

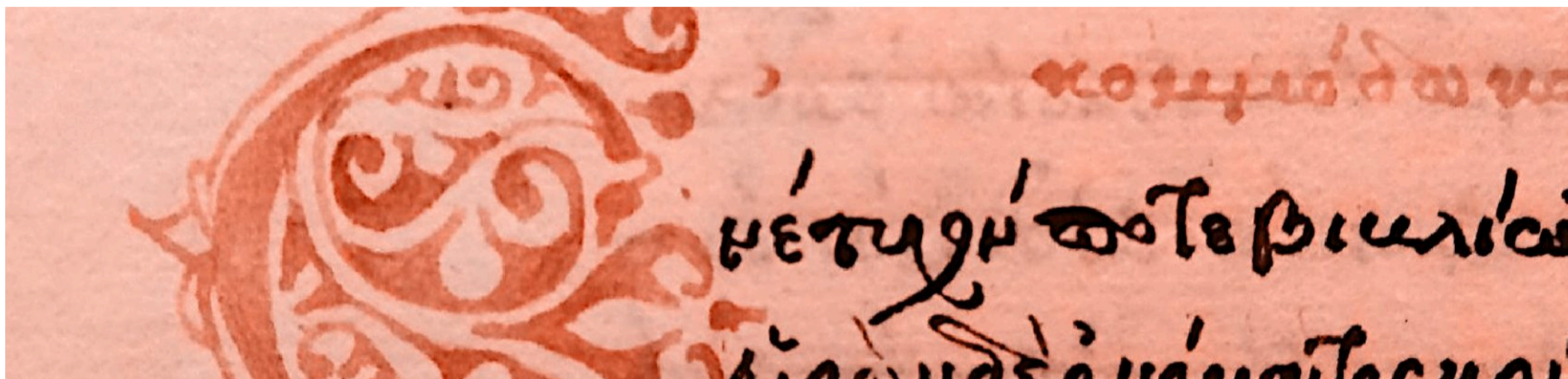


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PURA. Purism In Antiquity: Theories Of Language in Greek Atticist Lexica and their Legacy



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DEA contributes to the three main objectives of PURA:

1. to provide a comprehensive mapping of **Atticist purism** by analyzing the linguistic theories of Atticist lexica;
2. to study the intellectual and cultural **legacy** of Atticism in antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the early modern age by charting the history both of the lexica as **books** and of their authors;
3. to make the theories of these specialist and intricate texts more approachable and **accessible** outside the traditional format of critical editions.

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How to cite this resource

O. Tribulato (ed.), *Digital Encyclopedia of Atticism*. With the assistance of E. N. Merisio. Venice, Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2022-. e-ISSN 2974-8240.

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This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 865817)

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Lexicographic entries

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δυσέριστος

(Phryn. *PS* 65.13)

A. Main sources

(1) Phryn. *PS* 65.13: δυσέριστος· οὐ μόνον δύσερις.

δυσέριστος: Not only δύσερις ('contentious, causing strife').

B. Other erudite sources

(1) Hsch. δ 2574: δυσήριστοι· δυσέριστοι, φιλόνηκοι. ἢ ἀμφίβολοι.

δυσήριστοι: [The same as] δυσέριστοι, 'contentious'/'causing strife'. Or 'ambiguous'.

(2) Schol. Soph. *El.* 1385: [...] δυσέριστον δὲ τὸ δι' ἔριν γινόμενον κακὴν.

[...] δυσέριστον is [the bloodshed] that happens because of bad strife.

C. *Loci classici*, other relevant texts

(1) Soph. *El.* 1384–5:

ἴδεθ' ὅπου προνέμεται

τὸ δυσέριστον αἶμα φουσῶν Ἄρης.

Watch where Ares advances, he who breathes implacable bloodshed.

(2) Cleanth. fr. 537.28–31 SVF (= fr. 1.28–31 Powell = Stob. 1.1.12):

αὐτοὶ δ' αὖθ' ὀρμῶσιν ἄνοι κακὸν ἄλλος ἐπ' ἄλλο,
οἱ μὲν ὑπὲρ δόξης σπουδῆν δυσέριστον ἔχοντες,
οἱ δ' ἐπὶ κερδοσύνας τετραμμένοι οὐδενὶ κόσμῳ,
ἄλλοι δ' εἰς ἄνεσιν καὶ σώματος ἡδέα ἔργα

But these silly [people] rush to [do] the evil, one to [do] one, one to [do] another. Some people make unrestrainable efforts for the [sole] sake of fame, others [are] turned to profit without any order, while others [pursue] licence and pleasurable occupations of the body.

