THE PLAY OF LANGUAGE IN ANCIENT GREEK COMEDY

COMIC DISCOURSE AND LINGUISTIC ARTIFICES OF HUMOUR, FROM ARISTOPHANES TO MENANDER

*Edited by Kostas Apostolakis
and Ioannis M. Konstantakos*

The Play of Language in Ancient Greek Comedy

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Volume 154

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DE GRUYTER

Preface

A French theoretician once remarked that anthropologists can be recognised from the food stains on their clothes, given that they are inveterate frequenters of restaurants, taverns, or lunch pubs. This is probably true of all scholars of the humanities. The origins of this volume go back exactly to such an encounter of scholars over the loaded table — one evening in December 2018, when the two of us were having dinner in a neighbourhood bistrot, at the north of Athens, and discussing the organisation of an international conference at the University of Crete. As we both maintain a lively interest in Greek comedy, we came up with the idea of comic language and the linguistic techniques of humour as a conference topic. This promised to be an opulent and not overploughed field that would lend itself to fruitful scholarly exploitation. Soon we were exchanging emails and drawing up lists of the speakers we would like to have in the conference. The colleagues we approached responded readily and eagerly, and we felt a little like the mythical Jason or the legendary Germanic king Hengist putting together their brave crews for a fabulous enterprise.

The practical procedures for the preparation of the conference were also set in motion, mostly thanks to the initiatives of Kostas E. Apostolakis and the supportive milieu of the University of Crete. The Department of Philology willingly undertook to host the conference in its hospitable premises at the university campus at Rethymno, which replicate the beautiful labyrinthine style of Evans' Knossos. The Special Account for Research Funds of the University of Crete offered a generous grant to cover the organising expenses and the accommodation of the speakers. Almost everything was ready, and the conference was scheduled to take place in May 2020. Then, in the early March of that fateful year, the COVID pandemic reached Greece, and the lockdowns became our everyday reality.

At the beginning, we tried to be optimistic, in spite of the growing fear, not unlike the heroes of Camus' *The Plague*. We kept postponing the conference again and again, for a few months each time, in the hope that conditions were eventually bound to ameliorate, and that human contact would become permissible before long. We could have opted, of course, for an event online, the kind of experience that developed into a standard part of university life from a given point onwards. However, as both of us were facing on a daily basis the very unsatisfactory practice of online teaching, we were reluctant to extend this kind of virtual semi-existence to the endeavour which we had originally planned as a live exchange of knowledge and scholarly companionship. In the end, exasperated after a protracted period of continuous cancellations and deferments, we

decided to abandon the plan of the conference and to collect the written chapters from the participants, so as to prepare a collective volume.

We are most grateful to the authors who have contributed to the book. They have laboured for our common project with unfailing endurance and patience in difficult times, and have stayed with us throughout the long interval of its gestation and its metamorphoses. We feel deeply honoured that they have entrusted us with the fruits of their work. We are sorry that we have not been able to welcome them to Crete, but we hope for another opportunity in the future, when — as is usual in the wonderful world of Aristophanic comedy — language will be transformed into real things and acts.

Professor Antonios Rengakos is our *agathos daimon*. Already while we were planning the conference, he took an active interest, encouraged us, and invited us to think of the renowned *Trends in Classics Supplementary Volumes* series as a possible venue of publication of the proceedings. When we approached him later with a proposal of the volume, he warmly embraced the project and offered us his invaluable support. By now, no less than four generations of Modern Greek scholars have found a good home and a well-respected forum in the rich and prestigious *Trends* series, which is his spiritual child. We are all proud to be soldiers in his great scholarly legion — the equivalent of the magical "Dumbledore's army" in the Greek philological world.

A big "thank you" is due to our colleague Melina Tamiolaki, of the University of Crete, who offered us valuable advice and guided us through the tricky process of applying to the university administration for funding. We owe a great debt to two charismatic young doctoral students of the Department of Philology at Crete, members of Kostas E. Apostolakis' dynamic research team: Georgia Choustoulaki (who meanwhile has been awarded her doctorate) and Georgios Triantafyllou, who has also contributed a chapter to the collection. They provided vital assistance in editing the volume, formatting the texts and bibliographies, checking references, and taking care of innumerable practical details. Last but not least, our wives, Vaso and Konstantina, tolerated the project with their undaunted good humour and surrounded us with their inexhaustible love and solicitude. Let our profound gratitude to them serve as an envoi for this book.

Kostas E. Apostolakis
Ioannis M. Konstantakos

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Introduction

1 A drama of words

For the study of ancient Greek comedy, and of Greek drama in general, the second half of the twentieth century might be called the "Golden Age" of performance criticism and performance-oriented scholarship. The tragic and comic plays of ancient Athens were emphatically and insistently envisaged as stage events, rather than as written texts and fabrications of words. They were productions to be acted out in vivo before an audience, and they could be properly understood and interpreted only in the context of their live theatrical execution. This "theatrocentric" view of ancient drama was proclaimed with might and main by scholars such as Carlo Ferdinando Russo with regard to comedy and Oliver Taplin with regard to tragedy.[1] They were the prophets of a new age of scholarship, and their arguments were soon established as the prevalent academic orthodoxy. It became customary for authors of philological commentaries on ancient plays to include, in their prefaces or introductions, a statement to the fact that they considered the text they commented on as a script or a libretto for performance. Every student of Greek drama had to be an imaginary *metteur en scène*, putting up a production of the classical tragedies and comedies in the theatre of their mind. The eyes of all classicists had to turn inwards, to move away from the words on the page in front of them and towards the phantasmic stage that was to be erected inside the reader's mind; it was on this imaginary theatrical space that the text had to be reflected in the form of live action.

There is no doubt that performance-oriented study afforded important insights into ancient dramatic texts and opened up fruitful perspectives for the understanding of theatrical experience in classical antiquity. On the other hand, comedy, as an art form, is not only a performative event. The kind of highly literary and poetically accomplished play in verse, which was produced during the acme of the comic genre in the Classical and early Hellenistic age, is also an intricately crafted text, a masterful work of artfully elaborated language, a consummate piece of wordsmithing. The justified emphasis on spectacle and scenic performance, which permeates much of modern scholarship on ancient comic drama, should not make us forget its fundamental linguistic dimension. Greek

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1 Russo 1962; Taplin 1977; Russo 1994.

comedy was, first and foremost, a theatre of language, a drama of words. The *logos*, in its multifarious aspects, was the paramount constituent of comic poetics.

In some respects, indeed, the text seems to have been regarded as the primary factor which determined the aesthetic value of a comedy and conditioned its reception by the audience and the pleasure of the spectators. The comic poets themselves took great pride in the verbal sophistication and linguistic accomplishment of their scripts. Aristophanes, in particular, often extols the high-level wordplays and verbal jokes and emphasises the creative use of language which he displays in his works. This is formulated very eloquently in a passage from the parabasis of the *Clouds* (537–544), in which the poet, speaking in the first person through his Chorus, exalts the virtues of his comedy. As he points out, he has not used in his play the common and vulgar devices for eliciting easy laughs from the audience. He included neither obscene jests with the comic phallus of the actor (538–539), nor the lascivious *kordax* dance (540), nor scenes of scenic violence and noisy knockabout, with people rushing on stage, brandishing torches, and crying for help (543). Also, the poet did not present an elderly character that resorts to slapstick, hitting the people around him with his stick, in order to cover up for the poor jokes that are assigned to his part (541–542). By contrast, the Aristophanic comedy confidently relies on its ἔπη (544, ἀλλ' αὐτῇ καὶ τοῖς ἔπεσιν πιστεύουσ' ἐλήλυθεν), that is, on its poetic verses, on its verbal constituents and the quality of its text.

This passage is highly significant as to the artistic merits that the comic poet would have wished to be primarily judged and evaluated upon. Aristophanes stresses the value and proficiency of the text and the verses of his work, of its poetic and linguistic composition. Furthermore, he contradistinguishes this textual and verbal aspect from a series of low-brow artifices, aimed at provoking gross and uncouth laughter, almost all of which pertain to the performance, the scenic materialisation and live staging of the script: the jests with the phallus rely on an element of the comic actors' costume and on the performers' gestures for manipulating it; the *kordax* dance is self-evidently an exhibition of lewd and indecent movements; the animated scenes with torches and actors rushing on stage also depend on bodily motions in the performance area. Even with regard to the scenes of the poorly jesting old man (541–542), the poet's censure does not fall so much on the character's low-brow banter (πονηρὰ σκώμματα) as on the fact that he resorts to physical slapstick (the age-old routine of beating up other personages) in

order to draw the audience's attention away from the awful quality of his jokes.[2]

In other words, Aristophanes glories in the excellence of his verbal humour and the brilliance of his poetic writing, while he finds fault with coarse routines which belong to the *mise en scène* and the stage execution. This stance seems characteristic of an author who considered himself first and foremost a poet and a writer, rather than an artist of the stage. Not fortuitously, Michael Silk, in his perceptive critical monograph on Aristophanes, at the turn of the new millennium, reacted against the theatrocentric vision of ancient drama and called for a reconsideration of the Aristophanic oeuvre in terms of purely literary artistry: Silk's Aristophanes is primarily a writer, a creator of poetic discourse, a literary author whose main task is the manipulation of words, before and beyond their potential transformation into performance.[3] The same idea has been implicit in much of the scholarship on the language of ancient comedy, which has never ceased to be produced and has yielded insightful and illuminative studies during the past few decades (see the bibliographical survey below, in section 2 of the introduction).

The *Clouds* are not the only witness to this kind of poetic self-appreciation. Other passages from the comic corpus support the same perspective. Aristophanes repeatedly proclaims the dexterity and originality of his poetic lines and highlights his mastery of particular linguistic artifices, such as metaphors, imagery, and verbal humour. He boasts that his plays contain the best comic verses ever to be heard by Athenian audiences (*Wasps* 1047, μὴ πώποτ' ἀμείνον' ἔπη … κωμῳδικὰ μηδέν' ἀκοῦσαι). He attributes the greatness of his art to his magnificent poetic lines and his refined jokes (*Peace* 749–750, ἐποίησε τέχνην μεγάλην … ἔπεσιν μεγάλοις … καὶ σκώμμασιν οὐκ ἀγοραίοις). He exhorts the spectators to cherish those poets who can "speak" something original (*Wasps* 1053, καινόν τι λέγειν, a characteristic choice of verb). He especially singles out his inventive

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2 The reference to the "jests against bald men" (*Clouds* 540, οὐδ' ἔσκωψεν τοὺς φαλακρούς) is ambiguous: coarse verbal mockeries at the expense of the bald may be evoked; but the poet may also have in mind scenic routines in which bald characters were physically abused and ridiculed on stage, e.g., by being laughed at for the funny spectacle of their hairless head, or by receiving loud slaps on their bare pate.

3 Silk 2000, 1–6, 98–206. For a more detailed summary of Silk's views on Aristophanic verbal artistry, see below, section 2.6 of the introduction. Cf. also Konstantakos 2019, 244–246, where I discuss the dramatic writer as a literary craftsman and drama as a form of literature to be enjoyed also by reading — a very ancient idea, which goes back at least to Aristotle (*Poet.* 1450b 18–19, 1453b 1–6, 1462a 11–14) and runs through the history of European criticism up to T.S. Eliot (e.g. Eliot 1932, 113–115).

metaphors and comic images (εἰκούς, *Clouds* 559), which his fellow-writers strive to imitate and plagiarise.

It might be argued that the insistence on the verbal aspects of comic art is an exclusive characteristic of Aristophanes, not shared by any of his colleagues. Under this viewpoint, Aristophanes would be holding up the excellence of ἔπη as a brandmark of his own creations, the central component of his own poetics, by contrast to the inferior productions of his opponents, who would have primarily focused on slapstick and performative gimmicks for the generation of comic effect. As is the case with many facets of ancient comic dramaturgy, the scantiness and fragmentariness of the other comic authors' textual remains render it nearly impossible to refute the claim of Aristophanes' uniqueness — although it should not be forgotten that the same factors make it equally difficult to prove this claim. Nevertheless, there are a few comparable statements from the works of Aristophanes' colleagues, which indicate that the latter was not alone in his exaltation of linguistic artistry.[4] Pherecrates, in a fragment from a parabasis, calls his audience to appreciate an original invention of his, which consists in a new kind of "condensed" anapaests (fr. 84, ἐξευρήματι καινῷ, συμπτύκτοις ἀναπαίστοις). The creative innovation, in which the dramatist takes pride, is again an artifice of poetic expression, regarding the metrical composition of the verses. Aristophanes, as noted above, censures his colleagues for plagiarising his witty metaphors (*Clouds* 559); this implies that the criticised writers were conscious of the high value of verbal humour and wished to imitate Aristophanes in this respect.

The axiom of "saying new things" persists until much later, in the indirect poetological statements of New Comedy. In Hegesippus fr. 1.2–3, a slave reproves the garrulous cook, a hackneyed figure of the comic stage, by challenging him to either pronounce something evidently new (λέγων φαίνου τι δὴ καινόν) or be silent. As often in New Comedy, these lines entail an implicit criticism of commonplace and trite comic motifs (such as the cook's loquacity), which tend to be routinely used by uninventive writers. The meritorious poet must brush aside such stock-in-trade stuff and create work of true novelty.[5] It is

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4 On these passages of poetological self-presentation, cf. Sommerstein 1992, 17–27; Konstantakos 2004, 13–20.

5 On the underlying poetological implications of Hegesippus' passage, see Konstantakos 2004, 32–33. One should not misunderstand the well-known (and most probably apocryphal) anecdote about Menander, who claimed that his comedy was ready, even though unwritten — for he had designed the outline, and it only remained for him to add the little verses (Plut. *Mor.* 347e–f, ᾠκονόμηται γὰρ ἡ διάθεσις, δεῖ δ' αὐτῇ τὰ στιχίδια ἐπᾶσαι). This tale does not imply that the language and the verbal formulation of the comic text were deemed unimportant by

noteworthy that in this case, well over a hundred years after the καινόν τι λέγειν of *Wasps* 1053 was heard on the Attic stage, verbal expression is again highlighted, in exactly the same words, as the indicator of comic inventiveness and originality.

Aristophanes, and perhaps also other poets of Old Comedy, belonged to that small and selective elite of literary creators whom George Seferis, the Modern Greek poet and Nobel laureate, has called "the lords of language" (ἄρχοντες τῆς γλώσσας).[6] The happy few authors of this group possess absolute mastery over the complete range of resources afforded by their native tongue, and confidently exploit the full extent and variety of its stylistic means, linguistic niveaus, specialised jargons, and peculiar idiolects. They can combine and fuse together all these expressive elements into an exuberant, polymorphic, and kaleidoscopic linguistic synthesis, which offers their compositions a characteristic richness of style and serves as the brandmark of their literary versatility. Language for them is not (as in the case of other writers) a strong and challenging rival to fight with, but a cunning, resourceful, yet entirely obedient servant, who is ready to faithfully carry out every one of his master's commands. Aristophanes and his colleagues may worthily take their place in this old literary aristocracy, next to some of the foremost authors of the western canon, from Shakespeare and Rabelais to Italo Calvino, from Joyce to Anthony Burgess and the members of the Oulipo team.

Thriving in their lordship over language, the comic poets of ancient Greece employed a vast range of linguistic means to achieve the aesthetic effects they desired. They delved deeply into the mechanisms of language in order to create humour and entertain their audiences. On the level of vocabulary, they fabricated long grotesque compounds, portmanteau words, neologisms and funny word formations, ridiculous diminutives, and speaking personal names. They were also deft at parodying all kinds of specialised and technical terminology, from scientific jargon to philosophical and rhetorical nomenclature. With regard to more composite verbal and phrasal structures, they crafted clever puns and wordplays, paradoxes and oxymora, *para prosdokian* jokes, and ludicrous accumulations. They elaborated various stylistic figures, such as inventive

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the poet. It simply serves to highlight, *modo Aristotelico*, the prominence of the plot in the overall craft of playwriting and the poetics of comic drama. The verses are not in themselves a negligible constituent; in fact, they are designated as the main aesthetic means for the expression of the poetic design which the poet has formed in his mind. Cf. Willi 2002, 1–2; Ciesko 2011, 124.

6 Seferis 1974–1992, I 203, 259, 319, II 99, III 185. Cf. Seferis 1966, 20, 60.

metaphors, lively imagery, and similes, by means of which they produced both poetic enchantment and comic amusement. They occasionally cultivated intricate patterns of formulation, for example, witticisms and ironical quips, clever apophthegms and absurd sophisms, riddles and conundrums, so as to emanate an air of refined pleasantry. They also indulged in more violent forms of mocking language, from *aischrologia* and obscene jokes to abusive insults and satirical speech, in order to ridicule their targets or enhance the carnivalesque tone of their works. Their chameleonic creativity extended to larger stretches of discourse, chiefly by use of the techniques of parody: they comically imitated and distorted all forms of high-flown literary and official expression which were established in their milieu. They parodied the elevated style of epic, tragedy, and lyric poetry, as well as the rhetorical formalities of judicial and political oratory.

The comic exploitation of language was not confined to the composition of a humorous text for the generation of poetic *charis* and amusement. Language was a pliable and multivalent tool which could be made to serve every aspect of the comic dramaturgy. It was the fundamental means for the realisation of the dramatic storyline and the creation of the comic fiction. In fact, language was intrinsically connected to all the main constituents of the comic work, from plot, characterisation, and ideology to scenic spectacle and performance. The words of the script were the basic materials for the formation of the dramatic mythopoeia and the central factor which conditioned the holistic aesthetic experience offered by the play.

In particular, comic language was a valuable instrument for *ethopoiia*, for the characterisation and ethological constitution of the dramatic personages. The characters of the play, the comic hero and his antagonists, the various stock types and standard figures of the comic repertoire, all may be viewed as products of linguistic operations and systems of speech. An individual character might be endowed with his or her peculiar style of expression or scenic idiolect; he might display distinctive verbal or phrasal habits and gimmicks, which functioned as recognisable brandmarks of his speech. This practice of linguistic and stylistic characterisation has been traced, in a more or less elaborate form, throughout the history of Classical Greek comedy, from Aristophanes to Menander and the other poets of the fourth century.[7]

In some cases, the Greek comic poets created dramatic characters that are entirely generated from stylistic processes and idiosyncratic operations of language. The whole *ethos* of such figures, their dramatic personality and identity

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7 See below, sections 2.4 and 2.8 of the Introduction.

are determined by peculiar choices of vocabulary, phrasal patterns, and figures of speech; it may be said that characters of this kind are truly "made of words". An evident example is offered by the foreigners and aliens of the comic stage: the barbarians who speak broken Greek, such as the Scythian archer in the *Thesmophoriazusae*, and the non-Athenian professionals, such as the Doric doctor, a recurrent type in the comic repertoire from Crates and Ameipsias to Menander. The presence of these personages in the play, their comic effect, their entire role, in essence, are the result of their linguistic make-up; they are funny because they speak in a ludicrously strange and devious idiolect, and this is the main reason why they have been created by the author and included in the scenario.[8] In the person of such a character, comic language has been made flesh; linguistic morphology and grammatical peculiarity have acquired a body and face.

The broad gallery of the comic *alazones* is also a noteworthy manifestation of the same characterological phenomenon. This ample category, which traverses the entire history of Greek comedy, comprises a variety of arrogant and boastful figures ﹘ from the cook, the medical doctor, and the conceited philosopher and scientist to the yarn-spinning traveller, the glorious military, the pompous poetaster, and the charlatan priest ﹘ all of whom pretend to be something greater than they are in reality, to possess knowledge or powers which they lack in fact. The pretentious temperament of these characters is expressed, in textual terms, through the use of fanciful and bizarre language, of vocabulary and style which starkly deviate from the common norm of speech of comic drama. Their *alazoneia* is manifested through linguistic exhibitionism.[9] The *miles gloriosus* uses bombastic rhetoric, aggressive discourse, and pompous high-style locutions; the poetaster recites high-flown chants which ridiculously mimic epic, dithyrambic, or tragic diction; the pompous intellectual reproduces abstruse philosophical terminology or scientific jargon; the cook accumulates interminable sequences of names of foods and describes detailed culinary recipes; the bragging traveller narrates exaggerated tales about the extraordinary marvels he has witnessed in faraway lands.

Thus, the *alazones* of comedy acquire their ethological identity and dramatic substance by means of their idiosyncratic linguistic constitution. They are

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8 Cf. Del Corno 1997, 245–246. On the broken Greek of comic foreigners, see the relevant chapter of Willi 2003, 198–225. On the doctor's Doric, see Rossi 1977; Imperio 1998, 63–75; Imperio 2012; Montemurro 2015; Ingrosso 2016; and cf. the survey of research in section 2.4 of the Introduction.

9 See Konstantakos 2015, 43–44.

roles substantially made up of funny language. Another kindred figure, paired and contrasted with the *alazon* already by Aristotle (*Eth. Nic.* 1108a 21–25, 1127a 13–1128b 1, *Rh.* 1419b 7–9, cf. *Tractatus Coislinianus* XV 38–39 Koster), is the so-called *bomolochos* of Old Comedy. The role of the *bomolochos*, as aptly noted by Sommerstein, essentially consists in a particular type of utterance: a string of mocking, buffoonish, silly, and often vulgar statements, which are interposed in comic dialogue in order to ridicule the serious or grandiloquent pronouncements of other characters and provide humorous relief. The *bomolochos* personage is practically made up of these low-brow jokes; he is another creation of funny speech made flesh.[10]

With such character creations, the poets of Greek comedy initiated a seminal literary practice, which was bound to enjoy a long posterity in the comic theatre and more broadly in the humorous literature of the western world. The ridiculous personage whose essence consists in his peculiar language is a well-loved figure of the comic tradition, which has many whimsical specimens to display, up to the present age. The foreigner who speaks in pidgin language, with a distorted vocabulary and mutilated morphology, remained a perennial favourite of humoristic writing, from the Mufti and his mock-Turkish entourage in the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* to the heavy Teutonic accents of the psychologist Doctor Zempf in Stanley Kubrick's adaptation of *Lolita*. A modern variation of the type is the German tourist in *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, who communicates with ready-made, stilted phrases lifted out of an English dictionary and mechanically agglutinated together. One may also recall Maistre Janotus de Bragmardo, the doyen of the Sorbonne in Rabelais' *Gargantua*, who constructs his speech out of strings of Latin quotes from the breviary; Camille Chandebise, in Feydeau's *A Flea in the Ear*, who pronounces only the vowels of words and omits the consonants; and the grotesque lay brother Salvatore in Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*, who speaks a lunatic medley made up of Latin and various European vernaculars. These hilarious characters carry on the comic line which goes back to Aristophanes' Scythian guard, the Doric-speaking doctor, and the grandiloquent braggarts of the Greek theatre.

Last but not least, comic language crucially interacts with the stage action of the play and provides the basic stuff for the live performance of the actors. This aspect comes forward most impressively in an emblematic Aristophanic technique which is examined in two chapters of the present volume: the scenic

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10 Sommerstein 2004. On the role of the comic *bomolochos*, see Kloss 2001, 132–188; Borowski 2013.

materialisation of metaphors and figures of speech.[11] By means of this procedure, which is recurrent in Aristophanes' plays, a figurative expression or a proverbial phrase is taken in an entirely literal sense and is transformed into a visible spectacle on stage: for example, the "King's Eye" (the synecdochic title of a Persian official who served as the king's representative) is presented with an enormous eye on his mask; poetic verses are "weighed" (a metaphorical idiom of Attic speech, meaning "evaluated") literally on a pair of scales; the demagogic politicians, who rhetorically claimed to be the "watchdogs" of democracy, are metamorphosed into actual dogs.[12] Thus, poetic language and its stylistic artifices become the basis for elaborate theatrical representations and sensational stage effects.

With these fascinating scenic visions, the present section, which began with a reference to the possible overvaluation of comic performance by comparison to the words of the script, comes full circle: comic language is not an opponent of performance but its good master, its benefactor and main provider. The literary text creates the setting for the performance to evolve and establishes the main guidelines to be followed by the performers. The comic poets of Greece wrote plays of words and presented before their eager audiences a drama of language.

2 A selective research survey

In his classic *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur*, first published in 1957, Albin Lesky set an important research goal for the following generations of students of Aristophanes: "It must be remarked with regret that, amidst all the critical work on the preserved plays, the task of bringing out the elements of Aristophanic humour has been very much neglected. Although the comedy of situation is amply used, the primary conveyor of Aristophanes' humour is language".[13] In this way, the great Austrian philologist was indirectly but firmly encouraging

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11 See the first two chapters of this volume, by Bernhard Zimmermann and Ioannis M. Konstantakos.

12 For these and further examples and relevant bibliography, see the chapters by Zimmermann and Konstantakos in this volume.

13 Lesky 1971, 506: "Mit Bedauern muß man feststellen, daß über der kritischen Arbeit an den erhaltenen Stücken die Aufgabe, die Elemente des aristophanischen Humors herauszuarbeiten, stark vernachlässigt wurde. So reich auch Situationskomik ausgenützt wird, ist Träger dieses Humors doch vor allem die Sprache".

younger scholars to take up this neglected task and analyse the comic language of Aristophanes' oeuvre, the linguistic artifices exploited by the poet to generate his unsurpassable effects of humour. The younger generations of classicists responded quickly to this exhortation.[14] Important monographs on various aspects of Aristophanic verbal artistry and humour appeared within a few years of the first edition of Lesky's work. Their flow continued steadily over the following decades.

Collectively, the scholarly investigations extended over a wide range of linguistic facets and stylistic artifices of the comic text. Studies have been published on poetic figures such as metaphors and similes, on rhetorical devices such as accumulations and epithets, on categories and thematic areas of comic vocabulary, on types of humour (paradoxes, *para prosdokian*, obscene jokes), on personal names, on particular grammatical and syntactic structures (diminutives, forms of address, reported speech), as well as on the literary imitation and parody of the language and style of various other genres. Most interestingly, there have also been happy few attempts at a broader synthesis: monographs which bring together and examine the multiple levels and expressive means of comic language in their complex interrelation; essays which afford a holistic approach to the comic text as an aesthetic creation. The bibliographical account, which is set out in the next pages, does not aspire to offer a complete and systematic overview of modern research on the language of ancient Greek comedy; such a task would probably require an entire book and surpasses the present writer's scholarly stamina. I merely intend to select and describe several important works on various facets of this vast topic, based mainly on my own research experience.[15]

In other words, what follows is an unavoidably partial memoir on the books and essays which I have found most illuminating and useful during my thirty-year-long engagement in the study of ancient comedy. Emphasis is given to works of a more general nature, which address broader phenomena and tendencies of comic speech and writing, rather than to specialised studies of particular plays or passages. Above all, the selection is restricted to approaches which treat language as an aesthetic medium and an artistic tool, used by the comic poet to construct his fictional world, create poetry, amuse his audience,

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14 At least two Modern Greek scholars admit, in the introductions of their dissertations, that Lesky's statement inspired their choice of topic: Spyropoulos 1974, 2; Michael 1981, 9.

15 An admirable survey of scholarship, up to the turn of the millennium, has been published by Andreas Willi, in his introduction in Willi 2002, 1–32. A young and dynamic scholar should now continue this work and bring it up to date, covering the rich crop of the past two decades.

and achieve humorous effects. There is little mention of purely technical and grammatical treatments, which explore the comic corpus as a source of linguistic phenomena (for example, the syntax of the genitive case, colloquialisms, or word formation), in connection with the history and structure of ancient Greek, but without reference to their literary operation and aesthetic purposes. This, unfair though as it may seem towards the hard-core workers of philological linguistics, is in accordance with the overall thematic orientation and objective of the present volume. The aim of the contributions gathered here is to highlight verbal materials, artifices, and figures of expression which serve the creative and poetic operation of comic drama.

2.1 *Catalogues raisonnés* and their reverberations

In 1962 Jean Taillardat published a virtually exhaustive survey of Aristophanes' figurative expressions, including poetic imagery, metaphors, and similes — an aspect of his art in which the poet himself took great pride, as already remarked above (see *Clouds* 559).[16] Understandably for that time, the book was rather thin with regard to theoretical linguistic background. Nonetheless, Taillardat covered important unexplored ground, and his work was soon established as a standard tool of research. His investigations were poured into the layout of a long catalogue of entries, methodically categorised according to the notions expressed by the figurative locutions. Every passage of the catalogue was accompanied with a detailed exegetical discussion, which illuminated the meaning of the Aristophanic text with apt commentary and apposite textual parallels. The book thus brought to light the basic principles of Aristophanes' handicraft of fabricating metaphors. Taillardat also carried out some useful work of practical criticism, trying to evaluate the originality and artistic accomplishment of the comic poet's linguistic imagery — a perilous and speculative but indispensable part of philological study. Even if it is read as a catalogue, from beginning to end, Taillardat's book will not give the impression of an arid, interminable list. On the contrary, it reveals to the reader the multicoloured and variegated mosaic of an entire world, throbbing with life — the world within which the comic poet lived and worked.

The one aspect which Taillardat neglected was the significance of imagery within the dramatic world of an individual play, the use of images and similes as leitmotivs which help to organise and unify the plot and bring forward the

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16 Taillardat 1962.

poetic meaning of the work. This lack was soon redressed in other studies, which focused on the close reading and interpretation of particular Aristophanic comedies. Cedric Whitman, in his monograph on the comic hero, one of the most fascinating critical studies of Aristophanic poetics and aesthetics, was the pioneering figure in this respect.[17] Alongside many other poetic and dramaturgical constituents, Whitman trailed and highlighted the clusters of imagery which recur in several episodes of the plays and connect the different parts into an integral artistic unity (e.g. wine, filth, and scatology in the early peace plays; food and eating in the *Knights*; air in the *Clouds*; feathers and flying in the *Birds*; the circle in the *Wasps*; animal imagery in many comedies). In particular, these permeating systems of imagery bring forth the contrast between the miserable reality of the early stages of the plot and the ideal world created by the comic hero through the implementation of his fantastic scheme.

Whitman's contribution was very influential in the field of Aristophanic studies, especially among Anglo-Saxon academics. Its echoes and reverberations are felt in many other books and essays, even decades later, by authors who do not necessarily focus on comic language, but have taken over and adapted Whitman's methods of close reading in order to correlate recurrent figurative motifs with central notions in one or another comedy. The interaction of these two registers was thus proved to be a determining factor for the interpretation of the Aristophanic works.[18] More recent studies have proceeded further on this track with greater theoretical complexity and sophistication. Scholars such as Ian Ruffell and Nicola Comentale have traced extensive networks of imagery and symbolism, which run through the text of particular comedies (e.g. the wine of peace in the *Acharnians*, the allegory of the *polis* as a household in the *Knights*, the interweaving of animal metaphors and dicastic imagery in the *Wasps*). They have analysed the intersection of these metaphorical networks with the central themes, plot patterns, and ideological contexts of each play.[19] They have also highlighted the association of imagery with theatrical

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17 Whitman 1964.

18 See, e.g., Arrowsmith 1973 on the metaphors of flying, wings, and *eros* in the *Birds*; Cassio 1985 on the imagery of the *Peace*; Reckford 1987 concerning the use of poetic images in various plays; Hubbard 1991 on literary-critical metaphors; Bowie 1993 on images from ritual; and my own essays (Konstantakos 2012, Konstantakos 2021a) on the exploitation of motifs from tragedy and comedy.

19 See Ruffell 2011, 54–213; Comentale 2015, 60–66.

performance, as the dominant metaphors of the text are visualised on stage through scenic objects and their manipulation.[20]

Taillardat's tradition was followed by the Greek scholar Elias Spyropoulos in his useful study of verbal accumulations and lists of terms in Aristophanic comedy.[21] This device is indeed one of the most impressive traits of Aristophanes' comic style; like his distant French kinsman Rabelais, the Greek comic poet piles up words into heaps, as children do with pebbles.[22] In the model of Taillardat, Spyropoulos compiled methodical and well-arranged catalogues of the numerous extant examples of comic accumulations. He classified a great mass of material by more than one criterion, such as the distribution of specimens in the different parts of the comedy, the semantic fields and subject-matter of the lists, and the grammatical genus of their ingredients; he thus offered valuable service to subsequent commentators of Aristophanes with his detailed and well-indexed collections. He also included selective comments on the aesthetic and literary function of accumulations, their rhetorical dimension, emotional use by the characters, humorous and parodic effects, as well as their relationship to other techniques of humour, such as puns and *para prosdokian* jokes. This critical aspect of the study should have been more developed; as it is, Spyropoulos did the basic groundwork of tilling the field and left the harvest of the rich fruits of interpretation to later experts. His most valuable critical contribution was the study of the additional stylistic artifices and tropes which may be intertwined with the accumulation and heighten its poetic effect: alliterations and sound effects, asyndeton and polysyndeton, repetition and anaphora, homeoteleuton and climax, as well as the prominence of lists consisting of three items — the "magical" number which links comic poetry with the world of folksong and oral popular formulas.

The masterpiece among the studies of "catalogue" type was Jeffrey Henderson's groundbreaking investigation of obscene language and *aischrologia* in Old Comedy. Published originally in 1975, reissued and still in print today, *The Maculate Muse* is the boldest of the reference works of Aristophanic scholarship.[23] Henderson compiled a comprehensive catalogue of the sexual,

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20 Cf. also above, section 1, with reference to the chapters by Zimmermann and Konstantakos in this volume, concerning scenically materialised images and metaphors.

21 Spyropoulos 1974, based on his doctoral dissertation at the Sorbonne (1973), for which Taillardat himself served as an examiner.

22 Cf. Anatole France's famous quote about Rabelais: "Il joue avec les mots comme les enfants avec les cailloux; il en fait des tas" (France 1928, 95).

23 The second edition, Henderson 1991, is the standard one. I once told the author (a perfect American gentleman, supremely courteous and impeccably dressed) that I had read his book

scatological, and other obscene jokes of Greek comedy, and interpreted a large number of obscure, unclear, or multi-levelled comic passages. The objections raised by some critics with regard to points of detail, dubious explanations, inaccuracies, or mistranslations,[24] have not essentially detracted from the great value of this book for all subsequent editors, commentators, and translators of Greek comedy. Henderson furthermore provided a substantial introduction discussing general critical and grammatological issues: the origins of obscene humour in the ritual roots of the comic genre, the aesthetic function of *aischrologia* in the poetics of Greek comedy, its interrelation with the themes and dramaturgy of the plays, and its psychological effects on the audience.

Although theoretical perspectives have been altered and broadened since then, Henderson's discussion remains the starting point for the appreciation and understanding of this vital constituent of ancient comic art. Later scholars have offered valuable insights and clarifications as to particular sexual images or categories of obscene vocabulary.[25] James Robson, in his monograph on humour and obscenity, set the *aischrologia* of Aristophanic comedy in a complex and up-to-date methodological frame, laden with the full apparatus of modern humour theory and discourse analysis. He refined and supplemented Henderson's views on the psychological effects of obscene language, stressing its convivial, playful, and carnivalesque aspects. He analysed in general the operation of *aischrologia* as a type of humour, according to the prevailing cognitive, social, and psychological theories. But he did not add to the collection of material, the practical explication of bawdy jokes, the typologies of sexual and scatological imagery, or the elucidation of difficult words and expressions — the perennial exigencies of the readers and commentators of Aristophanes.[26] In this respect, no one has yet achieved a synthesis of the same breadth and comprehensiveness as Henderson's work.

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through with great enthusiasm already as an undergraduate. He looked at me with an air of mock-severity and answered, with a twinkle in his eye: "You were not very well brought up, were you?"

24 See also the chapter by S. Douglas Olson in this volume.

25 See the essays by Jocelyn 1980, Komornicka 1981, Bain 1991a, Bain 1991b, Bain 1992 on the terminology of sexual organs and copulation; Edwards 1991 on scatology; Beta 1992 on the sexual vocabulary of Cratinus; Sommerstein 1999, 196–208 on sexual and scatological euphemisms; and McClure 1999, 205–259, comparing the varieties of obscenity used by male and female comic characters.

26 Robson 2006.

2.2 Parody

Another branch of the study of comic language, which also took roots in the 1960s, in the wake of Lesky's admonitions, was the investigation of the literary allusions and imitations which are interwoven in the comic text. Parody of high-style poetic genres took the lion's share in this respect. The seminal work in the field was Peter Rau's monograph on paratragedy, a large-scale examination of the humorous adaptations and satirical versions of tragic material in Aristophanes' works, with particular attention to the extensive sequences of episodes based on Euripidean tragedies in the *Acharnians*, *Thesmophoriazusae*, and *Peace*.[27] A good deal of Rau's analyses was centred on content and plot, rather than on language. The author examined various plot motifs, dramaturgical techniques, themes, and structural patterns which Aristophanes took over from tragic drama and reworked in his own productions. Nevertheless, Rau also paid detailed attention to matters of language and style. He compared particular Aristophanic citations to their tragic models, word by word; he minutely distinguished the verbal and metrical elements of tragic discourse which were taken over in every comic passage that mimics tragedy. He thus highlighted the techniques of variation, substitution, degradation, and distortion, which were used to turn the tragic formulations into ridiculous statements and sources of mirth.

In the intervening decades since Rau's pivotal publication, countless essays on comic paratragedy have appeared. Scholars have examined the reflection of particular tragic motifs, structural patterns, and techniques in the oeuvre of Aristophanes and the remains of his colleagues; or they have provided close readings of particular comic passages and sequences of tragic parody in individual plays. These multitudinous studies, often supported by elaborate apparatuses of literary theory, have shed abundant light on the parodic mechanisms employed, both in terms of language and in matters of content, and on the metadramatic constructs created through the incorporation of tragic models into the comic fiction. The comic imitation of tragic models has also been studied as a powerful dramatic tool, which serves the broader intellectual and ideological topics of the comedy and the creation of poetic meaning.[28] Nevertheless,

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27 Rau 1967.

28 The most important studies, selected from among a vast number, are Zeitlin 1981; Foley 1988; Dobrov 2001; Nieddu 2004; Rosen 2005; Platter 2007, 42–62, 143–175; Jay-Robert 2009, 114–133; Lauriola 2010, 115–132, 181–192; Wright 2013; Nelson 2016; and the collections of essays in Calame 2004 and Medda/Mirto/Pattoni 2006. More references to specialised studies of particular plays and passages are listed in Willi 2002, 14; Konstantakos 2021b, 205–206, 217, 222–225.

with regard to the stylistic aspect of paratragedy, Rau's book has remained the standard work of reference, because it offers the fullest, most comprehensive, and most illuminating survey of Aristophanes' linguistic techniques of parody — at least until Stavros Tsitsiridis wrote his own, dense and all-embracing typological classification of the material.[29]

Published a few years after Rau, Wilhelm Horn's dissertation focused on the imitations and parodies of prayer in Aristophanic comedies.[30] Building on the earlier monograph by Hermann Kleinknecht, who had examined many examples from Aristophanes in the context of his broader overview of parodies of prayer in ancient literature,[31] Horn collected the Aristophanic passages in prayer form and analysed their literary substance and function in the context of the comic plays. As in many studies of parody, the examination of thematic elements and dramaturgical aspects of prayer coexists with attention to stylistic markers, ritual language, traditional formulations, and the methods employed for their comic distortion.

Although tragedy was diachronically the favourite and most prominent intertext of Greek comedy, the Aristophanic drama, at least, is a truly polyphonic composition, which assimilates and reflects in a panoramic manner all the grammatological genres and literary forms of its time.[32] Stimulating contributions have therefore been dedicated also to the echoes of other poetic genres, such as lyric and epic, in the texts of Old Comedy. Christoph Kugelmeier published an admirable study of all the quotations, parodies, and imitations of Greek lyric poetry which are traced in Aristophanes and the other poets of Old Comedy.[33] He meticulously examined the text and wording of every one of these lyric reflections, in connection with their operation as a literary means within the broader comic script. Kugelmeier also offered a full-scale analysis of the parodies of the so-called "New Dithyramb", the form of lyric song that was greatly in vogue in late Classical Athens, during the acme of Old Comedy.[34]

A number of other studies revolve around the parodies of epic poetry, especially Homeric epic, in Aristophanes, Cratinus, and their colleagues. Apart from pointing out the hilarious reworking of epic myths and episodes, scholars also tend to the linguistic aspect of the parody; they discuss epic words, phrases,

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29 Tsitsiridis 2010.

30 Horn 1970.

31 Kleinknecht 1937.

32 See Konstantakos 2021a, 92–97.

33 Kugelmeier 1996.

34 The parody of the ponderous New Dithyramb is also discussed by Zimmermann 1997.

typical formulas, or centos of Homeric verse, and their incorporation or misrepresentation in the comic text for the achievement of humorous effects.[35] There have also been discussions of epic parody in Epicharmus, who regularly used Homer and the epic cycle as models for his mythical travesties. The ironical echoes and satirical pastiches of Homeric formulas in the papyrus fragments of *Odysseus Automolos* have attracted particular attention.[36]

2.3 Vocabulary and idiolects

The examination of the vocabulary of comedy, of its humorous functions, sources, and specialised categories, has also been at the epicentre of fruitful research. Investigations in this area have mostly taken the form of articles and essays concerning particular thematic groups of words, specific systems of terminology, peculiar social and professional idiolects, or specialist jargons, which are exploited in the comic text for the construction of the dramatic mythopoeia and the generation of mirth. Studies of this kind have covered a very wide variety of thematic areas, sociolinguistic niveaus, and cultural domains: for example, the language of power and government; the catchwords, slogans, and ideologically charged imagery that was current in Athenian political discourse, in the speeches of the demagogues and the civic parlance of the Agora and the popular assembly; the language and rhetoric of the courts and the juridical procedures; the vocabulary used for the life of the soul and the mind, the psychological operations and emotions; words of praise or affection and epithets of insult; medical terms, words for illnesses, medicaments, and the physician's tasks; the jargon of sophists and intellectuals, of rhetoricians and literary criticism; the nomenclature and terminology of athletic contests, games, and competitive sports; and the terms for sailing, shipbuilding, maritime travel, navigation, fishing, and all other aspects of sea life.[37]

A relevant perspective consists in the exploration of ritual terminology and religiously charged jargons in ancient comedy. Important work on an aspect of this theme was done in the already mentioned monographs by Kleinknecht and Horn, who analysed the formulation and style of prayers in the Aristophanic plays. In the same direction, other scholars have investigated the morphology of

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35 See mainly de Lamberterie 1998; Macía Aparicio 2000; Ornaghi 2004; Revermann 2013.
36 See Cassio 2002, 73–82; Willi 2008, 177–192; Willi 2012.
37 See especially Denniston 1927; Handley 1953; Handley 1956; Byl 1981; Byl 1990; Dover 1992; Zimmermann 1992; Casevitz 1996; Camacho Maxia 1996; López Eire 1997; Noël 1997; Zanetto 1999; Jouanna 2000; Campagner 2001; Dover 2002; Byl 2006; Jay-Robert 2011; Zanetto 2020.

religious hymns incorporated in comic drama, mostly on the lips of the Chorus; the formulas of oaths and their parodic or satirical use in the dramatic action; the diction, imagery, and poetic language of comic oracles and their relation to other genres, from epic to fifth-century oracular poetry; the invocations of gods, their typology and use in comic situations; the cult epithets of gods and their connection to the general themes and the overall poetic meaning of the plays.[38]

In another pioneering essay, Alan Sommerstein compiled a glossary of Aristophanic euphemisms, that is, attenuated or vaguer expressions used in place of stronger ones which might cause offence, embarrassment, or be of ill omen.[39] He classified the euphemistic terms and phrases according to their subject matter (death, old age and disabilities, vice and crimes, political misdeeds, sex and scatology) and surveyed their distribution among the various sections and roles of the Aristophanic comedies, highlighting their prominence in the speech of women and elderly characters.

In total, over a period of several decades, considerable work was done on all these individual facets of the verbal repertoire of comedy. At the turn of the millennium, the time was ripe for a broad and comprehensive synthesis, which would collect and survey the various types of vocabulary and specialised idiolects, so as to give a more spherical picture of the protean and kaleidoscopic nature of comic discourse. This task was accomplished, with regard to Aristophanes' oeuvre, by Andreas Willi in a book which constitutes one of the richest and most engaging works of Aristophanic philological scholarship.[40] Making use of the research methods and tools both of modern linguistic science (especially sociolinguistics) and of traditional philological approaches, Willi explored the great diversity of verbal ingredients, the mixture of linguistic varieties, terminological registers, and forms of speech that make up the mosaic of the Aristophanic text. His goal was to sketch a comprehensive (though unavoidably not exhaustive) panorama of the multiform and polychromatic landscape of Aristophanic poetic expression; to provide, as Willi himself liked to suggest, a linguistic equivalent to Victor Ehrenberg's *People of Aristophanes*, that classic survey of the social and anthropological substance of ancient Athens, as reflected in comedy.

To fulfil this task, Willi focused on a cross-section of representative categories of Aristophanic language, comprising religious formulas and technical

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38 See most prominently Anderson 1995; Dillon 1995; Gil 1997; Conti Bizzarro 1998; Suárez de la Torre 1998; Bellocchi 2009.
39 Sommerstein 1999.
40 Willi 2003.

vocabulary, scientific jargon and sophistic terminology, and also foraying into social and characterological idiolects, such as the speech of women and foreigners. Most of these categories had been treated, more or less abundantly, in earlier scholarship, and some of them would continue to be studied in subsequent works. In Willi's monograph, however, these were considered for the first time together, in their coexistence and interaction within the complete linguistic arsenal of the great comic poet. In particular, Willi examined two religiously charged forms of expression in Aristophanic comedy: the more elaborate poetic hymns, which offer praise and encomia for the gods, and the simpler prayers, in which a specific request to the divine is directly posed. In this context, he considered a series of linguistic components and stylistic markers, such as cultic epithets, formulaic cries and invocations, speech-act verbs, and syntactic structures. He painstakingly differentiated between the overlapping but distinct registers of hymn and prayer, and studied their intersection with the dramatic situations and the characterisation of personages.

In connection with technical, scientific, and sophistic terminologies, Willi reached some of the most original and provocative conclusions of his study. He examined legal and juridical language, medical vocabulary, and terms of literary criticism in the Aristophanic texts, and established sophisticated criteria for distinguishing truly technical and professional jargon from words which had passed into general everyday usage. He demonstrated how Aristophanes adapts and parodies the language of Pre-Socratic thinkers, especially Eleatic and Orphic poetry, Protagorean grammatical theory, and the neologisms and verbal habits of the sophists, in order to fashion a peculiar brand of scientific parlance for the intellectuals of his comic fictions.

2.4 Linguistic characterisation

With regard to the social and character categories of language, Willi also had important earlier research to build on and carry further. Kenneth Dover, in a seminal paper, was the first to substantially discuss the question of linguistic characterisation in Old Comedy. Dover examined the idiolects of a series of character types from Aristophanic plays (old countrymen, slaves, philosophers, tragic poets) and showed that their speech represents a compromise between realism and comic convention. Many of these personages are endowed with a modicum of distinctive stylistic markers of naturalistic quality (e.g. sophistic neologisms for the intellectuals, old-fashioned vocabulary for the rustics, high-flown tragic expressions for the poets), but none of them preserves full consistency of this linguistic make-up. All the Aristophanic characters may abandon

their expected language register and freely stray into different levels of discourse for the purpose of jokes, parody, and other comic effects.[41] Subsequent studies refined these conclusions and adduced further observations on techniques of linguistic character depiction, such as the stylistic differentiation between opposed characters (the hero and the *bomolochos*, the antagonists in a contest), the querulous and self-defensive tone of old men's speech, or the use of verbal tics.[42]

Much attention has been awarded to the language of women in comedy, in accordance also with the emphasis on gender studies which prevails in recent classical scholarship. In a number of essays, the speech of the heroines of Aristophanic plays has been analysed, with a view to pointing out distinctive traits which permeate their manner of expression: affective locutions, pathetic and sentimental adjectives and forms of address, endearing diminutives, informal and colloquial turns of phrase, laxity and simplicity of style, euphemisms and restricted use of obscenity, and a preference for particular oaths.[43] On the other hand, Stephen Colvin dissected with precision and minuteness the passages of non-Attic dialect (Laconian, Boeotian, Megarian) placed on the lips of non-Athenian characters in Aristophanic comedy. He investigated in full the phonology, morphology, lexicon, syntax, and idioms of these marked stretches of comic text and assessed the accuracy of the representation of the various Greek dialects in the dramatic world of comedy. He also made interesting remarks on the use of dialect as a literary tool in comic drama, as an element of dramatic realism, a means of characterisation, and a medium for humour.[44]

In the wake of this earlier work, Willi also studied the language of Aristophanes' female characters and identified a long series of idioms peculiar to it: terms of endearment and affection, markers of politeness and attenuating speech patterns (litotes, non-assertive moods and verbal forms), possessive and emotive elements (pronouns, ethical dative), and other peculiar syntactic structures and phenomena, which are much more prominent in the lines of female personages than in those of the male characters, and may thus be considered as more characteristic of the idiolect of women.

In the final chapter of his book, Willi meticulously analysed the broken Greek of the barbarian figures in Aristophanes' plays, especially the longest such extant part, that of the Scythian archer in the *Thesmophoriasuzae*. He

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41 Dover 1976; Dover 1987, 237–248.

42 See especially Silk 1995, 208–214; Del Corno 1997.

43 See Sommerstein 1995; McClure 1999, 205–259; Nieddu 2001.

44 Colvin 1999; cf. Colvin 2000.

compared the Aristophanic material with examples of modern representations of "foreigner talk" in literary contexts, so as to highlight the humorous effects that these characters' faulty speech would produce on the Athenian audience. Another valuable study of barbarian speech in Old Comedy and its comic exploitation was recently published by Piero Totaro, who concentrated on the briefer roles of this type: Pseudartabas of the *Acharnians*, the Triballus of the *Birds*, and the strangely speaking young guard on the so-called "New York Goose Play Vase" at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.[45]

The most comprehensive and elaborate study of the use of language for characterisation in Old Comedy was written by Simone Beta.[46] The central axis of Beta's monograph is the identification of the different ways of speaking and forms of eloquence that are assigned to individual categories of personages in Aristophanes' works. The author aims at defining the distinctive manner of expression which represents a character's peculiar nature and epitomises the way in which the poet, the other personages of the play, and the audience look at this character. Rather than focusing on the vocabulary and grammatical structures traced in the speech *per se* of one or another group of comic figures, as Willi and other scholars had done, Beta analyses the significant terms, descriptions, and evaluations provided in the Aristophanic texts for the language used by each one of these groups. In this perspective, Beta establishes a basic dichotomy which conditions Aristophanes' classification of speech forms: on one hand, the "negative speech" is typical of the targets of comic satire, such as politicians, sophists, mediocre poets, antagonists of the hero, and the other *alazones* of the stage; on the other hand, the "positive speech" is attributed to the poet himself, in his statements in the parabasis, and to the praiseworthy heroes of his dramas.

A series of unpleasant, dangerous, and reprehensible qualities is associated with the speech of the satirised characters. Politicians and charlatans have loud, babbling, and offensive voices, similar to the cries of animals. The language of sophists and intellectuals is marked by emptiness, vagueness, and vanity, a hollow void under their verbal brilliance and subtlety. Their words are like thin air. Their talk abounds, of course, in neologisms, complex antitheses, and other rhetorical gimmicks. The discourses of politicians are steeped in lies and deceit, calumny and flattery, sycophancy and cunning. The degenerate

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45 Totaro 2019. Colvin included a few remarks on the language of comic barbarians in his own studies: Colvin 1999, 281–294; Colvin 2000, 287–291. See also Brixhe 1988; Morenilla-Talens 1989; Lamagna 2000; Negri/Ornaghi 2008.

46 Beta 2004.

eloquence of radical demagogues, in particular, is associated with filth, scatology, and perversion. The *alazones*, *bomolochoi*, and buffoons of the comic stage are also notable for deceitful and puffed-up outpourings. Women are prone to idle talk, chattering, and loquacity, although central heroines, such as Praxagora and Lysistrata, may display the serious rhetorical skills of male eloquence. The propensity towards prattling and garrulousness is also deemed to be a feature of old men and slaves. By contrast, the elocution of the poet and the positive heroes is a model of truthfulness, justice, righteousness, and good sense.

Plutarch, in his notorious denunciation of Aristophanic comedy (*Comparatio Aristophanis et Menandri* 853d), accused the great comic poet of haphazardly mixing all kinds of disparate styles. In Plutarch's view, Aristophanes never gives to each particular category of characters its fitting and appropriate language; the reader cannot tell from the text whether the speaker is a son or a father, a rustic or a god, a hero or an old woman, a king or a housewife, an orator or a scumbag of the market. It is a pity that Plutarch did not have the chance to read the works of Willi, Beta, and the other scholars mentioned in this section. He would have been moved to considerably revise his unfair statements.

2.5 Artifices of humour

The comic poet's mastery of language is particularly evident in the way he manipulates words to create humour. Lesky had already remarked that the major and most interesting part of Aristophanic comic effects are generated through verbal mechanisms; wordplays and puns, paradoxes and oxymora, unexpected locutions and *aprosdoketa*, funny words and phrases, and other artifices of this kind are at the centre of the comic writer's *métier*. Although research on these linguistic procedures has not been prolific, in spite of Lesky's exhortations, a few stimulating works, especially in the new millennium, have successfully anatomised the verbal neurons of Aristophanic humour.

As was the case with the categories of comic vocabulary (see above, 2.3), there have been individual studies of separate linguistic tropes and devices of humorous intent. These include the repetition of phrases and lines of comic text, which may serve to produce humorous effects (irony, derision, parody, burlesque absurdity, comic characterisation) or to connect different parts of the comedy through recurrent linguistic leitmotivs; various kinds of wordplay, which rely on semantic ambiguity, polysemous words, assonance, or elliptic and ambivalent syntax; comic misunderstandings caused by euphemistic and ambivalent expressions; punning compounds and word coinages; and various

figures of speech and rhetorical effects, such as anaphora, chiasmus, and antithesis.[47] Ian Ruffell also examined the arrangement of sequences of jokes into larger routines, around which entire scenes may revolve; for example, the funny metonymies of the animal trial in the *Wasps*, the strings of "stand-up comedy" jests with the audience in the prologue of the same play, or various metaphor-oriented routines of comic confrontation in the *Knights*.[48]

Much interest has been roused by the so-called *aprosdoketon* or *para prosdokian* joke, the kind of jest that relies on unexpected expressions and verbal surprise. In a series of essays, plentiful examples of this device have been catalogued and classified with regard to their themes, grammatical and lexical structure, notional function, and positioning within the lines of the text. Scholars have explicated the basic mechanics of the device, in particular the effects of dissonance and incongruity, the mixture of serious and ludicrous terms, and the operation of the final surprising punch line, the unforeseen tag which carries the gist of the joke. Through close readings of passages including *aprosdoketa*, mostly from Aristophanic texts, scholars have also highlighted the interaction of this form of humour with other comic techniques, such as obscenity and political invective.[49]

Most recently, the study of the *para prosdokian* has been significantly furthered by Dimitrios Kanellakis, who dedicated to this artifice a long and thought-provoking chapter of his monograph on the poetics of surprise in Aristophanic comedy.[50] Kanellakis combined the insights of ancient grammarians with the methods of modern linguistic science, to establish an accurate definition of the *para prosdokian* ("a figure of speech in which the latter part of an idiom, proverb, or well-known expression or formula of words is altered to make an unexpected and humorous ending"). He offered full analysis of the structure and verbal mechanisms of this device and proposed a typological classification of the specimens, based on criteria of source, theme, and morphology. He thus brought forth the close interaction of *para prosdokian* jokes with other important

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47 See Miller 1944 and Miller 1945 on repetitions; Diller 1978 on various kinds of wordplay, calembour, punning compounds, and neologisms, but restricted to the *Acharnians*; Sommerstein 1999, 213–217 on misunderstandings; Slings 2002 on figures of speech; Melis 2018 on verbal plays of polysemy and ambiguity. Robson 2006, 39–69 also discusses examples of various types of joke (repetition, tragic parody, *para prosdokian*, coinages and unusual words, puns of ambiguity, and double entendres), although his emphasis is on theoretical models of humour analysis, not on the elucidation of verbal mechanics.

48 Ruffell 2011, 112–156.

49 Filippo 2001–2002; Napolitano 2007; Comentale 2015, 53–60.

50 Kanellakis 2020, 23–85.

procedures of linguistic amusement (paratragedy, *aischrologia*, hyperbole, and climax). He investigated the structural and syntactic distribution of *aprosdoketa* in Aristophanic discourse, the linguistic materials (parts of speech, grammatical levels) involved in the fabrication of the extant examples, their relative statistical occurrence in the various sections of the play and in the parts of different standard characters. He explicated dozens of passages of this kind from Aristophanic comedies, underlining the reverberations of the verbal comic technique on the dramatic situation and the scenic action. With his methodical approach, control of the evidence, and good judgement, Kanellakis has not only written the most fruitful discussion of the comic *para prosdokian* but also provided a model for future studies of verbal techniques of humour.

In a brief coda, Kanellakis has also treated the oxymoron, a type of witticism which consists in the juxtaposition of two opposite semantic values. This particular device proves to be rare in Aristophanic comedy.[51] It would take perhaps a more affected and mannered kind of humorous writing, as found, e.g., in the stilted courtly satires of the English Restoration or in the witty brilliance of Wilde and Shaw, to elaborate the oxymoron to the full extent of its potential.

Another particular source of verbal humour, which has been repeatedly studied, consists in the so-called speaking or significant names: in other words, the personal names of comic characters and other relevant appellations (nicknames and sobriquets, demotics, ethnic and place names, theonyms), which have been specially coined by the poet or appropriately chosen from the existing repertoire of real life, so as to serve an aesthetic and dramatic purpose — for example, to express a character's particular *ethos* and role in the comedy, epitomise central themes and tendencies of the plot, function as a medium of invective and satirise personalities of contemporary Athens, or produce various humorous results. Related studies have emphasised the use of names as literary tools and structural elements of the comic fiction, as well as their importance for personal satire and *onomasti komoidein*. The use of stock or standardised names for particular categories of characters (e.g. slaves, citizen women, and elderly men), which was bound to become a staple feature of Middle and New Comedy, was also traced back to the comic poets of the fifth century. Most interestingly, scholars have commented on the dynamic operation of naming as an element of dramatic action, highlighting how the names of important characters

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51 Kanellakis 2020, 85–87.

are revealed at key moments of the plot, so as to maximise their dramatic impression or their laughable effect.[52]

There have also been forays outside the classic tradition of Attic comedy. Andreas Willi offered an exemplary survey of Epicharmus' literary dialect, analysing its phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon, as well as its colloquial material and local Sicilian idioms. In this context, he also discussed Epicharmean linguistic humour, especially puns of etymology and paronomasia, funny similes, *aprosdoketa*, and accumulations. His lead was followed by Sara Tosetti, who collected and interpreted a good number of Epicharmean wordplays and verbal jokes: puns based on homonymy, homophony, semantic ambiguities, and sound effects, double entendres with obscene sense, quiproquos and misunderstandings, fabricated speaking names, and ridiculous compounds.[53] All these artifices bear eloquent testimony to the refined humour and high literary level of Epicharmean drama.

Two broader synthetic studies of verbal humour were produced decades apart from each other. Firstly, the Greek scholar Christos Michael wrote a dissertation on the tropes and stylistic devices of the Aristophanic comic *logos*, drawing amply on the poet's entire oeuvre.[54] His work covered a mixed variety of literary techniques, including categories which pertain to content rather than linguistic form, such as satire, invective, irony of situation, black and macabre humour, marvellous tales, the ridicule of gods, and the manifestations of *alazoneia*. Much of his study, nonetheless, surveyed purely linguistic forms of comic expression: witticisms, sophisms, funny proverbs and maxims; various kinds of wordplay based on sound effects, semantic ambiguities, synonymy, homonymy, and etymology; the mechanisms of parody, such as transposition, disfigurement, and pastiche; misunderstandings of multivalent words and phrases; the linguistic means of irony (rhetorical questions, exclamations); *aprosdoketa* created by unexpected words, phrases, and pragmatic references, by the distortion of literary passages and proverbs, or by incongruous combinations of disparate items;

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52 See Bonanno 1987; Olson 1992; Beltrametti 2019. The monograph by Kanavou 2011 is scarcely more than a catalogue of lemmata, accompanied by explanations borrowed and compiled from the standard commentaries on Aristophanes, with no trace of original thought and no contribution to broader interpretative issues. It is sad that this book should occupy now the place of a "standard" work on Aristophanic speaking names, due to the mere lack of alternatives. A new synthetic and interpretative study of personal names in Old Comedy is sorely needed.

53 Willi 2008, 119–161; Tosetti 2018. A methodical description of the poetic dialect of Epicharmus and the Doric mime was already carried out by Cassio 2002.

54 Michael 1981.

repetition of words and lines, anaphora, parallelisms, homeoteleuton, and rhyme; funny sobriquets and satirical distortion of proper names; comic neologisms, fabrication of new words, onomatopoeia, derivatives, and ludicrous long compounds; sound effects, alliteration, and paronomasia; metaphors and similes; comic prayers, oaths, and curses; and the humorous functions of the classic repertoire of rhetorical figures, from hypallage, hysteron proteron, hendiadys, and hyperbaton to asyndeton, polysyndeton, periphrasis, antithesis, metonymy, synecdoche, and aposiopesis. He also briefly touched upon other figures of style, such as bathos and anticlimax, paradox, repartee, insults, obscenity, and the humorous exploitation of colloquialisms and specialised vocabulary.

Michael set his study in a general philosophical framework; he elaborated on the aesthetic nature and psychological effects of the comic, based on ideas from Schlegel, Schopenhauer, and Bergson. In spite of the broad range and comprehensiveness of the material, however, the investigation of the individual tropes and artifices was not much developed in terms of interpretation and commentary. Michael offered typological classifications and methodical systems of subdivisions for each category, but attempted no close readings of individual passages, no explications of the mechanics of humour, and no comparative investigations. Much of his book consists of catalogues of examples, classified under typological headings. The author drew a preliminary map of the vast area of Aristophanic comic discourse, but provided little guidance as to its sights.

Much more sophisticated and theoretically up-to-date is Stephen Kidd's book on nonsense and meaning in Greek comedy, in which a number of verbal mechanisms of comic effect are explored, though hardly in a systematic or exhaustive manner.[55] Kidd sets out from the concept of "nonsense", the utterance or action that is seemingly interpretable but ultimately escapes meaning; according to his approach, this kind of playful reference-free incongruity lies at the core of the pleasure of comedy and constitutes the risible element *par excellence*, the essence of comic fun. Under this perspective, Kidd examines a series of linguistic formations and devices which can be connected with the central axis of hilarious nonsense, such as riddles, metaphors, allegories, wordplays, verbal coinages, repetitions, and rambling speech. Unfortunately, the reduction of the material under an idiosyncratic and ultimately elusive concept does not favour the methodical classification and comprehensive study of the techniques and figures of speech. Nonsense is essentially a notional, not a linguistic category, and as such it is not a suitable tool for illuminating the mechanics of comic

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55 Kidd 2014.

language. It may prove useful, nonetheless, in probing peculiar, exceptional, or borderline cases of linguistic creativity.

In this direction, Kidd examines riddles and conundrums incorporated into the comic text, a fascinating element of verbal humour, which was especially loved by the authors or Middle Comedy but has roots already in fifth-century masters such as Aristophanes and Crates. He focuses primarily on riddles and cognate forms (oracles, allegorical locutions) which do not truly have a solution but offer parodies and funny reproductions of enigmatic and symbolic formulas, as a void shell of form, without correspondence to an external reality. In such cases, the riddling language turns and reflects on itself. Kidd furthermore discusses extended metaphors and allegories, such as the trial of the dogs in the *Wasps* and the vocabulary of sex used in connection with feminine personified abstractions in several plays (Aristophanes' *Peace* and *Lysistrata*, Eupolis' *Cities*). As he demonstrates, in these examples the metaphorical expression sometimes breaks loose from the signified reality and wanders freely into the imaginary world created by the imagery *per se*. An analogous approach is applied also to other elements: far-fetched wordplays, which rely on simple homophonies and games of sounds and have a tenuous connection with the content and meaning of the characters' words; ludicrous verbal coinages and multi-syllable compounds, in which the semantic values of the individual components seem to merge into the pure exuberance of language; and funny repetitions of words or phrases, which destroy the meaningfulness of the linguistic items by means of their vain proliferation.

2.6 The Silk Road: broader syntheses

The years around the turn of the millennium were a propitious time for the study of Aristophanic poetic expression. Apart from the comprehensive monographs by Willi and Beta, which were mentioned above, two other important works were published at that time, offering a wide-ranging overview and critical evaluation of many facets of Aristophanes' verbal humour and artistry. For the scholars of ancient comedy, the inauguration of the twenty-first century showed that in the beginning was the word.

Gerrit Kloss, in his book on the manifestations of comic speech in Aristophanes, examined the forms of linguistic humour in the context of pragmatic analysis and communication theory, as speech acts of a peculiar kind.[56] In essence,

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56 Kloss 2001.

the jokes of comedy are speech acts gone wrong, utterances which violate one or more of the prerequisite conditions for the success of a speech act. The comic effect is generated from the disturbance or failure of the communicative process. This theoretical frame enables the scholar to analyse the modes and tropes of comic language not merely as rhetorical and stylistic artifices, but as integral factors of the plot and performance of the play; the funny speech acts are viewed as constituents of the live interaction between dramatic characters and are interwoven with the creation of comic situations. In this perspective, Kloss reviews a series of phenomena of humorous speech, which belong to various categories, and provides close readings and detailed discussions of several Aristophanic passages. His work thus becomes a useful commented anthology and a selective encyclopaedia of the forms of comic language.

Kloss' investigation ranges over phenomena of linguistic characterisation, deviant or aberrant idiolects, parody and imitation of literary, official, and cultic registers, types of joke, and stylistic figures. In particular, he examines the gibberish and the ridiculously broken Greek of barbarian characters (Pseudartabas, Triballus, the Scythian guard), a form of communicative failure which causes laughable incongruities and misunderstandings. The dialectical speech of non-Athenians, on the other hand, is proved to function as a means of characterisation, rather than as an object of mockery and comic effect. The vocal and grammatical faults of prominent contemporary *komoidoumenoi* (for example, Cleon's loud tirades, Alcibiades' and Hyperbolus' flawed phonetics, the *lapsus linguae* of the actor Hegelochus) are mercilessly satirised. Kloss furthermore discusses the comic use of various revered or established linguistic systems from the spheres of literature, religion, administration, and popular culture: hexameter oracles, legal documents such as laws, decrees, and treaties, public prayers and curses, military orders, sympotic songs, fables and Sybaritic anecdotes, and the vocabulary of philosophical discourse. The introduction of these divergent language codes into the comic text serves a variety of dramatic purposes.

A valuable chapter is dedicated to the vulgar jokes, anticlimactic similes, mocking asides, and silly anecdotes placed on the lips of the *bomolochos* and interposed in the dialogue in order to afford comic relief. Kloss also analyses examples of comic misunderstandings (such as the hilarious interventions of Critylla in the parody of Euripides' *Helen* in the *Thesmophoriazusae* 850–923) from the point of view of failed speech acts. Finally, he explores the repetition of words and phrases as a means of creating burlesque or ironical effects and as a leitmotiv connecting different parts of the play. Though far from exhaustive, Kloss' study conveys a fair idea of the overall richness and variety of the linguistic arsenal of Aristophanic humour. The comic poet emerges as a verbal jongleur,

who dexterously juggles with a large number of linguistic devices, like so many balls in the air, in order to produce a magnificent and entertaining spectacle for his audience.

The most complex and fascinating critical appraisal of Aristophanes' language as an aesthetic creation and an accomplishment of poetic art is found in Michael Silk's magnum opus on Aristophanes and the definition of comedy, the culmination of two decades of thought and research. Amidst an impressive general discussion of the literary techniques and expressive means of Aristophanic drama, Silk dedicated a sizeable part of his investigation to language and style as a central component of comic poetics.[57] He sought to trace the sources of Aristophanes' poetic greatness in his mastery of words and demonstrated how the multifarious ingredients of Aristophanic style (from tragic borrowings to barbarian pidgin, from omnivorous literary echoes to colloquialism and animal voices) ultimately serve the poet's unified vision of the world. A genuine heir of the best traditions of New Criticism, Silk offered close readings of numerous textual passages, by means of which he brought forth the defining qualities of Aristophanes' poetics of language.

As Silk demonstrates, the Aristophanic text is branded by an immense variability and mobility of stylistic level. High and low elements are blended with the utmost dexterity. The poet often juxtaposes characters that incarnate different stylistic codes or contrasted levels of expression (e.g. the turgidity of Aeschylus versus the insubstantiality of Euripides). The language displays unpredictable variations and continuous undulations between the portentous and the banal, the literary and the colloquial, pathos and bathos, lyric exaltation and coarse insult. Yet, behind and beyond this seemingly infinite diversity, there are certain stylistic features which permeate Aristophanes' manner of expression and assume central significance for his art. Silk singles out first and foremost the physicality of the language, the preponderance of the material element which is given poetic form. The metaphors materialised on stage, the osmosis of the metonymical and the real, the sharp and bold verbal combinations, the sensuous obscenity, all these elements contribute to the intensely physical sense of the text. The second trademark of Aristophanic writing is accumulation, which is displayed on every level of composition: lexicon (large compound words), syntax (long lists of terms, paratactic juxtapositions), elocution and versification (parallel phrases and repeated stylistic patterns, often enhanced by sound effects). This accumulative slant is the main cause of the exuberance which so strongly marks the Aristophanic text.

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57 Silk 2000, 98–206.

The third main trait, a corollary of the essential mobility of Aristophanic style, is discontinuity, in other words, the collision of incompatible items, which is ubiquitous in the text and underlies a range of stylistic manoeuvres: para-tragedy, *para prosdokian*, verbal coinages, violation of the dramatic illusion, bold comic metaphors, all rely on the unpredictable and irregular combination of unrelated elements. In the most extended and elaborate sequences of meta-phor and allegorical imagery, the terms of the real subject continuously intrude and disrupt the consistency of the metaphorical image. The conjunction of the concrete and the abstract ("oats and salvation", "smell of quietism and poplar") is another emblematically Aristophanic manifestation of the same principle of discontinuity. The cumulative effect of these three capital stylistic features is to convey a particular poetic vision of the world, an exuberant acceptance of exist-ence in all its peculiar diversity. Silk compares this Aristophanic worldview with the modern literary-theoretical concept of defamiliarisation, which was devel-oped by the Russian formalists: the purpose of poetry is to make objects unfa-miliar and thus grant readers a renewed vision of the things of the world, which will enhance their sensation of life. The vitalism of Aristophanic language is the essential catalyst for this defamiliarising and reinvigorating experience.

2.7 Middle Comedy

Most of the monographs and essays mentioned in the preceding sections con-cern exclusively or *par excellence* the language of Aristophanes; at most, they take account also of the fragments of his fifth-century colleagues. It was inevi-table, perhaps, that the material of Old Comedy would preponderate in scholar-ly research, given that the comic language of Aristophanes (and, to some extent, of his contemporary playwrights) was a rare artistic accomplishment, a phe-nomenon of poetic vitality and euphoria virtually unparalleled in the ancient literary canon. However, the history of Greek comedy did not end at the begin-ning of the fourth century, nor should the study of its verbal and stylistic as-pects stop at that time. Although they are fewer by comparison with the bulk of Aristophanic scholarship, important and stimulating studies of the language of Middle and especially of New Comedy have been published over a period of several decades. There are also great prospects of further research in this par-ticular area, both with regard to the material of fourth-century comedy *per se* and in comparison with the expressive means of Aristophanes and Old Comedy.

Concerning the produce of Middle Comedy, the fragmentary remains of the early and middle decades of the fourth century, most of the relevant scholarship focuses on the parody of high-style poetic genres and its humorous techniques.

Tragedy, especially Euripidean tragedy, but also the productions of the post-classical tragic dramatists, remained an important intertext for the comic writers of that age. Following the example of Rau and other students of Aristophanic paratragedy, the scholars who have investigated this phenomenon in Middle Comedy examined a variety of materials, surveying both content and form. Alongside the comic adaptation and distortion of tragic myths and scenarios, scenic machinery and dramaturgical techniques, they also drew attention to linguistic facets: tragic quotations and paraphrases introduced in the comic fragments, burlesques of lines from tragedies and pastiches of tragic style, use of marked formulas and stylistic patterns from standard structures of tragedy, such as the narrative prologue and the messenger speech. In spite of the difficulties posed by the scantiness and fragmentariness of the material, scholars have attempted to delineate new traits and tendencies which distinguish the paratragedy of fourth-century comic poets by comparison to their fifth-century predecessors. These new trends consist firstly in a more nuanced critical stance towards tragedy as a model art form; and secondly in the assimilation of the tragic echoes and imitations into the favourite plot schemes and thematic concerns of fourth-century comic drama, such as the travesty of myth, love intrigues, and culinary matters.[58]

The most abundantly exploited target of parody in Middle Comedy was dithyrambic poetry. A great number of comic fragments consist of burlesque spoofs of the high-flown style of the New Dithyramb, usually placed on the lips of comic cooks or slaves, who describe in a ridiculously elevated manner food-stuffs and culinary dishes, wine and drinking vessels, and other paraphernalia of the banquet. Heinz-Günther Nesselrath, in his seminal monograph on the literary history and poetics of Middle Comedy, dedicated a substantial chapter to the analysis of these mock-dithyrambic tirades and described in detail their linguistic ingredients: extravagant compound words, rare and stilted poetic vocabulary, long and rambling circumlocutions, affected periphrases, loose or tortuous syntax, and interminable sequences of accumulated clauses in asyndeton or parataxis. All these stylistic means were well exploited already by Aristophanes, who also regularly made fun of the dithyrambic poets and their heavily ornate expression. Nevertheless, as Nesselrath showed, in Middle Comedy these devices were applied to different subject-matter, combined in new ways, and treated in a wholly peculiar and distinctive spirit, which produced a form of verbal humour and a kind of sound unheard in the comic tradition until then.[59]

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58 See Oliva 1968; Hunter 1987, 281–291; Cusset 2003, 31–52.
59 Nesselrath 1990, 241–280.

In the context of his investigation, Nesselrath also examined a number of other rhetorical and poetic figures mobilised by the bragging cooks and slaves of Middle Comedy to enhance the mock-elevated effect of their tirades: enormous lists of food names and culinary terms, mostly cast in long clusters of anapaestic dimeters; accumulations of phrases and parallelism of verses, reinforced through parison, isocolon, and homeoteleuton.

Other scholars carried on these researches and further explored the figure of the comic cook as a wordsmith and master of language, both in Middle Comedy and in its epigones in the Hellenistic age. They documented the cook's verbalism and lofty expressions, his parodies of high-style tragic and dithyrambic poetry, his detailed accounts of recipes and accumulations of culinary vocabulary, his use of Homeric glosses, philosophical terms, and scientific jargon from various disciplines (medicine, musical theory, architecture, astronomy, geometry, and military tactics).[60] Riddles and conundrums, which were a popular form in Middle Comedy and provided material for extensive episodes and even for entire plays, have also been fruitfully studied. Scholars have dissected the linguistic procedures and stylistic figures of comic riddles, their use of kennings and enigmatic circumlocutions, metaphors and symbolic imagery, contradictions, paradoxes, and other artifices intended to confuse the listener and obfuscate meaning.[61]

Overall, in spite of the aforementioned works, the verbal humour of Middle Comedy is an underexplored field of research. Many valuable remarks on the style and linguistic artifices of particular fragments are found in the commentaries on the remains of individual poets, from the classic earlier books by Richard Hunter and Geoffrey Arnott to the long series of excellently documented volumes of the Freiburg *Fragmenta Comica* project, which has already covered most of the poets of this period. Nevertheless, the lack of broader synthetic studies of the language of Middle Comedy is palpable. There is room for more than one dissertation which will investigate the multifarious figures and tropes of humorous expression in fourth-century comic fragments, from wordplay, witticisms, funny compounds and neologisms, types of vocabulary, philosophical jargon, ritual and technical codes to repetition, graphic metaphors and similes, sound effects, *aprosdoketa*, and even such rhetorical devices as asyndeton and polysyndeton, homeoteleuton, hypallage, and synecdoche. Perennially pushed

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60 See Dohm 1964, 160–203; Kassel 1974; Livrea 1980; Gallo 1981, 84–140; Roselli 2000; Dobrov 2002; Belardinelli 2008; García Soler 2008; Di Marco 2010; Stamatis 2014, 31–33, 131–177.
61 See Konstantakos 2000, 115–117, 146–210; Pütz 2007, 192–211; Monda 2012; Kidd 2014, 52–69.

to the margins of literary history, Middle Comedy is still expecting to find its Andreas Willi, its Simone Beta, its Gerrit Kloss, or (why not) its Michael Silk.

2.8 Menander and New Comedy

The discoveries of many papyri, over more than a century, have vouchsafed us a moderate sample of Menander's oeuvre, sufficient for literary study and interpretation, even though miserably small by comparison to the poet's total output. Menandrian style and poetic expression, so different from the exuberant speech of Aristophanic comedy, have attracted a good deal of scholarly interest. Benjamin Cartlidge's recent dissertation has offered an admirable grammatical description and analysis of Menander's language, examining most of its main aspects (phonology, morphology, word formation, syntax of subordinate clauses) in relation to the development of the Hellenistic Koine.[62] Earlier linguistic investigations of this kind concentrated on the typology of selected grammatical and syntactic phenomena, such as the formation, use, and distribution of the perfect tense and the varieties of hyperbaton in the Menandrian texts.[63] The new words (mostly unattested compounds or derivatives) found in the papyri of Menander have also been collected and analysed morphologically and semantically, as important indications for everyday speech or technical registers in early Hellenistic Athens.[64]

The bulk of related scholarship is concerned, of course, with the literary aspects and aesthetic operation of Menandrian language, with the poet's stylistic devices, mechanisms of verbal wit, and their dramatic function. Research in these areas has tended to take the form of specialised essays and small monographs on individual techniques and figures of style, rather than produce comprehensive and synthetic works comprising general overviews of a variety of such forms. Nevertheless, the scholarship on Menander's humorous wordsmithing is much more plentiful than the studies dedicated to his predecessors of the period of Middle Comedy.

Menander's complex literary debt to tragic poetry has been explored in many books and articles, and its linguistic aspects have received a fair amount of attention. Scholars have examined the introduction of tragic quotations in the Menandrian text and their self-conscious exploitation by the personages;

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62 Cartlidge 2014.
63 Goldberg 1996.
64 Pascucci 1971; Pascucci 1972.

the use of elevated tragic vocabulary, metre, and diction to underline the tension and pathos of a dramatic scene or the emotion of a character's speech, often in a subtly ironic manner; the application of tragic elocution to mundane matters or the mixture of tragic style and everyday speech for humorous effects; the imitation of the style of standard tragic parts, such as the narrative prologue, the recognition scene, and the messenger speech; and the employment of tragically coloured speech for linguistic characterisation, in order to mark particular dramatic characters as notably educated and dignified, or conversely as pretentious and pompous persons.[65]

This latter line of investigation leads to another area of research on which plentiful scholarly studies have concentrated: namely, the utilisation of linguistic and stylistic means in order to illustrate the *ethos* of the Menandrian personages, to bring out the peculiar idiosyncrasy, moral qualities, or intellectual gifts of individual characters. Much more prominently and palpably than in the plays of Aristophanes, the personages of Menander's comedy are differentiated through the language they speak, according to their sex, age, social position, educational background, or comic type. A great number of essays have explored this rich stratification of the Menandrian text, whether focusing on the idiolect of individual characters from one or the other play, or highlighting general trends which distinguish the speech of entire categories of personages and stock types.[66] Menander is shown to have handled a range of devices for this purpose: specific phrases or speech patterns used by an individual character as his or her favourite mannerisms or personal gimmicks of speech; dense repetition of the same or cognate keywords, whose semantic field pertains to the speaker's main ethical qualities; preferential assignment of selected elements (particular oaths and interjections, personal, possessive, or demonstrative pronouns, and other grammatical structures) to certain social or ethological groups of characters, such as slaves, women, hetairai, or old grouches; reserved recourse to special codes, such as obscenity, slang, and technical jargon, for the illustration of peculiar types (drunken slave, mock-doctor etc.); and a nuanced distribution of rhetorical effects such as asyndeton, enjambement, alliteration, anaphora, and hyperbaton.

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65 See especially Sandbach 1970, 124–136; Katsouris 1975, 101–181; Poole 1978; Arnott 1986; Hurst 1990; Cavallero 1994, 83–89; Leurini 1994; Cusset 2003; Zanetto 2014.
66 See Zini 1938; Osmun 1954; Dedoussi 1964; Sandbach 1970; Feneron 1974, 88–91; de Kat Eliassen 1975; Del Corno 1975; Katsouris 1975, 101–181; Ferrero 1976, 100–105; Bain 1984; Brenk 1987; Arnott 1995; Grasso 1995; Krieter-Spiro 1997, 201–251; Ferrari 2014.

A series of important findings have emerged from these researches, which help to draw a linguistic map of the world of New Comedy. To take some examples: The old men of Menander's comedies do not constitute a linguistically unified type, but rather an ample gallery of variegated speech idiosyncrasies, which includes some of the most amusing specimens of Menandrian theatre. For instance, the language of Niceratus, the simple and poor paterfamilias in the *Samia*, is branded by short asyndetic sentences and a proclivity towards superlative and exaggerated expressions, especially in his moments of anger. On the other hand, Demeas, the rich gentleman in the same play, masters a rich variety of registers, ranging from cultured fluency and vivid imagery to emotionally charged paratragedy and dexterous manipulation of humour and irony. Knemon, the protagonist of the *Dyskolos*, displays his rustic uncouthness and misanthropy through his predilection for negatives, emphatic and absolute expressions. Other rustic figures, such as Gorgias in the *Dyskolos*, suffer from rigid syntax, maladroit articulation of sentences, imitation of old-fashioned or pompous bookish style, and proneness to gnomic platitudes. Young men, especially lovers, such as Sostratus in the *Dyskolos* and Moschion in the *Samia*, are endowed with fluent and elegant speech, rhetorical capacities, and a reflective or introspective tone. The soldiers, such as Polemon in the *Perikeiromene* and Thrasonides in the *Misoumenos*, are prone to impulsive expression and hyperbolic sentimentality.

The diction of many slaves is colourless and conventional. Nevertheless, some of the most interesting representatives of the type are marked by stylistic individuality. For example, Daos in the *Aspis* demonstrates his intelligence through his complex syntax, familiarity with elevated and tragic diction, wide-ranging vocabulary, wordplays, and ironic wit. Pyrrhias in the *Dyskolos* is gifted with lively figurative language. The garrulous Onesimus in the *Epitrepontes* uses colourful images and mixes colloquialisms with fancy terms, which betray his desire to mimic the style of the well-educated. The cook Sikon in the *Dyskolos* is one of the greatest verbal masters of Menandrian comedy, full of wit and wordplays, unusual words and imaginative metaphors. Female characters fill their speech with emotional expressions, especially adjectives, adverbs, forms of address, and exclamations indicating affection, sympathy, tenderness, and (self-)pity. Habrotonon in the *Epitrepontes*, with her effusive superlatives and abundant terms of endearment, is an emblematic example. On the other limit of the spectrum, the elderly woman slave Philinna in the *Georgos* utters many impulsive exclamations which voice strong feelings.

These fruitful researches are founded on the groundwork laid by other formalistic studies, which have methodically examined important grammatical

phenomena, complex syntactic structures, and rhetorical figures (asyndeton, aposiopesis, questions and answers, word order, direct and indirect speech, rhyme and sound effects, anaphora and repetition, traditional verbal formulas) and illuminated their use, typology, and distribution over the entire Menandrian corpus, though not necessarily in connection with particular character types and their ethology. As has emerged from these studies, uncommon or abnormal word order serves to underline the speaker's emotion, excitement, or sarcasm. Asyndeta of various lengths and types may be used in monologues, narrative speeches, and lively dialogue, in order to create graphic vividness or indicate emotional agitation. Aposiopesis is introduced by speakers for reasons of discreetness and delicacy, euphemism, or repression of violent sentiments. Questions, longer or shorter, are employed to reveal various kinds of emotion, ensure dramatic pace and vivacity in dialogue, or help the advancement of the plot through the disclosure of information. Quotation of direct speech and dialogue inside a soliloquy renders the long monologue livelier and more theatrically effective; it is also useful for the indirect characterisation of other personages. Long and complex sentences are used in prologues, monologues, and *rheseis* to convey important information or capture the heart of an argument in an economical manner. Rhyme, assonance, and anaphora heighten emotion and afford rhetorical elevation to the speech, often with ironic results.[67]

Considerable interest has been attracted by the gnomic utterances, maxims, and proverbs included in the Menandrian text. Scholars have studied a number of aspects, including the morphology and syntactic structure of these forms of didactic speech; the formulas employed for their introduction and demarcation in the comic text; the metrical effects and rhetorical figures used for their formulation (chiasmus, parallelism, antithesis, assonance); their moral content, themes, and areas of reference; the imagery and similes contained in them, which range over a wide variety of fields of experience, from the animal kingdom to food, from myth to ethnic stereotypes and popular folktale; their literary ancestry and attestations in earlier tradition; and their application to the dramatic situation, the plot of the drama, and the delineation of the characters, which is often innovative or ironic.[68]

Menander's techniques of verbal humour have also enjoyed their share of attention. The linguistic artifices, on which related scholarship has concentrated, include wordplays, both hackneyed and original ones; witticisms and effects of

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67 See Feneron 1974; Ferrero 1976; Katsouris 1976; Turner 1980; Ireland 1981; Ricottilli 1984; Heap 1992; Lamagna 1998; Nünlist 2002.

68 Tzifopoulos 1995; Leurini 2006; Schirru 2010; Tosi 2014; Leurini 2019.

comic irony; rude terms and insults, even some obscenities and double enten-dres, especially on the lips of low-brow characters, such as the slave personnel; funny combinations of words and paradoxical turns of phrase; long accumula-tions and odd-sounding or exuberant compounds; *para prosdokian* jokes, artful-ly positioned in the verse; misunderstandings of ambiguous terms; and repeti-tion of the same words and phrases to hilarious results. All these effects, of course, are exploited by the comic poet with moderation and subtlety, in con-formity with the overall refinement and urbanity of the Menandrian *comédie larmoyante*.[69] As in the case of Middle Comedy, the works of this kind are fewer than the studies of the same phenomena in the oeuvre of Aristophanes. The full and methodical investigation of verbal humour in Menander and more general-ly in New Comedy still constitutes a desideratum of research. Antonis Petrides takes a significant step towards the fulfilment of this goal with his chapter in the present volume; he provides an all-embracing survey of Menander's linguistic techniques of humour, though concentrating on a single play.

