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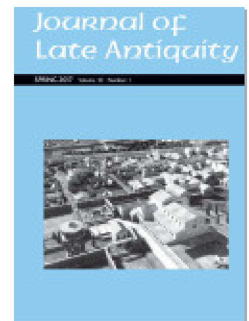

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Lucian in Byzantium: The Intersection of the Comic Tradition and Christian Orthodoxy in the Anonymous *Patriot*

Scholars recognize that the Patriot, *an anonymous Byzantine dialogue of uncertain date, imitates Lucianic satire, without pursuing how allusions to Lucian's work and that of his primary models, Plato and Aristophanes, function to characterize the dialogue's two main participants, Critias and Triepho. Attention to the original context of these allusions suggests that the traditional way of reading the* Patriot *underestimates its sophistication. This paper argues that the* Patriot *appropriates Lucian's comic dialogue form, as described in the* Literary Prometheus *and* Double Indictment, *to devalue Critias's nostalgic Hellenism relative to Triepho's blending of Christian orthodoxy with the Greek comic tradition.*

Famous for his biting satire and fantastical scenarios, Lucian was both denounced and emulated by later Greek writers. For some, he was incompatible with a Christian worldview.[1] The *Suda* famously preserves a tale that he was ripped apart by dogs and sentenced to burn in hell as a direct result of his attacks on Christianity in the *Life of Peregrinus*.[2] Other writers, however, turned to him as a model, imitating his linguistic style, playful spirit, and literary motifs.[3] The *Patriot,* a Byzantine dialogue of uncertain date and authorship, falls into the latter category. Lucian's literary world functions in this dialogue as a mediator between the pull of the classical past and the contemporary realities of writing dialogue in a Christian

I wish to thank Professor Bourbouhakis and the other *Journal of Late Antiquity* reader for their helpful insights and recommendations.

[1] On Lucian's popularity in Byzantium, see Robinson 1979, 68–81; Kaldellis 2012, 275; and most recently Bozia 2015, 154. For Lucian's treatment by the church fathers, see Baldwin 1982.

[2] See *Suda* Λ 683.

[3] Johannes Georgides (eleventh century); Theodorus Prodromos (twelfth century) *Sale of Lives of Litterateurs* and *Men in Public Life*; and Thomas Magister's (thirteenth century) *Selection of Attic Nouns* all attest to his popularity.

society.[4] The main portion of the text recounts a conversation between two friends, Critias and Triepho, about a series of dire and ambiguous predictions that the former has recently heard and that ultimately prove false.[5] Discussion of these predictions is preceded by an exchange between the two characters over the suitability of invoking pagan gods as witnesses to oaths. Pressured by Triepho to reject the Olympians one-by-one, largely on the basis of their scandalous mythology, Critias ultimately accepts the Trinity as the divine entity by which to swear. Read against Lucian's corpus and the writers on which he himself drew, the *Patriot* offers an intriguing but often overlooked perspective on Lucian's place as a literary paradigm for negotiating the tensions between Hellenism and Christianity.[6]

Ascertaining the nature of the dialogue's treatment of this tension and, moreover, the exact object of its satire remains a matter of contention.[7] This is partially a result of our uncertainty regarding when it was composed.[8] Satire is often closely connected to contemporary circumstances, and our lack of a definitive date raises questions as to whether the *Patriot* reflects on contemporary tensions or restages what had become an anachronistic debate.[9] The questions that surround the *Patriot*, however, also stem from the fact that references to the Greek comic tradition, in which I include Lucian, pervade the dialogue. Discussion of the pagan gods is couched in comic language, but so, remarkably, are references to Paul and the Trinity. Lucian and one of his own

[4] Goldhill 2008, 1–12 argues that, contrary to the democratic exchange found in classical dialogues, Christian dialogues focus on reinforcing a hierarchical worldview. For arguments against this view, see Cameron 2014, 7–22.

[5] See sections 19–29.

[6] Hellenism, Hellenic, and Hellene are complex terms that could be understood by a Byzantine audience as referring to the geographical region of Greece, the ancient Greeks, paganism, a person who spoke Greek, and the possession of classical *paideia*. In the case of the *Patriot,* the anonymous author appears primarily interested in exploring the possession of classical *paideia* and, to a lesser degree, its association with the pagan religion. For the purposes of this discussion, I will use "Hellenism" to refer to these specific associations. See Kaldellis 2007, 184–87 and Bowersock 1990, 1–15 for discussions of the different connotations of the term.

[7] For arguments in favor of both paganism and Christianity as the object of the dialogue's satire, see Baldwin 1982, 342. Contrary to Baldwin, Hilhorst 1993, 39 contends that the dialogue displays "a loyalty to Christian belief."

[8] Controversy has surrounded the dating of the dialogue. For an extensive discussion of the internal evidence for the dialogue's date and the problems that it poses, see Baldwin 1982, 321–26.

[9] On this problem, see Baldwin 1982, 343 who questions the conventional assumption that the dialogue was written in a later period, perhaps the tenth century, and proposes instead to ascribe the dialogue to the brief reign of Julian. Although this is an intriguing hypothesis, the use of the unusual noun στρατηγέτης, the anachronistic tone of the opening discussion, and the lack of datable references—a trait that the dialogue shares, as Baldwin notes (326), with Michael Psellos's *De operatione daemonum*—contribute to the sense that it is a work of a later, though ultimately unascertainable date.

comic models, Aristophanes, consequently become the lenses through which the dialogue negotiates and defines its Hellenic identity.

