-standards of some Roman aristocrats: the lower-classes are quickly criticised for any excess, but an aristocrat can even spew his wine on the floor and receive no criticism from his peers. As Edwards concludes, in such cases 'the rich and aristocratic can get away with low behaviour – it even enhances their reputations'.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Suetonius, *Vitellius*, 7.3. Compare, however, to Plutarch, *Otho*, 9.3-5, where the army regard Vitellius' gluttony and drunkenness as undesirable characteristics for an emperor.

⁷⁰ See Ch.3 n.146 and Ch.3 n.151.

⁷¹ Suetonius, *Nero*, 26; Tacitus, *Annals*, 13.25; Juvenal, 8.171-178; Edwards (1993) 193-194. On low pleasures being an object of elite desire, see König (2012) 235-236, 245, 267-268.

Shared banqueting and drinking could help individuals gain advancement in society, politics, their profession and so on. As noted in Chapter 3, Tiberius Gracchus may have secured an offer of marriage into an important family in part due to his excellent conduct at a banquet, and Valerius Flaccus seems to have made final decisions on whether to offer patronage to individuals such as Cato the Elder whilst dining with them.⁷² Indeed, under Caligula, a rich provincial bribed the emperor's staff with a vast sum, 200,000 sesterces, in order to gain an invitation to dinner. Dining with the emperor was apparently very highly valued, and it must thus have carried notable social capital.⁷³

We have already seen how individuals could gain the favour of heavy drinking superiors through shared drinking manners; the Emperor Tiberius was thought to have promoted his drinking companions to high offices including quaestor, urban prefect and governor of Syria by virtue of their intimacy over wine and/or their drinking prowess. We have also seen how displays of offensive drinking behaviour could destroy friendships, ruining hopes of political advancement; thus Nero's father created enmity with the young Gaius Caesar due to his cruel conduct at a drinking-bout.⁷⁴

A similar motivation is perhaps behind Antony's appointment of Varus, one of his drinking companions and a renowned heavy drinker, as a lieutenant in charge of six legions.⁷⁵ Similarly, the rhetorician Sextus Clodius of Sicily received the favour of Antony, invitation into his drinking circle, and large gifts, all because of his witty jokes and clever speech which made Antony and his friends regard him good company over wine. For Clodius, the intimacy and favour of a leading statesman, gained via good conduct at drinking-bouts, surely represented his social advancement.⁷⁶ Tiberius also established the office of 'Master of Imperial Pleasures' which he assigned to the knight Titus Caesonius Priscus, and the extravagantly luxurious Petronius was accepted into Nero's intimate circle and appointed 'Arbiter of Elegance'. In these cases, repute in pleasure led directly to political advancement – they were understandably the best men for these jobs focused upon the Emperor's pleasure.⁷⁷ Caligula, on

⁷² See Ch.3 n.90 and Ch.3 n.91.

⁷³ Suetonius, *Caligula*, 39.2.

⁷⁴ See Ch.3 n.329 and Ch.3 n.331.

⁷⁵ Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 42.2.

⁷⁶ Suetonius, *Rhetoricians*, 5; Cicero, *Philippics*, 2.17.42-43.

⁷⁷ Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 42.2; Tacitus, *Annals*, 16.18.

the other hand, seems to have been fond of people who displayed gluttony at banquets. When he saw a knight and a senator each eating with especial gusto, he favoured the former by sending him his own portion, and the latter by awarding him a praetorship out of the regular order; the latter at least received notable advancement.⁷⁸ On a grander scale, Alcibiades was easily able to gain an extraordinary degree of acceptance and favour among *whole societies*, when he lived in foreign lands, through being able to emulate local customs. His assimilation explicitly included drinking practices: in Thessaly he adopted their practice of drinking especially heavy.⁷⁹

In a significant passage, Plutarch records that Alcibiades' enemies accused him of negligence during a naval command. They claimed that Alcibiades wished to shrink from the admiral's duties, and instead revel with drink and courtesans, and so 'he had handed over – so Thrasybulus said – the duties of commander to men who won his confidence merely by drinking deep and reeling off sailors' yarns'. Regardless of the accuracy of this allegation, it was ultimately believed, and Alcibiades was stripped of his command. For this allegation to have been believable, it surely played upon an accepted constructive use of drinking akin to the modern employability skill of 'networking'. A subordinate would readily attend drinking-bouts with their superiors with the intention of exploiting the friendship-promoting properties of convivial drinking and conversation, so that in the future they were more likely to receive favour and advancement from these superiors.⁸⁰

Poets also seem to have used dinners for work purposes: both for gaining the favour of potential patrons, and for gaining feedback on their compositions from family and friends. The relaxed atmosphere, where *hired* performers were routinely present, seems to have been conducive to this particular work activity.⁸¹ Wine was thought to offer utility in this area. Plutarch's *Table-Talk* records the belief that a slight amount of wine – enough to promote tipsiness but not true drunkenness – strengthened the imaginative faculty, and thus aided the arts. Performers are noted to perform just as well at banquets as in the theatre, and Aeschylus is even said to have composed a play whilst drinking.⁸²

⁷⁸ Suetonius, *Caligula*, 18.3.

⁷⁹ See Ch.3 n.176.

⁸⁰ Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 36.1-3; Duff (1999) 238.

⁸¹ Suetonius, *Poets*, 'Terence', 2, 3.

⁸² Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 3.8=656c-d, 7.10=715d-e.

Yet, in contrast to these views in *Table-Talk*, Athenaeus preserves a fragment from Eubulus (a fourth-century BC Athenian poet) which claims that water-drinking makes people inventive, and wine only serves to cloud all thinking.⁸³

The atmosphere of friendly interaction at banquets and drinking-bouts could also be harnessed for sycophantic purposes: individuals could gain favour and influence through flattery of others. Plutarch accepts that this was commonplace: 'kings are supposed to listen to their flatterers after dinner has begun ... by way of diversion',⁸⁴ and in his *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men* the fictionalised Thales advises that a guest at a party should flatter his neighbours at table so that he could try and increase his friendship with them.⁸⁵ Accordingly, Plutarch notes that Thais, the Athenian mistress of Ptolemy, used eloquent speech at a drinking-bout to convince Alexander to burn Xerxes' house, an action which he otherwise would not have done, and one he later regretted. She did so both by 'graceful praise of Alexander' and by appealing to his obligations as host; she said it would bring his guests pleasure. In doing so, her flattery manipulated the intoxicated Alexander, and she was able to use him to exact symbolic revenge upon Xerxes for burning Athens.⁸⁶ Similarly, Plutarch notes that Antony was especially vulnerable to the flatterers present at drinking-bouts, as he did not believe that men could simultaneously be bold and flatter him in their speech. Clever sycophants thus exerted special power over him by disguising their tactics: they avoided simply submissively yielding in conversation, but instead appeared to boldly argue their point and then subsequently admit they were 'vanquished by superior wisdom'.⁸⁷ Cleopatra also used flattery to build an overwhelming degree of intimacy and power over Antony. Her tactics consisted of adopting his demeanour and being with him constantly, especially whilst he drank and revelled.⁸⁸

Furthermore, when men valued their drinking ability, this in itself could be a focus for sycophancy. Thus an Athenian embassy to Philip II praised his ability to consume more than his fellow drinkers, as well as being the best speaking and most handsome of men. This tactic was designed to encourage friendly

⁸³ Athenaeus, 2.43f (= Eubulus, fr.133).

⁸⁴ Plutarch, *Phocion*, 8.2.

⁸⁵ Plutarch, *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, 3=149a-c, 4=149f. See also Ch.3 p.307 with n.327.

⁸⁶ See Ch.3 n.209.

⁸⁷ Plutarch, *Antony*, 24.7-8.

