

Beer on the Periphery of the Roman World

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1. Plutarchus, *Quaestiones convivales* 3.2 (= *Moralia* 648e) (late 1st or early 2nd C. A.D.):

... οἱ φίλοινοι μὴ παρόντος ἀμπελίνου κριθίνῳ χρῶνται πόματι, καὶ μηλίτας τινάς, οἱ δὲ φοινικίνους οἴνους ποιοῦσιν ...

... lovers of wine use barley drink [i.e. beer] when the vine is not available, and some mead, and others make date-palm wine ...

See also *Quaest. conv.* 4.6 (= *Mor.* 672b) on mead.

2. Herodotus, *Historiae* 2.77.4 (c. 430 B.C.):

οἴνῳ δὲ ἐκ κριθέων πεποιημένῳ διαχρέωνται· οὐ γὰρ σφι εἰσὶ ἐν τῇ χώρῃ ἄμπελοι.

They [i.e. the Egyptians] use wine made of barley since there are no vines in their country.

3. Pytheas, *De Oceano* fr. 7 Roseman (late 4th C. B.C.):

παρ' οἷς δὲ σίτος καὶ μέλι γίγνεται, καὶ τὸ πόμα ἐντεῦθεν ἔχειν.

Among those [in the far North] where there is grain and honey, the beverage there also [i.e. along with the food] has it.

4. Posidonius, *Historia* fr. 169 Theiler (c. 80 B.C.):

διὰ δὲ τὴν ὑπερβολὴν τοῦ ψύχους διαφθειρομένης τῆς κατὰ τὸν ἀέρα κράσεως οὔτ' οἶνον οὔτ' ἔλαιον φέρει. διόπερ τῶν Γαλατῶν οἱ τούτων τῶν καρπῶν στερισκόμενοι πόμα κατασκευάζουσιν ἐκ τῆς κριθῆς τὸ προσαγορευόμενον ζῦθος, καὶ τὰ κηρία πλύνοντες τῷ τούτων ἀποπλύματι χρῶνται.

Because excessive cold destroys the climate of the air, it [i.e. the land] bears neither wine nor oil [i.e. grapes or olives]. Therefore those of the Gauls deprived of these fruits [i.e. grapes and olives] prepare a drink from barley called *zithos*. They also use the washings with which they wash their honeycombs.

5. Dionysius Halicarnassensis, *Antiquitates romanae* 13.11.1 (early 1st C. A.D.):

οἱ δὲ Κελτοὶ οὔτε οἶνον ἀμπελίνον εἰδότες τῆνικαῦτα οὔτε ἔλαιον οἶον αἱ παρ' ἡμῖν ἐλαία φέρουσιν, ἀλλ' οἴνῳ μὲν χρώμενοι κριθῆς σαπίσης ἐν ὕδατι χυλῶ δυσώδει ...

The Celts at that time [i.e. in the early fourth century B.C.] did not know of grape wine nor of oil as olive trees produce among us, but used wine [made] of barley rotted [i.e. fermented] in water, a foul-smelling juice ...

6. Cassius Dio, *Historiae Romanae* 49.36.2-3 (late 2nd or early 3rd C. A.D.):

οἱ δὲ δὴ Παννόνιοι ... οὐκ οἶνον, πλὴν ἐλαχίστου καὶ τούτου κακίστου, γεωργοῦσιν. ἄτε ἐν χειμῶνι πικροτάτῳ τὸ πλείστον διαιτώμενοι. ἀλλὰ τὰς τε κριθᾶς καὶ τοὺς κέγγρους καὶ ἐσθίουσιν ὁμοίως καὶ πίνουσιν ...

The Pannonians ... do not cultivate wine, except for a little bit which is bad, since they spend most of the time in a very harsh winter [climate], but rather eat and drink both barley and millet ...

