

Food and Counter-cultural Identity in Ancient Cynicism

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1. *Food, culture, and counter-culture*

Food is a central feature in the philosophical, ethical, and religious framework of any human society. Its materiality helps to embody the abstract, otherwise intangible, cultural discourses that are enacted, recreated, and embodied by the community through ritual means.¹ As David Morgan argues, embodiment plays a central role in the articulation of belief systems, and in this process, food and eating practices are fundamental elements in the construction of the shared background that leads to the individual's participation in the social body of belief.² Nevertheless, the relationships between food, a coherent or incoherent body of beliefs, and wider socio-cultural identities are extremely complex, and they are subject to many nuances and subtleties. Food may facilitate the construction of shared identities in many ways, but every shared identity also has a potential for confronting itself with foreign groups that are culturally described as belonging to 'the Other'.³ Food is a traditional point of departure for cultural narratives that justify and legitimate Otherness, challenging thus the construction of

¹ P. Schmid-Leukel (ed.), *Las religiones y la comida* (Barcelona 2002).

² D. Morgan, "Materiality, Social Analysis, and the Study of Religions," in *Religion and Material Culture. The Matter of Belief* (New York 2010) 59–61.

³ Identity studies have addressed the parallel problems of the assumption of a cultural identity and the construction of cultural Others: F. Hartog, *Le miroir d'Hérodote: essai sur la représentation de l'autre* (Paris 1980); J. M. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge 1997) 17–33, and *Hellenicity, between Ethnicity and Culture* (Chicago 2005) 90–124.

shared identities that could rely on other cultural features.⁴

In the Greek world, culinary differences are among the preferred forms of dealing with cultural representations of the Other. Already in the *Odyssey* the monstrous creatures that live at the margins or beyond the civilized (Greek) world have a distinct aberrant diet. They do not eat bread; instead, they consume strange foods such as lotus flowers, cheese and milk, or even human flesh.⁵ This tendency is also present in the depiction of the barbarian peoples and cultures with which the Greeks had intense relationships from at least the eighth century B.C. This is especially prominent in the discourses regarding foreign socio-political realities, such as the Persian Empire.⁶ Nevertheless, food's capacity in the development of socio-

⁴ As A. F. Smith argues, "False Memories: The Invention of Culinary Fakelore and Food Fallacies," in H. Walker (ed.), *Food and the Memory* (Totnes 2001) 254–260, a great many of the discourses concerning the food of the cultural Other show a significant degree of deformation from the actual culinary culture. On the relationship between cuisine and identity: C. Grottanelli and L. Milano (eds.), *Food and Identity in the Ancient World* (Padua 2004); K. C. Twiss (ed.), *The Archaeology of Food and Identity* (Carbondale 2007); M. Sánchez Romero, "El consumo de alimento como estrategia social: recetas para la construcción de la memoria y la creación de identidades," *Cuadernos de Prehistoria y Arqueología de la Universidad de Granada* 18 (2008) 17–39; M. Beer, *Taste or Taboo. Dietary Choices in Antiquity* (Totnes 2010).

⁵ *Od.* 9.82 ff.; P. Vidal-Naquet, "Valeurs religieuses et mythiques de la terre et du sacrifice dans l'Odyssee," in M. Finley (ed.), *Problèmes de la terre en Grèce ancienne* (Paris 1973) 269–292.

⁶ P. Schmitt Pantel, *La cité au banquet. Histoire des repas publics dans les cités grecques* (Rome 1992) 429–435; H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "Persian Food. Stereotypes and Political Identity," in J. Wilkins et al. (eds.), *Food in Antiquity* (Exeter 1995) 286–302; P. Briant, "History and Ideology. The Greeks and the 'Persian Decadence'," in T. Harrison (ed.), *Greeks and Barbarians* (Edinburgh 2002) 193–210; M. García Sánchez, *El gran rey de Persia: formas de representación de la alteridad persa en el imaginario griego* (Barcelona 2009) 327–364; F. Notario, "Comer como un rey: percepción e ideología del lujo gastronómico entre Grecia y Persia," in J. M. Cortés et al. (eds.), *Grecia ante los imperios* (Sevilla 2011) 93–106; J. Wilkins, "Le banquet royal perse vu par les Grecs," in C. Grandjean et al. (eds.), *Le banquet du monarque dans le monde antique* (Tours 2013) 163–171.

cultural identities does not affect only foreign communities, as it may also convey the construction of exclusive identities *within* a complex socio-political and cultural group. In the case of sub-cultural or counter-cultural groups, their attitudes towards food frequently help them to confirm and maintain their particular identity as well as to reflect on wider ethical and philosophical topics for which food provides a common ground.⁷

Although there have been some studies concerning the relationship between closed socio-cultural groups and their particular cuisines in the ancient Greek world, it remains a largely untouched topic, mainly concerned with the attitudes of certain philosophical and religious sects.⁸ In this paper I address the question of the role that attitudes towards food, cookery, and eating had in the definition of the Cynic philosophical school as a distinct cultural group.⁹

⁷ Concerning modern counter-cultural movements and their relationship to food: C. Dylan, "The Raw and the Rotten: Punk Cuisine" *Ethnology* 43 (2004) 19–31; W. J. Belasco, *Appetite for Change: How the Counterculture Took in the Food Industry* (Ithaca 2007). On the concept of counter-culture in the post-industrialized world: A. Bennett, "Reappraising 'Counterculture'," in S. Whiteley and J. Sklower (eds.), *Countercultures and Popular Music* (Surrey 2014) 17–26.

⁸ Concerning Pythagoreans: M. Detienne, "La cuisine de Pythagore," *Archives de sociologie des religions* 29 (1970) 141–162, and *Les jardins d'Adonis. La mythologie des aromates en Grèce* (Paris 1972) 76–105; Beer, *Taste or Taboo* 44–53. Orphics: A. Bernabé, "Orphics and Pythagoreans: The Greek Perspectives," in G. Cornelli et al. (eds.), *On Pythagoreanism* (Berlin 2013) 117–151. Dionysiac worship groups have frequently been connected with the practice of raw eating or omophagy: M. Detienne, *Dionysos mis à mort* (Paris 1977) 197–200; R. Seaford, "Dionysiac Drama and the Dionysiac Mysteries," *CQ* 31 (1981) 252–275; C. Van Lifferinge, "Les Grecs et le cru. Pratiques alimentaires, pratiques rituelles et représentations dionysiaques," *Kernos* 27 (2014) 75–97.

