

No Laughing Matter

Studies in Athenian Comedy



EDITED BY C.W. MARSHALL AND GEORGE KOVACS

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Introduction

On Cratinus fr. 342 and Curmudgeons

There has never been a better time to read Athenian comedy. The revolutionary advances in the tools available mean that the study of early comedy is at the beginning of a new era. New editions of the Greek texts of Aristophanes by Sommerstein 1980-2002, Henderson 1998-2007, and Wilson 2007 provide the most accessible and clear scripts since the invention of the codex. At the same time, the plays of Aristophanes' contemporaries have also been richly studied: Storey 2003, Olson 2007, and Bakola 2010 provide important and accessible discussions in English of Eupolis, Cratinus, and other fragmentary poets, with commentaries on fragmentary comic poets from fifth- and fourth-century Athens available in Hunter 1985 (Eubulus), Arnott 1996 (Alexis), Belladrini et al. 1998 (Ameipsias, Diodorus, Kallias, Metagenes), Konstantakos 2000 (Antiphanes), Millis 2001 (Anaxandrides), Papachrystomou 2008 (Amphis, Aristophon, Dionysios, Mnesimachos, Philetairos, Theophilos), Orth 2009 (Strattis), and Miles 2009 (Strattis). Important collections on comedy include Harvey and Wilkins 2000 and Dobrov 2010. All the extant fragments have been assembled (Kassel-Austin 1983-2001 = *PCG*), and any fragment longer than a single word or two is available in English translation in Henderson 2007 (= Aristophanes vol. 5), Rusten et al. 2011, and Storey 2011.

The chapters commissioned for this volume cover a range of topics both in the work of Aristophanes and in the fragments of his rivals and successors. The first three papers consider the history of Athenian comedy before Aristophanes began competing. Aristophanes is our earliest extant comic poet, but it is clear that he was able to draw inspiration from several sophisticated traditions of political and social commentary. In [Chapter 1](#), Jeffrey Henderson presents the humorous lost *Nemesis* by Cratinus, a play probably performed in 431 BC, and considers some possible interpretive consequences in light of its historical context: Periclean Athens at the onset of the Peloponnesian War. In [Chapter 2](#), David Konstan examines the presentation in Crates' *Thêria* (*Beasts*), which may predate this, even though Crates is said to have once been one of Cratinus' actors (schol. *Knights* 537a, test 3 K-A). Our surviving fragments of this play, Konstan suggests, may be read and understood in a developing sub-genre of utopic fiction. Crates may even be using his utopic descriptions to advocate social change. In [Chapter 3](#), Eric Csapo goes further back to describe the original context of invective in fifth-century Athenian comedy.

The next six chapters consider the extant comedies of Aristophanes in the fifth century. In [Chapter 4](#), Keith Sidwell describes part of the intense interworking between *Acharnians*, the first extant comedy, and Aristophanes' rival playwright, Eupolis. His argument, as Sidwell playfully acknowledges, finds its own model in the academic discourse between his own work on Aristophanes and that of Ian Storey on Eupolis. In [Chapter 5](#), Hallie Marshall draws parallels between the extant text of *Clouds* and the tradition surrounding Eupolis' *Autolycus*. She suggests that the survival of *Clouds* is due to its continued existence as a performed text, a conclusion that has broader implications for our understanding of the performance tradition of Athens in the fifth century. In [Chapter 6](#), Doug Olson describes the immediate political context

of *Lysistrata*. The seizure of the Acropolis in that play, Olson reasons, must surely have resonated with the Athenian audience, then experiencing one of the greatest crises of leadership of the fifth century. Three chapters then offer different perspectives on Aristophanes' *Frogs*. This play, long popular with scholars for its clever and thorough engagement with Greek tragedy and its unique position, enables a literary retrospective of the fifth century, and still rewards close study through a myriad of critical lenses. In [Chapter 7](#), Donald Sells outlines the ritual context, with reference to the Eleusinian mysteries. In [Chapter 8](#), Arlene Allan relates the play to the battle of Arginusae and its horrific aftermath with a careful consideration of the Athenian calendar. In [Chapter 9](#), Alan Sommerstein reconsiders several passages in the play in light of scholarship since his 1996 edition, and in doing so asks us to reconsider the play's relationship to the tragic playwright Sophocles.

The remaining papers look to comedy in the fourth century and beyond. In [Chapter 10](#), Judith Fletcher describes the representation of law presented in *Ecclesiazusae*. In [Chapter 11](#), Rob Tordoff relates Carion's lengthy narrative in Aristophanes' *Wealth* to the tragic messenger speech. In [Chapter 12](#), Elizabeth Scharffenberger presents Axionicus' *Phileuripides* (*The Euripides Fan*), another play that expresses the tension between tragedy and comedy. In [Chapter 13](#), Ralph Rosen considers the influence of tragedy on a fragment of Timocles. In [Chapter 14](#), C.W. Marshall suggests that a third-century AD mosaic portrait of the new comic playwright Menander is best understood as a reference to Cratinus' *Wine-flask* (*Pytinê*).

These studies collectively represent the range of comedy in democratic Athens, and continue to problematise the easy periodisation of comedy that reaches back to the Hellenistic period. While it is convenient to think of the tripartite separation of Old Comedy (Aristophanes and his contemporaries), New Comedy (Menander and his contemporaries), and Middle Comedy existing somewhere between the two, the papers collected here help to challenge any straightforward linear progression. Old Comedy, as we know it, has roots that extend earlier even than Cratinus. As Olson (2007: 22-6) has described, the interstitial period of Middle Comedy is notoriously difficult to pin down, and the studies included here show how it remained engaged with the genre rivalry with tragedy well into the second half of the fourth century. The shift from Old to New Comedy is not so abrupt as it was once thought to be, nor is the gulf between these genres so great: rather, we may situate New Comedy on one organic trajectory of literary development. Even in the early fifth century, comic poets were constantly venturing into – and retreating from – many new territories of generic expansion.

The papers that consider fourth-century comedy, including two plays by Aristophanes, show the continued concern with the relationship between poetic genres, and the prominence of tragedy that extended late into the fourth century. This helps to provide a direct line to Menander's use of Euripidean tragedy as an underlying text shaping his plots (for example, *Auge* lies behind *Epitrepontes*; see Porter 1999-2000). Similarly, the so-called 'mythological burlesques' are not simply a feature of fourth-century Middle Comedy, but are present in the earliest extant comic playwrights. In itself, this is not a new observation, but the detailed examples presented here should encourage readers to avoid presuppositions about what to expect under umbrella terms such as Old or Middle Comedy. Both periods of comedy exhibit multiple, conflicting themes that weave together to produce a tapestry as rich and diverse as the *polis* itself (see also Nesselrath 1990, Dobrov 1995, Arnott 2010).

The typical hero of the earliest examples of Athenian comedy is an old curmudgeon who walks with a stick – we find him in Dicaeopolis (in *Acharnians*), Trygaeus (in *Peace*), Philocleon (in *Wasps*), Pyronides (in Eupolis’ *Demes*), and even Cratinus himself (in *Wine-flask*). He is attested in terracottas and vase painting. He perseveres into New Comedy and the *senex durus* of Plautus and beyond. In his many incarnations, he is a remarkable character, able to win over audiences with a charm that bubbles below the surface of the scowling mask he wears. His cantankerous nature conceals, thinly, a true passion for the welfare of his community.

Ian Storey, too, is a hero of Old Comedy, whose distinguished career at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario, this volume is meant to commemorate. Ian has been at the forefront of the study of comic fragments, culminating in his studies of Eupolis and his Loeb edition of the fragments of Old Comedy (2003, 2011). His bibliographies on Old Comedy (1987, 1992, 2000, 2006) are important starting points for researchers in the field, valuable to scholars of all levels of experience for their careful insights. These works constitute a legacy that will inform students and scholars for decades to come.

This volume does not represent all of Ian’s research interests – no volume could. Though his major works have been in Old Comedy, with more than twenty articles in addition to those items just mentioned, he has also published sensitive studies of Greek tragedy (1989, 2008a, 2009), and on the reception of Apuleius in C.S. Lewis’ *Till We Have Faces* (1998, 2005, 2007, 2008b). Ultimately, however, it is among the small, precise details of Old Comedy that he is best recognised: his treatment of fragments, his concern for dramatic chronology, and his interest in *kômôidoumenoi* – the real individuals named in jokes in Old Comedy, which extends back to his Toronto PhD under the supervision of R.M.H. Shepherd (1977).

Ian’s own commitment to teaching and student supervision, imperfectly hidden behind his curmudgeonly mask, is another area where the current volume must fall short. Ian has always been mindful of the needs of students – demonstrated in Storey, Allan, and Boyne (2002) and especially in Storey and Allan (2005), both written with former students. His habit of listening attentively to the ideas of students – of any student, even the lowly first-years reading their first samples of Greek literature – and then giving serious consideration, leaves students feeling like colleagues. Such treatment has often proven prophetic. Many of his students have gone on to academic careers, and several appear in this volume, alongside other Canadian scholars that he has encouraged (but whom he did not formally teach) and senior scholars in the study of the origins of comedy.

We might then think of the description of Aristophanes offered by Cratinus (fr. 342 K-A, Σ Plato’s *Apology* 19c):

ὑπολεπτολόγος, γνωμιδιώκτης, εὐριπιδαριστοφανίζων .

Each of these words is problematic in one way or another (see Conti Bizzarro 1999: 91-104, Luppe 2000, O’Sullivan 2006, Ornaghi 2006: 87-93, Bakola 2010: 24-9), but at the same time, each is also appropriate for the genre as a whole, as we can see by treating them in reverse order. The third word, εὐριπιδαριστοφανίζων, is the most familiar, since the context in Plato explains at least one way to understand the invented word: ‘mocking Euripides the way

Aristophanes does'. The inter-generic challenge offered by comedy, and the blending of tragedy and comedy so that one cannot be separated from the other is well represented by the contributions to this volume. The second word, γνωμιδιώκτης, is 'a chaser of maxims' – always seeking *le mot juste*, so that others will quote you. Cratinus' Aristophanes is a proto-Oscar Wilde, desiring recognition for his clarity of expression and his pithy wit. The first word, ὑπολεπτολόγος, suggests 'an extremely elegant speaker' or 'a subtle wordsmith': the last element, -λόγος, referring equally to concern for a single word, a sentence or speech, or indeed an entire narrative. In this context, perhaps, we might even recast the whole fragment for the honorand: 'a pursuer of wit, mixing Aristophanes with Euripides, the very clever Storey'.

'Comedy is no laughing matter': this has long been a favourite maxim of Ian's, frequently deployed in his teaching of Athenian comedy. Despite the many jokes and humorous situations, comedy reflects the anxieties and concerns of the society that made it: democratic Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries BC. Ian wants us to understand Greek comedy better, and to look at the full breadth of the surviving evidence, not just to the plays that happen to have survived. It is with this broad view, recognising the many opportunities that now exist for advancing our understanding of Greek comedy, that this volume is directed.

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Pursuing Nemesis: Cratinus and Mythological Comedy

Jeffrey Henderson

In the post-PCG era no one has done more than Ian Storey to advance our understanding of Old Comedy beyond Aristophanes, most notably with his study of Eupolis (2003) and now his splendid Loeb edition of the major fragments (2011). So it is an honour and a pleasure to offer, though not easy to find, an owl not already in his Athens.* One area that the topically oriented Eupolis afforded Ian little opportunity to explore is mythological comedy, a subgenre to which at least one-third of Old Comedies belonged but about which we are very poorly informed.¹ The mythological traditions that help us with tragic fragments are an uncertain guide for comedy: as Aristotle observed, ‘there, those who are bitterest enemies in the myth, such as Orestes and Aegisthus, become friends by the end, and no one is killed by anyone’.² Indeed we know something about the plots of only two such comedies, *Dionysalexander* and *Nemesis*, both by Aristophanes’ great older rival Cratinus. Since Ian has masterfully treated the former,³ it seems appropriate to offer him a study of the latter.⁴

Nemesis certainly deserves a closer look for both its content and its broader context: produced all but certainly in 431,⁵ the play re-imagined the origins and birth of Helen, whose mysterious role in causing the archetypal great war attracted fresh attention on the eve of another great war, whose own causes were and remained controversial.⁶ At the centre of the controversy, fanned by comic poets, was Pericles with his arguably personal motivations, including womanising in general and his relationship with Aspasia in particular.⁷ Helen’s role in motivating the Trojan War was an obvious mythological analogue that Pericles himself invited, if he really compared himself with Agamemnon after his success in the Samian War of 440-439 (Plu. *Per.* 28.7) – a war that drew attention to Aspasia’s Milesian origins and remained a dangerous international irritant until at least 433 (Th. 1.40).

Of *Dionysalexander*, in which Dionysus impersonates Paris in the fateful Judgement that won Helen, the papyrus Hypothesis says that ‘Pericles is very skilfully ridiculed (κωμωδεῖται) by innuendo (δι’ ἐμφάσεως) as having brought the war upon (ἐπαγηχώς) the Athenians’ (I 44-8). That is, while its plot was coherent as a mythological burlesque, the play somehow satirised topical politics as well, whether as a thoroughgoing allegory or (more likely) only incidentally, leaving it up to the spectators to connect the dots.⁸ Although it is possible that ‘the war’ was the Samian War,⁹ ‘brought upon the Athenians’ points rather to the Peloponnesian War, and Hermippus fr. 47, which mentions Cleon and so can be no earlier than the late 430s, refers to Pericles as ‘king of satyrs’, a likely allusion to *Dionysalexander*’s satyr-chorus, unusual for comedy.¹⁰ The production of *Dionysalexander* would thus be near that of *Nemesis*, whose plot is similarly suggestive, for fr. 118 unmistakably assimilates Zeus to Pericles (Plu. *Per.* 3.5).

Our external information about the plot is somewhat confused but clarifiable. Eratosthenes’

Catasterisms Epit. 25 on the Swan or Big Bird constellation explains that ‘Zeus took the shape of this creature and made love to (ἐρασθῆναι) Nemesis, since she was changing herself into every form to protect her virginity and then became a swan. So he too turned himself into this bird and flew to Rhamnous in Attica, and there corrupted (φθειραί) Nemesis, and she bore an egg, from which Helen was hatched and born, as Cratinus the poet says.’ Clearly two separate traditions have been harmonised: (a) Zeus’ pursuit and rape of Nemesis, both of them in various animal forms, as told in the *Cypria* (below), and (b) his seduction in swan-form of an unmetamorphosed Nemesis at Rhamnous. The version preserved in the Vatican fragments (Rehm p. 9) = Germanicus p. 84.19 has only (b), which, as we will see, is the one that describes Cratinus’ play.¹¹ But before we turn to the fragments it will be helpful to identify the variant traditions from which Cratinus might have drawn.

1. The mythical background

In Homer and Hesiod Helen is the daughter of Zeus, and Nemesis is only the abstraction Retribution. While no mother is named, Helen says in the *Iliad* (3.236-8) that the same mother bore the Dioscuri and herself, and in the *Odyssey* (11.298-304) that Leda was the mother by Tyndareos of the Dioscuri; in Hesiod’s *Ehoiai* Helen is not listed among Leda’s daughters by Tyndareos presumably because, as a child of Zeus, she was treated along with the Disocuri in a later part of the work.¹² Nothing is recorded about the manner of her conception or birth.

The seventh- or sixth-century cyclic epic *Cypria*, whose eleven books chronicled the events leading up to the Trojan War, contains a different account, personifying the hitherto abstract Nemesis and making Helen her daughter by Zeus: a Pandoralike symbolism that, along with the subsequent Judgement of Paris, provided cosmic logic for Zeus’ punishment of mankind by means of the War (fr. 10 = Athen. 8.334b):¹³

Third after them [the Dioscuri] he bore Helen, a wonder to mortals, whom fair-haired Nemesis once bore, united in love with Zeus, king of the gods, under strong compulsion. For she fled and was unwilling to unite in love with father Zeus, son of Cronus, for she was tormented by shame and misgiving. Over the land and the barren dark water she fled, and Zeus pursued, eager to catch her, now over the waves of the crashing sea, where she took the form of a fish, he roiled the vast deep; now along Ocean’s stream and the ends of the earth; now on the loam-rich land; and she kept changing into all the fearsome beasts that the land nurtures, in her attempt to escape him.

Fr. 11 (Philodemus *Piet.* B 7369 Obbink) adds that ‘the author of the *Cypria* says that [Zeus] pursued Nemesis after changing himself too into a goose, and after he united with her she laid an egg from which Helen was born’.

We are not told whether the *Cypria* specified a locale for the rape of Nemesis or what became of the egg, but we expect that the poet would somehow have harmonised his story with the traditional one by having the egg end up with Leda. Indeed Apollodorus, who otherwise follows the *Cypria* account,¹⁴ does have a shepherd finding the egg and giving it to Leda (*Bibl.* 3.10.7), while in Sappho Leda finds it herself (fr. 166); Σ Lycophr. 88 records these variants as

well as a third: Nemesis gives the egg to Tyndareos, who gives it to Leda.¹⁵ In each case the setting is presumably Sparta, where tourists in Pausanias' time could still see the egg 'suspended by ribbons' in the temple of the Leucippides (3.16.2). Leda is depicted with the egg on vases from c. 450.¹⁶

So far, Zeus somewhere rapes Nemesis, both of them in goose-form, but nothing about Zeus-as-swan seducing Nemesis at Rhamnous. This seems to be a local variant, essentially different from the *Cypria* story,¹⁷ that was inspired by the presence of Nemesis in Attica.¹⁸ Her sanctuary at Rhamnous had been destroyed during the Persian incursion at nearby Marathon in 490, began to be refurbished as a fine Doric temple during the 430s, and after an interruption caused by the outbreak of war and the plague, was finished during the next 10 to 15 years, when a cult-statue by Agoracritus was added.¹⁹ Depicted on the statue's elaborate base was the end of Leda's stewardship of Helen and the presentation of Helen to her natural mother, Nemesis, in a scene of family reunion after the destruction of Troy. Included are Zeus, Tyndareus, Castor and Pollux, Menelaus and Agamemnon, and Pyrrhus, who emphasises Helen's role as the agent of Nemesis against Troy.²⁰ The subtext was celebration of Nemesis' local role in helping the Athenians punish Persian hybris at Marathon, for legend had it that the Persians had brought with them a block of Parian marble for their trophy, and it was from this block that Nemesis' statue was carved (Paus. 1.33.2-3, 7-8).²¹

For the seduction-variant, the one that Eratosthenes evidently attributes to Cratinus' play and that best suits its fragments, our fullest account is the entry on the Swan constellation from the *Astronomica* attributed to Hyginus and ultimately deriving from Hellenistic sources (2.8):

When Jupiter, moved by lust, began to desire Nemesis and could not persuade her to lie down with him, he relieved his lust by the following plan. He told Venus in the likeness of an eagle to pursue him while he changed into a swan and, as if pursued by the eagle, took refuge (*confugit*) with Nemesis and settled himself in her lap. Nemesis did not turn him away but holding him in her arms fell into a deep sleep. As she slept Jupiter embraced her (*compressit*) and flew away ... but Nemesis, as if joined to the race of birds, when her months were ended bore an egg, which Mercury took away and brought to Sparta, and tossed it into Leda's lap as she sat. From it was born Helen, excelling all other women in physical beauty, whom Leda named her own daughter.

Nemesis, the earliest attested drama about either Nemesis or Leda, may be the source of this variant or may have adopted it from an earlier drama. Asclepiades of Tragilus, a younger contemporary of Isocrates, in his book on *Subjects of Tragedy*, records that 'Zeus, having turned into a swan, had intercourse with Nemesis' (FGrH 12 F 14) but did not necessarily find this in a tragedy: elsewhere he embellishes his plot summaries with variants from other genres of poetry, and indeed Helen's egg-birth, a main event, is unlikely to have been staged in a serious drama. An Apulian vase by Python c. 350-325 (Paestum 21370) does illustrate a non-comic scene of Helen's birth from the egg (Leda, Tyndareus, Hermes, Aphrodite, Phoeba and Papposilenus, all labelled, look on), but the presence of Papposilenus points to satyr drama.²² Satyrs are frequently in attendance at divine birth-scenes, and for all we know *Nemesis*, like

Dionysalexander, may have had a satyr chorus, though Dionysus is nowhere in evidence.

Complicating the picture is Helen's allusion to the story in Euripides' *Helen* (produced in 412) but with Leda instead of Nemesis: 'My fatherland is not without a name, Sparta, and my father is Tyndareus. But there is indeed a *logos* that Zeus flew to my mother Leda, having taken the avian form of a swan, and achieved a deceitful bedding, from an eagle's pursuit in flight, if this legend is credible' (16-21), and she later comments with equal scepticism about Leda's having hatched the egg (257-9).²³ Was this a Euripidean innovation, a transfer of the story from Nemesis to Leda, and Helen's *logos* merely a 'Scheinzitat'²⁴ that nevertheless inspired the popularity of Leda and the Swan in later art and poetry, including other details of the seduction-plot?²⁵ Or was Euripides referring to an actual *logos*, found perhaps in Stesichorus' poem(s) about Helen along with the story of her phantom? Either way, attaching the seduction and maternity to Leda suits the heroine of this play, a blameless victim rather than the Pandora-like cause of evils associated with Nemesis. Similarly Isocrates, arguing that in pursuit of beauty Zeus relies on amorous stratagems rather than rape, conflates both seductions: '(Zeus) became a swan and took refuge (κατέφυγεν) in Nemesis' lap, and taking this form again, he married (ἐνύμφευσεν) Leda; he is always seen pursuing this gift of nature [i.e. beauty] by art (μετὰ τέχνης) but not by force (βίας)' (*Hel.* 59).²⁶

With this background in mind, let us have a look at the fragments themselves.

2. The fragments

In fr. 114 someone is prompted to become 'a big bird': if Aphrodite becoming the eagle, the speaker is probably Zeus, but much more likely Zeus becoming the swan, since 'big bird' is masculine here, and in the catasterism versions 'big bird' means swan, as does 'purple-winged bird' in fr. 121.²⁷ In that case the speaker is uncertain but probably Hermes and not Aphrodite, since, as in Hyginus, it is Aphrodite who would get her instructions from Zeus, not vice versa.²⁸ The play would then have Zeus as a character who appears before his metamorphosis into a swan, and who had a sidekick with whom he discussed a strategy for conquering Nemesis. If the sidekick was Hermes, his role was like the one he plays in Plautus' *Amphitruo*, where he assists Zeus in the deception of Alcumena. A discussion in *Europa* by Aristophanes' contemporary Platon (fr. 43) seems to come from a scene of this kind:

(A) A sleeping woman is an inert thing. (B) I know.
(A) But once she's awake, her appetisers (παροψίδες)
all by themselves offer a good deal more pleasure
than the rest of it. (B) Then there are appetisers
to fucking, pray tell?

Interesting for *Nemesis* is that these speakers are discussing the pros and cons of sex with a sleeping woman; if one of the speakers is not Zeus, it is hard to imagine who else it could be.

Where was the seduction ruse hatched and carried out? Eratosthenes says that Zeus as swan flew to Rhamnous, where Nemesis was, and Hyginus says that Aphrodite as eagle chased the

Zeus-swan to Nemesis' lap; even though Hyginus does not specify Rhamnous, this is where Cratinus and his audience would expect her residence to be. Presumably the ruse was discussed on Olympus or in a comic nowhere-in-particular, and then there was a flight to Rhamnous after the transformation: a double flight featuring both Zeus and Aphrodite, if that part of Hyginus' account is from our play. While it is not impossible that the play opened with the planning of the ruse and then the transformation and flight were only reported after the fact, Cratinus would hardly have passed up the chance to stage such spectacular events, as other comic poets certainly did: for example, the metamorphosis of Peisetaerus and Euelpides in Aristophanes' *Birds* (which included a parody of the famous metamorphosis-scene in Sophocles' *Tereus*, where the title character had appeared as a hoopoe) and the flight of Trygaeus-Bellerophon on the dung-beetle-Pegasus in Aristophanes' *Peace*. And there was evidently similar business in Aristophanes' play *Daedalus* (produced sometime after 420: n. 26), where Zeus is said to have 'changed himself into many forms and misbehaved' (fr. 198 as he sought Daedalus' help in an amorous adventure, apparently (since egg-laying is mentioned among the fragments) with Leda (or even Nemesis?)), for one fragment (192) mentions the *mêchanê*, suggesting flight. And so in Cratinus' play Zeus probably did appear both before and after his metamorphosis, and there was a flight to Rhamnous either reported or staged.

Was the conquest of Nemesis staged or only reported? Nemesis was a chaste maiden won only by trickery and while she slept, so we may wonder how much of her corruption propriety would have allowed on the stage, even in a comedy. It would have been acceptable at least to show the 'swan' taking refuge in Nemesis' lap: an important moment in the ruse unlikely not to have been staged. In fact some scholars assign fr. 116 to Zeus, perhaps speaking to Nemesis as she feeds him bird-food:

how I enjoy my food as I eat it!
The whole world seems a rose-garden,
and apples, celery, and mint

The testimonium identifies a sexual double-meaning in 'rose-garden', and we can add that the other items in the list are also used this way elsewhere in comedy. This attribution raises the interesting question whether the Zeus-swan spoke to Nemesis. If so, he would hardly have spoken seductively, since the whole point of the ruse was to put Nemesis off her guard. Alternatively, fr. 116 might be Zeus speaking elsewhere in the play, for example after his metamorphosis but before the seduction, perhaps to Hermes.

In any event, we may doubt that the actual intercourse took place on stage. Certainly there is plenty of talk about sexual intercourse in comedy, as well as stage nakedness, some groping, and a fairly explicit seduction scene in *Lysistrata*, but never actual sex. A safer assumption is that in *Nemesis* Zeus took refuge in Nemesis' lap, perhaps with some conversation that Nemesis would interpret in an innocent way, and then Nemesis went inside for a nap, taking the Zeus-swan with her. Wilamowitz suggested that fr. 129 ('you, move off on the double! I'll pluck you today'), assigned by the testimonium to Cratinus' *Laws*, belongs to our play instead and may be Nemesis speaking to the Zeus-swan: but if so, it is unclear why she is annoyed.

A further complication is Hyginus' report that Zeus resorted to his ruse only after he 'could

not persuade [Nemesis] to lie down with him'. There is nothing in the fragments to suggest that such a preliminary and straightforward propositioning of Nemesis was part of our play, but if it was, it is unlikely to have been staged. First, there is awkwardness in putting Zeus first in Rhamnous to proposition Nemesis, then somewhere else to hatch the ruse, then flying him back to Rhamnous as a swan; and second, the question of propriety, if the reported squeamishness surrounding Phaedra and Hippolytus is any indication.²⁹ If there was a failed proposition, it was probably reported in an opening conversation with Hermes, in which the failure would have motivated the plotting of a ruse.

It is clear from fr. 115

Leda, here is your task: you must be
no less adept in your ways
than a hen in clucking over this, so you can
hatch us a fine and amazing bird from it

together with fr. 117 ('when I say "Sparta" I mean a spartine') and 119 ('you're treating Sparta like Psyra') that at some point the action shifted from Attica to Sparta, most likely after the parabasis: this arrangement would smooth the transition in space and in time, the period of the egg's gestation, which would have been reported; fr. 122 'at a later time afterward' may foretell the transition. Fr. 115 also shows that Leda was a character, and the deictics τῶιδε and τοῦδε ('this here') show that the egg was a prop: a large one, naturally, since Helen is going to be hatched from it. At this point, however, the speaker predicts the birth not of Helen but only of 'a fine and amazing bird', so that Leda for one is going to be surprised later on, when Helen emerges.

But who is the speaker of fr. 115? Someone aware of the contents of the egg who is misleading Leda, or someone unaware? Zeus is an unlikely candidate, since in no account does he confront Leda in his own form, nor would we expect him to; and it is hard to imagine how Zeus would be involved in the second part of the play at all – Hyginus says that he 'flew away' after sleeping with Nemesis – unless he reappeared at the end to acknowledge Helen, which might be the context for his invocation in fr. 118. Nor is the speaker likely to be a shepherd or other underling, who would not be the one to give Leda instructions. Is it Tyndareus speaking, after a shepherd, or Leda herself, had found the egg, or (as in another version) after Nemesis had given it to him? If Tyndareus, the first person plural ἡμῖν ('hatch for us'), unless it is simply a royal we, would mean 'you and me, Leda' and Tyndareus would be unaware of the contents of the egg. But the problem with assigning these lines to Tyndareus is motivation: why, if he is unaware of the contents of the egg, would he tell his wife to incubate it? So the likeliest candidate is probably Hermes: if Hyginus' version follows our play, then Hermes has delivered the egg to Leda and now instructs her to incubate it. If so, did Hermes decide to do this on his own, or was the fate of the egg part of Zeus' original scheme along with the conquest of Nemesis? It remains unclear whom Hermes means by 'for us' and under what pretext he would be giving Leda these instructions. Possibly he was in disguise, perhaps impersonating Tyndareus, which incidentally might account for the confusion in our various accounts of the story. To judge from the title of Polyzelus' *Demotyndareus*, someone

impersonated Tyndareus in at least one other comedy.³⁰

This is as far as the fragments go in helping us (me at least) reconstruct the play. Presumably it continued with confusion and suspense about the egg for Leda and her family, and some fun with Leda's incubation of it; a hatching scene; the revelation of Helen, born either as a baby or already full-grown; and Leda's decision to adopt her. Whether Nemesis or Zeus reappeared for a family reunion we cannot say. If this reconstruction is approximately correct, *Nemesis* was an eventful and spectacular diptych play featuring metamorphosis and seduction in Rhamnous and then the incubation and hatching of the egg in Sparta. The Nemesis (seduction) and Leda (birth) actions were possibly connected in a grand scheme of Zeus but not demonstrably or necessarily: Aristophanes' *Frogs* shows how much the character and personnel of a comic plot could change after the parabasis, perhaps even more so in Cratinus' plays, since more than one ancient writer on comedy remarks on the disorderliness of his plots.

3. The play in context

The contemporaneous *Dionysalexander* with its Periclean ἔμφασις, the assimilation of Zeus to Pericles in fr. 118, the traditional role of Nemesis and Helen as bringers of war both in poetry and at the new shrine at Rhamnous (an association rejected by the substitution of Leda for Nemesis in the version invented or adopted by Euripides), and the Spartan setting of the play's Leda action all encourage us to look for topical resonance in *Nemesis*. Speculation ranges from 'intermittent suggestion'³¹ to sustained allegory.³² It is safe to suppose that any ἔμφασις would have been unfavourable to Pericles and that, without much nudging, a Zeus-Pericles who sends the baneful child of Nemesis to Sparta could be seen as 'bringing the war upon the Athenians' – and of course upon the Spartans too.

The construction of an important³³ new shrine for the local goddess who had aided Athens and the Greeks against foreign aggression might have been Cratinus' inspiration.³⁴ Whether the shrine's depiction of the Nemesis-Helen was intended to bear (also) on the Peloponnesian War is unclear: with Lapatin, the depiction could be read 'as an exploration of the nature of Nemesis, an acknowledgment of the goddess' timeless and far-reaching power, and a warning to any overweening spirit, that of Athens included'.³⁵ Cratinus would of course have been free to make a less timeless point.

Zeus' seduction of Nemesis is the most obvious specific point of comparison with Pericles. His reputation as a seducer and adulterer, often reflected in comedy,³⁶ no doubt figured also in *Dionysalexander*, and sexual escapades involving Pericles and Aspasia are prominent in Dicaeopolis' recollection of the war's origins (*Ar. Ach.* 515-39).

In portraying Zeus as a seducer, a characterisation as old as the *Iliad*, Cratinus was hardly alone: Σ *Pax* 741 includes 'Zeus as adulterer' in a list of trite comic subjects and might have added tragedy and satyr drama: many fifth-century titles and/or fragments indicate divine affairs as a theme, for the most part Zeus' affairs, even if in some plays the god did not appear onstage.³⁷ But here Cratinus may have innovated: Hermippus' *Europa* is the only known comic candidate for priority.³⁸ In this respect drama differs from visual art: until c. 440 Attic vases frequently depict Zeus pursuing both females and Ganymede, but thereafter, until the fourth

century, he is portrayed in comfortable domesticity with Hera, as on the Parthenon frieze.³⁹ Old Comedy observed similar reticence on the human level: adultery is not depicted and right-thinking characters deplore it even as a theme for tragedy; indeed respectable women are not attested in comedy at all before Aristophanes' plays of 411. Thus Pericles as seducer could be staged only through mythical ἔμφρασις, and may have inspired Cratinus' choice of Nemesis as a subject.

How Zeus (Pericles) figured, if at all, in the second part of the play we cannot tell. Nor is it easy to see a connection with Aspasia: the maiden goddess and the Spartan wife, innocent victims both, are unlikely representations of the Milesian concubine, and Helen's gender is problematic for representing Pericles' illegitimate son (Heracles would have been more appropriate): ξένιε in fr. 188 more likely refers to his friendships with e.g. Protagoras, Anaxagoras, and (cf. *Pax* 603-18) Phidias. Although further allegorical specifics, e.g. that Helen or the egg somehow represented the Megarian Decree (as Schwarze 1971), remain purely speculative if not far-fetched, we can be confident that in *Nemesis* Cratinus adapted traditional mythology to current events in original and memorable ways.

Appendix: Fragments of *Nemesis*

114 and so you'll have to become a big bird

115 Leda, here is your task: you must be no less adept in your ways than a hen in clucking over this, so you can hatch us a fine and amazing bird from it

116 = Σ Theocr. 10/11 b.c They call the female member 'rose' and 'rose garden', as Cratinus in *Nemesis*: how I enjoy my food as I eat it! The whole world seems a rose-garden, and apples, celery, and mint

117 when I say Sparta I mean a spartine

118 come, o Zeus, patron of foreigners and head god (ξένιε καὶ καραιέ)

119 you're treating Sparta like Psyra

120 all the other birdies

121 purple-winged bird (ὄρνιθα φοινικόπτερον)

122 at a later time afterward

123 with his neck in the stocks

124 †having set up the cottabus targets according to the ancestral customs – saucers – to toss – to the one who tossed the most I award this prize for his luck†

125 = Σ Av. 521 (Lampon) was still alive at the time of the *Birds*' production (414) and had not died, as some think, for (that was) much later; Cratinus in *Nemesis* knew him as alive and this was much later

126 = Σ Av. 858 (Chaeris) There was another man, an aulos-player, whom Cratinus mentions in *Nemesis*

127 = Athen. 14.629c the dance known as the *apokinos*, which Cratinus mentions in *Nemesis*.

129 = *Lex. Bachm.* 118.3 (Νόμοις codd.: Νεμέσει Wilamowitz) You, move off on the double! I'll be plucking you today

Notes

*For comments and suggestions I am grateful to Lowell Edmunds, who shared parts of his monograph-in-progress on Helen; to audiences who heard preliminary versions at Brown, Cornell, and Glasgow (Classical Association 2009); and to the editors.

1. General surveys are Bowie 2000 and Casolari 2003; for the fourth century Nesselrath 1990.

2. *Poet.* 1453a36-9. All translations are my own.

3. Storey 2006a and b.

4. The identifiable fragments of *Nemesis* are gathered in an Appendix below.

5. Godolphin 1931, Luppe 1974a: 55.

6. For comedy and the Trojan War generally see Wright 2007.

7. For the popular opinion reflected in comedy but played down or ignored by Thucydides cf. especially *Plu. Per.* 13, 32; the material is collected by Schwarze 1971.

8. See most recently Bakola 2010: 181-208, 222-4.

9. As Storey 2006a, reviving a suggestion by Mattingly (1997: 213-45).

10. For comic satyrs see Storey 2006b, Bakola 2010: 81-117.

11. φθείραι in these testimonia is often mistranslated 'raped' or 'ravished', which suits only the *Cypria* version; correctly Germanicus *compressisse*, cf. e.g. *Plaut. Am.* 162 (Jupiter and Alcumena).

12. So Gantz 318-19.

13. For Zeus' plan in mythological context see Mayer 1996.

14. Luppe 1974b.

15. On a Boston kylix of c. 430 (99.539 = ARV² 1142 #1) Clytaemestra accompanies her parents as they discover the egg, while Zeus' eagle represents the god.

16. *LIMC* 'Helene' I.A.3: 3-13; 'Leda' 28-32.

17. Rightly Luppe 1974a: 53. Current reconstructions of *Nemesis* still base themselves on the *Cypria*, e.g. Casolari 2003: 85, Bakola 2010: 171-2, 222, Storey 2011: 322, though Storey does allow that the seduction-variant is 'a plotline certainly within the realm of comedy'.

18. Thus Callim. *H.* 3.232 'Rhamnusia Helen', with Σ.

19. See in general Miles 1989, Lapatin 1992, Knittlmayer 1999.

20. Familiar symbolism, e.g. an Attic r-f amphoriskos c. 430 (Berlin 30036) depicting *Nemesis* pointing at Paris upon his first meeting Helen, cf. Shapiro 2005: 51.

21. Cf. Knittlmayer 1999: 3-4, 9-11.

22. Thus it is unnecessary to regard the scene, with Taplin 1993: 82, as an example of non-theatrical 'paraiconography'. A comic depiction of the birth, likely illustrating *Nemesis*, is Bari 3899 (Apulian, c. 380-370), cf. Taplin 1993: pl. 19.20, Storey 2011: 3.444.

23. Most editors would delete the latter passage, but without good reason (Allan 2008: 180).

24. Kannicht 1969 ad loc.

25. For example, Hypnos with Leda and the swan (Malibu 86.AE.680, c. 350-340). Such

details might have derived from a subsequent treatment, e.g. the tragedy by Dionysius II of Syracuse dating to the turn of the fourth century and surviving only as a title, but again the egg-motif is unlikely in a tragedy.

26. In Aristophanes' *Daedalus* (date unknown but probably late; on ἐνίστε fr. 194.1 cf. Wackernagel 1969: 1037 n. 1), where Zeus seeks Daedalus' help in an amorous adventure (or more than one), someone 'has given birth to a very big egg, like a chicken' (fr. 193): perhaps Leda, though Suda ε 3718 = fr. 198, speaking of Zeus 'changing himself into many forms and doing wrong', could point to the *Cypria Nemesis*.

27. Cf. Hor. C. 4.1.10 *purpureis oloribus*. In some testimonia the egg in Sappho fr. 166, mentioned above, has the adjective 'hyacinth-colored' (ὕακινθινον); if genuine, perhaps indicating that Sappho knew the swan-version.

28. Hermes also played a prominent role in *Dionysalexander*, as the Hypothesis shows.

29. According to the Hypothesis attributed to Aristophanes of Byzantium, the second (extant) *Hippolytus* 'corrected' what was 'unseemly and worthy of condemnation' in the first; this must be the Phaedra whom 'Aeschylus' condemns as a whore in Aristophanes' *Frogs* (1043, 1052-4).

30. The fragments of *Demotyndareus* are not very informative (for possibilities see Storey 2011: 206-10); also unclear is the identity of the old man depicted on the Bari vase (n. 22, above) preparing to crack the egg open with an axe.

31. Bakola 2010: 224.

32. E.g. Schwarze 1971: 24-40, Rosen 1988: 55-7, Casolari 2003: 79-97, 109-12, Shapiro 2005: 54.

33. The temple must have required central funding to supplement deme funds: Miles 1989: 234-5.

34. At least by the fourth century Rhamnous also had a cult of Dionysus Lenaeus (*IG* II² 2854) and a theatre, where comedies (and probably only comedies) were produced (*IG* I² 3108, 3109). It is tempting to imagine that *Nemesis* was later revived for a performance at Rhamnous, which could have led to the confusion in fr. 125 about its date: the archon Pythodorus of 432/1 might simply have been confused with his homonym of 404/3, but the hypotheses of *Frogs* and *Lysistrata* show that homonymous archons were usually kept distinct.

35. Lapatin 1992: 119.

36. Well surveyed in Plutarch's *Life*. Fr. 120 of *Nemesis* brings to mind the rumour that Ppyrilampes made his collection of exotic birds available to his friend Pericles as a lure for women (13.15).

37. Old Comedy: Alcaeus *Callisto*, *Ganymede*, *Pasiphae*; Apollonophanes *Cretans*, *Danae*; Archippus *Amphitryo* (twice); Aristophanes *Daedalus*; Crates *Lamia*; Hermippus *Europa*; Nicochares *Cretans*; Platon *Daedalus*, *Europa*, *Io*, *Long Night*; Polyzelus *Demotyndareus*, *Birth of Dionysus*; Sannyrio *Danae*, *Io*. Tragedy/Satyr Drama: Aeschylus *Alcmene*, *Callisto*, *Carians or Europa*, *Semele*; Sophocles *Amphitryo*, *Daedalus*, *Danae*, *Minos*, *Tyro* (twice); Euripides *Alcmene*, *Antiope*, *Cretans*, *Danae*, *Lamia*, *Melanippe the Wise*, *Pasiphae*; Ion *Alcmene*; Chaeremon *Io*; Dionysius II of Syracuse *Leda*.

38. So too for the Spartan part of the play, a 'birth-comedy', a type that would become

popular later in the fifth century: Hermippus' *Birth of Athena* is the only candidate for priority. Loeb 1979 surveys this theme in visual art.

39. Cf. Kaempf-Dimitriadou 1979: 22-6, 55-6.

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A World without Slaves: Crates' *Thêria*

David Konstan

Athenaeus (bless him) has preserved a precious series of comic fragments concerning slavery, which he introduces with the words: 'the poets of Old Comedy, when discussing the primitive way of life, state the following concerning the fact that there was no need for slaves' (6.267e: οἱ δὲ τῆς ἀρχαίας κωμωδίας ποιηταὶ περὶ τοῦ ἀρχαίου

βίου διαλεγόμενοι ὅτι οὐκ ἦν τότε δούλων χρεία τοιάδε ἐκτίθενται). Athenaeus proceeds to quote bits of Cratinus, Crates, Teleclides, Pherecrates, Nicophon and Metagenes, but only the citation from Crates' *Thêria* or *Wild Beasts* in fact mentions slaves, the other fragments dealing rather with life in the Golden Age generally.¹

Marcella Farioli, in her careful study of utopias and dystopias in ancient Greek comedy, sums up the question of slavery in the olden times by noting: 'In fact, there were no slaves in the epoch of the Saturnia regna, and everyone shared the same rights, not because the institution of slavery was considered morally unacceptable but because the profusion and spontaneous creation of the products of the earth made work unnecessary.'² Farioli adds that 'it is important to note that this exceptional situation is not the result of an intentional restoration of original equality and that the absence of slaves is simply a secondary consequence of the absence of *ponos*'. A world without slavery was imaginable only under the impossible condition that physical objects suddenly came to life and performed all tasks and labour on their own (the so-called *automatos bios*), as in the fragment of Crates; 'such a conceit, obviously, has as its consequence the justification, not the negation of slavery, since self-moving objects exist only in myth or in fable'.³ The comic poets, Farioli observes, could imagine a state of nature prior to slavery, but for all their ingenuity in creating paradoxical societies in which private property and patriarchy were eliminated (as in Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae*), 'they never go so far as to ascribe to their characters a genuine and conscious abolition of slavery, but limit themselves to representing an equality based on the *automatos bios*'.⁴

I wish in this brief note to raise the possibility that Crates, in the *Thêria*, took that extra step and did at least intimate the creation of a society in which slavery had been abolished, and did not simply evoke a primitive mythical age prior to political life and social stratification. The first text of Crates quoted by Athenaeus runs as follows (fr. 16 K-A):

ἔπειτα δούλον οὐδὲ εἷς κεκτήσεται οὐδὲ δούλην,
ἀλλ' αὐτὸς αὐτῷ δῆτ' ἀνήρ γέρων διακονήσει;

{B.} οὐ δῆθ' , ὀδοιποροῦντα γὰρ τὰ πάντ' ἐγὼ ποιήσω.
{A.} τί δῆτα τοῦτ' αὐτοῖς πλέον; {B.} πρόσεισιν αὐθ' ἕκαστον
τῶν σκευαρίων, ὅταν καλῆ τις ἰπαρατίθου τράπεζα·
αὕτη παρασκευάζε σαυτήν. μάττε θυλακίσκε.
ἐγχει κύαθε. που ἴσθ' ἡ κύλιξ; διάνιζ' ἰοῦσα σαυτήν.
ἀνάβαινε μάζα. τὴν χύτραν χρῆν ἐξεραῖν τὰ τεῦτλα.
'ἰχθύ, βιάδιζ'.' 'ἀλλ' οὐδέπω ἴπι θάτερ' ὀπτός εἰμι.'
'οὔκουν μεταστρέψας σεαυτὸν ἀλί πάσεις ἀλείφων;'

(A) Then absolutely no one will get a slave man or woman,
but an old man will have to be his own servant?

(B) No! I'll make everything able to walk.

(A) But what good is that to them? (B) Each of the utensils
will come to you by itself, when you call it. 'Appear beside me, table!
set yourself! Grain-sack, knead the dough!

ladle, pour! Where is the wine cup? Go and wash yourself!

up here, bread-dough! The pot should spit out those beets!

Come here, fish.' 'But I'm done only on one side yet.'

'Then turn yourself over, and baste yourself – with a little salt.'⁵

Commentators have observed that what is being described here is not a past age of plenty but rather a plan for the future, as indicated by the tenses of the verbs. Of course, such a world, in which pots and pans and cooked fish move of their own accord, is entirely fanciful, and may appear to be nothing more than a projection of a mythical past into an age to come.⁶ In Aristophanes' *Birds*, Pisthetaerus inspires the birds to create a new avian empire by convincing them that they were once the lords of the universe, and that they are reclaiming their former rights. The next fragment (17 K-A), which according to Athenaeus followed immediately upon the previous and was in response to it (ἐξῆς δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα ὁ τὸν ἐναντίον τούτῳ παραλαμβάνων λόγον φησίν), combines what seem to be two different kinds of innovations, one equally whimsical, with talking instruments, the other conceivably of a more practical nature:

ἀλλ' ἀντίθες τοι· γὰρ αὐτὰ τραπέμπαλιν
τὰ θερμὰ λουτρά πρῶτον ἄξω τοῖς ἐμοῖς
ἐπὶ κιόνων, ὡσπερ διὰ τοῦ Παιωνίου,
ἀπὸ τῆς θαλάττης ὡσθ' ἕκαστῳ ρεύσεται
εἰς τὴν πύελον· ἐρεῖ δὲ θῦδωρ "ἀνέχετε".
εἴτ' ἀλάβαστος εὐθέως ἤξει μύρου
αὐτόματος ὁ σπόγγος τε καὶ τὰ σάνδαλα.

Well, try this on! To counter you, first
I'll bring hot baths for my people
on top of pillars like in the Paionion,
to flow from the sea into everyone's tub;

the water will say ‘you can turn me off now’;
then the perfume-bottle will march right up
followed by the moving sponge and sandals.

The identity of the Paionion is not certain, but may refer to a precinct of Asclepius, located in Piraeus, which presumably featured such a plumbing system; extending it to private homes was doubtless a fantastical notion, but it is not in the same class as talking water and ambulant sponges, which are wholly outlandish.⁷ The implication of a technological development has suggested to some scholars that Crates is here ridiculing a philosophical ideal of social improvement, based on genuine advances in science or engineering. Matteo Pellegrino, in his collection of texts and commentaries on the theme of utopias and gastronomic imagery in Old Comedy,⁸ cites, for example, Schmid-Stählin’s history of Greek literature⁹ for a possible allusion here to ‘sophistische Weltverbesserungsvorschläge’, but he dismisses the idea, affirming rather that ‘the end of a servile state combined with the miraculous automatism of utensils and foodstuffs ... lends itself more plausibly to being interpreted as an especially vivid instance of “the world turned upside down”’, and he quotes the important work of Maria Grazia Bonanno,¹⁰ who takes the reference to be to ‘the reign of Cronus’. But the idea that philosophers might have imagined such a labour-free future is perhaps not to be rejected out of hand. As is well known, Aristotle, in the *Politics* (1253b 33-38), defends the need for slaves on the grounds that, without them, citizens would not have the leisure to achieve the kind of cultivation required for civic participation: ‘if it were possible that every utensil accomplished its task when summoned or on its own initiative, and, like the objects made by Daedalus, as they say, or the tripods of Hephaestus, which the poet says, “on their own enter the divine assembly” [Homer, *Iliad* 18.376], and if shuttles could weave and plectrums pluck the lyre this way, then builders would have no need of workers or masters of slaves’. Aristotle may, of course, have been alluding to comic utopias like Crates’ *Thêria*, but it is possible as well that he had in mind schemes proposed in earnest by earlier thinkers.¹¹

There is one other feature of the *Thêria*, in addition to the *automatos bios* and the absence of slavery, that must be taken into account before returning to the question of whether Crates envisioned, however idealistically, a reformation of society in this comedy. A fragment quoted by Pollux (6.53 = fr. 19 K-A) runs:

καὶ τῶν ῥαφάνων ἔψειν χρῆ
ἰχθῦς τ’ ὀπτᾶν τοὺς τε ταρίχους, ἡμῶν δ’ ἀπο χειρᾶς ἔχεσθαι.
{B.} οὐκ ἄρ’ ἔτ’ οὐδὲν κρέας, ὡς ὑμεῖς λέγετ’, οὐδ’ ὀτιοῦν ἐδόμεσθα,
οὐδ’ ἐξ ἀγορᾶς οὐδὲ τάκωνας ποιησόμεθ’ οὐδ’ ἀλλᾶντας;

... and you ought to boil some radishes,
broil some fresh fish or salted, and keep your hands off us.
(B) You mean, then, we won’t eat any more meat at all?
No take-out? No home-made bratwurst or bologna?

It is clear that the first speaker must be a member of the animal chorus, who is here preaching a

partial vegetarianism, inasmuch as the consumption of fish is regarded as permissible.¹² Bonanno¹³ has the merit of having discovered an allusion in the phrase ἡμῶν δ' ἄπο χεῖρας ἔχεσθαι to Empedocles' fr. 31 B 141 Diels-Kranz, in reference not to meat but to beans: κνάμων δ' ἄπο χεῖρας ἔχεσθαι; thus, the passage may be read as a parody of philosophical dietary prescriptions, of the sort common to Pythagoreanism and Empedocles. We have, then, three themes that are often associated with the Golden Age: the spontaneous abundance of nature, the absence of slavery, and a harmony between animals and human beings expressed both as the ability to understand one another's speech and as a sense of common identity that prohibits the use of animals as food for human beings.¹⁴

It is not so easy to identify the speakers in the first two fragments. Two characters are describing the new order, one concentrating on items for the kitchen, the other on the bath.¹⁵ Are we to envision them as human beings, or as members, perhaps, of the animal chorus?¹⁶ The question is vexed (the use of αὐτοῖς in fr. 16 line 4 suggests that this speaker is perhaps non-human, but it is not decisive; besides this, the first two lines have been assigned by some editors to different characters¹⁷). The analogy of Aristophanes' *Birds* may lead one to favour the idea that it is human beings who have dreamed up these changes, but there Pisthetaerus was creating a new society for the birds; the characters in *Thêria* are not imagining a utopia for animals but for human beings, and conceivably the idea for it comes from the animals. It is either a human being, or an animal speaking on behalf of human beings, who says: 'Then absolutely no one will get a slave man or woman, / but an old man will have to be his own servant?' (assigning both verses to one speaker, as in K-A). But what motivated this question? The picture of a world in which objects respond of their own will to the commands of people is intended to assuage any anxieties that people might feel about the absence of slaves; but the notion that there will be no slavery in the society that is being imagined must have been inspired by some earlier comment. What will this have been? The easiest supposition is that the other speaker had affirmed simply that there will be no servitude in the society that is being proposed. But why so? If the speaker is in fact non-human, the proposition may well have been framed very generally: that no creature will be subordinated to any other, from which the speaker draws the inference that there will be neither male nor female slaves. Thus, the very characters who put forward a non-meat diet also insist on an end to slavery, and in each case do so in their own interest: the use of animals for food is analogous to the use of other creatures, including human beings, as living tools.

If this is correct, then the figures who defend the abolition of slavery are implicitly speaking on their own behalf; that is, indirectly, and in the guise of animals, it is slaves who are being given a voice and allowed to envisage a world where servitude would be ended. They do so not by harking back to the Golden Age, although the inspiration for their vision may lie there, but by fantasising a future order in which toil would be unnecessary. To be sure, this is but a dream, not a practical program, the more so in that slaves are not given their own voice but are represented, as it were, by the beasts. But the equation between animals with marginalised groups is a familiar one, and while it may be exploited to demean the dispossessed, it is also a resource that fable may exploit to grant them a coded presence. One cannot tell how the comedy evolved, and whether the intimation of a new order was approved and installed or

rejected by the human characters. Nevertheless, the play may have implied, if not the negation of slavery as a pragmatic goal, then at least a criticism of the institution rather than its justification, as seen from the perspective of slaves themselves. Crates may, then, have gone the extra mile in this comedy and invited his audience to see their society as the most exploited saw it. If we listen to the oppressed, then meat-eating and slavery alike may strike us as evils.

Notes

1. These fragments are quoted toward the end of a lengthy discourse on attitudes toward slaves generally, delivered by Democritus of Nicomedia. Democritus also quotes, earlier on, some fragments of comedy, of which the most relevant are from the Old Comic poet Pherecrates, in his *Savages* (*Agrioi*, 6.263E = fr. 10 K-A, tr. Rusten 2011: 150):

At that time there wasn't any Manes or Sekis
as a slave; the women had to do all the work in the house themselves,
and besides that, they used to grind the grain at dawn.
So the village resounded with their touch at the millstones;

and the poet of Middle Comedy Anaxandrides, in his *Anchises* (6.263B = fr. 4 K-A, tr. Rusten 2011: 463-64):

My good sir, there is no city for slaves,
fortune tosses all individuals around.
And many who are now not free
tomorrow will be citizens of Sounion. Then the day after
they employ the marketplace. For each of us
a god is at the helm.

That slavery was an accident of fortune even Aristotle recognised, in connection with enslaved Greeks, and his argument in favour of the natural inferiority of barbarians, which fitted them for slavery, is cast as a rejection of a more liberal doctrine, according to which there was no natural basis for slavery. But neither view in itself necessarily implies the project of abolishing servitude at some future time.

2. Farioli 2001: 214.

3. Farioli 2001: 215.

4. Farioli 2001: 217. Cf. Carrière 1979: 73: 'Les Comiques n'ont pas fait de l'abolition de l'esclavage le sujet d'une seule comédie. La reconnaissance, même ludique, de l'égalité naturelle des hommes, aurait signifié la fin, même fictive, de la Cité, réelle ou utopique. La mise en cause de l'esclavage ne pouvait donc faire partie du jeu.' Pellegrino 2007-8: 'L'abolizione della schiavitù vagheggiata dai commediografi ateniesi del quinto e quarto secolo non ha dunque alcuna potenzialità "eversiva" e, proposta in chiave puramente giocosa, esaurisce i suoi effetti nel breve spazio temporale della rappresentazione teatrale.'

5. Translations of Crates are by Rusten 2011: 139-40.

6. One thinks in this connection of the scene involving household utensils in Aristophanes' *Wasps* (936-39 and following); perhaps there was some similar action involving props on stage.

7. It is odd to think of bathing in seawater, but the whole idea is a fantasy, and perhaps one was not meant to examine the premises so closely.

8. Pellegrino 2000: 58.

9. Schmid-Stählin 1946: 91.

10. Bonanno 1972: 53-4.

11. Presocratic thinkers had discussed the origins of human society, and while one model represented the early stages of mankind as animal-like and beset with horrors; cf. Rose 1976: 51-5, who provides a survey of this view. Rose remarks (p. 53): 'the evidence indicates that the major proponents of anthropological theories applied them to a fundamentally optimistic – even utopian – analysis of Athenian society'. I have not found, however, a specifically revolutionary proposition with respect to the abolition of slavery.

12. For the idea of fish frying themselves, cf. Teleclides *Amphictyons* (Athenaeus 6.268a = fr. 1 K-A; the eating of fish is condemned in Archippus' *Fishes* (Athenaeus 6.227a = fr. 23 K-A; cf. also Athenaeus 7.344c = fr. 28 K-A).

13. Bonanno 1972: 100.

14. References in Pellegrino 2000: 56-7.

15. Baldry 1953: 54.

16. Cf. Ceccarelli 2000: 454.

17. See Farioli 2001: 60-1 for discussion.

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‘Parade Abuse’, ‘From the Wagons’

Eric Csapo

Our ancient sources preserve two names for ritually licensed abuse at festivals of Dionysus: ‘[abuse] from the wagons’ (τὰ ἐξ ἀμάξης) and ‘parade-abuse’ (πομπεία). Most of the sources are late and draw upon the lexicographical tradition. The tradition at some point brought both expressions together, rightly or wrongly, as if the terms were completely synonymous and referred to a single ritual: in a festival procession people rode on wagons and abused the spectators. But even if the terms are not as fully coextensive as the explanations suggest, they are certainly linked. They appear together in a passage of Demosthenes’ *On the Crown* (no. 2, below) and in a fragment of Menander’s *Perinthia* (no. 3, below). What does appear to be arbitrary is the festival to which our sources assign the ritual: all name a specific festival of Dionysus at Athens, but different ones. They variously name the Dionysia, the Lenaea, and the Anthesteria (both the second and third days of the festival, *Choes* and *Chytroi*). Of these modern scholars, usually with great hesitation, choose the Anthesteria as the favourite;¹ the Lenaea as a more distant second (sometimes adding parenthetically a phrase like ‘something similar happened at the Lenaea’, cf. *Suda*, no. 8, below).² The Dionysia, however, is almost never received as a serious option, though it is, I will argue, the correct one.³

So when did the relevant wagons roll? The question is important if we are to understand the different character of the Dionysian festivals or to understand the nature of the connection, if any, between the ritual context of Athenian comedy and its most distinctive feature, namely comic abuse (*loidoria*). I hope this will serve as a suitable tribute to Ian Storey who has, from his earliest student days, done much to advance our understanding of the vehement personal nature of Old Comic invective, the society that tolerated it, and the men who drew its fire.⁴

To start, let us review the sources that bear on this question. What follows is not an exhaustive list of sources that cite ‘on the wagons’ and ‘parade abuse’. I include the most important passages and those that, in my view, shed light on our question.⁵

1. Plato *Laws* 637a1-b5 Burnet (written c. 360-347 BC). Megillos, in conversation with an Athenian, asserts that Spartan customs are perfectly designed to curb licentious excess.

τὰ δ’ ἐν Σπάρτῃ κάλλιστ’ ἀνθρώπων δοκεῖ μοι κεῖσθαι τὰ περὶ τὰς ἡδονάς·
οὐ γὰρ μάλιστ’ ἄνθρωποι καὶ μεγίσταις προσπίπτουσιν ἡδοναῖς καὶ ὕβρεσι καὶ

ἀνοία πάση, τοῦτ' ἐξέβαλεν ὁ νόμος ἡμῶν ἐκ τῆς χώρας συμπάσης, καὶ οὔτ' ἂν ἐπ' ἀγρῶν ἴδοις, οὔτ' ἐν ἄστεσιν ὄσων Σπαρτιάταις μέλει, συμπόσια οὐδ' ὀπόσα τούτοις συνεπόμενα πάσας ἡδονὰς κινεῖ κατὰ δύναμιν, οὐδ' ἔστιν ὅστις ἂν ἀπαντῶν κωμάζοντί τι μετὰ μέθης οὐκ ἂν τὴν μεγίστην δίκην εὐθὺς ἐπιθείη, καὶ οὐδ' ἂν Διονύσια πρόφασιν ἔχοντ' αὐτὸν λύσαιτο, ὥσπερ ἐν ἀμάξαις εἶδὸν ποτε παρ' ὑμῖν ἐγώ, καὶ ἐν Τάραντι δὲ παρὰ τοῖς ἡμετέροις ἀποίκοις πᾶσαν ἐθεασάμην τὴν πόλιν περὶ τὰ Διονύσια μεθύουσαν· παρ' ἡμῖν δ' οὐκ ἔστ' οὐδὲν τοιοῦτον.

I think that Sparta has the best practice of all in regards to pleasures. Our law excludes from the entire country whatever induces men to yield to the most extreme impulses, aggressions, or recklessness. You would never see in fields or towns controlled by Sparta either drinking parties or the activities associated with the aftermath of such parties which give maximum stimulation to every wanton impulse. No Spartan who encountered a drunken reveller would fail at once to apply the maximum penalty. He would not even let the culprit go if he used the Dionysia as an excuse, as I once witnessed your people [i.e. Athenians] doing on the wagons. Indeed I once saw in Taranto, among our own colonists, the entire city drunk at the time of the Dionysia. You will not find anything like that in our country.

2. Demosthenes *On the Crown* 11, 122-4 Butcher. The speech was delivered in 330. This is probably not the first use of the Greek nouns and verbs with the primary meaning 'parade' and the secondary meaning 'abuse'. Gregory of Corinth (*Rhet. Gr.* 7.2 p. 1118, cf. Photius s.v. *πομπεία*) notes uses by the orators Lysias (fr. 506 Carey), Dinarchus (fr. 31 Conomis), and Hyperides (fr. 268 Jensen).

[11] ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ μὲν τῶν πεπολιτευμένων ἃ κατεψεύδου καὶ διέβαλλες ἐξετάσω, τῆς δὲ **πομπείας** ταύτης τῆς ἀνέδην γεγεννημένης, ὕστερον, ἂν βουλομένοις ἢ τουτοισί, μνησθήσομαι

[122] καὶ βοᾷς ῥητὰ καὶ ἄρρητ' ὀνομάζων, ὥσπερ **ἐξ ἀμάξης**, ἃ σοὶ καὶ τῷ σῷ γένει πρόσεστιν, οὐκ ἐμοί. καίτοι καὶ τοῦτ', ὡ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι· ἐγὼ λοιδορίαν κατηγορίας τούτῳ διαφέρειν ἠγοῦμαι, τῷ τὴν μὲν κατηγορίαν ἀδικήματ' ἔχειν, ὣν ἐν τοῖς νόμοις εἰσὶν αἱ τιμωρίαι, τὴν δὲ λοιδορίαν βλασφημίας, ἃς κατὰ τὴν αὐτῶν φύσιν τοῖς ἐχθροῖς περὶ ἀλλήλων συμβαίνει λέγειν. οἰκοδομῆσαι δὲ τοὺς προγόνους ταῦτ' ἀδικαστήρι' ὑπέλιψα, οὐχ ἵνα συλλέξαντες ὑμᾶς εἰς ταῦτα ἀπὸ τῶν ἰδίων κακῶς τὰ πόρρητα λέγωμεν ἀλλήλους, ἀλλ' ἵν' ἐξελέγχωμεν ἐάν τις ἠδίκηκώς τι τυγχάνῃ τὴν πόλιν. ταῦτα τοίνυν εἰδὼς Αἰσχίνης οὐδὲν ἤττον ἐμοῦ **πομπεύειν** ἀντὶ τοῦ κατηγορεῖν εἴλετο.