7. Servius, *Commentaria ad Vergilii Georgicam* 3.380 (4th C. A.D.):

potionis genus est, quod cervesia nominatur. et consequens est quod dicit, ut vinum, per naturam calidum, in provincia frigida non possit creari.

This is a type of drink which is called *cervesia*. What he [i.e. Vergil] says follows from the fact that wine, because of its natural heat, cannot be made in a cold province.

8. Plutarchus, *Amatorius* 5 (= *Moralia* 752b) (late 1st or early 2nd C. A.D.):

εἰ δ' ἔστι τις Ἔρως χωρὶς Ἀφροδίτης, ὥσπερ μέθη χωρὶς οἴνου πρὸς σύκινον πόμα καὶ κρίθινον, ἄκαρπον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀτελεῆς τὸ ταρακτικόν ἐστι καὶ πλήσιμιον καὶ ἀνίκορον.

If there is a certain Eros [i.e. lust] without Aphrodite [i.e. sexual partnership], it is like drunkenness without wine, by fig and barley drink: it is fruitless, the disturbance is unfulfilled, it is a surfeit, and quickly sated.

9. Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica* 3.73.6 (c. 30 B.C.):

οὐδένα γὰρ οὐθ' Ἑλλήνων οὐτε βαρβάρων ἄμοιρον εἶναι τῆς τούτου δωρεᾶς καὶ χάριτος, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς ἀπηρωμένην ἔχοντας χώραν ἢ πρὸς φυτείαν ἀμπέλου παντελῶς ἀπηλλοτριωμένην μαθεῖν τὸ κατασκευαζόμενον ἐκ τῶν κριθῶν πόμα βραχὺ λειπόμενον τῆς περὶ τὸν οἶνον εὐωδίας.

There is no one, either among the Greeks or among the barbarians, who does not share in his [i.e. Dionysus's] gifts and favour, but he even taught those who possess a land which has become a wilderness or altogether unsuited to the growth of the vine the drink prepared from barley little lacking in the good aroma characteristic of wine.

See also 1.20.4, 1.34.10, and 4.2.5.

10. Sextus Julius Africanus, *Cesti* 1.19.17-23 Vieillefond (early 3rd C. A.D.):

ὄσοι δὲ ἀμπέλους οὐκ ἔχουσιν, οὐδὲ τὸν ἀπὸ τῶνδε τῶν φυτῶν εὐτυχήκασιν καρπὸν, ἐμιμήσαντο οἶνον ἐτέρων ἢ σπερμάτων ἢ ἀκροδρύων σκευασία ἢ ρίζων συνθέσει, τὴν καθαροῦ ὕδατος πόσιν παραιτούμενοι. πίνουσι γοῦν ζῦθον Αἰγύπτιοι, κάμον Παίονες, Κελτοὶ κερβησίαν, σίκερα Βαβυλώνιοι. Διόνυσος γὰρ αὐτοὺς κατέλιπεν ὠργισμένος καὶ οὐδὲν ἐκείνοις ἀμπελοουργίας ἐδωρήσατο, μόνους τὰ ἐπινίκια γεωργοῖς Ἑλλήσι τηρῶν.

Those who do not possess vines, and are not able to profit from the fruit of this plant, have imitated wine from other things, either from seeds [i.e. cereals?] or by a preparation from fruits or by a combination of roots, since they refuse to drink pure water. The Egyptians drink *zūthos*, the Paeonians *kamon* [or *kamos*?], the Celts *kerbēsia*, the Babylonians *sikera*. For Dionysus, being angry, abandoned them and did not give them the art of viticulture, reserving for the Greek farmers alone the triumphs.

