

ARISTOPHANES OF BYZANTIUM AND
PROBLEM-SOLVING IN THE MUSEUM

οὐ περὶ τοῦ τυχόντος οὖν ἔφη ἐστὶν ὁ ἀγών,
ἀλλὰ περὶ τοῦ μαίνεσθαι ἢ μή.

Epictetus in M. Aurelius, *Meditations* 11. 38

When Festus said to Paul: 'Much learning doth make thee mad', Paul's answer was the instinctive defence of a scholar under attack: 'I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness'. Whether poets were mad or sober has been a question for critics ever since Gorgias pointed out the incompatibility; it is less frequently debated why scholars unlike poets should need to affirm their sobriety. I should like to concentrate on one aspect of ancient criticism, that of problem-solving, in order, as I hope, to put into a different perspective the whole business of what Alexandrians did with texts. Inevitably perhaps it will be argued that I am neglecting the vast philological and lexical labours of the Alexandrians and failing to appreciate their subtlety in textual criticism. I hope that my criticisms will not be construed in this way; yet I believe that the Alexandrians have been idealized and their critical attitudes over-simplified. By taking a problem from antiquity and setting it in its context, I will be trying to give what I consider to be a more correct perspective to the labours of our ancient predecessors.

Aristophanes of Byzantium wrote a whole book on the proverbial moaning message stick of Archilochus, but the one fragment which is preserved from this work deals surprisingly with shellfish.¹ It is not unreasonable to proceed on the assumption that somehow shellfish in his view did have something to do with his explanation of Archilochus' moaning message stick. The one certain fragment of Clearchus' work *On the mathematical passages of Plato's Republic*² is a discussion of the mating habits of quails, but this can be shown to be ultimately germane to Plato too. No-one to my knowledge has ventured to suggest, however, what shellfish are doing in Archilochus, and since scholarly puzzles are now as then attractive, I begin with an attempt at a solution.

Athenaeus tells us:

¹ p. 273 Nauck = fr. 368 Slater from Athenaeus 3. 85e.

Μνημονεύων δ' αὐτῆς (sc. τῆς τελλίνης) Ἀριστοφάνης ὁ γραμματικὸς ἐν τῷ περὶ τῆς ἀχυνμένης σκυτάλης συγγράμματι ὁμοίως φησὶν εἶναι τὰς λεπάδας ταῖς καλουμέναις τελλίνας. Καλλίας δ' ὁ Μιτυληναῖος ἐν τῷ περὶ τῆς παρ' Ἀλκαίῳ λεπάδος παρὰ τῷ Ἀλκαίῳ φησὶν εἶναι ὠδὴν, ἧς ἡ ἀρχή (fr. 359 Voigt)

Πέτρας καὶ πολίας θαλάσσας τέκνον

ἧς ἐπὶ τέλει γεγράφθαι

ἐκ δὲ παίδων χαύνους φρένας ἅ θαλασσία λεπάς.

ὁ δὲ Ἀριστοφάνης γράφει ἀντὶ τοῦ λεπὰς χέλυσ, καὶ φησιν οὐκ εὖ Δικαίᾳρχον ἐκδεξάμενον λέγειν τὰς λεπάδας. τὰ παιδάρια δέ, ἡνίκ' ἂν εἰς τὸ στόμα λάβωσιν, αὐλεῖν ἐν ταύταις καὶ παίζειν καθάπερ καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν τὰ σπερμολόγα τῶν παιδαρίων ταῖς καλουμέναις τελλίνας, ὡς καὶ Σώπατρος φησιν (fr. 7K)

App. crit.: ἐκ δὲ παίδων Ahrens: ἐκ λεπάδων cod.; χαύνους cod.: χαύνως Voigt, χαύνως Lobel; ἐκδεξάμενον Valckenaer: ἐκλεξάμενον cod. Both οὐκ εὖ and ἐκδέχομαι are technical terms; cf. Strabo 1. 1. 1 and 1. 3. 13 e.g. in zetemata.

² fr. 3 Wehrli² with explanation on p. 46.

Aristophanes the grammarian mentions the shellfish *telline* in his monograph *On the moaning message stick*, and says that limpets (*lepadēs*) are like the shellfish called *tellinai*. Callias of Mitylene in his monograph *On the limpet in Alcaeus* says that there is a poem in Alcaeus which begins:

Child of the rock and the gray sea,

at the end of which is written

You make empty the minds of children, you sea limpet.³

But Aristophanes reads 'tortoise' instead of 'limpet' and says that Dicaearchus in speaking of limpets interprets wrongly; whenever children (says Aristophanes) take them into their mouths, they play the flute in them and make fun, just as the idle gamins do nowadays with the shells called *tellinai*, as Sopater says... (fr. 7K).

Now it is of no real consequence whether Callias or Aristophanes lived first;⁴ we are dealing with an argument which concerned Aristophanes, Callias and Dicaearchus, and therefore had a life of at least 150 years. Technically therefore it was one of the *polythrylleta*⁵ or *diabeboemena zetemeta*, any one of which if sufficiently popular could give rise to a *syggramma*, i.e. a collection of solutions with appropriate argument,⁶ much like many articles in modern journals. Alcaeus' limpet was apparently one of these and Archilochus' message stick was another. Now it is important to emphasize that Aristophanes did not need to write a text of Archilochus or Alcaeus in order to deal with such problems, any more than a modern scholar who propounds a solution or problem in a journal need have edited a text.⁷ Some scholars wrote books of zetemata and solutions, but all scholars dealt with them in the course of their studies, and indeed then as now the ingenuity with which a scholar raised and solved problems was a criterion of his brilliance.⁸

³ I am unhappy with the definite article as a vocative, and suggest rather the exclamatory δ. But the vocative article is possible (Schwyzer-Debrunner, *Gr. Gr.* 2. 63), and Douglas Gerber refers me to Gow on Theocritus l. 151. He also indicates to me that R. B. Onians, *Origins of European Thought* (Cambridge, 1951), p. 19 translates χαννοῖς as 'make porous, puff out' – I can see no justification for this.

⁴ We have recently acquired new fragments of Callias, an ancient authority on Aeolic poetry, but they do not help to solve this problem, which vexed unduly Gudeman, *R.E.* s.v. Kallias no. 23 and especially Wilamowitz, *Textg. der gr. Lyriker* (Berlin, 1900), pp. 74–6, who recognized the riddle in Alcaeus, but by giving the last sentence to Dicaearchus instead of Aristophanes, was reduced to despair, in which he is followed by Wehrli on Dicaearchus fr. 99.

⁵ Sch. Eur. *Medea* 169, Sch. II. 10. 252.

