

FISH, SEX AND REVOLUTION IN ATHENS<sup>1</sup>

Anyone who picks up a collection of fragments of comic poetry is likely to be struck by the large number of references to eating fish. There are shopping-lists for fish, menus for fish and recipes for fish-dishes, with the ingredients and method of preparation graphically described.<sup>2</sup> Aristophanes and others dwell in several places on the charms of eel wrapped in beet-leaves.<sup>3</sup> Other writers describe preparations for a great fish-soup, or the dancing movements of fish as they are fried.<sup>4</sup> Undoubtedly Athenaeus is responsible for this preponderance among the fragments of Comedy of passages concerned primarily with food, especially fish, but some of the fragments are rather long in themselves<sup>5</sup> and indicate, at the very least, that cooks were important characters in many plays,<sup>6</sup> and that dinner-parties must have figured significantly in many plots. Outside Comedy, references to fish-consumption are somewhat fewer in number, but perhaps even more surprising when they do occur. It seems strange that Demosthenes, in discussing Philocrates' betrayal of his city, should think it at all relevant to state that he spent his ill-gotten gains on fish,<sup>7</sup> or that Aeschines, attacking Timarchus on a capital charge, should dwell on his fondness for fish.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, references to fish occur also in philosophy and the Hippocratic corpus.<sup>9</sup> In fact, the frequency with which ancient authors seem to have written about fish reveals almost a preoccupation. The consumption of fish clearly held a significance for the Athenians which needs to be uncovered and explained.

In a well-known episode in the *Wasps*, Bdelycleon describes the hazards of shopping: 'If someone buys sea-perch, but refuses sprats, straight away the sprats-seller next to him says: "This man here would appear to be buying fish with a view to a tyranny."'<sup>10</sup> Commentators and historians have not reached a consensus about the passage. Starkie thought it was the impudence of fishmongers that was being satirized, and that the passage was meant to convey the absurd readiness with which

<sup>1</sup> This article derives from a paper read out in various stages of evolution at the Oxford Ancient History graduate seminar in 1990 and at the Classical Association Annual Meeting at Warwick in 1991. I am grateful to all those who have commented on earlier drafts, particularly to Oswyn Murray, David Lewis, Simon Price, Daniel Ogden, Sitta von Reden, Roger Brock and the editors and readers of the *Classical Quarterly*. If I have not always been able to make full use of their additional recommendations, this is not because I found them irrelevant, but rather because in many cases they would have entailed opening up whole new areas of investigation. They have, however, helped me to realize that this article can be seen only as a preliminary sortie into a very large and important, but little-studied subject.

<sup>2</sup> Alexis 191–6 K–A; cf. H.-G. Nesselrath, *Die Attische Mittlere Komödie: Ihre Stellung in der antiken Literaturkritik und Literaturgeschichte* (Berlin, 1990), pp. 304–5.

<sup>3</sup> Ar. *Peace*, 1013–14, *Ach.* 894; Eubulus 34, 36, 64 K–A, and Pherecrates 113 K–A, line 12.

<sup>4</sup> Eubulus 108 K–A, Ophelio 1 K–A, Ehippus 5 K–A.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Mnesimachus, *Hippotrophos* 4 K–A. For Menander's use of the fish section of this list, cf. A. W. Gomme and F. H. Sandbach, *Menander: A Commentary* (Oxford, 1973), ad *Kolax* F7.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. H. Dohm, *Magieiros: Die Rolle des Kochs in der griechisch-römischen Komödie [Zetemata 32]* (Munich, 1964). <sup>7</sup> 19.229. <sup>8</sup> 1.42, 65 and 95, and see n. 74.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Plato, *Laws* 7.823–4. Fish figure prominently in the dietetics of the Hippocratic corpus, especially in the two treatises *On the Diseases of Women*.

<sup>10</sup> 493–5: ἤν μὲν ἀνῆται τις ὀρφῶς μεμβράδας δὲ μὴ θέλη, εὐθέως εἶρηχ' ὁ πωλῶν πλησίον τὰς μεμβράδας "οὗτος ὀψωνεῖν ἔοιχ' ἀνθρωπος ἐπὶ τυραννίδι."

the charge could be made: 'no action is secure from being tortured into an attempt at establishing a *tyrannis*, even the purchasing of the necessities of life.'<sup>11</sup> Other scholars seem to think that the fishmonger is referring to a conspiratorial dinner-party, or that the charge derives from Bdelycleon's treatment of his father, the purchase of fish, in this case, constituting a red herring.<sup>12</sup> But the most fruitful insight into the passage is provided by MacDowell's note: 'The rival fishmonger, annoyed at not making a sale, suggests that a man who is not content with the cheapest and most ordinary kind of fish evidently thinks himself better than other people and so is no true democrat.'<sup>13</sup> The crucial point is the fact that the sea-perch (*ὀρφῶς*), far from being one of the 'necessaries of life', is in fact one of the great delicacies of ancient Athens and in several passages is linked with the *γλαῦκος*, the eel, and the conger-eel in the top echelon.<sup>14</sup> What lies behind all these shopping-lists and rhetorical attacks is a discourse about conspicuous consumption and, perhaps, of class divisions. Aristophanes is indeed concerned to make a joke about the extraordinary readiness with which the charge of aiming at a tyranny could be made, but, far from being quite 'absurd', the anecdote does possess some logic. The eating of any but the most desultory species of fresh fish can, it would appear, be considered an elitist activity at Athens in the classical period.

This interpretation of the passage and of the importance of fish-consumption is in line with several other recent analyses of attitudes towards extravagant behaviour at Athens. Looking at accusations of *truphe* and profligacy in forensic speeches, Josiah Ober concludes: 'A litigant's portrayal of his rich opponents was often intended to inflame to the point of open resentment the envy of a poor man who had previously observed the life of the leisure classes only from a distance.'<sup>15</sup> According to this theory, attacks on fellow-citizens for their 'degenerate habits' are not about those habits or extravagances themselves, but the different lifestyles they represent. In his speech against Meidias, for instance, which Ober uses as an example, Demosthenes has nothing against the white horses and drinking-cups but is using them to characterize Meidias in a certain way.<sup>16</sup> Meidias' *truphe* is not a problem in itself, so much as a symbol of the social and material differences which divide him from the rest of the population. Fish-consumption seems to be used in a similar way.

It is noticeable that a fondness for fish is alleged of a number of prominent figures in the fifth and fourth centuries. There are references to gross expenditure on fish in Eupolis' *Kolakes*, which satirized the wealthy, profligate Callias.<sup>17</sup> Cleon's greed, especially when faced with the prospect of sizzling squid, is referred to in the *Knights* and elsewhere by Aristophanes.<sup>18</sup> We have already noted Aeschines' use of the charge in his attack on Timarchus and his lover Hegesander, in the fourth century,<sup>19</sup> and the

<sup>11</sup> W. J. M. Starkie, *The Wasps of Aristophanes: Text and Commentary* (London, 1897), ad loc.

