

HYPERBOREUS

STUDIA CLASSICA

ναυσι δ' οὔτε πεζὸς ἰὼν κεν εὐροῖς
ἔς Ἵπερβορέων ἀγῶνα θαυμαστὰν ὁδόν

(Pind. *Pyth.* 10. 29–30)

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ΧΑΡΑΚΤΗΡ ΑΡΕΤΑΣ

Donum natalicium
BERNARDO SEIDENSTICKER
ab amicis oblatum

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PETROPOLI
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A SCHOOL ANCIENT GREEK EPIC PARODY FROM KELLIS

The texts of ancient Greek epic parody are relatively few; most of them are preserved in quotations by later authors and in the papyrus fragments.¹ The most notable recent increase of interest to Greek parody was due not only to the foregrounding of different forms of literary subversion in (post-)modern literary theory, but also, and much more crucially, to the growing number of available pertinent texts, especially after the publication of fragmentary epic parodies in the *Supplementum Hellenisticum* and after the editions of Matro of Pitane and of Arcestratus by D. Olson and A. Sens.² These publications led to a number of stimulating critical discussions, among which one could particularly single out the studies of Greek epic parody by F. Condello, successively published as a series of *Matroniana*.³ The only monograph to date that discusses the majority of the relevant texts is R. B. Cebrián's *Comic Epic and Parodies of Epic: Literature for Youth and Children in Ancient Greece* (Zürich – New York 2008). But despite the seemingly comprehensive claim inherent in its title, even this book is far from achieving the goal. It does not include for instance the miniature codices from Kellis of the 4th c. AD recently published by C. A. Hope and K. A. Worp and containing an anonymous fragment of Homeric paraphrase or parody.⁴

There are still many interpretive questions concerning this obscure fragment, some of which I will address in my article. I intend to prove that

¹ The edition by P. Brandt (Brandt 1888) consists of *Batrachomyomachia*, Hipponax Ephesius, Hegemo Thasius, Euboicus Parius, Matro Pitaneus' *Symposium Atticum*, incertorum fragmenta, fragmenta dubia, and Arcestratus Gelensis' *Hedypatheia* (the genre of Arcestratus' poem is, in fact, uncertain; its belonging to parody is questionable). The list of epic parody remnants was augmented with the help of the papyrus fragments of *The Weasel and Mouse War* published by H. S. Schibli (Schibli 1983, 1–25).

² Lloyd-Jones, Parsons 1983; Olson, Sens 1999; 2000.

³ Condello 2002, 133–150; 2005, 449–467.

⁴ Hope, Worp 2006, 226–258 (photos of tablets are attached to the publication).

this text contains some obvious features of Homeric parody of gastronomic character, such as a symposium, a μύγειρος, a cooked rooster etc., which are not mentioned by C. A. Hope and K. A. Worp. In my opinion, this text serves as a testimony that gastronomic epic parody still existed in the early Christian time while obtaining new features (e. g., the words “Pater Zeus, give us bread...” could be interpreted as an allusion to “Pater noster”).⁵

In this article I discuss the text from Kellis trying to determinate its grammatical, literary, and social aspects, and giving a line-by-line commentary to it in addition to the short commentary by Klaas A. Worp.

The two miniature wooden codices were found in Kellis (modern Ismant el-Kharab) in 2002. One of them consists of four wooden boards (h. = 8 cm, w. = 5,5 cm, th. = 0,4–0,5 cm) with 15 hexameters each divided into two lines; another mini-codex consists of three Greek division tablets containing a list of Greek verbs and mathematical calculations. Worp suggests that “the handwriting should be dated to the middle of the fourth century, i. e. between 325–375”.⁶

Ismant el-Kharab is situated in Egypt’s Western Desert, at the Dakhleh Oasis, its name means Ismant-the-Ruined as it had been actually destroyed in 4th c. AD, and has not been built over since. The site contained a pagan temple of Tutu, Neith and Tapshay, and two church-like buildings, one of which may have been a Manichaean temple. Excavations of ruins in Kellis by Monash University, Melbourne, were held since 1986.⁷

The temple could have been destroyed in the late fourth century, after the year 391, when emperor Theodosius edited a decree permitting to destroy pagan temples, and when Christians ruined the famous temple of Serapis in Alexandria.

