

## GRAMMARIANS AND HANDWASHING

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IN MODERN COMMENTARIES one will find little about the rituals of hand-washing; the best recent discussion is a footnote in the work of an archaeologist and fifty years prior to that a brief comment by van Leeuwen.<sup>1</sup> But it was different in antiquity where philology concerned itself intensely with such problems. In what follows I propose to trace the ancient and modern discussions. They provide a good example of the vicissitudes to which learning is exposed in its transmission; they also shed some light on the methods of ancient scholars.

Adolf Roemer<sup>2</sup> came to the conclusion that Aristophanes of Byzantium had achieved nothing solid and was highly critical of his work, while Rudolf Pfeiffer<sup>3</sup> considered Aristophanes to be the "vollkommene Philologe." These are both judgements of modern philology, and can of course once fixed be used to praise or blame *a priori*. It is certainly true that one can find enough fragments to support both points of view; and equally both sides, to be consistent, are obligated to interpret away those fragments that do not suit their general estimate. In view of the epitomization and corruption to which the original has been exposed, this is no difficult task. It will be seen that the interpretation of even one fragment can involve a plethora of errors, ancient and modern.<sup>4</sup>

Athenaeus 8.408f tells us: 'Αριστοφάνης δὲ ὁ γραμματικὸς ἐν τοῖς πρὸς τοὺς Καλλιμάχου πίνακας χλευάζει τοὺς οὐκ εἰδότας τὴν διαφορὰν τοῦ τε κατὰ χειρὸς καὶ τοῦ ἀπονίψασθαι. παρὰ γὰρ τοῖς παλαιοῖς τὸ μὲν πρὸ ἀρίστου καὶ δείπνου λέγεσθαι κατὰ χειρὸς, τὸ δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα ἀπονίψασθαι. ἔοικε δὲ ὁ γραμματικὸς τοῦτο πεφυλαχέναι παρὰ τοῖς Ἀττικοῖς, ἐπεὶ τοι "Ὀμηρὸς πη μὲν φησι ... (α 138), πη δὲ ... (α 146) καὶ Σώφρων (fr. 10 Kaibel) ἐν Γυναικείῳς· "Τάλαινα Κοϊκόα, κατὰ χειρὸς δοῦσα ἀπόδος ποχ' ἀμῖν τὰν τράπεζαν." The doctrine is clear.

<sup>1</sup>R. Ginouvès, BAAANEYTIKH (Paris 1962) 152, n. 7, but note 9 on the same page confuses *χειρὸς* and *χειρῶν*. The usually reliable van Leeuwen (*Aristophanis Vespae* [Leiden 1909, 3rd ed. reprinted 1968]) on line 1216 essentially repeats Nauck (below, n. 26) with two errors.

<sup>2</sup>A. Roemer, *Die Homerexegese Aristarchs in ihren Grundzügen*, ed. E. Beltzner (Paderborn 1924) 287.

<sup>3</sup>R. Pfeiffer, *Geschichte der klassischen Philologie* (Hamburg 1970) 215.

<sup>4</sup>I confess that I too was misled to introduce a needless error in my own commentary to the fragment under discussion, fr. 368 of my edition, *Aristophanis Byzantii fragmenta* (Berlin 1968). This article results partly from my attempt to clear up this mistake.

“κατὰ χειρός” comes before the meal, and “ἀπονίψασθαι” comes after the meal παρὰ τοῖς παλαιοῖς. Athenaeus however thinks he knows better, and adds a further comment that Homer and Sophron are exceptions, so that Aristophanes’ rule, he thinks, must be derived from the observation of Attic writers. Whether he derived this wisdom from his own reading, or imported it wholesale and unacknowledged from an earlier source cannot, as is usual, be determined. But in Homer we do not find the term “κατὰ χειρός,” and “ἀπονίψασθαι” has nothing to do with eating. The learned quotation from Sophron, if it is meant to prove Aristophanes wrong, is also invalid, and Kaibel, who read τάχ’ for ποχ’ translated: “da nobis cenam quam dudum expectamus.” Indeed it is difficult to see why anyone could see it referring to a time after the meal, unless ἀπόδος is taken as “give back” and the diners are thought to have been interrupted in their meal. In the unlikely event that this were so, the rule would still not be broken.

