

Leonardo Tarán & Dimitri Gutas. *Aristotle, Poetics: Editio Maior of the Greek Text with Historical Introductions and Philological Commentaries.* (*Mnemosyne Supplements*, vol. 338). Brill: Leiden & Boston, 2012. xii & 538 pp. & 2 stemmata. ISBN 978 9004217409. \$226.

A better text of Aristotle's *Poetics* Book I, the least well transmitted of all his extant works, has long been needed. As I noted in 1987, Rudolf Kassel's OCT of 1965 "has not given enough weight to two sources, MS B and the Arabic, whose importance has been demonstrated only relatively recently."¹ Margoliouth's edition of the Arabic is sometimes hard to interpret, while Tkatsch's is so constructed as to be almost unusable.² Without recollating the MSS and learning Arabic (and Syriac, good knowledge of both of which is needed to control that side of the paradosis), I reconstituted the text as best I could from published sources as basis for my translation, but the text existed only as pencilled corrections in a heavily annotated copy of Kassel's edition.

Tarán and Gutas have at last filled this gaping lacuna, and in so doing have performed a service which puts all readers of *Poetics* Book I deeply in their debt. Their edition rests on the thorough examination and collation of four primary sources: the Greek MSS A (mid-10th. century) and B (redated by Davide Baldi³ from the 14th. to the mid-12th. century), and the translations into Latin by William of Moerbeke (1278) and into Arabic by Abū Bišr (before 934), thereafter revised. The *apparatus criticus* provides the fullest published reports of A and B in existence, and is impressively accurate, as the

¹ *Aristotle: Poetics*, Indianapolis (Hackett), 1987, xxii.

² David S. Margoliouth, *The Poetics of Aristotle*, London, New York and Toronto (Hodder and Stoughton), 1911; Jaroslav Tkatsch, *Die arabische Übersetzung der Poetik des Aristoteles und die Grundlage der Kritik des griechischen Textes*, 2 vols., Vienna and Leipzig (*Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien*), 1928–32.

³ His paper, to which Tarán refers as unpublished, is "Nuova luce sul Riccardiano 46," *Medioevo greco* 11 (2011) 13–22.

collations of Gerald F. Else confirm.⁴ Gutas' philological commentary on the Arabic is a masterpiece, both in divining the readings of the Greek MSS Σ and Ψ that underlie the oriental versions, and in making his reasoning intelligible for non-orientalist users. Tarán provides a similar commentary on the Greek text, stoutly defending his choice of readings.

The Greek text is extremely conservative and includes few scholarly conjectures. Even fewer are reported in the *apparatus*, in order to leave room for full reports of the MSS; this is a pity, since a repertory of conjectures to the text is another *desideratum*. A conservative edition potentially has great value if it reconstructs the archetype; yet archetypes need not always make sense or take us back to what the author wrote. A good conservative text is not the same as a cautious one that hews close to its predecessors' path. In the case of *Poetics* I, the *textus receptus* is often absurd and needs repair by conjecture. For instance, when Aristotle says “Epicharmus the poet, who was much earlier than Chionides and Magnes” (Ἐπίχαρμος ὁ ποιητὴς πολλῷ πρότερος ὥν Χιωνίδου καὶ Μάγνητος, (14)48a33–4), “the poet” is a redundant gloss; it needs to be replaced with the historically more accurate word “not”, which that gloss must have ousted. Tarán's defense of the paradosis does not sufficiently address the oddity that the famous Epicharmus is called a poet, while his obscure Attic near-contemporaries are not so specified. Hence Gudeman was right to delete ὁ ποιητὴς, and Gercke to insert ⟨οὐ⟩; neither change fully solves the problem without the other.