⁶ An example of a *syggramma* containing an ἀναγραφὴ of λύσεις would be Aristonicus' work *On the Wanderings of Menelaos*, who according to Strabo l. 2. 31 πολλῶν ἀναγέγραφεν ἀνδρῶν ἀποφάσεις περὶ ἐκάστου τῶν ἐκκειμένων κεφαλαίων. Similarly Clearchus in the first book of his *Erotika* (fr. 24W²) gave a whole list of possible explanations why lovers wore wreaths. Even the first book of Strabo is largely filled with a rambling discussion of a zetema based on *Odyssey* l. 24. We are not surprised, therefore, to learn that μακρολογία belongs rather to a *syggramma* than to a *hypomnema* (Galen cited by Rutherford, *Scholia Aristophanea* III (London, 1905), p. 35). Zetemata, therefore, could appear in almost any kind of grammatical work. Arrighetti, *SCO* 17 (1968), 79 n. 17 writes: 'il problema sarà piuttosto di cercare quale rapporto intercorra fra quel tipo di opere dedicate unicamente alla raccolta e quindi alla caccia di ζητήματα, ἀπορήματα, λύσεις e gli ὑπομνήματα'; but I do not think a definite answer will ever be attainable. An incomplete list is given by Gudeman *RE* s.v. Scholien 628 of similar *syggrammata*.

⁷ Pfeiffer's certainty about these editions is not warranted by the evidence; see his *History of Classical Scholarship* (Oxford, 1968), p. 130.

⁸ Gudeman in his useful article in *R.E.* s.v. Lyseis 2514 writes: 'where Aristarchus allowed the validity of *Aporiai*, unavoidable with the πολυθρύλητα ζητήματα, he took up a position and placed a diple πρὸς τὸ δοκοῦν μάχεσθαι or πρὸς τὸ ζητούμενον.' But it is not justifiable to argue, as Gudeman and others have done, that since Aristarchus condemns the frivolity of the zetemata

Wilamowitz⁹ stated that we do not know why Aristophanes rejected the interpretation of tortoise as limpet, but this view is itself based on unacceptable premises. No-one could ever have held an opinion that interpreted tortoise as limpet; what we are told is that Dicaearchus and Callias had a text that read 'limpet', and that this had been a major interpretative problem; Aristophanes, however, had a text, which he had invented or acquired¹⁰ – for *graphei* means only 'read' – , which had not 'limpet' but the metrically equivalent 'tortoise'. Wilamowitz' mistake results from a significant prejudice, that what Aristophanes had in his text was 'tortoise', and that what he had was right, since he was a great scholar. Indeed it is reasonably clear that Aristophanes objected to a text with 'limpet' in it, and I think that we can say why.

Aristophanes makes two points:

- (1) *Lepades* (limpets) are like *tellinae*,
- (2) Children use *tellinae* as flutes,

and the second statement is confirmed by a learned quotation from Sopater.¹¹ If we take these two statements together, then Aristophanes is implying that children use *lepades* as flutes. Now since he is objecting to the interpretation of Dicaearchus,¹² it follows that Dicaearchus did not explain *lepades* as flutes but as something else, and to this interpretation Aristophanes felt obliged to object.

Before we ask what the interpretation of Dicaearchus was, we must think about the Alcaeus fragment again. A poem that begins 'Child of rock and gray sea' and whose end is 'you sea limpet' is obviously in the form of a *griphos*, a riddle, as indeed Wilamowitz realized. It was therefore in itself a zetema,¹³ and what the ancients were arguing about was the answer to that riddle, limpet or tortoise. Now we know of

of others, he therefore disliked the concept itself. This condemnation takes the form e.g. of allegations that some grammarian has inserted a line to create a zetema (examples collected by Lehrs, *De Aristarchi Studiis Homericis*⁹ (Leipzig, 1882), p. 205 and Ludwich, *Die Homervulgata* (Leipzig, 1898), p. 168 n. 3). But such accusations are at least sometimes nothing more than polemical guesswork, not based on careful research (Bröcker, *Rh.M.* 40 (1885), 419¹; Nickau, *Untersuchungen... Zenodotus* (Berlin, 1977), p. 16 n. 36; above all the important conclusions of Ludwich, *Aristarchs Homerische Textkritik* II (Leipzig, 1885, p. 104). At sch. II. 20. 269 Aristarchus accuses someone of inserting lines to create a problem, although the lines are already known as a zetema to Aristotle; and at sch. II. 16. 97 Aristarchus praises Zenodotus for suspecting a passage as being inserted by someone wishing to create a homosexual liaison between Achilles and Patroclus. We should be warned that ancient scholars justified their attheses by simply accusing others of insertions. On the other hand, when Aristarchus on II. 10. 252 puts his dipole on a line because of τὸ πολυθρύλητον ζήτημα καὶ τὰς γεγρονύας ἀποδόσεις – a problem as old as Aristotle –, we ought to feel the joy of the scholar in full cry after a zetema. That his questions were not as futile as e.g. those of Zoilus is no reason to say with Pfeiffer (op. cit. 263) that he had no interest in zetemata at all. Ludwich, *Homervulgata*, p. 168 alleged that Aristarchus distanced himself as far as possible from zetemata, quoting Lehrs, op. cit. 197, who however says the opposite, viz. that such things are to be found in Aristarchus; Ludwich himself elsewhere admitted this (*A. H. T.* I, p. 30 n. 40, contrast II, p. 190).

⁹ *Textgeschichte der gr. Lyriker*, p. 75.

¹⁰ Like most scholiastic terms *γράφειν* is uncomfortably vague, meaning at times little more than *ἐξηγεῖσθαι* (Rutherford, *Scholia Aristophanea* III, p. 70; Ludwich, *Aristarchs Homerische Textkritik* I, p. 509 and II, p. 104; Erbse, *Hermes* 87 (1959), 280). For an example of *γράφει* = 'read' – 'proposed reading' – in a *syggramma* we have Ox. Pap. 221, ix, 3 on II. 21. 195, where Megacleides *γράφει* 'ποῖον ῥεῖθρον μείζον' ἐν ᾧ περὶ 'Ομήρου.

¹¹ *παρ'* ἡμῶν is an odd way to talk about an author who had been dead for about 100 years, but Sopater lived in Alexandria.

¹² fr. 99 W²: Voigt fr. 359 attributes the reading *χέλυσ* to Dicaearchus, following Wilamowitz, but Gudeman R.E. s.v. Kallias already describes it correctly as a conjecture by Aristophanes.

¹³ Sch. Dion. Thrax, 11. 14 Hilg. τί εἰσὶν οἱ γρίφοι; τὰ ζητήματα τὰ δεινὰ and continues τὰ οὖν τοιαῦτα ζητήματα εἰ μὲν ἐπίσταται ὁ γραμματικός, ἐπαινέτεός ἐστί...

ancient riddles about musical instruments¹⁴ and also ancient riddles about shells, and one of our oldest riddles combines the two. Theognis (1229–30) propounds this:

Already the sea corpse calls me home
Speaking though dead with living mouth.

The answer, says Athenaeus, is a conch, but I suggest that there may be a more precise answer, *keryx*, a trumpet-shaped sea shell; when it was dead it could be used as a bugle. Riddling periphrastic addresses about dead sea shells making musical noises, however, are as old as the Homeric hymn to Hermes, where the tortoise is turned into a lyre by the ingenious god. The poetic address to a musical instrument is attested by Horace, *Odes* 1. 32, and more important by Sappho's address to a lyre, fr. 118 Voigt. I do not think it doubtful, therefore, that Alcaeus' poem, despite its truncated nature, was a poetic address to a musical instrument, and that the last word of the poem gave the solution. Nor do I doubt that by 'writing' the alternative reading 'tortoise' Aristophanes was saying that the answer cannot be 'limpet' but must be 'tortoise', which would be understood as a lyre.¹⁵

So far, therefore, we have attempted to show:

(1) Aristophanes has explained the reading *lepas* as 'flute'.

