

DE GRUYTER

S. Douglas Olson (Ed.)

ANCIENT COMEDY AND RECEPTION

ESSAYS IN HONOR OF JEFFREY HENDERSON



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Edited by
S. Douglas Olson

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ISBN 978-1-61451-166-3
e-ISBN 978-1-61451-125-0

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A CIP catalog record for this book has been applied for at the Library of Congress.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie;
detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

© 2014 Walter de Gruyter GmbH, Berlin/Boston

Cover image: © The Trustees of the British Museum

Typesetting: jürgen ullrich typosatz, Nördlingen

Printing: Hubert & Co. GmbH & Co. KG, Göttingen

♻️ Printed on acid-free paper

Printed in Germany

www.degruyter.com

Foreword

This volume represents an attempt to offer not a systematic history of the comic genre from Graeco-Roman times to today, but a series of interconnected studies of some of the most important moments and figures in that history. These studies are dedicated to Jeffrey Henderson, whose *Maculate Muse* (1975) and critical edition and commentary on Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* (1987)—among other major scholarly contributions—have decisively shaped the way Athenian “Old Comedy” is read and received today.

The volume was conceived by Wolfgang Haase, Professor of Classical Studies at Boston University, who set its intellectual and geographic limits, issued the vast majority of the invitations to contribute, established the style-sheet and basic formatting standards, and did preliminary editorial work on a number of individual pieces. When Haase was forced to withdraw from the project for reasons of ill health at the end of 2012, I took over as general editor. My time and energy has been devoted primarily to line-editing material already in hand, making further organizing and formatting decisions and applying them throughout, and shepherding the project through the press. I would like to express my gratitude to the individual authors for consistently and cheerfully meeting the many deadlines set them in the course of this process. I would also like to thank Michiel Klein Swormink, De Gruyter's Editorial Director for the Humanities (North America), and our project editor Emily Hough, for their assistance in bringing the volume into print.

S. Douglas Olson
Freiburg, August 2013

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Ancient Comedy and Receptions

Zachary P. Biles

Exchanging Metaphors in Cratinus and Aristophanes

Abstract: Self-aggrandizing boasts and taunting exchanges between rivals are a noteworthy feature of comic poets' response to the competitive format of dramatic production. While these exchanges are often couched in blunt, if imaginative, terms, close analysis of a series of passages (esp. Cratin. fr. 203; Ar. V. 1049–50; fr. 688) reveals a subtle antagonism based on adoption and control of the metaphors and flamboyant language rivals deploy to portray their poetic virtues for the audience. Underlying the discussion is an argument for expanding the content of Cratin. fr. 203 to include the first couplet of the Hellenistic epigram from which the words are drawn.

Cratinus fr. 203 in Kassel-Austin's edition is drawn from the second line of a Hellenistic epigram:¹

“οἶνός τοι χαρίεντι πέλει ταχύς ἵππος ἀοιδῶ
ἕδωρ δὲ πίνων οὐδὲν ἄν τέκοις σοφόν.”
τοῦτ' ἔλεγεν, Διόνυσε, καὶ ἔπνεεν οὐχ ἑνὸς ἀσκοῦ
Κρατίνος, ἀλλὰ παντὸς ὠδῶδει πίθου.
τοιγὰρ ὑπὸ στεφάνοις μέγας ἔβρυεν, εἶχε δὲ κισσῶ
μέτωπον ὥσπερ καὶ σὺ κεκροκωμένον.

“Wine, you know, is a fast horse for a graceful poet,
and you could produce nothing clever by drinking water.”
That, Dionysus, is what Cratinus used to say, and he had the whiff
not of a single wineskin, but reeked of the entire cask.
Thus did he burst forth into greatness beneath garlands,
and he kept his forehead tinted yellow with ivy, just like you.