Finally, a fascinating line of investigation, which has not been pursued as much as it would deserve, is the interaction of language and performance, espe-cially the connection between particular forms of style and the delivery of the text by the actors. Phenomena such as the use of long and syntactically complex clauses, full of dense participial constructions, in the narrative prologues, or the abundance of asyndeta, anacolutha, and exclamations in passages of emotion-ally charged speech, may have served also as indications for a specific manner of *hypokrisis* and enunciation of the dramatic text on stage. The quotations of other characters' speech within a soliloquy, which are demarcated with a num-ber of formal and syntactic conventions, would also have called for a special mode of delivery; they might well have been uttered with a voice, tone, and sound effects different from those the speaker would have used for his own words. Other special forms of speech, such as repartee, asides and interjections, obscene insults and allusions, would have been appropriately voiced by the performers and accompanied with suitable movements and mimicry, to maximise their scenic effect.[70]

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69 Cavallero 1994; Arnott 1997; Craik 2001; Rampichini 2002.
70 Osmun 1952; Del Corno 1994; Cavallero 1994, 98–101; Nünlist 2002.

3 The present volume

The present volume represents a contribution to the study of the language of ancient Greek comedy, in the wake of the rich tradition of research outlined in the previous section. A collection of eleven chapters address a range of aspects of the linguistic material and stylistic artifices exploited by the Greek comic poets, from vocabulary, metaphors, and imagery to parody and obscenity, from artifices of humour, such as the *par' hyponoian* and the droll compounds, to figures of style, such as similes, accumulations, and rhyme. Most of the chapters concentrate on Aristophanes and Old Comedy, which offers the richest repository of verbal wealth and the most fully equipped arsenal of comic techniques. Nevertheless, the less ploughed fields of Middle and New Comedy are not ignored. Throughout the volume, the emphasis falls on practical criticism, textual readings, and "micro-philological" approaches, on the examination of specific figures and artifices of speech, on the analysis of individual comic words and passages. Broader theoretical issues are taken into account by several authors in connection with their focused philological and textual investigations; but this is not a book of linguistic theory or a manifesto of new methodologies. Above all, the main unifying theme, which runs through the chapters of this volume, is the use of language for the achievement of the aesthetic, artistic, and intellectual purposes of ancient comedy: for the generation of humour and the production of comic effect, the delineation of characters, the transmission of ideological messages, and the construction of poetic meaning.

The book opens with Bernhard Zimmermann's essay on "Metaphors and personifications onstage" in Old Comedy. As the author observes, the comic poets of the fifth century have three distinct techniques of enlivening abstract notions on stage. Firstly, they use common metaphors and verbal images, take them in an absolutely literal sense, and transform them into live theatrical spectacles. Secondly, they embody various aspects of reality or social life into personifications, which appear as *dramatis personae* with a greater or lesser role in the action of the play. Thirdly, the comic poets strip a well-known contemporary person of his individual characteristics and introduce him into the play as the representative of a broader group. The first technique is illustrated by a famous scene of the *Acharnians* (180–202), in which the *spondai*, the libations for the conclusion of a peace treaty, are materially represented before the spectators' eyes in the form of three jars of wine. With regard to personifications, Zimmermann examines in particular the incarnated Clouds, who form the Chorus of the homonymous play. The Clouds are introduced as the patron deities of intellectuals and embody all the typical features attributed to intellectuals by public

opinion. Their representation in the comedy is based on metaphors which persist in modern languages for the characterisation of impractical theoreticians and philosophers (e.g. "hover above the ground" for thinkers who are out of touch with reality). Socrates' figure in the *Clouds* is an example of the third technique. The Aristophanic character does not correspond to the historical Socrates of 423 BCE. Rather, he generically conflates in his person all the intellectuals who are under the protection of the Cloud goddesses, and thus becomes a stage symbol of the total of Athenian intellectual life at that time.

Analogously, in the *Birds* the well-known dithyrambic poet Kinesias scenically epitomises the entire category of the innovative choral poets of the New Dithyramb. The vocabulary and metaphors, which Kinesias employs to describe his poetic works, express in a graphic manner the literary defects of dithyrambic art, namely, its airy insubstantiality, cloudy darkness, and frigidity. Cratinus and other early poets of Old Comedy had already pioneered this technique. Some of their Choruses, such as Cratinus' *Archilochoi* and *Kleoboulinai* or Telecleides' *Hesiodoi*, represent particular cultural tendencies, ideological agendas, or poetic genres. Individual personifications were also assigned the same function of rendering artistic and political notions in visible manner. In Cratinus' *Cheirones*, the historical characters Solon and Pericles stood respectively for the idealised past and the contemporary state of corruption and *stasis* in the city. Female figures such as Comedy in Cratinus' *Pytine* and Music in Pherecrates' *Cheiron* are stage holograms of art forms and give voice to the poet's critical reflections on art. Thus, in the first chapter of the book, the interaction of the language with the performance and staging of comic drama is emphasised. It is this peculiar operation of comic speech, its use as a malleable, almost physical stuff for the creation of scenic spectacle, which defines the aesthetic and dramaturgical nature of Old Comedy.

In the second chapter ("Imaginary wor(l)ds: Comic language and the construction of fantasy"), Ioannis M. Konstantakos examines the use of language as a means for the creation of comic fantasy in the works of Aristophanes and his contemporaries. As he points out, the construction of a secondary fantastic world often entails the invention of the languages spoken by the inhabitants of that world; this is exemplified in many modern works of fantastic fiction, from Thomas More's *Utopia* and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* to the narratives of Borges, Tolkien, and George R.R. Martin. The ultimate roots of this phenomenon may be traced back to ancient Greek literature. In the Homeric epics, the gods have their own peculiar language, of which specific terms are cited in the text; the authors of Hellenistic travel romances made up strange or bestial local dialects, spoken by the natives of legendary or fictitious lands at the edges of

the earth. Attic Old Comedy also provides a possible example of a language fabricated for a fictional metaphysical world. Pherecrates, in his comedy *Krataloi*, invented a special numismatic system for the polity of the underworld, with particular names for the monetary units and their subdivisions. These names do not occur independently in the rest of the ancient literary tradition and may have been invented by Pherecrates for his comic fiction of Hades.

The comic poets of the fifth century, who were fond of producing comedies on fantastic and fairy-tale themes, also applied other linguistic and stylistic methods to illustrate secondary worlds in their dramas. They invented grotesque composite names for utopian states, names which reveal the mythopoeic function of comic fantasy. The technique of verbal and phrasal accumulation was amply employed to depict ideal alternative societies of fabulous wealth and gastronomic abundance. Aristophanes often resorted to the scenic materialisation of linguistic metaphors and proverbial expressions (a technique also discussed, in a different context, in the chapter by Bernhard Zimmermann), in order to highlight the surreal nature of the fictitious worlds of mythopoeia. Above all, wordplays, especially of the type based on homonymy, homophony, and ambiguous or polysemous words, are used in the comic plays to trigger the genesis of the fantastic world, and also to condition the formation of many of its particular aspects.

A characteristic example is included in Aristophanes' *Birds*, in which the play on two virtually homophonous words (*polos* and *polis*) constitutes the cornerstone for the foundation of the new city of the birds in the sky. The most extensive exploitation of such creative wordplays is found in Archippus' comedy *The Fishes*, the swan song of Athenian fairy-tale drama at the end of the fifth century. In this play, the verbal puns on the names of various species of fish become a dominant motif of the plot and provide the basic code both for the administrative organisation of the fishes' state and for its external relations to the cities of men. As transpires from Konstantakos' discussion, the creation of a secondary fictional world, in the context of a poetic drama, is above all a labour of diction and a feat of poetic language.

There follows a series of chapters which concentrate on verbal artifices of humour in the Aristophanic oeuvre. S. Douglas Olson ("A less maculate Muse") offers a new appraisal of sexual humour in Old Comedy, starting from a critical review of the standard scholarly monograph in this field, Jeffrey Henderson's *The Maculate Muse* (see above, section 2.1). Henderson's philological approach to the comic texts and his close readings of a great number of passages are premised on the argument that the comic poet describes sexual activities and sexual organs with a wide variety of primarily allusive terms. Comic obscenity is

expressed *par excellence* through figurative language, which is deployed on stage to shock and amuse.

Olson takes issue with a number of Henderson's individual interpretations, in which obscene jokes are misunderstood, confused, or inadequately explained, and their humour is not correctly appreciated. In the main part of the chapter, seventy-two cases are examined, in which Henderson has detected sexual metaphors or double entendres. These items fall into four figurative fields: agricultural metaphors for the sexual act and the genitals; elongated objects which are supposed to represent phallic implements (from flask, bar, and peg to spear, sword, and ladle); nautical language and images borrowed from ships and marine life; and words which signify hits, blows, piercing and the like. Olson argues that the interpretation of these passages in obscene sense is erroneous, based on weak evidence or on problematic textual readings, and supports a more straightforward explanation of the text. This line of argumentation, in turn, raises broader questions about the detection of sexual jokes and more generally the appreciation of allusive humour in Old Comedy.

Olson stresses the need to establish alternative basic principles for the appraisal of such figures of speech, taking account of the incompleteness of surviving materials, as well as of our temporal distance from the sources of the materials and the surrounding culture of antiquity. It is commonly observed, even in everyday experience, that language which is considered metaphorical by one recipient may not appear so to another. Such problems become even more acute in the field of classical studies, given that present-day readers belong to a different age and culture from that of the original texts. The information preserved from the time of composition of the classical texts may be scant, fragmentary, obscure, or not fully reliable. Thus, it is difficult to definitively rule whether a certain verbal expression has additional overtones, regardless of its context. In this connection, Olson proposes two viable criteria for establishing a figurative second sense of a particular word. Firstly, multiple uses of an image that are not dependent on (and hence not generated by) context, can be regarded as examples of established use (as happens, for example, with the sexual connotations of "pussy" and "bang" in modern English or ἐλαύνειν in ancient Greek). Secondly, a metaphorical interpretation gains in plausibility if it is supported by ancient sources, such as scholia and lexicographers.

Georgios Triantafyllou ("Like a rabid dog: Animal metaphors and similes in Aristophanes") focuses on another type of imagery which is also a core characteristic of Aristophanic style: the animal metaphors and similes, which suggest an order of similarity between a person or group of humans and an animal creature. In this figure of speech, the animal functions as the symbol of a certain

type of behaviour or trait of character. While in other poetic genres, such as Homeric epic, animal similes are applied to high-brow and heroic qualities, in Aristophanic comedy this stylistic effect is used to assign lowly and negative features to comic personages. The author proposes a classification and typology of the comic animal similes, both in morphological terms (similes demarcated by specific syntactic structures or implied by pragmatic reasoning) and in terms of subject matter, especially with regard to the human target of the comparison: politicians, citizen bodies, artists, and other citizens.

Animal similes concerning politicians exemplify the essential ambiguity of this stylistic figure. The politicians, as *dramatis personae* of the comedy, use the similes to attribute to themselves the positive qualities of the animals described; for example, Cleon presents himself as a loyal dog which guards and protects his master Demos. By contrast, when describing their opponents, they have recourse to the animals' negative traits; similarly, the poet applies animal comparisons to ridicule the demagogues for their vices. Thus, Cleon is also represented as a cunning and thieving dog, which cheats his master and steals food. Various other rapacious animals are used for this kind of political satire, from foxes and monkeys to seals, whales, birds of prey, and mythical monsters.

A wide range of animal species is employed to bring out the ridiculous defects of the other categories. The Athenians are compared to sheep and pigeons for their naiveté, or to rabid dogs and wasps for their aggressiveness. The Spartans and other enemies of Athens are presented as ravenous and treacherous creatures, such as monkeys, foxes, wolves, and kites. Failed poets and artists are pictured as small and contemptible birds and insects. Many of the similes serve as satirical tools to convey the poet's critique against his political enemies and artistic rivals. Others are merely humorous and generate hearty laughter rather than scorn. In a few examples, the animal image highlights a man's positive virtues, as when the old tragic poet Phrynichus is compared to a bee for the sweetness of his songs. In general, similes targeting politicians are harsh and sarcastic, while those regarding artists or simple citizens are often playful and less acrid.

Simone Beta, in his chapter "The shop of Aristophanes the carpenter: How comic poets assembled (and disassembled) words", focuses on another emblematic device of comic wordsmithing: the compound words, especially the invented and innovative compounds which were fabricated by Aristophanes and his fifth-century colleagues with great resourcefulness and ingenuity. Beta highlights the use of these droll made-up compounds in their textual context, in close connection with the plot and the comic situation at hand, and analyses their role in the generation of humour. He examines a large number of specimens,

classifying them by means of morphological criteria into grammatical categories. Firstly, compounds beginning with prepositions produce ironic formations and hilarious portmanteau words, such as Καταγέλα (*Acharnians* 606), Ἀντιλέων (*Knights* 1044), and ἀπηλιαστά (*Birds* 109–110). Secondly, compounds with the prefixes φιλο- and μισο- comprise many original Aristophanic coinages and *hapax legomena*, which express the poet's or a character's strong passion in favour or against something. Especially the compounds introduced by μισο- are frequent in political contexts and convey the poet's hatred for demagogues and warmongers.

The third category consists of compound nouns created by use of standard nominal suffixes, such as -μανία (e.g. ὀρνιθομανία, λακωνομανία), a suffix employed to satirise social tendencies and trends. Another large group is made up of composite personal names (a rich area of study, rather poorly covered even in recent monographs, which is also examined in the chapter by Kostas E. Apostolakis with regard to Middle Comedy).[71] These include meaningful patronymics (Pheidippides in the *Clouds*); burlesque verbal concoctions, such as Ἀποδρασιππίδης (*Wasps* 185), which humorously render the essence of a comic situation; and fanciful conjunctions of names of contemporary Athenian *komoidoumenoi*, joined together for the purposes of political or literary invective (e.g. Τεισαμενοφαινίππους and Γερητοθεοδώρους, *Acharnians* 603–605; μελλονικιᾶν, *Birds* 639; εὐριπιδαριστοφανίζων, Cratinus fr. 342). The longest compound words in the corpus of Old Comedy are spoken by female Chorus members (*Lysistrata* 457–458, *Ecclesiazusae* 1169–1175) and have culinary associations. The way is thus opened for the exuberant verbal cuisine of Middle Comedy (cf. also the chapter by Ioannis Konstantakos in this volume).

The series of chapters on the linguistic devices of humour closes with Andreas Willi's essay ("'When he should have said…': The treatment of humour παρ᾽ ὑπόνοιαν in the Aristophanic scholia"), which offers a reappraisal of a well-known type of verbal jest: the *para prosdokian* or *par' hyponoian*, as it is most usually termed in the ancient scholiastic literature. This kind of humorous effect has also been analysed in earlier studies (see above, section 2.5), but Willi approaches it from a different, innovative angle: he examines the comments and explanations of *par' hyponoian* jokes included in the Aristophanic scholia, the mass of ancient scholarship on comedy which was compiled in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. As he points out, the oeuvre of Aristophanes was studied in later antiquity not only as a school text, a model of Attic speech, or a source of *realia* for Classical Athenian history, but also for the pure amusement

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71 See above, section 2.5.

and pleasure it offered to readers. The Aristophanic scholia do not ignore verbal humour but provide descriptions and exegesis for several wordplays and other linguistic jokes, especially those based on unexpected substitutions of terms. These are usually called *par' hyponoian* by the scholiasts, a term more specialised and more pertinent to comedy than the *para prosdokian*, which is a more general critical appellation for a rhetorical figure, not necessarily associated with humorous effects.

Often the term *par' hyponoian* involves a particular counter-expectational device: the lack of a rational connection between the point of the joke and what precedes it (as noted in the scholion on *Wealth* 27). In conceptual terms, the name *par' hyponoian* may serve in the scholia as an "umbrella" for a variety of comic artifices. According to Willi's classification, prospective *par' hyponoian* jokes consist of sequences in which the audience is induced to expect a particular continuation, only to be surprised by what is actually said (e.g. *Acharnians* 119, *Wasps* 238, *Lysistrata* 114). In retrospective jests, by contrast, the audience realises only after a certain thing has been spoken, that another term would have yielded a more logical utterance in the wider context (e.g. *Clouds* 833–837). In other cases, the unexpected arises from a pun of paronomasia, by means of which another, closely sounding or homophonous word is substituted for the expected one (e.g. *Clouds* 856–857). As Willi further notes, the scholiasts sometimes fail to distinguish between what might be expected in the real world and what is logically consistent in the fictional world of the comic play (see e.g. the scholia on *Knights* 296). Ultimately, the term *par' hyponoian* could also be applied as a generic formula for any kind of textual surprise effect. The scholiasts resort to *par' hyponoian* explanations even in connection with difficult and problematic passages, which they cannot account for otherwise.

The chapter by Dimitrios Kanellakis ("Rhyme in Greek comedy") shifts the focus to the broader field of rhetorical and poetic figures and concentrates on rhyme — a very much underrated topic of research in connection with ancient Greek literature. Although rhyme, as a poetic phenomenon, is rarely discussed by ancient critics, relevant specimens are included in Aristotle's discussion of the rhetorical device of homeoteleuton, which relies on various effects of rhyming assonance. Kanellakis rejects the unfounded statements of earlier classicists, who sweepingly condemned rhymes in Greek poetry as grotesque and ugly or argued that rhyming in an inflected language is simply a fortuitous result of grammatical suffixes. He establishes a series of criteria for detecting perfect and imperfect rhymes in ancient Greek verse, relying on the consonance of endings and the identity of stress. On this basis, he offers a full catalogue of the rhymes found in extant Greek tragedies and comedies, from Aeschylus to

Menander, demonstrating that the effect was common enough in ancient dramatic poetry.

Kanellakis also classifies and analyses the various functions of rhyme in Greek comic texts. When it is used in stichomythia or antilabe, rhyme underlines aggression and sarcasm or punctuates a speedy exchange of words. Most usually, both in dialogue and in continuous discourse, rhyme highlights an antithesis, with the opposing terms placed at the end of successive lines. It also amplifies the effect of comic accumulations, strengthening the impression of abundance, exaggeration, or emotional climax, or boosting a comic point or a surprise joke. Furthermore, rhyme is employed in poetic narratives and descriptions, to convey a steady pace or make them sound more exciting. In choral sections, it serves important technical functions, such as the transition from recitation to song or from one song to another. Occasionally, it is employed to enhance various other humorous artifices and figures of speech, from hyperbole and parody of high-register genres to proverbial expressions, rhetorical parallelism, and formal address. As is well known, certain purist Greek poets and critics of the early modern period branded rhyme as a "barbaric" phenomenon, on the grounds that it is absent from ancient Greek poetry and alien to traditional Greek aesthetics. Kanellakis' chapter, a sound warning against such exaggerated claims, shows that rhyme is a familiar effect in Greek verse already since ancient times.

Piero Totaro's chapter, "Three words in Aristophanes' *Wealth* (999, 1037, 1083)", signals another thematic move, this time to the area of comic vocabulary. The author, who is preparing a much-expected commentary on Aristophanes' *Wealth*, provides a detailed study of three problematic words (ἄμης, τηλία, ἐτῶν) from the text of this comedy, all of them taken from the burlesque episode of the lustful old woman and her former young lover. Totaro elucidates the multiple linguistic nuances of these terms and determines their exact meaning in the light of the information provided by ancient scholia and lexica. In *Wealth* 999, an ἄμης, that is, a kind of soft cake made of dough and milk, is sent by the young man to the old lady, his former mistress. The deeper significance of this gesture is that the smooth milk-based pastry is particularly appropriate for a toothless old woman; the young man thus confirms his abandonment and rejection of his aged paramour.

Regarding *Wealth* 1037, Totaro argues in favour or the reading τηλία (nominative), as given in the majority of medieval codices, instead of the genitive τηλίας transmitted by the Ravenna manuscript. The speaker sarcastically compares the old woman to a *telia* (a large round board or tray with a raised circular edge), so as to mock her fat girth and ridicule her claims of having grown thin

from chagrin. In *Wealth* 1083, Totaro defends the manuscripts' reading ἐτῶν γε, which creates a witty double entendre in conjunction with the foregoing participle διεσπλεκωμένη (1082, in obscene sense, "screwed"). The form ἐτῶν may represent the genitive plural not only of the word ἔτος, "year", but also of the noun ἔτης, "fellow citizen". Apart from being mocked for her age, the old woman is also denounced as a veteran whore who has been possessed by innumerable lovers in her long career.

Anna A. Novokhatko, in her chapter "Spoudaiogeloion revisited: Homeric text between a scholar and a cook", concentrates on yet another favourite stylistic mechanism of humour: the citation and parody of high-registered literary discourse in the comic text, especially the parody of epic poetry — an area which has attracted some study but has never been the focus of such keen interest as the parody of tragedy (see above, section 2.2). Novokhatko examines a number of comic fragments, together with some passages from parodic poems, in which Homeric verses are quoted, ridiculed, or discussed by the characters. She thereby charts the various ways in which comic literature engages with Homeric texts, and the effects this might have on the audience.

In Old Comedy, Homeric vocabulary and formulas become the objects of discussion and literary criticism, as in the famous scene from Aristophanes' *Daitales* (fr. 233), in which a father probes his son's knowledge of Homeric glosses. This scene echoes contemporary Athenian school practice and fifth-century handbooks of Homeric explication. Epic phrases, metrical units, and syntactic patterns are also abundantly reworked and woven into comic speech. This may happen for satirical and parodic purposes: corrupt politicians are styled with grandiloquent Homeric epithets (Cratinus fr. 258, Hermippus fr. 47); typical words and morphemes of the epic language may be dismantled and reassembled in new combinations, to fabricate droll neologisms and compounds (e.g. κεφαληγερέταν, Cratinus fr. 258; ὀπτότατος, Cratinus fr. 150). Apart from the humorous potential, the comic poets' preoccupation with epic language indicates that Homeric criticism and transmission were a focus of interest for the intellectuals of Classical Athens.

In the parodic poetry of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, a genre which has close affinities to comedy and extensive intertextual exchanges with the comic corpus, the traditional language and style of Homeric epic are applied to the down-to-earth pleasures of everyday life, such as culinary matters, foodstuffs and banquets, or hot baths. Epic verses and phrases are distorted, inverted, and conflated into pastiches or centos; the heroic or fabulous contents they originally evoked are ridiculously re-contextualised and connected with trivial objects, such as gastronomic courses, fishes, and cooking methods. This practice

survived into the period of Middle and New Comedy, as shown by a masterful tirade from Straton's *Phoenicides* (fr. 1), in which a pompous cook baffles his employer by using Homeric glosses to refer to kitchen implements and the paraphernalia of the sacrifice. The semiliterate *mageiros* misunderstands and falsifies the epic terms, but also exploits them as raw materials for inventive verbal concoctions. This amusing scene reflects both the use of the Homeric poems in school practice and the contemporary scholarly exegesis of the Homeric oeuvre, as exemplified by the lexicon of Philitas. All these comic and parodic reworkings of Homer also serve as testimonia of the state of the Homeric text in the Classical age, before the editorial interventions of the Alexandrine grammarians.

The foray into the province of later Greek comedy is continued in the two closing chapters of the volume. Kostas E. Apostolakis contributes a much-needed examination of aspects of linguistic humour in the fragments of Middle Comedy. As noted above (section 2.7), this is a comparatively neglected and underexplored area of research. Apostolakis' chapter ("Proper names, nicknames, epithets: Aspects of comic language in Middle Comedy") is an important step towards filling this gap of scholarship, and significantly contributes to mapping the evolution of humorous language in the interim period between Aristophanes and Menander. The author concentrates on jokes and humorous effects which depend on the speaking names, nicknames, and droll epithets attributed to *komoidoumenoi* in Middle Comedy. The discussion brings forth the artistry and ingenuity of the often underestimated and marginalised comic writers of the fourth century, who are shown to have proficiently handled a range of verbal artifices, from wordplay and inventive metaphors to incongruous similes and hybrid compounds.

Continuing a well-documented trend of Old Comedy, the fourth-century playwrights construct burlesque compounds which bring together the name of a mythical figure and that of a generic stage character or a well-known contemporary personality (e.g. Timocles' *Orestautocleides*, Eubulus' *Sphingocarion*). Mythical names also give rise to wordplays (e.g. Timocles fr. 19, Antiphanes fr. 74). Speaking names, which reflect the bearer's peculiar nature and qualities, are sometimes attributed to comic personages and epitomise or comically contrast with their role in the play (e.g. Amphis' *Dexidemides*; the lyric poet Choronicus in Alexis fr. 19; the slave Pistus in Antiphanes fr. 69). Other verbal plays on historical or stock personal names include punning assonances, etymological figures (Dionysius fr. 3), and burlesque coinages and compounds (πεφιλιππίδωσαι, Alexis fr. 148, for a man thinner than the emaciated politician Philippides; Βρυσωνοθρασυμαχειοληψικερμάτων, Ephippus fr. 14).

Much more than speaking personal names, Middle Comedy revels in inventive nicknames, which ironically connect the bearer (whether a character of the plot or a *komoidoumenos*) with his or her main passion, occupation, or moral vice (Anaxandrides fr. 35 is among the most telling examples in this respect). Colourful nicknames were made up for particular categories of comic personnel, such as braggart soldiers, parasites, and hetairai. Epithets may also be a powerful and multivalent means of comic expression. Characterological adjectives, often serving as play titles, reveal the central ethical disposition of the main hero (e.g. Antiphanes' *Misoponeros*, *Philopator*, *Philometor*). Witty descriptive epithets are used to emblematise particular comic types, such as the parasite (e.g. ἄκλητος, κνισολοιχός, ὀλβιογάστωρ). Traditional epithets of gods, usually originating in epic poetry and ritual, are invoked in an innovative and sarcastic manner for satirical purposes (e.g. Alexis fr. 93, Timocles fr. 14).

The long journey of the Greek comic language in time reaches its last station in the subtle verbal wit of Menander, the subject of the final chapter of the book by Antonis K. Petrides ("Strategies of verbal humour in Menander's *Dyskolos*: From linguistics to dramaturgy"). Petrides takes advantage of the approaches and taxonomies of modern humour studies to provide a comprehensive overview of Menander's techniques of verbal comicality, using the only complete extant Menandrian play, the *Dyskolos*, as a case study and repository of examples. All the lexical, stylistic, and pragmatic resources, by which laughter and comic effects are achieved in this comedy, are methodically classified by character and species; their mechanisms are analysed and their semantics are probed in detail. A wide range of verbal artifices are singled out and described, including comic hyperbole, irony and sarcasm, malapropisms and *para prosdokian*, the comedic use of proverbs, scurrility and double entendres, puns and witticisms, plays with homonymy and polysemous words, imaginative metaphors and peculiar vocabulary, parody of high style, repartee, accumulations and repetitions, paradoxes and teasing pleasantries. These are distributed among some of the main characters of the comedy: the slave Getas, the cook Sikon, the young lover Sostratus, the landowner Kallipides, the parasitic Chaereas, and the prologue god Pan.

Menander's pretentions to linguistic naturalism have caused his texts to be considered as privileged models for studying everyday language and conversational humour in the late fourth century BCE. However, as Petrides points out, Menander's comic speech is an artificial and artistic construct, no less than the comic language of earlier playwrights (although it takes, of course, a different form). Menander purposefully distributes the various mechanisms of verbal humour among the characters of the comedy in a manner which transcends

mere naturalism and serves dramaturgical purposes of character individualisation and configuration. For example, analogous linguistic tics and humorous tendencies connect characters of the same household; personages who are antagonists in the plot share a penchant for the same figures of style. Therefore, the naturalistic use of verbal humour is shown to be an elaborate authorial strategy. Menander mirrors the occurrence and operation of humorous devices in real conversational contexts, with a view to establishing an appropriate setting for the deployment of his dramatic and ethological artistry.

Furthermore, Menandrian humour functions thematically: the various linguistic devices are assigned to the dramatic characters in such a way as to underline the fundamental ideological issues and dichotomies of the play. In the *Dyskolos*, the rustic and poor characters of the countryside are scantily endowed with jokes; they appear to be rather grim and agelastic. By contrast, the urban and rich personages and their household are liberally invested with humour. Thus, the targeted use of linguistic comicality boosts the main thematic concern of the play, the division between city and country or misanthropy and philanthropy. As Petrides concludes, for Menander verbal humour is not an end in itself but one of several instruments in the playwright's dramaturgical toolbox, organically interwoven with dramaturgy, character depiction, and ideology.

In conclusion, we hope that the volume, as a whole, will contribute to a deeper understanding of the verbal artistry and linguistic craft of ancient Greek comedy. The authors have explored a great variety of mechanisms of language and resources of poetic expression, building on the foundations of earlier studies to highlight further, often ignored or undervalued facets of the examined materials. In some cases, constructive criticism is exercised towards previous approaches to particular linguistic artifices and forms of humour, such as obscenity, rhyme, and *par' hyponoian* jokes, in order to establish a broader perspective, greater complexity, or finer distinctions in the treatment and operation of these forms. The rich vocabulary of comic speech, in particular, is sifted and probed to a great detail in several of the chapters; some of its most idiosyncratic and intriguing manifestations (such as droll compounds, comic names and nicknames, epithets, and ambiguous terms) become the object of new investigations and reappraisals. Figurative expressions (staged metaphors and turns of phrase, animal similes, food imagery), which have always been at the centre of scholarly interest, are examined anew with regard to broader aspects of their function, such as their contribution to the making of the comic fiction and to the ideological content of the play.

Several areas of research, which have received scant attention or only occasional treatment in earlier scholarship, are brought to the fore and explored

in extenso in this volume. Emphasis is placed on the importance of the ancient scholia and the writings of ancient scholars and grammarians for the understanding of comic language and of the operation of jokes. The various verbal artifices of humour are not only studied individually, as separate mechanisms, but are also viewed in their interaction and collaboration within the overall script of the play, and are appraised for their collective contribution to the aesthetic experience of the comic text as a work of art. In the same perspective, a wide range of linguistic materials and techniques are considered as the main building blocks for the construction of the entire dramatic world of the play, the fabrication of the plot, the creation of comic fantasy and phantasmagoria, the delineation of the characters, and the organisation of the performance. In general, the authors of this volume have collectively striven to bring into relief the multifarious and paramount role of language in the creation and experience of the ancient comic theatre. We are all disciples of Mallarmé and Seferis, the poets who stressed that poetry is made with words. Comic poetry is no exception.

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Bernhard Zimmermann
Metaphors and Personifications Onstage

Abstract: A typical literary technique of Old Comedy is the visualisation of abstract concepts by dramatising metaphors or by the appearance of personifications on stage. The comic poets of the fifth century BCE had three separate ways of bringing abstract concepts onto the stage. First, they use metaphor, taking an image literally and bringing it to life as a prop or in action. Second, they introduce personifications as a considerable part of the comic action. Finally, they strip a real, well-known person of his individuality to render him into a representative of a particular group. This chapter analyses these techniques in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* (180–202), *Clouds* (role of Socrates and the Chorus), and *Birds* (904–957, 1372–1409), and in some fragmentary comedies by Aristophanes' rivals (especially Cratinus' *Pytine* and Pherecrates' *Cheiron*).

1 Visualised metaphors

It is a constant anthropological principle that human beings interpret and encounter the phenomena that control their lives, and especially those that threaten them, by imagining them in physical and even personified form. Anything that can be named and imagined causes less fear than an intangible abstract power, and personifications of this kind abound in Hesiod's works. Abstract concepts such as Sleep, Death, or Love are elevated into the rank of divine or demonic powers, visible beings, and even occasionally honoured in cult worship.[1] This principle applies even more to fundamental values: conventions and rules of behaviour that govern human life such as honesty or reliability, as well as lies and deceit, persuasion, strife, and related concepts. In *Works and Days*, we can see the transformation of abstract terms into personifications (760–764):

> ἀλλ' ἔρδειν· δεινὴν δὲ βροτῶν ὑπαλεύεο φήμην·
> φήμη γάρ τε κακὴ πέλεται κούφη μὲν ἀεῖραι
> ῥεῖα μάλ', ἀργαλέη δὲ φέρειν, χαλεπὴ δ' ἀποθέσθαι.
> φήμη δ' οὔ τις πάμπαν ἀπόλλυται, ἥντινα πολλοὶ
> λαοὶ φημίξουσι. θεός νύ τίς ἐστι καὶ αὐτή.

This chapter was translated into English by Rachel Bruzzone.

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1 Cf. West 1966, 33–34 ("deification of abstracts").

> Act this way. Avoid the wretched talk of mortals. For talk is evil: it is light to raise up quite easily, but it is difficult to bear, and hard to put down. No talk is ever entirely gotten rid of, once many people talk it up: it too is some god.[2]

These verses vividly illustrate the way that human gossip, at first simply words, suddenly gains substantial weight and becomes a millstone on the neck of the victim. Even if the sufferer gains freedom, some portion of the gossip always sticks (*semper aliquid haeret*).[3] Similar personifications occupy a particularly central position in Greek comedy of the fifth century BCE. An exploration of the characteristics of the plays of this epoch, Old Comedy, makes clear why personifications, as the embodiments of abstract ideas or circumstances, played such a prominent role. Archaic comedies are rightly called "political", in that their content typically has to do with the *polis* of Athens. The term can include politics proper, in the modern sense of domestic, social, and international policy, but these plays are also concerned with religion, culture, literature, education, and related issues that are of consequence to the city. To a far greater extent than in narrative or discursive texts, comedy turns on these abstract phenomena, not by constructing arguments about them, but by converting them into action. If comic poets had not done so — and occasionally they do not, instead allowing argumentative points to collide in the form of an *agon* — they would not, in fact, have composed dramas, but rather staged static discussions which would not be focused on comedy. Much more often, comic poets, driven to produce colourful, engaging, and, above all, comic or burlesque plots annually, chose to make their thoughts visible, and thus comprehensible, via comic representation in the form of personification.

In his 1957 book *Metapher und Allegorie*, Hans-Joachim Newiger explored this particular feature of Aristophanic comedy, a point on which there is a clear distinction from Menander's plays, demonstrating that the Aristophanic personifications reflect particularly comic aspects of real life. For example, the old gentleman Demos in *Knights* or the Chorus of judgemental wasps in *Wasps* in fact carry the plot, deriving their comic effect and vividness from their roots in the common metaphors of colloquial language, now made absurdly literal and translated into action or visible figures. This becomes clear in two examples: in *Acharnians* (187–202), Aristophanes plays on the ambiguity of the word σπονδαί, which signifies both the ritual of libation, made when contracts are concluded, as well as,

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2 Translation by Most 2006, 149; cf. West 1978, 344 ff.

3 *Audacter calumniare, semper aliquid haeret* (Tosi 2017, nos. 1 and 2; Kudla 2021, no. 3143).

per synecdoche, the agreement itself that the libation concludes.[4] When pleas for peace fall on deaf ears in the popular assembly and the comic hero Dicaeopolis concludes one for himself and his family through his negotiator Amphitheos, then, the treaty can thus have a specific age, just as wine does: it can last five, ten, or even thirty years, just as wine ages. And just as the quality of wine improves over time, the longest-lasting peace treaty is by far the best (180–202). When Amphitheos — pursued by the ferocious charcoal burners of Acharnae attempting to prevent the conclusion of peace — brings the σπονδαί with him in the form of wineskins, both peace and those threatening it are made material. It becomes clear that it is the Acharnians who would like to hinder it, while, on the other hand, Peace is rendered appealing and delicious in a way familiar to everybody in the theatre. This example serves as a typical demonstration of the way that Aristophanes uses metaphor. Metaphor thus sets into motion the process that allows the play to explore conflict, and the tension between war and peace is rendered not only rational, but also part of a sensual and emotional process based on shared sensory experience.[5] The Acharnians have caught the scent of the wine (179) and, like the Erinyes in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* pursuing the trail of Orestes' blood, they track the scent of the peace offering. This sensual dimension, which turns on the ambiguity of the term σπονδαί, is developed further as Dicaeopolis holds a wine tasting, sampling the different vintages that Amphitheus offers: the five-year-old wine tastes of bad luck and new ships, namely of war. The ten-year-old one has the flavour of sluggish negotiations with allies, and therefore is acidic like vinegar. Only the thirty-year-old wine is spared: it tastes of nectar and ambrosia rather than military commands. It is also crucial that the wine is appropriate to the Dionysian context in which the Lenaea was celebrated, early in the year. The peasant Dicaeopolis, upon tasting the thirty-year-old wine, bursts out in the delighted exclamation "Dionysian!" and announces that he would, after ending the war and all its evils, return to his home village to celebrate the local Dionysian festival (201 ff.).

The connection between metaphorical language and the visualisation of the abstract becomes even clearer in the personification of *Clouds*, a play concerning the impact of the sophists on the traditional education of Athenian youth.[6] This happens on several levels. The plot shows how the Athenian citizen with the

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4 Newiger 1957, 104–106. On the technique of literalised and enlivened metaphors in Aristophanes' works, see also the chapter by Ioannis M. Konstantakos in this volume.

5 Tension simultaneously builds as to how the Chorus of wild Acharnians will perform and what the conflict with Dicaeopolis will be; cf. Konstantakos 2021, 199.

6 Cf. Newiger 1957, 50–74.

speaking name Strepsiades, "Distorter" — in fact "Distorter of Law" as it turns out — is destroyed through his own fault and due to the influence of the sophist teacher Socrates. His *oikos* and family are ruined, and his own son beats him before demonstrating, with his education in Socratic argumentation, that he is entirely right to do so. The contrast between the old, traditional education and its modern, sophistic counterpart, which underlies the whole piece as its basic tension, is made clear in the central portion, in the *agon* between the two personified *Logoi* (889 ff.).[7] The two *Logoi*, which in this form probably belong to the second, revised version of the *Clouds*,[8] are not as lifelike as the other personifications of Aristophanes. Their appearance is confined to a small portion of the text, does not develop logically from the action, and, above all, the two *Logoi* do not have their roots in a metaphorical manner of speech which would lend the scene a colourful background. This may have been different in the first version of *Clouds*. The Scholion VE at verse 889 reports that in the earlier version the two *Logoi* were brought onto the stage in cages and fought like roosters in a cockfight. The surviving text, the revised version, contains no such references to a cockfight. It is therefore reasonable to assume that in the first version the *agon* was designed in the manner of a cockfight or that cockfight metaphors were used — probably by the Chorus — to describe the confrontation.[9] In the absence of metaphorical imagery in the version passed down to us, the scene of the epirrhematic *agon* approaches a discussion between two allegorical forms, such as we see in the discussion between Penia and Plutus, Poverty and Wealth[10] — a discussion that is perhaps even inspired by the allegory of Heracles at the crossroads, which goes back to the sophist Prodicus.

The rhetorical, and thus rather dry for a comedy, in fact even uncomedic character of the two *Logoi* is clearly evident in comparison with another personification of the play, namely the Clouds that form the Chorus. As Socrates explains to an astonished Strepsiades (252 ff.), the Clouds are tutelary deities of all intellectuals (330–334, σοφισταί), be they seers or physicians, dithyramb poets or young people from a good family who are in the habit of staying in the orbit of the sophists. By introducing Clouds as the tutelary deities of intellectuals, Aristophanes succeeds in making everything that is associated with intellectuals in public opinion intensely visible. The metaphors behind the identity of the Chorus of *Clouds* are still used today — at least in the German language — to characterise

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7 Cf. Newiger 1957, 134–155.
8 On the two versions of the *Logoi*, see Olson 2021, 2–5; Torchio 2021, 11–38.
9 Dover 1968, 95.
10 Cf. Newiger 1957, 155–178; Torchio 2021, 39–43.

intellectuals: they "take flight" like clouds, or they hover above the ground of reality, as Socrates does at the opening of the play. Intellectuals are, like clouds, "untouchable", they cannot be grasped or understood. They constantly change their opinions, like clouds do their appearances. And intellectuals can have a seductive influence, as the personified Clouds do to poor Strepsiades. The fact that these symbols of sophistry ultimately turn out to be quasi Aeschylian deities, in that their seduction of the comic hero accords with the motto πάθει μάθος, "knowledge through suffering", is the surprise that Aristophanes saves for shortly before the end of the comedy. A personification can therefore remain an exciting riddle or present the viewer with a subsequent puzzle, even after the first seems to have been solved. But it should never be forgotten that in comedy a primary tension is often created by enigmatic identities.[11]

A particular form of personification occurs in the person of Socrates in *Clouds*. It is clear that Aristophanes does not bring a "real" Socrates onto the stage here, in that he does not create a likeness of the historical man Socrates of 423 BCE. Rather, the Socrates character represents all those who are under the special protection of the cloud goddesses, i.e. the entire group of intellectuals at the time of the performance.[12] While the Clouds illustrate the characteristics of intellectuals generally, Socrates acts as a generic intellectual on the stage — just as Lamachus in *Acharnians* represents the whole group of those who advocate war and seek profit.

2 Dithyrambic poetry in metaphor and personification

Using the example of the scene of the poet and Kinesias in *Birds* (904–957, 1372–1409), a second stage of this study will now illustrate how Aristophanes explores the possibilities of making the abstract visible with the help of personification and metaphorical dramatisation. The anonymous poet (Ποιητής) represents the type of poet who works on commission, *à la* Simonides and Pindar, and who, as he proudly emphasises, composes dithyrambs, partheneia, and songs in the manner of Simonides (919, μέλη κατὰ τὰ Σιμωνίδου). He is thus an old-school choral lyricist who has mastered the craft and is at home in all choral and occasional genres. In order to secure Peisetaerus' permission to enter the newly

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11 Cf. Konstantakos 2021, 196.

12 Zimmermann 1993, 260–267; Olson 2021, 5–7.

founded Cloudcuckooland, the beggar poet offers — Hipponax is certainly the model[13] — Pindaric verse interspersed with Homeric and lyric set pieces.[14] Not because he is overwhelmed by the poet's skill, but simply to get rid of his irritating presence (931, 940), Peisetaerus presents him with a cloak and asks him to flee.

Kinesias, the representative of modern choral poetry influenced by sophistry, fares quite differently. The son of the citharode Meles,[15] he was a dithyrambic poet and politician active from 425–390 BCE. At the beginning of the fourth century, a Chorus directed by him won a victory at the Dionysia (*IG* II² 3028). As a city council member, he introduced a resolution to honour the Syracusan tyrant Dionysius I (*IG* II² 18). He also accused a certain Phanias of criminal action. In his defense of Phanias, Lysias (fr. 195.1 Carey) accuses Kinesias of impiety and of belonging to an obscure club of κακοδαιμονισταί who had mocked the gods and despised the laws. In comedy, he is regularly ridiculed for physical abnormalities, thinness, and incontinence.[16] Whether the husband of Myrrhine in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* (838–979), also named Kinesias, is to be equated with the dithyrambic poet is unclear, but he may be the same man.[17] In the list of the rapists of Music in Pherecrates' *Cheiron* (fr. 155.8–12),[18] he is attacked for having "twisted" everything in his dithyrambic compositions. The epithet "Chorus killer", which Strattis gives him in his comedy *Kinesias* (fr. 16), indicates that Kinesias almost "killed" the dithyrambic Choruses with his compositions, since they were not danceable.[19] Exactly the same point is made when Kinesias is addressed in the *Birds* (1379): "Why are you dragging around the dithyrambic circle with your clubfoot?" (τί δεῦρο πόδα σὺ κυλλὸν ἀνὰ κύκλον κυκλεῖς;). The compositions of the dithyrambic poet are thus represented as so twisted and crazy that they are in fact impossible to dance, so that one could even get the impression that the Chorus members are clubfooted.[20]

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13 On v. 935, cf. the commentary of Dunbar 1995, 535 ff.
14 On this, see Zimmermann 1985b, 55–58; Dunbar 1995, 520–540.
15 Cf. Pherecrates fr. 6; Pl. *Grg.* 502a.
16 Cf. Ar. *Ran.* 366, 1437; *Eccl.* 328–330; fr. 156.10; Plato Com. fr. 200.
17 Cf. Kidd 2014, 87–117.
18 On this issue, see Restani 1983; M. Napolitano in Franchini 2020, 242–294.
19 Cf. Orth 2009, 108–115.
20 On this interpretation of the verses, see Dunbar 1995, 667–668; Zimmermann 1995, 125 ff.; Zimmermann 2008, 117–120.

In verses 1383–1390, Kinesias describes his dithyrambic art:

Κι.   ὑπὸ σοῦ πτερωθεὶς βούλομαι μετάρσιος
         ἀναπτόμενος ἐκ τῶν νεφελῶν καινὰς λαβεῖν
         ἀεροδονήτους καὶ νιφοβόλους ἀναβολάς.
Πε.   ἐκ τῶν νεφελῶν γὰρ ἄν τις ἀναβολὰς λάβοι;
Κι.   κρέμαται μὲν οὖν ἐντεῦθεν ἡμῶν ἡ τέχνη.
         τῶν διθυράμβων γὰρ τὰ λαμπρὰ γίγνεται
         ἀέρια καὶ σκοτεινὰ καὶ κυαναυγέα
         καὶ πτεροδόνητα.

Ki.   I want wings from you, to fly on high and snatch from the clouds fresh preludes air-
         propelled and snow-swept.
Pe.   You're saying you can snatch preludes from the clouds?
Ki.   Why, our whole art depends on them! In dithyrambs the dazzling bits are airy,
         dusky, darkly flashing, wing-propelled.

The art of the dithyrambic thus lives in the clouds, and poets soar up to them for new ideas and inspirations (cf. *Peace* 828–831). Indeed, the poetry itself has all the qualities of clouds: it is something airy, intangible, and floating, and can also be dark and difficult to see through.[21] As in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, then, the Chorus symbolises all those who, in Newiger's words, "confuse people by throwing blue mist before their eyes, including especially the orators" ("zu denen vor allem die Redekünstler, die den Leuten blauen Dunst vormachen, gehören").[22] In *Birds*, the art of the dithyrambic poets is described as something ethereal and intangible, which is removed from normal life, through the air and cloud metaphors. The dithyrambic poets, like the teachers of rhetoric and the sophists, are windy characters who "throw mist before people's eyes".

A comparison of the metaphors used in *Clouds* and *Birds* makes clear that the two groups — rhetors and sophists on the one hand and dithyrambicists on the other — can be seen as parallel to each other. Socrates pursues his thoughts while floating in the air (225, ἀεροβατῶ καὶ περιφρονῶ τὸν ἥλιον; cf. also 1503), while the dithyrambic poet receives inspiration for his poems (ἀναβολαί) in the same region. The Clouds are the nurturing deities not only of the sophists and soothsayers, but also of the dithyramb poets (333 ff., κυκλίων τε χορῶν ἀσματοκάμπτας, ἄνδρας μετεωροφένακας, / οὐδὲν δρῶντας βόσκουσ᾽ ἀργούς, ὅτι ταύτας μουσοποοῦσιν). The poetry of the dithyrambic poet is therefore something

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21 Cf. Newiger 1957, 90.
22 Newiger 1957, 74.

insubstantial and windy (1384, ἀεροδονήτους), something that constantly changes shape and remains elusive.[23]

A second quality is also closely related to the airy nature of the dithyrambs: their darkness (σκοτεινά). The cloud metaphor is maintained in this sense as well. Clouds can be dark and inscrutable, as can the dithyrambs, containing the inscrutable and incomprehensible. A further characterisation is found in the adjective νιφοβόλος, "whipped by snow", a poetic expression for the rhetorical term ψυχρός, "cold" or "lifeless". Aristophanes already used the image of "coldness" for uninspired poetry radiating lifelessness in *Acharnians*, where he associated the tragic poet Theognis, notorious for his "coldness", with snowstorms and the freezing cold in Thrace: just when everything in Thrace was suffering from freezing cold, Theognis was performing his plays in Athens (138–140).[24] Additionally, they are καιναί, "new", since the poet always has to offer something new to the client. A second meaning of καινός also resonates in this context: these works are modern and innovative, since the author breaks new ground in the composition of dithyrambs.

The sensual dimension of Aristophanes' metaphors is on display again in the metaphorical use of the adjective ψυχρός: the coldness of Theognis' and Kinesias' poetry can be experienced almost physically.[25] The samples of his art that Kinesias then offers (1392–1400) fully illustrate what is new in dithyrambic poetry: the dithyrambs of the modern poets are concerned with the essential sound of words, full of associative leaps, and are characterised by an accumulation of adjectives. Any meaning recedes behind the beautiful sound and impressive combinations of words and coinages, especially of adjectives.[26]

The Kinesias scene of *Birds* deftly combines the two comic techniques of personification which is closely related to the ὀνομαστὶ κωμῳδεῖν, and of metaphorical dramatisation. A well-known figure, the politician and dithyrambic poet Kinesias, represents a whole group, in this case the community of modern choral poets influenced by sophistry. The Kinesias scene gains significantly more weight

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23 Cf. Newiger 1957, 58.

24 Cf. Olson 2002, 116.

25 Regarding the adjective ψυχρός, it can also be understood how metaphors become rhetorical *termini technici*. Aristotle discusses in *Rhetoric* (1405b 34–1406b 14) the adjective ψυχρός as "the result of excessive use of compound words, odd vocabulary, peculiar epithets, and strained metaphors" (Olson 2002, 116).

26 Cf. here also Palumbo Stracca 2015, 17. I would emphasise that in Zimmermann 1985a, 80 ff. I already highlighted the pastiche character of the hoopoe monody of *Birds*. The "paradox" that Aristophanes simultaneously uses the achievements of New Music, even while criticising them, is entirely resolvable, as I have pointed out (Zimmermann 2012, 202 ff.).

in that Aristophanes allows an anonymous representative of traditional choral poetry to appear through the figure of the Poietes. This beggar poet irritates the comic hero and receives a cloak; but in the case of Kinesias, Peisetaerus even becomes violent in order to finally be rid of him (1402), "the poet who is courted by all the community" (1403 ff.).

The dramatic use of metaphor has a double face in the Kinesias scene. The dithyrambic poet soars into the air to reach Cloudcuckooland and asks Peisetaerus for wings so that he may find further artistic inspiration in the realm of the Clouds (1385 ff.).[27] Aristophanes thus uses the metaphor of "floating" or "being lifted off" or the absence of any connection to the earth, to characterise the nature of contemporary dithyrambic composition. Simultaneously, he allows Kinesias to explain dithyrambic poetry in terms of literary theory, using cloud metaphors as poetic and rhetorical terms. We thus stand on the threshold where metaphorical language begins to develop into literary, specialised, rhetorical and poetic terminology — with the result that the image fades and theory comes to the fore.

3 Cratinus, Pherecrates and personified art

As this study has shown, Aristophanes has three separate ways of bringing abstract concepts onto the stage. First, he may use metaphor, taking an image literally and bringing it to life as a prop or in action. Second, he sometimes introduces personifications as *dramatis personae* which form a considerable part of the comic action (e.g. Demos in *Knights* or the Choruses of *Wasps* or *Clouds*). Finally, he can strip a real, well-known person of his individuality to render him a representative of a certain group, and thus a personification of characteristics and behaviours ascribed to that group. This last group is numerous in Aristophanes' oeuvre: Lamachus represents warmongers and profiteers, Socrates the intellectuals, Euripides poetry influenced by sophistry, Kinesias dithyrambic poets, and so on. While the first two methods of rendering ideas concrete are not tied to any particular time period, personification using a real person anchors the comic plot to the specific date of the performance and thus makes clear the political relevance of the comedy in question to the *polis* at that point in time.

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27 Cf. Ar. *Pax* 828–831: at his heavenly council, Trygaeus also meets the souls of some dithyrambic poets who found their "wind-swept musical inspirations" in the lofty realms (ἀναβολάς ... τὰς εὐδιαεριαυρινηχέτους τινάς).

The cases examined thus far, which in some points have expanded on Newiger's conclusions regarding metaphor and allegory, are based on Aristophanes, and therefore cannot claim to represent all forms and functions of personification and the dramatisation of metaphor in fifth-century comedy. Research in recent years has demonstrated that comic poets engaged in a constant agonal dialogue, adopting, altering, and developing the themes and techniques of their rivals to win the audience's favour. Therefore, there were probably similar elements in other comic poets, but it is also probable that each poet also employed unique techniques.

If we consider Aristophanes' older rival, Cratinus, we discover a similar type of personification to what Aristophanes employs, and to a much greater extent: namely, his Choruses often represent a particular spirit, be it political or cultural. A defining characteristic of the Choruses of Cratinus seems to be that they often embody a certain cultural tendency, or else followers, friends, or companions of a certain person. A few examples suffice to illustrate this tendency: in *Archilochoi*, they are Archilochus and his followers; in *Odysses*, Odysseus and his companions; in *Kleoboulinai*, Kleoboulina and her friends; in *Cheirones*, the centaur Cheiron and his companions; in *Dionysoi*, the god Dionysus and his entourage. Regarding *Cheirones* (concerning the centaur Cheiron, Achilles' tutor, and his companions),[28] a play which Cratinus emphatically claims to have laboured intensively to write (πόνος, fr. 255),[29] Hesiod certainly serves as a background influence (*Theog.* 1001; frr. 40.2 and 204.87 M.-W.), and especially the *Precepts of Cheiron* (Χείρωνος ὑποθῆκαι, cf. fr. 253 M.-W.), a didactic poem attributed to Hesiod which was used as a school text in the fifth century.[30] In keeping with the character of the Chorus, the comedy seems not only to have dealt with the decay of political culture, but — similarly to Aristophanes' *Frogs* or Pherecrates' *Cheiron* — also with the decline of musical education (frr. 247, 248, and 254).[31] The character of Solon returns to the world of the living as a representative of the good old days (ἐπὶ Κρόνου, fr. 246),[32] standing as the antithesis of the character of Pericles. The latter is represented as the son of Stasis, domestic warfare, who, together with Hera/Aspasia as the daughter of immorality and lasciviousness (καταπυγοσύνη),[33]

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28 On the orthography of Χειρ- or Χιρ-, cf. the introduction to the play in Kassel/Austin 1983–2001, IV 245.

29 Schwarze 1971, 55–64.

30 Cf. West 1966, 430. On the school text, see Schmid 1929, 287 ff.

31 On the political content, see Farioli 2000, 406–431.

32 It remains unclear whether he opened the piece as the speaker of the prologue, or whether he was called out of the underworld (by the Chorus?) or returned to Athens in its company.

33 On personification in Hesiod, see West 1966, 33 ff.

rules over a city torn apart by party struggles (frr. 258 and 259). The Chorus, borrowed from the myth, thus stands, as is the case in *Wasps* and *Clouds*, for a new cultural movement — the old *paideia*, embodied by the centaur Cheiron — against which the decay of education of the present is contrasted. Similarly, in the *Archilochoi* ("Archilochus and his Companions") the theme of *paideia* in music may have been linked to politics, a tension which could likewise lead to a clash between different positions — Archilochus and his followers on the one hand and a group of modern poets on the other.[34]

A look at the *Poetae Comici Graeci* demonstrates that a comedy like *Archilochoi* was not the exception in the fifth century. Judging by the title, the *Hesiodoi* of Telecleides (before 429 BCE) may have been a comedy concerning poetic practice, like Cratinus' *Archilochoi*.[35] In it, the tragedians Nothippus (fr. 17) and Philocles, who assumes an Aeschylian attitude (fr. 15; cf. fr. 31), are deemed "bad" poets. It is possible that an *agon* took place between poets, with the participation of the personified Poetry or Tragedy. Nor was personal mockery absent (fr. 12, Pericles; fr. 16, Androcles). Conflict dealing closely with the genre of tragedy is attested in frr. 41 and 42, where Mnesilochus and Socrates are named as co-authors of Euripides.[36]

The last comedy of Cratinus, *Pytine* ("The bottle") — the 423 BCE play with which Cratinus achieved a victory over the *Clouds* of Aristophanes that the younger comedian never got over — was probably full of personification. In this piece, the older poet unveils his aesthetic programme in direct confrontation with his younger rival[37] — and unmistakably makes himself the comic hero of the play.

The Scholion to Aristophanes' *Knights* 400a (*Pytine* test. ii) conveys the essential points of the plot of the play:[38] enraged by Aristophanes' characterisation of him as an old drunkard past his prime as a poet in the previous year's parabasis of *Knights* (531–536), Cratinus — although he had already retired from the business of writing — took up the pen again in a comedy about himself and his own drunkenness (μέθη). Cratinus thus represents himself as the husband of the personified Comedy,[39] who wants to end their relationship and accuses him of abuse (κακώσεως). Frr. 193–196 are Comedy's own accusation, and fr. 197 Cratinus'

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34 The reconstruction of the plot is controversial, see the discussion in Zimmermann 2011, 727.

35 Schwarze 1971, 94–96; Bagordo 2013, 117–138.

36 See Patzer 1994, 51–55; cf. Kallias fr. 15.

37 Cf. Ruffell 2002; Olson 2007, 80–87.

38 For possible reconstructions of the play, see the note on the testimonia and fragments in Kassel/Austin 1983–2001, IV 219–232, as well as Schmid 1946, 85; Heath 1990, 148–151; Ruffell 2002, 156–158; Bakola 2010, 59–64.

39 See Hall 2000, 410–412.

reply. Friends arrive and ask Cratinus not to rush things, and inquire about the causes of the quarrel with his wife Comedy. She reproaches him for no longer spending time with her, but instead with Methe, the personified drunkenness. The fragments do not reveal whether Methe faced Comedy or whether Cratinus was forced to choose between the two women in the role of Heracles at the cross-roads.[40] But in any case, Drunkenness (Methe), whether appearing onstage in personified form or not, is also conceived of as a person, like Comedy. The friends discuss how they can cure Cratinus of his drunkenness (fr. 199) and only find one solution: to smash all the drinking cups. Cratinus seems to have yielded (fr. 200) and agreed to abstain from wine. But his plaintive address to his empty, cobweb-defaced cup (fr. 202) suggests that his abstinence will not last long. The fragments permit two possible resolutions of the crisis: one possibility would be that the spouses are reconciled. Alternatively, a perhaps more comedic solution would be if Cratinus, after first letting himself be taught better (similarly to Philocleon in Aristophanes' *Wasps*), eventually falls back into his old vice in even greater extremes of Dionysian exuberance.

Which of the two interpretations is correct depends on the interpretation of fr. 198, in which the elemental power that gushes out of his verses and songs is described, and fr. *203 ("If you drink water, you will never produce anything clever!").[41] Central to the plot is whether, in the *agon*, Cratinus defends his wine-inspired poetry, or whether in the exodos he has abandoned all good intentions and returned to drunkenness. The second solution would fit better to the general poetic technique of the piece. Just as Aristophanes' *Frogs* discusses the right way to write a tragedy, the *Pytine* — probably in the *agon* — seems to have centered on the craft of the comic poet (frr. 208 and 209). In the classroom scene, as we know it from the Aristophanic *Clouds* and *Wasps*, Comedy gives instructions to Cratinus.

In the *Pytine*, Cratinus engages in direct confrontation with Aristophanes by putting forth both friendly and biting characterisations, reworking representations which his rival bestowed on him in *Acharnians* (848–853) and above all in the parabasis of the *Knights* (526–536). Many men — according to Aristophanes in *Knights* (517) — have already propositioned Comedy, but only a few have been kind to her.[42] According to Cratinus' response in *Pytine*, he has nothing to do with

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40 See Heath 1990, 150.

41 With an even clearer Dionysian reference in Epicharmus fr. 131, οὐκ ἔστι διθύραμβος, ὅκχ' ὕδωρ πίῃς. This in turn resonates significantly with Archilochus fr. 120 West; cf. Conti Bizzarro 1999, 73–79.

42 On interpreting πειρᾶσθαι with an erotic connotation, see Henderson 1991, 158: "Comedy visualized as an *hetaera* at whom poets make passes".

the poets as variously successful lovers of the difficult, capricious Comedy; rather, he shares a conjugal relationship with Comedy.[43] He abandoned her for another woman, Methe, of his own free will, and now Comedy is fighting to win him back as her husband. The old man whom Aristophanes mocked in *Knights* as a living corpse is thus still the object of intense female attraction. In the image of his poetry as animated by a massive elemental force capable of sweeping away everything in its path and destroying the opponents, which Aristophanes portrayed in *Knights* (527 ff.), Cratinus in *Pytine* develops a theme of Dionysian poetics based on Archilochus. The image of wine resembles that of Archilochus fr. 120 West (ὡς Διωνύσου ἄνακτος καλὸν ἐξάρξαι μέλος / οἶδα διθύραμβον οἴνῳ συγκεραυνωθεὶς φρένας), as a metaphor for divine inspiration.[44] Fr. 198, which describes the power of Cratinus' words and characterises them as flooding and sweeping everything away, reproduces Aristophanes' judgement even on the level of vocabulary.[45] Archilochus becomes the main reference point of Cratinus' comedic poetry, representing both Dionysian inspiration and scathing personal mockery.[46] In addition to the Dionysian metaphor συγκεραυνοῦν (fr. 199.4), there is a word-for-word quotation from Archilochus in fr. 211 (= fr. 109 West).[47] Fragments 208, 209, 212, 214, and 215, meanwhile, show that the comedy was peppered with personal mockery, with Aristophanes also receiving criticism for stealing ideas from Eupolis (fr. 213). One could almost say that Cratinus, provoked by Aristophanes' mockery, revives the two dominant elements of his comic poetry, the Dionysian[48] and the satirical, in his last comedy. However, he does not do this in the form of a performative speech — for example in an *agon* or parabasis — but rather by

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43 Cf. Hall 2000, 411 ff.

44 The Dionysian verb συγκεραυνοῦν, "to strike with lightning", is found in fr. 199.4. Rosen (2000, 35) assumes that there will be an eventual reconciliation between Cratinus and Comedy; while Cratinus would reduce his wine consumption, he would not give it up entirely; this view is contrary to that of Dionysian poetry developed here.

45 Cf. Ar. *Eq.* 526, πολλῷ ῥεύσας ποτ' ἐπαίνῳ; Cratinus fr. 198.1, τῶν ἐπῶν τοῦ ῥεύματος. Cf. Zimmermann 2010, 53–61.

46 Rotstein 2010, 281–346.

47 In any case, it is entirely possible that πολῖται, stemming from Archilochus, has intruded into Cratinus' fragment; cf. Kugelmeier 1996, 171 ff.

48 The Dionysiac element is already clear in the titles *Dionysoi*, *Dionysalexandros*, and *Satyroi*. It is possible that *Boukoloi* and *Euneidai* also had Dionysiac content: the old family of the Euneidai included the priest of Dionysus Melpomenos and was responsible for a particular type of Dionysiac cult music, cf. Burkert 2006, 114–116.

converting that poetic programme into a comic stage action playing with metaphors and personifications.[49]

Pherecrates undoubtedly played with similar ambiguities with the female personification in his *Cheiron*, which is undatable but should probably be dated before Cratinus' *Pytine*; the decline of contemporary musical art is the focus of this play. In terms of the age of the speaker, fr. 156 may have been spoken by Achilles' tutor. It is presumably addressed to the Chorus, and the centaur seems to have appeared, as in Cratinus' *Cheirones*, in the role attributed to him by the didactic poem *Precepts of Cheiron* (Χείρωνος ὑποθῆκαι).[50] Of particular interest for the history of the dithyramb and the "New Music" is the extensive text (fr. 155) handed down by Pseudo-Plutarch in *De musica*, which may have come from the prologue. In it, the personified Music, abused on every part of her body, complains to the personified Justice about the tortures inflicted on her by the representatives of the New Dithyramb and the New Music (Melanippides, Kinesias, Phrynis, Timotheus, Philoxenus).[51] Pherecrates plays with sexual ambiguities throughout; the musical innovations of the avant-gardists, which were intended above all to make their compositions richer and more varied, are described as the rape of the incarnated Music.

4 Conclusion

This sampling of the works of Aristophanes and of his rivals, even in their fragmentary state, suffices to demonstrate that personification in its various forms was one of the central techniques of Old Comedy. The plot structure of fifth-century comedy drives this tendency, which will disappear in the course of the fourth century until the time of Menander. The plays of Old Comedy, in contrast, are usually based on a "critical idea" that occurs to the protagonist. In light of his criticism of the rampant wrongs going on in the *polis*, he develops a fantastical counter-model to remedy the abuse. Playwrights prefer not to leave the abuse that is being criticised, or indeed the criticism itself, in the vacuum of abstraction. Instead, they render it both visible and understandable, in accordance with the

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49 The *Didaskaliai* may also have featured implicit poetics and self-referentiality, if one assumes with Kaibel (Kassel/Austin 1983–2001, IV 139) that Cratinus introduced his individual pieces as a (probably personified) Chorus, forming a kind of career overview.
50 Schmid 1946, 106.
51 The fragment has been discussed in detail from a music-historical viewpoint by Restani 1983, 130–159; cf. Hall 2000, 414 ff.; Henderson 2000, 143.

genre of drama and especially comedy. Comic poets of the fifth century thus employed personifications, either as protagonists of the entire play, like Aristophanes in *Knights* or Cratinus in *Pytine*; or as the main characters in a single scene, such as the *Logoi* in Aristophanes' *Clouds*; or in a wealth of associations of metaphors. When the genre of comedy later allows critical analyses of contemporary events to recede into the background, the personifications and metaphors that animate it eventually disappear from the plays.

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Ioannis M. Konstantakos

Imaginary Wor(l)ds: Comic Language and the Construction of Fantasy

Abstract: The poets of Old Comedy applied various linguistic and stylistic methods to construct secondary fictitious worlds in their dramas. Grotesque composite names, which reveal the mythopoeic function of comic fantasy, were assigned to invented utopian states. The technique of verbal and phrasal accumulation was employed to depict alternative worlds of fabulous wealth and gastronomic abundance. Aristophanes resorted to the scenic materialisation of linguistic metaphors and proverbial expressions, in order to highlight the surreal nature of his mythopoeia. Pherecrates, in his comedy *Krapataloi*, may have invented an imaginary language for the inhabitants of the legendary society of the underworld. Above all, wordplays, especially of the type based on homonymy, homophony, and ambiguous or polysemous words, were used to give rise to the genesis of the fantastic world *per se*, and also conditioned the formation of many of its individual aspects, from civic institutions and administration to demography and political life.

1 The languages of literary fantasy

As J.R.R. Tolkien pointed out in his seminal essay on fairy-stories, the writer of fantastic tales is a creator of another world — or, rather, a "sub-creator", a lower-order imitator of God, the one and only true Creator. The story-writer invents a "secondary world", in other words, an alternative universe parallel to the reality of our common experience, an imaginary space-time which operates according to its own internal laws. Inside this delimited second-degree *cosmos*, anything that the author relates is "true", provided that it happens according to the system of this world's rules.[1] The writer of fantasy must strive to achieve the "inner consistency of reality" for his secondary world.[2] He needs to concretely invent and design virtually every aspect of his imaginary universe, down to the tiniest details: from the natural order, physical layout, and material conditions of the *cosmos*

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1 J.R.R. Tolkien, "On Fairy-Stories", originally delivered as a lecture at the University of St. Andrews in 1939: Tolkien 1983, 138–147. On the concepts of "sub-creation" and the "secondary world", which are central in Tolkien's view of fantastic fiction, see Phelpstead 2014, 86–90.
2 Tolkien 1983, 139–140.

to its inhabitants and creatures, populations and races, flora and fauna, and further to its socio-cultural formations, its realms and cities, nations and societies, history and civilisations, and generally all the components of the people's ordinary life, public activity, and private experience. If the story-writer succeeds in constructing the secondary world in such fullness, he will have carried out a true achievement of art. The narration of fantasy, in this perspective, is "story-making in its primary and most potent mode".[3] Thus, the successful author of fantastic literature becomes a disciple of the real Maker; he replicates, as far as is permitted to mortals, the original and genuine act of Creation.

The invention of every aspect of the secondary world includes, among many other elements, the languages spoken by the world's intelligent residents, the various tribes, nations, or other collectivities of speech-endowed dwellers that inhabit the sub-created *cosmos*. Ideally, at least, the author must have set out, in his mind and in his text, the native tongues of the populations of his world, their peculiar nature, sound-pattern, history, distribution, and interrelations. In the annals of world literature, there is one author who actually worked out the various individual languages of the inhabitants of his fantastic universe in full detail, as freestanding and operational systems of linguistic expression, complete with their grammatical paradigms, morphological and syntactic rules, etymological roots, derivation mechanisms, and their place in overarching family trees of languages. This was J.R.R. Tolkien, the sub-creator of Middle-Earth and of its sundry races of living beings.[4]

Mostly in the earlier part of his creative years, from the mid-1910s to the late 1930s, Tolkien composed (in full or in outline) more than a dozen fictitious languages ("art-languages", as he called them), which were eventually distributed among the populations of his vast imaginary universe, throughout its multi-millennial history. In a celebrated essay, Tolkien described his "secret habit" of inventing languages and defined the crucial role that this habit played with regard to the development of his mythopoeia, the fabrication of his fictional world, and ultimately the writing of his novels and stories.[5] As he states, the making of language ("glossopoeia") is closely intertwined with the creation of a mythology (mythopoeia); for the perfect construction of an invented language, it is

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3 Tolkien 1983, 140.

4 On this fundamental aspect of Tolkien's creative art, the invention of languages in the context of fantastic mythopoeia, see Flieger 2002, 67–95; Drout 2007, 332–344; Smith 2007, 3–23, 81–112; Weiner/Marshall 2011; Smith 2014; Fimi/Higgins 2016, xvi–xxx.

5 See the essay entitled "A Secret Vice", written around 1932: Tolkien 1983, 198–223; Fimi/Higgins 2016, 1–59.

necessary to devise, at least in outline, a mythical concomitant. In practice, once the art-language is designed, it will breed a suitable mythology for itself.[6] In his personal correspondence, writing in a more informal context, Tolkien went so far as to declare that his entire fictional oeuvre was "fundamentally linguistic in inspiration": the invention of languages was the foundation; the stories were generated subsequently and secondarily, to provide a context, a "world" for the languages to exist in.[7] Having composed a fictitious tongue, for reasons of linguistic exercise and pure aesthetic pleasure, Tolkien proceeded, at a second stage, to imagine the people who would be the speakers of this language, and to set out their history, culture, and myths. In the beginning was the word.

Very few, if any, subsequent writers have advanced thus far in drawing up entire systems of artificial languages. Most authors, both before and after Tolkien, have restricted themselves to a much more moderate scale of invention.[8] A special case is presented by certain dystopian fictions set in a dark and pessimistic vision of the future. The language of the societies depicted in these works is usually based on an existing modern language, such as English. The author develops the common spoken language into a weird direction, introduces strange innovations and mutations in its structure and vocabulary, and ends up with a distorted and unfamiliar version of it, which suits particular social and cultural aspects of the bleak future world.

George Orwell, in his famous novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (published in 1949), introduced Newspeak, the official language of the totalitarian state of Oceania. Newspeak is a perversely simplified form of basic English, with limited vocabulary, curtailed semantics, many artificial contractions and abbreviations, and extensive use of prefixes and suffixes to indicate all kinds of grammatical variation.[9] Analogously, Anthony Burgess, in his novel *A Clockwork Orange* (1962), developed Nadsat, an argot used by delinquent teenagers in the novel's dystopian city. Nadsat consists in English with numerous Russian loan words and various borrowings and influences from Cockney rhyme, demotic slang, Shakespearean

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6 Tolkien 1983, 210–213.

7 Tolkien 1981, 219–220, from a letter to Houghton Mifflin Co., Tolkien's American publishers, dated June 30, 1955. Cf. Shippey 2003, 116–117; Smith 2007, 17–19, 127–129; Weiner/Marshall 2011, 96–98; Smith 2014, 202–203; Fimi/Higgins 2016, xi–xvi.

8 For comprehensive surveys of the fictitious languages appearing in world fiction, see Lo Bianco 2004; Barnes/van Heerden 2006; Stockwell 2006; Smith 2007, 93–106; Cheyne 2008. An analytical *catalogue raisonné* is provided in the encyclopaedia of Conley/Cain 2006.

9 On Orwell's Newspeak, see Wicker 1962; Courtine 1986; Conley/Cain 2006, 136–138; Jackson 2011, 50–64; Noletto/Teixeira Lopes 2018, 1–9, 13–15.

style, and archaic linguistic registers.[10] Cases such as Newspeak and Nadsat do not constitute truly invented languages. Rather, they represent strange and unconventional adaptations of common speech to a fictional context, with a view to bringing about an irregular and alienating effect.[11]

Other writers confined themselves to making up only some words, phrases, or at most a few structural elements of the imagined tongues of their narrative worlds. This practice can be traced back to the dawn of the modern age and seems to have originated in the early phases of European travel fiction. Some authors of imaginative travelogues and utopian romances composed short specimens of the languages which they placed on the lips of the fictional populations of the faraway countries they described. Thomas More's illustrious *Utopia* (1516) is prefaced with a poetic quatrain written in the language of the fantastic land of the title, a phonetic concoction apparently based on Latin, Greek, and Persian. The main narrative is also interlaced with several names of institutions, offices, customs, and geographical landmarks of the Utopian land, which follow analogous principles of derivation from the Greek and other ancient languages.[12] Jonathan Swift, in his satirical novel *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), included sundry samples from the fictitious tongues of the places visited by the hero, such as Lilliput the kingdom of minuscule people, Brobdingnag the land of the giants, and the country of the Houyhnhnms, the intelligent and supremely virtuous speaking horses.[13]

This literary practice flourished especially in the twentieth century, becoming a staple ingredient of fantastic fictions, especially those concerned with the fabrication of imaginary secondary worlds. C.S. Lewis peppered the novels of his space trilogy (*Out of the Silent Planet*, *Perelandra*, and *That Hideous Strength*, 1938–1945) with numerous words and names of Old Solar, an invented interplanetary language which is presented in the novels as the original speech form of the universe and as the lingua franca used throughout our solar system.[14] Jorge Luis Borges designed a couple of idiosyncratic abstract languages for the fantastic utopias of his short stories; their main characteristic is their austerely selective and restrictive repertoire, which only comprises some of the constituents of common parlance and excludes others, so that the operation of the language recalls the experimental linguistic games of the Oulipo team. In the story "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis

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10 On Burgess' Nadsat, see Evans 1971; Conley/Cain 2006, 28–29; Jackson 2011, 64–72; Noletto/ Torres de Alencar Costa 2017.

11 Cf. Smith 2007, 97–99; Adams 2011, 242–243; Noletto/Torres de Alencar Costa 2017, 259.

12 See Romm 1991; Conley/Cain 2006, 201–203; Noletto/Teixeira Lopes 2019.

13 See Kelling 1951; Clark 1953; Kelly 1978; Conley/Cain 2006, 78–82; Noletto/Teixeira Lopes/ Torres de Alencar Costa 2017.

14 See Bond 1972; Conley/Cain 2006, 143–147.

Tertius" (from the collection *The Garden of Forking Paths*, 1941), the *Ursprache* of the idealistic planet Tlön contains no nouns but only impersonal verbs, modified by suffixes and prefixes which function as adverbs. In this form of speech, everything has to be expressed by means of verbal actions and adverbial relations (e.g. to convey the meaning "the moon rose above the river", the speaker needs to say "upward, behind the onstreaming it mooned"). In another weird tale, "Dr. Brodie's Report" (from the homonymous collection, 1970), the language of the savage Ape-men on the unknown island discovered by the Reverend Dr. David Brodie consists only of consonantal roots conveying a general idea, which is further to be defined in actual communication by the context or by the speaker's facial expressions. For instance, the word *nrz* indicates a dispersion of spots; in practice, it may denote the starry sky, a leopard's skin, a flock of birds, smallpox, a splatter of water or mud, the act of scattering, or an army taking flight after a defeat. Borges usually illustrates these figments of linguistic imagination with a few examples from the original native vocabulary.[15]

Roald Dahl created another fictitious language (commonly known as "gobblefunk") for the tribe of the giants in his novel *The Big Friendly Giant* (1982). He made up and cited almost four hundred words of it, most of them fanciful nouns and names, which recall the portmanteau words and nonsense formations of Lewis Carroll.[16] George R.R. Martin, perhaps the greatest sub-creator of fantastic worlds since Tolkien, mentions about a dozen languages spoken by the populations of the fictional continents Westeros and Essos, the setting of his enormous cycle of novels under the general title *A Song of Ice and Fire* (five books published between 1996 and 2011). For a couple of these languages, such as the native tongue of the nomadic Dothraki tribe or the aristocratic High Valyrian, Martin also wrote down a few words and sentences, which appear interspersed in the texts of his novels.[17] However, he did not elaborate any of these languages to a substantial degree; indeed, none of the aforementioned novelists have attempted such an endeavour, with the single exception of Tolkien.

In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the writers of fiction do not usually move beyond the invention of individual words and phrases of the constructed languages. The development of fictitious tongues as fully-fledged systems is left to specialised professionals, expert linguists and scientists, who are usually hired to work for television shows. The linguist David J. Peterson became

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15 On Borges' linguistic fantasies, see Cordero 1990, 192–194; Conley/Cain 2006, 191–192; Smith 2007, 1–6, 93–94.

16 See Rennie 2016.

17 See Peterson 2015b for a general survey.

famous for developing High Valyrian and the speech of the Dothraki for the tele-
vised series *Game of Thrones* (2011–2019), on the basis of the small number of
words from these languages which were mentioned in George R.R. Martin's nov-
els. He went on to devise other fictional languages for a score of television serials
and films.[18] The pioneer of this kind of activity was the academic Marc Okrand, a
scholar of Native American languages, who fabricated the language of the extra-
terrestrial race of the Klingons for the science fiction franchise *Star Trek* in the
early 1980s.[19] What had been an amateur hobby and "secret vice" for Tolkien is
now turned into a full-time job in show business.

For present-day readers, the images of the fantastic lands of epic legend, sci-
ence fiction, travel literature, or secondary mythology are inextricably connected
with the peculiar sounds of made-up languages, the emblematic slogans and
mottos placed on the lips of the various peoples which inhabit the vast continents
of the imagination. "Ash nazg durbatulûk, ash nazg gimbatul", "Valar morghu-
lis, valar dohaeris", "phizz-whizzing", "Hekinah degul", "hlör u fang axaxaxas
mlö" — these phrases have entered the collective literary imaginary, and their
mere mention calls to mind the worlds of fiction for which they have been cre-
ated. Invented language has become a valuable tool in the hands of the writer of
fantasy, one of the building blocks for the construction of fictitious universes.

What has all this to do with ancient Greek literature? The development of im-
aginary languages in a fictional context is a phenomenon of modernity, rarely
encountered before the twentieth century, impossible to trace before the Renais-
sance. There seems to have been no equivalent in the literary production of the
ancient world. No known Classical author of prose or poetry has created a recog-
nisable alien form of speech for the peoples of his narrative. Nevertheless, the
devices of language are not altogether irrelevant to the construction of alterna-
tive, utopian, and secondary worlds in ancient literature. One particular form of
art, the so-called Old Comedy in the theatre of fifth-century Athens, exploited a
wide range of linguistic techniques and stylistic means for the fashioning of fan-
tastic societies and utopian visions.[20] In the hands of the Athenian comic poets,
the Attic idiom served as the basic material for the scenic portrayal of the imagi-
nary worlds which formed part of the comic storyline. Aristophanes and the other

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18 See his own testimony in Peterson 2015a, 1–2, 25–26, 89–96, 153–163, 199–207, 247–265;
cf. Peterson 2015b.
19 For the fascinating story of the development of the Klingon language, see Conley/Cain 2006,
170–172; Okrent 2009, 229–244; Okrand/Adams/Hendriks-Hermans/Kroon 2011.
20 On the concept of the fictitious "secondary world" (or "counter-world", "Gegenwelt") in Old
Comedy, cf. Heberlein 1980, 5–26.

playwrights of his generation produced and brought on stage cities made of words, kingdoms founded on wordplay, lexical wonderlands, and otherworlds discovered in the gaps of grammar and syntax.

The rest of this chapter will be dedicated to the exploration of this aspect of linguistic creativity in the preserved texts and fragments of Old Comedy. A variety of linguistic resources and mechanisms of verbal humour, employed by the poets of this fruitful genre, will be examined in connection with the depiction of fictitious worlds. These include the invention of amusing composite names for imaginary countries, which poignantly indicate the main traits of the corresponding lands or the preoccupations of their people; the use of stylistic devices such as accumulations, word lists, climaxes, and metaphors for the description or the scenic realisation of a utopian otherworld; the exploitation of wordplays for the development of social and cultural facets of invented societies; and also the fabrication of fictitious vocabularies and forms of speech, which may have been applied by certain poets to a moderate degree. This latter aspect will provide a good point to start.

2 A new language for an alien place

Although ancient Greek authors thought up many imaginary places and their fictitious peoples, they did not display equal creativity with regard to the latter's forms of oral expression. Rarely do Classical writers wonder about the language spoken by the inhabitants of an invented country, or about the ways in which the latter may contact the outer world. Even if a particular language is attributed to such a fictional population, words or other elements of it are almost never cited in the text. Although the concept of an invented form of speech originated in Greek imagination from early on, already in the Homeric *Iliad*, it was only exploited to a minimal extent. In the *Iliad*, the Trojans and their Asiatic allies speak throughout the same language as the Achaeans, and the poet does not problematise their mode of communication in the context of the epic narrative.

Nevertheless, one particular group is assigned a separate language: namely, the immortal gods, who embody the most important counter-world within the Homeric universe. In a number of Iliadic passages, the gods are said to use a particular name for a given entity (a person, landmark, animal, or object) which mortal men call differently in their own language (*Iliad* 1.403–404, 2.813–814, 14.291, 20.74, cf. also the divine terms μῶλυ and Πλαγκταί mentioned in *Odyssey* 10.305 and 12.61). This implies that the Olympian divinities have their own tongue,

which is different from the human forms of speech,[21] although they may fully imitate the language of men when they come into contact with the latter — in the same way as they assume a human form, hiding their true godly appearance, when they appear among men on earth.[22] The Homeric poet may be presumed to have access to the divine language via the omniscience granted him by the Muses.[23] Of course, in the context of Greek religious cult, the gods cannot exactly be regarded as a "fantastic" race, on a par with the populations of the fictitious countries of utopian and travel literature. They do represent, however, an alternative supernatural world, which exists in parallel with the ordinary society of mankind and bears the marks of a secondary mythological sub-creation.[24]

Apart from the Homeric polity of the gods, the fantastic cities and regions of ancient Greek fictional narratives are mostly encountered in distant lands at the edges of the known world or in metaphysical spaces such as the kingdom of the dead. In many cases, the local tribes or groups of dwellers are not attributed a separate language of their own. Often the inhabitants of the fictitious country are shown to communicate spontaneously and unproblematically with visitors from our ordinary world, sharing the same language, like the Achaeans and the Trojans in the *Iliad*. Odysseus converses freely with the alien races of the Cyclopes, the Phaeacians, and the Laestrygonians in the *Odyssey*.[25] Alexander the Great, in the fictionalised *Alexander Romance*, conducts extensive dialogues with the Amazons and the royal family of the legendary Ethiopia (3.18–23, 3.25–26), without any mention of translation or linguistic mediation. In Lucian's pioneering fantastic novel *True Histories*, the protagonist is able to communicate without obstacle with the peoples of the sun and the moon, which he visits during his wonderful journeys (1.11–29). The ingenuous spirit of folk fantasy and fairy tale permeates these early travel fictions, which pose no problems of linguistic communication to the hero, as though the entire earth were covered by a single universal

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21 On the Homeric language of the gods and the various scholarly hypotheses about its origins, see Güntert 1921, 89–130; Heubeck 1949–1950; Lazzeroni 1957; Clay 1972; Suter 1991; Watkins 1994, 456–458; Gera 2003, 50–54; Heath 2005, 52–57. The idea that the gods speak a different language from men is indeed a very old and traditional folk belief, deeply enrooted in mythical and magical thought. There are analogous examples in Vedic, Hittite, Old Norse, and Old Irish religious or mythological texts. See Güntert 1921, 1–88; Heubeck 1949–1950, 197–198, 217; Lazzeroni 1957, 15–25; Watkins 1994, 458–472.

22 See Gera 2003, 50–51; Heath 2005, 53–56.

23 Cf. Güntert 1921, 90, 165; Gera 2003, 52.

24 Cf. Güntert 1921, 164–165 for the analogies between the gods' peculiar language and the invented speech forms of the peoples of fantasy and fairyland.

25 Cf. Gera 2003, 3–17.

language. The imaginative sub-creation recaptures the conditions of the world before Babel.

In other narratives, the legendary or fictitious people are said to speak an idiom of their own, and the hero only manages to converse with them through the intervention of interpreters. Cambyses exchanges messages with the king of the legendary Ethiopians through a party of native African envoys, who know the local Ethiopian language (Herodotus 3.19–25).[26] Alexander meets with a tribe of effeminate fish-eaters on a faraway location of India, at the shores of a sea of gigantic monsters; they speak an unknown alien language, but the Macedonian conqueror communicates with them through an interpreter (*Alexander Romance* 3.17.3).[27] If no such intermediary is available, articulate verbal exchange between the heroes and the foreign populations may prove to be impossible. When a party of Amazons find refuge in inland Scythia, the natives cannot understand their language and at first communicate with them only by means of signs, until the women learn the local Scythian tongue (Herodotus 4.110–117).[28] Alexander meets various tribes of wild and theriomorphic humanoids (oversized men with bodies covered with hair, cynocephali, headless humans), as he wanders with his army in the deserted regions near the edges of the earth. They speak an unintelligible language (*Alexander Romance* 2.37) or only make inarticulate yelling sounds (2.33).[29] One of the most felicitous inventions is found in the utopian travelogue of Iambulus, a writer of the late Hellenistic age, who composed a novel about an imaginary journey to a marvellous idyllic island far away in the southern ocean. The natives, a wonderful race of tall men with supernatural bodily capacities, have forked tongues, with which they can imitate all articulate human languages (Diodorus Siculus 2.56.5–6),

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26 See Harrison 1998, 11–14; Munson 2005, 73–77.

27 The interpreter is mentioned only in the Latin translation of the earliest recension α of the *Alexander Romance*, composed by Julius Valerius in the fourth century CE (3.17.330–331: *Fuit igitur mihi ad eorum fabulas diligentia et interpres inventus est qui nobis daret cum hisce barbaris fabulari*; see Rosellini 2004, 137; Callu 2010, 168–169). Nonetheless, this detail is presumably an authentic part of the story and stems from the original text of the *Alexander Romance*: see Konstantakos 2019, 285–289.

28 See Harrison 1998, 6; Munson 2005, 72–73; Mayor 2014, 54–56.

29 Cf. the non-verbal, barking sounds with which the legendary tribe of the Cynocephali of India communicate, according to Ctesias' *Indica* (fr. 45.37, fr. 45p Lenfant) and other ethnographic sources (Ael. *NA* 4.46). See Gera 2003, 185–192.

presumably including Greek. The question of communication between the hero and his hosts is thus immediately solved.[30]

In none of these cases, however, do the Greek authors cite words or other components of the fictitious peoples' languages; the sound of their speech is left entirely to the reader's imagination. Only in the Greek comic corpus, there is one possible case of an invented otherworldly language accompanied by actual citation of some of its words in the text. Pherecrates' comedy *Krapataloi* must have developed a fantastic storyline, revolving around the well-known mythological theme of the *katabasis*, the journey to the underworld. In one fragment, Aeschylus takes pride in the lofty art which he elaborated and gave over to his successors (fr. 100); the context is probably a poetic *agon* in Hades, similar to the contest of the *Frogs*. In another passage (fr. 85), a character receives instructions on how to become ill with fever and aches, probably with a view to descending more quickly to the dead.[31] The purpose of the journey to the netherworld in this drama is unknown. Perhaps the kingdom of the dead was depicted as a kind of trenchermen's utopia, with continuous banquets, culinary abundance, and automatic preparation of food (frr. 87, 88, 89),[32] as happened also in another play by Pherecrates, the *Miners* (see below, section 4).

