

In this paper, I will argue that Classical Greek had only one written instance of a laughter interjection by interpreting a previously misunderstood line of Plato Comicus. In Plato's late 5th century play *Gryphens*, the following line has caused considerable confusion over Greek interjections of laughter: "αἰαῖ· γελῶν δ' ἐπηκροώμην πάλαι" "oh! Laughing I heard [this] long ago." Through Meineke's (mis)interpretation of this line and conjecture of "ἄ ἄ" (an interjection of laughter) for "αἰαῖ" (an interjection of pain), a wild goose chase began for a Greek version of the Indo-European laugh "ha ha" (found in English, German, Russian, Latin), resulting in incorrect entries for "ἄ ἄ" both in the *DGE* and *LSJ*. I will first explain why Meineke's interpretation of this line is incorrect, and then examine *DGE/LSJ*'s other entry of "ἄ ἄ"—Euripides' *Cyclops* 157, which I will argue (*pace* Seaford) is not an instance of laughter at all. This project is not only significant for the *DGE & LSJ* entries for "ἄ ἄ," but also for bringing to light the peculiar absence of laughter interjections in Greek comedy. Whereas instances of interjections expressing pain (e.g. οἴμοι, αἰαῖ) number into the hundreds (both in tragedy and comedy), there is only *one* instance of a laughter interjection in all of comedy (αἰβοιβοῖ at *Peace* 1066). This disparity highlights the comparative unimportance of laughter on the Greek comic stage.

However, it is the assumption of on-stage laughter which caused Meineke to conjecture "ἄ ἄ" (laughter) for "αἰαῖ" (pain)—which *DGE/LSJ* followed—even though the original manuscript reading can and should be saved. The 14th-century lexicographer, Photius, who transmits this line of Plato Comicus, writes about the line, "this is something that occurred often in Middle/New Comedy" (ἔστι δὲ πολὺν παρὰ τοῖς τῆς μέσης κωμωιδίας καὶ τῆς νέας ποιηταῖς). Meineke interpreted this line to mean that the *interjection* occurred often in Middle/New Comedy, and thus amended it to "ἄ ἄ." However, as I will argue *via* a parallel in Roman New Comedy (Ter. *Eun.* 426), Photius is not referring to the interjection, but to the sentiment—that complaining about an old joke is characteristic of Middle/New Comedy. Thus, the "αἰαῖ" (pain) of the manuscript can be easily understood, and Plato's line ought to be read as "Ugh! I heard that one long ago, laughing *then*." So too the second *DGE/LSJ* citation, Euripides *Cyclops* 157, does not accurately represent laughter, and, for that reason, Seaford chooses to edit the text without aspiration. The other contender for being a Greek laughter interjection, "αἰβοῖ", also, like *DGE/LSJ*'s "ἄ ἄ" citations, melts away upon closer examination (Schinck).

The only instance of a written laughter-interjection for the Greek comic stage is the "αἰβοιβοῖ" of *Peace* 1066. To this outburst of Trygaeus, the other character (Hierokles) responds "τί γελᾷς;" marking this interjection as a certain instance of laughter, and, in fact, the only instance of a laughter-interjection that has been transmitted to us from ancient comedy.