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VII

S. DOUGLAS OLSON

FROM 'CANONICAL' LITERATURE TO ALCIPHRO

ABSTRACT

This paper undertakes a detailed examination of the language of four of Alciphro's *Letters of Farmers* and argues that the source of much of the learning on display is likely not the primary texts themselves but secondary scholarship. The *Letters* can thus be understood as important evidence for how 'canonical' literature was received in the so-called 'Second Sophistic' period, and indeed for what that 'canon' was.

In his initial charge for these *Entretiens*, Andreas Willi described their goal as "exploring to what extent our understanding of literature in the Greek world is enriched if, for once, we see in its language not just a diffuse recording instrument, but an artistically manipulated tool for the creation of meaning". In this paper, I attempt to tie together the handling of a number of 'canonical' works of Greek literature by Hellenistic and Roman-era lexicographers with the *Epistles* of Alciphro, from the third century CE or so, with particular attention to some of the *Letters of Farmers*. Exploring Alciphro's work in this way, I argue, offers insight into his literary style and training and his expectations of his audience, while also shedding light on a largely obscure chapter in the history of the ancient reception of earlier literature.

As a preliminary example of the question I am attempting to address, consider a single three-word phrase from section 3 of *Epistle* 2, 19 (discussed in more detail below), τρίτην ταύτην

ἡμέραν, literally “this the third day”, i.e. “two days ago, the day before yesterday”. This is a relatively rare expression, attested once in Menander in precisely this form (although divided across two verses)¹ and as simple ἡμέραν τρίτην in Xenophon, Plato, Antiphanes, and Menander again;² glossed by Pollux and Zonaras, the latter seemingly drawing on Orus and citing the passages of Xenophon, Antiphanes, and Menander;³ and used three more times by Alciphro, multiple times by Lucian in the form τρίτην ἡμέραν, and once by Aelian in the form τρίτην [...] τὴν ἡμέραν.⁴ Put another way, τρίτην ταύτην ἡμέραν is a patent Atticism, which has been mined out of various fifth- and fourth-century Athenian texts by ancient scholars and taken over by ‘Second Sophistic’ authors.⁵ In what follows, I show that similar vocabulary drawn from similar sources appears again and again in the *Epistles*,⁶ a point rarely made in the secondary literature in anything more than general terms, obscuring what Alciphro is doing and what he expects from his readers. More important, I argue that much of this literary and social color likely comes not direct from Middle and New Comedy or other texts from the same period, as is generally but again often only vaguely asserted,⁷ but from what we today would call secondary

¹ MEN. fr. 894.

² THUC. 8, 23, 1; XEN. *Cyr.* 6, 3, 11; ANTIPHAN. fr. 276 K.-A.; MEN. *Epit.* 440.

³ POLL. 1, 67; ZONAR. p. 1744 Tittmann = ORUS fr. A 79 Alpers.

⁴ ALCIPHRO. 1, 1, 1; 2, 18, 1; 2, 30, 1; cf. 3, 28, 1. In LUCIAN. at e.g. *Tox.* 58; *Dial. deor.* 14, 1. In AELIAN. at *NA* 7, 10.

⁵ For the so-called ‘Second Sophistic’ movement and the political and cultural anxieties that drove it, see esp. BOWIE (1970).

⁶ SCHMID (1887-1897) is the standard reference, but is so dense as to be almost unusable and in any case omits discussion of Alciphro. VIELLEFOND (1979) 126-129 offers scattered specific remarks on the topic.

⁷ KÖNIG (2013) 187 n. 1 lists recent treatments of Alciphro’s sources or supposed sources, none of them substantial. See also FUNKE (2016), esp. 224-229, who attempts to trace the influence of Menander in Alciphro, but ultimately concedes that the links have to do mostly with language and plot-motifs rather than specific allusions to or reworkings of individual known texts. The classic discussion is VOLKMANN (1886), who again mostly establishes generic rather than specific connections in the language.

scholarly sources, and that a familiarity with learning of that sort and an appreciation of virtuoso displays of it must have been a vital part of reading and enjoying Alciphro and authors like him.⁸ A considerable amount of sophisticated work has been done on the *Epistles* over the last twenty years or so, concentrating on their character as letters, on the communicative strategies and ironies that result from putting exceedingly refined words in the mouths of seemingly unrefined characters, and on the relationship between the text and standard Second Sophistic rhetorical exercises.⁹ My goal is not to disallow or replace observations made on the basis of such readings of the *Epistles*, but to supplement and set them in context, allowing us to see more of Alciphro and to gain a better understanding of the literary and scholarly traditions that lie behind his work.

To make the implications of the argument clear, I begin with some remarks about the history of Attic comedy, its scholarly reception in the ancient world, and how that scholarship appears to have been put to use in the Second Sophistic period. At least a thousand comedies were likely performed in Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries alone, although only eleven by Aristophanes have come down to us through the manuscript tradition, along with a handful of others by Menander, some of them more or less complete, preserved in papyri. Beyond this, we have thousands of fragments, most of them quoted by authors of the Roman and Byzantine periods. The scholars working in Alexandria and in other centers of learning influenced by the Library generally have quite specific interests, many of which we today would describe as 'antiquarian': producing lists of historical persons ranging from politicians to philosophers to prostitutes, and of whatever information could be gleaned about them; catalogues of e.g. fish and how they were caught and prepared (cf. the work of the otherwise obscure

⁸ Thus also SCHMITZ (2004) 101-102, referring specifically to POLL. 1, 96-98 on fishing vocabulary, but not taking the discussion much further than this.

⁹ See esp. ROSENMEYER (2001) 255-307; SCHMITZ (2004); KÖNIG (2007); KÖNIG (2013), esp. 197-205; VOX (2013); DRAGO (2018).

Dorion, which likely supplied most of the material for Athenaeus Book 7), cups (whence much of Athenaeus Book 11), and wreathes (whence portions of Athenaeus Book 15); collections of legal and political terms and their definitions (cf. what survives of Harpocration) and of apothegms (represented today by the corpus of paroemiographers); and most significant for this paper, studies of vocabulary in 'good authors' however defined (whence much of the material in Pollux and in the mostly lost or severely epitomized Atticist lexicographers). Comedy was particularly useful for such purposes, since it talks in detailed, graphic terms about individual persons, food, drink, furniture, and the like, and uses colorful, colloquial language. This enormous enterprise of reading, research, and excerpting appears to have been carried out in the conviction that the texts and periods in which the Alexandrians and their academic descendants were interested were deeply significant, or at any rate more significant than their own times. Homer in particular *mattered*, as did texts from late fifth- and fourth-century Athens, and whatever the original point of all this scholarly excerpting, list-making, and glossing was, a large part of why Homer and fifth- and fourth-century literature came to matter for aspiring Roman-era sophisticates was because the latter often aspired to write or speak in 'good classical Greek'.

One means to that end was to read widely and carefully in ancient authors, so as to develop a sense of appropriate vocabulary and style and an ability to refer casually to important figures, events, and institutions from the past. Practically speaking, extensive research and study of this kind must not have been an option for most people, both because it required a library and a considerable investment of time and because the judgments in question depended on substantial scholarly expertise. The obvious alternative was to rely on others, i.e. on one's teachers but also on handbooks such as those of Moeris and Phrynichus, which offered advice as to what the proper Attic term was for various *koinê* words, or on thesauruses like that of Pollux. That such learning could be badly applied or taken too

far is apparent from Athenaeus' anecdotes about Pompeianus of Philadelphus, who used to say things like "I'm hastening off to destruction" (ἀπολούμενος ἐπείγομαι) when he meant "I'm hurrying off to take a bath",¹⁰ from Lucian's satire of the learned Lexiphanes, who committed similar blunders, and from the boorish behavior of Athenaeus' symposiarch Ulpian, who was nicknamed *Keitoukeitos* because he always asked *κεῖται ἢ οὐ κεῖται*; ("Is this mentioned anywhere [in 'good literature'] or is it not?") when food was presented to him.¹¹ But the goal appears to have been to display one's elegance and sophistication by using Greek nominally appropriate to an educated contemporary of Euripides, Aristophanes, Demosthenes, or Menander, all leavened with a bit of Herodotus, Homer, or whatever else the individual in question or his scholarly masters regarded as a 'classic'. This high-stakes antiquarianism in turn implies the existence of a reading and listening public keenly attuned to such distinctions and able to appreciate the presence of an otherwise obscure *mot juste*, the use of an approved combination of particles or a well-chosen image, or a knowing allusion to a famous text or institution.

In what follows, I use a close study of four of the *Letters of Farmers* to argue that – whatever their other meanings and purposes – Alciphro's *Epistles* can be productively read as stylistically oriented exercises whose wit consists not just in their charmingly colorful depictions of socially marginal and generally put-upon fictional characters, but in their insistent, highly wrought use of language and antiquarian information of the sort Hellenistic and Roman-era scholars were concerned to assemble and analyze. Indeed, this can easily be understood as one of the central points of the *Epistles*; their seeming lack of substantial content disguises an extraordinary intellectual busyness just below the surface of the text which contemporary readers were concerned with and well-equipped to detect. My

¹⁰ See ATH. 3, 97f-98c.

¹¹ ATH. 1, 1e.

larger contention is that much of this learning or apparent learning is to be traced to scholarly sources and school training rather than to a profound immersion in the original texts themselves. Two methodological points must be made in advance. The first is that the loss of most ancient Greek literature makes our task more difficult. In a number of cases, I argue that Alciphro references – likely at second hand – a specific passage of e.g. Homer, Sophocles, Euripides, or Demosthenes. If this is in fact part of his method of composition or of the nature of his sources, there must be other, similar allusions we are no longer in a position to identify. The saving grace is that our canon – not coincidentally – appears to overlap to a substantial extent with the one with which Alciphro and his contemporaries and predecessors were working. We have the two great Homeric epics; Herodotus and Thucydides; a considerable number of plays by Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes; a large amount of Lysias, Demosthenes, Plato, and Xenophon; and thousands of comic fragments, mostly selected precisely for their value as evidence for fifth- and fourth-century language, customs, and historical events and persons. That Alciphro and the secondary authorities he knew and relied upon had more of some of these authors and their contemporaries than we do thus does not leave us entirely in the dark. Second, the lexicographic tradition itself is badly battered, as a consequence of which I can demonstrate conclusively only in a few cases that this is the source from which Alciphro got his material. Instead, I will routinely cite Homer and fifth- and fourth-century texts, on the one hand, and Alciphro and to a lesser extent Lucian, Aelian,¹² and Philostratus (who seem to work in a similar manner), on the other, and will argue that the links between the two bodies of material leave little doubt as to

¹² For the relationship between Aelian and Alciphro, see REICH (1894) 26-45; BONNER (1909) 32-44, arguing that the two authors drew independently on older literary sources (which Bonner assumes both studied at first hand), with comments in the second section regarding Alciphro and Longus (responding to REICH [1894] 46-50); DRAGO (2013).

how they are connected. This means that I will occasionally resort to speculation, that some of the arguments I advance are stronger than others, and that many points remain obscure. But the case I am building is cumulative, and I hope to show that there are so many certain examples of such appropriation that we should assume it even when the evidence is not entirely clear.

