

# Epicharmus' Comedy and Early Sicilian Scholarship

Anna Novokhatko

Can the surviving 239 fragments and forty eight or forty nine titles of Epicharmus shed light on the relationship between comedy and early scholarship in Sicily and South Italy? Early scholarship denotes here the beginnings of textual criticism, of exegesis, of linguistics and of stylistics. The present paper will examine a number of Epicharmus' fragments in the context of contemporary philological studies, particularly textual and literary criticism, grammar and stylistics as these developed in the Sicily of that time.<sup>1</sup>

Surviving fragments suggest that rhetorical education, linguistic innovation and literary merit were central to Epicharmus' writings. The interaction of Epicharmus' comedy with scholarship is multilayered. It encompasses a reflection and reworking of contemporary philological discourses but also a process of literary differentiation. This new genre was established through a critical interaction with other genres, as part of a process of rereading and literary interpretation.<sup>2</sup>

## 1. Homeric Criticism in Sicily

The basic text employed for the learning of reading and writing and also the principal subject of interpretation was Homer. The rhapsodes who performed Homer provided a form of textual criticism: they clarified their material and explained γλῶσσαι (rare or unknown epic words or phrases).<sup>3</sup> Later tradition held that the Chian rhapsode Cynaethus was the first to recite Homeric epic at Syracuse. This occurred during the 69<sup>th</sup> Olympiad, in other words at the very end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE (ὁ Κύναιθος πρῶτος ἐν Συρακούσαις ἐρραψώδησε τὰ Ὀμήρου ἔπη κατὰ τὴν ἐξηκοστὴν ἐνάτην Ὀλυμπιάδα). According to the same source, Cynaethus and his associates were said to have composed many verses and to have inserted them into the Homeric texts (οὓς φασὶ πολλὰ τῶν ἐπῶν ποιήσαντας ἐμβαλεῖν εἰς τὴν Ὀμήρου ποιήσιν).<sup>4</sup> All of this constitutes tentative evidence for exegesis and interpolation in early Syracuse.

Xenophanes of Colophon was Epicharmus' contemporary and, according to the tradition, a wandering singer and performer of his own songs active in the Sicily of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Andreas Willi has analysed Epicharmus' work in the wider context of the Sicilian literary tradition, cf. Willi 2008, 162-192 and Willi 2012; Lucía Rodríguez Noriega Guillén has studied the literary and philosophical background of Epicharmus Rodríguez-Noriega Guillén 2012.

<sup>2</sup> For comedy's 'fabric of generic discourse' see the recent volume of Bakola, Prauscello and Telò 2013, where the interaction of Greek comedy with other genres is discussed.

<sup>3</sup> According to Aristotle, *glōssai* are particularly suited to epic poetry (Arist. *Poet.* 1459a9-10).

<sup>4</sup> The information is provided by a scholium to Pindar's second *Nemean* (Σ. Pind. *Nem.* 2, 1c Drachmann). On a possible Syracusan edition of the Homeric text, see Cantarella 1967, 52-53 and Cassio 2012.

time.<sup>5</sup> In his *Silloi* Xenophanes noted that ‘from the beginning everyone learnt according to Homer’ (ἐξ ἀρχῆς καθ’ Ὅμηρον ἐπεὶ μεμαθήκασι πάντες, DK 21 B10), however he also mocked Homer and Hesiod for their theology and for their attribution of ‘everything that among men is to be reproached and censured: stealing, adultery and cheating each other’ to the gods (πάντα θεοῖσ’ ἀνέθηκαν Ὅμηρός θ’ Ἡσιόδός τε, / ὅσα παρ’ ἀνθρώποισιν ὀνειδέα καὶ ψόγος ἐστίν, / κλέπτειν μοιχεύειν τε καὶ ἀλλήλους ἀπατεύειν, DK 21 B11, cf. DK 21 B12).<sup>6</sup>

The lyric poet Stesichorus of Himera constitutes further evidence for Homeric criticism linked to Sicily. Stesichorus was known as a poet, not as a scholar, but his work represents an important part in the mythological tradition which challenged Homeric and Hesiodic accounts of the story of Helen and of the Trojan War.<sup>7</sup> According to this tradition Helen did not go to Troy but remained in Egypt, and it was her phantom (εἶδωλον) that appeared at Troy. That Stesichorus deliberately opposes himself to the known epic version, which he denotes ‘not real/true’ (οὐκ ἔστ’ ἔτυμος λόγος οὗτος, fr. 192 *PMGF*), is noteworthy. In the 2<sup>nd</sup>-century BCE papyrus commentary, the verb ‘to censure’ (μέμφεται) is used in order to describe Stesichorus’ assessment of Homeric and Hesiodic texts: ‘he censures Homer because Homer sang about Helen in Troy and not her phantom, in the other (section) he censures Hesiod’ (μέμφεται τὸν Ὅμηρο[ν ὅτι Ἐλέ]νην ἐποίησεν ἐν Τ[ροίαι] καὶ οὐ τὸ εἶδωλον αὐτῆ[ς], ἐν τε τ[ῆ] ἐτέραι τὸν Ἡσιόδ[ον] μέμ[φετ]αι, *P. Oxy.* 2506 fr. 26 col. i).<sup>8</sup>

The 2<sup>nd</sup>-century CE theologian Tatian credits Theagenes of Rhegium (a Greek colony in southern Italy) with being the first to research (note the use of the erudite verb προερευνάω!) Homer’s poetry, life and historical background (περὶ γὰρ τῆς Ὀμήρου ποιήσεως γένους τε αὐτοῦ καὶ χρόνου καθ’ ὃν ἤκμασεν προηρεύνησαν πρεσβύτατοι μὲν Θεαγένης τε ὁ Ῥηγῖνος κατὰ Καμβύσην γεγονώς καὶ Στησίμβροτος ὁ Θάσιος καὶ Αντίμαχος ὁ Κολοφώνιος κτλ. DK 8 A1).<sup>9</sup> Theagenes dated to the last quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE was listed as the first among a number of other important early Homeric scholars. Stesimbrotus of Thasus was known for his emendations and discussion of problematic passages from the Homeric text;<sup>10</sup> his pupil Antimachus of Colophon was the earliest editor of the Homeric text, and composed a book on Homeric problems.<sup>11</sup> As discussed by the 3<sup>rd</sup>-century CE scholar and philosopher Porphyry in his *Homeric Questions*, Theagenes also offered an allegorical exegesis of the theomachy in *Iliad* 20 and 21, using allegory to “solve” the “problem” of improper stories involving the gods.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Diog. Laert. 9, 18-19. On Xenophanes within the sympotic tradition, see Ford 2002, 46-66.

<sup>6</sup> See Leshner 1992, 81-85 and 114-119, Heitsch 1994.

<sup>7</sup> On Stesichorus’ certain knowledge of Homeric fixed texts similar to the version we know, see Burkert 1987, 50-51, and Cassio 2012, 255-259.

<sup>8</sup> Frs. 192 and 193 *PMGF*. See the recent commentary by Davies und Finglass 2014 *ad loc.* See also Willi 2008, 111-115.

<sup>9</sup> On Theagenes’ scholarship, see Cantarella 1967, 54-62, Pfeiffer 1968, 9-11 and Ford 2002, 68-72.

<sup>10</sup> *FrGH* 107 frs. 21-25. Cf. also *Xen. Symp.* 3, 5-6. See Pfeiffer 1968, 35-36.

<sup>11</sup> Antim. frs. 165-188 Matthews; on Antimachus’ Homeric studies see Pfeiffer 1968, 93-95, Matthews 1996, 46-51, 373-403.

