

Introduction

Who is so precise a tactician or critic of dishes as this poet from Gela—or rather Katagela—, who with such precision on account of his gluttony sailed even through the Strait and tested the qualities and flavours of the parts of each fish, as if he were laying the foundation of some science likely to improve human existence?

Ath. 7. 314f, transl. Olson and Sens (2000).

The above quote is a cynical take on the work of Archestratos of Gela, uttered by one of the scholars attending Ulpian's dinner party in Athenaios' *Deipnosophistai*, the aptly named Cynic philosopher Kynoulkos. Cynical or no, the quote gives a strikingly comprehensive overview of the work. The *Hedypatheia* was indeed about fish, their qualities and flavours, how to prepare them, and where they were best found.

This thesis will concern itself with this remarkable treatise on fish, but before formulating a main research question, as Archestratos of Gela is far from a household name even among classicists, a brief introduction to this author and his main work are in order.

Archestratos of Gela and his Hedypatheia

Archestratos was a poet from the town of Gela, Sicily. His only known work, the *Hedypatheia*, or *Life of Luxury*, written in Greek, can be dated quite confidently to the fourth century BCE, and had to be written at the very latest around the time of Alexander the Great.¹ The gastronomic poem, in dactylic hexameters, is a discussion of different items of food, mostly fish—but bread as well, for example—, where they can or should be purchased, their distinctive flavours and other qualities, and of how to cook them. These instructions are passed on to two of his friends, both apostrophized in the remaining fragments, called Kleandros and Moschos. Only 60 of these fragments—about 340 odd verses—of the work survived. Even though Athenaios was outspokenly negative about Archestratos' work, he mentions it strikingly often. In fact, all remaining fragments of the *Hedypatheia* were quoted in Athenaios' *Deipnosophistai*.

¹ Olson and Sens (2000), Introduction, xxi-xxii, and specifically: Dalby (1995), 404 on the dating of the work. Archestratos' floruit is impossible to be determined more exactly than the first two-thirds of the 4th century BCE.

The Hedypatheia read from the perspective of Greek comedy

Almost nothing is known of the author, and how the work is to be interpreted is less than certain. This will be addressed extensively in the first chapter of this thesis, in which a myriad of genres and literary traditions scholars have opted for the *Hedypatheia* will be discussed. We will discover that Arcestratos' work is a literary oddity, impossible to be fit comfortably in any one genre. Its closest parallel, classicists Olson and Sens note, appears to be in Athenian comedy, specifically Platon Komikos' *Phaon*. It is in this particular play that the interest in fish shared by the *Hedypatheia* and Athenian comedy in general is combined with the mentioning of a cookbook on how to prepare fish—perhaps a parody of Arcestratos' own work.² The close correlation between Arcestratos' work and Athenian comedy is augmented further by the tradition of epic parody, which also figures strongly in comedy, and also seems to have had a specific interest in gastronomy, as well as a more local Sicilian comic tradition. Both will be discussed more extensively in the first chapter. However, despite the strong parallels in subject matter and parodic focus shared by the *Hedypatheia* and comedy, comedy seems to be a rather overlooked genre in interpreting this poem.³ Although both modern editions with commentary of the work mention comedy as a strong literary parallel, neither of them discusses the relationship in detail, noting only direct textual parallels in the commentary, and parallels in subject, without looking at them at a more detailed level.⁴ In this thesis I attempt to do exactly that, to pursue this relation of the *Hedypatheia* and Athenian comedy further and in more detail, to see what light the comic tradition can shed on the interpretation of the work.

As an exhaustive comparison of all available material of Athenian comedy with the fragments of Arcestratos' work is far beyond the scope of this thesis, the focus will be on two specific thematic parallels. The first is the subject matter and its cultural connotations. Seafood

² Olson and Sens (2000), xl-xliii. Wilkins and Hill (2001) [1994], 16-17. The specific fragment will be treated in more detail in chapter 2.

³ Shaw (2009) reads the *Hedypatheia* from the perspective of comedy, which is the only such attempt I know of. John Wilkins mentions the *Hedypatheia* and comedy are connected, but does not elaborate on this. See: Wilkins (2000, b), 531.

⁴ The 1984 edition of Arcestratos' fragments by Montanari was to include a commentary, which never appeared. Her textual apparatus is apparently rather unusable – “so ill-designed as almost to baffle use”, in the words of Olson and Sens (2000), lxxiii. The edition will therefore be left out of consideration.

has figured in comedy since Aristophanes and has strong connections with sex and luxury.⁵ I will explore this sexual connotation, if and how it allows a more detailed interpretation of at least certain fragments of the *Hedypatheia* through comedy, taking Shaw (2014) as an example of this sexual connotation. The same goes for the second subject of focus – the figure of the comic chef or *mageiros*, which will be compared to Archestratos' narrator. An additional advantage of these two specific subjects is that they both figure especially strongly in the so-called 'Middle' and 'New' comedy, again limiting the source material for this thesis. This approach led to the following main question:

How was the *Hedypatheia* connected to Athenian comedy, and how might the (Attic) comic tradition inform the interpretation of this work?

Several questions that contribute to answering this main question with the points of focus discussed above will be treated in each chapter:

1. In light of which literary tradition(s) is the *Hedypatheia* usually considered? This will include a status quaestionis on the genre of the work, with a more extensive account of epic parody and Sicilian comedy, leading up to Attic comedy.
2. What are the connotations of fish treated in comedy and by Archestratos with sex and luxury, and how might these contexts inform the interpretation of the fragments of the *Hedypatheia*?
3. What is the figure of the comic *mageiros*? How was it fashioned in comedy, when did it emerge, how does it relate to Archestratos's narrator-persona and to what effect does this inform the interpretation of the *Hedypatheia*?

The first thing to do now is to take a closer look at what the *Hedypatheia* is usually taken as in terms of genre and establish more clearly how it is connected to the comic tradition. After all, if we are to argue a connection between the *Hedypatheia* and Attic comedy, we first need to establish that Archestratos actually knew of this tradition. Before we can do this, however, a caveat is in place, pertaining to the way in which the work has come to us.

⁵ Shaw (2014) on sexual connotations; Davidson (1997), specifically the chapter on "eating", 3-39.

Athenaios and the distortion of tradition

The *Deipnosophistai* has often been viewed as a literary treasure chest, an indispensable source of many fragments of Greek literature which would have been lost completely if not for Athenaios' erudite scholarship.⁶ This is, rather paradoxically, also the inherent problem of the *Deipnosophistai*—as was mentioned, all extant fragments of Arcestratos' work, and even all of the testimonia by other authors, were quoted by Athenaios, which makes one wonder if Athenaios' choice of quotes from this work has not somehow distorted the way in which we view the *Hedypatheia*. Athenaios had a keen interest in Greek banquet foods and drink, so of course the fragments of Arcestratos he quotes are those about fish—the available evidence simply does not allow us to know with absolute certainty if other items were also discussed to the same extent in the *Hedypatheia*.

We are not clueless, however. Classical philologists Olson and Sens have suggested that the fragments of Arcestratos represent a considerable part—about 28 percent—of the *Hedypatheia*, as Athenaios never mentions the work by book number, which means it did not take up more than one book roll.⁷ Admittedly, this is still only a small part, even though Olson, Sens and classical philologist John Wilkins assert that this percentage left is enough to reasonably assume that the subject matter of the fragments is representative of the whole work. Perhaps a more reliable reason can be gleaned from Athenaios' particular obsession with Arcestratos and his writings. Wilkins has suggested that the *Hedypatheia* was used as an important organising principle for the *Deipnosophistai*.⁸ This, as well as the extreme negativity expressed about Arcestratos' poem in the *Deipnosophistai*, suggests that the work must have been at least for the most part accurately represented in it—Athenaios' learned readers would presumably not accept his remarks about the poem otherwise.⁹ The opinion of

⁶ The *Deipnosophistai* has only relatively recently begun to draw attention as a literary product in itself, as is the case for many works from the Second Sophistic. The most complete work exploring the *Deipnosophistai* from this perspective is Braund and Wilkins (edd.) (2000).

⁷ Olson and Sens (2000), xxiv. Classicist Andrew Dalby also suspects that the remaining verses of the *Hedypatheia* represent a reasonable sample of the original. I do not, however, find his argument - two of the most important places for good food for a traveller from Sicily crop up often in the poem - completely convincing, see: Dalby (1995), 407.

⁸ Wilkins (2008).

⁹ Whether Arcestratos' poem would be widely known among the Roman (scholarly) elite in the second century AD is once again disputable, but it is at least partly supported by the fact that the Roman epic poet Quintus Ennius had made an adaptation in Latin of parts of the *Hedypatheia*, the *Hedyphagetica*.

Sumptuous Seafood and Glorious Gastronomy

his fellow scholars could also be used to dispute possible adaptation by Athenaios of the fragments of the *Hedypatheia*, provided that the work was known among Athenaios' readers.

Possible distortion in the *Deipnosophistai* is a problem inherent to all of the works quoted in it—sufficient care must be taken. It is not insurmountable, however, and we must, in any case, work with what we have.

1. The literary tradition

As was mentioned, Arcestratos' work bears strong similarities to Athenian comedy, particularly to Platon Komikos' play *Phaon*. Before we can explore these similarities further, we must first try to determine at the crossroads of which literary genres the *Hedypatheia* stands, as they might inform how the comic tradition—the specific literary tradition with which this thesis will concern itself—is connected to the *Hedypatheia*. Determining an exact genre for this work is a neigh impossible task, as we will shortly see. We will start with an overview of the considerations on the genre of this Arcestratos' poem, which will demonstrate its literary plurality. I will also discuss the intended audience of the poem, as this audience is important in considering the comic influences on the work. This will be followed by a more extensive treatment of epic parody and the tradition of Sicilian comedy to place the *Hedypatheia* in the comic tradition.

Something smells fishy – making sense of the Hedypatheia

In the third century BCE, doing groceries had apparently become a daunting enough task for the poet Lynkeus of Samos to dedicate a whole treatise to how to do it properly. He advises shoppers to keep Arcestratos' *Hedypatheia* in mind, to scare the salesmen with his verses and so haggle down the price of fish.¹⁰ To Lynkeus, apparently, Arcestratos' work had its—slightly mischievous—more practical uses. This tongue-in-cheek mentioning of the work teaches us little, however, of what the poem on fish was intended to be.

Is the *Hedypatheia* what at first glance it may seem to be, simply a serious practical manual on good food—as Lynkeus would have it and is often suggested in the fragments themselves when Arcestratos advises on how to prepare fish—and nothing more than that? If the *Hedypatheia* was meant to be a serious manual, intended solely to instruct, Arcestratos' choice to compose the work in verse seems odd – a prose treatise would perhaps have been more believable. The lack of practicalities of cooking in the poem also does not go well with interpreting the work as a hands-on cooking manual.¹¹ This is not to say that the work may not have been a partly serious instruction, but we should be weary, as several of his

¹⁰ Ath. 7. 313f.

¹¹ Arch. fr. 14 is one of the few examples in which Arcestratos gives specific instructions on how to prepare fish.

admonitions are clear cases of comic exaggeration. In fr. 22 for example, he advises to steal a threshers-shark from a shop if it cannot be bought – even at the cost of one’s own life.

A completely serious manual seems out of the question, then. Another line of inquiry used by scholars is historiography, specifically the work of Herodotos. It was first suggested by German philologist Brandt in 1888 that the opening line of Arcestratos’ work, in which he portrays his poem as ἱστορία, a research, resembles Herodotus’ proem in his *Histories*:

ἱστορίας ἐπιδείγμα ποιούμενος Ἑλλάδι πάσῃ
making an account of my research for all of Hellas
Arch. fr. 1, ap. Ath. 1. 4d-e.¹²

However, as Olson and Sens have noted, even though Arcestratos is at one point in the *Deipnosophistai* compared to authors of *periegeses* and *periploi*, and he certainly emphasised the importance of place in his poem, his general interest as portrayed in the *Hedypatheia* is far from the Herodotean tradition of describing local customs.¹³ Arcestratos’ opening line may well be generally (and mockingly) scientific rather than specifically Herodotean.¹⁴

Another, more tentative interpretation of the poem should be mentioned. American classical philologist Emily Gowers showed in 1993 how food in Roman literature was often used as a metaphor for a certain style of poetry. She argued that Arcestratos promoted a light style of cooking with very little use of seasonings, in order to advocate a light, elegant style of poetry.¹⁵ This suggestion seems attractive, as a tradition of short Hellenistic poetry did prevail after 300 BCE, Kallimachos being its most famous representative.¹⁶ Wilkins and Hill do not explicitly dispute this interpretation, as it fits their insistence that Arcestratos’ style of cooking was markedly lighter—i.e., less use of heavy sauces—than other known ancient cooking styles.¹⁷ It must be mentioned however, that Arcestratos also advises using rather strong sauces and flavourings, though indeed not as often as other gastronomic authors at the time. Fr. 37 is a striking example:

¹² For the text of the *Hedypatheia* I have used the 2000 edition by Olson and Sens. I follow their numbering of the testimonia, fragments and dubia. Translations without further mentioning of a translator are my own.

