

MISZELLEN

A NOTE ON AELIAN, EPICHARMUS,
AND MNESIMACHUS*

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A passage of Aelian's *De natura animalium* (13,4) is the source for Epicharmus' fragments 29 and 64, and for Mnesimachus' fragment 5:¹

ἀκούσας δ' ἂν ἀλίεων καὶ ἰχθύων τινὰ καλλιόνυμον οὕτω λεγόντων.
[...] εἰσὶ μὲν οὖν οἱ καὶ φασιν αὐτὸν ἐδώδιμον, οἱ δὲ πλείους ἀντιλέ-
γουσιν αὐτοῖς. οὐ ραδίως δὲ αὐτοῦ μνημονεύουσιν ἐν ταῖς ὑπὲρ τῶν
ἰχθύων πανθοινίαις, ὧν τι καὶ ὄφελός ἐστι, ποιητῶν θεμένων σπουδῆν
εἰς μνήμην ἔνθεσμον· Ἐπίχαρμος μὲν ἐν Ἴβρας Γάμῳ [= fr. 64] καὶ Γῶ
καὶ Θαλάσσῃ [= fr. 29] καὶ προσέτι Μούσαις [vid. fr. 88], Μνησίμαχος
δὲ ἐν τῇ Ἴσθμιονίκη [= fr. 5].

ὑπὲρ codd. : ἀπὸ Casaubon || ποιητῶν θεμένων codd. : ποιηταὶ θέμενοι
Hercher || καὶ Γῶ καὶ Θαλάσσα καὶ προσέτι Μούσαις om. V

The overall meaning is plain. Aelian states that some believe that people eat the fish called καλλιόνυμος, but most disagree;² in fact, Aelian adds, it is hard to find any reference to the καλλιόνυμος in literary texts describing fish-based banquets. The passage poses a number of problems, though. On the one hand, editors agree that the sentence οὐ ραδίως [...] Ἴσθμιονίκη is problematic; many have suspected that

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1) The text is printed according to the most recent edition of *De natura animalium* (M. García Valdés / L. A. Llera Fueyo / L. Rodríguez-Noriega Guillén, Claudius Aelianus. *De natura animalium*, Berolini et Novi Eboraci 2009), whose critical apparatus is modified and slightly enriched.

2) V. Mastellari, *Eubulide – Mnesimaco. Introduzione, traduzione e commento*, Göttingen 2020, 444 collects the scanty evidence for the consumption (in most cases only for medical purposes) of the καλλιόνυμος (Hipp. Aff. 21,20; 22,15; 30,30; 49,24; Vict. 1,48,2; SEG XXXII 450).

the section ὑπὲρ τῶν ἰχθύων [...] ἔνθεσμον is corrupt in one way or the other, and some obelise it in its entirety.³ On the other hand, the point behind the reference to Epicharmus and Mnesimachus is not perspicuous.

We may begin revisiting the textual problems, which on the whole are not too daunting. To start with, it is quite hard to make sense of the transmitted reading ἐν ταῖς ὑπὲρ τῶν ἰχθύων πανθοινίαις; the reference is to fish-banquets, but the exact reading is not equally clear, and Scholfield obelised ὑπὲρ. However, Casaubon⁴ had previously suggested to emend ὑπὲρ into ἀπὸ, and he might be on the right track.⁵ Even though this suggestion is practically ignored in all editions of Aelian's *De natura animalium*, it gives plausible Greek at a very small price. The resulting text ἐν ταῖς ἀπὸ τῶν ἰχθύων πανθοινίαις 'in banquets consisting in fish' is well paralleled in Imperial Greek (see Diod. 3,17,5 ἐπὶ τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν ἰχθύων πάλιν τροφήν ἀνακάμπτουσι, Arr. Hist. Ind. 28,8 σίτῳ [...] τῷ ἀπὸ τῶν ἰχθύων [...] διαχρεόμενοι, 29.15 τοῦτοισιν ἀπὸ τῶν ἰχθύων ἢ πᾶσα διαίτα πεποιήται). The way the clause ὦν τι καὶ ὄφελός ἐστι interacts with the rest of the sentence is not immediately clear either. The best solution is to take ὦν [...] ἐστι as a relative clause governed by εἰς μνήμην, and to supply τούτων (sc. fish).

