

Unripe Grapes in Ancient Lexica: A New Fragment of Attic Drama?

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MANY FRAGMENTS of ancient literature are known to us only thanks to ancient scholarship. Among these, very little attention has been paid to a short anonymous quotation handed down by the Byzantine lexicon known as Pseudo-Zonaras:¹

τρυγῶ καὶ τρυπῶ. Ὅμηρος: “ὡς δ’ ὅτε τις τρυπῶ δόρυ νήϊον ἀνήρ.” τὸ εὐκτικὸν τρυγάοιμι, τρυγῶμι, τρυγῶοι, τρυγῶ. “πῶς ἄν τις ὄμφακα τρυγῶ.” οὕτως Ὀρος ὁ Μιλήσιος.

τρυγῶ (‘he/she/it would harvest’) and τρυπῶ (‘he/she/it would drill’): Homer: “Just as one man would drill a ship’s timber.” The optative [is] ‘I would harvest’ (τρυγάοιμι, τρυγῶμι), ‘he/she/it would harvest’ (τρυγῶοι, τρυγῶ). “How could one harvest unripe grapes?” Thus [says] Orus Milesius.

The entry deals with two uncommon thematic optatives, τρυγῶ (from τρυγάω) and τρυπῶ (from τρυπάω). As the original thematic optatives of contract verbs were quickly replaced by athematic forms (e.g. τρυγῶην, τρυγῶης, τρυγῶη, instead of τρυγῶμι, τρυγῶς, τρυγῶ),² it is easy to see why ancient grammarians felt the need to take a closer look at thematic remnants such as τρυγῶ and τρυπῶ. Each of both forms is illustrated through an *exemplum*: while τρυπῶ can boast the ‘support’ of none

¹ I. A. H. Tittmann, *Iohannis Zonarae Lexicon* (Leipzig 1808) II 1752.

² P. Chantraine, *Morphologie historique du grec* (Paris 1984) 265. See also E. Schwyzer, *Griechische Grammatik* I (Munich 1939) 796 (esp. n.1); A. Willi, *Origins of the Greek Verb* (Cambridge 2018) 10–11.

other than Homer himself (*Od.* 9.384, δίνεον, ὡς ὅτε τις τρυπῶ δόρυ νήϊον ἀνήρ),³ τρυγῶ is represented by a far more obscure *locus classicus*, πῶς ἄν τις ὄμφακα τρυγῶ. Despite the complete lack of information about its context and authorship, the second passage is also likely to be a poetic quotation. This is the thought of the editor of Pseudo-Zonaras, who comments on this passage: “Incerti poetae verba sunt, quae nescio nunc ubi legerim” (1752 n.39). In other words: the anonymous quotation should be considered a poetic fragment, but no conclusion can be drawn as to which author (or even poetic genre) it comes from.

No substantial progress has been made in this regard to date. The only significant novelty has come from Reitzenstein, who noted that the same entry is found in a still unpublished section of another Byzantine lexicon, the *Etymologicum Genuinum*.⁴ Here is the text that I have obtained by collating anew its two witnesses.⁵

τρυγῶ καὶ τρυπῶ^a· “ὡς δ’ ὅτε τις τρυπῶ^b δόρυ νήϊον ἀνήρ,” τῶ λόγῳ^c τῶν εὐκτικῶν τρυγάοιμι τρυγῶμι^d, τρυγάοι τρυγῶ^e· “πῶς ἄν τις ὄμφακα τρυγῶ^f,” Ὁροσ^g.

³ This passage is also quoted by Apollonius Dyscolus (*Constr.* 298 Lallot), Pseudo-Draco (86.26 Hermann), and Eustathius (*In Od.* I 351.8 Stallbaum). To be precise, the reading transmitted by Pseudo-Draco is an indicative τρυπῶ, adopted by von der Mühlh in his edition of the *Odyssey*: see also C. J. Ruijgh, *Autour de “τε ἐπιQUE.” Études sur la syntaxe grecque* (Amsterdam 1971) 639. Van Thiel and West, on the other hand, stick to the optative τρυπῶ.