Again, the paradosis is full of minor or major offenses against grammar that we would unhesitatingly correct in a student's elementary Greek composition. At 48a24 we still find ταύταις διαφοραῖς: read ταύταις ⟨ταῦς⟩ διαφοραῖς. At 52a25 the person who comes to relieve Oedipus of his fears and instead confirms them is simply missing from the grammar: there is no τις or other such indication. We need to read ἐν τῷ Οἰδίποδι

⁴ These collations, made in the late 1950s, are in the Library of the Department of Classical Studies at the University of Michigan. MS B has since deteriorated; thus Else's notes are a primary source for its readings, but unfortunately do not add much.

〈ό〉 ἐλθόν ὡς εὐφρανῶν τὸν Οἰδίπουν. No editor, so far as I know, has ever printed either of these changes, to which I could add several more.⁵

Even the MS sources that are extant have not been fully exploited. As in all previous editions, three lacunae in the Greek are still not filled in from the Arabic. (i) At 53b29 the Arabic indicates that we need to restore ἔστιν δὲ γινώσκοντας 〈μελλῆσαι καὶ〉 μὴ πρᾶξαι. These words, lost by a haplography of ἔστιν δὲ, are cautiously left in the *apparatus* and assigned to “Σ vel scriptor quidam Graecus”. (ii) At 57b6 the Arabic shows that the sentence τὸ δὲ “δόρυ” ἡμῖν μὲν κύριον, 〈Κυπρίοις〉 δὲ γλῶττα has fallen out by haplography after ἡμῖν δὲ γλῶττα, but this is still not promoted into the text. (iii) At 58a16 Aristotle listed five words ending in -υ (εἰc δὲ τὸ Υ πέντε), but these are lost except in Σ, which had δόρυ πῶν νᾶπι γόνυ τρῆν (?) as Gutas shows, but these are still not in the text. Amazingly, a marginal note by Giorgio Valla in the margin of MS Estensis graecus α. T. 8. 3 (olim 100), from which he made his Latin translation of 1498,⁶ lists the words as τὸ πῶν τὸ νᾶπι τὸ γόνυ τὸ δόρυ τὸ ἄστυ, even though there are many other words in Greek that end in -υ, e.g. δάκρυ. We shall see the significance of this note below.

Conversely, two pairs of doublets in the Greek text, i.e. different versions of the same sentence standing side by side, are not properly repaired. (i) At 53a5–6 editors keep δέ μὲν γὰρ περὶ τὸν ἀνάξιον ἔστιν δυστυχοῦντα, δέ περὶ τὸν ὅμοιον, ἔλεος μὲν περὶ τὸν ἀνάξιον, φόβος δὲ περὶ τὸν ὅμοιον, where ἔλεος … ὅμοιον is not in B and is surely a gloss, albeit one very helpful to the reader. (ii) At 50b10–10¹, Tarán, like Kassel, prints ἔστιν δὲ ἥθος μὲν τὸ τοιοῦτον δηλοῖ τὴν προαιρεσιν, ὅποια τις [ἐν οἷς οὐκ ἔστι δηλον ἢ προαιρεῖται ἢ φεύγει] —διόπερ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἥθος τῶν λόγων ἐν οἷς μηδ’ ὅλως ἔστιν ὅ τι προαιρεῖται ἢ φεύγει ὁ λέγων— διάνοια δὲ κτλ. The first, deleted version was not in Σ; the duplication arose because of an omission by haplography (λόγων … λέγων), which was then restored in the wrong place. Despite the lack of clarity in the Arabic (p. 351), we need to read τῶν λόγων ἐν οἷς οὐκ ἔστι 〈δηλον〉 ὅ τι

⁵ For a list, which I would now adjust in places, see my *Aristotle: Poetics* [above, n. 1], xxiv–xxvi.

⁶ Edgar Lobel, *The Greek Manuscripts of Aristotle's Poetics*, Oxford (Bibliographical Society) 1933, 25.

κτλ., introducing οὐκ and δῆλον from the first version; μηδ' ὅλως is the wrong negative with the indicative ἔστι. *Poetics* I is not a text that rewards undue caution, even if one follows conservative editorial principles.