I begin with Alciphro 2, 19 (Polyalos to Eustaphylus), discussed briefly above, and in particular with sections 3-4, where the evidence is denser and more interesting than in the first two sections, allowing the rest of the letter to be read in light of the pattern they establish:

(1) Πλαγγών δὲ τὸ (2) Μελιταῖον κυνίδιον, ὃ (ἐ)τρέφομεν (3) ἄθυρμα τῇ δεσποίνῃ προσηνές, ὑπὸ τῆς ἄγαν (4) λιχνείας ἐπὶ τὸ κρέας ὀρμησαν κεῖται σοι (5) τρίτην ταύτην ἡμέραν (6) ἐκτάδην νεκρὸν ἤδη (7) μυδῆσαν. ἔλαθον οὖν (8) ἐπὶ κακῷ κακὸν (9) ἀναρριπίσας. καὶ τίς παρὰ τῷ (10) σκυθρωπῷ τῶν τοιούτων συγγνώμη; φευξόμεθα (11) ἢ ποδῶν ἔχομεν, (12) χαιρέτω δὲ ὁ ἀγρὸς καὶ (13) τὰ μὰ πάντα. (14) ὥρα γὰρ (15) σώζειν ἑαυτόν, καὶ μὴ (τὸ) (16) παθεῖν ἀναμένειν ἀλλὰ πρὸ τοῦ παθεῖν φυλάξασθαι.

"Little Plangon, however, the Maltese puppy we were raising as a pet to please my mistress, rushed too greedily at the bait, and now, you see, it lies outstretched, already a mouldering corpse, dead for two days now. So, unawares, I heaped trouble on trouble. And what mercy will be found in the old churl's heart for such offences? Good-bye to the farm and all my possessions! It's time to save my own skin and, instead of waiting for trouble, to take measures before it arrives."¹³

(1) Πλαγγών is a personal name in Demosthenes as well as the name of a notorious prostitute in late fourth-century Athenian comedy.¹⁴ Alciphro's choice of it is thus most easily read as a bit of antiquarian color, particularly since it shows up again in the *Epistles* at 4, 13, 12, where it belongs to a courtesan. (2) A

¹³ Translation adapted from BENNER / FOBES (1949), as also below.

¹⁴ DEM. 9, 3; ANAXIL. fr. 22, 8 K.-A.; the title of a play by Eubulus; TIMOCL. fr. 27, 2 K.-A.

Μελιταῖον κυνίδιον is mentioned also by Philostratus, three times by Aelian, and twice by Lucian, always in precisely this way, as well as by a number of other Roman-era authors.¹⁵ This thus looks like an Atticist trope, the earliest mention of such dogs being in Aristotle and Theophrastus.¹⁶ (3) ἄθυρμα in the sense “toy, source of childish delight” is attested in early epic and subsequently in Sappho and Euripides.¹⁷ Put another way, this is a poetic rarity, the sort of word one might expect a lexicographer to pick up. The combination with τρέφω, on the other hand, is *not* standard, but appears also once in Philostratus and once in Aelian.¹⁸ That seems unlikely to be coincidence, and this is probably a prescribed combination based on a now-lost exemplar. (4) λιχνεία is attested before the Roman period only in Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, and Aeschines Socraticus.¹⁹ This must thus have been identified as ‘good Attic vocabulary’, in support of which one may note that Lucian has it seven times, Aelian twice.²⁰ Whether the combination with ἄγαν is also intended as an Atticism is unclear, although LSJ *s.v.* “with a substantive” (with definite article) includes only Attic examples. (5) τρίτην ταύτην ἡμέραν, another Atticism, is discussed above. (6) Adverbial ἐκτάδην is attested twice in Euripides,²¹ but nowhere else before the Roman period, when it appears three more times in Alciphro and twice in Lucian.²² In all these

¹⁵ PHILOSTR. *Imag.* 2, 17, 13; AEL. *NA* 7, 40; 13, 42; 16, 4; LUCIAN. *Symp.* 19; *Philops.* 27 (always specifically κυνίδιον Μελιταῖον); also PLUT. *Mor.* 472c; STRAB. 6, 277 ὅθεν τὰ κυνίδια ἃ καλοῦσι Μελιταῖα; AESOP. *Fab.* 75, 3 H.-H. Μελιταῖα κυνίδια.

¹⁶ ARIST. *Hist. an.* 612b10 τὸ μέγεθος ἡλίκον Μελιταῖον κυνίδιον τῶν μικρῶν; cf. [ARIST.] *Pr.* 892a21; THEOPHR. *Char.* 21, 9 κυναρίου δὲ Μελιταίου.

¹⁷ E.g. *Il.* 15, 363; *H. Cer.* 16; SAPPH. fr. 44, 9 L.-P.; EUR. fr. 272 Kannicht.

¹⁸ AEL. *NA* 6, 29 (from Phylarchus); PHILOSTR. *Imag.* 2, 17, 13.

¹⁹ E.g. XEN. *Oec.* 1, 22; PL. *Resp.* 519b; ARIST. *Part. an.* 660b9; AESCHIN. *SOCR.* fr. 34, 7 Dittmar.

²⁰ E.g. LUCIAN. *Merc. cond.* 24; *Lex.* 25; AEL. *NA* 7, 34; 13, 2.

²¹ EUR. *Tro.* 463; *Phoen.* 1698 ἐκτάδην σοι κεῖσθον.

²² ALCIPHRO. 3, 15, 4 ἐκτάδην κεῖσθαι νεκρόν; 3, 19, 7 ἐκτάδην κείμενος; 3, 36, 4 ἐκτάδην κεῖται; LUCIAN. *Dial. mort.* 12, 5 ἐκτάδην κείμενον; 17, 2 ἐκτάδην ἐκείμην.

cases, the adverb is associated with a form of *κεῖμαι*, as in this passage, and here it has the dative as well, as in *Phoenissae*. There can thus be little doubt that this is another prescribed expression and that Alciphro is (consciously or not) echoing Euripides, although with no obvious larger point. (7) *μυδάω* (literally “be damp”) is a rare verb of interest to the lexicographers.²³ It seems to be used of a dead body before the Roman period only at Soph. *Ant.* 410 *μυδῶν τε σῶμα*, but then appears in that sense not only here but also at 1, 20, 2 and in Lucian.²⁴ While this might be coincidence, more likely both authors found the use discussed and approved of in some secondary authority. (8) *κακὸν ἐπὶ κακῷ* is a matter of a different sort. The phrase appears repeatedly in later authorities as a gloss on *πῦρ ἐπὶ πυρί* at Pl. *Leg.* 666a, and given Alciphro’s general fondness for gnomic material, it is tempting to think that – like the other ‘wise sayings’ that fill his work – it is drawn from a paroemiographer.²⁵ Whether that means that “Evil upon evil” was already found in now-lost classical sources, or its mere presence in a secondary source, even if as a gloss, was good enough for Alciphro to take it over, is unclear. (9) *ἀναρριπίζω* appears also at 4, 8, 2, as well as three times in Lucian and once in Athenaeus.²⁶ Phrynichus seems to have been interested in the word, as was whatever lexicographer (excerpted in Photius) cited Pherecrates fr. 27 K.-A., and Pollux treats it as well.²⁷ This creates the impression that the word – also preserved in fragments of Antiphanes and Demades²⁸ – was regarded as an

²³ HSCH. μ 1783 *μυδῶντες· διυγραίνοντες· σηπόμενοι*, 1784 *μυδῶσι· σεσημμένοις*; *Synag.* μ 285 *μυδῶντες· βρέχοντες, διυγραμμένοι, σαπέντες*.

²⁴ LUCIAN. *Philops.* 11; *Dial. mort.* 12, 5 *μυδῶντα [...] κατὰ νόμον ἀπάντων τῶν σωμάτων* “mouldering in the manner of all bodies”; cf. AEL. *NA* 15, 18 ἡ σὰρξ *μυδήση*.

²⁵ For *πῦρ ἐπὶ πυρί*, note AR. fr. 469, 2 K.-A.; Pl. *Leg.* 666a with ZENOB. 5, 69 = PHOT. π 1562 (etc.) (= PAUS. ATT. π 45) *παροιμία, ἥς μέμνηται καὶ Πλάτων· κακὸν ἐπὶ κακῷ*.

²⁶ LUCIAN. *Anach.* 21, 26; *Tim.* 6; ATH. 13, 570a.

²⁷ PHRYN. *PS* fr. 219* de Borries (from Photius = *Suda* = *Synag.* ~ Hsch.); PHOT. α 1638, citing PHERECR. fr. 27 K.-A.; POLL. 6, 129.

²⁸ ANTIPHAN. fr. 200, 16 K.-A.; DEMAD. fr. 78.

Attic rarity and was used by Alciphro and his contemporaries on that account. (10) σκυθρωπός is attested first in Aeschylus and then in Euripides, Aristophanes, Xenophon, and Plato.²⁹ It appears elsewhere five times in Alciphro, repeatedly in Lucian, and in Aelian,³⁰ all of whom clearly use it to create the impression of a good colloquial style. (11) Alciphro has ἡ ποδῶν ἔχειν (“as fast as one can”) also at 3, 36, 4, and Aelian uses the same – otherwise unusual – expression repeatedly.³¹ This is thus most easily explained as a taught phrase modeled on Herodotus³² and here perhaps specifically Pl. *Grg.* 507d ἀκολασίαν δὲ φευκτέον ὡς ἔχει ποδῶν ἕκαστος ἡμῶν “each of us must flee licentiousness as fast as his feet will carry him”. (12) χαιρέτω in the sense “A long goodbye to”, i.e. “Enough of!, To hell with!” is attested in Herodotus, Euripides, and comedy³³ and seems to be a late fifth-century colloquialism. Lucian also has it twice,³⁴ suggesting that this was another taught expression. (13) Although τὰ μὰ πάντα seems unremarkable, it is attested only four times: here, in Lucian, in Philostratus,³⁵ and at Eur. *Supp.* 1126. The latter is thus most likely the model for the Roman-era passages. (14) ὦρα (ἐστὶ) plus infinitive is found twice in Homer and then (as LSJ notes) “also in Trag(edy) and Attic”. Alciphro has the expression at two other points;³⁶ Lucian and Aelian use it;³⁷ and it is tempting to think that this too was a taught expression.

²⁹ AESCH. *Cho.* 738; e.g. EUR. *Alc.* 797; AR. *Lys.* 707; XEN. *Mem.* 2, 7, 12; e.g. PL. *Symp.* 206d.

³⁰ ALCIPHR. 1, 13, 3; 3, 28, 2; 3, 36, 2; 4, 2, 3; 4, 7, 8; e.g. LUCIAN. *Pisc.* 12; *Merc. cond.* 33; AEL. *VH* 14, 22; *Epist.* 15, 23; ARISTAENET. 1, 17, 16-17.

³¹ AEL. *NA* 2, 39 ἡ ποδῶν ἔχει φυγῆς ἄρχεται; 3, 21 ἡ ποδῶν εἶχεν ἀνέθει; 6, 48 ὡς εἶχεν ἐπιθυμίας καὶ ποδῶν; 10, 48 οἱ μὲν ἔθειον ἡ ποδῶν εἶχον.

³² HDT. 6, 116, 1 Ἀθηναῖοι δὲ ὡς ποδῶν εἶχον τάχιστα ἐβοήθειον ἐς τὸ ἄστυ “the Athenians lent aid to the city as fast as their feet would carry them”; 9, 59, 2 ἐδίωκον ὡς ποδῶν ἕκαστοι εἶχον “they pursued as fast as each group’s feet would carry them”.

³³ E.g. HDT. 2, 117; 4, 96, 2; EUR. *Med.* 1044; MEN. *Epit.* 573; PHOENIC. fr. 4, 2 K.-A.

³⁴ LUCIAN. *Herc.* 8, 2; *Gall.* 33, 4.

³⁵ LUCIAN. *Dial. mort.* 18, 1; PHILOSTR. *VA* 5, 38.

³⁶ ALCIPHR. 2, 32, 3; 3, 5, 2.

³⁷ E.g. LUCIAN. *Iud. voc.* 6, 10; *Iupp. trag.* 14; AEL. *VH* 1, 21; 2, 34.