Whether a direct quotation of a Cratinean trimeter or an adaptation thereof, the verse suits the comic poet in light of contemporary (esp. Ar. *Eq.* 529–36) and later poets' and

Among the many contributions Jeffrey Henderson has made to the study of Old Comedy is his attention, in his lexical work particularly, to the sophisticated use of vivid terms and the meanings they generate in different literary contexts. This study attempts to extend that effort to further enrich our understanding of the work of Aristophanes and his rivals. For Aristophanic passages, I offer the translations of Henderson's Loeb's throughout.

¹ AP 13. 29; Asclep. 47. Authorship is variously ascribed in the sources for the epigram; see Alexander Sens (ed.), *Asclepiades of Samos: Epigrams and Fragments* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 325–6.

readers' (Hor. *Epist.* 1.19.1–3; Lib. *Ep.* 1477.5) descriptions of his fondness for alcohol, and above all because a wine-induced inspiration was part of Cratinus' own poetic identity.² Moreover, as an iambic trimeter the second line can be easily ascribed to a specific play, *Pytine* (Dionysia 423 BCE), in which Cratinus notoriously made his alcoholism and poetic activity the centerpiece of the action in response to Aristophanes' taunts in *Knights* ($\Sigma^{\text{VEI}^3\Theta}$ *Eq.* 400a = *Pytine* test. ii). This would explain why the statement does not take the form of an anapestic tetrameter or another long-line verse better suited to a self-reflexive poetic assertion in a parabasis.³

Kassel–Austin, however, scale back the text offered by Meineke and Meier, who accepted the entire first couplet of the epigram as a quotation or rendering of Cratinean material, a position that accords well with the implicit connection of the statement in v. 3–4 to *everything* said up to this point: “Cratinus used to say the preceding.”⁴ One detail that appears not to have been taken into account supports this conclusion. The description in v. 1 stipulates a “fast” horse, which seems to presuppose an equestrian competition as the envisioned comparandum driving the metaphorical treatment of wine. Not surprisingly, “fleet” is a common epithet of horses in epinician poetry, as also in epigrams commemorating victories in equestrian events.⁵ That characterization of a poet's interests accordingly is not only a fitting description of the competitive ambience of the dramatic festivals as Cratinus experienced and reflected on them,⁶ but points to the Hellenistic epigrammatist's likely source for the sentiment, namely a Cratinean parabasis or a passage with parabolic overtones, in which the playwright squared off with his rivals by making poetic claims

2 Ralph M. Rosen, “Cratinus' *Pytine* and the construction of the comic self,” in: David Harvey, John Wilkins (eds.), *The Rivals of Aristophanes: Studies in Athenian Old Comedy* (London: Duckworth, 2000) 23–39; Zachary P. Biles, “Intertextual biography in the rivalry of Cratinus and Aristophanes,” *American Journal of Philology* 123 (2002), pp. 170–88; Ian Ruffell, “A total write-off: Aristophanes, Cratinus, and the rhetoric of comic competition,” *Classical Quarterly* NS 52 (2002), pp. 155–62; Emmanuela Bakola, “The drunk, the reformer and the teacher: agonistic poetics and the construction of persona in the comic poets of the fifth century,” *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 54 (2008), pp. 11–15; *Cratinus and the Art of Comedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), Ch. 1 *passim*.

3 For the range of meters used in parabases, see e.g. James W. Poultney, “Eupolidean Verse,” *American Journal of Philology* 100 (1979), pp. 140–1; Riccardo Quaglia, “Elementi strutturali nelle commedie di Cratino,” *Acme* 51 (1998), pp. 58–62. For “Cratinus” in *Pytine*, cf. Sidwell, pp. 280–9 in this volume.

4 See Kassel–Austin *ad loc.*, with attempts to recast the verse in an appropriate metrical form. Cf. Sens, *Asclepiades* (above, n. 1), pp. 327, 328–9.

5 Epinician: Pi. *O.* 1.110; *P.* 11.46–8; *N.* 1.5–6; Bacch. 3.4. Epigram: *CEG* nos. 302.3; 820.2; cf. 379. In Homer, the combination ἵππος ταχύς is mostly associated with the chariot race in Patroclus' funeral games (*Il.* 23.347, 545, cf. 287; elsewhere at 5.356; 22.464); more regularly, fast horses in Homer are ὠκύς (e.g. 3.263; 4.500; 23.516).