11. Jonas, *Vita sancti Columbani* 26 (= PL 87.1026B) (late 7th C. A.D.):

... *minister refecturi cervisiam administrare conaretur, quae ex frumenti vel hordei succo excoquitur, quamque prae caeteris in orbe terrarum gentibus, praeter Scordiscis et Dardanis gentes, quae Oceanum incolunt usitantur, id est Gallia, Brittania, Hibernia, Germania caeteraeque quae ab eorum moribus non disciscunt.*

Scordiscis et Dardanis] *Scoticas et barbaras* al. *codd.*

... the steward of the refectory [at the monastery of Luxeuil, France] was undertaking to take care of the beer, which is boiled from the juice of wheat or barley and which, before other nations on earth, especially the Scordisci and Dardani peoples who inhabit Ocean use, that is Gaul, Britain, Ireland, Germany, and the other [places] which are not unfaithful to the customs of these.

12. Leontinus in Cassianus, *Geoponica* 7.34.1 (10th C. A.D.):

... τὰ ἀπὸ τοῦ σίτου καὶ τῶν κριθῶν γινόμενα πόματα, οἷς μάλιστα κέχρηται οἱ βάρβαροι.

... drinks arising from wheat and barley, which the barbarians especially use.

13. Tacitus, *De origine et situ Germanorum* (= *Germania*) 4.3, 22.2, and 23.1 and 2 (A.D. 98):

... *minimeque sitim aestumque tolerare, frigora atque inediam caelo solove adsueverunt. ... diem noctemque continuare potando nulli probrum. crebrae, ut inter vinolentos, rixae ... potui humor ex hordeo aut frumento, in quandam similitudinem vini corruptus; proximi ripae et vinum mercantur. ... si indulseris ebrietati suggerendo quantum concupiscunt, haud minus facile vitiis quam armis vincentur.*

... [the Germans] do not at all tolerate thirst and heat but, because of the climate and soil, they are accustomed to cold and hunger. ... Uniting the day into night in drinking is a reproach to no man [among the Germans]. Fights are frequent, as is natural among heavy drinkers of wine ... For drink [among the Germans there is] a liquid from barley or wheat, which, once rotted [i.e. fermented], has a certain resemblance to wine. Those near the shore also buy wine. ... If you humour their drunkenness by supplying as much [wine] as they want, they will be just as easily conquered by their vices as by weapons.

14. Inscription from Trier, Germany (= *L'Année épigraphique* [1928] no. 183) (late 1st C. A.D.):

... *miles clas sis germanic<a>e do mitianae p(iae) fl(elicis) neg otiator cervesa rius artis offect tur<a>e ex voto pro meritis posuit.*

[To xxx, xxx] a soldier of the German fleet of Domitian, [which is] dutiful [and] lucky, the beer dealer of

the guild of dyeing, set up [this stone] in accordance with a vow, in return for services.

15. Tablet from Vindolanda, England (= *Britannia* 27 [1996] 324, no. 3, ll. 13-15) (c. A.D. 100):

cervesam commilitones ; non habunt quam ; rogo iubeas mitti

My fellow-soldiers do not have any beer; I request that you order some to be sent.

16. Tablet from Vindolanda, England (= *Tab. Vindol.* II.182, col. ii, ll. 14-16) (late 1st or early 2nd C. A.D.):

Atrectus cervesar[ius] | ex pretio ferri (denarios) i[...] | pretio exungiae (denarios) xi (asses ii).

Atrectus the beer-maker, [owes/has payed] as part of the price of iron [... denarii], for the price of pork fat 11 [denarii, 2 asses].

17. Tablet from Vindolanda, England (= *Tab. Vindol.* II.186, ll. 11-12) (A.D. 111):

[K(alendas) Ianua{ui}rias cer[v]es(a)e | metrata(m) (asses) viii.

January 1st: 1 *metrata* of beer for 8 asses.

