A diffused antiquarian, to be consulted for the remains of Middle and New Comedy, and savoured as a dispenser of curious lore. That is how men usually regard Athenaeus of Naucratis— if they regard him at all. Editors of his brobdingnagian compilation, from Casaubon to Kaibel, have conspired to reinforce this view. And almost all of what little has been written about the *Deipnosophistae* outside the commentaries dwells exclusively on the minutiae of text and culinary detail.¹

The focus has been needlessly narrow, to the detriment of proper knowledge and appreciation. It says something about the situation that the very title of Athenaeus' work could persist in mistranslation through every edition of Liddell-Scott-Jones, until the *Supplement* brought overdue correction.²

However, there are richer rewards than mere censure of constriction and mumpsimus. A good deal can be disclosed or clarified, or at least plausibly tendered. And without recourse to hypersubtle reconstruction or inference. All that is required is a willingness to read the text of Athenaeus thoroughly, the assistance of other sources (old and new³) of knowledge, and the abandonment of antique conjectures that have attained the rank of fact in the standard accounts.

Take the author himself, for first and easy instance. Athenaeus, in terms of completing his book, tends to be located vaguely towards the end of the Severan period. That rests solely on the assumption that the Ulpian of his dialogue is the celebrated jurist, slain in 228. This procedure is facilitated by

---

¹ This is no lax claim, drummed up to exalt the originality of the present paper. Engelmann-Preuss, *Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum* (Leipzig, 1880), registered only 52 papers on Athenaeus for the period 1700–1878, mostly in German or Latin. For 1896–1914, Lambrino found only 30, four of which are in English. Marouzeau has 19 for the decade 1914–1924, including three in English. The average annual harvest from *L'Année Philologique* (in any tongue) is three or less. The notice by Wentzel in Pauly-Wissowa was brief (2, cols. 2026–2033). To be exempted from these strictures is W. Dittenberger, *Athenaeus und sein Werk*, *Apophoreton* (1903), 1; he saw the problems and anticipated some of my conclusions. But we have learned much in the 70 years since Dittenberger published his paper.

² The title was translated as 'Learned in the mysteries of the kitchen'; the *Supplement* renders 'Learned Diners'. The distinction is hardly trivial.

³ Epigraphic, of course, for the most part. The reader will constantly be referred to the fundamental G. W. Bowersock, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1969), henceforth cited by the author's name. A useful and up-dated résumé is provided by Bowersock and others in *Approaches to the Second Sophistic* (American Philological Association, Pennsylvania, 1974).
ignorance, at least in the case of the Loeb editor, of the exiguous but suggestive notice of Athenaeus in the *Suda*. We shall see that it is possible to be somewhat more scientific than that.

The same holds for the characters of his banquet. Kaibel maintained that most of them were fictions, derived or compounded from great names of the past. It is a view that has exerted two kinds of influence, both unfortunate. The Budé editor reproduces Kaibel’s notions with servility. Gulick of the Loeb rightly contested a number of these fantasies, but succumbed to a complexity of his own devising: Athenaeus’ practice was ‘to take a well-known historical personage and attribute to him different traits from those he was known to possess’. That credo has a perverse charm, but will get us nowhere slowly.

Athenaeus was not always in firm control of his teeming pages, but he did not stand in permanent awe of his antiquities or his mentors. An element of mockery is frequently paraded. Ridicule of extreme Atticists and pedantry is a major theme. These contentions will be documented in due season. To the conclusion that Athenaeus was no stuffy polyhistor. Rather, he employed the motif of learned table talk to satirical ends, in the manner of Lucian’s *Con vivium*. The presence (albeit a muted one) at his banquet of Galen, another noted deflater of linguistic and intellectual pretension, may enhance the interpretation.

Athenaeus was not one of those Hellenic or Hellenised creatures who affected not to have noticed the phenomenon of Rome. He stands rather in the tradition of Plutarch (as with Galen, the appearance of a Plutarch in his dialogue may be construed as a hint) and, in his own time, Dio Cassius. The banquet is set in Rome, at the season of a Roman festival, with a Roman host. Great figures from Rome’s past, notably Scipio Aemilianus, are adduced on occasion. So are a few emperors, from Augustus to Commodus. Many references to Roman *mores* are inserted, by no means all of them uncomplimentary.

Above all, there is frequent discussion of Latin words and meanings, with no obvious attitude of contempt. In fact, one sharp exchange is tailored to produce a defence of Latin expertise. The world had moved far, and in the right direction, from Apollonius of Tyana’s condemnation of Roman nomenclature amongst Greeks and the golden-mouthed Dio’s apologies for having to mention such ‘modern’ names as that of the emperor Nero. As in the case of Dio Cassius, whose knowledge of Latin appears to have extended beyond his

8. 3.121f.
Roman source materials to the poetry of Virgil, Athenaeus clearly concedes the reality and health of bilingualism and biculturalism.

Which attitude is redolent of the Antonine and Severan eras. If the phrase has not been debased beyond meaning, Athenaeus was the product of his age. But his interest for modern students of his times does not stop here. He and his deipnosophists serve to expand the Philostratean version of the intellectual history of the period. Various small details, notably those pertaining to fashions in luxury then current in Rome, are of interest to students of Dio Cassius and the accursed Historia Augusta. So are some larger items, such as the host Larensios, now commonly taken to be P. Livius Larensis, who (if the equation be correct) features in the Vita Commodi (and, perhaps, anonymously in Dio) at a dramatic juncture.

Indeed, Athenaeus can come up with some arresting matters in his Roman sequences. For example, there is the claim that Caligula was known as Neos Dionysos, in which role he assumed the god’s regalia and handed down judgements of law. That is an aspect of this Julio-Claudian emperor to be found in neither ancient or modern standard accounts. Or consider another unsatisfactory princeps, one akin to Caligula; namely Commodus. It is common form in the usual sources to ridicule that ruler’s obsession with the image of Hercules. Yet Athenaeus mentions it with approval, in a past tense that precludes any belief in a forced compliment to a living tyrant.

There will be no agreement on how to exploit such items. Caligula as the New Dionysus could have come out of a source. Or was he inspired by Caracalla, who is so styled on an inscription? Athenaeus’ view of Commodus may have been an unusually tolerant one; constrained perhaps, the cynic will want to subjoin, by the memory of advancement under that ruler of the banqueters Larensis and Galen – and of the narrator himself? On another view, the tolerant glance at Commodus in the role of Hercules, something defended by reference to Alexander the Great, might again be tied in with Caracalla. For that emperor, notorious for his love of the Alexander image, came to foster comparisons of himself with Hercules, after initial deprecation.

---

10. On this, see F. Millar, A Study of Cassius Dio (Oxford, 1964), 143; henceforth referred to by author’s name.
14. Not in Suetonius or Dio; missed (as far as I can see) by J. P. V. D. Balsdon, The Emperor Galus (Oxford, 1934).
15. 12.537f.
16. CIG 6829 (= IGR 4.468); Millar, 216, assigns it to the period 198–209 (not adducing the Athenaeus passage).
17. HA, Caracalla 5.5 (rejection), 5.9 (acceptance) – a quick change of tempo, even for the HA.
Athenaeus of Naucratis may have been the supreme polymath of his age, a man of unorthodox opinions, or a time-server in the reigns of Severus and/or Caracalla. Whatever the truth (I do not claim to have it), the Deipnosophistae is a document of greater utility to the student of Antonine and Severan Rome than is usually realised. Hence (in part) the genesis of this present paper.