⁴ For a general account of the textual tradition of the *Genuinum* and its partial editions see E. Dickey, *Ancient Greek Scholarship* (Oxford 2007) 91–92, and K. Alpers, “Difficult Problems in the Transmission and Interrelation of the Greek Etymologica,” in G. A. Xenis (ed.), *Literature, Scholarship, Philosophy, and History. Classical Studies in Memory of Ioannis Taifacos* (Stuttgart 2015) 293–314.

⁵ **A** = *Vat.gr.* 1818 (https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.1818); **B** = *Laur. S.Marc.* 304. The entry τρυγῶ καὶ τρυπῶ is on f. 278^r in **A**, on f. 242^v in **B**. Moreover, the bare lemma is also found on f. 326^r of **L** (= BN España 4559), whose ff. 324^r–326^r have recently been recognized as an excerpt copied from **A**: see S. Valente, “Konstantinos Laskaris, der *Matrit.* 4559 und das *Etymologicum Genuinum*,” *Parekbolai* 14 (2024) 311–315.

^aτρυγῶ καὶ τρυπῶ] τρυγῶ καὶ τρυπῶ **AB** | ^bτρυπῶ] τρυπῶ **AB** | ^cτῶ
 λόγῳ] τῶ λόγῳ **A** : τῶ λο^r **B** | ^dτρυγῶμι] τρυγῶμι **A** | ^eτρυγῶ] τρυγῶ **A**
 | ^fτρυγῶ] τρυγῶ **AB** | ^gΩρος] ὠρ **B** : om. **A**

Even though the *Etymologicum Genuinum* (mid-ninth century) is about four centuries older than the Pseudo-Zonaras (first half of the thirteenth century) and therefore must be regarded as the source of the latter,⁶ the text of the *Genuinum* as it stands does not provide us with any additional details.⁷ If anything, it is even poorer, as the information on the ultimate source of the entry (i.e. the grammarian Orus) is less complete: while the Pseudo-Zonaras preserves the ethnic ὁ Μιλήσιος,⁸ both witnesses of the *Genuinum* omit it.⁹ Perhaps most interestingly, the text of the anonymous quotation in the *Genuinum* agrees perfectly with that

⁶ The compiler of the Pseudo-Zonaras—possibly Nicephorus Blemmydes, see P. Isépy and P. La Barbera, “Cyril’s Glossary as a Source for the Lexicon of Ps.-Zonaras,” *GRBS* 65 (2025) 246–267—drew extensively on the *Genuinum* for the entirety of the work. On the close relation between these two lexica see K. Alpers, “Zonarae lexicon,” *RE* 10A (1972) 732–763, at 741–743.

⁷ A shorter version of this entry can also be found in another lexicon dependent on the *Genuinum*, the *Etymologicum Magnum* (first half of the twelfth century): in turn, the *Magnum* itself passed down this content to the *Magna Grammatica* (MSS. **CPV**, s.v. τρύγη), a later etymological compilation including entries from both the *Etymologicum Symeonianum* and the *Etymologicum Magnum*: on this lexicon see D. Baldi, *Etymologicum Symeonis Γ–Ε* (Turnhout 2013) xxiv–xxvi and xxxii. However, the text we read in the *Magnum* and in the *Magna Grammatica* omits both quotations.

⁸ Since in the etymologica Μιλήσιος (‘Milesian’) is usually abbreviated as μελ/μιλ/μλ, it has been argued that the reading Μιλήσιος is only a later, wrong interpretation of such compendia: according to this reconstruction, they originally stood for μέλας, ‘black’ (thus meaning that Orus was not Milesian, but rather Egyptian). See A. Ippolito, “Orus,” in F. Montanari et al. (eds.), *Lexicon of Greek Grammarians of Antiquity* (https://doi-org.ezproxy.uniroma1.it/10.1163/2451-9278_Orus_it).

