

THE COMIC POET ARCHEDIKOS

AS Günther PHILIPP has demonstrated, the poets of New Comedy occasionally refer to political events and sometimes express political views, although much less frequently than poets of Old Comedy.¹ In particular, Philipp discusses Philippides, son of Philokles, of the deme Kephale, who won the contest at the Dionysia in 313/2 with his play *Mystis*² and who, at the turn of the century, vehemently attacked the democratic politician Stratokles, depicting him as the lackey of king Demetrios Poliorketes. Besides being a poet, Philippides was active in politics, a friend of king Lysimachos, Demetrios' bitterest enemy. He intervened with the king in 301 B.C. and successfully ransomed a large number of Athenians who had fought on the side of Demetrios at the battle of Ipsos and had been captured by Lysimachos' victorious troops. And it was Philippides who persuaded the king to donate to the city of Athens ten thousand bushels of wheat and other gifts destined for the festival of the Panathenaia. He went to Athens himself to deliver the gifts. Still later, during his tenure as superintendent of the state festivals (*agonothetes*) for the year 284/3, he founded and financed an additional contest in honor of Demeter and Kore, to commemorate the city's liberation from the rule of Demetrios in 287 B.C. For his services, he was honored by the Council and the Assembly with a decree, *IG II² 657*, still preserved and the source of some of the information above. Philippides must have been a man of considerable means, an impressive figure, a good and successful poet deeply involved in politics.³

Somewhat less successful and less famous was his fellow poet Archedikos (perhaps a slightly senior contemporary), also an Athenian citizen. It will become clear, however, that he was less obscure than has been thought. Polybios, heavily biased against him, calls him an insignificant comic poet (literally, a nameless poet): *κωμικός τις μάρτυς ἀνώνυμος*, "of no repute".⁴ Athenaios has preserved a number of his verses,⁵ and there are two entries in the *Suda*, both for the same individual: *κωμικός τῶν δραμάτων αὐτοῦ Θησαυρός καὶ Διαμαρτάνων ὡς Ἀθηναῖός φησι . . .* (4082), and *κωμωδιογράφος, δς κατὰ Δημοχάρους ἔγραψε τοῦ ἀνεψιοῦ Δημοσθένους* (4083). It is his polemic against Demochares of Leukonoe, the son of Demosthenes' sister, that accounts for his modest and (insofar) negative fame. This polemic was reported in the contemporary history of Timaios of Tauromenion, who lived and wrote in Athens.⁶ Timaios adopted Archedikos' verdict and, in so doing, provoked a

¹ Philipp 1973, pp. 493–509.

² *IG II² 2323a*, lines 39–41; Mette 1977, p. 114, line 16; *PCG VII 335*, T 8.

³ See *PCG VII 333–352*, where all the evidence concerning Philippides is collected. See also Davies 1971, p. 541 and the bibliography there cited.

⁴ Polybios 22.13.3, with the English rendering of *ἀνώνυμος* of Walbank 1967, p. 357. Many have commented on this chapter, for instance Pédech 1961, pp. 94–99 and Marasco 1984, pp. 99–109.

⁵ *PCG II 533–536*, F 1–3. I wish to thank Rudolf Kassel for kindly providing these references before the volume was published.

⁶ *FGrHist 566*, F 35.

sharp rebuke from Polybios. Indeed, Polybios, in his attempt to refute it, dedicated the entire Chapter Thirteen of his twelfth book to this criticism. This is the story:

On the testimony of an “insignificant comic poet,” Timaios had charged Demochares with indecent conduct. This, however, says Polybios, must be blatantly false, for, if true, others besides Archedikos (here he mentions his name) would have talked about it, *viz.* “many friends of Antipatros, regarding whom Demochares had used very strong language that might have offended not only Antipatros himself, but also his successors and friends.” Demochares’ political foes among his fellow citizens would also have mentioned it, in particular Demetrios of Phaleron whom Demochares had severely criticized in his *Histories*, saying that he had the mentality of a shopkeeper. Neither Demetrios, Polybios concludes, nor any other enemy of Demochares had charged him with the accusation made by Archedikos and repeated by Timaios.

Whether or not Archedikos’ strictures were to the point, Polybios’ chapter makes it clear that that poet was just as politically engaged as Philippides and that he focused on Demochares as the political foe, just as Antipatros, his successors (especially his son Kassandros), his friends, and Demetrios of Phaleron had done. Demochares, like his uncle Demosthenes, was a radical democrat and a confirmed enemy of Kassandros and (in all likelihood) of Antipatros. He also detested those philosophers and politicians who were on good terms with this important Macedonian family: Aristotle, Theophrastos, and their pupil Demetrios of Phaleron.⁷ After the overthrow of the last, Demochares was the main advocate (perhaps even the driving force) behind Sophokles’ bill, which gave the state control over the philosophic schools. Once adopted, the law forced all the philosophers, led by Theophrastos, to leave Attika, but it was soon repealed because it was judged unconstitutional.⁸ Next to Stratokles, Demochares was the most influential politician in the city for several years after 307, until he broke with Stratokles and sharply criticized his servility toward king Demetrios. This led to his exile in 303, from which he returned only in 286/5, once Athens was finally free of the rule of king Demetrios. In 280 B.C., Demochares requested the decree in honor of his uncle Demosthenes, some forty years after his death. He himself was posthumously honored in 270 B.C., upon the initiative of his son Laches. Both decrees are preserved in the *Lives of the Ten Orators*.⁹

Clearly, Archedikos’ political preference lay close to that of the aforementioned foes of Demochares, namely, Antipatros and Antipatros’ successors and friends, as well as citizens in the circle of Demetrios of Phaleron, that is to say, those citizens who kept all their political rights when these were taken away from all those whose wealth fell below the census limit, set at 2000 drachms in 322 and at 1000 drachms

⁷For Demochares, see Habicht 1979, pp. 22–32; Marasco 1984, *passim*; and the remains of his *Histories* in *FGrHist* 75.