Shortly afterwards the text of Athenaeus 8.410b comes to cite Aristophanes’ *Tagenistae* (fr. 516 K-A), which contains the phrase κατὰ χειρὸς ὕδωρ, and the writer cannot resist a further unnecessary jibe at Aristophanes’ doctrine: σημειωτέον δὲ ὅτι καὶ (= also) μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι κατὰ χειρὸς ἔλεγον, οὐχ ὡς Ἀριστοφάνης ὁ γραμματικός φησιν, ὅτι πρὶν φαγεῖν οἱ Ἀττικοὶ κατὰ χειρὸς ἔλεγον, μετὰ δὲ τὸ δεῖπνον ἀπονίψασθαι (so Nauck: νίψασθαι mss). This time one should rather blame the epitomator of Athenaeus for including a marginal comment by himself or an earlier scribe in the text (so Casaubon *ad loc.*). This time the text silently attributes to Aristophanes the “correction” that Athenaeus had himself undertaken earlier, by substituting “Ἀττικοί” for “παλαιοί.” This distortion of a doctrine by the insertion of an *obiter dictum* in the transmission is a salutary reminder of what must have happened frequently in the grammatical texts of antiquity. It is also worth noting the motive for the insertion. The text of the *Tagenistae* does not of itself prove anything: φέρε, παῖ, ταχέως κατὰ χειρὸς ὕδωρ· παράπεμπε τὸ χειρόμακτρον. This could be after or before a meal. But it seems that the writer recognized by saying “also” that the text of the *Tagenistae* fragment supports Aristophanes’ doctrine, not his; it is the sheer desire to be critical that brings the unnecessary criticism. Worse still, the writer does not realize that he is contradicting even the wrong-headed earlier “correction” of Athenaeus, since there it was agreed that the doctrine of Aristophanes held good for Attic writers. Now he wishes to deny the doctrine holds true at all. Twice therefore the text of Athenaeus has criticized the doctrine of Aristophanes, and twice its misplaced zeal has led it to misrepresent the object of its criticism. We shall see that this was not the first or last time that this happened.

But first we must admit that Aristophanes himself was very quick to criticize as well. Here he χλευάζει; elsewhere he ἀντιλέγει κατὰ κράτος (fr. 378).

The readiness to indulge in polemic is one of the principal and regrettable features of ancient scholarship, and we have no reason to think that the Alexandrians were exceptions. One could deduce this solely from the gladiatorial nicknames which they bestowed on one another: Ixion; Thrax, Pleistoneikes, Xiphos, Epithetes, as well as less flattering suggestions: Pentathlos, Insanus, Epitimaïos, Beta, Mochthos and many more, though the most revealing may be the grammarian called simply ὁ Θήρ (Erotian 23.17). Criticism could extend to include the lovelife of Aristophanes or the sartorial inelegance of Aristarchus. In the fragment that concerns us, ἄγνοια—the commonest word of reprimand—is directed against the usual τινές in a work which calls itself bluntly πρὸς τοὺς Πίνακας τοῦ Καλλιμάχου. I do not know of any πρὸς-title which can be demonstrated to be devoid of criticism, though of course many cannot be proved to imply criticism.<sup>5</sup> Whether it means “against,” i.e., *Adversaria*, or only “Remarks with regard to,” such a title implies criticism to a greater or lesser degree, and such titles are common enough in Alexandrian works. Apollonius wrote against Zenodotus, Zenodotus against Lycophron, Callimachus against Praxiphanes, and so forth. On the basis of the many πρὸς-titles attributed to Aristarchus Pfeiffer<sup>6</sup> was justified in concluding: “[his books] were mainly polemical.” But surprisingly, when Pfeiffer comes to the work of Aristophanes, he comments (133): “Πρὸς is ambiguous and often means ‘against,’ but there is not the slightest reason to assume that Aristophanes ever wrote ‘Against Callimachus’ *Pinakes*’; his book was meant to be a supplement . . .”—*non sequitur*. It may of course have been a supplement, but its primary aim was critical and corrective—one must conclude—of the work of Callimachus. Its language we know to have been pugnacious. It would be an odd library supplement that denounced colleagues for ignorance. Just why Pfeiffer preferred to avoid this characteristic of Alexandrian scholarship is obscure, but one may at least suspect that it did not in this case fit with his picture of the “perfect scholar,” whether ancient or modern; and it is certainly correct that philological polemic is seldom pursued purely for the promotion of truth, and often achieves the opposite.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless it is a necessary component in any attempt to reconstruct the philological world of antiquity.

