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XENOPHANES B6 DK: ETHICS, RECIPROCITY AND THE MYSTERY OF THE TRAVELLING MEAT*

ABSTRACT

Uncertainty about the pragmatic context, the fundamental content and hence the philosophical significance of Xenophanes B6 DK prevents this comparatively extensive fragment from playing much of a role in scholarly discussions. This essay reviews interpretations of that difficult text and then offers a new reading which arguably better accords with the preserved Greek, Xenophanes' other fragments and ritual custom. It is also suggested how B6 fits in with Xenophanes' philosophical and specifically ethical concerns as evidenced in other fragments.

Keywords: Xenophanes; religion; sacrifice; reciprocity; ethics; satire

Xenophanes is the oldest among those thinkers traditionally labelled as Presocratics from whom a substantial, if fragmentary, textual corpus still survives. Among that corpus, only six of the forty-one fragments in Diels and Kranz[1] are more extensive than the four integrally preserved verses of B6 DK (= D69 Laks–Most). Yet uncertainty about the pragmatic context and the fundamental content of this fragment, and hence its philosophical significance, has prevented it from playing much of a role in scholarly discussions. B6 goes unmentioned, for example, in the handbooks of Guthrie and Kirk, Raven and Schofield;[2] the monograph of Schäfer only mentions our fragment alongside B9 and the inauthentic B42, both no more than one verse long, in a somewhat paradoxical index collecting the only three fragments of Xenophanes not cited in the text;[3] rather more strangely, the edition of Gemelli Marciano omits B6.[4]

I first review previous interpretations of this difficult fragment and then offer a new reading that arguably better accords with the preserved text, Xenophanes' other fragments and Greek ritual custom. I also briefly suggest how B6 fits in with Xenophanes' philosophical and specifically ethical concerns as evidenced in other fragments.

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[1] H. Diels and W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Berlin, 1952[6]). The numeration of Presocratic fragments follows this edition. Translations are my own.

[2] W.K.C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1962); G.S. Kirk, J.E. Raven and M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge, 1983[2]).

[3] C. Schäfer, *Xenophanes von Kolophon* (Stuttgart, 1996), 265: 'Anhang: im Text nicht zitierte Fragmente'.

[4] L. Gemelli Marciano, *Die Vorsokratiker*, Band 1 (Berlin, 2007).

I.

Athenaeus quotes Xenophanes in order to illustrate a specific form of a rare word (*Deipn.* 9.368d–f):

ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ κωλέα συνῃρημένον ἐστὶν ὡς συκέα συκῆ, λεοντέα λεοντῆ, κωλέα κωλῆ … καὶ Ξενοφάνης δ' ὁ Κολοφώνιος ἐν τοῖς ἐλεγείοις φησί

> πέμψας γὰρ κωλῆν ἐρίφου σκέλος ἤραο πῖον
> ταύρου λαρινοῦ, τίμιον ἀνδρὶ λαχεῖν,
> τοῦ κλέος Ἑλλάδα πᾶσαν ἐφίξεται, οὐδ' ἀπολήξει,
> ἔστ' ἂν ἀοιδάων ᾖ γένος Ἑλλαδικῶν.

From κωλέα there is a contracted form like συκέα, συκῆ, or λεοντέα, λεοντῆ: κωλέα, κωλῆ … And Xenophanes of Colophon says in his elegies: 'for having sent the thigh of a kid you won the fatty leg of a well-fed bull, a thing of honour to receive for a man whose fame will reach all of Hellas and will not give out as long as the race of Greek songs exists' (B6).[5]

Athenaeus' philological citation offers no clue whatsoever about the context of the Xenophanes fragment, and 'the absence of context makes the point unclear'.[6] Indeed, Heitsch simply writes that these verses 'establish [γάρ] a statement which is not preserved alongside it and which cannot be reconstructed', labelling some hypotheses 'mere guesswork'.[7] Other scholars before and since have more adventurously offered 'diverse, speculative and not entirely satisfactory interpretations'[8] in an attempt to explain the fragment on the basis of the Greek itself.

Some identify Xenophanes' addressee as a fellow poet and the fragment as an attack on him.[9] Xenophanes elsewhere attacked other poets (A22, B1.21–2, B10, B11, B12), but here there is nothing specific and concrete to suggest that the addressee is a poet. His fame will last as long as the race of Greek songs (or possibly singers),[10] but it does not follow that he himself belongs to the race of Greek singers.[11] The point of the final couplet is that this man will be celebrated in song as long as song itself exists. Such limitative temporal clauses expressing an unlimited (or unimaginably long) extent of

[5] I follow the majority in taking the antecedent of τοῦ to be the closer ἀνδρί rather than the more distant σκέλος; cf. the passages cited below in note 54. 'In general one would expect men to be more famous than prizes' (J.H. Lesher, *Xenophanes of Colophon* [Toronto, 1992], 67). Without complete confidence I read (with DK and against West) the genitive Ἑλλαδικῶν ($C^{S}E^{S}$; -κέων Fick) rather than the accusative Ἑλλαδικόν (ACE).

[6] A. Laks and G.W. Most, *Early Greek Philosophy*, vol. III. *Early Ionian Thinkers, Part 2* (Cambridge, MA, 2016), 73.

