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HEROES AND FISH IN HOMER*

ἰχθῶν δ' Ὅμηρος ἐσθίοντ' εἶρηκε ποῦ τίνα τῶν Ἀχαιῶν;
Where has Homer ever spoken of any Achaean eating fish?
(*Eub.* fr. 120 Hunter)

Athenaeus of Naucratis, when quoting Eubulus' words, was himself deeply convinced that the absence of fish food in Homer's epics was the poet's deliberate choice. The episodic mentions of fish in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* greatly puzzled ancient commentators, as indeed it puzzles scholars today. Both groups attempted to find a solution to this riddle, while at the same time being unanimous in at least one aspect: the lack of fish in Homer's works was by no means accidental.

Fish and fishery appear occasionally in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, whereas 'the tables' of heroes abounded in meat, bread and wine.² They consume fish only

* This text is significantly changed and supplemented version of the previous paper published in Polish. Cf. P. Berdowski, 'Ryby i rybacy w poetyckim świecie Homera' [Fish and fishermen in Homer's poetic world], in L. Morawiecki (ed.), *Graecorum et Romanorum memoria* (Res historica, 14), Lublin 2002, 9–28. I truly appreciate the valuable comments made by Lesław Morawiecki, Marek Węcowski, Stephanie West and John Wilkins on the several versions of the presented paper. Of course only the author is responsible for the views presented here. Also I would like to thank B.A. Krostenko for his kind help in improving English of the paper. If not stated clearly all dates refer to the period *ante Christum*.

¹ The Loeb translation by C. Burton Gulick, London 1993.

² Heroes of Homer eat roasted beef, pork, mutton, venison and goat-flesh (and quite possibly geese – cf. *Od.* 19.536–53). Poultry is not consumed. *Sitos* is a general term for corn food, especially bread. Honey is attested as food as well. Despite the presence of fruits in the garden of Alkinoos and in the orchard of Laertes, we do not see them eaten. Similarly vegetables: only onion is mentioned once as a relish. None of the Greeks drink milk, though grated cheese is added to the Pramnian wine, which is the main beverage in Homer (pure water is not drunk at all; olive-oil is not mentioned in the consumption context either).

if they are threatened by starvation and as a result they have to eat everything within their reach. There is an interesting excerpt from the *Odyssey* in which Menelaus tells Telemachus about his forced landing (caused by giving up the burnt-offering to the gods) on Pharos Island near Egypt when he was coming back from Troy. After having run out of the supplies, Menelaus' companions 'were even roaming about the island, fishing with bent hooks, for hunger pinched their bellies'.³ However, they were acting under the pressure of the present situation (ἔτειρε δὲ γαστέρα λιμός) and there is no reason to suppose that they would be engaged in fishing willingly.⁴ Odysseus' companions acted in the same way when they were confined on Trynakhia Island due to weather conditions: 'But when all the stores had been consumed from out of ship, and now they must roam about in search of game, fishes, and fowl, and whatever might come to their hands – fishing with bent hooks, for hunger pinched their bellies'.⁵ Homer does not mention fish consumption in the *Iliad* at all.

The act of catching fish is as embarrassing as eating it. Except for the above-mentioned scenes in Pharos and Trynakhia, fishing appears almost solely in Homeric *comparationes*, and it is always used in the same context, i.e. whenever the poet compares the act of striking a death blow to catching fish by means of the rod or net.⁶

Scholars have analysed the reasons for Homer's prejudice towards food containing fish. The early monographs on Homer are marked by antiquarian method and firm belief of their authors that realities hold in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* can be referred to the specific historical époque. Following the ancient commentators these scholars believed, that fish food was consumed by 'poor classes' while the heroes ate fish only under starvation. Fishermen's work had had bad reputation as well and this occupation was chosen only by law-class background

³ *Od.* 4.368–9: *περὶ νῆσον ἀλώμενοι ἰχθυάσσκον/ γναμπτοῖσ' ἀγκίστροισιν, ἔτειρε δὲ γαστέρα λιμός.* The *Odyssey* translated by A.T. Murray, London 1919.

⁴ Athenaeus (1.13a-b) noticed pedantically that heroes had to be equipped with fishing tackle and it means that they were familiarized with fishing. Alternatively one could suppose that they improvised and made fish-hooks on the spot.

⁵ *Od.* 12.329–32: *ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ νηὸς ἐξέφθιτο ἦα πάντα/ καὶ δὴ ἄγρην ἐφέπεσκον ἀλητεύοντες ἀνάγκη/ ἰχθῦς ὄρνιθας τε, φίλας ὅ τι χεῖρας ἴκοιτο/ γναμπτοῖσ' ἀγκίστροισιν. ἔτειρε δὲ γαστέρα λιμός.* Fish appears once more in *The Odyssey* (19.109–114) among the foods that are gifts of the gods. There are also few places where the presence of fish in the sea is mentioned.

⁶ There are six references to fishermen's work (*Il.* 5.487; 16.406–8; 24.80–2; *Od.* 10.124; 12.251–3; 22.383–6). One remark is made concerning fishing (diving) for oysters (*Il.* 16.746–8). This is the first depiction of diving in Greek literature. Cf. R.J. Rabel, 'Cebriones the Diver: *Iliad* 16.733–76', *AJP* 114 (1993), 339–341. On Homeric similes see M. Coffey, 'The Function of the Homeric Simile', *AJP* 78 (1957), 113–132.

people.⁷ More profound reflection can be found in the works written in the interwar period. In 1917 John A. Scott published his paper in which he expressed his opinion that fish consumption in Archaic and Classical Greece was very high, and a lot of species were luxurious food eaten by 'the better classes'.⁸ In this context the exclusion of the fish food from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* was intentional effort of Homer. Scott formulated a hypothesis that it was connected with Smyrna – the place, where Homer, as Scott believed, was born and grew up. The American scholar quoted the book of a Scottish archeologist and traveler Sir William Ramsay entitled *Impressions of Turkey*, in which the author talks about a very low quality of fish in the rivers and streams in the proximity of Smyrna. According to Scott, this situation did not change from the antiquity. He believed that the Homer's treatment of fish would be affected by personal experience of the poet. Today Scott's explanation seems naive, but his paper served an important role in the discussion of the fish treatment in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* initiating very vivid polemics in the 20-ties and 30-ties in American philological journals.

