Frammenti sulla scena (online)
Studi sul dramma antico frammentario
Università degli Studi di Torino
Centro Studi sul Teatro Classico
http://www.ojs.unito.it/index.php/fss
www.teatroclassico.unito.it
ISSN 2612-3908
2• 2021

SURFACE AND DEEP PARODY: THE CASE OF MIDDLE COMEDY

ATHINA PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU
UNIVERSITY OF PATRAS
athinapap@upatras.gr

Satire and laughter constitute the defining hallmarks of the comic genre and have always drawn the attention of scholars, both ancient and modern. The key role of satire/laughter is especially highlighted by the fact that differentiation in the ways satire was exercised and laughter was pursued substantiated, already in antiquity, the tripartite division of Greek comedy, underpinning the chronological boundaries among the three comic eras[1]; cf. *e.g*. the testimony of Dionysius Thrax: τρεῖς διαφορὰς ἔδοξεν ἔχειν ἡ κωμῳδία· καὶ ἡ μὲν καλεῖται παλαιά, ἡ ἐξ ἀρχῆς φανερῶς ἐλέγχουσα, ἡ δὲ μέση ἡ αἰνιγματωδῶς, ἡ δὲ νέα ἡ μηδ᾽ ὅλως τοῦτο ποιοῦσα πλὴν ἐπὶ δούλων ἢ ξένων[2]. ("Comedy seems to have had three distinct periods, one known as Old Comedy, which from its inception criticized openly; Middle Comedy, whose criticism was enigmatic; and New Comedy, which eschewed even this except in the case of slaves or foreigners"[3]).

The last few decades in particular saw the publication of substantial and extensive analyses of interconnected aspects of the twofold satire/laughter theme (*e.g*. satire

[1] There is sufficient evidence to allow us to trace the actual threefold division of Comedy back to the Hellenistic period, and we have good reason to believe that we particularly owe it to Aristophanes of Byzantium; cf. NESSELRATH 1990, 180-187. On Comedy's periodization cf. also NESSELRATH 2015.

[2] KOSTER 1975, XVIIIa, 37-39. For an evaluation of the testimonies collected by KOSTER 1975, cf. DOBROV 2010, 21-27.

[3] Eng. trans. by HENDERSON 2008, 81-83.

studied in various contexts such as politics and social history, laughter typology, theoretical interpretations of the mechanics of eliciting laughter in historically specific audiences, etc.)[4].

Contributing to this ongoing discussion, the present chapter revisits an old subject from a radically new point of view, as it assumes an interdisciplinary stance and explores comic satire during the period of Middle Comedy[5] from the perspective of psychology, in an attempt to identify and classify the major targets of satire during this period and, simultaneously, detect the very nature of satire that each target receives (*e.g.* which targets are treated more leniently and which ones less so). The key methodological tool in this approach is the modern psychological pattern of "*surface* and *deep* parody" (*parody* meant exclusively as "satire"), which has recently been established in two landmark studies by the Italian psychologists Francesca D'Errico and Isabella Poggi[6], in their attempt to explore the role of parody in modern politics. To this end, the two authors identified – following a meticulous socio-cognitive process – two distinct types of parody, "surface parody" and "deep parody", with reference to the recent political situation in Italy. According to D'Errico and Poggi, "surface parody" is defined as *simple distortion of reality by exaggeration*; that is, the author/parodist reproduces – in a distorting, grotesque, and laughable way – the target's main traits/flaws (of either physique or personality/behaviour), in order to elicit spontaneous laughter. Yet, reality can also be distorted in other, less anodyne ways, which D'Errico and Poggi identify as "deep parody". Typically, deep parody consists of the *re-categorization* of the target; in other words, the parody is so substantial and so vehement that the target is shifted from its own category (professional or other) to a different one that has the target's main flaw as its most prominent feature (*e.g.* gluttony, fraudulence, avarice, impetuousness). Distortion is at work, again; only that this time distortion is more profound (even hostile, at times) and, accordingly, it has deeper, stronger, and potentially harmful implications for the target[7]. It is important to note that "distortion" is understood in its widest sense, ranging from caricature to substitution, addition, subtraction, exaggeration, condensation, contrast, and discrepancy –

[4] The existing bibliography is voluminous and eclectic. Since it is impossible to squeeze all relevant work in a footnote, I merely cite certain reference and across-the-board items (rather than those focusing on particular cases) for purposes of further reading: BERGSON 1911, GIANGRANDE 1972, HALLIWELL 1984, CLARK 1987, NESSELRATH 1990, 218-225, HALLIWELL 1991, CAREY 1994, GRIFFIN 1994, GLASGOW 1995, BOYD 2004, HALL 2007, ROSEN 2007, HALLIWELL 2008, MITCHELL 2009, SIDWELL 2009, SOMMERSTEIN 2009, KIDD 2011, BEARD 2014, HALLIWELL 2014, ROSENBLOOM 2014, ROSEN 2015, KAZANTZIDIS/TSOUMPRA 2018, DESTRÉE 2019, SELLS 2019, SWALLOW/ HALL 2020.

[5] For a comprehensive synopsis of ancient views and modern scholarship on Middle Comedy, cf. NESSELRATH 1990, 1-187.

[6] POGGI/D'ERRICO 2013 and D'ERRICO/ POGGI 2016.

[7] D'ERRICO/POGGI 2016, 3-4.

with regard to the real-life target. Understandably, deep parody requires a more complex cognitive process, as well as control of more information by both the recipient and the generator of parody.

It is significant to emphasize that, within the context of this psychological model, the term "parody" is used to designate any kind of satire and criticism and all satirical techniques used in order to communicate a distorted, satirical representation of reality. This is a necessary clarification, since the widely established meaning of "parody" in relation to Greek Comedy is to designate any kind of distorting representation of a (literary) original[8]. Since the current analysis of comic satire will be carried out on the basis of the aforementioned psychological model, I consider it logical to maintain the same terminology to the one featuring in the respective psychological studies (*i.e*. *parody* instead of *satire*), so that a sense of both consistency and correspondence to the prototype is sustained.

On the grounds of this interdisciplinary approach, the present chapter showcases a *mutatis mutandis* application of the psychological pattern of surface and deep parody to Middle Comedy fragments[9], and tackles any resulting implications and issues[10]. By definition, a *mutatis mutandis* application of D'Errico and Poggi's parody model to (Middle) Comedy entails certain self-evident alterations and necessary adjustments that primarily pertain to the medium and the modality of parody; *e.g*. in the cases studied by D'Errico and Poggi the parody is enacted by a character (the parodist), whose costume may also allude to the recategorization of the target (in cases of deep parody), whereas in Comedy the targets are merely spoken of and described in terms that arguably account for their recategorization. Furthermore, D'Errico and Poggi only study examples of political nature, *i.e*. cases where the parodist exhibits a manifest political leaning and political ideology is intrinsically involved in parody. My analysis deliberately expands the purview of the psychological model beyond the political sphere and explores its adapted application upon the wide range of Comedy's targets. As the political repertoire drastically shrinks (though without ever disappearing) and as Comedy's engagement with politics

[8] Cf. SILK 1993, 478 and SILK 2000, 351.

[9] The present discussion does not seek to exhaustively register every single case of surface and deep parody featuring in Middle Comedy; instead, the aim is to exemplify the pattern.

[10] For the application of the same psychological tools/methodology to Aristophanic satire cf. PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2020a, of which the most salient findings are the following: Cleon (in *Knights* and elsewhere) is constantly the recipient of deep parody, and thereby recategorized from the category of victorious generals and popular politicians to the category of traitors and enemies of the Athenian polis. Socrates (in *Clouds*) is also a deep parody target, recategorized from the category of philosophers to the category of amoral charlatans. Other individuals, like Cleisthenes, are mocked through surface parody.

is fundamentally modified during the fourth century, an alternative, non-political version of ὀνομαστὶ κωμῳδεῖν emerges[11]; prosopographic satire now largely focuses on non-political, yet laughable features of the targeted individual (flawed/funny physical appearance, luxurious daily habits and nonchalant behaviour, conspicuous sexual predilections, etc.), instead of attacking the target's political standing/activities[12]. A new satirical environment is established, which is not primarily preoccupied with a political agenda; hence, it is at least challenging and thought-provoking to explore how D'Errico and Poggi's model can be adapted in this context, especially since this non-political version of ὀνομαστὶ κωμῳδεῖν is multifarious and can have a number of different manifestations.

The current discussion is pertinent to Halliwell's crucial differentiation between vulgar laughter that is expressive of hostility (as in "laughing someone down", κατα*γελᾶν*) and playful, sophisticated laughter that involves only a pretence of ridicule[13]. Furthermore, in discussions about Comedy's impact on reality, one needs to acknowledge the existence of an additional, crucial agent; that of the audience. There is a dynamic and reciprocal relationship between the comic poets and the audience, especially since comic plays often work (subconsciously, that is) as a 'shared psychological register'[14], reflecting, deflecting, and otherwise imprinting the communal discourse. Comedy's repertoire (including target-picking) is equally shaped by the poet's ingenuity and the audience's tastes. The intensity of satire (in our case, *surface* and *deep parody*) also needs to correspond – at least to some extent – to the audience's expectations, for the comic poets write neither *in vacuo* nor for themselves; they write for a specific audience. In the adespoton comic fr. 206 the audience (sitting in the actual theatrical *koilon*, the concave bank of seats) is metaphorically described as θά*λασσα* κοίλη ("a sea with heavy swells"; *i.e.* a turbulent sea). The composition of Athenian audience (elite, non-elite, more socially stratified; a still controversial issue among scholars[15]) and its concomitant, indeterminable socio-economic spectrum, along with the fluctuating level of politicization, the possibility of direct engagement with public affairs, and an underlying dramatic training and familiarization with the

[11] For trenchant discussions of politics in Middle Comedy cf. WEBSTER 1970, 37-56; NESSELRATH 1997 and 1990, 218-225; PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2008, 18-19; HENDERSON 2014; SOMMERSTEIN 2014, 299-302; MASTELLARI 2016.

[12] For a detailed analysis of this pattern and close reading of a substantial number of exemplary fragments from Middle Comedy, cf. PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2009.

[13] Cf. HALLIWELL 2014, 190-191 and HALLIWELL 2008, 206-263.

[14] HALL 2020.

[15] Some scholars (*e.g.* SOMMERSTEIN 1997, SOMMERSTEIN 1998, BOWIE 1998) make a case for a predominantly elite audience, whereas others (*e.g.* DAWSON 1997, WILSON 2000, REHM 2002, 50, REVERMANN 2006b, ROSELLI 2011, ROBSON 2017) argue in favour of a more socially stratified one.

dramatic stage constitute tangible, yet ever-changing, variables. Besides, another parameter not to be overlooked is the audience's 'participation' in the performance; as Hall has demonstrated[16], ancient Greek audiences (of both theatres and lawcourts) were more interventionist than modern ones.

Throughout this discussion, it is paramount that we constantly bear in mind that the dichotomy between surface and deep parody is an entirely modern concept and a mere hermeneutic tool that is meant to assist academic researchers in approaching the fragmentary material of (Middle) Comedy. Hence, whatever strategies, techniques or other tactics we are willing to credit the comic playwrights with, we need to remember that these were totally uncalculated and subconscious mechanisms on their behalf; all relevant process was entirely instinctive and unplanned. And this is significant from another point of view: *i.e.* we can detect traces and draw a picture of parody dynamics from within a pool of texts that were not originally meant to communicate such notions; this suggests – among many other things – that such notions were ultimately innate, albeit still latent, within the poetic collective.