[7] E. Heitsch, *Xenophanes. Die Fragmente* (Munich, 1983), 117: 'die Verse begründen eine Aussage, die nicht mit überliefert und auch nicht rekonstruierbar ist … bloße Vermutung'; similarly L. Reibaud, *Xénophane de Colophon* (Paris, 2012), 18.

[8] Lesher (n. 5), 67.

[9] K. Reinhardt, *Parmenides und die Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie* (Bonn, 1916), 135: 'einem gereizten Ausfall gegen einen Zunftgenossen'; Diels and Kranz (n. 1), 1.130: 'Ausfall auf einen Sänger wie Simonides'. A. Ford, *The Origins of Criticism* (Princeton, 2002), 38 n. 50 suggests that our fragment 'may well be an example of a challenge poem' to another poet.

[10] ἀοιδάων could be the normal genitive plural of ἀοιδή or, as seems less probable, an anomalous genitive plural of the masculine ἀοιδός: see E. Schwyzer, *Griechische Grammatik* (rev. A. Debrunner; Munich, 1934–1971), 1.559; R. Pfeiffer, *Callimachus. Volumen I: Fragmenta* (Oxford, 1949), 485–6 on Callim. fr. 786.

[11] e.g. F. De Martino and O. Vox, *Lirica Greca* (Bari, 1996), 884, who describe the second distich as an 'indizio che l'interlocutore potrebbe essere anch'egli un poeta'; G. Cerri, 'Senofane: un'elegia incompresa', *AION* 34 (2012), 7–17, at 7: 'il suddetto donatore sia un tale degno di essere considerato poeta di gloria immortale'; 'nel secondo distico si dice di lui che è un grande poeta' (9).

time are conventional in predictions of poetic fame of the sort which Xenophanes at once mocks and embodies (see further below).[12] In any event, Greek poets were usually more overtly concerned with perpetuating others' fame rather than their own.

A more specific and hence inherently less probable variation of this thesis, which is exposed to the same objections, identifies the addressee as Simonides.[13] Xenophanes attacked Simonides elsewhere (B21, quoted below), but if our fragment were directed against the canonical lyric poet then one might have expected Athenaeus or some other source to have told us so. Throughout antiquity Simonides' biography attracted extensive and enduring interest.[14]

Others identify the addressee as a patron of poetry rather than as a poet. So, most recently, Mackenzie writes that 'the fragment seems to be addressed to a patron. In sending only the thighbone of a kid, the patron has received good value for money in attaining the leg of a fatted bull, most likely a metaphor for Xenophanes' song'.[15] One objection to such an approach is that it lacks a good parallel in the fragments of Xenophanes. If he elsewhere speaks of literal wine and literal food (B1, B2.8, B5, B22, B38), why should one suppose that our fragment concerns metaphorical meat? This reconstruction also makes for an odd mismatch between the literal and figurative: the thigh of a real kid is exchanged for the metaphorical leg of a bull. Other Archaic poets write of sending poems to a distant patron or location for performance,[16] but this usage of the verb πέμπω is restricted to Pindar and Bacchylides (note Dionysius Chalchus fr. 1 W^2). On this reading, moreover, a patron first sends a slight reward in advance of services rendered (πέμψας, aorist), then receives a poem as greater recompense in return (ἤραο, aorist), and is subsequently castigated for doing so by Xenophanes. But if the initial reward was insufficient, why then should the poet have none the less offered greater recompense in return—and then composed another poem attacking an illiberal patron? On this reconstruction the patron does look cheap, but Xenophanes looks like a remarkably unsavvy, and perhaps unethical, entrepreneur. In any event, other fragments and testimonia provide little firm evidence for patronage, and it is not clear that Xenophanes generally composed on commission.[17]

[12] e.g. Thgn. 252 ὄφρ' ἂν γῆ τε καὶ ἠέλιος ('as long as there is earth and sun'); Cleoboulus' 'Midas epigram' (as quoted at Pl. *Phdr.* 264d): ὄφρ' ἂν ὕδωρ τε νάῃ καὶ δένδρεα μακρὰ τεθήλῃ ('as long as water flows and tall trees flourish'); Critias B1.6 ἔστ' ἂν ὕδωρ οἴνῳ συμμειγνύμενον κυλίκεσσιν ('as long as water is mixed with wine in cups'); Posidippus 17.8 GP = 122.8 AB ἔστ' ἂν ἴῃ Νείλου ναῦς ἐφ' ἁλὸς πελάγη ('as long as a ship goes from the Nile to the sea'); Hor. *Carm.* 3.30.8–9 with R.G.M. Nisbet and N. Rudd, *A Commentary on Horace: Odes Book III* (Oxford, 2004), 372.

[13] Cf. C.B. Gulick, *Athenaeus: The Deipnosophists. Books VIII–X* (Cambridge, MA, 1930), 171: 'perhaps referring to the alleged greed of Simonides'; cf. B. Gentili and C. Prato, *Poetarum elegiacorum testimonia et fragmenta*, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1988), 171. Cerri (n. 11) offers the fullest statement of this view and adduces *Anth. Pal.* 6.213 = 'Simon.' ep. 27 *FGE* = ep. 52a–b Sider, stressing the similarity between Xenophanes' σκέλος ἤραο and ἤραο ταύρους. But this epigram is inauthentic and presumably postdates Xenophanes: D.L. Page, *Further Greek Epigrams* (Cambridge, 1981), 241–3; cf. D. Sider, *Simonides: Epigrams and Elegies* (Oxford, 2020), 187–8.