Given the dialogue's combination of Aristophanic, Lucianic, and Christian themes, it is remarkable that the *Patriot* has not received more attention in discussions of Lucian's later reception. Analysis of the dialogue has focused almost exclusively on questions surrounding its date and treatment of Christian doctrine, with very few definitive answers beyond Hilhorst's demonstration that the dialogue promotes a general Christian perspective.[10] Moreover, discussions of Lucian's influence in the Byzantine age have focused predominately on the *Timarion,* a twelfth-century dialogue that combines satiric elements with Neoplatonic and Christian metaphysics.[11] To be sure, the *Patriot* is often mentioned in conjunction with the *Timarion,* yet the two dialogues adopt different components of Lucian's literary style and consequently illustrate different aspects of his reception. The *Timarion,* for example, depicts its eponymous hero's journey to Hades and as such speaks to the afterlife of Lucian's own representations of the underworld in the *Dialogues of the Dead, The Downward Journey,* and *Menippus.* The afterlife of this Lucianic motif was a long one and can be traced through the writings of later authors, including Thomas More and Gustave Flaubert.[12]

The *Patriot,* in contrast, secures its association with Lucian's corpus through the frequency with which it cites the second-century satirist, raising the question—which has only recently begun to be posed in analyses of Byzantine literature—of what role these allusions actually play in the narrative of the text.[13] The dialogue, in fact, abounds with Homeric, Euripidean, Aristophanic, Lucianic, and Biblical references. Several studies have already traced the presence of these references, but here I wish to explore the dialogic function that the anonymous author attributes specifically to the Greek comic tradition and, more broadly, what this role might reveal about the influence of Lucian as an author known for merging disparate traditions and identities.[14] The *Patriot*'s blending of the comic tradition with Christian doctrine models itself on the amalgamation of comedy and Platonic dialogue that we find Lucian staging in such apologetic works as the *Literary Prometheus* and

[10] On the relationship to Christianity, see Hilhorst 1993, 39–40.

[11] On the *Timarion,* see Baldwin 1984, Kaldellis 2012, and Bozia 2015, 155–58.

[12] On the reception of Lucian in More's *Utopia* and Flaubert's *Bouvard et Pécuchet,* see Bozia 2015, 162–65 and 172–74. A general survey of Lucian's reception from Byzantium to Henry Fielding can be found in Robinson 1979.

[13] On the need to consider the function of allusions in Byzantine literature, see Kaldellis 2012, 281–84.

[14] The most complete commentary on the classical allusions contained in this dialogue is that of Baldwin 1982. See also Robinson 1979, 73–76.

Double Indictment. In doing so, the dialogue displays an appreciation not only of Lucian's hybridization of genres, but also of the value that Lucian ascribes to that hybrid as a tool for revealing folly and pretensions. For the author of the *Patriot*, Lucian offered a model of how comedy could perform a serious function, exposing in this case the problems inherent in a reliance on the pagan gods (Critias's position). Lucian, contrary to his reputation for attacking Christianity, strikingly becomes a vehicle for promoting its orthodoxy.

In his influential commentary on the *Patriot,* Baldwin suggests that—based on the repetition of several turns of phrase—the dialogue's two main participants, Critias and Triepho, are in essence interchangeable in terms of their characterization and function within the dialogue.[15] I begin my discussion of the *Patriot* by revisiting the question of their characterization and specifically the role that the characters' respective uses of the classical past assume in it. While Baldwin has done much to reveal the complex web of allusions at play within the dialogue, I argue that in Critias, the anonymous author presents a character initially rigid in his philhellenism and openly desirous of recreating the world of Platonic dialogue. Critias stands in contrast to Triepho, who possesses the ability to harness the pagan past, most notably through the specter of Lucian, as a tool for correcting Critias and promoting Christian doctrine. Triepho's need to correct Critias points to the dangers of excessive Hellenism, a common concern among Byzantine writers, and initially establishes Critias in the mold of the foolish and fake philosophers who populate Lucian's dialogues. Following a detailed examination of their characterization, I turn to Triepho's use of the Greek comic tradition to argue the supremacy of the Trinity and Paul over Critias' pagan gods, a scene that has been deemed both surprising and problematic in its juxtaposition of comic and Christian material. As I hope to show, what emerges from this scene is a Lucianic fusion of comedy and Christianity that brings into relief and ultimately legitimizes the dialogue's incorporation of the Hellenic literary tradition.

The Enthusiastic Student: The Role of Platonic and Lucianic References in the Opening Exchange (1–4)

I turn first to the Homeric, Platonic, and Lucianic references that are interwoven into the dialogue's introductory discussion, which Baldwin has described as mere literary tags or pastiche, indicative of the author's desire to showcase his familiarity with the classics.[16] According to this reading, the classical texts being quoted are inconsequential to the subject matter of the *Patriot*

[15] Baldwin 1982, 342.
[16] Baldwin 1982, 340.

and are largely present as rhetorical flourishes. But, as Kaldellis has already noted about Homeric and Euripidean quotations in the *Timarion*, the original context of quotations more often than not holds significance for the subject matter of the work and, methodologically speaking, should be taken into consideration.[17] An additional layer of complexity, however, is added to this approach when the allusions refer not just to the original context of the line but to its adaptation and reformulation by a later author. In the case of the *Patriot,* this means considering not just the original context of Homeric, Platonic, or Aristophanic allusions, but in certain cases the afterlife that they had in Lucian's dialogues. This, of course, presumes a thorough familiarity on the part of the reader with the literary contexts of each allusion. While this may not have been the case for all readers of the dialogue, we should not discount the fact that some readers would have recalled the original contexts of the allusions, and for these readers an additional layer of meaning would have been activated.[18] This strategy of reading becomes particularly important in the dialogue's opening exchange where a web of references is used to define the relationship between the dialogue's two interlocutors and to introduce tensions into their discussion about the legitimacy of the pagan gods.

The opening greeting between Triepho and Critias offers an illustrative instance.[19] It replays a scene familiar from both Plato's *Phaedrus* and Lucian's *Hermotimus* that has implications for how we understand the dynamics between the two characters. In the *Phaedrus,* Socrates encounters the eponymous interlocutor on his way to rehearse a recent speech delivered by Lysias and presses him to report what he has heard. Lucian rewrites this scene—one of the most famous of Platonic passages—in the *Hermotimus*. As that dialogue opens, Lycinus, an obvious Lucianic alter-ego, happens upon Hermotimus, a student of Stoic philosophy, rushing to class as he mutters and gesticulates to himself.[20] In both the original and its Lucianic reinterpretation, the student's enthusiasm demands correction. Phaedrus's passion for Lysias's speeches needs to be redirected by Socrates to philosophy, while Hermotimus's devotion to a philosophical education, which has spanned twenty

[17] Kaldellis 2012, 281–82.

