

EUBOULOS' *ANKYLION* AND THE GAME OF KOTTABOS

Euboulos' *Ἀγκυλίων* is represented by only four fragments (frr. 1–3 KA = frr. 1–4 Hunter), all culled from Athenaeus, which tell us nothing about the plot of the play or about the identity of its titular character. R. L. Hunter, in his recent commentary on Euboulos, discusses at length the name *Ἀγκυλίων*¹ and concludes that it could belong to either (1) a humble and poor man;² (2) 'a character from folklore notorious for sexual relations with his mother';³ or (3) 'a wily slave such as those foreshadowed in Aristophanes and familiar from New Comedy'.⁴ In view of our ignorance of the play's plot, each of these possibilities has an equal claim to our consideration. I believe, however, that the context in which the fragments are embedded in Athenaeus allows us to refine our understanding of the name even further.

The passage in which Athenaeus quotes Euboulos fr. 1 KA (= 1 + 2 Hunter), occurs towards the end of a discussion (665d–668f) of the game of kottabos, the sympotic game popular especially in the fifth and fourth centuries in which participants tossed wine lees at a disc balanced on a rod, or, in another version, at saucers floating in a tub.⁵ During this discussion Athenaeus treats of the various forms of the game as well as the special applications of the term *κότταβος* and *κοττάβεια*.⁶ At 667c he mentions that one expression often applied to the tossing of the kottabos was *ἅπ' ἀγκύλης*, which referred to the bending of the wrist:

ἀγκυλοῦντα γὰρ δεῖ σφόδρα τὴν χεῖρα εὐρύθμως πέμπειν τὸν κότταβον, ὡς Δικαίαρχος φησιν καὶ Πλάτων δ' ἐν τῷ Διὶ Κακουμένῳ [fr. 47K]... ἐκάλουν δ' ἅπ' ἀγκύλης τὴν τοῦ κοττάβου πρόσιν διὰ τὸ ἐπαγκυλοῦν τὴν δεξιὰν χεῖρα ἐν τοῖς ἀποκοτταβισμοῖς.

Athenaeus proceeds to cite Bacchylides' *Ἑρωτικοί* and Aeschylus' *Ὀστολόγοι* (for the related adjective *ἀγκυλητός*):

.....εὐτε
τὴν ἅπ' ἀγκύλης ἦσι τοῖσδε τοῖς νεανίαις
λευκὸν ἀντεῖνασα πήχυν.

(Bacchylides fr. 17 Sn)

¹ R. L. Hunter, *Eubulus: the Fragments* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 85–6 [= Hunter].

² The argument is based on Aristophanes, *Wasps* 1396–7, where the name seems to be used humorously for its connotations of humble origins.

³ cf. Σ Aristophanes, *Wasps* 1178a, 1178b, with Hunter 85.

⁴ Hunter 86: 'as a nickname, *Ἀγκυλίων* might refer to crooked legs or to a crooked spine... or to an aspect of character...; it would be particularly appropriate for a slave, as slaves were often named from peculiarities of physique.'

⁵ There were two main forms of the game: (1) the 'descending kottabos' (*κότταβος κατακτός*), where the player aimed his wine drops at a disc (*πάστιγξ*) balanced on top of a rod, trying to dislodge it so that it in turn would strike another disc (*μάνης*; cf. below, n. 20) with a loud noise; (2) the 'kottabos with saucers' (*κότταβος δι' ὀξυβάφων*) in which one tried to sink saucers floating in a basin by hurling wine drops on them. For a full treatment of the ancient evidence of the game, see K. Sartori *Das Kottabos-Spiel der alten Griechen* (Munich, 1893) [= Sartori]; cf. also K. Schneider s.v. 'Kottabos' in *RE* 11.2 cols. 1528–41, and B. Sparkes, 'Kottabos: an Athenian After-Dinner Game', *Archaeology* 13 (1960), 202–6.

⁶ For *κότταβος* as a term for the cup used in the game, cf. Eupolis, *Baptai* fr. 95 KA (Athen. 666d). Euboulos fr. 15 KA (= fr. 16 Hunter = Athen. 666e/f) seems to employ *κοττάβειον* to mean 'kottabos stand' in the game of *κότταβος κατακτός*; cf. Hunter 109.

