

[Author] Critias Atheniensis (460-403 a.C. ca.)

[Work] Critias, fr. 2 Gent.-Pr. = fr. 4 West<sup>2</sup>

[Place of work] Athens

[Source] Hephaest. *Ench.* 2,3 Consbr.: (περὶ συνεκφωνήσεως) ἡ δύο βραχεῖαι εἰς μίαν βραχεῖαν, ὅπερ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις εὐρίσκεται μέτροις ... ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἔπεσι σπανίως· ὥσπερ Κριτίας ἐν τῇ εἰς Ἀλκιβιάδην ἐλεγείᾳ οὐκ ὤιετο ἐγχωρεῖν τοῦ Ἀλκιβιάδου τὸ ὄνομα· φησὶ γάρ· ‘καὶ νῦν Κλεινίου — οὐκ ἀμέτρως’.

[Typology] Elegy

[Period] 450–400 BC

[Text] καὶ νῦν Κλεινίου υἱὸν Ἀθηναῖον στεφανώσω

Ἀλκιβιάδην νέοισιν ὑμνήσας τρόποις·

οὐ γάρ πως ἦν τοῦνομ’ ἐφαρμόζειν ἐλεγείῳ·

νῦν δ’ ἐν iambeῖω κέισεται οὐκ ἀμέτρως.

[Metrics] Pythiambic meter

[Critical apparatus] 1 Ἀθηναίου v.l. || 2 ἐλεγεῖον de pentametro hic primum dictum

[Translation] and now I’ll crown the Athenian, the son of Cleinas,

Alcibiades, and I’ll praise him with new manner.

Really it was not possible to fit the name in the elegiac verse,

now it lies in an iambic verse, with a not unsuitable manner.

[Comment]

This is one of the author's two ‘political’ elegies, perhaps parts of a single composition dating to 408 BC. In this fragment, as in all of Critias’ elegy, a metrical innovation regarding the name of Alcibiades is expressed in terms of primacy, which determines a pythiambic stanza (hexameter + iambic trimeter). In the first couplet we find a technical terminology, typical of the hymn and the praise, which is counterbalanced by the choice of a new metrical form, the iambic trimeter. This statement may lead one to think that, together with the refinement of the metrical form, there may also be a criticism against Alcibiades, whose name cannot be harmonized with the elegy, the meter of praise, but adapts in a way that is not inappropriate (as well as not *contra metrum*) to the iambic verse, the meter of blame and felony. About Critias and the origin of a new poetic genre, see *testim.* 43 Gent.-Pr.

[Reference Editions]

B. Gentili-C. Prato (edd.), *Poetae Elegiaci. Testimonia et fragmenta. Pars altera*, Monachii et Lipsiae 2002<sup>2</sup>; M.L. West (ed.), *Iambi et Elegi Graeci ante Alexandrum cantati. Editio altera atque emendata*, II, Oxonii 1998<sup>2</sup>; D.E. Gerber, *Greek Elegiac Poetry*, II, Cambridge (Mass.)-London 1999.

**[Essential Bibliography]**

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**[Keywords]**

Elegy, Critias, Alcibiades

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