<sup>12</sup> A. W. Lintott, *Violence, Civil-strife, and Revolution in the Classical City* (London, 1982), p. 130; L. B. Carter, *The Quiet Athenian* (Oxford, 1986), p. 64 n. 29.

<sup>13</sup> D. M. MacDowell, *Aristophanes' Wasps: Text and Commentary* (Oxford, 1971), ad 495.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Kassel-Austin on Cratinus 171 l. 49; Hegesander, *FHG* (Müller) iv. 416 ap. Ath. 337f, and Lynceus of Samos ap. Ath. 7.285f. For the *γλαῦκος*, see W. G. Arnott's review of R. L. Hunter, 'Eubulus: The Fragments', *CR* 34 (1984), 182.

<sup>15</sup> J. Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens* (Princeton, 1989), p. 206 adducing Dem. 48.81, 18.320, and 36.43; cf. W. Donlan, *The Aristocratic Ideal in Ancient Greece: Attitudes of Superiority from Homer to the End of the Fifth Century* (Lawrence, Kansas, 1980), pp. 160-1; O. Murray 'The Symposium in History', in E. Gabba (ed.), *Tria Corda: Scritti in onore di Arnaldo Momigliano* (Como, 1983), pp. 257-72.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. esp. 160 and 174 K-A.

<sup>18</sup> E.g. 928ff., 353-5; cf. *Ach.* 1156-61.

<sup>19</sup> Aeschin. I.42 and 65.

same or similar charges are made against Hyperides,<sup>20</sup> Philocrates,<sup>21</sup> Aristonicus,<sup>22</sup> Callimedon,<sup>23</sup> and perhaps even Demosthenes, if a later tradition is anything to go by.<sup>24</sup> According to the class-envy theory of *truphe*, such charges, directed against the leading politicians of the day (sometimes, it must be remembered, as in Aeschines' attack on Timarchus, in deadly earnest), are about something more important than diet, they are about illustrating a clash of lifestyles, about creating a gulf of understanding between the object of these attacks and the audience/jury. And indeed, this interpretation can be supported by a number of references in the surviving literature.

First of all, it is quite clear that the price of fresh fish was generally high at Athens, a subject of anxiety, as various passages show. So, in a fragment from Diphilus' play *Emporos*, a character describes how he had to pay for a fish with its weight in silver, like Priam ransoming Hector.<sup>25</sup> Another poet talks of the fishmongers exacting 'royal tributes' for their produce,<sup>26</sup> while a character in Antiphanes' play *Neaniskoi* claims that he has to look away when he shops for fish, for if he sees for how small a fish they are charging so much, he would be frozen solid!<sup>27</sup>

Actual prices for fish are, as so often in classical Athens, hard to come by. There are some figures preserved in the comedies themselves. August Boeckh's collection of the evidence includes some very steep prices,<sup>28</sup> i.e. three drachmas for a single eel in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* 962, which Boeckh and Oder accept as accurate for the period of the Archidamian War, but which Starkie considers ridiculous.<sup>29</sup> Apart from this, we hear of an octopus offered at four obols in a play by Amphis, and a barracuda for eight.<sup>30</sup> Alexis 16 K-A in *Apeglaukomenos* shows that ten obols is thought too much for two grey mullets, while the same sum on the Athenian standard is accepted by the purchaser as the price of a single *labrax*, or sea-bass, in Diphilus' *Polypragmon*, only to be told that the fishmonger meant the higher Aeginetan standard.<sup>31</sup> Finally, in Eupolis' play *Kolakes*, eight *labrakes* and twelve gilt-heads (*chrysophrus*) cost one hundred drachmas, although it is possible that the list continues beyond the end of the fragment, and that the purchaser got more for his money than these twenty fishes.<sup>32</sup>

However, prices quoted in Comedy are notoriously unreliable and have come under attack in recent years. This comic exaggeration is especially noticeable in the case of dowries. The smallest dowry offered in Menander's plays is a talent, while evidence from boundary-stones and forensic speeches indicates that such large amounts were extremely rare, and as a proportion of the estate (Cnemon's whole estate is worth only two talents), quite unheard of.<sup>33</sup> With regard to fish-prices, we are

<sup>20</sup> Philetaerus 2 K-A; Timocles 4 and 17 K-A cf. Hermippus 68aII and 68b (Wehrli); [Plu.] *Vit. X Orat* 849e.

<sup>21</sup> Dem. 19.229.

<sup>22</sup> Alexis 130-1 K-A, see W. G. Arnott, 'Towards an Edition of the Fragments of Alexis', *PCPhS* n.s. 16 (1970), 6 n. 2. M. H. Hansen, 'Rhetores and Strategoi in Fourth-Century Athens', *GRBS* 24 (1983), 161.

<sup>23</sup> Eubulus 8 K-A, Alexis 249 K-A, Antiphanes 77 K-A.

<sup>24</sup> Ath. 13.592e-593a.

<sup>25</sup> 32 K-A.

<sup>26</sup> Alexis 204 K-A lines 3-4.

<sup>27</sup> Antiphanes 164 K-A.

<sup>28</sup> A. Boeckh, *Die Staatshaushaltung der Athener*, 3 Aufl. von Max Fränkel (Berlin, 1886), p. 129.

<sup>29</sup> A. Boeckh and E. Oder, *RE* I col. 3; W. J. M. Starkie, *Comm.*, ad loc.

<sup>30</sup> Amphis 30 K-A.

<sup>31</sup> 67 K-A.

<sup>32</sup> Eupolis 160 K-A.

<sup>33</sup> Men. *Dyscolus*, 737-9, cf. 327 and 844-7. Cf. M. I. Finley, *Studies in Land and Credit in Ancient Athens* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1952), p. 267 n. 29, but Menander has his supporters: cf. A. W. Gomme and F. H. Sandbach, *Menander: A Commentary* (Oxford, 1973), ad *Dys.* 738, T. B. L. Webster, *An Introduction to Menander* (Manchester, 1974), pp. 25-6; U. E. Paoli, 'Note giuridiche sul Δύσκολος di Menandro', *Mus. Helv.* 18 (1961), 53-62.

rather short of external evidence on which to base our assessment. Fortunately, however, an inscription from Acraephia in Boeotia was unearthed in two parts earlier this century.<sup>34</sup> There are manifold problems in trying to compare the probably maximum prices there listed, with our figures from Comedy. There is no reason why the Hellenistic economy of Acraephia, a small inland city, should be comparable to the economy of a great metropolis like Athens in the late fifth and fourth centuries; the prices at Acraephia are all quoted by mina, whereas all the prices in Attic Comedy are for whole fish or pieces of fish, whose size and weight we can only guess at. Nevertheless such comparisons have been made, and it may be worth noting the conclusions: 'the congruence is surely noteworthy, and strongly suggests that there was nothing intrinsically inflationary about the dialogue of Attic comedy.'<sup>35</sup>

