Epicharmus, the *Pseudepicharmeia*, and the origins of Attic drama

1. Introduction

In Epicharmus fr. 32.9–12, from *Hope or Wealth* (Ἐλπὶς ἢ Πλοῦτος), a parasite describes his return from a party late at night:

> ἔρπω δ' ὀλισθράζων τε καὶ κατὰ σκότος
> ἐρῆμος: αἴ κα δ' ἐντύχω τοῖς περιπόλοις,
> τοῦθ' οἷον ἀγαθὸν ἐπιλέγω τοῖς θεοῖς, ὅτι
> οὐ λῶντι πλεῖον ἀλλὰ μαστιγῶντί με.

'I walk along, slipping out in the dark, all on my own; and when I run into a patrol, I just thank the gods that all they want is to give me a whipping.'

The plight of the Epicharmian scholar is similar: he sets out after feasting on the rich remains of Attic comedy, but suddenly finds himself tapping in the dark, on slippery ground, every now and then running into other scholars who ask for hard evidence, instead of fancy guesswork. And yet, Epicharmian comedy must have its place at the table when the δειπνοσοφισταί are considering the periodisation and dramatic form of Greek comedy; for the question may be an old one, but it remains worth asking: What is the role of the Sicilian Epicharmus in the history of Greek comedy—a history which otherwise is so much an Athenian one?

We would not ask this today, if Plato and Aristotle had not opened the can of worms already in antiquity. In the *Theaetetus* (152e = Epich. test. 3) Plato refers to Epicharmus as the 'doyen of comedy' (ἄκρος κωμωιδίας), and in the *Poetics* (1448a33–34) Aristotle famously—though questionably[1]—comments on the 'substantial' chronological priority of Epicharmus in comparison with the early Athenian comedians Chionides and Magnes. Apparently this priority was used by some unnamed Sicilian author(s)[2] as an argument in

[1] According to *Sud.* χ 318 (= Chionides test. 1), Chionides was already staging comedies eight years before (the end of) the Persian Wars, whereas *Sud.* ε 2766 (= Epich. test. 1) dates Epicharmus' activity in Syracuse two years later. No matter how exact these dates are, and whether or not Epicharmus already had a lengthy career before he was active in Syracuse (as is plausible: cf. §8), they hardly justify Aristotle's statement that Epicharmus was πολλῶι πρότερος Χιωνίδου. According to *Sud.* μ 20 (= Magnes test. 1), even Magnes overlapped in time with Epicharmus (ἐπιβάλλει Ἐπιχάρμωι νέος πρεσβύτηι).

[2] One likely candidate is the Sicilian historian Alcimus: not only was Alcimus interested in Epicharmus, and tried to highlight his role in Greek cultural history (cf. §2 on the *Pseudepicharmeia*), he also controversially claimed for Sicily the invention of another light (perhaps lascivious?) literary genre, the so-called Παίγνια (Alcimus fr. 560F1 Jacoby, referring to 'Botrys of Messene').

support of the claim that comedy was truly Sicilian in origin. This sweeping adrogation is subsequently modified by Aristotle himself (*Poet.* 1449b1-9, including Epich. test. 5). According to him, (Athenian) comedy grew out of volunteer choruses, and this initially choral genre then gradually evolved through the introduction of character roles, the addition of prologues, and the increase in the number of actors:

τὸ δὲ μύθους ποιεῖν τὸ μὲν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐκ Σικελίας ἦλθε, τῶν δὲ Ἀθήνησιν Κράτης πρῶτος ἦρξεν ἀφέμενος τῆς ἰαμβικῆς ἰδέας καθόλου ποιεῖν λόγους καὶ μύθους

'The construction of plots, however, originally came from Sicily, and in Athens Crates was the first to abandon the iambic mode and create, with a general scope, λόγοι and μῦθοι.'

As we shall see, this seemingly innocuous statement contains something of a literary bombshell, hidden perhaps, but ready to detonate. By contrast, the *Theaetetus* passage is harmless, for all its emphatic wording. Strictly speaking, in fact, Plato's term ἄκρος κωμωιδίας need not even imply that Epicharmus was really a comedian in the modern sense: after all, the same sentence also calls Homer the ἄκρος τραγωιδίας. Even so, Plato's cursory remark has impacted on modern Epicharmian scholarship as much as Aristotle's more balanced views. In context, the Platonic Socrates refers to the authority of 'all the philosophers, except Parmenides'—viz. Protagoras, Heraclitus, and Empedocles—as well as the ἄκροι of both tragedy and comedy, Homer and Epicharmus, to bolster the claim that 'nothing ever *is*, but everything is always *becoming*' (ἔστι μὲν γὰρ οὐδέποτ' οὐδέν, ἀεὶ δὲ γίγνεται). We are not told the exact Epicharmian reference point, but given the quality of the Homeric one, we might not be very impressed. If the Homeric verse Ὠκεανόν τε θεῶν γένεσιν καὶ μητέρα Τηθύν (*Il.* 14.201, 14.302) is taken to mean that 'everything is born out of flow and movement' (πάντα […] ἔκγονα ῥοῆς τε καὶ κινήσεως), this depends so much on a forced allegorical reading of the *Iliad* that one wonders how plain the Epicharmian 'evidence' could have been. It is true, an ancient commentary on the *Theaetetus*, together with a more elusive reference in Plutarch, suggest that Epicharmus once wrote a play, or scene, in which the—ultimately Heraclitean, though arguably more immediately Pythagorean[3]—idea of constant change was comically exploited, as two people litigated about a loan and its repayment (Epich. fr. 136, from Anon. in Pl. *Theaet.* col. 71.12-40, ed. Bastianini/Sedley, *CPF* III 458–460, and

[3] Cf. Willi (2008: 172-174) and (2012a: 60-62), after Rostagni (1924: esp. 7-68) who concentrates on the Alcimus fragment cited below. Iambl. *VP* 266 (= Epich. test. 12) may have this (and/or similar passages) in mind when he turns Epicharmus into a crypto-Pythagorean (μετὰ παιδιᾶς κρύφα ἐκφέροντα τὰ Πυθαγόρου δόγματα: μετὰ παιδιᾶς indicates that Iamblichus is not thinking of e.g. the spurious Πολιτεία, on which see §2).

Plut. *Mor.* 559a–b: cf. §3); and one of a number of conceivably unauthentic[4] Epicharmian fragments quoted by the fourth-century historian Alcimus even has one speaker say,

> ὦδε νῦν ὄρη
> καὶ τὸς ἀνθρώπους· ὁ μὲν γὰρ αὔξεθ', ὁ δέ γα μὰν φθίνει,
> ἐν μεταλλαγᾶι δὲ πάντες ἐντὶ πάντα τὸν χρόνον. ([Epich.] fr. 276.6–8)

'So, now look also at mankind: one person grows, the other withers away, and all are subject to change all the time.'

But even if Plato had something like this in mind, the *Theaetetus* shows no interest in Epicharmus or Epicharmian comedy *per se*. Given Plato's negative attitude towards comedy in general (cf. esp. Pl. *Leg.* 7.816e), this is hardly surprising. And yet, this fleeting mention of Epicharmus has made some modern scholars—headed by Zieliński (1885: 243) and more recently François (1978)—maintain that it was Plato, of all people, who brought Epicharmian comedy to Athens, and whose journey to Sicily should therefore be regarded as a *terminus post quem* for an Athenian audience's familiarity with Epicharmus' work. Obviously, this paradoxical hypothesis further entails that we must disregard (or distort[5]) Aristotle's information about the Attic take-over of Sicilian plot comedy in the days of Crates; but if we are prepared to do that, we might as well disbelieve anything else Aristotle has to say about the history of comedy (or tragedy, for that matter).

Still, the extreme position of Zieliński and François could never have been defended, were it not true that Aristotle's doctrine, though perfectly plausible in itself, proves difficult to substantiate with further detail. A number of scholars on the opposite side—most notably von Salis (1905), followed by Körte (1921: 1224–1225)—tried hard to detect various kinds of Epicharmian influence on Attic comedy, beyond the general point highlighted by Aristotle; but if one chooses to adopt a critical stance, little stands up to closer scrutiny, as Wüst (1950) and Kerkhof (2001) have demonstrated. Given the availability of these two treatments, the present contribution will not rehearse again all the arguments and counterarguments, but only offer the briefest of summaries, adding some methodological remarks (§7). Its main focus, however, will be different. An attempt will be made to vindicate Aristotle's views by going well beyond, and forgetting about, the minutiae that have dominated (and obscured) the discussion so far. In order to do this successfully, we must first acquaint ourselves with the Epicharmian oeuvre itself.

2. Problems of pseudepigraphy

[4] On these fragments *ex Alcimo* and their possible origin cf. §2.2 below.

[5] Cf. Cassio (1985: 40–41), against François (1978: 67–68).

As soon as we zoom in on the Epicharmian corpus, we encounter a major obstacle: pseudepigraphy. Diogenes Laertius notes that under Epicharmus' name circulated 'scientific, gnomic, and medical treatises' (Diog. Laert. 8.78 = Epich. test. 9, ὑπομνήματα ἐν οἷς φυσιολογεῖ, γνωμολογεῖ, ἰατρολογεῖ). These included, at least,[6] a collection of Γνῶμαι, a Κανών of unclear content,[7] a Pythagoreanising[8] Πολιτεία, and a Χείρων apparently containing medical recipes and therefore thematically reminiscent of, though hardly identical to,[9] a gastronomical Ὀψοποιΐα. The question arises why anyone would want to ascribe such non-comic writings to a comic author. Even in the case of the

[6] I.e. leaving aside the even more shadowy λόγος πρὸς Ἀντήνορα, which is mentioned by Plut. *Num*. 8.9 (= [Epich.] fr. 296) and apparently turned Pythagoras into a Roman citizen; according to Cassio (1985: 45–50), such a work could have been inspired by an *interpretatio Pythagorica* of Epicharmus and/or some *Pseudepicharmeia* due to Aristoxenus of Tarentum.

[7] Since the treatise περὶ μαντικῆς of Philochorus (fr. 328F79) named Axiopistus as the author of both the Κανών and the Γνῶμαι (cf. §2.1), and since Tertull. *De an.* 46.10 (= [Epich.] fr. 274) cites 'Epicharmus' as an oneirocritical authority, Kaibel (1899: 134) hypothesised "ex Canone sumptam esse quam de somniorum divinatione Epicharmi opinionem rettulit Tertullianus". At the same time, it would be attractive to find in the Κανών the reference point for Diogenes' φυσιολογεῖ, and one might therefore suspect, with Pascal (1919: 65–73) or Kerkhof (2001: 106–108), the Κανών behind the *Epicharmus* of Ennius which, embedded into a dream vision ([Epich.] fr. 281), dealt with the four elements water, earth, air, and fire ([Epich.] frr. 282–286; cf. Epich. fr. 199?). The detail of Kerkhof's theory is problematic, however, as he also wants to connect the Κανών with [Epich.] fr. 278 *ex Alcimo* and [Epich.] fr. 280, because of a thematic similarity between [Epich.] fr. 278.3–5 with Enn. *ann.* 8–10 Sk. The fact that Ennius' *Epicharmus* was written in trochaic tetrameters, the favourite metre of Epicharmus and the *Pseudepicharmeia* (cf. §5), suggests that Ennius followed his 'source' here, whether or not that source was the Κανών; but [Epich.] fr. 278 is written in iambic trimeters, and for this very reason hardly to be attributed to the same work as [Epich.] fr. 280. In terms of content, [Epich.] fr. 280 rather resembles [Epich.] fr. 244, apparently the beginning of the Γνῶμαι (cf. Crönert 1912: 408, Olivieri 1946: 108, Pickard-Cambridge 1962: 245), although the prologue/epilogue of a *carmen physicum* (= the Κανών?) cannot be ruled out either (cf. Lorenz 1864: 100, Kaibel 1899: 138, Kerkhof 2001: 97).

[8] Note the emphasis in [Epich.] fr. 240 on ἀριθμός and λογισμός, and on a θεῖος λόγος in human life; cf. Schmid (1929: 650 n. 1) and Cassio (1985: 49) (though for the latter the Πολιτεία was merely 'Pythagorisable', not truly Pythagorean). Also worth mentioning in this context is [Epich.] fr. 243 (from Antiatt. p. 112.16 Bekker; cf. Cassio 2012) with παράκαιρος· ἀντὶ τοῦ ἄκαιρος: on the importance of the καιρός in Pythagorean thought see e.g. Arist. *Met.* 985b23–32; Willi (2008: 174) and (2012a: 61–62).

[9] The case for identity (Susemihl 1894: 564–565; cf. Kaibel 1899: 144, Pascal 1919: 64–65, and Olivieri 1946: 135, who regard the Ὀψοποιΐα as one part of the Χείρων) is weak, as it rests on the ascription of the word ἡμίνα 'half-pint' to the Χείρων in Athen. 14.648d and to the Ὀψοποιΐα in Antiatt. p. 99.1 Bekker. Apart from the fact that the occurrence of an everyday word like ἡμίνα is unremarkable in any text dealing with quantities of this size, Athenaeus' wording itself makes it clear that the lexeme was found in more than one *Pseudepicharmeion* (τὴν μὲν ἡμίναν οἱ τὰ εἰς Ἐπίχαρμον ἀναφερόμενα ποιήματα πεποιηκότες οἴδασι).

equally varied collection of pseudepigrapha ascribed to Hesiod, which generated similar authenticity debates already in antiquity, one can regularly see a stricter generic *tertium comparationis*—didactic and mythological narrative—with Hesiod's genuine works. So, despite the partial parallelism with the *Pseudohesiodeia*, the Epicharmian situation remains unique; and it is one of the tasks of Epicharmian philology not only to separate the genuine from the spurious (as is generally done, or at least attempted), but also to account for the existence of the spurious. As long as our focus is on Epicharmus' *drama*, i.e. the 'real' Epicharmus, this second task might perhaps seem irrelevant at first, but it is not. As with Hesiod, the genuine works must have contained *some* trigger for the proliferation of pseudepigrapha. Hence, the *Pseudepicharmeia*, or at least some of them, may indirectly still tell us something about the character of Epicharmian comedy.