D. General commentary

Phrynichus ([A.1](#)) remarks upon the existence of the adjective *δυσέριστος* alongside the more common form *δύσερις*. His gloss is neither prescriptive nor proscriptive. Rather, Phrynichus collects a form he considers worthy of attention and then comments on its use. It is slightly surprising that, in this case, Phrynichus would recommend such a rare word as *δυσέριστος*. However, as the compounds formed in a similar fashion to *δυσέριστος* are relatively common in Greek (see below), Phrynichus might have regarded *δυσέριστος* as unexceptional, though rare.

Given the rarity of *δυσέριστος*, the *locus classicus* of the gloss is in all likelihood a passage of Sophocles' *Electra* ([C.1](#)). The remaining evidence for *δυσέριστος* is limited to a passage in Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus* ([C.2](#)). In later Greek, Iamblichus (*Myst.* 1.2) and Proclus (*in Prm.* 701.20) also document an abstract derivative *δυσεριστία* 'contentiousness'. A gloss of Hesychius on *δυσήριστος* ([B.1](#)) also attests to the alternative form *δυσήριστος*, with [ε:] (see also *δύσερις/δύσηρις*).

With regard to semantics, in the passage of Sophocles ([C.1](#)) *δυσέριστος* indicates a killing 'which is difficult to contest', and so the meaning must be along the lines of 'uncontestable', 'inexorable', and 'implacable' (see Jebb 1894, 184–5: 'bloodshed, deadly vengeance, against which the guilty will strive in vain', approved by Finglass 2007, 505; see also below on *οὐκ ἐριστά* 'which cannot be contested' and 'against which one cannot struggle' at Soph. *El.* 220). One can thus compare *δυσέριστος* with several other verbal adjectives in -τος formed with the prefix *δυσ-*. To mention but a few cases, see *δυσάρεστος* 'difficult to satisfy', *δύσβατος* 'difficult to enter', *δύσφευκτος* 'difficult to escape from', and many more (on the ambiguous status of the prefix *δυσ-*, i.e. whether forms in *δυσ-* are compounds or derivations, see further Tribulato 2015, 20 and 70 n. 27). This effectively goes against the interpretation of the scholia ([B.2](#)), where *δυσέριστον αἷμα* is taken as the bloodshed 'caused by unholy strife' (i.e. between the mother and her children; this interpretation is also contested by Jebb 1894, 184–5). A meaning akin to the one in Sophocles can also likely be found in the passage of Cleanthes ([C.2](#)), where *δυσέριστος* indicates an urgency (*σπουδή*) that cannot be contested or restrained. The *CGL* s.v. correctly denotes that *δυσέριστος* means 'hard to strive against, irresistible', while the treatment of older lexis is outdated (see LSJ s.v. 'pertaining to unholy strife' and *DGE* s.v. 1 'perteneciente a una contienda impía, que acompaña a querellas funestas', though *GE* s.v. also gives the correct meaning 'implacable' as an alternative possibility).

The verbal adjective *δυσέριστος* (also *δυσήριστος*) is based on *δύσερις* with an expansion -τος (for this formation see Risch 1974, 26). Interestingly, the first available evidence for the verbal adjective *ἐριστός* 'which can be contested' (in turn based on the verb *ἐρίζω*) also occurs in Sophocles' *Electra* (*El.* 220; later also in prose writers, e.g. Vett.Val. 1.3.118 and Ath. 11.506b). An important parallel for *δυσέριστος* is *ἀμφήριστος*. This word is already attested in Homer (*Il.* 23.382 and 23.527) and is fairly common in later poetry, but it is also used by Polybius (5.85.6) and prose writers from the imperial period onwards (Philo, Strabo, Josephus, Lucian, etc.). We also have evidence for

-εριστος/-ηριστος in the personal names Ἀμφήριστος and Ἀνήριστος/Ἀνέριστος (respectively 2x and 4x; the personal names Ἀμφήριτος, Ἀνήριτος, and Μετήριτος indicate that some -τος forms actually derive from a verb *ἐρίω, see further Bechtel 1917, 195).

