

GENDER, POLITICS AND SUBVERSION IN THE *CHREIAI* OF MACHON

1. Problems of genre and historical context: the singularity of Machon

I would like to consider the Greek poet Machon, whose extant fragments pose a problem of genre that opens out to a historical problem. At issue is the historical – or at least historicising – reading of literary texts. Machon, who hailed from Corinth or Sicyon, wrote comic dramas and *Chreiai*, anecdotes and witty sayings of Athenian musicians, parasites, and courtesans. All that we have of Machon, and almost all that we know about him, comes from Athenaeus in his discursive, encyclopaedic *Deipnosophistai* (written in the 2nd or 3rd c. CE). Athenaeus quotes nearly 500 lines of Machon's verses – almost all of it from the *Chreiai*, as well as two very brief fragments from his comedies. As a writer entirely preserved in another author's work, Machon has languished in almost complete obscurity, although his fragments have been scrupulously edited and annotated by A. S. F. Gow.¹

According to Athenaeus, Machon was a contemporary of 'Apollodorus the comic poet',² who tutored Aristophanes of Byzantium in the 'parts of comedy'.³ Finally, we are told that he ended his life in Alexandria, apparently an old man, to judge from the funerary epigram Athenaeus quotes. The same epigram appears in the *Palatine anthology* attributed to Dioscorides:

¹ Gow's edition is Volume 1 of the 'Cambridge classical texts and commentaries', published in 1965. Unless otherwise noted, I have followed Gow's text and commentary.

² Athenaeus 14.664a: Μάχων δ' ὁ Σικυώνιος τῶν μὲν κατ' Ἀπολλόδωρον τὸν Καρύστιον κωμωδιοποιῶν εἷς ἐστὶ καὶ αὐτός· οὐκ ἐδίδαξεν δ' Ἀθήνησι τὰς κωμωδίας τὰς ἑαυτοῦ ἀλλ' ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ. ἦν δ' ἀγαθὸς ποιητὴς εἴ τις ἄλλος τῶν μετὰ τοὺς ἑπτὰ, διόπερ ὁ γραμματικὸς Ἀριστοφάνης ἐσπούδασε συσχολάσαι αὐτῷ νέος ὢν ('Machon the Sicyonian is also one of the comic playwrights contemporary with Apollodorus of Carystus. But he didn't produce his own comedies in Athens, but in Alexandria. And he was a good poet, if ever there was one, of those after the "Pleiad". Which is why the grammarian Aristophanes, when a young man, was eager to study with him.')

³ Athen. 6.241f (the speaker at this point is Plutarchus, an Alexandrian grammarian): μνημονεύει δ' αὐτοῦ καὶ Μάχων ὁ κωμωδιοποιὸς ὁ Κορινθίος μὲν ἢ Σικυώνιος γενόμενος, ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ δὲ τῇ ἐμῇ καταβίου καὶ διδάσκαλος γενόμενος τῶν κατὰ κωμωδίαν μερῶν Ἀριστοφάνους τοῦ γραμματικοῦ· ὃς καὶ ἀπέθανεν ἐν τῇ Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ ... ('And he is mentioned also by Machon the comic poet, who was from Corinth or Sicyon, but ended his life in my Alexandria, and who taught the grammarian Aristophanes about the parts of comedy. And he also died in Alexandria ...').

τῷ κωμωδογράφῳ κούφῃ κόνι τὸν φιλάγωνα
 κισσὸν ὑπὲρ τύμβου ζῶντα Μάχῳι φέρεις,
 οὐ γὰρ ἔχεις κύφωνα παλίμπλυτον ἀλλὰ τι τέχνης
 ἄξιον ἀρχαίης λείψανον ἠμφίεσας·
 τοῦτο δ' ὁ πρέσβυς ἐρεῖ· Κέκροπος πόλι, καὶ παρὰ Νεῖλω
 ἔστιν ὄτ' ἐν Μούσαις δριμὺ πέφυκε θύμον.⁴

O light dust, may you bear living contest-loving ivy over the
 tomb for Machon the comic writer, for you do not hold a
 washed-out garment, but you have clothed a worthy relic
 of the ancient art. And the old man will say this,
 'City of Cecrops, also beside the Nile sometimes grows
 bitter Attic thyme among the Muses.'

I'll return to this biographical information and consider it in more detail later on; for now, I just want to focus on the significant facts for establishing Machon's date. On the basis of this information and the references to historical figures in the preserved fragments, Gow reckoned that Machon should be more or less contemporary with Callimachus (c. 305–240 BCE), with a *floruit* in the decade 260–50 BCE.⁵

But what *are* Machon's *Chreiai*? What is their purpose and how are we to read them? Read all together, the individual anecdotes of the *Chreiai* are short and punchy (running from two to twenty-five lines), funny (when we can figure out the joke), and frequently highly obscene (indeed, they are regularly translated into Latin in Gulick's Loeb of Athenaeus). Machon's syntax is loose – sometimes, almost non-existent. And yet simultaneously, there are elements that suggest that these witty sayings of parasites and prostitutes are not just crude popular entertainment but a literate, learned version thereof (and in that sense, typically 'Hellenistic').⁶ Thus occasionally the duplication of anecdotes in Athenaeus reveals Machon drawing his material from literary sources, while the loose iambic trimeter of the *Chreiai* several times crystallises into a flawless tragic trimeter, a quotation from Sophocles or Euripides that serves as the punchline for a joke.⁷

But most of all, Machon's *Chreiai* seem oddly subversive or askew in relation to the values and hierarchies we expect to find. Consider two brief examples: first, in the set-up for a joke about the frigidity of the comic poet Diphilus' prologues, Machon begins, 'Diphilus, once invited to Gnathaina's for dinner, as they say on the occasion

⁴ Athen. 14.664f = AP 7.708. I accept Gow's emendation of the manuscripts' κηφῆνα to κύφωνα in line 3; for discussion, see Gow and Page (1965) 2.257; Gow (1963) 527; Gow (1965) 4–5.

⁵ Gow (1965) 3–11.

⁶ Cf. (e.g.) Callimachus' *Iambs* or the *Mimes* of Herondas.

⁷ For Machon's use of literary sources, see Gow (1965) 20–1; for the quotation of a tragic trimeter (either exact or slightly transformed) as the punchline for a joke, see Machon, ll. 24, 173, 230, 410 Gow. For other moments of parody of high literature or para-tragedy, see ll. 77–84, 118, 127(?), 385–6, 419 Gow (and see Gow's commentary *ad locc.*).

of the Aphrodisia, the most honoured of her *eromenoi*'... (fr. XVI, ll. 262–64 Gow). Here it's surprising and a little unsettling to find the poet Diphilus referred to as one of the 'beloveds' of the courtesan Gnathaina. Indeed, Gow's perplexed note on ἐρωμένων, 'possibly the middle, for *lovers* would seem the more appropriate meaning', pinpoints the moment of ideological stress or difficulty.⁸ My second example is an anecdote about the famous courtesan Phryne:

Φρύνην ἐπέιρα Μοίριχος τὴν Θεσπικὴν·
 κάπειτεν αἰτήσασαν αὐτὸν μνᾶν μίαν
 ὁ Μοίριχος, Μέγ', εἶπεν. οὐ πρόην δύο
 χρυσοῦς λαβοῦσα παρεγένου ξένῳ τινί;
 Περίμενε τοίνυν καὶ σύ, φησ', ἕως ἂν οὐ
 βινητιάσω καὶ τοσοῦτον λήψομαι.

Moirichos was trying to get Phryne of Thespieae into bed. And when she asked him for a whole mna, Moirichos said, 'That's a lot. Didn't you just yesterday accept 40 drachmas of gold to be with some foreigner?' And she said, 'Well then, you too wait around, till I wanna fuck and then I'll accept [only] so much.'
 (fr. XVIII, ll. 450–5 Gow)

Here, the (somewhat unsettling) point of the joke is precisely Phryne's sexual independence and active desire, conjoined with the powerful business sense that still turns a profit.

Normally, our first recourse in trying to make sense of such unsettling and seemingly subversive moments might be formal and generic: what kind of poetry is this; for what context was it composed; for what audience, and with what expectations? Here immediately, we run into our first stumbling-block. For the title *Chreiai* is established unambiguously by Athenaeus (13.577c): Μάχων δ' ὁ κωμωδοποιὸς ἐν ταῖς ἐπιγραφομέναις Χρεῖαις φησὶν οὕτως ... ('And Machon the comic poet, in the collection entitled *Chreiai*, says as follows ...'). Indeed, of all the gossipy material about hetairas, professional musicians, and parasites Athenaeus culls from a vast array of older sources, Machon's work alone is given the title *Chreiai*.⁹ But what is this generic designation and what does it mean?¹⁰ Later, *Chreiai* became a fixture of Greek rhetorical training, so that we find them referred to as a beginning exercise in all the preserved Greek *progymnasmata*. The *progymnasmata* define *χρεῖα* as a brief anecdote

⁸ Gow (1965) 107. McClure (forthcoming) also notes this anomaly.

⁹ Machon's *Chreiai* also represents the only non-comic material quoted by Athenaeus which is in verse. Typical of the treatment of the *Chreiai* is that of Dalby (2000) 379, who discusses Machon with the other anecdotists preserved by Athenaeus, noting that they differ 'only in the fact that they are in verse'. In contrast, I would like to insist on the significance of this difference.

¹⁰ My discussion of *Chreiai* relies heavily on that of Gow (1965) 12–15.

relating a significant word or deed or both ‘for the sake of some use-value’, as Hermogenes puts it, clearly calquing the term itself.¹¹ If we study the examples proffered in the *progymnasmata*, we find that *Chreiai* are almost inevitably wise sayings of philosophers or ennobling words or deeds of statesmen and soldiers.¹² But even before the category filters into the Greek rhetorical tradition, *Chreiai* frequently occurs as the title for works written by philosophers, beginning with Aristippus of Cyrene in the fourth century BCE.¹³ Within the philosophical tradition, *Chreiai* seem to be collections of practical wisdom in the form of pithy sayings.¹⁴

Given this generic background, Machon’s choice of the title *Chreiai* for the obscene quips of Athenian demi-mondaines must surely be a parody or send-up of the philosophical tradition, as Gow and, more recently, James Davidson have recognised.¹⁵ Indeed, at one point, Machon makes his generic parody explicit. One of his featured players, the hetaira Gnathainion, explains why she chose a particular sexual position with a client who was a smith and therefore covered with soot:

¹¹ For definitions of *χρεῖα*, see Hermogenes *Progymnasmata*, ch. 3, in Spengel (1854) 2.5; cf. Aphthonius and Theon in Spengel (1854) 2.23, 2.96.

¹² For examples of *χρεῖα*, see Spengel (1854) 2.5–7 (Hermogenes), 23–5 (Aphthonius), 97–105 (Theon). E.g. (1) Wise sayings of philosophers: ‘Isocrates said the root of education is bitter, but its fruit is sweet’ (Hermogenes, Aphthonius: Spengel (1854) 2.6, 26); ‘Pittacus of Mytilene, asked if anyone escapes the notice of the gods doing anything base, said “Not even contemplating it.”’ (Theon: Spengel (1854) 2.97); ‘Socrates, asked if the Persian king seemed to him to be blessed, said “I couldn’t say, since I don’t know how his education stands.”’ (Theon: Spengel (1854) 2.98); ‘Bion the wise man called greed for money the mother city of all baseness’ (Theon: Spengel (1854) 2.99); ‘Antisthenes, going from Athens to Sparta, said he was going from the women’s chambers to the men’s’ (Theon: Spengel (1854) 2.105); (2) Ennobling words or deeds of statesmen or soldiers: ‘A Laconian, when someone asked him where [how] the Lacedaemonians secure the boundaries of their territory, showed his spear’ (Theon: Spengel (1854) 2.99); ‘Alexander, king of the Macedonians, asked by someone where he keeps his treasure-houses, said “In these”, pointing to his friends’ (Theon: Spengel (1854) 2.100); ‘Epaminondas, dying childless, said to his friends, “I leave behind two daughters – the victory at Leuctra and the victory at Mantinea.”’ (Theon: Spengel (1854) 2.103–4).

¹³ Philosophers who composed *Chreiai*, according to Diogenes Laertius: Aristippus (2.85), Demetrius of Phaleron (5.81), Hecaton of Rhodes (6.32), Metrocles of Maronea (6.33), Diogenes the Cynic (6.80), Zeno (6.91), Persaeus (7.36), Ariston of Chios (7.163). (I have taken this list from Gow (1965) 13.)

¹⁴ As Gow notes (1965) 14, the *Gnomologium Vaticanum* may be an example of the genre; for an edition, see Sternbach (1963).

¹⁵ Parody is an idea Gow struggles with but can’t quite endorse: thus, in a footnote, he offers ‘To judge from the elevating tone demanded of such books [of *Chreiai*] ... one might wonder whether Machon selected the title with his tongue in his cheek. Anecdotes of Diogenes however, which may come from other *χρεῖα*, are hardly less scabrous’ (Gow (1965) 24 n. 1). Here as elsewhere (1965) 14, Gow’s literary intuition founders on the fact that the *Chreiai* of Diogenes the Cynic were also quite unsavory, but I would contend that Diogenes’ *Chreiai*, like Machon’s, represented a deliberate parody of the high philosophical tradition. Davidson with more confidence describes the *Chreiai* as ‘an ironic versified counterpart to the collections of philosophical anecdotes such as Xenophon’s *Memoirs*’ (1997) 93; cf. 104: ‘Machon’s *Chreiai* was a parody of [philosophers’] wise sayings’. Cf. also Hawley (1993) 87 (in the service of an argument that Athenaeus’ text is itself a parody): ‘[Athenaeus’] quotation of Machon’s catalogue of *hetairai* and their one-liners recalls and wittily undercuts the catalogues of maxims of those other “wise women”, the women philosophers, and also perhaps more directly the catalogues of virtuous women such as Plutarch’s *Virtues of Women* or his *Sayings of the Women of Sparta*.’

Περιλαμβάνειν γὰρ οὐκ ἔδοκίμαζον, τάλαν,
 ἄνθρωπον ἄχρι τοῦ στόματος ἤσβολωμένον.
 διὰ τοῦθ' ὑπέμεινα πολὺ λαβοῦσα χρυσίον
 ἐφιλοσόφησά θ' ἴν' ἄκρον ὡς μάλιστα καὶ
 ἐλάχιστον αὐτοῦ περιλάβω τοῦ σώματος.

For I didn't regard it as fit, you wretch, to embrace a man covered with soot up to his mouth. On account of this, I submitted when I had gotten much gold and I philosophised [cleverly contrived] how I might embrace only the uttermost tip of his body and his smallest part. (fr. XVII, ll. 371–5 Gow)

Here a prostitute uses the loaded verb φιλοσοφέω of her own clever contrivance of the most advantageous sexual position, in what must be a parody of a familiar philosophical genre. But when we ask why Machon should choose to parody this philosophical genre by recasting it as the doings and sayings of Athenian low-lives, we run up against the problem that there are no extended examples of 'straight' philosophical *Chreiai* extant.¹⁶ Machon's text is thus (from our perspective) oddly singular and isolated, deprived of its serious intertexts and objects of parody.

Thus formal interpretation seems to be stymied by the lack of generic *comparanda* and intertexts. Instead, several scholars have recently attempted to read (or perhaps better, to mine) Machon for historical content and contexts. Precisely because Machon's *Chreiai* have as their principal actors prostitutes (as well as parasites and musicians), such historical excavation is entirely focussed on women, gender, and prostitution. Traditionally, this kind of reading has been done in the service of positivist historical reconstruction, as already for Gow, whose preface justifies attention to the *Chreiai* as 'of considerable interest both as a document of social history and as representing a type of literature of which, though popular and extensive in antiquity, little has survived'.¹⁷ More recently, readings of Machon have shifted from the reconstruction of social fact to that of gender ideology, but within this domain have drawn diametrically opposed conclusions. Thus Madeleine Henry, reading Machon together with all the other miscellaneous material amassed by Athenaeus, derives a single coherent gender ideology of men oppressing women. For her, Machon's tale of Phryne and other such anecdotes perfectly illustrate Roland Barthes' conception of the 'Sadeian woman':

¹⁶ By this I mean connected *Chreiai* attributed to a single philosophical author. For even if Gow is right to see in the *Gnomologium Vaticanum* a late example of *Chreiai* collections, this is an anthology of excerpts from different sources. Likewise, Davidson is correct that Xenophon's *Memorabilia* represents a similar genre, but I think it is still worth insisting on the title 'Chreiai' as a distinct generic marker (thus Hermogenes distinguishes χρεῖαι from ἀπομνημονεύματα by their use of metre and their essential brevity: Spengel (1854) 2.6).

¹⁷ Gow (1965) ix. This interest in social history is what makes Gow's commentary to Machon a masterpiece of prosopographical thoroughness. For more recent use of Machon in the service of positivist historical reconstruction, see Ogden (1999) 215–78 (and see especially 218–20 for Ogden's scrupulous discussion of the methodological difficulties inherent in using Machon's presumably fictive text for this purpose).