⁹ The role of food in the Cynic philosophical system as a materialization of the life *kata physin*, according to nature, has been addressed in some of the recent studies that have revitalized the topic of ancient Cynicism. A detailed bibliography is given by L. E. Navia, *The Philosophy of Cynicism. An Annotated Bibliography* (Westport 1995). Recent studies on the general problems of Cynicism: M.-O. Goulet-Cazé, *L'ascèse cynique. Un commentaire de Diogène*

Ancient Cynicism lacked some of the most evident elements in the definition of philosophical schools, such as a coherent corpus of doctrinal texts or an immediate association with a teaching centre, and thus its very same existence as a philosophical school was often questioned.¹⁰ Cynics adhered to a loose ensemble of counter-cultural practices that, in accordance with some classical sources, was regarded as a form of renunciation of customs or “defiling the currency” (παρὰχαραῖσαι τὸ νόμισμα) as a way of strengthening their cultural identity.¹¹ Some of the most perceptible features of the Cynic identity are the walking staff, the travel bag, the single thin cloak, and the long and messy hair they usually wore. These elements reflect a distinct counter-culture as they play with the traditional image of the beggar instead of with the increasingly accepted performance codes of philosophical and intellectual groups.¹² I argue

Laërce VI 70–71 (Paris 1986); F. G. Downing, *Cynics and Christian Origins* (Edinburgh 1992); M.-O. Goulet-Cazé and R. Goulet (eds.), *Le Cynisme ancien et ses prolongements* (Paris 1993); R. Bracht Branham and M.-O. Goulet-Cazé (eds.), *The Cynics. The Cynic Movement in Antiquity and its Legacy* (Berkeley 1996); L. E. Navia, *Classical Cynicism. A Critical Study* (Westport 1996); W. Desmond, *The Greek Praise of Poverty: Origins of Ancient Cynicism* (Notre Dame 2006), and *Cynics* (Stocksfield 2008); M.-O. Goulet-Cazé, *Cynisme et christianisme dans l'antiquité* (Paris 2014).

¹⁰ M.-O. Goulet-Cazé, “Le cynisme est-il une philosophie?” in M. Dixsaut (ed.), *Contre Platon I Le platonisme dévoilé* (Paris 1993) 273–313; I. Gugliermi, *Diogène Laërce et le Cynisme* (Villeneuve d’Ascq 2006) 117–164.

¹¹ This idea blends with the anecdote concerning Diogenes’ exile from Sinope for his father’s defiling the local coinage: Diog. Laert. 6.20–21, 38, 56, 71; Luc. *Bis.acc.* 24, *Demon.* 5. Erroneously, the *Suda* (δ 1143, cf. γ 334) attributes the defiling to Diogenes. An interesting contrast is provided by the (highly biased) view of the emperor Julian on this question: *Or.* 9.8 (187b–188c); 7.4, 7 (208c–d, 211b–d) [G. Giannantoni, *Socratis et Socraticorum reliquiae II* (Naples 1990 = *SSR*) v B 8–10]. Concerning the symbolic expression ‘defiling the coin’ as a form of counter-cultural contestation in the Cynic milieu: Diog. Laert. 6.20 (referring to Diogenes’ *Pordalos*); Julian *Or.* 9.11 (191a–192c). Cf. M.-O. Goulet-Cazé, *Diogène Laërce* (Varese 1999) 703 n.5; Desmonds, *Ancient Cynicism* 78–82.

¹² So Antisthenes: Diog. Laert. 6.13–15, also citing Sosicrates (*FHG IV* 503, fr.19) [*SSR* v A 22]. Diogenes: Diog. Laert. 6.22–23 [*SSR* v A 174].

that Cynic counter-cultural attitudes towards food had a central role in the construction of both Cynic identity and the way wider socio-cultural groups perceived these somewhat shocking philosophers. This analysis will consider several aspects of food, cuisine, and eating in the Cynic milieu. The first will be the symbolic and socio-cultural implications of the ‘Cynic menu’, that is, the preferred foods they are associated with. The second concerns adoption of counter-cultural patterns of consumption and the way they could convey some philosophical messages about individual freedom from the social norms arbitrating eating. The analysis of these overlapping fields will help us understand the role that food played in the socio-cultural identity dynamics of ancient Cynics.

2. *Choosing foods: the Cynic menu*

Generally speaking, the idea of a menu is consistent with the definition provided by the *Oxford English Dictionary*: a list of food available or to be served in a restaurant or at a meal. Nevertheless, contemporary food studies have argued that the very idea of ‘a list of food’ is far from being a pure and innocent matter. Food is a complex subject, and even when humans are almost omnivorous, or precisely because of that, the constitution of a culturally preferred menu is a topic open to many interpretations. The assumption of a distinctive menu must be studied as the constitution of a complex network of foods that generate and receive many socio-cultural discourses and im-

Other anecdotes concerning the Cynic extravagant or inappropriate attitude towards dress: Damasus *Ep.* 5 (*PL* 13.565–566); Crates: Diog. Laert. 6.90 [*SSR* V H 35]; Dio Chrys. 13.10; Julian *Or.* 9.16 (198a–d); Luc. *Demon.* 16, 19, 41, *Peregr.* 14–15; Menedemus: Diog. Laert. 6.102 [*SSR* V N 1]. On the image of the intellectual: P. Zanker, *The Mask of Socrates* (Berkeley 1995); N. Loraux and C. Miralles (eds.), *Figures de l’intellectuel en Grèce ancienne* (Paris 1998). Concerning the consolidation of the intellectual image in the mechanisms of social recognition: V. Azoulay, “Champ intellectuel et stratégies de distinction dans la première moitié du IV^e siècle,” in J.-C. Couvenhes and S. Milanezi (eds.), *Individus, groupes et politique à Athènes de Solon à Mithridate* (Tours 2007) 171–199.

pressions due to the role these foods have in the wider context of the culinary system.¹³

Greek culinary culture has received some degree of scholarly attention in recent decades.¹⁴ From the perspective of the ancient Mediterranean world, the Greeks had what we could define as a comprehensive food inventory: unlike other cultural traditions, such as the Jews or the Egyptians, the Greeks had, as a whole, almost no major food taboo that could have a pronounced impact on their everyday life.¹⁵ Apart from some particular aversions, such as the known food taboos of the Pythagoreans, the Greeks did not recognize any formal ‘dietary law’ that forbade them to eat some kinds of foods.¹⁶ Nevertheless, this general observation conceals some aspects of the Greek culinary system and its dietary choices. In the first place, there are some foods that are consciously avoided and whose consumption is considered abhorrent. Human meat is the primary example: cannibalism is seen in mythic and historical

¹³ R. Barthes, “Pour une psycho-sociologie de l’alimentation contemporaine,” *AnnEconSocCiv* 16 (1961) 977–986; M. Douglas, “Les structures du culinaire,” *Communications* 31 (1979) 145–179; J. Cruz Cruz, “Semántica de la comunicación alimentaria,” in J. Bilbao-Fullaondo (ed.), *El ámbito gastronómico* (Bilbao 1993) 31–50; A. Beardsworth and T. Keil, *Sociology on the Menu: An Invitation to the Study of Food and Society* (Oxford 1997); M. Montanari, *Food is Culture* (New York 2006).

¹⁴ A. Dalby, *Siren Feasts: A History of Food and Gastronomy in Greece* (London 1996); S. D. Olson and A. Sens, *Greek Culture and Cuisine in the Fourth Century BCE: Archestratos of Gela* (Oxford 2000); M.-J. García Soler, *El arte de comer en la antigua Grecia* (Madrid 2001); A. Dalby, *Food in the Ancient World, from A to Z* (London 2003).

¹⁵ The ancient Jewish food taboos are among the most studied in the scholarly tradition: M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London 1966); cf. M. Harris, *Good to Eat: Riddles of Food and Culture* (London 1986); N. MacDonald, *Not Bread Alone. The Uses of Food in the Old Testament* (Oxford 2008) 196–218. On food taboos in the wider ancient world: Beer, *Taste or Taboo*.

