ARCHESTRATUS
THE LIFE OF LUXURY

Frontispiece. A fragment of a South Italian vase illustrating a grotesque character from comedy, dating to around 350 BC and found in Gela.

ARCHESTRATUS

FRAGMENTS FROM
THE LIFE OF LUXURY

A MODERN ENGLISH TRANSLATION
WITH INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY

JOHN WILKINS & SHAUN HILL

REVISED EDITION

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
PHILIPPA STOCKLEY

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Figure 1. A banqueting scene illustrating furniture, entertainment and hetairai*, the female 'companions' of non-citizen status who were the only women at the banquet/ symposium. The painting is on a bowl for mixing wine and water at a feast (* krater*), and is dated to the late fourth century* BC.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS TO THE FIRST EDITION

We are most grateful for advice on several matters from Susanna Braund, W. Geoffrey Arnott and Tom Jaine. Particular thanks go to Alan Davidson for castigating a number of errors. Naturally, we are responsible for the text as published.

JOHN WILKINS AND SHAUN HILL, 1994

A NOTE ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS AND THE COVER

The illustrations fall into two categories. The first group is taken from the Greek cities of southern Italy in approximately the period of Archestratus. Their purpose is to give some idea of the ways in which this rich culture represented its attitudes to eating in artifacts and artistic forms.

The second group represents some of the cities mentioned by Archestratus in his poem. In some cases these overlap with the first group, since he includes a number of Italian towns in his survey.

The artist Philippa Stockley has drawn her own interpretations of pottery vase-paintings and fragments. They purport to be accurate renderings, yet are not in any sense measured drawings or replicas.

The cover shows the design from a sixth-century Spartan cup exported to Tarentum. The workmanship and subject matter belie the austere image of Sparta in later centuries. Tarentum, a city of good living and good eating, was a Spartan colony (traditional date of foundation, 706 BC).

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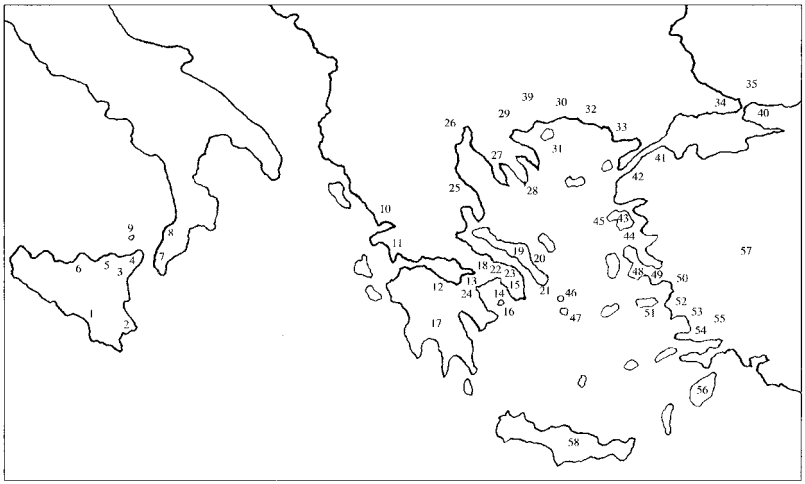
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Figure 2. Apulian krater *(mixing bowl for wine) portraying men in a comedy carrying bread or meat on a spit. Athenaeus leads us to believe they are carrying bread in a religious procession. The vase is dated to 380–350* BC.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EDITION

THE LIFE OF LUXURY

The Life of Luxury is a remarkable and almost unique work. When considering the ancient Greeks, the modern person may think of their temples, their tragedies, their philosophy and democracy. These best-known aspects of Greek culture are often specifically Athenian rather than Greek in general. Cookery books in ancient Greece do not readily come to mind; cookery in fact is credited by modern people – wrongly – to the Romans with their dormice and the cookery book ascribed to Apicius. Here we redress the balance by editing a Greek cookery book, not from Athens but from Gela in Sicily.

The Life of Luxury reveals much about Greek culture, and a great deal about the style of Greek food in antiquity. In travelling throughout the Greek world – Greece, southern Italy and Sicily, the coast of Asia Minor, the Black Sea – Archestratus makes clear how cosmopolitan Greeks were (rather like the British during the period of Empire). His influences – ingredients, combinations of flavours, techniques – are drawn from a wide Mediterranean background, taking in a diversity of ideas unrestricted by the topography of the Greek mainland.

Our commentary is concerned principally with the *content* of the poem, that is, the purchase and preparation of certain foods. Literary and other aspects of the poem have been investigated by Brandt (1888) and Degani (1990), and are considered by us only briefly.

Almost nothing is known about Archestratus other than that he was a Sicilian Greek, from Syracuse or Gela. The poem is conventionally dated to about 330 BC, partly in relation to the Pythagorean philosopher Diodorus of Aspendus mentioned in fragment 23, but whose dates are no more secure than Archestratus'. Archestratus was known to Clearchus the philosopher (*c.* 340–*c.* 250 BC) and therefore cannot post-date his death.