¹³ Ath. 7. 278d.

¹⁴ Olson and Sens (2000), Introduction, xxix-xxx.

¹⁵ Wilkins and Hill (2011), 14-15 on Gowers (1993).

¹⁶ Idem, 15.

¹⁷ Idem, 19-20.

- ἥνικα δ' ἂν δύνοντος ἐν οὐρανῷ Ὠρίωνος
 μήτηρ οἰνοφόρου βότρυος χαίτην ἀποβάλλη,
 τῆμος ἔχειν ὀπτὸν σαργὸν τυρῷ κατάπαστον
 εὐμεγέθη θερμὸν δριμεῖ δεδαῖγμένον ὄξει·
 5 σκληρὸς γὰρ φύσει ἐστίν. ἅπαντα δὲ μοι θεράπευε
 τὸν στερεὸν τοιῶδε τρόπῳ μεμνημένος ἰχθύν.
 τὸν δ' ἀγαθὸν μαλακὸν τε φύσει καὶ πίονα σάρκα
 ἀλσι μόνον λεπτοῖσι πάσας καὶ ἐλαίῳ ἀλείψας·
 τὴν ἀρετὴν γὰρ ἔχει τῆς τέρψιος αὐτὸς ἐν αὐτῷ.
 and when, as Orion is setting in the sky,
 the mother of the wine-bringing grape cluster will throw off her hair,
 then get a roasted sargue, sprinkled with cheese,
 of a good size, hot and drenched with a strongly smelling vinegar:
 5 as it is hard by nature. Treat every firm fish
 in this way, thinking of me.
 But concerning what is by nature good, soft and abundant with meat,
 having spiced it with fine salt and sprinkled it with olive oil.
 As it contains the righteousness of pleasure in itself.
 Arch. fr. 37, ap. Ath. 7. 321c-d.

Archestratos' 'light' style of cooking seems to be advised only when the fish is fresh and soft. For older and harder meats, the *Hedypatheia* suggests using heavier flavourings such as cheese as well.¹⁸ This complicates Gowers' interpretation considerably.

Olson and Sens suggest the *Hedypatheia* was written for intimate performances at symposia. The nature of the reactions of Hellenistic authors to the poem, they argue, suggests that the intended external audience was a restricted group of aristocrats, sympathetic to the constant insisting in the poem that good taste was held only by a small elite. In their words, "The most basic function of the *Hedypatheia* is thus to affirm the social and intellectual superiority of its intended readership..."¹⁹ This interpretation would also explain the choice to compose the treatise in verse, as poetic performances were a traditional part of symposia,

¹⁸ This has been noted by Grainger and Grocock in their review of the 2011 revised edition of Wilkins and Hill (1994) in *The Classical Review*, Volume 62, Issue 02, October 2012, 665.
www.journals.cambridge.org, accessed February 2015.

¹⁹ Olson and Sens (2000), xliii-xlvi.

and is reinforced by Archestratos being mentioned as “the Hesiod or Theognis of gourmands”²⁰, both of whom we know were recited at symposia. Hellenistic scholars Klearchos and Chrysippos indeed suggest that the *Hedypatheia* was performed at symposia.²¹ Some of the fragments do seem to convey a rather elitist flavour, for example:

- ἀλλὰ σὺ μὴ πείθου κείνοις, ἃ δ' ἐγὼ λέγω ἔσθθ
βρωτά· τὰ δ' ἄλλα γ' ἐκεῖνα τραγήματα πάντα πέφυκε
πτωχείης παρὰδειγμα κακῆς, ἐφθοί ἐρέβινθοι
15 καὶ κύαμοι καὶ μῆλα καὶ ἰσχάδες
...but do not be convinced by them, eat exactly those things I tell you
that are to be eaten: all those other dainties
are an example of evil beggary: boiled chickpeas,
15 broad beans, apples, and dried figs...
Arch. fr. 60, vv. 12-16, ap. Ath. 3. 101b-e.

In this fragment, Archestratos explicitly denounces dainties as poor food. Expensive fish was apparently the way to go. This is also very clear from the fact that Archestratos in multiple fragments advises to disregard the price of a certain fish—as long as it is a good one it does not matter how expensive it is.²²

Performance at symposia would explain why Archestratos decided to compose his work in verse, but why specifically in hexameters? The fact that the *Hedypatheia* was composed in a metre connected to epic, the instructive nature of the poem, and its catalogue-resembling style, might suggest that it is to be understood as a piece of didactic epic poetry, in the tradition of Hesiod. As the subject matter is decidedly un-epic however, epic parody seems a more promising genre to make sense of the *Hedypatheia*: fish, as will be discussed extensively later, had strong connections to excessive luxury in classical Greek literature, and is therefore ill-suited to the genre of epic. Yet, the poem is usually not considered as purely parodying epic, either. Wilkins and Hill, in the introduction to their 1994 translation of the available fragments, consider Archestratos' work a light-hearted poem that “flirts”, to use their word, with epic

²⁰ Test. 6, Ath. 7. 310a. As was mentioned before, the manuscript tradition of the *Deipnosophistai* is complicated. I follow Olson and Sens for the text of Athenaeus directly concerned with Archestratos and his work.

²¹ Olson and Sens (2000), test. 4 for Klearchos, test. 5 and 6 for Chrysippos. All are in Athenaios.

²² Frs. 16, 26, 32, 35, 48.

poetry – it does not refer to Homer and Hesiod as often and explicitly as the gastronomically oriented mock-epic poetry by Matro of Pitane and Hegemon of Thasos.²³ This is perhaps best illustrated by the opening line of Matro's *Δείπνον Ἀττικόν*, the *Attic Dinner*:

δείπνα μοι ἔννεπε, Μοῦσα, πολυτρόφα καὶ μάλα πολλά

tell me of the meals, Muse, much-feeding and in great numbers...

Matro fr. 1, ap. Ath. 4.134d-7c, v. 1.²⁴

This is a rather obvious parody on the opening line of the *Odyssey* that stays very close to the original in its use of language. Direct parallels with epic as these are not to be found in the *Hedypatheia*: "Like Hegemon, Archestratus borrows scattered bits and pieces of verse from Homer and Hesiod but does not engage in systematic, line-by-line reworking of long strips of epic exemplars."²⁵ It must also be mentioned that despite the fact that Archestratos used dactylic hexameters, his use of them differs from that in Homer and Hesiod. For example, Archestratos' verse is in general more spondaic, with spondees in the fourth foot in 50% of his verses – far higher than the 30% in both *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and the 29% of the verses in Hesiod's work.²⁶ So, epic parody does not seem to be sufficient an explanation. To once again quote Olson and Sens: "As Wilamowitz noted long ago, therefore, the *Hedypatheia* must ultimately be regarded as a different sort of text from those produced by Hegemon and the other 4th-c. parodists discussed...."²⁷ The discrepancy in subject and choice of metre does make it clear that the work is meant to be wittily parodic, however one looks at it.

The above discussion suffices to show that the exact interpretation of the *Hedypatheia* in terms of its genre is a rather slippery affair.²⁸ The work does not appear to be any of the above mentioned interpretations exclusively. Every genre suggested to make sense of the work has its own particular problems, but they also have their merits. Moreover, these interpretations are not mutually exclusive. Perhaps we must view the work not as any genre in particular, but instead, I would suggest, as situated at a crossroads of traditions. Perhaps this was a conscious decision made by Archestratos, and trying to fit the work in any one

²³ Wilkins and Hill (2001) [1994], 13-15. Also: Olson and Sens (2000), Introduction, xxxv.

²⁴ The edition of Matro used is Olson and Sens (1999).

²⁵ Olson and Sens (1999), 10.

²⁶ Olson and Sens (2000), lxii-lxiii.

²⁷ Olson and Sens (1999), 10.

²⁸ I do not claim my overview is inexhaustive.

generic tradition would do him severe injustice. This does not mean that all interpretations mentioned above are invalid. On the contrary, in trying to make sense of the work, all literary traditions of genres in which the *Hedypatheia* can be placed should be explored in detail, as limitation to any one genre or strand of literary tradition would, as we have seen above, leave many other facets of the work unexplained.

In light of this, as mentioned in the introduction, I propose to look in more detail at the underexplored tradition of Athenian comedy in the *Hedypatheia*, as close literary parallels to this genre in Archestratos' work are hard to ignore. It is my hope that this will open up yet another layer of meaning in the *Hedypatheia*, to do justice to its variety as a work at a crossroads of genres.

The comic tradition: epic parody and Greek comedy in the west

In order to explore the *Hedypatheia* in the light of Athenian comedy, we must first look in more detail at how this work can be connected to it, and then establish that Archestratos was indeed aware of the plays of the Attic tradition.

Olson and Sens note that the closest literary parallel to the *Hedypatheia* is in fact a fragment of the Old comic poet Platon Komikos' play *Phaon*.²⁹ In it, two people discuss a cookbook, ὁψαρτυσία, by a certain Philoxenos. The instructions given by Philoxenos, with their emphasis on fish, do call to mind the *Hedypatheia* – they are delivered in first person, in a catalogue-like style, advice on cooking styles and even on seasonings is given. Seafood is a recurring theme in Greek comedy, and an important link between Archestratos' work and the Attic comic tradition, which will be explored in more detail in chapter 2. There are also some notable differences however, including the lack of interest in geography in the cookbook by Philoxenos. Therefore it seems unlikely that Philoxenos' work is meant to be a reference to the *Hedypatheia*, but it remains possible nonetheless. On the other hand, Philoxenos' cookbook can also be taken as an earlier example of the same comic tradition in which Archestratos' work is placed.³⁰

The tradition of epic parody, treated shortly above, is intricately connected to so-called Doric comedy, of which Sicily was the main centre of production. As Archestratos' hometown

²⁹ Pl.Com. fr. 188 PCG. The close proximity of the *Hedypatheia* to comedy in terms of subject matter is the main issue in chapter 2, and will be treated extensively there.

³⁰ Olson and Sens (2000), xlii-xliii.

Gela is situated on the south coast of this island, it seems worthwhile to explore both epic parody and this Doric comedy in a bit more detail, so as to more firmly place Archestratos within the comic tradition.

The earliest examples of epic parody are the *Margites*, a play of which the author is unknown, but which was said in antiquity to be by either Homer's own hand, or by that of a certain Pigres, and fr. 128 of the Old comic poet Hipponax. Polemon Periegetes, the second century BCE geographer, mentions Hipponax as the inventor of παρωδία (quoted by Athenaios), which is unlikely, as the *Margites* is older, but it does bring us to a very important point — epic parody and Athenian comedy were intimately connected.³¹ As Olson and Sens note:

“Epic parody appears to have flourished in the 5th c., especially among the comic poets, for Polemon reports that it was used to a limited extent by Epicharmus (fl. 490s-480s?) as well as by Cratinus (fl. c.450-420), and numerous mock-oracles and the like are found in the plays of Aristophanes (e.g. *Eq.* 1015-20, 1030-4; *Lys.* 770-6).”³²

Other poets mentioned by Olson and Sens in this context are Hermippos, a comic poet who also composed parodies, and Hegemon of Thasos, an epic parodist who composed at least one Old comedy, one of whose parodies was interestingly titled Δείπνον, *Dinner*. Athenian Old comic poetry appears to have been rife with parodic epic references, and this tradition connects Archestratos' *Hedypatheia* with Athenian comedy, besides its subject matter. This is also confirmed to some extent by the fact that Lykophron, the scholar tasked by Ptolemy II to make an inventory of all the comedies in the library of Alexandria, mentions Archestratos among the comic poets in his treatise Περὶ Κομωδίας, *On Comedy*.³³

The poet Epicharmos of Kos, mentioned above by Olson and Sens, is of particular interest in this context. He is the main exponent of the South Italian and Sicilian Doric Comedy. His *floruit* is usually placed in the first half of the second century BCE, which makes him one of the oldest poets we know who wrote epic parody.³⁴ Sicily seems to have had a

³¹ Ath. 15.698a-9c.