¹⁶ Some fishes were subject to food avoidance for religious reasons among some Greeks: C. Antonelli, “Fauna marina e tabù alimentari nel mondo greco,” in *Food and Identity in the Ancient world* 165–177.

accounts as a sign of barbarism and savagery, and it is an act commonly relegated to the farthest extremes of Mediterranean cultures.¹⁷ In the second place, that a food may be considered edible by religious or cultural standards does not make it particularly appealing. In the Greek world we do find many testimonies about the consumption of the most diverse foodstuffs, ranging from bitter vetch to dogs or even stranger animals.¹⁸ Still, these species do not seem to form part of the *preferred* menu, and their obligatory consumption (for medical or other reasons, such as a bad harvest year) should not be confused with the development of a cultural taste for them.

In the absence of a clear dietary law regulating food consumption, the construction of socio-cultural identities through food lies more in the formulation of a selective or distinctive menu than in the subversion of the gastronomic grammar.¹⁹ At first glance, the particularity of the Cynic menu is that it is

¹⁷ Vidal-Naquet, in *Problèmes de la terre* 269–292; E. M. Murphy and J. P. Mallory, “Herodotus and the Cannibals,” *Antiquity* 74 (2000) 388–394; F. S. Sanz, “El fenómeno del canibalismo en las fuentes literarias greco-romanas: su mención en la mitología y la filosofía antigua,” *Emerita* 81 (2013) 111–135; F. Notario, “¿Caníbales, dioses y reyes? Acerca del canibalismo y los conflictos divinos en la *Teogonía*,” *ARYS* 11 (2013) 93–114.

¹⁸ Bitter vetch: Dem. 22.15; Hippoc. *Epid.* 2.4.3 = 6.4.11; Dalby, *Food in the Ancient World* 342–343; L. Gallo, “L’alimentation de substitution dans les cités grecques,” in S. Collin Bouffier and M. H. Sauner (eds.), *Substitution de nourritures / Nourritures de substitution en Méditerranée* (Aix-en-Provence 2006) 53–65, and “Il nomos di Agirrio e una testimonianza di Demostene,” in A. Magnetto et al. (eds.), *Nuove ricerche sulla lege granaria ateniese del 374/373 a.C.* (Pisa 2010) 149–157. Dogs and puppies are a rather common food in some of the Hippocratic treatises: Hippocr. *De aff.* 41, 43, 52, *Morb.* 2.44, 56, *De aff.intem.* 6, 9, 22, 24, 27, 30. G. Ekroth provides a list of the faunal remains in Greek sanctuaries: beyond cattle, sheep, goats, dogs, and pigs, there are more exotic animals such as weasels, wolves, snakes, crocodiles, lions, etc.: “Meat in Ancient Greece: Sacrificial, Sacred or Secular?” *Food & History* 5.1 (2007) 249–272.

¹⁹ S. Mennell, “Taste, Culture and History,” *Petits Propos Culinaires* 78 (2005) 23–31; M. Van der Ween, “When is Food a Luxury?” *WorldArch* 34 (2003) 405–427.

selective or restrictive not in its rejection of popular, widespread foods, as would happen in other religious or philosophical groups, but rather the contrary: its most distinctive trait is the embracing of the most economical and simple foods and the rejection of the sophisticated dishes that define high cuisine.²⁰ The reason for this strategy of counter-distinction, or alternative distinction, lies in the role food and cuisine played in the structures of social prestige and recognition since the late classical period.²¹ From the fourth century B.C. on, there was an increasing sophistication as to food that allowed for a new symbolic and material normative concerning the interplay between food and individual and collective identities.²² The Cynic rejection of these new dishes marked their parallel rejection of the socio-cultural background of the elitist cuisine and all its messages and discourses concerning comfort, pleasure, and general distinction.

It is generally accepted that the Cynic menu has many points in common with the type of diet that a fragment of Alexis claims was typical of the poorer social groups: fava bean (κύαμος), lupine (θήρμος), vegetables (λάχανον), turnips (γογγυλίσ), bird's pease (ὄχρος), grass-peas (λάθυρος), acorns (φηγός), bulbs (βολβός), cicadas (τέττιξ), chickpeas (ἐρέβινθος), wild pears

²⁰ On the division between high and low cuisine see J. Goody, *Cocina, cuisine y clase: estudio de sociología comparada* (Barcelona 1995) 69–130.

²¹ Concerning the modes of social recognition in ancient Greek culture see A. Duploux, *Le prestige des élites: recherches sur les modes de reconnaissance sociale en Grèce entre les X^e et V^e siècles avant J.-C.* (Paris 2006).

²² On the process of cuisine differentiation in fourth-century Greece see Dalby, *Siren Feasts* 113–129; Olson and Sens, *Greek Culture and Cuisine* (esp. Introduction). For Athens see F. Notario, “Placeres externos, disgustos internos: percepciones de la alteridad, interacciones gastronómicas y conflictos ideológicos e identitarios en la Atenas del siglo IV a.C.,” in C. del Cerro et al. (eds.), *Ideología, identidades e interacción en el mundo antiguo* (Madrid 2012) 357–376, and “Cooking Pot as Melting Pot. Gastronomy in Late Classical Athens,” in S. Lira et al. (eds.), *Sharing Cultures 2013. Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Intangible Heritage* (Barcelos 2013) 173–182.

(ἄχραός), and figs (συκέα).²³ Many of the foods associated with the Cynics are, indeed, present in this list, although we should not take for granted their immediate identification with the poor. Foods, as such, cannot have any social or otherwise defined agency, and it is the use the different social groups make of them in their everyday life that may attach them to a particular one. In the case of these foods, which are used in both Greek elite and popular cuisine, their role in the grammar of high and low cuisine is more meaningful than their overall use. While in popular cuisine these foods have a central importance, in the elitist culinary grammar they are peripheral: they can form the garnish of the more elaborate dishes, or they are relegated to the category of *tragemata*, snack foods.²⁴

Thus, the role the different products had in the Cynic menu must be assessed in terms of their use in the wider contexts of the Greek culinary socio-cultural system. This inquiry will focus on four ample food categories that have a major importance in both the Greek and the Cynic menu: cereal products, legumes, vegetables, and dried fruits. Contrasting their mainstream uses and discourses with Cynic attitudes towards them, we will have a better understanding of their role in this counter-cultural cuisine.

It seems difficult to overstate the importance of cereal products in the ancient Greek diet. It is almost a commonplace to state that at least 75–80% of daily Greek food was composed of them. Indeed, Greek texts are full of references to bread and *maza* as staple foods.²⁵ The two primary cereals in the ancient

²³ Alex. fr.167 [Ath. 54F]. On this passage: W. G. Arnott, *Alexis: The Fragments* (Cambridge 1996) 484–492.

²⁴ Dalby, *Siren Feasts* 23; García Soler, *El arte de comer* 34; Dalby, *Food in the Ancient World* 330.