A testimonium and a small fragment of the *Krapataloi*, in combination, open an intriguing possibility with regard to the language used in this comic version of Hades. According to Pollux (9.83, test. i Kassel/Austin), the title of the comedy was taken from the name of a type of coin used in the underworld:

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30 On Iambulus' utopian concept of polyglottism, cf. Gera 2003, 33–35. In another Hellenistic romance of travelogue and utopia, the book on the Hyperboreans by Hecataeus of Abdera, the legendary tribe of the Hyperboreans, at the far north of the world, were reported to speak an idiom of their own (ἰδίαν τινὰ διάλεκτον, *FGrHist* 264 F 7, from Diodorus 2.47.4); nevertheless, they were also said to freely communicate with the Greeks, especially the Athenians and Delians, who travelled to the Hyperborean land and were welcomed there (ibid., from Diodorus 2.47.4–5); see Winiarczyk 2011, 54. Were the Hyperborean people as a whole imagined to speak foreign languages such as Greek, like the fantastic population of Iambulus' island? Or were interpreters of Greek locally available at Hyperborea? Diodorus' brief summary of Hecataeus' narrative affords no clue on this matter.
31 On the plot of the *Krapataloi* and the theme of the *katabasis* to Hades, see Rehrenböck 1987, 55–56; Urios-Aparisi 1992, 267–270, 277–280, 289–290, 296–297; Franchini 2015; Franchini 2020, 12–14, 19–23, 29–40, 50–51, 55–61.
32 Cf. Körte 1938, 1988; Urios-Aparisi 1992, 267–268, 277–280, 283; Ceccarelli 1996, 131; Franchini 2015, 4–11; Franchini 2020, 11–13, 16, 29.

ὄνομα δὲ νομίσματος καὶ κραπαταλοί, εἴτε παίζων εἴτε σπουδάζων Φερεκράτης ὠνόμασεν ἐν τῷ ὁμωνύμῳ δράματι· λέγει δὲ τὸν μὲν κραπαταλὸν εἶναι ἐν ᾅδου δραχμήν, ἔχειν δ' αὐτὸν δύο ψωθίας, τὴν δὲ ψωθίαν εἶναι τριώβολον καὶ δύνασθαι ὀκτὼ κικκάβους.[33]

The *krapataloi* is a kind of coin, as Pherecrates used the word in his homonymous play, whether he did so with serious intent or for amusement. As he says, the *krapatalos* is the equivalent of a drachma in Hades. It is divided into two *psothiai*. One *psothia* is the equivalent of three obols and comprises eight *kikkaboi*.

Fr. 86 complements this information: the character addressed in the text is instructed or informed that in Hades he will receive these coins.[34]

λήψει δ' ἐν Ἅιδου κραπάταλον {τριωβόλου} καὶ ψωθία

In Hades you will receive a *krapatalos* and *psothia*.

Apparently, Pherecrates devised a new system of coinage for his comic vision of the underworld, complete with its subdivisions and relative monetary values. The *krapatalos*, the main monetary unit, was the equivalent of the drachma, the basic coin of Classical Athens. It was subdivided into two *psothiai*, which represented the equivalent of half a drachma (i.e. three obols in Athenian value), and the *psothia* was further divided into eight *kikkaboi*, presumably extremely small coins of minimal worth.[35]

These words are practically unattested in Attic vocabulary outside Pherecrates' comedy. They do not recur in extant literary texts and are only adduced as curious glosses in lexica and grammatical works.[36] Hesychius (κ 3971) interprets the word κραπαταλός as "idiot" (παρὰ πολλοῖς ὁ μωρός), before citing the

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33 I adopt the text as printed in Kassel/Austin 1983–2001, VII 143, with Meineke's correction of ὀκτὼ ψωθίας into δύο ψωθίας. On the various emendations proposed for this passage, in order to change the numerical subdivisions of the otherworldly coinage and make them accord with one or another arithmetical system, see Caccamo Caltabiano/Radici Colace 1987, 977–979; Rehrenböck 1987, 56–57; Urios-Aparisi 1992, 264–267; Franchini 2020, 15. Whichever corrections and numerical analogies are adopted, it would make no difference to the present discussion, which is focused on the names of the coins *per se*.
34 On the text and interpretation of this fragment, see Rehrenböck 1987, 57–58; Urios-Aparisi 1992, 276–278; Franchini 2015, 7–8; Franchini 2020, 24–26.
35 On the numismatic system of the society of Hades in Pherecrates' play, see Caccamo Caltabiano/Radici Colace 1987; Rehrenböck 1987, 55–68; Urios-Aparisi 1992, 261–267, 276–278; Franchini 2020, 14–17, 24–26.
36 On the textual tradition of the words, see Caccamo Caltabiano/Radici Colace 1987, 973–976; Rehrenböck 1987, 56–59, 64–65; Urios-Aparisi 1992, 261–264, 268–269, 276–278; Franchini 2020, 11–12, 14–17.

meaning "coin", with obvious reference to Pherecrates' play. In other lemmata (κ 3969 and 3970), he designates the plural κραπαταλλοί (*sic*) as the name of a species of fish, and also cites the kindred form κραπαταλίας with a range of meanings: "like the wind", "weak" or "speaking weakly", and "foolish" (cf. the explanation "idiot" in κ 3971).[37] The ψωθίαι or ψωθία are glossed as "small crumbs of bread" by Athenaeus (14.646c) and as "the blisters on the lower side of a loaf of bread" by Pollux (7.23). The lexicographical tradition (Hesychius, Suda, Photius, the Atticist Pausanias, and later glossaries) gives the same hermeneumata and presumably depends on Athenaeus and Pollux.[38] Both meanings, with their evident connotations of smallness and insignificance, could be metaphorical derivations or extensions of the numismatic usage. As for the κίκκαβοι, they are only mentioned in lexicographical sources (Photius, *Lexicon* κ 708) as small coins of Hades, doubtless once again in connection with the Pherecratean text.[39]

In brief, there is no solid evidence for the autonomous use of these terms in Athenian speech or literature, apart from Pherecrates. It is conceivable, if not probable, that all three words were invented by Pherecrates for the purposes of his comedy, in order to serve as names of the monetary units in the numismatic system he devised for his comic underworld.[40] It has been sometimes argued that the names of the three coins must have originally been colloquial Attic words, used with different meanings in common parlance (e.g. "worthless thing",

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37 Hesychius, *Lexicon* κ 3969: κραπαταλίας· ἀνεμώδης, καὶ ἀσθενής. καὶ ἀνίσχυρα λέγων. ἄμεινον δὲ ληρώδης. κ 3970: κραπαταλλοί· ἰχθύες τινές. κ 3971: κραπαταλός· παρὰ πολλοῖς ὁ μωρός. ἢ νόμισμα. Cf. Herodian, *De prosodia catholica* I 158.23 Lentz: κραπαταλλὸς δὲ εἶδος νομίσματος.
38 See Athenaeus 14.646c: ψωθία τὰ ψαθύρια [...] Ἀπολλόδωρος δ' ὁ Ἀθηναῖος καὶ Θεόδωρος δ' ἐν Ἀττικαῖς Γλώσσαις τοῦ ἄρτου τὰ ἀποθραυόμενα ψωθία καλεῖσθαι, ἃ τινὰς ὀνομάζειν ἀτταράγους. Pollux 7.23: τοῦ γε μὴν ἄρτου αἱ μὲν κατὰ τὸ ἄνω μέρος οἰονεὶ φλύκταιναι ἀτταράγος, αἱ δ' ἐκ τοῦ κάτω ψωθίαι, αἳ δὴ καὶ προσέχεσθαι εἰώθασι τῷ κριβάνῳ ὑπεροπτώμεναι. Cf. Hesychius, *Lexicon* ψ 307: ψώθιον· τὸ ὑποκάτω τοῦ ἄρτου, and ψ 308: ψώθια· τὰ τοῦ ἄρτου ἀποθραύσματα, καὶ τὰ ὑποκάτω. Similarly Suda ψ 129; Photius, *Lexicon s.v.* ψωθία (657.6 Porson); Pausanias Att. ψ 6 Erbse; Eustathius *in Od.* 1817.46–48; and the glossary of comic words in *CGFPR* 342.27. Further testimonia from the Byzantine lexica are collected by Rehrenböck 1987, 59.
39 Photius, *Lexicon* κ 708: κίκκαβος· ὠνοματοπεποίηταί τι νομισμάτιον ἐν Ἅιδου. Cf. Hesychius, *Lexicon* κ 2648: κικκάβιν· ἐλάχιστον, οὐδέν, which presumably derives from the numismatic use of the term κίκκαβος/κικκάβιον for a very small, almost minimal unit of money. Similarly, Photius, *Lexicon* κ 720 (κίμβικας καὶ κικκάβους· τοὺς αἰσχρούς) is based on the original sense of κίκκαβος, "small coin". The κίμβιξ, i.e. the miserly and parsimonious man (cf. Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1121b 21–23: οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἐν ταῖς τοιαύταις προσηγορίαις οἷον φειδωλοὶ γλίσχροι κίμβικες, πάντες τῇ δόσει ἐλλείπουσι) is precisely the kind of person who would collect "small pennies" and strive not to spend a cent (cf. Rehrenböck 1987, 65–66).
40 This hypothesis is rightly endorsed by Körte 1938, 1988; Schmid 1946, 104; cf. Caccamo Caltabiano/Radici Colace 1987, 972, 976.

"worthless fish" for κραπαταλός; "crumbs" for ψωθίαι; "owl bird" for κίκκαβος); Pherecrates is supposed to have simply transferred the familiar Athenian terms to his fictitious numismatic system of the underworld society.[41] Such an approach, however, is contradicted by the lack of independent literary testimonia of these words outside Pherecrates' play. This fact does not support their preexistent use in Attic speech; there should have been some occurrences of these terms in further literary authors (e.g. comic poets or later Atticists such as Lucian), if they had been indeed in common use.

As for the alternative or variant meanings of the three coins' names, which are recorded in ancient lexica and grammarians, these could also stem from Pherecrates' text. It is noteworthy that a glossary of words taken from comic writings (Λέξεις κωμικαί), transmitted in P. Sorb. 2243 (*CGFPR* 342), glosses the word ψωθία as τὰ ὑποκάτω τοῦ ἄρτου (v. 27). This indicates that the use of ψωθία in this sense originated in a comic play; and the only comic work for which this term is attested is Pherecrates' *Krapataloi*. Most probably, therefore, this and the other variant explanations of the three coins' names were also included in or inspired from the script of the *Krapataloi*. They may have been metaphorical or metonymical applications of the coins' names in the context of particular scenes of the comedy; or they may have arisen through misinterpretation of these comic scenes in the context of the later lexicographical tradition.[42]

If this hypothesis is true, it opens up an enthralling possibility for the language of the Pherecratean netherworld. The inhabitants of Pherecrates' Hades presumably had a society of their own, complete with its peculiar numismatic system and its subdivisions, according to the model of the Classical Athenian *polis*. Were the names of the coins and monetary units the only linguistic elements peculiar to Hades? Or could they be simply the "tip of an iceberg", a small extant specimen which suggests that the dwellers of this comic Hades had an entire

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41 See Rehrenböck 1987, 59–68; Urios-Aparisi 1992, 261–264; Franchini 2020, 11–12, 16–17.
42 To give only some examples of conceivable and practicable scenarios: Hesychius' association of κραπαταλλοί with fish might stem from a comic episode in which these particular coins were used for buying seafood, perhaps worthless or inedible fishes (cf. Rehrenböck 1987, 62). The widespread interpretation of ψωθίαι/ψωθία as crumbs of bread could have been generated from another such ludicrous scene of exchange: e.g. a poor soul might go to the market of Hades equipped with a couple of ψωθίαι, and find out that he could only acquire a few miserable bread crumbs in exchange for them. The meaning "idiot" or "weak person" for κραπαταλός or κραπαταλίας may also have been related to a foolish and ridiculous character of the play, who would have employed the coin in a silly manner in the course of the plot (cf. Rehrenböck 1987, 59). See also above, n. 39, for the metonymical application of κίκκαβος to the miser and to things of no value; cf. in general Caccamo Caltabiano/Radici Colace 1987.

vocabulary of their own — a vocabulary which may have comprised many more unique words, unknown to the common Greek speech, like the gobblefunk jargon used in the land of the giants in Roald Dahl's novels, or even like the constructed languages of fictitious populations in the works of modern fantasy? In that case, Pherecrates would have designed the ancient equivalent of an invented language for the secondary world of the dead, which he staged in his comedy. This cannot be definitively proved on the basis of the extant remains of the *Krapataloi*, but it is an intriguing possibility. It seems unlikely that the linguistic peculiarities of Pherecrates' comic Hades would have been restricted to the nomenclature of the numismatic system. If the comic poet made this kind of beginning, he would be liable to extend the special vocabulary of the inhabitants of the underworld also to other domains.

Pherecrates was a seminal figure for the development of *Märchenkomödie* in fifth-century Athenian theatre. He wrote many plays based on fantastic scenarios and fairy-tale materials, and amply contributed to the repertoire of motifs and techniques that defined the physiognomy of this particular comic genre. Together with his earlier contemporary Crates, Pherecrates was one of the most prominent writers of imaginative literature in Classical Athens. If his oeuvre had survived in its entirety, he would undoubtedly rank among the greatest authors of comic fantasy in world tradition, on a par with Lucian, Rabelais, Jonathan Swift, Terry Pratchett, Tom Holt, and Terry Gilliam. If he made up indeed a special language of the underworld in his *Krapataloi*, according to the hypothesis advanced above, Pherecrates would also appear as the ultimate precursor of such modern luminaries of fantastic writing as Roald Dahl and C.S. Lewis, George R.R. Martin and J.R.R. Tolkien.

3 The names of utopia

In the context of a fantastic narrative, the invented world may be identified with a metaphysical space, such as the domain of the gods in heaven or the realm of the dead in the underworld. On the other hand, the fictitious society may be an altogether new and original formation, for example, a freshly discovered land in a hitherto unexplored part at the edges of the earth, or a newly founded city or state, or an alternative universe in a separate space-time, distinct from our own reality. In these cases, the invented world needs to have a name of its own, and it is the author's task to provide it. Thus, the discipline of fantastic name-giving arose, in other words, the art of creating new and suitable names for the fictitious places and peoples which appear in the plot of a fictional narrative. This is the

most elementary and primal stage in the linguistic construction of a secondary fictional world, although it should not be assumed that it is an easy and unproblematic task. Many authors have expended considerable efforts and talent in performing it.

In semantic terms, the name of the secondary world need not bear a recognisable meaning or a transparent etymology, connected to the nature and qualities of the fictional formation to which it refers. Fictitious name-giving is not a Cratylean science; there is no compulsory pragmatic relationship between the appellation of an imaginary place or people and its properties. The author may strive to create a phonetically appropriate word which serves the aesthetic effect he wishes to convey, whether this is humour or mystery, exoticism or strangeness, the aura of fairy tale or the power of legend. Tolkien's Gondor, Rohan, Eriador and Rivendell, Minas Tirith and Edoras radiate an aura of mythical grandeur, romantic heroism, and chivalric adventurousness, while harsher words such as Mordor, Barad-dûr, Caradhras, Khazad-dûm, and Erebor transmit an uneasy feeling of fear and dark anxiety, compatible with the natural bleakness or the moral depravity of the corresponding locations.[43]

In the fictitious universe of George R.R. Martin, the names of foreign countries and cities, such as Valyria, Braavos, Volantis, Qarth, Astapor, Yunkai, carry the tones of otherness and exoticism that are fitting for a distant, outlandish continent of the East. Similarly, in the parallel fantastic world created by C.S. Lewis, the topographical appellations, such as Narnia, Calormen, Telmar, Beruna, and Tashbaan, are endowed with a sense of fabulousness and fairy-like charm, as though taken from medieval legend or Celtic folklore; they are thus suitable for the setting of a magical tale.[44] Borges, in his attempt to construct a well-tempered global geography for his alternative universe, counterposed and balanced the Scandinavian-like Tlön with the mock-Arabic Uqbar.[45] On the other hand, the lands and towns visited by Captain Gulliver, in Jonathan Swift's satirical novel, bear either quaint humoristic names which seem to have been taken out of nonsense poetry (Lilliput, Balnibarbi), or sufficiently grotesque and ludicrous formations (Blefuscu, Brobdingnag, Glubbdubrib, Luggnagg), all of which contribute to the generation of comic effect.[46]

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43 On invented names and their aesthetic function in Tolkien's fictions, cf. Shippey 2003, 96–117; Turner 2005, 77–128; Smith 2007, 21–23, 57.
44 Cf. Sayers 1998.
45 Cf. Fishburn/Hughes 1990, 177, 244.
46 On the aesthetic effect of Swift's invented names, cf. Clark 1953, 596, 606–607, 611–615.

In other cases, however, especially in works of self-consciously comic and satirical character, authors have tried to establish a pragmatic relation between the fantastic place and its invented name. The semantic value or the etymological derivation of the word corresponds to basic characteristics of the designated land or of its population. The prime example of this practice is Thomas More's Utopia, a felicitous compositum which denotes at once the ideal conditions of the fantastic land (*eu* + *topos*, "the good place") and its unreality (*ou* + *topos*, "no place").[47] Rabelais, in his *Fourth Book* (ch. 2–4), similarly invented the island of Medamothi, the first stop of Pantagruel and his companions after they have set sail in the ocean to reach the Oracle of the Bottle. The name of the location, a Greek adverb meaning "nowhere at all", brands it as a landscape of the imagination. The island proves to be full of marvellous things and sights. Pantagruel and his company have the opportunity to procure there a number of unreal commodities, including three unicorns and some paintings which depict objects impossible to represent, such as the Platonic Ideas, the atoms of Epicurus, and a faithful portrait of Echo.

Thus, the non-place of Medamothi serves as the gate to fairyland; it introduces the heroes of the novel into the secondary otherworld of their voyage, the area of the fantastic and the unreal. Two other isles, which the heroes encounter later in the *Fourth Book* (ch. 45–54), are also given eloquent composite names, which humorously reveal the main disposition of their inhabitants. On the island of the Papimanes ("Papimaniacs") dwell the people who worship the Pope, spend their life in the hope of seeing his person, and consider the papal decretals as a holy book. By contrast, the island of the Papefigues ("Pope-Figs") is the home of a dissident nation who "make the sign of the fig" (an insulting gesture) before the Pope's image and disparage his authority. The two geographical terms, inspired from the religious conflicts of the author's age, serve the satirical purposes of the novel, which symbolically concretises the main ideological trends of its time in the form of topographical landmarks scattered over the ocean of the imagination.[48]

The creation of significant geographical names for the utopian secondary world was also practiced by the authors of ancient comedy. An exemplary case is found in Aristophanes' *Birds*, in which the fantastic city of the birds in the air is

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47 See Romm 1991, 179; Konstan 1995, 33, 176–177; Winiarczyk 2011, 1–2.

48 There have also been attempts to decipher many names of places and personages in *Gulliver's Travels* as anagrams or comic distortions of actual words, which satirically hint at Swift's contemporary realities in Britain and Ireland. See Kelling 1951; Clark 1953; Noletto/Teixeira Lopes/Torres de Alencar Costa 2017. In this case, however, the satirical meaning of the names was hidden under a code, which would only have been accessible to few well-learned and initiated readers (cf. Kelling 1951, 763–778).

baptised by the comic heroes in a highly amusing scene. The two exiles from the human world, Peisetaerus and Euelpides, together with the Chorus of the birds, wonder how to call the newly-founded *polis* (809 ff.). The name of Sparta is first forwarded and readily rejected (813–816). Euelpides suggests that the name of the new city should be light and airy, reminiscent of the clouds and the things of the surrounding sky (817–819). Then, Peisetaerus comes up with the formation "Nephelokokkygia", which is enthusiastically accepted by the birds as a grandiose and beautiful proposition (819–820). Henceforward, this word is adopted as the official appellation of the city of the birds, although no detailed explication of its meaning is provided in the text. The spectators are obviously expected to think up their own interpretation, based on the linguistic components of the name.

The first component clearly points to the area of the clouds, in the midst of the sky, where the new *polis* is situated. This is in accordance with Euelpides' proposal that the name should take account of the city's aerial location. In addition, the clouds carried in the ancient Greek mind the semantic connotations of emptiness, unreality, and deception. According to myth, Zeus used a cloud (νεφέλη) in order to fabricate a sham effigy of Hera and thereby deceive Ixion, who wanted to seduce the goddess (Apollod. *Epit.* 1.20); the same stuff was employed to create the false idol of Helen which was taken to Troy, to mislead both the Greeks and the Trojans, according to the Euripidean version of the story (Eur. *Hel.* 705–707).[49] Moreover, the clouds look like smoke or mist and are glossed with the synonym καπνός in ancient texts (e.g. Ar. *Nub.* 330, cf. Arist. *Mete.* 346b 32–35); the very word καπνός in Greek denotes metaphorically something vain, insipid, meaningless, or insubstantial (e.g. Eur. *Hipp.* 954).[50] Thus, the first part of the name, *nephelo-*, insinuates that the city of the birds is an elusive and illusory formation, a creation of thin air and smoke, which belongs to the domain of the unreal and the imaginary.[51] Nephelokokkygia is a sham *polis*, a mock-city masquerading as though a real citadel in the land of dreams. It is also implied that the new *polis* has been founded with the purpose of cheating and deception, as indeed will be proved in the course of the plot: the inhabitants of the town will dupe the Olympian gods and snatch the rule of the universe out of their hands.

The second component of the name introduces an apt bird-element in the form of the cuckoo, a creature also associated with fraud and delusion in the ancient popular tradition. The word κόκκυξ was used metaphorically for a foolish

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49 See Dover 1968, lxviii.

50 Cf. Taillardat 1962, 299; Dover 1968, lxviii; Thiercy 1986, 109, 263; Zannini Quirini 1987, 122–123.

51 Cf. Newiger 1957, 57–59; Whitman 1964, 187–188; Thiercy 1986, 114; Reckford 1987, 331–332; Zannini Quirini 1987, 16–17, 122–126; Dunbar 1995, 5, 491; Dobrov 1997, 97, 107.

and empty-headed person; this might indicate that the population of the city (i.e. the birds) are taken for inane and silly subjects under the control of their master, the human Peisetaerus, who takes advantage of the new *polis* in order to control the universe.[52] More relevant is the allusion to the cuckoo's cunning and predatory breeding habits, which were widely known to ancient naturalists and bird-watchers.[53] The cuckoo lays its eggs in the nests of other birds, and in many cases the cuckoo's chicks, when hatched, push the host's genuine eggs out of the nest or are raised alongside the host bird's authentic offspring. The young cuckoos thus supplant the true owner's children and take their place. The inhabitants of the new city will also perform a similar feat in the comedy: under Peisetaerus' leadership, the birds will supplant the gods, the previous masters of the universe, and replace them in power.[54]

Therefore, the name of Nephelokokkygia is tailor-made to illustrate the complex destiny of the birds' city in the plot of the Aristophanic play. The poet condenses in one multivalent word-formation the essence of the corresponding secondary world and its function in the context of the narrative. Nephelokokkygia is a rare creation, a cuckoo's nest amidst the clouds of poetic imagination, half-way between the real world and the space-time of fantasy.

In post-classical comedy, the creation of secondary worlds was relegated to a peripheral position. The discovery or foundation of new societies on the heroes' part ceased to be a central theme and a core device of the plot. As a rule, the invented lands or cities were not displayed on stage but only described in reported speeches by characters who were supposed to have encountered them in the

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52 See Zannini Quirini 1987, 120, 126; Dunbar 1995, 5, 491; Dobrov 1997, 97, 107, 113; Dobrov 2001, 107, 123; Corbel-Morana 2012, 109, 181.

53 See Arist. *Hist. an.* 563b 29–564a 3, 618a 8–29, *Gen. an.* 750a 11–15; [Arist.] *Mir. ausc.* 830b 11–20; Theophr. *Caus. pl.* 2.17.9; Antig. *Mir.* 44, 100; Ael. *NA* 3.30; Dionys. *Ixeut.* 1.13; Zannini Quirini 1987, 119; Arnott 2007, 153–154; Konstantakos 2009, 458–460. Dunbar's objection (Dunbar 1995, 345, 491) that the cuckoo's breeding habits were presumably unknown to Aristophanes' contemporaries, because they are not mentioned in any source before Aristotle, is not strong. The lack of fifth-century references may be simply an accident of transmission. The formulation in Arist. *Hist. an.* 618a 13–25 (note the repeated references to earlier authorities: ὥς φασιν ... οἱ δὲ λέγουσιν ὡς καὶ ἀποκτείνασα ἡ τρέφουσα δίδωσι καταφαγεῖν ... τὰ μὲν οὖν πλεῖστα τούτων ὁμολογοῦσιν αὐτόπται γεγενημένοι τινές· περὶ δὲ τῆς φθορᾶς ... οὐχ ὡσαύτως πάντες λέγουσιν, ἀλλ' οἱ μέν φασιν ... οἱ δὲ ... οἱ δὲ ...) clearly suggests that multiple observations on the cuckoo's breeding habits had been made before Aristotle, and Aristotle is drawing on them for his discussion.

54 Cf. Zannini Quirini 1987, 121–122. The same scholar also detects broader mythical assonances in the name Nephelokokkygia, with regard to the primeval dominion of the birds over the universe (Zannini Quirini 1987, 121–126).

course of their past adventures. In particular, one type of comic figure became prominently associated with the delivery of such utopian and fantastic narrations in the storylines of Middle and New Comedy: the braggart soldier, a character who has the opportunity to widely travel in various places of the world, as part of his military assignments, and often reports on the marvellous lands and sights he has experienced in his journeys. In the context of their sensational tirades, the braggarts of Middle and New Comedy or their associates and servants refer to various imaginary places which they have allegedly visited, in the periphery of the known world.[55] Thus, the illustration of fantastic alternative worlds is introduced into the comic fiction, as it were, "from a side entrance", as a minor ornamental element of the comic discourse.

In the context of the soldiers' imaginative narrations, the poets of post-classical comedy continue the earlier practice of fictitious name-giving, as known from Aristophanes. The fantastic lands and cities discovered by the comic braggarts are given fanciful speaking names, which eloquently bring out their satirical aspect and their relation to the soldier's role. A characteristic case is found in Plautus' *Curculio*. The soldier of this play, Therapontigonus, is reported to have completed within a few days a vast cycle of conquests, for which he is about to dedicate an impressive golden monument. The report is placed on the lips of the parasite Curculio, who appears as Therapontigonus' emissary and representative. The long list of conquered territories comprises various well-known areas of the Aegean and the Near East, side by side with imaginary lands bearing grotesque polysyllabic names (442–448):

> *quia enim Persas, Paphlagonas,*
> *Sinopas, Arabas, Caras, Cretanos, Syros,*
> *Rhodiam atque Lyciam, Perediam et Perbibesiam,*
> *Centauromachiam et Classiam, Unomammiam,*
> *Libyamque, <et> oram omnem Conterebromniam,*
> *dimidiam partem nationum usque omnium*
> *subegit solus intra viginti dies.*

> Because within twenty days he single-handedly subjected the Persians, the Paphlagonians, the inhabitants of Sinope, the Arabs, the Carians, the Cretans, the Syrians, Rhodes and Lycia, Gobbleonia and Booziania, Centaurobattaglia and Classia, Onenippleania, Libya, and the entire coast of Wineknockoutia, in short, half of all the nations on earth. (Transl. W. de Melo.)

The invented names of the regions which have supposedly been subjugated by Therapontigonus fall into two categories. On one hand, some of them refer to the

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55 See in detail Konstantakos 2020.

pleasures of food, drink, and the symposium, fictionalised as imaginary countries. Peredia is the land of everlasting eating and Perbibesia that of continuous drinking. Conterebromnia seems to be derived from the verb *conterere* ("wear out, destroy") and Bromius, a cult epithet of Dionysus, the god of wine and banquets; the name thus signifies "the country of those worn down by Dionysus", another reference to the banquet and its wine-struck participants. These names ironise the braggart's exploits, presenting him as a hero of tables and cups, whose great battles are fought in the banquet hall rather than on the field of action.

On the other hand, another group of names point to well-known mythical cycles of warlike feats, which pertain to traditional heroes such as Heracles and Theseus. *Centauromachia*, literally "the land of the battle with the centaurs", recalls Heracles' celebrated fight with these monsters during his visit to Pholus in Arcadia. Theseus took part in the other famous centauromachy of ancient mythology, at the wedding of Peirithous in Thessaly.[56] *Unomammia*, the "country of the One-Breasted", clearly alludes to the Amazons, who were said to cauterise or cut off their right breasts, so as to easily throw javelins or draw bows in battle. Both Heracles and Theseus were said to have fought with the Amazons, the former to acquire the wondrous belt of the Amazon queen Hippolyte, the latter when the fabulous female warriors attacked Athens.[57] Thus, the invented names of the fictitious conquered lands emblematise the most salient comic characteristics of the *miles gloriosus*: on one hand, his pretence to heroic status and superhuman powers comparable to those of the legendary warriors of myth; on the other hand, his proneness to banquets and entertainments, which seem to supplant his military activities.[58]

However, the secondary worlds of post-classical comedy are no longer stage realities presented before the spectators' eyes. The fancifully named comic utopia remains out of reach, a mere rhetorical ornamentation in a world altogether averse to fantastic exuberance. The lands with the strange and grotesque names form a peripheral universe away from the centre of comic fiction. Verbal inventiveness, for the successors of Aristophanes, is a gate to a narrated otherworld which remains largely unexplored.

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56 See Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.5.4, *Epit.* 1.21; Gantz 1993, 277–282, 390–392.

57 See Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.5.9, *Epit.* 1.16–17; Gantz 1993, 224–225, 284–285, 397–400; Blok 1995, 349–430; Mayor 2014, 249–286.

58 On these Plautine comic names and their interpretation, see Elderkin 1934, 34; Collart 1962, 84–85; Hofmann/Wartenberg 1973, 117–119; Konstantakos 2020, 140–144.

4 The lists of fantasy

One of the most prominent themes in the fantastic comedies of the fifth century is the portrayal of the Golden Age, which takes a peculiar form in comic dramaturgy: the comic playwrights describe a kind of culinary paradise, a utopian world of miraculous gastronomic abundance, in which food and drink are automatically produced from the elements of nature. This fantasy of trenchermen has impressive similarities with a well-known utopian construct of medieval and later European folklore and popular storytelling: the so-called "land of Cockaigne" or "Schlaraffenland", a marvellous otherworld in which nature itself undertakes the functions of the cook and the pastry-maker, and a variety of cooked foodstuffs are generated from natural forces.

The depiction of Cockaigne may be inserted into the comic fiction in a number of ways. It may be presented as an alternative reality set in a metaphysical space, such as the underworld, or in a mythical location, for example, the wondrous isle of the Sirens; or it may be described as a state of things which exists in exotic lands of the faraway East or West (the marvellous Persia or an idealised Magna Graecia). It may also be envisaged as a memory from the distant past, a situation which once prevailed in a primeval epoch of bliss, such as the Golden Age of Cronus.[59] In this latter case, clearly, the conditions of Cockaigne would only have been the subject of descriptions in the course of the play; they would have been verbally illustrated in characters' speeches, as fond recollections or hallowed traditions from a long-lost past, but would not have been actually staged as part of the plot.

On the other hand, when the theme of Cockaigne is introduced as a parallel reality which may be found in other countries or in a metaphysical otherworld, it cannot be excluded that the paradisiacal utopia might have been actually brought on stage in some phase of the action of the comedy. The setting of the play could have changed at some point and have been transferred to the exotic land or the metaphysical location in which the Cockaigne-like world was supposed to exist; thus, the wondrous state of affairs and some of its marvels could

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59 There is abundant bibliography on these comic portrayals of Cockaigne. See Baldry 1953; Langerbeck 1963; Gatz 1967, 116–121, 201, 206; Cantarella 1969, 331–336; Kenner 1970, 72–78; Morocho Gayo 1977; Carrière 1979, 88–90, 255–269; Heberlein 1980, 19–22; Bertelli 1982, 520–523; Zimmermann 1983, 59–62; Mainoldi 1989, 251–258; Ceccarelli 1996; Ruffell 2000; Pellegrino 2000; Wilkins 2000c, 109–130; Farioli 2001, 10–15, 27–137, 187–233; Melero 2006; Pellegrino 2006; García Soler 2009; Melero 2009; García Soler 2012; Pellegrino 2013, 13–17, 61–70; Bagordo 2013, 18–21, 43–104; Orth 2014, 379, 408–434.

have been staged before the spectators' eyes. At least one extant fragment from a Greek comic play, fr. 299 from Eupolis' *Chrysoun Genos* ("The Golden Race"), may derive from a scene which formed part of the live presentation of the secondary world on the comic stage. The speaker of the fragment points to a truckle of cheese which is walking off towards the water, clothed in its rind, presumably to be washed on its own before being eaten or stored: λοιπὸς γὰρ οὐδείς· <ἡ> τρο-φαλὶς ἐκεινηὶ / ἐφ' ὕδωρ βαδίζει, σκῖρον ἠμφιεσμένη. The strongly deictic ἐκεινηί indicates that the paradoxical spectacle of the walking cheese must have been visible on stage. The role may have been performed by an actor or an extra who would incarnate the cheese in a suitable costume.[60]

Apart from this rare textual specimen, the great bulk of extant comic passages consist of narrative descriptions of the Cockaigne-like society, included in speeches by characters who have seen or heard about this wondrous phenomenon. A series of excerpts on this theme are cited by Athenaeus (6.267e–270a), taken from a sequence of eight plays by Cratinus, Crates, Telecleides, Pherecrates, Aristophanes, Metagenes, and Nicophon, which were presumably produced between the late 430s and the end of the fifth century. There is no reason to assume that Athenaeus' list is exhaustive;[61] indeed, it does not include some plays which are known from other testimonia to have treated the theme of Cockaigne, such as the aforementioned *Chrysoun Genos* by Eupolis and *Krapataloi* by Pherecrates, or the two Aristophanic plays (*Ecclesiazusae* and *Plutus*) which will be discussed below. Nevertheless, the passages cited by Athenaeus give a fair idea of the layout and style of the descriptions of Cockaigne in fifth-century comedy.

The main stylistic device used by the comic poets for the depiction of the culinary paradise is the verbal or phrasal accumulation. The comic poet piles up a sequence of separate, independent clauses which illustrate aspects of the marvellous trenchermen's utopia. Every phrase offers a verbal image of a particular wondrous element or phenomenon which characterises the fictitious world and which usually has to do with the magical production of foodstuffs. Thus, every single sentence functions as an individual tessera or pebble and combines with all the other phrases of the passage for the collective creation of a verbal mosaic, which reveals the total picture of the wonderful utopian universe.[62] The accumulative linguistic construction of these comic descriptions is well displayed in the

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60 See Zielinski 1885, 58, 66; Ruffell 2000, 490, 501; Storey 2003, 269; cf. Olson 2016, 468–471.
61 Cf. Ceccarelli 1996, 112, 131–135; Pellegrino 2000, 37–39; Ruffell 2000, 475.
62 On the use of the phrasal accumulation for the depiction of the utopian world, see Spyropoulos 1974, 88–89; Heberlein 1980, 20–21; Urios-Aparisi 1992, 324–326, 330; Pellegrino 2000, 18; Orth 2014, 420; Franchini 2020, 107–108.

following example, fr. 113 from Pherecrates' *Metallēs* ("The Miners"). The plot of this play seems to have revolved around a group of diggers in the mines of Laurium, who delved too deep and reached down to the underworld, to discover there a world of gastronomic plenty and natural flow of foodstuffs.[63] A woman who returns from that blissful location gives a detailed description of its conditions:

(A.) πλούτῳ δ᾽ ἐκεῖν᾽ ἦν πάντα συμπεφυρμένα,
ἐν πᾶσιν ἀγαθοῖς πάντα τρόπον εἰργασμένα·
ποταμοὶ μὲν ἀθάρης καὶ μέλανος ζωμοῦ πλέῳ
διὰ τῶν στενωπῶν τονθολυγοῦντες ἔρρεον
αὐταῖσι μυστίλαισι, καὶ ναστῶν τρύφη,
ὥστ᾽ εὐμαρῆ γε καὐτομάτην τὴν ἔνθεσιν
χωρεῖν λιπαρὰν κατὰ τοῦ λάρυγγος τοῖς νεκροῖς.
φύσκαι δὲ καὶ ζέοντες ἀλλάντων τόμοι
παρὰ τοῖς ποταμοῖς σίζοντ᾽ ἐκέχυτ᾽ ἀντ᾽ ὀστράκων.
καὶ μὴν παρῆν τεμάχη μὲν ἐξωπτημένα
καταχυσματίοισι παντοδαποῖσιν εὐτρεπῆ,
τεύτλοισί τ᾽ ἐγχέλεια συγκεκαλυμμένα.
σχελίδες δ᾽ ὁλόκνημοι πλησίον τακερώταται
ἐπὶ πινακίσκοις, καὶ δίεφθ᾽ ἀκροκώλια
ἥδιστον ἀτμίζοντα, καὶ χόλικες βοός,
καὶ πλευρὰ δελφάκει᾽ ἐπεξανθισμένα
χναυρότατα παρέκειτ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀμύλοις καθήμενα.
παρῆν δὲ χόνδρος γάλακτι κατανενιμμένος
ἐν καταχύτλοις λεκάναισι καὶ πυοῦ τόμοι.
(B.) οἴμ᾽ ὡς ἀπολεῖς μ᾽ ἐνταῦθα διατρίβουσ᾽ ἔτι,
παρὸν κολυμβᾶν ὡς ἔχετ᾽ ἐς τὸν Τάρταρον.
(A.) τί δῆτα λέξεις, τἀπίλοιπ᾽ ἤνπερ πύθῃ;
ὀπταὶ κίχλαι γὰρ εἰς ἀνάβραστ᾽ ἠρτυμέναι
περὶ τὸ στόμ᾽ ἐπέτοντ᾽ ἀντιβολοῦσαι καταπιεῖν,
ὑπὸ μυρρίναισι κἀνεμώναις κεχυμέναι.
τὰ δὲ μῆλ᾽ ἐκρέματο, τὰ καλὰ τῶν καλῶν ἰδεῖν,
ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς, ἐξ οὐδενὸς πεφυκότα.
κόραι δ᾽ ἐν ἀμπεχόναις τριχάπτοις, ἀρτίως
ἡβυλλιῶσαι καὶ τὰ ῥόδα κεκαρμέναι,
πλήρεις κύλικας οἴνου μέλανος ἀνθοσμίου
ἤντλουν διὰ χώνης τοῖσι βουλομένοις πιεῖν.
καὶ τῶνδ᾽ ἑκάστοτ᾽ εἰ φάγοι τις ἢ πίοι,
διπλάσι᾽ ἐγίγνετ᾽ εὐθὺς ἐξ ἀρχῆς πάλιν

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63 For analysis and commentary on this fragment, see Urios-Aparisi 1992, 322–355; Ceccarelli 1996, 123–126; Pellegrino 2000, 86–109; Farioli 2001, 91–104; Franchini 2020, 94–96, 104–116.

(A.) Abundance was what everything there oozed, with every advantage, produced in every way. Rivers, filled with porridge and black broth, flowed bubbling through the canyons, croutons and all, and chunks of cheese-stuffed bread; each mouthful went slick and easy by itself down the corpses' throats. On the riverbanks, blood-pudding and sizzling sausage-slices were strewn like seashells. There were also broiled steaks decked with sauces galore, and eels smothered in beets, and next to them ribs and joints, tender as can be, on individual plates; and stewed pigs' feet with their delicious aroma, and beef tripe; browned pork-ribs lay perched daintily on soft cakes. There was oatmeal too, bathed in milk in bath-buckets big as basins, and chunks of birth-milk pudding.

(B.) Lady, you'll kill me wasting time like this, when you all could be leaping right into hell instead!

(A.) What will you say when you've heard the rest? Roast thrushes, seasoned to be boiled, flew round our mouths begging to be gobbled up as we lay beneath the myrtle and anemone. The most beautiful sight, apples hung above our heads, growing out of nowhere. Girls in silken wraps, just blossoming, their roses shaved, sloshed through funnels full goblets of dark aromatic wine to the drinkers. And if you ate or drank any of these things, they grew back right away, at twice the size. (Transl. J.S. Rusten.)

The same stylistic armature, with the sequence of accumulated phrases, is retained in the other passages of this type, although the grammatical mode of utterance may change from one example to another. In Pherecrates fr. 113 the verbs are placed in the past tense, because the speaker reports on the sights she has witnessed in Hades on a previous occasion, during her recent visit there. The past tense is also employed in accounts in which the utopian otherworld is presented as a phenomenon of an earlier age, set in a blissful society of bygone times (e.g. Cratinus, *Ploutoi* fr. 176, οἷς δὴ βασιλεὺς Κρόνος ἦν τὸ παλαιόν, / ὅτε τοῖς ἄρτοις ἠστραγάλιζον, "Cronus was their king of old, when they played knucklebones with loaves of bread"; Telecleides, *Amphiktyones* fr. 1, οἴνῳ γὰρ ἅπασ' ἔρρει χαράδρα, μᾶζαι δ' ἄρτοις ἐμάχοντο / περὶ τοῖς στόμασιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἱκετεύουσαι καταπίνειν, / εἴ τι φιλοῖεν, τὰς λευκοτάτας. οἱ δ' ἰχθύες οἴκαδ' ἰόντες / ἐξοπτῶντες σφᾶς αὐτοὺς ἂν παρέκειντ' ἐπὶ ταῖσι τραπέζαις, "Every creek bed flowed with wine, barley loaves would fight with wheat breads about the lips of men begging them to gulp down the whitest loaves, if you please; fish would come into your house, grill themselves, and then lie down on your tables").

On the other hand, the verbs are placed in the present tense when the speaker describes the reality of his own world as a contemporary and current state of affairs (Metagenes, *Thouriopersai* fr. 6, ὁ μὲν ποταμὸς ὁ Κρᾶθις ἡμῖν καταφέρει / μάζας μεγίστας αὐτομάτας μεμαγμένας, / ὁ δ' ἕτερος ὠθεῖ κῦμα ναστῶν καὶ κρεῶν, "the river Crathis carries huge barley loaves, self-kneaded, downstream for us, and the other river drives a wave of cakes and meats"). The gastronomic paradise may also be introduced as a prophecy or vision of the future, a set of miraculous conditions announced or promised for a forthcoming period. In that

case, the verb forms are in the future tense (Pherecrates, *Persai* fr. 137, αὐτόματοι γὰρ διὰ τῶν τριόδων ποταμοὶ λιπαροῖς ἐπιπάστοις / ζωμοῦ μέλανος καὶ Ἀχιλλείοις μάζαις κοχυδοῦντες ἐπιβλὺξ / ἀπὸ τῶν πηγῶν τῶν τοῦ Πλούτου ῥεύσονται, σφῶν ἀρύτεσθαι. / ὁ Ζεὺς δ' ὕων οἴνῳ καπνίᾳ κατὰ τοῦ κεράμου βαλανεύσει, "on their own through the crossroads will rush forth rivers of black broth with shiny speckle cakes and Achilles buns, gurgling from the springs of Wealth, for us to draw from; Zeus will bathe the roof tiles by sending down a rain of mellow wine"). The speaker may even employ the imperative, commanding the elements of nature or the foodstuffs themselves to perform their function in the context of the Cockaigne-like utopia (Nicophon, *Seirenes* fr. 21, νειφέτω μὲν ἀλφίτοις, / ψακαζέτω δ' ἄρτοισιν, ὑέτω δ' ἔτνει, / ζωμὸς διὰ τῶν ὁδῶν κυλινδείτω κρέα, "let it snow with barley groats, hail with loaves of bread, pelt down with soup, let gravy roll pieces of meat throughout the streets").[64]

The accumulative construction of these passages highlights one of the central curiosities concerning the development of the theme of Cockaigne in Old Comedy: the repetitiveness of the poetic repertoire, in other words, the recurrence of essentially the same images or motifs in most of the texts. Many individual descriptive elements, illustrating one or another aspect of the automatic generation of food in the paradisiacal world, are reused by the majority of the poets and are included in most of the preserved fragments of this category, either in substantially the same form or with small variations. Identical or closely related visions of abundance and natural generation of foodstuffs recur again and again in the comic passages of different authors. Thus, the recycled motifs collectively compose a repertoire of standard culinary *topoi*, which become the building blocks for the construction of the fairy-tale utopia. The comic dramatists may have drawn these motifs and images from the repository of popular tradition, or they may have freely plagiarised and borrowed from each other. Each one of them elaborated, expanded, or diversified the elements he appropriated in his peculiar way, so as to construct his own dramatic representation of Cockaigne.[65]

For example, we hear of rivers and streams which flow with meat soup, dragging pieces of meat downstream (Pherecrates fr. 113.3–4, fr. 137.3–5; Telecleides

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[64] The translations of all these passages are by I.C. Storey. On the variety of tenses and moods used in the comic descriptions, cf. Ceccarelli 1996, 123–124, 126, 128–130.

[65] This phenomenon has often been noted and discussed; see Baldry 1953, 55–60; Gatz 1967, 117–121; Morocho Gayo 1977, 378–382, 387; Rehrenböck 1987, 51–52; Urios-Aparisi 1992, 327–331; Ceccarelli 1996, 124, 126, 129–130, 132, 138–139, 155; Pellegrino 2000, 31, 62, 79, 92–93, 103, 119, 121, 130–131, 136, 139–140; Wilkins 2000c, 113–114, 119; Ruffell 2000, 483–486, 498–499; Melero 2006, 133–134, 137–138; Pellegrino 2006, 180, 190–191; Melero 2009, 75; García Soler 2012, 320–322; Pellegrino 2013, 15–16, 68–70; Bagordo 2013, 18–19, 53–54, 61–73; Orth 2014, 411, 417, 420–426.

fr. 1.8; Metagenes fr. 6.3). Other rivers are filled with porridge and carry along float-ing pieces of cake and croutons (Pherecrates fr. 113.3–5, fr. 137.3–5; Metagenes fr. 6.1–3; Nicophon fr. 21.3); yet other streams and canyons flow with wine (Tele-cleides fr. 1.4). The moistened pieces of bread and cake, which have been im-mersed into the streams of broth, offer nice and soft mouthfuls to the eaters (Pherecrates fr. 113.3–7; Telecleides fr. 1.8–10). Baked pies and loaves of bread gather around the people's mouths and vie with each other to be eaten (Tele-cleides fr. 1.4–6, fr. 1.13; Metagenes fr. 6.11; Nicophon fr. 21.4). Various plates or other containers of ready-made edibles (slices of meat and fish, tripe and entrails, eggs, dairy products) lie about freely and sometimes move of themselves (Phere-crates fr. 113.10–19; Telecleides fr. 1.11). Roasted birds fly around and thrust them-selves into the open mouths of the eaters (Pherecrates fr. 113.23–24; Telecleides fr. 1.12; cf. Metagenes fr. 6.9–10 for flying fillets of fish). The fishes grill them-selves in the frying pan and lie down on the table of their own accord (Crates fr. 16.9–10; Telecleides fr. 1.6–7). The rain is made of wine or of pea soup, the hail of bread crumbs, the snow of barley flour (Pherecrates fr. 137.6; Nicophon fr. 21.1–2). Cakes roll in the streets and fall down from the rooftops (Pherecrates fr. 137.7–8; Cratinus fr. 176). People play knucklebones with bread rolls or with scraps of meat (Cratinus fr. 176; Telecleides fr. 1.14). In view of this cluster of re-current and interconnected imaginary motifs, it becomes evident that the fabri-cation of fictitious secondary worlds, as practiced by the Attic comic poets, was essentially an art of "themes and variations".

The stylistic device of the accumulation was destined to enjoy a long afterlife in the depictions of culinary plenty in comic drama. In Middle and New Comedy, the same linguistic technique is used by cooks, parasites, gluttonous slaves, or other characters associated with food, who pile up long lists of foodstuffs or cul-inary dishes.[66] In the relevant comic passages, the speaker enumerates the food-stuffs which he has bought or intends to buy from the market (e.g. Alexis frr. 115, 175, 191–193; Eubulus fr. 120; Ephippus fr. 15), or those he offers for sale to his clientele (e.g. Antiphanes fr. 27); or he catalogues the culinary courses which he usually prepares and serves to customers (e.g. Alexis frr. 191–194; Diphilus frr. 17, 90), or those he has cooked or tasted on a particular occasion of the past (e.g. Alexis frr. 15, 84, 263; Eubulus fr. 36; Ephippus fr. 8; Diphilus fr. 64), or those he plans

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66 On the list of foods in Middle and New Comedy, see Nesselrath 1990, 255–265, 272–280, 285–291, 297–306; Arnott 1996, 33, 224–228, 315–324, 383–390, 528–536, 559; Degani 1998, 219–224; Pellegrino 2000, 19–21; Wilkins 2000c, 18–19, 44–46, 87, 166, 230–231, 376–378, 380–386. Al-ready Spyropoulos 1974, 87–89 noted the affinity of these passages with the accumulative de-scriptions of Cockaigne in Old Comedy. See also Wilkins 2000c, 114.

to present in an impending feast (e.g. Antiphanes frr. 130, 131, 216, 221; Alexis frr. 178, 180; Anaxandrides fr. 42; Eubulus frr. 14, 63, 75; Mnesimachus fr. 4).

However, the poets of Middle and New Comedy have entirely removed the fantastic aspect from their accumulations of culinary materials. The enumerated items are drawn from the world of ordinary experience; they consist of foodstuffs actually bought from the city market, or of courses truly prepared for banquets held in the context of the comic plot. There is no reference to a secondary world of utopian conditions or to miraculous phenomena such as the automatic production of foodstuffs from natural sources. The culinary accumulation and its contents have been domesticated and adapted to the everyday setting and the ordinary social context, in which the plays of post-classical comedy are standardly set. The strong and colourful power of imagination, which used to brand the fantastic comic fictions of the fifth century, has been rather trivialised and brought down to earth.

Apparently, only one author succeeded in creatively reworking the pattern of the fantastic gastronomic list in the fourth century. This was Aristophanes, who was himself an accomplished master of the technique of verbal accumulation[67] and had been one of the greatest practitioners of the fantastic type of comedy and the creation of invented secondary worlds at the time of his prime, in the fifth century. In his latest surviving plays, the *Ecclesiazusae* and the *Plutus*, produced at the beginning of the fourth century, in the years of burgeoning Middle Comedy, Aristophanes persisted in the utopian themes of his imaginative earlier repertoire. In both plays a paradisiacal society is established and enlivened on stage, although it is not located in a distant, parallel, or metaphysical space but inscribed within the limits of the Athenian *polis*. The utopian secondary world is now generated from the radical metamorphosis of the ordinary society of contemporary Athens, which takes place in the context of the comic fiction under the influence of a catalytic marvellous event. In the *Ecclesiazusae*, the women assume power in the city and implement a bold plan of reform, which leads to the inauguration of a new type of state organisation, characterised by idealised social justice and total equality of access to material resources. In the *Plutus*, the personified god of wealth, who had previously been blind and easily misled by crooks, is magically cured by Asclepius and receives his sight back; he therefore makes all the righteous people rich and is established in the Acropolis, to provide perennial prosperity to the public finances of Athens.

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67 See the seminal monograph by Spyropoulos 1974; also Ferrari 1998; Silk 2000, 126–136, 155–157.

In both these plays, Aristophanes exploits the device of verbal accumulation to depict the new world of plenty and bliss, which prevails in the latter part of the plot. The Aristophanic use of the accumulation presents some notable innovations by comparison to the standard practice of the fifth-century Cockaigne comedies. In the *Plutus*, the slave Carion gives an accumulative description of the new conditions of abundance and prosperousness, which hold sway in his master's household after the god of wealth has recovered his sight (802–818):

ὡς ἡδὺ πράττειν, ὧνδρές, ἐστ' εὐδαιμόνως,
καὶ ταῦτα μηδὲν ἐξενεγκόντ' οἴκοθεν.
ἡμῖν γὰρ ἀγαθῶν σωρὸς εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν
ἐπεισπέπαικεν οὐδὲν ἠδικηκόσιν.
ἡ μὲν σιπύη μεστή 'στι λευκῶν ἀλφίτων,
οἱ δ' ἀμφορῆς οἴνου μέλανος ἀνθοσμίου.
ἅπαντα δ' ἡμῖν ἀργυρίου καὶ χρυσίου
τὰ σκευάρια πλήρη 'στίν, ὥστε θαυμάσαι.
τὸ φρέαρ δ' ἐλαίου μεστόν· αἱ δὲ λήκυθοι
μύρου γέμουσι, τὸ δ' ὑπερῷον ἰσχάδων.
ὀξὶς δὲ πᾶσα καὶ λοπάδιον καὶ χύτρα
χαλκῆ γέγονε· τοὺς δὲ πινακίσκους τοὺς σαπροὺς
τοὺς ἰχθυηροὺς ἀργυροῦς πάρεσθ' ὁρᾶν.
ὁ δ' ἰπνὸς γέγον' ἡμῖν ἐξαπίνης ἐλεφάντινος.
στατῆρσι δ' οἱ θεράποντες ἀρτιάζομεν
χρυσοῖς· ἀποψώμεσθα δ' οὐ λίθοις ἔτι,
ἀλλὰ σκοροδίοις ὑπὸ τρυφῆς ἑκάστοτε.

Well, gentlemen, prosperity is sweet, especially when no money leaves the house! A heap of goods has piled up in our house, and not a single one's ill-gotten gain. The meal-tub's brimming with gleaming barley grain; the vats are brimming with dark and fragrant wine; our coffers are crammed with gold and silver coins; you wouldn't believe how much we've stored away. The well's awash with olive oil; the flasks are full of scent, the cupboards upstairs with figs. Our saucers, dishes, and pots have turned to bronze; our plates, which used to be such grimy things, have turned to highly polished silverware. Our oven's changed from bricks to ivory. We slaves sit playing games with golden sovereigns, and now we've got so used to luxury, we wipe our bums on garlic, not on stones. (Transl. S. Halliwell.)

Carion constructs his report by piling up sentences which reveal various aspects of the new cornucopian reality. His stylistic technique is identical to that used for the descriptions of the Cockaigne-like secondary worlds in the discourses of fifth-century comedies. Every phrase in his monologue refers to a particular phenomenon of marvellous abundance or excessive hedonism. Thus, each phrase operates like an individual tessera in a broader mosaic, whose total image is gradually constructed by means of the paratactic line-up of the phrases, one after the other. The basic difference between Carion's monologue and the speeches about

Cockaigne in the fantastic comedies lies in the wider thematic range of the former. Carion's examples are not restricted to phenomena of culinary plenty and profusion of foodstuffs. The slave includes several references to edible goods (a tub full of grain, vats brimming with wine, a well overflowing with olive oil, cupboards stocked with figs) but combines them with attestations of great wealth in other kinds of valuable materials: gold and silver (coffers crammed with coins, former earthenware plates turned to silver ones, slaves playing with golden coins), perfume (flasks full of scent), and other precious items (an oven made of ivory, pots of bronze), together with a general display of luxury (soft garlic for wiping one's bottom). Aristophanes has taken over from the earlier poets the model of the accumulative, mosaic-like description of the fantastic world of plenty, but has notably enlarged the repertoire of motifs and images.[68]

In the *Ecclesiazusae*, the illustration of the marvellous abundance of the new world is kept on the level of gastronomic hedonism, as in the comedies on the theme of Cockaigne. This time, Aristophanes finds another way to innovate on the well-known pattern of accumulative description and to produce a new variation of the traditional image of culinary plenty. At the finale of the play, the new society of gynaecocracy has been established in the city, and a female servant calls the people to come to the communal banquet. She sets out the menu to be served in the feast by means of the following gigantic word, an agglomeration of the names of various foodstuffs joined together into a single compositum (1168–1175):

> τάχα γὰρ ἔπεισι
> λοπαδοτεμαχοσελαχογαλεο-
> κρανιολειψανοδριμυποτριμματο-
> σιλφιοπαραλομελιτοκατακεχυμενο-
> κιχλεπικοσσυφοφα<τ>τοπεριστερα-
> λεκτρυονοπτοπιφαλλιδοκιγκλοπε-
> λειολαγῳοσιραιοβαφητραγα-
> νοπτερυγών.

> This is what is coming: casserole-saltfish-skate-dogfish-head's-leftovers-vinegar-dressing-silphium-cuttlefish-honey-sauce-thrush-blackbird-pigeon-dove-chicken-roast-lark-wagtail-hare-stewed-in-new-wine-gristle-wings.

The traditional comic list of foodstuffs breaks down, as its individual items lose their independent subsistence and are fused together into a vast integrated

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[68] For comparison of Carion's tirade with the descriptions of the Cockaigne-like worlds of earlier comic fragments, see also Heberlein 1980, 133–134; Reckford 1987, 90–92; Wilkins 2000c, 129.

concoction.[69] The descriptions of Cockaigne in the earlier plays of Old Comedy unfolded a sequence of successive snapshots from the marvellous gastronomic conditions of the fantastic world. Now all these images seem to converge together in one kaleidoscopic picture, which offers a panoramic view of the utopian cuisine, seen from all its angles and aspects simultaneously. The gigantic and all-inclusive meal course, which merges together virtually all the foodstuffs on the menu, emblematises the constructed world of abundance, in which every good thing is freely available.[70] In the rest of the text of the *Ecclesiazusae*, Aristophanes paid relatively small attention to the aspect of culinary plenty in the women's utopian state,[71] choosing rather to highlight other aspects, such as social justice, the distribution of wealth, egalitarianism, and the complicated sexual relations between the various age groups. In the finale of the play, however, as the entire *polis* is transformed into an enormous banquet hall for the universal citizens' dinner, the poet brings to the fore the material dimension of dining, in the form of an all-embracing, multi-ingredient superfood, around which the whole population of the city will be united. Thus, Aristophanes reconnects with the earlier comic tradition of the fifth century, in which the utopian visions were mostly associated with the themes of Cockaigne and gastronomy.

5 The wordplay made flesh

To return to the comic production of the fifth century, there is another important linguistic artifice which plays a cardinal role in the construction of invented secondary worlds. Wordplay, in its various forms and with its multiple mechanisms, is often a crucial factor for the formation of the fantastic society and determines the development of many of its facets.[72] The forms of wordplay exploited by the comic poets in this respect rely mostly on homonymy and homophony, on the similar sounds of different words and names. Occasionally, semantic ambiguity and the metaphorical meanings of polysemous words are also explored.

In Aristophanes' *Birds*, an elementary pun on two near-homophonous words provides the basis for the foundation of the new city of the birds in mid-air. Peisetaerus, upon arriving at the region of the birds in the sky, perceives the

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69 Cf. Spyropoulos 1974, 123–124; Bowie 1993, 264; and Simone Beta's chapter in this volume.

70 Cf. Silk 2000, 135–136.

71 On the restricted role of the culinary element in the utopia of the *Ecclesiazusae*, cf. Langerbeck 1963, 201; Farioli 2001, 203.

72 Cf. in general Farioli 2001, 226–227.

immense potential of this as yet unbridled space. He conceives the plan of establishing a *polis* in this aerial location, and invites his host, the Hoopoe, to survey the entire surrounding area of the sky and the clouds, looking upwards, downwards, and all around (172–178). Peisetaerus calls this space "the *polos* of the birds" (179–180, ὀρνίθων πόλος), a rare term in Classical Greek, usually designating the celestial sphere of the heavens ([Aesch.] *PV* 429; Eur. fr. 839.11), the vault of the stars in the sky (Eur. *Or.* 1685), or, in philosophical and scientific texts, the axis of the celestial sphere and its poles (Pl. *Ti.* 40c; Arist. *Cael.* 285b 9–21, *Mete.* 362a 33, *Mund.* 392a 2 etc.).[73] In plain words, this "vault" or "sphere", as Peisetaerus explains, is the "place" or "region" of the birds (their τόπος, 180), which is termed *polos* because it revolves (πολεῖται) and everything moves through it (181–182).[74] If this space is inhabited by the birds and fenced off with a wall, the *polos* will be turned into a *polis*, a city in the air, by virtue of which the birds will lord over the men and the gods (183–186).

Thus, by means of a slight wordplay of near-homonymy, the new city of the birds comes into existence; the undifferentiated space of the air is transformed into an organised *polis*, a political and social community of the birds, complete with its walls and fortifications, and with a specified geographical location in the overall design of the universe. A change of a single letter brings about the creation of the secondary world of the play, the utopian state of Nephelokokkygia in the sky, midway between the higher domain of the gods and the realm of men on the earth. An elementary pun, consisting in a small mutation of vowels, is the origin of the entire fantastic *cosmos*. Language has rarely been awarded greater power in the annals of imaginative literature.[75]

Wordplays and punning associations also prove important for the design and configuration of further individual aspects of the secondary world. In the case of Aristophanes' *Birds*, the construction of the great wall of Nephelokokkygia (1124–1163) is partly achieved by linguistic means, through the application of occasional wordplays in the text. All the duties and tasks required for the building of the wall are carried out by the birds themselves. The distribution of the tasks among the individual species of birds is based, as a rule, on the physical capacities and natural endowments of each particular species. Each separate kind of bird is

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73 See Dunbar 1995, 192.

74 On the puns involved, cf. Whitman 1964, 177; Thiercy 1986, 114; Zanetto 1987, 198; Dunbar 1995, 192–194; Konstan 1995, 36–37; Amati 2010, 216–217.

75 Cf. Whitman 1964, 177–178; Bertelli 1982, 526; Kloss 2001, 277–278. See also Arrowsmith 1973, 144–146; Thiercy 1986, 114–116; and Dobrov 1997, 95–108, 117–121 for more general discussion of the capital role of language in the creation of Nephelokokkygia.

assigned a type of work which accords with its peculiar physique, bodily features, and congenital properties (at least as perceived by the ancients). For example, the stones for the foundations of the wall are carried by cranes from Libya (1136–1137); it was widely believed in antiquity that cranes swallow a stone to steady themselves against gusts of wind during their high flight (Arist. *Hist. an.* 597b 1–2; Ael. *NA* 2.1). The stones are then dressed by the *krekes* (most probably the black-winged stilts), which perform the work with their long and strong beaks (1138). The water for the fabrication of the bricks and the mortar is carried by the stone curlews and other river-birds (1140–1141), which have their natural habitat near streams of water and are hence ideally suited for this job. The wild geese use their broad and webbed feet as shovels, to carry and load mud into troughs (1143–1147).[76]

In a couple of cases, however, the task assigned to a particular species of birds cannot be connected with an identifiable characteristic of this species' physical constitution or natural qualities. Rather, the link between the birds and their type of work is provided by a play of words, a punning association between the name of the bird species and another term which designates some aspect of the required task. The storks are said to have made the bricks (1139, ἕτεροι δ' ἐπλινθούργουν πελαργοὶ μύριοι), although this latter assignment cannot be credibly attributed to any one of the known physical properties of these birds. It seems that the πελαργοί are selected as brick-makers (the main productive task for the fabrication of the wall) because their name recalls the so-called Πελαργικὸν τεῖχος, the age-old complex of walls which encircled the Acropolis of Athens (Hdt. 5.64.2, Thuc. 2.17.1, Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 19.5) and was supposedly built by the Pelasgians (Hdt. 6.137). Since their very name entails a reference to a famous wall and to the activity of wall-building, the storks were thought suitable for the responsibility of brick-making.[77]

Furthermore, the wooden parts of the wall (gates, parapets) are said to have been cut and carved by the pelicans, who proved to be excellent carpenters and woodworkers (1154–1155, ὄρνιθες ἦσαν τέκτονες σοφώτατοι πελεκᾶντες). They used their beaks to hew the wood and fashion the gates (τοῖς ῥύγχεσιν ἀπεπελέκησαν τὰς πύλας), and the sound of their hacking was like the noise of a shipyard (1155–1157). In reality, the beaks of pelicans are large but soft, unfit for boring into wood. The association of the pelicans with woodwork in this passage must also be due to a linguistic reason, namely, the phonetic similarity between the name πελεκᾶντες ("pelicans") and the verb πελεκάω ("hew, hack with an axe"), the

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[76] See Dunbar 1995, 597–606 for a detailed commentary on the analogies; also Zanetto 1987, 270–272; Corbel-Morana 2012, 181–183.

[77] See Dunbar 1995, 497–498, 598–599; Corbel-Morana 2012, 182.

standard term employed for the carving of wood in ancient Greek.[78] Thus, in both these cases, the choice of a certain bird species for a particular type of artisan's work in the construction of the great wall is conditioned by a play of words. It is the name of the bird that makes the latter appropriate for undertaking a task which is designated by near-homonymous terms in common parlance.

An analogous criterion is applied for the selection and recruitment of the human population of the aerial city. Together with the birds, the founders and original citizens of Nephelokokkygia, certain humans are also deemed worthy of becoming members of the new society, thanks to their personal qualities which bring them close to the world of birds. The qualities in question may involve physical similarities between the man and a bird species (e.g. the branded skin of a tattooed slave is similar to the multi-coloured plumage of the black francolin, 760–761) or analogous patterns of behaviour (e.g. a deceitful man may be compared to the partridge, which practices cunning tricks to escape capture, 766–768). In some cases, however, the correspondence between man and bird is again dependent on phonetic play and punning association of similarly sounding terms. As the birds declare, a charlatan such as Spintharus, who is in reality a Phrygian (Φρύξ) alien and pretends to be an Athenian citizen, would be welcome in the new city, where he will have no reason to hide: among the birds, this man will become a φρυγίλος (762–763) — this was the Greek name for a species of bird not identified with certainty (possibly the cattle egret).[79] The transformation is held to be possible because of the similarity between the bird's name φρυγίλος and the ethnic term Φρύξ.[80]

The amplest and most consistent use of this linguistic technique for the construction of a secondary world is found in the comedy *The Fishes* (Ἰχθύες) by Archippus, which was produced shortly after 403 BCE,[81] at the very end of the period of Old Comedy. The basic premises of the plot of the play can be deduced

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78 See above all Dunbar 1995, 514–515, 606, and Arnott 2007, 251–252, where the identification of πελεκᾶς with the pelican is securely established; also Taillardat 1962, 39; Sommerstein 1987, 276; Zanetto 1987, 272; Corbel-Morana 2012, 183.

79 On the possible identification of the species, see Dunbar 1995, 471; Arnott 2007, 280.

80 On the pun, cf. Dunbar 1995, 471–472.

81 On the date of Archippus' *Fishes*, see Csapo 1994, 40; Farioli 1999, 38; Farioli 2001, 157; Storey 2012, 2; Miccolis 2017, 100, 203. Eucleides, the Athenian eponymous archon of 403/2 BCE, is mentioned as "having exercised the archonship" in the past (Εὐκλείδην τὸν ἄρξαντα, fr. 27). On the other hand, the politician Anytus, who is mocked in the play (fr. 31), was exiled from Athens after 397. The comedy should therefore belong, at the latest, to the early 390s.

from the preserved fragments.[82] The fishes of the sea found a city or state of their own, much like the birds in Aristophanes' comedy or like the beasts in Crates' *Theria* (frr. 16–19),[83] which promise to inaugurate a utopian world of plenty and miraculous automatism. It is not recorded in the extant remains of the comedy whether this new *polis* of the fishes was given a particular name. It would be tempting to hypothesise that Archippus followed the creative example of the Aristophanic Nephelokokkygia and invented an analogous funny appellation, such as e.g. Θαλασσοκαραβία ("Sealangousteland") or Ὑδατοκεστρεία ("Watergreymulletland"), although he might also have opted for a more conventional solution, such as Ἰχθυόπολις.

In their newly-founded society, the fishes themselves undertake the various public offices, hieratic orders, and administrative positions of the state machinery. The distribution of these state posts among the fish population is determined again on the basis of linguistic principles, mostly wordplays which link the fish names with the vocabulary of the corresponding human activity. The name of a species of fish is correlated with a near-homophonous term which signifies an appropriate task, social function, or personality trait of the human world. For example, the bogue is called βόαξ in Greek, and its name phonetically resembles the word βοή, "shout, cry". Therefore, this fish is appointed a public herald (fr. 16), an office for which the capacity of a loud cry comes in handy. The saupe (σάλπης) is associated with the word σάλπιγξ, "trumpet", and assumes the service of the trumpeter (fr. 16). The dogfishes, γαλεοί, are nearly homonymous with a Sicilian clan of diviners, the so-called Galeoi or Galeōtai; hence, they are acclaimed as seers and prophets of the sea (fr. 15). The Greek name of the grouper, ὀρφώς, brings to mind Orpheus and the Orphics; thus, this particular fish undertakes the hieratic office of the priest of a certain god (fr. 17). The gilthead, χρύσοφρυς, has the Greek term for gold embedded in its name; it therefore becomes a priest of Aphrodite, the goddess standardly designated as "golden" (χρυσέη) in ancient poetry (fr. 18).[84] The entire social organisation and civic design of the fishes' secondary world is developed by means of the linguistic mechanisms of homophony and homonymy, pun and calembour.

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82 On Archippus' play in general, see Csapo 1994; Farioli 1999, 37–59; Wilkins 2000a, 345–347, 351–352; Wilkins 2000b; Farioli 2001, 156–174; Rothwell 2007, 126–130, 260–262; Pace 2008; Storey 2012, 2, 6–19; Miccolis 2017, 92–211.
83 Cf. Farioli 1999, 38–41, 54–59; Wilkins 2000b, 529; Farioli 2001, 71–72, 157–160, 165–170, 189–192, 228; Rothwell 2007, 127–128, 260–261; Pace 2008, 122–123; Storey 2012, 6–9; Miccolis 2017, 99.
84 On these puns, see Csapo 1994, 40–44; Farioli 1999, 40–43, 53; Farioli 2001, 160–164, 173–174; Pace 2008, 123; Storey 2012, 7–8, 10; Miccolis 2017, 95–96, 99, 102–103, 113–136.

Apart from the offices assigned to the fishes, some of the institutions and civic procedures of the new state are also conceived and articulated through linguistic artifices, mostly homonymy and semantic ambiguity. In one of the fragments (fr. 14), the election of public officials (πραγμάτων ἐπιστάτας, "overseers of state affairs") is discussed.[85] The operation of this process revolves around an ambivalent term, παλιναίρετος, which signifies different things in the political experience of men and in the life of fishes. In terms of a human democratic polity, the word παλιναίρετος refers to a candidate who has been once elected for an office by common vote, has been subsequently disqualified through a process of scrutiny, and has finally been re-elected to the same post (πάλιν + αἱρεῖσθαι in the sense "elect, choose", "the one who is elected again"). On the other hand, in the precarious life of sea creatures, the same word refers to another kind of experience, the capture of fishes by fishermen. The παλιναίρετος is a fish which has been caught once by a fisherman, has subsequently been thrown back to the sea, only to be fished up again in the end (πάλιν + αἱρεῖν in the sense "catch, capture", "the one who has been caught again").[86] The play on these two meanings of the polysemous word correlates and parallels the democratic routine of public elections in the marine city with the fishes' common experience of being captured as prey. In their new state, the fishes may become παλιναίρετοι in more than one sense: they are liable to be elected, disqualified, and then re-elected as officers, in the same way as they are in danger of being caught, released, and finally re-captured in their normal everyday existence. Through the operation of language, the institutions of the fishes' polity reflect the common experiences of their subsistence in their natural habitat.

Wordplays also condition the external relations of the fishes' state with the human race. In Archippus' play, there must have been some kind of conflict between the fishes and the city of Athens. In the end, the two opposed parties came to an agreement and signed a treaty, part of which is transmitted as fr. 27 of the comedy. According to the terms of the treaty, the fishes and the Athenians commit to mutually restore to each other whatever property of the other party is held by each one of them (ἀποδοῦναι δ' ὅσα ἔχομεν ἀλλήλων). The preserved portion of the text concentrates on the exchange of persons, presumably captives or

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85 αἱρουμένους τε πραγμάτων ἐπιστάτας / ἀποδοκιμάζειν, <εἶτα δοκιμάζειν> πάλιν. / ἢν οὖν ποιῶμεν ταῦτα, κίνδυνος λαθεῖν / ἀπαξάπαντας γενομένους παλιναιρέτους, "now, we elect our comptrollers in order to reject them first, and afterwards we approve them again. So if we keep on doing this, there is a real danger that, without realising it, they will all become second catch" (adapted from the translation of I.C. Storey).

86 See Farioli 2001, 158–159; Rothwell 2007, 127; Miccolis 2017, 95, 105–113.

hostages. The fishes undertake to hand over to the Athenians a number of more or less well-known personalities of Athens, whose names or nicknames refer to fishes or other creatures of the waters.[87] Evidently, because of their marine appellations, these persons were considered to belong to the fishes' world and were held up there. Homonymy and phonetic assonance are again of capital importance for the elaboration of this aspect of the fantastic scenario.

Unfortunately, most of the people alluded to in fr. 27 are unknown to us and unattested in other ancient sources. Nevertheless, some indications about their identity may be deduced from the clues provided in the comic text itself. The punning list of exchange subjects includes first of all the Θρᾷτται, a word which literally means "women from Thrace" and, in the milieu of Classical Athens, might designate female slaves of hetairai; it is also the name of a species of fish, the shad. There follows a flute-girl called Ἀθερίνη, "sand-smelt"; a woman named Σηπία, "Mrs. Cuttlefish", wife or daughter of a certain Thyrsos; and a group of men designated as Τριγλίαι, "red mullets". Perhaps the latter were also foreigners conspicuous for their red hair or reddish faces (later, in the 340s or 330s, a prostitute similarly nicknamed Τρίγλη was active in Athens, possibly another impressive redhead from the north; see Antiphanes fr. 27.9–11).[88] The next name on the catalogue belongs to a historically documented person: Eucleides, the former eponymous archon of Athens (403/2 BCE), who is classified among fish-named individuals because his name contains the word κλεῖδες, i.e. choice morsels from the shoulders of the tuna; Eucleides may thus be taken to mean "the tunny with the nice shoulder meat". The Κορακίωνες from the deme of Anagyrus, whose name recalls the fish κορακῖνος, the "castagnole" or "meagre", were perhaps a known family at the time. A man from Salamis, called Κωβιός, "goby", bears a name that is actually attested for real people in Classical Athens. A descendant of his, named again Kobios, is mentioned as a lover of the luxurious hetaira Pythionice in the 340s (Antiphanes fr. 27.19–21).[89] The list closes with a minor

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87 ἀποδοῦναι δ' ὅσα ἔχομεν ἀλλήλων, ἡμᾶς μὲν τὰς Θρᾴττας καὶ Ἀθερίνην τὴν αὐλητρίδα καὶ Σηπίαν τὴν Θύρσου καὶ τοὺς Τριγλίας καὶ Εὐκλείδην τὸν ἄρξαντα καὶ Ἀναγυρουντόθεν τοὺς Κορακίωνας καὶ Κωβιοῦ τοῦ Σαλαμινίου τόκον καὶ Βάτραχον τὸν πάρεδρον τὸν ἐξ Ὠρεοῦ, "To give back what we have of each other's: we will give back the Misses Herring, and Madame Smelt the flute-player, and Cuttlefisha the wife of Thyrsus, and the Red Mullet-Boys, and Euclid the former archon, and the Crowfishes from the deme of Anagyrus, and the son of Master Goby of Salamis, and the right honourable Frog, the inspector from Oreos".

88 See Konstantakos 2000, 80.

89 See Konstantakos 2000, 87–88; Miccolis 2017, 188.

magistrate called Βάτραχος ("frog" but also "monkfish") from the deme of Oreos. He also carries a personal name well documented in ancient Greece.[90]

It is not possible to estimate how large a part of the comedy would have been devoted to the development and scenic enactment of such wordplays. It is not inconceivable that they would be restricted to a couple of scenes, while the rest of the script would have been taken up with other comic situations and routines.[91] Nevertheless, the contribution of these punning calembours to the layout of the fictional society of the fishes is cardinal. Wordplay and linguistic association are promoted as basic modes of thinking about an alternative otherworld in literary terms.[92] It is not accidental that Archippus' *Fishes* was the last masterpiece of fantastic comedy in the theatre of ancient Athens; the fairy-tale mode, with its invented secondary worlds, was destined to decline shortly afterwards and to disappear from the comic production, ceding its place to the mythical and social themes prevalent in Middle Comedy.

Did Archippus suspect that he was cultivating a dying genre, a form of art which would soon become obsolete? In any case, he seems to have done his best in order to epitomise the essence of this genre of utopian writing in his work. Above all, he linked comic language with fantastic action, the repertoire of linguistic devices with the fictional plot, to an unprecedented degree of intensity. The *Fishes* offers a fine epilogue to the history of fictitious *cosmoi* in Classical Athenian theatre. Its author definitely showed that the construction of a secondary world, in the context of a poetic work, is primarily a feat of language.

6 Fantasia for enlivened metaphors

One of the most intriguing techniques, which Aristophanes uses for the construction of fantastic and utopian societies in his comedies, is a complex mannerism straddling the borderline between language and scenic representation. It has been designated with various terms, such as "enlivened metaphors", "staged metaphors", or "materialisation of figures of speech". The basis for this procedure is provided by a figurative or proverbial expression of common use, a manner of speaking widespread in the popular parlance of ancient Athens. The comic

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90 On the interpretation of this fragment and its wordplays, see Farioli 1999, 50–53; Wilkins 2000a, 346, 351–352; Farioli 2001, 170–173; Rothwell 2007, 127, 261; Pace 2008, 113, 122–126; Storey 2012, 8–9; Miccolis 2017, 103, 180–190.

91 Cf. Farioli 1999, 43–44; Farioli 2001, 163–164; Miccolis 2017, 116–117, 120–121, 128.

92 Cf. Farioli 1999, 53; Farioli 2001, 173–174, 226–227; Storey 2012, 7; Miccolis 2017, 95–97.

poet takes this expression in its fully literal sense and turns it into a visible spectacle on stage; the various elements making up the metaphorical idiom are scenically represented as personages or objects, and the linguistic conception is acted out in the theatrical performance. Thus, what was originally a construct of words, a commonplace metaphor widely used by the people, now acquires material substance and visibility before the spectators' eyes.[93]

This technique, which is peculiar to Aristophanes, has been analysed in detail by Bernhard Zimmermann in his chapter in this volume. There is no reason to repeat the findings of that essay or to attempt a full examination of the Aristophanic practice through an array of examples. The purpose of the following brief and selective survey is to highlight a particular aspect of this dramaturgical procedure, which characterises the majority of its occurrences in the Aristophanic oeuvre. The scenic materialisation of figures of speech is most frequently used by the comic poet in the context of a constructed secondary world; it is a phenomenon which belongs to the imaginary otherworld, occurs within its limits of space and/or time, and exemplifies the peculiar conditions prevailing in the fantastic environment, the idiosyncratic version of reality which exists in this parallel universe of the imagination. Of course, not all the Aristophanic examples of this device can be so classified; there are a few cases in which the enlivened metaphor is found in the context of the heroes' ordinary experience, in the parts of the play which bring on stage the circumstances of everyday reality and the life of common citizens, with all its mishaps and difficulties.[94] Nevertheless, most of the

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93 Apart from Zimmermann's essay in this volume, see also the analysis of this technique by Newiger 1957, 122–133; Taillardat 1962, 65–67, 337–338, 405–406, 430–431, 504–506; Thiercy 1986, 103–119; Konstantakos 2015, 65–69; Konstantakos 2017a, 124–125; Konstantakos 2021a, 213–214, 216–219.

94 A prominent example occurs in the *Acharnians*, when Dicaeopolis places his head on a butcher's slab before delivering his *apologia* for peace (355–369), so that his enemies may immediately decapitate him if he does not speak persuasively. This is a literal scenic rendition of a figurative manner of speech used by Telephus in Euripides' homonymous tragedy (fr. 706: "Even if someone held an axe in his hands, ready to bring it down on my neck, I would not remain silent, because I have just things to say in response"). See Konstantakos 2021a, 216–219 with further bibliography. This sequence of incidents occurs while Dicaeopolis is still enmeshed in the reality of war, which prevails in his contemporary Athens; he is faced with a party of bellicose opponents, who threaten him, and is struggling to establish his right to a personal peace. Another exception is found in the *Peace*, in the scene in which Polemos prepares to crush the Greek cities in his large mortar (228–288). This is a spectacular stage representation of the metaphorical use of the verb τρίβειν in the sense "wear out, waste, ravage". The war is bound to wear the Greek cities out (τρίβειν) with its disasters and evils. In scenic terms, this is transformed into the personified figure of Polemos who intends to τρίβειν the cities in the literal sense of the word, i.e.

extant occurrences are connected with the invention and representation of the secondary fantastic *cosmos*. The following examples will serve as illustration and proof of this poetic rule.

In the *Acharnians*, the personal peace treaty, which the comic hero Dicaeopolis makes with the Spartans, is called σπονδαί; the word was usual in Greek for this type of peacemaking agreement, but its literal meaning is "wine", "a quantity of wine poured out on the ground in honour of the gods". The comic poet takes the word σπονδαί in its literal sense and represents the peace treaty in the material form of wine. Dicaeopolis' envoy brings from Sparta three vases of wine, which represent peace treaties of three different periods of duration, respectively for five, ten, and thirty years. The hero chooses the longest one, drinks it up, and thus his peace agreement with the Lacedaemonians is regarded as valid and immediately effective (175–200). Straightaway, Dicaeopolis is miraculously transported to his farm in the Attic countryside, where he is free to enjoy his peace, without fear of enemy invasions into his own private space.

In essence, Dicaeopolis has created his own, ideal *polis* within the broader Athenian territory; his private farm and household are organised like a miniature city-state, complete with its geographical borders, agora, institutions, and international relations with the other Greek states. In this respect, Dicaeopolis' peaceful domain is a secondary world, a constructed utopia which exists in parallel to the ordinary Athenian *polis* and its historical reality.[95] The materialised metaphor of the peace-treaty as wine is instrumental for the creation and inauguration of the hero's utopian society. The Aristophanic artifice, in this case, signals the beginning of the fictitious *cosmos* of the play and brings it into existence.[96]

The *Acharnians* includes another example of a scenically enlivened metaphor, which is again associated to an alternative otherworld. The Persian envoy, who comes to Athens in the company of the Athenian ambassadors (91–97), is a "King's Eye" (ὀφθαλμὸς βασιλέως), according to the traditional Greek title of his office. In the performance, he is incarnated by an actor in a mask which bears one

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pound and crush them inside his mortar, as though foodstuffs for a sauce (cf. Newiger 1957, 29–30, 111–119; Taillardat 1962, 365, 505; Olson 1998, 115–121). In this case, again, the impressive materialised metaphor is a visible representation of the conditions of wartime, the dire reality of the Peloponnesian War which plagued the Greek states of Aristophanes' time.

95 Cf. Schwinge 1977, 49–52; Edmunds 1980, 27–32; Zimmermann 1983, 63–66; Ceccarelli 1996, 136–137; Olson 2002, xlii–xliv, lii–liii.

96 On the materialised metaphor of the *spondai* and its significance in the *Acharnians*, see Newiger 1957, 52–53, 104–106; Taillardat 1962, 372, 505–506; Whitman 1964, 62–63; Edmunds 1980, 5–6; Thiercy 1986, 104–105; Reckford 1987, 167–168; Olson 2002, 127–133. See also Bernhard Zimmermann's chapter in this volume.

enormous eye. The official title of the Persian magistrate is a figure of speech; the word "eye" is employed metaphorically in the sense of an overseer or supervisor who surveys the provinces on behalf of the monarch. Aristophanes takes the expression literally and depicts it in a visible manner on the costume of the corresponding theatrical figure.[97]

The Persian envoy represents a foreign state, the Achaemenid Empire, which is described in the comedy as a utopian land of plenty, full of fantastic marvels (65–90). Everything in this country is oversized, vast, of gigantic dimensions. The Athenian delegates need three years to traverse it and reach the royal capital (80). The luxury of the inhabitants is fabulous; they drink out of golden vessels and compete with each other in consuming the greatest quantities of food and drink (73–78). In their banquets, entire oxen roasted in the oven are served, together with enormous birds, three times the size of the most corpulent Athenian glutton (85–89). The gold is so abundant in the country that it is heaped up into whole mountains. In fact, there is so much gold that people presumably have no use for it, and therefore the king uses the golden mountains as a place to defecate on (81–82). The Persia of the *Acharnians* is imagined as a land of fantasy.[98] The enlivened metaphor of the King's Eye belongs to this invented secondary *cosmos*, in which (as in so many Aristophanic fictitious societies) words acquire a material dimension.

In the *Birds*, the central metaphor which is implemented in the fantastic plot concerns flying, wings, and their acquisition. In common Greek, the verbs πέτομαι, "to fly", and πτεροῦμαι, "to have or acquire wings", could be used also in a figurative sense to signify "to be very excited or enthusiastic about something", "to be full of enthusiasm and high spirits".[99] The foundation of the birds' city in the air provokes indeed emotions of this latter kind to large groups of humans on earth, and more particularly in Athens; numerous Athenians react to the news about Nephelokokkygia with a great passion for birds and all things related to them (1277–1304). Aristophanes advances this situation one stage further by taking the verbs πτεροῦσθαι/πέτεσθαι, which would metaphorically designate these people's eager attachment to avian matters, in their literal meaning, "have wings

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97 Cf. Newiger 1957, 123; Taillardat 1962, 65–67; Edmunds 1980, 4; Thiercy 1986, 106; Olson 2002, 101–104.

98 See Pretagostini 1998; Pellegrino 2006, 187–189; Konstantakos 2011, 59–99.

99 See Newiger 1957, 57–58; Taillardat 1962, 115–116, 249–250, 430–431, 479, 505; Dunbar 1995, 5, 491; Bowie 1993, 173–174; Dobrov 1997, 117–121, 124; Dobrov 2001, 124–125; Corbel-Morana 2012, 177–179.

and fly". As a result, a series of visitors come to Nephelokokkygia and ask to be equipped with physical wings, so as to be able to actually fly in the sky (1305–1469).

The pioneers of this enlivened metaphor are, of course, the two protagonists of the comedy, Peisetaerus and Euelpides, the two Athenian men who decide to join the birds at the beginning of the play and inspire them to establish their new city. Accordingly, the two Athenians are given a magical root to eat, thanks to which they grow wings and feathers and are metamorphosed into hybrid, half-human and half-avian creatures (649–655, 801–808).[100] In all these cases, the eagerness of men for the life of the birds (their tendency to figuratively πτεροῦσθαι/ πέτεσθαι) is expressed as a material phenomenon on stage, through the acquisition of actual wings for a flight. The staging of figurative expressions is directly associated with the creation of the secondary world.