³² Olson and Sens (1999), 7.

³³ Test. 7, Ath. 7. 278a-b.

³⁴ Many of Epicharmos' fragments seem to be indebted to epic—Homer, Hesiod, and presumably also the Epic Cycle and the *Cypria*. It must however be made explicit that Epicharmos did not exclusively write epic parody. His work was also influenced by a myriad of other writers and (local Sicilian) traditions. For the many (possible) influences on Epicharmos' work, see: Rodríguez-Noriega Guillén

lively local dramatic tradition, as is suggested, for example, by a fifth century BCE lead curse tablet, probably from Arcestratos' home town Gela. This tablet contained a financial document on the one side and a curse on *choregoi* on the other, which, as argued by American classicist Chris Dearden, "argues very strongly for dramatic competitions of some kind in Gela at this time, and indeed, further afield, since the penultimate line (line 13) seeks his success 'always, everywhere', raising the strong possibility of similar competitions elsewhere."³⁵ This does not in any way prove staging of particular comedies or tragedies, but it does demonstrate a lively dramatic scene in Sicily in Epicharmos' time. Two other Sicilian poets, a Phormis and a Dinolochos, can be plausibly argued to have composed comedies as well – Phormis' comedy specifically was mentioned by Aristotle as being comparable to that of Epicharmos – and they both enforce the notion of a Sicilian comic tradition.³⁶ A tradition based at least partly on epic parody like that by Epicharmos and, one may assume, Phormis, and which can easily be imagined to have influenced Arcestratos.

Not only was there a lively local comic tradition in Sicily in the fifth century, there is also some evidence that by the beginning of the fourth century, comedies staged in Athens were exported to Sicily as well. Dearden has argued that a few Greek vases discovered in Southern Italy were decorated with scenes from specific Old comedies, especially those by Aristophanes. Care has to be taken here, as Dearden stresses that this is only a small part of the Greek vases found in Southern Italy connected to some form of comic staging from this period. He does not want to diminish what links with Attic comedy there are, but he asserts that most of these decorations are probably inspired by local traditions.³⁷ Nevertheless, Attic comedy seems to have been known in fourth century BCE Magna Graecia, so it is not unreasonable to assume that Arcestratos of Gela knew of the Athenian comic tradition.

If the Philoxenos of Platon Komikos' *Phaon* can be identified with Arcestratos, this would imply an export of literature from Sicily to Athens as well. Also interesting in this

(2012). An example of a play by Epicharmos which parodies epic and is exceptional in that we know its title is the *Ὀδυσσεὺς ἀντόμολος*, *Odysseus the Deserter*. For a detailed treatment of the play, see: Willi (2012).

³⁵ Dearden (2012), 275-276.

³⁶ Idem, 277-278.

³⁷ Idem.

context is a play by the Middle comic poet Antiphanes titled *Ἀρχεστράτη*, of which two lines are preserved by Athenaios:

τίς δ' ἐγγέλειον ἄν φάγοι
 ἢ κρανίον σινόδοντος
 Who would eat an eel
 or the head of a sea-bream?
 Arch. *dubium*, test. 10 Ap. Ath. 7. 322c.³⁸

It is tantalizingly interesting that this fragment of a comedy which bears the female form of the name Arcestratos is about fish, and therefore it is attractive to suggest this comedy as referring to Arcestratos of Gela and his work. This seems unlikely to me, however. We have already seen that the *Hedypatheia* was meant for intimate performance among wealthy men, which would imply that this work and its author were not known to the masses. It is for this reason that I find it unlikely that Arcestratos was parodied or in comedies meant for public performance such as those by Antiphanes and the aforementioned Platon Komikos. I do not and cannot discount the possibility completely, however.

But even if he was unknown among the Athenian populace, and if there is no indication of literary export from Sicily to Athens, it is still clear that Arcestratos and his work stood at a crossroads of several comic traditions, both local and Athenian.³⁹ Epic parody seems to arise very early in Athenian comedy, and played an important part in the local Sicilian tradition as well. Whether there was an actual mutual literary cultural exchange between Sicily and Athens from both sides is hard to say. Epicharmos perhaps had some influence on Attic comedy, but this is denied by several scholars.⁴⁰ The important point is that it can be convincingly argued that Arcestratos must have been aware of at least part of the

³⁸ *Dubium* 3 in Olson and Sens (2000).

³⁹ The aforementioned Lynkeus of Samos, whose *floruit* is most likely to be placed in the early third century BCE, could be used to argue for the export of Arcestratos into the Attic sphere. We do not know, however, for whom he wrote his treatise on groceries. If it was meant for the well-off, which seems likely, his mentioning of Arcestratos does not drag the *Hedypatheia* out of the private elite sphere in which Olson, Sens and Wilkins place it.

⁴⁰ See for literature: Willi (2012), 58, note 9. Concerning an exchange between Athens and Magna Graecia, the Lucanian Middle comic poet Alexis of Thurioi could also serve as an example. However, as it is unclear whether he started writing comedies before his arrival in Athens, a mutual literary exchange is impossibly argued with any certainty from him alone. The important point for us is that Arcestratos should in any case have been aware of the Athenian comic tradition.

Athenian comic tradition, and of the tradition of epic parody, which he would have known both from a local and of the Athenian traditions.⁴¹



Image: Apulian red-figure terracotta kalyx-krater attributed to the Tarporley painter, ca. 400-390BCE. Now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Depicting an unknown Attic comedy labelled 'The goose play'. Source: www.metmuseum.org, accessed March 2015.

Up until now, two very important links between comedy, both local and Athenian, and Arcestratos' poem has been left out of consideration: fish and gastronomy. It is to the former in both comedy and the *Hedypatheia* to which we will now turn.

⁴¹ In this context I want to mention the so-called fish plates. These red-figure ceramic plates were very popular in fourth century BCE Magna Graecia. As they were nearly always decorated with fish motifs, one immediately thinks of Arcestratos, who was himself Sicilian. I have left these out of consideration, as Wilkins has argued they in all probability reflect a local tradition, and not an inspiration drawn from Attic painters and Athenian comedy, see: Wilkins (2000, a), 337-340; and my notes on the cover picture.

2. The comic semiotics of seafood in interpreting the *Hedypatheia*

“That’s my little octopussy”

Magda (Kristina Wayborn) in: *Octopussy* (1983), directed by John Glen.

As we saw in the first chapter, it is not completely clear what Arcestratos’ work actually is in terms of genre. What certainly is clear however, is what the work was about: seafood. We now know that the *Hedypatheia* has connections to comedy and epic parody. While this has not been discussed in detail in the previous chapter, these connections are most clear when viewed in terms of subject matter, fish. While other foodstuffs are discussed in the *Hedypatheia*, there is a remarkable emphasis on seafood in the extant fragments.⁴² It is time for the piscifauna to enter the spotlight.

Fish had a strong presence in epic parody, and in comedy in general. Epicharmos, a clear proponent of both traditions, devotes a lot of space in his comic parodic plays to the description of a wide variety of seafood. His play *The Marriage of Hebe* (and its revised version, *Muses*) is a case in point. It most likely was a parody on the marriage of Hebe to Heracles, first mentioned in *Od.* 11.603. The marriage feast, perhaps described by Hermes, included a seafood banquet. Among the fragments is a long description of different sorts of shellfish brought in for the gods:⁴³

ἄγει δὲ παντοδαπὰ κογχύλια,
 λεπάδας, ἀσπέδους, κραβύζους, κικιβάλους, τηθύνια,
 κτένια, βαλάνους, πορφύρας, ὄστρεα συμμεμυκότα,
 τὰ διελεῖν μὲν ἐντι χαλεπά. καταφαγῆμεν δ’ εὐμαρέα,
 5 μῦας ἀναρίτας τε κάρυκας τε καὶ σκιφύδρια,
 τὰ γλυκεὰ μὲν ἐντ’ ἐπέσθειν, ἐμπαγῆμεν δ’ ὀξέα,
 τοὺς τε μακρογογγύλους σωλήνας· ἃ μέλαινά τε
 κόγχος, ἅπερ κογχοθηρᾶν παισὶν + ἐστριώνια·
 θάτεραι δὲ γαῖαι κόγχοι τε κάμαθίτιδες,
 10 ταὶ κακοδόκιμοί τε κηῦωνοι, τὰς ἀνδροφυκτίδας
 πάντες ἄνθρωποι καλέονθ’, ἅμεις δὲ λεύκας τοὶ θεοὶ
 He brings all kinds of shellfish,
 limpets, *aspedoi*, *krabyzoi*, *kikibaloι*, sea-squirts,

⁴² Arch. fr. 5 is about bread, for example.

⁴³ Wilkins (2000, a), 323.

scallops, barnacles, purple-shells, oysters closed tight,
they are difficult to tear apart, but easy to devour,
mussels, sea-snails, sea-trumpets, clams,
they are sweet to eat, but sharp to strike,
cylindrical shellfish: a black
shell, which (...) for children to hunt for shellfish:
There are also land snails and *amathides*,
which are held in low esteem and are cheap, which all men
call 'men-fleeing', but we gods 'white'.
Ep. fr. 40 PCG (42).⁴⁴

This fragment illustrates the importance of seafood in West Greek comedy. Epicharmos even implies it is fit for the gods! But was it? I will return to this later.

Athenian comedy had its fair share of the piscine as well. There is the aforementioned fr. 189 by Platon Komikos, and Aristophanes himself included quite the amount of edible sea creatures in his comedies. A particularly witty example from Old comedy is the play *Fishes* by Archippos, produced at the very end of the fifth century BCE. Archippos describes a war between Athens and a similar polis controlled by fish-citizens (ἄνδρες ἰχθύες, fr. 30 PCG). The war is resolved through a peace treaty, but the conditions for peace are not to be taken lightly: several Athenians are to be sent to the polis of fish for punishment! The fish want to get back at the Athenians for eating them so voraciously. Archippos here "satirizes the fondness of Athenians for sea food."⁴⁵

A 'fondness' for seafood seems an understatement when held against the overwhelming amount of references to fish in Greek literature, especially comedy.⁴⁶ What the Greeks in comedy felt for fish comes closer to being an obsession. Archestratos' treatise on where to best buy what fish seems exemplary in this context. How to explain this popularity

⁴⁴ For the Greek text of all comic fragments not by Aristophanes, I have used Kassel and Austin's monumental edition *Poetae Comici Graeci* (PCG).

⁴⁵ Gilula (1995), 391.

⁴⁶ The sheer amount of passages on seafood from Greek literature in general, and from comedy in particular, is indeed so overwhelmingly large that any attempt to do justice to its size and scope would be far beyond the length of this thesis. For a large selection of passages on fish in comedy, see especially: Davidson (1997) and Shaw (2014) Neither claim to be comprehensive on this account, it should be mentioned. Like them, I will try to illuminate claims with the help of salient passages on seafood.

of fish in the Greek literary mind set, especially in comedy and epic parody? It seems necessary to first take a closer look at these questions before turning back to Archestratos and his connections to comedy.

The piscine paradox

(Φι.) τοὺς γὰρ μεγάλους τούτους ἅπαντας νενόμικα
ἀνθρωποφάγους ἰχθῦς.

(Phi.) for I have come to consider all those large fish
man-eaters.

Antiph. fr. 69 PCG, 11-12.

In the play *Βουταλίων* by the comic poet Antiphanes, quoted above, the character Philoumenos calls fish ἀνθρωποφάγους, man-eaters. They were apparently so expensive that they ‘devoured’ a man’s estate with their high prices. Antiphanes here plays at a well-known fact about fish in Greek literature: they are among the few creatures in the Mediterranean world that eat men. Most importantly perhaps, the fragment shows that at least in the comic mind set, fish were so desirable that one would give up one’s estate to buy them.

