

**ARISTOTLE ON POETS:
A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF RICHARD JANKO'S EDITION OF THE FRAGMENTS**

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Abstract

This paper provides a critical examination of Richard Janko's edition of the fragments of Aristotle *On Poets* (Janko 2011). Section 1 discusses passages preserved in late ancient texts which Janko assigns to *On Poets*. Section 2 identifies problems in the evidence preserved in the Philodemus papyri. Section 3 assesses indirect evidence for Aristotle's theory of *katharsis*, and considers two contested points in Aristotle's discussion of *katharsis* in *Politics* 8: the meaning of *mousikē*, and the nature of his response to the challenge posed by Plato in *Republic* 10.

Richard Janko's edition of Philodemus *On Poems* book 1¹ combined exceptional philological expertise and ingenuity with a seemingly superhuman patience and attention to detail. Indeed, his editorial achievement far outshone in intellectual stature the mediocrity of Philodemus and his opponents. He has now edited the remains of books 3–4.² These, though less extensive than those of book 1, hold out a prospect of more rewarding content: in book 4 ('a treasure', as Janko calls it: viii) Philodemus apparently begins an engagement with Aristotle's lost dialogue *On Poets* which continues into book 5. For this reason, Janko supplements his edition of Philodemus with an edition of the fragments of *On Poets*, supported by a substantial introduction and commentary. An earlier version of this collection of fragments, without a Greek text or any elaborate scholarly apparatus, was appended many years ago to Janko's translation of Aristotle's *Poetics*.³ It did not then receive close scrutiny from reviewers, and there is a risk that this new version, similarly appended to other material by which it may be overshadowed, will not be reviewed in detail. An edition which 'more than quadruples the number of fragments' (400) certainly merits careful scrutiny. Yet few scholars command the full range of expertise needed for a comprehensive assessment of material drawn from late ancient sources as well as from Philodemus. Since I am neither a papyrologist nor an expert on Philodemus, my own contribution must draw primarily on my knowledge of Aristotle and of late ancient intellectual culture. Accordingly, the first section of this review discusses in some detail the identification and interpretation of some of the passages preserved in late ancient texts which Janko assigns to *On Poets*; the treatment of evidence preserved in the Philodemus papyri in Section 2 will necessarily be briefer. Section 3 will give separate consideration to a variety of sources of evidence for Aristotle's theory of *katharsis*, including (most importantly) evidence provided by Aristotle himself.

In what follows, I follow Janko's numeration to identify texts which he has printed as fragments of *On Poets*. But to avoid prejudging the question of whether the identification of a given text as a fragment of *On Poets* is correct, I shall use the prefix 'J'

¹ Janko 2000.

² Janko 2011. In what follows, references to this book will be given by page number alone.

³ Janko 1987.

(instead of the standard abbreviation 'F').⁴ Similarly, since the interpretation of fragments is sometimes an issue, I provide my own translations, giving Janko's rendering for comparison where divergences are potentially significant.

1. The evidence of late antiquity

Janko separates testimonia from fragments. The latter include, for example, excerpts from *Politics* 8, though these are not fragments of *On Poets* in any normal sense. Janko explains that he classes texts that attest to the existence of *On Poets* as testimonia, while his fragments include texts which report or provide other indirect evidence for the content of *On Poets*, even if they do not transmit Aristotle's own words (403).⁵ Combining the two kinds of evidence is a defensible policy, though using the term 'fragments' (rather than, for example, 'sources')⁶ for both is potentially misleading. It is, at any rate, important to maintain a conceptual, if not a terminological, distinction, since different kinds of source place different constraints on editorial practice. It is legitimate to try to restore the probable wording of the original text by emendation if one is editing a fragment in the strict sense, but not if one is editing a later author's paraphrase. Janko is not consistently alert to this distinction.⁷ Consider, for example, **J36c**, from John the Deacon's commentary on pseudo-Hermogenes *On Method* (150.7–9 Rabe):⁸

τῆς δὲ τραγωδίας πρῶτον δράμα Ἀρίων ὁ Μεθυμναῖος εἰσήγαγεν, ὥσπερ Σόλων ἐν ταῖς ἐπιγραφομέναις Ἐλεγείαις ἐδίδαξε.

Arion of Methymna introduced the first tragic drama, as Solon taught in his work with the title *Elegies*.

When Janko emends the expression τραγωδίας... δράμα το τραγωδίας... σχῆμα ('Arion of Methymna introduced the first form of tragedy'), what has he emended? Substituting the more Aristotelian expression would be justified in a reconstruction of Aristotle's original text. But such a reconstruction presupposes that John has given us a fragment in the strict sense (transmitting Aristotle's words, though in a corrupt form), rather than in Janko's extended sense (transmitting Aristotle's thought in what may be a free paraphrase). Since we have no reason to believe that this passage is a fragment in the strict sense, eliminating from the text of John the Deacon a periphrasis for 'tragedy' attested elsewhere in late ancient scholarship⁹ is illegitimate.

An even more fundamental question is whether we have reason to believe that **J36c** is an Aristotelian fragment in *any* sense. It is not a named citation. The source of the information is explicitly identified in John's text as Solon, not Aristotle. Perhaps the

⁴ A concordance of Janko's numeration with those of Rose 1886, Gigon 1987 and Laurenti 1987 can be found in Appendix 2 below.

⁵ Janko distinguishes doubtful fragments with an asterisk; he includes one spurious fragment, marked with a dagger, but also provides a list of other exclusions (403–7).

⁶ See e.g. Fortenbaugh *et al.* 1992: 4–9.

⁷ This point was made long ago by reviewers of Janko 1984: Barnes 1985: 104–5; Schenkeveld 1986: 214; Fortenbaugh 1987: 157–9; Bremer 1988: 168.

⁸ Rabe 1908a published extracts from Vat. gr. 2228. Janko designates this as 'cod. unicus', which is not strictly correct: Rabe 1908b.

⁹ sch. Aristophanes *Ran.* 95 (εὐδοκίμησαντα ἐν τραγωδίας δράματι); sch. Lucian 21.41 (ὑποκρίται... ὑποκρινόμενοι τὰ τῶν τραγωδιῶν δράματα); sch. Lycophron 7.4 Scheer (τραγωδιῶν ἐποίησε δράματα). The fact that this reading commits John to what is, to our eyes, a very implausible claim is not in itself evidence that he did not write it.

statement about Arion attributed to Solon was transmitted by Aristotle: but do we have any reason to believe that? Aristotle held that tragedy arose out of dithyramb (*Poet.* 4, 1449a9–11), and Proclus reports (**J36a**) that Aristotle claimed that Arion originated dithyramb. But there is a difference between originating dithyramb and introducing tragedy. So Proclus' report cannot safely be regarded as a variant of John's report that Arion introduced tragedy, and gives no positive support to the conjecture that Solon's claim that he did so was transmitted by Aristotle. Nor does that conjecture gain any support from the fact John has mentioned Aristotle only a few lines earlier. Here is the sentence in a slightly extended context (150.1–10 Rabe):¹⁰

(***J33a.3**) τῆς οὖν κωμωδίας οὕτως εὐρεθείσης, ἵνα μὴ πάντη διάχυσις γένηται, τὴν τραγωδίαν εὐρήκασι, τὸ συνωφρωμένον καὶ κατηφές ἐκ ταύτης εἰσφέροντες. (**J35**) ἄμφω δὲ παρ' Ἀθηναίοις ἐφεύρηται, καθάπερ Ἀριστοτέλης φησὶν. ἐν ταύτῃ γὰρ ἄνθρωποι πρῶτοι γεγόνασι. διὸ καὶ ταυτὴ τῇ πόλει μαρτυρητέον τὰ κάλλιστα τῶν μαθημάτων καὶ σπουδαιότατα. (**J36c**) τῆς δὲ τραγωδίας πρῶτον δράμα Ἀρίων ὁ Μεθυμναῖος εἰσήγαγεν, ὡσπερ Σόλων ἐν ταῖς ἐπιγραφόμεναις Ἐλεγείαις ἐδίδαξε. Στράτων δὲ ὁ Λαμψακηνὸς δράμα φησὶ Ἀθήνησι διδασθῆναι ποιήσαντος Θεσπιδος.

(***J33a.3**) Once comedy had been discovered in this way, to avoid there being uninterrupted merriment they discovered tragedy, introducing frowning and downcast eyes by means of it. (**J35**) Both were invented in Athens, as Aristotle says. For it is there that humans first came into existence. That is why one should attribute to this city the finest and most serious of studies. (**J36c**) Arion of Methymna introduced the first tragic drama, as Solon taught in his work with the title *Elegies*. But Strato of Lampsacus says that drama was first produced at Athens, when Thespis composed it.

Does Aristotle's authority extend beyond the sentence in which he is named? Not if my translation is correct: Aristotle is unlikely to have said that humans originated in Athens, since in his eternal world the question of human origins does not arise.¹¹ But Janko's translation of the crucial phrase is different: 'it is in Athens that human beings have become preeminent.' This, however, neglects the specific tradition that lies behind John's text. The Attic origin of humans goes back to Plato (*Mnx.* 237d–8b); Aelius Aristides took it up in the *Panathenaicus* (25, 33), and in the same work he also mentioned the Athenian origin of weaponry (43). These two ideas were combined by Themistius, who says that the claim that weaponry first appeared in Attica is reasonable, given the Attic origin of mankind (*Or.* 27, 337a). This passage in Themistius comes immediately before a statement about the origins of tragedy (**J34**). It is therefore not likely to be a coincidence that John's supporting argument for the Athenian invention of tragedy reproduces the structure of Themistius' supporting argument for the Athenian invention of weaponry. It follows that John's citation of Solon's statement about Arion (**J36c**) is separated from the statement attributed to Aristotle by name (**J35**) by a statement that John (or, rather, his late ancient source) has modelled on something said by Themistius in the context of, but not about, the origin of drama. This intervening

¹⁰ See Appendix 1 below for a more extended presentation of the passage in John from which ***J33a+J35+J36c** are extracted (149.6–150.10 Rabe), alongside the partial parallel in the commentary on *On Method* attributed to Gregory of Corinth (*RG* 7.1328.8–9.1 Walz). The two commentators shared a common late antique source, from which they independently selected and adapted material (Rabe 1908a: 130–2). Note that ***J33b** (from Gregory), which abbreviates the source of ***J33a.2–3**, includes a reference to festivals which is a displaced summary of the source of ***J33a.1**.