²⁵ L. Foxhall and H. A. Forbes, “Σιτομετρεία: The Role of Grain as a Staple Food in Classical Antiquity,” *Chiron* 12 (1982) 41–90; C. Ampolo, “Il pane quotidiano delle città antiche fra economia e antropologia,” in O. Longo and P. Scarpi (eds.), *Homo Edens: regimi, miti e pratiche dell'alimentazione nella civiltà del Mediterraneo* (Milan 1989) 205–211; J. Wilkins and S. Hill, *Food*

Mediterranean are barley and wheat, although the former is more prevalent due to its better yield and its resistance to unfavourable events such as disease or drought.²⁶ In Roman culinary culture, barley was regarded as low-status cereal, fit for slaves and other dependent social groups, but that is not the case in the Greek world.²⁷ *Maza*, the most common form, as well as ‘bread’ (*artos*) are present in the diet of all Greek social groups. There are, nevertheless, significant differences in flour quality, the use of baking ovens for the bread instead of the most popular cooking processes (in the fireplace ashes, for example), or the use of additives and flavourings.²⁸

In contrast with *maza*, which they often praise, the Cynic philosophers adopt harsh attitudes towards sophisticated cereal-based delicacies. In their view these dishes materialize the culinary folly of the elites who employ food as a tool for social distinction, as well as a source of personal pleasure. Honeyed cakes embody these over-refined dishes, presented as unnecessary foods that bespeak the physical, moral, and even culinary depravity of the eater.²⁹ In a very similar way, wheat baked breads are considered a sign of overindulgence, and anecdotes regarding them and honeyed cakes are sometimes blended together.³⁰ An anecdote preserved in one of Teles’ diatribes

in *the Ancient World* (Malden 2006) 112–139. *Maza* is the most common barley meal, whose texture seems to have been between porridge and more solid flat breads.

²⁶ R. Sallares, *The Ecology of the Ancient Greek World* (London 1991) 313–316.

²⁷ Galen *Alim.fac.* I 11 [VI 507 K.]; Celsus *Med.* 2.18.4. J. André, *L'alimentation et la cuisine à Rome* (Paris 1981) 50.

²⁸ F. Notario, “Why Does Matro Weep? Barley Bread and Social Identity and Status in Classical Greece,” *Pegasus* 43 (2010) 22–25.

²⁹ Anecdotes about various Cynic philosophers and honeyed cakes: Diogenes: *Gnom. Vat.* no. 188; Diog. Laert. 6.56; Ath. 113F [SSR V B 189–190]; Menippus: Ath. 664E; Teles 2 (7–8 Hense = Stob. 3.1.98); Demonax: Luc. *Demon.* 52, cf. *Gall.* 12. On honeyed sweets in Greek culinary culture: García Soler, *El arte de comer* 379–391.

³⁰ Diog. Laert. 6.55; Stob. 3.17.15; Greg. Naz. *Or.* 4.72 [SSR V B 494].

emphasizes the contrast between “bread of pure flour” (ἄρτος καθαρός) and *maza*: when Metrocles was a student at the Academy, he always concerned himself with the distinctive elements that form the image of the elitist scholar, such as serving pure bread and uncommon dishes at banquets. When he became a Cynic under the influence of Crates, however, he led a simple life based on *maza* and other cheap foods, and he never regretted his new diet.³¹

Thus, the consumption of *maza* or, sometimes, merely bread (allegedly barley bread), is encouraged. This praise contrasts with the elitist cultural hegemony that marks it as an insufficient or peripheral food.³² In its unprocessed form, barley flour also has an interesting role in the image of the Cynic philosophers. It embodies the seemingly little things that are more important to the Cynic sage than the grandiose elements that accompany the legitimation of elite control and authority over the political community. As Diogenes allegedly argued, the really important things, such as barley flour, are cheap, while the unworthy things, such as bronze statues, are very costly.³³ Direct flour eating is, nevertheless, an extreme form of eating, and is not even attested in the texts relative to Cynic philosophers. Still, some texts related to archetypical images of Cynic behaviour, such as those regarding the gymnosophists, argue that flour eating was frequent among them.³⁴

Legumes and pulses constitute another staple food in the de-

³¹ Teles 4A (40–41 H.). The dietetic properties of *maza* are described in Hippoc. *Acut.* 2.40; on the different types of bread and their properties, 2.42. On “pure flour bread” see also Alexis fr.126 (Ath. 110E).

³² Diogenes: *Anth.Gr.* 16.333; Auson. *Epigr.* 29 (where *maza* is translated *polenta*); Diog. Laert. 6.35; *Gnom.Vat.* no. 169; Julian *Or.* 9.18–20 (200d–203c); Max. Tyr. 32.9; *P.Bour.* 1.157–166 [SSR v B 156–157, 188, 191, 264, 298, 466]; Diog. *Ep.* 13, 32.3, 34, 37.4. Crates *Ep.* 14, 17, 34 [SSR v H 101, 104, 121]; Leonidas *Anth.Gr.* 6.302, 7.736; Dio Chrys. 6.12, 61–62.

³³ Diog. Laert. 6.35 [SSR v B 323]; Diog. *Ep.* 34.1, 38.4.

³⁴ Onesicritus *FGrHist* 134 F 17 [Strab. 15.1.63–65]; Megasth. *FGrHist* 715 F 33 [Strab. 15.1.58–60].

picture of the Cynic menu, although, as in the case of cereal meals, the symbolic and practical implications of legume eating in the Cynic behavioural code is not the same as in other contexts of the Greek culinary system. Despite their dietary importance, legumes and pulses have always received mixed views in the culinary traditions of the Mediterranean world: their rather indigestive nature (materialized in the flatulence and the difficult digestion they cause) and their association with the poorer social groups have marked them as typical underclass and peripheral foods.³⁵ It is unsurprising, then, that the Cynics, in their counter-cultural approach to food and cuisine, chose them as a kind of *totem-food* that embodied their distinctive identity.³⁶

Bean consumption, although significant, does not seem to be one of the most particular traits of the Cynic way of life. As with other cheap foods, Crates advised a diet of beans and lentils as a remedy against debts, and with them, one could finally raise a trophy over poverty.³⁷ Nevertheless, the Cynic inclination towards bean eating is sometimes contrasted with the Pythagorean aversion to beans, and it is one of the basic elements in the construction of the philosophical and behavioural distance between these two apparently counter-cultural cuisines.³⁸ Although not a Cynic himself, Lucian of Samosata provides us with some reflections of a clear Cynic inspiration.³⁹ In *Dialogues of the Dead* and *Gallus* he contrasts

³⁵ P. Garnsey, "The Bean: Substance and Symbol," in *Cities, Peasants and Food in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge 1998) 214–225; García Soler, *El arte de comer* 66–72.

³⁶ Desmond, *The Cynics* 83–84.

³⁷ Teles 2 (14–15 H.) [SSR V H 73].

³⁸ The Pythagorean cuisine is based on the rejection of several foods, some of them very common (fava bean), while others, though not unusual, have a more distinctive nature, such as mullets, considered a delicacy in the Greek culinary culture: Diog. Laert. 8.33–35; Iambl. *VP* 24.106–109.

³⁹ This influence is mostly appreciated when Lucian writes concerning traditional religion: F. Berdozzo, *Götter, Mythen, Philosophen. Lukian und die paganen Göttervorstellungen seiner Zeit* (Berlin 2011) 51–94. Nevertheless, as

Cynic and Pythagorean attitudes towards beans, and in both cases he seems to support Cynic ‘open’ consumption patterns against the taboo on beans. In the first text, a dead and starving Pythagoras begs for some food from the equally dead Menippus: he has only some beans in his bag, but Pythagoras will eat them anyway, as he has finally learnt that the beliefs of live and dead people are not the same, and neither are the beans the heads of the parents.⁴⁰ In *Gallus*, the eponymous cock of the title confesses that in the other life he was the very same Pythagoras, and when confronted with the question of the interdiction on meat and fava beans, he confesses that it was only an artificial distinction, achieved by banishing otherwise common foods.⁴¹

If beans were regarded as a sign of the differences between the Pythagorean and Cynic relationship with food, lentils were perhaps the most significant foodstuffs in the performance of the Cynic life. As we have seen, Crates recommended a diet of lentils and beans, and the grammarian Demetrius says that he also wrote an *Encomium to the Lentil* (φακῆς ἐγκώμιον) that could be read to libertines (ἄσώτοις).⁴² The verses where he claims that he will not argue with anyone about whether a casserole dish is better than lentil soup were perhaps originally from this work.⁴³ Even when lentils were a part of the life “according to nature” (*kata physin*) that was encouraged by the Cynics, they

Jones argued, the varied manifestations of the Cynic school make it impossible to reduce Lucian’s attitudes toward it to a simple dualistic matter of acceptance-rejection: C. P. Jones, *Culture and Society in Lucian* (Cambridge 1986) 31.

