

## Arch 0770 Food and Drink in Classical Antiquity

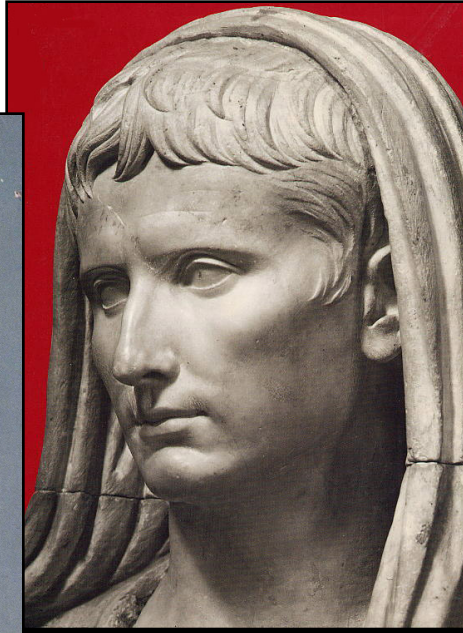
## Food and Morality



## Roman dilemmas, choices

- Past vs. present
- Modesty vs. *luxuria*
- Simplicity vs. gastronomy
- Frugality vs. gluttony
- Antique virtue vs. present decadence
- Puls and turnips vs. songbirds, peacocks, dormice



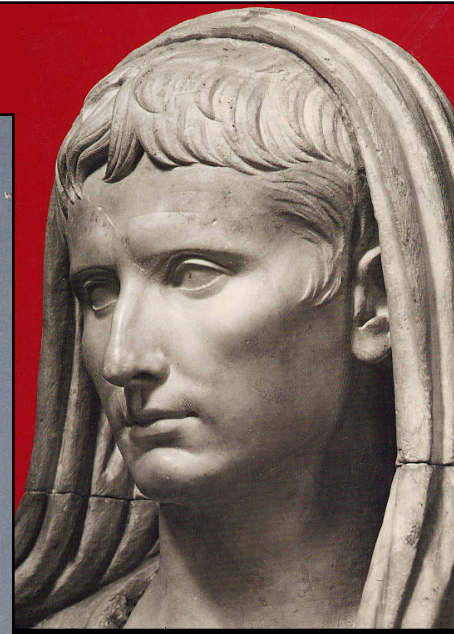


Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*

**Augustus (27 BC- AD 14) vs. Vitellius (AD 69)**

- He ate sparingly (for I must not omit even this), and commonly used a plain diet. He was particularly fond of coarse bread, small fishes, new cheese made of cow's milk, and green figs of the sort which bear fruit twice a year. He did not wait for supper, but took food at any time, and in any place, when he had an appetite. The following passages relative to this subject, I have transcribed from his letters. "I ate a little bread and some small dates, in my carriage". Again: "In returning home from the palace in my litter, I ate an ounce of bread, and a few raisins". Again: "No Jew, my dear Tiberius, ever keeps such strict fast upon the Sabbath, as I have to-day; for while in the bath, and after the first hour of the night, I only ate two biscuits, before I began to be rubbed with oil". From this great indifference about his diet, he sometimes supped by himself, before his company began, or after they had finished, and would not touch a morsel at table with his guests (Suetonius, *Life of Augustus* 76)





**He ate sparingly... and commonly used a plain diet.**

**He was particularly fond of coarse bread, small fishes, new cheese of cow's milk, and green figs...**

**Augustus: 'I ate a little bread and some small dates, in my carriage... In returning home from the palace in my litter, I ate an ounce of bread and a few raisins.'**

**From this great indifference about his diet, he sometimes supped by himself, before his company began, or after they had finished, and would not touch a morsel at table with his guests...**