The numerous anecdotes concerning those witty women who appear to be ‘acting subjects’ in their world are more instructive for the topic at hand. Analysis of their remarks and of the contexts in which these remarks are made shows the women to be not ‘acting subjects’ but instead participants in a pornographic scenario ... Metaneira, like her sisters Gnathaina, Nannion, Lais, and others, is a ‘Sadeian woman’ who acts out the pornographic scenario within the *Deipnosophistae*. Additional anecdotes about historical courtesans illustrate how such women constructed themselves – or are here depicted as having constructed themselves – as willing, self-denigrating participants in the scenario ...¹⁸

In contrast to Henry’s univocal account of female oppression, James Davidson has located in the *Chreiai* an authentic voice of female empowerment and self-fashioning:

For the symposium was the place where beautiful and witty girls exchanged jokes and *doubles-entendres* with artists and politicians, illustrated and celebrated on drinking cups and mixing-bowls. Collections of these obscene witticisms of hetaeras and of their male counterparts, the gate-crashers or ‘parasites’, became almost a sub-genre of literature. One, Machon’s *Chreiai*, partly survives in long fragments, an ironic versified counterpart to the collections of philosophical anecdotes such as Xenophon’s *Memoirs*. Some of the jokes are highly sophisticated, punning on lines from tragedy, but if we acknowledge that Machon, like Xenophon, put something of himself into the collection, that does not mean that the witty hetaera is any more of a fabrication than the wise Socrates.¹⁹

In like manner (if somewhat more equivocally than Davidson), Patricia Rosenmeyer has recently offered a thoughtful analysis of the whole Phryne legend in very similar terms:

[Phryne] defines herself through sex, and emphasizes again the connections between eros, money, and power. Her own publicity agent and biographer, she carefully designs the image she wishes the world to see: that of a wealthy hetaira, a public benefactor, a woman of intelligence and power.²⁰

How are we to choose between Henry’s abjected Sadeian women and Davidson’s and Rosenmeyer’s happy picture of female empowerment? I would contend that it is a

¹⁸ Henry (1992) 263–4. Cf. Henry (2000) 504.

¹⁹ Davidson (1997) 93; cf. xviii ‘Machon, who collected the witticisms of courtesans and put them in verse’. Davidson (1997) 126 cites the Phryne story I’ve quoted as a specific example of the hetaira’s ‘arbitrary behaviour’ by which she mystifies her status and makes herself more desirable: ‘The difficulty involved in defining a hetaera, then, is all part of the hetaera’s plan. A hetaera remains a hetaera only so long as she can foil attempts to pin her down. This uncertainty keeps her on the right side of laws and taxes and builds a glass wall between what she does and what goes on in brothels. Much more than that, however, it makes her sexy ...’

²⁰ Rosenmeyer (2001) 247. On Phryne cf. Davidson (1997) 106, 123–6.

mistake to attempt to fix a reading on this level, for all these readings for historical content operate precisely by obliterating or ignoring issues of literary form. This is transparently true for Henry and Rosenmeyer, who treat all the material in Athenaeus and all the Phryne legends, respectively, as a single undifferentiated mass, but it is equally true for Davidson, in spite of some apotropaic hand-waving in the quotation above. Thus Davidson dismisses Machon's versification and parody of a philosophical genre as his 'put[ting] something of himself into the collection', but this precisely mystifies the conventional (metrical form and literary genre) as the personal.²¹

The issue becomes clearer when we ask, why should Machon be motivated to cast the real witty sayings of real prostitutes into the form of a parody of philosophical *Chreiai* in iambic trimeters? Another way of posing this question is to focus not on the author's intent (so difficult to reconstruct in the absence of intertexts), but on the audience's response – what pleasure or satisfaction are we to imagine such stories provided for their ancient audiences? For even if Machon's *Chreiai* were based on the real witty sayings of real hetairas, we must still account for their audience appeal in the particular literary form Machon gives them. This is a generic question, for, as all theories of parody acknowledge, the genre requires an audience knowledgeable enough to recognise the parody and complicit enough to enjoy the joke.²² But it is also a sociological question, since it requires us to think about the social context in which Machon's witty stories might have been performed and what audience satisfaction they might have produced.

Henry's reading at least offers an account of audience gratification (i.e. male oppression of women), but, as we shall see, it ignores the parodic and literary form of the anecdotes. In contrast, both Rosenmeyer and Davidson want to endow the female protagonists of these stories with agency – the power to shape and control their own images.²³ But I remain sceptical that, even when these stories give us portraits of strong, sexually and economically independent women, we can therefore assume active agency on the women's part. And my scepticism derives from the fact that most of these anecdotes are not only authored by men, but also socially embedded in so far as they are composed for an audience of listeners or readers. Machon's intended audience and performance context can only be speculatively reconstructed based on internal evidence. On one occasion (l. 188 Gow), Machon's speaker addresses 'listeners'. Based on this passage and other internal evidence, Gow suggested (plausibly enough) that Machon's text would have served as a prompt or vade-mecum for speakers/performers in need of jokes and witty anecdotes.²⁴ Male authorship suggests that those purveying

²¹ It is puzzling that Davidson, who is otherwise such a subtle reader of ideology, should opt to treat the content of Machon's verse as literally true, and paradoxical that Ogden, engaged in a much more positivist historical project, should be so much readier to acknowledge the fictiveness of Machon's material (Ogden (1999) 218–20).

²² For the crucial role of audience interpretation and participation for effective parody, see Rose (1979) 26–8, 114–28; Hutcheon (1985) 84–99; for insightful application of their models to a classical text, see Goldhill (1991) 209–22.

²³ Rosenmeyer (2000) 242–60; Davidson (1997) 120–36.

²⁴ Gow (1965) 23–4. On anecdote collections, cf. Dalby (2000) 376–83.

the anecdotes have no particular reason to promote an agenda of female empowerment, but the social embedding of audience and performance context is perhaps the more salient point. At issue is the status of social subjects in relation to ideology (in this case, gender ideology): how easy is it for subjects – male or female – to free themselves from or stand outside of ideology? Davidson (and more equivocally) Rosenmeyer imply that this is unproblematic; I would contend, following Althusser, that the entanglements of ideology are the very forces constituting social subjects, so that, while there may be complex negotiations within the system, the notion of a simple unshackling from ideology is a utopian fantasy.²⁵

So I return to the issue of audience. For, in trying to imagine what pleasure or satisfaction the ancient audience derived from Machon's seemingly subversive stories of women on top, I hope to restore to these anecdotes their social embeddedness as well as their generic specificity, and thereby to shed light on the ideological work they would have performed. To put it in other terms, what is needed is a sociological poetics – or a generic sociology – of Machon. Perhaps Machon's hetairas need to be thought of and analysed in terms analogous to those of the clever slaves in Roman comedy. That is, we must postulate not an audience of appreciative hetairas, but instead complicated kinds of cross-identification going on between the figures represented and members of a largely or entirely male audience.²⁶ And here, I draw inspiration from Kathleen McCarthy's recent, superb mapping of complex audience identifications with the clever slaves of Plautine comedy. In McCarthy's analysis, the alliance of slaves and young men colluding against the *senex* and the established order he represents invites the audience identification of masters precisely in so far as they are themselves dominated and subject to others within the elaborate hierarchy of Roman society.²⁷ I suggest an analogous sociological interpretation of the *Chreiai* of Machon, that takes into account the specifics of the historical context in which he composed. I think there are good reasons to read Machon's low-life characters politically, as representatives of Athens, speaking for the Athenians as voices of resistance.

If this is what's going on in the *Chreiai*, it's worth emphasising how unusual Machon's representational strategy is. The much more conventional choice is symbolically to contrast the proper order of the democratic *polis* with the corrupt *demi-monde* of prostitutes, parasites, and hired musicians, so that the prostitute becomes the

²⁵ See Althusser (1971) with the critique and modifications of Smith (1988). For an acknowledgment of the constraints of ideology in the reading of subject formation in literary texts, see Greenblatt (1980). I am indebted to Richard Neer for discussion and help in formulating the theoretical issues involved.

²⁶ At one point at least, Davidson (perhaps tongue-in-cheek) imagines an audience of hetairas for scandalous anecdotes about Pythonikê: 'Harpalus' actions and the publicity surrounding them led to severe inflation in hetairas' expectations: "You will be queen of Babylon, if things turn out; you know, don't you, about the famous Pythonicê and her Harpalus?" (Davidson (1997) 107). Conversely, Henry can only imagine an entirely male audience with no possibility of cross-identification; for her, male audience-members can only identify with male actors in the anecdotes.

²⁷ McCarthy (2000). McCarthy draws effectively on Clover (1992) and Lott (1995) for very suggestive studies of complex audience cross-identification in the genres of slasher film and blackface minstrelsy respectively.

very figure for a debased private sphere invading or encroaching upon the public. We are familiar with this discursive opposition in Aeschines' *Against Timarchus* and Apollodorus' *Against Neaira*,²⁸ but it certainly continues strong in the Hellenistic period in Athens. Consider, for example, the outraged commentary of Theophrastus' contemporary Dicaearchus on the tomb of the courtesan Pythionikê, erected in Attica by Harpalus with riches stolen from Alexander's treasury:

One would feel the same when going up to the city of Athens by way of the Sacred Road, as it is called, from Eleusis. For there, stationing himself at the point from which the temple of Athena and the citadel are first seen in the distance, he will observe a monument, built right beside the road, the like of which, in its size, is not even approached by any other. One would naturally declare quite positively, at first, that this was a monument to Miltiades, or Pericles, or Cimon, or some other man of noble rank and character and, in particular, that it had been erected by the state at public expense or, failing that, that permission to erect it had been given by the state. But when, on again looking, one discovers that it is a monument to Pythionikê the courtesan, what must one be led to expect?

(Dicaearchus *On the descent into the cave of Trophonius* [= *FHG* II 266 F 72],
quoted in Athenaeus 13.594f–95a, trans. C. B. Gulick)

On this same topic of the tomb of Pythionikê, Theopompus also waxes eloquent, branding her as 'not only triply a slave (τρίδουλος), but also triply a whore' (τρίπορνος).²⁹ What these denunciations register clearly is the way in which Pythionikê's oversize monument stands as a symbolic affront to the public, communal order of the city at every level – religious, military, and deliberative. Thus it stands right beside the Sacred Way, the processional route for initiates from Athens to Eleusis, precisely where the city's most sacred spaces, the Acropolis and Parthenon, become visible in the distance. It is not, as one might expect, the honorific tomb of a great Athenian statesman or military leader like Miltiades, Pericles, or Cimon, nor a *dêmosion sêma* for the city's war dead, nor even a monument officially sanctioned by the Athenian demos.³⁰ And, of course, these denunciations are directed not just at the

²⁸ On the representational strategies of *Against Timarchus*, see the excellent discussion of Davidson (1997) 246, 250–63, 267–77; on *Against Neaira*, see Gilhuly (1999) 27–56.

²⁹ Athenaeus quotes at length from Theopompus' *Letter to Alexander* denouncing Harpalus (Athen. 13.595a–c). The terms of Theopompus' outrage are very similar to those of Dicaearchus', though in this case directed to Alexander: thus (e.g.), 'Now, with the sum of more than two hundred talents he erected two monuments to [Pythionikê]; the thing that surprised everyone is this, that whereas for the men who died in Cilicia defending your kingdom and the liberty of Greece neither he nor anyone else among the officials has yet erected a proper tomb, for the courtesan Pythionikê the monument in Athens and the other in Babylon have already stood completed a long time' (Theopompus *FGrH* 115 F 253 *ap.* Athen. 13.595b, trans. C. B. Gulick). On both these texts (read from a different perspective), see Davidson (1997) 106–7; Ogden (1999) 231–2, 247, 262, 264, 268.

³⁰ This final association with the demos' deliberative activity would be even stronger if we accept MS A's reading δεδογμένον instead of B's correction to δεδομένον. In that case, the participle would evoke the formula for a resolution passed in the democratic Assembly, ἔδοξε τῷ δήμῳ ('it seemed best to the demos').

tomb's occupant Pythionikê, but through her at the corrupt Macedonian overlords – Harpalus and his ilk – who undermined the old-time virtues of Athens with the influx of Eastern riches on an unimaginable scale.

A second example relates even more closely to Machon's subject-matter. According to Plutarch, when Demetrius Poliorcetes responded to the Athenians' appeal and saved the city from a siege by Cassander in 304 BCE, the Athenians lavished inappropriate honours on him, including billeting him in the *opisthodomos* of the Parthenon. There, Plutarch tells us, he violently debauched 'freeborn boys and citizen women', as well as installing in his quarters 'Chrysis and Lamia and Dêmo and Antikyra, those well-known whores' (ταῖς πόρναῖς ἐκείναις, Plut. *Dem.* 24.1). Plutarch even preserves a fragment from the comic poet Philippides, excoriating Stratocles, the rhetor who proposed the motion in the Assembly, as

ὁ τὴν ἀκρόπολιν πανδοκεῖον ὑπολαβὼν
καὶ τὰς ἑταίρας εἰσαγαγὼν τῇ παρθένῳ.

the one who turned the Acropolis into a hotel, and led his courtesans into the Virgin Goddess. (Philippides fr. 25 K.-A. ll. 2–3, *ap.* Plutarch *Dem.* 26.3)

Philippides' lines register with utter outrage the transformation of the city's most sacred institutions into the ultimate forms of a debased mercantile sphere. The Acropolis becomes a *pandokeion* – not just a hotel, but since it 'takes all comers', a brothel – while the Virgin goddess is forced to cohabit with Demetrius' hetairas.³¹ This is an image of Athens' extreme degradation.

In the *Chreiai*, by contrast, there are not two cities – the bright daylight sphere of the properly ordered *polis* and the twilight world of its *demi-monde* – whose fantasised interminglings are intended to shock and unsettle.³² In Machon, there is only the *demi-monde*, and its inhabitants emblematised and speak for democracy, from a democratic position. For in the *Chreiai*, it is parasites, hired musicians, and prostitutes who (often paradoxically) speak up for and enforce good old Athenian values against foreigners

³¹ Cf. Habicht (1997) 78 and Ogden (1999) 263–4 for *pandokeion* as 'brothel'. Ogden makes the intriguing suggestion that Demetrius' activities in the Parthenon represented not debauchery but his version of a *hieros gamos* with a courtesan who was an Athenian citizen. If such a religious ceremony indeed lies behind the anecdotes preserved by Plutarch, its moral degradation and deformation by contemporary critics like Philippides are all the more striking.

³² For an excellent discussion of this 'two city model', see Davidson (1997) 306–8: 'Aeschines simply counters his opponents' attempt to frighten the Athenians with imminent assault from barbarians outside with another image of a city devastated from within by consuming passions, by the beast that lurks inside. The Athens Timarchus inhabits with its hollow zones, its derelict buildings, its bottomless wells, barbaric settlements and wasteland is already within the city walls, waiting to take over. This anti-Athens has been there for a long time; the polis was built on its repression. But it never finally disappeared and lurks still in the city's crevices and on its margins and between the lines of Timarchus' speeches. It is the space of the streetwalker and the wastrel, of unbridled appetites and animal passions, waiting like abysmal Charybdis to swallow Athens down.' (quote taken from p. 308).

and potentates. Thus for example, the courtesan Mania mocks a foreign soldier who's settled in Athens for throwing away his shield in battle (ll. 231–51 Gow), while the aged Gnathaina sharply reproaches a butcher in the *agora* for using 'Carian measures/positions when in Athens' (ll. 300–10 Gow; there's an obscene pun here on σταθμοῖς).³³

For now, I offer just one more specific example where the political contours of the encounter seem clear. Amidst a whole string of anecdotes about the Athenian citharist Stratonikus travelling around to different cities and courts and commenting wryly on their peculiar customs, we find the following:

Ἡ Νικοκρέοντος εἰσιούσα Βιοθέα
 γυνὴ μετὰ παιδίσκης ἀβρᾶς εἰς τὸν πότον
 ἀπεψόφησε, κᾶτα τῷ Σικυωνίῳ
 ἀμυγδάλην ἐπιβάσα συνέτριβεν ταχύ.
 Στρατόνικος εἶπεν, Οὐχ ὅμοιος ὁ ψόφος.
 ὑπὸ νύκτα τῆς φωνῆς δὲ ταύτης οὐνεκα
 ἐν τῷ πελάγει διέλυσε τὴν παρρησίαν.

The wife of Nikokreon, Biothea, coming in for the drinking with a dainty little maid, farted and then quickly trod with her Sicyonian sandal on an almond and crushed it. Stratonikus said, 'The sound is not the same.' Under the cover of night, because of this utterance, in the sea he paid the price for his freedom of speech.
 (fr. XI, ll. 156–62 Gow)

Nikokreon was king of Salamis on Cyprus, who ascended to the throne in 322 BCE. His queen (here named Biothea), elegantly decked out with Sicyonian sandals and a dainty maid, farts as she enters the dining-room for the drinking and attempts to cover her *faux pas* by quickly crushing an almond lying on the floor. But Stratonikus doesn't allow her face-saving manoeuvre and apparently pays for it with his life, drowned in the sea that same night. Machon's little black comedy highlights two different kinds of incongruity. The first is the gap between Biothea's royal status, marked by the luxury commodities with which she surrounds herself, and her betrayal by her own lower bodily strata – that is to say, her farting undermines and exposes her regal pretensions. At the same time, Machon's lines are all about sound and voice, articulating the difference between the Cyprian queen Biothea, who can only make 'noise' (the euphemistic verb ἀποψοφέω means literally 'noises off') and Stratonikus, endowed with speech (φωνῆς) and *parrhêsia*, the ultimate Athenian democratic virtue. And though the queen gets her revenge for her social humiliation, Machon's shaping of the anecdote gives Stratonikus the last word by ending on the note of *parrhêsia*.³⁴

³³ On these two anecdotes, see McClure (forthcoming).