Your lies and slanders concerning the conduct of public affairs I will lay out in detail, but this particular spree of '**parade-abuse**' I will deal with later if these gentlemen are willing....

and you shout as if **from a wagon** using language that can and cannot be repeated, language that describes you and your kind, not me. And yet, men of Athens, here is another matter. I reckon that abuse differs from legal prosecution insofar as prosecution concerns injuries for which the laws provide remedies, but abuse concerns the sort of slanders that

enemies like to direct at each other's characters. In my opinion our ancestors built these law courts not so that we could gather you in them to exchange unspeakable slanders arising from private enmities, but so that we might test whether or not some individual is doing the city an injury. And yet even though Aeschines knows this as well as I do, he has chosen to **behave like a man in the parade** rather than conduct a prosecution.

3. Harpocraton *Lexicon of the Ten Orators* s.v. πομπείας καὶ πομπεύειν Dindorf, later second century AD. The fragment of Menander's *Perinthia* (produced any time between 323 and 292 = Menander *Perinthia* fr. 5 Arnott) comes without further context. Harpocraton (or his source) is copied almost verbatim by the lexicon of Photius (s.v. πομπείας καὶ πομπεύειν) and by the Suda (π 2023).

πομπείας καὶ πομπεύειν· ἀντὶ τοῦ λοιδορίας καὶ λοιδορεῖν. Δημοσθένης ἐν τῷ ὑπὲρ Κτησιφῶντος. μεταφέρει δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν ἐν ταῖς Διονυσιακαῖς πομπαῖς ἐπὶ τῶν ἀμαξῶν λοιδορουμένων ἀλλήλοις· Μένανδρος Περινθία· 'ἐπὶ τῶν ἀμαξῶν εἰσι πομπείαι τινες σφόδρα λοιδοροί.'

'parade-abuse' and 'behaving like one in a parade': for 'abuse' and 'to abuse'. Demosthenes in *For Ctesiphon* [i.e. *On the Crown*]. He draws a metaphor from those in the Dionysian parades who abuse each other on the wagons. Menander in the *Perinthia*: 'on the wagons there are parade-abuses that are really slanderous'.

4. Scholia on Lucian, *Iupp. Trag.* 21.44a-b (Rabe). The Lucianic scholia in their final form date to Byzantine times but contain a surprising amount of earlier and often reliable information. In Lucian's *Zeus the Tragedian* 44.11, Zeus complains that humans no longer spare the gods but lambaste them with 'free speech from the wagon'.

ἐξ ἀμάξης· ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ τῶν Διονυσίων παρὰ τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις ἐπὶ ἀμαξῶν καθημενοὶ ἔσκωπτον ἀλλήλους καὶ ἐλοιδοροῦντο πολλά. παροιμία οὖν ἐκράτησεν ἐπὶ τοῦ ὑβριστικῶς κεχρημένου 'τὰ ἐξ ἀμάξης'.
ἐξ ἀμάξης· ἐν τοῖς Διονυσίοις ἔθος εἶχον σκώπτειν ἀλλήλους συνιόντας καὶ τούτων ἀπάρχεσθαι τῷ παρακαλέσαντι δαίμονι μέθης ἐφόρῳ καὶ τοιούτοις αἰεὶ χαίροντι. καὶ ἵνα τοῦτο περιφανέστερον δρῶτο, ἐφ' ἀμαξῶν ἀνέβαινον καὶ οὕτως ἔσκωπτον, ὡς ἐξ ὑπερδεξίου μᾶλλον εὐηκοώτεροι ᾧσι. τοῦτο καὶ νῦν φησιν· ἐπεκράτησε γὰρ ἐξ ἐκείνων εἰς παροιμίαν χωρεῖν ἐπὶ τῶν ἀδεῶς ταῖς ὑβρεσι χρωμένων καὶ οὕτω λέγειν 'τὰ ἐξ ἀμάξης παρρησιάζειν'.

'From a wagon': At the festival of the Dionysia at Athens men sitting on wagons mocked and richly abused one another. The expression 'the mockery from a wagon' therefore applies to anyone whose behaviour is insolent.

'From a wagon': At the Dionysia it was the practice to come together and mock one another and with this they made a beginning for the god who oversees and invites drunkenness and who always delights in such things. And in order to do this more conspicuously they started to get up on wagons and mock each other in this way, so that they would be more audible, speaking from a height. They still use this expression. From

such practice it became proverbial for people who acted with reckless insolence and so they say ‘speaking freely the mockery from a wagon’.

5. Scholion on Lucian, *Eunuchus* 2 (Rabe). In Lucian’s dialogue Lykinos speaks of the philosophical schools ‘dumping whole wagons of slander’ upon one another.

ὅλας ἀμάξας βλασφημιῶν· ἐπὶ τῶν ἄγαν ὑβριστικῶς ἀλλήλοις χρωμένων εἴρηται τοῦτο· καὶ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς Διονυσίοις ἐφ’ ἀμαξῶν ἀναβαίνοντες τοῦ ἄμα τε περίοπτοι καὶ ἐπὶ μακρὸν ἀκουόμενοι εἶναι ἔσκωπτον ἀλλήλους· ἀφ’ οὗ παροιμία ‘τὰ ἐξ ἀμάξης’.

‘Slandering wagonloads’: this is said of people who behave in an exceedingly insolent manner to one another. Indeed at the Dionysia people got up on wagons so that they would be both conspicuous and audible from a distance and began to abuse one another. Hence the expression, ‘the mockery from a wagon’.

6. Appendix Proverbiorum, *Corpus paroemiographorum Graecorum*, vol. 1, 4.80.1:

Τὰ ἐκ τῶν ἀμαξῶν· ἐπὶ τῶν ἀσελγέστερα σκωπτόντων τάττουσι ταύτην. Ἀθήνησι γὰρ ἐν τοῖς Διονυσίοις μεθυσθέντες κωμάζουσι, μεθ’ ἡμέραν δὲ τοὺς ἀπαντῶντας σκώπτουσι ἐφ’ ἀμαξῶν καθήμενοι.

‘Words from the wagons’: They apply this expression to people who are mocking in very obscene fashion. They do this because at Athens at the Dionysia men got drunk and led revels (*kômoi*). By day, however, they sat on wagons and mocked the people they met.

7. Pausanias the Atticist (?), *Compendium of Attic Words* τ 4 Erbse (early second century AD). Pausanias’ text is reconstructed from the nearly identical entries in the Byzantine lexica of Photius (s.v. τὰ ἐκ τῶν ἀμαξῶν), Suda (**8** below) and Apostolios (*Corpus paroemiographorum Graecorum*, vol. 2, 15.99.7)

τὰ ἐκ τῶν ἀμαξῶν σκώμματα· ἐπὶ τῶν ἀπαρακαλύπτως σκωπτόντων. Ἀθήνησι γὰρ ἐν τῇ τῶν Χοῶν ἑορτῇ οἱ κωμάζοντες ἐπὶ τῶν ἀμαξῶν τοὺς ἀπαντῶντας ἔσκωπτόν τε καὶ ἐλοιδύρουσιν. τὸ δ’ αὐτὸ καὶ τοῖς Ληναίοις ὕστερον ἐποίουν.

‘The mockery from the wagons’: of those mocking openly. Because at Athens at the Festival of the Pitchers (*Choes*) revellers on the wagons mocked and abused those they met. Later they also did this at the Lenaea.

8. Suda τ 19 (c. 1000 AD). The scholion to Aristophanes’ *Plutus* 1014 also gives ridicule ‘on the wagon’ to women on their way to the mysteries at Eleusis. This is likely to be an unthinking glossator’s reflex to seeing a reference to travelling to the mysteries ‘by wagon’ in Aristophanes text (where there is no mention at all of ridicule). The connection was probably encouraged by the fact that ritual abuse is attested for the Iacchus procession to Eleusis,⁶ but this had no direct connection with wagons.

Τὰ ἐκ τῶν ἀμαξῶν σκώμματα· ἐπὶ τῶν ἀπαρακαλύπτως σκωπτόντων· Ἀθήνησι γὰρ ἐν τῇ τῶν Χοῶν ἑορτῇ οἱ κωμάζοντες ἐπὶ τῶν ἀμαξῶν τοὺς ἀπαντῶντας ἔσκωπτόν τε καὶ ἐλοιδοροῦν. τὸ δ' αὐτὸ καὶ τοῖς Ληναίοις ὕστερον ἐποίουν. ὅτι ἐπὶ τῆς ἀμάξης ὀχοῦμεναι αἱ γυναῖκες αἱ τῶν Ἀθηναίων, ἐπὶ εἰς Ἐλευσίνα ἐβάδιζον εἰς τὰ μεγάλα μυστήρια, ἐλοιδοροῦν ἀλλήλας ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ· τοῦτο γὰρ ἦν ἔθος αὐταῖς. ὅτι οἱ Ἀλεξανδρεῖς τὸ παλαιὸν καθαρμὸν ἐποιούντο ψυχῶν· ἐν γὰρ ταῖς ὠρισμέναις ἡμέραις ἐφ' ἀμαξῶν φερομένους ἀνθρώπους αὐτὸ τοῦτο προστεταγμένους ἐπιπαριέναι τὴν πόλιν ἅπασαν καὶ στάντας ὅπου ἂν ἐθέλωσι, καὶ οἴκῳ παραστάντας ὅπου δὴ βουλευθῶσιν, ἄδειν τῷ ὄντι τὰ ἐξ ἀμάξης, οὐ τὰ ψευδῆ λοιδοροῦντας, ἀλλὰ τάληθῆ ὄνειδιζοντας. ἐπιμελὲς γὰρ εἶναι σφίσιν ἀκριβῶς ἐξετάζειν τὰ ὄνειδη τῶν πολιτῶν καὶ ταῦτα ἀδεκάστως προφέρειν μετὰ ἀληθείας, ὥστε διὰ τοῦτο πάντας ἀποδιδράσκειν τὴν πονηρίαν.

'The mockery from the wagons': of those mocking openly. Because at Athens at the Festival of the Pitchers (*Choes*) revellers on the wagons mocked and abused those they met. Later they also did this at the Leanaea. When the women of Athens rode on the wagon whenever they processed to the Greater Eleusinian Mysteries, they used to abuse each other en route. This was their custom. When in ancient times the Alexandrians conducted the purification of souls – on certain days men who were assigned to this specific task would ride on wagons passing through the whole city and, halting wherever they wished and beside any house they chose, they would in fact sing 'the mockery from a wagon', and they would not revile them falsely but would reproach them with the truth. They were concerned to lay out their charges correctly and bring them out into the open in a truthful and disinterested manner so that as a consequence all men would shun wickedness.

9. Bekker *Anecdota* 1.316

Χύτροι τίνες εἰσίν; ἑορτὴ τις Ἀθήνησιν οὕτω καλουμένη, ἐν ἣ ἕξῃν σκώπτειν καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους, μάλιστα δὲ τοὺς πολιτευομένους.

What are the Pots (*Chytroi*)? A certain festival at Athens is so called in which it was permitted to mock others, especially politicians.

10. Scholion VEGΘMLh on Aristophanes *Knights* 547c. In *Knights* Aristophanes invents an adjective *lenaites* (a deformation of the word 'Lenaean' after the model of the word *thranites*). *Thranites* is an adjective that literally refers to the highest bank of oarsmen in a trireme, but came to refer generally to the common people who manned the oars in the Athenian navy (cf. Ar. *Ach.* 162). It forms part of an extended metaphor in the parabasis of *Knights* which likens the direction of a comic production to the command of a trireme. Aristophanes excuses himself for relying on others to produce his comedies in the past, saying that he felt he had to learn to row before he dared to steer the ship. In the choker (*pnigos*, lines 547-50) Aristophanes extends the metaphor with the words 'for all the following reasons: because he did not jump on board mindlessly and talk drivel, but did so modestly, raise up a great sea-roar for him, the good Lenaite cheer [of applause] and give him a send off on eleven oars, so our poet can go away happy, having performed to satisfaction, and resplendent with radiant forehead!' The *Knights* was performed at the Lenaea in 424.

ληναϊτην· έορτή παρὰ τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις τὰ Λήναια, ἐν ἣ μέχρι νῦν ἀγωνίζονται ποιηταὶ συγγράφοντές τινα ἄσματα τοῦ γελασθῆναι χάριν· ὅπερ ὁ Δημοσθένης εἶπεν ἐξ ἀμάξης· ἐπὶ ἀμαξῶν γὰρ οἱ ἄδοντες καθήμενοι λέγουσὶ τε καὶ ἄδουσι τὰ ποιήματα.

‘Lenaite [cheer]’: the Lenaea is a festival at Athens in which up to the present day compete poets who compose some songs to be laughed at. That’s why Demosthenes said ‘from a wagon’, because the singers sat on wagons and spoke and sang their poems.

11. Suda ε 1530 Adler. In the process of transmission Aristophanes’ ‘Lenaite cheer’ became the ‘Lenaite chorus’ (cf. also Suda λ 455). The transformation possibly resulted from a literal interpretation of the metaphor likening the personnel of a trireme to that of a comic production (see below).

Ἐξ ἀμάξης· ἡ λεγομένη έορτή παρ’ Ἀθηναίοις Λήναια, ἐν ἣ ἠγωνίζοντο οἱ ποιηταὶ συγγράφοντές τινα ἄσματα τοῦ γελασθῆναι χάριν· ὅπερ Δημοσθένης ἐξ ἀμάξης εἶπεν· ἐφ’ ἀμαξῶν γὰρ οἱ ἄδοντες καθήμενοι ἔλεγόν τε καὶ ἦδον τὰ ποιήματα· λέγεται καὶ Ληναϊτης χορός, ὁ τῶν Ληναίων.

‘From a wagon’: the festival at Athens called Lenaea in which compete poets who compose some songs to be laughed at. That’s why Demosthenes said ‘from a wagon’, because the singers sat on wagons and spoke and sang their poems. ‘Lenaite chorus’ is also said, the chorus of the Lenaea.

12. Scholion on Aristophanes’ *Clouds* 289.

οἱ τρυγοδαίμονες· οἱ ποιηταί, ἐπειδὴ τὴν τρύγα χριόμενοι, ἵνα μὴ γνώριμοι γένωνται, οὕτως τὰ αὐτῶν ἦδον ποιήματα κατὰ τὰς ὁδοὺς ἀμάξης ἐπικαθήμενοι· διὸ καὶ παροιμία ‘ὡς ἐξ ἀμάξης λαλεῖ’, ἤγουν ἀναισχύντως ὑβρίζει· τοῦτο δὲ ἐποίουν οἱ κωμικοὶ ποιηταί.

trygodaemones: the poets, because they smeared themselves with wine-lees so as to hide their identity. In this way they sang their poetry along the roadways sitting in a wagon. Whence the proverb, ‘how he speaks as from a wagon!’, that is to say, he shamelessly insults. This is what comic poets used to do.

13. Scholia on Demosthenes *On the Crown* 40a-b (§11) Dilts.

πομπείας· τῆς λοιδορίας, διὰ τὸ ἐν ταῖς πομπαῖς κωμωδεῖν ἀλλήλους.
πομπείας· τῆς χλεύης τῆς περὶ τὸν βίον· ἥδη γὰρ ἔγνωμεν ὡς ὅτι ἐν ταῖς πομπαῖς προσωπεῖά τινες φοροῦντες ἀπέσκωπτον τοὺς ἄλλους, ὡς ἐν έορτῇ παίζοντες, ἐπὶ ἀμαξῶν φερόμενοι· ὅθεν καὶ ἡ παροιμία ‘ἐξ ἀμάξης με ὑβρίζεν’.

of parade abuse: of slander, because in processions they mocked one another in comedy.
of parade abuse: of jests relating to someone’s life[?-style]. We already know that in processions some people wearing masks made fun of others, as making merry at a

festival, while carried about on wagons. From this we get the proverb ‘he insulted me from a wagon’.

Our earliest source, Plato (1), unambiguously refers the ‘wagons’ to the Athenian Dionysia. The word ‘Dionysia’ can of course refer generically to any festival of Dionysus, but Plato does not employ a generic plural: he refers to specific drunkards at a specific festival and would not have used ‘Dionysia’ if he meant the Anthesteria or Lenaea (unlike many postclassical writers Plato does not mix his Dionysia: *Prt.* 327b5, *Rep.* 475d7). The collateral reference to the Dionysia at Taranto should remove all doubt (Taranto had no Anthesteria or Lenaea).⁷ The language of the scholiast to Lucian (4) is also unambiguous: ‘*the* festival of the Dionysia’. Passages 3, 5 and 6 also refer to ‘Dionysia’, but for the sake of argument we might allow that their expression could refer generically to any festival of Dionysus.

We are lucky that the two main traditions that assert a connection between the Anthesteria or the Lenaea and ‘wagons’ or ‘parade-abuse’ are clearly aimed at explicating expressions found in extant works: Demosthenes’ *On the Crown* (2) and Aristophanes *Knights* (10-11). We are in the rare position of knowing that the literary contexts are both devoid of any information that could have provoked the conclusions drawn by the lexicographers. Information relating to the festival was surely not found in Menander’s *Perinthia*, either, because that play is only cited by 3 which is the least specific of all about the actual festival context. The tradition followed by 7-11 are therefore drawing upon independent scholarship not known to or ignored by 4.

The attribution of ‘wagons’ and ritual abuse to the Anthesteria depends entirely on the testimony of three Byzantine lexica (7-8, cf. 9), all of which closely copy an earlier source, thought by Erbse to be the second-century AD Atticist lexicographer, Pausanias (7). They appear to have had nothing more compelling to work with than a reference to the phrases ‘from the wagons’ and ‘parade-abuse’ in Demosthenes (2), who nowhere hints at a localisation in any festival. Why did their source (Pausanias the Atticist?) choose the Anthesteria as a likely candidate? And is the ‘Festival of the Pots’, *Chytroi*, in 9 just a sloppy or ignorant mistake for Pitchers, *Choes*?

The attribution of ‘from the wagons’ to the Lenaea (passages 10 and 11) depends on a fanciful linkage by the lexicographical tradition of a gloss *lenaites* taken from Aristophanes’ *Knights* with the gloss ‘from the wagons’ taken from Demosthenes (2). There is no mention of wagons (or indeed parades) at all in the parabasis of *Knights*, so why did the ancient lexicographers make the connection?

Sextus Empiricus, in *Against the Mathematicians* 1.59.8, specifically lists Demosthenes’ expression ‘he shouted as if from a wagon’ as one of the most celebrated lexical problems of antiquity. The meaning seems never to have been in doubt, but our sources do reveal a sustained attempt to extract from it more than just a gloss. The task of elucidating the expressions ‘from (a/the) wagon(s)’ and ‘parade-abuse’ has, namely, been hijacked by an attempt to recruit the language of Demosthenes and Aristophanes as testimony for a history of the evolution of comedy. Mockery from the wagons and parade-abuse is equated in our sources with the two features that distinguished Old Comedy from its later forms, namely *loidoria/skômmata* (abuse 3-9, 13) and *parrhêsia* (free speech, 4, cf. 8) – one of our sources (13) even glosses ‘parade abuse’ with *kômôidein* (literally ‘to mock in comedy’). A well

known Hellenistic political-functional theory of the evolution of comedy, largely of Aristotelian inspiration, made licensed abuse and free speech the primary features of early comedy.⁸

According to this theory comedy developed as a form of democratic social control through free speech and ridicule: it exposed and punished wrongdoers, and served as a deterrent to any who might follow their path. Our post-Hellenistic sources give evidence of a variant in which the ‘wagons’ acted as the primary locus for the evolution of comedy. It begins in the rites of Dionysus. People came together to drink and, out of drunkenness (4, 6) or using drunkenness or Dionysus as a pretext (Nicephorus Gregoras *Hist. Rom.* 1.450.9, 2.991.19, cf. 1), began to abuse one another. They then decided to climb up on wagons both to make themselves more conspicuous and more audible (4, 5). In some of our sources the people on the wagon are said to sing their slanders (8, 10). At first the songs were improvised, then prepared texts (10-11). The drunkards on the wagons (4) thus turned into poets on the wagons (10) and in one source are specifically identified as comic poets (12). Moreover the poets are said to have competed with one another (10, 11). The other people on the wagon become a chorus (10, 11): this is probably the point of connection with the ‘Lenaite chorus’. The objects of their ridicule are sometimes just ‘people they meet’ (6-8) but elsewhere, at a more evolved stage or just for the sake of the theory, become ‘wrongdoers’ (8; Lydus *Mens.* 4.56) and politicians (9). Comedy thus functions to keep the powerful in check and to chastise sinners. This is in conformity with the above-mentioned Hellenistic theory of Old Comedy.⁹

Even the contradictions seem to be by-products of various attempts at generating coherent, if slightly different, versions of this history of the evolution of drama. Some of our sources say they slandered, others that they strictly told the truth (8). Some say they disguised themselves with masks (13) or wine lees (11) so they could speak without fear; others insist that they spoke openly or undisguised (*aparakaluptos*, 7, 8) because of drink and Dionysus. In our Late Hellenistic to Byzantine sources the abuse from the wagons has in effect become an evolutionary history of comedy where the abuse gave rise to comic song and the wagon served as the primordial stage. Horace knew a version of this theory that derived tragedy too from ‘the wagons’: *ignotum tragicæ genus invenisse Camenæ/ dicitur et plaustris vexisse poemata Thespis/ quæ canerent agerentque peruncti facibus ora*, ‘Thespis is said to have invented the unknown genre of the tragic Muse and to have carried his poems on wagons, which men sang and acted with their faces covered with wine-lees’ (*Ars poetica* 275-7; cf. 12). Dionysius of Halicarnassus makes use of ‘wagon theory’ in arguing for the Greek origin of satyr play (*Ant. Rom.* 7.72.11-12, cf. Lydus *Mens.* 4.56).

Given the framework in which our information about abuse and free speech at the Anthesteria is preserved, one must be at least a little suspicious that purely theoretical and speculative motives lie behind the integration of the Anthesteria into an evolutionary theory of comedy. We know, in fact, that late Classical and Hellenistic scholarship, beginning with Phanodemus, located the origins of Dionysus worship, wine, and drama at the Anthesteria.¹⁰ Phanodemus was a supporter of Lycurgus and it is likely that the effect, if not the purpose, of his speculation was to support Lycurgus’ ‘reintroduction’ of a dramatic contest to the Anthesteria, albeit to the third day (*Chytroi*), in conformity with 9, and not the second day

(*Choes*), on which **7** and **8** place the ‘wagons’. Connecting the origin of comedy with the Anthesteria had the added attraction of excluding Dorian claims, since the Anthesteria was an exclusively Ionian festival, and thereby asserting the primacy of the Athenian claim at a time when we know, from Aristotle’s *Poetics* (1448a28-40), that the place of the origin of comedy was hotly disputed. Phanodemus’ version of the origin of drama (and especially comedy?) was adopted by Callimachus (fr. 85 Hollis), and, it would appear, other Alexandrians (cf. the reference to Alexandrian custom in **8**).

The connection of ‘wagons’ with the Lenaea can also be explained by ancient scholarship’s search for evidence to support this theory. Using an extended nautical metaphor Aristophanes explains why he did not act as *didaskalos* for his earliest plays (**11-12**). He claims that he felt it right to learn first to row and then to guide the ship. In doing this, he boasts that he showed ‘restraint’ and ‘did not jump on board mindlessly and talk drivell’. He asks the Athenians to ‘raise the sea-roar, the excellent Lenaite [ληναϊτην] clatter [i.e. applause]’ and to ‘escort him by eleven oars [i.e. give him a victor’s escort]’. Aristophanes’ word ληναϊτην is a *hapax legomenon*. The source of **11** and **12** appears to have taken ληναϊτην to refer to the Lenaeian chorus and to have supposed that this chorus was somehow connected with poets who sing their songs (i.e. comedies) seated ‘on board’ a wagon (cf. *Knights* 545 εἰσπηδήσας). Perhaps Aristophanes’ nautical metaphors made someone think of the wagon in the form of Dionysus’ ship-cart (on which more below). The logic of the connection, however, puts Aristophanes so close to the dawn of comic evolution that one is not justified in extracting anything from the testimony for a Lenaeian connection beyond a demonstration that ancient scholarship was frequently ignorant, fanciful, arbitrary and irresponsible.

This does not of course prove that whoever first connected the theory of the origin of comedy at the Anthesteria with the theory of the origin of licensed abuse and free speech on ‘the wagons’ was wrong to connect the Lenaea or Anthesteria and wagons; it only proves that he had very poor reasons for doing so.

But did they hit upon the right answer for the wrong reasons? This is most unlikely. Parades and ‘wagons’ of some sort are variously ascribed to all three festivals of Dionysus. The Lenaea certainly had a parade (Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 57.1) but the only wagons we hear about are those found in our lexicographical tradition (passages **10** and **11**, cited below). The Anthesteria probably had neither, although both are claimed on dubious grounds.

The evidence for wagons at the Anthesteria depends on a connection between the testimony of two second-century AD authors (Philostratus VS 1.530-31 and Aelius Aristides 17.6, 21.4) that a sacred ship served as a float for Dionysus at the Dionysia of Smyrna in the month of Anthesterion and the appearance of Dionysus in a ship-cart on four Archaic Attic skyphoi, all c. 500 BC, as well as on a (doubtfully authentic) lead strip from Sicily.¹¹

Since the turn of the twentieth century the Attic ship-carts have been associated with the Smyrnan ship and hence with the Anthesteria.¹² For just as long or longer a minority of scholars have urged that the Dionysia is the most likely venue for the ship-cart procession depicted on the Attic skyphoi.¹³ There are some compelling arguments in the Dionysia’s favour. The first is the inclusion of the ship-cart in a procession of bull sacrifice on the Bologna skyphos and the close association of ship-cart and bull sacrifice on the London

skyphos. Bulls belong to large public sacrifices, and are very much a feature of the Pompe of the Dionysia (see below). The Anthesteria by contrast seems to have involved only private sacrifices (which could hardly include such pomp as a ship cart) and private contributions to public feasts.¹⁴ This is indicated by a fourth-century BC inscription (*IG II² 1496* covering years 334-330¹⁵) recording receipts for the sale of the skins of animals sacrificed at various Athenian festivals which conspicuously does not include mention of the Anthesteria.¹⁶ In short, as Robert Parker says, ‘the bovine on the Bologna skyphos does not fit well our image of the Anthesteria’.¹⁷ Only two inscriptions relate to sacrifice in connection with the Anthesteria: *IG II² 1672* lines 204-5, accounts of *epistatai* of Eleusis, mention a disbursement of wine and a sacrificial animal (doubtless a goat) to sixteen public slaves and their foreman, which confirms the general practice of holding private parties;¹⁸ and an inscription of Thorikos (*SEG 33, 147* ll. 34-35) which does seem to have made public sacrifice during the Anthesteria but in this case only a goat.

If bull-sacrifice does not suit our conception of the Anthesteria, the elaborate procession we see on the skyphoi, with a float, music and costumed satyrs, does so even less. There is no obvious public procession at the Anthesteria to which our images could refer: ‘this was not a festival of public pomp and expenditure’.¹⁹ The procession connected to the sacred marriage of Dionysus at the Boukoleion seems excluded by the lack of wedding imagery on the skyphoi: our ship-carts cannot be compared to the chous (New York Metropolitan Museum of Art 24.97.34) that supposedly shows children enacting the wedding procession of Dionysus and his bride in a chariot (brides are conspicuously absent on the skyphoi). Aristophanes (*Frogs* 217-19) mentions *kômoi* in relation to the last day of the Anthesteria (*Chytroi*), but these also appear to have been without formal organisation or elaborate spectacle (the Lycurgan ‘revival’ of comic competitions is not relevant to any procession to the Sanctuary of Dionysus in the Marshes).

In addition it must be said that the late antique sources (Philostratus, Aristides) that mention the carrying of ships at a festival for Dionysus in Anthesterion seem to be writing about actual ships and not anything like ship-carts. Literary and epigraphic sources make it clear that the ‘ships’ used in the Greater Panathenaic procession in Imperial times also had the shape and scale of real ships.²⁰ The only reference to the Panathenaic ‘ship’ that does not call it simply a ‘ship’ is the earliest, from the pseudo-Virgilian *Ciris*, in a passage thought to draw upon Calvus’ *Io*, and so datable to the first half of the first century BC.²¹ There, uniquely, the ship is called a *currus* (‘cart’: *Ciris* 26), a fact which leads Shear to conclude that the use of an actual ship was first introduced with the Hadrianic reform of the festival.²² Later antiquity’s larger and more international festival economies seem to have required the magnificence of actual ships. By contrast the images on the Attic skyphoi are very much ‘wagons’ in the shape of ships and unlikely to be called anything other than ‘wagons’ in our ancient texts.

Abundant epigraphic, literary and iconographic evidence exists to attest the use of ‘wagons’ at the Pompe of the Dionysia, even if only indirectly. Direct evidence for Athenian practice might have come from the intriguing early third century inscription, *IG II² 673*, if it were not too fragmentary to allow us with certainty to connect the reference to the *phallagogia* in lines 7-8 with the very plausibly restored ‘[f]our-wheeled [wagon]’, [ἄμαξαν τε]τετράκυκλον in line

18.²³ But abundant indirect evidence does come from the Pompe of the Dionysia at Delos which was organised at a time when Athens dominated the island and doubtless based closely on the Athenian model.²⁴ At Delos several inscriptions mention the ‘wagon’ constructed to carry the phallic icon of Dionysus during the Pompe.²⁵ A two-wheeled wagon supporting a large phallos and also Dionysus appears on an early fourth-century Boeotian red-figured bell krater.²⁶ The phallos in the parade of Ptolemy Philadelphos was also carried on a wagon (Callixenus ap. Athen. 210d). A phallos-bearing chariot of Dionysus is also known from second-century AD Edessa (where the appellation *harma* may be a function of the mock-epic character of the elegiac verse describing the life of a pet pig that died running in front of it – the relief shows a four-wheeled cart).²⁷ When Dionysian rites were received in Italy, they consisted mainly of the parading of *phalloi* on wagons (Varro in August. *De civ. D.* 7.21).

Because our ancient sources blithely and ignorantly blur the distinctions between the character of the different Dionysian festivals, we should be very cautious in assuming generic resemblances. An important distinction, worth insisting upon, is that, while ‘the phallos is basic’ at the Athenian Dionysia, ‘the phallic aspects are not prominent’ at the Anthesteria, and still less so at the Lenaea.²⁸ Indeed, the abundant phallic imagery on our earliest reflection of a ritual Dionysian ship might alone urge a connection between the ship-carts on the Attic skyphoi and the Pompe of the Dionysia.²⁹ It has also been suggested that the phallos poles depicted on both sides of the mid sixth-century Attic cup in Florence have a base that deliberately curves upwards in the form of a ship’s keel, though this is far from clear.³⁰ But phallic imagery apart, the attested uses of ‘wagons’ in Dionysian processions, and the presence of the bull sacrifice suffice to make the Pompe of the Athenian Dionysia the most likely venue for the Attic ship-carts. The Dionysian Pompe, with its phallic procession, is also *prima facie* the most likely locus of ritually licensed speech: Hedreen³¹ and Halliwell³² demonstrate that ritual abuse is generally associated with genital display in ancient Greek ritual (and in the Dionysian realm, with phallic rites). And among the winter festivals of Dionysus in Athens, only the Dionysia (Rural and City) had phallic rites.

The actual festival venue of the ritual abuse clearly has some relevance to the history of Athenian comedy: personal invective is the hallmark of Old Comedy. But what sort of relevance? Some would argue that the relevance extends only to the characterisation of the Dionysian festival as a period in which verbal aggression was tolerated. Others would derive comedy more directly from the tradition of festival abuse, in which case knowing that ritual abuse was a feature of the Dionysia, the first Athenian venue for drama, must count for something. But those who seek to use this information for writing a prehistory of comedy, must also reckon with the fact that our late sources have already, as it were, loaded the dice. ‘[Abuse] from the wagons’ and ‘parade-abuse’ were already incorporated in an ancient prehistory of comedy of a rather fanciful kind.

Notes

1. Farnell 1909: 211-12; Deubner 1932: 103; Nilsson 1955: 559 n. 2; Pickard-Cambridge 1968: 12; Burkert 1986: 229; Reckford 1987: 456; Yunis 2001: 181; Stehle 2004: 154; Parker

2005: 317; Spineto 2005: 88; Bremmer 2008: 263 n. 78.

2. Farnell 1909: 211-12; Pickard-Cambridge 1968: 13; Parke 1977: 105; Parker 2005: 317; Spineto 2005: 88 ('fuor di dubbio per quanto riguarda i Lenaia'); Bremmer 2008: 263 n. 78; Bierl 2009: 317 n. 127; Storey 2010: 183; Evans 2010: 190.

3. Cole 1993: 33-4; Halliwell 2008: 180 (equally with Lenaea and Anthesteria).

4. I 'grew up' under Ian's shadow, arriving as a graduate student at the University of Toronto not long after he left. His, unfortunately unpublished, thesis (Storey 1977) was presented to me as a model of the genre, and proved in fact to be one, and very useful in all other respects too.

5. A fuller list of passages can be found in Hamilton 1992.

6. Fluck 1931: 11-33; Rusten 1977.

7. The Lenaea and Anthesteria are Ionian festivals (Burkert 1985: 226; Trümpy 1997). Dionysia for Taranto are independently attested: the famous anecdote about the insult of Lucius Postumius, the Roman legates in the Tarentine theatre (Val. Max. 2.2.5; Dion. Hal. 19.5.2; Polyb. 1.16.5) is explicitly said to be at the Tarentine 'Dionysia' by Dio 9.39.5; Julian *Mis.* 27.2; etc.

8. Csapo 2000; Sidwell 2000.

9. Csapo and Slater 1994: 165, 171-4.

10. Humphreys 2004: 254.

11. Athens NM Acropolis 1281; Bologna 130; London BM B79; Tübingen + Vatican Ast. 668, inv. 35632, on which see Iozzo 2002: 206-7 (pl. 139); De Miro 1982: 179-83. Most are found conveniently in *LIMC* 3 (1986) 492 nos 827-9.

12. Among others by Usener 1899: 117; Nilsson 1900: 126; Nilsson 1906: 266-71; Nilsson 1955: 582-3; Deubner 1932: 102-4; Pickard-Cambridge 1968: 12; Parke 1977: 109-10; Simon 1983: 93-4; Auffahrt 1991: 213-20; Spineto 2005: 90-5.

13. Implicit in Bethe 1896: 44-5; first explicitly Pfuhl 1900: 70; then, among others, by Frickenhaus 1912; Burkert 1983: 200-1; Steinhart 2004: 94; Humphreys 2004: 230.

14. Parker 2005: 293-4; Seaford 2008: 51-4.

15. Rosivach 1994: 48-65.

16. Steinhart 2004: 94; Parker 2005: 302-3.

17. Parker 2005: 303 n. 56.

18. Parker 2005: 294.

19. Parker 2005: 290.

20. Shear 2001: 148-52.

21. Lyne 1978: 48-56, 109-10.

22. Shear 2001: 154.

23. Cole 1993: 28.

24. Frickenhaus 1912: 68; Ringwood Arnold 1933: 455; Roussel 1987: 208; Wilson 2000: 293-4.

25. Vallois 1922.

26. Brommer 1985; cf. Hdt. 2.49.

27. I. Epidamnos T 527 = SEG 25.711; Csapo 1997: 283.
28. Parker 2005: 318 (first quotation); Parke 1977: 109 (second quotation); Pickard-Cambridge 1968: 36.
29. Oxford 1924.264; CVA Oxford ii, Ild, pl. 10 (401), 24; Boardman 1958; Csapo 1997: 277, figs 8A-B.
30. Florence 3897; Boardman 1958: 7; see Csapo 1997: 265-70; Iozzo 2009.
31. Hedreen 2002: 53-8.
32. Halliwell 2008: 81-3.

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Aristophanes' *Acharnians* and Eupolis again: Metacomedy in Action

Keith Sidwell

Given that parodies – even unpublished ones – have a shelf-life governed by the currency of the novel that is being parodied, the small sub-genre was dominated by that year's favourite: uneven 'D.J. Growling' rip-offs. We walked on, and once past the still-popular Tolkien pastiches we were in the unread Parody hinterland, based on books either out of print themselves, or so far off the Zeitgeist Radar that they had little or no meaning.

Jasper Fforde, *One of Our Thursdays is Missing*, p. 274

In his fine 2003 study of Eupolis, the recipient of this collection of essays took a few pages¹ out from his main narrative to deal with the thesis of some articles of mine from the mid-90s, in which I had tried to outline a new paradigm for the interpretation of Old Comedy, based on (1) the crucial, but in my view understated, role in them of disguised caricature and (2) the notion of a 'poets' war', in which political antagonism between rival comedians led to the development of what I at that time dubbed 'paracomedy' (parody of the comedies of rivals).² Among several general points of criticism,³ which helped me better to articulate my overall vision of Old Comedy in my recent monograph, *Aristophanes the Democrat*,⁴ was the following, more specific, comment about the complexity of my proposed interpretation of *Acharnians*: 'One can only imagine what the theatre would have been like with constant questions and explanations as a Sidwellian *Acharnians* developed'.⁵ In the spirit of our ongoing and always friendly discussion, then, I offer Ian for his contemplation in retirement a product of my own, a restatement of the grounds for my approach to the play, following on from the more general lines of argument about Old Comedy and its nature given in *AtD*. What I shall attempt here is to recap and expand upon the external political grounds for my reading of *Acharnians*, to examine once more the types of assumption used by scholars of Old Comedy in their readings of the play, and finally to try to demonstrate the theatrical plausibility of my reading, which I shall base on attitudes reconstructed as far as possible to match those of the Athenian audience of 425 BC.

***Acharnians*: common assumptions**

Among the things Ian Storey criticised were my 'assumptions from the comic texts', though what I was actually criticising were the assumptions that other Old Comic scholarship was utilising without acknowledgement.⁶ Now we all make assumptions, of course: construction of meaning will only operate if we fill out the blanks in the data we are given, and even within a single culture, we can work with very different sets of assumptions. However, as historians of

an ancient and under-evidenced culture, we are more than normally obliged to examine our basic points of departure and to try to reconstruct as far as possible the likeliest assumptions upon which *original* readers/audiences will have operated. Since I manifestly failed to be persuasive the first time around, let me start again by listing a series of assumptions drawn directly from the evidence of Aristophanes himself, which should naturally be given priority over assumptions drawn by later scholarship from a study of the text of the play, and which will be used to guide our approach to interpretation.

In *AtD*, my argument about *Acharnians* rested on a new detailed reading of the *Clouds II* parabasis.⁷ I identified the (projected) audience of this parabasis as potential and past sponsors of Aristophanes' plays. The specific mention of the circumstances of his first comic effort (*Banqueters* of 427), suggests a relationship with this same group which had lasted already (depending on the date of the revision) for probably a decade or more. Since *Clouds I* (an attack on Socrates) and *Knights* (an attack on Cleon) had also been sponsored by the same group (*Clouds* 521-6, 554),⁸ it is reasonable to infer that it is this audience's political and intellectual agenda that Aristophanes is serving in his remarks. This shows that they can be categorised broadly as opponents of Socrates (indeed, a sub-group of them are identified in the parabasis as *sophists*) and Cleon (the pre-eminent radical democratic leader of the 420s after Pericles' death), but the focus upon Hyperbolus (another radical democratic politician of the 420s and early 410s, later ostracised) and the virulent language used against comic poets who had attacked him, make it clear that they were actually *supporters* of this radical democrat. The poetic rivalries embedded in the piece therefore reflect real political differences, especially between the poet (as comic spokesman for the Hyperbolus group) and Eupolis, and indicate that the parabasis' critiques of comic themes and techniques of rivals are substantive: occurrences of such motifs in Aristophanes, therefore, betoken *antagonistic parody*. Finally, the treatment by the poet of his art in such a context (before long-standing patrons of his work) ought not to be regarded as self-ironic, and contradictions usually seen between his words and his practice require alternative explanations. In particular, his way of speaking about plays and their targets and the need for us to ask why he does not think it self-contradictory to claim that *Clouds II* is entirely new, given that it did not appear so to later commentators who could read both versions, come together to suggest that he regarded the on-stage caricatures of individuals as characters as the focus of the comedies (and their satire) and not the plots. Hence his original play was conceived as caricature comedy and the revised play must have changed the caricature targets.

The major consequences for *Acharnians* (425L) that follow from this analysis and combination of its results with the information about the poet's career in the parabasis of *Wasps* (1015-59)⁹ are:

- (1) that *Acharnians* was one of the plays produced in the names of 'other poets' (and not merely 'producers': *Wasps* 1018) in the 'ventriloquial' period before *Knights* and was put on at the festival under the name (unknown to us) of the 'Aeginetan poet' (even though Aristophanes' role was certainly already well known in Athens by that time);
- (2) that we can infer *Acharnians*' sponsors were the same group addressed in the *Clouds II* parabasis, because of the poet's personal statement in the *Clouds II* parabasis (533) of his

pista horkia ('firm bonds of trust') with this audience *ek toutou* 'ever since then' (i.e. their support for *Banqueters*) and the inclusion for the purposes of his argument of two other plays we know were produced with their help after *Banqueters* (*Knights* of 424L and *Clouds I* of 423D);

- (3) that therefore all Aristophanes' plays (including those put on in the names of other poets¹⁰) of this period served the political agenda of Hyperbolus;
- (4) that a similar sort of vetting will have occurred in respect of *Acharnians* as with *Banqueters*, *Clouds I* and *Clouds II* (we know nothing apart from what I have inferred from this parabasis about the way in which comedies reached the point of being chosen for the festivals);
- (5) that, since Hyperbolus was a supporter of the war's continuation, *Acharnians* cannot have been written in *support* of making peace;
- (6) that therefore the disjunction seen by most scholars between parabolic rejection of Spartan peace terms (however we read them in detail) and the main character's peace project reflects on the one hand the Aeginetan poet's (and Aristophanes') Hyperbolan position and on the other a desire to satirise the peace project of another political grouping;¹¹
- (7) that the play's political agenda also involved the critique of rival comedy, since one of the motifs criticised at *Clouds* 537-43, the circumcised phallus, is a prominent feature of the scene with the Odomantian Thracians (*Ach.* 158, 161)

Unless (or until) it can be definitively shown that the *Clouds* parabasis does not and cannot carry the meanings I suggest and the inferences I make from it, then, we have here a template for interpretation of *Acharnians* external to the play itself, which we are obliged as historians of ancient culture to explore and exploit as the most likely to carry a meaning consonant with that agreed by Aristophanes' sponsors in 425 BC.

The disjunction between play and parabasis is, therefore, fundamental, and identification of the voice of the parabolic poet (not Aristophanes, but 'the Aeginetan poet' whose name is unknown to us: see *Wasps* 1018-20 with note 10) with that of the personal peace-making poet of the plot must be rejected straightaway. This means we must discard the usual assumption that references by the main character to his role as a comic poet (377-82, 499) naturally relate to Aristophanes himself and that in the exchange between the old man and the chorus at 299-301 the *Acharnians* suddenly, in the middle of a sentence, speak for the bald poet. The old man/grape-farmer/ comic poet (395, 512, 377-82, 499) must, rather, represent a *rival* whose comic politics has been tied in with the agenda of those wishing to make peace with Sparta and who somehow can be recognised at once by the audience. The conclusion we should draw from Aristophanic comic naming practice about the identity of this rival is clearly that of Bowie 1988, viz. that the name revealed to Euripides ('Dikaiopolis of Cholleidae') at 406 is a comic version of that of Eupolis and that here we probably have his *real* demotic (cf. *Wasps* 895 'Kuon [for Kleon] from Kydathenaion indicts Labes [for Laches] of Aixone'). The very real problems this raises in terms of the use of caricature, as Parker showed in her 1991 article, will certainly need to be dealt with, but within the interpretative framework already outlined (see further below). The chorus' attack on the old man at 299-301 implies a pre-

existing enmity between this character and themselves (as Sommerstein saw, but rejected¹²) which in turn makes their identification of themselves later (at 1150-2) with an earlier comic chorus (possibly not even an Aristophanic one) a crucial datum also recognised early on by the audience.

The Athenian comedygoer arrived at the theatre at Lenaia 425 BC, then, with a very different set of assumptions from those generally used by modern commentators to read the play and argue for the plausibility or otherwise of rival interpretations. We have been inclined to focus on plot and unravelling the character's identity as the play proceeds. Ancient spectators would be likelier to assume that direct on-stage personal attack was the crucial focus of a comedy and actively look for caricature or political comment (cf. *Peace* 44-9). Now the assumption that the play's plot is focal and its characters freshly minted does have some support in ancient discourse more or less contemporary with Aristophanes. Antiphanes *Poiesis* fr. 189, where a complaint is made that comic poets have to invent their plots and characters from scratch (unlike tragic poets), might certainly be taken as a model for how a comic playwright had to compose and *mutatis mutandis* for the way an audience might interpret a play. However, Antiphanes belongs to a later stage in comedy's development and it is a moot point as to whether the implications of his suggested style of composition can be made to fit plays like Aristophanes' *Knights* and Eupolis' *Marikas* which manifestly do not employ chance names and stereotypical characters, but centre on-stage caricatures of real and recognisable contemporary individuals. In any case, as I have argued in *AtD* and in a forthcoming study of fourth-century Athenian comedy,¹³ both the *polis* itself and fourth-century scholarship on comedy made a distinction between the type of comedy centred on plot and that centred on attacking individuals and the *polis* regularly legislated against the latter. Reaching back into this fourth-century scholarship (because certainly not invented by an entirely opposite interpretative tradition) and related specifically to the understanding of satirical comedy, is Platonius' dictum that 'In Old Comedy they made the masks like the targets of the satire [*kômôidoumenoi*] so that before the actors actually said anything the target [*kômôidoumenos*] was clear from the likeness of the face'.¹⁴ Arriving at a comedy with the assumption that you are going to be treated to a play where the characters are recognisable individuals and are made fun of by the plot would have produced a very different mind-set, I suggest, from arriving with the assumption that you will never have seen these characters before and that you will learn about them as the play goes on.

A very great part of the problem many modern scholars have had in envisaging a metacomic *Acharnians* is that their basic assumption – that the audience comes to the play without any prior knowledge – obstructs the modern reader's view by ruling out another option, which I have argued above has good historical justification. For if disguised caricature and metacomic allusion are central aspects of this play (and of others), it is most unlikely that the dramatist will have wanted to reveal his design piecemeal at random points in the play. Rather, he is more likely to have built his allusions in the play on work done much earlier to alert his audience to his satirical and comic purposes. My analysis of the process of watching *Acharnians* in 425 BC, then, begins well before the comedy's first line is delivered and will end with only a very brief overview of the opening *rhexis*.

Reading *Acharnians* at Lenaia 425 BC

(i) Before the festival

The audience's preparation for *Acharnians* may have begun even before the day of the performance. We do not know whether the comedians appeared, like their tragic brothers, at the Proagon, but let us for a moment assume that at least the names of the competitors and the titles of their plays were posted by the archon before the day of the performance.¹⁵ Now such titles tell us relatively little, but the 425 BC audience naturally was not in this position. If the assumption made by the surviving parabases that their audience is a constant at the festival and will naturally know of previous works by this and other writers, tragic and comic, is any guide,¹⁶ then one thing we can say is that if any previous writer had dealt with the *Acharnians* and this was meant to be signalled by the title, then they will have been (potentially, at any rate) in the know before even arriving at the theatre. We cannot know whether or not the only other on-stage *Acharnian* we meet in the fragments (*PCG* VIII, 498) belonged to a play staged before *Acharnians*,¹⁷ but we do know that *Acharnians* come to prominence only once in our historical sources (Thuc. 2.19-23) precisely for their geographical position in the path of the Spartan incursions and that this perhaps ceased to be a crucially live issue after 427 BC, when the incursions stopped (so that the *Acharnians* of the 425 BC play may better be explained as 'secondary', depending on a previous, more serious, outing, that is, than as contemporary political reference). We can also say with some confidence that the chorus identifies itself during the play with that of an earlier production (1150-2) and it has been reasonably conjectured that this was not a play by Aristophanes, but of Cratinus.¹⁸ If the whole comic idea of *Acharnian* resistance to Spartan incursions predated *Acharnians* and belonged to Cratinus, then an audience in 425 BC could certainly have picked this up from the title alone and they would know they were in for a metacomedy which would at the very least be taking a swipe at Cratinus.

(ii) 'Before even a word had been spoken'

Platonius, whose comments on masking I have quoted above, says that in this type of comedy the characters wore masks which would be recognisable as real individuals merely from their appearance 'before even a word had been spoken'. The 'portrait-mask', or, as I prefer to call it, the 'caricature-mask' – since its function was not to represent so much as mis-represent and satirise the original's features – seems to have been, on this account, a central part of the genre and thus fundamentally reorientates our attempts at interpretation: Old Comedy's central feature was the on-stage satire of specific individuals (cf. Paphlagon/Kleon in *Knights*).¹⁹ In contrast, then, with modern readers, for whom the play's protagonist becomes the 'comic hero', unknown beforehand and representative of 'the common man' in many interpretations, the ancient audience comes to the play primed to recognise in the protagonist someone they have met before (whether in earlier comedy or reality) and who is (most often) being mocked.

As the main character enters the scene, we should imagine laughter at whatever *coup de théâtre* the playwright has managed here. We know from his own self-descriptions and those of other characters later on that he is old, that he is a grape-farmer, and that he is a comic poet

(395, 512, 377-82, 499). Taking Platonius' dictum as a guide, we can say that the audience will not have needed to be informed of these things the way we discover them – by inference from the text. Rather the individual who appears before them will already be well-known to them and will be recognised by the mask and costume, by any props he is carrying and by his way of walking (and eventually by his way of talking). The references we use to pin him down will have acted for the 425 BC audience rather as jokes based on the spectators' prior visual identification of these features (and of the individual being satirised).

Our problem is the play of 'voices' within the play. Parker pertinently asks in criticism of Bowie's 1988 proposal that Dikaiopolis was meant to be recognised as the poet Eupolis: 'In what sense can Dicaeopolis be said to 'represent' Eupolis if he is recognisable only by the name after he has been on stage almost continuously for over 400 lines?'²⁰ She goes on to examine Aristophanes' practice of naming caricatures and concludes: 'Dicaeopolis, as envisaged by Bowie, does not come within either category of stage caricature. He cannot look like the young poet ... Dicaeopolis looks ... like an ordinary comic γέρων [old man], and he is only to be identified as Eupolis by a few verbal hints.'²¹ This is an effective criticism of Bowie's position, but only because Bowie accepted the basic assumption that the audience received its information the same way the modern reader does.²² However, as I have argued above, the Athenian audience would have been expected by the poet to recognise the central character upon his entry and also later on at 406 to have understood 'Dikaiopolis of Cholleidae' as a joke on the name Eupolis. We are obliged, then, to find a way of making sense of this apparent inconsistency without the natural advantage of the 425 BC audience.

We may begin by noting a fundamental disjunction within the protagonist himself. At 33-6 and 266, it is clear that he is from a country deme, which he has not seen for six years, because he has been confined to the city, and which he longs for with deep nostalgia as he sits on the Pnyx. The revelation of the name of apparently the same character, however, at 406, gives us a person from the city deme of Cholleidae. This may not seem important to us and it has been underplayed even by Olson, the first commentator to spot it.²³ After all, many people (especially if they were wealthy and wished to participate in political life in the city) would keep a city home as well as their own place in their country deme (or would have a farm in the country, even if they were from a city deme); many would also reside away from their own native deme. But an Athenian would not have neglected the information given in the play (though he will not have had to read it as we do) because: (1) the deme was fundamental to the organisation of the Athenian democracy, as it was membership of a deme that conferred citizenship; (2) the demotic was the specific badge of the Athenian citizen and was one of the ways used to identify an individual citizen (his father's name being the other); (3) a person might reside elsewhere, but continue to use his original demotic; and (4) there appears to be no evidence of anyone having ever changed demotic, even though a man could be ejected from his deme.²⁴ An Athenian citizen in 425 BC, watching *Acharnians*, then, is likely to have assumed from 33-36 (especially *ton d'emon dêmon pothôn* 'desiring my deme') and 266 (*eis ton dêmon elthôn* 'having returned to my deme') that the main character belonged to a country deme. The name and city deme given in 406, then, will most naturally have been understood by him as those of a different person.²⁵

The disjunction can be made to make sense on the inference that Dikaiopolis of Cholleidae (= Eupolis, a comic poet, after all) is represented (satirically, since he is a political and poetic rival) as *acting* and *composing* the old man/comic poet character. We know that comic poets had sometimes acted in their own plays in the past and one older contemporary of Eupolis and Aristophanes (Pherecrates) is said to have done so, so that the satirical ploy involved here will not lack a plausible basis in reality.²⁶ Given that after this revelation, the two characters are conflated (since the name Dikaiopolis is the only one used to address or allude to the main character later in the play (748-9, 823, 959, 1048, 1085) and a possible cross-reference in *Clouds* 920-4 would identify the speaker of the defence speech *Ach.* 496-556 as Eupolis,²⁷ we may infer that it is also he who is *making a comedy (trygôidian poiôn* 499). This explains how the young poet can still be caricatured in the guise of the old man character (he is satirically represented as an actor/poet),²⁸ but it leaves us with work to do to explain the circumstances in which such comedy could be understood by the audience.²⁹

The easiest way to understand the satire is by seeing that, because the peace-plot is satirically treated, both comic poets, the old man seen by the audience and the young poet (Eupolis) who is acting/writing him, are *rivals* of Aristophanes. The simplest explanation as to how this makes immediate visual sense must, at the least, be that the older poet had earlier been presented on stage by Eupolis in the costume he appears in in *Acharnians* (cf. *Peace* 729-32 on theft of comic paraphernalia). This would immediately signal to the audience that he was *Eupolis'* comic-poet and that would prepare them for Eupolidean references (see (iii) below on the opening *rthesis*) and for the surprise revelation at 406, if that is what it is. Otherwise, if 406 does not shift the play into a different gear in which the underlying actor/poet becomes more important as a satirical target than the costumed figure, there will have been something about the appearance of the old man character right from the start which allowed the controlling poet's identity to show through (cf. *Ach.* 440-4, which on this reading will be a joke not just about the old man character and his Telephus costume, but also about the old man character's costume and his *actor/poet's* identity). The visual information given, whichever version we choose to accept, will have been based firmly upon assumption of the audience's knowledge of the comic theatre and the (politically motivated) rivalry between the poets. But it is, of course, completely invisible to modern readers.

If the audience in 425 BC, then, identify at once the 'old grape-farmer/comic poet' character as the comic poet from Eupolis' comedy, the following circumstances must have obtained: the audience knew that in an earlier play of his own 'old grape farmer/ comic poet' had in some sense argued the case for peace with Sparta and Eupolis had satirised this play in a metacomic attack on the other poet in which he had put him on stage in the costume the audience now recognises. They also will have known, from gossip or from the comic theatre, that Eupolis, having once been in favour of the war, had changed his mind and conversely, that the opposite move had been made by the older poet. If we envisage that the satirical representation of Eupolis as the actor/poet beneath his old man character was in some way visible from the very start of the play, then in addition we will have to assume also that another poet (most likely Aristophanes) had already created a recognisable caricature of Eupolis, aspects of which might have been visibly present, grafted like Heracles' accoutrements upon Dionysus in *Frogs*

onto the appearance of the Eupolidean old man/comic poet character. The changes in the political attitudes of his two rivals towards the war would thus constitute the *labê* ('hold') which had suggested to Aristophanes the comedy's basic scenario:³⁰ he mocks the inconsistency of the political postures of two rivals by having Eupolis the newly converted peacemonger now play an older rival dressed as a grape-farmer arguing the case made in the older rival's anti-war comedy.

Identification of 'old grape-farmer/comic poet' is as difficult from our perspective as it would have been simple from that of the 425 BC audience. But Cratinus seems the likeliest candidate for a number of related reasons: (1) his *Dionysalexandros* appeared to the hypothesis writer to have satirised Pericles for bringing the war upon Athens (the Samian War, as Ian Storey has to my mind persuasively argued³¹); (2) he continued to be a consistent opponent of Pericles and this is likely to mean he opposed the Peloponnesian War too, when it came; (3) there is evidence of some stylistic relationship between Eupolis and Cratinus (visible to the scholiasts even without the knowledge of why Eupolis was doing it); (4) there are clear echoes in the play of Cratinean language and scenes.³²

We have, note, still not begun watching the play proper. We are suspended in that moment of laughter provoked on the entry of the main character by the audience's immediate recognition of the identity (or the double identity) we have had to excavate so laboriously from beneath the layers of text and intertext. The character has still to speak and yet we have still more material to sift before we – in the guise of the 425 BC audience – are ready to continue. For if the identifications the audience makes are more or less as proposed, then each of the layers of the character's identity has also its own quite specific set of referents, which will enter the heads of the (properly primed) spectators at the same time as they make the match between the main character and the Eupolidean Cratinus they have seen before. In which play was it, the slower ones might ask themselves (or perhaps their neighbours – if someone doesn't immediately cry out 'Oh my goodness, it's a take-off of X!': cf. *Peace* 44-9), was it that someone was dressed in this costume?³³

It seems likeliest, from the number of verbal echoes and from the chorus' evocation of the Horai at 988-9, that the main target of Aristophanes' metacomical satire of Cratinus is his *Horai*.³⁴ We have no firm date for this play, but Hyperbolus was already a young and emerging politician by then (fr. 283). Since he is already well-known enough to be the object of a passing reference at *Acharnians* 846-7 (where, note, he is linked specifically – and for us, mysteriously – with Cratinus) and could be conceived of as a caricature target in Cratinus' *Wine-flask* (*Pytinê*) (423),³⁵ we would have no special problem in attributing it to the early period of the war, when opposition to Pericles' policy was at its strongest. That it was an anti-war play is more difficult to demonstrate directly (except if Hyperbolus was a character and already pro-war, which is possible). However, there are strong links between *Acharnians* and *Peace* which may help us make this argument:³⁶

- (1) the central character of *Peace* is also a grape-farmer (*Peace* 190; cf. 520, 1323).
- (2) his mission is to return Peace to Athens.
- (3) the chorus (at least the main body of them) are farmers (*Peace* 508, 511), one of whose

main concerns is with vines (*Peace* 557, 1146-8, 1162-4, 1340).

- (4) they are also associated with being harsh jurors (*Peace* 349-50; cf. *Acharnians* 375-6).
- (5) the name Trygaeus not only signifies a connection with grapes and wine, but also with *comedy* – the same joke, then, as in *Acharnians* is being used again, with a *comic poet* character playing an old grape-farmer.
- (6) the chorus twice invoke the Horai (*Peace* 456, 1168). Moreover, *Peace* utilises motifs criticised in the *Clouds* parabasis as unhumorous, which on my argument suggests that where these appear, we have a deliberate hit at the comic techniques of other poets.³⁷

Peace, then, provides us with another metacomedy which uses a grape-farmer/comic poet as its central character. Since Cratinus appears to have been retired by this time (his last play may have been *Wine-flask* of Dionysia 423, or possibly *Seriphioi* in 423/2,³⁸ the play's target must have been Eupolis – once more for his current attitude to peace (in 421) because the play is a *satire* and is attacking the current peace-process and because Aristophanes was a supporter of Hyperbolus, an opponent of peace. It does so it would seem from the material it shares with *Acharnians*, by reusing Eupolis' earlier satirical caricature of Cratinus, which he had, I have inferred, used to attack Cratinus' support of seeking peace with Sparta in the early part of the war. Here is another reason to think, then, that the double identity of Cratinus as the grape-farmer from Eupolis' comedy was certainly visible to the audience *before even a word had been spoken* and that, *pace* Ian Storey, they will have had no problem at all in seeing what was probably about to happen, given that they also knew the following: (1) Aristophanes (or rather his cover, the 'Aeginetan poet') supported the continuation of the war; (2) Cratinus had changed his view of the war (perhaps when he became a supporter of Cleon³⁹); (3) Eupolis had changed his view, from support of the war under Pericles' leadership, to opposition now he had joined a new political clique (perhaps that of Nikias). There is a possibility that the way the theatre had been set up for the play might also have indicated even before the main character's entry that the first scene would be set at the assembly. In such circumstances, the audience might well have been primed to expect at least some argument in favour of making peace with Sparta (though the actual manner of the ramifications of such an argument would still remain a humorous and delightful surprise, even for them).

But which play was it in which Eupolis had attacked Cratinus' attitude to the war? Two main possibilities present themselves, *Prospaltioi* and *Taxiarchoi*. The first is definitely an early play, probably produced in 429 BC.⁴⁰ In it, there is a character who is stubbornly refusing to do something (fr. 260) and he is an old man, beating around him with a stick and making bad jokes (*Clouds* 541-2 with scholion).⁴¹ This would fit, though we have precious little else to go on, except a piper (fr. 259.116-17, cf. *Ach.* 862-6 and a few possible verbal echoes in *Acharnians*.⁴² *Taxiarchoi* is promising, but mainly because an argument can be made for Cratinus' having been satirised on-stage in it, outfitted and cast as Dionysus, appointed taxiarch of the Oeneis tribe (actually the tribe of which Lamachus – the main opposition to Dikaiopolis in *Acharnians* – would have been taxiarch, if he had indeed held that post).⁴³ Its date is disputed, though I make a case in *AtD* for setting it in the 420s BC.⁴⁴ In such a case the chorus' complaints about a taxiarch at *Peace* 1171-8 would most likely be a metacomic

reference back to that play,⁴⁵ and probably evoke a specific character: Dionysus-as-Cratinus perhaps?⁴⁶ Another play in which an on-stage Cratinus-figure may have appeared and which will be evoked twice (5-8; 299-301) is one where the chorus appears to have convicted Cleon of theft. *Chrysoun Genos*, possibly of 426 BC, fr. 298 has a list which may be the jury. I have argued that in fact the ‘bald-man’ is Aristophanes and ‘the man wearing the worn cloak’ refers to Cratinus.⁴⁷ If so, we have three possible metacomic sources for the Cratinus caricature and it is difficult for us to choose precisely which one is dominant, though the 425 BC audience would not have had this problem. If the other direct reference to Cratinus in the play (848-53) evokes a market scene,⁴⁸ this may be associated with one of the three Eupolis comedies already discussed, but, if so, there is no way of knowing precisely which one it is.

Indeed, upon noticing that *Acharnians* is highly metacomic, we are left, of course, with serious difficulties in tracking its humour. As my epigraph points out (from one of our age’s outstanding practitioners of comic intertextuality), not only is parody a highly specific genre, but one tied to the ‘shelf-life’ of the work it parodies. In losing not just a few, but absolutely all of the works which fuelled the intertextual humour of *Acharnians* (to say nothing of other Aristophanes plays), we are left in the position of having somehow to reconstruct the originals in order to recapture the laughter generated for the 425 BC audience.