Vitellius always made three meals per day, sometimes four: breakfast, dinner and supper and a drunken revel after all. This load of victuals he could bear well enough, from a custom to which he had inured himself of frequently vomiting. For these several meals he would make different appointments at the houses of his friends on the same day. None ever entertained him at a less expense than 400,000 HS [est. ca. \$570,000,000 in 1998 dollars]. The most famous was a set entertainment given him by his brother, at which were served up no less than two thousand choice fishes, and seven thousand birds. Yet even this supper he himself outdid at a feast which he gave upon the first use of a dish which had been made for him, and which from its extraordinary size he called "The Shield of Minerva." In this dish were tossed together the livers of charfish, the brains of pheasants and peacocks, with the tongues of flamingoes and the entrails of lampreys, which had been brought in ships of war as far as from the Carpathian Sea [eastern Mediterranean] and the Spanish Straits. He was not only a man of insatiable appetite, but he would gratify it at unseasonable times, and with any garbage that came his way. Thus at a sacrifice he would snatch from the fire the flesh and cakes and eat them on the spot. When he traveled, he did the same at inns upon the road, whether the meat was fresh dressed and hot, or whether it had been left from the day before and was half eaten (Suetonius, *Life of Vitellius*)



# Vitellius

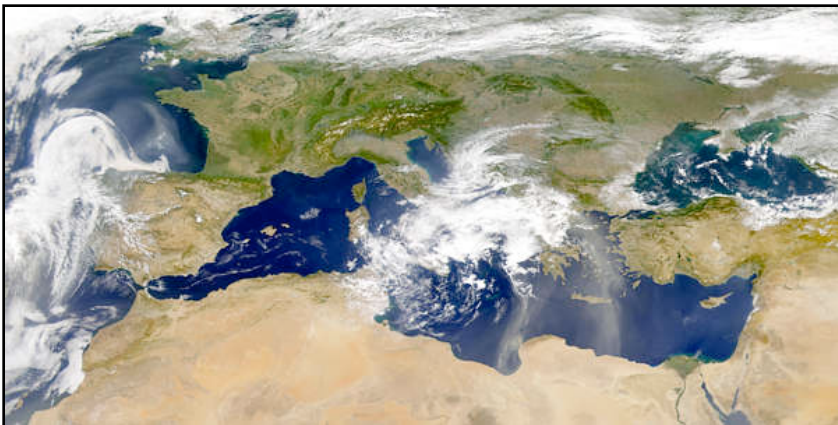
.. always made three meals a day and sometimes four...