2.1. The Γνῶμαι

This is most obviously true for the Γνῶμαι, the composition of which was ascribed to a certain 'Axiopistus' of Lokroi or Sikyon by the early Hellenistic scholar Philochorus, and subsequently also by Apollodorus of Athens who put together a ten-volume edition of Epicharmus (Athen. 14.648d = *Pseudepicharmeia* test. i K.-A., with Philochorus fr. 328F79 and Apollodorus fr. 244F226). It is likely that Axiopistus' gnomic collection contained a core of genuine material from Epicharmus' plays. According to the anonymous treatise *On Comedy* (Proleg. de com. III, 16, p. 8 Koster = Epich. test. 6), Epicharmus was in fact γνωμικὸς καὶ εὑρετικὸς καὶ φιλότεχνος, and gnomic sayings are occasionally ascribed to specific plays by our sources.[10] In the Τρῶες, for example, someone remarked (Epich. fr. 129),

– ⏑ ἐκ παντὸς ξύλου κλοιὸς γένοιτο κ' ἢ θεός (*vel sim.*[11])

'any piece of wood may turn into the stocks or a god',

and in the Ἡρακλῆς ὁ πὰρ Φόλωι a character observed (Epich. fr. 66.2),

οἴομαι δ' οὐδεὶς ἑκὼν πονηρὸς οὐδ' ἅταν ἔχων

[10] See further Willi (2008: 154–156), where this feature of Epicharmus' style is related to the conversational idiom depicted in the comedies: Sophron, too, was known for it ([Demetr.] *Eloc.* 156 = Sophron test. 14).

[11] The proverb is given in *Prov. Coisl.* 168 as ἐκ παντὸς ξύλου κλῶιος γένοιτ' ἂν καὶ θεός (with the explanation that κλῶιος is 'Doric' for κύφων) and in Zenob. *vulg.* 4.7 (with the ascription to Epicharmus) as ἐκ παντὸς ξύλου κύφων γένοιτ' ἄν. Kaibel (1899: 115) notes that "poterat poeta talia scribere ἐκ παντὸς ξύλου | κλοιός τε κα γένοιτο κἠκ τωὐτοῦ θεός", but not only does this depart more substantially from the above restitution, it also neglects the fact that Epich. fr. 128 points to trochaic tetrameters for the Τρῶες.

'no-one, I think, is willingly bad or struck by delusion'.

Given such material in Epicharmus' comedies, it is often impossible to decide whether a gnomic line attributed simply to 'Epicharmus' is genuine or not—and if it is (or may be), whether it is cited directly from a play or merely from a gnomic collection. A case in point comes from Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (2.1.20), where Socrates quotes, first, a passage from Hesiod's *Works and Days* (287-292) and, second, two Epicharmian lines (Epich. frr. 271 and 236), in support of his view that αἱ διὰ καρτερίας ἐπιμέλειαι τῶν καλῶν τε κἀγαθῶν ἔργων ἐξικνεῖσθαι ποιοῦσιν 'effort and endurance let one reach noble and good results':

τῶν πόνων πωλοῦσιν ἡμῖν πάντα τἀγαθ' οἱ θεοί

'For hard work the gods sell us all the good things'

ὦ πονηρέ, μὴ τὰ μαλακὰ μῶσο, μὴ τὰ σκλήρ' ἔχηις

'Wretch, don't look for soft comfort, lest you get hard discomfort'.

Of these two lines, the second stands a slightly better chance of being genuine, both because it is dialectally sounder (whereas in the first a substantial intervention is needed to produce acceptable Syracusan Doric[12]) and because the initial vocative makes it less self-containedly gnomic. However, it is also possible that *both* are genuine, even if the first was dialectally adjusted. Such adjustment should only be expected if the saying had become common currency in Athens. To give a more extreme modern analogue, a German speaker who says *Sein oder Nichtsein, das ist hier die Frage* can still honestly claim to be quoting Shakespeare—although in truth (s)he is merely quoting A. W. von Schlegel's translation of *To be or not to be, that is the question*.

But the Shakespeare parallel goes even further. Stout anti-Zielińskians, including Cassio (1985: 39-40) have used Xenophon's quotations from Epicharmus as an argument to prove that Epicharmus' work must have been known in Athens already by the time of Socrates, i.e. well before Plato's journey to Sicily. Xenophon, they maintain, would not have put an anachronistic statement into the mouth of his Socrates (nor would Plato, as in Pl. *Gorg.* 505e, with Epich. fr. 161). To this, the pro-Zielińskians might reply:[13] perhaps

[12] Kassel and Austin (2001: 155) print ἁμὶν instead of ἡμῖν on the basis of the transmission in Stobaeus (who is no doubt following Xenophon), but only something along the lines of Ahrens's (1843: 457) τῶν πόνων πωλοῦντι (or πωλεῦντι?, cf. Thumb and Kieckers 1932: 215, Willi 2008: 128 and 138 on ἐμεῦς) πάντα τἀγαθ' ἁμὶν τοὶ θεοί really heals the dialect.

[13] Cf. François (1978: 54); accordingly, Epich. fr. 161 is classified as spurious or doubtful by Kaibel (1899: 138), Olivieri (1946: 128), and Diels and Kranz (1951: 201).

only a collection of Epicharmian γνῶμαι was circulating in Athens, before Plato imported the plays themselves. In reality, though, one would not even have to assume that. When I quote *To be or not to be* and name Shakespeare as the author of the quote,[14] this does not necessarily mean that I and/or my addressee(s) have read *Hamlet*, nor that I have a collection of Shakespeare quotations on my shelf. It simply means that I happen to know this one phrase, and regard Shakespeare as a quotable authority.

This last point, however, is crucial. For Socrates to cite Epicharmus alongside Hesiod or Homer makes sense only if his Athenian addressees too regard Epicharmus as a quotable authority. So those who invoke an Epicharmian collection of γνῶμαι in order to 'excuse' Xenophon make the tail wag the dog. To repeat someone's memorable sayings presupposes that person's authority, it does not trigger it. Even *if* Axiopistus had already edited (a first version of) the Γνῶμαι by the end of the fifth century, there would have been no demand for such a work in Athens—*unless* Epicharmus already had an independent claim to fame there. And for that, the non-comic pseudepigrapha cannot be responsible, both because Plato's term ἄκρος κωμωιδίας would then be odd and because the one other *Pseudepicharmeion* whose topic might have been sufficiently weighty to establish its alleged author's moral authoritativeness, the Πολιτεία, was apparently written—without any serious pretence at linguistic authenticity[15]—by the aulete Chrysogonus only some fifty years after Socrates' death (cf. Aristoxenus fr. 45 Wehrli).[16]

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[14] The second condition is essential: not everyone who says *Trust is good, control is better* does so with the intention of quoting Lenin (and of those who do, only some will also know that Lenin never actually said/wrote precisely that, or its equivalent in Russian). Thus, *if* Eur. *Hel.* 122 αὐτὸς γὰρ ὅσσοις εἰδόμην, καὶ νοῦς ὁρᾶι 'I've seen it with my own eyes, and my mind sees it too' really responds to Epich. fr. 214 νοῦς ὁρῆι καὶ νοῦς ἀκούει· τἆλλα κωφὰ καὶ τυφλά 'the mind sees and the mind hears: all the rest is deaf and blind' (cf. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1910: 29-30 n. 54), this does not tell us anything about Euripides' knowledge of Epicharmus' plays (or a hypothetical *gnomologium*: cf. Kannicht 1969: 50, Olson 2007: 60). Nor, incidentally, will Lenin have known Epich. fr. 218 νᾶφε καὶ μέμνασ' ἀπιστεῖν· ἄρθρα ταῦτα τᾶν φρενῶν 'Be sober and remember to disbelieve: that's what holds intelligence together' or [Epich.] fr. 253 πόλλ' ἀπιστία δέδρακεν ἀγαθὰ ⟨καὶ⟩ πίστις κακά 'Distrust has done much good and trust bad'.

[15] Contrast, for example, the dialectally plausible [Epich.] fr. 244, presumably from the Γνῶμαι (cf. fn. 7; Solmsen 1907: 320).

[16] That Chrysogonus was active in the 350s results from Marsyas fr. 135/136F17 (= Didym. *in Dem.* col. XII 55-62), but the matter is complicated by the mention, in Duris fr. 76F70 (disputed by Plut. *Alcib.* 32), of another (earlier) flute-player Chrysogonus, who is said to have accompanied Alcibiades on his return from exile in 407 B.C. Most scholars have regarded this 'first Chrysogonus' as the author of the Πολιτεία (Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1910: 30 n. 54, Kirchner 1899: 2512, Kaibel 1899: 133 and 1907: 40, Cassio 1985: 48), but Kerkhof (2001: 112-114) rightly objects that "[w]enn der ältere Flötenspieler der Verfasser wäre, so wären […] die dürftigen Verse des Chrysogonos nicht nur die älteste pseudepicharmeische Dichtung, die sich sicher nachweisen lässt, sondern seine *Politeia* wäre überhaupt die älteste bekannte Schrift dieses Titels". Moreover, when one famous aulete Chrysogonus existed in the middle of the fourth

2.2. *Fragmenta incerta* and *fragmenta ex Alcimo*

Once we accept that it was really the genuine work of Epicharmus that was highly regarded not only in fifth-century Sicily, but also in Athens, our need to understand its dramatic nature becomes even more pressing. Unfortunately, this is no easy task. In *Poetae Comici Graeci* I, a mere 134 fragments are assigned to a named play, and many of these consist only of a single word or line. They are followed by 105 *incertarum fabularum fragmenta*, not all of which necessarily belong here rather than among the *Pseudepicharmeia*. The uncertainty can be exemplified by the very first of them, which—together with Epich. fr. 158—is also one of the two longest (Epich. fr. 135, cited in *P. Colon.* 126, possibly from Apollodorus' Περὶ θεῶν). Although Kassel and Austin signal no misgivings about its ascription, it contains a number of linguistic features which raise suspicions, however plausibly Epicharmian the text may otherwise look:

ἐκ τᾶς τῶ Διός
φαντι κεφαλᾶς ἀπολέσαι πράτιστα πάντων ἐν μάχαι
τᾶι γενομέναι κατὰ Κρόνον Πάλλαντα, τὸ δὲ τούτω δέρος
πὸτ τὸ φοβερὰν εὐθὺς εἶμεν περιβαλεῖν αὑτᾶι κύκλωι·
διόπερ αὐτὰν Παλλάδ' ὀνομασθῆμεν ὑπὸ πάντων τόκα

'They say that [Athena], right out of the head of Zeus, had destroyed Pallas as the very thirst thing in the fight under Kronos, and that she had thrown his skin around herself in order to be immediately frightful: that's why she was allegedly called Pallas by everyone then.'

Phonologically, it is surprising that the papyrus presents τῶ (corrected into τοῦ) and τούτω, not τοῦ and τούτου, as elsewhere in Epicharmus.[17] Morphologically, the infinitive

century, Aristoxenus could hardly refer in the second half of that century simply to Χρυσόγονος ὁ αὐλητής if he meant *another* person of that name and profession. In this context, note too Callisthenes fr. 124F5.1 (from Athen. 8.350de): the notoriously witty cithara-player Stratonicus of Athens made a joke πρὸς τὸν Χρυσογόνου πατέρα after the latter had shown pride in his son being an aulete; other conversations of Stratonicus point to the period of *c.* 370–360 (cf. Maas 1931: 326–327), which fits in with Chrysogonus II, not Chrysogonus I (whether or not the latter is a historical figure at all).

[17] Kassel and Austin (2001: 101), after Bühler *apud* Koenen and Merkelbach (1976: 21), compare *Anon. Dor.* 20 (Ἡρακλείτω ⟨τῶ⟩ Τεριναίω), and one may also refer to Sophron frr. 56 (τῶ χρόνω) and 86 (τῶ). In Willi (2008: 127 n. 29) I considered the possibility of 'Strong Doric' local redactions of these texts, but in the light of (e.g.) εἶμεν in Epich. fr. 135 above (not: ἦμεν), this is no truly satisfactory explanation. A different approach is now suggested (for Theocritus, but with potential validity here as well) in Willi (2012b): such apparently 'Strong Doric' forms may have been written in Hellenistic manuscripts in order to highlight the open pronunciation of the (especially back) mid-vowels vowels in (all) Doric dialects, as

εἶμεν (though not metrically guaranteed) contrasts with usual εἴμειν;[18] and, more crucially, unemphatic αὐτάν is awkward because we should expect νιν.[19] Lexically, the use of διόπερ (or δι' ὅπερ) is not only absent from the rest of Epicharmus (which would not in itself be worrying), but the conjunction is also not attested in any Greek text before the time of Thucydides, Andocides, and Lysias. And syntactically, Kassel's sensible conjecture of reflexive αὐτᾶι for the papyrus's αυτας diverges from the regular reflexive construction, which would be αὐτὰν αὐτᾶι (or possibly αὐταυτᾶι) in Epicharmus; and the articular infinitive governed by a preposition (πότ) also looks strangely recent given the extreme rarity of this fairly bookish construction in, say, Epicharmus' contemporary Aeschylus.[20] Admittedly, none of these points is decisive on its own, but their accumulation should give pause to any editor or commentator.