The Life of Luxury was valued by Athenaeus in his *Philosophers at Dinner* (in Greek *Deipnosophistai*), which was composed in about AD 200. He is the only

ancient author to preserve the 62 fragments of the poem, which says much. By contrast, lost works of ancient poetry are usually preserved in quotations by a number of authors – for instance the multiple references drawn from the one hundred or more lost tragedies of Sophocles. This almost unique source for the poem may reflect the fact that Archestratus appears to employ little colourful or unusual vocabulary in the fragments: rare words are generally picked up by glossaries and grammarians. More likely, though, the lack of interest demonstrates the status of food books and recipe books: they are not high literature and are not carefully preserved in manuscripts for posterity. We would like to see the book on breadmaking by Chrysippus of Tyana or the book on salt fish by Euthydemus of Athens, but they survive only in sparse references in Athenaeus. In Wilkins and Hill (1994b) we discuss Mithaicos, an influential Syracusan predecessor of Archestratus, who survives only in four tiny fragments.

An exception to the general neglect of classical texts on cookery is *de arte coquinaria* of Apicius. This contains little of Apicius himself, being largely a compilation of recipes from different sources, but at least something has been preserved, and was thought worthy of preservation. There were many medieval copies made, and it was a scholarly favourite of the Renaissance.

It is evidently a risky business to attempt a reconstruction of the whole of Archestratus' poem from a mere 62 fragments, and we do not attempt to guess more than to hazard it unlikely there was much if anything on the cooking of meat, and that the bulk of the poem was devoted to fish [Wilkins (1993a)]. There may have been something on desserts, since there clearly is something on simple hors d' oeuvre, and while Athenaeus has much to say on sweet pastries and desserts, it is impossible to discern if he ignored Archestratus or the sage was indeed dumb. The section on breads may have been more extensive; we may have been told which breads were particularly suitable for which foods. The section on garlands and the organization of the feast [fragments 59–62] may have been much larger, though we might guess that such detail would have given Athenaeus more ammunition with which to attack the supposed luxury of Archestratus and would be likely to be quoted. We would certainly expect detail on sauces to be quoted in Athenaeus, and on authorial vanity, since these would have been grist to Athenaeus' mill. Their absence in Athenaeus implies their absence from the poem.

One later writer who had read Archestratus was the Roman poet Quintus Ennius, author of tragedies and the *Annals*, an historical poem in epic metre.

Ennius was a southern Italian who was born in 239 BC and learnt both Latin and Greek. For Romans of later centuries his work represented some of the finest poetry in early Latin, in a grand, rough style. One surviving fragment is a Latin adaptation of Archestratus fragment 56. Ennius probably learnt Greek at Tarentum in southern Italy, indication that there at least, or somewhere very similar, *The Life of Luxury* was being read around the end of the third century BC and was made available to the Romans who at this period were heavily influenced by the Greek cities to the south.

A striking feature of *The Life of Luxury* is that it is written in verse. At the time of composition (fourth century BC), prose-writing had been known in the Greek world for over a century. Archestratus had the option to write in prose, as technical and scientific and philosophical writers in the sixth and early fifth centuries had not. This raises questions about his audience and the purpose of the poem. It was almost certainly not a hands-on cookery book but a volume to be enjoyed at a rich man's banquet and symposium.

People rarely read in private in the Greek world: rather, they – if they were the upper-class people regularly associated with literature in antiquity – *heard* literature recited to them at banquets, in particular at the drinking session (symposium) after the meal. This was an occasion for men: they were apart from their wives and enjoyed the ministrations of women of low status, as well as literature, while other entertainments might include dancers or drunken games [Athenaeus, Book 15; Lissarrague (1990); fragment 3]. Such literature might be lyrical poems, songs, recited epic or drama or history, or sub-literary forms based on dance and mime.

Archestratus' poem, then, is *literature*. The category of literature it falls into is parody, poetry with inappropriate characters or subject-matter. It is a parody of epic, the poetry of Homer and Hesiod about heroes and gods in hexameter verse. So one day at the symposium the entertainment might be a recitation of Hesiod's *Theogony*, the story of the family history of the Olympian gods; the next day it might be the poem of Archestratus. He provides a pleasing contrast, and urbanely focuses on the very activity that the audience was enjoying. As they bit into their olive relishes, or took a mouthful of tuna, the hexameters celebrated the best kind of tuna that could be found and the best way in which it could be prepared.

There was a long tradition of the genre of parody before Archestratus, on topics such as the celebrated *Battle of the Frogs and the Mice*, but often in the

area of food and its consumption. We have a fragment from the *Parodies* of the sixth/fifth-century poet Xenophanes in hexameters on the subject of eating chickpeas at the symposium [Xenophanes fragment 18]; Hegemon of Thasos, a notable parodist of the late fifth century, and, Athenaeus tells us [407a], the poet who consoled the Athenians when they lost their army in Sicily in 413, identifies himself in one of his hexameter poems as 'foul Lentil Soup'; at roughly the same date as Archestratus, Matro wrote his *Attic Banquet*, in whose hexameters an elaborate meal is described in an accomplished and comic way. [On the literature of parody in which inappropriate foods are blended with Homeric hexameters, and on Matro in particular see Degani (1990, 1991, 1994).]