(15) Alciphro uses σώζειν ἑαυτόν also at 3, 11, 2, which suggests that he thought he had good authority for the expression. Both passages appear to be specific echoes of Pl. *Grg.* 512d ἀλλ' αὐτὸ τοῦτ' ἐστὶν ἀρετή, τὸ σώζειν αὐτόν "but this is virtue: to save oneself". Whether the quotation is drawn from Plato himself or has come to Alciphro through a secondary authority is uncertain; the line is memorable enough to have drawn notice in either case. The same is true of (16) παθεῖν ἀναμένειν ἀλλὰ πρὸ τοῦ παθεῖν φυλάξασθαι, which quotes and then alludes to Dem. 19, 224 ἐκλελύσθαι μοι δοκεῖτε καὶ παθεῖν ἀναμένειν τὰ δεινά, ἑτέροισι δὲ πάσχοντα ὁρῶντες οὐ φυλάττεσθαι "you seem to me to have grown slack and to be waiting to suffer terrors, and although you see others suffer them, not to be protecting yourselves", a passage picked out for discussion also by Hermogenes and Tiberius.

This is only the first half of *Epistle* 2, 19, and these are only the echoes and allusions to earlier texts we can see today. It is nonetheless striking how much of Alciphro's language has been taken over from earlier authors and in ways that suggest not so much a witty 'Hellenistic' allusiveness as a careful, concerted effort to use authorized vocabulary, constructions, and references easily understood as drawn from lexicographic sources or the like. Put another way, Alciphro 2, 19, 4 does not appear to be commenting on or 'playing with' Plato and Demosthenes but to be quoting them – perhaps better put, reusing their language – in a primarily stylistic exercise. A similar impression is created by the first two sections of the letter:

(17) πάγην ἔστησα ἐπὶ τὰς (18) μισαράς ἀλώπεκας (19) κρεῖ-
διον τῆς (20) σκανδάλης (21) ἀπαρτήσας. ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἐπολέ-
μουν τὰς (22) σταφυλάς, (23) καὶ οὐ μόνον τὰς (22bis)
ῥᾶγας ἔκοπτον (23bis) ἀλλ' ἤδη καὶ (24) ὀλοκλήρους ἀπέτε-
μον τῶν (22tris) οἰνάρων τοὺς βότρυς, ὁ δεσπότης δὲ ἐπιστή-
σεσθαι (25) κατηγγέλλετο – ἀργαλέος ἄνθρωπος καὶ δριμύς,
(26) γνωμίδια καὶ προβουλευμάτια (27) συνεχῶς ἐπὶ (28)
τῆς Πινυκὸς Ἀθηναίοις εἰσηγούμενος, καὶ πολλοὺς ἤδη διὰ (29)
σκαιότητα τρόπου καὶ (30) δεινότητα ῥημάτων (28bis) ἐπὶ
τοὺς ἑνδεκα ἀγαγὼν – δέισας μή τι πάθοιμι κἀγὼ (31) καὶ

ταῦτα τοιούτου <τοῦ> δεσπότου ὄντος, τὴν (32) κλέπτειν ἀλώ-
πεκα συλλαβὼν ἐβουλόμην παραδοῦναι. ἀλλ' ἡ μὲν οὐχ ἦκε·

"I set a trap for those cursed foxes, with a bit of meat tied to the trigger. They were raiding the vines, not only chewing at the grapes but going so far as to bite whole clusters off of them; and it was reported that my master was about to arrive – he is a harsh and bitter man, who is continually proposing trifling decrees and resolutions to the Athenians on the Pnyx and who, by his rough ways and skillful oratory, has previously sent many a man to the Eleven. So since I was afraid, especially considering what sort of man my master is, that something might happen to me as well, I wanted to catch the thieving fox and turn it over to him. But the fox never came near the trap."

(17) πᾶγη is found four times in Herodotus and subsequently in Xenophon, Plato, and Aristotle,³⁸ and is easily explained as having been picked up by Alciphro as fifth/fourth-century vocabulary. (18) μιάρως is attested already at *Il.* 24, 420, but is extremely rare before the fifth century and then common in comedy, Plato, and Demosthenes.³⁹ It is also common in Alciphro, as well as in Lucian,⁴⁰ both of whom apparently regard it as "good colloquial vocabulary". μιάρως and ἀλώπηξ are combined elsewhere only at *Ar. Thesm.* 1133 μιάρως ἀλώπηξ, οἷον ἐπιτήκιζί μοι. Whether the echo is significant is impossible to say, but there is no obvious direct reference to the Aristophanic passage (where the reference is to a deceptive woman) and Alciphro may have got the combination, but divorced of its original context, from a secondary authority. (19) and (21) Diminutive κρεάδιον (also once in Aelian and glossed by Pollux)⁴¹ and the compound ἀπαρτάω are fifth/fourth-century Attic vocabulary⁴² and likely appear in Alciphro for that

³⁸ E.g. *HDT.* 2, 121; subsequently at *XEN. Cyr.* 1, 6, 39; *PL. Leg.* 824; *ARIST. Mir.* 834a9.

³⁹ E.g. *AR. Eq.* 239; *PL. Resp.* 589e; *DEM.* 18, 134.

⁴⁰ *ALCIPHR.* 2, 2, 1; 2, 16, 3; 2, 21, 1; 3, 3, 1; 3, 26, 4; 3, 36, 2; e.g. *LUCIAN. Iupp. trag.* 19; *Tim.* 34.

⁴¹ *AEL. NA* 2, 47; *POLL.* 6, 33.

⁴² κρεάδιον: e.g. *AR. Plut.* 227; *XEN. Cyr.* 1, 4, 13; *CEPHIS.* fr. 8 K.-A.; *ALEXIS* fr. 180, 2 K.-A. Also *HIPPOC. Epid.* 7, 3, 38 = 5, 372, 4 Littré. ἀπαρτάω: e.g.

reason. (20) σκανδάλη, by contrast, is found only here and in late Byzantine sources. σκανδάληθρον would seem to be expected, being attested at Aristophanes and then in Pollux (twice) and perhaps in Phrynichus.⁴³ That would make that form of the word an Atticism, and – to move briefly into hypothetical argument via analogy – it is tempting to think that σκανδάλη has come to Alciphro through a source no longer available to us and thus that it too has a good classical pedigree, although in this case one we cannot see.⁴⁴ (22) σταφυλή is attested in early epic⁴⁵ and is rare outside of it. ῥάξ, by contrast, appears to be Attic,⁴⁶ as is οἶναρον (also picked up by Timaeus in his *Lexicon*).⁴⁷ This section of the *Epistle* thus looks like a learned cluster of related vocabulary drawn from a source similar to whatever lies behind Poll. 1, 243 ἀμπέλου σταφυλαὶ καὶ βότρυες, καὶ ἀπ' αὐτῶν αἱ σταφυλίδες καὶ αἱ σταφίδες “grapevine clusters (*staphulai*) and bunches of grapes, and from these words grape-bunches (*staphulides*)”; 6, 21 ἀπὸ δ' οἴνου καὶ οἰνάνθαι αἱ ἄμπελοι καὶ οἶναρα τὰ φύλλα “from wine (*oinos*) grapevines are *oinanthai*, and the leaves are *oinara*”. (23) The combination καὶ οὐ μόνον is found in Thucydides, the orators, Xenophon, and Plato,⁴⁸ but not before them. Lucian has it three times, once followed by ἀλλ' ἤδη καί but generally by ἀλλὰ καί, as in the classical period, while Aelian has it five times, generally with ἀλλὰ καί or a variant thereof.⁴⁹ All this suggests that the phrasing was tagged as an Atticism and as worthy of imitation. The same is true of the

EUR. *Andr.* 412; THUC. 6, 21, 2; XEN. *Eq.* 10, 9; DEM. 12, 7; ARIST. *Gen. an.* 716b29.

⁴³ AR. *Ach.* 687; POLL. 7, 114 (both in reference to mousetraps); PHRYN. *PS* fr. 351* de Borries σκανδαλήθρα· καὶ σκάνδαλα λέγουσιν (from Photius).

⁴⁴ But see the discussion that follows.

⁴⁵ E.g. HOM. *Il.* 18, 561; *Od.* 5, 69.

⁴⁶ SOPH. fr. 398, 2 Radt; PL. *Leg.* 845a; e.g. ARIST. *Hist. an.* 552b20; e.g. THEOPHR. *Hist. pl.* 3, 17, 6.

⁴⁷ E.g. CRATIN. fr. 269, 2 K.-A.; XEN. *Oec.* 19, 18; THEOPHR. *Caus. pl.* 5, 4, 1. Cf. TIM. *Lex.* ο 2.

⁴⁸ THUC. 8, 68, 4; e.g. XEN. *Mem.* 1, 7, 2; e.g. PL. *Symp.* 206a; ISAE. 2, 43.

⁴⁹ LUCIAN. *Iud. voc.* 11 (followed by ἀλλ' ἤδη καί); *Vit. auct.* 23; *Laps.* 2; e.g. AEL. *NA* 16, 20; *VH* 3, 13.

combination ἀλλ' ἤδη καί, which is also found in Attic prose⁵⁰ but not before. (24) ὁλόκληρος is fourth-century Attic vocabulary, common in comedy and in Plato and Aristotle.⁵¹ Lucian has it twice,⁵² suggesting that it too was treated as approved vocabulary. (25) καταγγέλλω is first attested in Xenophon and Lysias,⁵³ and is perhaps used by Alciphro on that basis. (26) γνωμίδιον is attested three times in Aristophanes⁵⁴ and thereafter first here and in Lucian.⁵⁵ Even more striking, Lucian also has the phrase γνωμίδια καὶ προβουλευμάτια, and προβουλευμάτιον is attested nowhere else. Alciphro and Lucian are thus almost certainly drawing the combination of words from the same – presumably Atticist – source, and προβουλευμάτιον must have been attested somewhere in fifth- or fourth-century literature, most likely (given the diminutive form and the deteriorative sense) in comedy. (27) συνεχῶς is an Atticism, used for example by Eupolis, as we know from Photius,⁵⁶ showing that the word was of interest to the lexicographers. (28) ἐπὶ τῆς Πνυκὸς and ἐπὶ τοὺς ἑνδεκα are bits of Attic topographic/political color of the sort one would expect to be drawn from a source similar to Harpocration, and an example of what Schmitz calls “material classicism”.⁵⁷ (29) σκαιότης is fifth/fourth-century vocabulary,⁵⁸ and Lucian has it as well,⁵⁹ suggesting that it was recognized as such. That σκαιότητα τρόπου is an echo specifically of σκαιότητα

⁵⁰ THUC. 6, 86, 4; XEN. *Cyr.* 8, 8, 16; ISOC. 4, 140.

⁵¹ In comedy at e.g. PL. *COM.* fr. 188, 9 K.-A.; ANAXANDR. fr. 40, 10 K.-A.; in Plato at e.g. *Phdr.* 250c; in Aristotle at e.g. *Hist. an.* 585b36.

⁵² LUCIAN. *Macr.* 2; *Philops.* 8.

⁵³ XEN. *An.* 2, 5, 38; LYS. 25, 30.

⁵⁴ AR. *Eq.* 100 (with βουλευμάτιον, diminutive of βούλεμα “purpose, plan”); *Nub.* 321; fr. 727 K.-A. (from Phrynichus).

⁵⁵ LUCIAN. *Par.* 42.

⁵⁶ EUP. fr. 485 K.-A. (drawn from PHOT. σ 754). But see the discussion, where this claim is challenged and rephrased.

⁵⁷ SCHMITZ (2004) 92-93. For the Pnyx, see also ALCIPHR. 3, 25, 3; e.g. LUCIAN. *Bis acc.* 9. For the Eleven, e.g. LUCIAN. *Bis acc.* 5; *Iupp. conf.* 16 with *scholia*; HARP. α 167; π 21.