[18] Besides personal reading habits, this familiarity likely would have stemmed from their education. On the popularity of Homer, Euripides, Aristophanes, and Plato in the Byzantine classroom, see Valiavitcharska 2013, 92. On the specific reception of Aristophanes in the Byzantine age, see Dover 1972, 226, Dobrov 2010, 21–27, Slater 2016. For arguments against the assumption that thematic connections between the source and target text are merely coincidental, see Kaldellis 2012, 283–84.

[19] All Greek quotations of the *Patriot* are from Macleod 1967. Translations are adapted from his corresponding translation.

[20] Lucian, *Herm.* 1. On the imitation of the *Phaedrus* at the opening of the *Hermotimus,* see Hunter 2012, 1–3. For the popularity of the *Phaedrus* in the second century, see Trapp 1990.

years with little progress, requires Lycinus to expose Hermotimus's teacher as a fraud.

The opening of the *Patriot* returns to this motif and uses it to establish Critias in an analogous position to Phaedrus and Hermotimus. This is achieved largely through Triepho's initial description of Critias's appearance:

> What is this, Critias? You've changed completely and now have a furrowed brow (τὰς ὀφρῦς κάτω συννένευκας) and you are brooding (βυσσοδομεύεις), wandering up and down, just like the poet's "crafty mind" and "a paleness has seized your cheeks" (ὦχρός τέ σευ εἷλε παρειάς).[21]

Although the *Patriot* does not borrow directly the language from either the *Phaedrus* or the *Hermotimus,* Triepho's account of Critias's appearance recalls Lucian's description of the physical markers of Hermotimus's mental exertions, which is itself indebted to that of Phaedrus. Moreover, Triepho's language displays Lucianic undertones. Baldwin, for example, suggests, though he does not explore its implications, that Critias's brooding (βυσσοδομεύεις) recalls Lucian's use of the same verb in *Slander.* An uncommon verb, βυσσοδομεύω frequently carries with it negative connotations. In *Slander,* Lucian uses it to denote the type of person who speaks openly from the type who does not, but instead mulls over his anger and becomes prone to slander.[22] Contained in Triepho's greeting is thus a subtle warning: Critias should not follow the negative example that Lucian's text describes but behave as a proper interlocutor and relate what he is pondering. This connection is reinforced a few lines later when Triepho asks Critias, in language modeled on a line from the *Ship*, whether Critias is offended or has gone deaf.[23]

Triepho's opening lines thus establish an important dynamic between himself and Critias, one that centers on Triepho as the figure who will correct Critias' behavior. This correction occurs at least initially through Triepho's subtle use of classical and Lucianic allusions. For example, in describing Critias's appearance Triepho quotes Homer's description of the paleness that settled over Paris's cheeks when it came time for him to fight Menelaus.[24] Given

[21] *Phil.* 1: Τί τοῦτο, ὦ Κριτία; ὅλον σεαυτὸν ἠλλοίωσας καὶ τὰς ὀφρῦς κάτω συννένευκας, μύχιον δὲ βυσσοδομεύεις ἄνω καὶ κάτω περιπολῶν κερδαλεόφρονι ἐοικὼς κατὰ τὸν ποιητήν "ὦχρός τέ σευ εἷλε παρειάς."

[22] Lucian *Cal.* 24: βυσσοδομεύει τὴν ὀργήν. All Greek quotations of Lucian are from the edition of the Loeb Classical library: Harmon 1913 (*Slander*), Harmon 1915 (*Tragic Zeus*), Harmon 1921 (*Double Indictment*), and Kilburn 1959 (*Hermotimus, Literary Prometheus, Ship*). All translations are adapted from the respective editions.

[23] Compare *Phil.* 1: δυσχεραίνεις καθ' ἡμῶν ἢ ἐκκεκώφωσαι with Lucian *Nav.* 10: δυσχεραίνει καθ' ἡμῶν ἢ ἐκκεκώφωται.

[24] Hom. *Il.* 3.35: ὦχρός τέ σευ εἷλε παρειάς.

the fact that Paris behaves uncourageously in this scene and must be rescued by Aphrodite, the comparison does not evoke images of epic bravery and therefore seems intended to tease Critias. Moreover, Triepho himself draws attention to the unsuitability of using epic language to describe Critias and his intellectual labors: "You haven't seen the three-headed hound have you, or Hecate risen from Hades?"[25] Triepho's commentary on the differences in context between the original Homeric lines and his own appropriation of them underscores the discrepancy between classical examples and the dialogue's subject matter. As such it reveals an awareness within the dialogue of the disparity between its world and that of the classical intertexts.

This discrepancy between the original and newfound context is part of the overall parodic effect on display in the dialogue's opening exchange. Beyond alluding to the *Iliad,* Triepho's description of Critias's paleness also recalls Lucian's depiction of Zeus as pale and brooding in the *Tragic Zeus*. One of Lucian's more religiously controversial works, the *Tragic Zeus* opens on Olympus with Zeus, Hermes, Athena, and Hera bemoaning the fact that certain mortal philosophers, namely the Epicureans, doubt their existence. Hermes initiates the discussion with four lines of iambic trimeters that ironically liken Zeus to a philosopher: What is bothering you, Zeus, that you are talking to yourself while alone, / pacing around pale, looking like a philosopher? / Unburden yourself on me, take me as a counselor of your toil. / Don't look down on the nonsense of a slave.[26] These four lines, as Tim Whitmarsh has noted, replay a comic scene, possibly by Menander, in which a slave urges his master to follow his advice.[27] In applying this scenario to this dialogue's opening, Lucian renders Zeus a comic character, whose appearance is denoted by the proverbial joke about the pale philosopher, but who nonetheless speaks, along with Hermes and Athena, as if he is in a tragedy.[28] This depiction of Zeus functions as a model for the mixture of comic and serious registers that we find Triepho deploying. Moreover, as a dialogue that sheds a spotlight on the second-century debates about religious skepticism, it provides an important intermediary intertext for Triepho's subsequent criticism of Critias's use of the pagan gods.