The inscription at Acraephia brings us to another problem with regard to the fish-market at Athens, the question of whether or not prices were controlled.<sup>36</sup> There are certainly several references in the literature which could be interpreted as implying that at some time or other the activities of the fishmongers at Athens were supervised and restricted. The problem is to discover first of all the precise nature of these measures and secondly their time of duration and effectiveness. The evidence can be listed briefly: a reference in a play called 'The Purple-fish' by Xenarchus, to a law forbidding fishmongers to drench their fish to make them seem fresher than they were;<sup>37</sup> the series of mysterious laws ascribed to the politician Aristonicus in two fragments of Alexis' *Cauldron*;<sup>38</sup> and a comment in one of the scholiasts on the *Iliad* that in the market-law of Athens the taxes(?) for fish and eels are distinguished.<sup>39</sup> However, with prices fluctuating with every catch, it is difficult to see how restraint could be imposed, and the laws that are referred to seem to acknowledge the difficulty, like the law ascribed to Aristonicus, which tried to make the fishmonger stick to his original price, an attempt (surely doomed) to stop haggling.<sup>40</sup> Despite the obscurity of such references, we can draw some solid conclusions from all this speculation. First of all, that, although there were some cheaper exceptions, fresh fish was generally considered a great luxury at Athens, and secondly that as a result of this, there was a certain preoccupation with the price of fish in comedies and perhaps some attempts to control the trade through legal measures. The best fish would not be totally beyond the wage of the average Athenian citizen, but would take a large slice out of his weekly income; a dinner-party with fish-dishes served up to several guests, moreover, would probably be out of the question for any but the most wealthy.

We should not be surprised, then, to find fish occurring as a gauge of class and wealth at Athens in several places. So Timocles in his play *The Spiteful Man*,

<sup>34</sup> Michel Feyel, 'Nouvelles inscriptions d'Akraiphia', *BCH* 60 (1936), 27-36; F. Salviat and C. Vatin, *Inscriptions de Grèce centrale* (Paris, 1971), pp. 95-109.

<sup>35</sup> D. M. Schaps, 'Comic Inflation in the Market-Place', *Scripta Classica Israelica*, 8-9 (1985-8), 66-73, esp. 68-70. See also T. W. Gallant, *A Fisherman's Tale* (Ghent, 1985), pp. 39-40, who provides much useful information on the economics of fishing in the Mediterranean.

<sup>36</sup> The evidence for laws concerning fishing and the sale of fish is collected with a none-too-critical eye by Diedrich Bohlen, *Die Bedeutung der Fischerei für die antike Wirtschaft*, thesis (Hamburg, 1937), pp. 23ff. For fixed prices in general (a rare phenomenon in the classical period), see P. Millett 'Sale, Credit and Exchange in Athenian Law and Society', in P. Cartledge, P. Millett and S. Todd (eds.), *Nomos: Essays in Athenian Law, Politics and Society* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 172 n. 13 and 192 n. 53. Fantastic laws are a favourite theme of comedy and should be taken extremely cautiously. On the other hand, there is no reason why laws and decrees themselves should not have been impracticable from a modern point of view.

<sup>37</sup> 7 K-A.

<sup>38</sup> 130 and 131 K-A. For the identity of this Aristonicus and his political career, see n. 22.

<sup>39</sup> Scholiast on *Iliad* 21.203.

<sup>40</sup> Alexis 131 K-A.

describing the sycophant known as the Lark in the market-place, comments: 'an agora well stocked with fish is a joy to behold if you can afford it, but beyond endurance if you're of meagre means.' He then goes on to describe the Lark with four pieces of bronze in his pocket going to look at the eels, tuna, rays and crayfish, but having discovered the price of each, he scuttles off towards the sprats.<sup>41</sup>

The fish-market, therefore, represents a locus of distinction in a discourse of class and wealth. In the *Frogs* (1065ff.), Dionysus describes how a wealthy man who pretends to be poor and dresses in rags to avoid liturgies, exposes himself and his true wealth, when he is seen at the fish-stalls. Aeschines uses the same principle to denounce Timarchus and Hegesander, calling on the jury to recall all those occasions when they have been seen spending large amounts of money at the *opson*.<sup>42</sup> There are even a couple of extraordinary passages which seem to treat fish-consumption as a jealously guarded privilege of the rich. A fragment of Alexis' *Heiress* has one character suggesting that if a man, who in other regards is clearly short of money, is seen buying eels, he should be arrested and taken off to prison.<sup>43</sup> Another poet, Diphilus, in his play *Emporos*, has a character from Corinth claim: '[In Corinth] if we see someone buying fish conspicuously, we ask where he lives and what he does. And if he proves to have an estate whose revenues can pay his expenses, we let him enjoy this lifestyle. But if it happens that he is spending beyond his means, they forbid him to do it again. And if anyone disobeys, they are fined...'.<sup>44</sup> In the context of these passages, we should not be surprised to find that *temache* figure in Praxagora's list of things which will at last be available to all, come the revolution.<sup>45</sup> In fact, in one passage the full political implications are spelled out and we find ourselves very close to the sentiments expressed by the fishmonger in Bdelycleon's anecdote. The passage is from Antiphanes' play entitled significantly *Rich Men* (188 K-A). It describes two 'veteran fish-consumers', who, seeing one Euthynus buying fish, get into a panic that the market for fish has been cornered by a few rich men, and that the agora contains only *anopsia* (lack of fish) (l. 8). They gather crowds around them and denounce the perpetrators, ending their complaints: 'It's not democratic for him to do this and chomp on so many fish.'<sup>46</sup> Bdelycleon's anecdote set properly in this context seems rather less surreal. A discourse of conspicuous consumption and class-difference certainly seems to be at play in the literature concerning fish in classical Athens. However, this does not exhaust the possibilities of meaning in the passages discussed. There seems also to be a more metaphorical function at work, in this association of fish with wealth and status, in which the fish have come to represent power and the rewards of power.<sup>47</sup> This more metaphorical element can, I think, best be illustrated with an examination of Aristophanes' treatment of Cleon in the *Knights*.

Firstly, as noted above, at the most basic level, there seem to be references to Cleon's own love of sea-food. At 928ff., for instance, the Sausage-seller curses the Paphlagonian as follows: 'May your skillet of squid be standing ready and sizzling; and may you be about to propose a motion concerning the Milesians, and make a

<sup>41</sup> Timocles 11 K-A, lines 1-2.

<sup>42</sup> Aeschin. I.42 and 65. For this stall or area of the market, see n. 74.

<sup>43</sup> Alexis 78 K-A.

