NEW LINGUISTIC USES ON THE COMIC STAGE: 
NON-STANDARD DEVICES

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As long as Aristophanes was writing polis-comedies (...) his dialect may have been consci-
ously conservative, favouring traditional over innovative Attic wherever actual usage was
divided. If this is true, it entails that the Attic heard on stage was not necessarily the same
as the Attic spoken by a majority of his audience. (Willi 2014, 178)

0. Summary.

I. Phonetics.
   1) Opening of diphthongs.
   2) Aphaeresis.
   3) Unconditioned metathesis.
   4) Metathesis in contact with liquids.
   5) Vocalic change in contact with liquids.
   6) Lenition of rhotics.
   7) Confusion of liquids.
   8) Lenition of voiced obstruents.
   9) Devoicing of voiced obstruents.
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  11) Simplification of obstruent clusters.
12) Confusion of labial phonemes.
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II. Morphology.
14) Metaplasm.
15) Change of grammatical gender.
16) Nominal suffixation.
17) Diminutives.
18) Haploglogization.
19) Pronominal remodellings.
20) Sigmatic formation replacing contracted future.
21) Sigmatic formation replacing root aorist.
22) τεθεικα.
23) Thematization of athematic verbs.
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III. Syntax.
27) Decline of the dative.
28) Decline of the partitive genitive.
29) Preference for prepositional syntagm.
30) Reflexive pronoun replacing possessive pronoun.
31) Passive voice replacing middle voice.
32) Active voice replacing middle voice.
33) Middle voice replacing passive voice.
34) Perfect with temporal value.
35) Brachylogic ὅτι.

1. Introductory

The comic fragmentary texts of the 5th and 4th centuries BC offer a huge and varied testimony of linguistic innovations, that is to say, phenomena of different origin which were neither inherited nor generally attested in the literary tradition. It must be kept in mind, however, that most of these innovations, actually spoken by the comic characters in daily situations exempt of any particular social relevance, belong to the low registers of the language and follow the patterns of the non-standard varieties.

In choosing texts from both Athens and Sicily, even if they are not strictly contemporary in time, our conclusions initially focused on the Attic dialect, much more represented in our extant corpus of fragmentary comedy, will find a support in a second dialect which
is distant in geography, although close in literary tradition.\(^1\) Our fragments imply severe difficulties in many aspects, as many of these quotations were made because of their high interest for lexicographers and grammarians in general.

Our survey includes an extensive corpus consisting of the first three volumes of the Kassel & Austin edition.\(^2\) The objectives of our research are, first of all, the linguistic innovations registered in the comic genre of the Classical Age; second, the position of these phenomena within the history of the Greek language as full innovations even in further ages. Otherwise said, we are interested in those linguistic phenomena which in literature appear at first in the comic genre.

Morphology especially offers a plenty of examples of regularization, but not all of them are interesting for our purposes. For example, the ancient class of the athetic verbs undergoes thematization, witness Antiphanes in Antiph. 154: *Antiatt. d 8* Valente: διδούσιν ού διδόσιν. Ἀντιφάνης Μητροφώντι (“didóüsín, not didóásin. Antiphanes in *Metrophon*”). The thematic conjugation of the old athetic verbs occurs quite often in non-literary Koine, cf. *P.Mich. 176.20* ὀμνύω, dated on 91 AD, but this feature is so widely registered in the Classical literature that it has small relevance for our search. The same can be said of many other cases, implying or not regularization and levelling: for example, the sigmatic imperative λέξον -a substitutive form of the old εἰπέ-, attested by Epicharmus, Epich. fr. 113, v. 252; the syntactic construction ὡς οὔτος, cf. Sophr. fr. 57; and the periphrastic perfect, cf. Alex. fr. 267, 8 δεδωκός ἤν. Although these features fit with the substandard register, none of them can be ranged under the qualification of unique novelties. Other innovations come from high registers of the language, but they soon spread to almost all the literary genres. So, for example the *-μα terms, as in Alc. fr. 12 νοσημάτων instead of νόσων, Sophr. fr. 23.2 λίχνευμα. In the field of lexicon, Epicharmus, Alexis and Aristophanes, as well as Timocles, use the term δηλαδή, i.e. originally δῆλα δή, cf. Epich. fr. 149, Alex. fr. 177.6, Ar. Ve. 441, Timocl. fr. 3. Yet this term, so frequent in later stages of the Greek language, is attested from Herodotus onwards and in different genres,\(^3\) so that it will not deserve our comment here.

In short, we will pay attention to those instances featured by a sense of singularity which makes unusual to find them in other genres than comedy. As an example we will give that of the change of the gender of the masculine term ὁ σκότος, which became τὸ σκότος in Epicharmus.\(^4\) In outlining the history of this term, Fränkel pointed out that

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\(^1\) It is not really relevant for our purposes that Sophron was a mime writer. Also, from the point of view of methodology Alexis will be dealt with as an Attic author, although he was Thurian by birth and developed there his skills and his talent as comediohrapher. Furthermore, Epicharmus, born in the Aegean island of Cos, will be alluded to as a Syracusan poet.

\(^2\) Only occasionally we will offer quotations from comediohraphers included in other volumes (Eubulus, Plato, Timocles), just for the sake of comparison or completeness.

\(^3\) See, for example, Hdt. 4.135, S. OT 1501, E. IA 1386, Pl. Prt. 309a, etc.

\(^4\) Belloccchi 2008, 280.
already in the Classical Age the neuter form was developed, although it could achieve a normal use only in the New Comedy. According with Fränkel, Aristophanes always keeps the old masculine noun,\(^5\) but in fact this statement is quite weak, as there is an only valid example in Frogs.\(^6\) His contemporary Ameipsias, however, admitted the neutral declension, cf. Amips. 38: Phot. 525, 4 σκότος καὶ σκότων ἐκατέρως. οὕτως Ἀμειψίας (“skotos and skoton: in both forms. So Ameipsias”). In New Testament Greek, Blass does not mention any particular feature of this neutral declension, but Radermacher quotes this form as *vereinzelt*.\(^7\) Actually, in the Ptolemaic papyri variation cases such as τὸ ἔτος / ὀ ἔτως are quite frequent.\(^8\) Therefore, the role of comedy in this linguistic change goes far beyond other literary genres, and this is the kind of situation that we would like to underline in this paper.