¹¹ See *DC* 1.3, 270b16–25; *Met.* 12.8, 1074a38–b14; *Met.* 1.3, 339b16–30; 1.14. Discussion in (e.g.) Sedley 2007: 119–20; Cambiano 2002; Verlinsky 2006.

statement is not Aristotelian. There is therefore no reason to regard **J36c**, or any part of **J35** beyond the named citation, as a fragment of Aristotle.¹²

Themistius demands further attention. He is prominent in Janko's collection of fragments of *On Poets*, furnishing substantial additions to the fragments to be found in Rose or Gigon. Janko maintains that Themistius was exceptional, for someone of his late date, in having had *direct* access to Aristotle *On Poets*: 'in the fourth century AD the *De poetis* became the preserve of learned philosophers, since so far as we know only Iamblichus and Themistius read it' (392). I shall have more to say about Iamblichus in §3. For the present, it is enough to note that Janko offers no evidence for his direct knowledge of *On Poets*: he simply refers us to **J55**, in which Iamblichus does not name Aristotle, let alone *On Poets*, and where Janko's commentary speaks more cautiously of 'dependence on Aristotle, direct or indirect' (520). In the case of Themistius, the belief that he had direct knowledge of *On Poets* is apparently grounded on, and in turn provides support to, the belief that he is the source of otherwise unattested fragments of Aristotle. This reasoning need not be viciously circular: the more reason we have to believe that Themistius mediates fragments of *On Poets* that are not attested in any earlier text, the more plausible it is that he had direct access to *On Poets*; and that, in turn, will lend support to the identification of fragments in Themistius which might otherwise have seemed doubtful. But the risk of circularity is there, and we need to satisfy ourselves that the case for identifying fragments of *On Poets* in Themistius is a strong one.

We may start with **J34** (Themistius *Or.* 27.337a–b). This follows the passage mentioned above, on which the second part of **J35** is modelled, and contains Themistius' statement about the origin of tragedy. According to Themistius, tragedy, though perfected in Athens, was invented in Sicyon, just as comedy originated in Sicily and was enhanced in Athens. A first point to observe is that Janko's hypothesis creates an apparent contradiction in Aristotle. If **J34**, **J35** and **J36c** are all, as Janko claims, fragments of *On Poets*, then Aristotle said that tragedy was invented in Sicyon, invented in Athens, and first introduced by Arion. Janko proposes a complicated way to reconcile this seemingly extravagant variety of claims about the origins of tragedy (365–71). But the reconciliation is unnecessary: the fact that Aristotle's name appears in only one of these three 'fragments' (indeed, only in the first sentence of **J35**, according to which Aristotle said that tragedy was invented in Athens) suggests that the problem is an artefact of Janko's mistaken attributions.

It might be objected that **J34**, at least, is marked as Aristotelian by its reference to the Sicilian comic dramatists 'Epicharmus and Phormus'. Janko comments: 'the presence of the ungrammatical phrase Ἐπίχαρμος καὶ Φόρμις at *Poetics* 1.5, 1449b6, which has often been deemed an interpolation from a parallel passage in the *De poetis*, strongly supports the assignation of **J34** to the *De poetis*' (366). But what exactly is it that

¹² The subsequent reference to Strato (the transmitted text has Draco: Janko adopts Patzer's conjecture, plausibly) suggests the possibility that it was Strato who mentioned the Solon fragment and dissented from it. But there are no strong grounds for asserting this: John's source is likely to have combined snippets from many different sources. This possibility, and the source's knowledge of late antique literature, are illustrated by the fact that the named reference to Aristotle (**J35**), which is followed by the adaptation of Themistius, is also preceded by an apparent echo of Choricus (***J33a.3** τὸ συνωφρυσμένον καὶ κατηφῆς ~ Choricus 1.93: κατηφῆς καὶ συνωφρυσμένος: the parallel is, so far as I have been able to determine, unique).

provides this support? The fact that the phrase is *not* an authentic part of the text of the *Poetics* (i.e. is interpolated) is not in itself evidence that it *is* an authentic part of the text of *On Poets*. Nor is the fact that the phrase in *Poetics* ‘has often been deemed’ an interpolation from *On Poets* evidence that the phrase is a fragment of *On Poets*: the crucial question is whether it has *rightly* been so deemed—in other words, we need evidence that the phrase is a fragment of *On Poets*. Combining an unsupported conjecture about the source of **J34** with an unsupported conjecture about the source of the interpolation in *Poet.* 5, 1449b6 would yield only the flimsiest of self-supporting structures. Let us therefore consider the matter in a larger context. It is beyond reasonable doubt that the phrase in the *Poetics* is an interpolation.¹³ From this, it does not follow that the pairing of Epicharmus and Phormis must have reached Themistius from some other Aristotelian work. They are also paired in *Suda* E2766 and Φ609, which supply additional information about them; the source is identified in E2766 as Lycon. So it is possible that Themistius took the names either from Lycon or from some link in a doxographic tradition leading from Lycon to the *Suda*. The interpolation in the *Poetics* might derive from the same tradition. Alternatively, since the interpolation in the *Poetics* is apparently not an early one,¹⁴ it might derive from Themistius himself. The existence of such alternative possibilities means that we have no reason to suppose that Epicharmus and Phormis made a joint appearance in any Aristotelian text. Therefore Janko’s argument for identifying **J34** as a fragment of *On Poets* fails.

There is another, much longer extract from Themistius that Janko includes among the fragments of *On Poets* (*Or.* 26, 316a–9a = **J38+J43a**). The context is a defence of innovation. Themistius first mentions (**J38**) various examples of human progress: statuary, ship-building, diet¹⁵ and housing, painting and music, and the development of tragedy from its purely choral beginnings through the inventions of Thespis and Aeschylus to Sophocles and Euripides. Aristotle’s support is invoked by name in the case of tragedy. Themistius then proceeds (**J43a**) to trace at much greater length the development of philosophy from Thales and the Presocratics through Socrates and Plato to Aristotle. Since Aristotle’s *On Poets* is unlikely to have included a history of philosophy culminating in Aristotle himself, Janko prudently truncates the purported Aristotelian fragment before Themistius reaches Aristotle’s contribution to philosophy. But why should we attribute *any* of this history of philosophy to Aristotle? It can hardly be claimed that Themistius, who Janko rightly describes as a ‘learned philosopher’ (392), would have been incapable of composing such an account himself. But there is evidence that he did, at least, have some help in conceiving the idea: Diogenes Laertius has a similar, though briefer, comparison of the histories of tragedy and philosophy (3.56 = **J42**). This parallel makes it probable that such a comparison was present in a source common to Diogenes and Themistius. In Diogenes the history of philosophy does not extend beyond Plato, and Janko acknowledges (505) that Themistius (or, less economically, an

¹³ See Tarán in Tarán and Gutas 2012: 245. Janko himself is non-committal (365 n.2; cf. 1987: 80, where the phrase is retained), which makes his appeal to the support of the (in his view, possibly mistaken) view that the phrase is interpolated in *Poet.* 5, 1449b6 even stranger.

¹⁴ The names were not in the Greek ancestor of the Syriac-Arabic tradition: see Gutas in Tarán and Gutas 2012: 334–6.

¹⁵ Themistius here mentions balanophagy, which also appears in ***J33a.1**, from John the Deacon (see n.10 above). That may give further support to the inference that the common source of John and Gregory made use of Themistius. There is no reference to balanophagy in extant Aristotle.

intermediate source) has elaborated the material taken over from the common source *at least* to the extent of extending the history of philosophy. But it would not be safe to assume that this is the only respect in which Themistius modified the common source.

Even if we knew that Aristotle was the common source of the passages in Diogenes (J42) and Themistius (J38+J43a), therefore, we would not know how far Themistius was adapting and expanding, rather than simply paraphrasing, Aristotle. But we do not know that Aristotle was the common source of Diogenes and Themistius. We do not even have reason to suppose that the common source made any extensive use of Aristotle. Themistius names Aristotle as an authority *only* in support of the claim that tragedy developed by a series of incremental innovations. This reference to Aristotle could have been introduced by the common source into a body of material that was not derived from Aristotle; or Themistius himself could have introduced it into a body of material derived from the common source.¹⁶ Indeed, the reference to Aristotle, so far from authenticating the Aristotelian provenance of other material in the context, counts against it: if all or most of J38+J43a was derived from Aristotle, why should he be named just at this one point? Since the full extent of Themistius' adaptation of the common source is not known, we must recognise the possibility that he was able to supply from his own wide reading the examples that precede the history of tragedy in J38, or which follow it in J43a. The idea that an accomplished and scholarly orator who had occasion to compose a defence of innovation must have taken it over slavishly from a single source is not realistic.

Janko does, however, have a further argument for connecting Themistius' history of philosophy with Aristotle. The end of the tribute to Plato runs as follows (J43a.6):

πρὸς δὲ καὶ ἕτερα πάμπολλα ἐπεισηνέγκατο καὶ εἰσήγαγε, λόγου ἰδέαν κερασάμενος ἐκ ποιήσεως καὶ φιλομετρίας, τοὺς ἐρωτῶντας καὶ ἀποκρινομένους καὶ διηγουμένους, ὑφ' ὧν κατεχόμεθα ἅπαντες ἄνθρωποι καὶ αἰρόμεθα ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς.

In addition, he made very many other innovations, and introduced (blending a style [*idea*] of discourse [*logos*] from poetry and bare prose) people asking questions and answering them and telling stories, by whom all we humans are enthralled and raised above the earth.

There is an apparent parallel in Diogenes, who reports Aristotle as saying that 'the style (*idea*) of Plato's discourses (*logoi*) is between poetry and prose' (φησὶ δ' Ἀριστοτέλης τὴν τῶν λόγων ἰδέαν αὐτοῦ μεταξύ ποιήματος εἶναι καὶ πεζοῦ λόγου, J43b = D.L. 3.37). Since Diogenes makes this point in a completely different context, the parallel does not license us to assume that the point about Plato's style was made in the common source which we have inferred for Themistius *Or.* 26, 316a–9d (J38+J43a) and Diogenes 3.56 (J42). Here, too, we must recognise that Themistius could himself have made this addition to material that he had adapted from the common source. Moreover, this case provides no evidence to support Janko's claim that Themistius had direct access to *On Poets*, since the parallel in Diogenes is evidence that by Themistius' time the point was preserved in indirect tradition.

More importantly, there are issues of interpretation. Janko's text and translation differ from those given above in two important respects: he translates *logos* as 'dia-

¹⁶ Laurenti 1987 includes this as his F4c (i.e. only the last 5 of the 23 lines of Janko's J38, and none of the 59 lines of his J43a). If this citation of Aristotle was inserted by Themistius, I am not confident that he would have scrupulously checked his memory of what Aristotle said against the original text. Janko defends Themistius' report of Aristotle against various suspicions that have been raised against it (370–1): nevertheless, reports are not always reliable (see n.19 below).

logue' and prints a supplement <μιμούμενος>: 'he... introduced a form of dialogue, blending it from poetry and bare prose, <imitating> people asking questions and answering them and telling stories' (443).¹⁷ These two decisions nudge the passage in the Aristotelian direction that he thinks it should take. But there are two problems. First, the supplement is not adequately motivated unless we have independent reason to believe that Themistius is making an Aristotelian point. Secondly, the word which Themistius uses elsewhere when he wishes to refer specifically to dialogue is not *logos*, but *dialogos*. In this passage, Themistius does acknowledge the dialogical character of Plato's discourse; but he does by means of an allusion to a standard definition of dialogue in terms of question and answer (D.L. 3.48; Alb. *Intr.*1), combined with a reminder that Plato also includes narrative elements (such as the myths).¹⁸ As we shall see, however, Themistius' concern in this passage is not with the dialogue form *as such*.