In the *Frogs*, the fictitious universe is located in the metaphysical space of Hades. It is there that the contest of the two great poets, Aeschylus and Euripides, takes place, including, among other competitive ordeals, the test of the weighing of verses, which offers another case of a metaphorical idiom materially represented in scenic performance. In Attic speech, the verbs σταθμᾶν or σταθμᾶσθαι, literally "weigh on the scales", were also figuratively employed in the sense "assess, judge the value of" something, especially with regard to the reception and evaluation of poetry and art. Dionysus, as arbiter of the poetic *agon* between the two topmost dramatists in the underworld, decides to exploit the ambiguity of this critical terminology in practice, as a means to evaluate the two competitors' relative merits. Dionysus has a pair of scales brought on stage and asks the two tragic authors to utter their poetic verses over the scales, so that the verses may be "weighed"; the heaviest verse, i.e. the one that mentions physically heavier things, will win (1365–1410).[101]

Apart from the aforementioned examples, the same technique also occurs in two other Aristophanic plays, in which the enlivened figures of speech are located within the confines of the Athenian *polis*, as represented in the dramatic fiction of the comedy. However, the scenically materialised metaphors are enacted within a set of special conditions, in a kind of separate and delimited domain inside the everyday Athenian society — a domain, moreover, in which the usual rules of ordinary reality are subverted and extraordinary or irrational phenomena occur unproblematically, as though they formed part of the expected

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100 See Reckford 1987, 331–332; Silk 2000, 286–289; Corbel-Morana 2012, 175–177. Cf. Whitman 1964, 181–182 on the image of wings and flying, which occupies a central place in the text of the *Birds*.

101 Cf. Newiger 1957, 53; Taillardat 1962, 454–455, 505; Konstantakos 2010.

order of events. Therefore, the particular context in which the enlivened meta-
phors occur in these plays may be considered as a form of distinct secondary
world; it is a fictitious heterotopia which has been invented by the poet and has
been introduced into the ordinary setting of the comedy, as a secluded other-
world operating within the framework of the heroes' common experience.

In the *Wasps*, the elderly hero Philocleon suffers from an inveterate obses-
sion with public trials and is abnormally fond of serving as a judge in the popular
court of the Heliaea. His sober son Bdelycleon, who dislikes the way the Athenian
judges are manipulated by the populist demagogues, wishes to keep his father
away from the courts; but the old man cannot live without his favourite judicial
occupation. Therefore, Bdelycleon comes up with an eccentric plan: to inaugu-
rate a domestic court of law, which will operate at the threshold of their family
house, and in which Philocleon will be the sole judge. The old dicast will sit there,
a one-man jury by himself, and judge the private disputes which are bound to
arise between the slaves, the domestic animals, and other members of the house-
hold, following all the formalities of the Attic law (764 ff.). Oddly enough, Philo-
cleon is content with this outrageous idea. Thus, father and son collaborate to set
up an improvised courtroom outside their house door; a series of easily available
household utensils are transformed into makeshift components of the court set-
ting (805–891).

When everything is ready, the first case is introduced: a dog of the house-
hold, named Labes ("Snatcher"), has stolen from the pantry and eaten up a
truckle of Sicilian cheese. Another dog, Kyon of Cydathenaeum, presents the ac-
cusation (835–843). Their judicial conflict is tried and adjudicated according to
the Athenian court procedure, until the judge finally casts his vote and the de-
fendant is acquitted (892–1002). Apart from the obvious parody of the operation
of Athenian courts, this episode is also replete with marvellous and fabulous mo-
tifs, beyond the laws of nature and the limits of ordinary reality. The prosecuting
dog stands up and speaks with a man's voice, as though he were a human being.
Inanimate household utensils are enlivened and move, as though living crea-
tures; they come into court, take up their places on the witnesses' bench, and one
of them (the cheese-grater) is actually called to the stand, is interrogated by the
defendant's representative, and answers the questions by nodding "yes" or "no".

As becomes clear from these elements, the private court in Philocleon's
house does not form part of the ordinary reality of the Athenian city. It is a sepa-
rate construct, a miniature *cosmos* operating according to its own peculiar rules;
it therefore fulfils the basic criteria of an invented secondary world, even though
it is not situated in a distant land or in a parallel alternative universe, but is

inserted within the broader civic space of Athens.[102] It is within this constructed otherworld that the staged metaphor operates, revolving around the spectacle of the two personified dogs, who dispute at court like human litigants. It is obvious from the speaking names that the two hounds are symbolic aliases of two contemporary Athenian statesmen: Labes refers to the general Laches, and Kyon is a thinly disguised allegory of the demagogue Cleon, who also came from the deme of Cydathenaeum. The representation of the two politicians in the form of dogs relies on the materialisation of a figurative expression taken from the political jargon of late fifth-century Athens. The demagogues of Athenian radical democracy, notably Cleon and his clique, used to compare themselves, in their rhetorical speeches, to "watchdogs" of the *polis* or the people, so as to promote themselves as guardians of the state and highlight their own contribution to the protection of democracy. Aristophanes takes the demagogues' rhetorical figure literally and turns it into a grotesque scenic spectacle, by casting the two politicians as actual human-voiced dogs. In the context of the fantastic secondary world, a rhetorical *topos* of contemporary political discourse is invested with physical substance.[103]

In the *Clouds*, another play set in the urban milieu of fifth-century Athens, the heterotopian space of Socrates' philosophical school, the so-called *phrontisterion*, is the epicentre of the scenically materialised metaphors. The *phrontisterion* is another delimited domain in which the laws of the ordinary Athenian society do not apply. It has a dark and ominous interior (505–509) and houses a collection of strange instruments, which would have appeared weird in the layman's eyes in Classical Athens (200–217). It shelters a group of persons of peculiar physique and appearance, all of them identical in their pale complexion, skinny bodies, hunched posture, and overall miserable look, which recalls prisoners of war (184–199, 500–504). They might well be taken for members of an alien tribe from a distant land. Although no marvellous or supernatural events are reported to take place in the *phrontisterion*, the latter is the home of extraordinary non-physical creatures, namely the two Logoi, Right and Wrong, who are embodiments of abstract concepts. In all these respects, the Socratic school of the *Clouds* may be considered as a secondary otherworld inserted into the Athenian setting of the play.

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102 On the fabulous and fairy-tale materials, which underlie the episode of the domestic court in the *Wasps*, see Konstantakos 2017b; Konstantakos 2021b, 240–248.

103 See Taillardat 1962, 404–406, 505; Corbel-Morana 2012, 118–136; Konstantakos 2021b, 240–244.

In connection with the *phrontisterion*, two specimens of materialised metaphor are introduced into the text. The word μετέωρος (literally "raised in mid-air", "high in the air"), like other words of related semantics, such as the verbal forms πεπότημαι and ἀνεπτέρωμαι ("I fly up, I soar in the air"), could be figuratively used in the sense "I am not down-to-earth", "I am out of touch with reality", "I have my head in the clouds", "I think erratically". Consequently, μετέωρος and kindred expressions might be metaphorically applied to philosophers and intellectuals, who were considered to be out of touch with the real world and absorbed in strange thoughts, as though "lost in the clouds".[104] Socrates, as represented in the Aristophanic comedy, is a perfect example of this category of persons; he could be described as μετέωρος in the sense of an unworldly man dedicated to weird ideas. Aristophanes takes the term μετέωρος literally and presents his Socrates, on his first entry on stage, as actually soaring in the air: the philosopher sits in a large basket which hangs from a crane, so as to hover above the ground (218–238).[105] In the same way, the personified Clouds, who appear as divine patronesses of Socrates and his school, are entities of the sky and float about in the air. They thus emblematise the philosophers' detachment from down-to-earth matters and their absorption with abstract concepts.[106]

7 Epilogue

Aristophanes and other comic poets of fifth-century Athens cultivated successfully the genre of fantastic and fairy-tale comedy, the kind of comic drama that drew its materials from popular imagination and magical narrative. Central to this form of drama was the invention of secondary otherworlds, fictitious societies, and states of being characterised by marvellous, supernatural, or utopian traits. Poetic language provided an important means for the creation of these imaginary *cosmoi* within the dramatic fiction.

The comic writers exploited a range of linguistic and stylistic devices to define the identity of their invented worlds and develop their various facets. Grotesque composite nouns were fabricated, to serve as names of the fictitious polities and reveal their imaginary nature. Verbal accumulation was used for the depiction of utopias of gastronomic abundance and fabulous wealth. Wordplays,

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104 See Newiger 1957, 55–59; Taillardat 1962, 115–116, 249–250, 430–431, 505; Dover 1968, lxvii–lxix; Thiercy 1986, 109.
105 Cf. Taillardat 1962, 250.
106 Cf. Bernhard Zimmermann's chapter in this volume.

based on homophony or semantic ambiguity, provided the basis for the genesis of the fantastic societies and the blueprint for the formation of many of their individual aspects, from institutions and administration to demography and political life. Enlivened metaphors and scenically materialised figures of speech emblematised the surreal nature of the secondary worlds. At least one poet, Pherecrates, may have gone as far as to envisage a special language spoken by the inhabitants of the fictitious otherworld, and to pepper his text with selected specimens of its made-up vocabulary.

Thanks to the scope and variety of these techniques, comic language became the central means for the construction and representation of imaginary worlds in Attic comic drama. The staging and performance of these secondary sub-creations was dependent on the material provided by linguistic invention and verbal ingenuity. Comic fantasy, in ancient Greek theatre, was primarily a feat of language and poetic art.

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S. Douglas Olson
A Less Maculate Muse

Abstract: This chapter considers the nature of sexual humour in ancient Greek literature, with particular attention to Athenian Old Comedy and the pioneering work of Jeffrey Henderson in *The Maculate Muse*. Henderson argues that comedy describes sexual activities and sexual organs with a wide variety of primarily allusive terms. His work depends on close readings of thousands of individual passages, supported by a complex implicit theory as to how figurative language is established and deployed on the comic stage to shock and amuse. Through a series of case studies, it is argued that Henderson's treatment of specific obscenities (or alleged obscenities) is often inadequate, confused, or unclear, and that the humour of many individual passages in Athenian Old Comedy is not what he takes it to be. A larger concern is with how riddling, allusive language of this sort is created and employed, and — much more important — with how it can be detected, and the risks of misidentifying or misreading it.

Most readers today would agree that fifth-century Athenian comedy, the so-called "Old Comedy", is somehow "funny", and there can be little doubt that in its original performance context it was at least intended to be funny. Precisely how Old Comic humour works is a more complex and difficult matter. But obscenity — the use of coarse, "dirty" sexual language, often for mocking or abusive purposes — is generally and not unreasonably taken to be an important and perhaps central part of its appeal. This is a genre, after all, in which all adult male characters were outfitted with oversized leather penises that dangled outside their clothing, crudities seemingly equivalent to the modern English "fuck" and "shit" are ubiquitous, and the hero's ultimate triumph is routinely depicted as involving access to beautiful women and occasionally boys.

Like many classicists of my generation, I was introduced to Old Comedy and the nature of Old Comic humour in particular by Jeffrey Henderson's ground-

breaking 1975 book *The Maculate Muse*.[1] *The Maculate Muse* (hereafter *MM*) is itself the product of an enormous cultural shift in America in the late 1960s and early 1970s that involved a recognition not just of the significance of sexuality in personal and political life, but of the right and indeed the obligation to acknowledge and discuss that significance. It had always been obvious that obscenity was an important component of Aristophanes' plays and their humour, even if the matter had never been given systematic scholarly consideration. *MM* amounted to a call for open acknowledgement of the pervasiveness and vigour of such language, which it converted into a basic tool for interpreting Old Comedy and genres cognate with it, such as *iambos*. The individual paragraph-entries in *MM*, moreover, showed that obscenity was far more pervasive in Old Comedy than earlier investigations of the matter had suggested, and far more inventive. The larger categories into which the material was collected also pointed to the existence of whole fields of metaphor and imagery not previously identified as such. The result was to open up new dimensions of the primary texts to consideration, and to invigorate discussion of a genre that up to that time had been generally treated as far less significant and exciting than fifth-century tragedy. It might accordingly be said without much exaggeration that the late twentieth-century reception of the Old Comic poets can be divided into two general periods, before the publication of *MM* and after it. The ripple effects of the book were even more significant, for if a word or idea could be shown to be obscene — and thus amusing — in the Old Comic poets, where the evidence was particularly dense and informative, the same word or idea could be tentatively treated as such in other, more fragmentary or less effectively understood genres and texts.

 MM is equipped with a long theoretical introduction to the question of obscenity that situates its subject in a Freudian context (pp. 1–55). It offers no equivalent explicit discussion of what it takes to be the mechanics of figurative language, on the one hand, or its own philological procedures, on the other, leaving the reader to infer answers to such questions from the text itself. Broadly put, *MM* appears to treat most Old Comic obscenity as one of two forms of verbal play. "Primary obscenities" — words equivalent to "asshole" and "fuck" — are used for their shock value, as something like punchlines, where the unexpected and in one sense inappropriate crudity of the language makes the audience laugh with pleasure at the reference to a fact or function that ought not to be discussed openly. Other Old Comic obscenities — the type on which this

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1 Henderson 1975. The book is generally cited from the 1991 Oxford University Press second edition. With the exception of a short section of "Addenda, Corrigenda, Retractanda" (pp. 240–252), however, the two editions are identical. For the topic in general, see more recently Robson 2006.

paper concentrates — are figurative: otherwise innocent words are used in a double sense, and the disjuncture between pedestrian and metaphorical senses becomes an object of amusement and delight in and of itself, with the delight further sweetened by the realisation that this is yet another way of saying and listening to "dirty things" in public. As for its style of philological argument, *MM* seems to proceed from a conviction — in one sense, not particularly controversial — that a case for a previously unsuspected figurative sense of a word is built in the first instance by citing parallels in an essentially exponential fashion: two examples of an alleged double sense are far more than twice as compelling an argument as only one, and so forth. More controversially, *MM* assumes that once a number of words of double sense falling into a general figurative field (agricultural language or language of sailing, for example) have been identified, other words belonging to the same field can be treated as potentially having a similar valence. The pervasiveness of such language emerges as fundamental to Old Comic humour as *MM* understands it, and indeed to the humour of texts of a number of other sorts.

In Section I of this paper, I take what I understand to be the implicit methodological assumptions of *MM* seriously, by examining the textual and lexicographic basis for its claims regarding seventy-two individual items falling into four broad figurative fields.[2] This analysis suggests that much of the evidence the book puts forward for a double sense for individual lexical items is weaker than it is represented as being. In addition, a number of the figurative fields and subfields *MM* identifies as rich sources of allusive obscenities, and thus of humour of various sorts, seem not to exist. All of this has substantial implications for how we read Old Comedy and how it was intended to be funny. Section II accordingly attempts to articulate some alternative basic principles for evaluating figurative language and the humour dependent on it in ancient sources, taking account of

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2 Items are identified by their original paragraph-numbers in parentheses, and are generally placed with the figurative field to which *MM* assigns them. The inherent complexity of metaphor as a linguistic practice and the occasionally sprawling nature of the original discussion mean that some relevant terms may be omitted. My general contention is nonetheless that this is a sufficiently large and substantial subset of examples to suggest that my conclusions can be taken to apply to the volume as a whole. Because reference numbers for most of the primary texts cited in *MM* have changed since 1975, I routinely give the modern numbers (in the case of comedy, Kassel/Austin fragment numbers) followed by the number offered in *MM*. Where *MM* cites modern secondary authorities, I generally do not repeat the bibliographic information. References to standard commentaries and editions such as Dover's *Clouds* and Kassel/Austin's *Poetae Comici Graeci* are treated as self-explanatory.

the limited nature of the material available and our distance from the primary sources and the cultures that produced them.

Section I: *MM* on four alleged sets of figurative obscenities

A. Agricultural language used for the act of intercourse (1–11) and for the male genitals (12–16)

This appears to be a large and previously disregarded figurative field consisting on the one hand of verbs properly applied to agricultural activities given a secondary sexual sense, and on the other hand of nouns properly referring to agricultural products used in reference to the penis.[3]

1. ἀλοάω, "thresh" (§280). *MM* suggests that at Ar. *Ran.* 149 ἢ μητέρ' ἠλόησεν (literally "he threshed his mother") the verb means not figuratively "beat, cudgeled" (= LSJ *s.v.* I.2), as is generally assumed, but "had sex with", on the ground that the former meaning is insufficiently different from ἢ πατρὸς γνάθον / ἐπάταξεν ("or struck his father's jaw"), which follows. But it also acknowledges that the supposed metaphorical sense of the verb is attested nowhere else, and Ar. fr. dub. 932 ἀλοᾶν χρὴ τὰς γνάθους ("it's necessary to 'thresh' their jaws") with Phot. α 1021 = *Synag.* Β α 986 ἀλοᾶν· τύπτειν, βάλλειν ("to thresh; to strike, to hit") supports the traditional interpretation.

2. βωλοκοπέω, "break up clods (as in a field)" (§283). Ar. fr. 57 Dem. καλῶς με βεβωλοκόπηκεν is actually Men. *Dys.* 514–515 (cited as a *comparandum* at *MM* 166 n. 70), where the context shows that the verb is not being used as a sexual metaphor, but means something like "throw for a loss".

3. γεωργέω, "farm" (§284). As *MM* notes, at Ar. *Lys.* 1173 ἤδη γεωργεῖν γυμνὸς ἀποδὺς βούλομαι ("I want to strip naked now and work the land"; one of the Athenian ambassadors contemplates a reunion with Reconciliation, personified as a beautiful young woman), the verb gets its metaphorical sexual sense from context, in that individual parts of Reconciliation's body are compared to geographic features of the Greek world. The sexual overtones probably depend as well on what appears to be a standard Athenian marriage formula, in which a woman

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3 *MM* catalogues other nouns from the same figurative field that allegedly describe the female anatomy (scattered through §107–204), but considerations of space make discussion of them here impossible.

was given to a man γνησίων παίδων ἐπ’ ἀρότῳ (literally “for the ploughing of legitimate children”; e.g. Men. *Pk.* 1013–1014). There is no other evidence to support the notion that γεωργέω alone has an established sense “have intercourse with”.[4]

4. διαλέγω, “pick out, separate, examine” (§155, 295). At Ar. *Lys.* 720–721 τὴν μέν γε πρώην διαλέγουσαν τὴν ὀπὴν / κατέλαβον ᾗ τοῦ Πανός ἐστι ταὐλίον (literally “I caught the first one picking apart the hole where Pan’s cave is”), the heroine is describing the first in a series of attempts by individual women occupying the Acropolis to sneak off to their husbands. Σ^R glosses διαλέγουσαν with διορύτ-τουσαν (“boring through, excavating”; cf. Hsch. δ 1129 διαλέξαι· διορύξαι) and adds κακεμφάτως (“in a vulgar sense”). Wilamowitz *ad loc.* rejects Σ^R’s interpretation as “willkürlich” (“arbitrary”); compares Hsch. δ 1116 διαλέγειν· ἀνακαθαί-ρειν, ᾗ δέον ἀπιέναι ἢ ἐκπλεῖν (“*dialegein*: to clear (a path) by which one needs to exit or sail out”); and argues that the point is that the woman is widening a pre-existing hole in the rock.[5] *MM*, by contrast, takes the scholion’s κακεμφάτως seriously and argues for a second sense of διαλέγω (the woman has been caught picking open or enlarging her vagina), rejecting Wilamowitz’s interpretation on the ground that it “serves to leach all the humour from the joke (and there *must* be a joke here) without offering either a reasonable defense of his explanation or an alternative source of humour”. As *MM* itself concedes, διαλέγω is not specifically agricultural language and thus does not really contribute to the construction of this as a productive figurative field. But there are a number of additional problems with the argument. The first is that the claim that the passage is not funny on Wilamowitz’s reading is misleading, for *Lys.* 720–721 remain just as amusing as the two lines that follow, in which another woman is said to have tried to get away from the Acropolis by means of a block-and-tackle, i.e. construction machinery being used for work on the Erechtheion, and which *MM* does not treat as sexual. What *MM* means by “funny” is thus apparently “enlivened by a sexual double entendre”, which is a form of circular argument.[6] Nor do the first two anecdotes need to be obliquely sexualised in the way a number of those that follow are: the general joke is that the women are deserting the Acropolis in various ridiculous ways, and sexual humour is then mixed into the remarks that

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4 Cf. Ar. *Lys.* 1174, where the Spartan ambassador in turn expresses a desire to κοπραγωγῆν (lit. “to spread dung”, *sc.* on a field as fertiliser), referring metaphorically to the supposed Spartan preference for anal intercourse. Here too the double sense seems to be produced by context alone.

5 Cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 350, where Hermann proposed reading διαλέξαι (in reference to an ὀπή) in place of the paradosis διορύξαι.

6 “The passage is funny; it cannot be funny if there is no sexual double entendre; therefore the passage contains sexual double entendre”.

follow. Equally important, *MM* cites no parallels elsewhere for the supposed extended sense of διαλέγω, and even if one accepts the general interpretation of the line as "obscene", διαλέγω need not have an unusual sense, the much more obviously ambiguous use of ὀπή alone being enough to generate the supposed humour.

5. καταγιγαρτίζω (§285). At Ar. *Ach.* 275, as the climax of a fantasy of raping a slave-girl caught stealing wood from his land, Dicaeopolis imagines μέσην λαβόντ', ἄραντα, καταβαλόντα καταγιγαρτίσαι ("after grabbing her about the waist, lifting her up, throwing her down, grape-seeding her down"). Σ^REF3 — citing no evidence in support of the thesis — maintains that γίγαρτον is a word for "penis" and glosses καταγιγαρτίσαι (a *hapax*) with συνουσιάσαι (~ "to have sex with"). But Σ^REF3 also suggests ἢ καταθλῖψαι, ἀπὸ μεταφορᾶς τῶν γιγάρτων ("or 'to press', metaphorically from *gigarta* (grape-seeds)"), whence van Leeuwen's *ex uvis prelo subiectis succum exprimere* (~ "to press like a grape") and Taillardat's "pressurer le raisin".[7] *MM* rejects the latter interpretation and follows Starkie in taking καταγιγαρτίζω to mean metaphorically "deflower",[8] apparently on the ground that "γίγαρτον ... refers to virginity (and youthfulness)" (p. 166 n. 71) in *PLond. Lit.* 188.246 (*PLond. ined.* 1821). The word in the London papyrus (a Greek-Coptic glossary from the sixth century CE), however, is diminutive γιγαρτώνιον (= γιγαρτόνιον; otherwise unattested), and the gloss reads "the unripe grapes".[9] The evidence is thus overwhelming that van Leeuwen and Taillardat are right, and that the claim in Σ^REF3 that γίγαρτον means "penis" is merely a guess.

6. κοκκίζω, "extract seeds from" (§286). *MM* supports its interpretation of καταγιγαρτίζω (**5**) by comparing Ar. fr. 623 (610 K.) ὀξυγλύκειάν τἄρα κοκκιεῖς ῥόαν (literally "and you're going to seed a sweet-sour pomegranate, then"), following Dobree in understanding this to be a metaphorical reference to having sex with an under-age girl. But Dobree's interpretation of the verse is a guess — Pollux merely cites the line as evidence that κοκκίζω could be used of "seeding" a pomegranate — and there is no other reason to believe that the word has a second, sexualised sense, much less that it refers specifically to deflowering.

7. λέπω, "peel" and ἀποδέρω, "flay" (§288–291). At Ar. *Lys.* 736, one of the women occupying the Acropolis attempts to leave on the ground that she left her flax ἄλοπος ("unpeeled") at home; once she has "flayed it" (ἀποδείρασ(α)), she insists, she will return. These lines are full of seeming sexual double entendres,

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[7] Taillardat 1962, §173 (not "le raison").

[8] Henderson's phrasing ("The scholiast's alternative gloss, καταθλῖψαι") makes it appear that this too is an ancient explanation of the sense of καταγιγαρτίσαι, but it is not.

[9] For the text, see Bell/Crum 1925, 177–226 (at 192, 210).

making it likely that *MM* is right that what the woman really wants to "peel" or "flay" is her husband's penis, i.e. she intends to make him erect and have sex with him. Expanding on this interpretation, *MM* cites for λέπω Eupolis fr. 465 (427 K.) λέπει; Alexis fr. 50.3 (49.3 K.) λέπεσθε (addressed to a group of women); Mnesimachus fr. 4.18 (4.18 K.) λέπεται κόρδαξ (part of a description of a wild party); and for ἀποδέρω Ar. *Lys*. 953 (the sexually frustrated Cinesias complains that his wife Myrrhine has gone away ἀποδείρασ(α)); Ar. *Vesp*. 450 (Philocleon reminds one of his slaves how once upon a time ἐξέδειρ' εὖ κἀνδρικῶς); Ar. *Lys*. 158 = Pherecrates fr. 193 τὸ τοῦ Φερεκράτους, κύνα δέρειν δεδαρμένην ("What Pherecrates said — to flay a flayed dog"; Lysistrata's response to Calonice's concern that their husbands may divorce the women, if they refuse to have sex with them); Ar. fr. 332.5 (320.5 K.) περιδέραι(α); Timocles fr. 19.1 (2.1 Dem.) δεδαρμέν[ο]ν. Neither verb is strictly agricultural in its primary sense, and in any case:

– λέπει in Eupolis fr. 465 (427 K.) is merely Meineke's suggestion for an emendation of the paradosis λέπτει found in Photius, although it is printed by Kassel/Austin. The sense is obscure, but Photius — i.e. the lexicographic source Photius has taken over — glosses κατεσθίει ("consumes"), suggesting that whatever Eupolis wrote, the sense was not obviously sexual.

– When Athenaeus (14.663c–d) cites Alexis fr. 50 (49 K.), he observes vaguely that τῷ δὲ λέπεσθαι χρῶνται οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι ἐπ' ἀσελγοῦς καὶ φορτικῆς δι' ἀφροδισίων ἡδονῆς ("The Athenians use *lepesthai* in reference to crude, base sexual pleasure"). The meaning of the verb in the middle — not the active here — is obscure beyond this, and nothing suggests that fellatio is in question in verse 3, despite *MM*.[10]

– Mnesimachus fr. 4.18 (4.18 K.) λέπεται κόρδαξ (once again middle rather than active) is taken by *MM* to refer to "an obscene dance in which masturbation (note middle voice) is featured". This is difficult to extract from the text, which appears instead to mean something like "a lewd *kordax*-dance is being performed".

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10 "λέπεσθε ... clearly means 'get the penis ready for fellatio'". Note that the only evidence that the addressees are "prostitutes or flute-girls", as *MM* maintains, is that they are also ordered to drink toasts (προπόσεις πίνετε) in verse 2. The next command (the final one in the fragment) is ματτυάζετε ("prepare *mattuê*!", a fancy Macedonian-style dish), which *MM* seemingly takes as another reference to fellatio, citing Ar. *Nub*. 451 ματτυολοιχός (lit. "*mattuê*-licker"). But ματτυολοιχός is merely Bentley's conjecture for the paradosis ματιολοιχός, which Dover prints, noting that *mattuê* is otherwise referred to only in the Macedonian period. Even if the conjecture is accepted, it would have to mean "greedy parasite" (thus Dover *ad loc*.) *vel sim*. and scarcely "fellator".

λέπομαι thus seemingly had a secondary sexual sense that is activated in the use of the active in the *Lysistrata* scene. But its specific meaning beyond that is difficult to identify and may merely be a vague "excite" *vel sim*. As for ἀποδέρω:

– Cinesias' ἀποδείρασ(α) at Ar. *Lys*. 953 does not obviously mean anything more than "after tormenting me", which is precisely what Lysistrata has asked her to do (839–841).
– Ar. *Vesp*. 450 has nothing to do with homosexual rape, as *MM* would have it, but refers to a beating and is thus irrelevant.
– The "flayed dog" of *Lys*. 158 is obscure, but is taken by Henderson in his commentary *ad loc*. to refer to a leather dildo, making this passage too irrelevant.
– περιδέραι(α) at Ar. fr. 332.5 (320.5 K.) is < δέρη ("neck") and means "necklace", and is thus irrelevant.
– At Timocles fr. 19.1 (2.1 Dem.) δεδαρμέν[ο]ν is a reference to the flaying of Marsyas, and is thus again irrelevant.

8. ὀρύττω, "dig" (§292). As *MM* notes, the verb is used allusively at Ar. *Av*. 442 of penetrating another person's anus; cf. Ar. *Nub*. 714, where Strepsiades says of the bedbugs in his pallet τὸν πρωκτὸν διορύττουσιν ("they're boring through my asshole"). The image is not agricultural, however, but is drawn from the combat sports ("neither to bite me, nor to yank my testicles, nor to gouge...";[11] = the terms of the truce supposedly reached by an unfortunate knife-maker and his physically abusive wife), as also at Ar. *Pax* 898 (with specific reference to *pankration*-fighting). Nor is there any other evidence for a sexualised metaphorical use: of the other passages cited by *MM*, at Ar. *Pax* 372 ταύτην ἀνορύττων refers literally to "digging up" the goddess Peace, who has been buried in a cave, while at Pherecrates fr. 155.19 (145.19 K.) ὁ δὲ Τιμόθεός μ', ὦ φιλτάτη, κατορώρυχεν / καὶ διακέκναικ' αἴσχιστα ("And Timotheus, my dear, buried me and shamefully wore me away to nothing"; Music describes what she suffered at the hands of one in a series of lovers/composers), κατορύττω clearly refers metaphorically to abuse of some sort (thus LSJ *s.v.* 2.a "ruin utterly"), but neither verb has an obviously sexual sense.

9. σκαλαθῦραι (§293–294). The verb is attested at Ar. *Eccl*. 611 (what a man might want to do with a girl he desires), but otherwise only in the scholia and the lexicographers, who gloss it συνουσιάσαι (~ "to have sex"; thus Σᴿ *ad loc*. = *Suda* σ 521) and ἀκολασταίνων ("behaving wantonly"; thus Hsch. σ 810). *MM* takes the second element to be < θύρα ("door"). But the *upsilon* in that word is short, and

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11 The word "anus" is not used, but the point is clear from what follows ("(B.) Not your...? (A.) No, I'm referring to my eyes").

σκαλαθῦραι is more likely < ἀθύρω, so that the sense is "poke in a playful fashion" *vel sim.*; see below, the section on *Language of hitting, piercing, and the like*. This is not agricultural language in any case.

10. σκαλεύω, "stir, poke" (§294). *MM* takes Ar. *Pax* 440 ἔχονθ' ἑταίραν καὶ σκαλεύοντ' ἄνθρακας (literally "holding a courtesan and poking coals"; from a vision of the ideal life of peace) to mean "poking her hot coals" and thus metaphorically "her vagina". But sitting beside a fire is a standard part of homely images of felicity (e.g. Ar. *Ach*. 984; *Vesp*. 773; *Pax* 1131–1132), and there is no obvious reason to give either σκαλεύω or ἄνθρακας an extended, sexualised sense; cf. **17**. In support of an obscene interpretation of the line from *Peace*, *MM* cites Ar. *Ach*. 1014 τὸ πῦρ ὑποσκάλευε ("Fan the fire!"; Dicaeopolis gives directions to the slave helping him cook the eel). But there as well there is no obvious sexual allusion and no need of one to make sense of the passage.

11. τρυγάω, "gather (fruit)" (§287). At the end of Aristophanes' *Peace*, the hero and his bride Opora ("Summer Fruit") are hailed by the Chorus with a sort of wedding song in which they say of her (1339) τρυγήσομεν αὐτήν ("we will gather her in"). There are patent sexual overtones here, and the scene is an appropriate ending to the play, in that it celebrates a return to the countryside and the old farmer-hero's acquisition of a bride. But the double sense of the verb is attested nowhere else and is just as easily understood as dependent on the context.

12. ἀμοργίς, "mallow stalk" (§39). At Ar. *Lys*. 735–736, one of the women attempting to escape the Acropolis complains that she has left a mallow stalk unscutched (ἄλοπος) at home. The middle of λέπω (whence ἄλοπος) appears to have a sexual valence; see **7**. But nothing suggests that ἀμοργίς — glossed "the erect member" by *MM* — does as well, as opposed to serving to set up a quick one-off joke.

13. βάλανος, "acorn" (§40–41, 44). The word is applied to a variety of objects that resemble an acorn, including a bolt for locking a door (Ar. *Vesp*. 200), and at Arist. *Hist. an.* 493a 27, Poll. 2.171, and Gal. *De loc. aff.* 8.442.2 K. is used as a term for the head of the penis. The same sense appears to be activated at Ar. *Lys*. 413, where the Probulus describes a naïve husband whose wife has had the βάλανος ("pin" *vel sim.*) of her necklace fall out (410), and who asks a goldsmith to go to his house that evening while he is away and ἐκείνη τὴν βάλανον ἐνάρμοσον ("fasten the/your *balanos* for/in her!"). This is wordplay of a sort, but does not suggest that the head of the penis was metaphorically conceived of as an acorn, even if it was called by a word that properly meant "acorn". Nor do the other passages *MM* cites support a strong metaphorical sense of βάλανος:

– βαλανεύω at Ar. *Lys*. 337 (the female semi-chorus describe the male semi-chorus as bringing logs to the Acropolis βαλανεύσοντας) does not mean "in

order to penetrate sexually" but "in order to play the role of bathmen", i.e. "light a fire"; cf. **56**.

– At Ar. *Eccl.* 361 βεβαλάνωκε τὴν θύραν (cf. 370), the constipated Blepyrus does not complain that the wild pear he ate "is banging at my back gate" (~ "raping me anally"), but that it has locked him closed.

– Timocles fr. 2 (2 K.) καὶ τὸ γλωττοκομεῖον βαλανεύσατε ("and you gave a bath to the reed-case") can be regarded as obscene only if one assumes that both words have a double sense, which is a *petitio principii*.

14. ἐρέβινθος, "chickpea" (§42). This is patently a euphemism for "penis" at Ar. *Ran.* 545 τοὐρεβίνθου ’δραττόμην (literally "I was grasping my chickpea"; in reference to masturbation), as perhaps also in a joke of a different sort at Ar. *Ach.* 801 (Dicaeopolis proposes offering chickpeas to the Megarian's daughters, whom he plans to buy and put to sexual use). Cf. Sophilus fr. 9 (8 K.) ὁ πατὴρ ὁ ταύτης πολὺ μέγιστός ἐστι / κριὸς ἐρέβινθος ("this girl's father is far and away the biggest ram-chickpea"), where "ram-chickpea" might — or might not — be an even more extended metaphor ("penis" = "man"). *MM*'s claim that the word has the euphemistic sense "penis" at Ar. *Pax* 1137, on the other hand, depends on a problematic reading of that passage (see **17**), while at Ar. *Eccl.* 45 (cited as another parallel) chickpeas are simply a snack consumed along with wine.

15. κριθή, "barley" (§43). The word is patently used as a euphemism for an erect penis at Ar. *Pax* 966–967 (when Trygaeus notes that the women in the theatre have not got any of the sacrificial barley thrown to the audience, the Slave tells him the men "will give it to them this evening"). That this was a well-established secondary use is suggested by Ar. *Av.* 505–507 (the fact that the Phoenicians began to harvest wheat and κριθαί when the cuckoo calls is taken to explain the saying "Circumcised men into the field!") and perhaps Ar. *Av.* 566 (when sacrifices are made to Aphrodite, κριθαί should also be offered to the φαληρίς, "coot", but punning on φαλλός). Note also Hsch. κ 4106 κρίθων· ἐπώνυμον ἀνδρὸς μοιχαλίου ("*krithôn*: a nickname for an adulterer").[12] That the cognate verb **κριθάω/κριθιάω** also has a sexual meaning, as *MM* maintains, on the other hand, is not apparent. The basic sense seems to be "consume barley" and thus by extension "run wild" (of animals such as donkeys,[13] and metaphorically of

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[12] Characterised as a "comic name" by *MM*, but not identified by either Kock or Kassel/Austin as a comic adespoton.

[13] Cf. Aesch. *Ag.* 1641 κριθῶντα πῶλον; Soph. fr. 876 κριθώσης ὄνου; Babr. 62.2 ἡμίονος ... κριθιήσας (misidentified by *MM* as a reference to a human being).

human beings[14] and the like[15]). But none of the passages cited in *MM* has a sexual sense except the fragment of Cleanthes ἐκ κριθιῶντος ἀνδρὸς ἐν ἀφροδισίοις, where the addition of ἐν ἀφροδισίοις makes it clear that κριθιάω by itself lacks this significance. As *MM* notes, Cratinus (fr. 409 (381 K.)) is supposed to have used ἀμφίκαυστις (cognate with καίω, "burn") — a term for some particular variety of barley, or for barley harvested at a specific time or processed in a specific way — either to mean ὀσφύς or in reference to the genitals. But the ancient sources (collected by Kassel/Austin) show no sign of direct acquaintance with the original text, and the significance of the image remains obscure.[16]

16. σῦκον, "fig" etc. (§31–38, 122). *MM* begins §31 by qualifying the fig as "a common source of double entendres for the organs of both sexes", with the tree used as an image of the male genitals, the fruit as an image of the female genitals. The specific terms in question are:

a) **συκῆ, "fig-tree"** (§31). At Ar. *Eccl.* 708, δίφορος συκῆ (literally "double-bearing fig-tree") is patently a riddling reference to a penis and scrotum sack. The same image seems to be preserved at Antiphanes fr. 196 (198 K.) ἔστιν παρ' αὐτὴν τὴν δίφορον συκῆν κάτω ("It's down below beside the double-bearing fig-tree itself"), suggesting that this was established fourth-century usage. Pherecrates fr. 103 (97 K.) σῦκα τῶν διφόρων ("figs of the double-bearing variety"; unmetrical) *ap.* Poll. 7.152 might be another example (pushing the image back into the fifth century), but is not necessarily anything more than a simple botanical reference, as at Theophr. *Caus. pl.* 5.1.6 ὁ τῶν διφόρων συκῶν λεγομένων καρπός ("the fruit of the so-called double-bearing figs"). These are the only solid examples of συκῆ meaning "penis", and the point of the image would seem to be not so much that a penis resembles a fig tree, as that a scrotum roughly resembles a fig in shape; that it is "double-bearing" because there are two testicles; and that what the scrotum hangs from can therefore be riddlingly described as a "fig-tree".

b) **συκίς, "fig-shoot/fig-cutting"** (§32). At Ar. *Ach.* 995–998, the plantings the Chorus vow to undertake to celebrate their marriage to the personified Reconciliation include νέα μοσχίδια συκίδων ("new fig-tree shoots"), as well as grapes and olives. *MM*, building on the interpretation of the passages discussed in **62**, takes all this language to be sexualised in one way or another: not only are the fig-tree shoots ~ penises, but ἀμπελίδος ὄρχον ... μακρόν

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14 Cleanthes fr. 583 von Arnim (*Stoic.* 1.132) (quoted below); Poll. 7.24 (citing the fragments of Aeschylus and Sophocles).

15 Of δυσγένεια at Cercidas fr. 17.36 (17.16), p. 215 Powell.

16 *MM*'s "suggests the pubic hair" is a guess unsupported by the ancient evidence.

("a long row of grape-vines") and ἡμερίδος ὄρχον ("a row of *hēmeris* vines") pun on ὄρχις ("testicle"). The reading is both complicated and unnecessary to make sense of the passage, and there seem to be no other examples of συκίς suggesting "penis" or ὄρχος suggesting ὄρχις.[17]

c) **ψηνίζω, "pollinate figs by means of a gall-insect, ψήν"** (§35). The sense of the allusive adesp. com. fr. 12 K. (not included in Kassel/Austin) οὐδεὶς κομήτης ὅστις οὐ ψηνίζεται ("There's no long-hair" — i.e. "no aristocrat" — "who isn't pollinised") is apparent from the more straightforward adesp. com. frr. 13–14 K. (also not included in Kassel/Austin) οὐδεὶς κομήτης ὅστις οὐ βινητιᾷ ("There's no long-hair who doesn't want to be fucked") and οὐδεὶς κομήτης ὅστις οὐ περαίνεται ("There's no long-hair who isn't pierced"): to be "pollinised by means of a gall-insect", i.e. to be treated like a fig-tree, is to be sodomised. While ψήν may figuratively be "penis" here, therefore, this is not evidence that "fig" = genitalia. All these passages come in any case from the paroemiographer Macarius (fourteenth century CE) and cannot be treated as reliable evidence for Classical usage.

d) **ἀποσυκάζω, "test figs (*sc.* for ripeness)"** (§36). Ar. *Eq*. 259 ἀποσυκάζεις πιέζων τοὺς ὑπευθύνους (literally "you test figs, squeezing the men whose accounts are being audited"; of the Paphlagonian looking for victims) is a pun on συκοφαντία (the use of false accusations and the like). Despite *MM* §36, there is no obvious reference to homosexual rape, and if there were, the "figs" in question would presumably be anuses.

e) **θρῖον, "leaf"** (LSJ *s.v.* I.1), and thus by extension "a pastry baked in a fig-leaf or grape-leaf" (LSJ *s.v.* II) (§37). The only evidence that θρῖον could be used to describe a portion of the genitals is Ar. *Eccl*. 707–709 ὑμᾶς δὲ τέως θρῖα λαβόντας / διφόρου συκῆς / ἐν τοῖς προθύροισι δέφεσθαι ("But you [pl.] in the meantime take the leaves of your double-bearing fig-tree and beat off in the fore-courts!"), where the word perhaps refers metaphorically to the skin that covers the penis-shaft, *sc.* as a fig-leaf covers a fig-leaf pastry. As this is part of the elaborate image discussed in **16.a** and dependent on it, however, the verse is weak evidence for an established double sense "foreskin" *vel sim.* for θρῖον. *MM* also compares Ar. *Ach*. 1102 κἀμοὶ σὺ δημοῦ θρῖον· ὀπτήσω δ' ἐκεῖ ("And *you* fetch *me* a fig-leaf pastry; I'll roast it there"; Dicaeopolis to the slave helping him prepare for the Priest of Dionysus' dinner party), but understanding θρῖον there as a reference to the hero's foreskin makes the

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17 *MM* §75 compares *Lys*. 409 ὀρχουμένης μου τῆς γυναικὸς ἑσπέρας ("as my wife was dancing in the evening"), where the general context is sexual (the speaker is accidentally setting himself up to be cuckolded) but a reference to a testicle is otherwise irrelevant.

passage neither funnier nor clearer. This is also true of Ar. *Ran*. 134, where Dionysus notes that if he leaps from a tower, ἀπολέσαιμ' ἂν ἐγκεφάλου θρίω δύο ("I'd wreck the twin lobes of my brain!").

f) **ἀποθριάζω, "remove θρῖα"** (§37). *MM* glosses the verb "draw back the petals" (*sic*) of a fig and claims that it "is in meaning identical to ἀποψωλέω" ("draw back the foreskin", i.e. "become erect"). The verb is actually attested only in the lexicographers and other late sources dependent on them, where it is said to mean τὸ ἀφαιρεῖν φύλλα συκῆς. καταχρηστικῶς δὲ καὶ τὸ ὁτιοῦν ἀφαιρεῖν ("to strip leaves from a fig-tree, but by extension to strip off anything"; Hsch. α 6349 = *Etym. Magn.* p. 125.46–48, cf. Phot. α 2495 = *Synag.* B α 1845).

g) **ἐνθριόω, "wrap in a fig-leaf"** (§38). At Ar. *Lys*. 662–663, the male semi-chorus discard their outer garments ὡς τὸν ἄνδρα δεῖ / ἀνδρὸς ὄζειν εὐθύς, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐντεθριῶσθαι πρέπει ("since a man must smell outright like a man, and it's not appropriate that he be wrapped up in a fig-leaf"). *MM* maintains that ἐντεθριῶσθαι not only alludes to the way pastries were prepared, but also means "to be hoodwinked" (cf. Men. *Sam*. 241) and "to remain limp and unerect ... with foreskins unretracted". The first alleged additional sense is irrelevant to the passage, while the second is unnecessary. There is no other evidence that either the compound or the simplex had a sexual double sense.

17. φηγός, "acorn" (§165). *MM* maintains that the word can have the euphemistic sense "penis" based on its reading of Ar. *Pax* 1136–1137 κἀνθρακίζων τοὐρεβίνθου τήν τε φηγὸν ἐμπυρεύων, / χἄμα τὴν Θρᾶτταν κυνῶν (literally "and roasting some chickpeas in the coals and toasting acorns, and simultaneously kissing Thratta", i.e. the speaker's slave girl; of a party in the countryside), where the chickpea in question is supposedly the speaker's penis (see **14**) and the mention of ἄνθραξ "indicates the cunt inflamed by coitus and poked by a (phallic) stoker". There are no parallels for the supposed double sense of the word, and the passage is more economically interpreted as meaning what it appears to: the speaker happily imagines preparing rustic snacks by a fire and kissing a woman who is not his wife.

Very few of *MM*'s entries in this area thus hold up to detailed scrutiny. There are two examples of the direct metaphorical use of the name of a crop for the penis (ἐρέβινθος, κριθή), and one as part of what by the fourth century was apparently an established image (συκῆ). λέπομαι — although not λέπω — seems to have a sexual sense, but is probably not usefully regarded as "agricultural imagery". Something similar is true of βάλανος: while in other contexts the word can mean "acorn" rather than ~ "penis", this is not the same as saying that a penis is an

acorn. In three cases (γεωργέω, τρυγάω, θρῖον), agricultural language appears to take on a sexual valence from the context in which it appears; in two of these (τρυγάω and θρῖον) there is no evidence that this sense would be felt outside of the context. It is accordingly difficult to believe that there is in fact a figurative field of sexualised agricultural language capable of generating and supporting other alleged double entendres.

B. Phallic implements

This is a highly diverse collection, based on the notion that "From very early childhood all men are fascinated by tools and tool-making"[18] and are thus predisposed to represent their penis as one.

18. ἀλάβαστον, **"perfume flask"** (§45). At Ar. *Lys*. 947, the frustrated Kinesias responds to Myrrhine's λαβὲ τόνδε τὸν ἀλάβαστον ("Take this *alabastos*!") by observing ἀλλ' ἕτερον ἔχω ("But I've got another"), in reference to his erect penis. This is unquestionably a sexual double entendre. The lack of parallels for the use suggests that it is nonetheless also an example of one-off, situational humour, as opposed to an established image. In support of its interpretation of the word as an established euphemism, *MM* argues that at Ar. *Ach*. 1051–1066 "Dicaeopolis vividly demonstrates on the alabastos" the technique by which the Bride is to anoint the Bridegroom's penis with liquid peace, so as to keep him out of combat. But there is no evidence of this in the text, which instead shows that the hero pours a bit of peace *into* the flask, which the woman is holding (1063), his own hands being occupied with a pouring vessel. Nor is there any substantial ground for asserting that Ar. fr. 561 (548 K.) ἀλαβαστροθήκας τρεῖς ἔχουσαν ἐκ μιᾶς ("having [fem.] three *alabastos*-storage vessels made from (?) one"; from *Triphalēs*) is "unquestionably phallic", even if the idea — advanced originally by Blaydes — supplies an amusing interpretative framework for making sense of an otherwise obscure verse.

19. δόρυ, "spear" (§47). At Ar. *Lys*. 985, an Athenian mockingly pretends that a Spartan's erection is a spear (δόρυ). This is a joke, but not a figurative use of the word of the sort in question here.

20. ἔμβολος, "ram" (§48). For the word used figuratively to mean "(erect) penis", *MM* cites Ar. *Av*. 1256, where Peisetaerus warns Iris that γέρων ὢν στύομαι

τριέμβολον ("although I'm an old man, I've got a triple-ram hard-on"), and Ar. fr. 334.3 (fr. 317.3 K.) ὅστις ἐπεγερεῖ τὸν ἔμβολον (a wine "which will awaken your ram"); cf. Hsch. ε 2308 ἔμβολον· … τὸ αἰδοῖον ("ram: … the genitalia"). τριήρους ἐμβολάς ("the marks left by trireme rams"; a point of comparison for the impressions created on a barley-cake by the kneader's hands) at Eubulus fr. 75.12 (75.12 K.), on the other hand, is riddling dithyrambic language, and arbitrarily sexualising the line makes it neither clearer nor funnier.[19]

21. ἐπιβολή, "fine" (§50). ἐπιβάλλω (lit. "fall upon, attack") likely has the extended sense "assault (sexually)", given its use at Ar. *Av.* 1214–1216 (Peisetaerus asks Iris if any bird-magistrate ἐπέβαλέν … σοι, and she responds indignantly); see **57**. When Bdelycleon at Ar. *Vesp.* 768–769, in a mock judicial setting, tells Philocleon that he will be able to impose an ἐπιβολή (normally "penalty, fine") on a slave-girl who has misbehaved, therefore, the word may well take on a leering tone. It is nonetheless unclear that a "fine" is usefully described as an "implement".

22. ἐρετμόν, "oar" (§51). The word may have the allusive sense "penis" at Plato Comicus fr. 3.4 (3.4 K.) ἡ μὲν ἐλαυνομένη λαθρίοις ἐρετμοῖς, ὁ δ' ἐλαύνων ("she by being rowed with secret oars, he by rowing"; of Aphrodite and Dionysus, who destroyed Adonis through their separate sexual relationships with him); cf. **44**. It might just as well mean "rhythmic motions", however, and given the lack of any other examples of this use of ἐρετμόν, its obscene sense seems in any case to be determined by the use of ἐλαύνω.

23. ἐτνήρυσις, "ladle" (§52). Nothing about Ar. *Ach.* 245–246 ἀνάδος δεῦρο τὴν ἐτνήρυσιν, / ἵν' ἔτνος καταχέω τοὐλατῆρος τουτουί ("Give me the ladle up here, so that I can pour bean-soup over this flat-cake here!"; Dicaeopolis' daughter,

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19 In support of this interpretation of this fragment, *MM* §333 offers two additional examples of what are taken to be πιέζω (literally "press, squeeze") and cognates used to mean "'penetrate sexually' (in a rough fashion)": (1) Ar. *Eq.* 259 κἀποσυκάζεις πιέζων τοὺς ὑπευθύνους, where there is no hint of rape (see **16d**), however, and πιέζω patently has the extended sense "apply pressure to", *sc.* "to bend them to your will"; (2) Ar. *Lys.* 416–417, where an oblivious husband tells a well-hung young leather-worker τῆς μου γυναικὸς τοῦ ποδὸς / τὸ δακτυλίδιον πιέζει τὸ ζυγόν, / ἅθ' ἁπαλὸν ὄν ("the strap [of her sandal] squeezes the little toe of my wife's foot, given that [the toe] is tender"), and urges him (419) ἐλθὼν χάλασον, ὅπως ἂν εὐρυτέρως ἔχῃ ("come and loosen it/her up, so that it's/she's wider!"). Like the similar request made in the immediately preceding lines of the goldsmith, who is asked to "insert a bolt" for/into the man's wife, this is a patently sexual joke, in that the speaker is unknowingly asking to be cuckolded. On *MM*'s reading of the passage, 416–417 have the second sense "The bulk [ζυγόν] of my penis [ποῦς] is ramming my wife's little cunt [δακτυλίδιον]" (thus explicitly at §146). This is far too elaborate to be funny, particularly since it requires otherwise unexampled meanings of ζυγόν, ποῦς, and δακτυλίδιον.

making preparations for the celebration that will accompany the phallic procession) suggests that either ἐτνήρυσις or ἔτνος (supposedly an oblique way of describing *secreta muliebra*: §181) is to be understood as having a secondary sexual meaning.[20]

24. κέντρον, "pole, pike" (§53). At Sotades fr. 1 (p. 238 Powell; third century BCE) εἰς οὐχ ὁσίην τρυμαλιὴν τὸ κέντρον ὠθεῖς ("You thrust your pole into an unholy hole"; addressed to Ptolemy Philadelphus, who had married his sister Arsinoe), κέντρον is used as a crude riddle to mean "penis". Despite *MM*, there is no evidence that the word was common in this sense. In particular:

– The references at Ar. *Vesp*. 225–226, 406b/7, 1115, 1121 are to the stingers of the eponymous Wasps; none of these passages is enriched or clarified by taking the word to have an allusive sense "penis", and the Chorus does not normally wear a stage-phallus.

– The specific sense of κέντρων (nom.) at Ar. *Nub*. 450 (among the names Strepsiades happily imagines he might be called, were he to become a courtroom prodigy) is obscure. As *MM* notes, the only other attestation of the word is at Soph. fr. 306, where κέντρωνες is coupled with μαστιγίαι ("people who have been whipped", i.e. "worthless slaves, common criminals" or the like) and ἀλλοτριοφάγοι ("people who eat food belonging to others"), neither of which has an obvious sexual sense. LSJ *s.v.* suggests "one who bears the marks of the κέντρον", i.e. "torture victim" and thus "villain". None of the other abusive terms that surround κέντρων in the *Clouds* passage is obviously sexual in nature.

25. κήλων (§54). The word is attested in the Classical period only at Cratinus fr. 359.1 (321.1 K.) (of Pan), and earlier at Archil. fr. 43.2–3 ὥστ' ὄνου Πριηνέως / κήλωνος ἐπλήμυρεν ὀτρυγηφάγου ("it swelled full like that of a crop-eating Prienian *kēlōn*-donkey"; perhaps in reference to the penis of a sexually excited man). The Byzantine-era *Hippiatrica Berolinensia* uses it in reference to horses, and it most likely means "stud animal" rather than specifically "he-ass" (LSJ *s.v.* II),[21] and so by extension a man who is insistently eager to have sex, as at Suetonius περὶ βλασφ. 14 κήλων ὁ εἰς τὰ ἀφροδίσια ἐπιρρεπής, ἀπὸ μεταφορᾶς τῶν ὀχευτῶν

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20 *MM* cites as parallels for the supposed sense of ἔτνος Ar. *Lys*. 1061 κἄστιν ἔτνος τι ("and there's some bean soup"; from the menu for a feast) and Ar. *Eccl*. 845 χύτρας ἔτνους ἕψουσιν αἱ νεώταται ("and the youngest women are boiling cookpots of bean soup"). Neither passage is usefully described as an "obscene banquet catalogue", and taking ἔτνος as a sexual euphemism makes them neither clearer nor funnier.

21 Note also Philo *de spec. leg.* 3.47.4 ὄνους ὑπερμεγέθεις, οὓς προσαγορεύουσι κήλωνας ("exceptionally large donkeys, which they refer to as *kēlōnes*").

ὄνων ("*kēlōn*: a man who is inclined toward sex, metaphorically from stud-asses") and Philoxenus (fr. 514) κήλων· ὁ θερμὸς εἰς συνουσίαν ("*kēlōn*: a man who is hot for sexual commerce") both claim. This is thus figurative language, but not a phallic implement.

26. κοντός, "ship's pole" (§55). Epicrates fr. 9 (10 K.) is a complicated jumble of nautical and symposiastic language, which apparently refers to an old woman and a younger one (prostitutes?) as if they were sails in vv. 3–4 ἄνελκε τὴν γραῦν, / τὴν νέαν τ' ἐπουρίσας / πλήρωσον (literally "Haul up the old woman, and fill the young one up and sail onward!"); see below the section on *Nautical language*. Verse 4 εὐτρεπῆ τε τὸν κοντὸν ποιοῦ ("stow the ship's pole") may therefore be intended to suggest "bury the penis (in someone's flesh)!" *vel sim*. Cf. **24**, **63**. As this is the only example of κοντός supposedly ~ "penis", however, and as it is embedded in a larger metaphorical context, this looks more like a one-off pun than established usage. *MM* cites as comparisons Ar. *Eq.* 1391 κατατριακοντου-τίζω and Eup. fr. 364 (334 K.) αὐτοῦ δ' ὄπισθεν κατέλαβεν τὸν κόντιλον ("but be-hind him/it he/she seized the *kontilos*"). The former word is not from κοντός and is thus irrelevant (**61**). Nor is there any reason to take Eupolis' κόντιλος as having a sexual sense, particularly since — as *MM* itself notes — the word ought probably to be accented κοντίλος and understood as the name of a bird or animal.

27. λαβή, "handle, hold" (§56). *MM* identifies the use of the word at Ar. *Lys.* 672 εἰ γὰρ ἐνδώσει τις ἡμῶν ταῖσδε κἂν σμικρὰν λαβήν ("for if one of us gives them a small *labê*"; the male semi-chorus describe the danger of yielding to the female semi-chorus) as "an *ad hoc* double entendre" from the "common sexual sense" of λαμβάνω.[22] The suggestion is tacitly withdrawn in Henderson's commentary on the play, where he notes *ad loc*. that the metaphor is actually drawn from wres-tling (cf. Ar. *Eq.* 841, 847; *Nub.* 551; Nicochares fr. 21.2; Pl. *Resp.* 544b).[23]

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22 The evidence for this claim is laid out at §236, where *MM* identifies the expression "to grab someone μέσος" as a euphemism for rape at Ar. *Ach.* 274; *Lys.* 437; *Eccl.* 260. In fact, (1) *Ach.* 274 is part of a description of a rape of a slave-girl, but is not the sexual portion of it, the "grabbing around the middle" being merely the preliminary wrestling that makes what follows possible. (2) At *Lys.* 437, the Probulus orders one of the bowmen to seize Lysistrata around the waist (οὐ ξυναρπάσει μέσην;) and bind her hands; this is violence — and indeed violence against a woman — but with no hint of rape. (3) At Ar. *Eccl.* 259–260, one of the women proposing to visit the Assembly disguised as a man says that if the bowmen try to pull her (*sc.* away from the *bema* or off the Pnyx), ἐξαγκωνιῶ / ὡδί· μέση γὰρ οὐδέποτε ληφθήσομαι ("I'll elbow them away like this; because I'll never be caught around the middle"). This too is not obviously sexual.

23 Eur. *Andr.* 965 λάβεσθέ μοι τῆσδ', ἀμφελίξαντες χέρας (also cited by Henderson on *Lys.* 672–673) is irrelevant.

28. μοχλός, "bar, pry-bar" (§57). Although the assault by the men in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* on the women's fortified Acropolis can be read on some level as a sexual metaphor, nothing suggests that the μοχλοί they bring at 246 to force the citadel's doors open are to be taken as punningly suggesting that they want to knock the gates open with their penises.[24]

29. ξίφος, "sword" (§58). Nothing except an arbitrary decision to read the passage this way makes the male semi-chorus' quotation of the Harmodius-song at Ar. *Lys*. 632 καὶ φορήσω τὸ ξίφος τὸ λοιπὸν ἐν μύρτου κλαδί "an obscene parody" of the original (*PMG* 893.1 = 895.1 ἐν μύρτου κλαδὶ τὸ ξίφος φορήσω), with ξίφος to be understood as suggesting "penis". In the traditional story alluded to at Ar. *Lys*. 156 (*MM*'s second example of the supposed usage), Menelaus intended to kill Helen when he found her after Troy was taken, but failed to do so. That he ἐξέβαλ(ε) ("threw away", i.e. "dropped") his ξίφος at the sight of her μᾶλα (literally "apples", but in context clearly "breasts"; cf. §202) is thus comprehensible on its own and does not require that the word be understood as a double entendre for "penis". Nor is it clear why Menelaus would throw away/drop his penis in such a situation in any case, the point being that he was sexually attracted to Helen, not the opposite.

30. ὀβελός, "spit" (§59). The word is used in a leering double entendre at Ar. *Ach*. 796, as the Megarian describes how χοῖροι ("piglets/cunts") might be sacrificed to Aphrodite. There seem to be no other examples of the usage.

31. ὅπλα, "equipment" (§60). At Ar. *Ach*. 592, Dicaeopolis describes his adversary Lamachus as εὔοπλος (literally "well-equipped"), which appears to mean "well-hung" *vel sim*. Cf. Ar. *Vesp*. 27, where Cleonymus is mocked for having thrown away his ὅπλα (i.e. in the first instance his shield); Nic. fr. 74.30 (Athen. 15.683e) (a flower's pistil described as a "donkey-ὅπλον", apparently because it is taken to resemble an erect donkey-penis).[25]

32. πάτταλος, "peg" (§61). At Ar. *Eccl*. 1020 ἕλκειν ... λαβομένας τοῦ παττάλου (literally "to grab him and drag him by his peg"), πάτταλος is certainly a euphemism for "penis".[26] The only other secure use of the word in this sense is in the Roman-era epigram poet Automedon (*Anth. Pal*. 5.129.5–6), who praises a dancing-girl not for how she moves, ἀλλ' ὅτι καὶ τρίβακον περὶ πάσσαλον ὀρχήσασθαι / οἶδε καὶ οὐ φεύγει γηραλέας ῥυτίδας ("but because she knows how to dance

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24 Note also that the κορμός ("tree-trunk") the male semi-chorus refer to at *Lys*. 255 is not a "phallic battering ram" but wood to be burnt as a different means of assaulting the doors that protect the Acropolis.

25 *MM* also cites Hesychius, who offers no relevant lemma for either εὔοπλος or ὅπλον.

26 Despite *MM*, not necessarily erect.

around a worn-out 'peg' and does not flee an old man's wrinkles").[27] Of the other passages from comedy *MM* cites as examples of this sense of the word:

– At Ar. *Eccl*. 284 ὑπαποτρέχειν ἔχουσι μηδὲ πάτταλον (individuals who fail to arrive at the Assembly-place early enough are forced "to scuttle off without even a peg", *sc*. because they will fail to get any pay), there is no reason to detect a double sense for the word.

– At Ar. *Vesp*. 808, where Bdelycleon tells Philocleon that if he needs a piss-pot when he is serving in his new, private law-court, παρά σοι κρεμήσετ' ἐγγὺς ἐπὶ τοῦ παττάλου ("it will be hanging at your side nearby, upon the peg"), it is easier to take this as a reference to an actual wall-peg than as a punning reference to the old man's penis.

– Although *MM* asserts that at Ar. *Eq*. 371 διαπατταλευθήσει χαμαί ("you'll be stretched out on pegs on the ground") διαπατταλεύω "seems … to mean 'bug-ger'", the threat merely follows up on *Eq*. 369 ἡ βύρσα σου θρανεύσεται ("your hide will go on a tanning-board"); cf. **58**. Sexual violence is not in question.

– At Timocles fr. 19.2 (fr. 2.2 Dem.), καμίνῳ προσπεπατταλευμένον ("pegged to a kiln") refers to the punishment of a man who is to be hung up like an apo-tropaic device protecting the firing process. Sexual violence once again does not appear to be in question.

33. πέλεκυς, "ax" (§62). The Antiatticist (π 27) cites Araros fr. 5 (5 K.) ἡ σὴ θυγάτηρ, ὅτ' ἐκεῖνος αὐτὴν ἐπελέκα (literally "your daughter, when that guy axed her") as evidence that πελεκάω could be used καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ κακεμφάτου ("also in an ugly sense"), i.e. as a sexual metaphor. *MM* takes this to mean that πέλεκυς itself has the double sense "penis", which it may, although the speaker in Araros might just as easily be building on a metaphor established in the preceding lines (the girl as a young tree, for example, or as the main beam supporting the ad-dressee's house). There appears to be no other evidence for an obscene sense of either the noun or the cognate verb.

34. πέλτη (§65). Despite *MM*, this is not a "spearshaft" used by cavalry, but a small shield associated with Thracian infantrymen. A straightforward phallic in-terpretation of the word is thus ruled out, including at Ar. *Ach*. 160, where a dou-ble sense is unnecessary in any case; see **60**.

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27 *Hipp. Ber*. 115 (ninth century CE), cited by *MM* as an example of πάτταλος in this sense in medical prose, in fact refers to τοῖς ὀρθοκώλοις ἢ πασσάλοις λεγομένοις ("the straight-legged horses known as 'pegs'") and lacks any obvious obscene undertones.

35. πηδάλιον, "rudder, steering oar" (§63). At Thgn. 458, the claim that a young woman ought not to be married to an old man, οὐ γὰρ πηδαλίῳ πείθεται ὡς ἄκατος, / οὐδ' ἄγκυραι ἔχουσιν· ἀπορρήξασα δὲ δεσμὰ / πολλάκις ἐκ νυκτῶν ἄλλον ἔχει λιμένα ("because she doesn't obey a steering oar like a skiff, and she lacks anchors; and she often breaks her mooring-cables at night and goes off to another harbour"), uses nautical imagery to refer to sexuality, although not in a simple one-on-one manner that would allow πηδάλιον to be ascribed the meaning "penis". Theophilus fr. 6.2–4 (6.2–4 K.) ὥσπερ γὰρ ἄκατος οὐδὲ μικρὸν πείθεται / ἐνὶ πηδαλίῳ, τὸ πεῖσμ' ἀπορρήξασα δὲ / ἐκ νυκτὸς ἕτερον λιμέν' ἔχουσ' ἐξευρέθη ("because just like a skiff, she doesn't obey a single oar even a bit, but she breaks her mooring-cable and is found occupying a different harbour at night"), adapting the lines from Theognis, is slightly more explicit, but does not lend much support to the notion that πηδάλιον could be taken to have an obscene double sense outside of a fully developed context such as this. Ar. *Pax* 142–143 is similarly complicated: when Trygaeus is asked by his slave how he will cope, if he and his dung-beetle fall into the sea, he seemingly points to his comic phallus and says ἐπίτηδες εἶχον πηδάλιον, ᾧ χρήσομαι· / τὸ δὲ πλοῖον ἔσται Ναξιουργὴς κάνθαρος ("I deliberately got a rudder, which I will use; and my ship will be a Naxian beetle-boat"). But this is again different from claiming that πηδάλιον had an established secondary sense.

36. ῥοπαλισμός, "clubbing" (§64). At Ar. *Lys.* 553, this appears to be a one-off coinage < ῥοπαλίζω ("wield a ῥόπαλον") with the sense "erection". ῥόπαλον has an obscene sense at Leonidas, *Anth. Pal.* 16.261.2 (Priapus has ἰθυτενὲς μηρῶν ... ῥόπαλον, "a straight-stretched thigh-club"; third century BCE), as Hsch. ρ 449 καὶ τὸ αἰδοῖον ("also the genitals") notes. There is no other evidence that the word or any of its cognates had an established obscene secondary meaning.

37. σαυνίον, "javelin" (§67). Poll. 10.143 καὶ ξυστὰ δ' εἴποις ἂν καὶ κάμακας καὶ παλτὰ καὶ σαρίσσας καὶ σαυνία· τὸ μὲν γὰρ ὄνομα ἐπ' ἀνδρείου αἰδοίου ἐστὶ παρὰ Κρατίνῳ ("And you could also call spears *kamakes*, *palta*, *sarissai*, and *saunia*; for the latter word is used to refer to the male genitalia in Cratinus") establishes that σαυνίον (or σαννίον?; cf. Hsch. σ 172) was used metaphorically by Cratinus (fr. 490 (443 K.)) to mean "penis". Hsch. σ 273 = Phot. σ 99 σαύνιον· κόντιον βαρβαρικόν. καὶ σαθρόν, χαῦνον, ἀσθενές, παρὰ Κρατίνῳ ("*saunion*: a barbarian javelin. Also (one that is) unsound, loose, weak, in Cratinus"; Marzullo proposed emending to read "Also male genitalia that are unsound etc.") suggests that the specific sense was "a flaccid penis".

38. σκυτάλα, "message-baton" (§66). At Ar. *Lys.* 991, the Spartan ambassador attempts to explain that his prominent erection is actually a σκυτάλα. This does not suggest that the word had the established secondary sense "erect penis".

39. στρόβιλος, "ball", "top", "whirlwind" (§68). Whatever the meaning of the word at Pherecrates fr. 155.14 (145.14 K.) Φρῦνις δ' ἴδιον στρόβιλον ἐμβαλών τινα ("and Phrynis, imposing (on me) some private whirlwind"; Music describes the bad behaviour of one of her musician lovers), there seems to be no evidence that it anywhere means "shaft", as *MM* suggests, or has an obviously sexualised sense.

40. σφραγίς, "seal", and **σύμβολον, "token"** (§69–70). At Ar. *Av*. 1213–1215, Peisetaerus leeringly asks Iris whether she has a σφραγίς from the *pelargoi* or has had a σύμβολον impressed upon her by one of the ornitharchs, *sc*. as she crossed the border into Cloudcuckooland. As Iris' shocked response in 1216, echoing Peisetaerus' use of ἐπιβάλλω (see **21**) in 1215, makes clear, the latter word in particular takes on sexual overtones from the way he uses it. But nothing suggests that either term has a similar sense outside this context, nor does 1213 σφραγῖδ' ἔχεις παρὰ τῶν πελαργῶν; ("Do you have a token from the *pelargoi*?") square neatly with the claim that that σφραγίς "is clearly a sexual double entendre for phallus". *MM* cites as evidence in favour of the latter hypothesis σφραγῖδας at Ar. fr. 332.12 (320.12 K.), in a long list of women's accessories, which it takes to mean ὄλισβοι ("dildos") rather than "seals, signet rings". No positive evidence or parallels support this interpretation of the word.

41. τόρος, "drill" (§71). *MM* takes the word to have a veiled sexual significance in Philyllius fr. *17 (18 K.) προὔδωκεν αὐτὸν ὁ τόρος· ἦν γὰρ ἀσθενής (literally "his drill betrayed him; because it was weak"; probably from a play entitled *The Well-Digger*), so that the sense of the second clause is "because he was impotent" *vel sim*. There is no positive support for this interpretation in the fragment and no ancient parallels for the supposed double sense of τόρος.

42. φλέψ, "vein" (§72). At Xenarchus fr. 1.8 (1.8 K.), octopus is described in riddling dithyrambic language as φλεβὸς τροπωτήρ ("an oar-strap of a vein"). Octopus was supposedly an aphrodisiac, and the point is apparently that it serves to drive a φλέψ (i.e. during sexual intercourse) in something approximating the way an oar is driven when a man is rowing; cf. **22**. φλέψ thus patently has the allusive sense "penis" here, as also seemingly at adesp. trag. fr. 667a.85, *TrGF* V.2 p. 1140 (Neophron? *PLond. Lit*. 77 fr. 2.7) εὐτόνωι φλεβί, cf. 97 εὔφλεβὲς κέρας (satyr play?), and later Alcaeus, *Anth. Pal*. 6.218.1 (but with the specifying adjective γονίμη, perhaps suggesting that the word alone would not automatically be taken to have this sense); Leonidas, *Anth. Pal*. 16.261.4 (both cited by *MM* from LSJ *s.v.* 1). The citation contexts suggest that this is a high-style euphemism rather than a crude obscenity, and it is in any case not an "implement".

This group is thus again much smaller and less diverse than *MM*'s presentation makes it appear to be. There seem to be five examples of established figurative terms of this sort for a penis: ἔμβολος, ἐπιβολή, ὅπλα, πάτταλος, φλέψ. Six additional terms (ἐρετμόν, κοντός, ὀβελός, πηδάλιον, σφραγίς, σύμβολον) may take on a leering tone in context, but are not obviously endowed with one independently. That "phallic implements" is a useful general organising rubric for these items is unclear. The dominant images in fact appear to be "pole" or "impression", with ὅπλα as a more general "equipment", and the high-style euphemism φλέψ as an outlier. "Piercing" might be taken to be an additional underlying idea with κοντός and ὀβελός; but given the lack of related vocabulary in Group D (discussed below), it is tempting to think that it is not.

C. Nautical language

This is another seemingly substantial and nominally traditional figurative field, although of the references *MM* §258 supplies as background, Alcm. *PMG* 125 (109 D.) has no sexual or nautical content, while in Sophron fr. 47 (48 Olivieri) the word in question is not ἄγκυρα ("anchor"; used euphemistically for "penis" at Epicharm. fr. 189 (182 Olivieri), according to Hesychius), but ἐγκίρκα (i.e. ἐγκίρνα, "mix (wine)!"). For Epicrates fr. 9 (10 K.; fourth century BCE), see **26**. Much of *MM*'s detailed discussion of the fragment is problematic,[28] but the more

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[28] For ἐπουρίσας (< οὐρίζω, "carry with a fair wind"), *MM* §258 n. 49 compares Ar. *Ran.* 95 προσουρήσαντα, which is however < οὐρέω ("urinate") and thus irrelevant. *MM* §258 n. 49 further suggests that "πλήρωσον plays on the meaning 'fill up (sexually) (LSJ s.v. III.2)'", although LSJ actually reports only that Aristotle used πληρόω in the sense "impregnate" a handful of times in his biological works, and compares πίμπλησι at Xenarchus fr. 1.10 (1.10 K.) and κατεμέστωσε at Pherecrates fr. 155.28 (145.28 K.). πίμπλησι in Xenarchus fr. 1.10, however, is used in reference to baked octopus filling a casserole dish (described in mock high-style language as a girl, but with no obvious sexual overtones), while κατεμέστωσε in Pherecrates fr. 155.28 is from the personified Music's description of how one of her lovers "filled (her) up" with modulations (καμπῶν < καμπή, but punning on κάμπη "caterpillar", hence her comment "just like cabbages"), but again has no obvious sexual sense. *MM* does not say explicitly that it regards τοὺς κάλως ἔκλυε ("loose the reefs!") in Epicrates fr. 9.5 as another veiled obscenity, but the citations of Ar. *Eq.* 756 (the Chorus tell the Sausage-Seller that σε πάντα δεῖ κάλων ἐξιέναι σεαυτοῦ, "you need to let go all your reefs", i.e. "go full speed ahead") with scholia and Eur. *Med.* 278 (Medea complains that her enemies ἐξιᾶσι πάντα δὴ κάλων, "are in fact letting every sheet go", i.e. "sparing no effort" in their attempts to ruin her) do not support one. For κοντός (literally "pole") in Epicrates fr. 9.4, see **26**.

significant point is that it is again unclear whether images located in a context of this sort can be taken to have been generally available elsewhere.

43. δικωπεῖν, "double-scull" (§259). At Ar. *Eccl.* 1091, the Young Man being dragged offstage to do sexual service for the Hags wonders how he will be able to δικωπεῖν them both. *MM* describes the metaphor (set up by the reference to the Hags as ferrymen in 1086–1087) as seemingly "an Aristophanic invention". It might be more usefully regarded as a one-off variant of the slightly more common use of ἐλαύνω (**44**), but there is in any case no evidence for use of it elsewhere.

44. ἐλαύνω, "row" (§260). As LSJ *s.v.* I.5 notes, ἐλαύνω (literally "drive, strike"; often of moving a boat forward with oars) is patently used as a verb of sexual congress at Ar. *Eccl.* 37–39 ὁ γὰρ ἀνήρ... — / Σαλαμίνιος γάρ ἐστιν ᾧ ξύνειμ' ἐγώ — / τὴν νύχθ' ὅλην ἤλαυνέ μ' ἐν τοῖς στρώμασιν ("for my husband — because I'm married to a man from Salamis — was driving me all night long in the sheets") and Plato Com. fr. 3.4 (3.4 K.) ἡ μὲν ἐλαυνομένη λαθρίοις ἐρετμοῖς, ὁ δ' ἐλαύνων ("the woman being driven by secret oars,[29] the man doing the driving"; see **22**). In both cases, the metaphor is expressly marked as nautical, which may mean that it would otherwise be taken to mean simply "pound (sexually)", like κατελαύνω (**62**). *MM* tentatively suggests that Ar. *Eccl.* 109 νῦν μὲν γὰρ οὔτε θέομεν οὔτ' ἐλαύνομεν ("for as it is, we neither run with the wind nor row") "*may* contain another such double entendre". But there is no reason to believe that it does, particularly since the opposition "θέω vs. ἐλαύνω" would then make no sense. Despite *MM*, there is no reason to take the simplex at Ar. *Ach.* 995 as sexualised; see **62**.

45. ἔμβολος, "ship's ram" (§272). See **20**.

46. ἐπιβατεύω (§262). At Ar. *Ran.* 45–48, Heracles mocks Dionysus for his mixed costume (a heroic lionskin over an effeminate *krokōtos*, a club but also high boots), and asks where he has been. Dionysus responds (48) ἐπεβάτευον Κλεισθένει ("I was serving as a marine for Cleisthenes"). Cleisthenes was a notorious effeminate, and *MM* takes this to be a "pederastic joke", apparently adopting the suggestion at LSJ *s.v.* II that ἐπιβατεύω suggests ἐπιβαίνω ("mount (sexually)" = LSJ *s.v.* A.III.1).[30] But the word-play is not obvious, and the joke is perhaps simpler than this: if Dionysus was "a member of Cleisthenes' crew", he must share his commander's dubious tastes.

47. κελητίζω, "ride" (§275). A κέλης is both a riding horse (LSJ *s.v.* I) and a fast yacht (LSJ *s.v.* II), and κελητίζω is "ride", including "ride (sexually)" (Ar. *Vesp.*

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29 *MM* §258 n. 50 compares Hsch. ε 5741 ἐρετμόν· ... καὶ τὸ ἀνδρεῖον αἰδοῖον ("oar: ... also the male genitals").

30 Thus also Dover *ad loc.*

501; *Lys*. 773).[31] What is less clear is whether κέλης II contributes to the use of κελητίζω as a sexual euphemism. The crucial text in this connection is Ar. *Lys*. 59–60 ἀλλ’ ἐκεῖναί γ’ οἶδ’ ὅτι / ἐπὶ τῶν κελήτων διαβεβήκασ’ ὄρθριαι (“Well, I know that *they’ve* come across at dawn on their *kelētes*”; Calonice attempts to make sense of the failure of the Salaminian women to arrive on time), which *MM* translates “these women came early, *mounted* on their *yachts*”. This is the only point at which κέλης II appears to be used as a sexual euphemism, κέλης I elsewhere always being in question. Ar. *Ran*. 203–205 makes it clear that the inhabitants of Salamis were regarded as good rowers (presumably because they had to be, since they lived on an island), and the same idea appears to lie behind the speaker’s observation at Ar. *Eccl*. 38 that her Salaminian husband was “rowing” her — i.e. having sex with her — all night long; cf. **44**. It thus seems likely that at Ar. *Lys*. 59–60 the crucial image is “rowing ~ sex”, and that κέλης II is brought in only because it is appropriate in context and because κέλης I often has a euphemistic sense,[32] which κέλης II, by contrast, lacks.[33]

48. ναυμαχέω, “fight a naval battle” (§263–268). At Ar. *Ran*. 430 (the end of an iambic abuse song), the Chorus say of Callias that κύσθῳ λεοντῆν ναυμαχεῖν ἐνημμένον (“he fights his naval battles wearing a lion-skin of pussy-hair”). This is patently a sexualised insult: Callias does not wear a heroic lion-skin, but something that suggests a taste for prostitutes or the like. But requiring ναυμαχεῖν to have a veiled sexual sense as well (~ “he has intercourse wearing a lion-skin of pussy-hair”), as on *MM*’s reading of the passage, renders the humour incoherent, since the contrast ought to be between Callias’ heroic posture (fighting a naval battle while wearing something resembling a lion-skin) and what he actually wears. *MM* similarly alleges a euphemistic sexual sense for ναυμαχέω at Ar. *Lys*. 674–675, where the male semi-chorus complain that the

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31 See *MM* §274, although note that the anger with which the prostitute responds in *Wasps* has to do not with the content of the request itself, but with the supposed implication that it betrays a longing for the tyranny of Hippias (cognate with ἵππος, “horse”). At *Thesm*. 153 οὐκοῦν κελητίζεις, ὅταν Φαίδραν ποιῇς; (“So do you ‘ride’, when you write about Phaedra?”), the reference is in the first instance to Agathon (implicitly accused of wanting to be mounted as a woman would be) and only secondarily to Phaedra. The comparanda in *MM* §274 n. 59 (Ar. *Thesm*. 497, 547; *Ran*. 1043) are simply additional references to Phaedra and do not touch specifically on her sexuality.

32 Thus seemingly LSJ *s.v.* III.

33 *MM* further maintains that the sexual euphemisms in the passage are reinforced by the use of διαβεβήκασ(ι) in 60 in place of the expected βεβήκασ(ι). But this is a standard use of the compound (LSJ *s.v.* 2 “abs. (θάλασσαν or πόταμον being omitted) *cross over*”), here in reference to the passage from Salamis to the mainland. Despite *MM*, Ar. *Av*. 1204 (a reference to the state trireme, the Salaminia) and *Lys*. 411 have no obvious sexual content and are irrelevant.

city's women ἐπιχειρήσουσ' ἔτι / ναυμαχεῖν καὶ πλεῖν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς, ὥσπερ Ἀρτεμισία ("will undertake as well to fight naval battles and sail against us, like Artemisia"). But here once again there is no reason to take the verbs as having anything other than their obvious superficial sense. Cf. **50** on πλέω. *MM* also cites:

– Anaxilas fr. 22.18–19 (22.18–19 K.; part of a long list of "monstrous" *hetairai* and the male customers they have ruined), where Phryne in the guise of Charybdis is said τὸν ... ναύκληρον λαβοῦσα καταπέπωκ' αὐτῷ σκάφει ("to have caught the merchant-shipper and swallowed him down, vessel and all"). Although the designation of the man's occupation is crucial to the humour of presenting Phryne as Charybdis, it is not obviously put to work of the sort *MM* imagines: "merchant-shipper" in itself does not suggest "individual having sex".

– Eubulus fr. 67.10–11 (67.10–11 K.) Ἑλλάδος ἔγωγε τῆς ταλαιπώρου στένω, / ἢ Κυδίαν ναύαρχον ἐξεπέμψατο ("I for my part groan for wretched Greece, which sent Cydias out as a naval commander"), with Pl. *Chrm.* 155d (where a man by the same name is said to have commented on the dangerous attractiveness of a beautiful boy). Even if this is the same person, the reference to Cydias' fondness for boys in Plato does not make his sexuality the point of the Eubulus fragment. Nor — an even more unlikely argumentative step — can the mention of Cydias' sexuality in Plato colour the use of ναύαρχος in Eubulus.

– The otherwise unknown Nausimache (literally "Naval Battle") at Ar. *Thesm.* 804 Ναυσιμάχης μέν <γ'> ἥττων ἐστὶ Χαρμῖνος ("Charminus is worse than Nausimache"), whom *MM* identifies as a *hetaira*, asserting that she "battered" the Athenian naval commander Charminus. The verse comes from a section of the parabasis in which the Chorus are comparing individual Athenian women with individual Athenian men, arguing that the former are superior. In 805, the "radical democratic" politician Cleophon is said to be even worse than the notorious prostitute Salabakcho, so perhaps Nausimache too was a well-known *hetaira*. If so, this shows that "Naval Battle" could be regarded as a clever "working name" for such a woman, but nothing more.[34]

– Ar. fr. 558 (544 K.), which Kassel/Austin print in the form † τίς δὲ εἷς ὁ λοιπὸς ἐγγύτατα τὰς ὀσφύας / ἐπὶ τῶν κοχωνῶν ἀργοναύτης οὑτοσί; ("† Who are you the remaining close to the flanks upon the ass-cheeks this Argonaut?"). The text is obscure, although the point is likely either homosexual or pederastic; why the individual addressed is called an Argonaut, is impossible to say.

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34 Note also that Nausimache is not said to have "battered" Charminus, but is merely better than him.

- The claim that Artemisia (the name of a queen of Halicarnassus who fought on Xerxes' side at the Battle of Salamis in 480 BCE) "is a sea-fighter" not only at Ar. *Lys*. 675 (quoted above) but also at *Thesm*. 1200, the implication being that the name has a euphemistic sexual significance in both passages. In fact, there is no reference to naval warfare in the second text, where "Artemisia" is merely a name adopted by Euripides (for reasons that remain unclear; see Austin/Olson *ad loc*.) as part of his disguise as an old woman managing a dancing-girl/prostitute. Nor is the logic on which *MM*'s interpretation seems to depend — "'naval battle' means 'sex'; Artemisia fought in a naval battle; therefore any mention of Artemisia is a reference to sex" — easy to follow.
- Ar. *Eq*. 1300–1315, where Athens' triremes are personified as women and declare their unwillingness to be ruled (οὐ δῆτ' ἐμοῦ γ' ἄρξει ποτ', 1307) by Hyperbolus, although not "their fear that Hyperbolus will soon 'board' them", as *MM* would have it. *MM* goes on to identify the supposed "boarding" as "an act of sexual aggression often associated in this play with Cleon". But the Paphlagonian — Cleon's stand-in in the play — never threatens sexual violence against women in the play, and metaphorical language of ships and sailing surfaces in the text repeatedly with no obvious sexual implications.

49. πίττα, "pitch" (§273). At Ar. *Plut*. 1093, the Young Man who has grown rich and is thus free to abandon his older lover tells Chremylus ἱκανὸν ... αὐτὴν πρότερον ὑπεπίττουν χρόνον ("previously I pitched her bottom for quite a while"), an image drawn from the production and maintenance of boats, whose hulls had to be pitched to keep them waterproof. *MM* claims that "the reference is to the female secreta". The image is certainly nautical, although what the young man is saying euphemistically is something more like "I applied semen to her underparts".

50. πλέω, "sail" (§270). *MM* maintains that the verb "usually = βινέω and thus is used of the male sailing the female", although at fr. 144 (142 K.) the subject is the woman. In fact, πλέω is normally used in Aristophanes in its standard sense "sail" (e.g. *Eq*. 1314; *Av*. 597, 1459; *Lys*. 392; *Ran*. 197), and the same is true of all the passages *MM* cites in support of the claim that it routinely has the euphemistic sense "have sexual intercourse":

- Ar. *Pax* 341 (when peace comes, the Chorus will be able πλεῖν, μένειν, κινεῖν, καθεύδειν, "to sail (elsewhere), to stay (at home), to screw, to sleep")
- Ar. *Lys*. 411 (a careless husband tells the goldsmith he asks to come fix his wife's necklace when he is away ἐμοὶ ... ἐστ' εἰς Σαλαμῖνα πλευστέα, "I have to sail to Salamis")

– Ar. *Lys.* 674–675 (the city's women ἐπιχειρήσουσ' ἔτι / ναυμαχεῖν καὶ πλεῖν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς, "will undertake as well to fight naval battles and sail against us"; cf. **48**)
– Ar. *Eccl.* 1087 (discussed in **51**)
– Ar. *Eccl.* 1106 (the Young Man being dragged into the stage-house by the Hags anticipates dying δεῦρ' εἰσπλέων, "when I sail in here", the house being momentarily imagined as a harbour, as 1088 makes clear)
– At Ar. fr. 144 (142 K.) (A.) ἀποπλεῖς ἐτεόν; (B.) ἐπὶ τὸν νυμφίον / ᾧ γαμοῦμαι τήμερον ("(A.) Are you actually sailing off? (B.) (Yes), to the bridegroom I'm marrying today"), the scholion to Nicander that cites the fragment makes it clear that "sail off" is a way of saying "go away", with no necessary reference to a boat; sexual euphemism is not in question.

51. πλωτήρ, "passenger" (§269). At Ar. *Eccl.* 1087, the Young Man, having just described the Hags who are pulling him in different directions as "bad ferrywomen" (1086), justifies his choice of image by explaining ἕλκοντε τοὺς πλωτῆρας ἂν ἀπεκναίετε ("you would wear out your passengers with your hauling"). *MM* takes this to make πλωτήρ a sexual euphemism ("passenger on a (sexual) voyage"), which is not the point.

52. συννήξομαι, "swim along with" (§271). The manuscripts at Ar. *Eccl.* 1104 (the Young Man, overpowered by the Hags, laments his fate) offer the corrupt συνείξομαι, for which editors generally print Dobree's ὅστις τοιούτοις θηρίοις συνείρξομαι ("I who will be shut up with such beasts"). *MM* opts instead for συννήξομαι ("I who will swim along with such beasts"), which it glosses "συννήχεσθαι refers to coital motion and appears to be an Aristophanic invention".