2. Evidence for innovation I. Phonology.

Many of the attested innovations belong to the phonological level. Look, for example, 1) at this *Diphthong-Öffnung* attributed to Epicharmus, Epich. fr. 174: *Et. Gen.* A\(^1^\) ινα, τοις ἵματας ἐστι δὲ τῶν ἄπαξ εἰρήμενων παρὰ δὲ Ἐπιχάρμων αὐληρα εἰσίται, παρὰ τὸ αὐλόν (“eulera, in neuter form, the reins, the straps; it is one of the terms said only once; in Epicharmus it is said *aulera*, in comparison with *aulón*). In our opinion, however, beyond the suggested etymology, the spelling αὐληρα instead of εὐληρα shows a non-standard pronunciation of the diphthong which will be attested later in the Imperial Age, as in *P.Oxy.* I 67, 18 ἐραυνα (1st. cent. AD); II 294, 9 and 10 ἐραυνῶ (3rd. cent. AD). This Epicharmian example deserves full attention, for such a pronunciation was not very common indeed. We also read ἐραυνάω instead of ἐρευνάω in the *Gospel* of John and in the *Apocalypsis*, and in the Pauline epistles as well.\(^9\) Take into account that the phenomenon points to the idiolects of these two individuals. On the other hand, this feature was qualified by Schmid as a specific Helleno-Hebrew innovation,\(^10\) and later on by Buresch, Thumb and Reinhold as an Alexandrine trait.\(^11\) We can

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\(^5\) Fränkel 1911, 195-196.
\(^6\) Ar. *Ra.* 273, *Ec.* 288 κατὰ σκότον is ambiguous.
\(^7\) BLASS/DEBRUNNER 1961, 35; RADEMACHER 1925, 62.
\(^9\) Jo. 5.39 and 7.52, *Apoc.* 2.23, *Ro.* 8.27, *I Cor.* 2.10. See also MAYER 1923, 113: «Die im N.T. (...) auch bei Philo und Josephus (...) belegte Form ἐραυνάω erscheint in dem Papp. erst nach Christus: so ἡραύνηται *Oxy.* II 294, 9. 10 (22p); ἐραύννων ebd. 280, 30 (180p)».
\(^10\) SCHMID 1895, 40, where the feature is assigned to the category of Ἰουδαϊκά ὀνόματα.
now reconsider the question from a different perspective and depict the feature as a
general Koinism, not to be identified with a restricted group of speakers.

2) Prodelion or aphaeresis, also known as inverse elision, is not very common in
Classical Greek literature, but in Koine Greek it is slightly more usual, especially in the
Roman—and later in the Byzantine—papyri, while in Modern Greek its frequency beco-
mes very high.12 In our corpus, it occurs in Epiccharm and Amphip, that is to say, both
in Sicily and Athens, cf. Epich. fr. 76, 2 ὦ ἕτα, Amph. fr. 30, 12-13 (...) ἄλλα συλλαβήν ἄφελων ἴταον ἴτον γένοιτ' ἴν' ἐκάστῳ: ἴτῳ ἴτον ("but when taking
out a syllable 'it should cost four pennies'; 'and the fish?'; 'eight pennies"’), this second
passage being quoted by Athenaeus.13 In non-literary Koine we will find much more
examples, such as P.Grenf. II 26, 19 ὰ πελθῶν, 28, 12 νότου ἀπελθῶν, P.Oxy. 75, 32 καὶ ἐνα.

3) Our third feature will be unconditioned vowel metathesis, another uncommon
phonetical phenomenon. Our comic fragments show examples so striking as βιπτάζω
instead of βαπτίζω, cf. Epich. fr. 171, Sophr. fr. 110 βιπτάζω, Not surprisingly, Cassio
declares that this case of metathesis is unparalleled.14 Mayser defines this phenomenon
as originated in written texts,15 and a similar explanation is also tried by Threatte.16 With
all probability it was after the passages of Epiccharm and Sophron that Hesychius
collected this phonetical feature, cf. Hesych. 304: βιπτάζειν ἐπιβάζειν. Since there is
no basis for a phonetical change, in our opinion the explanation for the appearance of
the by-form βιπτάζω must be phono-morphological. Although there are of course many
*-τίζω formations as ποτίζω, σφηματίζω, χαίρετίζω etc., some of them experiencing an
increased use in Koine Greek, it seems that by means of a transitory form **βαπτάζω,
following the model of ἐξετάζω, κοιτάζω, and the like, a dissimilatory form βιπτάζω
was created.

4) Other examples of vowel change occur in contexts of liquid phonemes, especially
the rhotic /r/, as shown by Epiccharm and Sophron, cf. Epich. fr. 177 κοκρύδες instead of κρόκυδες, Sophr. 10 διφροιν instead of διφροιν. In this case the Syracusan authors are
much more close to the spoken language than their Attic partners. Aristophanes, for ins-

13 Athen. 224d.
14 CASSIO 2002, 66.
15 MAYSER 1923, I 152: «Wenn solche Metathesen bei unähnlichen Vokalen vorkommen, sind sie wohl rein
graphischer Natur». However, Mayser is wrong in describing as a vowel metathesis the writing of αὐθε-κείτως instead of αὐθεκείτως. The writing mistake is correctly defined, but there is no metathesis because αὶ and ε sounded exactly the same.
tance, keeps always the inherited form, cf. Ar. fr. 676 κροκύδα, fr. 689 κροκύδας. None-
theless, the language of the Greek papyri is fond of similar examples of vowel change.17
Threatte takes as doubtful an Attic evidence for metathesis and quotes just an example
from the Imperial period, τρομήση instead of τολμήση (3rd-4th cent. AD).18 Also Gignac
is quite reluctant to the recognition of metathesis as a rather common feature of substan-
dard language.19 On the other hand, spellings like Φρεσοφόνη, Φρεσσοφόνη are quite
abundant in the Attic defixiones from a much older period.20 Compare also the lexicogra-
phical quotation afforded by Hesychius, Hesych. 1270: προαίροι ακριδος ειδος (“pranó:
kind of locust”), that is to say, a πάρνοψ, which is to be related to Hesych. 1200:
πάρνοπες· ακριδες (“parnopes: locusts”) – a gloss inspired by an Aristophanic passage,
Av. 588.