The introduction comprises (i) Tarán's wonderfully informative account of the history of the text of *Poetics* I down to Kassel's edition; (ii) Gutas on the Syriac and Arabic transmission, with illuminating comments on how extremely literal these translations were; and (iii) prolegomena to the edition by Tarán, with similar reflections on the Latin translation of the lost Greek MS Φ. As Gutas shows, the oriental transmission was more complex than had been thought, with successive revisions to the translations and the involvement of two lost Greek MSS, Σ and Ψ, the second of which is scantily known from Avicenna.⁷ Gutas' insights contribute materially to establishing the text. We may note that the Arabic testimonia that Themistius somewhere discussed the *Poetics* (Test. 1–2 on pp. 78–9) are confirmed by Elias and Olympiodorus.⁸ It is tantalizing to learn (pp. 80–1) that in c. 790 Timothy I, a Nestorian patriarch of Baghdad, was looking systematically for copies of the *Poetics*. He asked a colleague to enquire at St. Zenon's monastery for “the two books on the poets: For we have one of them.” This is definitely a new testimony to the existence of *Poetics* Book II. Alas, the well-stocked library of this monastery at Ikalto in eastern Georgia was reputedly burned by the Persian shah ‘Abbās I in 1616. It is equally tantalizing that Else's collations include at the end of Book I a drawing of B's final words as περὶ δὲ ἱάμβων καὶ κωμῶν δίας οὐ γρ[ά]ψω+-. This supports Kassel's transcription of this phrase, which derives from Nigel Wilson (see p. 303). I take it as a *reclamans* that gave the first five words of Book II (to help the reader locate the next book-roll), which however the scribe completed by declaring that he would not copy it, presumably because he lacked the text.

⁷ To understand the extent of Gutas' progress, one may compare his stemma on p. 110 with that in E. Valgimigli, A. Francheschini and L. Minio-Paluello, *Aristoteles Latinus. XXXIII: Poetica*, Bruges and Paris (de Brouwer), 1953, xv.

⁸ Elias, *Comm. in Arist. An. Pr.* p. 136,25–32 Westerink; Olympiod. *Prol.* p. 18,5–10 Busse (= Aristotle, *On Poets* *T6 Janko).

Tarán's discussion of the Hellenistic transmission of Aristotle's books does not sufficiently allow for the probability that Apellicon acquired only Aristotle's autograph MSS; the fact that copies of his esoteric works circulated at Alexandria and elsewhere need not disprove Strabo's remarkable story of the survival of Aristotle's books, a story now supported by the recovery of the Arabic translation of Andronicus' list of his works.⁹ Tarán dates the archetype of *Poetics* I to as early as the 4th. century C.E. (p. 35). In support of this hypothesis, note how often word-final -ν appears and disappears in our MSS: this reflects the late antique writing of -ν at the line-end as a bar over the final letter of a line. For example, at (14)58b23, Aristotle quotes Aeschylus' *Philoctetes* fr. 253 for the verse φαγέδαιναν ἡ μου σάρκας ἐσθίει ποδός. Hermann rightly restored φαγέδαιναν. MS Parisinus graecus 2038 (henceforth "P") has φαγέδαινα, B has φαγάδαινα[.] (presumably φαγάδαινα[ν] before a worm holed the text), and A φαγάδενα. In addition, the translator of Σ amusingly misread the text as ἔφαγε λέαινα ἐμοῦ σάρκας,¹⁰ which shows that the archetype had supralinear corrections.¹¹ Given sixteen letters per line, the archetype must have run:

ΕΠΟΙΗΣΕΦΑΓΕΔ^EΑΙΝĀ
ΗΜΟΥCΑΡΚΑCECΘΙEI
ΠΟΔΟC etc.

I count fourteen further cases of the loss or addition of word-final -ν, excluding νῦ ἔφελκυστικόν.¹² The fact that they are variously attested in the sources confirms that they reflect a feature of the archetype.