⁹ The compiler of the Pseudo-Zonaras is thought to have used a very good witness of the *Genuinum*; instead, both **A** and **B** transmit an abridged (and often heavily corrupt) version. Thereby, the Pseudo-Zonaras sometimes provides a better text than the direct tradition of the *Genuinum*. In this regard see Alpers, *RE* 10A (1972) 742–743.

found in the Pseudo-Zonaras, thus enabling us to carry out on firmer ground a fresh investigation of its textual tradition and metrical structure.

2. A ‘dramatic’ source: Orus’ *Orthography*

As already mentioned, the ultimate source of the whole entry is the grammarian Orus (fifth century). Even though the title of the work from which the entry $\tau\rho\upsilon\gamma\hat{\omega}$ καὶ $\tau\rho\upsilon\pi\hat{\omega}$ was drawn is not explicitly stated, at least two arguments clearly point to Orus’ *Orthography*:

a) among Orus’ works, only two are known to have been directly and extensively used by the compilers of the *Genuinum*, namely his *Περὶ ἔθνικῶν* (a treatise on adjectives derived from toponyms) and his *Orthography*. Since the entry $\tau\rho\upsilon\gamma\hat{\omega}$ καὶ $\tau\rho\upsilon\pi\hat{\omega}$ does not include references of any kind to adjectives/toponyms, the work *Περὶ ἔθνικῶν* is not a suitable option.

b) the short extant section of Orus’ *Orthography*, which is also known as *Lexicon Messanense de iota ascripto*, deals extensively with problematic spellings involving iota.¹⁰ One of the topics discussed is precisely the spelling of a verb form analogous to $\tau\rho\upsilon\gamma\hat{\omega}$ and $\tau\rho\upsilon\pi\hat{\omega}$: $\nu\kappa\hat{\omega}$, thematic optative of the contract verb $\nu\kappa\acute{\alpha}\omega$.¹¹

All in all, then, it seems fully safe to assume that the source of the entry $\tau\rho\upsilon\gamma\hat{\omega}$ καὶ $\tau\rho\upsilon\pi\hat{\omega}$ is Orus’ *Orthography*.¹² This fact is not without interest, especially if one takes a closer look at the extant part

¹⁰ The surviving section is nothing more than an anonymous excerpt written in the final folios of MS. Messina, *S. Salvatore* 118 (ff. 280^v–283), first edited by H. Rabe, “Lexicon Messanense de iota ascripto,” *RhM* 47 (1892) 404–413; a later refinement of the *princeps* is in H. Rabe, “Nachtrag zum Lexicon Messanense de iota ascripto,” *RhM* 50 (1895) 148–152. The first editor was not able to identify the excerpted work with Orus’ *Orthography*, which instead happened few years later thanks to R. Reitzenstein, *Geschichte der griechischen Etymologia* (Leipzig 1897) 289–295.

¹¹ *Lexicon Messanense* f. 281^r.17–18: on this passage see further below (§3).

¹² This conclusion was also reached by Reitzenstein, *Geschichte* 295, who included the entry $\tau\rho\upsilon\gamma\hat{\omega}$ καὶ $\tau\rho\upsilon\pi\hat{\omega}$ among the certain fragments of Orus’ *Orthography*.

of Orus' *Orthography*. The *Lexicon Messanense* provides a wealth of quotations from ancient literary texts, but some authors and some genres seem to be cited much more frequently than others. In detail (Table 1):¹³

	Genre	Number of quotations
Sophocles	Tragedy	7
Aristophanes	Comedy	6
Cratinus	Comedy	6
Homer	Epic	6
Eupolis	Comedy	4
Euripides	Tragedy	4
Plato Comicus	Comedy	4
Demosthenes	Prose	2
Plato	Prose	2
Thucydides	Prose	2
Achaeus	Tragedy	1
Aeschylus	Tragedy	1
Alcaeus Comicus	Comedy	1
Anacreon	Lyric poetry	1
Archilochus	Lyric poetry	1
Callias	Comedy	1
Hermippus	Comedy	1
Herodotus	Prose	1
Menander	Comedy	1
Nicochares	Comedy	1
Nicomachus	Tragedy	1
Pherecrates	Comedy	1
Strattis	Comedy	1
Theopompus Comicus	Comedy	1