5) Another rather anomalous case of vowel substitution can be found in Epicharmus,
namely Epich. fr. 191 βλίταχεα instead of βατράχεα. No matter how much unsound
we can find this vowel variation, the case deserves further study. The Epicharmean form
merges two variations, since not only liquids /l/ and /r/ are confused, but also the vowels
/a/ and /i/, so that βλίταχεα would have been occurred after an intermediate form
*βιτράχεα, with a vocalic dissimilation.21 Other examples given by the lexicographer
Hesychius should have different explanations: for instance, a quite opening of the vowel
because of the liquid is attested in Hesych. 1468 τράφαλλος· ὁ χλωρὸς τυρός, οἱ δὲ
τροφαλλίδα (“traphallos: fresh cheese, others say trophallida”). The case of Hesych. 1323:
ὦπτη· ὀμήρω, ὀπτη should be due to the semantic similarity of the corresponding verbs of
movement ἧπτω and ἧπτω.22

6) Not far from the above examples, a liquid vibrant is lost after two non-vocalic pho-
nemes as in the spelling ἀλαβάστον, registered in Attic non-literary texts dated about
414 and 350 a.C.,23 but also in the comediographer Alexis, cf. Alex. fr. 63 ἀλαβάστον
and 147, 3 ἀλαβάστος. Parallel examples can be found in the Ptolemaic papyri.24

7) The confusion between liquid phonemes is attested in Ameipsias, Sophron and So-
pater, cf. Amip. 5 κλιβανίτις, Sophr. 27 κλιβανίταις, Sopat. 5 κλιβανον. In dealing

19 GIGNAC 1975-1981, vol. I, 314: «Metathesis is limited to a very few words, indicating the existence of by-
forms rather than that metathesis was a phonological feature of the living language».
20 RABEHL 1906, 9 and 24.
21 It is after the form βλίταχος that one should probably explain another Hesychian testimony, Hesych. 306:
βλαχάν· ὁ βάτραχος.
22 It is not to be discarded that ἧπτω was created after ἧπτω.
with this same word, Mayser suggests that the Koine form follows a widely attested
tendency, given that κλίσβανος is used by Herodotus, besides the Doric instances.25

8) The lenition of the voiced obstruents is also attested, in such a way that they can be
even eliminated. A fragment from the Attic comicographer Plato was already noticed
by Dover,26 namely Plat. Com. fr. 183 ὀλίος. Yet other instances can be read in the Syracu-
san authors Rhinton and Sophron, cf. Rhint. fr. 2 ὀλίοιοιν ἡμῶν ἐμπέφυκε εὐφυχία
(“in a few of us good spirit has grown”), fr. 4 χρήζω γὰρ ὀλίον μισθόν αὐτῶς
λαμβάνειν (“I need to take a small salary”),27 Sophr. fr. 149 παμφάλανα instead of
πομφολάνα. The feature is very common in the language of the Greek papyri,28 so that
Thumb suggested, insofar as the examples in Asia Minor were not so frequent, that its
presence in Egypt was a direct consequence of the influence of the Coptic phonetics, not
at all an inherited feature since according with his opinion the Classical instances were
very few.29 We now have in front of our eyes a much more widespread testimony of the
feature.

9) Devoicing of the voiced obstruents is attested in Alexis and Sophron, cf. Alex. fr.
177, 3-4, ποταπός οὐτοσι / ἀνθρωπος; Sophr. fr. 144: Phot. 158 βλέννα· ἢ μύεα.
Σώφρον δὲ διὰ τοῦ π φησι πλέννα (“blenna: snot. But Sophron says plenna with p”).
Again the language of the Greek papyri shows interesting parallels, such as P. Par. 51, 3
βατίζειν, Ost. 1089, 5 προστέχουμαι, etc.30

10) The voiceless aspirated obstruents φ θ χ experienced deaspiration, as in Epichar-
mus and Sophron, cf. Epich. fr. 139 ὁπίδα· τὴν βελόνην. Ἐπίχαρμος (“rhapida: the
needle”), instead of ὁφίδα; Sophr. fr. 34 τατωμένα τοῦ κιτώνος, ο ἕκας νιν
ἀλφεθέρωκε (“in need of a mantle, the interest had ruined her”), instead of χιτώνος;
and fr. 67 and 68 ἦπιαλης instead of ἠφιάλης. This last term was quoted by Hesychius
after a fragment of the Lesbian poet Alcaeus, Alc. fr. 129 ἐπιαλῆς, cf. Hesych. 582:
ἐπιαλῆς· ὁ ἑρμάλης. Of course in the Imperial Age it was quite common to assign this
feature to the eastern Greek dialects. Therefore, Mayser explained all these instances of
deaspiration, cf. P. Par. 52, 6 κιθώνας, P. Tebt. 112, 42 κυθρα, as Ioniaics.31 Yet long
before the strongest period of influence of the Ionic spoken dialect in Athens, spellings
like κιτῶν, καλκοῦς, πρόετος (on a vase of the 4th cent. BC), ἄτλα (on a vase of the

26 DOVER 1993, 244-245.
27 See also EM 621.51 ὀλίος κατὰ διάλεκτον. Ταραντίνοι γὰρ τὸ ὀλίος ὀλίος λέγουσιν ἄνευ τοῦ γ; QUEROL DONAT 2018, especially 11-12.
28 MAYSER 1923, vol. I, 163-164. See also pp. 163-164 for the opposite feature, the Hiatustilgung.
29 THUMB 1901, 134-135.
30 MAYSER 1923, vol. I, 175; for a double example, both of devoicing and voicing spelling, see P. Weil III 1
πάμμοδος instead of πάμβος, cf. MAYSER 1923, 185.
31 MAYSER 1923, vol. I, 184: «Man darf in allen diesen Formen, die nicht nur auf Ägypten beschränkt bleiben,
Ionismen erkennen». 
painter Sophilos, 6th cent. Athens), etc., were attested in non-literary Attic, as well as a different case in which there is no real deaspiration, but methathesis, as in κυθρα for χυτρα. The inverse phenomenon is also attested in two Aristophanic fragments, Ar. fr. 391 φανός instead of πανός, cf. Phot. 377, 25 πανός· δέσμη κληματίδων. Οι δὲ νεώτεροι Ἀττικοι φανός (“panós: tie of the vine-branches. But the youngest Attic-speakers say phanos”), and fr. 701 πολφός instead of βολβός, this last text showing also the voiceless pronunciation of the voiced labial β.

11) The simplification of obstruent clusters is a feature present in many popular and generally non-literary registers. This feature is already attested in Aristophanes, cf. Ar. fr. 955 ἀρτον, where the first voiceless phoneme of the inherited term ἀρκτον is suppressed. This reduced by-form is common in our imperial texts, although with a different solution, cf. I Sal. 17.35 ἀρκος. Take also into account Hesych. 1017 ματία· ἁμαρτία.