A flavour of Matro may be given by the following extract [Lloyd-Jones and Parsons (1983) 534.33–43 = Athenaeus 135c–d. Here and elsewhere the text of Athenaeus is referred to in the standard form of page number (of the Greek text) and subdivision a–f]:

> The daughter of Nereus also came, Thetis of the silver feet,
> The cuttlefish of the fair tresses, the dread goddess who speaks,
> The only fish to distinguish white from black.
> I saw too Tityus, glorious conger of the marshy lake,
> Lying in the cooking pots: he lay over nine tables in length.
> In his footsteps came the fish goddess with the white arms,
> The eel, who boasted that she had been loved in the embrace of Zeus,
> From Lake Copais, the home of the whole tribe of wild eels.
> Enormous was she, and two men who competed in the games,
> Such as Astyanax and Antenor, would not have been able
> To lift her with ease from the ground on to a cart.

Degani discusses such phrases as 'goddess with the white arms' and argues that they are not mere travesties of Homer [we discuss the sexuality of the eel in the note on fragment 8].

Parody, Athenaeus tells us [699b], was particularly enjoyed in Sicily, birthplace of Archestratus and home of the cookery book. But *The Life of Luxury* is quite unlike all the others in the collection of parodic poetry edited by Brandt in 1888. It is a poem which may have amusing touches but is first and foremost a work of instruction for the acquisition and preparation of good food. Although other interpretations, discussed by Degani (1994) and Gowers (1993), are possible and potentially valuable, we do not consider them here, beyond noting that

Gowers, writing on food in Roman literature, has shown how it is often a metaphor for a style of poetry. A light, elegant style of cooking, such as that promoted by Archestratus, could represent a similar style of poetry, which was indeed a prevailing style after 300 BC. Thus short witty poems were preferred to verbose epic, as sensitive seasoning might be preferred to pungent sauces.

We conclude with two further stylistic considerations. Many of the fragments concern fish, which, as Athenaeus observes at the beginning of his work, are virtually absent from Homer. This may be due to the selection made by Athenaeus, but is probably not, and is a subtle way in which Archestratus can please his audience by taking over the Homeric verse-form and filling it with decidedly un-Homeric fish. Equally, if we compare Archestratus with Hesiod, as Athenaeus does [fragment 23], we can see a pleasing contrast between Hesiod's insistence on the grinding hard work of the peasant in his *Works and Days* and Archestratus' advice for good and elegant living.

The second point is that Archestratus might have been more credible if he had written in prose. Why this flirting with parody? Flirtation is the right word, for the quantity of Homeric and Hesiodic phraseology is small compared with Matro or Hegemon. A prose work may have convinced us that this was a book for chefs, not a pleasing poem for their dilettante employers. Equally, it would probably have condemned the work to oblivion, for it was the versification and playfulness that caught the eye of Athenaeus and seduced him into quoting 62 fragments. Contrast the fate of Mithaicos who, though influential enough to outrage Plato, wrote in prose and is scarcely mentioned by Athenaeus.

The content is clearly influenced by the form and tone of the medium. Yet, despite the fact that this is epic parody, the advice about the selection, purchase and preparation of food is first rate. The man has much to say, and much of value to say. Since chefs were of low status and unlikely to be sufficiently educated to write an epic-style poem, we presume that Archestratus was not a chef himself; but he has knowledge of quality produce and combinations of flavours and use of heat in cooking. He is perhaps an equivalent of an Edwardian lady, the kind of lady who supervised her kitchen and was concerned to try new dishes she had read about, but who was quite distinct from her cook below stairs.

The cook in antiquity was of low status, but the best chefs operated in a competitive mode, being hired out together with their brigade of assistants to the homes of the rich. Quality and fame mattered to them. The evidence for this is to be found in Greek comedy and therefore has to be treated with some

caution, but we have argued elsewhere [Wilkins & Hill (1993)] that the comic chef bears a close relation to his counterpart in everyday life.

Writing about food in a practical way in ancient Greece was first and foremost a sub-division of medical writing. Food influenced the balance of the humours in the body. But eating is also a sensual experience: however basic the diet, senses of taste and smell and sight are necessarily involved. There is a hint of pleasure, directing writing on food towards the playful area of comedy. There are comic touches in Archestratus [fragments 9, 23, 35, 45], and there is some similarity between some of his advice and that found in speeches delivered by chefs in comedy.

The comic poets thought it desirable to have a comic chef as a stock character in their plays. The comic chef has to be recognizable in his comic guise, a caricature of his counterpart in the real world. As well as cooking methods, there are extravagant claims to reading, knowledge and excellence in the competitive world of the commercial chef. We offer two extracts.