⁵⁸ SOPH. *Ant.* 1028; HDT. 7, 9, 2, β; THUC. 4, 80, 3; PL. *Resp.* 411e; DEM. 6, 19 σκαιότητα τρόπων.

⁵⁹ LUCIAN. *Tim.* 44.

τρόπων at Dem. 6, 19 is worth considering, given that the words never occur together elsewhere before the Roman period. (30) δεινότης is likewise fifth/fourth-century vocabulary,⁶⁰ in this case attested exclusively in Attic prose, and Demades actually refers once to Demosthenes' δεινότης τῶν ῥημάτων.⁶¹ Once again, moreover, Lucian has the word, in this case seven times.⁶² (31) Exclamatory καὶ ταῦτα (properly "and at that!") is another Atticism, which is used repeatedly by Alciphro as well as by Lucian.⁶³ Here it seems to be *misused*, which might be taken to suggest dependence on a half-understood model or handbook. (32) κλέπτεις, finally, is found before this only in Herodian, who knows it as an accentual oddity. But Herodian has got the word from somewhere, meaning that Alciphro has not invented it but has taken it over from a literary source.

Whether the points made above render Alciphro's *Epistles* more intriguing reading is a matter of individual taste. The analysis nonetheless suggests that among the interests of the letters may have been not only what they say but also how they say it in terms of vocabulary, phrasing, and incidental references. Behind this style of writing, moreover, seem to lurk not so much primary sources as learned collections of 'good' words, expressions, and constructions drawn from or authorized by authors such as Herodotus, Sophocles, Euripides, Plato, Demosthenes, and the comic poets; paroemiographers; and historians of the quotidian details of Athenian life in the classical period and of the associated vocabulary. And all of this implies an audience similarly familiar with such material and capable of appreciating how it is put to use, although with no obvious interest in original context. Compare 2, 24 (Gemellos to Salakonis):

τί ταῦτα, ὦ (1) Σαλακωνίς, (2) ὑπερηφανεῖς (3) τάλαινα; οὐκ ἐγὼ σε εἰς (4) τοῦργαστήριον καθημένην παρὰ τὸν (5) ἀκροστήν τὸν (6) ἑτερόποδα ἀνελόμην, (7) καὶ ταῦτα (8) λάθρα

⁶⁰ E.g. THUC. 3, 59, 1; ANTIPH. 5, 5; PL. *Tht.* 177a; ISOC. 3, 43.

⁶¹ DEMAD. fr. 79 (of Demosthenes). But see the discussion.

⁶² E.g. LUCIAN. *Alex.* 4.

⁶³ E.g. AR. *Ach.* 349; e.g. ALCIPHR. 2, 24, 1; 2, 26, 2; e.g. LUCIAN. *Iupp. trag.* 6.

τῆς μητρός, καὶ καθάπερ τινὰ (9) ἐπὶ κληρον (10) ἐγγυητὴν ἀγαγόμενος ἔχω; σὺ δὲ φρυάττη, (11) παιδισκάριον εὐτελές, καὶ (12) κιχλίζουσα καὶ μωκωμένη με (13) διατελεῖς. (14) οὐ παύση, τάλαινα, τῆς ἀγερωχίας; ἐγὼ σοι τὸν ἐραστὴν δείξω δεσπότην καὶ (15) κᾶχρυσ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀγρῶν φρύγειν ἀναγκάσω, καὶ τότε (16) εἶση παθοῦσα (17) οἱ κακῶν σαυτὴν ἐνέσεισας.

“Why, Salakonis, are you so disdainful, wretch? Didn’t I carry you off when you were sitting in the workshop with the lame tailor, and without my mother knowing it at that? And aren’t I now keeping you as if you were an heiress to whom I am engaged? But you, you cheap little slave, puff yourself up and go on tittering at and mocking me. Put a stop to your insolence, wretch! I’ll show you that your lover is your master, and I’ll force you to roast barley in the countryside; then you’ll know by sad experience the sort of trouble you’ve plunged yourself into.”

For the modern reader, this is a disturbing letter – Gemellos has paid good money for Salakonis and is writing to express his outrage that she is unenthusiastic about him forcing himself upon her sexually. The ugliness of the situation becomes even more obvious in *Epistle* 2, 25, in which Salakonis writes back to say that she loathes Gemellos’ hairy body and foul breath and has decided to hang herself rather than submit to him again. As for the language with which Gemellos expresses himself and its apparent sources: (1) Σαλακωνίς is from σαλάκων, which Aristotle uses for a pretentious person, while Hermippus has σεσαλακωνισμένην in his *Iambs* and Aristophanes uses the compound διασαλακωνίζω.⁶⁴ The scattered evidence thus suggests that this is ill-attested Attic vocabulary – precisely the sort of expressive rarity one would expect a lexicographer to collect – and it thus cannot be an accident that Alciphro also has cognate σαλακωνία at 4, 18, 4. (2) ὑπερηφανέω is a Homeric rarity⁶⁵ and then shows up in Hellenistic and Roman-era authors,

⁶⁴ E.g. ARIST. *Eth. Eud.* 1233b1 σαλάκων; HERMIPP. *Iamb.* 5, 2 West σεσαλακωνισμένην; AR. *Vesp.* 1169 διασαλακωνίσσον.

⁶⁵ A Homeric *hapax* at *Il.* 11, 694 ταῦθ’ ὑπερηφανέοντες.

presumably on that basis; Pollux disapproves of it,⁶⁶ which shows that its status was a matter of discussion and presumably that some authorities recommended it, while others did not. For my purposes the word is interesting because it points to another stratum of learning – Homeric vocabulary, also a topic of intense Hellenistic and Roman-era scholarly inquiry – on display within the *Epistles*. (3) *τάλαινα* is typically tragic vocabulary, from which it is taken over occasionally into comedy.⁶⁷ Alciphro has the word again in this same letter and three more times as well, while Lucian uses it once.⁶⁸ (4) *ἐργαστήριον*, a generic word for a commercial workspace, is first attested in Herodotus, Attic prose, and comedy,⁶⁹ and seems to be an example of a rare word of the type a lexicographer might pick up. (5) *ἄκεστής* is attested in the classical period only at Xen. *Cyr.* 1, 6, 16; that the word was judged interesting by Hellenistic and Roman-era scholars is apparent from the fact that Pollux mentions it and Phrynichus identifies it as an archaism for common *ἡπότης*.⁷⁰ This is thus a clear example of a rare Atticism making its way from a fourth-century author to the lexicographers, and from the lexicographers to second- and third-century authors, as witness the fact that Lucian also has *ἄκεστής* not just once but four times.⁷¹ (6) *ἑτερόπους* is attested before this only in Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists*,⁷² a text written in a pointedly Attic style, meaning that neither Alciphro nor Philostratus is likely to have coined it. The closest parallel appears to be *ἑτερόφθαλμος* ("one-eyed"), which is used by three fourth-century Athenian authors and was of interest to

⁶⁶ POLL. 9, 146 τὸ δὲ ῥῆμα τὸ ὑπερηφανεῖν οὐκ ἐπαινῶ.

⁶⁷ In tragedy at e.g. AESCH. *Ag.* 1247; SOPH. *El.* 450; EUR. *Supp.* 941; *Hipp.* 841. In comedy at e.g. AR. *Thesm.* 690.

⁶⁸ Also ALCIPHR. 2, 14, 2; 4, 5, 1; 4, 9, 5; cf. LUCIAN. *Dial. meret.* 12, 2.

⁶⁹ HDT. 4, 14, 1. In Attic prose at e.g. XEN. *Hell.* 3, 14, 7; AESCHIN. 1, 124; DEM. 25, 52. In comedy at AR. *Eq.* 744; ANTIPHAN. fr. 22, 3 K.-A.

⁷⁰ POLL. 7, 42; PHRYN. *Ecl.* 64 Fischer.

⁷¹ LUCIAN. *Fug.* 17; *Pseudol.* 9; *Nigr.* 25; *Dial. D.* 18, 1.

⁷² PHILOSTR. *VS* 1 p. 515, 7.

Phrynichus (who approves of it).⁷³ The obvious conclusion is that this is another rare Attic word recommended by the lexicographers on the basis of an original from the classical period that no longer survives. (7) I have already discussed καὶ ταῦτα, which in this case is used correctly. (8) The combination λάθρα [...] μητρὸς is attested elsewhere only at Soph. *OT* 787 λάθρα δὲ μητρὸς καὶ πατρὸς πορεύομαι “I made my way in secret from my mother and my father”, a sufficiently famous text that it is easy to believe that Alciphro or his source is referring directly to it. Be that as it may, λάθρα + a genitive object with a definite article is otherwise restricted before the Roman period to one appearance in Xenophon, one in Plato, and λάθρα τῆσδε γῆς “in secret from this land” in Euripides.⁷⁴ Lucian, meanwhile, has λάθρα τῆς Πηνελόπης,⁷⁵ suggesting again a taught sense of ‘good style’ shared with Alciphro. (9–10) ἐπίκληρος is a technical Athenian legal term, the sort of word one would expect to be collected by an authority like Harpocration. It is used three other times by Alciphro, including at 1, 6, 1 with ἐγγυητής as part of a quotation of the Attic marriage formula, and is patently a deliberate antiquarian touch.⁷⁶ ἐγγυητής for its part is attested first in Herodotus and is then extremely common in, although not confined to, Attic prose;⁷⁷ Lucian and Aelian both have it.⁷⁸ (11) παιδισκάριον εὐτελές seems to recall Men. *Mis. fr.* 2, 1 παιδισκάριόν με καταδεδούλωκ’ εὐτελές “a cheap little slave girl has enslaved me”, which is one of only two known instances of the noun in the classical period and appears to be echoed also in Clement of Alexandria’s *Miscellanies* 2, 15, 64 and Arrian’s *Digest* of Epictetus 3, 25, 6, making it clear that the passage was well-known. Lucian has παιδισκάριον at

⁷³ ἑτερόφθαλμος: DEM. 24, 140; e.g. ARIST. *IA* 714a7; DEMAD. fr. 32. Cf. PHRYN. *Ecl.* 107 Fischer μονόφθαλμον οὐκ ἔρεϊς, ἀλλ’ ἑτερόφθαλμον.

⁷⁴ XEN. *Cyr.* 6, 4, 2; PL. *Lys.* 211a; EUR. fr. 1132, 38 Kannicht.

⁷⁵ LUCIAN. *Ver. hist.* 2, 29.

⁷⁶ Also ALCIPHR. 3, 22, 2; 3, 28, 4.

⁷⁷ E.g. HDT. 1, 196, 3; ISAE. 3, 78 ἡ ἐγγυητὴ γυνή.

⁷⁸ AEL. fr. 103; LUCIAN. *Hermot.* 77; *Vit. auct.* 1; *Catapl.* 10.

