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**PHILICUS' "NOVEL COMPOSITION"
FOR THE ALEXANDRIAN GRAMMARIANS:
INITIAL LINES AND IAMBE'S SPEECH***

SUMMARY: The Hymn to Demeter (*SH* 676-80) by Philicus of Corcyra can be viewed as a combination of new and traditional features. It contains a proclamation of novelty, but, at the same time, it is rooted in the hymnic tradition; the traceable characteristics of the conventional hymn, however, are considerably modified by Philicus and practically require redefinition. What seems particularly worth emphasising is the poet's receptiveness to other than hymnic modes of expression as well as intertextual allusions ranging in time from the archaic period to the present day.

Philicus' poem (δῶρα) is "brought" to the *grammatikoi*, a specific group of recipients whose opinions must have counted so much that the poet decided to address to them his hymn on par with the gods. Although it is a truism to say that the ancient hymn composers took into account two communicative settings, one formally adopted (the author/performer – the god) and one resulting from the circumstances of their performance (the author/performer – the audience/readers), it is Philicus' merit to state explicitly what the other poets used to leave implicit.

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The innovativeness of Philicus' hymn is clearly visible also in Iambe's speech, quoted in the last part of the preserved text (*SH* 680.56-62). The author of the article highlights the witty contrast between her suggested uneducatedness and refined poetic diction. In Iambe's protests can be heard the Homeric *μη βάλλετε κούροι' Αχαιῶν* (*Il.* 3.82), the Pindaric *Ἐλλάδος ἔρεισμα, κλειναὶ Ἀθῆναι* (fr. 76.3) or the Hippocratean, highly technical *δαίαιτα τῶν ἀνθρώπων* (*De aere, aquis et locis* 1.19), comically applied to the deer. In addition, there can be found a thematic echo between Philicus and Callimachus, compare *βοτάνη ... ἐλάφου δαίαιτα* in Philicus and *μῆλα ... βοτάνην νέμοιτο* in Callimachus (*Branchus*, fr. 229.4 Pf.).

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In recent studies there has been a growing recognition that Hellenistic poets were seeking to recreate and restore, as much as they sought change and novelty.¹ To avoid the possible impression that the order of the above enumeration is meaningful and reflects the preferred hierarchy I propose to put the statement also the other way round: they sought change and novelty, as much as they were seeking to recreate and restore. The proportions may vary from author to author, even within a corpus of works of the same genre by a particular author – compare the six hymns of Callimachus. The *Hymn to Demeter* (*SH* 676-680) by Philicus of Corcyra, a well-known tragedian and priest under Ptolemy II Philadelphus, can likewise be viewed from this perspective as a combination of new and traditional features. It contains a proclamation of novelty, but, at the same time, is rooted in the hymnic tradition; the traceable characteristics of the conventional hymn, however, are considerably modified by Philicus and practically require redefinition. What seems particularly worth emphasising is the poet's receptiveness to other than hymnic modes of expression as well as intertextual allusions ranging in time from the archaic period to the present day.

The idea of novelty is put forth already at the start. Fragment *SH* 677, which according to a scholiast belongs to the poem's proem,² reads:

¹ See Hunter, Rengakos, Sistakou 2014: V.

² Scholia Hephaest. AC p. 140.14-15 Consbruch. Hugh Lloyd-Jones and Peter Parsons (1983), the editors of *Supplementum Hellenisticum*, question the initial position of