12) Another phonetical confusion originates the change of the labial nasal /m/ into the labial voiced /b/. The case is attested in Antiphanes, cf. Antiph. fr. 46, 4 βύστακας. This same word appears in Eubulus and Aristoteles under the form μύσταξ, cf. Eub. fr. 112 μύστακα, Arist. fr. 539 μάστακα. Hesychius gives the follow explanation of the term, Hesych. 1068: μύσταξ: οἱ ἐν τῷ ἀνώ χείλει τρίχες (“mystax: hair on the upper lip”). But the gloss devoted to this variation by Photius is much more interesting, cf. Phot. 318: βύσταξ: ὁ ύφι ἡμῶν μύσταξ (“bystax: the word that for you is mystax”). Of course the oscillation of these phonemes is known from a long time before. The epic and poetic verb μάρναμαι is recorded in two epigrammes epigraphically transmitted under the spellings βαρνάμενος βάρναμαι, maybe because of a dissimilation. Moreover, our papyrological sources include the spelling attested in P. Tebt. I 16, 41 μάραθον, while similar instances can be found in the lexicographer Hesychius, cf. Hesych. 293 βάσκα· μάκελλα (“baska: hoe”), cf. 1014 μάσκη· δίκελλα (“maske: a double hoe”); 305: βλακεία· μαλακία (“blakeia: illness”), cf. 1008: μαλακία· νόσος, βλακία (“feebleness: illness. blakia”).

13) In a different phonetic context, Sophron offers an example of the posterior development of a secondary vowel from /ṛ/ followed by the development of an epenthetic glide, again the labial voiced /b/, cf. Sophr. 114 ἐμβραμένα (<ἐμμαμένα). This phenomenon is also registered in the language of the Ptolemaic papyri, cf. Wilcken Par. 5, 20, 8.
κρομβυπώλης, and in our lexicographers as well, cf. Hesych. 1054: Μομβρώ ἢ Μορμώ (“Mombro: Mormo”), in this last case after a metathetical form *Μομφώ.

3. Evidence for Innovation II. Morphology.

14) We will first of all notice the metaplasm in the old name ἅλς ἅλος, regularized by Antiphanes in the neuter nominative ἅλας, cf. Antiph. fr. 71, 2 ἅλας. This same regularization occurs in our papyri, cf. P. Ryl. 4, 692.7 and 12, 696.6, dated in the last decades of the 3rd cent. AD. The innovation also occurs in Neotestamentarian texts, cf. Mc. 9.50, Mt. 5.13 (bis), as well as in Galen 14, 3217.1 K. καὶ ἅλας βιολικόν μετὰ γλήχονος (“and a lump of salt with pennyroyal”).

15) Interesting beyond any doubt is the change of grammatical gender in the neutral form of the former masculine σκότος, transmitted by Ameipsias according with our sources (fr. 38). As it has been discussed above, we will just mention it.

16) Nominal suffixation shows the continuity between these comic texts and post-Classical Greek. Aristophanes, for instance, uses twice the suffix -ίας to allude to some wine of bad quality, cf. Ar. fr. 219 ταχύν νυν πέτου καὶ μὴ τροπίαν οἴνον φέδε. A second example appears in the extant comedies, where wine scented with floral aromas is called ἀνθοσμίας, a term also attested in the fragments of Aristophanes himself and his contemporary Pherecrates. Both terms are quoted and explained by Hesychius: Hesych. 161 ἀνθοσμίας οἶνος ἀνθός ἔχων (“anthosmías: wine aromatized with flower scent”); Hesych. 1475 τροπίας οἶνος· μεταβεβληκὼς καὶ ἕκλυτος (“tropias wine: transformed and untied”). It is interesting that there are other examples that refer to the same reality, different kinds of wine, cf. Pherecr. fr.130, 6, Anaxandr. fr. 41, 71 and Pl. Com. fr. 244 κατνιας, as in the Aristophanic Acharnians we find ομφακίας. Similarly, this suffix *-ίας provided many names for the semantic family of winds, cf. κερκίας, ὀρνιθίας, κακίας, etc. The formation is of course present in the Ptolemaic papyri with examples such as ἐρυθρίας, ἱσχυρίας.

17) The preference for diminutive substantives links also these comic fragments with the Greek Koine. Alexis, Antiphanes, Apollodorus and Aristophanes prove that the di-

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38 Ar. Ra. 1150, Pl. 807; fr. 351; Pherecr. fr. 108, 30.
39 Ar. Ach. 352.
40 Chantraire 1933, 94.
41 Mayser 1923, vol. I, 434, P. Petr. II 13 (a) 26 ἑρυθρίας, P. Petr. II 10 (1) 10 ἱσχυρίας.
minutive has lost its meaning to become a simple alternative to the corresponding substantive.\textsuperscript{42} It has no sense that Alexis adds the adjective ‘small’ in Alex. fr. 115, ll. 5-6 ἰχθυδίων μικρῶν. On the Aristophanic fragment 13 δύοιν ἀνυχιδίουν the lexicographer Pollux had to make a very valuable comment, cf. Poll. 10.118 (...) δῆλον ὅτι λύχνων εἴρηκεν ἀλλ` οὐ λύχνους μικροὺς (“it is clear that he was speaking about oil lamps, not about small oil lamps”). In a similar way, look at Mt. 26.51 ὑπίον and Mc. 14.47 and Jo. 18.10 ὑπάριζον, as nothing in our texts imply that the poor servant had a diminutive ear.

18) Two fragments of Epicharmus, Epich. fr. 43 and 86, show a case of haplologization, πέρδακας instead of πέρδικας. This feature can also be recognized in the language of satyr drama, cf. A. fr. 234 θωπείς instead of θωπεύςεις,\textsuperscript{43} S. fr. 173 θωρχείς instead of θωρχεῖς.\textsuperscript{44} The language of the Greek papyri gives us again striking parallels, such as P. Grenf. I 39 v. Π. 2 στεφαλβάνος,\textsuperscript{45} P. Petr. I 14, 20 Βενήκης,\textsuperscript{46} instead of στεφανολβάνος, Βενήκης. Moreover, the Hesychian lexicographical compilation adds new valuable information, cf. Hesych. 1008: μάλαι· μασχάλαι (“malai: armpits”). The phenomenon of haplology was actually common in low registers.

19) Pronominal morphology makes also some contribution to our outline of the linguistic innovations in the literary language of the comic genre. Epicharmus and Sophron use Sicilian pronominal forms that had no continuity in the Greek Koine, for they were limited to that dialectal area. Our first instance comes from Epicharmus, cf. Epich. fr. 5 αὐτότερος αὐτῶν. This innovation has a very noticeable parallel in Ar. Pl. 83 αὐτότατος, showing also the extension of the adjectival gradation to the class of the personal pronouns.\textsuperscript{47} The following examples are taken from Sophron: the reflexive pronoun αὐταὐτός is attested also once, cf. Sophr. 18 αἳ δὲ μη ἑγὼν ἐμασσὸν ταῖς αὐταὐταῖς χερσὶν (“if I had not knead it with my hands”),\textsuperscript{48} but it is quite frequent in epigraphical texts of the Hellenistic Age from different places in most of Sicily; as a formation many scholars use to analyze it as a refection by means of the addition of an

\textsuperscript{42} Alex. 159 ὁψάρια, τριχίδια and σηπίδια, 177, Anaxil. 28 (bis), Antiph. 132 ὁψάρια, Apoll. Car. 30 οίνάρια. Actually this item can be ranged among the morphological as well as among the syntactic innovations.