<sup>12</sup> Porph. *Quaest. Hom.* 1, 240, 14 = Theag. DK 8 A2. On the early allegorical exegesis practiced on Sicily and in Southern Italy (also by the Pythagoreans), see Ford 1999, 35-38.

Theagenes was regarded by later sources as a grammarian, in fact as the initiator of grammar, by which knowledge of correct usage of Greek was meant: ‘the other [kind of grammar] concerns *hellēnismos* (i.e. correct Greek usage), which is newer; it has begun with Theagenes and finished with the Peripatetics Aristotle and Praxiphanes’ (ἡ δὲ περὶ τὸν ἑλληνισμόν, ἥτις καὶ νεωτέρα ἐστίν, ἀρξάμενη μὲν ἀπὸ Θεαγένους, τελεσθεῖσα δὲ παρὰ τῶν Περιπατητικῶν Πραξιφάνους τε καὶ Ἀριστοτέλους).<sup>13</sup> Although nothing survives of Theagenes’ work, in the ancient tradition he seems to have enjoyed a solid reputation as a scholar.<sup>14</sup>

Theagenes and the other figures mentioned here should be considered an important part of the context for Epicharmus’ comedy.<sup>15</sup> The following sections will consider the reflection of this scholarship in Epicharmus’ plays themselves.

## 2. Literary Criticism in Epicharmus’ Comedy

Despite the fragmentary state of Epicharmus’ surviving corpus, it seems clear that he was engaged in interpreting other texts. As a comic playwright, he reflected and mocked contemporary scholarly and literary trends, and as a poet he engaged with his creation self-referentially. In this section, a number of fragments that underline the significance of criticism for his work will be discussed.

To begin, Epicharmus’ comedy works with mythological material and thus treats the whole range of mythological lore: the universally admired Homeric epics, the “alternative” Stesichoran tradition. Epicharmus imitates and parodies Homeric models using epic morphology, vocabulary, syntactic structures and hexameters.<sup>16</sup> To give just one example, the dactylic hexameter line from Epicharmus’ comedy *Seirēnes*, λαοὶ τοξοχίτωνες, ἀκούετε Σειρηνάων (‘people equipped with bows and arrows, listen to the Sirens’, fr. 121 *PCG*), alludes to the verse from the *Odyssey* ὄφρα κε τερπόμενος ὄπ’ ἀκούσης Σειρήνοισιν (‘that with delight you would listen to the voice of the two Sirens’, *Od.* 12, 52).<sup>17</sup> It is possible that Epicharmus either altered the Homeric text himself, or used a source which included such an alteration. The emphatic ἀκούετε Σειρηνάων at the end of the verse would render an allusion to the Homeric ὄπ’ ἀκούσης Σειρήνοισιν recognizable. Thus, through the voice of the Sirens, Homer is given voice on the comic

<sup>13</sup> Thus stated in a Vatican scholium on Dionysius Thrax’ *Grammatical Art* 1 (Σ Dion. T. *GG* I 3, 164, 23–29 and 448, 12–16 = DK 8 A1a).

<sup>14</sup> On Theagenes working with written copies of Homeric text, see Cassio 2002a, 118–119 and Cassio 2012, 254–255.

<sup>15</sup> On the possible literary and philosophical sources of Epicharmus, see Rodríguez-Noriega Guillén 2012. On Epicharmus’ comedy in the context of ‘the wide variety and cultural complexity of Sikeliote dramatic performance’, see Bosher 2013. On Sicilian prose texts in Epicharmus’ time, see Cassio 1989.

<sup>16</sup> In Athenaeus, who cites the 2<sup>nd</sup>-century BCE periegetic writer Polemon of Ilium, Epicharmus is listed among other poets who used parody, at least ‘to a small extent in some of his comedies’: κέχρηται δὲ καὶ Ἐπίχαρμος ὁ Συρακόσιος ἔν τισι τῶν δραμάτων ἐπ’ ὀλίγον (*Athen.* 15, 698c = *Epich. test.* 20 *PCG*). On Epicharmus’ treatment of epic language, see a thorough analysis by Cassio 2002b, 70–80. On Epicharmus’ parody of epic themes, see Rodríguez-Noriega Guillén 2012, 76–84.

<sup>17</sup> See the discussion in Cassio 2002b, 71–72.

stage. However, on other occasions Epicharmus “attacks” the Homeric epics, using versions of myths that contradict well-known Homeric versions.<sup>18</sup> It is significant that Epicharmus’ work engages with both Homeric tradition and Homeric criticism, reflecting contemporary scholarly discourses.

Further, on a few occasions Epicharmus either declares that he engaged with particular authors, or is reported to have done so. Three sources refer to his treatment of Xenophanes of Colophon: Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, a commentary on the *Metaphysics* by the 2<sup>nd</sup>- and 3<sup>rd</sup>-centuries CE commentator Alexander of Aphrodisias, and another commentary on the same text by the 6<sup>th</sup>-century CE philosopher Asclepius of Tralles (Epich. fr. 143 *PCG*). Aristotle mentions that Epicharmus challenged Xenophanes: διὸ εικότως μὲν λέγουσιν, οὐκ ἀληθῆ δὲ λέγουσιν· οὕτω γὰρ ἀρμόττει μᾶλλον εἰπεῖν ἢ ὥσπερ Ἐπίχαρμος εἰς Ξενοφάνην (‘therefore they speak plausibly, but they do not say the truth; for it is fitting to say it like that rather than as Epicharmus put it against Xenophanes’).<sup>19</sup> Alexander of Aphrodisias explains this passage: ὡς Ἐπιχάρμου τοῦ τῆς κωμωδίας ποιητοῦ εἰς Ξενοφάνην βλασφημιώτερά τινα καὶ ἐπηρεαστικά εἰρηκότος, δι’ ὧν εἰς ἀμαθίαν τινὰ καὶ ἀγνωσίαν τῶν ὄντων σκώπτων διέβαλεν αὐτόν (‘Epicharmus, the comic poet, said some rather slanderous and insolent things against Xenophanes, in which he attacked and mocked him for a degree of stupidity and ignorance about reality’).<sup>20</sup> Kassel and Austin reconstruct Epicharmus’ mocking of Xenophanes as οὕτ’ εικότως οὕτ’ ἀληθῆ, following Alexander of Aphrodisias’ text ‘for a degree of stupidity and ignorance about reality’.

Asclepius of Tralles’ commentary does not add much to our understanding of the Aristotelian reference to Epicharmus and Xenophanes. He clarifies, however, the name ‘Epicharmus’: <ὁ> κωμικός ὑβριστικῶς προῆλθεν εἰς τὸν Ξενοφάνη (‘the comic poet insolently proceeded against Xenophanes’).<sup>21</sup> Andreas Willi refers to two fragments of Xenophanes, where similar epistemological statements are declared.<sup>22</sup> In one fragment Xenophanes affirmed that nobody has seen the gods, and nobody will know about them. And the same holds for what he himself ‘says about everything’ (καὶ τὸ μὲν οὖν σαφὲς οὐ τις ἀνὴρ ἴδεν οὐδὲ τις ἔσται / εἰδὼς ἀμφὶ θεῶν τε καὶ ἄσσα λέγω περὶ πάντων). People can only rely on appearance/opinion (δόκος δ’ ἐπὶ πᾶσι τέτυκται).<sup>23</sup> The second fragment includes vocabulary comparable to Epicharmus’ text quoted by Aristotle: ‘This should be accepted as something similar to reality’ (ταῦτα δεδοξάσθω μὲν εἰκότα τοῖς ἐτύμοισι).<sup>24</sup> A few decades later another Sicilian intellectual, Gorgias, would discuss this juxtaposition of *doxa* and reality.<sup>25</sup> The Sicilian rhetoricians Corax and Teisias were

<sup>18</sup> Willi 2008, 176: ‘der Angriff auf das Epos’. On Epicharmus’ inversion of the Homeric model in the play *Odyseus Automolos* (frs. 97-103 *PCG*) and on the reconstruction of the paraepic plot, see Willi 2008, 177-191 and Willi 2012, 63-72. On Epicharmus’ paraepic practice in the broader context of paraepic comedy, see also Revermann 2013, 106-110.

