

BOOK REVIEW

Fragments of Old Comedy: Alcaeus to Diocles. Edited and translated by Ian C. STOREY. Loeb Classical Library 513. Cambridge Mass. and London, 2011. Pp. xlvi + 449. ISBN 978-0-674-99662-5.

Fragments of Old Comedy: Diopithes to Pherecrates. Edited and translated by Ian C. STOREY. Loeb Classical Library 514. Cambridge Mass. and London, 2011. Pp. xi + 520. ISBN 978-0-674-99663-5. \$24.00/£15.95.

Fragments of Old Comedy: Philonicus to Xenophon, Adespota. Edited and translated by Ian C. STOREY. Loeb Classical Library 515. Cambridge Mass. and London, 2011. Pp. xi + 464. ISBN 978-0-674-996779. \$24.00/£15.95.

Just five years ago, a reader looking for an English translation of a passage from a “lost” Old Comic poet might easily find nothing more recent than Edmond’s eccentric 1959 *Fragments of Attic Comedy*. Now, with the more or less simultaneous appearance of Storey’s three-volume Loeb edition and Jeffrey Rusten et al. (eds.), *The Birth of Comedy* (2011), at least two options are often available and sometime more (e.g. for texts preserved by Athenaeus). Storey defines “Old Comedy” as the period from roughly 485 BCE (the first contests at the City Dionysia) to 385 BCE (the death of Aristophanes). Authors are presented in alphabetical order, as in Kassel–Austin, *Poetae Comici Graeci*. The fragments of Aristophanes have been treated separately by Henderson as Volume 5 of his Loeb of that poet (2007), and are accordingly excluded here, as is Epicharmus. In contrast to the Rusten *et al.* volume, all fragments are translated, although one-word glosses and the like are given quick, summary treatment.

Storey offers not just Greek on the left and English on the right, in the standard Loeb format, but extensive commentary on the careers and literary and dramatic tendencies of individual poets and—in many ways the outstanding feature of these volumes—on play-titles. Much of this discussion is necessarily speculative, but even those who disagree with some of Storey’s hypotheses will find him a provocative interlocutor. A section on apparent representations of Old Comedy in vase-painting, and three brief indexes (of *komoidoumenoi*, geographical names,

and mythological names and subjects) are included at the end of Volume 3. An index of titles would also have been welcome.

By and large, Loeb's are not intended as standard editions of ancient authors. Instead, their function is to make otherwise difficult material accessible to a non-specialist audience, by printing a solid text with limited notes, on the understanding that the reader interested in manuscript variants, conjectures and the like can go elsewhere, and by accompanying that text with a translation clear and faithful enough that an intermediate student of the ancient language can work back and forth between the two. Matters are more complicated in the case of the comic fragments, since the Kassel–Austin edition is so expensive that many smaller libraries may not own it. Readers are thus potentially far more reliant on the Loeb than they might otherwise be, putting an additional obligation for accuracy and care on the editor.

In his Introduction (Vol. 1, p. viii), Storey explains that “For the most part I print the Greek text as given in Kassel and Austin’s ... definitive edition. ... Where I print or translate something other than their text, I have indicated this in the notes.” In fact, the text presented here is an inconsistently reworked version of Kock (1880)—presumably because the latter was available in electronic form from the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* and could be updated manually on the basis of *PCG* without paying licensing fees—with very few of the promised notes, and full of typographical errors, bad punctuation (much of it taken over direct from Kock), omissions, inconsistencies and the like. Greek texts are notoriously difficult to produce, and not all the errors that creep into them can be charged to the editor. Whatever the source of the problem here, however, more time should have been taken in the preparation of these volumes.

So too in the case of the translations. The comic poets’ Greek is often odd and colloquial, and the fragments preserved for us are sometimes so badly battered, that rendering them into accurate and idiomatic English poses a substantial challenge. But precision and care are therefore once again of great importance; when a fragment consists—as many do—of five words or less, some of them problematic and obscure, every word is valuable. Here, by contrast, particles like γάρ are omitted repeatedly from the translation; definite articles mysteriously appear and disappear; aorists are translated as perfects; statements become questions and *vice versa*; idioms are garbled; and so forth. Storey also has a pronounced tendency to strong-arm difficult or partially corrupt Greek into saying “what it ought to say,” even when his rendering cannot reasonably be extracted from what is printed on the left-hand page.