καινογράφου συνθέσεως τῆς Φιλίκου, γραμματικοί, δῶρα φέρω πρὸς
ὕμῃς

The precise meaning of the crucial expression *καινόγραφος* σύνθεσις, as might be expected, is not easy to grasp and still needs careful consideration. Compare its translations in the context of the whole line by various scholars: “Ihr Gelehrten, eines von Philikos neugeschaffenen Gebildes Gaben bringe ich vor euch” – Alfred Körte (1931); “Philikos, I, lovers of books, offer you here a new-fangled composition” – Peter Marshall Fraser (1972); “A composition in a style unheard of, which is that of Philicus, I present to you, men of letters!” – J. M. van Ophuijsen (1987); “Scholars, I bring you a new-fangled composition” – Alan Cameron (1995); “Grammarians, I bring you the gift of the innovative written composition of Philicus” – Marco Fantuzzi (2004); “Men of letters, I bring you gifts of a composition of Philikos in a new style” – Nita Krevans and Alexander Sens (2006); “This gift of Philicus’ newfangled composition I present to you, scholars / critics” – Mary Depew (2007); “Per voi, o grammatici, porto i doni di una composizione originale di Filico” – Federica Provenza (2008-2009); “Men of letters, I bring you a gift of Philikos’ newly/innovatively written composition” – Peter Bing (2009); “Gifts in a new style of composition by Philikos, I bring you, scholars” – William D. Furley (2009); “I bring gifts to you, philologists, of Philicus’ innovatively written composition” – Ewen Bowie (2015).

The above survey illustrates well the degree of difficulty in translating Philicus’ phrasing. To start with, the compound *καινόγραφος* is a lexical *hapax legomenon*, not attested elsewhere in the preserved Greek texts. Its first component stresses the novelty of the composition, but it is important to keep in mind the nuance of sense it brings in, which, importantly, makes it different from seemingly synonymous *νεόγραφος*³ and the like. Armand D’Angour’s thorough comparative analysis of the use of *νέος* etc. and *καινός* showed that the latter expres-

this fragment in Philicus’ poem; see their comment *ad locum*.

³ Cf. *AP* 4.1.55: ἄλλων τ’ ἔρνεα πολλὰ νεόγραφα, “the newly written buds of many others” (trans. W. R. Paton); *Scholia in Aristophanem: Commentarium in Plutum* (scholia recentiora Tzetzae), verse 137, line 12: ἔκ γε τῶν νεογράφων (scil. βιβλίων) and 14: βίβλους ἐφευρών τῶν νεογράφων δύο.

sion “is more often found when novelty is simply felt by the utterer to be unprecedented, or as a rhetorical means of emphasising the extent to which something departs from the past experience” (D’Angour 2011: 21).

The second element of the compound under discussion (-γραφος, “written”) seems to be underestimated by some scholars. It is given due importance by Peter Bing who connects it with “the materiality of the text” to be read by a concrete group of recipients, namely “readers”, “men of letters” (Bing 2009: 109).

The translation of the σύνθεσις is made easier by the fact that there exist its calques in several modern languages (via the Latin noun “compositio”): “composition”, “composizione”, etc. Nevertheless, one should be aware that the semantic field of the ancient term does not fully coincide with the modern one. It is noteworthy that the other proemial fragment, that quoted a little earlier by Hephaestion (p. 30.21-22 Consbruch) and hence considered by Hugh Lloyd-Jones and Peter Parsons as the most likely initial line of the poem,⁴ is preceded by the statement: Φίλικος δ’ ὁ Κερκυραῖος [...] ἑξαμέτρῳ συνέθηκεν ὅλον ποίημα, “And Philicus of Cercyra [...] has composed an entire poem with a hexameter”.⁵ Thus, the verb συνέθηκεν (“he composed”) from Hephaestion’s introductory note anticipates the noun σύνθεσις (“composition”) occurring in Philicus’ text quoted immediately afterwards. The close vicinity of these two etymologically connected words may suggest that Hephaestion understood the noun σύνθεσις, above all, as the product of a metrical experiment.

