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LAUGHTER INTERJECTIONS IN GREEK COMEDY

Comedy should be full of laughter, the scholia tell us. One scholiast writes: 'comedies should be full of jests, which the Greeks call *skômmata*, and full of laughs, which they call *gelasias*' (*comoedias esse oportet refertas cauillis, quae σκώμματα nominant Graeci, et cachinnis, quas γελασίας uocant*).[1] Another writes 'comedy is different from tragedy, because comedy tapers off from laughter into laughter, but tragedy from lament into lament' (*διαφέρει δὲ ἡ κωμωιδία τῆς τραγωιδίας, ὅτι ἡ μὲν κωμωιδία ἀπὸ γέλωτος εἰς γέλωτα καταλήγει, ἡ δὲ τραγωιδία ἀπὸ θρήνου εἰς θρῆνον*).[2] Whether this second scholar means that comedy goes from laugh to laugh, or that on-stage laughter causes audience laughter (just as on-stage grief causes audience grief), he nevertheless seems to present a sentiment similar to that of our first scholion: laughter is an integral on-stage element of comedy. In this article, however, I would like to question whether this is really the case, and examine what evidence there is for on-stage laughter, via the actual written-out expressions of it – that is, laughter interjections, especially the interjection 'ha ha'. I will argue that there are no instances of the interjection 'ha ha' on the comic stage (despite the entries in LSJ and *DGE*), and only four instances of other laughter interjections (the *αἰβοιβοῖ* of *Peace*, and the *ἰηῦ* of *Acharnians*, *Peace* and *Wasps*). At the end, I will briefly consider what this evidence suggests about on-stage laughter in Greek comedy.

Before turning to these citations, however, some methodological problems need to be outlined. The first, which is mentioned in scholarship from every period (including the scholia to Aristophanes),[3] is that the same interjection can be spoken in different ways – 'ha ha' can be a laugh in earnest, or an imitation of laughter expressed sarcastically.[4] Likewise, a cry of grief or disgust can be emitted unconsciously, or can, again, be ironic, and enunciated to mean something quite different from the interjection's original force. The second problem in dealing with Greek laughter interjections is that the interjection that 'must have been' in use (the ono-

[1] W.J.W. Koster, *Scholia in Aristophanem* (Groningen, 1975), 49.

[2] Koster (n. 1), 50.

[3] Cf. the scholion to *Clouds* 829: *γελῶν λέγει τὸ αἰβοῖ. ἔστι δὲ ἐπίρρημα σχετλιαστικόν* ('he says *aiboi* while laughing. But it is an interjection of anger'). Donatus suggests that the 'hui' at Ter. *Ad.* 411, which is usually an interjection of astonishment, is in the play's context spoken *quasi admiretur*. R.H. Martin, *Terence: Adelphoe* (Cambridge, 1976), 168, explains Donatus' interpretation of the interjection: 'The "admiration" of Syrus is simulated, and the audience knows quite well that what is going on is *irrisio* at Demea's expense.'

[4] For this reason it is often questioned whether 'ha ha' is a proper interjection at all, e.g.: 'haha! für lautes Lachen, hihi! für feines Kichern sind keine wahren Interjektionen, sondern nur Surrogate der Schrift zur Bezeichnung des in Buchstaben unausdrückbaren Naturlauts' (J. Grimm's *Deutsche Grammatik*, quoted in E. Schwentner, *Die primären Interjektionen in den indogermanischen Sprachen* [Heidelberg, 1924], 18). For an odd treatment of the English 'hehe' as an interjection bearing the force of *linguistic* communication, see J. Schenkein 'Towards an analysis of natural conversation and the sense of "hehe"', *Semiotica* 6 (1972), 344–77.

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matopoetic ἃ ἄ according to some Indo-European scholars)[5] is nowhere to be found on the comic stage, and the more certain interjections of laughter do not resemble what 'must have been' (αἰβοιβοῖ, ἰηῦ). Ernst Schwentner, for example, who cites equivalents for the 'ha ha' laugh in a number of Indo-European languages (Old Indian 'has', Latin 'hahahae', Russian 'xaxa', among others[6]) writes, for Ancient Greek, 'ἃ ἄ "ha ha", an expression of laughing and glee' and offers Aristophanes' name in parentheses.[7] But he does not cite any Aristophanes line numbers, and indeed I have found none, nor did Aemilius Schinck (1873) or Juan Miguel Labiano Ilundain (2000) in their discussions of interjections in Aristophanes.[8] This is not to say that the ἃ ἄ laughter interjection did not exist in ancient Greek – indeed we find discussion of this interjection among later Atticist lexicographers – but simply that it is absent in the comedy that survives. In what follows, I will examine the discussion of this interjection among later Greek lexicographers and grammarians, tracking the interjection back to the second-century-A.D. lexicographer Diogenianus. Diogenianus' citation is *prima facie* evidence that this ἃ ἄ interjection must have existed somewhere in classical Attic Greek. But where? The two places where this interjection has been thought to exist – Plato Comicus fr. 16 and Euripides *Cyclops* (cited by both LSJ and *DGE*)[9] – are conjectures never adopted by modern editors. Nevertheless, these conjectures deserve some brief discussion since they are not debated elsewhere and since modern dictionaries continue to print the supposed ἃ ἄ citations. After dismissing these possible examples of the 'ha ha' interjection, I will consider whether the scarcity of such laughter representations ought to call into question ancient and modern assumptions about the frequency of laughter on the comic stage.[10]

[5] This is not to say, of course, that the 'ha ha' laugh was affected by historical Indo-European phonology, for which one would expect *yaya or *sasa (A.L. Sihler, *New Comparative Grammar of Latin and Greek* [Oxford, 1995], 187 for *y, 170 for *s), but that the onomatopoetic interjection is found in a number of different Indo-European languages. For the typical 'ha ha' sound of laughter, see R.R. Provine, *Laughter: A Scientific Investigation* (New York, 2000), 55–74, although his emphasis on the 'typical' sound of laughter (which apparently has numerous types of sound) draws criticism from, among others, J. Trouvain, 'Segmenting phonetic units in laughter', in M.J. Solé, D. Recasens and J. Romero (edd.), *Proceedings of the 15th International Congress of the Phonetic Sciences* (Barcelona, 2003), 2793–6. For ancient discussion of the sound of laughter, see Ps.-Arist. *Pr.* 11.13.900a20–31, 11.15.900b7–14, 11.50.904b22–6.

[6] Schwentner (n. 4), 18–20, cites the 'ha ha' laughter sound in Old-Indian, Greek, Latin, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Polish, Anglo-Saxon (quoting the ninth-century grammar of Aelfred: 'ha ha and he he denote laughter in Latin and in English'), Dutch, Danish, Swedish, German (quoting the medieval Walther von der Vogelweide: 'friunt ich erkenne ouch daz, haha haha haha'), Spanish, Portuguese, etc.

[7] Ibid., 18: '… ἃ ἄ <<ha ha>> Ausdruck des Lachens und der Freude (Aristoph.)' Cf. also E. Schwyzer, *Griechische Grammatik* (München, 1934), 303.

[8] A. Schinck, *De interiectionum epiphonematumque apud Aristophanum vi atque usu* (Halle, 1873), 2–5; J.M. Labiano Ilundain, *Estudio de las interjecciones en las comedias de Aristófanes* (Amsterdam, 2000), 61–7.