That Triepho's correction of Critias will ultimately be religious in nature is also suggested by his unusual name. The name is in fact so rare that older

[25] *Phil.* 1: μή που Τρικάρανον τεθέασαι ἢ Ἑκάτην ἐξ Ἅιδου ἐληλυθυῖαν.

[26] Lucian *Zeus Trag.* 1: Ὦ Ζεῦ, τί σύννους κατὰ μόνας σαυτῷ λαλεῖς, / ὠχρὸς περιπατῶν, φιλοσόφου τὸ χρῶμ' ἔχων; / ἐμοὶ προσανάθου, λαβέ με σύμβουλον πόνων, / μὴ καταφρονήσῃς οἰκέτου φλυαρίας.

[27] See fr. adesp. 1027 K–A and Whitmarsh 2013, 178.

[28] For a discussion of the tragic references at the opening of this dialogue, see Karavas 2005, 142–43 and especially Whitmarsh 2013, 177–82.

commentators on the dialogue proposed emending it to Tripho or Trupho.[29] Despite its abnormality, it seems clearly intended to evoke the Trinity. This association between a character's name and a central concern of the dialogue has precedents in Lucian's own personae, most notably Parrhesiades of the *Fisherman* and the Syrian of the *Double Indictment*. In the *Fisherman,* for example, Parrhesiades faces off against famous philosophers from the Hellenic past, who have returned from the dead to charge Parrhesiades with *hubris* because he comically debased them in an earlier work, *Philosophies for Sale*. At stake in the dead philosophers' charge is Parrhesiades's claim to free speech (*parrhesia*), the significance of which is denoted by his name. Similarly, in the *Double Indictment* a personified character, Rhetoric, charges the Syrian with maltreatment on the grounds that he abandoned her, his legitimate wife. Rhetoric's case against the Syrian rests in part on the claim that the rhetorical education she offered him had the effect of endowing him with a Greek identity.[30] The obvious connections between the names of these characters, thematic strands within the respective dialogues, and even the supposed biography of Lucian himself all contribute to the authorial and specifically Platonic games that Lucian's personae are notorious for playing.[31] In the case of the *Patriot,* the connection between the initial topic of discussion and the connotations implied by Triepho's name follows this pattern and raises the possibility that Triepho functions as an authorial persona. Although the anonymity of the *Patriot*'s author means that this point must remain speculative, it nonetheless has the potential to shape how we understand Triepho's position of authority within the dialogue.

If we presume, at least for the moment, that Triepho's name holds significance for ascertaining the full extent of the dialogue's relationship to its Lucianic models, then it is worth considering what import the name Critias might have. Although Baldwin suggests that it may be a play on the adjective *kritikos* and therefore be reflective of a general Lucianic stand towards "mythological folly,"[32] the name by its very nature recalls Socrates's problematic interlocutor in the *Timaeus-Critias* and possibly the *Charmides*.[33]

[29] On the proposed changes to the name, see Baldwin 1982, 342.

[30] See Lucian *Bis Acc.* 27. On Rhetoric's portrayal of the Syrian's cultural identity, see Goldhill 2002, 73–75.

[31] On Lucian's evasive relationship to his personae and the possible connections that this might have to Plato's famous absence from his own dialogues, see Branham 1989, 28–37 and 41–43; Whitmarsh 2001, 247–94; Goldhill 2002, 60–93; and Ní Mheallaigh 2005 and 2010.

[32] Baldwin 1982, 341.

[33] For an ancient description of his character, see Philostr. *VS* 1.16. There remains disagreement among scholars of Plato whether the Critias of the *Charmides* is the same as that of the *Timaeus* and *Critias*, but this is most likely a modern debate (compare Proclus *Comm. in Tim.* 1.70). There

In both the *Timaeus-Critias* and the *Charmides,* Critias fails to attain philosophical enlightenment. His tale in the former dialogue ultimately falls short in fulfilling Socrates's request to depict Kallipolis at war, while the Critias of the *Charmides* cannot recognize his lack of knowledge when it comes to understanding the concept of moderation. These Platonic associations further distinguish Critias's stance at the start of the dialogue from that of Triepho and reinforce the suggestions, implied in Triepho's greeting, that he may prove a problematic interlocutor. Like his Platonic predecessors, the Critias of the *Patriot* presumes through his invocation of the pagan gods to know the proper way to initiate a discussion of the prophecy that he has just heard. Triepho's subsequent refusal to accept such an oath is not just a rejection of pagan beliefs, as Hilhorst understands it to be, but a refusal to engage in a traditional, philosophical dialogue.[34]

Critias's language reinforces the Platonic connotations inherent in his name. In his response to Triepho's greeting, for example, Critias worries that what he just heard might cause him to become a second Cleombrotus, a student of Plato who famously killed himself after reading the *Phaedo.*[35] Critias's invocation of this Platonic student suggests that he might be one himself. In fact, while Critias certainly adopts the language of other authors, including Lucian and Homer, his persona is largely defined at the opening through Platonic references. This persona extends even to the imagery applied to his initial inability to put his thoughts into words, which he describes through the image of a swollen belly.[36] Although Critias's language does not directly recall that of Socrates, νήδυς, in addition to referring to the belly, can also denote the womb and as such is evocative of Socrates's use of pregnancy as a metaphor in the *Symposium* and *Theatetus.*[37] Triepho reinforces this Socratic connection in his response, which borrows a line from the character of Socrates in the *Clouds*: "What a rumbling and agitation afflicted your stomach."[38] In the *Clouds*, this line is used by Socrates to explain thunder and consequently the supremacy of the god "Vortex" to Strepsiades. To be sure, not every classical reference in this introductory exchange looks ahead to Triepho's argument about the Trinity—some do appear to function largely as rhetorical

is no way to tell whether the author of the *Patriot* would have had made this distinction. For a discussion of this issue, see Labarbe 1989, 239–55 and Nails 2002.

[34] Hilhorst 1993, 40.

[35] *Phil.* 1: καὶ τὸ τοῦ Κλεομβρότου πήδημα τοῦ Ἀμβρακιώτου ἐμυθεύθη ἐπ' ἐμοί. For this reference, see Callim. *Epigr.* 25.