[14] See J.M. Bell, 'Κίμβιξ καὶ σοφός: Simonides in the anecdotal tradition', *QUCC* 28 (1978), 29–86 and now R. Rawles, *Simonides the Poet: Intertextuality and Reception* (Cambridge, 2018).

[15] T. Mackenzie, *Poetry and Poetics in the Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge, 2021), 61–2; cf. J.M. Edmonds, *Elegy and Iambus*, vol. 1 (London, 1931), 197: 'metaphorical; the gift was prob[ably] a poem or book of poems by the author'; Cerri (n. 11), 14–15. Edmonds and Mackenzie unattractively take σκέλος to be the antecedent of τοῦ (contrast note 5 above), but their interpretations need not depend on this point. Note also R.P. Martin, 'Read on arrival', in R. Hunter and I. Rutherford (edd.), *Wandering Poets in Ancient Greek Culture* (Cambridge, 2009), 80–104, at 97 n. 52: 'a threat to spread rumours about a cheap patron?'

[16] See P. Agócs, 'Message-stick of the Muses: lyric epistolarity and textuality in Pindar and Bacchylides', *GRBS* 62 (2022), 385–416.

[17] See H.L. Spelman, 'Xenophanes' Poetic Travels', *AJP* 144 (2024), 503–28.

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Lesher (n. 5), 67–8 proposes an alternative reading: 'you (the athlete) sent (that is, for sacrifice) a thigh of a goat; you won (as a prize) the fat leg of a bull, quite an honour for someone whose fame will spread throughout Greece …'[18] There is no signal in the Greek that the addressee is an athlete.[19] One might have expected a live goat, rather than the thigh of a dead goat, to be 'sent for sacrifice'. In any event, the Greeks did not speak of sending animals (or cuts of meat) for sacrifice; no parallel has been adduced for such a practice or locution.[20] Citing Pl. *Leg.* 950e, Lesher (n. 5), 68 suggests that Xenophanes was 'referring to the kind of sacrifice made at the games for the sake of a victory', but the Platonic passage concerns the well-attested practice of sending delegates, rather than meat, to the games (πέμπειν κοινωνοῦντας θυσιῶν τε καὶ ἀγώνων).[21]

Bergk and Wilamowitz, apparently independently, point the way toward a more satisfying interpretation. Citing visual evidence, Bergk laconically writes that the Greeks 'were accustomed to give the κωλῆν of a kid or a fawn for the sake of honour or love'.[22] Wilamowitz comes to similar conclusions.[23] In connection with our fragment, he cites Alcaeus fr. 71 Voigt: φίλος μὲν ἦσθα κἀπ' ἔριφον κάλην | καὶ χοῖρον· οὕτω τοῦτο νομίσδεται, 'you were a friend to invite to kid and pork; thus this matter has been established by custom'. The papyrus scholia suggest that this poem was addressed to Alcaeus' *erômenos* and identify 'invite to kid and pork' as a proverb (τὸν τοῦ Ἀλκαίου ἐρώμ(εν)ον … παροιμία δ' (ἐστὶν) ἐπ' ἔριφ[ο]ν καὶ χο[ῖρον καλεῖν).[24] Wilamowitz's other *comparandum* is Rhianus 9 GP = 75 Powell:

> ἥμισυ μὲν πίσσης κωνίτιδος, ἥμισυ δ' οἴνου,
> Ἀρχῖν', ἀτρεκέως ἥδε λάγυνος ἔχει,
> λεπτοτέρης δ' οὐκ οἶδ' ἐρίφου κρέα· πλὴν ὅ γε πέμψας
> αἰνεῖσθαι πάντων ἄξιος Ἱπποκράτης.

This flask holds precisely, o Archinus, half pitch extracted from pine-cones and half wine, and I haven't seen the meat of a skinnier kid. But the one who sent it, Hippocrates, is worthy to be praised for everything.

Writing in his elliptical later style, Wilamowitz does little to explain the relevance of these passages to our fragment (cf. note 38 below), and it is worth being explicit about what this evidence does, and does not, establish. Rhianus' epigram does not show that the ἔριφος was an intrinsically unwelcome meal.[25] On the contrary, the meat of a kid was

[18] Cf. D.E. Gerber, *Greek Elegiac Poetry* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), 421: 'perhaps the poet is satirising an athlete whose sacrifice prior to the games was much inferior to the reward he received for his victory, and yet his fame will be celebrated in song throughout the land'.

[19] Cerri (n. 11), 12: 'assolutamente nulla nel testo suggerisce che il "tu" cui è rivolto il discorso sia un atleta!'

[20] The same objection faces Cerri (n. 11), 14, who suggests a sacrifice before a poetic competition.

[21] See I. Rutherford, *State Pilgrims and Sacred Observers in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, 2013).