[9] LSJ: 'ἃ ἄ or ἇ ἇ, to express laughter, *ha ha*, E. *Cyc.* 157, Pl.Com.16 (prob. l.), etc.; ἃ ἄ δασυνθὲν γέλωτα δηλοῖ Hsch., Phot., Eust. 855.19.' *DGE*: 'ἇ ἇ Pl.Com.16 … 3. indicando alegría *ja! ja!* E.Cyc.157, Pl.Com.16, Phot., Eust.855.21.' Although it is important that the *DGE* says 'alegría' (joy, merriment) and not 'risa' (laughter), I will argue that even interpreting this aspirated interjection via such middle ground is incorrect.

[10] Ancient scholia quoted in introduction. For modern examples, see S. Halliwell, *Greek Laughter* (Cambridge, 2008), 245; O. Taplin, 'Comedy and the tragic', in M. Silk (ed.), *Tragedy and the Tragic* (Oxford, 1996), 190: 'Performers who want to arouse laughter often enact laughter themselves as a stimulant.' Can on-stage laughter really function as a technique to stimulate audience laughter? This question will be discussed at the end.

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'HA HA' AMONG GRAMMARIANS

The twelfth-century scholar Eustathius writes in his *Iliad* commentary the following note about the interjection ἃ ἄ (*in Il.* 855.20):

ἰστέον δὲ ὅτι εὕρηται παρὰ τοῖς παλαιοῖς τὸ α καὶ μετὰ δασέος τόνου καὶ ὀξείας προφερόμενον. καὶ κεῖται ἐν Ἐπιλογῇ λέξεων ἀρχαίᾳ, ὅτι ἃ ἄ δασυνθὲν γέλωτα δηλοῖ.

It must be known that, among the ancients, 'a' has been found written with a rough breathing and acute accent. In fact, it is in the old lexicon that 'ha ha' aspirated shows laughter.[11]

A similar note is found in the ninth-century lexicon of Photius, who attributes the source of this information about aspirated laughter to Diogenianus: ἃ ἄ· ἐπὶ τοῦ μεγάλου. ἔστι δὲ καὶ σχετλιαστικὸν ἐπιφώνημα· δασυνθὲν δὲ γέλωτα δηλοῖ, ὥς φησι Διογενιανός ('Ah ah: at something huge. It is an expression of woe: when aspirated, it expresses laughter, as Diogenianus says); and Hesychius, whose sixth-century lexicon was largely based on Diogenianus,[12] bears the same note, although he omits Diogenianus' name. The fact that Harmut Erbse attributes Eustathius' ἐν ἐπιλογῇ λέξεων ἀρχαίᾳ to the second-century writer Aelius Dionysius (an opinion that has been widely followed),[13] should not obscure the origin of the laughter-aspiration note, since Erbse himself admits that it was Diogenianus who must have been Aelius Dionysius' source for such material.[14] Thus, although this information about the 'ha ha' laugh is found in a number of different late-antique and Byzantine scholars, the source falls squarely on the shoulders of the second-century Diogenianus. This is important because it provides evidence that this ἃ ἄ interjection must have existed in classical Greek literature. However, as I will show, first with Plato Comicus 16 and then with Euripides *Cyclops* 157 – the two texts where the interjection has been thought to exist (as LSJ and *DGE* attest) – ἃ ἄ (despite the testimony of Diogenianus) has yet to appear in a pre-imperial source.

PLATO COMICUS FR. 16

Serena Pirrotta in her recent edition of the fragments of Plato Comicus (fifth/fourth century B.C.) prints the following one-line fragment from Plato's lost play *Griffins*: αἰαῖ· γελῶν δ' ἐπηκροώμην <-> πάλαι, translating the line as 'Ach! Lachend

[11] M. Van der Valk, *Eustathii commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem pertinentes* (Leiden, 1979), 230, notes that Eustathius meant to write δασέος πνεύματος not δασέος τόνου.

[12] On Diogenianus as a source of Hesychius, see K. Latte, *Hesychii Alexandrini Lexicon, vol. 1: α–δ* (Hauniae, 1953), X–XII, XLII–XLIV; and E. Dickey, *Ancient Greek Scholarship* (Oxford, 2007), 88–90.

[13] H. Erbse, *Untersuchungen zu den attizistischen Lexica* (Berlin, 1950), 35: 'Denn dass Ael. mit der Angabe des Eust. gemeint ist, unterliegt m.E. keinem Zweifel …'. Both Van der Valk (n. 11), 230, and S. Pirrotta, *Plato Comicus: Die fragmentarischen Komödien* (Berlin, 2009), 83, follow Erbse's conjecture. For Aelius Dionysius, see Dickey (n. 12), 99. For the problems involved in reconstructing Eustathius' sources, see Erbse, 1–22.

[14] Erbse (n. 13), 35–6.

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hörte ich schon lange zu'.[15] In the text of Kassel and Austin, Plato's line also begins with αἰαῖ, and it is no wonder: the line is cited in Photius' lexicon (as well as the slightly earlier *Συναγωγὴ λεξεών χρησίμων*[16]) under the lemma of αἰαῖ:

αἰαῖ· ἠθικὸν τοῦτο. Πλάτων Γρυψίν· αἰαῖ· γελῶν δ' ἐπηκροώμην πάλαι. ἔστι δὲ πολὺ παρὰ τοῖς τῆς μέσης κωμωιδίας καὶ τῆς νέας ποιηταῖς

aiai: this is expressing character.[17] Plato in *Griffins: aiai*, laughing, I heard < – > long ago. This occurs much among the poets of middle and new comedy.

Since this passage of Plato exists for the modern reader because it provided an example of the interjection αἰαῖ, there seems little reason to question the soundness of that very lemma.

However, both LSJ and *DGE* print a text in which the line does not begin with an interjection of lament (αἰαῖ) but one of laughter (ἃ ἃ) – which leads one to ask, if this fragment is actually *listed* under αἰαῖ, where did the dictionaries' ἃ ἃ come from? The reading is a conjecture of August Meineke – not printed in his 1840 edition of the fragments but in the 1857 corrections: ἃ ἃ, *γελῶν ἐπηκροώμην σου πάλαι* (*dudum ego cum risu te audio*; 'Ha ha, I heard you just now with a laugh').[18] Meineke based his conjecture on the testimony found in the grammarians regarding the aspiration of ἁ ἅ signifying laughter (the passages of Photius, Hesychius and Eustathius discussed above). Although neither Pirrotta nor Kassel and Austin consider Meineke's reasons for this conjecture beyond the similarity of Photius' two entries (αἰαῖ and ἁ ἅ), David Bain, in an article that discusses a number of comic interjections, offers a parallel passage from Terence's *Eunuch*, which, he suggests, makes Meineke's conjecture plausible, even preferable: 'GN. hahahae. THR. quid rides? GN. istuc quod dixti modo' (497).[19] With the opening *hahahae* and the ending *modo*, this line certainly bears a resemblance to Meineke's version of Plato's line, which begins with ἃ ἃ and ends with πάλαι ('just now').[20]

[15] Pirrotta (n. 13), 83–4.