So much by way of exordium. Now to the various enquiries. First, the author himself. There are various possible avenues to a chronology for him. Least secure is the roster of guests at the table of Larensis. Especially if we are to suppose verisimilitude of setting. Most of the participants are otherwise unknown. Set aside narrator and host, and we have two illustrious names: Galen and Ulpian. The latter is said by Athenaeus to have expired a few days after the termination of the banquet. If he was the great jurist, that event belongs to the year 228. But Galen died in 199. Thus only in the Elysian fields could this pair have dined together in 228.

It is possible that the deipnosophists are aggregated from different ages. On that reckoning, any investigation of dates and personnel is doomed. Adherence to the belief that such is not the case requires another expedient: rejection of the equation between Ulpian the jurist and the Ulpian of the banquet. That issue is deferred for the moment. One problem at a time. It is already clear that 228 is in no way a safe terminus for any chronology.

According to the brief notice in the Suda, derived no doubt from the Pinax of Hesychius of Miletus, Athenaeus of Naucratis was a grammarian in the reigns of Marcus and Commodus and Pertinax: even the greatest doctors only enjoy one birth.

Either way, recourse to the notice of Athenaeus would have saved the Budé editor from an egregious error. He proclaimed that ‘Medecin philosophe, Galien de Pergame était mort quand notre Athéene ne pouvait être qu’un enfant’. In cold fact, even if born and we go to the limits by assuming that Athenaeus came into the world in the final year of Marcus’

18. In view of the controversial deification of Commodus by Severus. This topic will be reverted to later.
19. 15.686c; see later for the new date of 223 for the jurist’s death.
20. The notion is floated, but not liked, by Gulick, xiv. To adduce (as he does) Lucian’s Dial. Mort. is not valid: Hades has no chronological restrictions on meetings.
24. Introd., xvi; Kaibel, Præf., vi, did not make this blunder.
reign, that would still make the deipnosophist nineteen years old at Galen’s
death. An implausibly strapping _enfant_ even by Gallic standards!

Given the unreliability of so much of what passes for biography in the _Suda_,
it is reasonable—nay, obligatory—to ask what warrant the writer had for
connecting Athenaeus with Marcus Aurelius. Might the connection be no
more than crude inference from the text of the _Deipnosophistae_?

It seems unlikely. For there is but one allusion to Marcus. It occurs in one
of the earliest extracts from the first book, with reference to the sacerdotal
appointment of Larensis. That Marcus is described as _τοῦ πάντα ἄριστου
βασιλέως_ proves nothing; Hadrian is accorded the identical accolade, more
than once. The most obvious target for inferential connection is in fact
Commodus. For, in the aforementioned reference to that emperor’s obsession
with Hercules, it is stated without equivocation that the _princeps_ was καθ’ ἡμέρα.

A moment of relative precision is here possible. From the language of
Athenaeus, it is patent that Commodus was dead at the time of writing (or
publication). His account is that of an eye-witness: Commodus rode in a
chariot with a club beside him and a lion-skin spread as a rug. Both numismatic
and literary evidences indicate that the emperor’s manic emulations of
Hercules broke out in the last stages of his reign, perhaps as late as 191. We
may accordingly risk the speculation that Athenaeus was in Rome at that time.

At one stage of the banquet, Larensis looks to a moment in his career
when he was appointed as procurator to one of the provinces of Moesia (which
one is not specified) by _τοῦ κυρίου ᾠδοκράτορος_. Gulick assumes that the
emperor in question is Commodus. Not so Kaibel. And historians such as
Dessau, Pflaum, and Birley have been rightly non-committal.

For if Commodus is in question, and the passage is composed and published
(as it must surely be) after 192, would anyone allude to the late ‘monster’ in
such respectful terms? This is a problem we have already faced. Larensis had
prospered under the Antonines. It may be that he did not join in the _damnatio
memoriae_ indulged in by the senate after Commodus’ death. Athenaeus could
be conveying such an impression by his phraseology. Or perhaps the deipnos-
osophist from Naucratis had his own reasons for regretting the last of the

25. 1.1c (a reference omitted from Kaibel’s _Index Nominum_).
26. 8.36f.; 13.57f.
27. 12.57f.
28. See A. R. Birley, _Septimius Severus_ (London, 1971), 133 (this book will henceforth
be cited by author’s name), and Millar, 133, for the evidence.
29. 9.398c.
30. Who admits only the Hercules reference to his _Index Nominum_.
procuratorientes équestres_ (Paris, 1960–1), no. 194 (henceforth cited as _Carrières_), and
restating the matter in his _BHAC_ 1970 paper, 233; Birley, 145.
Antonines. Literary men had been known to do well at Rome in that reign: they did not all go the way of the brothers Quintilii. Or again, the attitude could have been conditioned by the sudden apotheosis of Commodus in Severan Rome.

There is another palpable link between Athenaeus and the era of Marcus Aurelius. An extract from his first book makes mention of a discussion of the philosopher-dancer Memphis. This ought to be the actor Agrippus, imported from Syria by Verus, according to the Historia Augusta. The biographer awards him the cognomen of Memphius, before styling him Apolaustus. Manumitted, the thespian took the polyonymous label of L. Aelius Aurelius Apolaustus Memphius, under which impressive style he lived until liquidated by Commodus in 189. For present purposes, the point is that Agrippus Memphius is described as a contemporary (ἐν ἡμέραις) in the pages of Athenaeus. In general terms, the concordance between deipnosophist and biographer should be of interest to those who wrestle with the problems of the Historia Augusta.

Let it be noted, en passant, that Marcus Aurelius is not referred to as divine. Neither is Commodus, nor the other two emperors mentioned by name in the dialogue: Hadrian and Augustus. Athenaeus prefers to employ other honorifics, as cited in the foregoing pages.

Other allusions in the Deipnosophistae carry us back through the Antonine period to that of Hadrian. The bon vivant Magnus, in one of his rare intrusions into the learned talk, recalls how he as a young man came to know a certain Aristomenes of Athens. This fellow was versatile indeed. Apart from composing at least three volumes on the subject of ceremonial ware, he was an actor of Old Comedy, and a favoured freedman of Hadrian who dubbed him Atticoperdix as a compliment.

Aristomenes of Athens is otherwise unattested. Naturally, we have no dates for him, or for Magnus, if indeed the latter existed. At face value, however, the situation militates against a late Severan date for the Deipnosophistae, unless Aristomenes lived to be very old.