However, saying that this is hardly 'genuine' Epicharmus need not imply that this is a *Pseudepicharmeion* of the type discussed before. Instead, Epich. fr. 135 resembles the fragments *ex Alcimo* ([Epich.] frr. 275-279), a group of fragments cited by Diogenes Laertius (3.9-16) from the fourth-century historian Alcimus. Alcimus' aim, it seems, was to convict Plato of plagiarism: the gist of his teachings, Alcimus maintained, is already found in Epicharmus. Following Cassio (1985: 45)[21] this must be read "against the backdrop of Sicilian political and cultural life after Plato's second journey to Syracuse, when the split between the 'parties' of Dionysius the Younger on one side and Dion and Plato on the other became evident": "[e]verything falls into place if we see Alcimus as a pro-Dionysian, possibly a member of that small court of intellectuals that gathered around the tyrant […] and it is only too fitting that an author of *Sikeliká* should have availed himself of a local glory, Epicharmus, to make Plato appear in a bad light".

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opposed to Koine Greek. Whatever the truth of the matter, within the Epicharmian oeuvre the feature is odd.

[18] Cf. Epich. frr. 97.8, 113.244, 113.247, and Willi (2008: 136); the same objection arises to εἶμεν in [Epich.] frr. 276.3, 277.3 and 277.6, 279.4 (all *ex Alcimo*), whereas [Epich.] fr. 295.19 is undoubtedly spurious anyway (cf. already Handley in Turner and Handley 1976: 57-60). ὀνομασθῆμεν is less problematic given Epich. fr. 40.6 ἐμπαγῆμεν: it is conceivable that -μεν was retained in the 'passive' infinitive in -(θ)ημεν, but remodelled (after thematic -ειν) into -μειν in athematic active infinitives.

[19] Cf. Epich. frr. 18.1, 98.131, 113.244, 158.4. Willi (2008: 139) may accept Epich. fr. 113.135 αὐτόν too readily as an equivalent of νιν: it could mean 'him*self*'.

[20] Cf. Birklein (1888: 10-21), Burguière (1960: 99-126, esp. 118-124), Willi (2003: 149-152). Birklein finds only three articular infinitives with preposition in Aeschylus, once in the *Prometheus* (*Prom.* 381), and twice in the *Choephoroi* (*Cho.* 415, 957; "jedoch scheint beidemale der Text verdorben"). In Sophocles (Birklein 1888: 21-31), six out of eight examples occur in the very late *Philoctetes* and *Oedipus at Colonus* (*Phil.* 525, *OC* 115, 495, 795, 1368, 1537; elsewhere: *Ai.* 554, *Ant.* 883).

[21] Against Schwartz (1894) and Gigante (1953: esp. 166-172), according to whom Alcimus' aims were not anti-Platonic at all.

And yet, to dismiss the Alcimus fragments as shameless forgeries would be rash. As Cassio (2002: 57 n. 18), quoting Körte (1911: 231), has also observed, "[n]ot only are they 'lebhaftester dramatischer Dialog' in contrast to the spurious (and dull) treatises, but one wonders whether Alcimus could really afford to quote Epicharmean fakes if he wanted to carry his point". Even supposing—without substantial evidence—that Alcimus wrote for an Athenian audience and that Epicharmus' work *was* still unknown in fourth-century Athens, such a scheme could blow up so easily that any reasonable forger would have had second thoughts. Also, the forgery would be rather poor since the Alcimus fragments do not support Alcimus' claims all that neatly: their point is not quite the same as Plato's. [Epich.] frr. 275 and 276, for example, are meant to show the Epicharmian precedent for the Platonic idea that 'that which never remains in the same state and quantity is perceptible' (αἰσθητὸν μὲν εἶναι τὸ μηδέποτε ἐν τῶι ποιῶι μηδὲ ποσῶι διαμένον), whereas 'that from which nothing goes away or to which nothing is added is conceivable with the mind' (νοητὸν δὲ ἐξ οὗ μηθὲν ἀπογίνεται μηδὲ προσγίγνεται); but in reality neither of the two fragments is at all concerned with a difference between αἰσθητά and νοητά, only with the everlasting nature of the gods (fr. 275) and the ever changing nature of mankind (fr. 276; cf. above). In §1 we have already come across a comic constellation with which the discussion of such ideas could have been compatible, and Epich. fr. 135, in its turn, would equally fit the immediate context of [Epich.] fr. 275—perhaps as a further objection of speaker B at the end, or as an initial trigger for the exposition of A's wisdom:

> ἀλλ' ἀεί τοι θεοὶ παρῆσαν χὐπέλιπον οὐ πώποκα,
> τάδε δ' ἀεὶ πάρεσθ' ὁμοῖα διά τε τῶν αὐτῶν ἀεί.
> (B.) ἀλλὰ λέγεται μὰν χάος πρᾶτον γενέσθαι τῶν θεῶν.
> (A.) πῶς δέ κα; μὴ ἔχον γ' ἀπὸ τίνος μηδ' ἐς ὅτι πρᾶτον μόλοι;
> (B.) οὐκ ἄρ' ἔμολεν πρᾶτον οὐδέν; (A.) οὐδὲ μὰ Δία δεύτερον
> τῶνδέ γ' ὧν ἀμές νυν ὧδε λέγομες, ἀλλ' ἀεὶ τάδ' ἦς

'(A.) But gods always existed and never ceased to exist, and the things here are always present and identical and always follow the same principles. – (B.) But it's said that Chaos came first of the gods! – (A.) And how would that be? if there wasn't anything from which and into which a first thing could go? – (B.) So nothing came first? – (A.) No, nor indeed second, at least of those things we are now talking about: they always existed.'

However that may be, if (at least some of[22]) the Alcimus fragments, like Epich. fr. 135, are linguistically suspicious, but if at the same time there are reasons to believe that they

[22] For a full discussion see now Kerkhof (2001: 65-78); most, if not all, of the Alcimus fragments are regarded as genuine e.g. by Lorenz (1864: 183-187), Kaibel (1899: 121-124, 135), Olivieri (1946: 81-92),

nevertheless come from an Epicharmian play, there is only one possible, and not even particularly unlikely,[23] scenario that does justice to both sides of the argument: namely, that Epicharmus' plays were initially 'fluid', so that post-auctorial additions and revisions, by actors and/or editors, could creep in, perhaps until and beyond the time of Dionysius the Younger whose work περὶ τῶν ποιημάτων Ἐπιχάρμου may have started off Epicharmian philology properly speaking (Sud. δ 1179 = Epich. test. 33).[24] If this were correct, Alcimus would cite 'Epicharmus' in good faith, and we should expect precisely what we find in these fragments: certain later linguistic features, attributable to the Sicilian Doric *koina*, in what is otherwise impeccable Syracusan.[25]

3. Epicharmian heterogeneity and the genesis of the *Pseudepicharmeia*

Obviously, such insertions, extensions, or interpolations could only be successful if they blended naturally into an 'original' text. Hence, witnesses like Epich. fr. 135 or the Alcimus fragments should still fit well enough into Epicharmian comedy, *although* they stage almost philosophical discussions and thereby potentially justify the following remark of 'Pseudo-Epicharmus' in the (presumed) introduction to the Γνῶμαι ([Epich.] fr. 244.10–11):[26]

> αἰτίαν γὰρ ἦχον ὡς ἄλλως μὲν εἴην [δ]εξιός,
> μακρολόγος δὲ κοὐ δυναίμαν ἐν β[ρ]αχεῖ γνώμα[ς λέγ]ειν.

'For I was criticised that I was fairly skilful, but long-winded and incapable of saying briefly what I meant.'

Pickard-Cambridge (1962: 247–254) Berk (1964: 85–101), Falus (1968), Demand (1971), Silvestre Pinto (1977), Carrière (1979: 202–207), Álvarez Salas (2007), and Rodríguez-Noriega Guillén 2012: 88–95), whereas wholesale rejections are fairly rare (Covotti 1931, Kerkhof 2001: 65–78, Kassel and Austin 2001: 157–164, Olson 2007: 9–10). Linguistic weaknesses are arguable even in [Epich.] frr. 275 (παρῆσαν, ὑπέλιπον) and 276 (εἶμεν, τός: cf. fn. 18, Willi 2008: 129 n. 38), whose claim to authenticity is otherwise strongest.

[23] Note in this context also the existence of Epicharmus' Μοῦσαι as a διασκευή ('revised version') of the Ἥβας γάμος (cf. below §3); Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1919: 52 n. 1) observed that the revision need not have been made by Epicharmus himself.

[24] Cf. similarly already Diels and Kranz (1951: 193) on [Epich.] fr. 277, followed by Thierfelder (1956: 175) on [Epich.] fr. 280; see also Webster in Pickard-Cambridge (1962: 253).

[25] For the Sicilian *koina* cf. Bartoněk (1973) and Willi (2008: 45–49); to judge by the text of Archimedes, our most important witness, infinitives in -μεν (not -μειν: cf. Thumb and Kieckers 1932: 216) or also pronominal αὐτάν for νιν would have been regular here.

[26] *Pace* Carrara (2003: 184), the two lines hardly refer to other Pseudepicharmian writings: the point of a comic scene may be 'summarised' in a γνώμη, but not the essence of a medical treatise or the like.

On the other hand, there was certainly much in the genuine Epicharmus that was far from tedious. Horace (*epist.* 2.1.58 = Epich. test. 21) likens Plautus to Epicharmus by saying *[dicitur] Plautus ad exemplar Siculi properare* Epicharmi 'Plautus is said to move quickly following the model of the Sicilian Epicharmus',[27] and a sequence of scenes like those described in Epich. fr. 136 has considerable comic scope, not unlike Aristophanes' *Clouds*, while still providing a potential framework for a para-philosophical exchange *à la* [Epich.] frr. 275 and 276 (cf. §1):[28]

Ἐπίχαρμος, ὁ[μιλή]σας τοῖς Πυθα[γορείοις,] ἄλλα τ[έ] τι̣να εὖ̣ [ἐδίδασ]κ̣εν δ[ρά]μ̣α̣τ̣[α, καὶ τὸ περὶ τ]ο̣ῦ̣ α̣ὐ̣ξομ[ένου, ὃ] λ[όγωι] ἐφοδ[ικῶι καὶ πισ]τ̣[ῶι ἐ]π̣έ̣ρα[ινε. οὐ μὴν] ἀλλ' ὡ̣ς̣ ἄ̣[φοδοι γίνον]ται πρόσο̣[δοί τε ἐναρ]γ̣ές, εἰ οὐχ [ἑστώς τις] γί̣[νε]ται μ̣[είζων ἢ ἐ]λ̣[ά]τ̣τ̣ων· ε̣[ἰ δὲ τοῦτο,] οὐσίαι ἄλλ[οτε ἄλλαι] γίνο̣ν̣τ̣αι [διὰ τὴν συν]εχῆ̣ ῥύσιν. κ̣α̣[ὶ ἐκ]ω̣μώιδησεν αὐτὸ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀπαιτουμένου συ̣μβ̣ο̣λὰς καὶ [ἀ]ρ̣νουμένου τ̣ο̣ῦ̣ αὐτοῦ εἶναι διὰ τὸ τὰ μὲν προσγεγενῆσθαι, τὰ δὲ ἀπεληλυθέναι, ἐπεὶ δὲ ὁ ἀπαιτῶν ἐτ̣[ύ]π̣τ̣ησεν αὐτὸν καὶ ἐ̣νεκαλεῖ̣τ̣ο̣, πάλιν κ[ἀ]κ̣ε̣ί̣ν̣ο̣υ̣ [φά]σκοντος [ἄλλ]ο̣ μὲ̣[ν] ε̣[ἶ]ναι τὸν τ̣[ετυ]πτ̣η̣κότα, ἕτερο[ν δὲ] τ̣ὸ̣ν̣ ἐγκαλούμ[ε]ν̣ον.

'Epicharmus, who had frequented the Pythagoreans, successfully staged many other plays and also the one about the "Augmenting Discourse" (αὐξόμενος λόγος) which he concluded with a methodical and convincing point. However, it is manifest that there are subtractions and additions if one who stands fast does not become bigger or smaller. But if this is the case, the substances are ever-changing because of the uninterrupted flux. He made a comic scene out of this with someone who claims back a loan and another who says that the money no longer belongs to the same person because something has been added and something else taken away; then, when the creditor has beaten him and has been taken into court because of that, he too replies in such a way and says that the one who has beaten is one thing and the one who has been taken to court another.'

Similarly, the few Epicharmian fragments from named plays[29] in which we still recognise a conversation are everything but dull. Epich. fr. 76, from Λόγος καὶ Λογίνα, presents a

[27] Kassel and Austin (2001: 13) pertinently compare Ar. *Eccl.* 581-582 ἀλλ' οὐ μέλλειν ἀλλ' ἅπτεσθαι καὶ δὴ χρῆν ταῖς διανοίαις, | ὡς τὸ ταχύνειν χαρίτων μετέχει πλεῖστον παρὰ τοῖσι θεαταῖς 'one should not hesitate, but really head for the ideas, because to move quickly goes down best with the audience'; the context in Horace shows that the *tertium comparationis* is not merely the quick-moving trochaic tetrameter as opposed to the more leisurely iambic trimeter.

[28] For a full discussion of the 'αὐξ(αν)όμενος λόγος' play involved here, see Willi (2008: 170-175) and (2012a: 58-63), with earlier literature including Bernays (1853) and Kerkhof (2001: 68-70, 171-173).