In the following analysis I will study the application of this psychological model in cases of parody against politicians and philosophers, as well as against two largely thriving professional groups, *i.e.* hetairai and fishmongers. In the first cluster of examples analyzed immediately below a number of Athenian politicians of the fourth century BC are named and lambasted; Philippides becomes the recipient of surface parody, Iphicrates and Callistratus are subjected to deep parody, whilst non-political ὀνομαστὶ κωμῳδεῖν is exercised against them all.

The politician Philippides (*PAA* 928850) was a fervent partisan of the pro-Macedonian party, to the extent that his potent and controversial political presence led the orator Hyperides to deliver a speech against him in 336/5 BC (*Against Philippides*; fragmentarily preserved). Nonetheless, Philippides' contemporary comic playwrights have nothing to say of his political views, but they merely choose to focus on and deride his extreme thinness, to the point that Alexis coins a new term out of his name, the verb φιλιππιδόομαι, which means "to become as thin as Philippides, to lose weight", and uses it in the following fragment in present perfect tense, πεφιλιππίδωσαι:

> (A.) κακῶς ἔχεις, στρουθὶς ἀκαρὴς νὴ Δί᾽ εἶ· πεφιλιππίδωσαι.
> (B.) μὴ σὺ καινῶς μοι λάλει. ὅσον οὐ τέθνηκα[17]

[16] HALL 1995, 44; cf. REVERMANN 2006a, 159 ("audiences can justly be said to 'perform', to 'stage' themselves").

[17] Alex. fr. 147.

(A.) You're in bad shape, you're nothing but a sparrow, by Zeus! You've Philippidized.
(B.) Don't use newfangled vocabulary on me; I am as good as dead.[18]

Likewise, Aristopho makes the following remark:

(A.) ἐν ἡμέραις τρισὶν
ἰσχνότερον αὐτὸν ἀποφανῶ Φιλιππίδου.
(B.) οὕτως ἐν ἡμέραις ὀλίγαις νεκροὺς ποιεῖς;[19]

(A.) Within three days
I will make him thinner than Philippides.
(B.) Do you make corpses in so few days?[20]

Similarly, Philippides is mentioned and made fun of simply for his utmost slimness in the following comic fragments: in Aristopho fr. 10 Philippides' name becomes synonymous to asceticism[21]; in Alex. fr. 2 he is assimilated to a slender, miniature wine-vessel (ψυκτηρίδιον)[22]; in Alex. fr. 93 Philippides is visualized as having already been allotted to Hermes (the latter is described as Φιλιππίδου κληροῦχος), *i.e*. the implication being that his thinness makes him appear half-dead. This accumulative satire against Philippides is a typical case of surface parody, since reality is comically distorted through anodyne exaggeration that aims to cause playful laughter, without any hidden innuendos about the target's character, integrity, political attitude, etc. The ridicule/parody is straightforward and harmless to the target's status and career.
A textbook case of deep parody is implemented by Anaxandrides against the acclaimed general Iphicrates (*PAA* 542925)[23]. Iphicrates was fond of sumptuousness and luxury, *i.e*. qualities that, along with public display of wealth, were typically frowned upon in Athens, especially during the fourth century BC[24]. Iphicrates had appositely cultivated this taste of his during his service under Thracian masters and under the Persian king, before

[18] Eng. trans. by OLSON 2010, 209.
[19] Aristopho fr. 8. Here there is a detectable echo from Ar. *Nub*. 503-504: οὐδὲν διοίσεις Χαιρεφῶντος τὴν φύσιν. / οἴμοι κακοδαίμων, ἡμιθνὴς γενήσομαι ("In your nature you'll be indistinguishable from Chaerephon. / Heavens no, I'm going to be half-dead!"; Eng. trans. by HENDERSON, 1998, 81, adapted).
[20] Eng. trans. by PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2008, 121.
[21] Cf. PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2008, 120-122.
[22] Cf. ARNOTT 1996, 60-61.
[23] Cf. MILLIS 2015, 194-195, 199-237.
[24] Evincive passages are quoted and discussed further *below*.

marrying into the royal family of Cotys, king of Thrace, in the late 380s[25]. In 374 BC Iphicrates, having returned to Athens, managed to end the Spartan siege of Corfu under controversial circumstances (he was accused of appropriating a victory that allegedly was already won by the besieged who had broken free by themselves). Yet, Anaxandrides chooses not to comment on Iphicrates' recent military deeds, but focuses on his utterly barbarian wedding, thus re-categorizing him through deep parody: instead of some victorious Athenian general, Iphicrates is pictured as an immoderate and uncouth barbarian, without self-control, yielding to indulgence:

> κἂν ταῦτα ποιῆθ᾽ ὥσπερ φράζω,
> λαμπροῖς δείπνοις δεξόμεθ᾽ ὑμᾶς,
> οὐδὲν ὁμοίοις τοῖς Ἰφικράτους
> τοῖς ἐν Θράκῃ· καίτοι φασὶν
> βουβαυκαλόσαυλα γενέσθαι.
> κατὰ τὴν ἀγορὰν μὲν ὑπεστρῶσθαι
> στρώμαθ᾽ ἁλουργῆ μέχρι τῆς ἄρκτου·
> δειπνεῖν δ᾽ ἄνδρας βουτυροφάγους,
> αὐχμηροκόμας μυριοπληθεῖς[26]
>
> And if you behave just as I explain,
> we'll welcome you with a brilliant dinner party
> quite unlike the one Iphicrates
> celebrated in Thrace; although they say
> it was a huge, swank, swaggering affair.
> Purple bedding was spread as high as
> the Great Bear throughout the marketplace;
> butter-eating men were dining,
> dirty-haired hordes.[27]

The speaker continues with registering similarly extravagant circumstances, such as preposterously huge cauldrons, as well as evidence of non-Greek, barbarian ethos, *e.g.* Cotys getting drunk.

One of Iphicrates' associates, Callistratus (*PAA* 561575), is also targeted through deep parody. Callistratus played a major role in establishing the Second Athenian League (378/7 BC), assisted Iphicrates in ending the Spartan siege of Corfu (374 BC), and was

[25] Iphicrates married the sister (rather than daughter, as Athenaeus claims, 4, 131a) of Cotys, king of Thrace, shortly after the latter ascended to the throne in 384/3 BC. Cf. DAVIES 1971, 248-252 and MILLIS 2015, 210-211.

[26] Anaxandr. fr. 42, 1-9.

[27] Eng. trans. by OLSON 2007, 125.

instrumental in sealing the Peace of Nicias in 371 BC[28]. Yet, Antiphanes merely targets Callistratus' huge appetite and gluttony, and shifts him from the category of prominent politicians to the category of cooks:

> οἴνῳ < > τὸν οἶνον ἐξελαύνειν
> σάλπιγγι τὴν σάλπιγγα, τῷ κήρυκι τὸν βοῶντα,
> κόπῳ κόπον, ψόφῳ ψόφον, τριωβόλῳ δὲ πόρνην,
> αὐθαδίαν αὐθαδίᾳ, Καλλίστρατον μαγείρῳ[29]
>
> to try to drive out the wine with wine,
> the trumpet with a trumpet, the fellow who shouts with the herald,
> blow with blow, noise with noise, a whore with a triobol,
> stubbornness with stubbornness, Callistratus with a cook.[30]

In these lines the comic character makes a quip regarding how everything and everyone can be ousted by something or someone of similar nature, in what Meineke[31] jokingly described as an excellent confirmation of the homeopathy doctrine. In an instance of *παρὰ προσδοκίαν* Callistratus is paired with a cook; recategorization is at work again and the vehicle for it is Callistratus' incessant concern with food (because of his gluttony).

The orator Demosthenes is also picked up by the comic playwrights and re-categorized through deep parody. Timocles nicknames him Briareos[32] and pictures him swallowing catapults and spears[33]:

> καὶ πρῶτα μέν σοι παύσεται Δημοσθένης
> ὀργιζόμενος. (Β.) ὁ ποῖος; (Α.) ὁ Βριάρεως,
> ὁ τοὺς καταπέλτας τάς τε λόγχας ἐσθίων[34]
>
> (A.) And first of all, Demosthenes will stop
> being mad at you. (B.) Who? (A.) Briareus,
> the one who eats catapults and spears.[35]

[28] Cf. Diod.Sic. 15, 29, 7-8 and Theopomp. *FGrH* 115 F 98. Cf. SEALEY 1956; SEALEY 1967, 133-163; DAVIES 1971, 277-282; RHODES 1994, 573.

[29] Antiph. fr. 293, 1-4.

[30] Eng. trans. by OLSON 2007, 249.

[31] MEINEKE 1840, 139-140.

[32] One of the three hundred-handed and fifty-headed giants, offspring of Earth and Sky; cf. Hes. *Th*. 147-152, 617-719.

[33] Cf. APOSTOLAKIS 2019, 115-123.

[34] Timocl. fr. 12, 3-5.

[35] Eng. trans. by OLSON 2008, 11 (adapted).

Likewise, Mnesimachus presents Demosthenes addressing king Philip II of Macedon in preposterously warlike language[36]. The political background here is the Athenian embassy to king Philip in 346 BC, in which Demosthenes participated[37] and which resulted in the Peace of Philocrates during the same year.

> ἆρ' οἶσθ' ὁτιὴ πρὸς ἄνδρας ἐστί σοι μάχη,
> οἳ τὰ ξίφη δειπνοῦμεν ἠκονημένα,
> ὄψον δὲ δᾷδας ἡμμένας καταπίνομεν;
> ἐντεῦθεν εὐθὺς ἐπιφέρει τραγήματα
> ἡμῖν ὁ παῖς μετὰ δεῖπνον ἀκίδας Κρητικάς,
> ὥσπερ ἐρεβίνθους, δορατίων τε λείψανα
> κατεαγότ', ἀσπίδας δὲ προσκεφάλαια καὶ
> θώρακας ἔχομεν, πρὸς ποδῶν δὲ σφενδόνας
> καὶ τόξα, καταπάλταισι δ' ἐστεφανώμεθα[38]
>
> Don't you know that in us you are going to fight
> against men who dine on sharpened swords,
> and swallow blazing torches as a relish?
> Thereafter, just after dinner, the slave
> brings forth for us a dessert of Cretan arrows,
> as if it were chickpeas, and relics of broken
> spears; for cushions we have shields and
> breastplates, slings and bows at our feet,
> and we are wreathed with catapults.[39]

Through this deep parody, Demosthenes is re-categorized; from eloquent orator he is transformed into a non-human creature, a war machine, a fakir who swallows sharpened swords and flaming torches – as if this were part of some circus show.

Nevertheless, even with the concomitant recategorization, deep parody against Iphicrates, Callistratus, and Demosthenes does not communicate the same anxiety, grudge or even enmity that *e.g.* Aristophanic texts do against Cleon. During Middle Comedy, deep parody – at least when directed against politicians (and other persons engaged with public affairs) – is of a conspicuously different nature compared to Old Comedy cases[40]; it is less critical, less derogatory, less caustic, and less inimical. At the

[36] Cf. PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2008, 210-216 and MASTELLARI 2019, 453-467.