⁹ See further my *Philodemus On Poems Books 3–4, with the Fragments of Aristotle's On Poets*, Oxford 2011, 390–8.

¹⁰ I glean this from Margoliouth's translation ("leena comedit carnem meam") and Tkatsch's ("leones ederunt carnes meas"): Gutas is silent. Clearly this edition has not extracted from the Arabic all the information that is to be had.

¹¹ Even more oddly, the Latin renders φαγέδαιναν as *infirmitas lupus* [sic].

¹² The correct reading comes first: 48a8, ἔτερα APΦ versus ἔτέραν Σ; 52a16, πεπλεγμένην B versus -νη APΦ; 53a1, αῦ τὸν P (αύτὸν BΣ) versus αύτὸ ΑΦ; b22, δρᾶ Φ versus δρᾶν AB; 55a2, ἀπολόγω BP versus -ων ΑΣΦ; 57a2, πεφυκῆα B

Tarán's learned account of the transmission in the Renaissance proves that, as Lobel strongly suspected,¹³ an early MS that is now lost did reach Italy. A list of Janus Lascaris' books made in c.1490 includes an Ἀριστοτέλους περὶ ποιητικῆς καὶ τινα συγγράμματα τοῦ Θεοφράστου π(εργαμηνόν). Tarán thinks this parchment codex may have been MS A, which was still unbound (p. 151). However, as he shows elsewhere (p. 132), by 1468 A had already *lost* the works of Theophrastus that it once contained, as a letter by Cardinal Bessarion reveals, and A was *not* among the books that Cardinal Ridolfi bought from Lascaris. Perhaps the compiler of the list took his information about the book's contents from its initial πίναξ without checking; otherwise, however, this codex was not A. Nor was it B, which is written on paper. Greek MSS that had safely reached Venice could still be lost afterwards, as witness the lost copy of Empedocles' *Katharmoi* which was there in 1424.¹⁴

In his prolegomena, Tarán systematically demonstrates the primacy of his four sources: “[t]o prove that a given MS is a primary witness one must point to a number of passages where it is the only one that has preserved the right reading” (p. 133). Yet he denies this status to the 15th.-century MS P, which was owned by Lascaris and served as the basis for the Aldine edition. Kassel accepts 71 true readings that are in P alone among Greek MSS, i.e. more than one per OCT page,¹⁵ and this edition prints just as many. The fact that Kassel usually reports P as “rec” has hindered understanding of its importance; even now, P hides behind “rec” at 47a25, 49a9, 50a5 and 58b23.¹⁶ Although Tarán warns

versus -αν APΣΦ; a9, πεφυκυῖα A versus -αν PΣΦ; a29, συνδέσμω Φ versus -μων ABPΣ; b6, γλῶττα APΣΦ versus -αν B; b21, Ἀρη A versus Ἀρην BP; 58b24, ἐσθίει ABΣ versus ἐσθίειν PΦ; 60a26, νίπτρων BP versus -ρω ΑΦ; b17, ἀδυναμία APΦ versus -μία B; 61a1, οὕν restored by Tyrwhitt versus οὐ in ABPΦ; 62b3, τὸν A²PΦ versus τὸ A^{ac}BΣ.

¹³ Lobel op. cit. [n. 6], 2–3, 48.

¹⁴ Jaap Mansfeld, “A lost manuscript of Empedocles' *Katharmoi*,” *Mnemosyne* 47 (1994) 79–82.

¹⁵ Statistics from Michael McOske (pers. comm.).

¹⁶ Also, “P” should be “P^c” at 48b7, 49a11–12, 54b25, 60b18, 61b3.

emphatically that P is not a primary source, he prints no fewer than 33 true readings of P that are confirmed by the Arabic, and were therefore in Σ ; were all of these conjectures, they would be an amazingly impressive achievement, and it strains credulity that any Renaissance scholar could have repaired the text so successfully and so often.