³⁴ Athenaeus preserves a whole set of similar anecdotes culled from other authors about the wit of Stratonikus (Athen. 8.347f–52d; cf. the discussion of Gilula (2000)). Among Athenaeus' anecdotes is a slightly different version of the story of his death: 'And they say that in fact he ended his life because of his freedom of speech in joking (διὰ τὴν ἐν τῷ γελοίῳ παρρησίαν), when he was forced by Nikokles

But how plausible is it to read Machon's dirty jokes as somehow political and politically subversive? Here I must pause to review briefly the history of early Hellenistic Athens.³⁵ For a hundred years after the death of Alexander, Athens was essentially a pawn in the power and turf struggles of the Diadochi. With the city perennially struggling to reinstate the ancestral democracy, Athens was subject first to Phocion's oligarchic regime backed by Antipater (322/1–19); the Macedonian regent Cassander's control through the oversight of Demetrius of Phaleron (317–307); the so-called 'liberation' and progressive domination of the city by Demetrius Poliorcetes (307–295, 294–87); and finally, after a period of twenty-five years of qualified autonomy, renewed Macedonian domination under Demetrius' son and heir, Antigonus Gonatas and his son Demetrius II (262–29 BCE). Thus, during this century, Athens enjoyed only brief periods of democratic rule from 318–17 and 287–62, though always with Macedonian troops occupying Munychia above Piraeus and other Attic forts.³⁶

What is most relevant for Machon (I think) is the domination of several different Demetriuses. First, the philosopher Demetrius of Phaleron, who with the backing of Cassander, imposed a moderate oligarchy (317–07), during which he reined in the competitive extravagance of the wealthy with sumptuary legislation and the abolition of *choregiai*. (And it appears that much of Demetrius of Phaleron's legislation remained in force even after the collapse of his regime.) Next, Demetrius Poliorcetes, who 'liberated' Athens in 307 and lived there amidst debauchery and excess for several years. Demetrius Poliorcetes maintained his control of Athens and grew progressively more tyrannical after he became ruler of Macedon in 294. Finally, it appears that when Demetrius' son Antigonus Gonatas regained control of Athens at the end of the Chremonidean war in 262, he installed another Demetrius, son of Phanostratus, of Phaleron (the grandson of the first Demetrius of Phaleron) as Macedonian-backed regent from 262–55 BCE.³⁷ During this period, Antigonus also installed a Macedonian occupying force in the city of Athens itself, in addition to the troops that continued to occupy the Piraeus. With a military presence in the city itself, Macedonian domination seems to have been particularly harsh and overt in the first few years after the war.³⁸

the king of Cyprus to drink poison for making fun of the king's sons' (Athen. 8.352d). In this instance, Athenaeus' lengthy discussion reveals Machon's dependence on literary sources (on which, see Gow (1965) 20, 80; Gilula (2000) 428). But, as Gilula (2000) 428 notes, Machon's version of this anecdote in particular 'exhibits the liberty with which Machon treats his sources'. Indeed, it is worth noting the different (much more explicitly political) effect Machon achieves here by using *parrhêsia* without any qualification as the last word of his anecdote.

³⁵ For modern surveys of Athenian history in the Hellenistic period, see Ferguson (1911a); Tracy (1995); Habicht (1997).

³⁶ Lehmann (1997) 66, 82–5 emphasises how tenacious was Athens' commitment to democracy throughout this period, in spite of all pressures to the contrary. On the persistence of Athenian democratic culture and ideology even in the absence of democratic institutional forms, see Lape (2001a, b).

³⁷ The existence of the second Demetrius of Phaleron was first suggested by Ferguson (1911a) 183, and has recently been strongly supported by Tracy (1995) 43–4, (2000) 332–6 and Habicht (1997) 151–4.

³⁸ See Habicht (1997) 150–6.

It is also worth noting that throughout this period, Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II of Egypt served as Athens' best allies in her struggle to regain and preserve her independence. Thus, during the period of Athens' autonomy (287–62), both Ptolemies made generous contributions of grain to the city, while Ptolemy II was a key member of the alliance that attempted to liberate the Greek cities from Macedonian domination in the Chremonidean war (267–62).³⁹

So in all, we have three Demetriuses who played a prominent role in Athenian politics in this period. The first two Demetriuses were not only enemies but apparent polar opposites – Demetrius of Phaleron, the sober and philosophically-inclined regent who legislated to curb excess, and Demetrius Poliorcetes, famous for his debauched and luxurious lifestyle, awarded all kinds of excessive honours by what contemporary critics regarded as a fawning Athenian demos.⁴⁰ And yet, from the perspective of the 260s and 250s, when the philosopher Demetrius' grandson ruled Athens with the backing of the other Demetrius' son Antigonos, all three could be seen to be making common cause to oppress the Athenians and deprive them of their ancestral freedom. By the same token, in the wake of the Chremonidean war, in the decade 260–50, it was surely a politically sensitive act to mock or parody either Demetrius of Phaleron, the namesake and grandfather of the current regent, or Demetrius Poliorcetes, the father of the current Macedonian king. And yet, in various *Chreiai*, Machon appears to be doing both these things.

At this point, I'd like to consider a series of particular anecdotes from Machon to see how they might be read as articulating voices of political resistance or subversion. As is always the case with this kind of reading, I will move from those instances that seem more compelling to those that are more tenuous or allusive, in hopes that the persuasive power of the former will buttress or support a political interpretation of the latter. That is to say, once I have established the plausibility of the claim that many of Machon's anecdotes have a political point, it may be possible to see that element in other passages where politics are more mediated or coded. I will consider first those anecdotes where Demetrius Poliorcetes appears as a speaking character and then move to those that seem to me, though without explicit reference, to send up or parody the regime and legislation of Demetrius of Phaleron.

³⁹ On the significant support of Athens by the Ptolemies, see Habicht (1997) 127–9, 142–9.

⁴⁰ It may be significant that Athenaeus records many of these excessive honours in his extended sequence of parasites to powerful dynasts in Book 6 (Athen. 6.252f–4c). That is to say, Athenaeus segues directly from individual parasites to 'Athens' or 'the Athenian demos' fawning on Demetrius Poliorcetes; in so doing, he may perhaps be following sources contemporary with the events described (here and elsewhere, Athenaeus explicitly cites Demochares, Duris of Samos, the comic poet Alexis, Theopompus, the comic poet Diphilus, and Philochorus (Athen. 15.697a) for his information).

II. Demetrius Poliorcetes: kingship and divinity

On three occasions in the *Chreiai* (as we have them preserved), Demetrius Poliorcetes appears in conversation with a flute-girl or prostitute.⁴¹ At the most basic level, we can observe that in each case, Demetrius is shown up or bested by his low interlocutor. This is in marked contrast to the treatment throughout the *Chreiai* of Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II, who together appear three times:⁴² on two occasions, the Egyptian dynasts serve simply as good-natured hosts and observers (fr. I and V Gow), while in one case Ptolemy II gets a witty punchline at the expense of a courtesan interlocutor (fr. XVIII, ll. 439–49 Gow). But more than just making Demetrius Poliorcetes look base or foolish, the anecdotes that concern him, I would contend, offer us courtesans who embody or emblemise Athens itself in its dependent relation to Demetrius as world power, though always in the register of irony or mockery.

Consider the following exchange between Demetrius and Lamia:

Δημήτριός ποθ' ὁ βασιλεὺς γένη μύρων
 Λαμία παρὰ πότον παντοδαπῶν ἐπεδείκνυτο
 (ἢ Λάμια δ' ἦν αὐλητρίς ἧς σφόδρ' ἠδέως
 σχεῖν φασι κυισθῆναί τε τὸν Δημήτριον).
 ἀποδοκιμαζούσης δὲ πάντα καὶ πάνυ
 κατεγχλιδώσης τῷ βασιλεῖ, νάρδον τινα
 διένευσ' ἐνεγκεῖν εὐτελεῆ τῇ χειρὶ τε
 ταῖδοιον ἀποτρίψας [καὶ] θιγῶν τοῖς δακτύλοις
 Τουτί γε, Λαμία, φησιν, ὀσφράνθητι καὶ
 εἴσει παρὰ τᾶλλα διαφορὰν ὅσην ἔχει.
 κείνη δὲ γελάσασ', Ἄλλὰ τοῦτ', ἔφη, τάλαν,
 ὄζειν δοκεῖ μοι σαπρότατον πάντων πολὺ.
 Δημήτριος δ' εἶπ', Ἄλλὰ μὴν, νῆ τοὺς θεοὺς,
 ἀπὸ βαλάνου τοῦτ' ἐστί, Λάμια, βασιλικῆς.

Demetrius the King was once showing off all kinds of perfumes to Lamia at a drinking-party (and Lamia was a flute-girl they say Demetrius was very sweet on and stung with love for). And when she was rejecting all of them and entirely turning up her nose at the King, he nodded [to a servant] to bring in some inexpensive spikenard and, jerking himself off, he touched it with his fingers and said, 'Smell this one, Lamia, and you'll find out how much better it is than the rest.'

⁴¹ We are, of course, dependent on Athenaeus' selection from Machon's *Chreiai* (filtered, in turn, through Athenaeus' epitomator). And yet, as Gow notes ((1965) 16), Athenaeus is normally quite scrupulous in citing book numbers if he is drawing on a work of more than one volume; this strongly suggests that Machon's *Chreiai* only occupied a single volume (i.e. one papyrus roll containing 800–1200 lines). Thus we might have half or more of Machon's book of *Chreiai*.

⁴² On the question of which Ptolemy is meant on each occasion, see Gow (1965) 10–11. I follow Gow's suggestion that his fr. I concerns Ptolemy I Soter, while fr. V and XVIII represent 'the unwarlike and pleasure-loving' Ptolemy II Philadelphus (quote from Gow, p. 10).

And she laughed and said, 'But this one seems to me, o wretch, to smell the most putrid of all by far.' And Demetrius said, '[Maybe so], but, by the gods, it's from a royal gland.'
(fr. XIII, ll. 174–87 Gow)

At the most obvious level, Machon's verses show us a humble flute-girl who disdains and insults Demetrius Poliorcetes, in a portrait that contrasts sharply with other preserved anecdotes about Lamia and the King. Plutarch, for example, tells us that Demetrius conceived a passion for Lamia the *aulos*-player when she was already past her prime (*Dem.* 16.3–4), and that she gloried in and ruthlessly exploited the status her royal liaison gave her (*Dem.* 27.1–2).⁴³

But I would suggest that the real *frisson* of this anecdote resides in its questioning and ultimate undermining of Demetrius' claims to royal status. Notice that the noun βασιλεύς and the adjective βασιλική occur three times in 14 lines; Machon's verses are preoccupied with the issue of royalty. And while Demetrius appears to have the last word here, his final image of a 'royal gland' (βαλάνου ... βασιλικῆς) suggests the same jarring juxtaposition of regal pretensions and coarse bodiliness we have already seen in Stratonicus' exchange with the Cyprian Queen Biothea. As with Biothea's fart, Demetrius' symptomatic masturbation explodes his royal pretensions. And Lamia here, like Stratonicus in that exchange, calls attention to his signally unkingly crudeness with the pungent adjective σαπρότατον and the dismissive vocative τάλαν.

It is worth recalling in this context that the question of who got to use the title 'King', and when, was a particularly fraught one for the Diadochi. It was only in 306 that Antigonos and his son Demetrius officially adopted the title,⁴⁴ and an anecdote preserved by Plutarch and Athenaeus strongly suggests that Demetrius was very jealous of the privilege. Thus Plutarch tells us:

Ἀλέξανδρος γοῦν οὐδένα τῶν ἄλλων βασιλέων ἀπεστέρησε τῆς ὁμωνυμίας, οὐδὲ αὐτὸν ἀνεῖπε βασιλέων βασιλέα, καίτοι πολλοῖς τὸ καλεῖσθαι καὶ εἶναι βασιλέας αὐτὸς δεδωκώς· ἐκεῖνος δὲ χλευάζων καὶ γελῶν τοὺς ἄλλου τιμὰ πλὴν τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ αὐτοῦ βασιλέα προσαγορεύοντας, ἡδέως ἤκουε τῶν παρὰ πότον ἐπιχύσεις λαμβανόντων Δημητρίου βασιλέως, Σελεύκου δὲ ἐλεφαντάρχου, Πτολεμαίου δὲ ναυάρχου, Λυσιμάχου δὲ γαζοφύλακος, Ἀγαθοκλέους δὲ τοῦ Σικελιώτου υἱσιάρχου.

And certainly King Alexander never refused to bestow the royal title upon other kings, nor did he proclaim himself King of Kings, although many kings received their position and title from him; whereas Demetrius used to rail and mock at those

⁴³ Along the same lines, Athenaeus tells us (citing Demochares) that the Athenians consecrated two temples to Aphrodite Lamia and Aphrodite Leaina as a way of flattering Demetrius (*Athen.* 6.253a). On the historical Lamia, see Ogden (1999) 240–6, 263–8, with collection of sources, p. 281.

⁴⁴ See *Plut. Dem.* 10.3 and especially 18 (where Plutarch asserts that Antigonos and Demetrius were the first of the Diadochi to assume the title of King, at which point Seleucus, Ptolemy, and Lysimachus followed suit).

who gave the title of King to anyone except his father and himself, and was well pleased to hear revellers pledge Demetrius as King, but Seleucus as Master of the Elephants, Ptolemy as Admiral, Lysimachus as Treasurer, and Agathocles of Sicily as Lord of the Isles. (Plut. *Dem.* 25.3–4, trans. B. Perrin)⁴⁵

Read together, Plutarch's anecdote and Machon's bear striking resemblances, so that it is tempting to read the latter as ironic commentary on stories that might have circulated about Demetrius Poliorketes during his lifetime and after his death in 283. Both stories represent joking banter at a drinking party (παρὰ πότον), wherein Demetrius asserts his difference and superiority by virtue of his true royal nature (notice Machon's παρὰ τᾶλλα διαφορὰν ὕσπιν ἔχει).⁴⁶ But whereas Plutarch's anecdote stages the mocking denigration of the other kings by Demetrius' toadying drinking buddies, Machon's suggests that the crude sensualist Demetrius himself deserved to be lampooned as 'Lord of Acorns' – or, to use Machon's own obscene idiom, King of Jerk-offs.⁴⁷

In a second anecdote, Demetrius Poliorketes makes a request of the hetaira Mania:

Αἰτουμένην λέγουσι τὴν πυγὴν ποτε
ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως Μανίαν Δημητρίου
ἀνταξιῶσαι δωρεὰν καὐτόν τινα,
δόντος δ' ἐπιστρέψασα μετὰ μικρὸν λέγει,
'Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖ, νῦν ἔκειν' ἔξεστί σοι.

They say that Mania, once having been asked for her ass by King Demetrius, asked him also for a favour in return. And when he had given it, after a little time she turns around and says, 'Child of Agamemnon, *now* it is permissible for you [to see/to have?] those things ...' (fr. XV, ll. 226–30 Gow)

⁴⁵ Athenaeus 6.261b relates the same anecdote, explicitly crediting it to the tenth book of Phylarchus' *Histories* (see *FGrH* 81 F 19). That issues of masculinity were intimately bound up with the royal title is clearly demonstrated by the coda Plutarch appends to this anecdote: 'When this was reported to these kings, they all laughed at Demetrius, except Lysimachus; he was incensed that Demetrius considered him a eunuch (it was the general practice to have eunuchs for treasurers). And of all the kings Lysimachus had most hatred for Demetrius.' (*Dem.* 25.5–6, trans. B. Perrin).

⁴⁶ There may be an additional element to the sympotic play in both anecdotes (as Richard Neer suggests to me), since in both cases Demetrius would have been symposiarch – or, as Plutarch elsewhere puts it, συμποσίου ... βασιλεύς (*Quaes. conviv.* 1.4, 622a; cf. Miller (1991) 67 and her note 54). Within the narrative trajectory of Plutarch's *Life*, of course, this characterisation of Demetrius as 'King of the symposium' takes on a poignant colouring as it foreshadows his end. For, as Plutarch describes Demetrius' last days (in captivity as a prisoner of Seleucus): 'But Demetrius, who in the beginning bore up under the misfortune that had come upon him, and presently grew accustomed to it and endured his situation with a better grace, at first, in one way or another, exercised his body, resorting to hunting, so far as he could, or riding; then, little by little, he came to have the greatest indifference and aversion to these sports, took eagerly to drinking and dice and spent most of his time at these ... So, then, Demetrius, after an imprisonment of three years in the Syrian Chersonese, through inactivity and surfeit of food and wine, fell sick and died, in the fifty-fifth year of his life.' (Plutarch *Dem.* 52, trans. B. Perrin).

⁴⁷ And what are we to make of the 'inexpensive spikenard'? Is Demetrius using this as lubricant to get himself off? If so, ἐὺτελεῖ perhaps suggests that even Demetrius' royal pleasures are cut-rate or bargain-basement.

The request for a courtesan's ass, which occurs several times in the *Chreiai*, is regarded as a special favour for which Demetrius has to offer a counter-gift. But when he has given Mania what she wanted, she obligingly turns around and presents her ass.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, Mania gets the last word here. The joke inheres in her apt but ironic quotation of a line from Sophocles' *Electra* (Soph. *El.* 2: originally spoken by the *paidagōgos*, as he offers Orestes his first view of Argos on his return from exile). It is worth quoting the entire context of the line, for it was presumably familiar to Machon's ancient audience:⁴⁹

Ἦ τοῦ στρατηγήσαντος ἐν Τροίᾳ ποτέ
 Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖ, νῦν ἐκεῖν' ἔξεστί σοι
 παρόντι λεύσσειν, ὧν πρόθυμος ἦσθ' ἀεί.

O child of Agamemnon, who once commanded the army at Troy, it is now permissible for you, present, to see those things for which you have always longed.
 (Sophocles *Electra* 1–3)

The incongruity between the heroic address 'Child of Agamemnon' in its perfect tragic trimeter and the sordid and obscene context in which it occurs is bathetic, yet again exploding the regal pretensions of Demetrius.