[37] Cf. Demosth. 5, 9-10.

[38] Mnesim. fr. 7.

[39] Eng. trans. by PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2008, 214 (adapted).

[40] For comparison with Old Comedy cf. PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2020a.

same time, it is much more funny and more caricatural; one may easily visualize Iphicrates as a maharaja, Callistratus as a cook, and Demosthenes as a fakir. In parallel, this more refined deep parody also aims to produce sophisticated and playful laughter[41]. Hence, one could speak of a 'hybrid' version of deep parody during Middle Comedy with relation to political figures, in the sense that the recategorization, albeit still present, is meant to be less harmful (to a person's character and political career) and much more amusing; *i.e*. the parody target – despite the recategorization process – is not necessarily stripped from its credibility and trustworthiness, and its (political / social) status is not pulverized.

As far as philosopher figures are concerned, Middle Comedy's *enfant terrible* is Plato[42], who succeeds Socrates as the primary philosophical figure to be mocked. Yet, the attack against him lacks the bitterness and acrimony that poets of Old Comedy regularly exhibited towards philosophers in general. Plato is hardly ever subjected to deep parody and no severe accusations (such as impiety) are ever cast against him. With perhaps one exception (Ephipp. fr. 14; quoted below), Plato is always mocked through surface parody. The attenuated sarcasm towards him is quintessentially different from *e.g*. the inimical treatment of Protagoras in Eupolis' *Kolakes* or Socrates in Aristophanes' *Clouds* and Amipsias' *Connus*[43]. The cooling off of comic jibe is to be understood in relation with the increased interest in philosophy and philosophical tenets in general, which is recorded during the fourth century BC; by a "trickle down" process philosophy becomes part of the fabric of the society, to the extent that playwrights writing for mass audiences can expect their spectators to know certain basic concepts, without having necessarily read *e.g*. their Plato in the original[44]. Plato is mocked through surface parody for inconsequential reasons and trifling topics, whereas his intellectual / philosophical worth is most unquestioned and left intact; *e.g*. the speaker in Anaxandr. fr. 20 sarcastically refers to Plato's notorious fondness for the Academy's sacred olives (μορίαι)[45], Alexis (fr. 185) laughs at Plato's idle talk and foolish prattling (ἀδολεσχεῖν)[46], while Plato's passion of definitions, usually trivial ones, is roasted in Alex. fr. 1[47] and Epicr. fr. 10. Even when referring to Plato's philosophical tenets, the comic playwrights refrain from conveying any serious criticism; the parody is again of the surface kind, with the satire being largely innocuous; *e.g*. for the slave figure in the following fragment by Amphis, "Plato's Good" (Ἀγαθόν) is synonymous to anything obscure and

[41] Such a kind of laughter is simply inconceivable when, for example, Aristophanes accuses Cleon for acting against the city's best interests in *Ach*. 659-664; cf. PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2020a, 120-122.

[42] Cf. WEBSTER 1970, 50-56; RIGINOS 1976, 68, 114; BROCK 1990; ARNOTT 1996, 49-51.

[43] Cf. BOWIE 1998; CAREY 2000, 419-436; ORTH 2013, 213-248; PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2020a, 123.

[44] Cf. IMPERIO 1998, 120-130; BELARDINELLI 2008; KONSTAN 2014; FARMER 2017.

[45] Cf. MILLIS 2015, 110-111.

[46] Cf. ARNOTT 1996, 549-550.

[47] Cf. ARNOTT 1996, 48-51.

incomprehensible, but the overall mood is playful and no animosity against Plato is detected[48]:

> τὸ δ' ἀγαθὸν ὅ τι ποτ' ἐστίν, οὗ σὺ τυγχάνειν
> μέλλεις διὰ ταύτην, ἧττον οἶδα τοῦτ' ἐγώ,
> ὦ δέσποτ', ἢ τὸ Πλάτωνος ἀγαθόν. (B.) πρόσεχε δή[49]
>
> And as for whatever benefit you are likely
> to get through her, I know less about that,
> master, than about Plato's Good. (B.) Pay attention.[50]

The same doctrine about *ἀγαθόν* is the satirical focus of Alex. fr. 98[51]. Plato's theories about the soul and its immortality are parodied in Alex. fr. 163[52] and Cratin.Jun. fr. 10[53], while the theory about the one and indefinite dyad becomes the comic butt in Theopomp.Com. fr. 16.

In another fragment by Amphis the comic character directly addresses Plato (who may have been either present on stage or absent) and accuses him of arrogance[54]:

> ὦ Πλάτων,
> ὡς οὐδὲν οἶσθα πλὴν σκυθρωπάζειν μόνον,
> ὥσπερ κοχλίας σεμνῶς ἐπηρκὼς τὰς ὀφρῦς[55]
>
> O Plato,
> you know nothing but scowling,
> raising solemnly your eyebrows like a snail.[56]

Furthermore, pacing up and down whilst vainly pondering is singled out by a female speaker as a characteristic habit of Plato in the following fragment by Alexis[57]:

> εἰς καιρὸν ἥκεις· ὡς ἔγωγ᾽ ἀπορουμένη
> ἄνω κάτω τε περιπατοῦσ᾽ ὥσπερ Πλάτων

[48] Cf. PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2016, 49-55.
[49] Amphis fr. 6.
[50] Eng. trans. by PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2016, 49.
[51] Cf. ARNOTT 1996, 257-259.
[52] Cf. ARNOTT 1996, 477-479.
[53] Cf. MASTELLARI 2019, 125-131.
[54] Cf. PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2016, 87-93.
[55] Amphis fr. 13.
[56] Eng. trans. by PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2016, 87.
[57] Cf. ARNOTT 1996, 445-447.

σοφὸν οὐδὲν εὕρηκ᾽, ἀλλὰ κοπιῶ τὰ σκέλη[58]

You have come in the nick of time. For I am at my wits' end
and walking up and down, like Plato,
and yet have discovered no wise plan but only tired my legs.[59]

In Antiphanes fr. 35 surface parody is exercised towards the members of Plato's Academy, who are presented as soft and effeminate; most characteristic are lines 3-4 of this fragment: λευκὴ χλανίς, φαιὸς χιτωνίσκος καλός, / πιλίδιον ἁπαλόν, εὔρυθμος βακτηρία ("a white mantle, a nice little gray cloak, / a small, soft felt cap; an elegant staff"[60]). But the tone is different in the next fragment by Ephippus, where the speaker employs deep parody against the Academy members and Plato. The focus is on a young Platonist, representative of all (or, at least, the majority of) students/members of the Academy, who is pictured cultivating a fake façade of austerity and solemnity whilst crookedly exploiting philosophy for making money:

ἔπειτ᾽ ἀναστὰς εὔστοχος νεανίας
τῶν ἐξ Ἀκαδημείας τις ὑπὸ Πλάτωνα καὶ
Βρυσωνοθρασυμαχειοληψικερμάτων
πληγεὶς ἀνάγκῃ, ληψιλογομίσθῳ τέχνῃ
συνών τις, οὐκ ἄσκεπτα δυνάμενος λέγειν,
εὖ μὲν μαχαίρᾳ ξύστ᾽ ἔχων τριχώματα,
εὖ δ᾽ ὑποκαθιεὶς ἄτομα πώγωνος βάθη,
εὖ δ᾽ ἐν πεδίλῳ πόδα τιθεὶς ὑπόξυρον
κνήμης ἱμάντων ἰσομέτροις ἑλίγμασιν,
ὄγκῳ τε χλανίδος εὖ τεθωρακισμένος,
σχῆμ᾽ ἀξιόχρεων ἐπικαθεὶς βακτηρίᾳ,
ἀλλότριον, οὐκ οἰκεῖον, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ,
ἔλεξεν· "ἄνδρες τῆς Ἀθηναίων χθονός."[61]

Then a shrewd young man stood up,
someone from the Academy who had been under Plato,
one of those taking coins like Bryson and Thrasymachus,
driven by necessity, a person familiar with this money-making
speech craft and incapable of saying anything inconsiderate.
With hair neatly trimmed with shears,
with uncut beard nicely grown long and thick,

[58] Alex. fr. 151.
[59] Eng. trans. by HICKS 1925, 301.
[60] Eng. trans. by OLSON 2010, 169.
[61] Ephipp. fr. 14.

having his lean feet nicely set in sandals
with twisted straps of equal length around his shins,
and nicely shielded behind his bulky cloak,
while setting his compelling stature upon a staff,
he made a speech composed, in my opinion, by
someone other than himself: "Men of the land of Athens."[62]

Pursuit of crooked profiteering, fake devotion to philosophy, and extravagant appearance, all enveloped in an air of fraudulence, make for a concrete case of deep parody against the Academy, and by extension against Plato; and this is the only such case in the surviving comic corpus.

Apart from Plato, the Pythagoreans are also a popular comic butt during Middle Comedy[63]. The comic playwrights use almost exclusively[64] the term Πυθαγοριστής ("Pythagorist"), instead of Πυθαγόρειος ("Pythagorean")[65], as a (pejorative) designation of all followers of Pythagoras. Unlike the case with Plato, the parody against Pythagoreans is normally deep (albeit more flippant than *e.g*. the moral concerns expressed in Aristophanes' *Clouds*). The Pythagoreans are recategorized; instead of devoted followers they are visualized as charlatans and hypocrites, who use philosophy as a façade and a cheap excuse for their squalidness, stinginess, and peevishness. The following fragment by Aristopho (from the play "The Pythagorist") is a typical example of the comic satire against them[66]. In these lines, the speaker refuses to acknowledge any pure faith or genuine motives behind the practice of asceticism; instead, what he discerns behind the many pretensions is sheer hypocrisy, empty talk, squalidness, greediness, and opportunism:

πρὸς τῶν θεῶν, οἰόμεθα τοὺς πάλαι ποτέ,

[62] Eng. trans. by PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2021, 147.

[63] Cf. WEIHER 1913, 55-68; SANCHIS LLOPIS 1995; MUCCIOLI 2002, 366; BATTEZZATO 2008; ZHMUD 2012, 179-182; KONSTANTAKOS 2015, 169 (n. 31 for further bibliography).

[64] Except for three cases: Antiph. fr. 158, and Alex. frr. 201 and 223.

[65] Outside Comedy the Pythagorean pupils and adherents are called either Πυθαγόρειοι or Πυθαγορικοί (*e.g*. Hdt. 2, 81, Plat. *Resp*. 530d, Diog.Laert. 8, 7, Plut. *Mor*. 116e, Porph. *VP* 49, etc.). The term Πυθαγοριστής appears for the first time in Middle Comedy. What emerges from the ancient sources (*e.g*. Iambl. *VP* 18, 80, *Suda* π 3124, Phot. *Bibl*. 249, 438b) is that there were two different types of Pythagoreanism; the Πυθαγόρειοι / Πυθαγορικοί, who were the actual pupils / members of the sect, and the Πυθαγορισταί, who were the zealous admirers (ζηλωταί). The former (also known as μαθηματικοί or ἐσωτερικοί) were the sophisticated ones, whereas the latter (also known as ἀκουσματικοί) practised a number of abstinences (*e.g*. from meat, beans) avoided baths, believed in metempsychosis, etc. (cf. Porph. *VP* 37, Clem. Al. *Strom*. 5, 9, 59, Iambl. *VP* 18, 81, 87-89). Cf. ARNOTT 1996, 581-582; BURKERT 1972, 166-208; KINGSLEY 1995, 126.