[16] As the *Συναγωγὴ λεξεών χρησίμων* is also called the *Lexicon Bachmannianum* and *Lexicon Bekkeri VI*, the Plato Com. entries are cited as 'Bekk. Anecd. 360' by Meineke, and 'Bachmann 48.28' by C. Theodoridis, *Photii patriarchae lexicon*, vol. 1 (α–δ) (Berlin, 1982). The most recent edition is I. Cunningham, *Synagôgê lexeôn chrêsimôn* (Berlin, 2003), whose introduction (13–82) illustrates the lexicon's relationship to other Byzantine lexica. See also Theodoridis 72–6 for its relationship to Photius, and Dickey (n. 12), 100–3 for the lexicon of the fifth-century-A.D. scholar Cyrillus, on which the *Συναγωγή* was based.

[17] The word ἠθικός is difficult to translate (especially in grammarians' usage) and will be discussed below. Here I offer as broad a translation as possible. Although J. Wisse, *Ethos and Pathos: From Aristotle to Cicero* (Amsterdam, 1989), 64, n. 268, feels that 'character' can still translate (or be discerned behind) most of the grammarians' ἦθος-based words, W. Kroll, 'ἐν ἤθει', *Philologus* 75 (1918), 68–76, discusses a broader range of meanings, including 'emphatic', 'pithy' and, in the majority of cases, 'ironic'.

[18] For πάλαι as 'just now', see LSJ s.v. πάλαι II. More plausible, however, is its more common definition – 'long ago' or 'for a long time'. Kassel and Austin (*PCG*) give as parallel Lucian *Icarom.* 1, πάλαι γὰρ ἐπακροῶμαι σου παρακολουθῶν ('I have been listening to you for a long time, following you around').

[19] D. Bain, 'Female speech in Menander', *Antichthon* 18 (1984), 24–42, at 36.

[20] J. Barsby, *Terence: Eunuchus* (Cambridge, 1999), 176, notes that it is Menander's *Kolax* (fr. 8 Sandbach) that is being used in these lines, while A.J. Brothers, *Terence: Eunuch* (Warminster, 2000), 18, applies the *Kolax* fragment (a joke regarding a Cypriot bullock and dung-eating) to line 426 not 497. Brothers argues that a Roman joke originating with Livius Andronicus substitutes Menander's 'Cypriot bullock' joke. This 'old joke' (*vetus credidi*, *Eun.* 428) also receives a response of (feigned) laughter, *hahahae* (*Eun.* 426).

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However, although it is appealing to look for a Greek precursor to the Roman *hahahae*[21] in Plato's fragment, it is simply too difficult to explain the palaeographic process whereby Plato's ἃ ἃ could have become the lexicographer's lemma for αἰαῖ,[22] especially when Plato's fragment is perfectly understandable as the manuscripts transmit it. If one reads the passage according to the manuscripts, *αἰαῖ· γελῶν δ' ἐπηκροώμην πάλαι*, it is clear that the laughter is not happening at the present time but in the past (since the participle is grammatically relative only to the time of the main verb). The speaker apparently heard something long ago and laughed *then*, but now is groaning – thus the δέ that Meineke omits can be read as strongly adversative: αἰαῖ now, but laughed before. Does not this, then, suggest the complaint over an old joke found so often in Old Comedy?[23] Here, a speaker seems to be groaning over an old joke with a paratragic αἰαῖ,[24] reminding the audience, perhaps, that old jokes really are tragic things. That Photius calls this αἰαῖ interjection ἠθικόν can be explained by ἠθικόν's sense of 'ironic' or, better, 'playful'.[25] The αἰαῖ is not expressing true suffering, but suffering ἠθικῶς, 'in play'. It remains obscure, however, why Photius writes that this interjection occurs 'much in the poets of Middle and New Comedy'.[26]

[21] The Roman *hahahae* is spelled out some seven times. Although G.P. Shipp, *Terence Andria* (Oxford, 1970 [1939]), v. 754, writes that both interjections *hahae* and *hahahae* are used to express laughter, *hahae* should be treated more warily. Cf. Plaut. *Pseud.* 1052, where it expresses a feeling of security, and also *Pseud.* 1294, where it represents a drunken belch. *Hahahae* is more certain: see Plaut. *Poen.* 768, *Mil.* 1073, *Pseud.* 946, *Tru.* 210; Ter. *Phorm.* 411, *Haut.* 886, *Eun.* 426.

[22] For 'A A' to become 'AIAI' there would have had to have been a very early conjecture, something like (but opposite to) the *Acharnians* scholiast who suggested (incorrectly: see Schinck [n. 8], 6, and S.D. Olson, *Aristophanes: Acharnians* [Oxford, 2002], 334) that an αἰαῖ should be emended to ἀᾶ` (1083): *αἳ αἳ· τούτων τινὲς τὸ μὲν πρῶτον διὰ τῆς αἳ διφθόγγου, θρηνητικὸν γάρ· τὸ δὲ δεύτερον ψιλόν, θαυμαστικὸν γάρ* ('*ai ai:* the first group of these are interjections of mourning shown by the *ai* diphthong; the second, without the diphthong, show surprise'). This 'A A' of course would have had to have been with omitted aspiration (not unusual). For discussion of how aspiration would have been written in Plato's day (probably a half-'H'), see V. Gardthausen, *Griechische Palaeographie* (Leipzig, 1913), 383–4.

[23] See Ar. *Ran.* 1–4, *Nub.* 535–6, *Vesp.* 54–66, *Pax* 739–47, *Lys.* 381, 543, 1218, *Eccl.* 888–9 for complaints over old or lame jokes. It should be noted, though, that at Ter. *Eun.* 426, the speaker prefaces the complaint over an old joke with a (sarcastic) *hahahae*.

[24] For the contention that αἰαῖ is usually paratragic in comedy, see Labiano Ilundain (n. 8), 71–6; M. West, *The East Face of Helicon* (Oxford, 1999), 261; Pirotta (n. 13), 83.

[25] Kroll (n. 17), 73, in his discussion of the usage of ἦθος/ἠθικός/ἐν ἤθει among grammarians, notes that the most frequent meaning of the word is 'ironic': 'Namentlich aber von ironischen, und "Ironie" ist die haüfigste Bedeutung des Wortes in grammatischer Literatur.' However, the very reason why he considers the definition of these ἦθος-words to be 'ironic' – that ἠθικός and εἰρωνικός are so often used side by side – is precisely the reason why they cannot be synonymous. When one examines, for example, the scholia to Soph. *El.* 393 (εἰρωνεύεται ἐν ἤθει) or Eur. *Hec.* 26 (ἐν ἤθει καὶ εἰρωνείᾳ εἶπεν) or *Or.* 750 (ἐν ἤθει ταῦτα λέγει εἰρωνικῶς), etc. (for more examples, see Kroll, 73–4), it becomes clear that translating both words as 'ironically' produces redundancy. Rather, ἠθικός – although close to 'ironic' – seems to shade into meaning 'not completely serious' or 'in play'.

[26] αἰαῖ, usually paratragic (see n. 24), occurs eight times in Old Comedy but never in Middle or New Comedy. It is hard to explain Photius' observation as arising from confusions in comedy's periodization (for which see H.-G. Nesselrath, *Die attische mittlere Komödie* [Berlin, 1990]). A conjecture that deserves attention is provided by U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Das Schiedsgericht* (Berlin, 1925), 77, who notices that the similar interjection αἳ appears in Middle and New Comedy (and not in Old Comedy); see Bain (n. 19), 35–6, for citations. αἳ is found as the lemma in the Berlin manuscript of Photius' lexicon, but rejected by Theodoridis (n. 16).