<sup>19</sup> Arist. *Metaph.* Γ 5 1010a5-7.

<sup>20</sup> Alex. Aphr. *CAG I*, 308, 10-14 Hayduck.

<sup>21</sup> Asclep. *CAG VI 2*, 278, 23-24 Hayduck.

<sup>22</sup> See a fascinating reconstruction of Epicharmus’ verse in Willi 2008, 163-166.

<sup>23</sup> DK 21 B34.

<sup>24</sup> DK 21 B35. See the discussion on the difference between ἔτυμα (‘real’) and ἀληθῆ (‘true’) in Willi 2008, 165 n. 11 and 114-115.

<sup>25</sup> DK 82 B11, 11.

credited with using the argument of *eikos* in debating the same questions.<sup>26</sup> In any case it seems clear that contemporary debates over this juxtaposition are reflected in Epicharmus and Xenophanes. The fragmentary state of the texts means that we cannot say which work by Xenophanes provokes Epicharmus' response. A blurry snapshot of the Sicilian intellectual environment in which a comic poet attacked an intellectual authority is however conveyed.<sup>27</sup>

The other poet named explicitly in Epicharmus' text is the 6<sup>th</sup>-century BCE Ionian iambographer Ananius. Fragment 51 *PCG* from the comedy *Hebas gamos* contains a verse from Ananius:

καὶ σκιφίας χρόμις θ', ὃς ἐν τῷ ἤρι κατὰ τὸν Ἀνάτιον  
ἰχθύων πάντων ἄριστος, ἀνθίας δὲ χεῖματι

and a swordfish and a chromis, which according to Ananius  
is the best fish of all in the spring, whilst anthias is in the winter

The alluded choliambic tetrameter from Ananius (fr. 5, 1 West<sup>2</sup>) sounds like

ἔαρι μὲν χρόμιος ἄριστος, ἀνθίας δὲ χεῖμωνι

*in the spring chromis is best, whilst anthias is in the winter*

Epicharmus does not quote directly but rather paraphrases and explains Ananius' verse. He makes some Doric alterations, changes the position of words and interpolates. Interestingly, he adds the metatextual *κατὰ τὸν Ἀνάτιον* to his text, cutting the paraphrase in the middle. Examples of the prosaic reference 'κατὰ τὸν X' are rare in comedy and always marked in the text.

Thus, for example, in Aristophanes' *Birds* (414 BCE) Peisetairos comments on his and his fellow's appearance as birds: 'we have been made the object of these comparisons, according to Aeschylus, 'not by others', but by our own feathers' (ταυτὶ μὲν ἠκάσμεσθα κατὰ τὸν Αἰσχύλον / τὰδ' οὐχ ὑπ' ἄλλων, ἀλλὰ τοῖς αὐτῶν πτεροῖς, vv. 807-808). In this case the quotation from Aeschylus' *Myrmidones* (fr. 139, 4-5 *TrGF*) is taken verbatim by Aristophanes, but the verb on which the quotation is dependent is changed. The function of the quotation indicator *κατὰ τὸν Αἰσχύλον* is clear here: the tragic metaphor of feathers is transferred and incorporated on the comic stage. The act of incorporation is highlighted through the metatextual recollection of the tragedian's name. Comicality is intensified through feathered Peisetairos quoting this elevated Achillean speech.

In the same *Birds* an old-fashioned Pindaric singer asks for Peisetairos' patronage, repeatedly calling himself Μουσάων θεράπων ὀτρηρός, κατὰ τὸν Ὅμηρον ('ready servant of the Muses, according to Homer', vv. 908-914, with the marked *κατὰ τὸν Ὅμηρον* in 910 and 914). Again, the comic context of the scene, which is far removed

<sup>26</sup> See B II 15, 16, 17, 18, 20 Radermacher. See also Kraus 2006.

<sup>27</sup> On the common intellectual discourse for both Epicharmus and Xenophanes, cf. also similar content and vocabulary in Epicharmus' νοῦς ὀρῆι καὶ νοῦς ἀκούει· τᾶλλα κωφὰ καὶ τυφλά ('the mind sees and the mind hears; the other things are deaf and blind', fr. 214 *PCG*) and Xenophanes' οὐλος ὀρᾷ, οὐλος δὲ νοεῖ, οὐλος δὲ τ' ἀκούει ('all of him sees, all of him apprehends, and all of him hears', DK 21 B24). See Pickard-Cambridge 1962, 243-244.

from anything Homeric, highlights the metatextual reference to Homer, and fixes the distance between the text and the recipient. We cannot reconstruct the context in which Epicharmus refers to Ananius with this same prepositional phrase, but we should keep these parallels and their comic effect in mind. They provide a possible context for such referencing on the stage.

The context of the quotation of Epicharmus' fragment 51 *PCG* provides important material for an interpretation of Epicharmus' text. The fragment is quoted twice in the seventh book of the *Deipnosophists* by Athenaeus. On the first occasion Athenaeus refers to Epicharmus (282a-b) whilst talking about the fish ἀνθίας. On the second (328a) Athenaeus refers to the same fragment listing various kinds of fish and mentioning an obscure fish χρόμις found, among others, in Epicharmus. The iambographer Ananius, to whom Epicharmus is referring, is also at the forefront of Athenaeus' attention. Athenaeus offers a nine-verse -passage from Ananius and proceeds to explain: 'I quoted Ananius at length because I believe that he also offers this sort of warning to lecherous people' (τῶν τοῦ Ἀνανίου πλεόνων ἐμνημόνευσα νομίζων καὶ τοῦτον ὑποθήκας τοῖς λάγνοις τοιαύτας ἐκτεθῆσθαι 282c). These 'lecherous people' were mentioned earlier in Athenaeus' text.<sup>28</sup> It remains unclear whether Athenaeus' quoting of Ananius on lust was direct or dependent on some other source. Similarly, we cannot know whether lust provided the context for Epicharmus' use of the same verse. Epicharmus' paraphrase of Ananius might be either a parody of the iambographer, or a reference to some other person, or (recent) event that the audience would recognize.

In Epicharmus' comedy *Ga kai Thalassa* Ananius may be referred to one more time. The iambic formulaic oath ναὶ μὰ τὴν κράμβην 'yes by the cabbage', called by Athenaeus 'Ionian' and repeated by the comic poets Epicharmus (fr. 22 *PCG* with a Doric alteration ναὶ μὰ τὰν κράμβαν), Teleclides (fr. 29 *PCG*), and Eupolis (fr. 84, 2 *PCG*), is also found in Ananius (fr. 4 West<sup>2</sup>). Athenaeus lists other parallels and comments on them.<sup>29</sup> From the quotation only this oath survives. Whether Epicharmus is quoting or mocking Ananius and whether this oath existed as a common source and was used by various poets independently in a comic context remain unclear. It should be stressed, however, that Epicharmus' allusion to the iambographer Ananius marks a much discussed connection between *iambos* and comedy.