[66] Cf. PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2008, 125-128.

τοὺς Πυθαγοριστὰς γινομένους, ὄντως ῥυπᾶν
ἑκόντας ἢ φορεῖν τρίβωνας ἡδέως;
οὐκ ἔστι τούτων οὐδέν, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ·
ἀλλ' ἐξ ἀνάγκης, οὐκ ἔχοντες οὐδὲ ἕν,
τῆς εὐτελείας πρόφασιν εὑρόντες καλὴν
ὅρους ἔπηξαν τοῖς πένησι χρησίμους.
ἐπεὶ παράθες αὐτοῖσιν ἰχθῦς ἢ κρέας,
κἂν μὴ κατεσθίωσι καὶ τοὺς δακτύλους,
ἐθέλω κρέμασθαι δεκάκις[67]

In the name of the gods, do we think that those early
Pythagorists really went dirty of their own will
or wore threadbare cloaks happily?
Neither of these holds true, as it appears to me.
But of necessity, since they had literally nothing,
having found a good pretext for their frugality,
they established measures useful for the poor.
For, lay before them fish or meat,
and, if they do not devour it, along with their fingers,
I am willing to be hung ten times.[68]

The next fragment by Aristopho (originating from the same play as the previous fragment) is an eschatological account referring to someone's descent to the Underworld, where a squalid Pythagorean 'feast' is said to be taking place featuring vegetables and water (instead of meat and wine)[69]. Pythagorists are again subjected to deep parody and are recategorized; their fake devotion and destitution are once again exposed, revealing the devotees as cheap impostors and squalid fraudsters.

ἔφη καταβὰς εἰς τὴν δίαιταν τῶν κάτω
ἰδεῖν ἑκάστους, διαφέρειν δὲ πάμπολυ
τοὺς Πυθαγοριστὰς τῶν νεκρῶν· μόνοισι γὰρ
τούτοισι τὸν Πλούτωνα συσσιτεῖν ἔφη
δι' εὐσέβειαν. (Β.) εὐχερῆ θεὸν λέγεις
εἰ τοῖς ῥύπου μεστοῖσιν ἥδεται συνών.
ἐσθίουσί τε
λάχανά τε καὶ πίνουσιν ἐπὶ τούτοις ὕδωρ·
φθεῖρας δὲ καὶ τρίβωνα τὴν τ' ἀλουσίαν
οὐδεὶς ἂν ὑπομείνειε τῶν νεωτέρων[70]

[67] Aristopho fr. 9.
[68] Eng. trans. by PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2008, 125-126 (adapted).
[69] Cf. PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2008, 138-143.
[70] Aristopho fr. 12.

> He said that, when he descended, he looked at every one of the
> Underworld habitants, as to their life-style, and that the Pythagorists
> were far better than the other dead. For he said that only
> with them does Pluto dine because of
> their piety. (B.) What an easy-going god you are speaking of,
> since he finds pleasure in keeping company with people full of filth.
> And not only do they eat vegetables,
> but they also drink water afterwards.
> As for the lice, the threadbare cloak and their unwashed state,
> none of the younger ones could bear them.[71]

Likewise, the Cynics also become recipients of deep parody and are recategorized in the following fragment by Eubulus; instead of reverent philosophers, they are portrayed as impoverished, filthy and homeless fakes and starving parasites[72]:

> οὗτοι ἀνιπτόποδες χαμαιευνάδες ἀερίοικοι,
> ἀνόσιοι λάρυγγες,
> ἀλλοτρίων κτεάνων παραδειπνίδες, ὦ λοπαδάγχαι
> λευκῶν ὑπογαστριδίων[73]
>
> You of the unwashed feet, who sleep on the ground and whose roof is the open sky,
> unholy gullets,
> who dine on other people's goods, o snatchers of casserole dishes,
> full of white belly-steaks.[74]

As already mentioned, the playwrights of Middle Comedy treat philosophy much more leniently compared to what their colleagues have been used to during the previous century. And this is especially true for Plato; by and large, Middle Comedy poets draw an anodyne portrait of him greedily snatching the Academy's sacred olives, whilst aimlessly meandering and endlessly prattling about incomprehensible stuff. Regarding the followers of other philosophical schools (e.g. Pythagoreans and Cynics), although deep parody highlights their alleged hypocrisy, one cannot deny a simultaneous feeling of sympathy towards these hapless and pitiable wanna-be philosophers, who – "by necessity" (ἐξ ἀνάγκης, Aristopho fr. 9, 5) – (try to) cover their penury behind the veil of an ascetic lifestyle that is becoming for a comme-il-faut philosopher. Hence, on the

[71] Eng. trans. by PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2008, 139 (adapted).

[72] Cf. HUNTER 1983, 228-230.

[73] Eub. fr. 137. The same view about Cynics is shared by Ath. 3, 113f (with reference to Diogenes of Sinope).

[74] Eng. trans. by OLSON 2007, 39-41 (adapted).

whole[75], deep parody towards philosophers in Middle Comedy is arguably of the same 'hybrid' kind that is also exercised towards contemporary politicians; *i.e*. recategorization is still implemented but without any grudge, enmity, or bitter resentment. Instead, Plato (the commonest target) is almost always pictured as a goofy philosopher, who has everyone's sympathetic understanding for his eccentric habits.

Nevertheless, apart from the political figures and the philosophers (popular comic targets in both Middle and Old Comedy, despite the rudimentary differences in the nature and scope of satire in each period), there are two distinct professional categories that stand out for the extremely caustic satire and the conspicuous deep parody that is exercised against them in the surviving fragments of Middle Comedy; these are the fishmongers[76] and the hetairai (though mostly the μεγαλόμισθοι, *i.e*. the "high-priced" ones[77]). Although, as we have seen, deep parody against politicians and philosophers in Middle Comedy appears significantly milder, funnier and less anodyne (having turned into a caricaturistic version of Old Comedy's acrimony), when it comes to hetairai and fishmongers deep parody against them is phenomenally caustic, spiteful, and relentless, and explicitly communicates an intense feeling of rancour and indignation, to say the least, against them both, as if the comic poets were looking to take vengeance for some past wrongdoing. As a matter of fact, this uninhibited antipathy and animosity against hetairai and fishmongers is reminiscent of and can be paralleled with the deep parody against Cleon[78], in terms of both intensity and content (comparison with beasts/monsters). It is noteworthy that this extremely sharp, almost hostile, deep parody against hetairai and fishmongers constantly visualizes them as thoroughly unlikeable individuals (often even as voracious creatures and man-eating mythical monsters – recategorization is blatantly at work here), who capriciously charge astronomical fees for their services and products and regularly use scheming ways (beautifying tricks and sale of rotten fish respectively), in order to deceive their customers and thus increase their profit and amass wealth. Ultimately, deep parody against both hetairai and fishmongers repeatedly clings on the thorny question of money, on the riches heaped up by these professionals.

A most revealing passage, where hetairai are assimilated to monstrous mythological creatures, is the following fragment by Anaxilas[79]:

---

[75] Allowing perhaps for a couple of exceptions, *e.g*. Ephipp. fr. 14 (against Plato's students) and Eub. fr. 137 (against Cynics).

[76] Cf. the analysis of all surviving fragments targeting fishmongers in PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2020b.

[77] The prices charged by the grand hetairai are discussed by SCHNEIDER *RE* 8.1343-4; cf. FURLEY 2009, 131 (on Men. *Epit*. 136).

[78] In the second parabasis of Aristophanes' *Wasps* Cleon is visualized as a grotesque, inhuman monster (1031-1036). I discuss the affinities with Cleon *below*.

[79] Cf. the detailed analysis of this fragment by TARTAGLIA 2019, 120-156.

ὅστις ἀνθρώπων ἑταίραν ἠγάπησε πώποτε,
οὗ γένος τίς ἂν δύναιτο παρανομώτερον φράσαι;
τίς γὰρ ἢ δράκαιν' ἄμικτος, ἢ Χίμαιρα πύρπνοος,
ἢ Χάρυβδις, ἢ τρίκρανος Σκύλλα, ποντία κύων,
Σφίγξ, ὕδρα, λέαιν', ἔχιδνα, πτηνά θ' Ἁρπυιῶν γένη,
εἰς ὑπερβολὴν ἀφῖκται τοῦ καταπτύστου γένους;
οὐκ ἔνεσθ', αὗται δ' ἁπάντων ὑπερέχουσι τῶν κακῶν[80]

If anyone's ever grown attached to a hetaira –
could you name a more criminal bunch?
Because what fearsome dragon, or fire-breathing Chimaera,
or Charybdis, or three-headed Scylla, or shark,
Sphinx, Hydra, lion, poisonous snake, or winged flock of Harpies
outdoes this revolting group?
It's impossible, for they exceed all evil![81]

And further down the same fragment:

ἡ δὲ Νάννιον τί νυνὶ διαφέρειν Σκύλλης δοκεῖ;
οὐ δύ' ἀποπνίξασ' ἑταίρους τὸν τρίτον θηρεύεται
ἔτι λαβεῖν; …
ἡ δὲ Φρύνη τὴν Χάρυβδιν οὐχὶ πόρρω που ποεῖ
τόν τε ναύκληρον λαβοῦσα καταπέπωκ' αὐτῷ σκάφει;[82]

What difference can you see today between Nannion and Scylla?
After she strangled two boyfriends, isn't she angling now
to catch a third? …
And isn't Phryne behaving just like Charybdis,
by grabbing the ship-owner and gulping him down, boat and all?[83]

And the fragment concludes (Anaxil. fr. 22, 30-31): συντεμόντι δ' οὐδὲ ἓν / ἔσθ' ἑταίρας ὅσα πέρ ἐστιν θηρί' ἐξωλέστερον ("to sum up, however many wild beasts there are, nothing's more pernicious than a hetaira!"[84]). The imagery of hetairai eating up their lovers (*i.e.* making them spend entire fortunes buying their services) recurs in Macho (fr.

[80] Anaxil. fr. 22, 1-7.
[81] Eng. trans. by OLSON 2010, 237 (adapted).
[82] Anaxil. fr. 22, 15-19.
[83] Eng. trans. by OLSON 2010, 239.
[84] Eng. trans. by OLSON 2010, 241 (adapted).

18, 423-426)[85], who testifies how the hetaira Nico was nicknamed "She-goat" (Αἴξ), "because she once gobbled up a wealthy lover named Thallus"[86].