⁸⁸ Plutarch, *Antony*, 27, 29.1-30.1.

relations, and thus make Philip more amicable to the Athenians and their requests.⁸⁹ Alternatively, sycophants could play upon men who were ashamed of their heavy drinking. Seneca records that heavy drinkers often heard themselves called “most temperate” whilst in the midst of drunkenness; the guilty drunkard was eager to believe this flattery.⁹⁰ Yet, although drinking provided several opportunities for flattery, Plutarch regarded drunkenness as destructive to the work of a sycophant: the sober flatterer was most to fear.⁹¹

Wine’s ability to promote talkativeness and truthfulness was also perceived to offer constructive work-related uses. Tacitus states that, in a similar manner to the Romans, the Germans believed that men were most frank, honest and direct whilst drinking at banquets. Due to alcohol’s influences upon men, they chose to undertake important public and private affairs (even forming alliances and declaring war) during this time.⁹² Although this is presented as alien behaviour, some comparable practice can also be seen in Greek and Roman cultures. As discussed in Chapter 3, the truth and talk generated by wine was thought to allow an individual to gain an insight into another’s character. Plato’s *Laws*, for example, presented socialising over wine as a quick, cheap, and fairly accurate way to do this. It is thus advised that a business man vet dubious potential business partners in this way, in order to appraise the risk. We accordingly hear that Valerius Flaccus vetted potential candidates for his political support in this manner, and Appius Claudius may have similarly evaluated Tiberius Gracchus to see whether he was worthy of marrying his daughter.⁹³ In *Table-Talk*, Plutarch succinctly advised that ‘wine [is] useful for this purpose ... to cross-question each other or to catch each other out’.⁹⁴

As truth was considered inevitable when drinking significant quantities of wine, many people promoted group confidentiality within a drinking context. As such, they built an atmosphere of communal privacy and trust, whereby men within the banquet could speak freely with their peers, knowing that afterwards their conversation would remain secret from outsiders. Thus, for example, the fact that Plutarch advises that a company should only speak words at a *symposium*

⁸⁹ Plutarch, *Demosthenes*, 16.

⁹⁰ Seneca, *Epistles*, 59.12.

⁹¹ Plutarch, *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend*, 4=50e; König (2012) 243-244.

⁹² Tacitus, *Germania*, 22.

⁹³ See Ch.3 n.81, Ch.3 n.90 and Ch.3 n.91.

⁹⁴ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 3.pr=645a-c.

which anybody could later reiterate to anyone else implies that this was *not* universal practice. Indeed, in Lyncurgan Sparta, members of mess-groups were apparently instructed ‘no talk goes out that way’ with a point towards the door.⁹⁵ Whilst wine’s ability to promote friendliness doubtless helped to promote confidential trust, confidentiality was also thought to be aided by wine’s property of hindering memory. Plutarch notes that it was hard, at a later date, to remember accurately what had been said over heavy drinking.⁹⁶ Indeed, one of Plutarch’s interpretations of the saying ‘I dislike a drinking-companion with a good memory’ was the social custom of ‘amnesty for all that is said and done during the drinking’. In support of this he notes that ‘in our traditional legends forgetfulness and the *thyrsoi* are together consecrated to the god [Dionysus], the implication being that one should remember either none of the improprieties committed over cups or only those which call for an altogether light and playful reproof’.⁹⁷

The drinking party was thus perceived to be a good place to discuss a topic honestly with one’s associates, with a reduced fear of outsiders finding out about it. Accordingly, Greek and Roman banquets seem to have repeatedly ignored the incompatibility of work and wine, and fallen into this apparently ‘alien’ practice of discussing important matters whilst drinking. The biographies of Suetonius and Plutarch record several instances of the discussion and consideration of work-related matters at banquets and drinking-bouts.⁹⁸ In extreme cases, the confidentiality of drinking contexts understandably offered an appropriate place for plotting.⁹⁹

Indeed, although Herodotus’ comments on the Persians imply otherwise, thinking about work and politics over dinner and wine was not altogether alien to the Greeks and Romans. Guests at a fictional dinner party in Plutarch’s *Table-Talk* discuss just this issue, and come to the conclusion that it is also a Greek custom. They note various examples of work being discussed over or after drinking, including the traditional mess-groups of the Spartans and Cretans, and scenes from Homer and Plato. Ultimately, their views differ on whether it is a

⁹⁵ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 7.pr=697e; *Lycurgus*, 12.

⁹⁶ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 6.pr=686a-c.

⁹⁷ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 1.pr=612c-d.

⁹⁸ For example: Suetonius, *Augustus*, 51; *Tiberius*, 13, 61.6; *Caligula*, 22.1; *Otho*, 10.1; *Titus*, 8.1; Plutarch, *Lucullus*, 26.3-4; *Alexander*, 50.4, 59.1-3. See also: n.102.

⁹⁹ Paul (1991) 162-164. See for example: Suetonius, *Augustus*, 51.1; *Tiberius*, 13; Plutarch, *Caesar*, 49.2-3; *Pyrrhus*, 5.3-6. See also: Suetonius, *Caesar*, 53.

good practice to discuss work matters over wine. On the one hand, it promotes overconfidence, makes people less keen to take advice, and makes judgements unstable and precarious. On the other, it promotes honesty and truthfulness, and some people can make sober decisions whilst drunk. One character also highlights an apparent contradiction of standards: the same aristocrats promote the discussion of philosophy over wine, but think work an inappropriate topic for conversation as wine hinders their rational skills.¹⁰⁰

Discussing work over wine did indeed have longstanding roots in Greek culture. Although *symposia* were not in themselves political, they did form a private context where males frequently met with an invited selection of their peers. They thus offered a key context for the sharing of political opinions, as well as a possible location for the origin of rebellions. From the fifth century BC, *hetaireia* began to form. These were private clubs based upon relations formed at *symposia*, which spent much time engaged in *symposia*. They were not explicitly political, but they sometimes pursued political agendas. For example, in Classical Athens and Thebes they were an easy target for politicians to canvas support, action and pressure-groups from elements of the elite.¹⁰¹ Work matters were even discussed in Plutarch's fictional and idealised *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men* set in Archaic Corinth (note that this behaviour is contrary to Plutarch's advice in *Advice about Keeping Well*, which argues that the discussion of business affairs over dinner is destructive to health, as noted above on p.415). Arrian records several banquets where Alexander revealed important policy decisions. Furthermore, in a similar manner to Herodotus' Persians – who reconsidered political matters when drinking – Plutarch records that following the Spartan victory of the Peloponnesian War, the victors immediately resolved to sell Athenian captives into slavery and destroy the city. Yet when their leaders were at a leisurely banquet listening to the singing of Euripides, presumably over wine, they were moved to compassion and reconsidered the matter.¹⁰²

As wine was thought to offer a window into another man's mind, and given that drinking parties were a time for loquacity, honesty, confidential discussion and

¹⁰⁰ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 7.9-7.10=714a-716c. Further on Sparta and Crete: *Lycurgus*, 12.

¹⁰¹ Thucydides, 8.54; Xenophon, *Hellenica*, 5.2.25; Plutarch, *Pericles*, 14.2; Murray (1990b) esp. 150-151, 157-160; *Pauly*, s.vv. 'Banquet, Greece, Symposia', 'Hetairia'.

¹⁰² Plutarch, *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, 17=160c-e; Plutarch, *Lysander*, 15.2-3; Shipley (2000) 67.

even plotting, the Greeks and Romans understandably recognised drinking contexts as productive opportunities for spying. Diodorus Siculus records a particularly blunt and extreme example of this from near the end of the fourth century BC. Agathocles, tyrant of Syracuse, set about discovering who was hostile to his tyranny by jesting with people at drinking-bouts. Once he had learnt (what he believed to be) their true opinions, he invited the hostile people to subsequent banquets where he had them slaughtered; about five hundred people were killed in this way.¹⁰³

Plutarch implies the widespread nature of espionage at parties in Classical Athens when he records that Nicias refused to dine with other people, and instead ate at home with his door firmly bolted, as he was so afraid of informers.¹⁰⁴ In a similar manner, potential informers and spies were a major fear for diners in Imperial Rome, who had to take especial care to watch what they said when their tongues were freer due to the influence of wine, as anything spoken could easily become known by others. Martial, for example, asked his guests to confine their talk to trivial matters, such as chariot races, so their conversation over wine was less likely to lead them to say anything that would land them on trial.¹⁰⁵ Seneca believed that the root of this evil was the great number of 'busy idlers' in Rome – people who had insufficient work to fill their days, and so they turned to vices such as eavesdropping.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, upper-class houses had large numbers of clients and slaves in and around the dining room, both of whom were particularly characterised as chatterers who were prone to spreading gossip of scandalous talk from the night before.¹⁰⁷ Significantly, Pliny the Elder even implies recognition that spies and informers benefited from the loquacity and truthfulness promoted by wine:

[Whilst drunk] then it is that the secrets of the heart are published abroad: some men specify the provisions of their wills, others let out facts of fatal import, and do not keep to themselves words that will come back

¹⁰³ Diodorus Siculus, 20.63.6; Paul (1991) 164.

