

NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS

THE JOKE ON APOLLODORUS' DEMOTIC (PL. *SYMP.* 172A)

καὶ γὰρ ἐτύγγανον πρόην εἰς ἄστυ οἴκοθεν ἀνίων **Φαληρόθεν** τῶν οὖν γνωρίμων τις ὅπισθεν κατιδὼν με πόρρωθεν ἐκάλεσε, καὶ **παίζων ἅμα τῇ κλήσει**, ὦ **Φαληρεύς**, ἔφη, οὗτος Ἀπολλόδωρος, οὐ περιμένεις;

A considerable number of scholars have been puzzled by this passage and commentators have yet to give a convincing explanation of the joke. There is none, so long as the attempt is made to preserve the manuscripts' **Φαληρεύς**. Dover tried to justify the reading by commenting: "παίζων: the humour may lie in startling Apollodorus by shouting with feigned urgency 'Hi! The man from Phalerum! You!' οὗτος is not always rude, but it is forceful; cf. Ar. *Birds* 1164 Οὗτος τί ποιεῖς; 'Hey, what's up with you.'"¹ One has only to notice Alcibiades' Σωκράτης οὗτος at *Symposium* 213B and Socrates' use of Ἱπποκράτης οὗτος in response to Hippocrates' ὁ Σώκρατες at *Protagoras* 310B to see how inadequate an account this is. A fair consideration of the context and the way in which the text calls attention to the joke being made should also refute Dover's explanation that the mere use of οὗτος is at issue. Bury recalls four equally unsatisfactory earlier efforts.² Should not παίζων ἅμα τῇ κλήσει be calling attention to something obviously striking in the next few words? A hint at the sort of thing that is wanted here can be found at *Cratylus* 406B–D, where Socrates in reply to Hermogenes' question about the meaning of "Dionysus" and "Aphrodite" offers him a joking rather than a serious answer:

Ἑρμογένης: Τί δὲ ὁ "Διόνυσος" τε καὶ ἡ "Ἀφροδίτη";
Σωκράτης: Μεγάλα, ὦ παῖ Ἱππονίκου, ἐρωτᾷς. ἀλλὰ ἔστι γὰρ καὶ σπουδαίως εἰρημένος ὁ τρόπος τῶν ὀνομάτων τούτοις τοῖς θεοῖς καὶ **παιδικῶς**. τὸν μὲν οὖν σπουδαῖον ἄλλους τινὰς ἐρώτα. τὸν δὲ **παιδικὸν** οὐδὲν κωλύει διελεῖν· **φιλοπαίσμονες** γὰρ καὶ οἱ θεοί. ὅ τε γὰρ Διόνυσος εἴη ἂν ὁ διδοὺς τὸν οἶνον "**Διδοίνυσος**" ἐν **παιδιᾷ καλούμενος**, οἶνος δ', ὅτι οἶεσθαι νοῦν ἔχειν ποιεῖ τῶν πινόντων τοὺς πολλοὺς οὐκ ἔχοντας, "**οἰόνους**" δικαιοῦται· ἂν **καλούμενος**, περὶ δὲ Ἀφροδίτης οὐκ ἄξιον Ἡσιόδῳ ἀντιλέγειν. ἀλλὰ συγγραφεῖν ὅτι διὰ τὴν ἐκ τοῦ ἀφροῦ γένεσιν "Ἀφροδίτη" **ἐκλήθη**.

What we want, then, is the sort of appellative joking found in other plays on words in the *Symposium*: Ἀγάθων and ἀγαθῶν 179B; Πανυσανίου and πανυσαμένου 185C; Γοργίου κεφαλὴν 198C (cf. Ar. *Ach.* 1124, 1131); and Εἰλείθυια and ἀνείλ-λεται 206D.³

1. K. J. Dover, *Plato: Symposium* (Cambridge, 1980), p. 77.

2. R. G. Bury, *The Symposium of Plato*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, 1932), pp. 1–2.

3. Cf. Ἀρίστωνος : ἄριστον *Resp.* 580B–C, Ἀλκίνοῦ : ἀλκίμου 614B, καλῶς : Καλλία *Prt.* 336B. The puns on Δῆμος : δῆμος *Grg.* 481D, 513B; and Πῶλος : πῶλος 463E involve homonymy and are expectedly monomial.