---

32. It is sufficient to cite the cases of Adrian of Tyre (Philostratus, VS, p. 588) and Pollux (VS, p. 593). Observe that Adrian and Ulpian share a birthplace.
33. On this, see HA, Commodus 17.11 (with Magie’s note in the Loeb); cf. Birley, 198. Inscriptions disclose that the procedure began as early as 195. Which would accord with the contention of Dittenberger (art. cit.) that the Deipnosophistae belongs to the period 193–197.
34. 1.20c.
35. Verus 8.10. The fullest account is in M. Kokolakis, Pantomimus and the Treatise Πεπέτυμπος Ορφήος (Athens, 1959), 7; neither Kokolakis nor Magie seem to be aware of the Athenaeus passage, unlike PIR³ A 148.
36. HA, Comm. 7.2. His death is assigned to 189 by Magie, to 190 by A. R. Birley, Marcus Aurelius (London, 1966), 206.
37. 14.652a (acknowledging Nicolaus of Damascus as the source).
38. 3.115b.
39. PIR³ A 1055; the absence of this item from the HA is worth remarking.
Another and more striking link with Hadrian is forged by, of all people, Ulpian. He claims to have known the poet Pancrates, who showed the emperor a rosy lotus flower at Alexandria. It was after Hadrian had killed a great Libyan lion, an event dutifully celebrated in verse by Pancrates. The poet was rewarded with pensioner status in the Museum.

We know a little about Pancrates the poet. The Cynic philosopher who bore that name, associated both with Athens (where he saved the philosopher-administrator Lollianus of Ephesus from a bread riot) and Corinth, will also be thought of here. Again, there is no chronology, and we cannot be sure of how highly Athenaeus valued dramatic realism. But in practical terms, it is not easy to equip Ulpian the jurist with personal memories of a poet from the age of Hadrian.

At this juncture, it is appropriate to assess the references to Hadrian in Athenaeus. There are four passages in which the emperor is named. All redound to his credit. Two (discussed above) commend him for his patronage of the actor-author-freedman Aristomenes and the poet Pancrates; a third praises his revamping of the Parilia as a festival in honour of Rome; the fourth enthuses over his erection of a statue to Alcibiades at Melissa.

It may seem natural that a literary man should rhapsodise over a princeps who nurtured men of letters. Could Athenaeus be dropping a hint in some imperial direction? If so, one might be tempted to think of Caracalla, a ruler not famous for patronage of the arts. Yet it is striking how keen the deipnosophist of Naucratis is to present Hadrian in the best light possible. He is, as noted earlier, awarded the same honorific description as Marcus Aurelius, and his devotion to the arts is more than once praised as superlative. There is no trace of the fractious emperor adumbrated by Dio and developed by the Historia Augusta.

This is of interest. Unmitigated praise of Hadrian was a rare phenomenon in the age of Athenaeus. Dio Cassius did not shrink from detailing the darker side, and greatly undervalued the utility, political as well as cultural, of the emperor's philhellenism. There would appear to have been sections of pronounced hostility in the biography by Marius Maximus. Casual allusions in such as Pronto underline the situation, balanced as they are by indications

---

40. 15.677e.
41. Deip. 11.478a; Plutarch, De Mus. 1137E; P. Ox. 73.
42. Philostratus, VS, p. 526.
43. 3.115b (omitted from Käibel's Index); 8.361f; 13.574f; 15.677e.
44. Μυστικός.
45. On this, see Millar, 71–2.
of approval in, for instance, Aulus Gellius.\textsuperscript{47} The end-product of all this is the version put forward by the \textit{Historia Augusta}.

Whence the enthusiasm of Athenaeus? Various possibilities offer. A mind of his own is not to be ruled out. Nor is the imbibing of Hadrian’s own version of things, issued in the imperial autobiography. It might not have been hard in Severan Rome, especially that of Septimius and Caracalla, for a Greek man of letters to work up some nostalgia for an imperial philhellene. Especially if, as is now believed, the once vaunted ‘circle’ of Julia Domna (into which our author has been inserted), had little formal existence and no political influence.\textsuperscript{48}

None of the deipnosophists could have had any personal debt of gratitude to Hadrian. However, there is one luminary from that earlier age who could have conditioned the attitude of Athenaeus. No sophist stood higher in Hadrian’s favour than Polemo of Laodicea.\textsuperscript{49} According to Galen,\textsuperscript{50} Polemo coined a notable phrase to describe Rome: she was the ‘epitome of the world’. An extract from his first book\textsuperscript{51} discloses that Athenaeus reproduced this \textit{mot}.

This proves nothing. A phrase could have been borrowed for mockery as much as emulation. Yet it might suggest that Athenaeus was an admirer, perhaps even a pupil, of Polemo. If so, he might have been acquainted with the ill-fated Hermocrates of Phocaea, the great-grandson of Polemo, who was prospering under Severus before his early death.\textsuperscript{52} The captious Philostratus, no doubt purveying the jealousy of rival \textit{salons}, asserts that Hermocrates was the only follower or descendant of Polemo to merit discussion.\textsuperscript{53}

Two other items can be adduced here. The character to whom Athenaeus narrates his account of the banquet is a certain Timocrates. That happens to be the name of Polemo’s philosophy teacher, defended and admired by his luminous pupil.\textsuperscript{54} It could be that Timocrates of Athenaeus is a descendant. Or a fiction, designed to recall that real-life original. Either way, Polemo’s mentor suits the learned table, for his first ambition had been medicine: four of the deipnosophists (including Galen) were physicians.

Second, and much more tenuous. A foolish youth of sophistic pretensions who incurred the wrath of Polemo was called Varus.\textsuperscript{55} Amongst the assembled

\textsuperscript{47} Fronto (\textit{Ad Verum} 2.1 = Loeb, 2, 138) scorned his archaising style; Gellius, \textit{NA} 3.16.2; 11.15.3; 13.22.1; 16.4.4. Hadrian is the only emperor named by Gellius (of his own century, that is).

\textsuperscript{48} For expert demolition work on earlier fantasies, see Bowersock, 101–17. Athenaeus was reckoned a member by M. Platnauer, \textit{The Life and Reign of the Emperor L. Septimius Severus} (Oxford, 1918), 144–5.

\textsuperscript{49} Philostratus, \textit{VS}, p. 530; Bowersock, \textit{passim}, esp. 48, 120–1.

\textsuperscript{50} 5,585 Kuhn.

\textsuperscript{51} 1.19b.

\textsuperscript{52} Philostratus, \textit{VS}, p. 608.

\textsuperscript{53} \textit{VS}, p. 544.

\textsuperscript{54} \textit{VS}, p. 536; cf. Bowersock, 67, 91.

\textsuperscript{55} \textit{VS}, p. 540.
banqueters, one of the least significant is a grammarian of that name, whose one tiny contribution to the talk is rudely ignored. Coincidence or more? No certitude can be attained. It is possible that Athenaeus was more of an Antonine than a Severan personage, in terms of birth and connections. But there are alternatives to this belief, as outlined above. Whatever the truth, the image of Hadrian in the Deipnosophistae is striking. It remains to be added that one of the occasions on which the banquet is said to have occurred is the Parilia, an old festival whose restructuring by Hadrian is, as we have seen, approvingly described by Athenaeus.