Epicharmus' awareness of the *iambos* is evident elsewhere. An example of what may be termed "literary criticism" in Epicharmus is his evaluation using technical terminology of the poet Aristoxenus' innovative techniques. The speaker in the corrupt fr. 77 *PCG* seems to be discussing metric or performative issues:

οἱ τοὺς ἰάμβους καὶ τὸν ἄριστον τρόπον,  
ὄν πρῶτος εἰσαγήσαθ' Ὠριστόξενος

who the *iamboi* and the † best way/style/mode,  
which Aristoxenus was the first to introduce

<sup>28</sup> See Athen. 7, 281f on the fish ἀλφησιτής: 'As one of them follows behind the buttocks of the other, thus some of the old authors call them incontinent and lecherous' (τῶν ἀρχαίων τινὲς τοὺς ἀκρατεῖς καὶ καταφερεῖς οὕτω καλοῦσιν).

<sup>29</sup> Athen. 9, 369e-370f. On the iambic nature of this oath, see Kugelmeier 1996, 190-191.

We do not know anything about Aristoxenus of Selinus apart from what we learn from this fragment of Epicharmus and from the context of its quotation. The fragment is quoted by the 2<sup>nd</sup>-century CE Alexandrian grammarian Hephaestion in his discussion of the anapaestic metre. Epicharmus, says Hephaestion, wrote two plays in anapaests. The poet Aristoxenus of Selinus, who was older than Epicharmus (Ἀριστόξενος δὲ ὁ Σελινούντιος Ἐπιχάρμου πρεσβύτερος ἐγένετο ποιητής), also wrote in this metre. Epicharmus is said to have referred to Aristoxenus in his play *Logos kai Logina* (fr. 77 PCG), and some anapaest verses of this Aristoxenus are remembered in Hephaestion (καὶ τούτου τοίνυν τοῦ Ἀριστοξένου μνημονεύεται τινα τούτῳ τῷ μέτρῳ γεγραμμένα).<sup>30</sup> ‘Introducing’ (εἰσαγήσαθ’) in Epicharmus’ verse might mean both invention and adoption of something from elsewhere.<sup>31</sup> It is not however clear what the term *iamboi* means here: either Ionian or some Sicilian forms of *iamboi* are intended, but whether they are forms of rhythm, composition, or performance remains undetermined.<sup>32</sup>

A term related to *iambos* is mentioned by Epicharmus in the comedy *Periallos*. Epicharmus refers to the citharodic nome *pariambis* (fr. 108 PCG). The text is corrupt, but some poet or person skilled in the cithara (σοφός) is piping *pariambides* as an accompaniment to Semele’s dance (Σεμέλα δὲ χορεύει / καὶ ὑπαυλεῖ σφιν † σοφός κιθάραι παραμβίδας). The explanations provided by later lexicographers draw no clear distinction between *iambos* and *pariambis*.<sup>33</sup>

Returning to Epicharmus’ assessment of Aristoxenus’ innovations, the meaning of the term *tropos* (style as in a musical style?) in this context remains unclear. In the 2<sup>nd</sup>-century CE papyrus fragment from Epicharmus’ *Odysseus Automolos*, a scholiast mentions a certain Aristoxenus: ]ρατω.[ ]υακ( ) ὁ Ἀριστόξενος [.<sup>34</sup> Whether this refers to our poet from Selinus, or to the 4<sup>th</sup>-century BCE scholar from Tarentum who wrote on Epicharmus, or even to some other Aristoxenus, remains open. Aristoxenus remains tantalizingly obscure.

To conclude the question of Epicharmus’ concern with the *iambos*, this developed in in a Sicilian context. It had its own specific forms and its own terminology for these forms. The comic playwright dealt with the relationship between the genres of comedy and *iambos*,<sup>35</sup> his curiosity concerning the *iambos* being related to a wider inquisitiveness concerning the nature of comicality itself.

<sup>30</sup> Heph. *Ench.* 8, 2-3 Consbruch. See a stimulating discussion of this fragment in Rotstein 2010, 213-221.

<sup>31</sup> For the parallel of such “introducing” cf. Hdt. 2, 49 and Rotstein 2010, 217-218.

<sup>32</sup> On the Sicilian context of the *iamboi* cf. Athenaeus’ statement on the diversity of Greek music with Athenians preferring Dionysiac (dramatic) and cyclic (dithyrambic) choruses, whilst the Syracusans preferred iambic dancers (Athen. 5, 181c: καθόλου δὲ διάφορος ἦν ἡ μουσικὴ παρὰ τοῖς Ἑλλησι, τῶν μὲν Ἀθηναίων τοὺς Διονυσιακοὺς χοροὺς καὶ τοὺς κυκλίους προτιμώντων, Συρακοσίων δὲ τοὺς ἰαμβιστάς).

<sup>33</sup> See the discussion with examples in (Brown 1997) 37-38; see also Rotstein 2010, 234-240.

<sup>34</sup> *P. Vindob.* 2328, 4 (fr. 83 CGFP, Epich. fr. 97 PCG). See Cassio 1985, 46 n. 31.

<sup>35</sup> See Rosen 1988, Bowie 2002 and Rosen 2013 with further bibliography. The terms referring to iamb appear in comic (or satyr-play) texts early. Apart from Epicharmus’ references cf. also: ἰαμβίς in Aeschylus *Isthmiaeae ē Theōroi* fr. 81 TrGF, ἰαμβύκη in Eupolis’ *Heilotes* fr. 148 PCG, ἰαμβος in Aristophanes’ *Frogs* 661. For iambic patterns in Aristophanes’ comedy, see Zanetto 2001.

In addition to the iambic poets, Epicharmus was also attentive to the new genre of tragedy. We can trace some of his reactions to it. In the damaged scholia on the 1<sup>st</sup>-century BCE papyrus fragment from Epicharmus' *Odysseus Automolos* the following is noted: something πάλιν πρὸς τοὺς τραγικοὺς λέγεται (‘is said again with reference to the tragic playwrights’). This obscure line does not help answer the question whether this is a reference by Epicharmus to tragedy, or, alternatively, whether some aspect of his text is compared with the tragic texts by later commentators.<sup>36</sup>

Further, Epicharmus seems to have criticized Aeschylus, as a scholium to Aeschylus' *Eumenides* line 626 reports. The lemma τιμαλοφύμενον from the elevated verb τιμαλοφείν synonymous to the standard τιμᾶν (‘to honour’) is commented upon: συνεχῆς τὸ ὄνομα παρ' Αἰσχύλοι διὸ σκώπτει αὐτὸν Ἐπίχαρμος (‘it is a frequent word in Aeschylus; Epicharmus mocks him for that’).<sup>37</sup> Whether the scholium provides information stemming from Epicharmus' text cannot be proved. Nonetheless, if we assume a connection to Epicharmus, then the conclusion may be drawn that Epicharmus was conscious of tragedy, of tragic language, of Attic language, and of stylistics more generally. Further, Epicharmus' comedy *Persae* (frs. 110-111 *PCG*) bears the same title as Aeschylus' tragedy performed in Syracuse.<sup>38</sup> Other titles shared by both playwrights include the *Atalantae*, *Bacchae*, *Philoctetes* and *Sphinx*. Epicharmus' comedies *Thearoi* (frs. 68-69 *PCG*), *Pyrrha kai Promatheus* (frs. 113-120 *PCG*) and *Diktyes* (test. 36, 15 *PCG*) remind us of Aeschylus' satyr-dramas *Isthmiastae ē Theōroi*, *Prometheus Pyrkaeus* and *Diktyoulokoī*, but no intertextual relationship can be proved.<sup>39</sup>

Titles and topics held in common make sense given the social and intellectual environment of the first half of the fifth century BCE in Sicily. Both Epicharmus and Aeschylus convey this in their respective generic modes reacting on the models provided by epic and lyric conveyers.<sup>40</sup> Drawing on the scholarship of his time, Epicharmus was engaged in intensive dialogue between literary genres. As a comic playwright he stages alien and/or novel tendencies and peculiarities belonging to other genres, while at the same time providing a lively commentary on them.