<sup>44</sup> Diphilus 31 K-A. J. B. Salmon, *Wealthy Corinth* (Oxford, 1984), p. 200 suggests the measure may go back to Periander. However, I think it must remain doubtful whether the measure ever existed at Corinth even in the 4th c. It is certainly of a kind quite different from other known archaic sumptuary legislation, including Periander's measures.

<sup>45</sup> Ar. Ecc. 606.

<sup>46</sup> Antiphanes 188 K-A, line 19.

<sup>47</sup> On metaphors of political voracity, see J. Taillardat, *Les Images d'Aristophane: études de langue et de style* (Paris, 1962) pp. 413-16.

talent if you carry it; and may you therefore make haste to fill yourself with the squid and still get to the Assembly in time, and then before you have eaten it may a man come for you, and may you in your eagerness to get the talent, choke on the squid as you eat it.' Again, at 353–5, the Paphlagonian boasts: 'Do you compare any man to me? I who can consume hot slices of tuna, drink a jugful of neat wine and then without a pause, screw the generals at Pylos.' Such references may conceal a more obscure, allegorical meaning, but it does seem possible that Cleon like many other politicians had a reputation as a lover of fish.<sup>48</sup> At any rate, the metaphorical elements in these passages are not allowed to stay quiet for long. The Paphlagonian's boast in 353–5 is followed by a similar one from the Sausage-seller which prompts Demosthenes to comment: 'I was pleased with the rest of what you said; but one thing doesn't appeal to me: that you mean to lap up the political gravy all by yourself.'<sup>49</sup> Developing the metaphor further, the Paphlagonian comments: 'But you wouldn't fall on the Milesian sea-bass and devour them', which seems to be a reference to a famous incident when Cleon accepted bribes from the Milesians for doing his best to get their tribute lowered.<sup>50</sup> The very same metaphor is used at line 313, where Cleon is described as 'watching like the tunny-fishers from the rocks above for shoals of tribute.'<sup>51</sup> A similar image occurs in the pseudo-prophecy of 1030–4, in which Demos is warned to be wary of the dog Cerberus (i.e. Cleon), who, 'when thou dinest will wag his tail ingratiatingly, watch his opportunity, and eat up *τοῦψον*, when you gape in another direction; and he will go frequently to the kitchen and dog-fashion, without thy being aware, will by night lick the plates and the islands clean.'<sup>52</sup> The prophecy and other references to Cleon's consumption of fish could also be alluding to the honour awarded to him after his victory at Sphacteria of being feasted in the prytaneum at public expense, referred to earlier in the play by the slave Demosthenes.<sup>53</sup> He talks of the food made available to the demagogue there: 'bread and meat and [of course] a fish-steak' and remarks sarcastically, that Pericles himself was never thought worthy of such an honour.<sup>54</sup>

If we look over these passages, it is obvious, firstly, that the fish can stand for bribes and embezzled funds, but there is more to it than that. Cleon's metaphorical *gourmandise* is turned on the tribute, and the allies, i.e. on the Athenian empire itself. The tribute is an important part of the power-relations between Athens and her allies, and indeed in several passages in Greek literature, conquest, empire and power are identified with the material rewards which derive from them, the *agatha*. In Herodotus' account of Cyrus' feast, for instance, the prizes of victory are represented as meat and fine wines, and the promise of other riches to come (1.125–6 cf. 1.71 and 1.88,3). When Aristagoras is attempting to persuade Cleomenes and the Spartans to

<sup>48</sup> As indeed the scholiasts suggest commenting on Ar. *Knights* 313; cf. Suidas s.v. *θυνηνοσκόπος*. <sup>49</sup> 359–60. The phrase is *τῶν πραγμάτων... τὸν ζωμόν*.

<sup>50</sup> Although it should be noted that sea-bass really were considered a great speciality of Miletus and the phrase 'Milesian sea-bass' became proverbial, cf. Arcestratus F45 (Brandt), 1–9; Suidas s.v. *λάβραξ*.

<sup>51</sup> *καπὸ τῶν πετρῶν ἀνωθεν τοὺς φόρους θυνηνοσκοπῶν*. For this metaphor in particular, cf. J. Taillardat, *Les Images*, p. 422. For the techniques of fishing referred to, cf. T. W. Gallant, *A Fisherman's Tale*, pp. 21–3.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. 1017–19 and 1023 and J. Taillardat, *Les Images*, pp. 403ff. The '*opson*' could well be the stall referred to in Ar. F 258 K–A; see n. 74.

<sup>53</sup> For public banqueting and the inscription known as the 'Prytaneion decree' (*IG* I<sup>3</sup>, 131), see P. Schmitt-Pantel, 'Les Repas au Prytanée et à la Tholos dans l'Athènes classique', *Annali, Istituto orientale di Napoli: Archeologia e storia antica* 2 (1980) [55–68], 58–9, and M. J. Osborne, 'Entertainment at the Prytaneion at Athens', *ZPE* 41 (1981), 153–70.

<sup>54</sup> Ar. *Knights* 282–3, cf. 709.

provide assistance against Persia, he talks of precious metals, fancy clothes, beasts of burden and slaves (5.49.4). The same principle lies behind the Old Oligarch's identification of the Athenians' motive for requiring the allies to come to Athens for trial as 'profit' (Pseudo-Xen. 16–17). In all these examples, power, wealth and luxuries flow self-consciously in the same channels. In fact, Aristophanes himself in the *Wasps* gives one of the most graphic accounts of this principle. Bdelycleon, trying to prove that the dikasts and maybe the ordinary citizens in general are not really sovereign, but mere slaves, couches his argument in terms of the money, food and other gifts given to the orators by the cities, and the lack even of some garlic for the people.<sup>55</sup> He suggests a more equitable solution, in which each city of the empire should support a number of citizens, and keep them fed with delicacies (709–10).<sup>56</sup> In the same way, Cleon's voracity, his gobbling up of squid and bribes, tuna and tribute, sea-bass and the islands, stands for his usurpation of power.

In fact, this symbolic relationship between material goods, particularly, in this case, food, is indicated in Bdelycleon's anecdote. His second altercation is with the woman who sells vegetables. She shouts from her stall: 'Tell me then, so you're after a leek; I suppose it's with a view to tyranny, or maybe you think Athens should be taxed to supply you with relishes?' Sommerstein points out that the passage is probably alluding to the Persian practice of assigning land for a particular purpose as tribute, just as the revenues of Magnesia were granted to Themistocles for his bread.<sup>57</sup> References to this system occur in several places in classical literature and it was clearly a widely known phenomenon.<sup>58</sup> Theopompus, discussing the system in his *History of Philip*, comments: 'For the dinner, like the tribute has from ancient times been imposed on all cities in proportion to their population.'<sup>59</sup>

If we return to the fish-stalls, we find a similar idea expressed in a fragment of Alexis' *Pylaiai*, which retains the analogy with Persian tribute, slightly altered. Now it is the fishmongers who are exacting *basilikous phorous* for their wares.<sup>60</sup> The situation is the reverse of that in the *Wasps*, but the fish occupy the same position as symbols of power, their purchase conceived of as a channel of power-relations.<sup>61</sup>

If this is the case, then we ought to be able to find some examples of a more direct association between tyrants or at least tyrannical power and the consumption of fish. The story of Polycrates as told by Herodotus comes most readily to mind; in

<sup>55</sup> Cf. esp. 518–20; 666–79; 682–95; 698–724.