As to the sentence as a whole, there are two ways of construing it. The first is to assign an indefinite subject to μνημονεύουσιν, to put a colon before Ἐπίχαρμος, and to translate: "They hardly mention it in fish-banquets, although poets rightly put effort in mentioning those (sc. fishes) which have some value: Epicharmus [...] Mnesimachus [...]" A different view is taken by Hercher,⁶ who emends the genitive absolute ποιητῶν θεμένων [...] ἔνθεσμον into ποιηταὶ θέμενοι [...] ἔνθεσμον ("The poets hardly mention it in fish-banquets, although they rightly put effort in mentioning those [sc. fishes] which have some value: Epicharmus [...] Mnesimachus [...]"). This would provide us with a subject for μνημονεύουσιν (ποιηταὶ) also governing a conjunct participle. However, the overall meaning of the passage remains the same, and we may therefore prefer to retain the paradosis.

3) See F. Jacobs, *Aeliani de natura animalium libri XVII*. Vol. II, Jenae 1832, 289 n. 31, A. F. Scholfield, *Aelian. On the characteristics of animals*. Vol. III, London / Cambridge (Mass.) 1959, 82–83, A. Zucker, *Élian. La personnalité des animaux*. Tome 2. Livres X–XVII, Paris 2002, 221 n. 9, García Valdés / Llera Fueyo / Rodríguez-Noriega Guillén (n. 1) 310.

4) See I. Casaubon, *Animadversionum in Athenaei Deipnosophistas libri XV*. Secunda editio postrema, Lugduni 1621, col. 505.

5) The *recensio* of Aelian's *De natura animalium* is closed; hence this corruption was likely already in the Medieval archetype. For the palaeographical confusion between ἀπό / ὑπό and ὑπό / ὑπὲρ see F. J. B. Bast, *Commentatio palaeographica* in G. H. Schaefer, *Gregorii Corinthii et aliorum grammaticorum Libri de dialectis linguae Graecae*, Lipsiae 1811, 794–795 and 846, Ael. NA 2,39 ὑπὲρ θήρας (ὑπό θήρας L) and NA 9,36 ὑπό γῆς (ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς V).

6) R. Hercher, *Claudii Aeliani de natura animalium libri XVII, varia historia, epistolae, fragmenta*. Vol. I, Lipsiae 1864, 319.

The reference to Epicharmus and Mnesimachus is problematic, too: are these comic poets mentioned because they exceptionally did refer to the *καλλιώνυμος*, hard though this fish may be to find in food catalogues, or because they did not refer to it, although they are usually at pains to mention all sorts of fishes? The latter interpretation is suggested by Meineke,⁷ while some have argued explicitly for the first one,⁸ but most scholars are vague on this point,⁹ and Aelian's passage regularly features without any further comment among the fragments of Epicharmus and Mnesimachus.¹⁰ However, a well-known statement in Athenaeus (VII 282d) explicitly states that Epicharmus did not mention the *καλλιώνυμος* in Μοῦσαι:

Ἐπίχαρμος δ' ἐν Μούσαις τὸν μὲν ἔλωπα καταριθμεῖται, τὸν δὲ κάλλι-
υθῦν ἢ καλλιώνυμον ὡς τὸν αὐτὸν ὄντα σεσίγηκεν· λέγει δὲ περὶ τοῦ
ἔλοπος οὕτως [Epich. fr. 88].