[29] In addition to these, listed in the following, cf. only Epich. frr. 146 with a 'rhetorical' ἐποικοδόμησις and 147 with another punning sequence.

slapstick misunderstanding in a mythological setting;[30] fr. 122, from Σειρῆνες, has one character 'torment' another by describing a feast; fr. 97, from the Ὀδυσσεὺς αὐτόμολος, stages a pitifully un-heroic Odysseus who is apparently beaten up after deserting to Troy;[31] and fr. 113.4–15, from Πύρρα καὶ Προμαθεύς, introduces a Pyrrha who suspects that Prometheus only advised the building of an ark in order to steal her belongings once she and Deukalion are inside. None of this would be out of place on Aristophanes' stage, and even the longish parasite's monologue of fr. 32 need not compare unfavourably with, say, Dikaiopolis' monologue at the beginning of *Acharnians*. All we can conclude from these fragments (and from a good number of further play titles such as Ἄμυκος, Βούσιρις, Ἡρακλῆς ὁ ἐπὶ τὸν ζωστῆρα, Ἡρακλῆς ὁ πὰρ Φόλωι, Κύκλωψ, Μήδεια, Ὀδυσσεὺς ναυαγός, Σφίγξ, Τρῶες, or Φιλοκτήτας) is that Epicharmus combined mythological travesty with an entertaining depiction of everyday-life situations; and if we add not only the parasite figure in Ἐλπὶς ἢ Πλοῦτος (cf. §1), but also the titles Ἀγρωστῖνος 'The rustic' (for a play featuring a schoolteacher named Κόλαφος 'Slap': Epich. fr. 1), Γηραιά 'The old woman', and Φιλοκλίνης 'The lazybones', we may infer that a careful depiction of character types was also part of Epicharmus' formula for success.[32]

It is likely, however, that there was not just a single such formula, and mere titles may be misleading. For example, nothing lends particular support to the idea that Γᾶ καὶ Θάλασσα agonistically opposed Earth and Sea as allegorical figures,[33] or that Λόγος καὶ Λογίνα contained an ἀγὼν λόγων similar to the one depicted in Aristophanes' *Clouds*.[34] Whatever the correct interpreation of the latter title ('Mr and Mrs Word'?, 'Mr and Miss

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[30] *Contra* Kassel and Austin (2001: 52), the reading of Porson (1812: 102) is preferable to Ahrens's (1843: 446) ἀλλ' ἔρανόν ⟨γα⟩ in the last line, as the (untranslatable) pun on ἔρανος 'dinner, banquet' and γέρανος 'crane' continues: (A.) ὁ Ζεύς μ' ἐκάλεσε, Πέλοπί γ' ἔρανον ἰστιῶν. | (B.) ἦ παμπόνηρον ὄψον, ὦ 'τᾶν, ὁ γέρανος. | (A.) ἀλλ' οὔτι γέρανον, ἀλλά γ' ἔρανόν τοι λέγω '(A.) Zeus invited me to a nice dinner for Pelops. (B.) An ice dinner – that's disgusting, mate! – (A.) Not an ice dinner, a nice dinner!'

[31] For the reconstruction of the action of this play cf. now Willi (2008: 177–188) and (2012a: 63–71), responding to earlier discussions (including Schmidt 1888: 379–380, Gomperz 1889, Blass 1889, Stanford 1950, Barigazzi 1955, Lobel 1959: 40–42, Phillips 1959: 58–61, Gentili 1961: 336–337, Webster 1962, Salomone 1981, Kerkhof 2001: 123–128, Cassio 2002: 73–82, Casolari 2003: 47–52, Olson 2007: 47–48).

[32] Of course this is not to say that Epicharmus' comedy ever became a *Typenkomödie* like the *Commedia dell'Arte*: cf. Kerkhof (2001: 171) against Dohm's (1964: 22–30) assumption that Epicharmus had a 'cook type'.

[33] Thus e.g. Kaibel (1899: 94), Sieckmann (1906: 17), Prescott (1917: 414), Körte (1921: 1224), Radermacher (1954: 25), Froleyks (1973: 133–134); but our evidence almost entirely consists of mere lexical references in Athenaeus (Epich. frr. 20, 22–28).

[34] Cf. Dieterich (1897: 78), von Salis (1905: 50), Sieckmann (1906: 18), Prescott (1917: 414–415), Körte (1921: 1224), Radermacher (1954: 25), Froleyks (1973: 133), Silvestre Pinto (1977: 248–249).

Argument'?[35]), one of the three fragments we have points again to mythological characters (Epich. fr. 76, quoted in fn. 30), while another (fr. 77) evidences a (not entirely isolated[36]) interest in literary matters. It mentions the iambographer (?)[37] Aristoxenus of Selinus and *could* be read as a self-referential statement if the problematic first line is emended as follows, with two minor changes where correction is unavoidable (and where previous proposals have been more intrusive):[38]

> οὐ τοὺς ἰάμβους κὰτ τὸν ἄδιστον τρόπον,
> ὃν πρᾶτος εἰσαγήσαθ' Ὡριστόξενος

'not iambic lines of the very sweet type which Aristoxenus was the first to introduce'

We reach somewhat safer ground once we turn to the Ἥβας γάμος ('Marriage of Hebe') and its revision under the title Μοῦσαι (cf. Athen. 3.110b). At first sight, at least the earlier title also seems to point to a mythological plot of sorts. When we look at the fragments, however, it becomes hard to believe that this was the same type of burlesque play as, for instance, the Ὀδυσσεὺς αὐτόμολος of Epich. fr. 97. Of the 26 extant fragments of the Ἥβας γάμος, 21—all from Athenaeus—contain 47 trochaic tetrameters amounting to an elaborate catalogue of foodstuff (mainly fishes and seafood). Three more (Epich. frr. 46, 62, 64) cite the play as a source for specific fish and bread names, one adduces the term λεκίς 'pot, pan' (Epich. fr. 63, from Poll. 10.86), and the last one (Epich.

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[35] Cf. Hoenigswald (1941), Cassio (2002: 69-70); differently Froleyks (1973: 133) ("sicher ein Streit zwischen Herrn und Frau Vernunft, zwischen männlicher und weiblicher Logik").

[36] Cf. Epich. fr. 51 (with a 'quotation' κὰτ τὸν Ἀνάνιον; cf. Rodríguez-Noriega Guillén 2012: 86-87, but Epich. fr. 22 need not quote the same iambographer directly [Ananius fr. 4 West] since the 'oath' ναὶ τὰν κράμβαν may have become proverbial: see Eupolis fr. 84); Epich. fr. 92 (on the Spartan ἐνόπλιος νόμος in a mythical context); also Epich. fr. 4 (on Diomos as the 'inventor' of bucolic song)?

[37] Lennartz (2010: 131-136) rightly points out that the generic classification of Aristoxenus as iambographer largely depends on emending καί into κάτ in Epich. fr. 77 (cf. fn. 38: next to τρόπον, κατά is certainly natural), but he fails to mount a plausible defence for καί (and the resulting awkward syntax).

[38] (1) οὐ for transmitted οἱ, but the nom. pl. of the article is τοί in Epicharmus, and Ahrens's (1843: 446) "fort[asse] ὦ (aut οἳ)" fails to convince stylistically; (2) κὰτ τὸν ἄδιστον for transmitted (unmetrical) καὶ τὸν ἄριστον, with κὰτ τόν as already suggested by Porson *apud* Gaisford (1810: 45) and Ahrens (1843: 446), but ἄδιστον (cf. Epich. fr. 84 ἄδιστον κρέας) instead of ἀρχαῖον (Porson), ἀχάριστον (Ahrens), ἀμπαιστόν (Vaillant 1927), or Ἀνανίου (Rotstein 2010: 220): the first two of these alternatives would hardly have been corrupted (since they are also plain Attic), and the third and fourth would presuppose a much more substantial change in the transmission (next to a less likely starting point for the third: what is an 'anapaestic manner'?). For the interpretation of the fragment cf. already Pace (1940: 71), Guardì (1980: 31), or West (1974: 34): "It seems likely that Epicharmus, speaking outside the action of the play […], was here contrasting his own kind of show with a different kind that was in fashion before."

fr. 39) mentions the names Epicharmus gave to the Muses, clearly with a humorous twist because here they are the daughters of Πίερος καὶ Πιμπληΐς 'Mr Fat and Ms Full'.

To blame this situation exclusively on Athenaeus' biased interests is difficult. Firstly, even trying hard it would be impossible to come up with an equally one-sided and uniform selection of dozens of lines drawn by Athenaeus from any Athenian comic author. Secondly, the past-tense third-person verbs[39] in these fragments suggest an ekphrastic layout in which the speaker(s)[40] are/is describing in hindsight and with much detail a lavish banquet of the gods, apparently in the form of a monologue.[41] Again this has no parallel in extant comedy, including notoriously food-happy Middle Comedy: here an extreme case[42] like Anaxandrides fr. 42.37-66 presents a simple list, perhaps for virtuoso delivery,[43] but not the leisurely catalogue one must infer for Epicharmus. It is therefore safe to say that the Ἥβας γάμος was a 'comedy' *sui generis*, *if* 'comedy' is the right term for it.[44] This is all the more true since passages such as Epich. frr. 40.3-6, 49.1-

[39] Cf. Epich. fr. 47 καρκίνοι ἵκοντ(ο) 'crabs arrived', 48 ὁ Ποτειδὰν ἷκε 'Poseidon arrived', 49 ἦν δὲ σαργῖνοι 'there were *sarginoi* (fishes)', 52 ἦν δὲ νάρκαι 'there were electric rays', 57 ἄγε τρίγλας '(s)he brought red mullets', 58 ἦν δ' ὑαινίδες τε βούγλωσσοί τε καὶ κίθαρος ἐνῆς 'there were hyena fishes and soles and a cithara flatfish among them' (and similarly, from the Μοῦσαι, Epich. fr. 85 ἦν δ' ἐρωιδιοί 'there were herons', 88 ὁ Ζεὺς ἔλαβε κἠκελήσατο 'Zeus took and ordered', 89 οὔτε μυραινᾶν ἀπῆς 'nor was there a lack of sea-eels'). The presents in Epich. fr. 40.1 (ἄγει 'he brings') and 42.1 (λαμβάνοντι 'they take') may be visualising historical presents.

[40] On the first-person plural references in Epich. fr. 40.11 (Ἥβας γάμος) and fr. 84 (Μοῦσαι) cf. §6.

[41] Cf. already Lorenz (1864: 88-89), von Salis (1905: 43); Epich. fr. 49 αἰ δὲ λῆις 'if you like' need not imply a stage dialogue (*pace* Sieckmann 1906: 18): contrast the dialogical arrangement of e.g. Ar. fr. 581 with typical bomolochic interventions.

[42] Antiphanes fr. 140, Ephippus fr. 12, or Eubulus fr. 63 are much shorter.

[43] Cf. Nesselrath (1990: 272-276); *pace* Schmid (1929: 646), Albini (1986: 14), or Kerkhof (2001: 119), nothing in the Epicharmian fragments from the Ἥβας γάμος or Μοῦσαι suggests a similar speed performance (whereas the mere list of votive offerings in Epich. fr. 68, from Θεαροί, might).

[44] Dionysius the Younger significantly entitled his critical treatise Περὶ τῶν ποιημάτων (not: κωμωιδιῶν) Ἐπιχάρμου (Epich. test. 33; cf. §2.2); "[w]ir wissen nicht, wie Epicharmos seine gedichte genannt hat" (Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1910: 55; cf. Kaibel 1907: 36, West 1974: 34), but δράματα is a possibility. As noted in §1, Plato's reference to Epicharmus as the ἄκρος κωμωιδίας is still vague, when Homer is at the same time the ἄκρος τραγωιδίας (Pl. *Theaet.* 152e = Epich. test. 3). A specific application of the (Attic) term κωμωιδία to Epicharmus' oeuvre is thus first found in Aristotle (implicitly: *Poet.* 1448a29-34 = Epich. test. 4) and Theocritus (explicitly: *Epigr.* 18 = Epich. test. 18 ὁ τὰν κωμωιδίαν εὑρὼν Ἐπίχαρμος 'Epicharmos the inventer of comedy'; cf. Sud. ε 2766, s.v. Ἐπίχαρμος = Epich. test. 1); see further e.g. Porph. *vit. Plot.* 24 (= Epich. test. 34, Ἐπίχαρμον τὸν κωμωιδιογράφον), Anon. de com. (*Proleg. de com.* III) 9 p. 7 Koster (= Epich. test. 6, Epicharmus as an author τῆς ἀρχαίας κωμωιδίας).

2, or 51 are reminiscent of a different genre that came into existence in (presumably later) fifth-century Sicily—cookery-books:[45]

> κτένια, βαλάνους, πορφύρας, ὄστρεια συμμεμυκότα,
> τὰ διελεῖν μέν ἐντι χαλεπά, καταφαγῆμεν δ' εὐμαρέα,
> μύας ἀναρίτας τε κάρυκάς τε καὶ σκιφύδρια,
> τὰ γλυκέα μέν ἐντ' ἐπέσθειν, ἐμπαγῆμεν δ' ὀξέα

'scallops, barnacles, purple-fishes, firmly-closed oysters, which are difficult to take apart, but easy to be swallowed, mussels and sea-snails and trumpet-shells and sword-shells, which are sweet to eat, but sharp when one is stuck on them'

> ἦν δὲ σαργῖνοί τε μελάνουροί τε καὶ ταὶ φίνταται
> ταινίαι, λεπταὶ μὲν ἀδέαι δὲ κὠλίγου πυρός

'there were *sarginoi* fishes and black-tails and the most pleasant ribbon-fishes, fine but sweet and not to be roasted for long'

> καὶ σκιφίας χρόμις θ', ὃς ἐν τῶι ἦρι κὰτ τὸν Ἀνάνιον
> ἰχθύων πάντων ἄριστος, ἀνθίας δὲ χείματι

'and sword-fish and *chromis*-fish, which, according to Ananius, is the best of all fishes in spring, whereas the *anthias*-fish is in winter'

As it is easy to see how verses like these could be further elaborated upon, we may even grasp here the elusive starting-point for the creation of *Pseudepicharmeia*.[46] As mentioned in §2, these works included an Ὀψοποιΐα, and given the general Sicilian interest in gastronomy (which later culminates in Archestratus of Gela's didactic Ἡδυπάθεια[47]), this Ὀψοποιΐα could indeed have been the very first *Pseudepicharmeion*, building upon the material contained in e.g. the Ἥβας γάμος and/or Μοῦσαι. If so, and because the mid-fifth-century also saw the beginnings of a Sicilian empiricist school of medicine with a strong interest in dietetics, and therefore food again,[48] the step from an Ὀψοποιΐα to the

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[45] See Bilabel (1921), especially on Mithaikos of Syracuse (5th cent.; cf. Cassio 1989: 144) and Herakleides of Syracuse (4th cent.).