[22] T. Bergk, *Poetae Lyrici Graeci. Vol. II poetas elegiacos et iambographos continens* (Leipzig, 1882[4]), 114: 'haedi vel hinnuli κωλῆν solebant honoris vel amoris causa donare, cf. vasculorum picturas ap. Jahn. Catal. Monac. n. 262. 275 al.' The reference is to O. Jahn, *Beschreibung der Vasensammlung König Ludwigs in der Pinakothek zu München* (Munich, 1854), 76 and 80, citing Munich 2449 and 2674 (= Beazley archive #205693 and #205009). This interpretation of the visual evidence is not self-evident: see F.T. Van Straten, *Hiera kala. Images of Animal Sacrifice in Archaic and Classical Greece* (Leiden, 1995), 153, who adduces further comparable images.

[23] U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, 'Lesefrüchte', *Hermes* 61 (1926), 277–303, at 279–80; cf. T. Hudson-Williams, *Early Greek Elegy* (Oxford, 1926), 104; M. Untersteiner, *Senofane* (Florence, 1956), 122.

[24] Is this unparalleled proverb a phantom, merely an autoschediastic inference from νομίσδεται?

[25] Contrast Hudson-Williams (n. 23), 104: 'κωλῆ ἐρίφου was not much of a delicacy'.

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generally desirable;[26] what makes this particular kid unattractive is the leanness of its meat (λεπτοτέρης … ἐρίφου; cf. Ar. *Av.* 901–2, Men. *Sam.* 399–404). Alcaeus fr. 71 Voigt does not show any specific or special connection between romantic love and the meat of a kid;[27] the ἔριφος features as a generic, unmarked sacrifice from Homer onward (*Od.* 19.397–8, for example).

The social practice that underpins the Rhianus epigram is far commoner, and sheds far more light on our fragment of Xenophanes than Wilamowitz's passing citation would suggest. There was a custom of 'sending portions of a sacrificial animal to friends or others one wishes to honour or influence';[28] 'in this connection πέμπειν is regular'.[29] The social nuances of this practice are important for more fully understanding Xenophanes B6, as we shall see.

Sending sacrificial meat was a way to bring into the community of commensality someone who was not physically present at the sacrifice itself. Probably the earliest example comes from the cyclic *Thebaid* (fr. 3 West), where Oedipus' sons have sent to him from their sacrifice a haunch rather than a shoulder:[30] ὤμοι ἐγώ, παῖδες μέγ' [Schneidewin; μέν MSS] ὀνείδειον τόδ' [Buttmann; ὀνειδείοντες MSS] ἔπεμψαν ('woe is me! My sons have sent this to me as a great insult').[31] Compare the words of an anonymous slave acting as go-between to Dicaeopolis in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* (1049–50): ἔπεμψέ τίς σοι νυμφίος ταυτὶ κρέα | ἐκ τῶν γάμων ('a certain groom has sent you this meat from his marriage'). In Ephippus fr. 15 K.–A. the first speaker, who is accused of meanness (μικρολόγος, 10), is trying to prepare a meal on the cheap (εὐτελῶς, 1; μὴ πολυτελῶς, 3): A. πάντως κρέ' ἡμῖν ἔστι. B. πότερ' ἔπεμψέ τις; ('A: Anyway we have meat. B: Did someone send it?', 11). Menander *Samia* 403–4 parodies the practice: πέμψω δὲ γεύσασθαι κατακόψας τοῖς φίλοις | τὸ κῴδιον· λοιπὸν γάρ ἐστι τοῦτό μοι ('after I've chopped it up, I'll send to my friends for a taste … the fleece. For that's what's left to me'). Theophrastus' μεμψίμοιρος ('Ungrateful Grumbler', Diggle), when his friend sends him a portion of meat, says to the person who brings it: 'he begrudged me soup and wine by not inviting me to dinner' (οἷος ἀποστείλαντος μερίδα τοῦ φίλου εἰπεῖν πρὸς τὸν φέροντα· "ἐφθόνησέ μοι τοῦ ζωμοῦ καὶ τοῦ οἰναρίου οὐκ ἐπὶ δεῖπνον καλέσας", *Char.* 17.2). The rustic folk of Theocritus 5 provide another example (139–40): καὶ τὺ δὲ θύσας | ταῖς Νύμφαις Μόρσωνι καλὸν κρέας αὐτίκα πέμψον ('and do you sacrifice to the nymphs and send Morson fine meat right away').

The realistic, even homely, register of many of these examples bespeaks a familiar social ritual enduring across centuries.[32] Xenophon's Cyrus employs the same custom on

[26] M.L. West, *Hesiod: Works and Days* (Oxford, 1978), 295–6 on Hes. *Op.* 592: 'adult goats would have given bigger skins but less toothsome meat'.

[27] Contrast J. Defradas, *Les élégiaques grecs* (Paris, 1962), 82: 'les cuisses de chevreau étaient des cadeaux que l'on pouvait faire à un amoreux … et c'est dans cette atmosphère qu'il faudrait replacer plutôt cette plaisanterie … on voit mal cependant avec cette dernière explication le sens que l'on pourrait donner aux deux derniers vers'.

[28] S.D. Olson, *Aristophanes: Acharnians* (Oxford, 2002), 328.

[29] J. Diggle, *Theophrastus*: *Characters* (Cambridge, 2004), 345; similarly on the inscriptional evidence A. Jacquemin, 'La participation *in absentia* au sacrifice', in V. Mehl and P. Brulé (edd.), *Le sacrifice antique* (Rennes, 2008), 225–34, at 228.