The two sides of his work should not, however, be separated. Whether in mocking or passing judgment comedy does not cease to be simultaneously both literary and dramatic. In the literary criticism of Epicharmus (as also in Old Attic comedy more generally, including Aristophanes) any delineation of abstract critical points would seem to be beside the point, in fact impossible. These are always intertwined with the dramatic context of performance.

<sup>36</sup> *P. Vindob.* 2328, 2 (fr. 83 *CGFP*, Epich. fr. 97 *PCG*).

<sup>37</sup> Aesch. Test. 115 R. = Epich. fr. 221 *PCG*. See also Kerkhof 2001, 136-143, Willi 2008, 166-167 and Rodríguez-Noriega Guillén 2012, 85-86.

<sup>38</sup> On the performance of Aeschylus at the court of Hieron of Syracuse, see Boshier 2012 with further bibliography.

<sup>39</sup> On Doricisms and Sicilianisms in Aeschylus' plays, see Griffith 1978.

<sup>40</sup> On the beginnings of myth burlesque in Sicily in both material and literary evidence, see Reinhardt 1996.



### 3. Epicharmus' Comedy and *Logos*

Given the flourishing of rhetoric in the Sicily of his time, it is not surprising that *logos* plays an important role in a number of Epicharmus' comedies. In later sources there are allusions to an Epicharmian comedy presenting a scene devoted to the 'growing *logos*' (ὁ αὐξόμενος λόγος, fr. 136 *PCG*). The plot is discussed in an anonymous papyrus commentary to Plato's *Theaetetus*.<sup>41</sup> An orator is called to court. The creditor had loaned him some money and now the due date has arrived, and he wants his money back. The debtor argues that the creditor has no right to claim the money back, since everything is constantly in a process of changing; he himself is no longer the same as the person who had borrowed the money. The creditor then proceeds to beat the debtor. When he is summoned to court by the debtor, the same argument is used — the creditor is no longer that same person who had carried out the beating. Everything is in a process of changing.<sup>42</sup>

The papyrus provides some significant information on Epicharmus: he successfully staged a number of other plays (ἄλλα τ[έ]τινα εὔ[ρει] [εδίδασ]κεν δ[ρά]ματ[α]) and also this one on the *auxomenos logos*. Through a juridical scene from this play he ridiculed (ἐκ]ωμώιδησεν) the idea that 'substances keep on changing because of the continuous flux' (οὐσίαι ἄλλ[στε ἄλλαι] γίνονται [διὰ την συν]εχῆ ῥύσιν). And he held conversations with the Pythagoreans (ὁ[μιλή]σας τοῖς Πυθα[γορείοις]).

Epicharmus might be parodying a number of the principles credited to the early Pythagoreans, for example the impossibility of absolute justice, since justice depends on a concrete person who is always influenced by circumstances.<sup>43</sup> The "continuous flux" recalls Heraclitus' aphorism on the changeability of things (DK 22 A6 and B91). Epicharmus may then be mocking those orators who employed Heraclitean arguments in order to achieve practical results. The *logos* itself, the meaning of which is not at all clear from the fragment discussed, might recall the crucial Heraclitean principle of ordering matters (DK 22 B1 and B2). On this reading, Epicharmus' *auxomenos logos* unifies and displaces two discourses, one philosophical and one rhetorical-stylistic.<sup>44</sup>

Plutarch also discusses this passage, depicting it as pure rhetoric, without any philosophical allusions. It resembles an Epicharmian scene (ταῦτά γε τοῖς Ἐπιχαρμείοις ἔσκεν), he says, from which the *auxomenos logos* among the sophists was drawn (ἐξ ὧν ὁ αὐξόμενος ἀνέφυ τοῖς σοφισταῖς λόγος).<sup>45</sup> Thus Plutarch refers to the Epicharmian *auxomenos logos* as a predecessor of the sophistic programme. The path of *logos* from Sicily to the Athenian sophists is drawn, and the figure which symbolizes this path is the

<sup>41</sup> *Pap. Berol.* 9782, Anon. in *Pl. Thet.* col. 71, 12-40 = Epich. fr. 136 *PCG*.

<sup>42</sup> See Willi 2008, 170-175 and Willi 2012, 58-63 for the reconstruction of the scene and speculation on possible associations with Pythagorean rhetorical tricks.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. *Iambl. VP* 179-182, *Arist. Metaph.* 985b23-986a3. See Willi 2008, 173-174. On Epicharmus' link to the Pythagoreans as transmitted in later sources, see Epich. test. 9, 11, 12, 13 *PCG*.

<sup>44</sup> This unification works even more strikingly if the tensions between Pythagoras and Heraclitus are taken into account. See Willi 2012, 60-61 on the complicated relationship between these philosophers as described in the later tradition.

<sup>45</sup> *Plut. Mor.* 559b = Epich. fr. 136 *PCG*.

scholar Gorgias, whose *logos dynastēs* was accorded with the primary power to change the world.<sup>46</sup> And this is the motif that Aristophanes will use in his *Clouds* (423 BCE) where he criticizes the sophistic model of rhetoric and education.

The importance of *logos* for Epicharmus is also seen in the title of his comedy *Logos kai Logina* (frs. 76-78 PCG). The title may be interpreted as an allusion to allegories (as is the case with a number of other titles of Epicharmus' works, such as *Ga kai Thalassa* or *Elpis ē Ploutos*). A parallel with the agon of *logoi* in Aristophanes' *Clouds* (889-1104) comes to mind, though it is not supported by the surviving textual content.<sup>47</sup> Although Epicharmus' title bears the opposition of the male (*logos*) and the female (*logina*), the opposition is not necessarily laden with erotic connotations. A father-and-daughter relationship might also be suggested, in which case the gender opposition is rendered more complex through an additional generation opposition. Other possibilities are that a juxtaposition between male and female argumentation (in the Gorgian sense) or between male and female principles of ordering matters (in the Heraclitean sense) is intended. The comic nature of the title is emphasized by the hapax form of the female form *log-ina*.<sup>48</sup>

The surviving text supports the hypothesis that Epicharmus' comedy made use of contemporary exercises in rhetoric and stylistics. One dialogue (fr. 76 PCG) involves a linguistic exercise on a mythological topic playing with the acoustic misunderstanding γ' ἔρανον ('feast, banquet') as γέρανον ('crane'):

- A. ὁ Ζεὺς μ' ἐκάλεσε, Πέλοπί γ' ἔρανον ἰστιῶν.  
 B. ἡ παμπόνηρον ὄψον, ὦ τᾶν, ὁ γέρανος.  
 A. ἀλλ' οὔτι γέρανον, ἀλλ' ἔρανον <γά> τοι λέγω.

- A. Zeus invited me over, giving a banquet for Pelops.  
 B. An awful dish, mate, the crane!  
 A. It's not a crane though that I'm talking about, but a banquet.

Such wordplay with homophonies is a typical device in comedy.<sup>49</sup> As far as we can judge from the surviving fragments, Epicharmus used this device frequently, as well as other puns, comic word-making, paronomasiae, etymologies exploiting multiple meanings of words, or of similar-sounding words for humorous effect.<sup>50</sup> The fragment has an intertextual relationship with the first Olympian ode by Pindar (cf. Pind. *Ol.* 1, 36-42), where the traditional myth of Pelops, Tantalus' son, is criticized: *υἱὲ Ταντάλου, σὲ δ' ἀντία προτέρων φθέγξομαι, / ὅπότε' ἐκάλεσε πατήρ τὸν εὐνομώτατον / ἐς ἔρανον φίλαν τε Σίπυλον* ('son of Tantalus, I will speak of you, against the earlier <tradition>, when your father invited <the gods> to a very well-ordered feast at his beloved home Sipylos'). Instead of being eaten by gods, Pelops is brought to Zeus' palace and thus hidden from human beings. Epicharmus is here playing with the Pindaric word ἔρανος for 'feast,

<sup>46</sup> The word *logos* alludes to Gorgias and to his famous expression from the *Encomium of Helen* λόγος δυνάστης μέγας ἐστίν ('*logos* is a great ruler', DK 82 B11, 8).