To do so directly, from the fragments, is virtually impossible. Nor can one use some magic formula to reconstitute the original from the parody. Parody is a strange and parasitic genre, which takes sustenance from its host but remains separate and distinct from it. In the case of Aristophanes’ metacomic parody, our best chance of spotting where it occurs is where we have reference to the same material in another metacomic context:⁴⁹ proposing a common source rather than ‘self-imitation’ would, after all, be a normal first hypothesis for such occurrences outside comedy. Hence, the coincidence of Megarians and Boeotians and their marketable goods in very specific terms in *Acharnians* 729-958 and *Peace* 999-1015 strongly suggests that somewhere in the two plays (one of Cratinus, the other of Eupolis) which dealt with the war and its effects there were scenes with Megarians and Boeotians at market.⁵⁰ It is possible that the differentiation between the personnel of the markets at *Acharnians* 836-58 and *Peace* 1006-15 matches the profiles of two different scenes, the first in Eupolis (with a representation of Cratinus as a character, dealing with the nuisances mentioned here) and the second in Cratinus (of which the Eupolis scene will have been a parody). The coincidence of details relating to Cleon, theft, and the Athenian cavalry at *Acharnians* 5-8 and 299-301, at *Wasps* 758-9 and *Knights* 805-8 and 1145-50, indicates not only the existence of a scene (in Eupolis probably) in which Cleon was convicted by a jury on a charge of theft brought by knights, but also the involvement in that scene of characters representing the same real-world individual that we meet in *Acharnians* as ‘Dikaiopolis’, in *Wasps* as ‘Philocleon’ and in *Knights* as ‘Demos’ (on my identification, then, Cratinus).⁵¹ One of the chief ways, then, in which metacomedy appears to have worked was by taking a scene and parodying it with its author as a central character in the subsequent, rival scenes. We may imagine, then, that this will be the main thrust of the metacomic satire of *Acharnians*, even if we lack the detailed knowledge of the comedies it uses to make its humour.

Another thing we can probably say with some confidence, once we accept that this

approach is valid, is that there is going to be a point to the encounters between the main character and other disguised individuals (as well as between the main character and the chorus) during the course of the play.⁵² Once more, we the modern readers are disadvantaged in comparison with the 425 BC audience. They have been watching comedies for years, many of them, and will have been aware before they arrived at the theatre not only in general of the fundamentally political nature of Old Comedy, but specifically of the current major artistic/political groupings in the city. Comedy can be readily made, then, from other comedy not just because its visual, musical and verbal idiosyncrasies can be parodied, but also because those comedies must also have dealt with on-stage attacks on known individuals whose political proclivities and personal relationships would be widely known in the comparatively small city-state of Athens. Thus the audience will have come prepared to see a parade of such individuals placed in humorous and often embarrassing situations that exploited their relationships with the main character. *Acharnians* is a double satire, though, in two distinct senses: it attacks two discrete individual targets (Cratinus and Eupolis), but it also recognises and utilises both Cratinus' and Eupolis' earlier satires and their targets. Nonetheless, since it seems nonetheless that the play's principal target is Eupolis, it seems most likely that the characters he encounters will have been the object of attack in previous Cratinus plays; they actually for the most part are friends or political allies of Eupolis, and I have dealt with some of these individuals in *AtD*, though much remains to be done. Regardless of our inability to see through to the detail with any clarity and without complex and convoluted arguments, there seems to me no doubt at all that by the time the main character opened his mouth, the 425 BC audience were already laughing at the cleverness of [Aristophanes'] reuse of Eupolis' attack on Cratinus for attacking the war, evident from the physical appearance of Dikaiopolis and the larger comic context of a play called 'Acharnians', and their mouths are watering with the prospect of much more laughter to come on the basis of their knowledge of the metacomic and political context.

(iii) The opening *rhesis*

The play does not begin, then, as it is usual to say, with the monologue: for the 425 BC audience it has already become clear what [Aristophanes] is up to. The Eupolidean target may only be confirmed for us by the parody of his *psammakosious* ('sand-hundreds') from *Chrysoun Genos* (fr. 308), probably of the previous year (426 BC),⁵³ encapsulated in the even more unwieldy *psammakosio gargara* ('sand-hundred-piles') at *Acharnians* 3, but it seems likely that already the opening words have echoed a well-known trope or stylistic tic of Cratinus.⁵⁴ A double joke can be seen at 5-8, once we accept that the reference is to a scene in a Eupolis comedy (probably *Chrysoun Genos*; cf. Eupolis fr. 298) in which the surface character (Cratinus) was put on stage, defying his current political boss (Cleon; cf. *Wasps* 757-9) as member of a jury supporting those antagonists of the poor, the knights. For even if it was not yet clear to the audience that Eupolis was actually playing Cratinus, it would have been clear that this was *Eupolis'* Cratinus they were seeing.

The other 'theatrical' references here currently defy our ability to process them fully. They may be direct and based on public knowledge of both Cratinus' and Eupolis' tastes (for Cratinus especially in the case of the Aeschylus play he so looked forward to viewing, *Ach.* 9-

12⁵⁵), though it is just as likely that they are also mediated in some way by pre-existing comic scenes (as I have argued is the case with the Cleon/ Knights scenario at 5-8). In the case of the piper Chaeris, at any rate, we can say that he is lambasted again at 866 by Dikaiopolis, is criticised in the metacomical *Peace* by the chorus in a way that suggests the main character (Trygaeus/Eupolis acting Cratinus) has a long-standing and hostile relationship with him (*Peace* 951), and appears to be represented by the piper at *Birds* 857 (the chorus speaks here, though I argue that Eupolis is also the main metacomical target of this play⁵⁶). Chaeris also makes an appearance in Cratinus' *Nemesis* (fr. 126). As I showed in *AtD*, the named attack has to be treated carefully, as it is usually focalised on the character speaking⁵⁷ and while we can infer that in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* and *Peace* this is a version of Eupolis playing Cratinus, and in *Birds* there is a general intention to attack Eupolis, in Cratinus' *Nemesis* we have no idea who uttered the name. It seems likely, though, that Chaeris was connected with both Cratinus and Eupolis, possibly sustaining attacks from Cratinus, but a friend of – or even the usual piper for – Eupolis. This solution gives the same kind of ironic double satire we have seen operating already in this speech.

By the time we reach the point where for the modern reader the direction of the plot begins to be revealed (i.e. at 26-42), then, the Athenian theatregoer of Lenaia 425 BC would be a very long way ahead. Indeed, it is reasonable to argue that he would already have realised that the direct confrontation promised between the desires of the protagonist and the will of the *dêmos*, and the direct critique of democratic decision-making in those lines, are part and parcel of a satirical attack upon Cratinus⁵⁸ who admits at 502-3 that he has been accused already of badmouthing (*kakos legein*) the city, something that [Xenophon] *Ath. Pol.* 2.18 tells us was not permitted. More particularly, it is an attack upon Eupolis, by way of an evocation of an earlier attack by him upon Cratinus, for an attitude towards the war which he himself now holds.

Conclusion

Space does not permit me to continue with this reading of the play as it unfolds for the 425 BC audience: that is another day's work and a long and difficult one at that. My intention here has been to try to show exactly how I envisage the caricature and metacomedy of *Acharnians* working for the original spectators. The most important point, I think, is that we make a fundamental error in regarding the play as a closed system, one which – apart from the obvious naming of individuals and references to current events – is defined by its plot, which is in turn contained by the play itself and revealed sequentially by the action. This type of comedy is, by contrast, basically defined by its point of *attack* – the on-stage caricatures of individuals – and consequently the plot is secondary. And in a situation where dramatists are involved as characters subject to ridicule, it stands to reason that their plays will also have an important part in the construction of the drama (as is widely accepted for later plays, such as *Thesmophoriazusai* and *Frogs*, featuring tragedians). Hence, as soon as the old farmer is spotted, his costume and mask, his demeanour, his gait may all point at once, before a word has been spoken, to material known to the audience from outside this comedy in the way I have argued above. Far from being a confusing process and one in which audience members struggle to get a handle on what is going on, I suggest that a very large proportion of them would know

straightaway what kind of game was afoot. The extent to which this has implications for the make-up of the audience (one of Ian's main objections to my early work) will depend upon one's attitude to the sophistication required to spot theatrical cross-references.⁵⁹

Where metacomedy is in play, then, we must find a new way to approach the interpretation of the plays. We must strive to dig from later in the play and from cross-references between plays (including fragmentary comedies by Aristophanes' rivals) information which will allow us to put ourselves in the knowing position the Athenian aficionados will have been at the beginning of each new play. Thus, for another example, we cannot hope to see what is going on in *Knights* without appreciating that it forms part of a metacomedic series, taken up again by Eupolis in *Marikas*, but probably initiated by Eupolis himself in 425 BC with his *Noumeniai*. This I suggest was an attack on Cleon and Hyperbolus and in *Knights* some of its characters are taken over and its basic structure is deliberately subverted to attack, in the disguise of Sausage-Seller, one of the politicians Eupolis supported (i.e. Alcibiades).⁶⁰ By the very start of that comedy too, then, a contemporary Athenian audience will not have been wondering what the plot would be: they would already have more than half an idea as soon as they saw the two slaves entering and recognised them as Demosthenes (a character from Eupolis' *Noumeniai*?) and Nicias (one of Eupolis' political sponsors?) that they were about to see a satire which parodically subverted Eupolis' *Noumeniai*. This plus their knowledge of Aristophanes' politics would probably have led them to anticipate a reversal of the original Eupolidean scenario. Sequential reading, then, must for us follow the tracking down of character identifications and the reconstruction of such parameters as metacomedy (or paratragedy). My hunch is that if we are prepared to apply this template, we shall in time discover a great deal more not only about Aristophanic comedy and that of his rivals, but also about the internal and artistic politics of Athens during this period.

Notes

1. Storey 2003: 297-300.

2. Sidwell: 1993, 1994, 1995.

3. Ian's rejection was based partly on the fact that the consequent sophistication of the comedies presumed (or seemed to presume) an audience very far from the undifferentiated generality of the *dêmos* Aristophanic scholarship usually proposes (see n. 60 below for an answer), partly because in his view the environment in which Old Comedy operated was 'not as hostile' as I suggested (see Sidwell 2009 ch. 1 for rebuttal), and partly because of the loss in 'paracomedy' of the comic poet 'who becomes ... just a pretender with no real identity of his own'. Indeed, the last of Ian's points was crucial in the recrafting of my theory. It was precisely the appreciation that the early parabases had to be regarded as relating to the poet who wrote (or in the case of *Acharnians* and its two predecessors, who was accepted as having written) the comedy, rather than as a part of what I now call the 'metacomedy', which led me to the crucial reinterpretation of the *Clouds* parabasis mentioned below.

4. Sidwell 2009, hereafter *AtD*.

5. Storey 2003: 299.

6. Storey 2003: 300 n. 26. After criticising my use of ‘assumptions from the comic texts’ and listing a series of conclusions which he finds dubious, he states: ‘Each of these and numerous other assumptions needs to be challenged on a line-by-line basis.’ There is little sign that anybody cares to do this. But this is perhaps because some (e.g. Biles 2011: 95 n. 162) have seen what I saw at the outset when I was proposing a new paradigm (Sidwell 1994: 113), that what Ian calls ‘assumptions’ are simply different assumptions from those upon which the traditional view of Old Comedy is based (see further below). Trying to declare this process invalid by using the traditional assumptions as the measuring stick misses the point of the experiment (cf. Olson 2002: 180, who suggests that my arguments in Sidwell 1994 are incoherent). The attempt to see where this different, and I would argue, Aristophanic, set of assumptions takes us can only be declared a failure when it reaches the point where it cannot contain or explain material readily explained by the current paradigm. Of course, this is a matter of judgement. In my view, however, the current paradigm is certainly now straining at the seams to contain new insights, especially about poetic rivalry and the agonistic dimension of comedy, being won from study of the fragments of Aristophanes’ rivals. See Bakola 2010 and Biles 2011.

7. *AtD* 15-27.

8. See my discussion at *AtD* 8-11, where I point out that the text of 521-5 suggests a pre-festival performance of *Clouds I* in the same place used for the pre-festival performances of *Banqueters* and *Clouds II* and that the mysterious *hemeterous* used of *Knights* in 554 implicates the same audience in its support of that play.

9. As discussed in *AtD* 107-11.

10. At *AtD* 107-11, I argued that while the terms *poiêtês* and *didaskalos* are equivalent and refer to the poet who is granted a chorus, neither refers to the person ‘through’ whom (*dia*) a play was produced (people such as Callistratus and Philonides). Thus Aristophanes’ insistence that he had in his early career acted like Eurycles (*Wasps* 1020-21) to other *poiêtai* (*Wasps* 1019), ought to be taken at face value (whether or not it is a poetic plural). *Acharnians*, consequently, had been *officially* presented as the work of the ‘Aeginetan poet’ (*Ach.* 653-4) referred to as already an old hand at *didaskalia* in 425 (*Ach.* 628), while Aristophanes’ first official chorus was granted for *Knights* at 424L (*Knights* 512-13; *Wasps* 1029-35) and there is no external evidence for a connection of him with Aegina.

11. Biles 2011: 78-80 (whose book was presumably already in press when *AtD* came out and who consequently does not take into account its arguments) makes the bold step of denying altogether this distinction and proposing (79) that ‘the passage is so undercut by irony and hyperbole that a literal reading will not do’. Instead, he concludes (80): ‘It is not necessarily the position in favour of peace ... that is undercut by an earnest rattling of swords in the parabasis: rather, the proposition of war continues to be subjected to humorous distortion and criticism, with the decision between war and peace ... bound up in the identity of the poet himself and his relationship with his fellow Athenians.’ Biles’ analysis of the passage is acute, but his discussion demonstrates our capacity as scholars to make almost anything follow the pattern we wish to perceive: in this case Biles is already committed on traditional lines to seeing Dikaiopolis as a reflection of Aristophanes and so (like Foley 1988 in a different way) feels obliged to mitigate the distinction. Biles is correct, of course, to see the humour of the

passage, but does not consider the way in which (as I suggested at *AtD* 120-1) it possibly reuses elements from a comic play written by one of his enemies (cf. *Acharnians* 630-1), which had made the ‘Aeginetan poet’ a character (or at least given his name a place) in a comic plot involving the Persian King. This scenario perhaps culminated (in the usual fantastic manner of Old Comedy) in the conclusion of a peace with Sparta, the terms of which included the handing over to the Spartans of Aegina, at the same time, therefore, getting rid of the troublesome rival poet. The conjecture is backed by the fact that there is no mention of such a peace-offer at this time in Thucydides. On this reading, the poet uses this cross-reference to turn the attack to his own advantage, emphasising the *honour* done to his crucial importance to Athens by this rival attack, and suggesting by implication that if even his *enemies* think he is so important, then the Athenians need to keep hold of him *if they want to win the war* (cf. *Acharnians* 651). It has occurred to me since, however, that, because the evaluation of the poet of *Acharnians* is so positive (despite the adverse implications of *kaka legei*), this might be an example of ironic self-advertisement in the previous year’s *Babylonians*. This was a play with a Persian theme (it had a chorus of Persians) and might well have been able to accommodate such a scene: the Persian King’s questions, the first about naval superiority and the second, ‘Which of the two sides, Sparta or Athens, does X attack most?’, will both have been answered bleakly by the Spartans ‘Athens’, leading to the inevitable conclusion that if the Athenians continue fighting, with superiority both in ships and comic abuse of themselves, they are bound to win. On this interpretation, however, it would likelier be the case that there actually had been a further peace offer from Sparta involving the handover of Aegina (as Olson thinks, 2002: xxxviii, though at 241 he prevaricates), than that this was part of the comic plot. One might object that it is difficult to see why the cross-reference would not have been spotted, if from *Babylonians*. However, the comic poet’s name or sobriquet given by the King will not have been Aristophanes’, but that (unknown to us) of his ‘host’, in which case ancient scholars will not have noticed it. In any case, they will not have been looking for a cross-reference here, as they were for that at 378, because there is no direct mention of a comic play (scholiasts were exceptionally literal-minded in formulating their *zêtêmata*). For other positive treatments of Aristophanic ‘friends’ in named attacks, see *AtD* 95 and 99. On either reading, this is indeed a very subtle way of suggesting that war is preferable to peace for Athens right now and allows the poet to make his contrast with Dikaiopolis’ highly satirised position in a much less black-and-white manner than he draws his contrast between Dikaiopolis and Lamachus (who in my reading is also a figure of ridicule).

12. Sommerstein 1980, on 299-302: ‘there is no particular reason why the *Acharnians* should be hostile to Cleon; rather, the chorus here (in the middle of a sentence) shift from speaking in their capacity as a comic, and specifically an Aristophanic, chorus’. Cf. even more categorically Olson 2002: 156 (on *Ach.* 299-302): ‘the intrusive “I” that breaks into the text for the first time at 299-302 is *beyond any doubt* the voice of the author of the present play rather than of one of his rivals’ (my italics). On the contrary, since on the grounds I have given this cannot be the case, we need to go back to the explanation Sommerstein rejects and ask under what circumstances this chorus could be understood as being hostile to Cleon. The answer will involve at least the basic assumption that either the *Acharnians* were generally known for their hostility to Cleon (unlikely, since Cleon’s hostility to Pericles and his pro-war stance might

rather have made the two parties allies) or that this, given its cross-reference to the Cleon/Knights scenario sketched at 5-8, points (as perhaps does 1150-2), to a metacomic intertext: the chorus appeared in a previous comedy where they were shown to be hostile to Cleon.

13. *AtD* Appendix 1, 305-36; Sidwell forthcoming.

14. Platonius *On Differences* (Koster, *Prolegomena* p. 5, 1.57-9); discussed at *AtD* 317, 326-35.

15. See Biles 2011: 40-6 with bibliography.

16. See *AtD* 45-8.

17. Though the language used (*Dryacharneu* ‘oak-Acharnian’) might point to a connection between the two plays (cf. the wood metaphors used of the Acharnian chorus by Amphitheus at *Ach.* 180-8).

18. van Leeuwen 1901 on *Ach.* 1163-73. See *AtD* 124-5.

19. See *AtD* 28-9, 305-36.

20. Parker 1991: 206.

21. Parker 1991: 207. Her fundamental belief that there is no real difference between the way Athenians would have viewed and understood *Acharnians* and the way a modern audience would is underlined by her opening words: ‘It is sad that *Acharnians* is so rarely produced on stage, for, visually as well as verbally, the play is immensely inventive and funny ...’ (1991: 203).

22. Bowie 1988: 183: ‘Only ... at line 377 was the audience suddenly forced to come to terms with an important biographical datum about the play’s central character.’

23. Olson uses much the same logic as Parker in rejecting the importance of the disjunction (between the *country deme* to which the old man belongs and the *city deme* of Dikaiopolis), when he says (Olson 2002: 78 on *Ach.* 33) ‘Dik. eventually claims to be from the deme Cholleidae ..., but what matters *for the moment* is that he – like most Aristophanic heroes ... – is from the countryside’ (my italics). Once more (see n. 11 above), if one insists on beginning from a model derived from surface phenomena such as comic discontinuity (though who knows what other meanings this might have had for a contemporary audience?), it is easy to persuade oneself that there is simply no other way to view the ‘facts’ than by taking this sort of line. What Olson consistently fails to do is to test out positions he instinctively disagrees with by pursuing *their* inherent logic (a point I made in Sidwell 1994, but which he confesses he does not understand: see n. 6 above for reference).

24. See Osborne 1985, especially 72-4, 146-51, 183-9.

25. Of course, he would already on my view have recognised the central character as a satirical caricature of a real individual whose deme he probably knew. Whether the association of this individual with a country deme was real or a joke cannot, however, be ascertained by us, though it would have been obvious to our Athenian citizen in 425.

26. Csapo and Slater 1994: 225, nos 4-6.

27. Discussed in *AtD* 93-4. Add to this the possibility noted at *AtD* 80 n. 62 that Ephorus ascribed the voice of the defence-speech (*Ach.* 496f.) to Eupolis. See further nn. 2 above and 32 below.

28. The arguments here are not very different from those used by Bailey 1936 to argue that

Dikaiopolis was *played* by Aristophanes.

29. It may therefore be the case that instead of two separate antagonisms between comic poets and Cleon (see *AtD* 117-22), we have *three*. The first (at 377-82), before Eupolis steps into the open, relates to the appearance of ‘grape-farmer/comic poet’ in a comic scene where he is attacked in the *boulê* by Cleon; the second (502-3), will relate to *Eupolis*, and refer to remarks made by Cleon either in real life or in a comedy; the third (630-1 and 659-64) relates to Cleon’s sponsorship of comic plays attacking [Aristophanes] for his badmouthing of the city. However, if the audience was primed from the outset to see that the ‘old man’ character was being manipulated by a satirised ‘Eupolis’ actor/poet, then we have no way of knowing whether or not the first aside (377-82) also relates to Eupolis rather than to the real individual satirised by the ‘old man’ character, though in such circumstances the 425L audience will not have had any trouble following the reference. All we can do (see above n. 23) is to test each of the possibilities against the other evidence we have (in this case a possible cross-reference to *Babylonians*) on this and other interpretative models available to us and decide which offers the best fit. On any reading, however, the central basis for these jokes must be Cleon’s extraordinary sensitivity to Old Comedy, or perhaps more to the point, Old Comedy’s attacks upon him.

30. This concept is clarified in *Clouds* 551-2 by its use to highlight what it was that Hyperbolus had done specifically in 422/1 BC to give comedians grist for their comic mill. Commentators have missed its specific import here (possibly Hyperbolus’ change-of-mind over contact with the Persians? Possibly as well his collaboration with the old enemy Alcibiades in the ‘don’t stop the war’ campaign?), but the idea itself is easily illustrated from modern political cartoons, which often build their humour upon material provided by the ‘gaffes’ or ‘flip-flops’ of politicians themselves. For example, the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, made a Father’s Day pronouncement saying that absent fathers were as bad as drunk drivers. Taking this as its *labê*, a cartoon in the *Independent* on 20 June 2011 shows a woman holding an armful of babies, each with a T-shirt proclaiming policies the Prime Minister begot, but has now abandoned, while a red-faced and dishevelled Cameron himself pulls on his jacket and heads for the door saying ‘The little bastards are nothing to do with me!’ (The cartoon is available online at <http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/the-daily-cartoon-760940.html?ino=73>, accessed 31/8/2011).

31. Storey 2006. See now Bakola 2010: 81-102 and Appendix 1, 297-304 *contra*. Her central argument, based on a persuasive defence of the reading *hyôn poiêtôn* at *hyp. Dionsyalexandros* Kassel-Austin, iv.140 line 8 (= her own edition Bakola 2010: 322 line 30), is that the ‘adoption of sons’ was a current issue for Pericles only in respect of his attempt to have his sons by Aspasia legitimised (so c. 429 BC). But the generic nature of the reference could also apply to a much earlier period, after Pericles took Alcibiades as his ward, following the death of Kleinias in 446 BC at Coroneia. If by the early 430s BC this ‘lion-cub’ was already beginning to show his claws (at the age of c. 11 in 440 BC), we might easily believe that Cratinus had *him* in mind rather than Aspasia’s sons and date the play, as Storey does, to the period of the Samian War. Another telling reason for doing so is that Cratinus was not shy about attacks on Pericles, but as Bakola shows, the writer of the hypothesis could only *infer* that the play attacked Pericles. I suspect, then, that the play was constructed as it was (as

opposed to, say, *Cheirones*) because it was produced under the terms of the decree *mê kômôidein* (which meant, in my view, ‘not to satirise individuals on-stage’) which held sway from 440-437 BC. This theory would have some knock-on effect for suggestions I made in *AtD* about the caricature targets of *Dionysalexandros*, since the play could not have been constructed on this model between 440 and 437 BC.

32. For detailed discussion of these points see *AtD* 76-7, 107-54.

33. Cf. *Peace* 729-31 for theft of theatrical paraphernalia.

34. See further *AtD* 132-3.

35. See my arguments at *AtD* 101-2.

36. See further *AtD* 202-15.

37. *AtD* 34.

38. Bakola 2010: 162, 226. However, I rather suspect that this play belongs earlier. Fr. 218, on Bakola’s persuasive interpretation, seems to present the same sort of scene as we see in the *Acharnians*, where the main character borrows props from Euripides and thus *Seriphioi* could well have provided its parodic model. For Euripides and Cratinus, see also *AtD* 138-9.

39. *AtD* 72-5, 85.

40. Storey 2003: 65.

41. See *AtD* 83.

42. Bowie 1988: 185.

43. See *AtD* 82-4.

44. Storey 2003: 246-8 sets it around 415 BC. See *AtD* 346-8 for a challenge to his arguments.

45. The coincidence of the phrase *baptein bamma Sardinikon* ‘to dye a Sardinian colour’ at *Acharnians* 112 and *Peace* 1174, in which latter case it refers specifically to a taxiarch, is perhaps significant.

46. See *AtD* 82-84 for discussion of the idea that Cratinus was represented as Dionysus in *Taxiarchoi*.

47. By an argument involving identification of Philocleon in *Wasps* as Cratinus. See *AtD* 128-30.

48. *AtD* 79-80, 132.

49. *AtD* 144.

50. *AtD* 145.

51. *AtD* 128-33.

52. *AtD* 133-44.

53. Storey 2003: 266-7.

54. Note the other references to *kardia* ‘heart’ on the lips of the central character in *Acharnians* 485, 488 and compare those to *thumos* at 480, 483 with Cratinus fr. 171.63 *Ploutoi*.

55. See Bakola 2010: 24-9, 174-7.

56. *AtD* 34-5, 236f.

57. *AtD* 22-3, 91-101.

58. Or is it rather *Eupolis* who will be understood to be speaking? See n. 29 above for the consequences of the idea that the audience sees the doubleness of the main character from the start by the ‘asides’ he makes.

59. In *AtD* I pointed out in a number of places that the TV cartoon series *The Simpsons* is rife with filmic cross-references. This does not appear to have stopped it from becoming a truly ‘popular’ programme, watched by audiences of all ages and all intellectual levels.

60. *AtD* 48-56, 155-65.

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Clouds, Eupolis and Reperformance

Hallie Rebecca Marshall

The extant text of Aristophanes' *Clouds* is generally held to be an unperformed revision of the play that had been staged in competition at the Dionysia in 424/3 BC.¹ The reasons for the opinion that this version of the play was not staged are threefold:

- (1) An ancient hypothesis to the play (Hyp. I Dover = Hyp. 6 Wilson; hereafter Hyp. I) claims:

τοῦτο ταῦτόν ἐστι τῷ προτέρῳ. διεσκεύασται δὲ ἐπὶ μέρους ὡς ἂν δὴ ἀναδιδάξαι μὲν αὐτὸ τοῦ ποιητοῦ προθυμηθέντος, οὐκέτι δὲ τοῦτο δι' ἣν ποτε αἰτίαν ποιήσαντος. 'This [the extant text] is the same as the previous one, but it has been revised in details, as it would be if the poet wanted to produce it again but for some reason or other did not after all do so.'²
- (2) A scholion on *Clouds* 553: Ἐρατοσθένης δὲ φησι Καλλιμάχον ἐγκαλεῖν ταῖς διδασκαλίαις, ὅτι φέρουσιν ὕστερον τρίτῳ ἔτει τὸν Μαρικᾶν τῶν Νεφελῶν, σαφῶς ἐνταῦθα εἰρημένου, ὅτι πρῶτος καθεῖται. λανθάνει δὲ αὐτόν, φησὶν, ὅτι ἐν μὲν ταῖς διδαχθείσαις οὐδὲν τοιοῦτον εἶρηκεν· ἐν δὲ ταῖς ὕστερον διασκευασθείσαις εἰ λέγεται, οὐδὲν ἄτοπον· αἱ διδασκαλῖαι δὲ δηλονότι τὰς διδαχθείσας φέρουσιν.

'Eratosthenes says that Callimachus found fault with the *Didaskaliai* because they show *Marikas* being produced two years later than *Clouds*, though here it clearly stated that it (*Marikas*) was produced first. Eratosthenes says that Callimachus was ignorant of the fact that no such thing was said in the version that was produced, and there is nothing strange about it being said in the later revision. Obviously the *Didaskaliai* list the plays that were produced.'³
- (3) The text as it has been transmitted to us seems not to have been revised in full, nor is it complete.⁴

In this paper I argue that in light of the evidence of plays with apparently similar textual traditions, and considering the scholarship done in recent years on the reperformance of plays in Attica and beyond, we ought to reconsider what the extant *Clouds* might represent in terms of ancient performance. I contend that it is more reasonable to assume that this text is fundamentally similar to other dramatic texts from the fifth century, and therefore almost certainly a text rooted in performance, than to argue that it remains uniquely unperformed.⁵

The first piece of evidence brought to bear on the argument for or against performance are the words of Hypothesis I, cited in the previous paragraph. Hypotheses II Dover (= Hyp. 5 Wilson; hereafter Hyp. II) similarly reports that the revision was not staged:

αἱ πρῶται Νεφέλαι ἐδιδάχθησαν ἐν ἄστει ἐπὶ ἄρχοντος Ἰσάρχου, ὅτε Κρατῖνος μὲν ἐνίκα Πυτίνῃ, Ἀμειψίας δὲ Κόννῳ. διόπερ Ἀριστοφάνης ἀπορριφεὶς παραλόγως φήθη δεῖν ἀναδιδάξας τὰς Νεφέλας τὰς δευτέρας καταμέμφεσθαι τὸ θέατρον. ἀτυχῶν δὲ πολὺ μᾶλλον καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἔπειτα οὐκέτι τὴν διασκευὴν εἰσήγαγεν. αἱ δὲ δευτέραι Νεφέλαι ἐπὶ Ἀμεινίου ἄρχοντος.

The first *Clouds* was produced at the City Dionysia during the archonship of Isarchis (424/3 BC), when Cratinus won with *Wineflask*, Ameipsias <came second> with *Konnos*. So Aristophanes, tossed out unreasonably, thought it necessary to produce the second *Clouds* and chastise the audience. But his luck was even worse with this and he did not thereafter produce the revised version. The second *Clouds* dates to the archonship of Ameinias (i.e. 423/2 BC).⁶

In each hypothesis, the author starts from what he could presumably establish as fact, either through his own recourse to the texts and didascalical records, or by reference to information provided by commentaries. Hypothesis I tells us that the second *Clouds* was the same as the first, but revised in details, and continues on to give specifics about the nature of the revision, saying that the parabasis, the contest between Right and Wrong, and the burning of Socrates' school belong in their entirety to the second version.⁷ This has the appearance of information derived from a direct comparison of the two texts in question. Similarly, the statement in Hypotheses II as to the year that the play was first produced, the festival at which it was entered in competition, and how it placed represent the sort of detail which would have its origin in the didascalical records and which could have, and at some point would have, been checked against those records. In both hypotheses, however, the information turns from the evidence provided by the text itself or by the historical records to an attempt to explain why two differing scripts existed in the textual tradition but only the first had a corresponding entry in the *Didascaliae*. The author of Hypothesis I is more restrained in his speculation than the author of Hypothesis II: his evidence demonstrates clearly that Aristophanes revised the text, and he assumes that this must have been with the intent of reperformance, but since there is no didascalical record of a second production, he deduces that for some reason the revised text must not in the end have been performed.⁸ The author of Hypothesis II seems less restrained, but he does not provide any further evidence to support his claims. He too is clearly aware that there were two divergent texts of *Clouds*, and he seems to make the assumption that the second version of *Clouds* was Aristophanes' response to the first *Clouds* having placed third in competition. One suspects that the author has relied on the parabasis of the revised *Clouds* in his reasoning here (520-5):

οὕτω νικήσαιμι τ' ἐγὼ καὶ νομιζοίμην σοφός,
ὡς ὑμᾶς ἠγούμενος εἶναι θεατὰς δεξιούς
καὶ ταύτην σοφώτατ' ἔχειν τῶν ἐμῶν κωμωδιῶν,
†πρώτους ἤξιωσ' ἀναγεῦσ' ὑμᾶς†, ἢ παρέσχε μοι
ἔργον πλείστον· εἶτ' ἀνεχώρουν ὑπ' ἀνδρῶν φορτικῶν
ἠττηθεὶς οὐκ ἄξιός ὢν·

So I may win the prize and be thought sage, I took you for intelligent theatregoers and this

for the most sophisticated of my comedies; that is why I thought you deserved to be the first to savor it, a play that cost me very hard work. Then I lost the contest, defeated by vulgar men, though I didn't deserve it.⁹

The author of the hypothesis dates the revision to the year following its first performance, to the archonship of Ameinias (423/2 BC), but claims that it was even more of a failure and therefore was not produced (by which he presumably means that Aristophanes was not granted a chorus for the play at the Dionysia in 422).¹⁰

The date given by the second hypothesis for the revised text is demonstrably wrong. This is seen on the basis of exactly the evidence that had caused confusion for Callimachus, as attested by the scholion to *Clouds* 553. The revised *Clouds* makes specific mention of Eupolis' *Maricas*, which was produced two years after the first *Clouds*. The extant play must therefore postdate the production of *Maricas*.¹¹ More relevant for my argument is the fact that Hypothesis II provides no details for the supposed greater failure of the second *Clouds*, though the reasoning is likely the same as that of the author of the first hypothesis. The evidence that survives in a variety of sources indicates two relatively secure facts:

- (1) two texts of *Clouds* were in circulation in antiquity, with one clearly being a revised version of the earlier play; and
- (2) there were didascalic records indicating that *Clouds* had been produced at the Dionysia in 424/3, where it placed third, but there was no corresponding entry for a revised version of the play in subsequent years.

There is no indication of evidence, however, to support anything in the hypotheses beyond these two facts. The remainder of the information provided by them seems to be a series of deductions to explain these details: that a revised text surely indicated that Aristophanes wanted to remount his play; that the new parabasis suggested that this was in part to defend his reputation as a playwright; that since there was no didascalic record of a second production, the revision must have been even less successful than the first; and finally that the only thing less successful than coming in third place, is not being granted a chorus in the first place.

In both cases the logic of the progression from evidence to speculation is comprehensible, and similar, if not identical, to the steps of logic followed by modern scholars when faced with the same evidence. Indeed, Rosen describes the scholion to *Clouds* 553 as 'the most compelling evidence to suggest that the revised *Clouds* was not, in fact, performed'.¹² I will argue, however, that the assumption that our texts were only performed at the Lenaia and City Dionysia is incorrect, and that recent scholarship on performance outside these venues means that this assumption about the relationship between text and competitive performance ought be re-evaluated. We may even evaluate to what extent modern scholars have been led to conclusions about the non-performance of the second *Clouds* by the hypotheses and the scholion, by comparing the standard view of the performance history of *Clouds* to other Athenian comedies.

Other plays of Old Comedy apparently circulated in two separate versions (Aristophanes' *Aeolosicon*, *Thesmophoriazusae*, *Peace*, and *Wealth*, Diocles' *Thyestes*, Magnes' *Dionysus*,

and Eupolis' *Autolycus*).¹³ Also relevant is Aristophanes' *Frogs*, which survives as a single text, but preserves variants which apparently represent revision for reperformance. The number of titles known to us suggest that it may in fact have been, if not common, at least not unusual for ancient plays to be revised in some fashion.¹⁴ We must be cautious, however, to separate our knowledge of 'double' texts of tragedies from 'double' texts of Old Comedy, as the available evidence suggests that these may represent two separate phenomena. When Butrica wants to argue for the two attested versions of *Thesmophoriazusae* being two distinct plays under a single title, the ancient evidence that he brings to bear for this possibility derives exclusively from tragic examples.¹⁵ The examples from Old Comedy are fundamentally different from the tragic examples, however. It seems that all the double plays in Old Comedy bear some narrative relationship to one another. We can see this difference in the practice of the Hellenistic librarians: whereas they could give adjectival titles to distinguish two similarly named tragedies, comedies are only ever distinguished by number.¹⁶ The only two examples where the evidence extends meaningfully beyond very limited evidence that the same title was used for two separate Old Comedies are with the text of the revised *Clouds* and its first hypothesis and testimonia surrounding Eupolis' *Autolycus*.

While no text of *Autolycus* has survived there is sound evidence, as laid out by Storey, that two versions of this play were in circulation in antiquity.¹⁷ In addition to the five citations which seem to distinguish between two separate *Autolycus* plays, there is Galen's very helpful definition of *epidieskeuasthai* (ἐπιδισκευάσθαι):

λέγεται βιβλίον ἐπὶ τῷ προτέρῳ γεγραμμένῳ τὸ δεύτερον γραφέν, ὅταν τὴν ὑπόθεσιν ἔχον τὴν αὐτὴν καὶ τὰς πλείστας τῶν ῥήσεων τὰς αὐτὰς τινὰ μὲν ἀφηρημένα τῶν ἐκ τοῦ προτέρου συγγράμματος ἔχη, τινὰ δὲ προσκειμένα, τινὰ δ' ὑπηλλαγμένα· παράδειγμα δ' εἰ βούλει τούτου σαφηνείας ἕνεκα, τὸν δεύτερον Αὐτόλυκον Εὐπόλιδος ἔχεις ἐκ τοῦ προτέρου δισκευασμένον.

This term is used of a work that is rewritten from the original version. It has the same plot and most of the same text, but will have some things removed from the original, some things added, and some revised. If for the sake of clarity you need an example, you have the second *Autolykos* of Eupolis 'revised' from its previous version.¹⁸

As Storey notes, Galen's definition also fits well with the *Clouds* revisions described by Hypothesis I. Within three years of *Clouds*, then, *Autolycus* was apparently revised in a similar manner, even though, like *Clouds*, we have only a single date for performance attested.¹⁹ But Storey's immediate assumption, which would I think be generally accepted, is that Eupolis' play was performed twice and that the divergent texts represent the two separate performances. Indeed Storey says, '*Autolycus* is the only play by Eupolis that we know was performed a second time'.²⁰ But the reality is that not a single piece of the evidence for a second *Autolycus* says anything about a second performance. Storey assumes that two texts mean two performances, and I contend that this situation is exactly parallel to the evidence we have for *Clouds*.

The strong correspondence between the testimonia regarding the revised nature of both

Clouds and *Autolycus* as ‘double’ plays should encourage us to question whether other Old Comedies that circulated under a single title were in fact completely new plays. As Butrica noted, it may well have been that tragedies with the same title were able to be distinguished from each other in the fifth century by the fact that they did not stand alone as plays, but were part of a tetralogy – which *Ajax* was being described could be defined by its companion plays.²¹ This is not true of Old Comedy, which could potentially mean that what at first glance looks like a parallel habit in both tragedy and Old Comedy of circulating new plays under previously used titles is nothing of the sort. While it may have caused confusion for later scholars who were often reading tragedies in the absence of their accompanying plays, fifth-century Athenians may never have conceived of these as ‘double’ plays. *Clouds* and *Autolycus* suggest that Old Comedies circulating under a single title were seen as revisions of previously existing plays. Similarly, there is no strong evidence to assume that *Clouds* alone of these ‘double’ plays went unperformed in its second incarnation.

The lynchpin for the non-performance for the extant *Clouds* is the apparent lack of a second entry for *Clouds* in the didascalical records: as Rosen puts it, ‘Eratosthenes’ brief comment, then, certainly holds that a second, revised performance of *Clouds* never appeared in the didascalical records at Athens, and so was probably never performed’.²² The absence of *Clouds* from the didascalical records a second time can only be taken as evidence that the revised text was not performed in either of the two central Athenian competitions following its initial performance in 424/3.²³ It should not be taken as evidence that the revised text was never performed.²⁴ This has implications for *Autolycus* as well: a second script does not necessarily mean a second performance in competition at the Lenaia or Dionysia. Indeed, several other possible performance contexts present themselves:

- (a) the revised script may have been performed at another dramatic festival in Athens.
- (b) the revised script may have been performed under specific non-competitive conditions in Athens (as was the case with *Frogs*, perhaps²⁵).
- (c) the revised script may have been intended for production in a non-Athenian context, which may or may not have been competitive.
- (d) the revised script, though unperformed (perhaps having failed to secure a chorus), remained in circulation and was seen as a text intended only for reading purposes.

Clouds has generally been thought to fall into this final category, uniquely. The other three bear consideration, however, though I believe we may also exclude the first possibility. Even though we know that major tragedians did not think it beneath them to compete at the lesser festivals,²⁶ there is no comparable evidence for comedy. Further, plays at the Lenaia and Dionysia apparently shared dramatic conventions: a play written for one festival was dramaturgically coherent with a play written for the other,²⁷ and I presume that the same would be true of other Athenian dramatic competitions. Since the extant text of *Clouds* does not cohere with established performance conventions, this seems considerably less probable.²⁸ Nevertheless, two likely performance circumstances remain: either non-competitive performance within Athens or performance in another community.

Clouds and *Autolycus* are not our only evidence for the practice of revision of Old Comedy. There were two versions of Aristophanes' *Peace*, *Thesmophoriazusae*, and *Wealth*, and *Frogs* seems to preserve small-scale revisions alongside the original performance text of 405 BC. While we do not know whether plays listed under the same title are in fact completely distinct plays rather than one being a revision, where two versions are accepted, the assumption is always that these alternate texts represent a double performance tradition. There is some evidence to support this. The Hypothesis to *Frogs*, for example, cites Aristotle's student Dicaearchus as the source for the fact that 'the play was so admired because of its parabasis that it was actually produced a second time'.²⁹ No one doubts the play was reperformed, but when and where are not certain, and it is not clear if this honorary re-staging was within the competitive context or not. As in the case of all the other double texts of Aristophanes, we have only one secure date for production, on the basis of which, coupled with dateable internal references in the text or fragments, scholars guesstimate when it might have been staged. There are two points to be made here. First, the evidence leans towards certain plays being revised by Aristophanes and Eupolis, making it therefore likely that other poets of Old Comedy did so as well. Not every play was revised it would seem, but enough were that it was not seen to be unusual or peculiar. Secondly, in every instance (except for *Plutus*), there is only one date that has come down to us from antiquity for performance in competition at the Dionysia or Lenaia. This pattern seems to suggest that *Clouds* fits into a larger pattern, and that it did not uniquely remain unperformed. Whatever happened is best seen as part of a larger practice among fifth-century poets that resulted in plays circulating in two scripts with a single production date.

If *Clouds* is not unique there are a number of consequences. First and foremost we need to be much more circumspect about taking the parabasis (esp. *Clouds* 520-5) to heart. As Major has argued, it shares features and tone with a number of other Aristophanic parabases.³⁰ As a general rule, again, the parabasis of *Clouds* has been treated as a unique passage, with the author directly addressing his failure in competition, and this has been read as a reflection of Aristophanes' genuine feelings. Not only does the parabasis of *Clouds* share features with the parabases of other plays, but there is even evidence that the parabasis could be somewhat formulaic. Indeed, while Aristophanes claims not to bring things out two or three times,³¹ *Peace* 751-60 repeats *Wasps* 1029-37 almost verbatim. Indeed, it is on the evidence of this repetition that Storey dismisses the relevance of Eupolis fr. 89 K-A to *Clouds*, suggesting that the same accusation must also have been present in an earlier play.³² And as much as I would like to take that fragment as evidence that Eupolis expected the revised *Clouds* parabasis to be widely known, Storey is right to allow the possibility that Aristophanes made the same charges in another play. Parabases by their nature are both formulaic and topical, referring to events in the very recent past, and so are likely targets for large-scale revision in reperformance. Within these formulaic conventions of chastising the audience, Aristophanes got good mileage out of the result of the dramatic competition of 423, and thus returned to it in at least two parabases.³³

We must also reconsider the assumption that the first *Clouds* failed as miserably as Aristophanes later describes. Taking the parabasis as autobiographical fact, many believe Aristophanes revised the play in order to redeem his reputation following what he felt was an unjust third-place finish. If this were the case, the extant text of *Clouds* might represent one of

two things: either, following Hypothesis II, Aristophanes revised it with a view to reperformance but was not given the opportunity to perform his play (and to this modern scholars add the suggestion that Aristophanes then, still believing in his play when no one else apparently did, put the text into circulation to redeem himself with a reading audience³⁴), or the revision was never intended for reperformance, and was simply a literary revision for an exclusively reading audience.³⁵ I find neither of these plausible. If the play was such a failure, in either scenario, we must ask who do we imagine would be interested in reading the play, and who do we think would be willing to invest the time and money on producing copies of such a text? In every single competition someone had to come in last place (just ask Euripides). Surely many poets thought that they had deserved to place better. The sort of revision and distribution that we are envisioning for Aristophanes, however, did not apparently lead to a flood of revised texts seeking redemption for their authors. Furthermore other instances from comedy provide counter-examples. *Peace* placed second at the Dionysia in 421, and even *Frogs*, which placed first, was partially revised for reperformance. This suggests that a play may have been revised regardless of how it had placed, and so, whatever is behind these doublets, it is unlikely to be poetic redemption before the eyes of the public.

We may even question what ‘losing’ might really mean. Because of the nature of the voting process, a third-place finisher might still have received support from several judges (and not even necessarily the fewest votes),³⁶ and placement in competition need not correspond to a play’s popularity with the audience. We even have a (late) anecdote from Aelian, *VH* 2.13, that suggests *Clouds* was in fact a crowd favourite:

ἐκρότουν τὸν ποιητὴν ὡς οὐ ποτε ἄλλοτε, καὶ ἐβόων νικᾶν, καὶ προσέταττον
τοῖς κριταῖς ἄνωθεν Ἀριστοφάνην ἀλλὰ μὴ ἄλλον γράφειν

They (the audience) applauded the poet as never before and shouted that he should win and commanded the judges from above to write no other name but Aristophanes.³⁷

So while *Clouds* placed third when it was first performed in 424/3, there is evidence to support the idea that despite Aristophanes’ apparently indignant response, his play was in fact very well received in this year. And despite ‘losing’ at the Dionysia 424/3, Aristophanes was back at the next major dramatic festival, the Lenaia of 422 with not one but two plays: *Wasps*, which he directed and which placed second, and *Proagon*, directed by Philonides, which placed first. It seems a remarkable coup for any poet to have two plays in the same competition³⁸ and this suggests that despite appearances Aristophanes had somehow won substantial favour with those who granted the honour of producing plays at the festivals. Two choruses in the same festival would require substantial expenditure of Athenian resources, financial and otherwise, and can only be read as a clear marker of faith, by everyone involved, in Aristophanes’ talent as a poet of Old Comedy.

Considered in this light, it becomes increasingly improbable that *Clouds* was the failure that it is so often made out to be. If the revised text is not a response to a failed production, we need to reconsider what it might represent. In light of what Storey has called ‘the curious matter of the Lenaia festival of 422’, we should give serious consideration to the possibility

that, despite placing third at the Dionysia, this was among Aristophanes' most warmly received plays. This fits with the anecdote in Aelian (which, though from the second century AD, may have some historical basis), and it raises the possibility that *Clouds* was revised because it was still being performed several years after its debut at the Dionysia. This possibility also finds some potential support in Eupolis fr. 89 K-A, which if it does refer to the revised parabasis of *Clouds* would mean that the play was still expected to be familiar to audiences when Eupolis' *Baptai* was performed c. 417-415 BC.³⁹ This theory of comic reperformance explains why a limited number of scripts (perhaps those featuring notorious caricatures of figures such as Euripides and Socrates, who continued to be prominent in Athenian life) also circulated in doublets, but large numbers of plays apparently did not.⁴⁰

References to *Clouds* by Plato and Xenophon, both followers of Socrates, provide two final pieces of evidence which ought to be considered. At *Apology* 19a-c, Plato has Socrates say:

Ἀναλάβωμεν οὖν ἐξ ἀρχῆς τίς ἡ κατηγορία ἐστὶν ἐξ ἧς ἡ ἐμὴ διαβολὴ γέγονεν, ἣ δὴ καὶ πιστεύων Μέλητος με ἐγράψατο τὴν γραφὴν ταύτην. εἶεν· τί δὴ λέγοντες διέβαλλον οἱ διαβάλλοντες; ὥσπερ οὖν κατηγορῶν τὴν ἀντωμοσίαν δεῖ ἀναγνῶναι αὐτῶν Ἰωκράτης ἀδικεῖ καὶ περιεργάζεται ζητῶν τὰ τε ὑπὸ γῆς καὶ οὐράνια καὶ τὸν ἥττω λόγον κρείττω ποιῶν καὶ ἄλλους ταῦτα ταῦτα διδάσκων· τοιαύτη τίς ἐστὶν· ταῦτα γὰρ ἐωρᾶτε καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν τῇ Ἀριστοφάνους κωμῳδίᾳ, Ἰωκράτη τινὰ ἐκεῖ περιφερόμενον, φάσκοντά τε ἀεροβατεῖν καὶ ἄλλην πολλὴν φλυαρίαν φλυαροῦντα, ὧν ἐγὼ οὐδὲν οὔτε μέγα οὔτε μικρὸν πέρι ἐπαῖω.

Let us then take up the case from its beginning. What is the accusation from which arose the slander in which Meletus trusted when he wrote out the charge against me? What did they say when they slandered me? I must, as if they were my actual prosecutors, read the affidavit they would have sworn. It goes something like this: Socrates is guilty of wrongdoing in that he busies himself studying things in the sky and below the earth; and he makes the worse into the stronger argument, and he teaches these same things to others. You have seen this yourself in the comedy of Aristophanes, a Socrates swinging about there, saying he was walking on air and talking a lot of nonsense about things of which I know nothing at all.⁴¹

Plato's *Apology* takes place in 399 BC, and was written sometime thereafter. Socrates was a frequent butt of comedic jests in the plays of Old Comedy between 423 and 399. But despite numerous jokes about Socrates in multiple plays, Plato assumes not only that the jurors have seen *Clouds* in performance but that they remember the play, and that their opinion of Socrates may have been swayed by his depiction therein.⁴² That these Athenians would remember a third-place play that had been staged nearly a quarter of a century earlier, in a city where there had been more than 150 new comedies at the Dionysia and Lenaia in the intervening period should be surprising. Socrates' followers, Plato and Xenophon, who both were small children in 423, both foreground *Clouds* in representing the public perception of Socrates by those who did not know him personally. One can envisage a scenario whereby Socrates' bookish followers, looking for reasons to explain the jury's disposition against him, found Aristophanes' *Clouds* to be the most egregious and perhaps sustained attack on him in Old

Comedy. But that does not account for Plato's suggestion that the jurors had actually seen Aristophanes' Socrates, and that this depiction would have had such a memorable impact on them that it might still sway their judgment of the man more than two decades after the fact. For Plato to think that this play was of such potential influence that it would be addressed directly in Socrates' defence speech, there would have to have been a reperformance of the play at some point in the not-so-distant past. While it would be possible to come up with an Earl of Essex/*Richard II* scenario for reproduction on the eve of the trial, the internal references within our extant script are absolutely clear that our revised text dates from much earlier.⁴³

It is also possible that Xenophon tells us something about the afterlife of *Clouds*.⁴⁴ Xenophon, writing well after the death of Socrates in the fourth century, chose to set his *Symposium* in the year 421, with himself as a guest, even though the historical reality was that he would have been but a child at the time. We must assume that Xenophon has a reason for the date and occasion at which he has set his work, as well as for the details that he chooses to include. What the dialogue presents cannot represent any historical event, but rather is a deliberately crafted literary fiction. Within this fiction, Aristophanes' *Clouds* enters the discussion, despite having been performed decades before Xenophon wrote his work. At *Symposium* 6.6-10 the Syracusan who has been hired to provide entertainment for the occasion approaches Socrates and asks if he is the one they call the 'thinker' (Xen. *Symp.* 6.7, φθονῶν τῷ Σωκράτει εἶπεν· ἄρα σὺ, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὁ φροντιστὴς ἐπικαλούμενος;). He goes on to say that Socrates is supposed to be 'a thinker on celestial subjects' and asks him to measure the distance between them in flea feet (Xen. *Symp.* 6.7-8). There can be no doubt that this is a reference to *Clouds* 144-54: the question should be, how does the Syracusan know the play? Given that this entire event is a construction of Xenophon's imagination the question is not looking for a historical certainty. Rather, how does Xenophon think the play was being disseminated among the public. Again, there are a number of possibilities: the reader is meant to assume that the Syracusan saw the play at the Dionysia in 423, and the play is still being discussed more than a year on; or the Syracusan saw the play performed somewhere other than at the Dionysia; or the Syracusan read the play. Whatever Xenophon had in mind, there is no doubt that he viewed the play as damaging to the image of Socrates. When the Syracusan brings up the play with Socrates he does so spitefully (φθονῶν). Xenophon gives us a character who does not know Socrates by sight, and who is not Athenian; who, on account of Aristophanes' play, thinks of the philosopher as someone who studies natural phenomena and discusses them in the most ridiculous of terms. Somehow, this is also supposed to remain coherent for Xenophon's audience, for whom the allusion must also be meaningful. Again, the possibility that *Clouds* possessed an afterlife in performance following its debut seems the most likely of the three options when we need to account for it apparently being familiar, or least being perceived to be familiar to Syracusan procurers, Athenian jurors and Socrates' followers.

The evidence of both Plato and Xenophon suggests a shared belief that Aristophanes' *Clouds* was widely known across a period of more than twenty years and that the play shaped many people's ideas about Socrates to his detriment. The modern understanding of the history of *Clouds*, that it was a dismal third-place failure and that a revised or partially revised text circulated as a means of redeeming the play, simply cannot be reconciled with this perspective. On the other hand, a very popular play, that continued to be reperformed following its

premiere, to such an extent that it was worth the author's time to revise it several years later, would account for the hostile view of the play maintained by two of Socrates' followers in the early years of the fourth century. Even today, in the age of cheap and accessible means of textual production and reproduction, playscripts tend to be very ephemeral objects. Plays that do not enter the literary canon or have regular revivals on the stage disappear with alarming alacrity. Aristophanes' *Clouds* survived in two versions, and it continued to be perceived as culturally relevant and influential. The reason for this, I believe, was that it continued to live on the stage in the years following its initial performance.⁴⁵

Notes

1. See Dover 1968: lxxxi-xcviii, and also Storey 1993: 73-4 and Rosen 1997: 401, all of which rely on the same evidence for non-performance. Revermann 2006: 326-33, with the caveat that the authors of the hypotheses may have been reliant on Athenian records and thus unaware of non-Athenian performance, also accepts that the play was not performed, but argues that the text of the revised *Clouds* was conceptualised by Aristophanes as a performance text.

2. Tr. Dover 1968: lxxxii.

3. Tr. Csapo and Slater 1995: 6.

4. For a succinct summary of the most serious internal problems, see Storey 1993: 73-4. On the number of actors required by the extant script, and the potential performance problems therein, see Russo 1994: 92-109; MacDowell 1994: 329-30; MacDowell 1995: 144-9; and Revermann 2006: 224-35 and 326-28.

5. Athenaeus 270a says that he knows of two dramatists, Metagenes and Nicophon, who were active in the fifth century, who wrote plays that were not staged. As Rosen (1997: 425 n. 9) cautions, however, Athenaeus gives no indication as to whether these plays had been written with a view to performance and therefore cannot be used as evidence for a strictly text-based tradition of dramatic poetry. And to Rosen's caution, I would add that Athenaeus also tells us nothing about why he believes that these plays were not performed. It is possible that the issue here, as with the second *Clouds*, is the lack of an entry for either play in the didascalical record. It is worth noting that Athenaeus does not include *Clouds* as a play that was believed to have been unperformed.

6. Tr. Csapo and Slater 1995: 5.

7. See Dover 1968: lxxxiv.

8. For a discussion of the phrasing of the Hypothesis on this point and possible interpretations of the phrasing, see Rosen 1997: 402.

9. Tr. Henderson 1998: 83.

10. The date of 423/2 for the revision is not supported by the internal references to later events, and is likely a further logical deduction on the part of the scholiast, who has assumed that revision would have occurred immediately following the play's poor showing in the Dionysia of 424/3.

11. On the date for the revised *Clouds* see Kopff 1990 and Storey 1993, in response to

Kopff.

12. Rosen 1997: 401.

13. On the known ‘double’ plays of Old Comedy and how they are referred to in ancient secondary sources, see Butrica 2001: 55-61, Konstantakos 2004: 9-19, and Sommerstein 2010: 11-29.

14. Konstantakos 2004: 15 has argued that revision ‘was common in the Greek comic theatre’. Revermann 2006: 330-31, on the evidence of an anecdote in Athenaeus (9.374a-b) and K-A test. 5.5 regarding Telecleides’ *Sterroi*, suggests that there may have been a general practice of revision among the poets of Old Comedy.

15. Butrica 2001: 56-8.

16. Though see Konstantakos 2004: 14, who argues that sometimes ‘the double title may be the result of διασκευή, a second production of the play in a revised version. ... the poet could well change the title, e.g. in order to give the impression that he was producing a new play and not just rehashing old material’.

17. Storey 2003b: 82-4.

18. Galen, *Commentary on Hippocrates’ On Regimen in Acute Diseases* 1.4. See Storey 2003b: 83.

19. Storey provides two pieces of evidence for the date of the first *Autolycus*. A scholiast to Plato’s *Apology* at 19c tells us that both Eupolis, in *Autolycus*, and Plato the comic playwright, in his *Nikai*, made fun of Aristophanes’ statue of Peace. Given that *Peace* can be securely dated to the Dionysia of 421 BC, *Autolycus* must date to 420 or later. That it was in 420 precisely is made clear by the second piece of evidence: Athenaeus in the course of discussing the chronological problems of philosophers in respect to Xenophon’s *Symposium* (5.216c-d), says:

ἔστιν δὲ οὗτος ὁ καιρὸς καθ’ ὃν Ἀριστίων ἄρχων ἦν. ἐπὶ τούτου γὰρ Εὐπολις τὸν Ἀυτολύκον διδάξας διὰ Δημοστράτου χλευάζει τὴν νίκην τοῦ Ἀυτολύκου. ‘This is the time when Aristion was archon (421/0); for in that year Eupolis put on through Demostrotos his *Autolykos* making fun of the victory of Autolykos’ (tr. Storey 2003b: 81).

20. Storey 2003b: 82.

21. Butrica 2001: 56.

22. Rosen 1997: 401.

23. We know little about the afterlife of plays following their initial festival performance. Given the number of anecdotes that we have about Athenian tragedians traveling abroad because of non-Athenian demand for their plays and the evidence from vase paintings for an audience in South Italy for Old Comedy, it seems safe to say that some plays could enjoy new performances on the stage following their performance at the Dionysia or Lenaia. If we think that these plays were being reperformed outside the boundaries of Attica, we must consider the possibility that there were opportunities to restage these plays within Attica as well. We shouldn’t think in terms of going from Broadway to off-Broadway: rather, having made the offering to Dionysus in the appropriate festival context, the spoils of the ritual offerings could be shared more widely among the community. And it would seem that reperformance in an Attic context would be of more benefit to the *chorêgos* than non-Attic reperformances.

24. One further piece of evidence is potentially relevant to reperformance. The anecdote

preserved by Herodotus (6.21) about Phrynichus' *Fall of Miletus* identifies the penalty for reminding the Athenians of their own woes was a substantial fine and 'they passed a regulation that no one was to make use of this drama in the future' (ἐπέταξαν μηκέτι μηδένα χρᾶσθαι τούτῳ τῷ δράματι, tr. Csapo and Slater 1995: 11). The phrasing of this leaves open the possibility that reperformance might not just be by the poet in competition, but that others might also seek to stage a play following its performance in competition. Such anecdotes must always be used with caution, but Herodotus is of particular value for being a contemporary source suggesting that reperformance was a possibility for a play with a disastrous reception.

25. *Frogs* apparently preserves line variants alongside one another: see, for example, Sommerstein 1996 on lines 1251-60, 1431a-b, 1437-53.

26. See Pickard-Cambridge 1988: 40-2. Aelian, *VH* 2.13 describes Socrates going to the Piraeus whenever Euripides was competing there.

27. The only exception to this I can find is Russo's claim that the theatrical crane was available only at the Dionysia (Russo 1994: 3).

28. The extant *Clouds* is apparently missing a chunk of choral text and has two scenes which require four actors. Again, caution must be urged when reading anything into this when making claims for performance or non-performance. Even the plays of Shakespeare, written with the intent to create a script that would be reperformable and with the wonders of the printing press readily available, frequently circulated in printed editions that are not stage-worthy (the so-called 'bad quartos'). Even in this relatively recent tradition, for which we have multiple editions that can be compared against each other and good knowledge of the performance context, there is no clear explanation for the origin of these substandard texts. It is only the extant 'good quartos' and folio scripts, coupled with external evidence, that assures us that these texts, whatever their origin, have their roots in a performance tradition. A cautionary tale for classical scholars trying to explain the first stages of the textual history of *Clouds* is the theory put forward by Pollard and Wilson as to why the first quarto of *Romeo and Juliet* was 'bad' and the second quarto 'good'. Their proposed solution to this textual conundrum was that the first quarto represented an early draft of the play set from Shakespeare's manuscript, and the second a final stage-ready revision of the play, also set from Shakespeare's manuscript. On the narratives created for the varying quality of the printed texts of Shakespeare, see Werstine 1990.

29. See Storey 2003b: 83.

30. See Major 2006: 138-43 for the somewhat habitual practice of using the parabasis to chastise the audience and mock other writers of Old Comedy.

31. *Clouds* 546. Sommerstein 1991: 189, in his commentary on this line, writes that 'this assertion is audacious even by the standards of the present passage, since it is certain that substantial parts of the revised *Clouds* are taken over virtually unaltered from the original version'; he then points to the duplicated passage in *Peace* and *Wasps*.

32. Storey 1990: 22.

33. In addition to complaining about his loss in the revised parabasis of *Clouds*, at *Wasps* 1043-5 Aristophanes seems to abuse the audience for their treatment of *Clouds* in 424/3.

34. See Rosen 1997: 405-11.

35. See Fowler 1989: 257-8.

36. See Marshall and van Willenberg 2004: 95-101.

37. Translated by Csapo and Slater 1995: 163.

38. See Storey 2003a: 281-92.

39. On the date of Eupolis' *Baptai*, see Storey 1993 and Kopff 1990.

40. Though perhaps a coincidence, it is worth noting that two of the plays most plausibly identified in vase-painting are plays with known multiple scripts: the Würzburg Telephus (see Csapo 1986 and Taplin 1987) which almost certainly depicts a scene from *Thesmophoriazusae*, and the Getty birds, which may depict the *agôn* from the first *Clouds* (see Taplin 1987, 93-6, contra Green 1985).

41. Tr. Grube 1997: 17-18.

42. Revermann 2006: 329 uses Plato's emphasis on the jury having seen the play, with no mention of the possibility that they could read the play, to argue that there was a general perception of performance being memorable and reading audiences being small. He acknowledges, however, that there are real questions about 'how many jurors in 399 could reasonably be assumed to have seen it', if the first and only performance had taken place twenty-four years earlier.

43. On 7 February 1601 the Lord Chamberlain's Men, having been commissioned by supporters of the Earl of Essex, put on a performance of Shakespeare's *Richard II*, apparently with the intent of fomenting ill-will towards Queen Elizabeth. On this performance, see Dawson and Yachnin 2011: 2-9.

44. If I am correct in suggesting that double texts are indicative of popularity and reperformance, one also wonders about Xenophon's choice of occasion for the setting of his *Symposium*: the athletic victory of the young Autolycus in 421. While we know little about the actual content of Eupolis' *Autolycus*, it too seems to have been tied to this same victory based on its date, and it too circulated in two texts. This again raises the possibility that Xenophon was using a general familiarity, both for himself and his audience, derived from reperformances of old plays to select the settings of his Socratic dialogues. On the possible content of *Autolycus*, see Storey 2003b: 84-92.