(2) He has himself preferred to read *chelys*, meaning 'lyre'.

(3) But Dicaearchus explained *lepas* as something other than a wind instrument, since Aristophanes had to demonstrate that one blew into it.

It follows, I think, as a probable hypothesis that Dicaearchus had before him a text with *lepas*, which he tried to interpret as not a wind instrument but a plucked instrument; he did this because it was clear to him as it was to Aristophanes that the riddle poem demanded the answer: plucked instrument or lyre. Aristophanes points out that though the answer must indeed be something like lyre, *lepas* is not a plucked instrument. He produces the convenient variant *chelys*, and the problem is solved. Now the suspicion is strong that if Callias could write a book about the answer *lepas* and Dicaearchus also found himself striving with the same reading, the variant *chelys* was unknown to them, and the text according to Aristophanes is *facilior* enough to invite the explanation that it was an emendation, i.e. the solution to a zetema by *metagraphe*.¹⁶ Almost all our texts now print Aristophanes' reading.

There are four questions to be asked. What has this to do with message sticks? Is the argument sound? Does this agree with our picture of Aristophanic scholarship? If so, what can we learn about the work of the Museum from it?

If Aristophanes wrote a whole monograph on message sticks, he did so because he did not like the normal explanation, and for once we are in the fortunate position of being able to say not only what it was but who proposed it, for Apollonius Rhodius¹⁷

¹⁴ Tortoise riddle: Cic., *de div.* 2. 133 from Pacuvius with Pease's note; *A.P.* 14. 30; Soph. fr. 279N² = R; Seaford, *Maia* 28 (1976), 218 and 219 n. 83 with interesting remarks about the place of such riddles in satyr plays; a double flute riddle in *A.P.* 14. 14; and compare the oyster riddle with its learned ancient commentary, restored by Parsons *ZPE* 24 (1977), 1 ff. Gow on Theocritus 9. 25; Plut., *Sept. Sap.* 151 f.

¹⁵ The tortoise in the Homeric Hymn is a land-tortoise, but a turtle shell would do equally well for constructing a lyre; *R.E.* s.v. Schildkröte 427.

¹⁶ Strabo 12. 22. 1 ταῦτα μὲν ἀπολύεται τῇ μεταγραφῇ. The peripatetic methodology behind zetemata and their solutions is explored by H. Hintenland, *Untersuchungen zu den Homer-aporien des Aristoteles* (Heidelberg, diss., 1961), though zetemata will not always convincingly fit the theoretical framework. Another problem involving Dicaearchus and Aristarchus exists at *Il.* 3. 244, where the information given is contradictory and the obvious deduction (Erbse, *Überlieferung*, p. 327) is not, in my view, credible.

¹⁷ Athenaeus 10. 451d = fr. 22 Michaelis; West on Archilochus fr. 185.

in his monograph *Concerning Archilochus* says that it was a message stick round which a message was wrapped, and other ancient authorities repeat this information¹⁸ sometimes with a reference to Archilochus. Aristophanes had criticized Dicaearchus, and we shall see that he criticized Zenodotus; if he then criticized Apollonius, it was because he did not like the explanation of ἀχνυμένη σκυτάλη as a message stick. Our only clue to his own solution of this problem is that it may have had something to do with musical instruments or sea shells. However, the ancient lexicographers come to our aid, and tell us that *skytalion* and *skytaleia*¹⁹ are small pipes or flutes, and also that *keryx*²⁰ is a spiral sea shell into which one blows. Since the explanation of Apollonius was the one accepted in antiquity and seems to us also correct, it is difficult to see exactly what Aristophanes was proposing. I suggest that possibly he was wanting to make Archilochus mean 'I'll tell you (pl.) a riddle with wailing flute, o Kerykides' or 'o son of a keryx', or again, reading the vocative instead of the dative, 'I'll tell you a riddle, o son of a keryx, wailing flute'. Whatever he intended, he could well have taken the opportunity, in dealing with riddles and musical instruments, to talk about the old problem of the riddle poem of Alcaeus.²¹ He could also have mentioned Archippus fr. 23 K (1, p. 683):

O *keryx* of the sea, edible son of the porphyra

and, for the riddling periphrasis, Hermes' address to the tortoise (*Hymn to Hermes* 31):

Hail delightful in nature, dancer, comrade in banquets...

The probability, then, is that Aristophanes' monograph, though dealing primarily with Apollonius' solution to the Archilochus problem, also found time to offer a solution to a similar problem in Alcaeus; the common element in both problems was musical instruments in riddles. There is nothing inherently improbable in all this; the problems were genuine and the solutions far from incredible. In addition we have to take into account the tendency in some philological studies, ancient and modern, to value ingenuity higher than truth or even probability. Aristophanes' argument runs: we blow into sea shell A and sea shell B is like sea shell A; therefore one blows into sea shell B. On the face of it perhaps as neat an argument as Bentley's *nitedula*. But it is wrong, because though one may blow into a *keryx* or a *telline*, one cannot blow into a limpet, even the Mediterranean variety,²² since the limpet is not a type of conch like the other two. Though both are edible molluscs, they are not both wind instruments; similar is not identical. We can say then that, though Aristophanes deserves full marks for ruthless logic and ingenuity, yet his argument is false, and more

¹⁸ e.g. Sch. Pindar, *O.* 6. 154; Sch. Ar. *Lysis*. 991.

¹⁹ Poll. 4. 82 καὶ σκυτάλια μέντοι μικρῶν αὐλίσκων τοῦνομα; Athenaeus 4. 177a (from Juba) ἐλύμους, ὀνομάζεσθαι δὲ καὶ σκυταλείας; Hesych s.v. σκυτάλια· αὐλίδια; Cf. A. Wilhelm, *Akademischeschriften* 1 (Leipzig, 1974), p. 238.

²⁰ Antiphanes fr. 300 (2. 129 K); see D'Arcy Thompson, *Glossary of Greek Fishes* (London, 1947), s.v. *Keryx*.

²¹ The ancients in their works were only too easily diverted into philological zetemata which would seem to us quite irrelevant, e.g. Zopyrus in his *Foundation of Miletus* (*FGrHist* 494 F1 with Jacoby's commentary).

²² The criticism is already made in *R.E.* s.v. Muschel 794. No one except Aristophanes claims that limpets are musical (*R.E.* s.v. Schnecke no. 41), and though Epicharmus fr. 114 K lists together τέλλις and λεπάς as edible, this has no more force than χέλυς and κήρυξ together in Empedocles B76 D-K⁶. Beazley *ARI*² 929. 87 is said to show a Silenus playing a mussel. It could in fact be anything small; 'like a balloon' says Mrs A. Dunbabin, to whom I am grateful for the information.

important, his respect for the text is considerably less than we are nowadays wont to admire, though if we admire Ritschl, Bentley and Cobet, we should also extend our admiration to their ancient predecessors.²³

The problem now arises: can we show this attitude to be typical of the scholarship of Aristophanes? It has first to be admitted that our information about Aristophanes is transmitted through grammatical sources that have epitomized, simplified, and distorted his learning. There is no single fragment of which it could be said that it must represent his own complete and untarnished views. Much of the information indeed is only preserved because it is the object of polemic, and is as such likely to be misrepresented and simplified. Much of the argumentation therefore that follows is based upon cumulative induction.