The mini-codices were found within the territory of the temple. Hope points out that a part of the temple was re-used for the local school:⁸ “From a fourth century re-use of Shrine III (Area D/4) came various pens, ostraka and fragments from inscribed boards that point to it functioning as a scriptorium, possibly coincident with the end of the temple as a place of worship. Amongst the texts were two identified as school exercises”.

⁵ Hope, Worp 2006, 247.

⁶ Hope, Worp 2006, 238.

⁷ Kaper 1991, 59–67; “The texts found at Kellis in the Dakhleh Oasis”, <http://www.tertullian.org/rpearse/manuscripts/kellis.htm> 7.03.2014.

⁸ Hope, Worp 2006, 232.

The text according to Worp's transliteration:⁹

- 1 τὴν πάρος ὀκρίοντι λίθων / μυλοειδέα πάμπαν
- 2 λαοφόρον θαλεροῖσι δ' ἀνέμβατον αἰζηοῖσιν
- 3 λειήνας ἐπέτασσε φιλίππι/ος ἴχνεσι λαῶν·
- 4 καὶ μιν ὁμῶς νυξὶν τε / καὶ ἡμασι πάντες ὁμαρτῆ
- 5 ἄτρομον ἴχνος ἔχον/τες ἐπιστίβουσι πόδεσσι.
- 6 ἀλλὰ ἐπ' ἄλλας ἄνασσε / σὺν ἀρτέμεσιν τεκέεσσι
- 7 ἐς πάτρην πεμπθῖσι / τὸν αἰοίδιμον ἡγεμονῆα.
- 8 ὧς εἰπὼν πυλέων ἐξέσσυτο / λευκὸς ἀλέκτωρ
- 9 τῷ δ' ἄμ' Ἀλέξανδρος πιάσας παρ'έδωκε μαγεῖρω
- 10 ὁ δὲ μάγειρος ἐνήσασας καὶ γευσά/μενος ἔλεγεν “χρηστόν!
- 11 Τρῶες καὶ Λύκιοι καὶ Δάρδανοι, / δευτ' ἐπὶ δεῖπνον·
- 12 ἀνέρες ἔστε, φίλοι, μνήσασθε δὲ / μάμπαν ἐνεγκεῖν.
- 13 αἰσθίετε πάντες καὶ μοι καταλί/ψατε ὄστουν.
- 14 Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἢ ἄρτον μοι δὸς / ἢ τυρίον ὀπτὸν
- 15 ἢ αὐτὸν βασιλῆα πολυσταφύ/λοιο πλακοῦντα”.

Line 10 is unmetrical; lines 6, 7, 11, 13, 14 contain metrical flaws.

Translation by Worp:

After smoothing the road that was aforesaid millstone-like through rocky stone and inaccessible for the stout and sturdy people he, the horse loving (or: Philippios?), spread it for the footsteps of the soldiers (or: of the people). And days and nights alike all trample upon it with their feet, having a fearless foot. But rule – with your children, sent – safe and sound – to the fatherland, (to) the renowned commander (or: guide).

After having spoken these words the white cock dashed out of the gate. But Alexander immediately grabbed it and gave it to a cook. And the cook, after having boiled and tasted it, said: “It’s nice! Trojans, Lycians and Dardanoi, come here for the meal! Be men, friends, but do not forget to bring a napkin with you. All of you must eat and leave me the bone. Father Zeus, give me bread, or a toasted cheese, or the king himself: cake of Grape-rich!”

Commentary¹⁰

The text is obviously divided into two parts, the first of which is a speech of a cock about the road (1–7), and the second contains the words of the cook about the feast (8–15). The first speech is zany, but the exact sense escapes us without more extent context.

⁹ Hope, Worp 2006, 238–239.

¹⁰ In the commentary I note *versus similes Homeric* and Homeric patterns which were missed by Worp.

Vv. 1–3. I presume that φιλίππιος means Φίλιππος or a son of Philipp according to papyrus and some inscriptions where φιλίππιος / Φιλίππειος are attested.¹¹

The subject matter of the first cock’s speech is the construction of a road. If φιλίππιος is a hint to one of the Philipps, kings of Macedonia, the most famous road that crossed Macedonia was the Roman military road *via Egnatia* which connected Illyria, Macedonia and Thrace. It was mentioned by Polybius (34. 12. 2a. 2; 6. 2), and six times by Strabo (7. 7. 4. 3; 8. 40; 7a. 1. 10. 10 etc.) who called the first part of it *Candavium*. Unfortunately we don’t know exactly who commenced the construction of *via Egnatia*, its origin is “almost totally in the dark”.¹²

V. 5. The form ἄτρομον occurs in Homer in the same *sedes* (*Il.* 5. 126; 17. 157).

Vv. 6–7. Worp wrote that the interpretation of verses 6–7 was “a matter of *non liquet*”.¹³ He gave an approximate translation omitting ἐπ’ ἄλλας: “But rule – with your children, sent – safe and sound – to the fatherland, (to) the renowned commander (or: guide)”.