Taking a bite of fish was a rather ideologically charged act. Perhaps the most basic ideology in fish is its otherness, its hostility. The antique sources, both Greek and Roman, are rife with references to the sea as another world, one uncontrolled by man, and to its denizens as hostile and often man-eating others to the creatures of the land.⁴⁷ The sea was also considered poor when compared to the land, as is demonstrated by Oxford classical philologist Nicholas Purcell. Dependence on a desolate and dangerous space such as the sea led to the portrayal in art and literature of fishermen as the epitome of poverty. This was enforced by the chance factor of catching fish.⁴⁸

And yet, despite all the emphasis on otherness and poverty that fish entailed, the sources ceaselessly remind us how expensive a commodity seafood really was, especially in comic works.⁴⁹ Expensive and desirable, certainly, if Antiphanes portrays fish as eating up a

⁴⁷ Purcell (1995), 133-134.

⁴⁸ Idem, 135-136. The poverty connected to fish could also explain why fish in everyday, non-exalted contexts are rather rare and seem to have been unpopular in paintings on Attic Black and Red-figured vases. For this rarity, see: Sparkes (1995).

⁴⁹ Again rather paradoxically, the price of fish was high probably in part due to the high chance factor present in catching them.

man's estate because of their steep prices! Our own Arcestratos emphasises the high monetary value of fish:

αὐτὰρ ἐς Ἀμβρακίην ἐλθὼν εὐδαίμονα χώραν
τὸν κάπρον, ἄν ἐσίδῃς, ὠνοῦ καὶ μὴ κατάλειπε,
κἄν ἰσόχρυσος ἔη, μὴ σοι νέμεσις καταπνεύσῃ
δεινὴ ἀπ' ἀθανάτων· τὸ γὰρ ἐστὶν νέκταρος ἄνθος.
But, having gone to Ambrakia, a happy land,
purchase the boar-fish and do not leave it behind, if you see it,
even if it costs as much as gold, lest horrible revenge
blows down from the immortals upon you: for it is the flower of nectar.
Arch. fr. 16, 1-4, ap. Ath. 7. 305e-f.

So, fish is at the same time poor and expensive, a symbol of wealth among the elite. How is this paradox to be resolved?

American ancient historian James Davidson argues that the paucity connected to fish at a certain stage in time made way for decadence and luxury. Sustenance for the Greeks of the classical period consisted of three parts: ὁ σίτος, το πτότον and το ὄψον. Πότος, 'drink', 'wine', was the liquid part of the meal. Σίτος and ὄψον made up the solid part. Σίτος was the staple, the essential: bread or barley. Ὅψον is a little bit harder to pin down. It basically means the non-essential part of the meal, 'everything but σίτος', 'the supplement'.⁵⁰ Fish was ὄψον, but so were meat, poultry, sauces and vegetables, the list goes on.⁵¹ French philosopher Jacques Derrida noted a source of anxiety regularly encountered in Western Philosophy, which he dubbed the 'dangerous supplement'. This pertains to:

"an addition that seems to complete something and yet to be extraneous, threatening all the time to forget its negligible subordinate role and take over what it is supposed merely to complete or embellish."⁵²

Davidson argues that ὄψον is precisely such a 'dangerous supplement', which is why Plato and other Greek philosophers tried to downplay its role so zealously.⁵³ Dangerous perhaps,

⁵⁰ Davidson (1997), 20-22.

⁵¹ Some scholars differentiate a third element of the solid part of the meal: τραγήματα, 'dainties'. In our classification, they belong with ὄψον.

⁵² Davidson (1997), 23-24.

⁵³ Idem, 20-26.

but also much loved. We now understand how fish, as ὄψον, went from being represented as the epitome of poverty, the result of the high chance factor in catching them, to a symbol of excess and luxury, an expensive elite commodity. However, why has this happened to fish, of all ὄψα? Why not, for example, to meat, certainly also both exclusive and expensive?

This is in all probability because fish lacks a sacral context, Davidson argues. The flesh of fish was not sacrificed to the gods, whilst pork, mutton and beef were. The reason why fish never found its way into ritual is open to debate. It could be that fish were deemed ill-suited to sacrifice because of their relative bloodlessness. If one considers Greek sacrifice to have been primarily a blood sacrifice, fish indeed do not fit into this context. It is worth to note here that when a fish was sacrificed to the gods—a rarity in itself—, it was usually a tuna, a fish known for its exceptional bloodiness.⁵⁴ However this may be, it remains that fish were excluded from ritual. This explains why fish could take such a flight as a food of luxury, according to Davidson. The sacrificial meat was shared among the attendants of the ritual, and therefore lacked the exclusivity that fish, as expensive commodity, did contain. It was its secularity which allowed fish to become the epitome of luxury, free for private consumption.⁵⁵ It is also probably because of this lack of ritual context, and the poverty connected to fish in earlier times, that Homer so laboriously avoided having his heroes eat fish. As Davidson argues, sacrifice was paramount in Homeric economy based on reciprocity. Fish did not have a place in this economy. Davidson furthermore thinks its connections to poverty made fish ill-suited as food for heroes the calibre of Achilles or Odysseus, unless in extreme necessity. Fish is thus a decidedly un-Homeric commodity.⁵⁶ Later on, the shift to luxury occurred of fish as ‘dangerous supplement’.⁵⁷

We can now better appreciate the wit of epic parody, and fish in it as a recurring theme. Fish, a decidedly un-epic and specifically un-Homeric commodity, was placed in an epic context to great comic effect. We also remember Epicharmos’ *Marriage of Hebe*, in which he has the gods dine on a banquet of seafood, which was normally excluded from sacrificial context

⁵⁴ Idem, 12.

⁵⁵ Idem, 13, 15.

⁵⁶ Idem, 13-18.

⁵⁷ The philosopher Platon already noted the connection of fish to luxury and excess in his own time. He also connects this to the absence of fish in Homer, but, as Davidson notes, he is wrong about this, since a shift occurred of fish from poverty to luxury between Homer’s time and his own. See: Davidson (1997), 13, 17.

and therefore from the divine diet.⁵⁸ Comedy in general loved seafood, as it was “something peculiarly secular and distinctively, decadently ‘modern’.”⁵⁹ The example of Epicharmos also illustrates the important role of seafood in comedy outside of Athens. But these particular qualities of fish also made way for a connection that has remained undiscussed in this thesis so far, but is of enormous importance for its argumentation: sex.

Sexy seafood

The connection of seafood and sex in comedy is discussed by classicist Carl Shaw in his article “‘Genitalia of the Sea’: Seafood and Sexuality in Greek Comedy”, published in 2014.⁶⁰ Shaw argues that the relationship of seafood to obscenity and sexuality has been underexplored in scholarship, and identifies many passages in comedy to illustrate several ways in which seafood and sexuality are connected. I want to mention a few, simply to show how deeply fish and sex are connected in comedy, confining this illustration to several salient passages mentioned by Shaw: the source material is abundant, to say the least.

As always when one looks at metaphors, there lurks the danger of over-interpretation. In many instances, the sexual *double entendre* included in the item of seafood is brought out only because it is surrounded by other sexually suggestive words. This can be clearly illustrated with our first example, a fragment from Aristophanes’ *Merchantmen*:

δαρδάπτοντα, μιστύλλοντα, διαλείχοντά μου

τὸν κάτω σπατάγγην.

devouring, splitting, licking out my

sea-urchin below.

Ar. fr. 425 PCG.

This fragment illustrates nicely the sexualisation of seafood, often used, as is the case here, as a symbol for the female (and male) genitalia. Shaw shows several instances of this use.⁶¹ In the case of this particular fragment, however, it are also several other sexually suggestive words near it that reinforce the sexual metaphor of the sea-urchin, even though we lack the general

⁵⁸ Ep. fr. 40 PCG.

⁵⁹ Davidson (1997), 13.

⁶⁰ This chapter focusses specifically on the links between seafood and sexuality. It is a well-known fact that the stomach, and therefore gluttony and food, were connected to sex in Greek literature. Seafood, as we will see, is a particularly salient case in point.

⁶¹ Shaw (2014), 557-564.

context of the fragment.⁶² According to Shaw, the seafood mentioned in the fragment by Epicharmos quoted above can also be interpreted as genitalia, both male and female.⁶³ Seafood as specifically male genitalia can be found in another fragment by Epicharmos, also from *The Marriage of Hebe*:

ἐντὶ δ' ἄστακοὶ κολύβδαιναί τε ἥως τὰ πόδι' ἔχει
 μικρά, τὰς χεῖρας δὲ μακράς, κάραβος δὲ τῶνυμα
 there are smooth lobsters and *kolybdainai* and those which have small
 feet, but large hands, and are crayfish by name.
 Epich. fr. 50 PCG.

Athenaios mentions some notes by the ancient scholar Nikandros on the κολύβδαινα:

κολύβδαιναν δ' εἰρηκεν Ἐπίχαρμος ἐν τοῖς προεκκειμένοις,
 ὥς μὲν Νικανδρός φησι, τὸ θαλάσσιον αἰδοῖον,
 ὥς δ' ὁ Ἡρακλείδης ἐν Ὀψαρτυτικῶι, τὴν καριῖδα
 Epicharmos has mentioned the *kolybdaina* in the preceding,
 as Nikandros says, as the sea-phallus,
 but according to Herakleides in his *Art of Cookery*, it means shrimp.
 Ath. 3.105c.

Epicharmos in the fragment cited above gives us a Sicilianism, κολύβδαινα, which is interpreted sexually by Nikandros, as a 'sea-phallus', and Herakleides links it to a shrimp. Crustaceans were often used as metaphors for male genitalia, perhaps because their looks corresponded to those of comic stage phalluses:

"The parabasis of Aristophanes' *Clouds* (v. 539) sheds light on Nicander's interpretation, when the chorus leader refers to the stage phallus as 'leather hanging down, red and thick at the tip.' Because the Greeks stressed these particular qualities of the phallus, various crayfish, lobsters and crabs serve as humorous references to dildos or penises in comedy. Comic poets play on the red color and generally phallic shape of crustaceans' bodies and claws to allude to male genitalia."⁶⁴

A second type of correlation of seafood and sex pertains to women, specifically courtesans. We have already seen with Davidson how fish was fetishized as the epitome of excess, gaining

⁶² Idem, 558.

⁶³ Idem, 560-564.

⁶⁴ Idem, 563.

an allure that is very close to arousing sexual desire. This desire is made very explicit in the tendency in comedy to use different sorts of seafood as metaphors for courtesans. Female bodies were consumed alongside fish and other dishes in the context of the symposium.⁶⁵ For examples we only have to take a look at the names used by the Middle comic poet Antiphanes to refer to courtesans, among which: κάραβος (crayfish), γόγγρος (eel), and τρυγών (sting-ray).⁶⁶ Shaw notes that the conflation of seafood and courtesans and comedies went beyond the mere cultural fetishisation noted by Davidson. He uses a remark by Apollodoros who mentions the 4th century courtesan Phryne had the nickname σαπέριδιον, a diminutive of an undetermined species of fish. This fish was itself connected by Greek scholars to female genitalia. Phryne and the fish were not only the same type of commodity, an object of desire, lust even, but were also connected through their mutual association to sex.⁶⁷

For another connection of seafood to sex, that of fish as an Aphrodisiac, we can point to a fragment by the Middle comic poet Xenarchos (fr. 1 CPG), who calls an octopus the φλέβος τροπώτηρ, the ‘arouser of a vein’. Xenarchos considered the octopus capable of ‘arousing a vein’, cause an erection, and therefore as an aphrodisiac. I will confine myself to this one example. The source material is overwhelming, as mentioned, in both size and scope. For an—not exhaustive—overview of fish and sex in comedy, I point to Shaw (2014).⁶⁸

We have seen a myriad of ways in which seafood was connected to sex and sexuality in the Greek comic mind. As Shaw—I think rightly—, suspects, more attention to this connection might lead to the discovery of many sexual jokes that commentators have missed before.

Sex in the Hedypatheia

How to connect all of this to Arcestratos’ *Hedypatheia*? In the first chapter, we saw that Arcestratos most likely knew, or was at the very least aware of, the Athenian comic tradition of his own time. Just now, we saw how strongly seafood was connected to sex and sexuality in this comic tradition, not only in Athens, but Epicharmos’ fragments on fish make one suspect that the same connection was used in Sicilian comedy as well. Arcestratos was

⁶⁵ Wilkins (2000, a), 36-38.