> A: Sophon of Acarnania and Damoxenus of Rhodes were fellow pupils of each other in the chef's art, and Labdacus of Sicily was their teacher. These two wiped away the clichéd old seasonings from the cook books and did away with the mortar: no cumin, vinegar, silphium, cheese, coriander – seasonings which old Kronos used to have. They did away with all these and said the man who used them was only a tradesman. All they asked for, boss, were oil and a new pot and a fire that was hot and not blown too often. With such an arrangement every meal is straightforward. They were the first to do away with tears and sneezing and a running nose at the table: they cleared out the tubes of the eaters. Well, the Rhodian died from drinking a salt pickle, for such a drink was unnatural.
>
> B: Quite so.
>
> A: Sophon now runs things in Ionia, and has become my teacher, boss. I myself philosophize, and I'm keen to leave behind me new books on the art of cooking.
>
> B: O God! It's me you'll be butchering, not the animal you're about to sacrifice.
>
> A: First thing in the morning you'll see me, books in hand, researching into food ways, in no way different from Diodorus of Aspendus.
>
> Anaxippus, *Behind the Veil*, fragment 1.1–26KA
>
> [Athenaeus 403e–f: this is Athenian comedy of the fourth/third century BC]

> Anyone can prepare dishes, carve, boil up sauces and blow on the fire, even a mere commis. But the chef is something else. To understand the place, the season, the man giving the meal, the guest, when and what fish to buy, that is not a job for just anyone. You will get the same kind of thing just about all the time, but you will not get the same perfection in the dishes or the same flavour. Archestratus has written his book and is held in esteem by some, as if he has said something useful. But he is ignorant of most things and tells us nothing.
>
> Dionysius, *The Law Maker*, fragment 2.15–26KA
> [Athenaeus 405a–b: this is Athenian comedy of the fourth century BC]

In these comic passages we have a rejection of earlier techniques, consideration of location and season, an air of authority, all redolent of Archestratus. The first passage refers to Diodorus of Aspendus [see fragment 23]; Sophon of Acarnania is an influential chef mentioned elsewhere in Athenaeus; Archestratus himself appears in the second passage. These comedies and *The Life of Luxury* appear to draw on the same world of food preparation and writing about cooking.

These comedies, like *The Life of Luxury*, derive from the chefs of the Greek world in the fourth century. Comedy in Greek culture is an appropriate place for food and cooking to be commented on, perhaps because aspects of the real chef's life verge on the comic: complex and menial skills are combined in cooking; there is a sharp contrast between the heat of the kitchen and the calm of the banquet where the food is presented; there is an element of entertainment in the presentation of food, which might be mocked. Another parallel may be drawn between cooking and war: the kitchen is organized like a military operation, and indeed some military terminology is used. Then too, food has something in common with sex in being the object of pleasure [fragment 3].

THE GREEKS AT TABLE

Upper-class Greeks ate while they reclined on couches, putting food to their lips with one hand and leaning on the other arm. This has implications for the style of food. If it was eaten one-handed, then it needed to be presented on the plate in bite-sized portions. Even if it was a fish head [cf. fragments 18 and 20], it should be prepared for one-handed consumption. Knives were available, though almost certainly not spoons and certainly not forks. If the reclining posture were to be maintained, the easiest tool to supplement the human hand

was bread; and if the bread was to act as a kind of scoop, then a flat bread like modern pitta appears eminently suitable, while a raised bread might be better for absorbing soups. We do not hear a great deal about raised breads in Athens at this period (we do at least hear about them, though), and the need for pitta-style scoops may account for Archestratus' praise of barley, discussed in the note on fragment 4. (He may of course be speaking in ignorance or in jest, but that is not our interpretation.)

They ate two sets of courses, all the while reclining on couches. In the first set, identified as the dinner (*deipnon*), appetizers with strong flavours [fragments 6–7] were followed by dishes based on fish and meat [fragments 8–58]. These dishes might be served several at a time. The second set of dishes accompanied the drinking session (symposium) [fragment 62]. This order of foods may be seen in Matro's *Attic Banquet* [quoted by Athenaeus 134d–137 c], and is adopted for the fragments of Archestratus, down to the provision of breads for the meal at the outset.

Courses were based on a carbohydrate element (*sitos*) – stomach-filling barley and wheat – with strong flavours (*opsa*) to provide extra proteins and vitamins and interest for the palate. These *opsa* ranged from best sea bass to a salad of bitter herbs or cheese and onions. Greedy people might eat too much carbohydrate, luxurious people too many *opsa*, particularly highly prized fish. After the food, the diners went into the drinking session (symposium) and were entertained.

The fragments, as we have seen, concentrate on fish-cooking (49 out of 62 fragments). It is our belief that fish was more highly valued by chefs than meat because meat was closely connected with other rituals, rituals of worship and sacrifice. The slaughter of animals in sacrifice and the butchering of the meat was the task of the *mageiros* (the Greek word for chef, butcher and sacrificer of animals): he divided the meat between the worshippers. It was possible to incorporate such worship with a banquet, but meat cookery appears only occasionally in cookery books. In Archestratus meat is represented only by hare (not a sacrificial animal) [fragment 57], goose [fragment 58] and sow's womb as a relish [fragment 62]. There may well have been more meat in the full poem and Athenaeus may have distorted the picture by his own lack of interest in meat; Greek culture nevertheless associated fish-eating (quality fish as opposed to small fry) with luxury and meat-eating with the gods. The full poem of Matro confirms the bias towards fish. This is in striking contrast with Christian Europe where fish is reserved for fast (that is, non-meat) days.