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All interpretations must start with Stallbaum's deduction that "apparet iocum in uno isto Φαληρεὺς esse quaerendum" and so for the sake of the joke, I would read Φαληρίς. Φαληρόθεν at the end of the previous sentence set the pun up—the coot would quite naturally have been associated with the coastal region of Phaleron—and, at a later date, caused some inattentive scribe to substitute the expected demotic Φαληρεὺς for the bird's name.⁴ There does seem to be an etymological connection between the place name and the bird's, and Keller has suggested that Phaleron owed its name to the vast numbers of coots that were found there—just as Phocaea and Phocis got their names from the association with seals.⁵ The drinkers at symposia were addicted to this sort of caricaturing (δι' εἰκόνων). In Alcibiades' speech (215A–222B) we find Socrates compared to Marsyas, a hollowed-out statue of Silenus, a biting snake, and—quite relevant here—a strutting waterfowl: ἔπειτα ἔμοιγε ἐδόκει, ὦ Ἀριστόφανες, τὸ σὸν δὴ τοῦτο, καὶ ἐκεῖ διαπορεύεσθαι ὥσπερ καὶ ἐνθάδε, **βρενθυόμενος** καὶ τῷφθαλμῷ παραβάλλων," ἥρέμα παρασκοπῶν καὶ τοὺς φιλίους καὶ τοὺς πολέμιους, δῆλος ὢν παντὶ καὶ πάνυ πόρρωθεν, ὅτι εἴ τις ἄγεται τούτου τοῦ ἀνδρός, μάλα ἐρρωμένως ἀμυνεῖται (221B). Βρενθυόμενος (cf. the English "goose-stepping") seems to represent a metaphorical derivative of βρένθος.⁶

Plato's *Symposium* owes much in both form and content to the plays of Aristophanes, and such puns on deme names are common in Old Comedy; e.g., at *Acharnians* 233 Βαλλήνδε appears for Παλλήνδε to support a "striking" pun; at *Knights* 79 (ὁ δὲ νοῦς ἐν Κλωπιδῶν) Κρωπίδαι exchanges a "ρ" for a "λ" to create a pun on thefts. At *Frogs* 84, in a play which served as a model for much else in Plato's *Symposium* there occurs—together with the pun on Agathon's name—a particularly revealing example of a geographically based pun:

HP.	Ἀγάθων δὲ ποῦ 'στιν;
ΔΙ.	ἀπολιπὼν μ' ἀποίχεται, ἀγαθὸς ποιητῆς καὶ ποθεινὸς τοῖς φίλοις.
HP.	ποῖ γῆς ὁ τλήμων;
ΔΙ.	ἐς μακάρων εὐωχίαν.

These puns were noticed by Plato and the "Goodman" one was echoed at 174B. Agathon's visit to the Macedonians, where he seems to have remained until his death, is made the theme of a playfully lugubrious pun that fits well into the *Frogs*' main plot, a descent to Hades.

That the Greeks could as naturally accost one another with bird-names as we can is well illustrated by the very passage in Aristophanes which may have suggested the joke to Plato.⁷ At *Birds* 1277–97, Peisetairos has just been heralded as wisest of men and honored with a golden crown; for he has made men "lovers" of

4. For the ease with which such an appellation could have become corrupted, see "Confusions of Proper Names" in R. Renehan, *Greek Textual Criticism* (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 66–75.

5. Cf. O. Keller, *Die Antike Tierwelt*, vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1913), pp. 236–37; D. Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Birds* (Oxford, 1895), p. 176; and P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque* (Paris, 1968–74), s.v. φαλός iv.