⁶⁶ Idem, 571. The conflations of women and eels were especially potent, see: Wilkins (2000, a), 37-38.

⁶⁷ Idem, 572.

⁶⁸ Of course, seafood is not the only aphrodisiac mentioned in the extant comic fragments; Pl.Com. fr. 187, for example, contains a reference to tassel-bulbs as able to induce an erection.

himself connected to the comic tradition through epic parody, and also through his emphasis on fish.⁶⁹ Taking all of this into consideration, it seems safe to assume that Arcestratos' *Hedypatheia*, a tongue-in-cheek poem with an emphasis on seafood and a strong connection to comedy, contains humour and jokes based on the connection seafood had to sexuality.

To strengthen this assumption, let us for one last time turn to Platon Komikos' *Phaon* fr. 189, mentioned before as the closest literary parallel to the *Hedypatheia*. The fragment is not only similar to it in formal features such as the catalogue-like style. It is also about food—with an emphasis on seafood. After discussing the cookbook by Philoxenos, character A. goes on to read from the book out loud, at B.'s request. A. mentions purse-tassel bulb and how to cook it, then moves on to fish:

- (A.) καὶ τὰδε μὲν δὴ ταῦτα· θαλάσσης δ' ἐς τέκν' ἄνειμι
 < >
 οὐδὲ λὸπας κακὸν ἐστίν· ἀτὰρ τὸ τάγηνον ἄμεινον,
 οἶμαι. < >
- ὀρφῶν αἰολίαν συνόδοντά τε καρχαρίαν τε
 15 μὴ τέμνειν, μὴ σοι νέμεσις θεόθεν καταπνεύσῃ,
 ἀλλ' ὅλον ὀπτήσας παράθες· πολλὸν γὰρ ἄμεινον.
 πουλύποδος + πλεκτή δ' ἄν ἐπιλήψῃ + κατὰ καιρόν,
 ἐφθῇ τῆς ὀπτῆς, ἣν ἡ μείζων, πολὺ κρείττων·
 ἣν ὀπταὶ δὲ δύο ὥς, ἐφθῇ κλαίειν ἀγορεύω.
 20 τρίγλη δ' οὐκ ἐθέλει νεύρων ἐπιήρανος εἶναι
 παρθένου Ἀρτέμιδος γὰρ ἔφῃ καὶ στύματα μισεῖ.
 σκόρπιος αὖ---- (B.) παίσειέ γε σου τὸν πρωκτὸν ὑπελθών.
 But that's that: I move on to the children of the sea,
 < >
 nor is a flat dish bad, but a frying pan is better,
 I think < >
 concerning the perch, speckle-fish, dentex, and shark,
 15 do not cut them, lest revenge from the gods blows down upon you,

⁶⁹ Another connection to comedy can be drawn from the fact that some pieces of advice on cooking fish in Arch. fr. 19 and several others have parallels in Comedy, see, for example: Olson and Sens (2000), 91.

but serve them after roasting them whole: for it is much better.

+ if you obtain the tentacle + of an octopus when the time is right,

it is much better boiled then roasted, if it is bigger:

if there are two roasted, I would tell the boiled one to cry.

20 the mullet does not want to be helpful to the nerves,

for it belongs to the virgin Artemis and hates erections.

the scorpion-fish, on the other hand – (B.) may it go up and strike your anus.

Pl.Com. fr. 189 PCG, 11-22.

This fragment also once again illustrates the sheer amount of references to seafood in comedy, and even contains a reference to a fish as aphrodisiac in verse 20.⁷⁰ But it is most important for another reason. Shaw mentions a fourth connection of seafood to sexuality in his 2014 article, not yet mentioned in this thesis: that of sexual puns using the names of fish. Several years earlier, in 2009, he published a short article on Archestratos fr. 30:

ἐν δὲ Θάσῳ τὸν σκορπίον ὠνοῦ, ἐάν ῃ

μὴ μείζων πυγόνος· μεγάλου δ' ἀπὸ χειρὸς ἴαλλε.

Buy the scorpion-fish in Thasos, if it is

not bigger than an underarm's length: keep your hands of a big one.

Arch. fr. 30, ap. Ath. 7. 320f-1a.

Shaw argues that this fragment contains witty sexual wordplay. The word σκορπίος, 'scorpion-fish', he argues, sounds quite like two more offensive words: σκῶρ, 'shit' and πέος, 'penis'.⁷¹ The joke is completed by the word πύγων, 'bare cubit' which sounds like πύγη, 'ass'. What Archestratos is saying here according to Shaw, is: "buy the shitcock in Thasos, unless it is bigger than your butt."⁷² In other words, Archestratos in a witty wordplay on fish advises the reader not to pay for anal sex if one's anus is too small for it. A similar joke is applied in

⁷⁰ Shaw (2009), 638.

⁷¹ Shaw notes that "[T]he necessary vocalic interchanges are, in fact, attested in various Greek dialects, texts and inscriptions. Omega and omicron, as with all long and short vowels, are switched rather frequently. For example, the fifth-century Athenian tragedian, Achaëus of Eretria, employs an omicron that must by metrical rules be scanned with the value of an omega in fr.33.4; and even more significantly, in fourth-century *koinê* orthography, omicron is regularly used to represent *o*, *ou* and *ω*. The shift from epsilon to iota is also rather common in a number of dialects, particularly when it is positioned before an omega, as it is here. Even without any manipulations in pronunciation, σκορπίον sounds enough like σκῶρ πέον that Archestratus' mention of the fish could make a relatively straightforward sexual pun..." Idem, 635-636 with references.

⁷² Idem, 636.

the fragment by Platon Komikos quoted above. The remark in verse 22, of a scorpion fish that might sting someone in his asshole, is reminiscent of the joke in Arch. fr. 30.⁷³ Shaw argues that Platon Komikos here applies the same wordplay as did Arcestratos, albeit less subtly.⁷⁴ Whether Platon Komikos and Arcestratos, drew from the same source, or Arcestratos from Platon—as Platon’s play is older—, it remains that this shared joke implies a deeper and more direct connection between the *Hedypatheia* and comedy than we have seen so far. It also ensures us of the possibility of sexual content hidden in the *Hedypatheia*, connected to fish, and I wholeheartedly agree with Shaw that the discovery of the scorpion-fish joke “helps further reveal the complex layering of humour in Arcestratos’ *Hedypatheia*.”⁷⁵

Octopussy

To conclude this chapter, looking at the *Hedypatheia* from a comic context, specifically the links made in comedy between sex and fish—developed in this way because fish was a commodity free of the sacred—in mind, opens up whole new readings of it, adding a layer of sexual humour to the already complicated mix of interpretations that the *Hedypatheia* allowed, as exemplified by Shaw (2009). That Arcestratos’ work was also interpreted sexually in Antiquity can perhaps be illustrated by the Stoic philosopher Chrysippos, who is mentioned by Athenaios as putting the *Hedypatheia* on the same level as a sex manual written by the courtesan Philainis.⁷⁶ We can imagine Chrysippos also had detected the erotic in Arcestratos’ poem.

This chapter focussed on the connections of the subject matter of Arcestratos’ poem to sex and sexuality, probably immediately recognisable to a contemporary audience. Consider in this context the quote from the James Bond movie *Octopussy* with which I started this chapter. This is a particularly salient example, as ‘octopussy’ here actually refers to a tattoo, but it also links seafood to the female genitalia: one immediately also considers a sexual connotation, comparable to the sexual references in the *Hedypatheia*. I illustrated how seafood was connected to sexuality in comedy, and demonstrated through the work of Carl Shaw that

⁷³ The acute accent on the word σκόρπιος in the text of fr. 189 in Olson & Sens is on the antepenultimate syllable, but is transferred to the penultimate by Shaw, doubtlessly to reinforce his reading of the word as a sexual pun, Idem, 635, n. 8.

⁷⁴ Idem, 638-639.

⁷⁵ Idem, 639.

⁷⁶ Arch. Test. 5 Olson & Sens, ad. Ath. 8. 335b, d-6a.

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Archestratos applied this connection to humorous effect. In the next chapter, I will attempt my own sexual interpretation of a fragment of the *Hedypatheia*, but for now, we will leave all this fishiness behind to focus on another element of comedy, to see whether it can also be used to add to the layers of interpretation of the *Hedypatheia*.

3. The Comic Chef: Archestratos' self-presentation in the *Hedypatheia*

(Δη.) + τίς δὴ τι+ παραδείξας ἐμοί
 τὰ δέοντ' ἀπελθὼν αὐτὸς ἡσυχίαν ἄγε
 (De.) + + you have demonstrated
 the necessities to me, go away and keep quiet.
 Sosip. fr. 1 PCG.

The preceding fragment is the response of the character Demylos to an elaborate speech on the theory behind practical cooking of a chef from a comedy by the third century BC New comic poet Sosipatros. The boasting of the chef about the difficulty of his trade is tiresome and unwelcome, leading Demylos to urge the cook to “go away and keep quiet”. Archestratos’ insistence on good taste and knowledge of food calls to mind this boasting of the chef. In this chapter I will explore the many ways in which Archestratos resembles, or rather makes himself resemble, the comic stock figure of the cook. In so doing I will present my own—tentative—interpretation of the text based on this resemblance between narrator and comic chef, how it might influence the interpretation of the *Hedypatheia*.

Presentation of the self

A few notes on self-representation are in order. Most important would be to state that the narrator and the writer of a written piece are not necessarily the same—the voice of the narrator does not have to represent Archestratos’. It is a good possibility, as the name of the narrator of the *Hedypatheia* is never mentioned in it as far as we can see, nor does Athenaios mention someone else but Archestratos speaking.⁷⁷ We should, however, allow for a margin of error here—we simply cannot know for certain. If the *Hedypatheia* was intended for performance at symposia, the narrator may very well be left purposely uncertain. Therefore, focussing on the construction of the narrator seems the safer bet.

⁷⁷ That Athenaios often mentions Archestratos as the one expounding something before quoting a fragment from the *Hedypatheia*—a good example is Arch. fr. 5 ad. Ath. 3.111e-12b—is suggestive, but in my opinion far from conclusive. He may very well simply mean that Archestratos wrote the text. Compare the fact that Athenaios quotes comic poets in exactly the same way, by saying the poets propounded something, then quoting a fragment of the play spoken by a specific (and named) character in that play (a look at nearly any chapter of the *Deipnosophistai* is enough to affirm this). The same may apply to his treatment of Archestratos. We remember Athenaios was outspokenly negative about the work; I suspect he would direct all the blame at its author as much as possible, not on a fictional narrator, if there was one.

In his *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, as early as 1956, sociologist Goffman argued that a 'self', an identity, is not something solely inherent to a person, but is always constructed in dialogue with others. One creates a self that is presented to others. Goffman compared this process to a theatrical staging, and discerned a 'front stage', that is the outwardly presented self, and the 'backstage', which he considered to be a truer self, untouched by the front stage. Although Goffman's work has been criticized since—especially his front stage vs. backstage theory, as sociologists came to realise that a 'true' self, a backstage, does not exist, as it is always determined by external factors and that therefore a person's inward and outward self are more intricately connected than Goffman's theory allowed—his initial assertion still stands.⁷⁸ A self is fashioned in relation to others, and the others have to come to accept the self that a person creates if it is to work. It follows then that fashioning a self, creating an identity, necessarily involves creating a persona for oneself, a role others come to recognize, which means that a persona can differ depending on the audience or situation. It is this fashioned self, this persona of Arcestratos' narrator in relation to comedy that I am interested in this chapter. We will look at how Arcestratos shaped a persona for his narrator, a persona that indeed should have been recognisable to an audience of—in all probability—elite men at a symposium. Perhaps also to the audience of comic plays in Athens, if we accept that Philoxenos in Platon Komikos' *Phaon* is meant to be Arcestratos.