The pervasiveness of such problems will be apparent from the catalogue that follows, drawn from Storey's text and translation of Pherecrates in Volume 2 (about 110 pages of text, although with substantial amounts of white space):

- In the general introduction to the poet (p. 411), "the ancients seem to have been able to ferret out the real author" becomes comprehensible only if one reads "unable."

- At fr. 11.2, † οἴκους λέξεις, ἵνα μὴ συνέχη τοῖσι Λυκούργου πατριώταις, Storey ignores the first two words ("you'll say 'houses' *vel sim.*; obscure) and then translates "so that he may contend with the forebears of Lycurgus." This has little to do with the Greek, and seems instead to represent an English version of Kock's Latin translation of his own very tentative rewriting of the line (*ut bellum inferat Lycurgi popularibus*). The source of the misleading "forebears" for πατριώταις remains unclear.

- At fr. 12, ὁ δὲ δὴ δελφίς ἐστι μολιβδοῦς, δελφίνοφόρος τε κεραία, / ὅς διακόψει τοῦδαφος αὐτῶν ἐμπίπτων καὶ καταδύων, Storey translates "Now this dolphin is made of lead, and the yardarm is a dolphin bearer, and it will fall and break through their hull and sink." Without a note, only a specialist reader is likely to know that a "dolphin" is a weight dropped on an enemy ship. More important, the antecedent of ὅς is not the yardarm, as Storey's translation implies, but the "dolphin," and καταδύω is here transitive (see LSJ, s.v. II), so that what the Greek says is not "sink" but "cause it to sink."

- At fr. 14.3, the Greek says not "their fingers" but "their *own* fingers" (αὐτῶν τοὺς δακτύλους)—which is vital to the joke.

- At fr. 22.1, γάρ is omitted from the translation (as also in, e.g., fr. 91).

- At fr. 28 (lacunose and corrupt), πρώτιστ' (v. 1) and ῥινήσαντες (v. 5) are omitted from the translation; ἀποκρίνετε in verse 1 is treated as imperative, despite the translation of the parallel verb νέμεθ' as indicative in verse 5; and ὀσφύν in verse 4 means specifically "tailbone," not "bone."

- At fr. 30, ὥσπερ τῶν αἰγιδίων ὄζειν ἐκ τοῦ στόματος μελικήρας, Storey translates "just like smelling honeycombs on the breath of goats." But ὄζω has not an active sense ("detect a smell") but a passive one ("smell of"), and normally takes not the accusative but the genitive. So the Greek must mean "smelling like honeycomb from one's mouth"—i.e., "having honeycomb-breath"—"like that of goats" (sc. who have eaten particularly sweet flowers?).

- Fr. 33 is punctuated as a question in the English translation, but as a statement in Greek, although ἄρα (contrast ἄρα) is not primarily an interrogative particle (and cf. Denniston, *Greek Particles*, p. 36 on its use with μέλλεις, as here).

- At fr. 34, πίνειν ἀεὶ καὶ μεθύειν, if the first infinitive is translated (correctly) “to be drinking,” the second should be “to be getting drunk” (not “to get drunk”).

- In fr. 43.1, the final two words (κίθαρος ὧν, “as a flat-fish,” i.e. “that way”) are omitted from the translation. Note that in fr. 43.3 the punctuation is Kock’s, not Kassel–Austin’s.

- Although fr. 47 is correctly punctuated as a question, οὐ + future indicative is idiomatically the equivalent of an imperative (thus “Get rid of!” not “Won’t you get rid of?”).

- At fr. 53, ῥαίνειν means “to sprinkle” not “to wash down,” and the rest of the fragment makes it clear that reference is to dribbling water on the ground to keep the dust down.

- At fr. 62.1, σοῖσι has been omitted from the translation (“your tiny crow fishes”).

- At fr. 76.3, the text is Kock’s, not Kassel–Austin’s.

- At fr. 81, κατάχεον αὐτῆς κἀνύδρευσαι τὸν κάδον, the Greek says “pour it over her and draw the jar up.” Even if Storey is right in treating this as a *hysteron-proteron* (“Draw some water and pour the jar over her”), there is no compelling reason to rewrite the Greek.