At the other end of the chronological scale is Ulpian. If he is the jurist, then the Deipnosophistae (in the form we have it) cannot have been completed before 228, since its final book contains a reference to Ulpian’s death.

Or so the scenario used to go. However, a papyrus from Oxyrhynchus published in 1966, pertinent to the Egyptian tenure of M. Aurelius Epagathus (the man responsible for the jurist’s death), appears to have shifted the date of Ulpian’s expiration back to 223. This renders no assistance to the disentangling of Ulpians, but it would, if correct, bring Athenaeus five years closer to the second century.

The equation of the jurist with the deipnosophist was apparently first proposed by Johannes Schweighauser in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Kaibel accepted it for his Teubner edition, and it is perpetuated in the Bude text. Wentzel exploits it in his Pauly-Wissowa notice of Athenaeus. Gulick, the Loeb editor, changed his mind over the course of his labours. His Introduction leans strongly towards the identification; by the time of his note on the passage concerning Ulpian’s death, he has abandoned it for the possibility of the jurist’s father.

Ulpian senior is essentially the creation of Dittenberger; as a candidate, he has attracted some modern support, including that of Syme. Other

56. 3.118d-e; see later on Varus.
57. 8.361f. Observe that at 3.99e, the banquet is in the dog-days, whereas it is January by 9.372b; see Gulick, xi.
60. Introd., viii; it is registered in his index of proper names as a fact. The change of mind appears in vol. 7, 175.
62. EB, 125 n. 5; cf. B. Baldwin, Studies in Lucian (Toronto, 1973), 53.
scholars, writing both before and after the payrus publication, have remained sagely non-committal.

Ulpian the deipnosophist is ushered into the banquet as Ulpian of Tyre (1.1d). His geographical provenance is stressed more than once. Phoenicia is said to be his native land (15.697c); he is once called a Syrian (8.346c), and twice dubbed 'Syrraticist' (3.126f; 9.368c).

There is only one hint of a public career for him. On two occasions, Ulpian is addressed by the vocative λογιστά (9.401b; 14.649a). Gulick wondered if this might not indicate that Ulpian was one of the curatores urbiōnum,64 styled in Greek as λογισταῖ. If so, and if Ulpian is the jurist, we have an item from his career not considered in the usual accounts. The office was an important one, apparently dating from the reign of Trajan. Corresponding to the curator reipublicae or civitatis, this magistrate supervised the financial administration of a city or a group of communities, sometimes an entire province. The position is attested for the mainland and islands of Greece, Egypt, and many parts of the East, including Syria and Tyre.65 It would not be unworthy of the cursus of Domitius Ulpian.

However, caution is enjoined. The noun may simply be used in its prime sense of 'reasoner' or 'calculator'. Gulick hedged his bets by translating it as 'reasoner' in the first passage, 'bursar' in the second. Its first occurrence is in a phrase which imports poetic jingle: φροντιστᾶ καὶ λογιστᾶ. That may be nothing more than an echo of Aristophanes.66

Yet if the word be taken as the official title, we have not come away empty-handed, whoever this Ulpian was. For λογιστῆς in this technical sense is restricted in the lexica to epigraphic sources, with no literary authorities added.67

Ulpian is the chief speaker in the dialogue, quite overshadowing the host Larensis and that other distinguished participant, Galen of Pergamum. It is made clear early in the proceedings (2.58b) that he was the symposiarch. Gulick thought that these two honours might have been devised by Athenaeus as a compliment to the high position of the jurist in Rome.

That was not an unreasonable notion. But it will have to be asked why Athenaeus did not take the obvious step and refer to Ulpian's juristic and political career. After all, he is quite explicit about the qualifications of Larensis, Galen, and most of the other wiseacres. One might have suggested

---

63. E. g., Pflaum, Carrières, no. 294; Bowersock, 14, n. 4.
64. In his note on 9.401b (curatores urbiōnum is his phrase).
65. For details, see the articles of M. N. Tod in JHS 25 (1905), 44; JHS 42 (1922), 167.
67. LSJ give only IG Rom. 3.39 (Bithynia); the Supplement has no literary reference, nor has H. J. Mason, Greek Terms for Roman Institutions (Toronto, 1973), s.v. The presence of Philostратus, V'S, p. 512 in Tod's lists is misleading, since it is the verb λογιστῆω that is found there.
that the Ulpian of the banquet had not yet attained his eminence, thus aiding Dittenberger's efforts to restrict the *Deipnosophistae* to the period 193–197. But that is at once impeded by the reference to Ulpian's death near the end of the dialogue.

An exhaustive and exhausting tabulation of Ulpian's contributions to the table talk would clinch nothing; it is in any case supplied by the indices of Kaibel and Gulick. Athenaeus introduces him as a pedant notorious in the streets, colonnades, bookshops, and baths of Rome for his enquiries into literary precedents for almost any word that comes up in conversation. This is one of his two constant traits, earning him various sobriquets such as Keitoukeitos (1.1e), Syratticist (3.126f; 9.368c), a Daedalus of words (9.396a), word-chaser (4.184b), and hyper-critic (14.613c).

His other proclivity is wrangling with Cynic philosophers. Most of his appearances in the dialogue involve clashes with Cynulcus and Myrtilus of Thessaly, the other leading participants. Ulpian and Cynulcus are billed as always in conflict (6.270c), and particular animosity between pedant and Myrtilus is once alleged (13.571a).

In both regards, Ulpian typifies aspects of the life of Antonine and early Severan intellectuals, as described both by its admirers and detractors. Aulus Gellius has a seminar on philology set in a bookshop; Fronto can pause to ask after literary antecedents for a word whilst simultaneously occupied with the gout and discussion of blueprints with architects; animosities between sophists (notably Herodes Atticus) and Cynics are attested by Gellius, Lucian, and Philostratus. We need not doubt that this atmosphere lasted into the third century.

None of this helps our enquiry into the identity of Ulpian, in any formal way. Yet his activities and tastes conform exactly to those of the second century. In due course, we shall link them more precisely with some evidence from Lucian. The procedure might help the claims of Ulpian the father, and suggest that Athenaeus himself belonged more to the second than the third century.

Ulpian the jurist could have been a querulous pedant. The lawyer and prefect is not incompatible with the grammarian. Yet, apart from the issue of Ulpian's mode of death, there are certain scenes in the *Deipnosophistae* which militate

---

68. My experience is that Gulick is more reliable than Kaibel. Typical scenes are at: 2.49a; 2.58b; 3.96f; 3.99e; 3.107a; 3.108a; 3.122f; 3.125a; 3.126f; 4.150a; 4.165b; 4.184b; 6.228c; 6.270c; 7.275c; 9.396a; 9.401b; 14.613c. An unusually long silence between 10.459a and 14.613c may partially be explained by the lack of any indicated speakers in Book Twelve (see later on this). It is amusing to see that a bawdy turn in the conversation at 9.367d silences Ulpian.
69. *NA* 18.4.
70. *NA* 19.10.
72. Specifically, the *Lexiphanes* (which might involve Galen).