Deep parody and recategorization are manifestly at work here; the relentless greediness and rapacity of hetairai becomes the vehicle that enables the comic playwrights to recategorize them and project them as non-humans, monstrous creatures. This monster imagery is germane with another deep parody imagery, the one that portrays hetairai as traps and female hunters (again, recategorization is more than manifest). A female hunter is precisely the title-figure of a play by Philetaerus: *Κυναγίς*. In the following fragment by Theophilus an elderly appears anxious about protecting and preventing a younger lad from becoming entrapped by hetairai[87]:

> τοῦ μή ποτ' αὐτὸν ἐμπεσεῖν εἰς Λαΐδα
> φερόμενον ἢ Μηκωνίδ' ἢ Σισύμβριον
> … ἢ τούτων τινὰ
> ὧν ἐμπλέκουσι τοῖς λίνοις αἱ μαστροποί[88]
>
> (to save him) from falling with a rush into the hands
> of Lais or Meconis or Sisymbrion
> or Barathron or Thallousa or anyone of those (women),
> in whose nets the brothel-keepers entangle you.[89]

Likewise, in the following fragment by Amphis the speaker reckons – with disappointment – that Plutos frequents only certain famous hetairai:

> τυφλὸς ὁ Πλοῦτος εἶναί μοι δοκεῖ,
> ὅστις γε παρὰ ταύτην μὲν οὐκ εἰσέρχεται,
> παρὰ δὲ Σινώπη καὶ Λύκᾳ καὶ Ναννίῳ
> ἑτέραις τε τοιαύταισι παγίσι τοῦ βίου
> ἔνδον κάθητ᾽ ἀπόπληκτος οὐδ᾽ ἐξέρχεται[90]
>
> I think Plutos is blind,
> for he does not enter the house of this girl,
> but in the homes of Sinope, Lyca, and Nannion,

[85] Cf. GOW 1965, 131-132. There is a witty pun on the lover's name, Θαλλός, which means "young shoot/branch" that goats love to graze on.

[86] Eng. trans. by OLSON 2010, 369.

[87] It is instructive that, even much later, in Lucian (*DMeretr*. 11, 2), Παγίς ("Trap") features as a hetaira's nickname.

[88] Theophil. fr. 11, 1-4.

[89] Eng. trans. by PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2008, 273-274.

[90] Amphis fr. 23.

and other similar traps of life
he sits senseless inside and never comes out.[91]

In these lines the imagery of personified Plutos (stemming from the obvious antecedent, *i.e.* Aristophanes' homonymous play) sitting in the houses of some grand hetairai is an acute metaphor for the riches that 'have settled in' the houses of these and other, similar figures. Remarkably, the hetairai are bluntly described as "traps of life". The wealth enjoyed by the grand hetairai (along with the accompanying capricious behaviour and selective availability of theirs) constitutes a basic (better say, the most fundamental) reason why the comic playwrights exhibit such a strong antipathy towards them. In the next fragment by Aristopho the disgruntled comic character concludes:

αἱ τῶν ἑταιρῶν γὰρ διοπετεῖς οἰκίαι·
γεγόνασιν ἄβατοι τοῖς ἔχουσι μηδὲ ἕν[92]

The houses of the courtesans are surely taboo;
they have become places unapproachable to those who have not a thing.[93]

Via this grotesque imagery the houses of hetairai are transformed into sacrosanct places (NB this is the only occurrence of the epithet διοπετής in Comedy; lit. "fell from Zeus"); as such ("touched by Zeus"), the houses have become taboo and inaccessible to common people. Accordingly, the hetairai living in such elysian habitats are automatically recategorized and turned into goddesses. Having exactly the swaggering attitude of a goddess, rich hetairai capriciously accept and reject customers at will and according to their mood. Most typical is Phryne's terse reply in the following fragment[94]:

Φρύνην ἐπείρα Μοίριχος τὴν Θεσπικήν
κἄπειτεν αἰτήσασαν αὐτὸν μνᾶν μίαν
ὁ Μοίριχος, "μέγ᾽," εἶπεν. "οὐ πρώην δύο
χρυσοῦς λαβοῦσα παρεγένου ξένῳ τινί;"
"περίμενε τοίνυν καὶ σύ," φησ᾽, "ἕως ἂν οὗ
βινητιάσω, καὶ τοσοῦτον λήψομαι"[95]

Moerichus was trying to get Phryne of Thespiae into bed,
and then, when she asked him for a mina,

[91] Eng. trans. by PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2016, 150.
[92] Aristopho fr. 4.
[93] Eng. trans. by PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2008, 102.
[94] Cf. GOW 1965, 135-136.
[95] Macho fr. 18, 450-455.

Moerichus said: "That's a lot; didn't you settle
for two gold (staters) when you slept with some foreigner the other day?"
She said: "Well then, you can hang around too, until
I feel like getting laid and then I'll take that much."[96]

The same pretentiousness/unavailability and pursuit of the wealthiest customers are traits also attributed to the hetaira Lais by Epicrates, in a fragment where the speaker recalls the following:

αὕτη γὰρ οὖν ὁπότ᾽ ἦν νεοττὸς καὶ νέα,
ὑπὸ τῶν στατήρων ἦν ἀπηγριωμένη,
εἶδες δ᾽ ἂν αὐτῆς Φαρνάβαζον θᾶττον ἄν[97]

when she was a young nestling,
she was driven wild by the staters
and you would have got an audience with
Pharnabazus sooner than with her.[98]

The vanity and snobbishness of well-off hetairai, who do not need to take up every single customer (because of their affluence), is another cause for rancour against them and another common point with the fishmongers (see further below).

Furthermore, the over-elaborate beautifying tricks of hetairai constitute a common comic butt, providing the grounds for parody (surface and also deep at times). Most typical and most detailed is the following fragment by Alexis, where the speaker expatiates on what Athenaeus 13, 568a (who preserves the fragment) describes as ἑταιρικὴ παρασκευή ("how the hetairai prepare for business"):

πρῶτα μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τὸ κέρδος καὶ τὸ συλᾶν τοὺς πέλας
πάντα τἄλλ᾽ αὐταῖς πάρεργα γίγνεται, ῥάπτουσι δὲ
πᾶσιν ἐπιβουλάς. ἐπειδὰν δ᾽ εὐπορήσωσίν ποτε,
ἀνέλαβον καινὰς ἑταίρας, πρωτοπείρους τῆς τέχνης·
εὐθὺς ἀναπλάττουσι ταύτας, ὥστε μήτε τοὺς τρόπους
μήτε τὰς ὄψεις ὁμοίας διατελεῖν οὔσας ἔτι.
τυγχάνει μικρά τις οὖσα· φελλὸς ἐν ταῖς βαυκίσιν
ἐγκεκάττυται. μακρά τις· διάβαθρον λεπτὸν φορεῖ
τήν τε κεφαλὴν ἐπὶ τὸν ὦμον καταβαλοῦσ᾽ ἐξέρχεται·
τοῦτο τοῦ μήκους ἀφεῖλεν. οὐκ ἔχει τις ἰσχία·
ὑπενέδυσ᾽ ἐρραμέν᾽ αὐτήν, ὥστε τὴν εὐπυγίαν

[96] Eng. trans. by OLSON 2010, 371.
[97] Epicr. fr. 3, 11-13.
[98] Eng. trans. by OLSON 2010, 305 (adapted).

ἀναβοᾶν τοὺς εἰσιδόντας[99]
…
τὰς ὀφρῦς πυρρὰς ἔχει τις· ζωγραφοῦσιν ἀσβόλῳ.
συμβέβηκ᾽ εἶναι μέλαιναν· κατέπλασεν ψιμυθίῳ.
λευκόχρως λίαν τις ἐστίν· παιδέρωτ᾽ ἐντρίβεται[100]

Everything else, first of all, is less important to them than
making a profit and plundering the people they associate with,
and they stitch together plots against everyone. And whenever they get rich,
they take new courtesans, novices at the craft, into their houses.
They immediately reshape them, so they don't act
or look the same any more.
A girl happens to be short; cork's attached to the soles
of her shoes. She's tall; she wears a thin-soled shoe and rests her head on her
shoulder when she goes outside, reducing her height. She's got no ass;
her mistress discreetly puts a pad on her, so that people who see her
comment loudly on what a fine rear end she has.
…
A girl's got blond eyebrows; they draw them in with soot.
Her skin happens to be dark; her mistress covers her with white lead.
Another one's skin's too white; she rubs rouge on herself.[101]

The above report is overwhelmingly descriptive and graphic. The hetairai are manifestly mocked through surface parody for the sensationalistic usage of faux means to increase their attractiveness. Yet, one could also argue that deep parody is at work here (at least, up to a point); as the speaker notes, the mistresses "immediately reshape" (εὐθὺς ἀναπλάττουσι) the novices, so that "they don't look the same any more" (μήτε … ὁμοίας διατελεῖν οὔσας ἔτι). The transformation of hetairai into something alien to their nature is arguably an adapted version of recategorization.

Likewise, the repulsive result of such a profound make-over is vividly recorded by Eubulus in the following fragment, where the speaker addresses a group of hetairai with excessive make-up (ὑμεῖς, line 2) and employs this gross image of theirs as a counter-example (οὐδ᾽ ὥσπερ, line 2) for some other women who refrain from using these crafty methods.

μὰ Δί᾽ οὐχὶ περιπεπλασμέναι ψιμυθίοις
οὐδ᾽ ὥσπερ ὑμεῖς συκαμίνῳ τὰς γνάθους

[99] Alex. fr. 103, 1-12.
[100] Alex. fr. 103, 16-18.
[101] Eng. trans. by OLSON 2010, 293.

κεχριμέναι. κἂν ἐξίητε τοῦ θέρους,
ἀπὸ τῶν μὲν ὀφθαλμῶν ὑδρορρόαι δύο
ῥέουσι μέλανος, ἐκ δὲ τῶν γνάθων ἱδρὼς
ἐπὶ τὸν τράχηλον ἄλοκα μιλτώδη ποεῖ,
ἐπὶ τῷ προσώπῳ δ᾽ αἱ τρίχες φορούμεναι
εἴξασι πολιαῖς, ἀνάπλεῳ ψιμυθίου[102]

not plastered with white lead, by Zeus,
or with their cheeks smeared with mulberry juice,
like you! If you go outside during the summer,
two streams of ink flow
from your eyes, the sweat cuts a bright red furrow
from your cheeks to your neck,
and the hairs that grow on your face
turn gray, they're so full of white lead![103]

To return to the monster/beast visualization of Anaxil. fr. 22, 31 ("however many wild beasts there are, nothing's more pernicious than a hetaira"), it is remarkable that the same term, ἐξωλέστερον ("more pernicious"), occurs in another fragment, in Antiph. fr. 157, 11-12, where the reference is to the fishmongers; the raging speaker declares that ἔθνος / τούτου (*sc.* τῶν ἰχθυοπωλῶν) γὰρ οὐδέν ἐστιν ἐξωλέστερον ("there is no group more pernicious than them [*sc.* the fishmongers]")

The two professional groups, hetairai and fishmongers, share further similarities in the way they are parodied. In Philippid. fr. 5 the hetaira Gnathaina is described as ἀνδροφόνος; this is a Homeric epithet meaning *murderous*, *man-slaying*. In the following fragment by Amphis the entire breed of fishmongers is similarly described as ἀνδροφόνοι ("murderers"). The implication, in both cases, is that both hetairai and fishmongers cause economic annihilation to the persons who buy their services and products. In addition, the individuals of both groups are portrayed as extremely arrogant, pretending they are constantly preoccupied with their business and condescend to their customers. Below the fishmongers are unfavourably compared to the Athenian generals (who would have every right to be unavailable to converse with, given their high office)[104]:

πρὸς τοὺς στρατηγοὺς ῥᾷόν ἐστιν μυρίαις
μοίραις προσελθόντ᾽ ἀξιωθῆναι λόγου
λαβεῖν τ᾽ ἀπόκρισιν <ὧν> ἂν ἐπερωτᾷ τις ἢ

[102] Eub. fr. 97.