\textsuperscript{43} REDONDO 2015a, 149.

\textsuperscript{44} REDONDO 2003, 426. For an alternative explanation, as the passive aorist participle of θήγω, see LÓPEZ EIRE 2003, 391.

\textsuperscript{45} MAYSER 1923, vol. I, 6 and n. 4, suggests that the form can be recognised as a case of haplology, but states that the question remains unsolved because of the unclear meaning of the word.

\textsuperscript{46} MAYSER 1923, vol. I, 245-248.

\textsuperscript{47} A different case is that of the possessive pronouns ἡμέτερος, ἡμέτερος and σφέτερος, as well as the alterity pronoun ἔτερος, where the suffix keeps its old intensive meaning, cf. WITZWER 1970; see also LEJEUNNE 1962; NEUMANN 1983.

\textsuperscript{48} ESTEVE 2009, 206.
unddeclined element *-τα. In our opinion, for different reasons it seems better to follow the explanation of García Teijeiro and Molinos Tejada, as an haplologized form of the reflexive tautological conflation αὐτός αὐτόν, since it offers a comparative approach to similar cases, it is more economical according with the refection procedures, and avoids the introduction in pronominal morphology of such a singular element as the indeclinable suffix *-τα, only known till now as a temporal adverbial element.50 Finally, the third Sophronian innovation is also a reflexive pronoun, cf. Sophr. fr. 89 Συμμαχούσιον ψήν, and fr. 90 πῶς ψή καὶ γινώσκοµες; (“how do we know ourselves?”), and it was explained by Hesychius with the following gloss, cf. Hesych. 1574 ψήν: αὐτός, αὐτόν (“ψήν: themselves; himself”). The form ψή is found in Theocritus, Theocr. IV 3, as well as in the Cretan dialect; it is usually explained as a metathetical by-form of σφέ.51 However, as indicated above, none of these innovations had some continuity in later stages of the Greek language, the Theocritean instance being due to the sole factor of literary imitation.

A last remark on pronominal morphology is related to the form οὐθέν used by Antiphanes, cf. Antiph. fr. 193, 11-12 (...) ἀλλὰ οὐθέν μὲλέτη / τῶν σκοµµάτων μοι (“but I do not care at all about these jests”).52 Gignac is not right when he states that it was a Sandhi-sequence that originated the new form,53 since never in Classical and Hellenistic standard Greek a voiced stop became aspirated. Only in the imperial period will be found some examples, although quite rare.54 Actually οὐθές was very sparingly used by the Attic writers. Hypereides, for instance, says (...) οὐδὲν δεινὸν ἐπαχοῦν (...) ὡς οὐθενός ἄξιον ὑπνα ("they did not suffer at all (...) since they were not worthy anything") etc.,55 as a kind of doublet.

Verbal morphology confirms the link between this language of comedy and the Greek Koine. 20) In post-Classical Greek the sigmatic future uses to restrict and even to eliminate the ancient contract future. This preference for sigmatic future is already attested in

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49 Estève 2009, 217: «En primer lugar hay que destacar el uso del sufijo –τα añadido al pronombre αὐτός para formar el pronombre reflexivo en las antiguas ciudades no griegas del oeste y centro de la isla. Así, encontramos: αὐτότα, αὐτόντα ambas en Centuripla en el s. III/II; αὐτόντα en Termas de Hímera en el s.II o en Segesta αὐτότα entre los siglos III/II». Esteve himself (2009, 227) takes for highly probable that the innovation was extended to all the Sicilian dialects: «No tenemos ninguna razón para pensar que el reflexivo del tipo αὐτότα no llegaría a toda la isla, incluidas las zonas del sur, de colonización ródia, y Siracusa. Los primeros ejemplos de estos pronombres surgen en el siglo III y se generalizan en el siglo II. Es probable que, en general, los reflexivos en –τα conviviesen con reflexivos áticos que poco a poco irían desplazándolos». On αὐτόντα see also Mímirera 2012, 232-233.

50 García Teijeiro/Molinos Tejada 1988, 177-178.

51 Fiske 1830, 227.

52 In this regard, see also fr. 281 K.-A. in Douglas Olson 2021, 250; Threatte 1980, 472-476.


the following Alcaeus’ fragment: Alc. 8: Antiatt. i 38 Valente: κρεμάσων οὐ μόνον κρεμῶ. Ἀλκαῖος Γανιμήδηι (“kremason: not only kremo. Alcaeus in Ganimedes”). Aristophanes certainly used the expected contracted future κρεμῶ,56 but it was in a lyric section. His adoption of the new sigmatic formations is not limited to the particular Greek spoken by the Scythian archer with his τρέξει, i.e. θρέξει,57 since the innovation is also used by such different characters as the Just Discourse, War and the slave Charon.58 This innovative sigmatic future -and aorist- will ratify its expansion in the Septuagint, cf. LXX Gn. 40.19: ἐτὶ τριῶν ἡμερῶν ἀρελεῖ Φαραώ τὴν κεφαλὴν σου ἀπὸ σοῦ, καὶ κρεμάσει σε ἐπὶ ξύλου, καὶ φάγεται τὰ ὅρνεα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ τὰς σάρκας σου ἀπὸ σοῦ (“Yet in no more than three days the Pharaoh will rip your head off, and he will hang you on a tree, and heaven birds will eat your flesh”).59 New Testament Greek, as the language of the Greek papyri, generalized the sigmatic future in the paradigmata provided with dental suffix.60 Yet the opposite phenomenon is also attested, as it can be read in Ameipsias, cf. Amip. fr. 29 ἀναβιβῶμαι ἀντὶ τοῦ ἀναβιβάσομαι (“anabihomai: instead of anabibasomai”).

