

Anthimi, *De Obseruatione Ciborum*

Incipit epistula Anthimi uiri inlustris comitis et legatarii ad gloriosissimum Theudericum regem Francorum de obseruatione ciborum: qualiter omnes cibi comedantur ut bene digerantur et sanitatem praestare debeant, nam non infirmitatem stomachi nec anxietatem humani corporis.

rationem obseruationis uestrae Pietati, secundum praecepta auctorum medicinalium, ut potui uobis exponere profuturam generaliter procurauit, quoniam prima sanitas hominum in cibis congruis constat. id est, si bene adhibiti fuerint, bonam digestionem corporis faciunt, si autem non bene fuerint cocti, grauitatem stomacho et uentri faciunt. etiam et crudos humores generant et acidiuas carbunculos et ructus grauissimos faciunt. exinde etiam fumus in capite ascendit, unde scotomatici et caligines graves fieri solent. etiam et uentris corruptela et ipsa indigerie fiet, aut certe desursum per os uomitus fit, quando stomachus cibos crudos conficere non potuerit. si autem bene praeparati fuerint cibi, digestio bona et dulcis fiet, et humores boni nutriuntur. in hoc enim prima sanitas constat ita ut, qui se taliter uoluerint obseruare, aliis medicaminibus non indigebunt.

similiter et de potu tantum oportet adhibere quantum cum cibis concordat. ceterum si plus praesumptum fuerit et maxime frigidum, stomachus ipse in frigidatus nihil praeualet, unde etiam corruptela nascitur et illa quae superius diximus. unum tamen

Anthimus, *On the Observance of Foods*

Here begins the letter of Anthimus, a Distinguished Gentleman, Count and Legate to His Excellency Theuderic, King of the Franks, concerning the observance of food. Or: how all food should be eaten so that it may be properly digested and promote health, rather than cause stomach problems and persistent infirmity of the body.

I have taken care, to the best of my ability, following the directions of medical writers, of a plan of diet for Your Reverence which will be of benefit to you, because in men excellence of health corresponds to the suitability of food. By that I mean: if food has been prepared well, it helps towards good digestion, but if it has not been cooked properly, it causes a heaviness in the stomach and bowels. It can even engender undigestible fluids, together with smelly hiccoughs and violent belching. Following on this, a vapour rises into the head, as a result of which sudden dizziness and unpleasant exhalations can often arise. This type of indigestion can lead to diarrhoea, or at the very least to vomiting, because the stomach is unable to digest raw food. But if food has been well prepared, the ensuing digestion is good and agreeable, and useful humours will be nourished. To such a degree does excellent health depend on this, that anyone who is prepared to take care over his food in the way which I shall set out will have need of no other medicine.

Drink should be treated in the same way, for as much should be taken as will harmonise with the food. If too much is drunk and at too a low temperature, the stomach grows chilled and loses its efficacy, so that there ensues diarrhoea and the other conditions that I mentioned above. Let me give you an analogy: if someone is

exemplum suggerimus: quomodo in fabrica domus parietis si calcem et aquam quis tantum temperauerit, quantum ratio poscit ut spissa sit ipsa mixtio, proficit in fabrica, et tenet; si autem satis aqua missa fuerit, nihil proficit. sic et in cibis uel potu ratio debet cognosci, ergo et sicut supra diximus, sanitas ex cibis bene coctis et bene digestis constat.

nam si quis dicat: homo in expeditione positus uel iter agens longum, quomodo potest se taliter obseruare? et ego suggero: ubi focus est uel uacat, quae praedicta sunt fieri debent. nam si necessitas exegerit carnes uel alia crudiora manducare, non ad nimitatem sed parcius. sed quid plus quam quod ab antiquis dictum est ‘omnia nimia nocent’. nam et de potu, si quis caballicando et in labore festinando amplius potum praesumpserit, commouendo se in equo uexabitur, et in uentre peiora nascuntur quam de cibis.