<ΟΔ.> Εὐρύμαχος †οὐκ ἄλλος† οὐδὲν ἤσسون< >
 ὕβριζ' ὕβρισμους οὐκ ἐναϊσίους ἐμοί.
 ἦν μὲν γὰρ αὐτῷ †κότταβος ἀεὶ† τοῦμὸν κára,
 τοῦ δ' ἀγκυλητοῦ κοσσάβιός ἐστιν σκοπός (?)
 <χ> ἐκτεμῶν (?) ἡβῶσα χεὶρ ἐφίετο

(Aeschylus fr. 179 Radt)⁷

This passage recalls another, 782d,⁸ where Athenaeus also locates the expression in Cratinus:⁹

πιεῖν δὲ θάνατος οἶνον ἦν ὕδωρ ἐπῆ.
 ἀλλ' ἴσον ἴσω μάλιστ' ἀκράτου δύο χοᾶς
 πίνουσ' ἀπ' ἀγκύλης ἐπονομάζουσα < >
 ἱησι λάταγας τῷ Κορινθίῳ πέει

(fr. 299 KA)

ἐντεῦθεν ἐννοοῦμεν τοὺς παρ' Αἰσχύλῳ ἀγκυλητοὺς κοττάβους. λέγονται δὲ καὶ δόρατα ἀγκυλητὰ καὶ μεσάγκυλα. ἀλλ' ἀπὸ ἀγκύλης ἦτοι τῆς δεξιᾶς χειρός. καὶ ἡ κύλιξ δὲ ἡ ἀγκύλη διὰ τὸ ἐπαγκυλοῦν τὴν δεξίαν χεῖρα ἐν τῇ προέσει. ἦν γὰρ τοῖς παλαιοῖς πεφροντισμένον καλῶς καὶ εὐσχημῶνως κότταβον προιεσθαι. καὶ οἱ πολλοὶ ἐπὶ τούτῳ μᾶλλον ἐφρόνουν μέγα ἢ ἐπὶ τῷ εὐ ἀκοντίζειν. ὠνομάσθη οὖν ἀπὸ τοῦ τῆς χειρός σχηματισμοῦ, ὃν ποιοῦμενοι εὐρύθμῳς ἐρρίπτουν εἰς τὸ κοττάβιον.

The passages cited by Athenaeus affirm that as early as the fifth century the specialized vocabulary of the kottabos game included references to the ἀγκύλη, either in the phrase ἀπ' ἀγκύλης¹⁰ (from the bend) or as an adjective describing the toss, ἀγκυλητός.¹¹ I would suggest, therefore, that Ἀγκυλίῳν may in fact be a nickname for a character who possesses special expertise at the kottabos game as described in these passages, i.e. one who has shown himself to have a particularly deft tossing hand.¹²

Athenaeus himself does not make any connection between the ἀγκύλη of the kottabos and Euboulos' Ἀγκυλίῳν when he has occasion to quote from this play several pages later, 668d, but he is still concerned there with the general subject of the kottabos, and it seems likely that the citations from Ἀγκυλίῳν contained references to κοττάβεια:

ἦν δέ τι καὶ ἄλλο κοτταβίων εἶδος προτιθέμενον ἐν ταῖς παννυχίσιν, οὗ μνημονεύει Καλλίμαχος ἐν Παννυχίδι διὰ τούτων

ὁ δ' ἀγρυνήσας [συνεχῆς] μέχρι τῆς κολῳῶνης
 τὸν πυραμοῦντα λήψεται, καὶ τὰ κοττάβεια
 καὶ τῶν παρλυσῶν ἦν θέλει, χῶν θέλει, φιλήσει.

[fr. 227 Pf]

⁷ A very troublesome text; Radt diffidently prints the MS. reading, though Kaibel's emendation, ἀγκυλητοὺς κοσσάβους (as object of ἐφίετο; τοῦ δ' = 'capitis') may be right. For the plethora of other emendations, cf. Radt ad loc. 293.

⁸ 781-4 is a section from the Epitome, traditionally inserted at 466d, following I. Casaubon, *Animadversionum in Athenaei Deipnosophistas Libri XV* (Leiden, 1600), pp. 492-3.

⁹ Athenaeus cites Cratinus as an example of ἀγκύλη = 'cup' (ποτήριον), though in fact Cratinus uses ἀπ' ἀγκύλης here more as Athenaeus explains it at 667c (= 'from the bend', quoted above); cf. Kock's remarks ad Cratinus fr. 273, and Sartori 94-5.

¹⁰ Note also Anacreon, *PMG* 415: Σικελὸν κότταβον ἀγκύλη †δαίζων†.