As a matter of fact, in this line there are metrical, prosodic, syntactical and, subsequently, semantic inconsistencies. It is not entirely clear what are subject and object of ἀνάσσει. The verb ἀνάσσειν, according to LSJ, occurs with dative, genitive or prepositions (but not with ἐπί as here). Thus, the reference of τὸν αἰοίδιμον ἡγεμονῆα is under the question. I rather agree with Worp to “take τὸν αἰοίδιμον ἡγεμονῆα as a further epexegetis”¹⁴ of ἐς πάτρην.

An adjective αἰοίδιμος “subject of song” occurs in Homer only at *Il.* 6. 358 – in the famous words of Helena to Hector about Alexander and her future fate – where αἰοίδιμος is to be interpreted rather in *malam partem*: “notorious, infamous” (*Il.* 6. 356–358):

εἶνεκ’ ἐμεῖο κυνὸς καὶ Ἄλεξάνδρου ἔνεκ’ ἄτης,
οἷσιν ἐπὶ Ζεὺς θῆκε κακὸν μόνον, ὡς καὶ ὀπίσσω
ἀνθρώποισι πελώμεθ’ αἰοίδιμοι ἔσσομένοισι.

¹¹ *PLond* 7. 2024 r 2; *IG* VII 2430₁₃; *IG* IX, 2, 517₆₆; *ibid.* 234 col. II₁₀₀; *SEG* 26 (1976), 672₂₂. According to the LSJ, in the literary texts Φιλίππειος means *of Philipp*; Φιλίππιον is a dim. of Φίλιππος.

¹² Smith 1857, 1297. Justin (3rd cent. AD) does not mention this road in his *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus*.

¹³ Hope, Worp 2006, 240–241.

¹⁴ Hope, Worp 2006, 241.

The expression σὺν ἀρτεμέσιν τεκέεσσι (v. 6) can be compared to: ἀμύμονα δ' οἴκοι ἄκοιτιν / νοστήσας εὐροίμι σὺν ἀρτεμέεσσι φίλοισιν (*Od.* 13. 43). The word τεκέεσσι occurs in the same *sedes* in *Il.* 4. 162; *Od.* 14. 244.

Thus, vs. 6–7 can be cautiously interpreted as “rule (or: he ruled, *imperf.*) other lands (not ours) with your (or: his) safe descendants sent (returning?) to the fatherland to (or: of) the famous (or: infamous) leader (guide?)”. This sounds almost senseless. The verses are corrupted, perhaps their meaning was: “being famous (or: infamous) leader rule other lands (not ours) with your safe descendants sent (returning?) to the fatherland”.

Vv. 8–9. The Homeric phrase *Il.* 7. 1¹⁵ has been picked up in the parody “After having spoken these words the white cock dashed out of the gate. But Alexander immediately grabbed it and gave it to a cook”.

ᾠς εἰπὼν πυλέων ἐξέσσυτο φαίδιμος Ἔκτωρ,
τῷ δ' ἄμ' Ἀλέξανδρος κί' ἀδελφεός· ἐν δ' ἄρα θυμῷ
ἀμφότεροι μέμασαν πολεμίζειν ἠδὲ μάχεσθαι.

Worp wrote: “Of course, the metrical value of λευκὸς ἀλέκτωρ is equivalent to that of φαίδιμος Ἔκτωρ”.¹⁶ Besides, we note that the main point of this pun is paronomasia Ἔκτωρ – ἀλέκτωρ, and synonymic λευκὸς for φαίδιμος.

One can suppose that the author of this parody had *prae se* the end of the 6th (vv. 356–358) and the very beginning of the 7th songs of the *Iliad*.

The rashly murdered white cock of parody could bring the additional association with the Pythagorean prohibition to sacrifice a white cock (which was popular in antiquity),¹⁷ and moreover with Lucian's speaking cock who had been Pythagoras himself in one of his previous lives (*Somnium s. gallus* [XLV]).