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Thus, if the manuscripts are followed, the Plato fragment can be understood as a paratragic, playful lament over an old joke. As all modern editors of the fragment seem to agree, Meineke's conjecture of the laughter interjection ἃ ἃ is unnecessary, both for palaeographic reasons and because the manuscripts' αἰαῖ fits perfectly well within a plausible comic context. As a pre-imperial example of the 'ha ha' interjection, the Plato Comicus fragment ought to be disregarded in LSJ and *DGE*.

EURIPIDES' *CYCLOPS*

The other entry of the 'ha ha' laughter interjection that occurs in LSJ/*DGE* is from Euripides' *Cyclops* 157. Although Diggle and Seaford read ἃ ἃ ἃ, LSJ suggests the aspiration ἁ ἁ ἁ, signifying laughter. In this scene, Silenus is tasting Odysseus' wine for the first time and exclaims: βαβαί· χορεῦσαι παρακαλεῖ μ' ὁ Βάκχιος. / ἁ ἁ ἁ ('Yowza: Bacchus bids me to dance. Ah ah ah').[27] This seems like a perfectly reasonable point to aspirate the alphas: Silenus is so overjoyed by his first taste of wine (after so long) that he laughs with glee. But Diggle does not aspirate, and Seaford in his commentary is hesitant to read this as a moment of laughter.[28] Lopez Eire, on the other hand, although not aspirating the alphas, puzzlingly still insists on translating the interjection as laughter.[29] But this is unparalleled. The unaspirated alpha appears quadrupled in the *Rhesus* (749), where Rhesus' driver cries out ἃ ἃ ἃ ἃ in pain. So too in the *Alcestis* (28), the ἃ ἃ is explained as a 'strange cry of surprise, often accompanied by pain … So used by Io (PV 566) as she feels the sting of the gadfly.'[30] Although Silenus is far from pain in the *Cyclops* passage, it seems that he is feeling the 'sting' of Dionysus' surprise, that is, the first perceptions of wine.

Not laughter or pain but awe and amazement are behind Silenus' ἃ ἃ ἃ. Just as Xanthias at *Frogs* 759 exclaims ἃ when he hears about Aeschylus and Euripides in the underworld, and Cassandra cries ἃ when in awe of Apollo (1085) in the *Agamemnon*, so here Silenus is in a thaumastic state from the wine. This might explain Photius' line about the interjection ἃ ἄ· ἐπὶ τοῦ μεγάλου ('at something huge') – the feeling of wonder or awe. Schinck takes this line of interpretation in explaining the ἃ at *Frogs* 759:

> rem permagni momenti … voces … indicant. Suidae locus s.v. 'α' rectum docere mihi videtur. 'σημαίνει δὲ καὶ τὸ πόλυ καὶ μέγα, παρ' Ἀρχιλόχῳ ἃ δέκα ταύροις' Dicitur illa vocula cum exclamatione de re quapiam magna quae repente contigit aut ante oculos nostros repente sese obtulit

the words show a matter of great moment. The entry for 'ἃ' in Suidas seems to me right: 'it shows also the much and the large, in Archilochus: ah! Ten bulls!' This utterance is

[27] D. Kovacs, *Euripides: Cyclops, Alcestis, Medea* (Cambridge, 1994), ad locc., translates 'ooh la la!' for the βαβαί and 'Tra la, tra la, tra la!' for the ἃ ἃ ἃ.

[28] R. Seaford, *Euripides: Cyclops* (Oxford, 1984), 132: 'The triple ἁ, because a rarity, may be a subtle expression of the anarchy of Sil.'s joy.'

[29] A. Lopez Eire, 'À propos des mots pour exprimer l'idée de "rire" en grec ancien' in M.-L. Desclos (ed.), *Le rire des grecs* (Grenoble, 2000), 13–44: 'Souvenons-nous que Silène rit aux éclats, après avoir bu du vin, dans le drame satyrique d' Euripide intitulé le Cyclope'; the unaspirated alphas are translated as 'Ha, ha, ha!'

[30] L.P.E. Parker, *Euripides: Alcestis* (Oxford, 2007), ad. loc.

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spoken with exclamation about something great which suddenly happens, or suddenly comes before our eyes.[31]

Like Cassandra in the *Agamemnon* being overwhelmed by the horrible visions of Apollo, and Xanthias being amazed by the presence of Aeschylus and Euripides,[32] here Silenus is being overwhelmed (albeit in a more tongue-in-cheek way) by Dionysus. Since there are parallels for these ἆ's, there is no need to allocate too much space here to arguing over an unparalleled aspiration in the *Cyclops* – which is what LSJ and *DGE* suggest.

XA XA

Before turning to more certain laughter interjections in Greek comedy, a brief mention must be made of another form of 'ha ha' that has received recent attention in books about laughter: the χα χα of the *Greek Magical Papyri*. One recent author writes that it is χα χα not ἃ ἃ that is the Greek interjection of laughter: 'the staccato rhythms of breathing-cum-vocalisation (χα χα χα being the Greek equivalent of "ha ha ha") …'.[33] Another scholar writes that this evidence of χα χα for a laughter interjection suffices to show that the present-day χ-pronunciation (presumably kh-) must be incorrect: 'mais ce qui est intéressant ici c'est que la vocalisation aspirée χα suffirait à prouver à la fois combien notre prononciation française moderne du χ est défectueuse …'.[34] χα χα is certainly the *modern* Greek spelling of laughter, since it, like Russian (which also represents laughter as 'xa xa'), lacks the *h*-aspirate.[35] Presumably, as Greek lost its aspiration, the χ-sound (having evolved from voiceless aspirate (*kh*) to fricative (*x*) by the fourth century A.D.) occupied aspiration's place in laughter's spelling – which would then make χα χα quite a late spelling of laughter in ancient Greek. One problem, however, is that, as Geoffrey Horrocks and others have shown, there is no evidence that the χ-sound in Egypt made the transition from voiceless aspirate to fricative in the Hellenistic, Roman or early Byzantine periods, as it did elsewhere in the Greek world. If the χ-sound remained a voiceless aspirate, how would this Egyptian papyrus's χα χα

[31] Labiano Ilundain (n. 8) remarks that this passage is not from the *Suda* but a scholion to Plato *Hp. Mai.* 295a: 'Schinck hace una referencia equivocada a la *Suda*, que en realidad corresponde a un escolio platónico'. The line is found in both.

[32] Although Schinck (n. 8), 3, argues that the interjection is spoken by Aeacus, not Xanthias – for the incorrectness of which see K.J. Dover, *Aristophanes: Frogs* (Oxford, 1994), ad loc., who argues that ἆ is not a continuation but usually a response – he is still correct in treating the ἆ in a thaumastic sense. Less compelling is Labiano Ilundain (n. 8), 65, who translates the interjection as 'No!' as in 'No – it cannot be!' in order to capture an interjection that is part surprise, part incredulity ('por una parte expresa sorpresa, y por otra, incredulida'). One would expect, in such a situation, that the slave's response to ἆ would bear some traces of 'but it is!' – but his response is without particles.

[33] Halliwell (n. 10), 8, although he mentions that Eur. *Cyc.* 157 'is not … a formal vocalization of laugher' (8, n. 20), he omits the Diogenianos tradition about aspirated alphas signifying laughter.