21) In accordance with an extended and deep regularization of the verbal morphology, the old root aorist is now replaced by sigmatic forms, as in a fragment of Antiphanes, cf. Antiph. fr. 33 λείψας instead of λιπῶν. Similar examples can be found in non-literary Roman and Byzantine papyri.61

22) The perfect form τέθεικα is attested in the Attic comedographers Alexis and Batos, cf. Alex. fr. 15, 13 διὰ τοῦτο <τὸ> τάριχος τέθεικας διπλασίων (“for this reason did you raise twice the price of your salted fish?”); Bat. fr. 2, 7-8 τι τάργυριον, ἀνθρωπε, τιμώτερον / σαυτοῦ τέθεικας ἢ πέφυκε τῇ φύσει (“why, man, did you release money that is worth more than what is naturally due you?”). This by-form can be read in LXX Is. 49, 6 ιδοὺ τέθεικα σε εἰς διαθήκην γένους (“have it in mind, I made you as a pact of our people”),62 and in the Ptolemaic papyri and in New Testament Greek as well it is

56 Ar. Pl. 312.
57 Ar. Th. 1222 and 1225.
58 Ar. N. 1005 άποθρέξει (Just Discourse), Pa. 261 μεταθρέξει (War), Ra. 193 περιθρέξει (Charon). On other Aristophanic innovations in verbal morphology – βαλλόμεναι, ἀνίστασο, έδοξόρθεν – see REDONDO 2015b, 193. See also LAUTENSACH 1911, 173-174.
59 Gn. 40, 19.
60 Blass/DEBRUNNER 1961, 50; RADERMACHER 1925, 92-93. The only exception were some forms taken from quotations of the Septuagint, for example Mt. 12.21 ἔλπισασιν, Lc. 19.44 ἐδιαφορέσω. For the Roman and Byzantine papyri see IGNAC 1975-1981, vol. II, 284-286.
62 Most, not to say all, of the extant translations of this passage do not give any account of this sentence, which instead is rendered with a version where δέδωκα replaces the uncomfortable τέθεικα.
also the regular record. We must take into account that the first Attic epigraphical example is dated in 69-62 BC.

23) Other noticeable verbal forms do appear in the fragments of the Athenian comedographers Antiphanes and Alexis. Antiphanes uses a second person singular of the middle pluperfect with an ending *-εσο which gives in a contract verb in *-α the result *-ᾶσο, cf. Antiph. fr. 93 ἱκροᾶσο ἀντί τοῦ ἱκροῶ. Ἀντιφάνης Ἐπιδαύρῳ (“ekroᾶσο: instead of ekroῦ. Antiphanes in Epidauros”). The innovation consists in adding the thematic vowel, since this verbal formation was all around the Greek territories athematic, as far as we know.

24) Morphological innovations are also attested in the imperative. The comedian Alexis made his own contribution to it, cf. Alex. fr. 14: Antiatt. μ 25 Valente: μετάβασα ἀντί καὶ ἀνάβασα καὶ κατάβασα. Ἀλεξὶς Ἀμφώτιδι (“metaba: like anaba and kataba. Alexis in Amphotis”). This formation appears in Aristophanes, cf. Ar. Ve. 979-980 and Ra. 35 κατάβασα. Yet in this author the most common form is the old one as in Ve. 963 ἀνάβησθι, Ach. 884 ἐκβαίνει, Eg. 169 ἐπανάβησθι, Ra. 674 ἐπίβηνε, Nu. 237 and Lys. 873 and 883 κατάβησθι. In non-literary Koine, however, the old ending *-οι is only used in the verbs εἰμὶ and οἶδα.

25) In 1948 Schmid and Stählin pointed out the present formation with nasal infix and suffix as one of the features by means of which the language of Thucydides was related to the Greek Koine. The fourth-century BC comic poet Antiphanes is actually placed between Thucydides and the Koine, and this verbal formation is attested in one of his fragments, cf. Antiph. fr. 37 πρὸς τῷ Πέρωνι μυρωπόλη γευόμενον κατελίμπανον / αὐτὸν περὶ μύρων κτλ. (“I left him close to Peron, the perfumeseller, tasting fragrances”). In a similar way, Deinolochus prefers a new formation, cf. Deinol. fr. 5 σωννύω instead of σοζω, originated by analogy with ζωννύω according with Cassio. This form was already remarked by Ahrens, and its continuation in the Cretan modern conjugations εσοννύω, θα σωννύσω et sim. was confirmed by Hatzidakis. Similar formations are Attic καταδηνύω, IG III App. 75 (12ies) and 94, 2, and Cretan στανύω, cf. GDI 5040, 66, as deverbatives from δεω and ιστημι, respectively.

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64 Meisterhans/Schwzyer 1900, 189.
65 Mt. 5.25, Mc. 5.34 ἵσθι (ἰσμι), Lc. 19.17 ἵσθι (οἶδα), Jer. 31.34 γνῶθι. The Lucan example is a hapax, and even most of commentators and translators did not understand that is is an οἶδα-form, cf. A. Ag. 1760.
67 Cassio 2012, 262.
68 Ahrens 1843, 352.
69 Hatzidakis 1892, 157.

The innovations are not restricted to the fields of phonetics and morphology. To begin with, 26) there are examples of the decay of the dative case, as shown by Alexis and Aristophanes, cf. Alex. 250: Antiatt. π 1 Valente: παρ᾽ ἡμᾶς οἴκει ἀντί τοῦ παρ᾽ ἡμῖν. Ἀλεξίς φιλάθηγαίῳ (“he lives close to us: instead of near us. Alexis in Philathenaios”), Ar. fr. 466, 4-5: γυναίκα δὴ ζητοῦντες ἐνθάδ᾽ ἥκομεν / ἤν φασιν εἶναι παρὰ σε (“We arrived here indeed in the search of a woman who is said to live by your side”). In both sentences the required pronouns had to be ἡμῖν and σε.

27) The substitution of the partitive regime with the accusative appears in a quotation from Antiphanes, Antiph. fr. 68: Antiatt. δ 38 Valente: δραμι ἁκούσαν ἀντί τοῦ δράματος ἁκούσαι (“to listen a play: instead of listen to a play”). The Septuagint shows close examples as Gn. 3, 8 καὶ ἦκοσαν τὴν φωνήν Κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ περιπατοῦντος ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ τὸ δειλινόν (“and they heard the voice of Lord, the God, while he was walking down the paradise in the evening”), 70 and if we now pay attention to the Ptolemaic papyri we will find the same construction, as in UPZ 77 col. I 25 ἁκούσασα τὴν φωνήν (“as she heard the voice”). 71

28) The preference for accusative constructions expands to the prepositional syntagm. So Amphis prefers to use the prepositional syntagm with accusative κατ᾽ ἄγρῳ instead of the old construction with dative ἐν ἄγρῳ, cf. Amph. fr. 12: κατ᾽ ἄγρῳν ἀντὶ τοῦ ἐν ἄγρῳ. Ἀμφῖς Δακτυλιῳ (“in the countryside: instead of by the countryside. Amphis in The ring”). The same construction, now with a temporal meaning, comes back in this Septuagint passage, Deut. X 15: πλῆθος τούς πατέρας ὑμῶν προειλατο Κύριος ἀγαπάν αὐτούς, καὶ ἐξέλεξατο τὸ σπέρμα αὐτῶν μετ᾽ αὐτούς ὑμᾶς πάρα πάντα τὰ ἔθνη κατὰ τὴν ἡμέραν ταύτην (“except that the Lord chose to love your ancestors and appointed their descendant after them, that is to say, you, over all the nations up to this day”).