sed forte dicitur mihi: quare gentes aliae crudiores carnes manducant et sanguinolentas, et sani sunt? et licet nec illi omnino sani sint, quia ipsi medicinas faciunt – cum male sibi senserint, ustulant se foco in stomacho et uentre et per alia loca, quomodo caballi furiosi¹ ustulantur – tamen et inde reddo rationem: illi unum cibum manducant sicut lupi, nam non multos, quia non habent nisi carnes et lactes, et ipsud quod habuerint, manducant, et uidentur esse sani de paucitate ciborum. nec non de potu est quando habent, est quando longo tempore non habent, et paucitas ipsa uidetur ipsis sanitatem praestare. nam nos qui diuersis cibis et

¹ furiosi l furias GAH furies g foria Fischer.

constructing a wall of a house, he should mix the lime and water in the correct proportions to ensure that the mortar is thick, for then it is both useful for the building and it sets; but if too much water is added, then it is no longer useful. In a similar way proportion ought to be observed in food and drink, for as we said above, excellence of health corresponds to food that has been properly cooked and properly digested.

But let us suppose that someone asks how anyone can take this sort of care when engaged in military manoeuvres or a long journey. I would say that if a fire can be lit and if there is time, what has been suggested ought to be possible. However, if force of circumstance compels one to eat meat or anything else raw, then eat sparingly rather than to excess. What I am arguing can be summed up by the ancient motto: 'Everything in excess is harmful'. As far as drink is concerned, if someone drinks too much before riding his horse or hurrying about his business, then he will suffer pain when jolted on his horse, and what will be produced in his bowels will be worse than if he had eaten food.

Perhaps there will be asked the question of how it is that other peoples eat raw and bloody meat and yet are healthy. The answer is that these peoples may not really be healthy, because they make themselves remedies; for when they feel ill, they burn themselves on the stomach and the belly and in other places, in the same way that untamed horses are burned. My explanation for all this is as follows: these people just like wolves eat one sort of food rather than a variety of foods, since they possess nothing but meat and milk, and whatever they have they eat, and they appear to be healthy because of the restricted nature of their diet. Sometimes they have something to drink, and sometimes they do not, and this lack of abundance seems to be responsible for their state of health. By way of contrast, we who excite ourselves with different food

diuersis deliciis et diuersis poculis nos agimus, necesse habemus nos gubernare taliter ut non pro nimietate adgrauemur, sed magis parcius agentes sanitatem obtineamus. si quis uero delectatus fuerit cibum qualemcumque manducare, sed in primo bene factum cibum praesumat, et de aliis rebus parcius ita ut lucretur hoc quod primum accepit et bene digerat.

propterea diligenter constat obseruare quae a nobis suggesta sunt auxilio diuinae maiestatis et domini nostri Iesu Christi, a cuius largitate¹ longiorem uitam et praecipuam sanitatem habeamus. rationem ergo diuersorum ciborum quemadmodum uti debeant secundum praecepta diuersorum auctorum, ut potest intellectus noster habere, suggerimus.

1. in primis panem nitidum bene fermentatum et non azimum, sed bene coctum comedendum, et ubi locus fuerit, cottidie calentem, quia tales panes melius digeruntur. nam si non bene leuatus fuerit, satis grauat stomachum.

2. [hordei natura humida et frigida, et pergatorius sucus palearum. hoc ut agnoscas, hordeum non frixum sic coque in aqua et uidebis defluentem sucum copiosissimum.]²

3. de carnibus uero uaccinis uaporatis factis et in sodinga coctis utendum, etiam et in iuscello, ut prius exbromatas una unda mittas, et sic in nitida aqua quantum ratio poscit coquantur, ut non addatur aqua, et cum cocta fuerit caro, in uaso mittis acetum acerrimum quantum mediam buculam, et mittis capita porrorum et pulegii modicum, apii radices uel feniculi, et coquatur in una hora, et sic addis mel quantum medietatem de aceto uel quam quis dulcedinem habere uoluerit, et sic coquas lento foco agitando ipsam ollam frequenter manibus, ut bene ius cum carne ipsa temperetur. et sic teris: piperis grana L costum et spicam nardi per singula quantum

¹ largitate 1 et Weber, *om.* GAgPpHN, gratia Liechtenhan.

