

## SHORTER NOTES

## GNESIPPUS AND THE RIVALS OF ARISTOPHANES\*

Gnesippus is one of those characters we would gladly know more about. All the ancient evidence about him, deriving entirely from Athenian comedy, is given by Athenaeus (14.638D), who in turn may depend on an earlier, probably Hellenistic, treatise *περὶ κωμωιδουμένων*. Athenaeus may have known almost nothing else about him; certainly the phrasing of his introduction to the fragments (*Γνησίππου τινὸς μνημονεύει κτλ.*) does not inspire confidence. Davidson has recently argued that Gnesippus was not, as has been generally assumed, a tragic, lyric, or comic poet, but a writer of a sort of lyrical mime called *παίγνιον*.<sup>1</sup> He suggests that this was a form of sympotic entertainment largely performed by female slaves, and that we have a dramatic representation of such a mime in the lyric dialogue between the Old Woman and the Girl at Ar. *Eccl.* 877ff. There is no doubt that sympotic performances could include mimic elements, at least in the fifth century; Davidson (p. 49) rightly adduces the erotic pantomimic ballet depicting the love of Ariadne and Dionysus at Xen. *Symp.* 9.2–7. But his arguments raise numerous problems, and the evidence merits further consideration.

Athenaeus refers to Gnesippus as *παίγνιαγράφος* (though we might instead expect *παίγνιο-* if a specific genre is meant) *τῆς ἱλαρᾶς μούσης*, a description that may either be his own or one taken over from his source. The neuter *παίγνιον* (pl. *παίγνια*) and the connected feminine *παίγνια* (Ionic *-η*) are related to the verb *παίζω*, the core meaning of which is ‘play’. It is not in doubt that *παίζω* and *παίγνιον* could be used of mimetic or dramatic performances as early as the fifth century; neither, however, is restricted to this context. Plato (*Leg.* 7.796B) mentions the *Κουρήτων ἐνόπλια παίγνια*, apparently a type of ritual armed dance,<sup>2</sup> and can disparagingly describe comedy as *παίγνια* (*Leg.* 7.816E *ὅσα μὲν οὖν περὶ γέλωτά ἐστιν παίγνια, ἃ δὲ κωμωιδίαν πάντες λέγομεν*). But it is the latter passage that is the more instructive: a *παίγνιον* is essentially a light-hearted affair, and thus Gorgias can happily describe his *Helen* as one (ch. 21), where we might best translate *jeu d’esprit*. Such is no doubt also the significance to be attached to the *Suda*’s statement that *παίγνια* were written by Thrasymachus of Chalcedon.<sup>3</sup> Related to this may be a fragment of Aristophanes which mentions someone putting on *ῥήματά τε κομψὰ καὶ παίγνια* (fr. 719<sup>4</sup>). Davidson suggests that this could refer to putting on mimic pieces, but although the verb (*ἐνδεικνύναι*) can be used in this way, the juxtaposition of *παίγνια* with *ῥήματα* is

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<sup>1</sup> J. Davidson, in D. Harvey and J. Wilkins (edd.), *The Rivals of Aristophanes* (London, 2000), 41–64, hereafter ‘Davidson’.

<sup>2</sup> Davidson (48) suggests that this may refer to some type of ritual mime, but goes astray in his attempt to link it with the *παίγνια* for Hecate at Ar. *Lys.* 700–3, claiming that ‘it does seem possible that what we have here is a *paignion* in honour of Hecate’. Quite apart from the fact that we have to do with two different words, *παίγνια* in the sense ‘festivity’, ‘party’ can be paralleled at Herod. 3.55 (cited in the revised Supplement to LSJ, where too the original gloss *ἐορτή*, which Davidson quotes, is deleted).

<sup>3</sup> *Suda*, Θ 462; DK 81 A1.

<sup>4</sup> All fragments of comedy are cited after R. Kassel and C. Austin, *Poetae Comici Graeci* (Berlin and New York, 1984–).

important; one does not put on ‘smart words (or speeches) and *mimes*’. However, the language would be very appropriate as a slighting description of display-oratory in the Gorgianic or Thrasymachean style (‘smart words and farcical ideas’?).