[36] *Phil.* 2: ἐξώγκωσέ μου τὴν νηδύν.

[37] For this Socratic image see Pl. *Symp.* 208e2–209a3 and Pl. *Tht.* 157c7–157d2, where Socrates describes himself as a barren midwife.

[38] *Phil.* 3: πόσος κορκορυγισμὸς καὶ κλόνος τὴν γαστέρα σου συνετάρασσε.

flourishes—yet it is nonetheless significant that Triepho's response to Critias playfully challenges the supremacy of the Olympian gods even as it engages with Critias's broader Platonic persona.

Triepho's comic and Lucianic quotations, while humorous on their surface, are taken from contexts that question the existence of the pagan gods and as such are reflective of what will become his initial argument within the dialogue. Critias, in contrast, displays his enthusiasm for the classics through Platonic language and references. This allows Critias, when finally acquiescing to Triepho's request that he relate what he has heard, to suggest that the two of them hold their dialogue in the same famous setting as the *Phaedrus*:

> Let us depart to where the plane trees keep off the sun, and nightingales and swallows pour forth sweet melodies, so that our souls may be enchanted by the melody of the birds that delights the ears, and by the gentle murmur of the water.[39]

Critias here draws a parallel between his own situation, namely the fact that he has just come from hearing the speeches of the "thrice-cursed professors" (σοφιστῶν) to that of Plato's Phaedrus.[40] His suggestion to Triepho that they conduct their dialogue about the teachings of these professors under the plane trees represents in essence an invitation to engage in and recreate Platonic dialogue. This idyllic setting, however, is at odds with the ultimate subject matter under discussion, which is not *eros,* but dire predictions about the emperor's misfortune in battle. The setting of the *Phaedrus* does not make sense in the context of the *Patriot*, and this disparity underscores the unsuitability of this request: Critias is attempting to create the setting of a philosophical discussion when the matter to be considered is far from a philosophical abstraction.

The anonymous author of the *Patriot* thus imbues the character of Critias with Platonic and Lucianic undertones that bring into relief Critias's anachronistic Hellenism and consequently foreshadow the first topic for discussion. Taken jointly, they also introduce uncertainty as to whether Critias will be a success as an interlocutor or not. Like the charlatan philosophers of Lucian's dialogues, he has adopted the outward guise of a philosopher, but fails to live up to expectations immediately when he does not swear by the appropriate god.

Unlike his models, however, he does eventually accept the enlightenment that Triepho offers him. While this enlightenment ostensibly focuses on the Christian Trinity, the general lack of discussion regarding this aspect

[39] *Phil.* 3: ἀπίωμεν ἔνθα αἱ πλάτανοι τὸν ἥλιον εἴργουσιν, ἀηδόνες δὲ καὶχελιδόνες εὔηχα κελαδοῦσιν, ἵν' ἡ μελῳδία τῶν ὀρνέων τὰς ἀκοὰς ἐνηδύνουσα τό τε ὕδωρ ἠρέμα κελαρύζον τὰς ψυχὰς καταθέλξειεν.

[40] *Phil.* 2: τῶν τρισκαταράτων ἐκείνων σοφιστῶν.

of Christian doctrine and the ease with which he accepts it suggests that Triepho's attention is as much focused on Critias's appropriation of the Hellenic tradition as it is on questions of religion, two topics that are admittedly closely intertwined. Triepho's ultimate success represents a rejection of the purely aesthetic approach adopted by Critias in favor of one that adopts the very essence of the Lucianic dialogue, namely its reconfiguration of comic genres within the philosophical tradition.

Christian Comedy? Triepho's Aristophanic Description of the Trinity and Paul (4–19)

In the dialogue's opening, classical and Lucianic references function as a flexible tool, adapted freely by the author to demarcate Triepho from Critias and foreshadow the problem posed by oaths to the pagan gods. Triepho, in particular, exemplifies this approach as he utilizes both Lucianic and Aristophanic allusions to redirect Critias's enthusiasm for pagan culture towards the Trinity. For example, Triepho responds to Critias's suggestion that they retire, like Socrates and Phaedrus, to the shade of the plane trees with a direct reference to Lucian's *Lover of Lies*: "Let us go, Critias. But I am afraid that perhaps what you've heard is a magic incantation, and the wonders which amazed you will make me into a pestle or door or some other inanimate object."[41] In the *Lover of Lies,* Lucian, through the persona of Tychiades, explores superstitious beliefs in a series of largely fantastical tales, which he treats with suspicion and derision. Triepho's response to Critias references specifically the tale of Arignotus, which recounts how a certain Pancrates had the power to make the bar of a door, or a broom, or a pestle behave as if human.[42] In his version of the tale, however, Triepho alters the original scenario by suggesting Critias's own words might have similar powers and in doing so, implicitly creates the context for exploring and exposing Critias's own beliefs. This context is not contained in the story to which he refers, but in Tychiades's broader aim of relating Arignotus's tale, namely to expose it as mere superstition. Of course, recognition of this hinges on a familiarity with the entirety of Lucian's dialogue and not simply this specific tale—something that would not be unthinkable in Byzantine times, particularly during the revival of Hellenism in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[43] In this case, any reader well-

[41] *Phil.* 4: Ἴωμεν, ὦ Κριτία· ἀλλὰ δέδια μή που ἐπῳδὴ τὸ ἠκουσμένον ἐστὶ καί με ὕπερον ἢ θύρετρον ἢ ἄλλο τι τῶν ἀψύχων ἀπεργάσεται ἡ θαυμασία σου αὕτη κατάπληξις. On the connection to the *Lover of Lies,* see Baldwin 1982, 328–29.

[42] See Lucian, *Philops.* 35.

[43] On this revival, see Kaldellis 2007, 189–316. Even if Reinach 1902, 85–89 was correct in reading Critias's mention of the dismemberment of virgins on Crete (9) as a reference to the recapture

versed in Lucian would recognize Triepho's objectives proleptically, before they are made clear to Critias.