But I would go further and suggest that this anecdote in five lines brilliantly (and hilariously) encapsulates the relation of Demetrius to Athens. For the Sophoclean quotation introduces into the sordid negotiations of prostitute and client issues of possession of territory, sovereignty, and royal descent. Like Orestes, Demetrius is the son of a king with military conquests in the East, who in the later years of his own eventful career made Athens his home. More significantly, Mania's apt quotation of the line equates her proffered ass with the rule of Argos, and so also the rule of Athens.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ I am informed by one of the journal's editors that "'ass" means donkey in UK English', so that, in order to avoid confusion, I should use the orthography 'arse.' As an American, I find myself unable to do so – to my eyes, the spelling 'arse' seems hopelessly quaint and antiquated. I therefore beg the indulgence of my British readers: I do not here refer to Mania's 'donkey'.

For the high desirability of what Demetrius has requested, see Gow (1965) 103. Davidson (1997) 124 cites this anecdote to illustrate time-delay as a necessary part of the 'misrecognition' involved in gift exchange. It is interesting (and perhaps a little surprising) that Machon does not specify here precisely what the gift demanded by Mania was. I would contend that that deliberate vagueness facilitates the kind of political reading I am proposing. For if we were told that Mania got (e.g.) perfume or jewels or gold or rich clothing, the specificity of those gifts might interfere with our ability to read Mania as a stand-in for Athens. Cf. also McClure (forthcoming) for a different treatment of the joke.

⁴⁹ I assume familiarity with the whole context not just because these are the opening lines of the play, but also because (as Gow (1965) 103 notes), three manuscripts of Athenaeus actually include Soph. *El.* line 3 as well as line 2 in their text of Machon. Gow follows the majority of manuscripts and all editors in omitting the second line of the quotation as 'superfluous'.

⁵⁰ To appreciate the political valence the Sophoclean quotation gives the anecdote when Demetrius Poliorcetes is a participant, we need only contrast Machon's version with the other ancient anecdote that uses the same Sophoclean tag as its punchline (as preserved in Plutarch *Quaes. conviv.* 737b): 'Mention was also made of the wife of Theodoros the tragic actor who would not receive him to sleep with her while the competition was imminent, but when he entered her room victorious welcomed him with the words, "Agamemnon's child, you have permission now.'" (*Moralia*, Loeb vol. 9, trans. F. H. Sandbach).

And yet at the same time, her heavily ironised citation asserts her own effortless control of Athens' cultural heritage and distances her from her posture of sexual subjection.

Given what the Sophoclean quotation injects into this brief anecdote, we might read it as what James Scott has called the 'hidden transcript' of the public honorifics Athens lavished on Demetrius – that is, the coded, unofficial and ironic version of the 'public transcript' the subjected shared among themselves.⁵¹ In public, Athens famously conferred extravagant honours on Demetrius on the several occasions when he offered her military aid. To cite just some of these honours: first, in 307, the city made Demetrius and his father Antigonos into 'Saviour-gods', and added two civic tribes named after them to the original ten. At that point, the priest of the 'Saviour-gods' replaced the Eponymous Archon in giving his name to the year in official documents. In 304, as I've mentioned, Demetrius was housed in the *opisthodomos* of the Parthenon and, at his own request, initiated in a matter of days into the Eleusinian mysteries – an initiation that normally required at least ten months. This was effected by an assembly decree that first changed the name of the current month to that appropriate for the first stage of initiation, then immediately changed it back again so that Demetrius could undergo the final stages of initiation under the month's proper name. Finally, in 290, when Demetrius returned to Athens from Leucas and Corcyra, the Athenians met him with incense and crowns, processional choruses, and ithyphallic dancers who sang a hymn in his honour. The text of this ithyphallic hymn, preserved by Athenaeus from Duris of Samos, runs in part:

For the highest and dearest of the gods are present in our city, for the proper time has led together here Demeter and Demetrius. And she comes to celebrate the august mysteries of the Maid, while he is present gracious (as a god ought to be) and beautiful and smiling. He appears as something august, all his friends around him and he in their midst – the friends just like the stars and that one like the sun! O child of the most mighty god Poseidon and of Aphrodite, hail! For other gods are far away, or they don't have ears, or they don't exist, or they don't heed us at all. But you we see present before us, not of wood or of stone, but in very truth. And so we pray to you ... (Duris of Samos, *FGrH* 76 F 13 *ap.* Athen. 6.253d–3)⁵²

From one perspective (and this was certainly the perspective of critics of Athens' policy), the city of Athens behaves like a prostitute presenting her ass, willing to do anything to gratify Demetrius. But from another perspective, reading Machon's joke as the 'hidden transcript' of Athens' public policy, the message seems to be that Athens

⁵¹ See Scott (1985), (1990) and see discussion in Section V below.

⁵² For the honours of 307, see Plutarch *Dem.* 10–13; for the honours of 304, Plutarch *Dem.* 23.2–3, 24.4, 26; for 290, see Athenaeus 6.252f–3f, quoting Demochares and Duris of Samos, and Athenaeus 15.697a, quoting Philochorus for Hermocles of Cyzicus' authorship of the ithyphallic hymn (apparently by winning a competition). On this whole sequence of honours to Demetrius Poliorcetes, see Habicht (1997) 72–80, 88–94.

manipulates Demetrius with honours as skilfully (and cynically) as a hetaira wheedles gifts from an infatuated ‘john’.⁵³

And in case the political, allegorical interpretation I’m proposing seems far-fetched, it’s worth noting Plutarch’s parenthetical observation that Mania’s real name was Dêmo (*Dem.* 27.4). As we’ll see in a moment, Machon himself records a different tradition, but this name may still have been familiar to his original audience.⁵⁴

The third anecdote, which involves Demetrius Poliorcetes and the two hetairas Leaina and Lamia, invites a similar political reading. Machon tells us:

Ἵπερβολῆ δὲ τῆς Λεαίνης σχῆμά τι
περαινομένης εὖ παρά τε τῷ Δημητρίῳ
εὐημερούσης, φασὶ καὶ τὴν †Λαμίαν
τὸν βασιλέ’ εὐμελῶς κελητίσαι ποτέ
ἐπαινεθῆναί θ’ ἢ δὲ τοῦτ’ ἀπεκρίθητ,
Ἰρὸς ταῦτα καὶ Λέαιναν εἰ βούλει κράτει.

When Leaina had executed a certain position exceptionally well and was a hit with Demetrius, they say that Lamia also once rode the king horsey-style very rhythmically [limberly?] and was praised for it. And she answered this: ‘As for that, stick it to Leaina also if you want’.
(fr. XII, ll. 168–73 Gow)

On the face of it, this looks like a catty competition between two call-girls to see who has the best gymnastic skills and who is most willing to oblige.⁵⁵ For the position here called *κελητίσαι* (‘riding horsey’) was regarded as particularly demeaning for the woman involved, as we know from its other occurrences in the *Chreiai* and elsewhere.⁵⁶ Indeed, on occasion in Machon, even prostitutes refuse to do it.

⁵³ So, contrast Machon’s tone here with the moral outrage of, say, Demochares, Duris of Samos, and Theopompus (all cited in Athen. 6.252f–4c), Philochorus (Athen. 15.697a), and Philippides (quoted above, p. 29).

⁵⁴ On the prosopography of Mania/Dêmo, see Ogden (1999) 233–4, 242, 247–8 (Ogden suggests that two different Antigonid courtesans, Mania-Dêmo and Mania-Melitta, may have been conflated in our sources). Since Machon himself etymologises Mania’s *nom de guerre* from ‘madness’, it may also be relevant to cite Plutarch’s anecdote about yet another special privilege awarded Demetrius by the Athenian demos: ‘furthermore, they voted besides that it was the pleasure of the Athenian people that whatsoever King Demetrius should ordain in future, this should be held righteous towards the gods and just towards men. And when one of the better class of citizens declared that Stratocles was mad to introduce such a motion, Demochares of Leuconoë said: “He would indeed be mad not to be mad”’ (μαίνουτο μεντᾶν ... εἰ μὴ μαίνουτο, *Dem.* 24.4–5, trans. B. Perrin).

⁵⁵ Indeed, several modern readings of this joke turn on the idea that Leaina took her *nom de guerre* from a particular sexual position; thus Stewart (1997) 164, 179 and Ogden (1999) 250, 260–1: ‘The name of Demetrius Poliorcetes’ courtesan Leaina (‘Lion’) may have been intended to evoke the sexual position of the same name, perhaps equivalent to our “doggy style”. In the passage relating to Lamia ..., she makes a joke which plays on the name of Leaina and on the sexual position. This same fragment, incidentally, also suggests the possibility of troilism’ (quote taken from pp. 260–1). On this reading, Lamia’s response to Demetrius is all about one-upmanship of exotic sexual positions. It is not my intention to deny this sexual reading; I simply want to add to it also a political reading.

⁵⁶ See Heath (1986); Henry (1992) 264; Davidson (1997) 196–7.

But as with Mania's para-tragic come-hither as she presents her ass, Lamia's retort here gives an ironic twist to the whole exchange. Her challenge to Leaina is, in fact, a near quotation of a line from Euripides' *Medea*, when Medea makes her final appearance in the Chariot of the Sun and dismisses Jason's abuse of her. Jason calls her 'a lioness, not a woman' (*Med.* 1342), and Medea responds disdainfully, πρὸς ταῦτα καὶ λέαιναν, εἰ βούλη, κάλει ('As for that, call me also lioness, if you wish', *Med.* 1358). Lamia wittily transforms the common noun 'lioness' into the name Leaina, and with the change of the final imperative from κάλει to κράτει, suggests to Demetrius that he 'stick it to Leaina as well'. Thus here, as in the exchange with Mania, a prostitute ironically flaunts the fifth-century poetic heritage of Athens at the moment she seems to be subjecting herself to the power of Demetrius.

Indeed, we might take the interpretation even a step further in this case. As we are invited to do by the last example, whose Sophoclean context obtrudes itself so forcibly, we might assume that Lamia's punchline here conjures up the original context of the Euripidean line. At the moment the line is spoken, Medea appears all-powerful and unassailable in the position of *deus ex machina*, while Jason on the ground below her is reduced to utter sputtering impotence. If Lamia's near quotation carries any residue of its original context with it, both her equine activity and Demetrius' relative power are suddenly transformed thereby. In the audience's imagination, Lamia's 'riding horsey' momentarily morphs into mounting the Chariot of the Sun, while Demetrius is suddenly cut down to size as Jason, made into an impotent nothing by Medea's force of will. Thus Lamia's witty turn on Euripides resignifies the relative power and status of 'top' and 'bottom' in this sexual exchange.⁵⁷

I cannot therefore entirely agree with Madeleine Henry, who cites this anecdote as a typical example of a 'Sadeian woman':

The comic poet Machon, in the work called *Witticisms*, says the following: '[they say] that the posture of Leaina as she finished off Demetrius was wonderfully skilled; they say that Lamia also once rode the king gracefully and was praised for it. And she replied: "Well then, take Leaina as well if you wish"' (13.577d1–8). Heath's 1986 study of the verb *kelêtizô* ('to ride', sens. obsc.) has shown that this sexual position was one considered degrading to women and that prostitutes often refused to perform it. Yet the high-priced Lamia skillfully performs the act and invites the king to hire another woman to do the same In no way are courtesans represented, nor do they represent themselves, as other than objects of men's pleasure. They exist for men.⁵⁸

As I have noted, Henry's use of the concept of the 'Sadeian woman' to expose the pornographic oppression of the female in Machon's anecdotes stands at the other extreme from Rosenmeyer's and Davidson's optimistic reading of real female agency

⁵⁷ Cf. McClure (forthcoming).

⁵⁸ Henry (1992) 264–5.

and, in so far as she denies agency to the female characters in these anecdotes, Henry is probably closer to the mark. But to say that Machon's anecdotes – like everything else in Athenaeus – oppress women and are therefore pornographic does not get us very far in understanding the particularity of Machon. Thus Henry's reading, in turn, seems to me to ignore both the literary shaping of Machon's anecdotes and their political point. We can get at the former by noticing that Henry's translation occludes the fact of Euripidean citation in the anecdote's punchline – and noticing further how that entirely alters the dynamics of Machon's narrative. For literary form here pulls against – even undermines – overt content. In both anecdotes, the hetaira's final line is a gesture of sexual submission, but, cast in the form of the ingenious deployment of a perfect tragic trimeter, it registers something else – resistance, contempt, and superiority. This is the superiority of a quintessentially Athenian poetic genre to the crude physical demands of Athens' boorish conqueror.⁵⁹

And with the issue of Athenianness, I come back to the political point of these anecdotes, equally ignored by Henry's reading. We can get at this latter issue by thinking again about audience identification. Henry assumes that Machon's audience identifies with Demetrius and so derives further titillation from the women's own willing sexual subjection to him. And yet, paradoxical as it may seem, I would contend that the audience is invited to identify more with Machon's Athenian hetairas in these anecdotes than with the hated and buffoonish Macedonian king. Thus it is certainly true that Machon's represented hetairas 'exist for men', but in a more complex sense than Henry perhaps intends.

III. Interlude: Machon's life and work

The few bits of data Athenaeus records about Machon seem to provide external support for the kind of reading I am proposing. Notice, first, Dioscorides' characterisation of him in the funerary epigram cited above as 'a worthy relic of the ancient art' (ll. 3–4). Gow understands this phrase to mean that Dioscorides 'looks on [Machon] rather as a survival from the Old Comedy than as a representative of the New', and goes on tentatively to explain that characterisation: 'The contents of the *Χρῆται* cannot be taken as evidence for the Comedies, but, with due caution, it may be noted that their frequent

⁵⁹ Thus it may be significant that the last word of the punchline, and the single word Lamia changes in Euripides' quotation, is *κράτει*. The use of *κράτει* here is striking since, as Gow ((1965) 94) notes, following Porson, the word change is unnecessary for the dirty joke: Machon could just as well have kept Euripides' *κάλει*, with the meaning 'So now, if you please, send for Leaina too.' Furthermore, this forces us to give *κράτει* an otherwise unattested meaning, as Gow also notes: '*κράτει*, if correct, will presumably mean *ὄπιθε* with some overtones. The sense seems, if unattested, natural enough, but *κάλει* is quite appropriate to Machon's context and it is difficult to see why he should have altered it.' Given the apparent gratuitousness of the change and the contempt the form of this line seems to register, this is perhaps a challenge to Demetrius' potency (implying not just 'if you wish', but 'if you can'). But *κράτει* may also carry a political charge (since this is the normal semantic sphere of the verb), insinuating the ultimate impossibility of Demetrius' truly dominating cultured Athenians through sheer physical force.

and extreme coarseness is much more reminiscent of Aristophanes than of Menander.⁶⁰ But perhaps Machon's dramas were akin to Old Comedy not – or not only – in their coarseness and obscenity, but also in their explicit mockery of current politics and politicians. (This might also explain Dioscorides' choice of the adjective *δριμύ*, 'bitter' or 'pungent,' to characterise Machon's art.) Explicit political lampoon might, in turn, account for Athenaeus' odd formulation in Bk. 14.664a: οὐκ ἐδίδαξεν δ' Ἀθήνησι τὰς κωμωδίας τὰς ἑαυτοῦ ἀλλ' ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ. This is usually translated simply 'he didn't produce his dramas in Athens, but in Alexandria'. But, as Gow alone seems to acknowledge, 'Athenaeus' phrase τὰς κωμωδίας τὰς ἑαυτοῦ taken at its face value would seem to imply that he had nevertheless been connected with the Athenian theatre though not as a playwright.'⁶¹ Indeed, I would contend that Athenaeus' formulation suggests that Machon may have produced other people's comedies in Athens (as we know Aristophanes himself did as a young man), but could only produce his own in Alexandria. This shift from Athens to Alexandria makes sense if Machon's plays too explicitly criticised or parodied the activities of Demetrius Poliorcetes or of his son Antigonos Gonatas, once Macedon had regained control of Athens in 262. Another politically sensitive object of comic abuse may have been the legislative reforms of Demetrius of Phaleron (many of which were still in force).⁶²

And with Demetrius of Phaleron, I'd like to shift from consideration of Machon's comedies to that of his *Chreiai*. For thus far, I have only been able to offer speculation about Machon's comedies, of which we have almost nothing preserved. With the *Chreiai*, however, we are on somewhat firmer ground. I have already suggested that Machon's *Chreiai* parody a familiar philosophical genre, and that, at one point, he explicitly signals the generic object of his parody by having one of his speaking characters use the loaded verb φιλοσοφῶ of her choice of sexual position (l. 374 Gow). But we may be able to take the generic argument even a step further, for among the philosophers to whom Diogenes Laertius credits the composition of *Chreiai* is Demetrius of Phaleron. Demetrius of Phaleron was said to be an exceptionally prolific writer, who (according to Diogenes Laertius) composed nearly sixty volumes on philosophical and political topics (including among the latter at least a couple books of apologia for his own regime).⁶³ With it all, he found the time to compile Sayings of the

⁶⁰ Gow (1965) 5.

⁶¹ Gow (1965) 5n. 1. Contrast Gow's scrupulous note with Gulick's Loeb translation: 'he did not bring out his comedies at Athens, but in Alexandria'. (Loeb vol. 7, p. 57).

⁶² We might find support for this suggestion in a fragment of Philodemus *Peri poiêmâtôn*, published by Jensen (1934), based on Casanova's transcription of a subsequently lost papyrus. According to Jensen's interpretation, the fragment contains Philodemus' discussion of Machon's comedy *Auge*, in which (the fragment seems to say) he borrowed from and critiqued Aristotelian doctrine and also 'ridiculed the Socratic [dialogues]'. If this interpretation of the papyrus is correct, it might suggest Machon's onstage hostility to the school of Aristotle and Theophrastus, with which Demetrius of Phaleron was closely connected. But, like Gow, I am troubled by the divergences between Casanova's drawing and Jensen's proposed readings, so that, on the whole, this material seems tenuous and unreliable and I would not build a case on it.