Such a supposition is confirmed by Hephaestion’s subsequent remarks on what we now cite as *SH* 677 (p. 31.1-6 Consbruch), i.e. the fragment we are dealing with here (καινογράφου συνθέσεως τῆς Φιλίκου, γραμματικοί, δῶρα φέρω πρὸς ὑμᾶς). The fragment is introduced with the words: “Philicus actually pretends to be the inventor of this (metron) when he says ...”, and followed by the metrician’s remark: “but his claim is false, for before him Simmias of Rhodes used (the metron)”. All in all, Hephaestion’s primary concern is with the

⁴ *SH* 676: τῇ χθονίῃ μυστικὰ Δήμητρί τε καὶ Φερσεφόνη καὶ Κλυμένῳ τὰ δῶρα.

⁵ I.e. with stichic choriambic hexameters. All passages from Hephaestion are given in J. M. van Ophuijsen’s translation.

metrical structure of the composition; in his eyes, the noun "composition" denotes such a structure.

Since one can object that Hephaestion as a metrician *par excellence* was an one-sided interpreter of poetry, and lived a couple of centuries later at that, let us have a closer look at the usage of the verb συντίθῃμι in the poems written by Philicus' contemporaries, starting with Callimachus, the most outstanding representative of the period. In his famous criticism of the conception "one genre, one poet", Callimachus describes the production of different kinds of poetry with exactly the same word: τίς εἶπεν [...] / σὺ πεντάμετρα συντίθει, σὺ δ' ἡ[ρῶν]ν, / σὺ δὲ τραγωδε[ῖν] ἐκ θεῶν ἐκληρώσω; (*Iamb.* 13.31-32 = fr. 203 Pf.). Nevertheless, there is one important difference between Hephaestion and Callimachus: the former understood the (choriambic) *metron* instrumentally as a unit serving to construct a more complex whole (ἐξάμετρῳ συνέθηκεν ὅλον ποίημα), in the latter – the name of the metre (πεντάμετρα, ἡρῶν) indicates the genre typically composed in such a metre (elegy, epic), as the juxtaposition with tragedy clearly shows: "Who said ... you compose pentameter, you hexameters, you have been allotted tragedy by the gods?" – *trans.* Andrew Morrison.

The technical, mainly syntactical, aspect of composing the poem out of units of identical length (11 letters) and rhythm (iambic metron) comes to the fore in Castorion of Soli's *Hymn to Pan* (*SH* 310, line 3-4): κλήσω γραφῇ τῇδ' ἐν σοφῇ πάγκλειτ' ἔπη / συνθείς, ἄναξ, δύσγνωστα μὴ σοφῷ κλύειν – "I shall invoke you by knitting together in this clever composition, / lord, widely-renowned phrases that are difficult for dull listeners" (*trans.* S. Douglas Olson). The word συνθείς, as Peter Bing has pointed out (Bing 1985: 505, n. 9), refers here to the task of both poet and reader and consists in "putting together" the discrete metra, which on the part of the reader – in spite of the ostensible freedom in reshaping the hymn at will – finally turns out to be illusory if the hymnic character of this composition is to be retained (Bing 1985: 508).

What Philicus and Castorion have in common is their pride of the new-fangled, clever poem which is intended for intelligent and erudite men. The aspect of novelty is strongly highlighted also by Boiscus, another Alexandrian poet-experimentalist (*SH* 233):

Βοῖσκος ἀπὸ Κυζικοῦ, καινοῦ γραφεὺς ποιήματος,
τὸν ὀκτάπουν εὐρῶν στίχον, Φοῖβῳ τίθησι δῶρον.

Boiscus of Cyzicus, writer of a new poem, inventor of the eight-footed verse, dedicates it as a gift to Phoebus – *trans.* Marco Fantuzzi.

Boiscus, symbolically, devotes his poem to Apollo, the divine patron of the poetic art. The style of this couplet is reminiscent of the style of votive epigrams. Boiscus' δῶρον is presented almost like an artefact set up in a temple. The ambiguous self-definition γραφεύς (painter/writer) increases that impression.