² GB *om.* AlgPpH *del.* Rose (1877) *exc.* Rose (1864) et Liechtenhan.

and different delicacies have, by necessity, to govern ourselves in such a way as not to be aggravated by excess, so that by living more frugally we may maintain our health. If pleasure is taken from eating food of whatever kind, then the food that is eaten first should have been properly prepared, and anything else taken more sparingly, in order that what is eaten first may not only be of benefit and but also be digested well.

With this in mind, everyone should steadfastly observe what has been put forward by me through the help of Our Divine Majesty and Lord Jesus Christ, by Whose bountifulness we may have a longer life and excellent health. I therefore present, to the best of my knowledge, a scheme of how different foods should be used according to the instructions of a number of writers.

1. To begin with, it is best to eat white bread, not unleavened, but well leavened and, when the situation allows, hot every day, because such bread is better digested. For if the bread is not well risen, it weighs heavily on the stomach.

2. Barley is, by its nature, moist and cold, and the juice from its husk is purgative. You can prove this by toasting unparched barley, and watching the juice oozing out in large quantities.

3. Beef which has been steamed can be used both roasted in a dish and also braised in a sauce, provided that, as soon as it begins to give off a smell, you put the meat in some water. Boil it in as much fresh water as suits the size of the portion of meat; you should not have to add any more water during the boiling. When the meat is cooked, put in a casserole about half a cup of sharp vinegar, some leeks and a little pennyroyal, some celery and fennel, and let these simmer for one hour. Then add half the quantity of honey to vinegar, or as much honey as you wish for sweetness. Cook over a low heat, shaking the pot frequently with one's hands so that the sauce coats the meat sufficiently. Then grind the following: 50 pepper corns, 2 grammes each of costmary and spikenard, and

medietatem solidi, et cariofilii quantum pensat tremissis I. ista omnia simul trita bene in mortario fictili addito uino modico, et cum bene tribulatum fuerit, mittis in ollam et agitas bene, ita ut antequam tollatur de foco, modicum sentiat et remittat in ius uirtutem suam. ubi tamen fuerit mel aut sapa uel caroenum, unum de ipsis, sicut superius continetur, mittatur, et in buculari non coquatur, sed in olla fictili meliorem saporem facit.

4. ueruecinae uero carnes et si frequenter utantur aptae sunt, et in iuscello simplici et in assatura, ut delonge a foco coquantur. nam si proxima fuerit foco, ardet caro deforis et deintus deuenit cruda, et potius nocet quam iuuat. sed ut dixi delonge et diutius; quomodo uaporata sic deueniat, et sales cum uino mixti, quando assatur, cum pinna diffundantur.

5. agnellinae uero carnes aut de haedis optimae sunt, qualiter uolueris, aut uaporatas aut elixas in iuscello; etiam et assae bonae sunt.

6. ceruinae uero carnes elixae et uaporatae accipiuntur, sed interdum utendae. assaturae uero, si de nouello fuerint ceruo, bonae sunt; nam si de uetusto ceruo, grauiores sunt.

7. carnes de hinnuleis uero et de capreolis et ipsae congruae sunt; quando nouellae fuerint, meliores sunt.

8. aprunae uero quanto recentiores fuerint, leuiiores sunt; sed elixae utendae, et assaturae senim si fiunt, ut longe a foco et diurtius, quomodo de ueruecinis indicauimus.

9. de porco domestico et elixae et assatae; quanto tamen recentiores sunt, tanto leuiiores sunt, et aptae ad digestionem. praeterea de lumbis porcellinas expedit assas manducare, quia aptae sunt et bene conficiuntur, ita ut sale in aqua soluto cum pinnis, quando assantur, tangantur. et si duriores quando manducantur

1.5 grammes of cloves. Carefully grind all these spices together in an earthenware mortar with the addition of a little wine. When well ground, add them to the casserole and stir well, so that before they are taken from the heat, they may warm up and release their flavour into the sauce. Whenever you have a choice of honey or must reduced either by a third or two-thirds, add one of these as detailed above. Do not use a bronze pan, because the sauce tastes better cooked in an earthenware casserole.