In his discussion of Themistius (J43a) Janko maintains that 'the paraphrase of this same idea' in Diogenes (J43b) 'demonstrates that Themistius depends on the *De poetis*' (508). What exactly is this idea? Janko is confident that the idea in both passages relates to the framework of generic classification which Aristotle constructs in *Poetics* 1, with Socratic dialogues as a form of mimesis in prose (*Poet.* 1, 1447b9–13). But whatever it is that Themistius is referring to, he explicitly regards it as one of Plato's many innovations. A multiply attested fragment explicitly attributed to *On Poets* records that Aristotle awarded priority in the composition of dialogues, not to Plato, but to Alexamenus of Teos (J44a, c, e).¹⁹ So if Themistius' concern here is with the mimetic dialogue form as such, the assignment of priority to Plato contradicts Aristotle's attested views on the origins of mimetic dialogue in prose. But it is questionable whether that is what Themistius is concerned with. First, in an author of the fourth century AD, it is hard not to see stylistic analysis in the phrase 'blending an *idea*', which echoes the technical terminology of contemporary rhetorical theory.²⁰ Stylistic comment would not be out of place: the legitimacy of the poetic elements in Plato's prose style had been a matter of debate for centuries.²¹ Since *idea* is used elsewhere in connection with the invention of

¹⁷ For ease of comparison, I have given an adapted form of my own translation. In Janko's own words: 'he... introduced a form of dialogue by mixing it from poetry and prose, <representing> people asking questions and answering them and narrating.'

¹⁸ I think this more likely than a reference to the dramatic/diegetic classification of dialogues (Plut. QC 711b–c; D.L. 3.50).

¹⁹ Elsewhere Janko highlights Aristotle's award of priority to Alexamenus, claiming that it 'brings to light' one of two 'contradictions in Plato's argument' (that is, in his 'provocative condemnation of poetry as μίμησις'): 'that he cannot have the credit for inventing the Socratic... dialogue' (319). If we had to reconstruct Plato's argument from this passage of Janko, we would have to infer that Plato claimed to have invented the Socratic dialogue, and that this claim played an important role in his condemnation of poetry. Otherwise, how would Aristotle's denial that Plato invented Socratic dialogue have any bearing on Plato's argument? (Even then, strictly speaking, denying Plato's priority would bring to light a *false premise* in Plato's argument, not a *contradiction*.) Similarly, when Janko speaks of 'Plato's rejection of poetry in general' (320), we would have to infer that this rejection embraced all kinds of poetry—which is false: Plato explicitly licenses hymns to the gods and encomia of good men (*Rep.* 10, 607a). When assessing evidence for lost texts, and drawing inferences from that evidence, we need to take a realistic view of the reliability of second-hand reports.

²⁰ See Hermog. *Id.* 215.9–11, 305.6 Rabe; Longinus F49.108–9 Patillon-Brisson = 212.4–6 Spengel-Hammer.

²¹ See e.g. Dionysius of Halicarnassus' *Letter to Pompeius*, where he defends his earlier criticisms of Plato; Caecilius' criticisms of Plato evoke a sharp response in Longinus *On Sublimity*. For a survey see Walsdorff 1927.

the dialogue form as such (Athen. 11, 505c), this argument is not in itself decisive. But, secondly, Themistius' interest is in the effect that Plato has on his readers: 'all we humans are enthralled and raised above the earth' (ὅφ' ὧν κατεχόμεθα ἅπαντες ἄνθρωποι καὶ αἰρόμεθα ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς).²² It would be implausible to claim that the use of prose mimesis as such (which was not, in any case, distinctively Platonic) was the source of that elevating effect: what enthralled and elevates is Plato's distinctive style.

Themistius' interest in **J43a** is therefore in the innovative and elevating admixture of poetic elements in Plato's prose style, rather than in generic classification. Where does that leave Diogenes (**J43b**)? He, unlike Themistius, does refer explicitly to Aristotle. Given that this is a genuine fragment of Aristotle, it is an easy assumption that the point being made in it is the one about generic classification familiar from *Poetics* 1. Yet 'between poetry and prose' is not a particularly good formulation of Aristotle's argument in *Poetics* 1, that imitations in verse and imitations in prose are subsets of a single, as yet nameless art.²³ Moreover, Aristotle in *Poetics* 1 does not talk about Plato in particular, but about Socratic dialogues in general: by contrast, the Aristotelian observation which Diogenes reports is *specifically* about Plato. We know that Aristotle had views on the use of poetic elements in prose style (*Rhet.* 3.1, 1404a20–40), and I see no reason why *On Poets* should not have included discussion of stylistic differences between poetry and prose. So **J43b** is a genuine fragment of Aristotle, and Janko may well be right in attributing it to *On Poets*; but by hastily assimilating it to a familiar passage from *Poetics*, he has misidentified its original context. If that construction of the facts is correct, we need not assume that Aristotle took so favourable a view of the poetic elements in Plato's prose style as Themistius does: he insists on the distinction between prose and poetic diction (*Rhet.* 3.1, 1404a38–9).²⁴ That hypothesis is, of course, speculative; but, in accordance with the need for caution when dealing with fragments, it has the merit of not asserting itself with unwarranted confidence.

There is one further piece of evidence that might be seen as supporting the argument for Themistius' dependence on Aristotle's generic classification in **J43a**. Janko points out that *psilometria* occurs elsewhere only in the *Poetics*, and comments (508):

Themistius' usage proves that by φιλομετρία Aristotle meant language that is "bare of verse", i.e. "prose"... Hence at *Poet.* 1.2, 1448a11, τοὺς λόγους δὲ καὶ τὴν φιλομετρίαν cannot mean, as everyone has thought, "prose and unaccompanied verse", but rather "prose literature that lacks verse-form", with epexegetic καί.

This argument is seriously flawed. Themistius' usage proves what *he* meant when he used the word: what *Aristotle* meant should be judged, not from someone else's use of the word, but from the context in which Aristotle himself used it. I find Janko's reinterpretation of that context entirely unconvincing. The structure of *Poetics* 2, 1448a7–18 is based on a four-part sequence:

δῆλον δὲ ὅτι καὶ τῶν λεχθεισῶν ἐκάστη μιμήσεων ἔξει ταύτας τὰς διαφορὰς καὶ ἔσται ἑτέρα τῶν ἑτέρα μιμῆσθαι τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον. (i) καὶ γὰρ ἐν ὀρχήσει καὶ αὐλήσει καὶ κιθαρίσει ἔστι γενέσθαι

²² For the metaphor compare Long. *Subl.* 7.2, 36.1, 36.3.

²³ At one point Janko says that Aristotle 'argues' that non-verse mimesis *is* poetry (217). If this were true, then 'between' would be even less appropriate.

²⁴ Dionysius of Halicarnassus includes Aristotle among the critics of Plato's style (*ad Pomp.* 1.16, 226.10–15 Usener-Radermacher). Aristotle is sharply critical of Plato's 'empty verbiage and poetic metaphors' at *Met.* 1.9, 991a20–2 (= 13.5, 1079b24–6; cf. *An.Po.* 2.13, 97b37–9). The assessment of Plato at *Pol.* 2.6, 1265a10–13 is more subtly ambivalent: Halliwell 2006 provides an acute analysis.

ταύτας τὰς ἀνομοιότητας, **(ii)** καὶ [τὸ] περὶ τοὺς λόγους δὲ καὶ τὴν ψιλομετρίαν, οἷον Ὅμηρος μὲν βελτίους, Κλεοφῶν δὲ ὁμοίους, Ἡγήμων δὲ ὁ Θάσιος ὁ τὰς παρωδίας ποιήσας πρῶτος καὶ Νικοχάρης ὁ τὴν Δειλιάδα χεῖρους· **(iii)** ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ περὶ τοὺς διθυράμβους καὶ περὶ τοὺς νόμους, ὥσπερ [γὰρ] Κύκλωπας Τιμόθεος καὶ Φιλόξενος μιμήσασαιτο ἄν τις. **(iv)** ἐν αὐτῇ δὲ τῇ διαφορᾷ καὶ ἡ τραγωδία πρὸς τὴν κωμωδίαν διέστηκεν· ἡ μὲν γὰρ χεῖρους ἢ δὲ βελτίους μιμεῖσθαι βούλεται τῶν νῦν.

It is clear that each of the kinds of imitation mentioned above will also exhibit these differences, and will be distinguished by the imitation of distinct objects in this way. For these dissimilarities are possible **(i)** both in dance and in music for pipe or lyre, **(ii)** and also in connection with language and unaccompanied verse: for example, Homer imitates better people; Cleophon people similar to us; Hegemon of Thasos, who invented parodies, or Nicochares, the author of the *Deiliad*, worse people; **(iii)** similarly also in connection with dithyrambs and nomos one could imitate as Timotheus and Philoxenus did the Cyclopes; **(iv)** and the very same difference distinguishes tragedy and comedy from each other: for the latter aims to imitate people worse than our contemporaries, the former better.

This sequence recapitulates the arts mentioned in 1, 1447a13–16,²⁵ dividing them according to the permutations of rhythm, language and melody established in chapter 1: **(i)** = rhythm, with or without melody (~ 1447a23–8); **(ii)** = rhythm and *logos* (~ 1447a28–b13); **(iii)** = rhythm, language and melody used in combination throughout (~ 1447b24–6); and **(iv)** = rhythm, language and melody distributed in separate parts (~ 1447b26–8). Janko posits an ‘unnoticed parenthesis’ (508) in 1448a9–11, embracing καὶ γὰρ ἐν ὀρχήσει... ψιλομετρίαν (‘For these dissimilarities... unaccompanied verse’).²⁶ But this parenthesis destroys the internal logic of the passage, and in doing so also disrupts its cohesion with chapter 1. I therefore conclude that Themistius used the word in a different sense from Aristotle. That is not to say that he misunderstood Aristotle’s usage. Themistius was under no obligation to conform to Aristotle’s usage when crafting his own prose. He could achieve a pleasingly erudite effect by deploying an item of vocabulary which he had met in the *Poetics*, and could do so with little risk of confusing his readers, since he was using it in a contextually transparent sense.²⁷ Themistius was a sophisticated literary artist, pursuing his own agenda, and it does him an injustice to treat his text as a passive conduit for the evidence for Aristotle’s lost works that we would so much like to have.

2. The evidence of Philodemus

Let us turn now to the fragments from Philodemus. The condition of the papyri from which traces of Philodemus’ text have to be recovered poses special difficulties. The reconstruction of the text itself from these incomplete and indistinct remains is also fraught with problems. I am not the only reader of the first volume of Janko’s edition to have been struck by the peculiarity of some of the Greek attributed to Philodemus; the translations, too, are often ones that I would have struggled to get out of the Greek.

²⁵ 2, 1448a7 τῶν λεχθεισῶν ἐκάστη μιμήσεων (‘each of the kinds of imitation mentioned above’) ~ 1, 1447a21 ταῖς εἰρημέναις τέχναις (‘the arts I have mentioned’).