We have to look first at an even more famous zetema, and a number of Homeric variants. Aelian²⁴ tells us that Aristophanes abused Zenodotus because in a fragment of Anacreon he *metepoiesen* ἐροέσσης for κεροέσσης (horned) on the ground that female deer did not have horns. Whether they did or not was already a famous zetema for Aristotle in the *Poetics*.²⁵ Aristophanes abused Zenodotus²⁶ for adulterating the text and upended a tubful of examples from poetry over the unfortunate Zenodotus to prove that female deer do indeed have horns. Good philology, we say, and applaud; but it is bad zoology, for female deer do indeed not have horns, no matter what ignorant poets may think.²⁷ But the reader may be inclined to argue that as far as poetry was concerned Aristophanes was right to abuse Zenodotus, and knew how to separate poetical from zoological truth. That is however just what is interesting.

We have for nearly one hundred years possessed a good part of the epitome made by Aristophanes of Aristotle's *History of Animals*,²⁸ in which Aristotle twice denies that female deer have horns. It is clear, then, that Aristotle had denied that female deer had horns; but Aristophanes had on considerable poetic authority stated that they did. What did he do, we ask, when he came to epitomize Aristotle, in full awareness of the problem? One of the passages he has epitomized out of existence, but taking a charitable view, we may consider that an accident. But in another passage the female deer have, contrary to Aristotle's text, acquired horns.²⁹ It says very little

²³ Lehrs, op. cit. 349 was reminded of the *diligentia Batavorum*, which Ludwig, *Homervulgata*, p. 169 translated as *Cobetianer*. On Ritschl's school Wilamowitz, *Geschichte der Philologie*³ (Berlin, 1927), p. 61.

²⁴ Aelian *H.A.* 7. 39 = Ar. Byz. p. 61 N = fr. 379 Slater; sch. Pind. *O.* 3. 52; Poll. 5. 76.

²⁵ 1460b 13.

²⁶ ἀντιλέγει κατὰ κράτος... τοὺς μοιχῶντας τὸ λεχθέν.

²⁷ Aristotle *H.A.* 538b 18 and *P.A.* 662a are both explicit with an explanation: sch. D on *Iliad* 3. 24 agrees; F. Brein, *Der Hirsch in der griechischen Frühzeit* (Vienna, diss., 1969), pp. 36–7.

²⁸ *Aristophanis Historiae Animalium Epitome – Suppl. Aristotelicum* 1, ed. S. Lambros (Berlin, 1885). A papyrus of this exists in P. Lond. 164. Though W. Kroll, 'Zur Geschichte der aristotelischen Zoologie', *Sitz. Ak. Wien*, phil.-hist. Kl. 218, 2 (1940), 30 wishes to attribute nearly all variations from Aristotle in the epitome to Theophrastus, in this case at least this is highly unlikely.

²⁹ The passage is complex. Aristophanes begins correctly by talking about the pregnancy of does but fails to change the genders when he comes to behaviour. *H.A.* 611a23 ἐτι δὲ ὁ ἄρρην ὅταν γένηται παχύς... becomes λέγεται δὲ ὡς παχυνθεῖσα... p. 127, 9–10L, and Aristophanes keeps the feminine in the epitome until he comes to 611b26, where Aristotle is once again speaking of does. From *H.A.* 611a30 to 611b20 Aristotle is speaking of the growth of horns on the male, from which Aristophanes has preserved two sentences 127. 12–15L, in which he has altered the original to the feminine. But most revealing is the one passage where Aristotle in an aside says (*H.A.* 611a25): ἀποβάλλουσι (sc. οἱ ἄρρενες) δὲ καὶ τὰ κέρατα ἐν τόποις χαλεποῖς... ὅθεν καὶ ἡ παροιμία γέγονεν 'οὐ αἱ ἔλαφοι τὰ κέρατα ἀποβάλλουσιν' (Zenob.

for Aristophanes' sense of faithfulness to his original that in the same manuscript there is another epitome of the same work by the much later Timotheus of Gaza³⁰ and that on this point it accurately represents Aristotle's view.

Zenodotus, therefore, on the evidence of Aristotle or some similar authority, sought to emend Anacreon; Aristophanes, on the evidence of Anacreon and other poets, emended – not, sought to emend – Aristotle. This should be a warning to those editors of tragedy who write in their prefaces that their only aim is to restore the text according to Aristophanes.³¹

In confirmation let me gently pry open the door of Aristophanes' lecture room and view him at work on the seven passages where he is known to have read or proposed to read lines very different from those we read in Homer today.³²

(1) *Od.* 2. 51:

τῶν ἀνδρῶν φίλοι νῖες οἱ ἐνθάδε γ' εἰσὶν ἄριστοι

Sch. HM^a: 'Αριστοφάνης προστίθησιν

ἄλλοι θ' οἱ νήσοισιν ἐπικρατέουσιν ἄριστοι

Δουλιχίῳ τε Σάμῃ τε καὶ ὕληντι Ζακύνθῳ (= α245, 246)

οὐκ ὀρθῶς. περὶ γὰρ τῶν ἐν Ἰθάκῃ φροντίζει μόνων, οὓς ἀπελάσας οὐκ ἂν ἐφρόντισε τῶν λοιπῶν

2. 22 = ps.-Zenob. 5. 52) ὥσπερ καὶ τὰ ὄπλα ἀποβεβληκῦναι φυλάττονται ὀρᾶσθαι. Aristophanes conceals the fact that Aristotle is speaking exceptionally of a proverb, and alters the order of epitomization so that he can say: πᾶσαι δὲ ἀποβάλλουσαι τὰ κέρατα κρύπτονται καθάπερ τὰ ὄπλα ἀποβεβληκῦναι.

The proverb meant – contrary to the explanation of Demo found in the paroemiographers – 'so remote as to be nowhere' (Plut. *Mor.* 403d, 700d – a sympotic zetema), and nearly all our authorities, even when dependent on Aristotle (Ael. *H.A.* 6. 5), use the masculine; even *R.E.* s.v. Hirsch 1940 accidentally changes to masculine, while Zenobius 5. 52 quotes feminine and explains masculine. The tendency, therefore, is always to remove the feminine, and it must go back to a time when does were actually thought to have horns, or perhaps an *adynaton* was intended.

³⁰ Timotheus of Gaza, p. 131 Lambros.

³¹ *Ignotum pro magnifico*. The *fons malorum* would appear to be Wilamowitz in Euripides, *Herakles* 1 (Berlin, 1959, first 1889), pp. 145 ff. Arthur Ludwich was no admirer of Wilamowitz' views on these matters: 'Neu ist an dieser ganzen Belehrung, wie so unendlich oft bei Wilamowitz, weiter nichts als die Schaustellung seines unbegrenzten Selbstbewusstseins und die Sucht aus unsicheren Hypothesen eine feste Tatsache aufzubauen' (*Aristarchs Homerische Textkritik* II, p. 220 n. 195).