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Lysistrata's Conspiracy and the Politics of 412 BC

S. Douglas Olson

Sometime in late summer 413 BC, reports reached Athens of the defeat the city's expeditionary forces had suffered in Sicily – reports so horrifying, according to Thucydides (8.1.1), that the Athenians initially refused to believe them. Once they recognised the reality of the situation, the people adopted a number of emergency measures, including gathering supplies to build and outfit new ships, and appointing a board of ten elderly *probouloi* to manage the city's affairs (Th. 8.1.3-4, 8.4). Many of the subject states in Ionia and the islands soon revolted, due in large part to the machinations of the renegade general and politician Alcibiades, who was at this point in exile in Sparta, although by late summer 412 or early winter 412/1 BC he had fled to the court of the Persian satrap Tissaphernes. From there Alcibiades – who now wanted to return home, but not if the democracy controlled the city – reached out to wealthy and influential individuals in the fleet at Samos who, Thucydides (8.48.1) reports, had grown tired of funding the war and were ready for a change in Athens' form of government. Sometime probably around mid-December, Peisander (a prominent politician and one of the aspiring 'oligarchs' in the fleet at Samos) and a number of other men were dispatched to Athens to begin negotiations about putting down the democracy, recalling Alcibiades from exile and forming an alliance with Tissaphernes and the Persians. In Athens, as on Samos, the proposal to replace the democracy with a more limited form of government was not greeted with universal enthusiasm. But even those who opposed the plan in principle were unable to suggest a better way to reverse the city's fortunes, and members of certain small-scale political and social groups (*hetaireiai*) appear to have been happy to support the plan. Indeed, a violent revolution was already underway by the time Peisander returned to Athens a second time in early June 411 BC. Other than Thucydides' brief remarks about the motivations of the oligarchs on Samos at 8.48.1, we know little about the specific grievances or motivations of the men who overthrew the democracy in the middle of that year, or about how an oligarchic movement developed more generally in the city's population in the aftermath of the Sicilian disaster. Nor, much more important, is it clear why average democrats both in Athens and on Samos so readily agreed to surrender political control over the city to a restricted group of their supposed 'betters'.

No comedies are preserved from 413 or 412 BC.¹ But we do have two – Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* and *Thesmophoriazusae* – that were performed in 411: *Lysistrata* is generally believed to have been staged at the Lenaea in February, *Thesmophoriazusae* at the City Dionysia in April.² The plot of *Lysistrata* is overtly political: Athens' women join forces with Peloponnesian and Boeotian allies, institute a sex-strike and a blockade of the Acropolis, and bring about a rapid, happy end to the war. Scholars have nonetheless found it difficult to detect specific traces within the play of the tumultuous events of early 411 BC, much less any

concrete recommendations for how to deal with what everyone in the city must by then have realised was a terrible military and political crisis.³ Instead, the play ignores the incipient oligarchic revolution and Peisander's public role in it, and offers an unrealistic vision of renewed social harmony and an easily negotiated, territorially and politically favourable settlement of the conflict with Sparta and her bloc. I argue in this paper that *Lysistrata* is better understood as evidence for the even more confused and ambiguous situation in Athens in mid-412 BC or so, and that the heroine's plans, procedures and complaints, and how the opposition to them is characterised, offer insight not so much into the ideology of the committed oligarchs who briefly and violently seized control of the city's government a year or so later, as into widely dispersed patterns of political and social thought that made that seizure possible.⁴

Lysistrata's coup and its opponents

At the beginning of *Lysistrata*, the heroine appears alone onstage, impatiently awaiting the arrival of the other women she has summoned to assist her in her great plan to save not just Athens, but Greece as whole (esp. 29-30, 41). Lysistrata herself has been developing her ideas for a long time (26-7). But no one else knows what she intends, and her message to the other women, as she characterises it in retrospect, was simply that they were to come to a meeting 'to discuss a quite significant matter' (13-14 ἀπαντᾶν ἐνθάδε / βουλευσομέναισιν οὐ περὶ φαύλου πράγματος). Once informed of Lysistrata's goals, the other women are delighted (49-55, 111-18). The method she proposes to achieve those goals, on the other hand, inspires universal horror (125-36), and only the reluctant cooperation of the Spartan Lampito (140-5), combined with a long speech of persuasion (149-79), a bit of last-minute bullying (214-16) – and of course the opportunity to have a drink (esp. 195-208, 238-9) – makes agreement possible. In the end, Lysistrata nonetheless manages to create a band of sworn conspirators (esp. 181-2, 210-11, 237-8) dedicated to forcing the city to accept the terms the women plan to dictate in order to achieve what they take to be the common good (esp. 250-1).

That Lysistrata's plan is more complex than a simple sex-strike rapidly emerges. She has already made arrangements, she tells the other wives, with a group of older women to seize the Acropolis, and thus the city's treasury, under the guise of carrying out a sacrifice (176-9). The seizure takes place immediately after the oath of sexual abstinence is complete (240-2), and Lysistrata responds by dismissing Lampito and by leading the other, younger Athenian women (along with her Peloponnesian and Boeotian hostages) into the Propylaia, which she proposes to defend against male assault (242-51). All this undermines the basic premise of the sex-strike, which was that the conspirators were to remain inside their houses, entrancing their husbands, but refusing to sleep with them unless they made peace (46-8, 149-66), and I take up some of the larger implications of this 'double plot' below. What is more important at this point, is that Lysistrata has launched what can only be described as an as-yet-bloodless coup against the democratic state. Why the city's women have chosen – Lysistrata would say 'been forced' – to act this way emerges in the confrontation with the Proboulos that follows.

When the Proboulos arrives onstage, almost foaming at the mouth with rage about alleged female licentiousness and (of more immediate, obvious concern to him) the fact that he has

been denied access to state funds to buy oars (420-3), his first reaction is to attempt to pry the Propylaia doors open (424-30). Lysistrata unexpectedly emerges, ready to talk and asking only for the exercise of intelligence and good sense; violence is unnecessary (431-2 τί δεῖ μοχλῶν; / οὐ γὰρ μοχλῶν δεῖ μᾶλλον ἢ νοῦ καὶ φρενῶν, ‘What need is there of pry-bars? There’s less need of pry-bars than of good sense and intelligence’). The Proboulos, however, will have none of this, and insists on attempting to arrest the heroine and her allies (433-55). Only after he and his Scythians have been badly beaten does he reluctantly agree to explore the question of the women’s motivations (486-7), and even then he can barely restrain himself from striking his interlocutor when she tells him that the conspirators plan to save him and the rest of the city, whether he likes it or not (503-5).⁵

What the women want – or at least what they wanted at one point – it seems, is not so much control of the state as dialogue. Lysistrata has specific complaints about the current (democratic) regime: Peisander and other leading politicians cling insistently to office, and use their position to stir up trouble and enrich themselves from the public coffers (489-92). But Athens’ real problem, on Lysistrata’s analysis, has been the consistent refusal of the city’s men to discuss public policy with their wives, even as the men made one ludicrously bad decision after another. For a long time, *sôphrosynê* kept the women from attempting to comment on, much less correct their husbands’ foolish actions, ‘for you didn’t let us open our mouths’ (507-9). As the situation deteriorated, the women began to ask occasional mild questions, but were told to be quiet (510-16, esp. 515-16). When matters grew even worse, and they offered actual criticism, they were told not just to close their mouths but that they would be struck on the head if they refused (517-20, cf. 521-2). Only when the men themselves began to concede their own inability to govern the state effectively did the women step in, asking once again – although actually now insisting – that their voices be heard (527-8). A productive conversation might easily have occurred much earlier, had the men been willing to listen, rather than lashing out instinctively against and silencing all opposition, no matter how well intentioned. Now the tables have been turned, and other opinions will be aired and other policies adopted *perforce* (because there was finally no other option, if disaster was to be averted), but still with nothing except enormous good will toward the city of Athens and indeed the Greek world as a whole. ‘Be assured that you will be saved, like it or not... This makes you unhappy, but it must be done all the same ... You must be saved’ (499-501).

Lysistrata thus claims to have acted out of a sense of frustration not just with specific policy decisions made by Athens’ democratic government, but with its systematic refusal to pay attention to other voices, and its readiness to use threats of violence to back up that refusal. Her allies include not only the two groups of local women (old and young) shut up along with her within the Acropolis, and her Peloponnesian allies abroad, but the female semi-chorus, who arrive onstage prepared to resist the old men who propose burning out the heroine and her fellow-conspirators. When the female semi-chorus first appear, they say that they are acting in solidarity with their ‘fellow demes-women’ (332-5) and insist that they can marshal many more allies, should that prove necessary (354-5).⁶ Like Lysistrata later on in her confrontation with the Proboulos (463-4), they also go on to note that they are free people and thus entitled to speak their minds, whatever their opponents may think (379). They are willing to meet force with force, but only if they are required to do so, in which case their opponents should expect

to get the worst of it (esp. 365-7, 381-6).

Once forced into a confrontation with the women, the male semi-chorus are concerned mostly not to debate but to silence them, and – like the Proboulos shortly thereafter – are prepared to use violence to accomplish their goal (esp. 356-7, 360-1, 364, 379-80). They also resort to the hoariest and most manipulative of democratic tropes of memory, implicitly comparing the women's occupation of the Acropolis to that by the Spartan king Cleomenes in support of the final vestiges of the Pisistratid order in 508 BC (273-82), and their own anticipated victory to the Athenians' over Persian invaders at Marathon in 490 BC (283-5);⁷ insisting that the current situation is redolent of Hippias' rule (616-19, 630) and of plots intended to betray the city to the Spartans (620-3); and casting themselves as the enemies of tyranny (667-71) and as Aristogiton-like champions of liberty (631-5).⁸ The male semi-chorus also acknowledge (bathetically) that the occupation of the Acropolis concerns them not only because the city as a whole will be deprived of funds it needs to prosecute the war, but because they personally may lose access to the jury-pay on which they depend (624-5 with Henderson ad loc.).

The political concerns and motivations of Lysistrata and her allies are thus consistently conceived, as is the ham-fisted, blinkered and nominally arch-democratic nature of the opposition they confront. The women want (or wanted) dialogue, for the common good of all; the men refuse, despite their inability to govern the city effectively themselves and the transparently foolish, even self-destructive nature of their rhetoric. The women have accordingly acted on their own, but only after the other party had every opportunity to behave intelligently and responsibly, and failed to do so. In the second half of her debate with the Proboulos, Lysistrata puts this unhappy local history behind her and looks forward, outlining a plan to save Athens and thus ultimately Greece from ruin. The foreign policy aspects of this programme are dealt with rapidly at the beginning of her speech. All that is needed to bring about an end to the war, Lysistrata maintains, is to send envoys here and there (569-70); simply opening up a dialogue, it seems, will be enough to produce results, the implication being that there are (and presumably always have been) plenty of reasonable people on the Peloponnesian side.

Lysistrata's plans for Athens itself are more complicated and more revealing. Her goal as she describes it, developing her model of wool-working, is to card together all good and helpful persons, including well-disposed metics, other foreigners and disenfranchised citizens, in a way that produces general good will in the city; to incorporate Athens' ancient colonies (i.e. the allied states) into the basket as well; and ultimately to weave from this diverse raw material 'a fine robe for the people' (579-86). Lysistrata's programme is routinely praised by modern critics for its touchingly humane simplicity,⁹ despite her high-handed attitude toward the subject cities and the casual manner in which she proposes the immediate, condition-free reincorporation into the body politic of public debtors (presumably almost all wealthy men who had fallen foul of the democracy in one way or another). But this is only the second stage (note 579 εἶτα) of Lysistrata's plan for Athens, which begins with an aggressive, systematic 'cleansing' of the citizenry (574-5) designed to 'beat and pluck out' all 'bad elements' (576), and in particular to break up groups who work to dominate the city's government (cf. 490

οἱ ταῖς ἀρχαῖς ἐπέχοντες, ‘those who cling to offices’, of Peisander and his associates) and to ‘pluck off their heads’ (578) – i.e., on any reasonable interpretation of the metaphor, to execute them. Only after that (patently extra-constitutional) purge of ill-defined ‘anti-social elements’ is complete can there be any question of moving on to create an idyllically peaceful, happy new community. No such brutal measures are taken at the end of play.¹⁰ But that is because the war with Sparta has only now – and just as easily as predicted! – been brought to an end; the further, allegedly happy local ending of the story for the citizens of Athens themselves is still to come.

Texts, poets and audiences: the date of our *Lysistrata*

How the texts we have of individual Aristophanic comedies relate to the performances by which those plays are conventionally dated is difficult to say. Proposals for the next set of festivals had to be submitted to the relevant archons in mid-summer (i.e. at the beginning of the Athenian year), to allow time for texts of the approved tragedies and comedies to be completed and the actors and choruses trained. In the case of *Lysistrata*, this means that Aristophanes must have been able to offer a credible proposal for the play seven to eight months before it was staged, in mid-412 BC. But the basic organising idea for a comedy was necessarily always somewhat older than that and perhaps much older, if the poet’s request for a chorus had failed one year but succeeded with a subsequent archon, or if he was attempting to rework preexisting material. How long it would take to produce a solid draft with which actors and chorus-trainers could work is impossible to know, but at least a month or two of pre-performance practice time must have been needed. The pressure to complete a text would have been particularly acute for poets staging plays at both the Lenaea and the City Dionysia in a single year, as was the case for Aristophanes in 411 BC: the first play (in this case, *Lysistrata*) had to be handed off to the theatrical personnel early enough to allow the second play (in this case, *Thesmophoriazusae*) to be produced on time as well.

None of this means that a play could not continue to evolve after an initial draft was turned over to the actors or the chorus, or that the texts passed down to us necessarily represent the poet’s first solid clean copy of a comedy. Lines and even whole scenes must routinely have been rewritten in rehearsal, when it became apparent that the text did not ‘work’ as the playwright intended, or when external events unexpectedly caught up with the action.¹¹ Indeed, the reference at *Eccl.* 1158-9 to the order in which the plays were staged at the festival that year makes it clear that alterations might still be made in the very last days before the performance. That poets sometimes – perhaps routinely – produced cleaned-up, post-festival drafts of dramatic texts, in anticipation of circulation in written form or (more likely and certainly more pressing for them) under contract for re-performance at one or more deme-theatres,¹² is also almost certainly the case; the preserved *Clouds*, at any rate, is clearly an incomplete rewrite of some sort. Which of these various drafts we have of any individual play, we cannot say.¹³ But in the absence of any specific indication to the contrary, the safest assumption is that the vast majority of any text, and certainly the basic conception of the play, belongs to the second half of the previous year (on our reckoning), i.e. to six months or more before the performance at the Lenaea or the City Dionysia.

When the Proboulos appears onstage at 387, his initial complaint has to do with the behaviour of Demostratus' wife during the fateful assembly that approved the Sicilian expedition (389-98) – an enterprise, he is well aware, that ended in disaster (esp. 391-2, 396-7; cf. 590). Indeed, the office the Proboulos occupies was created specifically sometime in the second half of 413 BC in response to that disaster, and the mission he is on – to secure money to buy oars, so as to build up the city's fleet again (421-2) – is an expression of one of that office's fundamental duties, as Thucydides describes them (8.1.3-4, 4). *Lysistrata* makes no obvious reference to political events in Athens in late 412 and early 411 BC, and the nature of the attack on Peisander at 490-2, not for the shocking proposals he put forth in the Assembly in mid-December 412 or so for putting down the democracy, but on the bland, generic grounds of creating political confusion in order to steal from the public treasury, is particularly striking. One obvious explanation for all these seeming anomalies is that – regardless of what was actually said onstage at the initial public performance of the play at the Lenaea in February 411 BC, i.e. its performed content – the text we have belongs to mid- to late 412 BC, after the Sicilian disaster and the institution at Athens of political and military measures to deal with it, but before an oligarchic revolution began.¹⁴ Much more significant, *Lysistrata*'s political complaints, and the ways she goes about correcting them, are unlikely to represent a vision of the city's government and its possibilities and failures restricted to the limited number of individuals in the original audience who eventually emerged as full-blown, committed oligarchs. The political appeal of comedy as a genre was always broader than that, and the tragedy – and arguably the warning – that the text of *Lysistrata* represents, is that the heroine's political analyses and modes of operation must have seemed sensible or appealing to many other, far more 'average' Athenians, who only came to realise too late the ugliness of the antidemocratic proposals they themselves had at least tacitly endorsed in the name of desperate and despairing 'good citizenship'.

The politics of *Lysistrata*

The humour of *Lysistrata* as a whole depends on the absurd notion that Athens' women might seize control of the state from its men, setting a radically new agenda for the city and indeed for the Greek world as a whole. Once gender is removed from this equation as a comic red herring, what remains is a claim that the heroine and her fellow-revolutionaries represent an indeterminately large group of loyal citizens who nonetheless insist that the current way of governing the city is unacceptable, and who are prepared to take radical, independent action to bring about what they take to be necessary political changes. They have watched in enforced silence as the city's democratic government has committed one dreadful blunder after another, in particular in its handling of Sparta and thus the war. Dialogue about such matters was possible, but was consistently, even violently rejected, and with terrible consequences. Now Athens' increasingly desperate situation requires that those who truly care for her (and all of Greece), and who have not been allowed to have a voice in the city's government, act in ways they might previously have been reluctant to consider. Put another way, alternative voices must be not just heard but heeded, and extraordinary measures are required to make that change possible, even if some retrograde adherents of the old order continue to believe otherwise.

As was noted above, the male semi-chorus of *Lysistrata* are cast – in no particularly flattering manner – as arch-democrats of the sort who controlled Athens’ government from the death of Pericles through the Sicilian Expedition years, in large part through the vision they present of the history of the city as defined by staunch local resistance to the Pisistratids (667-9) and to the Spartan forces that briefly supported the tyrants in 508 BC (273-82); by the glorious deeds of the tyrannicides Harmodius and Aristogiton in 514 BC (631-4); and by recollections of the battle of Marathon, where the Athenians, fighting alone, drove back a Persian invasion in 490 BC (285). The men are determined to defend the city’s contemporary political and social order, and their greatest fears are of tyranny, on the one hand, and (closely related to that) of Spartan treachery, on the other (esp. 616-30) – unless what really matters to them is simply to be sure that they continue to get their jury-pay (624-5). When the female semi-chorus first appear onstage at 319, they offer no explicit political agenda to match the men’s recollections of Cleomenes and Marathon at 273-85; they are merely pious citizen-women who have come to protect other women and the goddess’ shrine at a moment of crisis. At 640-7, however, the female semi-chorus use a description of various public cultic activities in which they have participated to reveal that they in fact belong to some of Athens’ oldest and most prominent families.¹⁵ They are ‘good’ Athenians, in every sense of the word, and in return for the privileges granted them, they insist, they feel obliged to offer the city useful advice, if they can, in its hour of crisis (648). The women’s coalition is broader than this; at 452-60 (esp. 457-8), for example, Lysistrata summons a force of common street-vendors to assist her against the Proboulos and his archers. But whoever the play’s women are in socioeconomic terms, they are patently not radical democrats, even if their loyalties to the state supposedly run as deep as or deeper than the men’s do.

This collision of political cultures is resolved in the women’s favour in the second half of the play, when Lysistrata and her supporters offer a rival version of Athenian history, in which it was the Spartans who liberated the city from Hippias’ tyranny in 510 BC (1150-6); Sparta and Athens fought side-by-side during the Persian invasion of 480-479 BC (1249-61); and the Athenians paid back the Spartans’ earlier benefactions by supporting them during the helot revolt in 464 BC (1138-44). In accord with this tendency, the only specific recent foreign policy blunder Lysistrata denounces is the Assembly’s repudiation of the Peace of Nicias in 418 BC (513-14), and the most substantial realisation to which Athens’ men come after the feast of reconciliation shared by the two sides in the Acropolis near the end of the play, is that they have consistently mishandled relations with the Spartans, leaping to wild, paranoid conclusions about the other side’s intentions when there was no need to do so (1231-5; cf. 628-9). Were it not for the bold cooperation of the Spartan Lampito, after all, Lysistrata’s plan would never have succeeded (140-4), and Lampito’s only concern at the time was not whether the men on her side would respect the proposed peace, but how ‘the Athenian rabble’ would behave (168-71). The contest of memory between the play’s men and its women thus encodes a powerful and in many ways straightforward political argument: the male semi-chorus’ ‘democratic’ version of Athenian history, and in particular of Athenian-Spartan relations, has blinded them to their own best interests. When the two semi-choruses finally reconcile, the monstrous, painful gnat that the female coryphaeus pulls from the eye of the male coryphaeus is accordingly identified as having come specifically from the marshes at Marathon (1032).

Sparta is – or might easily be – Athens’ friend, and accepting that friendship would allow for recovery of the squandered legacy of the Persian Wars (653-4), i.e. the possibility of an easy, cooperative hegemony over the rest of the Greek world and continued resistance against Persia (cf. 1128-35).

The most important insight into the political function of Athenian comedy in the last generation is certainly the recognition that playwrights had little choice but to offer the audience their own individual version of popular ideology, in a highly competitive environment.¹⁶ All other things being equal, the poet who best expressed what average citizens were thinking and feeling about the state, via the fantasies he presented onstage, could expect to be awarded the largest number of votes and thus most likely take the prize.¹⁷ Comedy can thus be read as a sophisticated and highly motivated attempt to capture the common mood, by identifying widely perceived issues or problems in the state and giving expansive expression to imaginary, if often impractical or even incoherent ways of solving them. No one in Athens in mid- to late 412 BC is likely to have wanted, much less expected, a powerful woman like *Lysistrata* to lead a female coup against the male-dominated state to correct the political and military mess in which the city found itself. But the notion that fundamental changes were needed not just in the city’s policies but in its historical sense of itself, and – what was not necessarily the same thing – that the democracy itself had become part of Athens’ problem, would seem to have been regarded by Aristophanes in mid- to late 412 BC as likely to be deeply appealing to many members of his audience. The specific fantasies of leadership, power and reform upon which *Lysistrata* depends thus require close attention.

That the sex-strike *Lysistrata* proposes and the occupation of the Acropolis by the city’s women are fundamentally incompatible projects, is a critical commonplace: if the women are on the Acropolis keeping the treasury safe, they cannot (and do not need to) be at home driving their husbands wild with desire, and *vice versa*.¹⁸ But the play’s two plots also have different political foci and follow different models of political action. The sex-strike is intended to bring about peace with Sparta, while the occupation of the Acropolis is mostly required to produce internal political change in Athens. In the sex-strike plot, *Lysistrata* is a brilliant, bold, tradition-shattering leader, without whom nothing would happen: the plan is hers alone (esp. 26-7); she must force the other women, none of whom can be counted on for much (e.g. 9-14, 137-9, 706-15), to go along with it, by means of typically demagogic devices such as reading them oracles (765-80), if necessary; and in the end she alone lectures and then dictates terms of peace to the Spartan and Athenian ambassadors (1128-87). To the extent that a successful female conspiracy exists to withhold sex from the city’s men in order to drive them to the bargaining table with Sparta, therefore, it is because *Lysistrata* creates and maintains it by sheer force of will; she alone matters, and she is working with otherwise weak and unreliable political material. The occupation of the Acropolis, on the other hand, is a group-action from the very first, and *Lysistrata* serves as its spokesperson at most. Unlike the sex-strike, this is a true political movement, organised and carried out by an alienated and disenfranchised group, who are willing to use violence to seize power and express no intention of giving it up once they have got hold of it, and who have a broad, clear agenda and a quietly expressed but exceedingly clear plan to settle scores (if only for what they take to be ‘the general good’).

Regardless of whether *Lysistrata* is coherent on a dramatic level, therefore, its plot depends on two arguably conflicting political models. The fantasy of a single strong leader capable of forcing, by any means necessary, the allegedly weak, indecisive and self-serving Athenian people to act in the common interest appears to have been a staple of the city's political culture in the Peloponnesian War period. Pericles is an example from real life (cf. Th. 2.65.8-9); the Sausage-Seller in *Knights*, who despite his initial characterisation as the 'worst of the worst' ultimately emerges as a successful anti-Cleon able to restore Demos to his early fifth-century glory, represents the type onstage. As Sommerstein has noted, however, the monarchical popular leader who works entirely outside the conventional political order really emerges as a type in Aristophanic comedy only in the mid-410s BC, with Pisthetairos in *Birds*;¹⁹ and *Lysistrata* in the sex-strike plot is very much a leader of this type, in that she seizes power by patently unconstitutional means rather than by winning it openly (if dishonestly) in the Council and the Assembly. She is thus much more like Alcibiades than like Pericles, Cleon or Hyperbolus; and whatever the original audience of *Lysistrata* thought – or could be expected to think – of Alcibiades himself or the prospect of recalling him, the desire for someone powerful, ruthless and unconventional enough to seize control of the state in order to 'rescue' it is a significant component of the blend of political fantasies on which Aristophanes' play depends.

The more disturbing element in the plot of *Lysistrata* is the idea of a coup organised by a band of sworn conspirators acting to save the city because they no longer have a choice, and regardless of whether the city wants to be saved (cf. 498-501). That the women's plan actively re-imagines Athens' political history, and as a consequence the future of its relationship to Sparta and the war, is unsurprising and indeed essential to its appeal; the old ways have failed, and a certain amount of intellectual flexibility and creativity will be required to imagine (or remember) the city in new and more effective ways. Not only is this a fantasy of active subversion of the allegedly failed democratic state for what is presented as the true popular good, however, but hidden in its fine print via the use of homely metaphor is a prescription for terror to be carried out by the new authorities, whoever they may be, against ill-defined but patently arch-democratic elements in Athenian society. This terror is cloaked in language and imagery not just of salvation but of reconciliation: everything will be wonderful and everyone will be happy – although only after an unspecified amount of necessary blood has been shed. Were *Lysistrata* an extremist tract intended for the exclusive consumption of a small band of oligarchic conspirators, none of this would be surprising. But (as argued above) the play was certainly intended to appeal to a mass audience of average citizens, which is to say that Aristophanes must have expected the ugly political fantasy upon which it depends, of a good and just conspiracy led by loyal citizens compelled by patriotism to strike out against a failed because deliberately deaf and domineering pseudo-democratic order, to resonate with his contemporaries.

None of this means that Aristophanes himself was a fully formed cryptooligarch in 412 BC, or (even less likely) that he approved of the clandestine political violence that began in Athens in early 411 BC and culminated in an overthrow of the democracy later that year.²⁰ Aristophanes was only a comic poet, and in mid-412 BC neither he nor many members of his intended audience are likely to have carefully thought through what a 'well-intentioned'

overthrow of the democracy and a ‘hygienic’ purge of the citizen body might mean. Nor is *Lysistrata* as a whole easily read as a genuine proposal for political action. The terms for an end to the war that the heroine negotiates in 1159-72 are absurdly favourable to Athens, and the series of four choral songs in 1043-71, 1189-215, in which the now-united chorus first offer the audience wonderful things and then acknowledge that nothing of the sort is available, are a clear admission of the impossibility of everything the larger plot promises. Put another way, the staging of *Lysistrata* did not cause the oligarchic coup of 411 BC. But the text of the play makes it clear that the appeal of an abstract, sanitised version of such a coup carried out ‘for the good of Athens and indeed of the Greek world as a whole’ was apparent to many – perhaps most – average Athenians well before Peisander offered concrete proposals for a move to an oligarchy in the Assembly in December 412 BC. Needless to say, the Athenians’ real-world experience of an allegedly improved and benevolent new order proved less amusing than what they saw happening on stage at the Lenaea the next February.

Concluding remarks and implications

By 412 BC, Athens was under terrible stress from the military and social costs of a long and unsuccessful war, on the one hand, and the economic pressures produced by that war, on the other. The Sicilian expedition had been a horrifying disaster and appears to have made it possible even for nominally loyal citizens to maintain that the problem was not just the war, but the democracy that had authorised and managed it. Athens could still be saved, the argument went, but only if the dominant political order was replaced with something supposedly more sensible. That would require quick, stern measures to set internal and external matters right. But the Athenians had always had access to other, ‘more traditional’ ways of thinking about the exercise of political power, the domestic use of state funds, relations with Sparta, and the like; and there seems to have been a despairing general sense that anything would be an improvement over the current, patently dysfunctional situation.

Whether we ought to believe the repeated implicit claim in *Lysistrata* that the city’s dominant ‘radical’ democrats were in part responsible for alienating their opponents, by refusing to listen to anything they had to say and even threatening to punish them for saying it, is impossible to know. One might reasonably ask what the supposedly loyal opposition was arguing, other than that the democratic leadership was hopelessly corrupt (unlikely to be true); that the war with Sparta could be easily brought to an end if the appropriate advances were made (almost certainly false); that average citizens generally were a pack of jingoistic, self-serving fools (probably true, as in all times and places, but no way to win a political debate, particularly since one’s own faction is unlikely to look any better in the end); and that democracy itself was a basic part of the problem (a claim no democratic system can be expected – or ought – to take into serious consideration). The more significant point is that all such talk, including on stage, was socially corrosive, and that the political and intellectual space it opened up was soon exploited by genuine oligarchs – who proved no better at managing the city than the democratic government had, and who were murderous thugs besides. Winston Churchill observed in a speech in the House of Commons on 11 November 1947, ‘Democracy is the worst form of government, except all those other forms that have been tried

from time to time.’ As the Athenians learned to their cost, those who argue the contrary, no matter how convincing they may seem at first, or how prominent their political or social position, or how loudly they proclaim their devotion to average citizens, or how comforting the metaphors they use, are not to be trusted, and ought instead to be regarded as the enemies of all that is right and good.

Notes

1. Eupolis’ fragmentary *Demes* is often thought to have been performed in 412 BC, and to have been a response to events in Sicily. But see the careful sceptical discussion of Storey 2003: 112-14.

2. For the assignment of the plays to festivals and more detailed treatment of the political events of 412-411 BC, see Sommerstein 1977; Austin-Olson 2004: xxxiii-xliv.

3. The fundamental discussion remains Westlake 1980.

4. The most significant recent contribution to discussion of the play is Sommerstein 2009: 23-36, who demolishes the popular view of *Lysistrata* as a pacifist tract. Much of the scholarly work on *Lysistrata* in the last generation was concerned with the role and representation of women in the play, a question only marginally at issue in this essay: Vaio 1973; Foley 1982, esp. 6-13; 1987; Konstan 1993. Of more recent work, Faraone 1997 suggests interesting if tentative connections with other plays and stories involving fire, water-bearing and rescue, and with the religious idea of ‘salvation’. Martin 1987 takes a firm grip on the wrong end of the stick and wields it vigorously. For the play’s politics, see most recently McGlew 2002: 139-63, whose conclusions are generally very different from mine. Henderson 1980 remains the most important synthetic study of the play, and is only partially superseded by Henderson 1987, to the text of which I refer throughout.

5. Cf. the exchange between the two semi-choruses at 467-75: the men urge the Proboulos not to talk to the women, and the women respond by warning them against violence, with which the women want nothing to do, although they will necessarily respond in kind if attacked.

6. Cf. *Lysistrata* at 452-54.

7. For Marathon as an Athenian *lieu de mémoire*, see Jung 2006: 13-224.

8. Cf. their comparison of the women at 675-79 to Artemisia and the Amazons. As Faraone 1997: 58 notes, it is ironically the old men’s plan to build a fire about the Acropolis walls to incinerate its defenders that recalls the Persian occupation of Athens in 480 BC (Hdt. 8.51.2-53).

9. E.g. Henderson 1980: 200: ‘Lysistrata ... instructs the Proboulos on how the city ... can be made stronger through healthy internal and external purgation’; Konstan 1995: 56: ‘a remarkable program ... Here the utopian impulse of the comedy exceeds the confines of pragmatic politics’; Faraone 1997: 59: ‘Lysistrata in her wonderful speech to the Proboulos’; McGlew 2002: 155, seemingly without irony or misgivings: ‘In some important ways, *Lysistrata* ... constructs a utopia; ... Lysistrata is engaged and preserving the best elements of the city, reforming those that can be reformed and eliminating those that cannot.’

10. Although note the odd attacks on unidentified undesirable elements at 1216-20, 1239-

40, which are apparently expected to inspire enthusiastic approval in the audience (1219-20).

11. An obvious example is the passing references to the recent death of Sophocles in *Frogs*, the plot of which as a whole depends on the notion that only two poets (Aeschylus and the somewhat less recently deceased Euripides) were available in Hades to contend for the chair of tragedy there.

12. For a systematic review of the literary, archaeological and epigraphic evidence for deme theatres and their functions (not limited to providing a forum for local dramatic performances), see Paga 2010, esp. 354 n. 5, 372-3.

13. See in general Revermann 2006: 66-95.

14. Cf. Westlake 1980: 39-40.

15. Cf. *Lysistrata*'s appeal to the broadly 'aristocratic' virtue of σωφροσύνη (508; cf. 547-8 φιλόπολις / ἀρετὴ φρόνιμος) as an explanation of why the city's women stayed quiet while their (democratic) husbands were making reckless decisions in the Assembly (esp. 514 ἐν τῷ δήμῳ); her claim that women contribute not just men to the war-effort but hoplites in particular (589-90 τεκοῦσαι / κάκπέμψασαι παῖδας ὀπλίτας, 'by bearing and sending out hoplites'; the Proboulos, meanwhile, is outfitting warships); and the sympathy for Sparta discussed below.

16. Most clearly and effectively articulated by Henderson 1990. For general discussion of the issue and further bibliography, see Olson 2010.

17. For the festival voting process, in which the playwright who received the most votes may not necessarily have taken the prize, depending on the order in which the ballots were examined, see Marshall 2004.

18. See esp. Hulton 1972. For a useful analysis of class-bias built into the common modern view that the play ignores everyday reality in its assumption that men have no significant access to sex other than through their wives, see Fowler 1996.

19. Sommerstein 2009: 212-18, although Sommerstein himself ultimately rejects the idea that the date is significant.

20. On the arguably 'anti-democratic programme' in Aristophanes' comedies, see Sommerstein 2009: 204-22, esp. 212: 'I am not positively asserting that Aristophanes was a closet oligarch. I am saying that there were certain policies that he supported which were also supported by oligarchs. ... Perhaps, but only perhaps, Aristophanes' alternative democracy for the real world was after all an alternative to democracy the whole time.' But note the desperate cry to Athena at *Th.* 1136-47 (after the coup was well under way), and in particular the pointed reference to the threat of tyranny at 1143-4.

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Eleusis and the Public Status of Comedy in Aristophanes' *Frogs*

Donald Sells

One of the greatest extant comedies in any language, *Frogs* (405 BC) is a monument to Aristophanes' sophisticated understanding not only of the literary culture of late fifth-century Athens, but also his particular place within that culture. In honour of Ian Storey – someone who has dedicated his life to the study of Old Comedy – this chapter explores *Frogs*' presentation of Aristophanic comedy through its chorus of Eleusinian initiates, who aggrandise the poet's literary brand as an essential Athenian institution. A surge of interest in *Frogs* over the last few decades has produced a number of interpretations of the Mysteries' relevance to Dionysus' *katabasis* and the *agôn* of Aeschylus and Euripides. Segal's seminal article inspired several subsequent studies arguing that the initiates provide a ritual frame for the comic Dionysus' own rite of passage.¹ More recent critics have persuasively defined the chorus as an idealised Athens which Dionysus' plan ultimately hopes to restore² or a novel fusion of cult and comedy which contextualises the contest.³ While Edmonds and Biles use the chorus to illuminate those specific aspects of *Frogs* with which they are concerned, Peter Wilson's explanation of the initiates' authentic significance more closely approaches the topic of this chapter, which is *Frogs*' self-referential exploration of comedy's public status vis-à-vis tragedy. Wilson explains that the initiates would have caused the Lenaian audience to identify the virtues of Aristophanic comedy, through the public recognition of its subsequent victory, with the initiates' 'successful way of life and death'.⁴ I argue that Aristophanes also accomplishes this identification by stressing the modal, thematic, and social similarities between Eleusis and the comic genre.

My point of departure is the high degree of spectacle in Eleusinian ritual, whose fundamentally performative mode was naturally comparable to dramatic performances in the festivals of Dionysus. Aristophanes recasts the cult's *prorrhêsis* (354-71), the public exclusion of the uninitiated from Eleusinian rites, as a fusion of cultic and comic concerns which establishes the basis of the chorus' dual identity and *Frogs*' pararitual agenda. Performances of myth in Eleusis' secret rites conveyed to those being initiated a special knowledge which distinguished them from the uninitiated. By demonstrating their command of Aristophanic poetic discourse, the initiates' critical exegesis of the tragic *agôn* represents a parody, or comedification, of the privileged knowledge of Demeter's initiation rites and suggests that comedy too promises its own type of special knowledge. The pararitual agenda of *Frogs* culminates in its closing procession, in which Aeschylus is resurrected through an enactment of the cult's eschatological dimension (1500-32), the promise of a blessed afterlife. The chorus' escort of Aeschylus to the world of the living ensures Athens' revival through an act of communal salvation analogous to the spiritual change undergone by the Eleusinian *mystês*. My

final remarks isolate the significance of the Eleusinian imagery of this comic closure by examining Aristophanes' departures from that text which inspired him, the closing procession of Aeschylus' *Eumenides* (458 BC).

Performance

While making their way to the palace of Hades, Dionysus and Xanthias are overtaken by a chorus of blessed initiates (*Frogs* 316), the very chorus they were told to expect by Heracles (154-8) before their descent to the Underworld. A locus of literary and cultic fusion from the moment of their appearance, the initiates perform the comic *parodos* (324-459) as if it were the traditional Eleusinian procession along the Sacred Way on the nineteenth or twentieth day of *Boêdromion* to the precinct of Eleusis.⁵ As initiates of Eleusis, their dramatic role, they are devotees of Demeter; as chorus of Attic comedy, they perform in the festivals of Dionysus.⁶ Since the fusion of ritual and literary identities in this passage has been so frequently analysed by previous scholarship, I will only summarise those details which most convincingly reflect both of the performative contexts recognised in the initiates' status.⁷ In addition to the dual function of the *parodos*, the chorus' frequent invocations of Iacchos (*Frogs* 323-5, 342, 395-408) – the traditional guide of Dionysus' mystic procession – and (admittedly less frequent) calls to Demeter also acknowledge both frames of the current performance.⁸ The same can be said of the mentions of 'play' (*paizô*: 332, 443/4, 452), 'secret rites', *orgia* (of Demeter: 384; of the Muses: 356), and ritual 'acts' (*telê*: 343, 357). References to a blessed afterlife (326) are obviously Eleusinian, while clapping hands, *auloi*, and *thiasoi* (154-7) acknowledge the Dionysian context.⁹ The confluences of cult and comedy culminate with the choral *prorrhêsis* – the ritual call for the exclusion of the impure and non-Greek four or five days before the procession¹⁰ (354-71):

εὐφημεῖν χρὴ κάξιστασθαι τοῖς ἡμετέροισι χοροῖσιν,
ὅστις ἄπειρος τοιῶνδε λόγων ἢ γνώμην μὴ καθαρεύει
ἢ γενναίων ὄργια Μουσῶν μήτ' εἶδεν μήτ' ἐχόρευσεν,
μηδὲ Κρατίνου τοῦ ταυροφάγου γλώττης Βακχεῖ' ἐτελέσθη,
ἢ βωμολόχοις ἔπεσιν χαίρει μὴ 'ν καιρῷ τοῦτο ποιούντων,
ἢ στάσιν ἐχθρὰν μὴ καταλύει μηδ' εὐκόλος ἐστί πολιταῖς,
ἀλλ' ἀνεγείρει καὶ ῥιπίζει κερδῶν ἰδίων ἐπιθυμῶν,
ἢ τῆς πόλεως χειμαζομένης ἄρχων καταδωροδοκεῖται,
ἢ προδίδωσιν φρούριον ἢ ναῦς, ἢ τὰ πόρρητ' ἀποπέμπει
ἐξ Αἰγίνης Θωρυκίων ὧν εἰκοστολόγος κακοδαίμων,
ἀσκώματα καὶ λίνα καὶ πίτταν διαπέμπων εἰς Ἐπίδαυρον,
ἢ χρήματα ταῖς τῶν ἀντιπάλων ναυσὶν παρέχειν τινὰ πείθει,
ἢ κατατιλᾷ τῶν Ἐκαταίων κυκλίοισι χοροῖσιν ὑπάδων,
ἢ τοὺς μισθοὺς τῶν ποιητῶν ῥήτωρ ὧν εἶτ' ἀποτρῶγει,
κωμωδηθεὶς ἐν ταῖς πατρίοις τελεταῖς ταῖς τοῦ Διονύσου.
τούτοις αὐδῶ καῦθις ἐπαυδῶ καῦθις τὸ τρίτον μάλ' ἐπαυδῶ
ἐξιστασθαι μύσταισι χοροῖς ...

All speak fair, and the following shall stand apart from our dances:

whoever is unfamiliar with such utterances as this, or harbors unclean attitudes, or has never beheld or danced in the rites of the first-class Muses nor been initiated in the Bacchic rites of bull-eating Cratinus' language, or enjoys clownish words from those who deliver them at the wrong time, or forbears to resolve hateful factionalism and act peaceably toward other citizens, but foments and inflames it from desire for personal gain, or as an official sells out the city when she's tossed on stormy seas, or betrays a fortress or fleet or is a goddamned collector of 5% duties like Thorycion and ships contraband from Aegina, sending oar pads, flax, and pitch across to Epidaurus, or talks someone into supplying money for our adversaries' navy, or shits on the offerings for Hecate while singing for dithyrambic choruses, or is a politician who nibbles away the poets' honoraria after being lampooned in a comedy during the ancestral rites of Dionysus. To these I proclaim, and proclaim again, and thrice proclaim: stand apart from the initiates' dances ...¹¹

The standard calls for silence and exclusion (354-5) are accompanied by an expansion of the criteria for prohibition to the generic concerns of Old Comedy. Eleusis' acceptance of Greeks and exclusion of the *barbaroi* and the polluted (Isoc. 4.157)¹² are broadened to include those who are the real *barbaroi* according to comedy, those offenders against the literary and political health of Athens.¹³ These include those ignorant of the Muses and Cratinean comedy (356-7), those who take pleasure in buffoonery and laughing at the wrong time (358-9), and those who spitefully reduce the poets' pay. Those singled out for political crimes include divisive citizens (359-60), officials who sell out the city (361), and artists too incontinent to sing with dithyrambic choruses (366). While panhellenic Eleusis excludes the non-Greek speaker, the cult of comedy forbids from its performances the *atimoi*, whose citizenship should be revoked:¹⁴ Archedamus, for falsely claiming citizenship (416-21); the son of Cleisthenes, for prostituting himself (422-7); and Callias, for being a hedonist (428-30). Using quasi-parabatic metre (i.e., anapaestic tetrameter) and content, Aristophanes thus comedifies the ritual frame of the *prorrhêsis* into a recognisably comic form and broadens Eleusis' general cultural and moral concerns to include the poetic and civic interests of comedy.¹⁵

The *prorrhêsis* also establishes the confluences inherent in the chorus' identity. As former spectators of both Demeter's rituals and Dionysus' festivals, the initiates elide the distinction between their world, the world of the dead, and the world of the living.¹⁶ Their alleged social diversity, as citizens of mixed genders (157, 445) and ages (344-9), reflects the very particular spirit of inclusion characteristic of Eleusis, which welcomed social groups normally excluded from the democracy: male and female, old and young, and free as well as slave could undergo the mystic process. This spirit of inclusion rather sharply distinguishes the initiates from other

Aristophanic choruses representing a particular segment of Athenian society (e.g., old Marathon fighters [*Acharnians*], cavalrymen [*Knights*], aging jurists [*Wasps*]) and, like the spectators of the Lenaia of 405 BC, the initiates too attended the dramatic festivals while alive. These aspects of the chorus' identity, in addition to its role as internal audience of the *Frogs*' *agôn*, may have encouraged the Lenaian audience – many of whom would have been initiates themselves – to identify more closely with this particular chorus.

The most important Eleusinian rituals were, like the *prorrhêsis*, permeated with spectacle. While the cult's policy of secrecy has successfully prevented many details of the mystic period from being disclosed, some extant (albeit fragmentary) descriptions in late authors offer hints as to what took place.¹⁷ Potential initiates filed into the *telestêrion*, a darkened temple with seating for several thousand worshippers, in order to witness the showing and revealing of objects with symbolic importance (e.g., torches, mortar and pestle, ears of corn). Cult officials performed the so-called 'ritual drama' (*hieros logos*), a dramatisation of the myth of Demeter and Kore which distinguished Eleusis from the majority of Greek cults.¹⁸ A vague sense of the overall experience might be extracted from Plutarch's intriguing description of the soul's experience of death, thought to be modelled on the Eleusinian candidate's experiences. 'Wanderings and wearisome rushings', 'journeys fearful and unending through the darkness', and numerous unspecified terrors disoriented the *mystês* before an explosion of extraordinary light and 'pure regions and meadows ... with voices and dances and majesties of sacred sounds and holy sights ...'.¹⁹ Demeter's rites even had their own audience, the *epoptai*, initiates of the previous year who were required to observe the rites in order to achieve the highest grade of initiation.

The *prorrhêsis* highlights the composite identity of the initiates in a ritual act which introduces the performative mode characteristic of both Eleusis and Aristophanic comedy.²⁰ From the initial public exclusion of undesirables to the secret performance of the sacred drama – much of which was observed by a designated class of spectators, the *epoptai* – the Mysteries were performative and dramatic at many stages. The *parodos* thus establishes the fundamental similarities of the institutions of Demeter and comedy: accessibility, didacticism, and distinct Athenianness.²¹

Knowledge

After guiding Dionysus and Xanthias to Hades' palace, the initiates guide the Lenaian audience through the poetic contest. Their statements throughout the second half of the play, particularly in the parabasis (674-737) and the *agôn*, exhibit the same exceptional grasp of ritual, civic, and poetic matters as the *prorrhêsis* did. This section analyses a pair of passages representative of the chorus' command of poetic discourse, a comic analogue to the privileged knowledge promised to Eleusinian initiates. Aristophanes' chorus therefore knows the rites of Demeter *and* comedy (355-7).²²

As mentioned above, Aristophanes acknowledges the public and inclusive dimension of Demeter's cult through the social diversity of his *choreutai*. Yet this inclusive spirit was balanced by a corresponding exclusivity which gave Eleusis a 'double-nature', according to

Sourvinou-Inwood.²³ Aristophanes' initiates are idealised not just because they represent an Athens purged of miscreants,²⁴ but also because they possess special knowledge. Despite the collective experience of the mystic rites, they were defined by secret, esoteric knowledge which was accessible only to those who committed to the cult through their own initiative by payment of the requisite fees and completion of the various stages of initiation.²⁵ While the cult's secrecy prescribed severe penalties for disclosure, obscure and vague details in later authors make clear that knowledge – knowledge which afforded the initiated some social prestige²⁶ – was transmitted.²⁷ The comic chorus exhibits a comedified version of this knowledge in its use of certain specialised terms and themes of Aristophanic poetic discourse.²⁸ It might be objected that the Eleusinians' participation in critical discourse is not unparalleled in comedy, and that comic choruses by definition often evaluate, praise, and criticise characters and events as part of their particular role as internal audiences.²⁹ While choruses frequently comment on characters and action, even sometimes using some of the specific terms to be discussed below, no Aristophanic chorus comments with such frequency and depth on poetic topics as the Eleusinian chorus does. By demonstrating special knowledge the initiates evoke the intellectual and spiritual rewards of Eleusinian initiation and maintain a largely consistent identity throughout *Frogs*.

While it is unlikely that the initiates draw from an established technical terminology of literary criticism, they (and the disputing tragedians) express a number of adjectives and their compounds – e.g., *dexios* ('clever': 540, 1114, 1121, 1370), *leptos* ('delicate': 828, 876, 1108, 1110), and *semnos* ('grave': 178, 1061, 1496) – which acquire quasi-technical status in later literary criticism.³⁰ The chorus' use of other terms with associations to poetic and sophistic discourse gives them a not inconsiderable poetic vocabulary compared to other Aristophanic choruses.³¹ Although frequently discussed for its possible reference to Athenian literacy, the trochaic address to Aeschylus and Euripides before the test of the prologues offers a vivid demonstration of this command of poetic matters (1102-118):

ἀλλὰ μὴ ἴν ταυτῶ κάθησθον·
 εἰσβολαὶ γάρ εἰσι πολλαὶ χᾶτεραι σοφισμάτων.
 ὅ τι περ οὖν ἔχετον ἐρίζειν,
 λέγετον, ἔπιτον, ἀνὰ <δὲ> δέρετον
 τά τε παλαιὰ καὶ τὰ καινὰ, κάποκινδυνεύετον λεπτὸν τι καὶ σοφὸν λέγειν.
 εἰ δὲ τοῦτο καταφοβεῖσθον, μὴ τις ἀμαθία προσῆ
 τοῖς θεωμένοισιν, ὡς τὰ
λεπτὰ μὴ γνῶναι λεγόντοιν,
 μηδὲν ὀρρωδεῖτε τοῦθ', ὡς οὐκέθ' οὕτω ταῦτ' ἔχει.
 ἐστρατευμένοι γάρ εἰσιν,
 βιβλίον τ' ἔχων ἕκαστος μανθάνει τὰ δεξιὰ·
 αἱ φύσεις τ' ἄλλως κράτισται,
 νῦν δὲ καὶ παρηκόνηνται.
 μηδὲν οὖν δείσητον, ἀλλὰ
 πάντ' ἐπέξητον, θεατῶν γ' οὐνεχ', ὡς ὄντων σοφῶν.

Now don't just sit tight, you two:

there are plenty more thrusts to come,
and more intellectualities.
So whatever your grounds of dispute,
argue out, attack, and lay bare
the old and the new,
and take a chance on saying
something subtle and sage.
And if you're afraid
of any ignorance among
the spectators, that they won't
appreciate your subtleties of argument,
don't worry about that, because
things are no longer that way.
For they're veterans,
and each one has a book
and knows the fine points;
their natural endowments are masterful too,
and now sharpened up.
So have no fear,
but tackle it all, resting assured
that the spectators are sage.

Announcing a new phase in the *agôn*, the initiates invoke several terms of comic poetics commonly used to describe Euripidean style, the poetic competence of the audience, and even Aristophanes' own comedy. The exhortation to say 'something subtle' uses an adjective (*λεπτόν* : 1108; cf. 876) – employed several times by the initiates – for refined, subtle thinking and expression in the fifth century which acquires great significance in the Hellenistic period.³² Although the chorus seems to be using the term in a neutral way, *leptos* was frequently paired with *akribeia*, 'precision', *kompsos*, 'subtlety', and a few other key adjectives to describe what ancient critics later referred to as the *genus tenue*, the 'thin' style of speaking identified with Euripides, Socrates, and individuals with sophistic tendencies.³³

Euripidean style was also defined as *dexios*, used of a speaker or expression that is striking, bold, or clever,³⁴ and here referring to the audience's poetic competence (1113-14; cf. 71). Ralph Rosen has shown that the sophisticated audience acknowledged resembles the ideal audience described in *Frogs* by comic Euripides as being educated by his tragedy (971-9).³⁵ The conception of an enlightened comic audience is a *topos* of the Aristophanic biography which extends back to its early period.³⁶ In the famous, revised parabasis of *Clouds*, Aristophanes distinguished the clever spectators of his audience from those unable to appreciate the genius of the original production, which won a lacklustre third place in the Lenaia of 423. In the unperformed version of the play we now possess, the poet personified his work as a virtuous Electra (534) seeking wise spectators (*theatais ... sophois*: 535) able to

show her the lock of her brother Orestes' hair (i.e., the award of first prize in the dramatic competition).³⁷ The same failure of the audience is mentioned in the parabasis of *Wasps* the following year, when Aristophanes denies ever letting the 'clever ones' (*toisi sophois*: 1049-50) down. Although in *Frogs* it describes a quality of poetry to which both Aeschylus and Euripides aspire (see 1009), *dexios* is also a key qualifier of Aristophanes' parabolic descriptions of his own style (*Clouds* 548, *Wasps* 1059-60) and in this function appears with two other terms featured prominently above, *sophos* ('wise') – a central term of Aristophanic aesthetics, as indicated by its frequency – and *kainos* ('innovative').³⁸

The initiates' command of the terms of poetic discourse at 1102-18 is one example of Aristophanes' conflation of privileged Eleusinian insight and the knowledge of poetics in the comic genre. The famous stanza in which the chorus passes final judgment on each tragedian after Dionysus' decision for Aeschylus offers further evidence of the chorus' refined tastes (1482-99):

μακάριός γ' ἀνὴρ ἔχων
ξύνεσιν ἠκριβωμένην.
πάρα δὲ πολλοῖσιν μαθεῖν.
ὄδε γὰρ εὖ φρονεῖν δοκήσας
πάλιν ἄπεισιν οἴκαδ' αὐθις,
ἐπ' ἀγαθῶ μὲν τοῖς πολίταις,
ἐπ' ἀγαθῶ δὲ τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ
ξυγγενέσι τε καὶ φίλοισ<ι>,
διὰ τὸ συνετὸς εἶναι.

χαρίεν οὖν μὴ Σωκράτει
παρακαθήμενον λαλεῖν,
ἀποβαλόντα μουσικὴν
τά τε μέγιστα παραλιπόντα
τῆς τραγωδικῆς τέχνης.
τὸ δ' ἐπὶ σεμνοῖσιν λόγοισι
καὶ σκαριφησμοῖσι λήρων
διατριβὴν ἀργὸν ποιεῖσθαι,
παραφρονούντος ἀνδρός.

Happy the man who has
keen intelligence,
as is abundantly clear.
This man, for his eminent good sense,
is going back home again,
a boon to his fellow citizens,
a boon as well to his family and friends,
through being intelligent.

So what's stylish is not to sit
beside Socrates and chatter,

casting the arts aside
and ignoring the best
of the tragedian's craft.
To hang around killing time
in pretentious conversation and
hairsplitting twaddle is the mark
of a man who's lost his mind.

The possible irony of the chorus' ascription of *σύνεσις* ('intelligence', 'astuteness') to Aeschylus (1483) is apparent if one recalls Euripides' claim to the same quality in his opening prayer to 'Smarts' (*Εύνεσι*: 893; see also 957) and Aeschylus' tactful prayer to Demeter.³⁹ Although the latter's request 'to be worthy of your Mysteries' (*τῶν σῶν ἄξιον μυστηρίων*: 887) is normally taken as confirmation of his deme affiliation, its echo of an earlier prayer by the chorus (*τῆς σῆς ἑορτῆς ἀξίως / παίσαντα*: 391-2) may be an attempt to connect the pious tragedian to the cult whose representatives ultimately affirm his victory in the final procession.⁴⁰

If Aeschylus' victory is owed to his intelligence, Euripides' failure, by contrast, is attributed to *lalein* ('chatter': 1492), a term characteristic of the pretentious, sophistic intellectuals of the younger generation who were linked to Socrates.⁴¹ This image of a Euripides chattering with Socrates, probably in the marketplace, evokes a nexus of popular ideas about the poet and his tragedy which are touched upon throughout the *agôn*. Euripidean colloquialism is linked to pretentious Socratic argumentation, as well as the frivolous gossip of Athenian women, but also to Euripides' own self-described democratising tendency (952), which taught audiences to think by depicting everyday things and matters (959-62). According to comic Aeschylus (1083-8), this teaching of empty chatter (1069) led to the current generation of low-class demagogues like Cleitophon and Theramenes (967), an amoral politician whom comic Euripides claims as a student.⁴² The parabolic abuse of similar demagogues (674-85; 706-16, 1504, 1532-3) demonstrates the role of Euripidean *lalein* in Athenian poetic and political degeneration. In sum, this term is central to Aristophanic discourse because it alludes to the personalised, 'dialogic' style of Euripidean tragedy which allowed audiences to draw bad conclusions about Euripides himself.⁴³

The initiates' repeated use of critical terms evoking key themes of Aristophanic poetics is consistent with its identity as initiates and sets it apart from other comic choruses. While other Aristophanic choruses occasionally deploy some of the same critical terms and even command comic discourse in some plays – e.g., in the Thinkery (*Clouds* 949-57), in Cloudcuckooland (*Birds* 1470-2), in a feminised Athens (*Eccl.* 516, 571-80) – such statements belong to the generic role typically assumed by the comic chorus as the play develops. The critical statements of the initiates, by contrast, are consistent with their designated role as enlightened *choreutai* of Demeter and this makes their resulting identity less fragmentary than their choral counterparts.⁴⁴ The unique status of the initiates is perhaps most apparent when compared to the famous frog-chorus (209-68), whose appearance is almost certainly meant to recall (among other things) the animal choruses of comedy's earliest phase.⁴⁵ The introduction of this primitive chorus focuses attention on the uniquely diverse, enlightened, and civic status of the

initiates who appear shortly thereafter.

Resurrection

Frogs' confluences of cult and comedy climax with the resurrection and escort of Aeschylus by the initiates, whose celebration of the poet's victory and its inevitably positive civic effects (1487-8) implicitly credits comedy with the salvation of the city and its choruses (1418-19). This ritual *exodos* suggests a final institutional aspect of Eleusis exploited by *Frogs*, the improved afterlife promised by the cult to its members.⁴⁶ While ritualised processions are not uncommon in fifth-century comic closure, the pronounced triumphalism of this particular ending has a significant tragic pedigree, the sacred procession of Aeschylus' own *Eumenides* (458 BC), which celebrated Orestes' salvation and the future glory accruing to Athens through the foundation of the Areopagus. Aristophanes' choice of *Eumenides* is unsurprising for several reasons, not least of which is its resounding conclusion to one of the fifth century's most famous trilogies on one of the greatest heroic sagas. Frequent allusion to the *Oresteia* throughout *Frogs* indicates that it was possibly recognisable even to spectators in 405 BC, many of whom perhaps enjoyed re-performances of the plays in the 420s.⁴⁷

As often happens in parody, Aristophanes' departures from his model tell us most about the underlying message of comic appropriation. My final remarks, therefore, are concerned with Aristophanes' revisions of *Eumenides*' closure, especially his enlargement of the mystic subtext which informs the proper subject of Aeschylus' play, the harrowing trials and acquittal of Orestes.⁴⁸ In *Frogs*' closing lines, Hades orders the final departure of the comic initiates, who in response anticipate the positive effects of the victorious Aeschylus' return to Athens (1524-32):

Πλ: φαίνετε τοίνυν ὑμεῖς τοῦτω
λαμπάδας ἱεράς, χᾶμα προπέμπετε
τοῖσιν τοῦτου τοῦτον μέλεσιν
καὶ μολπαῖσιν κελαδοῦντες.

Χο: πρῶτα μὲν εὐοδίαν ἀγαθὴν ἀπιόντι ποιητῇ
εἰς φάος ὀρνυμένων δότε, δαίμονες οἱ κατὰ γαίας,
τῇ δὲ πόλει μεγάλων ἀγαθῶν ἀγαθὰς ἐπινοίας.
πάγχυ γὰρ ἐκ μεγάλων ἀχέων παυσαίμεθ' ἂν οὕτως
ἀργαλέων τ' ἐν ὄπλοις ξυνόδων...

Pl: Now display your sacred torches in this man's honour and escort him forth, hymning his praises with his own songs and melodies.

Ch: First, you gods below the earth, grant to the departing poet a fine journey as he ascends to the sunlight, and to the city grant fine ideas that will bring fine blessings. For that way we may have an end of great

griefs and painful encounters in arms ...

The motifs of the torch, closing song, and conflict-resolution evoke the mood of a ritual procession, a signal to the audience of the final movement to dramatic closure.⁴⁹ Yet the emphasis on these particular motifs in addition to the sacred light of the escort (1524-5; cf. *Eum.* 1003-5, 1022, 1041-2) and the dactylic rhythms ('[Aeschylus'] own songs and melodies': 1526-7) reveal Aristophanes' debt to the analogous final procession of *Eumenides*. Orestes' acquittal and Athena's reconciliation with the Furies are capped with a final procession of Areopagites carrying torches, the purple robes of metics (for the civic integration of the *Eumenides*), and sacrificial animals, while singing strophic pairs (*Eum.* 1033-47) and exhorting the audience to participate in ritual cries of joy (1043, 1047).⁵⁰ Aristophanes even echoes a key Aeschylean phrase: Pluto's command to comic Aeschylus to educate the Athenians with 'fine counsels' (γνώμῃσι ἀγαθαῖσι: 1502), as well as the initiates' prayer for 'fine ideas that will bring fine blessings' (1530), recall Athena's prayer after her reconciliation with the Furies (*Eum.* 1012-13):

... εἴη δ' ἀγαθῶν ἀγαθὴ διάνοια πολίταις.

... May the citizens have good thought for good.

Although similar to *Eumenides* in these details, *Frogs* contains multiple departures from the Aeschylean model which are meaningful within Aristophanes' sustained assimilation of Eleusis and comedy. Like the Eleusinian escort of *Frogs*, the Aeschylean procession concludes a generational struggle between 'old' and 'new' (i.e., the Furies versus the new Olympians): the Areopagus' acquittal of Orestes replaces the primitive *dikê* of the primordial world with the newly established jury-trial approved by the Olympians. So committed is this closure to the promotion of civic unity that even the losing party of the suit, the Furies – in part symbols of tragedy itself⁵¹ – are welcomed into Athens to promote fertility (804-7). In Aeschylus, the Athenian legal system is a vehicle not only for civic justice, but also for civic education, since the fearsome Furies' resettling in Athena's city symbolises in part the birth of the distinctive institution of tragedy, Athens' public education.

Aristophanes' procession reacts to many of these Aeschylean motifs to express its particular literary agenda. In contrast to *Eumenides*' forensic dispute, *Frogs*' contest between old and new explores tragedy and its civic value through its evolution since Aeschylus. The duel between Aeschylean and Euripidean styles and the attendant social consequences of each poet's work modifies the Furies (*Eum.* 490-8) and Apollo's (644-51) competing visions of *dikê* and their social and political consequences. In comedy, where bringing back tragedy is identified with bringing back tragedian, the old Aeschylus is judged to be preferable to the new Euripides whose tragedy has had a profoundly negative impact on the polis. The return of Aeschylean tragedy by the poet's resurrection one-ups *Eumenides*' aetiology of tragedy through the integration of the Furies. Most importantly, the Athenian courts do not adjudicate the Aristophanic contest, a task which falls to Dionysus, who represents the equally vital civic institution of comedy. Finally, the Eleusinian theme of the *exodos* gives Aristophanes' closure a

distinctly Athenian, yet also panhellenic thrust, as opposed to Aeschylus' procession of the Areopagites, whose traditional aristocratic associations only nominally represent the civic body.