²⁶ In 1448a11, τοὺς λόγους signals the progression from purely instrumental music to imitation in language, while ψιλομετρία indicates that we are not yet concerned with language with melodic accompaniment. Thus I, like Janko, read the καὶ epexegetically: but the meaning is ‘*logoi*, i.e. unaccompanied verse’ (not ‘prose literature that lacks verse-form’).

²⁷ Synesius was sufficiently impressed to reproduce the effect in *Dion* 18, if Bernays’ plausible emendation of φιλομετρίας to ψιλομετρίας is correct (1869: 116). Less plausibly, Garzya 1972–3 defends φιλομετρίας in Synesius, emending Themistius to match.

That does not prove that Janko’s reconstruction is wrong. If we knew Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* or Plotinus’ *Enneads* only from papyri excavated at Herculaneum, our reconstructions would be wrong if they were *not* linguistically challenging.²⁸ On the other hand, it is doubtful whether we would have succeeded in reconstructing the peculiarities of Aristotle’s or Plotinus’ lost texts correctly had we been reliant on Herculaneum papyri.

These considerations provide grounds for approaching the reconstructed evidence of Philodemus with caution, but not for ignoring it. At *On Poems* 4, col. 106.8–9 (= J3) the restoration [τῶν περὶ τὸ]ν Ἀριστοτέ[λην] is compelling. In principle, this formula would be consistent with a collective reference to Aristotle and his followers; but reading it (in accordance with a familiar idiom) as a periphrastic singular reference to Aristotle is, as Janko argues (220–1), more consistent with the manner of the following polemic. Janko also makes a good case against the *Poetics* as the Aristotelian source (330–62); the inference that the source is *On Poets* is therefore attractive. On the other hand, we know that Philodemus made use of doxographic aids when compiling *On Poems*;²⁹ so the possibility that he is engaging with *On Poets* at second hand needs to be considered,³⁰ as do his own polemical habits. There are therefore still questions that need to be posed about the value of this evidence and about its responsible use.

First, let us consider an example of the work of restoration that needs to be performed on the evidence of Philodemus’ text in order to produce something that looks like Aristotle. Philodemus has just introduced the topic of characters; this is how Janko reconstructs the text that follows (*On Poems* 4, col. 109.17–21):

καὶ ὁ τὰς πράξεις ἢ εὖ ἢ χεῖρον φάσκων [ἦν ἄ]νευ τῆς β[ουλευτι]κῆ[ς]. εἰ μὲν ἔστι βελτιόνων ἢ καθ’ ἡμᾶ[ς] ἢ πρᾶξις...

And the one who said “the actions either well or worse” was without deliberative capacity. If it is “of those better than us” ... (followed by c.48 missing words)³¹

From this he reconstructs a fragment of Aristotle (J8):

<τὸν ποιητὴν μιμεῖσθαι> τὰς πράξεις ἢ εὖ ἢ χεῖρον <πραττόντων ἢ> βελτιόνων ἢ καθ’ ἡμᾶς <ἢ χειρόνων>

<The poet imitates> the actions either well or worse <of agents either> better than us <or worse>.³²

²⁸ Longinus, a native speaker of Greek and a philosophically educated contemporary of Plotinus, complained to Porphyry that copies of some of Plotinus’ works that had been sent to him were full of errors—yet Porphyry assures us that they were accurate copies (Porph. *VP* 19.21–3, 20.5–9).

²⁹ See Janko 228–9. Janko 391 acknowledges that Philodemus’ knowledge of other Aristotelian dialogues may have been direct or indirect.

³⁰ There are some items of vocabulary not otherwise attested for Aristotle: ποιηματικός (elsewhere only in Plut. *QC* 9.14, 744e), ἐξανθρωπιζειν (only in [Hipp.] *Oct.* 86.6 Grensemann before Plut. *Mor.* 360a, 582d).

³¹ Janko 277 translates: ‘The person who claimed that “(the poet represents) the actions either well or badly” was incautious. If on the one hand the action belongs to “those who are better than we are” ...’ The phrase in parenthesis is a clarification, not a supplement: that is, it does not translate words which Janko believes were present in Philodemus’ text (see next note).

³² Janko 417 translates: ‘(... that the poet represents) either well or badly the actions of (characters) who are (either) better than we are (or worse).’ In Aristotelian fragments, Janko places words which he believes were omitted by Philodemus in round brackets (undefined in his sigla but explained on 330; cf. 403). I will follow the standard convention, and use angled brackets to mark editorial supplements to a text as transmitted.

Did Aristotle write those words in *On Poets*? Possibly. Is the text of Philodemus sufficient evidence that he did? No: it provides Janko with a peg for a conjectural reconstruction that is made possible by his knowledge of the *Poetics*. There are three methodological corollaries. First, where we do not have independent knowledge of the kind of thing that an author is likely to have written, Philodemus may not provide adequate evidence for what the author actually wrote. Secondly, to the extent that such conjectural reconstructions depend on our prior knowledge they cannot securely *add* to our knowledge of Aristotle's views. Thirdly, convergence between *On Poets* as reconstructed by Janko and the *Poetics* is not evidence that Aristotle's views remained constant: it is an inevitable result of Janko's method, since consistency with the *Poetics* is a criterion for his identification and reconstruction of fragments of *On Poets*. Consider **J12**: faced with a statement that seems to conflict with what Aristotle says in the *Poetics*, Janko suggests that it 'belongs to a speaker in the dialogue who opposes Aristotle's view, unless the philosopher himself argued *in utramque partem*' (337). So, when Janko later concludes that 'Aristotle does not seem to have changed his views of poetry' between *On Poets* and the *Poetics* (389), we should reflect that evidence for a change in Aristotle's views could not be brought to light by a procedure which eliminates apparent inconsistencies.

It is, nevertheless, true that *On Poets* was a dialogue. It is therefore probable that not everything said in *On Poets* was a statement of Aristotle's own views. We need not, for example, feel under any obligation to conclude that Aristotle himself was of the considered opinion that Homer's father was 'one of the spirits that dance with the Muses' (**J65a**). As Janko says of such anecdotes, 'since they were within a dialogue, Aristotle did not have to vouch for them himself' (317). But this does not apply only to anecdotes: one of the formal characteristics of Aristotelian dialogues accepted by Janko is that '*everything* was discussed from opposing points of view' (324, my emphasis).³³ This, too, has methodological consequences. On the one hand, arguments against the attribution of a fragment to *On Poets* on grounds of inconsistency with other evidence for Aristotle's views are not conclusive. For example, if we had positive reason to believe that Janko's **J34**, **J35** and **J36c** were all fragments of Aristotle's *On Poets*, that work's dialogue form would provide a possible explanation of the apparently discrepant opinions about the origins of tragedy which they contain. Janko's harmonising explanation of the apparent discrepancies between these fragments (365–71) would still be superfluous.³⁴ On the other hand, the dialogue form gives us an additional reason for being cautious in reconstructing Aristotle's views from citations of *On Poets*, in Philodemus or elsewhere.

The case of **J12** provides a good illustration of the importance and the difficulty of deciding whether or not a view expressed within the dialogue is Aristotle's own view. I am not convinced that Janko is right to say that the fragment is inconsistent with what Aristotle says in the *Poetics*. The statement (extracted from Philodemus) that 'some have tried to thoroughly humanize (ἐξανθρωπίζειν) tragedy' is not in conflict with Aristotle's idea that tragedy represents 'characters superior to ordinary human beings' (Janko 337: cf. *Poet.* 2, 1448a1–18), any more than the statement that some poets

³³ Citing Laurenti 1987: I.55–73.

³⁴ That is not, of course, enough to confirm Janko's speculative attributions: we still have no positive reason to believe that these are all fragments of *On Poets*.

distort the continuity of their plots (*Poet.* 9, 1451b35–2a1) is in conflict with the idea that tragedy is an imitation of a complete action (*Poet.* 6, 1449b24–5; 7, 1450b21–34). A normative theory (for example, that stealing is wrong) is not contradicted by a report of deviations from the norm (for example, that some people steal). Either way, this example has important implications for Philodemus’ reliability as a source. If I am right, Philodemus’ charge of inconsistency (*On Poems* 4, col. 111.10–112.3) depends on treating a practice *reported* by Aristotle as a practice *endorsed* by Aristotle. If Janko is right, Philodemus’ charge of inconsistency depends on treating a view expressed *in* Aristotle as a view expressed *by* Aristotle. On both readings, Philodemus’ argument is worthless. Though such crude misrepresentation would not be out of keeping with his style of polemic,³⁵ we should acknowledge that the confusion might not be Philodemus’ fault: if he was not working directly from *On Poets*, he ran the risk of being misled by his predecessors’ attempts to summarise Aristotle’s views, as well as by his own polemical zeal. Wherever the fault lies, there are limits to the confidence that can be placed in Philodemus’ reports of Aristotle; and even when we think we can make sense of his rebuttals, there are severe limits to the confidence with which we can recover from them what Aristotle meant by the words to which Philodemus is responding.

3. The evidence for *katharsis*

Potentially the most important of the fragments from Philodemus are those that relate to *katharsis*, a concept which readers of Aristotle and of Greek tragedy continue to find irresistibly fascinating and frustratingly impenetrable. Janko says that the fragments of Philodemus ‘confirm the recent consensus, derived above all from *Pol.* 8, that Aristotelian catharsis was a process in which the emotional effect of watching a mimesis habituates us to approach more closely to the mean in terms of our reactions to real-life events, and hence helps us to attain the virtues of character’ (374). I do not think that that such a consensus exists (except in the tautological sense that there is a consensus among those who accept that interpretation). But to the extent that such a consensus does exist, Philodemus does not confirm it. As we shall see, Janko himself identifies one aspect of the view of *katharsis* which he finds in Philodemus as a surprise. But there are also surprising and problematic elements which Janko seems not to have noticed.

There are three relevant fragments, all from *On Poems* book 5. One, which merely mentions tragic *katharsis* of pity (J50 ἐ]λέου κάθαρ[ρσις... τρα]γική), adds nothing to our knowledge. Another (J46) has more substantial content, indicating that *katharsis* is beneficial with regards to virtue:

ἔστιν ἡ ποιη[τι]κή χρῆσιμον πρὸς [ἀρε]τήν, καθάρουσα, ὡ[ς] ἔφαμεν, τὸ μόνιον.

Poetry is useful for virtue, purifying [*kathairousa*], as we said, the part.

That is the somewhat cryptic text of Philodemus. In the fragment of Aristotle as Janko reconstructs it, Philodemus’ text is supplemented with what he surmises (after Nardelli) are the words of Aristotle which Philodemus omitted:

³⁵ Janko sometimes dignifies Philodemus’ point-scoring distortions with the title *reductio ad absurdum* (e.g. 274 n.6; 297 n.8). That is a technical term, and should be used with more precision.

ἔστιν ἡ ποιητικὴ χρήσιμον πρὸς ἀρετὴν, καθαιρούσα, ὡς ἔφαμεν, τὸ <ἄλογον> μῦρον <τῆς ψυχῆς>.