⁶³ D.L. lists 58 volumes under 45 titles, prefacing his list with the assertion that 'In the number of his works and their total length in lines he has surpassed almost all contemporary Peripatetics'. (D.L. 5.80).

Seven Sages and one book of *Chreiai*. Thus, Machon's *Chreiai* presumably parody the philosophical genre in general, but it is hard to believe that in Athens and Alexandria of the 260s and 250s, they do not specifically evoke Demetrius of Phaleron's volume.⁶⁴ Indeed, as we shall see, Demetrius of Phaleron seems to unite in a single figure an oligarchic political agenda and serious philosophical commitments articulated through *Chreiai*. This combination would seem to get us very close to Machon's odd fusion (as yet unexplained) of the form of philosophical parody with the content (if my readings thus far are persuasive) of anti-Macedonian democratic politics. Thus it may be that Demetrius of Phaleron offers a key to our sociological poetics of Machon.

IV. Demetrius of Phaleron: philosophy and legislation

Still, when it comes to Demetrius of Phaleron, the argument must be much more tentative, because this Demetrius never appears himself in the *Chreiai* and because evidence for his actual legislation is extremely scattered and fragmentary.⁶⁵ Thus there remains wide divergence of opinion among ancient historians and specialists in Athenian law on the nature, extent, and motivation of his legislative programme. W. S. Ferguson, writing early in the last century, was happy to attribute an entire philosophically-inspired constitution to Demetrius, while the most recent discussions tend to be much more conservative in the actual legal reforms they credit to him.⁶⁶ Furthermore, Hans-Joachim Gehrke in 1978 challenged the earlier orthodoxy that Demetrius was a veritable 'Philosopher King' whose legislation was intended to put in practice the theoretical writings of Plato and Aristotle on the laws of the ideal polity. Gehrke's important article refuted many vague and unsubstantiated associations between Demetrius' legislation and the political philosophies of Plato and Aristotle. But Gehrke himself went too far in the other direction, insisting that there was absolutely no philosophical influence whatsoever on Demetrius' legislation, but that all of it was explicable as a set of practical responses to practical problems.⁶⁷ This approach, which treats the legislation piecemeal and construes its motivation as

⁶⁴ Recall that, when he was driven out of Athens by Demetrius Poliorcetes, Demetrius of Phaleron eventually wound up in Alexandria, where he served as advisor to Ptolemy I and (according to Aristeas) was instrumental in the founding and acquisitions of the Alexandrian library. This suggests that his own writings would have been readily available – and presumably familiar – in Alexandria as in Athens. On Demetrius of Phaleron's role in Alexandria, see Williams (1987) 90–3; Tracy (1995) 50–1, (2000) 343–5.

⁶⁵ In addition, Demetrius of Phaleron's own copious writing is entirely lost, except for a few short quotations preserved in other authors. For the testimonia and fragments, see Wehrli (1949), Fortenbaugh and Schütrumpf (2000); for fragments of autobiography and memoirs, see Jacoby *FGrH* 228.

⁶⁶ Thus Ferguson (1911a) 38–94, (1911b); Dow and Travis (1943) vs. Tracy (1995) 36–51, (2000); Habicht (1997) 53–66; Gagarin (2000). Even among the most recent reconstructions, there's quite a bit of variation: thus, for example, Habicht (1997) 54–5 is confident that Demetrius must have suspended sortition for the archonship (since he himself served as Eponymous Archon in 309/8), while Tracy ((1995) 38 n. 8, (2000) 337–8) contends that this is not a necessary conclusion – that Demetrius may have tampered with the process, but officially left sortition in place.

⁶⁷ Gehrke (1978).

narrowly as possible, has been critiqued in turn by James Williams, who offers an alternative interpretation that mediates between the two extremes. Williams observes that all the legislation we can reconstruct for Demetrius can be understood as an ideologically coherent programme to answer in practice a century of oligarchic critics of democracy.⁶⁸ I find Williams' compromise position more persuasive than Gehrke's, and so I shall assume that Demetrius' legislation aimed to establish a philosophically and morally grounded oligarchic regime.⁶⁹

I want to start with a fragment that invites further interpretation precisely because its jokes seem quite opaque to us.⁷⁰ And here, I take Gow as my representative of a well-informed but baffled modern reader. At one point only, Machon's jokey narrator pauses to address the audience directly:

Ἴσως δ' ἂν ἀπορήσαι τις εὐλόγως θ' ἅμα
 τῶν νῦν ἀκροατῶν εἴ τις Ἀττικὴ γυνή
 προσηγορεύετ' ἢ νομισθῆ Μανία, 190
 αἰσχρὸν γὰρ ὄνομα Φρυγιακὸν γυναικ' ἔχει
 καὶ ταῦθ' ἑταίραυ ἐκ μέσης τῆς Ἑλλάδος
 καὶ τῶν Ἀθηναίων μὴ πικωλύσαι πόλιν,⁷¹
 ὑφ' ἧς ἅπαντές εἰς ἐπινορηθέντες.
 τὸ μὲν οὖν ὑπάρχον εὐθέως ἐκ παιδίου 195
 αὐτῇ Μέλιττ' ἦν ὄνομα. τῷ μεγέθει μὲν ᾗ
 τῶν τότε γυναικῶν βραχὺ τι καταδεεστέρα,
 φωνῇ δ' ὁμιλίᾳ τε κεχορηγμένη,

⁶⁸ Williams (1987), (1997), drawing on Jones (1957) for the elements of the oligarchic critique; for more on the 'critics of democracy', see now Ober (1998).

⁶⁹ I would therefore agree with the thoughtful summary of Wilson (2000) (mainly concerned with Demetrius' changes to the liturgical system): 'In this position of power Demetrius set about instituting a set of conservative measures whose high degree of ideological coherence and whose influence from Peripatetic ideas are evident, although the nature and degree of the latter is debated. It is certainly clear that his practical law-giving instantiates a response to many of the standard oligarchic objections to democracy. His treatment of the leitourgical system, so far as we can make it out, is very much in the spirit of Aristotle's advice.' (pp. 270–1). Cf. also Lehmann (1997) 68–80.

⁷⁰ In this, I am following the lead of Robert Darnton, who in his famous essay on 'The great cat massacre' in pre-revolutionary France observes, 'Our own inability to get the joke is an indication of the distance that separates us from the workers of preindustrial Europe. The perception of that distance may serve as the starting-point of an investigation, for anthropologists have found that the best points of entry in an attempt to penetrate [!] an alien culture can be those where it seems to be most opaque. When you realize that you are not getting something – a joke, a proverb, a ceremony – that is particularly meaningful to the natives, you can see where to grasp a foreign system of meaning in order to unravel it.' (Darnton (1984) 77–8; cf. Geertz (1973) 3–30). It might be objected that I am glossing over an important difference, for Darnton's explication of the joke is cultural and anthropological, whereas mine in this instance will be narrowly political. But I would contend that, in fact, my way of understanding Machon's ironic relation to the legislation of Demetrius of Phaleron requires situating the latter within a distinctive, alien cultural, philosophical, and ideological context. This is precisely what Gehrke (1978) fails to do, and why his interpretation of Demetrius' legislation seems so impoverished.

⁷¹ This line is hopelessly corrupt, though the general idea is clear. I therefore provide Gow's own suggested corrections *exempli gratia* (see Gow (1965) 98).

πάνν δ' εὐπρόσωπος οὔσα καὶ καταπληκτικὴ
 πολλοὺς ἔραστὰς, καὶ πολίτας καὶ ξένους, 200
 εἶχ', οἷς ὅπου περὶ <τῆς> γυναικὸς τις λόγος
 γένοιτο μανίαν τὴν Μέλιτταν ὡς καλὴν
 ἔφασκον εἶναι, καὶ προσεξειργάζετο
 αὐτὴ τὸ πλεῖον· ἤνικα σκώψειε γάρ
 ῥημάτιον εὐθὺ τοῦτο μανίαν ἀνεβόα, 205
 αὐτὴ θ' ὄτ' ἐπαινοίη τιν' ἢ ψέγοι πάλιν
 ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρων προσέκειτο μανία τῶν λόγων.
 διὸ τῆς μανίας τὸ ῥῆμ' ἐπεκτείνας δοκεῖ
 καλέσαι τις αὐτὴν τῶν ἔραστῶν Μανίαν.
 μάλλον τὸ πάρεργον ἐπεκράτησ' ἢ τοῦνομα. 210

But some one of my listeners could fairly and reasonably be at a loss, if an Attic woman was addressed and commonly known as Mania. For it's a shameful thing for a woman to have a Phrygian name – especially a hetaira from the middle of Greece – and the city of Athens not prevent it, the city by which all men have been set upright. But straightway from childhood, the name she had was Melitta. And in size she was short, somewhat inferior to her contemporaries, but well-endowed with speech and social skills, and being entirely beautiful and a real 'knock-out', she had many admirers, both citizens and strangers. And whenever there was any discussion among them concerning the woman, they were always saying that it was madness how beautiful Melitta was, and she developed it further herself. For whenever someone would make a joke, she would straightway shout out this little word 'madness', and whenever she herself would praise or again censure anyone, 'madness' was attached to both these utterances. On account of this, one of her admirers, having lengthened the first syllable of the word 'madness' decides to call her Mania. And the deformation of the word triumphed [even] more than the name itself. (fr. XIV, ll. 188–210 Gow)

This long anecdote, which purports to explain why Mania's *nom de guerre* is not the same as the common Thracian slave name, seemed singularly unfunny to Gow. And Gow himself helpfully isolates two specific moments of even greater darkness amidst the general opacity. Thus he notes at line 192, 'Supposing it to be disgraceful for a woman of central Greece to bear a Phrygian name, it is hard to see how, as Machon seems to assert, the outrage is aggravated by her being a prostitute.'⁷² Again at line 194, in a half-hearted attempt to find a joke in ἐπνηροθωμένοι, Gow allows himself the following: 'It is permissible to wonder whether this tribute to Athens from Alexandria is not ironical.'⁷³ I would like to build an interpretation around these two puzzling or

⁷² Gow (1965) 97.

⁷³ Gow (1965) 98.

symptomatic moments – καὶ ταῦθ' ἑταίραν and ἐπηνορθωμένοι. To start from the latter: aside from a rather obvious obscene joke, ἐπηνορθωμένοι may represent a quite specific allusion to the regime of Demetrius of Phaleron and his subsequent apologia for it. For we find the following brief notice in Strabo's *Geography*:

ἔνιοι δέ φασι, καὶ βέλτιστα τότε αὐτοὺς πολιτεύσασθαι δεκαετῆ χρόνον, ὃν ἦρχε Μακεδόνων Κάσσανδρος. οὗτος γὰρ ὁ ἀνὴρ πρὸς μὲν τὰ ἄλλα δοκεῖ τυραννικώτερος γενέσθαι, πρὸς Ἀθηναίους δὲ εὐγνωμόνησε, λαβῶν ὑπήκοον τὴν πόλιν· ἐπέστησε γὰρ τῶν πολιτῶν Δημήτριον τὸν Φαληρέα, τῶν Θεοφράστου τοῦ φιλοσόφου γνωρίμων, ὃς οὐ μόνον οὐ κατέλυσε τὴν δημοκρατίαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπηνώρθωσε. δηλοῖ δὲ τὰ ὑπομνήματα, ἃ συνέγραψε περὶ τῆς πολιτείας ταύτης ἐκεῖνος.

And some say that [the Athenians] were actually best governed at that time, during the ten years when Cassander reigned over the Macedonians. For although this man is reputed to have been rather tyrannical in his dealings with all others, yet he was kindly disposed towards the Athenians, once he had reduced the city to subjection; for he placed over the citizens Demetrius of Phaleron, one of the disciples of Theophrastus the philosopher, who not only did not destroy the democracy but even improved it (ἐπηνώρθωσε), as is made clear in the *Memoirs* which Demetrius wrote concerning this government.

(Strabo 9.1.20/C 398, trans. H. L. Jones)

The immediately following reference to Demetrius' *Hypomnemata* suggests that Strabo may be drawing the verb ἐπανορθῶ from Demetrius himself. Perhaps it represents his own political catch-phrase or buzz-word to characterise his legislative programme – not the dissolution of democracy, but its 'correction' or 'restoration'.⁷⁴ If that is the case, ἐπηνορθωμένοι in Machon is certainly ironic, but not of Athens from Alexandria so much as of the officious moralising legislation Demetrius might be imagined to have put in place.

And here we get to καὶ ταῦθ' ἑταίραν, for which Gow offers a striking but at the same time curiously ill-fitting parallel from Athenaeus. Athenaeus mentions a flute-girl named Nemeas and observes parenthetically:

⁷⁴ Thus Wehrli (1949) 73 assumes that the language here goes back to Demetrius himself: 'Die Behauptung, er habe die Demokratie wiederhergestellt, ist Antwort des D. auf den Vorwurf der Tyrannis ...' Cf. Lehmann (1997) 67–8 with his note 82. The verb appears to have a good political and philosophical pedigree: cf. Isocrates *Arch.* 48, *Peace* 133, *Areop.* 15; Plato *Rep.* 425a5, e6, 426e6, *Laws* 769d7, e8, 772c3, 781b4, 957b2; Aristotle *Pol.* 1287a27, 1289a3; *IG I³*, 1 93, ll. 19–20; *IG I³*, 1 101, line 58; *IG II*, 1² 204, line 84; *IG II*, 1² 832, lines 14, 20. Cicero's use of the verb *sustentasset* to describe Demetrius' activity of 'upholding the already bloodless and prostrate Athenian state' (*rem publicam ... postremo exsanguem iam et iacentem doctus vir Phalereus sustentasset Demetrius, De republica* 2.1.2) perhaps represents a Latin translation of the same verb; for Cicero's familiarity with and admiration for the writings of Demetrius of Phaleron see Lehmann (1997) 80.

περὶ ἧς ἄξιον θαυμάζειν πῶς περιεῖδον Ἀθηναῖοι οὕτως προσαγορευομένην τὴν πόρνην, πανηγύρεως ἐνδοξοτάτης ὀνόματι κεχρημένην· ἐκεκώλυτο γὰρ τὰ τοιαῦτα τίθεσθαι ὀνόματα οὐ μόνον ταῖς ἑταιρούσαις, ἀλλὰ καὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις δούλαις, ὡς φησι Πολέμων ἐν τοῖς περὶ Ἀκροπόλεως.

Concerning her one may rightly wonder how the Athenians permitted the whore to be so called, since the name she had assumed was that of a highly-revered festival; for the adoption of such names as these had been forbidden, not only to women practising prostitution, but also to other women of the slave class, as Polemon declares in his work *On the Acropolis*.

(Athen. 13.587c, trans. C. B. Gulick)

The fact that Athenaeus here and elsewhere records anecdotes about Athenian hetairas named Nemeas and Isthmias strongly suggests that, if such legislation existed, it was not seriously enforced.⁷⁵ And yet, the second-century BCE *periegete* Polemon apparently asserted with confidence that it ‘had been forbidden’ in Athens (ἐκεκώλυτο) for hetairas and other slave women to bear such names. This legislation, which aims entirely to segregate high religious festivals from socially debased and polluted elements, even at the level of language, is at least, as Gow notes, symbolically ‘intelligible’⁷⁶ (and indeed, perhaps appropriate legislation for an aspiring Philosopher King). But when we turn back to Machon, everything seems off-kilter or askew in relation to this discursive quarantining. For Machon is not denouncing the fact of a sacred name given to a hetaira; instead, the scandal for him seems to be that a good Attic prostitute should bear an outlandish slave name. And therein lies the joke: Machon’s self-conscious address to his audience parodies the style and tone of the street-corner philosopher’s moral diatribe, even as it precisely inverts the terms and values involved. Our speaker is the self-righteous defender of the home-grown Attic prostitute. In this scheme, καὶ ταῦθ’ ἑταίραν is the first moment at which the parody becomes explicit – up to that point, we could imagine the speaker to be referring to a freeborn Attic citizen wife named Mania, but ἑταίραν gives the game away (hence Gow’s befuddlement).

But what does all this have to do with Demetrius of Phaleron, as we imagine it should if we accept ἐπιτηροθῶμενοι as a specific allusion to his regime? I find it very tempting to connect this parody of moralising regulation with magistrates called *Gunaikonomoi* – an office we know to have been established, or at the very least, significantly enhanced by Demetrius of Phaleron. Contemporary sources are fragmentary and allusive, but they seem to imply that the *Gunaikonomoi* were charged with enforcing sumptuary legislation, like limiting the number of banqueters allowed at private sacrifices.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ For the name Isthmias, see Athen. 13.587e, 593f. Cf. Gulick’s note on 587c (Loeb vol. 6, p. 167).

⁷⁶ Gow (1965) 98.