<sup>56</sup> Ar. *Wasps* 709–10; cf. *Knights* 814–16 and 1166ff. J. Taillardat, *Les Images*, p. 397, comments: 'La politique alimentaire tient une telle place dans l'esprit du populaire que le Charcutier, rendant hommage au grand homme d'état Thémistocle, assimile tout naturellement ses bienfaits à un repas servi à Athènes.'

<sup>57</sup> A. H. Sommerstein, *Aristophanes' Wasps: Text and Commentary* (Warminster, 1983), ad loc.; Thuc. 1.138.5. I assume with MacDowell and Sommerstein that the request is for a leek to be given to him free of charge.

<sup>58</sup> Her. 2.98.1, cf. D. M. Lewis, 'The King's Dinner', in Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg and Amélie Kuhrt (eds.), *Achaemenid History*, II. *The Greek Sources* (Leiden, 1987), pp. 79–87; id., *Sparta and Persia* (Leiden, 1977), pp. 4–5, 53–5, 122; Alan B. Lloyd, *Herodotus Book II: A Commentary* (Leiden, 1976), vol. ii ad loc.; Thuc. 1.138.5; Xen. *Anab.* 1.4.9; [Plato] *Alcibiades I* 123bc; D.S. 1.52.

<sup>59</sup> Theopompus, *FGrHist* 115 F 113.

<sup>60</sup> Alexis 204 K–A, lines 3–4.

<sup>61</sup> Further to this might be a description of a painting in a Pisan temple (Strabo 8.343 and Ath. 8.346c) supposedly of Poseidon offering a tuna to Zeus while he is giving birth to Athena or Dionysus. Lippold, *RE* xii col. 574 considers that later viewers have misinterpreted an archaic representation of Poseidon's attributes, but it may be significant that the tuna was one of the few fish that could be sacrificed, see Jean-Louis Durand, 'Ritual as Instrumentality', in M. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant, *La Cuisine du sacrifice en pays grec* (Paris, 1979), Eng. transl. (London, 1989), pp. 127–8 and 116 fig. 10, and H. A. Shapiro 'Poseidon and the Tuna', *AC* 58 (1989), 32–43.

particular, the words of the fisherman when he presents his splendid fish (which will contain Polycrates' ring in its stomach) to the tyrant: 'Prince, when I caught this fish, I did not think it right to take it to the agora, although I am a man who must work for his living, but it seemed to me to be a fish worthy of you and of your *arche*; and so I have brought the fish to you as a gift' (3.42.1–2). At first sight the phrase 'worthy of your *arche*' looks rather odd. It is a sentiment perfectly understandable, however, in the light of the passages already cited, which demonstrate a ready association between material goods, especially food, and power. The great fish relates to Polycrates' *arche* in the same way that the *deipnon* supplied by the cities of the Persian empire relates to the power of the Great King over them, and the beestings and hares conjured up by Bdelycleon in *Wasps* 709–10 represent the power of the Athenian people over the cities of the empire.<sup>62</sup>

A slightly different kind of relationship in Greek consciousness between fish-consumption and, in this case, oriental despotism is indicated by the stories told to explain the strange cult of Atargatis of Syria. This goddess was one of the most important Levantine deities. Lucian's *De dea Syria* concerns her. It is clear that fish figured importantly in her cult, inasmuch as real fish or golden representations of fish were offered to her, and there were some kind of limitations on her followers' consumption of fish.<sup>63</sup> The relevance of these cult-practices for a study of the discourse of fish-eating is in the stories told by Greek writers to explain their origins. They refer to a queen Atargatis, who was said to have been such a great *opsophagos* that she reserved all the fish for herself and forbade her subjects to eat it, and as a result of this *hubris*, she and her son Ichthus 'were captured by Mopsus the Lydian and sunk in the lake of Ascalon to be gobbled up by the fish'.<sup>64</sup> In its fullest version, this story survives only in the fragments of third-century or later authors,<sup>65</sup> but Xenophon was aware of the taboo (*Anab.* 1.4.9) and we do have an unplaced fragment of Menander (754, Koerte), which shows knowledge of the practice: 'Take as an example the Syrians: whenever they eat fish, because of some loss of will-power, their feet and their stomachs swell up; then they put on sackcloth and go and sit in the road, on a dung-hill and supplicate the goddess by total self-abasement.'<sup>66</sup> Moreover, the final end of the queen and her son, consumed by the fish, is said to come from the fifth-century historian Xanthus of Lydia (*FGrHist* 765 F 17). If this is the case, then it is likely that the whole story derives from him, since the ending of the tyrannical queen makes more sense as a symmetrical reversal of fate: the fish-eater eaten by the fish. In this way, a disturbing practice which seems to show the barbarian Syrians as more ascetic and self-restrained than the Greeks, able to control their appetite for fine foods, enters the Greek discourse of fish-consumption as a tale of

<sup>62</sup> Other examples of the connection between fish and power, especially in a context of usurpation, are Plu. *Alex.* 23.9 with D.S. 17.108.4, and the strange fragment of the *Constitution of the Naxians*, preserved by Athenaeus (8.348bc) = Arist. fr. 510 (Rose). A similar association between fishing and the seizure of power is presented in a metaphor employed by Solon to describe the way people spoke of his refusal of autocratic power, Plu. *Solon*, 14.9 = Solon fr. 33 (West); cf. too the oracle given to Pisistratus just before the battle of Pallene, although here, the image of tunny-fishing refers not so much perhaps to a symbol for power, as to a graphic illustration of a planned mass slaughter of his enemies drawn into the confined space between Hymettus and Pentelicum (Hdt. 1.62.4). For a recent study of the passage with a rather different conclusion, see B. M. Lavelle, 'The Compleat Angler: Observations on the Rise of Peisistratos in Herodotos (1.59–64)', *CQ* 41 (1991), 317–24.

<sup>63</sup> See esp. *De dea Syria*, 14 and 45–7.

<sup>64</sup> Ath. 8.346de.

<sup>65</sup> Antipater of Tarsus F64 (*SVF* iii.257); cf. Mnaseas of Patara, *FHG* (Müller) iii.155.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Timocles 4 K–A, line 9, on the phenomenon of Syrians not eating fish.



oriental despotism and of gods for whom sacrifice stands at the opposite pole from the Greek ideal of commensality, emphasizing instead the gulf between the divine and the human.