Poetry is useful for virtue, purifying [*kathairousa*], as we said, the <non-rational> part <of the soul>.³⁶

The surprise comes in J47:

[κακία γὰρ καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἀρίστ]αις ψυχαῖς ἔνεστιν, ἀ[φρο]σύνη μὲν ἐν ταῖς [σο]φωτάταις, ἀκολασί[α δ'] ἐν ταῖς σωφρονεσ[τά]ταις· ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ [φό]βοι μὲν ἐν ταῖς ἀνδρείαις, φθόνοι δ' ἐν [ταῖς μ]εγαλοψύχοις.

For there is vice even in the best souls: (i) folly in the wisest, and (ii) self-indulgence in the most temperate; similarly there are also (iii) fears in brave souls, and (iv) jealousies in magnanimous ones.

In view of what follows, the supplement in the initial lacuna ('For there is vice even in the best...') is plausible. But two problems are worth noting. First, wisdom is an intellectual virtue, not a virtue of character. The extension of *katharsis* to intellectual virtue is not part of any recent consensus: it is, in Janko's words, 'a real surprise' (513). Various questions spring to mind. Can an intellectual defect be repaired by the mechanism of emotional habituation, or must its *katharsis* involve some different process? If so, what process? Does an intellectual virtue have the same structure as a virtue of character? In other words, is wisdom a mean? If it is, between what excess and defect does wisdom lie?³⁷ Can the *katharsis* of an intellectual defect be reconciled with Janko's text of J46? Janko does not explain how *katharsis* of an intellectual deficiency can be achieved by operating on the non-rational part of the soul. A second problem in J47 is that the catalogue of vices in the best souls is strikingly anomalous. In (i) an intellectual virtue (*sophia*, theoretical wisdom) is paired with a deviation from a *different* intellectual virtue.³⁸ In (ii), a virtue of character is paired with a deviation from the *same* character virtue. In (iii), a virtue of character is paired with one of that same virtue's affective *prerequisites*.³⁹ In (iv) a virtue of character is paired with an affective disposition which, though especially incongruent with that virtue, is always deviant.⁴⁰ On the

³⁶ See n.32 above. Janko's translation: 'The (art of) poetry is something useful with a view to virtue, purifying, as we said, the (irrational) part (of the soul).'

³⁷ Janko's answer seems to be that folly is an excess: 'folly is juxtaposed with cowardice, intemperance, and irritability in a similar list of excesses at 7.7, 1149a5–6' (514). But he has misread the text: Aristotle says that any of these things *in an extreme form* is either bestial or pathological.

³⁸ As Janko puts it, 'the greatest scientific or artistic genius may still be a dunce at taking practical decisions' (513). One would expect practical folly (ἀφροσύνη) to be contrasted with practical wisdom (φρόνησις: *EE* 7.2, 1236a5; 8.1, 1246b5–7, 18; *Rhet.* 1.11, 1371a13; 3.9, 1410a7–8). It is, in fact, possible that Aristotle did think of practical wisdom (*phronēsis*) as a mean at some point in his career (considered, but not confidently affirmed, in Pearson 2007; see also, briefly, Reeve 2012: 129). This possibility is of no help to Janko, however, since he identifies *sophia* as theoretical or technical wisdom, in accordance with Aristotle's normal usage (for the latter possibility see *NE* 6.7, 1141a9–12). In *Poet.* 18, 1456a22–3, where Sisyphus is described as *sophos* but wicked, the word may refer to the morally neutral capacity for practical reasoning which Aristotle elsewhere terms 'cleverness' (δεινότης: *NE* 6.12, 1144a23–9). Cleverness is necessary, but not sufficient, for practical wisdom. But Philodemus specifies 'the best souls': and a soul that has cleverness but not practical wisdom would not qualify.

³⁹ There must be fears in the courageous soul, since courage is a mean with regard to fear and confidence (*NE* 3.6, 1115a6–7; cf. 3.7, 1115b7–20, 24–8). So in this case, the evidence for vice in the best souls is that they have something that they *must* have if they are to be courageous (and not reckless).

⁴⁰ For the deviance of *phthonos* see *NE* 2.6, 1107a8–14; 2.7, 1108a35–b5; cf. *EE* 2.3, 1221a38–9; *Top.* 2.2, 109b37–8; *Rhet.* 2.11, 1388a34–5. It receives no special mention in Aristotle's discussion of *megalopsukhia*

face of it, this seems desperately incoherent. I am not so rash as to assert dogmatically that these problems are insoluble, or that it is impossible to extract a coherent and Aristotelian account of *katharsis* from the fragments that give rise to them; but I have not yet succeeded in doing so. Nor has Janko: he shows no sign of having noticed that the problems exist, and makes no attempt to address them.⁴¹

One reason why J47 is a surprise is that it is entirely isolated. None of the other texts that have been proposed as sources of indirect evidence for Aristotle's theory of poetic *katharsis* contains any hint of its promoting intellectual virtue: they all speak of an effect on the emotions. We ought, then, at least to consider the possibility that Philodemus' evidence on this point is erroneous. Alternatively, if Philodemus' evidence is right, it follows that the rest of the indirect evidence for Aristotle's theory is positively misleading in its incompleteness. Both horns of this dilemma have discouraging implications for the project of using indirect evidence to recover Aristotle's theory. But there is a third possibility, still more discouraging: for one could doubt the reliability of Philodemus' evidence without being convinced that the rest of the indirect evidence is reliable. The only responsible way to proceed is to consider in each case whether or not there are sufficient grounds for treating a given passage as indirect evidence for Aristotle's thinking on *katharsis*.

Since there were other theories of *katharsis*, the fact that a passage is concerned with tragic and comic *katharsis* is not sufficient on its own to warrant our treating it as evidence for Aristotle's theory. Here, at least, Janko and I agree. He once included a passage from Olympiodorus' commentary on Plato's *Gorgias* (33.3, 172.6–23 Westerink) among the testimonia to Aristotle's theory, but has since changed his mind: the passage is omitted from this edition on the grounds that 'it probably derives from a similar theory of Theophrastus' (406).⁴² In a series of passages in his commentary on the *First Alcibiades*, Olympiodorus distinguishes various conceptions of *katharsis*, one of which is associated with Aristotle by name (6.10–12), though also later described as 'Peripatetic or Stoic' (54.15–55.14) and 'Aristotelian' (146.2–4).⁴³ These passages do appear in Janko's collection, but only as a spurious fragment (†J75). His conclusion that Olympiodorus does not provide us with reliable evidence for Aristotle's theory is, in my judgement, correct. We agree, therefore, that reference to *katharsis* is not sufficient to warrant a passage being treated as evidence for Aristotle's theory. That is true even when Aristotle is named by the source of the putative fragment; *a fortiori* it will be true when he is not named.

(NE 4.3; EE 3.5); however, it is associated with *mikropsukhia* (*Rhet.* 2.10, 1387b34–5) and servility (*Pol.* 4.11, 1295b21–3).

⁴¹ Nor does he give any adequate explanation when he extends *katharsis* from the correction of moral and intellectual errors in the audience to the correction of the errors of poets and of people in the poems (514–5, on J48 and J49). I have failed to make any sense of this at all.

⁴² Included in Janko 1987: 60 (cf. 1984: 147–8); retracted in Janko 2009.

⁴³ 'Peripatetic' does not refer specifically to Aristotle, and 'Aristotelian' need not (see e.g. Olympiod. *in Cat.* 48.37 Busse; *in Mete.* 27.22–3 Stüve; Proclus *Tim.* 1.262.5 Kroll; Philop. *in DA* 597.21, 28, 39 Hayduck). The element of this theory which Olympiodorus specifically attributes to Aristotle (6.9–11) is combating *thumos* with *epithumia* and *vice versa*, which is not found in any extant work of Aristotle (the parallel as 54.17–55.1 is printed, without independent attestation, as Chrysippus SVF 3.489); this idea is explained as healing by opposites (6.11; cf. 6.9; 54.17–18), which can be found in Aristotle, though not in connection with *katharsis* (NE 2.3, 1104b16–18; EE 2.1, 1220a34–7).

Iamblichus, too, was familiar with at least one account of *katharsis* other than Aristotle's: in *On the Mysteries* 3.9 he mentions a theory that *aulos* music can have therapeutic effects on emotions and on bodily states; Iamblichus' denial that this should be described as *katharsis* indicates that it had been so described. Some have treated this passage as an Aristotelian fragment (F81c Rose; F6c Laurenti); Janko is right not to do so—indeed, he does not even include it in his list of omissions.⁴⁴ What, then, is the evidence for Aristotle's anonymous presence in *On the Mysteries* 1.11 (J55, mentioned briefly in §1 above)? Janko claims that 'although Iamblichus does not name Aristotle, his concepts and wording are so similar that dependence on Aristotle, whether direct or indirect, is generally accepted' (519–20), and draws attention to the 'typically Aristotelian' antithesis between *dunamis* and *energeia* (520; cf. 1987: 186). The cogency of this evidence is easily tested. If the presence of this antithesis is to count as evidence that the passage derives from Aristotle, then the antithesis should be absent from passages in Iamblichus that are not derived from Aristotle. In *On the Mysteries* alone (and without including technical uses of the cognate verbs) there are approximately 180 and 80 occurrences of *dunamis* and *energeia* respectively, and they are juxtaposed as closely as they are in the passage under discussion in at least 15 other passages. These terms are therefore not evidence that the passage is derived from Aristotle: they are part of Iamblichus' own technical vocabulary,⁴⁵ and he was perfectly capable of deploying them if he needed to summarise a theory of *katharsis* in his own words.

Moreover, one detail in this passage counts against its having preserved Aristotle's own wording: the potentials of human passions are to be brought to activation to a degree that is proportional (ἄχρι τοῦ συμμετροῦ). Aristotle uses *summetria* and its cognates freely. He routinely uses it in connection with physical health; and he does so in ethical contexts where he is using physical health as an analogy for virtue (*NE* 2.2, 1104a14–19; 10.3, 1173a23–8). Yet he never applies this terminology to emotions—though the *idea* that emotions should be proportionate to their object is, of course, fundamental to his ethics. I do not think his avoidance of *summetria* in this context is coincidental. His regular form of expression, that emotions should be felt as they ought, in response to the things they ought, etc (e.g. *NE* 4.5, 1126b5–6), is clearer, more flexible in its capacity to express all the various dimensions in which emotions may be appropriate, and also (perhaps) less liable to be misunderstood as meaning 'not very much'.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ The combination of psychological and physical healing points to Theophrastus (F726 Fortenbaugh); the phrase κράσεις καὶ διαθέσεις is consistent with Theophrastus (*Sens.* 35, 509.12 Diels; *CP* 2.3.8, 6.5.4, 6.5.6), though not exclusive to him (Plut. *Mor.* 383b; 432d, 438c; 496a; 918d–e; Simpl. in *DA* 19.34 Hayduck).