53. σκάφη, "skiff" (§278). A scholion identifies Ar. *Lys.* 139 οὐδὲν γάρ ἐσμεν πλὴν Ποσειδῶν καὶ σκάφη ("for we're nothing but Poseidon and a skiff"; Lysistrata expresses frustration at the unwillingness of the other women to give up sex as the price for ending the war) as a reference to Sophocles' *Tyro* (fr. 657), and glosses the remark οὐδέν ἐσμεν, εἰ μὴ συνουσιάζειν καὶ τίκτειν ("we're nothing but having sex and giving birth"). The skiff in question is the one on which Pelias and Neleus, the sons of Tyro by Poseidon, were exposed, so that the passage is only vaguely relevant here.

Despite *MM*, therefore, with the exception of ἐλαύνω (probably better included in Section D on the "Language of hitting, piercing and the like") and the elaborate one-off bundle of imagery at Epicrates fr. 9, nautical language does not appear to be a productive locus of sexual imagery in Attic Comedy.

D. Language of hitting, piercing and the like

This category includes a mix of simple, straightforward verbs meaning ~ "apply physical force to" *vel sim.* and a number of sometimes elaborate euphemisms.

54. ἀναπείρω, "spit" (§298). Ar. *Ach.* 1007 ἵν' ἀναπείρω τὰς κίχλας ("in order that I can spit the thrushes") is a reference to culinary preparations and — despite *MM* — has no obvious sexual overtones.

55. ἀναπήγνυμι, "spit" (§299). Ar. *Eccl.* 843 λαγῷ' ἀναπηγνύασι (literally "they are putting hare-meat on spits") again refers to banquet preparations and has no obvious secondary meaning (allegedly "penetrate sexually").

56. βαλανεύω (§300). At Ar. *Lys.* 337, the verb means "play the bathman", i.e. "heat water", and has no euphemistic sexual sense; cf. **13**.

57. -βάλλω compounds (§301). Of the various -βάλλω compounds *MM* discusses:

a)   ἐπιβάλλω (literally "fall upon, attack") likely has the extended sense "assault (sexually)", given its use at Ar. *Av.* 1214–1216 (discussed in **21**).

b)   ἐμβάλλω at Pherecrates fr. 155.14 (145.14 K.) Φρῦνις δ' ἴδιον στρόβιλον ἐμβαλών τινα ("and Phrynis, imposing (on me) some private whirlwind"; Music describes the bad behaviour of one of her musician lovers), by contrast, is made no clearer by assuming a euphemistic sense.

c)   καταβάλλω at Ar. *Ach.* 275 and *Pax* 896a (the latter generally expelled from the text) merely means "throw down to the ground", even if the context in both cases is a sexual encounter (rape in the first case, a wild orgy in the second).

d)   *MM* translates προσβαλεῖν at Ar. *Ach.* 994 ἀλλά σε λαβὼν τρία δοκῶ μ' ἂν ἔτι προσβαλεῖν (the Chorus address Reconciliation, whom they imagine as a woman) as "to assault violently" and characterises this as a description of a "predicted gang-rape". This distorts both the tone and content of the passage, which refers to a single man's wish to establish a long-term relationship with a woman (esp. 999); the verse is better translated "but I think that after I got hold of you, I would add three items more" (i.e. the various plantings listed in what follows).

58. διαπατταλεύω, "stretch out on pegs" (§302). At Ar. *Eq.* 371, this is a mocking threat to treat the Sausage-Seller like a hide being tanned, and lacks an obvious extended sexual sense; cf. **32**.

59. ἐρείδω, "press hard" (§303). The verb patently has an extended sense refer-ring to vigorous sexual intercourse at Ar. *Eccl.* 616; fr. 715.3 (695.3 K.) (active, of a man) and Ar. *Thesm.* 488 (passive, of a woman). Ar. fr. 76 (74 K.) μέσην ἔρειδε πρὸς τὸ σιμόν (literally "pound her/it in the middle towards the snub-nose!") is obscure; Fritzsche took an obscenity to be concealed in the line, but the sense

might just as easily be "Proceed along the middle (of the road) toward the height!" R's ἔργα νυκτερείσια at Ar. *Thesm.* 204, taken by *MM* for a pun on ἐρείδω, is a spelling error for ἔργα νυκτερήσια ("nocturnal activities"); thus Bothe).

60. καταπελτάζομαι (§316). The Thracian mercenaries introduced at the Athenian Assembly at the beginning of Aristophanes' *Acharnians* apparently have prominently displayed erections (*Ach.* 158), and *MM* takes the Ambassador's claim at 160 that they καταπελτάσονται τὴν Βοιωτίαν ὅλην (literally ~ "will *peltazein* the hell out of all of Boeotia") to mean metaphorically that they will rape the Boeotian plain. πέλτη is not "penis" (see **34**), but even if *MM*'s sexualised interpretation of the language is right, this is a one-off use of what is probably a nonce verb.

61. κατατριακοντουτίζω (§315). This is a nonce-word at Ar. *Eq.* 1391 punning on τριακοντούτιδας ("thirty-year", in reference to peace treaties personified as beautiful young women) in 1388–1389, with the prefix serving as an intensifier (LSJ *s.v.* κατά E.V); thus "thirty-year the hell out of them" *vel sim.* for the expected "fuck the hell out of them". LSJ *s.v.* offers a more complicated explanation of the verb, describing it as a pun on ἀκοντίζω. *MM* rightly rejects this on the ground that "ἀκοντίζω is never found with an obscene meaning" — a reasonable caution that cuts many of its own eccentric interpretations — but then offers the even less likely suggestion that it "puns on τρία and κοντός" (see **26**). This is in any case not a verb of hitting or piercing.

62. κατελαύνω, "pound" (§261).[35] LSJ *s.v.* 3 (followed by *MM*) notes that the compound is used with a sexual sense at Ar. *Pax* 711 τῆς Ὀπώρας κατελάσας ("after I pound Opora"; Trygaeus imagines having sex with one of the female attendants of Peace); *Eccl.* 1082 ποτέρας προτέρας οὖν κατελάσας ἀπαλλαγῶ; ("Which of them can I pound first and get away?"; the Young Man being dragged off by the Hags considers his options). *MM* takes Ar. *Ach.* 995 ἀμπελίδος ὄρχον ἐλάσαι μακρόν (literally "to drive a long row of grapevines") to be another example of a sexualised use of ἐλαύνω. But the interpretation this yields ("to have sex with a row of grapevines") is incoherent, and the verb must mean instead "drive (into the earth)", i.e. "plant" (LSJ *s.v.* III.2) here; see **44**. *MM* also notes Antiphanes fr. 293 (300 K.) οἴνῳ ... τὸν οἶνον ἐξελαύνειν, / σάλπιγγι τὴν σάλπιγγα, τῷ κήρυκι τὸν βοῶντα / κτλ ("to drive out wine with wine, a trumpet with a trumpet, a man who shouts with a herald" etc.), which it identifies as "an obscene metaphor" that "probably derives from metallurgy (see LSJ s.v. III)". But no obscenity is in

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35 *MM* includes κατελαύνω in "Nautical Terminology", but concedes that the compound has no such implications and seemingly places it there only as a matter of convenience in the context of its discussion of the simplex ἐλαύνω in §260.

question, and this is instead a straightforward use of ἐξελαύνω in its basic sense "expel" (LSJ *s.v.* I) on the quasi-scientific principle of driving out like with like.

63. κεντέω, "prick, stab, goad" (§304). That the verb has an extended sexual sense at Mnesimachus fr. 4.55 πίνει, σκιρτᾷ, λορδοῖ, κεντεῖ ("drinks, hops about, lies on his/her back, *kentei*"; among the activities engaged in by the guests at a great dinner party) is suggested both by the word that precedes, which routinely has allusive sexual sense, and by the intrusive gloss βινεῖ ("fucks") that follows — which nonetheless also suggests that this second sense of the verb was not immediately obvious.

64. κρούω, "strike, smite" (§305–6). As LSJ *s.v.* 8, following Antiatt. κ 15,[36] notes, at Ar. *Eccl.* 989–990 ὅταν γε κρούσῃς τὴν ἐμὴν πρῶτον θύραν (the Hag tells the Young Man that he can "knock" on the Young Girl's door "when you knock at my door first") the verb appears to be a euphemism for "have sex". Cf. the following parallels:

- προκρούω (literally "knock", i.e. "have sex (with someone) before (someone else)") at Ar. *Eccl.* 1017–1018
- the pun on the same compound in the reference to Προκρούστης at *Eccl.* 1021
- ὑποκρούω at *Eccl.* 618[37]
- κρούματα at *Eccl.* 257, where Praxagora proclaims herself οὐκ ἄπειρος οὖσα πολλῶν κρουμάτων ("not lacking experience of many blows") in anticipation of a potential physical encounter with the other Assemblymen, which seems more likely to be a joke than a claim that she is routinely beaten (*sc.* by her husband).[38]

Despite *MM*, Blepyrus' observation at Ar. *Eccl.* 316–317 that a man from Kopreus τὴν θύραν / ἐπεῖχε κρούων ("kept pounding on my door") has nothing to do with either pederasty or an extended sexualised use of κρούω, but merely means that Blepyrus felt a desperate urge to defecate and therefore left the house without his robe. κρουστικός as a characterisation of an orator at Ar. *Eq.* 1379 similarly has no obvious sexual content, but means "striking" (LSJ *s.v.* II.2) *vel sim*.[39]

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36 καὶ κατὰ τοῦ κακεμφάτου ἐν τῇ συνηθείᾳ τὸ κροῦσαι κεῖται ἀντὶ τοῦ συγγενέσθαι ("*krousai* is also customarily employed in vulgar usage in place of 'to have intercourse with someone'").

37 *MM* takes the prefix here to mean "below" (presumably in reference to the woman's genitals), whereas LSJ *s.v.* ὑποκρούω suggests "gently" (cf. LSJ *s.v.* ὑπό F.II).

38 Eup. fr. 197 (184 K.) κρούων γε μὴν αὐτὰς ἐωνούμην ἐγώ ("but I was knocking on them (fem.) as I purchased them"; cited by *MM* in § 305 n. 88) is obscure (of pots being checked for proper firing?), but does not obviously use κρούω in an extended sexualised sense.

39 *MM* also compares Eur. *Cyc.* 180 διεκροτήσατ' ἐν μέρει (the satyrs fantasise about the gang-rape of Helen), although rightly noting that this is a different verb and thus properly irrelevant.

65. κυκάω, "stir up" (§307). At Ar. *Eq.* 1286, Ariphrades the cunnilictor is accused of κυκῶν τὰς ἐσχάρας (literally "stirring up the hearths") in the brothels he visits. "Hearths" appears to be a double entendre for "vaginas" (cf. Ar. *Thesm.* 912), but κυκάω does not obviously gain or require an extended sense as a consequence.

66. παίω, "strike" (§308). The verb clearly has an extended sexual sense at Ar. *Pax* 874 (the slave asks his master if the beautiful Theoria is the one "we used to *paiein* at Brauron"), as well as at *Pax* 898 παίειν, ὀρύττειν, πὺξ ὁμοῦ καὶ τῷ πέει ("to strike, to gouge, with fist and one's penis alike"), although in the latter passage the issue is complicated by the fact that the entire passage is cast in agonistic imagery; cf. **8**. *MM* §12 suggests that παίω has a similar sense at Ar. *Ach.* 834–835 πειρῆσθε ... / παίειν ἐφ' ἁλὶ τὰν μάδδαν (literally "Try to strike your barley-cake on salt!"; the Megarian's parting advice to the daughters he has sold to Dicaeopolis), with ἐφ' ἁλὶ punning on φαλλός.

67. πατάσσω, "strike" (§309). Adesp. com. fr. 465 (798 K.) αὐτὸ ἐπάταξεν (literally "he/she/it struck it", i.e. the thing that was aimed for) is quoted in a pederastic context at [Luc.] *Am.* 53 and apparently refers there to getting one's hand on a boy's ass or penis. How the phrase was used in its original context is unclear, but there is in any case no ground for claiming that πατάσσω was used euphemistically to refer to intercourse.

68. **πελεκάω, "hew with an ax"** (§312). See **33**.

69. ῥιπτάζω, "toss about" (§310). At Ar. *Lys.* 26–28, Lysistrata tells Calonice that she has something she has "sought out and tossed about" through many sleepless nights (πρᾶγμ' ἀνεζητημένον / πολλαῖσί τ' ἀγρυπνίαισιν ἐρριπτασμένον). Calonice responds by asking if the item in question is λεπτός ("thin, fine"; by extension "subtle"). *MM* takes this as a joke that has to do with manipulating a penis to make it erect;[40] this would follow up on the much more openly phallic humour in 21–24, where Calonice asks first whether the matter all the women have been summoned regarding is both large and thick, and then, when Lysistrata assures her that it is, expresses amazement that everyone has not arrived. But ῥιπτάζω is not an obvious image for "chafe", nor is the supposed humour followed up by either interlocutor, and the conversation in fact appears to be taking a serious turn at this point. Sexual euphemism thus appears unlikely.

70. σπαθάω, "strike the woof with the weaving blade" (§311). At Ar. *Nub.* 53, Strepsiades, after describing his aristocratic wife's expensive, sensual tastes (51–52), adds οὐ μὴν ἐρῶ γ' ὡς ἀργὸς ἦν, ἀλλ' ἐσπάθα ("I certainly won't say that she was lazy, but *espatha*"). He then explains that he would hold his *himation* up

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40 Made more explicit in Henderson's note on *Lys.* 28 in his edition of the play.

and say (55) ὦ γύναι, λίαν σπαθᾷς ("Wife, you *spathais* too much"). Dover *ad loc.* notes that that σπαθάω might be "a slang word (not attested elsewhere) for sexual intercourse", but rejects this interpretation as spoiling "the joke of 54ff., to which 53 is only a lead", and takes 55 λίαν σπαθᾷς to have the extended sense "you're much too extravagant" (= LSJ *s.v.* σπαθάω II), as at Diphilus fr. 42.27 (43.27 K.). *MM* argues instead for understanding the verb as in LSJ *s.v.* I in 53 (Strepsiades' wife works hard at weaving), but with a euphemistic sexual sense in 55 (Strepsiades complained that she wore him out in bed). As this hypothetical euphemistic sense of σπαθάω is attested nowhere else (as Dover notes), whereas Dover's explanation of the lines depends on two well-established meanings of the word, with the humour in 55 created by the divergence between them, *MM*'s interpretation should be rejected; as a matter of methodological principle, one ought not to invent a meaning of a word to explain a difficult passage when a standard meaning will do.

71. σποδέω, "pound, smite, crush" (§313). That the verb is an established euphemism for intercourse (Ar. *Thesm.* 492; *Eccl.* 113, 908, 939, 942, 1016)[41] is acknowledged by the standard lexica (LSJ *s.v.* II).

72. τύπτω "beat" (§314). Although *MM* identifies this as a euphemism for intercourse, of the two passages it cites in favour of the thesis, at Ar. *Lys.* 162 ἐὰν δὲ τύπτωσιν; (Calonice considers potential reactions by the women's husbands, if they refuse to have sex) an actual beating is in question, as also at Ar. *Plut.* 1015 ἐτυπτόμην διὰ τοῦθ᾽ ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν ("I was beaten on this account all day long"; the old woman describes the Young Man's reaction if someone leered at her in public). The best evidence for τύπτω used this way are instead the terms χαμαιτύπη (literally "one who is beaten on the ground", but by extension "cheap prostitute": Timocles fr. 24.2 (22.2 K.); Men. *Sam.* 348; fr. 472.1 (879 K.)), μοιχοτύπη (literally "one who is beaten in an illicit sexual encounter", i.e. "victim of seduction": adesp. com. fr. 389 (1081 K.)), and σποδησιλαύρα (a term for a prostitute: adesp. com. fr. 223 (1377 K.)[42]). None of these is securely dated before the end of the fourth century BCE, which does not mean that the verb was not used this way earlier.[43]

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41 *MM* also cites Apollod. Car. fr. 5.13 (5.13 K.), where σποδεῖν is however merely a bad supplement.

42 Not fr. 1352 K.

43 The use of cognates of χαμαιτύπη in various authors of the Roman era cited by *MM* suggests that the word eventually came to be regarded as an Attic colloquialism, although this is problematic evidence for Classical usage.

"Pounding" or "striking" is clearly a well-established idiom for intercourse (ἐπιβάλλω, ἐρείδω, κατελαύνω, κρούω, παίω, σποδέω, τύπτω; cf. **44** ἐλαύνω), to the extent that it appears that almost any such verb could take on a sexual double sense. "Piercing", on the other hand, is a far less common image (the problematic κεντέω), and none of *MM*'s more figurative language holds up to close inspection.

Section II: Some larger methodological concerns

The first section of this paper evaluates the meaning and use of a number of individual lexical items treated in *MM* as having an obscene double sense by reference to *MM*'s own implicit standards of philological argument. Many of *MM*'s claims appear to be based on weak or defective evidence, or on problematic readings of the ancient texts. That observation in turn raises questions not only about the interpretation of the specific passages in which these words appear, but about the larger style of allusive humour *MM* alleges is active in Old Comedy and related genres. Old Comedy is certainly "dirty", and this "dirtiness" is among the means by which it generates humour. The genre nonetheless appears to be far less systematically obscene than *MM* argues; whatever makes — or made — it funny, this is only one small part of it.

These conclusions evoke larger questions that *MM* bravely if perhaps imperfectly confronts in regard to sexual (or sexualised) vocabulary and the humour dependent on it. The analysis of imagery is to a considerable extent a matter of judgement. The power of imagery lies precisely in the fact that tenor and vehicle are different, and this gap is part of what makes it powerful and sometimes amusing. But language one reader or listener takes to be figurative may not seem to have the same veiled significance to another, and such issues become even more acute when — as in the case of classical studies — the readers are from a different time and culture than the original texts, and native informants are few in number, often obscure and fragmentary, and not entirely reliable. Put more directly, there is no way to say definitively whether a particular Greek lexical item has a double sense, sexual or not, in any particular context. Instead, we are thrown back on methodology, i.e. on the need to articulate criteria that allow us to make informed consensus decisions for ourselves on such matters.

The strongest cases for recognition of a figurative second sense of a word would appear to be those in which we can identify multiple seeming uses of an image that are not dependent on and thus perhaps generated by context, and where support is provided for the interpretation by ancient lexicographic or scholastic authority. These can reasonably be regarded as examples of established

usage,[44] which then provokes the question of when and how such secondary senses are activated. If we believe — as appears to be the case — that ἐλαύνω, for example, had the established double sense "have intercourse with", is every use of the verb necessarily coloured that way?[45] Genre is a reasonable place to start with such questions: sexual imagery would seem to be inherently more likely in comedy than in historical or documentary texts. But unless it can be shown that a particular lexical item is always used in an unambiguously double sense in a particular text or set of texts, and unless that evidence is rich enough to be interpreted as a pattern rather than a chance phenomenon, this is not enough, and context (however defined or analysed) must seemingly be taken into account as well.

Falling into a different category are images that get their force only from context, for example the naval language of Epicrates fr. 9: when established double entendres or elaborate created metaphors are patently in play, otherwise straightforward vocabulary can be made to conform momentarily to the pattern. This is sexualised language, and potentially very amusing — in large part because these are *not* established secondary senses of the words in question, so that briefly understanding them as such is funny. It is nonetheless hazardous to assume that a contextually determined one-off of this kind can be taken to establish a double sense of a word that carries over into other texts or conversations.[46]

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44 Cf. "pussy" or "bang" in contemporary English; no adult native speaker can have any doubt that both words have a secondary sexual sense recognised even in dictionaries.

45 Translated into contemporary English: does the fact that "fooling around with my girlfriend" means colloquially "having sexual adventures" with her inevitably colour "Last weekend I fooled around with Bob and Jackie", where the idiom has the more common sense "happily wasted time"? In such cases, natural language competency suggests that contextual cues of some sort (here the words "my girlfriend") are required to activate the non-standard sense of the vocabulary. One can leeringly respond "So you 'fooled around' with Bob, huh?" But no native speaker acting on basic principles of communicative generosity would take the point of the original statement to be that the speaker had sex with Bob and Jackie on the weekend, unless required to do so by some other clue.

46 Thus, if Jill has been seen wearing a tank top, (A) might comment "Wow, Jill's got the nicest pair of melons I've seen in a long time", "melon" being an established colloquialism for a large breast, and (B) might respond "That's a fruit stand I'd like to do business with!" Context allows "doing business with a fruit stand" in (B)'s remark to take on a figurative sexual sense it does not otherwise have. The problem for the non-native speaker is that the difference is difficult to detect, except by (1) looking carefully at other contemporary uses of "fruit stand", which will show that this is an isolated image, and (2) noticing that (B)'s remark is a joke and thus quite possibly a one-off use of a neutral term. If the non-native speaker misunderstands the conversation and interprets every other reference to fruit stands he encounters as leering, sexualised humour, he will repeatedly detect "dirty jokes" where a native speaker would not, and will thus badly misinterpret his material.

Finally, there are passages — including a substantial portion of those treated in *MM* and discussed above — in which obscenity, and thus obscene humour, is purely conjectural. As noted above, any word can take on a second sense from context, and there is no simple, objective way to determine whether such a sense exists. If I insist that μοχλός at *Lys*. 246 means "penis", no one can prove me wrong, despite the lack of ancient parallels for this use of the word or of ancient authorities to support it, as well as the absence of a rich, allusive context that might facilitate the interpretation. What one might reasonably insist in response, however, is that I have advanced a very weak case for my alleged double sense, and one that fails to meet what would elsewhere be treated as basic criteria for philological decision-making. Arguments of this kind, in other words, can be described as arbitrary, and they have all the weaknesses of arbitrary arguments generally: that I find it productive to define something e.g. as an obscenity because it advances my own agenda with a text, is no basis for anyone else to believe me, unless of course they share that agenda. This does not mean that the supposed double sense or allusion is not there, for no one can tell. But it does mean that we are generally ill-advised both to advance such claims and to accept them from others. One might consider adopting a rule allowing an otherwise unattested double sense of a word to be hypothesised when it makes sense of an obscure line or passage, as with Blaydes' theory regarding Ar. fr. 561 (**18**). These are merely guesses and not deserving of much trust, since they inevitably reflect our own presuppositions and concerns rather than those of the original author or audience, which are unavailable to us. But accepting this approach in such situations in any case requires that we also accept its converse, which is that if a text is clear as it stands, we are not justified in imposing a double sense on the vocabulary: this is an exegetical technique appropriate for emergency situations only.

Analysing humour routinely tells us at least as much about what we find amusing as about what our sources did. Obscenity is by definition a uniquely charged phenomenon — that which one should not say or do, but nonetheless does — and is thus particularly useful for inciting laughter. Indeed, such jokes are so appealing on some level, that simply alleging the presence of one in an ancient text can be enough to make it seem to be there, particularly in a time like our own, when popular culture is openly suffused with sexuality. There is no easy way to escape this dilemma. But we can at least insist that the evidence offered in support of such claims hold up to normal standards of philological argumentation, and self-consciously consider the methodological principles on which we make and evaluate such claims.

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Georgios Triantafyllou

Like a Rabid Dog: Animal Metaphors and Similes in Aristophanes

Abstract: Animals play a key role in the comedies of Aristophanes. More often than not, the comic poet's focus is not on the animals themselves but on human beings who share characteristics with them. The attribution of animal characteristics to humans takes the form of a simile and almost always creates a comic effect. Examination of these similes can reveal Aristophanes' and his audience's perceptions of animals, as well as the poet's perception of the traits of his "dehumanised" human targets. Particular people are more frequently compared to certain animals than others: Cleon is compared to dogs, jurors to stinging insects, Athenians to sheep, and Spartans to wolves. Most similes focus on negative characteristics shared by animals and humans, especially when Aristophanes is targeting politicians and civic bodies. Other similes, in particular those concerning artists and common individuals, are merely amusing.

Aristophanic text and stage are populated not only by human beings but also by various animals.[1] Whether domesticated or wild, these animals play a key role in Old Comedy, and in Aristophanes' comedies, in particular.[2] In fact, some of them are entitled after such animals.[3] The text of *Birds* is crowded with all sorts of winged creatures. *Frogs* gets its name from the first of the play's Choruses.[4]

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1 See e.g. Franco 2011, 320–361 on the presence of animals in ancient Greek literature; Harden 2013, 141–196 on animals in everyday life in ancient Greece. Cf. also Howe 2014, 233–244.
2 Comparisons between animals and humans are also found in other genres. Their use in the iambic tradition, in particular, is especially worth noting, since Aristophanes is conscious of the earlier literary production. Hence, in Archilochus, we see, *inter alia*, comparisons of men with monkeys or foxes (see Swift 2019, 27, 41–42). Moreover, Semonides distinguishes different women types by attributing special animal traits to them (see Lloyd-Jones 1975, 22; Hubbard 1994, 189–190; Osborne 2001, 47–48).
3 This practice is part of a tradition that clearly predates Aristophanes. There is ample evidence that earlier comic poets, as well as Aristophanes' contemporaries, used zoomorphic choruses in some of their works. The animals which made up these choruses provided the titles of the corresponding comedies: Magnes' *Frogs*, *Birds*, and *Gall-Flies*, Crates' *Birds* and *Beasts*, Eupolis' *Goats*, Callias' *Frogs*, and Plato Comicus' *Ants* (see Sifakis 1971, 76; Rothwell 2007, 103–104; cf. also Conti Bizzarro 2009, 10).
4 See Dover 1972, 177–178 on the matter of the two Choruses in this play. Cf. also Pütz 2014, 160.

In *Wasps*, the Athenian jurors who form the Chorus are portrayed as the homonymous insects with their ferocious stings. Apart from the titles of the plays, there are numerous references to animals throughout the texts. They were used in sacrifices, as sources of food, as working partners, or as means of transport and entertainment. Besides, some animals lived near humans, either as a companion or as a nuisance.

There are also many cases in which animals are compared to humans. This comparison takes the form of a metaphor or a simile,[5] and may involve the complete transformation of a human being into an animal, the attribution of animal characteristics to a human, or the characterisation of a human as a specific animal. These cases are of particular interest, since they provide comic effect. Aristophanes attributed to humans, more often than not, humble and disgraceful animal traits.[6] The idea behind this is that comparing the poet's targets to animals reduced them from the state of a civilised human being to that of a savage or even non-human creature.

This paper examines the use of animal metaphors and similes in the extant Aristophanic plays.[7] Similes, in particular, may be either overt or implied. When explicit, they are either indicated by specific morphosyntactic features, such as the conjunction ὥσπερ and the particle ὡς, or explained in the following verses. When implicit, pragmatic reasoning is required in order to make them intelligible. Moreover, humans and animals are rarely fully identified in every respect.

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5 Metaphor and simile are figures of speech that are related to each other, because they refer to the comparison of two notions which share common qualities (see Silk 2012, 940). Metaphor is defined as the transfer of meaning from one context to another (see Stanford 1972, 3; Innes 2003, 7; for a detailed discussion on metaphor from the perspective of modern linguistics, see Huang 2007, 222–223). The distinguishing factor between a metaphor and a simile is morphological. A simile is nothing more than a metaphor introduced by a conjunction that means "as" or "like" (see Stanford 1972, 25; Innes 2003, 18). Since these two figures of speech are so closely connected, and the subject matter of this chapter is the comic comparison of people and animals with common traits, I decided to include both metaphors and similes in my research.

6 As opposed to Homer, who attributed noble traits to heroes.

7 Only similes referring to human beings are discussed. Therefore, animals which are compared to other animals are beyond the scope of this study. The same applies to cases such as the metonymy of the fish in Ar. *Eq.* 645, where cheap fish represent abundance of food and supplies. Moreover, animals with human abilities, similes involving dead animals, such as Myrrhine's self-comparison to fish in Ar. *Lys.* 115, and similes about inanimate objects, like the comparison of smoke to a rabid bitch by the men's Chorus in Ar. *Lys.* 298 (see Franco 2014, 196–197 on the connection between dogs and rabies), are also not presented here. This study is restricted to the extant plays of Aristophanes, since they provide wider contextual information, which is essential in order to better understand the use of the simile.

Their similarities are usually confined to specific aspects of their character, appearance, or morals. Aristophanes focuses on the weak points of his targets and exploits the traits they share with the animals they are compared to.

Several groupings of the subject matter are possible. Based on their length, metaphors and similes may be extended or short. Based on textual information, they may be addressing, self-addressing, or describing.[8] Based on biology, they may involve mammals, birds, fishes, amphibians, reptiles, or insects. However, we have opted to group them on the basis of the target of the comparison. Thus the subject matter is divided into four groups of people, to whom animal characteristics are attributed: politicians, citizen bodies, artists, and other citizens.

The passages discussed here follow Wilson's (2007) edition.[9] In each passage we examine who speaks, to whom, and under what circumstances. Then, we figure out who is being compared to the specific animal in each case, what animal characteristics are attributed to him/them, and which human traits correspond to those characteristics. We only examine metaphors and similes involving specific animals, since when someone is represented as an unspecified animal,[10] no conclusions can be drawn on the specific traits attributed to that person.

1 Politicians

When using animal metaphors and similes to represent themselves, politicians on the Aristophanic stage attribute to themselves all the positive connotations of the animal mentioned. On the contrary, when describing their rivals, they portray them as cunning and dangerous beasts, usually as a fox, a dog, or a monkey. Aristophanes himself ridicules the politicians he presents on stage by comparing them to a wide variety of animals. Cleon is undoubtedly the dominant figure in this group.

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8 Addressing is when someone addresses someone else comparing him to an animal; self-addressing when someone compares oneself to an animal; describing when someone compares a third person, usually not present, to an animal.

9 All translations are taken from Henderson's (1998) edition.

10 Cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 448, οὐκ ἀφήσεις οὐδὲ νυνί μ', ὦ κάκιστον θηρίον. The use of the word θηρίον is clearly derogatory, but we are given no clues as to the specific traits Aristophanes means to allude to. In Ar. *Lys.* 468, 476, and 1014, women are represented as beasts. In Ar. *Nub.* 184–186, the Spartan captives are represented as beasts by Strepsiades.

1.1 Cleon the dog or Cleon the beast?

In Ar. *Eq.* 1014–1024, on the occasion of interpreting an oracle, Paphlagon demonstrates his loyalty to Demos by presenting himself as a dog barking to protect his master:[11]

ἐγὼ μέν εἰμ' ὁ κύων· πρὸ σοῦ γὰρ ἀπύω.[12]

I'm the dog, because I howl on your behalf.

The Sausage-Seller provides another interpretation, using a similar comparison.[13] He does not deny that Paphlagon is the dog, and presents another oracle which attributes different canine traits to his rival:

φράζευ, Ἐρεχθεΐδη, κύνα Κέρβερον ἀνδραποδιστήν,
ὃς κέρκῳ σαίνων σ', ὁπόταν δειπνῇς, ἐπιτηρῶν
ἐξέδεταί σου τοὐψον, ὅταν σύ ποι ἄλλοσε χάσκῃς·
εἰσφοιτῶν τ' εἰς τοὐπτάνιον λήσει σε κυνηδὸν
νύκτωρ τὰς λοπάδας καὶ τὰς νήσους διαλείχων.[14]

Mark well, son of Erechtheus, the dog Cerberus, trafficker in bodies,
who wags his tail at you when you're dining and watches,
and when you happen to gape in another direction, eats up your entree,
and at night steals into your kitchen all unseen, and doglike
licks clean the plates and the islands.

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11 In the last phrase of the oracle, Cleon's rivals are represented as jackdaws (cf. Ar. *Eq.* 1020, πολλοὶ γὰρ μίσει σφε κατακρώζουσι κολοιοί). Paphlagon accuses them of jealousy (see Sommerstein 1981, 198–199) and malevolence, and depicts them as enemies of the state, who should be barked away by the protectors of the common good. Rival politicians are depicted as ravens elsewhere (cf. Ar. *Eq.* 1051, μὴ πείθου· φθονεραὶ γὰρ ἐπικρώζουσι κορῶναι). This simile also denotes jealousy. In another oracle, Paphlagon describes these people as gnats (cf. Ar. *Eq.* 1038, ὃς περὶ τοῦ δήμου πολλοῖς κώνωψι μαχεῖται). In other words, he portrays Cleon's rivals as both contemptible and annoying (see Sommerstein 1981, 199). Elsewhere the politicians from whom Cleon protects the Athenian people are described by Philocleon as flies (cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 597, ἀλλὰ φυλάττει διὰ χειρὸς ἔχων καὶ τὰς μυίας ἀπαμύνει).
12 See Ar. *Eq.* 1023.
13 See Kloss 2001, 57 and Konstantakos 2021, 240–251 on Cleon presented as a dog. On the struggle between Sausage-Seller and Cleon, see Rademaker 2003, 119–121. On Aristophanes' mockery of Cleon, see Koster 1980, 72–74; Kamen 2020, 53–57.
14 See Ar. *Eq.* 1030–1034.

Paphlagon, under the pretence of protecting Demos, actually steals his goods, taking advantage of his master's trust.[15] Therefore, he is not as loyal as a dog, as he claims. Rather, he is similar to a cunning, greedy, and ungrateful dog. In other words, he possesses all the negative traits a dog can have.

Paphlagon tries to defend himself with another oracle, in which he is represented as a lion:

ἔστι γυνή, τέξει δὲ λέονθ᾽ ἱεραῖς ἐν Ἀθήναις[16]

There is a woman who shall bear a lion in holy Athens

Pericles' mother was said to have dreamt of giving birth to a lion before the politician's birth.[17] The allusion to Pericles is intended to provoke a comparison between the two, Pericles and Cleon. As in the previous oracles with the good dog and the bad dog, here we have to distinguish between the good lion and the bad lion. Obviously, Pericles possessed all the positive traits of a lion, highlighting the contrast with Cleon. There are lions which are not noble, and Cleon is one of them. He is fierce and dangerous, and resembles Cypselus,[18] the tyrant of Corinth, rather than Pericles.

Cleon is described as a terrible monster by the Chorus leader as he lists Aristophanes' achievements in Ar. *Pax* 754–758. The description begins by calling Cleon a dog:

καὶ πρῶτον μὲν μάχομαι πάντων αὐτῷ τῷ καρχαρόδοντι,
οὗ δεινόταται μὲν ἀπ᾽ ὀφθαλμῶν Κύννης ἀκτῖνες ἔλαμπον[19]

First of all I battled old Jagged Teeth himself, whose eyes like the bitch Cynna's flashed terrible beams

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15 See Franco 2014, 28 and 67 on dogs and thievishness.

16 See Ar. *Eq.* 1037.

17 See Sommerstein 1981, 199. Politicians are represented as lions in another passage (Ar. *Ran.* 1431a–1431b, οὐ χρὴ λέοντος σκύμνον ἐν πόλει τρέφειν· / μάλιστα μὲν λέοντα μὴ ᾽ν πόλει τρέφειν). According to Aeschylus, the city must not allow politicians who resemble lions, alluding to Alcibiades, to grow and gain power. They may look charming at birth, but they will prove fierce and dangerous like lions (see Stanford 1963, 194; Dover 1993, 372; Sommerstein 1996, 286). On Alcibiades as a lion, see Konstantakos 2018, 27–29.

18 A similar oracle was associated with Cypselus' birth (see Sommerstein 1981, 199). The comparison of a newborn male child to a lion also recurs in Ar. *Thesm.* 514 (see Sommerstein 1994, 189; Austin/Olson 2004, 207).

19 See Ar. *Pax* 754–755.

The doglike trait implied in the first verse is obviously not loyalty but fury and aggression. In the second verse there is a pun on the words κύων and Cynna, who was a notorious prostitute.[20] The point here is that Cleon is aggressive as a dog and should not be esteemed more highly than a whore.

The comparison of the monstrous Cleon with animals continues in Ar. *Pax* 758:

> φώκης δ' ὀσμήν, Λαμίας δ' ὄρχεις ἀπλύτους, πρωκτὸν δὲ καμήλου.

> the smell of a seal, the unwashed balls of a Lamia, and the arsehole of a camel.

The comparison of Cleon's smell to that of a seal, which is terrible, is undoubtedly an allusion to the politician's family leather-tanning workshop. The similarity between Cleon's anus and that of a camel lies in the fact that they are both large and stinking. The difference is that the camel's anus is naturally large, while Cleon's has become so as a result of sexual intercourse,[21] recalling the pun on Cynna's name in the previous lines. In fact, these verses are an accusation against Cleon of being a *kinaidos*. Such an accusation pertains to the commonplace derision of

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20 See Platnauer 1964, 132–133; Sommerstein 1985, 169; Olson 1998, 222. Cleon is portrayed in exactly the same way elsewhere (cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 1031–1032, θρασέως ξυστὰς εὐθὺς ἀπ' ἀρχῆς αὐτῷ / τῷ καρχαρόδοντι, / οὗ δεινόταται μὲν ἀπ' ὀφθαλμῶν Κύννης ἀκτῖνες ἔλαμπον). It seems that dog in general was a metonym for prostitutes (see Lonsdale 1979, 151). A comparison of politicians with prostitutes is also found in Diphilus (cf. fr. 101, ὅρκος δ' ἑταίρας ταὐτὸ καὶ δημηγόρου· / ἑκάτερος αὐτῶν ὄμνύει πρὸς ὃν λαλεῖ). On Cleon's representation as a monster in the *Knights* and the *Wasps*, see the full discussion in Konstantakos 2022, 136–141.

21 See Henderson 1991, 63; Olson 1998, 223; Kamen 2020, 51. Cf. also Ar. *Vesp.* 1035, φώκης δ' ὀσμήν, Λαμίας δ' ὄρχεις ἀπλύτους, πρωκτὸν δὲ καμήλου. Cleisthenes, an effeminate person, is ridiculed by Dicaeopolis, who calls him a monkey (cf. Ar. *Ach.* 119–121, ὦ θερμόβουλον πρωκτὸν ἐξυρημένε, / τοιόνδε γ', ὦ πίθηκε, τὸν πώγων' ἔχων / εὐνοῦχος ἡμῖν ἦλθες ἐσκευασμένος;). Although monkeys are a symbol of trickery, in this case it seems that Aristophanes is comparing Cleisthenes' arse to that of a monkey (see Koster 1980, 72–73; Kamen 2020, 50). A monkey's arse is grotesque (see Olson 2002, 111), and the meaning here is that Cleisthenes' arse has become so due to intense anal sex (see Rademaker 2003, 122). The emphasis lies on the illusory appearance of Cleisthenes, which alludes to the monkey's imitative habit (see Apostolakis 2021, 52). Monkeys were also associated with imitation, grotesque appearance, and trickery in Latin literature. In Plautus' *Mostellaria*, for example, the slave Phaniscus, who tries to deceive his master, is called a monkey by another slave, who tries to stop him (cf. Plaut. *Most.* 887–887a: *Vide ut fastidit simia. / manesne ilico, impure parasite?*). Moreover, the resemblance between the words *simia* (monkey) and *similis* creates a recurring wordplay in Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus* (see McDermott 1936, 150; Connors 2004, 191–202). This pattern probably passed into Roman comedy through Greek Middle and New Comedy.

Athenian politicians of being *euryprōktoi*, i.e. of having broad arses as a result of sexual penetration.

In Ar. *Vesp.* 34–36, a demagogue is compared to a whale:

> κᾆπειτα τούτοις τοῖσι προβάτοις μοὐδόκει
> δημηγορεῖν φάλλαινα πανδοκεύτρια,
> ἔχουσα φωνὴν ἐμπεπρημένης ὑός.

> Then a ravening whale started haranguing these sheep with a voice like a scalded pig.

The whale may be a symbol of greediness, because of its size, or of ugliness. The metaphor here targets Cleon once again. The whale's voice is piggish, and we know that Cleon had a high-pitched voice. Therefore, the animal here could be identified with Cleon,[22] who was greedy as a whale with a piggish voice. The demagogue's audience is compared to sheep. The comparison of Athenians to sheep is quite frequent in Aristophanes.[23]

In Ar. *Eq.* 197–198, Homeric imagery is employed in an oracle spoken by the first slave:

> ἀλλ' ὁπόταν μάρψῃ βυρσαίετος ἀγκυλοχήλης
> γαμφηλῇσι δράκοντα κοάλεμον αἱματοπώτην

> Yea, when the crook-taloned rawhide eagle shall snatch
> in its beak the dimwitted blood-guzzling serpent

Paphlagon is identified as the eagle in this oracle, and the Sausage-Seller as the snake. Eagles in such imagery are symbols of failure, since the snake defeated the eagle in the Homeric parallel.[24] The Sausage-Seller is described as a snake because he is a disgusting crawler, a pariah of society, but also perhaps because the sausages he sells are similar to snakes. Therefore, the meaning of the metaphor is that someone as disgusting as a snake will beat someone else who is bound to fail.

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22 See Sommerstein 1983, 154–155; Biles/Olson 2015, 93–94.
23 Cf. Konstantakos 2021, 241–243 with further references.
24 See *Iliad* 12.200–207; Sommerstein 1981, 153. However, Paphlagon compares himself with a hawk, and he obviously thinks that he possesses the positive attributes of the bird, in Ar. *Eq.* 1052, ἀλλ' ἱέρακα φίλει μεμνημένος ἐν φρεσίν.

1.2 Doggier than thou

Cleon is not the only one to present himself as a dog. Ar. *Eq.* 413–428 provides a lengthy metaphor in which the Sausage-Seller is described in words and imagery alluding to dogs. In the fourth line of this passage, we are informed that the main nutrition of the Sausage-Seller in his childhood consisted of pieces of bread that people throw to dogs:

> ἀπομαγδαλιὰς σιτούμενος τοσοῦτος ἐκτραφεὶς ἦ
>
> I've grown this big on a diet of sops

Here the animal metaphor reveals poverty and misery, but also endurance in difficult conditions. However, it does not exactly arouse empathy towards the speaker. The Sausage-Seller yearns to assume power, but in terms of breeding he is even worse than Paphlagon. Therefore, the metaphor should provoke aversion towards this man.

Paphlagon responds, and the two men enter a contest about who is more savage than the other:[25]

> ἀπομαγδαλιὰς ὥσπερ κύων; ὦ παμπόνηρε, πῶς οὖν
> κυνὸς βορὰν σιτούμενος μαχεῖ σὺ κυνοκεφάλλῳ;[26]

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[25] In previous verses, both describe their voices as animal-like (cf. Ar. *Eq.* 285–287, τριπλάσιον κεκράξομαί σου. / καταβοήσομαι βοῶν σε. / κατακεκράξομαί σε κράζων). Therefore, the contest is simply resumed in the dog simile discussed above (see Hutchinson 2011, 66; Pütz 2014, 164). Elsewhere, Cleon is compared to a cow (see Sommerstein 1981, 179), which speaks faeces instead of words (cf. Ar. *Eq.* 658, κἄγωγ' ὅτε δὴ 'γνων τοῖς βολίτοις ἡττώμενος). Syracosius, another politician, is called a jay, because of his annoying voice resembling the bird's squawk (cf. Ar. *Av.* 1297, Συρακοσίῳ δὲ Κίττα).

[26] See Ar. *Eq.* 415–416. The contest between a malnourished dog and a powerful beast is analogous to the trial of the dogs in Ar. *Vesp.* 891–1008 (see MacDowell 1971, 243–254; Landfester 1977, 135–139; Sommerstein 1983, 208–212; Kloss 2001, 153–154; Pütz 2014, 157; Biles/Olson 2015, 337–360; Konstantakos 2021). Although the Cydathenaean dog is identified as Cleon and Labes is identified as Laches, this scene is not regarded as a simile here, because the point of the trial is that the litigants are actually dogs, anthropomorphic as they may be. Aristophanes plays with dog traits, such as loyalty and thievishness, which are attributed to the human counterparts of the two rivals. In that sense, there are some similes within the dogs' trial. The Cydathenaean dog portrays himself as a loyal guard and accuses Labes of thievishness. However, the Cydathenaean dog is also portrayed as a thief (see Dorey 1956, 136; Konstantakos 2021, 249–260; and cf. Konstantakos' chapter in this volume).

> Sops, like a dog? How can a cheap joker like you eat dog-food and expect to fight a dog-faced baboon?

Paphlagon is represented as a dog-headed baboon.[27] Both candidates who desire the power to control Demos are now reduced to mere beasts. The simile and the metaphor in this passage are designed to provoke emotions of horror, disgust, and insecurity about the fate of Demos, who has the fiercest of creatures as advisors.

In the rest of the scene, the Sausage-Seller describes how he used to distract the butchers' attention in the market and steal pieces of meat. Thievishness is the trait attributed to dogs in this passage. The same trait is attributed to weasels in Ar. *Vesp.* 363:

> ὥσπερ με γαλῆν κρέα κλέψασαν

> watching me like a weasel who's stolen some meat

Philocleon presents his captivity as that of a weasel convicted of stealing.[28]

1.3 Other demagogues

Both Athenian and Spartan politicians who may erode peace at some point are represented by the Spartan delegate as foxes in Ar. *Lys.* 1265–1270:

> νῦν δ᾽
> αὖ φιλία τ᾽ ἀὲς εὔπορος εἴη
> ταῖσι συνθήκαισι, καὶ τᾶν αἰμυλᾶν ἀ–
> λωπέκων παυαίμεθα.

> Now let friendship in abundance
> attend our agreement always, and let us
> ever abandon foxy stratagems.

The trait attributed here to politicians is obviously cunningness.[29] Some politicians would certainly try to trick the people of Athens and Sparta into another war. Quite interestingly, fox metaphors refer to Spartans when used by Athenians.

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27 See Sommerstein 1981, 165–166.

28 See MacDowell 1971, 181–182; Biles/Olson 2015, 204–205.

29 A positive comparison of a human to a fox occurs only once. In Tereus' presentation of Peisetaerus before the birds, he uses the fox as a metaphor of cleverness (Ar. *Av.* 429, πυκνότατον κίναδος). The meaning here is that Peisetaerus is clever as a fox (see Dover 1974, 128; Collard 2018, 131).

Here the Spartans aim their criticism at selfish politicians, prone to corruption, and thus reject accusations of being tricksters themselves.

Aristophanes' Cleon was the filthiest of all demagogues, but he was not the only one. They are all portrayed as greedy animals. Demagogues are compared to seagulls, a symbol of greed and thievish disposition, in Ar. *Eq.* 956:[30]

λάρος κεχηνὼς ἐπὶ πέτρας δημηγορῶν.

A large-mouthed seagull on a rock haranguing the people.

This was the seal on the ring of Cleonymus, a minor politician.[31] He is also compared to a big eagle which casts away a shield in Xanthias' dream in Ar. *Vesp.* 19. The eagle here is a symbol not only of failure, but also of cowardice. Cleonymus was reported to have once discarded his shield in battle, an action regarded as contemptible.[32] His comparison to an eagle may stress the contrast between what he thinks he is and what he really is.

Theorus, a supporter and flatterer of Cleon, is described as raven-headed in Ar. *Vesp.* 42–45:

ἐδόκει δέ μοι Θέωρος αὐτῆς πλησίον
χαμαὶ καθῆσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν κόρακος ἔχων.
εἶτ' Ἀλκιβιάδης εἶπε πρός με τραυλίσας·
"ὁλᾷς; Θέωλος τὴν κεφαλὴν κόλακος ἔχει".

And I dreamed that Theorus was squatting on the ground beside the whale, with the head of a plover. Then Alcibiades said to me in his baby lisp, "Wookit! Theowus has the head of a gwoveller"!

The pun here lies in the similar sound of the words κόλαξ and κόραξ. The common attribute shared by Theorus and a raven is opportunism and feeding on dead

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30 In the comedy of the fourth century, the comparison of politicians with seagulls can also be found (cf. Timocles fr. 4.7–9, ὅ τ' ἐν λόγοισι δεινὸς Ὑπερείδης ἔχει. / τοὺς ἰχθυοπώλας οὗτος ἡμῖν πλουτιεῖ / ὀψοφάγος † γὰρ ὥστε τοὺς λάρους εἶναι Σύρους). Here Hypereides is compared to seagulls, in relation to his alleged passive bribery by Harpalus. Voracity and thievishness are the traits which are common to the politician and the seagulls (see Apostolakis 2019, 43–44).
31 See Sommerstein 1981, 194.
32 See MacDowell 1971, 130; Sommerstein 1983, 153; Rademaker 2003, 122; Biles/Olson 2015, 87–88; Kamen 2020, 48. Cleon is also compared to a seagull elsewhere (Ar. *Nub.* 591, ἢν Κλέωνα τὸν λάρον δώρων ἑλόντες καὶ κλοπῆς). The simile denotes greed and bribery (see Dover 1968, 175; Sommerstein 1982, 192).

bodies — figuratively of Theorus, literary of the raven.[33] Aristophanes exploits here Alcibiades' inability to pronounce the sound /r/ (lambdacism), in order to highlight the comparison (in ethical level) of the flatterer with the raven.[34]

Elsewhere, Theorus is compared to a fox, since he seems to flatter both Cleon and his rivals. According to Philocleon, this political stance is unacceptable:

οὐκ ἔστιν ἀλωπεκίζειν,
οὐδ' ἀμφοτέροισι γίγνεσθαι φίλον.[35]

You cannot be foxy
or befriend both sides.

The common attributes of Theorus and the fox here are cunningness and unscrupulousness.[36] However, Aristophanes did something similar when he pretended to stop attacking Cleon. This is the only example of the comedian presenting himself as an animal:

ταῦτα κατιδὼν ὑπό τι μικρὸν ἐπιθήκισα.[37]

I saw all this and pulled a little monkey business.

Aristophanes claims here that he was tricky as a monkey.[38] The difference with Theorus is that the comic poet tricked Cleon, while Theorus tricks everybody else. This makes Aristophanes praiseworthy and Theorus despicable.

Cleigenes was another politician, perhaps related to Cleophon, who was also a target of Aristophanes. In Ar. *Ran.* 708–709, Cleigenes is compared to a monkey by the Chorus:

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33 See MacDowell 1971, 133–134; Sommerstein 1983, 155; Biles/Olson 2015, 96–97.

34 It seems that this particular comparison was known in the Socratic tradition (cf. Antisthenes fr. 84a.1 Caizzi, κρεῖττον ἔλεγε, καθά φησιν Ἑκάτων ἐν ταῖς Χρείαις, εἰς κόρακας ἢ εἰς κόλακας ἐμπεσεῖν· οἱ μὲν γὰρ νεκρούς, οἱ δὲ ζῶντας ἐσθίουσιν).

35 See Ar. *Vesp.* 1241–1242.

36 See MacDowell 1971, 292–293; Biles/Olson 2015, 444. Cf. also López Eire 1996, 154–155.

37 See Ar. *Vesp.* 1290.

38 See Totaro 2000, 191–192. Archilochus also describes himself as a cunning fox, in reference to his poetics (fr. 185 West; see Swift 2019, 41–42). In Aristophanes, Euripides is compared to a monkey and a fox by the archer whom he is trying to trick in order to help Mnesilochus (cf. Ar. *Thesm.* 1133, μιαρὸς ἀλώπηξ, οἷον ἐπιτήκιζί μοι). Moreover, the Theban merchant describes himself as a monkey when talking to Dicaeopolis (cf. Ar. *Ach.* 906–907, λάβοιμι μέντἂν κέρδος ἀγαγὼν καὶ πολύ, / ἅπερ πίθακον ἀλιτρίας πολλᾶς πλέων). Both fox and monkey are related to cunningness and playing tricks (see Olson 2002, 299; Austin/Olson 2004, 332).

οὐ πολὺν οὐδ' ὁ πίθηκος οὗτος ὁ νῦν ἐνοχλῶν,
Κλειγένης ὁ μικρός

then this monkey who's so annoying now—
pint-sized Cleigenes

This metaphor is obviously belittling of Cleigenes. Cleigenes was also short, a fact which the Chorus stresses, making the mockery against him even harsher. Monkeys were associated with trickery and mischievousness. Therefore, the meaning here is that Cleigenes was mischievous as a monkey.[39]

1.4 Military officers

Bdelycleon portrays Laches as an efficient herd-dog in his advocacy:

Βδ. ἀγαθὸς γάρ ἐστι καὶ διώκει τοὺς λύκους.
Φι. κλέπτης μὲν οὖν οὗτός γε καὶ ξυνωμότης.
Βδ. μὰ Δί', ἀλλ' ἄριστός ἐστι τῶν νυνὶ κυνῶν,
     οἷός τε πολλοῖς προβατίοις ἐφεστάναι.[40]

Bd. For he's a good dog, and he chases away the wolves.
Ph. No, he's a thief and a conspirator!
Bd. On the contrary, he's top dog of his generation, able to control a multitude of sheep.

The enemies of Athens, both external and internal, are represented as wolves, considered as rapacious and marauders of animals. They are dangerous to Laches' fellow-citizens, who are represented as sheep. This metaphor is quite frequent in the comedies. Sheep are a symbol of a simple-minded, foolish group of

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39 See Stanford 1963, 133; Dover 1993, 280; Sommerstein 1996, 218. Ugliness is also related to monkeys. Politicians are represented as monkeys in another passage from the same play, underlining their tricky nature (cf. Ar. *Ran.* 1083–1086, κᾆτ' ἐκ τούτων ἡ πόλις ἡμῶν / ὑπογραμματέων ἀνεμεστώθη / καὶ βωμολόχων δημοπιθήκων / ἐξαπατώντων τὸν δῆμον ἀεί). On this passage and on comparisons of politicians with apes in Attic oratory, see Apostolakis 2021, 52–53. Cf. also Phrynichus Com. fr. 21.1–4, μεγάλους πιθήκους οἶδ' ἑτέρους τινὰς λέγειν, / Λυκέαν, Τελέαν, Πείσανδρον, Ἐξηκεστίδην. / ἀνωμάλους εἶπας πιθήκους – ‿ – / ὁ μέν γε δειλός, ὁ δὲ κόλαξ, ὁ δὲ νόθος.
40 See Ar. *Vesp.* 952–955.

people.[41] Therefore, Laches' bravery and self-denial in repelling dangers to the city are praised in this passage.[42]

An unnamed officer is the target of mockery by the Chorus leader in Ar. *Pax* 1177–1178:

> κᾆτα φεύγει πρῶτος ὥσπερ ξουθὸς ἱππαλεκτρυών
> τοὺς λόφους σείων.

> Then he's the first to take to his heels, fluttering his plumes like a zooming horsecock.

The hybrid animal to which the officer is compared combines some traits of both horses and cocks. The trait which is attributed to the officer here is cowardice. The name of the animal is taken from Aeschylus' *Myrmidons*,[43] where its meaning was different. Here Aristophanes paints an amusing picture of an officer running away from battle as fast as a horse, and looking like a cockerel with his feathers going up and down in his attempt to get away, contrary to the heroic exemplar of leaping willingly into battle.

Some verses later, the Chorus leader expands his metaphor to include all generals who act in this way:

> πολλὰ γὰρ δή μ' ἠδίκησαν,
> ὄντες οἴκοι μὲν λέοντες,
> ἐν μάχῃ δ' ἀλώπεκες.[44]

> for they've done me much wrong,
> acting like lions on the home front,
> like foxes in the fight!

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41 See Sommerstein 1983, 212; Biles/Olson 2015, 364; Konstantakos 2021, 241–243. Cf. also Ar. *Vesp.* 31–33, ἔδοξέ μοι περὶ πρῶτον ὕπνον ἐν τῇ Πυκνὶ / ἐκκλησιάζειν πρόβατα συγκαθήμενα, / βακτηρίας ἔχοντα καὶ τριβώνια.
42 See MacDowell 1995, 166; Konstantakos 2021, 249–260.
43 See Platnauer 1964, 163; Sommerstein 1985, 189; Olson 1998, 292. Phrynichus is compared elsewhere to a cock by Philocleon (cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 1490, πτήσσει Φρύνιχος ὥς τις ἀλέκτωρ). It seems that "cock" functions as synonym of "loser" here, with reference to the losing bird in the popular sport of cock-fighting (see MacDowell 1971, 324–325; Sommerstein 1983, 245; Biles/Olson 2015, 503–504). Dieitrephes the general is also compared to a horsecock (cf. Ar. *Av.* 800, μεγάλα πράττει κἀστὶ νυνὶ ξουθὸς ἱππαλεκτρυών). The simile here may refer to the rise of an otherwise unworthy man high in the hierarchy (see Sommerstein 1987, 249–250), and how ridiculous the offices look on him. His outfit and armour might also look funny, in the same way as Lamachus' helmet makes him look like an exotic bird due to its impressive ornaments (see Olson 2002, 340).
44 See Ar. *Pax* 1188–1190. On such behaviour by commanders, see Sommerstein 1985, 190; Olson 1998, 295.

The contrast between the lion and the fox highlights the generals' cowardice when they should be brave. Indeed, being brave at home is of no value to the city. The use of the lion in this metaphor is derogatory, although lions were considered noble animals. Here a lion would be useless at best, since courage and force are not applied when needed, in battle. The worst-case scenario would be that force is applied at home, against fellow citizens, when those represented as lions in this sense would be dangerous to the common good. The same is true of the fox, which here denotes not only cunningness, but also cowardice.

2 The citizenry

Aristophanes describes the citizen body of Athenians as sheep, i.e. simple-minded, and the citizens of other cities, namely Sparta and Megara, as foxes, wolves, and dogs, i.e. cunning, fierce, and untrustworthy. The Athenians, when serving as jurors, are criticised for their irascibility by being compared to wasps.

2.1 Law courts

Athenian jurors are compared to wasps in the eponymous play. Aristophanes thereby criticises the flaws of the Athenian legal system. In the time of Cleon, citizens who served as jurors were often manipulated by demagogues. Thus, they produced unfair judgements[45] which harmed innocent citizens, just as wasps harm their victims with their stings. The Chorus' costumes must have been based on this metaphor, and its members carried a sting which was presumably used in sealing the conviction of unlucky accused citizens, guilty or not. In this respect, jurors are like wasps, since they cannot distinguish between those who deserve to be stung and those who do not. However, the metaphor implies that jurors'

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45 See MacDowell 1971, 2–4; Sifakis 1971, 97–99; Sommerstein 1983, xvi–xvii; Pütz 2014, 156; Biles/Olson 2015, xliv–xlv. Vocabulary related to insects and stinging recurs frequently in this play (cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 1113, πάντα γὰρ κεντοῦμεν ἄνδρα κάκπορίζομεν βίον). Aristophanes implies that stinging is vital to wasps for making a living, and that is how jurors are compared to them (see MacDowell 1971, 275). The Chorus leader accuses some jurors, comparing them to drones (cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 1114, ἀλλὰ γὰρ κηφῆνες ἡμῖν εἰσιν). The meaning here is not that jurors who do not convict the accused resemble wasps who do not sting, but that some of them either evaded military service or were not as brave and as effective as they should have been (see MacDowell 1971, 275–286; Sommerstein 1983, 222; Biles/Olson 2015, 413). For a detailed discussion on metaphors involving wasps and men in this play, see Conti Bizzarro 2009, 71–120.

misjudgements are due to incompetence rather than wickedness, since wasps do not have the intelligence to understand what they are doing.

The accused often presented his crying children in front of the jurors in order to provoke the emotion of pity, in an attempt to sway the decision of the jury. Philocleon describes this practice in Ar. *Vesp.* 572–573:

> "εἰ μὲν χαίρεις ἀρνὸς φωνῇ, παιδὸς φωνὴν ἐλεήσαις"·
> εἰ δ' αὖ τοῖς χοιριδίοις χαίρω, θυγατρὸς φωνῇ με πιθέσθαι.

> "If you enjoy the bleat of the lamb, please pity the cry of the kid!" And if I enjoy a bit of pork, I'm supposed to heed the cry of his daughter.

Boys are represented as lambs for the sake of a pun on ἀρρεν- (male) and ἀρνός (lamb). Lambs function as symbols of innocence and incapability of doing harm.[46] The meaning here could be that sometimes jurors sympathised with the accused because they really felt pity for them. On the contrary, girls are represented as young pigs, a pun on female genitals frequent in comedy.[47]

In Ar. *Pax* 635–648, Hermes criticises the jurors' way of handling legal disputes in the court of law. He particularly emphasises their manipulation by orators, and ultimately by Cleon:

> εἶτ' ἂν ὑμεῖς τοῦτον ὥσπερ κυνίδι' ἐσπαράττετε·
> ἡ πόλις γὰρ ὠχριῶσα κἂν φόβῳ καθημένη,
> ἅττα διαβάλοι τις αὐτῇ, ταῦτ' ἂν ἥδιστ' ἤσθιεν.[48]

> Then you'd mangle the man like a pack of puppies, because the city, pale and crouching in fear, was quite happy to swallow whatever slanders anyone tossed its way.

Here jurors are compared to little dogs in a derogatory manner. They follow the demagogues' orders in the same way as dogs obey their masters.[49] The use of the

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46 See MacDowell 1971, 209; Sommerstein 1983, 192; Lenz 2014, 159; Biles/Olson 2015, 265.
47 See Dover 1974, 195; Henderson 1991, 8–9; Lenz 2014, 159. This expression is a metonymy rather than a simile. Similarly, "dog" is a metonymy for penis (cf. Ar. *Lys.* 158, τὸ τοῦ Φερεκράτους, κύνα δέρειν δεδαρμένην). So is "sparrow" in Ar. *Lys.* 723. Elsewhere "pig" functions as a synecdoche for a woman (cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 1353, λυσάμενος ἔξω παλλακήν, ὦ χοιρίον). "Swallow" functions in the same way in Ar. *Lys.* 770 and 775. The comparison of human genitals to animals also occurs in Archilochus; see Swift 2019, 35. There is also in *Lysistrata* a comparison between women and lions, which also bears a sexual connotation alluding to the doggy-style position during the sexual intercourse (cf. Ar. *Lys.* 231–232, οὐ στήσομαι λέαιν' ἐπὶ τυροκνήστιδος).
48 See Ar. *Pax* 641–643.
49 See Olson 1998, 203. The verb σπαράττω is also found elsewhere in Aristophanes with the same meaning and in the same context, describing the act of prosecution in Ar. *Ach.* 688. In this

diminutive κυνίδια further intensifies the fall of the humans who bear such an important duty, as they are reduced to brainless animals. Therefore, the diminution does not concern their size but their personality. The rest of the citizen body do not avoid Hermes' criticism, as they watch terrified.[50] They are also compared to dogs, since they are happy to devour the "food" demagogues toss to them.[51]

In this passage there are three characteristics of dogs which are attributed to humans. Jurors are represented as loyal to their masters,[52] while the rest of the citizens are depicted as fearful and submissive. Both categories lack personality and thus are dangerous to the city.

In Ar. *Vesp.* 106–108, there seems to be an intentional blurring between biting and stinging insects:

> ὑπὸ δυσκολίας δ' ἅπασι τιμῶν τὴν μακρὰν
> ὥσπερ μέλιττ' ἢ βομβυλιὸς εἰσέρχεται
> ὑπὸ τοῖς ὄνυξι κηρὸν ἀναπεπλασμένος.

> From sheer nastiness he scratches a long penalty line for all convicts, and comes home with his nails caked with wax like a honeybee or a bumblebee.

Philocleon is portrayed as a bee, because when he returns home his nails and fingers are covered in wax. The meaning of the simile here is that he collects wax from the tablets on which he has voted for the conviction of the accused, as bees collect pollen from flowers in order to produce wax.[53] This bee connotation does not bear as negative a sense as the wasp one. Bees are productive animals and feed on plants, while wasps are not productive[54] and feed on dead flesh. Although this difference was probably clear to the audience, the similarities between the two in appearance and humming may have served Aristophanes as the basis on which he created the wax pun.

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case the prosecutor is essentially once again compared to a dog. Athenian jurors were often accused that the only thing they cared about was their payment of three *oboloi*. Philocleon narrates an incident in which he put some fish scales in his mouth because he thought they were money. Although he spat them out, Lysistratus told him that he had a stomach like a rooster's (see MacDowell 1971, 239; Sommerstein 1983, 206; Biles/Olson 2015, 329), digesting money fast. The simile reveals the jurors' greediness and stinginess.

50 See Sommerstein 1985, 163.

51 See Platnauer 1964, 124.

52 See van Leeuwen 1906, 104.

53 See MacDowell 1971, 146; Sommerstein 1983, 162; Biles/Olson 2015, 121.

54 Cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 365–366, ἀλλὰ καὶ νῦν ἐκπόριζε / μηχανὴν ὅπως τάχισθ'· ἕως γάρ, ὦ μελίττιον. The Chorus addresses Philocleon as "bee", probably due to his industriousness (see Biles/Olson 2015, 205).

2.2 Athenians

In *Peace* 929–936, when Trygaeus and the Chorus talk to each other in order to decide which animal should be sacrificed, the Chorus rejects all of Trygaeus' suggestions. Then they propose that a lamb should be sacrificed:

> Τρ. τῷ δαὶ δοκεῖ σοι δῆτα τῶν λοιπῶν; Χο. οἴ.
> Τρ. οἴ; Χο. ναὶ μὰ Δί'. Τρ. ἀλλὰ τοῦτό γ' ἔστ' Ἰωνικὸν
> τὸ ῥῆμ'. Χο. ἐπίτηδές γ', ἵν' <ὅταν> ἐν τἠκκλησίᾳ
> ὡς χρὴ πολεμεῖν λέγῃ τις, οἱ καθήμενοι
> ὑπὸ τοῦ δέους λέγωσ' Ἰωνικῶς "οἴ" —
> Τρ. εὖ τοι λέγεις. Χο. — καὶ τἄλλα γ' ὦσιν ἤπιοι.
> ὥστ' ἐσόμεθ' ἀλλήλοισιν ἀμνοὶ τοὺς τρόπους
> καὶ τοῖσι συμμάχοισι πρᾳότεροι πολύ.

> Tr.   Then which of the remaining options appeals to you?
> Ch.   A boo lamb.
> Tr.   Boo lamb?
> Ch.   That's right.
> Tr.   But that's an Ionic pronunciation.
> Ch.   I used it on purpose, so that whenever anyone in Assembly says we've got to go to war, the assemblymen will be frightened and say in Ionic, "Boo!" —
> Tr.   Good idea!
> Ch.   — and be gentle otherwise, so that we'll be like lambs in the way we treat one another, and much milder toward our allies.

Here the members of the Assembly are compared to sheep, on the grounds that they would like to be gentler towards their allies. However, the use of the Ionic word for lamb alludes to Ionic softness. Therefore, we should understand this metaphor as an implication that Athenians are naïve like sheep.[55]

In Ar. *Eq.* 264–265, the Chorus leader represents only some citizens as sheep:

> καὶ σκοπεῖς γε τῶν πολιτῶν ὅστις ἐστὶν ἀμνοκῶν,
> πλούσιος καὶ μὴ πονηρὸς καὶ τρέμων τὰ πράγματα.

> Yes, and what's more, you scan the citizenry for anyone who's an innocent lamb, rich and innocuous and afraid of litigation.

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55 See Olson 1998, 246–247. The same simile is found in Ar. *Vesp.* 31–36. Assemblymen are stupid as sheep and resemble a herd of sheep (see MacDowell 1971, 131; Biles/Olson 2015, 92–93; Konstantakos 2021, 241–243).

Cleon is accused of *sycophantia* against citizens who are mild and gentle. His victims are described as sheep. The trait attributed to them is faint-heartedness. The purpose of this metaphor is not to arouse empathy towards them, but to blame them in order to achieve two goals: to praise Aristophanes who is unlike them and opposes Cleon on one hand, and to accuse Cleon of being savage and marauding as a wolf on the other. The passage is reminiscent of Xenophon's *Memorabilia* 2.9, where Crito is the sheep at the mercy of wolfish sycophants.[56]

2.3 Spartans and Megarians

In Ar. *Lys.* 1254–1256, the Spartans describe themselves as boars:

> ἀμὲ δ' αὖ Λεωνίδας
> ἆγεν ᾇπερ τὼς κάπρως
> σάγοντας, οἰῶ, τὸν ὀδόντα

> while we were led by Leonidas,
> like wild boars we were, yes,
> gnashing our tusks

The simile implies that Spartan warriors were ferocious as boars and heroic in battle.[57] No reference to cunning is made here, and there is nothing scornful in this simile. However, the reference to past glory stresses the contrast between the pride of the past and the wretched condition to which the Spartans have been led in the present.

In Hierocles' oracle, Spartans are compared to monkeys, foxes, and eagles. All these animals function as symbols of treachery. In Ar. *Pax* 1065, he warns Trygaeus:

> συνθήκας πεποίησθ' ἄνδρες χαροποῖσι πιθήκοις

> you have struck a pact with glaring-eyed monkeys

The adjective χαροπός is a standard epic epithet for wild animals such as lions. Therefore, its application to monkeys seems inappropriate.[58] However, the use of this bizarre combination of adjective and noun, which provokes Trygaeus'

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56 See Neil 1901, 42.
57 See Henderson 1987, 212; Sommerstein 1990, 221.
58 See Olson 1998, 272–273.

laughter, could serve a twofold meaning: Spartans are treacherous as monkeys on one hand, and fierce as lions on the other.[59] This expression could also allude to a proverbial saying often applied to Spartan soldiers, that they acted like lions at home and like foxes in battle.[60]

The violent nature of the Spartans recurs some verses later, in Ar. *Pax* 1099–1100, in another warning addressed by Hierocles to Trygaeus:

φράζεο δὴ μή πώς σε δόλῳ φρένας ἐξαπατήσας
ἰκτῖνος μάρψῃ.

Take heed, lest a kite somehow beguile your wits by
deception.

Here the Spartans are compared to a kite, a bird which is not considered treacherous but ravenous. The meaning is that Spartans are not human; their wild animal nature will emerge, leading them to violate the agreement. This would obviously be at the Athenians' expense, and can be called treachery. Thus, in the same way as people do not trust kites, they should not trust Spartans either.

The most obvious metaphor in Hierocles' words is marked by a contrast between the cunningness of the Spartans and the simplicity of those seeking peace:

καὶ κέπφοι τρήρωνες ἀλωπεκιδεῦσι πέπεισθε,
ὧν δόλιαι ψυχαί, δόλιαι φρένες.[61]

and like tremulous pigeons give credence to fox cubs,
whose hearts are wily, and wily their minds.

Trygaeus is a fool, according to Hierocles, to trust the Spartans, who are cunning as foxes.[62] In fact, he is both a fool and a coward, as indicated by the use of the Homeric epithet for doves, τρήρων, construed with the noun κέπφος, a silly

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59 In any case, the comparison is offensive (see Long 1976, 7). Elsewhere, the Spartans are not presented as dangerous animals, since they are compared to *korakinoi* (lit. "ravenfish", a species of fish not securely identified, possibly a kind of mackerel) by Paphlagon (cf. Ar. *Eq.* 1053, ἤγαγε συνδήσας Λακεδαιμονίων κορακίνους). Since this fish was very cheap, the meaning of the simile is that Spartans were not worthy fighters (see Sommerstein 1981, 200).

60 See Sommerstein 1985, 190. Cf. also Plut. *Comp. Lys. et Sull.* 3.1, Οἴκοι λέοντες, ἐν ὑπαίθρῳ δὲ ἀλώπεκες. Since foxes are contrasted with lions, it is assumed that they possess the opposite traits. Lions are known for their bravery. Therefore, this proverb does not attribute to foxes the trait of slyness, but that of cowardice.

61 See Ar. *Pax* 1067–1068.

62 See Platnauer 1964, 155–156.

water-bird.[63] The recurrence of the adjective δόλιος in the following verse stresses the cunningness of the fox and its human counterpart, the Spartans. The point is that their cunning nature is known and cannot be changed. What was not known was the silliness and the cowardice of Trygaeus, who trusted those who should not be trusted.

The word κυνίδια is used of Megarians in the dialogue between Trygaeus and Hermes in the same play, when they discuss the common efforts to free Peace:

> οὐδ᾽ οἱ Μεγαρῆς δρῶσ᾽ οὐδέν· ἕλκουσιν δ᾽ ὅμως
> γλισχρότατα σαρκάζοντες ὥσπερ κυνίδια.[64]

> And the Megarians aren't accomplishing anything either; still, they're pulling hard, gnawing like puppies.

Here the Megarians, who are starving due to the sufferings of war, are compared to hungry dog-puppies. The lack of compassion towards the hungry people is striking,[65] but explained by the fact that the Athenians considered them responsible for the war.

However, the Megarian man in the *Acharnians* thinks otherwise, and accuses the Athenians of being destructive as mice in a metaphor taken from rural life:

> ποῖα σκόροδ᾽; ὑμὲς τῶν ἀεί,
> ὅκκ᾽ ἐσβάλητε, τὼς ἀρουραῖοι μύες,
> πάσσακι τὰς ἄγλιθας ἐξορύσσετε.[66]

> Garlic! Every time you invade, you dig up the bulbs with a hoe, like field mice.

According to the Megarian, there is no garlic production in Megara because of the war. Invaders destroy the land like mice which ravage the crops.[67] This is the only passage where a destructive animal trait is attributed to the Athenians, who are

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63 See Olson 1998, 273.

64 See Ar. *Pax* 481–482.

65 See Olson 1998, 178. Another expression for extreme poverty is used by Philocleon, who insults Lysistratus during the party scene (cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 1311–1312, ὁ δ᾽ ἀνακραγὼν ἀντήκασ᾽ αὐτὸν πάρνοπι / τὰ θρῖα τοῦ τρίβωνος ἀποβεβληκότι). Lysistratus is compared to a locust without wings, i.e. he does not have anything to wear. Besides, he will eat anything he finds (see Sommerstein 1983, 236; Biles/Olson 2015, 465), like a locust which cannot choose food if deprived of its wings. Another insect simile is found in Ar. *Nub.* 710, where the Corinthians are represented as bedbugs (see Egan 2014, 411).

66 See Ar. *Ach.* 761–763.

67 See Olson 2002, 266.

usually accused of being naïve. However, the destruction inflicted by the Athenians cannot be compared to that inflicted by the Spartans, in the same way that the destruction inflicted by mice is very different to that inflicted by foxes or wolves. Mice may be harmful to agriculture, but they are neither rapacious nor cunning.

The Spartans are compared to wolves in a metaphor which combines Spartan treachery and Megarian hunger in a previously discussed simile:

> καὶ διαλλάττειν πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀνδράσιν Λακωνικοῖς,
> οἷσι πιστὸν οὐδὲν εἰ μή περ λύκῳ κεχηνότι.[68]

> And to top it off they're trying to make peace between us and the men of Sparta, who are no more trustworthy than a starving wolf.

The leader of the men's Chorus, echoing the views of those who did not want the war to end, warns of the nature of the Spartans. The meaning here is that one would be a fool to trust someone who is by nature rapacious and savage as a wolf. The Spartans are not only rapacious and violent but also impoverished because of the war, and they resemble a hungry wolf: they will betray any treaty given the chance, as they have already done in the past.[69]

3 Artists

Aristophanes normally attacks both the artists of the past and his contemporaries.[70] However, in some cases he attributes positive traits to certain poets.

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68 See Ar. *Lys.* 628–629.

69 See Henderson 1987, 153; Sommerstein 1990, 187. Wolves are a symbol of cunning and treachery when Peisetaerus and Euelpides are compared to them by the Chorus (cf. Ar. *Av.* 369, φεισόμεσθα γάρ τι τῶνδε μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς ἢ λύκων;). However, wolves are not dangerous to birds. The two men may function here as a synecdoche of humankind, meaning that humans are dangerous to birds, as wolves are to humans. Simon, a politician accused of perjury, is compared to a wolf by Socrates (cf. Ar. *Nub.* 352, ἀποφαίνουσαι τὴν φύσιν αὐτοῦ λύκοι ἐξαίφνης ἐγένοντο). Rapacity is obviously the common attribute between man and the beast (see Sommerstein 1982, 179).

70 There are two cases of poets compared to animals which are not discussed here. In Ar. *Eq.* 522–524, the Chorus leader says that Magnes dyed himself to become a frog. However, this is not a simile, but an allusion to the costumes borne by the animal Chorus in one of Magnes' comedies. Tereus attributes the cognomen "hoopoe" to the tragic poet Philocles in Ar. *Av.* 281–282 and the cognomen "lark" in verse 1295 of the same play, probably because he wrote a tragedy about Tereus' metamorphosis.

3.1 Comic and tragic poets

According to the Chorus in Ar. *Ach.* 852–853, Cratinus smells so nasty that one would think his father was a he-goat:[71]

> ὄζων κακὸν τῶν μασχαλῶν
> πατρὸς Τραγασαίου
>
> his armpits smelling nasty,
> son of a father from the Goat d'Azur

Being the son of a he-goat, he may be a he-goat too. The meaning here is not only that Cratinus smells as bad as a goat, but also that he does so because of his foreign origin.[72]

Speaking to Heracles about new poets, Dionysus compares them to swallows using a paratragic expression in Ar. *Ran.* 93:

> χελιδόνων μουσεῖα, λωβηταὶ τέχνης
>
> choirs of swallows, wreckers of their art

The passage alludes to Euripides' *Alcmene*, where the phrase ἀηδόνων μουσεῖα is found. Barbaric speech resembled the tweeting of swallows according to ancient Greeks, which is why non-Greeks have been compared to these birds.[73] Therefore, the meaning of this Aristophanic passage is that new poets have abandoned the Greek poetic tradition, and their plays sound barbaric like the tweeting of swallows.

Phrynichus, the tragic poet of old, is compared to a bee by the Chorus in Ar. *Av.* 748–750:

> ἔνθεν ὡσπερεὶ μέλιττα
> Φρύνιχος ἀμβροσίων μελέων ἀπεβόσκετο καρπὸν ἀεὶ
> φέρων γλυκεῖαν ᾠδάν

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71 See Sommerstein 1980, 199; Olson 2002, 285.
72 See Spatharas 2021, 46.
73 See Stanford 1963, 80; Dover 1993, 202; Sommerstein 1996, 164. The same simile is used in the play to denote the (supposed) Thracian origins of the demagogue Cleophon (cf. Ar. *Ran.* 678–681, ἐφ' οὗ δὴ χείλεσιν ἀμφιλάλοις / δεινὸν ἐπιβρέμεται / Θρηκία χελιδών). Therefore, Aristophanes is questioning Cleophon's citizenship (see Stanford 1963, 130; Dover 1993, 277–278; Sommerstein 1996, 214–215). A certain Menippus is also called "swallow" (cf. Ar. *Av.* 1293, Μενίππῳ δ' ἦν Χελιδὼν τοὔνομα). Lycurgus is called "ibis", a nickname which suggests connections with Egypt (cf. Ar. *Av.* 1296, Ἶβις Λυκούργῳ).

> whence like a bee
> Phrynichus ever sipped the nectar
> of ambrosial music
> to bring forth his sweet song

The meaning here is that Phrynichus produced sweet songs as bees produce sweet honey. Comparing poets to bees was common in ancient Greek literature.[74] It is noteworthy that elsewhere bees are associated with annoying attributes, such as buzzing and stinging. Phrynichus' simile illustrates Aristophanes' approval of the oldest generation of poets, as opposed to his negative disposition towards the poetic production of his time.

In Ar. *Pax* 739–740, the Chorus leader attacks Aristophanes' rivals:

> πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ τοὺς ἀντιπάλους μόνος ἀνθρώπων κατέπαυσεν
> εἰς τὰ ῥάκια σκώπτοντας ἀεὶ καὶ τοῖς φθειρσὶν πολεμοῦντας.

> In the first place, he was the only man on earth to stop his rivals from making jokes about rags and waging war on lice.

The targets of his rivals are represented as lice, i.e. as very easy to beat and contemptible enemies.[75] Since they pick the powerless out as their enemies, we can easily deduce that Aristophanes' rivals are cowards; otherwise, they would have chosen a powerful enemy such as Cleon rather than lice. Thus, the contrast between them and Aristophanes, who bravely confronted Cleon, is highlighted.

3.2 Musicians and dancers

Pipers are represented as wasps in Ar. *Ach.* 864:

> παῦ', ἐς κόρακας. οἱ σφῆκες οὐκ ἀπὸ τῶν θυρῶν;

> Stop, damn you! Away from my doorway, you hornets!

Dicaeopolis emerges from his house to scare away the annoying pipers. The sound made by the pipe resembles the buzzing of wasps, since the musicians are obviously playing a vulgar tune.[76]

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74 See Sommerstein 1987, 245–246.
75 See Platnauer 1964, 131; Olson 1998, 218.
76 See Sommerstein 1980, 200; Olson 2002, 289.

Carcinus' sons are compared to small birds by the Chorus leader in Ar. *Pax* 787–789:

> ἀλλὰ νόμιζε πάντας
> ὄρτυγας οἰκογενεῖς, γυλιαύχενας ὀρχηστὰς
> νανοφυεῖς, σφυράδων ἀποκνίσματα, μηχανοδίφας.

> but consider them all
> home-bred quails, hump-necked dancers
> of dwarfish build, demi-dungballs, caper-chasers.

This metaphor functions on two levels. The first level is the similarity in size between Carcinus' sons and quails, as these artists were said to be very short. Since a quail is a small bird, what Aristophanes is saying here is that the sons of Carcinus are small like these winged creatures. Moreover, they are home-bred, which means that they are softer than the wild ones. Since these birds were used in bird-fighting, home-bred quails would always be inferior to wild ones, and consequently valued much less, if at all.[77] The meaning behind the metaphor is that Carcinus' sons were worthless dwarves.

4 Other civilians

In this group we examine cases where women, old men, and parasitic individuals are represented as animals. There are two cases which do not exactly match the other civilians belonging to this group. At Ar. *Av.* 300 there is a joke about the barber Sporgilus, whose name sounds like a bird's name. A similar joke is made of the similarity between the origin of a certain Spintharus, said to be an originary of Phrygia, and a chaffinch: the ancient Greek word for chaffinch is φρυγίλος, with the stem of Phrygia and the suffix -ίλος, forming a bird's name.

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77 See Platnauer 1964, 135–136; Sommerstein 1985, 170–171; Olson 1998, 226–227. Philocleon also compares them to wagtails due to their small size (cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 1513, ὅσον τὸ πλῆθος κατέπεσεν τῶν ὀρχίλων). Previously, Xanthias called them crabs, a pun on their father's name (cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 1507, μὰ τὸν Δί' οὐδέν γ' ἄλλο πλὴν τρεῖς καρκίνους). Lastly, one of them, the youngest one, is presented by Philocleon as a scorpion or spider, possibly because of his funny movement (cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 1509, τουτὶ τί ἦν τὸ προσέρπον; ὀξὶς ἢ φάλαγξ;). The youngest son of Carcinus was also a tragic poet.

4.1 Women

The comparison between women and bears in Ar. *Lys.* 645 is related to a rite of passage into adulthood and does not bear any connotations about attributes shared by women and these specific animals.[78]

In Ar. *Lys.* 1307–1309, the Spartan delegate compares the dancing girls to young female horses:

> <ὄχ'> ἇτε πῶλοι ταὶ κόραι
> πὰρ τὸν Εὐρώταν
>
> where by the Eurotas' banks
> young girls frisk like fillies

The common attributes shared by the girls and the animals are their youth and liveliness.[79] The cheerful imagery created is obviously contrasted to the depressing war, and it may resemble the actual movements of the maiden Chorus.

In Ar. *Vesp.* 1402, Philocleon compares the bread-seller Myrtia to a bitch:

> θρασεῖα καὶ μεθύση τις ὑλάκτει κύων
>
> a bold and tipsy bitch started barking

The meaning here is that Myrtia threatens him like a barking bitch. The animal trait attributed to Myrtia is shamelessness. Women were often accused of being shameless.[80]

The same comparison is found in Ar. *Lys.* 363, where the women's Chorus leader threatens the men's Chorus leader that she is going to bite off his testicles:

> κοὐ μή ποτ' ἄλλη σου κύων τῶν ὄρχεων λάβηται
>
> But then I'm the last bitch that ever grabs you by the balls!

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[78] See Henderson 1987, 156; Sommerstein 1990, 188–189.

[79] See Henderson 1987, 221. The comparison between the movements of the maiden Chorus and those of a deer some verses later, in Ar. *Lys.* 1316–1319, conveys exactly the same meaning, and should also be seen as a hint at the actual performance of the dance in the exodos (Henderson 1987, 222). A girl dancer is compared elsewhere to a deer (cf. Ar. *Thesm.* 1172–1173, ἐμὸν ἔργον ἐστίν· καὶ σόν, ὦλάφιον, ἅ σοι / καθ' ὁδὸν ἔφραζον ταῦτα μεμνῆσθαι ποιεῖν). The simile may refer to the style of her dance. Otherwise, it could also be a metonymy for prostitutes (see Sommerstein 1994, 234; Austin/Olson 2004, 339).

[80] See MacDowell 1971, 312; Sommerstein 1983, 240; Kloss 2001, 110; Biles/Olson 2015, 486.

This metaphor has also been connected to shamelessness.[81] However, this is a self-representation of the speaker as a bitch, and it is unlikely that the old woman would admit to being shameless.[82] The meaning here is that women used to lick the old man's balls during fellatio, but now she is going to bite them off. In this sense, the threat is not future-oriented; the implication is not that no one else will have the chance to bite the old man's testicles off. The point is that the old woman is different from the women he has met in the past, because something has changed, and a woman's mouth will no longer produce pleasure, but pain.[83] Therefore, there is irony here, involving two different doglike attributes. The old woman tells the old man that, even if he thinks that she is shameless as a dog, she is not. She is just as dangerous as a dog, and she can protect herself and her fellow-women.[84]

4.2 Old men

In Ar. *Vesp.* 257, the boy rudely warns the Chorus leader that he will fall in the mud if he walks in the dark:

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81 See Henderson 1987, 114; Sommerstein 1990, 171.

82 Women are not meant to be insulting and disrespectful. This is evident from the third wife's words when she is describing how she is afraid to give birth on the Acropolis, although in fact she is faking pregnancy (cf. Ar. *Lys.* 754–755, τέκοιμ' εἰς τὴν κυνῆν / εἰσβᾶσα ταύτην, ὥσπερ αἱ περιστεραί). In order to avoid violating the prohibition of giving birth in a sacred place, she compares herself with a pigeon. Her hope is that she will be granted the right to give birth there unpunished, like pigeons which are not restricted by the prohibition (see Henderson 1987, 167; Sommerstein 1990, 196).

83 The same connotation can be found in an allusion to Aesop's fable of the beetle and the eagle (cf. Ar. *Lys.* 695, αἰετὸν τίκτοντα κάνθαρός σε μαιεύσομαι). Here women are compared to beetles because of their perceived lack of physical strength and small size. Men are compared to eagles, being much stronger (see Henderson 1987, 161). However, as the beetle's ingenuity and determination led to the destruction of the eagle's eggs, the women will prevail over the men. The metonymic association here between the eagle's eggs and men's testicles, which are going to be broken (see Sommerstein 1990, 192–193), serves as a warning that men will lose their manliness as a result of their conflict with women. Elsewhere in the same play, women are compared to swallows and men are represented as hoopoes (cf. Ar. *Lys.* 770–771, ἀλλ' ὁπόταν πτήξωσι χελιδόνες εἰς ἕνα χῶρον, / τοὺς ἔποπας φεύγουσαι). Apart from the obvious sexual metonymies, there do not appear to be any common attributes between these specific birds and their human counterparts.