[30] Σ Soph. *OC* 1375, the quoting source: τὸν ὦμον … ἰσχίον.

[31] Compare the closely related anon. fr. 458 *TrGF*, where one of Oedipus' sons speaks and quotes his father: ἐπέμπομεν … κρέας … ἐπέμψαμεν βόειον … "μισητὸν κρέας | πέμπων" ('we would send … meat … we sent … of a cow … "sending me this hated meat"').

[32] F. Puttkamer, *Quo modo Graeci victimarum carnes distribuerint* (Diss., Königsberg, 1912), 41; P. Stengel, *Die griechischen Kultusaltertümer* (Munich, 1920), 106; Van Straten (n. 22), 153; R. Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens* (Oxford, 2005), 43. This essay compiles the fullest collection of

a rather grander scale of prestige (*Cyr*. 8.2.4): 'if he wanted someone to be courted by many friends, to these, too, he would send from his table (ἔπεμπεν ἀπὸ τραπέζης). For even now, whoever they see receiving things sent from the king's table, these people they court all the more, thinking them to be honoured (νομίζοντες αὐτοὺς ἐντίμους εἶναι)'. Antigonus deployed the custom to overtly political ends (Plut. *Arat*. 15.1–2): 'wanting either to lead [Aratus] over completely by friendship (μετάγειν ὅλως τῇ φιλίᾳ) or to put him at variance with Ptolemy, he displayed other acts of benevolence toward him (ἄλλας τε φιλανθρωπίας) when he did not come completely over to his side and in particular, when sacrificing to the gods in Corinth, he sent portions to Aratus in Sicyon (μερίδας εἰς Σικυῶνα τῷ Ἀράτῳ διέπεμπε)'. With a similar degree of calculation Agesilaus would send a cloak and a prize cow (χλαῖναν ἔπεμπε καὶ βοῦν ἀριστεῖον) to those entering the Spartan *gerousia*, thereby seeming to honour them (τιμᾶν δοκῶν) while it escaped their notice that he was increasing his own power and that of the kingship through their resultant good will (ἐκ τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸν εὐνοίας συγχωρούμενον, Plut. *Ages*. 4.4). A rich dossier of Hellenistic and Imperial epigraphic evidence attests to what Carbon felicitously terms 'travelling meat' employed as a tool of statecraft to honour distant benefactors.[33]

In literary texts, and especially comedic ones, this custom repeatedly features as a locus of anxieties about real vs feigned (or opportunistic) friendship and symbolic vs instrumental (or monetary) value. Olson (n. 28), 328 speaks of 'friends' and 'others one wishes to honour or influence', and several passages turn on the fraught distinction between these two categories.[34] Parker (n. 32), 43 observes that the practice of sending meat could be 'a mark of lesser intimacy' in comparison to an invitation to attend a sacrifice in person, and thus in the *Acharnians* passage mentioned above Dicaeopolis was not invited to the wedding of an anonymous groom previously unknown to him. Dicaeopolis is first pleased with the gift and then dismayed with a demand for recompense (*Ach*. 1049–55):

Οἰ. ἔπεμψέ τίς σοι νυμφίος ταυτὶ κρέα
ἐκ τῶν γάμων.
Δι. καλῶς γε ποιῶν, ὅστις ἦν.
Οἰ. ἐκέλευε δ' ἐγχέαι σε τῶν κρεῶν χάριν,
ἵνα μὴ στρατεύοιτ', ἀλλὰ βινοίη μένων,
εἰς τὸν ἀλάβαστον κύαθον εἰρήνης ἕνα.
Δι. ἀπόφερ', ἀπόφερε τὰ κρέα καὶ μή μοι δίδου,
ὡς οὐκ ἂν ἐγχέαιμι χιλίων δραχμῶν.

Slave: A certain groom has sent you this meat from his wedding. Dicaeopolis: That's a nice gesture, whoever he is. Slave: And he bids you in return for this meat to pour just one small measure of peace into this container, so that he might not go on campaign but stay at home and screw. Dicaeopolis: Take away the meat and don't try to give it to me! I wouldn't pour for a thousand drachmae.

The exchange slides tellingly from the language of gifts and gratitude to that of cash sale (χιλίων δραχμῶν, genitive of price). The pragmatic trouble involved in sending meat,

literary examples known to me; see further Xen. *Hell*. 4.3.14, Plut. *De garr*. 506C, *Lyc*. 12.3. An anonymous referee notes Plut. *Dion* 27.7–10.

[33] J.-M. Carbon, 'A network of hearths: honors, sacrificial shares, and "traveling meat"', in F. van den Eijnde, J.H. Blok, and R. Strootman (edd.), *Feasting and Polis Institutions* (Leiden, 2018), 340–75; see further Jacquemin (n. 29).

[34] Cf. Ar. *Thesm*. 558: wives share with procuresses meat from an Athenian festival of family solidarity in which legitimate sons were enrolled in phratries (ὥς τ' αὖ τὰ κρέ' ἐξ Ἀπατουρίων ταῖς μαστροποῖς διδοῦσαι).