¹⁰⁴ See Ch.3 n.305.

¹⁰⁵ Martial, 10.48; Tacitus, *Annals*, 6.24, 11.27; *Agricola*, 2; Friedländer (1908-13) 1.220-223. Nero even utilised brothels and their workers as spies to make covert enquiries: Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 30.15.

¹⁰⁶ Seneca, *On Tranquillity of Mind*, 12, esp. 12.7; Friedländer (1908-13) 1.223. On 'busy idlers', see also: Motto and Clark (1993) 136-137.

¹⁰⁷ Martial, 2.82, 7.62.4; Juvenal, 9.102-129 (n.b. telling his master's secrets is more appealing to a slave than drinking his Falernian wine); Friedländer (1908-13) 1.223.

to them through a slit in their throat – how many men having lost their lives in that way! and truth has come to be proverbially credited to wine'.¹⁰⁸

Plutarch's *Lives* contain accounts both of intentional espionage (whereby a leader purposefully employed agents) and informants (whereby a third-party overheard information of use to another, and so gave an account to them). Plutarch's *Pyrrhus* contains examples of both, when he describes the means by which Pyrrhus kept track of Neoptolemus' plot against him, allowing him eventually to hatch a counter-plot. First, one of Pyrrhus' cupbearers is invited to dine with one of Neoptolemus' followers; the latter uses this as an opportunity to try and enlist the former in Neoptolemus' plot. The cupbearer later informs Pyrrhus of this plan, and Pyrrhus has the cupbearer act as a double-agent: pretending to join the plot and continue going to the banquets and drinking parties where the plot was discussed. Pyrrhus even orders a second cupbearer to pretend to join the plot, and be a second spy at the conspirators' drinking-bouts. Secondly, when Neoptolemus discussed this plot at a revel in his sister's house, he presumed that only his supporters would hear. Yet, he overlooked a female guest, who appeared to have fallen asleep. In reality she was conscious, overheard their plans, and later informed Pyrrhus. Thirdly, some kind of informer or spy was also doubtless behind the anecdote whereby Pyrrhus hears of some youths who had insulted him at a private dinner party.¹⁰⁹

Plutarch's *Alexander* also contains a similar story. The young Philotas, son of Parmenio, was in the habit of drinking with his mistress, which would lead him to talk freely with her. Philotas bragged that Alexander's greatest achievements were actually due to him and his father, and – as the mistress innocently told a friend about Philotas' comments – word eventually came to Alexander about Philotas' insolence. Alexander therefore employed the mistress as his agent, to spy on Philotas for him whilst they drank together. Philotas remained ignorant of Alexander's subterfuge, and continued to say many angry, boastful and improper things to his mistress, who relayed them to Alexander. This

¹⁰⁸ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.141.

¹⁰⁹ Plutarch, *Pyrrhus*, 5.3-6, 8.4-5.

embittered Alexander towards him, and he later tortured and killed Philotas, along with his father, when he was implicated in an assassination attempt.¹¹⁰

The use of a vice to aid political work is not unparalleled. Augustus' friends excused his adultery in a comparable way: 'they excuse it as committed not from passion but from policy, the more readily to get track of his adversaries' designs through the women of their households'. Using this vice in a calculated way, for political ends, was considered much more acceptable than being drawn to it due to unrestrained instincts and base character. Similarly, Suetonius records that Domitian used extreme cruelty to his advantage, following his victory in the civil war. He ruthlessly tortured many individuals from the opposing party, burning their genitals and cutting off their hands, in order to discover any conspirators who were in hiding. Suetonius presents these actions as, to an extent, mitigated by necessity.¹¹¹ If adulterous sex and cruel torture were condonable for espionage reasons, it is probable that heavy drinking could have been similarly justified as constructive when used in this manner.

Wine's perceived utility for espionage was presumably partly based on its association with trickery. Indeed, Dionysus, the Greek god of wine, was also associated with trickery, as is famously seen in Euripides' *Bacchae* where the god creates illusions for his adversary to attack, deceives a mother into killing her son, and ultimately puts all of Thebes into a trance.¹¹² Plutarch's account of early Rome links wine and banqueting with trickery on three occasions. In the first, Numa manages to catch local demigods by mixing wine and honey in the spring where they usually drink. In the second, he sets a simple meal before his guests, but arranges for very costly beakers, foods and furniture to appear instantly upon his comment that the goddess who he has consorted with has come to visit (the mechanics of this trick are not described).¹¹³ Thirdly, Plutarch records that a priest of Hercules was obliged to provide a feast and woman for

¹¹⁰ Plutarch, *Alexander*, 48-49.

¹¹¹ Suetonius, *Augustus*, 69.1; *Domitian*, 10.5; Edwards (1993) 48.

¹¹² Euripides, *Bacchae*, 616-636 (Dionysus deludes Pentheus' mind, so he ties up a bull thinking it is Dionysus; then he makes a hovering phantom for Pentheus to stab at), 850-855 (Dionysus orders wild delusions to drive Pentheus out of his mind), 977-984 (the maenads are described as hounds of madness), 1104-1152 (Agave is possessed by Dionysus, and is not in her right mind; she kills her son thinking he is a lion), 1295 (all of Thebes was in a Bacchic trance). Note also: 325-326 (fighting Dionysus is madness), 504 (Dionysus claims to be sane, whilst Pentheus is mad). Further on Dionysus, see Ch.1 n.28.

¹¹³ Plutarch, *Numa*, 15.2-6.

the god. He thus invited a woman to the feast in the temple, and after the meal he locked her in; the banquet was a snare, and the woman presumably easier to trick when relaxed after heavy consumption.¹¹⁴

As drinking-bouts were an enticing activity, and were associated with honesty, trust, relaxation and reduced judgement skills, it was easy to encourage the average person to drink, and intoxicated people were off-guard and ripe for deception. The merry convivial atmosphere of the banquet was also congenial to friendly trickery.¹¹⁵ Claudius was a fitting butt to be repeatedly tricked by Caligula and his companions, as he drank especially heavily and often fell asleep during dinner. He was variously pelted with olive and date stones, awakened by a jester, or had slippers put on his hands so he would rub his face with them when suddenly awakened.¹¹⁶ Tiberius also apparently used a method of tricking individuals into starting their own torture through wine. He would trick men into drinking copious amounts of wine – surely not a difficult task – and would then have their genitals tied with chords so that they could not urinate.¹¹⁷

Conversely, meals, banquets and drinking parties were also used to counter espionage through political bluffing. Individuals made a show of engaging in them, so as to deceive onlookers from realising their true activities, plans and intentions. Caesar famously joined a banquet with a large company just before sneaking away in the dark and crossing the Rubicon to start a civil war; this tactic feigned his inactivity to onlookers and spies. Similarly, Nero used the context of an elaborate banquet in order to draw his mother into an assassination plot without raising her suspicion. Plutarch also notes that when the tyrant Dionysius II was justifiably accused of enmity towards Plato, his guest, he attempted to disguise this and bluff friendship by hosting a banquet in Plato's honour. Plutarch further writes that when Antigonus II wished to gain power over Corinth's citadel by subterfuge, he arranged for the public wedding of his son in the city, complete with days of feasting and other festivities. There are many further examples of meals being used as bluffs to hide intentions of

¹¹⁴ Plutarch, *Romulus*, 5.1-2.