The response to the Scott's hypothesis was the paper written by A.D. Fraser, which was generally concerned with the fish consumption among Phrygians and its connection with the Cybele cult in Asia Minor. The problem of the abstinence of Homer's heroes from fish appears as it were and occurs to him as a realization of the idea of a peculiar 'taboo'.⁹ In the meantime the text of Max Radin seen the light of day, who ruled out the possibility of the 'taboo' acting in the epics.¹⁰ He underlines that breaking of the 'taboo' must have serious consequences, whereas the heroes after consumption of fish in Trynakhia and Pharos islands did not experience penalty at all.¹¹ Generally Radin seems to support the Scott's theory: 'Homer may have grown up with a contempt for fish, and ascribed to his heroes a lordly distaste for them'.¹² The Fraser's repartee for the Radin's paper was immediate and harsh: Radin did not understand the argumentation of the

⁷ J.B. Friedreich, *Die Realien in der Iliade und Odyssee*, Erlangen 1856, 116, 264–5; E. Buchholz, *Das öffentliche Leben der Griechen im heroischen Zeitalter*, (Die homerischen Realien, Bd II 1), Leipzig 1881, 161–164; W. Helbig, *Das homerische Epos*, Leipzig 1887, 424–5; R.C. Jebb, *Homer: An Introduction to the Iliad and the Odyssey*, Boston 1894, 84; A. Galloway Keller, *Homeric Society. A Sociological Study of the Iliad and Odyssey*, New York 1902, 48, 84; T.D. Seymour, *Life in the Homeric Age*, New York, 1907, 213, 377–80. One can find similar views also in later publications. Cf. e.g. H. Bolkestein, *Economic Life in Greece's Golden Age*, Leiden 1958, 37 (first ed. in 1923).

⁸ J.A. Scott, 'Homeric Heroes and Fish', *CJ* 12 (1917), 328–330.

⁹ A.D. Fraser, 'The Ancient Fish-Taboo', *CW* 15 (1922), 165.

¹⁰ M. Radin, 'Homer and Little Fishes', *CJ* 17 (1922), 461–463.

¹¹ Radin did not exclude the possibility of the fish consumption because of their holiness. See Radin, 'Homer and Little Fishes', 461.

¹² Radin, 'Homer and Little Fishes', 462.

author.¹³ However, Fraser changed slightly his view backing out from the 'taboo' term for 'tradition'.¹⁴ In the same issue of *The Classical Journal* Scott felt about the vivid discussion supporting his earlier hypothesis.¹⁵

In the subsequent years few articles concerning fishing techniques in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* seen the light of day.¹⁶ This stage of the discussion was summed up in 1936 by Scott, who modified his earlier concept propagated by two decades: 'It is clear to me now that something wider than Homer and the streams near Smyrna is involved, since the belief that fish as food is beneath the dignity of warriors is frequently found and has been noted by others'.¹⁷ Referring to the analogy taken from the *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, autobiographical account of the experiences of T.E. Lawrence of Arabia, where Arab's aversion to fish, eggs and poultry is said, Scott underlined that exclusion fish food from the Homer's epics is not a question of food quality, but its impropriety (this was simply unworthy of a warrior).

Scott's paper broke off the further discussion for almost two decades. In 1953 in *The Classical Journal* the paper by F.M. Combella was published, who took the original attempt to explain Homer's dislike for fish.¹⁸ He namely noticed, to say, an 'anthropophagic' character of fish. In few cases Homer speaks of fish which eat human's flesh.¹⁹ For the total of 18 mentions of the fish in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* Combella listed those which constitute approximately one third of this figure where fish are portrayed as bloodthirsty creatures. This is not a case for him: 'When Homer, who really gives very little attention to fish, devotes so surprisingly much of that little to what must be for man their most unpleasant characteristic, and when in addition he seems in his mind to connect fish with ghastly human death, there may be no need to look further for an explanation of the definite lack of enthusiasm Homer's heroes show for eating fish'.²⁰

¹³ A.D. Fraser, 'The Homeric Fish-Question', *CJ* 18 (1923), 240–242.

¹⁴ Fraser, 'The Homeric Fish-Question', 241: 'There is here no reference to an existing *taboo* but merely to a *tradition*. For the *taboo* by the time of Homer was certainly a dead-letter, at least in the aristocratic stratum of society to which Homer belongs'.

¹⁵ J.A. Scott, 'Homeric heroes and fish. Second note', *CJ* 16 (1923), 242–243. The same arguments appeared in the book by Scott, *The Unity of Homer*, Berkeley 1921, 6–8. Cf. H.J. Rose, 'Homer's Little Fishes Again', *CJ* 19 (1923), 49–50.

¹⁶ See e.g. A. Shewan, 'Fishing with a Rod in Homer', *CP* 22 (1927), 170–183; H.N. Couch, 'Fishing in Homer', *CJ* 31 (1936), 303–314; A.D. Fraser, 'Fishing in Homer', *CJ* 31 (1936), 503–505.

¹⁷ J.A. Scott, 'Homeric Heroes and Fish', *CJ* 32 (1936), 171–172.

¹⁸ F.M. Combella, 'Homer's Savage Fish', *CJ* 48 (1953), 257–261. Cf. E.M. Sanford, A Note on 'Homer's Savage Fish', *CJ* 49 (1953), 65.

¹⁹ *Il.* 14.133–6; 21.122–7; 21.203–4; *Od.* 24.291–2.

²⁰ Combella, 'Homer's Savage Fish', 261. The savage character of fish is underlined by the adjective *omestes* (*Il.* 24.82). Apart from fish, birds and dogs eat human's flesh as well. Birds, similar to fish, are consumed only under starvation. Dogs are not eaten at all.

The last decade has brought a new interpretation of the exclusion of fish from Homer's epics. The most elaborate theory was introduced recently by J. Davidson.²¹ He stresses the religious aspect of the Homeric heroes' consumption of meat. According to Davidson, the contrast between meat and fish has played an important role in Greek society. Meat, no matter if it was beef, pork, or mutton, was considered to have been a ritual offering to some gods, whereas fish, with some exceptions (e.g. tuna was an offering to Poseidon), was entirely excluded from the ritualised process of eating.²² It was actually not a matter of taste for Homeric heroes to consume meat but rather a religious duty. Davidson follows this line of thought even further: 'It seems probable that, as in many Middle Eastern cultures, all beef, pork and mutton available was the product of this ritualized process. Even the meat sold in the market, it seems, had been cut from animals that had been killed ritually'.²³ This, however, is impossible to prove. What is nevertheless important is Davidson's stress on the significance of the contrast between meat and fish in Homer's epic. Since consumed fish did not conform to religious rules it was regarded as the secular equivalent of a sacrificial meat.²⁴ Davidson notices that apart from the religious aspect, the praise of fish would violate the tone of heroic hexameters used in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.²⁵ However, this assumption seems to me doubtful. Although the employment of fish in Attic comedy in comic contexts seems to confirm Davidson's assumptions, there are still

²¹ J. Davidson, 'On the fish missing from Homer', in J. Wilkins (ed.), *Food in European Literature*, Exeter 1996, 57–64; J.M. Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes. The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens*, New York, 11–20.