<sup>47</sup> On the *agōn logon* in comedy see Froleyks 1973, 133-134 and 335-359.

<sup>48</sup> See the discussion of the title in Cassio 2002b, 69-70.

<sup>49</sup> The same acoustic joke was played by the Sicilian playwright Sophron (fr. 38 PCG and Shaw 2014, 75). Cf. also Stratt. fr. 63 PCG.

<sup>50</sup> See various examples in Willi 2008, 156-157.

banquet' which is infrequent elsewhere. Epicharmus' dialogue may thus be read as a parody of the elevated lyric style.<sup>51</sup>

The philological connotations of the *iamboi* and the *tropos* introduced by Aristoxenus in fr. 77 *PCG* from the comedy *Logos kai Logina* were discussed above. The third fragment (fr. 78 *PCG*) consists of five words and is a stylistic exercise in itself. In his discussion of the use of the word 'shrimp' (κᾶρίς) in various authors, Athenaeus says that Epicharmus spells this word with an omega (διὰ τοῦ ω εἴρηκεν) in this particular comedy, and quotes the following verse:<sup>52</sup>

ἀφύας τε κωρίδας τε καμπύλας

*both small-fries and curved shrimps*

One line with three trisyllabic words in the same female plural form in accusative with an emphatic *homoeoteleuton* joined through the conjunction τε... τε is not sufficient to build an hypothesis on the function of these stylistic devices within the text as a whole. It does however point to the stylistic sensibilities of its author.<sup>53</sup>

Our understanding of Epicharmus' rhetorical and linguistic receptivity can be expanded through the examination of two further fragments from uncertain plays. Etymologies and paronomasiae are already found in Homeric epic, but in comedy they achieve a special status, not least through parody. Fr. 147 *PCG* may be imagined as a school dialogue (in the manner of Aristophanes' *Clouds*):

A. τί δὲ τόδ' ἐστί; B. δηλαδὴ τρίπους. A. τί μὲν ἔχει πόδας τέτορας; οὐκ ἐστὶν τρίπους, ἀλλ' <ἐστὶν> οἶμαι τετράπους.  
B. ἔστιν ὄνομα ἀντὶ τρίπους, τέτορας γὰρ μὲν ἔχει πόδας.  
A. εἰ δίπους τοῖνον ποκ' ἦς αἰνίγματ' Οἰ(δίπου) νοεῖς

(A) What is this here? (B) a tripod, obviously. (A) And why does it have four feet? It is not a tripod, but seems like a tetrapod to me.

(B) It bears the name tripod, but it has really got four feet.

(A) Well, if it had two feet, you would think there is the riddle of Oe<dipus>.

Aristophanes uses the same joke on the etymology of the word τρίπους in his late comedy *Telemesses*. In Athenaeus' *Epitome* various literary examples of the usage of τρίπους are listed and both Epicharmus' and Aristophanes' fragments are quoted one after the other.<sup>54</sup> The fragment of Aristophanes (fr. 545 *PCG*) also represents a dialogue:

A. τράπεζαν ἡμῖν <εἶς>φερε  
τρεις πόδας ἔχουσαν, τέτταρας δὲ μὴ ᾗχέτω.  
B. καὶ πόθεν ἐγὼ τρίπου τράπεζαν λήψομαι;

<sup>51</sup> See Arnson Svarlien 1990/1991, 106-108, Rodríguez-Noriega Guillén 2012, 83 and Morgan 2014, 107-108. If it is not a direct influence, then Pindar and Epicharmus might have had a common source, with the same contextual and stylistic structure. Thus a discussion of the game, including common myth-telling and common vocabulary, remains valid.

<sup>52</sup> Athen. 3, 106e.

<sup>53</sup> For more on stylistics of Epicharmus' comedy, see Willi 2008, 153-158.

<sup>54</sup> Athen. 2, 49a-d. Cf. also Cratinus' use of 'three-footed tables' (τράπεζαι τρισκελεῖς) in fr. 334 *PCG*.

- (A) Bring us out a table  
with three feet, it must not have four.  
(B) And where should I get a three-footed table?

We do not know whether Aristophanes knew this particular comedy by Epicharmus. The context in which Aristophanes lived and worked in Athens in the last quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE was in any case overloaded with rhetorical and linguistic debates. Such exercises must have been commonplace. Through similar jokes such as the cosmological comparison of the sky with the baking-cover, and people with the charcoal, Aristophanes intertwines natural philosophical, rhetorical and linguistic discourses.<sup>55</sup>

Transferring Aristophanes and the Athenian context in which he worked on to Epicharmus' Syracuse, one might assume that Epicharmus was also engaged in mocking early linguistic studies carried on by the Sicilian rhetoricians. There might be a connection to Heraclitus' pupil Cratylus (perhaps Epicharmus' younger contemporary) and his statement that those who know names, know things, and there is no other way to understand the essence of things but through names (διδάσκειν ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ, ὃ Σώκρατες, καὶ τοῦτο πάντα ἀπλοῦν εἶναι, ὃς ἂν τὰ ὀνόματα ἐπίστηται, ἐπίστασθαι καὶ τὰ πράγματα, Plat. *Crat.* 435d). Through this cognitive approach, which foreshadows De Saussurian theory of signs, Cratylus' ὀνόματα are intertwined with Epicharmus' ἔστιν ὄνομα' αὐτῶι τρίπους. The ὀνόματα will be considered in Athens in the context of Protagoras' concept of ὀρθοέπεια ('the correctness of expression'), an idea that was further developed by Prodicus as the ὀρθότης τῶν ὀνομάτων ('the correct usage of words/names').<sup>56</sup> This brings us back to Theagenes of Rhegium discussed above. Theagenes was credited with being one of those who first dealt with grammar and the correct usage of language.<sup>57</sup> Epicharmus' fr. 147 *PCG* could thus be read in the context of Theagenes' studies in grammar.

Further, this fragment bears noteworthy literary allusions. The three-footed table served as a topos for 'riddles' (γρίφος and αἰνίγμα) in Greek literature beginning from the poem *The wedding of Ceyx* ascribed to Hesiod.<sup>58</sup> Comedy exploited this technique.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Ar. *Nu.* 97: ἡμεῖς δ' ἄνθρακες ('and we are the charcoal', the wordplay with ἄνθρωποι). This baking-cover joke was ascribed by Cratinus in his comedy *Panoptae* to the philosopher Hippon (*Crat.* fr. 167 *PCG*) and by Aristophanes in his *Birds* (Ar. *Av.* 1000-1001) to the astronomer Meton. Heraclitus had also compared a man with hot charcoal (DK 22 A16 = Sext. *Adv. math.* 7, 130).

<sup>56</sup> DK 80 A 24 and 26; DK 84 A 9, 11, 16. On Protagoras' and Prodicus' approach to the correctness of names, see Rademaker 2013, Wolfdorf 2011 and Mayhew 2011, 107-128 with further bibliography.

<sup>57</sup> See above on Theagenes DK8 A1a.

<sup>58</sup> Fr. 266 M.-W. and Merkelbach and West 1965, 310. The obscure poetess Cleoboulina wrote riddles in hexameters (Cratinus' comedy *Cleoboulinae* test. 1 *PCG* = D. L. 1, 89). On the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE literary riddles, see LeVen 2013.