The comic cook

The comic cook, μάγειρος, seems to have been an invention of comedy, as he does not appear to have taken on a life in other literary genres. The term μάγειρος appears for the first time in our sources in the fifth century BCE. The cook in Athens essentially had three roles: he was a

⁷⁸ Sociological criticism of Goffman's theory can be found in, for example, Buckingham (2008). American philosopher Judith Butler would later take Goffman's theory a step further in the case of gender, arguing that there is not something like an inherent gender, but that masculinity and femininity are always a *performance* (note again the language of theatre used). See, among others: Butler (1988). It also has to be mentioned that Goffman uses literary examples in his work such as the novel *A Contest of Ladies* (1956) by William Sanson—self-fashioning also happens in literature. Many classicists realised this and also the importance of Goffman's theory for classics specifically. Goffman is often referenced in scholarly publications on classical literature, especially on poetic voice. Salient cases in point are Keith Dickson's *Nestor: Poetic Memory in Greek Epic* (1995) and *Homeric Voices: Discourse, Memory, Gender* (2007), by Elizabeth Minchin. These are merely two of many examples.

sacrificial butcher, sold meat at the market or was for hire as a private chef.⁷⁹ These roles were exploited by comic poets, though not all of them equally.

The comic cook is a stock character from Middle and New comedy, especially New comedy, a genre typically reliant on the use of stock roles such as the clever slave and the parasite. The stock figure of the cook does not appear in the extant Old comedies, but the protagonist in many of them seems to have some of the characteristics of the later cooks, especially in the sacrificial sphere, as Wilkins points out. The protagonist in Old comedy usually presides over the sacrifice, a central concern of the genre, and there are often cooks in silent roles present at a whim to take over the work of the protagonist.⁸⁰ Wilkins (2000, a) suspects that there were other figures in Old comedies that served as prototypes for later stock *mageiroi*, perhaps even as early as the plays of Epicharmos, contrary to Dohm (1964).⁸¹ However that may be, the cook as a stock figure is an invention of Middle and New Comedy from the fourth and early third centuries BCE. They, contrary to the protagonists of Old Comedy, are connected to the private sphere (although they do sometimes still claim skill in sacrifice), which allows them to cook luxurious foods, such as fish. Their proper place is in the kitchen, they do not belong at the dinner party itself as they are characters of low status.⁸² However, the stock *mageiros* typically seeks to augment his position and achieve status through boasting, ἀλάζειν: he is “a boaster inflated with a notion of his own importance.”⁸³ The chef from Dionysios’ *Thesmophoros* is a case in point:

- 15 οὕτως ἐφ’ ἡμῶν σκευάσαι μὲν ἢ τεμεῖν
 ἡδύσμαθ’ ἐψησαί τε καὶ φυσᾶν τὸ πῦρ
 ὁ τυχὼν δύναιτ’ ἄν· ὀψοποιὸς οὖν μόνον
 ἐστὶν ὁ τοιοῦτος, ὁ δὲ μάγειρος ἄλλο τι.
 συνιδεῖν τόπον, ὥραν, τὸν καλοῦντα, τὸν πάλιν
 20 δειπνοῦντα, πότε δεῖ καὶ τίν’ ἰχθύν ἀγοράσαι
 15 in this way in our case, anyone could prepare
 or chop, and cook sauces

⁷⁹ Wilkins (2000, a), 369.

⁸⁰ Idem, 371-375. For instance, in Aristophanes’ *Peace*, the protagonist orders a slave to slaughter a sheep, a sacrificial victim, μαγειρικῶς.

⁸¹ Idem, 373-377.

⁸² Idem, 87.

⁸³ Idem, 371.

and blow the fire: so, that kind of person is only
an *opsopoios*, but a *mageiros* is something different.
to understand the place, the season, the one inviting,
20 the one dining in turn, when and what fish it is necessary to buy...
Dionys.Com. fr. 2 PCG, 15-20.

Boasting is the quintessential characteristic of the comic stock *mageiros*, but he has an array of other typical, more specific characteristics as well.

Archestratos the mageiros(?)

In what follows, several of the characteristics of the stock *mageiros* of Middle and New comedy will be treated, and then linked to Archestratos' narrator, to show how similar his persona is to that of a comic chef.⁸⁴ The stock comic chef was not a static character, however. While he remained a stock comic character, his exact characteristics seem to have underwent slight changes over time. German philologist Nesselrath distinguishes two types of stock cook: one who was popular mainly in the first half of the fourth century BCE—the actual period of Middle Comedy—, a cook that relies mainly on bombastic speech to praise his food in almost poetic language, the second having been developed in the years after 350 BCE, whose speeches grow in length to nearly 40 verses in some cases and are riddled with attempts to elevate cooking to a sort of omniscience.⁸⁵ Even though not all characteristics of the cook were popular at the same time, Archestratos could have drawn from a long period and wide range of characteristics of the comic stock *mageiros*.⁸⁶

A logical start in connecting Archestratos' narrator to the stock cook of Middle and New comedy would once again be fish, the subject matter of Archestratos' poem. As was already mentioned, the private sphere of the stock cook meant that he was able to prepare luxury foods for his elite patrons, most notably fish.⁸⁷ The connection to Archestratos is clear, but interestingly comedy seems to connect luxurious foods, including fish, specifically to

⁸⁴ Examples from comedy were taken from Wilkins (2000, a), ch. 8 and translated by me.

⁸⁵ Nesselrath (1990), 297-309.

⁸⁶ Although this is hard to prove, Archestratos may even to some degree have provided inspiration for comic poets creating their own *mageiros*, as New Comedy continued after the *Hedypatheia* was written.

⁸⁷ See for example Antiphanes, *Philotis*, fr. 221 PCG.

Sicily.⁸⁸ This is best illustrated in a fragment from Aristophanes' play *Banqueters* (fr. 225 PCG), in which the word Συρακοσίαν τράπεζαν is used to denote a luxurious banquet. In a fragment from Epicrates' *Merchant*, cooking fish is explicitly connected to Sicily:

ἐπὶ τοῖσδ' ἐγώ
 μάγειρος. οὔτε Σικελία καυχῆσεται
 τρέφειν τοιοῦτον ἄρταμον κατ' ἰχθύων,
 οὐκ Ἑλῖς, ἔνθα δελφάκων ἐγώ κρέα
 5 κάλλιστ' ὅπωπα πυρὸς ἀκμαῖς ἡνθισμένα

After them,
 I am a *mageiros*. Neither Sicily will boast
 of raising such a cook concerning fishes,
 neither will Elis, where I have seen the best meat
 of sucking-pigs browned by the tops of fire
 Epicrates fr. 6 PCG.

Two more extant fragments speak of a Sicilian cooking style, there is Antiphanes' *Dyspratos* fr. 90 PCG on cooking a ray—seafood—in 'Sicilian Style', and Ehippos' *Philyra* fr. 22 PCG, which connects Sicilian cooking to cakes.⁸⁹ Even if there was such a thing as a Sicilian cooking style or school, Archestratos seems to distance himself from it at least in part:

10 μηδὲ προσέλθῃ σοί ποτε τοῦψον τοῦτο ποιοῦντι
 μήτε Συρακόσιος μηθεὶς μήτ' Ἰταλιώτης·
 οὐ γὰρ ἐπίστανται χρηστοὺς σκευαζέμεν ἰχθυῶς,
 ἀλλὰ διαφθείρουσι κακῶς τυροῦντες ἅπαντα
 ὄξει τε ραίνοντες ὑγρῷ καὶ σιλφίου ἄλμῃ.
 10 and not ever must anyone either Syracusan or Italiot
 go near you when you are making that dish:
 for they do not know how to prepare proper fish,
 but they ruin them badly by putting cheese on every single thing
 and by sprinkling with vinegar and with brine of laserwort-juice.
 Arch. fr. 46 PCG, 10-14.

⁸⁸ Wilkins (2000, a), 385. This is perhaps reflected materially by the enormous number of fourth century BCE fish plates discovered in Magna Graecia. See also my notes on the cover picture of this thesis, and note 41.

⁸⁹ Cakes are mentioned in Arch. fr. 5.

Olson and Sens argue that Archestratos here alludes to Syracusan or Italiot professional cooks such as Mithaikos, whom he dismisses.⁹⁰ The fragment once again connects elaborate and intricate cooking with Sicily, and the rejection is interpreted by Olson and Sense as an attack by Archestratos at contemporary affluent people who think “Sicilian” lavishness equals good taste: “Archestratos’ narrator, on the other hand, expresses the contempt of a traditional elite for those who have gained access to commodities that once were the exclusive property of their social betters but who still allegedly fail to understand true elegance”.⁹¹ This both reflects Archestratos’ claim on good taste and reinforces the assumption that he wrote for an exclusive elite. Comic stock *mageiroi* often mention belonging to or reject certain cooking schools in their speeches, as Archestratos does, which fits in perfectly with the constant insistence on authority by *mageiroi* on matters of food, similar to the way in which Archestratos claims his authority on cooking fish and good taste.⁹²

As the *mageiros* is a boaster, the spoken word is perhaps even more important to him than skill in cooking. In Euphron fr. 10, a *mageiros* explicitly compares himself to a poet in that they both use their mind as art. This tendency leads to comic *mageiroi* who claim cooking to be a virtual omniscience, claiming that knowledge in cooking is preceded by knowledge in various other sciences, illustrated by Damoxenos’ *Syntrophoi* fr. 2, in which a cook proclaims the following, after claiming he is a student of Epikouros:

- οὐκ ἔστιν οὐθεν τοῦ πονεῖν σοφώτερον,
10 ἦν τ' εὐχερὲς τὸ προᾶγμα τοῦ λόγου τριβῆν
ἔχοντι τούτου· πολλὰ γὰρ συμβάλλεται.
διόπερ μάγειρον ὅταν ἴδῃς ἀγράμματον
μὴ Δημόκριτόν τε πάντα διανεγνωκότα,
{μᾶλλον δὲ κατέχοντα καταγέλα ὡς κενού}
15 καὶ τὸν Ἐπικούρου Κανόνα, μινθώσας ἄφες
ὡς ἐκ διατριβῆς. τοῦτο δεῖ γὰρ εἰδέναι,
τίν' ἔχει διαφορὰν πρώτον, ὧ βέλτιστε σύ,
γλαυκίσκος ἐν χειμῶνι καὶ θέρει, πάλιν
ποῖος περὶ δύσιν Πλειάδος συνειδέναι

⁹⁰ Olson and Sens (2000), 185.

⁹¹ Idem, lv.

⁹² Wilkins (2000, a), 386.

- 20 ἰχθύς ὑπὸ τροπᾶς τ' ἐστὶ χρησιμώτατος.
there is nothing wiser than to work,
- 10 and it was an unconcerned matter for one who has experience
of that theory: for many things come together.
Thus when you see an unlettered *mageiros*
who has not read all of Demokritos
{and when he is holding back his laughter more than a destitute (?)}
and the Canon of Epikouros, send him off, having besmeared him with dung
as he is out of the discipline. For it is necessary to know,
first what difference there is, dear sir,
between a *glaukiskos* in winter and in summer, again
to know what kind of fish is most useful
around the stting of the Pleiades and at the solstice.
Damox. fr. 2 PCG, 9-20.

Not only does this *mageiros* claim to have studied rhetoric, philosophy, astronomy, he is also noted by his conversational partner to have knowledge of medicine:

καὶ τῆς ἰατρικῆς τι μετέχειν μοι δοκεῖς.
You seem to me to have some part in medicine.
Damox. fr. 2 PCG, 33.

The same character later exclaims:

ἁρμονικός, οὐ μάγειρος.
You are a musician, not a *mageiros*.
Damox. fr. 2 PCG, 49.

after which the cook starts to speak of musical harmony and octaves.

Another chef, this time from a play by the New comic poet Sosipatros, also claims his knowledge of cooking was preceded by studying the stars, but also architecture, nature and war:

- τὸ διδασκαλεῖον ἡμεῖς σφύζομεν
τὸ Σίκωνος· οὗτος τῆς τέχνης ἀρχηγὸς ἦν.
15 ἐδίδασκεν ἡμᾶς πρῶτον ἀστρολογεῖν – ν
ἔπειτα μετὰ ταῦτ' εὐθὺς ἀρχιτεκτόνειν.
περὶ φύσεως κατεῖχε πάντας τοὺς λόγους·

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ἐπί πασι τούτοις ἔλεγε τὰ στρατηγικά.

πρό τῆς τέχνης ἔσπευδε ταῦθ' ἡμᾶς μαθεῖν.