84 Cf. Ar. *Lys.* 475, ἢν μή τις ὥσπερ σφηκιὰν βλίττῃ με κἀρεθίζῃ. Here women are self-described as wasps, referring to their self-protection. The simile alludes to their supposedly irritable female nature.

τὸν πηλὸν ὥσπερ ἀτταγᾶς τυρβάσεις βαδίζων

churning up the mud like a marsh snipe

The old man is compared to the black francolin, a small bird which prefers to walk rather than fly. Therefore, its movement is similar to that of old men.[85] Moreover, since the bird lives in the marsh, we can imagine that it is covered in mud. The Chorus leader would resemble it even more if he walked like it covered in mud after a possible fall.

Similes about Philocleon the old man — as opposed to Philocleon the juror — do not produce negative connotations about him in general. They rather tend to provoke sympathetic feelings towards him.[86] In Ar. *Vesp.* 129–130, he is described as a pet jackdaw:

ὁ δ' ὡσπερεὶ κολοιὸς αὐτῷ παττάλους
ἐνέκρουεν εἰς τὸν τοῖχον, εἶτ' ἐξήλλετο

But he hammered pegs into the wall and hopped up and away like a pet crow.

The simile here is not insulting. The old man is trying to escape from his prison by hopping up some pegs, as trained jackdaws hopped up a ladder in their cages in order to amuse their owners.[87] Perhaps these verses were accompanied by an imitation of the movement by actors in performance.[88]

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85 See MacDowell 1971, 167; Sommerstein 1983, 173; Biles/Olson 2015, 171–172. We may feel compassion for the elderly Chorus men here. Elsewhere in the same play, the Chorus members compare their white hair to the colour of a swan, finding it even whiter (cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 1065, οἴχεται, κύκνου τε πολι/ώτεραι δὴ αἵδ' ἐπανθοῦσιν τρίχες). Jurors are also compared to worms by the Chorus leader (cf. *Ar. Vesp.* 1110–1111, ξυμβεβυσμένοι πυκνόν, νεύοντες εἰς τὴν γῆν, μόλις / ὥσπερ οἱ σκώληκες ἐν τοῖς κυττάροις κινούμενοι). The connotation of this simile is not known. However, it seems that it is not related to emotions or character attributes, but rather to physical posture (see Biles/Olson 2015, 412).
86 However, Xanthias compares Philocleon to a little donkey later, in the party scene (cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 1306, ὥσπερ καχρύων ὀνίδιον εὐωχημένον). Here the connotation, as playful as it is, is that he did not behave decently (see Pütz 2014, 155; Biles/Olson 2015, 463), resulting in making a fool of himself.
87 See MacDowell 1971, 148; Sommerstein 1983, 163; Pütz 2014, 155; Biles/Olson 2015, 127.
88 A similar comparison of movement is found in another simile (cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 140, καὶ μυσπολεῖ τι καταδεδυκώς). Here Philocleon is compared to a mouse (see MacDowell 1971, 150; Pütz 2014, 155; Biles/Olson 2015, 131). Some verses later he is compared to a sparrow (cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 207, οἴμοι κακοδαίμων, στροῦθος ἀνὴρ γίγνεται). The old juror resembles the small bird (see Biles/Olson 2015, 152) in his attempt to escape through the roof of his prison. This is another playful expression of sympathy, which produces empathy towards Philocleon, along with laughter at his

4.3 Slaves and parasites

Dionysus indirectly compares Xanthias to an ass in Ar. *Ran.* 31–32:

> σὺ δ’ οὖν ἐπειδὴ τὸν ὄνον οὐ φῄς σ’ ὠφελεῖν,
> ἐν τῷ μέρει σὺ τὸν ὄνον ἀράμενος φέρε.

> Very well, since you deny that the donkey’s helping you, pick up the donkey and take your turn carrying him.

The joke which culminates in this exhortation has been gradually built up in the previous verses.[89] The ass may be a symbol of hard work, and it was used by people in rural societies as a means of transporting heavy loads from one place to another. It was known to carry its burdens patiently, no matter how mercilessly it was loaded by its master. Consequently, it was a symbol of complete lack of rights, i.e. a symbol of slaves.[90] By urging Xanthias to carry the ass here, Dionysus implies that his slave should not complain, because there is something even worse than being his slave: being the slave of the humblest animal. He is also creating the impression that Xanthias is silly, since carrying an animal which is used to carry things is silly in itself.

Hierocles is represented as a raven in Trygaeus’ words addressed to the slave:

> ἤκουσας; ὁ κόραξ οἷος ἦλθ’ ἐξ Ὠρεοῦ.[91]

> There goes the raven,[92] just as he came from Oreus.

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resourcefulness. Partridges are also related to gait (cf. Ar. *Av.* 1292, Πέρδιξ μὲν εἷς κάπηλος ὠνομάζετο). The seller referred to in these verses was lame, and he obviously got his nickname because of his hindered movements (see Sommerstein 1987, 284).

89 See Sommerstein 1996, 159. Dionysus also directly called the slave an ass (cf. Ar. *Ran.* 27, οὔκουν τὸ βάρος τοῦθ’, ὃ σὺ φέρεις, οὖνος φέρει;).

90 Later in the same play Xanthias describes himself as an ass (cf. Ar. *Ran.* 159, νὴ τὸν Δί’ ἐγὼ γοῦν ὄνος ἄγω μυστήρια). Although donkeys do all the hard work for the initiates in the Eleusinian Mysteries, they get no reward. Xanthias resembles them, since he does all the hard work for his master (see Stanford 1963, 86; Dover 1993, 210; Sommerstein 1996, 171).

91 See Ar. *Pax* 1125.

92 “Buzzard” in Henderson’s translation.

He seems to be described in this way because of his thievish habits,[93] given that he tried to participate uninvited in the sacrifice and to molest Peace. Ravens and eagles were known to steal sacrificial meats.[94]

Theogenes was probably a merchant and a public figure associated with Cleon.[95] He is mocked by the Chorus in Ar. *Pax* 928:

> ἵνα μὴ γένηται Θεογένους ὑηνία.

> So we don't turn piggish like Theogenes!

The Chorus declines Trygaeus' suggestion to sacrifice a pig, in order to avoid becoming like Theogenes. The animal trait in this metaphor is stupidity.[96] Therefore, the meaning is: "Theogenes is as stupid as a pig".

In Ar. *Lys.* 957, Kinesias calls Philostratus the pimp by his nickname to be the nursemaid of his orphan:

> ποῦ Κυναλώπηξ;

> Is Fox Dog out there anywhere?

Philostratus' nickname suggests that he was considered cunning as a fox and shameless as a dog.[97] On a second level, Kinesias mourns for his "orphaned" penis, and asks the pimp for a prostitute to take care of it.

5 Conclusions

Numerous animal metaphors and similes are found in the extant plays of Old Comedy written by Aristophanes. Most of them are undoubtedly found in *Wasps*,

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93 See Platnauer 1964, 159. A well-known Athenian, Opuntius, had been given the name of this bird as a nickname (cf. Ar. *Av.* 1294, Ὀπουντίῳ δ' ὀφθαλμὸν οὐκ ἔχων Κόραξ). According to the first herald, he was given this nickname because he had defective eyesight, having lost an eye. Chaerephon, a disciple of Socrates, is called a bat because he studies a lot and spends all his time indoors (cf. Ar. *Av.* 1296, Χαιρεφῶντι Νυκτερίς).
94 See Sommerstein 1985, 187; Olson 1998, 283.
95 See Sommerstein 1985, 177–178; Olson 1998, 246.
96 See LSJ *s.v.* ὑηνία. A certain Theogenes, who is called a ruddy shelduck (χηναλώπηξ, lit. "fox-goose"), cannot be identified with this person (cf. Ar. *Av.* 1295, Χηναλώπηξ Θεογένει). He was obviously aggressive as a goose and cunning as a fox.
97 See Sommerstein 1990, 204; Franco 2014, 135.

followed by *Knights*, *Lysistrata*, *Peace*, and *Birds*. Fewer metaphors and similes are found in *Acharnians*, *Frogs*, *Thesmophoriazusae*, and *Clouds*. Some animals, such as the dog, the wasp, the wolf, the fox, and the monkey, were used more often than others in Aristophanic metaphors and similes. It seems that certain people are compared to certain animals more often than others: Cleon is often compared to dogs, jurors to stinging insects, Athenians to sheep, and Spartans to wolves.

Politicians in general may be compared to monkeys, foxes, and seagulls. Certain politicians and generals may be compared to lions and foxes. Cleon is self-represented as a dog, a lion, a hawk, and a baboon. When others talk about him, Cleon may be represented as a dog (by the Chorus and the Sausage-Seller), an eagle (first slave in *Knights*), a seal and a camel (by the Chorus), a whale, a pig, a cow, and a seagull. Cleon himself describes his rivals in general as ravens, gnats, and flies. The Sausage-Seller is represented both by himself and Cleon as a dog. The first slave in *Knights* describes him as a snake in an oracle reminiscent of the *Iliad*. Other politicians are not attacked by Aristophanes as often as Cleon. Cleonymus is compared to an eagle, Syracosius to a jay, Cleigenes to a monkey, Simon to a wolf, and Cleophon to a swallow. As far as generals are concerned, both Dieitrephes and an unnamed military officer are described as horsecocks.

The citizens of Athens are consistently represented as sheep. This comparison is found four times in the Aristophanic plays. Trygaeus and the Athenians who seek peace are represented as pigeons. Aristophanes frequently attacks jurors, who are described as wasps, dogs, and worms. Some jurors are compared to drones, and a prosecutor is compared to a biting dog. Philocleon is further represented as a rooster and a bee. The enemies of Athens in general are described as wolves. Greater variety can be observed in the animals which are used in metaphors and similes applied to Spartans, who are represented as boars, monkeys, kites, foxes, *korakinoi*-fish, and wolves. Megarians are described as dogs.

In most cases, the metaphors and similes focus on negative attributes shared by animals and humans. Thus, they are used as a means of accusing and insulting Aristophanes' targets. However, some metaphors and similes are merely playful and produce simple laughter rather than scorn.

Aristophanes does not attack other artists with the severity observed in his attacks against politicians and political groups. The only exception is the comparison between his rivals' targets and lice, which is belittling of his rivals. In fact, his animal metaphors and similes for this group of persons are rather playful. Phrynichus the comic poet is compared to a rooster, Cratinus to a goat, Euripides to a fox, new poets to swallows, a group of pipers to wasps, Carcinus' sons to quails and wagtails. The youngest son of Carcinus is also compared to a

scorpion or a spider. There are two cases where animal metaphors and similes carry positive connotations: Phrynichus the tragic poet is represented as a bee, and Aristophanes himself is self-represented as a monkey.

As far as other people are concerned, there is a great variety of animal metaphors and similes. Women are represented as lions, dogs, beetles, and wasps. Men are compared to eagles and old men to swans. The women's Chorus leader in *Lysistrata* is described as a dog and the men's Chorus leader as a marsh snipe. Girl dancers are compared to horses and deer. A pregnant woman compares herself to a pigeon, and a newborn child is represented as a lion. The characters of the plays are also involved in animal metaphors and similes. Peisetaerus is described by Tereus as a fox. Peisetaerus and Euelpides are represented by the Chorus as wolves. The Theban merchant is compared to a monkey, Hierocles to a crow, Xanthias to a donkey. Philocleon is represented as a cat, a jackdaw, a donkey, a mouse, and a sparrow. Animal metaphors and similes are also applied to well-known persons. Cleisthenes is represented as a monkey, Theorus as a raven, Lysistratus as a wingless locust, Menippus as a swallow, Lycurgus as an ibis, Perdix as a partridge, Theogenes as a pig, Opuntius as a crow, Chaerephon as a bat, another Theogenes as a fox-goose, and Philostratus as a fox-dog.

Metaphors and similes involving politicians and groups of citizens are intended to describe their character and personality. These metaphors and similes usually carry a negative meaning, since the actions of the demagogues and the citizens can be harmful to the common good. Of course, the meaning depends on who is talking when someone is represented as an animal. Therefore, when Cleon describes himself as a dog, he attributes to himself the positive traits of the dog, such as loyalty. When others describe him as a dog, on the other hand, they attribute to him the negative traits of the dog, such as ferocity. Similarly, when the Athenians describe themselves as sheep, they attribute to themselves the positive trait of mildness. When others describe the Athenians as sheep, they attribute to them the negative trait of the animals, the inability to defend themselves in case of danger. Some animals have no good traits. Wolves are ferocious and rapacious, and these are the traits attributed to anyone compared to those animals.

Metaphors and similes applied to other categories of people are usually intended to describe a person's physical appearance. They carry a neutral meaning, since the actions of those persons cannot be dangerous to the common good. For instance, when the dancing girls are compared to fillies, the trait of fillies attributed to humans is their way of movement.

To summarise, animals play an important role in Aristophanic comedies, since they do not only appear as members of dramatic Choruses. They function as symbols of human traits and are often used in metaphors and similes to

describe particular persons or groups of people. These animal metaphors and similes usually bear negative connotations when they are applied to the world of politics, but may have a playful sense in other cases.

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Simone Beta

The Shop of Aristophanes the Carpenter: How Comic Poets Assembled (and Disassembled) Words

Abstract: In the *Institutio oratoria*, Quintilian says that the composition of new words through the device of *iungere* ("to join") was a privilege of the Greek writers that their Latin colleagues did not have. This statement is particularly true if we think of the creative language of Greek comedy, as the many brilliant puns invented by Aristophanes and the other poets of Old Comedy witness. This chapter presents, analyses, and discusses a wide choice of comic compounds organised by their grammatical features (compounds with prepositions, prefixes, and suffixes; compounds with proper names), in order to give a comprehensive picture of the imaginative ability shown by Greek comic poets in the creation of new, smart, and funny words.

1 Introduction

In the tenth book of his *Institutio oratoria*, a work that might be translated as "a textbook on the art of speaking in public", at the beginning of the cursory but interesting survey of the main authors and subjects of Greek and Latin literature (10.1.46), Quintilian states that "as Aratus says 'let us begin with Zeus', so the proper place for us to begin is Homer". Likewise, in this chapter on the use of compounds in ancient comic poetry, we can begin with Quintilian. In the eighth book of the *Institutio*, the most famous Latin rhetorician states that "coining words … is more a privilege of the Greeks, who have not hesitated to fit words even to certain sounds and emotions with the same freedom with which primitive men gave things their names. The few ventures that our countrymen have made in compounds or derived words have scarcely met with acceptance".[1] From this quotation, it is clear that Quintilian knew very well that

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1 Quint. *Inst.* 8.3.30–31: *Fingere … Graecis magis concessum est, qui sonis etiam quibusdam et adfectibus non dubitaverunt nomina aptare, non alia libertate quam qua illi primi homines rebus appellationes dederunt. Nostri aut in iungendo aut in derivando paulum aliquid ausi vix in hoc satis recipiuntur* (for the translation, see Russell 2001).

the composition of new words through the device of "joining" (this is the proper meaning of the verb *iungere*) was a prerogative of the Greek writers that their Latin colleagues did not share.

This is true — and it is particularly true if we think of certain poetic genres, such as the dithyramb, in which the Greek poets were able to create compound words by joining together up to three different lexical items: in a papyrus fragment attributed to Theophrastus (probably a passage from his lost treatise *On Style*, as the first editor Bruno Snell suggested) we find the terms βοτρυοκαρποτόκος ("generating the fruits of the grapes") and ἀστερομαρμαροφεγγής ("as bright as a shining star").[2] Aristotle was also conscious of this peculiar feature of the Greek language: in one of the last chapters of his *Poetics*, the philosopher notes that "in regard to words, compounds are especially suitable for dithyrambs"; in the third book of the *Rhetoric*, he states that "*lexis* using double words is most useful to dithyrambic poets".[3]

The same observations are valid also for other genres, apart from dithyramb. One of these genres is comedy, of course, as many scholars have noticed. One example is Americo Da Costa Ramalho, a Portuguese academic who taught Greek at the University of Coimbra and who published, in 1952, his doctoral dissertation *Dipla Onomata no estilo de Aristófanes*, a list of Aristophanic compound words classified by individual comedies, with a concise *index nominum* at the end.[4] A recent monograph on a particular aspect of this topic is *Aristophanes' Comedy of Names* by Nikoletta Kanavou (2011), who catalogues the speaking names present in the eleven comedies (and the extant fragments) of the Greek comic poet, including the proper names that are the result of a compound.[5]

In this chapter, I plan to discuss the inventiveness shown by Aristophanes and his colleagues (the poets of the so-called Old Comedy) in the creation of new comic compounds for the sake of provoking laughter in the audience. A wide selection of examples will be analysed and categorised according to their

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2 See Appendix 8 Fortenbaugh (*P. Hamb.* 128, col. Ii, ll. 23–25).

3 Arist. *Poet.* 1459a 4 ff., τῶν δ' ὀνομάτων τὰ μὲν διπλᾶ μάλιστα ἁρμόττει τοῖς διθυράμβοις (for the translation, see Golden 1968); *Rh.* 1406b 1 ff., χρησιμωτάτη ἡ διπλῆ λέξις τοῖς διθυραμβοποιοῖς (for the translation, see Kennedy 1991).

4 The first scholarly work on this subject was Meyer 1923, another dissertation submitted at the University of Basel. This work is divided in two sections, dedicated respectively to prose and poetry; in the latter part, a large portion is dedicated to satiric poetry (comedy included).

5 See however the introduction to this volume, section 2.5 and n. 52, on the limitations of this work.

grammatical features (and not, as happened in earlier studies of the topic, by individual plays).[6]

2 Compounds with prepositions, prefixes, and suffixes

2.1 Prepositions

One of Aristophanes' most brilliant puns, based on the clever conjunction of a preposition and a proper name, is found in a passage of *Acharnians* and involves the preposition κατά ("against"). At 599–606, the protagonist Dicaeopolis complains that, while elderly Athenians have to serve in the army to fight against the Spartans, there are some young Athenians who desert and find refuge abroad, travelling to the most remote and secluded places. Among the cities to which they flee, Dicaeopolis mentions ἐν Καμαρίνῃ κἀν Γέλᾳ κἀν Καταγέλᾳ (606). While the first two locations are real (Camarina and Gela, two Sicilian cities), the third is a fictional one, a geographical wordplay which, through its reference to the verb καταγελᾶν ("make fun"), condenses the preposition κατά and the place-name Γέλα into a felicitous and playful composite word.[7]

The preposition ἀντί ("against" and "instead of") is cleverly handled by Aristophanes in two plays. The first example is a passage of *Knights*. At 1042–1043, the Paphlagonian (the arch-slave who, in the symbolic plot invented by the comic poet, is the body double of Cleon, the leader of the radical demagogic party) interprets to his own benefit a Delphic oracle by identifying the lion (λέων) mentioned in the text of the prophecy with himself: Paphlagon/Cleon will save Athens because he is as strong as the king of the animals; his strength will be the salvation of the town (1043, ἐγὼ γὰρ ἀντὶ τοῦ λέοντός εἰμί σοι). This boast makes Demos of Pnyx (the personification of the Athenian people) think of the similarity between the Paphlagonian's ambiguous behaviour and the hostility of a tyrant of Chalcis whose name was Antileon (Ἀντιλέων). The answer of Demos (1044, καὶ

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6 My initial approach to this topic dates back to 2006, when I took part in a conference organised in Venice by my friend and colleague Alberto Camerotto. The proceedings were published the following year (see Beta 2007); this chapter is in fact an expanded and updated reworking of that contribution. I have also discussed some of these examples in my contribution on puns to the *Cambridge Companion to Ancient Greek Humour* (Beta, forthcoming).

7 Mueller (mentioned by Olson 2002, 230) has detected, in the fictive name of Καταγέλα, a hint at the name of another Sicilian town, Κατάνη/Catania (but see Olson's critique).

πῶς μ᾽ ἐλελήθεις Ἀντιλέων γεγενημένος;) is a wordplay on a real name (the historical Antileon is mentioned by Aristotle in *Politics*) taken in its etymological meaning ("someone who is against the lion/Leon", that is, the opponent of lion/Leon).[8]

The second example is a passage of *Women at the Thesmophoria*. The kinsman of Euripides (who is disguised as Helen of Troy), interrogated by Euripides (disguised as Menelaus), introduces an Athenian woman by claiming that her name is Theonoe, the daughter of Proteus (αὕτη Θεονόη Πρωτέως); the woman replies that her name is in fact Critylla, daughter of Antitheus, from the deme of Gargettus (Κρίτυλλά γ᾽ Ἀντιθέου Γαργηττόθεν). Here the joke lies in the contrast between the former name, which is a real and famous one (Θεονόη, a mythical prophetess, whose name means "the mind of a god"), and the second name (Ἀντίθεος), a very rare one, whose meaning might be equivalent to "the contrary of god".[9] Although the names used by Aristophanes in these cases are not new in themselves, new is the meaning these quite uncommon names receive in the comic context.[10]

Brand new, on the other hand, and never attested elsewhere, as far as we know, is the compound word found in another Aristophanic passage. In the prologue of *Birds*, Peisetaerus, the comic hero, is telling Hoopoe where he and his companion Euelpides come from. When the bird hears that they come from Athens, the city of the "beautiful galleys", he asks if they are jurors of the Heliaea (109, μῶν ἡλιαστά;). But the Athenian denies it: "No way! We belong to the other kind: we are no-jurors!" (109–110, μἀλλὰ θἀτέρου τρόπου· / ἀπηλιαστά). In her commentary, Nan Dunbar notes that the word ἀπηλιαστά "is coined as an opposite, presumably by Ar. for this passage";[11] in fact, there is no reason for not seeing this word as a compound that plays on the meaning of the preposition ἀπό.[12]

Similar examples of a wordplay on the same preposition are quoted by Pollux in the *Onomasticon*: they do not come from a comic poet, but from a historian,

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8 Arist. *Pol.* 1316a 29–32. On this joke, see also Kanavou 2011, 54–55.

9 Ar. *Thesm.* 897–898; see Austin/Olson 2004, 287–288. As for Antitheus, Kanavou 2011, 149 n. 673, comments that "a pun between the two names is not impossible, but the frequency of the -θεο- element in onomastics risks making it unnoticeable".

10 In some later plays (of Middle and New Comedy), there are further witty compounds with ἀντί, which produce a neologism attested nowhere else: see for instance the titles Ἀντιπορνοβοσκός ("The rival of a pimp", by Dioxippus) and Ἀντιλαΐς ("The rival of Lais", by Cephisodorus and Epicrates).

11 Dunbar 1995, 168–169.

12 For another play on ἡλιαστής (a juryman at the Athenian court of the ἡλιαία), see below, section 2.2, on φιληλιαστής.

namely Theopompus of Chios, who coined the negative compounds Ἀπαθηναῖοι ("degenerate Athenians"), ἀποπολίτης ("degenerate citizen"), and ἀφέταιρος ("degenerate friend").[13]

2.2 Prefixes

The most productive prefix in the language of the comic poets is by far φιλο-, used for underlining the strong passion of a comic character for something or someone. Aristophanes was well aware of this, because he himself jokes about it in the prologue of *Wasps*. The comic slave, who speaks the prologue, speculates about the strange disease of the old hero of the play (called Φιλοκλέων, because of his love for Cleon). He mentions and rejects a series of possibilities: that the old man is mad about dice (75, φιλόκυβος), or fond of drinking (79, φιλοπότης), of offering sacrifices to the gods (82, φιλοθύτης), of hosting strangers (82–84, φιλόξενος); and he finally reveals the old man's true passion, namely, to sit in a tribunal as a judge (88, φιληλιαστής). In between this sequence of compound words, the slave acknowledges that "the beginning of the name of the disease" is the prefix φιλο- (77, ἀλλὰ «φιλο» μέν ἐστιν ἀρχὴ τοῦ κακοῦ).[14]

Most of these compounds are quite probably original coinages of Aristophanes;[15] as for the case of φιλόξενος, which was a common word (as old as Homer), there is a further play with a historical name, a certain Philoxenus (one of the

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13 Pollux 3.58; Theopompus, *FGrHist* 115 F 338. For ἀποπολίτης, cf. also ἀπόπολις, a tragic neologism ("far from the city", i.e. "banished") created by Aesch. *Ag.* 1410; the word (see Medda 2017, 338) is a conjecture by Casaubon (the mss. have ἄπολις), followed by Seidler. The more common form is ἀπόπτολις (Soph. *OT* 1000 and *Trach.* 647).

14 I have quoted the translation of MacDowell 1971. He postulates a lacuna between 76 and 77, where there might have been another similar compound, such as φιλογύνης ("lover of women") or φιλόπαις ("lover of boys"); *contra*, Biles/Olson 2015, 110.

15 A doubt might arise for φιλοπότης, attested in Herodotus (2.174, about Amasis, who was also φιλοσκώμμων, i.e. "fond of jesting") and Eupolis (fr. 221.1, about Cimon), who used it in a comedy (*The Cities*) produced, according to Geissler, in 422 — that is, in the same year of *Wasps* (see Olson 2016, 241–245, in particular 244). The same could be said about φιλοθύτης: Metagenes, a contemporary of Aristophanes, wrote a Φιλοθύτης (see Orth 2014, 453); for other comic titles with the prefix φιλο- see Φιλοκλίνης (Epicharmus), Φιλάργυρος (Crates II and Philippides), Φίλαυλος (Philetaerus and Philippides), Φιλαθήναιος (Alexis and Philippides), Φιλοδικαστής (Timocles), Φιλευριπίδης (Axionicus and Philippides), and Φιλοτραγῳδός (Alexis). The opposite of the *hapax* φιληλιαστής is the already quoted ἀπηλιαστής (above, section 2.1).

many passive homosexuals that populate the stage of Old Comedy).[16] Two other Aristophanic compounds bear testimony to the poet's enviable creativity: in *Acharnians* 336, the Chorus of the coalmen of the deme of Acharnae calls a charcoal-basket φιλανθρακέα ("coal lover");[17] in *Peace* 308, the goddess that gives her name to the play is called φιλαμπελωτάτη ("a strong lover of vines").[18]

Even when Aristophanes uses a very common compound such as φιλόπολις, his choice is never innocent, because the epithet is charged with a strong political sense, according to the context, as becomes clear in a passage of *Wealth*: when a sycophant complains of being treated badly although he is an honest citizen who loves his own home city (899–900, Οἴμ' ὡς ἄχθομαι / ὅτι χρηστὸς ὢν καὶ φιλόπολις πάσχω κακῶς), Carion, Chremylus' slave, rebukes him with sarcasm: "You, an honest citizen who loves his own city?" (901, Σὺ φιλόπολις καὶ χρηστός;).[19] A political nuance is also detected in a compound first attested in the most famous of Aristophanes' predecessors: in a fragment of an unspecified comedy, Cratinus coined the word φιλοπραγματίας, "meddlesome" and "busybody", almost a synonym of the term πολυπράγμων, which was a recurring term in the political language of the fifth century BCE.[20]

Since it would be too long to quote all the comic compounds with φιλο-, I prefer to end this section with two amusing *hapax legomena*. The first consists of a pair of epithets, the positive φίλορχος ("someone who loves to dance") and the comparative φιλορχικώτερος ("someone who loves to dance even more"), attributed by Pherecrates, in his comedy *The Savages*, to the sons of the tragic poet Carcinus: in the scholion to Aristophanes' *Wasps* which has preserved the fragment, the manuscript readings are φίλαρχος ("someone who loves power") and the comparative φιλαρχικώτερος, but since the young boys were famous for their ability in dancing (and this is the reason why they are mentioned in the exodos

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16 For φιλόξενος, see for instance Hom. *Od*. 6.121; in a fragment of Cratinus (fr. 1.2), there is the superlative φιλοξενώτατος (but see also Aesch. fr. 196.2 Radt). On the κωμῳδούμενος Philoxenus, see Henderson 1991, 215.

17 Olson (2002, 165) says that "φιλανθρακέα appears *para prosdokian* for φιλάνθρωπον ('humane')".

18 See Olson 1998, 133. This adjective reappears at the very end of antiquity: see Nonn. *Dion*. 12.41.

19 The compound, first attested in Aeschylus (*Sept*. 176: the gods of Thebes) and in Pindar (*Ol*. 4.18: Ἡσυχία, that is Tranquillity and Peace), is used by Aristophanes in *Lysistrata* (547–548, φιλόπολις ἀρετὴ φρόνιμος, said of the sagacious virtue of the Athenian women) and in another passage of *Wealth* (726, referring to the god Asclepius).

20 Cratinus fr. 382; see Olson/Seaberg 2018, 205–206. On πολυπράγμων and πολυπραγμοσύνη, see Ehrenberg 1947; Dover 1974; Leigh 2013.

of the Aristophanic comedy), Meineke's conjecture is accepted by all the editors.[21] The second *hapax*, the juicy compound φίλετνος ("fond of pulse-soup"), is an adespoton — and we are not sure whether it actually comes from a comic play. Nevertheless, the strong presence of food in Greek comedy makes this attribution quite possible.[22]

The opposite of the suffix φιλο- was properly μισο-, but the imagination of the comic poets allowed for other possibilities, as is shown by the young protagonist of *Wasps*, Philocleon's son, who utterly despised the politician so loved by his father and thus has been given by Aristophanes the name Βδελυκλέων, with a prefix that recalls the verb βδελύττομαι ("to despise", "to loathe"). The prefix μισο- appears three times in this comedy, always with reference to the conflicting relationship between father and son. The compound word μισόπολις ("hater of the town") occurs in a political context: it is an accusation tossed by the Chorus of Athenian judges to the "man who despises Cleon" in the section (the προαγών) that precedes the debate proper (the ἀγών).[23] Utterly political is, again, the nuance of the compound μισόδημος ("hater of democracy"), hurled as an abuse by the same Chorus to Bdelycleon a little while later, in the same part of the play.[24] Aristophanes employs this very compound (possibly his own coinage) also in the lost comedy *Farmers* (Γεωργοί): in a fragment quoted by Athenaeus in regard to Spartan figs, an unknown character charges this variety of fruit with being hostile, tyrannical, and a hater of the *demos*.[25] This bitter feeling, which the Athenians nursed against the Spartans during the Peloponnesian War, is echoed also in another passage of *Wasps*, in which Philocleon refuses to wear a Laconian shoe because his foot is μισολάκων ("hater of the Spartans").[26]

But Cleon was not the only Athenian politician who aroused different and opposed feelings in the people of Athens. In the context of a long and arduous war, it is no wonder that the warmongering captains were hated by their fellow citizens: thus, the long-awaited day of the inauguration of Nicias' peace, which marked the end of the first part of the Peloponnesian War, is celebrated by the Chorus of farmers of the Aristophanic *Peace* (produced in 421) as μισολάμαχος

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21 Pherecrates fr. 15, quoted by Schol. Ar. *Vesp.* 1502c.

22 Fr. 686 (from Phryn. *Praep. Soph.* 122.11).

23 Ar. *Vesp.* 412; see Biles/Olson 2015, 219.

24 Ar. *Vesp.* 474; see Biles/Olson 2015, 235–236.

25 Ar. fr. 110.2–3: τοῦτο γὰρ τὸ σῦκον ἐχθρόν ἐστι καὶ τυραννικόν. / Οὐ γὰρ ἦν ἂν μικρόν, εἰ μὴ μισόδημον ἦν σφόδρα.

26 Ar. *Vesp.* 1165; see Biles/Olson 2015, 425.

(304).[27] Aristophanes' target is here the *strategos* Lamachus, considered as the symbol of the political party favourable to the continuation of the war. He had already been mocked in the *Acharnians*, the comedy performed at the Lenaea of 425, in which he was one of the main characters (actually, the basic antagonist of the comic hero Dicaeopolis). The accidental presence, inside his very name, of the word μάχη ("battle") had given Aristophanes the chance to include the same witty pun in two different passages of that play: at 269–270, Dicaeopolis thanks the god Phales for having relieved him "from troubles, battles, and Lamachuses" (πραγμάτων τε καὶ μαχῶν καὶ Λαμάχων ἀπαλλαγείς); at 1071, a herald knocks at the door of Lamachus' house crying "O toils, and battles, and Lamachuses!" (ἰὼ πόνοι τε καὶ μάχαι καὶ Λάμαχοι).[28] To return to the category of compound words, we cannot overlook the adjective πολεμολαμαχαϊκός, attributed to στρά-τευμα ("army") at *Acharnians* 1080, in which the name of the general is face-tiously joined to the word πόλεμος ("war").

A final example of a compound with μισο- is offered again by a passage of *Peace*, in which the god Hermes, after having contributed to the rescue of the goddess Peace, addresses her with the vocative "you, the woman who feels the strongest hatred for the shield-handles" (662, ὦ γυναικῶν μισοπορπακιστάτη), a compound built upon the technical word πόρπαξ ("shield-handle").[29]

Other fairly productive prefixes are ψευδο-, μονο-, αὐτο-, and ὁμο-. Since it would take too long to comment on all the compounds with these prefixes, only the most imaginative ones will be discussed here. In the section of the *Knights* that follows the parabasis, the Sausage-Seller informs the audience of the strong reaction of the council at the speech of the Pahlagonian. As he states, the assembly was full of ψευδατράφαξυς (630): the name of this nonexistent plant joins the prefix ψευδο- to the botanical name of the orach (ἀτράφαξυς) and succeeds in

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27 According to Olson (1998, 132), the compound has an active sense: "hostile to Lamachos", and not something "that Lamachos abhors".

28 For another compound including the name of general Lamachus in this comedy see 1207, Λαμαχίππιον, a play of the suffix -ιππος (typical of the names of people belonging to a high social class), plus the diminutive -ιον; Olson (2002, 360) translates the name "My dear noble Lamachos". On similar compounds with -ιππος, see also Beta, forthcoming (Ar. *Ran.* 429, Ἱππό-κινος or Ἱππόβινος). A quite different case is the name of Strepsiades' son in *Clouds*, Φειδιππίδης, on which see below, section 2.5.

29 On the precise meaning of πόρπαξ ("a removable bronze strip that ran across the back of the hoplite shield"), see Olson 1998, 206.

creating a name that recalls that of a real herb — ψευδαμάμαξυς, a bastard vine that twines itself around a tree but does not produce any grapes.[30]

The "lonely eater", the man who likes to eat on his own in order not to share his food with anybody, is a standard character in Greek comedy, as Ameipsias' μονοφάγος demonstrates;[31] the coining of this adjective might date back to Aristophanes, who uses the superlative μονοφαγίστατος to describe the selfish appetite of the dog Labes, accused of having eaten a whole truckle of cheese.[32]

In a fragment of Epicharmus, the father of the Syracusan comedy, we find αὐτότερος, the comparative of the pronoun αὐτός; the superlative αὐτότατος is attested in *Wealth*, Aristophanes' last play.[33] These two *hapax legomena* are not compound words, but both play on αὐτός, as Aristophanes does in a famous passage of the prologue of *Knights*, a difficult challenge for every translator.[34] A compound including this pronoun is surely αὐτόκακος ("self tormentor" — or, using a

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30 This plant is mentioned by Aristophanes (*Vesp.* 326) in order to underline the falsehood of a certain "son of Sellus" (MacDowell 1971 translates this as "the son of Swank"), a notorious liar; for a more detailed explanation of the joke, see Biles/Olson 2015, 193. The frequent occurrence of this suffix in Greek comedy (see for instance other compounds such as ψευδολόγος, Ar. *Ran.* 1521; ψευδομαρτύριον, Cratinus fr. 192 and fr. 268; ψευδορκεῖν, Ar. *Eccl.* 603) is caused by the high rate of deceitful characters present in these plays. On this topical feature of Greek comic theatre, see Beta 2004, 175–180.

31 Fr. 23; see Orth 2013, 309–311.

32 Ar. *Vesp.* 923. For the same idea, see also Antiphanes (fr. 291, μονοφαγεῖν); other similar compounds are Μονότροπος ("The loner", the title of a comedy of Phrynichus), the verb μονοκοιτεῖν ("to sleep alone", Ar. *Lys.* 592), and the noun μονογέρων ("solitary old man", adesp. com. fr. 628).

33 Epicharmus fr. 5; Ar. *Plut.* 83. There is a similar joke in Plaut. *Trin.* 988 (*ipsissimus*).

34 Ar. *Eq.* 20–27: ΔΗΜΟΣΘΕΝΗΣ ἀλλ' εὑρέ τιν' ἀπόκινον ἀπὸ τοῦ δεσπότου. ΝΙΚΙΑΣ λέγε δὴ "μο-λω-μεν" ξυνεχὲς ὡδὶ ξυλλαβών. Δ. καὶ δὴ λέγω "μο-λω-μεν". Ν. ἐξόπισθε νῦν "αὐ-το" φάθι τοῦ "μο-λω-μεν". Δ. "αὐ-το". Ν. πάνυ καλῶς. ὥσπερ δεφόμενος νῦν ἀτρέμα πρῶτον λέγε τὸ "μο-λω-μεν", εἶτα δ' "αὐ-το", κᾆτ' ἐπάγων πυκνόν. Δ. μο-λω-μεν αὐ-το μο-λω-μεν αὐτομολῶμεν. Ν. ἤν, οὐχ ἡδύ; On this wordplay between αὐτός, μόλωμεν, and αὐτομολῶμεν, see the different renderings of Sommerstein 1997 (Demosthenes: "Find some sort of wiggle to get away from master". Nicias: "Well, say 'cape-let', joining it together in one like this". Demosthenes: "All right, I'm saying it: 'capelet'". Nicias: "Now, after that 'capelet', say 'cess'". Demosthenes: "Cess". Nicias: "Splendid. Now act as if you were having a wank: say first of all slowly 'capelet', then 'cess', and then start speeding it up hard". Demosthenes: "Capelet cess cape — let's escape!" Nicias: "There, isn't it delightful?") and Henderson 2022 (First slave: "Just think of some kind of shimmy away from the master!". Second slave: "Very well, say 'wall lets', and put it together like this". First slave: "All right, 'wallets'". Second slave: "Now next, after 'wallets', say 'go way'". First slave: "Go way". Second slave: "Very good! Now, as if you were masturbating, slowly say 'wallets' first, then 'go way', and then start speeding it up". First slave: "Wallets, go way, wallets go way, let's go AWOL"; Second slave: "There, wasn't that nice?").

more up-to-date terminology, "masochist"), present in a fragment of Theopompus from an unknown comedy.[35]

The only case of a compound with ὁμο-, which points at the idea of similarity, is a clever coinage placed in the mouth of Xanthias, the slave who accompanies Dionysus during the trip to the Underworld staged by Aristophanes in the *Frogs*. The neologism ὁμομαστιγίας (LSJ translates the word as "fellow-knave", adducing the noun μαστιγίας "rogue", a derivative from μάστιξ "whip") is the epithet Xanthias gives to Zeus, hinting (if we have to trust the ancient scholiast) at the cult appellation of Ζεὺς δούλιος ("Zeus protector of the slaves").[36]

2.3 Suffixes

The suffixes mainly used by the comic poets in order to coin new compound words are two: -μανια and -δουλος.[37] *Birds* presents two occurrences. The first one, the verb ὀρνιθομανεῖν, is present twice in the same scene (the long messenger's speech after the expulsion of Iris from Cloudcuckooland), and is repeated shortly afterwards. The messenger tells Peisetaerus that clear evidence of the success of his brilliant idea (the foundation of the city of the birds between heaven and earth) is the sudden attack of bird-mania which has affected the Athenians (1284, ὀρνιθομανοῦσι); the latter have started to show this unbelievable passion (1290, ὠρνιθομάνουν) by giving people the nicknames of birds. Then the father-beater (or, as Nan Dunbar prefers to call him, the rebellious son) claims that his love for the species of birds (1344, ὀρνιθομανῶ) is so strong that he has just begun to fly.

The emotion conveyed by this suffix represents, in a certain sense, a stronger version of the feeling expressed by the φιλο- compounds. The equivalence becomes evident from another Aristophanic coinage, φιλορνιθία, a noun that occurs in the same context (the messenger's speech, at *Birds* 1300).[38] Equally stronger than the mild φιλολάκων which, according to Plutarch, was the epithet given to Cimon because of his penchant for Sparta, is the Aristophanic coinage

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35 Theopompus fr. 21; Farmer (2022, 80) cites in his commentary Menander's Ἑαυτὸν τιμωρούμενος, the model of Terence' *Heautontimorumenos*. See also adesp. com. fr. 559.

36 Ar. *Ran.* 756 (preceded, at 750, by another epithet of Zeus, ὁμόγνιος, used by the same Xanthias in the exclamation ὁμόγνιε Ζεῦ in order to highlight the closeness between himself and the lord of Olympus). On both passages, see Dover 1993, 285–286.

37 For a different case (-πωλης), see below, section 4 and n. 76.

38 For all these passages, see Dunbar 1995, 638. In Aeschylus we find the adjective φίλορνις (*Eum.* 23), referring to the Corycian cave.

λακωνομανεῖν ("to be crazy for the Spartans"), mentioned in the same comedy as one of the many passions of young Athenians of the upper class.[39]

A fragment from an unknown comedy of Aristophanes is the only attestation of the compound ἐνθεσίδουλος ("slave to his own stomach"), a graphic description of a glutton.[40] In the land of Cockaigne described in Greek comedy, where almost every play ended up with a lavish banquet, similar coinages were very frequent: Photius, who has transmitted the Aristophanic fragment, states that ἐνθεσίδουλος was a synonym of ἐνθεσίψωμος and ψωμόδουλος, two other unique compounds built on ψωμός ("morsel of food"). This latter word recurs as part of another comic neologism, ψωμοκόλαξ, "a parasite ready to flatter in order to get some good morsels", in another fragment of Aristophanes from the lost play *Gerytades*.[41]

2.4 Prefixes and suffixes

There is at least one term that, in the language of comedy, works both as prefix and suffix: αρχο. Its use as suffix, very common in the Greek language, gives two brilliant results in a passage of *Birds*, in which Peisetaerus shows Iris that the organisation of Cloudcuckooland resembles that of a typical Greek polis: among the public positions, we find the more specific κολοίαρχος (1212, the "leader of the jackdaws") and the less specific ὀρνίθαρχος (1215, the "leader of the birds"). With regard to its use as a prefix, unfortunately we do not know the name of the comic poet who coined the compounds ἀρχολίπαρος and ἀρχογλυπτάδης, quoted by Suetonius in *The Greek Terms for Abuse* (Περὶ βλασφημιῶν) with the meaning "someone who yearns for obtaining a position of power".[42]

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39 Ar. *Av*. 1281; Plut. *Per*. 9 and *Cim*. 16. Dunbar 1995, 636: "The compound occurs only here, but imitative Lakonizing in disregard for cleanliness and in anti-democratic attitudes had long been practised by some Athenian aristocrats, and during the war clearly aroused suspicions of treachery".

40 Ar. fr. 816, see Bagordo 2017, 259–260. The word ἔνθεσις is a typical comic term for "mouthful" (Ar. *Eq*. 404; Pherecrates fr. 113.6; Telecleides fr. 1.10; Hermippus fr. 42.1).

41 Ar. fr. 172, borrowed by Sannyrion fr. 11 and Philemon fr. 7; see also ψωμοκολακεύειν (Philippides fr. 8) and ψωμοκόλαφος (Diphilus fr. 48, "someone who endures to be slapped just for getting a piece of bread"). On the land of Cockaigne, see Pellegrino 2000; Farioli 2001; and the chapter by Ioannis Konstantakos in the present volume.

42 Adesp. com. fr. 930. In their commentary, Kassel/Austin point out the compound σπουδαρχίδης, probably coined by Aristophanes (*Ach*. 595–597, "the son of a man who is eager for gaining an office of state") and echoed by Eupolis in the lost *Cities* (fr. 248); "probably a colloquial term of abuse" according to Olson 2016, 301.

2.5 Patronymics

One of the most characteristic Greek suffixes, sometimes used by the comic poets for comic purposes, is the patronymic. The most famous example is the name of one of the main characters of Aristophanes' *Clouds*, the son of the protagonist, the young Φειδιππίδης. The origin of this proper name (a common one, because it was also the name of the celebrated Athenian who is reputed to have died after having given his fellow citizens the news of the victory at Marathon) is explained by the young man's father in a passage of the prologue, where Strepsiades gives the audience the following, bizarre etymology:

> Well, soon enough we had a son, and then my troubles really began. The wife and I could not agree on a name for the boy. She wanted something upper-class and horsy, a name with hippus in it, like "Xanthippus", "Charippus", or "Callippides". But I wanted to name him Pheidonides after his grandfather, a good old-fashioned thrifty name.[43]

In the end, the boy does get the upper-class suffix so craved by his mother and, in addition, a patronymic ending too — but the linguistic root (φειδ-) betrays (at least in Strepsiades' interpretation) the lower-class origin of his father's lineage, because the verb φείδομαι means "to spare", "to be frugal". This proper name is not an Aristophanic coinage, but other examples of compound names are new words indeed. Such is, for instance, the Ἀποδρασιππίδης mentioned in the prologue of *Wasps*: here (at 185) the ending -ιππίδης that belonged to Pheidonides' grandson is glued to the root of ἀποδιδράσκω, a verb that means "to run away". The character who claims this name is old Philocleon: caught during one of his many attempts at escaping from the house where his son Bdelycleon has locked him up, he admits his desire for running away by declaring that he is the "son of Fitzrunawayhorse".[44]

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43 Ar. *Nub.* 60–65: Μετὰ ταῦθ', ὅπως νῷν ἐγένεθ' υἱὸς οὑτοσί, / ἐμοί τε δὴ καὶ τῇ γυναικὶ τἀγαθῇ, / περὶ τοὐνόματος δὴ 'ντεῦθεν ἐλοιδορούμεθα. / ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἵππον προσετίθει πρὸς τοὔνομα, / Ξάνθιππον ἢ Χάριππον ἢ Καλλιππίδην, / ἐγὼ δὲ τοῦ πάππου 'τιθέμην Φειδωνίδην (for the translation, see Meineck 1998). For the first Marathon runner, see Hdt. 6.105.1; on the question of his name (elsewhere quoted as Φιλιππίδης), see Nenci 1998, 266–267.
44 This is the translation of MacDowell 1971; see also Kanavou 2011, 86–87. Similar wordplays can be found in other authors and other genres: see, for instance, the compound Ἱπποκρατιππιάδης coined by Nicarchus, *Anth. Pal.* 11.17.

3 Compounds with proper names

3.1 Compounds with two proper names

A passage of Aristophanes' *Acharnians* is a good starting point for a discussion of this type of compound made of the union (and, in a few cases, of the fusion) of two proper names. The long list of deserters enumerated by Dicaeopolis in front of the general Lamachus includes a string of such compounds: Τεισαμενοφαίνιπποι at 603 and Γερητοθεόδωροι at 605. The identity of these people may be learned from the scholia (if it is admitted that the scholiast transmits reliable knowledge, which is often doubtful). These are certainly comic creations, made of the union of personal names.[45]

In other cases, the personal names belong to famous people. One of the most ancient examples is the verb coined by Cratinus by joining together the names of his main comic rival and of the most controversial tragic poet of his times: a precious note written by Arethas of Caesarea in the margin of a Platonic manuscript has preserved for us the verb εὐριπιδαριστοφανίζειν, a brilliant way (for Cratinus) to indicate that Aristophanes made fun of Euripides but, at the same time, imitated him.[46] Cratinus has repeated the same procedure for two other poets, the tragic Choerilus (Χοιρίλος) and the comic Ecphantides (Ἐκφαντίδης), thus creating the compound Χοιριλεκφαντίδης.[47]

This comic procedure is mostly exploited for the creation of amusing and imaginative titles: one of the first examples is Cratinus' *Διονυσαλέξανδρος*, a play whose plot is known to us through a papyrus preserving a conspicuous section of

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45 Kanavou (2011, 38–39) comments upon all the explanations put forward by ancient and modern commentators. To the first compound Aristophanes also adds Πανουργιππαρχίδαι (a compound that belongs to the category of patronymics discussed above, in section 2.5); the second one is followed by the compound Διομειαλαζόνες ("Humbug from Diomeia", as translated by Henderson 2022), which, according to Kanavou, "may refer to the reputation of the people from the deme Diomeia, perhaps for favouring the war or for arrogance, which came to give the demotic a pejorative sense".

46 Cratinus fr. 342: τίς δὲ σύ; κομψός τις ἔροιτο θεατής. / ὑπολεπτολόγος, γνωμοδιώκτης, εὐριπιδαριστοφανίζων ("A sophisticated spectator might ask you who you are. And the answer would be that you are a subtle speaker, a relentless phrasemaker, a mixture of Euripides and Aristophanes"). On these three compounds, see also Conti Bizzarro 1999, 91–104; Beta 2004, 136 n. 62, 143 n. 88; Olson 2007, 110–111; Olson/Seaberg 2018, 118–122.

47 Cratinus fr. 502. On this fragment (but also on the preceding one), see Bakola 2010, 23–29; Ornaghi 2006; Olson/Seaberg 2018, 342–343. For another similar example, see adesp. com. fr. 338, Ἐξηκεστιδαλκίδαι (the cithara-players Execestides and Alcides).

its ὑπόθεσις (the introduction written by the Alexandrian scholars). There are many more examples, including an Aristophanic title (*Αἰολοσίκων*, Aristophanes' last comedy, produced by his son Araros).[48] Apart from the title, the same phenomenon occurs also in the main text of the play, if the poet wants to underline the double nature of a specific character: thus, in the *Frogs*, when the slave Xanthias accepts to wear Heracles' attire (the lion's skin and the club), he becomes a real "Heraclean Xanthias" (499, Ἡρακλειοξανθίας).

Sometimes this creative process is not limited to the conjunction of two proper names: in the course of the process, the names may also be modified, so that it would be more appropriate to speak of a fusion or, if we want to borrow a word used by Sigmund Freud, a condensation. The compound Ἀνδροκολωνοκλῆς, coined by Cratinus in the lost comedy *The Seasons*, is a clear example of this peculiar comic process: the poet merges the proper name of a politician of the radical party, Androcles (Ἀνδροκλῆς), with the name of one of the Athenian demes, Colonus (Κολωνός); since this deme was the place in which poor people gathered every morning in search of a daily job, it becomes clear that Androcles is mocked either for being always and readily at the disposal of the leading politicians or (since the scholion adds the information that Cratinus satirises him for being a pervert) for his sexual availability.[49]

This same Androcles apparently recurs in the fragment of another lost comedy of Cratinus, *The Men of Seriphos*. It is not easy to determine what the compound Ἀνδροκλέων means: it might be tempting to see it as a kind of condensation of Ἀνδροκλῆς and Κλέων (especially because the leader of the radical party is hinted at in a fragment of the same comedy), but since the term is preceded and followed by five plural genitives (δούλων, ἀνδρῶν, νεοπλουτοπονήρων, αἰσχρῶν, and the probably corrupted Διονυσοκουρώνων), it is much more likely that here Cratinus is simply adding Androcles to this list in a grammatical case that makes the audience recall the name of Cleon.[50] Still, if Ἀνδροκλέων is not a

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48 On Cratinus' title, see Bianchi 2016, 198–203; on Aristophanes', see Orth 2017, 9–14. Among many other compound titles, note especially Ἀνθρωφηρακλῆς and Ψευδηρακλῆς (both by Pherecrates), Ἀνθρωπορέστης and Λημνομέδα (both by Strattis), Μανέκτωρ (Menecrates), Τιτανόπανες (Myrtilus), Δημοτυνδάρεως (Polyzelus), and Σφιγγοκαρίων (Eubulus). In the latter title it is easy to identify a common slave name (Καρίων), joined to the name of the Sphinx; for a similar compound, see Eupolis fr. 435, who coins Βαρυγέτας, a name that indicated a very earnest (βαρύς) slave (Γέτας), as Photius β 60 explains (σεμνὸς μὲν καὶ βάρος ἔχων, δοῦλος δὲ καὶ Γέτας). Cf. also the chapter by Kostas E. Apostolakis in the present volume.

49 Cratinus fr. 281 (see Fiorentini 2022, 226–230).

50 Cratinus fr. 223: εἶτα Σάβας ἀφικνῇ καὶ Σιδονίους καὶ Ἐρεμβούς, / ἔς τε πόλιν δούλων, ἀνδρῶν νεοπλουτοπονήρων, / αἰσχρῶν, Ἀνδροκλέων, † Διονυσοκουρώνων ("Then you come to the Sabae

"condensation", Ἀνδροκολωνοκλῆς certainly is — and therefore it is liable to the definition Freud used in *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, the essay published in 1905. In that study on the origins of laughter, the founder of psychoanalysis spoke of *Verdichtung mit Ersatzbildung* ("condensation with substitution"), and made the meaning clear to his readers through the coined compound "famillionnaire" (a condensation of the words "familiar" and "millionaire").

Returning to Cleon, one of the most beloved targets of Aristophanes' first comedies, his name appears in other compounds in addition to the already quoted pair of protagonists of *Wasps* (Φιλοκλέων and Βδελυκλέων). In fact, the name of Pericles' successor appears in this same comedy under another coinage: in the preliminary scene to the *agon*, the Chorus, who stands by Philocleon in his passion for the radical demagogue, insults Bdelycleon by calling him Δημολογοκλέων, a comic compound in which the name of Cleon is preceded by the adjective δημολόγος, "a contemptuous word for a public speaker".[51]

3.2 Compounds with one proper name joined with an adjective or noun

The final case of the preceding section is a suitable introduction to the present one, which regards another group of comic compounds, made of the union of a proper name (such as that of Cleon)[52] not with another personal name but with

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and the Sidonians and the Eremboi, / and to the city of slaves, men who are newly rich and wicked, / shameful, Androcles, Dionysio-barber-Pyrons"; for this translation, see Rusten 2011). On this fragment, see also Bona 1992; Fiorentini 2018; Fiorentini 2022, 30–37. The word Διονυσοκουρώνων is another interesting compound, but the passage is so corrupted that it is very difficult to guess what the poet precisely meant (see Luppe 2005).

51 Ar. *Vesp.* 343; the quotation comes from MacDowell 1971, who translates the compound with "Soapbox-Cleon"; see also Kanavou 2011, 89. The presence of a negative word in connection with Cleon uttered by a character who has always a positive attitude toward him has induced many scholars to emend the compound: for some of these proposals, see, besides MacDowell 1971, Vetta 1996.

52 The popularity of Cleon in the first five Aristophanic comedies (he died in 422, but he is often mentioned in *Peace* as well, performed in 421, right after his death) is witnessed by other comic compounds: in order to let the audience understand who is the real politician hidden behind the mask of the Paphlagonian, in the prologue of *Knights* the slave Demosthenes calls him βυρσοπαφλαγών (*Eq.* 47, "leather-Paphlagonian"), with a straightforward allusion to Cleon's profession (he owned a tannery); further below, in the same comedy, see also 901, Πύρρανδρος (the "red man", probably an allusion to Cleon's red hair). According to Hesychius (adesp. com. fr. 297), the compound βυρσόκαππος (a synonym of βυρσοκάπηλος, "leather-seller") was a sobriquet of Cleon.

an adjective or a verb. The names of this group very often belong to celebrated contemporary Athenians: apart from the politicians, there were also the poet's colleagues (comic or tragic poets), or other intellectuals, or even athletes; sometimes, the proper name is a geographical one.

The verb μελλονικιᾶν, used by the Hoopoe in *Birds*, is a coinage made up by Aristophanes to mock the notorious tendency of Nicias to hesitate and procrastinate (μέλλειν), pointed out by Thucydides as well.[53] Amynias, ridiculed in *Wasps* through the compound Κομηταμυνίας, was a notable politician: elsewhere Aristophanes mocks him for being a flatterer and an effeminate, but in this case he makes fun of Amynias (who, by the way, held the strategy in that very year) because of his long hair — a probable sign of his penchant for the Spartans.[54] The neologism Κολακώνυμος is not, in the strictest sense, a compound. But behind this name, which also occurs in *Wasps*, there hides another politician: Cleonymus, standardly accused in comedy for being a coward.[55] In this passage, he is also blamed for flattery, as the first part of the word (κολακ-) shows.[56]

In the preceding section, the Cratinean verb εὐριπιδαριστοφανίζειν was mentioned; another compound with the name of the tragic poet is offered by Aristophanes. In the prologue of *Knights*, the adverb κομψευριπικῶς is found, translated by the LSJ (which considers the word as a shortening of κομψευριπιδικῶς) as "with Euripides-quibbles"; the significance of the adjective has been thoroughly discussed by O'Sullivan in his excellent essay on the beginning of Greek stylistic theory.[57] Another tragic poet who is frequently cited by Aristophanes (but, contrary to Euripides, in a positive way) is Phrynichus, one of the oldest tragic playwrights, famous for the beauty of his choral songs.[58] The extremely long word ἀρχαιομελισιδωνοφρυνιχήρατα ("ancient-honey-Sidon-Phrynikhos-lovely", in MacDowell's

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53 Ar. *Av.* 639; Thuc. 6.8.4. According to Dunbar (1995, 414), the verb means "to suffer from the Nikias-dithers".

54 Ar. *Vesp.* 466; see Biles/Olson 2015, 109, 234.

55 Ar. *Vesp.* 592 — but see also his (disguised) presence in Xanthias' dream at the beginning of the play (15–27). For other occurrences, see Storey 1989.

56 For a similar joke, see Κολακοφοροκλείδης (or -φωροκλείδης), a word attested both in Hermippus (fr. 39) and Phrynichus (fr. 18) for a person accused of being a flatterer. On the identity of this mysterious character (Hierocleides? Hierocles? Pherecleides?), see Stama 2014, 128–131; Comentale 2017, 154–156.

57 O' Sullivan 1992, 138 ff.; see also Beta 2004, 142–144.

58 See Ar. *Av.* 749–750.

verbum de verbo rendering) blends the name of the poet with his age (ἀρχαῖος) and the sweetness (μέλι) of his lovable (ἐρατός) songs.[59]

Among the intellectuals, a prominent place is occupied by Socrates: in a fragment of Teleclides, Euripides is blamed for the (presumed) help he received from Socrates in the composition of his tragedies by means of the compound σωκρατογόμφος ("patched up by Socrates"), where the name of the Athenian thinker is joined with γόμφος ("bolt").[60] Even Socrates' music teacher receives the (dubious) honour of being part of a comic compound: in the word κοννόφρονες, mentioned by Hesychius, the proper name Connus is easily identified.[61] But "having the same mind as Connus" is not a compliment at all, because, according to Hesychius, the word was a synonym of ἄφρονες ("mindless", "foolish") — and so the compound may be translated as "people as stupid as Connus". In another case, an athlete's name is brilliantly modified through the addition of a part of the body which was central in his athletic feats: he was Δαμασίστρατος, a Chian boxer, whom Eupolis calls Δαμασικόνδυλος because he used his fists (κόνδυλοι) for defeating his rivals.[62]

A good selection of compounds with geographical names comes, as usual, from Aristophanes. In the long list of the sophists (σοφισταί) that are fed by the Clouds, Socrates mentions, together with the just quoted μετεωροφένακες (see note 60), the Θουριομάντεις: with the term "soothsayers of Thourioi", Aristophanes alludes to the people who took part in the foundation of the town of Thourioi,

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59 Ar. *Vesp*. 220 (a perfect iambic trimeter). More problematic is the mention of the Phoenician town Sidon (Σιδών): according to a scholion, this is due to the fact that, in a song of Phrynichus' *Phoenician Women*, Sidon was cited twice (see MacDowell 1971, 160–161; Biles/Olson 2015, 156–157).

60 Teleclides fr. 42 (quoted by Diogenes Laertius 2.18); for a recent discussion of the fragment, see Conti Bizzarro 1999, 178–186; Bagordo 2013, 205–207. It is not known whether Teleclides portrayed Socrates as a sophist, as Aristophanes did in *Clouds*. Certainly, many Aristophanic compounds make fun of the sophists: see *Nub*. 101, μεριμνοσοφισταί ("minute philosophers", according to the LSJ); 333, μετεωροφένακες ("astronomical quacks", LSJ); 360, μετεωροσοφισταί ("astronomical sophists", LSJ, i.e. "sophists with the head in the clouds"); see also fr. 401, μετεωρολέσχαι ("star-gazers" and "visionaries", according to the LSJ, but I would prefer to translate it "chatterers with the head in the clouds", see Beta 2004, 151 n. 11, with bibliography, because the fragment is quoted by the scholiast of *Peace* 92 in connection with another similar compound, μετεωροκοπεῖν, correctly translated by the LSJ with "to prattle about high things"). On this fragment (possibly a remnant of the first version of *Clouds*), see Torchio 2021, 54–55.

61 Adesp. com. fr. 371 (Hesychius κ 3536). Κόννος was the title of a play by Ameipsias, performed in 423 BCE, in the same festival as Aristophanes' *Clouds*, when the prize was won by Cratinus' *Flask* (Πυτίνη).

62 Fr. 444; see Olson 2014, 211–212.

in Southern Italy (and, in particular, to the *mantis* Lampon, a friend of Pericles).[63] In a long fragment from the *Gerytades*, Aristophanes creates the noun Θρᾳκοφοίτης ("Thrace-haunter"), a possible allusion to Alcibiades, who, in the years preceding the performance of the play, had fled in Thrace after the defeat of Notion.[64] The town of Abydos, located in the Asian coast of the Hellespont, appears in another Aristophanic fragment, in which the compound Ἀβυδοκόμης designates a sycophant who declares to be proud of his job. According to the many sources that have handed down to us this *hapax legomenon*, the people of Abydos were notorious for their inclination towards denouncing foreigners.[65]

This kind of compound might involve the names of populations as well: in order to indicate a group of Peloponnesians who had been forced to leave their country due to a famine, Eupolis created, in the *Helots*, the noun Λιμοδωριεῖς.[66] Since the plays were staged and took place in Athens, it is no wonder that the creative imagination of the Athenian comic poets acted on the geographical names of the area in which they lived and worked. Thus, the compound Δρυαχαρνεύς underlines the endurance of the people who lived in the deme of Acharnae, portrayed by an unknown poet as strong as oaks (δρῦς).[67] The name of Attica, the broader region of the city of Athens, is present in a passage of Aristophanes' *Peace*, in the coinage Ἀττικωνικοί (215); although the name is clearly modelled on Λακωνικοί ("Spartans"), mentioned at *Peace* 212, it probably contains within itself the word νίκη as well, as an allusion to a possible future victory of the Athenians in the war.

A final category of this kind of compounds involves proper names taken from mythology. In most of these comic coinages the name of Cronus, Zeus' father, is evoked as a symbol of a very old age: such is the case of Κρόνιππος ("old nag"), a

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63 Aristophanes mentions Lampon in *Birds* 521; on the presence of deceitful soothsayers in Greek comedy, see Smith 1989; Beta 2004, 212–215. The compounds included in the list are five (in just two lines, 332–333): ἰατροτέχναι ("experts in medicine"), σφραγιδονυχαργοκομῆται (a comic name for a coxcomb, translated by the LSJ as "lazy long-haired fop with his rings and natty nails"), and κυκλίων χορῶν ᾀσματοκάμπται ("twisters of arias performed by dithyrambic choruses").

64 Fr. 156.7; on the validity of this hypothesis, put forward by Kaibel, see also Rusten 2011, 298. This coinage appears to be influenced by the word ᾀδοφοῖται ("Hades-haunters", because very thin and, therefore, very close to death), cited in ll. 4 and 6. For a similar compound, see adesp. com. fr. 840, Λυδοφοίτης ("Lydia-haunter", in the sense of someone who sells oils and unguents).

65 Fr. 755. On this fragment, see Kanavou 2011, 195; Bagordo 2017, 179–181.

66 Fr. 154. On this fragment, see Storey 2003, 178; Olson 2016, 24–25.

67 Adesp. com. fr. 498. On this fragment, see Olson 2002, 127–128. The strength of the Acharnians had been emphasised by Aristophanes in *Ach.* 179–181, where they had been described as πρίνινοι ("made of olm oak") and σφενδάμνινοι ("made of maple tree").

mocking insult hurled by the Wrong Speech to the Right Speech (who is envisaged as old and antiquated, like the educational system he represents) in the *agon* of *Clouds*;[68] κρονοδαίμων ("as old as the god Cronus"), a compound addressed to someone who was old and silly;[69] κρονόληρος ("old chatterbox"), from the verb ληρεῖν ("to speak foolishly").[70] Old people were often mocked in comedy, and this gave the comic poets the opportunity for many witty coinages, such as πρότηθυς, a neologism invented by Cratinus for designating an extremely old woman, who was born "before Tethys", one of the oldest goddesses in classical mythology, the daughter (according to Hesiod) of Gaia and Uranus, older sister of the aforementioned Cronus, and wife of Ocean.[71]

The list of the compound names invented by the comic poets for making fun of some of the more evident (and ridiculous) features of old people is too long for quoting and discussing every single sample. The same can be said of women, another category which was a beloved target of the Greek comic gibes.[72] As far as proper names are concerned, it is easy to think of Lysistrata, "she who disbands the armies", the heroine who gives her own name to one of the wittiest plays of Aristophanes, or of Praxagora, the "woman who turns her words into real facts", the protagonist of the *Women in the Assembly*.[73] In this case too, compounds related to mythological figures are found. The classic example is the neologism μεθυσοχάρυβδις, a derogatory term addressed to a drunken woman, who is compared to a mythological monster: the terrifying Charybdis, the whirlpool that, together with Scylla, made extremely difficult the crossing of the Strait of Messina, between Calabria and Sicily.[74] The difficult relationship between women and wine is one of the most frequent *topoi* in Greek comedy — but the same can be said of the penchant (of both men and women) for sex, the origin of another

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68 Ar. *Nub*. 1070. See Dover 1968, 152, 226.

69 Adesp. com. fr. 610; see also adesp. fr. 660, σοροδαίμων (a nickname of "one on the brink of the grave", LSJ), from σορός "coffin".

70 Adesp. com. fr. 751. On the verb ληρεῖν, see Beta 2004, 167–170; Kidd 2014.

71 Cratinus fr. 483; see Olson/Seaberg 2018, 318–319. On Tethys (not to be confounded with Thetis, Achilles' mother), see Hes. *Theog*. 126–138, 337–368.

72 For a more detailed discussion, see Beta 2007, 21–23.

73 Most of the names of Aristophanic protagonists are in fact compounds: Dicaeopolis (*Acharnians*), Agoracritus (*Knights*), Philocleon and Bdelycleon (*Wasps*), Peisetaerus and Euelpides (*Birds*). For these and other examples, see Kanavou 2011.

74 Adesp. com. fr. 629, quoted by the lexicographer Phrynichus, with the clarification that the term was addressed to a drunken woman, not to a man (*Praep. Soph*. 88.14, ἐπὶ γυναικὸς μεθύσου, οὐκ ἐπ' ἄρρενος). On the terrible reputation of the strait of Messina, the *locus classicus* is the famous passage from Homer's *Odyssey* (12.234–259).

long list of comic compounds that clearly show the way comic poets were able to assemble (and disassemble) words.[75]

4 Conclusions

Some comic terms are made up of more than two or three simple words — hence, they are even longer than the sought-after compounds created by the dithyrambographers. Speaking of women, it would be difficult not to mention the two long compounds Lysistrata creates when she urges all the Athenian female storekeepers to defend her friends from the attacks of the Scythian archers led by the Probulus: σπερμαγοραιολεκιθολαχανοπώλιδες and σκοροδοπανδοκευτριαρτοπώλιδες are two "multi-compound words" (πολυσύνθετοι λέξεις is the definition given by Eustathius of Thessalonica), in which, before the suffix -πώλιδες (from πωλεῖν, "to sell"), a great variety of goods may be identified, such as σπέρματα ("seeds"), λέκιθοι ("legumes"), λάχανα ("vegetables"), σκόροδον ("garlic"), and ἄρτος ("bread"), all of them sold in the "market-place" (ἀγορά), next to the pubs run by the "innkeepers" (πανδοκεύτριαι).[76]

And it is, once more, a female character who utters the longest word in ancient Greek literature. The Chorus-leader of the *Women in the Assembly* (herself a woman, since the Chorus of that play was formed by Athenian women) invites her friends to a party where the cook will serve the following, astonishing dish:

> Plattero-filleto-mulleto-turboto-
> cranio-morselo-pickleo-acido-
> silphio-honeyo-pouredonthe-topothe-
> ouzelo-throstleo-cushato-culvero-
> cutleto-roastingo-marrowo-dippero-
> leveret-syrupo-gibleto-wings.[77]

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75 See Beta 2007, 30–35.

76 Ar. *Lys.* 457–458; for Eustathius, see *ad Il.* 1277.47, vol. IV p. 645.15 van der Valk. Aristophanes plays on the suffix -πώλης in a passage of *Knights* (129–144), in which he lists all the predecessors of the character of the "Sausage-Seller" (ἀλλαντοπώλης): "oakum-seller" (στυππειοπώλης), "sheep-seller" (προβατοπώλης), and "leather-seller" (βυρσοπώλης) — an allusion to the Paphlagonian, i.e. Cleon.

77 I have borrowed the glittering translation of Rogers 1924. But the translation of Henderson 1996 is much clearer: "For soon there'll be served / limpets and saltfish and sharksteak and dogfish / and mullets and oddfish with savory pickle-sauce / and thrushes with blackbirds and various pigeons / and roosters and pan roasted wagtails and larks / and nice chunks of hare

This is the translation of a word that occupies seven lines (1169–1175), positioned by Aristophanes as the seal of a comedy that, like most of the examples we know, ended up with a banquet:[78]

λοπαδοτεμαχοσελαχογαλεο-
κρανιολειψανοδριμυποτριμματο-
σιλφιοτυρομελιτοκατακεχυμενο-
κιχλεπικοσσυφοφαττοπεριστερα-
λεκτρυονοπτοκεφαλιοκιγκλοπε-
λειολαγῳοσιραιοβαφητραγα-
νοπτερυγών

Such a rich word, crafted by the exquisite art of a poet who is as expert a crafts-man as a skilled carpenter, seems the aptest conclusion to a chapter in which I have tried to give a picture of the ability shown by comic poets in the composition of new, smart, and funny words.

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marinated in mulled wine / and all of it drizzled with honey and silphium / and vinegar, oil and spices galore!"

78 Here are the words that Ussher (1973, 235–237) identifies in the "much compounded" (συχνοσύνθετον: again, a definition given by Eustathius, see above, n. 76) term: "saucepan" (λοπαδο), "slices of salt-fish" (τεμαχο), "shark" (σελαχο), "dog-fish" (γαλεο), "head" (κρανιο), "pieces" (λειψανο), "bitter" (δριμ), "pickling" (υποτριμματο), "laserwort" (σιλφιο), "cheese" (τυρο), "honey" (μελιτο), "poured all over" (κατακεχυμενο), "thrush" (κιχλ), "blackbird on top" (επικοσσυφο), "doves and pigeons" (φαττο, περιστερα, πελειο), "hen" (αλεκτρυον), "roast-mul-let" (οπτοκεφαλιο), "wag-tail" (κιγκλο), "hare" (λαγῳο), "dipped in new wine boiled down" (σιραιοβαφη), "gristly wings" (τραγανο πτερυγων). See also the chapter by Ioannis Konstantakos in this volume.

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Andreas Willi

"When He Should Have Said…"
The Treatment of Humour παρ' ὑπόνοιαν
in the Aristophanic Scholia

Abstract: While the Aristophanic scholia do not normally pay much attention to the mechanisms of verbal humour, there are numerous annotations pointing out jokes "against expectation". The term typically used for this common phenomenon is παρ' ὑπόνοιαν rather than παρὰ προσδοκίαν, although the latter also occurs a few times, probably under the influence of rhetorical teaching. The scholiasts' general awareness of the feature, and their insistence on it, does not, however, go hand in hand with any in-depth analysis; much rather, παρ' ὑπόνοιαν risks being used as a cover-all label for a variety of comic devices and without much consideration being given to its contextual appropriateness. Moreover, there is some evidence to suggest that explanations by means of παρ' ὑπόνοιαν could be a last resort when difficult passages could not be explained in a more "sophisticated" manner.

1 Introduction

The Aristophanic scholia provide us with extensive and important insights both into ancient scholarship on comedy and into the needs and interests of comedy's non-scholarly readers. They do not, however, indicate exactly who these readers were, nor why they were reading Aristophanes (or comedy) in the first place. It is often assumed, with good reason, that Aristophanes continued to be widely studied in Hellenistic and Roman times because his language reflected Classical Attic usage and vocabulary that lay beyond the horizon of fifth- and fourth-century

prose texts[1] and because the plays moreover shed much light on a central period of Athenian history. However, it would no doubt be wrong to believe that Aristophanes' post-classical reception was entirely guided by instructional considerations or blind to the poet's more strictly literary qualities. In fact, the entertainment and enjoyment factor must have played a major role as well, not just because there was apparently some utilitarian discussion on whether reading Aristophanes *at school*[2] was appropriate — as witnessed by Galen's treatise εἰ χρήσιμον ἀνάγνωσμα τοῖς παιδευομένοις ἡ παλαιὰ κωμῳδία — or because various sources explicitly speak of the poet as *facetissimus* or *festivissimus* (Cic. *Leg.* 2.37; Gell. *NA* 1.15.19; Gell. *NA* 13.25.7; Gell. *NA* praef. 20; cf. also Pers. 1.124, *praegrandis*; Macrob. *Sat.* 5.20.13, *lepos*) and mention his χάρις (Ath. 4.158c, Ath. 6.269e, etc., χαρίεις; cf. also [Demetr.] *Eloc.* 128?), a quality that encompasses more than just stylistic achievement (on which see also Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.65–66; [Longinus] *Subl.* 40.2), but also because Plutarch, prefacing his own scathing remarks on Aristophanes' art in the *Comparison of Aristophanes and Menander* (Plut. *Mor.* 853a–854d), decries that ὁ μὲν ἀπαίδευτος καὶ ἰδιώτης οἷς ἐκεῖνος λέγει ἁλίσκεται. As Plutarch himself specifies in this context, he is thinking, for example, of the poet's use of puns (παρωνυμίαι), and he stresses that *he*, unlike other people, can *not* detect the "literary skill" usually ascribed to Aristophanes (ἡ θρυλουμένη δεξιότης).

Even so, the focus of the scholia clearly lies elsewhere. Many of them provide rather basic linguistic information, paraphrasing unfamiliar words or seeking to untangle constructions that are, or are taken to be, problematic. Others hark back to specialised treatises on κωμῳδούμενοι and tell the user of the commentary more about the countless historical people mentioned in the comic text. A third major group of notes identify intertexts and help to navigate through the sea of topical allusions. In all of these areas, and especially in the last one, Aristophanic humour has its place, and neither did this escape the ancient commentators. But what is generally missing from the scholiasts' remarks is any sign of a deeper analysis of humour and any systematic approach to the matter. With regard to intertextuality, for instance, the coverage is very exhaustive as far as the enumeration of actual or potential source texts is concerned — so much so that there is

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1 While still being particularly accessible: see Coker 2019, 66 on Galen's opinion expressed in *De nominibus medicis* (103v–104v in Meyerhof/Schacht 1931, 31–33); note also Galen's (lost) works on everyday vocabulary (πολιτικὰ ὀνόματα) in Aristophanes, Cratinus, and Eupolis (Gal. *Libr. Propr.*, p. 19.48 Kühn), and cf. further e.g. Phot. *Bibl.* 158 p. 101b 4–15, on the canon of Phrynichus' *Sophistic Preparation*.

2 For an explicit testimony of Aristophanes being studied at school in Roman times, see Lib. 1.9 (= Ar. test. 76).

sometimes a danger of overshooting the target — but the question is hardly ever asked what role a given "parody" plays within the comic product. That comedy has to parody and that parody is funny is taken for granted, but neither the mechanism of the phenomenon "parody" nor its function of adding a layer of interpretive complexity to the genre receive sufficient attention.

Mutatis mutandis a similar picture emerges if we look at the treatment of other forms of verbal humour in the scholia. While puns or jokes καθ' ὁμωνυμίαν (including double entendres) are picked up with some regularity, further elements, though being hardly less prominent in Aristophanes' comic language, are given shorter shrift. In particular, stylistic persiflage is often neglected when it is *just* that, i.e. when a passage does not at the same time allude to some *concrete* model, especially in the corpus of tragedy; and in the case of many a comic word coinage, the users of ancient commentaries were not alerted to the fact that the unusual word in question was more than just one of the many lexemes that were to be found in classical texts but had fallen out of use in the Hellenistic and Roman periods (and therefore required semantic elucidation). Generally speaking, and allowing for some degree of variation, one may thus say that the overall approach to Aristophanes' verbal art was atomistically "lexicological". Individual lexical entries got related to each other (punning/παρονομασία, καθ' ὁμωνυμίαν jokes) and new lexical entries could be fashioned where needed, but what is missing from the commentary is the systemic component that would have been necessary in order to adequately decode or describe more formally oriented patterns of humour.

Since formal similarities are of crucial importance where puns and καθ' ὁμωνυμίαν jokes are concerned, this does not of course mean that *no* attention was paid to the comic *signifiant*. Yet, the precedence assigned to the *signifié* level also comes to the fore when we compare the commentators' relative neglect of stylistic humour to their alertness as far as another prominent, though hardly *more* prominent, type of Aristophanic humour is concerned: jokes παρ' ὑπόνοιαν. Many instances of punning (παρονομασία) work in such a way that a contextually expected or expectable lexical item X is substituted by another item Y whose formal similarity makes the addressee think of the expected item without naming it (cf. e.g. Ar. *Nub.* 709–710, ἐκ τοῦ σκίμποδος δάκνουσί μ' ἐξέρποντες οἱ Κορίνθιοι, "the Corinthians are crawling out of the couch and biting me", with Κορίνθιοι, "Corinthians", replacing expected κόρεις, "bedbugs"). However, the non-fulfilment of such audience "expectations" may be used for comic effect also when there is no formal

similarity[3] between X and Y. It is this latter type which is often termed παρ' ὑπόνοιαν in the scholia and whose fairly extensive[4] identification by the scholiasts the present article will explore, as a first step towards a more comprehensive description of the analysis of humour in the *scholia Aristophanica*.[5]

2 Terminology: παρὰ (τὴν) ὑπόνοιαν and παρὰ προσδοκίαν

The following scholion on a line in *Lysistrata* may serve as a basic example of such a scholiastic diagnosis. It relates to a song in which the Chorus outline the blessings restored peace will bring to private life. Everyone, they sing, will be welcome to

Χο.   ... χωρεῖν ἄντικρυς
ὥσπερ οἴκαδ' εἰς ἑαυτῶν γεννικῶς, ὡς
ἡ θύρα κεκλείσεται.

                             Ar. *Lys.* 1068–1071

(Chorus) ... come straightaway, as if coming home to their own place, in a proper manner, for — the door will already be closed!

Σ Ar. *Lys.* 1071a τοῦτο εἰς γέλωτα εἶπεν. R — 1071b παρ' ὑπόνοιαν δέον "ἀνεῳχθήσεται". R

1071a He said this to raise a laugh. — 1071b Against expectation, when it should have been "will be opened".

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3 Or indeed identity, as with καθ' ὁμωνυμίαν jokes: Quintilian (*Inst.* 6.3.84) groups these phenomena together as the *genus decipiendi opinionem aut dicta aliter intelligendi* ("the type of cheating expectation or understanding differently what has been said"; cf. further Section 5).
4 The failure to point out conspicuous instances is uncommon, at least for the plays that are well-served by the scholia; the lack of pertinent notes on e.g. Ar. *Thesm.* 515 and Ar. *Eccl.* 128 may of course be seen in connection with the generally less comprehensive character of the scholia on the "women's plays". In any case, it is definitely untrue that "negli *Scholia* aristofanei, rare sono le allusioni al fenomeno" (Filippo 2001–2002, 62).
5 For a comprehensive *modern* take on, and typology of, παρ' ὑπόνοιαν humour in Aristophanes (as part of a wider poetics of surprise), see Kanellakis 2020a, 23–87 (parts of which Kanellakis 2020b duplicates). An overview of Aristophanic instances, arranged according to semantic types, is offered by Filippo 2001–2002; cf. also Aloni 1995, esp. 90–95, for whom "attesa frustrata" is one of three basic manifestations of Aristophanic verbal humour, next to "straniamento" (= "defamiliarisation") and "svelamento" (= "revelation" by means of ambiguity). In what follows, the scholia are quoted according to the edition by Koster *et al.* 1960–2007.

The label παρ' ὑπόνοιαν, which is applied here, is the scholiasts' standard[6] way of referring to the phenomenon, which modern literature often speaks of as *para prosdokian* (παρὰ προσδοκίαν). However, as is often the case in the scholia, the critical terminology is handled flexibly, if not inconsistenly.

Firstly, as was highlighted by W.G. Rutherford, next to the more frequent παρ' ὑπόνοιαν label there are also some instances of παρὰ τὴν ὑπόνοιαν with the definite article. According to Rutherford, the latter must be "the earlier and more correct form", since "[t]he article brings out the precise signification, namely 'at odds with the (hearer's) mind', and serves as a plain signal not to take παρὰ (τὴν) ὑπόνοιαν for an exact equivalent of παρὰ προσδοκίαν".[7] This conclusion seems over-confident, not just because the distribution of the variants with and without article do not point to any chronological sequence,[8] but also because ὑπόνοια, as intended here, is not so much "the hearer's mind" as a broadly conceived "suspicion, conjecture, guess" of what is to follow (cf. LSJ *s.v.* I.1). Accordingly, although it is of course always anchored in a specific situation (just as much as a προσδοκία is), the ὑπόνοια in question can well be taken as a generalised concept which, as such, may but need not take the definite article. Typical jokes παρ' ὑπόνοιαν run counter to conjectural expectation as defined by a given semantic context, yes, but they do this by defying *any* reasonable conjecture or expectation,

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6 This needs to be stressed because it has been wrongly claimed that "*par' hyponoian* [...] normally means an allusion or metaphor" (Kanellakis 2020a, 31, and cf. *passim*); the "terminological inconsistency of the annotators" relates much more to their occasional use of παρὰ προσδοκίαν instead (cf. immediately below; on fuzzy uses of παρ' ὑπόνοιαν, see further Sections 5–6). By a similar confusion, Montana 2013, 154–155, reads Aristophanic scholia that make mention of *παρ' ὑπόνοιαν* as if they meant *καθ' ὑπόνοιαν* "by insinuation, covertly" (cf. LSJ *s.v.* II), referring to the ὑπόνοια (i.e. "underlying/hidden meaning, innuendo" *vel sim.*). Aristotle opposes to outspoken αἰσχρολογία (Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1128a 23–24).

7 Rutherford 1905, 450.

8 Παρὰ τὴν ὑπόνοιαν is confined to the scholia on *Wasps* (Σ^VΓAld Ar. *Vesp.* 449; Σ^V Ar. *Vesp.* 924c; Σ^RVΓ3 Ar. *Vesp.* 1136; Σ^RV Ar. *Vesp.* 1365), *Frogs* (Σ^V Ar. *Ran.* 308f; Σ^VEΘNBarb(Ald) Ar. *Ran.* 501d; Σ^RVEΘBarb(Ald) Ar. *Ran.* 547–548; Σ^VMEΘBarb(Ald) Ar. *Ran.* 970d; Σ^RVMEΘ(Ald) Ar. *Ran.* 992b) and *Plutus* (Σ^ΘBarbAld Ar. *Plut.* 324; Σ^EΘNBarbAld Ar. *Plut.* 818g), but these do not otherwise share clear characteristics. Also, the manuscripts themselves may haphazardly disagree with each other in individual cases (cf. Σ^V [παρὰ τὴν ὑ.] vs. Σ^ΓLhAld [παρ' ὑ.] Ar. *Vesp.* 924c; Σ^RV [παρὰ τὴν ὑ.] vs. Σ^ΓLhAld [παρ' ὑ.] Ar. *Vesp.* 1365; Σ^V [παρὰ τὴν ὑ.] vs. Σ^RMEΘBarb(Ald) [παρ' ὑ.] Ar. *Ran.* 308f; Σ^ΘBarbAld [παρὰ τὴν ὑ.] vs. Σ^VMMatr [παρ' ὑ.] Ar. *Plut.* 324; Σ^EΘNBarbAld [παρὰ τὴν ὑ.] vs. Σ^V [παρ' ὑ.] Ar. *Plut.* 818g). At best, the carefully phrased Σ^VMEΘBarb(Ald) Ar. *Ran.* 970d, which forms part of a sequence of doxographic notes on the interpretation of Ar. *Ran.* 970 by scholars up to and including Didymus, could suggest that some post-Didymean scholar with a strong grasp on the tradition (e.g. Symmachus?) already wrote παρὰ τὴν ὑπόνοιαν at least in this instance; but even that would be a daring inference.

without there necessarily being a single specific one (cf. Engl. *against expectation* vs. *against the expectation*).

Secondly, and more importantly, alongside παρ' ὑπόνοιαν the expression παρὰ προσδοκίαν is encountered as well, albeit almost exclusively in notes on *Acharnians* and *Peace*.[9] Since παρὰ προσδοκίαν is an established term for a rhetorical figure (σχῆμα), which *need* not be used for humoristic purposes, it is less precise when applied to the comic device.[10] When Pseudo-Demetrius (*Eloc.* 152) uses an Aristophanic παρ' ὑπόνοιαν joke (and one that is classified as such in Σ^R/RV Ar. *Nub.* 179a/b) as one of two illustrations for witty παρὰ προσδοκίαν,[11] he therefore stresses that an additional dimension is involved as well: namely the lack of a rational connection with what precedes (οὐδ' ἠκολούθει τοῖς προτέροις), a feature that is also highlighted in one Aristophanic scholion where — quite exceptionally — the mechanics of the humour are briefly looked at:[12]

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9 With the single addition of Σ^RΓ Ar. *Lys.* 702 in the *scholia vetera*. Beyond, there is just Σ^rec. Ar. *Nub.* 179a, which uses the two terms in one breath (παρὰ προσδοκίαν καὶ παρ' ὑπόνοιαν διαβάλλει αὐτόν) for a passage where the older scholia have παρ' ὑπόνοιαν only (Σ^R/RV Ar. *Nub.* 179a/b); this might be under the influence of the reference to this specific passage in [Demetr.] *Eloc.* 152 (cf. below). *Pace* Filippo 2001–2002, 62, Σ^rec. Ar. *Plut.* 783 is different: παρὰ προσδοκίαν is there an explanatory gloss on παραχρῆμα.

10 Cf. Rutherford 1905, 450; I have been unable to consult Bilbao Ruiz 2005. In rhetoric, the concept of παρὰ προσδοκίαν (~ παράδοξον) can be traced back to Aristotle (or, more precisely, to Theodorus of Byzantium in the late fifth century BCE: cf. Arist. *Rh.* 1412a 26–28): see e.g. Bonanno 1987, 222–225; Celentano 1995, 168–169; Filippo 2001–2002, 59–60; Celentano 2003; Kanellakis 2020a, 27–31. Kanellakis underlines that, "[f]ollowing the Aristotelian tradition, *Tractatus Coislinianus* puts *para prosdokian* under the category ἐκ τῶν πραγμάτων γέλως rather than ἀπὸ τῆς λέξεως", but this need not entail an exclusion of verbal παρὰ προσδοκίαν: the fact alone that such παρὰ προσδοκίαν relates to the *signifié* more than to the *signifiant* could legitimise the classification. Even so, we do not of course know if the older Peripatetic analysis of comedy used the term παρὰ προσδοκίαν at all, or *initially* applied it somewhat differently from how we find it employed in the Aristophanic scholia (cf. Rutherford 1905, 451).