Aristophanes certainly uses *παίζω* of dramatic activity. The chorus-leader at the end of *Thesmophoriazusae* declares (1227): ἀλλὰ πέπαισται μετρίως ἡμῖν. But this is hardly a reference to a supposed form of mime, as Davidson imagines; the sense is simply ‘but we’ve disported ourselves enough’ (Sommerstein’s translation).<sup>5</sup> Davidson’s explanation of the lyric dialogue between the girl and old woman at *Eccl.* 877ff. as a representation of sung mime is equally wayward, though that scene certainly has close connections with popular song.<sup>6</sup> Davidson (pp. 50–1) makes much of the use of *παίγνιον* and *παίζω* at two points in this episode, but his reading in neither case makes much sense. At 877 the first Old Woman appears at the central stage-door; she is waiting to accost passing men for sexual purposes, has made herself up in comically grotesque fashion, and is singing to herself (880–2): μινυρομένη τι πρὸς ἑμαυτὴν μέλος, | παίζουσ’ ὅπως ἂν περιλάβοιμ’, αὐτῶν τινα | παριόντα. Davidson speculates that ‘we might translate [*παίζουσα*] “as one performing a *paignion*”’. However, this makes nonsense of the following clause (one no more attracts young men by performing mimes than young men entice women by doing so) and ignores the fact that the old woman goes on to say that she will sing an ‘Ionian’ song (882–3). ‘Ionian songs’ may be those sung in the Ionian mode, but Ionia was in any case a byword for iniquity and luxury, and the phrase probably just plays on these associations.<sup>7</sup> Shortly afterwards the Girl, following her abusive exchange with the Old Woman, declares (922–3) ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἂν ποθ’ ὑφαρπάσαιο τὰμὰ παίγνια, ‘you’ll never rob me of my playmates’ (Sommerstein) or ‘you will never again intercept my darling’ (Ussher). Davidson suggests this may *also* mean ‘interrupt my *paignia*’. Even if the verb can mean ‘interrupt’ here, itself rather doubtful, I do not see that this follows from what has been said before or provides any proper motivation for the plural *παίγνια*. For the sense ‘boyfriends’, cf. Anaxandr. fr. 9. 3, Plut. *Ant.* 59. 8 (cited by Sommerstein ad loc.).

The specifically mimic connotations of *παίγνιον* are in fact not attested before the second century A.D., in a well-known passage from Plutarch’s *Quaest. conv.* (712EF) forming part of his discussion of the proper forms of sympotic entertainment:

There are certain mimes . . . some of which they call *hypotheses* and others they call *paignia* (*παίγνια*), but I think that neither is consonant with a symposium; the *hypotheses* because of their length and the difficulties in putting them on, the *paignia* because they are full of buffoonery and scandal, unfit to be seen even by the slaves who carry our shoes, if their masters are men of virtue; but the masses, even when women and boys are reclining among them, put on representations of words and deeds more unsettling than any drunkenness.

There is no doubt that Plutarch is using *παίγνιον* as a technical term, although he does not specify whether these mimes were in prose or verse (we would usually expect the former). The origin of Plutarch’s usage is unknown, though paralleled in later texts.<sup>8</sup> But there is no clear example of a dramatic, or even lyric, work entitled

<sup>5</sup> Cf. also Ephipp. fr. 7.

<sup>6</sup> S. D. Olson *CQ* 38 (1988), 328–30; C. M. Bowra, *AJP* 79 (1958), 376–91 (reprinted in *On Greek Margins* [Oxford, 1970], 149–63).

<sup>7</sup> See Ussher ad loc.; M. L. West, *Ancient Greek Music* (Oxford, 1992), 349, n. 96, and cf. Plato *Com.* fr. 71. 12ff. (an Ionian song sung by a hetaera to the accompaniment of a *trigónos*).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. the revised Supplement to LSJ, s.v., and E. Voutiras, *Epigraphica Anatolica* 24 (1995), 61–72.