Dial. mort. 22, 7, suggesting again that he regarded the word as good classical vocabulary. (12) *κικλίζω* and *μωκάομαι* appear together at two other points in Alciphro and in the same order,⁷⁹ making this something like a fixed phrase for him and likely one he was taught. *κικλίζω* is attested first in Aristophanes and appears in Aelian in a thematically related passage.⁸⁰ Moeris disapproves of the verb, which leaves no doubt that its status as good Attic vocabulary was a matter of interest to the lexicographers.⁸¹ *μωκάομαι* is not attested in what survives of Attic literature, but is found in Aelian;⁸² it too may thus hark back to a now lost source, explaining Alciphro's apparent sense that it and *κικλίζω* work well together. (13) *διατελέω* + participle is common in Herodotus and Attic (see LSJ *s.v.* II), as well as in Lucian,⁸³ and is probably another example of approved style. (14) οὐ παύση [...] τῆς ἀγερωχίας; finds a close parallel at 1, 6, 4 πέπαυσο τῆς ἀγερωχίας, suggesting reliance (perhaps through a learned intermediary) on a common model. Alciphro also uses οὐ παύση + gen. at 4, 3, 1, making this look like a set phrase, and the construction is apparently an Atticism and was likely identified as such in one of his sources.⁸⁴ (15) For κάχρυς [...] φρύγειν, cf. Cratin. fr. 300, 2 K.-A. φρύγουσιν ἤδη τὰς κάχρυς, the only other example of the combination before Galen (himself actively involved in research on

⁷⁹ ALCIPHRO. 3, 42, 3 (also with thematic similarities); 4, 6, 3.

⁸⁰ AR. *Nub.* 983; AEL. *Ep. rust.* 11. Also AR. fr. 347, 4 K.-A.; THEOC. 11, 78; HEROD. 7, 123.

⁸¹ MOER. κ 19. Cf. AB p. 271, 30 ~ *Et. Magn.* p. 516, 17 (defining *κικλίζω* as a "whorish laugh").

⁸² AEL. NA 1, 29.

⁸³ E.g. LUCIAN. *Sat.* 36.

⁸⁴ οὐ παύση + gen. in classical texts at EUR. *Med.* 93-94; *Bacch.* 1360-1361; EUP. fr. 108, 1 K.-A.; AR. *Lys.* 1160; ISOC. 4, 11; ἀγέρωχος is attested in Homer (e.g. *Il.* 2, 654; *Od.* 11, 286) and other early poetry (e.g. HES. fr. 150, 30 M.-W.; IBYC. fr. S192b, 14; PIND. *Nem.* 6, 33), and is apparently glossed by Phrynichus (*PS* fr. 58*, 1 de Borries ἀγέρωχος· γαῦρος, σεμνός, θρασύς, ὑπερόπτης). That Alciphro has ἀγερωχία also at 1, 6, 4; 3, 31, 2; 4, 6, 3, that Philostratus uses it repeatedly (e.g. *VA* 2, 28), that Aristaenetus (1, 22, 2) has it as well, and that the lexicographer Eudemus glosses it (3, 30 Niese), combines to suggest that the word was found in a canonical text lost to us.

Attic vocabulary);⁸⁵ Pollux and Aelius Dionysius (in glosses on φρύγετρον “roasting vessel” and κάχρυς, respectively);⁸⁶ and Moeris (who identifies κάχρυς as an Atticism, although the word is also attested in Hippocrates).⁸⁷ (16) εἴσῃ [...] οἷ κακῶν appears to be modeled on or inspired by Eur. *Med.* 1306 ὦ τλῆμον, οὐκ οἶσθ’ οἷ κακῶν ἐλήλυθας “Wretch, you do not know what point of troubles you have reached”, the only example of οἷ κακῶν attested before this. The combination is also found three times in Xenophon of Ephesus and in later writers, suggesting that it was a taught phrase.⁸⁸ (17) οἷ [...] σαυτήν ἐνέσεισας, finally, seems modeled on or inspired by the odd and unexpected use of the verb at Soph. *Ant.* 1273-1274 με [...] / ἐν δ’ ἔσεισεν ἀγρίαις ὁδοῖς “he shook me onto savage paths”.

Epistle 2, 24 thus reinforces the impression created by 2, 19 in regard to Alciphro’s language. The vocabulary and seeming set-phrases used in the letter go back insistently to Atticisms and in one case to a Homeric rarity, and in a number of cases can be traced without much question to specific fifth/fourth-century texts available today, suggesting that there were other models we can no longer detect (for example for ἐτερόπους or for the combination of κιχλίζω and μωκάομαι). And while the evidence for this is badly fractured and inadequate, the combination of the emphatic use of many of the same words in other Roman-era authors with stylistic tendencies similar to Alciphro’s and the appearance of a number of them in what remains of the lexicographic tradition makes it a reasonable hypothesis that Alciphro is drawing for the most part not on complete tragedies, comedies, historical texts, and the like but on secondary scholarly work.

⁸⁵ GAL. 19, 11, 3-4 Kühn.

⁸⁶ POLL. 1, 246 φρύγετρον, ὃ τὰς κάχρυς ἔφρυγον; AEL. DION. κ 17 κάχρυς· κριθαὶ πεφρυγμέναι.

⁸⁷ MOER. κ 18 κάχρυς Ἀττικοί· κριθαὶ πεφρυγμέναι Ἑλλήνες. For κάχρυς, also AR. *Nub.* 1358; *Vesp.* 1306; e.g. THEOPHR. *Hist. pl.* 3, 14, 1; HIPPOC. *Morb.* 3, 17, 32 = 7, 158, 17 Littré.

⁸⁸ XEN. EPH. 1, 3, 4; 5, 7, 5; HELIOD. *Aeth.* 8, 6, 6; 9, 3, 6.

These conclusions are supported by *Epistle* 2, 22 (Hyle to Nomios):

(1) **θαμίζεις** εἰς ἄστὺ κατιῶν, ὦ Νομίε, καὶ τὸν ἀγρὸν (2) οὐδ' ἀκαρῇ θέλεις ὀρᾶν· (3) ἀργὸς δὲ ἡ γῆ (4) **χηρεύουσα** τῶν ἐκπονούντων, ἐγὼ δὲ (5) οἰκουρῶ μόνῃ μετὰ τῆς (6) **Σύρας** (7) ἀγαπητῶς τὰ (8) **παιδιά** (9) **βουκολοῦσα**. σὺ δὲ ἡμῖν (10) **αὐτόχρημα** (11) **μεσαιπόλιος** ἄνθρωπος (12) **μειράκιον** (13) **ἀστικὸν** ἀνεφάνης. ἀκούω γάρ σε (14) **τὰ πολλὰ** (15) ἐπὶ **Σκί-ρου καὶ Κεραμεικοῦ** διατρίβειν, οὗ φασι τοὺς (16) **ἐξωλεστά-τους** σχολῇ καὶ (17) **ῥαστώνῃ** τὸν βίον (18) **καταναλίσκειν**.

“You’re always going down to the city, Nomios, and you’re unwilling to give even a glance to the farm. Our land lies idle, bereft of men to work it, and I am tending the house alone with Syra and taking care of the children as best I can. Meanwhile, although you’re a middle-aged person with hair already gone part gray, you resemble a boy about town; for I hear you’re spending most of your time in Skiron and the Kerameikos, where they say the biggest rascals waste their lives in idleness and ease.”

Unlike Salakonis in *Epistles* 2, 24 and 2, 25, Nomios does not reply, leaving Hyle in a desperate and impossible situation. Once again, however, my interest is in how she expresses herself rather than in what she says. (1) **θαμίζω** with a particle is found already once in the *Odyssey*⁸⁹ but seemingly after that first at the opening of Plato’s *Republic*, where Socrates is not going off to the city but to Piraeus.⁹⁰ Alciphro uses language similar to **θαμίζεις** εἰς ἄστὺ κατιῶν at 1, 4, 2 ἄστὺδε **θαμίζεις** [...] **συνεορτάζουσα** and 2, 28, 1 εἰς ἄστὺ **καταβάς**, where the influence of *Od.* 15, 505 ἐσπέριος δ' εἰς ἄστὺ ἰδὼν ἐμὰ ἔργα **κάτειμι** “in the evening I will return to the city after I have inspected my fields” is perhaps heard instead. None of this is satisfactory, but it is difficult to escape the impression that the beginning of this letter recalls a combination of these primary texts or others similar to them – or, better put, secondary scholarship drawing

⁸⁹ *Od.* 8, 451.

⁹⁰ *Pl. Resp.* 328c ὦ Σώκρατες, οὐ δὲ **θαμίζεις** ἡμῖν **καταβαίνων** εἰς τὸν Πειραιᾶ “Socrates, you don’t often come down to the Piraeus to see us”.

on and analyzing them. (2) οὐδ' ἀκαρῆ (also in Lucian;⁹¹ cf. μηδ' ἀκαρῆ once in both Alciphro and Lucian⁹²) is attested a handful of times in fifth/fourth-century Athenian literature,⁹³ as is simple ἀκαρῆ, including at Antipho fr. 146 Thalheim, which is drawn from Hesychius = Photius and thus patently from a lexicographer. Indeed, Moeris α 89 specifically identifies the word as an Atticism, making it a reasonable conclusion that Alciphro and Lucian have got it from a similar source. (3) For ἀργός in the sense "fallow", LSJ s.v. (B) I.2 cites only three passages from fourth-century Athenian prose,⁹⁴ suggesting that this is another Atticism identified as such in antiquity. (4) ἡ γῆ χηρεύουσα τῶν ἐκπονούντων appears to be an echo of *Od.* 9, 124 ἀνδρῶν χηρεύει (of Cyclops Island), which is also picked up in Plutarch and Aelian.⁹⁵ Perhaps all three authors refer specifically to Homer, but just as likely they have got the trope as a bit of approved rhetorical color from a secondary source. (5) οἰκουρῶ is Attic vocabulary,⁹⁶ and the fact that it is used again by Alciphro, as well as by Lucian, Aelian, and Plutarch,⁹⁷ suggests that it was recommended to them. (6) The name Σύρα is a bit of Attic color also picked up by Lucian.⁹⁸ (7) ἀγαπητῶς is colloquial fourth-century Attic vocabulary⁹⁹ also found at 1, 16, 2 and common in e.g. Plutarch and Aelian.¹⁰⁰ (8) παιδία is a fifth-century form, very common in Herodotus, comedy, and

⁹¹ LUCIAN. *Am.* 10.

⁹² ALCIPHR. 4, 14, 1; LUCIAN. *Am.* 26.

⁹³ In addition to ANTIPH. fr. 146 Thalheim (discussed below), AR. *Vesp.* 541; AV. 1649; [DEM.] 50, 56.

⁹⁴ XEN. *Cyr.* 3, 2, 19; ISOC. 4, 132; THEOPHR. *Hist. pl.* 9, 12, 2.

⁹⁵ PLUT. *Pomp.* 28, 4 Δύμην τὴν Ἀχαΐδα, χηρεύουσαν ἀνδρῶν τότε; AEL. *NA* 4, 59 ἀνθρώπων χηρεύουσα.

⁹⁶ First attested at AESCH. *Ag.* 809; subsequently e.g. SOPH. *Phil.* 1328; HERMIPP. fr. 46, 3 K.-A.; PL. *Resp.* 451d; [DEM.] 59, 86; [ARIST.] *Ath. pol.* 56, 4.

⁹⁷ Also ALCIPHR. 4, 13, 19; LUCIAN. *Nigr.* 18; e.g. AEL. *NA* 5, 18; 9, 53; PLUT. *Per.* 11, 1; 34, 1.

⁹⁸ AR. *Pax* 1146; PHILEM. fr. 117, 1 K.-A.; APOLLOD. CARYSTIUS fr. 8, 1 K.-A.; LUCIAN. *Dial. meret.* 4, 4, 5.

⁹⁹ E.g. PL. *Lys.* 218c; *Menex.* 245e; LYS. 6, 45; ISOC. 14, 41; DEM. 19, 200; DIPH. fr. 89, 2 K.-A.