⁴⁰ *Dial.mort.* 6(20). Among the probable reasons offered by Aristotle (fr.195 Rose = Diog. Laert. 8.34) for the bean prohibition, none is related to the matter of their resembling human heads, but rather genitalia (cf. Luc. *Vit.auct.* 16, Gell. *NA* 8.10).

⁴¹ *Gall.* 18; cf. 4–5, where the cock still claims that beans are unfit for philosophers (although they are good for birds!).

⁴² Demetr. *Eloc.* 170 [*SSR* V H 66]

⁴³ Plut. *Mor.* 125F [*SSR* V H 72].

were usually cooked as a stew or as a soup (*phake*), and for this reason a sort of little pot or bowl was normally necessary for eating them. An oracle was cited stating that Diogenes burnt a *xoanon* of Heracles for making a fire and boiling his lentil soup.⁴⁴ Diogenes had a small bowl precisely for eating these kinds of half-liquid dishes, but when he saw a little boy eating lentils from hollowed bread instead of a bowl, he threw away his pot.⁴⁵

Lentil dishes were seen as part of Cynic doctrine and socio-cultural identity in other terms as well. Their low status made them a perfect element for anecdotes about the false sense of honour and shame in the wider Greek culture.⁴⁶ The good Cynic could not be ashamed of his behaviour, which was in accord with nature, and thus shamelessness is one of the most diagnostic traits of the Cynic way of life.⁴⁷ In some accounts, one of the exercises for leaving aside the social sense of shame was to carry very low quality foods in the crowded streets of Athens.⁴⁸ Thus, Crates made the Stoic Zeno carry a big pot of lentils through the Kerameikos, and when he tried to hide him-

⁴⁴ *Theosophorum Graecorum fragmenta* 70 (ed. Erbse); cf. Dio Chrys. 6.62, where acorns roasted in ashes are among the preferred Cynic foods along with “the cheapest of lentils.” Further depictions of lentil soup as a frugal dish opposed to luxurious delicacies: Antiphanes fr.185, Diphilus fr.64 [Ath. 156C–157A].

⁴⁵ Diog. Laert. 6.37 [SSR V B 158]. Another anecdote mentions drinking water from the palm of the hand instead of a cup: Auson. *Epigr.* 29; Diog. Laert. 6.37; *Gnom. Vat.* no. 185; Plut. *Mor.* 79E; Sen. *Ep.* 14.2; Simp. *In Epict.* 32; Basil. *Ep.* 1.4 [SSR V B 157–161].

⁴⁶ D. L. Cairns, *Aidos. The Psychology and Ethics of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greek Literature* (Oxford 1993).

⁴⁷ Elias *In Arist. Cat.*, CAG XVIII.1 111; Isid. *Etym.* 8.6.14. Antiphanes: Plut. *Mor.* 33C. Diogenes: Apostol. 16.6.1a; Diog. *Ep.* 10.1. Bion of Borysthene: Diog. Laert. 4.54. Oenomaus of Gadara: Julian *Or.* 7.6 (210d–211a). As Cairns argues, shamelessness is a recurrent topic in the cultural image of dogs in the classical Greek world: *Aidos* 98 n.151.

⁴⁸ E.g. Diogenes dragged a wine-jar through the Kerameikos, or made another person carry a disgusting cheese or a herring: Diog. Laert. 6.35, 36 [SSR V B 188, 367].

self from the public, Crates broke the pot and left him completely dirtied with the lentil broth in the middle of the street.⁴⁹

The question of lentil cooking and eating is a major issue in the literary tradition on the Cynic and early Stoic schools, and it may have been one of the elements of differentiation between the two. In the commentary of Colotes on the *Lysis* there are hints of a dispute between Zeno and a certain Menedemus, who could be the Cynic Menedemus of Lampsacus, concerning lentil cooking.⁵⁰ According to Menedemus, the real sage should cook his lentils in such a way that they could not provide any kind of pleasure to the eater.⁵¹ Against this proposition, the Stoics stated that the wise person would do everything well, including cooking lentils, which the very same Zeno argued should be cooked adding one-twelfth of a coriander seed to the stew for scenting it.⁵²

As the Cynic philosophers became an increasingly familiar sight in the Hellenistic world, their association with lentils became closer via literary works that underlined the Cynic preference for this pulse. A lost work of the Cynic Meleager of Gadara introduced a comparison of bean and lentil soup (λεκίθου καὶ φακῆς σύγκρισιν), probably from a satiric or humorous point of view.⁵³ More interesting is a work attributed

⁴⁹ Diog. Laert. 7.3 [*SVF* I T 1]; cf. *Gnom. Vat.* no. 384. On the early influence of Cynicism on Zeno: M. Daraki, *Une religiosité sans Dieu. Essai sur les stoïciens d'Athènes et saint Augustin* (Paris 1989) 38–53; M.-O. Goulet-Cazé, *Les Kynica du stoïcisme* (Stuttgart 2003).

⁵⁰ G. Giannantoni, *Socraticorum Reliquiae* III (Rome 1985) 521–523. In any case, the topic has a deep Cynic background.

⁵¹ Colotes *In Pl. Lys.*: *P.Herc.* 208.c [*SSR* V N 2].

⁵² Timo *Suppl.Hell.* 787–788 [Ath. 158A–B]. The use of coriander as a flavoring for lentils was still common in late antiquity: Anthimus *De observ. ciborum* 67. There are some references to lentil soup as a dish greatly enjoyed by many people: Ar. fr.23, Antiphanes fr.171 [Ath. 158C]. Lentil soups were usually scented with cheap aromatics (Dioscor. 2.129), but they could also be prepared in more complex ways: P.Heid.inv. 1701.ζ.40 ff. (*SBHeid* 1919.23 p.11); Apic. 4.4.2, 5.2.1–3.