29) Regarding pronominal syntax, Alexis replaces the simple possessive ἡμῖς by the reflexive ἐμαυτῆς, cf. Alex. fr. 291: οὐκ ἔστ᾽ ἀναυχυντότερον οὐδὲν θηρίον γυναικὸς ἀπ᾽ ἐμαυτῆς ἐγὼ τεκμαίρομαι. (“There is no beast more shameless than woman: I have experience from mine”). A similar use can be detected in the Lucan Acts of the Apostles, cf. Act. 21, 11 καὶ ἐλθόν πρὸς ἡμᾶς καὶ ἀρας τὴν ζώνην τοῦ Παύλου δήσας ἐτυντο τοὺς πόδας καὶ τὰς χεῖρας εἶπεν etc. (“And as soon as he went to us, took out Paul’s belt and tied his feet and hands, he said”). 72

70 Blass/Debrunner 1961, 114.
71 Mayer 1923, vol. II, 2 207.
30) Variation in verbal voice is also widely attested. Of course the middle voice experienced the strong concurrence of the passive voice, as in several fragments of Epicharmus, Sophron and Antiphanes. Our first example, Epich. fr. 210: Phryn. Ecl. 79 γενηθηναι: αντι του γενεσθαι, is described by Willi as a Koinism in Epicharmus,\textsuperscript{73} which is not exactly the case: it is attested in Metrodorus of Chios, a philosopher of the 4th cent. BC, cf. Metrod. Aët. I 5, 4, in the Neotestamentarian text of Heb. V 5, and in an epigraphical record of northern Thracia, IG X E205, 16, ca. 2nd-1st cent. BC. Just to quote an example taken from the Greek Koine, cf. Mc. 12.29 Ο δε ἵπτον κατακριθη αὐτῷ (“and Jesus answered him”).\textsuperscript{74} The Sophronian instance is the following, Sophr. fr. 101 ἐκατηρισθημεν, so explained by Hesychius, Hesych. 497: ἐκατηρισθημεν- ἐμεθυσθημεν. In our third example, Antiphanes does not correctly use the old middle form γαμοῖμαι, which was assigned to the female speakers –just as the passive μοιχεύωμαι was also applied to women-, cf. Antiph. 48: Antiatt. γ 2 Valente: γαμώ ἡ γυνὴ λέγει, οὐ γαμοῖμαι. Αντιφάνης Ασώτος. ἐγημίην ὁ ἀνήρ λέγει αντί του ἐγημα (“gamma says the woman, not γαμοῦμαι). Antiphanes in The people deprived of salvation. The husband says egemenai instead of egema”). The comment by Ammonius is absolutely clear: γημα του γημάσθαι διαφέρει, ὅτι γαμεί μὲν ὁ ἀνήρ, γαμεῖται δὲ ἡ γυνὴ (“γῆμαι is different from γεμάσθαι, for the husband marries, and the wife is married”).

31) A different example, where the middle voice is replaced with an active form, comes out among the fragments of the comicographer Alcaeus, cf. Alc. fr. 31: Antiatt. β 40 Valente: βιάσας ἀντί του βιάσασθαι. Ἀλκαῖος: ἐβιασέ μου τὴν γυναίκα. The quotation seems somewhat corrupted, as the article has a non-Doric form. Yet the verbal active form has no textual problems and is also guaranteed by the grammatical quotation. Its correspondence can be found in P.Petr. II 45, col. 1, 2 καταβιάσωσας,\textsuperscript{75} P.Oxy. 1257.17 δείησει (4th cent. BC), P.Giss. 105.20 λήψῃς (5th cent. AD).\textsuperscript{76} Consequently, there is no doubt about how often the middle voice shows its decreasing use.

32) As in former cases, where the innovation draws the opposite reaction –not especially because of a conservative tendency, but after a counterbalanced sense of symmetry-, also some middle forms were thought to express the passive meaning. So in Alexis and Epicharmus, cf. Antiatt. λ 11 Valente: Alex. 23 λαβόμενος: ἀντὶ τοῦ λαβῶν. Ἀλέξις Ἀρχιλόχος (“labomenos: instead of labon. Alexis in The Archilochi”); Epich. 118: Antiatt. δ 40 Valente: δεούμεθα: ἀντὶ τοῦ δεηθησόμεθα. Ἐπίχαρμος Δευκάλιων (“deoumetha, instead of deethesometha. Epicharmus in Deucalion”). The first example shows the middle form instead of the active, the second instead of the passive.

\textsuperscript{73} Willi 2008, 147-149. A more detailed account in FAVI 2021.


\textsuperscript{75} Mayer 1923, 385.

33) Another important syntactic change, the loss of the aspectual value of the perfect stem, very often used from now on just for expressing past time, can be perfectly understood after this passage from Antiphanes, cf. Antiph. fr. 202:

Whoever having been born as a human being bears in mind that for his living every sure possession is fruitful, is most of times wrong; either some tax takes out all his belongings, or was completely ruined for he yielded to a verdict, or he was fined after holding a strategy, or because he provided his chorus with golden robes, or while being trierarch he became choked, or when sailing was taken prisoner somewhere, or while walking or in sleeping was dismembered by his servants.

The loss of the aspectual value in New Testament Greek is underlined by Radermacher and Blass. A second example, this time taken from Amphis, will supor the evidence of this innovation in the perfect tense—and the same should be said regarding its past tense, the pluperfect: Amph. 27, 4.5: ἀκτήκοας σὺ, δέσποτ’, ἢδη πώποτε / τὸ θυμίαμα τοῦτο; (“did you ever hear, lord, this fragrance?”)