¹⁰⁰ E.g. PLUT. *Mor.* 321c; e.g. AEL. *NA* 5, 11.

prose¹⁰¹ and used repeatedly by Alciphro,¹⁰² doubtless for that reason. (9) LSJ *s.v.* I.2 offers only one other example of βουκολέω + person in the sense of “caring for”, at Ar. *Vesp.* 10, where the reference is to tending a god. A better parallel is *H. Merc.* 167 βουκολέων ἐμὲ καὶ σὲ διαμπερές “always taking care of you and me”, in which case – regardless of what one thinks of the date of the *Hymn* – this must be another of Alciphro’s epic rarities. (10) αὐτόχρομα is attested before this only at Ar. *Eq.* 78, but is also used at 2, 26, 1 and six times by Aelian.¹⁰³ Whether the word has been drawn direct from Aristophanes or not, therefore, it appears to be employed because it is both attested as Attic and unusual. (11) μεσαιπόλιος is a Homeric *hapax legomenon* at *Il.* 13, 361, and is attested subsequently only once in ‘Aesop’¹⁰⁴ and in scattered Roman-era sources, including at 2, 13, 2 and Ael. *NA* 12, 43. This is accordingly another epic rarity best explained as drawn from a source that collected such words, a conclusion supported by the fact that Galen and Pollux both treat it as a bit of *recherche* but useful vocabulary.¹⁰⁵ (12) μειράκιον is colloquial Attic, common in comedy and prose.¹⁰⁶ Alciphro uses it 15 times, Lucian over 50, Aelian almost 40.¹⁰⁷ (13) ἀστικός is also Attic¹⁰⁸ and accordingly draws Pollux’ attention.¹⁰⁹ Alciphro has it five more times, Lucian four, Aelian three.¹¹⁰ (14) τὰ πολλά in the adverbial sense “often,

¹⁰¹ E.g. HDT. 2, 2, 3; EUP. fr. 261, 3 K.-A.; AR. *Lys.* 99; ANDOC. 1, 26; XEN. *Oec.* 3, 10; PL. *Leg.* 910c; ISAE. 12, 3.

¹⁰² E.g. ALCIPHRO. 1, 6, 3; 2, 8, 1.

¹⁰³ E.g. AEL. *NA* 2, 44; 14, 10.

¹⁰⁴ AESOP. *Fab.* 31, 1 H.-H.

¹⁰⁵ GAL. 18b, 221, 8-10 Kühn; POLL. 2, 12.

¹⁰⁶ First attested at PHERECR. fr. 70, 3 K.-A.; also in comedy at e.g. EUP. fr. 104, 2 K.-A.; e.g. AR. *Eq.* 556. In prose at e.g. ANTIPH. 2, 4, 8; XEN. *Hell.* 1, 2, 42; PL. *Symp.* 192a; ISAE. 5, 40.

¹⁰⁷ E.g. ALCIPHRO. 1, 11, 1; 3, 19, 1; 3, 22, 3; e.g. LUCIAN. *Im.* 1; *Philops.* 37; e.g. AEL. *NA* 6, 63; *VH* 1, 30.

¹⁰⁸ First attested at AESCH. *Supp.* 501, 618; *Eum.* 997; subsequently at THUC. 5, 20, 1; LYS. 17, 3; DEM. 55, 11; MEN. *Dys.* 41; also twice at THEOC. 20, 4; 20, 31.

¹⁰⁹ POLL. 9, 17.

¹¹⁰ ALCIPHRO. 1, 11, 1; 2, 5, 2; 2, 8, 3; 3, 34, 1; 3, 35, 3; LUCIAN. *Bis acc.* 11, 9; *Dial. deor.* 20, 7; *Dial. meret.* 7, 3; 15, 2; AEL. *NA* 4, 59; 6, 63; 8, 22.

generally, mostly, repeatedly” appears to be an Atticism;¹¹¹ Alciphro has it also at 1, 8, 1; 2, 18, 1; 2, 28, 2; 3, 34, 1, Lucian scores of times.¹¹² (15) ἐπὶ Σκίρου καὶ Κεραμεικοῦ (meaning ~ “gambling and whoring”) is echoed at 3, 5, 1, where Skiron is a district for prostitutes, as also in an entry in Harpocration = *Suda* citing Theopompus,¹¹³ while at 3, 12, 3 and 3, 28, 3 the same is supposedly true of the Kerameikos.¹¹⁴ This is thus another bit of Attic color drawn at least in part from the lexicographic/antiquarian scholarly tradition. (16) ἐξώλης is attested once in Herodotus and is common in colloquial Attic.¹¹⁵ After that, it surfaces in Plutarch;¹¹⁶ twice more in Alciphro, including at 3, 18, 4 Ἀθῆναι καὶ τῶν Ἀθήνησι κυβευτῶν οἱ ἐξωλέστατοι “Athens and the foulest of those who shoot dice in Athens”, which appears to be closely connected to this passage; once in Lucian;¹¹⁷ and twice in Aelian.¹¹⁸ (17) ῥαστώνη is attested in the classical period in Herodotus and Hippocrates, and then in Attic prose;¹¹⁹ the combination with σχολή raises the possibility that this is a specific echo of Dem. 18, 45 τὰ δὲ τῇ καθ’ ἡμέραν ῥαστώνη καὶ σχολῇ δελεαζομένων “ensnared by the ease and idleness of their daily life”, where both words are similarly in the dative. ῥαστώνη appears again in the Roman era twice in

¹¹¹ E.g. EUP. fr. 172, 4 K.-A.; EUR. *Ion* 239; *Bacch.* 486; THUC. 1, 13, 1; 1, 78, 2.

¹¹² E.g. LUCIAN. *Demon.* 21; *VH* 1, 13.

¹¹³ THEOPOMP. *FGrH* 115 F 228 διέτριβον ἐν Σκίρῳ οἱ κυβεύοντες “those who shoot dice spent their time in Skiron”.

¹¹⁴ For the Kerameikos (also mentioned at 4, 8, 11) as a place for prostitutes, cf. ALEXIS fr. 206 K.-A.

¹¹⁵ HDT. 7, 9, 2, β.1; in colloquial Attic at e.g. EUP. fr. 51 K.-A.; AR. *Pax* 1072; ANDOC. 1, 126; ANTIPHAN. fr. 157, 12 K.-A.; DEM. 19, 172.

¹¹⁶ E.g. PLUT. *Mor.* 13a; *Pel.* 26, 4.

¹¹⁷ LUCIAN. *Nigr.* 23.

¹¹⁸ AEL. fr. 123, 14; 325, 5.

¹¹⁹ In Ionic prose at HDT. 3, 136, 2; e.g. HIPPOC. *De arte* 11, 22 = 6, 20, 17 Littré. In Attic prose at THUC. 1, 120, 4; 3, 136, 7; XEN. *Eq.* 7, 19; PL. *Resp.* 525c; ISOC. 4, 36; DEM. 18, 45; 19, 219. Note also DIOD. SIC. 38/39, 9; DION. HAL. 2, 3, 3; and PLUT. *Mor.* 655c, combining to suggest that ῥαστώνην καὶ σχολήν may have come to be treated as a set phrase.

Lucian and once in Aelian,¹²⁰ as one might expect if the word were an approved Atticism. (18) καταναλίσκω is found in Hippocrates and Attic prose,¹²¹ on the one hand, and in Aelian (who has an expression very similar to τὸν βίον καταναλίσκειν),¹²² on the other, and was likely regarded as good fifth/fourth-century vocabulary.

Once again, only a handful of the words and phrases noted in this letter can be traced specifically to the lexicographic tradition. We are nonetheless in the position of believing either that Alciphro himself has done all the painstaking reading and checking that would be required to assemble this combination of rare words (including two Homeric *hapax legomena*) and typical fifth- and fourth-century, mostly Attic vocabulary, or that he has drawn most of this from elsewhere. The simpler thesis – and thus the one to be preferred – is the second, especially given how many of these words also show up in Lucian and Aelian. Nor does Alciphro re-use the specific sources to which his language can on occasion be traced in any obviously clever way; the borrowing and adaptation is on an almost exclusively lexical level.

Much the same is true of *Epistle* 2, 20 (Thallos to Pityiskos):

πάντα φιλῶ (1) **τρυγᾶν** – ἔστι γὰρ τὸ καρπῶν (2) **ἀποδρέπεσθαι** πόνων (3) **ἀμοιβὴ δίκαιος** – ἐξαιρέτως δὲ ἐθέλω (4) **βλῖπτειν** τὰ (5) **σμήνη**. ἔχων οὖν (6) **σίμβλους** ὑπὸ τῇ πέτρᾳ, ἀποκλάσας (7) **κηρία** (8) **νεογενῇ** (9) **πρῶτον μὲν** τοῖς θεοῖς (10) **ἀπηρξάμην**, (9bis) **ἔπειτα** δὲ τοῖς φίλοις ὑμῖν (10bis) **ἀπάρχομαι**. ἔστι δὲ (7bis) **λευκά** ἰδεῖν καὶ (11) **ἀποστάζοντα** (12) **λιβάδας** (13) **Ἀττικοῦ μέλιτος**, οἷον αἱ (14) **Βριλήσσαι λαγόνες** (15) **ἐξανθοῦσι**. (16) **καὶ νῦν μὲν** ταῦτα πέμπομεν, (17) **εἰς νέωτα** δὲ δέχοιο παρ' ἡμῶν μερίζω (18) **τουτωνὶ καὶ ἡδίωνα**.

¹²⁰ LUCIAN. *Merc.* 3 μετὰ πάσης ῥαστώνης καὶ ἡδονῆς; *Demon.* 5; AEL. *NA* 7, 42.

¹²¹ E.g. HIPPOC. *Epid.* 2, 4, 2, 12 = 5, 126, 2 Littré; XEN. *Mem.* 1, 2, 22; PL. *Phd.* 72d; ISOC. 3, 31; ARIST. *Part. an.* 651a22; THEOPHR. *Hist. pl.* 2, 6, 2.

¹²² AEL. *VH* 3, 13 τὸ πλεῖστον τοῦ βίου [...] καταναλίσκειν “to waste most of their life”, and note also LYCURG. 1, 94; ALCID. fr. 1, 19; DION. HAL. *Lys.* 25, 71.

"I'm fond of bringing in any sort of harvest – for reaping crops is a just return for labor – but I particularly like extracting honey from bee-hives. Since I have some hives under the cliff, therefore, I broke off new combs; and first I made a preliminary offering to the gods, and then I make a gift to you, my friends. They are light gold in appearance and drip libations of Attic honey, the sort the flanks of Brilessos produce. I am now sending these (to you), and next year may you receive even larger and sweeter ones than these from us!"

Unlike the letters examined previously, 2, 20 is strikingly upbeat and is perhaps supposed to be written by a tenant sending his landlord an annual gift or *θάλλος* (LSJ *s.v.* III), as Benner / Fobes suggest. As for 'Thallus' language: (1) *Alpha*-contract *τρυγάω* (in contrast to the Homeric *omicron*-contract *τρυγῶω*¹²³) is a fifth/fourth-century form¹²⁴ but rare after that. Lucian has it seven times, Aelian six,¹²⁵ suggesting that Alciphro uses it because it represents approved vocabulary with a distinctly 'classical' resonance. (2) *ἀποδρέπω* is a rare poetic word found in Hesiod and Pindar,¹²⁶ and is thus precisely the sort of item one would expect lexicographers to collect. But the use of the middle plus genitive is odd, and the fact that Alciphro has it again at 3, 15, 2, as does Aelian,¹²⁷ may suggest a now-lost model. (3) The combination *ἀμοιβὴ δίκαιος* appears repeatedly in Roman-era authors, including twice in the pseudo-Lucianic *Ass.*¹²⁸ It is attested in the classical period only at Theophr. *De piet.* fr. 12, 55, which might mean that Alciphro or his source got it from there. But this also sounds like a fixed proverbial phrase, like *κακὸν ἐπὶ κακῷ* at 2, 19, 3, and the obvious alternative is that the phrase is drawn from a paroemiographer – which

¹²³ HOM. *Il.* 18, 566; *Od.* 7, 124.