18. Tablet from Vindolanda, England (= *Tab. Vindol.* II.190, ll. 4-9 and 17-24) (late 1st or early 2nd C. A.D.):

xiii K(alendas) Iuli[as] | horde[i m(odios) ...] | cervesa[e m(odios) ...] | x[ii] K(alendas) Iulias ; hordei m(odios) iiiii [...] | cervesae m(odios) ii ... viiii K(alendas) Iulias | hordei m(odios) v s(esmissem) | vini m(odium) i (sextarios) xiiii ; cervesae m(odios) iii | viii K(alendas) Iulias | hordei m(odios) vi [...] | cervesae m(odios) iii (sextarios [...]) ; vini m(odium) i (sextarios) xii | ...

June 19th: [... pecks] of barley ... [... pecks] of beer ... June 20th: 4 pecks [...] of barley ... 2 pecks of beer ...
June 23rd: 5 ½ pecks of barley, 1 peck, 14 pints of wine, 3 pecks of beer. June 24th: 6 pecks of barley ... 3 pecks, [... pints] of beer, 1 peck, 12 pints of wine ...

19. Tablet from Vindolanda, England (= *Britannia* 27 [1996] 312, no. 2, ll. 2-6 and 16-17) (late 1st or early 2nd C. A.D.):

iii Idus April[es] | decurion[...] | i cerv[esa...] | xvii K(alendas) Iunia[s] | cervesar[io] ... iiiii Idus Iunias [...] | cervesario [...]

April 11th: the decurions of the 1st ... beer ... May 16th: from the beer-maker ... June 10th: ... from the beer-maker ...

20. Tablet from Vindolanda, England (= *Tab. Vindol.* II.482) (late 1st or early 2nd C. A.D.):

... de guttis cervesarum ...

... from drops of beer ...

21. Dioscorides Pedanius, *Materia medica* 2.88 Wellmann (c. A.D. 70):

σκευάζεται δε καὶ ἐκ πυρῶν τοιαῦτα πόματα. ὡς ἐν τῇ πρὸς ἐσπέραν Ἰβερία καὶ βρεττανία.

Such drinks [i.e. beers] are also prepared from wheat, as in Iberia and Britain in the West.

22. An altar from Haddon House near modern Bakewell, Derbyshire, England (*CIL* VII.176 = *RIB* I.278) (undated):

Deo Marti Braciacae Quintus Sittius Caecilian(us) praefectus cohortis Aquitano(rum) votum solvit.

Quintus Sittius Caecilianus, prefect of the first cohort of the Aquitani, payed this vow to the god Mars Braciaca [i.e. of malt?].

23. Papyrus from Oxyrhynchus, Egypt (*P.Oxy.* XII.1513, ll. 1-12) (4th C. A.D.):

χοίακ λ'. Δαλμάταις τοῖς ὑπὸ Λουπιανὸν πραιπόσιτον διὰ Δισορᾶ ὀπιώνος· α', ζῦτου λί[τραι] νε', β'. ζῦτ[ου] λί[τραι] νε', γ', ζῦτ[ου] λί[τραι] νγ', δ', ζῦτ[ου] λί[τραι] ν', ε', ζῦτ[ου] λί[τραι] ν', ζ'. ζῦ[του] λί[τραι] μθ'.

The 30th of Choiak. To the Dalmatians under the *praepositus* [i.e. superior] Lupianus through the *optio* [i.e. adjutant] at Disora: (1) 55 litres of beer, (2) 55 litres of beer, (3) 53 litres of beer, (4) 50 litres of beer, (5) 50 litres of beer, (6) 49 litres of beer.