TABLE 1: Quotations of ancient authors in the direct tradition of Orus' *Orthography* (= *Lexicon Messanense*)

The data reveal an overwhelming majority of poetic quotations over prose quotations (50 : 7); of the former, more than 80% (42 out of 50) come from Attic drama, either tragedy (14

¹³ The figures in the table are based on the reliably identifiable quotations (both anonymous and explicit) already recognized by Rabe, *RhM* 47 (1892) 404–413 and 50 (1895) 148–152.

out of 42) or, even more frequently, comedy (28 out of 42). Moreover, it should be noted that 6 out of 8 poetic quotations not pertaining to Attic drama are Homeric: this means that virtually all poetic citations that do not come from Homer are from drama, the only exceptions being one quotation from Anacreon (fr.364 *PMG*) and one from Archilochus (fr.278 West²).

Although possibly influenced by the relative narrowness of the extant sample, these data are not unlikely to be somewhat representative of the original situation: a fondness for Attic drama is not at all surprising for Orus, who besides the already mentioned works also wrote an influential (if almost completely lost) Atticist lexicon.¹⁴ It follows that, from a merely statistical point of view, the adespoton quoted by Orus and thence transmitted to the etymologica most probably comes from the Attic playwrights. As a result, we should ask ourselves whether this scenario is consistent with the content, style, language, and metrical structure of the fragment.

3. *A 'dramatic' metrical structure and a poetic parallel (with a conjecture)*

With regard to content, style, and language, nothing emerges that either truly confirms or disproves the hypothesis under consideration. Questions introduced by $\pi\acute{\omega}\varsigma \acute{\alpha}\nu$ are fairly common in both prose and drama; in the latter they can also perform the function of expressing wishes,¹⁵ which means that another possible translation for our passage is “oh, if only one could harvest unripe grapes!”

Perhaps more interestingly, it can be observed that several examples of thematic optatives of contract verbs actually come from classical Attic: Schwyzer lists $\nu\omicron\sigma\omicron\iota\mu(\iota)$ (Aesch. *PV* 978), $\chi\omega\rho\omicron\iota\mu(\iota)$ (Soph. *OC* 507), $\pi\omicron\iota\omicron\iota\varsigma$ (Ar. *Eq.* 1131, *v.l.*) and, more generically, Plato.¹⁶ It should also be noted that, in his *Orthogra-*

¹⁴ For more information on Orus as an Atticist and on his Atticist production see K. Alpers, *Das attizistische Lexicon des Oros* (Berlin 1981).

¹⁵ See e.g. LSJ s.v. $\pi\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ II.b; E. Schwyzer, *Griechische Grammatik* II (Munich 1950) 327–328.

¹⁶ Schwyzer, *Griechische Grammatik* I 796 n.1.

phy, Orus himself makes reference to an optative of this type, namely the aforementioned νικῶ, and explicitly ascribes it to the Athenian Old Comedy poet Cratinus (fr.52 *PCG*).¹⁷

Even more significantly, however, the hypothesis of a dramatic origin is also supported by the very metrical structure of the fragment (πῶς ἄν τις ὄμφοκκα τρυγῶ: – – ∪ – × –² ∪ –). All in all, this sequence seems to fit quite well into an iambic verse, that is to say, the most common rhythm in both tragedy and comedy. We can interpret this fragment as an iambic dimeter, which in turn might be, for instance, the beginning or the ending of an iambic trimeter.