11 The other is the Cyclops' promise to "eat last No-one" in Hom. *Od.* 9.369, which is of a very different nature. That [Demetr.] *Eloc.* 152 misquotes the Aristophanic passage by introducing the beginning of Ar. *Nub.* 149 into Ar. *Nub.* 178 does not affect his point. By contrast, Hermogenes (*Method.* 34, pp. 453–454 Spengel) chooses as his example of παρὰ προσδοκίαν something taken ἐκ τοῦ βίου (rather than ἐκ τοῦ κωμικοῦ), although the phenomenon as such falls under the wider heading of κωμικῶς λέγειν.

12 Cf. also Σ^VEΘNBarb Ar. *Nub.* 12d, where the word X that would be "expected" instead of χρεῶν, "debts", is corrupted, but where it is said that X would have been "in line and consistent with <the preceding word> φάτνη" in Ar. *Nub.* 13 (ἵνα ἑξῆς καὶ ἀκολούθως τῇ φάτνῃ λέγειν δοκῇ). Of course, the "rational connection" can take very different forms: cf. e.g. n. 24 below on Σ^VEM Ar. *Av.* 102d appropriately observing how in that passage an antonym rather than a (partial) synonym is expected.

Χρ.　ἀλλ' οὔ τι κρύψω· τῶν ἐμῶν γὰρ οἰκετῶν
　　πιστότατον ἡγοῦμαί σε καὶ κλεπτίστατον.

<div align="right">Ar. Plut. 26–27</div>

(Chremylus) I won't conceal it, for I think of all my slaves you are the most trustworthy and the most — thievish.

Σ Ar. Plut. 27a κλεπτίστατον RsAld(U): τὸ σχῆμα παρ' ὑπόνοιαν ἐπήγαγε, VMNMatrBarb RsV[57]Ald(U) κωμικῶς παίζων. VMMatrRsV[57]Ald(U) — 27c ἅμα καὶ χαριεντιζόμενος διὰ τὸ τῆς κωμῳδίας μειδιαστικόν, ἅμα δὲ καὶ τὸν MatrRsV[57]Ald(U) οἰκέτην ποιεῖ ἀποδοχῆς τε τυγχάνοντα καὶ χλεύης παρὰ τοῦ δεσπότου· ἦν γὰρ ἐλπὶς συμφώνως τῷ πρώτῳ λεχθήσεσθαι καὶ τὸ δεύτερον. RsV[57]Ald(U)

27a Most thievish: He employed the figure παρ' ὑπόνοιαν, making a comic joke. — 27c <He says this> as a joke, the aim of comedy being to make people smile, and at the same time he lets the servant be the object of some approbation and some jest from his master; for the expectation was that the second element was going to agree with the first one.

At best, one could thus argue that, from a classificatory perspective, παρὰ προσδοκίαν is the genus and παρ' ὑπόνοιαν the species — save that παρ' ὑπόνοιαν is not a term employed in rhetorical literature. Rutherford therefore finds it significant that "both the [sc. Aristophanic] commentators who use παρὰ προσδοκίαν at all often, have a strong rhetorical bias".[13] While this formulation is based on the problematic contention that the scholia on every Aristophanic play have their own distinct profile because they go back to separate source commentaries,[14] the concentration of παρὰ προσδοκίαν remarks in the older scholia on Acharnians in particular is indeed noteworthy. Moreover, the idea that it is influenced by rhetorical analysis aligns with the fact that in one case the phenomenon is explicitly introduced as a σχῆμα:

Δι.　ἄγ', ὦ θύγατερ, ὅπως τὸ κανοῦν καλὴ καλῶς
　　οἴσεις βλέπουσα θυμβροφάγον. ὡς μακάριος
　　ὅστις σ' ὀπύσει κἀκποήσεται γαλᾶς
　　σοῦ μηδὲν ἥττους βδεῖν…

<div align="right">Ar. Ach. 253–256</div>

(Dicaeopolis) Come on, daughter, make sure you beautiful girl carry the basket beautifully, with a savoury-eating look in your eyes. How blessed is he who will marry you and beget — weasels that are in no way inferior to you in farting…

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13 Rutherford 1905, 450.

14 For a rejection of this thesis and the more plausible assumption that different selections from, and additions to, a common basis were made depending on the extent to which each play was read in late antique and Byzantine classrooms, see Boudreaux 1919, 176–184.

Σ Ar. *Ach.* 255 κἀκποιήσεται γαλᾶς: ἀντὶ τοῦ "παῖδας δριμυτάτους". τοῦτο δὲ τὸ σχῆμα καλεῖται παρὰ προσδοκίαν. ἔδει γὰρ φάναι "ἐκποιήσεται παῖδας νεανίας". ΡΕΓ

And beget weasels: Instead of "pungent children". This figure is called *para prosdokian*; for he should have said "will beget youthful children".

It appears that the commentator who is responsible for the formulation of this note did not overlook the humorous point but regarded παρὰ προσδοκίαν as an appropriate label for the comic device as well. This need not exclude that earlier commentators had already picked up the same joke and spoken of it as παρ' ὑπόνοιαν, but it is of course impossible to prove that there was any kind of (half-)systematic terminological revision during the history of this set of scholia. More likely, perhaps, our annotator used the term he regarded as correct when commenting on παρ' ὑπόνοιαν passages that had *not* previously been singled out as such. This might explain both why there are also a good number of παρ' ὑπόνοιαν notes on *Acharnians*[15] and why in the majority of παρὰ προσδοκίαν notes on passages from *Acharnians* the diagnosis of a παρ' ὑπόνοιαν/παρὰ προσδοκίαν joke is actually more questionable than in the case of Ar. *Ach.* 255.[16] They include Ar. *Ach.* 119, where the primary comic point, as observed in the scholion itself, is the humorous alteration of a Euripidean verse, so that there

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15 See Σ^REΓT3 Ar. *Ach.* 18a; Σ^REΓLh Ar. *Ach.* 756; Σ^REΓLh Ar. *Ach.* 850a; Σ^REΓ Ar. *Ach.* 1173a; Σ^EΓ Ar. *Ach.* 1181a; cf. also Σ^rec. Ar. *Ach.* 1001b; Σ^rec. Ar. *Ach.* 1026c. The same is true for *Peace* (Σ^RV Ar. *Pax* 249aα; Σ^RV Ar. *Pax* 368; Σ^RVΓLh Ar. *Pax* 402b; Σ^RVΓ Ar. *Pax* 425c; Σ^RV Ar. *Pax* 526a; Σ^RVΓ Ar. *Pax* 822; Σ^V Ar. *Pax* 1186; Σ^V Ar. *Pax* 1319) and *Lysistrata* (Σ^Bar/R Ar. *Lys.* 114α/β; Σ^RΓ Ar. *Lys.* 937; Σ^R Ar. *Lys.* 1057; Σ^R Ar. *Lys.* 1071), the other two plays with occasional παρὰ προσδοκίαν notes. Note that the label παρ' ὑπόνοιαν may occasionally be used even where παρὰ προσδοκίαν would seem justified because a *rhetorically* unexpected, but contextually appropriate, word/phrase occurs: see e.g. Σ^V Ar. *Pax* 1319 (on Ὑπέρβολον ἐξελάσαντας, "throwing out Hyperbolus", in Ar. *Pax* 1321), Σ^RV Ar. *Pax* 526α (on ἀστρατείας, "freedom of campaigning", as a metaphorical nice smell in Ar. *Pax* 526), and especially Σ^V Ar. *Plut.* 23c (on Chremylus' threat to Carion, ἵνα μᾶλλον ἀλγῇς, "so that it's even more painful": here the phrasing τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ λόγου παρ' ὑπόνοιαν may intimate that παρ' ὑπόνοιαν is a *rhetorical* figure; cf. similarly Σ^NBarbAld(U) Ar. *Plut.* 20c and Σ^VMNMatrBarbRsV57Ald(U) Ar. *Plut.* 27a, although in the latter case a real comic παρ' ὑπόνοιαν is at stake). On extended uses of παρ' ὑπόνοιαν, see further Sections 5–6 below.
16 Cf. also, apart from the examples given in the main text, Σ^REΓLh Ar. *Ach.* 615a, where the notion that χρεῶν, "of debts", is *para prosdokian* is due to an old corruption and the scholiast's failure to understand that the preceding parallel ἐράνου/ἐράνων (regularly) means "cash-loan(s)" (cf. Olson 2002, 233; Kanellakis 2020a, 48); Σ^REΓ Ar. *Ach.* 684a, where there may be a παρ' ὑπόνοιαν joke, but if so it is ἠλύγην, "shadow", rather than δίκης that is παρ' ὑπόνοιαν (cf. Olson 2002, 247; Kanellakis 2020a, 44); and Σ^REΓ3 Ar. *Ach.* 974a, where it is not clear what is "unexpected" (or funny) specifically about the adjective χλιαρά, "warm" (cf. Filippo 2001–2002, 86; Kanellakis 2020a, 48). Thus, only in Σ^REΓLh Ar. *Ach.* 733a is the label παρὰ προσδοκίαν applied as legitimately as it is in Σ^REΓ Ar. *Ach.* 255.

is not ostensibly more παρ' ὑπόνοιαν humour than in other parodistically trans-formed paratragic lines (which are *not* normally labelled in this way),[17] and Ar. *Ach.* 751, which rather revolves around a phonological pun on διαπίνομεν (or Megarian διαπίνομες = /diapi:nomes/) ~ διαπεινᾶμες (= /diape:na:mes/):[18]

Δι.   καὶ τοῖν μὲν εὐνούχοιν τὸν ἕτερον τουτονὶ
         ἐγᾦδ' ὅς ἐστι, Κλεισθένης ὁ Σιβυρτίου.
         ὦ θερμόβουλον πρωκτὸν ἐξυρημένε...
                                    Ar. *Ach.* 117–119

(Dicaeopolis) And of the two eunuchs, I know who one is, this one here, Cleisthenes the son of Sibyrtius! O thou, shaved off on your hot-headed arse...

Σ Ar. *Ach.* 119 ὦ θερμόβουλον: παρῳδίᾳ χρῆται. ἔστι γὰρ ἐν Τημενίδαις Εὐριπίδου, "ὦ θερ-μόβουλον σπλάγχνον". οὗτος οὖν σκώπτων Εὐριπίδην προσέθηκε "πρωκτὸν" παρὰ προσδο-κίαν. REΓLh

O hot-headed: He applies parody; for in Euripides' *Temenidai* (?) there is the phrase "O hot-headed heart". So, in order to ridicule Euripides he inserted "arse" against expectation (*para prosdokian*).

Δι.   πῶς ἔχετε;
Με.   διαπεινᾶμες ἀεὶ ποττὸ πῦρ.
                                    Ar. *Ach.* 751

(Dicaeopolis) How are you? — (Megarian) We keep starving by the fire.

Σ Ar. *Ach.* 751 διαπεινᾶμες ἀεί: παρὰ προσδοκίαν, ὡσεὶ ἔφη "διαπίνομεν ἀεὶ πρὸς τὸ πῦρ"· ὁ δὲ εἶπε "διαπεινᾶμες"· οἱ γὰρ πότοι χειμῶνος πρὸς τὸ πῦρ γίνονται· εἴρηκε δὲ οὕτω διὰ τὸν λιμόν. "διαπεινᾶμες" δὲ ἀντὶ τοῦ "διαπεινῶμεν". ἢ οὕτως· ἐσχάτως πεινῶμεν, ὥστε καὶ τὰ

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17 Notwithstanding the fact that on one level the "unexpected" is of course always present in parody (see Rau 1967, 16); such deformations can be seen as the phrase-level equivalent of lexi-cal punning. Hermogenes (*Method.* 34, p. 453 Spengel) explicitly differentiates παρὰ προσδοκίαν from κατὰ παρῳδίαν.

18 The second part of Σᴱᴳ³ᴸʰ Ar. *Ach.* 751 (starting with ἢ οὕτως) could be taken to doubt the presence of a pun (or "*para prosdokian*") altogether, but this may represent an addition by some-one other than the person who came up with the παρὰ προσδοκίαν diagnosis. Kanellakis 2020a, 69–70 accepts this diagnosis by allowing for "single-word *para prosdokian*" because "the first part (διαπειν-) [sc. of διαπεινᾶμες] phonetically predisposes us to expect διαπίνομεν"; yet, such a justification seems rather too sophisticated for what the scholia normally offer. On Ar. *Ach.* 119, Kanellakis 2020a, 57–58 rightly notes that this "is funny regardless of whether it is recognised as a *para prosdokian*": "not every verbal substitution in a parody of a tragic line is automatically a *para prosdokian*, but it is so when the underlying material is a trademark of tragic style, i.e. a formula or a famous quote".

ἱμάτια ἀποδόμενοι καθεζόμεθα πρὸς τῷ πυρὶ διὰ τὸ ῥῖγος. ἢ διαπύρως καὶ ἐκτόπως πεινῶμεν, ὃ καὶ βέλτιον. ΕΓ³Lh

We keep starving: *Para prosdokian*, as if he were saying "We keep drinking by the fire"; yet, he said "we keep starving". <The phrasing is> because in the winter drinking parties take place by the fire. However, because of the hunger he said this instead. <The form> διαπεινῶμες stands for <Attic> διαπεινῶμεν. Or else, <what is meant is> "We are exceedingly hungry so that we even sell our clothes and sit by the fire because of the cold"; or "we are ardently and excessively hungry", which is an even better explanation.

Although the situation with παρὰ προσδοκίαν notes on *Peace* may be slightly better,[19] and although we shall see that the label παρ᾽ ὑπόνοιαν, too, can be used imprecisely (Sections 5–6), it seems fair to say that at least the critic who is responsible for the παρὰ προσδοκίαν notes on *Acharnians* was not the most perceptive literary scholar. Whether it was a single person we cannot tell. However, it should be borne in mind that if there had been an entire group of Aristophanic critics with this terminological preference, the concentration of the παρὰ προσδοκίαν notes in the scholia on just two plays would become even more difficult to account for than it is anyway.

Very tentatively, we may even go one step further. Thanks to the subscription in ms. V (Venetus Marcianus 474) to the scholia on *Peace*, we know that the metrical analysis of that play followed Heliodorus, while the annotations are by and large culled from the commentaries of Symmachus and Phaeinus (κεκώλισται πρὸς τὰ Ἡλιοδώρου, παραγέγραπται ἐκ Φαείνου καὶ Συμμάχου). This certainly does not mean that there cannot be minor additions here or there, but it makes it less likely that any notes presenting real substance come from a third source. Now, at least the παρὰ προσδοκίαν note in Σ^RV Ar. *Pax* 363a *is* a substantial one.

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19 See at least Σ^RV Ar. *Pax* 363a, where a parallel is invented to illustrate how the line works (εἰπὼν δὲ "οὐδὲν πονηρόν" παρὰ προσδοκίαν ἐπήγαγε τὸ "ἀλλ᾽ ὅπερ καὶ Κιλλικῶν", ὡσεὶ εἶπεν "οὐδὲν κακὸν ποιῶ, ἀλλ᾽ ἱεροσυλῶ", "Having said 'Nothing bad', he adds, *para prosdokian*, 'but what Cillicon also did', as if he said 'I am not doing anything bad, but robbing a temple'"; cf. Kanellakis 2020a, 66) and Σ^RV(bis)Γ Ar. *Pax* 898b (τῷ πέει, "with the penis", instead of τῷ σκέλει, "with the leg"), possibly also Σ^V Ar. *Pax* 505a (δικάζετε, "you are holding trials", instead of something like φωνεῖτε, "you are talking"; but cf. Kanellakis 2020a, 54), but not Σ^RVLh Ar. *Pax* 95, since neither the question τί πέτει; "Why are you flying?", nor the subsequent τί μάτην οὐχ ὑγιαίνεις; "Why are you out of your mind?", are situationally "unexpected" in Ar. *Pax* 95 (cf. Section 7 with n. 45; Kanellakis 2020a, 42). In several scholia on the same play (Σ^R Ar. *Pax* 235aα; Σ^RVΓ Ar. *Pax* 425aα; Σ^RVΓ Ar. *Pax* 901a), where alternative ways of designating παρ᾽ ὑπόνοιαν humour are used (δέον εἰπεῖν/ἀντὶ τοῦ: cf. Section 3 below), Rutherford 1905, 451 also finds an "odd trick of annotating, not τὸ παρὰ προσδοκίαν εἰρημένον, but the something already said against which that clashes". The one παρὰ προσδοκίαν note on *Lysistrata* (Σ^RΓ Ar. *Lys.* 702) also concerns an actual παρ᾽ ὑπόνοιαν joke.

To credit Symmachus with a terminological change from παρ' ὑπόνοιαν to παρὰ προσδοκίαν would seem unwise, and not just because what little we know about Symmachus points to a scholar with some literary acumen. More crucially, if the responsibility was already Symmachus', we should expect παρὰ προσδοκίαν notes to be spread more widely since Symmachus' commentaries on Aristophanes, written in the second century CE, were influential enough to supersede even the monumental earlier work by Didymus Chalcenterus.[20] With Phaeinus, by contrast, the situation is different. By his (uncertain, but post-Symmachean) time, most of the παρ' ὑπόνοιαν jokes that are annotated as such in the extant scholia will already have been picked up, with only few pertinent cases left to be added.[21] For these, someone like Phaeinus, whose compilation was probably meant to address the more basic instructional needs of a later age, could well have introduced the παρὰ προσδοκίαν terminology that was familiar from rhetorical teaching. Uncertain though it is, such a scenario would thus account, on the one hand, for the fact that παρὰ προσδοκίαν notes are common enough to suggest their origin in a *relatively* prominent source of the Aristophanic scholia, and on the other hand also for their numerical and (on average) qualitative inferiority as compared to the παρ' ὑπόνοιαν notes. More confidently, meanwhile, we may retain that the more traditional critical term in comic scholarship,[22] and the one most likely used already by Aristophanes' Alexandrian commentators, will have been παρὰ (τὴν) ὑπόνοιαν, with παρὰ προσδοκίαν intruding secondarily from the teaching and analysis of rhetoric.

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20 On Symmachus, Phaeinus, and their place in ancient Aristophanic scholarship, see e.g. White 1914, xlix–liii, lxviii–lxix; Boudreaux 1919, 144–164; Montana 2003; Montana 2015; Willi, forthcoming b.

21 The case of Σ^RV Ar. *Pax* 363a is telling if read alongside Σ^V Ar. *Pax* 363d. The latter note contains considerable learning, of the type that is usually associated with Didymus (cf. the references to Theopompus [*FGrHist* 115 F 111, corr. for Θεόφραστος], Callimachus [fr. 607 Pfeiffer], and Leander [*FGrHist* 492 F 15]), but it starts with the surprisingly naive remark οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως φησὶν οὐδὲν πονηρὸν ποιεῖν ταῦτα εἶναι, ἅπερ καὶ Κιλλικῶν, "I do not know how he can say that doing what Cillicon did is doing nothing bad", which misses the joke.

22 But not just comic scholarship: παρ' ὑπόνοιαν is also used in the scholia on non-comic authors, including orators (cf. Σ Aeschin. 1.18 [41b Dilts]; Σ Aeschin. 3.100 [220 Dilts]; Σ Aeschin. 3.187 [427 Dilts]; Σ Aesch. *Cho.* 95; Σ Dem. 18.237; Σ Dem. 18.239b; Σ^bT Hom. *Il.* 2.359; Σ^bT Hom. *Il.* 4.127b; Σ Lucian. 77.10.2; Σ Pl. *Grg.* 473b), more commonly in fact than παρὰ προσδοκίαν (although audience "expectation" is a concept with which ancient critics freely operate: see Nünlist 2009, esp. 149–151). The remarks on scholiastic παρὰ προσδοκίαν by Kanellakis 2020a, 31 n. 91 are misleading because he does not differentiate between scholia where παρὰ προσδοκίαν is used in a technical sense and others; for the former see only Σ Dem. 1.27a/b; Σ Dem. 1.29; Σ Dem. 4.15, as well as Epicharmus fr. 98.50.

3 Other formulations: ἀντὶ τοῦ and δέον εἰπεῖν

In addition to the two designations discussed so far, numerous scholia use fur-
ther, less specific, ways of referring to παρ’ ὑπόνοιαν jokes. In such cases we most
commonly read either ἀντὶ τοῦ or δέον εἰπεῖν (each with variants),[23] as in the fol-
lowing examples:

> Φι.   ὦ Κέκροψ ἥρως ἄναξ, τὰ πρὸς ποδῶν Δρακοντίδη,
>   περιορᾷς οὕτω μ’ ὑπ’ ἀνδρῶν βαρβάρων χειρούμενον,
>   οὓς ἐγὼ ’δίδαξα κλάειν τέτταρ’ εἰς τὴν χοίνικα;
>
>   Ar. *Vesp.* 438–440

(Philocleon) O lord and hero Cecrops, Dracontides as far as the parts by your feet are con-
cerned, will you quietly watch how I am wronged by barbarian men whom I have taught
how to — cry in full measure?

> Σ Ar. *Vesp.* 440a οὓς ἐγὼ ’δίδαξα: μήποτε καὶ τοῦτο παροιμιακόν. ἀντὶ δὲ τοῦ εἰπεῖν “πέττειν
> καὶ διαρτίζειν” “κλάειν” εἶπεν. VΓ

Whom I have taught: Possibly this too [sc. “do such-and-such τέτταρ’ εἰς τὴν χοίνικα?”] is
an idiomatic expression. But instead of “how to bake and make bread” he said “cry”.

> Πε.   Τηρεὺς γὰρ εἶ σύ; πότερον ὄρνις ἢ ταῶς;
>
>   Ar. *Av.* 102

(Peisetaerus) So you are Tereus? A bird or — a peacock?

> Σ Ar. *Av.* 102a[24] πότερον VΓ ὄρνις VEΓ ἢ ταώς VE: ἔπαιξε· δέον γὰρ εἰπεῖν “ἄνθρωπος”
> VEΓMLh εἶπεν “ἢ ταώς”. ὀξύνεται δὲ καὶ περισπᾶται. VEΓM

A bird or a peacock: He made a joke, for when he should have said “<or> a man” he actually
said “or a peacock”. <ταώς> has an acute or a circumflex accent.

The problem with this type of παρ’ ὑπόνοιαν notes is that the same phrasing is
also applied when there can be no question of παρ’ ὑπόνοιαν humour. Thus, ἀντὶ

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23 Such as ἀντὶ τοῦ εἰπεῖν (Σ^{REΓ3} Ar. *Ach.* 1060a; Σ^R Ar. *Thesm.* 746 etc.), ἔδει εἰπεῖν (Σ^{REΓLh} Ar.
Ach. 756; Σ^{RVΓLh} Ar. *Pax* 637b etc.), or the slightly paradoxical βούλεται λέγειν, “he wants to say”,
of Σ^{VEΓ2θ} Ar. *Eq.* 49a. A further type is ὡσεὶ ἔλεγε/ἔφη/εἶπεν, as at Σ^{RVΓ/VΓLh} Ar. *Pax* 756bα/β (and
cf. Σ^{EΓ3Lh} Ar. *Ach.* 751 and Σ^{RV} Ar. *Pax* 363a quoted above in Section 2 and in n. 19 respectively).
24 Cf. Σ^{VEM} Ar. *Av.* 102d, which further specifies that the surprise effect is achieved by adding,
following disjunctive ἤ, a term for the species (“peacock”) to the term for the genus (“bird”), sc.
in lieu of some kind of an antonym (τὸ γενικὸν εἰπών, εἶτα τὸ εἰδικόν).

τοῦ is a frequent way in which the scholia introduce exegetic paraphrases, but even δέον/ἔδει εἰπεῖν can appear in environments where there is simply a pun[25] or where an annotator thought a different way of putting things might have been more natural:[26]

Σ Ar. *Ran.* 1014a διαδρασιπολίτας ΜΕ: ἀντὶ τοῦ "δειλούς" VΕΘBarb(Ald)

Run-away citizens: Instead of "cowards".

Σ Ar. *Αν.* 69 ἀλλὰ σὺ RV τί θηρίον ποτ' εἶ RVΕΓ: δέον εἰπεῖν "ὄρνεον" πρὸς τὸ τεραστικὸν τοῦ σώματος "θηρίον" εἶπεν. RVΕΓMLh

But you, what kind of animal are you?: When he should have said "bird", he said "animal" with a view to the strange appearance of his [sc. the Hoopoe Servant's] body.

As a result, although in most instances it is clear whether or not a comment of this sort identifies a παρ' ὑπόνοιαν joke, there can be some ambiguity. If, for example, δέον εἰπεῖν in Σ^V Ar. *Vesp.* 511c is taken to imply a παρ' ὑπόνοιαν joke, this entails that the commentator who is responsible for the phrasing failed to notice that πνίγω, "stew", is just as much a culinary verb as ἕψω, "cook", is (cf. the glossing of πεπνιγμένον as ὀπτημένον, "roasted", and ἡψημένον, "cooked", in Σ$^{R/V}$ Ar. *Vesp.* 511a/b respectively); whereas if he used δέον εἰπεῖν more freely, and meant only that the less specific ἕψω could also have done the job *under normal circumstances* (i.e. when no καθ' ὁμωνυμίαν joke on the double meaning of πνίγω as "stewing (food)" or "grilling (someone in court)" was to be introduced), no such oversight needs to be imputed on him:

Φι. οὐδὲ χαίρω βατίσιν οὐδ' ἐγχέλεσιν, ἀλλ' ἥδιον ἂν
     δικίδιον σμικρὸν φάγοιμ' ἂν ἐν λοπάδι πεπνιγμένον.

<div align="right">Ar. *Vesp.* 510–511</div>

(Philocleon) Also, I don't like rays and eels, but would rather eat a little lawsuit stewed in a pan.

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25 See e.g. Σ$^{VEΓΘ/RM}$ Ar. *Eq.* 59a/b; Σ^{VΓLh} Ar. *Pax* 415b; Σ^{RVΓ} Ar. *Pax* 756f (where the manuscripts R and V — followed by Olson 1998, 37 and Wilson 2007, 315 — have ἐλιχμῶντο in the text, but our scholion and some later manuscripts point to a *varia lectio* ἐλιχνῶντο punning on λίχνος, "gluttonous"; this issue is separate from the παρ' ὑπόνοιαν joke in the same line, as picked up by Σ$^{RVΓ/VΓLh}$ Ar. *Pax* 756bα/β: cf. n. 23).

26 For whatever reason: in Σ^{RVEΓM} Ar. *Αν.* 1108, whoever annotated δέον εἰπεῖν "καὶ λεπίσουσι" against κἀκλέψουσι, "and they will hatch", may simply have overlooked that ἐκλέπω was a standard word for "hatching" in Classical Greek.

Σ Ar. *Vesp.* 511c πεπνιγμένον: δέον εἰπεῖν "ἡψημένον" φησὶ "πεπνιγμένον" ἀπὸ τοῦ συμβαίνοντος ὑπὸ τῶν δικαστῶν τοῖς δικαζομένοις. V

Stewed: When he should have said "cooked", he said "stewed" because of what happens to the accused at the hands of the judges.

4 "Prospective" vs. "retrospective" παρ' ὑπόνοιαν humour

Even leaving aside ambiguous cases like the one just cited, when the scholia are diagnosing παρ' ὑπόνοιαν humour, they can be looking at a variety of different phenomena.

Firstly, it makes sense to differentiate between what may be called *prospective* and *retrospective* παρ' ὑπόνοιαν jokes, respectively. In both of these, "the semantic value of the second part of a structure (word, phrase, or sentence) contradicts the semantic value of the first part, motivating the reader/listener to reframe, i.e. to reinterpret the first part in the direction of the latter part".[27] However, only "prospective" παρ' ὑπόνοιαν jokes are jokes "against expectation" in the strict sense, as they consist of sequences in which the audience is *primed* to expect a particular continuation of a given utterance — whether in terms of a specific wording or just of general content — only to be surprised by what is then actually said (which may even be the exact opposite of what was expected).[28] The priming itself is usually achieved by wider contextual cues, although in the case of a well-known idiom or quotation being modified the correctly quoted beginning of the sequence in question may suffice. In Ar. *Ach.* 119, for example, it is conceivable that the mere ὦ θερμόβουλον at the start of the line was sufficient on its own for the audience to recognise the Euripidean model verse and hence to expect σπλάγχνον as the next word — rather than the actual πρωκτόν (cf. Section 2, with Σ^REΓLh Ar. *Ach.* 119).

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27 Kanellakis 2020a, 34. This formulation implicitly marginalises purely *stylistic* discontinuity, disruption, and *aprosdoketon*, just as the scholia do in their approach to verbal humour (cf. Section 1), although it is of course a common enough phenomenon in Aristophanes (cf. e.g. Silk 2000, 136–137; Napolitano 2007, 46–47, 49–52).
28 Thus κεκλείσεται, "[the door] will be closed", for expected ἀνεῳχθήσεται, "will be open", at Ar. *Lys.* 1071 (with Σ^R Ar. *Lys.* 1071b; cf. Section 2); similarly, Σ^R Ar. *Lys.* 1057 treats μηκέτ' ἀποδῷ, "shall not pay back", in Ar. *Lys.* 1057 as a παρ' ὑπόνοιαν joke for ἀποδῷ.

Several more of the examples already adduced unmistakably belong to this prospective type of παρ᾽ ὑπόνοιαν (cf. Section 2 with Ar. *Ach.* 255 and Ar. *Plut.* 27, Section 3 with Ar. *Vesp.* 440 and Ar. *Av.* 102), and so do the following two instances from *Wasps* and *Lysistrata*. As the scholia on the lines in question point out, in Ar. *Vesp.* 238, where the Chorus reminisce about their youthful exploits on campaign abroad, the listeners expect greater achievements than stealing a piece of bakery equipment, and in Ar. *Lys.* 114, where Calonice is declaring her readiness to support Lysistrata's plan come what may, something like "even if I had to fight" (not: "drink") would be contextually warranted.[29] At the same time, the *Wasps* example shows that the scholiasts acknowledged the possibility of general rather than specific priming and allowed for παρ᾽ ὑπόνοιαν diagnoses that have scope over an entire line or more, not just one or two words:[30]

> Χο. πάρεσθ᾽ ὃ δὴ λοιπόν γ᾽ ἔτ᾽ ἐστίν, ἀππαπαῖ παπαιάξ,
>   ἥβης ἐκείνης, ἡνίκ᾽ ἐν Βυζαντίῳ ξυνῆμεν
>   φρουροῦντ᾽ ἐγώ τε καὶ σύ· κᾆτα περιπατοῦντε νύκτωρ
>   τῆς ἀρτοπώλιδος λαθόντ᾽ ἐκλέψαμεν τὸν ὅλμον…
>
> <div align="right">Ar. Vesp. 235–238</div>

(Chorus) We've got here all that's left, aiai, oioi, of that youthfulness of ours when we were together on sentry-duty at Byzantium, I and you: and then, patrolling at night — we got away with stealing the baker's mortar…

Σ Ar. *Vesp.* 238a τῆς ἀρτοπώλιδος: παρ᾽ ὑπόνοιαν τοῦτο δέον εἰπεῖν "τοὺς πολεμίους ἐχειρωσάμεθα" ἢ "λόχον τινὰ ἐποιήσαμεν". VAld

The baker's: This <line> is against expectation, as they should have said <something like> "we overpowered the enemy" or "we organised an ambush".

> Λυ. ἐθέλοιτ᾽ ἂν οὖν, εἰ μηχανὴν εὕροιμ᾽ ἐγώ,
>   μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ καταλῦσαι τὸν πόλεμον;
> Κα.   νὴ τὼ θεώ,
>   ἐγὼ μὲν ἄν, κἂν εἴ με χρείη τοὔγκυκλον
>   τουτὶ καταθεῖσαν ἐκπιεῖν αὐθημερόν.
>
> <div align="right">Ar. Lys. 111–114</div>

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29 The alternative proposed by Σ[Bar] Ar. *Lys.* 114α (παρ᾽ ὑπόνοιαν ἀντὶ τοῦ εἰπεῖν "ἀμπέχεσθαι") does not fit semantically; why should anyone "expect" Calonice to say "even if I had to put on this dress of mine"? However, Aristophanes' joke also contains a "retrospective" element (cf. below) in that the audience only realise once ἐκπιεῖν is said that καταθεῖσαν was to be understood, καθ᾽ ὁμωνυμίαν, as "put down for payment" rather than literal "put down (in order to be free in my movements)".

30 With the lemma τῆς ἀρτοπώλιδος, the scholion only cites the first words of the line, but that is standard practice when larger stretches are meant.

(Lysistrata) So, would you be ready, if I found a way of doing it, to put an end to the war together with me? — (Calonice) By the two goddesses, yes, I would, even if I had to put down this dress of mine and then — drink it all on this very day!

Σ Ar. *Lys.* 114β παρ' ὑπόνοιαν. δέον εἰπεῖν "μάχεσθαι", "ἐκπιεῖν" εἶπεν. R

Against expectation: when she should have said "fight", she said "drink it all".

In "retrospective" παρ' ὑπόνοιαν jokes, by contrast, the humour arises not so much from the audience having been primed in advance to expect a continuation other than the one that is eventually uttered, as from the audience realising, *after* some X has been said, that Y would have yielded a more "normal/logical" (hence *in hindsight* more "expected") utterance in the wider context. Unsurprisingly, it is in this domain in particular that παρ' ὑπόνοιαν humour can overlap with punning,[31] but it should be stressed that typical παρ' ὑπόνοιαν jokes do not require phonological similarity in the way puns do (see further Section 5).

To give an example, in Ar. *Nub.* 833–837 Strepsiades wants to act as an apologist of the Socratics' way of life, and in that context he makes reference to the philosophers' neglect of personal hygiene, a point that could indeed be regarded as something positive if it were attributed to asceticism or the like, but not if the negative aspects of φειδωλία ("stinginess" rather than "thrift") are understood to be its motive. Here, then, there can be no question of the audience already *expecting* (e.g.) ὑπὸ καρτερίας when they do not even know yet what Strepsiades is going to talk about; but once he has finished, it is at least arguable[32] that the phrase ὑπὸ τῆς φειδωλίας jars with the laudatory aims of the proposition:

Στ.   εὐστόμει
    καὶ μηδὲν εἴπῃς φλαῦρον ἄνδρας δεξιοὺς
    καὶ νοῦν ἔχοντας, ὧν ὑπὸ τῆς φειδωλίας
    ἀπεκείρατ' οὐδεὶς πώποτ' οὐδ' ἠλείψατο
    οὐδ' εἰς βαλανεῖον ἦλθε λουσόμενος...
                         Ar. *Nub.* 833–837

(Strepsiades) Hold your tongue and don't speak ill of clever, intelligent men, of whom – because of their thrift — not one has ever had his hair cut, or anointed his skin, or gone to the bath to wash...

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31 And also parody: cf. again the case of Ar. *Ach.* 119 mentioned above, on the assumption that ὦ θερμόβουλον alone was not a sufficient prime on its own.

32 But not more than that: since for someone with Strepsiades' mindset φειδωλία is indeed something positive, the παρ' ὑπόνοιαν reading advocated by the scholion must not be taken for granted. See Section 7 for further examples of scholia not paying enough attention to intradramatic logic in diagnosing παρ' ὑπόνοιαν humour.

Σ Ar. *Nub.* 835c δοκῶν ἐπαινεῖν ψέγει. RVENp ἀντὶ γὰρ τοῦ εἰπεῖν "καρτερίας" εἶπε "φειδωλίας". RVE

While he thinks he is praising them, he criticises them; for instead of saying "<out of> self-control", he said "<out of> stinginess".

It may be noted that in this case the phrasing with ἀντὶ τοῦ is chosen, and the label παρ' ὑπόνοιαν is not used. In fact, it is possible that the application of the phrases ἀντὶ τοῦ and, especially, δέον εἰπεῖν to παρ' ὑπόνοιαν humour originates precisely with such retrospective instances. Yet, counter-examples also exist, both with ἀντὶ τοῦ/δέον εἰπεῖν referring to prospective παρ' ὑπόνοιαν jokes (cf. Section 3 above, with Σ^{VT} Ar. *Vesp.* 440a and Σ^{VEΓMLh} Ar. *Av.* 102a) and with παρ' ὑπόνοιαν diagnoses affecting retrospective ones. For the latter, compare for instance Ar. *Vesp.* 1167, where the paradoxicality of Philocleon's complaint only becomes obvious once the line is complete, or Ar. *Ran.* 1005, where the Chorus' qualification of tragic poetry as λῆρος, "babbling", contradicts the deferential tone with which they are otherwise addressing Aeschylus:[33]

Βδ.   οὐκ ἔστι παρὰ ταῦτ' ἄλλα.
Φι.   κακοδαίμων ἐγώ,
        ὅστις ἐπὶ γήρᾳ χίμετλον οὐδὲν λήψομαι.
                                                Ar. *Vesp.* 1166–1167

(Bdelycleon) There's no way around this! — (Philocleon) Poor me, in my old age I will not get a single chillblain!

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33 On the difficult interpretation of the passage, see e.g. Dover 1993, 317–318; Beta 2004, 168–169; in theory, λῆρος might refer only to *pre*-Aeschylean tragedy, which then got better thanks to Aeschylus, but the scholia undoubtedly see "λῆρον as referring […] to the art of tragedy as a whole" because only then is there a form of παρ' ὑπόνοιαν (or, in Dover's words, "a somewhat alien note [in] the play"; cf. also Σ^{RVEM} Ar. *Nub.* 359b on λήρων/λόγων). For further retrospective examples with the label παρ' ὑπόνοιαν, see e.g. Σ^{REΓ3} Ar. *Ach.* 18a (adding δέον γὰρ εἰπεῖν; but cf. Kanellakis 2020a, 41); Σ^{REΓLh} Ar. *Ach.* 756 (+ ἔδει γὰρ εἰπεῖν; but cf. Kanellakis 2020a, 54); Σ^{VEΓΘM} Ar. *Eq.* 167b (+ δέον εἰπεῖν); Σ^{RVEΘNMA} Ar. *Nub.* 1261b (+ δέον εἰπεῖν); Σ^{VAld} Ar. *Vesp.* 19a (παρ' ὑπόνοιαν combined with a καθ' ὁμωνυμίαν joke on ἀσπίς, "shield/asp viper"); Σ^{RVEΓT2} Ar. *Av.* 38a; Σ^{RVEΘNBarbLutRsAld} Ar. *Plut.* 972a; for ones with other formulations e.g. Σ^{REΓLh} Ar. *Ach.* 81a (ἀντὶ τοῦ εἰπεῖν; disputed by Kanellakis 2020a, 73–74 because of its retrospective nature); Σ^{REΓ3} Ar. *Ach.* 1082a (ἀντὶ τοῦ εἰπεῖν); Σ^{VEΓ3Θ} Ar. *Eq.* 539a (ἀντὶ τοῦ); Σ^{VEΓΘMLh} Ar. *Eq.* 905 (ἀντὶ τοῦ εἰπεῖν); Σ^{REΘMatr} Ar. *Nub.* 37aα (ὡς εἰ ἔλεγε); Σ^{VTAld} Ar. *Vesp.* 1187b (δέον εἰπεῖν); Σ^{RVEΓMLh} Ar. *Av.* 1288 (δέον εἰπεῖν); Σ^{RVEΓMLh} Ar. *Av.* 1628a (δέον εἰπεῖν; a prospective reading is also possible since a question containing δοκεῖ σοι (*vel sim.*) is expected already before paradoxical οἰμώζειν opens the phrase οἰμώζειν δοκεῖ σοι;).

Σ Ar. *Vesp.* 1167b παρ' ὑπόνοιαν ἀντὶ τοῦ εἰπεῖν "ἀγαθὸν οὐδὲν λήψομαι, ὅστις τὰ τῶν γερόντων οὐ λήψομαι". VΓAld

Against expectation, instead of saying "I will not get anything good as I will not get what old men should".

Χο.   ἀλλ' ὦ πρῶτος τῶν Ἑλλήνων πυργώσας ῥήματα σεμνὰ
        καὶ κοσμήσας τραγικὸν λῆρον, θαρρῶν τὸν κρουνὸν ἀφίει.

                                                          Ar. *Ran.* 1004–1005

But you, who were the first of the Greeks to build impressive words like towers and to adorn tragic babbling, be confident and let your spring flow.

Σ Ar. *Ran.* 1005a καὶ κοσμήσας M τραγικὸν λῆρον VME: παρ' ὑπόνοιαν. VMEΘBarb(Ald) — 1005c λῆρον R: ἀντὶ τοῦ "τὴν τέχνην". RVMEΘBarb(Ald)

1005a *Adorning tragic babbling*: Against expectation. — 1005c *Babbling*: Instead of "the art".

That prospective and retrospective παρ' ὑπόνοιαν humour are not strictly kept apart is all the more understandable because they sometimes shade into each other. With regard to Ar. *Ran.* 1005, for example, one could say that the hymnic tone of the preceding words makes us expect a continuation in the same register; so, although we are not primed to hear τέχνην or any other semantically predictable phrase *per se*, there *is* enough priming *not* to expect λῆρον. Similarly, in Ar. *Eq.* 1034 the Sausage-Seller is reciting one of his (mock-)oracles warning Demos of a dog who will sneak into the kitchen by night and lick out all the pans and — islands. Although the verbal form διαλείχων here occurs only at the very end of the relevant line, by the time the audience have heard λήσει σε κυνηδὸν νύκτωρ τὰς λοπάδας they may already be waiting for a verb such as "eat out, empty", and any further direct object added to λοπάδας by means of καί should therefore refer to "pots" or the like, thus creating a prospective expectation which is disappointed by the lexeme νήσους. However, since καὶ νήσους is a mere add-on, without syntactical necessity, its insertion at the same time produces retrospective surprise:

Ἀλ.   εἰσφοιτῶν τ' εἰς τοὐπτάνιον λήσει σε κυνηδὸν
        νύκτωρ τὰς λοπάδας καὶ τὰς νήσους διαλείχων.

                                                          Ar. *Eq.* 1033–1034

(Sausage-Seller) Going into the kitchen without you noticing he will, like a dog, lick clean by night the pans and the islands.

Σ Ar. *Eq.* 1034c καὶ τὰς νήσους διαλείχων: ὅτι ἀντὶ τοῦ εἰπεῖν "τὰς χύτρας" παρ' ὑπόνοιαν εἶπε "τὰς νήσους"· τουτέστι τοὺς τῆς πόλεως φόρους διαρπάζων καὶ τοὺς νησιώτας διασείων. VEΓΘΜ

And licking clean the islands: <To note> that he said "the islands" against expectation, instead of "the pots"; that is, robbing the tributes paid to the city and extorting money from the islanders.

5 Παρ' ὑπόνοιαν and punning/καθ' ὁμωνυμίαν humour

Secondly, as has already been noted (Section 4), there is some overlap between (especially, though not necessarily, retrospective) παρ' ὑπόνοιαν humour and punning (paronomasia). When a pun occurs, the audience are also meant to think of the word that is substituted by the pun as the one that was in certain ways "expected". If one were to adopt a broad concept of παρ' ὑπόνοιαν, puns could therefore be subsumed under this umbrella term, invoking the authority of Aristotle who, in his *Rhetoric* (3.11, 1412a 26–31), directly compared ἐν τοῖς γελοίοις τὰ παραπεποιημένα, "altered expressions in jokes", with τὰ παρὰ γράμμα σκώμματα, "derision by change of letter", because they both "cheat [sc. expectation]" (ἐξαπατᾷ γάρ).[34] In practice, however, the specificity of punning, which presupposes phonological similarity, is such that παρ' ὑπόνοιαν is better reserved for counter-expectational jokes that are independent of phonological conditioning. By and large, this restriction of the term (or of its competitor παρὰ προσδοκίαν)[35] does seem to be observed in the scholia, but every now and then an exception occurs. One case, Σ^EΓ3Lh Ar. *Ach.* 751 (with παρὰ προσδοκίαν), has been discussed before (Section 2), and another is encountered in the following scholion on

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34 Note that Aristotle speaks of neither παρὰ προσδοκίαν nor παρ' ὑπόνοιαν here; cf. n. 10 above, also on the *Tractatus Coislinianus*. Filippo 2001–2002, 128–138 includes a large number of puns in her survey of Aristophanic *aprosdoketon*.

35 In contrast with the vaguer ἀντὶ τοῦ and δέον εἰπεῖν; see Section 3. Whether e.g. the line annotated by Σ^VΓLh Ar. *Pax* 728a (ἐστυκότες Γ: ἔδει εἰπεῖν "ἑστῶτες", "*Having an erection:* He should have said 'standing'") is thought of as primarily containing a pun or a (retrospective) παρ' ὑπόνοιαν joke is therefore difficult to tell. In Σ^RVMEΘ Ar. *Ran.* 418a, the wording οὐκ ἔφυσε φράτερας, "he had not yet grown kinsmen", is presented like a παρ' ὑπόνοιαν joke (ἀντὶ τοῦ εἰπεῖν "ὀδόντας", "συγγενεῖς" εἶπεν, "Instead of saying 'teeth', he said 'relatives'"; cf. later Σ^Tz. Ar. *Ran.* 418a, τὸ σχῆμα παρ' ὑπόνοιαν), but the fuller version in *Suda* φ 692 reveals that the source commentary did acknowledge the pun on φράτερας ~ φραστῆρας, "second teeth".

Clouds, where the commentator wants to find a punning link between καταπεφρόντικα and "expected" καταπεφρόνηκα:[36]

> Φε. διὰ ταῦτα δὴ καὶ θοἰμάτιον ἀπώλεσας;
> Στ. ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀπολώλεκ', ἀλλὰ καταπεφρόντικα.
>
> Ar. *Nub.* 856–857

(Pheidippides) So because of that you lost your upper garment? — (Strepsiades) I have not lost it, I have thought it off.

> Σ Ar. *Nub.* 857αβ παρ' ὑπόνοιαν ἀντὶ τοῦ "καταπεφρόνηκα" ὑπὸ φιλοσοφίας "εἰς τοὺς φροντιστὰς ἠνάλωσα" λέγων. Rs

Against expectation since, instead of "I think nothing of it" (because of philosophical training), he is saying "I spent it on the thinkers".

Moreover, in view of the close connection between punning and καθ' ὁμωνυμίαν jokes, it is unsurprising if we find the occasional slip of this kind also when dealing with the latter type of humour, as in the following brief note on a double entendre in *Lysistrata*:[37]

> Κι. ἄνθρωπος ἐπιτρίψει με διὰ τὰ στρώματα.
> Μυ. ἔπαιρε σαυτόν.
> Κι.   ἀλλ' ἐπῆρται τουτογί.
>
> Ar. *Lys.* 936–937

(Cinesias) This woman will finish me off with her bedding! — (Myrrhine) Get yourself up! — (Cinesias) But this one here *is* up!

> Σ Ar. *Lys.* 937 ἀλλ' ἐπῆρται τοῦτό γε Γ: τὸ αἰδοῖον δείκνυσιν. παρ' ὑπόνοιαν δὲ ἀπήντησεν. ΡΓ

But this one is up: He is pointing to his penis. The reply is against expectation.

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36 Whether the suspected pun on καταφρονεῖν is intended in Ar. *Nub.* 857 is of little relevance. For yet another example, see Σ[ME(Ald)] Ar. *Ran.* 85c (punning on μακάρων/Μακεδόνων).

37 Cf. also Σ[RVMEΘBarb(Ald)] Ar. *Ran.* 547–548, but it is most uncertain if the author of this note thought of χοροί in ἐξέκοψε τοὺς χοροὺς τοὺς προσθίους, "he punched out my front rows", as polysemous ("rows [of teeth]" vs. "choruses") when he wrote παρὰ τὴν ὑπόνοιαν; the situation may well be similar to the case of Ar. *Vesp.* 189, where modern commentators assume that κλητήρ meant both "donkey" and "summons-witness" (see MacDowell 1971, 157; Biles/Olson 2015, 147), but where it would be rash to decry the misconstruction of a καθ' ὁμωνυμίαν joke as a παρ' ὑπόνοιαν joke in Σ[V] Ar. *Vesp.* 189b (ἀντὶ τοῦ "ὄνου" ἢ "ἡμιόνου" "κλητῆρος" εἶπεν, "He said 'summons-witness' instead of 'donkey' or 'mule'") when the evidence for the "donkey" meaning is so tenuous (consisting mainly of Ar. *Vesp.* 1310).

6 Other extended usages

Thirdly, the scholia repeatedly diagnose παρ' ὑπόνοιαν humour in passages where there can be no question of failed (even just retrospective) "expectation". In Ar. *Ran.* 75, for example, the audience may be surprised when Dionysus suddenly has second thoughts about whether it is really a good thing that Sophocles' son Iophon is still alive; but it requires a very broad concept of παρ' ὑπόνοιαν to let it encompass any turn of direction in a comic utterance:

> Ἡρ. τί δ'; οὐκ Ἰοφῶν ζῇ;
> Δι.   τοῦτο γάρ τοι καὶ μόνον
>   ἔτ' ἐστὶ λοιπὸν ἀγαθόν, εἰ καὶ τοῦτ' ἄρα·
>   οὐ γὰρ σάφ' οἶδ' οὐδ' αὐτὸ τοῦθ' ὅπως ἔχει.
>
> > Ar. *Ran.* 73–75

> (Heracles) So what, isn't Iophon still alive? — (Dionysus) That's really the only good thing that's left — *if* it's one; because I am not entirely sure how things are in that respect.

> Σ Ar. *Ran.* 75a ἐπαινέσας αὐτὸν ὁ Ἀριστοφάνης, ὅτι "τοῦτο <…> καὶ μόνον <…> ἐστὶ λοιπὸν ἀγαθόν", παρελθὼν ἔψεξεν αὐτόν. V — 75b παρ' ὑπόνοιαν. ΜΘBarb

> 75a Having first praised him [sc. Iophon] <by saying> "That's the only good thing that's left", Aristophanes finds fault with him in passing. — 75b Against expectation.

Similarly, the Chorus' opening of the antode in the *agon* of *Frogs* with a quotation from Aeschylus' *Myrmidons* (Ar. *Ran.* 992 = Aesch. fr. 131.1 Radt) may be "unexpected" and "surprising" in a general sense when they seemingly address Aeschylus as φαίδιμ' Ἀχιλλεῦ, "splendid Achilles" — but so are countless other lines in Aristophanic comedy since the entire genre hinges on unpredictability;[38] and when we are dealing with a striking metaphor (as in Ar. *Vesp.* 479)[39] or a quipping completion of a first speaker's sentence by a second speaker (as in Ar. *Plut.* 180),[40]

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38 Cf. further the equally doubtful examples in Σ^REΓ Ar. *Ach.* 1173a (not listed in Kanellakis 2020a, 202); Σ^V/M Ar. *Eq.* 984a/c; Σ^VAld Ar. *Vesp.* 6a; Σ^R Ar. *Av.* 395b; Σ^RVMEΘBarb Ar. *Ran.* 308f (on (ὑπερ)επυρρίασέ σου, "became redder than you": cf. Section 8, n. 57); Σ^RVEΘ Ar. *Ran.* 1466b (cf. Section 8, n. 48); Σ^RM Ar. *Plut.* 287a (not listed in Kanellakis 2020a, 206–207).
39 Or also Σ^RVEΘNBarbAld Ar. *Plut.* 839g and Σ^RMEΘNBarbLutAld Ar. *Plut.* 1096e (both not listed in Kanellakis 2020a, 206–207); in the latter case the scholiast's claim that τῷ μειρακίῳ replaces "expected" πέτρᾳ is misguided also because the sentence would be elliptical if it contained (only) πέτρᾳ.
40 In this instance, it is of course true that the build-up has primed the audience to expect Carion to continue with οὐχὶ διὰ τοῦτον; *vel sim.*, as in Ar. *Plut.* 171, 174, 176 (cf. Kanellakis 2020a,

the scholiasts' use of παρ᾽ ὑπόνοιαν terminology is equally generous — even though, in these latter cases, it is at least possible to guess with some confidence what the utterance might have looked like if there had been *no* stylistic intervention or humorous disruption (and the respective scholia indeed venture to make such guesses):[41]

Χο.   τάδε μὲν λεύσσεις, φαίδιμ᾽ Ἀχιλλεῦ;
        σὺ δὲ τί, φέρε, πρὸς ταῦτα λέξεις;

<div align="right">Ar. <i>Ran.</i> 992–993a</div>

(Chorus) Do you behold this, splendid Achilleus? Now you, come on, what will you reply to this?

Σ Ar. *Ran.* 992a/b τάδε Ε μὲν λεύσσεις, RME φαίδιμ᾽ Ε: πρὸς τὸν Αἰσχύλον λέγει ὁ χορὸς ἀπὸ τῶν αὑτοῦ· ἔστι δὲ ἀρχὴ αὕτη Μυρμιδόνων Αἰσχύλου. RVMEΘBarb(Ald) τοῦτο δὲ παρὰ τὴν ὑπόνοιαν. RVMEΘ

Do you behold this, splendid...: The Chorus are addressing Aeschylus with some of his own words; for this is the beginning of Aeschylus' *Myrmidons*. This is against the expectation.

Βδ.   νὴ Δί᾽ ἦ μοι κρεῖττον ἐκστῆναι τὸ παράπαν τοῦ πατρὸς
        μᾶλλον ἢ κακοῖς τοσούτοις ναυμαχεῖν ὁσημέραι.

<div align="right">Ar. <i>Vesp.</i> 478–479</div>

(Bdelycleon) By Zeus, it's better for me to renounce my father once and for all, rather than fight at sea against such big problems every day.

Σ Ar. *Vesp.* 479a ναυμαχεῖν: δέον εἰπεῖν "μάχεσθαι". VΓ²LhAld

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39–40); but since Carion simply does not get a chance to go on, the interruption by Chremylus still constitutes a phenomenon of a different kind (and, *pace* Rutherford 1905, 450 n. 55, it must be an interruption even in the scholiasts' eyes: cf. the wording οὐκ εἴασε εἰπεῖν). Contrast e.g. Ar. *Vesp.* 1226–1227, where Philocleon is *supposed* to recite the next line in the skolion, but fails to come up with semantically appropriate content; even so, Ar. *Vesp.* 1227 is not classified as παρ᾽ ὑπόνοιαν in Σ[VΓAld] Ar. *Vesp.* 1227 (which merely notes οὐδὲν δὲ τοῦτο πρὸς τὸ ἐξῆς τοῦ σκολίου, "but this has nothing to do with the continuation of the skolion").

41 This is not to say that the scholia *always* specify what would have been the "expected" wording when their παρ᾽ ὑπόνοιαν analysis is appropriate: cf. e.g. Σ[RVEΓ2M] Ar. *Av.* 876d on the vocative μῆτερ Κλεοκρίτου, "mother of Cleocritus!", following the address to δέσποινα Κυβέλη, "Mistress Cybele", in the same line (παρ᾽ ὑπόνοιαν ἐπήγαγεν, "He added <Κλεοκρίτου> against expectation"); since Cybele is the mother goddess *par excellence*, also known as the μεγάλη μήτηρ, "Great Mother" (cf. Ar. *Av.* 874–875), or μήτηρ θεῶν, "mother of the gods" (*Hymn. Hom.* 14.1), Κλεοκρίτου is indeed a surprise substitute for e.g. μεγάλη or θεῶν here (cf. also Section 8, n. 57).

Fight at sea: When he should have said "fight".

Χρ.   Φιλέψιος δ' οὐχ ἕνεκα σοῦ μύθους λέγει;
          ἡ ξυμμαχία δ' οὐ διὰ σὲ τοῖς Αἰγυπτίοις;
          ἐρᾷ δὲ Ναῒς οὐ διὰ σὲ Φιλωνίδου;
Κα.   ὁ Τιμοθέου δὲ πύργος—
Χρ.   ἐμπέσοι γέ σοι.
          τὰ δὲ πράγματ' οὐχὶ διὰ σὲ πάντα πράττεται;

                                        Ar. *Plut.* 177–181

(Chremylus) But Philepsius, doesn't he tell his stories for your sake? The alliance with the
Egyptians, isn't it there because of you? Naïs, doesn't she love Philonides because of you?
— (Carion) The tower of Timotheus… — (Chremylus) …may crash on you! All business deal-
ings, aren't they conducted because of you?

Σ Ar. *Plut.* 180 ἐμπέσοι γέ σοι REAld: (α) παρ' ὑπόνοιαν τὸ "ἐμπέσοι γέ σοι", δέον εἰπεῖν
"θαυμαστὸς καὶ μέγας". REMatrBarbRsV[57]Ald | (β) οὐκ εἴασε εἰπεῖν "διὰ τὸν Πλοῦτον", ἀλλ'
ἐπήγαγε παρ' ὑπόνοιαν "ἐμπέσοι γέ σοι". VMENMatrBarbAld

May crash on you: (α) The phrase "may crash on you" is against expectation, since he should
have said "is wonderful and big". | (β) He did not let him say "because of Wealth", but sup-
plied, against expectation, "may crash on you".

Thus, since the extension of the label to cases of "retrospective" παρ' ὑπόνοιαν
humour — or even puns and the like — had already begun to erode the underlying
concept, it eventually became so bleached for some of its users that they could
treat it as if παρ' ὑπόνοιαν were a generic formula for any kind of textual surprise
effect in comedy.

7 Intra-dramatic vs. real-world expectation

Fourthly and finally, in addition to this tendency of turning παρ' ὑπόνοιαν into
something of a catch-all term, the scholiasts are also guilty of a further analytical
blunder which is no less problematic (although occasionally shared with modern
critics).[42] They repeatedly fail to differentiate between what might be expected in

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42 See the pertinent discussion by e.g. Filippo 2001–2002, 92 and Kanellakis 2020a, 41–48 on
Ar. *Eq.* 296 quoted below. Kanellakis 2020a, 50–53 also gives some examples where modern crit-
ics have mislabelled as *para prosdokian* other figures of speech, in ways that are reminiscent of
the material in Section 6.

the real world and what is "expected" or "logically consistent" within the comic world on stage.

We have already come across one likely example of this issue when discussing the presumed replacement of the phrase ὑπὸ καρτερίας by ὑπὸ φειδωλίας in Ar. *Nub.* 835 (Section 4, with n. 32). The scholion there forgets that this utterance by Strepsiades, however unusual it might be in the mouth of a "normal" person, is perfectly in line with the speaker's general way of thinking.[43] Another, even clearer, illustration of the phenomenon is found in the following exchange in *Knights*, where the Paphlagonian and the Sausage-Seller are trying to outdo (and outshout) each other in terms of how badly behaved or street-wise they can be:

Πα.	διαβαλῶ σ' ἐὰν στρατηγῇς.
Ἀλ.	κυνοκοπήσω σου τὸ νῶτον.
Πα.	περιελῶ σ' ἀλαζονείαις.
Ἀλ.	ὑποτεμοῦμαι τὰς ὁδούς σου.
Πα.	βλέψον εἴς μ' ἀσκαρδάμυκτον.
Ἀλ.	ἐν ἀγορᾷ κἀγὼ τέθραμμαι.
Πα.	διαφορήσω σ' εἴ τι γρύξει.
Ἀλ.	κοπροφορήσω σ' εἰ λακήσει.
Πα.	ὁμολογῶ κλέπτειν· σὺ δ' οὐχί.
Ἀλ.	νὴ τὸν Ἑρμῆν τὸν ἀγοραῖον.
	κἀπιορκῶ γε βλεπόντων.

<div align="right">Ar. Eq. 288–298</div>

(Paphlagonian) I'll discredit you if you become a general! — (Sausage-Seller) I'll beat you like a dog on your back! — (Paphlagonian) I'll round you up with telling rubbish! — (Sausage-Seller) I'll cut off your paths! — (Paphlagonian) Look at me without blinking! — (Sausage-Seller) I've also grown up in the streets! — (Paphlagonian) I'll tear you to pieces if you make one peep! — (Sausage-Seller) I'll toss you on a dung heap if you open your mouth! — (Paphlagonian) I profess to steal; and you don't! — (Sausage-Seller) Yes, of course, by Hermes of the market-place, and then I even deny it on oath when people have seen it all.

In this context, to claim that the Paphlagonian's ὁμολογῶ κλέπτειν is παρ' ὑπόνοιαν does not make sense. In Ar. *Eq.* 296 there is of course no specific (prospective) expectation of what he will say next, but that it proves to be in line with

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43 Contrast Σ^VΓAld Ar. *Vesp.* 449 and Σ^VΓLhAld Ar. *Vesp.* 525a, which establish an explicit connection between two παρ' ὑπόνοιαν instances in lines spoken by Philocleon and his personal character (δεικνὺς τὸ σκληρὸν αὐτοῦ, "showing his harshness", ὑπεμφαίνων τὸ φιλόδικον, "underlining his obsession with lawsuits"). However, in these passages the παρ' ὑπόνοιαν diagnosis remains legitimate because even someone of Philocleon's ilk could be expected to say something different under the given circumstances.

his questionable character is not a (retrospective) surprise either. That the average Athenian would pride himself on other things is neither here nor there:

> Σ Ar. *Eq.* 296 ὁμολογῶ κλέπτειν: τοῦτο παρ᾽ ὑπόνοιαν λέγει, ὡς ἂν εἰ ἔλεγε "σώφρων εἰμὶ καὶ πεπαιδευμένος". ὁ δὲ αὐχεῖ ἐπὶ τῷ κλέπτειν. ἃ κλέπτω, ὀμνύω μὴ κεκλοφέναι, ὅ ἐστιν ὑπερβολὴ ἐπιορκίας. VEΓ³ΘΜ

> *I profess to steal*: He says this against expectation, as if he were saying "I am a good and educated citizen". The other <then> brags with his stealing: What I steal, I swear not to have stolen, which constitutes the epitome of perjury.

In the same vein, one may query whether it is true that the Chorus of *Wasps*, with their half-human, half-insect identity, "should have said τὰς οἰκίας" instead of ἀνθρήνια at Ar. *Vesp.* 1080, when they are remembering how the barbarians came to destroy their homes (see Σ^VΓLhAld Ar. *Vesp.* 1080b, δέον δὲ ἦν εἰπεῖν "τὰς οἰκίας");[44] whether there is anything "unexpected" about Philocleon referring to the new, and for him unfamiliar, Persian cloak he gets from Bdelycleon as a κακόν, when this is so well-aligned with his conservative character (see Σ^VΓ³ Ar. *Vesp.* 1136, παρὰ τὴν ὑπόνοιαν· καινὸν παραλαμβάνει ἱμάτιον); or whether the humour in Euelpides' statement in Ar. *Av.* 27–28, about his and Peisetaerus' wish to "go to the ravens (~ go to hell)" (δεομένους ἐς κόρακας ἐλθεῖν), is adequately captured by again using the label παρ᾽ ὑπόνοιαν (see Σ^Γ² Ar. *Av.* 28b): after all, what this is really about is not any expectation on the part of the audience, which is (retrospectively) "disappointed", but the comic literalisation of an idiomatic expression.[45] Even more extremely, meanwhile, when Chremes' acquaintance in

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44 Echoed by Biles/Olson 2016, 404 ("the word [sc. ἀνθρήνια] is in any case reserved for the end of the line as a *para prosdokian* for 'homes' *vel sim.*"); note that a few lines later the Chorus also refer to the barbarians as being "stung" (Ar. *Vesp.* 1088, κεντούμενοι). In a case like this, or similarly Σ^VΓ³ Ar. *Vesp.* 639 on the Chorus' blissful self-description ἐν μακάρων δικάζειν αὐτὸς ἔδοξα νήσοις, "I thought I was passing judgement on the islands of the blessed" (δέον εἰπεῖν "οἰκεῖν" "δικάζειν" ἔφασαν ὡς φιλόδικοι), Σ^RVEΓMLh Ar. *Av.* 92 on the Hoopoe's order ἄνοιγε τὴν ὕλην, "Open the woods!" (δέον εἰπεῖν "τὴν θύραν"), and Σ Ar. *Eccl.* 683 on Praxagora's announcement to repurpose the allotment machines so that they assign people to a dinner place rather than to a tribunal (δέον εἰπεῖν δικάζειν, εἶπε δειπνεῖν), it would perhaps be possible, if far-fetched, to argue that the formula δέον εἰπεῖν does not simply mean "he/they/she should have said", but rather implies a premise like "Were it not for the comic setting…".

45 See also Section 2 with n. 19 on Σ^RVLh Ar. *Pax* 95, and further e.g. Σ^VEΓΘMLh Ar. *Eq.* 1033a; Σ^RVELh Ar. *Av.* 1173; Σ^R Ar. *Thesm.* 1025 (cf. Kanellakis 2020a, 42–43); Σ^EΘBarb3Ald Ar. *Plut.* 278cα (accepted as retrospective παρ᾽ ὑπόνοιαν by Kanellakis 2020a, 36); Σ^R Ar. *Plut.* 805bβ (with the label παρ᾽ ὑπόνοιαν: but it corresponds to the play's logic for Carion to express surprise at material wealth reaching even people who are not criminal; other scholia here do not talk of παρ᾽ ὑπόνοιαν).

Ecclesiazusae predicts that the Athenians, having voted for the abolition of private property, will soon change their minds again, this indictment of the *demos*' tendency to overturn its own decisions does not even clash with conventional opinion as expressed elsewhere in comedy (cf. Ar. *Ach.* 632, Ἀθηναίους μεταβούλους; Ar. *Eccl.* 586–587; Plato Com. fr. 239),[46] yet is still classified as παρ' ὑπόνοιαν by a commentator (see Σ^R Ar. *Eccl.* 798).[47]

8 Παρ' ὑπόνοιαν humour and interpretation

Given this readiness in the scholia to diagnose παρ' ὑπόνοιαν jokes even when the situation does not really warrant it, it does not come as a big surprise if the commentators sometimes also think of παρ' ὑπόνοιαν explanations when they are facing challenging passages they have difficulty accounting for otherwise.[48] Thus, whereas Ar. *Av.* 16 has been athetised in modern times because the phrase ἐκ τῶν ὀρνέων mirrors the identical verse-end of Ar. *Av.* 13 but does not make sense here, ancient interpreters tried to resolve the issue either by arguing for syntactically and/or semantically contorted readings[49] or by declaring the

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46 As well as outside comedy: see Ussher 1973, 186 and Vetta/Del Corno 1989, 224, especially on Isoc. 8.52.

47 By contrast, some awareness of the contextual conditioning of a παρ' ὑπόνοιαν joke is shown in Σ^ΓLh Ar. *Pax* 708 (on Hermes telling Trygaeus to take Opora as a wife and "beget with her — grapes", ἐκποιοῦ σαυτῷ βότρυς): since Opora is indeed a woman on stage, this nevertheless involves true παρ' ὑπόνοιαν (οὐκ εἶπε τοὺς παῖδας, ἀλλὰ "βότρυς" διὰ τὴν Ὀπώραν, "He did not say 'children', but 'grapes' because of Opora"; cf. Kanellakis 2020a, 38–39).

48 In addition to the examples in the main text, see Σ^RVM9ΓMLh Ar. *Av.* 515a (contrasting with the view expressed in Σ^RVM9ΓM Ar. *Av.* 515b and supported by Dunbar 1995, 350–354), Σ^RVEΘ Ar. *Ran.* 1466b (contrasting with the plausible non-παρ' ὑπόνοιαν reading of Σ^VMEΘ(Ald) Ar. *Ran.* 1466a), or also Σ^RVM9ΓMLh Ar. *Av.* 575a and Σ^RVEΓM Ar. *Av.* 609, where no παρ' ὑπόνοιαν/δέον εἰπεῖν formulation is used, but broadly comparable Aristophanic "errors/misquotations by design" are postulated (Ἶριν instead of Ἥραν, πέντε instead of ἐννέα, cf. Willi, forthcoming a); the suspicion that Aristophanes could deliberately mislead his audience is also attested in Σ^R Ar. *Thesm.* 21a and Σ^VEΘBarb(Ald) Ar. *Ran.* 661 (whereas Σ^V Ar. *Av.* 1047a/cβ may imply an inadvertent blunder by the poet). In Σ^RVE Ar. *Av.* 1654b, the idea that γνησίων in ἀδελφῶν γνησίων, "legitimate brothers", humorously replaces its antonym νόθων is probably due to a simple failure to understand Peisetaerus' (logical: cf. Σ^RVEΓLh Ar. *Av.* 1653b) reasoning; a misunderstanding is also likely in Σ^R Ar. *Vesp.* 231c.

49 By either (a) inserting strong punctuation after ὃς ὄρνις ἐγένετ(ο), and thus reading ἀπέδοτο instead of κἀπέδοτο at the beginning of Ar. *Av.* 17, accepting an unnatural and unnecessary ἐκ τῶν ὀρνέων, "from/at the bird-market", at the start of the new sentence and overlooking that

problematic words to be παρ' ὑπόνοιαν for ἐκ τῶν ἀνθρώπων — apparently without being worried that the resulting "joke" would then be lame in the extreme:[50]

> Πε. ἦ δεινὰ νὼ δέδρακεν οὐκ τῶν ὀρνέων,
> ὁ πινακοπώλης Φιλοκράτης μελαγχολῶν,
> ὃς τώδ' ἔφασκε νῷν φράσειν τὸν Τηρέα,
> [τὸν ἔποφ', ὃς ὄρνις ἐγένετ' ἐκ τῶν ὀρνέων,]
> κἀπέδοτο τὸν μὲν Θαρρελείδου τουτονὶ
> κολοιὸν ὀβολοῦ...
>
> <div align="right">Ar. Av. 13–18</div>

(Peisetaerus) The guy from the bird market has really treated us badly, Philocrates the crazy bird-seller, who said that these two were going to show us Tereus, [the hoopoe, who became a bird from the birds,] and who sold us this jackdaw son of Tharreleides for an obol...

Σ Ar. *Av.* 15a ὃς τώδ' ἔφασκε νῷν: οἱ μέν φασιν αὐτὸν διασύρειν τὸν αἰσώπειον λόγον, καὶ δέον εἰπεῖν "τῶν ἀνθρώπων" λέγειν "ἐκ τῶν ὀρνέων", οἱ δὲ οὕτως· ὃς ἔφασκε μᾶλλον τῶν ἄλλων ὀρνέων δύνασθαι προηγήσασθαι τῆς ὁδοῦ καὶ δεῖξαι ἡμῖν αὐτόν. VEΓ

Who said that these two [...] *to us*: Some commentators say that he is making fun of the Aesopic story and that he says "from the birds" when he should have said "<from> the humans", while others <take it> like this: Who said that he was better able than the other birds to lead the way and show him to us.

Σ Ar. *Av.* 16aα παρ' ὑπόνοιαν εἴρηκε τὸ "ὃς ὄρνις ἐγένετ' ἐκ τῶν ὀρνέων". ἔδει γὰρ "ἐκ τῶν ἀνθρώπων". VEΓ²M | 16aβ ὄρνις ἐγένετ' ἐκ τῶν ὀρνέων R: ἔδει εἰπεῖν "ἐκ τῶν ἀνθρώπων". REΓ²

16aα He has said "Who became a bird from the birds" against expectation; for it should have been "from the humans". | 16aβ *He became a bird from the birds*: He should have said "from the humans".

Similarly, there was disagreement over the reasons why the slave Carion, in *Plutus*, describes as one consequence of the newly acquired wealth in his household

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"one cannot say 'Tereus, the Hoopoe who became a bird' without explaining how, when or where he did so" (Dunbar 1995, 142) or (b) taking ἐκ τῶν ὀρνέων as an implausibly delayed complement of (i) φράσειν or (ii) τούτω (i.e. (i) "that these two were going to show us Tereus [...] from among the birds" or (ii) "that these two, of the birds [= more than the other birds], were going to show us Tereus"), which would still leave ὃς ὄρνις ἐγένετ(ο) stranded; for (a) see Σ^VEΓ² Ar. *Av.* 15c and Σ^RΓM Ar. *Av.* 16b, for (b) see Σ^VEΓ Ar. *Av.* 15b, Σ^VEΓ² Ar. *Av.* 15c, and Σ^R Ar. *Av.* 16b [= (i)] as well as the second part of Σ^VEΓ Ar. *Av.* 15a [= (ii)].

50 Filippo 2001–2002, 103 wants to rescue this approach by postulating that ὀρνέων might be endowed with a "simbolismo sessuale" (i.e. ὄρνις ~ "phallus" > "man"); but there is little support for such an assumption.

the fact that they are now wiping their bottoms with garlic (σκορόδια) rather than stones. Whereas some commentators were content with the idea that σκορόδια are chosen here because people would have *eaten* garlic when they were still poor (see Σ[RVEΘNBarbAld] Ar. *Plut.* 818b; Σ[RVMEΘNBarbAld] Ar. *Plut.* 818c; Σ[RVEΘNBarbAld] Ar. *Plut.* 818e), and another discusses the usefulness of garlic for the purpose in question (see Σ[VEΘNBarbAld] Ar. *Plut.* 818f), there are again also those who detect a παρ' ὑπόνοιαν layer. According to this reading, σκορόδια would be said instead of something like "towels" (or, in modern terms, "toilet paper") and potentially be extra funny because wiping one's bottom with garlic might burn — but the annotator responsibly indicates that he is unsure about this latter interpretation:[51]

> Κα.   ...ἀποψώμεσθα δ' οὐ λίθοις ἔτι,
>   ἀλλὰ σκοροδίοις ὑπὸ τρυφῆς ἑκάστοτε.
>
> Ar. *Plut.* 817–818

(Carion) ...and we no longer wipe our bottoms with stones, but regularly with garlic plants, for luxury.

Σ Ar. *Plut.* 818a ἀλλὰ REΘN σκοροδίοις RMEΘNAld ὑπὸ τρυφῆς Ald: γελοίως, ἀντὶ τοῦ "σαβάνοις". RVMEΘNBarbAld

But with garlic plants, for luxury: Instead of "with towels".

Σ Ar. *Plut.* 818g εἰ ἄρα δηκτικόν τι ἔχει, τάχα ἂν εἴη παρὰ τὴν ὑπόνοιαν εἰρημένον. VEΘNBarbAld

If <the garlic> somehow has a burning effect, it might perhaps be said against expectation.

Earlier in the same play, Chremylus' refusal to say χαίρετε, "Hello!", to his fellow demesmen, addressing them with ἀσπάζομαι, "I greet you", instead, is understood by several scholia to imply a change in greeting practice (as the context indeed suggests);[52] but one reader who failed to grasp this, or found it unconvincing, preferred to postulate a παρ' ὑπόνοιαν joke:

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51 He is however followed by Kanellakis 2020a, 74.

52 See Σ[RVEΘBarbAld] Ar. *Plut.* 322a (ὁ Χρεμύλος, ὡς καινισθεὶς τῇ τύχῃ, καινοτέραν προσηγορίαν ἐπινοεῖ, "Chremylus, being rejuvenated by his luck, thinks of a more recent form of address"); Σ[RV/ΘBarbAld] Ar. *Plut.* 322bα/β; Σ[VM] Ar. *Plut.* 322d; cf. Sommerstein 2001, 161; Willi 2003, 62–63 (although I am no longer sure that we should accept an ephemeral change of greeting fashion in real-world Athens at the time).

Χρ.   "χαίρειν" μὲν ὑμᾶς ἐστιν, ὦνδρες δημόται,
      ἀρχαῖον ἤδη προσαγορεύειν καὶ σαπρόν·
      ἀσπάζομαι δ' ὁτιὴ προθύμως ἤκετε

Ar. *Plut.* 322–324

(Chremylus) To say "Hello" to you, my friends from the deme, is now old-fashioned and rotten; but I greet you, because you've come so eagerly.

Σ Ar. *Plut.* 324 ἀσπάζομαι MAld: παρ' ὑπόνοιαν· εἰπὼν γὰρ μὴ ἐρεῖν "χαίρειν", "ἀσπάζομαι" φησίν. VMΘMatrBarbAld

Against expectation: For having said that he will not say "Hello", he <nonetheless> says "I greet you".

Only exceptionally, however, can we connect an ancient scholar's name to such a discussion about the presence or not of παρ' ὑπόνοιαν humour, as in the following instance. When Dionysus and Xanthias in *Frogs* are about to enter the palace of Pluton and have already encountered the hostile doorkeeper, the god gets worried about what will happen next and therefore challenges his slave to change dress with him and prove that he is really more courageous. Xanthias readily accepts, only to hear a snappy reply from Dionysus:

Ξα.   φέρε δὴ ταχέως αὔτ'· οὐ γὰρ ἀλλὰ πειστέον.
      καὶ βλέψον εἰς τὸν Ἡρακλειοξανθίαν,
      εἰ δειλὸς ἔσομαι καὶ κατὰ σὲ τὸ λῆμ' ἔχων.
Δι.   μὰ Δί' ἀλλ' ἀληθῶς οὐκ Μελίτης μαστιγίας.

Ar. *Ran.* 498–501

(Xanthias) Quick, bring it on then; after all I have to obey. And watch this Heracles-Xanthias, if I'll be a coward and have your kind of guts. — (Dionysus) By Zeus, no, you'll truly be the Melitean — flogging-slave!

The question is what to make of οὐκ Μελίτης μαστιγίας at the end of this exchange. As in the cases discussed before, the difficulty was removed by positing a παρ' ὑπόνοιαν joke and seeing in μαστιγίας a surprise substitute for Ἡρακλῆς (see Σ[VEΘBarb(Ald)] Ar. *Ran.* 501d; ἀντὶ τοῦ in Σ[RVEΘBarb(Ald)] Ar. *Ran.* 501a also implies as much). Given the Heraclean context and since there was in fact a shrine of Heracles in the deme of Melite, about which much informative detail could be provided, this idea seems well-founded. Even so, it was rejected by the post-Aristarchean commentator Apollonius, who instead favoured a prosopographical allusion to the notorious womaniser Callias son of Hipponicus. Callias, so the reasoning went, (i) lived in Melite and (ii) used to wear a lionskin, just like Heracles, when serving in the army — an odd habit that would also be ridiculed in

Ar. *Ran.* 430 where mention is made of Callias' "pussy-skin". To what extent these points were independently established, and not just read out of the Aristophanic text (i.e. (i) out of the present passage, and (ii) out of Ar. *Ran.* 430 combined with the present passage) is impossible to tell. But in any case Apollonius — or possibly some reader(s) after him — sought to prop up this alternative interpretation[53] by additional arguments. They highlighted (iii) that picking out Melite where nothing but a reference to Heracles was required would be surprising when there were so many other Heracles shrines as well; (iv) that the formulation "from Melite" is how one speaks of a real person, but not of a god who resides "in a place"; and (v) that if, as the supporters of the παρ' ὑπόνοιαν reading had observed, the Heracles shrine in Melite had been established during the great plague of the early 420s, there would also be a chronological problem because Aristophanes' comic career already started in the same period. As it stands, argument (v) is so obviously flawed when dealing with a passage from a comedy that does *not* belong to Aristophanes' early production that one would like to think it was added to Apollonius' case (or misrepresented)[54] by some later reader whose grasp of chronology was poorer than one would like to assume for a scholar working in the tradition of Aristarchus; but it has to be conceded that the wording in the relevant scholion presents it as entirely parallel with the preceding items. By contrast, (iii) and (iv) are indeed valid — though hardly decisive — considerations:[55]

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53 Which does not seem to have originated with Apollonius, for Σ[VEΘBarb(Ald)] Ar. *Ran.* 501c starts by recording Apollonius' approval (not authorship) of the idea. The continuation suggests that Apollonius was as keen to invalidate actual or conceivable objections (e.g. that the κωμῳδούμενος was not identifiable enough in the text) as to add some positive support of his own. Since Apollonius son of Chaeris criticised the identification of another κωμῳδούμενος (or κωμῳδουμένη) by Aristarchus' student and successor Ammonius, who wrote an influential treatise on κωμῳδούμενοι (see Σ[VΓAld] Ar. *Vesp.* 1238b; on Ammonius, cf. Bagordo 1998, 50, 74–76; Montana 2006), and since there is no particular reason to see in the Apollonius of Σ[VEΘBarb(Ald)] Ar. *Ran.* 501c a different Aristophanic commentator of the same name (cf. Boudreaux 1919, 77–78; Montana 2002), the unnamed source for the notion that Callias was also mocked in Ar. *Ran.* 501 might again be Ammonius. That Apollonius objected to Ammonius once need not of course mean that he could not agree with him elsewhere.

54 "More recent than/too recent for Aristophanes" (νεώτερον) would seem more logical than παλαιότερον; for such an argument in the scholia, cf. Σ[VEΘMatrBarbAld] Ar. *Plut.* 385b.

55 Regarding (iii), note that Σ[RVEΘBarb(Ald)] Ar. *Ran.* 501a implicitly contains two potential justifications of the choice of Melite: the connection with Heracles' initiation, which may be of significance at the entrance to the underworld, and the existence of a particular ἄγαλμα of which Xanthias might be visually reminiscent.

Σ Ar. *Ran.* 501a οὐκ Μελίτης RMEBarb μαστιγίας MEBarb:

1. ἀντὶ τοῦ "ὁ ἐκ Μελίτης Ἡρακλῆς". RVEΘBarb(Ald)

2. ἡ γὰρ Μελίτη δῆμος τῆς Ἀττικῆς, ἐν ᾗ ἐμυήθη Ἡρακλῆς τὰ μικρὰ μυστήρια. RVEΘBarb(Ald)

3. ἐκλήθη δὲ ἀπὸ Μελίτης νύμφης, RVMEΘBarb(Ald) ᾗ ἐμίγη Ἡρακλῆς. VMEΘBarb(Ald)

4. α. ἐπειδὴ ἐν Μελίτῃ ἐστὶν ἐπιφανέστατον ἱερὸν Ἡρακλέους ἀλεξικάκου. VMEΘBarb(Ald) | β. ἔστι δὲ ἐκεῖ καὶ ἱερὸν Ἡρακλέους. RVEΘBarb(Ald)

5. τὸ δὲ τοῦ Ἡρακλέους ἄγαλμα ἔργον <Ἀ>γελάδου τοῦ Ἀργείου, τοῦ διδασκάλου Φειδίου. VEΘBarb(Ald)

6. ἡ δὲ ἵδρυσις ἐγένετο κατὰ τὸν μέγαν λοιμόν. ὅθεν καὶ ἐπαύσατο ἡ νόσος, πολλῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀπολλυμένων. VEΘBarb(Ald)

The flogging-slave from Melite: 1. Instead of "Heracles from Melite". 2. For Melite is a deme of Attica, in which Heracles was initiated into the Lesser Mysteries. 3. It got its name from the nymph Melite, to whom Heracles made love. 4. α. Because in Melite there is a very famous shrine of Heracles the Averter of Evil. | β. There is a shrine of Heracles there. 5. And the image of Heracles is a work of Hageladas of Argos, the teacher of Pheidias. 6. The establishment <of the shrine> took place in the time of the great plague; as a consequence, the illness, from which many people were dying, came to an end.

Σ Ar. *Ran.* 501c 1. Ἀπολλώνιος οὐ κακῶς ὑπονενοῆσθαί φησι τὸ κωμῳδεῖσθαί τινα. ἴσως δὲ ὅτι ἦρχε, διὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ὠνομάσθη.

2. ἢ ὀλίγον πρότερον εἰρῆσθαι. Καλλίας γὰρ ὁ Ἱππονίκου ἐν Μελίτῃ ᾤκει. παρεικάζει δὲ αὐτὸν Ἡρακλεῖ, ἅμα χλευάζων διὰ τὸ λεοντῇ ἐν ταῖς μάχαις χρῆσθαι, ὡς ἐν τοῖς ὀπίσω· "κύσθου λεοντῆν ναυμαχεῖν ἐνημμένον" (430). VEΘBarb(Ald)

3. ἐπεὶ εἴ γε ὄντως ἐπὶ τὸν Ἡρακλέα ἀνέφερε, τί μᾶλλον εἶπε τὸ "ἐκ Μελίτης" καὶ μὴ ἐξ ἄλλου δήμου; πανταχοῦ γὰρ Ἡρακλέα ἐπιφανῆ.

4. σύνηθές τε οὐχ οὕτω λέγειν ἐπὶ θεῶν "οὐκ Μελίτης", ἀλλ' "ὁ ἐν Μελίτῃ", ὡς καὶ "Ζεὺς ὁ ἐν Ὀλυμπίᾳ", ἐπὶ δὲ ἀνθρώπων "ἐκ Μελίτης", "ἐξ †Ἰοῦς†", "ἐκ Κολωνῶν". VEΘBarbV[57](Ald)

5. πῶς δὲ καὶ παλαιότερον εἶναι Ἀριστοφάνους τὸ ἄγαλμα, εἰ ἀκμάζοντος τοῦ λοιμοῦ ἱδρύθη; σχεδὸν γὰρ μειρακίσκος ἤδη ὢν ἥπτετο τῶν ἀγώνων. VEΘBarb(Ald)

1. Apollonius says the idea that some person is being made fun of here is not bad. Perhaps <this person> was not named because he was in office; 2. or else, <he suggests> he had been mentioned a little earlier. For Callias the son of Hipponicus lived in Melite; him he likens to Heracles, ridiculing him at the same time for his habit of wearing a lion-skin in battle, as in the following passage: "to fight at sea wearing a pussy-skin". 3. <All this is likely to be the case> since, if he were really making reference to Heracles, why did he say "from Melite" rather than from some other deme, Heracles being famous everywhere. 4. Moreover, about gods one does not normally say "the one *from* Melite", but "the one *in* Melite", as for instance also "Zeus *in* Olympia"; but about humans <one does say> "from Melite", "from †?†", "from Kolonos". 5. And how could the god's image be older than/too old for Aristophanes if <the shrine> was established at the height of the plague? After all, Aristophanes began to take part in the comic competitions when he was still almost an adolescent.

It was probably a side-effect of the number of uncontroversial factual and proso-pographical allusions in the Aristophanic text if some ancient commentators,[56] keen to display their learnedness, did not then hesitate to reject a fairly straight-forward παρ' ὑπόνοιαν joke as long as they could come up with a more sophisti-cated alternative, however far-fetched the latter might be. How widespread such an attitude was, the scholia no longer allow us to tell because we are not normally as well-served by them as in the example just discussed.[57] Indirectly, however, the Apollonian case seems to confirm what the generous over-application of the παρ' ὑπόνοιαν label elsewhere also suggests: that παρ' ὑπόνοιαν humour, al-though (or since?) omnipresent in Aristophanes' plays, was not really felt to be worth critically engaging with. It was accepted as part of what makes Aristo-phanic comedy fun to watch and read; but it was not something that made com-edy fascinating to the ancient scholar and invited him to look more closely and discover that, as one *modern* critic put it, "ben lungi dall'essere banali dispositivi comici esclusivamente funzionali allo scatenamento del riso, molti degli *aprosdoketa* aristofanei sono invece procedimenti argomentativi dotati di ec-cezionale forza persuasiva".[58]

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56 And not just ancient ones: even Dover 1993, 256–257, following van der Valk 1980, 75, is wary of rejecting the Apollonian theory, despite pointing out that Callias' native deme was Alopeke, not Melite (cf. Davies 1971, 256). Instead, he observes (as argument (vi), so to speak) that "Krati-nos [fr. 81] calls Kallias στιγματίας 'tattoed (sc. like a runaway slave)' because his property was heavily mortgaged. If Kallias lived more in Melite than elsewhere, if he had ever worn a lion-skin, and if Kratinos' στιγματίας was remembered, then Σ[RVE] is right, and Dionysos is saying 'You look like Kallias!'". But why should Aristophanes then not have helped his audience at least a little by writing στιγματίας rather than μαστιγίας?