²² Cf. Antigonus Carystius ap. Athen. 7.297e. On food offerings see M. Detienne, J.-P. Vernant (eds), *La cuisine du sacrifice en pays grec*, Paris 1979, (on tuna see J.-L. Durand's article in the same volume, *Du rituel comme instrumental*, 178–9); A. Dalby, *Siren feasts. A history of food and gastronomy in Greece*, London 1996, 22–3, 58–62; Davidson, *Courtesans*, 12. See also R. Seaford, 'Homeric and tragic sacrifice', *TAPA* 119 (1989), 87–95.

²³ Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes*, 15.

²⁴ The epigraphic documents from Delos seem to contradict Davidson's arguments about excluding fish food from the scope of *sacrum*. They confirm that fish food was given to gods as *vota* as well. It is true that these are later sources, coming from the early second century. Nevertheless Davidson's assumption that fish was excluded from sacrificial offerings is seriously weakened. In inscriptions from Delos we can read about salted fish (τάριχος) offered to Eileithia and Artemis. Zob. *ID* 401. 24; 406b.78, 440a.70; 442a.223; 445.15; 464.16; 2367.6. See also *SEG* 44 (1994), 191, no 676. Cf. Athen. 7.297e-f; Suidas, s.v. Φάσηλις.

²⁵ See Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes*, 13–4: 'The eulogies of fish in epic language and hexameter rhythms, which are such a feature of Middle Comedy and writers such as Archestratus and Matro, get their sense of *bathos* from a clash of tone between the heroic form and the fishy content. The very names of fish were unheroic and their presence in these inappropriate contexts was unavoidably ironic'. Cf. Archestratus, *Hedypatheia: Archestratus, The Life of Luxury. Europe's Oldest Cookery Book*, translation, introduction & commentary by J. Wilkins and S. Hill, Devon 1994, 13–4.

some doubts.²⁶ First of all, the fish nomenclature of Homer's times is not known.²⁷ Secondly, the late Hellenic literature did not avoid 'the eulogies of fish in epic language', as Davidson calls them.²⁸

Davidson's concept is the most coherent and elaborated from all of those discussed above but in my opinion not fully satisfactory. I am not inclined to reject Davidson's idea of the sacrificial character of meat food in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* but at the same time I think that speaking about the lack of fish in Homer's epic only in the religious context does not make full use of the function assigned to fish by the poet.²⁹

* * *

Before presenting my own approach, which explains the absence of fish in Homer's epics, I shall familiarise the readers with the comments of the ancients which are crucial for formulating my conception. The exclusion of fish from Homer's epics was the subject of a lively discussion in antiquity. Several outstanding philologists, grammarians, philosophers, and men of letters, each on their own, tried to explain the lack of fish in the diet of Homeric heroes. That absence, in the context of the Greeks' love of fish and fish products, was particularly suspicious for them and needed explanation.

I shall begin my review with Plato's remarks.³⁰ When he puts the words about the educational aspects of gymnastics into the mouth of one of the interlocutors of the *Republic*, he quotes an example from Homer, who

²⁶ See D. Gilula, 'Comic food and food for comedy', in J. Wilkins (ed.), *Food in Antiquity*, Exeter 1995, 390–3; N. Purcell, 'Eating fish. The paradoxes of seafood', in J. Wilkins (ed.), *Food in Antiquity*, Exeter 1995, 141–2.

²⁷ Some researchers believe that fish species terminology was very small. Cf. D.W. Thompson, 'On Egyptian Fish-names used by Greek Writers', *JEA* 14 (1928), 22.

²⁸ Cf. Purcell, 'Eating fish. The paradoxes of seafood', 144.

²⁹ In 2000 in the bulky and seminal book devoted to Athenaeus and his work the paper entitled 'Do Heroes Eat Fish? Athenaeus on the Homeric Lifestyle' by M. Heath was published. This is valuable attempt to order all Athenaeus' comments referring to the fish-food in Homer. However, Heath's paper does not respond to the core of 'the fish question in Homer', namely the reason why did the poet abstain from portraying heroes (apart from two instances mentioned above) eating fish. See 'Do Heroes Eat Fish? Athenaeus on the Homeric Lifestyle', in D. Braud D., J. Wilkins (eds), *Athenaeus and his world. Reading Greek culture in the Roman Empire*, Exeter 2000, 342–52. I will refer to the Heath's paper later.

³⁰ It's an open question how early the comments upon the missing fish from the heroes' diet appeared. It is highly probable that Plato's observations were inspired by earlier work (or works). Only slightly later than Plato is the comment by comic poet Eubulus preserved in the first book of Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistai* (1.25c = Eub. fr. 120). I will refer to Eubulus later in the section devoted to Athenaeus. R.L. Hunter thinks that both Plato and Eubulus might take their information from earlier study devoted to Homeric society. See *Eubulus. The Fragments*, trans. and comm. by R.L. Hunter, (Cambridge Classical Text and Commentaries, 24), Cambridge 1983, 219.

(...) in the banqueting of the heroes on campaign he [i.e. Homer] does not feast them on fish, nor on boiled meat, but only on roast, which is what soldiers could most easily procure. For everywhere, one may say, it is of easier provision to use the bare fire than to convey pots and pans along.³¹

Plato then proceeds to point out that Homer did not mention any spices either (ἡδύσματα), from which those who want to keep their body in a good condition must abstain. It seems quite obvious that, according to Plato, fish were detrimental to vigour (physical strength) and for this reason they were considered to be unsuitable for Homeric heroes. Therefore, unlike contemporary scholars, the philosopher did not emphasize religious motives. For Plato fish are a symbol of luxury, unnecessary abundance. Kitchen utensils are also superfluous since they are associated by the philosopher with sophisticated Syracusan and Sicilian cuisine, which he refers to afterwards.³² Going farther still, Plato equates gustatory with bodily pleasures.³³ Both are harmful to warriors. Furthermore, not only fish but also sailing and marine service spoil character.³⁴ In Plato's case, his dislike of all things nautical could result from his critical stance on Athens' maritime policy. But that is not the most significant point. What matters and has gone unnoticed so far is that Plato feels united with Homer in this 'reluctance' for the sea and refers to him in such terms. Anticipating my later arguments, I think this interpretation of Homer by Plato is generally accurate. However, I still have some serious doubts as whether fish was in Homer's times, as Plato would have it, a synonym of affluence and luxury. We must keep in mind the fact that Plato was writing his works in Athens, where fish were often served as sumptuous dish, and numerous species reached high prices on the market.³⁵ Was it the same in the seventh century? One could doubt it, since Homer allows his characters to eat fish only when they face hunger, therefore in the case of absolute necessity.