6. See J. Taillardat, *Les images d' Aristophane: Études de langue et de style*² (Paris, 1965), pp. 175–76.

7. In English we have "coot" itself, "dove," "pigeon," "vulture," "quail," etc. And in Latin, R. Renehan (*CP* 71 [1976]: 164–65) has plausibly discovered a coot at Plaut. *Cas.* 239: "eho tu nihili, cana fulix, vix teneor quin quae decent te dicam, / senectan aetate unguentatus per vias, ignave, incedis?"

his city in the sky and turned them away from Spartan and Socratic doings. Many of those so converted to bird-madness now bear bird-names and among such is Chairephon the Bat;⁸ Χαιρεφῶν ἡ νυκτερίς is memorably encored in the punch line of an anti-Socratic chorus at *Birds* 1564. Support for my divining a coot in Plato's *Symposium* may be found in Allmann's discovery of an owl together with a pheasant and a peacock in Aeschines' *Callias*—a dialogue which contributed to the development of the *Symposium* genre.⁹ The cockfight that figured in that dialogue echoed the one in the *Clouds* in which the two logoi appeared in the guise of fighting roosters.

M. Schmidt thought the play lay in the hendecasyllabic rhythm of the address ὦ Φαληρεύς, οὗτος Ἀπολλόδορος, and A. Hug noted the poetic coloring of ὦ οὗτος.¹⁰ These observations, which have been used in the past to bolster the quite alien notion that Plato's joke was a takeoff on legalistic formulas, might better be viewed as testifying to a dramatic influence. Bird puns would have had their origin in everyday gossip and the comic theater rather than the courts. Past editors have argued that the reading Φαληρεύς might itself have produced an automatic pun on φαληρίς "coot," thereby making fun either of Apollodorus' want of hair or some supposedly cootlike aspect of his walk. The Greek word for the "bald coot" is cognate with the English word "bald," alluding to the white area on the bird's forehead, and the coot does tend to skitter over the water when taking flight. "But what evidence," as Bury (echoing Hug) asks, "is there to show that Apollodorus either was bald or walked like a coot?"¹¹ The decisive objection to this approach is that no reader could possibly be expected to get the point of such a joke. A phallic pun on Apollodorus' name would be appropriate in the beginning of the *Symposium*, with its concern for Eros, fertility, and life. In this world the word Φαληρίς would naturally involve a pun on φαλλός, as does the joke made by Aristophanes at *Birds* 565: Ἦν Ἀφροδίτη θύη πυρούς ὄρνιθι φαληρίδι θύειν.¹²

Since the expected appellative Φαληρεύς would have been replaced by a punning word that could be interpreted as its feminine equivalent (Φαληρίς), this would imply the familiar accusation of homosexuality as at *Clouds* 691–92 (τὴν Ἀμυνίαν . . . ἥτις). Keeping in mind that the dramatis personae of Plato's *Symposium* are portrayed as members of a markedly and exclusively homosexual demi-monde, the joke need not be seen as a particularly offensive one. The slight allusion to his "phallic" propensities does not go much beyond what one might deduce from his self-confessed interest in "erotic" logoi. It should be noted that Aristodemus, the *fons et origo* of the narrative, was so notoriously gay that

8. For the role of Chairephon in the anti-Socratic *Clouds*, see K. J. Dover, *Aristophanes: The Clouds* (Oxford, 1968), p. xcv.

9. H. Allmann, "Über die beste Erziehung: Zum Dialog 'Kallias' des Sokratikers Aischines," *Philologus* 16 (1972): 213–53.

10. *RhM* 27 (1872): 481; A. Hug and H. Schöne, *Symposion*, vol. 5 in *Platons ausgewählte Schriften* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1909), ad loc.

11. It is clear from 173A that Apollodorus was at most thirty-five years old at the time of the discussion that opens the *Symposium*.

12. See J. Henderson, *The Maculate Muse: Obscene Language in Attic Comedy* (New Haven, 1977), pp. 112–13; and W. Arrowsmith, "A Note on *Eros* and *Pteros*," *Arion* 1:1 (1973): 164–67. This type of phallic joke would be in keeping with the general atmosphere of *παρρησία*, which is—mutatis mutandis—as characteristic of both Plato's and Xenophon's *Symposia* as it is of the Old Comedy. With Brunck's emendation κριθᾶς for πυρούς the erotic imagery would be heightened, cf. LSJ s.v.