¹¹⁵ Dupont (1992 [1989]) 279.

¹¹⁶ See Ch.3 n.268.

¹¹⁷ Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 62.2.

covert military manoeuvres, personal enmity and impending assassination plots.¹¹⁸

In a more personal example, when Tiberius fell ill he tried to hide suspicion of weakness by continuing his usual habits, including all of his accustomed banqueting practices. After he became suspicious that one banquet guest (who happened to be a physician) suspected his illness, he prolonged this dinner to an unusually late hour. In this case, more *extreme* bluffing required more *extreme* consumption.¹¹⁹

Symposia and wine could clearly fulfil this bluffing role. Plutarch implies that Aratus ingeniously used wine's association with political inactivity and impotency to his advantage. Realising that he was being watched by spies sent by the tyrant of Sicyon, he pretended to be a typical youth living a life of sympotic and similar pleasures. In doing so, he displayed a leisurely life far removed from public affairs, and created an image for himself incompatible with a competent rival of the tyrant. He thus avoided suspicion whilst plotting opposition, and eventually overthrew the tyranny.¹²⁰ Furthermore, as noted early in Chapter 3, within a banquet itself, it was thought that shrewd individuals could deceive an observer into thinking they had a different character simply by manipulating their eating and drinking behaviour.¹²¹

Given the ease and friendliness associated with meals and drinking-bouts, they also offered opportunity for the most extreme subterfuge: assassinations. Although Plutarch suggests that *Lycurgus* promoted simple meals as they offered no scope for treachery, as Paul concludes, 'any meal or symposium with traditional aims [such as friendship] might be exploited as a cover for dark deeds'.¹²² The biographies of Suetonius and Plutarch thus abound with anecdotes of assassinations carried out over food and drink, as well as

¹¹⁸ Caesar: Suetonius, *Caesar*, 31.1-2; Plutarch, *Caesar*, 32.3-4. Nero: Suetonius, *Nero*, 34.2; *Otho*, 3.1, 6.1. Dionysius: see n.45. Antigonus: Plutarch, *Aratus*, 17.3-5. Further examples: Suetonius, *Titus*, 6.1-2; *Domitian*, 11.1; Plutarch, *Aemilius*, 15.5; *Pyrrhus*, 5.3-6; *Marius*, 37.2-4; *Lucullus*, 9.1; *Nicias*, 20.4-5; *Sertorius*, 26.3-6; *Cleomenes*, 23.3. Note also: Suetonius, *Caligula*, 45 (meals used as settings for invented enemies); *Nero*, 33.2-3 (Nero lies to his banquet guests, after poisoning Britannicus' drink, by implying that he is not really dead).

¹¹⁹ Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 72.2-3.

¹²⁰ Plutarch, *Aratus*, 6.4-7.2.

¹²¹ See esp. Ch.3 p.245 with n.98.

¹²² Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, 13.3-5; Paul (1991) 162-165.

individuals afraid of being killed over dinner.¹²³ Indeed, Paul notes that the accounts of the murders of both Phakeas and Gedaliah in Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* (written c.93/94AD) differ from the biblical accounts in that he includes a few words to place them both in a sympotic context. Paul thus argues that 'for Josephus at least, treacherous murder at a *symposium* is a *topos* that may be used to flesh out a sparse narrative'.¹²⁴

Wine was frequently the substance in which poison was hidden, and in this sense it could have a sinister utility. On a practical level, Fleming notes that 'wine's rich flavours could mask the bitterness of a poison such as aconite that, along with certain species of mushroom, appears to have re-directed so frequently the course of imperial history'. The association of wine and poisoning had deep roots in Greek society; such an attempt is made on Ion's life in Euripides. This association was so strong that an individual fearing assassination thought it necessary to make pretexts to avoid drinking the wine, or to avoid attending parties altogether. Similarly, when an actor in Rome made a satirical allusion to Nero's alleged assassinations, to imply the poisoning of Claudius at dinner he mimed drinking whilst stating 'farewell to thee, father' (even though the poisoning of Claudius was more heavily associated with mushrooms).¹²⁵

Yet regardless of these associations, banquets and drinking-bouts were sometimes also thought to offer *protection* against assassination. Plutarch states that when Caesar was in Egypt and feared the King was plotting against him, he would sit up whole nights at dinner parties with his friends to protect himself. Similarly, when Lycurgus feared that the newborn king of Sparta would be assassinated, he had the baby brought immediately upon birth to his

¹²³ Paul (1991) 162-165. See for example: Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 53.1; *Claudius*, 35.1, 44.2; *Nero*, 33-37, 43.1; *Titus*, 2; *Domitian*, 14.1, 16.1, 17.1; Plutarch, *Theseus*, 12.2-3; *Pelopidas*, 9.2-11.2; *Pyrrhus*, 5.3-6; *Cimon*, 1.2-4 (also discussed on p.424 n.36, and Appendix 7 p.452 n.27); *Sertorius*, 26.3-6; *Alexander*, 74.1; *Caesar*, 49.2-3; *Cleomenes*, 7.3-8.1; *Antony*, 85.1-86.3; *Artaxerxes*, 19; also: Plutarch, *Lucullus*, 16.2 (on unknowingly making an assassin a table companion). Note however, Titus inviting people to dinner to show he did not want to kill them: Suetonius, *Titus*, 9.1-2. Note further, on assassination (or suspicion of it) caused via conduct at dinner: Plutarch, *Antony*, 59.4; *Artaxerxes*, 15. Consider also the expectation that a good host would guarantee his guests' safety: Plutarch, *Antony*, 32.4-5; *Otho*, 3.4-7.

¹²⁴ Paul (1991) 164. He cites: Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 9.233-234, 10.168-169 in comparison to *Bible*, '2 Kings', 15.25 and 'Jeremiah' 41.1-2.

¹²⁵ Euripides, *Ion*, 1166-1214; Plutarch, *Demetrius*, 36; Suetonius, *Nero*, 39.3; Paul (1991) 163; Fleming (2001) 54-56. Mushrooms: Suetonius, *Claudius*, 44.2; *Nero*, 33.1. Note further: Plutarch, *Lucullus*, 18.4-6 (drinking poison is regarded as the easiest and most painless death); *Themistocles*, 31.4-5 and *Flamininus* 20.5 (drinking bull's blood is considered poisonous).

banquet, where he had his fellow diners swear allegiance. In both cases, the banquet offers the protective environment of a private space filled with trusted friends.¹²⁶ An alternative tactic is illustrated in Plutarch's *Demetrius*. When Demetrius correctly suspected an assassination attempt from Alexander V, yet was due to have dinner with him, he went accompanied by fully-armed guards and many attendants. In doing so, he made his suspicions overtly clear, and frightened Alexander into abandoning his plans.¹²⁷

A further use of drinking and dining for bluffing hinges upon the understanding that unusual dining behaviour could be interpreted as a sign of anxiety and worry, whilst the opposite was thought to indicate freedom from such concerns. Plutarch thus contrasts the dining behaviour of Brutus and Cassius upon the eve of the first battle of Philippi, to illustrate their differing confidence. The former was full of hope, and thus engaged in philosophical discussion at supper. Yet the latter was worried, and so ate in a more dejected manner: with only a few intimate friends, and was uncharacteristically silent and meditative.¹²⁸ Plutarch also notes three similar points in his *Cato the Younger*. First, when Cato the Younger's household was full of great fear and dejection – as it feared imminent attack by Pompey's supporters – some of his friends and household were so anxious that they took no food and kept watch all night long. Second, Plutarch notes that Cato could bear bad news more easily than most people. Thus, after losing an election he carried on his daily life and accustomed dining behaviour as usual, whilst most people would be too full of sorrow and dejection to do so. Third, Cato the Younger attempted to keep secret his resolution to suicide, following defeat at Utica, and thus maintained his normal daily routine, including his supper. Yet his friends came to suspect his plan when his behaviour over wine became unusual: his speech became uncharacteristically violent, implying severe inner turmoil.¹²⁹

Suetonius apparently also held similar beliefs. To support his comment that Nero received news of a major revolt with calmness and indifference, Suetonius states that Nero carried on as normal: going to the gymnasium and then dinner. When Nero later heard that Galba had joined the revolt, he gave up his

¹²⁶ Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, 3.3-4; *Caesar*, 48.3.