¹¹ cf. O. Jahn, 'Kottabos auf Vasenbildern', *Philologus* 26 (1867), 214, and Sartori's Appendix V 'Bedeutung und Etymologie des Wortes ἀγκύλη'. The iconographical evidence certainly makes it clear that a bent, almost contorted, hand was an important feature of the kottabos; cf., e.g., *CVA*, Munich, vol. 5, plate 225.2; Berlin, vol. 2, plates 92.2, 95.1.

¹² This is not to say, of course, that the name Ἀγκυλίῳν necessarily had an original connection with the kottabos (note its earlier occurrence in Aristophanes, for example [cf. above, n. 3], which offers no indication of its nuance). What is important, however, is the connotation of the name that Euboulos exploited for the purpose of his play.

ἐγίνετο δὲ καὶ πεμμάτια τινα ἐν ταῖς παννυχίσιν, ἐν αἷς πλείστον ὅσον χρόνον διηγρύπνουσιν χορεύοντες· καὶ διωνομάζετο τὰ πεμμάτια τότε χαρίσιοι ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν ἀναιρουμένων χαρᾶς. μνημονεύει Εὐβουλος ἐν Ἀγκυλίῳ λέγων οὕτως·

καὶ γὰρ πάλαι πέττει τὰ νικητήρια.

[fr. 1]

εἶθ' ἐξῆς φησιν·

ἐξεπήδησ' ἀρτίως πέττουσα τὸν χαρίσιον

[fr. 2]

ὅτι δὲ καὶ φίλημα ἦν ἄθλον ἐξῆς λέγει ὁ Εὐβουλος·

εἰὲν γυναῖκες· νῦν ὅπως τὴν νύχθ' ὄλην
ἐν τῇ δεκάτῃ τοῦ παιδίου χορεύσετε·
θήσω δὲ νικητήριον τρεῖς ταινίας
καὶ μῆλα πέντε καὶ φιλήματα· ἐννέα.

[fr. 3]

Callimachus, of course, in the first citation of the passage quoted above, seems to use *κοττάβεια* as a general term for prizes given at night-festivals rather than those offered at the *kottabos* game proper. Apparently – although the connection of thought is far from precise – it is to illustrate this use of the term (*κοττάβεια* = *χαρίσιοι*) that Athenaeus is induced to cite Euboulos.¹³ Yet in spite of the ambiguity of the passage, the fragments cited from Euboulos' *Ἀγκυλίῳ* certainly indicate a scene or scenes of elaborate festivity¹⁴ and sympotic competitions, or at least preparations for such activity. A context such as this is eminently appropriate for a game of *kottabos*, and it seems likely that Athenaeus was drawn to these passages in the first place because they included at least a mention of the game and its prizes.¹⁵

Ameipsias composed in the fifth century a play entitled *Ἀποκοτταβίζοντες* and, although we are unable to reconstruct its plot, it is clear from the title that the chorus

¹³ Strictly speaking, the 'πυραμοῦντα' in the Callimachus quotation above (fr. 227Pf) reminds Athenaeus of Euboulos' 'cakes' (ἐγίνετο δὲ καὶ πεμμάτια τινα ἐν ταῖς παννυχίσιν). But Athenaeus' larger subject remains the *κοττάβεια*, a type of 'victory-prize', and it seems that he cites Euboulos' *χαρίσιοι* as a species of *κοττάβεια*. He clearly implies, after all, that Euboulos referred to *χαρίσιοι* as *νικητήρια* ('victory-prizes', fr. 1 quoted above). It is, nevertheless, rather bold of Jahn, art. cit. (n. 11), 215 n. 67, to cite these frr. as examples of the *κοττάβεια* = prizes offered at the *kottabos* game. Even Pfeiffer ad Call. fr. 227.7 implies as much. It is intriguing, however, that according to Σ Aristoph. *Peace* 1242, Pherecrates makes mention of the *κότταβος κατακτός* in a play entitled *Παννυχίς* (elsewhere referred to with the double title *Ἰνὸς ἢ Παννυχίς*, cf. Athen. 612a).

¹⁴ Fr. 1, 'She (?) has been baking victory cakes for a long time', sounds as if it is a response to someone marvelling at a cornucopia of delicacies. Note also that the prizes mentioned for the *Παννυχίς* were among those offered for the *kottabos*: cakes and kisses. For comestibles cf. Athenaeus 667d: *ὅτι δὲ ἄθλον προῦκειτο τῷ εὐ προεμένῳ τὸν κότταβον προεῖρηκε μὲν καὶ ὁ Ἀντιφάνης* [fr. 55.2–3 K; the verse is incomplete at Athenaeus 667b] *ὥς γὰρ ἔστι καὶ πεμμάτια καὶ τραγήματα*; for kisses cf. Sophocles, *Salmones* fr. 537 Radt, Plato Comicus, fr. 46.5K.