[46] Contrast e.g. Pace (1940: 53) and Guardì (1980: 33-34), according to whom the Γνῶμαι were pivotal; but why should such a collection give rise to pseudepigraphical texts of an entirely different kind?

[47] On Archestratus' work and its literary background (but very little on any Epicharmian connections) see Olson and Sens (2000: esp. xxviii-xliii).

[48] According to Sud. α 1026, s.v. Ἄκρων, the fifth-century doctor Akron of Akragas wrote Δωρίδι διαλέκτωι περὶ τροφῆς ὑγιεινῶν βιβλίον α' 'one book in Doric "On the diet of healthy people"' (cf. Cassio 1989: 143); some decades later Philistion of Lokroi, who was active in Syracuse (Pl. *Epist.* II 314d =

more generally medical Χείρων was small; and finally, in an intellectual environment where certainly Empedoclean, if not strictly Pythagorean, ideas undoubtedly informed medical thought,[49] the Χείρων in turn would provide a natural bridge to, first, a pseudepigraphical *carmen physicum* of wider scope, as seems to have constituted the basis for Ennius' *Epicharmus* (and/or the Κανών: cf. fn. 7), and, next, Pythagoreanising treatises *à la* Chrysogonus' Πολιτεία. Thus, we may postulate an overall model for the genesis of the *Pseudepicharmeia* as in Figure I.

Philistion fr. 2 Wellmann), also focused on dietetics, as Athen. 3.115d (= Philistion fr. 9 Wellmann) implies, and as the ascription of Ὀψαρτυτικά to him indirectly confirms (Athen. 12.516c = Philistion fr. 13 Wellmann; cf. Wellmann 1901: 73-74, Diller 1938: 2406).

[49] Cf. e.g. Plin. *NH* 29.5 (= Akron fr. 2 Wellmann) on Akron and Galen. X 5 (from *De methodo medendi*, = Philistion fr. 1 Wellmann) on Philistion as followers of Empedocles, the latter for instance with the doctrine that the human body consists of the four elements, a disturbance of whose balance causes illness (Philistion fr. 4 Wellmann): Wellmann (1901: 67-75), Diller (1938: 2407).

Fig. I: A model for the genesis of the *Pseudepicharmeia*

4. Counter-canonical Epicharmus

Obviously, in such a model much remains hypothetical, but the essential point is this: to judge by the evidence we have, Epicharmus' comedy was fundamentally heterogeneous, and Aristotle's observation that plot comedy came from Sicily (§1) need not imply that *all* of Sicilian (and Epicharmian) comedy was plot comedy. However, the (at least[50]) two

[50] I deliberately leave open the question whether there was an additional divide between 'character comedies' (such as an Ἀγρωστῖνος) and 'mythological comedies' (such as the Heracles or Odysseus plays).

'groups' of works we are able to distinguish—burlesque plays like the Ὀδυσσεὺς αὐτόμολος on the one hand and catalogue-like compositions such as the Ἥβας γάμος and Μοῦσαι on the other[51]—may still have things in common. What they share, and what makes them intrinsically innovative, is their iconoclastic attitude towards the cultural canon.

In the Ὀδυσσεὺς αὐτόμολος we recognise the persiflage of a story referred to in both the *Iliad* (Book 10) and the *Odyssey* (4.242-258) and fully developed in the Ἰλιὰς μικρά (cf. Procl. *Chrest.* 206 Severyns): how Odysseus was given the task of going to Troy as a spy and explore the city—only that in Epicharmus he did not dare to do so, but instead deserted, with unexpected and demeaning consequences (Epich. frr. 97, 99).[52] Similarly, in the *Busiris* Heracles was de-heroised and made fun of as a glutton whose table manners are those of a pig (Epich. fr. 18), perhaps contrasting negatively with the well-behaved conduct of the title figure;[53] and although the fragments are insufficient to prove it, one may doubt that Odysseus and Heracles were presented more awe-inspiringly when the first was visiting the Cyclops (Κύκλωψ), travelling past the Sirens (Σειρῆνες), or shipwrecked in the Ὀδυσσεὺς ναυαγός, and when the second was encountering the gigantic Alcyoneus (in the homonymous play), hunting for the Amazon's belt in the Ἡρακλῆς ὁ ἐπὶ τὸν ζωστῆρα, or feasting at the centaur Pholos' in the Ἡρακλῆς ὁ πὰρ Φόλωι. That Heracles and Odysseus should figure so prominently in Epicharmus is no coincidence.[54] In the colonial West these archetypical travellers and ambassadors of civilization had acquired an identitarian resonance that transcended their role in metropolitan culture.[55] To demote such heroes in Sicily therefore represented even more of a counter-canonical challenge.

Turning to the Ἥβας γάμος and the Μοῦσαι, things are perhaps less obvious, but the general stance appears to have been similar. The crucial point is not so much that Hebe is

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Our knowledge of the former is too limited, but it is conceivable that they presented mime-like character studies, not fully-fledged plots. Similar titles of Middle and New Comedy (e.g. Menander's Δύσκολος) could advocate against this, but for example the fragments of Ἐλπὶς ἢ Πλοῦτος (with the parasite's monologue in Epich. fr. 32) would be compatible with it, and of course mime had a subliterary ancestry in the Doric world (cf. §5).

[51] What other titles (if any) belong to this group is difficult to say: one may think for instance of the Ἑορτά 'Feast' (from which fr. 38 cites the word κόγχος 'shell'), the Θεαροί 'Festival-goers' (with the catalogue-like fr. 68), the Ὀρύα 'Sausage', or also the Νᾶσοι 'Islands'.

[52] See the literature cited in fn. 31.

[53] Cf. Pianko (1948: 419-420), Kerkhof (2001: 117), Casolari (2003: 269-270), Olson (2007: 40-41).

[54] Cf. Pickard-Cambridge (1962: 255-264), Reinhardt (1996: 26-35), Kerkhof (2001: 117-119, 121-128), Rodríguez-Noriega Guillén (2012: 79-81).

[55] See, for example, Jourdain-Annequin (1988/9) on Heracles, and Malkin (1998: 3-5 and *passim*) on Odysseus.

Heracles' wife (Hes. *Theog.* 950–955), so that a connection with this hero again lurks in the back, but the very form of the catalogue-like fragments. These commonly consist of (1) a transitive or intransitive lead verb such as ἆγε '(s)he brought' or ἦν 'there were'/ἵκοντο '(there) came' with (2) a series of objects or subjects, respectively, listing fish names or items of seafood, some of which are elaborated upon by (3) descriptive relative clauses and/or (4) colourful (often compound) epithets. This structure exactly mirrors that of an epic-didactic catalogue of the type seen in Hesiod's *Theogony* (e.g. (1) lead verb τέκε(ν)/ἐγένοντο 'gave birth to/were born', followed by (2) a list of objects/subjects, some amplified by (3) relative clauses and/or (4) (often compound) epithets):

[ἆγε]$_1$ δὴ [τρίγλας τε κυφὰς [κἀχαρίστους]$_4$ βαιόνας]$_2$

'So she brought curved red mullets and unpleasant *baiones*' (Epich. fr. 57)

[καρκίνοι θ]$_2$ [ἵκοντ']$_1$ [ἐχῖνοί θ', [οἳ καθ' ἁλμυρὰν ἅλα
νεῖν μὲν οὐκ ἴσαντι, πεζᾶι δ' ἐμπορεύονται μόνοι]$_3$]$_2$

'Crabs came and sea-urchings, who are unable to swim in the salty sea, but are the only ones to travel on foot' (Epich. fr. 47)

Τηθὺς δ' Ὠκεανῶι ποταμοὺς [τέκε]$_1$ δινήεντας,
[Νεῖλόν τ' Ἀλφειόν τε καὶ Ἠριδανὸν [βαθυδίνην]$_4$]$_2$

'Tethys bore Oceanus the eddying rivers, the Nile and the Alpheius and also the deep-whirled Eridanus' (Hes. *Theog.* 337–338)

Νηρῆος δ' [ἐγένοντο]$_1$ μεγήρητα τέκνα θεάων
πόντωι ἐν ἀτρυγέτωι καὶ Δωρίδος ἠυκόμοιο,
κούρης Ὠκεανοῖο τελήεντος ποταμοῖο,
[Πρωθώ τ' Εὐκράντη τε Σαώ τ' Ἀμφιτρίτη τε
[…]
Νησώ τ' Εὐπόμπη τε Θεμιστὼ τε Προνόη τε
Νημερτής θ', [ἣ πατρὸς ἔχει νόον ἀθανάτοιο.]$_3$]$_2$

'Numerous divine girls were born in the barren sea from Nereus and Doris with the lovely hair, the daughter of Oceanus the circling river, Protho and Eukrante and Sao and Amphitrite […] and Neso and Eupompe and Themisto and Pronoe and Nemertes, who was the mind of her immortal father' (Hes. *Theog.* 240–262)

That Epicharmus had Hesiod in mind when he wrote the Ἥβας γάμος is confirmed by Epich. fr. 39 (from Tzetz. *ad Hes. Op.* 6, ed. Gaisford, *Poetae minores Graeci* III, p. 23). As

already mentioned (§3), this fragment gives Epicharmus' names of the 'Muses'. The comic name of their mother Πιμπληΐς recalls the Oceanid names Κερκηΐς or Περσηΐς presented by Hesiod (*Theog.* 355–356) in the same catalogue section that also lists Oceanus' river sons Νεῖλος, Ἀχελωιός, Ρόδιος, and Ἑπτάπορος (*Theog.* 338–341). All of these in turn are echoed among Epicharmus' Muses, presumably because such 'river Muses' would naturally attend the wedding together with their respective fishes:[56]

Ἐπίχαρμος δὲ ἐν τῶι τῆς Ἥβης γάμωι ἑπτὰ λέγει, θυγατέρας Πιέρου καὶ Πιμπληΐδος νύμφης, Νειλοῦν Τριτώνην Ἀσωποῦν Ἑπταπόρην Ἀχελωΐδα †Τιτόπλουν† καὶ Ροδίαν

'But Epicharmus names seven [Muses], daughters of Mr Fat and the nymph Ms Full: Neilo, Tritone, Asopo, Heptapore, Achelois, Titoplo (?), and Rhodia'

Thus, just as Epicharmus' plot drama satirically rewrites the myth of narrative epic, so his catalogue poetry comically rewrite didactic epic, replacing divine genealogies with the offer in a fishmonger's shop. The two facets of Epicharmus thereby correspond to the two most hallowed genres of Greek culture, and they treat them with as little respect as Aristophanic comedy later treats noble tragedy.

5. Hybridisation and the 'invention' of comedy

In Willi (2008), I already made an argument along these lines for Epicharmus' mythical plot comedy, but I had not yet seen the para-Hesiodic parallel to it in the Ἥβας γάμος. In particular, I argued that this subversive, counter-canonical dimension of Epicharmus' work must be related to its colonial context. *Mutatis mutandis*, similar phenomena can be observed in colonial worlds, both ancient and modern, even in non-comic genres: "In der Aufgabe und in dem Bedürfnis, überkommene und allgemein akzeptierte Dinge *anders* zu sehen und zu bewerten, überschneiden sich die Rollen des kolonialen und des komischen Autors. Insofern stellt die Komödie geradezu den Idealtypus kolonialer Literatur dar".[57] At the same time, I argued that another typical feature of 'colonial' literature is also replicated in Epicharmus: generic experimentation and hybridity. The focus then was mainly on the innovative combination of a colloquial linguistic register

[56] Cf. Welcker (1844: 289–290), Moessner (1907: 39).

[57] Willi (2008: 192); for the concept of a 'canonical counter-discourse' in modern colonial and post-colonial literature see esp. Tiffin (1987) and Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2002: 77–114), and for a comparison with Greek literary culture in ancient Sicily Willi (2008: 327).

with an art form that aspired to literary recognition in public life.[58] But adopting the dichotomy suggested above, we can also detect behind the more dramatic half of Epicharmus' oeuvre a novel hybrid in another, yet more fundamental respect.

According to Aristotle (*Poet.* 1449a11-13), Attic comedy ultimately arose ἀπὸ τῶν τὰ φαλλικὰ [sc. ἐξαρχόντων] ἃ ἔτι καὶ νῦν ἐν πολλαῖς τῶν πόλεων διαμένει νομιζόμενα, 'from the leaders of the phallic choruses, which are still organised even today in many cities'. Whatever the exact details of the relationship,[59] it is easy to recognise here a connection between comedy and both ritual scurillity and—less directly—literary iambus, whether or not iambic performers also occasionally wore a phallus (cf. Archil. frr. 66-67 W., Hipponax fr. 78.14 W.?[60]). Thus, the choral (parodos and/or) parabasis of comedy may go back to the earlier φαλλικά as such, whereas the spoken sections correspond to a more narrowly defined[61] iambus—witness their typically iambic metres. In these spoken parts the chorus leader (ἔξαρχος), increasingly detaching himself from his group,[62] performed a (perhaps initially introductory or 'prologic') monologue not dissimilar from the character impersonations seen in literary iambus (e.g. a cook at Semonides fr. 24 W., a crook at Hipponax fr. 32 W.[63]). Following Aristotle, Attic comedy may therefore be regarded as an organic outgrowth of ritual ribaldry, both phallic in kind and iambic in tone.