¹²⁷ Plutarch, *Demetrius*, 36.

¹²⁸ Plutarch, *Brutus*, 40.1-2.

¹²⁹ Plutarch, *Cato the Younger*, 27.1-3, 50.1, 67-68.2 (also discussed on Ch.3 p.240 n.83, and Ch.3 p.279 n.207).

luxurious habits, and only rejoined them whenever he received good news in these matters. Here, calmness and confidence are associated with taking meals as normal, whilst anxiety and distress are associated with avoiding normal consumption.¹³⁰

In one of the above examples, that of Cato the Younger's resolution to suicide, Plutarch states that Cato *purposefully* manipulated his own banqueting behaviour for bluffing purposes. He forced himself to display normal dining conduct, explicitly including an unsuccessful attempt to display normal *drinking* behaviour, so as to hide his true feelings and intentions. Specific drinking practices were thus recognised as variably constructive or destructive to certain types of bluffing.

Indeed, Plutarch writes that Pompey purposefully exploited wine consumption for more dramatic bluffing purposes. Whilst on campaign with his father, the young Pompey discovered his tent-mate Terentius' conspiracy to assassinate Pompey and his father. Pompey planned to take covert precautions against the attack, and catch Terentius in the act. Yet in the evening, just prior to the planned attack, Pompey was due to take dinner with Terentius. Pompey did not wish to seem disturbed, as this could alert Terentius' suspicions, and so he made a point of drinking more freely than usual and treating Terentius with especial kindness. Plutarch's explanation of events imply that he believed that drinking more heavily than usual could serve as an especially convincing bluff to feign relaxation and normality.¹³¹ This bluffing surely worked in a comparable manner to the above noted tactic of Tiberius, who prolonged his banqueting so as to dismiss any suspicion of his illness: Pompey's conduct was opposite to that expected of a worried man, and Tiberius' was opposite to that expected of a weakened man.

In a similar vein, leaders could also use extravagant dining to bluff confidence, thereby boosting their followers' morale. Plutarch states that Dion hosted an extremely lavish banquet for his troops – featuring drinks in gold and silver beakers, and much costly produce – before they marched on the tyrant Dionysius in Syracuse. The troops took comfort in this display of luxury,

¹³⁰ Suetonius, *Nero*, 40.4, 42.1-2.

¹³¹ Plutarch, *Pompey*, 3.1-2.

reasoning that a man with such fortunes, and past the prime of his life, would not risk them unless he was very confident.¹³²

In summary, the Greeks and Romans generally considered wine to be incompatible with the work of the elite, as it reduced mental abilities, clouded judgement, fostered over-talkativeness and untactful truthfulness, and threatened to undermine the aristocracy's moral authority and decorum. Yet, in practice, there is much evidence of Greeks and Romans discussing work over wine, and using drinking contexts for work purposes. Banqueting with wine often formed an important political duty. Drinking together was also recognised to promote and support friendly relations between people and states, to increase or consolidate an individual's support, favour or position, and to aid an individual's career advancement. Wine also offered opportunity for propagandist and sycophantic purposes. Furthermore, wine's ability to promote truthfulness and talkativeness was perceived to allow individuals to more accurately observe another individual's character and plans. Drinking therefore facilitated espionage. Yet the atmosphere of trust typical at Greek and Roman drinking contexts also allowed cunning individuals to practice the opposite: deception, political bluffing and counter-espionage. For the most unscrupulous, drinking-bouts presented a prime opportunity for implementing plots and assassinations.

¹³² Plutarch, *Dion*, 23.3-24.1. Note also: *Eumenes*, 11.1-2.

APPENDIX 7: WINE AND OVER-CONFIDENCE, ANGER, VIOLENCE AND WARFARE

Excessive wine consumption was thought to inspire the hot-blooded behaviour of brash confidence, anger, cruelty and violence. In his indictment of drunkenness, Seneca argued that 'cruelty usually follows wine-bibbing; for a man's soundness of mind is corrupted and made savage'. A man was not thought to always become physically violent, but to be more combative in a manner which befitted his temperament:

'The haughty increases his arrogance, the ruthless man his cruelty, the slanderer his spitefulness.'

According to Seneca it was wine which made Antony cruel. Seneca found it intolerable that Antony would thus deal with proscriptions of death whilst drunk at banquets (he would inspect the heads and hands of those thus executed). Another of the notable drunkards which he describes is Tillius Cimber, who was said to be 'a sot as well as a brawler'. Seneca also records the famous incident of Alexander the Great killing his friend Cleitus in anger whilst drunk, and subsequently regretting it. Seneca presents this as heinous violence directly resulting from Alexander's intoxication: it produced a condition of temporary insanity.¹

In a similar manner, Galen stated that excess makes drinkers 'prone to anger and impulsive to insolence'.² Pliny records that Cicero's son was famed for frequently downing large draughts in one go. Yet he once threw a goblet at Marcus Agrippa, immediately after having drunk this draught. Pliny concludes that such violence is a common result of intoxication.³ Chamaeleon of

¹ Seneca, *Epistles*, 83.12, 83.18-21, 83.25-26. On Alexander and Cleitus, note also: Plutarch, *Alexander*, 13.2-3, 50-52 (note that Plutarch accepts the role of intoxication, but mitigates its influence by noting the role of Cleitus' evil *daimon*); Arrian, *Anabasis*, 4.8-9; Curtius Rufus, 8.1.43-8.2.6; Paul (1991) 164. On Seneca's comments regarding heads and hands, note that the display of severed heads at dinner constituted a motif, see Paul (1991) 165. See also Weeber (1993) s.v. 'Streit'.

² Galen, *On the Preservation of Health*, 1.11=6.54-55K; this is said to be because wine 'fills the head with fumes of the moist and warm character'.

³ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.147.

Heracleia's *On Drunkenness* (c.300BC) even notes that some people tried to explain the Homeric heroes' harsh and violent conduct in this way. He implies that many people regarded heavy drinking as a plausible explanation for why certain individuals could be prone to this behaviour, even when their character would otherwise lead them to opposite behaviour.⁴

Plutarch held similar beliefs. He noted that many people frequently engaged in malicious talk at dinner, and believed that a wild and manic element was stimulated among men drinking wine. Wine was thought to encourage insults, fits of anger and violence. As noted by his fictional Thales, this could have severe social consequences, even leading to life-long enmity between individuals. His suggested means of control was not to prohibit wine, but rather to take tight reign of the conversation. He thought that by engaging in appropriate conversation (that with a speculative and instructive agenda, such as riddles and conundrums), this wild and manic element was restrained.⁵ Plutarch also advised that as wine made men quick to anger, and their judgement unstable, drinkers should not have weapons at hand.⁶

The biographies of Plutarch and Suetonius record several instances of arrogant, malicious talk and arguments stimulated over drink; sometimes these even led to physical violence.⁷ Of particular note is an anecdote in Plutarch's *Pyrrhus*. Here it is recorded that some youths were once brought before Pyrrhus after an informer reported that they had insulted him at a private dinner party. When confronted, they admitted that they had spoken these insults, and said 'we should have said still more than this if we had had more wine'. Pyrrhus laughed and dismissed them; it was accepted that wine motivated violent talk.⁸ Plutarch's *Lucullus* also presents drunkenness as a state symbolic of brash and blinding over-confidence.⁹

Suetonius, on the other hand, records that a man once openly declared, at a large dinner party, that 'he lacked neither the earnest desire nor the courage to

⁴ See Ch.3 n.99.