⁷⁷ For ancient sources on the *Gunaikonomoi* and sumptuary legislation, see Philochorus, *FGH* 328 F 65 (with Jacoby’s commentary *ad loc.*); Harpocration s.v. *hoi chilikas*; Pollux 8.112; Lynceus *ap.* Athenaeus 6.245a; Timocles fr. 34 K.-A.; Menander fr. 208 K.-A. For modern reconstructions of the office of

In the most comprehensive survey to date of *Gunaikonomoi* throughout the Greek world, Daniel Ogden collects all the literary and epigraphic evidence for their office and duties and concludes that the core of their responsibilities was religious: ‘the surveillance and ordering of women at festivals and funerals’.⁷⁸ From that core, he postulates, the *Gunaikonomoi* derived a range of responsibilities, including training girls for festival roles; regulating the proper behaviour of married women; and in some cases, maintaining distinctions between respectable women, prostitutes, and slave women through dress and other regulations.⁷⁹ This cluster of duties, especially the oversight of religious festivals and the maintenance of distinctions between respectable and non-respectable women, seems to conform quite closely to the contents of the legislation to which the *periegete* Polemon refers. What better office, then, to police the professional names chosen by the city’s prostitutes – and so perhaps also to lie behind Machon’s comic riff on Mania’s sobriquet?⁸⁰

Thus, this anecdote at least may parody the conjunction of moralising philosophy with legislative intervention that seemed to characterise Demetrius of Phaleron’s regime. But the identification must remain tentative, given how little we know about Demetrius’ law code. There is, however, one important constitutional change we can certainly identify with Demetrius: the imposition of a property requirement of 1000 drachmas for citizenship. As only half the property requirement imposed by Phocion’s

Gunaikonomoi. see (in addition to Jacoby) Ferguson (1911b); Wehrli (1962); Gehrke (1978) 162–70; Williams (1987) 96–8, (1997) 335–8; Ogden (1996) 364–75; Habicht (1997) 55–7; Lehmann (1997) 75–6; Gagarin (2000) 352; Gottschalk (2000) 370.

⁷⁸ Ogden (1996) 364–75 (quote taken from p. 365).

⁷⁹ Ogden (1996) 367–71, citing specific regulations from Hellenistic Syracuse, Thasos, and Andania.

⁸⁰ We may find another parodic reference to the *Gunaikonomoi* and the festival and sumptuary regulations with which they were charged in Machon fr. XVII, lines 387–401 Gow. This anecdote describes the hetaira Gnathainion going down to Piraeus for a festival, ‘well equipped upon a litter, having in all three donkeys with her and three servant-women and one new nurse’. At a narrow point in the road, Gnathainion’s lavish retinue encounters a ‘bad wrestler’, one of the sort, we’re told, who ‘always deliberately(?) loses his matches’. When he can’t get by easily, he threatens to throw the whole group, ‘wenches, donkeys, and all’ off the road, and Gnathainion responds, ‘No way, you wretch, for you’ve never yet accomplished this’ (i.e. throwing an opponent). The joke here seems to reside in Machon’s topsy-turvy revaluation of the relative status and respect normally accorded to a courtesan and a citizen athlete. According to the regulations of many cities (enforced by *Gunaikonomoi*), prostitutes were excluded from festival celebrations and presumably would be prevented from such a public display of conspicuous consumption as Gnathainion flaunts here in her entourage. And yet, her sneering response to the ‘bad wrestler’ asserts her superiority to him. This joke perhaps explains the manuscripts’ ἐπιμελῶς in line 394, which so puzzled Gow that he daggars it in his text ((1965) 126): ‘ἐπιμελῶς can hardly be right. It would mean *one of those always careful to lose* ... presumably because their opponents (or their supporters) made it worth their while to do so. There can hardly however have been a class of such persons; moreover this man loses his bouts because he is a bad wrestler (393), and Gnathainion’s riposte (401) loses its point if he could have won them.’ In spite of Gow’s objections, I would be inclined to keep ἐπιμελῶς, since it implicitly establishes Gnathainion’s moral as well as material superiority, or, at the very least, deconstructs the presumed distinction between courtesan and wrestler (since both take a tumble for pay). Finally, it is possible that the wrestler’s deliberately throwing a festival match might itself constitute an infraction punishable by the *Gunaikonomoi*, since, as Ogden (1996) 373 notes, in some cities these officials were also responsible for ‘curbing ... womanish behaviour in men’. The implication, then, is that the moral hierarchy constructed and enforced by the *Gunaikonomoi* is itself bankrupt and absurd.

short-lived oligarchy of 322/1–319, Demetrius' property requirement would in fact have expanded the citizen base, probably enfranchising a majority of those who would have been eligible under the full democracy while excluding the poorest citizens.⁸¹ Several scholars have connected this reform and the mix of democracy and moderate oligarchy it would have produced with Aristotle's proposed 'best constitution' or *politeia* in the *Politics*.⁸² As James Williams argues:

The major reform which changed Athens' constitutional structure into a moderate oligarchy was Demetrius' establishment of a moderate property qualification to eliminate the poorest Athenians from political activity. This coincided with the general criticism by conservatives of giving political rights to *hoi poneroi* and objections about mob rule and the tyranny of the poor majority over the rich minority. It may also have reflected the belief of Aristotle and other conservatives that the poor lacked sufficient leisure to become educated about political issues and participate wisely in the political process. While this reform coincides with the general trends of anti-democratic thought, it set up a government which resembles closely an Aristotelian polity in its attempt to make the middle class numerically dominant in politics by the elimination of the poor from the ranks of the voters.⁸³

I would like to devote the rest of this section to several anecdotes in the *Chreiai* that may perhaps relate, however allusively, to the issues of franchise, citizenship, and differential status within the city. First, consider the story of Gnathainion and the bronze-smith:

Ἐν ταῖς Ἀθηναῖς χαλκοτύπος σφόδρ' εὐφυῆς
καταλελυκίας τῆς Γναθαίου σχεδόν 350
οὐκέτι θ' ἔταιρεῖν ὑπομενούσης διὰ τό πως
τὸν Ἀνδρόνικον ἠδέως αὐτῆς ἔχειν
τὸν ὑποκριτὴν, τότε δ' ὄντος ἐν ἀποδημίᾳ
ἔξ οὗ γεγονὸς ἦν ἄρρεν αὐτῷ παιδίον,
οὐχ ὑπομένουσαν τὴν Γναθαίου λαβεῖν 355

⁸¹ For Demetrius' property requirement, see Diodorus Siculus 18.74.2–3; for modern discussions, see Gehrke (1978) 178–81; Williams (1987) 93–5, (1997) 329–30; Habicht (1997) 40, 52; Lehmann (1997) 66–7, 79; Tracy (2000) 338–9. Gehrke (1978) 180 estimates that Demetrius' property requirement would have allowed approximately 15,000 of Athens' 21,000 former citizens to retain full citizen rights (as opposed to approximately 9,000 under Phocion's regime). But Hansen (1986) has estimated 31,000 rather than 21,000 for the potential citizen base. It is generally assumed by ancient historians that the Macedonians would have required the imposition of a property requirement in any case, while some scholars suggest that Demetrius himself may have been influential in negotiating a more moderate property requirement (thus Gehrke (1978) 183; Williams (1987) 95 n. 29; Lehmann (1997) 63).

⁸² On *politeia*, see Arist. *Pol.* 1279a37–b5, 1288a12–15, 1293b23–94b42, 1295a25–96a21, 1296b38–97a8, 1302a13–15, 1307a7–20. For the association of Demetrius' reforms with Aristotle's model, see Cohen (1926) 92; Wehrli (1949) 72; Wood and Wood (1978) 238–51; Will (1979) 1. 50–1; Williams (1987) 93–5, (1997) 329–30; Lehmann (1997) 69–70, 79. Gehrke (1978) 178–83 denies the connection.

⁸³ Williams (1987) 94.

μίσθωμα, λιπαρῶν δὲ καὶ προσκείμενος
 πολὺ δαπανήσας ἔσχεν αὐτὴν χρυσίον.
 ἀνάγωγος ὦν δὲ καὶ βάνουσος παντελῶς
 ἐν σκυτοτομείῳ μετὰ τινῶν καθήμενος
 κατεσχόλαζε τῇ Γναθαίνῳ λέγων⁸⁴ 360
 ἑτέρῳ τρόπῳ μὲν συγγεγενηῆσθαι μηδενί
 ἐξῆς καθιππᾶσθαι δ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς πεντάκις.
 μετὰ ταῦτ' ἀκούσας Ἀνδρόνικος τὸ γεγονὸς
 ἐκ τῆς Κορίνθου προσφάτως ἀφιγμένος
 < > πικρῶς τε λοιδορούμενος 365
 παρὰ τὸν πότον ταῦτ' ἔλεγε τῇ Γναθαίνῳ·
 αὐτὸν μὲν ἀξιοῦντα μὴ τετευχέναι
 τοῦτου παρ' αὐτῆς μηδέποτε τοῦ σχήματος
 ἐν τῷδε δ' ἑτέρους ἐντρυφᾶν μαστιγίας.
 ἔπειτεν εἰπεῖν φασὶ τὴν Γναθαίνιον, 370
 Περιλαμβάνειν γὰρ οὐκ ἔδοκίμαζον, τάλαν,
 ἄνθρωπον ἄχρι τοῦ στόματος ἠσβολωμένον.
 διὰ τοῦθ' ὑπέμεινα πολὺ λαβοῦσα χρυσίον
 ἐφιλοσόφησά θ' ἵν' ἄκρον ὡς μάλιστα καί
 ἐλάχιστον αὐτοῦ περιλάβω τοῦ σώματος. 375

In Athens [there was] a very handsome bronze-smith when Gnathainion had nearly given up [the game] and no longer continued going with men on account of the fact that Andronikos the actor was somehow sweet on her. But then, when Andronikos was out of town from the time a male child had been born to him, [this bronze-smith] pestered and pursued Gnathainion, who no longer submitted to take a wage, until, having spent much gold, he had her. But, being ill-bred and entirely vulgar, he sat with some cronies at the shoemaker's and passed the time saying that he had been together with Gnathainion in no other position, but that he had been ridden by her five times in succession. Afterwards Andronikos, recently returned from Corinth, having heard what happened, bitterly reproaching Gnathainion at the drinking said that he, though he had asked for it, had never got this position from her, while other men – scum – luxuriated in it. And then they say that Gnathainion said, 'For I didn't regard it as fit, you wretch, to embrace a man covered with soot up to his mouth. On account of this, I submitted [only] when I had gotten much gold and I philosophised [cleverly contrived] how I might embrace only the uttermost tip of his body and his smallest part.'

(fr. XVII, ll. 349–75 Gow)

⁸⁴ I put in the text here Page's proposed correction τῇ Γναθαίνῳ for the manuscripts' presumably corrupt τῆς Γναθαίνου (and I constructure it with συγγεγενηῆσθαι in the next line). Gow ((1965) 122 on line 360) considers Page's correction a reasonable one, but does not print it in his text; instead, he daggers the whole phrase τῆς Γναθαίνου λέγων.

The humour of this anecdote resides in Gnathainion's clever self-defence, which precisely inverts the symbolic valence of 'riding horsey' (καθιππάσθαι, l. 362). Rather than being a demeaning position for her, it becomes a mark of her fastidiousness – her way of having as little bodily contact as possible with the sooty and abject flesh of the bronze-smith. Once we see this inversion, we notice that the anecdote works by inverting a whole series of terms. Thus the first line tells us the bronze-smith is 'handsome' (εὐφύης), but by the end Gnathainion has transformed him into a grotesque body, covered in soot and, perhaps, poorly endowed (if we can give ἐλάχιστον in the last line this added resonance). Thus also Andronikos imagines that enjoying this position is the height of luxury (ἐντροφᾶν), while Gnathainion's version presents it as a matter of strict sexual hygiene and the literal articulation of relative status.

So far so good – it's a dirty joke. What could this possibly have to do with franchise and citizenship? To see this, I'd like to start from the last five lines (which I've already considered briefly in another context) and especially two verbs Gnathainion uses of herself in close conjunction: οὐκ ἐδοκίμαζον (l. 371) and ἐφιλοσόφησα (l. 374). δοκιμάζω is, of course, the technical term for examining and approving an Athenian for citizenship or office in the context of the *dokimasia*.⁸⁵ οὐκ ἐδοκίμαζον conjoined with ἐφιλοσόφησα suggests the denial of citizenship status on philosophical grounds. Now this may seem far-fetched, but notice also Machon's characterisation of the bronze-smith as he boasts of his sexual exploits to his cronies: ἀνάγωγος ὢν δὲ καὶ βάνανσος παντελῶς (358). The adjectives here and the characterisation of the bronze-smith throughout the anecdote to me strongly evoke Aristotle's remarks on the kinds of education or skills-training he considers banausic or 'vulgar':

βάνανσον δ' ἔργον εἶναι δεῖ τοῦτο νομίζειν καὶ τέχνην ταύτην καὶ μάθησιν, ὅσαι πρὸς τὰς χρήσεις καὶ τὰς πράξεις τὰς τῆς ἀρετῆς ἄχρηστον ἀπεργάζονται τὸ σῶμα τῶν ἐλευθέρων ἢ τὴν ψυχὴν ἢ τὴν διάνοιαν. διὸ τὰς τε τοιαύτας τέχνας ὅσαι τὸ σῶμα παρασκευάζουσι χεῖρον διακεῖσθαι βαναύσους καλοῦμεν, καὶ τὰς μισθαρνικὰς ἐργασίας· ἄσχολον γὰρ ποιοῦσι τὴν διάνοιαν καὶ ταπεινὴν.

One should consider a vulgar task, art, or sort of learning to be any that renders the body, the soul, or the mind of free persons useless with a view to the practices and actions of virtue. Hence we call vulgar both the sorts of arts that bring the body into a worse state and wage-earning sorts of work, for they make the mind a thing abject and lacking in leisure.

(Arist. *Pol.* 8.2.4–4, 1337b8–15, trans. C. Lord)

Machon's anecdote gives us a graphic demonstration of Aristotle's point, for the bronze-smith's banausic τέχνη has certainly made him unsuited for the pursuits of

⁸⁵ In the present, δοκιμάζω means 'examine'; in the aorist passive or perfect passive, it means 'approved'. For this usage, see Aristophanes *Wasps* 578, Isoc. 12.28, Dem. 27.5, [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 42.2, 55.2, 55.3, 55.5 and see discussion in Kurke (1999) 309–14.

virtue in body and soul and mind.⁸⁶ And, of course, for Aristotle this is precisely why *banausoi* should be excluded from citizenship in the *politeia* and the best kinds of democracy (*Pol.* 1294a16–b6, 1318b6–19a38). It is finally worth noticing that Gnathainion's prostitution achieves just this, for by surgically (or philosophically?) separating the bronze-smith from his gold, Gnathainion can be imagined to cast him out of the Athenian citizen body. By an ironic turn, her own 'working for a wage' (Aristotle's τὰς μισθαρικὰς ἐργασίας) achieves the figurative as well as literal abjection of the dirty smith. By accepting this one last gig, Gnathainion thus seems to reinstate a whole set of proper civic hierarchies: with Andronikos, she plays the good citizen wife and mother, while with the bronze-smith she is a shameless whore. At the same time, she discriminates (citizen) gold from banausic bronze and perhaps even plays citizen knight (*hippeus*), physically superior to the bronze-smith's low tradesman.

But if this anecdote is predicated on a series of Aristotelian oppositions (citizen vs. *banausos*, free man vs. wage laborer), it ultimately maps them all onto the body of a hetaira and thereby renders them problematic. We might say Gnathainion enacts a philosophy of the body that travesties the fantasy of some pure Aristotelian civic order. For the point here is that she can skilfully play *all* the roles: dutiful wife and mother, high-priced courtesan, even knight fastidious about her mount. Play-acting is, of course, the successful hetaira's stock-in-trade; but here, given the roles she is playing, it serves to deconstruct the very possibility of Aristotelian civic distinctions.⁸⁷

In a couple of other anecdotes, it is not the prostitute's body but the banquet of unequal contributions that seems to register the hierarchy and asymmetries of Demetrius of Phaleron's Macedonian-supported oligarchic regime. If this is correct, the private banquet, at which guests make separate and unequal contributions, replaces the perfectly egalitarian distribution of sacrificial meat as a figure for the civic community.⁸⁸ This may be what's going on in an anecdote about the Athenian parasite Archephon (though much is unclear here):

Κληθεὶς ἐπὶ δεῖπνον ὁ παράσιτος Ἀρχεφῶν 25
 ὑπὸ Πτολεμαίου τοῦ βασιλέως ἠνίκα
 κατέπλευσεν εἰς Αἴγυπτον ἐκ τῆς Ἀττικῆς
 ὄψου πετραίου παρατεθέντος ποικίλου
 ἐπὶ τῆς τραπέζης καράβων τ' ἀληθινῶν,

⁸⁶ Notice how Machon's κατεσχόλαξε (360) picks up and plays with Aristotle's ἀσχολον: the bronze-smith has plenty of idle time for obscene banter in a shoemaker's shop, but none for the pursuit of virtue.

⁸⁷ On the hetaira's facility at role-playing, see Davidson (1997) 120–36; Kurke (1999) 214–17; and for an intriguing analogy from a different period, see Clark (1984) 109–11 on the nineteenth-century Parisian *courtisane's* ability to occupy simultaneously multiple different sites within the conventional grid of class and status. If I am right to see the proliferation of Gnathainion's role-playing as central to the ideological work of this anecdote, it may explain why Machon bothers to tell us that Andronikos is an actor (τὸν ὑποκριτὴν, l. 353). This detail, otherwise gratuitous, perhaps signals the importance of play-acting for the joke as a whole, while it suggests yet another domain in which Gnathainion, a consummate actor, outwits or surpasses her interlocutor.

⁸⁸ On sacrifice as a figure for the civic community, see Loraux (1981); Nagy (1985); Detienne (1989); Davidson (1997) 15–18.