[34] D. Arnould, *Le rire et les larmes dans la littérature grecque d'Homère à Platon* (Paris, 1990), 144. Here, too, there is no mention of the Diogenianos tradition.

[35] Provine (n. 5), 62, notes that Italian (also lacking the *h*-aspirate) writes laughter as 'ah' in libretti, and that 'both English and Italian speakers probably differ more in the *perception* than the production of the species-typical laugh sound'.

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have been pronounced?[36] To add further complications, it is questionable whether the two cases of χα χα in the *Greek Magical Papyri* can be considered firm evidence for a 'Greek equivalent' of 'ha ha' at all. If one examines the document itself, its origins and the Egyptian environment in which it was produced, this hypothesis becomes doubtful.

The two passages of χα χα – *PGM* 13.169 and 473 (*PLeid.* J 395) – are part of a complex compilation of magical documents dated to the fourth century A.D., containing three versions of the same text, the so-called 'eighth book of Moses'.[37] The papyrus begins with magical directions – for example, gather pinecones and two white roosters, draw a falcon-faced crocodile on a square of natron, and so forth – but then, at line 169, breaks off into an inserted theogony.[38] It then returns to the magical directions, only to give a slightly different version of this same inserted theogony later at 473.[39] It is in these two inserted theogonies that the χα χα appears, in virtually the same repeated line (since they are from two versions of the same source-text) (163–4):

Εἰπὼν ἐκρότησε γ′, καὶ ἐγέλασεν ὁ θεὸς ζ′· χα χα χα χα χα χα χα. Γελάσαντος δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν θεοὶ ζ′, οἵτινες τὸν κόσμον περιέχουσιν.

So saying, he clapped three times, and the god laughed seven times: 'kha kha kha kha kha kha.' When the god laughed, seven gods were born who encompass the cosmos.

Compare lines 472–3, which are found in the same context and clearly from a slightly different version of the same theogony:

Εἰπὼν ἐκρότησε γ′, καὶ ἐγέλασεν ὁ θεὸς ἑπτάκις· χα χα χα χα χα χα χα. Γελάσαντος δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν θεοὶ ζ′, οἵτινες τὸν κόσμον περιέχουσιν.

It is clear that these passages cannot be counted as two separate instances of a laughter interjection, since they are essentially the same text in transmission.

However, what is more important here is the source text. Like many of the *Greek Magical Papyri*, this particular text may have been of non-Greek origin, which is to say that it was translated at some point into Greek.[40] Morton Smith notes that the male and female pairings of gods in the theogony suggest non-Greek origin, since certain deities bear genders foreign to the assignations of the Greek

[36] G. Horrocks, *Greek: A History of the Language and its Speakers* (London, 1997) 112–13, citing S.-T. Teodorsson, *The Phonology of Ptolemaic Koine*, (Göteborg, 1977) and F.T. Gignac, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods, Vol. I: Phonology* (Milan, 1976). Horrocks conjectures: 'Whether this reflects a conservative peculiarity of Egyptian Greek under the influence of Coptic … or reflects a more general state of affairs in the Koine, is difficult to determine' (112).

[37] For dating, see chart in H.D. Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri in Translation* (Chicago, IL, 1990), xxiii. For three versions (A=1–230, B=343–618, C=646–734) and their development, see M. Smith, 'Eighth book of Moses and how it grew (P Leid J. 395)', in S.J.D. Cohen (ed.), *Cult of Yahweh*, vol. 2 (Leiden, 1996), 217–26, at 223–6.

[38] Betz (n. 37), 176, n. 41: 'Here the sudden change in content and style indicates that something has fallen out of the text. What follows is a fragment from some theogonic and cosmogonic myth, an insertion which runs to l.206 …'.

[39] In the third version, the theogony is referred to but not quoted, at line 697 (see Betz [n. 37], 176, n. 41).

[40] Cf. J. Johnson's introduction in Betz (n. 37), lvii, for the notion that Greek translation of Egyptian sources 'may be true for much of the Greek material' of *PGM.*

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pantheon ('translation into Greek has obscured the sexual relations').[41] But, even if the document were not directly translated and were simply – like so many of the other magical papyri – indirectly influenced by its Egyptian environment, should not this affect the lone instance of χα χα in the Greek corpus?[42] It should be remembered that this is a text not only conscious of the exact, magical sounds of things – e.g. ἐπικαλοῦμαί σε, κύριε, ὀρνεογλυφιστί· αραί … ἱερακιστί χι χι χι χι χι χι χι … μενεφωιφωθ· χα χα χα χα χα χα χα' (83–7) – but also part of a larger corpus that is eager to mimic 'the inherent power of the Egyptian language'.[43] It seems probable that this lone instance of χα χα is influenced by its Egyptian environment – if not from the translation then from its surroundings. For that reason, it ought to be cited with caution as an ancient Greek version of the 'ha ha' laugh: the document is too culturally complex to isolate one Greek element with any certainty.

αἰβοιβοῖ OF *PEACE* 1066

To summarise thus far, despite the guarantee that the laughter interjection ἃ ἄ existed at some point in the Greek language by the testimony of Hesychius, Photius, Eustathius and, probably, Diogenianos (as Photius reports), there is no sure occurrence of the interjection (or χα χα, for that matter) in pre-imperial Greek, let alone the Greek of the comic stage. However, there is a more certain laughter interjection that does occur, although it is far removed from the ἃ ἄ sound. The interjection αἰβοιβοῖ, which occurs at *Peace* 1066, is immediately answered with τί γελᾷς; ('why are you laughing?'), which suggests that αἰβοιβοῖ is that very laughter. The interchange occurs between Trygaeus and Hierokles (the anti-peace oracle-mongerer) as Trygaeus is attempting to sacrifice to the goddess Peace (1064–6):

> Ἱε. οἵτινες ἀφραδίῃσι θεῶν νόον οὐκ αἴοντες
> συνθήκας πεπόησθ' ἄνδρες χαροποῖσι πιθήκοις —
> Τρ. αἰβοιβοῖ.
> Ἱε. τί γελᾷς;
> Τρ. ἥσθην χαροποῖσι πιθήκοις.
>
> H. Those of you who in madness don't listen to the will of the gods, have made treaties as men with brown monkeys —
> T. Ha, ha, ha!

[41] M. Smith, 'P.Leid J 395 (PGM XIII) and its creation legend', in Cohen (n. 37), 227–34, at 234.

[42] Although I have not found instances of 'spelled out' laughter in Egyptian, the language is much richer than Greek in velar fricatives; see the onomotopoeic verb forms of jubilation similar to the sound of laughter in W. Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar* (Copenhagen, 1954), 293. I have found no Coptic interjection for laughter, but see W.E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford, 1972), 636, 640, for 'ho!' and 'he!' equivalents. Onomatopoieic words must be used with caution, since (I would argue) the Greek καχάζω no more suggests χα χα as the spelling of laughter than the Latin *cachinno* undermines Latin's *hahahae* or the English 'guffaw' undermines 'ha ha'.

[43] J. Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites* (Leiden, 2005), 9. For the nature of these Theban magical papyri and their bilingual origin, see especially Dieleman's introduction.

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H. What are you laughing at?
T. Your monkeys amuse me!

