A crux in Phrynichus Com. fr. 19 K-A

My name is “Solitary” and I am living the life of Timon, without a wife, not paired (?), sour-tempered, inaccessible, unsmiling, silent, holding my own opinion.

Phot. α 375 ἄδουλος βίος ἐρεῖς, τουτέστιν ὁ μὴ δοῦλον ἥχων (~Phryn. praep. soph. p. 44,1). ἐρεῖς δὲ καὶ ἀδιάλεκτος βίος καὶ ἀγέλαστος βίος. Φρύνιχος Μονοτρόπῳ : ὄνομα… ἰδιογνώμονα


ἄζυγον in line 3 is unmetrical; -α is long before -ζ, in a position where the iambic trimeter requires a short syllable. Moreover, ἄζυγος is first attested in [Lucianus] Am. 44,3 ἄζυγος κοίτη, the proper word for the fifth century being ἄζυξ (Eur. Ba. 694; Ar. Th. 1139). Many emendations have been suggested. On the one hand, some scholars attempted to find a metrically acceptable synonymous adjective. E. Schwartz suggested ἀσύζυγον, whilst Kassel-Austin would prefer μονόζυγ'. But ἀσύζυγον, with the meaning ‘without a wife’, does not occur in classical texts, whereas μονόζυγ' denotes rather the interruption of conjugal life (it is said of Persian women in A. Pers. 139 λείπεται μονόζυγ'),1 and therefore is difficult after the preceding ἄγαμος. On the other hand, Meineke attempted to

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1 For the ironical use of the metaphor of marriage as a yoke in this tragedy cf. 542 ποθέουσαι ἰδεῖν ἄφτιζυγίς; cf. Hall 1996, 117: “the image of the yoke which is put in this play is supplemented
preserve ἄζυγον by changing the word order in ἀπρόσοδον, ἄγαμον, ὀξύθυμον, ἄζυγον; and Boethe, on the basis of a parallel from Libanius, proposed ἄγαμον, ἀπρόσοδον, ὀξύθυμον, ἄγαμον. It is clear that Meineke’s and Boethe’s suggestions correct the meter, but they lack any palaeographic basis.

Another interesting suggestion is Hermann’s ἄδουλον, ‘lacking slaves’, instead of ἄζυγον, on the ground that Phrynichus’ fragment is transmitted by the Lexicon of Patriarch Photius (9th c.), precisely in the lemma ἄδουλος βίος (see the entry cited above). The only occurrence of ἄδουλος in fifth century literature is in E. Andr. 593 ἄκλῃστ’ ἄδουλα δώμαθ’ ἑστίας (it was in commenting on this verse that Hermann conjectured ἄδουλον instead of ἄζυγον with regard to our passage); but the transmitted text is problematic. ἄδουλα would literally mean that Menelaus went to Crete leaving his palace without slaves, but this is incomprehensible; also the phrase δώματα ἑστίας is impossible. J. Lentig proposed ἄφρουρα instead of ἄδουλα, whereas Diggle, followed by Kovacs (1995 and 1996) and Lloyd (2005), put the words ἄδουλα δώμαθ’ ἑστίας between cruces. Hermann’s proposition would be stronger, if it were supported by sources earlier than Photius. However, the second century grammarian Phrynichus, who was considered as the most severe Atticist of his time and regularly used to cite passages from fifth century comedy in order to support his linguistic choices, includes in his Σοφιστικὴ Παρασκευή (The Sophist’s Preparation) only the entry ἄδουλος βίος: ὁ μὴ δουλεύοντα ἔχων (44.17 de Borries), without citing the passage of his namesake comic poet; still, this might be expected, since this work is an epitome. Libanius (4th century AD), on the other hand, who seems to imitate Phrynichus’ fragment in the description of a lonely life (cited in n. 2), does not include the adjective ἄδουλος. I believe therefore that in Photius’ citation two different entries are merged together, the connecting element being the phrase pattern ‘adjective with privative alpha + βίος’; cf. the phrase ἐρεῖς δὲ καὶ, which seems to introduce a second entry. Therefore, ἄδουλος βίος does not

by the picture of the Persian wife, supporting the yoke of marriage on her own”; see also Garvie 2009, 92.

2 διαβάλλοντας μου τὴν ἡσυχίαν, ἀπρόσοδον καλοῦντας, ἀγέλαστον ὀνομάζοντας, ἰδιογνώμονα μου τὸν βίον προσαγορεύοντας (Decl. 26.46).

3 This adjective seems to be rather a late usage; its certain earliest appearance is in Megasthenes (late fourth century), where Brahmins are described as ‘slaveless’ because of the νόμοι of their culture (BNJ 715 F 33; cf. Strabo 15.1.59). See also LSJ s.v. 2, “too poor to keep a slave”; cf. D.S. 37.29.3; Plu. Vit. aere al. 827D-832A. The supposed ἄδουλος, in connection with the preceding ἄγαμος, could also be taken to mean that the speaking character does not have a woman of slave status (δούλη) as a concubine (see McClure 2003, 18-20); but this usage is not supported by the explanation of ἄδουλος βίος as ὁ μὴ δοῦλον ἔχων either.