⁵ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 7.pr=697e, 8.pr=716f-717a; *Symposium of the Seven Wise Men*, 2=147f-148b.

⁶ Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 3.3=650e, 7.10=714e.

⁷ Paul (1991) 159-160, 164-165. Note for example: Suetonius, *Nero*, 5.1; Plutarch, *Alexander*, 9.4-5, 13.2-3, 48-49, 50-52; *Antony*, 59.1-3. Note also: *Artaxerxes*, 15; König (2012) 231.

⁸ Plutarch, *Pyrrhus*, 8.4-5.

⁹ Plutarch, *Lucullus*, 27.4-6. Compare to *Demosthenes*, 20 (only realising the magnitude of the situation after becoming sober).

kill [Augustus]'; presumably the wine made him more brash and confident, at least in his speech. Nero appears to have purposefully used wine to inspire courage before his stage debut: he dined in the orchestra, saying that he would sing louder after a few drinks. Similarly, during the revolt which marked the end of his reign, Nero became drunk at a banquet just before intending to go into the field. He became arrogant, thinking he would be able to win over the enemy simply by weeping; he then turned to writing victory songs.¹⁰

Horace and Juvenal associate wine with arguments and violence in several poems. In one, Horace states that brawling over wine is barbarous, fit for the men of Thrace, and should be avoided by Romans. In another he enjoys a personal festival with fine wine, relishing the lack of argument and commotion. The implication of both passages is that many Romans did just this: drank wine, and then fought and argued. In this vein, Juvenal describes a typical scene of guests drinking wine following dinner: they turn to insults, then fighting. He also describes an habitual drunkard who is unable to sleep without having been in a fight; addiction to wine was associated with an addiction to violence.¹¹

Furthermore, in the same manner as Seneca's above comments regarding Antony's cruelty, Plutarch and Suetonius' biographies repeatedly present political figures as excessively cruel when they administering torture and execution whilst drinking at banquets. Plutarch, Cato and Livy all note that an execution committed by Lucius Quinctius Flamininus at a party, whilst drunk, met with particular outrage; he was thus expelled from the senate. The association of wine with increased violence and reduced judgement skills helps to explain the rationale behind this: in this context the fair implementation of justice was unlikely.¹²

¹⁰ Suetonius, *Augustus*, 51.1; *Nero*, 20.2, 43.2. Note also: *Tiberius*, 13. Alternatively, it is possible Nero may have instead intended the wine to strengthen his voice: see Suetonius, *Nero*, 20.1 (Nero modified his diet, denying things injurious to his voice) along with Hippocrates, *Aphorisms*, 5.5 and Celsus, 2.6.7-8, 5.25.15 (on wine drinking variously strengthening or weakening the voice).

¹¹ Horace, *Odes*, 1.18, 1.27, 3.8.13-16; Juvenal, 3.278-279, 5.24-29.

¹² Seneca, *Epistles*, 83.25; Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 62.2; *Caligula*, 32; *Nero*, 5.1; Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 17.1-5; *Flamininus*, 18.2-19.2; *Crassus*, 33.1-4. Further on Lucius, see Ch.3 n.112. Note also: Suetonius, *Caligula*, 27.4 (cruelty shown by inviting a man to dinner immediately after his son's execution). Better practice: Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 21.3 (punishment of negligent slaves only after meals); *Alexander*, 28.2-3 (Alexander refuses to use fear tactics at dinner, such as displaying executions); Plutarch, *Galba*, 12.1-3 and Suetonius, *Claudius*, 32 (Claudius' humorous, rather than serious, punishment for a guest's theft during dinner). On the expectation that a good host would guarantee his guests' safety, see Ch.3 n.123.

In extreme circumstances, it was thought that drunkenness could even inspire criminality.¹³ This idea had deep roots in Greek society. In Greek legend, the Centaur's rape and violence against the Lapiths was inspired by drunkenness.¹⁴ The law of the sixth-century BC tyrant Pittacus of Mytilene, which prescribed double the penalty for a crime committed whilst drunk, was designed to discourage drunkenness, but it probably also implies a perceived link between intoxication and crime. Alexandria also published a comparable law in the mid third century BC.¹⁵

In both Greece and Rome, guests at drinking-bouts sometimes revelled through the streets; these instances could occasionally descend into criminality and violence.¹⁶ In Classical Athens, the vandalism of the herms was pinned on the night-time activities of Alcibiades and other drunken youths. The majority of Athenians were convinced of this, due to their belief that 'one of the common effects of strong wine' is that youths, 'in mere sport, are carried away into wanton acts' including such vandalism.¹⁷ Indeed, in Aristophanes' *Wasps* one character refuses to go with the other on a drinking-bout as he predicts the drunken criminality which the other man commits later in the play. He states:

'Drinking's bad. Wine gets you doors broken in, assault and battery, then paying money for the damage while you're hungover.'¹⁸

In the first century AD, Pliny similarly concluded that wine has 'caused the commission of a thousand crimes'.¹⁹ Indeed, in the mind of the Roman elite, both criminality and violence were strongly linked with taverns. Literary sources repeatedly mention drunken thieves and cut-throats, arguments and brawls.²⁰ Deviant young aristocrats also visited taverns and dubious quarters, often in

¹³ Note, however, Douglas (1987) 4 summarises that modern anthropologists 'find no clear relation between the use of alcohol and a tendency to aggressive or criminal behaviour'.

¹⁴ Plutarch, *Theseus*, 30.3; Horace, *Odes*, 1.18; Weeber (1993) s.v. 'Streit'.

¹⁵ On Pittacus' law, see Ch.3 n.35. On Alexandria, see: *P.Hal.*, 1.193-195 = Hunt and Edgar (1934) no.202; D'Arms (1995) 313.

¹⁶ Dalby (2003) s.vv. 'Comissatio', 'Komos'; Dupont (1992 [1989]) 159; Eyben (1993 [1977]) 107-108; Wilkins and Hill (2006) 176-177.

¹⁷ Thucydides, 6.28-29; Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 18.3-4, note also 19.1-2.

¹⁸ Aristophanes, *Wasps*, 1250-1260.

¹⁹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 14.137.

²⁰ Plautus, *Trinummus*, 1010-1030; Juvenal, 8.171-182; Tacitus, *Annals*, 13.25; *Historia Augusta*, 'Lucius Verus', 4.6-7; Cassius Dio, 61.8.1; Ammianus Marcellinus, 14.6.25; Laurence (1994) 70, 78-79; Weeber (1993) 10 and s.vv. 'Gastwirt', 'Schenke'.

groups, not only to drink but sometimes with the aim of getting into blows and committing theft.²¹

Although Roman law surprisingly mentions wine and drunkenness very little, a law stated by Marcian notes the division of crime into three: 'a crime is committed either deliberately, or upon a sudden impulse, or by chance', with drunken crimes considered as committed 'by sudden impulse'.²² The Roman state explicitly recognised intoxication as a motivation behind crimes. A case study is provided by a papyrus petition from second-century AD Egypt. A man claims that two donkey-drivers had invaded his house and attacked his family, before being arrested by local guards. He is keen to stress that the two men were drunk, and he repeatedly notes that he has no involvement with them; he appears to present drunkenness as the sole motive for the violent crime.²³ In a more extreme manner, Cato the Younger called Caesar the only man to undertake to overthrow the state sober. This implies belief that drunkenness was a key factor in inspiring people to plot revolution.²⁴

Yet the anger and violence which wine promoted could have a constructive use. Warfare was an area where aggression was considered to be legitimately required.²⁵ In *On Anger*, Seneca responds to the widespread idea that 'anger is profitable ... because it makes men more warlike'. He states:

'By that reasoning, so is drunkenness too; for it makes men forward and bold, and many have been better at the sword because they were worse for drink ... Anger, drunkenness, fear, and the like, are base and fleeting incitements and do not give arms to virtue, which never needs the help of vice; they do, however, assist somewhat the mind that is otherwise slack and cowardly. No man is ever made braver through anger, except the one who would never have been brave without anger. It comes as a substitute for [virtue].'

