the story about the poet's violent death in Macedonia.[79] Thus Greek tragedy may in fact not end where it began, with Dionysus.[80] The actual date of Aeschylus' *Suppliants* indicates that the course of literary history is less easily charted than scholars or their pupils would like.[81]

[79] P. 90 above. The story about Sophocles' and Iophon's quarrel (p. 83 above) is taken as proof that Sophocles composed the *OC* toward the end of his life (it was produced by his grandson in 401); yet the anecdote appears to be based on comedy. But the story of Sophocles dying as a result of winning first prize with *Antigone* (p. 82 above) is not used as evidence for dating that play to 406/5, because Aristophanes' suggestion of *c.* 441 seems more plausible.

[80] Lesky 1966, 400.

[81] Lloyd-Jones 1964, 256–84.

CHAPTER TEN

Comic Poets

Old comedy, because it is not based on inherited myth and uses a variety of metrical forms, contains relatively less mythical material than other types of ancient poetry,[1] and consequently provides a more precise sense of its historical content. But even though biographies of Aristophanes draw their anecdotes directly from the texts of his plays, they do not attempt to recreate in any detail the chronology or circumstances that he describes. Instead the biographies designate his place in the history of Greek literature, and claim for him a role as champion of Athenian democracy and freedom of speech.

Aristophanes' *Vita* begins by emphasising his ethical achievements: 'It was he who first decided to transform comedy—which was still wandering around in the old style—into something more constructive and serious. Comedy had previously been nastier and more shameless because the poets Cratinus and Eupolis had uttered more slander than was appropriate' (2–5).[2] No sources for this information are specified, but the notion of reforming art in the guise of a wayward and shameless woman sounds as if it came from comedy. Euripides in the *Frogs* says to Aeschylus: 'When I first took over Tragic Art from you, swollen from your bombast and heavy words, I first slimmed her down and took off weight' (939–41). Aristophanes in the parabasis of the *Clouds* speaks of his play as 'basically chaste' (537; cf. Pherecrates fr. 145).[3] The idea that Aristophanes was not only a better poet, but more elegant and less

[1] The same distinction applies to middle comedy, cf. Antiphanes ii.90 Kock *ap.* Ath. vi.222b.

[2] See Appendix 6.

[3] Comedy is a character also in Cratinus' *Pytine*, fr. 180 = schol. Ar., *Eq.* 400.

crude than his predecessors and contemporaries comes from Aristophanes' own *parabaseis* (*Ach.* 629ff., *Eq.* 507ff., *Nub.* 518ff., *Vesp.* 1015ff., *Pax* 734ff.; cf. *Ran.* 12, *Vesp.* 64ff.). A contemporary audience would have recognised it as the poet's conventional claim of pre-eminence; but removed from context, stripped of their humour and summarised, these assertions are reported as historical fact.

Aristophanes is then said to have set the model for New Comedy in his *Cocalus* (5–7). Later in the *Vita* (50–5) it is claimed that he gave the *Cocalus* its Menandrian plot and substance because the *chorēgoi* in 387 ruled that no one could be 'ridiculed by name' in any comedy. The notion of the *chorēgoi* appears to be an attempt to give political significance to what had been a natural evolution of comic form. Platonius' treatise on comedy offers a similar explanation for the absence of real names from fourth-century comedy (Kaibel, *CGF*, pp.3–4): free speech was restricted when the oligarchs began to take over; Alcibiades drowned the comic poet Eupolis for saying that he lisped, presumably some time after 415 (Tzetzes in Kaibel, *CGF*, pp.27–8, cf. 3).[4]

Restrictive legislation is cited with suspicious frequency to account for particular references in Aristophanes. Euthymenes is named in the *Acharnians* because he was archon in 439 when an act against comic satire sponsored in the previous year was repealed (schol. *Ach.* 67). Syracosius is mentioned because in 414 he is said to have sponsored a decree forbidding the use of people's names (schol. *Av.* 1297); cf. Eupolis fr. 207). The same legislation is also cited to explain why Phrynichus said in his *Monotropos* that Syracosius 'took away my means of making fun of whom I wanted to' (fr. 26). A similar law was said to have been enacted in 426 because of Aristophanes' attack on Cleon in his *Babylonians* (Ael., *NH* 10.41). If in fact it ever existed, all this legislation appears to have been consistently ineffective; but there appears to be no reference to legal censorship outside commentaries on old comedy.

In the sober context of the *Vita*, not only jokes but practical information takes on political overtones: 'since he was very

[4] P. 115 below.

cautious at the start, all the more because he was so gifted, he produced his first plays under the names of Callistratus and Philonides; because of this Aristonymus and Ameipsias made fun of him, saying that (as in the proverb) he was born on the fourth day, to toil for other men' (7–10). It is possible that the source of this information was the *didaskaliai*, if it can be assumed that young poets did not serve as producers of comedies until they gained experience; Philonides was a member of Aristophanes' own *thiasos*.[5] But the notion that poets, like orators, served some sort of apprenticeship may simply derive from literal interpretation of allusions in dramas, e.g. 'since I was a virgin I wasn't able to give birth' (*Nub.* 530, cf. schol. 518). The chorus of the *Knights* claim that Aristophanes hadn't asked for a chorus previously 'because he thought producing a comedy (*kōmōidodidaskein*) was very difficult work' (513ff.) and because he says that a poet, like a pilot, ought to serve first as oarsman and then as officer on the bow before he takes over the helm (541ff.). The analogy of the pilot's training suggests that the production of a comedy was a complex operation that could involve the talents of several poets at a time.[6] Comic poets enjoyed implying that one poet wrote another's plays. Eupolis in his *Baptai* says he helped Aristophanes compose the *Knights* (fr. 78). Aristophanes suggests in the *Clouds* (553ff.) that Eupolis' *Maricas* was a bad reworking of the *Knights*. Dionysus claims in the *Frogs* that Sophocles wrote for his son Iophon (*Ran.* 78–9) and that Cephisophon helped Euripides (*Ran.* 944, fr. 580).[7] Aristophanes' contemporary Teleclides claimed that Socrates and Mnesilochus collaborated with Euripides (fr. 39–40, Eur. *Vit.* 11f.).[8]

As a first illustration of Aristophanes' achievement, his biographer describes his enmity for Cleon the demagogue and his criticism in the *Knights* of Cleon's thefts and tyrannical nature (11–13). Further to exemplify Aristophanes' political courage, the biographer adds that Aristophanes himself acted

[5] Halliwell 1980, 38n.23, 39n.29.
[6] Ibid., 43–4.
[7] Stemplinger 1912, 12–13.
[8] P. 89 n.4 above; cf. charges of borrowing and copying in new comedy, *ap.* Edmonds III B544.

the part of Cleon when none of the costumers would make a mask of him, smearing his face with red dye (13–16). The idea that no one would make a mask of Cleon is based on the lines in the *Knights* that introduce the Paphlagonian stranger (whom the audience knows to be Cleon, 115ff.): 'Don't worry; he doesn't look like himself. The costumers were afraid to make a likeness of him. But he'll be recognisable all the same, because the audience is clever' (230–3).

The story that Aristophanes acted the part himself (the hypothesis adds that he also produced the play) may derive from a literal interpretation of Aristophanes' statement in the parabasis of the *Clouds*: 'I went for Cleon below the belt but I didn't have the nerve to jump on him again when he was down' (549–50; cf. 581). The *Vita* (16–19) claims that Aristophanes' performance was responsible for Cleon's being fined five talents, citing in 'confirmation' Dicaeopolis' lines about Cleon's fine in the *Acharnians* (5ff.).[9] But the *Acharnians* was produced in 425, the year *before* the *Knights*; the biographer's narrative ideas clearly matter more than chronology.

The notion of the poet acting in his own drama conveniently relates his life to his work, as in the anecdote about the picture of Sophocles playing the role of bard in his drama *Thamyris* (*Soph. Vit.* 4).[10] A more natural interpretation of the lines in the *Knights* about Cleon's mask is that the Paphlagonian stranger did not wear a portrait mask, but some sort of grotesque—in the *Wasps* (1031) and *Peace* (751) Cleon is described as the monster Typhoeus.[11] The practice of smearing an actor's face with wine lees is first described in Hellenistic theories about the origins of tragedy; white lead is also mentioned (Suda, s.v. Thespis), but never red dye (*miltos*).[12]

The next anecdote in the *Vita* explains that Cleon had entered a lawsuit against Aristophanes for usurping citizen's rights

[9] A standard political accusation of bribery; cf. Plu., *Them.* 21; Timocreon, *PMG* 727.8; Jacoby on Theopompus *FGrHist* 115F94, 86; = Fornara 131B; cf. Hdt. viii.112, and the story that Sophocles made money out of the Samian campaign, p. 83 above.

[10] P. 78 above.

[11] Dover 1967, 22–3; Pickard-Cambridge 1968, 218.

[12] Dover 1967, 18; Pickard-Cambridge 1968, 79–80.

(*graphē xenias*), because the poet had criticised him in the presence of foreigners in his *Babylonians* (20–2). The notion of a trial derives from Dicaeopolis' description in the *Acharnians* of his experiences with an Athenian jury: 'I myself am well aware of what Cleon did to me because of last year's comedy. He dragged me into the Council chamber, accused me, and bad-mouthed me with his lies' (377ff.). The idea that Aristophanes was charged with usurping citizen's rights (i.e. being himself a foreigner) appears to be based on inference from the usual comic accusations about a poet's parentage.[13] Accusing Cleon before foreigners simply represents the central plot of the *Babylonians*, where Cleon was accused of taking bribes from cities subject to Athens.[14] In the *Vita* dramatic context is ignored and Dicaeopolis is assumed to be speaking directly for Aristophanes. A little later in the *Vita* (29–31), Dicaeopolis' lines about Cleon are quoted, but with the clause about 'last year's comedy' removed (they are glossed as 'and so on', 31).[15] That way the lines can be understood to refer to Cleon's enmity for Aristophanes generally, and used to support the notion that Aristophanes had to defend himself against charges that he was not an Athenian citizen.

The 'trial' provides a convenient explanation of the animosity against Cleon in the *Acharnians* and other plays; but it is significant that information about it comes only from commentaries on Aristophanes and that details about the nature of the charges are inconsistent.[16] The scholia to Dicaeopolis' lines in the *Acharnians* claim that Cleon accused Aristophanes also of 'attacking the state' (*adikias eis tous politas egrapsato*) and of committing *hybris* against the *dēmos* and the *boulē* (schol. 378). When the chorus leader in the *parabasis* of the *Wasps* complains about Cleon's harassment, the scholia to the lines suggest that he too might be referring to the same trial (schol. *Vesp.* 1284).

[13] Cf. p. 88 above.

[14] Van Daele 1972, 12n.1. Cf. how a comic scene about Cleon and the Athenian assembly turns up as an historical incident in Plutarch: Robertson 1923, 165.

[15] Gelzer 1970, 1398.

[16] Van Daele 1972, 145n.4; cf. Dover 1972, 99–100; Fornara 1977, §131.

Comedy appears to have provided the basis for similar legal incidents in the biographies of other historical figures. A scene in 'a drama' was the source of the story of Sophocles' lawsuit against his son Iophon (*Soph. Vit.* 13).[17] To explain a line in Aristophanes about the Knights hating Cleon, the fourth-century historian Theopompus asserted that Cleon had made attacks on the constitution (schol. *Eq.* 226 = Fornara 131A = *FGrHist* 115F93).[18] Euripides is said to have been tried for impiety by Hygiaenon for advocating perjury in his line 'my tongue swore it but my mind foreswore the oath' (*Hipp.* 612); Euripides replied that there was no need for a law court, since his case had already been tried in the theatre (Ar., *Rhet.* 1416a3). Aristophanes parodies the line twice in the *Frogs* (101, 1471) and once in the *Thesmophoriazousae* (275–6). The story that Hermippus charged Aspasia with impiety (Plu., *Per.* 32) appears simply to replicate the plot of a comedy about her (Edm. I 285), in the way that the *Thesmophoriazousae* emerges in Satyrus' *Life of Euripides* as a historical plot to kill the poet (39.x; *Vit.* 70–1, 91, 100–4).[19] Diopeithes, accused of being a crazy oracle-monger by Aristophanes and several other comic poets as late as 414 (schol. Ar., *Eq.* 1085, *Vesp.* 380, *Av.* 988; Phrynichus fr. 9, Telecleides fr. 6, Ameipsias fr. 10) is said to have proposed *c.* 430 a law against atheists and philosophers with celestial theories (Plu., *Per.* 32).[20] Satyrus says that Anaxagoras was tried for impiety and medising (Fornara 116c) and that Cleon prosecuted Euripides for impiety (perhaps because at the Dionysia he portrayed Heracles going mad, a situation used as a rhetorical exercise in the third century A.D. (*POxy* 2400).[21] The notion of trials for impiety made particular sense in retrospect because they offered precedents for Socrates' condemnation in 399, especially since Plato has Socrates allege in

[17] Pp. 83–4 above.

[18] Cf. also Theopompus' story about the five talents, p. 108 n.9 above.

[19] Cf. the anecdote that Pericles wept when he spoke in her defence, Fornara §116c; on Euripides and the women, p. 89 above.

[20] Cf. Dover 1976, 39; Phrynichus fr. 9; Stesimbrotus *FGrHist* 107F10a; the trials are treated as historical by Momigliano apud Humphreys 1978, 188. See also Nilsson 1961, 122.

[21] Fairweather 1974, 255; Arrighetti 1964, 125.

his defence that the jurors took seriously the accusations against him in Aristophanes' *Clouds* (*Apol.* 19b–c).[22]

When they draw material from *parabaseis*, where the poet traditionally expressed his own political views, biographers give the poet unwarranted importance by taking his exaggerations literally. The chorus in the parabasis of the *Acharnians* claims that the king of Persia had heard of Aristophanes and had predicted that whichever side he was advising would win the war (647–51)—this to support an even more preposterous claim that the Spartans wanted Aegina not for itself but because they would get Aristophanes along with it. In the *Vita* these absurdities emerge as illustrations of outside recognition: 'the poet's fame was so great that he was known in Persia, and the king wanted to know whose side the comic poet was on' (44–6). The *Vita* asserts: 'He was held in high regard for having got rid of the informers, whom he called Fevers in the *Wasps*' (33–5), citing his attack on informers in the parabasis (1038–9), although a glance at Thucydides would have established that the informers were still effectively at work in 415, seven years after the *Wasps* had been produced. Aristophanes' plea for amnesty in the parabasis of the *Frogs*, according to the *Vita*, is said to have won him public recognition in the form of an olive crown; according to the peripatetic Dicaearchus, his reward was the right of a second performance (fr. 84 W; hypothesis *Ran.* p.82, 39–40).

The stories about the plea for amnesty and the king of Persia are cited as confirmation of a summary assessment: 'People praised and liked him particularly because of his determination to show in his dramas that the government of Athens was free and not enslaved by any tyrant, and that it was a democracy, and that since they were free, the people ruled themselves' (36–9). A final anecdote is appended to suggest that the enduring importance of the comedies is their democratic stance: when Dionysius the tyrant wanted to learn about Athens' government, Plato sent him Aristophanes' poetry and advised him to learn about their government by studying Aristophanes' dramas (46–9). The emphasis in all the anec-

[22] On the actual motives behind the trial, Dover 1976, 46–54.

dotes on the advantages of democracy suggests that they were composed after the middle of the fourth century, like the 'legislation' cited by orators and the forged inscriptions that illustrate to Athenians under Macedonian rule the ideals of their city in the fifth century.[23]

Even comic repartee about Aristophanes' parents emerges in the biographies as serious litigation over his citizenship. In the first *Vita*, the notion that Aristophanes came from Aegina is correctly understood to be an 'assumption based on his having spent a considerable amount of time or on his owning property there' (23–4); the chorus of the *Acharnians* claim that the Spartans wanted the island of Aegina not for its own sake but 'to take away our poet' (654).[24] The same *Vita* reports that Aristophanes defended himself against charges that his father came from Aegina by quoting wittily Telemachus' famous lines about how no one knows his own father (*Od.* 1.215); but the Suda *Life* and the preface to a catalogue of Aristophanes' plays record that 'Aristophanes was a Rhodian or Lindian; some say Egyptian, some from Camirus [in Rhodes]. He was an Athenian by special decree (*thesis*)' (xxxa. 1–2). All these conflicting nationalities sound as if they came from allegations in comedies, like the notion that Sophocles was a Phliasian or Euripides' mother a seller of vegetables.[25] Saying that he was given citizenship looks like a biographer's attempt to resolve the conflict created by his predecessors.

Comic allegations about historical persons are taken seriously in the biographies because they *sound* historical though in fact they may be no less fictitious than Cloud-cuckoo land in the *Birds* or Hades in the *Frogs*. According to his Suda biography, the comic poet Cratinus was a drunk and a pederast; the anonymous treatise on Comedy (Kaibel, *CGF*, p.3) cites Aristophanes as evidence that Cratinus died when the Spartans invaded Attica because 'he fainted; he couldn't bear to see a

[23] See esp. Habicht 1961, 35; Woodbury 1973, 10; Dover 1974, 289; Levy 1976, 173–208; Fornara 1977, §55; Murray 1980, 274ff.

[24] Gelzer 1970, 1397.

[25] Pp. 75, 88 above. Cf. the confusion about Antiphanes' origins, Suda s.v.

jar full of wine being broken' (*Pax* 702–3).[26] Phrynichus, Lycis, and Ameipsias, according to the Suda, were 'very frigid comic poets'; this information also is simply a summary of a joke about stock comic routines in Aristophanes' *Frogs*. Ancient scholars apparently did not take into consideration the context of the comic passages that they used as evidence. When Didymus could not find support in Phrynichus' plays for criticisms of Phrynichus, he did not suggest that the criticisms might be false:[27] 'Didymus says ... that Phrynichus was caricatured also for his foreign birth, the poorness of his plays, plagiarising, and metrical irregularities ... but Phrynichus doesn't do this in his surviving plays. A reasonable hypothesis is (*eikos*) that he did something of the sort in his *lost plays*' (schol. Ar., *Ran.* 13). Ancient scholars questioned the tradition that Aristophanes had three sons because of a reference in one of his plays to 'my wife and two innocent children' (fr. 62), without discussing the context or dating of the lines. The third son's name is given either as Nicostratus (xxixa. 4–5) or Philetairus (xxxa. 5); some authorities claimed that his mother was a slave (xxxb. 6).[28]

After historical references disappeared from comedy, biographers inferred what they could from the plots of the plays. Not surprisingly, poets of New Comedy tend to be involved with women. Menander is said to have been in love with a *hetaera* Glycera, a character in his *Perikeiromenē* and other plays (fr. 80, 280) who marries her lover after misunderstanding and separation.[29] According to the Suda (T1 K-Th), Menander was 'absolutely mad for women'; heroes of New Comedy tend to fall in love at first sight (e.g. Sostratus, *Dysc.* 52).[30] Athenaeus preserves an anecdote that suggests that Menander had such

[26] Cratinus portrayed himself as a drunk in his *Pytine* p. 105 n.3 above; cf. Nicaenetus *EG* 3003ff., Gow-Page 1955 on 2711ff. Cf. Aristophanes' jokes about his friends, p. 89 n.3 above.

[27] Cf. also S. West 1970, 295.

[28] Coulon 1972, 1 iii–iv; Jacoby on *FGrHist* 224F75.

[29] Gomme-Sandbach 1973, 466–9; cf. the story that Antimachus wrote the *Lydē* (p. 119 above) for a Lydian girl Lyde (Hermesianax fr. 2.41ff. = Antimachus T6 Wyss); also the *Lyde* of Lamynthius, and *Leontion* of Hermesianax (Ath. xiii. 597aff.).

[30] Cf. Ovid, *Trist.* ii.369 = Menander T35 K-Th.

difficulties with women that he criticised the comic poet Philemon for calling his beloved *hetaera* (or for that matter, any woman) 'good' in one of his plays (xv. 594d/T12). In the third century A.D. Alciphron composed a correspondence between Menander and Glycera, describing an invitation from Ptolemy to Menander, and a request for Menander to 'make ready the play in which you have introduced me' (iv.19.4/T12). As in the case of Euripides, who is said to have written the *Hippolytus* because he found his wife committing adultery, art is given a direct and tangible connection to the poet's life.[31]

Menander is given a personal appearance that belies his art: 'he was cross-eyed but keen in mind' (Suda, T1), the way the eloquent Sophocles and Plato were said to have had small voices (*Soph.Vit.* 4, D.L. 3.5) and Aristotle is said to have lisped (D.L. 5.1),[32] or the facile Euripides (*Ran.* 96ff./*Vit.* 125ff.) was said to look melancholy, thoughtful and severe (Alex. *Aetol.* 7, *Vit.* 65ff.).[33] Menander's style is accounted for by personal influence. He was said to have been a pupil of Theophrastus, author of the *Characters* (D.L. 5.36/T7)[34] his uncle was Alexis the comic poet (Suda T5), either that, or he studied with Alexis (T2), the way Sophocles is said to have learned about tragedy from Aeschylus (*Vit.* 4), Apollonius to have studied with Callimachus, or Euripides with Anaxagoras and Socrates (*Vit.* 10ff.).[35] Menander's presence in Athens during the regime of Demetrius of Phalerum was taken as indication of his co-operation with tyranny: Demetrius was disgusted by Menander's effeminate dress but praised his beauty when he found out who he was (T9); after Demetrius was exiled, Menander was brought to trial because of their friendship, but Demetrius Poliorcetes' nephew begged him off (T8).

Since nothing is said in any of the biographies about the specific circumstances of Aristophanes' death, presumably his

[31] P. 89 above.
[32] Cf. also Isocrates, *XOrat* 837a; Demosthenes' training program, *XOrat* 844e; Vergil 'was extremely slow in speaking, almost like an uncultivated person', *Vit.Donat.* 16.
[33] Arrighetti 1964, 145; p. 89 n.5.
[34] Lesky 1966, 644.
[35] P. 131 below; Fairweather 1974, 257–9.

choruses (or a character like Dicaeopolis) did not mention it. If they had, a comic threat against Aristophanes' life might have become the basis for an anecdote. Eupolis is said to have been drowned off Sicily or in the Hellespont by Alcibiades, whom he attacked in his play the *Dippers* (Kaibel, *CGF*, pp.27–8, cf. 3). An epitaph about Eupolis suggests that the story of the poet's death was connected with the plot of the comedy: 'Drown me on stage and I'll drown you in the waves of the sea in bitter streams of water' (Cram., *Anec. Par.* 1.540).[36] The story of Eupolis' drowning appealed to Duris of Samos (*FGrHist* 76F73), who apparently enjoyed anecdotes critical of poets;[37] but the scholar-poet Eratosthenes discounted it (*FGrHist* 241F19), on the grounds that Eupolis produced plays after the *Dippers*. Instead Eratosthenes offered a story that showed Eupolis in a favourable light, much as he had redeemed Hesiod's reputation in his *Anterinys*.[38] As in the story of Erigone, a faithful dog is involved: Eupolis' dog Augeas caught and killed his slave Ephialtes as he was stealing Eupolis' plays. When Eupolis died, the dog died of grief, and the site (this time in Aegina) was named 'Dog's Grief'. This story appears to have been invented well after the fact: Pausanias also saw a tomb of Eupolis near the Asopus river in the territory of Sicyon (2.7.3).

In Aristophanes' case biographers appear to have deduced from the *didaskaliai* that the poet died peacefully. An inscription records that his son Araros won the victory, presumably with the *Cocalus* in 387;[39] the *Vita* reports 'in [the *Ploutos*] he introduced his son Araros and so departed from life' (58–9). Sophocles' son Iophon also carried on his father's profession, but according to tradition the two quarrelled before his death (*Vit.* 13). It is interesting that while the tragic poet Sophocles is said to have choked to death while reading the *Antigone* (according to Satyrus, *Vit.* 14),[40] the comic poet Philemon is said to have died more peacefully, after a storm prevented him from reading the third act of a play (Suda). Since apparently

[36] Also in Dübner p. xix.61.
[37] P. 127 below.
[38] P. 6 above.
[39] Coulon 1972, iiin.2.
[40] P. 86 above.

no facts were known about Philemon, biographers picked forms of death that seemed to fit the character of his poetry. Plutarch says that Philemon and Alexis died after they were awarded the crown of victory (*Mor.* 785b), much as Sophocles was said to have died of joy after he won with the *Antigone* (*Vit.* 14).[41] According to the Suda, Philemon also died from laughing too much, or after he dreamt that he saw nine young women leaving the room, and was told that they were not permitted to stay.[42] Menander, who wrote plays about separated lovers, and had a tomb in Piraeus, is said to have drowned while swimming off the Piraeus; the story sounds like an incident in a Hellenistic romance—Ovid associates it with Hero and Leander (*Ibis* 591–2).

[41] P. 86 above.
[42] Cf. Archilochus and the Muses, p. 28 above.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Hellenistic Poets

Every assessment of Apollonius' work takes account of his alleged differences with Callimachus,[1] although no surviving text by either poet refers directly to a quarrel. The evidence derives from *interpretation* of Callimachus' statement about poetry and from ancient biographies. Callimachus is said in the Suda to have written 'a poem distinguished for its obscurity and abuse against a certain Ibis who was an enemy of Callimachus—this was Apollonius who wrote the *Argonautica*' (T1.13–15/T39–40). According to the ancient *Lives*, Apollonius was a pupil (*mathētes*) of Callimachus (*Vit.*A 8, B 5 Wendel). Callimachus also is said to have had something to do with the rejection of Apollonius' *Argonautica* and his consequent exile to Rhodes: '[Apollonius] was a pupil of Callimachus in Alexandria, who was a scholar, and he wrote his poems and recited them. Since he was very unlucky and embarrassed he went to Rhodes' (*Vit.*B 5–7). 'First he was closely associated with Callimachus, his own master . . . and turned late in life to composing poetry. And it is said that while still a young man he gave a recitation of the *Argonautica* and was condemned' (*Vit.*A 8–11), left for Rhodes, revised the poem, which was well received. According to *Vita* B, 'some say he went back to Alexandria and recited his poem once again and was held in highest regard, so that he was thought worthy of the libraries and the Mouseion and buried next to Callimachus himself' (11–14). According to a papyrus list of librarians (*POxy* 1241/T13), Apollonius was an Alexandrian who was *called* (*kaloumenos*) a Rhodian, an acquaintance (*gnōrimos*) of Calli-

[1] E.g. Pfeiffer 1968, 1 140–4; Lesky 1966b, 729–30; Fraser 1972, 1 636ff.; Giangrande 1967, 85ff.; 1974, 117ff.; Herter 1973, 196–8.

THE LIVES OF THE GREEK POETS

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