Archestratus cooks the fish simply, boiling, roasting or grilling, with light seasoning and oil added if it is quality fish, stronger flavours if poor quality [see fragments 13, 3, 45, 49]. Freshness and quality are his watchwords, and these features must not be damaged by strong sauces based on cheese and pungent herbs [fragment 45]. An earlier (or possibly alternative) style of cooking is deprecated [fragment 45] and a light, elegant style recommended. There is much interest in texture, both in parts of the fish, for instance head meat [fragments 18, 20, 22, 26, 33], fin [fragment 22], tail [fragments 26, 37, 40], and belly [fragment 23] as well as in varieties of fish.

Archestratus' favourite fish tend to have firm-textured and strongly flavoured meat rather than mild-tasting flesh like the white fish which are now used in France and Britain as the vehicles for sauces. And of course, he shows much interest in eels, the common eel, the conger and the moray [fragments 8, 16, 19]. He emphasizes flavour and the oil/fat of the fish where flavour is to be found [fragments 8, 12, 17, 18, 19, 30, 36, 45, 49]. Archestratus' presentation of fish has something in common with the Chinese approach as described in the modern manual of Yan-kit So. Comparisons with Far Eastern or South-East Asian cuisine are as appropriate as anything in modern Europe. An holistic approach to meal-time with emphasis on balance – yin and yang in China, humours in Greece – is common to both. The four humours, blood, phlegm, black and yellow bile, were to be kept in the right proportion and quality (hot, cold, wet and dry) by eating foods that would provide that balance and the required qualities.

Sauces of cheese or herb pickles are added to inferior fish, but in general this is not sauce-based cooking, the preference being for additions of oil and light herbs to the fish juices. This is striking, and to be contrasted with the strong flavours added to Roman foods (though our principal informant is 'Apicius' from the fourth century AD) and the meat-based sauces from Asia Minor which appeared in most other Greek cookery books: Athenaeus [516c–d] gives a list of books with one such recipe, and Archestratus' is notable for the absence of such sauces.

Meats are prepared with equal simplicity [fragments 57, 58] and an eye to essential juices. There is no interest (in the fragments at least) in comparatively new introductions to the Mediterranean such as pheasant and chicken.

Strong flavours are recommended at the beginning and end of the meal, in the form of olives, barley breads, small birds and pickled sow's womb. Vegetable dishes are deprecated in fragment 7 (whether as starters or in general

is unclear). We do not have enough information on the presence of vegetables in the poem, but they may not have figured largely if associations with poverty, found elsewhere, were thought important by Archestratus. His views on chick peas and other desserts [fragment 62] lend some support to this suggestion, as does a dismissive remark at the end of fragment 23.

There is little more to say about the flavours in the poem for it relies principally on fresh produce, from the sea, which has changed less since antiquity than other products, certainly than farmed animals and plants. The product is cooked with little flavouring, and apart from the salt fish of fragment 38 and the occasional reference to silphium (the relative of the sulphurous asafoetida) there is little evidence of the predominate flavour we have found in ancient Greek food, that is a rank, slightly rotting quality. Often this is balanced with the sweetness of honey or olive oil to provide an equivalent harmony to more familiar couplings such as Stilton and sweet port wine or roast mutton and red currant jelly [Wilkins & Hill (1993)]. Anyone in the modern world who cooked from Archestratus would not find the flavours as strange as much ancient Greek food.

A comment on silphium is in order. It was the prestige flavour of antiquity. It was eaten more rarely than the strong Mediterranean herbs such as thyme, but was a much-desired flavour. It grew in North Africa in the area around Cyrene and there is little evidence for its growth elsewhere. The plant is one of the giant fennels which needed special conditions for its cultivation [Theophrastus *History of Plants* 6.3.1–7]. The root was eaten, but the main products were two juices, one derived from the root, the other from the stem. The export of silphium was an important part of Cyrene's trade in some periods. By the time of Nero the production was said by Pliny to be extinct, and the flavour thereafter was provided by asafoetida, another giant fennel, from Persia. Ancient sources on the enigmatic but pungent silphium have been discussed recently by Alice Arndt and Andrew Dalby in their papers listed in the bibliography.