A metaphoric reference to the novelty of the poem's metrical pattern (Kwapisz 2013: 115) can be found also in Simias' *Egg* (line 1-4):

Κωτίλας
ματέρος
τῇ τόδ' ἄτρινον νέον
Δωρίας ἀηδόνο·

Lo here a new weft of a twittering mother, a Dorian nightingale – *trans.* W. R. Paton

In Simias, this initial statement is followed by an address to the reader (line 5): πρόφρων δὲ θυμῷ δέξο, “receive it with a right good will”, formulated, rather unexpectedly, in a prayer-like style.⁶ Philicus' poem (δῶρα), to return to our main subject, is “brought” to the *grammatikoi*, a specific group of recipients whose opinions must have counted so much that the poet decided to address to them his hymn on par with the gods. Although it is a truism to say that the ancient hymn composers took into account two communicative settings, one formally adopted (the author/performer – the god) and one resulting from the circumstances of their performance (the author/performer – the audience/readers),⁷ it is Philicus' merit to state explicitly what the other poets used to leave implicit.⁸

⁶ Cf. Kwapisz 2013: 115: „[I]ts reapplication as an apostrophe to the reader sounds ironic; it is *para prosdokian* when it turns out that it is the reader addressed here, and that the poem is not dedicatory”.

⁷ See Danielewicz 1976: 38, 119 (accepted by Furley, Bremer 2001: 59).

⁸ Cf. Depew 2007: 166 (who, however, compared Philicus mainly with Callimachus).

But now – if we admit that both *SH* 676 and *SH* 677 belong to the hymn's *prooimion* – the question arises which of these lines is to be granted the initial position. On the one hand, it was customary to mention the god's name at the very beginning of the hymn, and that is what happens (albeit in a quite unconventional form) in *SH* 676:

τῇ χθονίῃ μυστικὰ Δήμητρί τε καὶ Φερσεφόνη καὶ Κλυμένῳ τὰ δῶρα

To Chthonic Demeter, Persephone and Klymenos mystic gifts... – *transl.*
William D. Furley

on the other – it is tempting⁹ to take the article τὰ in this fragment as anaphoric, and on that basis – following Alfred Körte (1931: 443) and Kurt Latte (1954: 11)¹⁰ – to inverse the still favoured order *SH* 676-677¹¹ and achieve the sequence: δῶρα ... τὰ δῶρα, “gifts ... the gifts”. The first two lines of the poem would then read:

καινογράφου συνθέσεως τῆς Φιλίκου, γραμματικοί, δῶρα φέρω πρὸς
ὕμῳ
τῇ χθονίῃ μυστικὰ Δήμητρί τε καὶ Φερσεφόνη καὶ Κλυμένῳ τὰ δῶρα

Körte translates this couplet as follows: “Ihr Gelehrten, eines von Philikos neugeschaffenen Gebildes Gaben bringe ich vor euch; mystisch, für die chthonische Demeter, Persephone und Klymenos sind die Gaben”.

⁹ In spite of Lloyd-Jones' and Parsons' categorical rejection of this possibility – see their comment *ad locum*: “perperam 677 et 676 coniunxit Körte, inverso ordine, ut unum ambo enuntiatum efficerent” (Lloyd-Jones, Parsons 1983).

¹⁰ Giuseppetti (2012: 117, n. 74) ascribes the same opinion to Pfeiffer (1968: 157), but that scholar is not specific on this point; he writes more generally: “[P]hilicus [...] in the proem to his *Hymn to Demeter*”. The initial position of *SH* 677 is taken for granted by Fraser 1972: 651: “It began apparently with the line ‘Philikos ... [etc.]’”, and Cameron 1995: 42: “[a]n obscure hymn [...] which opens with the words: ‘Scholars (γραμματικοί), I bring you ...’ [etc.]”.

¹¹ Among the scholars who succumb to Lloyd-Jones' and Parsons' authoritative statement are, for example, Brown 1990: 175; Furley 2009: 485. Giuseppetti (2012: 117) [following another suggestion of the two Oxonian scholars] additionally relegates *SH* 677 to the poem's end. Provenzale, the most recent editor of Philicus, though admitting the initial position of *SH* 677, seriously considers the possibility that it was a later inclusion, added at the moment of the poem's publication (see Provenzale 2008-2009: 68).