*παίγνιον* in the period between the fifth century B.C. and Plutarch, and the supposed examples adduced by Davidson are all either clearly non-dramatic or dubiously interpreted. Philitas wrote *παίγνια* of which there are two surviving fragments, both in elegiac couplets,<sup>9</sup> a fact which precludes the possibility that they have anything to do with Davidson's lyric mime. The term presumably described a collection of epigrammatic pieces of a humorous character. Aratus' *παίγνια* (*Suda*, A3745) will also have been epigrammatic,<sup>10</sup> and Crates' *παίγνια* parodying Solon and Homer (*Diog. Laert.* 6. 85), whatever precise form they took, will clearly not have been lyric, but respectively elegiac and hexametrical. Laevius' six books of *Erotopaegnia*, by contrast, were largely mythological pieces with an amatory theme in a variety of metres; but again, nothing in the extant fragments suggests mime. They contained dialogue, but one should not need to point out that dialogue can easily be accommodated in a narrative frame. The title itself probably reflects Laevius' tastes for bizarre and novel diction; his choice of playful subjects; and his enthusiasm for metrical experimentation, sometimes changing metres within poems, a particularly important detail if the word *erotopaegnia*, not otherwise attested, was modelled on *τεχνοπαίγνια*, the term used to describe poetic 'jokes' in which the physical shape of the poem on the page reflected its content.<sup>11</sup> In all these cases, *παίγνιον* simply emphasizes the light-hearted nature of the poet's enterprise. Even Theocritus' bucolic poems could be called *παίγνια* in this sense.<sup>12</sup> Davidson further (p. 44) suggests that Plutarch's usage may be reflected in the Greek tag quoted by Augustus on his death-bed (*Vit. Aug.* 99. 1; *Com. Adesp.* \*925 K-A):

ἐπεὶ †δετῆχοι† κα<λ>ὡς τὸ παίγνιο<ν>,  
δότε κρότον, καὶ πάντες ἡμᾶς μετὰ χαρὰς προπέμψατε.

According to Suetonius, Augustus asked those gathered round whether he had performed well enough in life's mime (*ecquid iis videretur mimum vitae commode transegisse*), which may suggest that *παίγνιον* here specifically means mime. But it is just as likely that *mimus*, if indeed Augustus' own term, is used simply because mime was the most popular genre of the Roman stage under the Empire.<sup>13</sup> Such tags are typical enough of Plautus (e.g. *Mostell.* 1181, *Capt.* 1034ff.), and the Greek lines themselves more probably come from New Comedy. The informal performances described by Plutarch are unlikely to have had such formal conclusions, and the reference to applause and the plural forms (*πάντες*, *ἡμᾶς*) more readily suggest public stage performance.

The type of poetry Gnesippus wrote is in fact abundantly clear from the surviving references to his work. Athenaeus quotes five comic fragments, one each by

<sup>9</sup> Fragments 10–12 Kuchenmüller; 10–11 Powell; 12–13 Sbardella; 23, 25 Spanoudakis. Most of the material relating to the term *παίγνιον* is collected by von Blumethal, *RE* 18.2.2396–8; see also D. Bain, *CQ* 48 (1998), 262–8 (a reply to J. Davidson, *CQ* 45 [1995], 590–2).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Leonides, *AP* 6. 322 τήνδε Λεωνίδεω θαλερὴν πάλι δέρκεο Μοῦσαν, | δίστιχον εὐθίχτου παίγνιον εὐεπίης (D. L. Page, *Further Greek Epigrams* [Cambridge, 1981], 515–16).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. E. Courtney, *The Fragmentary Latin Poets* (Oxford, 1993), 118f.

<sup>12</sup> Aelian, *NA* 15.19 ὁ τῶν νομευτικῶν παιγνίων συνθέτης. That Aelian is an Atticizing writer (Davidson, 46) is neither here nor there. The 'drunken *παίγνια* of Glauce's Muses' (Hedylus, *HE* 1883; cf. Theocr. 4. 31) are light and playful tunes for the aulos; though a connection with mime is made in the epigram's opening lines (1877–8), the subject has changed by the time Hedylus mentions Glauce.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. W. Beare, *The Roman Stage* (London, 1955<sup>2</sup>), 139–49.