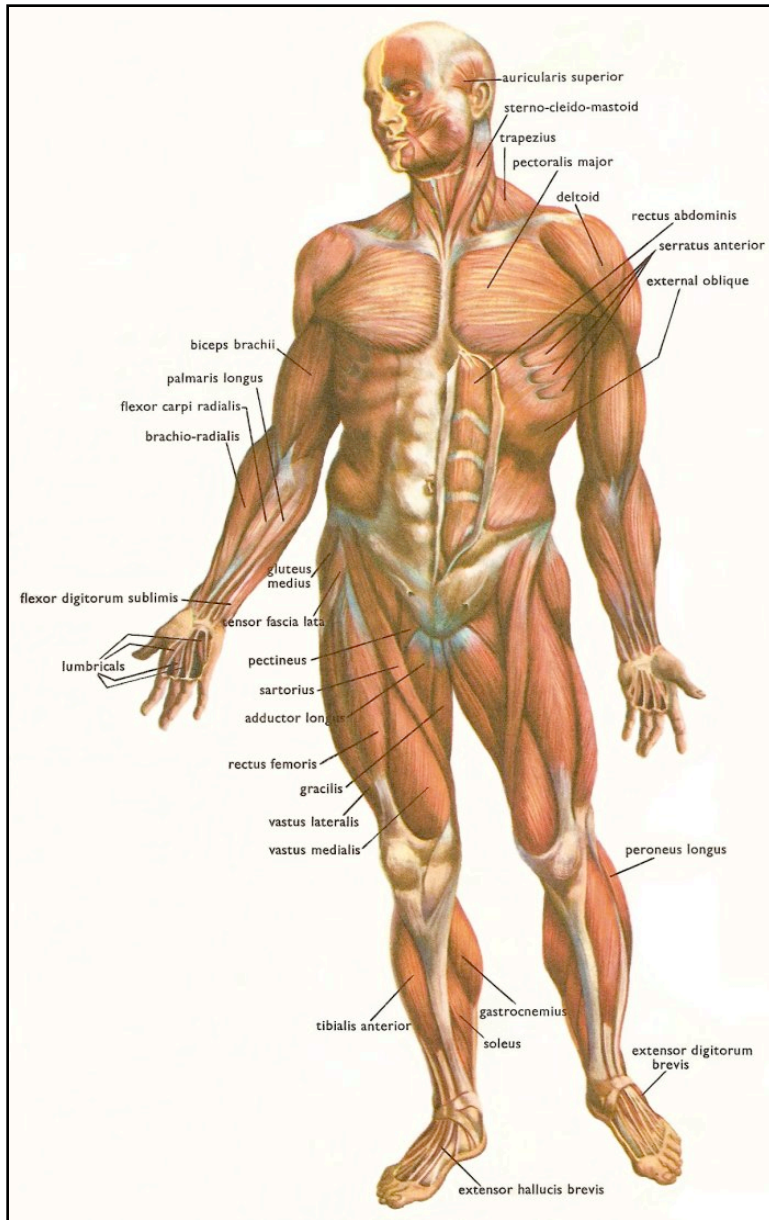
Suetonius,  
*Life of Vitellius*



Shield  
of  
Minerva

'eating the world...'





