

**THE ROLE OF THE MAGEIPOI IN  
THE LIFE OF THE ANCIENT  
GREEKS: AS DEPICTED IN GREEK  
LITERATURE AND INSCRIPTIONS**

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The Role of the Magepoi in the Life of the Ancient Greeks: As Depicted in Greek Literature and Inscriptions by Edwin Moore Rankin

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**EDWIN MOORE RANKIN**

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THE RÔLE OF THE ΜΑΓΕΙΠΟΙ IN THE  
LIFE OF THE ANCIENT GREEKS

AS DEPICTED IN GREEK LITERATURE  
AND INSCRIPTIONS

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Professor H. W. Prescott,  
with kind regards  
E. M. R.

#### PREFATORY NOTE

The main subject-matter of this book was originally used in a dissertation presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Classical Philology at Harvard University. Since that time, however, the work has undergone a careful revision, although my conclusions are essentially the same as in the original thesis.

E. M. R.

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## INTRODUCTION

In a careful examination of the fragments preserved from the writings of the Greek comic poets, one must of necessity be impressed with the rôle which cooks in general played in Greek Comedy. In my own study of these comic fragments the material collated on this subject was such as to induce the belief that cooks were an important factor in the life of the ancient Greeks, both private and public, and therefore worthy of more extensive investigation and more careful consideration than had been accorded them. Hence I was led to investigate, as far as possible, all Greek literature, and the inscriptions as well, in the hope that a contribution of some value might be made to the study of Greek life on a subject which was apparently of such real importance.

One need not go beyond a careful reading of Athenaeus to be convinced of the significant part which cooks played in the life of the Greeks from the middle of the fifth century before our era, or even earlier, down to the third century at least after the birth of Christ. Because of the form which Athenaeus gave to his work, under the title of *Deipnosophistae*, and the subjects therein discussed, the characters at the fictitious feast of Larensis<sup>1</sup> are represented as discoursing upon a variety of subjects concerned with feasting and everything pertaining to matters connected with the preparation of banquets and the like. Particularly is it true that the cook is introduced as quoting authors who have portrayed those of his own vocation in the Greek Comedy. To this fact, indeed, we owe the preservation of a very large number of the comic fragments. The rôle

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Wilh. Christ, *Geschichte der griechischen Litteratur*<sup>8</sup>, p. 735 and n. 2.