<sup>59</sup> For riddles in Old comedy, cf. Aristophanes' *Knights* 1011-1099, *Wasps* 15-23 or *Frogs* 52-67, Plato com. fr. 3 *PCG* etc. For Middle Comedy see Antiphanes frs. 51, 55, 75, 122, 192, 194 *PCG*, Alexis fr. 242 *PCG*, Eubulus fr. 106, Timocles fr. 13 *PCG*. Cf. also a long discussion of literary riddles at the end of the tenth book of Athenaeus' *Deipnosophists* 448b-459b with a variety of parallels. On the function of riddles in comedy, see the recent study Kidd 2014, 52-65. As pointed out in Zagagi 1999, 211: 'The use of γρίφος and

Through the combination of two meanings of the word τρίπους, Epicharmus' joke is rendered more complex than Aristophanes' wordplay in his *Telemesses*. Τρίπους can signify at the same time 'an old man who leans on a staff', and, through this meaning of the word, the reading αἰνίγματ' Οἰ(δίπου) in Epicharmus' fragment fits perfectly. Further, the τετράπους in the fragment corresponds to the word τετράπουν found on the hydria from Basel (520-510 BCE) revealing the Sphinx scene and an inscription.<sup>60</sup> The famous riddle of the Sphinx (walking on two, four and three legs) seems to be alluded to on stage: Epicharmus himself wrote a comedy with the title *Sphinx* (frs. 125 and 126 *PCG*) and some of the surviving text of Euripides' lost tragedy *Oedipus* reveals a link to the riddle.<sup>61</sup> Epicharmus' fragment could thus be understood as a rhetorical exercise with sophisticated literary and mythological wordplay.

The last fragment worth mentioning is fr. 145 *PCG*. This is interesting because it sheds light on the stylistic devices employed by Epicharmus and also because the context for the quotation provides information on Epicharmus' use of ridicule. The fragment might be regarded as the statement of a social parasite:

τόκα μὲν ἐν τήνων ἐγὼν ἦν, τόκα δὲ παρὰ τήνοισ ἐγώ

at one time I used to be at their houses, at another time with them

The line is overloaded with rhetorical devices including anaphora (τόκα... τόκα), antithesis (μὲν ἐν τήνων... δὲ παρὰ τήνοισ), and homoeoteleuton (ἐγὼν ἦν... ἐγώ). The fragment is quoted by Aristotle in the third book of his *Rhetoric*. Here Aristotle deals with the place of clauses in a period. Aristotle argues that the antitheses can be false (εἰσὶν δὲ καὶ ψευδεῖς ἀντιθέσεις), and he quotes this fragment by Epicharmus as an example (Arist. *Rhet.* 1410b3-5). The same verse is quoted in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-century BCE treatise *De elocutione* in a similar context.<sup>62</sup> In his discussion of periods including antithetical clauses, the author (conventionally called Demetrius) argues that 'some antitheses may lie in the content and some may be twofold, touching both questions of language and of content' (ἦτοι τοῖς πράγμασιν, ἢ ἀμφοτέροις, τῇ τε λέξει καὶ τοῖς πράγμασιν). The author then quotes Epicharmus' line as an example of such a clause, which is 'not really antithetical, but suggests an antithesis because of the antithetical form' (μὴ ἀντικείμενα ἐμφαίνει τινὰ ἀντίθεσιν διὰ τὸ τῷ σχήματι ἀντιθέτως γεγράφθαι). Demetrius may be quoting Epicharmus' verse from Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, but he discusses the example in greater detail. The verse is called 'playful' (πεπαιγμένον), and Demetrius interprets it in the following way: "The same idea is repeated, without contrast, but the

---

αἰνίγμα is an integral part of the social and cultural life of ancient Greece, and they leave their mark on virtually all areas of Greek literature and thought'.

<sup>60</sup> Cahn 855, see Moret 1984, 40.

<sup>61</sup> E. fr. 540a *TrGF*. Cf. A. Ag. 80-82 and a hexameter riddle about the Sphinx, perhaps taken from a tragedy quoted by Asclep. Trag. 12 *FGrH* 7 with Lloyd-Jones 1978, 60-61. Further, Aeschylus wrote the satyr-drama *Sphinx* (467 BCE). Cf. also allusions to the Sphinx riddle in the 4<sup>th</sup>-century BCE comic playwrights Anaxilas' fr. 22, 25-28 *PCG* and Eubulus' title *Sphingokarion*. The riddle is recorded on many examples of vase painting from the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE; Moret 1984, 31-65. Cf. also Hes. *Op.* 533 τρίποδι βροτῶ and West 1978 *ad loc.*

<sup>62</sup> See *Eloc.* 22-24.

stylistic manner, imitating an antithesis, suggests an intent to deceive'. According to Demetrius, Epicharmus 'probably used antithesis' μὲν ἐν τήνων... δὲ παρὰ τήνοις 'to provoke laughter, and to mock the rhetoricians' (ἀλλ' οὗτος μὲν ἴσως γελοιοποιῶν οὕτως ἀντέθηκεν καὶ ἅμα σκώπτων τοὺς ῥήτορας). Both terms meaning 'mocking' (γελοιοποιῶν and σκώπτων, the latter being much stronger and more expressive than the former) are significant: Hellenistic philology comments on Epicharmus' criticism of stylistics, marking the intertwined dialogue between Sicilian scholarship and comedy.

The fragments discussed above serve as an opportunity to speculate on approaches to the linguistic norm and also to literary standards in pre- and early classical Sicily. We find a critical interaction with epic, lyric, iambic and prose genres; we see the capacity to recognize allusions and to evaluate innovations; we note the criticism of intellectual trends; and we identify the exchange of literary and artistic ideas with significant Athenian poets, who were invited and patronised by the Deinomenid tyrants Gelon (485-478 BCE) and Hieron (478-467/466 BCE).<sup>63</sup> But although Epicharmus' fragments contribute to the recreation of an intellectual and cultural context for performance and scholarship in Sicily in the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, they do more than shed light on their Sicilian context. Rather, they illustrate the interaction between different genres and the ways in which these were incorporated into text, metatext and performance to generate tension and comic effect.

### Bibliography

- Arnson Svarlien, D. 1990/1991. 'Epicharmus and Pindar at Hieron's Court'. *Kokalos* 36-37: 103-110.
- Bakola, E., L. Prauscello and M. Teldò (eds.). 2013. *Greek Comedy and the Discourse of Genres*. Cambridge.
- Bosher, K. 2012. 'Hieron's Aeschylus'. In: K. Bosher (ed.), *Theater Outside Athens: Drama in Greek Sicily and South Italy*, Cambridge - New York, 97-111.
- Bosher, K. 2013. 'Infinite Variety: Ancient Greek Drama in Sicily'. In: C.L. Lyons, M. Bennett, C. Marconi, with A. Sofroniew (eds.), *Sicily: Art and Invention Between Greece and Rome*, Los Angeles, 111-121.
- Bosher, K. 2014. 'Epicharmus and Early Sicilian Comedy'. In: M. Revermann (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Comedy*, Cambridge, 79-94..
- Bowie, E.L. 2002. 'Ionian Iambos and Attic Komoidia: Father and Daughter, or Just Cousins? In: A. Willi (ed.), *The Language of Greek Comedy*, Oxford, 33-50.
- Brown, Ch.G. 1997. 'Iambos'. In: D.E. Gerber (ed.), *A Companion to the Greek Lyric Poets*, by. [Mnemosyne Supplements 173]. Leiden - New York - Köln, 11-88
- Burkert, W. 1987. 'The Making of Homer in the Sixth Century BC: Rhapsodes versus Stesichoros. In: *Papers on the Amasis Painter and His World*. Malibu, Cal., 43-62

<sup>63</sup> For an overview of the cultural context in Epicharmean Sicily, see Bosher 2014.