The passage follows an excursus concerning those who think that the fish-names *ἀνθίας*, *κάλλιχθυς*, *καλλιώνυμος*, and *ἔλωψ* refer to the same fish. Athenaeus adds that in Μοῦσαι Epicharmus only refers to the *ἔλωψ* and that he did not use the fish-name *καλλιώνυμος*, and to prove this he quotes a passage from Μοῦσαι mentioning the *ἔλωψ*. Athenaeus, that is to say, infers that for Epicharmus too the two names apply to one and the same fish, for he only uses one of them. We may not agree with Athenaeus' inference (and with his source's identification of *καλλιώνυμος* and *ἔλωψ*),¹¹ but he clearly states that in his Μοῦσαι Epicharmus did not mention the *καλλιώνυμος*.¹² This has obvious implications for our interpretation of Aelian's passage.

7) A. Meineke, *Fragmenta Comico-rum Graecorum*. Collegit et disposuit A. M. Vol. III. *Fragmenta poetarum comoediae mediae*, Berolini 1840, 576 (and see already Casaubon [n. 4] col. 505).

8) See L. Rodríguez-Noriega Guillén, *Epicarmo de Siracusa*. *Testimonios y fragmentos*, Oviedo 1996, 27 and 41 and J. M. Edmonds, *The Fragments of Attic Comedy*. Volume II, Leiden 1959, 361.

9) See F. Maspero, Claudio Eliano, *La natura degli animali*. Volume II, Milano 1998, 751 and Zucker (n. 3) 221. Scholfield (n. 3) 83 seems to imply that Epicharmus and Mnesimachus did not mention the *καλλιώνυμος*, but he does not make it explicit enough to ascertain this.

10) Beside PCG, see T. Kock, *Comico-rum Attico-rum fragmenta*. Volumen II. *Novae comoediae fragmenta*, Lipsiae 1884, 441 and G. Kaibel, *Comico-rum Graeco-rum fragmenta*. Voluminis I fasciculus prior. *Doriensium comoedia, mimi, phlyaces*, Berolini 1899, 95–96. Mastellari (n. 2) 443–444 ponders both possibilities.

11) The *καλλιώνυμος* is anything but dainty (see n. 2), while the *ἔλωψ* is a delicacy (see D'A. W. Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Fishes*, London 1947, 62–63). Athenaeus is clearly making a confusion here, for at the beginning of the passage (VII 282c) he quotes Dorion who attests to the identity of *ἀνθίας*, *κάλλιχθυς*, *καλλιώνυμος*, and *ἔλωψ*, while at the end of this section (VII 282d) he names Dorion once again with the precise aim to contradict these identifications (see also Mastellari [n. 2] 445).

If we are not prepared to accept an inconsistency between the two passages,¹³ the most likely conclusion is that the reference to Epicharmus and Mnesimachus in Aelian's passage testifies to the fact that these poets did not mention the καλλιόνυμος. Aelian would thus be making an argumentum a fortiori to support the idea that the καλλιόνυμος is not an edible fish: although Epicharmus and Mnesimachus mention many types of fish (which is very likely to be the case, at least for Epicharmus¹⁴), even they did not make any mention of the καλλιόνυμος. According to this reading, οὐ ῥαδίως does not mean 'it is hard to find a mention of the καλλιόνυμος, yet Epicharmus and Mnesimachus refer to it'. Rather, it is a mild (though firm) way to say 'never'; Aelian does not explicitly rule out the possibility that the καλλιόνυμος was actually mentioned in some passage of which he may not be aware.¹⁵ One may compare Plut. Lyc. 31.3 ἱερὸν τε γάρ ἐστιν αὐτοῦ [sc. Lycurgus], καὶ θύουσι καθ' ἕκαστον ἐνιαυτὸν ὡς θεῶ. λέγεται δὲ καὶ τῶν λειψάνων αὐτοῦ κομισθέντων οἴκαδε κεραυτὸν εἰς τὸν τάφον κατασκήψαι· τοῦτο δὲ οὐ ῥαδίως ἐτέρῳ τινὶ τῶν ἐπιφανῶν πλὴν Εὐριπίδῃ συμπεσεῖν ὕστερον, τελευτήσαντι καὶ ταφέντι τῆς Μακεδονίας περὶ Ἀρέθουσαν. Plutarch too cautiously does not rule out the existence of other parallels for Lycurgus' case, although he is not aware of any other than Euripides.