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[58] Willi (2008: 158-161); cf. Willi (2008: 4-6 and 325), following Tiffin (1987: 19-20), Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2002: 137-138 and 153-163), and Boehmer (2005: 237-243), on hybridity and generic experimentation as defining features of modern (post-)colonial texts.

[59] The literature is vast and controversial (but Depew 2007 shows how unwise it would be to dismiss Aristotle's primary information on the origins of drama, simply because he applies his own methodological lense to it): cf. e.g. Herter (1947: esp. 26-27), Pickard-Cambridge (1962: 132-162), Sifakis (1971), Adrados (1975), Rosen (1988), Degani (1988) and (1993), Henderson (1991: 13-28), Bowie (2002), Sourvinou-Inwood (2003: 172-177), Lennartz (2010: 310-338), Rotstein (2010: 266-276). Leonhardt's (1991) complete reinterpretation of Aristotle's words remains unconvincing.

[60] Cf. West (1974: 30, 125-126, 143); Pohlenz (1949: 32-36) doubted an ithyphallic costume for the earliest comic choruses, but neither is this a necessary prerogative for a group of φαλλοφόροι ('phallus-bearers', not necessarily 'phallus-wearers'), and the entire issue remains controversial (cf. Rothwell 2007: 25-27).

[61] I.e. iambus in the sense of "*Sprechvers* monologues of Ionian writers" (West 1974: 36); the ancient category of ἴαμβος was broader and included choral performances, whether or not these were metrically defined (as maintained by Lennartz 2010, against e.g. West 1974: 22-39; cf. also the cautious position of Rotstein 2010: 221-225).

[62] In comparison, that is, with the earlier situation where the ἔξαρχος was a "Protoschauspieler, der zwar als Teil des Chores keine eigene Identität besitzt, aber trotzdem eine in der Gruppe herausgehobene Stellung innehat und, indem er das Lied beginnt, über eine eigene Stimme verfügt" (Zimmermann 2011: 458); see Herter (1947: 38-40) and cf. further below. Adrados (1975: 252), Ieranò (1997: 175-179), and Scullion (2002: 108-109) comment on the role of the chorus leader in dithyramb and other hymnic genres.

[63] Cf. West (1974: 32-33).

Meanwhile, and to return to Epicharmus, we know that iambus also flourished in Sicily, not only because Epich. fr. 77 probably refers to the ἴαμβοι of Aristoxenus of Selinus (cf. §3), but also because Athenaeus (5.181c) specifically highlights a Syracusan liking for ἰαμβισταί, contrasting with the Athenian preference for Dionysiac choruses. For our purposes this Sicilian iambic tradition is relevant because Epicharmus' main metres—the iambic trimeter and, even more commonly, the trochaic tetrameter—unambiguously point to such a background as much as the metrical form of Attic comedy squares with Aristotle's account of the origins of that genre. In other words, when we encounter a composition in tetrameters such as the Ἥβας γάμος, the core of which consists of a monologic performance with a distinctly satirical or parodic aim, there is little surprise in this: after all, satire and parody had always been an important ingredient in iambus, as illustrated for example by the Pseudo-Homeric *Margites* or Semonides' 'gynaecogony' (fr. 7 West).

Iambus had not, however, been a dramatic (i.e. dialogic) genre. As indicated above, and as presupposed by Aristotle's derivation of both tragedy and comedy, there could at best have been a sort of exchange between a chorus (dithyrambic, phallic, iambic, or whatever) and its ἔξαρχος, with the latter adopting iambic verse as a spoken medium.[64] True drama, with a dialogue between two or more individual participants, is something quintessentially different. The origins of this we may best seek in subliterary mimetic 'farce', about which we know very little, except that it existed particularly in the Doric Peloponnese. The historian Sosibius (*FGrH* 595F7, *apud* Athen. 14.621d) informs us about the Laconian δ(ε)ικηλισταί (identified by Athenaeus with both the Sicyonian φαλλοφόροι and the φλύακες in Italy), and various sources point to a pertinent tradition in Megara, triggering the Megarian claim that comedy was 'theirs' (Arist. *Poet.* 1448a31-32).[65] Since much of this farce must have been improvised—giving rise to the alternative

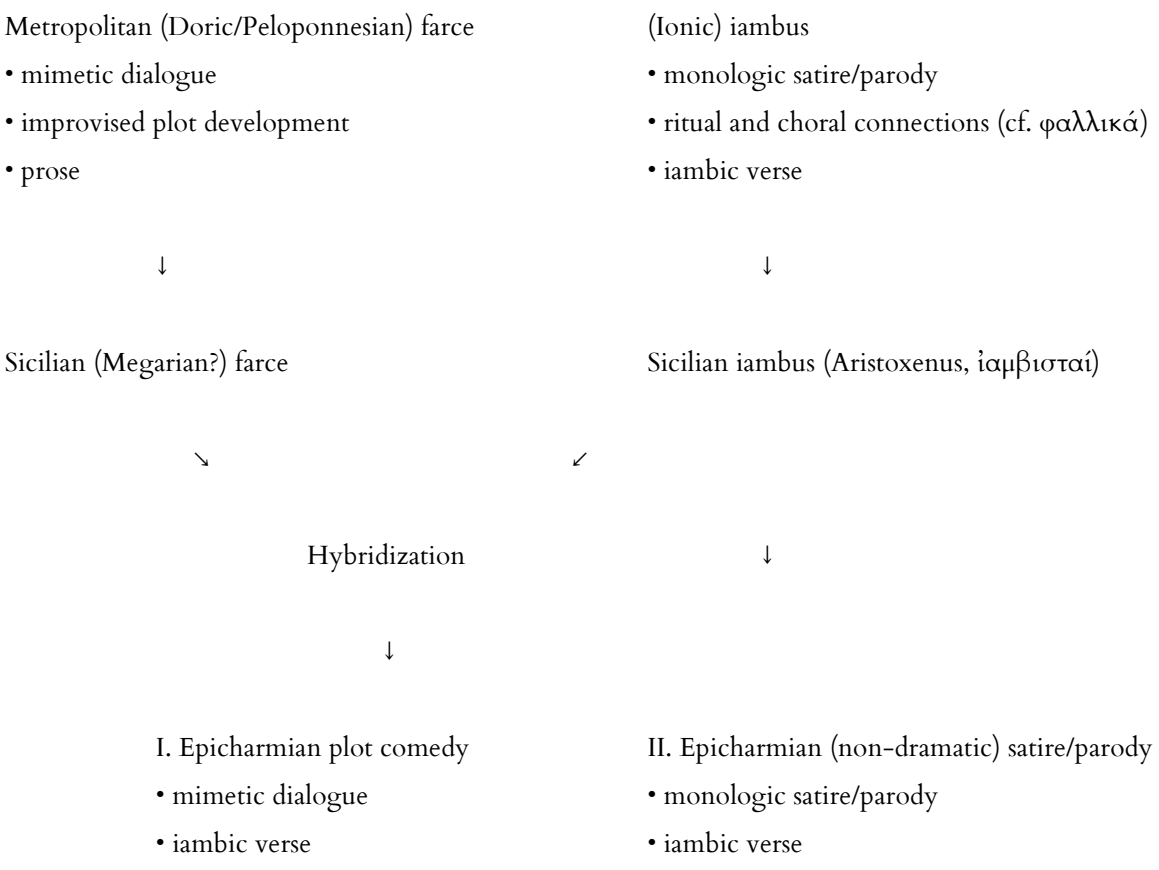
[64] Cf. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1910: 87) on the origins of tragedy: "Und nun tat Thespis im jahre 534 den nächsten schritt: denn name und jahr darf geglaubt werden. er fügte den ersten schauspieler hinzu oder richtiger, er trat als sprecher zu seinem chore. dieser schritt konnte nur in einer ionischen stadt geschehen, da aber lag er nahe genug, denn der sprecher war als solcher vorhanden: der recitator des ionischen iambos." West (1974: 33-34) concurs (except for the exact dating of Thespis, cf. West 1989), stressing that "[t]he model cannot have been iambus in the strict sense, verse of a scurillous, lubricious or farcical character, but rather the more dignified poetry which had been or was being composed in similar metres in the Ionian sphere and (with touches of Ionic dialect) by Solon at Athens".

[65] See, after Körte (1921: 1221-1223), now especially Kerkhof (2001: 1-50), also on the problematic figure of Susarion (who must not be dismissed too easily, cf. Rusten 2006: 42-44; in theory there could have been a particularly well-remembered ἔξαρχος φαλλικῶν, who endowed himself with the sobriquet 'Shoo!Shoo!-Arion' aimed at the famous dithyrambist: cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 209 σοῦ, σοῦ). Given the variety of sources, the scepticism expressed by Breitholtz (1960) and Henderson (1991: 223-228) on the entire complex certainly seems excessive.

terms αὐτοκάβδαλοι 'extemporisers' and ἐθελονταί 'volunteers' for the performers of such mimesis ἐν εὐτελεῖ τῆι λέξει 'in simple language' (Athen. 14.621d-f)—and since later on Sophron's literary mime is written in prose too,[66] it is likely that little if anything of this was versified.

So where does this all lead? The Greek colonists who went to the Western Mediterranean took with them, on the one hand, the (predominantly Ionic) tradition of iambus and, on the other hand, the (predominantly Doric) tradition of mimetic farce. In the dichotomous Epicharmian fragments we recognise, on the one hand, pieces that look like natural offshoots of iambic satire (the Ἥβας γάμος type), and, on the other hand, 'plot comedies' whose centrepiece is versified dramatic dialogue (the Ὀδυσσεὺς αὐτόμολος type). This latter kind of work therefore combines the crucial elements of both traditions in a new hybrid genre: dialogic comedy with a satirical-parodic storyline but written, like proper iambus, in trimeters and tetrameters. This is no longer an organic development out of a single root, but the courageous experiment of an individual genius, as represented in Figure II, which extends Figure I into the past:

Fig. II: A model for the genesis of Epicharmus' 'comedy'



[66] For Sophron's mime and its background in this tradition cf. now Hordern (2004: esp. 4-10).

6. The problem of the chorus

So far, we have deliberately eschewed the vexed question to what extent (if any) Epicharmian 'comedy' was choral. In fact, for the genetic model just proposed this question is only of limited consequence. If there were a choral element in Epicharmus, it would clearly belong to the iambic side of things and suggest a link with the Syracusan ἰαμβισταί similar to the choral roots of Attic comedy according to Aristotle. On balance, the fragments, while not conclusive, seem favourable to this possibility.[67] The existence of plural titles alone does not of course prove anything, and *some* plural titles (such as Διόνυσοι and Ἀταλάνται) may rather point to plays about mistaken identities, along the lines of Plautus' *Bacchides* or *Menaechmi*, or also the Dionysus-Xanthias role exchange scene in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, not to a god or a heroine with their respective entourage.[68] However, according to Hephaestion (*ench.* 8.2 = Epich. Ἐπίνικος test. ii) both Epicharmus' Ἐπίνικος and his Χορεύοντες (or Χορευταί[69]) were written entirely in anapaestic tetrameters, the recitative metre of a marching chorus, and incidentally the one metre attested in the only preserved fragment from Aristoxenus of Selinus's 'iambic' (?) poetry. Add to this the first-person plural references in the trochaic tetrameters of Epich. frr. 40.11 (ἁμὲς […] τοὶ θεοί 'we, the gods') and 84 (καλέομες 'we call'), from the Ἥβας γάμος and Μοῦσαι respectively, Epich. fr. 122, from the equally trochaic Σειρῆνες, possibly addressed by the enticing title figures to a suffering Odysseus,[70] plus the iambic trimeters of Epich. fr. 68, from Θεαροί, in which (as Athenaeus 8.362b tells us) a group of festival-goers describe the votive offerings at Delphi, and the picture emerges of a chorus who speaks or recites in the iambic mode, but—crucially—does not sing. Not a single fragment contains evidence of sung metres, and even basic spoken/recited polymetry

[67] Cf. e.g. Berk (1964: 27-34), Pickard-Cambridge (1962: 278-280), and West (1974: 34-35), against Wüst (1950: 341-342 and 348-349) and Kerkhof (2001: 151-155).

[68] Cf. Pianko (1948: 425), Reinhardt (1996: 31); the latter interpretation (e.g. Berk 1964: 32-33) seems partly based on the 'parallel' with Cratinus' Ὀδυσσῆς, but even there a rendering like 'Odysseus and his comrades' (Bakola 2010: 238; cf. Perusino 1986: 82, and contrast Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1910: 56 n. 14, "Odysseuskomödie") is not certain.

[69] The title itself, though commonly adduced in this context, does not unambiguously suggest a choral group: in Epicharmus' dialect χορός was also the word for 'school class' (cf. Epich. fr. 13 and 103, Sophron fr. 136 and 147, also on χοραγός 'school teacher', χοραγεῖον 'school'; but contrast Epich. fr. 108 χορεύει 'dances'), and χορευταί might therefore conceivably be 'school pupils' rather than 'dancers'.