The hierarchy of addressees strongly implied by such an order (and additionally, as stated above, the very fact of directly addressing human recipients in a hymn) has no precedent in the traditional Greek hymnography, but ought we expect repeating the old-fashioned rules from a poet who declares himself an innovator? Why should we exclude the possibility, on the part of Philicus, of a conscious departure from the stereotype way of beginning the hymn? Callimachus' "mimetic" hymns (2, 5, 6) show clearly the extent to which it was possible to deviate from the old principles of hymn composition.

I am prepared to think that Philicus modelled the line addressed to Demeter, Persephone and Clymenus on dedicatory inscriptions, as did Boiscus of Cyzicus (quoted above). The "gifts" are, naturally, to be taken figuratively as poetry.¹² This explains the use of the dative case while enumerating the gods' names, a practice unparalleled in Greek hymns which typically began with either an apostrophe to the god in the vocative or had his name in the accusative as the direct object of a *verbum canendi* – compare Lasus' *Hymn to Demeter of Hermione* (PMG 702.1)¹³ mentioning the same divine triad: Δάματρα μέλπω Κόραν τε Κλυμένοί ἄλοχον, "I sing of Demeter and the Maiden [Persephone], wife of Clymenus" – *trans.* David A. Campbell.

A structural parallel to *SH* 676 of Philicus (as far as its inscription-like features are concerned) may be found in Callimachus' *Epigr.* 39 Pf.: Δήμητρι τῇ Πυλαίῃ [...] / καὶ τῇ κάτω θυγατρὶ / τὰ δῶρα Τιμόδημος / εἴσατο, "For Demeter of Thermopylae [...], and for her daughter under earth, did Timodemus [...] place here these gifts" – *trans.* W. R. Paton. Given, however, that Philicus' poem was metrically modelled on Simias, it is better to concentrate on the similarities to that poet. The first two lines of Simias' *Axe*, of identical rhythm and length to those of Philicus' hymn:

¹² As for the δῶρα, "gifts", it is worth noting that this is a manifestation of the archaic idea of poetry as a verbal ἄγαλμα, "pleasing gift" for the gods. For ἄγαλμα in archaic epigrams and dedications see particularly Day 2010: 85-129, and for the reception of this motif in Hellenistic poetry compare Ivana Petrovic (2012: 173) who recalls an alluring fragment of Callimachus (494 Pf.) as a testimony: ἄκαπνα γὰρ αἰὲν αἰοῖδοί / θύομεν, "We bards always offer smokeless sacrifices".

¹³ Generally thought to be a close model for Philicus.

Ἀνδροθέα δῶρον ὁ Φωκεὺς κρατερᾶς μηδοσύνας ἦρα τίνων Ἀθάνᾳ
ὥπασ' Ἐπειδὸς πέλεκυν, τῷ ποτε πύργων θεοτεύκτων κατέρειπεν αἶπος

Phocian Epeius has offered a gift to the virile goddess Athena, so as to honour her strong counsel; the axe, with which he once overthrew the height of the god-built towers – *trans.* Jan Kwapisz

may have inspired Philicus with more than just the choriambic metre. The shared elements¹⁴ are: the god's name in the dative,¹⁵ the name of the donor, the object offered as a gift (δῶρον) and its praise, the article τό used as a deictic. Note also that in both cases the relation of the dedicatee(s) to the dedicator is comparable and can be described in terms of hierarchical interconnection: consummate master and judge of art's quality (Athena, *grammatikoi*) – artisan or artist. Last but not least: the beginnings of both poems are characterised by self-referentiality. Epeius' πέλεκυς in Simias not only denotes the material object whose history is described, but also – by mere insertion of this word in the *carmen figuratum* formed in the shape of an axe – acquires the metatextual¹⁶/metapoetic function of a pointer to the visual concept of the poem. Similarly, the phrases καινογράφου συνθέσεως ... μυστικᾶ ... δῶρα in Philicus, as an utterance about the general character of the poem inserted intratextually in its beginning, reflect the 'meta-' perspective of the author qua creator of the text.