4. Mutton is suitable even if eaten often, both braised in a plain sauce or when roasted, provided that it is cooked some way from the fire. For if it is cooked near the fire, the meat burns on the outside whilst the inside remains raw, and it becomes more harmful than beneficial. So cook it, as I have stated, some way from the fire and for a long time; let it become in this way like steamed meat. When it is roasting, salt mixed with wine should be spread over it with a feather.

5. Lamb and kid are both excellent, using whatever method you like, either steamed or boiled in a sauce. They are equally good roasted.

6. Venison can be eaten boiled and steamed, but should be eaten only on occasion. It is good roasted, provided it comes from young deer, because it is rather heavy if it comes from old deer.

7. Fawn and wild goat are also suitable, but they are better when they are young.

8. The fresher the boar, the lighter it is, but it should be eaten boiled. If it is roasted, it should be placed some way from the fire and for a long time, as we explained in the case of mutton.

9. Pork can be eaten both boiled and roasted. In fact, the fresher the pork, the lighter and more digestible it is. Loin of pork is best eaten roasted, because it is a good food and well digested, provided that, while it is roasting, it is spread with feathers dipped in brine. If the loin of pork is rather tough when eaten, it is better to dip in

fuerint, melius est, sic tamen ut in sale puro intingantur. nam liquamen ex omni parte prohibemus.

10. lactantes uero satis apti et congrui elixi, uel in iuscello, et assi in furno ut non grandis sit uapor et ne satis ustulentur, sed magis ut deueniant quasi uaporati, et inde intingendo in oximelle simplici ad horam facto, ut duae partes de melle et una pars de aceto adhibeatur, et sic coquantur in uaso fictili, et sic intingantur carnes ipsae quando manducantur.

11. de bualibus uero qui teneriores sunt, sic apti sunt: caro ipsa sumatur elixa uel uaporate; et si delectatus fuerit quis, assas comedere potest, ut longius a foco assentur. tamen non bene accipiuntur.

12. carnes uero uaccinae uel bubulinae insalatae non sunt congruae, nisi necessitas exegerit ut sumatur, quia pinguedo de ipsis carnibus de sale defluit, et deueniunt siccae ipsae carnes et non bene conficiuntur.

13. lepores uero si nouelli fuerint et ipsi sumendi in dulci piper habente, parum cariofili et gingiber, costum et spicam nardi uel folium.

14. de larido uero, unde non est qualiter exire delicias Francorum, tamen qualiter melius comedatur ad horam expono. si assatum fuerit ad horam quomodo bradones, pinguamen ipsum defluit in foco et laridum deuenit siccum, et qui manducauerit, laeditur, nam non iuuatur; etiam et malos humores generat et indigentionem facit. sed elixatum laridum et refrigeratum si manducatur, melius iuuat et uentrem constrictum temperat, et bene digeritur. sed bene debet elixari; certe si de perna, plus debet coqui. de cute uero ipsa nihil praesumatur, quia non conficitur. frixum uero laridum penitus non praesumendum, quia satis nocet. pinguamen ipsius laridi, quod in cibo aliquo supermissum fuerit uel supra olera, ubi oleum non fuerit, non nocet. nam illa frictura penitus non expedit.

pure salt. We ban the use of fish sauce from every culinary rôle.

10. Sucking-pig is extremely good and agreeable when boiled, or cooked in a sauce, as well as roasted in an oven, provided that the heat is not too great and that it is not burnt too much, but instead prepared so that it becomes like steamed meat. It can then be dipped in a simple honey and vinegar mixture, made with two parts of honey to one part of vinegar. The meat is dipped into this sauce when it is eaten.

11. Tender ox is suitable if the meat is eaten either boiled or steamed. If you want, you can eat it roasted, on condition that it is roasted some way from the fire, but it is not digested well.

12. Salted beef and ox are not agreeable, unless necessity dictates that they are eaten, because the fat runs out of the meat on account of the salt, and the meat becomes dry and difficult to digest.

13. Hare, if young, can be eaten in a sweet sauce made with pepper, a little clove and ginger, costmary, and spike or leaf of nard.