6 E.g. fr. 38; 342; 360; with Bakola, *Cratinus* (above, n. 2), pp. 24–9, 40–1, 48–9. Epinician imagery returns in the epigram's final couplet with the image of Cratinus' ivy-shadowed crown, for which cf. *AP* 13.28.4.

about the virtues of alcohol, likely in response to criticism like that found in *Knights* (Lenaia 424 BCE).⁷ Indeed, a separate scholion tells us that Cratinus leveled specific charges of plagiarism against Aristophanes in *Pytine*.⁸ And while certainty is impossible, this play seems the likely place of origin for the ideas contained in the entire first couplet of the epigram, both because of its explicit concentration on poetry in such terms, and because the rivalry between Aristophanes and Cratinus probably reached its climax that year, shortly after which Cratinus ceased to compete at the Dionysian festivals.⁹

If both verses of the epigram's opening couplet depend on Cratinean passages having to do with his rivalry with Aristophanes, it is worth considering how two other passages might fit within an antagonistic dialogue between the two poets. Commenting on the defeat of *Clouds* by *Pytine* (*Nu. Hyp. II Dover*) one year after the event, Aristophanes at *Wasps* 1049–50 attempts to explain the upset by recourse to a related metaphor:

ὁ δὲ ποιητῆς οὐδὲν χείρων παρὰ τοῖσι σοφοῖς γενόμεσται,
εἰ παρελαύνων τοὺς ἀντιπάλους τὴν ἐπίνοιαν ξυνέτριψεν.

Though our poet is no worse off in the eyes of the sagacious
if, while overtaking his rivals with a novel conception, he took a spill.

Here too “the poet” is cast in a context of equestrian competition. Whereas the Cratinean passage only alluded to the competitive dynamic of dramatic performance, Aristophanes' reference to his “rivals” at *V. 1050* draws this function of the metaphor out into the open.¹⁰ The resonance is potentially more interesting, however, if *Pytine* is the source of the Hellenistic epigram, since in that case Aristophanes seems to be

7 Although I assume that the Hellenistic poet can be credited with some manipulation of metrical form, see Bakola, *Cratinus* (above, n. 2), pp. 163 n. 138 (for hexameters perhaps mixed with other meters in Cratinus), 39–59 (for the voice of “Cratinus” in fragments belonging to poetic structures other than the parabasis).

8 Σ^{VEΓΘM}Eq. 531a = *Pytine* fr. 213, alleging plagiarism by Aristophanes of Eupolidean material; see Ian C. Storey, *Eupolis: Poet of Old Comedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 281–8; Natalia Kyriakidi, *Aristophanes und Eupolis: zur Geschichte einer dichterischen Rivalität*, Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte 85 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007), pp. 176–96.

9 See the cautionary remarks against such assumptions in Biles, “Intertextual biography” (above, n. 2), pp. 173–4, and Bakola, *Cratinus* (above, n. 2), pp. 56–7, although Biles, pp. 175–6, provides additional reasons for thinking that v. 2 of the epigram (fr. 203) belongs to *Pytine*. The report of Cratinus' “death” at *Pax* 700–3 (City Dionysia 421 BCE), while almost certainly a distorted exaggeration of the true circumstances (see S. Douglas Olson (ed.), *Aristophanes: Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), *ad loc.*), at least fits his disappearance from the didascalic evidence. Giuseppe Mastromarco, “L'invasione dei Laconi e la morte di Cratino (Ar. *Pax*, 700–703),” in: Luigi Torraca (ed.), *Scritti in onore di Italo Gallo* (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 2002), pp. 395–403, believes that he remained active for a few more years.