Unfortunately, this is a rather obscure line for unpacking Trygaeus' amusement. Olson explains his reaction to be based on the unexpected word πιθήκοις following the word χαροποῖσι, since this colour adjective usually modifies more dangerous animals, such as lions.[44] Whether or not this is a satisfactory explanation, J. Henderson translates the αἰβοιβοῖ as 'ha ha ha' and LSJ also defines it as an interjection of laughter. Halliwell calls it a 'stylised annotation' of laughter,[45] and so too a scholiast writes ἀκούσαντες γὰρ τοῦ χρησμοῦ ἐγέλασαν. Γελῶντος γάρ ἐστι τοῦτο μίμημα. Olson ad loc. is more wary, suggesting that it represents a 'spontaneous cry of joy', although he translates the following line as 'why are you laughing?'[46] It seems that he is drawing an important distinction here that is rather similar to that disturbing reminder of the *Clouds* (829) scholiast (mentioned earlier): γέλων λέγει τὸ αἰβοῖ. ἔστι δὲ ἐπίρρημα σχετλιαστικόν. Are we dealing with an interjection of laughter, or some other interjection, spoken while laughing? With such 'stylised annotations' one can never be completely certain.[47]

ἰηΰ

In the early 1980s, a piece of a sixth-century codex was published containing an important passage from Aristophanes' *Peace*. This discovery brought to light a new spelling of another stylised annotation of laughter that had caused earlier confusion: 'ἰηΰ'.[48] In this *Peace* passage, Hermes laughs ἰηΰ ἰηΰ ἰηΰ (originally ἰὴ ἰὴ ἰή) in response to Trygaeus' request that Zeus be summoned. As Martin West writes: 'Hermes chortles at the folly of Trygaios' suggestion. ἰὴ ἰὴ ἰή is obviously not the hieratic ἰή of ἰὴ παιάν (Pax 453–5, Av. 1763, al.), nor the ἰή of Aeschylean

[44] Cf. Halliwell (n. 10), 301, n. 94, for citations of apes' status as 'comically quasi-human' in Greece.

[45] Halliwell (n. 10), 8, n. 20.

[46] S.D. Olson, *Aristophanes: Peace* (Oxford, 1998), ad loc. '1066: αἰβοιβοῖ: A spontaneous cry of joy (contrast 15, 544, 1291), like "αἰβοῖ" at *Av.* 610, 1342.' The contrasts he cites at 15, 544, 1291 are the usual meanings of αἰβοῖ: that is, an interjection of disgust. The two examples where αἰβοῖ is similar to αἰβοιβοῖ are as follows: the first is the Patroloias speaking with Peisetaerus, who is excited about flying and getting his wings: αἰβοῖ. οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν τοῦ πέτεσθαι γλυκύτερον ('Oh boy! There's nothing sweeter than flying.'). The second is at the point when Peisetaerus is convincing the Koryphaeus that the birds truly will be better rulers than the gods, owing to the extra 300 years that they will give from their own life (playing on a Hesiodic proverb that crows live five ages of man), and the Koryphaeus yelps out αἰβοῖ, πολλῷ κρείττους οὗτοι τοῦ Διὸς ἡμῖν βασιλεύειν ('Oh boy! They will be far better for us at ruling than Zeus!'). Schinck (n. 8), 10, defines these usages as *gaudium cum stupore*. Labiano Ilundain (n. 8), 85–6, also enlists *Clouds* 829, but this is problematic. Here the scholiast (rightly in Schinck's opinion) interprets Pheidippides' αἰβοῖ as disgust but that Pheidippides says it while laughing: γέλων λέγει τὸ αἰβοῖ. ἔστι δὲ ἐπίρρημα σχετλιαστικόν.

[47] So P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue Grecque* (Paris, 1983), s.v. αἰβοῖ, 'exclamation de dégoût (Ar.), aussi avec redoublement αἰβοιβοῖ avec un rire'. See Labiano Ilundain (n. 8), 79–87 for discussion, although his expansive category 'Alegría, burla, risa' here and in the table on 385–97 is perplexing (but see below [n. 52] for the error regarding ἰοῦ).

[48] Published by H. Maehler, "Bruchstücke spätantiker Dramenhandschriften aus Hermupolis", *APF* 30 (1984), 5–29, at 18.

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lament (Ach. 1206, Ran. 1265ff.), but the graphic representation of a guffaw.'[49] So the passage reads, in its recent editions with the new spelling incorporated (N.G. Wilson, 2007; Olson, 1998; vv. 195–7):

> *ΤΡ. ἴθι νῦν κάλεσόν μοι τὸν Δί'. ΕΡ ἰηῦ ἰηῦ ἰηῦ,*
> *ὥτ' οὐδὲ μέλλεις ἐγγὺς εἶναι τῶν θεῶν·*
> *φροῦδοι γάρ. ἐχθές εἰσιν ἐξωικισμένοι.*
>
> TR. Go now, summon Zeus for me. HER. Ha ha ha!
> You won't be among the gods any time soon:
> They're gone. They left town yesterday.

Labiano Ilundain (although he does not mention the new spelling) considers this passage to be 'without doubt' a moment of laughter: Hermes cannot hold back his guffaw.[50] The scholiast calls it a *πρόσφθεγμα καταφρονοῦντος*. Olson, too, calls it 'derisive laughter' (ad. loc.). With such an array of opinion slated to consider this laughter, it is of little value to cast doubt, but is it certain that a *πρόσφθεγμα καταφρονοῦντος* is laughter itself? There are many sounds of jeering, mockery and disparagement that are not laughter. Since, as with the *αἰβοιβοῖ* above, the interjection is not immediately recognizable as laughter, there cannot be complete certainty about how it is functioning. Nevertheless, if it is indeed a 'graphic representation' of laughter in Greek it is interesting in its own right.

This interjection reappears at *Wasps* 1335. West suggests amending the *ἰὴ ἰεῦ* spelling here as well, since 'Philokleon chortles at a naïve threat which is based on a misconception':[51]

> *ἀθρόοι γὰρ ἤξομέν σε προσκαλούμενοι.*
> *ΦΙ. ἰηῦ ἰηῦ, καλούμενοι.*
> *ἀρχαιά γ' ὑμῶν.*

Here, too, there is a general agreement on this being an interjection of laughter but, as with the passage above, it should be remembered that the sounds of mockery and enjoyment extend beyond laughter itself (one recalls, for example, the interjection *ἰοῦ*[52]).

[49] M. West, 'IEU!', *ZPE* 60 (1985), 10.

[50] Labiano Ilundain (n. 8), 213: 'El caso en el que ya no nos cae duda sobre representación onomatopéyica de la risa es el de *Pax* 195 *ἰὴ ἰὴ ἰή* … Hermes no puede contener una carcajada'. Schinck (n. 8), 24, suggests an emendation to repeat the previous line, since the triple *ἰὴ ἰὴ ἰή* was an anomaly and since the same line repetition happens with the *καλούμενοι* at *Wasps* 1335.