Aristarchus of Samothrace, an outstanding Alexandrian grammarian and a splendid expert on Homer, was similarly dubious. We know Aristarchus' views

³¹ Plato *Rep.* 404b: ἐπὶ στρατιᾶς ἐν ταῖς τῶν ἡρώων ἐστιάσεσιν οὔτε ἰχθύσιν αὐτοὺς ἐστιᾶ, καὶ ταῦτα ἐπὶ θαλάττῃ ἐν Ἑλλησπόντῳ ὄντας, οὔτε ἐφθοῖς κρέασιν ἀλλὰ μόνον ὀπτοῖς, ἃ δὴ μάλιστα ἂν εἴη στρατιώταις εὐπορα· πανταχοῦ γὰρ ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν αὐτῷ τῷ πυρὶ χρῆσθαι εὐπορώτερον ἢ ἀγγεῖα συμπεριφέρειν. Translation by P. Shorey, Cambridge-London 1969.

³² Because of the lack of utensils beef has to be roasted.

³³ 404d.

³⁴ Plato *Res.* 706a-d. Cf. T. Krischer, 'Ląd i morze w historii kultury greckiej' [Land and sea in the History of Greek Culture], *Meander* 50 (1995), 515–26.

³⁵ Although the highest prices of fish in Greece were incomparably lower than the record-breaking amounts spent on fish by rich Romans, not everyone could afford it. On fish prices see F. Salviat, C. Vatin, 'Le tarif des poissons d'Akraiphia', in *Inscriptions de Grèce centrale*, Paris 1971, 95–109; P. Roesh, 'Sur le tarif des poissons d'Akraiphia', *ZPE* 14 (1974), 5–9; Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes*, 186–88.

only fragmentarily through his comments, which (among others) were preserved in *scholia* on the *Iliad*. He disputes the views of the so-called ‘separatists’ (χωρίζοντες), i.e. advocates of the theory that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* had separate authors. As he states, the ‘separatists’, to support their thesis, drew on the fact that there was no mention of the consumption of fish in the *Iliad*, whereas in the *Odyssey* Menelaus’ and Odysseus’ companions ate fish on Pharos and Trynaki. Aristarchus rejects those opinions by pointing out that in the *Iliad*, too, the characters are familiar with fishing (viz., the similes involving fishermen) and argues that the lack of images of fish consumption is the poet’s deliberate choice.³⁶ Homer does not ‘allow’ heroes to eat fish since this kind of food is miserable (διὰ τὸ μικροπρεπές). Aristarchus adds that for the same reason Homer does not mention vegetables.³⁷ The consumption of fish is not, according to Aristarchus, an irrefutable proof of the separatists’ view, since the heroes eat fish only in case of absolute necessity (δι’ ἀνάγκην) when faced with hunger.³⁸

Aristarchus, like Plato, concluded that the absence of fish food on the heroes’ ‘tables’ was Homer’s intentional choice.³⁹ They agree that the poet considered fish to be unsuitable for his heroes. However, they differed on the reasons. Plato believed fish to be a luxurious commodity, while Aristarchus thought them to be miserable food. It is hard to resist the impression that Aristarchus’ conclusions result from his philological analysis of the text and are not contaminated with the moral component characteristic of Plato.

Another *litteratus* who had his own explanation for the absence of fish in Homer’s epics was Athenaeus of Naucratis. He expatiates upon the problem of food, among others, in the first book of the *Deipnosophistai*, almost all of which is devoted to Homeric characters. However one comment is necessary before I shall proceed to present the views of Athenaeus. He speaks of the topic of interest to us three times, and more intriguingly, each time in a different way. That inconsistency has caused some interpretative difficulties to scholars. The problem was convincingly resolved by M. Heath.⁴⁰ He drew attention to the fact that the first book of the *Deipnosophistai* was preserved as an excerpt, and in most cases the author of the epitome removed dialogue frames from the original text. Most difficulties arise in determining the limits of a particular block of dialogue in the

³⁶ Cf. *Il.* 16.746–8.

³⁷ See ΣΑ *Il.* 16.747a. Onion appears only once as foodstuff. Cf. Hom., *Il.* 11.630.

³⁸ This necessity is emphasised also by another commentator. Cf. ΣΤ. *Il.* 16.747b. It is under debate how long ago the controversy of *choridzontes* can be traced back. Cf. *Eubulus. The Fragments*, 219.

³⁹ Aristarchus seems to believe that Homeric heroes consumed both fish and vegetables in reality. Cf. ΣΑ *Il.* 16.747a.

⁴⁰ Heath, ‘Do heroes eat fish?’, 342–52.

material. It is even harder to identify the names of the interlocutors speaking. Heath made such an attempt in his paper proposing a few hypothetical interlocutors, of whom we only know by name a Myrtilos of Thessaly. Heath allocated the interlocutors in the three ‘Homeric discourses’ in the following sequence. In the first one only one person appears, the above-mentioned Myrtilos (8e–11b). In the second discourse (11b–19a) we can distinguish three or four hypothetical figures, whereas in the third one there is one unidentified person (24b–25f).

Heath’s can be challenged on certain points of detail, however, his method and the observation, obvious as it might seem, that the different views in the first book of the *Deipnosophistai* do not result from any inconsistency of Athenaeus’ but stem from the dialogical structure and logic of the book, deserves credence. It might be worth remarking that Athenaeus’ literary skills are subtler than one might have thought hitherto: the selection of quotations is not accidental and, what is more, it reveals a well-thought-out composition.⁴¹

Myrtilos of Thessaly, a sophist who is not known to us, takes the floor as the first to comment on the absence of fish in Homer’s epics:

Although Homer describes the Hellespont as teeming with fish, and pictures of Phaeacians as devoted to the sea, and although he knows that in Ithaca there are several harbours and many islands near the shore abounding in fish and wild fowl, and moreover counts the sea’s bounty in supplying fish as an element of prosperity, he nevertheless never represents anyone as eating any of these creatures.⁴²

Myrtilos has no doubts that Homer omitted fish because of their luxurious nature. Like Plato he believes that fish are detrimental to physical strength and weaken one’s character. Therefore fruit, poultry and honey cakes were excluded for the same reason.⁴³ Myrtilos also points out that this culinary regimen is

⁴¹ Athenaeus applies the principle of *varietas*, hence the issue of fish food in Homer’s epics appears in the First Book three times. This technique is achieved also by mutual contrasting interlocutors of the dialogue and their views to each other. See Heath, ‘Do heroes eat fish?’, 346. Athenaeus has been treated badly, not to say contemptuously, by scholars. He has been considered exclusively a compiler of lost Greek literature. Although ‘*Grammatikos* of Naucratis’ was not an outstanding writer such an opinion does not do him justice. A new multi-author work devoted to Athenaeus speaks to this view (cf. footnote 29).