⁴⁵ See Steel 1978: 53–61; Shaw 1995: 34 n.28, 72–3, 78–9 and index ss.vv. Iamblichus is not alone: for Plotinus see Sleeman and Pollet 1980: 268–76, 374–83.

⁴⁶ The *Magna Moralia* (which I take not to be by Aristotle) speaks of *summetria* between reason and emotion (2.7, 1206b9–11). The term is applied directly to emotions by later Peripatetics (Asp. in *NE* 1.5, 42.22, 44.18–19 Heylbut; Alex. Aphr. in *Top.* 99.10–11, 19 Wallies; [Alex. Aphr.] *Eth. Probl.* 146.23, 149.31–150.3, etc Bruns) and Platonists (e.g. Plut. *Mor.* 443c–d; Max. Tyr. *Or.* 27, 3c; Plot. 6.8.5.28–30); Olympiodorus uses it in the accounts of Peripatetic-Stoic or Aristotelian *katharsis* that we have already seen are not Aristotle's (in *Alc.* 54.22, 146.4). Comparing Proclus in *Remp.* 1.82.5–7 Kroll with *Rep.* 2, 377e–8e will provide one example of the tendency to introduce the term *summetria* into reports of texts in which it did not appear. The use of the term in connection with *katharsis* was no doubt particularly encouraged by Pl. *Soph.* 227c–8d. As Janko notes, the *Tractatus Coislinianus* also has this usage in its definitions of tragedy ('tragedy... wants to have a *summetria* of fear') and comedy ('*summetria* wants to be of fear in tragedies, and of the laughable in comedies'). The status of the *Tractatus* as evidence for Aristotle is,

Olympiodorus is not the only late Platonist to mention Aristotle in connection with *katharsis*: Proclus does so, too, though he does not mention Aristotle alone. In his commentary on the *Republic* (1.49.17–20 Kroll = J56) Proclus speaks of the objection to Plato’s rejection of tragedy and comedy based on the thesis that a moderate satisfaction of the emotions will make them educable. He continues:

τοῦτο δ’ οὖν, πολλήν καὶ τῷ Ἀριστοτέλει παρασχὸν αἰτιάσεως ἀφορμὴν καὶ τοῖς ὑπὲρ τῶν ποιήσεων τούτων ἀγωνισταῖς τῶν πρὸς Πλάτωνα λόγων, οὕτως ἴπως ἡμεῖς... διαλύσομεν.

This, then, which provided Aristotle with ample opportunity for criticism, and the combatants on behalf of these kinds of poetry for their arguments against Plato, we shall solve... more or less as follows.

That is my translation; others have understood the Greek in the same, or a similar, way.⁴⁷ But Janko translates the passage differently (459):

It was this that gave Aristotle, and the defenders of these (kinds of) poetry in his dialogue against Plato, most of the grounds for their accusation (against him). We shall refute this (objection)... as follows.

This translation is crucial for Janko’s claim that ‘Proclus... makes clear that he is citing the *De poëtis*..., and proves that Aristotle and the characters in the dialogue responded explicitly to Plato’s challenge’ (520).⁴⁸ But it is not tenable. As in a passage from Themistius discussed earlier, Janko offers ‘dialogue’ as a translation of *logos*—or, more precisely and even less plausibly, of *logoi*. Yet *On Poets* was hardly a ‘dialogue against Plato’, though it may well have included arguments (*logoi*) against Plato. More importantly, it is hard to see any reason why Proclus should have thought it worth giving separate mentions to Aristotle and other characters in the dialogue if they all shared Aristotle’s critical stance towards Plato’s views on poetry.⁴⁹ (That is not like distinguishing, for example, the views of Socrates and Callicles in *Gorgias*.) It is much easier to see why Proclus would record, with disapproval, the fact that others (who would include Theophrastus) had jumped on Aristotle’s anti-Platonic bandwagon. Since Proclus presents himself as responding to a *tradition* of responses to Plato that, though it originated with Aristotle, was not limited to him, we have no right to be confident that his summary carefully distinguishes the specifics of Aristotle’s theory from later variations. That is, for our purposes, inconvenient. But Proclus, like Themistius, was not

however, itself disputed, and this use of *summetria* is one of the reasons for treating it with caution (as already noted by Barnes 1985: 106).

⁴⁷ 1857: 165 (= 1880: 47): ‘Diesen Punkt nun, welcher dem Aristoteles vielen Anlass zu Vorwürfen und den Verfechtern jener Poesien zu Entgegnungen gegen Platon gegeben hat...’ (‘It was this that provided most of the grounds both to Aristotle for accusation and to the defenders of these kinds of poetry for their arguments against Plato’: Janko 459 n.1). Bernays’ version is accepted by Vahlen 1874: 296. Festugière 1970: I 67 understands the passage in the same way: ‘Ce deuxième problème donc, qui a fourni à Aristote une ample occasion d’attaque, et aux défenseurs de ces genres poétiques prétexte à leurs écrits contre Platon...’. Compare (with a different, and in my view less satisfactory, rendering of τῶν πρὸς Πλάτωνα λόγων) Laurenti 1987: I.219: ‘Questo problema, dunque, che offre un’ampia occasione di critica e ad Aristotele e a quanti difendono tali generi di poesia contro gli scritti di Platone...’; Flashar, in Flashar, Dubielzig and Breitenberger 2006: 79: ‘Das hat nun auch dem Aristoteles einen nicht geringen Anlass für seine Kritik gegeben und allen, die für diese Dichtungen eingetreten sind gegen die Worte Platons.’

⁴⁸ Cf. Janko 1987: 186 (‘provides a clear statement that he is citing the *On Poets*, and that Aristotle and the characters in the dialogue are responding to Plato’s challenge’). Janko is here following Rostagni 1955: I.287–8.

⁴⁹ As already noted by Laurenti 1987: I.263–4, in response to Rostagni.

writing to serve as convenient repository of evidence for Aristotle; we must respect his agenda.

We have, then, no alternative: we must fall back on the direct evidence for Aristotle's theory of musical and poetic *katharsis* (*Poet.* 6, 1449b27–8; *Pol.* 8.6 1341a21–4; 8.7, 1341b32–2a18). Readers of the *Poetics* are acutely aware that its brief allusion to *katharsis* is not supplemented by any explanation. Most scholars turn to the discussion of musical *katharsis* in *Politics* 8.7 (J54) in the hope of finding clues to the explanation that is missing from the extant text of the *Poetics*; yet in the *Politics* Aristotle refers us to a work on poetics for a 'clearer' account (1341b38–40).⁵⁰ His admission that the discussion in *Politics* 8 is an outline, lacking in explicitness, is discouraging. Nevertheless, the discussion in the *Politics* has significant advantages over all indirect sources. We know that Aristotle is expounding his own theory of *katharsis*; we can be confident that he did not misunderstand or misrepresent his theory; and the cross-reference gives us some assurance that the theory of musical *katharsis* has some relevant connection with the theory of poetic *katharsis* that is missing from the *Poetics*.

How close that connection is may depend on the scope of Aristotle's discussion of music in *Politics* 8. If *mousikē* is used in a narrow sense, approximating to 'music' in modern usage, then this discussion of musical *katharsis* might stand at some distance from the lost discussion of poetic *katharsis*. Janko, however, maintains that Aristotle's usage in *Politics* 8 is broad: 'μουσική not only means what we now call music, but includes the words, and therefore comprises poetry and song as well' (375, cf. 516: 'μουσική comprises song and poetry also'). Elsewhere he has claimed that 'everyone' used *mousikē* in this broad sense 'down to Philodemus' *De musica*'.⁵¹ If this means that the word was always *available* for use in the broad sense, it is unobjectionable, but insufficient to determine the sense of the word in any given context. But if it means that the word was *only* used in the broad sense, and *never* referred to song and/or instrumental music as distinct from non-melodic poetry, it is false: in *Poet.* 26, 1462a14–16, *mousikē* is something which tragedy has and epic does not; and that can only be song as distinct from non-melodic poetry. The sense in which Aristotle uses the term in *Politics* 8 is therefore an open question.

Janko believes that the question can be settled on internal evidence: 'Aristotle defines μουσική as working διὰ μελοποιίας καὶ ῥυθμῶν, "via song-composition and rhythms" (*Pol.* 8.7, 1341b24)' (375 n.1). This argument turns, obviously, on the claim that 'μέλη are "songs", not "tunes"' (517). The translation is doubly anomalous. First, Olympus' μέλη were 'apparently solo pieces for the αὐλός without words' (Janko 517): such purely instrumental compositions are not 'songs' in normal English usage. Secondly, Janko classifies epics and tragedies as μέλη: these, too are not 'songs' in normal English usage. More importantly, epics and tragedies are not μέλη in Aristotle's usage, either. Tragedies *use* μέλος in certain parts (*Poet.* 1, 1447b24–8; cf. 6, 1449b28–31)

⁵⁰ Janko does not interpret this as a cross-reference to *On Poets*: he takes it as a reference to passages in the lost part of the *Poetics*, of which (more controversially) he believes the *Tractatus Coislinianus* preserves an epitome (518, citing Janko 1984: 136–51, 211–2; see n.46 above). J53 and J54 are therefore 'fragments' of *On Poets* only in an exceptionally attenuated sense: they are indirect evidence for what Aristotle said in the *Poetics* about a topic that was also discussed in *On Poets*.

⁵¹ Janko 2009: 270: 'This is supported by the fact that Theophrastus had a theory of catharsis that applied to μουσική; by this term he meant both music and poetry, as did everyone down to Philodemus' *De musica*.'

and therefore *include* μέλη. It does not follow that they *are* μέλη. μελοποιία is not co-extensive with the composition of tragedy, and is far from being its most important component (6, 1449b31–50b20); and it is primarily through the imitation of actions that tragedy evokes pity and fear and thus effects *katharsis* (6, 1449b27–8, with e.g. 9, 1452a1–3; 14, 1453b1–14), not through the songs.

Janko may object that the reference to pity and fear in *Pol.* 8.7, 1342a7 (J54.2) ‘proves that “songs relating to action” includes tragedy, which represents actions that arouse these emotions in particular’ (519). But that does not help. To show that a tragedy is a song relating to action, it is not enough to show that it relates to action or that it arouses certain emotions: one must also show that it is a song. Nor does the fact that tragedy and epic represent character and action combine with the fact that ‘rhythms and μέλη’ are associated with character and action (J53.3 = *Pol.* 8.5, 1340a14–23) to ‘confirm’ that ‘μέλη are “songs”, not “tunes”’ (517). To show that μέλη are not tunes, it is not enough to show that μέλη and songs can represent character and action: one must also show that tunes cannot do so—for if they can, the association of μέλη with character and action is consistent with μέλη being tunes. In what follows, Aristotle treats μέλη and rhythms alike as representative of character (J53.4–5 = *Pol.* 8.5, 1340a38–b10). This pairing of rhythms and μέλη occurs four times in *Politics* 8. Translating the phrase as ‘rhythms and songs’ awkwardly yokes songs with one structural component of songs. It makes better sense if the phrase designates the two dimensions in which songs and instrumental compositions are patterned, i.e. rhythm and melody. It is then equivalent to the phrase ‘ἁρμονίαι and rhythms’, which occurs four times in *Politics* 8.⁵² This interpretation is more consonant than Janko’s with the dominant emphases of Aristotle’s discussion of musical education, which seeks to determine which instruments children should learn to play at school, and which *harmoniai* and rhythms are educationally appropriate.