The initiates' prominence in *Frogs*' closure foregrounds the well-established mystery subtext which informs Orestes' quest for and final attainment of absolution for matricide in *Eumenides*.⁵² Orestes' actual and imagined sufferings resemble the trials of the uninitiated in prose descriptions thought to be based on mystic accounts of the Underworld: forced into endless wandering for killing his mother (74-7, 240, 249-51), Orestes is threatened with a life of unhappiness (301), and a 'living death' (302) analogous to the experiences of the initiation candidate;⁵³ his tormentors, the Furies, derive from the Underworld, with its sinners submerged in mud (267-75), who are also found in popular mystic accounts;⁵⁴ once acquitted, Orestes' suffering gives way to the joy and rebirth (757) of the initiate, a connection emphasised by multiple references to salvation (*sôtêria*) in Orestes' final speech (754-77).⁵⁵ For Aristophanes, as for the *Eumenides*, Eleusis offers a 'model for the acceptance into the city of problematic figures'.⁵⁶ Yet Aristophanes reifies and concretises Aeschylus' mystic imagery into a chorus, the comic initiates, who give the political and poetic implications of the *agôn* greater immediacy for the Lenaian audience and establish comedy as a poetic counterpart to Demeter's cult. The escort of Aeschylus from actual death to life – as opposed to the figurative death of Orestes – in order to save tragedy and the city is analogous to the spiritual rebirth of the *mystês* at the Greater Mysteries.⁵⁷ The Eleusinian chorus' completion of the final procession thus figures comedy as an institutional analogue to Eleusis in Athens: inclusive, yet exclusive because of its esoteric knowledge, comedy ensures the communal salvation which Eleusis offers to the individual.

Conclusion

Prominent and distinctive in their contributions to the poetic agenda of *Frogs*, the initiates are an atypical chorus of an exceptional play. As representatives of Demeter's esteemed cult, they simultaneously raise the profile of *Frogs*' comic *agôn*, its critical exegesis of tragedy, and Aristophanic comedy. *Frogs*' assimilation of comedy to a popular civic institution, Eleusis, which was both prestigious and distinctly Athenian, is a novel approach to Aristophanes' decades-long project of negotiating comedy's place in Athens' literary landscape vis-à-vis tragedy. Among Athenian institutions which might be emulated, Eleusis was an obvious choice: the cult was thought to have been overseen by the Athenians since Solon and never expanded beyond Attica;⁵⁸ its evolution was thought to have paralleled Athens' own foundation and ascension to power;⁵⁹ as a part of Attica's frontier, it helped define the shape of the polis and the land it controlled. In the popular imagination, Eleusis' status and well-being must have been identified to some degree with that of Athens itself.

Eleusis therefore lent itself naturally to the self-referential project pursued in *Frogs*' dramatisation of a contest between two of the fifth century's great artists. But Aristophanes' choice was motivated by more than just popular sentiment. The cult's spectacle and performative character were highly congruent with Old Comedy's own mode, as the *parodos*

and *prorrhêsis* self-consciously show. Whether performed in the agora on the first day of the Mysteries or in the theatre of Dionysus, the spectacle of both cult and comedy is the most readily apparent basis of comedy's emulation of Demeter's cult. However, the most important rituals of the cult were not public, but secret, exclusive, and prestigious. Aristophanes comedifies Eleusis' mystic knowledge in his initiates' poetic knowledge throughout *Frogs*. The chorus' critical exegesis utilises central terms of Aristophanes' most self-conscious statements on art and literature and thereby evokes recurring themes of Aristophanic poetics on the style of Euripides, the competence of comic audiences, and Aristophanes' own poetic virtues. So exceptional is the initiates' grasp of comic poetics that one scholar even compares them to the *sophoi* sometimes described by Aristophanes as his ideal comic audience.⁶⁰ The humanity, social diversity, and high poetic competence which contribute to the initiates' singular choral identity are thrown into sharp relief when compared to *Frogs*' frog chorus, a representative of the primitive animal choruses of early comedy. *Frogs*' closure harnesses the most famous contribution of Eleusis to the ancient world, its promise of a better afterlife, in order to articulate the transformative powers of tragedy, but especially of the comic genre responsible for resurrecting it. Aristophanes' significant departures from the closure of Aeschylus' *Eumenides* make the implicit metatheatrical claim that comedy can improve the lot of Athens as Eleusis improves that of the individual.

The Eleusinian chorus defines Aristophanic comedy as an equally vital Athenian institution whose continued existence was fundamental to the health and survival of its poetry and public. The extent to which the Athenian popular imagination actually identified Eleusis as an exclusive, prestigious institution is much less important than that Aristophanes implies that it was. The historical circumstances of 405 BC attest to the shrewdness of Aristophanes' approach: Athens itself faced a crisis comparable to that dramatised by the Eleusinian cult every year in the 'sacred drama', the crop failure resulting from Demeter's withdrawal, which threatened all humanity. But while disaster is averted and order is restored in the story of Demeter and Persephone, we know that the crisis raging in 405 would not end so happily for Athens.

Notes

1. Segal 1961. For the Mysteries as the means of Dionysus' incorporation into the alien Underworld: Moorton 1989; as the frame of Dionysus' rite of passage: Bowie 1993a: 244-53 and Lada-Richards 1999: 45-122 (cf. Edmonds 2004: 113-18).

2. Edmonds 2004: 138-47.

3. Biles 2011: 222.

4. Wilson 2007: 270.

5. Parker 2005: 348-9.

6. Dover 1993b: 173-5. For the alternative theory that the initiates are worshippers of the Lenaia, see Tierney 1936.

7. Zimmermann 1984: 124-5; Dover 1993a: 57-60; Sommerstein 1996: 184-5 n. 324; Biles 2011: 222-8. For a study of the passage's ritual mockery: Rosen 2007: 29-31.

8. Although not identical to Dionysus, Iacchos was roughly the equivalent in his function for Eleusis (Burkert 1987: 106).
9. Biles 2011: 224.
10. Parker 2005: 347.
11. Translations of Aristophanes are those of Henderson 2002. Translations of Aeschylus are those of Sommerstein 2009.
12. See Graf 1974: 42 n. 11.
13. Much of my analysis here is indebted to Edmonds 2004: 142-4, although my emphasis differs.
14. Bowie 1993a: 242-4.
15. Wilson 2007: 269; Biles 2011: 225 states that the anapaests provide 'parabolic coloring' to the *prorrhêsis*. For anapaests as traditional in the Aristophanic parabasis: Sifakis 1971: 33-6.
16. Edmonds 2004: 120.
17. For a reconstruction of the events of the Greater Mysteries: Clinton 1993: 116-19.
18. Clinton 1993: 115. An explicit reference to this 'sacred drama' is contained in Tertullian's (*Ad nat.* II.7) remark about a performance of the 'rape of Ceres'.
19. *On the Soul* fr. 178 Sandbach.
20. Vivid confirmation of the performative character of Eleusis is found in the story of the notorious profanation of the Mysteries at a private party in Athens in 415 BC (Thuc. 6.28; Plut., *Alc.* 19), where Alcibiades, mimicking the hierophant, performed the rites with his friends (Murray 1990b: 155).
21. Sourvinou-Inwood 2003: 27 explains that Athens had overseen Eleusis as far back as Solon (see Andoc. 1.111).
22. For a wide-ranging discussion of the sacred knowledge of initiation rites: Burkert 1987: 66-88.
23. Sourvinou-Inwood 2003: 26.
24. Edmonds 2004: 146.
25. The exact cost of initiation is unknown. Parker 2005: 342 n. 65 says that 15 drachmas per candidate is often understood from *IG II² 1672.207*, which assesses 30 drachmas for the initiation of two slaves in 328/9 BC. However, part of this cost may have gone to a sacrificial victim.
26. For the social prestige of the cult: Sourvinou-Inwood 2003: 26-7; Hardie 2004: 21.
27. Teaching formed an important part of the full initiation process (Riedweg 1986: 2-29). Some noteworthy anecdotes in later authors are collected by Parker 2005: 346. Livy (31.14.6-8) preserves a story of two uninitiated youths who, when trespassing in Demeter's sanctuary, were executed after failing to answer questions posed about cult teachings. Isocrates (4.28) remarks that only initiates hear what deeds were done for Demeter by the inhabitants of Eleusis. Pausanias explains that only the initiates know whether or not Demeter discovered beans (1.37.4). Clement of Alexandria states that it is only during initiation that it is explained to a *mystês* why it is forbidden for initiates to eat certain parts of certain animals (*Strom.*

2.20.106).

28. Denniston 1927; O’Sullivan 1992: 7-22, 106-50; Willi 2003: 87-95.

29. Sifakis 1971: 27-9; Robson 2009: 98.

30. Willi (2003: 92-4) also includes in his list of pre-technical terms (spoken by the chorus unless otherwise indicated) ἀστεῖος (‘witty’: 901, 906), ἰσχνός (‘lean’: 941 [spoken by Euripides]), κομψός (‘elegant’: 967), σαφής (‘clear’: 1434, 1445 [spoken by Dionysus]).

31. E.g., *sophos*: 676, 700, 737, 882, 896, 1104, 1108, 1118 and *kainos*: 720, 1107.

32. On *leptos*: Taillardat 1962: §15; O’Sullivan 1992: 137; Willi 2003: 88. See also Call. fr. 124 Pf.

33. O’Sullivan 1992: 138.

34. Ford 2002: 200; Bakola 2008: 9.

35. Rosen 2008: 165-6.

36. Bremer 1993: 140-1.

37. On this interpretation of the Electra metaphor: Telò 2010: 282-96.

38. For Aristophanes as ‘reformer’: Bakola 2008: 8; for Aristophanes as adherent of Euripidean tragedy: Silk 2000: *passim*; for Aristophanes as ‘paternal son’: Telò 2010. For work on the comic poets’ presentation of themselves and their distinctive brands of comedy through comic biography see, *inter alia*, Hubbard 1991, Rosen 2000, Ruffell 2002, Biles 2011, and Bakola 2008 and 2010.

39. Sommerstein 1996: ad loc. Dover (1993a: 20) argues that σύνεσις here specifically means what ‘works’ in the theatre and satisfies audiences (cf. *Frogs* 876).

40. For Aeschylus as native of Eleusis: Dover 1993a: ad loc., Sommerstein 1996: 19, ad loc.; for the echo of the initiates in Aeschylus’ prayer: Biles 2011: 228.

41. For the stylistic associations of *lalia*, which is related to στόμα words (826, 837-8, 840-3, 880), see O’Sullivan 1992: 131-4 and Willi 2003: 169.

42. Roselli 2005.

43. Rosen 2008: 162.

44. Cf. Dover 1993b: 191. On the ‘fragmentation’ of identity: Robson 2009: 99-101.

45. Reckford 1987: 408-13; Hubbard 1991: 201-3; Biles 2011: 228. On the debate about the frogs’ true identity, see the bibliography of Hubbard 1991.

46. The cult promised blessed (or at least improved) existence after death (*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 480-2).

47. *Frogs* 1126-8 (= *Cho.* 1-3), 1276 (= *Ag.* 104), 1431b (= *Ag.* 717-36).

48. Taplin 1996: 198; Wilson 2007: 270.

49. Segal 1996.

50. Dover 1993a: 384; Taplin 1996: 199. These echoes would have been perceived by some spectators who would have observed decreed re-performances of Aeschylus at Athens, possibly as recently as the 420s. See *Ach.* 10-11 and Revermann 2006: 72-4 on *Frogs* 868 and Easterling 2005. For doubts about this evidence: Biles 2006-7. For the purple robes of the Furies: Headlam 1906; Taplin 1977: 412-13.

51. Wilson and Taplin 1993.

52. For the influence of mystery imagery in the *Oresteia*: Thomson 1935; for the influence of the Eleusinian Mysteries: Tierney 1937: 17-21 (cf. Bowie 1993b: 24-6).
53. Tierney 1937: 16; Bowie 1993b: 25. For treatments of the soul's journey after death which are thought to be modelled on the experiences of the candidate for initiation: Pl., *Ph.* 107d-108c, Plut. fr. 178 (Sandbach).
54. For furies in the hell of mystery religions: Paus. 10.28-31 (Eleusis mentioned by name: 31); for sinners in mud: Pl. *Resp.* 363c-365a, *Grg.* 493b.
55. For the joy of the initiated in the afterlife: Pind., *Ol.* 2.61-83.
56. Bowie 1993b: 25.
57. Segal 1961: 226. For the identification of the winning poet with the salvation of Athens: *Frogs* 1419.
58. Burkert 1987: 37.
59. Sourvinou-Inwood 1997: 133.
60. Hubbard 1991: 204.

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Turning Remorse to Good Effect?: Arginusae, Theramenes and Aristophanes' *Frogs*

Arlene Allan

If we accept, as many critics do, that Aristophanes took his role as a teacher of the city seriously and thus offered advice to his fellow citizens through his characters' scripted lines, it would appear that that advice was seldom, if ever, taken to heart by the *dêmos*.¹ Despite his critique of Cleon's policies, the people continued to give heed to the latter's proposals, and despite his lampooning of those who advocated for the continuation of the war, the people continually rejected offers of a negotiated peace. Nevertheless, apparently undaunted by the *dêmos*' record of bad decision-making (or perhaps because of it) Aristophanes scripted a play for the Lenaea of 406/5 BC in which he pointedly recommended that the Athenians recall those whom they had exiled and make a change in the sort of men they were selecting as their leaders.² We are told that the *dêmos* was so impressed by his advice, given first in the parabasis and partially iterated in the closing scene of the *katabasis*³ that they awarded *Frogs* the highly unusual honour of a second performance.⁴ However, they were slow in its implementation: action was not taken on the first part of that advice until the autumn of 405/4, when, following the Athenians' final naval defeat that summer, the Assembly endorsed Patrocleides' proposal to recall the exiles (Andoc. 1.73).

It is possible, however, that the people took action on the second part of that advice well before that fateful summer campaign: although they elected Theramenes to the board of generals for 405/4, Lysias (13.10) reports that he was not confirmed into office, having failed his scrutiny (*dokimasia*).⁵ The specific grounds on which he was denied entry are not given, but the possibility that there is a relationship between the advice given in *Frogs* and Theramenes' failed *dokimasia* invites further consideration.⁶ For not only did *Frogs* critique the people's poor choice in leaders, it did so in the context of the larger play in which they were reminded frequently, albeit humorously, of their most recent troubles.

The most recent of those troubles began during the summer of 406 when the Athenian navy had been triumphant in their engagement with the Spartan forces off the coast of the Arginusae islands. It proved to be a bitter-sweet victory, however, when a sudden storm arose which prevented the rescue and retrieval of many of Athens' citizens who had been wounded, shipwrecked or killed in the battle. Exactly what happened next is not wholly clear, as our two main sources for the aftermath of the battle provide differing accounts (Xen. *Hell.* 1.7.1-35; Diod. 13.101-2). But they both agree on two points: (1) upon their return to Athens, all of the generals in the field at Arginusae were charged with something akin to negligence of duty; and (2) Theramenes, a trierarch involved in the battle, played a significant role in securing their trial and condemnation.⁷ Despite a very reasoned appeal to try the generals individually, the

Athenian people, contrary to their own laws, tried and convicted all eight commanders in a single vote.⁸ The penalty demanded was death. And such was the penalty imposed on the six generals who had returned to the city by the angry and aggrieved Assembly in the late fall of 406.⁹ Xenophon reports that not long after this (οὐ πολλῶ χρόνῳ ὕστερον, *Hell.* 1.7.35; cf. Diod. 13.103.1-2) the Athenians regretted their decision and sought to rectify the wrong they had committed by incarcerating, for future prosecution, those who had misled them.

Xenophon's expression is frustratingly vague. Although it is possible that a general sense of remorse was not shared by the populace until after the navy's defeat at Aegospotami in the summer of 404, it seems more in keeping with the *dêmos*' habit of having (belated) second-thoughts (e.g. Thuc. 3.36) that the remorse was beginning to be felt well before the summer campaign season began.¹⁰ Were this the case, a play which regularly invites its audience to recall the most significant event of the last campaign season (as well as its aftermath) within months of the generals' execution, and proffers remediating advice, may well have served both to hasten the spread of any nascent sense of remorse amongst its audience and to stimulate more serious consideration than anything Aristophanes had produced before.

The results were not immediate. Like most good advice which challenges someone to think and/or act differently, time is needed to process it, and often the need to make some other choice arises before the decision to implement the advice is made. Such, I would argue, was the case in relation to Theramenes' election to the generalship for 405/4. The men seeking this office had been campaigning to garner support among the electorate for some time before the Lenaea, and, as I discuss below, the election is likely to have been held within days of *Frogs*' production; that is, too soon after the receipt of Aristophanes' advice for it to have been fully assessed and implemented. Immediately after the Lenaea the electioneering is likely to have continued, stirring emotions and depriving the electorate of sufficient time to fully reassess the men who were seeking office.

Frogs and the election of generals

According to Ps-Aristotle's *Athenian Constitution* (*Ath. Pol.* 44.4), in his own day (mid-late 300s) the election of the generals (*stratêgoi*) took place at the first Assembly after the sixth prytany, that is, the first meeting of Assembly called in the seventh prytany. With no evidence to the contrary, most scholars accept that this was also the case during the latter part of the fifth century.¹¹ We also know that the first Assembly meeting of any prytany would be set in order to avoid conflict with the city's important festivals. Given that an important festival was held on each of the first eight days of every month, it is unlikely that any Assembly business was conducted on these days. With regards to the Lenaea, although we have no firm information on the dates for this festival, we know that it was held in Gamelion, the seventh month of the festival calendar. Jon Mikalson has shown that it was most probably celebrated between the twelfth and the nineteenth day of the month.¹² There would be no problem establishing the temporal relationship between the election of the generals and the Lenaea if each prytany and each calendar month were coterminous: Prytany VII and Gamelion would be neatly paired; avoiding the first eight days of the month, the first Assembly could be held between day 9 and day 12, in advance of the Lenaea. Unfortunately, such is not the case.

Athens managed her political and festival business according to two different calendars. For the city's political business the year was divided into ten prytanies, whereas for its religious celebrations, it was divided into twelve months (or thirteen if the year were intercalary).¹³ Thus, even if the civic and festival years began on the same day, the second month of the year in the festival calendar would commence before the end of the first prytany in the civic calendar and the two calendars would not be wholly synchronised again until the last day of the year. Because of this, it becomes necessary to determine when Prytany VII is most likely to have begun in 406/5 in order to see when the election of the generals could have been held.¹⁴

If we follow B.D. Meritt's original hypothesis,¹⁵ which held that between 432/1 and 404/3, the Civic calendar ran roughly in accord with a solar year of 366 days, we find that for the Athenian Civic year 406/5, Prytany VII would have begun in the last days of Gamelion (Fig. 8.1). Similarly, if we accept Kendrick Pritchett's argument which holds that in 407/6 the Civic calendar was reset to be coterminous with the Archon's festival calendar,¹⁶ having 354 days in an ordinary year and 384 in an intercalary one, we find that Prytany VII would still have begun in the last days of Gamelion, if that year were intercalary (Fig. 8.2).¹⁷ With Prytany VII beginning in the last days of Gamelion when there are no known festival days to be avoided, it is likely that the first Assembly meeting would have been held very early in the prytany, probably on days 1-7, before the first week of the month Anthesterion when the festival calendar was again crowded with a variety of 'holy days'.¹⁸ Thus, whether the Civic calendar was still running roughly in line with the solar year, or had been reset to be coterminous with the Archon's year, our best estimate is that Theramenes' election to the generalship could have come as soon as five days after the staging of *Frogs*, as Prytany VII.1 falls (roughly) on Gamelion 25.¹⁹ In keeping with our hypothesis, this would have been too soon for Aristophanes' advice in the play to take effect.

But before any official-elect was allowed to take up his position, he first had to undergo a *dokimasia*, an examination of his qualification to be an office-holder. Unfortunately, we have no firm information about the temporal relationship between the election and confirmation hearings, but given the Athenians' caution in relation to ostracism,²⁰ it is reasonable to assume that a certain amount of time, perhaps a month or more, was allowed to elapse between a person's election and his examination.²¹ This would leave a sufficient amount of time for the people to consider the results of their elections and to prepare any challenges to be raised during the vetting process concerning the fitness of each candidate-elect.²² It is my contention that *Frogs*' numerous explicit and implicit reminders of Arginusae, in conjunction with its advice to select better leaders, were productive of two results: first, a reconsideration of Theramenes' trustworthiness in light of his representation in the play and his recent history; and second, the implementation of that advice at the first available opportunity post-election – his *dokimasia*.

Fig. 8.1. **Non-Coterminous Calendar 406/5** (Intercalary Festival year, 384 days; Solar Prytany year, 366 days)

Prytany I-VI: 37 days; Prytany VII-X: 36 days

Months alternating 29/30 days beginning with Hekatombaion:

Prytany I.1 = Hekatombaion 11

Prytany II.1 = Metageitnion 19

Prytany III.1 = Boedromion 26 (contains all of Pyanopsion)

Prytany IV.1 = Maimakterion 4

Prytany V.1 = I Poseideon 12

Prytany VI.1 = II Poseideon 18

Prytany VI.14 = Gamelion 1

VI.14 = Ga 1

VI.15 = Ga 2

VI.16 = Ga 3

VI.17 = Ga 4

VI.18 = Ga 5

VI.19 = Ga 6

VI.20 = Ga 7

VI.21 = Ga 8

VI.22 = Ga 9

VI.23 = Ga 10

VI.24 = Ga 11

VI.25 = Ga 12

VI.26 = Ga 13

VI.27 = Ga 14

VI.28 = Ga 15

VI.29 = Ga 16

VI.30 = Ga 17

VI.31 = Ga 18

VI.32 = Ga 19

VI.33 = Ga 20

VI.34 = Ga 21

VI.35 = Ga 22

VI.36 = Ga 23

VI.37 = Ga 24

VII.1 = Ga 25

VII.2 = Ga 26

VII.3 = Ga 27

VII.4 = Ga 28

VII.5 = Ga 29

VII.6 = An 1

VII.7 = An 2

Prytany VI.25-32: *Lenaee*

(= Gamelion 12-19)

Prytany VII.1 = Gamelion 25

Anthesterion begins on day 6 of Prytany VII,
allowing first meeting of Prytany at which **elections**
were held to take place between Gamelion 25 and 29.

Reminders of Arginusae

Frogs contains five explicit references to Arginusae, four of which relate to the grant of (partial) citizen-rights to slaves who manned the oars in that battle. Aristophanes wastes no time in bringing this incident to the forefront of his audience's mind, with three of these coming within the first 55 lines of the play. At 33-4 Dionysos' slave, Xanthias expresses the wish that he had served in 'that naval-battle', because, if he had, he would now be free to speak back to Dionysos. Sixteen lines later (48-52) both 'the battle' and Cleisthenes, who may have served recently as trierarch,²³ are mentioned in conjunction with the claim that the ship under Cleisthenes' command sank more than twelve ships all on its own (50-1). Arginusae is clearly the battle inferred, as it was the most recent sea-battle in which a large number of enemy ships were sunk or disabled (Diod. 13.100.3-4). The next explicit comment occurs at 1901 where

Xanthias' failure to have participated in 'the naval-battle' is given as the reason why Charon refuses to transport him across the infernal lake. The final such reference appears in the parabasis (674-737), when the chorus leader admonishes the audience for enfranchising men simply because they fought in a single naval battle, while refusing to recall their own kith and kin from exile (693-9).

Fig. 8.2. **Coterminous Calendar 406/5** (Intercalary Festival year, 384 days; Solar Prytany year, 384 days)

Prytany I-IV: 39 days; Prytany V-X: 38 days

Months alternating 29/30 days beginning with Hekatombaion:

Prytany I.1 = Hekatombaion 11

Prytany II.1 = Metageitnion 10

Prytany III.1 = Boedromion 20

Prytany IV.1 = Pyanopsion 29 (contains all of Maimakterion)

Prytany V.1 = I Poseideon 9

Prytany VI.1 = II Poseideon 18

Prytany VI.15 = Gamelion 1

VI.15 = Ga 1

VI.16 = Ga 2

VI.17 = Ga 3

VI.18 = Ga 4

VI.19 = Ga 5

VI.20 = Ga 6

VI.21 = Ga 7

VI.22 = Ga 8

VI.23 = Ga 9

VI.24 = Ga 10

VI.25 = Ga 11

VI.26 = Ga 12

VI.27 = Ga 13

VI.28 = Ga 14

VI.29 = Ga 15

VI.30 = Ga 16

VI.31 = Ga 17

VI.32 = Ga 18

VI.33 = Ga 19

VI.34 = Ga 20

VI.35 = Ga 21

VI.36 = Ga 22

VI.37 = Ga 23

VI.38 = Ga 24

VII.1 = Ga 25

VII.2 = Ga 26

VII.3 = Ga 27

VII.4 = Ga 28

VII.5 = Ga 29

VII.6 = An 1

VII.7 = An 2

Prytany VI.26-33: *Lenaea*

(= Gamelion 12-19)

Prytany VII.1 = Gamelion 25

Anthesterion begins on day 6 of Prytany VII, allowing first meeting of Prytany at which **elections** were held to take place between Gamelion 25 and 29.

This play also contains seven references to men associated with Arginusae and its aftermath. Once Dionysos and Xanthias have entered the underworld, they encounter the Chorus of Initiates, who asks if they should 'make fun of Archedemus' (416-20), the man

responsible for initiating the prosecution of one of the generals (Erasinides) and who is said to be ‘the first of scoundrels’ in the upper-world (cf. *Lys.* 14.25). He is given a second mention when his name is included among those whom Dionysos offers up to be annihilated should he break his oath to Xanthias, effectively making him the victim of a curse (588). There follows the first of two references to Theramenes. In the first he is presented as someone who, rather than standing his ground, will easily switch sides as the situation demands for his own advantage (533-41) – precisely the sort of person who, not a few minutes before in performance time, was censured by the Mystic chorus (360). It is Theramenes’ astute ability to switch sides and escape danger which is again highlighted when he is named a second time (967-70). Some two hundred lines later Erasinides’ name is dropped in connection with Oedipus’ luck and the former’s command of one of the ships at Arginusae (1195).²⁴ Erasinides’ ‘luck’ was doubly bad: not only was his ship damaged in the battle (*Hell.* 1.7.32), but once back at Athens, he was charged with ‘embezzlement’ (*Hell.* 1.7.2) and executed along with his fellow generals. The final two men named were not directly involved at Arginusae, but retain some connection. Near the end of the play, Cleophon, who had opposed all efforts at negotiating peace, most recently and significantly after Arginusae (Aeschines 2.76), is identified by Pluto as one who belongs below, while Adeimantus, one of two men named by Xenophon as chosen by the people to replace Erasinides and Diomedon on their recall to Athens (Xen. *Hell.* 1.7.1; Diod. 13.101.5), is styled as a man worthy of death (1500-14).²⁵

In addition to these clear references to Arginusae, *Frogs* contains a further seven comments which are strongly evocative of the subsequent trial. Before asking if they should lampoon Archedemus, the chorus leader makes a proclamation which includes four such comments (359-62). In his highly politicised list of all those who are banned from joining or observing the mystic chorus, he includes those who would ‘stir up strife (*stasis*) in the city’, or ‘seek personal advantage (*kerdôn idiôn*) to the city’s harm when it is struggling in stormy seas’, or ‘betray a fort or fleet’. Each of these exclusions is reminiscent of the activities of persons and/or the concerns raised about them during the generals’ trial. Not fifty lines later, Erisinides’ prosecutor, Archedemus, is named. Shortly thereafter, following the first reference to Theramenes (533-41), two notorious politicians, Cleon and Hyperbolus, receive attention (569-70). Although both were dead before the events of 406/5, the fact that each had a reputation for being a vicious prosecutor may have served as the fifth strongly evocative comment to keep the recent trial and execution in the forefront of the audience’s thoughts, especially given that their names are dropped so closely (in performance time) to those of Theramenes (533-41) and Archedemus (588).

When the action resumes after the parabasis, we learn that there is *stasis* (760) in Hades concerning an impending *pragma* (‘law-suit’, 759) which has been triggered by the arrival of a clever speaker who has rallied the populace in support of his claim (761-78). The result is the demand for a trial (*krisis*, 779-80), at which, as in the world above, there are few supporters of the defendant (782-3). The activity of this clever speaker, Euripides, is not unlike that attributed to Theramenes (and others) by Xenophon in the prosecution of the generals (*Hell.* 1.7.4-9), while the larger setting with its law-court language, may have evoked a sixth strong memory of the machinations of those involved in the prosecution of the generals. Not fifteen lines later, Xanthias, in mock horror, compares the upcoming weighing of Tragedy to the

Apaturia sacrifice (798). In his use of the word μείον, (the lamb offered by the father on behalf of his son on his introduction to the phratry),²⁶ a seventh strongly evocative reference to the Arginusae trial may be heard, as it was at this particular festival in late 406 that Theramenes reportedly rallied support for the collective trial of the generals among his phratry members (*Hell.* 1.7.8; Diod. 13.101.5-7). It seems unlikely that Aristophanes could evoke thoughts of this festival's most recent celebration, without also reminding at least some of his spectators of the events which followed from it.²⁷ The final strongly evocative statement occurs after Dionysos has announced his decision to take Aeschylus rather than Euripides back to Athens. When Euripides protests, Dionysos, quoting Euripides' own words back at him, asks: 'What is shameful, if it seems not so to these?' (1475) – clearly indicating the theatre audience. Although Euryptolemus had cautioned the Athenians of the shame that would accrue to them if they tried and executed men innocent of the crime and that by means contrary to their own laws (*Hell.* 1.7.27), they ignored his warning. If, as I suggest, that shame, experienced now as remorse, was beginning to grow among the citizens, such a pointed question would surely have brought their recent trial of the generals to mind.

Apart from these strongly evocative statements, there are a further eleven comments, which, in company with the many other references to the conflict and its aftermath, would naturally be understood to be relevant to the Arginusae context. Even if not every spectator caught every association, some surely would. The first of these appears in the conversation between Heracles and Dionysos on the best way to get to the Underworld. Heracles recommends three ways to commit suicide: hanging (120-2), hemlock (123-4) and hurling oneself from a tall tower (130-3). Significantly, the first two are methods used to exterminate those whom the Athenians had condemned to death, while the third seems to invite recollection of the proposal made by Euryptolemus at the trial. He recommended that the generals should be tried individually according to the 'Law of Cannonus', a law which apparently called for the guilty to be hurled to their deaths (*Hell.* 1.7.20). Although our sources are silent on the method used to execute the generals, the Athenians would have known how they were killed and whether (alive or dead) they were cast into the *Barathron*, a 'rocky gully ... into which condemned criminals were sometimes thrown'.²⁸

Once Dionysos and Xanthias reach the shore of the infernal lake, the second oblique statement is made, closely linked with a more explicit one. Charon refuses to take a slave on board his ferry if μή νεναυμάχηκε τὴν περὶ τῶν κρεῶν (lit. 'he did not fight in the naval battle for his flesh', 191). The phrase περὶ τῶν κρεῶν seems to be a play on a well-known saying equivalent to our 'run for your life'.²⁹ However, used here in relation to Arginusae, it may have served to remind the audience not only of the lives lost at sea, but also the figurative 'battle' fought in the courts over their generals' failure to recover both the living and the dead.³⁰

The third oblique illusion comes in the context of Dionysos being trained in the art of rowing by the frog chorus of pseudo-coxswains. With the hardships of the rower's lot made visible through enactment,³¹ the content of the Frogs' last stanza, with its reference to 'Zeus' showers', singing underwater (247-8) and 'bubbles bursting on the surface' (πομφολογπαφλάσμασιν, 249)³² seems to invite the audience to recall that most recent storm at sea, which silenced so many coxswains' and oarsmen's rhythmical chants through drowning.

The fourth and fifth such references appear in connection with the chorus leader's critique of the Athenians for enfranchising foreigners and slaves while failing to recall from exile those men of nobility with a history of service who had made just one previous error (693-9). Although this latter group primarily involves the men who had participated in the oligarchic coup some six years earlier, by calling to mind the enfranchisement of the slaves who fought at Arginusae, and linking this event with the exile of those who had made 'one error', some in the audience may have remembered the two generals who, because of 'one error', remained in exile for fear of execution should they return. When, immediately following this critique, the Athenians are advised to 'slacken their anger' and allow wiser heads to prevail (700), this directive recalls not only the anger still felt against the oligarchs, but also that anger which led them to vote for the eradication of eight men who had served them well in the past, save for 'one error'.

The rest of the oblique references occur after the parabasis. One hundred lines after Theramenes is named for a second time (967-70) Aeschylus criticises Euripides for teaching the inferior folk how to frame an argument (1071-3), noting that slaves now even talk back to their commanding officers. He draws his example from the crew of the *Paralus* (1071; cf. Thuc. 8.86.9); if, however, anyone in the audience knew that some crews had refused to follow orders to return and pick up the dead and dying at Arginusae (Diod. 13.100.2), it is likely that such a remark would have brought this more recent example to mind. This sixth oblique comment is closely followed by a seventh, which makes reference to cajoling and deceptive politicians (1086). While this is a generic compliant in comedy, it may have stimulated thoughts of the more recent use of persuasive flattery, shameless antics, and deceit by the *dêmos*' leading men in the condemnation of the generals.

Once the contest is underway, four more things are said which may have stimulated thoughts of Arginusae. Just before the battle of the lyrics begins, Dionysos decides to pick up some stones (*psêphôn*, 1263) to keep count of the points Euripides scores against Aeschylus. Although this is the appropriate term for small stones used as counters, because it is also the technical term for the voting pebbles cast in trials, it may have served as a reminder of the *dêmos*' recent use of these items in their emotionally informed vote to execute the generals (*Hell.* 1.7.9-10; cf. *Ath. Pol.* 69.1). The use of *psêphoi* in this instance was unusual, because the vote to condemn should have been taken in the Assembly by a show of hands (*Hell.* 1.7.7, 34); instead, agreeing to the motion by Meneclês, the *dêmos* created a memorable use of their *psêphoi* in condemning these men by secret ballot. Immediately thereafter, Euripides chooses lines that refer to cries of dying men and the failure of anyone to save them (1264), ending with a reference to a lakeshore (1266).³³

Finally, it is worth noting that all of these comments, which to a greater or lesser degree evoke thoughts of Arginusae, are set in a play that contains a greater abundance of maritime imagery than any other of Aristophanes' extant plays.³⁴ He makes use of such imagery on fourteen occasions, six of which involve storms (361, 822-5, 848, 852, 1220-1).³⁵ Given that most of this imagery occurs in the context of the poets' contest, it could be argued that it is typical tragic fare; however, tragedy provided numerous lines involving female victims and avengers, or poisoners, murderers and suicides, as well as battles fought exclusively on land,

that could have served just as effectively if the point of the exercise was *solely* to contrast the poetic styles and content of Aeschylus' and Euripides' tragedies. Their topicality in light of Arginusae and its aftermath is striking, especially given that two of the longest comments on naval warfare (whatever the ordering or originality) appear near the end of play in relation to Alcibiades and the city's salvation, in a scene which rehearses the advice given by the chorus. Euripides' first response to the question about Alcibiades (1427-9) iterates the chorus' concern over who is fit to join the 'blessed throng' (cf. 359-62), while his second iterates their advice to select different leaders proffered in the parabasis.

Although separated out and presented here according to the probable strength of these comments to trigger thoughts of Arginusae, collectively this evidence suggests that the Arginusae affair constituted a significant event for Aristophanes, one which he could not let pass without repeated comment.³⁶ But rather than clustering these images together in two or three blocks, or giving his audience one strongly jarring reminder of recent troubles before moving on to consistently lighter fare, Aristophanes sprinkles them throughout the play, affording his audience little opportunity to forget their recent troubles. For, it is important to recognize that once a memory of some event has been stimulated, especially if it was a highly emotional one, it often remains in the forefront of the mind, making it more likely that other less explicit statements will be heard in relation to that event.

Second thoughts on Theramenes

Although we do not know when the Athenians began to feel remorse over the actions they took only a few months before the Lenaia of 405, it seems likely that Aristophanes was responding to sentiments that were 'in the air' by this time.³⁷ Perhaps their emotion-fuelled actions were being discussed only in the privacy of individual homes among small groups of associates, but not in public where it may have been dangerous to critique the city's past actions. However, by addressing the serious political issues of the day in a humorous manner, while simultaneously stimulating the people's memory of their hastily enacted trial and execution of the commanders, Aristophanes may have successfully challenged the Athenian *dêmos* both to listen more critically to the voices which stood forth to proffer them advice in all public arenas and to take better care in their selection of their civic officials.

Thus, despite the fact that very soon, possibly within days of *Frogs*' production, Theramenes had garnered enough support to become general-elect, with the benefit of the time afforded between the election and the scrutiny of the victors, Aristophanes' advice that it was not too late to mend their ways and 'appropriate the appropriate [persons] again' (*chrêsthe tois chrêtoisin*, 735, cf. 1443-50) for their advisors and leaders had the opportunity to 'sink in' and to be converted into action at his *dokimasia*. For as the people well knew, Theramenes had been a supporter of the oligarchic coup (8.68.4) and, according to Lysias (12.66), he was rewarded with the title *stratêgos* ('general') by them. When their policies appeared too extreme, he switched sides, aided the democrats in their ouster of the oligarchs, and was instrumental in the institution of the short-lived constitution of the Five Thousand (8.89.2-94.1), a far less inclusive constitution than had been in place before the oligarchic coup. Nevertheless, it seems that he continued to serve as general (Diod. 13.47.4-8, 49-51) until, in

company with Alcibiades, he was defeated at the battle of Notium in 407/6 (Xen. *Hell.* 1.4.16). In other words, Theramenes was one of those men whom the people had made use of before.³⁸

When at his *dokimasia*, the examiners posed the last set question in Ps-Aristotle's list to Theramenes, which asked whether he had gone on campaign when required (*Ath. Pol.* 55.3), and subsequently opened the examination to the floor by asking if anyone wished to bring an accusation against the candidate-elect (*Ath. Pol.* 55.4), it is highly likely that Theramenes' most recent activities as trierarch would have come under further scrutiny. This is all the more likely if any lingering doubts about his failure to follow orders or his commitment to the democracy had been magnified by his presentation in *Frogs* as a man who had his own, rather than the city's, best interests at heart and as one who, when under threat, would easily switch to the other side in order to save his own skin. Though not the worst of men, with the choral advice to select better leaders and the people's heightened sense of remorse over the execution of the generals (who were being replaced by this current election!), it is highly plausible that the people were unwilling to risk placing the city's salvation in the hands of one such as Theramenes, lest they give themselves cause to proclaim, *pace* Eupolis: 'But now we take the field, who knows where, electing as our generals the scum of the earth'³⁹ (fr. 384).

Notes

1. See, for example, Arnott 1991, Slater 1999: 365-6. For a concise overview of the position taken by scholars on whether Aristophanes expected his advice to be taken seriously, see Storey 2003: 338.

2. All dates are BC unless otherwise indicated.

3. As the *katabasis* of Dionysos nears its end, Euripides iterates the *parabasis*' advice that the citizens choose better sorts of men for their leaders (1443-50). On whether *katabasis* or *parabasis* should be read, see Sommerstein 1993: 461-4.

4. Although some debate continues, the majority favour Sommerstein's argument (1993) that *Frogs* was re-staged at the Lenaea of 404. Cf. MacDowell 1995: 298-9.

5. On the *dokimasia*, see Adeleye 1983, Todd 1993: 115-16 and *passim*.

6. Lysias intimates that his rejection was based on his suspected anti-democratic sentiments (οὐ νομιζόντες εὖνουν εἶναι τῷ πλήθει τῷ ὑμετέρῳ, 13.10). Cf. Adeleye 1983: 300-1; Todd 1993: 288-9; Rhodes 1972: 12.

7. For assessments of Theramenes' character see, Frank and Monoson 2009, McCoy 1997, Buck 1995, Ehrhardt 1995, Lang 1992, Harding 1974, Usher 1968.

8. For the precedent of collective trials see Munn 2000: 186, 404 n. 31. For discussion of the trial, see, Lang, 1992, Bauman 1990: 69-75, Andrews, 1974. Whereas Hunt 2001 locates the *dêmos*' hostility to the generals in their resentment over the emancipation of slaves and attendant promise of citizenship, Munn 2000: 181 observes that because the ships on the flank which suffered the greatest damage and losses were manned by Athenians, the *dêmos*' intense grief easily shifted into anger.

9. Two commanders, Protomachus and Aristogenes, went into voluntary exile pre-trial, but

were tried and condemned to death *in absentia* along with the six who had returned to Athens (*Hell.* 1.7.34).

10. Andrews 1974: 121 believes that the remorse was fully realised by the Lenaea of 405; Munn 2000: 192 implies that such sentiments were not aroused before the naval defeat at Aegospotami.

11. Cf. Hamel 1998: 15; Adeleye 1977: 48; Fornara 1969: 17 n. 23.

12. Mikalson: 1975: 109-10. He suggests (110) that the festival may have occupied a full eight days, from Gamelion 12-19, which seems excessively long given that the city's premier dramatic festival, the City Dionysia, ran for only 4-5 days. But his evidence for it falling between Gamelion 12 and 19 is sound.

13. Both calendar systems were more complicated than this. When the Civic calendar was based on a 366-day year, the first six prytanies were 37 days and the last four 36 +/-1. When its year was coterminous with the Festival calendar year, the same pattern of 6 longer and 4 shorter prytanies was maintained: in an ordinary, 354-day year, the prytanies had 36 and 35 days, while in an intercalary year of 384 days, they were 39 and 38 days. Within the Festival calendar, a month might be either full (30 days) or hollow (29 days), according to an alternating pattern; however, the Archon could decide to add or subtract a day or more to any month to affect seasonal adjustments when need arose.

14. The following discussion is based on the probability that 406/5 was an intercalary year (see Dinsmoor 1931: 421). Of course, it must be acknowledged that if it were an ordinary year, Prytany VII is more likely to have fallen in early Anthesterion, with its first meeting several weeks after the Lenaea. Such a delay between the staging of *Frogs* and Theramenes' election would undermine the argument developed here, unless *Frogs* was granted its second performance at the City Dionysia in 406/5. If that were the case, the argument would be strengthened, with the election of Theramenes occurring prior to the second production and his rejection coming shortly after it.

15. Meritt: 1928.

16. Pritchett: 2001.

17. According to Herodotus (2.4), the Athenians maintained a regular pattern of alternating ordinary and intercalary years (but see Hannah 2005: 35; 2009: 37). If 407/6 was the initial year for the establishment of coterminous calendars, as Meritt 1961: 212-13 later came to accept (based on a proposed restoration of *IG I² 304B*), 406/5 should have been an intercalary year. Cf. Rhodes 1972: 224-5; 1993: 406-7; Pritchett 2001: 181. Evidence suggests that the Athenians preferred to intercalate months in the first half of the year, although Gamelion itself, as well as Anthesterion, could be doubled; see Hannah 2009: 37. For convenience, [Fig. 8.2](#) has used Poseideon as the reduplicated month. On the inconclusive nature of the evidence that coterminous calendars had been reinstated by 407/6, see Dunn 1998: 46.

18. Cf. *Dem. Against Meidias* 10. However, the complaint in Aristophanes' *Clouds* (615-26) seems to suggest that while the Civic calendar was running roughly in keeping with the solar year, some civic business may have been scheduled on festival days. Cf. Dunn 1999: 378-9 and 1998: 47-50.

19. I say 'roughly' because we can determine neither whether the Archon added or

subtracted any days from the calendar prior to the Lenaea nor whether the alternating pattern of full and hollow months was strictly observed. If, for some reason, the Archon had decided to make all six of the first months of the year full, that would have the effect of bringing the Lenaea closer to the start of Prytany VII by three days.

20. On ostracism, see Mattingly 1991; on delay between the decision to hold an ostracism and the actual event see, Christ 1992: 339; for possible ritual basis for the procedure, see Mirhardy 1997.

21. Ps-Aristotle (*Ath. Pol.* 44.4) indicates that the time between election and assumption of office could be as much as four prytanies. Cf. Fornara 1969: 40; Hamel 1998: 15.

22. See [Ps] Arist *Ath. Pol.* 53.3-4 for the set questions posed to the candidates-elect and other procedural matters.

23. Sommerstein 1996 ad 48.

24. On Erasinides, see Lang 1992: 267-8.

25. Munn (2000: 402 n. 18), observing the absence of Erasinides and Diomedon from Diodorus' list of generals (13.101.5) and Xenophon's notice that the Athenians replaced two generals (1.7.1), infers that these two were replaced before the other generals were recalled.

26. The Apaturia fell in Pyanopsion (roughly late October), which means that the execution of the generals would have occurred well within three months of the Lenaea if the Civic solar year were still in use, four months if the coterminous calendars were in operation. Cf. Adeleye 1977: 48. On Theramenes' exploitation of this festival, see Xen *Hell.* 1.7.8; Hunt 2001: 375-6.

27. An earlier allusion to the Apaturia may have been heard when the Mystic chorus noted that Archedemus did not have his 'phratry-teeth' at age seven (420), suggesting that his entry into his father's phratry had been contested.

28. Sommerstein 1996: ad 574.

29. Worthington 1989: 361 suggests 'save your bacon' as a modern equivalent, and takes the comment to infer the men who fought (unsuccessfully) to keep themselves from drowning.

30. The Athenians also learned during the trial that there had been a 'battle' of sorts among the generals in the field over whether they should take the time to retrieve the dead and shipwrecked or pursue the Spartan fleet immediately (*Hell.* 1.7.29).

31. Marshall 1996.

32. See Stanford 1958 ad loc.

33. Diodorus (13.100.4) reports that the bodies of those who drowned at Arginusae began washing up on the shores of Cyme and Phocaea soon after the event.

34. *Acharnians* has the next highest count (95-7 [3], 162-3, 190, 546-54 [6], 622, 680, 918), although nine of these involve activities in the Piraeus.

35. The other eight instances are: 'an enormous, bottomless lake' and 'an old sailor' (137-40); 'the city is in the arms of the waves' (704); the sea-faring image (1207); references to sea waves and prows of ships (1310, 1318); Euripides' reference to a naval battle (whatever its line numbers); and Aeschylus' comment on the fleet (1465). In addition, Theramenes' ability to position himself advantageously involves ship imagery: he is one who knows how to 'roll to the better (safer) side of the ship' (536-8)!

36. Hubbard 1991: 208 n. 135, considers the uncomplimentary manner and context in which

Archedemus, Theramenes, and Erisinides are named evidence which ‘suggests that Aristophanes strongly disapproved of the generals’ condemnation’.

37. Although various forms of literature can be used to initiate thought and action on a particular issue, more often the literary and performance arts reflect a trend that is already developing in the ‘real world’. I would like to thank Harry Love for a stimulating discussion on this point.

38. Additionally, with the recall of Alcibiades a current topic of deep concern and one which becomes the focus of the final test between Euripides and Aeschylus in *Frogs* (1420-36, OCT), the fact that Theramenes had actively advocated for his return may have made some suspicious of Theramenes’ own ambitions.

39. Tr. Storey 2003: 29.

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Notes on Aristophanes' *Frogs*

Alan H. Sommerstein

1. *Frogs* 71-107

It has long been suspected that all or some of the references to Sophocles in *Frogs* were inserted into an already more or less complete script before the first production, when the death of Sophocles made it necessary for any dramatist presenting a play including a contest between deceased tragic poets, and the resurrection of one of them to live again on earth, to take him into account. In particular, C.F. Russo¹ argued that Aristophanes inserted lines 71-85 into the prologue, suppressing a previously composed passage which included *inter alia* 'mischievous praise' by Dionysus of Euripides as a loquacious talker (said to be presupposed at 91) and objections by Heracles to the very idea of an expedition to Hades (said to be presupposed by ἔτι 'any more' in 117). Dover² identifies the insertion with lines 71-107, without making it clear whether he thinks that any existing material was deleted at that point; in my own edition³ I argued that 71-88 was the new insertion and that in the pre-revision script 89 had followed on directly from 70.

Recently Weissenberger⁴ has made yet another proposal. He identifies the passage inserted after Sophocles' death as 71-97, on the ground that Dionysus' words in 98-102 about Euripides' fecundity in coining bold expressions link well to 68-70 where he expresses his unshakable determination to go in quest of Euripides, and supposes that in the original script 70 had been followed by a question from Heracles asking what it was that made Dionysus so fond of Euripides.

Prima facie Weissenberger has a point, inasmuch as 89-97 appear to assume, just like 71-88, that there is no living poet congenial to Dionysus. But in this passage Heracles assumes that what it takes to make a poet congenial to Dionysus is loquacity (λαλιά, cf. 91) – not a characteristic that is ever associated with Sophocles, in comedy or elsewhere; and Dionysus in reply distinguishes between the *mere* loquacity of the younger poets and Euripides' talent for creating memorable and incongruous expressions – again, a talent that we do not find attributed to Sophocles.

There is therefore nothing in the content of 89-97 (indeed, of 89-107) that compels us to regard it as having been written after the death of Sophocles. Much of the preceding passage on the other hand does presuppose Sophocles' death – not just 76-82, which explicitly places him in Hades, but also 71-2 (there are no good poets left alive) and 73-5 (naming Iophon, not Sophocles, as the most obvious potential exception to that generalisation).

How far, if at all, beyond 82 does the insertion extend? One possible clue would be the presence of what may be called a creaking joint: at the point where the insertion ends (with line *n*) and the original text resumes (with line *n* + 1), we may find that there is a less than perfect fit, because line *n* + 1 was not originally written to follow line *n*.

There is perhaps a slight inconcinnity at 82/3, as the discussion, having passed from the living Iophon to the dead Sophocles, reverts to the living (though in another sense departed) Agathon. But this was almost inevitable if Aristophanes wanted (i) to name Iophon first, presumably because he would be widely regarded as the best poet still living, *and* (ii) to include the joke about it being doubtful whether Iophon's plays really were his own unaided work – which required that Sophocles be mentioned directly after Iophon – *and* (iii) to mention some other living poets also.

There is no creaking joint at 85/86; the catalogue entries simply get shorter and shorter, until in the end Dionysus is not allowed to waste any words at all on the last poet named, Pythangelus.

At 88/9, as I noted in my edition,⁵ the word ἐνταῦθα 'here' would be much more effective if 89 directly followed 70 than it is in the present state of the text. Heracles would then be asking Dionysus why he needs to go *down to Hades* ('and even lower', 70) in quest of Euripides when there are other poets *up here* who should be at least equally to his liking. As the text stands now, with 89 following 88, ἐνταῦθα makes no such contrast with anything in its immediate context: the last two persons mentioned, Xenocles and Pythangelus, are 'here' (i.e. in Athens) just as much as are the unnamed young poets of 89-91.

At 97/8, far from there being a creaking joint, there is a seamless linkage, as Heracles asks Dionysus what he means by γόνιμον (96) and Dionysus responds in a way that also explains his phrase ῥῆμα γενναῖον (97). If there was a late insertion that ended with 97, then the transition has been so well reworked as to leave no trace.

At 107/8, by any reckoning, the discussion prompted originally by Dionysus' declaration of his passion for Euripides (52-67) has come to an end, and Dionysus is at last ready to proceed to the real business of his visit to Heracles, namely to ask him for advice about his journey and information about his destination. There is thus bound to be something of a break in the thread of the dialogue at this point, whether an inserted passage ended here or not.

I conclude that 88/9 is the only point at which we can say that there is a creaking joint between lines n and $n + 1$ which ceases to creak if we assume that the section from line 71 to line n was inserted after the death of Sophocles into an already composed text. We have already seen that nothing in 89-107 requires that Sophocles be dead. Accordingly I continue to hold that the passage which Aristophanes inserted at this relatively late stage was 71-88. In the prologue as at first written, therefore, Dionysus was challenged, as in the present text, to explain why no one but the dead Euripides would satisfy him; he was thus afforded an opportunity to give us an idea of his taste in language, and Heracles to declare, in unconscious prophecy, that Dionysus did not know what his own true preferences were (104, cf. 1468); but no individual poet other than Euripides was mentioned by name, and the criteria that a poet had to satisfy in order to appeal to Dionysus were so framed that Sophocles – still alive at that time – could not come into the picture.

2. *Frogs* 100

Modern taste finds nothing objectionable, or particularly daring, in the phrase 'the foot of Time'. It certainly seemed blameless to Shakespeare:

Let's take the instant by the forward top;
For we are old, and on our quick'st decrees
The inaudible and noiseless foot of Time
Steals ere we can effect them. (*All's Well that Ends Well* 5.3.39-42)

O fearful meditation! Where, alack,
Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest lie hid?
Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back?
Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid? (*Sonnet* 65.9-12)

And apparently also to Euripides; at any rate he was prepared to use it at least twice:

καὶ χρόνου πρὸς βαινε πούς

'And the foot of time was advancing'⁶ (Eur. fr. 42, from *Alexandros*)

κρυπτεύουσι δὲ ποικίλως
δαρὸν χρόνου πόδα καὶ
θηρῶσιν τὸν ἄσεπτον.

'They [the gods] subtly conceal
the slow foot of time and
hunt down him who is impious' (*Bacchae* 888-90)

Yet to the Aristophanic Dionysus this phrase deserves a place alongside two pieces of nonsense misremembered from Euripidean plays, αἰθέρα Διὸς δωμάτιον 'the sky, the bedroom of Zeus' (Euripides had written αἰθέρ' οἴκησιν Διὸς 'the sky, the dwelling-place of Zeus' fr. 487 – and Aristophanes had quoted it accurately in *Thesm.* 272) and a grotesque and almost meaningless garbling of *Hipp.* 612. Those two passages were made ludicrous by being misquoted; 'the foot of time', it seems, could be regarded as ludicrous even when quoted correctly. Why should this be so?

Henderson⁷ claimed that πούς ('foot') in comedy could mean 'penis', referring to Eubulus fr. 108.3 Kock (107.3 K-A) and Epicrates fr. 10.5 Kock (9.5 K-A) (and to Eur. *Med.* 679). The Eubulus passage, though corrupt, certainly has an erotic content of some kind, since it speaks of a male person lying in a bedchamber surrounded by girls who will rub his πούς with perfume. In Antiphanes fr. 101, to be sure, where a man speaks of the pleasure of having his πόδες ('feet') rubbed by the 'soft, beautiful hands' of a *hetaira*, it seems likely that whatever may be *about* to happen, at the moment being described the man is merely having a foot massage; but nobody has an aromatherapy massage on just *one* foot (unless indeed he has lost the other), and the use of the singular by Eubulus may well have been a sufficient hint that he was referring to a different body part. The Epicrates passage uses a series of nautical expressions some of which can also be used in sexual senses, together with at least one expression which can hardly be understood in any other way (τὴν νέαν ... πλήρωσον 'fill up the young woman'⁸); χάλα πόδα (nautically speaking 'slacken the sheet') is the last phrase in the passage, and one

would expect it to form a comic climax. One may certainly agree with Bain⁹ that some assistance from the context is needed in order for πούς to be understood in an obscene sense; but such assistance can be given in many ways, and the advice given to the supposed Mr Death Bredon (really Lord Peter Wimsey) in Dorothy Sayers' *Murder Must Advertise* – 'that if, by the most far-fetched stretch of ingenuity, an indecent meaning could be read into a[n advertisement] headline, that was the meaning that the great British Public would infallibly read into it'¹⁰ – may be assumed to have applied in full measure (*mutatis mutandis*) to Athenian comedy. It is no doubt relevant that πούς was phonetically quite close to πέος ('penis').

There may be another relevant passage later in *Frogs* itself, when Aeschylus is singing a mock-Euripidean lyric with the aid of the 'Muse of Euripides' and suddenly breaks it off to ask ὄρᾱς τὸν πόδα τοῦτον; 'do you see that foot?' (probably referring to a metrical irregularity) to which Dionysus replies ὄρῶ 'yes, I do', and then asks again τί δαί; τοῦτον ὄρᾱς; 'well, do you see that one?' and receives the same reply (1323-4) – after which he accuses Euripides of composing his lyrics after the manner of the multi-talented *hetaira* Cyrene. For the exchange 1323-4 to be funny, it has to be assumed that πούς is being understood (by different characters and/or by the audience) in at least two different senses, and since Aeschylus and Euripides, like other male comic characters, will be wearing phalli, there would certainly be opportunity for Dionysus to indicate by gesture that he was taking Aeschylus to be referring to them.

There is another reason for suspecting that this may be what is funny about πόδα in *Frogs* 100. The other 'venturesome' (παρακεκινδυνευμένον, 99) expression ascribed to Euripides in the same line is distorted, as already noted, by substituting for Euripides' οἴκησιν 'dwelling' the untragic word δωμάτιον 'bedroom' – a word that carries sexual connotations in three of its four occurrences in comedy outside *Frogs* (*Lys.* 160, *Eccl.* 8, Eubulus fr. 102.1; the probable exception is Ar. fr. 18) and sometimes in other texts too (e.g. *Lysias* 1.24, *Pl. Rep.* 3.390c). After this, the listener will be primed to look for a sexual connotation in the next phrase as well. And, as we have seen, mention of a male person's (or in this case a male personification's) πούς, in such a context as to imply that he only has one, may convey such a connotation. The joke, it seems, was so good that it was repeated at 311.

3. *Frogs* 273-76

Willi¹¹ is probably right to reverse the usual speaker assignments in this passage. The crucial point is that ἐνταυθοῖ means 'here' (as Dover¹² in his somewhat tortured note makes evident despite himself), and it is Xanthias who should be asking 'What are things like here?' since it is Xanthias who has just arrived back on stage (after running all the way round the Acherusian lake, 193) whereas Dionysus has remained on stage the whole time. It should also be Xanthias who asks Dionysus whether he has seen the 'father-beaters and perjurers' spoken of by Heracles (145-51); for it was Dionysus who was told by Heracles that he would see them, and it is Dionysus who has followed the route that Heracles mapped out.

It does not follow, however, that Willi is right to suppose that the sinners whom Dionysus saw are none other than the Frogs. Indeed, he is certainly wrong: (i) Dionysus (as Willi himself correctly notes) did not see the Frogs,¹³ whereas (ii) he not only has seen the sinners but

assumes that Xanthias has too (275); and (iii) Heracles told Dionysus that he would see the sinners (and the fearsome beasts of 143-4, cf. 278-308) *after* crossing the lake (μετὰ τοῦτ' 143). From (iii) it follows that 'here' in 273 no longer means 'at the lake', and we must assume that since he disembarked from the boat Dionysus has moved some distance (presumably while calling out to Xanthias, 271) and, looking about him, can see (as now can Xanthias) plenty of father-beaters, perjurers, etc. – in the audience (276)!¹⁴

4. *Frogs* 326 etc.

The 'flowery meadows' repeatedly mentioned in the parodos of *Frogs* (344, 352, 372-3, 442, 448-9) are said by a scholiast (on 344) to have been spoken of by Sophocles (fr. 891), doubtless in his *Triptolemus* which probably included Demeter's original establishment of the Eleusinian Mysteries.¹⁵ The phrase ἀνθοφόρον ... ἄλσος (442) may well derive from Sophocles' play, since the poetic use of ἄλσος in the sense 'level expanse' peaked in the early years of Sophocles' career (which were also the later years of Aeschylus' career) and was almost obsolete by 405. And 'level expanse' is what ἄλσος must mean here: the area in question is repeatedly called a λειμῶν, and therefore it cannot be a wooded grove.¹⁶

5. *Frogs* 586-8

Having instructed his slave Xanthias to take over his Heracles-costume (494-500) when he was threatened with arrest and torture by the Hadean authorities, Dionysus shortly afterwards insisted on resuming it when offered the chance of dining with Persephone and meeting some underworld *hetairai* (522-33). But almost immediately afterwards two female innkeepers appear, accusing 'Heracles' of having bilked them of payment for a large amount of food last time he was in Hades, and send for Cleon and Hyperbolus, formidable prosecutors when on earth, to bring him to court – and as soon as the two women have departed (579-82) Dionysus is beseeching Xanthias to take over the disguise again. Xanthias refuses, quoting back at Dionysus his own words about the absurdity of a mortal and a slave masquerading as 'the son of Alcmena' (582-3, cf. 530-1), and a desperate Dionysus offers him a solemn oath (586-8):

If I ever take [the Heracles-costume] away from you from this time on, then may I perish most miserably and be utterly annihilated – myself, my wife, my children, and bleary-eyed Archedemus too!

On this I commented:¹⁷

Additional force and solemnity was often added to an oath by including the swearer's family as well as himself in the scope of the curse should the oath be violated. ... Here, however, the apparent reinforcement of the oath is illusory, since myth knows of no marriage for Dionysus, and in archaic and classical Greek sources he usually has no children either ...

However, I noted as an exception the case of Thoas, king of Lemnos, mentioned in the prologue of Euripides' *Hypsipyle* which will be quoted later in *Frogs* (1211-13), and I also cited with

approval the remark of Tucker¹⁸ that the mention of Archedemus would, from Xanthias' point of view, 'be a great inducement' to agree to the exchange of roles, since even if Dionysus broke his oath (as Xanthias expects him to, 599-601), Xanthias and the Athenian people would still have the consolation that they would be rid of Archedemus ('number one for villainy in those parts' according to the chorus, 421).

I was too kind to Dionysus. The action of the play is set in 406/5 BC, after the death of Euripides, the battle of Arginusae, the trial of the generals, and (in the final version of the script) the death of Sophocles too. Thoas is therefore long dead, as is any other human offspring with which Dionysus may have been credited in any version of any heroic myth, and the imprecation of destruction upon them is thus meaningless. So too is Dionysus' similar imprecation upon himself, since he is immortal – as he himself will be pointing out shortly afterwards (629, 631). As for Archedemus, if Dionysus has any intelligence at all (which admittedly, on the evidence of his words and actions to date, may be open to some doubt) and wishes Athens well (which no Athenian would be inclined to doubt), it can be assumed that he as much as Xanthias would regard the destruction of Archedemus as a blessing. Thus *every* clause of Dionysus' oath is in reality totally worthless!

It may be added that Dionysus, nevertheless, does not in fact break his oath; he never again attempts to resume the identity of Heracles. When Xanthias (as Heracles) offers Dionysus (as his slave) for interrogation under torture regarding the allegation that he (Heracles) had stolen a dog (Cerberus), Dionysus warns all concerned (628-32) that he must not be tortured, because he is an immortal, namely ... Dionysus. It is presently agreed that both he and Xanthias/Heracles will be flogged, in order to determine which of them is a god (for a god will feel no pain), and they are ordered to strip (641); Xanthias will thus take off the Heracleian lion-skin, it will be cleared away at or before the end of the scene, and when Dionysus reappears to judge the contest between Aeschylus and Euripides, he will undoubtedly be costumed as himself, undisguised.

6. *Frogs* 1185

Ευ.	“ἦν Οἰδίπους τὸ πρῶτον εὐτυχῆς ἀνὴρ” –	
Αι.	μὰ τὸν Δι’ οὐ δῆτ’, ἀλλὰ κακοδαίμων φύσει, ὄντινά γε πρὶν φῦναι μὲν ἀπόλλων ἔφη ἀποκτενεῖν τὸν πατέρα –	
Δι.		πρὶν καὶ γεγονέναι; 1185
Αι.	πῶς οὗτος ἦν “τὸ πρῶτον εὐτυχῆς ἀνὴρ”;	

Euripides: ‘Oedipus was a fortunate man at first –’

Aeschylus: No, by Zeus, he was *not*! He was born to misery. For a start he was the man who, before his birth, Apollo said would kill his father –

Dionysus: Before he was even born?