10 For ἀντίπαλος in this sense, cf. *Pax* 739 with Olson, *Peace* (above, n. 9), *ad loc.*; CEG no. 811.

claiming that his own play (*Clouds*), although defeated by Cratinus' play, was in fact the "faster" of the two, which is to say "better." This at least is the poetological implication of claiming that he "was driving past his rivals."¹¹ The responsive relationship between the passages may be closer still, since in *Pytine* Cratinus presumably used the metaphor, either directly or implicitly, to address his two consecutive defeats by Aristophanes' *Acharnians* (Lenaia 425 BCE) and *Knights* (Lenaia 424 BCE).¹² So too, Aristophanes' obvious attempt to restore his relationship with the *sophoi* in the audience in *V.* 1049 and especially in the *pnigos* that follows (*V.* 1051–9), smacks of a rebuttal to the assault on his credentials as an (over-) sophisticated poet, which Cratinus (fr. 342) must have made before the audience in the recent past and which the defeat of *Clouds* is taken by Aristophanes to have endorsed (esp. *Nu.* 525–35).¹³ It makes sense, finally, that Aristophanes' intellectualizing *epinoia* (*V.* 1050) both recalls *dianoia*, a term used to refer to *Clouds* and its defeat a few lines earlier (*V.* 1044), and replaces Cratinus' wine as the vehicle that ought to bring a poet across the finish line in first place.¹⁴ The metaphor and its redeployment in a modified form thus amount to a pointed, sophisticated exchange between rivals as they strive to pick apart one another's poetic claims and simultaneously promote their own, all in an effort to win over the audience, as the *pnigos* in *Wasps* makes plain by weaving together blatant requests for support and touting the virtues of Aristophanic-brand poetic *sophia*.

A similar attempt to appropriate and control a feature of Cratinus' poetic identity may exist in Ar. fr. 688. As part of a discussion of Pramnian wine, Athenaeus quotes Aristophanes as an authority for Athenian dislike of this vintage:¹⁵

11 Compare Aristophanes' comments on *Clouds*' superlative quality in relation to the shabby rivals who defeated him at *Nu.* 521–5 (cf. *V.* 1043–7). For *παρελαύνων* in this context, cf. *Il.* 23.345, 427; and see Roberto Campagner, *Lessico agonistico di Aristofane* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 2001), pp. 255–6; Olimpia Imperio, *Parabasi di Aristofane: Acarnesi, Cavalieri, Vespe, Uccelli* (Bari: Adriatica Editrice, 2004), *ad loc.*

12 *Ach. Hyp.* I.38–9; *Eq. Hyp.* II.21–2 Wilson.

13 Aristophanes' claim to a strategy of poetic retrenchment in *Wasps*, in response to his defeat with *Clouds*, is already adumbrated in the prologue, where terms activating his poetic persona as an "overly sophisticated" poet are prominent (esp. 64–6).

14 Cf. Imperio, *Parabasi* (above, n. 11), pp. 297–9. For possible explanations of what *epinoia* (cf. *Eq.* 539; *Pax* 750) implies for Aristophanean poetics, see Ruffell, "Total write-off" (above, n. 2), pp. 147–50.

15 The fragment is transmitted without a play-title. Bergk assigned it to the lost *Thesmophoriazusae*, based on the mention of Pramnian and many other wine types in fr. 334 and flowery wine in fr. 351, but references to wine are ubiquitous in comedy; for Pramnian specifically, see also *Eq.* 107; *Phryn. Com.* fr. 68. The former passage may involve engagement with Cratinean comedy: Ruffell, "Total write-off" (above, n. 2), pp. 148–55. In any event, a date of production for the second *Thesmophoriazusae* within the period of Aristophanes' rivalry with Cratinus is not impossible: James Butrica, "The lost *Thesmophoriazusae* of Aristophanes," *Phoenix* 55 (2001), pp. 44–76; skeptical response in Colin Austin and

τὸν Ἀθηναίων δῆμον οὔτε ποιηταῖς ἦδεσθαι σκληροῖς καὶ ἀστεμφέσιν οὔτε πρραμνίοις {σκληροῖσιν} οἴνοις συνάγουσι τὰς ὄφρῦς¹⁶ τε καὶ τὴν κοιλίαν, ἀλλ' <ἀνθ>οσμῖα καὶ πέπονι νεκταροσταγεῖ.