Cf. Diog. La. 8. 34:

φησὶ δ' Ἀριστοτέλης ἐν τῷ Περὶ τῶν Πυθαγορείων παραγγέλλειν αὐτὸν ... Ἀλεκτρύονος μὴ ἄπτεσθαι λευκοῦ, ὅτι ἱερὸς τοῦ Μηνὸς καὶ ἰκέτης· τὸ δ' ἦν τῶν ἀγαθῶν τῷ τε Μηνὶ ἱερὸς· σημαίνει γὰρ τὰς ὄρας.

It is curious whether the pupils of provincial Kellis could know about Pythagoras and his acusmas. The school's wooden tablet of 3rd–4th cc. AD,

¹⁵ In Worp 2006, 241 read *Il.* 7. 1 instead of *Il.* 6. 1.

¹⁶ Hope, Worp 2006, 241.

¹⁷ Zhmud 2012, 171.

found in Egypt, containing a complete declension of a *chria* about Pythagoras who became a grammar teacher and used to advise his pupils to abstain from (the word) ἐνάιμονες,¹⁸ proves that they could.

V. 10. ὁ δὲ μάγειρος ἐψήσας καὶ γευσάμενος ἔλεγεν “χρηστόν!”

The verse has seven metra, besides, 1st (akephalos), 2nd, 5th and 6th are irregular. My explanation is that the verse was written without the Homeric original verse(s) in mind. There is also the suggestion that the word μάγειρος in v. 10 could be a glossa for ὁ δὲ which was put into the text by a scribe or that the whole line is to be regarded as a piece of prose which interrupts the verses.¹⁹

In my opinion, the verse was corrupted at the process of writing, and it could be reconstructed approximately as ὄς δ’ αὐτ’ (= ὁ δὲ μάγειρος) ἐψήσας καὶ γευσάμενος λέγε “χρηστόν”.²⁰

The word μάγειρος (vv. 9, 10) does not occur in Homer, we find it only in the late parody *Batrachomyomachia* 40.²¹ The μάγειρος is a very important personage in comedy, and necessary for gastronomical parody. Matro of Pitane, the author of the epic parody *Symposium Atticum* (4th c. BC), compares μάγειροι, on whom depends the fate of the feast, with the Homeric Horae controlling the Heaven and Olympos.²²

I suggest that καὶ γευσάμενος ἔλεγεν “χρηστόν” alludes to *Psa* 33:8:

γεύσασθε καὶ ἴδετε ὅτι χρηστός ὁ κύριος·
μακάριος ἀνὴρ, ὃς ἐλπίζει ἐπ’ αὐτόν.

Other Christian texts (almost contemporary to the boards from Kellis) citing this phrase confirm that it was rather famous.²³

The big part of the texts from Kellis belongs to a Manichaean community that was widely expanded at the end of 4th c. AD; the literary

¹⁸ See more in Sedley 1998, 122–138.

¹⁹ It was suggested by Michael Pozdnev during discussion on my talk at the St Petersburg University conference in March 2014.

²⁰ Compare in Homer: ὄς δ’ αὐτ’ *Il.* 13. 176; ἦ δ’ αὐτ’ *Il.* 18. 146; and τὸν δ’ αὐτ’ *Od.* 4. 641; 7. 308 passim.

²¹ For the discussion about the date of the *Batrachomyomachia* see Wackernagel 1916, 189–197; Wölke 1978, 63; Gleit 1984, 34–35. I agree that it should be dated about the 1st c. BC.

²² See Olson, Sense 1999, 82–83: “Deliberately absurd adaptation of the description of the Homeric Horae” (*Il.* 5. 750–751 = 8. 394–395 to the cooks in fr. I. 12–13).