⁵³ Ath. 157B; its (somewhat 'soft') Cynic identity is addressed in M.-O.

to Parmeniscus by Athenaeus (156C–158A), or rather, by his character Cynulcus, a learned Cynic, *The Banquet of the Cynics* (Τῶν Κυνικῶν συμπόσιον). In this text, six Cynics are attending a banquet prepared by the master Cynic Carneius of Megara on the occasion of the Dionysia in Athens. As could be expected from these philosophers, their banquet has features that distance it from wider, mainstream banquets. Instead of talking about the quality of the different wines, they focus on the question of the best drinking water.⁵⁴ The dishes served are very different from the frivolous delicacies eaten at elite banquets: lentil soup, lentils soaked in vinegar, and more lentils cooked in various other ways, to the point that the guests themselves start making fun of the situation.⁵⁵ When a couple of courtesans enter, they are amazed at the vast quantities of lentils, and they mock the philosophers, arguing that the Cynics could export themselves from life if this is the way they eat.⁵⁶ Using the Stoics' philosophical language, one of the courtesans argues that eating heavy foods like lentils impedes the authoritative part of the soul (reason) and prevents *phronesis*. Carneius, the host, maintains that this regime is adequate for the Cynic mode of life, for even though they follow Heracles as an ethical model, they have a very different temperament concerning gluttony.⁵⁷

Goulet-Cazé, "A Comprehensive Catalogue of Known Cynic Philosophers," in Branham and Goulet-Cazé, *The Cynics* 389–413, 397; Desmonds, *The Cynics* 39–38. On Meleager and his other poetical works: K. J. Gutzwiller, *Poetic Garlands. Hellenistic Epigrams in Context* (Berkeley 1998) 276–322.

⁵⁴ The connoisseurship of wine is one of the elements of the elite cultural capital: Dalby, *Siren Feasts* 93–104. Contrast the connoisseurship of drinking water: Ath. 41E–43F; Plin. *HN* 31.3–34.

⁵⁵ Parodies of Euripides (*Med.* 332) and an unknown tragedian (*TrGF* II F 92) at Ath. 156F.

⁵⁶ Antisth. at Ath. 157B [*SSR* V A 133].

⁵⁷ On the traditional image of Heracles as an irremediable glutton: R. Nadeau, "Héraclès, ce gourmand," in K. Karila-Cohen and F. Quellier (eds.), *Le corps du gourmand. D'Héraclès à Alexandre le Bienheureux* (Tours 2012) 93–108.

Beyond lentils and beans, other legumes have a prominent role in the Cynic cuisine. Culinary discourses concerning lupines share many elements with the lentils, although they are prepared and consumed in a very different way. Instead of being boiled or stewed, lupines are soaked in salt water to soften their naturally bitter flavor and then are eaten without any other complex treatment.⁵⁸ They were, like lentils, cheap food, and even in Athens, where the prices of ordinary things were allegedly high, almost anyone could afford them.⁵⁹ The simplicity of this food, its association with the poorest social groups, and even its shameful nature may have been decisive factors in its association with the Cynic philosophers.⁶⁰ Diogenes was reputedly very fond of lupines, and sometimes ate them while walking along the street or only listening to someone else.⁶¹ Like lentils and other cheap and embarrassing foods, lupines had, in the literary depiction of the Cynic life, some role in rejecting the social expectations about appropriate behavior and public shame: it was said that Crates persuaded Metrocles to give up his feeling of extreme shame at the flatulent effect of lupines.⁶²

Lupines are usually seen in the Cynic literature as one of the few things that the wandering philosophers kept in their travel

⁵⁸ *Geopon.* 2.39. Tender lupines are not eaten by any animal (Theophr. *Hist.pl.* 8.7.3), and the *Geoponika* (4.15) states that lupine pods may be used even as a protection method against problems like mice.

⁵⁹ Teles 2 (12–13 H.).

⁶⁰ Diphilus fr.87 [Ath. 55D–E]. Menedemus of Eretria (Diog. Laert. 2.125), who led a frugal life (2.138), was also given to drinking very cheap wine and eating lupines: Lycophron *TrGF I F* 100 fr.2–4 [Ath. 420A–D], cf. Diog. Laert. 2.133. In one of the Socratic epistles, Aristippus ironically sends Antisthenes some large white lupines because he will not be ashamed to eat them, while in the court of Dionysius in Syracuse they are regarded as too shameful to be even named in the tyrant's presence (*Socr.ep.* 9.4 [p.617 Hercher]). Cf. Crates *Ep.* 7 [*SSR V H* 94].

⁶¹ Diog. Laert. 6.48 [*SSR V B* 393]. Lupine eating in the street: Alexis fr.268 [Ath. 55C].

⁶² Diog. Laert. 6.94–95 [*SSR V L* 1].

bags (*pera*), making them one of their traditional possessions. Thus, in one of the pseudo-Diogenic letters, Diogenes recommends to a certain Hippo to hoard lupines or dried figs for his new Cynic way of life.⁶³ The association between lupines and the travel pouch is a common topic in later literature. Crates, according to Teles, materialized the self-sufficient life in the vast power of a wallet containing two measures of lupines. In Lucian's *Dialogues of the Dead*, a dead Diogenes asks the resurrecting Pollux to tell the Cynic Menippus that he could bring some lupines in his wallet to share with him when he dies.⁶⁴ Lucian also tells another story that underlines the relationship between lupines and the bag: a fugitive slave disguised himself as a Cynic philosopher, but when he was finally captured, instead of some lupines, he kept a (stolen) golden belt in his wallet.⁶⁵

In addition to cereals and pulses, fruits and vegetables were also recurrent foods in the cultural narratives concerning the Cynic diet. Like legumes, vegetables have a complex position in the Greek culinary system. Conveniently cooked and combined with other ingredients, they are a nuclear element in the elitist high cuisine since the late classical period.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, eating raw or simply-cooked vegetables, or serving them as the main course of a meal, is considered a sign of poverty or coarse

⁶³ Diog. *Ep.* 26; cf. Luc. *Dial.mort.* 21(11).3.

⁶⁴ Teles 4a (44 H.); Luc. *Dial.mort.* 1.1; cf. Diog. Laert. 6.85 [*SSR* V H 70], where lupines are not specifically named among the contents of Crates' bag.

⁶⁵ *Fugit.* 27–33.

⁶⁶ Thus, Anaxandrides fr.51 [Ath. 68B] describes a preparation made of different vegetables (asparagus, onion, oregano, coriander, etc.) that enhances the flavor of the salted fish. Other references to vegetables as garnish for complex dishes: Antiphanes fr.179 [Ath. 303F]; Archedicus fr.2 [Ath. 292E]; Eubulus fr.34, 36, 64, 92 [Ath. 300B–301A]; Sotades fr.1 [Ath. 293A]. The use of vegetables as ingredients in more complex dishes is perhaps best exemplified in the recipe of the *matye*, a dish made with overlapping layers of meat and vegetables: Ath. 662 ff. (esp. 663D–E, where a fragmentary recipe is provided). Cf. Dalby, *Siren Feasts* 156–157; García Soler, *El arte de comer* 403.

taste.⁶⁷ It is not strange, then, that they materialized the Cynic's attitude towards social elites and the socio-cultural background of their *haute cuisine*. Nevertheless, they also embody the disdain with which these elites regarded Cynics' rebellious attitudes and behaviours beyond culinary matters. An anecdote regarding Diogenes and Aristippus is a perfect example of the differing evaluations of vegetable eating (rather, cleaning) as a sign of either socio-political independence or socio-political ignorance.⁶⁸ The simplicity of the vegetables is also underlined in Teles' contrast between Metrocles' way of life as a student at the Academy and as a Cynic.⁶⁹ The association between vegetables and Cynicism is also apparent in Roman culture, where Cato assisted the Cynic Marcus Favonius by awarding humble vegetables as prizes in the games.⁷⁰

Fruits, finally, are a significant element in the cultural discourse concerning Cynicism, although like the other foods here surveyed they do have a peripheral role in the culinary grammar of Greek high cuisine. Figs are regarded as rare delicacies for the Cynics, and they are particularly prominent in the sources. Dried figs are a source of carbohydrates, and are indeed one of the few sweet foods that the Cynics seem to enjoy on a regular basis. In the most 'doctrinal' texts, such as the letters of Cynic inspiration, figs are among the basic foods the Cynic apprentices should keep close, as a reminder of the simplicity of the life *kata physin*.⁷¹ Precisely, some anecdotes

⁶⁷ Thus, guests at the banquets of Menedemus frequently left when they knew that the main course was vegetables (Antigonus fr.26a Dorandi [Ath. 419F]). Alexis fr.167 [Ath. 55A]; Poliochus fr.2 [Ath. 66B–C] identifies local vegetables (λάχανα τῶν ἀπτοχθόνων) as a poor man's diet.