³² I do not include in this list atheteses, though they can often be shown to be a solution to a zetema. I take this opportunity of saying that there is not enough evidence to say that Aristophanes edited anything, though he certainly commented on a vast variety of texts, and did bibliographic work with them. Pfeiffer's belief (op. cit. 173 ff.) that a scholar could produce very conservative editions, filled with signs, variants and conjectures, including his own, in the margin, which he explained in *syggrammata* and lectures, not in hypomnemata (nor I add in his lexical works, *pace* Pfeiffer), does not seem to me at all possible. He would know that such a text would be immediately unusable without a commentary, which Pfeiffer explicitly denies him. His pupils Aristarchus and Callistratus as well as many others after him produced commentaries; Euphronius, said to be his teacher, produced a commentary before him. It stands to reason that Aristarchus and Callistratus can tell us Aristophanes' opinions because they possessed hypomnemata or lecture notes, whether composed by them or Aristophanes. If, then, his views survived even in selection in the works of others, his readings and solutions could be known as they are today, essentially through hypomnemata and not editions. It would be left to later scholars, obsessed with reconstructing Alexandrian texts from such notes, to assume that indeed editions by Alexandrian scholars had actually existed: Ludwich, *Rh.M.* 69 (1914), 684; Erbse, *Hermes* 87 (1959), 275–303. The best treatment of the subject is G. Zuntz, *Die Aristophanesscholien der Papyri*² (Berlin, 1975), pp. 75 ff.

Sch. HRQ = Herakleides Ponticus 173 W²:

ἐκατὸν δέκα καὶ ὀκτὼ σχεδὸν τῶν ἀπάντων ὄντων μνηστήρων, ἀπὸ τούτων δὲ ἐκ τῆς Ἰθάκης
 δυοκαίδεκα πάντες ἄριστοι (= π 251)
 ῥηθέντων, ζητεῖ Ἡρακλείδης πῶς ὁ Τηλέμαχος κατασμικρύνει ἐν τῇ δημηγορίᾳ συστέλλων
 τὸ πλῆθος εἰς μόνους τοὺς Ἰθακησίους...

Here Aristophanes has added two lines,³³ taken apparently from the first book of the *Odyssey*. This would mean that Telemachus would mention not only the 22 suitors from Ithaca but all the others to a total of 118. One might be tempted to argue that Aristophanes knew of a text superior to ours, but there are two powerful arguments against this. The scholia tell us that it was already a zetema for Heraclides Ponticus,³⁴ 150 years before Aristophanes, why only the Ithacans were mentioned and not the other suitors, since it was obviously in Telemachus' interest to mention as many as possible in his speech. There could have been no text which lent authority to Aristophanes' solution or there would have been no zetema. Aristarchus,³⁵ finally, the pupil of Aristophanes, rejected his addition, and it may be surmised would not have done so if he had known Aristophanes to have authority. We are compelled to the conclusion that Aristophanes' reading is an autoschediasma, designed to solve a long-standing zetema.

(2) *Od.* 1. 424:

δὴ τότε κακκείοντες ἔβαν οἰκόνδε ἕκαστος

Sch. E²HM^aQR: ἐνιοι, 'δὴ τότε κοιμήσαντο καὶ ὕπνου δῶρον ἔλοντο (= τ 427)'. μεταποιοθῆναι δέ φασιν ὑπὸ Ἀριστοφάνους τὸν στίχον. ἐν τῇ Ἀργολικῇ προστίθεται

Sch. Aristonici i.e. Aristarchi ad β 397: ὅτι οὐκ ἐν τῇ Ὀδυσσεύς οἰκίᾳ ἐκοιμῶντο R. δεῖ νοεῖν ὅτι οἱ ξένοι τῶν μνηστήρων παρὰ φίλοις ἐκάθευδον. οὐ γὰρ ἐθάρρουν παρὰ τῶν Ἰθακησίων μνηστήρων ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ Ὀδυσσεύς καθεύδειν. EPQ.

Instead of going home individually, the suitors go to sleep, according to the text of Aristophanes, where they are, in Odysseus' hall. Nothing in the scholia *ad loc.* warns us that this is other than a variant reading. But Aristonicus on *Od.* 2. 397 reveals that it was a zetema where the non-Ithacans among the suitors slept.³⁶ Aristophanes seems

³³ G. M. Bolling, *External Evidence for Interpolation in Homer* (Oxford, 1925), p. 221: 'obviously interpolated'... 'they look like a *lysis* for the problem there (Porph. 26. 5) discussed. It is surprising that they should have made their way into the edition of Aristophanes.' If this is so, how can Pfeiffer (op. cit. 173) possibly say that Aristophanes was reluctant to put conjectures into his text? The simple answer to both problems is that there was no text; cf. Nickau, op. cit. 17, and Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* 1 (Oxford, 1972), p. 476.

³⁴ Heracleides wrote on Homeric zetemata (fr. 171–5 W², to which add another noted by Erbse, *Beiträge zur Überlieferung der Iliasscholien* (Munich, 1960), p. 69 n. 2). Since he was an Academic, there can be no justification for making too sharp a distinction between Academic, Peripatetic and Alexandrian (or Pergamene) zetemata. Even the cynic-rhetorical *aporiai* of Zoilus and Antisthenes are noted by Alexandrians, and *Il.* 2. 674 is 'omitted' by Zenodotus because of a zetema by Antisthenes, though the line is known also to Aristotle.

³⁵ The criticism directed at Aristophanes is preserved by Aristarchus' hypomnemata, quoted either directly or indirectly by Didymus. Aristonicus never mentions Aristophanes' variants (Ludwich, *Aristarchs Homerische Textkritik* 1, p. 53) because he comments on marginal signs, which did not include divergence from Aristophanes. We are thus entirely dependent on Didymus' choice from Aristarchus; this means that we hear nothing about his variants from Aristarchus in the first six books of the *Iliad*; cf. Nickau op. cit. 22–3.

³⁶ So A. Roemer, *Homerexegese Aristarchs* (Paderborn, 1924), p. 245 and *Aristarchea*, in Emil Beltzner, *Homerprobleme* 1 (Leipzig, 1911), pp. 178–9; Roemer was learned and often penetrating, but 'he had stuck together a picture of Homeric scholarship, dominated before and after Aristarchus by profound darkness, where Aristarchus and only Aristarchus had been right in his explanations' (M. Schmidt, *Die Erklärungen zum Weltbild Homers... = Zetemata* 62 (Munich, 1976), 14).

to have decided that they slept in the palace and read accordingly; the scholia, reflecting presumably the views of Aristarchus, say explicitly 'emended'.³⁷

(3) *Od.* 2. 70:

σχέσθε φίλοι καὶ μ' οἶον ἔασατε πένθει λυγρῷ/τείρεσθ'

Sch. HM^aQRT: πῶς τοὺς μνηστήρας φίλους καλεῖ; ἢ ὁ λόγος πρὸς τοὺς Ἰθακησίους, οἶον ἀντίσχεσθέ μου. διὸ καὶ Ἀριστοφάνης γράφει 'μὴ μ' οἶον ἔασατε.' ὁ ἔστι 'καὶ ὑμεῖς συμπενήσασατε.' Ἀρίσταρχος δὲ τὴν μὲν γραφὴν οὐκ ἀμείβει, τὸ δὲ 'οἶον' ἀκούει πρὸς τὸ πένθος τοῦ πατρός

D. sch. σχέσθε· βοηθήσατε

Telemachus says, 'Hold my friends and let me alone to be worn by grief'. The scholia indicate a zetema. Who are the friends? Ithacans or suitors? Not suitors, clearly, therefore Ithacans. But then, why say *σχέσθε*, which means 'assist', as the D-scholia say, and is not to be reconciled with 'leave me alone'? Therefore, we are told, Aristophanes wrote, i.e. read, 'do not leave me alone', and the problem is solved. There is a similar problem at

(4) *Od.* 12. 152–8:

ἀνθρώπων, μέγα δέ σφιν ὄρος πόλει ἀμφικαλύψαι . . .