¹²⁴ E.g. HDT. 4, 199, 4; AR. *Vesp.* 634; *Pax* 1339; XEN. *Oec.* 19, 19; PL. *Leg.* 844e.

¹²⁵ E.g. LUCIAN. *Catapl.* 20; *VH* 1, 22; 2, 14; e.g. AEL. *NA* 9, 32; 9, 45.

¹²⁶ HES. *Op.* 611; PIND. *Pyth.* 9, 110; note also ARCHIP. fr. 50, 3 K.-A. *κῆπον ἀποδρέπεις*.

¹²⁷ AEL. *NA* 6, 21.

¹²⁸ E.g. [LUCIAN.] *Asin.* 27.

admittedly only pushes the problem back one step. (4) βλίττω, by contrast, appears to be distinctly Attic,¹²⁹ and is recommended by Pollux (albeit with a definition that does not fit the use of the word here) and glossed by Timaeus on Plato and Hesychius (in a way that does),¹³⁰ suggesting a connection to the lexicographic tradition. (5) The impression that Alciphro has got βλίττω from a lexicographer is reinforced by his use of σμῆνος, which is attested first in Hesiod and thereafter repeatedly in Attic,¹³¹ and which Pollux¹³² offers at the beginning of the section that also includes βλίττω, and which Phrynichus approves.¹³³ (6) Between σμῆνος and βλίττω in Pollux, moreover, appears plural σίμβλοι, which is also found in the same section of Hesiod as σμῆνος¹³⁴ and then in the singular in Aristophanes and Aristotle¹³⁵ and in the plural a number of times in Aelian.¹³⁶ Alciphro thus seems to be offering a showy cluster of specialized vocabulary, as he does many other times in the *Epistles*,¹³⁷ probably on the basis of a text resembling Pollux. (7) This is all the more so because κηρία λευκά too appears in the same section of Hesiod,¹³⁸ which has clearly served as a source for whatever work lies behind this section of Alciphro. This is

¹²⁹ E.g. SOPH. fr. 778 Radt; AR. *Lys.* 475; PL. *Resp.* 564e; ARIST. *Hist. an.* 627a32.

¹³⁰ POLL. 1, 254 ἐρεῖς δὲ σμῆνος τὸ πλῆθος τῶν μελιττῶν· ὁ δὲ τόπος σίμβλοι, τὸ δὲ ἔργον μελιττουργεῖν· βλίττειν δὲ τὸ καπνίζειν τὰς μελίττας καὶ ποιεῖν ἀναχωρεῖν “you are to refer to the mass of bees as a *smēnos*; *simbloi* are the place [they are found], while the occupation is *melittourgein*; *blittein* is “to blow smoke at the bees and cause them to withdraw”; TIM. *Lex.* β 10 = HSCH. β 752 βλίττειν· ἀφαιρεῖν τὸ μέλι ἀπὸ τῶν κηρίων *blittein*: “to extract honey from hives”.

¹³¹ HES. *Theog.* 594. In Attic at e.g. AESCH. *Pers.* 127; CRATIN. fr. 2 K.-A.; AR. *Nub.* 297; XEN. *Oec.* 17, 15.

¹³² POLL. 1, 254, quoted in n. 130.

¹³³ PHRYN. *PS Epit.* pp. 66, 5; 110, 14 de Borries.

¹³⁴ HES. *Theog.* 598.

¹³⁵ AR. *Vesp.* 241; ARIST. *Hist. an.* 627a6.

¹³⁶ E.g. AEL. *NA* 1, 58; *Ep.* 5, 4.

¹³⁷ Similar clusters of specialized vocabulary at e.g. 2, 16, 1 τὴν ἐχέτην [...] καὶ δύο δρεπάνας “the plow-handle and two sickles”; 2, 21, 3 σκαπάνη [...] ὑπὸ τῇ δικέλλῃ καὶ τῇ σμινύῃ “a spade [...] the mattock and the hoe”.

¹³⁸ HES. *Theog.* 597.

especially the case given the extreme rarity of λευκός in the sense 'light gold', for which LSJ *s.v.* cites only one other example (from Herodotus). (8) νεογενής is Attic vocabulary¹³⁹ and νεογενῆ is a distinctly Attic form. (9) Alciphro also has πρῶτον μὲν [...], ἔπειτα – a common combination in Attic authors¹⁴⁰ – at 3, 7, 4; 3, 40, 1, as does Lucian;¹⁴¹ this looks like another learned stylistic gesture. (10) The repeated use of ἀπάρχομαι – attested already at *Od.* 3, 446; 14, 422 in reference to sacrifice and then numerous times in fifth/fourth-century sources¹⁴² – in what seem to be two slightly different senses is striking. Were Alciphro a Hellenistic poet, we would inevitably read this as an indication of the author's awareness of a learned dispute surrounding the proper meaning of the word, which Lucian also uses.¹⁴³ (11) ἀποστάζω is fifth/fourth-century vocabulary and a poeticism in Attic,¹⁴⁴ while (12) λιβάς is also a poeticism,¹⁴⁵ although the word is attested in Hellenistic epic as well as in Attic¹⁴⁶ and is thus generally high-style. (13) The reference to Attic honey is a typical bit of fifth/fourth-century color.¹⁴⁷ (14) Βριλήσσαι λαγόνες (meaning "the slopes of Mt. Pentelikon") finds a parallel only at Callim. fr. 552 Pfeiffer Βριλησσοῦ λαγόνεσσιν. Either Alciphro is echoing Callimachus – which would expand his range of literary reference considerably – or, more likely, both poets are recalling some famous but now otherwise unknown text. In either case, this is clearly a deliberate

¹³⁹ E.g. AESCH. *Cho.* 530; SOPH. fr. 754, 5 Radt; XEN. *Cyn.* 10, 23; PL. *Sph.* 259d; ANTIPHAN. fr. 55, 4 K.-A.

¹⁴⁰ E.g. SOPH. fr. 395* Radt; AR. *Vesp.* 1177; THUC. 1, 115, 5; ISAE. 3, 78.

¹⁴¹ E.g. LUCIAN. *Iupp. trag.* 49; *Par.* 11.

¹⁴² E.g. HDT. 3, 24, 4; EUR. *El.* 91; AR. *Ach.* 244; XEN. *Hier.* 4, 2.

¹⁴³ Of a preliminary sacrifice at LUCIAN. *Syr. D.* 60.

¹⁴⁴ E.g. SIMON. 519 fr. 79, 9 Page; e.g. HIPPOC. *Mul.* 205, 3 = 8, 392, 19 Littré; in Attic also at SOPH. *Ant.* 959; EUR. *Ion* 1011.

¹⁴⁵ First attested at AESCH. *Pers.* 613, subsequently at e.g. SOPH. *Phil.* 1216; EUR. *Andr.* 116; ANTIPHAN. fr. 55, 13 K.-A. ('dithyrambic' style); in prose at THEOPHR. *Hist. pl.* 2, 4, 4.

¹⁴⁶ CALLIM. fr. 250, 10 Pfeiffer; AP. RHOD. 4, 606; 4, 1735; NIC. *Ther.* 61.

¹⁴⁷ For Attic honey, e.g. AR. *Pax* 252; *Thesm.* 1192; ANTIPHAN. fr. 177, 1-3 K.-A.; ARCHESTR. fr. 60, 17-18 K.-A.

rarity. (15) ἐξανθέω is used by both Hippocrates¹⁴⁸ and Attic authors,¹⁴⁹ and thus likely appears here as a bit of 'good classical vocabulary'. (16) καὶ νῦν μὲν is found twice in early epic¹⁵⁰ and then repeatedly in Attic.¹⁵¹ Alciphro has it again at 2, 34, 2, suggesting that this is another taught combination. (17) εἰς νέωτα is attested in the classical period in Xenophon, Theophrastus, and the comic poets,¹⁵² and then three times in Lucian,¹⁵³ which probably means that he and Alciphro have it as an approved Atticism. Finally, (18) the deictic *iota* on τοῦτωνί is an Atticism.

These are only four of the *Letters of Farmers*. The impression created is nonetheless that Alciphro's language is overwhelmingly drawn from fifth- and fourth-century (primarily Athenian) sources, with a smattering of learned epicisms thrown in. In a number of cases, a specific model for a phrase can be identified. But this does not appear to be a learned game of allusion to and reworking of individual exemplars. Instead, what Alciphro is borrowing is *language* of a sort nominally appropriate to characters lodged in a make-believe late-classical Athenian world lightly colored by its Homeric and Hesiodic predecessors. As for the sources for this material, perhaps they come from Alciphro's own deep, careful reading of early epic, the Attic poets and orators, etc. – in which case we seem obliged to imagine an audience that is similarly learned, allowing it to use its own broad, subtle knowledge of canonical sources to make sense of the freshly composed text before it. What tells against this thesis is not only its inherent improbability but the fact that the readership for which the *Epistles* are written is seemingly expected to appreciate their various verbal gestures without being concerned

¹⁴⁸ E.g. HIPPOC. *Epid.* 2, 3, 1, 25 = 5, 102, 5 Littré.

¹⁴⁹ AESCH. *Pers.* 821; EUR. *IT* 300; THUC. 2, 49, 5; XEN. *Cyn.* 5, 5; PL. *Plt.* 273d; ANTIPHAN. fr. 294 K.-A.

¹⁵⁰ HOM. *Il.* 24, 685; *HAp.* 326.

¹⁵¹ E.g. AESCH. *Sept.* 21; EUR. *Andr.* 732; XEN. *An.* 2, 4, 3; PL. *Men.* 85c.

¹⁵² XEN. *Cyr.* 7, 2, 13; 8, 6, 15; e.g. THEOPHR. *Char.* 3, 3; in the comic poets at e.g. ALEXIS fr. 131, 7 K.-A.

¹⁵³ LUCIAN. *Vit. auct.* 1; *Bis acc.* 4; *Hermot.* 4.

with the content of specific models. What is wanted is instead a generic appreciation of words, phrases, customs, names, and the like – and just enough survives of the ancient scholarly tradition touching on these and similar matters to suggest that this tradition, and the broader tradition of teaching and learning it represents, is the basic resource or set of interrelated resources that lies behind the *Epistles*. Like his audience, Alciphro is learned, but in a secondary manner. He knows the vocabulary and constructions he employs and the set of conventional cultural and literary tropes to which he refers primarily through intermediary texts and teachers, and the obvious conclusion is that he expects the same of his audience. Had we more of the antiquarian and lexicographic work on which Alciphro drew, we would be in a position to appreciate more fully the cleverness and sophistication of his work. But just enough of it survives to let us catch fleeting glimpses of a significant aspect of the literary art of the *Epistles*. The *Letters of Farmers* are not a mere collection of words. Attention to Alciphro's language nonetheless opens up aspects of his work that might otherwise remain invisible to us, and helps make better sense of the author, his genre, and his time.

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DISCUSSION

A. Cassio: Texts like the letters of Alciphro are fascinating on many counts, especially because of the complete artificiality of the situations described and their focus on the resurrection of the old Attic dialect. Obviously the ‘correct’ preparation of such texts posed problems, since the authors ran the risk of committing ridiculous blunders like the ἀπολούμενος you mention. In some cases the Attic models are easily recognizable, but matters are not always so easy; for instance you mention *à propos* of σκανδάλη the closest possible model, Attic σκανδάλη-θρον, but σκανδάλη itself seems completely isolated, and it is hard to say what happened: a mistake? an Attic form unknown to us? an invented hyper-sophisticated form? ἀμυγδάλη “almond” was the Attic counterpart of Hellenistic ἀμύγδαλον, and I would not exclude that Alciphro decided to modify the banal σκάνδαλον by ‘Atticizing it back’ into σκανδάλη. In other words, the use of invented Attic forms should not be excluded.