In the fragment itself we can observe that κατὰ χειρὸς is used before the meal, not before the symposium, and that this explains why ἄριστον is given

<sup>5</sup>H.-L. Barth, *Die Fragmente aus den Schriften des Grammatikers Kallistratos* (diss., Bonn 1984) 47, with the response of M. Schmidt, *Gnomon* 58 (1986) 651–653. Pfeiffer himself on Callimachus fr. 453 cited the “Against Praxiphanes” as a contradiction of his own view. For πρὸς τοὺς ἀθετοῦντας in the sense of “against” cf. Σ Ar. Pax 778.

<sup>6</sup>*History of Classical Scholarship* (Oxford 1968) 213.

<sup>7</sup>H. Erbse, *Untersuchungen zur Funktion der Götter* (Berlin 1986) 84–85, esp. 85, n. 2.

as a gloss on the word δειπνον, which can mean both meal and symposium taken together.<sup>8</sup> This then makes it clear that ἀπονίψασθαι comes before the symposium and after the meal, a point of some importance as we shall see. It was part of the ritual which separated the two parts of a δειπνον. Even in antiquity there was a great deal of debate and misunderstanding of the sequence and philology of the formal meal, since otherwise there would have been no need for Aristophanes' polemic. One is amazed at the precision of Aristophanes' remark, in an era without concordances to the thousands of relevant texts.

It is only to be expected that an imperial grammarian who undertakes to tell us all about long dead sympotic language will be wrong, for Pollux 6.92 affirms: ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ τὸ κατὰ χειρὸς συμποτικὸν ἦν . . . <σὸ δ' ἂν εἶπεις> καὶ νίψασθαι μὲν πρὸ τῆς τροφῆς, ἀπονίψασθαι δὲ τὸ μετὰ τὴν τροφήν. If Aristophanes was correct, then κατὰ χειρὸς was precisely not sympotic, since it preceded the meal and not the symposium.

Aristophanes did not invent his handwashing law, one hopes, solely for polemical purposes. But neither is there a sign that he proposed it for Atticistic purposes, so that schoolmasters could instruct their pupils in correct philology at mealtimes. Here we cannot avoid reviewing the teachings of the ancient grammarians who did offer precepts on the subject. First is Moeris 201.30: κατὰ χειρὸς Ἀττικοί· κατὰ χειρῶν Ἕλληνες. This should be taken with Phrynichus *Ekloge* 229 Fischer: κατὰ χειρῶν (v.l. χειρὸς) δεινῶς ἀνελλήνιστον καὶ τὸ ἐπὶ χειρῶν δέ. μεστή γὰρ ἡ κωμωδία τοῦ κατὰ χειρὸς. These Atticists agree that one should use only the singular and not the plural genitive, even though this was a classical usage for after-meal handwashing. Another grammarian of a later date, whom Klaus Alpers has identified with Orus, has more to say:<sup>9</sup> κατὰ χειρὸς ὕδωρ λέγουσιν, οὐ κατὰ χειρῶν, οὐδ' ἐπὶ χεῖρας οὐδ' ἄλλως πως. καὶ τὸ ῥᾶστον πάντων καὶ εὐχερέστατον<sup>10</sup> κατὰ χειρὸς ὕδωρ καλοῦσιν. οὕτως Τηλεκλείδης ἐν Ἀμφικτύοσιν (fr. 1.2 K)· Εἰρήνη μὲν πρῶτον ἀπάντων ἦν ὥσπερ ὕδωρ κατὰ χειρὸς. It is clear from this that what the Atticists sought to combat was the use of the plural instead of the singular. That this usage should have developed was understandable, since one normally washes both hands, not one, and it had become apparently natural for Greek speakers to use the plural generally of hand washing, and presumably after or before a meal. But the correct classical usage is confirmed by the fragment of Telecleides, which surprisingly is cited by no other authority although it is decisive in determining the classical term. It makes it obvious that κατὰ χειρὸς ὕδωρ must be before the meal, since it is apparently a proverb for the first thing of all, and therefore could not be at

<sup>8</sup>So correctly e.g., M. Blech, *Studien zum Kranz bei den Griechen* (Berlin and New York 1982) 63, n. 2.

<sup>9</sup>Orus, fr. B83 Alpers, from Phot. 144.19; Suda κ863.

<sup>10</sup>For this gloss cf. Hesychius κ1513 L.

any other place in the meal.<sup>11</sup> Yet oddly Orus did not cite the proverbial expression for that reason, but in order to demonstrate the correctness of the singular.