ATHENAEUS AND ARCHESTRATUS

The attitude of Athenaeus himself is an interesting one, and for this reason we have quoted the *Context* of each citation as well as Archestratus' words themselves. Athenaeus' work, like Archestratus', is modelled on the banquet and symposium, and it explicitly introduces foods and rituals of the banquet as the diners progress through their meal [1b]. The ultimate literary model for a work

things written on such subjects by Philaenis and Archestratus and writers of similar works." In book seven he says: "just as the learning of the works of Philaenis and the 'Gastronomy' of Archestratus contribute nothing to the living of a better life." Now you who have quoted this Archestratus so many times have filled the symposium with unrestrained immorality, for which of the things that can damage us has that fine epic poet omitted? He is the only man who has emulated the life of Sardanapalus son of Anacyndaraxes.' At 337b, Athenaeus reports: 'Clearchus in his book on proverbs says that the teacher of Archestratus was Terpsion who was the first to write a Gastrology and to instruct his students in what foods they should avoid.' These fragments best state the hostile tradition which has in part infected Athenaeus [Introduction]. Clearchus (a Peripatetic philosopher in the school of Aristotle, 4th–3rd century BC) surveys various rituals of the banquet and articulates the ready association between eating and sex, linking at the same time Archestratus and the supposed authoress of a sex manual, Philaenis [on whom see Parker (1992)]. Clearchus wrote a *Book of Love* himself, and it is not entirely clear how it differed from Philaenis: in some way though Philaenis and Archestratus shared the unsatisfactory category of 'luxury'. Clearchus' scorn for fish in their season [on which see Introduction] makes it clear enough that Archestratus' poem is not for him.

Chrysippus the Stoic philosopher, who elsewhere [Athenaeus 101f and 104b] identifies Archestratus' poem with the whole of the philosophy of pleasure of Epicurus, attacks Archestratus and links him with Philaenis. Athenaeus' speaker adds a sarcastic note about the fine epic (parodic) poetry

Figure 6. A silver coin of Gela (c. 450 BC) portraying a river god and fish (fish were often part of the design on Sicilian coins).

of Archestratus, at this point introducing a further indication of immorality, the emulation of the life of Sardanapalus, king of Assyria in the sixth century BC [compare fragment 21]. This king was for the classical world the archetype of the luxurious oriental despot. Athenaeus reviews his 'excesses' at 528f–530c. There is almost nothing of the East in *The Life of Luxury*, and less than in most cookery books, but Archestratus stands as the figure-head for cooking in this hostile tradition [see Introduction]. On Greek ambivalence towards the East see Wilkins (1994). Nothing more is known of Terpsion.

FRAGMENT 4

[ATHENAEUS IIIE]

Archestratus in his Gastronomy discourses on barley meal and breads as follows: First then I will list the gifts of Demeter of the fair tresses, my dear Moschus: keep it safe in your heart. Now the best to get hold of and the finest of all, cleanly bolted from barley with a good grain, is in Lesbos, in the wave-surrounded breast of famous Eresos. It is whiter than snow from the sky: if the gods eat barley groats then Hermes must come and buy it for them from there. In seven-gated Thebes too it is reasonably good, and in Thasos and some other cities, but it is like grape pips compared with Lesbian. Get that idea clearly into your head. Get hold of a Thessalian roll, rounded into a circle and well pounded by hand. They themselves call this roll *krimnitas*, but others call it *chondrinos* bread. Then I praise the son of fine wheat flour from Tegea, ash-bread. Bread made in the market, famous Athens provides for mortals, of an excellent quality. In Erythrae which bears clusters of grapes a white bread comes out of the oven, bursting with the delicate flavours of the season, and will bring pleasure at the feast.

COMMENTARY

Content. This long fragment is interesting mainly for showing the variety of bread making. Bread is more effectively and economically baked in quantity. The use of grains in porridge obviously better suits home preparation, especially as home ovens were primitive [Sparkes (1962)]. Competition in style and quality of bread would be stimulated by these market conditions: in this fragment commercial baking seems to be at the centre (Hermes god of markets, Athenian market bread); in the next, good home baking. Particular praise of fine barley flour is remarkable, but white barley is found

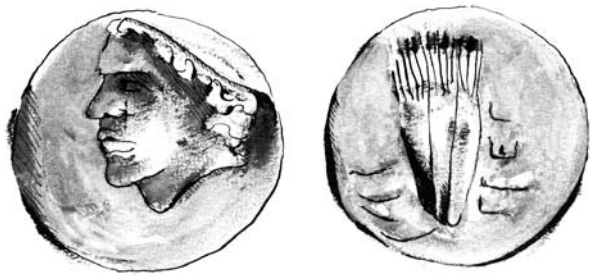

Figure 7. A bronze coin of the third century BC *from Eresos on Lesbos. Head [*Historia Numorum *(Oxford 1911), p. 560] noted the close link between Archestratus' remarks on Hermes and barley and the coins of Eresos with a head of Hermes and an ear of grain. This is further evidence that the poem is firmly based in the markets and kitchens of the city states described.*