ἐπὶ πᾶσι λοπάδος τ' εἰσενεχθείσης ἀδράς 30
 ἐν ἧ̄ τεμαχιστοὶ τρεῖς ἐνήσαν κωβιοί,
 οὓς κατεπλάγησαν πάντες οἱ κεκλημένοι,
 τῶν μὲν σκάρων ἀπέλαυε τῶν τριγλῶν θ' ἅμα
 καὶ φυκίδων ἐπὶ πλεῖον Ἀρχεφῶν πάνυ,
 ἄνθρωπος ὑπὸ τῶν μαινίδων καὶ μεμβράδων 35
 Φαληρικῆς ἀφύης τε διασεσαγμένος,
 τῶν κωβιῶν δ' ἀπέσχετ' ἐγκρατέστατα.
 πάνυ δὴ παραδόξου γενομένου τοῦ πράγματος
 καὶ τοῦ βασιλέως πυθομένου τᾶλκῆνορος,
 Μὴ παρεόρακεν Ἀρχεφῶν τοὺς κωβιούς; 40
 ὁ κυρτὸς εἶπε, Πάνυ μὲν οὖν τοῦναντίον,
 Πτολεμαῖ', ἐόρακε πρῶτος, ἀλλ' οὐχ ἄπτεται,
 τοῦψον δὲ σέβεται τοῦτο καὶ δέδοικέ πως,
 οὐδ' ἐστὶν αὐτῷ πάτριον ὄντ' ἀσύμβολον
 ἰχθὺν ἔχοντα ψῆφον ἀδικεῖν οὐδένα. 45

The parasite Archephon [was] invited to dinner by King Ptolemy when he had arrived in Egypt from Attica. And when variegated rock-fish were put out on the table and genuine crawfish, and for all a great casserole was borne in, in which there were three gobies sliced up, which all those invited were amazed at, Archephon was helping himself to parrot wrasse and red mullet, and at the same time most of all to wrasse – he was a man crammed full of sprats and anchovies and Phalerean whitebait – but he avoided the gobies with the greatest self-restraint. And when this entirely unexpected event occurred and the king perceived it and Alcenor too, [the king said,] ‘Surely Archephon hasn’t overlooked the gobies?’ The hunchback said, ‘Entirely the opposite, Ptolemy. He was the first to see them, but he doesn’t touch them. But he somehow reveres and fears this fish, nor is it his ancestral custom, when he is without a contribution himself, to do harm to any fish that has a pebble/token.’ (fr. V, ll. 25–45 Gow)

Two elements in this anecdote particularly troubled Gow, and together, they completely obscure the joke. First, the reference to ‘three sliced-up gobies’ in line 31. In Athens, the goby was a very ordinary fish, so it is hard to see why the assembled banqueters would be astonished at this offering.⁸⁹ In addition, as Gow notes, ‘Another and not less difficulty is that gobies are quite small fish, and three of them sliced are quite inadequate as the crowning glory of a dinner, evidently of several persons, at which the king himself is present.’ Gow’s own reluctant conclusion is that in this passage ‘and perhaps in Alexandria generally’, κωβιός designates ‘some larger and more highly esteemed fish’.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ See Thompson (1947) 137–9, Gow (1965) 66–7 and further discussion below.

⁹⁰ Gow (1965) 66–7. Gow himself acknowledges, however, that there is absolutely no evidence for a different meaning of κωβιός in Alexandria, so his suggestion seems the counsel of despair.

But all this is nothing compared to the opacity of the anecdote's final lines.⁹¹ 'Being ἀσύμβολος' normally refers to a guest who makes no contribution to the feast.⁹² As such, it is an apt designation for the parasite Archephon, but still puzzling, since presumably Ptolemy the host has on this occasion provided all the elements of the banquet. 'A fish that has a stone or pebble' (ἰχθὺν ἔχοντα ψῆφον) is even more problematic. At the most basic level, it refers to the fact that gobies are πετραῖοι, 'rock-fishes'.⁹³ But at the same time, the phrase seems to pun on the ψῆφος or σύμβολον – the 'token' that banqueters who were going to make a contribution to the evening's feast held as a pledge. But if that is the point of the joke, it is hard to see why gobies alone could be imagined to be making a contribution to the feast, but not the other fishes.⁹⁴

I want to attempt an approach to this anecdote from a different angle by noting the pervasive political language of its last three lines. The 'fear and reverence' attributed by Alcenor to Archephon (l. 43) perhaps evoke the great Aeschylean civic emotions, endorsed by the Furies and Athena alike at the end of the *Oresteia*.⁹⁵ In any case, 'to harm no one' (ἀδικεῖν οὐδένα) seems an oddly political expression, while even πάτριον in this context ('his ancestral custom') may suggest the Athenian *patrios politeia*, that political catch-phrase of Athenian conservatives claiming to reinstate the good old-fashioned Solonian or Cleisthenic order.⁹⁶ In this political ambience, it is tempting to see in ἔχοντα ψῆφον a reference to the franchise; the goby is then 'a fish who has the vote'.⁹⁷ And by its close collocation with several political terms, ὄντ' ἀσύμβολον itself seems to take on a secondary political resonance. If ἀσύμβολος most commonly and familiarly means 'without a contribution to a

⁹¹ Gow (1965) 68 notes 'A very puzzling couplet.'

⁹² For this meaning, cf. Aeschines 1.75; Timocles fr. 10 K.-A., line 4; Anaxandrides fr. 10 K.-A.; Menander *Samia* 258; Diphilus fr. 74 K.-A., line 8 and see LSJ s.v. ἀσύμβολος II; Nesselrath (1985) 66, 77 n. 210.

⁹³ I am following Gow (1965) 68–69 here. Gulick's proposed explanation – 'apparently the goby was supposed to carry a jewel in its belly' – seems to have no ancient evidence to support it (Gulick *ad Athen.* 6.244d; Loeb vol. 3, p. 99, note d).

⁹⁴ Cf. Gow (1965) 69: 'In what sense however the fish ἔχει ψῆφον is highly obscure. It cannot well mean is entitled to participate (flat as that would be) for all the other fish, which Archephon is eating, are equally so.'

⁹⁵ Cf. Aes. *Eum.* 517–25 and especially 690–3, 698–702, where the terms σέβας, φόβος, σέβειν, τὸ δεινόν, and δεδουκίως are consistently linked with citizens' behaving justly (ἐνδίκως, ἐνδίκως) or 'not doing injustice' to each other (τὸ μὴ ἀδικεῖν).

⁹⁶ On *patrios politeia*, see Ostwald (1986) 337–411; Ober (1998) 278–286, 358–61. Cf. also the language of contemporary inscriptions; thus, for example, a citizens' oath of allegiance from late third-century Cos: ἐμμενῶ ταῖ καθεστακυῖαι δαμοκρατίαι ... καὶ τοῖς νόμοις τοῖς ἐγὼ Κῶι πατρίοις ὑπάρχουσι καὶ τοῖς δόγμασι τᾶς ἐκκλησίας ... ἐσσεύμαι δὲ καὶ δικαστᾶς δίκαιος καὶ πολίτας ἴσος χειροποιῶν καὶ ψαφίζόμενος ἄνευ χάριτος ὃ κά μοι δοκῆι συμφέρον ἦμιν τῶι δάμωι (Bengtson (1975) 3, 545, lines 14–29).

⁹⁷ In fact, both Casaubon and Gow suggest something like this in the end; Gow quotes Casaubon's Latin note, '*dicitur ψ. ἔ. qui habet ius veniendi in comitia.*' while Gow himself ultimately suggests 'ψ. ἔχειν may mean to have received the *suffrage* (of the other diners)'. (Gow (1965) 69, italics in original). I don't quite understand what Gow means by this – 'have the vote/suffrage' or 'have won the vote/election'? His phrase '(of the other diners)' suggests the latter.

banquet', it may also suggest here 'without a voting token', and therefore without political franchise.⁹⁸

'A fish who has the vote' may appear a deeply bizarre expression, but the idea that in Athens fish carried political symbolism – and that different fish could even signify different political tendencies or regimes – has recently been cogently argued by James Davidson.⁹⁹ So what is the special signification of gobies to explain why they alone should 'have the vote'? If we consider the attributes of all the fish named in this anecdote, they sort into three groups based on relative size and value.¹⁰⁰ The parrot wrasse and red mullet served at Ptolemy's table (σκάρων, τριγλῶν) were large fish that were highly valued, and so group with the crawfish (καράβων) as great delicacies. In contrast, the sprats, anchovies, and whitebait that seem to have been Archephon's customary fare when he was in Athens (μαινίδων, μεμβράδων, ἀφύης) were very common, very small fish. They were accordingly regarded as worthless and contemptible – 'poor man's fish' or 'beggar's relish'.¹⁰¹ Finally, gobies seem to fall somewhere in the middle. They were very common in Athens, but not regarded with complete contempt, at least to judge from comic references preserved in Athenaeus.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ Cf. LSJ s.v. σύμβολον, I. 5, 'identity-token given to Athenian dicasts on entering the courts ... also in the ecclesia ...' and see Gauthier (1972) 74, 88. I can find no parallel for the alpha-privative form used in this meaning, but, as I suggest in the text, the political language that surrounds ἀσύμβολον in Machon's verse may encourage this extension of meaning.

⁹⁹ Davidson (1993), (1997) 278–306.

¹⁰⁰ The following discussion is derived from Thompson (1947), who collects all the ancient evidence on each variety of fish.

¹⁰¹ Following Gulick's Loeb translation (Athen. 6.244c; Loeb vol. 3, p. 99), I understand lines 35–6 here as parenthetic, with the perfect participle διασεσαγμένως specifying Archephon's habitual diet back in Athens. For the various fish, cf. Thompson (1947), s.vv. The phrase 'poor man's fish' is Thompson's characterisation of βεμβράς (= μεμβράς, 'sprat'), p. 32. The expression 'beggar's relish' (πτωχικόν ... ὄψον) is derived from Chrysippus *ap.* Athen. 7.285d. The only fish in Machon's list (besides gobies) that doesn't seem to fall into either of these categories is φυκίς, a fish that Thompson ((1947) 276) glosses as 'A gaily coloured, nest-building fish, a Wrasse', and which he notes was actually sometimes confused with the goby.

¹⁰² Thus a character in Antiphanes' *Timon*, 'praising gobies' (ἐπαινῶν τοὺς κωβιούς) as Athenaeus puts it (Athen. 7.309d–e = fr. 204 K.-A.):

ἦκω πολυτελῶς ἀγοράσας εἰς τοὺς γάμους,
 λιβανωτὸν ὄβολοῦ τοῖς θεοῖς καὶ ταῖς θεαῖς
 πάσαισι, τοῖς δ' ἤρωσι τὰ ψαῖστ' ἀπονεμῶ.
 ἡμῖν δὲ τοῖς θνητοῖς ἐπριάμην κωβιούς.
 ὡς προσβαλεῖν δ' ἐκέλευσα τὸν τοιχωρύχον,
 τὸν ἰχθυοπώλην, 'προστίθημι, φησί, σοί
 τὸν δῆμον αὐτῶν· εἰσί γάρ Φαληρικοί.'
 ἄλλοι δ' ἐπῶλουν, ὡς ἔοικ', Ὀτρυνικούς.

I've just come from a lavish shopping expedition for the wedding. An obol's worth of frankincense I'll distribute to all the gods and goddesses, and cakes of ground barley to the heroes. But for us mortals I bought gobies. And when I bid the thieving fishmonger add in a little extra, he says, 'I'm throwing in for free – their deme; for these are Phalerean.' But I guess the others were trying to sell gobies from Otryne.

Notice here (1) that gobies represent the perfectly appropriate mortal (i.e. Athenian?) food in contrast to what the gods and heroes get; (2) through the joke on δῆμον 'deme' vs. δημόν 'fat', the goby is identified with an Athenian citizen, normally characterised by his demotic.

Thus Archephon apparently has no qualms about devouring very high-class fish and is accustomed to a diet of very low-class fish, but studiously avoids gobies as ‘middling’ fish. In Alcenor’s joking response to the king, this pattern is made to correspond to the distribution of the franchise in Demetrius of Phaleron’s moderate oligarchy in Athens. As in Aristotle’s ideal polity, the goal is to have the middling citizens far outnumber both the very rich and the very poor. Thus Archephon, who perhaps falls below the property requirement for citizenship (hence οὐτ’ ἀσύμβολον and his humble diet), properly feels ‘reverence and fear’ for qualified fish/citizens, and ‘it is his ancestral custom to do no harm to any fish that has the franchise’. Bizarre as it may seem, then, this anecdote may offer a fishy burlesque of Demetrius’ Aristotelian *politeia*.¹⁰³

Even if such a complex coding of different fish representing different property classes in Athens be rejected as too far-fetched, the language of the anecdote still seems to invite a political reading. We might then construe Machon’s tale as a more general commentary on Athenian political nostalgia. Thus Archephon, freshly arrived from Attica (l. 27), might be seen as a stand-in for the city of Athens itself, reduced to the status of parasite at the table of Ptolemy.¹⁰⁴ For in spite of his own degraded and disenfranchised status, Archephon punctiliously preserves Athenian democratic traditions (πάτριον), displaying exemplary civic fear and reverence for the enfranchised goby. On this reading, the Athenian parasite’s nostalgic respect for democratic political forms – like Athens’ constant harking back to the glory days of the fifth and fourth century – is quixotic and ridiculous, especially when played out at Ptolemy’s royal table. Such a reading may seem to contradict the pro-Athenian, anti-Macedonian interpretation I’ve offered for other *Chreiai*, but I’m not sure we should look for complete ideological consistency in Machon’s chaotic and anarchic humour.

Finally, in a last anecdote, the hetaira Gnathaina enacts a redistribution of resources at a banquet:

Πρὸς τὴν Γνάθαιναν Δίφιλος κληθεῖς ποτε
 ἐπὶ δεῖπνον, ὡς λέγουσι τοῖς Ἀφροδισίοις,
 τιμώμενος μάλιστα τῶν ἐρωμένων
 ἴληθητ’ ἵπ’ αὐτῆς ἐκτενωῶς ἀγαπώμενος, 265
 παρῆν ἔχων δύο Χῖα, Θάσια τέτταρα,
 μύρον, στεφάνους, τραγήματ’, ἔριφον, ταινίας,

¹⁰³ A different interpretation is possible, if we take ‘has the vote’ to mean ‘has won the vote of citizens’, i.e. ‘has been elected’ (which is perhaps what Gow has in mind; see note 97 above). In support of this interpretation, we might note that, according to Antiphanes (fr. 204 K.-A., quoted in note 102 above), the best Athenian gobies are from Phaleron (!). In this case, the goby for which Archephon feels ‘fear and reverence’ might represent Demetrius of Phaleron himself. I am frankly reluctant to go this route, because the demotic ‘Phalerean’ does not occur in Machon’s verse to characterise the gobies, but does occur as an attribute of the lowly whitebait (Φαληρικῆς ἀφύης, l. 36).

¹⁰⁴ See Gow (1965) 65 for the assumption that Archephon is an Athenian parasite; and recall that both Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II periodically provided Athens with desperately needed contributions of grain (see Habicht (1997) 127 and note 39 above).

ὄψον, μάγειρον, τὰ μετὰ ταῦτ' αὐλητρίδα.
 καὶ τῶν ἐραστῶν Συριακοῦ τινος ξένου
 πέμψαντος αὐτῇ χιόνα σαπέρδην θ' ἔνα 270
 αἰσχυνομένη τὰ δῶρα μὴ τις καταμάθη
 φυλαττομένη τε πολὺ μάλιστα Δίφιλον
 μὴ δῶ δίκην μετὰ ταῦτα κωμωδομένη,
 τὸ μὲν τάριχος εἶπε ταχέως ἀποφέρειν
 πρὸς τοὺς σπανίζειν ὁμολογουμένους ἀλῶν 275
 τὴν χιόνα δ' εἰς τὸν ἄκρατον ἐνσεῖσαι λάθρα·
 τῷ παιδί τ' ἐπέταξ' ἐγγέανθ' ὅσον δέκα
 κυάθους προσενεγκεῖν Διφίλῳ ποτήριον.
 ὑπερηδέως δὲ τὴν κύλικ' ἐκπιῶν ἄφνω 280
 καὶ τὸ παράδοξον καταπλαγείς ὁ Δίφιλος
 Νῆ τὴν Ἀθηναῖαν καὶ θεούς, ψυχρόν γ', ἔφη,
 Γνάθαιν', ἔχεις τὸν λάκκον ὁμολογουμένως.
 ἡ δ' εἶπε, τῶν σῶν δραμάτων γὰρ ἐπιμελῶς
 εἰς αὐτὸν αἰεὶ τοὺς προλόγους ἐμβάλλομεν.

Diphilus, once invited to Gnathaina's for dinner, as they say on the occasion of the Aphrodisia, honoured most of her beloveds [and] intensely loved by her, was present with two jars of Chian wine, four of Thasian, myrrh, crowns, sweetmeats, a kid, fillets, fish, a cook, and a flute-girl for after. And when one of her admirers, a Syrian stranger, had sent her snow and one sardine, ashamed lest anyone learn of these gifts and guarding against Diphilus most of all, lest she pay the penalty by later being lampooned in comedy, she bid [a servant] quickly to bear the pickled fish out to those well known to be in need of sustenance and to shake the snow surreptitiously into the unmixed wine. Then she ordered the slave to pour in as much as ten ladles and bear the cup out to Diphilus. And Diphilus, overjoyed when all at once he drained the cup and amazed at the unexpected thing, said 'By Athena and the gods, Gnathaina, you certainly have a frigid cistern!' And she said, 'Yes, since we always take care to cast the prologues of your dramas into it.'

(fr. XVI, lines 262–84 Gow)

The joke about the frigidity of Diphilus' prologues does not at all require the elaborate set-up it receives here; Machon himself has just provided a four-line version that gets immediately to the punch-line (ll. 258–61 Gow). In this instance, the joke's lengthy set-up is interesting for its very gratuitousness. Unlike the punch-line, the set-up is preoccupied with extreme inequalities in the different guests' contributions to a feast. And if, as I have suggested in the case of Archephon's fish-eating habits, the banquet of unequal contributions figures or makes visible the hierarchy of status within an

oligarchic regime, Gnathaina seems here to reject that model, carefully redistributing resources to blunt the perceptible edge of that inequality. Thus she sends the Syrian stranger's single pickled fish off to the poor, while she slips his contribution of snow into the wine to be distributed to all the guests (and presumably shares out Diphilus' generous contribution to the other guests as well). In all this, she enforces a kind of banqueting egalitarianism, and so mimes the traditional mediating function of the democratic city, redistributing resources among rich and poor to construct an imagined community of equals.