14. At this point I will explain how bacon may be eaten to the best effect, for there is no way that I can pass over this Frankish delicacy. If it has been simply roasted in the same way as a joint of meat, the fat drains into the fire and the bacon becomes dry, and whoever eats it is harmed and is not benefitted; it also produces bad humours and causes indigestion. But if bacon that has been boiled and cooled is eaten, it is more beneficial, regulating constipated bowels and being well digested. But it should be boiled well; and if of course it is from a ham, it should be cooked more. None of the rind should be eaten, because it is not digested. Bacon fat which is poured over some foods and vegetables when oil is not available is not harmful. But frying brings absolutely no benefit.

de crudo uero larido quod solent, ut audio, Franci comedere, miror satis quis illis ostendit talem medicinam ut non opus habeant alia medicina, qui sic crudum illud manducant, quia beneficium grande est et pro antidoto sanitatem illis praestat, beneficio ipsius quia ita omnia uiscera quomodo medicamento bono et si qua uitia sunt in uisceribus uel intestinis per ipsum sanantur, et si lumbrici uel tineae adnatae fuerint, expellit hoc. nam et uentrem temperat et, quod illis melius est, per istum cibum saniores aliis sunt. nam ut exemplum magnum dicatur, ut credatur quod diximus: tota uulnera, quod foris aut in corpore nata fuerint uel de plaga facta, laridum crassum adpositum adsidue et purgat putredinem uulneris illius et sanat. sic enim et ad interiora uiscera poterit prodesse, sicut superius diximus. ecce quale beneficium in larido crudo, et quod medici cum medicamentis uel potionibus temptant sanare uel emplastris curare, de larido crudo Franci sanant.

15. cervisa bibendo et medus uel aloxinum quam maxime omnibus congruum est ex toto, quia ceruisa, quae bene facta fuerit, beneficium habet et rationem praestat, sicut et tisana, quam nos facimus alio genere. similiter et de medo bene facto, ut mel bene habeat, multum iuuat.

16. renes de porco penitus non expedit manducare, nisi latera ipsorum, quia ipsa sunt congrua et bene digeruntur. nam renes de nullo animale manducantur.

17. de uentre uero bouis uel ueruecis auctores iubent manducare, praeter illa quae sunt spissa; sed elixa, nam non assa.

18. uulua porcina et ipsa optima est, sed elixa.

19. sumen porcinum et ipsud bonum est et frixum et elixum.

20. de uacca tenera uenter elixus congruus est. laridum uero in fartalia missum interdum permittimus comedere.

21. de ficato porcino frixo penitus non expedit nec sanis nec infirmis. sani tamen si uoluerint, sic manducant: incisum bene in

As for raw bacon which, so I hear, the Franks have a habit of eating, I am full of curiosity regarding the person who showed them such a medicine as to obviate the need for other medicines. They eat it raw, because it is very beneficial and as a remedy is responsible for their health. Its effect is akin to that of a good medicine for their internal organs, and if they have any difficulties with their bowels or intestines, it cures them. Stomach and gnawing worms are expelled by this medicine as soon as they are born. It regulates the bowels and, what is so good for them, they are healthier than other people because of this food. Let me give a good example so that what I am writing may be believed: thick bacon, placed for a long time on all wounds, be they external or internal or caused by a blow, both cleanses any putrefaction and aids healing. Look at what power there is in raw bacon, and see how with it the Franks heal what doctors try to cure with drugs or with potions.

15. Beer, plain mead and spiced mead are absolutely fine for drinking by almost everyone. Beer that is well brewed possesses goodness and surpasses expectation, as does barley soup, which we make in a different way to beer. Mead that is well brewed is very beneficial, provided that the honey is good.

16. It is not a good idea to eat pigs' kidneys, except for the edges, which are suitable and are well digested. Kidneys of no other animal should be eaten.

17. My sources instruct us to eat cow and mutton belly, except for those which are of a dense texture. They should be boiled, however, and not roasted.

18. Sow's womb is extremely good, but only when boiled.

19. Sow's udder is good both fried and boiled.

20. Calf belly is suitable boiled. I do let people eat on occasion the bacon that is put into the stuffing.

21. Fried pig's liver is not at all suitable for either healthy or sick people. But if those in health wish, they may eat it as follows: