

29). The anecdotes about Aristophanes' battles with Cleon offer tribute to the intellectual freedom of the fifth century as well as to Aristophanes' own courage. The epigrammists' distorted reminiscences of literary disputes in Alexandria at least suggest how important scholarship was to the poets of Callimachus' day.

We might have retained a clearer sense of the original value of the *Lives* and anecdotes had more biographers been like Plutarch than Herodotus. But a derisive tendency predominates; much of the biographers' material is drawn from comedy. Inevitably and consistently the biographies in their final form offer simple and demeaning portraits of the poets; they make many of their achievements appear miraculous and represent others as mere reflexes, so that even a Homer or a Pindar need not be too greatly envied. Callimachus complains in the *Aetia* prologue of the Telchines who mutter at his song, the 'race of the evil eye'. Since he is talking about poetry, ancient scholars inferred that the Telchines were other poets. But Callimachus, like Pindar, was aware that envy is not the sole provenance of one's colleagues or rivals; audiences and patrons seek to be pleased and flattered; the gods themselves were thought to resent consistent success. If the poets had been able to predict their future, they would have realised that their biographers would have posed an even greater threat to their achievement. Who else managed for so long to misconstrue the poets' explicit intentions, and to convince audiences to begin with *them* rather than with the poets' own works?

## Appendixes

### I. THE LIFE OF HOMER<sup>1</sup>

[1] Herodotus of Halicarnassus wrote the following history of Homer's background, upbringing and life, and sought to make his account complete and absolutely reliable:

After Cyme (the old Aeolian one) was founded, there came together various Hellenic families in that city, including some from Magnesia. Among them was Melanopus the son of Ithagenes, himself the son of Crethon. Melanopus was not a rich man; in fact, he had only limited means. This Melanopus married in Cyme the daughter of Omyres. She bore him a female child, to whom he gave the name Cretheis. Both Melanopus and his wife then died, but Melanopus had made his daughter the ward of a close friend, Cleanax of Argos.

[2] But after some time had gone by it turned out that the girl had had sexual relations with a man and had secretly become pregnant. At first she kept it a secret, but when Cleanax realised it, he was distressed by what had happened, and he called Cretheis aside and took her to task, because he was concerned about the disgrace especially among his fellow citizens. So he made the following provision for her: the Cymeans happened at that time to be building a town in a corner of the valley of the Hermus river. Theseus gave the settlers the town's name, Smyrna, because he wanted to have a memorial to his wife's name, which was Smyrne. Theseus was one of the founders of Cyme, among the foremost Thessalians, descended from Eumelus the son of Admetus. He was a very wealthy man. It was there that Cleanax sent Cretheis, to

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Wilamowitz 1929.

Ismenias of Boeotia. He had been assigned to the colonists by lot, and happened to be a particularly good friend of his.

[3] After some time had gone by Cretheis went with the other women to a festival on the banks of the river called Meles, and since her time was already near, she bore Homer; he was not blind, but could see. She gave her son the name Melesigenes, calling him after the river. For a while Cretheis stayed in Ismenias' house. But after some time she left and undertook to support herself and her son by working with her hands. She took on odd jobs with various people, and educated her son as best she could.

[4] There was in Smyrna at that time a man by the name of Phemius, who taught boys their letters and all their poetry. He paid Cretheis—since he lived alone—to work some wool for him; he took fleeces from his boys for pay. Since she did the work for him in good order and behaved herself properly, she pleased Phemius greatly. Finally he proposed that she live with him. He persuaded her by various arguments, the sort of thing that he thought would appeal to her, particularly about her son, that he would adopt him, and that if the boy were brought up and educated by him he would be a noteworthy man. He had seen that the child was clever and particularly good-looking. So he persuaded her to do as he said.

[5] The boy had natural talent, and as soon as his drill and education began, he surpassed all the others by far. After some time, when he had reached maturity, he proved to be in no way inferior to Phemius in his teaching. And so when Phemius died he left everything to the boy. Not long afterwards, Cretheis died too. Melesigenes established himself in the teaching profession, and because he was now by himself, he was noticed by more people, and both the locals and new arrivals from abroad became admirers of his. For Smyrna was a market town, and quantities of grain were brought there, much of it grain brought into the city from the surrounding countryside. Visitors, as soon as they finished their work, stopped and rested at Melesigenes' school.

[6] Among the visitors to his school was a merchant, Mentēs, who came from the region near Leucas. He had sailed to

Smyrna to buy produce, an educated man, at least by the standards of that time, and very knowledgeable. He persuaded Melesigenes to sail with him and to disband the school: he would receive a salary and all expenses. The idea was that he ought to see foreign lands and cities while he was still young. I think particularly that the notion of travel was very appealing to him, since possibly even then he was thinking of becoming a poet. So Melesigenes disbanded his school and went off in the ship with Mentēs, and wherever he went he saw all the countryside and learned by asking questions. It is probable that even then he was writing down a record of it all.

[7] After they had travelled back from Tyrsenia and Iberia they came to Ithaca. And it happened that Melesigenes, who already had suffered from eye disease, became much worse. Because he needed treatment Mentēs left him in Ithaca when he was ready to sail to Leucas, at the house of a man who was an especially good friend of his, Mentor of Ithaca the son of Alcimus, and he asked him to take great care of Melesigenes. Mentor nursed him assiduously—he was comfortably off and enjoyed by far the greatest reputation for justice and hospitality among the Ithacans. It was there that Melesigenes happened to make inquiries and learn about Odysseus. Now the Ithacans say that Melesigenes became blind when he was on their island, but I say that he regained his health then, and later became blind in Colophon. And the Colophonians agree with me about this.

[8] Mentēs on his way back from Leucas sailed to Ithaca and collected Melesigenes. He sailed about with Mentēs for a long time, but when he got to Colophon it turned out that he developed eye trouble again and could no longer resist the disease, and so it was in Colophon that he became blind. From Colophon then, now blind, Melesigenes came back to Smyrna, and so took up composing poetry.

[9] After some time, since he had no means of support in Smyrna he decided to go to Cyme. He journeyed through the plain of Hermus and went to Neon Teichos, a colony of Cyme. The settlement had established eight years after the founding of Cyme. There the story is told that he went and stood at an armourer's shop and recited these first verses:

Respect a man who needs hospitality and a home, you who dwell in the steep city that is the fair daughter of Cyme, lowest foothill of high-wooded Saedene, who drink the ambrosial water of a divine river, whirling Hermes, whom immortal Zeus begot.

[Epigram 1]

Saedene is a mountain that lies above the Hermus river and Neon Teichos. The armourer's name was Tychius. When he heard the verses he thought he should take the man in, especially since he took pity on him and his request because of his blindness. So he told him to come into his workroom and invited him to share what he had. Melesigenes went in, and as he sat in the armourer's shop recited his poetry also to others who were there, the poems *Amphiarauus' Expedition to Thebes*, and the *Hymns* to the gods which he had written, and when he produced aphorisms out of what the people sitting in the leather-worker's shop said in general conversation, Melesigenes seemed remarkable to all who heard him.

[10] For a time, then, Melesigenes was able to make a living from his poetry in the area around Neon Teichos. The people of Neon Teichos showed me the spot where Homer sat and recited his verses, and they had great reverence for the place. A black poplar tree also grows there, which they say has been growing there since the time when Melesigenes came to their city.

[11] After some time, when he found himself idle and helpless and with barely enough to eat, Melesigenes decided to go to Cyme to see if he could do any better. As he was about to start off he spoke these verses:

May my feet bring me straight to a city of righteous men;  
their hearts are generous and their intentions best.

[Epigram 2]

He journeyed from Neon Teichos and came to Cyme, making his way through Larisse, since this was the easiest route for him. So, as the people of Cyme tell it, the story is that he wrote the following epigram for Midas son of Gordios, the king of

Phrygia, at the request of Midas' inlaws. The epigram is still inscribed on the stele of the tomb, in four verses:

As long as water flows and the tall trees bloom,  
and the rising sun shines and the bright moon,  
I shall remain here on this tomb of great lamentation  
and tell passers-by that Midas is buried here.

[Epigram 3]

[12] Melesigenes sat down and joined the old men's discussions in the town square of Cyme, and recited the verses he had composed. He brought pleasure to all who heard him, who then became admirers of his. When he realised that the Cymians liked his poetry and found that they enjoyed listening to him, he made the following proposals to them: he said that if they wanted to feed him at public expense, he would make their city very famous. The people who listened to him were eager to do this, and they advised him to go to the town senate and ask the senators, and they said that they would come and help him. He took their advice and when the senate met came into the senate house and asked the man who was appointed to that office to lead him into the meeting. He promised that he would and at the appropriate moment he led him in. Melesigenes stood in front of the meeting and made the argument about public support that he had made in his conversations. After he had spoken, he went out and sat down.

[13] They deliberated about what they ought to say in reply to him. The man who brought him in and other senators who had been in his audiences at the conversations were eager to support him. But the story is that one of the magistrates opposed his request, using among his arguments that if they thought it right to feed hostages [*homēroi*], they would acquire a large and useless crowd of hangers-on. It was as a result of this event that the name Homer replaced Melesigenes, since the Cymians call blind men *homēroi*. And so the man who was previously called Melesigenes acquired the name Homer. And strangers have continued to do so, when they tell stories about him.

[14] In the end the argument was won by the magistrate, not

to support Homer, and the rest of the senate also agreed. The officer came out and sat down next to Homer. He went over the arguments on both sides about his request and what the senate had decided. Homer, when he had heard this, lamented his fate and recited the following verses:

To such a fate Zeus gave me as prey  
 When as a child I played at the knee of my dear mother.  
 Her by the will of Zeus the people of Phricon  
 once sheltered, riders of wild horses,  
 they waged war faster than raging fire  
 against Aeolian Smyrna, the sea's neighbour, sea-shaken.  
 The glorious water of the holy Meles runs through it  
 from that source the Muses rose up, the glorious children of Zeus  
 and were willing to praise its rich land  
 and the city of its people.  
 But they scorned the holy voice, the renown of song  
 in their folly. This one of them shall recall when he is in trouble,  
 the man who decided my fate, with his taunts to them.  
 The destiny Zeus gave me when I was born  
 I shall endure, bearing what is yet to come with patient heart.  
 No longer do my limbs strive to remain in the holy streets  
 of Cyme, but my strong heart urges me  
 to go to other men's cities, weak as I am.

[Epigram 4]

[15] After that he moved from Cyme to Phocaea, after placing a curse on the Cymeans that no famous poet would be born in their country who would bring the Cymeans glory. When he arrived in Phocaea he lived in the same way as before, reciting his poetry as he sat in on the men's discussions. In Phocaea at that time there lived a certain Thestorides who taught boys their letters—not an honourable man. When he learned of Homer's poetry he made proposals to him of this sort: he said that he was prepared to take Homer in and look after him and feed him, provided that he could write down what Homer had composed and could take down whatever new poetry Homer composed.

[16] Homer listened and decided that he would agree, since he was in need of the necessities of life and to be taken care of.

While he stayed with Thestorides he composed the *Little Iliad*, the epic that begins:

I sing of Ilion and Dardania with its good horses  
 the city for which the Danaans suffered greatly, servants of Ares.  
 [Il. Par. 1 Allen]

He also wrote the epic called *Phocais*, which the Phocaeans say he composed while he was in their city. When Thestorides had written down the *Phocais* and everything else Homer composed, he decided to move away from Phocaea, because he wanted to represent Homer's poetry as his own. Also, he no longer took care of Homer as he had before. Homer then composed the following verses:

Thestorides, of the many things that make no sense to mortals,  
 none is more incomprehensible than the human mind.

[Epigram 5]

Thestorides then moved from Phocaea to Chios and set up a school and recited Homer's epics as his own. He won much praise and profit from them. Homer meanwhile went back to his old way of life in Phocaea and made a living from his poetry.

[17] Not long after some Chian merchants arrived in Phocaea, and heard poetry by Homer that they had first heard many times in Chios from Thestorides. They told Homer that there was someone in Chios who recited the same verses, a teacher of letters, who had indeed won great praise for his recitations. Homer realised that this teacher might be Thestorides and wanted with all his heart to go to Chios. But when he went down to the harbour he could not catch any boats sailing to Chios, though some men were getting ready to sail to Erythraea for lumber. Homer was happy to make the voyage to Erythraea, and he went up to the sailors and asked them to take him on as a passenger. He recited persuasive verses with which he was bound to convince them. They decided to take him, and told him to get into the boat. Homer praised them greatly and got in the boat. After he was seated, he recited these verses:

Hear me, Poseidon with your great strength, earthshaker,  
you who protect [?] with its broad dancing places and  
holy Helicon,

grant us a fair wind and that there be a voyage home without  
pain

for these sailors who are the ship's escorts and captains.

Grant that when I come to the foothills of Mimas

with its high cliffs, that I find men who respect me, pious men,

and may I be avenged on the man who deceived me

and angered Zeus god of guests and a guest's table.

[Epigram 6]

[18] When they got to Erythraea after a calm voyage,  
Homer then spent the night on the boat. The next day he asked  
one of the sailors to bring him to the city. And they sent some-  
one with him. Homer travelled until he came to Erythraea, a  
place which is steep and mountainous, and he spoke these  
verses:

Queen earth giver of all, giver of honeysweet happiness,

I see how to some men you appear arable

but to others infertile and harsh, when you are angry at them.

[Epigram 7]

When he got to the city of Erythraea, he asked about the voyage  
to Chios. A man greeted him who had seen him in Phocaea,  
and embraced him. Homer asked him to find a boat, so he could  
make the crossing to Chios.

[19] Since no vessel was going out from the harbour, the man  
took him to where the fisherman's boats set out. And somehow  
it happened that there were some fishermen who were getting  
ready to sail to Chios. The man who led Homer there asked  
them to take Homer on board. But they took no account of  
him and set sail without him. So Homer spoke these verses:

Sailors who travel by sea, ill-fated

like trembling diver-birds you lead an unenviable life;

respect the honour of Zeus god of guests and his high power,

for dreadful is the judgment of Zeus god of guests, when his law

is broken

[Epigram 8]

When they set sail it happened that an adverse wind sprang up.  
So they turned back and returned to the place from where they  
had set out, and they found Homer still sitting on the beach.  
When he discovered that they had come back he said: 'Stran-  
gers. An adverse wind sprang up and caught you. But now take  
me along with you and you will be able to make your voyage.'  
The fishermen now were sorry that they hadn't taken Homer  
on at first. They said that they wouldn't leave him behind, if he  
wanted to sail with them, and they told him to get on board.  
And so once they took him with them they set sail and beached  
the ship on a promontory.

[20] The fishermen set about their work; Homer spent the  
night on the beach. But during the day he journeyed forth and  
after wandering around came to the place that is called Pitys.  
And while he stopped there for the night a fruit from a pine  
tree fell on him, the kind some call *strobiloi* (spinning tops) and  
others cones. And Homer spoke these verses:

Another pine tree drops better fruit than you  
a tree in the hills of windy Ida with its many glens,  
there men will acquire the iron for war, at the time  
when the Cebrenians rule the country.

[Epigram 9]

At that time the Cymeans were getting ready to found Cebre-  
nia on Mt. Ida, and from there came a great supply of iron.

[21] Homer got up from under the pine tree and set out after  
the sound of goats being herded. When their dogs barked at  
him, he cried out. When he heard Homer's voice, Glaucus—for  
that was the name of the man herding the goats—ran quickly  
and called off the dogs and frightened them away from Homer.  
For a long time he was in a state of amazement about how a  
blind man could have come by himself to such a remote place  
and what he wanted. He went up and asked him who he was  
and how he had come to this uninhabited spot and places  
without paths, and what he needed. Homer related all that  
he had suffered, and led him to pity him. Glaucus, as it seems,  
was not an ignorant man. He took Homer along and led him  
to his hut and kindled a fire and prepared dinner. And as he

put the food beside him [22] he told Homer to eat. But since his dogs stood round and barked at them as they ate, as was their habit, Homer spoke these verses to Glaucus:

Glaucus, guardian of pastures, I shall put some verses in your heart: give dinner first to your dogs by the gates of your courtyard. For that is best. Your dog first hears a stranger approaching and the wild animal nearing your fence.

[Epigram 11]

When Glaucus heard this he was pleased by the advice and held Homer in high regard. After they ate dinner they feasted on conversation. When Homer described in detail his wanderings and the cities to which he had come, Glaucus was amazed at what he heard. And then when it was time to go to bed, they broke off their conversation. [23] The next day Glaucus decided to make a trip to his master to tell him the story on Homer's behalf. He ordered a fellow slave to herd his goats and he left Homer inside after telling him: 'I shall be back soon.' He went to Bolissos—it is near Pitys. And when he was able to see his master he told him the whole truth about Homer and about his arrival, since he considered it astonishing, and he asked his master what he should do about him. His master didn't take much account of what he said. He considered Glaucus a fool to take in cripples and feed them. But none the less he told Glaucus to bring the stranger to him. [24] Glaucus went to Homer and described what had happened and told Homer to make the journey to his master, since he would prosper there. Homer was willing to make the journey. So Glaucus took him along and brought him to his master. When the Chian spoke with Homer he found him to be clever and widely experienced. He urged Homer to remain and take charge of his children. The Chian had young children, and it was these whom he appointed Homer to educate. Homer did this. While he was with the Chian in Bolissos he composed the *Cercoptes* and the *Battle of the Frogs and Mice* and the *Battle of the Starlings* and the *Heptapactēē* and the *Epicichidēs* and all the other children's works attributed to Homer. As a result he became famous also in the city of Chios because of his poetry. When Thestorides heard that Homer was on the island, he went and

sailed away from Chios. [25] After some time Homer asked the Chian to send him to the city of Chios; he set up a school there and taught boys his poetry. He seemed particularly clever to the Chians, and many were impressed by him. Since he made a good living, he took a wife, who bore two daughters to him. One of these died without marrying, but the other set up house with a man from Chios.

[26] He tried through his poetry to pay back the thanks which he owed; first to Mentor of Ithaca in the *Odyssey*, because he had nursed him assiduously, when he was suffering from eye disease on Ithaca, by putting his name into the poetry and saying that he was a comrade of Odysseus. He composed the story that when Odysseus sailed off to Troy, he appointed Mentor to take charge of his household, because he was the best and most honoured of all the Ithacans. Often elsewhere in his poetry he paid tribute to him by making Athena look like Mentor whenever she engaged in conversation with someone. He repaid his own teacher Phemius for his upbringing and education in the *Odyssey*, particularly in these verses:

A herald put a beautiful lyre into the hands of Phemius, who far surpassed others in singing  
[*Od.* 1.153-4]

and also:

but he played the lyre and began to sing a beautiful song  
[*Od.* 1.155]

He also remembered the ship owner with whom he had sailed round and had seen many cities and countries—the man whose name was Mentēs—in these verses:

I, Mentēs, say that I am the son of warlike Anchialus, and I rule over the Taphians who love rowing.  
[*Od.* 1.180-1]

He also paid thanks to Tychius the armourer, who took him in when he came to his armourer's shop in Neon Teichos, in these verses in the *Iliad*:

Ajax came near carrying a shield like a tower, bronze, seven hides thick, that Tychius had laboured to make, the armourer, who made his house in Hyle.

[*Il.* 6.219-21]

[27] Because of this poetry Homer became famous throughout Ionia, and word about him also spread to mainland Greece, and since many people had come to him the Chians advised him to go to Greece. He welcomed the suggestion and was very eager to make the journey. [28] Since he knew that he had written many fine tributes to Argos, but none to Athens, he inserted into his poetry in the greater *Iliad* the verses glorifying Erechtheus in the *Catalogue of Ships*:

The people of great hearted Erechtheus, whom Athena raised, daughter of Zeus, and the grain giving earth bore.

[*Il.* 2.547-8]

He also praised their general Menestheus as best of all at deploying infantry and cavalry in these verses:

These then Menestheus son of Peteos led, no man was like him on earth in arranging in battle horses and soldiers with their shields.

[*Il.* 2.552-4]

He put Ajax son of Telamon and the men from Salamis with the Athenians in the *Catalogue of Ships* in these verses:

Ajax brought twelve ships from Salamis;  
He stood when he brought them where the Athenian troops were stationed.

[*Il.* 2.557-8]

He also wrote in the *Odyssey* that when Athena came to speak to Odysseus she went back to the city of Athens, thus honouring that city far beyond others in these verses:

She came to Marathon and to the wide streets of Athens and went into the well-built house of Erechtheus.

[*Od.* 7.80-1]

[29] When he had inserted these verses in his poetry and finished his preparations to go to Greece, he made the voyage to Samos. The people there happened to be deliberating at that moment the festival of Apaturia. One of the Samians saw Homer coming, who had seen him previously in Chios, and went to his kinsmen and told them about him in detail, since he held him in the highest esteem. His kinsmen told him to bring Homer along, and he met Homer and said: 'Stranger, since the city is celebrating the Apaturia my kinsmen wish you to celebrate with them.' Homer said that he would come and went with the man who invited him. [30] As he made his journey he encountered women sacrificing to the protectress of children in the crossroads. The priestess said to him in anger, at the sight of him: 'Man, get away from our rites.' Homer took what she said to heart and asked the man who was leading him who was the person who spoke and to what god was he sacrificing. The man told him that it was a woman sacrificing to the protectress of children. When Homer heard his answer he uttered these verses:

Hear me, as I pray, Protectress of Children, grant that this woman reject love and sex with young men, but let her delight in old men with grey brows whose strength has been blighted, but whose hearts still feel desire.

[Epigram 12]

[31] When he came to the man's kinsmen and stood on the threshold of the house where they were having their banquet, some of them said that there was a fire burning in the house, others say that they kindled one then, because Homer uttered the following verses:

A man's crown is his children, a city its towers;  
Horses are an ornament to a field, and ships to a sea,  
Possessions bring a house glory, and honourable kings  
Seated in the marketplace are an ornament for their subjects to see;  
but a house is more honourable to look on when a fire is burning.

[Epigram 13]

Homer went inside and sat down and ate with the kinsmen, and they honoured him and held him in high regard.

And then after Homer had spent the night there, [32] the next day as he was leaving some potters saw him as they were lighting their kiln to make a pot, they called out to him because they had heard that he was a poet, and asked him to sing for them. They said that they would give him the pot and whatever else they had. Homer sang this song for them; it is known as the *Kiln*.

If you will pay me for my song, o potters,  
come then Athena and hold your hand over their kiln.  
May their cups turn a good black and all their bowls.

[I pray] that they be well fired and win profit by their price,  
that many, sold in the market, and many [sold] in the streets,  
that many bring gain, for me and for them to realise.

But if you [potters] turn shameless and tell me lies,  
then I shall invoke the destroyers of kilns,  
Smasher and Scatter and Sooty and Crasher

and Rawcrusher, who brings great problems to your craft.

Hear me; [ruin] the fire-porch and the chambers, let the whole kiln  
be shaken, while the potters weep loudly.  
As a horse's jaw grinds, may the kiln grind

all things inside it and turn them to shreds.

Come, daughter of the Sun, Circe with your many spells,  
cast your cruel spells on them, harm the potters and their  
handiwork.

Come, Chiron and bring many Centaurs,  
both those who escaped Heracles' hands and those who perished;  
May they hit these pots hard, may the kiln collapse,

and may the potters weep as they look at their ruined handiwork.  
I will rejoice as I look on their unlucky craftsmanship.

And if anyone peers in [the spy-hole], may his whole face be burned  
over, so that all men may know that they should be honest.

[Epigram 14/Hesiod, fr. 302 MW]

[33] Homer spent the winter in Samos. He went out at the time of the new moon festival to the houses of rich people and made some money by singing these verses, the song called *Eiresione*. Some children from the countryside took him around and kept him company.

We find ourselves at the home of a man with great power,

A man with great power who thunders loudly in his prosperity.

Doors, open by yourselves. For vast Wealth goes inside.  
and with Wealth flourishing Happiness  
and kindly Peace. Let all his grain bins be full.  
Let the pile of barley flow from the kneading trough.  
Now may the smiling barley with sesame . . .

Your son's wife will come out from a chair to you.  
Swift-footed mules will bring her to your house.  
Let her weave her cloth as she walks on *electrum*.  
I come, I come each year like the swallow;  
I stand before your door barefoot, so bring something quickly.  
We ask you for Apollo's sake, lady, give us something.  
If you do, give us something good. If you don't, we won't stay.  
For we did not come here to live in your household.

[Epigrams 15 and 16]

These verses were sung in Samos for a long time by children, when they would go begging at the festival of Apollo.

[34] When the spring came Homer tried to sail to Athens from Samos. He set sail along with some Samians and was taken to Ios. They put ashore not at the city but on the beach. It happened that when Homer got on board he began to feel sick. When he got off the boat he slept on the beach because he was weak. Since they were kept on shore for several days because of lack of winds, people kept coming out from the town and spent time with him. When they heard him they had high regard for him. [35] While the sailors and some people from the town were sitting with Homer some fisher boys sailed to the place and got out of their boat and came over to them. They said the following: 'Come, strangers, listen to us, and see if you can understand what we say to you.' One of the people there told them to speak. And they said: 'We are the ones who caught what we left behind. We didn't catch what we bring.' Some say they spoke in verse:

All we caught we left behind; what we didn't catch we bring.

[Epigram 17]

When the people there weren't able to understand what they said, the boys explained that when they went fishing they couldn't catch anything. But when they sat on the land they



looked for lice, and the lice they caught they left behind and the lice they couldn't catch they brought away with them. When Homer heard that, he uttered these verses:

From the blood of fathers like yourselves you are descended;  
Not from those with ancient inheritance or with boundless  
herds of sheep.

[Epigram 18]

[36] It happened that Homer died from this sickness in Ios, not because he couldn't understand what the boys said, as some think, but from weakness. When he died he was buried in Ios there on the beach by the sailors and the citizens who had been present during the conversation with him on the beach. And at a much later time the people of Ios wrote this epitaph, since his poetry had become famous throughout the world and was admired by all. The verses are not Homer's—

Here the earth covers the sacred head  
of the poet who gave heroes glory, divine Homer.

[37] That Homer was an Aeolian and not from Ios or a Dorian I have made clear by what I have said, and one can also provide the following evidence. It is likely that such a great poet when he was composing his poetry would find for his poetry the best practices among men or choose those of his own native country. You will be able to judge yourself when you listen to the following verses. For either he discovered the best form of sacrifice or he composed poetry about sacrifice in his own country. He speaks as follows:

First they drew back their heads and slaughtered and flayed  
And cut off the thigh pieces and covered them with fats  
making a double fold and set the raw meat on them.

[Il. 1.459-61]

In these lines nothing is said about the loins that they use in sacrifice. Among all Greeks the Aeolian race alone does not roast the loin. One can be certain also from the following verses that since he is an Aeolian he naturally observes these customs:

The old man roasted it on the split wood and poured out the bright wine  
and in their hands the young men held out to him the five-pronged forks.

[Il. 1.462-3]

Only the Aeolians roast entrails on the five-pronged forks, the other Greeks use three. The Aeolians also call the number five [*pente*] *pempe*. [38] This is what I know about Homer's background and death and life. One might also assess Homer's death accurately and correctly by making the following calculation:

From the time of the expedition to Troy which Agamemnon and Menelaus organised, it was one hundred and thirty years before Lesbos was colonised by towns; previously Lesbos had no towns. Twenty years after Lesbos was settled, Aeolian Cyme and the town called Phriconis were settled. Eighteen years after Cyme Smyrna was colonised by Cymaeans and at that time Homer was born. From the time Homer was born, there were 622 years until Xerxes' crossing—in his campaign against the Greeks, when he bridged the Hellespont and crossed from Asia into Europe. From this point it is easy to measure the time if one wishes by referring to the Archons in Athens. Homer was born 168 years after the Trojan war.

## 2. THE LIFE OF PINDAR<sup>1</sup>

[1] The poet Pindar was a Theban from Cynoscephalae, which is a village in the territory of Thebes. He was the son of Daiphantus, or according to other authorities, of Pagondas. Still others trace his genealogy to Scopelinus. Some say that Scopelinus was his uncle and that, since he played the *aulos*, he taught his skill to Pindar. His mother was Cleodice. Other authorities spell it Cledice.

[2] When Pindar was a boy, according to Chamaeleon and Ister, he went hunting near Mt. Helicon and fell asleep from

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Drachmann 1903.

exhaustion. As he slept a bee landed on his mouth and built a honeycomb there. Others say that he had a dream in which his mouth was full of honey and wax, and that he then decided to write poetry.

[3] Some authorities say that at Athens his teacher was Agathocles, others say Apollodorus. Apollodorus also, when he was in charge of the dithyrambic choruses and had to be out of town, entrusted their direction to Pindar even though he was still a boy. Pindar directed them so well that he became famous.

[4] When he said that Athens was the bulwark of Hellas [fr. 76] he was fined one thousand drachmas by the Thebans, and the Athenians paid the fine on his behalf.

[5] He was not only a beautiful poet, but he was a man dear to the gods. For example, the god Pan was seen between Cithaeron and Helicon singing a paean of Pindar. Accordingly Pindar wrote a song to the god in which he offers his gratitude for the honour, the poem that begins 'O Pan, Pan protector of Arcadia and guard of sacred shrines' [fr. 95]. And Demeter also appeared in a dream and blamed him, because for her alone of all the gods he had written no hymn. So he wrote her the poem that begins 'Queen, lawgiver [?] with golden headband' [fr. 37]. And he also built an altar to both gods outside his house.

[6] When Pausanias the king of the Lacedaemonians was razing Thebes, someone wrote on Pindar's house: 'Don't set fire to the home of the poet Pindar.' As a result his was the only house that remained unburned, and it is now the magistrate's hall in Thebes.

[7] At Delphi also when the priest is getting ready to close the temple he announces each day: 'let Pindar the poet come to join the god at dinner.' For the poet was born during the Pythian festival, as he himself says 'the quadrennial festival with its procession of oxen, in which I first was put to bed in swaddling clothes' [fr. 193].

[8] There is a story that pilgrims went to the temple of Ammon to ask for Pindar what was best for men, and the poet died on that very day.

[9] He lived at the time of Simonides, though he was younger, Simonides older. In fact both of them celebrated the same

events. Simonides wrote about the naval battle at Salamis [fr. 536] and Pindar celebrated the kingdom of [?] [fr. 272]. Both of them were together at the court of Hieron the tyrant of Syracuse.

[10] He married Megacleia the daughter of Lysitheus and Calline and had a son Daiphantus, for whom he wrote a song for the Daphnephoria. He had two daughters, Protomache and Eumetis.

[11] He wrote seventeen books: hymns, paeans, dithyrambs (2), prosodia (2), partheneia (2) and allegedly a third book which has the title of separate partheneia, hyporchemes (2), encomia, lamentations, victory odes (4).

[12] There exists an epigram with the following conclusion:

How Protomache and Eumetis weep for you in shrill voices, your wise daughters, when they came from Argos bringing home in an urn your remains which had been gathered from a foreign funeral pyre.

### 3. THE LIFE OF AESCHYLUS<sup>1</sup>

[p.1] Aeschylus the tragic poet's nationality was Athenian; his deme Eleusis. He was the son of Euphorion, the brother of Cynegirus. His family was aristocratic. He began writing tragedies when he was a young man and he raised standards far above his predecessors, in writing and in staging, [5] in the splendour of his choral productions, in his actors' costumes and in the serious content of his choral songs. As Aristophanes says:

Oh you who first piled up serious speeches and crowned tragic talk. [Ran. 1004]

He was a contemporary of Pindar's, having been born in the sixty-fourth Olympiad. They say that he was heroic and that he fought in the battle of Marathon [10] along with his brother Cynegirus, and in the naval battle at Salamis along with his

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Page 1972.

younger brother Ameinias, and also in the infantry battle at Plataea.

In the composition of his poetry he strove for a grand style, by using compound words and epithets, [15] and also metaphors and every other device that could lend weight to his diction. The plots of his plays do not abound in reversals and complexities like those of later poets, for he aimed solely at investing his characters with dignity. He thought that heroic grandeur struck the proper archaic note, [20] but that cunning ingenuity and sententiousness were foreign to tragedy. It was for this reason that Aristophanes made fun of him in his comedies, because of his stress on the excessive dignity of his characters. For example, in the *Niobe*, Niobe sits silent by her children's tomb for three scenes with her head covered, and does not utter a word; and in the *Ransom of Hector* [25] Achilles with his head covered similarly does not utter anything except a few words [p.2] at the beginning, in conversation with Hermes. For this reason one could find many outstanding illustrations of his striking dramatic contrivances but few aphorisms or pathetic scenes or other effects calculated to produce tears. He used visual effects and plots [5] more to frighten and amaze than to trick his audience.

He went off to stay with Hieron, according to some authorities, because he was criticised by the Athenians and defeated by Sophocles when the latter was a young man, but according to others because he was defeated by Simonides in an elegy for those who died at Marathon. Elegy in particular needs to have the conciseness necessary to arouse emotion, [10] and Aeschylus' poem (as the story goes) was not suitable. Some say that during the performance of the *Eumenides*, when he brought the chorus on one by one, he so frightened the audience that children fainted and unborn infants were aborted.

Then he went to Sicily at the time that Hieron was founding the city Aetna and put on the *Women of Aetna*, [15] as a favourable portent for a good life for the people living in the city. He was also greatly honoured both by Hieron and by the people of Gela, and after living there for two years he died, an old man, in the following way: an eagle had caught a tortoise, and because it did not have the strength to get control of its prey

threw it down on some rocks in order to break its shell. But the tortoise fell instead [20] on the poet and killed him. For he had received an oracle: 'Something thrown from the sky will kill you.' After his death the people of Gela buried him richly in the city's cemetery and honoured him extravagantly by writing the following epigram:

This tomb in grainbearing Gela covers an Athenian, Aeschylus son of Euphorion, who died here. [25] The famous grove of Marathon could tell of his courage and the longhaired Mede knew it well.

All who made their living in the tragic theatre went to his tomb to offer sacrifices and recited their plays there.

The Athenians [p.3] liked Aeschylus so much that they voted after his death to award a golden crown to whoever was willing to put on one of his dramas. He lived sixty-three years, during which time he wrote seventy dramas and in addition about five satyr plays. [5] He won quite a few victories after his death.

Aeschylus was first to enhance tragedy with highly heroic effects and to decorate the stage and to astound his audience's eyes with splendour, through pictures and devices, with altars and tombs, trumpets, images and Furies. He equipped the actors with gloves and dignified them with long robes and [10] elevated their stance with higher buskins. He used Cleander as first actor; then with him as second actor Mynniscus of Chalcis. It was he who invented the third actor, though Dicaearchus of Messene says it was Sophocles.

If one wanted to compare the simplicity of his dramatic art [15] to dramatists after him, one might think it insignificant and unsophisticated. But if one compared his work to his predecessors, one would be amazed at the poet's intelligence and inventiveness. Anyone who thinks that the most perfect writer of tragedy is Sophocles is correct, but he should remember that it was much harder to bring tragedy to such a height after Thespis, Phrynichus [20] and Choerilus, than it was by speaking after Aeschylus to come to Sophocles' perfection.

There is an inscription on his tomb:

I died, struck on the forehead by a missile from an eagle's claws.

They say that he put on [25] the *Persians* in Sicily at Hieron's request and was highly praised for it.

#### 4. THE LIFE OF SOPHOCLES<sup>1</sup>

[1] Sophocles was an Athenian by birth. He was the son of Sophillus who was not a carpenter in spite of what Aristoxenus tells us [fr. 115 Wehrli] nor a bronze-smith, nor a sword-maker by trade in spite of what Ister tells us [FGrHist 334F33]. As it happened, his father owned *slaves* who were bronze-smiths and carpenters. For it is not logical that a man descended from a tradesman would be considered worthy of a generalship along with Pericles and Thucydides, who were the most important men in the city. Indeed, if his father had been a tradesman, he would not have got off without abuse from the comic poets. Nor ought one to believe Ister [FGrHist 334F34] when he says Sophocles was not an Athenian but rather a Phliasian. Even if Sophocles' family originally came from Phlious, still one cannot find this information in any author other than Ister. In fact Sophocles was an Athenian by birth. His deme was Colonus. He was distinguished both because of his life and his poetry. He was well-educated and raised in comfortable circumstances, and he was involved in government and in embassies abroad.

[2] They say that he was born in the second year of the seventy-first Olympiad, when Philip was archon in Athens [495/4 B.C.]. He was seven years younger than Aeschylus, and twenty-four years older than Euripides.

[3] He trained with other boys both in wrestling and in music, and won crowns for both, as Ister says [FGrHist 334F35]. He studied music with Lamprus, and after the naval battle at Salamis, when the Athenians were standing round the victory monument, Sophocles with his lyre, naked and anointed with oil, led the chorus which sang the paean at the victory sacrifice.

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Radt 1977.

[4] He learned about tragedy from Aeschylus. He also was responsible for innovations in the dramatic competitions. He was the first to break the tradition of the poet's acting because his own voice was weak. For in the old days the poet himself served as one of the actors. He changed the number of chorus members from twelve to fifteen and invented the third actor.

[5] They say that he also took up the lyre and that only in the *Thamyris* did he ever sing; on account of this there is a picture of him playing a lyre in the Painted Stoa.

[6] Satyrus says [FHG 3.161ff.] that Sophocles invented the crooked staff himself. Ister also says [FGrHist 334F36] that he discovered the white half-boots that actors and chorus members wear, and that he wrote his dramas to suit their characters, and that he organised a *thiasos* to the Muses of cultivated people.

[7] In a word, his character was so charming that he was loved everywhere and by everyone.

[8] He won twenty victories, according to Carystius [FHG 4.359]. He often won second prize, but never third.

[9] The Athenians elected him general when he was sixty-five years old, seven years before the Peloponnesian war began, in the war against the Anaioi.

[10] He was so loyal to Athens that when many kings sent for him he did not want to leave his country.

[11] He held the priesthood of Halon, who was a hero under Chiron's tutelage along with Asclepius. After Sophocles' death Halon's shrine was maintained by his son Iophon.

[12] Sophocles was more pious than anyone else, according to what Hieronymus says [fr. 31 Wehrli] . . . about his golden crown. When this crown was stolen from the Acropolis, Heracles came to Sophocles in a dream and told him to go into the house on the right and it would be hidden there. Sophocles brought this information to the citizens and received a reward of a talent, as had been announced in advance. He used the talent to establish a shrine of Heracles Informer.

[13] The story is told by many authorities that at some point he brought a lawsuit against his son Iophon. Iophon was his son by Nicostrate, but he had a son Ariston by Theoris of Sicyon, and he was especially fond of this son's child, whose name was Sophocles. Once in a drama he portrayed Iophon

... as being envious of him and as making accusations to his clansmen that his father had lost his mind in his old age. They censured Iophon. Satyrus [FHG 3.162] says the poet said: 'If I am Sophocles I'm not out of my mind; if I am out of my mind, I'm not Sophocles', and then he produced the *Oedipus*.

[14] Ister [FGrHist 334F37] and Neanthes [FGrHist 84F18] say he died in the following way. When Callippides the actor came from the workshop in Opus and around the time of the festival of the Choes sent Sophocles a bunch of grapes, and when Sophocles put a grape that was still unripe into his mouth, he choked because of his advanced age and died. Satyrus says [FHG 3.162] that when Sophocles was reciting the *Antigone* and came to a passage toward the end of the play that did not have a break or mark for a pause, he strained his voice too much and gave up his life along with his voice. Some say that after he recited the drama, and he was proclaimed winner, he was overcome by joy and died.

[15] His body was placed on top of his ancestral tomb near the road to Deceleia, eleven stades from the city wall. Some say that they put up a statue of a siren in his memory; others, a bronze Cheledon. Since the Spartans were building a wall at this spot against the Athenians, Dionysus appeared to Lysander in a dream and ordered that the man should be buried. When Lysander ignored the dream Dionysus appeared to him a second time with the same message. Lysander then asked some fugitives who had died, and learned that it was Sophocles. So he sent a herald and allowed the Athenians to bury the body.

[16] Lobon says that this epitaph was written on his tomb:

In this tomb I hide Sophocles who won first prize with his tragic art, a most holy figure.

[17] Ister says [FGrHist 334F38] the Athenians voted to sacrifice to him each year because of his excellence.

[18] He wrote one hundred and thirty dramas, as Aristophanes says [p. 249, fr. iv N] of which seventeen are spurious.

[19] He competed against Aeschylus, Euripides, Choerilus, Aristias and many others, including his son Iophon.

[20] In general he used Homeric vocabulary. He took his

plots from the direction set by the epic poet and drew on the *Odyssey* for many of his dramas. He gives the etymology of Odysseus' name [*Od.* 19.406ff.] the way Homer did:

I am Odysseus, named correctly for my troubles. For many impious people have been angry [*Odysanta*] at me [fr. 965].

He delineated character, elaborated and used contrivances skilfully, reproducing Homer's charm. For this reason a certain Ionian says only Sophocles is a pupil of Homer. Certainly many poets have imitated one of their predecessors or contemporaries, but Sophocles alone culled the best from each. For this reason he was also called 'the bee'. He brought everything together: timing, sweetness, courage, variety.

[21] He knew how to match timing and events, so that he could delineate a whole character from a fraction of a line or from a single speech. This is the greatest mark of poetic skill, to delineate character or effect.

[22] Aristophanes says [fr. 580A Edmonds] that 'a honeycomb sat on him', and elsewhere (T108 Radt) that Sophocles' mouth is smeared with honey.

[23] Aristoxenus says [fr. 79 Wehrli] that he was the first of the Athenian poets to put Phrygian music into his own songs and to mix in the dithyrambic style.

##### 5. THE LIFE OF EURIPIDES<sup>1</sup>

Euripides the poet was the son of Mnearchides, a storekeeper, and of Cleito, a vegetable-seller.<sup>2</sup> He was an Athenian. He was born in Salamis while Calliades was archon in the seventy-

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Méridier 1929. In the translation of the *Vita* I have followed Méridier's text: a chronological account (1-49), a set of anecdotes (50-113); then a second short biography with comments on the poet's style (114-35). For the reader's convenience footnotes mark correspondences with earlier sources.

<sup>2</sup> Text of Satyrus from *POxy.* ix 1176, on the advice of S. West 1966, 546-50, though with some modifications to Hunt's translations. For *Vita* 1-44,

fifth Olympiad, the year when the Greeks fought the naval battle against the Persians.<sup>3</sup>

[5] At first he practised for the pancration or boxing, because his father had understood an oracle to mean that he would win at contests in which crowns were awarded. And they say that he won a victory in games at Athens. Once he understood the oracle's meaning he turned to writing tragedy; he introduced many innovations, prologues, philosophical discourses, displays of rhetoric and recognition scenes, [10] because he attended lectures by Anaxagoras, Prodicus and Protagoras. Socrates [the philosopher] and Mnesilochus appear to have collaborated with him in some of his writings,<sup>4</sup> as Teleclides says: 'that fellow Mnesilochus is cooking up a new play [15] for Euripides, and Socrates is supplying him with firewood' [fr. 39, 40]. Some authorities say that Iophon or Timocrates of Argos wrote his lyrics.<sup>5</sup>

They say that he was also a painter and that pictures of his are shown at Megara, that he was a torchbearer in the rites of Apollo Zosterius and that he was born on the same day as Hellanicus, [20] which was the day that the Greeks won the naval battle at Salamis, and that he began to compete in dramatic contests at the age of twenty-six. He emigrated to Magnesia and was awarded the privileges of a *proxenos*; there and freedom from taxation. From there he went to Macedonia and stayed at the court of Archelaus. [25] As a favour to him he wrote a drama named for him, and he made out very well there because he was also appointed to an administrative post. It is said that he wore a long beard and had moles on his face; that

cf. also the translation of F. A. Paley, *Euripides* 1<sup>2</sup> (Cambridge 1872) lx-lxii.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *FGrHist* 328F2 18: 'It isn't true that his mother was a vegetable-seller, for it happens that both his parents were well-born, as Philochorus demonstrates.'

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Jacoby on *FGrHist* 239A50, 63; 244F35.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Satyr. fr. 39 col. ii 8-22, citing two lines of dialogue from a drama: 'When this is done in secret, whom do you fear?' 'The gods, who see more than men.' Such a conception of the gods will be Socratic; for in truth what is invisible to mortals is to the immortal gods easily seen....

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Satyr. fr. 39 col. xvi 17-29: 'The verses have the appearance of being by one of his competitors, as you say. But here too the comic poet's attack on Euripides is mischievous.'

his first wife was Melito, his second Choirile. He left three sons: the oldest [30] Mnesarchides, a merchant; the second, Mnesilochus, an actor; the youngest, Euripides, who produced some of his father's dramas.

He began to produce dramas when Callias was archon in the first year of the eighty-first Olympiad [456 B.C.]. First he put on the *Peliades*, with which he won third prize. He wrote a total of ninety-two dramas, [35] of which seventy-eight are extant. Of these three are spurious: *Tennes*, *Rhadamanthys* and *Perithous*. He died, according to Philochorus, when he was over seventy years old [*FGrHist* 328F220], according to Eratosthenes, seventy-five [*FGrHist* 241F12], and he was buried in Macedonia. He has a cenotaph in Athens, with an inscription on it either by Thucydides the historian or by the lyric poet Timotheus: [40] 'All Hellas is Euripides' memorial, but the land of Macedonia holds his bones, for it took in the end of his life. His fatherland was the Greece of Greece, Athens. Having brought great pleasure with his poetry he also won many men's praise' [*EG* 500ff. = *AP* 7.45]. [45] They say that both monuments were struck by lightning. They say that Sophocles, when he heard that Euripides had died, went before the public in a dark cloak and brought his chorus and actors on stage without crowns on their heads in the ceremonial parade preceding the dramatic competition, and that the citizens wept.

Euripides died in the following manner.<sup>6</sup> [50] There was a

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Satyr. fr. 39 col. xx 22-35: '(A) Well, these were the events of Euripides' life. The death he met was very violent and peculiar, according to the version of the oldest Macedonian story-tellers. (Diodor.) What was their account? (A) There is in Macedonia . . . ; fr. 39 col. xxi: . . . and he begged them off. Some time afterwards Euripides happened to be alone by himself in a grove at a distance from the city, while Archelaus went out to the chase. When they were outside the gates the huntsmen loosed the hounds and sent them on in front, while they themselves were left behind. The dogs fell in with Euripides unprotected and killed him, the huntsmen arriving on the scene later. Hence they say the proverb is still in use among the Macedonians, "There is such a thing as a dog's justice". Cf. Hermetianax 7.61-68 Powell: 'I say that that ever-watchful man, who from all . . . developed a hatred of all women from the depth of his soul, struck by Eros' bent bow could not get rid of nocturnal agonies but wandered down the back alleys of Macedonia pursuing Archelaus' housekeeper, until Fate found a death for Euripides when he encoun-

town in Macedonia called the village of the Thracians because Thracians had once settled there. At some point a female Molossian hound belonging to Archelaus had strayed into the village. This dog the Thracians, as is their custom, sacrificed and ate. Accordingly Archelaus fined them one talent. Since they did not have the money, they asked Euripides to get them released from their debt to the king. [55] Some time later, when Euripides was resting by himself in a grove near the city and Archelaus came out to hunt, his dogs were released by their keepers and fell on Euripides. The poet was torn to shreds and eaten. [60] These dogs were the descendants of the dog that was killed by the Thracians. This is the origin of the Macedonian proverb, 'a dog's justice'.

The story is that in Salamis he furnished a cave that had an opening on the sea and that he spent his days there in order to avoid the public. Because of this he drew most of his comparisons from the sea.<sup>7</sup> [65] His looks were melancholy, thoughtful and severe; he hated laughter and he hated women.<sup>8</sup> On that account Aristophanes found fault with him: 'to me [Euripides] seems sour to speak to.'

They say that after he married Mnesilochus' daughter Choirile and realised that she was unfaithful [70] he first wrote the play *Hippolytus*, in which he exposes women's immorality, and then he divorced her. When her next husband said: 'she is chaste in my household,' Euripides replied: 'you're a fool if you think the same woman will be chaste in one man's house

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Arrhibus' hateful dogs' (reading *ex onychōu* at 62 with Jacobs; see A. Cameron, *Tener Unguis*, *GQ N.S.* 15 [1965] 83). Also the Suda, s.v. Eur.: 'He died as a result of a plot by Arrhibus of Macedonia and Crateus of Thessaly, who were poets and envied him and persuaded Lysimachus, who was bought for ten minas, to release on Euripides the royal dogs which he had raised.'

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *FGHst* 328F2.19: 'Philochorus says that he had on the island of Salamis a foul and wretched cave (which we have seen) in which Euripides wrote his tragedies.' Satyr. fr. 39 col. ix: 'He was the owner of a large cave there with the mouth towards the sea, and here he passed the day by himself engaged in constant thought or writing, despising everything that was not great and elevated. Aristophanes at least says, as though summoned as a witness for this very purpose, "He is like what he makes his characters say".' But once when witnessing a comedy he is said . . .

<sup>9</sup> Cf. n.10 below.

but not in another's.' [75] He took a second wife, but when he found she tended to be unchaste, he was more readily encouraged to slander women. The women planned to kill him and to come to his cave, where he spent his time writing.<sup>9</sup>

He was accused (enviously) of having Cephisophon as co-author of his tragedies. [80] Hermippus [fr. 94 Wehrli] also says that after Euripides' death Dionysius the tyrant of Sicily sent a talent to his heirs and got his harp, his tablet and his stylus; and when he saw them, he ordered the people who brought them to dedicate them as offerings in the temple of the Muses, and he had his own and Euripides' names inscribed on them. [85] For this reason he said he was considered a great friend of foreigners since foreigners particularly liked him, while he was hated by the Athenians. When a boorish youth said enviously that Euripides had bad breath, Euripides said: 'don't criticise me; my mouth is sweeter than honey and the Sirens.'<sup>10</sup>

[90] Euripides made fun of women in his poetry for the following reason. He had a home-bred slave named Cephisophon.<sup>11</sup> He discovered his own wife misbehaving with this boy.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. n.12 below.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Arist. *Pol.* 1.311 b30f. (tr. Jowett): 'In the conspiracy against Archelaus, Dechamnichus stimulated the fury of the assassins and led the attack; he was enraged because Archelaus had delivered him to Euripides to be scourged; for the poet had been irritated at some remark made by Dechamnichus on the foulness of his breath.' Cf. Satyr. fr. 39 col. xx 1-15: '... his mouth is . . . and extremely malodorous'. "Hush boy", he interrupted, "what mouth has there been such or could be sweeter than that from which issue songs and words like his?"' Also Alex. Aetol. 7 Powell: 'Good old Anaxagoras' boarding student looks sour to me and as if he hates laughter, and he hasn't learned to joke even in his cups; but whatever he might write had been made of honey and of the Sirens.'

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Satyr. fr. 39 col. xii 16-35: 'You have clearly comprehended my meaning and absolved me from developing it. He was embittered against the sex for this reason. He had, it seems, in his house a homebred slave named Cephisophon; and he detected his wife in misconduct with this person'; fr. 39 col. xiii: '... bearing the outrage [calmly], as is related, directed the woman to live with the young man. When he was asked "What is the meaning of this?", he said, "In order that my wife may not be his, but his mine—for that is just—if I wish". And he continued to oppose the whole sex in his poetry. (Di.) Quite absurdly! For why is it more reasonable to blame women because of a seduced woman than men because of the man who seduced her? As Socrates said, the same vices and virtues are to be found in both.'

At first he tried to dissuade her, and when he couldn't convince her, he left his wife to Cephaloson. [95] Aristophanes too refers to this: 'O best and darkest Cephaloson, you lived with Euripides in a lot of ways, and you wrote his poetry (so they say) along with him' [fr. 580]. [100] They also say that women lay in ambush for him at the Thesmophoria because of his criticisms of them in his poetry.<sup>12</sup> They wanted to destroy him, but they spared him first because of the Muses and then because he promised never again to say anything bad about them. For example, [105] this is what he said about women in the *Melanippe*: 'In vain men shoot their criticism at women. The bow twangs and misses. Women—I say—are better than men!' [fr. 499 N] and so on. Philemon was so devoted to Euripides that he dared to say the following of him: [110] 'If it's true the dead have feeling, as some men say, then I would hang myself so I could see Euripides' [fr. 130 Kock].

Euripides was the son of Mnesarchides. He was an Athenian. The writers of Old Comedy made fun of him in their plays by calling him the son of a woman who sold vegetables. [115] Some say that at first he was a painter but that after he had studied with Archelaus the natural philosopher and with Anaxagoras he started to write tragedies. For this reason presumably he was also somewhat arrogant and kept away from ordinary people and had no interest in appealing to his audiences. [120] This practice hurt him as much as it helped Sophocles. The comic poets too attacked him and tore him to pieces in their envy.

He disregarded all this and went away to Macedonia to the

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Satyr. fr. 39 col. x: 'Everyone disliked him, the men because of his unsociableness, the women because of the censures in his poems. And he incurred great danger from both sexes, for he was persecuted by Cleon the demagogue in the action for impiety mentioned above, while the women combined against him at the Thesmophoria and collected in a body at the place where he happened to be resting. But notwithstanding their anger they spared the man, partly out of respect for the Muses . . . ; fr. 39 col. xi: (a long quotation about women from Euripides' *Melanippe*; the lines quoted in the *Vita* are not included in the surviving papyrus); fr. 39 col. xii: (several lines quoted from Ar. *Theem.* 374-75, 335-37, parodying the style of a decree) . . . Lysilla was the secretary, Sostrate proposed it. "If there be a man who is plotting against the womenfolk or who, to injure them, is proposing peace to Euripides and to the Medes . . ."

court of King Archelaus,<sup>13</sup> and when he was returning there late one evening he was killed by the king's dogs. He began to produce dramas around the eighty-first Olympiad, when Calliades was archon.

[125] Because he used the middle style he excelled in expression and used reasoning perfectly on either side. In his lyric poetry he was inimitable, and he elbowed virtually all the other lyric poets aside.<sup>14</sup> But in dialogue he was wordy and vulgar and [130] irritating in his prologues, most rhetorical in his elaboration and clever in his phrasing and capable of demolishing previous arguments.

He wrote a total of ninety-two dramas, of which sixty-seven are extant and three in addition that are falsely attributed to him; also eight satyr plays, among these one that is falsely attributed to him. He won five victories.

## 6. THE LIFE OF ARISTOPHANES<sup>1</sup>

Aristophanes the comic poet's father was Philippus. His nationality was Athenian, from the deme of Kydathenaion, and from the tribe of Pandionis. It was he who first is thought to have transformed comedy—which was still wandering around in the old style—into something more useful and more respect-

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Satyr. fr. 39 col. xvii: 'These then, as I said, in their expression of views sought popular favour. He however, after putting in, so to speak, an obstructive plea, renounced Athens. (Di.) What was the plea? (A) It was entered in the following choral ode: "I have put wings of gold on my back, and the Sirens' winged sandals; lifted high into the wide upper air, I shall go to Zeus . . ." [fr. 911 N]; fr. 39 col. xviii: . . . began the songs. Or do you not know that it is this that he says? (Di.) How then? (A) In saying "to mingle my flight with Zeus" he metaphorically designates the monarch and also magnifies the man's power. (Di.) What you say seems to me to be more subtle than true. (A) Take it as you like. Anyhow, he migrated and spent his old age in Macedonia, being held in much honour by the sovereign; and in particular the story is told that . . ."

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Satyr. fr. 8: . . . in emulation of the beauties of Ion, he developed and perfected [tragedy] so as to leave no room for improvement to his successors. Such were the man's artistic qualities. Hence Aristophanes wishes to measure his tongue "by which such fine expressions were polished".

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Koster, 1975.



able. Comedy had previously been spiteful and more shameful, because the poets Cratinus and Eupolis uttered more slander than was appropriate. Aristophanes was first also to demonstrate the manner of New Comedy in his *Cocalus*, a play Menander and Philemon took as starting point for their dramatic compositions.

Since he was very cautious at the start, all the more because he was gifted, he produced his first plays under the names of Callistratus and Philonides. Because of this Aristonymus [fr. 4] and Ameipsias [fr. 28] made fun of him, saying that (as in the proverb) he was born on the fourth day, to toil for other men. [11] Later on he entered the contests for himself.

He was in particular an enemy of Cleon the demagogue and wrote the *Knights* as an attack on him. In that comedy he exposes Cleon's thefts and his tyrannical nature, and since none of the costumers had the courage to make a mask of Cleon's face because they were too frightened, since Cleon acted like a tyrant, Aristophanes acted the part of Cleon, smearing his face with red dye, and was responsible for Cleon's being fined five talents by the *Knights*, as he says in the *Archarnians*:

But one thing really made me happy: when I saw those five talents that Cleon vomited up. [5ff.]

[20] Aristophanes had become Cleon's enemy because Cleon had entered a lawsuit against him because of his being foreign, and because in his play the *Babylonians* Aristophanes criticised the elected magistrates while foreigners were present.

Some say that he was a foreigner himself, inasmuch as some say he was a Rhodian from Lindos, others that he was an Aeginetan, an assumption based on his having spent a considerable amount of time there or on his owning property there. According to other authorities it was that his father Philippus was an Aeginetan. Aristophanes absolved himself from these charges by wittily quoting Homer's lines:

My mother says I'm his son, but I don't know myself.  
For no one knows his own father. [*Od.* 1.215f.]

When he was informed against a second and third time he also got off, [30] and now that his citizenship was established he won out over Cleon. As he says, 'I myself know how I was treated by Cleon' [*Ach.* 377], etc. He was held in high regard because he got rid of the informers, whom he called Fevers in the *Wasps*, where he says 'they strangle their [?] fathers at night and choke their grandfathers' [1038-9].

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. [40] For this reason he won praise and a crown of sacred olive, which was considered equal in worth to a golden crown, when he spoke in the *Frogs* about the men who had been deprived of their rights:

it is just that the sacred chorus give the city much good advice. [686ff.]

The metre called Aristophanean was named after him, since he was well known. The poet's fame was so great that it was known in Persia, and the king of the Persians asked whose side the comic poet was on. There is also the story that when Dionysius the tyrant wanted to learn about Athens' government, Plato sent Aristophanes' poetry and advised him to learn about their government by studying Aristophanes' dramas. [50] He was imitated by the writers of New Comedy, I mean Philemon and Menander. When the decree about *chorēgoi* was passed that no one could be ridiculed by name and the *chorēgoi* were no longer rich enough to provide subsidies to train choruses, and because of these measures the substance of comedy had been completely removed (the purpose of comedy being to ridicule people), Aristophanes wrote the *Cocalus* in which he introduces seduction and recognition and other such events, which Menander especially likes. When once again the subsidies for training choruses were taken away, Aristophanes, when he wrote the *Ploutos*, in order to give the actors in the scenes time to rest and to change, wrote 'for the chorus' in the directions, in the places where we see the poets of New Comedy writing in 'for the chorus' in emulation of Aristophanes.

In that drama he introduced his son Araros and so departed from life, [60] leaving three sons, Philippus (named after his grandfather), Nicostratus, and Araros. He mentions his children in these lines: 'I am ashamed before my wife and my helpless children' [fr. 588], perhaps meaning them. He wrote forty-four plays, of which it is alleged that four are spurious. These are *Poetry, The Shipwrecked Man, Islands*, [?] *Niobus*—which some authorities say are by Archippus.

#### 7. PLATO AND ANTIMACHUS

Proclus mentions Callimachus' (fr. 589) and Duris' (*FGrHist* 76F83) approval of Plato's judgment of poetry in connection with an anecdote (once again) about Antimachus. Heraclides Ponticus (fr. 6 Wehrli) says he was sent by Plato to collect Antimachus' poetry (T. Wyss), even though most people at the time preferred the work of Choerilus; Riginos 1976, 124. The poem Antimachus recited does not appear to have been the *Lyde*, because according to another anecdote, perhaps from the same original source, he obliterated the text after the recital, and was comforted by Plato; Riginos 1976, 125; Matthews 1979, 44–5.

Riginos suggests that Heraclides' story is probably true, since Heraclides was Plato's own pupil; 1976, 127. But statements that Heraclides was a *gnōrimos* of Plato (Suda = fr. 2 Wehrli) or Plato's *zēlōtēs* (D.L. v.86 = fr. 3 Wehrli) may (as in the case of Apollonius and Callimachus) only represent intellectual influence. In any case, being a contemporary or even a friend is no guarantee of accuracy; Ion of Chios' stories about Aeschylus and Sophocles are only meant to be representative of the poets' characters (pp. 67, 81 above).

Heraclides' anecdotes about poets also seem meant to represent characteristics; in order to make a general point he reports information not recorded elsewhere. e.g., that Socrates' mistreatment by the Athenians had precedents in Homer's being fined fifty drachmae for insanity, or Tyrtaeus being considered mad, and of their honouring Aeschylus' friend Astydamas (rather than Aeschylus) with a golden statue (fr.

169). He cites a lamentation about the death of Palamedes from Euripides' drama (fr. 588 N) in 'confirmation', much as a character in Satyrus' dialogue uses lines from a choral ode about flying on golden wings to show that Euripides was thinking of going to Macedonia (39 xvii; p. 169 n.13 above). Heraclides (fr. 170) also tells a story about Aeschylus being accused of profaning the Eleusinian mysteries, but being acquitted because his brother Cynegirus' hands were cut off and he himself had been wounded at Marathon. In 'confirmation' he cites an epitaph that mentions Aeschylus' courage but not his injuries or Cynegirus' at Marathon (*EG* 454ff.); he does not add that Cynegirus (at least according to Herodotus 6.114) was killed (p. 69 above). Like the story of Sophocles' quarrel with Iophon (pp. 84–5 above), the anecdote about Aeschylus and the mysteries appears to be based on a scene of comedy that made fun of the poet's interest in the cult of his hometown (p. 68 above). Heraclides also wrote forgeries of Thespis' dramas; Gudeman 1894, 58–9.

Heraclides' story about Plato's championing of Antimachus (fr. 6) shows that the philosopher already as a young man had an interest in the narrative poetry that he later both employs and condemns in his writings (e.g., *Resp.* 10.607b). Like Homer, who is said to have visited Ithaca as a young man, Plato began his career by practising what he preached. Condensed and excerpted, the story could also be used *against* him; even the most persuasively articulated of Plato's doctrines were heavily satirised in antiquity. For example, there is Callimachus' epigram about how Cleombrotus was encouraged to commit suicide because of Plato's doctrine in the *Phaedo* of the immortality of the soul (*Epigr.* 23; Riginos 1976, 132; p. 99 n.54 above). Cf. the epigram for the atheist Hippon, finding immortality in death, 38B2 DK). Anecdotes of this sort offer the most insubstantial evidence about a writer's views of other writers. Since Proclus speaks only in general terms about Callimachus' disapproval of Plato's views on poetry, it is possible to *assume* that he considered them no more extensively than in an epigram or epigrams; his epigram for Aratus (27) is the source of the statement in Aratus' *Vita* that Aratus was a *zēlōtēs* of Hesiod (p. 131 n.56 above).