⁴² Athen. 1.9d: Ἐλλήσποντον δὲ Ὅμηρος ἰχθυόεντα προσαγορεύων καὶ τοὺς Φαίακας πλωτικωτάτους ποιῶν καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἰθάκῃ εἰδὸς λιμένας πλείους καὶ νήσους προσεχεῖς πολλὰς, ἐν αἷς ἰχθύων ἐγένετο πλῆθος καὶ ἀγρίων ὀρνίθων, καὶ εἰς εὐδαιμονίαν δὲ καταριθμῶν τὸ τὴν θάλασσαν ἰχθύς παρέχειν, ὁμῶς τούτων οὐδὲν οὐδένα ποιεῖ προσφερόμενον. The Loeb translation by C. Burton Gulick, London 1993.

⁴³ Athen. 1.9b-e. Eliminating cakes from the everyday diet strengthens not only the body but also spirit. Cf. Athen. 1.9a.

obligatory for all, regardless of their social status.⁴⁴ Other self-indulgences like, for instance, perfumes, bodily pleasures, etc. are equally detrimental. By contrast, simple diet and life style shape and help to develop σωφροσύνη.⁴⁵

The tone of Myrtilos' statements is strongly moralizing, which somewhat resembles Plato. This feature differentiates him from another participant in the conversation who starts the second 'Homeric discourse' (11b–19a). Despite the fact that we do not know anything about this person, it is evident that he is different from Myrtilos.⁴⁶ Unlike him, he advocates that Homeric heroes ate fish, birds and even oysters. He argues logically and with great pedantry that since Odysseus' companions, deprived of food on the island of Trynakia, hunted birds and caught fish with hooks, they must have had them with them and consequently that means they were familiar with fishery.⁴⁷ Therefore his interlocutor has quite a different opinion on the strict diet attributed to Homeric characters by Myrtilos.

Farther on in the second 'Homeric discourse' two more people may speak⁴⁸ but fish are not mentioned again until the third 'Homeric discourse' (24b–25f). This time the interlocutor also remains anonymous. His interpretation of the absence of fish in Homer's texts is similar to the opinion of the person from the 'second discourse':

(...) the poet [i.e. Homer] is silent about eating of vegetables, fish and birds because that is mark of greed, and also because it would be unseemly for the heroes to spend time in preparing them for the table, since he judges it beneath the level of heroic and godlike deeds.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ He also notices that even the suitors in Ithaca do not eat fish. See Athen. 1.9b.

⁴⁵ Cf. Athen. 1.8e.

⁴⁶ Instead of the pompous tone of Myrtilos one can discern antiquarian attitude towards Homer. Heath thinks that the Masurios known from the V book of the *Deipnosophistai* might be taken into consideration. See Heath, 'Do heroes eat fish?', 347–348.

⁴⁷ See Athen. 1.13a-b: Καὶ ἰχθύσι δὲ Ὅμηρος ποιεῖ χρωμένους τοὺς τότε καὶ ὄρνισι. κατὰ γούνη τὴν Θρινακίαν οἱ Ὀδυσσεῶς ἑταῖροι θηρεύουσιν

ἰχθὺς ὄρνιθὰς τε φίλας θ' ὅ τι χεῖρας ἴκοιτο
γναμπτοῖς ἀγκίστροισιν.

οὐ γὰρ ἐν τῇ Θρινακίᾳ ἐκεχάλλετο τὰ ἀγκίστρα, ἀλλ' ἐπεφέροντο ἐν τῷ πλοῦ δηλονότι· ὥστε ἦν αὐτοῖς θήρας ἰχθύων ἐπιμέλεια καὶ τέχνη.

⁴⁸ Heath provides some suggestions for assigning the spoken lines of the dialogue to these characters. See Heath, 'Do heroes eat fish?', 348–9.

⁴⁹ Athen. 1.25d: παρέλιπε δὲ τὴν χρῆσιν τῶν λαχάνων καὶ ἰχθύων καὶ τῶν ὄρνιθων διὰ τε τὴν λιχνεῖαν καὶ προσέτι τὴν ἐν ταῖς σκευασίαις ἀπρέπειαν, ἐλάττω κεκρικῶς ἠρωικῶν καὶ θείων ἔργων. Crucial to the cited fragment is the meaning of the term λιχνεῖα. It can mean 'gourmandise' but also 'gluttony', 'luxuriousness in eating', 'lust', 'desire' and so on. See LSJ, Oxford 1997, s.v. It seems that here it means 'gourmandise'. Davidson understands this passage similarly: 'Athenaeus (...) thought Homer was protecting his heroes not from the diet of paupers, but from luxury: the poet is silent about the eating of vegetables, fish and birds because that is a mark of gourmandise [*lichneia*]'. Cf. J. Davidson, *Courtesans*, 16.

The author of this opinion has no doubts, however, that fish were eaten by the characters from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. He also draws our attention to the fact that even meat was cooked in different ways, not only roasted but also boiled.⁵⁰ Our anonymous interlocutor quote a fragment taken from the lost comedy of Eubulus (fl. c. 370 BC).⁵¹ In reality this quotation seems to contradict his findings but he quote Eubulus out of contrariness:

That they also ate fish is disclosed by Sarpedon when he compares captivity to the catch of a great seine. Yet Eubulus, with comic wit, says jokingly: “Where has Homer ever spoken of any Achaean eating fish? And flesh too, they only roasted, for he represents nobody as boiling it. Nor did one of them ever see a single courtesan either, but for ten long years they abused each other. Bitter the campaign they saw, for after taking one city they came away with wider breaches than had the city which they captured”.⁵²

The irony of Eubulus resemblances the tone of Plato’s *Rep.* 404b.

Athenaeus was aware of the paradox, which was that fish are absent in Homer’s epics but had always been an important part of the diet of the Greeks regardless of their social status. He presented various opinions, thus proving his competency in the so-called ‘Homeric issue’. Did Athenaeus have a personal contribution to make thanks to his own philological thought? Judging by his method of literary work one can have serious doubts about it.⁵³

* * *

Ancients differ among themselves in detail when explaining the abstinence of Homer’s heroes from fish, but one belief was common for all of them: the absence of fish food in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* was Homer’s deliberate decision. As a matter of fact, the explanations from the first half of the twentieth century did not go beyond what was established by ancient philologists. Only the proposals of Combellack and Davidson should be treated as original ones. But their explanations are not fully satisfactory as well. Why? I am convinced that in the

⁵⁰ Athen. 1.25e.

⁵¹ = fr. 120 Hunter.

⁵² Athen. 1.25b-c: ὅτι δὲ καὶ ἰχθύς ἦσθιον Σαρπηδῶν δῆλον ποιεῖ, ὁμοίων τὴν ἄλωσιν πανάγρου δικτύου θήρα. καίτοι Εὐβούλος κατὰ τὴν κωμικὴν χάριν φησὶ παίζων·

ἰχθὺν δ’ Ὅμηρος ἐσθίωντ’ εἶρηκε ποῦ
τίνα τῶν Ἀχαιῶν; κρέα δὲ μόνον ᾤπτων, ἐπεὶ
ἔγοντά γ’ οὐ πεποίηκεν αὐτῶν οὐδένα.
ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ μίαν ἀλλ’ ἑταίραν εἶδε τις
αὐτῶν, ἑαυτοῦς δ’ ἔδεφον ἐνιαυτοῦς δέκα,
πικρὰν στρατείαν δ’ εἶδον, οἵτινες πόλιν
μίαν λαβόντες εὐρυπρωκτότεροι πολὺ
τῆς πόλεος ἀπεχώρησαν ἧς εἶλον τότε.