31
against the equation. That is, unless we are misled by Athenaeus’ sense of humour (on which more will later be said). For this is an element of the narrator which can provoke ambiguity. In one exchange (4.150a), Ulpian is sarcastically hailed as an expert on the ‘laws’ relating to Naucratite eating habits. Might this not be a joke on the reputation of a great lawyer? The fact that Naucratis is Athenaeus’ own city could lend point.

Three scenes are in question, in ascending order of cogency. The first (8.361f) has Ulpian ignorant of what went on at the festival of the Parilia as revised by Hadrian. Is such nescience likely on the jurist’s part?

More notable is the moment (3.115b) when Ulpian has to ask after the Greek equivalent for libertus. Surely Ulpian the lawyer could have delivered himself of a weighty lecture on that topic? It may be significant that Athenaeus chooses to abort this discussion within a couple of sentences or so.

Most telling is the clash (3.121f) between Ulpian and Cynulcus over the use of Latin. The latter’s request for decocta sends Ulpian into a passion against the use of so barbarous a tongue in ‘civilised’ circles. It is the Cynic who is granted the commonsense defence of speaking in Rome as the Romans do. It is not easy to credit that Ulpian the jurist, himself a user of Latin and high in Roman councils, could have come out with such an outburst.

The information\(^{73}\) we have about the career of Domitius Ulpianus permits no easy correlation with the deipnosophist. The only discernible common ground is geographical origin. A passage in the Digest\(^{74}\) from the jurist’s own pen makes proud (or defiant?) allusion to his provenance: ut est in Syria Phoenice splendidissima Tyriorum colonia, unde mihi origo est, nobilis regionibus, serie saeculorum antiquissima, armipotens . . . . The frequent twitting of Ulpian the grammarian for his native land by his opponents might suggest that they were weary of hearing it exalted by the scholar. But this is no ground on which to erect foundations of belief in anything: Syrian jokes were hardly uncommon. A rider might be added here. References to Syria will have been carefully tailored during the reign of Elagabalus.

Ulpian the lawyer is frequently mentioned in the Historia Augusta. Most of the passages concern his political influence and juristic skills. There is very little to indicate a sophist or scholar outside the legal field. The volumes dedicated by Ulpian to the consular Sabinus are not in any way described;\(^{75}\) they could simply have been legal treatises or the like. Even if he did once hold the office of a libellis in the Severan period, a claim now usually disbelieved on

---

73. For testimonia (incomplete) and brief discussion, see Pflaum, Carrières, no. 294, and Le Marbre de Thorigny (Paris, 1948), 41; Howe, op. cit., 75; Kunkel, op. cit., 245; A. Stein in Eunomia 1 (1957), 1; Syme, EB, 147–51, 154, 156–7; Millar, 170; Birley, 341.
74. 50.15.1.
75. Elag. 16.2; this passage is discussed later.
76. Pesc. 7.4 (disbelieved by, e.g., Pflaum, Syme, and Birley).
account of the unreliability of the *Vita Pescennii*, that would not guarantee particular literary interests.

One passage alone might be taken to support the equation of Ulpian. It is one of nine references to the lawyer in the life of Severus Alexander: *cum inter suos convivaretur, aut Ulpianum aut doctos homines adhibebat, ut haberet fabulas litteratas, quibus se recreari dicebat et pasci* (34.6). At first blush, this suggests the deipnosophist. But a man might be invited on the strength of his legal expertise. Athenaeus himself is on hand to support this, for he took care to include the jurist Masurius amongst the register of guests. By the same token, to cover all possibilities, both Masurius and Larensis had skills other than legal ones. The former, for instance, was also a poet. Ulpian is still not ruled out. However, on general principles, if it is safe to entertain any in the case of the *Historia Augusta*, one would have expected at least one overt mention of scholarly activity on the part of Domitius Ulpian, given the biographer’s usual zeal for registering orators and academics.

Ulpian the deipnosophist had a sudden and happy death: ἀπέθανεν ἄνωθεν, ὃν ἄνωθεν διδόνα κυριόν νόσφρ παραδόσις (15.686c). Domitius Ulpian, according to Dio, was lynched by the praetorians. In a later age, the version of Dio was reproduced by Zosimus. Ulpian was one of many important topics deemed worthy of exclusion from his narratives by Herodian. This is more than usually striking, in view of their common Syrian origins. The *Historia Augusta*, as Syme rightly stresses, does not award the jurist a violent end.

There seems no warrant for disbelieving Dio Cassius. Is any reconciliation between a lynching and a happy death possible? Kaibel essayed a desperate expedient, urging a curious principle: *gladio enim peti poterat imperatoris consiliarius, non poterat grammaticus*. Gulick, for a time concurred; ‘His assassination is passed over in silence; the violent death of a politician did not comport well with the peaceful death of a plodding scholar’. Neither Kaibel nor Gulick understood the close involvement of many a scholar with the world of politics: they should have remembered the biographies of Philo­tratus. And these commentators betray no knowledge of the fact that Ulpian himself had procured the deaths of his predecessors in office to further his own ambition!

There is one other possibility whereby the equation of Ulpian might be retained and the accounts of Dio and Athenaeus be made to square. The

---

77. 15.6; 26.5; 26.6; 27.2; 34.6; 51.4; 67.2; 68.1.
78. 80.2.2.
80. *EB*, 153. Indeed, *Alex. Sever.* 51.4 leaves Ulpian protected by the emperor against the soldiery. Is this one of the biographer’s pranks?
82. See n. 60 above for references.
83. Dio 80.2.2.
latter's Ulpian died suddenly. That is in accord with Dio's lynching. The assertion that it was a happy end might be another example of Athenaeus' sense of humour. For the final tribute to the pedantic Ulpius of Tyre has rightly occasioned surprise amongst readers and editors, discrepant as it is from the treatment of him throughout the dialogue. Athenaeus did not equip Ulpius with any adherents in the Deipnosophistae, despite the claim that there was a coterie of Ulpianaeans in circulation (3.98c). He is depicted as largely friendless and alone – until his expiration.

Such a scenario is possible, but is probably to be dismissed as too subtle. Let the identification be rejected, then, and other solutions canvassed. One easy way out would be to assume that Ulpius of Tyre is a fiction, as has been claimed for many of the wiseacres. Tempting, but not very satisfying. Another is to accept the deipnosophist as a real person, but without connection with Domitian Ulpius. After all, there are other literary Ulpians, of later or unspecified periods, registered in the Suda – and coming from Syria, at that.

However, the most popular alternative is Ulpius senior, father of the jurist. It has the obvious attraction of explaining the common Tyrian background. Another advantage offers. A father would be firmly placed in the second century where, as we have seen, the deipnosophist seems to belong. He would be coeval with Larenis, Galen, and perhaps Athenaeus himself.

In supplement to earlier observations on the suitability of a second century milieu is the promised evidence from Lucian. It is extracted from one of that fellow-Syrian's most elaborate assaults upon linguistic excess, the Lexiphanes.