Triepho's Lucianic response to Critias's Platonic suggestion is a critical moment, one that influences the direction of the dialogue's opening discussion. When Triepho playfully worries that the potential magical powers of Critias's words might render him a second Niobe or Aëdon, Critias offers a serious oath that Triepho will not be harmed, invoking first Zeus, then Apollo, Poseidon, Hermes, and finally Athena. Triepho, however, summarily rejects each god as a witness to Critias's oath on the grounds that the mythology of each contains inappropriate subject matter: Zeus's notorious infidelity, Apollo's false prophecies, Poseidon's hypocrisy when it comes to sexual affairs, Hermes's collusion in Zeus's infidelities, and Athena's association with the Gorgon.[44] The model for this scene, until now unidentified in discussions of the dialogue, must be Socrates's replacement of the gods with meteorological deities in the *Clouds*.[45] That the *Clouds* represents an important model for Triepho has already been suggested by his previous invocation of Socrates' explanation of thunder. Here the classical comparison is largely a thematic one. Socrates denies the supremacy of the Olympians in his conversation with Strepsiades, and that denial provides Triepho with the framework to prompt Critias to do the same, albeit at greater length, for Socrates does not go through the gods individually.

The Aristophanic allusion in this scene, however, is somewhat disorientating given the dialogue's oscillation between comic language and seemingly serious subject matter. An example of this oscillation can be seen in the shift in tone that occurs when the discussion turns to the Trinity. Triepho's analysis of the pagan gods, as I have already mentioned, focuses on their mythology and specifically on moments that cast the gods in an unfavorable light. For example, Triepho alludes to the humorous tale from the *Odyssey* of the affair between Ares and Aphrodite as well as to Hermes's role in facilitating Zeus's love affairs. In turning to the Trinity, he signals a change in tone through a hexameter line consisting of epithets traditionally applied to the Christian God: "the mighty god that lives on high, the immortal dwelling in the sky."[46] He then follows this line with a description of the Trinity, in which

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of Crete from the Saracens by Nicephorus Phocas in 961—a reading that Baldwin 1982, 323–26 calls into question—it need not be presumed that this was a contemporary reference. It is just as plausible that the author is referring to a past event that remained in the collective memory. On the issue of the date, see note 8 above.

[44] See *Phil.* 4–9.

[45] See Ar. *Nub.* 245–50.

[46] *Phil.* 11: ὑψιμέδοντα θεόν, μέγαν, ἄμβροτον, οὐρανίωνα. On the use of these epithets by Patristic authors, see Baldwin 1982, 331.

its components (father, son, and spirit) are spelled out. Finally, he concludes his point with a fragment of Euripides that Baldwin supposes was culled from the *Tragic Zeus*: "Consider this your Zeus, believe this to be your god."[47] Although we do not know its original tragic context, it is cited in the *Tragic Zeus* as part of that dialogue's larger debate between the Stoic Timocles and the Epicurean Damis about the existence of the gods. Damis, in fact, quotes a series of three Euripidean lines, which, like the *Clouds,* propose that air (αἰθέρα) replace Zeus as a deity. Triepho's use of examples from the classical tradition has a particular rhetorical function at this point in the dialogue. As he alludes to Euripides, Aristophanes, and Lucian, Triepho situates his own questioning of the gods within a broader ancient tradition. This move appears designed not only to appeal to Critias's enthusiasm for pagan culture but also to create continuity between the *Patriot* and the classical past.

Of these classical exempla, Aristophanes in particular functions as Triepho's vehicle for explaining the Trinity to Critias. Although the dialogue was surely composed in a Christian world, the conceit of its author is to portray Critias as confused at Triepho's reference to the Trinity and left wondering whether he is attempting to make a Pythagorean argument. Triepho's response once again appropriates the language of comedy:

> Be quiet about the things below and the things worthy of silence. We don't measure the footprints of fleas here (μετρεῖν τὰ ψυλλῶν ἴχνη). For I shall teach you what is all, who existed before all else, and how the universe works. For only the other day I too was in the same state as you, but, when I was met by a Galilean (Γαλιλαῖος) with receding hair and a long nose, who had walked on the air into the third heaven (ἀναφαλαντίας, ἐπίρρινος, ἐς τρίτον οὐρανὸν ἀεροβατήσας) and acquired the most glorious knowledge, he regenerated us with water, led us into the paths of the blessed, and ransomed us from the impious places. If you listen to me, I shall make you too a man of truth.[48]

Based on the general comic language of the passage, Macleod argues that the first line is a comic line of unknown origin, although Baldwin has also proposed that it may in fact be the author's own creation.[49] By contrast, the

[47] *Phil.* 11: τοῦτον νόμιζε Ζῆνα, τόνδ' ἡγοῦ θεόν. This is the last line of fragment 941 and is from an unidentifiable play. The fragment appears at Lucian, *Zeus Trag.* 41. See Baldwin 1982, 331.

[48] *Phil.* 12: Σίγα τὰ νέρθε καὶ τὰ σιγῆς ἄξια. οὐκ ἔσθ' ὧδε μετρεῖν τὰ ψυλλῶν ἴχνη. ἐγὼ γάρ σε διδάξω τί τὸ πᾶν καὶ τίς ὁ πρῴην πάντων καὶ τί τὸ σύστημα τοῦ παντός· καὶ γὰρ πρῴην κἀγὼ ταῦτα ἔπασχον ἅπερ σύ, ἡνίκα δέ μοι Γαλιλαῖος ἐνέτυχεν, ἀναφαλαντίας, ἐπίρρινος, ἐς τρίτον οὐρανὸν ἀεροβατήσας καὶ τὰ κάλλιστα ἐκμεμαθηκώς, δι' ὕδατος ἡμᾶς ἀνεγέννησεν, ἐς τὰ τῶν μακάρων ἴχνια παρεισώδευσε καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἀσεβῶν χώρων ἡμᾶς ἐλυτρώσατο. καὶ σὲ ποιήσω, ἤν μου ἀκούῃς, ἐπ' ἀληθείας ἄνθρωπον.