Easily the most elaborate and amusing example of fish used as a symbol of tyrannical power occurs in Juvenal's Fourth Satire, which concerns an enormous fish and its preparation for the emperor Domitian. However, a prototype of this kind of story is found in an obscure allegorical fragment of Ephippus' *Geryon*.<sup>67</sup> The fragment describes, in pseudo-epic language, the preparation of an enormous fish for Geryon: 'Whenever the dwellers in that country catch a fish – *not one of everyday size, but bigger in bulk than Crete...*', the speaker goes on to describe how the neighbouring peoples prepare to help cook the dish and supply the sauce. The meaning of the allegory has not yet been agreed upon. I am not convinced by Dušanić's rather elaborate interpretation, with the fish representing an alliance and Geryon as the Athenian general Timotheus. The reference to Geryon in line 9, as *basileus* without the article, would immediately bring to mind the Persian king, whose messengers are described as giving instructions to the neighbours, who include the Athenians and the king of Macedonia, without getting involved in the cooking themselves. For our purposes at any rate, the precise meaning of the allegory need not be important, but the passage does show, again, the use of a fish and its preparation as the locus of power-relations between Geryon and the neighbours.<sup>68</sup>

There are a few other references to fish and tyrants, especially Sicilian tyrants, in the literature,<sup>69</sup> but in all these examples of fish and tyranny, the theme is the same: the reservation of the choicest fish or the greatest fish or, in the case of Atargatis, of all fish, for the ruler, and the corresponding denial of the fish to everybody else. This is what lies behind the charge of undemocratic behaviour aimed at poor Euthynus by the two veteran *opsophagoi* in the fragment of Antiphanes examined above, and the same line of thinking is revealed in a fragment of dialogue from Alexis' *Phaedo*, in which one character imagines a second as *agoranomos*, trusting him to stop Callimedon's incessant assaults on the fish-stall. The second speaker balks at this, since he says it would be *ἐργον τυράννων*.<sup>70</sup>

If we return now to the symbolism of fish in the *Knights*, we can see how this association between food, especially fish and power, can illuminate other passages. When the Chorus talk of the reversal that Demos can inflict on the demagogues, when he so chooses, the image they use is all about feeding. Demos allows the demagogues to get fat, but when he is ready he himself will gobble them up as a substitute for his *opson*. The idea that Demos holds the real power is indicated by a metaphor in which he has the last bite, as it were.<sup>71</sup> Then again, there is the marvellous simile at 864ff.,

<sup>67</sup> Ephippus 5 K–A. For the date, cf. T. B. L. Webster, *Studies in Later Greek Comedy* (Manchester, 1953), pp. 42–3; S. Dušanić, 'Athens, Crete and the Aegean after 366/5 B.C.', *Talanta* 12/13 (1980–1), 12.

<sup>68</sup> Dušanić, *ibid.*, 23–7. Interestingly, Nesselrath, *Die Attische Mittlere Komödie*, p. 221, arguing from different concerns, comes to a similar conclusion: 'Wer immer in fr. 5 von Geryones und seinem Riesenfisch erzählte, tat dies wohl, um Herakles von der Macht des Gegners, gegen den er antreten sollte, einen Begriff zu geben und ihm klarzumachen, auf welch gefährliches Abenteuer er sich einließ.'

<sup>69</sup> e.g. an allusion in Theopompus, *FGHist* 115 F 187 to the tyrant Nysaeus' fondness for fish, in Phaenias ap. Athenaeus 1.6ef to Dionysius the Elder reserving the largest fish for himself and in Diodorus Siculus to the tyrant Gelon's fish-pond in Agrigentum (11.25); for the general theme of the tyrant as devourer in archaic literature, see Maria Fileni, 'Osservazioni sull'idea di tiranno nella cultura greca arcaica', *Quaderni urbinati di cultura classica*, 43 (1983), 29–35.

<sup>70</sup> Alexis 249 K–A, line 4.

<sup>71</sup> Ar. *Knights* 1131ff.; cf. also 282–3, 707, 709, 816, and 1148.

an image which Aristophanes later claimed had been plagiarized by other poets.<sup>72</sup> In this simile, Cleon is compared to an eel-fisher, who can only capture his prey by stirring up the mud, which means not only that he uses litigation to win money and bribes, but that he engages the city in *stasis* in order to win power.<sup>73</sup>

It is clear from all this discussion, that the class-division theory, which describes the discourse about fish primarily in terms of a discourse about conspicuous consumption and differences in lifestyle between economic groups, needs to be supplemented and modified somewhat. Clearly all these references to fish are not merely about the lifestyle of the rich. Herodotus is not simply concerned to show the difference in the ways of life of Polycrates and his subjects, and Aristophanes is not trying merely to distance Cleon from the common people. The fish are important on the symbolic level, because they can be used to represent power.

I would now like to look at a third important element in the treatment of fish-consumption: the way in which it could be constructed as a dangerous and threatening thing in itself, a force which drives men from within to desperate actions. This aspect of the discourse of fish-eating can best be illustrated by looking in more detail at the accusations made against Timarchus by Aeschines, in his speech of 345.

In 42, the orator describes how the defendant responded to Misgolas' monetary incentive to move in with him:

Timarchus did not hesitate, but submitted to it all, though he had income enough. For his father had left him a very large property, which he has squandered, as I will show in the course of my speech. But he behaved as he did, because he was a slave to the most shameful vices, *opsophagia*, expensive dinner-parties, flute-girls, hetaeras, dicing and all those other things by none of which should a free and noble man allow himself to be overwhelmed.

Later in Aeschines' narrative, he describes how Timarchus goes to live with Hegesander, to live off funds embezzled from the general Timomachus (65): 'That this is true you all know. For who among you has never yet arrived at the fish-stall and seen their lavish expenditures?'<sup>74</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Ar. *Clouds* 559. Cf. K. J. Dover ad loc.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. J. Taillardat, *Les Images*, p. 411, and Lowell Edmunds, *Cleon, Knights and Aristophanes' Politics* (Lanham, Maryland, 1987), p. 7 and in general on the theme of disturbance, pp. 5–20.