- At fr. 93, πέρδεται is present (“he farts”) not aorist (“he farted”).

- Fr. 94 καὶ νωτοπλήγα μὴ ταχέως διακονεῖν is “and that someone who’s been beaten doesn’t serve quickly,” not “for a whipped slave not to serve quickly” (which is barely comprehensible in any case).

- At fr. 99, ταῦτ’ ἔχων is not “holding these,” but is an idiomatic expression that means “under these circumstances.”

- At fr. 101, λαψάμενος is not from λαμβάων but from λάπτω, and what the Greek says is not “can pick it up” but “can lap it up.”

- At fr. 105, Storey prints the Kassel–Austin text, but then translates something different represented only in the apparatus.

- At fr. 111, the Greek says not “than this” but “than these” (τούτων).

- At fr. 112, the Greek as printed is a diminutive (*κυτόλιον*), and Pollux specifies that it is the type of *κύαθος* used to ladle perfume (“a little dipper” *vel sim.*). Athenaeus, on the other hand, cites the word as Storey translates it here (“ladle”).

- At fr. 117.1, the Greek says “Why are you talking nonsense?” not “What nonsense.” Verse 2 has a missing accent. The translation of verse 3 is far from the Greek, which says “there’s no other fish but the grunt fish,” not “no fish at all, other than the grunt fish.”

- At fr. 125, the Greek says “a fish, if I ask for (one)” not “any fish, if I ask for some.”

- The translation of fr. 126 is garbled, since *ὑμεῖς* cannot be the subject of the third plural verb *καταμήσονται*. The fragment is also punctuated as a statement in the Greek, but as a question in the English.

- At fr. 127, Storey’s translation (“But in my chests (?) ... on which we are going to dine”) bears no relation to the Greek (*ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς κύτας οἱ ἐν ἐμοῖν ἀποβάνθ’ ἃ μέλλομεν / ἀρίστησιν*), and is much closer to Kock’s text (*ἀλλὰ καὶ κίσταις ἐν ἐμαῖσιν ἀπόκειθ’ ἃ μέλλομεν / ἀριστήσειν*), although Storey does not print the latter.

- At fr. 137.2, *χαρακισμοῦ* is not “stakes” but “staking” while in verse 9 *ἐριφείοις* is omitted from the translation.

- At fr. 144, *λακπατέω* is a very rare word, but it certainly means “trample” not “thrash.”

- Fr. 145 is a joke about high-style vocabulary, which Kassel–Austin explain but Storey nonetheless misses: “Fetch me the basket; or if you like ‘bring it!’”

- Fr. 152.6 *οὐκ ἀβούλως, ἀλλὰ πόρρωθεν κατεσκευασμένοι* cannot be rendered “This was no accident, but planned long in advance,” since *κατεσκευασμένοι* is feminine and refers to the women discussed in the preceding verses.

- At fr. 162.2, *παρέοντα* is mistranslated (“arrive”), but has been got right on the next page in verse 5 (“at his being there”). In verse 9, the translation has a question mark where an exclamation point is called for.

- At fr. 165, the Greek says that the individual in question was struck in the *κόρρη* (“jaw, temple”, not “face”), and that as a consequence “fire shown forth from his *γνάθοι*” (“cheeks”, not “mouth”).

- At fr. 201, read “tare” not “tares.”

There are additional typographical errors in the Greek at, e.g., test. iii; viii.d; fr. 14.3; 22.1; 29.1; 37.2; *Doulodidaskalos* test. i and iii; *Ipnon* test. i; 70.4; *Korianno* test. ii; 92; 113.4, 18; 123; 126.1; *Chiron* test. i; 156.3; 161.1; 163.1; 197.2; 207.3; 247.2.

Some of these are minor points. The problem is that there are so many of them—more, in fact, than I have listed here, and the situation is the same with other authors. In sum, these are welcome but flawed volumes, full of information and ideas, but so unreliable in matters of detail that they cannot be recommended to the unsuspecting reader. Perhaps Harvard University Press will commission a thoroughly revised and vetted second edition, in which case this is likely to become a standard scholarly resource.

S. DOUGLAS OLSON

University of Minnesota, sdolson@umn.edu