

Cheese is an ancient food whose origins, predating recorded history, must lie in the practice of transporting milk in bladders made of ruminants' stomachs, with their inherent supply of rennet. There is no conclusive evidence indicating where cheesemaking originated, either in Europe, Central Asia or the Middle East, but convincing evidence of dairying in Egypt and Sumer, ca. 3100 BCE, is preceded by fourth-millennium evidence for the Saharan grasslands. Cheese-making had spread within Europe at the earliest level of Hellenic myth[1] and, according to Pliny the Elder, had become a sophisticated enterprise by the time the Roman Empire came into being,[2] when valued cheeses were exported long distances to satisfy elite Roman tastes.