In fact, her activity corresponds nicely to the single line of her own writing we have preserved. For Athenaeus informs us that Gnathaina wrote a *Nomos sussitikos*, 'Rules for dining in company', which admirers who came to her and her daughter Gnathainion were required to use.¹⁰⁵ Athenaeus tells us her *Nomos sussitikos* extended to 323 lines, and quotes the first line from Callimachus' *Pinakes*: ὅδε ὁ νόμος ἴσος ἐγράφη καὶ ὅμοιος ('This rule has been written fair and equal [for all]', Call. fr. 433 Pfeiffer *ap.* Athen. 13.585b). In contrast to Archephon, who timidly respects the oligarchic hierarchy figured in a banquet, Gnathaina resists and champions democratic values at her own table. Gnathaina's banquet, governed by her own egalitarian *Nomos*, constitutes a small island of democracy within the pressing inequities of property and status that characterise the larger Athenian community.

It is perhaps this political subtext that accounts for Machon's somewhat odd use of τῶν ἐρωμένων to describe Diphilus' relation to Gnathaina (one of the examples with which I began). For the set-up of the joke first heightens or exaggerates inequities among the guests, only to efface them more effectively in the end. Thus Diphilus seems to occupy the innermost circle of Gnathaina's affection, 'the most honoured of her beloveds' (l. 264), while the hapless Syrian is both geographically and emotionally distanced as simply 'one of her admirers' (l. 269).¹⁰⁶ But in the end, Gnathaina protects the reputation of her poor foreign *erastês* and sharply ridicules her 'most honoured' *erômenos*, democratically redistributing her affections just as she does her guests' contributions.

Thus τῶν ἐρωμένων here must be understood as part of a structural system whose ultimate point may be political. That is to say – we cannot necessarily simply hunt through our texts for images of strong, sexually active women and then take those at face value.¹⁰⁷ For often these representations have little to do with 'real' women – what they were like or what the Greeks wanted them to be like. They are instead

¹⁰⁵ On Gnathaina's *Nomos sussitikos*, see Davidson (1997) 104: 'a parody of the similar *nomoi* written by the philosophers'.

¹⁰⁶ For the translation of *erastai* as 'admirers' (with discussion), see Davidson (2001) 41.

¹⁰⁷ The same argument applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the school that reads ancient texts simply to find images of women being oppressed (e.g. most of the contributions to Richlin (1992)). I am, of course, not thereby claiming that these are *not* images of women being oppressed – only that that representation of oppression is often simultaneously doing other cultural work in addition to its obvious service in the domain of sex/gender ideology.

(or simultaneously?) often symbolic operators or vehicles for coding and contesting other fraught domains of culture.¹⁰⁸

V. Public and hidden transcripts: the singularity of Machon again

We might finally ask why, if such a political element exists in Machon's jokey *Chreiai*, it has (to my knowledge) never been noticed. I would like to conclude by considering (briefly) the ways in which the traditional disciplinary divisions of the field have made it very hard to see the political in Machon, and by returning to the issue of Machon's singularity. I want to suggest that the very anomalousness of Machon – the difficulty we have in finding *comparanda* and a suitable framework in which to place his verse – may ultimately make the *Chreiai* a unique kind of historical artifact.

Traditionally, the treatment of the history and literature of the Greek Hellenistic period has remained fairly strictly segregated – at this point, much more so than the treatment of the historical and literary remains of earlier periods. On the one hand, Hellenistic history is a field that relies heavily on inscriptional evidence. Thus for example, Christian Habicht, in the 1997 English edition of his *Athens from Alexander to Antony*, offers the following account of the relative lack of attention to Hellenistic history (after acknowledging that fifth- and fourth-century Athenian history is simply more appealing because that's when Athens was 'top nation'):

The second reason for the neglect of the postclassical era lies in the nature of the source material: it is not only much scantier than for the classical age, but also so fragmented that it is extremely difficult to gain an overview of the entire corpus of texts. Longer texts by individual authors are lacking almost entirely; the available sources tend to be limited to inscriptions in varying states of preservation. Fortunately far more of them have survived from the postclassical period than from earlier epochs, but their publication has been scattered in countless different works. Such inscriptions also require scholars to take a different approach; they cannot be read and interpreted in the same way as the complete, coherent text of an ancient historian who intended his work for future generations as well as his own.¹⁰⁹

It is revealing here that even when Habicht acknowledges that the historian needs different strategies for interpreting inscriptions and literary texts, the only texts

¹⁰⁸ The last step of this argument would of course be to return to the issue of gender – to consider the relevance and implications for the representation of gender and prostitution of such a political reading of Machon. That is to say, why does the political and cultural work I am positing particularly need hetairas as its vehicles and spokeswomen? While this is an important question, my goal here is simply to refine the theoretical underpinnings of such an account. For significant discussions of what particularly characterises the speech of women in general and hetairas in particular in the Greek cultural imaginary (and hence, why they might be Machon's chosen vehicles), see Davidson (1997), esp. pp. 135–6; Martin (2001); Gilhuly (1999) and (forthcoming); McClure (forthcoming).

¹⁰⁹ Habicht (1997) 1–2.

considered relevant are the prose accounts of Hellenistic historians. Indeed, in spite of the obligatory chapter on Athenian ‘culture’ (which covers New Comedy, philosophy, fine arts, historiography, and Theophrastus’ *Characters*), Habicht’s book-length survey of the history of Hellenistic Athens never once discusses Machon.¹¹⁰ Since Machon’s verse is neither explicit political history nor high culture, it can play no role in Habicht’s traditional historical narrative. On the other hand, Hellenistic poetry is assumed by a commentator like Gow to be entirely apolitical; when such poetry contains historical information, it seems almost by accident, as it were behind the author’s back and without his intent.¹¹¹ It is certainly not what this poetry is *about*.

More recently, as I have noted, scholars like Madeleine Henry, James Davidson, Daniel Ogden, and Patricia Rosenmeyer have mined Machon’s verse for social history and gender ideology. But even here, because Machon’s style is low and coarse and his subject matter the socially marginalised – prostitutes, parasites, and hired musicians – it seems inconceivable that his verse could make any contribution to high political history. Thus, when read for historical content, Machon is entirely ghettoised – considered relevant for evidence only on women, gender, and prostitution.¹¹²

This split within the field leads to the somewhat odd notion that inscriptions are history and poetry is literature and that these two have nothing to do with each other. Even odder: as words set in stone, inscriptions are ‘real’ or ‘true’, while poetry is fiction and fancy, and therefore irrelevant to the historical record.¹¹³

I would like to dismantle this opposition by returning to the political theorist James Scott’s model of public and hidden transcripts, which I referred to briefly above in the course of reading Machon’s anecdotes. Scott argues that in any structure of social and political domination (including serfdom, slavery, monarchy, communist regimes, caste systems, and prison culture), there exists a ‘public transcript’ – ‘to put it crudely, the *self*-portrait of dominant elites as they would have themselves seen’:

Given the usual power of dominant elites to compel performances from others, the discourse of the public transcript is a decidedly lopsided discussion. While it is unlikely to be merely a skein of lies and misrepresentations, it is, on the other hand, a highly partisan and partial narrative. It is designed to be impressive, to affirm and naturalize the power of dominant elites, and to conceal or euphemize the dirty linen of their rule.

¹¹⁰ Habicht (1997) ch. 4 on ‘culture’. Less surprisingly, W. S. Ferguson’s 1911 *Hellenistic Athens: an historical essay* likewise contains no mention of Machon.

¹¹¹ Lape (2001a), (2001b) represent notable exceptions to this style of reading Hellenistic literature. Her subtle readings of democratic political ideology in Menander’s comedy are a real inspiration for this essay.

¹¹² Gow (1965) 18 is quite explicit about this: ‘There is one more point which may deserve mention as indicating a possible limitation to the range of Machon’s subjects. His parasites and courtesans might find places in a study of social conditions in the later Greek world but they could score no more than passing mention in history or literary criticism.’

¹¹³ Cf. Hopkins (1993) for a similar critique of the conventional dichotomy of ‘truth’ and ‘fiction’ in the reading practices of ancient history.

But at the same time, there is also likely to be a ‘hidden transcript’, ‘a sharply dissonant political culture’ that represents the common discourse of the oppressed when they are ‘offstage’ – free from the surveillance of the dominant.¹¹⁴ Scott is careful to emphasise that he is not claiming that one ‘transcript’ is true and the other merely a sham, but that, in order to understand the real power dynamics, we need knowledge of both transcripts, since each complements and completes the other. And yet, precisely because of the conditions of domination, it is often difficult or impossible to access the hidden transcript. Scott acknowledges this limitation, especially given that the hidden transcript takes place where power is not, but he goes on to argue:

there is a third realm of subordinate group politics that lies strategically between the first two. This is a politics of disguise and anonymity that takes place in public view but is designed to have a double meaning or to shield the identity of the actors. Rumor, gossip, folktales, jokes, songs, rituals, codes, and euphemisms – a good part of the folk culture of subordinate groups – fit this description ... I argue that a partly sanitized, ambiguous, and coded version of the hidden transcript is always present in the public discourse of subordinate groups. Interpreting these texts which, after all, are designed to be evasive is not a straightforward matter. Ignoring them, however, reduces us to an understanding of historical subordination that rests either on those rare moments of open rebellion or on the hidden transcript itself, which is not just evasive but often altogether inaccessible. The recovery of the nonhegemonic voices and practices of subject peoples requires, I believe, a fundamentally different form of analysis than the analysis of elites, owing to the constraints under which they are produced.¹¹⁵

I want to suggest that Scott’s model, which we might see as offering a historical and sociological analogue to the model of literary parody, makes a great deal of sense of Machon in his historical context. We might then read the preserved inscriptions (along with fragments of contemporary historiography, political rhetoric, and New Comedy) as remnants of the public transcript, while Machon’s scurrilous jokes function as a mediating term between hidden and public transcripts, in a context in which Macedonian overlords were struggling to legitimate and maintain their domination of Athens. Thus we have seen in Machon’s parodic verse the discourse of honourific decrees, political rhetoric, and philosophical moralising turned inside out, ruthlessly and hilariously lampooned from below through the figures of Athens’ most abject and degraded denizens.

¹¹⁴ Scott (1990), quotes taken from p. 18.

¹¹⁵ Scott (1990) 18–19; cf. Scott (1990) 138: ‘By recognizing the guises that the powerless must adopt outside the safety of the hidden transcript, we can, I believe, discern a political dialogue with power in the public transcript. If this assertion can be sustained, it is significant in so far as the hidden transcript of many historically important subordinate groups is irrecoverable for all practical purposes. What is often available, however, is what they have been able to introduce in muted or veiled form into the public transcript. What we confront, then, in the public transcript, is a strange kind of ideological debate about justice and dignity in which one party has a severe speech impediment induced by power relations. If we wish to hear this side of the dialogue we shall have to learn its dialect and codes.’

If we accept the applicability of Scott's model to Machon's verse, it may also help us account for two anomalies with which I began. I noted that Machon's representational strategy, in which prostitutes and other low-lives stand and speak for Athenian democracy, contrasts sharply with the more conventional moralising and phobic discourse of such authors as Dicaearchus, Theopompus, Demochares, and Philippides. We might account for this difference by understanding the latter authors as engaged in what Scott terms 'critiques within the hegemony' – a dialogue conducted within the public transcript which exploits for political resistance the terms of the dominant's own ideological self-justification:

Any ruling group, in the course of justifying the principles of social inequality on which it bases its claim to power, makes itself vulnerable to a particular line of criticism Every publicly given justification for inequality thus marks out a kind of symbolic Achilles heel where the elite is especially vulnerable. Attacks that focus on this symbolic Achilles heel may be termed critiques within the hegemony. One reason they are particularly hard to deflect is simply because they begin by adopting the ideological terms of reference of the elite. Although such critiques may be insincere and cynical, they cannot be accused of sedition inasmuch as they clothe themselves in the public professions of the elite, which now stands accused of hypocrisy, if not the violation of a sacred trust. Having formulated the very terms of the argument and propagated them, the ruling stratum can hardly decline to defend itself on this terrain of its own choosing.¹¹⁶

We might say that the public genres of history, political oratory, and Middle and New Comedy are engaged in contestation over the high moral ground, each side attempting to impose its own interpretation on hegemonic terms and values within the same public idiom. Thus, for example, Theopompus' open letter to Alexander rhetorically exploits the martial value of commemorating the war dead in order to denounce Harpalus' extravagant expenditure on Pythionikê's tomb, while Philippides' comic attack on Stratocles and, through him, Demetrius Poliorcetes (quoted above, p. 29) exploits Demetrius' own self-presentation as liberator of Athens and pious monarch. Machon's text, in contrast, seems to have no aspiration or claim to the high moral ground, and thus seems to occupy a very different position in relation to the public transcript. As jokes that appear to be composed for more casual streetcorner performances – whether by Machon himself or circulated anonymously – Machon's anecdotes are a perfect medium for the veiled and coded public expression of elements of the hidden transcript.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Scott (1990) 103, 105.

¹¹⁷ See Scott (1990) 137 on jokes; 140–52 on anonymity. Scott's ((1990) 123–4) observations on the mobility and itinerancy that often characterise public carriers and performers of the hidden transcript also seem strikingly apt for Machon, given the few bits of biographical information Athenaeus provides: from Corinth or Sicyon, Machon seems to have spent some time in Athens before winding up in Alexandria, where he ended his life.

And this brings me to my second anomaly. I have posed the question why Machon should parody philosophical *Chreiai* through the clever quips of the abjected and marginalised. We might also ask why Machon's anecdotes should invite audience identification with the witty hetairas who are their protagonists, crossing the gender divide that seems so assiduously maintained within the contestation of the public transcript. Here again, Scott provides intriguing parallels in his discussion of anonymity as an essential defence when elements of the hidden transcript emerge into visibility:

In the Catholic West the tradition of carnival provides ... a ritual tradition that authorizes disguises coupled with direct speech and conduct that would otherwise not be tolerated. The men who dressed up as women in the Rebecca Riots in Wales or in the *Demoiselles* protests against forest restrictions in France did not need to invent a new tradition. These last two examples also illustrate the way in which the marginal and apolitical status of women in a patriarchic order can be creatively exploited.¹¹⁸

Thus it may be precisely because hetairai are doubly marginalised – as women and as sex-workers – that they provide so useful a cover, enabling the speaking or ventriloquising of the hidden transcript in the public sphere. In contrast, the high genres engaged in ‘critiques within the hegemony’ have no need of such masquerade, and so tend strictly to maintain the distinctions between Athenian citizens and abjected others. We might say these latter genres can speak directly in the citizen's voice because they are engaged in open warfare or resistance, while Machon's anecdotes require anonymity and disguise as part of the ‘ideological guerrilla war’ of voicing the hidden transcript.¹¹⁹

Paradoxically, Machon's disguise through the marginalised and abject has worked so well that modern interpreters have failed to see any political content at all in his scurrilous anecdotes. To return to the traditional construction of the field (inscriptions are history; poetry is literature), I hope it is clear by now why such an opposition cannot be maintained. If I am right in seeing in Machon's verse the public mediation of elements of the hidden transcript, his poetry is essential reading for ancient historians (just as Hellenistic inscriptions are essential reading for literary scholars attempting to explicate Machon). For the two kinds of evidence are parts of an ongoing dialogue, and we must attend to both sides – not just to the stentorian voice of the public transcript – to round out our understanding of the ancient world.

On this reading, it is precisely the singularity of Machon's literary remains – the fact that his fragments are so hard to read because they seem unmoored from context or *comparanda* – that makes them particularly precious. It is rare that we get access to the ancient hidden transcript, even in mediated form. Thus, with some minor tinkering, I would reaffirm the opening words of Gow's 1965 Preface, his justification for reading Machon:

¹¹⁸ Scott (1990) 149–50.

¹¹⁹ For the phrase ‘ideological guerrilla war’, see Scott (1990) 137; cf. 192–3.

The collection of anecdotes to which Machon attached the name *Χρειαί* and with which this book is primarily concerned has not received much attention from scholars, yet it is of considerable interest both as a document of social history and as representing a type of literature of which, though popular and extensive in antiquity, little has survived.¹²⁰

I would adjust Gow's judicious defence only slightly, as follows: the *Chreiai* are 'of considerable interest ... as a document of social and political history precisely because they represent a type of literature of which, though extensive in antiquity, little has survived'.¹²¹

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¹²⁰ Gow (1965) ix.

¹²¹ A much shorter version of this paper was delivered as a talk at a conference on 'prostitution in the ancient world' (Madison, Wis., April 2002) and at Magdalen College, Oxford (June 2002). I owe thanks to Chris Faraone and Laura McClure, the conference organisers, for the original instigation to pursue a hitherto unfocused interest in Machon. And for patiently reading and offering invaluable advice on earlier versions of the argument, thanks especially to Kate Gilhuly, Mark Griffith, Tim Hampton, Deborah Kamen, Michael Lucey, Ian Morris, Richard Neer, and Josh Ober. James Davidson offered scintillating commentary on a later version and Laura McClure generously shared with me her unpublished work on Athenaeus. I am also grateful to the journal's anonymous readers for insightful suggestions and to Tim Whitmarsh of the *PCPS* editorial board for his detailed comments and criticisms.

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