[70] But note that the Sirens (or a Siren, Pianko 1948: 423) can hardly be the only speaker(s), given the masculine participles ὀπτᾶντες and ἀδύνοντες in Epich. fr. 122.8: cf. Kerkhof (2001: 122-123), who thinks of Odysseus' companions.

appears to have been exceedingly rare in Epicharmian δράματα.[71] Moreover, this analysis—that Epicharmian comedy could feature a speaking or reciting chorus, continuing the tradition of satirical ἰαμβισταί, but no singing chorus—may find indirect confirmation in a piece of evidence that has been overlooked so far in this context. In his discussion of the evolution of Attic comedy, Platonius (*diff. com.* (= Proleg. de com. I) 31–34, p. 4 Koster) notes that Middle Comedy abandoned choral invective and then cites as forerunners of this different 'type' of comedy Aristophanes' Αἰολοσίκων, Cratinus' Ὀδυσσῆς,[72] καὶ πλεῖστα τῶν παλαιῶν δραμάτων οὔτε χορικὰ οὔτε παραβάσεις ἔχοντα, 'a great number of old plays which have neither choral songs nor *parabaseis*'. If one accepts the common view that the choral parabasis (including the parabatic odes) was the nucleus of primitive Attic comedy, it is difficult to see what 'great number' of apparently pre-Cratinean comedies Platonius may have in mind here—unless Platonius is not referring specifically to old *Attic* plays, but more generally to any παλαιὰ δράματα, notably those of Epicharmus. As we have just seen, if he is thinking of Epicharmus the claim that there were neither χορικά nor παραβάσεις is perfectly borne out by the available evidence.

7. From Sicily to Athens

Be that as it may, some other implications of the genetic model presented in §5 are of far greater significance. If Aristotle's presentation is accepted (and there is little reason not to accept it), Attic Old Comedy too became a hybrid genre in the age of Crates, when an iambic-parabatic tradition ultimately going back to the φαλλικά was married with the Sicilian tradition of plot comedy. Given the Epicharmian precedent, however, we now see that this was a generic innovation only within the Athenian paradigm. From a more

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[71] Cf. Kerkhof (2001: 152). The main exceptions are (1) Epich. fr. 113.415 with a proverbial hexameter quotation from Homer (*Il.* 9.63), Epich. fr. 114 with an anapaestic tetrameter, and Epich. fr. 115 with an iambic trimeter, all from an overwhelmingly trochaic play (Πύρρα καὶ Προμαθεύς), (2) similarly Epich. fr. 121 with a parodic hexameter from the trochaic Σειρῆνες (whereas Epich. fr. 224 may come from a hexameter *or* an anapaestic tetrameter), and (3) Epich. fr. 100 with two anapaestic dimeters from (the very end of?) the otherwise trochaic Ὀδυσσεὺς αὐτόμολος. The situation in Ἄμυκος (with Epich. frr. 6 and 7) and Σφίγξ (Epich. frr. 125, 126) is less clear.

[72] It is hard to say how valid Platonius' statement is for Cratinus Ὀδυσσῆς (cf. Bertan 1984, Perusino 1986: 80–84). The glyconeans of Cratin. fr. 153 are a lyric metre, but in principle they could be sung by an actor. Also, Platonius does *not* deny the presence of a chorus (which would be contradicted by the anapaestic fragments, notably the dimeters of Cratin. fr. 151 with ἡμῖν δ' Ἰθάκη πατρίς ἐστι, | πλέομεν δ' ἅμ' Ὀδυσσέι θείωι 'our home is Ithaca, and we sail with divine Odysseus'; cf. Bakola 2010: 238). Instead, it is tempting to see the Ὀδυσσῆς as one of the first 'Epicharmian' plot comedies (with speaking/reciting chorus) in Athens (cf. further §9).

general point of view, it simply replicated the generic hybridisation undertaken earlier in Sicily. To be sure, both because of the different and more fundamental role of the chorus in Athens and because the process there was additive rather than truly amalgamating, the—unavoidably much longer—Attic end result consisting of a plot *in addition to* a choral parabasis (which retained its ἰαμβικὴ ἰδέα) was far from identical. And yet, the Sicilian (and, most probably, specifically Epicharmian) influence in all of this can hardly be overrated. There is simply no 'logical' development that would 'automatically' lead from a choral performance with, at best, a dialogue between chorus and ἔξαρχος to a dramatic-dialogic form as we find it in the spoken scenes of classical Old Comedy. To hypothesise two independent but parallel developments is both uneconomical and implausible, all the more since in Athens there was not even a strong local mime tradition to provide the inspiration it would provide in Sicily.[73] Everything—Aristotle's account, the fragmentary evidence for early Old Comedy, the character of Epicharmus' work, and the colonial blueprint of generic experimentation—thus concurs and produces a coherent picture once we accept that Athens was simply less instrumental in the early development of Greek comedy than the anachronistically Athenocentric perspective of classical scholarship wants to make us believe.

Foreseeably, though, Athenocentrics will raise at least two objections to such a 'Sicelo-centric' account. The first of these brings us back to the more traditional arguments for and against Epicharmian influence on fifth-century Attic comedy. If Epicharmus' drama was really as macroscopically influential as I have argued, why is there so little evidence of influence on the microscopic level? The only point highlighted already by ancient critics is found in a scholion on Ar. *Pax* 185 (= Epich. fr. 123). Hermes has greeted Trygaeus with a lot of abuse, then wants to know his name, family name, and father's name; and he is given the sarcastic answer Μιαρώτατος 'Mega-Bastard' each time. According to the scholion, this was inspired by a similar scene in Epicharmus' Σκίρων where a basket (φορμός) was asked about its father's, mother's, and brother's name and each time replied Σηκίς 'Maid'. Modern scholars have dismissed this claim because the scenes are not exactly parallel: the Epicharmian one probably parodies Andromache's words to Hector in *Il.* 6.429-430, whereas Aristophanes imitates the Athenian δοκιμασία procedure (cf.

[73] Symptomatically, Zimmermann (2011: 468) or Rothwell (2007: 24-25), following e.g. Zielinski (1885: 244), Körte (1914: 5-6) and (1921: 1221), Pohlenz (1949: 38-44), and Wüst (1950: 350), have to invoke, somewhat vaguely, influence from neighbouring Megara in order to explain the rise of Attic drama (including tragedy, on which cf. Bickel 1942 and see further §8); but in a traditionalist society there was little incentive for the fundamental modification of choral proto-drama by contamination with a poorly regarded 'foreign' genre. Herter (1947: 34-35) solves the problem differently, by positing an encounter of two choruses as the nucleus of drama, but the splitting of a chorus is too rare in attested drama to make this plausible (cf. Pickard-Cambridge 1962: 149-150). Only Green (2007: 104) has recently remarked in passing that "it could be that Epicharmus came into the equation".

Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 55.3).[74] But even if the scholion were right—and if Ar. *Ach.* 333 were to be added, since a char-coal basket, λάρκος, is there referred to as a 'deme-fellow', δημότης, by the Acharnian chorus—, the case would remain fairly isolated; for similar hesitations also apply to further modern comparisons, for example between the puns on τρίπους 'tripod' in Epich. fr. 147 and on τράπεζα 'table, (lit.) four-footer' in Ar. fr. 545, between Epich. fr. 76 with a pun on ἔρανος vs. γέρανος (cf. fn. 30) and Strattis fr. 63 with a misunderstanding of γαλῆν 'weasel' vs. γαληνά 'calm of the sea', or between the para-rhetorical *epoikodomesis* figure in Epich. fr. 146 and the line of thought in Ar. *Vesp.* 1253-1255 or Eubulus fr. 93 (both without *epoikodomesis*).[75]

However, even if one chooses to follow the sceptics and reject all of this, to conclude from it that Epicharmus must have been unknown in Athens because none of the alleged echoes can be corroborated would be methodologically wrong. Instead, we should ask whether we should expect any such echoes at all. Good comedians do not copy each other, or if they do, then certainly not to an extent that would allow us to recognise the source of inspiration without ambiguity. The entire search for microscopic influences is therefore absurd. If there *was* a visible Epicharmian impact on Attic comedy, it *should* be macroscopic.

Of course, this is not a free ticket to empty speculation, and this is where the opposite side has sometimes been guilty. For instance, there is no reason to believe that the trochaic tetrameter was introduced into Attic comedy on Epicharmus' model merely because Epicharmian tetrameters, like their Attic counterparts, are richer in resolution than those of iambus and tragedy.[76] Both trimeter and tetrameter are conventional metres

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[74] See the detailed discussion and cautious rejection in Kerkhof (2001: 144-145), following van Leeuwen (1906: 36) and Cassio (1985: 42), against Kaibel (1889: 54-55 n. 1) and von Salis (1905: 36-38); on the fragment cf. now also Petrides (2003) with a daring reconstruction.

[75] See again Kerkhof (2001: 146-150), who also dismisses (1) von Salis's (1905: 41) idea that the superlative αὐτότατος in Ar. *Plut.* 83 follows Epich. fr. 5 (αὐτότερος αὐτῶν), (2) Crusius's (1891-1893: 291-293) complicated connection of Ar. *Pax* 73 referring to Trygaeus' Αἰτναῖος κάνθαρος 'Aetnaean dung-beetle' with the mention of the same notorious type of beetle in Epich. fr. 65, and (3) Cassio's (1985: 42) phraseological parallelism of Epich. fr. 113.243 ὀπτῆν φαντι καὶ πὸτ τὰν ἔλαν 'to roast, they say, also in the sunshine' and Ar. fr. 636 καὶ τῶν πρὸς εἴλην ἰχθύων ὠπτημένων 'and of the fishes roasted in the sunshine'. For Epich. fr. 147 ~ Ar. fr. 545 see von Salis (1905: 38) and Kaibel (1907: 39) (but Hes. fr. 266a M.-W. suggests that the paradox of a τρίπους τράπεζα may be much older: cf. Merkelbach and West 1965: 310-311), for Epich. fr. 76 ~ Strattis fr. 63 von Salis (1905: 38) (but Kerkhof compares e.g. Plaut. *Truc.* 262-264), for Epich. fr. 146 ~ Ar. *Vesp.* 1253-1255 Starkie (1897: 349-350) and van Leeuwen (1909: 195), followed by Olivieri (1946: 98), Carrière (1979: 200), and Cassio (1985: 42). Further inconclusive material in Crates is discussed by Bonanno (1972: 47-50).

[76] For the doubtful statistics behind this argument see Kanz (1913: 39-45), refuted by Wüst (1950: 343-346); there is no more substance to the view that Epicharmus 'took over' the tetrameter from Phrynichus (Radermacher 1954: 19). The situation with the anapaestic tetrameter is somewhat different, but even here

of iambus, which could therefore easily find their way into Attic comedy without a detour via Sicily. More generally, it is never safe to ascribe to Epicharmian (or other Sicilian) influence any constituent feature of Attic comedy that has equally plausible roots in early iambus. If, say, the satirical depiction and even impersonation of character types was probably known to iambus (cf. §5), the invention of 'character comedy' cannot safely be attributed to Epicharmus. At best, an Epicharmian legacy may lurk behind specific figures, notably the parasite (with Athenaeus 6.235e).[77] By contrast, all those features which we find in Epicharmus but which we have *no* good reason to derive directly from the tradition of iambus, whether popular or literary, strengthen the case for Epicharmus' role in the development of Attic comedy. As highlighted above, the prime example for this is mimetic dialogue between dramatic actors.

As a consequence, some earlier discussions about two further macroscopic candidate features were awkwardly framed. Old theories that the existence in Attic comedy of (a) ἀντιλαβή (that is, changes of speaker within a verse)[78] and/or (b) mythological travesty and burlesque[79] might also betray Epicharmian influence were easy to dismiss as pure speculation as long as no-one[80] asked the real question: Was early Attic 'comedy' dialogic-dramatic at all? The answer to this is very likely 'no', and if this may come as a

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it is risky to postulate any Epicharmian influence on Attic comedy (with Crusius 1891–1893: 284, Kaibel 1889: 54–55 n. 1 and 1907: 39, Körte 1914: 10 and 1921: 1224; cf. Wüst 1950: 346–347).

[77] Athenaeus objects to Carystius of Pergamon's claim that Alexis invented the parasite and cites Epich. frr. 31 and 32 from Ἐλπὶς ἢ Πλοῦτος as counterevidence; he then compares the κόλακες of Old Comedy quoting Eupolis fr. 172 from Κόλακες (which von Salis 1905: 46–47 wants to relate directly to Epich fr. 32; but cf. Wüst 1950: 359–361 and Kerkhof 2001: 169–170). Despite Epich. fr. 33 (from Schol. (T) Hom. *Il.* 17.577 and Poll. 6.35), and to judge by Athenaeus' wording (τὸν νῦν λεγόμενον παράσιτον; cf. Athen. 6.236e), the *term* παράσιτος (*πάρσιτος) was probably not Epicharmus' (cf. Epich. fr. 31.3 ἀείσιτον; Prescott 1917: 415, Arnott 1968, Nesselrath 1985: 102 n. 314, Kerkhof 2001: 166–167). Wüst (1950: 361–362) and Kerkhof (2001: 162–173) further discuss the 'miles gloriosus' and the 'ἀλαζών doctus' types, but for the former (cf. Wysk 1921: 3–6, Körte 1921: 1225) there is no evidence at all in Epicharmus, and for the latter (cf. Süss 1905: 33–35, Willi 2008: 170–175 and 2012a: 58–63) much remains in the air given how little Epich. fr. 136 really tells us about the setup and characters of the αὐξ(αν)όμενος λόγος play (cf. §3).

[78] Cf. von Salis (1905: 39–40) and Körte (1914: 10), criticised by Wüst (1950: 340) and Radermacher (1954: 20).

[79] Particular emphasis is here put on the figure of a gluttonous Heracles: cf. von Salis (1905: 44–46), Süss (1905: 131) on Ar. *Vesp.* 60 and *Pax* 741.