The philological villain of this piece drones out an interminable extract from his new work, a Symposium à la Plato. It is replete with Atticism, genuine and fake, and curious words. Lexiphanes is finally taken in hand by Lucian and a doctor called Sopolis, made to vomit up his vile vocabulary, and taught the virtues of plain, clear style.

First, two ancillary points. There was more than one reason why Lucian gave Lexiphanes a Symposium. That setting is perfectly contrived for displaying the requisite oddities of diction. And a banquet scene is the most familiar motif. Yet it may reflect upon literary soirées from real life. The dinner table is the scene for learned pontification in the Noctes Atticae. Lucian's Convivium may have been partly intended as a spoof of this sort of thing. So might the...
Deipnosophistae, which takes neither the participants nor their erudition too seriously.

Second, there is a sporting chance (no more) that the Sopolis of Lucian’s dialogue was meant to represent Galen. Even if false, the notion allows a pertinent word here about the great doctor. His Lucianic views and prolific publications on Attic style and Atticist controversies are known from his own bibliographies. His role in these battles was no unique one. Phrynichus of Bithynia is often scornful of the diction of medicals in his PraeparatioSophistica; De Borries was probably right to suggest that the purists had a nota cum medicis de sermone contentio.

Athenaeus exploited this situation. Ulpian is himself credited with wry approval of the mor, issued by an unnamed deipnosophist, that ‘were it not for doctors, there would be nothing stupider than grammarians’ (15.666a). And there are no fewer than four physicians at the table. But it is wrong to describe him, as does Bowersock, as a leading participant, for Galen in fact has an oddly muted role. Though introduced with honour and clarity (1.1e), he is allowed only two small contributions, both dealing with diet and health (1.26c; 5.115c).

Why this neglect, we cannot say. Some clash involving personalities and/or rival coteries would be a fair conjecture but no more. What is again to the purpose is the closeness of Athenaeus’ banquet to the Antonine scene.

Now the promised precision of detail. At least nine of the locutions of Lexiphanes are ridiculed by Cynulcus as typical ofPompeianus of Philadelphia, Ulpian himself, and the Ulpianean sophists at large. Full lexical data are assembled elsewhere. Coincidence seems to be excluded. Thus, unless we can believe that the same words had a lifespan of almost half a century within one group of littérature, the animadversions of Lucian and Athenaeus should be regarded as convergent upon the same target. Lexiphanes represents an Ulpianean sophist, whether he be the leader himself, or Pompeianus, or the group in general.

There is little firm chronology for the multifarious productions of Lucian. But it is enough for the present purpose to know his basic period. The identification of Lexiphanes proposed above would suit the chronology of Ulpian the father to perfection.

It might be asked why Athenaeus included no mention of his famous son, in that case. One would respond by simple reminder of the incomplete state of the Deipnosophistae, which disallows certitude on either side. An auxiliary

89. Bowersock, 64.
91. Harmon was tempted by this equation, first proposed by E. E. Seiler in the last century.
counter is to plead on behalf of Dittenberger’s restriction of Athenaeus’ dialogue to the years 193–197.

No more on Ulpian. We have reached, perhaps passed, the point of diminishing returns. But there are still things to be said concerning the chronology and career of Athenaeus himself.

One obviously firm link with the second century is Galen, dead in 199. Another would appear to be the host of the verbose diners. To say this does not require the old notion of Rudolph, wrongly perpetuated by Wright in the Loeb of Philostratus’ Lives, that Larensis is a cover-name for Herodes Atticus.92 Mine host would seem to have been a real character, with an Antonine career.

He is now universally regarded as P. Livius Larensis, a pontifex minor commemorated as marito incomparabili by his wife Cornelia Quinta on an inscription.93 It was Dessau94 impressed by the congruence of so uncommon a name and the fact that Athenaeus introduces his host as a priest, who established the identification.95

Other things accrue. According to Athenaeus, Larensis was in authority over one of the provinces of Moesia (9.398e). Pflaum96 fitted him in around 189 as a procurator. The Historia Augusta imports a Livius Laurensis in a dramatic role. As procurator patrimonii in 192, it was he who obeyed Pertinax and gave up the body of Commodus to Fabius Cilo for burial.97 There are those who believe (and those who do not) that he was the anonymous ‘most trusted comrade’ of Pertinax, whom Dio records as dispatched by the latter to view the imperial cadaver.98

Students of the Historia Augusta will find it notable that the biographer could pick up so rare a name and affix it to a plausible context without the aid of Dio. Happily, we do not need to ponder over Marius Maximus, Ignotus, and other claimants, for present purposes.

More to the immediate point, if Laurensis were Dio’s unnamed character, it would not be hard to believe that his career (and life) came to an abrupt halt in the period 193–197. The most trusted comrade of Pertinax is not likely to have prospered after his master’s fall. Unless, that is, he was an adept at changing sides or deep and discreet retirement from Rome. These considerations may

92. Introd., xxxiv.
93. CIL 6.2126 (cf. 32401) = ILS 2932; the provenance is Rome.
94. Art. cit.
95. Dessau could find only C. Granius Larensis (CIL 8.7973). The identification is accepted by: PIR² L 297; Pflaum, Carrières, no. 194 (and BHAC 1970, 233); Birley, 146; Bowersock, 20, no. 4, 64.
96. Carrières, p. 1068 (followed by PIR²).
98. Dio 73.1.2. This particular equation was proposed by E. Hohl, ‘Kaiser Pertinax und die Thronbesteigung seines Nachfolgers im Lichte der Herodiankritik’, SDAW (1956), 6. It was accepted as possible by PIR², but viewed with suspicion by Millar, 134 n. 6.
also assist efforts to restrict Athenaeus’ dialogue to the last decade of the second century.

Larensios (as Athenaeus styles him) is ushered in with copious detail, and nicely characterised throughout. He was notable for wealth, and wealth of learning. Such was his bilingual expertise that the nickname of Asteropaeus was fastened upon him. Diligent and unaided research had made him expert in both antique Roman rituals (all the way back to Romulus!) and political science. It is no surprise that he had the largest library in Rome; what does cause some shock is that it was restricted to Greek works (1.3a).

His contributions to the conversation are designed to suit the above characteristics. The chief manifestation of his hellenism was a craze for Homer (14.620b); an ability to hold his own in a discussion of riddles (10.448c) testifies to his scholarship and wits. No uncritical philhellen, he twice reaches back into the late Republic for anecdotes (involving Marius and Lucullus) to the credit of Romans (2.51a; 5.221f). The issuing of an encomium on married women (13.555c) may be thought to fit a Roman host, and his closing of the entire proceedings with incense, libation, and a paean to Hygieia (a nice touch that, after so long a feast of food and words) suits the pontifex.

On two occasions, he is given strange statements. The assertion that few Roman grammarians were conversant with Greek poetry and history (4.160b) is arrant nonsense. In reverse, the dogma might have held. Is Athenaeus poking fun again? Of equal implausibility is the claim (6.272e) that households of ten to twenty thousand slaves were common in Rome. Had that been said to one of the Hellenes present, we might set it aside as a piece of chauvinistic boasting. But the remark is in fact made to the polymath Masurius, who is both jurist and Roman.