[51] D.M. MacDowell, *Aristophanes: Wasps* (Oxford, 1971), ad loc.: '"Hoo hoo, 'summon'!", derisively repeating the end of the previous line.' Produced before P. Berol. 21223 publication, his text maintains the manuscript tradition's spelling of *ἰὴ ἰεῦ*. So too Labiano Ilundain (n. 8), 213, maintains the traditional spelling (no mention of P. Berol. 21223) and considers it to be an imitation of laughter. Schinck (n. 8), 24, careful to separate the interjection from the *ἰή παιάν* loci, repeats the scholiast's opinion that the interjection is *χλευαστικόν* and that Philocleon *irridet* ('mocks') when he says it – but is this laughter? So too the scholiast's line ad loc. – *χλευαστικὸν ἐπίρρημα τοῦτο, καταφρονεῖ λοιπὸν καὶ τῶν δικαστῶν ῥημάτων, τὸ γὰρ καλούμενοι ἀπορρίπτει* – although leaning toward laughter, some other sound of mockery may be being suggested, just as with the scholion: *πρόσφθεγμα καταγελῶντος*.

[52] Although *ἰοῦ* has a range of meanings from grief to surprise, it can also signal rejoicing. Olson (n. 46) ad *Peace* 316–17: 'Best taken as a cry of joy (cf. 344, 1191; *Nu.* 1171a; *Av.* 193b; contrast 110) …'. N. Dunbar, *Aristophanes: Birds* (Oxford, 1995) ad 193b: '"hurrah!",

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The final passage, where the ἰὴ appears is *Ach.* 1206. Olson (and later Wilson), following West's lead, emends to the new spelling ἰηὸ and writes again that the interjection represents derisive laughter 'as Dikaiopolis notices Lamachus for the first time'. Dikaiopolis, seeing Lamachus, cries ἰηὸ ἰηὸ, Λαμαχίππιον. Labiano Ilundain argues that the interjection here is 'very close to an imitation of laughter',[53] while Schinck reads the earlier spelling as a propitious greeting 'but not without a certain derision'.[54] West does not mention the passage as one to be emended to the 'chortle' ἰηὸ, but it would make sense if there truly are only three options: the ἰή παιάν of the paian, the ἰή of Aeschylean lament and now the ἰηὸ of laughter. However, here ἰηὸ's relationship to laughter is at its weakest, so much so that Labiano Ilundain suggests a scale between these three passages, with *Peace* as an open guffaw ('carcajada abierta'), *Wasps* as an 'intermediate stage of laughter' ('un estrato intermedio de risa') and *Acharnians* as a light smile ('la leve sonrisita').[55] Is this a satisfactory description of the interjection? Or is there another form of mockery occurring here? There can be no certainty, since just as with the αἰβοιβοῖ above, the relationship to laughter's 'sound' is obscure enough to raise doubts. Nevertheless, as far as Greek interjections go, these two interjections (αἰβοιβοῖ, ἰηὸ) are certainly closest to a 'graphic depiction' or a 'stylized annotation' of laughter.

CONCLUSIONS

In closing, it therefore seems that there are only four possible instances of written-out laughter on the comic stage. I have argued that the two citations of 'ha ha' – those of Plato Comicus and Euripides' *Cyclops* – are not justifiable, and that the two possible interjections that do exist – αἰβοιβοῖ and ἰηὸ – are quite rare (the first unique, the second appearing only three times) as far as we can tell from the Greek comedy that survives. It may be asked in response to this conclusion: 'so what?' Despite quibbles with dictionaries, do these interjections, or absence of interjections, have any significance? I would like to suggest that they do, and to return to the scholiasts and the question at the beginning of this paper about the evidence for on-stage laughter. If one searches tragedy for οἴμοι or ὤμοι or αἶαι, one will find hundreds of instances of these interjections of suffering or mental distress. This is in comparison to those four lonely possible instances of laughter interjections in comedy. It would seem that tragedy's on-stage grief, at least as far as interjections are concerned, far outweighs comedy's on-stage laughter. This picture does not change much when one adds other evidence: although laughter-words (e.g. γελάω, ἐγχάσκω, etc.) appear often in Aristophanes – Alan Sommerstein

here of joy (cf. 819b, 1510, both *extra metrum*, as here), but also of surprise (e.g. 295b, 305–6) and dismay (e.g. 889, 1170)'. Although Labiano Ilundain (n. 8), 216–19, lists the interjection under 'alegría', his table on pages 385–97 puts it as the puzzling 'Alegría, burla, risa'. The latter is presumably a typographical error, since nothing is said about laughter in his treatment of ἰοὺ elsewhere.

[53] Labiano Ilundain (n. 8), 212: 'Creemos que esta interjección está muy cercana … a la imitación de la risa.'

[54] Schinck (n. 8), 24: *[Lamachus] in lectulo adfertur cum fausta acclamatione ἰὴ excipitur, sed non sine irrisione quadam.*

[55] Labiano Ilundain (n. 8), 213.

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counts 96 separate occurrences[56] – only a handful of these can be considered certain instances of on-stage laughter. Indeed, as the title of Sommerstein's book suggests, these characters are '*talking* about laughter', not actually laughing. After one removes past and future narratives about laughter ('they laughed/will laugh when …'), worries or wishes about laughter, and general statements about laughter ('they always laugh when …'), few instances remain where a character is actually reporting his or another character's on-stage laughter. Thirteen instances altogether (which include the four instances of laughter interjections) can be can be counted with confidence – and even some of these are questionable.[57] All of which is to say that, when one considers both the representations of and the references to laughter, the evidence for on-stage laughter is rather scarce when compared to some ancient and modern ideas that comedy should be 'full of laughter'.[58]

This, of course, may not be saying much at all, since if one includes all the times that a character *could* laugh, these numbers would be very large indeed, and comedies could be envisioned as strings of on-stage guffaws from start to finish. The evidence gathered here may simply be pointing, then, to the independence of actors. While a tragic actor's cries of grief or lament need to be spelled out or orchestrated with written interjections of αἶαι or ὀτοτοῖ, the comic actor needs no such cues for laughter. This could be because comic timing is in a sense more volatile – a character's laughing at a joke or a situation not found funny by the audience would certainly be dangerous.[59] Or it may be that it is difficult to reproduce a convincing laugh on cue and, considering the rather demoralizing sound of a forced laugh, the whole project may be riskier than it is worth.[60]

These are all possibilities, but I would like to consider one more, which is that the evidence may actually be pointing to an important comic technique: that, in

[56] For a study of which, see A. Sommerstein, *Talking About Laughter and Other Studies in Greek Comedy* (Oxford, 2009), 104–15.

[57] Ar. *Av.* 801–5, *Ran.* 42–6, *Nub.* 816–22, *Pax* 335 and 1066 (already discussed above). I do not include the eight occurrences of καταγελᾷς (Sommerstein [n. 56], 109, n. 9) because it always refers to a joke, or *verbal* mockery, i.e. you are 'making fun of me' (Sommerstein, 109) in response to the other speaker's teasing. If one interprets, with Sommerstein (106) and K.J. Dover, *Aristophanes: Clouds* (Oxford, 1968), ἤσθην as an idiom specifically referring to laughter in the immediate past, one can add *Eq.* 696, *Nub.* 174, 1240, *Pax* 1066, *Av.* 570, 880. In support of this, Dover cites *Peace* 1066, where ἤσθην ('I found [your remark] funny') answers the question τί γελᾷς; there is also a scholiast to *Clouds* 1241 who writes that Strepsiades responds μετὰ καγχασμοῦ; ad *Clouds* 174, Dover writes: 'The aorist often puts into words a movement or noise already made.' It should be noted, however, that one can say something is ridiculous without actually laughing: for that reason I do not count every time a γελοῖος or καταγελάστος is spoken (although the potential should be noted). Finally, the Scythian archer at *Thesm.* 1089 κακκάσκι μοι (MS. reading, but cf. Sommerstein [n. 56], 114–15 for the various emendations) seems to point to laughter on stage.