ἀνθρωποι, μέγα δέ σφιν ὄρος πόλει ἀμφικαλύψαι

Sch. H in ν 152: Ἀριστοφάνης δὲ γράφει, 'μὴ δέ σφιν'

ἀντιλέγει δ' ἐν ὑπομνήμασιν (Porson: δὲ ν ὑπομνημάτων H)

Ἀρίσταρχος. Quae ad ν 158 spectant.

Poseidon had begged that the Phaeacian ship be turned to stone and that a great rock be placed on their city. Zeus in our text says he will do both, but in Aristophanes' he says he will do the first but not the second. Now in the *Odyssey* he does only the first and not the second. It follows that the text of Aristophanes is an attempt to bring the words of Zeus into agreement with the text. Aristarchus explicitly rejects the addition.³⁸

(5) *Il.* 10. 349:

ὥς ἄρα φωνήσαντε παρέξ ὁδοῦ ἐν νεκύεσσιν

κλινθήτην

Sch. A⁷: οὕτως Ἀρίσταρχος. καὶ θαυμαστὸν οὐδέν, εἰ Ὀδυσσεύς εἰπόντος μόνου συλλήβδην ἔφη ὥς ἄρα φωνήσαντε. σύνθηες γὰρ αὐτῷ τὸ τοιοῦτο. ἐν γοῦν τῇ παραποταμίῳ μάχῃ τοῦ Ποσειδῶνος [citantur Φ 289, Φ 298] . . . ἐν μέντοι τῇ Ἀριστοφάνους καὶ ἄλλαις ἐτέρως ἐφέρετο.

ὥς ἔφατ' οὐδ' ἀπίθησε βοὴν ἀγαθὸς Διομήδης

ἐλθόντες δ' ἐκάτερθε παρέξ ὁδοῦ ἐν νεκύεσσιν

κλινθήτην

Aristarchus points out that there is nothing odd if Homer uses the dual when only one person has spoken, and he gives an excellent parallel. But in Aristophanes' text the dual and the problem have disappeared. Aristarchus' language indicates that a

³⁷ The scholium is from Didymus; similar allegations are found in *Il.* 2. 397; 23. 104; *Od.* 1. 356; 2. 70; 6. 29 and especially *Il.* 21. 130 of μεταγράφειν, μεταποιεῖν in connection with Aristophanes. At 21. 130 Aristophanes himself accuses unnamed sources of interpolating lines to solve a zetema, of which we now have no trace!

³⁸ Roemer, *Homerexege*, p. 244; *Aristarchea* 176 comparing Eustathius' commentary 1610. 45. See also Erbse, *Beiträge zum Verständnis d. Odyssee* (Berlin, 1972), p. 146. For insertion of negative to solve a problem cf. sch. *Il.* 9. 453.

problem had existed, and that Aristophanes therefore must have been aware of it.³⁹

(6) *Il.* 23. 805–6:

ὀππότερός κε φθῆσιν ὀρεξάμενος χροά καλόν,
ψαύσῃ δ' ἐνδίνων διά τ' ἔντεα καὶ μέλαν αἶμα

Sch. T: ἀθετεῖ τὸν στίχον Ἀρίσταρχος... Ἀριστοφάνης δὲ οὕτω γράφει.
ὀππότερός κε πρόσθεν ἐπιγράψας χροά καλόν
φθῆῃ ἐπευξάμενος διά τ' ἔντεα καὶ φόνον ἀνδρῶν

The problem here was notorious. How can the victor win in friendly games by touching the entrails? Is that the meaning of ἐνδινά? Aristarchus in desperation athetizes, but Aristophanes rewrote so that one only scratched the skin to win. But the problem was famous in antiquity,⁴⁰ and if there had been any authority for Aristophanes' text, can one doubt that his pupil would have accepted it rather than athetize?

(7) *Il.* 24. 30:

τὴν δ' (sc. Ἀφροδίτην) ἦνῃσ' ἣ οἱ πόρε μαχλοσύνην ἀλεγεινῇν

Sch. A: παρ' Ἀριστοφάνει καὶ τισι τῶν πολιτικῶν
ἣ οἱ κεχαρισμένα δῶρ' ὀνόμηνε
καὶ τάχα μᾶλλον οὕτως ἂν ἔχοι. ἀθετεῖ γὰρ Ἀρίσταρχος διὰ τὴν μαχλοσύνην τὸν στίχον.

Here too Aristarchus athetized because of the *hapax* but presumably also for reasons of propriety. In any case the word that caused Aristarchus to wish to remove the line has disappeared in Aristophanes.⁴¹

In all these examples, and I have listed all the major changes proposed by Aristophanes, Aristophanes has removed a zetema by suggesting ruthless emendation. Where we know the opinion of Aristarchus, he rejects the reading of his own master for more difficult ones, twice indeed so difficult that he rejects the resulting text himself. I submit that there can be no question but that he did so because he knew Aristophanes was problem-solving without authority.

In short, the procedure that we find exemplified in Homer is the same as in the two earlier examples. Once we find that a zetema, especially a traditional one, is at issue, recourse to ruthless emendation can be justified by ingenious argument. Nothing in all this, I repeat, has to do with editing a text. Also I do not suggest that some of the other textual variants Aristophanes 'wrote' were not variants in the manuscripts available to him.⁴² But I submit that real debates took place about the solutions to

³⁹ Roemer, *Homerexegeese*, p. 15; *Aristarchea* 171; Bolling, *External Evidence*, p. 127, who rejects the view that the reading may have been that of Zenodotus (Duentzer, *de Zen. Studiis Homericis* (Göttingen, 1848), p. 160; M. van der Valk, *Researches... Iliad II* (Leiden, 1964), p. 150) and rightly I think sees an Aristophanic conjecture.

⁴⁰ See the extensive apparatus of Erbse, where Aristarchus' unhappy etymology is to be found.

⁴¹ I agree with Valk, *Textual Criticism of the Odyssey* (Leiden, 1949), p. 15 that the Aristophanic reading is a rewriting; and I do not attach to polis-editions the importance that Citti, *Vichiana* 3 (1966), 227–67 seeks to find here and elsewhere; scepticism also in Fraser, op. cit. 1, p. 328. Indeed precisely a passage like this shows that these texts have suffered from *diorthosis* at the hands of grammarians.

⁴² *Il.* 23. 92 is the only place I know where an ancient athetesis corresponds to an omission in a prearistarchean text (see Erbse *ad loc.*); it follows therefore that sometimes the Alexandrians could have had a textual basis for athetesis. Pasquali, *Storia*² (Firenze, 1971), p. 230 admits that Zenodotus emended Anacreon, but grimly and illogically denies that he can have done the same with Homer; we do not have absolute proof, but there is the highest probability that Zenodotus 'omitted' lines knowing that he had no textual authority, but that on other occasions he did have such authority, even if only in the suggestions of previous grammarians.

traditional zetemata, and that these played an important part in Alexandrian scholarship. It is with this in mind that I turn to my last question. How does this fit with what we know of the Museum?