Chionides (?)<sup>14</sup> and Eupolis, three by Cratinus, and ends by citing Teleclides (fr. 36) to the effect that Gnesippus dwelt on illicit sex (*περὶ μοιχείας ἀναστρέφεσθαι*). One of the fragments from Cratinus suggests that he brought Gnesippus on stage, perhaps in an erotic context (fr. 104), but the lines are too mutilated for any certainty, and throw no light on Gnesippus' poetry. The other four fragments are more informative. Chionides (fr. 4) mentions Gnesippus together with Cleomenes:

ταῦτ' οὐ μὰ Δία Γνήσιππος οὐδ' ὁ Κλεομένης  
ἐν ἐννέ' ἄν χορδαῖς κατεγλυκάνατο

neither Gnesippus, by Zeus, nor Cleomenes could have made *these* things sound sweet on their nine strings.

Cleomenes wrote poetry in divers genres, including dithyramb (*PMG* 838), and is mentioned by Epicrates (fr. 4) in the company of Sappho, Meletus, and Lamynthius as the composer of erotic verse.<sup>15</sup> Sappho's name suggests that Epicrates is thinking primarily of symposiastic poetry, which we know was written by Meletus (cf. *Ar. Ran.* 1302), though there was also a tragic poet of that name, perhaps the same man.<sup>16</sup> Lamynthius wrote a lyric *Lyde* (*PMG* 839) after the death of his homonymous lover, evidently a Lydian hetaera, presumably in part the inspiration for Antimachus' elegiac *Lyde*;<sup>17</sup> but that this too was sympotic is hardly to be doubted. Sympotic associations are also apparent in the fragment from Eupolis (fr. 148), which probably belonged to the parabasis of his *Helots*:<sup>18</sup>

τὰ Στσηιχόρου τε καὶ Ἀλκμάνος Σιμωνίδου τε  
ἀρχαῖον ἀεῖδεν, ὁ δὲ Γνήσιππος ἔστ' ἀκούειν.  
κεῖνος νυκτεριν' ἤνρε μοιχοῖς ἀείσματ' ἐκκαλεῖσθαι  
γυναικάς ἔχοντας ἰαμβύκην τε καὶ τρίγωνον.

It is old-fashioned to sing the songs of Stesichorus and Alcman and Simonides; Gnesippus is the one to hear. He invented night-time songs for adulterers, using *iambykē* and *trigōnos*, to call out women.

Gnesippus' poems are here indecent songs played on two harp-like instruments, often found in collocation, which we particularly associate with symposia. Chionides, by referring to 'nine-strings', evidently means instruments of the same sort. Sophocles calls the *trigōnos* Phrygian, mentioning it together with the Lydian *pēktis* (frs. 239, 412 R., from *Thamyras* and *Mysians*, respectively), and the tragedian Diogenes mentions both the *trigōnos* and *pēktis* in a Lydian context (*TrGF* 45 F1.9 [*Semele*]).<sup>19</sup> The *iambykē* (later *sambykē*; Lat. *sambuca*), a high-pitched harp almost certainly of eastern origin, had similarly exotic overtones. Girls who played such instruments at symposia were called *sambykai* or *sambykistriaí*, and no doubt also had attractions other than their musical skills.<sup>20</sup> Here, of course, it is men who play the *sambykē* and *trigōnos* to seduce women, but the context remains primarily sympotic or komastic.

<sup>14</sup> The fragment comes from *Beggars* (*Πτωχοί*), Chionides' authorship of which Athenaeus questions here and in another passage (3.137E).

<sup>15</sup> U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Griechische Verskunst* (Berlin, 1921<sup>2</sup>), 394–5, had reservations about identifying these two figures, but there seems little reason to doubt that we have to do with the same person.

