POxy. 863: A FRAGMENT OF CRATINUS'
DIONYSALEXANDROS?

I tentatively suggest the reattribution to Cratinus' *Dionysalexandros* of a dramatic fragment which is conventionally assigned to Eupolis' *Demoi*. Almost everything about this badly damaged papyrus fragment (= *POxy.* 863) is obscure: it seems to be part of an iambic dialogue or monologue, but it comes to us without a context, and its meagre contents are difficult to interpret. Schroeder,[1] followed by Kassel and Austin (and others), assigned it to Eupolis' *Demoi* (= fr. *101 *PCG*), on somewhat tenuous grounds: it contains the partially preserved word]δήμου[(line 2), as well as a reference to 'the gods below' (line 3) and some sort of threat to the city (lines 5–6)—elements which may correspond in some way to the plot of *Demoi* as we understand it.[2] Nevertheless, the perceived connection, and the exact nature of the events described, is extremely unclear, and there is no real reason to assign the fragment to Eupolis.

>   ]..[
>]δήμου[......] ηλυϲ[
>]. τοῖϲ ἐνερ[τέ]ροιϲ θεοῖϲ
>]. κωϲ οὐκ ἀνεβίων οὐδ' ἅπαξ
>]ημοι τῆϲ πόλεωϲ πλεῖϲτον πολύ   ἁ
>]αμοι διαφθείρουϲι νῦν
>]δροι τε καὶ Πάριδεϲ ὁμοῦ
>]των ἐνθάδε·
>]παρέλειπον πρὸ τ[ο]ῦ
>]. εἰϲ ἀνάκριϲιν   ἀά
>]. ωϲ μαχου .[
>]ται. θεν

... deme(?) ... Elysium ... to the gods below ... did not come to life again nor once ... by far the best part of the city ... they now destroy ... [?]-**ders and Parises together** ... here ... neglected before now ... to a decision ... fight ...

 In so far as this fragment can yield anything of value at all, the most interesting part is line 7, which mentions]δροι τε καὶ Πάριδεϲ ὁμοῦ. The occurrence of the name 'Parises' in the plural is extraordinary. But what of]δροι? Grenfell and Hunt, the original editors,[3] restored Ἀλέξαν]δροί, but Schroeder, supposing some contemporary political significance, suggested Πείϲαν]δροί. However, this latter restoration seems less likely. In the first place, there is no very obvious reason why Peisander should have been linked with Paris in particular.[4] Second, and more important, the pluralization of the proper name(s) is curious and demands explanation. The view of Grenfell and Hunt was that Πάριδεϲ is used here in a metaphorical or proverbial sense (that is, to stand for μοιχοί as a class: 'a Paris', it seems, is an adulterer). Of

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[1] O. Schroeder, *Novae comoediae fragmenta in papyris reperta* (Bonn, 1915), 65–6; cf. C. Austin, *Comicorum Graecorum fragmenta in papyris reperta* (Berlin, 1973), fr. *94.

[2] Cf. I. C. Storey, *Eupolis, Poet of Old Comedy* (Oxford, 2003), 111–74; M. Telò, 'Eupoli, Solone e l'adulterio', *ZPE* 146 (2004), 1–12.

[3] B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt (edd.), *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908), 859–64 ('Poetical fragments'), pp. 168–73.

[4] Observed by A. Körte, 'Zu neueren Komödienfunden, I: Eupolis' Demen', *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaft zu Leipzig* 71.6 (1919), 1–28 at 13.

course, this explanation is not out of the question.[5] Nevertheless, no straightforward parallel exists for the use of the name 'Paris' as a *general* term for adulterers.[6] And, in any case, this is not the only possible explanation. If we suppose that 'Parises' here is *not* a metaphorical usage, it is open to us to suggest some sort of context, however unlikely, in which there actually were two or more Parises.

The lost comedy *Dionysalexandros* does provide such an unlikely scenario (and it is hard to think of another), for in that play there was indeed a confusing proliferation of real and fake Parises. The surviving fragments (*PCG* frr. 39–51) yield little of interest, but an ancient *hypothesis*, partially preserved in papyrus (*POxy.* 663 = *PCG* 4, pp. 140–1), supplies an unusual amount of detail about the play's plot.[7] It appears that Cratinus' play used a peculiarly altered version of the Judgement of Paris myth, in which the goddesses' beauty contest was in fact judged by Dionysus, disguised to look like Paris. Dionysus (as Paris) abducted Helen, but upon learning that the Greeks were ravaging the country and demanding the surrender of Paris, he hid Helen in a basket and transformed himself into a ram. Later, the genuine Paris appeared and discovered the deception, with hilarious—or perhaps not so hilarious—consequences. The last sentence in the *hypothesis* (col. II.44–8) adds the further information that in this series of events Pericles was covertly mocked for having brought war on the Athenians. In other words, then, *Dionysalexandros* featured not only two 'Parises' but also a central character with a constantly changing identity (Dionysus *and* Paris *and* Pericles, not to mention the ram)!