The Atticists therefore were not primarily concerned with the timing of the handwashing terminology, but with the question of singular versus plural. Perhaps they ought to have been aware—and were—that the singular was only used before meals, and that they could not prescribe it for after meals. But the fact remains that *κατὰ χειρῶν* was proscribed as *δεινῶς ἀνελλήνιστον*—which is untrue. It remains therefore a possibility that they were aware of further subsidiary problems in the use of handwashing terminology, and that our sources are deficient. Imperial *Keitoukeitoi* we can imagine rejoiced to raise such issues as a conversational gambit.

There is some support for the view that later grammarians were aware of the problem of timing too. The scholium on the key text of Aristophanes *Vesp.* 1216 repeats the doctrine of the grammarian Aristophanes correctly: ὕδωρ κατὰ χειρὸς. λείπει τὸ αἰτήσον (VF: αἰτῆσαι LhAld). οὕτως δὲ ἔθος λέγειν· ὕδωρ κατὰ χειρὸς πρὸ τοῦ εἰσαχθῆναι τὴν τράπεζαν, μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι· “ἀπονίψασθαι δός, ὦ παῖ.” Unfortunately this rule could be derived from the text, and it is a bad habit of ancient scholars to derive general rules of philology and behaviour (οὕτως ἔθος ἦν παρὰ τοῖς παλαιοῖς . . .) from one specific passage without having necessarily any further evidence, or considering other alternatives. But there is one more piece of evidence that this distinction could have been preserved in antiquity. A late grammarian, identified as Orus,<sup>12</sup> decrees: ἀπονίψασθαι μετὰ τὸ δεῖπνον ἔλεγον, πρὸ τοῦ δεῖπνου δὲ κατὰ χειρὸς. It looks therefore as if the doctrine of Aristophanes was known to later philology, but ran in a separate tradition from the Atticist problem of the use of the plural *χειρῶν*.

As we should expect, the tradition which made distinctions between apparent synonyms plundered the work of Aristophanes for its own purposes, and the *Πρὸς τοὺς Πίνακας* was exceptionally useful for this purpose. Unfortunately the text of Ammonius (68 Nickau) is uncertain at the crucial point: ἀπονίψασθαι καὶ κατὰ χειρὸς ὕδωρ διαφέρει. ἀπονίψασθαι μὲν γάρ ἐστι μετὰ τὸ φαγεῖν, κατὰ χειρὸς δὲ ὕδωρ αἰτῆσαι πρὸ τοῦ φαγεῖν καὶ μετὰ τὸ φαγεῖν. Some manuscripts omit the final words καὶ μετὰ τὸ φαγεῖν, which could be the result of deliberate correction or accident, but we cannot determine what the original intention was. If the words are an addition, then the original agreed with Aristophanes. But the fuller text agrees with Athenaeus' view and possibly also with the Atticists, who wished to substitute *κατὰ χειρὸς* for the detested *χειρῶν*. On the other hand the doctrine attributed to

<sup>11</sup>Compare the Latin proverb *ab ovo*.

<sup>12</sup>Fr. B37 Alpers from Phot. α2588 Theod.; Ba. 130.4; *Suda* α3455.

Tryphon by Eustathius is certainly false.<sup>13</sup> θετέον ἐνταῦθα καὶ Τρύφωνος τὸ κατὰ χειρῶν μὲν πρὸ τροφῆς παρὰ τοῖς ὕστερον (i.e., after Homer), νίψασθαι δὲ μετὰ τροφήν. Nor does Eustathius' own imprecision inspire any confidence at another point (*ibid.* 1402.46): ὅτι δὲ τὸ τὰς χεῖρας νίπτεσθαι κατὰ χειρὸς καὶ κατὰ χειρῶν ὕδωρ λαμβάνειν ἢ δίδοναι ἢ διδόσθαι ἢ χεῖσθαι ἐλέγετο, παραδιδόασιν οἱ παλαιοὶ ῥήτορες.

This survey of ancient opinions does not allow us to add anything to Aristophanes' distinction save that he could have had something to say about κατὰ χειρῶν which is now lost. But there is reason to think that he made this distinction for a specific purpose, and had no necessary interest in defining all the philology of handwashing. To this purpose we now come.