⁵³ Cf. Heath, ‘Do heroes eat fish?’, 351: ‘(...) It can be argued that Athenaeus is less concerned to establish a view of Homer and his heroes than to record what has been said on those topics by earlier writers’.

publications so far one assumed incorrectly, to say, 'total explanation', i.e. a unique and complete solution of the problem. To me, this is a wrong way. There are no reasons to think that the exclusion of fish food from heroes' diet was caused only by the 'secular character' of fish, as Davidson wants. There might be more co-ordinates of the exclusion. They could complement each other.

To understand why Homer did not allow his heroes to eat fish food one must be able to recognise Homer's subtle poetics. Everything Homer says about fish is said within the frames of poetic convention. Therefore drawing comparisons between the Homeric world and our knowledge of fish consumption in archaic Greece is pointless. Homer's texts do not present any specific historical reality, neither prior nor contemporary to the poet's own time. Instead they present the world of the heroes as it should be.⁵⁴ Consequently food must also be ideal in this world.⁵⁵ Thus the monotonous menu of the heroes should not surprise us since it has no direct connection with the typical diet of the Aegean Sea Basin. Analysing fish in the context of the complete diet of Homer's characters enables us to understand why Homer refused to write about fish.

One of Homer's favourite literary techniques was using contrasts. One can see an example of that technique when the poet sets fish food against meat. Here I must agree with Davidson's opinion that contrast is a key issue in 'Homeric cuisine'. However, unlike Davidson, I cannot see any reasons for limiting the issue only to the sacralization of food.

Firstly, meat implies wealth, which was indispensable to every hero.⁵⁶ The amounts of meat consumed by Homer's characters required keeping large herds of animals, which only rich citizens could afford. Cattle also played a role as natural 'money', thus giving one more opportunity to show off one's affluence. All these factors determined unequivocally the heroes' wealth.⁵⁷ Accordingly a majority of the ancient attempts to explain the contrast between fish and meat in Homer's epics were incorrect. For most commentators the issue was the contrast between

⁵⁴ Cf. J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death*, Oxford 1980, 19. P. Berdowski, 'At quem non ceno barbarus ille mihi est. Homer i źródła kulinarnych paradygmatów barbarzyńców' [At quem non ceno barbarus ille mihi est. Homer and the culinary paradigms of barbarians], in K. Nawotka, M. Pawlak (eds), *Grecy, Rzymianie i ich sąsiedzi*, (Antiquitas, 29) Wrocław 2007, 65–70. I do not refer to the matter of the historicity of the Homeric world and immense literature concerning this subject.

⁵⁵ The children's diet was also artificial. Cf. *Il.* 22.500.

⁵⁶ See B. Bravo, 'Polis u Homera' [The polis in Homer], in *Świat antyczny. Stosunki społeczne, ideologia i polityka, religia. Studia ofiarowane I. Biezuńkiej-Małowist*, Warszawa 1988, 17–65, esp. 52–53, 57; cf. *idem*, 'Arete a ricchezza nella polis dell'età arcaica secondo le testimonianze dei poeti', *Index* 17 (1989), 47–79, esp. 49–64.

⁵⁷ On wealth and money in Homer see R. Seaford, *Money and the Early Greek Mind*, Cambridge 2004, 23–67.

simplicity and luxury, where fish were considered to be luxurious food. Plato, Myrtilos of Thessaly and other interlocutors who spoke in Athenaeus' the *Deipnosophistai* on the absence of fish in Homer expressed such opinions.⁵⁸ Only Aristarchus had a different view. He believed Homer to have abandoned fish as poor food, unsuitable for his heroes. The Alexandrian scholar was able to discern the core of the contrast between meat and fish in Homer.

Secondly, fish are for Homer a symbol of reality implying risk and uncertainty. I believe that one can discern in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* an opposition between the world of agricultural production, which is characterised by stable income (farming and animal husbandry) and the products rendered by the untameable world of the sea.⁵⁹ Unlike farming, the income from fishery was unstable and dependent on numerous factors: the season of the year, the abundance of fish, etc. The contrast between the land and the sea is also visible in the unequivocally negative *topos* of the sea merchant in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.⁶⁰ Fishermen's work is even less valued in such a classification.⁶¹ Along with fishmongers (ἰχθυοπῶλαι) and salted fish merchants (ταριχοπῶλαι) they were synonymous with low social status and negative character traits.⁶² All in all, fish belong to the world associated with risk. What is even more important, the risk does not refer to fishermen only, but, as is suggested by Odysseus' journey, to all people who happen to be in the power of the unpredictable sea.⁶³ The attitude of the Greeks towards the sea was not one of familiarity, as it is commonly assumed. That mistaken conception still prevails. Actually the process of 'taming' the sea was long lasting and spanned several generations.⁶⁴ Numerous passages in archaic literature prove that the process did not end before the classical period.⁶⁵

⁵⁸ It is not difficult to explain such an interpretation, since Plato and Myrtilos commit an anachronism by shifting 5th century Athenian *opsophagia* to the 7th century.

⁵⁹ Homer calls sea infertile (*Od.* 5.140): πόντον ἀτρύγετον.

⁶⁰ Cf. *Od.* 8.146–51; 14.287; 15.415–84.

⁶¹ R.I. Curtis, *Garum and salsamenta. Production and Commerce in Materia Medica*, Leiden 1991, 153–4. The negative picture of the fisherman and fishmonger's job did not prevent the high price of some fish becoming sign of luxury. See V. Ehrenberg, *The People of Aristophanes. A sociology of Old Attic Comedy*, Oxford 1943, 99–100; N. Purcell, 'Eating fish', 135–8; Davidson, *Courtesan and Fishcakes*, 186–8.

⁶² This picture has been fixed in Greek literature and it has not been altered by individual glorifications, i.e. 'occasional favourable estimates' of that job. Fishermen were aware of the low opinion of their work. The only solution to improving the fisherman's standing was to change job. The fishermen in Theocritus' idyll (21) dreams about such a change. Even farmers are aware of the miserable life of fishermen. See Moschos (*Bucol.*) fr. 1. Cf. Purcell, 'Eating fish', 135–8.

⁶³ Cf. Purcell, 'Eating fish', 132–49, esp. 133–5.

⁶⁴ This is not a new suggestion. Cf. A. Lesky, *Thalatta. Thalatta. Der Weg der Griechen zum Meer*, Wien 1947.