<sup>16</sup> Whether either should be further identified with Andocides' prosecutor in 399 and the titular prosecutor of Socrates is doubtful; there are several other candidates (see D. M. MacDowell, *Andokides. On the Mysteries* [Oxford, 1962], 208–10).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Clearchus, fr. 34 Wehrli.

<sup>18</sup> Wilamowitz (n. 15), 385.

<sup>19</sup> See West (n. 7), 71–2 with n. 105.

<sup>20</sup> West (n. 7), 75–7.

Stesichorus, Alcman, and Simonides were known for verse of a rather different kind, but all were thought suitable for solo sympotic performance.<sup>21</sup>

The two fragments of Cratinus raise slight difficulties. Both refer only to the 'son of Cleomachus', and though Athenaeus clearly thought that this meant Gnesippus, it has sometimes been suggested that he was in fact a separate individual.<sup>22</sup> Cratinus calls him a *τραγωιδίας* . . . *διδάσκαλος* in fr. 276, and fr. 17 can be taken to suggest a connection with tragedy, and thus Gnesippus duly appears as a tragedian in Snell's edition (*TrGF* 27). Certainly Hellenistic and later scholars were not above accidentally conflating comic identities in this way, but there is sufficient similarity between the Cratinus fragments and those from Eupolis and Chionides to indicate that all three are referring to the same person. In fr. 17 Cratinus attacks the unnamed archon who had refused him a chorus (cf. fr. 20):

ὅς οὐκ ἔδωκ' αἰτοῦντι Σοφοκλέει χορόν,  
τῷ Κλεομάχου δ', ὃν οὐκ ἂν ἤξιουν ἐγὼ  
ἐμοὶ διδάσκειν οὐδ' ἂν εἰς Ἀδώνια.

who didn't give a chorus to Sophocles when he asked, but (did) to the son of Cleomachus, whom I wouldn't think worth commissioning even for the Adonia.

The joke is that we do not expect state-sponsored choruses at the Adonia, which was a purely private festival. We should certainly not feel encouraged to assume that Cratinus is talking about a particular historical occasion on which Sophocles was denied, and Gnesippus granted, a tragic chorus. In fifth- and fourth-century Athens the Adonia was above all celebrated by women.<sup>23</sup> Aristophanes' Proboulos of *Lys.* 387ff. initially assumes the revolutionary antics of Lysistrata and her companions to be linked to the rites of Adonis and Sabazius, which he naturally associates with female licentiousness and uproar: ἄρ' ἐξέλαμψε τῶν γυναικῶν ἡ τρυφή | χῶ τυμπανισμὸς χοῖ πυκνοὶ Σαβάζιοι, | ὅ τ' Ἀδωνιασμὸς οὗτος οὐπὶ τῶν τεγῶν κτλ. A similar perspective is offered by Moschion's account of the Adonia at *Men. Sam.* 38–46; in particular 41–2 τῆς δ' ἑορτῆς παιδιὰν | πολλή]ν ἐχούσης suggests (indecorous?) frivolity (Gomme–Sandbach ad loc.). Diphilus (fr. 42.39–40) makes explicit the connection with hetaeras. Aristophanes and Menander both make clear that the rites were celebrated publicly, at least in part. Such public spectacle may well have suggested to Cratinus a comparison with the theatre, especially since the festivities involved dancing (Gomme–Sandbach on *Sam.* 46, and cf. 42–3 συμπαρὼν | ἐγινόμην οἶμαι *θεατῆς*). Gnesippus' 'chorus' will be no more than the groups of caterwauling women, many of them probably of low or ambiguous social status, who danced and sang to lament Adonis' death.

Fragment 276 makes a similar joke:

ἴτω δὲ καὶ τραγωιδίας  
ὁ Κλεομάχου διδάσκαλος  
†μετὰ τῶν† παρατιλτριῶν  
ἔχων χορόν Λυδιστὶ τιλ-  
λουσῶν μέλη πονηρά.

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<sup>21</sup> Stesichorus: *PMGF* 276(a) παιδικὰ and (b) paeans. Simonides: *Ar. Nub.* 1355ff. (*PMG* 507). The evidence that Alcman was performed in symposia is less clear, but it can easily be imagined given some of his preoccupations. For Stesichorus as old-fashioned in the fifth century, cf. also *Ar. Nub.* 967 (*PMGF* 274; Lamprocles, *PMG* 735).