[58] See also Halliwell (n. 10), 530–52 for representations of laughter in visual arts, especially 541–6, which deals with comic masks and the impossibility of locating any one 'univocal expression'.

[59] I thank Elizabeth Scharffenberger for this comment at a presentation of this paper at the APA (Philadelphia, 2009).

[60] Cf. Provine (n. 5), 49–50, on the difficulty of creating a laugh that does not sound 'forced and artificial'. The effect of on-stage laughter could potentially run counter to those effects that comedy tries to achieve: see also Provine's argument (in his study of laughter in 60 opera libretti) that most laughter occurs 'in a decidedly grim setting' (65; 66–7 for examples; 73–4 for the scores studied). On this point, see Halliwell (n. 10), 28 and 134, for the possibilities of tragic on-stage laughter, e.g. Electra's laughing over the dead and Pentheus' mocking of Dionysiac rites; also 17–18 for tragic laughter as derangement (e.g. Ajax and Herakles).

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order to elicit audience laughter, laughing is precisely the one thing that an actor ought *not* do. Far from laughter being a technique to elicit audience laughter, one finds ancient discussion actually supporting the opposite view. At the end of Cicero's long digression on humour in *De oratore*, the advice *not* to laugh is given as if this were the single-most important maxim of the discussion: *qui quidem quo severior est et tristior ... hoc illa quae dicuntur salsiora videri solent* ('indeed the more serious and gloomy a man's expression is … the more humorous his remarks are considered').[61] The nineteenth-century commentator A.S. Wilkins turns to the comic stage to explain Cicero's advice: 'The great comic actor Liston was never known to smile upon the stage. "His long solemn face might have become the pulpit, as he surveyed his audience after convulsing them with a display of his refined and exquisite humour."'[62] Cicero's opinion is repeated by Quintilian: the proper technique in joke-telling, he advises, is the *avoidance* of laughter (6.3.26): 'nothing is less witty than what is spoken as witty' (*nihil enim est iis, quae sicuti salsa dicuntur insulsius*) and 'the speaker's seriousness adds greatly to the [joke's] effect, and the [joke] becomes laughable because the teller does not laugh' (*gratiae plurimum dicentis severitas adfert, fitque ridiculum id ipsum, quod qui dicit illa non ridet*). Not by laughing, but by *not* laughing, then, does the joker elicit audience laughter, according to these ancient sources. Furthermore, it goes without saying that, for example, in the *Tractatus Coislinianus* – where some nine verbal and nine non-verbal sources of laughter are enumerated – laughter itself is conspicuously missing.[63] If it is one of comedy's goals to incite audience laughter, this may be precisely the reason why evidence for on-stage laughter is so scarce – not much on-stage laughter may have been occurring in the first place.

Of course, comedy does more than 'just' make the audience laugh, and it seems perverse, for example, to imagine the celebratory endings of comic plays without a good deal of on-stage laughter mixed in with the merriment.[64] But even here it must be admitted that although a lot of positive emotions are voiced at the end of

[61] Cicero *De or.* 2.289 at the end of the long discussion of wit starting at 2.216.

[62] A.S. Wilkins, *M Tulli Ciceronis: De oratore libri tres* (Hildesheim, 1990 [1892]), 377 quoting the nineteenth-century painter W.P. Frith. A.D. Leeman and H.M. Pinkster, *M. Tullius Cicero: De oratore libri III, Kommentar* (Heidelberg, 1981), 332, consider Cicero's remark to be more narrowly circumscribed culturally: 'In dieser Hinsicht scheint der römische Humor mit dem englischen verwandt zu sein.'

[63] R. Janko, *Aristotle on Comedy: Towards a Reconstruction of Poetics II* (London, 2002), 167–201, for commentary. In a survey of modern books on joke-techniques where as many as 45 (!) sources of laughter are enumerated, so too laughter itself is absent (e.g. A.A. Berger, *Art of Comedy Writing* [New Brunswick, NJ, 1997], 5). Provine (n. 5), 26, notes the difference between laughter in casual conversation (where joke-tellers do laugh) compared to comedian and audience (where joke-tellers generally do not); see ibid., 23–53, for the power relationships involved. Although audiences are obviously affected by laughter (and thus 'canned laughter'), this laughter is perceived to arise *within* the audience. See Provine, 39, for the critical need for a pause after a punch line so that the audience can laugh. Presumably, an on-stage laugh (whether by the joke-teller or some other actor) could potentially block such audience laughter. For bibliography on theories of laughter, see especially Halliwell (n. 10), 11, n. 28, and N. Lowe, *Comedy* (Cambridge, 2008), 1–17.

[64] For analysis of laughter at the end of Aristophanes' plays, see H. Flashar, 'Aristoteles, das Lachen und die alte Komödie', in S. Jäkel and A. Timonen (edd.), *Laughter down the Centuries*, vol. 1 (Turku, 1994), 59–70, but this presumes that different types of laughter are elicited from the audience by the play endings, laughter that he nicely refers to as the 'answer' to comic action (64: 'das Lachen eine Antwort bzw. Reaktion des Zuschauers auf das komische Spiel … darstellt'.)

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plays, the sounds that the scripts cry are those of raucous enjoyment, not laughter. When Demos has been renewed at the end of *Knights* and gleaming Athens is put on display, everyone is told to ὀλολύξατε; it is not laughter but Ὑμὴν Ὑμέναι᾽ ὦ (for example, *Av.* 1736–43, *Pax* 1331–56), ἀλαλαλαί, ἰὴ παιών (for example, *Lys.* 1291, *Av.* 1764) and ἰαὶ εὐαί … εὐοῖ εὐαί, εὐαί … εὐαί, εὐαί, εὐαί, εὐαί᾽ (for example, *Eccl.* 1180–3, *Lys.* 1294) that seems to be filling the stage with singing and noise. Although the audience may be laughing in enjoyment of the spectacle, the actors may have other sounds to produce.

On that note, it is worth returning one last time to our small handful of laughter interjections in order to recall a prominent feature of comedy. As was stated earlier, if one searches tragedy for οἴμοι, ὤμοι, αἶαι and other words of suffering one will find hundreds of examples, compared to comedy's four interjections of laughter. But this, of course, is not limited to tragedy. Searching the same words of suffering in comedy will also yield well over a hundred results.[65] If anything can be drawn from this disparity between comic laughter and comic suffering, the evidence reminds us that, often enough, it is not laughter producing laughter but suffering, the suffering of the joke's butt. A great deal of comedy is not a spectacle of laughing at all, but distress: Cleon being humiliated, Socrates' school on fire, Dionysus and Xanthias being whipped, Strepsiades being eaten by bedbugs, Lamachus going hungry, the Kinsman being tortured – the list goes on. In the final analysis, despite what the scholiasts have to say, it seems that suffering is not only the bread and butter of tragedy, but the vital *sine qua non* of comedy as well.

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[65] See Labiano Ilundain (n. 8), 385–91, for his useful table of Aristophanes' interjections.

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