34) An interesting colloquialism occurs at one of the pseudo-Epicharman fragments. The text goes like this: [Epich.] 295, 3-4 τεσσάρων δὴ δεῖ λαβεῖν ἱμάτια ἀπὸν αὐτὸν / καὶ δεῖ σποτὺς λόγουν ὑπὸ / οὸ νοσεῖσθι νοσεῖ τις ἢ ὅτι (“so, he must take an amount of three months for the four seasons [...] / whoever is patient suffers not otherwise”). This syntactic construction is based on the principle of brachylogy, so that the causal marker ὅτι is here equivalent to a whole sentence. The cluster is however not very common, and its parallels must be find in the Ptolemaic papyri, cf. P. Teb. 35.8 ἢ ὅτι ο παρά ταῦτα ποιῶν ἑαυτὸν αἰτιῶσεται –here after high point- (“not otherwise, because whoever acts against these rules will incriminate himself”), 15 τοὺς παρὰ τῶν κατὰ κόμην ἐπιστατῶν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἐμφάνη τάν πλέον διαγράφειν τίμι μνᾶς ἀργυρίου μ ἢ ὅτι ὅποιο παρὰ ταῦτα ποιῶν ἑαυτὸν αἰτιῶσεται (“those who take myrrh from the governors of each village

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Footnotes:

77 Radermacher 1925, 153-154; Blass/Debrunner 1961, 211: «die spätere Sprache hat das Perfekt fallen gelessin (...), nachdem es vorher noch als erzählendes Tempus vergeblich mit dem Aorist konkurriert hatte.»
and from the other people do not inscribe an amount for more than forty minae not otherwise, since whoever acts against these rules will incriminate himself.\textsuperscript{78}

5. Conclusions.

From the above data some conclusions can be drawn: first, our comic fragments show the same linguistic innovative solutions that we find in private texts written by individuals with no special literary and rhetorical skills, as well as in a few literary genres: judicial oratory and historiography.

Second, some of these innovations will achieve a standard status only after a long period. Such are, for instance, the elimination of the dative case and of some middle verbs. This means how much time the social and cultural pression kept the innovation restricted to informal speaking situations.

Third, it is interesting to remark that a half of the commented features belong to the phonological level, that is to say, the comic poets were especially attentive and close to the innovations produced in talk situations. This fact is wholly consequent with our former remark.

Fourth, at a very first sight it could be inferred from the above data that the Syracusan authors are much more close than the Athenians to the spoken language and, what is more, to its most innovative trends. Yet this is a rather slippery slope, since a high number of the quotations taken from our Sicilian comediographers come from two lexicographers: that called the Antiatticist, working in the 2nd cent. AD, and Hesychius, working in the 6th cent. AD. Had we a higher amount of fragments from the Syracusan authors, maybe there should be room for a right comparison. The particular case of Epicharmus deserves further comment, since this author was especially attracted by linguistics and rhetoric, as shown by Novokhatko and Lebedev.\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{78} Mayser 1923, vol. II, 3, 47.

\textsuperscript{79} Novokhatko 2015 and Lebedev 2017 explain how Epicharmus played with the paretymological joke between the theonym \textit{Ze\'us} and the verb \textit{z\'e\'n}, by means of a parechesis that sounds only if we have as our starting point the Doric accusative of the former, \textit{Ze\'na}, which could be also Ionicised in the form \textit{Ze\'na}. It seems now unacceptable the old view of Grysar 1828, 209-226, on the literary language of Epicharmus. His view was supported mostly by misunderstanding and prejudgment, cf. 222-223: \textit{Serno autem, quem ad fabulas suas omnino adhibuit Epicharmus, il est, quo tum temporibus homines Siculi utebantur. Duplex enim sermonis Dori\'c genus fuisse statuunt grammatici, unum antiquius, quod asperum et rusticitate plenum, alterum recen\'tius, quod facilius et ad Ionicum sermonem enollitum fuerit. Illo igitur Epicharmum et Sophronem, hoc Theocritum usos esse tradunt.}
Fifth, a difference can be made between comedy and mime, insofar as this last genre reflects the dialectal diction at a greater extent. Maybe the fact that some mimes were written in prose helped to approach better to the real colloquial situations.\textsuperscript{80}

Sixth, exclusive dialectalisms have small chance, if any, to arrive into the Greek Koine. This is perfectly exemplified by the pronominal innovations registered in our Syracusan authors, none of which reached a normalized extended use in Koine Greek.

Some conclusions have a different perspective of interest: they point out how the language of our comic characters fits with the substandard registers. In other words, our comic fragments display rather the daily life, interests and motifs of joy and fear of the common people. Most of our characters have to be found among individuals who had no chance to follow regularly the lessons of rhetoricians and even schoolmasters. In the same way our fragments attest a freedom of speech, from the point of view of grammar at least, that situates the genre of comedy at the highest level of closeness to the whole of its society.

From the perspective of the history of the Greek language, it is interesting to point out that many of the features that led to the Koine were parallely developed in Sicily and Athens, no matter if there was, as it seems, a literary Sicilian influence on the evolution of the Attic theatre.\textsuperscript{81} This fact, obviously concluded after the extant data -prodelision; lenition of voiced obstruents; deaspiration of voiceless aspirated obstruents; changes in the diathetical system- means that former theories on the opposition of spoken Doric and spoken Koine were wrong.\textsuperscript{82} Actually in the Hellenistic age the so-called Koinisms have been recognised at a higher extent in low registers, inasmuch as people of lower education were more flexible in using non-standard linguistic solutions.\textsuperscript{83}

As suggested by Willi -see the quotation which opens this paper-, of course the real Greek language used by the speakers was quite different from that elaborated in their plays by the literary authors, since even a genre so close to realism as comedy had to embellish its lexis with a huge arsenal of poetic and rhetorical devices. Notwithstanding, the comic poets were extremely attentive to the new trends of spoken Greek.

\textsuperscript{80} Cf. Willi 2014, 183.

\textsuperscript{81} This influence was simply non-existent according to Zielinski 1885, but extremely important according to Von Salis 1905, who relies at most on Arist. Po. 1449b 5-7. See also Cassio 1985; Bellocchi 2008, 260, and especially the complete reappraisals by Bretholtz 1960, 25-82, and Kerhof 2001, 51-177. We must also take into account the Ionicisms and Doricisms represented with a realistic bias on the Attic stage, as reminded by Cassio 2002, 57.

\textsuperscript{82} Sicca 1924, 156-160.

\textsuperscript{83} Mimbrera 2012, 244: «(...) Features of the spoken Koine were more prominent in this group [that is to say, in defixiones and dedications] of inscriptions than in the contracts». 
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Abstract: The comic festivals became a useful platform for transferring those linguistic innovations already common in daily speech to a literary frame. This was a regular behaviour among the comediographers, while the tragic poets did it in a much more restricted way. This paper will focus on the comic attestations of the linguistic change occurred in two different dialectal areas, Attica and Sicily. The comic testimonies show a greater closeness to the common people and reflect the linguistic change better than other literary genres. Many of the analyzed features reappear either in the non-literary Koine of our papyrological records or in the usually simply elaborated Biblical Greek.