Larensis is permitted two reflections upon his own career and background. There is the allusion to his sojourn in Moesia, already inspected. In addition, he refers to the great Varro as the Menippean who is ὁ ἐμὸς προπάτωρ. Is this intended as indicative of a personal connection, or merely a generalising ethnic one?

None of this helps to establish the equation. Two points may demonstrate that it is not so certain as is nowadays maintained. First, the sacerdotal appointment. The host was appointed by Marcus Aurelius to be in charge of both Greek and Roman rites, supervising both temples and sacrifices. This vague and prestigious office, redolent of the old rex sacrorum of the Republican age, might appear too much for a pontifex minor. However, the extract stresses (1.2b) that Athenaeus was here eulogising Larensis, which permits us to make some discount for rhetorical hyperbole.

Second, the inscription makes mention only of Larensis’ pontificate. Being

99. Deip. 4.160b (in the context of the Roman grammarians, discussed above). Recollection of Varro as the Menippean suits the second century, when one thinks of Lucian; cf. Marcus Aurelius, Medit. 6.47.
epitaphic, it cannot be said to have pre-dated the Moesian appointment and the
procurator patrimonii status. This very restricted laudation tends not to be
discussed. Yet it may get us into another tangle of father or son questions, as
with Ulpian.

Which is not fatal, except to dogmatic sentences in some modern works. The
host of Athenaeus’ banquet undeniably pertains to the second century. All
the more so, if he is the Laurensis of the Historia Augusta. And perhaps
absolutely, as argued above, were he Pertinax’ most loyal comrade. We are
still firmly within the confines of the Antonine and early Severan periods.

This may be the season to insert a bold speculation concerning Athenaeus
and the setting of his dialogue. The savants are assembled at the house of
Larensis, in Rome. Excluding the host, the narrator, and Timocrates (to whom
Athenaeus relates his material), there are twenty-one named participants,
supported by a host of anonymous and briefly intrusive extras.\(^{100}\)

Such a throng of guests is in violation of the ‘rules’ laid down in Varro’s
Menippian work entitled Nescis quid Vesper serus vehat, excerpted for us by
Aulus Gellius.\(^{101}\) It is prescribed that three is the smallest number allowable,
nine the greatest. In a later age, Ausonius regarded more than seven as a
convicium rather than a convivium.\(^{102}\)

Nicely enough, the number of guests at Lucian’s satiric Convivium almost
conformed to Varro’s dictates; yet a fierce convicium was to result.\(^{103}\) Athe-
naeus was acquainted with the Menippian productions of Varro, as we have
seen. It could be that his large number of guests is a deliberate mockery.
Further scrutiny of Gellius’ extrapolations reinforces the view. It is sensibly
held that guests should be neither loquacious nor taciturn. No one could accuse
Ulpian or Cynulcus of the latter vice, whereas a fair number of the deipnosop-
phists say little about anything. The banquet of Athenaeus may again be
regarded as permeated with a studied humour in terms of its structure.

One more thing. Gellius concludes his notice with a brief discussion of the
word bellaria, employed by Varro for the Greek πέμφατα to describe the
requisite sweetmeats for dessert. A discussion of πέμφατα is inserted into his
dialogue by Athenaeus, and awarded to Aemilianus Maurus as one of his
contributions to the talk.\(^{104}\)

Homage to Varro was rife in the second century. Whether or not Athenaeus
read the Noctes Atticae is unknowable. There is a case, then, for regarding the
construction of his Deipnosophistae as parodic.

However, the matter does not stop here. The Historia Augusta\(^{105}\) asserts

\(^{100}\) See Kaibel’s index to the Dialogi Personae, for the contributions of each participant.
\(^{101}\) NA 13.11.
\(^{102}\) In the locus invitationis section of his Torius Diel Negotium (≈ Loeb, 1, 22).
\(^{103}\) Conv. 6-9 for the list of guests and their placings.
\(^{104}\) Deip. 4.152d.
\(^{105}\) Verus 5.1.
that Verus created a great scandal by giving a banquet with couches for twelve, an allegedly unparalleled affair. It is subjoined that this violated the *notissimum dictum* which held *septem convivium, novem vero convicium*.

It happens that this *notissimum dictum* is known only to the biographer. Advocates of a late fourth-century date for the *Historia Augusta* might see it as inspired by the conceit of Ausonius, cited above. There is also the suspicion that Verus' banquet owes something to a notorious party put on by Augustus, to which the guests came tricked out as the Olympians. For all this, it remains possible that larger banquets either came or came back into fashion in the Antonine period, and that the welfer of deipnosophists is a social as well as a literary reflection. In sober truth, nothing is hereby proved concerning Athenaeus. Yet the coincidences (if such they be) are numerous. We have at least re-emphasised that investigators of the *Historia Augusta* must be as alive to Athenaeus, Gellius, and company as to lost or presumed sources.

Athenaeus derived from Naucratis. No unique origin, that. Several sophists emerged from that relatively obscure town, by pleasant and surprising contrast with the great city of Alexandria, which imported a few luminaries to membership in the Museum, but which exported few sophistic sons of its own.

Apart from the early and obscure Theomnestus, four luminaries are registered from Naucratis by Philostratus. Athenaeus is not among them— which (remembering other omissions from the Philostratean gallery) proves nothing. Leading the quartet, for the very good reason that he was one of Philostratus' teachers, comes Proclus. The others consist of the learned Pollux, the lecherous and conspiracy-loving Apollonius, and Ptolemy the globe-trotter. ‘Almost nothing is revealed of Naucratis under the empire, but it is hard to believe that purely by accident can we single out so many distinguished sophists from that place in virtually the same generation.’ Thus Bowersock, and rightly; his neglect of the earlier Theomnestus hardly spoils the observation. Athenaeus, in terms of provenance, was no isolated phenomenon. Just as Lucian had to leave humdrum Samosata, so the sons of Naucratis departed their native town to seek fame and fortune. According to Philostratus, Naucratis was prone to violent factional strife. He got this information from Proclus, who gave it as his reason for sailing away to the relative tranquillity of Athens. Yet Proclus may have exaggerated this in order to

---

106. See Magie, *ad locum*.
107. Suetonius, *DA* 70–1. The outcry of the populace at this is balanced by Marcus Aurelius' bewailing of Verus' effort (*Verus 5.6*).
explain away his own lack of éclat at home. For the men of Naucratis were judges of discrimination, rarely disposed to granting the honour of dining at public expense in the town's temple. One man so honoured was the sophist Ptolemy, who came home from his world travels to die in Egypt. 113

Athenaeus beat no drum on behalf of his native town. References to it are (apart from claiming Aristophanes the comic poet as a product) exclusively concerned with food and other appurtenances of the table (373a; 4.149d; 6.229e; 7.301b; 11.480d; 15.671e; 15.676a). One would like to detect sly humour in the remaining allusion: Naucratis was famed for its many illustrious harlots (13.596b). That makes a happy (dare we say it?) coupling with Naucratis the producer of intellectuals.

