

Heroic meal-times (Athen. I 11b-f)

Ancient scholars held a variety of opinions about the number of meal-times in the heroic world. The question is addressed in the epitome of Book I of Athenaeus, in a passage (11b-f) that at first sight seems lacunose and incoherent. This note defends the transmitted text and seeks to reconstruct the passage's argument.

According to Aristarchus the heroes had two meal-times: the early morning meal was called both *deipnon* and *ariston* (the latter term only in *Il.* XXIV 124, *Od.* XVI 2), and the evening meal was called *dorpon*. Others believed that there were three meal-times; these scholars distinguished *ariston*, a light breakfast in the early morning, from *deipnon*, a more substantial meal eaten mid-day, and retained *dorpon* for the evening meal. Adherents of this theory could cite in its support a passage from Aeschylus (fr. 182 R.):

καὶ ταξιάρχας †καὶ στρατάρχας καὶ ἑκατοντάρχας†
ἔταξα, σῖτον δ' εἰδέναι διώρισα,
ἄριστα, δεῖπνα δόρπα θ' αἰρεῖσθαι τρίτα.

A third theory posited four meal-times: on the evidence of *δειεληήσας* in *Od.* XVII 599 an afternoon meal was inserted between the mid-day *deipnon* and the evening *dorpon*. On any of these theories Homeric usage was seen as divergent from later usage, in which *ariston* was the mid-day meal and *deipnon* the evening meal¹.

In outline the discussion of the problem in Athenaeus runs as follows:

(a) Homer's heroes ate <three> meals².

¹ (I) Two meals: Schol. **Ab** *Il.* II 381a (rejecting the evidence of Aeschylus), **T** VIII 53b; cf. **A** *Il.* VIII 53a, X 578a, XI 86a, **T** XI 86c, **A** XI 730a, **A** XXIV 124a, **H** *Od.* XVI 2. (II) Three meals: Schol. **T** *Il.* II 381b, **EHMTV** *Od.* II 20 (citing Aeschylus), **BH** XVII 599; cf. **b** *Il.* XXIII 158, **V** *Od.* I 124; Hesych. α 7252 L. (s.v. ἄριστον), Erot. 62,4-6 Nachm. (s.v. δόρπηστος); Plut. *Quaest. Conv.* 726cd. (III) Four meals: rejected in Schol. **V** *Od.* XVII 599; cf. Ap. Soph. 57,11 Bekk. (s.v. δειεληήσας), Phryn. 39,15-40,10 de Borries (s.v. ἀκρατίσασθα). For a lucid analysis of the scholia, with references to earlier literature, see M. Schmidt, *Die Erklärungen zum Weltbild Homers und zur Kultur der Heroenzeit in der bT-Scholien zur Ilias*, München 1976, 191-197.

² We know from the recapitulation in Book V that the three-meal theory is to be affirmed (193a ὅσακις δὲ καὶ τροφᾶς ἐλάμβανον, προειρήκαμεν ἤδη ὅτι δὴ τρεῖς ἦσαν). The clarity

(b) The first is breakfast (*akratisma*), which Homer calls *ariston*: these two terms are illustrated from Homer and comedy.

(c) Philemon says the ancients ate four meals: four are listed in modern terminology (*akratisma*, *ariston*, *hesperisma*, *deipnon*), and ancient terms are given for three of them (*dianēstismos*, *dorpēstos*, *epidorpis*).

(d) The order *ariston*, *deipnon*, *dorpon* is found in Aeschylus: fr. 182 R. is quoted.

(e) Homer mentions the fourth meal in *Od.* XVII 599; it comes between what we call *ariston* and *deipnon*.

(f) *Ariston* is the meal taken at dawn, *deipnon* the mid-day meal (the modern *ariston*), and *dorpon* the evening meal.

(g) Perhaps *ariston* and *deipnon* are also synonyms, as in *Il.* VIII 53f.

Doubts have been raised about the text of (c):

Φιλήμων δέ φησιν ὅτι τροφαῖς δ' ἐχρῶντο οἱ παλαιοί, ἀκρατίσματι, ἀρίστω, ἐσπερίσματι, δεῖπνω. τὸν μὲν οὖν ἀκρατισμὸν διανηστισμὸν ἔλεγον, τὸ δ' ἀρίστον δορπηστόν, τὸ δὲ δεῖπνον ἐπιδορπίδα.

It seems illogical to list four meals and explain three, and it is surprising to find ἀρίστον glossing δορπηστός. Kaibel therefore marked a lacuna, to be supplemented along the lines τὸ δ' ἀρίστον <δεῖπνον, τὸ δ' ἐσπέρισμα> δορπηστόν; this supplement is adopted in Gulick's Loeb and Desrousseaux's Budé editions³.

The transmitted text is supported by a fragment of Lycophron's work on comedy (Schol. Ar. *Vesp.* 103b = fr. 36 Strecker):

ἀπὸ δορπηστοῦ] Λυκόφρων· ἀπὸ ἀρίστου. οἱ δὲ ἄλλοι πάντες δόρπα τὰ δεῖπνα.

In view of this parallel, it would be rash to emend away the surprising gloss attributed to Philemon. But (c) remains puzzling: the ancient terms it cites do not illustrate Homeric usage, and the alternation between four meals (c, e) and three (d, f) is confusing. Surprising, too, in what starts out as a discussion of heroic meal-times, is the extent and focus of (b); it contains four quotations from comedy, three of them illustrating the non-Homeric *akratisma* and at least one containing *ariston* in the non-Homeric sense of a mid-day meal. The explanation may

of the present passage is much improved if we adopt Kaibel's supplement <τρισίν>; but my argument does not depend on it.