²³ Ioh. Chrys. *In ep. Rom.* = PG 60. 622. 27; id., *In ep. Ephes.* = PG 62. 123. 18: τοῦτο μὲν οὖν αὐτὸ καὶ θαυμαστότατόν ἐστιν, ὅτι πείραν λαβὼν καὶ γευσάμενος τῆς φιλανθρωπίας τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ ἰδὼν ὅτι χρηστός ὁ Κύριος, τὸν μὲν χρηστόν εἶσας; Theodoret. *Hist. relig., Vita* 2. 2. 24.

texts preserved in Kellis are mostly of liturgical character, in particularly, psalms and prayers in Coptic and in Greek.²⁴

A citizen of Kellis, Makarios, wrote in a letter to his son Matheos: “Study [your] psalms, whether Greek or Coptic, <every> day (?). Do not abandon your vow. Here, the *Judgement of Peter* is with you. [Do the] *Apostolos*; or else master the *Great Prayers* and the *Greek Psalms*... Write a little from time to time, more and more. Write a daily example, for I need you to write books here...” (*P. Kell. Copt.* 19, 14–19).²⁵

Vv. 11–12. *Trojans, Lycians and Dardanoi, come here for the meal! / Be men, friends, but do not forget to bring a napkin with you.*

We may have a parodistic reminiscence here: the poet replaces the standard epic Τρῶες καὶ Λύκιοι καὶ Δάρδανοι ἀγχιμαχηταί (*Il.* 8. 173; 11. 286; 13. 150; 15. 425, 486; 17. 184) with Τρῶες καὶ Λύκιοι καὶ Δάρδανοι δεῖτ' ἐπὶ δεῖπνον²⁶ and ἀνέρες ἔστε φίλοι, μνήσασθε δὲ θούριδος ἀλκῆς (*Il.* 6. 112; 8. 174; 11. 287, 487; 15. 734; 16. 270; 17. 185) with ἀνέρες ἔστε, φίλοι, μνήσασθε μάππαν ἐνεγκεῖν.

Both δεῖτ' ἐπὶ δεῖπνον and μάππαν ἐνεγκεῖν are connected with the feast topic, and do not occur in Homer. It reminds the brilliant pun of Matro's gastronomical epic parody (fr. 1. 1 O.–S.): δεῖπνα μοι ἔννεπε, Μοῦσα, πολύτροφα καὶ μάλα πολλά...

The Kellis parody is one of the earliest occurrences of the Latin word μάππα in ancient Greek. For the first time, as we know, it was attested in the grammarian of the 2nd c. AD, Aelius Herodianus (Pseudo-Herodianus) “Περὶ σολοικισμοῦ καὶ βαρβαρισμοῦ” (312. 2) as an example of *barbarismos*:

λέγομεν δὲ βαρβαρίζειν καὶ τὸν ἀλλοφύλω λέξει χρώμενον, ὡς εἶ τις τὸ μὲν ὑπαυχένιον κερβικάριον λέγει, τὸ δὲ χειρόμακτρον μάππαν.

It is interesting that the word μάππα occurs in the papyrus *P. Oxy* 1051₁₇ (3rd c. AD), and perhaps in *PBerl*, Sarischouli 1995, no. 21 r, l. 15 (5th c. AD)

²⁴ “It would seem that the copying and singing of psalms was part of the spiritual praxis for the whole believing community” (Kellis Literary Texts 2007, 6). My sincere thanks go to Alexander L. Khosroev for supplying me with this book and some publications of texts from Kellis.

²⁵ Gardner, Alcock, Funk 1999, 160.

²⁶ Worp rightly explains the metrical error in the 4th metron: “In Homer the word Δάρδανοι is always followed by a word starting with vowel, hence “metrical corruption” turns the long syllable -νοι into a shot one”. Hope, Worp 2006, 242.

in the list of the “kitchen words”: ἀγκωνάρ(ια) ἀνγωναρ παλαῖα β' / τραπεζ() ζ' / μάππαν τριση[-ca.?-] / κουκκούμιγ[-ca.?-] / λεκάνη [-ca.?-].²⁷

It seems that the word μάππα does not have any special parodic connotation in this text; it is simply a reflection of the linguistic situation in the Roman province in the 4th c. AD.²⁸ “It is the papyrological documents of the imperial period that give us the best idea of the receptivity of Greek to the influence of Latin... The borrowings are (i) in the sphere of public life, in particular government administration and the military; (ii) in social life (industry, commerce, agriculture); and (iii) private life (home and furniture, food, and clothing)... The fourth century CE represents the period in which Latin borrowings are most numerous”.²⁹

V. 13. The verse is unparalleled in Homer.

In this text, there is a mixture of *koine* forms like καταλίψατε, αἰσθήετε (I presume that a schoolboy, who wrote this parody on the tablets, did it from memory or at dictation: hearing [e] he wrote it αἰ- instead of simple ἐ-), albeit with Attic traces like ὄστοῦν, and many Ionic traces like ὀκριόνετι, πυλέων and others.