24. Papyrus fragment of unknown provenance in Egypt (*P.Alex.* 1, l. 5) (3rd C. A.D.):

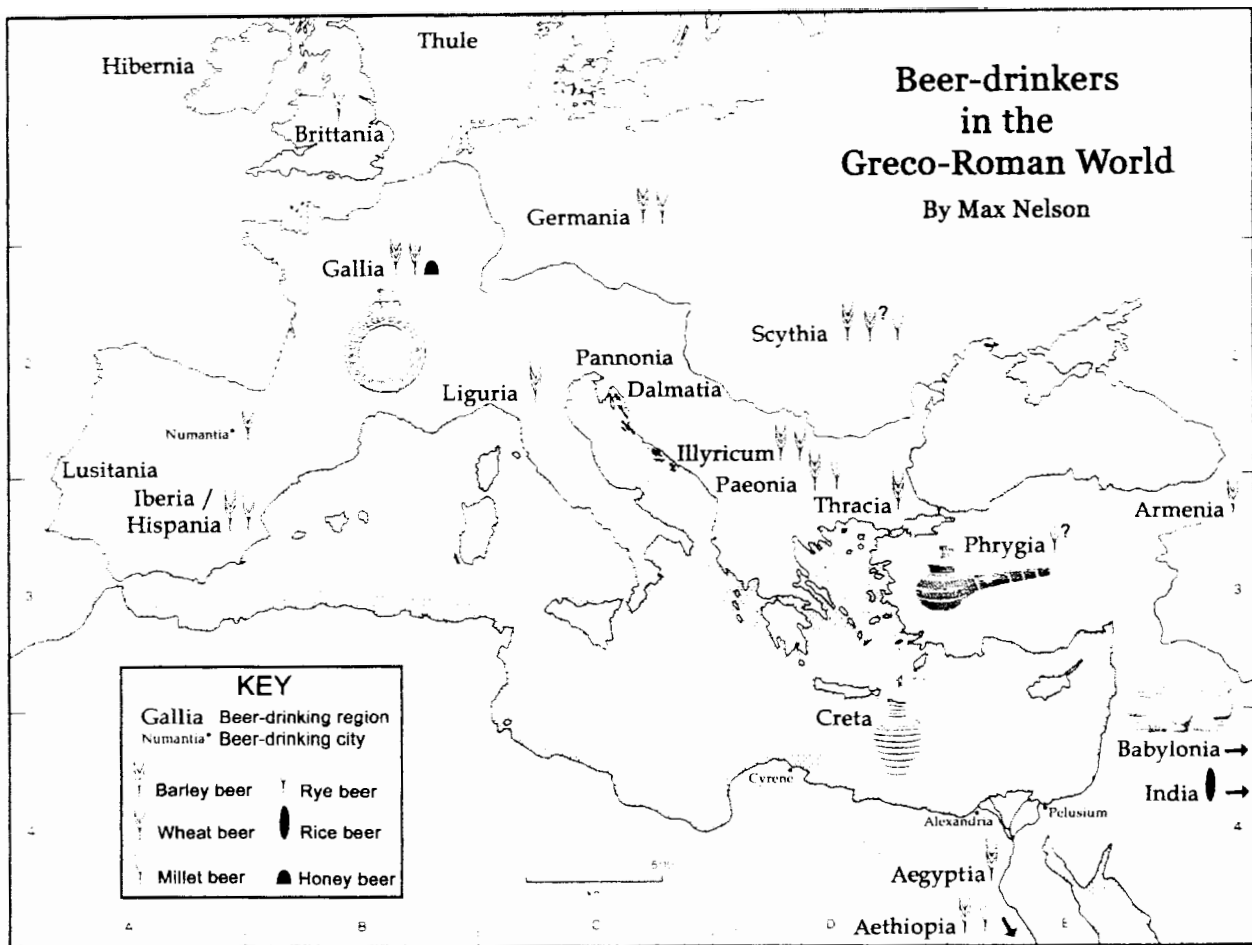
...] καὶ κρέως καὶ οἴνου ἐπιχωρίου καὶ ζ[ύ]τους, τοῖς δὲ στρατιώταις δι[δ]οσθαι [...

... [a measure is missing] of meat and local wine and beer and to be given to the soldiers ...

25. Papyrus fragment of unknown provenance in Egypt (*P.Alex.* 417, col. i. ll. 18-19) (3rd C. A.D.):

[...] στρατιωτῶν | [...]. αὐτοῦ ζῦτους ...