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sometimes over large distances, shows that notionally 'it was the perceived symbolic value of the meat that made it all worthwhile' (Carbon [n. 33], 367); Aristophanes' groom self-interestedly instrumentalizes the custom in an attempt to receive something of greater practical value in return. Somewhat similarly Theophrastus' cynical μεμψίμοιρος sees only cheapness in his friend's kind gesture (*Char.* 17.2, quoted above). Themistocles' detractors charged him with stooping even lower: 'some accuse him of great cheapness and pettiness, on the grounds that he sold even the foodstuffs sent to him' (οἱ δὲ τοὐναντίον γλισχρότητα πολλὴν καὶ μικρολογίαν κατηγοροῦσιν, ὡς καὶ τὰ πεμπόμενα τῶν ἐδωδίμων πωλοῦντος, Plut. *Them*. 5.1–2; cf. Ath. *Deipn.* 14.656c, quoted below).

II.

When placed against the wider social and cultural backdrop set out above, the pragmatic context, the comic thrust, and hence the philosophical significance of Xenophanes B6 acquire new lucidity. There is no good reason to suppose that the addressee is an athlete, a poet or a patron; we can confidently say only that he is someone who has, like Aristophanes' bridegroom, instrumentalized the custom of 'travelling meat'. Reaping use value from a practice ideally concerned with symbolic value and friendship, he has in effect purchased a larger piece of meat at the price of a smaller one. The bull, exalted in our passage with two tasty adjectives (πῖον … λαρινοῦ),[35] was the largest animal in the Greek sacrificial repertoire and outranked a kid in desirability.[36] By instrumentalizing a symbolic gesture to realize greater use value, the addressee has displayed the same sort of 'great greediness and pettiness' with which Themistocles was charged (Plut. *Them*. 5.1). Elsewhere 'Xenophanes calls [Simonides] a skinflint' (Ξενοφάνης κίμβικα αὐτὸν προσαγορεύει, B21), and our fragment likewise mocks someone's meanness.[37]

Wilamowitz thus accurately paraphrases Xenophanes as saying 'you got the side of bacon after which you threw the sausage'.[38] 'Throwing the sausage after the ham (or bacon)' is a German idiom for making a shrewd investment.[39] Wilamowitz thus rightly implies that Xenophanes' addressee has cannily first sent a gift (πέμψας, aorist) in the conscious, and correct, expectation of later receiving something more valuable in return—again, rather like Aristophanes' bridegroom. Such calculated pseudo-*philia* and self-interested pseudo-reciprocity is castigated elsewhere. Consider Eur. fr. 969 *TrGF*: οὐ βούλομαι πλουτοῦντι δωρεῖσθαι πένης, | μή μ' ἄφρονα κρίνῃς ἢ διδοὺς αἰτεῖν δοκῶ

[35] λαρινός was something of a *zêtêma* in the lexicographical tradition; it evidently means 'well-fed' and hence 'fatted': cf., besides the lexicographers, Sophron fr. 99 K.–A. and Ar. *Pax* 925 with S.D. Olson, *Aristophanes: Peace* (Oxford, 1998), 245.

[36] See, for example, N. Dunbar, *Aristophanes: Birds* (Oxford, 1995), 506 on Ar. *Av.* 856: the joke is that the sacrifice will entail not 'nobler oxen or bulls' but rather 'a mere sheep'.

[37] Chamaeleon (fr. 33 Wehrli = Ath. *Deipn.* 14.656c–d) reports that Simonides sold much of the food sent to him by the tyrant Hieron (τοῦ Ἱέρωνος ἀποστέλλοντος αὐτῷ τὰ καθ' ἡμέραν λαμπρῶς πωλῶν τὰ πλείω ὁ Σιμωνίδης τῶν παρ' ἐκείνου πεμπομένων ἑαυτῷ μικρὸν μέρος ἀπετίθετο; cf. Plut. *Them*. 5.1–2, quoted above). See above for the possibility that B6 addresses Simonides.

[38] Wilamowitz (n. 23), 280: 'du kannst zufrieden sein, du hast die Speckseite bekommen, nach der du mit der Wurst geworfen hattest'. Wilamowitz (n. 23), 279–80, however, describes the leg of a bull as 'eine Ehre für einen unsterblichen Dichter': contrast pages 2–3 above. Translating the fragment, Wilamowitz (n. 23), 279 supplies 'mir' as the indirect object of πέμψας. Nothing requires this interpretation, and the indirect object would normally be directly expressed; contrast page 3 above. The man who gave the leg of a bull appears generous (cf. Hes. *Op.* 350) but also gullible (cf. *Il.* 6.234–6). For a similarly unequal exchange of sent food cf. Ar. *Plut.* 995–1003.

[39] *Das digitale Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* s.v. 'mit der Wurst nach dem Schinken werfen': 'Kleineres geben, einsetzen, investieren, um Größeres zu erbitten, erlangen, gewinnen'.

('as a poor man, I don't want to give to a wealthy man, lest you judge me senseless or I seem to beg by giving first'). A similar distich is preserved in the *Comparison of Menander and Philistion* (1.292–3 = 2.51–2, page 100 and 104 Jaekel): μισῶ πένητα πλουσίῳ δωρούμενον· | ἔλεγχός ἐστι τῆς ἀχορτάστου τύχης ('I hate the poor man who gives to a rich man; it is a proof of his lot of starving'). An unidentified papyrus fragment (*P.Giss.* 132 = 310 *CGFP*) presumes the same situation and perhaps begins to quote a comparable reproach: ἐὰν πένης τις πλουσίῳ δῶρον φέρῃ, | ἐρεῖ τις ουσωνη̣ ('if some poor man bears a gift to the rich, someone will say …').