Only one aspect seems to require further scrutiny, namely the prosodic value of the last syllable of the accusative ὄμφοκκα. The iambic meter here requires long scansion, but the last syllable of ὄμφοκκα is short by nature: the subsequent *muta cum liquida* (τρ-) regularly ‘lengthens’ the preceding syllable in epic poetry, but such a lengthening is generally not expected in Attic drama. More precisely, long scansion before initial *muta cum liquida* is possible in tragic lyrics, but highly uncommon in tragic dialogues and, even more so, in comedy.¹⁸

Even this difficulty, however, could easily be overcome by taking into account a hitherto ignored textual parallel in a Greek metrical inscription from Naples. The text, written on a figured marble stele datable to the first century, is a funerary epigram in

¹⁷ *Lexicon Messanense* f. 281r.17–18 (as perfected by Rabe, *RhM* 50 [1895] 149 and by the editors of the *PCG*): καὶ νικῶ [νικῶ cod.] δὲ χωρὶς τοῦ η τὸ εὐκτικὸν ἔχει τὸ ι· Κρατῖνος Διονύσοις “νικῶ [νικῶ cod.] μὲν ὁ τῆδε πόλει λέγων τὸ [Kock: ποδι λέγω τὸν cod.] λῶστον.” On the *constitutio textus* of this passage see also F. P. Bianchi, *Cratino. Archilochoi - Empipramenoi (fr. 1–68)* (Heidelberg 2016) 304–305.

¹⁸ See M. L. West, *Introduction to Greek Metre* (Oxford 1987) 17; A. Willi, *The Languages of Aristophanes* (Oxford 2003) 238, with further bibliography. The observance rate of *correptio Attica* in iambic trimeters and tetrameters is 76.5% in Aeschylus, 69.7% in Sophocles, 69.2% in Euripides, and 86.5% in Aristophanes; however, since these data include groups that regularly break the rule (βλ-, γλ-, γμ-, γν-, δμ-, δν-), the observance rate for other groups such as τρ- should be regarded as even more significant.

elegiac couplets lamenting the *mors immatura* of the 7-year-old Ariston (*IG XIV 769 = GVI 1883 = IG Napoli 95*):¹⁹

ἄγγελε Φερσεφόνης, Ἑρμῆ, τίνα τόνδε προπονπεῖς
εἰς τὸν ἀμείδητον Τάρταρον Αἴδεω; —
μοῖρά τις ἀεικέλιος τὸν Ἀρίστων' ἤρπασ' ἀπ' αὐγῆς
ἑπταέτη· μέσσοις δ' ἔστιν ὁ παῖς γενετῶν. —
δακρυχαρῆς Πλούτων, οὐ πνεύματα πάντα βρότεια
σοὶ νέμεται; τί τρυγαῖς ὄμφακας ἡλικίης;

What seems most interesting to us is the last couplet, which is a series of two questions addressed to Pluto. Here the god of the underworld is openly blamed for taking away such a young life: since every soul is bound to fall into the power of Pluto sooner or later, the god could at least avoid “picking the unripe grapes of youth.” The resemblance to our fragment is quite striking: not only do both passages show the *iunctura* τρυγάω ὄμφακα(ς), which does not seem to be found in any other passage of Greek ‘pagan’ literature,²⁰ but they are also both formulated as questions.²¹ This leads to two further considerations:

(1) The textual parallel suggests that the metrical anomaly in our fragment could be amended by making a minimal integration, that is to say, by writing just as in the epigram ὄμφακας (plural) instead of ὄμφακα (singular).²² While having no

¹⁹ A recent and in-depth discussion with further bibliography is in F. Rigido, “L’epigramma per il fanciullo Aristone in un ipogeo funerario di Neapolis (*IG XIV 769 = GVI 1883*),” *Polygraphia* 5 (2023) 67–86.

²⁰ Outside of pagan literature, a noteworthy occurrence of this syntagm is in Job 15:33.1 (τρυγηθείη δὲ ὡσπερ ὄμφαξ πρὸ ὥρας, said of the wicked: a sentence often quoted by later authors). At any rate, our fragment cannot have a Christian origin: the pagan grammarian Orus never quotes Christian authors.