What does it mean: “All of you must eat and leave me the bone”?

The participants of the feast used to throw the bones onto the floor. I refer to mosaics in the style “Asarotos oikos” (“unswept room/floor”). Popular in the Hellenistic and Roman times, these mosaics depict the remnants of banquets, among which are bones (e. g., Vatican Museums, inv. 10132, AD 130). Pliny (*NH* 36. 184) described the most famous work in that genre, made by Sosos in Pergamon near the 3rd–2nd cc. BC and known as “Asarotos oikos”.³⁰

V. 14. The important Homeric parallel verses, which have been ignored by Worp, are the prayer of Priamus to Zeus before his departure to Achilles in *Il.* 24. 308–309:

Ζεῦ πάτερ ἴδηθεν μεδέων κῦδιστε μέγιστε
δός μ' ἐς Ἀχιλλῆος φίλον ἔλθεῖν ἦδ' ἔλεεινόν.

²⁷ Κούκκουμα means ‘jug’, and is attested on the papyri of the 3rd–4th cc. AD (see LSJ); λεκάνη is ‘dish, pot, pan, basin’ (see LSJ).

²⁸ Rochette 2010, 292: “First-century BCE borrowings are still related to objects, titles, or customs that were unfamiliar to Greeks (e. g., κεντυρίων *centurio*, λεγιών *legio*), but fourth-century CE borrowings enter the language even when a Greek word existed for the object in question (e. g., βέστη *uestis*, ὄσπες *hospes*, φαμίλια *familia*)”.

²⁹ Rochette 2010, 292.

³⁰ Andreae 2012, 46–51.

The pure vocative Ζεῦ πάτερ (without δός μ') very often occurs at the very beginning of a verse in Homer and his numerous followers.

Worp very cautiously suggests³¹ that “Father Zeus, give me bread...” (Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἢ ἄρτον μοι δός, v. 14) is used here with a hint of irony in reference to the Lord’s Prayer (Πάτερ ἡμῶν ... τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δός ἡμῖν σήμερον).

In the same vein the phrase καὶ γευσάμενος ἔλεγεν “χρηστόν” (v. 10) could be regarded as a hint to *Psa* 33:8 (see above).

The expression τυρίον ὀπτόν “toasted (?) cheese” occurs only in a receipt for μῦμα “meat chopped up with blood, cheese, honey, vinegar, and savoury herbs” (LSJ), quoted by Athenaeus, 14. 662 e (τυρῶ ὀπτῶ).

V. 15. Finally, what is the point of the verse which Worp translated as “Or the king himself: cake of Grape-rich!”?

The word πλακοῦς means “flat cake”. It does not occur in Homer (only in the *Batrachomyomachia*, 36) but it was very often used in comedy (TLG).³²

It is clear that πλακοῦντα (acc. sg. from πλακοῦς) should be regarded here as an object to δός, as the final extended part of the *tres crescendo* accusatives, after ἢ ἤρτον ἢ τυρίον ὀπτόν – ἢ αὐτὸν βασιλιῆα πολυσταφύλιοιο πλακοῦντα.

The cake πλακοῦς cooked with milk and honey was regarded as a great delicacy (Ael. *De nat. an.* 3. 20. 3).

An antithesis “bread – cake” (ἄρτον – πλακοῦς), albeit with “water – vine”, occurred in ancient Greek and Christian literature.³³

The comical effect consists in the growing requests: give me bread, delicious cheese, sweet cake.

As a matter of fact the cake πλακοῦς was brought at the end of the feast, in the moment of its culmination. I refer to the last verses of the gastronomical parody of Matro of Pitane fr. I, 115–120 O.–S.

³¹ Hope, Worp 2006, 247: “I follow D. Feissel (Paris) in wondering (in a private communication) whether elements of the “Pater noster” were taken over into the story sketched in lines 8 ff. within this context one should not only note l. 14 “Father Zeus, give us bread”, but also l. 10 where the word may have been used intentionally as a reminder of Χριστόν”.

³² *Passim* in Comedy: πλακοῦντος κύκος Ar. *Ach.* 1125, cf. Alex. fr. 22 (pl., hex.); π. ἄρτος Ath. 14. 645 d (LSJ).