¹⁵ The paragraph that immediately follows the quotation of Euboulos, fr. 2KA (= fr. 3 Hunter), at 668d/e, certainly reads as if Athenaeus had had the game of *kottabos* on his mind the whole time: *ὅτι δὲ ἐσπούδαστο παρὰ τοῖς Σικελιώταις ὁ κότταβος δῆλον ἐκ τοῦ καὶ οἰκήματα ἐπιτήδεια τῇ παιδίᾳ κατασκευάζεσθαι*. We cannot even be sure that the prizes mentioned in fr. 3 apply specifically to the night-dancing of the first two verses. They might easily refer to something (e.g. a *kottabos* competition) mentioned earlier, and taken up again after a charge to the *γυναῖκες* (the chorus perhaps, cf. Hunter 87) to continue their dancing through the night. This would be even more likely if Hunter is right to suggest (87–8, with ZPE 36 [1979], 35 n. 62) that this fragment is an example from Middle Comedy of the technique, common in New Comedy, 'whereby a character enters the stage speaking back into the house from which he or she emerges'.

consisted of a band of kottabos-revellers.¹⁶ Only five fragments of the play are extant, but at least four suggest in one way or another scenes of festivity.¹⁷ It was, of course, common practice in Old Comedy for the chorus to call attention at some point to their special attributes or activities,¹⁸ and it is not unreasonable to assume that in Ameipsias' *Ἀποκοτταβίζοντες* the chorus described the kottabos game, which in some fashion had become their trademark. Fr. 2K, at any rate, indicates clearly that a game of *κότταβος δι' ὀξυβάφων* was played during the course of the play:

ἡ Μανία, φέρ' ὀξύβαφα καὶ κανθάρους
καὶ τὸν ποδανιπτῆρ' ἐγχείασα θύδατος.

Ameipsias' play demonstrates that kottabos-playing could form an appropriate premise for a play of Old Comedy and that the technical details of the game would be readily known to the audience. If, therefore, Euboulos' *Ἀγκυλίων* was intended to evoke an aspect of the kottabos (which was still as popular during the fourth century as it was in the fifth), such a reference is unlikely to have been lost on the audience.

In fr. 2K from Ameipsias' play, cited above, the name *Μανία* may even be deployed specifically for its relevance to the kottabos, along the lines that I have suggested for Euboulos' *Ἀγκυλίων*. For, although the name *Μανία* seems to have been a formation analogous to *Μάνης*, the generic name frequently applied to a foreign slave in Old Comedy,¹⁹ it happens that one of the parts of the *κότταβος κατακτός* was known as the *μάνης*. The precise nature of this part of the apparatus is in dispute, but its function is clear: the object of the game was to dislodge the disc (the *πλάστιγξ*) on top of a rod so that it fell onto the *μάνης* with a loud noise.²⁰ The connection between the slave-name *Μάνης* and the *μάνης* of the kottabos was explicitly made in antiquity, as Antiphanes, fr. 55.10–13K attests (= Athenaeus 667a), a passage in which one character explains to another the details of the game:

Α. ἐὰν τύχη μόνον
αὐτῆς, ἐπὶ τὸν μάνην πεσεῖται καὶ ψόφος
ἔσται πάνυ πολὺς. Β. πρὸς θεῶν, τῷ κοττάβῳ
πρόσεστι καὶ Μάνης τις ὥσπερ οἰκέτης;

¹⁶ At *Ach.* 523–37 Aristophanes has Dikaiopolis trace the beginning of the Peloponnesian War to a band of drunken kottabos revellers (*μεθυσοκότταβοι*, 525), who allegedly abducted a prostitute from Megara. It would not be surprising if this theme actually served as the plot of Ameipsias' *Ἀποκοτταβίζοντες*. Ameipsias' play cannot be dated, though the stories of a rivalry between him and Aristophanes were famous; cf. Aristophanes, *Frogs* 12–14, *vita* Aristoph. XXVIII.8–10, XXIXa.10–12, XXXIIb.8 in W. Koster, *Scholia in Aristophanem* 1.1a (Groningen, 1975), and F. Meineke, *Fragmenta Comicorum Graecorum* (Berlin, 1839), i.199.