ὁ πρωκτός itself received a nickname from his proper name.¹³ In the *Banqueters* of Aristophanes, one of the forerunners of the symposiacal dialogues, we learn that a similar phallic joke was made at the expense of Alcibiades, who was said to have been born ἐπὶ Φαλληγνίου (for ἐπὶ Φαλινίου), with a pun on ὁ Φαλῆς.¹⁴

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13. Cf. A. C. Cassio, *Aristofane, Banchetti: I frammenti* (Pisa, 1977), p. 85, on Aristophanes fr. 38 (= 231 K).

14. *Ibid.*, fr. 54 (= 554 K). I would like to thank the Editor of *CP* and his anonymous referees for their comments and suggestions.

PRAXINOA'S SPEECH AND THE TEXT OF THEOCRITUS 15.15–17

The manuscripts of Theocritus 15.15–17 agree in reading thus:¹

ἀπφῦς μὲν τῆνος τὰ πρόαν λέγομεν δὲ πρόαν θην
πάντα νίτρον καὶ φύκος ἀπὸ σκανᾶς ἀγοράσδων
ἦνθε φέρων ἄλλας ἄμμιν ἀνὴρ τρισκαίδεκάπαχυς. 15

Some nineteenth-century editors made no sense of this, and emended. Seidler read προαθρεῖν for πρόαν θην, and Meinecke agreed: “libri fere quod intellegi non potest.” But he added that he would prefer ἔλεγον for λέγομεν. Indeed, the manuscripts’ present plural verb remains an embarrassment for all current interpretations.²

Ahrens objected to πάντα in 16, emending it to βάντα, and changed ἀγοράσδων to ἀγοράσδεν—construed as infinitive for imperative: “I told him [λέγομεν], ‘go and buy (βάντα ἀγοράσδεν).’” He found many followers.³ Fritzsche’s third edition (1870) still used the manuscripts’ text;⁴ but Cholmeley in 1901 was the last editor to print the manuscripts’ reading. Yet even he was disturbed by πάντα: “πάντα is awkward; but it should probably be taken as direct object with πρόαν ‘tertiary predicate’.”⁵

In his 1905 O.C.T. text Wilamowitz thought πάντα worse than awkward, and rejected it. Keeping Ahrens’ ἀγοράσδεν, for Ahrens’ βάντα (and the manuscripts’

1. See A. S. F. Gow, ed., *Theocritus*², vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1952), p. 108 (a few MSS read μέν for μὲν in 15).

2. A. Meineke, ed., *Theocritus, Bion, et Moschus*³ (Berlin, 1856); this seems to mean, “I told him (λέγομεν) to foresee everything” (LSJ attests προαθρεῖν only in Eustathius). R. W. Daniel, “Three Notes on Theocritus,” *ZPE* 27 (1977): 77–83, gives a similar interpretation, somehow extracting it even from the MSS readings (though he clearly prefers Wilamowitz’ text [below]). Yet Daniel’s exegesis has many difficulties. He translates λέγομεν as “I told (him)” (= “to command”) and construes it “as an unaugmented imperfect.” But why would Praxinoa say λέγομεν for ἔλεξα? And λέγω “command” is followed by the infinitive, not the participle. Daniel translates “just the other day I told (him) everything (he should do),” injecting padding but omitting the second πρόαν.

3. L. Ahrens, *Bucolicorum Graecorum reliquiae* (Leipzig, 1855). Ahrens’ full text appears, e.g., in O. Könnicke, *Bucolici Graeci* (Brunswick, 1914), and is still printed in Ph.-D. Legrand, *Bucoliques Grecs*, Budé vol. 1: *Théocrite* (Paris, 1967). His infinitive is still printed in all standard current texts.

4. H. Fritzsche, *Theocriti idyllia*, vol. 2³ (Leipzig, 1870), p. 40; but he defended the MSS with an opaque argument which convinced no one.

5. R. J. Cholmeley, *Idylls of Theocritus*² (London, 1901), ad loc.