According to such a reconstruction, Aelian and Athenaeus would agree that Epicharmus and Mnesimachus did not mention the καλλιόνυμος. Therefore, Aelian's passage should not be printed as a fragment of Epicharmus and Mnesimachus anymore; rather, as Aelian testifies to the presence of detailed πανθοινία

12) Kaibel (n. 10) 95–96 prints Aelian's passage only as a fragment of Γᾶ καὶ Θάλασσα, for (we may surmise) on the basis of Athenaeus' testimony on Μούσαι he infers that the καλλιόνυμος was not mentioned in Ἥβας Γάμος either (the former is a διασκευή of the latter, see Athen. III 110b and Kaibel [n. 10] 98). But Kaibel does not comment explicitly on this point.

13) I have chosen not to take into account the possibility that Aelian and Athenaeus had access to different sections of Epicharmus' Μούσαι. Firstly, if (the source of) Athenaeus only had access to a section of this play, it would be odd for Athenaeus to make so strong a statement as Ἐπίχαρμος δ' ἐν Μούσαις [...] τὸν δὲ κάλλιχθιν ἢ καλλιόνυμον [...] σεσίγηκεν. Likewise, I would rule out the possibility that καὶ Γᾶ καὶ Θαλάσσα καὶ προσέτι Μούσαις is an interpolation (it is omitted in ms. V); for even though this would solve the inconsistency with Athenaeus' passage about the καλλιόνυμος in Epicharmus' Μούσαι, it would be very hard to account for why a copyist would have introduced such an erudite gloss (provided that a copyist would have been able to do such a thing).

14) See Kaibel (n. 10) 94 and 98, R. Kerkhof, *Dorische Posse, Epicharm und Attische Komödie*, München 2001, 31, M. G. Palutan, *Le Nozze di Ebe o le Muse di Epicarmo (e una pittura vascolare)*, in: R. Nicolai (ed.), *Ῥυσμός. Studi di poesia, metrica e musica greca offerti dagli allievi a Luigi Enrico Rossi per i suoi settant'anni*, Roma 2003, 243–249, at 246–248, and S. D. Olson, *Broken Laughter. Select Fragments of Greek Comedy*, Oxford 2007, 42.

15) See further οὐ ῥαδίως in Ael. NA 10,28 πᾶν τὸ εἶ γινόμενον τετίμηται, ἐναντίας δὲ ἄρα πρὸς ταῦτα πέφυκε τὸ ζῶον τοῦτο. δίδυμα γοῦν ὄνον τεκοῦσαν οὐ ῥαδίως μέμνηται τις λόγος.

in the four comedies of Epicharmus and Mnesimachus and to the lack of mention of the καλλιώνυμος in them, the passage of *De natura animalium* should appear as a testimonium to Epicharmus' Ἡβας Γάμος, Γᾶ καὶ Θάλασσα, and Μοῦσαι, and to Mnesimachus' Ἴσθμιονίης.¹⁶

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16) See E. Cingano, *Interpreting Epic and Lyric Fragments: Stesichorus, Simonides, Corinna, the Theban epics, the Hesiodic corpus and other epic fragments*, *Lexis* 35, 2017, 28–57, at 34–35, and S. Vecchiato, *Nota editoriale a tre frammenti ,esiodei‘* (Hes. FF 340–42 M.-W. = 287–89 M.), *Hermes* 145, 2017, 118–120 for similar cases in fragments of Stesichorus and Hesiod.