It is very rarely that we can gain a closer glimpse into the disagreements of the Hellenistic grammarians, for which we may in part blame the break in the school tradition that accompanied the political chaos in Alexandria in the mid-second century and led to the exile of Aristarchus. But the garrulous Athenaeus enables us to give some context to the fragment we have discussed. He reports at 8.410d that the antiquarian Polemon (fr. 62 Preller) had something to say on the matter: Πολέμων δὲ ἐν ἔκτῳ τῶν πρὸς Ἀντίγονον καὶ Ἀδαῖον περὶ τῆς διαφορᾶς λέγει τοῦ κατὰ χειρὸς πρὸς τὸ νίψασθαι. One cannot unfortunately connect Polemon with the following comic fragment from the unknown Demonicus.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless the information is valuable, because we know that Polemon was a contemporary of Aristophanes at the beginning of the second century, and we should never have guessed that he would have criticized these Attalid art historians in this matter.<sup>15</sup> Now we can be sure that handwashing was a subject of considerable interest and brisk polemic among grammarians, antiquarians and their colleagues. It had a bearing on such diverse subjects as art history and library catalogues.

We can with some confidence say why Aristophanes formulated his rule, by comparing it with the only other certain fragment (fr. 369) to be attributed to the work on Callimachus' *Pinakes*.<sup>16</sup> The image of a "library supplement" goes back to Nauck's edition of Aristophanes in which he attributed to this work anything that seems to smack of lists and numbers of books. We now have two certain fragments, and they tell a very different

<sup>13</sup>Eustathius *Comm. in Hom. Od.* 1401.43 = fr. 137 Velsen.

<sup>14</sup>Demonicus fr. 1 K-A is interesting, and seems to portray the Boeotian boor Heracles hungry enough to omit the κατὰ χειρὸς ὕδωρ. One hopes that it was not used by Polemon or anyone else as evidence against Aristophanes.

<sup>15</sup>It is no more than a guess that they had described some scene of handwashing, and Polemon then indulged in an excursus on the subject.

<sup>16</sup>I have dealt with this fragment in "Aristophanes of Byzantium on the *Pinakes* of Callimachus," *Phoenix* 30 (1976) 234-241.

story. Perhaps Aristophanes did compile lists of surviving tragedies and suchlike, but there is no evidence that the critique of Callimachus contained them. In fr. 369 we find a precise rule formulated about the use of εὐθύς, εὐθύ, and εὐθέως; that this had been the subject of a study by Eratosthenes; and that the aim of the exercise was to determine the authenticity of an ancient comedy. Just as with fr. 368, the distinction passed quickly into the Atticistic writers and the tradition of distinguishing between *synonyma*. In fact the words of Aristophanes come close to suggesting a kind of proto-Atticism: δεῖ λέγειν οὕτως . . . τοῦτο οὐ λέγεται ἀλλὰ . . . . It follows that the discussion of the philology of handwashing was also designed to form the basis for the determination of authenticity; and it was therefore germane to a discussion of library catalogues, insofar as such κριτική was considered the highest form of the grammarian's art.<sup>17</sup> Such determination of genuineness will necessarily have played a major role in drawing up library catalogues,<sup>18</sup> and we possess Dionysus of Halicarnassus' *De Dinarcho* as witness to the precision with which this was done, and the gravity of the problem in an age of forgery. One concludes that in some work Aristophanes found his rule not observed, and decreed that it was therefore not the genuine work of a classical author; alternatively τινές had made a false distinction in the use of words for handwashing, which had led to an unscientific judgements about genuineness. We can see a similar method operating at the textual level in Homer. Aristophanes had decided (fr. 118) that μῆλα were sheep and goats in Homer, and athetized the one line that contradicted him in the *Odyssey* (17.246).<sup>19</sup> In his lexical work he silently assumes the deletion of the exception. So too he presumably feels justified in νοθεύειν any exception to a generalized rule. One can only admire the precision of his observations, while having reservations about the stringency of their enforcement.

So much for the rule. Is it correct? In antiquity, as we saw, it was criticized unjustly, and was corrupted in the course of time. Casaubon thought the rule false, but Lobeck in his commentary on Phrynichus was harder:<sup>20</sup> "Aristophanis praeceptum Heynius ad Apollodorum inani subtilitate excogitatum esse pronunciat." But Heyne<sup>21</sup> said nothing of the sort. He did not even mention Aristophanes, but had been considering the difference made by the Atticists between χειρός and χειρῶν as *inane*. Lobeck followed in

<sup>17</sup>Cf. N. Wilson, "Scolia e commentatori," *SCO* 33 (1983) 83–112, at 107.

<sup>18</sup>Callimachus fr. 429–452 Pfeiffer; R. Blum, *Kallimachos und die Literaturverzeichnis bei den Griechen* (Frankfurt 1977) with bibliography. Aristophanes certainly wrote various ἀναγραφαί, which one could consult for bibliographic purposes, as Athenaeus 8.336d attests.

<sup>19</sup>See the commentary *ad loc.* for the details, and the article there cited.