If we look at the ancient evidence, we find it sparse, but I think adequate. Porphyry tells us explicitly that in the Alexandrian Museum it was the custom to propose zetemata and to write up the resulting solutions;⁴³ indeed we know that Alexandrian scholars did write up problems and solutions.⁴⁴ Plutarch tells us that it was a custom in Museums for lots to be handed out and for those who took them to advance philological zetemata;⁴⁵ this he says was true of the ancient Greeks.⁴⁶ Plutarch is thinking of symposia in particular, and we have the authority of Polybius that in 200 B.C. in Museums all-day symposia could take place, until the worshippers of the Muses were carried home inebriated after sunset.⁴⁷ I am not suggesting that alcoholism was as prevalent in Alexandria as it is at some modern centres of philology, though I recall that Herondas in describing the wonders of Alexandria links the Museum and wine.⁴⁸ Nor will I offer as evidence those all too neat anecdotes about drunken behaviour at the Ptolemaic court involving scholars.⁴⁹ What we do know from Strabo is that the Museum contained the usual gardens, an exhedra presumably for lectures, a peripatos for reading and discussion, and in the centre an *oecus*, i.e. the large pillared dining hall of hellenistic times, capable of holding several triclinia. This was the place where the communal dining of the scholars took place.⁵⁰

If we remember that it was normal for cultured people to discuss philological and similar problems at symposia,⁵¹ and that the philosophic schools of Athens, the models for the Museum, were famous not only for their problems but also their symposia,⁵²

Statements like οὐκ ἦσαν, οὐδ' ἐφέροντο are unfortunately not good evidence for omission in actual Homeric texts, as is sometimes thought (Fowler, *ZPE* 33 (1979), 21 n. 17), for no careful distinction was made in the use of ἐκδοσις, διόρθωσις and ἀντίγραφον to denote whether a text or critical commentary was intended (Erbse, *Hermes* 87 (1959), 288; sch. Ar. *Nub.* 507, where ἀντίγραφα mean commentaries); οὐ γράφουσι means ἀφαιροῦσι (Sch. Ar. *Ran.* 153), and therefore in some sense athetesis in a commentary; even οὐκ οἶδε can mean 'disapproves of' (Valk, *Researches... Iliad* II, pp. 487–8). Add to this imprecision unsubstantiated allegation and cumulative error, and a definite answer to the diplomatic basis for Alexandrian readings becomes impossible.

⁴³ Porph. 1. 141. 17 Schr. and Erbse's apparatus to sch. II. 9. 682.

⁴⁴ Satyros ὁ ζήτητα, Sosibios ὁ θαυμάσιος λυτικός, Zenodotos of Alexandria (*R.E.* s.v. Zenodotos no. 2), Apollodorus, all produced titles redolent of zetemata; but titles alone do not reveal such things. Cf. Plut. *Sept. Sap.* 150c on Dionysus Lysios. ⁴⁵ *Qu. C.* 9. 2.

⁴⁶ *Sept. Sap.* 10. There a problema in a book is brought to a symposium in a dining room attached to an Aphrodite temple.

⁴⁷ Polybius 8. 27 three times emphasizes the festivity of the Museum at Tarentum, which like those at Metapontum and Croton may be linked with Pythagoras (Boyancé, *Le Culte des Muses...*² (Paris, 1972), pp. 235–7). For other Musea, see Fraser, op. cit. II, p. 469 n. 72; A. Wilhelm, *Akademieschriften* II, p. 87; J. and L. Robert, *Bull. Epigraphique* 1979, no. 51.

⁴⁸ Herodas, *Mime* 1. 48: Μουσῶν, οἶνος.

⁴⁹ Anecdotes have largely obscured the truth about the Museum. The best known story about Aristophanes was that an elephant ran off with his girl friend. More serious is the fact that many of the stories accepted as telling us something about the Library are of very doubtful authenticity, as has been indicated by C. W. Mueller, *Die Kurzdialoge der Appendix Platonica* (Munich, 1975) in his first chapter. But the story of the symposia of the Septuagint translators is worth noting (texts in Erbse, *Beiträge zur Überlieferung...*, p. 67 n. 2).

⁵⁰ Evidence in Fraser, op. cit. I, p. 315 and in *R.E.* s.v. Museion, col. 806 & 808f. (Müller-Graupa); F. Studniczka, *Das Symposium Ptolemaios II* = Abh. Säch. Ges. 30, 2 (Leipzig, 1914), pp. 25, 31, 108.

⁵¹ Poll. 6. 107; Ar. *Vesp.* 15–23; Athenaeus, 448b–459b.

⁵² H. Herter, *Platons Akademie*² (Bonn, 1952), p. 9 with notes p. 29.

there are no obvious *a priori* grounds for believing that the scholars of the Museum did not float gently along the mainstream of ancient academic life. I do not suggest that zetemata were discussed only in symposia and not in lectures; I think it most probable that the same problems were discussed in both. But it has been argued that only frivolous questions or at least only easy questions could be discussed in symposia, because one could not discuss difficult questions without manuscripts or extensive collections of parallels.⁵³ But not only do I observe that scholars seem to manage to talk about any problem without subsidiary apparatus, but in antiquity, where memory was so cultivated, the symposium was just the place to air one's ability for extempore citation.⁵⁴ In addition scholars or their slaves were ready to read from books or any other manuscript if required. But the views of sober modern scholars are different from my own. One writes, albeit in the form of a perfect *petitio principii*, the following gloomy appraisal of Museum scholarship: 'It cannot be supposed that such casual (sic) problem-solving formed a serious (sic) part of the activity (sc. of the scholars of the Museum)'.⁵⁵

This assumes that such problem-solving is casual, and that the work of the Museum was always serious. Pfeiffer⁵⁶ is even more stern in his disapproval: 'certain' circles of the Alexandrian museum seem to have adopted this "method" of zetemata – but 'the great serious scholars disliked it as a more or less frivolous game'. Later he adds that this method 'was continued by the philosophic schools... and by amateurs'. That is to say the method is frivolous, limited to amateurs and philosophers and certain circles who were clearly neither great nor serious, because they liked zetemata. This is too simple to deserve consideration. It is true to say that as far as we know none of the three major scholars wrote a book with a title of *Aporiai* or *Problemata*.⁵⁷ But it is equally clear that they dealt with them in the *syggrammata* and *hypomnemata* that they did write, and therefore above all in their oral delivery. And Apollodorus, pupil of Aristarchus, we now know by a chance find to have written a work called *Zetemata*.⁵⁸

Our problems in evaluating this aspect of ancient scholarship seem to arise because of prejudices about serious and frivolous scholarship. One might fruitlessly debate which was the more frivolous, a scholar who wastes an hour deciding whether $\tau\epsilon$ or

⁵³ Erbse, *Beiträge zur Überlieferung*..., p. 67: he argues that the imperial concept of learned Museum conversation was not justified, but his 'recht unzweideutig' evidence for its frivolity is also imperial. His two criticisms of Porphyry's statement about Museum zetemata, which he regards as an invention, lack conviction. (1) He says that the example following, to be correct, should be a list of solutions when in fact it only gives one; but Porphyry himself says that he is only selecting (1. 147. 5 Schr., quoted by Erbse, p. 64); and since he certainly had several books of zetemata available to him, he could possibly make such a statement on good advice. (2) The example would be of a *lysis* where the text had already been athetized. But athetesis was just one kind of solution; e.g. at *Il.* 18. 10 Aristophanes got rid of lines involving a zetema where Aristarchus placed a diple. Athetesis was no more a 'rohe Mittel' than rewriting. Ludwig, *A. H. T.* II, p. 173 called it the 'unschuldigste Mittel'. In fact Erbse writes 'Was Porphyrios... berichtet, könnte zur Not in den ersten Abendstunden unter Angehörigen des Museums diskutiert worden sein' but 'was die Philologen zu antworten hatten, sicherlich nicht...' I cannot see how one is possible without the other.