[49] Macleod 1967, 437 n. 6. For a summary of attempts to identify the line, see Baldwin 1982, 331.

second, μετρεῖν τὰ ψυλλῶν ἴχνη, is an unmistakable reference to *Clouds* 145, which is subsequently complemented by the presence of the participle ἀεροβατήσας. Intertwined with this comic language is a description of Paul as having a receding hairline (ἀναφαλαντίας) and long nose (ἐπίρρινος).[50] In his commentary on this passage, Baldwin cites the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* as the possible source for this representation of Paul.[51] Without discounting that connection, I would note here that Triepho's portrait of Paul also highlights the kind of features that would have been exaggerated on comic masks, effectively and surprisingly rendering Paul as a comic character.

The general comic imagery employed in Triepho's discussion of Paul and the Trinity has sparked debate among scholars about the dialogue's overall treatment of Christian orthodoxy that has yet to be satisfactorily resolved. Baldwin, for example, suggests that Triepho's use of the adjective Γαλιλαῖος to describe Paul is "hostile in tone" and intended to "ridicule the Christians."[52] In contrast, Hilhorst has called Baldwin's negative interpretation of Γαλιλαῖος into question, citing positive uses of the adjective in *Acts,* John Malalas, and the *Suda.*[53] According to this reading, the seemingly Aristophanic ἀεροβατήσας is out of place in a serious Christian context and should be understood in light of later Patristic uses of the word, in particular its use to denote Christ's ascension. While Hilhorst is certainly correct that the dialogue displays a Christian perspective in its dismissal of the pagan gods, it is tricky to presume what connotations would or would not have been recognizable to its readers. Moreover, a reading of ἀεροβατήσας that privileges later meanings of the word must overlook the other Aristophanic references contained within this scene.

It is here that Lucian's accounts of how he invented a new literary genre, the comic dialogue, become useful intertexts for understanding Triepho's juxtaposition of the *Clouds* and Christian orthodoxy. For example, in the essay *You Are a Literary Prometheus* Lucian describes the initial incompatibility of the figures of Comedy and Dialogue in language evocative of Aristophanes's play. While Dialogue spent his time in conversation with a few companions in the public walks, Comedy used the festival of Dionysus to deride his companions by depicting them walking on air and, in a phrase recalled in the passage

[50] ἀναφαλαντίας is not an uncommon word in Lucian. Lucian uses it at *Heracles* 1, *Timon* 47, *Navigum* 6, and *Dialogi Meretricii* 14.

[51] See Baldwin 1982, 332.

[52] Baldwin 1982, 332 argues that this adjective "inevitably recalls the language of the Emperor Julian." In addition to this, he also cites Epictetus as an important precedent to the overtly hostile tone of Γαλιλαῖος.

[53] On the use of Γαλιλαῖος in a positive sense and αἐροβᾶτειν to describe Christ's ascension, see Hilhorst 1993, 42.

quoted above from the *Patriot*, measuring the footprints of fleas.[54] As the language of this example suggests, Lucian locates the initial incompatibility of comedy and philosophical dialogue in the *Clouds*' representation of Socrates. We find a similar depiction of this union voiced by the character Dialogue in the *Double Indictment* as part of his prosecution of the Syrian. According to Dialogue, he was formerly a dignified genre that would, among other things, "tread on air" where "great Zeus in heaven drives his winged car."[55] Dialogue's prosecution combines allusions to the *Clouds* and to the *Phaedrus,* ironically embodying the very merging of comedy and philosophy that he seeks to prevent in his lawsuit against the Syrian. As these passages suggest, Lucian embraces both the charges made against Aristophanes by Socrates in the *Apology* and the depiction of Socrates in *Clouds*, which consequently becomes a vehicle by which Lucian can stake his claim on the dialogue genre.[56] His claims to originality are, of course, to a certain extent specious—Plato also includes elements of comedy in his own dialogues, and the comic poets themselves advertised the serious advice their plays offered the *demos*.[57] What Lucian's use of comedy has in fact achieved in these works is a transformation of contemporary philosophy, stereotypically dull in its presentation, back into the form it once took when practiced by Socrates.

The *Clouds* therefore provide an instrument through which Lucian can both voice the problem with contemporary philosophy and propose a solution to it. This component of Lucian's literary style constitutes a paradigm for the propaedeutic and religious role that Triepho attributes to comic language. In this passage, Triepho confronts Critias's clueless assumption that the number three holds Pythagorean significance but, in a Lucianic move, does so through the *Clouds*. Triepho's initial invocation of *Clouds* 145 equates Critias's philosophical learning with the ridiculous investigations enacted in that scene. Yet, the play functions in this exchange as more than simply a negative example. When Triepho applies the participle ἀεροβατήσας to Paul, he contextualizes this comic image within a Christian setting in a manner reminiscent of

[54] Lucian, *Prom. Es* 6: ἐν τοῖς περιπάτοις μετ' ὀλίγων τὰς διατριβὰς ἐποιεῖτο . . . ἀεροβατοῦντας δεικνύουσα . . . ψυλλῶν πηδήματα διαμετροῦντας.

[55] Lucian, *Bis Acc.* 33: ἀεροβατοῦντα, ἔνθα ὁ μέγας ἐν οὐρανῷ Ζεὺς πτηνὸν ἅρμα ἐλαύνων.

[56] See Pl. *Apol.* 18a–19c.

[57] On Lucian's claims to originality and their relationship to Plato's dialogues, see Blondell and Boehringer 2014, 233–34. For examples of the assertion made by the comic poets that their plays performed the serious role of advisor to the *demos,* see the parabases of the Ar. *Ach.* (lines beginning at 628 and following) and Ar. *Ran.* (686 and following). On the claims to originality made by the comic poets (and charges of plagiarism), see Heath 1990, 152; Storey 2003, 383; and Biles 2011, 137–38.

Dialogue's appropriation of the verb alongside Platonic language in the *Double Indictment*.[58] Surprisingly, Paul becomes the figure in whom comic and Christian traditions converge.