Comparable, to some extent, to the cases of δύσερις and δυσέριστος is that of φίλερις and φιλέριστος, regardless of the obvious difference that φίλερις and φιλέριστος are verb-initial exocentric compounds (similar compounds are, e.g., φιλακόλαστος ‘loving of incontinence’, φιλέραστος ‘fond of loving’ and ‘dear to lovers’). While φίλερις is widely attested in Greek (Aristotle, the comic poet Axionicus, imperial prose, etc.), φιλέριστος is first attested in Imperial Greek (Justinus Martyr, Adamantius).

Regarding the content of Phrynichus’ gloss, we cannot say whether he simply made a comparison between δυσέριστος and δύσερις, or whether he effectively treated these two adjectives as equivalent, on account of the epitomisation undergone by the *PS*. In support of the latter option is the fact that, in the epitome of the *PS*, οὐ μόνον is used to indicate that two forms are equivalent (see *PS* 65.9, *PS* 66.7–8, *PS* 76.14, *PS* 81.14–5, *PS* 83.1, *PS* 89.10, *PS* 106.7, 109.13, 110.7). At first, the semantics of δυσέριστος would make this unlikely (see above), though judging from the interpretations of δυσέριστος/δυσήριστος in ancient lexicography, the idea that Phrynichus might actually have considered δυσέριστος synonymous with δύσερις should not be dismissed. Note that the *interpretamentum* φιλόνηκοι in the gloss of Hesychius ([B.1](#)) indicates that δυσήριστος/δυσέριστος is taken in the same sense as δύσερις ‘contentious’ or ‘causing strife, discord’ (see LSJ s.v. 2; the alternative *interpretamentum* that explains δυσήριστος as ἀμφίβολους reminds one of the Homeric ἀμφήριστος ‘doubtful, uncertain’, see below). The evidence for δυσεριστία ‘contentiousness’ and ‘contentious nature’ in imperial authors (see above) further corroborates this reading of δυσέριστος as a possibility. On this tentative reading of the gloss, one might infer that Phrynichus regarded the rare form δυσέριστος as more precious than δύσερις, which in turn is a common word, and thus recommended that the aspiring sophist take note of it.

Though it remains speculative, a tentative argument might be made that Phrynichus vouched for a different exegesis of δυσέριστος in the passage of Sophocles ([C.1](#)) from the one attested by the scholia ([B.2](#)). That is, Phrynichus may imply that δυσέριστον αἶμα suggests that the bloodshed caused by Ares will generate further strife or discord in the future. In this scenario, the semantic ambiguity of the adjectives in -τος, which may be active or passive, might have played a role as well (on the semantics of the adjectives in -τος see Tribulato 2021; this also squares well with Phrynichus’ suggested comparison with δύσερις, which also has an active and passive meaning). As a reference is made to the Erinyes in the following lines (*El.* 1386–90), one might raise the suspicion that some ancient readers took δυσέριστος as referring proleptically to Orestes’ persecution at the hands of these deities of vengeance (this is not the standard view of modern interpreters, though some have suggested it, see Finglass 2007, 505; schol. Soph. *El.* 1388 only remark that the ἄφυκτοι κύνες ‘inescapable dogs’ who enter the house to inflict vengeance are either Orestes or the Erinyes). The ancient etymological connection between the Erinyes and ἔρις could have played a role, too.

E. Byzantine and Modern Greek commentary

N/A

F. Commentary on individual texts and occurrences

N/A

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CITE THIS

Federico Favi, 'δυσέριστος (Phryn. PS 65.13)', in Olga Tribulato (ed.), *Digital Encyclopedia of Atticism*. With the assistance of E. N. Merisio.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30687/DEA/2021/01/048>

ABSTRACT

This article provides a philological and linguistic commentary on the compound adjective *δυσέριστος*, discussed in the Atticist lexicon Phryn. PS 65.13.

KEYWORDS

Tragedy Tragic language Verbal adjectives -τος δυσ- δύσερις

FIRST PUBLISHED ON

01/10/2022

LAST UPDATE

02/05/2023



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This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 865817)

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