²¹ Also phrased as a question is a remarkably similar passage in the *Appendix Tibulliana*, where the young Lygdamus, feeling that death is approaching, wonders why the grapevine should be stripped of its unripe fruits: [Tib.] 3.5.19–20, *Quid fraudare iuvat vitem crescentibus uvis / et modo nata mala vellere poma manu?*

²² As rightly suggested by the anonymous reviewer(s), particular emphasis

real consequence on the meaning of the sentence (singular and plural are equally suitable for expressing indeterminacy), this emendation produces a closed syllable, -κα(ς), and thus provides a perfectly sound metrical structure. Furthermore, it should be noted that in the epigram the plural is precisely used as a collective: while lamenting the loss of a specific person, the epigram adopts the plural to give the unfortunate story of Ariston a universal connotation (that is, Pluto's insensitivity to the young age of his victims). In any case, it should also be emphasized that the emendation ὄμφοκα(ς) is not strictly necessary, especially if we assume that these words were uttered by a tragic Chorus. In this respect, it is important to point out that several occurrences of πῶς ἔν in tragedy actually come from lines attributed to the Chorus.²³

(2) Whether or not the correction ὄμφοκα(ς) hits the mark, the parallel apparently hints at a sorrowful, possibly mournful context: the *unctura* τρυγᾶω ὄμφοκα(ς) seems to be a metaphor for young lives prematurely cut short (or at least in danger). It is tempting to speculate that our fragment was spoken either by the Chorus or by a close relative of a youth who was facing a serious threat or had even already died. The danger-scenario is perhaps more likely than the death-scenario: compared to the τί τρυγᾶς of the epigram, our πῶς ἔν τις ... τρυγῶ seems to show a hypothetical nuance that is better suited to a foreshadowed event.

4. *Final remarks: tragedy or comedy?*

If the above reconstruction is correct, the evidence clearly points to a dramatic origin of the fragment: more specifically,

should be placed on the words "in our fragment": even if we deem ὄμφοκα to be a corruption, we cannot rule out that this reading goes back to Orus (or even to his source), who may have been indifferent to such metrical issues. Therefore, from an editorial point of view, the emendation ὄμφοκα(ς) does not apply to Orus' *Orthography*, but only to the poetic fragment taken by itself.

²³ E.g. Aesch. *Pers.* 788, *Ag.* 1198; Eur. *Alc.* 96, 142, *Med.* 173.

several clues seem to suggest a context of a tragic nature (perhaps a choral ode).

It must be said, however, that some other elements lead to considering a comic origin also possible:

(1) *τρυγάω* is unattested in extant tragedies but occurs comparatively often in comedy. A particular fondness for words in *τρυγ-* can be detected in Aristophanes' plays,²⁴ where *τρύξι/τρυγάω* (and especially some of their derivatives such as *τρυγφδία*) are consistently linked to the positive values of country life, abundance, and peace.²⁵

(2) While *ῥμφαξι* is never said metaphorically of people in extant tragedies, an occurrence of this figurative meaning is possibly attested in Aristophanic comedy,²⁶ as the etymologica attribute to Aristophanes the iambic trimeter *ῥρω γάρ ὡς ῥμφακα διασσυλούμενον* (*PCG* fr.635: "I see [him] squandering like an unripe grape").²⁷ Although the editors of the *PCG* followed Gaisford in emending *ῥμφακα* to *ςστῥμφακα* (accusative of *στῥμφαξι*, 'ranter'), the recent commentary to the fragment of Aristophanes by A. Bagordo suggests that the transmitted reading

²⁴ In addition to *τρυγάω* (7 occurrences) and *τρύξι* (6), we also find the name *Τρυγαῖος* (the well-known protagonist of the *Peace*) and other words such as *τρυγικός* (*Ach.* 628), *τρυγοδαίμων* (*Nub.* 296), *τρύγοιπος* (*Pax* 535, *Plut.* 1087), *τρυγφδός* (*Vesp.* 650, 1537, fr.156.9 *PCG*), *τρυγφδία* (*Ach.* 499, 500), *τρυγφδικός* (*Ach.* 886), and *τρυγφδοποιουμωσική* (fr.347.1 *PCG*).

²⁵ On *τρυγφδία* see now A. Mura, "An Epic Source for Aristophanes' *τρυγφδία* (*Ach.* 497–500 and Σ, 565–572)," *Journal of Greco-Roman Studies* 58.3 (2019) 1–13.