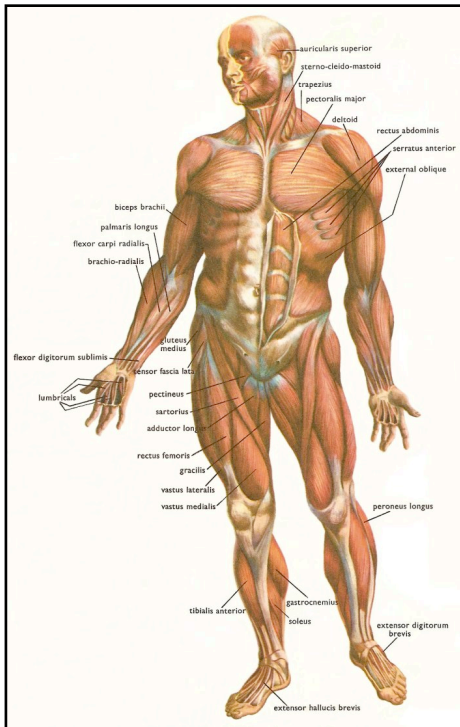
# The Body

**‘good bits?’**

**‘bad bits?’**

**spatial segregation**

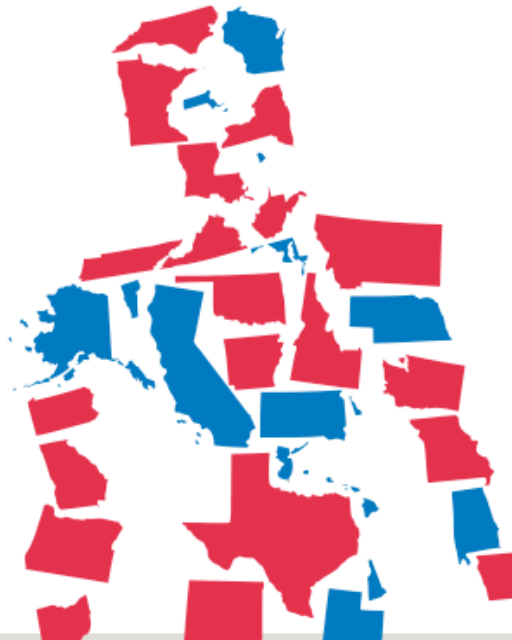




# The Body

**Metaphor for  
government/nation;  
'body politic'**

**THE BODY  
POLITIC**  
OCT. 15 & 16, 2012



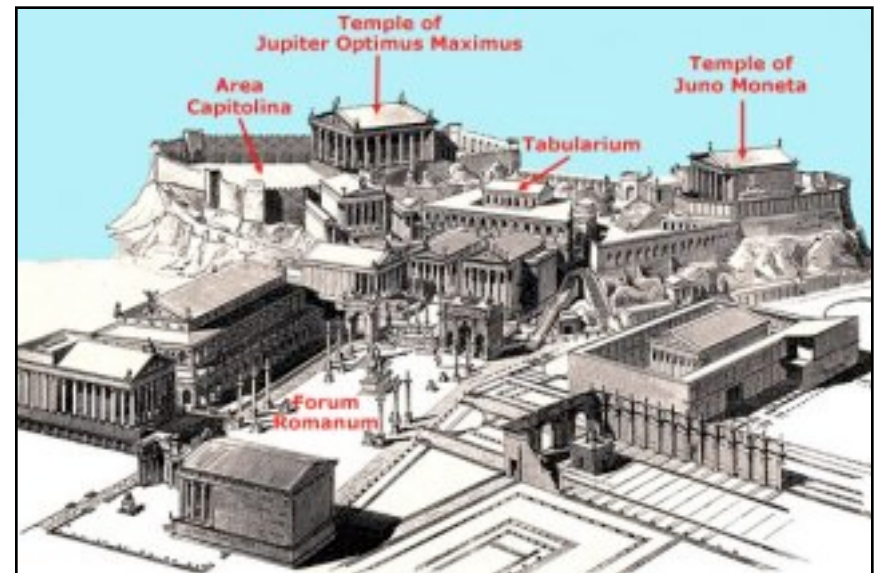
**Metaphor for city  
(Providence?)**

# Rome = *caput rerum*

‘caput’ = HEAD

Capitoline Hill, Capitolium  
(Capitol)

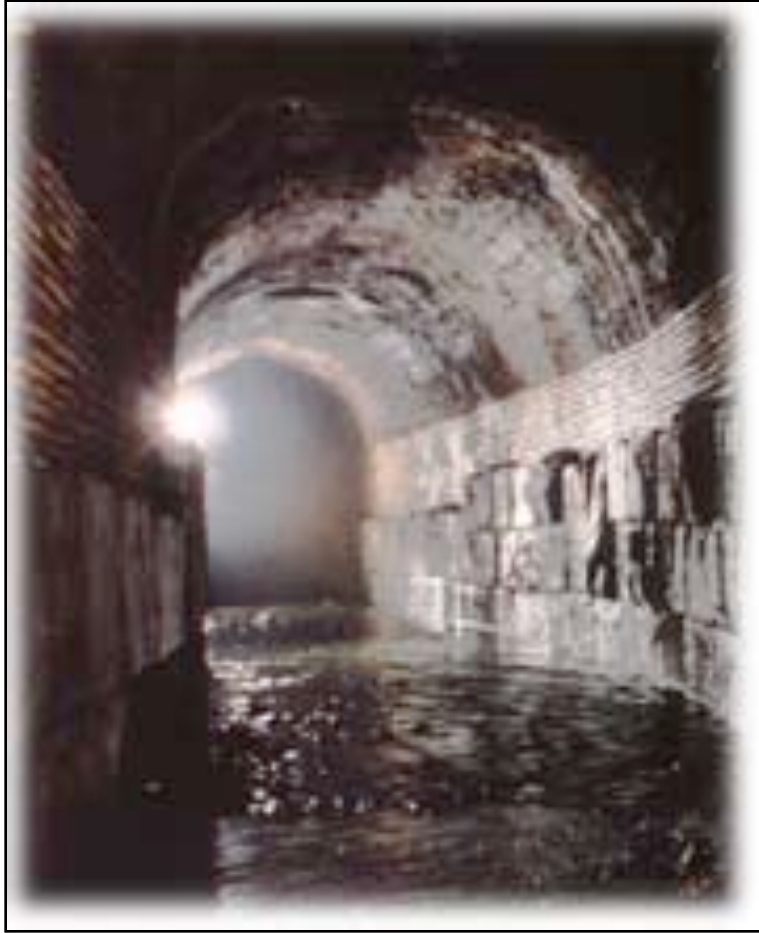
Temple of Jupiter Optimus  
Maximus (priest, the  
Flamen Dialis)