elsewhere in fourth-century texts, such as the lyric poem, *The Banquet* of Philoxenus of Leucas and in the comedy of Alexis, *The Woman Drugged on Mandrake* [fragment 145]. Although he does not say so, Archestratus is probably describing flatbreads here, to which barley flour may give more flavour, while the gluten of wheats, necessary if using yeast, is not needed. The fragment is characteristic for its survey of quality products from certain cities, expressed with a hint of epic language. So 'Demeter of the fair tresses' and 'keep it safe in your heart' clearly derive from epic, while phrases such as '[ash bread] son of wheat flour' and flour 'whiter than snow' are characteristic of comedy and epic parody. 'The wave-surrounded breast of famous Eresos' has an epic ring but no clear epic antecedent. There is a notable reference to the gods favouring the barley groats of Eresos, clearly a mark of quality, similar to remarks in fragments 23 and 59–60. The way gods ate – for the Greek gods ate like all other creatures – took two forms. In the first they ate immortal foods – ambrosia and nectar and the smoke of marrow in thigh bones on sacrificial fires. In the second they shared human food, receiving a portion on an altar of first fruits or barley cakes before the humans ate. This was hospitality for a visiting god. That is what we have here, though there is something playful and exaggerated about this statement, helped by reference to Hermes god of exchange and commerce who in comedy is not beyond a little thieving and deception [Aristophanes, *Peace*]. The wheat bread of

away) by a shallow lagoon, though Strabo [*Geography* 7 fragment 22] appears to speak of a navigable river. There is no apparent need in this case to consider a freshwater fish which perhaps grunts or has a stone in the ear.

FRAGMENT 31

[ATHENAEUS 306A]

Archestratus in Life of Luxury: Now the *kitharos*, provided it is white and firm [and large?], I order you to stew in clean salt water with a few green leaves. If it has a reddish/yellow appearance and is not too big, then you must bake it, having pricked its body with a straight and newly sharpened knife. And anoint it with plenty of cheese and oil, for it takes pleasure in big spenders and is unchecked in extravagance.

Figure 16. Another in the series of fish plates from Campania (see figure 11, above, and figure 22, below).

COMMENTARY

Content. The *kitharos* (i.e. lyrefish) is unidentified, possibly a flatfish [Thompson (1947) 114–5]. There are difficulties in identifying flatfish in Greek authors, exemplified by this and the next fragment. A possibility is the guitar fish, *Rhinobatus rhinobatus* (L.) [Davidson (1981) 34 and Palombi and Santarelli (1961) 243–4]. There are also textual uncertainties. The yellowish/reddish appearance is surprising to us. The larger fish is again valued, as in fragment 14, and cooked simply in (a light?) brine with herbs. The non-white and smaller fish is classified as lower in quality, requiring cheese and oil [compare fragment 45]. Details on cutting into the flesh in preparing the fish again indicate something more akin to a ray than a flatfish. A comic fragment has the *kitharos* baked [Athenaeus 306a–b]. The final line has a comic resonance: the fish enjoying the sight of big spenders and being unchecked in extravagance has acquired the characteristics of fashionable eaters who are criticized for eating fish, the principal gourmet food [see Davidson (1993)]. These big spenders however are eating the inferior version with the cheese dressing. The fish (whichever it is) is 'soft-fleshed' in the medical authors, inferior among the flatfish, and poor for eating.

FRAGMENT 32

[ATHENAEUS 288A AND 330A]

Archestratus, that Pythagorean when it comes to self-control says: Then get a large sole [*psetta*] and the rather rough ox-tongue, the latter is good in summer around Chalcis.

COMMENTARY

Context. Another sarcastic introduction. Archestratus is alleged to lack moral self-control [see Introduction]' and is said to be as abstemious in exercising that quality as Pythagoreans are with their food. 'Pythagorean' represents austerity and a diet without fish or meat, as discussed on fragment 23.

Content. There is some uncertainty about precisely which flatfish the *psetta* and ox-tongue are. In some texts they are identified as the same fish, in others distinguished, as here. In some medical texts they are characterized as 'soft-fleshed', in others as 'firm-fleshed'. The somewhat rough ox-tongue presumably refers to the skin, as in the boar-fish [fragment 15]. Size is again

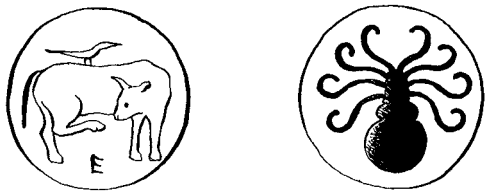

Figure 17. A fifth century BC silver coin from Eretria showing a cuttlefish on the reverse and on the obverse a cow scratching itself, with a bird on its back. Eretria is on the island of Euboea, the name reflecting the quality of the land for cattle.

important [compare fragment 14]. Chalcis (if the reading is right), on the island of Euboea, is another site on a strait with unusual currents. Compare fragment 14 for the Euripus channel between Euboea and the mainland (also Eretria in fragment 26), and fragments 8, 16, 51, 56 for the straits of Messina. The most famous channel of all, and well represented in the fragments, especially for tuna [34, 35, 37], is the Hellespont and its chief port, Byzantium.

FRAGMENT 33

[ATHENAEUS 326B]

Buy the heads of the large young *aulopias* in summer when Phaethon steers his chariot in its furthest orbit. Serve it hot and quickly and a pounded sauce with it. As for the underbelly, take it and roast it on a spit.