<sup>22</sup> Cf. P. Maas, *RE* 7.2.1479–81. W. Luppe (*Wiss. Z. Halle* 18 [1969], 4.218) thought that ὁ Κλεομάχου in fr. 276 might be an intrusive gloss.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. R. Parker, *Athenian Religion. A History* (Oxford, 1996), 194, 197–8.

Off with Cleomachus' son, the teacher of tragedy, together with (?) his chorus of depilating female slaves plucking wretched songs ('limbs') in Lydian fashion.

The phrase *τιλλουσῶν . . . μέλη* is deliberately ambiguous. *παρατιλτρίαι* were slaves whose unpleasant duty it was to depilate their mistress's body (LSJ, s.v.), and so *μέλη τίλλειν* can mean 'to pluck limbs (sc. of hair)'. This is not otherwise known as an especially Lydian fashion; Hipponax mentions genital depilation once or twice (frs. 114a, 174 West) and could perhaps be describing Lydian customs, but depilation was also a perfectly good Athenian practice.<sup>24</sup> However, *μέλη* can also be songs, played on a instrument that one plucks (like a harp), and *Λυδιστί* more naturally means 'in the (musical) Lydian mode'. This is particularly apt; the (slack) Lydian mode, like the Ionian, was thought especially suitable for symposiastic lyric.<sup>25</sup> Again, the lines suggest lascivious sympotic song, played by groups of hired girls and hetaeras. Davidson (pp. 48–9) speaks of Gnesippus' 'chorus' as if it were a real one, but we would hardly expect to find a proper chorus even in the sort of private lyric mime which he imagines Gnesippus to have written. 'Teacher of tragedy' is an ironic description, and the links with tragic poetry suggested by these two fragments in fact illusory.

Plutarch's account of mimic *παίγνια* remains a slight oddity, but is clearly unconnected with Gnesippus' lubricious serenades. Possibly *παίγνιον* in this sense was a term largely restricted to acting circles; Plutarch's *καλοῦσιν* could be taken to imply as much, though this strikes me as a little unlikely. Precisely why Athenaeus used the term *παίγνιαγράφος* to describe Gnesippus remains unknown, whether it was taken over from his source or an *ad hoc* coinage based solely on the material he found in the comic fragments. But it does not seem likely from the evidence that he will have thought of it as a precise technical description. Gnesippus' poetry was certainly nothing out of the ordinary, and belonged, whatever individual elements he added himself, to a lyric tradition which went back well into the archaic period.

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<sup>24</sup> For example, Ar. *Eccl.* 60f., *Thesm.* 238, etc.; Henderson on *Lys.* 87–9; Olson on *Pax* 892–3.

<sup>25</sup> Pl. *Rep.* 3.398E; West (n. 7), 179.

### POLYAENUS ON IPHICRATES

In the second book of the *Economics* (*Oeconomica*) attributed to Aristotle we read the following about Hippias Peisistratou, tyrant of Athens between 527 and 510:<sup>1</sup>

Hippias the Athenian sold off the parts of balconies which were projecting over the public roads—also the stairways and fences and outward-opening doors; thus the possessions concerned were bought, and in this way substantial sums of money were collected.

Ἰππίας Ἀθηναῖος τὰ ὑπερέχοντα τῶν ὑπερώων εἰς τὰς δημοσίας ὁδοὺς καὶ τοὺς ἀναβαθμοὺς καὶ τὰ προφράγματα καὶ τὰς θύρας τὰς ἀνοιγομένας ἔξω ἐπώλησεν· ὠνοῦντο οὖν ὧν ἦν τὰ κτήματα καὶ συνελέγη χρήματα οὕτω συχνά. ([Arist.] *Oec.* (2) 1347a4–8)

In the third book of the *Stratagems* of Polyaeus, Iphicrates Timotheou of Rham-

<sup>1</sup> All ancient dates are B.C.