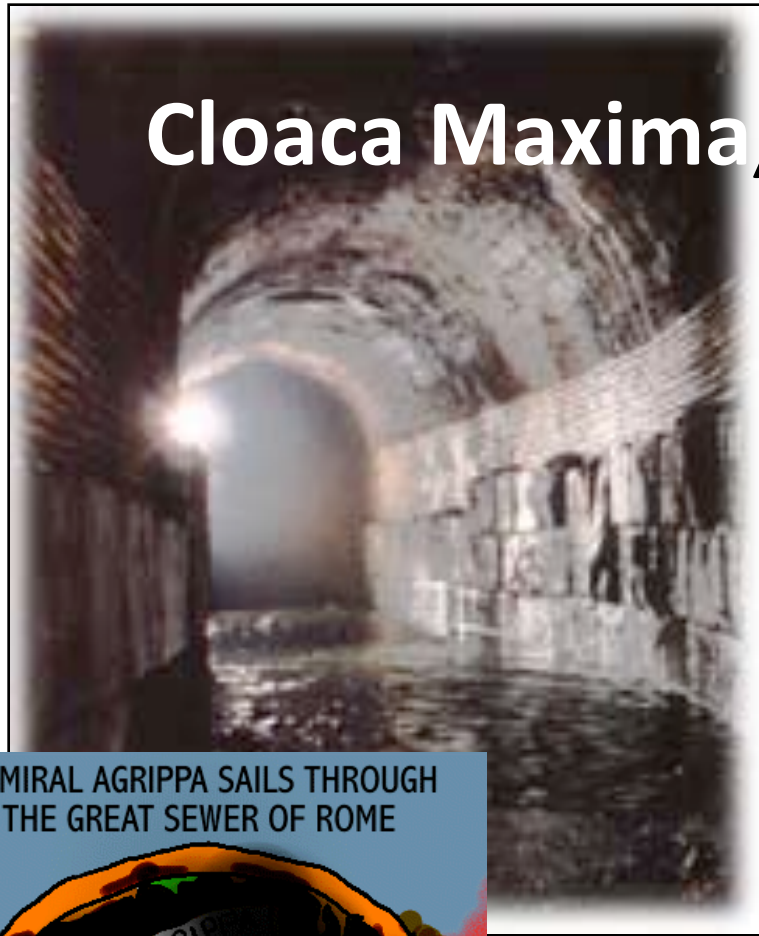


# Cloaca Maxima, 'Greatest Sewer'

'guts'



# Cloaca Maxima, 'Greatest Sewer'



'guts'

ADMIRAL AGRIPPA SAILS THROUGH  
THE GREAT SEWER OF ROME



Augustan  
'enema'