... of the army ... of the same beer ...



Map 1

INDEX OF GRECO-ROMAN LITERARY SOURCES:

Hibernia

GENERAL: Jonas, *Vit. Col.* 26

Lusitania

GENERAL: Posid., fr. 22 Th

Numantia

WHEAT: Florus, 1.34.12; Orosius, 5.7.13; Isid., *Etym.* 20.3.18

Iberia / Hispania

GENERAL: Pliny, *HN* 14.29.149, 22.82.164; Isid., *Etym.* 20.3.18

BARLEY: Plb., 34.9.15

WHEAT: Diosc., *Mat. Med.* 2.88; Pliny, *HN* 18.12.68

Brittania

GENERAL: Jonas, *Vit. Col.* 26

WHEAT: Diosc., *Mat. Med.* 2.88

Gallia

GENERAL: Pliny, *HN* 14.29.149, 22.82.164; Jul. Afr., *Cest.* 1.19 V; Julian in *AP* 9.368; Ammian., 15.12.4; Jonas, *Vit. Col.* 26

BARLEY: Posid., fr. 169 Th; Dion. Hal., 13.11.1

WHEAT: Pliny, *HN* 18.12.68

WHEAT + HONEY: Posid., fr. 170 Th

Thule (near)

GENERAL: Pytheas, fr. 7 Roseman

Liguria

BARLEY: Strabo, 4.6.2

Germania

GENERAL: Jonas, *Vit. Col.* 26 and 53
BARLEY + WHEAT: Tac., *Germ.* 23.1

Pannonia

GENERAL: Jerome, *Comm. Is.* 7.19
BARLEY + MILLET: Cass. Dio, 49.36.3

Dalmatia

GENERAL: Jerome, *Comm. Is.* 7.19

Illyricum

GENERAL: See Jonas, *Vit. Col.* 26
BARLEY + WHEAT: Ammian., 26.8.2

Paeonia

GENERAL: Jul. Afr., *Cest.* 1.19 V
BARLEY + MILLET: Hect., *FGrH* 1F 154

Cyrene

GENERAL: Orib., *Coll. Med.* 3.23.4 = *Syn. Eust. Fil.* 4.22.4

Scythia

BARLEY: Priscus, fr. 11.2 Blockley
WHEAT: Verg., *G.* 380 + Servius?
MILLET: Glaucus in *P.Oxy.* XV. 1802.11.41-42

Thracia

GENERAL: Archil., fr. 42 West; Aesch., *Lyc.* fr. 124 Radt?
BARLEY: Hellan., *FGrH* 4F66

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By Max Nelson

Phrygia

GENERAL: Archil., fr. 42 West
RYE: Hellan., *FGrH* 4F66?

Alexandria

GENERAL: Strabo, 17.1.14; Dio. Chr., *Or.* 32.82; Galen, *Hipp. Aph. Comm.* 20

Aegyptia

GENERAL: Thphr., *Caus. Pl.* 6.11.2; Strabo, 17.2.5; Pliny, *HN* 22.82.164; Jul. Afr., *Cest.* 1.19 V
BARLEY: Hect., *FGrH* 1F323; Aesch., *Suppl.* 953 + Σ; Hdt. 2.77.4; Thphr., *Hist. Pl.* 4.8.12; DioAcad. in Athen., *Deipn.* 1.34b; Diod. Sic., 1.34.10; Aret., *Caus.* 1.9.4

Aethiopia

BARLEY + MILLET: Strabo, 17.2.2

Pelusium

GENERAL: Colum., 10.116

Armenia

BARLEY: Xen., *Anab.* 4.5.26-27

Babylonia

GENERAL: Jul. Afr., *Cest.* 1.19 V

India

RICE: Strabo, 15.1.53; Pliny, *HN* 18.13.71; see Ael., *Nat. Anim.* 13.8 and Man. Phil., *Eleph.* 149