Lobel proved that P descends from A via several extant MSS,¹⁷ but it contains many divergent readings. Tarán regards it as the kind of codex in which Renaissance scholars blended readings from other MSS with their own conjectures (pp. 43–5); in Paul Maas' pejorative terminology, it is “contaminated”. Tarán proves (p. 75) that Monica Centanni¹⁸ was wrong to argue that P's divergent readings go back to the ancestor of B, since it does not fill the lacuna at 55a14 ff. and lacks other good readings of B. Hence Tarán holds that P is not a primary source, but derives its unique readings from B and from conjecture (pp. 149–51); accordingly he reports P's readings only sporadically, though more often than did Kassel. Thus at 52a35 he prints πρὸς ἄψυχα καὶ τὰ τυχόντα ἔστιν ως <ὅ>περ εἴρηται συμβαίνει, where P has the superior (and unique) text πρὸς ἄψυχα καὶ τὰ τυχόντα ἔστιν ὅτε, ὡσπερ εἴρηται, συμβαίνει; Tarán reports P's ἔστιν but not its ὅτε.¹⁹ Again, at 58b32 Tarán prints the conjecture εἴπειεν ἐν, where A has εἴπη ἐν, the Latin *diceret in* and B εἴπειεν; he does not report P's εἴποι ἐν, which perfectly explains the paradoxis.

Unfortunately for purist textual critics, a “contaminated” MS can sometimes be of immense value. Tarán's reasoning never addresses the possibility that P drew its true readings from a lost codex that was *not* B, but belonged to a third branch of the paradoxis, one that is distinct both from Σ and from Ξ , i.e. the common ancestor of A, of its twin Φ , and of B.²⁰ Michael McOske has recently shown that P is indeed independent, not least

¹⁷ op. cit. [n. 6], 27–31.

¹⁸ “Il testo della *Poetica* nel *Par. Gr.* 2038,” *Bulletino dei classici* 7 (1986) 37–58.

¹⁹ ὅτε may have been corrupted to ἔτι in the Latin *ad inanimata et ad quecumque adhuc et* (= ἔτι καὶ in Φ) *sicut dictum est accidit*; Σ omits the clause. Φ 's text rules out the neat solution ἔστιν ὡσπερ εἴρηται συμβαίνειν).

²⁰ With his usual caution, Lobel stated that P incorporated “readings from other MSS., including B” (op. cit. [n. 6], 30), not from B alone.

because it alone fills a lacuna at 50a17 and has a superior text at 57b21–25.²¹ The agreements between B and P prove not that P drew upon B, but instead that the reading is traditional. B and P, with its corrections in the same hand (here “P^c”), sometimes agree in error with Σ. Thus BP agree with Σ against A or AΦ at 48b26 (omission of τῶν, where either reading could be right), 49b26 (ἐπαγγελίας falsely for ἀπ- in the definition of tragedy), 52b22 (P knows both μεθ' and καθ') and 54a29 (either reading could be right). In 50a4, ἔστιν δὲ τῆς μὲν πράξεως ὁ μῦθος ἡ μίμησις “plot is mimesis of action,” BP^cΣ^qΣ are right to omit ἡ, *pace* Kassel and Tarán, since as the sentence stands there are two subjects, as marked by the article, and no predicate. This well illustrates how codex A is still overvalued against the rest of the paradosis. BPΦ agree in error at 54b30 (BP^{ac}Φ have οἱ for ἡ) and 59b6 (Λάκαινα for Λάκαιναι). According to Tarán’s choice of readings, BP alone agree in error nine times, at 49a28 (πλήθει B^{ac}P), 51b14 (τῶν BP^c), b19 (ἐν ἐνίαις), 52a3 (καὶ omitted before μάλιστα), b3 (ἔτι δ’ ἀναγνωρίσεις BP^c), 53a17 (πρὸ τοῦ *fere* BP^c), 57a22 (ἢ ἐπίταξιν), 58a27 (λέγοντα τὰ) and 59b16 (πάντας, versus πάντα in AΣΦ). However, I judge only four of these readings to be errors, viz. 49a28, 52a3, b3 and 53a17; only the last two are significant, and do not seem sufficient to prove any particular affinity between B and P.²²

