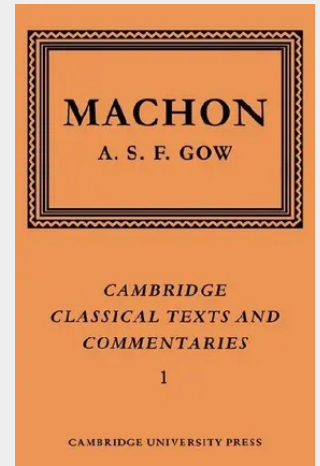


Machon

The Fragments

Machon was a writer of Comedies who lived and worked in Alexandria in the middle of the third century B.C. All of his work that survives is preserved in the Deipnosophistae of Athenaeus who, besides two fragments of Comedies of no great importance, quotes also 462 verses from a collection of anecdotes which Machon called Xpeiai. These anecdotes are written in the iambic verse of Comedy. They are concerned with the doings and sayings of courtesans, parasites, and musicians, sometimes in relation to persons of historical importance. They are often scabrous but also not infrequently amusing; and they are of considerable interest both as documents of social history and as a type of literature which, though popular in antiquity, has hardly survived. The Xpeiai, which present many problems of reading and interpretation, have never before been separately edited. Recent editors of Athenaeus have improved the text; but to find commentaries it is necessary to go back to Casaubon's edition of Athenaeus, published in 1600, and to Schweighauser's, published in 1801-7.

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