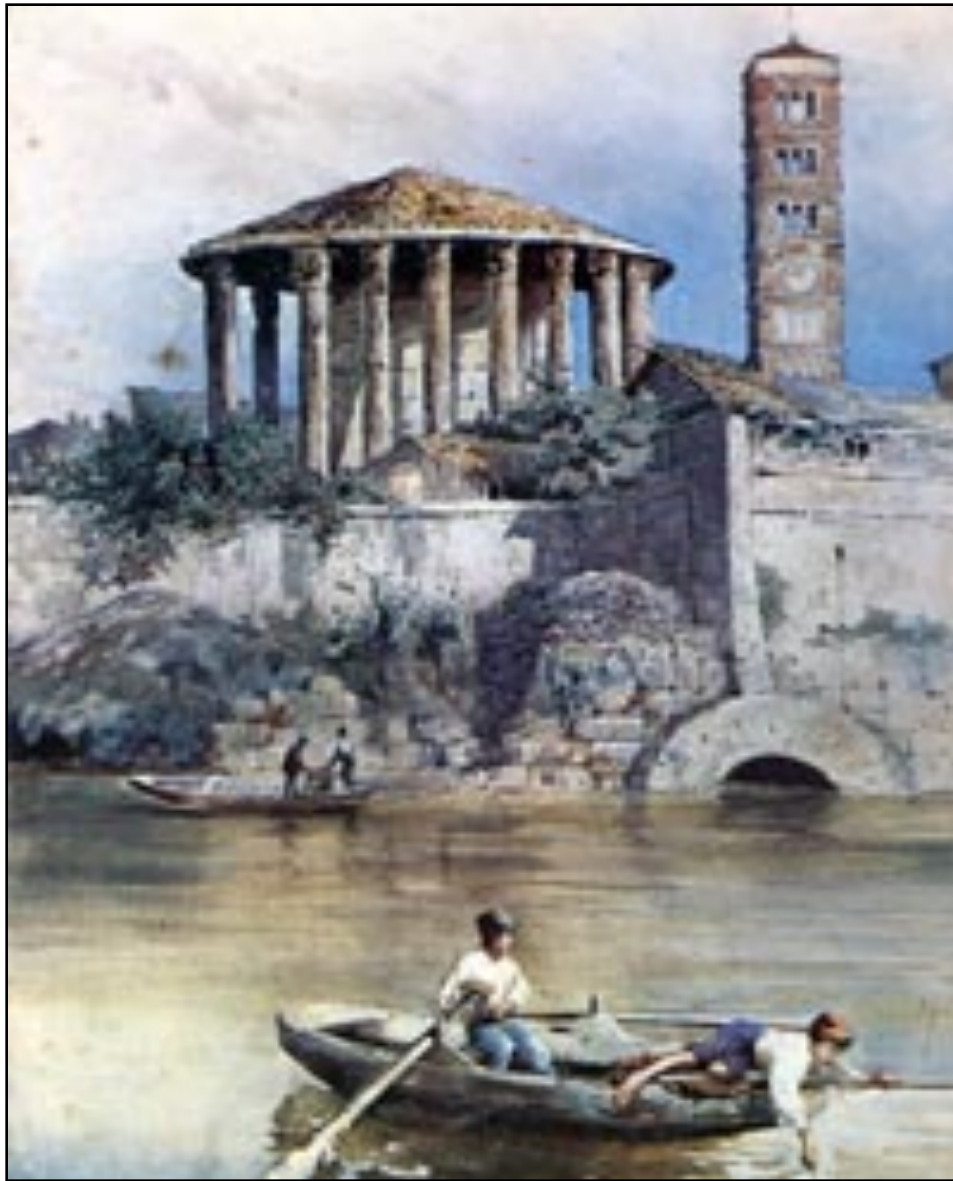






**‘...those splendid works that strike astonishment in the hearts of all beholders. There you see rivers as it were shut in by concave mountains, flowing down through mighty rafters. There you see men steering their ships with the utmost care, to avoid shipwreck. Thus may the greatness of Rome be inferred. What other city can compare with her in her heights, when her depths are so incomparable?’**  
**(Cassiodorus)**





River Tiber

**‘...those splendid works  
that strike  
astonishment in the  
hearts of all  
beholders...’**

***stercus* = garbage and  
dung**

**‘the receptacle of all  
the off-scourings of  
the city’ (Livy)**





**River Tiber**



# Flushing out the body, the city

*infima faex populi*  
the bottom most dregs,  
scum, crap of city



Other elements to  
be expelled:  
Astrologers, magicians





**Second Hourly**

**Monday, October 28<sup>th</sup>**

**On material (lectures/readings) from 10/2 to 10/23**

**Multiple choice/True or False (Do all SIX)**

**Identifications of terms, names, quotes, images  
(Do SIX out of ten)**

**Short answer question (Do ONE out of three)**