[103] Eng. trans. by OLSON 2010, 237.

[104] For detailed analysis of this fragment cf. PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2016, 190-203.

πρὸς τοὺς καταράτους ἰχθυοπώλας ἐν ἀγορᾷ
οὓς ἂν ἐπερωτήσῃ τις <ἀνα>λαβών τι τῶν
παρακειμένων, ἔκυψεν ὥσπερ Τήλεφος
πρῶτον σιωπῇ (καὶ δικαίως τοῦτό γε·
ἅπαντες ἀνδροφόνοι γάρ εἰσιν ἑνὶ λόγῳ)[105]

It is infinitely easier to come before
the generals and obtain a hearing
and receive an answer to whatever one inquires about, than
it is to approach the damned fishmongers in the market.
Whenever someone, picking up something of the wares on display,
asks them a question, he hangs his head like Telephus
in silence first (and they do this with reason;
for, to put it in a word, they are all murderers)[106]

In these lines the fishmongers, apart from "murderers", are also said to be κατάρατοι ("damned"). A strikingly parallel scenario is visualized in Alex. fr. 16[107], where the fishmongers are similarly cursed (line 5: τοὺς κάκιστ᾽ ἀπολουμένους: "to be perished in the worst possible way") and are portrayed behaving more arrogantly than even the generals. As already mentioned (cf. Epicr. fr. 3 quoted above), hetairai are charged with the same haughtiness and the same fake unavailability as fishmongers.

Furthermore, a constant parameter that generates deep parody against fishmongers is their insatiable avarice and unscrupulousness; not only do they charge preposterously high prices for their ware, but they also try to dupe their customers so that they maximize their – largely illicit – profit. Thus, they are recategorized; from merchants of the Athenian marketplace they transform into professional bandits and egocentric crooks, who, additionally, exhibit a disproportionately (compared to their status) insolence and superciliousness. Here are some of the most representative cases: the speaker in Antiph. fr. 164 wittily assimilates the fishmongers to the Gorgons; for, when he lays eyes on the prices they charge, he feels "outright paralyzed" (line 7: πήγνυμαι σαφῶς) and he "immediately turn(s) to stone" (line 4: λίθινος εὐθὺς γίγνομαι). The comic character in Xenarch. fr. 7 graphically describes an imaginative trick of fishmongers; they set up a fake fight, so that they can pretend they throw water on anyone who feigns fainting, whilst they actually throw water on stale fish to make them look fresh again. The speaker in Alex. fr. 204 compares the excessively high prices of fish to "tribute-payments large

[105] Amphis fr. 30, 1-8.

[106] Eng. trans. by PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2016, 191.

[107] On the striking convergence between the two fragments cf. ARNOTT 1996, 98-99 and NESSELRATH 1990, 294.

enough for kings" (line 3: βασιλικοὺς φόρους), and comes up with a pertinent metaphor whereby he visualizes fishmongers "taxing the properties at 10%" (lines 4-5: δεκατεύουσι γὰρ τὰς οὐσίας). The aggrieved comic character in Diph. fr. 32 proves even more resourceful; he figures that, if Poseidon (being the befitting god) received 10% of the fishmongers' profit, he would have been by far the richest god of all. At the same time, he admits that, in order to buy just a conger eel, he paid an extravagant amount of money, comparable to the ransom that Priam gave to recuperate Hector's body. In another fragment by Diphilus (fr. 67) we hear of a crooked fishmonger who makes profit by cheating on currency, choosing at will between the Attic and Aeginetan coinage (he receives payment in one currency but gives change in the other).

The visualization of hetairai as monsters, murderous beasts, traps, and hunters constitutes a case of deep parody. Likewise, the portrayal of fishmongers as insatiable murderers, pernicious and abominable individuals, prone to deceiving and double-crossing their customers, adds up to deep parody as well. Apart from the fragments quoted in full or referred to above, there are many more comic passages that attest to this visualization; *e.g.* on hetairai: Amphis fr. 24, Timocl. frr. 16 and 25, Antiph. fr. 27, 10-11, Anaxipp. fr. 1, 31-32; and on fishmongers: Antiph. frr. 159, 217, 204, Diph. fr. 31, Alex. frr. 130, 131, 76, 78, Archipp. fr. 23, Arched. fr. 3[108].

All these comic fragments attest to a disproportionately intense deep parody against hetairai and fishmongers, especially at a time (fourth century) when deep parody against other targets (politicians and philosophers) appears considerably milder and much more softened. As mentioned above (n. 78), Cleon becomes relevant to the present discussion; for there is a common parameter, of socio-economic dimensions, that links Cleon to hetairai and fishmongers: they all lack aristocratic / noble origin; they are not eupatrids[109] (far from that, most hetairai used to be slaves). Yet, they manage to become substantially rich[110] and they amass wealth, which nonetheless originates from banausic activities, *i.e.* activities other than land-owning. Thus, they breach and subvert a deeply rooted belief, according to which wealth was inseparably – almost teleologically – linked with noble origin. This is what the comic character emphatically asserts in the following fragment by Alexis:

[108] There is also one example from Old Comedy: Ar. fr. 402.

[109] The eupatrids were the noble aristocrats of pre-Solonian Athens; cf. DUPLOUY 2003 and PIERROT 2015. The division of Athenian society into the "noble aristocrats" (εὐπατρίδαι) on one hand and the occupational classes of "farmers" (ἄγροικοι / γεωμόροι) and "craftsmen" (δημιουργοί) on the other is attested in [Aristot.] *Ath.* 13.2; yet, RHODES (1981, 183) draws attention to the fact that ἄγροικοι and δημιουργοί were the "product of later theory". Cf. further RHODES 1981, 71-72, 74-76.

[110] Cleon even leads the city, having become "extremely popular among the people", as Thucydides cares to testify twice (3, 36: τῷ τε δήμῳ παρὰ πολὺ ἐν τῷ τότε πιθανώτατος, and 4, 21: τῷ πλήθει πιθανώτατος); NB the superlative degree (πιθανώτατος) in both instances, pleonastically accompanied by παρὰ πολύ at 3, 36.

ἔστιν δὲ ποδαπὸς τὸ γένος οὗτος; (Β.) πλούσιος.
τούτους δὲ πάντες φασὶν εὐγενεστάτους
< εἶναι >· πένητας δ' εὐπάτριδας οὐδεὶς ὁρᾷ[111]

(A.) What sort of family is this fellow from? (B.) He is rich.
Everyone agrees that they're the noblest people there are;
no one has ever seen a pauper from a noble background.[112]

In these lines the comic character reflects in terms of- and reproduces a preconstructed, old-fashioned ideology that features a conspicuous dichotomy; any given individual must be either rich *and* noble or pauper *and* non-noble. Even if we allow for a degree of hyperbole, in the sense that the reference to this dichotomy is finalized to the effectivity of the comic joke, the present allegation must have had a (substantial) core of truth; otherwise, the comic joke could not have worked and the poet would not have introduced it in the first place. Alexis' fragment suggests that this ideology was still familiar and topical (though not necessarily universally and/or fervently revered) in Athens in the fourth century BC. Hetairai and fishmongers markedly breach this long-established ideology, since they represent a new typology of plutocracy that consists of well-off individuals from non-noble background[113]. The very existence of wealthy, albeit non-noble, hetairai and fishmongers challenges this rigid, theoretical social structure that pre-dates Solon. Both professional groups manage to transgress the boundaries of their original, non-noble, social rank by accumulating wealth. It comes as no surprise that the comic playwrights picked up on this tangible social anxiety and projected it upon the comic stage, albeit neither straightforwardly nor passively (for this is not how Comedy reflects reality), but through the complex mechanisms of the comic genre, which we can now describe (borrowing the terminology from the discipline of Psychology) as deep parody.

Besides, there is substantial evidence that Athenian society (especially during the post-classical era) was fairly hostile towards ostentatious display of wealth and conspicuous consumption. This spitefulness is often manifested in alleged attacks on corruption

[111] Alex. fr. 94.

[112] Eng. trans. by OLSON 2007, 265 (adapted).

[113] The same is true for Cleon, Hyperbolus, and Cleophon in the fifth century, whom Old Comedy consistently deprecates through their visualizations as a tanner, lamp-maker, and lyre-maker respectively. Whether the tanner imagery of Cleon is Aristophanes' own invention or not is a debatable issue; cf. LIND 1990, 87-164 and LAFARGUE 2013, 89-110. Both Cleophon and Hyperbolus were portrayed by the comic playwright Plato (in his two plays named after them) as foreigners and low-born figures; cf. PIRROTTA 2009, 143-153, 319-337. Hyperbolus was also targeted and belittled by Eupolis in his *Marikas*; cf. OLSON 2016, 121-226.

by the orators, who maintain that individual properties should be modest, whilst ostentation should be the preserve of the state buildings. For example, in 349 BC Demosthenes (*Ol*. 3, 29) observes that ἔνιοι δὲ τὰς ἰδίας οἰκίας τῶν δημοσίων οἰκοδομημάτων σεμνοτέρας εἰσὶ κατεσκευασμένοι, ὅσῳ δὲ τὰ τῆς πόλεως ἐλάττω γέγονεν, τοσούτῳ τὰ τούτων ηὔξηται ("some have reared private houses more stately than our public buildings, while the lower the fortunes of the city have sunk, the higher have their fortunes soared"[114])[115]. Likewise, in 330 BC Aeschines (3, 250) deplores the civic decline noticing how ambassadors from foreign cities now go to the private houses of the leading politicians rather than to the Council of Five Hundred and the Popular Assembly: τὸ μὲν βουλευτήριον καὶ ὁ δῆμος παρορᾶται, αἱ δ' ἐπιστολαὶ καὶ αἱ πρεσβεῖαι ἀφικνοῦνται εἰς ἰδιωτικὰς οἰκίας ("the Council and the Popular Assembly are coming to be ignored, while the letters and ambassadors come to private houses"[116]). The same extravagance and arrogant display of wealth is also attested by Pliny (*NH* 37, 3) for fourth-century musical professionals (acquisition and flaunting of expensive, precious stones). In addition, Polybius (14, 11, 3-4, *ap*. Ath. 13, 576f), whilst in Alexandria, realizes with disdain that "some of the finest houses" (αἱ κάλλισται τῶν οἰκιῶν) belonged to Myrtion (a mime-actress)[117], and to Mnesis and Potheine (hetairai/pipe-girls)[118]. A later manifestation of this attitude materializes in Posidonius (*FGrH* 87 F 14), who takes offense at the grandiose mausoleum dedicated to the hetaira Pythionice by her lover Harpalus:

> τοῦτο δὲ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον, ὅπερ εἰκός, ἢ Μιλτιάδου φήσειεν <ἂν> σαφῶς ἢ Περικλέους ἢ Κίμωνος ἤ τινος ἑτέρου τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν εἶναι, <καὶ> μάλιστα μὲν ὑπὸ τῆς πόλεως δημοσίᾳ κατεσκευασμένον, εἰ δὲ μή, δεδομένον κατασκευάσασθαι. πάλιν δ᾽ ὅταν ἐξετάσῃ Πυθιονίκης τῆς ἑταίρας ὄν, τίνα χρὴ προσδοκίαν λαβεῖν αὐτόν;
>
> Initially, as one might expect, one would be likely to say that this must certainly belong to Miltiades, or Pericles, or Cimon, or to some other distinguished individual, and that it was doubtless erected by the city at public expense, or failing that, that public permission must have been granted for its construction. But then, when he looks and sees that it belongs to the hetaira Pythionice, what is he supposed to think?[119]

[114] Eng. trans. by VINCE 1930, I, 59.