If music is not the same as poetry, there is an element of uncertainty about the identity of musical and poetic *katharsis*. Yet the cross-reference indicates some significant connection. The question, then, is whether the account of musical *katharsis* that emerges from the discussion in the *Politics* can be transferred to poetry. If the transfer is possible (perhaps with some degree of modification), then we would have an account of poetic *katharsis* that could be accepted as Aristotle’s with some degree of confidence. The problem, obviously, is that we must first extract an account of musical *katharsis* from the *Politics*. The history of scholarship gives no grounds for optimism; but nor, perhaps, need we despair. In addition to the general advantages of direct over indirect evidence mentioned above, the direct evidence in this instance provides us with some resources. To attempt a full interpretation would exceed the remit of the present paper.⁵³ But it is worth considering what can be concluded about the nature of Aristotle’s response to Plato’s critique of drama and Homeric epic.

In *Republic* 10, Plato excludes these kinds of poetry because they stimulate intense emotion. He maintains (i) that they are harmful, because they make us prone to inap-

⁵² Rhythm and *melos*: 8.5, 1340a13, 19; 8.6, 1341a1, 14. Rhythm and *harmonia*: 8.5, 1340a40–b10; 1340b17–18; 8.7, 1341b19, 20–21. Cf. *Poet.* 6, 1449b29, where I agree with Janko (332 n.3) that the epexegetic καὶ μέλος is not to be deleted; so, too, Tarán in Tarán and Gutas 2012: 245

⁵³ I have in the past tried to maintain an agnostic position on the nature of musical and tragic *katharsis* (most recently in Heath 2013: 93–4). My current research project will force me, in due course, to commit myself. See further Heath (in preparation).

propriate emotion in real life (605c–6d); and (ii) that an argument in their defence would need to show that they are beneficial (607d6–9). If we set aside the libertarian response that harmfulness does not warrant legislative control (a view that Aristotle could not accept), any rebuttal will need to maintain that such poetry is not harmful—i.e. to deny (i). But two different strategies then become available: the first would maintain that such poetry is not only harmless but also beneficial; the second would maintain that harmlessness is sufficient defence, denying (ii) as well as (i). Which strategy does Aristotle adopt?

Here is a key passage (*Pol.* 8.7, 1342a4–18):

(a4) ὁ γὰρ περὶ ἐνίας συμβαίνει πάθος ψυχᾶς ἰσχυρῶς, τοῦτο ἐν πάσαις ὑπάρχει, τῶ δὲ ἦττον διαφέρει καὶ τῶ μᾶλλον, οἷον ἔλεος καὶ φόβος, ἔτι δ' ἐνθουσιασμός· (a7) καὶ γὰρ ὑπὸ ταύτης τῆς κινήσεως κατοκώχιοι τινές εἰσιν, ἐκ τῶν δ' ἱερῶν μελῶν ὀρώμεν τούτους, ὅταν χρήσωνται τοῖς ἐξοργιάζουσι τὴν ψυχὴν μέλεσι, καθισταμένους ὥσπερ ἰατρείας τυχόντας καὶ καθάρσεως· (a11) ταῦτ' οὖν τοῦτο ἀναγκαῖον πάσχειν καὶ τοὺς ἐλεήμονας καὶ τοὺς φοβητικούς καὶ τοὺς ὄλωσ παθητικούς, τοὺς δ' ἄλλους καθ' ὅσον ἐπιβάλλει τῶν τοιούτων ἐκάστω, καὶ πᾶσι γίγνεσθαι τινα κάθαρσιν καὶ κουφίζεσθαι μεθ' ἡδονῆς. (a15) ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὰ μέλη τὰ καθαρτικὰ παρέχει χαρὰν ἀβλαβῆ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις· (a16) διὸ ταῖς μὲν τοιαύταις ἀρμονίαις καὶ τοῖς τοιοῦτοις μέλεσιν ἐάτεον <χρησθαι> τοὺς τὴν θεατρικὴν μουσικὴν μεταχειριζομένους ἀγωνιστάς.

(a4) For the affect that occurs in some souls strongly exists in all, but in different degrees: e.g. pity and fear. And also enthusiasm. (a7) For some are possessed by this disturbance, too, and we see that, under the influence of the sacred melodies, whenever they employ the melodies that excite extreme frenzy in the soul, they are restored, as if having undergone medical treatment [*iatreia*] and *katharsis*. (a11) The very same thing, necessarily, is experienced by those prone to pity or to fear or, in general, to any affect, and by others to the extent that each is susceptible to such things; and for all there comes about a certain *katharsis* and alleviation [*kouphizesthai*] with pleasure. (a15) In the same way, kathartic melodies, too, provide harmless pleasure to human beings. (a16) This is why the use of such *harmoniai* and such melodies should be allowed to competitors taking part in public musical performances.

Aristotle is here setting out an argument. That argument is prompted by, and aims to justify, the statement that immediately precedes: practical and enthusiastic *harmoniai*, though not appropriate for children's education, are appropriate for listening to others performing (a3–4). The argument's success is marked by an explicit statement of the conclusion reached (a16–18); careful attention to the argument's structure should reveal what Aristotle sees as sufficient grounds for reaching that conclusion. The argument proceeds directly from asserting that kathartic melodies provide harmless pleasure (a15–16) to the conclusion which licenses the use of such melodies in public performance (a16–18). The implication is that Aristotle regards harmlessness as sufficient defence—in other words, that he is following the second of the two strategies mentioned above.

Denying that such music *needs* to be beneficial does not commit Aristotle to denying that such music ever *is* beneficial; and it is clear that Aristotle believes that music can be beneficial. The effect of the 'sacred melodies' on those who are pathologically prone to enthusiasm is therapeutic (ὥσπερ ἰατρείας, a7–11), which can hardly fail to be a benefit. Why, then, does Aristotle shift to the weaker claim that kathartic music is harmless immediately before drawing his conclusion? Here, too, attention to the structure of the argument is important. As the argument progresses its scope extends beyond those pathologically prone to enthusiasm to include people across the whole range of emotional susceptibility; in the course of that progression, Aristotle moves from 'as it were medical treatment and *katharsis*' (a10–11) to '*katharsis* and alleviation

(κουφίζεσθαι) with pleasure' (a14–15) to 'harmless pleasure' (a15–16). That makes sense if he thinks that the benefit in the pathological cases cannot be generalised to all cases: what can be generalised is the combination of harmlessness and pleasure; and that, in Aristotle's view, is sufficient. Another passage in *Politics* suggests that Aristotle took the same view in the case of poetry: he permits adults to attend performances of comedy, not because they will benefit from it, but because their education immunises them against the harm that comedy can do to young people (7.17, 1336b20–3).

Though I have spoken of Aristotle 'responding' to Plato's critique, that may not be the most helpful way to describe what is happening in the passage on musical *katharsis*. Compare Aristotle's comment on the representation of gods in poetry (*Poet.* 25, 1460b35–1a1), which is a 'response' to Plato only in the sense that it manifests Aristotle's disagreement with *Republic* 2; it is not a response to Plato in the sense of *arguing* that he was wrong. Similarly, the discussion of *katharsis* manifests Aristotle's disagreement with an argument about music analogous to the argument about poetry in *Republic* 10, but it does not engage directly with that argument: when it asserts that such music is harmless, it implicitly refuses the demand that a defence should demonstrate benefits, but does so without argument. Aristotle is not willing to allow Plato to set the rules for the debate (why should he?), but instead presents conclusions which he has reached from premises based on his own (not Plato's) understanding of ethics and human psychology.

Those premises are presupposed, and not articulated in the passage itself. They are not drawn to the reader's attention. Readers in whose thoughts Plato's critique is prominent will understandably find it natural to interpret Aristotle on the assumption that Plato's challenge was being met on the terms that Plato had laid down: that is, they will assume that he must have been trying to show that the emotional stimulus is beneficial.⁵⁴ Modern readers who make that false assumption will find confirmation of their understanding of Aristotle in the indirect evidence provided by ancient readers who made the same false assumption. The resulting consensus will be a consensus in error.

4. Conclusion

Working with fragments is a hazardous enterprise. Excessive caution condemns us to remain in ignorance, which is a bad thing; but lack of restraint may betray us into believing falsehoods, which is worse. The history of scholarship is littered with the corpses of source-critical hypotheses which, after becoming the basis for far-reaching conjectural constructs and being widely accepted as securely established, succumbed to the sceptical scrutiny that exposed their inadequate foundations. With hindsight it is easy to see in such cases how over-confident acceptance of insecure conjectures put research onto a false trail. Yet in a discipline in which certainty is hard to come by, total abstinence from conjecture is necessarily stultifying. The balance between excessive

⁵⁴ Janko's misreading (520: 'Ford... denies that Aristotle responded to Plato's attack on poetry') of Ford 2004: 334 ('My reading of *Politics* 8 will disappoint those who want to see Aristotle taking up Plato's challenge in the *Republic* to show in prose is not only a source of pleasure but also of benefit to political communities and human life (607d)... To respond that tragedy is "educational" is not to defeat Plato but to capitulate to him') illustrates the power of that assumption: it transforms Ford's denial that Aristotle responded *on Plato's own terms* into a denial that he responded *at all*.

caution and over-confidence is hard to strike. At both the individual and the collective levels, the progress of research depends on a dialectic between boldness and caution.⁵⁵

To disapprove on principle of Janko's bold endeavour would therefore be absurd.⁵⁶ If there is evidence that will help us to understand Aristotle, we need to know about it; and we will never find it if no one is prepared to look for it. But, as Janko says, it is crucial that we should be 'prepared to formulate *and test* such hypotheses' (362, my emphasis). In this paper, I have put some of hypotheses advanced in Janko's edition of the fragments of *On Poets* to the test,⁵⁷ and have found them compromised by multiple failures of methodology and judgement. But there is also a deeper failure. Janko does not recognise the fragility of his conjectures, and fails to alert users of his work to the need for caution. Indeed, his hypotheses are consistently delivered with the utmost confidence and a tendency to overstatement: 'confirms', 'proves' and 'certainly' are favoured words. This edition is therefore likely to give its users, especially users who are not experts on Aristotle or the later texts which are adduced as indirect evidence, a dangerously misleading impression of the solidity of its conclusions.⁵⁸

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⁵⁵ Heath 2002: 107.

⁵⁶ Janko 362: 'With the odds stacked against those who would argue for authenticity in such cases, it is not to be wondered at if scholars prefer not to take the risk, and even disapprove on principle of those who do.' But Janko does not identify any scholar who has expressed disapproval of the endeavour *on principle*, and I can think of none.