[Aristophanes says that] the Athenian people enjoy neither poets who are hard and dry nor Pramnian wines that contract the brows and the bowels, but prefer a rich bouquet and a taste of nectar.

Although it is unclear how the metrical form of the passage should be restored,¹⁷ interest in the current Athenian preference for poets strongly suggests that Aristophanes' own positioning for the audience's favor is involved. That he uses a metaphor that connects wine with poetics may also point to rivalry with Cratinus, whose poetic biography, as noted above, included a claim of inspiration through wine that was readily identifiable by the audience.¹⁸ It may not be coincidence, in that case, that the characterization of Cratinus' poetic style by Platonius includes the same qualitative term "harsh" to describe his penchant for abuse (ἀύστηρός ... ταῖς λοιδορίαις) that Athenaeus offers in his preface to the Aristophanic fragment to describe the "bitter" Pramnian poets/wine now out of fashion in Athens.¹⁹ At the very least, this point of comparison tends to confirm the literary critical interest of Ar. fr. 688.²⁰ But Athenaeus' prefatory remarks are also only a terse recasting of ideas that follow in the Aristophanic fragment itself,²¹ and it is accordingly worth recalling that the contribution of *loidoria* to Cratinus' comic style attracted Aristophanes' critical attention else-

S. Douglas Olson (eds.), *Aristophanes: Thesmophoriazusae* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. lxxxv–vii.

16 The phrase συνάγουσι τὰς ὄφρῦς (cf. Antiph. fr. 217.2) appears also at *Nu.* 582, for the Clouds' disapproval of the Athenians' support of Cleon.

17 See Kassel–Austin *ad loc.*

18 Less likely, a reference to Aeschylus is assumed by Ferruccio Conti Bizzarro, *Poetica e critica letteraria nei frammenti dei poeti comici greci* (Naples: M. D'Auria Editore, 1999), p. 48, based on Ar. fr. 663, in which the tragic poet's *sklērotēs*, i.e. "harshness" (on related terms for Cratinus, see below), is taken in the ancient scholarly tradition as the basis for Aristophanes' likening him to "tough skin" (κόλλοπι). It is easier to believe that Aristophanes reserved the terms of approbation in fr. 688 for himself, and thus that the passage has to do with comedy; cf. the characterization of Aristophanes in Anon. *De comoedia*, Prolegomena de Comoedia III, p. 9.37 Koster, εὐφυῖα πάντας ὑπεραίρων ("surpassing all in genius"). But the connection with Aeschylus is perhaps not to be rejected entirely, given the use Cratinus may have made of Aeschylus in developing his own comic poetics: see Anon. *De comoedia*, Prolegomena de Comoedia III, p. 8.24 Koster; Bakola, *Cratinus* (above, n. 2), pp. 118–79.

19 *De diff. char.*, Prolegomena de Comoedia II, p. 6.2 Koster. Platonius goes on to offer an immediate distinction from Aristophanes' style in this regard, well in advance of his focus on the latter poet at the end of the passage, where Cratinus is described in similar terms as πικρὸς λίαν (p. 7.15).

20 So too in Phryn. *Com.* fr. 68, Pramnian wine is apparently used metaphorically to characterize Sophocles' poetry; cf. Conti Bizzarro, *Poetica* (above, n. 18), p. 77.

21 ἔστι δὲ οὗτος γένος τι οἴνου καὶ ἔστιν οὗτος οὔτε γλυκὺς οὔτε παχύς, ἀλλ' ἀύστηρός καὶ σκληρός καὶ δύναμιν ἔχων διαφέρουσιν ("This is a type of wine, and it is neither sweet nor rich, but is bitter and harsh, as well as exceptionally potent").