[115] For an analysis of Demosthenes' attitude towards the wealth of Athens, cf. KEIM 2016.

[116] Eng. trans. by ADAMS 1919, 503 (adapted).

[117] STEPHANIS 1988, no. 1761.

[118] STEPHANIS 1988, nos. 1729 and 2076, respectively.

[119] Eng. trans. by OLSON 2011, 5-7 (adapted).

All things considered, there is a good case to be made for a further, germane argument; the embitterment felt and expressed by the comic playwrights (reflecting the overall aura of contemporary society) against hetairai and fishmongers through the means of deep parody is not exclusively directed against these two professional groups. Although hetairai and fishmongers are the primary recipients of scorn and spite, there is also an indirect, collateral target; this is none other than the customers of these two groups, who must have been sufficiently wealthy, so that they could afford to buy expensive fish and pay huge fees to the grand hetairai for their company – and still not go bankrupt. Through the attack on hetairai and fishmongers, Comedy records the contemporary financial boom and the subsequent appearance of *nouveau riche* (especially non-aristocrats), who are eager to flaunt and enjoy their newly acquired wealth[120]. The comic poets capture and describe a specific socio-economic behavioural pattern, according to which both ordinary and distinct, named individuals squander huge amounts of money, even entire properties, through the expensive habits of fish-purchases and pursuit of grand hetairai. References to impetuously squandered patrimonies occur in *e.g.* Anaxandr. fr. 46, Antiph. frr. 27 and 236, Anaxipp. fr. 1, 31-32, Alex frr. 128, 1-2 and 110[121]. Indeed, it is not uncommon for Comedy to provide us with a fleeting glimpse into its contemporary milieu and register the ongoing socio-economic transformations.

To conclude, an all-inclusive overview of Middle Comedy yields the following results regarding the surface and deep parody pattern of approach:
(i) surface parody and playful laughter continue to be omnipresent and literally embedded within the comic fabric (as was during Old Comedy too) and, accordingly, occur much more frequently than deep parody; besides, surface parody is fairly uncomplicated and straightforward.
(ii) deep parody against politicians and philosophers assumes a hybrid nature; despite the presence of recategorization, the parody is much milder and appears to have lost the overbrimming animosity and antipathy of the Old Comedy texts, albeit recategorization of targets is still manifest;
(iii) two new targets of deep parody emerge, hetairai and fishmongers, against whom the comic poets unleash a relentless attack that is reminiscent of Aristophanes' attack against Cleon; socio-economic connotations of contemporary Athens are traceable behind the comic playwrights' bitterness.

All in all, the psychological pattern of surface and deep parody does prove a useful methodological tool in distinguishing stylistic and notional nuances within the comic genre; yet, one should be constantly aware of two variables: (i) the audience's multidimensional and intricate nature and (ii) the long-established and clear-cut demarcation

[120] Regarding the economy of fourth century Athens, cf. FRENCH 1991, SHIPTON 2000, CHRISTESEN 2003.
[121] Cf. ARNOTT 1996, 295-296 for further examples. Cf. BILES/OLSON 2015, 413.

between reality and the – variously distorted and grotesquely exaggerated – world of Comedy; both (i) and (ii) multifariously frame and unpredictably interact with the pattern of surface and deep parody. Thus, the ultimate impact of the comic stage upon contemporary (fourth century) reality remains an unprecedented – and, arguably, elusive – amalgam of literary conventions, unmediated engagement with political affairs, ever-changing socio-economic climate, and varying audience tastes.

Bibliography

ADAMS 1919 = C.D. Adams, *Aeschines. Speeches*, Cambridge (MA) 1919.

APOSTOLAKIS 2019 = K. Apostolakis, *Timokles. Translation and Commentary*, Göttingen 2019.

ARNOTT 1996 = W.G. Arnott, *Alexis. The Fragments: A Commentary*, Cambridge 1996.

ASTBURY 1985 = R. Astbury, *M. Terentii Varronis Saturarum Menippearum fragmenta*, Leipzig 1985.

BATTEZZATO 2008 = L. Battezzato, *Pythagorean Comedies from Epicharmus to Alexis*, "Aevum(ant)" 8 (2008), 139-164.

BEARD 2014 = M. Beard, *Laughter in Ancient Rome*, Berkeley 2014.

BELARDINELLI 2008 = A.M. Belardinelli, *Filosofia e scienza nella commedia nuova*, "SemRom" 11 (2008), 77-106.

BERGSON 1911 = H. Bergson, *Laughter. An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic* (trans. C. Brereton and F. Rothwell), New York 1911.

BILES/OLSON 2015 = Z. Biles, S.D. Olson, *Aristophanes. Wasps*, Oxford 2015.

BOWIE 1998 = E. Bowie, *Le portrait de Socrate dans les* Nuées *d'Aristophane*, in M. Trédé-Boulmer, P. Hoffmann (edd.), *Le rire des anciens*, Paris 1998, 53-66.

BOYD 2004 = B. Boyd, *Laughter and Literature: A Play Theory of Humor*, "Ph&Lit" 28 (2004), 1-22.

BROCK 1990 = R. Brock, *Plato and Comedy*, in E.M. Craik (ed.), *'Owls to Athens': Essays on Classical Subjects Presented to Sir Kenneth Dover*, Oxford 1990, 39-49.

BURKERT 1972 = W. Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, Cambridge 1972.

CAREY 1994 = C. Carey, *Comic Ridicule and Democracy*, in R. Osborne, S. Hornblower (edd.), *Ritual, Finance, Politics. Athenian Democratic Accounts Presented to David Lewis*, Oxford 1994, 69-85.

CAREY 2000 = C. Carey, *Old Comedy and the Sophists*, in F.D. Harvey, J.M. Wilkins (edd.), *The Rivals of Aristophanes. Studies in Athenian Old Comedy*, London 2000, 419-436.

CHRISTESEN 2003 = P. Christesen, *Economic Rationalism in Fourth-Century BCE Athens*, "G&R" 50.1 (2003), 31-56.

CLARK 1987 = M. Clark, *Humor and Incongruity*, in J. Morreall (ed), *The Philosophy of Laughter and Humour*, Albany (NY) 1987, 139-155.

DAVIES 1971 = J.K. Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families 600–300 B.C.*, Oxford 1971.

DAWSON 1997 = S. Dawson, *The Theatrical Audience in 5th-Century Athens: Numbers and Status*, "Prudentia" 29 (1997), 1-14.

D'ERRICO/POGGI 2016 = F. D'Errico, I. Poggi, *The Bitter Laughter. When Parody Is a Moral and Affective Priming in Political Persuasion*, "Frontiers in Psychology" 7 (2016), 1-14.

DESTRÉE 2019 = P. Destrée, *Aristotle on Why We Laugh at Jokes*, in P. Destrée, F.V. Trivigno (edd.), *Laughter, Humor and Comedy in Ancient Philosophy*, Oxford 2019, 35-51.

DOBROV 2010 = G.W. Dobrov, *Comedy and her Critics*, in G.W. Dobrov (ed.), *Brill's Companion to the Study of Greek Comedy*, Leiden/Boston 2010, 3-33.

DUPLOUY 2003 = A. Duplouy, *Les Eupatrides d'Athénes 'nobles defɪnseurs de leur patrie'*, "CCG" 14 (2003), 7-22.

FARMER 2017 = M. C. Farmer, *Playing the Philosopher: Plato in Fourth-Century Comedy*, "AJPh" 138.1 (2017), 1-41.

FRENCH 1991 = A. French, *Economic Conditions in Fourth-Century Athens*, "G&R" 38.1 (1991), 24-40.

FURLEY 2009 = W.D. Furley, *Menander. Epitrepontes*, London 2009.

GIANGRANDE 1972 = L. Giangrande, *The Use of 'spoudaiogeloion' in Greek and Roman Literature*, Berlin/Boston 1972.

GLASGOW 1995 = R.D.V. Glasgow, *Madness, Masks, and Laughter: An Essay on Comedy*, Madison/London/Toronto 1995.

GOW 1965 = A.S.F. Gow, *Machon. The Fragments*, Cambridge 1965.

GRIFFIN 1994 = D. Griffin, *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction*, Lexington 1994.

HALL 1995 = E. Hall, *Lawcourt Dramas: The Power of Performance in Greek Forensic Oratory*, "BICS" 40 (1995), 39-58.

HALL 2007 = E. Hall, *Introduction: Aristophanic Laughter across the Centuries*, in E. Hall, A. Wrigley (edd.), *Aristophanes in Performance*, London 2007, 1-30.

HALL 2020 = E. Hall, *Play as Shared Psychological Register: Paidiá, Laughter and Aristophanes*, in P. Swallow, E. Hall (edd.), *Aristophanic Humour: Theory and Practice*, London 2020, 23-37.

HALLIWELL 1984 = S. Halliwell, *Ancient Interpretations of ὀνομαστὶ κωμῳδεῖν in Aristophanes*, "CQ" 34 (1984), 83-88.

HALLIWELL 1991 = S. Halliwell, *The Uses of Laughter in Greek Culture*, "CQ" 41 (1991), 279-296.

HALLIWELL 2008 = S. Halliwell, *Greek Laughter*, Cambridge 2008.

HALLIWELL 2014 = S. Halliwell, *Laughter*, in M. Revermann (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Comedy*, Cambridge 2014, 189-205.

HENDERSON 1998 = J. Henderson, *Aristophanes. Clouds, Wasps, Peace*, Cambridge (MA) 1998.

HENDERSON 2008 = J. Henderson, *Aristophanes*. *Fragments*, Cambridge (MA) 2008.

HENDERSON 2014 = J. Henderson, *Comedy in the Fourth Century II: Politics and Domesticity*, in M. Fontaine, A.C. Scafuro (edd.), *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Comedy*, Oxford/New York 2014, 181-198.

HICKS 1925 = R.D. Hicks, *Diogenes Laertius. Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, vol. I, Cambridge (MA) 1925.

HUNTER 1983 = R.L. Hunter, *Eubulus. The Fragments*, Cambridge 1983.

IMPERIO 1998 = O. Imperio, *La figura dell'intellettuale nella commedia greca*, in A.M. Belardinelli, O. Imperio et alii (edd), *Tessere. Frammenti della Commedia Greca: Studi e Commenti*, Bari 1998, 43-130.

KAZANTZIDIS/TSOUMPRA 2018 = G. Kazantzidis, N. Tsoumpra, *Morbid Laughter: Exploring the Comic Dimensions of Disease in Classical Antiquity*, "ICS" 43.2 (2018), 273-297.

KONSTAN 2014 = D. Konstan, *Crossing Conceptual Worlds: Greek Comedy and Philosophy*, in M. Fontaine, A.C. Scafuro (edd.), *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Comedy*, Oxford/New York 2014, 278-294.

KEIM 2016 = B. Keim, *Non-Material but not Immaterial: Demosthenes' Reassessment of the Wealth of Athens*, in E.M.A. Bissa, F. Santangelo (edd.), *Studies on Wealth in the Ancient World*, London 2016, 7-20.