Could P have derived its true readings from Lascaris’ lost parchment codex? Lascaris owned both codices in Venice in c.1490–1508, when he aided in the production of the Aldine (pp. 47, 151). Was his codex also the source of the much smaller number of good readings in other Renaissance sources? Quite possibly. There are many such

²¹ In neither place does Tarán report its readings. See Michael McOske, “Parisinus graecus 2038: A Neglected Witness to Aristotle’s *Poetics*,” forthcoming. I am grateful to him for sharing his results with me in advance of publication.

²² Other details in the app. crit.: at 49a28, ὅλλας ως is Lascaris in P; 55a5, B^{ac} had ἀλλὰ; 56a19, for “ex homoioteleuton” read “per homoeoteleuton;” 57b17, B^c has ὅτι; 58a27, P has the same reading as B; 58b32, B’s reading (here given as κραμοδοὺς) is κωμωδοὺς changed into τραγωδοὺς; 60a1, B^{ac} had κινητικαὶ καὶ; 61a14, Else read τὸ in B; 61a18, for ἥττοι read ἥτοι.

readings in A² (the corrector of A), which Tarán signals.²³ There are others in B^c (the corrector of B), Laurentianus 31.14 (L), which is the “aunt” of P (p. 44), and Riccardianus 16 (R), which is also related to P.²⁴ Thus B^c shares true readings with P (or P^c) and Σ at 49a28, 58a13, 59b13 and 60a1. At 48a36 L^c agrees with Σ in reading Ἀθηναίους, which was not offered as an emendation until after 1760; the other sources, including L^{ac}P, have Ἀθηναῖοι. Again, at 54a23 the correct text is οὐχ ἀρμόττον γυναικὶ οὔτως ἀνδρείαν ἢ δεινὴν εἶναι. Here L has Vahlen’s conjecture οὔτως, which Kassel and Tarán both adopt, while A has Λ.τῶι, B ούτω, P τὸ and Σ οὐδὲ τῶ.²⁵ As for R, at 55a24 PRΦ agree against ABΣ in the true reading ὁρῶν, and R alone, here reported as ‘rec’, has seven true readings that are unique to it.²⁶

In conclusion, it is wonderful finally to have a text of the first book of the *Poetics* that is based on a thorough analysis of A, B, Σ and Φ, and we must be especially grateful for the careful exploration and detailed exposition of the Syro-Arabic paradosis. The book is rounded off by an *index verborum*, a bibliography, and indices of names, subjects and manuscripts, both Greek and Arabic. Misprints are few,²⁷ with none in the Greek text. A year ago the ascent of this high mountain would have seemed a complete triumph. But behind this summit a yet higher one has just loomed out of the mist, since we also need a full accounting of the readings of P. There is also room for a text of *Poetics* I that repairs the problems of its defective transmission more courageously than hitherto.

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²³ At 56b28 Else’s notes show that Tarán should have put ρ A²PΣ : β A^{ac}BΦ.

²⁴ Lobel op. cit. [n. 6], 33.

²⁵ For some reason the Latin has *aut.*

²⁶ 47b24, 50b37, b39, 55b19 (with Σ), 56a22, 58a9 (with Σ) and 60a30.

²⁷ P. 19, for ἐλήχθη read ἐλέχθη; p. 24, for “Calchis” read “Chalcis”; p. 30 n. 135, for εἵρεται read εἴρηται; p. 54, for *excusus* read *excussus*; p. 138, for αὐτοσχηδιαστικῆς read αὐτοσχεδιαστικῆς ; p. 147 line 3, for “in oriental” read “on oriental.”