In this case, Ἀλέξαν]δροι is the preferable reconstruction in our papyrus fragment, and the tautological-sounding phrase 'Alexanders and Parises together' emerges as a rhetorical expression of surprise and puzzlement at this odd state of affairs. It may be that the fragment comes from, or shortly followed, a recognition or unmasking scene of some sort, in which a character—as it might be Menelaus or Helen, encountering the fake and real Paris together, or (better) the real Paris, coming on the scene late and discovering Dionysus' imposture (cf. the *hypothesis*, col. II.33–5)—delivers a speech expressing his perplexity at the impossible-seeming situation and coming to terms with its dire implications for the war. A parallel for such a scene is provided by another *Doppelgänger* drama, Euripides' *Helen*, in which Menelaus, astonished to discover the existence of *two* Helens (the real one and the phantom double), asks in hopeless confusion how many Zeuses, Tyndareuses, Troys, or Spartas really exist (*Hel.* 489–99).

If *POxy.* 863 is part of *Dionysalexandros*, some of its other details may fall into place. The references to death, loss, and fighting (lines 3–6, 11) may refer to the casualties of the Trojan War, which the play not only showed to have been fought for a trivial cause but also linked with the Athenians' current conflict, in order to make a

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[5] Telò (n. 2) takes Πάριδεϲ in precisely this sense, detecting in the fragment a reference to Solon's legislation on adultery. He follows Schroeder's restoration of Πείϲαν]δροι in line 7, arguing that Peisander's sexual morality (rather than any specific connection with Paris) is in question (cf. *Demes* fr. 99).

[6] In the two (late) passages cited by Grenfell and Hunt (*Anth. Pal.* 11.278.2, Chariton 5.2.8), 'Parises' are mentioned only in close connection with the names of Menelaus and Helen, and *not* as a metaphor for adulterers in general.

[7] This evidence has been very widely discussed. Notable recent treatments include R. M. Rosen, *Old Comedy and the Iambographic Tradition* (Atlanta, 1988) and A. Tatti, 'Le Dionysalexandros de Cratinos', *Metis* 1 (1986), 325–332. See also C. Austin, 'From Cratinus to Menander', *QUCC* 63 (1999), 37–40.

political point.[8] The speaker (Paris?) also mentions a previous failing (line 9) and a decision or dispute of some sort (line 10; conceivably a reference to the Judgement?). None of which speculation, admittedly, gets us very far. Nevertheless, the pluralization of Paris' name remains a feature with a certain interest, and my proposed reattribution might help us to fill in just a little more detail about this most fascinating of lost comedies.

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[8] Most scholars assume that the Archidamian War is meant, and date the play *c.* 430 B.C.: see J. Schwarze, *Die Beurteilung des Perikles durch die attische Komödie*, Zetemata 51 (Munich, 1971), 6–23. However, it has also been argued that the play dates from 440/39 B.C. and refers to the Samian War: H. B. Mattingly, 'Poets and politicians in fifth-century Greece', in K. H. Kinzl (ed.), *Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean in Ancient History and Prehistory* (Berlin and New York, 1977), 231–45.

'THIS IS THAT MAN': *STAGING CLOUDS* 1142–77*

Socrates organizes an *agon* between the Stronger and the Weaker Arguments in Aristophanes' *Clouds* in order to teach Pheidippides, the son of the protagonist Strepsiades, how the Weaker Argument can defeat the Stronger. During the debate, Socrates himself withdraws into the *phrontisterion* (882–8). The Weaker Argument wins, the Stronger admits defeat (1102), and Strepsiades hands his son over to be converted into a 'clever sophist' (1111). 'A pallid and depraved one, I rather suspect', Pheidippides exclaims (1112), before being led inside the *phrontisterion* in turn. Strepsiades presumably enters his own house at this point.

After a brief choral interlude (the second parabasis), Strepsiades emerges from his house worrying about the approaching due date for his debts, but adds that his creditors can try him all they like, provided Pheidippides has learned his lessons well. With this, he bangs on the door of the *phrontisterion* and cries out, 'Boy! I say, boy! boy!' (1145). Socrates himself emerges, and says, 'Greetings, Strepsiades'. Dover observes (ad 1145): 'We might have expected a student to open the door, just as in an ordinary household a slave (if available) would . . . but that would be dramatically inconvenient and time-wasting at this point.' Strepsiades returns the compliment, slips some kind of gift or payment to Socrates, and asks whether his son 'has learned that argument [i.e. the Weaker], the one you just led in' (1148–9: καί μοι τὸν υἱόν, εἰ μεμάθηκε τὸν λόγον ἐκεῖνον, εἴφ᾽, ὃν ἀρτίως εἰσήγαγες).

To what does the relative pronoun ὃν refer? Many editors (e.g. van Leeuwen, Starkie) maintain that the antecedent is τὸν υἱόν ('that <son> whom you [Socrates]