⁵⁴ Are Plutarch's *Quaestiones Conviviales* too distant from reality either in (a) their effusive citations, (b) the nature of the zetemata discussed, (c) their combination of *σπουδή* and *παιδιά*?

⁵⁵ Fraser, *op. cit.* II. 471 n. 86, referring to Erbse, *Beiträge z. Überlieferung*..., p. 67.

⁵⁶ *op. cit.* 70; cf. 263.

⁵⁷ We possess only a fraction of the titles of the period, and new finds do not fit well with our literary evidence. We did not know that Aristarchus worked on prose until a papyrus revealed that he wrote on Herodotus (Pfeiffer, *op. cit.* 224).

⁵⁸ Pfeiffer, *op. cit.* 263 seems to want to argue it out of existence.

δέ is the better reading, or a scholar who rambles on about latent structures in Pindar for a similar period; but one thing is certain. Whether such discussions take place over wine or styrofoam coffee cups, in the view of the great majority of sane men both are equally and unpardonably frivolous.⁵⁹ Ever since sophists propounded the first zetema,⁶⁰ scholarship, particularly philology, has been decried in terms of the frivolity of its problems.⁶¹ Do we not for our part smile condescendingly at the Middle Ages, for arguing about the number of angels on the point of a pin?

Polybius⁶² decried the Academics for discussing the zetema whether Athenians could smell eggs fried in Ephesus, thereby corrupting the youth with their inane arguments about useless and paradoxical subjects. In turn the philosophers decried philology, and Epicurus⁶³ advised kings at symposia rather to listen to dirty jokes and old war stories than to problems about music and philology. But the philologists saved their abuse for each other, and so to this day one philologist will describe the problems raised by another as ridiculous in order that his own may appear serious.⁶⁴ I leave others to decide whether the following⁶⁵ are serious or frivolous.

Sch. Hes. *Op.* 97: How is it that Hope remains inside the jar, when after all she is among men? It was Comanus, the chief wine-waiter of King Ptolemy, who proposed this one. Aristarchus answers: 'Hope for bad remains, hope for good has got out, so that we are not precise when we say, we hope for bad...'

And what of the great Eratosthenes? He expressed his love of symposia by quoting the words of Odysseus (9. 5 ff.)

I say that there is nothing more pleasant
Than when Euphrosyne possesses all the people
And banqueters listen in the hall to the singer

save that he said the second line, in dubious Greek, should read

When Euphrosyne holds sway, κακοῦ ἡτοῦσας.

⁵⁹ The language of sobriety seems to go back to Lehrs, who assures us (op. cit. 197 and 206) that Aristarchus was a *virum sobrium in melioribus exquirendis occupatum*.

⁶⁰ Plato, *Protagoras* 339d; Ar. *Nub.* 145 ff. with sch. 145a.

⁶¹ W. Bühler, *Jb. d. Ak. d. Wiss. zu Göttingen* (1977), 44–62 in a good summary (with further reference to the amusing essay of R. Kassel, *Winkelbrummer* (Berlin, 1974)) offers a sound judgement on the quality of ancient zetemata; after allotting due praise, he writes: 'what one misses in them... is the ability to be critical of their own ideas'. There is a fine list of 'frivolous' zetemata assembled by Mayor on Juvenal 7. 234. Seneca cites as particularly frivolous (*de brev. vit.* 31. 1) the question of the priority of *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; he has not made much impression.

⁶² Polybius 12. 26c.

⁶³ fr. 5 + 20 Usener = 9 + 12, 2 Arrighetti: οὐδὲ παρὰ πότον διδοὺς χώραν must mean that in Epicurus' day the symposium was the first place to find φιλολογικὰ ζητήματα κριτικῶν. Plutarch goes on after quoting these passages (*Mor.* 1095e):

εἰ δὲ Πτολεμαῖος ὁ πρῶτος συναγαγὼν τὸ μουσεῖον τούτοις ἐνέτυχε τοῖς καλοῖς καὶ βασιλικαῖς παραγγέλλουσιν...

Here I think βασιλικός means symposiarchic, as in the Academic sympotic laws mentioned by Athenaeus 1. 3 f. (T. Bergk, *Fünf Abhandlungen z. Ges. der gr. Philosophie und Astronomie* (Leipzig, 1883), p. 67 n. 1); Plutarch would be making a joke. But at Plut. *Mor.* 150b the same phrase means 'problems about kingship'.

⁶⁴ Strabo 2. 3. 7 criticizes a scholar for θετικὴν ποιούμενος τὴν ζήτησιν πρὸς οὐδὲν χρησίμως, i.e. turning a serious question into a frivolous rhetorical exercise; cf. Aphthonius, *Progymnasmata* 50. 1 Spengel: ἡ θέσις ἐν προγυμνάσμασιν ἀντίθεσιν καὶ λύσιν κατὰ ζήτημα δέχεται.

⁶⁵ Lehrs, op. cit. 197 and 335. Of the second he writes: *hic non grammaticum audimus sed philosophum*, but several of the lines were athetized in antiquity by grammarians. Aristarchus wrote whole books against Comanus, presumably attacking his solutions among other things.

The people have become *κακοτής*. The *profanum vulgus* it seems was not to enter within the Muses' dining room. Serious or frivolous? We shall never know, but I shall be pardoned if I have a suspicion that such things belonged originally at a symposium before they became print. Indeed I will go further and suggest that much that is peculiar about the literature of Alexandria, its allusiveness, obscure erudition, aitiologies – all this has its home not just in the Museum but in the zetemata of its dining room. That is why it shares in that ambivalence of all literary scholarship, stuck for ever half way between symposium and lecture theatre, sobriety and urbanity, between taking itself too seriously and not taking itself seriously enough.

Non est enim seiunctus iocus a φιλολογίᾳ et cotidiana συζητήσῃ

(Cic. *ep. ad Fam.* 16. 21. 5)

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POSTSCRIPT

This paper was originally given as a talk at the University of Göttingen in 1978; it has been revised many times since during seminars at universities in Canada and the United States, and was given in its final form at the University of Michigan in April 1980. Douglas Gerber has offered his usual friendly advice. Originally I dealt with the problem of *μῆλον* in Homer, on which Aristophanes' views are known. This has since been admirably treated by M. Schmidt in *Glotta* 57 (1979), 174 ff.