<sup>20</sup>C. A. Lobeck, *Phrynichi Eclogae* (Leipzig 1820) 327.

<sup>21</sup>C. G. Heyne, *Apollodori Bibliotheca* (Göttingen 1803) 217 on 2, 7, 6, 3.

ready condemnation; but he failed to consider at all the central distinction, of the words appropriate before and after the meal.

More influential was Becker's oft reprinted *Charikles*,<sup>22</sup> in which we read "Der Grammatiker Aristophanes unterschied streng . . . ähnlich Pollux; beide Distinktionen aber werden durch den Gebrauch nicht bestätigt. Denn . . . in Philyllius und in dem Deipnon des Philoxenus ist κατὰ χειρῶν von dem Waschen nach dem Essen gesagt." This is of course false. Not only were Pollux and Aristophanes different, but Aristophanes had not even mentioned κατὰ χειρῶν. But this passed through the many editions of Becker, and from there into the equally influential commentaries of Hug on Plato's *Symposium*.<sup>23</sup> There we find the same two passages as in Becker, and it is suggested perhaps correctly that Aristophanes could have got his rule from Aristophanes *Vespae* 1216; Hug also adds line 607 of the same play on ἀπονίζω as proving Aristophanes wrong. It reads: καὶ πρῶτα μὲν ἡ θυγάτηρ με / ἀπονίζῃ καὶ τὼ πόδ' ἀλείφῃ . . .

It is extraordinary that Hug could have consulted his own commentary to get it right, because a few pages earlier (on *Symposium* 175a) he recognized that ἀπονίζω in the *Symposium* refers to footwashing, not handwashing, and to demonstrate this he cited Aristophanes *Vespae* 607 as a parallel! He has forgotten his own words, just as Didymus was accused of doing. Now he cites 607 as a parallel for handwashing, which is wrong. Worse still, perhaps, he thereby implies that Aristophanes could have been capable of getting his rule from line 1216 of a play and forgetting that line 607 of the same play was an exception. In the *Symposium* of Plato (175a) the reference is clear: καὶ ἔ [Ἀριστόδημον] μὲν ἔφη [Ἀγάθων] ἀπονίζειν τὸν παῖδα, ἵνα καταλείπῃ. Aristodemus has walked a long way, and Hug remarks that this washing is particularly necessary with an ἀνυπόδητος like Aristodemus. This is, incidentally, a mistake; it is not said that Aristodemus has no shoes, but it is said that Socrates has shoes. Hug has got muddled. But of course footwashing is meant, as in the passage cited from the *Vespae*, when Philokleon comes home. Both Becker and Ginouvès<sup>24</sup> comment correctly on that passage, though the commentators<sup>25</sup> ignore the philology.

Enough has been said to show that error, misquotation, and incomprehension are as frequent in modern scholarship as in ancient. It is a relief

<sup>22</sup>W. A. Becker, *Charikles*, neu bearbeitet von H. Göll, 2 (Berlin 1877) 324.

<sup>23</sup>A. Hug, *Platons Symposium*, rev. H. Schöne, 3rd ed. (Leipzig 1909), 1st ed. (Leipzig 1876). Other commentaries simply ignore the question.

<sup>24</sup>See above, nn. 1, 25; J. Wettstein, *Novum Testamentum Graecum* (Amsterdam 1751) on John 13:12.

<sup>25</sup>As an example of a modern commentary I cite without comment D. M. MacDowell, *Aristophanes: Wasps* (Oxford 1971) on line 608: "Anointment after washing was normal, to protect the skin against the sun. This applied to all (or all exposed) parts of the body; the reason for mentioning the feet in particular is that it requires slightly more effort to reach one's feet . . ."

to turn to Nauck's commentary on the Athenaeus passage in his commentary on Aristophanes of Byzantium.<sup>26</sup> "nec dubium quin Aristophanes recte statuerit," and he adds a remark worthy of a great grammarian, that it is odd that *κατὰ χειρῶν* appears only after meals. This is excellent: *κατὰ χειρός* is before meals, and *κατὰ χειρῶν* and *ἀπονιψάσθαι* after. So it was possible to read in 1848. But scholarship, which had been so inventive of error, was not yet destitute of resource. Nauck was not read, and Becker was translated and reprinted. Another scholar managed to be ignorant of Nauck's learning, and his authority ensured that error should take its wonted place in the history of scholarship.