We safeguard the school

of Sikon: he was the originator of the art.

- 15 First he taught us to practice astrology – v
later, immediately after those things, to practice architecture.

He mastered all theories on nature:

he mentioned the art of warfare as above all these.

Before the art he hastened us to learn these things.

Sosip. fr. 1 PCG, 13-19.

Archestratos similarly claims and displays knowledge of astronomy as important for both buying and cooking food—in his case fish:⁹³

Σειρίου ἀντέλλοντος < > φάγρον < >

Δήλω τ' Εἰρετρῇ τε κατ' εὐλιμένους ἀλὸς οἴκους

When Sirius is on the rise < > a sea-bream < >

in Delos and Eretria and the well-harboured houses of the sea.

Arch. fr. 27, 1-2.

καὶ νεαροῦ μεγάλου τ' αὐλωπία ἐν θέρει ὦνου

κρανίον, ἂν Φαέθων πυμάτην ἀψίδα διφρεύῃ

and buy the head of a young large *serranus gigas*

in summer, when Phaethon drives his chariot over the final loop:

Arch. fr. 34, 1-2.

τὴν δ' ἀμῖν φθινοπώρου, ὅταν Πλειὰς καταδύνη,

πάντα τρόπον σκευάζε. τί σοι τάδε μυθολογεύω;

prepare the tunny in autumn, when the Pleiades set,

in any way. Why do I tell you these things word for word?

Arch. fr. 36, 1-2.

ἥνικα δ' ἂν δύνοντος ἐν οὐρανῷ Ὠρίωνος

μήτηρ οἰνοφόρου βότρυος χαίτην ἀποβάλλῃ,

τῆμος ἔχειν ὅπτον σαργὸν τυρῶ κατάπαστον

⁹³ Also linked to comic chefs by Olson and Sens (2000), 6, on test. 4.

εὐμεγέθη θερμὸν δριμυῖ δεδαῖγμένον ὄξει
 and when, as Orion is setting in the sky,
 the mother of the wine-bringing grape cluster will throw off her hair,
 then get a roasted sargue, sprinkled with cheese,
 of a good size, hot and drenched with a strongly smelling vinegar.
 Arch. fr. 37, 1-4.

Perhaps the most conspicuous resemblance between Archemstratos and the comic cook is to be found in a fragment by the, surprisingly, Old comic poet Strato in his play *Phoinikides*, in which a patron complains about his cook:

- σφίγγ' ἄρρεν', οὐ μάγειρον, εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν
 εἴληφ'. ἀπλῶς γὰρ οὐδὲ ἔν, μὰ τοὺς θεοὺς,
 ὦν ἄν λέγη συνήμι· καινὰ ῥήματα
 πεπορισμένος πάρεστιν. ὥς εἰσῆλθε γάρ,
 5 εὐθύς μ' ἐπηρώτησε προσβλέψας μέγα·
 «πόσους κέκλησας μέροπας ἐπὶ δεῖπνον;» λέγε.
 «ἐγὼ κέκληκα μέροπας ἐπὶ δεῖπνον; χολαῖς.
 τοὺς δὲ μέροπας τούτους με γινώσκειν δοκεῖς;
 οὐδεὶς παρέσται· τοῦτο γάρ, νῆ τὸν Δία,
 10 ἔστι κατάλοιπον, μέροπας ἐπὶ δεῖπνον καλεῖν.»
 «οὐδ' ἄρα παρέσται δαιτυμῶν οὐδεὶς ὅλως;»
 «οὐκ οἶομαί γε.» Δαιτυμῶν; ἐλογιζόμην·
 ἦξει Φιλῖνος, Μοσχίων, Νικήρατος,
 ὁ δεῖν', ὁ δεῖνα. κατ' ὄνομ' ἀνελογιζόμην·
 15 οὐκ ἦν ἐν αὐτοῖς οὐδὲ εἷς μοι Δαιτυμῶν.
 «οὐδεὶς παρέσται» φημί. «τί λέγεις; οὐδὲ εἷς;»
 σφόδρ' ἠγανάκτησ' ὥσπερ ἡδίκημένος
 εἰ μὴ κέκληκα Δαιτυμόνα. καινόν πάνυ.
 I have taken a male sphinx, not a *mageiros*, into my
 house. For I simply do not understand a single thing,
 by the gods, of the things he says: he arrives furnished with
 novel words. For when he arrived,
 5 he immediately asked me, having stared with big eyes:
 'how many meropans have you called to dinner?', he said.

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- ‘I have called meropans to dinner? You’re mad.
Do you think that I know these meropans?
None will come: for that, by Zeus,
10 is a bridge too far, inviting meropans to dinner.’
‘So no single guest will be present at all?’
‘I don’t think so. A guest? I counted them:
Philinos will come, Moschion, Nikeratos,
mister A, mister B.’ I recounted them all by name.
15 Not one guest of mine was among them.
‘Not one will come’, I say. ‘What do you mean? Not a one?’
He became very angry as if he was hurt
if I had not invited a guest. Very novel.
Strato Com. fr. 1 PCG, 1-18.

Very much like Arcestratos, this specific comic chef speaks almost entirely in Homeric hexameter verse and phrasing. We have seen that parody was important already in Old comedy, and plays like this one may have inspired writers on food such as Arcestratos. As Wilkins notes: “Homer was always a ready resource for the comic poets, as much for his content on sacrifice (and the absence of fish) as for his elevated language and metre.”⁹⁴ Arcestratos strongly resembles Strato’s chef, in that they both speak about food in Homeric verse, meant to parody the famous poet of epic. There is another resemblance between Strato’s chef and Arcestratos in this case, however. The patron compares the chef to a sphinx, a creature that is known for its riddling language. Arcestratos also employs riddles in his *Hedypatheia*. Consider the following fragment:

- αὐτὰρ ἐς Ἀμβρακίην ἐλθὼν εὐδαίμονα χώραν
τὸν κάπρον, ἅν’ ἐσίδης, ὦνοῦ καὶ μὴ κατάλειπε,
κἄν ἰσόχρυσος ἔη, μή σοι νέμεσις καταπνεύσῃ
δεινὴ ἀπ’ ἀθανάτων· τὸ γάρ ἐστιν νέκταρος ἄνθος.
5 τούτου δ’ <οὐ> θέμις ἐστὶ φαγεῖν θνητοῖσιν ἅπασιν
οὐδ’ ἐσιδεῖν ὅσσοισιν, ὅσοι μὴ πλεκτὸν ὕφασμα
σχοίνου ἐλειοτρόφου κοῖλον χεῖρεσσιν ἔχοντες
εἰώθασι δονεῖν ψήφους αἶθωνι λογισμοῦ

⁹⁴ Wilkins (2000, a), 407.

καὶ ῥῥων μηλείων ἐπὶ γῆν δωρήματα βάλλειν

But, having gone to Ambrakia, a happy land,
purchase the boar-fish and do not leave it behind, if you see it,
even if it costs as much as gold, lest horrible revenge
blows down from the immortals upon you: for it is the flower of nectar.

5 but it is not allowed for all mortals to eat of that one,
nor to look at it with their eyes, those who are not, holding a
hollow, twisted weaving of marsh-raised rush in their hands,
used to stir pebbles with brilliant calculation, not used to
throw the gifts of sheep limbs on the ground.

Arch. fr. 16, ap Ath. 7. 305e-f.

Olson and Sens argue in their commentary on this fragment that the four final verses of this fragment are deliberately obscure, containing several kennings.⁹⁵ They note that there is a connection between food, riddling and circumlocutory language in comedy, noted also in Euboulos fr. 75 and Menander's *Dyskolos*.⁹⁶ This in my opinion can be considered to be another link between Archestratos' narrator and the comic chef. There is, however, another connection present in this fragment of Archestratos that I would like to point out. Riddling language was not only connected to cooks and food. Interestingly, courtesans, *ἑταίραι*, and the symposium both have strong connections to riddling, as has been shown by, among others, classicist Dimitrios Yatromanolakis.⁹⁷ This connection is even a comic one, as *hetairai* were stock characters of Middle and New comedy, often made to tell riddles.⁹⁸ In the second chapter it was argued that seafood had strong connections to sex, even specifically to courtesans, who were often likened to fish, a connection also made in gastronomic literature, as Matro of

⁹⁵ For possible interpretations of this riddling passage, see: Olson and Sens (2000), 81-83.

⁹⁶ Idem, 81. There are admittedly only a few instances that point towards this connection. Olson and Sens refer to Handley (1965) on Men. *Dyskolos* 947-53, in which a cook describes the mixing and pouring of wine and dancing girls in high poetic language, in contrast to the rest of his speech; and to Hunter (1983) on Eub. fr. 75, in which the speaker, who may very well be a cook, describes the preparations for some sort of celebration (perhaps for Orthes, a rustic *Daimon*) in riddling language, in dithyrambs. This metre, Hunter notes, has always been connected to circumlocutory and riddling language: see: Hunter (1983), 166-171. This suggests that using poetic and obscure language was a part of the cook's boasting to appear more learned, and may have occurred more often in comedy than the few instances in the extant material. For the connection of fish and sex to riddles, see also: Arch. Test. 4, ap. Ath. 10. 457c-e.

⁹⁷ Yatromanolakis (2007), 301-312.

⁹⁸ Nesselrath (1990), 320.

Pitane's fr. 1., in which he labels an anchovy from Phaleron a Τρίτωνος ἑταίρη, 'a *hetaira* of Triton' illustrates.⁹⁹ Archestratos fr. 16 unites all these elements: cooks, courtesans, seafood and riddling language, reflecting an intricate comic tradition. This makes this fragment a particularly complicated one to interpret. It not only connects Archestratos' narrator to the comic chef, but we may also detect a sexual layer in fr. 16 through the connection of fish (boar fish, in this case) to riddling language, which was itself connected to courtesans and sex in comedy. This connection is reflected in a comment made by the Peripatetic philosopher Klearchos, who complained:

τῶν γρίφων ἡ ζήτησις οὐκ ἀλλοτρία φιλοσοφίας ἐστί, καὶ οἱ παλαιοὶ τὴν τῆς
παιδείας ἀπόδειξιν ἐν τούτοις ἐποιοῦντο. προέβαλλον γὰρ παρὰ τοὺς
πότους οὐχ ὥσπερ οἱ νῦν ἐρωτῶντες ἀλλήλους, τίς τῶν ἀφροδισιαστικῶν
συνδυασμῶν ἢ τίς ἢ ποῖος ἰχθὺς ἥδιστος ἢ τίς ἀκμαιότατος, ἔτι δὲ τίς μετ'
Ἀρκτοῦρον ἢ μετὰ Πλειάδα ἢ τίς μετὰ Κύνᾳ μάλιστα βρωτός.

The inquiry of writers is nothing else but philosophy, and the ancients demonstrated their education in these things. For they did not riddle about drinks like modern people asking each other, which of the sexual positions or which or what kind of fish is most pleasant or which at its prime, besides which is best eaten with Arcturus or with the Pleiades or which with the Dog-star.

Arch. test. 4 (Klearchos fr. 63 Wehrli), ap. Ath. 10. 457c-e.

Could it be, then, that the boar fish described in fr. 16 is actually a courtesan? Is Archestratos urging the reader to hire one in Ambrakia?¹⁰⁰ Even if the boar-fish was not intended to refer to a *hetaira*, I think it would be hard for one not to cross the minds of the intended audience of the *Hedypatheia*, a group of learned, elite men, perhaps listening to this poem at a symposium, and aware not only of the connections of fish to courtesans, courtesans to riddling, and riddling to food, but perhaps also to the sexual layer present in the *Hedypatheia* as analysed in chapter 2, in which my interpretation of fr. 16 would fit perfectly. I want to emphasise that this sexualised reading of fr. 16 is no more than a suggestion. The literary instances connecting

⁹⁹ Olson and Sens (1999).