⁵⁷ Other examples could be added. I cannot resist giving passing mention to the pages (327–8) in which Janko, reluctant to believe that Aristotle could have endorsed an allegorical interpretation of Homer (F175 Rose), hypothesises that the *Homeric Questions* were in dialogue form (those who share Janko's doubts about F175 would do better to consider the possibility that our sources record a solution mentioned but not endorsed by Aristotle), and then founds a conjecture about the speakers in this hypothetical dialogue on the work of that supremely inventive fantasist, Ptolemy son of Hephaestion, also known as Ptolemy Chennus (on whom see Cameron 2004: 134–63).

⁵⁸ Research for this paper was undertaken during my tenure of a Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship (F10099B). The Leverhulme Trust's support is gratefully acknowledged.

Appendix 1

See n.10 above for an explanation of this Appendix.

John the Deacon 149.6–150.10 Rabe

ἐνταῦθα διδάσκει, τί ἐστὶ τὸ τραγικῶς λέγειν καὶ τί τὸ ἔργον αὐτοῦ. παραδίδωσι δὲ καὶ τὴν τούτου μέθοδον. ἔστι μὲν οὖν τὸ τραγικῶς λέγειν τὸ μετὰ πάθους ἐκφράζειν τὰ πράγματα καὶ ἐλεινολογεῖσθαι· τραγωδία γάρ ἐστι συμφορῶν μετὰ θρήνου ἀπαγγελία, ἔργον δὲ τραγωδίας πάθος κινεῖν καὶ εἰς θρήνους κινεῖν καὶ δάκρυα, μέθοδος δὲ αὐτοῦ τὸ τὰ μεγάλα μὲν τῶν πραγμάτων διὰ βραχυλογίας ἐκφέρειν, τὰ δὲ μικρὰ καὶ ἐλάχιστα διὰ πλειόνων ἀπαγγέλλειν. ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἐπεὶ περὶ τραγωδίας λόγος ἐνέπεσε, χρὴ καὶ τῷ περὶ ταύτης λόγῳ μικρὸν τι ἐμφιλοχωρῆσαι καὶ εἰπεῖν πόθεν ἐπὶ τὸν βίον προῆλθε καὶ τίνες αὐτὴν ἐφεύρου καὶ δι' ἣν αἰτίαν οὕτως ἐκλήθη.

Gregory of Corinth, RG 7.1328.8–9.1 Walz

ἐνταῦθα διδάσκει, τί ἐστὶ τὸ τραγικῶς λέγειν καὶ τί τὸ ἔργον αὐτοῦ, καὶ παραδίδωσι καὶ τὴν μέθοδον αὐτοῦ. ἔστι δὲ τὸ τραγικῶς λέγειν τὸ μετὰ πάθους ἐκφράζειν τὰ πράγματα καὶ ἐλεινολογεῖσθαι· τραγωδία γάρ ἐστι συμφορῶν μετὰ θρήνου ἀπαγγελία, ἔργον δὲ τραγωδίας πάθος κινεῖν καὶ εἰς θρήνους καὶ δάκρυα, μέθοδος δὲ αὐτοῦ τὸ τὰ μεγάλα μὲν τῶν πραγμάτων διὰ βραχυλογίας ἐκφέρειν, τὰ δὲ μικρὰ καὶ ἐλάχιστα διὰ πλειόνων ἀπαγγέλλειν.

*J33a.1 μετὰ γοῦν τὸν ἀνήμερον βίον μεταβολῆς ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον γινομένης ἀπαλλαγέντες οἱ ἄνθρωποι τῆς βαλανοφαγίας καὶ ἐπὶ γεωργίαν τραπόμενοι ἀπαρχὴν τῶν γινομένων καρπῶν τοῖς θεοῖς ἀνετίθεντο, ἡμέρας αὐτοῖς εἰς πανηγύρεις καὶ ἑορτὰς ἀπονείμαντες· καὶ ἐν ταύταις ἄνδρες σοφοὶ τὸ τῆς ἀνέσεως ἄλογον ἐπικόπτοντες καὶ βουλόμενοι πανηγύρεις λογικῆς παιδείας μετέχειν

*J33a.2 τὴν κωμωδίαν ἐφεύρου. ἧς λόγος πρῶτον κατάρξαι τὸν Σουσαρίωνα ἔμμετρον αὐτὴν συστησάμενον.

ἐνστήναι μὲν γὰρ κατὰ τὸ σὺνηθες τὰ Διονύσια, ἐν τούτῳ δὲ τῷ καιρῷ τὴν γυναῖκα τούτου μεταλλάξαι τὸν βίον· καὶ τοὺς μὲν θεατὰς ἐπιζητεῖν αὐτὸν ὡς πρὸς τὰς τοιαύτας ἐπιδείξεις εὐφυᾶ, τὸν δὲ παρελθόντα λέγειν τὴν αἰτίαν καὶ ἀπολογούμενον εἰπεῖν ταῦτα... καὶ εἰπόντος τὰδε εὐδοκιμῆσαι παρα τοῖς ἀκούουσι.

*J33a.3 τῆς οὖν κωμωδίας οὕτως εὐρεθείσης, ἵνα μὴ πάντῃ διάχυσις γένηται, τὴν τραγωδίαν εὐρήκασι, τὸ συνωφρωμένον καὶ κατηφές ἐκ ταύτης εἰσφέροντες.

J35 ἄμφω δὲ παρ' Ἀθηναίοις ἐφεύρηνται, καθάπερ Ἀριστοτέλης φησίν. ἐν ταύτῃ γὰρ ἄνθρωποι πρῶτοι

ἐφεύρε δὲ τὴν κωμωδίαν Σουσαρίων πρῶτος,

*J33b

ἵν' ἔχοιεν οἱ ἄνθρωποι ψυχαγωγεῖσθαι διὰ ταύτης ἐν ταῖς ἑορταῖς καὶ πανηγύρεσιν.

ἵνα δὲ μὴ διάχυσις τελείως αὐθις γένοιτο, εὐρήκασι καὶ τὴν τραγωδίαν, τὸ κατηφές ἐκ ταύτης εἰσφέροντες.

J36c

γεγόνασι: διὸ καὶ ταυτὴ τῇ πόλει
μαρτυρητέον τὰ κάλλιστα τῶν
μαθημάτων καὶ σπουδαιότατα.
τῆς δὲ τραγωδίας πρῶτον δράμα Ἄριων
ὁ Μεθυμναῖος εἰσήγαγεν, ὥσπερ Σόλων
ἐν ταῖς ἐπιγραφομέναις Ἐλεγείαις
ἐδίδαξε.
Στράτων δὲ ὁ Λαμψακηνὸς δράμα φησι
Ἀθήνησι διδαχθῆναι ποιήσαντος
Θέσπιδος.

Appendix 2: Concordance

* = fragment doubtfully attributed to *On Poets* (Janko 2011), or doubtfully attributed to Aristotle (Rose). **J32** is marked as doubtful in Janko's text, but not in his commentary or concordance. In Janko 1987 asterisks mark fragments conjecturally attributed to *On Poets*: since this is a different criterion, I have omitted them here to avoid confusion.

† = spurious fragment (Janko 2011).

italicised fragment numbers = fragments which other editors (Rose, Gigon) do not assign to *On Poets*. I have supplied some numbers from Gigon's 'Fragmente ohne Buchangabe' omitted from Janko's concordance.

Under status, I have indicated which texts I would include if I were compiling a collection of sources; since I am not compiling such a collection, the judgements should be regarded as very provisional.

P = a text that I would include as a source for *On Poets* (in some cases hesitantly).

A = a text that I would include as a source for Aristotle, but could not assign to *On Poets* with any confidence.

In some cases I would include only a limited part of the text printed by Janko (see the discussions of **J35** and **J38** above). Inclusion does not imply endorsement: texts in which Aristotle is explicitly named have been included even if I believe that their evidence is unreliable (e.g. †**J75**); this includes cases where a named reference to Aristotle is complicated by mention of others (e.g. **J56**).

Janko							
2011	1987	Rose ³	Gigon	Laurenti	Source	Status	
*1–*2	3				Philodemus		
3–10	3				Philodemus	P	
*11					Themistius <i>Or.</i> 34.11		
12–30	3				Philodemus	P	
31a	11	*676	937	4a	sch. Cicero	P?	
31b					Didymus		
31c					<i>GL</i> 6.107.10–12 Keil		
—	12				anon. POxy. 2389		
*32	16				sch. Dionysius Thrax	A	
*33a					John Diaconus		
*33b					Gregory of Corinth		
34	14b				Themistius 27 (337ab)		
35	14a				John Diaconus	A (part)	
36a	13	*677a	919	4b	Proclus <i>Chrestomathy</i>	P?	
36b					sch. Plato		
36c					John Diaconus		
36d		*677b			Suda (s.v. Arion)		
*37a					Pausanias (Atticist)		
*37b–c					Zenobius (paroemiast)		
*37d					anon. PBerol. 9571		
38	15a			4c	Themistius 26 (316ad)	P? (part)	
*39–*40					Ar. Byz. (?), POxy. 3219		
41							

42	15b				D.L. 3.56	
43a					Themistius 26 (316d–9a)	
43b	2	73	862	5	D.L. 3.37	P
44a	1a	72b	15	3b	Athenaeus	P
44b					Eustathius	
44c	1b				Ar. Byz. (?), POxy. 3219	P
44d					Heracleodorus	
44e	1c	72a	14	3a	D.L. 3.48	P
45–52b	4				Philodemus	
*52c					John Philoponus	A
53–54	A				Aristotle (<i>Pol.</i>)	
55	B	81b	893	6b	Iamblichus <i>Myst.</i> 1.11	
—		81c		6c	Iamblichus <i>Myst.</i> 3.9	
56	C	81a	921	6a	Proclus <i>in Remp.</i>	A et al.
57	E			T1	Aristotle (<i>Poet.</i>)	P
58	7	74	16	7	Macrobius	P
59	5				Aristocles	
*60–*61						
62–63						P?
*64	6				Philodemus	
65a	9	76a	20.1	9a	[Plut.] De Hom.	P
65b		76e	20.4		anon. Vit. Hom.	P
65c		76b	20.5	9b	Gellius	P
65d		76c	20.2		[Plut.] De Hom.	P
65e		76d	20.3		anon. Vit. Hom.	P
66a	8	75a	21.1	8	D.L. 2.46	P
66b		75b	21,2		D.L. 8.48–9	
66c					Tzetzes	
*67a					Aelian	
*67b					Eustathius	
*68		7b	27		Cicero	A
*69					anon. POxy. 2506	A
*70					anon. POxy. 2734	A
*71		66	865	2c	D.L. 8.63	A
*72a		71a	18	2a	D.L. 8.51–2	A
*72b		71b	19	2b	D.L. 8.74	A
73	10	70	17	1	D.L. 8.57	P
*74					Plutarch	A
†75	Di				Olympiodorus <i>in Alc.</i>	A et al.
—	Dii				Olympiodorus <i>in Gorg.</i>	
—		77	22	10	Bekker <i>Anecdota</i> 1.101	

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