Coming back to the use of the gods' names, in the context of Philicus' hymn, their untypical (inscriptional) dative form, as mentioned above, can additionally serve as a substitute for the traditional hymnic announcement of the addressee (ergo, of the content). The sequence: Demeter – Maiden/Persephone – Clymenus/Hades is constructed according to the rule of priority: the principal addressee is mentioned first, and the other ones specify the topic by narrowing it down to the episodes connected with them. The literary models go back to the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, lines 1-3:

¹⁴ While comparing Philicus with Simias I take together *SH* 676 and *SH* 677 as a proemial unit.

¹⁵ The dative in *SH* 676; in *SH* 677 πρὸς ὕμῳ substitutes for the dative ὕμῳ; for these alternatives of taking the indirect object by the verb φέρω see LSJ s.v. IV.2.

¹⁶ For the definition and applicability of the term "metatext" see Danielewicz 2001: 46-61.

Of Demeter the lovely-haired, the august goddess first I sing, of her and
her slender-ankled daughter, whom Aïdoneus seized – *trans.* Martin L.
West

Nevertheless, the bold formal experiment at the beginning of Philicus' hymn, i.e. within its most conventionalised structural element, is a signal of further possible changes and modifications. The poet managed to insert in the hymn's proem much more metatextual information than his predecessors and contemporaries in the field of hymnography, and doing so transformed the traditional pattern.

The innovativeness of Philicus' hymn is clearly visible also in another passage I am going to deal with here, namely in Iambe's speech, quoted in the last part of the preserved text (*SH* 680.56-62):

σταῖσα γὰρ ἐφθέγγετ[ο δὴ θα]ρσαλέον καὶ μέγα· “μὴ βάλλετε χόρτον
αἰγῶν.
οὐ τόδε πεινῶντι θεῶι [φάρ]μακον, ἀλλ’ ἀμβροσία γαστρὸς ἔρεσμα
λεπτῆς.
καὶ σὺ δὲ τῆς Ἀτθίδος, ὦ δα[ί]μον, Ἰάμβης ἐπάκουσον βραχύ μού τι
κέρδος·
εἴμι δ’ ἀπαίδευτα χέα[ι δαρ]ὸν ἀποικοῦσα λάλος δημότις· αἱ θεαὶ μὲν
αἶδ’ ἔθεσάν σοι κύλικας κα[ὶ τελ]έσαι στέμματα καὶ βαπτὸν ὕδω[ρ]
ἐν ὕγρῳι.
ἐγ δὲ γυναικῶν π[έ]λεται, ἦν, βοτάνῃ δῶρον ὀκνηρᾶς ἐλάφου διαίτα,
οὐθὲν ἐμοὶ τῶνδε [μέτεστιν] γέρας· ἀλλ’ εἰ χαλάσεις π[έ]νθος ἐγὼ δὲ
λύσω”¹⁷

For she stood her ground and spoke out loud and bold: “Don’t throw
goats’ feed! / That’s no cure for a goddess hunger. Ambrosia’s the diet for
a delicate stomach. / And you listen, goddess, to a word of good advice
from me, Iambe of Attica. / I’ll not mince my words; I’ve lived long in
the backwoods, an old chatterbox. These goddesses / have ruled that
cups and wreaths and water drawn from the source be paid you. / The
women’s gift – just look! – is grass, food of the timid deer. / None of

¹⁷ The text as printed by Furley 2009: 487.

these fine gifts for me! If you care to ease your grief and I release..." –
trans. William D. Furley