[80] Even Sieckmann (1906: esp. 25), who wanted to derive the *agon* of Attic comedy from Epicharmus, did not do so, but somewhat arbitrarily distinguished between a 'Doric' anapaestic *agon* and 'Attic' trimeter dialogues; for criticism see Süss (1907), Wüst (1950: 350–352), and Radermacher (1954: 20–36), and note that what we now have of Epicharmian dialogue (e.g. in Epich. fr. 97) is quite unlike an Attic *agon* involving the chorus.

surprise, it is only because Aristotle has not been listened to. To recall (cf. §1), he observes (Arist. *Poet.* 1449b5-9):

τὸ δὲ μύθους ποιεῖν τὸ μὲν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐκ Σικελίας ἦλθε, τῶν δὲ Ἀθήνησιν Κράτης πρῶτος ἦρξεν ἀφέμενος τῆς ἰαμβικῆς ἰδέας καθόλου ποιεῖν λόγους καὶ μύθους

'The construction of plots, however, originally came from Sicily, and in Athens Crates was the first to abandon the iambic mode and create, with a general scope, λόγοι and μῦθοι.'

The last phrase is crucial: it mentions not only μῦθοι (echoing the first part of the sentence, which everybody focuses on), but also λόγοι. The latter is of course a highly polysemic term, and traditionally it has been understood as a somewhat redundant synonym of μῦθοι here.[81] More plausibly, however, it takes up the use of λόγος just a few lines earlier where λόγος contrasts with τὰ τοῦ χοροῦ and refers to the spoken word in '(actorial) dialogue', as Aristotle is describing Aeschylus' innovations in tragedy (Arist. *Poet.* 1449a15-18):

καὶ τό τε τῶν ὑποκριτῶν πλῆθος ἐξ ἑνὸς εἰς δύο πρῶτος Αἰσχύλος ἤγαγε καὶ τὰ τοῦ χοροῦ ἠλάττωσε καὶ τὸν λόγον πρωταγωνιστεῖν παρεσκεύασεν

'The number of actors was first increased by Aeschylus from one to two, and he reduced the role of the chorus and assigned the central role to dramatic dialogue.'

Thus, under the 'heading' μύθους ποιεῖν the sentence about Crates relates three interconnected innovations *vis-à-vis* the iambic mode: the shift towards a general scope (καθόλου, not καθ' ἕκαστον: cf. Arist. *Poet.* 1451b11-15, also on the ἰαμβοποιοί), the composition of spoken dialogue (λόγοι, not just τὰ τοῦ χοροῦ as in the old φαλλικά), and, as a trigger for all of it, the construction of plots/stories (μῦθοι, not episodic invective). But if dramatic dialogue—excepting the non-actorial (pseudo-)dialogue between an iambic chorus and its ἔξαρχος, which could at best develop into a proto-*agon* between the purely choral *parodos* and *parabasis*—was absent in Athenian comedy before Crates, it follows that there could also be neither (a) lines with ἀντιλαβή (for there were no actorial conversations) nor (b) mythological comedies (in the strict sense: for there

[81] Lucas (1968: 91) states that "the καί is explanatory, λόγος being rather more general than μῦθος" (cf. similarly Gudeman 1934: 152, Dupont-Roc and Lallot 1980: 180), and e.g. Janko (1987: 7) and Schmitt (2008: 8) accordingly translate, respectively, "Crates was the first to relinquish the form of the lampoon and compose generalised stories, i.e. plots" and "[Krates] begann damit, überhaupt Geschichten als durchorganisierte Handlungen [Mythen] zu konzipieren". By contrast, Lorenz (1864: 190) had taken μύθους to refer only to 'mythological plots', but this seems too restrictive for Aristotle's general argument (cf. Vahlen 1865: 295-298).

were no dramatic plots). Strictly speaking, however, the post-Epicharmian presence of these two features in Attic comedy is merely epiphenomenal to the takeover of Sicilian-style dialogic plays as such and therefore less revolutionary than the dramatisation of comedy itself.

8. Epicharmus and tragedy

At this point, however, the Athenocentrics may wish to play their second card. Attic comedy did not exist in a vacuum: it had its 'sister genre' tragedy, whose genesis Aristotle describes as a close parallel. So what if—contrary to Aristotle's statement about Crates' innovative use of λόγοι—a pre-Cratean type of Attic dialogue comedy had already been invented independently of any Sicilian 'plot' input, by inspiration not from (Doric) mime but from local tragedy? If so, myth too (and, for that matter, ἀντιλαβή as well) could have come in by that door, and the desperate attempt to keep Epicharmus and Sicily at bay might succeed.

The condition *sine qua non* for this to work would be the existence of an early dialogic tragedy. But thanks to Aristotle we *know* when tragedy became truly dramatic-dialogic, since "[i]t was the introduction of the second actor that opened the way for true drama".[82] That is, before Aeschylus' innovation of a second actor, Athenian tragedy itself was rather unlike all of 'classical' tragedy. Unfortunately, we are unable to date this change more precisely than between 499 B.C., when Aeschylus' career started, and 472 B.C. when Aeschylus' first extant play, the *Persians*, was produced (cf. Aesch. test. 55a R.); in the *Persians* the chorus is still fairly central but here already ὁ λόγος πρωταγωνιστεῖ. This time window matches exactly the crucial decades of Epicharmus' lifetime. We also know that Epicharmus was already active in Syracuse in the 480s (*Sud.* ε 2766, s.v. Ἐπίχαρμος = Epich. test. 1), and he seems to have been a slightly older contemporary of Aeschylus', probably born around 540 B.C., and therefore undoubtedly active also from around 500 B.C. at the latest.[83]

Taking stock, we now have (1) Epicharmian dramatic-dialogic comedy in Sicily, certainly no later than the 480s, and well-rooted in the colonial Doric context with its subliterary mime tradition next to iambus, (2) Aeschylean dramatic-dialogic tragedy in

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[82] Lucas (1968: 83), echoing Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1910: 94): "Aischylos […] führte den dialog ein: damit war das dramatische gefunden"; cf. similarly Pohlenz (1949: 37), Schmitt (2008: 300-301). Scullion (2002: 105) generally doubts Aristotle's information here, but I am not so sure that "[no poet], simply on his own say-so, could have written for and shown up at the competition with a second or third actor".

[83] For Epicharmus' chronology see Berk (1964: 3-6) and Willi (2008: 119-120); the approximate birth date is partly based on his being a younger contemporary of Simonides (*Vit. Pind. Ambr.* I, p. 2.21 Drachmann = Epich. test. 4), but could be revised upwards if the iconographic arguments of Reinhardt (1996) were confirmed.

Athens, certainly by 472 B.C., and without organic roots in the preceding 'choral-dithyrambic' tragedy tradition. If we add to this (3) the fact that Aeschylus was invited to Sicily in 476, on the occasion of Hieron's foundation of Aitna, for which Aeschylus wrote the *Women of Aitna* (Σ Ar. *Ran.* 1028a = Aesch. test. 56a R.), there is only one satisfactory way of bringing it all together chronologically and developmentally: to assume that Aeschylus's bold innovation, the second actor of Attic tragedy, was inspired by his visit to Syracuse, and his discovering there a novel type of dialogic drama that was already flourishing thanks to Epicharmus' ground-breaking generic experiment. The only reason why this scenario has not been considered before (as far as I know), is that modern scholarship has been hampered by a simple prejudice, the notion that comedy may respond to tragedy, but the inverse must not be true.[84] Once we abandon this unhealthy restriction, everything falls into place and we need not discard *any* element of the—primarily Aristotelian, and therefore perfectly respectable—information we have. Instead, we can start to rewrite the early history of Attic drama as an art form which, exactly like Attic rhetoric some decades later,[85] reached its τέλος precisely because it was not hermetically closed to outside influences, but took part in a cultural discourse that reached well beyond the boundaries of Attica.

9. Conclusion

To sum up, I propose that Epicharmus, imbued with the colonial spirit of generic experimentation that pervades most preclassical and classical Sicilian literature, 'invented' dramatic-dialogic plot comedy by combining mime-inspired plotlines with the metres of iambus, around or shortly after 500 B.C., at a time when 'comedy' in Athens was still a fully choral genre centering around the ἰαμβικὴ ἰδέα. When Aeschylus first visited Sicily two decades later, he got to know this new type of stage performance and immediately saw the potential for his own genre. Returning to Athens he (perhaps quite literally) took Epicharmus' plays with him and 'invented' dramatic-dialogic tragedy by adding a second actor to the traditional layout of choral tragedy. This proved a success, both in Athens and abroad: at the Dionysia of 472 already, *Persians* won first prize, and Aeschylus was

[84] Cf. e.g. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1910: 53-54), Pohlenz (1949: 509), Breitholtz (1960: 182-187), or Berk (1964: 12-13 and *passim*), followed by West (1974: 35): "Wilamowitz's assumption that [Aeschylus' and Phrynichus'] work provided the model for [Epicharmus'] new form is very plausible"; cf. Carrière (1979: 193). Rather exceptionally, Epicharmian influence at least on Aeschylean satyr-play is postulated by Setti (1952): Veniero (1906-1907: esp. 392), while foreshadowing in some ways the hybridization theory developed above, had argued for the opposite direction ("io credo che modello ad Epicarmo nel trasformare gli antichi cori giambici e la farsa megarese sia stato il dramma satirico").

[85] For the Sicilian role in the development of Attic rhetoric (Korax, Teisias, Gorgias) see e.g. Kennedy (1994: esp. 17-21, 30-35) and now Willi (2008: esp. 290-293), with earlier literature.

invited again to Sicily, to produce *Persians* there too (cf. *Vit. Aesch.* 18 = Aesch. test. 1.18 R.).[86] Epicharmus, ever ready to face a new challenge, replied in turn, with *his* Πέρσαι, presumably the first paratragedy the Greek world had ever seen.[87] Moreover, after Aeschylus' step the Athenian sluice-gates were open, and Attic comedy too began to look westwards. Unsurprisingly here it was someone who had first distinguished himself as the single actor (or chorus respondent) in comedy to pick up the idea of shifting the emphasis away from the iambic chorus and onto actorial interaction in a plot: Crates, ὃς πρῶτον ὑπεκρίνατο ⟨τὰ⟩ Κρατίνου, καὶ αὐτὸς ποιητὴς ὕστερον ἐγένετο 'Crates who first acted in plays by Cratinus, and later became a poet himself' (Crates test. 3 = Σ Ar. *Eq.* 537a). In comedy, however, the Athenian audience was not apparently so ready to live without the extensive—and expensive—choral fun they had got used to, and they felt short-changed at first (Ar. *Eq.* 537-539):

> οἵας δὲ Κράτης ὀργὰς ὑμῶν ἠνέσχετο καὶ στυφελιγμούς,
> ὃς ἀπὸ σμικρᾶς δαπάνης ὑμᾶς ἀριστίζων ἀπέπεμπεν
> ἀπὸ κραμβοτάτου στόματος μάττων ἀστειοτάτας ἐπινοίας.

'And what anger and rejection did Crates experience from you, because he gave you only a breakfast without great expense, before sending you home again, wiping off his super-sober[88] mouth clever ideas!'

Perhaps, then, this fundamental change did not really catch on until Crates' former mentor, the great Cratinus himself, ventured onto the new ground and produced with (plays like) the Ὀδυσσῆς the first Sicilian-style blockbuster(s) in Athens—self-

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[86] The number of Aeschylus' visits to Sicily is a contentious matter (cf. Guardì 1980: 38 n. 23), but I do not see how the *Women of Aitna* can easily belong to any other year than 476/5 (*pace* Herington 1967: 75-76, Guardì 1980: 41-42; cf. *Vit. Aesch.* 9 = Aesch. test. 1.9 R., Ἱέρωνος τότε τὴν Αἴτνην κτίζοντος 'as Hieron was then founding Aitna': not κτίσαντος). *If*, for no particular reason, one feels compelled to reduce the number of early visits, one might consider that *Persians* was first staged in Syracuse back then, and repeated in Athens a few years later (cf. Kiehl 1852: 363-365, Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1897: 394-398, Bosher 2012; but note the wording ἀναδιδάξαι in *Vit. Aesch.* 18 = Aesch. test. 1.18 R.).

[87] Information about Epicharmus' Πέρσαι is scarce (cf. Epich. test. 35.4, from a list of Epicharmian titles in *P.Oxy.* 2426; Epich. fr. 110, 111 from the lexicographical tradition), but since Eratosthenes wrote in the third book of his treatise on *comedy* (Περὶ κωμωιδιῶν) about the reperformance of Aeschylus' Πέρσαι in Syracuse (Σ Ar. *Ran.* 1028a; cf. Griffith 1978: 116), a parodistic relationship between Aeschylus' play and Epicharmus' comedy is most likely.

[88] On the meaning of κραμβοτάτου see Bonanno (1972: 36-38), who also comments on Aristophanes' judgment more generally.

referentially (?)[89] calling that comedy a νεοχμὸν ἄθυρμα or 'novel entertainment' (Cratin. fr. 152; cf. fn. 72).

Admittedly, many details in the above reconstruction must remain open, but I hope to have shown that the μῦθος as such is watertight. Aristotle was a sensible man, and Plato and Xenophon too knew what they were doing when they let Socrates refer to Epicharmus as a great authority in intellectual history (§§1, 2.1). The curious modern urge to remove Epicharmus from the literary map of fifth-century Athens tells us more about modern conceptions and preconceptions of literature and its workings than about ancient culture and society itself. Of course, to make not only classical comedy, but in some ways also classical tragedy 'start' with Epicharmus is much bolder than what even the most devoted pro-Epicharmianists have ever dared to do. Those who feel that it is going too far may just be asked to remember: a parasite always eats more than he is entitled to.

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[89] Cf. Kassel and Austin (1983: 198) on possible referents for this phrase; Bergk (1838: 161) came closest to the interpretation favoured here.

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