<sup>74</sup> The reference to *toupson* at 65 has caused translators some difficulty. R. E. Wycherley, *The Athenian Agora*, iii (Princeton, 1957), # 637–9, lists it as a place where 'Fish, meat etc.' are sold. His only explicit evidence for this seems to be the scholiast commenting on this passage in Aeschines' speech, who refers to the more general meaning of *opson* and claims it is a place where 'all edibles are sold'. This is wrong on any account, and derives from a later misunderstanding of the category of *opson*. The error shows that the scholiast knows no more than that the Athenians named stalls after what was sold there, and cannot be used as independent evidence for the wares to be found at the *opson*. Others, like Charles Adams, the translator of the Loeb edition, have chosen to see it as some kind of delicatessen, but *opson* does not mean delicacy, and there is no evidence, even if we include the Aeschines scholion, for a stall like a delicatessen at Athens which would have to mix up fish, meats, dairy produce and vegetables, which in the classical period at least seem to have been kept separate. We have only the title to go on, and this leaves two reasonable possibilities: (1) a major division of the market-place, where all foods that could serve as *opson* were kept together and distinguished from an area where grain and grain-products were sold, or (2) with LSJ, the fish-market. The problem with the first possibility is simply that there is no evidence for such major divisions of the agora, and it is hard to see the point of criticizing someone for being at the *opson*, when they could be merely buying olives or lentils. On the other hand, *opson* and its diminutive, as Johannes Kalitsunakis showed in his article on the subject ("Ὀψον und ὀψάριον" in *Festschrift für P. Kretschmer* (Vienna, 1926), pp. 96–106) were already occasionally used to specify fish in Old Comedy, a usage which became more and more common in the fourth century, especially in compounds used of the market, like *euopsos* (well stocked with fish), *anopsia* (lack of fish) and *opsonomos* (magistrate to control the

These passages from Aeschines' speech make explicit the compulsive nature of desire for fine foods, which almost always means fish, already noticeable in many of the comic fragments we have looked at. Firstly, we see that it is number one in the list of 'the most shameful pleasures', associated with flute-girls, hetaeras and dicing. Secondly, it is a pleasure which enslaves its victims, a compulsive thing, like sex and gambling. Thirdly, because of its nature it is a drain on resources that leaves its victims vulnerable to the enticements of prostitution and other crimes in order to pay for their addiction. This characterization of fish-consumption as an addiction may perhaps require illustration.

Anaxandrides' play *Odysseus* contains a eulogy of the fisherman's art:

What other profession gets youthful lips burning, gets their fingers fumbling, has their lungs gasping for air, in their haste to swallow? And isn't it only when it's well stocked up with fish that the agora can bring about liaisons (*συνουσίās*)? For what mortal gets a dinner-date if all he finds for sale when he gets to the counter are fish-fingers, or corbs, or a picarel? And as for some really good-looking man, with what magic words, with what chat-up lines would you overcome his defences, if you take away the fisherman's profession? For this is the profession that subdues, conquering with bouillabaisse's bedroom eyes, drawing up the (...) of lunch to undermine the body's defences(?),<sup>75</sup> this is the profession that gets the free-loader to lie down and pay his way.<sup>76</sup>

In this passage, the use of fish for the purposes of seduction quickly merges with the idea of the fish's face itself seducing. This conflation of ideas is fully developed in a metaphor employed by Diphilus in his play *Emporos*. The speaker complains about the high price asked for the fish: 'nevertheless, if one of them ever smiled at me, I would pay, albeit with a groan, all that the fishmonger asked of me.' This representation of fish as seductive bodies, comparable with the sex-objects of Athenian society, the boys and the women, creates a *topos* in which the eel, usually dressed in beet-leaves, is likened to a lady or a seductive goddess. In the *Acharnians*, when Dicaeopolis learns that the Boeotian has fifty 'Copaic maidens' in his sack, he

price of fish), where the *ops*-element seems to refer exclusively to fish; see Anaxandrides 34 K-A, Antiphanes 188 K-A, Timokles 11 K-A and Sophilos 2 K-A. *Opsopolion* and *opsopolia* are used by later authors to refer to places where specifically fish were sold (see LSJ svv), terms which would be automatically translated into the Attic idiom as *toupson*. The *opson* moreover is where such notorious consumers of sea-food as Callimedon swoop down (Alexis 249 K-A), and the only occasion when we are given a glimpse of what could be bought at the *opson*, in Aristophanes 258 K-A, it turns out to be fish and sea-food, a passage which is the main support for LSJ's gloss 'fish-market'. All in all, then, it is very probable that Aeschines' *toupson* is the same as Aristophanes', and that the orator's attack on Timarchus should be placed in the context of the many other passages where citizens and especially politicians are criticized or ridiculed for being caught at the fish-stall.

<sup>75</sup> This line has sometimes caused problems for editors and translators, although Kassel-Austin seem happy with it as it is. Anaxandrides is continuing the military narrative with what looks like an image of an assault on a city: I suggest that a bowl or ladle is pictured as a siege-machine to batter the young man's defences.

<sup>76</sup> Anaxandrides 34 K-A, lines 5ff. Cf. the suggestion of Lynceus of Samos ap Ath. 7.295ab that Theseus yielded his favours to Tlepolemus for the sake of a particularly tasty fish, and the story of Oppian that Pan lured Typhon out of his lair with a meal of fish, *Hal.* 3.18-19. Fish are sometimes found used as love-gifts in vase-painting, see G. Koch-Harnack, *Knabenliebe und Tiergeschenke* (Berlin, 1983), pp. 133 Abb. 65 and 229-31, and cf. G. Mommsen, *Der Affecter* (Mainz, 1975), p. 64 for men carrying fish for some unknown reason on several of that painter's vases. For the desultory fish in lines 11-12 see Kassel-Austin ad loc. and cf. Alan Davidson, *Mediterranean Seafood* (2nd ed., Harmondsworth, 1981), p. 90 'in Venice you could insult someone by calling him a picarel-eater'. For the use of fish in love-magic and seduction, see Adam Abt, *Die Apologie des Apuleius von Madaura und die antike Zauberei* [= Albrecht Dietrich and Richard Wünsch (eds.), *Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten*, Heft II] (Gießen, 1908, repr. Berlin, 1967), pp. 135-6 and 140-4.

goes into raptures: 'O my sweetest, my long-awaited desire...'.<sup>77</sup> In the *Peace*, Trygaeus imagines the fish-lover Melanthius' reaction, if he were to arrive too late for the eels: 'I perish, I perish', he cries, parodying lines from his own play *Medea*, 'deprived of my darlings embowered in beet'.<sup>78</sup> It could be suggested that such metaphors are the product of comic discourse, with its fondness for startling and jarring *eikones*, but the practice of comparing women to fish and vice versa seems to have been rather general in Athenian society in which flute-girls and hetaeras were apparently given nick-names like 'Atherine', 'Red Mullet' or 'Cuttlefish'.<sup>79</sup> This practice is exploited to comic effect by Antiphanes in his play *The Girl Who Goes Fishing*, where he plays on this double-meaning of the names of fish, so that it is impossible to know whether he is satirizing his victims for their love of fish or for their excessive devotion to prostitutes.<sup>80</sup>