Ten years after Nauck's discussion in 1848 Cobet—*acutissimus Batavorum*—discussed the whole question in the greatest detail since antiquity in his collection *Novae lectiones*.<sup>27</sup> There he notes that *κατὰ χειρός* is before meals. But he then adds: "legitur tamen aliquoties et *κατὰ χειρῶν* ut in Menandro Athen. IX 408.F: οἱ [or οἱ] δὲ *κατὰ χειρῶν* λαβόντες περιμένουσιν φίλτατοι." This seems to be saying that *κατὰ χειρός* is the same as *κατὰ χειρῶν*—in other words, the mistake of Lobeck. He goes on to compound the error:<sup>28</sup> "Nicostratus apud Athen. XV 685.E *κατὰ χειρός* εἰληφέναι post coenam dixit: *κατελαμβάνομεν . . . / ἑτέρους κατὰ χειρός* ἀρτίως εἰληφότας / καὶ στέφανον. nam coronae mentio indicat ὅτι ἀπὸ δείπνου ἦσαν," and he goes on to cite two fragments<sup>29</sup> of Philoxenus and Clearchus in confirmation, which in fact do not prove anything. Cobet is arguing that because the garland and *κατὰ χειρός* are given at the same time, and a garland would be given at the symposium, not the meal, then *κατὰ χειρός* is used here after the meal. But does the Nicostratus passage in fact prove what Cobet wants?

All one has to do this time is to consult the Nicostratus passage as Athenaeus quotes it at 15.685d. What Athenaeus is proving in this section is that garlands were distributed not only before the symposium but also before the meal. No matter how suspicious one may be of Athenaeus' scholar-

<sup>26</sup> A. Nauck, *Aristophanis Byzantii . . . fragmenta* (Halle 1848) 25, who however confused the issue by introducing handwashing before sacrifice, which is a different ceremony. The sacrificer washed both hands beforehand, as illustrated, e.g., on a vase of the Kleophon painter in Agrigento: H. Froning, *Dithyrambos und Vasenmalerei in Athen* (Würzburg 1971) plate 16.

<sup>27</sup> C. G. Cobet, *Novae lectiones* (Leiden 1858) 4–5.

<sup>28</sup> Perhaps Cobet really confused the Nicostratus passage at Athenaeus 685e with another Nicostratus fragment at 685d, which does indeed show that garlands were to be bought for the *secunda mensa*.

<sup>29</sup> Philoxenus PMG 836a; Clearchus fr. 4 K-A, where K-A notes that Athenaeus refers the fragment to *de mensa secunda*. This is probably true. But Athenaeus by this time is really collecting examples of *τραγήματα*, and has forgotten *secunda mensa*. The Clearchus fragment is discussed below.

ship, the passages he goes on to quote from Philoxenus and Eubulus<sup>30</sup> are proof positive that garlands were given out before the meal. Cobet has apparently been working from the fragments without the context. The Nicostratus fragment is perhaps ambiguous,<sup>31</sup> but the other two citations are not, and all three are cited—in the order Philoxenus, Eubulus, Nicostratus—to prove that garlands were given out as ἀρχὴ τῆς εὐωχίας, which apparently Cobet has misunderstood, as if εὐωχία had to mean συμπόσιον and not δείπνον. In fact one can easily cite other passages to show that garlands were worn at mealtimes.<sup>32</sup> Just why Cobet made such a simple slip we cannot tell.

In addition, Cobet has confused κατὰ χειρῶν and κατὰ χειρός, and has misunderstood the passage from Menander's *Hydria* quoted above. "Those who get water κατὰ χειρῶν and stay are the greatest friends" refers not to a time before the meal, which would make no sense, but to the time after the meal and before the symposium, as one would expect from what we have seen. Those who stay for the conviviality of the drinking are the greatest friends. The modern commentators on the passage are unhelpful.<sup>33</sup>

Cobet's last proof that Aristophanes was wrong is the already mentioned fragment of Clearchus, fr. 4 K-A from Athenaeus 14.642b, which he cites as follows:

λάβ' ὕδωρ κατὰ χειρός. — ἡ καίς, ἐπιτίθει  
ἐπὶ τὴν τράπεζαν ἀρύρα καὶ τράχηματα.

The argument here is that immediately after κατὰ χειρός small titbits are offered, such as were served at the "second tables" of the symposium. It would follow that κατὰ χειρός was then after the meal. But such τραγάλια, as we should expect, were served at other times too, as is clear from the *Vespa*, where Philocleon comes home, and from *Ach.* 1112, where they are served at the beginning of the meal.<sup>34</sup> But in any case the fragment describes an anomalous situation. Cobet has unwittingly misled us by omitting the second line of the fragment, which makes it clear that a guest has just arrived at some point in a meal. He refuses κατὰ χειρός ὕδωρ, and is offered nuts, since he apparently does not want to eat. There is therefore no evidence to support Cobet, and no evidence we know to contradict Aristophanes' rule.