Aeschylus: How can you say he was ‘a fortunate man at first’?

1182 εὐτυχῆς VAK and most secondary witnesses, including schol. Aesch. *Sept.*

775: εὐδαίμων R and schol. Aesch. *Sept.* 772

1185b assigned to Dionysus by van Leeuwen: continued to Aeschylus in mss.

Van Leeuwen¹⁹ gave the last three words of line 1185 to Dionysus as a question, with the following note:

verba πρὶν φῦναι non ab ἔφη sed ab infinitivo ἀποκτενεῖν suspensa esse putat Dionysus, vel potius iocose fingit: *in fatisne erat ut patrem prius etiam interficeret quam natus esset ipse?! [punctuation as in original]*

Dionysus thinks – or rather comically pretends – that the words πρὶν φῦναι ('before his birth') depend not on ἔφη ('[Apollo] said') but on the infinitive ἀποκτενεῖν ('would kill') [and thus is asking]: 'was it his destiny that before he was even born he should kill his father?!'

Stanford,²⁰ while not adopting this proposal, finds it 'rather attractive'; but Dover²¹ rejects it on two grounds. His first argument, that 'there is no hint of a change of speaker in the MSS or scholia', is rightly discounted by Wilson,²² 'since the MSS are not authoritative in this matter'; Wilson nevertheless concludes that Dover is 'probably right'. Yet Dover's only other argument is not of much cogency either: it is that there is 'no reason why we should not interpret the words as a forceful repetition of the point of πρὶν φῦναι'.²³ That would be an argument of some, though not overwhelming, force against an *alteration* to the transmitted text; but, as Wilson points out, van Leeuwen's proposal does *not* in any real sense alter the transmitted text. It is probably significant, therefore, that both Dover and Wilson speak of van Leeuwen assigning the three words to Dionysus 'as a puzzled question'. As his note above shows, that was not at all what van Leeuwen had in mind; his Dionysus is not expressing puzzlement – rather, he is making a joke.²⁴ And if in a comic text, without altering a letter, we can introduce a joke where previously there was none, rather than asking whether there is any 'reason why we should not' continue to read the text in the jokeless form in which our manuscripts present it, we ought to be asking whether there is any reason why we *should*. Such a reason might be, for example, that the proposal would be out of keeping with the poet's style or with the character of Dionysus as presented elsewhere in the play and especially in its second half. In fact it is thoroughly *in* keeping with them.

Speaking of 'the formal agon' (895-1098), Dover²⁵ writes: 'most of the time [Dionysus] plays the part of the βωμολόχος ['buffoon'] who comments facetiously (934, 968-70, 1036-8, 1067f., 1074-6), naively (916-20, 921, 930, 1023f., 1028f.), or maliciously (952f., 1047f.) on what the disputants say' – a role, as he notes (p. 42 n. 17), similar to that played by Euelpides in the *agôn* of *Birds* (463-626). He adds that this "'idiocy and inanity" [is] in abeyance during the weighing-scene [1364-1410]', but it is very much in evidence in 1119-248, when the two contestants are criticising each other's prologues; see (with varying proportions of facetiousness, naivety and malice) 1130, 1132-3, 1149, 1158-9, 1169, 1175-7, 1195-6, 1209, 1214, 1220-1, 1224, 1227-8, 1234-6, 1242, 1246-7 (at 1149 and 1245, as in van Leeuwen's version of 1185, Dionysus interrupts a speaker in mid-sentence). It will be seen that a similar interjection at 1185 would fill what would otherwise be the longest gap in this sequence.

After these interventions by Dionysus, we sometimes find that the previous speaker makes a comment, and sometimes (as at 1186 according to van Leeuwen) he continues as though nothing had been said. Both patterns are found in the passage (1018-30) where Aeschylus claims credit for having stimulated Athenians to martial valour. When Aeschylus says of his *Seven against Thebes* that ‘any man who watched it would have been seized with desire to play the warrior’, Dionysus absurdly complains (1023-4) that Aeschylus made *the Thebans* into braver warriors – as if Thebans had formed the audience of the play! – and Aeschylus answers, with surprising politeness, that the Athenians had had the opportunity to cultivate the same qualities and had failed to take it. He then speaks of his *Persians*, saying that in it he ‘taught [the Athenians] always to be eager to defeat their opponents’, and at this Dionysus irrelevantly recalls with pleasure (1028-9) the gestures and vocalisations of the Persian chorus in the ghost scene; Aeschylus ignores this, and Dionysus’ interruption at 1169 is similarly ignored by Euripides. Elsewhere in *Frogs* (797-801) we find Pluto’s slave completing a grammatically continuous sentence, without hesitation or deviation, in disregard of two bomolochic questions interposed by Xanthias.

There is thus, to echo Dover, no reason why we should not, with van Leeuwen, interpret the three words we have been discussing as a ‘buffoonish misinterpretation’ (Stanford). To bring this out we might translate the passage thus (adjusting Aeschylus’ phrase-order so as to preserve the ambiguity in English):

Euripides: ‘Oedipus was a fortunate man at first –’

Aeschylus: No, by Zeus, he was not! He was born to misery. Why, Apollo said he’d kill his father before he was even born!

Dionysus: Kill his father before he was born? Eh?

Aeschylus (ignoring this): So how could he be called ‘a fortunate man at first’?

The comic force of the passage is further spiced, for the more knowing spectator, by a fact, noted by the scholia, to which attention has been drawn afresh by Craik²⁶ and Mastronarde²⁷ in their editions of Euripides’ *Phoenician Maidens*: Aeschylus in this passage is closely paraphrasing Euripides himself, though not the play (*Antigone*) whose opening Euripides had begun to quote in 1182 (and will continue in 1187). What is more – a point that neither Craik nor Mastronarde notes – the Euripidean passage in question (*Phoen.* 1595-9) contains just the same ambiguity that Aristophanes here exploits:

ὦ μοῖρ’, ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς ὡς μ’ ἔφυσας ἄθλιον
καὶ τλήμων’, εἴ τις ἄλλος ἀνθρώπων ἔφυ-
ῶν καὶ πρὶν ἐς φῶς μητρὸς ἐκ γονῆς μολεῖν
ἄγονον Ἀπόλλων Λαῖψ μ’ ἐθέσπισεν
φονέα γενέσθαι πατρός.

Euripides evidently meant this to be understood thus (Oedipus is the speaker):

O Fate, in what wretchedness and misery, beyond all other mortals, you brought me into the world, right from the start – when Apollo, before I came out of my mother’s womb

into the light, when I was yet unborn, prophesied to Laius that I would become the murderer of my father.

But the last line and a half are also capable of meaning that Apollo

prophesied to Laius that I, when I was yet unborn, would become the murderer of my father.

I said that the words are *capable* of bearing that second meaning; but the ambiguity is one that could exist only in the mind of an imbecile – or of a comedian. It cannot be a coincidence that when Aristophanes reworked the passage, his version carried within it the same ambiguity. He had evidently noticed it when watching or reading Euripides' play;²⁸ and he would not have gone to the trouble of reproducing it without taking the opportunity to exploit it comically. The presence of the ambiguity in the Euripidean passage is thus further evidence in support of van Leeuwen's division of *Frogs* 1185.

7. *Frogs* 1403

ἐφ' ἄρματος γὰρ ἄρμα καὶ νεκρῶ νεκρός

For chariot on chariot and corpse on corpse –

Aeschylus' choice of this line from *Glaucus of Potniae* (Aesch. fr. 38) to 'outweigh' Euripides will be particularly galling to the latter because it was a line that Euripides himself had recently imitated – once again, as it happens, in his *Phoenician Maidens* (1194-5).²⁹

τροχοὶ τ' ἐπήδων ἄξονές τ' ἐπ' ἄξοσιν
νεκροὶ τε νεκροῖς ἐξεσωρεύονθ' ὁμοῦ

Wheels leaped into the air, and axles were piled up
on axles, and corpses on corpses, all together

Admittedly Euripides had taken two lines rather than one, and had piled up only wheels and axles rather than whole chariots; on the other hand, where Aeschylus had 'put in ... two corpses' (1405), Euripides, with his plurals, had put in at least four. This Aeschylean-Aristophanic device of destroying Euripides οὐχ ὑπ' ἄλλων, ἀλλὰ τοῖς [αὐτοῦ] πτεροῖς³⁰ had first been deployed, one might say, when Aeschylus had induced Euripides to say that the qualities for which a poet should be admired included that of giving 'good counsel, and [making] people better members of their communities' (1009-10) – the very reverse, according to Aeschylus, of what Euripides had actually done –and will culminate when Euripides' final discomfiture is effected by Dionysus justifying his desertion of his former favourite by directly quoting Euripides' own words back at him (1471, 1475, 1477).³¹

Notes

1. Russo 1961: 50-2; 1962: 312-13 = 1994: 198-9; 1966: 3-5.
2. Dover 1993: 7-8.
3. Sommerstein 1996: 162-3.
4. Weissenberger 2008: 55-7.
5. Sommerstein 1996: 163.
6. All translations are my own.
7. Henderson 1975:129-30.
8. νέα is not a nautical term; the nearest nautical expression would probably be τὴν ναῦν πλήρωσον ‘man the ship, get the crew on board’.
9. Bain 1984: 210.
10. Sayers 1933/2003: 35-6.
11. Willi 2008: 201-3.
12. Dover 1993: 227-8.
13. See Marshall 1996 and Sommerstein 1996: 175-6.
14. That the reference here is to the audience was already perceived by the ancient commentators.
15. See Sommerstein & Talboy 2012: 229-31, 254-5.
16. On the semantic history of ἄλσος see Sommerstein 1997.
17. Sommerstein 1996: 207.
18. Tucker 1906 ad loc.
19. Van Leeuwen 1896 ad loc.
20. Stanford 1963: 172.
21. Dover 1993: 336.
22. Wilson 2007: 179.
23. Del Corno 1985: 228, finding neither the traditional view nor van Leeuwen’s satisfactory (though not giving any reason for rejecting the latter), takes πρὶν καὶ γεγονέναι to mean ‘before he was even conceived’, comparing Soph. OC 973 ἀγέννητος τότε ἦ: but if that was how Aristophanes wanted his audience to understand the phrase, he would not have used a verb whose normal meaning (when it refers to the beginning of a life) is ‘be born’.
24. Unless we suppose that he is making a fool of himself by genuinely misunderstanding Aeschylus’ words.
25. Dover 1993: 42.
26. Craik 1988: 261.
27. Mastrorarde 1994: 599-600.
28. It is not necessary to suppose that there was an actual blunder by an actor when *Phoenician Maidens* was performed, like that committed by Hegelochus in *Orestes* (*Frogs* 304; *Sannyrion* fr. 8; *Strattis* fr. 63): a professional comedian is likely to spot a potentially comic ambiguity of which the speaker/author, and most of the rest of the audience, remain unaware. I am particularly grateful to Toph Marshall for stimulating me to make this point explicit.
29. Indeed, the scholia on the Euripidean passage give us an extra line of the Aeschylean

fragment.

30. Aesch. fr. 139.4; Ar. *Birds* 808 (both with αὐτῶν).

31. Warm thanks to Toph Marshall for his comments on an earlier version of this paper.

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The Women's Decree: Law and its Other in *Ecclesiazusae*

Judith Fletcher

'The laws [*nomoi*] desire what is just [*to dikaion*]', according to Demosthenes (25.16). This concept pervades the institutional discourse of classical Athens. Naturally faith in the judicial system depended on the idea that law and justice were coterminous. Yet in the legal imagination of the city, manifested in the comedies and tragedies produced at state-sponsored festivals, law and justice are not always aligned.¹ Justice is meted out by individual vendettas in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, for example. There are no courts in Argos, and it is not until Athena institutes the Areopagus that law and justice come together. Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae* presents the inversion of this accomplishment: a dystopia where established law is overturned, courts are abolished, and justice is obtained by force. The rationale for this new regime is that the legal systems of Athens no longer operate for the good of the state (i.e. as democratic institutions), but rather as the instruments of selfishness: men use law to promote self-interest while the mechanisms of democracy such as the courts and assembly are more a means of earning money than a form of civic devotion. The reciprocity that is one of the lubricants of the Athenian polis – by which men provide services to the polis out of a sense of duty, and for which in turn they enjoy state festivals, legal protection, and other boons – has evaporated. Sycophants, including Praxagora's husband, launch cases for purely financial gain, and public prosecutors are only after the money (560-3); men commit perjury for profit (602); attendance at the assembly is more about getting paid three obols than serving the democracy; jury duty is equated with supporting the household, rather than justice (460-1).²

Praxagora's new regime attempts to solve this quandary by abolishing courts and legal processes. The solution is accomplished by a mutation of a probouletic decree formulated outside the legal space of Athens, at a women's festival, but brought before the legislative assembly of Athens. The decree passed in the *ekklêsia* turns the state over to the women, who have disguised themselves as men in order to exercise a vote. Praxagora explains that everyone must turn over his property and money to a common store to equalise wealth (590-4). The poor will no longer need to work for a living; food, wine and clothing will be distributed to all citizens equally (605-7); any man can sleep with any woman he desires, and beget children with her (613-15); young women will be required to sleep with old, ugly men first to insure equal distribution of sexual favours (626-9).

The new law promises to eradicate abuse of legal actions because it will abolish all courts of law. The elimination of private ownership will end disputes over property, and thus there will be no reason for litigation.³ Communal property will do away with citizens' need to serve as jurors to earn income. Beyond this, the women's decree will regulate and redistribute sexual pleasure, a measure that tests the concept of justice in this new regime. The decree that ends all law exposes the fragile, contestable quality of law but ultimately reaffirms its necessity.

In this paper I investigate how the women's decree, which has the force of law and is referred to as such, is in fact a malformed legal utterance. Its performative force is a strange combination of standard legislative procedures, a distortion of those procedures, and blatantly illegal processes. But if law is outlawed, can we speak any longer of what is legal and what is not? This is the comic paradox of a fictional world engendered by a legislative process in order to eliminate legal action. The enactment of the decree creates a society where there are no longer any legal remedies, and where violence rather than the rule of law prevails.

The politics of *Ecclesiazusae*

Any discussion of law in Aristophanes entails the controversial issue of his political stance. Legal and political issues were common elements of Old and Middle Comedy, but in the final analysis it is impossible to pin a specific political label on Aristophanes. Scholars have argued for the full spectrum, from a conservative with oligarchic sympathies to a radical democrat.⁴ We know that the Athenian *dêmos* honoured his contributions to democracy with a crown, 'since through his plays he sought to show that the Athenians' constitution was free, and not enslaved by any tyrant, but that it was a democracy and the *dêmos*, being free, ruled itself'.⁵ His role was 'to look critically at public affairs and public personalities, to show not just the theory of Athenian democracy, but the weaknesses and faults of the way the democratic institutions worked in practice'.⁶ Yet while the poet presented his audience with a simulacrum of their state's foolishness and corruption, he also assures them that:

both individually and collectively they were not responsible for the ugly state of common affairs. They were free to laugh at or disprove the way matters were. But they were not required to do anything about them.⁷

Of course the most important political influence on *Ecclesiazusae* would be the desire to win the dramatic competition, and to do that the poet had to make his audience laugh and think.

Ecclesiazusae, one of Aristophanes' most political plays, is both funny and thought provoking. Obviously it acknowledges the sovereignty of the *ekklêsia*, and the intrinsic connections between the Athenian political and legal system.⁸ The decision made at the *ekklêsia* is authoritative: once the women have taken over, Blepyrus and his fellow citizens will never have to attend court again (460). This revolutionary society is, according to the first old woman, a 'democracy' (945), although not all citizens are as sanguine as Blepyrus and his neighbour about sharing their assets.

We can rule out one interpretation of Praxagora's communal polis: Aristophanes appears to have created a 'most democratic' version of Spartan customs that adapts the practices of communal dining and wife-sharing, but this does not mean that he supported Spartan politics. Supporters of oligarchy may have looked approvingly at the Spartan constitution and way of life, but Aristophanes probably borrowed Laconian practices for purely comic reasons. The play may address some of the issues that were 'in the air' in the early fourth century, but the end of private property and the sharing of women, a stereotype of Spartiate society, becomes an escapist fantasy designed to titillate the desires of a population enduring economic hard

times.⁹ But it is also more than this.

Rothwell quite aptly identifies the comedy as a meditation on the relationship between law and justice. He suggests that its core dynamic is a tension between self-interest and respect for the law. The dissident who refuses to give up his property, but still wants to participate in the communal feast, represents the self-interested citizen; Chremes, who willingly accepts the new regime, epitomises the law-abiding citizen. This reading casts *Ecclesiazusae* in a positive light with a slightly didactic function, but it doesn't take sufficient notice of the dissident citizen's quite reasonable critique of the transitory nature of decrees, nor does it fully account for the ugly scene in which three hideous women squabble over the sexual services of the young citizen. This scene, as I outline below, reveals some of the problems with the women's decree.

Croiset sagely comments that this comedy 'seeks neither to construct theories or to overthrow them'.¹⁰ But it does contemplate the authority of law, presenting its audiences, both ancient and modern, with a vision of a society that tries to eliminate the need for institutionalised law. It is self-evident that such a society cannot function. Praxagora's critique of the Athenian legal/political system was no doubt accurate: it was probably every bit as corrupt, creaky and cumbersome as she claims. Nonetheless, as the final scene illustrates, it was better than nothing.

The rule of women in Aristophanes

This mordant commentary on the authority of law develops two ideas found in earlier Aristophanic drama. First is the rule of women, a concept whose comic possibilities were exploited in *Lysistrata* and *Thesmophoriazusae*, and probably other lost plays by Aristophanes and his contemporaries.¹¹ Although *Lysistrata*'s coup d'état is only temporary and limited to control of the Athenian treasury, her gynaecocracy prefigures Praxagora's complete seizure of the government in the later play. A sense of desperation drives both heroines to lead their corps of women in an effort to save the city from the mismanagement of men. *Lysistrata* takes over a polis debilitated by war so that women can end the conflict. Praxagora confronts a less specific crisis: not only has the selfish misuse of law enfeebled the democracy, its poverty is so acute that citizens actually come to the assembly naked (*Eccl.* 408).

Thesmophoriazusae contemplates an *ekklêsia* of women, although one contained within a women's festival.¹² Athenian women, as they do in *Ecclesiazusae*, have co-opted the language of the legislative assembly to formulate a probouleutic decree to initiate a debate on Euripides, but their decree never extends beyond the temporary festive government of women. The plot formulated at the Skira functions as a meeting of the *boulê* before an *ekklêsia*, just as it will in the later play. The assembly that is staged before the audience is railroaded by the detection of Euripides' Kinsman disguised as a woman, but until the meeting falls apart the women use the familiar vocabulary of legislation. Their resolution to deliberate about the punishment of Euripides is phrased in terms that imitate the opening words of *probouleumata* at the democratic assembly: 'it seemed best to the council of women' (373-4). This enactment formula would be familiar to Aristophanes' audience of male citizens because it was how their own decrees were formulated and recorded.¹³

Ecclesiazusae goes further than this. The humour of women taking control of the polis in *Lysistrata*, and using the language of lawmaking, a minor joke in *Thesmophoriazusae*, extends to its fullest capacity in *Ecclesiazusae*. Again there is the familiar enactment formula of the *probouleuma* prepared before the assembly met: ‘It seemed best to my women friends at the Skira’, as Praxagora explains in reference to an earlier meeting (17-18). But rather than putting this proposed decree before a women’s assembly, Praxagora submits it to the *ekklêsia* when the prytaneis hold a debate on the salvation of the city (395-7). The women disguised as men intervene to offer a specious *probouleuma* before the assembly – specious because it has not come from a regular *boulê*, but from a rogue group that does not normally vote. Does a decree created outside the *boulê* and then presented to the assembly and voted upon by non-citizens have the force of law?

The illegal decree

This question relates to the second idea that Aristophanes recycles, which derives from an anxiety about the justice of any decree formulated by the assembly. By the last quarter of the fifth century there is evidence in Athenian society of a distinction between the mutability of *psêphismata*, or decrees, created by the vote of the assembly and generally aimed at specific issues, and more permanent *nomoi* or laws, attributed to lawmakers such as Solon.¹⁴ Constitutional changes in 403 BC made clear distinctions between the two forms of legislation (Ps-Pl. *Def.* 415b). Even before these explicit distinctions the Athenian constitution had a safeguard for checking abuse of the *psêphisma*: any citizen could launch a lawsuit, a *graphê paranomôn*, against an illegal decree which contravened existing laws. The proposer of the illegal decree was subject to stiff fines and civic disabilities. An example, which might colour our reading of *Ecclesiazusae*, is a *psêphisma* passed in 401 BC, to give full citizenship rights to metics and slaves who had aided in the recent overthrow of the oligarchs (*Ath. Pol.* 40.2). The decree was subsequently indicted by a *graphê paranomôn* presumably because it violated the double descent citizenship law of 451.¹⁵

There are hints that Aristophanes was speaking to concerns about the status of *psêphismata* in other plays even before the constitutional changes. In *Birds* (produced in 414) a decree-seller (*psêphimatopolês*), appears in Cloudcuckooland reading out some prefabricated decrees (1035-57), and is summarily ejected by Pisthetaerus. Decree-selling was probably not a real occupation in fifth-century Athens, but the caricature indicates a suspicion of self-interest in the creation of *psêphismata*.¹⁶ A mistrust of decrees is more sustained and complex in *Clouds*, which might provide clues to what Aristophanes was up to in *Ecclesiazusae*.¹⁷ Wrong Logic promises the reprehensible young Pheidippides a ‘long decree’ (1019) if he follows his educational programme. After attending Socrates’ Thinkery, the newly trained citizen uses sophistic arguments to justify beating his father, Strepsiades, and he proposes a new law, phrased in the formulaic terminology of Athenian legislature, that condones father-beating as a type of equalising justice in return for the paternal discipline of childhood.¹⁸

The *psêphisma* legislating father-beating contravenes a pre-existing law attributed to Solon (i.e. an old and established *nomos*) against parental abuse. Of course assault of any type was a crime, but father-beating was especially heinous. The crime could lead to arrest by the eleven

or prosecution (Dem. 24.105) in a *graphê kakôseôs goneôn* (Ath. Pol. 56.6).¹⁹ In the unlikely event that anyone would actually propose a decree in the Athenian assembly that authorised adult children to beat their fathers he would be subject to a *graphê paranomôn* and brought to court. Despite the illegality of Pheidippides' decree, however, it is notable that he insists that his new law is a form of justice, based on the idea that justice is a form of reciprocity or balance. He claims that 'it is just (*dikaion*) to strike one's father' (1405), and that it is 'just' (*dikaion*, 1411) to return paternal beating for all the disciplinary smacks of childhood. Of course this claim is specious for the reason just stated, but it serves as a reminder that claims of justice may be motivated by self-interest, as we shall also note in the *Ecclesiazusae*.

The *Ecclesiazusae* exhibits the same ambiguity and even suspicion about the status of *psêphismata* at a time when the distinction between *nomos* and *psêphisma* had become even stronger than when *Birds* and *Clouds* were written. In the fourth century a select group of expert *Thesmothetai* was responsible for formulating *nomoi*, but the popular assembly still voted on decrees. The introduction of payment for attendance at the assembly (three obols by the time of *Ecclesiazusae*) brought with it the anxiety that less than patriotic concerns were shaping the democracy. *Psêphismata* were being passed in sufficiently large numbers to warrant a suspicion that the assembly was rather careless about regulating them. Aristophanes' fantasy of a female-authored decree resonates with this opposition between permanent laws and mutable *psêphismata*.

The women's decree

This approach has similarities with that of Ober who considers how recent constitutional changes might have influenced *Ecclesiazusae*, but I differ in how I use this background information to interpret the play. While I agree that the status of the *psêphisma* is central to an understanding of the structure and meaning of this comedy, I challenge Ober's analysis regarding the legality of the women's decree. He argues that the decree is a felicitous speech act that was 'legally instituted and efficaciously performed'.²⁰ Accordingly the play draws attention to the fact that although women, as mothers, contributed citizen status to men, they were unable to participate in the politics of Athens. Ober contends that the act of cross-dressing reveals how performance in the civic world is dependent on an illusion, a construction of masculinity built solely on beards and cloaks. As he observes, once the decree has been passed, the disguises are abandoned, since the women no longer have to participate in the assembly.

While this reading might appeal to contemporary feminist sensibilities, it does not line up with fourth-century Athenian attitudes towards women. Women did not hold public offices, vote in the assembly or serve on juries in ancient Athens: political and civic life took place in the open air, but according to Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* (6.17-29) women were constitutionally suited for indoor tasks which included food preparation, weaving and household management. In accordance with this principle, it is appropriate that the new state is devoted to food, sex and clothing; law and politics are incompatible with women's rule. Women's power is not obtained by their transformation into men, according to Saïd, but because the nature of power has changed: the polis has become an *oikos*. While Ober suggests

that their temporary disguise reveals the illusory quality of civic authority, Saïd observes that their performance of masculinity is flawed. Their femininity is hard to suppress: they use women's oaths (155), want to take their knitting to the assembly (89), and even though they have been tanning themselves for months (64), they still appear pale-faced to witnesses (387).²¹ The audience only ever sees women trying to look like men; the rehearsal is staged but not the successful masquerade, which is after all only temporary.

This masquerade was part of the probouleutic decree resolved at the Skira (ὄσα Σκίροις ἔδοξεν, 59) and included women stealing their husbands' cloaks to create their disguises. The female rogue *boulê* had decreed an act of theft, and a much maligned type of theft at that. By filching their husbands' clothing, the women have perpetrated an act of cloak-theft, which will often include some form of violence. Blepyrus (535-8) complains that when Praxagora stripped him he was left naked like a corpse, as if to suggest an actual assault.²² Thus the disguise required to pass the decree is constructed as an act of larceny.

There are further problems with the women's decree. The unpleasant, but not entirely unreasonable, dissident neighbour refuses to submit to it because he suspects that it might be rescinded, just as other decrees have been: 'They vote quickly, and then they negate what they have decreed' (797-8). Decrees come and go, he observes, for example 'the one about the salt' (813).²³

This could be said of any decree. What is distinctive about this particular *psêphisma* is that it violates established laws, and according to the Athenian constitution it would therefore be an illegal decree. To begin with it gives economic power to women, who according to Greek law (Isaeus 10.10) could not perform a business transaction worth more than a bushel of barley. Secondly, by instituting a system of communal sex, the decree potentially violates laws against *moicheia*, an umbrella term that included rape, seduction, and adultery: the programme of legislated promiscuity means that any man can sleep with any woman with impunity.²⁴ A case in point would be the young man's attempt to have sex with the young girl in the final episode: she might be completely acquiescent, but according to Athenian law the youth was trying to commit a capital offence (Dem. 23.53).²⁵ Thirdly, when the girl complains that the age difference between the old women and the youth is too great she predicts that, 'If you pass this law, you will fill the land with Oedipuses' (1041-2). Even though it is a bit extreme to think that no man would know his mother in this communal society, the girl's point adds to the sense that this new regime has turned law inside out; indeed it has the potential to break one of the most fundamental laws, the incest taboo.²⁶

This decree is a mutation of the regular procedure for passing new laws in the fourth century in that it presents a probouleutic decree formulated outside the parameters of Athenian legislature. But could such a decree ever have come before the assembly? A subversion of the assembly vote in 411 and 404 by oligarchic factions had resulted in the repeal of democracy, which had essentially voted itself out of existence. After these events specific procedures for new or revised legislation (*nomothesia*) were created to prevent impulsive votes in the assembly. Clearly this process has not been observed with the women's decree. In the fourth century the *ekklêsia* would vote on whether laws needed to be revised. A citizen who wanted to propose a law had to post it in front of the Eponymous Heroes (Dem. 24.19-23).²⁷ Proposals

were submitted to a group of men known as *nomothetai* who had taken the dikastic oath that year (i.e. jury-men or members of the *dikastêria*). It was possible in emergencies to pass a decree without this measure, and perhaps the women's cure for the economic crisis might be considered to be such a law. Even so there was another measure, as we have seen, that would check an illegal decree. Could the illegal decree, like the proposal of Pheidippides, be subject to the *graphê paranomôn*?

The end of law?

The *graphê paranomôn* required the intervention of the *dikastêria*, the law courts. In Praxagora's new regime there will be no courts of law, however, because as she says there will be no opportunity to commit crimes (560-1).²⁸ Her logic seems hard to refute: the new state will provide everything its citizens require; there will be no need to steal cloaks (as she herself has done), and no need to seize property for unpaid debts (567). Paradoxically just after she claims that there will be no courts, she uses the language of the court to introduce her new communistic proposal: 'But I will demonstrate this, so that you will bear witness for me and this one [Blepyrus] will not refute me' (569-70).

Does her vocabulary undermine her claim that there is no need for courts? She makes her case in the following *agôn*, where she outlines the plan for the new regime: property will be communal, all private dwellings will be integrated into one large living space, slaves will continue to labour, women will do domestic chores and men will live a life of feasting and sexual promiscuity. Law courts will become banquet halls; the system of sortition will now be used to determine who sits where at dinner, rather than who serves on the jury; the herald will call people to dinner rather than to the assembly.

Blepyrus offers scenarios that suggest some form of legal remedy is still necessary, but she rebuts each objection. Cloak-theft will no longer be an issue, she tells him (after he reminds her that she just stole his), because there will be a communal store of them. Father-beating will be reduced because children won't know who their father is. If a youth starts to beat an old man, onlookers will help him out because the victim might be their own father (637-43). Praxagora's concession here allows for the possibility of popular justice, but she is resolute in her determination to dismantle courts of law. When he worries about being sued for a public debt, she assures him there will be no lawsuits (657). As for assault, formerly dealt with by a *graphê hubreôs*, let the assailant go without his supper (665-6).

This is the last we see of Praxagora who departs to make preparations for the communal feast (729). She has been appointed *stratêgos*, or general – and she seems to be the only *stratêgos* in Athens where normally there were ten such magistrates – but it seems that her work is done. Does the unusual departure of the principal character at this point in the play emphasise that the new regime is purely democratic? Or does it remove the voice of authority from the new state so that the implementation of justice is completely atomised?

The decree in action

The last episode lays out the nature of this new regime. A young man who has enjoyed the

communal dinner wants to evade the law that he must sleep with old women before the young girl that he fancies (988). Although the dissenting neighbour had been dubious about the permanence of the *psêphisma*, it seems to be taking on the status of a permanent law. The old women refer to the decree both as a *nomos* and a *psêphisma*, but as we have noted, the distinction between the two forms of legislation was clarified after the constitutional reforms outlined above. The text has repeatedly used the language of assembly decrees with reference to the speech act that instituted the new regime. But the decree has outlawed any mechanism that might overturn it, and in this sense it seems to have become a permanent *nomos*. And in a rather startling turn, the law seems to define the nature of democratic justice. The first old woman makes the proposition that sex with her would be a form of justice: ‘It’s just [*dikaion*] to do these things according to the law [*kata ton nomon*], if we are a democracy’ (944-5). It was the role of the courts to use the law to obtain justice, but now *to dikaion* consists of obeying the law.

The running gag throughout the episode is the use of legal terms in a sexual context. The youth tells the old woman that ‘we’re not entering cases [*eisagomen*] over sixty right now ... we’re trying cases [*ekdikazein*] under twenty first’ (983-4). The old woman responds that ‘now it is decreed [*dokei*] that you enter us’. She swears by Aphrodite ‘who granted me this allotment, I won’t let you go’, a parody of legislative language in the allotment of magistrates.²⁹ The jokes consistently reveal that the old women have the law on their side, but they also emphasise that previous legal remedies available to any citizen no longer exist.³⁰ When the young man continues to resist she produces a written decree (*psêphisma* 1013) that she reads aloud (1015-20):

ἔδοξε ταῖς γυναίξιν, ἣν ἀνὴρ νέος
 νέας ἐπιθυμῆ, μὴ σποδεῖν αὐτὴν πρὶν ἂν
 τὴν γραῦν προκρούσῃ πρῶτον. ἣν δὲ μὴ ᾔθελῃ
 πρότερον προκρούειν, ἀλλ’ ἐπιθυμῆ τῆς νέας,
 ταῖς πρεσβυτέραις γυναίξιν ἔστωτὸν νέον
 ἔλκειν ἀνατεῖ λαβομένας τοῦ παττάλου.

It has been decreed by the women that if a young man desires a young woman, he cannot bang her until he screws the old woman first. If he is not willing to screw her first, but still desires the young woman, let the old woman drag the young man without penalty taking him by the knob.

This is certainly not the way the new regime was presented to Blepyrus; Praxagora emphasised the equality of the system by highlighting older men’s privileged access to young women. But now the decree seems to favour the sexual desires of elderly women. The first hag insists that ‘our laws [*nomois*] must be obeyed’ (1022); the second old woman also refers to the decree as a *nomos*, when she tells the young girl that she is ‘breaking the law’ (*parabasa ton nomon*), which ‘has been read aloud’ and states that ‘he must sleep with me first’ (1049-50). The distinction between *nomoi* and *psêphismata* is blurred here. That distinction was based on the fact that a decree can be challenged or cancelled, while a *nomos* cannot be. It does not seem

that this decree will be rescinded. As I have already suggested, since the *dikastêria*, where a *graphê paranomôn* would be heard, have been eliminated, there is no way to overturn the law.

It is difficult for the youth to understand that institutionalised law has ended. He suggests having a friend come and bail him out, to ‘take me to freedom’. This legal procedure was available when one person tried to seize another as a slave; the guarantor would provide a security deposit until the dispute went to trial.³¹ The crone explains that under the new law no man has the authority (*kurios*) to make a contract over a bushel. Nor will she accept an oath of excusal (an *exômosia*), another legal remedy by which a man might relieve himself of a civic duty (1024-6).³² The youth claims he needs to defecate, offering to provide ‘sureties’, representatives who would give their word that he would show up again, as if for court (1064-5). But this is not the way it works now: the old woman (to judge from the youth’s language) tries to haul him off, only to be waylaid by an even older woman who also cites the law to claim him. The young man’s negotiations with the three crones share the same joke: he tries to resort to some legal remedy; they tell him that these processes no longer exist. With no courts and no magistrates, law is enforced by physical force, and the three old women tug him in different directions.

Although the play ends on a festive note, with Praxagora’s husband taken off to the feast by pretty girls, the youth is left lamenting his sorry fate. The scene with the hags has emphasised the authority of the decree, and at the same time reveals that legal procedures of the past are no longer applicable. The world that *Ecclesiazusae* promises is a simple one, free from the complexities of litigation. It offers sexual pleasure for some, sexual assault for others, and a free meal for all. According to patriarchal ideology law is the product of men, but this text has taken us to a society run by women where there are no legal controls save the decree itself, and its legality, as I have argued, is suspect and flawed.

I have analysed the women’s decree in the context of fourth-century Athenian constitutional law, and it would seem that there is a paradox implicit in this *psêphisma*. Having been passed by the legislative assembly using the appropriate formulaic language of law, it is procedurally correct; yet it is also illegal because it contravenes existing laws, and it seeks to undermine the authority of legal procedures. The absurdity of the gynaecocracy and its singular devotion to physical appetites (food and sex) at the expense of established laws provokes the question: can any state exist without some institutional form of legal control? *Ecclesiazusae* has a timeless relevance because it raises such fundamental questions about the nature and necessity of law. These are matters that continue to engage legal philosophers. To understand what is at stake here I would like to conclude by turning to H.L.A. Hart’s influential work of legal positivism (first published in 1961), *The Concept of Law*.³³ Using Hart’s criteria I want to investigate how the women’s decree highlights the essential elements of law not just in ancient Athens, but in a manner that transcends cultural specificity.

Hart is interested in how law differs from mere ‘commands backed by threats’; for example, what makes obedience to the law any different from a gunman demanding that a teller give him money.³⁴ He identifies three fundamental distinctions between law and coercive threats. One criterion is that law needs to be published or promulgated in a way that binds members of a society to rules that are general and impartial:

If it were not possible to communicate general standards of conduct, which multitudes of individuals could understand, without further direction ... nothing that we recognize as law would exist.³⁵

This necessity is certainly met by the women's decree. While there is a discrepancy between how Praxagora represented the content of the law to her husband (i.e. she focuses on the sexual pleasure available to old men such as Blepyrus), and the citations that the women make from the written law (which focus on their own pleasure), the decree has clearly been published since each one of the old women carries her own copy.

A second necessity of law, according to Hart, is that it is repeatable; unlike the gunman's threat, which 'dies with the occasion', law is applicable continually until it is repealed (if ever). Law has a 'relatively enduring and settled character'.³⁶ Unhappily for the young man this quality is illustrated by the succession of old women whom he will have to pleasure throughout the night. Indeed he has years of such evenings to look forward to (presumably until his charms fade), unless somehow the decree is overturned (and as we have already noted there is no institutional mechanism for this to occur).

A third, and perhaps the most essential criterion, is that some higher authority has authorised the law. The nature of this sovereign power, as Hart recognises, is variable depending on political structures. But as a general rule laws are made by 'persons qualified in certain ways to legislate by complying with a certain procedure'.³⁷ In our case the law came into being through a vote in the *ekklêsia*.³⁸ That is indeed how new laws were created in Athens, and as we have noted the women have used the correct procedure by passing the decree in the legislative assembly. Praxagora clearly understands and uses the sovereignty of the *ekklêsia*, but is an assembly of women disguised as men really a legitimate *ekklêsia*? Remember that in 401 BC, a decree giving citizenship rights to certain metics and slaves was deemed illegal; membership in the assembly was exclusive to adult male citizens, a criterion that was closely monitored. Thus even though the women looked like men when they voted on the law, it would seem that they do not possess the capacity to create valid laws.³⁹ The final episode has demonstrated the imperfections of the women's decree.

Furthermore, as noted above, the decree violates other more established laws including women's economic limitations, laws governing sexual relations with citizen women, and possibly even laws against incest. In Athens the *graphê paranomôn* would hypothetically overturn the decree on these grounds, but that procedure would have to go through the courts. Praxagora has abolished the courts, so presumably the decree will prevail in this imaginary society. But while the decree satisfies some of Hart's criteria for law – it has gone through the legislative process (albeit with deception), it is promulgated, it is repeatable – it lacks an important aspect of any legal system. There is no official agency to deal with enforcement of the decree or any violation – and this is how Praxagora's absence in the second half of the play becomes meaningful. Legal remedies, what Hart calls *secondary rules*, have been abolished along with the courts in Praxagora's scheme, returning Athens to a pre-Oresteian notion of self-remedy that is impractical for a functioning polis. But, as Hart observes:

Disputes as to whether an admitted rule has or has not been violated will always occur

and will, in any but the smallest societies, continue interminably, if there is no agency specially empowered to ascertain finally, and authoritatively, the fact of violation. Lack of such final and authoritative determinations is to be distinguished from another weakness associated with it. This is the fact that punishments for violations of the rules, and other forms of social pressure involving physical effort or the use of force, are not administered by a special agency but are let to the individuals affected or to the group at large.⁴⁰

Praxagora had envisioned just such a society in which putative father-beaters were admonished by bystanders. By abolishing the courts, Praxagora has eliminated those secondary rules that are required for law to exist. The tug of war between the three old women, each one trying to enforce the decree for her particular advantage, and the youth, who tries to avoid the decree, illustrates the consequences of a world with no such secondary rules. The fury-like quality of the old women, reminiscent of the Erinyes' pursuit of Orestes, takes us back to the pre-legal world of the *Oresteia*, where force and violence had to suffice for the enactment of justice until the establishment of law courts in Athens.

Notes

1. Johnstone 1999: 41 notes that 'in the courts litigants treated justice and the law as though they were entirely consonant'. As he also notes, philosophy and drama contemplate the opposition between the two concepts.

2. See Saïd's discussion 1996: 302; Foley 1982: 14.

3. Foley 1982: 15 observes that law is replaced by household rules, such as withholding food for bad behaviour.

4. Beginning with ancient ideas about the relationship of comedy to the Athenian democracy, Olson 2010 reviews and critiques some of the theories. Not included in his survey is Sidwell's recent (2009) hypothesis that Aristophanes was a radical democrat who engaged in political intertextual rivalry with his fellow comic poets.

5. *The Life of Aristophanes* (Aristophanes Testimonium 1.35-9 K-A, translation by Sidwell 2009: 42). Sidwell (43) notes that this was not just because of *Frogs*' parabasis, but because 'he was very much loved and praised by the citizens'.

6. MacDowell 1996: 189.

7. Olson 2010: 63. McGlew 2002: 111 on the other hand suggests that comedy is not so much about giving advice (note that *dêmos* did elect Cleon again even after *Knights*) as it is a fantasy of a citizen's 'active engagement in the city – of course a city at peace – in a way that the private hopes and the common interests of all citizens merge'.

8. See Rhodes 2004: 228 who concludes that Aristophanes is suggesting that the problem with the assembly is that 'it can easily be duped by clever rhetoric'.

9. See David 1984: 4 and Foley 1982: 16-17 on the similarities with Spartan society. There are also commonalities with the fifth book of Plato's *Republic*, composed at least twenty years later. David 1984: 20 treats the hypothesis that Plato had started discussing these ideas earlier, but notes that there is no evidence for this. Nonetheless Freyberg 2008: 115-57 presents a

complex reading of the interplay between the two works. Sommerstein 2007: 13-17 suggests that *Ecclesiazusae* influences the *Republic*.

10. Croiset 1909: 177. David 1984: 29 observes that while the play critiques the pay for assembly duty, an element of radical democracy, the critique centres more on *misthophoria* as a symptom of the selfishness and materialism that contributed to the crisis of fourth-century Athens. He argues that Aristophanes seems to advocate the middle ground by which decent people get ahead through hard work.

11. There were other women-centred comedies by Aristophanes and his rivals that might have also treated the fantasy of a women's government. Examples of women taking over from comic fragments might include Pherecrates' earlier *Tyrannis*, or Theopompos' *Stratitides*. See Sommerstein 2007: 8-10.

12. See Rhodes 2004: 224. The irregular assembly of women meets on the second day of the Thesmophoria when regular assemblies, courts and councils would not meet. Like the regular *ekklêsia* it begins with a prayer and curse. For discussions of women's use of civic language in the parodos and first episode see McClure 1999: 228-30.

13. Composing a probouleutic decree in a meeting of the *boulê* to put before the assembly was an increasingly common practice in the late fifth and early fourth centuries. For example in 377 BC an assembly decree began with the probouleutic formula 'it seems best to the *boulê* to accept the alliance of the Chalcidians'. See Sinclair 1988: 85-100 for further discussion.

14. MacDowell 1978: 43-52; Boegehold 1996: 201-14.

15. The earliest example of the procedure dates from Andocides 1.17 who is referring to events of 415. Xenophon discusses a famous attempt in 406 to block a motion made in the assembly to punish the generals who had abandoned the survivors and the dead after Arginusae (*Hellenica* 1.7.12). The motion was opposed by the *graphê paranomôn* on the grounds that the proposal was illegal without a formal trial.

16. Jackson 1918: 89-102 argues the decree-seller is a rhetor, who for a price will argue for a law in the assembly. Dunbar 1998: 385-6 points out that decrees were formulaic (and the samples provided by the decree-seller use the conventional language), but regardless of whether such an occupation existed the passage illustrates a suspicion of 'new laws' (*Birds* 1038).

17. The text of the original production of *Clouds* produced in 423 is lost, and there is no consensus on when the revised version was written or even if it was ever produced. For a full discussion of the issues see Dover 1970: lxxx-xcviii.

18. Harris 2002: 3-5 discusses the similarity between Pheidippides' decree and the formulaic language of the Athenian assembly.

19. Aeschines attributed a law to Solon which required adult children to respect and care for their parents. See MacDowell 1979: 92 and Avotins 2004: 461-9.

20. Ober 1998: 152.

21. Saïd 1996: 296-8. Slater 2002: 212-14 disagrees, and emphasises the metatheatricality of the rehearsal scene, which is a type of 'backstage' comedy. It is true that Praxagora does actually address the assembly in her practice speech, since the audience is mostly comprised of citizens, but the audience is aware of the masquerade.

22. Compton-Engel 2005: 164.
23. Christ 2006: 32-3 points out that although the neighbour epitomises Praxagora's characterisation of Athenian selfishness he still offers rational critiques.
24. Lys. 1.32-3 and Sealey 1990: 28-9.
25. MacDowell 1995: 320.
26. Ussher 1973: 220 notices that the old woman runs horrified into the house, and thus acts like Jocasta (Soph. *OT* 1072).
27. For further discussion see Sinclair 1988: 83-4.
28. The text seems corrupt here (see Sommerstein 2007: 186-7) but it is clear from what follows that the courts will cease to exist.
29. Sens 1992: 42.
30. McClure 1999: 256-7 misses this point when she notes that the old women's 'exaggerated legalisms betray their impotence'. They seem to have the law on their side, such as it is, while the youth has no recourse. Cf. Rothwell 1990: 68.
31. Sommerstein 2007: 226 provides examples including Lys 23.9-12, Aeschines 1.62. Cf. Ussher 1973: 217.
32. Sommerstein 2007: 226
33. Legal positivists argue that law is a social construction; if a government or legislative body authorises a rule or regulation then it is a law regardless of its ethical merits.
34. Hart 1997: 18-25.
35. Hart 1997: 124. On the other hand ignorance of the law, which the young man feigns, is no excuse to break it. As Hart (22) notes 'laws are validly made even if those affected are left to find out for themselves ...'.
36. Hart 1997: 23-4.
37. Hart 1997: 77.
38. On the sovereignty of the *ekklêsia* see Aristotle *Politics* 1291b30-8.
39. Taaffe 1994: 104-33 draws attention to the fact that all female roles in this comedy (as in all Attic drama) were played by men. I think the joke works best if the audience accepts the actors as women playing the role of men. Taaffe, however, suggests that the comic phallus might at times be visible under the female costume, although there is nothing in the text to suggest this. Accordingly the fact that the women are really men illustrates that it 'takes masculinity to rule' and the 'women' have 'real masculinity under, as well as over, their costumes'. (111)
40. Hart 1997: 93.

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Carion down the Piraeus: The Tragic Messenger Speech in Aristophanes' *Wealth*

Robert Tordoff

At the beginning of Aristophanes' *Wealth* Chremylus and his slave Carion enter stage right.¹ They are returning from Delphi following the oracular guidance of Apollo and – more immediately – a filthy, ragged, blind old man. They soon discover that their typhlotic guide is none other than Ploutos, or the god Wealth, whose sightless condition is responsible for the present lamentable state of the world in which the enrichment of the wicked and the poverty of the virtuous are *de rigueur*. Learning the old man's identity, Chremylus conceives the grand scheme that motivates the action of the play: he will take Wealth to have his eyesight restored at the sanctuary of Asclepius; and once the god is healed, the honest poor will become deservedly rich.

The plan comes to fruition not on stage but in the diegetic space of the sanctuary of Asclepius at Zea.² The events there are narrated by Carion, who arrives home just moments before the party escorting the now cured Wealth. Carion plays a starring role in *Wealth*, delivering over 25% of the lines in the play. His prominent part in the drama illustrates the justness of Plutarch's observation that in tragedy the actor playing the messenger or slave routinely upstages the actor adorned with a crown and carrying a sceptre.³ After a number of show-stealing turns in the earlier part of the play,⁴ Carion's biggest moment comes with his report of the healing of Wealth at the temple of Asclepius. In this scene he plays the parts of both slave and messenger, bringing the news of Wealth's cure home to the chorus and his master's wife (627-770). Curiously, despite all the interest in the messenger speech in tragedy (especially in Euripides), the comic analogue of this tragic type-scene has endured all but complete neglect.⁵ The present essay examines in detail the comic messenger speech in *Wealth* with three particular aims: first, to point out the unremarked importance of this passage in extant Old Comedy as the most developed parody of the tragic messenger type-scene that we have; second, to alert the reader to unnoticed metatheatrical business and a richness of tragic intertextuality that has hitherto not been fully appreciated; and third, to show how closely Aristophanes has integrated the tragic parody in this scene with the themes and narrative of the play.⁶

A large number of passages in Aristophanes contain narratives of developments or goings-on offstage. In many cases, a new character appears on stage for the sole purpose of bringing a report of a particular action or news of developments offstage to a character or characters already onstage (e.g. *Ach.* 1069-83, 1084-94, 1174-89; *Birds* 1119-63, 1168-85, 1277-307, 1706-19; *Lys.* 980-1013; *Thesm.* 574-96; *Eccl.* 834-52, 1112-54). In most of the instances just mentioned, the actor bringing the news is simply designated as a messenger (*Birds* 1119-63, 1168-85, 1706-19) or a herald (*Ach.* 1069-83, 1084-94; *Birds* 1277-307; *Lys.* 980-1013; *Eccl.*

834-52); the single named character in the passages listed is Cleisthenes in *Thesmophoriazusae*.⁷ In other cases, a character having previously departed the stage, either on an errand or mission or just going about his business, returns with a report of his successes, failures, or experiences (*Knights* 611-82; *Wasps* 1292-325, 1474-81; *Wealth* 627-770, 802-22).⁸

Among all these passages, Carion's report of the cure of Wealth at the temple of Asclepius (*Wealth* 627-770) is the most extensive and the closest to the formal feature of tragedy known to critics as the Messenger Speech – a highly developed type-scene in which tragic drama reports offstage action. Not all passages in comedy in which a 'messenger' brings some news from offstage are tragic parody; after all, reportage of offstage action is dramatically organic in comedy just as much as tragedy.⁹ The only parallel passage in Aristophanes that even comes close in length to Carion's report is the speech in *Knights* (624-83) in which the Sausage Seller Agoracritus relates how he wrested the support of the Council away from Paphlagon; but tragic parody is not prominent and Rau excludes the passage (along with a few others) from his discussion of parody of the tragic messenger speech.¹⁰ Very arguably, Agoracritus' report is the only extensive, authentically *comic* messenger speech in Aristophanes – in the sense that it does not ground its humour in tragic parody. And while the sequence at *Birds* 1119-85 involves two messengers, is clearly paratragic and exhibits some of the structural elements of the tragic messenger speech, it is not nearly as extensive as the messenger scene in *Wealth*. Other passages unquestionably parodying the tragic messenger speech are much more condensed.¹¹

In the case of Carion's report, the importance of an inter-generic engagement with tragedy is not only undeniable but also deeper and more significant than critics of this scene, or of *Wealth*, or of Aristophanes in general, have realised. The widely held view that *Wealth*, Aristophanes' last surviving play, shows evidence of his waning poetic powers has been sharply challenged by Andreas Willi with a demonstration of the text's extraordinary linguistic innovation.¹² This essay seeks to make the complementary case that Aristophanes' vibrant engagement with tragedy in *Wealth* (originally performed in 388 BC), also makes it clear that the poet stubbornly refused to 'go gentle into that good night'.¹³

The narratives of offstage events delivered by messengers and other characters bringing news in Greek tragedy have been made the subject of a number of major studies, each with its own particular emphasis.¹⁴ However, there is broad agreement on the general features of the tragic messenger speech. Oliver Taplin summarises as follows:

Our main notions of the messenger speech in Greek tragedy are based on the long, vivid set-piece narratives of terrible events which are delivered by an anonymous eye-witness and which tend to occur about three-quarters of the way through the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides ... Not every scene with any sort of narrative element will pass as a messenger scene. Rather, there are three elements involved: anonymous eye-witness, set-piece narrative speech, and over-all dramatic function.¹⁵

According to Taplin, if all three elements are present, the scene is uncomplicatedly a messenger speech; if one or two elements are missing, then the passage is a stronger or weaker

analogue of the type-scene.

In the case of Carion's report, there is undoubtedly set piece narrative; and although its form is atypical, in other respects it fits the pattern of the tragic messenger's speech. One aberrant feature of the messenger speech in *Wealth* is that Carion's report is not an uninterrupted *rhexis*; instead, longer narrative sections are interspersed with short passages of dialogue with Chremylus' wife.¹⁶ Nevertheless, in general terms the structure of the speech is fully congruent with the tragic messenger speech, and its less rigid form reflects the freer, more fluid kind of dialogue found throughout comic drama.¹⁷

Part of what identifies a set-piece messenger speech as such is vivid, detailed narrative. Margaret Dickin's recent study of the tragic messenger speech demonstrates that in Euripides the messenger type-scenes show a much higher frequency of 'narrative verbs' per line than the rest of the drama.¹⁸ In Euripides an elevated frequency is between 0.3 and 0.55 qualifying narrative verbs per line. If the method is applied to Carion's reportage, then among the 117 lines spoken by Carion in the scene 47 narrative verbs are found, yielding a rate per line of 0.39 – comfortably inside the range Dickin finds in Euripides. Therefore, in terms of narrative style, Carion's reportage fits the tragic model.

When Taplin speaks of 'dramatic function', he means that the messenger speech (or *angelia*) usually appears at a crucial juncture in the narrative just after the departure of a major character towards battle, a trial, suicide, or murder.¹⁹ In the case of Carion's narrative, this condition too is met, since the blind god of Wealth has just departed towards his cure at the temple of Asclepius. However, the absence of Taplin's first element directs attention to the way in which Aristophanes has adapted the tragic messenger scene for *Wealth*: here, the slave is no anonymous character whose entire identity is bound up in his occupation of carrying news.²⁰ In summary, Carion's narrative has strong affinities to the tragic messenger speech, with Taplin's second and third elements present.

The typical structure of the tragic messenger scene, developed through numerous appearances in Greek tragedy (especially in Euripides), can be divided into three parts: (A) an introductory dialogue, (B) the report itself, and (C) a closing dialogue.²¹ The report itself is an extensive narrative account of offstage events, and we shall examine its characteristic features presently. The introductory dialogue is structurally the most complex part of the scene, and its typical elements in Euripides (in whose works the form finds its fullest articulation) are as follows:

- I. The chorus or an actor alerts the audience to the imminent appearance of a messenger whom they see approaching offstage;
- II. The messenger arrives and greets the addressee (the chorus or the actor to whom the report will be directed) or asks where the addressee may be found;
- III. The messenger gives a general indication of (or sometimes just a hint at) what has happened off stage;
- IV. The actor / chorus asks (often anxious) questions;
- V. The messenger gives concise replies illuminating the essential points;
- VI. The addressee makes a brief statement of his / her reaction to the news;

VII. The chorus / actor gives the messenger an invitation to elaborate the story in detail.

Not every element appears in every Euripidean messenger speech (the *Hippolytus* is one example of a play in which the full development of the introductory dialogue can be seen).²² After the dialogue, the messenger proceeds to deliver the report, which typically consists of some eighty lines of uninterrupted narrative. After this there is a short dialogue between messenger and the actor or chorus in which the latter react (usually emotionally) to the report and the messenger, often with some further words or gnomic judgement on the events, departs.

Naturally, Carion's messenger speech is a comic appropriation of the tragic messenger type-scene and as such it does not conform to the model found in tragedy in every respect. Most notably, the comic messenger scene is shorter than its tragic model,²³ and the report is not an uninterrupted narrative monologue: there are frequent interjections and questions.²⁴ But Carion's messenger speech comes closer to the tragic model than any other in Aristophanes,²⁵ in terms of length, structure, and its use of formal features borrowed from tragedy. The close interaction between Carion's report and the tragic genre is flagged in various ways: first by precise imitation of the structural elements of the tragic messenger scene; second, by metatheatrical reference to the tragic messenger type-scene; and third, by the intensive and marked use of certain linguistic features including tragic pastiche, quotation and allusion.²⁶

At line 627 Carion appears on the scene returning home from the temple of Asclepius. The slave has been sent ahead to bring the good news of Wealth's cure to the chorus and Chremylus' wife. To the chorus he announces a day of rejoicing for all men of good character (630), since Wealth, as he reports with a quotation of Sophocles' *Phineus* (*Wealth* 634-6 = Soph. fr. 710 Radt), has had his eyesight restored. Then, within moments, Chremylus' wife appears demanding to know the reason for all the commotion, and this gives Carion the cue for his virtuoso performance of comic reportage.

To create a general flavour of tragedy in the scene, Carion describes the preliminary ceremonies performed on reaching the shrine of Asclepius with the paratragic phrase 'as a sacred offering [*pelanos*] to Hephaestus' flame' in line 661, with the definite article omitted three times and the stylistically elevated circumlocution 'Hephaestus' flame' for 'fire'.²⁷ When Asclepius comes to tend to the blind god, the patient is called *Ploutôn* rather than *Ploutos* (727). Usually the former refers to the god of the Underworld, but an ancient notice attached to the verse cites two fragments of Sophocles' *Inachus* to illustrate the high-style use of the form to refer (apparently) to Wealth.²⁸ Finally, there is paratragic language in Carion's description of the crowd surrounding Chremylus and Wealth on their return (in lines 758-9). The use of the singular 'shoe' (*embas*) for plural is poetic (as is the omission of the definite article), and the language of the words (literally translated) 'and the old men's shoe rang out with eurhythmic steps' is elevated.²⁹ There are echoes in this motif of two passages in Euripides: a clear reverberation of the sound of feet in *Medea* 1179-80 and a less distinct echo of *Bacchae* 1090-1.

The closing of Carion's report of the journey to and from Zea with these allusive lines of paratragic verse is significant, not simply because they are tragic but because they come from Euripidean messenger speeches. *Medea* 1136-230 reports the deaths of Creon and his

daughter, and *Bacchae* 1043-152 the death of Pentheus. Furthermore, the tragic phrase ‘Hephaestus’ flame’ in 661, which might then be said to work with 758-9 to frame Carion’s narrative, is paralleled in *Iphigenia at Aulis* 1601, which is also part of a messenger speech (*IA* 1532-612), though admittedly that part of the speech is the interpolation of a much later writer. Is this merely coincidence, or was the phrase found in a version of the play known to Aristophanes? That question cannot be answered definitively, but the intense interest in and close engagement with the tragic messenger speech in this scene can be further – and I think suggestively – illustrated. When Carion enters at line 627, he salutes the chorus with the following words:

ὦ πλεῖστα Θησεῖοις μεμυστιλημένοι
γέροντες ἄνδρες ἐπ’ ὀλιγίστοις ἀλφίτοις

O you who have many a time drunk soup at the festival of Theseus
To go with your scant rations of barley groats, you old men ...

Missing here is the anticipation of the messenger’s arrival (I) as the chorus or an actor sees him approaching from offstage. It may have been part of the choral ode that is missing from our texts after 626, but in general comic messenger speeches lack this element – perhaps prioritising surprise over suspense.³⁰ Therefore, Carion probably bursts on to the stage unannounced. His greeting (II) addressed to the chorus (quoted above) not only fits the model but also alerts the audience to the intergeneric dialogue with tragedy to come through the poetic use of the vocative with an adverb (*pleista*), which is paralleled three times in Sophocles (*OT* 1223, *El.* 1326, *OC* 720) and is exemplified elsewhere in elevated poetry.³¹

Next, Carion speaks two further verses (629-30) from which the chorus gathers that there is some (as yet undefined) cause for rejoicing (III). They respond with the following excited question (IV) and an observation drawing attention to the importance of metatheatrical discourse in this scene (*Wealth* 631-2³²):

τί δ’ ἐστίν, ὦ βέλτιστε τῶν σαυτοῦ φίλων;
φαίνει γὰρ ἤκειν ἄγγελος χρηστοῦ τινος.

What it is, you most excellent of your kind?
Because you seem to have come as a messenger of some good news.

The anxious question ‘What is it ...?’ is well exemplified in tragedy (e.g. Eur. *Bacch.* 1029), but it is the metatheatrical force of the words in line 632, ‘You seem to have come *as a messenger*’ (ἄγγελος), that most clearly indicates a metatheatrical gesture towards parody of the tragic messenger scene, which so often stages an anonymous bringer of news recognised by the audience as a messenger and referred to as such in ancient ‘cast lists’ attached to the texts of Greek tragedy.³³ Although the word can simply mean a bearer of news in Aristophanes (as it does at *Birds* 1340 and *Thesm.* 768), it appears twice in the suggestive context of a paratragic messenger scene in *Birds* (1119, 1168).

Carion’s concise reply (V) furnishes the chorus with the short version of events offstage

(Wealth 633-6):

ὁ δεσπότης πέπραγεν εὐτυχέστατα,
μᾶλλον δ' ὁ Πλούτος αὐτός· ἀντὶ γὰρ τυφλοῦ
ἐξωμμάτῳ καὶ λελάμπρυνται κόρας,
Ἀσκληπιοῦ παιῶνος εὐμενοῦς τυχῶν.

My master has had the greatest stroke of luck,
Or rather Ploutos himself has! 'Though previously blind
He now has eyes and his pupils shine,
Finding Asclepius a kindly healer.

According to the scholiast, the words in which Carion reports the cure of Wealth's blindness are a quotation from Sophocles' *Phineus*, in which on the generally accepted view of the plot Asclepius healed the blind Phineus (or possibly his sons).³⁴ The tragic quotation, which summarises the offstage action to be elaborated in the messenger's report, marks the whole scene as tragic parody.

The reaction of the chorus again ostentatiously underlines the dependence of this scene on tragedy. The chorus sing three lines of dochmiacs (*Wealth* 637, 639-40):

λέγεις μοι χάραν, λέγεις μοι βοᾶν.
...
ἀναβοάσομαι τὸν εὐπαιδα καὶ
μέγα βροτοῖσι φέγγος Ἀσκληπιόν.

Your words are joy! Your words make me shout out!

...

I shall cry aloud the name of Asclepius,
Father of fine children, a great light to mankind.

The chorus' words poke fun at tragedy, as the scholiast remarks; and the dochmiac metre reinforces the tragic resonance.³⁵

The chorus' excited singing brings Chremylus' wife out of the house in an exchange that recapitulates some of the elements of the introduction to the messenger's speech. She comes on to the stage asking more anxious questions (IV; *Wealth* 641-3):

τίς ἡ βοή ποτ' ἐστίν; ἄρ' ἀγγέλλεται
χρηστόν τι; τοῦτο γὰρ ποθοῦσ' ἐγὼ πάλαι
ἔνδον κάθημαι περιμένουσα τουτονί.

Whatever is all this shouting? Is some good news
Being announced? That's what I've been longing for,
Sitting inside and waiting for this man to arrive.

Again there is metatheatrical reference to the relationship between this scene and the tragic

messenger speech in the pointed use of the verb meaning to bring news (ἀγγέλλειν) in line 641, which is cognate with the word for a messenger (ἄγγελος). Although in Aristophanes the verb may simply be used of the sending of a report or an announcement (*Wasps* 409; *Lys.* 1235) and may quite naturally appear in messenger scenes that do not parody the tragic type-scene (*Knights* 614, *Thesm.* 579, 595, 654) it is found repeatedly and very suggestively in a paratragic messenger scene in *Acharnians* (1070, 1077, 1083, 1084). Moreover, as Rau observes, waiting a long time for news is a feature of a tragic messenger scene found in Euripides' *Medea* (1116-17).³⁶ Finally, the metatheatrical self-consciousness is further developed in another of the exchanges between the slave and his mistress just before the report (*Wealth* 646-7):

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ: ὡς ἀγαθὰ συλλήβδην ἅπαντὰ σοι φέρω.
 ΓΥΝΗ: καὶ ποῦ ἴστιν;
 ΚΑΡΙΩΝ: ἐν τοῖς λεγομένοις· εἴσει τάχα.