⁶⁵ Homer says 'For to my mind there is naught worse than the sea to confound a man, be he ever so strong' (*Od.* 8.138–9: οὐ γὰρ ἐγὼ γέ τί φημι κακώτερον ἄλλο θαλάσσης/ ἄνδρα γε συγχεῖναι,

My suggestion that Homer applied fish as a kind of symbol for a world opposed to Homer's own experience has a parallel: Homer used the same literary technique in opposing pastoral economy characteristic of the edges of the civilised world to the economy of an agricultural society based on regular effort. Here Homer used milk and dairy products.⁶⁶ It might seem curious that milk is drunk only by the Cyclopes, never by Homer's heroes.⁶⁷ In Book IX of the *Odyssey* we learn the diet of the Cyclopes, which consists of cheese, whey and milk (all dairy products). The Cyclopes are shepherds; they do not cultivate the soil but use what the land itself gives to them. They do not know commerce either.⁶⁸ The world of the Cyclopes is in clear opposition to the world of the Greek *poleis*. The absence of agriculture and commerce accentuates that there is no economic progress in that world.⁶⁹ The wild nature of the Cyclopes can also be discerned by the fact that they do not hesitate to devour people.⁷⁰ Even if cruel Polyphemus was not a typical representative of the Cyclopes' population we do not necessarily have to assume that their diet was exclusively vegetarian: it might consist also of meat from animal husbandry. However milk strongly emphasizes the pastoral character of Cyclopes' cuisine. The contrast between the pastoral nature of their economy and the sedentary life of Homeric heroes is conspicuous.⁷¹

Homer is a master of the technique of contrast. The fish food in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* constitutes a part of the bigger 'set'. This is a fully conventional heroic creation representing artificial world, where the culinary customs of the heroes became more prominent: 'The way in which meals are described also has symbolic rather than nutritious interest'.⁷² Was this symbolism, mentioned by J. Griffin, clear for Homer's contemporaneity? I think, it was. Therefore what was the poet's message for them?

εἰ καὶ μάλα καρτερὸς εἶη). Greeks' fear of the sea is accurately portrayed in Hesiod's works. There are also analogous references in lyric poets. See e.g. Sol. fr. 13.43–46.

⁶⁶ The case of milk was studied by B.D. Shaw in his paper "Eaters of flesh, drinkers of milk": The ancient Mediterranean ideology of the pastoral nomad', *Ancient Society* 13/14 (1982/83), 21–24.

⁶⁷ Milk appears three times in poetic similes (*Il.* 2.471; 4.434; 5.902; *Od.* 10.304), twice in the context of drinking (*Od.* 9.246; 9.297), and once Homer mentions it when he talks about a shepherd from Near East having an access to milk (*Od.* 4.88). Except mare-milk drinkers (*Hippemolgoi*, *Il.* 13.5), only sheep's and goat's milk is drunk,

⁶⁸ Cf. P. Vidal-Naquet, *The Black Hunter. Forms of Thought and Forms of Society in the Greek World*, Baltimore, 21–22; Berdowski, 'At quem non ceno, barbarus ille mihi est', 71–75.

⁶⁹ J. Rundin notices that there is a close relation between the development of the art of cooking and the development of political institutions. The world of the Cyclopes lacks any of the above-mentioned development. See J. Rundin, 'A politics of eating: Feasting in early Greek society', *AJP* 117 (1996), 180.

⁷⁰ *Od.* 9.288–98.

⁷¹ Cf. Shaw, 'Eaters of flesh, drinkers of milk', 21–24.

⁷² Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death*, 19.

I suggest that the absence of fish from Homeric heroes' diet is just one of the means used by Homer to disclose the aristocracy's fear of the sea. It is not only a fear of a destructive element but also of new people in the Greek society who, due to their participation in maritime commerce, were able to profit from the sea. Fish and fishermen become a kind of a symbol – one of many – ⁷³ for a world different from that based on stable income from farming and animal husbandry,⁷⁴ which is to say, those aspects of the economy on which the aristocracy were basing their wealth.⁷⁵ New sources of income from commerce could loosen the link between social status and property status of the privileged class.⁷⁶ In the epic world of the heroes, by contrast, the two aspects are inseparable.⁷⁷

Homer's dislike of commerce is emphasized by presenting an alternative picture of the self-sufficient *oikos*. Such a household does not carry on trade with the external world; furthermore there is no trade within the *oikos*. Accordingly *oikoi* render no profit. Making profit also is not the aim of so-called 'gift exchange' or 'reciprocal economy' practiced by.⁷⁸ The negative picture of commerce in Homer's epics might also result from new rules for the exchange of goods, so different from those applied by the heroes.⁷⁹ As Brown has

⁷³ One can observe that some of the ancient authors deliberately used food names referring to their quality, price etc. to evaluate people and things. Metaphors of cooking are applied as well. Cf. J. Wilkins, 'Eating in Athenian Comedy', in J. Wilkins (ed.), *Food in European Literature*, Exeter 1996, 46–56; K. Bartol, 'Smakować poezję. „Gastronomia literacka” w wypowiedziach greckich poetów lirycznych' [Tasting poetry. "Literary gastronomy" in Greek lyric poets], in I. Lewandowski, K. Liman (eds), *Litteris vivere. Księga pamiątkowa ofiarowana prof. A. Wójcikowi*, Poznań 1996, 31–41.

⁷⁴ This correspond to Davidson statement that fish were 'decadently modern'. See Davidson, *Fish and Courtesans*, 13.

⁷⁵ It is significant that the pictures on 'Achilles' Shield' from the XVIII Book of *The Iliad* (where Homer shows two towns, one of which is in the course of war and the other is peaceful) correspond to Homer's traditional idea of policy management. There is space devoted to presenting scenes of cultivating land, growing vines, and breeding animals. However, there are hardly any pictures showing the sea, trade and fishery. Undoubtedly this selection of scenes is not accidental.

⁷⁶ Cf. D.W. Tandy, *Warriors into traders. The power of the market in Early Greece*, Berkeley 1997, 84–138.

⁷⁷ See Bravo, 'Polis u Homera', 52–54. Income from agriculture and animal husbandry are sources of the heroes' wealth. Cf. note 57.

⁷⁸ See Tandy, *Warriors into traders*, 106–111. A. Brown uses the term 'honorific economy'. See A. Brown, 'Homeric talents and the ethics of change', *JHS* 118 (1998), 171. However, it is not a monolithic picture of a 'gift economy', as different elements of the redistribution of goods also are found in Homer's works. See W. Donlan, 'Scale, value, and function in the Homeric economy', *AJAH* 6 (1981), 101–117; Seaford, *Money and the Early Greek Mind*, 23–67. Cf. J. Rundin, 'A politics of eating', 179–205. Rundin uses the expression 'prestige economy'. He promotes the view that Homeric feasts were the places where different goods could be distributed, especially meat.