KIDD 2011 = S. Kidd, *Laughter Interjections in Greek Comedy*, "CQ" 61.2 (2011), 445-459.

KINGSLEY 1995 = P. Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic: Empedocles and Pythagorean Tradition*, Oxford 1995.

KONSTANTAKOS 2015 = I.M. Konstantakos, *Tendencies and Variety in Middle Comedy*, in S. Chronopoulos, C. Orth (edd.), *Fragmente einer Geschichte der griechischen Komödie / Fragmentary History of Greek Comedy*, Heidelberg 2015, 159-189.

KOSTER 1975 = W.J.W. Koster, *Scholia in Aristophanem*, vol. I.1A: *Prolegomena de Comoedia*, Groningen 1975.

LAFARGUE 2013 = P. Lafargue, *Cléon: Le guerrier d'Athéna*, Bordeaux 2013.

LIND 1990 = H. Lind, *Der Gerber Kleon in den 'Rittern' des Aristophanes. Studien zur Demagogenkomödie*, Frankfurt am Main 1990.

MASTELLARI 2016 = V. Mastellari, *Middle Comedy: Not only Mythology and Food. The Political and Contemporary Dimension*, "AAntHung" 56 (2016) 421-433.

MASTELLARI 2019 = V. Mastellari, *FrC 16.5: Eubulides – Mnesimachos*, Gottingen 2019.

MEINEKE 1840 = A. Meineke, *Fragmenta Comicorum Graecorum*, vol. III, Berlin 1840.

MILLIS 2015 = B.W. Millis, *Anaxandrides. Introduction, Translation, Commentary*, Heidelberg 2015.

MITCHELL 2009 = A.G. Mitchell, *Greek Vase-Painting and the Origins of Visual Humour*, New York 2009.

MUCCIOLI 2002 = F. Muccioli, *Pitagora e i Pitagorici nella tradizione antica*, in R. Vattuone (ed.), *Storici greci d'occidente*, Bologna 2002, 341-409.

NESSELRATH 1990 = H.-G. Nesselrath, *Die attische Mittlere Komödie*, Berlin/New York 1990.

NESSELRATH 1997 = H.-G. Nesselrath, *The Polis of Athens in Middle Comedy*, in G. Dobrov (ed.), *The City as Comedy: Society and Representation in Athenian Drama*, Chapel Hill 1997, 271-288.

NESSELRATH 2015 = H.-G. Nesselrath, *Zur Periodisierung der griechischen Komödie in hellenistischer (und späterer) Philologie*", in S. Chronopoulos, C. Orth (edd.), *Fragmente einer Geschichte der griechischen Komödie / Fragmentary History of Greek Comedy*, Heidelberg 2015, 16-34.

OLSON 2007 = S.D. Olson, *Athenaeus. The Learned Banqueters*, vol. II, Cambridge (MA) 2007.

OLSON 2008 = S.D. Olson, *Athenaeus. The Learned Banqueters*, vol. III, Cambridge (MA) 2008.

OLSON 2010 = S.D. Olson, *Athenaeus. The Learned Banqueters*, vol. VI, Cambridge (MA) 2010.

OLSON 2011 = S.D. Olson, *Athenaeus. The Learned Banqueters*, vol. VII, Cambridge (MA) 2011.

OLSON 2016 = S.D. Olson, *Eupolis. Heilotes – Chrysoun genos (frr. 147-325)*, Heidelberg 2016.

ORTH 2013 = C. Orth, *Alkaios – Apollophanes. Einleitung, Übersetzung, Kommentar*, Heidelberg 2013.

PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2008 = A. Papachrysostomou, *Six Comic Poets. A Commentary on Selected Fragments of Middle Comedy*, Tübingen 2008.

PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2009 = A. Papachrysostomou, *Οὐδὲν πρὸς τὴν πόλιν; Αναφορές σε πολιτικά πρόσωπα στη Μέση Κωμωδία του τετάρτου αιώνα π.Χ.*, "Ελληνικά" 59.2 (2009), 181-204.

PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2016 = A. Papachrysostomou, *Amphis: Introduction, Translation, Commentary*, Heidelberg 2016.

PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2020a = A. Papachrysostomou, *Surface and Deep Aristophanic Parody*, in P. Swallow, E. Hall (edd.), *Aristophanic Humour: Theory and Practice*, London 2020, 119-127.

PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2020b = A. Papachrysostomou, *πλῆθος ὅσον ἰχθύων ... ἐπὶ πινάκων ἀργυρῶν (Ath.* Deipn. *6.224b): A Different Kettle of Fish*, in A. Lamari, F. Montanari, A. Novokhatko (edd.), *Fragmentation in Ancient Greek Drama*, Berlin 2020, 617-645.

PAPACHRYSOSTOMOU 2021 = A. Papachrysostomou, *Ephippus: Introduction, Translation, Commentary*, Göttingen 2021.

PIERROT 2015 = A. Pierrot, *Who were the Eupatrids in Archaic Athens?*, in N. Fisher, H. van Wees (edd.), *'Aristocracy' in Antiquity: Redefining Greek and Roman Elites*, Swansea 2015, 147-168.

PIRROTTA 2009 = S. Pirrotta, *Plato Comicus: Die fragmentarischen Komödien; ein Kommentar*, Berlin 2009.

POGGI/D'ERRICO 2013 = I. Poggi, F. D'Errico, *Towards the Parody Machine: Qualitative Analysis and Cognitive Processes in the Parody of a Politician*, in A. Petrosino, L. Maddalena, et alii (edd.), *New Trends in Image Analysis and Processing – ICIAP 2013*, Heidelberg 2013, 491-500.

REHM 2002 = R. Rehm, *The Play of Space: Spatial Transformations in Greek Tragedy*, Princeton 2002.

REVERMANN 2006a = M. Revermann, *Comic Business: Theatricality, Dramatic Technique, and Performance Contexts of Aristophanic Comedy*, Oxford/New York 2006.

REVERMANN 2006b = M. Revermann, *The Competence of Theatre Audiences in Fifth- and Fourth-Century Athens*, "JHS" 126 (2006), 99-124.

RHODES 1981 = P.J. Rhodes, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaion Politeia*, Oxford 1981.

RHODES 1994 = P.J. Rhodes, *The Polis and the Alternatives*, in D.M. Lewis, J. Boardman et alii (edd.) *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. VI, Cambridge 1994², 565-591.

RIGINOS 1976 = A.S. Riginos, *Platonica. The Anecdotes concerning the Life and Writings of Plato*, Leiden 1976.

ROBSON 2017 = J. Robson, *Humouring the Masses: The Theatre Audience and the Highs and Lows of Aristophanic Comedy*, in L. Grig (ed.), *Popular Culture in the Ancient World*, Cambridge 2017, 66-87.

ROSELLI 2011 = D.K. Roselli, *Theater of the People: Spectators and Society in Ancient Athens*, Austin 2011.

ROSEN 2007 = R.M. Rosen, *Making Mockery: The Poetics of Ancient Satire*, Oxford 2007.

ROSEN 2015 = R.M. Rosen, *Aristophanic Satire and the Pretense of Synchrony*, in J.M. Gonzalez (ed.), *Diachrony: Diachronic Studies of Ancient Greek Literature and Culture*, Berlin 2015, 213-232.

ROSENBLOOM 2014 = D. Rosenbloom, *The Politics of Comic Athens*, in M. Fontaine, A.C. Scafuro (edd.), *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Comedy*, Oxford/New York 2014, 297-320.

SANCHIS LLOPIS 1995 = J.L. Sanchis Llopis, *Los pitagóricos en la Comedia Media: Parodia filosófica y comedia de tipos*, "Habis" 26 (1995), 67-82.

SEALEY 1956 = R. Sealey, *Callistratus of Aphidna and his Contemporaries*, "Historia" 5 (1956), 178-203.

SEALEY 1967 = R. Sealey, *Essays in Greek Politics*, New York 1967.

SELLS 2019 = D. Sells, *Parody, Politics and the Populace in Greek Old Comedy*, London 2019.

SHIPTON 2000 = K. Shipton, *Leasing and Lending: The Cash Economy in Fourth-Century BC Athens*, London 2000.

SIDWELL 2009 = K.C. Sidwell, *Aristophanes the Democrat: The Politics of Satirical Comedy during the Peloponnesian War*, Cambridge/New York 2009.

SILK 1993 = M.S. Silk, *Aristophanic Paratragedy*, in A.H. Sommerstein, S. Halliwell et alii (edd.), *Tragedy, Comedy and the Polis*, Bari 1993, 477-504.

SILK 2000 = M.S. Silk, *Aristophanes and the Definition of Comedy*, Oxford 2000.

SOMMERSTEIN 1997 = A.H. Sommerstein, *The Theatre Audience, the Demos and the* Suppliants *of Aeschylus*, in C. Pelling (ed.), *Greek Tragedy and the Historian*, Oxford/New York 1997, 63-79.

SOMMERSTEIN 1998 = A.H. Sommerstein, *The Theatre Audience and the Demos*, in J. López Férez (ed.), *La comedia griega y su influencia en la literatura Espaρola*, Madrid 1998, 43-62.

SOMMERSTEIN 2009 = A.H. Sommerstein, *Talking about Laughter and Other Studies in Greek Comedy*, Oxford 2009.

SOMMERSTEIN 2014 = A.H. Sommerstein, *The Politics of Greek Comedy*, in M. Revermann (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Comedy*, New York 2014, 291-305.

STEPHANIS 1988 = I.E. Stephanis, *Διονυσιακοὶ Τεχνίται*, Herakleion 1988.

SWALLOW/ HALL 2020 = P. Swallow, E. Hall (edd), *Aristophanic Humour: Theory and Practice*, London 2020.

TARTAGLIA 2019 = G.M. Tartaglia, *Alkenor – (Asklepiodo)ros: Introduzione, Traduzione e Commento*, Göttingen/Heidelberg 2019.

VINCE 1930 = J.H. Vince, *Demosthenes. Orations,* vol. I, Cambridge (MA) 1930.

WEBSTER 1970 = T.B.L. Webster, *Studies in Later Greek Comedy*, Manchester 1970[2].

WEIHER 1913 = A. Weiher, *Philosophen und Philosophenspott in der attischen Komödie*, München 1913.

WILSON 2000 = P. Wilson, *Powers of Horror and Laughter: The Great Age of Drama*, in O. Taplin (ed.), *Literature in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A New Perspective*, Oxford 2000, 88-132.

ZHMUD 2012 = L. Zhmud, *Pythagoras and the Early Pythagoreans*, Oxford 2012.

Abstract: The present study adopts an interdisciplinary approach towards the interpretation of Greek comedy, by using the recently established psychological model of "surface and deep parody" for the analysis of comic satire. According to this psychological model (where 'parody' is meant as 'satire'), "surface parody" is defined as "simple distortion of reality by exaggeration", whereas "deep parody" consists of a "re-categorization of the target". In the present analysis this psychological pattern is applied mutatis mutandis to Middle Comedy fragments, with reference to the parody exercised against politicians, philosophers, hetairai, and fishmongers. The ensuing results are considered (i) under the light of a germane study regarding the application of the same psychological model in Aristophanic comedy, and (ii) with reference to the reality of fourth century Athens.