CARION: ... I'm bringing you all the blessings that
 can be – all at once!

WIFE: Well then, where are they?

CARION: In my words. You'll soon know.

Carion's sly 'You'll soon know' probably does allude, as Sommerstein tentatively suggests, to the conventions of the tragic messenger speech and their development in the fourth century. In general, in the messenger speech in Euripides the main point of the message is announced to the listener before he or she hears the 'blow-by-blow' account. However, in *Iphigenia at Aulis*, Clytemnestra is told that she will learn everything from beginning to end (*IA* 1540-1), only for the messenger to embark upon a lengthy narrative in which the main point of the speech has still not been reached in the first forty lines.³⁷ Similarly, since Chremylus' wife has missed the introductory announcement stating the main point of the speech, she will now have to wait over ninety lines before she will know that Wealth's eyesight has been restored. In this way, Carion tips the audience a metatheatrical wink as he alters the long-established conventional form of the type-scene.

At the end of the report, the remainder of the scene (748-70) finds Carion explaining that Chremylus is on his way but has been waylaid by a huge crowd of people thronging around to congratulate him. Meanwhile the mistress runs into the house to fetch Carion's reward (of bread) and the traditional offerings (*katachusmata*) with which to shower Wealth on his arrival.³⁸ There is yet more tragic allusion and metatheatrical reference here. In Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* (194-8) a messenger similarly informs Deianeira that the herald Lichas is delayed on his way to her by a great crowd of people questioning him about Heracles.³⁹ At *Wealth* 762 Carion tells his master's wife that no one will ever again 'announce' (ἀγγελεῖ) that there are no more barley groats, and at 764-6 she thanks him for having brought a message (ἀπαγγεῖλαντα) with good news (εὐαγγέλια). The density and multiplicity of these references, both at the start and at the end of this scene, to bringing a report (ἀγγέλλειν) underlines once more the

significance of tragic parody.

At the lexical level, even in the shorter sections of jocular dialogue Carion's language shows numerous affinities with and borrowings from tragedy. A number of these are connected to ritual observance and are therefore unsurprisingly found widely in tragedy. For example, the word *pelanos* (mentioned above) in 661 is found numerous times in Aeschylus (*Per.* 204, 524, 816; *Ag.* 96; *Eum.* 265) and very frequently in Euripides (e.g. *Hipp.* 147 etc.), but only here in Aristophanes. In the same line, the verb meaning 'consecrate by burning' (καθοσιούμαι) occurs only here in Aristophanes but is also found in Euripides (*IT* 1320). However, other tragic-sounding words are not connected to the religious aspect of the scene at the temple of Asclepius. For example, the verb meaning 'look up' in 676 (ἀναβλέπω) is only otherwise found in Aristophanes at *Clouds* 346 but appears several times in Euripides (*Supp.* 322; *HF* 563; *Ion* 1263, 1467). Similarly, the verb meaning 'hiss' in 689 is found only here in Aristophanes but appears once in Aeschylus (*Seven Against Thebes* 463) and quite frequently in Euripides (*Alc.* 576; *IT* 431, 1125; *Ion* 501; *IA* 576). Again, the verb meaning 'instruct' in 669 (παραγγέλλω) appears only here in Aristophanes but is found on a couple of occasions in Euripides (*Supp.* 1173; *Heracl.* 825 – in a messenger speech; and also [Eur.] *Rhes.* 70).⁴⁰

The combination of tragic locutions and quotations in *Wealth* 627-47 in the context of the delivery of news, the overt metatheatrical gestures towards the *topos* of the messenger speech in tragedy, and the close adherence to the complex structure of the dialogue preparatory to the messenger speech in tragedy are decisive: Carion's narrative represents an engagement with the tragic messenger speech which, in extent and complexity, goes far beyond any other passage in Aristophanes. Moreover, the depth of engagement here can be further illustrated through the richness of the specific allusions to tragic messenger scenes and their peculiar aptness to the scene that Carion describes. As we shall find, the effect of *Wealth* 627-770 depends on the audience's awareness of the ordinary and accepted conventions of the tragic messenger speech,⁴¹ their alertness to developments and innovations in these conventions and an appreciation of how carefully Aristophanes has integrated tragic parody and intertextuality with some of the central themes of the comedy that appear in this scene: that is, blindness, theft, healing and medicine and the restoration of the integrity of the body.⁴²

The central difference between Carion's narrative and the narratives of tragic messengers is that whereas in the tragic messenger speech the focalisation of the narrative is as far as possible neutral, in *Wealth* the narrative focalisation is not only highly partisan, but also significant for the thematic development of the entire play.⁴³ To illustrate this let us glance at the second part of the comic messenger scene: that is, Carion's scandalous reportage (*Wealth* 668-87).

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ: ...ὡς δὲ τοὺς λύχνους ἀποσβέσας
ἡμῖν παρήγγειλεν καθεύδειν τοῦ θεοῦ
ὁ πρόπολος, εἰπὼν, ἦν τις αἰσθηταὶ ψόφου,

σιγαῖν, ἅπαντες κοσμίως κατεκείμεθα.
κάγῳ καθεύδειν οὐκ ἐδυνάμην, ἀλλὰ με
ἀθάρης χύτρα τις ἐξέπληττε κειμένη
ὀλίγον ἄπωθεν τῆς κεφαλῆς τοῦ γραδίου
ἐφ' ἣν ἐπεθύμουν δαιμονίως ἐφερπύσαι.
ἔπειτ' ἀναβλέψας ὁρῶ τὸν ἱερέα
τοὺς φθοῖς ὑφαρπάζοντα καὶ τὰς ἰσχάδας
ἀπὸ τῆς τραπέζης τῆς ἱεράς· μετὰ τοῦτο δὲ
περιῆλθε τοὺς βωμοὺς ἅπαντας ἐν κύκλῳ,
εἷ που πόπανον εἶη τι καταλελειμμένον·
ἔπειτα ταῦθ' ἤγιζεν εἰς σάκταν τινά.
κάγῳ νομίσας πολλὴν ὀσίαν τοῦ πράγματος
ἐπὶ τὴν χύτραν τὴν τῆς ἀθάρης ἀνίσταμαι.
ΓΥΝΗ: ταλάντατ' ἀνδρῶν, οὐκ ἐδεδοίκεῖς τὸν θεόν;
ΚΑΡΙΩΝ: νῆ τοὺς θεοὺς ἔγωγε, μὴ φθάσειέ με
ἐπὶ τὴν χύτραν ἐλθῶν ἔχων τὰ στέμματα·
ὁ γὰρ ἱερεὺς αὐτοῦ με προυδιδάξατο.

CARION: When the servant of the god had put out the lamps he instructed us all to go to sleep, telling anyone who heard a noise to keep quiet. Then we all obediently turned in for the night. But I couldn't sleep. A pot of soup standing a little way from the head of an old woman kept disturbing me with the overwhelming desire to sneak up on it. Then looking up, I see the priest snatching all the cakes and dried figs from the sacred table. Then he made a circuit of all the altars to see if any cakes had been left behind and performed the holy rite of stuffing them into his sack. So having decided that this must be fully lawful, I get myself up to make an attempt on the pot of soup.

WIFE: You're the most brass-necked man in the world! Weren't you afraid of the god?

CARION: I most certainly was, by the gods – afraid he would come along with his sacred fillets and beat me to the pot of soup! His priest had just taught me

that.

In this passage there are seven ‘narrative verbs’ by Dickin’s definition. Interwoven into the third-person narrative, which is a hallmark of the tragic messenger speech, are six first person singular verbs and their associated participles with which Carion describes his part in the story. In fact, since one of the third-person ‘narrative verbs’ (ἐξέπληττε in 673) has Carion as its direct object (με in 672), the slave’s verbs actually focus more attention on himself in this passage than on the events of which he is the witness. With the exception of the messenger speeches in Euripides’ *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, the general rule is that in tragedy the messenger is ‘never the protagonist of his own narrative.’⁴⁴

The pattern of Carion’s self-involvement in his report is more or less sustained across the ensuing narrative of the incubation at the temple of Asclepius, which may be divided into four parts. First, Carion steals the soup from the old woman, accomplishing his theft by pretending to be the sacred snake (688-95), and confirming that he is a thief (cf. *Wealth* 27) – not to mention a typically gluttonous comic slave.⁴⁵ Then as Asclepius approaches, the slave farts and hides himself under his cloak in terror, watching the proceedings through the holes in his ragged garment (696-708). Upon arriving, Asclepius treats the politician Neocleides’ myopia and makes it even worse (708-26), underlining the linkage between ophthalmic afflictions, theft and political corruption. Lastly, Asclepius tends to Wealth and cures him to lively and spontaneous thanksgiving and rejoicing (727-47).

Significantly Chremylus is only mentioned once in the narrative of the events at the temple of Asclepius, when Carion says that he tried to wake him up to celebrate the successful cure of Wealth’s eyesight (740). Chremylus was, therefore, asleep throughout the nocturnal goings-on in the sanctuary and did not witness what happened: in other words, Chremylus’ role is defined precisely by its contrast to the disgraceful part played by the slave and eyewitness messenger. There is very likely a suggestion here of the innovative ways in which the messenger type-scene developed in the fourth century. In the *Rhesus*, the Thracian charioteer who brings the news of the death of King Rhesus to Hector was asleep and dreaming during the murder of his king. For a messenger he is then left in the highly embarrassing position of being unable to say how the murdered king died or who killed him (*Rhes.* 800-2), for the chief task of the tragic messenger is to report *how* someone died.⁴⁶ With Chremylus asleep throughout the proceedings, Carion too is only able to guess as to how precisely Wealth was healed (735-6). Moreover, as mentioned above, Carion’s failure to inform Chremylus’ wife of the main point of his speech creates a peculiar kind of messenger speech in which full comprehension is tantalisingly delayed – a technique paralleled in *Iphigenia at Aulis* as we have noted. In these ways, the messenger’s scene in *Wealth* develops some of the innovative features of messenger speeches found in Euripides’ later plays and perhaps also in early fourth-century tragedy.⁴⁷

As for the rest of the narrative, only in the Neocleides episode does Carion relent from thrusting himself to the forefront of his account. The gluttonous slave is the hero of his soup-stealing peccadillo, it is his flatulence that disgusts Panacea, and he is the observer of the miraculous restoration of Wealth’s eyesight and the cheerleader in the impromptu *pannychis* at the temple. Far from playing the role of anonymous witness and uninvolved bystander, Carion

presents himself as the shameless antihero of his story.

As we have found earlier, Carion's speech makes several allusions to specific tragedies. Among those that can be certainly identified, are echoes of Sophocles' *Phineus* (634-6) and Euripides' *Medea* and *Bacchae* (758-9). The verses from Sophocles' *Phineus* are clearly chosen for the general appropriateness of Phineus' blindness to the condition of the god Wealth. The allusions to *Medea* and *Bacchae* are also (as remarked earlier) allusions to messenger speeches in those plays. The lines from *Medea* come at exactly the moment that Creon's daughter has been poisoned and is in her death throes, while the line in *Bacchae* comes from the moment that the Bacchantes rush towards the pine tree and the dismemberment of Pentheus. In both cases, the intertextual echo reminds the attentive spectator of the moment *just before* the death of a major character in tragedy, drawing attention in the clearest possible manner to the most prominent function of the messenger speech: relating the way in which someone dies. The entire scene can then be 'read' as an extended metatheatrical joke in which Carion appropriates the form of the tragic messenger speech only to invert its purpose, since instead of narrating a death scene, he tells the audience how Wealth came once more to see: to look upon the light – synonymous in Greek (tragedy) with 'to be alive'.⁴⁸

Carion's role in this play as a whole is not only large but also surprising in a number of ways. His rudeness and familiarity towards his master (e.g. 23, 46 etc.), the violence with which he threatens the blind god (67-70), and the beating he metes out to a free citizen (928-50) have all struck readers as unexpected and excessive.⁴⁹ A surprising final twist is found in the developing characterisation of the slave. As the play progresses, Carion puzzlingly fades further and further into the background until in the final scene – if he is present at all – he appears only in a mute role, silently and compliantly following his master's procession towards the acropolis. As Douglas Olson has argued, the play's ideological legerdemain first creates a licensed space for Carion's riotous acting out only to remove it in the later scenes, returning the rebellious subaltern to his 'proper place' in the order of things. By the end of the play, the uppity slave of the prologue scene has become his master's fully obedient servant, even to the point that he takes it upon himself to instruct Hermes, the runaway slave of the gods, in the comportment appropriate to a member of Chremylus' household in the new world of Wealth's restored vision (*Wealth* 1154, 1158).⁵⁰

The slave's self-incriminating boasting in the messenger scene stands in sharp contrast to his master's dignified lack of involvement and does much to explain why what happens to Carion next 'serves him right'. Chremylus' utopia is conceived to reward and enrich good citizens, like the chorus of rustics, and to exclude, punish, and impoverish obstreperous, interfering troublemakers and thieves (broadly defined to include characters like the Sycophant who makes his living from prosecutions). Nowhere does this become more clearly apparent than in the Sycophant's scene, in which the bringer of vexatious lawsuits is first made to admit that his 'public-spirited' beneficence (907-8, 911-12, 919) is nothing other than undesirable meddling (913, 920) and is then driven from the stage. The Sycophant presents himself as a manager of public and private business (*pragmata*), to which the Honest Citizen replies that he is guilty of meddlesome interference (*polypragmosynê*). Carion's predilection for theft is made clear in both the prologue scene and in his own words in his messenger speech.

Furthermore, in the prologue scene, Carion casts himself in the role of troublemaker in terms distinctly similar to those in which the Sycophant is reproached. Demanding to know who the blind old man whom they are following is, Carion warns his master that, if he does not receive a prompt explanation, he will by no means keep quiet, he will not cease his interrogation, and he will make trouble (*Wealth* 18-20):

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ: ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅπως σιγήσομαι,
ἦν μὴ φράσης ὃ τι τῷδ' ἀκολουθοῦμέν ποτε,
ὦ δέσποτ', ἀλλὰ σοι παρέξω πράγματα.

CARION: So there's no way I'm going to keep quiet
unless you tell me why the hell we're
traipsing around after this man, master. I'll
just make trouble for you.

Carion's threatening words illustrate a central aspect of his characterisation: his habitual role is *parechein pragmata*: to make life difficult. Part of the underlying metatheatrical purpose of the messenger speech scene is, then, to develop the troublesome (as well as the thievish) side of the slave's character. Carion is given centre stage to do something that – in the tragic messenger speech – he should not. By burlesquing the tragic messenger speech and violating its unwritten rules of anonymity and frank, third-person, eyewitness reportage, Carion condemns himself before the audience, proving that he is precisely the kind of thievish, self-interested character who can have no place in Chremylus' utopia. In this way, the highly metatheatrical messenger scene 'explains' and 'justifies' the forthcoming domestication of Chremylus' most reliably thievish (26-7) slave.

In conclusion, the unique qualities of Carion's paratragic messenger speech have been under-appreciated. The scene is crucial to *Wealth's* narrative development, in which the slave Carion, for all his undoubted popularity with the audience, must end the play firmly returned to his subordinate role. His outrageous speech prepares the way for his deserved relegation in a utopia in which upright and moral conduct is rewarded by economic success. But more significantly, Aristophanes' longest, most daring, and most subtly intertextual and metatheatrical parody of the tragic messenger scene is confirmation that even in his last surviving play the poet's creative powers had not deserted him and neither had his interest in tragedy. The latter, of course, had been a hallmark of Aristophanic comedy for nearly forty years, but *Wealth* shows that for all its brilliance, *Frogs* (and the deaths of Euripides and Sophocles) did not mark the end of the fertile cross-pollination of comedy and tragedy in Aristophanes' poetic art.

Notes

1. I would like to thank the editors for the opportunity to contribute an essay on Aristophanes' *Wealth*. I am very grateful to Ian Storey, the chair of the panel at the 2011 Classical Association of Canada at which this paper was originally presented, and to the

audience of the AGM for their helpful comments, questions and discussion.

2. Diegetic space: see Issacharoff 1981. There were two temples of Asclepius at Athens, one in the city and one in the Piraeus at Zea (Σ *Plut.* 621). It is generally accepted, against the testimony of the scholiast cited, that the action narrated by Carion takes place in the Piraeus sanctuary because of the bathing of Wealth in the sea (*Wealth* 656) which fits better with the Piraeus. Cf. Aleshire 1989: 13.

3. *Plut. Lys.* 23.4.

4. Apart from the numerous gags in the prologue scene, I am thinking in particular of lines 253-321 in which Carion brings the chorus onstage in a lyric amoebaeian *parodos* burlesquing Philoxenus of Cythera's dithyrambic poem the *Cyclops* (on which see Hordern 1999).

5. On the tragic messenger speech, see below n. 14. None of the studies cited there mentions the messenger scene in *Wealth* or any other in Aristophanes. The only thoroughgoing attempt to study messenger speeches in comedy remains Wagner 1913; but Rau 1967: 162-8 on the paratragic elements of messenger scenes in Aristophanes provides the best starting point for further investigation.

6. The only published discussion (as far as I am aware) dedicated to this scene is Roos 1960. Its emphasis is quite different from that of the present essay. Roos seeks to show that Aristophanes had no intention of mocking the god Asclepius or his cult, suggesting that the humour arising from this scene is entirely due to Carion's buffoonery: 'quibus rebus expositis satis docuisse videor poetam exceptis iocis, quos cachinnorum commovendorum causa agitatem Carionem scurram induxit, omni veneratione Aesculapium eiusque artem medendi mirabilem in Pluto fabula prosecutum est' (op. cit. 97, cf. 79-80, 87 and *passim*). I agree that in-depth characterisation of Carion is the central effect of this scene, but I find Roos a little too optimistic about the likelihood that the audience would not have enjoyed at least some fun at the expense of Asclepius, his cult and his priesthood. The scholiasts certainly found these things amusing (e.g. Σ ad 681, 685). Nevertheless, Roos is right that if Aristophanes desired to poke fun at the worship of Asclepius, he could have made much more of the kind of material found in narratives of miraculous cures prominently displayed in inscriptional form in sanctuaries of the god, assuming such material was available. For an English translation of the epigraphic documents relating to Asclepian cult from the second half of the fourth century BC, see Edelstein and Edelstein 1945: 229-37 (= *IG IV²* 1.121-2). The first case recorded on the first stele is that of a woman called Cleo who had been pregnant for five years. After sleeping in the precinct she gave birth to a five-year-old boy who immediately washed himself in a fountain and walked away with his mother. The only discussions focusing on the messenger-speech form of the scene are Rau 1967: 166-7 with excellent remarks on the paratragic aspects of the scene; and Wagner 1913: 6, 78 with brief comments on the close relationship to tragedy, the characterisation of Carion, and the central importance of this speech in the narrative of the play.

7. While Cleisthenes' scene abounds in paratragedy, it is specific parody of Euripides' *Telephus* not general parody of the tragic messenger speech: see Rau 1967: 46-50.

8. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. There are numerous additional examples of passages in which a character with an ulterior motive brings news from somewhere offstage

(e.g. *Birds* 1494-552, *Wealth* 1099-119 etc.) or when summoned from within reports goings-on or developments there (e.g. *Frogs* 503-18). From the fragments of Old Comedy, indications of messenger speeches are found in Pherecrates, *Graecis* fr. 38, 40 K-A, *Metallês* fr. 113 K-A; and a report of off-stage action in Doric comedy can be seen in Epicharmus, *Busiris* fr. 18. For a messenger speech in New Comedy, see Men. *Sicyon*. 176-271.

9. Cf. Rau 1967: 163-4: 'Man muß sich davor hüten, den komischen Botenauftritt allein wegen seiner entwicklungsgeschichtlichen Abhängigkeit vom tragischen Botenbericht als Parodie zu betrachten. Insofern der Botenbericht technisches Mittel der Dramaturgie ist, hat er im komischen Drama seinen Platz sowohl wie im tragischen. Ist er also in Inhalt und Form ganz komödienhaft, ist der komische Botenauftritt nichts als Pendant zu dem tragische; Parodie liegt nur dann vor, wenn sich der komische Bote in typisch tragischen Konventionen der Form bewegt.'

10. Rau 1967: 164. He calls *Ach.* 1084ff., *Knights* 624ff, *Wasps* 1474ff., *Birds* 1271ff., *Lys.* 980ff, and *Wealth* 802ff. 'keine Parodien des tragischen Botenberichts'.

11. These are: *Ach.* 1069-83, 1174-89; *Wasps* 1292-325; *Birds* 1119-63, 1168-85, 1706-19; *Eccl.* 843-52, 1112-54.

12. Willi 2003.

13. Rau 1967 remains the fullest treatment of this feature of Aristophanes' poetics. The pioneering study is Ribbeck 1864: 267-326.

14. Recently: Barrett 2002, De Jong 1991, Goward 1999: 26-32, Dickin 2009. On the composition and performance of the tragic messenger speech, see Marshall 2006 on the highly self-reflexive example found in Sophocles' *Electra*.

15. Taplin 1977: 81. Other analyses are similar. The most influential recent study (De Jong) identifies three defining features of a tragic messenger speech: (1) the speaker must not be a major character; (2) the content of the speech must be narrative with the verbs predominantly in the past; and (3) there must be an introductory dialogue (1991: 179-80).

16. The longest uninterrupted passage of speech from Carion is only 19 lines long (665-83). Most of it is quoted below. On the general congruence of the comic messenger speech with the form found in tragedy, cf. Wagner 1913: 9: 'Videmus igitur Aristophanem in nuntiorum scaenis componendis saepissime exemplum Euripideum secutum esse, non solum in externa forma, sed etiam in structura orationis.'

17. In fact, no Aristophanic parody of the tragic messenger speech precisely replicates all the features of the form. Cf. Rau 1967: 168: 'Nirgends parodiert Aristophanes in seinen Botenszenen den tragischen Botenbericht in seiner typischen, durch Euripides ausgeprägten Form *im ganzen*' (my emphasis).

18. Dickin 2009: 42. Narrative verbs in Dickin's terminology are third person verbs in an historical tense and any associated aorist participles (op. cit. p. 15). Dickin excludes the historic presents included by De Jong in her quantitative analysis of the messenger speeches (1991: 185-6) on the grounds that their identification as such depends on context and is therefore subject to interpretative bias (see Dickin 2009: 43-4).

19. Taplin 1977: 82.

20. Cf. Wagner 1913: 9-10: 'Ea autem re nuntii Aristophanis (ut omnino nuntii comici) a

nuntiis tragicis differunt, quod eae personae, quae in comoedia aliquem nuntium afferunt, saepe non solum uno fabulae loco ut nuntii prodeunt, sed in tota fabula graviores partes agunt (vel servi vel parasiti).’

21. The formal aspects of the messenger scene have attracted a great deal of attention: e.g. De Jong 1991; Dickin 2009; Di Gregorio 1967; Rau 1967: 162-4; Rijksbaron 1976. Cf. already Wagner 1913: 57-60.

22. In Eur. *Hipp.*, I = 1151-2; II = 1153-9; III = 1162-3; IV = 1160-1, 1164-5; V = 1166-8; VI = 1169-70; VII = 1171-2. A few more cases may be offered by way of comparison. In *Medea*, I = 1118-20; II = 1121-4; III = 1125-6; IV is inverted because the messenger, shocked by Medea’s joy at the news, asks shocked questions (1129-31); V is therefore also missing; VI = 1127-8; VII = 1132-5. In *Electra*, I is absent; II and III = 961-4; IV and V = 965-70; VI = 771; VII = 772-3. A heavily compressed example is found in *Heracles*: I is absent; II = 909; III, IV, V, VI = 910-16; VII = 917-21. In *Helen*, I is absent; II = 1511-12; III = 1512; IV = 1513, 1516, 1519-20; V = 1517-18, 1521-2; VI = 1519; VII = 1524-6. In *Bacchae*, I is missing; II = 1024-8; III = 1030; IV = 1029, 1041-2; V is not present because the messenger, shocked by the chorus’ attitude, asks them questions; VI = 1031, 1034-5, 1037-8; VII = 1041-2. My analysis of the structure of the introductory dialogue makes no claim to originality. I have learned from all of the works cited above, n. 14.

23. At least in terms of raw numbers of lines. However, allowing time for interjections, dialogue and any associated stage business, the audience very probably felt the scene to be as significant as the messenger speech in tragedy. Cf. Wagner 1913: 10: ‘Praeterea narrationes nuntiorum comicorum plerumque multo breviores sunt quam tragicorum narrationes sollemne: nam semper fere tam viles res vitae cotidianae nuntiantur, ut longa narratione opus non sit.’

24. Cf. Wagner 1913: 57.

25. Cf. Wagner 1913: 6: ‘Diligentissime fere nuntiorum tragicorum forma in Pluto adhibita est ...’.

26. For the structural and linguistic paratragic features in the scene, the discussion of Rau 1967: 166-7 is fundamental. As far as I am aware, the metatheatrical references and the richness of the tragic allusions have so far gone unremarked. For commentary on the scene, see Sommerstein 2001: 179-85.

27. Cf. Rau 1967: 167; Sommerstein 2001: 181.

28. Sophocles fr. 273, 283 Radt. See Sommerstein 2001: 184 for further references and discussion. The *Inachus* was probably a satyr play, but this is not absolutely certain. Sutton 1979: 25-51, making the case for the *Inachus* as a satyr drama, reviews the debate over the genre of this fragmentary play. For doubts, see West 1984, who inclines to the view that it was a tragedy. In any case, the kenning under discussion is elevated and would not be inappropriate to a tragic setting. The style of satyr play is not as high as that of tragedy but is still noticeably above comedy: for a good, general discussion, see López Eire 2003.

29. Cf. Rau 1967: 167. The verse (in iambic trimeters) is metrically compatible with tragedy.

30. Cf. Wagner 1913: 74. Most messenger speeches in Aristophanes are preceded by a choral song in which no indication of the messenger’s imminent arrival is given: e.g. *Ach.*

1143-73; *Knights* 507-610; *Wasps* 1265-91; *Birds* 1058-117, 1470-93, 1694-705; *Lys.* 959-79; *Eccl.* 1111.

31. Cf. Rau 1967: 166 citing also Pindar, *Pyth.* 9.97.

32. Reading ἦκειν in 632 *pace* Wilson 2007 *ad loc.* The scholia attest the reading ἦκων for ἦκειν in 632, which would yield the sense ‘You have clearly come as a messenger of some good news.’ The reading ἦκειν parodies the ‘exaggerated caution with which some tragic choruses make inferences’, as Sommerstein 2001 on *Knights* 632 suggests.

33. Audience recognition of the tragic messenger as the ἄγγελος: Eur. *El.* 759-60; cf. De Jong 1991: 119; Marshall 2000: 325-6. For discussion of the use of the term ‘messenger speech’, see Bremer 1976.

34. Sophocles fr. 710 Radt. Cf. Rau 1967: 166 with n. 79; Lloyd-Jones 1996: 337. The fullest discussion of the play is Giudice Rizzo 2002 (see pp. 21-2 on fr. 710 and *Wealth* 634-6). For the healing of Phineus’ sons, see Phylarchus *FGrH* 81 F 18.

35. Σ *ad* 639 citing Eur. *Or.* 985-6 for a parallel usage of ἀναβοάω. It is significant that the parallel is found in lyrics sung in response to a messenger speech (*Or.* 866-956): further proof of the deep relationship between this passage and (Euripidean) tragedy. The use of dochmiacs to parody a tragic messenger scene is paralleled at *Birds* 1188-96; cf. Rau 1967: 166.

36. Rau 1967: 167 ‘Das Motiv des langen Wartens auf Nachricht finden wir ähnlich bei E. *Med.* 1116f.’

37. Sommerstein 2001: 180 on *Wealth* 647.

38. Σ *ad* 768 explains that the *katachusmata* included dates, small cakes, figs, dried figs and nuts.

39. Messenger speeches in tragedy are often used to describe crowd scenes to the audience: Euripides, *Orestes* 866-956 is a good example.

40. Further examples include προυιδιάξατο (*Wealth* 687, only otherwise in Aristophanes at *Clouds* 476), a word favoured by Sophocles: it is found at *Aj.* 163, *Trach.* 681, *Phil.* 1015.

41. On audience awareness of the conventions of the tragic messenger speech, see Marshall 2006.

42. For general discussion of the themes of the play (especially the central theme of blindness and vision), see Konstan and Dillon 1981, Olson 1990.

43. Barlow (1971: 61) offers perhaps the clearest statement of the view of the tragic messenger speech as a ‘transparent window’ through which the audience views the offstage action. For criticisms of Barlow’s view, see De Jong 1991: 63. Clearly, no eye-witness narrative can be strictly objective; but Carion’s report is obviously far more partial than any example of the messenger speech in tragedy.

44. De Jong 1991: 60. On the exceptions (Eur. *IT* 238-339, 1284-419) to De Jong’s general claim, see Dickin 2009: 43. In the satyr-play, the rules appear to be more flexible: in Euripides’ *Cyclops* the messenger-speech (382-436) is spoken by the protagonist Odysseus.

45. The scholiast on 685 remarks: ἐν τούτῳ δὲ δεικνύει ὡς αἰεὶ οἱ δοῦλοι περὶ τὸ φαγεῖν τὸν νοῦν ἔχουσιν; ‘in this he shows that slaves always have their minds on eating’.

46. Cf. De Jong 1991: 32-3.

47. For discussion of the messenger scene in *Rhesus*, see Barrett 2002: 168-89; Burnett

1985.

48. On the phrase ‘to look upon the light’ with particular reference to tragedy, see Bernidaki-Aldous 1990: 11-131. The scholiasts appreciated at least part of the joke here (see Σ ad 727). They remark that the reason that Carion calls Wealth *Ploutōn* instead of *Ploutos* at 727 is that the god was lying down as if dead and is therefore aptly mocked with a name for the god of the Underworld.

49. For Carion’s rudeness, see Olson 1989: 194 n. 5 with the bibliography cited there and Sommerstein 2001: 138 on *Wealth* 46 citing the handful of parallels (*Frogs* 480, 486) in Aristophanes for such behaviour on the part of a slave. Olson finds Carion’s manhandling of the Sycophant sufficiently problematic to argue for a reassignment of lines in the scene to give the Just Man the initiative and leading role in the fight: Olson 1989: 197 n.15.

50. Olson 1989: 198-9 and *passim*.

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Axionicus, *The Euripides Fan*

Elizabeth Scharffenberger

Athenaeus preserves two fragments from a comedy by Axionicus titled *The Euripides Fan* (*Phileuripides*), which scholarly consensus dates to the middle of the fourth century BC.¹ The first (fr. 3 K-A), cited at *Deipnosophistae* 4.175b, consists of three verses in iambic trimeter that likely come from the prologue. The second (fr. 4 K-A), quoted in *Deipnosophistae* 8.342b-c, contains a portion of a song that is a rare specimen of polymetric lyric among the extant fragments of fourth-century comedy and has been recognised as derivative of Euripides' lyric compositions.²

Despite the attention that has recently been paid to 'Middle Comedy', the remnants of Axionicus' play have received relatively little notice since Heinz-Gunther Nesselrath's brief discussion of fr. 4.³ My paper aims to give this intriguing pair of fragments a little more of the attention they deserve – an undertaking inspired by the pioneering work Ian Storey has done on the fragments of the fifth-century comedians Eupolis and Cratinus. After supplying basic background information, I will present notes on some of the fragments' salient features, with the goal of addressing fundamental points of interest in vocabulary, topical references, and the metrical patterning of fr. 4.⁴ In the ensuing discussion I will argue that the fragments, though modest in size, contain suggestive information about the comedy's content and humour, and that they exhibit traces of a sophisticated theatrical self-consciousness that, although linked to fourth-century performance trends, invites comparison to the attention that we find in Aristophanes to phenomena of reception and performance.

Background

We know only four titles of comedies by Axionicus – *The Etruscan* (*Tyrrhenos*), *The Chalcidicean* (*Chalkidikos*), and *Philinna*, in addition to *The Euripides Fan* – and are indebted to Athenaeus for seven of the eleven fragments attributed to him. The Athenian didascalic records preserve no reference to him, and there is no discussion of his origins, life, and career in other sources. It is therefore possible that Axionicus was not an Athenian citizen,⁵ and that he did not compose plays exclusively for performances in Athens. Nonetheless, the references in fr. 4 to men with names that crop up elsewhere in Athenian comedy (Callias⁶ and Moschion) make it reasonable to surmise that he was active in Athens, and that this comedy was staged at one of the major festivals, the Great Dionysia or the Lenaea. It seems plausible that *The Euripides Fan* aimed to capitalise on the popularity of reperformances of Euripidean tragedy in Athens during the fourth century BC, as did many other Athenian comedies of the period, which bear the stamp of Euripides' influence in a variety of ways.⁷ Like 'Philocleon' in Aristophanes' *Wasps*, 'Phileuripides' could have been a

comically coined proper name assigned to the comedy's main character,⁸ or it could have simply been an adjective characterising his enthusiasm. The title *Phileuripides* was also used by another comedian, Philippides, who was an Athenian active during the late fourth century (fr. 22-4), and the devotion of a 'Euripides-fan' may have served as the basis for the plot of a comedy with an unknown title by Philemon, a contemporary of Philippides and Menander (fr. 118).

Text, translation and notes

Fr 3 K-A.

οὕτω γὰρ ἐπὶ τοῖς μέλεσι τοῖς Εὐριπίδου
ἄμφω νοσοῦσιν, ὥστε τᾶλλ' αὐτοῖς δοκεῖν
εἶναι μέλη γιγγραντὰ καὶ κακὸν μέγα.

They're both so nuts for the songs of Euripides that they think everything else sounds like tunes played on kazoos – which is to say, horrible noise.⁹

Athenaeus has the musician Alceides of Alexandria quote these verses to explain the preference of the Peripatetic philosopher Aristoxenus for string and percussion instruments. These instruments, according to Aristoxenus (and Alceides), are superior because of the skill and training they require from performers, in contrast to easily mastered wind instruments such as the pipe (*gingras*) played by Phoenicians and Carians (*Deipnosophistae* 4.174e).

The expository content of this fragment in iambic trimeter makes it reasonable to suppose that the verses were spoken in the comedy's prologue; we may compare Dionysus' explanation of his 'longing [*pothos*] for Euripides' in *Frogs* 58-69. A relative or slave of one (or both) of the Euripides enthusiasts could have presented this information, or a divine figure could have been the expositor, if the comedy imitated expositions by gods that Euripides himself used in the prologues of tragedies such as *Ion*, *Hecuba*, *Hippolytus*, *Bacchae*, and *Hypsipyle*. This is a device that, T.B.L. Webster argues, other fourth-century comedians such as Eubulus, Timocles, Amphis, and Alexis regularly used, probably thanks to the influence of Euripides.¹⁰ A prologue delivered by a god could have generated a rich metatheatrical joke, insofar as it would have conspicuously exploited a familiar expedient that Euripidean tragedy had bequeathed to the comic stage in order to introduce a comic plot centered on the influence and popularity of Euripidean tragedy.

line 1. τοῖς μέλεσι τοῖς Εὐριπίδου Plutarch's anecdote (in *Life of Nicias* 29.2-3) about the Athenian prisoners who won leniency from their Sicilian captors by singing songs from Euripides' dramas suggests that, by the end of the fifth century BC, the tragedian's musical compositions had already achieved considerable popularity in Athens and elsewhere in the Greek-speaking world. Fourth-century Athens witnessed the rise of professional actors whose virtuosity as singers mattered significantly in their competition for prizes at the Dionysia and Lenaia;¹¹ the role of superstar singer-performers in raising the profile of monodies in fourth-

century Athenian revivals of Euripides' tragedies may be attested in the monody of Electra in *Orestes* 960-1012, which, as Mark Damen has argued, was originally a choral ode that was reworked during the century after Euripides' death so as to be performed by a soloist.¹² The emphasis in fr. 3 on the fans' keenness for the songs of Euripides thus appears to reflect a contemporary enthusiasm for Euripides' musical compositions, especially solo songs, on the part of both spectators and performers. In addition, it undoubtedly served as a set-up for the Euripides-inspired aria partially preserved in fr. 4. We may compare Euripides' vow in *Frogs* 862 to contend with Aeschylus over 'the verses, the songs, the sinews of tragedy' (τᾶπη, τὰ μέλη, τὰ νεῦρα τῆς τραγωδίας), which anticipates the parodies of Aeschylean and Euripidean lyric compositions (μέλη) in *Frogs* 1249-363.

line 2. ἄμφω Despite the singular form in the title, the fan of this comedy evidently had a companion who shared his passion for Euripides. Several possibilities concerning the identities and relationship of the pair are plausible: for example, two old men (in the manner of Cadmus and Teiresias in Euripides' *Bacchae*); two young men; representatives of different generations in the same household (father and son, or grandfather and grandson); a superstar actor and a companion, associate, or sidekick.

line 2. νοσοῦσιν Kassel-Austin ad loc. note the closeness of the language in this description of the fans' enthusiasm to Xanthias' account of Philocleon's jury-mania in the prologue of *Wasps*, in which the old man is said to be 'sick with a strange new sickness' (νόσον γὰρ ὁ πατήρ ἀλλόκοτον αὐτοῦ νοσεῖ – *Wasps* 71; *nosos* and its derivatives recur in *Wasps* 75-6, 80, 87). In *Frogs* 103, Dionysus describes his fondness for Euripides' clever expressions as a kind of madness. This all-out enthusiasm for Euripides is shared by the speaker of Philemon fr. 118, who asserts, 'If the dead really retained perception, as some claim, I would hang myself to see Euripides' (εἰ ταῖς ἀληθείαισιν οἱ τεθνηκότες/ αἰσθησιν εἶχον, ἄνδρες, ὡς φασὶν τινες/ ἀπηγξάμην ἂν ὥστ' ἰδεῖν Εὐριπίδην).

F.D. Harvey has argued that the passages in the prologues of *Wasps* and *Peace*, in which a slave complains about the behaviour of an apparently mad master who can be heard calling or crying out from the stage building, are comic renditions of a distinctive technique of exposition and plot development that Euripides exploited in tragedies such as *Hippolytus* and *Medea*.¹³ As Harvey notes, the verb *nosein* and its cognates are otherwise rare in Aristophanes' comedies aside from their emphatic deployment to characterise Philocleon's jury-mania in the prologue of *Wasps*. But they figure prominently in *Hippolytus*' descriptions of Phaedra's lust, as do terms of madness in the expositions of the protagonist's distress in *Medea*. Axionicus' use of the verb *nosousin* to describe the obsession of his fans may constitute a clever appropriation of the same Euripidean technique of exposition that Aristophanes had co-opted two generations earlier. Although he could have adapted this Euripidean motif independently of Aristophanes' practice, it is also possible that the prologues of *Wasps* and *Peace* could have inspired, directly or indirectly, the 'Euripidean' characterisation of Axionicus' Euripides-enthusiasts.

line 3. μέλη γιγγραντά M.L. West identifies the *gingras* (alternatively *gingrias*) as ‘a small pipe ... of Phoenician or Carian origin’ that was ‘a hand’s span in length, high-pitched and plaintive, and used in teaching beginners’.¹⁴ One might think of it as the ancient equivalent of the modern recorder (in its design) or – more to the point here – of the kazoo (because of the low level of skill it required from those who played it, and also the annoyance it seems to have caused listeners). μέλη γιγγραντά would be songs played on or composed for a *gingras*.

The fans’ disdain for other musical compositions, whether songs in other tragedies or more generally songs in different genres, finds precedents in Dionysus’ dismissal of Euripides’ junior competitors in *Frogs* 92-5, and also in *Clouds* 1365-79, where condescension toward a putatively inferior alternative (Aeschylus) marks Pheidippides’ enthusiasm for Euripides.

Fr. 4 K-A

1 ἄλλον δ' ἰχθὺν	an
μεγέθει πίσυρνόν τινα τοῖσδε τόποις	+ 2 an
ἦκει κομίσας	+ an
γλαυκός τις ἐν πόντῳ † γαλούς †.	ia + ia (?)
5 σίτον ὀψοφάγων	(?)
καὶ λίχνων ἀνδρῶν ἀγάπημα φέρω κατ' ὤμων.	+ (?)
τίνα τῶδ' ἐνέπω τὴν σκευασίαν;	2 an
πότερον χλωρῶ τρίμματι βρέξας	+ 2 an
ἢ τῆς ἀγρίας	+ an
10 ἄλμης πάσμασι σῶμα λιπάνας	2 an
πυρὶ παμφλέκτῳ παραδώσω;	+ 2 an ^
ἔφα τις ὡς ἐν ἄλμῃ	ia + ba
θερμῇ τοῦτο φάγοι γ' ἐφθὸν ἀνήρ	- - cho + cho (?)
Μοσχίων φίλαυλος.	cr + ba (ithyphallic)
15 βοᾶ δ' ὄνειδος ἴδιον, ὦ Καλλία.	ia + ia + cr
ἦ σὺ μὲν ἀμφὶ (τε) σῦκα καὶ ἀμφὶ ταρίχι' ἀγάλλη	6 da
τοῦ δ' ἐν ἄλμῃ παρεόντος	(?)
οὐ γεύῃ χαριέντος ὄψου	hipponactean

Now arriving in these parts is a dogfish *attrapé dans la mer* – it has brought along some other fish that had been *trop sûr* in its *grandeur* – I bear over my shoulders sustenance for *connoisseurs* of delicacies and a delightful treat *pour les voraces*. Well, what preparation am I to *prrrr-ononcer pour ce poisson*? Shall I give it over to *le feu flambant, mouillé* in fresh pesto sauce, or dressed with a sprinkling of tangy pickles? *Quelqu'un a dit que* Moschion, that fan of *la musique des pipeaux*, used to eat this (kind of fish) boiled in hot pickled broth. *Cet homme* cries out a reproach that you, Callias *mon ami*, should take personally – indeed, *tu te delectes à figs and salt-fish*, but, when (dogfish) is *prêt à manger* ‘à la pickle’, you don’t take a taste of this *charrrr-mant* treat!¹⁵

Athenaeus has the philosopher Democritus quote this fragment during a discussion of pleasure-seeking (8.335b-e), which follows the lengthy catalogue of fish in book 7 and comes to focus on the extraordinary pleasure that some individuals take in indulging their appetite for fish

(8.337b) – a practice repeatedly referred to as *opsophagia*.¹⁶ The fragment is one of several passages that Athenaeus’ symposiasts cull from comedies and other texts to describe the reputed *opsophagia* of prominent men, including the politician Hyperides (8.342a) and the philosopher Aristotle (8.342c). Prompting the recitation of these verses is Axionicus’ supposed imputation of *opsophagia* to a certain Callias, who is identified as a politician (*rhêtôr*) in 8.342b and is in all likelihood not the Callias represented in Plato’s *Protagoras*. On Democritus’ interpretation, the comedian insinuates that this Callias did not merely indulge his desire for fish, but that he was also an informer with a taste for ‘shameful’ sexual practices (8.342c).

Bothe¹⁷ construes the fragment as a lyric duet (‘fortasse Φιλευριπίδου et sycophantae’) in which the second singer takes over from the first with the question in line 7. All other editors and commentators assume that a single individual sang these verses, and those who speculate about the singer’s identity label him a cook (*mageiros*) on the basis of the similarities in the song’s content to the utterances attributed to comic cooks, such as the extended speeches preserved in Sotades’ *The Locked Up Ladies* (fr. 1), Archedicus’ *The Treasure* (fr. 2), and Philemon’s *The Soldier* (fr. 82).¹⁸ In these fragments, the cooks proudly describe in detail their skilful provisioning and ingenious preparation of food, with a special focus on the inventive treatment of different kinds of fish and seafood, including the kind of dogfish or shark (γλαῦκος) that is the object of attention in the first six verses of fr. 4 and would have certainly been in full view of Axionicus’ spectators.¹⁹ The first person singular deliberative subjunctives (ἐνέπω in line 7 and παραδώσω in line 11), which are modified by the nominative masculine singular participle βρέξας in line 11, make it clear that the singer is the individual who will actually cook the fish, and that he is not merely contemplating instructions for its preparation. The fish is, moreover, not destined for the singer’s personal consumption, but rather has been acquired to satisfy the appetites of the men identified in lines 5-6 as ὀψοφάγων καὶ λίχων ἀνδρῶν. All of these details support the identification of the singer as a professional *mageiros* hired to prepare food for (presumably) a celebratory occasion.²⁰ His boldness in scolding Callias (as well as, it seems, Moschion) fits the stereotypical profile of comic cooks, who were uniformly presented as pompous and self-important. Moreover, his use of song to express himself – and the fanciful characterisation of the fish in the first six verses, where the γλαῦκος is imagined as ‘arriving’ and ‘bringing’ in tow (i.e. in its belly) another fish that had once been ‘confident in its size’²¹ – can readily be interpreted as humorous intensifications of the proclivity of comic cooks toward ‘ornate or animated speech’ that is illustrated by Antiphanes’ *The Boor* (fr. 1), and that was possibly indebted, as Nesselrath and Gregory Dobrov have argued, to the ‘new’ style of dithyrambic poetry popularised by Timotheus and Cinesias in the late fifth century.²² As the product of an active imagination fond of flourishes and exaggerations, this elaborate description of the fish fits seamlessly with the self-aggrandising deliberations concerning its preparation in lines 7-18, and it accordingly makes sense to interpret the entire fragment as part of a solo aria and to retain the ms. first person singular φέρω in line 6.

The singer of fr. 4 – the singing cook, as I would have it – could have made his appearance during an early episode or even in a latter section of the prologue, or he could have arrived in a subsequent episode. It is also possible that he made his entrance in the finale, especially if

the comedy dramatised a failed or backfired effort to curb the enthusiasm of the fan(s), who would have accordingly been left at the end of the play as fond of Euripides as ever – and in a celebratory mood.

The fragment begins with a series of anapaests in the first three verses, and lines 7-11 are also anapaestic. The text and metrical analysis of lines 4-6 are uncertain (more below); in lines 12-18, the anapaests of the preceding verses give way to other rhythms. On the analyses of Wilamowitz, Edmonds, and Kassel and Austin, which will be discussed below, lines 12-18 mix iambic verses (featuring some syncopation) and choriambic cola (in lines 13 and 18), with a dactylic hexameter interrupting in line 16 and possibly an enoplian (with Wilamowitz's emendation) in line 17. In several extant tragedies, anapaestic passages typically classified as 'recitative' or 'intoned' constitute preludes for more metrically complex songs sung by actors with or without choral involvement.²³ These passages include two monodies by the titular characters in Euripides' *Hecuba* 59-97 and *Ion* 82-183; the parody of such Euripidean solo songs in Aristophanes' *Frogs* 1331-63 also features this structure. The deployment of anapaests in the initial verses of fr. 4, along with their descriptive content, makes it likely that the excerpt represents the beginning of the song. The following notes and discussion will offer further considerations of the particular details of the song's metres and rhythmic development, and of its similarities to extant Euripidean compositions.

line 1. ἄλλον δ' ἰχθῦν The connective particle δέ in the first line might appear to provide evidence that the quoted fragment does not present the song's very first verses. See, however, Denniston on the use of inceptive δέ in Xenophon, *Cyropaideia* 4.5.23 and 7.1.21 to 'give a conversational turn to the opening ... and avoid formality',²⁴ and see also Campbell on the possibility that δέ is 'inceptive' in the first verses of Archilochus fr. 1 and Mimnermus fr. 1.²⁵ In the light of such precedents, we cannot rule out the possibility that the fragment's first verse was the beginning of the song.

line 2. πῖσνον Used generally in archaic poetry and in the lyric portions of fifth-century drama: e.g. *Iliad* 9.238; Hesiod, *Theogony* 506; Pindar, *Pythian* 4.232; Aeschylus, *Seven Against Thebes* 212 and *Suppliants* 352 (both lyric); also Aristophanes, *Clouds* 949 (in the strophe introducing the *epirrhêma* of the *agôn*) and *Wasps* 385 (in an anapaestic tetrameter). The adjective almost certainly helped establish the song's paratragic tone.

line 4 γλαῦκος τις According to Thompson 1945: 48, this is a type of shark or 'dogfish'. It was considered a delicacy (Dohm 1964: 108) and accordingly merited its own discussion in *Deipnosophistae's* catalogue of fish (7.295b-297e); see Olson 2007: 278-9 for a list of references to the γλαῦκος in extant fragments of comedy. Some editors capitalise the initial γ; it is possible that Axionicus' singing cook indulges in the kind of punning on γλαῦκος the fish and Γλαῦκος the sea god introduced by the speaker of Nausicrates' *Sea Captains (Naukleroi)* fr. 1 (cited ad loc. by Kassel-Austin).

line 4 † γαλούς † Kock 1880-8 (vol. 2): 413 emends to γαλεούς,²⁶ Edmonds 1957-61 (vol. 2): 562 to γ' ἄλον (modifying σίτιον in the line 5). Kaibel's emendation to γ' ἄλους is accepted by

Wilamowitz 1921: 410 n. 1, and I have adopted it into my translation. The unnecessary emphasis supplied by γῆ to ἐν Πόντῳ can be interpreted as a mark of the singer's bombast. Alternatively, as C.W. Marshall suggests to me, it is possible that the singer is claiming that the fish was caught in the Black Sea (ἐν Πόντῳ), in which case his emphasis on its exotic origins could have seemed appropriate. For the use of Πόντος without the definite article to refer to the Black Sea, see Aeschylus, *Persians* 878 (στόμωμα Πόντου).

line 5. σῖτον ὀσοφάγων The noun ὀσοφάγος and the verb ὀσοφαγέω may have originally been comic coinages (see *Clouds* 983 and *Peace* 810), or they could be fifth-century neologisms adopted into comic discourse. The expression *siton opsophagōn* is paradoxical, since, as Davidson 1995: 209-10 puts it, '... there is no mention of *opsophagoi* eating bread [*siton*]. Typically, they are shown snatching *opson* straight from the pan, so that it burns their fingers or their mouths'. Axionicus' paradox contributes to the impression that the singer is endowed with a grand imagination. It is possible that the *opsophagoi* (*kai lichnoi andres*) of lines 5-6 are to be identified with the fans described in fr. 3.

line 6. λίχνων Cf. Euripides, *Hippolytus* 913 and fr. 1063.8 (a verse of dubious authenticity, but perhaps interpolated by the middle of the fourth century into the (unknown) tragedy by Euripides); also Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.2.1; Plato, *Republic* 1.354b1. The adjective seems to have been adopted into prose usage in the fourth century. But, in this context, it might have retained its poetic (and perhaps distinctively Euripidean) ring.

line 6. ἀγάπημα Cf. Crates Thebanus (the fourth-century philosopher and poet associated with Diogenes the Cynic), fr. 12. The noun appears to be a fourth-century neologism.

line 6. φέρω The emendation φέρων accepted by Kock 1880-8 (vol. 2): 413, Headlam 1899: 7, and Wilamowitz 1921: 410 n. 1 (perhaps to avoid asyndeton between two main clauses) yields a participle modifying γλαυκός τις in line 4. The asyndeton does not trouble other editors, and it does not strike me as problematic. The comic effect of having the speaker proudly focus on himself at this point is undeniable; it is, moreover, in keeping with the stereotypical egocentrism of cooks.

line 6. κατ' ὤμων Edmonds 1957-61 (vol. 2): 562-63 condemns this ms. reading because of the 'impossible genitive', but the expression troubles no other editors. The positioning of the large fish (perhaps suspended from a pole carried over the singer's shoulders) may have justified the use of *kata* + the genitive.²⁷ lines 4-6 (metre) With † γαλούς † emended to either γ' ἄλους or γ' ἄλόν, the line 4 scans as an iambic dimeter. With the emendation of σῖτον to σίτιον (so Wilamowitz 1921: 410 n. 1), line 5 scans as a hemiepes. Line 6 as presented resists analysis. I have considered interpreting it as an outsized pendant enoplian preceded by a pair of anapaests, but am aware that such an interpretation would be strained. The solution of Headlam 1899: 7, which is to rearrange the words of lines 5-6 so that they create anapaestic dimeters (σίτ', ὀσοφάγων λίχνων τε φέρων/ ἀνδρῶν ἀγάπημα κατ' ὤμων), is plausible, but credits Axionicus with less adventurousness in his recreation of Euripidean monody. If lines 5-6 (or 4-

6) are not rewritten so as to be scanned as anapaests, they would represent (perhaps with comic exaggeration) the kind of intrusion of ‘alien’ rhythms that was a signature (albeit judiciously deployed) feature of Euripides’ lyrics (especially in astrophic monodies), which Aristophanes recreated with embellishments in *Frogs* 1331-63 and, to a lesser extent, in *Thesmophoriazusae* 1015-55.²⁸ Given the brevity of fr. 4 and the problems posed by the analysis of lines 5-6, it is difficult to characterise the precise effects at which Axionicus aimed in his song. But the apparent lack of coherent rhythmic development in lines 12-17, where a verse composed of choriamb (line 13) and a dactylic hexameter (line 16) are introduced amid a series of (syncopated) iambic verses, which is capped by an aeolo-choriambic colon (the hipponactean of line 18), make Axionicus’ parodic strategy seem less like the technique of *Thesmophoriazusae* 1015-55 and closer to the ‘medley’ and ‘jumble of cola’ used in the parodies of Euripides’ choral and solo lyric in *Frogs* 1309-63.²⁹

line 7. *ἐνέπω* The spelling with a single *v* is found in Euripides, *Hippolytus* 572 and 580, and *Children of Heracles* 95 (all three occurrences in dochmiacs sung by the chorus or its leader). Elsewhere in tragedy, the spelling with double *vv* is more common. *ἐνέπω* with one *v* (and therefore a short initial syllable) accordingly appears to have a special Euripidean ring, and Kock 1893: 216 is justified in defending the reading.

line 7. *σκευασίαν* Cf. Plato, *Lysis* 209e3, *Alcibiades I* 117c4, *Minos* 316e9, also Menander *Phasma* fr. 2. The noun seems to be another fourth-century neologism, and its prosaic quality may stand in humorous contrast with the ‘Euripidean’ *ἐνέπω*.

line 8. *τρίμματι* Cf. Alexis fr. 193 K-A (188 Kock), Timocles fr. 3 K-A, Sotades fr. 1.4 and fr. 17 K-A, and Diphilus fr. 43.5 K-A (44.5 Kock), all cited by Kock 1880-8 (vol. 2): 413. *τρίμμα* is used in fourth-century comedies to refer to drinks made from pounded grains, or to sauces with pounded herbs (and so similar to our ‘pesto’, which derives from It. *pestare*, to pound) used for dressing fish.

line 8. *βρέξας* The verb *βρέχω* is used metaphorically in Euripides, *Electra* 326 (*μέθη βρεχθείς*), but as far as I know there is no parallel or precedent for its use to describe food preparation. As a point of comparison, Archedicus uses the verb *ἔρρανα* (from *ῥαίνω*) in *Treasure* (fr. 2.5) to describe the act of sprinkling or wetting coals with olive oil to make a blazing fire – see Olson 2007: 283. The use of *βρέξας* in this passage may further mark the singer’s lively imagination and/or bombast.

line 9. *ἀγρίας* i.e. ‘biting’, ‘sharp’, ‘tangy’.

line 10. *ἄλμης* Here, ‘brine’ or ‘salt broth’, as in Aristophanes, *Wasps* 1515 and fr. 426, and other comic texts.

line 10. *πάσμασι* This is a widely accepted emendation for the ms.’s nonsensical *λιάσμασι*, although *πάσμα* is a rare term that denotes powdery substances in medical treatises dating to

late antiquity by Posidonius ‘Medicus’ and Alexander Trallianus. Here it must refer to the sprinkling of liquid; if the emendation is correct, there may be a joke in its paradoxical application to the sprinkling of liquid. Bothe 1855: 587 excises ἄλμης and emends to χλιάσμασι (‘fomentations’, ‘hot compresses’), another term more at home in medical texts. Both emendations make the singer’s planned treatment of the ‘body’ (*sôma*) of the fish sound like the posturing of a would-be doctor. Insofar as they capture his sense of self-importance, both seem plausible, and they are in keeping with the pretentious claims of comic cooks to philosophical wisdom and/or scientific expertise.³⁰

line 10. λιπάνας The verb λιπαίνω (‘to anoint’) is used metaphorically (of rivers making land wet) in Euripides, *Bacchae* 575 and *Hecuba* 454 (both lyric passages). The usage here is possibly another distinctively Euripidean, or at least tragic, ingredient in the song.

line 11. παμφλέκτω Cf. Sophocles, *Antigone* 1006 and *Electra* 1139. In the latter instance, the adjective modifies πῦρ as here; it arguably supplies more paratragic flavouring to this song.

line 12. ἔφα τις Bothe 1855: 587, followed by Kock 1880-8 (vol. 2): 413 and Kassel-Austin 1983 – (vol. 4): 22, compares this reading to οὐκ ἔφα τις in Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 369. Edmonds 1957-61 (vol. 2): 563 adds, ‘The Doric ἔφα gives a mock tragic tinge and suggests that the verses were sung’.

line 13. ἐφθόν Archedicus’ *Treasure* fr. 2 suggests that boiling fish in brine (the option under consideration in this verse) involves less labour than the other preparations the singer has just enumerated. See Olson 2007: 282-3 (note on *Treasure* fr. 2.4-5).

line 14. Μοσχίων See Traill 1994 – (vol. 12): 457, #659185. Traill, like Edmonds 1957-61 (vol. 2): 563, tentatively suggests that this may be the same Moschion named in Alexis fr. 238 (as a parasite) and in Straton, *Son of Phoenix* fr. 1.13 (in a list of potential dinner-guests).

line 14. φιλαυλος Cf. Sophocles, *Antigone* 965 (of the Muses – in lyric) and Euripides, *Electra* 435 (of a dolphin – also lyric); the latter verse is quoted almost verbatim in *Frogs*’ parody of Euripidean choral lyric (*Frogs* 1317). Since Moschion’s ‘love of the pipe’ doubtless involved flute-girls and other trappings of the symposium, the use of this poetic epithet to describe him must have played up the disparity between his affection for *aulos*-music and that of Muses, dolphins, et al.

The ithyphallic clausula (cretic + bacchiac) is fairly common; it is deployed in polymetric contexts in (e.g.) Euripides, *Hypsipyle* fr. I.ii.14 (= 752f.14) and I.iv.9 (= 752h.9).

line 15. ὄνειδος ἰδιον ἰδιος in the sense of ‘personally attached to someone’ is attested in Aristotle, *Politics* 5.11.1315a36. Wilamowitz 1921: 410 n. 1 emends ἰδιον to ἠλιθιον, with the result that the verse scans as three iambic metra. But Wilamowitz’s gloss of ὄνειδος ἠλιθιον as ἠλιθιότητα αὐτῷ ὄνειδιζουσι seems strained.

line 15. ὦ Καλλία The emendation of the ms. ὦ καλιάδη to ὦ Καλλία/ ἦ seems wholly justified by the reference to Καλλίαν τὸν ῥήτορα in the sentence that introduces the fragment in *Deipnosophistae* 8.342b. On this Callias, see Traill 1994 – (vol. 10): 50, #553610.

Perhaps rightly, Wilamowitz 1921: 410 n. 1 dismisses as ‘eine dumme Erklärung’ the explanation offered in *Deipnosophistae* 8.342c that Axionicus mocks Callias’ sexual proclivities and activity as an informer as well as his *opsophagia*.

line 16. <τε> The emendation proposed by Meineke 1867: 151, which permits the verse to be scanned as six dactyls, is accepted by Wilamowitz 1921: 410 n. 1 and Kassel-Austin.

line 16. σῦκα – Cf. σῦκα αἰτεῖν in Aristophanes, *Wasps* 302, as a proverbial expression for ‘to live luxuriously’.

line 16. τὰρίχια This diminutive of τὰριχος appears in Aristophanes, *Peace* 563. τὰριχος (‘salt-fish’) is mentioned as military rations in Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 967 and 1101.

Unless one embraces a metaphorical explanation (like Democritus’) of the reference in this verse to Callias’ supposed relish for both figs (a ‘luxury’ food) and salt-fish (not something prized by most people), the point of the singer’s assertion is somewhat mysterious: is Callias being called out for self-indulgence (as Democritus insinuates), or excessive austerity? Is his hypothetical rejection of the stewed fish described in the previous lines a sign of his finicky taste, or his boorishness? The questions are either complicated or resolved by the fact that ‘salt-fish’ was not universally scorned as poor man’s food in Athens.³¹

line 17. ἐν ἄλμῃ Wilamowitz’s emendation of ἐν ἄλμῃ to ἐν <τῇ> ἄλμῃ creates, on his analysis, an enoplian. Euripides, *Hypsipyle* fr. I.iii.29 (= 752g.29) might provide a very rough parallel for the placement of an enoplian in a sequence of verses otherwise dominated by choriambic rhythms that eventually give way to lyric dactyls (in I.iii.36-41). Without the supplement, metrical analysis of this verse is difficult.

line 17. παρεόντος – The Ionic spelling is common in the Homeric epics (and Herodotus), and may be another flourish that contributes to the ‘grand’ sound of the song. The correction to παριόντος (Bothe 1855: 587) seems unnecessary.

line 18. χαριέντος To make sense of the last part of the song, Edmonds 1957-61 (vol. 2): 562 suggests that either χαριέντος or ὄνειδος in line 15 is to be taken ironically.

