

CRATES, PLAYWRIGHT OF OLD COMEDY

PERRONE (S.) *Cratete. Introduzione, Traduzione e Commento.* (Fragmenta Comica 2.) Pp. 277. Göttingen: Verlag Antike, 2019. Cased, €64.99. ISBN: 978-3-946317-47-0.
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Our earliest references to Crates number him among the most important Athenian comic playwrights of the fifth century. Aristotle gives Crates pride of place in his schematic history of comedy's development (*Poet.* 1449b5–7), and Aristophanes' repeated satire of him in mock canons of earlier playwrights (*Eq.* 537–40, fr. 347) reinforces the view of Crates as an innovator, with a uniquely intellectual style of comedy tending towards the absurd. Yet the true dimensions of Crates' output and its influence are obscured by its almost total loss, his work now reduced to some fifteen testimonia and sixty fragments, including *dubia*. In spite of the recent turn towards the rivals of Aristophanes, most scholarship continues to focus on a later-established canon of three (Hor. *Sat.* 1.4.1 *Eupolis atque Cratinus Aristophanesque*) and overlooks all but the fragments of one Cratean play (*Beasts*), along with Aristotle's one-liner about Crates' shaping of early literary history. There is therefore particular value to in-depth study of this playwright, whose relative importance in his own day has since shifted so drastically.

This book is a strong contribution to the Freiburg commentary series of which it is a part. Discussions show a good balance between speculation and scepticism; lemmas aim at explication rather than encyclopaedism. On many of the larger issues raised by this author, such as whether Aristophanes' picture of Crates is ultimately positive or negative (it is both) or whether Crates and a hypothetical Crates II were in fact distinct individuals (they were not), P. cites opposing positions within the scholarship but recuses herself from the debate. This sometimes means that an interesting new line of thought or argument is not fully developed; for example, the cumulative effect of P.'s comments on the play *Neighbours* is to hint at interaction with tragedy and specifically Aeschylus (pp. 69, 81, read alongside the analysis of test. 8 on p. 53), but the point is left unexplored. If there is a single overarching conceptual point guiding P.'s commentary, it is that Crates was politically engaged, an idea generally downplayed in the scholarship. What is missing from her discussion is how far political engagement in Old Comedy necessarily implies abuse of named individuals (as it seems to in fr. 37, pp. 187–8). P. notes how Crates' notoriety for depicting a drunk on stage goes against his Aristophanic caricature as eminently sober, in contrast to Cratinus (pp. 66–7). In this respect P. misses a trick in not interpreting Κράτης ... ὄς ἐπιβέβληκε Κρατίνω as 'Crates ... who attacked Cratinus', along with K. Sidwell (*GRBS* 34 [1993], 369 n. 10, not cited), which also has the benefit of being natural Greek (the parallels offered on p. 30 must similarly mean 'competed against', cf. J. Chadwick, *Lexicographica Graeca* [1996], pp. 90–4).

One particular benefit of this volume is the length of the discussions of *testimonia*, although in general these are less convincing than P.'s treatment of the fragments. P. follows all previous scholarship in viewing Crates' career as having ended by the time of the *Knights* parabasis; yet the principle articulated by A. Hartwig surely applies (*Philologus* 156.2 [2012], 197–9), namely that, whenever a comic playwright is transparently criticised, he is also a competitor at the same festival competition. As P. herself allows (p. 100), the most likely date for Crates' *Beasts* is sometime in the early 420s. Similarly, although P. encourages us to read the fragments of Crates' *Samians* as full of references to the Samian War, she provides strong evidence for the currency of this subject

on the comic stage in the early 420s (pp. 160–1). Indeed, it is hard not to read Aristophanes' misidentification of his chorus of Babylonians as Samians (Ar. fr. 71) as a lightly veiled topical allusion to Crates' play, especially if P. rightly interprets fr. 33 as a reference to a tattoo (pp. 174–6). Even though Crates' first win was around 450, all our more concrete indications for the dates of the seven known play titles point to the final decade of Crates' career in the 420s. This would in fact align well with P.'s suggestion (pp. 14–15, 26, building on E. Mensching, *MH* 21 [1964], 29–30) that many of Crates' plays never made it even to the end of the fifth century; it would not be surprising if the earlier plays were those more readily subject to loss.

P. cites a number of doctoral theses, but my own recent commentary on Crates (2017, diss. Cambridge) goes unmentioned. It is therefore significant that we both independently came to a number of the same conclusions. Among the more important of these are that fr. 29, from the play *Games*, makes reference not to a cup, but to the cup of the hand in a sort of piggyback game, and that the chorus of the play *Beasts* was not only multiform, but may have included a wider range of animals than wild carnivores or even land mammals. P.'s analyses also consistently offer appealing suggestions not considered by any previous commentator, for example that the subject ὄζει in fr. 2 might be a piece of cheese (p. 71), rather than a woman or female body part, as always in Aristophanes; or that the context of fr. 12 could be a gymnastics competition (p. 91), to mention only two such observations among perhaps two dozen.

Some individual points of detail. For P. (p. 16) it is circular to argue that Crates does not show up in papyrus fragments because not enough of his corpus remains for us to identify potential ascriptions; yet might the *Heroes* parodos (*P.Mich.* 3690 = Ar. fr. 322) be one such candidate? P. distinguishes 'excrement' and 'young wine' as possible translations of τρυζ (p. 49); 'lees' would help unite the two ideas. Aristophanes frames Crates' comedies as a simple meal (p. 50), perhaps because food and drink were mentioned by Crates with incredible regularity, literally or figuratively appearing in nearly one third of the fragments (Γείτορες test. i, fr. 1, 2?, 8?, 10?, 11, 13, 14?, 16, 19, 21, 29, 30, 32.1–2, 37.3?, 43, 47, 50, 55), often as part of extravagant, Arcimboldo-like conceits. While there may be no other known use of the expression 'a pig through roses' (fr. 6, pp. 76–7), the idea is literalised in *Daphnis and Chloe*, when the cowherd Lampis surreptitiously uproots a prized flowerbed as though he were an intrusive pig (4.7.4 ὄσπερ σῦς). The introduction of a high point after τις in fr. 16.5 cannot be right, cf. esp. Ar. *Vesp.* 1307 'παῖ παῖ' καλῶν. It is unfortunate (pp. 122–4) not to have P.'s view on Com. adesp. fr. 382, which Kassel and Austin (*PCG* vol. 8, p. 519) tentatively ascribe to Crates' *Lamia*. P. overlooks (p. 169) that the pattern of paradoxical noun / adjective combinations in fr. 32 extends also to our interpretation of ποντιαὺς χελώνη, which must be 'sea tortoise', to match 'ivory fishstick' and the fragment's other oddities. One wonders if οὐρανοῦ καττύματα (fr. 32.4) might similarly be intended as a paradoxical combination of high ('sky') with low ('shoe sole'). Could παῖ' ἐκεῖνον (fr. 32.5) imply that the speaker of those words and the charlatan talking nonsense are on different parts of the stage (cf. e.g. Ar. *Eq.* 1196)?

Typographical errors appear with some regularity among bibliographical references (pp. 31, 37, 39, 40, 41, 47, 62, 103, 177) and in citations of secondary literature (pp. 39, 47, 51, 87, 114).

This is an even-handed, useful and consistently engaging commentary on an underrated fragmentary author, which anyone working on the comic fragments specifically, or Old Comedy more generally, will do well to consult.

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