<sup>30</sup>PMG 836a; Eubulus fr. 111 K-A.

<sup>31</sup>In fact Athenaeus at this point is illustrating that the first thing that happens is κατὰ χειρός and garlands, even in Egypt.

<sup>32</sup>E.g., Ar. *Aves* 463; Eur. *Ion* 1171, passages certainly known to Cobet. More in M. Blech (above, n. 8) 64, n. 9.

<sup>33</sup>Cf. e.g., K. Gaiser, *Menanders Hydria* (Heidelberg 1977) 156 and 191. Kock emended needlessly.

<sup>34</sup>In general the meal + symposium was less clearly defined than we usually believe. I shall be assembling the evidence elsewhere.

Nauck attributed eight fragments to the πρὸς τοὺς Πίνακας, of which the last is the one we have discussed. The other seven cannot be shown to have belonged to the work, and in view of the only other certain fragment discovered since by Nickau concerning εὐθὺς, there is no particular likelihood that any of the fragments attributed by Nauck belong there. This work was a work of criticism, in which rules about the use of classical words and phrases were established in order to determine the genuineness of classical works. It was at least highly critical of earlier scholarship, and as far as we know reached a level of philological precision seldom attained since. The precise interest in manners and particularly in table manners belongs to the tradition of Homeric philology<sup>35</sup> already established before Plato, and Aristarchus could athetize *Od.* 7.174 as violating Homeric dining habits, though the most modern commentary, rightly or wrongly, does not consider this kind of anomaly as worthy of comment. This precise observation of manners was obviously applied to classical authors generally in the determination of authenticity.

Perhaps the scholarship of handwashing illustrates not only the many errors that accompany scholarship through the centuries; it also illustrates that what interested the ancient scholars does not necessarily interest modern scholars. The tendency, begun innocently enough by Lehrs, of portraying Alexandria as if it were a Königsberg-on-the-Nile, can encourage a form of philological ancestor-worship,<sup>36</sup> and obscure the substantial differences in attitude between the modern and ancient worlds of philology.<sup>37</sup> χλευάζειν τοὺς οὐκ εἰδότας τὴν διαφορὰν between different kinds of handwashings may or may not have been justified in Alexandria; since then most philologists either have not cared to discover the difference, or if they did, were wrong.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Martin Schmidt, *Die Erklärungen zum Weltbild Homers und zur Kultur der Heroenzeit* (Munich 1976, Zetemata 62) 180–182.

<sup>36</sup>I owe the phrase to Richard Kannicht.

<sup>37</sup>Cf. the perceptive review of Pfeiffer's *History* by Nigel Wilson in *CR* NS 19 (1969) 366–372, especially in regard to the underestimation of Peripatetic influence in the Alexandrian school.

<sup>38</sup>The article was first delivered as a seminar at Cologne University. I am grateful to Prof. R. Kassel for the invitation.

## HANDWASHING: A SUMMARY

- A: Aristophanes' rule: Ar. *Vesp.* 1216–17.
- B: ἀπονίξειν before the meal: Plato *Symp.* 175a; Ar. *Vesp.* 608.
- C: κατὰ χειρός before meal: cf. Plut. *Quomodo adulator* 50c; *Vit. Phoc.* 8; Alexis fr. 392 K; Archedicus fr. 2 K; Demonicus fr. 1 K-A; Clearchus fr. 4 K-A(?); Philoxenus *PMG* 836a; Nicostratus fr. 25; Teleclides fr. 1; Ar. *Aves* 464.
- D: ἀπονίπτεσθαι after meal: cf. Ar. *Ach.* 616; Plato *Com.* fr. 69 K; Ar. *Eccl.* 419; Dromo fr. 2 K-A; Matron *ap. Athen.* 4.136f; Antiphanes fr. 130 K(?).
- E: κατὰ χειρῶν after meal: cf. Apollodorus 2.7.6; Philyllius fr. 3 K; Philoxenus *PMG* 836b40; Menander fr. 405 K-T; Antiphanes fr. 287 K.
- F: Uncertain examples: Epigenes/Antiphanes fr. 39 K; Ar. *Tag.* fr. 50 K-A; Sophron fr. 50 K; Eupolis fr. 320 K-A; Ameipsias fr. 21 K; Alcaeus fr. 16 K.