The question in fact is probably a moot one, since the two things are paired together so often, not, as we might have suspected, by accident, nor because these are the 'two chief objects of Athenian extravagance', as Becker commented,<sup>81</sup> but because somehow they implicate the subject in the same desires. Timarchus' *opsophagia* is not a matter of an excessively refined and well-drilled palate, but an uncontrollable lust. The fish seduces and conquers. It functions like the forces of persuasion, or the allure of a hetaira, or the magical power of charms.<sup>82</sup> Several passages attest this overwhelming power. The Sausage-seller's curse of the Paphlagonian (*Knights* 928ff.) depends on the fact that Cleon would find the sizzling squid absolutely irresistible, holding as great an attraction for him as a talent in bribes from the Milesians (which have already been described irresistibly as 'the Milesian sea-bass' 361). A similar curse, in which, again, the longed-for squid is snatched away before the cursed man can taste it, occurs in the *Acharnians* (1156–61). Antiphanes 77 K–A also uses the accepted view of the irresistibility of fish in the following comparison: 'I'd as soon give up my purpose as Callimedon would give up the head of a *γλαῦκος*'. Some may balk at reading any serious conclusion into these satirical and deliberately bathetic passages, but even in serious writings, *opsophagia* is treated as a passion as strong as a sexual one. So Chrysippus, writing in the third century, uses the word *opsomanes*, comparing the man so afflicted by excessive desire for *opson* with the *gunaikomanes*, the woman-mad.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, we must not forget that Aeschines' purpose in discussing Timarchus' lavish culinary expenditures is to have him deprived of all citizen's rights, exiled or executed.

In fact, it is very easy to see the similarities between the depiction of fish-consumers in Comedy, and Aeschines' characterization of Timarchus' *gourmandise*. The third stage in Timarchus' ruin as outlined by Aeschines in 42 is that this uncontrollable desire has gobbled up his resources and those of his lover Hegesander. Their patrimonies have been 'wasted, diced away and consumed in *opsophagia*'.<sup>84</sup> Timarchus ate up his patrimony, declares the orator, and had to sell his estate at a low price, without waiting for a better offer, 'so very quickly did he press on towards his pleasures' (96). This link between *opsophagia* and the destruction of estates can again be paralleled in Comedy. The fishmongers in Alexis' *Pulaiai* not only exact 'royal tributes', but 'steal away our entire property every day'.<sup>85</sup> 'Alive or dead the

<sup>77</sup> Ar. *Ach.* 885, cf. 894. <sup>78</sup> Ar. *Peace* 1013–14; cf. also Eubulus 34 and 36 K–A.

<sup>79</sup> See esp. Archippus 27 K–A and Antiphanes 27 K–A with the editors' comments ad loc.

<sup>80</sup> Antiphanes, *ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> W. A. Becker, *Charicles*, Eng. transl. (London, 1874), p. 324.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Anaxandrides 34 K–A and n. 76.

<sup>83</sup> SVFiii. 167 # 667.

<sup>84</sup> I.95: ... ἀπωλάλει καὶ κατεκεκύβετο καὶ κατωψοφάγητο...

<sup>85</sup> Alexis 204 K–A, line 6.

fish are at war with us,' declares a character in Alexis' *Hellenis*, for anyone who falls overboard will be eaten, and even when dead, 'they are bought for the price of an estate and whoever has paid the price must run away, suddenly a beggar'.<sup>86</sup> The mechanisms revealed in Comedy, therefore, can be used to illuminate the plausibility of Aeschines' arguments. Comedy and Oratory are clearly very different genres, but they seem to participate in the same discourse of the nature of *opsophagia* and the Athenian response to the pleasures of the fish.<sup>87</sup>

The similarity in treatment between Oratory and Comedy can be demonstrated again in the next stage on the road to ruin, as outlined by Aeschines: crime. Earlier I cited passages from plays by Diphilus and Alexis in which it is suggested that men who are thought unable to afford fish should keep away from the fish-stalls or be punished. Both passages can be used as evidence for the importance of class-divisions in the treatment of fish-consumption; however, this is not the reasoning given by the poets. The speaker in Diphilus' *Emporos* explains the measure like this: 'Because that man cannot live without some kind of criminal activity, you understand, but is bound to spend his nights as a cloak-snatcher or a burglar, or in cahoots with those who do such things, or he must play the sycophant in the agora or perjure himself for money.'<sup>88</sup> When Praxagora announces in the *Ecclesiazusae* that *temache* along with other things will at last be available to all, come the revolution, Blepypus (or the Chorus) comments that as it is, only thieves can have them (608). This thinking accords with the general view of Isocrates that *aporia* leads inevitably to *kakourgia* (7.44). And Aeschines, again, in just the same way uses this line of argument to show how Timarchus must have turned to prostitution.

Aeschines, then, draws on his audience's preconceptions about the nature of a fondness for fish to assist his argument's plausibility. It enables him to explain how a man of Timarchus' wealth and resources could be reduced to poverty and therefore be forced to sell his body. Under the influence of his all-consuming passion, Timarchus remains a threat to the estates of others. Then again, his enslavement to fine foods is paralleled by the submission of his body. Both are inappropriate and unseemly for a free man, a citizen, one who speaks in the Assembly. The last point, of course, is the crucial one, the defendant's disqualification from speaking in the *ecclesia*. But what relevance does all this talk of his dietary habits have to the issue? Money spent on sea-bass and eels is money not spent on trierarchies, and indeed, as we are told, the estate bequeathed to Timarchus and consumed by him would not merely have been preserved by another man, but could even have supported liturgies (97).

But Aeschines is building up to more serious matters. At 106 he remarks that Timarchus has wasted not only his own patrimony, but also the city's own resources. For he has had a very active career, filled, according to the orator, with bribery, blackmail and even extortion from the citizens of Andros (107): 'making your allies a ready source of supply for his own lusts'. Finally, in his summary, the orator places Timarchus' vices in their proper context: 'The impetuous lusts of the body and insatiate desire – these it is that fill the robber-bands, that send men on board the pirate's boats; these are for each man his Fury, urging him to slay his fellow-citizens, to serve tyrants, to help to overthrow the *demos*. For such men do not think of disgrace, nor of punishment to come, but are beguiled by the pleasures they expect if they succeed.'<sup>89</sup> There we have it; the full account of the problematization of

<sup>86</sup> Alexis 76 K–A, lines 7–8.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. also Antiphanes 27 K–A line 11 and Hyperides F 26 ap. Pollux vi.39.

<sup>88</sup> Diphilus 31 K–A, lines 12–17; cf. Alexis 78 K–A. <sup>89</sup> Aeschines I.191.

*opsophagia* at Athens. Patrimonies squandered and lost, young men turned to prostitution, bribes taken, then blackmail and the embezzlement of funds from Athena's treasury, then the extortion of money from the allies and finally plots against the state and tyranny, all deriving ultimately from, among other things, Timarchus' addiction to fish. We find ourselves back once again, by a rather more circuitous route, with Bdelycleon at the fish-stalls.

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