⁶⁸ Diog. Laert. 2.68; Arsen. *Violetum* p.113.10–13 Walz; Eudoc. *Violarium* 175 (p.122.17–22 Flach); Hor. *Epist.* 1.17.13–32, with Porphyry. and schol. ad loc.; Caesius Bassus *De chria* 6 (*Gramm.Lat.* VI 273); Val. Max. 4.3 ext. 4; *Gnom. Vat.* no. 192 [SSR IV A 44–48].

⁶⁹ Teles 4A (40–41 H.) [SSR V H 44].

⁷⁰ Plut. *Cat.Min.* 46.1–7.

⁷¹ *Socr.ep.* 9.2 [SSR IV A 222, 2]; Diog. *Ep.* 26, 29.5. Cf. Diog. Laert. 6.48

about Plato and Diogenes show figs as a central feature in the divergence between the elitist life of the former and the meagre one of the latter.⁷² The importance of figs is also seen in later Hellenistic and Roman depictions of the Cynic philosopher, connecting them in a clear way with the performance of socio-cultural identity.⁷³ The symbolism of figs surpasses their role as foodstuffs, and fig trees are commonly used in metaphors concerning squanderers whose way of life benefits the flatterers who deprive them of their possessions more than themselves.⁷⁴

These elements constitutive of the primary Cynic menu are, then, in keeping with the discourse and practice of food simplicity not so much because of their alleged harsh or rustic nature, but because the Cynics chose to give them a nuclear role in their culinary grammar rather than a peripheral one. Yet even as central foods, they re-attach the Cynic menu to the wider socio-cultural contexts of Greek eating, as they form the staple menu of the lower social groups. This culinary commonality is broken by the direct rejection of some of the social aspects of eating, both by discourses refusing widespread foods and by ways of transforming and processing food.

3. *Against normal eating: counter-cultural eating behaviours*

One of the most recurrent patterns regarding the constitution of counter-cultural identity is the rejection of widespread foods that are socially regarded as essential elements in the mainstream cultural narratives concerning individual and collective identities. Meat, being, as Nick Fiddes would express it, a “natural symbol,” is one of the central questions in the con-

[SSR V B 118]; Teles 2 (12–13 H.); Crates *Ep.* 7 [SSR V H 94].

⁷² Diog. Laert. 6.25–26; Stob. 3.36.21 [SSR V B 55]. Cf. Diog. Laert. 5.18–19 [SSR V B 68]: Diogenes seeks to make a sharp riposte when offering Aristotle a fig, who however accepts it and leaves Diogenes without fig and without riposte.

⁷³ Leonidas *Anth.Gr.* 6.300; Plut. *Cat.Min.* 46.1–7, *Pomp.* 67.4–6, *Caes.* 41.1–4.

⁷⁴ Galen *Protrep.* 6 [SSR V A 165]; Diog. Laert. 6.60 [SSR V B 321]; Stob. 3.15.10; Diog. Laert. 6.92 [SSR V H 54].

stitution of ancient and modern counter-cultural cuisines.⁷⁵ It is assumed that in ancient Greek culinary culture meat is a deeply symbolic matter, especially when the eaten meat derives from the traditional bloody sacrifice: from an ideal point of view, the access to sacrificial meat marks individual as well collective identities, embodying human and citizen statuses alike.⁷⁶

It is not strange, then, that meat had a particular place in Cynic reflexions regarding food, as it involves religious, behavioural, moral, and culinary matters. Despite some scholarly claims for the rejection of meat among the Cynics, this is not clearly seen in the classical sources.⁷⁷ The most direct texts with a Cynic inspiration on the rejection of meat are those on the alleged dialogue between Onesicritus, a disciple of Diogenes, king Alexander, and the Indian Brahman Dandamis or Mandanis, depicted as a sort of archetypical ‘Übercynic’.⁷⁸ Even

⁷⁵ N. Fiddes, *Meat: A Natural Symbol* (London 1991); cf. Belasco, *Appetite for Change* 54–61. In the ancient world: C. Osborne, “Ancient Vegetarianism,” in *Food in Antiquity* 214–224; Beer, *Taste or Taboo* 28–43.

⁷⁶ J.-P. Vernant, “Le mythe prométhéen chez Hésiode,” in *Mythe et société en Grèce ancienne* (Paris 1974) 177–194. The basic elements of Vernant’s interpretation would be later expanded in “A la table des hommes. Mythe de fondation du sacrifice chez Hésiode,” in *La cuisine du sacrifice en pays grec* (Paris 1979) 37–132. A general reappraisal of some of the most significant of Vernant’s perceptions on Greek sacrifice was offered in C. Grotanelli and N. F. Parise (eds.), *Sacrificio e società nel mondo antico* (Rome 1993), and later in S. Georgoudi et al. (eds.), *La cuisine et l’autel. Les sacrifices en question dans les sociétés de la Méditerranée ancienne* (Turnhout 2005). More precise critiques were expressed in H. S. Versnel, *Coping with the gods: Wayward Readings in Greek Theology* (Leiden 2011) 309–319, 352–370; F. S. Naiden, *Smoke Signals for the Gods: Ancient Greek Sacrifice from the Archaic through Roman Periods* (Oxford 2013).

⁷⁷ Daraki, *Une religiosité sans Dieu* 47: “la règle cynique est une règle végétarienne”; Desmond, *The Cynics* 84–86.

⁷⁸ P.Gen.inv. 271 and Pallad. *Gent.Ind.* 2.13–14 (ed. W. Berghoff); J. P. Oliver Segura, “Diálogo del rey Alejandro con el brahmán Dándamis: PGen. 271,” in F. Gascó and J. Alvar (eds.), *Heterodoxos, reformadores y marginados en la Antigüedad clásica* (Sevilla 1991) 107–136; A. Nodar, “The Encounter between Alexander and the Brahmans as in PGen inv. 271,” *Papiri filosofici: Miscellanea di Studi* 3 (2000) 141–170. For a contrast between Cynic

when meat is associated with luxury and the fat bodies that reveal an indolent life, there are not discourses opposing meat and vegetables from a moral or ethical point of view, as vegetarians would develop.⁷⁹ As Diogenes would express in his reported tragedy *Thyestes*, if all the elements were contained in all things and pervaded everything, it was indifferent to eat vegetables or meat, and one could eat the flesh of all animals, even human flesh.⁸⁰

Leaving aside the literary topos of the encounter with the Brahmins, the Cynic counter-cultural discourse judging meat eating does not rely on moral grounds. Instead the claim seems to have focused on it being *natural* rather than being ethically *good*, and the way cooking methods could alter the natural human diet in order to satisfy an unnatural desire for food is regarded as one of its main objections. In the cultural narratives concerning Greek culinary history the invention of fire marks a significant development in the relationship between humans and their food.⁸¹ It is thus especially important that narratives concerning Cynicism, and, in a very particular way, Diogenes, portrayed raw eating. Diogenes' death is a topic that frequently links the philosopher's end with the consumption of uncooked

and Brahmanic attitudes: C. Muckensturm, "Les gymnosophistes étaient-ils des Cyniques modèles?" in *Le cynisme ancien* 225–239.