³³ Ioh. Chrys. *In Matth.* = PG 58. 494. 4: Καὶ σὺ μὲν εἰς ἀμετρίαν ἐσθίεις, ὁ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐδὲ εἰς χρείαν· σὺ μὲν πλακοῦντας διαφόρους, ἐκεῖνος δὲ οὐδὲ ἄρτον ξηρόν· σὺ Θάσιον οἶνον, ἐκεναὶ δὲ οὐδὲ ψυχρὸν ἐπέδωκας ποτήριον διψῶντι.

τῶν δ' ἐγὼ οὐδενὸς ἦσθον ἀπλῶς, μεστὸς δ' ἀνεκείμην.
 ὡς δ' ἴδον ξανθόν, γλυκερόν, μέγαν, εὐκυκλον, ἀβρόν
 Δήμητρος παῖδ' ὀπτὸν ἐπεισελθόντα πλακοῦντα,
 πῶς ἄν ἔπειτα πλακοῦντος ἐγὼ θείου ἀπεχοίμην³⁴
 οὐδ' εἴ μοι δέκα μὲν χεῖρες, δέκα δὲ στόματ' εἶεν,³⁵
 γαστήρ δ' ἄρρηκτος, χάλκεον δέ μοι ἦτορ ἐνείη.

In both parodies the word *πλακοῦντα* occurs in the same *sedes* taking the emphatic position at the clausula of the verse.³⁶ The arrival of the cake is almost the final (before dancing, songs and *πόρνοι*)³⁷ and the most exciting event of the feast. In the Matro's parody it is called *Δήμητρος παῖδ'*, "a son of Demeter"; in the fragment from Kellis *αὐτὸν βασιλῆα*, "a king himself".

At the end of both parodies there is a kind of the personification riddle: *ξανθόν, γλυκερόν, μέγαν ἔγκυκλον ... Δήμητρος παῖδ'*; and *αὐτὸν βασιλῆα πολυστάφυλοιο*, its final solution being a cake *πλακοῦντα*.³⁸

The enigmatic adjective *πολυστάφυλος* Worp suggests to understand either as "the king of Grapeland" or as "the son of Grape-rich", "a father-son relationship being expressed by the genitive", although he warns that "the only conceivable objections against some elements of this interpretation are that (a) the adjective *πολυστάφυλος* is not encountered as a name, and that (b) this interpretation requires a certain amount of associative thinking".³⁹

The objections are indeed quite strong.

The meaning of the adjective *πολυστάφυλος* is "rich in grapes", about places: *Il.* 2. 507, *Soph. Ant.* 1133; also *Διόνυσε* (*Hymn. Hom.* 26. 11) and *ἄμπελος* (*Hecat. fr.* 15 J.). In my opinion, in the parody from Kellis the adjective *πολυστάφυλος* is associated rather with Dionysus and wine,

³⁴ *Il.* 10. 243 = *Od.* 1. 65: *πῶς ἄν ἔπειτ' Ὀδυσῆος ἐγὼ θεῖοιο λαθοίμην.*

³⁵ *Il.* 2. 488–490: *πληθὺν δ' οὐκ ἄν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω, / οὐδ' εἴ μοι δέκα μὲν γλῶσσαι, δέκα δὲ στόματ' εἶεν, / φωνὴ δ' ἄρρηκτος, χάλκεον δέ μοι ἦτορ ἐνείη.*

³⁶ In the same *sedes* the word *πλακοῦντα* occurs in the Arcestratus' parody *Hedypatheia*: ... *ἀλλὰ πλακοῦντα / αἰνῶ Ἀθήνησιν γεγενημένον...* (*Suppl. Hell. fr.* 192. 15).

³⁷ We do not know exactly whether both parodies are complete, because we possess Matro only as a quotation in Athenaeus, and the Kellis parody, as presumably an uncomplete wooden-tablets record. Concerning the parody from Kellis Worp wrote: "After two lines of text on board III.b producing one full hexameter, the text suddenly stops, though there is space enough to add further text: is this the end of the (short) story?" (Hope, Worp 2006, 237).

³⁸ Compare to the famous end of *Batrachomyomachia* with its riddle about cancers.