Seneca therefore admits the utility of wine in inspiring anger, boldness and warlike courage in a great number of people – those who lacked proper virtue

²¹ In addition to n.20 see: Cassius Dio, 61.9.2-4; Dionysius Halicarnassus, 10.7; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 13.126; Suetonius, *Nero*, 26; *Otho*, 2; D'Arms (1995) 311; Eyben (1993 [1977]) 107-112; Weeber (1993) s.v. 'Streit'.

²² *Digest*, 48.19.11.2 (= Marcian, *On Public Prosecutions*, 2); D'Arms (1995) 313-314, 317.

²³ *P.Mich.inv.*, 4195, printed, translated and commentary in Youtie (1978) 167-169; D'Arms (1995) 313.

²⁴ Suetonius, *Caesar*, 53.

²⁵ Duff (1999) 87.

and were not naturally courageous. He also admits that drunkenness could sometimes increase an individual's warlike competence: making certain individuals better at sword fighting.²⁶

Comparable ideas can be seen in Plutarch. His *Dion* records that the besieged troops of Dionysius II were plied with strong wine before being sent on a headlong charge against a siege wall. They subsequently launched a bold attack, hurling themselves at the wall with a mighty uproar. The implication is that wine was purposefully issued to this 'forlorn hope' with the intent of encouraging confidence in face of a dangerous mission. Some generals recognised wine's utility for inspiring warlike courage, akin to the modern concept of 'Dutch Courage'. Similarly, Plutarch's *Cimon* records the successful assassination of a Roman commander, by the sword, at Chaeronea. The conspirators 'smeared their faces with soot one night, heated themselves with wine, and at daybreak fell upon the Roman while he was sacrificing in the market-place'. Wine was consumed as one of their preparatory activities, but the reason behind this is unstated. Likely possibilities include all those introduced by Seneca: that it was thought to generate useful anger, steel their nerves or make them better at fighting.²⁷

Keegan has noted that, throughout history, soldiers have been prone to drink heavily before battle to ease their nerves. Hanson subsequently compiled ancient literary evidence to assess whether this phenomenon was present in Classical Greek warfare. He concluded: 'there is little evidence in Greek literature to indicate that commanders always issued hoplites a ration of strong drink as a matter of policy before they marched forwards'. Yet he does argue (on the basis of the literary evidence) that hoplites habitually drank before battle to ease their nerves, and frequently entered battle near-drunk. The Greeks recognised that such intoxication was beneficial for morale, but detrimental to order and discipline. It is more difficult to assess whether or not soldiers used wine in this way during the first to third centuries AD. In his study of the Roman army, Goldsworthy suggests that it is possible that the Romans followed similar

²⁶ Seneca, *On Anger*, 1.13; Motto and Clark (1993) 156.

²⁷ Plutarch, *Dion*, 30.3-4; *Cimon*, 1.2-4 (also discussed on Appendix 6 p.424 n.36, and Appendix 6 p.442 n.123).

practice, and tentatively suggests that 'it seems quite possible that they did', but justly concludes there is no firm evidence on either side of the argument.²⁸

On the one hand, Tacitus describes a battle in Germany during Vespasian's reign where a large number of barbarians hurled themselves against Roman siege works, for hours upon end, to no avail. Tacitus attributed their insane confidence to the hotness of wine: during battle 'they feasted, [and] as man after man became inflamed with wine, they rushed to battle with unavailing recklessness'. Barbarians were apparently using wine – purposefully or accidentally – in the same manner that Plutarch attributed to the troops of Dionysius II: to motivate troops to launch desperate but necessary attacks against fortified enemy positions. Tacitus' comments seem to imply that this drinking was considered novel; it differed from the practice of the Romans that they were fighting.²⁹

Yet, on the other hand, Greco-Roman generals frequently gave their troops a meal immediately before battle so that they would have the energy to fight.³⁰ For example, in the *Iliad* Odysseus advises that the Achaeans should eat food and drink wine before going into battle, so as to give them the warlike courage and the strength to fight for sustained periods. This heavy meal is also said to dismiss hunger and thirst, which are destructive to war.³¹ Hanson suggests that the Greek hoplites similarly drank at these customary pre-battle meals, and cites several instances where this is mentioned in the ancient literature.³²

As wine was a standard part of Roman military rations,³³ and was thought significantly strength-giving, wine would doubtless be part of Roman soldiers' pre-battle meals. Furthermore, Seneca writes that Roman soldiers were regularly drunk whilst on duty, and their centurions still put them to work

²⁸ Keegan (2004 [1976]) 113-114, 181-182, 241, 326; Hanson (2000) 126-131; Goldsworthy (1996) 261-262.

²⁹ Tacitus, *Histories*, 4.29; Goldsworthy (1996) 261. This passage is also discussed in Ch.2 p.166. Note also: Tacitus, *Annals*, 1.65.

³⁰ Onasander, *The General*, 12.1; Livy, 27.13.13; Roth (1999) 53-54. For examples of pre-battle meals: Frontinus, *Strategemata*, 2.1.1; Livy, 27.13.13, 28.2.2; Polybius, 3.71.11, 11.22.4; Plutarch, *Timoleon*, 12.3-4; *Alexander*, 32.1; *Sulla*, 29.4, 30.1; *Brutus*, 4.3-4, 39.1; *Dion*, 43.3.

³¹ Homer, *Iliad*, 19.155-170; Pauly, s.v. 'Intoxicating Substances'.

³² Hanson (2000) 129-130. Note for example: Diodorus Siculus, 11.9.4; Xenophon, *Hellenica*, 5.4.40-44.

³³ Roth (1999) 37-40; Davies (1971) 124-125; Tchernia (1986) 13-19, 303; Cool (2006) 132-135. See also: Goldsworthy (1996) 261; Weeber (1993) s.v. 'Handel'. See for example: Appian, *Spanish Wars*, 54; *Historia Augusta*, 'Hadrian', 10.2; 'Pescennius Niger', 7.7-8, 10.3; 'Gordians', 28.2; 'Thirty Pretenders', 18.6-9; 'Claudius', 14.3; Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 1.7.

although they were in full knowledge of their intoxication. Fronto similarly states that Roman troops (in Syria) regularly consumed wine, and were inebriated, whilst on duty.³⁴ Yet there is no conclusive evidence to ascertain whether Roman soldiers regularly fought noticeably intoxicated, or whether Roman commanders and soldiers thought that wine consumption carried useful military advantages above and beyond the rest of their strength-giving pre-battle meals.

Evidence against the *purposeful* utilisation of wine for this military purpose comes from Athenaeus (writing around 200AD). He repeats a comment from Theopompus' *History* (of the fourth century BC), which notes that 'Philip [II] was manic and prone to rushing head long into danger, in part because this was his nature, but in part because of his heavy drinking; for he often consumed large amounts of wine and often went into battle drunk'. This passage accepts that wine can be constructive to inspiring courage for warfare, even if this comes at the risk of increased personal danger. Yet, as Athenaeus uses this evidence to indicate Philip's exceptional heavy drinking and dependence on wine, this implies that Philip's behaviour was not considered normal and acceptable in contemporary warfare.³⁵

Another very specific military use of wine is implied in Suetonius' *Vitellius*. When Vitellius visited the site of a recent battle of the civil war, still full of decaying bodies, it is said that to 'better to bear the awful stench, he openly drained a great draught of unmixed wine and distributed some among the troops'. Although Suetonius interprets Vitellius' actions as displaying 'bad taste and arrogance' – drunkenness not being fitting among such great loss of citizen life – it does imply that Vitellius, at least, recognised that the task of clearing a battlefield could be made easier by drinking unmixed wine, as this helped mask the disgusting smell.³⁶

However, although Seneca may have been willing to admit that wine had some military uses, he clearly associated *drunkenness* with military impotency and catastrophes. In his letter against drunkenness he implores the reader to 'think of the calamities caused by drunkenness in a nation! ... this evil has conquered by the wine-cup those who in the field were invincible'. He also notes that wine

³⁴ Seneca, *Epistles*, 83.12. Fronto: see Ch.3 n.186.