One of the challenges leveled against Christian readings of the *Patriot* has been its general lack of discussion of Christian doctrine.[59] The view that there exists a paucity of Christian themes derives from an approach that establishes Christian language and imagery as secondary to that of Aristophanes and Lucian and does not acknowledge the way in which the author mingles the two. Triepho's comic description of Paul is exemplary of this approach in its use of Aristophanic language to define the knowledge offered by Paul as wisdom and not sophistry. Triepho's proclamation that he will not measure the footprints of fleas marks him as different from the teachers of Critias by equating them to the denizens of Socrates's thinkery. What they have produced is a figure who has adopted the appearance of classical *paideia* but in actuality is ridiculous. In contrast, Triepho promises to remake Critias into a man of truth.[60] Given that Triepho himself employs pagan exempla, this truth is not the choice of Christianity over Hellenism, but rather the ability to put that Hellenic and, specifically, comic tradition to a Christian use.

Triepho's invocation of the *Clouds* in this scene marks a gradual shift in how quotations and their resonances are used within the dialogue. Initially, the classical references function figuratively as illustrations or augmentations of the argument and do not explicitly address religious affiliation, although they might hint at it.[61] But as Triepho continues, Aristophanic allusions become literal reflections of his argument. Following Triepho's description of the promise of knowledge offered by the figure of Paul, Critias labels Triepho most learned and asks to hear more. Instead of continuing his focus on Paul, as we might expect, Triepho quotes the parabasis of Aristophanes's *Birds*, in which the traditional Hesiodic creation tale is reworked to establish birds as the product of Tartarus's union with Chaos and consequently as precursors to the Olympian gods: "At the start of time there was Chaos and Night, black Erebos, and Tartarus deep, / but earth and air and heaven were not."[62]

[58] On the mixture of comic and Platonic language in Dialogue's speech, see Blondell and Boehringer 2014, 231–32.

[59] For arguments against reading the dialogue as espousing a Christian perspective, see Baldwin 1982, 342–43.

[60] *Phil.* 12: σὲ ποιήσω, ἥν μου ἀκούῃς, ἐπ' ἀληθείας ἄνθρωπον.

[61] On this principle, see Kaldellis 2012, 284–85.

[62] *Phil.* 13: Χάος ἦν καὶ Νὺξ Ἔρεβός τε μέλαν πρῶτον καὶ Τάρταρος εὐρύς· / γῆ δ' οὐδ' ἀὴρ οὐδ' οὐρανὸς ἦν. Triepho is quoting Ar. *Av.* 693–4.

This classical comparison takes on literal meaning as Triepho himself seeks to supplant the pagan gods in Critias's mind with the Christian one, and Aristophanes becomes at this point in the discussion the model for questioning the gods. That he plays this role in the dialogue is hinted at in Triepho's use of the *Clouds,* but it is not until he turns to the *Birds* that the connection becomes explicit. The comic creation tale of the *Birds* prepares the ground for a summary of the Biblical creation story designed to illustrate the omnipotence of the Christian God. Triepho's language in this passage, as Macleod has noted, evokes not just the Old Testament but the Gospel of Matthew, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Book of Revelation as well.[63] For Triepho, Aristophanes or, rather, a Christian reinterpretation of him, which is itself indebted to Lucian, represents an important stepping-stone by which he will refine and reorient Critias's enthusiasm for the classical past.

His success in achieving this, however, is limited. When Critias wants to know whether Triepho's perspective allows for the Homeric Fates, the conversation once again returns to a demonstration of the contradictions that surround these mythological characters. Critias's persistence in this line of inquiry eventually prompts Triepho to chastise him regarding his presumptions about heaven with a quotation from *Clouds* that replaces the "clever men" of Aristophanes's lines with a reference to God's wisdom: "Hush and say nothing bad of God who is clever."[64] True to the implications of his name and initial characterization, Critias proves himself to be an initially foolish interlocutor, who accepts Triepho's point only when his ignorance is fully spelled out for him. Included in Critias's acknowledgment of ignorance is a return to the figure of Niobe, one of the mythological images that initiated this discussion. Whereas Niobe was turned to stone, Critias proclaims that he has had the opposite experience and has been changed from a "tombstone" to a man by the knowledge Triepho has offered him.[65] This reversal of Niobe's fate marks a shift in the dialogue's focus away from Critias's Hellenism to a discussion of the tales he has heard. As a character famous for her hubristic statements about the goddess Leto, Niobe's presence serves as a final figurative example of the dangers of not displaying proper religious deference. Although playful in tone, Critias's description of a transformation that is the opposite of Niobe's suggests that rigid adherence to the classical tradition is equivalent to petrification.

[63] See *Phil.* 13. For a list of references, see Macleod 1967, 439–40 and Baldwin 1982, 333–34.

[64] *Phil.* 13: Εὐστόμει καὶ μηδὲν εἴπῃς φλαῦρον θεοῦ δεξιοῦ. The Aristophanic lines read as follows: εὐστόμει / καὶ μηδὲν εἴπῃς φλαῦρον ἄνδρας δεξιοὺς, ("Hush and don't say anything bad about clever men"); compare Ar. *Nub.* 833–34.

[65] *Phil.* 18: ἐκ στήλης.

Conclusion

So what can attention to the Lucianic references and overtones in the *Patriot* suggest about the ways in which Lucian's dialogues were read and understood in the Byzantine age? One dialogue is, of course, not enough to reveal any trend, and before this question can be fully answered, further investigation of Lucianic references and the resonances of their original contexts in other Byzantine works, including the *Timarion,* will certainly be necessary. Yet, at this stage, I suggest that the full-scale adoption of pagan culture is presented as a problem in the Byzantine world of the *Patriot* to which Lucian and his creation of a hybrid genre are offered as a possible solution. The *Patriot* makes use of the pagan tradition, but does so in the complicated context of comedy and satire, which diffuses and redirects the criticisms of the original texts for a new Christian purpose. Lucian's claims to have merged Comedy and Dialogue thus become the paradigm for reconciling pagan culture with Christianity. Contrary to the popular view that the dialogue falls short of its model due to its uneven tone and "graceless style,"[66] the *Patriot* reveals itself to be an astute imitation of Lucian's own reliance on and reinvention of the literary tradition, the full extent of which will not be revealed until we fully explore its literary and satiric narrative.

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[66] On the literary style of the *Patriot,* see Baldwin 1982, 321 and 340.

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