Further considerations

If the song preserved in fr. 4 was modelled on a specific Euripidean composition, its debts would have been immediately obvious. Even if it was more loosely derivative, it seems to possess a sufficient number of distinctive qualities that would have encouraged an association with Euripidean lyric. The vocabulary derived from tragedy and the broader traditions of lyric and epic poetry would have immediately established the paratragic tone of this song, and, as

the notes above suggest, a good handful of words in this fragment –ἐνέπω in line 7, possibly λίχων in line 6 and λιπάνας in line 10 and even φίλαυλος in line 14 – could have had specific associations with Euripides. The song’s metrical structure may have also sounded distinctively ‘Euripidean’ to Axionicus’ audience. Other fifth-century tragedians used anapaestic passages at the beginnings of songs (e.g. Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 40-257 [exclusively choral] and *Persians* 908-1077 [sung by Xerxes and the chorus]). But the parody in Aristophanes’ *Frogs* 1331-63 suggests that, by the late fifth century, the format had come to be closely associated with Euripidean solo lyric,³² and the periodic re-performances of Euripides’ tragedies in the fourth century may have strengthened the association. Lines 12-18 and perhaps also lines 4-6 of fr. 4 seem designed to replicate Euripides’ predilection for incorporating polymetry into his solo arias, with the kind of compression and exaggeration that were typical of comedy. The musical accompaniment possibly promoted the association with Euripides, as well.³³

Two prominent features of Euripidean lyric, which Aristophanes replicates with gleeful exaggeration, are not featured in fr. 4: the doubling of words, or *anadiplosis* (e.g. ἴλιον ἴλιον ὦμοι μοι in *Orestes* 1381; cf. φόνια φόνια δερκόμενον in *Frogs* 1336) and the high degree of resolution, particularly in the anapaests and iambs. But, like Aristophanes, Axionicus apparently sought to capture with the cluster of first-person references in lines 6-11 the self-absorption that characterises Euripides’ soloists.³⁴ What is more, with its singer warbling in high style about his options for preparing the catch of the day, the song excerpted in fr. 4 seems to have tapped into the same rich vein of humour concerning Euripides’ focus on ‘ordinary affairs’ (*oikeia pragmata*) that Aristophanes exploited so ingeniously in the contest in *Frogs*, culminating in the parodic monody of 1331-63 in which ‘Aeschylus’ impersonates a woman distraught over the theft of her rooster. As we remain mindful of the likelihood that the song excerpted in fr. 4 derived some of its inspiration from sources that are now lost to us, the fragment’s affinities with extant lyrics invite speculation about its pedigree. It is certainly fair to see in the fragment the comic alter-ego of songs such as the monodies sung by the Euripidean Ion and Hypsipyle in their eponymous tragedies (*Ion* 82-183 and *Hypsipyle* fr. I.ii [= fr. 752f]), whose arias serve as accompaniments to mundane chores, and it is possible that these monodies contributed something to Axionicus’ conception. *Orestes* 1369-502 may have also supplied inspiration for this composition, which arguably reconceived in lyric form a boastful cook’s recitation of his plans, much as the Phrygian slave’s aria provided an innovative format for the report of off-stage happenings that tragic messengers typically deliver in iambic trimeter. In addition, Axionicus’ conception for this aria may have been mediated by Aristophanes’ lyric parodies, especially the monody in *Frogs* 1331-63, which (given the abiding popularity of Euripides) could have stayed in style during the fourth century because of its hilarious ‘mash-up’ of Euripidean lyric, even if *Frogs* itself enjoyed no revival performances in Athens.³⁵

Whatever the plot of Axionicus’ *The Euripides Fan* was, and however the singer was involved with the fans described in fr. 3, the song preserved in fr. 4 must have humorously spotlighted the title character’s enthusiasm for Euripides and, in particular, his love of Euripides’ musical compositions. The song surely did extra comic duty by making the singer seem ridiculously pretentious, as he sang about his plans for cooking a fish in highfalutin’,

paratragic style that jumbled together different kinds of language. Recent scholarship on the discourse of cooks in Middle and New Comedy has drawn attention to their ‘wizardry’ with words and their appropriation of the obscurantist, riddling style of contemporary dithyrambic poetry.³⁶ In particular, Dobrov argues that these speeches conflate the *technai* of the cook and the dithyrambic poet, so that the cook appears to use dithyrambic language in order to ‘promote himself as a virtuoso’ – an artist whose skill demands attention and respect – in the face of social pressures that would otherwise marginalise him.³⁷ This suggestive analysis encourages us to consider the possibility that there may be an analogous metapoetic dynamic at work in fr. 4 that, thanks to the paratragic nature of the song and the comedy’s interest in contemporary revivals of Euripidean tragedy, has a specifically metatheatrical dimension. The song excerpted in fr. 4 may have encouraged the association of its singer with the actual tragic performers such as Theodorus, who starred in fourth-century productions of Euripides and earned particular acclaim for their skill in singing the arias that this song humorously evokes.³⁸ One of the song’s effects, then, would have been to mischievously link the pretences to superstar prestige conventionally attributed to cooks in the fictive world of comedy with the claims to celebrity professional status by real-life tragic actors – i.e. the very sort of performers who fostered and benefited from the tragedian’s posthumous popularity among fans.

All in all, the two fragments of Axionicus’ *The Euripides Fan* evince a sophisticated brand of metatheatrical humour that seems kindred to what we find in Aristophanes’ comedies. Moreover, the comedy’s evident interests in phenomena of the reception and performance of tragic drama are also not so far removed from those of Aristophanes. Although Aristophanes’ attention to the reception of Euripidean tragedy necessarily looked to a different set of circumstances from those prevailing in Axionicus’ day, Nesselrath’s contention that the parody in fr. 4 differs substantively in terms of its point, or goal, from the parodies in Aristophanes’ *Frogs* and *Thesmophoriazusae* downplays, in my view, the ways in which the Aristophanic comedies focus attention on trends of reception, performance, and interpretation.³⁹ The differences in content and humour between *Frogs* and *The Euripides Fan* may not have been so great, and the remnants of *The Euripides Fan* may supply modest support for a larger-scale rethinking of traditional conceptions of the periodisation of Athenian comedy.⁴⁰

Notes

1. Webster 1970: 259 dates Axionicus’ *The Euripides Fan* to the period of 360-350 BC. Edmonds 1957-61 (vol. 2): 645 gives c. 340 BC as an approximate year for the comedy’s performance, perhaps on the assumption that the comedy capitalised on the documented revivals of *Orestes*, one of the *Iphigenias*, and another Euripidean tragedy at the Great Dionysia in 341-339 BC (for which see Katsouris 1974: 178 and Kuch 1978: 191-2). Although they do not speculate on a date for *The Euripides Fan*, Meineke 1839 (vol. 1): 417, Kaibel 1896, Nesselrath 1990, and Rusten 2011 classify Axionicus’ plays under the rubric of ‘Middle’ Comedy. All fragments from comedies are cited from Kassel-Austin (eds), *Poetae Comici Graeci* (PCG) unless otherwise noted.

2. Kaibel 1896 identifies the lyrics as a parody of a Euripidean monody; see also Wilamowitz 1921: 410-11; Edmonds 1957-61 (vol. 2) 562-3; Webster 1970: 61; Nesselrath

1990: 246-7; Rusten 2011: 563.

Hunter 1983: 21 discusses the ‘misleadingly small number of lyric and choral passages’ that has survived from fourth-century comedy. Among all the extant fragments of ‘Middle’ Comedy, Nesselrath 1990: 267-80 identifies twenty composed of anapaests (typically arranged into dimeters in modern editions), and Csapo 2010: 134 n. 108 cites Menander’s *Leucadia* fr. 1. 11-16 and fr. 2, *Phasma* fr. 3, and a ‘fragmentum dubium’ attributed to *Theophoroumenê* as remnants of monodies sung by actors.

3. Nesselrath 1990: 245-8. *The Euripides Fan* is also mentioned in passing by Davidson 1995: 209-10 and 1998: 34, Roselli 2005: 2 n. 3, and Hanink 2010: 43-4, as well as Giannini 1960: 163 and Dohm 1964: 89 and 101. Rusten 2011: 563-4 offers translations of both fragments. Kovacs 1994: 112-15 cites and translates fr. 3.

4. Full *apparatus critici* for both fragments are available in Kassel-Austin 1983 – (vol. 4): 21-2. My limited discussion in this paper does not consider all the textual problems and proposed emendations (especially of fr. 4), but focuses on the aspects of the fragments that seem to have the greatest consequences for interpretation.

5. If *The Euripides Fan* was performed at one of the major Athenian festivals (as most scholars suspect), it is not necessarily the case that Axionicus was an Athenian. On the relaxing of standards concerning the citizen status of playwrights competing at the major Athenian festivals in the fourth century BC, see the general remarks of Csapo 2010: 116.

6. Virtually all editors accept emendations of the ms. reading *καλαΐδη* in line 15 to the vocative *Καλλία* followed by a particle that begins the next verse. The text will be discussed below.

7. For the popularity of Euripides’ tragedies in fourth-century Athens, see e.g. Webster 1954, Katsouris 1974, Kuch 1978, Damen 1990, Wise 2008: 385, and Hanink 2010: 41-5. Fragments of comedies that have some connection with Euripidean tragedy include: Strattis, *Phoenician Women* fr. 47 and *Anthroporestes* fr. 1; Sannyrion, *Danaë* fr. 8; Theopompus, *Odysseus(es)* fr. 35; Nicostratus, fr. 29; Philippides, *Philadelphoi* fr. 18; Philemon, *The Soldier* fr. 82. 1-2 and fr. 153; Diphilus, *The Parasite* fr. 6. Arnott 1972: 73-5 suggests that Menander’s borrowings from Euripides, whose influence on ‘New Comedy’ was recognised in antiquity (Satyrus, *Life of Euripides*, F 6 fr. 39 col. 7), were in part indebted to the Euripides-influenced mythological burlesques staged by comedians active earlier in the fourth century, such as Eubulus.

8. Bothe 1855: 587.

9. Text Kassel-Austin; my translation.

10. Webster 1970: 83-4; cf. Hunter 1983: 166 (note Eubulus, *Orthanes* fr. 75).

11. See especially Damen 1990: 140-3; Hall 2002, 7-12; Wise 2008.

12. Damen 1990.

13. Harvey 1971. In *Bacchae* 311 and 327, Teiresias uses the word *nosos* to describe Pentheus’ resistance to Dionysus; Pentheus echoes the language (describing the ‘disease’ that the stranger has brought to the women of Thebes) in *Bacchae* 353.

14. West 1992: 92.

15. Text and colometry Kassel-Austin; my translation.

16. The term *opsophagia* is used in 8.340b, 340e, 341b, 342b. According to Arnott 1996: 368 (note on fr. 129 *PCG*, from Alexis' *Lebes*), 'Although by Alexis' time ὄψον was coming in Athens to be restricted more and more to the preferred delicacy of fish, the word still carried enough of its basic meaning: any cooked or prepared food – fish, meat ... or vegetables or fruit – that was eaten as a snack with bread or wine.' Citing the opening verses of fr. 4, Davidson 1998: 34 underscores the challenge of pinning down exactly what was meant by *opsophagia*: 'Most people in classical Athens would have recognized the vice of *opsophagia* when they witnessed it, though the accused might have denied the charge or someone else might have disputed what exactly it was in this kind of eating that made the epithet applicable' In book 8 of *Deipnosophistae*, however, *opsophagia* clearly refers to eating fish.

Important examinations of the definitions of *opsophagia* and its associations with upper-class extravagance and self-indulgence are Davidson 1995 and 1998; Marchiori 2000; Wilson 2000: 293-304. Fisher 2000: 368-9 points out that the consumption of *opson* was not limited to elites in Athens.

17. Bothe 1855: 587.

18. For the identification of the singer as a cook, see Giannini 1960: 163; Nesselrath 1990: 245; also Dohm 1964: 89 and 101, who nonetheless acknowledges the tentative nature of the identification.

19. Scodel 1993: 162-4 reviews the stereotypical qualities of cooks in comedy, observing that such figures' 'creative energy ... is expended mostly on fish'. See also Wilkins 2000: 387-410, Olson 2007: 134-5, and Arnott 2010: 319-22, as well as Giannini 1960 and Dohm 1964, on the tendency of comic cooks toward self-promotion and bombast. This tendency was not lost on Athenaeus, who has one of his banqueters preface the series of self-congratulatory speeches by comic cooks in *Deipnosophistae* 7.290b-293e with the comment, 'The entire tribe of cooks is full of hot air' (ἀλαζονικὸν δ' ἐστὶ πᾶν τῶν μαγείρων φύλον) (7.290b).

Nesselrath 1990: 245-6 suggests that the singing cook of fr. 4 could have been one of the two fans described in fr. 3, a possibility that seems less likely to me (given the generally marginal status of cooks in comedy) than the alternative considered by Nesselrath, that the cook sings 'à la Euripides' because he is employed by the titular fan. In any case, Nesselrath's characterisation of the singer as 'halbverrückte' seems a bit uncharitable.

20. Wilkins 2000: 372 and 379-80.

21. The ms. text, accepted with minor alterations by Kassel-Austin and others, yields this sense. The emendations introduced by Bothe 1855: 586-7 and Edmonds 1957-61 (vol. 2): 562 alter the sense of the passage.

22. Nesselrath 1990: 297-309; Dobrov 2002; also Wilkins 2000: 380-1.

23. See Parker 1997: 55-8 and Hall 2006: 301-4 for a discussion of these passages. Hall also addresses questions concerning the delivery of 'recitative' anapaests and their musical accompaniment. Hall's analysis points to the conclusion that 'recitative' anapaests, however delivered, were differentiated from 'spoken' verse forms, and it accordingly seems fair to use the word 'song' to characterise the entirety of a passage such as fr. 4, especially since its latter verses, if not its anapaests as well, were meant to be sung 'full-out'.

24. Denniston 1950: 172.

25. Campbell 1982: 140-1, 224.

26. Thompson 1945: 41-4 identifies the γαλεός also as a ‘dogfish or small shark’; it is not clear how the γλαῦκος was distinguished from the γλαῦκος.

27. The painting on the black-figure amphora cited by Sparkes 1995: 154-5 (fig. 11.5) is suggestive of how the singer may have transported the fish.

28. Parker 1997: 442: ‘Unlike the *Frogs* parody, this song [the parody in *Thesmophoriazusae* 1015-55] does not indulge in an un-Euripidean excess of metrical diversity’. See Parker 1997: 515 on Euripides’ sparing use of ‘alien cola’ in *Phoenician Women* 1485-538, *Orestes* 1369-502, and *Iphigenia in Aulis* 1279-335.

29. So Parker 1997: 506-7 and 514-15. As Parker puts it (concerning the parody of choral lyric in *Frogs* 1309-28), ‘there is ‘no sign of the rhythmical logic in the juxtaposition of cola ... that we should expect from Euripides’.

30. Wilson 2000: 404-6; cf. Arnott 2010: 322.

31. See Davidson 1998: 7: ‘The preserved fish or *tarichos*, for instance, was generally looked down on and the phrase “cheaper than salt-fish” is used by Aristophanes to mean “ten a penny.” [But] certain varieties did have their supporters ...’.

32. See Parker 1997: 515 on the anapaestic opening of *Frogs* 1331-7.

33. See Wallace 1995: 214. Given the absence of copyright regulations, it is possible that Axionicus used music adapted from one or more of Euripides’ tragedies for this and other songs in *The Euripides Fan*.

34. Damen 1990: 144.

35. Unlike tragedies by Euripides, Aeschylus, and Sophocles, fifth-century comedies did not enjoy regular revivals in the major Athenian theatrical festivals during the fourth century BC. Sommerstein 2010: 405-6 offers a very cautious assessment of the accessibility of Aristophanes’ comedies as texts in the generations after their initial performance. On the other hand, it would be extreme to claim that comedies by Aristophanes – or portions thereof, especially funny songs – had no popular currency in the fourth century.

36. Cf. Nesselrath 1990: 247.

37. Dobrov 2002: 187-8. Wilson 2000: 379-82 and Dobrov 2002: 174-6 and 179 discuss the marginalised status of cooks, who (in fourth-century comedy) were represented as free men who were nonetheless hirelings. Pace Hall 2006: 304-8, it would seem that the singer of fr. 4, like the singer represented by ‘Aeschylus’ in *Frogs* 1331-63, is barely qualified to sing a ‘tragic’ aria, which was a form of expression typically reserved for high-status individuals. Part of the humour of Axionicus’ song must have been generated by the singer’s presumption of a kind of social privilege.

38. See Damen 1990: 142 n. 39 and Hall 2002: 12 on Theodorus.

39. Nesselrath 1990: 246-7: ‘Bei Aristophanes bleibt die parodierte Lyrik noch ganz im Milieu der tragischen Kunst und ihrer Vertreter ... bei Axionikos ist es ein völlig anderer, der “euripidisiert,” jemand, der mit der tragischen Muse im Grunde gar nichts zu tun hat; damit verschiebt sich auch der Ansatzpunkt der Komik, die an der Stelle der bösen Persiflage den grotesken, aber harmlosen Kontrast setzt.’ Cf. Dobrov 2002: 186-7.

For discussions of Aristophanes’ interests in reception and performance, see Roselli 2005,

Rosen 2006, and Scharffenberger 2007.

40. For important re-evaluations of the significance of the periodisation of Attic comedy into the categories of 'Old', 'Middle' and 'New', see Rosen 1995; Csapo 2000; Olson 2007: 22-6.

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Timocles fr. 6 K-A and the Parody of Greek Literary Theory

Ralph M. Rosen

Timocles’¹ celebrated fragment from his *Dionysiazousai*, in which a character attempts to explain the appeal and utility of Greek tragedy for contemporary audiences, is exactly the kind of ancient text that Ian Storey has become famous for elucidating. It is the tiniest sliver of a Greek comedy that is otherwise entirely lost to us. It is embedded in Athenaeus’ *Deipnosophistae* (6.223b-d), that famous repository of Greek comic fragments. And of course to make the challenge even more enticing, it comes with no context in Athenaeus. We know absolutely nothing about the speaker of the fragment,² the plot of the play, the scene from which the fragment is wrested, its addressee or its tone. What the speaker actually says, however, as we shall presently see, is rich and thoroughly tantalising, so it is well worth the energy it takes to understand it as fully as we can. Fragments such as this seem just to float about in history untethered to any sure moorings, until a scholar with Ian Storey’s erudition and shrewdness can at least begin to lash them down, sorting out the interpretive possibilities and probabilities, and bringing into focus their historical and cultural significance. Throughout his scholarly career, Ian has masterfully shown not only why it is so crucial to persist in grappling with such ancient scraps, but also how delicate such an enterprise can be. Indeed, as so much of his work has shown, it is often the methodological questions raised by fragmentary texts that come to be as interesting as the substantive ones. In the case of Timocles fr. 6, as I shall argue in this homage to Ian, closer attention to just such questions – its original function as a speech within a fourth-century BC comedy and as a self-standing exemplum in Athenaeus, for example – will help clarify what can and cannot be said about the fragment as a document in the history of Greek literary aesthetics.

Timocles fr. 6 K-A

ὦ τᾶν, ἄκουσον ἦν τί σοι δοκῶ λέγειν.
 ἄνθρωπός ἐστι ζῶον ἐπίπονον φύσει,
 καὶ πολλὰ λυπήρ’ ὁ βίος ἐν ἑαυτῷ φέρει.
 παραψυχὰς οὖν φροντίδων ἀνεύρετο
 ταύτας· ὁ γὰρ νοῦς τῶν ἰδίων λήθην λαβῶν

πρὸς ἄλλοτριῶ τε ψυχαγωγηθεὶς πάθει,
 μεθ' ἡδονῆς ἀπῆλθε παιδευθεὶς ἅμα.
 τοὺς γὰρ τραγωδοὺς πρῶτον, εἰ βούλει, σκόπει,
 ὡς ὠφελοῦσι πάντας. ὁ μὲν ὦν γὰρ πένης
 πτωχότερον αὐτοῦ καταμαθὼν τὸν Τηλέφον 10
 γενόμενον ἤδη τὴν πενίαν ῥᾶον φέρει.
 ὁ νοσῶν τι μανικὸν Ἀλκμέων' ἐσκέψατο.
 ὀφθαλμῶ τις, εἰσὶ Φινεΐδαι τυφλοί.
 τέθνηκέ τῷ παῖς, ἡ Νιόβη κεκούφικε.
 χωλός τις ἐστὶ τὸν Φιλοκτῆτην ὄρᾳ.³ 15
 γέρων τις ἀτυχεῖ· κατέμαθεν τὸν Οἰνέα.
 ἅπαντα γὰρ τὰ μείζον' ἢ πέπονθέ τις
 ἀτυχήματ' ἄλλοις γεγονότ' ἐννοούμενος
 τὰς αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ συμφορὰς ἤττον στένει

Listen, good sir, and see if I speak the truth.
 Man is by nature a creature born to suffer,
 and his life must endure many sorrows.
 And so, he has discovered these comforting distractions
 from his anxieties. For the mind, forgetting its own cares 5
 and entertained at someone else's suffering,
 ends up pleased, and learning something to boot.
 Now, consider first, if you will, how tragic poets
 benefit everyone. For someone who's poor,
 once he's learned that Telephus was a greater beggar than himself
 can then endure his own poverty more easily.
 Someone who's sick looks at Alcmeon stark-raving mad.
 Let's say you've got eye disease – well, the sons of Phineus are blind!
 Someone's child has died? Niobe can console him.
 If someone's a cripple, he can look at Philoctetes. 15
 If an old man falls on hard times, he learns of Oineus.
 The person, then, who understands that all the misfortunes
 that happened to others are worse than his own
 will then groan less under the weight of his own calamities.⁴

It is easy to see why this fragment has continually fascinated scholars. At first glance, at any rate, it seems to offer us a glimpse at how some people in fourth-century audiences explained the appeal of tragic drama. The speaker attempts to answer the perennial question of what audiences 'get' from tragedy, both psychologically and practically. His analysis is both seductive and frustrating, at once profound – again, as it seems – and pedestrian. His position, in brief, runs as follows: human life is miserable, and tragedy is one of the things people have discovered to take their mind off their anxieties (παραψυχὰς οὖν φροντίδων, 4); the ability to be distracted from one's own misery by the sufferings of characters on the tragic stage brings a

kind of pleasure (5-6), and even offers an opportunity for learning something (παιδευθεῖς ἄμα, 7). Next (8-19), tragedy can offer spectators practical relief from personal suffering as well, for when they see characters in a play who are worse off than themselves (specifically, characters who suffer from identical afflictions, but more intensely), they will be able to endure their own misfortune much more easily.⁵ Scholars have routinely found connections between such sentiments and those of other Greek writers who are interested in similar questions. In his recent discussion of the fragment, for example, Halliwell cites Democritus (191 DK, on contemplating the lives of miserable people), Gorgias and Aristotle (both of whom apply the term *psychagôgê* to the power of poetry), among others, as likely antecedents to Timocles' speaker, and is able to conclude: 'Gorgias anticipates the line taken by Timocles' character, whose contention that the tragic spectator is "educated" matches a wider classical conception of poets as "teachers" of their communities'.⁶ Whether or not Timocles had any specific theorising in mind when he wrote the lines for the speaker of fr. 6, there can be little doubt, as Halliwell and others have noted, that the fragment reflects notions that were at least in the air at the time and would have been intelligible to the audience as tidbits of literary theory. Further questions, however, remain.

Does the fragment, for example, serve as evidence that anyone seriously held the positions about tragedy articulated by the speaker as he *specifically* articulates them? Does it, in other words, actually *add* anything substantive to our understanding of the history of Greek literary theory, and allow us to conclude, for example, that the speaker purveys what would have been considered a serious, viable explanation of tragedy, however comic the framing might have been? Scholars have certainly been aware that the fragment comes from a comedy,⁷ but the move from comedy to literary theory can be seductive; it is one thing to say that Timocles created a character whose comic analysis of tragedy amalgamated a jumble of well known philosophical positions, but quite another – as scholars often intimate even if they do not say as much explicitly – to impute such positions to Timocles himself as if he were a *bona fide* literary theorist of some sort. The consequences of conflating these two positions may not seem especially catastrophic, but it does tend to distract scholars from attempting to understand how the fragment might actually have functioned in its original context. As I would like to argue here, an examination of the fragment as a specimen of comic poetics, not literary theory, suggests the likelihood that its *function* within *Dionysiazousai* is the opposite of what is generally supposed. That is, the fragment should probably be read as *parody* of a set of theoretical positions which, *when articulated precisely as they are by the speaker*, would be judged absurd by the audience, or at the very least, amusing and untenable as serious literary theorising. The point of the passage, in other words, is not at all its theory – which is merely warmed-over familiar stuff by the late fourth century – but its humour, which distorts the theory and, in a move that would have been considered conventional in post-Aristophanic Attic comedy, takes a playful swipe along the way at the pretences of tragedy.

Comparison with similar scenes from earlier comedy, in fact, suggests that Timocles had adopted for the speaker of fr. 6 a very specific trope from his predecessors which was designed to effect a particular kind of parody. In its abstracted form this trope either 'literalises' a notion that was intended to be construed as metaphorical or mischievously lowers the register of an idea that was supposed to remain elevated. A scene from

manages to integrate both parts of the joke – the serious ‘comic feed’ and its subsequent trivialisation – into one speech. Lines 1-8, in other words, open with what appears to be a serious claim, cast as a generalised bit of philosophising: life is full of sorrows, humans have discovered various forms of consolation,¹² which help people forget their own misery and give them pleasure along the way, and so on. The speaker then offers up tragedy (line 8) as his first example of a *consolatio*. The overall literary-critical thrust of these lines is not terribly different from the point Euripides wants to make in *Frogs* in his description of his work, in that they each want to make a case for the *ὠφελία* of tragedy (τοὺς γὰρ τραγωδοὺς πρῶτον ... σκόπει, ὡς *ὠφελουσι* πάντας, Timocles fr. 6.8-9). Also, like Euripides, the fragment’s speaker is concerned with how tragedy affects one’s *φροντίς* and *νοῦς* (4-5), although from here their positions diverge: whereas Timocles’ speaker argues that tragedy diverts people from their real-world concerns (ὁ γὰρ νοῦς τῶν ἰδίων λήθην λαβῶν ..., 5), Euripides, as we have seen, wants tragedy to offer audiences something practical for their daily lives. Both Euripides in *Frogs* and the speaker of Timocles fr. 6 (up to line 9) think of tragedy generally and abstractly, grasping in their own ways for a kind of normative ‘theory of tragedy’ (i.e., ‘good tragedy ought to do the following things, and above all it should have some “utility” for real life ...’). Each seems to be alluding to a serious, quasi-philosophical conception of tragedy that audiences might recognise from other, non-comic, contexts, but the point of each scene is to *parody* each character’s philosophical pretences, not to promote a philosophical position.

The Timocles fragment, in fact, follows the same pattern of comic deflation and parody that we saw in the exchange between Euripides and Dionysus in our *Frogs* passage. After the first nine lines establish the general idea that tragedy is consolatory and propaedeutic, the next seven lines (9-16) attempt to offer some examples. It is here that things begin to fall off the rails. The speaker’s examples are drawn, appropriately enough, from actual tragic figures who are adduced as emblematic of the kinds of afflictions normal humans might experience in their lives: Telephus (poverty), Alcmaeon (madness), the sons of Phineus (blindness), Niobe (death of children) and Philoctetes (lameness), Oineus (abject old age). Seeing such characters on the stage in all their tragic misery is supposed to offer consolation to the poor spectator who happens to have the same problem. But how in fact is the audience supposed to ‘read’ these exempla? We have, of course, no contextual bearings here to help us with an answer, but I would suggest that if we think through what this character is actually saying, the most reasonable conclusion has to be that the exempla are intended to come across as comically banal, if not downright ludicrous. Does the speaker really imagine that spectators would say to themselves, ‘Well, I may be poor, but at least I’m not poor like Telephus’, or ‘I may have lost a child recently, but at least I didn’t lose fourteen, like Niobe – now I feel much better!’¹³, and so on for each of the other tragic figures cited?¹⁴

Adding to the silliness of this conceit is the fact that the afflictions ascribed to each of these tragic characters are not really the same kinds of *ἀτυχήματα* (‘misfortunes’) that depress normal people in the course of their routine lives. Telephus, for example, is a particularly bad exemplum for poverty: he was the king of Mysia, after all, who only *pretended* to be a beggar in order to find his way to Achilles. Niobe did lose all of her children, but this was divine punishment for boasting that she was more fortunate than Leto. Similarly for Alcmaeon, the

sons of Phineus, and Philoctetes, all of whom suffered as they did for specific reasons that are explained by the details of their myths.¹⁵ All of these figures would have played out many grand questions of life, death, humanity and divinity on the tragic stage, but I think we can be reasonably sure that the authors who wrote them into their plays were not trying to locate the ‘tragedy’ of such characters merely in the contingencies of their misfortune – their blindness, lameness, insanity, etc. One might envision the myth of Niobe, for example, ‘teaching’ us any number of things about how humans should interact with the gods, *vel sim.*, but it seems questionable at best to imagine any serious Greek thinker holding that it teaches us to feel better about the loss of children in our real lives.¹⁶

The Timocles fragment, therefore, seems to be a parody of *explicitly* didactic theories of tragedy, the kinds of theorising that take the notion of ‘teaching’ very literally and directly. This is not to say that Timocles’ larger purpose would necessarily be to repudiate such theories wholesale, only to show that there is a good deal of comedy that can be extracted from them if one reduces the teaching metaphor to the most literal and pedestrian levels, as the Aristophanic Dionysus did with Euripides’ claims that his tragedy was useful for the daily lives of his audience.

One important by-product of this discussion is the larger methodological questions it raises about what we can glean from disembodied comic fragments such as this in the first place. The excerptor himself, Athenaeus, creates the first problem when he casually introduces the fragment by ascribing the sentiments of the lines to Timocles himself, even though we have no reason to assume any connection between the speaker and the poet’s own views:

Τιμοκλῆς ὁ κωμωδιοποιὸς κατὰ πολλὰ χρησίμη

*εἶναι λέγων τῷ βίῳ τὴν τραγωδίαν φησὶν ἐν Διονυσιαζούσαις ... (6.223b3).*¹⁷ It is fruitless, of course, to hold Athenaeus to an anachronistic standard of precision in his citation practice, but his clumsiness in this case has often been replicated in the scholarly tradition. Even when scholars are careful to separate the poet from the speaker, there remains the question of how we handle the speaker’s particular views as evidence of contemporary intellectual history. The fragment does seem to suggest legitimately enough that some people at the time who thought seriously about aesthetics explained the pleasures of tragedy according to a theory of psychological manipulation (*psychagôgê*) inherited from Gorgias and others. Likewise, as scholars often note, the speaker’s foray into ‘consolation theory’ must have alluded to some of the contemporary debates about the ‘usefulness’ of tragedy. The trivialising, parodic thrust of the fragment, however, ought to give us pause about what further claims we want to make about it. If we are correct to stress its comic aspects, we need to imagine the speaker in a context in which Timocles himself is ‘goofing on’ these theories, not endorsing them – much as Aristophanes enjoyed twisting and inverting serious topics by means of characters who are made to see themselves as serious, but who are given ideas to express that the audience would find laughable. Timocles’ speaker in fr. 6, in other words, may ‘think’ he is presenting a serious theory of tragedy, but his audience would find his explanation of it humorous, not deep.

Ian Storey concluded his entry on Timocles in his (and Arlene Allan’s) *Guide to Ancient Greek Drama* by noting that Timocles’ ‘*vis comica*, in the same league ... as Aristophanes and Kratinos, makes one suspect that he may he may well have been trying to revive Old Comedy

in an age where drama looked to the past'.¹⁸ While our available evidence does not allow us to do much more than speculate along with Storey, our examination of Timocles fr. 6 suggests, in any case, a familiarity with, and predilection for exactly the kinds of parodic practices that we have come to associate with the poets of Old Comedy.¹⁹

Notes

1. Active during the second half of the fourth century BC. See Rusten et al. 2010: 517.
2. This includes, it must be said, the identity of the speaker's gender, which might be male or female. By default, but aware of the uncertainty, I refer to the speaker as male throughout this chapter. The speaker could, after all, be an allegorised female character 'Tragedy', with a precedent in, for example, Cratinus' allegorised 'Comedy' in his *Wine-flask* (*Pytinê*) (423 BC); see Testim. ii in Kassel-Austin vol. 4: 219, Rosen 2000: 26, Bakola 2010: 60-3 and Biles 2011: 147-8.
3. The use of ὀπᾶ in v. 15 suggests that the speaker takes his examples from *performed* tragedies, not from texts. The fact that the examples are famous plays of Euripides (*Telephus*, *Alcmaeon*, *Oineus*, and perhaps *Philoctetes*) and Aeschylus (*Phineus* and *Niobe*) may point to specific plays that were being reperformed at the time of Timocles. Indeed, this seems appropriate for the title, *Women at the [City] Dionysia*, since it was at this festival that classic tragedies were reperformed after 386. See Csapo and Slater 1994: 42.
4. The translation is my own (slightly modified) from Rusten et al. 2011: 518-19.
5. See Halliwell's summary of the passage (2005: 395): 'Building on the folk wisdom that life is hard, the speaker construes tragic myth as a magnified reflection of the scope of human suffering, a reflection which affords spectators a perspective on their own lives and makes their troubles seem more endurable'.
6. Halliwell 2005: 395-6.
7. Halliwell 2005: 394, concedes that we need to exercise some care in interpreting a passage embedded in a comedy ('Such material ... always needs interpreting circumspectly'), but does not pursue here the question of how its comic context actually affects an analysis of passage: 'But the juxtaposition of life and theatre in Timocles' fragment, though not without a humorous slant, provides an illuminating glimpse of some possible attitudes to tragedy in the late-classical period'. Kassel 1958: 9, too is aware that we need to acknowledge the fragment's comic setting: 'Wir sind also, obwohl der Ausgangspunkt bei Gorgias genommen ist, ganz im Bereich rationaler Tröstung - *das komische Element natürlich hier beiseite gesetzt* - durch *exempla* und Vergleich ...' (my emphasis). We have come a long way, at least, since the nineteenth century, when one could find assessments of Timocles fr. 6 such as this: 'The passage is particularly valuable, not only for its intrinsic merit, but for the handsome tribute which it pays to the moral uses of tragic drama ...' (Mills 1854: 399).
8. One example worth contemplating in the context of *Frogs*, is the conceit of weighing verses in scales, lines 1364-410. As is often noted (e.g., Stanford 1963: 190) the idea seems to be riffing on serious scenes from Homer (*Il.* 22.209ff.) and Aeschylus' lost *Psychostasia* in which Zeus weighed the souls of Achilles and Memnon in combat. The comic thought process

behind the idea of grafting a ‘weighing of souls’ on to a ‘weighing of verses’ would seem to involve first, thinking what a good idea it would be if one could evaluate poetry in the manner of the famous Iliadic scene – metaphorically, that is, not literally – then, to literalise the metaphor so as to imagine the metaphorical ‘weight’ of words as ‘real’ weight. On the Aristophanic scene, see now Porter 2010: 273.

9. See Dover 1993: 297 on l. 840 (a joke about Euripides’ mother as vegetable-seller).

10. The exact point of the joke remains opaque to us, but see Dover’s discussion (1993: 311), on line 953, Borthwick (1994), arguing that the accusation is a euphemism for prostitution, and Roselli (2005), who offers a complex argument for a connection between poetics and social class in the joke about Euripides’ mother.

11. Dover 1993: 315.

12. See Kassel 1958: 8-9 and 71-2 for the place of the Timocles fragment in the ancient tradition of ‘consolation literature’.

13. One might think of Homer, *Iliad* 24.596-620, where Achilles invokes Niobe in his effort to persuade the grieving Priam to eat, as an early example of her deployment within a *consolatio*. But Achilles’ purpose here is to get Priam to take food, not to relieve him of his sorrow by suggesting that he suffers less than Niobe. In fact, he explicitly tells Priam (620) that he can mourn Hector fully after he has eaten. Niobe is cited here only as an example of someone who managed to eat even in the midst of extreme sorrow.

14. Not to mention other humorous possibilities with characters not mentioned in the fragment: think of a spectator imagined to take solace in a performance of Sophocles’ *Oedipus Tyrannus* – ‘I may have slept with my sister, but look at Oedipus ... he slept with his *mother!*’ (with thanks to C.W. Marshall).

15. For basic details of each myth, see Olson 2008: 6-9 nn. 7-12. It is probably more than coincidental that three of Timocles’ mythological exempla also occur in the list of tragic heroes whom Dicaeopolis mentions at Aristophanes’ *Acharnians* 410-34. Here, Dicaeopolis visits Euripides to ask him for costumes and props from his most piteous tragedies. He asks for Oineus first (419), then Phoenix (421), Philoctetes (424), Bellerophon (427) and finally Telephus (429). Even in the late fifth century, in other words, Euripides’ tragedies could be conceptualised as offering stock examples of ‘piteous’ plot-lines, and Timocles may well have Euripides in particular in mind in fr. 6. See Macleod 1974 on the Aristophanic scene (I thank Mario Telò for this observation).

16. This is not, of course, to deny *tout court* the existence of ancient theories which held that tragedy could offer audiences consolation for human suffering; I think it is only unlikely that anyone holding such a view would trivialise the actual mechanism of *consolatio* with the kinds of examples we find in the Timocles fragment. When Democritus, for example, who is often regarded as our earliest Greek *consolatio*-theorist (‘der Archeget’, Kassel 1958: 72), recommends in fr. B 191 DK that people should contemplate the sufferings of others and compare them to their own so that they can understand that they are better off than such people (

τῶν δὲ ταλαιπωρούντων τοὺς βίους θεωρεῖν, ἐννοούμενον ἅ πάσχοσι κάρτα

ὄκως ἂν τὰ παρεόντα σοι καὶ ὑπάρχοντα μεγάλα καὶ ζηλωτὰ φαίνηται, καὶ μηκέτι πλειόνων

ἐπιθυμέοντι συμβαίνει κακοπαθεῖν τῇ ψυχῇ), he may well in fact have had in mind specific instances of

commonplace misfortunes (if one is blind in one eye, e.g., one could feel fortunate to be better off than the person who is blind in both), and it is even possible he believed that the many miserable mythological figures who appeared in tragedy could assist in this exercise in ‘positive psychology’. What seems less easy to believe is that anyone would have held that the ‘usefulness’ of tragedy could be reduced to the kind of trivial formulation that the speakers give it in Timocles fr. 6.

17. The section of Athenaeus in which the Timocles fragment is embedded, the very opening of *Deipn.* Book 6, is extremely confusing. In fact, it is nearly impossible to puzzle out exactly what Athenaeus’ motivation was for citing Timocles at 223b. The book opens with Athenaeus explaining to his friend Timocrates, as it seems, why it is that he should not expect that Athenaeus will ‘invent novelties’ in his account of the banqueters (καινά τινα νομίζων ἡμᾶς εὐρίσκειν, 6.222c). He immediately quotes the famous fragment from Antiphanes’ *Poetry* (fr. 189 K-A) in which a character complains that comedy is much harder to compose than tragedy, because the latter can always fall back on conventional character and plots, while the former must invent everything from the ground up. Five lines from Diphilus’ *Olive-Grove Guards* are then cited to affirm that point. The train of thought seems to be that Athenaeus’ narrative is more like tragedy in that he just recounts what he has experienced, but does not have to invent the details. I can find no logical connection between this thought and his citation of Timocles fr. 6, which immediately follows. He simply introduces it by noting that Timocles claimed that tragedy was useful for one’s life – no contrast with comedy, no suggestion that the fragment relates to Athenaeus’ conversation with Timocrates. Athenaeus simply seems to have gotten distracted at this point thinking of passages he knew that referred to tragedy (or comedy) self-consciously. See Braund and Wilkins 2000: 31, for a reasonable attempt to make sense of this ‘curious discussion’, as they put it, although they prudently avoid trying to explain why the Timocles fragment occurs where it does.

18. Storey and Allan 2005: 221.

19. I thank S.D. Olson for an extremely helpful discussion of various aspects of this chapter in its early stages, as well as the editors for their excellent suggestions on final drafts.

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Cratinus, Menander and the Daphne Mosaic

C.W. Marshall

The impact of Cratinus on the subsequent reception of comedy in antiquity is underappreciated, in a large part because none of his plays survive.¹ This chapter aims to demonstrate the function that allusion to Cratinus could serve in the third century AD, and in so doing to add another dimension to our understanding of the place held by the playwright among the educated Roman elite. The paper adduces an allusion to one of Cratinus' undisputed masterpieces, *Wine-flask* (*Pytinê*, fragments 193-217, the play that defeated Aristophanes' *Clouds* and Ameipsias' *Connus* in the competition at the Dionysia in 423 BC), in a mid-third-century mosaic from Daphne, 9 km south of Syrian Antioch in the south of modern Turkey, and now in the Princeton Art Museum.² In doing so, it offers a new interpretation of an important surviving image of the New Comic playwright Menander. The nature of the allusion depends on the viewer's expected familiarity with Cratinus' play and the ability to recontextualise it through a visual medium, and this process works alongside other ways that the mosaic communicates to its viewer.

Cratinus was the elder statesman of Old Comedy, establishing the generic structure that would be followed by Eupolis and Aristophanes. His name can represent the genre metonymically because of his pre-eminence. Cratinus' *Wine-flask*, originally produced at the Dionysia in 423 BC (alongside the original *Clouds* of Aristophanes, which it defeated), is one of the lost masterpieces of Old Comedy. In it, Cratinus presents a domestic situation in which an old playwright (representing Cratinus himself, whether or not he was so named in the play) is married to a personified Comedy, who is upset at her husband because instead of writing comedies, he is dallying with Drunkenness, *Methê*, who may also have appeared in the play as a personification. Our knowledge of the plot comes principally from the scholiast to Aristophanes, *Knights* 400a:³

ὅπερ μοι δοκεῖ παροξυνθεῖς ἐκεῖνος, καίτοι τοῦ ἀγωνίζεσθαι ἀποστὰς καὶ συγγράφειν, πάλιν γράφει δράμα, τὴν Πυτίνην, εἰς αὐτὸν τε καὶ τὴν μέθην, οἰκονομία τε κεχρημένον τοιαύτη. τὴν Κωμωδίαν ὁ Κρατῖνος ἐπλάσατο αὐτοῦ εἶναι γυναῖκα καὶ ἀφίστασθαι τοῦ συνοικεσίου τοῦ σὺν αὐτῷ θέλειν, καὶ κακώσεως αὐτῷ δίκην λαγχάνειν, φίλους δὲ παρατυχόντας τοῦ Κρατῖνου δεῖσθαι μηδὲν προπετὲς ποιῆσαι καὶ τῆς ἔχθρας ἀνερωτᾶν τὴν αἰτίαν, τὴν δὲ μέμφεσθαι αὐτῷ ὅτι μὴ κωμωδοίη μηκέτι, σχολάζοι δὲ τῇ μέθῃ.

It seems that he [Cratinus] got very angry at this [Aristophanes' comments at *Knights* 526-36] and although he had retired from writing and competing, he wrote another play, *Wine-flask*, about himself and Drunkenness, employing the following plotline: Cratinus made Comedy his wife, wanting to stop living with him and to lodge a complaint of abuse at his hands; his friends appear and ask her not to do anything rash and to find out the reason for

her enmity; Comedy complains that he no longer lives with her, but spends all his time with Drunkenness.

This is probably the first time the genre had been personified on stage, and that it is within a comedy only adds to the reflexivity: indeed, ‘It is difficult to imagine a more complex metapoetic phenomenon’.⁴ *Wine-flask* presents a legal charge of conjugal neglect of an heiress (ἐπικλήρου κάκωσις) being brought against the poet.⁵ This unflattering self-portrait emerges because the playwright has taken to drink: Methê is presented as a *hetaira* who has distracted the playwright from his conjugal duties.⁶ *Wine-flask* constitutes part of Cratinus’ response to accusations of old age and drunkenness, and the impotence associated with both of these, levelled by Aristophanes the previous year (*Knights* 526-36). *Wine-flask* emerges as a bravura claim to poetic potency: the playwright appropriates and inverts a scurrilous charge and claims to be both the inheritor of the legacy of Comedy and a randy lover of Drunkenness.⁷

The plays of Cratinus, including *Wine-flask*, remained available to readers into the second century AD, as attested by quotations in Plutarch and Athenaeus (among others): ‘Cratinus’ plays were read and studied well into the Hellenistic and early Roman periods, at least until the late second or mid-third century AD.’⁸ This end point is determined by the likely date of *P.Oxy.* 663, a papyrus hypothesis of Cratinus’ *Dionysalexandros* (and there are several Cratinus papyri from roughly this period).⁹ In addition to being read, Cratinus is being used in literary allusion. Lucian makes *Wine-flask* the literary underpinning to his *Double Indictment* (Δις κατηγορούμενος), in which a Syrian speech writer (a coded self-portrait of Lucian himself) is married to Rhetoric but takes up with Dialogue. Both personifications are bringing a case against the Syrian (§14): Rhetoric for neglect and Dialogue, who is presented as a bearded male (§28), for *hubris* (assault). The audience is expected to make repeated associations with Cratinus’ plot: ‘Lucian reinforces his right to use frank and abusive speech ... and at the same time displays his literary virtuosity’, notes Sidwell, who rightly stresses that ‘The allusion ... must be spotted and set in its intellectual context for the full value of Lucian’s literary game – and his defence – to become clear’.¹⁰ Cratinus’ play, familiar in the second century AD as a read text, is therefore part of the educated literary tradition (a tradition that extends to Syria!), and can become a point of intertextual reference for a comic author’s self-presentation. Further, it can do so even in the absence of specific reference to Cratinus, or to Comedy, or to Drunkenness. Lucian assumes sufficient familiarity with the plot of *Wine-flask* that simply the love triangle involving a genre personification is sufficient to constitute a necessarily interpretable allusion to the play.

An important portrait of the New Comic playwright Menander, dating to 250-75 AD,¹¹ also offers a love triangle involving a genre personification. The connection between the image and Cratinus’ *Wine-flask* is much more direct than is the situation in Lucian’s *Double Indictment*. A mosaic on the floor of a small room that ‘might have served as a private dining room for an intimate group’¹² in Daphne, in the so-called House of Menander,¹³ depicts and labels the playwright Menander reclining on a couch next to his *hetaira* Glykera (‘Sweetie’), with a personification of Comedy standing further away. Daphne offers many literary scenes in its mosaics (see also the House of the Man of Letters and the House of Aion), testifying to the

sophisticated elite literate knowledge that was present, or could be thought to be present, in third-century Syrian Antioch (we must always remember that simply possessing the mosaic guarantees nothing about the literary tastes and reading habits of the owner, of course). Csapo's discussion of this mosaic rightly contextualises it in terms of later Roman enthusiasm for the playwright (attested also by Houses of Menander at Pompeii and Mytilene), but a puzzle remains: 'That a man of wealth and education should put a picture of Menander on his floor is readily intelligible, but it is not so readily intelligible why his passion for theatre should be expressed iconographically by the representation of Menander as a guest at a cocktail party'.¹⁴ A second element of the puzzle is why Comedy appears as a personification within the composition 'rather than the more usual representative Muse'.¹⁵ The answer to both elements of this puzzle, I contend, resides in the expectation that the viewer will consider the mosaic and interpret it based upon a presumed knowledge of Cratinus' *Wine-flask*.

Menander's relationship with the prostitute Glykera was an established detail in the poet's biography in the third century. This is true, even if the relationship was fictional, arising perhaps from the presentation of the character Glykera in Menander's play *Perikeiromenê*.¹⁶ As Athenaeus says, ὅτι δὲ καὶ Μένανδρος ὁ ποιητὴς ἦρα Γλυκέρας κοινόν (13.594d: 'That the poet Menander loved Glykera is a commonplace'). Their relationship is also the subject of three of Alciphron's *Letters of Courtesans* (4.2, 18, 19), a second-century text that imagines the world of *hetairai* in the late fourth century BC.¹⁷ Positioned next to the young, reclining Menander, who is idealised with broad shoulders and a bare chest, is Glykera, who is central in the mosaic's composition and is depicted as the object of the poet's desire.¹⁸ Both their heads are garlanded, and their faces are seen in three-quarter profile, as they gaze at each other intimately.

At the left of the composition, a personified Comedy stares out to the viewer. Csapo offers his reading:

The table in front of him [Menander], which is partly reconstructed, probably held not food, but another mask. The woman at the end of the couch is not a second trollop, but the personification of Comedy. And she bears not evening dress, but the costume and – in her hand – the mask of a comic old man. In front of Comedy is another mask on top of a box containing papyrus rolls. ... The costume, three masks, one for each person, and the box of papyri, suggest that they are about to entertain us with the performance of a scene from one of Menander's plays.¹⁹

The mosaic cannot by itself be taken for evidence of a domestic performance of Menandrian comedy.²⁰ There is an imprecise conflation of the literal with the allegorical: for example, there is an expectation of three masks, one for each figure, and even though Comedy is personified, she is involved in a domestic performance; Menander is to be seen as being at a victory feast (following a successful performance or re-performance of one of his plays) and also at a symposium at which a full performance of Menander is being mounted. Further, the female figures are associated with masks as part of a performance, even though to my knowledge actual women never wear masks in any performance context, domestic or public, in

antiquity. The mosaic may also evoke familiar artistic tropes of the poet on a couch after a dramatic competition: there does exist a tradition of female abstractions approaching Dionysus or a victorious poet, often holding masks.²¹ All of these are possible, but it is not as clean as one would like.

For Csapo, the scene in the Daphne mosaic draws more on iconographic traditions than on literary knowledge, with Menander both at a victory feast but also at a performance.²² While I do not want to suggest that the complex set of associations dependent upon established iconographic patterns is not operating, it was not seen as primary for the artist, and I believe that a more specific message – both more localised and more precise – was also available. It is not necessary for a viewer to make associations between the mosaic and Cratinus' *Wine-flask*, but for those who did (and we have seen that the literary competence required was less than that expected of Lucian's literary audience) a new set of associations imposes itself. Because this is not the way mosaics are often thought to communicate with their viewers, and because the scene is interpretable simply as the famous poet Menander, his mistress, and his tutelary genius, it is necessary to pause and consider the ways in which the scene differs from parallel examples of scenes depicting a boy and his genre.

Comedy's identity is overdetermined for the viewer.²³ Though the label alone would have been sufficient, here she also has two masks nearby, wears an actor's costume, holds a prop walking stick,²⁴ and stands by a *scrinium*, a box of papyrus rolls: these attributes define her sphere of control. Her plain outfit with its long sleeves, comparatively muted colours, and high neckline, contrasts with the saffron of Glykera's more revealing and feminine dress (exactly how revealing is not clear, given the reconstructed areas of the mosaic, but her left shoulder at least is bare). While Comedy's face is pretty (she is an immortal personification, after all), her hair is shorter than Glykera's and is not garlanded. Every effort has been made to present Comedy as respectable and modest.²⁵ More importantly, Comedy is not the centre of attention, even for the most successful comic playwright known to later antiquity. Yet, as Ian Storey points out to me, she is not fully separate from the couple either: she is neither presiding over the scene nor watching them, but she does remain part of the ensemble. This reinforces the need to read all three figures together, with Comedy as a woman rejected in favour of Glykera.

The idealised presentation of Menander with Glykera is a common enough theme for a triclinium mosaic. One can imagine the combination of a pseudo-historical Menander and Glykera, or a symbolic representation of Menander with a muse. Both of these are paralleled in other ancient Menandrian portraits. The juxtaposition of both is not paralleled, however, and demands explanation. The presence of Comedy alongside Glykera, with both labelled so that no misidentification is possible, makes available another interpretation that is not relevant to the scenes where the genre and the sympotic *hetaira* are conflated. Menander, a comic playwright, is with a *hetaira* and ignores a personified Comedy; for some viewers, this will evoke *Wine-flask*, in which Cratinus, a comic playwright, is with a *hetaira* and ignores a personified Comedy. Compare the situation in *The Double Indictment* (Lucian, a comic prose author, is with a bearded male Dialogue and ignores a personified Rhetoric), where allusion to Cratinus was a necessary component of interpreting the text, and the weight of the similarity between Cratinus' play and the mosaic impresses itself.²⁶ Again, this is not a necessary

association for the viewer, and it may be that the mosaic encourages a heterogeneous response as some recognise the literary allusion and the others have to have it explained to them by their host. I contend, however, that it is easier for the viewer to associate the mosaic with Cratinus than it is for Lucian's reader to make the necessary connection for understanding *The Double Indictment*, and to see Cratinus underlying it. The mosaicist (or his source) has taken the love triangle from Cratinus' *Wine-flask* and applied it purposefully to Menander.

That the scene is set in a sympotic context is consequently not accidental. On one level, Glykera represents Cratinus' Drunkenness.²⁷ Both Cratinus and Menander have particular associations with the symposium. According to Aristophanes, *Knights* 529-30, songs from Cratinus' plays were regularly sung at symposia. Plutarch claims that Menander is more a part of symposia than wine itself (*Mor.* 712B), and so Glykera's presence as an alternative to excessive drink is reinforced.²⁸ This effect is redoubled because of the infamy of Glykera as Menander's sympotic companion. Both elements of the puzzle posed by the mosaic are therefore interpretable in the light of Cratinus' play: the convivial setting reinforces the correlation between Glykera and drunkenness,²⁹ and the labelling and overdetermination of Comedy ensures that the scene is not read as a generic association with Thalia or Skênê or some other personification.

This interpretation of the Daphne mosaic does not require specific firsthand familiarity with Cratinus' *Wine-flask*: indeed, in the case of both this mosaic and Lucian's *Double Indictment*, no knowledge is required beyond the brief outline provided by the scholiast to *Knights* 400a. Nor, obviously, does the mosaic present any necessary information about the content of Cratinus' play: the sympotic setting of the mosaic need not originate in Cratinus for the allusion to be effective, any more than the presence of Zeus, Hermes, and other characters in Lucian's dialogue is evidence for their appearance or even mention in Cratinus' lost play.³⁰ The extent of the allusion reaches only to the identities of the self-presenting poet, his preferred genre being presented as his modest wife, and his lover. For the viewer who knows both that Menander was a successful comic playwright and that there was a famous play in which a playwright was presented as being married to Comedy but preferring a *hetaira*, the excluded female personification of Comedy in the mosaic, standing at the end of the couch and looking 'rather vacantly outside the scene',³¹ is now able to be understood as Menander's shunned wife or lover.

The Daphne mosaic uses Cratinus' *Wine-flask* as a literary intertext to make three specific claims about the poet Menander: (1) it accepts the romantic biographical tradition of Menander's physical relationship with a specific *hetaira* named Glykera; (2) it presents Menander as the inheritor of the comic tradition which, even seven centuries later, was still able to be embodied in the authorial self-presentation of Cratinus, who could legitimately be seen as the grandfather of Athenian comedy (and in so doing it affirms a continuity between the periodisation separating Old Comedy from New Comedy); and (3) it affirms Menander's intimate associations with the genre of comedy, with sex, and with the symposium. These claims do not provide evidence, one way or another, on whether Menander continued to be performed (in whatever sense) in the late third century; nor can we say whether the allusion to Cratinus originated with the mosaicist, or derived from some other intermediary text.

Regardless, the mosaic is readily interpretable and rich in meaning when read within the light of the information available to an educated viewer in third-century Antioch.

Notes

1. Ian Storey first introduced me to the fragments of Cratinus' *Pytinê* and *Dionysalexandros*, and this small study is offered to him in gratitude for that and for so much else over the years. His interest in Lucian is also relevant to the argument that emerges. Thanks go to Ian and to Eric Csapo (neither of whom will necessarily agree with my conclusions), for their ever-thoughtful and challenging insights, and to George Kovacs, Cat Wilson and Tyson Sukava.

2. Princeton University Art Museum 40.435 (= *MNC*³ 6HM 4) reproduced with permission.

3. Σ (VE Γ³Θ) *Knights* 400, 5-12 (= *Suda* κ 2216 = test. ii K-A). I cite Storey's text and translation (= his test. iii), 2011: I, 364-7. Major studies of *Wine-flask* from the past two decades, with references to earlier literature, include Sidwell 1995, Luppe 2000, Rosen 2000, Ruffell 2002: 155-62, Biles 2002: 180-8, Olson 2007: 80-7, Bakola 2010: 59-64 and 275-85, and Storey 2011: I, 362-75.

4. Hall 2000: 410, and see 410-12. The film *Being John Malkovitch* (1999, dir. Spike Jonze), in which characters take turns living in the mind of the actor John Malkovitch (played by John Malkovitch), comes close.

5. See Bakola 2010: 275-7.

6. It does not matter for my purposes whether or not Drunkenness appeared as a character in Cratinus' play, or only existed offstage: the play perhaps alternated between personification and metaphor in any case (see Sommerstein 2005: 163-4 and Bakola 2010: 281-5), but it seems probable that she did physically appear (e.g. Rosen 2000: 26, Ruffell 2002: 156).

7. See Sommerstein 2005 for other personifications as wives and lovers in comedy.

8. Bakola 2010: 4.

9. *P.Oxy.* 663 (= *CGFP* 70 = *Dionysalexandros* test. i K-A). See also *P.Oxy.* 2739 (= *CGFP* 69 = Cratinus test. 7f K-A; a list of plays), *PSI* 1212 + 1279 + *P. Brux.* E. 6842 (= *CGFP* 73, Cratinus fr. 171 K-A; from *Ploutoi*), *P.Oxy.* 2742 (*CGFP* 74 = *adespota* 1104 K-A; possibly a commentary on *Seriphioi*), *P.Oxy.* 2807 (= *CGFP* 75, *adespota* 1110 K-A; possibly from *Horai*), and *P.Oxy.* 2806 (= *CGFP* 76 = *adespota* 1109 K-A; possibly Cratinus).

10. Sidwell 2004: 4. See also Sidwell 2009: 56-64.

11. Friend 1941, Levi 1947: 201-3, Jones 1981: 3-4, Csapo 2010: 144-8.

12. Dunbabin 2003: 222 n. 76.

13. See Dobbins 2000: 57-9, who wonders, given the large number of *triclinia* in the building, if this rich house was not instead a dining club; cf. Kondoleon 2000a: 75, 'the number of reception suites in the House of Menander is striking given the size of the house'.

14. Csapo 2010a: 144 and 146.

15. Huskinson 2002-3: 151, and see Levi 1947: 202-3, and Schefold 1997: 390-9. Thalia was the Muse of Comedy, and representations of Greek playwrights with some tutelary divinity do exist. A marble relief in Istanbul depicts Euripides with Dionysus and a personified Skênê

(The Stage); cf. *MTS*² AS 10 (though the description does not mention Skênê), and see Bieber 1961: 30 and fig. 109 and Hall 2010: 166-7. A Vatican relief apparently shows Menander with an unnamed female, who has variously been taken to be Thalia, Skênê, or Glykera (Vatican 9985 (ex Lateran); *MNC*³ 3AS 5a, and see Bieber 1961: 89-90 fig. 317); Friend 1941: 48-9 proposes certain identifications based on the apparent similarities with this mosaic. The Daphne portrait is much more specific than any of these.

16. Our knowledge of Menander's plays is of course incomplete, and Glykera was a common and appropriate prostitute name, and so it is of course possible that other Menandrian Glykeras were known in antiquity. Körte 1919 (and at *RE* 15.712) reasonably doubts that there was a historical Glykera for Menander, though Schmid 1919 and Schepers 1926 offer some rebuttal. Ancient sources tie a prostitute named Glykera (who need not be the same person) to Harpalus, the Macedonian aristocrat and friend to Alexander (Athenaeus 13.586b-d, 595d-96b, Diodorus Siculus 17.108.6). For the presentation of Glykera in Menander's *Perikeiromenê*, see Konstan 1987.

17. See also Bungarten 1967. The prominence of New Comedy and Menander specifically in this epistolary genre that blends history and fiction is reinforced by Aelian's *Letters of Farmers* 13-16. This sequence of four letters between Cnemon and Callipedes purports to originate during the events presented in Menander's *Dyskolos*.

18. Levi 1947: 201-2, Huskinson 2002-3: 152. For the appearance of Menander in ancient portraiture generally, see Charitonidis, Kahil, and Ginouvès 1970: 28-31. The Daphne mosaic offers an idealised portrait of the playwright, which is perhaps why it is not discussed by Bassett 2008. Another mosaic in Antioch (in the House of Aion) juxtaposes Menander and Glykera with Achilles and Briseis (Friend 1941: 249-51, Levi 1947: 196-7): this affirms not only the erotic connection between the two, but also the pre-eminence of Menander alongside Homer as a poet.

19. Csapo 2010a: 146. The possibility of a third mask is also mentioned, without argument, at Jones 1981: 3, and repeated at *MNC*³ II 493; cf. the more cautious Levi 1947: 202: 'The hands of both ... seem to hold the ends of a single object which cannot be determined.'

20. Kondoleon 2000b and Huskinson 2002-3: 152 and 161 believe that the *triclinium* with the Menander mosaic was used for *symposia* during which private recitations of New Comedy took place. If such recitations occurred, it would be extremely unlikely that masks would be used. Csapo 2010a: 146-8, believes that full-scale productions could be mounted in domestic contexts.

21. Compare Hall 2010: 179: there is a 'tradition of depicting a personification of Tragedy within vase-paintings expressing Dionysus' relationship with theatre and with satyrs'. She is discussing the Pronomos vase (Attic red figure volute krater from Ruovo Paglia, c. 400 BC; Naples, *MN* inv. 81673; *MTS* AV 25), where an unidentified woman sits on a couch in a central position alongside Dionysus at a celebration of a dramatic victory. Hall plausibly suggests this woman is Tragedy personified: 'The mysterious lady is much more likely to represent *Tragoidia* herself, conceived with a mask in a way that associates her with the acting of a female role' (2010: 177). See also Bacchielli 1991-2 for other images of the dramatic poet on a couch.

22. Describing the Pronomos vase (see previous note), Csapo suggests that it ‘draws directly and indirectly upon the imagery of *choregic dedications as a genre*, but it seems to do so in an abstract and selective fashion’ (2010b: 123). Something similar may be happening in the Daphne mosaic, but as it exists in a very different performance culture, centuries removed from the playwright commemorated, it is unlikely that the parallel is exact. Compare Hall on the same figures: ‘the *Tragoidia* scene provides neither a direct allegory nor a genealogically conceived narrative of origins: it crystallizes, through the use of a conventional mythological framework, a set of symbiotic and interdependent relationships operating within the dramatic festivals’ (2010: 177). These interpretations express a tension that can also be found in the Daphne mosaic.

23. Compare other representations at Kossatz-Deissmann 1992.

24. Csapo 2010a: 146. Levi suggests it is ‘a hook used to hang and detach the masks from their case’ (1947: 202 n. 22) or some similar device, and offers parallels. Regardless, it is an attribute of Comedy and does not anticipate an actual performance (so explicitly at Kossatz-Deissmann 1992: 94).

25. Nor is this stern appearance expected in the depiction of a genre personification, as is seen in a description of a representation of *Tragoidia*, where (according to Hall 2010: 177) ‘she smiles playfully’ with ‘a mildly flirtatious implication’ even though she is ‘older and more dignified’ than *Komos* (Revelry). See Kossatz-Deissmann 1997 for the iconographic representation of Tragedy.

26. Similarly, some Old Comedy, possibly Eupolis’ *Demes*, lies behind Lucian’s *The Dead Come Back*, or *The Fisherman* (Ἀναβιοῦντες ἢ Ἀλιεύς).

27. In this context one may mention the two third-century mosaics in a house in Sepporis, Israel, that are labelled with the Greek word Μέθη (see Nagy, Meyers, Meyers, and Weiss 1996: 111-15, and Kondoleon 2000a: 68-9). Menander also wrote a play called *Methê* and there was apparently a prostitute in Pompeii with that name (*CIL* 4.4434)

28. See Jones 1991: 192-3, Handley 2002: 169-73, Hunter 2002: 194, and Nervegna 2007.

29. While it is not necessary for this reading, a wine-flask on the small table where it has been reconstructed or in Menander’s hand (as posited by Csapo 2010a: 144: ‘he may have had a cup of wine in his hand’) would make explicit what I believe is already implicit.

30. The old chestnut concerns the ending of *Wine-flask*: did Cratinus return to his wife or did he stay with Drunkenness? On the available evidence, one cannot say, and my reading of this mosaic does not add anything to this discussion.

31. Levi 1947: 202.

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