⁸Athenaios 13.610 F; Pollux, *Onomastikon* 9.42; Diogenes Laertios 5.38. See Ferguson 1911, pp. 104–107; Lynch 1972, pp. 103–104, 117–118; and Habicht 1988, pp. 7–9.

⁹[Plutarch], *Mor.* 850 F–851 F; see Ladek 1891.

in 317. Archedikos seems to have been close to the political convictions of Phokion, Athens' leader from 322 until his overthrow in the spring of 318 B.C.

In light of this, it is more than coincidental that an Athenian citizen with the (rare) name of Archedikos played an active role in politics in those same years. In 320/19 (the year of the archon Neaichmos), the *anagrapheus* was Archedikos, son of Naukritos, from Lamptrai. This office seems to have been the most influential within the prevailing oligarchic government, introduced in 322. The *anagrapheus* had replaced the traditional *grammateus* but obviously enjoyed greater powers. He is generally listed first in the preamble of documents, even ahead of the eponymous archon.¹⁰ Direct political activity is also attested for this Archedikos. In early 317 B.C. he was the speaker of a decree honoring a man from Herakleia.¹¹ Leonardos long ago recognized Archedikos as the speaker of *IG II² 402*, to which Stephen Tracy has just added a new, previously unpublished fragment (above, pp. 249–251) which joins and seriously modifies the beginning.¹² Archedikos' motion begins: “[In order that] as many of the [friends] of the king and of Antipatros, once they [are honored] by the people of Athens, become benefactors of the city [of Athens], resolved ...” (here the text breaks off).¹³

While this Archedikos, namely, Archedikos of Lamptrai, moves here that royal officials and friends of Antipatros be honored, the poet Archedikos castigates Demochares because he had assailed Antipatros and his friends. As August Meineke already recognized in 1839: “ut in Antipatri gratiam se insinuaret Archedicus Democharem conviciis proscidit.”¹⁴ Obviously, the two were in fact one and the same. The name Archedikos is rare; Kirchner's *Prosopographia Attica* has no more than four instances, from two or three different families. Decisive for the identification is the fact that both the poet and politician are concerned in similar ways with “φίλοι Ἀντιπάτρου”, friends of Antipatros.

As an enemy of radical democracy¹⁵ and as a sympathizer of one of the great Macedonian marshals, Antipatros, Archedikos resembles his fellow poet Philippides

¹⁰ *IG II² 380–384*, and others: his name (in the nominative) is first in seven of the eight decrees of that year. See Errington 1977, p. 489.

¹¹ Published in *Hesperia* 8, 1939, no. 8, p. 30; see the comments and restorations (some hypothetical) of Raubitschek 1945, pp. 106–107.

¹² Tracy cautiously dates the document to 338 or 337 B.C. and recognizes Philip II as the king. As is well known, Philip was honored in Athens, together with Antipatros, after the battle of Chaironeia. The singular makes it difficult to refer the text to one of the years when there were two kings, 323–317; see Habicht 1973. The king, however, could also have been Alexander the Great shortly before his death.

¹³ Lines 3–7: [ὅπως ἂν ὡς πλείστοι τῶν τ[ο]ῦ βασι[[λέως φίλ]ων καὶ Ἀντιπάτ[ρ]ου τε[[τιμημένοι] ὑπὸ τοῦ δήμου τοῦ Ἀθηναίων εὐεργετῶσιν τὴν πόλιν [τὴν Ἀθηναίων].

¹⁴ Meineke 1839, p. 459. He mistook, however, Antipatros to be the grandson of Alexander's marshal, instead of the marshal himself.

¹⁵ This remains true even if Archedikos also moved a decree in the spring of 317 (note 11 above), during the democracy which was restored after Phokion's overthrow. As Tracy (1993, p. 251) observes: “These activities suggest that Archedikos was most adroit in navigating everchanging political waters.”

in his connection with Lysimachos.¹⁶ He may have been politically active as early as 338 B.C. but maybe only after Alexander's death. Furthermore, the information that already in 322 Demochares had opposed a request made by Antipatros is very likely correct after all, even if this has often been doubted.¹⁷ In any event, it is clear that Demochares was an active political foe of Antipatros before 319 B.C., the year of Antipatros' death.

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¹⁶Marasco (1984, pp. 57–58) holds that he was a fellow politician of Stratokles and an opponent of Philippides and that his attack on Demochares should be considered as a reply to Demochares' attack on Stratokles. This view seems to me mistaken.

¹⁷Doubts, for instance, in *RE* IV, i, 1901, col. 2864, s.v. Demochares (H. Swoboda); Jacoby on *FGrHist* 75, T 1; Davies 1971, p. 142; and Marasco 1984, pp. 25–27. It is said that Demochares, girded with a sword, appeared in the assembly to oppose Antipatros' demand that Demosthenes, Hypereides, and other political foes of his be extradited: [Plutarch], *Mor.* 847 D. It is indeed likely that a statue erected after his death showing him with a sword was the origin of that story. This, however, does not affect the essential point, his opposition. Such opposition in 322 seems all the more likely, since among those affected by Antipatros' demand was his uncle Demosthenes. For a similar view, see Pédech 1961, p. 96.