³ R. Weber, *De Philemone Atheniensi glossographo*, in *Commentationes quibus Ottoni Ribbeckio [...] congratulantur discipuli Lipsienses*, Leipzig 1888, 443-450, suggests (447f.) that Philemon must have written τὸν μὲν οὖν ἀκρατισμὸν ἀρίστον ἔλεγον, τὸ δ' ἀρίστον δεῖπνον, τὸ δὲ δεῖπνον δόρπον: this is completely arbitrary.

lie in Athenaeus' use of a lexicographical source. Phrynichus' entry under the lemma ἀκρατίσασθαι (39,15-40,10 de Borries) first illustrates that word from comedy (using one of the quotations which appear in [b]); then it lists the four Homeric meal-times, mentions the Aeschylean three, and finally describes the later Attic usage. If a similar, but more extensive, lexicon-article lies behind Athenaeus' discussion, the presence of the non-Homeric material in (b) and (c) is understandable.

The passage's logical progression is still elusive⁴; but retaining the transmitted text in (c) makes it easier to reconstruct a coherent underlying exposition out of the epitome, along the following lines:

(a) The heroes in Homer ate three meals.

(b) The first meal is taken in the early morning: we call it *akratisma*, but Homer calls it *ariston* – a term which we use for the mid-day meal. These different usages can be illustrated from Homer and comedy.

(c) According to Philemon, however, the ancients ate four meals, which we would call (I) *akratisma*, (II) *ariston*, (III) *hesperisma*, and (IV) *deipnon*. Of these, (I), (II) and (IV) used to be called *dianēstismos*, *dorpēstos* and *epidorpis* respectively.

(d) In Homer these three meals are called *ariston*, *deipnon* and *dorpon*. The same order is also⁵ found in Aeschylus.

(e) Philemon's fourth meal (III) is allegedly mentioned in *Od.* XVII 599; but the passage does not refer to a meal⁶. There are therefore only three genuinely Homeric meals.

(f) Of these, *ariston* is taken in the early morning, *deipnon* at mid-day (what we would call *ariston*), and *dorpon* in the evening (what we would call *deipnon*).

But what of (g)? At first sight it seems to mark a shift from the three-meal theory to Aristarchus' two-meal theory, in which *ariston* and *deipnon* both refer to breakfast. But Porphyry (I 117,4-9 Schrader) comments that *deipnon* is used in Homer both for breakfast (as in *Il.* VIII 53f., the passage cited in [g]), and for the mid-day meal (as in *Il.* XI 86). So when Athenaeus says that *ariston* may also⁷ be synonymous with *deipnon*, he is not denying that Homer uses *deipnon* for the mid-day meal, but noting that it is sometimes used for breakfast as well. There is therefore no retreat from the three-meal theory.

⁴ Kaibel was driven to conclude that the Aeschylus-testimonium must have been displaced.

⁵ Note καὶ παρ' Αἰσχύλῳ in the epitome, implying that this sequence of terms had already been introduced in the original.

⁶ For the rejection of the fourth meal cf. Book V 193a γελοῖοι γὰρ εἰσιν οἱ φάσκοντες ὅτι καὶ τέσσαρας ἐλάμβανον, ἐπεὶ ὁ ποιητὴς ἔφη 'σὺ δ' ἔρχεο δειελήσας', οὐ νοοῦντες ὅτι λέγει τὸν δειλινὸν διατρίψας χρόνον.

⁷ The καί is again important.

This analysis brings the discussion into line with the recapitulation in Book V (193a) in affirming three meals and rejecting the inference of a fourth from *Od.* XVII 599. But the recapitulation raises a question of its own, to which I can give no confident answer. It asserts that there were three meals διὰ τὸ τὸ αὐτό ποτε μὲν ἄριστον, ποτὲ δὲ δεῖπνον ὀνομάζεσθαι, an argument of which I can make no sense. It cannot be meant to establish that there were three meals rather than four: the four-meal theory (to which the observation is, in any case, irrelevant) is given a separate refutation. But the argument also fails to establish that there were three meals rather than two: that requires, not that *ariston* and *deipnon* both refer to breakfast, but that *deipnon* does not (or does not always) refer to breakfast. Perhaps Athenaeus' speaker has got muddled between one meal being called by two names and one word being applied to two meals. Otherwise, I see no satisfactory alternative to Schweighaeuser's proposal that these words be transposed to the end of the recapitulation, or deleted⁸. The recapitulation ends with the statement that, although there were three meals, ὅμως δὲ οὐδεὶς δείξει παρὰ τῷ ποιητῇ τρίς τινα λαμβάνοντα τροφάς. It is conceivable that a reader sought to elucidate this cryptic remark with the marginal comment that the same meal is called both *ariston* and *deipnon*⁹, which was subsequently incorporated into the text.

Leeds

MALCOLM HEATH

⁸ J. Schweighaeuser, *Animadversiones in Athenaei Deipnosophistas*, Argentorati 1801-1807, VIII 68. Weber, *o.c.* (n. 3) 449 n. 1 concurs, a fact from which I draw little encouragement.

⁹ If the three-meal theory is taken as given, then the fact that breakfast is called *deipnon* as well as *ariston* means that *deipnon* is ambiguous; this ambiguity might in turn have been thought to make it difficult to establish whether someone eating a *deipnon* is taking breakfast or a mid-day meal.