COMMENTARY

Content. The *aulopias* is a kind of tuna according to Aelian, and is identified with the *anthias* by Aristotle [*History of Animals* 570b20, see also fragment 11, and Thompson (1947) 20–1]. The identification of the season by the mythical Phaethon is unusually ornate for Archestratus, but similar to fragments 35 and 36. Parodist though he is, he keeps such ornament under strict control. The *aulopias* is best in summer, which is also the time for spawning, according to Aristotle. For the head see Introduction; for the underbelly, fragments 23, 47; for the size of the fish, fragment 14. What exactly is meant by pounded sauce we do not know: presumably not the complex mixtures of Apicius, but herbs of some kind ground in a mortar.

FRAGMENT 34

[ATHENAEUS 301F]

Now around holy Samos with its wide dancing places you will see the great tuna enthusiastically caught: they call it *orkus*, others call it the monster-fish. In summertime you must buy such cuts of the fish as are appropriate swiftly, with no fighting [?] over the price. It is good at Byzantium and Carystus; and in the famous island of Sicily the Cephalodian and the Tyndarian shores breed much better tuna than these. If you ever go to Hipponium in holy Italy, make your way to the garlands of the waters [?]: there are the very best [tuna] of all, by a long way, and they have the culmination of victory. The tuna in these waters are those that have wandered from there after travels over many seas through the briny deep. As a result we catch them when they are out of season.

COMMENTARY

Content. On the tuna, a migratory fish par excellence, see Davidson (1981) 125–6. In citing other names, as often [cf. fragment 12], Archestratus may refer to other members of the family, but probably gives alternatives for the largest tuna, *Thunnus thynnus* (L.), the bluefin. It should be bought in summer (if the text is correct), which is also the breeding and migrating season. There may be vigorous activity over the purchase [cf. fragment 15], but the text is uncertain. Archestratus attests to good fish in Samos, Byzantium, Carystus (the southernmost tip of Euboea), and even better in northern Sicily near Cephalodium and Tyndaris. In the modern world, Sicily is noted for its tuna fishing [see Davidson, and, for ancient versions of the famous tuna traps, Thompson (1947) 848]. Archestratus praises Hipponium on the Italian mainland as best for tuna, though there is uncertainty in the text over the meaning of 'the garlands of the waters'. Are they the shoals where they are caught? Notably, he says, the tuna in these waters have travelled far from there and are therefore caught out of season. It is difficult to see why, if he is writing from Gela in southern Sicily, the fish should be worse and further-travelled than those to the north of the island. This may conform to migratory patterns, with fish travelling westward along the north coast of Sicily and their breeding grounds and back eastwards along the south coast. We have not been able to verify this. There is a possibility that he is writing from somewhere else not blessed with tuna, such as Athens. 'With its wide dancing places' is a conventional epic epithet and may not convey anything particular about Samos.

FRAGMENT 35

[ATHENAEUS 278A]

Archestratus the Daedalus of tasty dishes in his Gastrology (for such is its title according to Lycophron in his books on comedy, just as the work of Cleostratus of Tenedos is titled Astrology) says this about the amia: The *Amia*. Prepare it by every method, in the autumn, when the Pleiad is sinking. Why recite it to you word for word, for you could not do it any harm even if you wished to? But if you desire to learn this too, my dear Moschus, the best way to present this fish I mean, then in fig leaves with not too much origano is the way. No cheese, no fancy nonsense. Simply place it with care in the fig leaves and tie them with rush-cord from above. Then put into hot ashes and use your intelligence to work out the time when it will be roasted: don't let it burn up. Let it come from lovely Byzantium if you wish to have the best, though you will get a good one if it is caught near here. The further from the Hellespont, the worse the fish: if you travel over the glorious salt ways of the Aegean sea, it is no longer the same fish at all; rather, it brings shame on my earlier praise.

COMMENTARY

Context. Archestratus is introduced again as the Daedalus of tasty dishes [see fragment 9]. Here also is a further comment on the title [discussed at fragment 1], interestingly by a scholar of the history of comedy, a genre some way from Archestratus' parody of epic, but related [see Introduction].

Content. The *amia* may be one of the bonitos [Thompson (1947) 13–14, Davidson (1981) 123, Palombi and Santarelli (1961) 10812]. The season is given, and an astronomical note added in the style of Hesiod [see Introduction]. In the fourth century BC the Pleiades set on April 6th. The *amia* is versatile, and a quality fish, hence cheese is discouraged, as discussed on fragment 45. The use of *leros*, fancy nonsense, is similar to fragment 24. In the cooking method described here, fig leaves impart a small amount of flavour, but their real function in this dish is to prevent the flesh from being scorched while cooking and to seal in any cooking juices. However, most cooking of this type in Archestratus is not in ashes. The advice on restraint in the use of origano implies the addition – automatically – of some herbs, in this and maybe all fish cookery. Herbs are not described in the poem as preserved nor as having any medical qualities. This may be because they were considered low-grade

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