²⁶ Outside of drama, more metaphorical occurrences of *ῥμφαξι* (without *τρυγάω*) are found in inscriptions, epigrams (*Anth.Gr.* 5.20.3, 12.205.4), and epic poetry (Triphiod. 42; Nonnus *Dion.* 1.71, 48.957). All of them refer to young (living) girls not yet ripe for marriage or even to the unripe breasts of a young (living) girl. See also LSJ s.v.

²⁷ *Etym.Gen.* **AB** s.v. *διασσυλούμενος*; *Etym.Sym.* **EFCPV** δ 217 Baldi; *Etym.Magn.* **MOPR** 270.42–43 Gaisford. Pseudo-Zonaras (I 539 Tittmann) also preserves the Aristophanic quotation but omits the name of the playwright.

ὄμφακα is to be preserved.²⁸ The emendation <στ>ὄμφακα was proposed for purely metrical reasons: in poetry the second syllable of ὄμφακα does not count elsewhere as long. However, as pointed out by Bagordo, the grammarian Herodian included ὄμφαξ in his list of words whose *alpha* can be either short or long (*anceps*):²⁹ therefore, ὄμφακα in Aristophanes could well be genuine and perhaps regarded as a pun on words formed with the much-used pejorative suffix -αξ, -ᾱκος (ὄμφακα = ‘bad unripe grape,’ ‘deplorable immature boy’).³⁰

In light of this, the possibility of a comic origin cannot be ruled out. In particular, since πῶς ἄν in drama often has a real optative function (see §3), we might venture to imagine that with these words a mature, positive character reproached one or more young debauchees deserving of an ‘early harvest’ (“oh, would to heaven that even unripe grapes could be harvested!”).³¹ Obviously, in case of a comic origin, a direct relation between our fragment and the funerary epigram should be excluded: rather, we would have to think that both texts independently reworked in different ways and with different purposes the same tragic/elegiac hypotext (now completely lost) or at least the same *topos*.

Of course, the comic hypothesis also has some weaknesses, and above all the need for the (minimal) emendation ὄμφακα(ς), just about inevitable unless a parodic license is assumed. At present, given the high uncertainty, the most sensible solution could be to regard our fragment both as a *tragicum adespotum dubium* and as a *comicum adespotum dubium*. More precisely, a re-

²⁸ A. Bagordo, *Aristophanes fr. 590–674* (Heidelberg 2016) 167–168.

²⁹ Hdn. Περὶ διχρόνων 5.1 Sandri: τὰ εἰς αξ λήγοντα καὶ ἐκτείνει τὸ α καὶ συστέλλει. ὅσα μὲν οὖν δισύλλαβα ὄντα ἔχει (τὴν) πρὸ τέλους μὴ φύσει μακράν, ἀλλ’ ἢ βραχεῖαν ἢ θέσει μακράν, ἀδιάφορον ἔχει τὸν χρόνον τοῦ α· κόρᾱξ, κὸλᾱξ, φύλᾱξ, ἀνᾱξ, βὸᾱξ, νέᾱξ, ὄμφᾱξ, φόρτᾱξ.

³⁰ It should be noted that a scansion ὄμφακα is also possible in our fragment: if we regard it as an iambic verse, -φα- is the *anceps* of the second *metron*.

³¹ A similar construction with a comparable optative meaning is found e.g. in Ar. *Ach.* 990–991, πῶς ἄν ἐμὲ καὶ σέ τις Ἔρωσ ξυναγάγοι λαβῶν, / ὥσπερ ὁ γεγραμμένος, ἔχων στέφανον ἀνθέμων;

edition of *TrGF* could easily retain the transmitted textual *facies* (πῶς ἄν τις ὄμφοκα τρυγῶ), while the editors of a new *PCG* should seriously consider changing it to πῶς ἄν τις ὄμφοκα(ς) τρυγῶ. To date, this is the most that can be done to ripen the “unripe grapes” preserved by the ancient etymologica.³²

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