Xenophanes' addressee is self-evidently not starving—after all, he could have eaten the kid himself—but the disparity between the two meats very probably reflects a difference in status, as the passages just quoted would suggest.[40] 'The ideal was perhaps one of reciprocity', writes Parker (n. 32), 43, 'but an element of social ranking inevitably crept into relations based upon sacrifices'.[41] For the wealthier man the greater gift expresses his greater standing; for the poorer recipient it simply means more to eat. The addressee of B6 is not quite stealing or being deceptive, but his conduct verges on both and is certainly shameful.[42]

Yet if the meat of a kid would make for a good meal, as indeed it would (note 26 above), why then has the addressee given it away? The most salient difference between the two meats, I suggest, is not quality but rather sheer physical size: a leg is bigger than a thigh,[43] a mature bull is larger than a baby goat, and λαρινοῦ suggests a bull of remarkably large size (note 35 above). It seems, in other words, that the addressee has stooped to undignified behaviour simply to get *more* to eat. Xenophanes thus mocks not just his meanness but his gluttony. Our fragment fits in well with attacks against other forms of immoderation, gastronomic and otherwise, elsewhere in his work.[44]

Xenophanes A14 (= Arist. *Rh.* 1377a19–21) perhaps provides the best parallel for the skewed reciprocity of our fragment:

καὶ τὸ τοῦ Ξενοφάνους ἁρμόττει, ὅτι οὐκ ἴση πρόκλησις αὕτη ἀσεβεῖ πρὸς εὐσεβῆ, ἀλλ' ὁμοία καὶ εἰ ἰσχυρὸς ἀσθενῆ πατάξαι ἢ πληγῆναι προκαλέσαιτο.

And it is a fitting saying of Xenophanes that the same challenge [to an oath] is not equal for an ungodly man in comparison with a godly man, but rather like a strong man challenging a weak man either to hit or be hit.

[40] Cf. e.g. Hes. *Op.* 336 κὰδ δύναμιν δ' ἔρδειν ἱέρ' ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσιν ('make sacrifices to the immortal gods in accordance with your means'); Xen. *Mem.* 1.3.3–4; Hor. *Carm.* 4.2.53–6. The fact that the addressee has sent the meat, rather than inviting the recipient to the sacrifice, suggests a lack of substantial *philia* between them (cf. Parker [n. 32], 43, quoted above). This likewise suggests social inequality (cf. Xen. *Cyr.* 8.2.4, quoted above).

[41] Contrast B1.11: in Xenophanes' description of an ideal symposium the sacrificial altar is significantly placed 'in the middle' (βωμός … ἂν τὸ μέσον).

[42] Cf. B11.2–3 ὅσσα παρ' ἀνθρώποισιν ὀνείδεα καὶ ψόγος ἐστίν, | κλέπτειν μοιχεύειν τε καὶ ἀλλήλους ἀπατεύειν ('all that is shameful and a reproach among mankind, to steal and philander and to deceive each other').

[43] The precise anatomical sense of σκέλος and κωλῆ is debated, but both were desirable portions: G. Ekroth, 'Meat, man and god. On the division of the animal victim at Greek sacrifices', in A.P. Matthaiou and I. Polinskaya (edd.), *Μικρός Ιερομνήμων. Μελέτες εις μνήμην Michael H. Jameson* (Athens, 2008), 259–90, at 265–7.

[44] B1.17–18 οὐχ ὕβρις πίνειν ὁπόσον κεν ἔχων ἀφίκοιο | οἴκαδ' ἄνευ προπόλου μὴ πάνυ γηραλέος ('it is not hubris to drink as much as you might have in you and go home without a servant, unless one is very old'). B5 presumably recommends moderate drinking: Lesher (n. 5), 66. B3 implies that immoderate luxury led the Colophonians into hateful tyranny. In B6 the somewhat tautologous πῖον and λαρινοῦ emphasize sensual pleasure.

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The *proklêsis* was a traditional (quasi-)legal procedure,[45] and scholars generally suppose that Aristotle is closely following Xenophanes' original thought.[46] As often in the Aristotelian corpus, the argument is skeletal and needs fleshing out, but the paradox that makes Xenophanes' *bon mot* memorable is evidently that somehow one and the same challenge to an oath (αὕτη) is not in fact equal (ἴση) for two parties. The saying thus specifically concerns, as Mirhady argues,[47] a reciprocal exchange of oaths: Party A demands that both Party A and B swear something. Since the pious man fears divine retribution whereas the impious man does not, the superficial reciprocity of an exchange of oaths between them conceals an unethical asymmetry; it is in fact as unequal as if a strong man challenged a weak man to exchange blows, either taking or receiving the first punch.[48] On this interpretation of A14, an impious man cynically instrumentalizes the reciprocal ritual exchange of oaths in order to win practical advantage; in B6, on the interpretation offered above, the addressee has similarly perverted the ideally reciprocal exchange of meat from ritual sacrifice in order to get more to eat.[49]