³⁹ Hope, Worp 2006, 244.

and consequently with the feast – δειπνον. The speech of the cook begins with his invitation to the feast (Τρῶες καὶ Λύκιοι καὶ Δάρδανοι δεῖτ' ἐπὶ δειπνον, v. 11) and ends with the king of the feast, the cake. Thus, I propose to connect πολυσταφύλιο <δειπνου> with αὐτὸν βασιλῆα, and to understand it as “Or the king himself of a <feast> rich in grapes – a cake!”

It is worth also to take into consideration that grape is an attribute of Dionysus and of Christian symbols.

Finally, I shall consider some aspects of the audience of the parody from Kellis. One cannot study a text but through its recipients and its audience. In our case we can only presume following Worp that the audience were students of a school because the wooden codices also contain a list of Greek verbs and mathematical calculations. That allows us to suggest that it is an example of school parody of Homer. The text was either created for the Kellis school or rewritten by a school-master or by a school-boy.⁴⁰

Among the texts found in the Kellis temple there is another wooden board containing four lines of Homer *Iliad* 12. 294–297. Worp, who edited it in 1998, insisted that it was a school text.⁴¹ It is interesting that a schoolboy probably had written these lines from memory because there was an error in 294 ἦν ἀρ ἀχιλλεὺς instead of ἦν ἄρα χαλκεύς. R. Criore noticed that Egyptian readers preferred the *Ilias* over the *Odyssey*.⁴² A sensational find from Kellis was the 4th-century Isocrates codex containing three previously lost orations: *Ad Demonium*; *Ad Nicoclem*, and *Nicocles*.⁴³ These and others remains allow the suggestion that there was a school of grammar and rhetorics in Kellis. The letter of Ision confirms that people who had an interest in Classical Greek literature were educated in Kellis: “Greet all by name. Your brothers greet you. I pray you are well in god, beloved (friends). Send a well-proportioned 10-page notebook of city quality for your brother Ision. For he has become a writer of Greek and a thoroughly Attic reader” (*P. Kellis* 63, early to mid. 4th c. AD).⁴⁴

Another problem is whether Christian parody could appear at that time in Egypt. It is difficult to prove, but I suppose that the double parody of Homer and of the liturgical Christian texts could be a point of the joke(s).

⁴⁰ We know another example when a school parody became a literary text: the parody on the school texts *Batrachomyomachia* and Aeschylus' *Persae* written by a Byzantine poet Theodorus Prodromus (see Ahlborn 1978).

⁴¹ Hope, Worp 1998, 2, 206–210.

⁴² See a chapter “The Poet” about Homer reading at Egypt schools in Criore 2005, 194–197.

⁴³ Rijksbaron, Worp 1997.

⁴⁴ Whitehorne 1999, 281–283.

In Egypt “Christians were an overwhelming majority by the late fourth century ... The earliest letter that can be said certainly to be written by a Christian, because of the use of a distinctively Christian abbreviated religious term, *ἐν κυρίῳ*, *P. Bas.* 16 (Naldini no. 4), is dated to the early third century”.⁴⁵

To define the date of this piece of parody we have a *terminus ante quem* – between 325 and 375, as well as a *terminus post quem* – the 3rd c. AD when Christianity became more influential in Egypt. The Latin word *mappa* also attests that the text is late. I presume that the parody was written by a well educated pagan.

The remains of ancient Greek epic parody are not numerous; a gap in our knowledge is, in particular, the Roman period after the first century BC. It means that even the 15-lines fragment from Kellis is of great importance for the history of the genre.

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⁴⁵ Bagnall 2009, 18.

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The miniature codices from Kellis of the 4th c. AD containing an anonymous fragment of Homeric paraphrase or parody were published by C. A. Hope and K. A. Worp in 2006. In this article I discuss the text from Kellis trying to determinate its grammatical, literary, and social aspects, and giving a line-by-line commentary to it. I suppose that the double parody of Homer and of the liturgical Christian texts could be a point of the joke. We can presume following Worp that the audience were students of a school because the wooden codices also contain a list of Greek verbs and mathematical calculations. The parody could be written by a well educated pagan.

В статье дается построчный комментарий и интерпретация анонимного гексаметрического текста IV в. н. э., сохранившегося на миниатюрных деревянных табличках из Келлис, опубликованных в 2006 г. К. Хоупом и К. Уорпом. Текст представляет собой пародию на Гомера, записанную, возможно, школьным учителем или учеником на табличках вместе со списком глаголов и математическими вычислениями. Автор показывает, что в пародии могут содержаться намеки также и на известные христианские литургические тексты.