¹⁷ Fr. 1K presents an exchange between two people, the one of whom had been following the other for food 'like a mullet' (a fish proverbial for hunger): ... ἐγὼ δ' ἰὼν πειράσομαι || εἰς τὴν ἀγορὰν ἔργον λαβεῖν. Β. ἡττόν γ' ἂν οὖν || νῆστις καθάπερ κεστρεὺς ἀκολουθήσεις ἐμοί; fr. 2K (on which cf. below) gives an order for setting up the *κότταβος δι' ὀξυβάφων*; fr. 3K mentions the purchase of cosmetics: *δουοῖν ὀβολοῖν ἔγχευσα καὶ ψιμύθιον*; fr. 4K apparently has Dionysus speaking of the mixing of wine: *ἐγὼ δὲ Διόνυσος πᾶσιν ὑμῖν εἰμι πέντε καὶ δύο*; and fr. 5K mentions a kind of baked bread, *κλιβανίτης ἄρτος*.

¹⁸ Especially, though not only, in the parodos; cf. *Wasps* 403–7, with 420; *Clouds* 275–90, 375–94; *Frogs* 209–68.

¹⁹ cf. Sartori 31f.; Aristoph. *Birds* 523 with Σ ad loc. On *Μανία* cf. Athenaeus 578b ff. = Machon fr. 14 in A. S. F. Gow's *Machon: the Fragments*, with his comments p. 97; and Aristoph. *Thesmo.* 728 with Σ ad loc.

²⁰ C. Boehm, *de Cottabo* (Bonn, 1893), p. 27 held that the *μάνης* referred to a basin (Athenaeus 667e *λεκάνην ὑποκειμένην*) or disc which surrounded the kottabos-shaft. H. Hayley, 'The *κότταβος κατακτός* in the Light of Recent Investigations', *HSCP* 5 (1894), 79–82 argues that it was a statuette representative of a slave *Μάνης* sitting in a basin at the base of the shaft. Sparkes, art. cit. (n. 5), 205–6 is probably correct to argue that the *μάνης* was a central disc that broke the fall of the *πλάστιγξ*.

In view of the comic poets' well-known fondness for *nomina significantia*, it seems highly probable that Ameipsias' *Μανία*, applied to a servant who is ordered to set up the apparatus for the kottabos, was employed humorously as a *figura etymologica* for one of the pieces associated with the game.²¹

If my suggestion for *Ἀγκυλίων* is correct, we have a similarly comic name formation derived from one of the technical terms of the kottabos.²² As such, the name could readily belong to that class of slave names, discussed by Hunter, which reflect a particular aspect of character or field of expertise.²³ Indeed, as Hunter argues, the parallels from New and Roman Comedy of characters whose names fall into this category²⁴ do suggest strongly that *Ἀγκυλίων* was in fact a 'wily slave' rather than a traditional figure from folklore. Informed speculation about the plot of the play is still next to impossible, but if the name *Ἀγκυλίων* was employed specifically for its comic association with the kottabos,²⁵ it seems probable that such a character would have been involved in orchestrating sympotic, perhaps unruly, festivities.

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²¹ Sartori 31 n. 3 seems to have been on the verge of making just such a suggestion, but merely notes that the name appears in Ameipsias' play. It is true that *Μανία* is ordered in fr. 2K to set up the *κότταβος δι' ὀξυβάφων*, which did not apparently use a *μάνης*, but in a play with a chorus of kottabos revellers, we may feel certain that fr. 2 does not represent the only scene in which the kottabos was portrayed or discussed. The *κότταβος κατακτός* no doubt appeared elsewhere in the play, at which point a servant named *Μανία* would have her full comic effect, and probably occasioned several pointed jokes. Naturally the humour inherent in her name in such a context would remain operative throughout the play. An Aristophanic example of an otherwise unobtrusive or historical name made to serve as a pun in a specific context can be seen in the manipulation of the name *Λάμαχος* at *Ach.* 269, 1071 and *Peace* 304.

²² A possible translation would be 'Bend-y' or 'Bendy-boy'.

²³ Hunter 86; Hunter cites incorrectly M. Lambertz, *Die griechischen Sklavennamen* (Vienna, 1907), who discusses this category of slave names in part II, pp. 7–11. We even find a slave called *Κότταβος* in a second-century B.C. manumission decree from Thera (*IG* XII.3 1302).

²⁴ cf. Hunter 86.

²⁵ The name also serves as the title for one of Alexis' plays, from which one fragment survives (= Diog. Laert. 3.27), and may have been applied to a stock figure of Middle and New Comedy. The relative chronology of the two plays, however, is impossible to determine.