⁷⁹ Brown, *Homeric talents*, 167: 'The gap between heroic and contemporary notions of value is exploited to make a moral point: the heroes are capable of behaving in a way which, it may seem deeply illogical to the poet's audience, make perfect sense to themselves, and in doing so

pointed out, the rules for valuing goods in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* was governed by non-economic factors.⁸⁰

It must be said that the poet's picture of the economy did not correspond with the epoch in which he lived. From archaeological findings we can be certain beyond any doubt that in the 7th century neither trade nor the 'oikos' households functioned in the radical autarkic form as described by Homer.⁸¹ Despite the fact that Homer seems to present trade as a new phenomenon, not actually yet existing in the Hellas, there is no doubt that this is an anachronistic picture.⁸²

My opinion, as presented above, does not exclude the thesis that the Greek aristocracy in the 8th and 7th century invested their capital in commerce and made profit although they disapproved of it. The discussion of these aspects is extremely interesting.⁸³ However, it must be stated that the sources we have at our disposal for the reconstruction of trade in the 8th and 7th century are very restricted and it is difficult to draw concrete conclusions. On the one hand, we have a richer and richer archaeological documentation, which by its very nature cannot give us too many clues as to the organisation of trade.⁸⁴ On the other hand, using only

they are portrayed as wholly admirable'. Cf. also Donlan, 'Scale, value, and function in the Homeric economy', 101–117.

⁸⁰ Cf. S. Von Reden, *Exchange in Ancient Greece*, Duckworth 1995 (especially chapter 'Kleos and commerce in the Odyssey'), 58–76; Tandy, *Warriors into traders*, 84–138; B. Scheffold, 'Reflections of ancient economic thought in Greek poetry', in B.B. Price (ed.), *Ancient Economic Thought*, vol. 1, London 1997, 119–125.

⁸¹ It seems that we are dealing here with some reflection of the economic reality of the Dark Ages; however, it is hard to prove. D.W. Tandy firmly claims that: '(...) reciprocity must have been the dominant form of integration in most localities in the Dark Age but must also have been found commonly at all levels of society during the eighth century and subsequently'. Cf. Tandy, *Warriors into traders*, 101, 111. Owing to the finds of transport amphorae (the oldest date back to the latter half of the 8th century), it is known that the beginnings of 'long-distance trade' fell in 8th century at the very least. 'By the beginning of the seventh century, long-distance trade had become a full-time activity'. See. G.R. Tsetsckhladze, 'Trade on the Black Sea in the archaic and classical periods: some observations', in H. Parkins, C. Smith (eds), *Trade, Traders and the Ancient City*, London 1998, 52–74. See also papers in the volume *The Archaeology of Greek Colonization. Essays dedicated to Sir J. Boardman*, Oxford 1994. Cf. note 84 below.

⁸² Foreigners are traders *par excellence*. There are no references to fairs, nor are there reasons to suppose that the agora fulfilled any economic function.

⁸³ Cf. P. Cartlage, 'Trade and politics' revisited', in P. Garnsey, K. Hopkins, C.R. Whittaker (eds), *Trade in the Ancient Economy*, Berkeley 1983; B. Bravo, 'Le commerce des cereals chez les Grecs de l'époque archaïque', in P. Garnsey, K. Hopkins, C.R. Whittaker (eds), *Trade in the Ancient Economy*, Berkeley 1983; *idem*, 'Commerce et noblesse en Grèce archaïque. A propos d'un livre d'Alfonso Mele', *DHA* 10 (1984), 99–160.

⁸⁴ Studies on transport amphora in Mediterranean basin are more advanced in relation to *pars occidentalis*, but this situation is slowly changing. See I.K. Whitbread, *Greek transport amphorae. A petrological and archaeological study*, Exeter 1995, 9–29; J. Eiring, J. Lund (eds), *Transport Amphorae and Trade in the Eastern Mediterranean. Acts of the International Colloquium at the Danish*

Homer's texts and *ex necessitate* concluding retrospectively from later sources must also raise some doubts.

The ambivalent attitude towards commerce held by the aristocracy should not surprise. There are enough proofs in the ancient world to support the thesis that very often the negative moral or philosophical assessment of economic phenomena was in direct contradiction with daily practice.⁸⁵ If we do recognise criticism of 'professional trade' in Homer's epics, then perhaps it is directed against specialised merchant-speculators.⁸⁶ Homer gives rise to the literary tradition which clearly opposes the cultivation of land and profit made from such activity (selling one's own product was not blameworthy: the element of speculation characteristic of 'professional trade' is missing here) to trade and craft.⁸⁷ Such a dichotomous division of the world of labour had a huge load of moral valuing. This topic will be explored and extended later in both Greek and Latin literature.

The artificial picture of the world of the heroes is not, as suggested by some scholars, an effect of Homer's archaizing methods.⁸⁸ It is rather a heroic staging of a world in opposition to his present. Each and every piece of this puzzle is a part of a bigger picture, which plays its role *in toto*. In a sense it is a picture of a 'lost world'.

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Institute at Athens, September 26–29, 2002, (Monographs of the Danish Institute at Athens, 5), Athens 2004; V. Gabrielsen, J. Lund (eds), *The Black Sea in Antiquity. Regional and Interregional Economic Exchanges*, (Black Sea Studies, 6), Aarhus 2007. See also M. Lawall, 'Ceramics and positivism revisited: Greek transport amphoras and history', in H. Parkins, C. Smith (eds), *Trade, Traders and the Ancient City*, London 1998, 75–101.

⁸⁵ The involvement of the Roman senatorial elite in economic activity, which was officially a subject of contempt for the *ordo senatorius*, is a good example. Cf. P. Berdowski, 'Gospodarka i ideologia – Stosunek rzymskich elit do rzemiosła (I w. p.n.e. – I w. n.e.)' [Economy and ideology – the attitude of Roman elite to craft (I BC-I AD)], in L. Morawiecki, P. Berdowski (eds), *Ideology and Propaganda in Antiquity*, Rzeszow 2004, 259–293.

⁸⁶ Cf. Cartledge, 'Trade and politics', 9–10: '[Homer] roundly condemns what he calls *emporía*, external maritime trade, for three reasons: it is motivated and structured by a positive desire for gain; it is specialized and so contradicts his autarkic model of surplus-disposal; and it conflicts with the agricultural cycle (...)'.
⁸⁷ Hesiod is usually mentioned as the first author to contrast sharply agriculture with commercial activity in Greek literature.

⁸⁸ M.W. Edwards, *Homer. Poet of the Iliad*, Baltimore 1990, 163–164; K.A. Raaflaub, *Homeric Society*, in I. Morris, B. Powell (eds.), *A New Companion to Homer*, Leiden 1997, 627–628, 646–648.