³⁵ Athenaeus, 10.435b-c (= Theopompus, fr.115.282).

³⁶ Suetonius, *Vitellius*, 10.3. On civil conflicts and wine, see Ch.3 p.288 with n.249.

was what drew Antony into conflict with Rome, yet it also made him 'no match for his enemies'.³⁷

Plutarch follows a similar pattern in his *Lives*. In the two above examples from his *Dion* and *Cimon*, Plutarch describes quantities of wine being taken for a predefined military advantage; each led to military success. Yet whenever else he mentions drinking before combat, the drinking was incidental to the fighting – it was not seemingly taken with any explicit military benefit in mind – and it had destructive consequences. An example of this can be seen Plutarch's *Alexander*. At a drinking-bout, wine makes the guests quick to anger, and Philip II quick to his sword. Yet wine and anger together make Philip trip and fall, rather than successfully wield his weapon. Similarly, in the *Dion* Plutarch notes that when the revolutionary troops fighting against Dionysius II in Syracuse become drunk along with their generals, this led to a lack of discipline, military negligence and slow reactions to danger. The enemy take advantage of this, and nearly destroy them. Furthermore, Plutarch notes in his *Otho* that the praetorians were soft, ill-disciplined and ultimately ineffective in warfare due to frequent luxuries, including drunkenness.³⁸

Indeed, Plutarch seems to consider wine to be generally destructive to military interests, as can be seen in his comments surrounding Scythian beliefs to this effect:

'The Scythians, in the midst of their drinking and carousing, twang their bow-strings, as though summoning back their courage when it is dissolved in pleasure.'

Unlike Seneca and many others in the Greco-Roman world, the Scythians apparently believed that courage was dissolved when drinking wine; they worried that this made them less effective soldiers. Plutarch uses this anecdote to contrast Demetrius, who always remained effective in war, even though he engaged in frequent drinking-bouts and other pleasures. Plutarch's implication here is that, for the vast majority of people, a lifestyle of regular drunkenness

³⁷ Seneca, *Epistles*, 83.22, 83.35.

³⁸ Plutarch, *Alexander*, 9.4-5; *Dion*, 41 (also discussed on p.456 n.41, and Ch.3 p.287 n.245); *Otho*, 5.5-6.

usually made them less courageous and less effective in warfare.³⁹ Similarly, as noted in Chapter 3, two Gallic tribes of the first century BC prohibited the importation of wine as they thought it hindered their warriors' masculinity and courage.⁴⁰

Indeed, the association between drunkenness and military ineffectiveness was such that times of intoxication were perceived as a particularly opportune time to attack an enemy; at this time they were considered especially vulnerable, being less able to resist attack. Many such examples exist in Plutarch's *Lives*, and throughout ancient literature. These range from the grand scale of armies launching surprise attacks upon inebriated camps, to a handful of individuals launching violent assassinations and jail-breaks when the targets or guards were drunk or hangover. Drunkenness during warfare was a mistake particularly associated with lax discipline and untrained barbarians. Tacitus advises that a general could gain an easy victory over Germans by first supplying their insatiable desire for wine.⁴¹ This fits into a wider belief, whereby the ancients – especially Roman society – thought that luxury, extravagance and effeminacy were incompatible with the act of soldiering. Heavy and luxury drinking and dining were thought to negatively affect soldiers, making them unwarlike.⁴² Indeed, Plutarch records that Pericles even used this negative association in a constructive manner: when his troops were eager to press battle, but he wished to delay, he implemented a rota of enforced days of feasting and ease. This helped to reduce their eagerness for battle.⁴³

³⁹ See Ch.3 n.234.

⁴⁰ See Ch.3 n.354.

⁴¹ Tacitus, *Germania*, 23; Plutarch, *Camillus*, 23.4-6, 35.3-4, 41.1-5; *Pelopidas*, 9.2-11.2; *Marcellus*, 18.3; *Marius*, 18.3-19.3; *Sertorius*, 3.3-4; *Cleomenes*, 37.1-2; *Dion*, 41 (also discussed on p.455 n.38, and Ch.3 p.287 n.245); Polybius, 8.30.1-6, 11.3.1, 14.4.9; Livy, 41.2; Appian, *Civil Wars*, 2.10.64; Cassius Dio, 67.4.6; Tacitus, *Annals*, 4.48; Roth (1999) 38-40, 57; Goldsworthy (1996) 261-262; Dupont (1992 [1989]) 124-125; see also McKinlay (1950) 34. Note also, Roman troops refusing to fight until they receive vintage wine: *Historia Augusta*, 'Pescennius Niger', 7.7-8. On barbarians and excess drink, see further: Ch.3 n.178-180.

⁴² Further to n.41, see: Sallust, *Catiline*, 11.6; Suetonius, *Caesar*, 67.1; *Caligula*, 45; *Vespasian*, 8.3; Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 36.1-3; *Cato the Elder*, 3.5-6; *Pyrrhus*, 16.1-2; *Marius*, 3.2-3; *Eumenes*, 13.4-5, 14; *Pompey*, 72.4; *Caesar*, 19.2; *Gaius Gracchus*, 2; *Antony*, 56.3-5; *Comparison of Demetrius and Antony*, 3.1-3 (on this passage, see further Ch.3 n.89); *Galba*, 1.1-3; *Otho*, 9.2. Compare to the military ideal, for example: Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 1.7; *Philopoemen*, 3.2-4; *Antony*, 17.2-3 (on this passage, see further Ch.3 n.89). Note also, strict/traditional Roman generals prohibiting/limiting wine/luxury-wine consumption: Sallust, *Jugurthine War*, 44.5; Polyaeus, 8.16.2; *Historia Augusta*, 'Avidius Cassius', 5.3; 'Pescennius Niger', 10.3. See also, on the Syrian legions' laxity: Ch.3 n.186. Note further the commotion caused by drunken praetorians: Tacitus, *Histories*, 1.80-83.

⁴³ See Ch.3 n.276.

Heavy drinking was thought to similarly hinder generalship. Polybius criticises Gaius Livius as, when Tarentum was attacked by Hannibal, 'his drunken condition rendered him incapable'. When Plutarch characterises Sertorius as a far more potent general than Metellus, he notes not only Sertorius' superior knowledge of the local lands, but his superior lifestyle for a general, including his complete avoidance of excessive drinking. He also records that Alcibiades' enemies tried to claim he was a bad admiral by stating that he engaged in heavy drinking whilst the enemy was nearby.⁴⁴ Suetonius likewise associated excessive banqueting with a leader's military impotence. He repeatedly presents Nero as dining during key stages of the rebellion which marked the end of his reign; this aids the characterisation of Nero as impotent during the conflict.⁴⁵ Similarly, Suetonius argues that Galba chose Vitellius to control the armies in Lower Germany as he believed that gluttonous men were least to be feared.⁴⁶

Therefore, although wine was thought to have an overwhelming capacity to be destructive to military endeavours, it was also acknowledged to have a few, specific constructive military uses (such as motivating troops to launch desperate, and seemingly suicidal, attacks against well-fortified enemies). Yet, using wine and intoxication in this way was acknowledged to be a dangerous tactic. For the wine to be of military benefit, the key criterion was similar to the one behind the Greco-Roman medical advice analysed throughout Chapter 2: wine must only be taken (and intoxication pursued) with a specific military advantage in mind, and only by those who would benefit from it.

⁴⁴ Polybius, 8.30.1-6; Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 36.1-3; *Sertorius*, 13.1-3; Roth (1999) 57. Note also: Plutarch, *Lucullus*, 27.4-6.

⁴⁵ Suetonius, *Nero*, 40.4, 42.1-2, 43.2, 47.1; note also *Vitellius*, 15.3; Plutarch, *Galba*, 5.3.

⁴⁶ Suetonius, *Vitellius*, 7.1.

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