

A COMMENTARY ON ANTIPHANES

OLSON (S.D.) *Antiphanes: Zakyntios – Progonoi*. (Fragmenta Comica 19.2.) Pp. 411. Göttingen: Verlag Antike, 2022. Cased, €90. ISBN: 978-3-949189-33-3.

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Among present-day Classicists, O. is the one that most merits the epithet ‘chalcenterous’, once given to the Alexandrian grammarian Didymus for his indefatigable scholarly industry and productivity. O.’s latest contribution to the magnificent series *Fragmenta Comica*, of which he is one of the founders and chief editors, is his three-volume commentary on the remains of another exceedingly prolific author: Antiphanes, the Middle Comedy playwright who produced a total of about 280 plays during his long career. This is the first full-scale philological and exegetical commentary that covers the total of Antiphanes’ 330 preserved fragments. It is an invaluable contribution to the understanding of the poet and generally to the knowledge of the history and dramaturgy of fourth-century comedy. O. has achieved the equivalent of W.G. Arnott’s massive commentary on the fragments of Alexis (one of the milestones of scholarship on comic fragments).

The book under review is the second of three volumes (cf. *CR* 71 [2021], 334–6), including 92 fragments from 67 plays. The layout of the material follows the standard scheme adopted throughout the *Fragmenta Comica* series. Each play is furnished with an introduction, in which the title and its implications are discussed; information as to the contents of the comedy is carefully extracted and evaluated, and a list of related titles from the entire comic corpus is drawn up. The fragments are equipped with a full critical apparatus and metrical analysis and are accompanied by an accurate English translation. Two sections in particular, common to all volumes of *Fragmenta Comica*, constitute the most helpful and reader-friendly innovations of the series. Firstly, in a separate, line-by-line examination of the critical problems posed by the transmitted text of every fragment, all the linguistic, metrical and semantic difficulties are clearly pinpointed, and the various emendations proposed by previous scholars are expertly assessed. Secondly, the context of the citation of the fragment in the ancient source(s) is examined, and the reasons for its selection and quotation by the corresponding ancient author are explained. Afterwards, a substantial line-by-line exegesis of the text is provided, explicating a multifaceted range of topics: themes, situations and figures of the comic repertoire; vocabulary, style and linguistic parallels; contemporary persons (*komoïdoumenoi*) mentioned in the text; elucidation of *realia*, historical data and cultural references.

Given the exemplary critical work in the monumental edition of R. Kassel and C. Austin, it is not easy to improve their text of the comic fragments. Nevertheless, in a few cases O. revives and prints manuscript readings or previous editors’ emendations that make better sense than Kassel and Austin’s corresponding choice: κατέχοντας, fr. 174.4 (following Meineke, instead of Musurus’ καταμπέχοντας); ἐφθῶις, fr. 183.3 (following Casaubon, instead of codex A’s ἐφθός); διωχημένα, fr. 189.19 (following Herwerden, instead of ACE’s διωκημένα); γλαύκοι, fr. 191.2 (a supralinear variant in codices CE of Athenaeus’ epitome, instead of the main reading θύννοι).

Other editorial decisions seem less commendable. In fr. 157.10 Meineke’s easy emendation βούλεται γέ τις λέγειν (for the codices’ unmetrical τις βούλεται λέγειν or βούλεται τις λέγειν) is rejected because ‘it is unclear why βούλεται should receive the emphasis the particle adds’ (p. 209). This ignores the fact that the entire speech, coming most probably from a misanthrope, is marked precisely by excessive and superfluous emphatic elements,

including redundant instances of γε (e.g. vv. 7–8). In fr. 192.19 Cobet's ἐπιτρίψαι (optative, adopted by Kassel and Austin) is more pointed and expressive than Casaubon's ἐπιτρίψει, which O. privileges on the (rather trivial) grounds that it requires one fewer change of the paradosis' ἐπιτρέψει. In fr. 132 Kaibel's attribution of the entire v. 4 (and accordingly of vv. 5b–6, οἶον ... ποτηρίῳ) to speaker A ensures a better flow of the dialogue than the arrangements preferred by O. or Kassel and Austin. On the other hand, fr. 123 is better taken as a single monologue than distributed over two speakers. It is usual for comic characters coming back from the fish market to deliver lengthy tirades, in which they give comprehensive descriptions of their experiences at the fishmongers' stalls; as a rule, in such cases it is the same speaker who first points out some outrageous behaviour of the fishmongers and then makes fun of it (e.g. Antiphanes, fr. 164; Amphis, fr. 30; Alexis, fr. 76; Diphilos, fr. 32, 67).