Another tricky instance is ὑπερηφανέω, which is Homeric (*Il.* 11, 694) but seems to have enjoyed success only in post-classical times (Polybius, the *Septuagint*, and Christian authors), so that it is hardly surprising that Pollux 9, 146 advised against it: he accepted the noun (ὑπερηφανία) but not the verb (τὸ δὲ ῥῆμα τὸ ὑπερηφανεῖν οὐκ ἐπαινῶ). Probably Alciphro thought that Homer’s use of it would have excused its presence in an Attic text, but the Atticists accurately distinguished between Homer and Attic and recommended Attic. Many Atticist texts pose problems that are more complicated than we would like.

S.D. Olson: Alciphro is clearly playing a sophisticated literary game, and he expects his audience to enjoy watching him play it. Unfortunately for us, he never makes the rules of his

game explicit, and all we can do is work them out from the texts themselves. Homer, for example, clearly falls within the range of authors Alciphro regards as canonical for his own purposes, regardless of what a strict Atticist might think; what one would like to know is how eccentric this point of view was. That *σκανδάλη* “sounded right”, even if it was not, may well be the case. If so, however, Alciphro may not have been the one to generate it. Added to this is the fact that we do not have as much evidence as we would like – which is to say that a great deal inevitably escapes us, and that numerous words or turns of phrase in the *Epistles* that today seem flat, puzzling or ‘wrong’ might make sense if we had one more play of Sophocles or one more speech of Lysias. All texts from antiquity, after all, are more complicated than we would like – or at least more complicated than we can appreciate. In this case, we see something but not everything. Perhaps that is enough.

As for the ‘complete artificiality’ of the situations described in the *Epistles*, the world Alciphro’s characters inhabit appears to be very much that of Attic Middle Comedy, which (so far as we can tell from the fragments) was similarly full of rustic farmers, obnoxious if amusing parasites, sophisticated courtesans, hypocritical philosophers, hapless fishermen, and the like. Whether anyone in Alciphro’s time believed that Attica had been like that hundreds of years ago is unclear. But perhaps they did, or at least partially did, which is to say that the project carried out in the *Epistles* is not so much the invention of a world as a nominal recreation of one.

A. Vatri: *δεινότης* was a technical term in Imperial literary criticism (e.g. in Longinus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Plutarch’s *De Herodoti malignitate*). Longinus and Dionysius (but cf. already Demetrius) use it with a specialized sense to describe a specific rhetorical quality (“vigour”, “vehemence”); in Plutarch and Dionysius himself it may be used more generically to designate “rhetorical ability”. The fragment of Demades is a nice parallel for Alciphro; but De Falco, the editor of

Demades' fragments, considers it spurious and assigns it to a rhetorical exercise on a Demadean theme. In this light, the use of δεινότης in the *Epistles* seems to point to rhetorical education more than anything.

S.D. Olson: This is another example of how fragile our evidence is. If De Falco is right, the passage I have cited is not evidence for the Attic prose character of this word but for its reception in the Roman period. The case I am trying to build, however, is cumulative. Other fifth- and fourth-century prose authors appear to use δεινότης, whether Demades did or not; were all those uses too to be expunged by editors, this point would have to be struck, but others would stand; and my overall claim is that the underlying impression of how Alciphro operates and what he expects from his readers would not be substantially different as a consequence.

O. Tribulato: You raise fundamental questions about the role of imitation in Greek literary language and the extent to which we can understand its motivations. In regard to this, I have two questions. The first concerns methodology. In your analysis of the words used by Alciphro you have given their first attestation in Attic (or sometimes earlier) literature and have highlighted how they resurface in Atticist works or in the Second Sophistic. I wonder whether working with these two extremes may not lead us to miss the fact that some of these words may have a richer linguistic history, which might lead us to doubt that they would be perceived by Alciphro's readers specifically as Atticisms. Take the adverb συνεχῶς, for instance. What is specifically Attic about it? συνεχῶς is pervasive in Greek prose of any age, and *koinê* prose is no exception. Another case is σκυθρωπός: what is the actual Attic hidden reference of this word? It was used continuously in *koinê* works, such as the *Septuagint*, the *New Testament*, Diodorus Siculus, etc. In itself, σκυθρωπός does not strike me as learned Attic vocabulary: is a specific passage implied?

My second question concerns your interpretation of the *purpose* of Alciphro's stylistic exercise in imitation. Is it only a question of using 'correct' language which readers may have found interesting or educational – or is the point to parody Attic texts and epic by adopting their linguistic strategies? The first strategy may be the use of marked epic and tragic language (thus, e.g., μυδάω, τάλαινα and ἄθυρμα) for trivial or laughable situations in a way not dissimilar from the comic cook who speaks in snatches of Homeric Greek. The other strategy would be to resort to language specifically marked as comic to further characterize the humorous aspects of these scenes. For instance, in Alciphro 2, 19 the mix of high-brow rare words and references to humbler settings may have been intended to create a humorous contrast between the self-stylization of the protagonist as a 'refined man' and his brutal conduct.

S.D. Olson: You are right that συνεχῶς is more widely distributed than I imply. Photius, patently echoing some lost lexicographer, approves it in the sense "constantly" – which seems to be the normal meaning in the classical period, and also how Alciphro uses it – but not in the sense 'frequently'. The note in Photius shows that the proper use of the word was a matter of dispute, and that Attic authors were cited to help resolve the question. But that is not a strong argument, and were my thesis as a whole dependent on it, the reader would be well-advised to be sceptical. σκυθρωπός is more suggestive, because the word does first surface in Attic texts. The question becomes whether that was enough to brand it as 'good classical vocabulary' even if not as a pure Atticism. My own sense is that Alciphro or his teachers or sources worked less scientifically than we might like in this regard; a word might have a 'good pedigree' if it first appeared and was concentrated in texts they regarded as canonical, even if we today would question some of their judgments.

As for your second question, my own feeling is that we do not need to choose between the two options you outline and

that nothing is gained from attempting to do so. One important aspect of the humor in the *Epistles* is certainly the fact that a slave on an Attic farm, for example, has the time and ability to draft a verbally rich and beautifully expressed description of his troubles with the local foxes: grand language and grand models for strikingly trivial matters as experienced by what one would on the face of it have expected to be a very unsophisticated person. But that need not be the only point of interest in the text, and my claim is that something even cleverer is going on simultaneously on a different level in the *Epistles*, and that this has to do with the vocabulary and constructions themselves and how they are sourced and deployed.

A. Willi: I like the idea that Alciphro's letters are primarily *exercices de style*, and as such presuppose an in-depth familiarity with imperial lexicography rather than an impressive first-hand scholarly knowledge of a wide range of classical literature *per se*. But I wonder whether we can confidently assert this and whether there is not a 'middle' option, i.e. to assume that Alciphro was indeed widely read in classical literature and had simply acquired a near-native competence of its language in this way. Would it really have to be a sign of serious scholarship on his part to have learned that variety by assiduous although potentially superficial reading?

Second, looking at the specific examples you highlight, I am struck by Alciphro's use of seemingly Euripidean ἐκτάδην – not because the lexeme is remarkable as such, but because to me the construction with an adverb in -δην looks like something that would not normally be used in prose (a passive participle being an obvious alternative). If I were right on that, it would point to a – in my view remarkable – indifference to generic variation: if the point was to depict how ordinary Athenians might have written letters in classical times, did a well-educated audience not have to object to finding a typically tragic feature within the mix?

S.D. Olson: It is of course impossible to know what Alciphro read and did not read, and the answer to your first question depends to a considerable extent on something we do not fully understand and perhaps never will, which is the extent to which fifth- and fourth-century Athenian texts were circulating in the Roman world in the third century CE or so. What we can say with a more substantial degree of confidence, is that Alciphro's audience could not all have read and studied e.g. the comic and tragic poets and the Attic orators in the depth and with the care that would be required to appreciate the nuances of the use of language in the *Epistles*. Put another way, *someone* had studied the vocabulary of these texts and others very carefully, whether we think that activity was carried out primarily in the Library at Alexandria and similar institutions (as I tend to believe) or also by Alciphro in his own working space (as you suggest). My own impression is that Alciphro does not write as a fluent semi-native speaker of mock-classical Greek, but in a way that suggests a careful attention to learned rules, hence *inter alia* the repetition of fixed expressions and vocabulary items I have attempted to document both in the *Epistles* and in Lucian and Aelian. But all that really matters is that the audience for which Alciphro wrote must inevitably have had most of their classics at second hand. I suppose this gets to your second point as well: Did Alciphro (or Alciphro's audience) have the linguistic sophistication to see the point regarding ἐκτάδην you raise and to object to its appearance in his prose? The implicit answer would seem to be that they did not, even if they were well enough informed to be certain that this was 'good vocabulary' drawn from Euripides.

L. Huitink: I have a question regarding the 'level' of the Attic borrowings you discern. Many of them come from Middle Comedy, but some are from tragedy and some appear particularly *recherché* (e.g. εἰς νέωτα, which seems a rarified expression from the *Halbattiker* Xenophon in particular). Can you give an indication as to what sorts of Atticisms are more common,

both in Alciphron and in late Atticizing literature as a whole? And does an answer to that question have implications for the 'flavour' of Alciphro's letters? Of course, for Alciphro and his readers, classical Attic was to a large extent a 'dead' language, to be reconstructed from sources from the classical period. But does Alciphro intend his farmers and other 'lowly' characters to be speaking a passable imitation of 'real' (vernacular) Attic of the classical period (as conceived by Alciphro and his audience), or is the 'fun' in part that such characters speak in a rarified and precious (strictly literary) language?

S.D. Olson: A complete answer to your larger questions would require a study of the *Epistles* as a whole, something beyond the scope of this paper. As other participants at the *Entretiens* have noted, Alciphro uses *inter alia* his choice of vocabulary to paint a picture of an imaginary classical Attica, and as you suggest, a clearer understanding of how he manipulated his primary material would give us a better sense of what he is up to when he does so. One striking gap, for example, involves obscenity. What survives of fifth-century comedy leaves little doubt that Athenians had a rich abusive lexicon of words for body-parts, sexual acts, and the like, and there seems no reason to doubt that the average man on the street used such language as often as some of us do. But such words seem largely – perhaps entirely – lacking in Alciphro, who has apparently censored his sources in this regard or relies on sources that have done the censoring for him. But neither is the language simply 'rarified and precious', given the obvious delight the *Epistles* take in straightforwardly 'prosaic' words for farmers' tools, fishermen's devices, bee-hives, and the like.

F. Schironi: I am convinced by much of what you showed us; this is certainly a time when knowledge is transmitted and acquired through encyclopedias, compendia, and anthologies. Many of the words you discuss, however, are not simply Attic but occur first in Homer or Herodotus and are then used by

Attic prose writers or poets. Does this suggest that instead of 'Atticism' we should speak of the 'classicism' of the Second Sophistic period?

S.D. Olson: There seems little doubt that an 'Atticist' movement was active in the Roman world at this time. But whatever that movement is or means, you are right that Alciphro appears to represent a slightly different phenomenon: he is interested in and ready to use Attic vocabulary, but his lexical net is cast more widely. It is interesting in this context to consider Athenaeus, whose sources also seem prepared to cite Homer, Herodotus, the lyric poets, and the like as testimonia for approved vocabulary, while simultaneously relying most heavily on Attic authors and especially the comic poets. Perhaps we would do best, as you suggest, to look for diversity rather than uniformity in ancient intellectual and literary practice until we have sorted through the primary material for this period more carefully than anyone has had the time or inclination to do so far.