As has been long recognised, Philicus follows the traditional (cf. *h. Cer.* 202-205) account of Iambe who makes the grief-stricken Demeter laugh, but he completely changes the scenery and time of this episode. In the Homeric hymn the scene takes place in the house of Celeus before the goddess caused a universal famine, and Iambe's jests, probably indecent, are not recorded at all, presumably because of the epic *decorum*, whereas in Philicus' poem Iambe (transformed into an old woman) comes from the Attic deme Halimus,¹⁸ meets Demeter in the open air after the earth has been bared of any crops by the goddess, and delivers a long speech.¹⁹ It follows, and alludes to, the act of obeisance combined with the *φυλλοβολία*, pelting Demeter with leaves,²⁰ on the part of a group of women. Unlike these worshippers (Furley 2009: 484), Iambe will not worship the goddess but will make some comments. Her address is introduced by a metapoetical statement: "A humorous tale is not without profit on solemn occasions", as Fraser (1972: 651) neatly puts it.

Some important undertones of Iambe's speech confirming Philicus' novel approach to traditional themes and his literary refinement seem to escape, for all their merits, the commentators' notice.²¹ My impression is that they generally tend to take Iambe's words *à la lettre*. Even Christopher Brown (1990: 185), who, promisingly, uses the adverb "perversely" to define the nature of Iambe's intervention, turns out to refer it merely to the question of the inappropriateness of showering the

¹⁸ Where a festival in honour of Demeter, a preliminary to the three-day Athenian Thesmophoria, took place, see Richardson 1974: 214, who reminds us that Apollodorus (1.5.1) makes Iambe's jesting the *aition* for the *skommata* of women at the Thesmophoria, and this may refer to the Thesmophoria at Halimus.

¹⁹ Of which only the initial part is preserved; Furley (2009: 484) surmises that the length of the whole poem may have been some two to three hundred verses.

²⁰ This act typically applies to the practice by which victors were honoured, like Theseus in Callimachus' *Hecale*. As Brown (1990: 185) reminds us, in the case of Demeter it is difficult to see in what way the *phyllobolia* is appropriate; Lloyd-Jones and Parsons (1983: on line 53) divine an *aition* for ritual practice.

²¹ See e.g. Previtali 1969: 16; Brown 1990: 185-186; Provenza 2008-2009: XXIV, 112-124; Furley 2009: 494.

goddess with leaves in this very case: “That this practice is not normal is emphasized by Iambe herself, who perversely infers that the point of the φυλλοβολία is a mistaken attempt to offer the goddess food; ambrosia is the proper diet of a goddess”.

As for Iambe’s speech, I would highlight the witty contrast between her suggested uneducatedness and refined poetic diction. Iambe is seemingly shown as a simple woman taking the symbolic act of *phyllobolia* as feeding the goddess, but in her protests can be heard the Homeric μή βάλλετε κοῦροι Ἀχαιῶν (*Il.* 3.82), the Pindaric Ἐλλάδος ἔρεισμα, κλειναὶ Ἀθῆναι (fr. 76.3)²² or the Hippocratean, highly technical δίαίτα τῶν ἀνθρώπων (*De aere, aquis et locis* 1.19), comically applied to the deer. One can also trace some intertextual links between Philicus and Callimachus, the leading figure of the Alexandrian scholarship and literature. The two poets must have known each other’s poems. Incidentally, there can be found a thematic echo between them, compare βοτάνη ... ἐλάφου δίαίτα in Philicus and μῆλα ... βοτάνη νέμοιτο in Callimachus (*Branchus*, fr. 229.4 Pf.). Whatever the direction of the impact is, the above parallel testifies to Philicus’ presence in the literary discourse between the Alexandrian men of letters to whom he had much to offer.

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²² Latte (1954: 4) speaks of “der skurrile Ton” of the phrase γαστρὸς ἔρεισμα (and gives two examples from tragedy to support his opinion), but only in the context of the intratextual addressees of Iambe’s words.

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