In fr. 190.4–5 it is worth pondering whether πλευράν in the paradosis should be retained, precisely in its regular sense of 'man's side', which O. rejects due to the commonly accepted view that the passage must be referring to edible animal ribs. However, the oddly phrased τάττειν ... παρασκευάζεται πλευράν μετ' αὐτῶν may mean that the man described prepares to 'station his own side together with them', i.e. with the women for whom he has bought dainty slices of fish bellies (vv. 1–3); in other words, he is going to recline on his πλευρά to enjoy himself at a dinner party, in the company of those women, after he has purchased the food. The military colouring of τάττειν would furnish another instance of the well-known comic use of war metaphors for the symposium.

It is unnecessary to doubt Athenaeus' claim that fr. 113 followed fr. 112 in the text of *Karine*. The two fragments may easily be connected into a plausible sequence within the same speech: the speaker describes a personage that makes use of sympotic vessels and starts drinking (fr. 112), and then quotes this personage's words in direct speech (fr. 113), a practice common in comic banquet narratives. The occurrence of the word κάδος in both fragments, presumably referring to the same vessel, reinforces the probability of their immediate connection. In fr. 113 there is no need to assume displacement of words or scribal mistakes, because the drinker's words may be plainly explained: if it is no longer possible to κυαθίζειν, i.e. to use a ladle to pour wine from the larger jar (κάδος) into the cups, the speaker will only make use of the κάδος and his own cup (ποτήριον); that is, he will dip his cup directly into the κάδος and draw the wine, without need for a ladle. He therefore tells a slave to take everything else away.

The introductions to the plays are usually brief; O. has often made clear his aversion to speculation on the plots of lost comedies. Sometimes, however, the reader misses the broader thematic and dramaturgical discussions that were offered, for example, by Arnott in his introductions to Alexis' individual plays. In the discussion of *Misoponeros* no connection is made to the rich tradition of misanthropes in Greek comedy and humorous literature; the parallel of Ar. *Lys.* 813–15 (the misanthrope Timon inspired by μίσους ... πονηροῖς, cf. ἀντεμίσει τοὺς πονηροὺς, *ibid.* 816–18) is not noted. In the case of *Lykon*, regarded as a speaking name for a rapacious character, the stingy banker Lyco of Plautus' *Curculio* might have been mentioned. Among the potential topics for the mythological travesty called *Minos*, one may also include the story of Minos' son Glaucus, who was brought back to life by means of a healing herb; the reference to 'eating mallow root' in fr. 156 would tally with this episode. With regard to the title *Paiderastes*, it would be worth quoting Plut. *Qu. Conv.* 712c, where Menander is praised for not including pederastic love-affairs in his comedies; this implies that such affairs were exploited by other comic playwrights.

Analogous opportunities for enlightening connections with the comic repertoire are missed in the interpretation of particular fragments. In fr. 108, from *Hippeis*, a comparison

with Mnesimachos, fr. 7 would have been welcome: in both fragments military men propose to use weapons or soldierly equipment as drinking vessels and sympotic implements. Fr. 169, in which one character uses a strange word (στᾶθμοῦχος, for ‘innkeeper’) and the interlocutor protests that he cannot understand it, is compared to scenes in which a frustrated customer cannot cope with the high-flown language of a cook. Another possibility would be that the first speaker is a braggart soldier (to whom the title of the play, *Obrimos*, an epic adjective meaning ‘mighty’, may refer). Comic soldiers also have the habit of using odd and incomprehensible vocabulary (e.g. Philemon, fr. 130) and, as foreigners, may lodge at an inn. Such small points, of course, hardly detract from the immense value of this admirable work.

*National and Kapodistrian
University of Athens*

IOANNIS M. KONSTANTAKOS
iokonstan@phil.uoa.gr