- Cantarella, R. 1967. 'Omero in Occidente a le origini dell' omerologia'. In: *Letteratura e arte figurata nella Magna Grecia. Atti del sesto convegno di studi sulla Magna Grecia*. Napoli, 37-65.
- Cassio, A.C. 1985. 'Two Studies on Epicharmus and His Influence'. *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 89: 37-51.
- Cassio, A.C. 1989. 'Lo sviluppo della prosa dorica e le tradizioni occidentali della retorica greca'. In: A.C. Cassio, D. Musti (eds.), *Tra Sicilia e Magna Grecia: aspetti di interazione culturale nel IV sec. a. C.*, Pisa, 137-157.
- Cassio, A.C. 2002a. 'Early Editions of the Greek Epics and Homeric Textual Criticism in the Sixth and Fifth Centuries BC'. In: F. Montanari (ed.), *Omero tremila anni dopo*. Roma, 105-136.
- Cassio, A.C. 2002b. The Language of Doric Comedy. In: A. Willi (ed.), *The Language of Greek Comedy*. Oxford, 51-83.
- Cassio, A.C. 2012. 'Epica orale fluttuante e testo omerico fissato: riflessi su Stesicoro (PMGF 222b 229 e 275)'. *Seminari Romani di cultura greca n.s.* I 2: 253-260.
- Davies, M., P.J. Finglass. 2014. *Stesichorus: The Poems, intr., ed., comm.* Cambridge.
- Ford, A. 1999. 'Performing Interpretation: Early Allegorical Exegesis of Homer'. In: M. Beissinger, J. Tylus, S. Wofford (eds.), *Epic Traditions in the Contemporary World: the Poetics of Community*. Berkeley e.a, 33-53.
- Ford, A. 2002. *The Origins of Criticism: Literary Culture and Poetic Theory in Classical Greece*. Princeton.
- Froleyks, W.J. 1973. *Der Agon Logon in der antiken Literatur*. Diss. Bonn.
- Griffith, M. 1978. 'Aeschylus, Sicily and Prometheus'. In: R.D. Dawe, J. Diggle, P.E. Easterling (eds.), *Dionysiaca: Nine Studies in Greek Poetry by former pupils presented to Sir Denys Page on his 70th birthday*. Cambridge, 105-139.
- Heitsch, E. 1994. *Xenophanes und die Anfänge kritischen Denkens*. Stuttgart.
- Kerkhof, R. 2001. *Dorische Posse, Epicharm und Attische Komödie*. München; Leipzig.
- Kidd, S. E. 2014. *Nonsense and Meaning in Ancient Greek Comedy*. Cambridge.
- Kraus, M. 2006. 'Nothing To Do With Truth? Eikós in Early Greek Rhetoric and Philosophy'. In: L. Calboli Montefusco (ed.), *Papers on Rhetoric*, 7:129-150.
- Kugelmeier, Ch. 1996. *Reflexe früher und zeitgenössischer Lyrik in der alten attischen Komödie*. Stuttgart - Leipzig.
- Leshner, J.H. 1992. *Xenophanes of Colophon: Fragments, ed. with transl. and comm.* Toronto.
- LeVen, P.A. 2013. "'You Make Less Sense than a (New) Dithyramb": Sociology of a Riddling Style'. In: J. Kwapisz, D. Petrain, M. Szymansk (eds.), *The Muse at Play. Riddles and Wordplay in Greek and Latin Poetry*. Berlin - New York, 44-64.
- Lloyd-Jones, H. 1978. 'Ten notes on Aeschylus, Agamemnon'. In: R.D. Dawe, J. Diggle, P.E. Easterling (eds.), *Dionysiaca: Nine Studies in Greek Poetry by former pupils presented to Sir Denys Page on his 70th Birthday*. Cambridge, 45-61.
- Matthews, V.J. 1996. *Antimachus of Colophon: text and comm.* [Mnemosyne: supplements 155.] Leiden.
- Mayhew, R. 2011. *Prodicus the Sophist: texts, translations, and commentary*. Oxford.
- Merkelbach, R. and M.L. West. 1965. 'The wedding of Ceyx'. *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 108: 300-317.

- Moret, J.-M. 1984. *Oedipe, la Sphinx et les Thébains: essai de mythologie iconographique*. Rome.
- Morgan, K.A. 2014. *Pindar and the Construction of Syracusan Monarchy in the Fifth Century B.C.* Oxford.
- Pfeiffer, R. 1968. *History of Classical Scholarship: From the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age*. Oxford.
- Pickard-Cambridge, A.W. 1962. *Dithyramb, Tragedy and Comedy*. 2nd ed., rev. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Rademaker, A. 2013. 'The Most Correct Account: Protagoras on Language'. In: J.M. van Ophuijsen, M. van Raalte, P. Stork (eds.), *Protagoras of Abdera: the Man, his Measure*. Leiden - Boston, 87-111.
- Reinhardt, U. 1996. 'Zu den Anfängen der Mythenburleske. Griechische Mythen in den Komödien Epicharms und bei Stesichoros, auf Caeretaner Hydrien und anderen westgriechischen Sagenbildern'. *Thetis: Mannheimer Beiträge zur Klassischen Archäologie und Geschichte Griechenlands und Zyperns* 3: 21-42.
- Revermann, M. 2013. 'Paraepic Comedy: Point(s) and Practices'. In: E. Bakola, L. Prauscello, M. Telò (eds.), *Greek Comedy and the Discourse of Genres*. Cambridge e.a, 99-128.
- Rodríguez-Noriega Guillén, L. 2012. 'Epicharmus' Literary and Philosophical Background'. In: K. Boshier (ed.), *Theater Outside Athens: Drama in Greek Sicily and South Italy*. Cambridge, 76-96.
- Rosen, R.M. 1988. *Old Comedy and the Iambographic Tradition*. Atlanta, GA.
- Rosen, R.M. 2013. 'Iambos, Comedy and the Question of Generic Affiliation'. In: E. Bakola, L. Prauscello, M. Telò (eds.), *Greek Comedy and the Discourse of Genres*. Cambridge, 81-97.
- Rotstein, A. 2010. *The Idea of Iambos*. Oxford.
- Shaw, C.A. 2014. *Satyrical Play: the Evolution of Greek Comedy and Satyr Drama*. Oxford - New York.
- West, M.L. 1978. *Hesiod, Works and Days, ed. with proleg. and comm.* Oxford.
- Willi, A. 2008. *Sikelismos: Sprache, Literatur und Gesellschaft im griechischen Sizilien (8.-5. Jh. v. Chr.)*. Basel.
- Willi, A. 2012. 'Challenging Authority: Epicharmus Between Epic and Rhetoric'. In: K. Boshier (ed.), *Theater Outside Athens: Drama in Greek Sicily and South Italy*. Cambridge; New York, 56-75.
- Wolfdorf, D. 2011. 'Prodicus on the Correctness of Names: the Case of ΤΕΡΨΙΣ, ΧΑΡΑ and ΕΥΦΡΟΣΥΝΗ'. *Journal for Hellenic Studies* 131: 131-145.
- Zagagi, N. 1999. 'Comic Patterns in Sophocles' *Ichneutae*'. In: J. Griffin (ed.), *Sophocles Revisited: Essays Presented to Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones*, Oxford, 177-218.
- Zanetto, G. 2001. 'Iambic Patterns in Aristophanic Comedy'. In: A. Cavarzere, A. Aloni, and A. Barchiesi (eds.), *Iambic Ideas: Essays on a Poetic Tradition from Archaic Greece to the Late Roman Empire*. Lanham - Boulder - New York - London, 65-76.