Naucratites did not fare badly abroad. Commodus was sufficiently charmed by Pollux to award him the chair at Athens; Ptolemy was liked and respected wherever he went; Apollonius had to play second fiddle to Heracleides at Athens, but he died to the grief of all Athenians – admittedly a suspect claim; 114 Proclus settled down to a life of comfortable philanthropy and academical ease in Athens. Yet we may note two things. Only Pollux gained the ear and favour of an emperor. And Philostratus' accounts of sophists from Naucratis are less enthusiastic over success than concerned to point up the darker side of things. Even his master Proclus is taken to task for joining in with his son's dissipations, and for allowing himself to be gulled as a 'sugar-daddy' in thrall to a young mistress. 115 Could it be that a certain feeling had developed against this quasi-Mafia of Naucratite sophists?

Athenaeus opted for Rome. As we have seen, his banquet is laid in Rome, has a Roman host, and a blend of Roman and Hellenic participants. We know nothing of a career, sophistic or otherwise. It is a fair inference that he was comfortably off and admissible to polite company. Any sophistic career he might have had was over and suppressed by the time he came to produce the Deipnosophistae. For his remarks on sophists and their trade are uniformly vicious (1.4a; 1.22d; 3.98a; 11.505b; 13.565d; 14.621f; 14.632c); it is the tone of Lucian, not Philostratus.

The attitude of a failure? We cannot tell. It is permissible to see his hostility as further evidence of the satirical construction of the Deipnosophistae, earlier discussed. Which might be one reason why he was congenial to rich Romans. His defence of Latin, his frequent admission of Latin topics (1.14f; 2.56a; 2.70e; 3.80f; 3.85c; 3.85e; 3.97d; 3.98c; 3.111c; 3.113d; 3.114e; 3.121e; 3.125f; 4.139a; 4.170e; 4.171a; 4.174d; 7.294f; 7.306d; 7.310e; 7.330b; 9.398b; 10.440e; 14.647e; 15.701b), his constant allusions to Roman tastes of the time

113. VS, p. 593 (honour, p. 596 [death in Egypt])
114. VS, p. 600: Apollonius had purchased good-will by sharing his wealth and by remitting lecture fees. Unlikely characters tend to die lamented by the Athenians in Philostratus – notably Herodes (VS, p. 565).
115. VS, p. 604.
in food, drink, and music (2.56a; 3.75e; 3.82c; 4.183e; 6.224c; 7.294e; 9.384c; 14.654d), all of these lead to the same end. He may, of course, have tailored his opinions to suit his patrons – as Lucian did, as many satirists of all ages have done.

Athenaeus depicts a luxurious society. An unsurprising discovery, and not one that can be used to pinpoint his chronology with any precision. Superficially, his picture might be taken to suit the reigns of Commodus or Elagabalus best, within the possible limits for the deipnosophist’s lifetime. But such reasoning would be jejune. There is no simple correlation between rulers and ruled, in terms of mores. True, according to Tacitus,\textsuperscript{116} gourmandising went out of fashion under the Flavians. Many must here have taken their cue from Vespasian. But not everyone turned in their chefs for Stoic philosophers under Marcus Aurelius. The allusions in Athenaeus have no temporal precision.

The \textit{Deipnosophistae} was not his only confection. There was a monograph on the \textit{Thrattae} of Archippus (7.329c). It is clear that this was a scholarly discussion of the content and diction of the piece. One will recall the labours of Galen on Old Comedy.\textsuperscript{117} Of greater interest is a treatise on Syrian Kings (5.211a). It is tempting to relate this to either Ulpian of Tyre or the provenance of Elagabalus. But dangerous. Monarchs, Syrian or otherwise, regularly had their biographers or historians. Suetonius composed a \textit{De Regibus}, not restricted in scope to the seven kings of Rome.

It might quickly be subjoined that scholarly work upon Greek Comedy and oriental despots does not make Athenaeus an unalloyed professor or academic recluse. There was not, mercifully, that kind of dichotomy between letters and life in the ancient world, and especially not in the Antonine and Severan eras.

The foregoing pages have laid frequent claim to the satiric nature of Athenaeus’ dialogue. To what has been said, there can accrue some final and exact observations. The very title of the work is almost certainly a comic coinage. A long time later, a quotation from Dionysius Chalcus brings the entire proceedings to what Gulick\textsuperscript{118} well calls ‘a lame and impotent conclusion’.

Between title and finale, there are many indications of the comic spirit. The dialogue is ushered in on a note of parody of Plato’s \textit{Phaedo} (1.2a). Ulpian’s discoursing is once branded (by narrator, not Cynic rival) as interminable (6.262b), and the company’s seminar on fish is laughed at as idle gabble (7.330c). And it is the regular practice of Athenaeus to advise his ‘freed’ Timocrates that the talk is impossibly prolix and monstrously trivial. These animadversions are placed at the beginnings and ends of individual books.

\textsuperscript{116} Ann. 3.55.
\textsuperscript{117} Attested by his own bibliographies.
\textsuperscript{118} Loeb, 7, 275.
where no reader can miss them (1.4c; 3.127d; 4.185a; 5.185b; 6.222b; 6.275b; 7.330c; 8.331b; 8.365e; 9.336a; 11.509e; 12.510a; 15.665a).

If accepted, this view of Athenaeus would afford no secure dating. One inevitably thinks of Lucian, of course. Moreover, since possible connections between Athenaeus and Polemo have already been explored, this is the moment to recollect that the latter was on record as regarding the memorising of authorities and quotations (the stock-in-trade of the deipnosophists) as the most tedious of all pursuits. Galen was another who was bored by cultural affectations and absurdities: is this why he was so silent at Larensis’ table?

In brief conclusion. No precision is possible on the matter of Athenaeus’ chronology. The old terminus ante quem non of 228 has no validity; the date has now to be moved back to 223, still leaving an implausible equation between Ulpian the jurist and Upian the pedant. The internal evidences often seem to point to the second century rather than the third; Dittenberger’s confines of 193–197 deserve serious consideration.

Athenaeus emerges as far more than a prolix antiquarian. His details, themes, and characters often pertain to his contemporary Rome, and merit collocation with the writings of Galen, Lucian, and Philostratus. The author exhibits a healthy recognition of Roman achievement in cultural matters and of the importance of the Latin language. His attitude towards antiquarianism and the sectarian issues turns out to be refreshingly light-hearted.

From time to time, the dialogues of Athenaeus serve to complement the biographies of Philostratus, enhance the narratives of Cassius Dio, and perhaps illumine items of fact or nomenclature in the Historia Augusta. One cheerfully acknowledges that many will continue to leaf through the Deipnosophistae only as a farrago of sources and sauces. But it is also a document for the student of imperial Rome, above all for those engaged in the analysis of the Second Sophistic in the Rome of the Antonines and Severans.

119. VS, p. 541.
Acta Classica is published annually by the Classical Association of South Africa. The journal has been in production since 1958. It is listed on both the ISI and the SAPSE list of approved publications.

For further information go to: http://www.casa-kvs.org.za/acta_classica.htm