¹⁰⁰ The boar fish seems a particularly apt choice to describe a courtesan, not only because *hetairai* were often nicknamed after fish, but also because there is a reference in comedy to girls as pigs. In verse 750 of Aristophanes *Acharnians*, the main character Dikaiopolis starts a conversation with a Megarian man, who tries to sell him his daughters as sows. Admittedly, pigs do not show up in this context in Henderson's 1991 book *The Maculate Muse*, which treats obscene language in Greek comedy.

food and comic chefs to circumlocutory language admittedly are few, limited to only those I discussed earlier. However, building on Shaw's insistence that there are probably more sexual jokes in the *Hedypatheia* than only the one analysed by him, I would argue that the strong connections of seafood to sexuality, *hetairai* and perhaps to *mageiroi* merit my suggestion. Aside from this possible sexualised layer, the fragment remains to my mind a clear connection of the comic chef to Arcestratos' narrator, a connection the intended audience would also have been aware of.

A perhaps less obvious link between Arcestratos and the comic chef is the guest list. Presiding over the guest list was one of the concerns of the comic *mageiros*, the cook in Strato's *Phoinikides*, part of which was quoted above is a case in point. This is perhaps reflected in Arcestratos fr. 4, in which Arcestratos speaks of his ideal number of guests for a dinner party:

πρὸς δὲ μιῇ πάντας δειπνεῖν ἀβρόδαιτι τραπέζῃ·
 ἔστωσαν δ' ἢ τρεῖς ἢ τέσσαρες οἱ ξυνάπαντες
 ἢ τῶν πέντε γε μὴ πλείους· ἥδη γὰρ ἄν εἴη
 μισθοφόρων ἀρπαξιβίων σκηνὴ στρατιωτῶν.

That all dine together at one luxurious table:

the people coming together should be three or four in number
 or at least not more than five: for it would be a scene
 of soldiers for hire, living off rapine.

Arch. fr. 4.

Andrew Dalby argues that this fragment refers to Arcestratos' contemporary political reality, as Sicily was terrorised by armies of mercenaries in the fourth century BCE, hired by warring tyrants.¹⁰¹ This seems to imply that the *Hedypatheia* was written for a contemporary audience, as was mentioned probably composed of elite symposiasts. It also implies that presiding over the guest list was an urgent task to Arcestratos' narrator.

We have seen many ways in which the narrator of the *Hedypatheia* resembled the comic *mageiros*, but there are also differences. For instance, the comic chef's boasting is rather more blatant than Arcestratos' claim of knowledge and taste. More notably, the narrator of the *Hedypatheia* is very much concerned not only with how to cook fish and other foods, but also

¹⁰¹ Dalby (1995), 403.

with *where* these foodstuffs are best found. The comic *mageiros* lacks this emphasis on space.¹⁰² The final difference is social status. We already saw that the comic chef was a figure of low status. Archestratos, in contrast, attended symposia and performed for an elite audience. This difference is of particular importance for my own interpretation of the *Hedypatheia*. These differences in approach do not diminish my preceding insistence that Archestratos' narrator was shaped after a comic chef, as the many literary connections demonstrate. They are important, however, for my own interpretation of the *Hedypatheia*, especially the difference in social status.

Archestratos' narrator as the ultimate mageiros

It is in my opinion undeniable that the narrator of the *Hedypatheia* resembles the comic chef. I have demonstrated diverse links, ranging from a shared insistence on astronomic knowledge, to fish as a specific connection to Sicilian chefs, even to the use of riddling language. Indeed the links are so many and diverse that it is hard to imagine them not having been purposely written. Another question arises, then: why would Archestratos want to link his narrator—and himself, to an extent, if he performed the piece at symposia—with the comic *mageiros*, especially considering the fact that the comic chef, as we have seen before, was a figure of low status? I would argue that it is exactly this characteristic of the comic chef that makes him worthwhile for Archestratos to copy. If we remember that the *Hedypatheia* was written for an exclusive and wealthy elite far above the social standing of any comic chef, the point becomes clear: Archestratos' narrator can be considered a witty improvement on the boasting *mageiros*, and with that, the *Hedypatheia* as an improvement on the comic boasting speech. *Mageiroi* in comedy always try to improve their social standing—which was very low, they were often slaves—through boasting claims of learnedness and taste, as we have seen, and they always fail. They could dream of attending the meals and symposia they helped to organise, but could never succeed in doing so, doomed to remain in the kitchen. Archestratos' narrator on the other hand did what they could not; he succeeded in gaining access to the upper echelons of

¹⁰² In this context we may consider Poseidippos fr. 1, in which a cook compares the art of cooking to navigating a ship through a harbour mouth into a port. It is suggestive, but in my opinion not comparable to Archestratos' insistence on place. Considering why place and travelling had such a prominent place in Archestratos' work is beyond the scope of this thesis. Olson and Sense do note the great importance of geography in the poem, but as far as I can see give no explanation as to its function in the *Hedypatheia*.

Greek society, and can perform his speech while attending a symposium: his claims of knowledge and taste are accepted by his elite audience. He is certainly not urged to “go away and keep quiet”. I would even connect this to the main difference between Archestratos and the comic chefs, mentioned above: geography. Perhaps Archestratos tries to show that a boasting speech with *his own* emphasis, namely that on place, is the speech that would succeed. By carefully (and playfully) making his narrator resemble a comic chef through boasting like a *mageiros*, but with a specific twist that was all his own, he succeeded where other *mageiroi* failed. In a sense, Archestratos’ narrator has become the ultimate *mageiros* through a distinctly Archestrtean boasting speech. This greatly adds to the overall depth of humour in the *Hedypatheia*, humour that would be appreciated by a wealthy class of elite men who knew their comedies and so would be aware of the characteristics of the comic *mageiros*. This playful interpretation of the *Hedypatheia* once again illustrates that new layers of meaning can be found in Archestratos’ poem when it is studied from the perspective of comedy. I again want to emphasise the plurality of the *Hedypatheia*: my interpretation of it as an improved cook’s speech through its link with comedy in no way excludes the other interpretations and suggested literary traditions for the poem.

Final remarks and conclusion: the *Hedypatheia* read from the perspective of Greek comedy

Before answering the main question posed in this thesis, some final remarks are in order.

Barthes and the Hedypatheia

In the preceding thesis, I have tried to complicate the way in which we interpret the *Hedypatheia* by adding to a long list of possible interpretations two others, with a specific connection to Greek comedy. I have already explained that I do not feel the very nature of the *Hedypatheia* allows any one interpretation as definite. A question arises: is adding more interpretations to an already complicated work useful? To address this question, let us turn for a moment to the twentieth century.

In 1980, American literary critic Barbara Johnson published *The Critical Difference: Essays in the contemporary rhetoric of reading*, in which she discussed several views of the French philosopher Roland Barthes on literature. Johnson explains Barthes valued the plurality of a text, the fact that it can be interpreted differently by different readers or, in case of the *Hedypatheia*, listeners. Barthes distinguished two tools for evaluating texts: the so-called “scriptible” and the “lisible”. While the “lisible” or “readerly” only describes a text as a product ready for consumption by readers, the “scriptible” or “writerly” is a process in which the reader becomes a writer herself, in which she interprets the text in her own way. Johnson explains:

The readerly is constrained by considerations of representation: it is irreversible, “natural”, decidable, continuous, totalizable, and unified into a coherent whole based on the signified. The writerly is infinitely plural and open to the free play of signifiers and of difference, unconstrained by representative considerations, and transgressive of any desire for decidable, unified, totalized meaning.¹⁰³

I would suggest considering the *Hedypatheia* “writerly”. It is best to let go of trying to determine one unified interpretation of this poem on fish, and stress the writerly plurality of it. As we have seen, the *Hedypatheia* is an amalgam of many different traditions, and I doubt each individual member of even a contemporary audience listening to Archestratos performing at a symposium would have noticed all of them: the *Hedypatheia* is also “writerly” to a contemporary audience. Therefore, I would answer the question posed above positively:

¹⁰³ Johnson (1980), 5-6.

yes, adding new interpretive layers to the *Hedypatheia* is indeed useful. It strengthens the status of the *Hedypatheia* as a unique work in Greek literature and at the same time fits it firmly in known traditions, that even if they were unintended by Archestratos, would in all probability at least have been noticed by a contemporary educated audience in a “writerly” fashion. It is the plurality of the text that keeps it interesting, both to read and to listen to. I imagine Archestratos’ poem being quite successful at amusing symposiasts.

Conclusion

Let us then finally turn to the main question posed in the introduction: How was the *Hedypatheia* connected to Athenian comedy, and how might the (Attic) comic tradition inform the interpretation of this work?

We started with different interpretations of the *Hedypatheia* already suggested, such as reading it as Homeric parody and Herodotean historiography, and determined that Athenian comedy was a factor often left unconsidered in interpreting Archestratos’ poem. While looking at these interpretations, we also determined that the *Hedypatheia* was written to be performed to a wealthy elite at symposia. The different interpretations, not mutually exclusive, but also unable to give a coherent interpretation of the work as a whole, illustrated the literary plurality of the *Hedypatheia*. We then considered the related comic traditions in Athens and Sicily, and found out that Archestratos in all probability knew of the Attic comic tradition. Following up on this, I considered two strands of tradition most clearly visible in comedy: sexuality and seafood on the one hand, and the comic *mageiros* on the other.¹⁰⁴ I illustrated that both of these strands had strong parallels in the *Hedypatheia*.

Archestratos played with the traditional comic links of seafood and sex, as Carl Shaw demonstrated through a sexual joke on the scorpion fish in the *Hedypatheia*. I later attempted to demonstrate this sexual layer of the *Hedypatheia* with my suggestion of interpreting Arch. fr. 16 sexually later in chapter 3. Archestratos was certainly on to more than just fish.

To turn to the second strand of comic tradition analysed, the boasting *mageiros*, we saw that Archestratos seems to have modelled his narrator after this stock chef. The narrator reflects many of the characteristics of the comic chef as analysed by John Wilkins, among others. I argued that Archestratos through this comparison humorously made his narrator

¹⁰⁴ Especially the links between seafood and sexuality are not exclusively found in comedy, but are most prevalently exploited in the comic tradition.

into an improved version of the comic chef, and the *Hedypatheia* into an improved boasting speech. By making his narrator clearly resemble this *mageiros* while playfully subverting the stock figure's social status and making him focus on geography, Arcestratos created his own, distinctly Arcestratean, version of the comic chef.

The links between the literary figure of the *mageiros* and Arcestratos' narrator are so prevalent and clear in the *Hedypatheia* that they were almost certainly intentional. The sexual connotations of fish are played upon by Arcestratos, in all probability also intentionally, as Shaw has demonstrated in his 2009 article. Admittedly, Shaw provides only one, albeit to my mind convincing, example. My own suggested sexual interpretation of fr. 16 is tentative, although certainly a good possibility. The paucity of examples of sexual wit in the *Hedypatheia* should not detain us. Even if the connections of sexuality and seafood are less clear in the *Hedypatheia* than those of Arcestratos' narrator to the comic chef, Shaw's reading of a sexual pun should still alert us to the fact that sexual humour was included in the *Hedypatheia*.

Both readings of the *Hedypatheia* from the perspective of comedy add greatly to the wit of the poem as a whole: two examples of how Arcestratos fashioned his poem in relation to comedy. These examples also demonstrate how the comic tradition might influence our interpretation of Arcestratos' poem; by adding layers of interpretation that reveal humour that would never have come to light if the work was not read from the perspective of Greek comedy. I have confined myself to two strands of the comic tradition, but, as Shaw also asserted pertaining to sexual wit in the *Hedypatheia*, I would not find it at all surprising if more of them were discovered in this fishy poem in the future.

Throughout this thesis, I have illustrated and emphasised the literary plurality of the *Hedypatheia*, and suggested that the work defies any one definite interpretation. The importance of this was stressed through Barbara Johnson's treatment of Roland Barthes. The comic interpretation does not exclude any others: it adds to the myriad of interpretations already suggested for the poem, without rejecting any of them, in an attempt to better understand the literary nature of the *Hedypatheia*. Unable to be caught in any one single interpretation, adding a comic interpretation only strengthens the plurality and with it the uniqueness of the *Hedypatheia* in Greek literature. I consider this plurality a tribute to Arcestratos' literary genius.

But the greatest tribute made to the *Hedypatheia* is perhaps how often it turns up in the *Deipnosophistai*: we have come full circle. Athenaios may not have liked the poem much, but it kept his diners talking. Perhaps Archestratos even managed to make them laugh a little, through his skilful references to sumptuous seafood and his glorious gastronomy.

GLYN MUITJENS, NIJMEGEN 09/06/2015.

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Abbreviations

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