⁷⁹ Diog. Laert. 6.72–73; Stob. 3.29.92 [SSR V B 353, 340]; Teles 2 (12–13 H.); Diog. *Ep.* 28; Maximus Conf. *Loci comm.* PG 91.876D [SSR V H 64]; Dio Chrys. 8.30, 9.13.

⁸⁰ Diog. Laert. 6.73 [SSR V B 132]. The question of anthropophagy, which I will not address here, was further explored in Diogenes' *Republic*: Ath. 159c; Philod. *Sto. (P.Herc. 339)* coll. 9–10. Cf. S. Husson, *La République de Diogène. Une cité en quête de la nature* (Paris 2011) 136–145.

⁸¹ Thus Hippocr. *VM* 3, *Vict.* 2.56, cf. *Epid.* 7.82, where eating undercooked pig (κρηφαγγίης ... χοιρείων ἐνωμοτέρων) may lead to a choleric condition; Athenio fr.1, with Wilkins, *The Boastful Chef: The Discourse of Food in Ancient Greek Comedy* (Oxford 2000) 410–412; Moschio *TrGF* I 97 F 6; Asclepiades *FGrHist* 752 F 1. Concerning Greek cooking terminology: Arist. *Mete.* 379b–381b; C. Baffioni, *Il IV libro del "Meteorologica" di Aristotele* (Cercola 1981) 82–94.

food.⁸² These stories seem to have originated from some reflexions of Diogenes on the issue of fire and cooking as practices beyond the life *kata physin*.⁸³ Perhaps we will never be absolutely sure about the reality behind these anecdotes. However, what is interesting, from the point of view of cultural history, is that the idea of raw meat eating was deeply ingrained in the popular narratives and perceptions of the Cynic counter-cultural cuisine. This leads to the construction of what Sergi Grau defines as a *biographeme*, a categorization of real or imaginary pasts that allows stereotyping, concentrating, and rearranging complex biographical processes in accordance with a narrative background that conveys the social memory of public figures.⁸⁴ The poetic structuring of an otherwise complex and not always coherent historical past tends to force ambiguous processes and facts in order to give them a universal and collective sense in keeping with the wider systems of cultural representation. Thus, Diogenes' death represents the ultimate binding of counter-cultural cuisine and popular representations and reformulations of the Cynic life and identity. It does not matter, from this point of view, whether Diogenes actually died of bad digestion after eating raw food: as the prime mover of a counter-cultural approach towards food, there could hardly be a more appropriate way of dying than to follow his particular culinary grammar to the end.

Other aspects of the Cynic counter-cultural attitudes towards food relate to the general circumstances of consumption. Eating is a physical process that takes place in both time and

⁸² Ath. 341E; Censorinus *DN* 15.2; Plut. *Mor.* 995C–D, 956B; Diog. Laert. 6. 76; Julian *Or.* 9.1 (181a–b); Luc. *Vit.auct.* 10 and schol. *Vit.auct.* 7; Stob. 4.34.8; Tat. *Ad Gr.* 2.1 [*SSR* v B 90, 93–94].

⁸³ Dio Chrys. 6.26–31; Julian *Or.* 9.11–12 (191c–193c). Nevertheless, as we have seen, some of the most representative foods of the Cynics, such as *maza* or lentil soup, required a cooking process.

⁸⁴ S. Grau i Guijarro, *La imatge del filòsof i de l'activitat filosòfica a la Grècia antiga. Anàlisi dels tòpics biogràfics presents a Les Vides i doctrines dels filòsofs més il·lustres de Diogènes Laerci* (Barcelona 2009) 191.

space, but these two contexts are much more than mere dimensional backgrounds in traditional cultures. Meal times and the social places for eating are charged with cultural meanings and discourses, and individuals challenging them risk being the target of a significant amount of symbolic (sometimes even physical) violence.⁸⁵ Cynic eating patterns are notorious precisely for the disdain with which they regard the socio-cultural expectations of food consumption. Diogenes was frequently seen eating in the Athenian Agora or at least in the streets of the city, an activity that was regarded as being at least as shocking as his public masturbation.⁸⁶ In the same sense, he had a particular scorn for the social meal times, and he argued that free men should eat whenever they are hungry, not when social norms see it as proper.⁸⁷ These two practices are of a piece with the rejection of elitist and mainstream banqueting occasions. Although the relationship between Cynics and *symposia* is far from being clear and consistent, it is significant that Diogenes appears in different anecdotes as an annoying guest, breaking the behavioural code that in the late fourth century B.C. defines elite good manners.⁸⁸ As with raw food, counter-cultural eating behaviours form an important part of Diogenes' biographical narratives. I would argue that these attitudes helped to develop an image of the philosopher that was later projected onto those who were perceived as belonging to the same intellectual cast. In later literature, the figure of the banqueting Cynic became a stereotype, whose general features

⁸⁵ M. Visser, *The Rituals of Dinner. The Origins, Evolution, Eccentricities and Meaning of Table Manners* (New York 1991) 90 ff.; R. Nadeau, *Les manières de table dans le monde gréco-romain* (Tours 2010) 216–218, 261–266.

⁸⁶ Theon *Progymn.* 97.11–101.2; *Gnom. Vat.* nos. 175, 445; Diog. Laert. 6.45, 48, 61, 69; Apostol. 13.23 [*SSR* v B 60, 144, 147, 388]. Metrocles also had this habit of eating (and even cooking) in the streets: Teles 4A (40–41 H.). Anecdotes of Diogenes' masturbation: Ath. 158F; Diog. Laert. 6.46, 69; Plut. *Mor.* 1044B; Galen *De loc. aff.* 6.15 [*SSR* v B 197].

⁸⁷ Diog. Laert. 6.40, 45, 104; Plut. *Mor.* 604D [*SSR* v B 30, 183, 369].

⁸⁸ Diog. Laert. 6.26, 33, 46, 63 [*SSR* v B 55, 192, 401, 412, 496]; Arsen. *Violetum* p.210.1–4 Walz. Cf. Plut. *Mor.* 77E–F; Ael. *VH* 13.26.

remain to be studied, but which is marked by disdain for social table manners.⁸⁹

It is clear, then, that food and eating had a central role in the structuring of both inner and external discourses regarding Cynic identity. Reversing the culinary centre-periphery framework allowed them to develop a distinct menu that, in the absence of other intellectual tools, marked them as a well-defined cultural group. At the same time, their counter-cultural attitudes shaped the way they were perceived by the rest of the community. *Biographemes* concerning Diogenes and his attitudes towards food marked the vision later authors would have of the Cynic movement and individual Cynic philosophers.

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⁸⁹ Some examples are Parmeniscus' aforementioned Cynic Cynulcus (C. Jacob, *The Web of Athenaeus* [Cambridge 2013] 37–40) or Lucian's Alcidamas (*Symp.* 12–14).