The larger pragmatic and cultural context posited above illuminates even the fine-grained poetic texture of our fragment. The parallel nouns κωλῆν and σκέλος, which are close in anatomical sense, suggest equality, but the disparate genitives attached to these accusatives (ἐρίφου … ταύρου λαρινοῦ) belie an unequal exchange. ἤραο incongruously applies a verb of agonistic victory over an opponent[50] to what ought to be a reciprocal exchange between friends. The addressee has won a tasty piece of meat, but he ultimately loses his good name through Xenophanes' poem mocking him—an exchange even more unequal than the thigh of a kid for the leg of a bull.[51] τίμιον is thus highly ironic: the man who gave the leg of the bull may have intended it as an honour,[52] but the addressee's sharp conduct, now exposed, ultimately brings on him immeasurably greater dishonour. His fame, or his infamy, does indeed endure and travel widely through this very poem, in which he is derided.[53] Xenophanes' diction and syntax strongly recall traditional epic, the genre paradigmatic for transmitting immortal fame throughout the Greek world.[54] Using high diction to mock low

[45] See D. Mirhady, 'The oath-challenge in Athens', *CQ* 41 (1991), 78–83; M. Gagarin, 'Litigants' oaths in Athenian law', in A.H. Sommerstein and J. Fletcher (edd.), *Horkos: The Oath in Greek Society* (Exeter, 2007), 39–47.

[46] Cf. the various attempts at versification collected at Diels and Kranz (n. 1), 1.115 and Untersteiner (n. 23), 24.

[47] D. Mirhady, 'Non-Technical *pisteis* in Aristotle and Anaximenes', *AJPh* 112 (1991), 5–28, at 25–6.

[48] So Mirhady (n. 45), 78. I leave aside questions about how this passage fits in with Xenophanes' theology: see J. Warren, 'Gods and men in Xenophanes', in V. Harte and M. Lane (edd.), *Politieia in Greek and Roman Philosophy* (Cambridge, 2013), 294–312, at 305–7.

[49] B2 attacks another form of skewed reciprocity: the victorious athlete receives rewards, including food (8), incommensurate with his civic contributions (15–22).

[50] Cf. e.g. Xenophanes B2.1 νίκην … ἄροιτο ('might win a victory'); B2.7 προεδρίην … ἄροιτο ('might win *proedria*').

[51] Cf. A16 (= Plut. *De vit. pud*. 530E): Lasus of Hermione calls Xenophanes a coward because he refuses to dice, presumably out of a fear of losing money; Xenophanes agrees that he lacks daring in regard to shameful conduct (ὡμολόγει καὶ πάνυ δειλὸς εἶναι πρὸς τὰ αἰσχρὰ καὶ ἄτολμος)—in which he risks losing his good name.

[52] ἐντίμους (Xen. *Cyr*. 8.2.4), τιμᾶν (Plut. *Ages*. 4.4), both quoted above; cf. e.g. Xen. *Hier*. 8.3–4, Ar. *Rh*. 1401b16–17; Diggle (n. 29), 345.

[53] Spelman (n. 17) interprets B6 as a comparable statement about the circulation of Xenophanes' poetry.

[54] For the verb cf. κῦδος ἄροιο (*Il*. 4.95), κλέος ἐσθλὸν ἄροιτο (*Il*. 5.3, *Od*. 13.422), κῦδος ἄροιτο (*Il*. 10.307, 22.207). The syntax with the genitive relative clause followed by κλέος and an indication of

behaviour, our fragment turns on a bathetic contrast between ephemeral, material food and enduring, immaterial glory.[55]

III.

Many of the best parallels for Xenophanes B6 come from comedic genres, and the fragment emerges from this analysis as a biting piece of social satire whose barbed point depends on the fine-grained realities of ritual practice and the violation of social norms and niceties usually unspoken and implicit. The Xenophanes embodied in this fragment, quoted by the bookish Athenaeus in order to make a morphological point, looks very different from the theologian and cosmologist who is more familiar to us from many citations in the subsequent doxographic and philosophical tradition.[56] And yet this fragment, as we have seen, makes a nuanced and substantial ethical point which fits in well with other fragments and testimonia. One wonders how much our picture of Xenophanes has been selectively shaped by our sources—and how much our impression of his intellectual agenda would be altered if more fragments, like this one, came down to us through sources outside of the doxographic and philosophical tradition. But it remains abundantly clear that the cosmologist, the theologian and the satirist were one and the same thinker.

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space has strong traditional resonances: τοῦ κλέος εὐρὺ καθ' Ἑλλάδα καὶ μέσον Ἄργος (*Od*. 1.344 and elsewhere); τῆς νῦν κλέος οὐρανὸν ἵκει (*Il*. 8.192); see also *Il*. 3.325, 7.451, *Od*. 9.264, 19.333–4.

[55] Cf. *Il*. 22.510–14 and Ar. *Av*. 905–46 for sublime and bathetic versions of similar oppositions.

[56] Athenaeus elsewhere comments on Xenophanes' metrical technique (A27 = Ath. *Deipn*. 14.632c–d), cites him as an authority on sympotic etiquette (B1 = Ath. *Deipn*. 11.462c, B5 = Ath. *Deipn*. 11.782a, B22 = Ath. *Epit*. 2.54e) and quotes his verse on athletics (B2 = Ath. *Deipn*. 10.413f) and Colophonian history (B3 = Ath. *Deipn*. 12.526a).

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