57 Similarly, though, an "anonymous" counter-expectational reading contrasts with different, non-παρ' ὑπόνοιαν, interpretations by named scholars in a group of scholia on ὑπερεπυρρίασε in Ar. *Ran.* 308 (see Σ[VMEΘBarbAld] Ar. *Ran.* 308a [Aristarchus], Σ[VEΘBarbAld] Ar. *Ran.* 308c [Demetrius Ixion] vs. Σ[VEMΘBarbAld] Ar. *Ran.* 308f [παρ' ὑπόνοιαν]). By contrast, in Ar. *Ran.* 320 Aristarchus read Διαγόρας rather than δι' ἀγορᾶς (as preferred by Apollodorus of Tarsus and others: Σ[VMEΘBarbAld] Ar. *Ran.* 320f) and therefore took ᾄδουσι earlier in the line to be ironic (ἐν εἰρωνείᾳ κειμένου τοῦ λόγου); such irony could also be framed as "retrospective" παρ' ὑπόνοιαν humour — and the phrase ἀντὶ τοῦ is indeed used (see Σ[VMEΘBarbAld] Ar. *Ran.* 320b; cf. also Σ[Tz.] Ar. *Ran.* 320a [παρ' ὑπόνοιαν]; Filippo 2001–2002, 75) — but in this case the ironic/παρ' ὑπόνοιαν interpretation was also the one allowing to display greater knowledge. In Ar. *Av.* 876, meanwhile, the status of Κλεοκρίτου as παρ' ὑπόνοιαν for θεῶν (or μεγάλη) was not disputed (cf. Section 6, n. 41), only the reasoning behind it (see Σ[RVEΓ2] Ar. *Av.* 876e [Symmachus] vs. Σ[RVEΓ2] Ar. *Av.* 876f [Didymus]).

58 Napolitano 2007, 65; cf. also Kanellakis 2020a, 77–81.

Conclusion

We set off from the observation that verbal humour, while not being actively disregarded in the scholia, never occupies a prominent place in them (Section 1). At first sight, the sheer number of annotations which speak of, or at least acknowledge, παρ' ὑπόνοιαν jokes might seem to contradict this claim. On closer inspection, however, they turn out to contain only a minimum of critical reflection. That the terminology can be vague, inconsistent, and possibly subject to some diachronic change under the influence of rhetorical instruction (Sections 2–3) is symptomatic, but less revealing than the fact that phenomena of very different kinds tend to be grouped together without further reflection. Next to a core of truly counter-expectational instances, there is a substantial group of "retrospective" cases where expectations are only "disappointed" in hindsight (Section 4); and these, in turn, shade into an even wider group of mechanisms used to cause audience surprise in which expectation is no longer a central factor at all (Sections 5–6). Furthermore, just as the scholia do not always differentiate fully between the comic author and his characters, so they may also forget that what is expected in the world on stage is not necessarily the same as what would be expected in the real world (Section 7). All of this leads to a situation where παρ' ὑπόνοιαν diagnoses can be used as an easy fix to plaster over interpretative challenges or where, vice versa, doubt can be cast on likely cases of παρ' ὑπόνοιαν humour merely because other, more "learned", interpretations are more exciting to the critical scholar's mindset (Section 8). And yet, the very fact that so many παρ' ὑπόνοιαν notes *are* transmitted in the scholia does provide further evidence for the general premise stated at the beginning. No matter how much more scholarly attention was paid to historical or linguistic details, ancient readers never completely forgot that the principal *raison d'être* of Aristophanic comedy was and remained popular entertainment.

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Dimitrios Kanellakis

Rhyme in Greek Comedy

Abstract: Long-standing theoretical biases and lack of a methodological frame —
let alone consensus — have impeded the study of rhyme in ancient Greek litera-
ture. Although Aristotle's conception of *homeoteleuton* did encompass what we
today perceive as rhyme, our unfamiliarity with ancient Greek prosody seems to
lie behind scholars' hesitancy about the latter phenomenon (and term). In an at-
tempt to break that deadlock, this chapter argues for the aesthetic reappraisal of
rhyme, sets a typological model for it, measures its occurrence in Greek drama —
no quantitative discrepancy between tragedy and comedy arises — and traces its
functions, more specifically, in comedy. The most frequent uses of rhyme, as de-
duced from Aristophanes, Menander, and the comic fragments, are to invest a
stichomythia with speed, sarcasm, or aggression; to highlight a pair of opposites;
and to cohere (in terms of enunciation) lists of funny words.

1 Introduction: in defence of rhyme

Rhyme[1] in ancient Greek literature has scarcely ever been addressed as a sub-
ject.[2] Indeed, it is the word "rhyme" that seems to cause all the discomfort, ra-
ther than the concept, especially if we consider how scholastic most commen-
tators are with other phonological phenomena, such as alliterations and
metrics. Arthur Verrall tried to explain our reluctance to admit rhyme in ancient
Greek: "The habit of silent reading has made us slow to catch the sound of what
is written".[3] But this is hardly the case, because rhyme is anyway impressed on
the orthography of the text, just like alliterations and metrics. Our reservations
towards rhyme, in particular, should be sought elsewhere then. One reserva-
tion, I suggest, has to do with the fact that ancient Greek was spoken with a
melodic accent (fluctuation of pitch), rather than a dynamic accent (fluctuation

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1 I borrow this title from the English poet and historian Samuel Daniel, who in 1603 issued a
rebuttal to Thomas Campion's treatise *Observations in the Art of English Poesie* (1602). The latter
promoted quantitative metre and advised the poets to avoid rhyme.
2 Indicatively, a quick search in *L'Année Philologique* (as accessed in February 2023) returns
35 entries containing the term (in the variants "rhyme" [8], "Reim" [7], "rima" [11], or "rime" [9])
in their title, but nearly all of those entries concern Latin literature.
3 Verrall 1910, 246.

of amplitude) like English or Modern Greek. Thus it might seem inappropriate to judge ancient Greek prosody by our modern criteria of pronouncing, if rhyme, according to the standard definition, is regarded as "extending to the last *stressed* vowel [of a verse] and any sounds following it".[4] This is not a valid excuse, of course, because ancient Greeks *did* stress their vowels, only it was a different kind of stressing from what we are accustomed to. A second reservation might be that "rhyme" was not a recognised poetic device by ancient critics.[5] The first mention of anything approaching true "rhyme" is Aristotle's *homeoteleuton* (to which I shall return shortly), but it is not identified there as something particular to poetry; in fact, "the later Alexandrian rhetoricians and critics, like some Latin writers after them, understood the use of homeoteleuton in prose".[6] This is not a valid excuse either, because if we were bound to only use the literary categories invented by the ancient critics, we would never study classics under the prism of e.g. Genettian narratology or modern linguistics. Yet, the most important reason for our bias against rhyme is that rhyme is not, for certain, a common feature in ancient Greek. "In Byzantium, Romanus the Melode and Synesius were exploiting its possibilities in hymnology by the 6th century AD"[7] and "the first systematic use of rhyme in Greek poetry appears in the late 14th century in the work of the Cretan poet Stefanos Sachlikis".[8] Yet, as Edgar Alan Poe remarked in 1848, "Rhyme is supposed to be of modern origin [...] I may say, however, in passing, that several instances of rhyme occur in the *Clouds* of Aristophanes" — and indeed, we should add, in Homer (e.g. *Il.* 2.87–88; 9.236–238). To sum up: despite not being frequent as a phenomenon, standardised as a term, and familiar as a sound effect to us, rhyme existed in ancient Greek. Even more, we can confidently say that it existed as a *conscious* stylistic choice, rather than as an inevitable side-effect of Greek being an inflecting language — there are several such cases of course — because we occasionally encounter triple, quadruple, quintuple, even sextuple rhyming verses (e.g. Antiphanes fr. 146), or combinations of rhyming patterns: in other words, anything but random occurrences.[9]

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4 OED *s.v.* rhyme.

5 As a term, rhyme first appears (as *rim* < Old Fr. *rime* < Lat. *rhythmus* < Gr. ῥυθμός) in the twelfth century; Preminger/Brogan 1993, 1053, 1058.

6 Preminger 1986, 236.

7 Preminger 1986, 236. For further discussion and examples, see Norden 1915, 841–864.

8 Holton 1991, 12. Beyond Greek, "true rhyme first appears in the Christian Latin hymns of the 3rd–4th c. AD", Preminger/Brogan 1993, 538.

9 E.g. Aesch. *Sept.* 513–516 (enclosed rhyme), 901–904; Ar. *Eq.* 1378–1381 (couplets); Eur. *Med.* 836–842; *Andr.* 50–53; *IA* 537–540; Ar. *Eq.* 80–83; *Thesm.* 149–151 (alternate rhymes).

2 Homeoteleuton

Since Aristotle's homeoteleuton is the closest to rhyme we have from antiquity, let us begin from there. The definition and types of homeoteleuton in *Rh.* 1410a–b are: ἐὰν ὅμοια τὰ ἔσχατα ἔχῃ ἑκάτερον τὸ κῶλον … ἐπὶ τελευτῆς … τὰς ἐσχάτας συλλαβὰς ἢ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ὀνόματος πτώσεις ἢ τὸ αὐτὸ ὄνομα ("clauses having similar endings … either in their final syllables [= type 1], or using inflexions of one and the same word [= type 2], or using repetition of the same word [= type 3]"). The examples cited by Aristotle are:

i. ᾠήθης ἂν αὐτὸν ‹οὐ› παιδίον τετοκ**έναι**, ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὸν παιδίον γεγον**έναι** (type 1)
ii. ἐν πλε**ίσταις** δὲ φροντ**ίσι** καὶ ἐν ἐλαχ**ίσταις** ἐλπ**ίσιν** (type 1)
iii. ἀξιοῖ δὲ σταθῆναι **χαλκοῦς**, οὐκ ἄξιος ὢν **χαλκοῦ**; (type 2)
iv. σὺ δ᾽ αὐτὸν καὶ ζῶντα ἔλεγες **κακῶς** καὶ νῦν γράφεις **κακῶς** (type 3)
v. τί ἂν ἔπαθες δειν**όν**, εἰ ἄνδρ᾽ εἶδες ἀργ**όν**; (type 1)

The differences from what we understand today as rhyme are the following: (a) type 3 is essentially the figure called *epistrophe* or *epiphora* or (rarely) *antistrophe* and, although it does create a rhyming effect ("identical rhyme" in modern terms), it can hardly be taken as true rhyme;[10] (b) type 2 does not create a rhyming effect but mere consonance, and the particular example given by Aristotle is a case of *paronomasia*, a pun;[11] (c) only type 1 is what we would readily accept as

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10 Instances of *epistrophe* in the three tragedians and Aristophanes (an exhaustive list): Aesch. *Sept.* 996–997; *Ag.* 1287–1288; *Cho.* 238–239, 509–510; *Eum.* 581–582; Soph. *Aj.* 480–481; *El.* 1006–1007, 1218–1219; *OT* 777–778, 1061–1062; *Phil.* 878–879, 1299–1300; Eur. *Alc.* 705–706; *Med.* 925–926; *Supp.* 143–144; *HF* 256–257, 1337–1338, 1418–1419; *Tro.* 717–718; *Ion* 756–757; *Hel.* 599–600; *Phoen.* 1646–1647; *Or.* 454–455, 937–938, 1128–1129, 1351–1352; *Bacch.* 758–759; *IA* 749–750, 1481–1482; Ar. *Ach.* 34–35, 102–103, 105–106, 136–137, 200–203, 410–411, 515–516, 591–592, 916–917, 1097–1098, 1118–1119, 1124–1125, 1134–1135, 1227–1228; *Eq.* 81–82, 111–112, 121–122, 189–190, 997–998, 1154–1157; *Nub.* 83–84, 113–114, 160–161, 484–485, 557–558, 674–675, 689–690, 990–991, 1195–1196, 1232–1233; *Vesp.* 83–84, 171–172, 1334–1335, 1368–1369; *Pax* 183–184, 185–187, 328–329, 401–402, 550–551, 851–852, 1065–1066, 1338–1339; *Av.* 113–115, 172–173, 329–330, 795–796, 1044–1045, 1205–1206, 1233–1234, 1437–1438, 1512–1513, 1666–1667, 1679–1680; *Lys.* 86–87, 129–130, 457–458; *Thesm.* 32–33, 97–98, 168–170, 564–565, 605–606, 627–628, 630–631, 1125–1126; *Ran.* 200–201, 286–287, 305–306, 514–515, 1156–1157, 1323–1324, 1452–1453, 1463–1464; *Eccl.* 197–198, 221–228, 338–339, 460–461, 524–525, 773–776, 799–803, 862–864, 987–988, 1156–1157; *Plut.* 194–195, 711–712, 926–927. The prevalence of *epistrophe* in comedy is evident. The instances of type-2 homeoteleuton are too many, in both genres, to list.
11 "Does he really believe he deserves a (bronze) *statue* to be set up for him? He, who is not worth a single (bronze) *penny*?". See Cope 1877, 105.

rhyme today,[12] and indeed Aristotle gives more examples of that type than of the other two; and even though Aristotle does not clarify in his definition that type 1 requires the identity of *stressed* end-syllables (as in our "rhyme"), all three of his examples comply with that requirement. More strikingly, his second example admits the phenomenon of internal rhyme (πλείσταις-ἐλαχίσταις), here combined with end rhyme (φροντίσι-ἐλπίσιν, assuming a silent ν). Therefore, homeoteleuton is an inclusive term, an over-inclusive term, of what we understand as rhyme today.[13]

Part of this over-inclusion, it is not clear whether Aristotle (and Demetrius after him) reserves homeoteleuton for poetry or prose, since all his examples are of unknown authorship.[14] On the one hand, when discussing *anaphora*, in the same passage as homeoteleuton, he only quotes poetic examples (Hom. *Il.* 9.526; Ar. fr. 666; Epicharm. fr. 145). But when discussing pairs of opposites, again in the same passage, all his quotes come from Isocrates' *Panegyricus*; indeed, later rhetoricians referred to homeoteleuton as an Isocratic device *par excellence*,[15] and together with parallelisms and antitheses, it was considered one of the so-called Gorgian figures, i.e. pertinent to prose.[16] In reality, however, Gorgias can only be said to have standardised homeoteleuton, rather than to have introduced it, and only in oratory, rather than in Greek literature altogether. The fact that those figures struck ancient critics as something extraordinary for the standards of prose, and that Isocrates himself advocated the "poeticality" of prose (15.47), suggest that *poetry* was considered the "natural"

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12 "Much of the rhyme is simple homeoteleuton, but rhyme of two and three syllables is also found", Greene/Cushman 2012, 1193. This forced distinction does not do justice to Aristotle, whose two (out of three) examples of type-1 homeoteleuton are in fact penultimate rhymes. "It should be understood that homeoteleuton is not an instance of rhyme strictly speaking, for in inflectional languages similarity of word-endings is the rule rather than the exception", Preminger/Brogan 1993, 538. Were that a valid criterion, we should not speak of rhyme in medieval and modern Greek either.

13 In Roman rhetorical theory, Quintilian (*Inst.* 9.3.77–80) reserves the term ὁμοιοτέλευτον for Aristotle's type-1 homeoteleuton, and distinguishes it from what he calls πάρισον (but he evidently means *paronomasia*, i.e. puns such as *puppes/pubes*, *fama/flamma*, *spes/res*), from ὁμοιόπτωτον (i.e. different words in the same grammatical case, which should not be confused with Aristotle's type-2 homeoteleuton which concerns a single word in different cases), and from ἰσόκωλον (i.e. phrases of equal length and structure).

14 Demetr. *Eloc.* 26 on homeoteleuton cites a variant of Aristotle's fourth example.

15 Cf. Philostr. *VS* 1.17, πάρισα καὶ ἀντίθετα καὶ ὁμοιοτέλευτα οὐχ εὑρὼν πρῶτος, ἀλλ᾽ εὑρημένοις εὖ χρησάμενος. See Norden 1915, 115–119.

16 Cf. Diod. Sic. 12.53, Γοργίας ὁ ῥήτωρ ... πρῶτος γὰρ ἐχρήσατο ... ἀντιθέτοις καὶ ἰσοκώλοις καὶ παρίσοις καὶ ὁμοιοτελεύτοις. See Norden 1915, 15–79 on Gorgias, 830–838 on examples from poetry.

environment for such devices. Indeed, for Aristotle the Gorgian figures originate from poetry (*Rh*. 1404a). At any rate, regardless of its origin and the Aristotelian designation of the term "homeoteleuton",[17] rhyme was something *perceptible* in both poetry and prose.

3 The aesthetic effect

Aristotle does not make an aesthetic evaluation of homeoteleuton *per se*, but we may assume his positive appraisal, since in the same context he praises antitheses as "sweet" (ἡδεῖα), and "smart and popular sayings" (τὰ ἀστεῖα καὶ τὰ εὐδοκιμοῦντα) as "requiring natural genius and practice to produce" (τοῦ εὐφυοῦς ἢ τοῦ γεγυμνασμένου). In prose, homeoteleuton and the other Gorgian figures were considered more appropriate to epideictic oratory and ought to be used in moderation: κάλλος δὲ τὸ σχῆμα ἐργάζεται, ἐάν τις αὐτῷ ἀνεπαχθῶς χρῆται.[18] There are no testimonies on whether homeoteleuton in poetry was praised or not; if it were a feature linked to the so-called "New Music",[19] then we would extend Aristophanes' mockery and Plato's condemnation of the movement to rhyme in particular. But, as my statistics below suggest, such an association is not supported, since Euripides (who experimented with New Music) actually uses rhyme *less* frequently than Aeschylus, Sophocles, and indeed Aristophanes. If Aristotle considered this device as something "sweet", or the like, in the case of prose, it is unlikely that he would have considered it as something distasteful in poetry. But even if we assume that there *was* some scepticism about it, it is still difficult to explain Verrall's ultimate depreciation. For him, rhyme in Greek poetry is "ugly, offensive, and comic ... of service only to

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17 "...the student may ask, where did these devices originate? The answer of classical scholarship is a classical example of circular argument. It is taken for granted that Gorgias, the inventor of artistic prose, copied his figures from poetry, whereas poets avoided Gorgianic figures because they were prosaic". Yet what is certain, "no ancient source claims that rhyme was originally a device of prose"; Guggenheimer 1972, 13, 20.

18 Tiberius, *De figuris Demosthenicis* 33. See further Norden 1915, 50–55.

19 Csapo 2004, 222. However, none of the examples he cites (n. 68) are cases of (Aristophanic parodies of) homeoteleuton, but of alliteration and accumulation of adjectives. The bibliography cited at that note (Breitenbach 1934, 214 ff.; Zimmermann 1992, 121) does not refer to homeoteleuton either, but to other figures.

the artist in grotesque ... harsh, sharp, and unmusical — a wound to the ear ... something harsh, inharmonious, improper".[20]

The basis for this depreciation is that, as long as Greek is an inflecting (synthetic) language, any instance of rhyme is nothing more than the inevitable coincidence of grammatical suffixes (e.g. an adjective agreeing with its noun) — in contrast to English (an "analytic" language) in which rhyme is a "harmonious decoration and pleasing method of emphasis".[21] Similar views are found in more recent bibliography: "In noninflected, positional languages, such as English, by contrast, the poet must labour for the phonic echo. Word-endings in homeoteleuton bear grammatical information, but that is all. [...] Homeoteleuton is chosen by the language, rhyme is chosen by the poet".[22] While correctly putting emphasis on the role of suffixes in the production of rhyme in Greek, such linguistic "explanations" are forced, as the following objections show. First: what about homeoteleutons which are *not* based on the identity of grammatical suffixes?[23] Are they not "proper" and "elaborated" rhymes either? Second: if rhyme is not intended *per se* but is a side-effect of inflection, then why is the identity of grammatical suffixes reserved for the end-positions of a couplet/triplet/quadruple, rather than placed in random positions? Finally, what about grammatical homeoteleuton in English? Is Dryden's "*Time and Death shall depart, and say in fl**ying**, | Love has found out a way to live, by d**ying***" not a "harmonious" and "pleasing" rhyme? Is it not a rhyme at all?

These (rhetorical) questions show that the "ugliness" of Greek rhyme is nothing but a subjective evaluation, and that comparison with English rhyme is anachronistic: Euripides' spectators/readers could compare his rhymes with those by Aeschylus and Sophocles — certainly not those by Dryden. The only aforementioned statement that merits a closer attention is that rhyme is something "comic" and "grotesque", in other words, something more suitable to comedy than to tragedy. That we shall discover soon.

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20 Verrall 1910, 246, 247, 251, 261. On Euripidean rhymes, "Nauck found the repetitive verse-ends intolerable, and suspected corruption. Wecklein, more shrewdly, suspected parody"; Parker 2007, 208 with full references.
21 Verrall 1910, 246.
22 Preminger/Brogan 1993, 538. See n. 12 above.
23 E.g. Aesch. *Eum.* 239–240: βροτῶν (gen. plural, noun) / ἐκπερῶν (nom. singular, participle).

4 Methodology

1. I distinguish between *perfect* rhyme (when two or more verses share an identical ending, counting from their last stressed vowel onwards) and *imperfect* rhyme (when two or more verses share a similar, rather than identical, ending; this either means having a different vowel, e.g. φ**ό**βος-κ**ύ**βος, or a different consonant, e.g. φό**β**ος-πό**ν**ος, but not both kinds of difference, e.g. φ**ό**βος-φ**ά**ρος, unless the different consonants are of the same phonetic class, e.g. ἔ**χ**ουσιν-ἄ**γ**ουσιν).
2. The last stresses must be of the same kind, acute or circumflex. Thus, for example, τροφᾶς-ἀράς (*tropháas-araás*, Aesch. *Sept*. 786–787) or χρεών-θεῶν (*khreoón-théoon*, *ibid*. 502–503) are not taken as rhymes.
3. I do not count mere consonance (i.e. identity of ending letters) as rhyme, if the last stresses are not at similar positions. For example, Aesch. *Sept*. 758–765 (all lines ending with -ι) or *Cho*. 327–329 (with -ων) do not count.
4. I do not count song refrains (e.g. Aesch. *Supp*. 118–121 = 129–132), type-2 homeoteleuton (same end-words but in different grammatical cases), or type-3 homeoteleuton (*epistrophe*).
5. I only consider consecutive lines (couplets, triplets etc.). For example, in Aesch. *Supp*. 446–450, I admit the first couplet as rhyme (καίρια-κινητήρια) but not the concluding χρηστήρια, since two non-rhyming verses intervene. An exception is made for when there is an enjambement in between, for instance in *Supp*. 680–682 and Ar. *Ach*. 1118–1121.

This delimitation is much stricter than Verrall's. Despite not outlining what he considers as rhyme, in practice (i.e. judging from his examples) he does not apply any of the abovementioned requirements except for point 4.[24] The result is an impressive degree of inconsistency among the passages he quotes or cites. My methodology, on the contrary, allows for sound stylometric and comparative observations — "absolute" numbers are not the priority here — and reflects better what we perceive as rhyme today.

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24 See Verrall 1910, 250 n. 2. Feneron 1974 also discusses "rhyme" in Menander irrespectively of accent, e.g. taking ἐγώ, ἔχω, τυγχάνω, and παρεγγυῶ as rhyming (Men. *Dys*. 729–733). Even more loosely, Buller 1980 considers the repetition of any sound patterns as "rhyme".

5 Statistics: tragedy vs. comedy

According to the abovementioned criteria, here is an exhaustive list of the rhymes found in the extant tragedies and comedies.[25] It becomes evident that, from a quantitative perspective at least, rhyme is not at all a privilege of comedy.

Tab. 1: List of perfect rhymes.

Author	Perfect rhymes	Proportion
Aeschylus	*Pers.* 76–80, 550–551=560–561; *Sept.* 59–60, 662–663, 901–902, 975–976=986–987; *Supp.* 74–75, 114–115, 446–[448], 680–682, 779–781, 946–947; *Ag.* 89–90, 627–628, 810–811, 950–951, 1672–1673 (internal); *Cho.* 6–7, 117–118, 175–176, 292–293, 386–387, 852–853, 906–907, 1072–1073; *Eum.* 239–240, 269–270, 461–462, 792–793=822–823, 1029–1030; *PV* 238–239, 866–867, 891–892, 1030–1031.	76 out of 8,116 lines = 0.93%
Sophocles	*Aj.* 401–402, 807–808, 854–855, 898–899, 999–1000, 1024–1025, 1078–1079, 1085–1086, 1175–1176, 1297–1298; *El.* 873–874; *OT* 11–12, 76–77, 110–111, 572–573, 626–627 (internal), 823–826 (825 imp.), 1150–1151, 1185–1186; *Ant.* 272–273, 736–737, 766–767, 873–874; *Trach.* 535–536, 909–910, 913–914, 1265–1266; *Phil.* 9–10, 94–95, 176–177, 361–362, 832–833; *OC* 20–21, 91–92, 306–307, 328–329, 695–696, 775–776, 897–898, 1273–1274, 1581–1582.	83 out of 10,341 lines = 0.8%
Euripides (excl. *Cyc.* and *Rhes.*)	*Alc.* 302–303, 549–550, 723–724, 739–740, 771–772, 815–816, 1025–1026, 1134–1135; *Med.* 72–73, 243–244, 408–409; *Heracl.* 93–94, 541–542, 875–876; *Hipp.* 208–211, 727–728, 1236–1237; *Andr.* 50–53, 64–65, 580–581, 689–690; *Supp.* 16–17, 583–584; *El.* 309–310, 521–522, 788–789, 883–884, 1044–1045; *HF* 29–30, 45–46, 152–153, 966–967, 1129–1130, 1258–1259, 1362–1363; *Tro.* 591–592, 732–733; *IT* 5–6, 1016–1017; *Ion* 322–323, 590–591, 1261–1262, 1285–1286; *Hel.* 402–403, 869–870, 1312–1313; *Phoen.* 216–217, 478–479, 717–718, 791–792, 807–808, 1252–1253, 1478–1479, 1496–1497; *Or.* 27–28, 51–52, 55–56, 379–380, 945–946, 1143–1144, 1522–1523; *Bacch.* 33–34, 48–49, 178–179, 295–296, 356–357, 599–600, 642–643, 1216–1217; *IA* 418–419, 520–521, 537–540, 816–817, 1161–1162, 1165–1166.	154 out of 24,330 lines = 0.63%

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25 My statistical corpus for Menander comprises the entire *Dys.* and *Sam.*, *Asp.* up to 467, *Georg.* up to 87, *Epit.* 218–569, 860–922, 1060–1131, and *Pk.* 121–190, 305–404, 467–550, 768–812. This selection has been made to exclude any passages with high concentration of missing cola. An exhaustive list of rhymes (according to my criteria) in the comic fragments: Alexis frr. 28.1–2, 131.7–8, 145.9–13, 167.4–5, 275.1–2; Anaxandr. frr. 28, 34.2–4; Antiphanes frr. 19.1–2, 146, 225.1–2; Cratinus frr. 1.2–3, 237; Diodorus fr. 3.2–3; Epich. frr. 40.1–2, 41.2–3, 55, 254; Ephippus fr. 13.3–5; Eubulus fr. 82.1–4; Euphron fr. 1.13–14; Eupolis fr. 84; Hegesippus fr. 1.25–26; Menander frr. 196, 734, *Kithar.* 64–65, *Mis.* 4–5, 697–698; Mnesimachus fr. 4.52–55; Nicophon fr. 10; Pherecr. frr. 22, 113.1–2; Philetaerus fr. 3.2–3; Plato Com. fr. 57; Polyochus fr. 2.1–2; Timocles fr. 19.1–2; Adesp. fr. 1146.15–16.

Author	Perfect rhymes	Proportion
Aristophanes	*Ach*. 32–33, 276–277, 366–367, 547–549, 552–553, 595–597, 623–624, 700–701, 720–721, 874–875, 1008–1009, 1015–1016, 1126–1127, 1136–1137, 1219–1221; *Eq*. 311–312, 373–374, 1378–1381; *Nub*. 64–65, 684–685, 809–810, 1012–1014, 1078–1079, 1504–1505; *Vesp*. 65–66, 133–134, 167–168, 916–917, 999–1000, 1013–1014, 1211–1212; *Pax* 152–153, 380–381, 661–662, 712–713, 922–923, 1001–1002, 1285–1286 (internal); *Av*. 27–28, 99–100, 833–834, 841–842, 946–947, 1195–1196, 1271–1272, 1479–1481, 1745–1746; *Lys*. 26–28, 43–44, 292–293, 431–432, 831–832, 1313–1314; *Thesm*. 59–60, 111–112, 247–248, 288–289, 331–333, 415–416, 474–475, 493–494, 1200–1201; *Ran*. 191–192, 333–334, 1001–1002, 1080–1081; *Eccl*. 241–242, 838–840, 875–876; *Plut*. 32–33, 120–121, 368–369, 447–448, 502–503, 552–553, 574 (internal), 792–793, 807–808, 1171–1172.	163 out of 15,290 lines = 1.07%
Menander	*Dys*. 62–63, 365–366, 743–744, 923–924 (internal); *Sam*. 454–455, 487–488; *Asp*. 380–381; *Epit*. 308–309, 396–397, 443–444, 447–448; *Pk*. 181–182.	24 out of 2,970 lines = 0.81%

Tab. 2: List of imperfect rhymes.

Author	Imperfect rhymes	Proportion
Aeschylus	*Pers*. 171–172, 361–362, 826–827; *Sept*. 255–256, 513–516, 616–617, 875–876, 903–904, 911–912, 923–924; *Supp*. 194–195; *Ag*. 31–32, 604–605, 1068–1069, 1440–1441; *Cho*. 295–296, 423–424, 897–898, 900–901, 945–946, 1036–1037; *PV* 1037–1038.	46 out of 8,116 lines = 0.56%
Sophocles	*Aj*. 104–105, 250–251, 287–288, 728–729; *El*. 734–735; *OT* 100–101, 158–159, 605–606, 805–806, 924–926; *Ant*. 930–931, 1219–1220; *Trach*. 176–177, 492–493, 508–509; *Phil*. 36–37, 247–248, 1342–1343; *OC* 744–745, 1647–1648, 1674–1675.	44 out of 10,341 lines = 0.42%
Euripides (excl. *Cyc*. and *Rhes*.)	*Alc*. 35–36, 161–162, 450–451, 631–632, 784–785, 1110–1111; *Med*. 836–842; *Hipp*. 917–918, 937–938; *Andr*. 435–436; *Hec*. 289–290, 326–327, 677–678, 825–826; *Supp*. 671–672, 1208–1209, 1225–1226; *El*. 371–372, 1354–1355; *HF* 170–171; *IT* 532–534, 767–768, 1230–1231; *Ion* 752–754, 1542–1543; *Hel*. 773–774, 1524–1525; *Phoen*. 358–360, 1033–1034, 1141–1142, 1546–1547; *Or*. 9–10, 567–568, 668–669, 1390–1391; *Bacch*. 509–510, 517–518, 951–952, 1314–1315, 1362–1363; *IA* 35–36, 594–595, 1088–1089, 1442–1443.	92 out of 24,330 lines = 0.37%
Aristophanes	*Ach*. 70–71 (internal), 180–181, 458–459, 462–463; *Eq*. 80–83, 1012–1013; *Nub*. 342–344, 494–495, 711–714, 883–884, 991–992; *Vesp*. 585–586, 813–814, 1420–1421; *Pax* 343–344; *Av*. 188–189, 681–682, 1300–1301; *Lys*. 192–193, 682–683; *Thesm*. 173–174, 913–914; *Ran*. 66–67; *Eccl*. 41–42, 591–592; *Plut*. 50–51, 190–191, 576–577.	61 out of 15,290 lines = 0.4%
Menander	*Dys*. 253–254, 322–323, 522–523, 571–573, 956–957 (internal); *Sam*. 270–271; *Georg*. 7–8; *Epit*. 899–900; *Pk*. 538–539.	19 out of 2,970 lines = 0.64%

Tab. 3: Proportion of rhymes.

Author	Perfect rhymes	Imperfect rhymes	Total proportion
Aeschylus	0.93%	0.56%	1.49%
Sophocles	0.8%	0.42%	1.22%
Euripides	0.63%	0.37%	1%
Aristophanes	1.07%	0.4%	1.47%
Menander	0.81%	0.64%	1.45%

6 Comic rhymes

On the basis of the listing above, it would be interesting to further review Verrall's arguments on tragic rhymes (namely, that they are only used to offend someone or to show the distress of female characters in particular).[26] My focus here, however, shall be on comedy: what are the most common functions of comic rhymes? I have grouped the compiled comic passages in such categories, which I present below through illustrative examples, in a descending order of frequency, i.e. starting with the most prevalent function. My categories are not exhaustive, since there are multiple cases which do not fit in any one of them, nor are they mutually exclusive, since there are cases with overlapping functions. I mainly draw on *perfect* rhymes, to reduce the impact of coincidental rhymes on my typology as much as possible.

Rhyme in comedy is mostly used in stichomythia. The second speaker gives the impression of imitating the first one, the purpose usually being to render aggression (examples 1–2), sarcasm (3–5), or a speedy exchange (6–7).[27]

(1) ΠΑ. τὰς βλεφαρίδας σου παρατιλῶ.
ΑΛ. τὸν πρηγορεῶνά σούκτεμῶ.

PAPHLAGON: Your eyebrows I'll tear apart!
SAUSAGE-SELLER: I'll rip your stomach and your heart!   *Eq*. 373–374

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26 Verrall 1910, 258, 261–262.
27 The Greek text follows Wilson's *OCT* for Aristophanes, Sandbach's *OCT* for Menander, and Kassel and Austin's *PCG* for the comic fragments. My translation aims at rendering the rhymes, at the expense of verbal and syntactical accuracy.

(2) ΒΛ. ἀλλ' ἐστὶν ἐπιδηλοῦν τι πεπανουργηκότος.
ΧΡ. σὺ μὲν οἶδ' ὃ κρώζεις· ὡς ἐμοῦ τι κεκλοφότος

BLEPSIDEMUS: He's obviously done something bad, there is no doubt.
CHREMYLUS: You think I've stolen, that's what you're clucking about.   *Plut.* 368–369

(3) ΧΑ. δοῦλον οὐκ ἄγω, / εἰ μὴ νεναυμάχηκε τὴν περὶ τῶν κρεῶν.
ΞΑ. μὰ τὸν Δί' οὐ γὰρ ἀλλ' ἔτυχον ὀφθαλμιῶν.

CHARON: I'm not taking a slave, unless he fought in the sea.
XANTHIAS: I'm afraid I didn't. Had a pink eye, couldn't see!   *Ran.* 190–192

(4) ΕΥ. τὸ ῥάμφος ἡμῖν σου γέλοιον φαίνεται.
ΕΠ. τοιαῦτα μέντοι Σοφοκλέης λυμαίνεται.

EUELPIDES: Your beak seems so funny!
HOOPOE: Sophocles made that, honey!   *Av.* 99–100

(5) Α. ἀνόσια πάσχω ταῦτα ναὶ μὰ τὰς Νύμφας.
Β. πολλοῦ μὲν οὖν δίκαια ναὶ μὰ τὰς κράμβας.

A: By the Nymphs! I suffer moral damages!
B: Well deserved, for certain — by the cabbages!   Eupolis fr. 84

(6) ΟΙ. ἄγε δὴ τί νῷν ἐντευθενὶ ποιητέον;
ΤΡ. τί δ' ἄλλο γ' ἢ ταύτην χύτραις ἱδρυτέον;

SLAVE: Anything that you require?
TRYGAEUS: Put the cauldron to the fire.   *Pax* 922–923

(7) ΙΕ. τίς ἂν φράσειε ποῦ 'στι Χρεμύλος μοι σαφῶς;
ΧΡ. τί δ' ἔστιν ὦ βέλτιστε; / ΙΕ. τί γὰρ ἄλλ' ἢ κακῶς;

PRIEST: Can anyone tell me Chremylus' address?
CHREMYLUS: What's up, buddy? / PRIEST: Troubles, man, what else?   *Plut.* 1171–1172

The most elaborate cases of rhyme within stichomythia are those coinciding with an *antilabē*, i.e. the splitting of a single verse between two characters. Rhyme may apply to the first verse and the coda of the second (7–8); or to the first verse and the half-line before the *antilabē* (9); or between the two half-lines, in which case we may speak of internal rhyme (10).

(8) ΣΤ. Λύσιλλα, Φίλιννα, Κλειταγόρα, Δημητρία.
ΣΩ. ἄρρενα δὲ ποῖα τῶν ὀνομάτων; / ΣΤ. μυρία.

STREPSIADES: Names like "Jenny", "Kate", "Wendy"...
SOCRATES: And for boys? / STREPSIADES: There are plenty!   *Nub.* 684–685

(9) ΤΡ. ταῦτ' ᾆδε, ταῦθ', ὡς ἤσθιον κεκορημένοι.
ΠΑΙ. "θωρήσσοντ' ἄρ' ἔπειτα πεπαυμένοι —" / ΤΡ. ἄσμενοι, οἶμαι.

TRYGAEUS: You should sing of those sated men who yet ate a cake!
BOY: "They regained their strength, after taking a break..." / TRYGAEUS: Great, right?
                                                                Pax 1285–1286

(10) ΧΡ. ὅτι γε ζητεῖς τοῦτ' ἀναπείθειν ἡμᾶς, ὡς ἔστιν ἄμεινον
Πενία Πλούτου. / ΠΕ. καὶ σύ γ' ἐλέγξαι μ' οὔπω δύνασαι περὶ τούτου,

CHREMYLUS: How you're trying to persuade us better to be poor
than wealthy! / POVERTY: You cannot refute my point, you stealthy!   *Plut.* 573–574

The second most frequent use of rhyme is to highlight an antithesis, with the opposing words often reserved for the end of each verse (11–13). In *Acharnians*, most strikingly, three rhyming antitheses occur within stichomythic couplets, leaving no doubt that Aristophanes employed rhyme intentionally; in all three cases, Dicaeopolis offers an ironic counterpoint to Lamachus' plight, the latter preparing for battle — the former for dinner (14).

(11) πολλοὶ μὲν γὰρ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὄντες πλουτοῦσι πονηροί,
ἀδίκως αὐτὰ ξυλλεξάμενοι· πολλοὶ δ' ὄντες πάνυ χρηστοὶ

There are many, you see, wealthy scoundrels recently.
Dirty money! But those who behave always decently...   *Plut.* 502–503

(12) ὦ τρισκακοδαίμων, ὅστις ἐκ φειδωλίας
κατέθετο μῖσος διπλάσιον τῆς οὐσίας.

You're a shameful cheapskate
saving pennies, earning hate!   Men. fr. 734

(13) τῶν ζωγράφων μὲν ἡ καλὴ χειρουργία
ἐν τοῖς πίναξι κρεμαμένη θαυμάζεται,
αὕτη δὲ σεμνῶς ἐκ λοπάδος ἁρπάζεται
ἀπὸ τοῦ ταγήνου τ' εὐθέως ἀφανίζεται.

The painters' lovely works
are hung in museums to admire,
but mine's in the pot to desire,
directly sells out from the fire!   Anaxandrides fr. 34.2–4

(14) Λ. ταῦτ᾽ οὐ κατάγελώς ἐστιν ἀνθρώποις πλατύς;
Δ. ταῦτ᾽ οὐ πλακοῦς δῆτ᾽ ἐστὶν ἀνθρώποις γλυκύς; [...]
Λ. τὰ στρώματ᾽, ὦ παῖ, δῆσον ἐκ τῆς ἀσπίδος.
Δ. τὸν δῖνον, ὦ παῖ, δῆσον ἐκ τῆς κιστίδος.
Λ. εἰλιγγιῶ κάρα λίθῳ πεπληγμένος / καὶ σκοτοδινιῶ. [...]
Δ. κἀγὼ καθεύδειν βούλομαι καὶ στύομαι / καὶ σκοτοβινιῶ

LAMACHUS: Isn't this attitude what men call malicious?
DICAEOPOLIS: Isn't this pizza dough what men call delicious?   *Ach*. 1126–1127
LAMACHUS: Boy, bring my bedding and my shield.
DICAEOPOLIS: Boy, bring my wine flask well-sealed.   *Ach*. 1136–1137
LAMACHUS: I'm dizzy, a stone hit my head; I'll faint in darkness.
DICAEOPOLIS: I also want to go to bed; I'll fuck with hardness.   *Ach*. 1218–1221

A common comic device is catalogues of trivial things (15–16) or activities (17–18), usually appearing in asyndeton rather than in polysyndeton, and poets often invest them with rhyme. The technique of accumulation, one extreme form of which are such catalogues, has been studied in detail by Spyropoulos (1974), who demonstrated its dramatic and expressive nuances, most important: abundance, exaggeration, emphasis, emotional climaxing, rhetorical colouration, *bōmolochia*, and surprising jokes. It is only reasonable to suggest that adding rhyme amplifies the intended effect.

(15) στῆθος λιπαρόν, χροιὰν λαμπράν,
ὤμους μεγάλους, γλῶτταν βαιάν,
πυγὴν μεγάλην, πόσθην μικράν.

Oily chest, skin so slick,
tiny tongue, muscles thick,
beefy bum, little dick.   *Nub*. 1012–1014

(16) χόνδρος, τυρός, μέλι, σησαμίδες,
†βράχος, βρυγμός,† μνοῦς, πυραμίδες,
μῆλον, κάρυον, γάλα, κανναβίδες,

Wheat, cheese, honey, sesame-bakes,
shortbread, crackers, cream, pancakes,
apple, peanuts, milk, hemp-flakes,   Ephippus fr. 13.3–5

(17) πᾶς δὲ κατ᾽ οἴκους μάττει, πέττει,
τίλλει, κόπτει, τέμνει, δεύει,
χαίρει, παίζει, πηδᾷ, δειπνεῖ,
πίνει, σκιρτᾷ, λορδοῖ, κεντεῖ.

When at home, we are all kneading,
plucking, chopping, slicing, baking,

> laughing, playing, jumping, eating,
> drinking, hopping, bending, pegging.   Mnesimachus fr. 4.52–55

(18) τὸ καλὸν δὲ χρῶμα δευσοποιῷ χρῴζομεν.
καὶ χιόνα μὲν πίνειν παρασκευάζομεν,
τὸ δ’ ὄψον ἂν μὴ θερμὸν ᾖ διασύρομεν.
καὶ τὸν μὲν ὀξὺν οἶνον ἐκπυτίζομεν,
ἐπὶ ταῖς ἀβυρτάκαισι δ’ ἐκβακχεύομεν.

> We dye the bread, make it look fair,
> may drink cold snow, we don’t care,
> but if the food’s not hot we swear
> and spit sour wine we can’t bear
> (yet sour sauces we don’t spare).   Alexis fr. 145.9–13

As the last example has already demonstrated, rhyme may be employed to convey a steady pace to a narrative or description, to make it sound exciting or appalling (19–22).

(19) πλούτῳ δ’ ἐκεῖν’ ἦν πάντα συμπεφυρμένα,
ἐν πᾶσιν ἀγαθοῖς πάντα τρόπον εἰργασμένα·

> Everything was brought together by Wealth to our avail,
> all good things were best arranged by him in all detail...   Pherecrates fr. 113.1–2

(20) ὡς αἱ τράπεζαί γ’ εἰσὶν ἐπινενημέναι
ἀγαθῶν ἁπάντων καὶ παρεσκευασμέναι,
κλῖναί τε σισυρῶν καὶ δαπίδων σεσαγμέναι·

> The tables are set and heaped
> high with every kind of treat,
> and the couches cosy and neat...   *Eccl*. 838–840 (transl. Henderson, adapted)

(21) τί δ’ ἂν γυναῖκες φρόνιμον ἐργασαίατο
ἢ λαμπρόν, αἳ καθήμεθ’ ἐξηνθισμέναι,
κροκωτοφοροῦσαι καὶ κεκαλλωπισμέναι

> What can women do that’s wise or impressive?
> We just stay inside adorned with flowers,
> trying on dresses and make-up for hours.   *Lys*. 42–44

(22) καὶ τικτούσας ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς,
καὶ μιγνυμένας τοῖσιν ἀδελφοῖς,

> Girls who inside temples are becoming mothers,
> girls without shame fucking with their brothers...   *Ran*. 1080–1081

Not surprisingly, rhyme also appears in choral sections, however not as often as possibly expected, mostly to mark the transition from recitation to singing, or from one song to another. Thus rhyme may occur in the opening couplet of a song (23–24) or the closing couplet (25–26), or even be shared between a sung and a spoken verse (27).

(23) ζηλῶ σε τῆς εὐβουλίας,
μᾶλλον δὲ τῆς εὐωχίας

I envy you your well laid plan   *Ach.* 1008–1009
and even more your luscious flan   (strophe opening)

(24) εἰ νὴ τὼ θεώ με ζωπυρήσεις, λύσω
τὴν ἐμαυτῆς ὗν ἐγὼ δή, καὶ ποιήσω

I swear, if you fire me up, I'll unleash   *Lys.* 682–683
the bitch out of me and make you wish...   (antistrophe opening)

(25) τοῦτο γὰρ σκαιῶν θεατῶν
ἐστὶ πάσχειν, κοὐ πρὸς ὑμῶν.

Naive spectators miss the point,   *Vesp.* 1013–1014
but none of you we'll disappoint.   (*kommation* before parabasis)

(26) τοῦτο τοῦ μὲν ἦρος ἀεὶ / βλαστάνει καὶ συκοφαντεῖ,
τοῦ δὲ χειμῶνος πάλιν τὰς / ἀσπίδας φυλλορροεῖ.

In springtime he grows to clamour,   *Av.* 1478–1481
in autumn he drops his armour.   (strophe ending)

(27) μή σε λάθῃ θεῶν τις ταύτῃ περῶν·
<σιγᾶτε σῖγ'.> ἄθρει δὲ πᾶς κύκλῳ σκοπῶν,

No god should pass through and escape your attention.   *Av.* 1195–1196 (end of song/
— Be quiet and watch over the place for prevention...   start of spoken part)

Less common functions of rhyme, each only occurring a handful of times, are to address someone with reverence (28–29), to parody tragic, hieratic, and other high-register language (30–31), to mark a pair of synonyms (32–35), to point out proverbs and make them memorisable (33–34), to draw attention to a hyperbolic claim (35–36) or a pun (37–38).

(28) Φάλης Φάλης,
ἐὰν μεθ' ἡμῶν ξυμπίῃς, ἐκ κραιπάλης

Arousal Arousal,
join us drinking in carousal   *Ach*. 276–277

(29) εἴφ᾽ ὅ τι νοεῖς αὐτοῖσι πρὸς ἔμ᾽ ὦ φιλτάτη.
ἴθ᾽ ὦ γυναικῶν μισοπορπακιστάτη.

Tell me what you think about these, my dear,
how much you hate the shield and the spear.   *Pax* 661–662

(30) ἄνδρ᾽ <ἄνδρ᾽> ὁρῶ προσιόντα παραπεπληγμένον,
τοῖς τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ὀργίοις εἰλημμένον.

A man I see — poor man — coming to our direction,
who has been struck so hard by Venus with erection.   *Lys*. 831–832

(31) ἀλλ᾽ ὦ μέλ᾽ ὑπὸ τοῦ Διὸς ἀμαλδυνθήσομαι,
εἰ μὴ τετορήσω ταῦτα καὶ λακήσομαι.

My friend, I'll be — no doubt — relegated by Zeus
if I don't deliver loud and proclaim around this news!   *Pax* 380–381

(32) εὖ γ᾽ ὦ γλυκυτάτη Πραξαγόρα καὶ δεξιῶς.
πόθεν ὦ τάλαινα ταῦτ᾽ ἔμαθες οὕτω καλῶς;

Well done, sweet girl, you spoke precisely.
Where did you learn these things so nicely?   *Eccl*. 241–242

(33) τὸ γὰρ προθύμως μὴ πονήσαντας τυχεῖν
εὐδαιμονίας εἴωθ᾽ ὑπερηφανίας ποιεῖν.

When happiness is won by grudging labour   Men. fr. 196
it makes the happy man despise his neighbour.   (transl. Edmonds)

(34) τὸ μὲν βραδύνειν γὰρ τὸν ἔρωτ᾽ αὔξει πολύ,
ἐν τῷ ταχέως δ᾽ ἔνεστι παύσασθαι ταχύ.

Taking slow action increases the passion;
but taking it fast, be sure it won't last.   *Dys*. 62–63

(35) τὸν Ταυρέαν δὲ τοῖς πόνοις ὑπερβαλῶ,
τὸν Κτησίαν τε τῷ φαγεῖν ὑπερδραμῶ.

Than Taureas I'll work harder,
than Ctesias I'll eat faster.   Philetaerus fr. 3.2–3

(36) εἰ τοιοῦτ]οι πάντες ἦσαν, οὔτε τὰ δικαστήρια
ἦν ἄν, οὔθ᾽ αὑτοὺς ἀπῆγον εἰς τὰ δεσμωτήρια

If all people were like that, there would be no reason
for the state to maintain any court or prison.   *Dys.* 743–744

(37) ὅστις ἡμῖν τὰς Ἀθήνας ἐκκεκώφωκας βοῶν
κἀπὸ τῶν πετρῶν ἄνωθεν τοὺς φόρους θυννοσκοπῶν.

You're the guy who has deafened our Athens with your hissing,
lurking in the rocks above us, well at**tun**ed to tribute-fishing!   *Eq.* 311–312

(38) οὐ δεινὸν οὖν δῆτ᾽ ἐστὶν ἡμᾶς δεομένους
ἐς κόρακας ἐλθεῖν καὶ παρεσκευασμένους

It is awful — isn't it? — to have the aspiration
to go to **hen**, and to have done the entire preparation...?   *Av.* 27–28

7 Conclusion

In this paper I pursued a descriptive taxonomy of comic rhymes, based on statistical frequency (rather than an analytical discussion based on few selected case-passages), to demonstrate the many possibilities of rhyme, to argue for its aesthetic reappraisal, to prove claims of "coincidental rhyme" in ancient Greek wrong, and to facilitate further research in this unjustly overlooked stylistic phenomenon. While certainly not a major element in dramatic poetry (not exceeding 1.5% of the aggregated corpus), nor a feature more pertinent to comedy than to tragedy, rhyme performs, or facilitates as a supplementary element, key functions of comedy, including parody, exaggeration, abuse, and jokes. Several of the quoted examples illustrate how very conscious a choice rhyme was, since it was so combined with other figures, or employed in such positions and such contexts, as to lay emphasis on the very content that had to be emphasised, e.g. a *para prosdokian* joke, a character's ironical response to his collocutor, or a proverb — functions which rhyme still serves today in poetry and in everyday speech.

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Piero Totaro

Three Words in Aristophanes' *Wealth* (999, 1037, 1083)

Abstract: This chapter provides a detailed study of three problematic words from the text of Aristophanes' *Wealth*, all of them taken from the episode of the lustful old woman and her former young lover. In v. 999, the milk-based cake ἄμης, sent by the young man to the old lady, implies that this kind of smooth pastry is particularly appropriate for a toothless old woman. In v. 1037, the reading τηλία (nominative), given in the majority of codices, is favoured. The speaker sarcastically compares the old woman to a *tēlia* (a large round tray with a raised circular edge), to mock her fat girth. In v. 1083, the manuscripts' reading ἐτῶν may represent the genitive plural not only of ἔτος, "year", but also of ἔτης, "fellow citizen". Apart from being mocked for her age, the old woman is also denounced as a veteran whore who has been possessed by innumerable lovers.

In one of the scenes that, in the second part of *Wealth*,[1] unveil the consequences of the healing of the blind god of richness, Aristophanes brings on stage an Old Woman and a Young Man, together with the Coryphaeus (from the Chorus of old farmers) and the protagonist Chremylus (959–1096). The Old Woman, wearing a white mask covered with rouge (1064) and a dress adorned with ποικίλα (1099),[2] poses as a young lady, suitably adapting perhaps her attitude and voice (cf. 963). Initially, in dialogue with Chremylus, she recalls the attention paid her by her young lover, on whom she bestowed substantial material benefits, until the opportunist gigolo lost interest and decided to break up with her.

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1 Warmest thanks are due to S. Douglas Olson and Pietro Berardi for their precious suggestions. Unless otherwise specified, the text of Aristophanes is cited from Wilson 2007a, whereas the scholia on *Wealth* reflect the editorial assessments of Massa Positano 1960 (*Tzetziana*); Chantry 1994b (*vetera*); Chantry 1996 (*recentiora*).

2 Aristophanes' ἔχουσα δ' ἦλθες αὐτὴ ποικίλα has been variously translated: "robe brodée" (Van Daele in Coulon 1930, 147; Thiercy 1997, 975), "veste ricamata" (Paduano 1988, 175), "Your dress looks bright enough" (Halliwell 1998, 253), "richly dressed" (Sommerstein 2001, 133), "vesti ricamate" (Torchio 2001, 241), "wearing your own finery" (Henderson 2002, 595), "veste tutta ricami" (Albini/Barberis 2003, 83).

1 *Plut.* 999: ἄμης

Both literature and iconography offer substantial evidence that the exchange of gifts between lovers — e.g. animals (such as birds, horses, and hounds)[3] or desserts[4] — was a common and meaningful practice. But in the context of a hopelessly deteriorated and compromised relationship like the one depicted in *Wealth*, such an exchange takes on a negative value and turns out to be remarkably disrespectful towards the ex-lover (993–1002):

> OLD WOMAN: But nowadays that skunk hasn't got the same attitude; he's completely changed his tune. You see, when I sent him this πλακοῦς and the other snacks (τραγήματα) on the tray (πίναξ) here, with a message that I'd visit him this evening —
> CHREMYLUS: What did he do, I'd like to know?
> OLD WOMAN: He sent it all back, along with this ἄμης, on condition that I never visit him again, and on top of that he added, "Once upon a time Milesians were formidable".[5]

With the proverbial expression "Once upon a time Milesians were formidable", the Young Man irreverently either implies that his love story with the Old Woman is over[6] or intends to remind her of her inexorable physical decay.[7] The significance of the exchange of sweets between lovers is less obvious, and I find it surprising that modern commentaries (including Holzinger's, which is generally extremely detailed) fail to thoroughly investigate the meaning of this action, which has however been carefully considered by Vinicio Tammaro in his "Note al *Pluto*" (1983, 134–136). Tammaro came to the conclusion that the sweets mentioned in Aristophanes are strongly sexualised, and that they reproduce the shapes of genitals:

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3 Cf. Ar. *Av.* 706–707; *Plut.* 157; on the topic, see Koch-Harnack 1983.

4 Athenaeus (14.643f) and Aelian (*VH* 11.12) report a famous anecdote regarding a dessert that Alcibiades sent to Socrates "to ignite his passion", unleashing Xanthippe's wrath. This led her to violently smash the cake, after which the philosopher replied "So, therefore, you cannot eat it either".

5 Transl. Henderson 2002, 565 (slightly adapted).

6 Cf. Holzinger 1940, 300.

7 Tammaro 1983, 136–137; Torchio 2001, 203; Sommerstein 2001, 201. The physical decline of the Old Woman is compared to the decadence of Miletus, which followed a period of power and prosperity for the city, and subsequently turned into a proverbial formula (first attested at Anac. *PMG* 426 = fr. 53 Gentili and Timocr. *PMG* 733; on the origin of the proverb, see now Bernsdorff 2020, II 738–739). The parabasis ode of *Wasps* opens (1060–1062) with a reworking of this proverb, with the Chorus of old jurymen-wasps complaining that "once upon a time we were valiant in Choruses, and valiant in battle, and above all most valiant with this" (referring to their sting).

si può supporre che, fallica o testicolare, sia comunque "virile" ── di contro a un "femmineo" πλακοῦς ── la parvenza dell'ἄμης nel *Pluto* (ciò pare denunciare del resto l'ironica condizione espressa al v. 1000). Un frammento di Alessi (163 K., dall' Ὁμοία) costituisce forse una decisiva conferma, se mostra ── al di là di residui dubbi testuali ── che gli ἄμητες, accanto ai λαγῷα e alle κίχλαι (tutti τραγήματα), erano dagli sposi offerti alle spose. La connotazione nuziale suonerebbe in definitiva come un'ulteriore beffa (p. 136).[8]

Paduano, by contrast, was unpersuaded by the assimilation of πλακοῦς and ἄμης to the shape of female and male genitals (1988, 154–155 n. 137):

Che il giovane risponda, oltre che con la sgarbata restituzione, con un altro dono dello stesso tipo, si spiega non già con una lambiccata proposta di vedere nei dolci stessi una raffigurazione rispettiva degli organi genitali (Tammaro) ── ma come una sfrontata volontà di mettere sullo stesso piano il significato del dono della donna (che è quello di richiesta amorosa), con una opposta e simmetrica richiesta dell'uomo: che è evidentemente quella di essere lasciato in pace.

Even Sommerstein (2001, 201 *ad* Ar. *Plut.* 999), although he fails to cite Tammaro's article, is inclined to read Aristophanes' ἄμης through the lens of the aforementioned fragment of Alexis:

(*scil.* ἄμης) which was traditionally brought, together with other foods, by a bridegroom to his bride when he came to fetch her from her father's house to his (Alexis fr. 168). If on that occasion it conveyed the message "I want you to come to my house, and I will maintain you", it is here used (together with the return of the other gifts) to say almost exactly the opposite: "I don't need you to maintain me, and I don't want you to come to my house".

I believe that both Tammaro's and Sommerstein's interpretations of Alexis fr. 168 are affected by a clear misunderstanding.

The fragment (*ap.* Ath. 14.642d) comes from a dialogue in which one of the interlocutors (probably a greedy parasite or a servant) initially states that he is not a φιλόδειπνος, later nullifying this declaration by specifying that his culinary

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8 Tammaro (1983, 136 n. 12) notes that Henderson, in the *Maculate Muse* (see now the second edition, Henderson 1991), thought that Alexis' ἄμης was "one of the various kinds of pastries used to refer to the cunt" (Henderson 1991, 144), and that πλακοῦς χαρίσιος in Ar. fr. 211 "probably means phallus", or alternatively "indicates the cunt, as at *Plut.* 995–998" (Henderson 1991, 160 n. 41). Torchio (2001, 222–223 *ad* Ar. *Plut.* 999) synthetically reiterates Tammaro's observations: "Per Henderson … anche la forma di questo dolce alluderebbe ai genitali femminili. Alexis, fr. 168, 5 K.-A., fa riferimento all'uso degli sposi di donare ἄμητες alle spose il giorno delle nozze insieme ad altre 'leccornie' ('lepri e tordi'): la simbologia nuziale associata a questo tipo di dolce renderebbe ancor più 'crudele' la risposta del giovane".

preferences incline toward τραγήματα, and eventually revealing, with a juicy comic *aprosdoketon*, that his palate is actually delighted by all kinds of dishes:

> οὐδὲ φιλόδειπνός εἰμι μὰ τὸν Ἀσκληπιόν,
> τραγήμασιν χαίρω δὲ μᾶλλον. (Β.) εὖ πάνυ.
> (Α.) τραγήματ᾽ αἰσθάνομαι γὰρ ὅτι νομίζετε
> τοῖς νυμφίοις μετιοῦσι τὴν νύμφην †λέγεις†
> παρέχειν, ἄμητας καὶ λαγῷα καὶ κίχλας.   5
> τούτοισι χαίρω, τοῖς δὲ κεκαρυκευμένοις
> ὄψοισι καὶ ζωμοῖσιν ἥδομ᾽, ὦ θεοί

With regard to the irresistible τραγήματα, his mind immediately runs to those traditionally served during wedding ceremonies at the bride's parents' house, when the bridegroom came to pick her up to escort her in procession to her new home. On that occasion — as stated in the fragment — ἄμητες, pieces of hare, and thrushes were usually offered (as τραγήματα) τοῖς νυμφίοις μετιοῦσι τὴν νύμφην, "to the bridegroom and his groomsmen fetching the bride".[9] The fragment thus documents that ἄμητες were included among the kinds of treats offered *to the husband* at the bride's house, and not *by the bridegroom to the bride*, as Tammaro and Sommerstein argue in support of their interpretation of the Aristophanic passage.

The question to be addressed now is what a πλακοῦς and an ἄμης were. The former (literally "flat cake"; cf. LSJ 1411, *s.v.* I) could properly indicate any pastry product other than bread (ἄρτος);[10] the latter was a particular kind of πλακοῦς, the dough for which contained milk.[11] I suggest that this difference, slight as it may appear, explains both the destination and the meaning of the gift: the Old Woman sends snacks she imagines will be particularly appreciated by the Young Man, a collection of τραγήματα and a πλακοῦς, but the Young Man refuses those gifts, returning all of them to sender with the addition of a different kind of sweet, a soft milk-based pastry, which — he guesses — may be particularly suitable for

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9 The text and interpretation of the fragment are excellently discussed by Arnott 1996, 493–496; see also Sanchis Llopis/Montañés Gómez/Pérez Asensio 2007, 177; Stama 2016, 321–323.

10 Cf. L. Citelli in Canfora 2001, III 1665 n. 3 (*ad* Ath. 14.643e); Pellegrino 2013, 42.

11 Ath. 14.644f, ἄμης· πλακοῦντος γένος; Poll. 6.77, πλακούντων εἴδη ἄμης, ἀμητίσκος; Phot. α 1195 Theodoridis, ἄμης· γένος πλακοῦντος (further lexicographical and etymological references are collected by Theodoridis 1982, 125 *ad loc.*). Apart from Ar. *Plut.* 999 and Alexis fr. 168.5, see also Amphis fr. 9.3; Anaxandrides fr. 42.56; Antiphanes frr. 89.2, 297; Epicrates fr. 5.5; Ephippus fr. 8.3 (cf. Olson 2007, 303 *ad loc.*); Telecleides fr. 1.12; Men. fr. 381; Schol. vet. Ar. *Plut.* 999a, εἶδος πλακοῦντος γαλακτώδους; Schol. Tz. Ar. *Plut.* 995, ἄμητες δὲ γαλακτοπηγῆ κατασκευάσματα, τὰ μὲν συναφεψηθέντα μέλιτι, τὰ δ᾽ οὔ.

a toothless old woman.[12] It cannot be accidental that, in the abundant repertory of insults employed by the Young Man to slander the Old Woman (a virtual catalogue of the *vetula-Skoptik* motif, as Grassmann calls it),[13] her lack of teeth have a prominent place, along with her grey hair (1042–1043), a face abundantly furrowed by wrinkles (1050–1051), her dirtiness (1062), and the exaggerated antiquity of a woman "fucked by thirteen thousand years" (1082–1083). See *Plut.* 1055–1059:

> YOUNG MAN: Would you like to play with me? It's been a while.
> OLD WOMAN: Where, my dear?
> YOUNG MAN: Right here. Have these nuts.
> OLD WOMAN: What kind of play do you mean?
> YOUNG MAN: Guessing how many teeth you have.
> CHREMYLUS: Here, let me guess: I say three or four.
> YOUNG MAN: Pay up: she's only got a single molar.[14]

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12 Commenting on a different type of food, namely, the χόνδρος (Ar. *Vesp.* 737–738), MacDowell (1971, 234) aptly observes: "The implication is that an old man is toothless (cf. 165) and can take only soft or liquid food". See also Biles/Olson 2015, 317: "[χόνδρος] in any case represents something a toothless old man can easily eat".

13 Grassmann 1966, 176 *s.v.* "*vetula-Skoptik*".

14 Transl. Henderson 2002, 573–575 (slightly modified). An insult against a toothless old hetaera closes Philetaerus fr. 9: "And my lips are sealed about Naïs; because she's lost her molars" (*ap.* Ath. 13.587e; transl. Olson 2010, 395). A scommatic continuity is easy to trace in Greek and Latin epigrammatic tradition: cf. Lucill. *Anth. Pal.* 11.310, "You bought hair, rouge, honey, wax, and teeth; for the same outlay you might have bought a face" (transl. Paton 1918, 213); Mart. 3.93.1–2, *cum tibi trecenti consules, Vetustilla, / et tres capilli quattuorque sint dentes*; see also Hor. *Carm.* 4.13.9–12, *importunus enim transvolat aridas / quercus et refugit te, quia luridi / dentes, te, quia rugae / turpant et capitis nives*; and *Epod.* 8.1–6, *rogare longo putidam te saeculo / viris quid enervet meas, / cum sit tibi dens ater et rugis vetus / frontem senectus exaret / hietque turpis inter aridas natis / podex velut crudae bovis*; *Carmina Priapea* 12.8–9, *hesterna quoque luce dum precatur, / dentem de tribus excreavit unum* (on Horace and *Priapea*, see Richlin 1983, 109–116; Watson 2003, 295; Fedeli/Ciccarelli 2008, 535 ff.). In his catalogue of masks, Pollux (4.151) includes the "old maid" (οἰκουρὸν γρᾴδιον), who "has a snub nose and two teeth for each jaw"; cf. the corresponding old-woman masks listed in Bernabò Brea 1981, 212–213 and Bernabò Brea 2001, 238–239. We currently lack a comprehensive, detailed study of the profile of the old woman in Attic Comedy: Oeri's (1948) dissertation is outdated; despite the interesting sociological analysis he offers, Henderson 1987 is far from exhaustive; brief but useful observations are provided by Tammaro 1995, 174. An excellent, up-to-date survey on the *vetula-Skoptik* motif in ancient Greek and Latin literature is offered by Watson 2003, 287 ff., and abundant bibliography on the topic can be found in Galán Vioque 2002, 430.

2 *Plut.* 1037: τηλία

The embarrassment of modern scholars in attempting to discover the meaning of *Plut.* 1037 (εἰ τυγχάνοι γ' ὁ δακτύλιος ὢν τηλίας) is only partially relieved by the fact that the line appeared no less obscure to ancient commentators, who did not hesitate to admit their difficulties in interpreting it (especially with regard to the exegesis of τηλία, as testified, e.g., by Schol. vet. 1037b, which candidly admits τηλία: τοῦτο τί ἐστιν οὐκ οἶδα). In a well-documented article, Marcel Chantry (1994a) gathered the whole corpus of literary, lexicographical, and scholiastic witnesses related to the term, in order to outline its precise semantic spectrum and the functions of the object it indicates. It can be concluded that a τηλία was a polished table with a raised circular edge, usually employed for flour-processing and on which bread, in addition to being prepared, was put to rise and sold (cf. e.g. Schol. vet. Ar. *Plut.* 1037a, d, e); the presence of a large raised edge made it possible to avoid scattering the flour and kept the products on top of the table, while also allowing the implement to be employed as a table for playing dice or a spot for fights between cocks or quails (cf. Aeschin. 1.53; Alciphron 3.17; Synesius, *Epistulae* 45 Garzya; Poll. 7.203, 9.108, 10.150; Schol. vet. Ar. *Plut.* 1037g; *Anecd. Bach.* I 386, 30; *Anecd. Bekk.* 307, 31). Schol. vet. Ar. *Plut.* 1037l provides an additional meaning ("chimney lid"), but this explanation is probably influenced by the way the object is employed at *Wasps* 147, where (as Schol. 147b Koster clarifies) a τηλία functions as a cover for a chimney, despite the fact that it was properly "a smooth board on which flour was sold at the market".[15] According to a number of lexica and ancient etymological works, τηλία (or σηλία) was substantially equivalent to terms like κόσκινον, "sifter", and ἀλευρόττησις, the tool through which flour was filtered (διαττῶσιν; cf. Phot. α 931 Theodoridis; *Synag.* **B** α 964 Cunningham) or sieved (σήθουσιν, διασήθουσιν; Hsch. α 2904 Cunningham; *Etym. Magn.* 60.25 Gaisford). On an interpretation alternatively ascribed to the grammarians Orion (*Etym. Gen.* **AB** *s.v.* τηλία) and Oros (*Etym. Magn.* 757.1–2 Gaisford; [Zonar.] p. 1727 Tittmann), τηλία indicates the "circumference of the sifter", ἡ περιφέρεια τοῦ κοσκίνου (thus both Hsch. τ 772 Hansen and *Suda* τ 497 Adler): this interpretation is registered in the ancient scholia to *Plut.* 1037, variously phrased as ὁ κοσκίνου κύκλος or τοῦ κοσκίνου ὁ κύκλος (Schol. vet. 1037m, reported in many manuscripts but absent from **R**; see also Tzetzes' related

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15 At *Vesp.* 148, a piece of ξύλον is exactly what Bdelycleon uses to cover the fireplace Philocleon tries to get out of, in the attempt to nullify his father's efforts to escape his house and satisfy his uncontrollable desire to be a juror in the courts.

scholion [p. 211 Massa Positano]), κοσκινόγυρος or κοσκίνου γύρος (Schol. rec. 1037b).[16]

In the light of such complex and multifarious lexical and exegetical positions, how should we interpret the humorous reference to τηλία in *Plut.* 1037? Being abandoned by her young lover made the Old Woman endure harsh psychological-physical damage: "I'm pining away with grief", she says at 1034, where κατατέτηκ(α) expresses the corporal and spiritual consumption she is suffering. This heartfelt confession is immediately followed by Chremylus' merciless: "No, you're rotting away, if you ask me" (κατασέσηπας, 1035). As evidence of her physical ruin, the Old Woman then declares that she could be pulled through a ring (1036, διὰ δακτυλίου μὲν οὖν ἐμέ γ' ἂν διελκύσαις) due to her current alleged emaciation, as the scholiasts note (Schol. vet. 1036, Schol. rec. 1036b; see also *Suda* τ 497 Adler, ἐπὶ τῶν πάνυ λεπτῶν). In this case, the spectators did not have long to wait for Chremylus' ironic reply (1037): εἰ τυγχάνοι γ' ὁ δακτύλιος ὢν τηλίας, "Sure, were it the ring of a *tēlia*", if the Ravennas' genitive τηλίας is retained. This is the reading accepted by Wilson (2007a) in his critical text, with no comment in the companion volume *Aristophanea* (Wilson 2007b). The Ravennas' τηλίας was also favoured by Holzinger (1940, 285–286), who constructed the sentence as follows: ὁ δακτύλιος ὢν δακτύλιος τηλίας, giving the predicative δακτύλιος the sense of κύκλος or γῦρος — a semantic nuance that is not attested, however, before late Greek literature. Sommerstein (2001, 121) translates "Yes, if the ring happened to be attached to a bread-seller's tray", subsequently offering (pp. 204–205) a peculiar defence of **R**'s text: the δακτύλιος of the τηλία is actually a ring (more plausibly made of leather than metal) attached to the tool and carried cross-body, allowing the vendor to have his or her hands free to comfortably sell the products displayed on the board. Henderson (2002, 571) translates: "Provided the ring were the size of a barrel hoop".

Apart from **R**, the entire medieval paradosis (including *Suda* τ 497 Adler) transmits τηλία (nominative with a predicative function): "if the ring were a *tēlia*", i.e. "if the ring had the diameter of a *tēlia*", and this is the reading and interpretation I favour. As ancient commentators (Schol. vet. 1037k; cf. *Suda* τ 496 Adler) observed, the Old Woman's fatness would have prevented her from being pulled through a ring, unless the ring had a hole of such a size to look like a perforated *tēlia* (1037i, λέγει ὅτι "εἰ μὴ ὁ δακτύλιος τοσοῦτον ἔχει τρύπημα, ὡς δοκεῖν εἶναι ἐν τηλίᾳ τὸ τρύπημα, **RVEΘNBarbAld** οὐκ ἂν διέλθοις" **VN**); it goes without saying that the scholiasts were aware that the aforementioned board was

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16 *Circulus cribi*, *cribi anulus*, or *incerniculum* are the most widespread interpretations in humanistic translations of *Plut.*: see Muttini 2023, 97, 132–133.

not perforated (1037h, τηλία μέν ἐστιν ἡ ἀτρύπητος σανίς **RVEΘNBarbAld**). The actual difference between a small, common ring and a *tēlia* was their dimension, the rounded shape being merely an element shared by both. With the exception of Phot. τ 246 Theodoridis (≅ *Suda* τ 497 Adler ≅ *Etym. Gen.* **AB** *s.v.* τηλία, *unde Etym. Magn.* 756.56 Gaisford), which defines it as a πῆγμα τετράγωνον useful for selling flour or having cocks fight, and a commentary on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (Anon. *in Arist. Art. Rhet. comm.* [p. 205, 14 Rabe], according to which "someone argues that *tēlia* is a square basket [καλαθίσκον τετράγωνον] where flour lies"), a *tēlia* is usually described by the sources as a board with a wide circular edge:

– Pollux (9.108), describing quail-fighting, informs us that players used a *tēlia* (similar to that used for selling bread) to trace a circle on the ground before having the birds fight each other: τηλίᾳ μὲν ὁμοίᾳ τῇ ἀρτοπώλιδι κύκλον ἐμπεριγράψαντες;

– *Anecdota Bachmann* (I 386, 30): σανίδιόν τι περιπεφραγμένον πανταχόθεν, "a tablet completely surrounded by a border";

– *Anecdota Bekker* (275, 15): σανὶς ἀλφιτοπωλικὴ πλατεῖα, προσηλωμένας ἔχουσα κύκλῳ σανίδας, τοῦ μὴ τὰ ἄλφιτα ἐκπίπτειν, "a flat board used for selling flour, with other boards fixed in a circle to prevent the flour from falling out" (a similar description is provided by *Etym. Magn.* 757.7 Gaisford);

– *Anecdota Bekker* (307, 31) defines the *tēlia* on which cocks used to fight with each other as a πλέγμα τι ψιαθῶδες στρογγύλον.

Therefore, according to Chremylus, the Old Woman (who surely did not have a thin waist, despite her loud complaints about her physical state) could have been pulled through an anomalous, enormously large ring with the same diameter as a round *tēlia*. The circular shape both rings and *tēliai* shared must have triggered this association in Chremylus' mind, perhaps encouraged also by the fact that the Old Woman had just appeared on stage bearing a πίναξ, the wooden tray on which she placed the πλακοῦς and the other τραγήματα sent as gifts to her gigolo in order to receive erotic favours in return, but which he did not hesitate to send back to her with the addition of an ἄμης (cf. 995–999). This visual assessment of the scene may have prompted Chremylus to bring the *tēlia* into the conversation, as a tool the Old Woman must be familiar with, given her expertise in the loving preparation of bakery products. This is not to mention the fact that she herself was seemingly a glutton, as her size indicates.

Nor is this the first use of *tēliai* to mock women in Athenian comedy. The scholia on this line (Schol. vet. 1037b–c) inform us that Eupolis' *Maricas* (Lenaea 421 BCE) included an unidentified character who used an *eikasmos*, i.e. a burlesque comparison between a *tēlia* and the mother of the demagogue lamp-seller

Hyperbolus, whose bones ended up being thrown on a *tēlia* (Eup. fr. 209). Eupolis' joke likely insulted the demagogue's mother — the drunk old woman who danced the *kordax* in the same play (cf. Ar. *Nub.* 553–556, with Schol. vet. 555 Holwerda) — for her dishonourable work as a baker,[17] a profession she perhaps practiced also in Hermippus' *Artopōlides*.[18] Regardless of how attractive these assumptions appear, handling such meagre and often badly preserved fragmentary materials always requires caution, as conjectural reconstructions could be numerous, and all uncertain; it is no coincidence that, with regard to the comparison between Hyperbolus' mother and a *tēlia* in Eup. fr. 209, S. Douglas Olson proposes a number of different exegetical solutions, all of them ending with a question-mark: "Hyperbolus' mother was compared to a *tēlia* (because she was presented as a bread-woman, as perhaps a year or two later in Hermippus' *Artopōlides*?; or because she was tall and flat-chested or the like?)";[19] τοῦτο τί ἐστιν οὐκ οἶδα, indeed.

3 *Plut.* 1083: ἐτῶν

Line 1082 (οὐκ ἂν διαλεχθείην διεσπλεκωμένῃ) contains two verbs denoting sexual intercourse: for the former, see also Hyp. fr. 171 Jensen and Plut. *Sol.* 20.3; for the latter, cf. σπλεκοῦν in Ar. *Lys.* 152 (according to Schol. vet. Ar. *Plut.* 1082jα, σπλέκωμα represents the noise produced during copulation).[20] The Young Man thus categorically rejects the idea of having sex with an old woman "screwed by thirteen thousand years" (1082–1083):

> οὐκ ἂν διαλεχθείην διεσπλεκωμένῃ
> ὑπὸ μυρίων ἐτῶν γε καὶ τρισχιλίων.

Willems (1919, III 357) did not succeed in making complete sense of l. 1083, and proposed emending the mss.' ἐτῶν γε to τε τῶνδε,[21] introducing a direct reference

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17 On this matter, particular interest is raised by Tzetzes' scholion on Ar. *Nub.* 555a Holwerda, γραῦν μεθύσην, τὴν μητέρα δῆθεν Ὑπερβόλου, ἣν ἔλεγον ἀρτοπώλιδα εἶναι; but see also Schol. Tz. 552c, ὡς ἀρτοπώλισσαν.
18 See Sonnino 1997; Sonnino 2012; Comentale 2017, 65–68.
19 Olson 2016, 218.
20 On both verbs, see Henderson 1991, 154–155.
21 Rutherford 1896, 100 conjectured ὑπὸ χιλίων γε τῶνδε καὶ τρισμυρίων (τρισμυρίων *iam* von Velsen 1881, 77 [apparatus] *coll.* Ar. *Eq.* 1156) in order to reconcile the quantitative evidence

to the spectators in the theatre: the Young Man would be declaring that he would never long for sex with a woman "fucked by *these* thirteen thousand". The conjecture is plausible from a palaeographic perspective and finds some support in the fact that the theatrical audience is frequently addressed by the characters in Aristophanic comedies. But what granted this emendation a long life was, most of all, its acceptance in Victor Coulon's critical edition, which was highly influential in the last century. The most striking consequence of Willems' correction was to make *Plut.* 1083 a crucial, if not decisive, piece of evidence with regard to the long-standing question of the number of spectators the Theatre of Dionysus in Athens could hold in the fifth and early fourth centuries BCE, the time of the version of *Wealth* preserved in the manuscripts. For example, this passage inclined Luigi Gallo (1981, 295 n. 50) to believe that thirteen thousand spectators would be the number obtained by calculating one thousand people for each of the thirteen sectors (*kerkides*) into which the cavea was divided.[22]

Willems' conjecture has now fallen into oblivion, and the *lectio codicum* has been restored by all recent editors (Torchio, Sommerstein, Henderson, Albini/ Barberis, Wilson). Moreover, current estimates of the capacity of the fifth-century BCE theatre have significantly decreased, fluctuating between 4000 and 7000 spectators.[23] In addition, I believe that the genuineness of the manuscript reading (ἐτῶν) can be proved by what follows. Ancient scholia noticed that the term in question has a double semantic nuance: on the one hand, it mocks the Old Woman for her age (Schol. vet. 1083b, ὁ νέος τὸ "ἐτῶν" προσέθηκε, σκώπτων αὐτὴν ὡς γραῦν),[24] but on the other, it tacitly implies ἀνδρῶν "men" (Schol. vet. 1083a, λείπει τὸ "ἀνδρῶν"; cf. Schol. rec. 1083b, ἐτῶν] πολιτῶν **thPstr** | ἐν μιᾷ λέξει νοεῖ δύο πράγματα, τοὺς πολίτας καὶ τοὺς χρόνους **Mt** | χρόνων, πολιτῶν

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related to the number of spectators with what he deemed was inferable from Pl. *Symp.* 175e, i.e. over 30.000.

22 Halliwell (1998, 288) comments on his translation ("thirteen thousand") of *Plut.* 1083: "the hyperbole, which happens to provide probably the most plausible classical estimate of the audience in the Theatre of Dionysus, implies that the woman is the most widely available of whores".

23 See Csapo 2007, 97; Loscalzo 2008, 69–71; Roselli 2014, 27.

24 Modern scholars (see e.g. Elmore 1905, 436–437; Postgate 1905, 437–438) have often discussed the symbolic value of thirteen as an "indefinite number", which could be the case for *Plut.* 1083 as well. Moreover, as Fraenkel 1950, III 759 (*ad* Aesch. *Ag.* 1605) pointed out, the number thirteen would embody the idea of "going beyond" or "exceeding" a round number (such as twelve: an up-to-date discussion on the Aeschylean passage is found in Medda 2017, III 424 *ad loc.*). Olson (1998, 258–259) is fairly cautious with regard both to the matter in question (broadly intended) and the specific interpretation of Ar. *Pax* 990: "Of all their examples, however, only *Plut.* 846; Hom. *Il.* 5.387; Bacchyl. 11.92; and perhaps *Plut.* 1083 and Theoc. 15.17 have any force, and none is decisive".

V[57]).[25] It is worth noting that ἐτῶν can be the genitive plural of both ἔτος ("year") and ἔτης, a masculine noun of the first declension. In Homer, the latter is used to refer to kin or relatives (e.g. *Il.* 6.239; *Od.* 4.3), but in fifth-century poetry it begins to be restricted to the sense "citizen, fellow-citizen, private-citizen" (e.g. Pind. fr. 52f.10 M.; Aesch. *Supp.* 247; fr. 281a.28 R.; Eur. fr. 1014 Kann.; Thuc. 5.79.4 ⸺ where it is attested in the text, in Doric dialect, of a peace-treaty between Sparta and Argos).[26] The intended ambiguity of the term could thus sound perfectly acceptable to Aristophanes' spectators (or at least to the smartest of them), in order to indicate the impressive amount not only of years but also of citizen-lovers possessed by the old whore: an elegant linguistic double entendre, comically combined with the extremely obscene διασπλεκοῦμαι.

In addition, one *topos* included in the *vetula-Skoptik* motif consisted in attributing a hyperbolic number of years to a now veteran hetaera. Paradigmatic evidence of this is provided by fr. 9 (*ap.* Ath. 13.587e) of the *Kynagis* of Philetaerus (a fourth-century BCE comedian identified as "Aristophanes' son" by *Suda* φ 308 Adler), which presents a series of slanders similar to those addressed to the Old Woman in *Wealth*:

> Isn't Cercope 3000 years (ἔτη τρισχίλια) old by now? And isn't Diopeithes' disgusting Telesis 10.000 years (ἕτερα μυρία) older than that? And no one has any idea when Theolyte was originally born. Didn't Laïs ultimately die while being fucked? And haven't Isthmias and Neaera and Phila rotted out? I won't mention the Cossyphas, Galenes, and Corones. And my lips are sealed about Naïs; because she's lost her molars (transl. Olson 2010, 395).

With regard to this motif, it is also easy to imagine a scommatic continuity in Greek and Latin epigrammatic tradition, which is often populated by women mercilessly stigmatised as exaggeratedly old, and as dating back even to mythical past;[27] the comic poet Cratinus had already mocked an old woman by defining her as "born before Tethys" (πρότηθυς, fr. 483, *ap.* Phryn. *Praep. Soph.* p. 102.19 De Borries). A representative, exhilarating sample of passages follows:

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25 Inclined to accept the latter interpretation are some humanistic Latin-language translators of *Plut.*: friar Alexander of Otranto (1458), *strupizatam a mille civibus tribus milibus*; and Ludovicus of Poppi (late 15th century), *nequaquam colloquerer te subagitata / decem milibus civium et ter mille*; see Muttini 2023, 111.

26 See Radt 1958, 113–114; Rutherford 2001, 308 n. 8; Sommerstein 2019, 161 (*ad* Aesch. *Supp.* 247).

27 On this *topos*, see Goldberg 1992, 104 ff., 286 ff. (*ad Carm. Priapea* 12 and 57); Schatzmann 2012, 166–167 (*ad* Nicarch. *Anth. Pal.* 11.71); Floridi 2014, 123, 550 (*ad* Lucill. *Anth. Pal.* 11.69 and 11.408).

"The letter υ signifies four hundred, but your years are twice as much, my tender Lais, as old as a crow and Hecuba put together, grandmother of Sisyphus and sister of Deucalion. But dye your white hair and say 'tata' to everyone" (Myrinus, *Anth. Pal.* 11.67; transl. Paton 1918, 105).

"Themistonoe, three times a crow's age, when she dyes her grey hair becomes suddenly not young (νέα) but Rhea" (Lucillius, *Anth. Pal.* 11.69; transl. Paton 1918, 105).

"Niconoe was once in her prime, I admit that, but her prime was when Deucalion looked on the vast waters. Of those times we have no knowledge, but of her now we know that she should seek not a husband, but a tomb" (Nicarchus, *Anth. Pal.* 11.71; transl. Paton 1918, 107).

"They say you spend a long time in the bath, Heliodora, an old woman of a hundred (ἐτῶν ἑκατόν) not yet retired from the profession. But I know why you do it. You hope to grow young, like old Pelias, by being boiled" (Lucillius, *Anth. Pal.* 11.256; transl. Paton 1918, 193).

"You dye your hair, but you will never dye your old age, or smooth out the wrinkles of your cheeks. Then don't plaster all your face with white lead, so that you have not a face, but a mask; for it serves no purpose. Why are you out of your wits? Rouge and paste will never turn Hecuba into Helen" (Lucillius [or Lucianus], *Anth. Pal.* 11.408; transl. Paton 1918, 267).

"I can't do an old woman. You complain, Matrinia? Well, I *can*, even an old woman. But you are not old, you're dead. I can do Hecuba, I can do Niobe, Matrinia, but only if the one is not yet a bitch, the other not yet a stone" (Martial 3.32; transl. Shackleton Bailey 1993, I 223).

"You have three hundred consuls, Vetustilla, and three hairs and four teeth" (Martial 3.93.1–2; transl. Shackleton Bailey 1993, I 269).

"When you swear, Lesbia, that you were born in Brutus' consulship, you lie. Were you born, Lesbia, in Numa's reign? You lie even so. For, as they recount your centuries, you are said to have been moulded from Prometheus' clay" (Martial 10.39; transl. Shackleton Bailey 1993, II 363).

"Daughter of Pyrrha, stepdaughter of Nestor, she was grey when Niobe saw her as a girl, old Laertes called her grandmother, Priam nurse, Thyestes mother-in-law: Plutia, having outlived all crows, was laid at last in this tomb and itches with lust alongside bald Melanthio" (Martial 10.67; transl. Shackleton Bailey 1993, II 385–387).

"Why do you pluck your aged cunt, Ligeia? Why stir up the ashes in your tomb? Such elegances befit girls; but you cannot even be reckoned an old woman any more. Believe me, Ligeia, that is a pretty thing for Hector's wife to do, not his mother. You are mistaken if you think this a cunt when it no longer has anything to do with a cock. So, Ligeia, for very shame don't pluck the beard of a dead lion" (Martial 10.90, transl. Shackleton Bailey 1993, II 407).

"A hag as old as Hecuba, who could have been the Cumaean Sibyl's sister, or that old crone seen by Theseus homeward-bent, laid out on funeral mound, comes here; and that a fuck for her by me be found, with wrinkled hands raised up, implores the skies, and spits out one of only three teeth as she cries" (*Priapea* 12.1–9; transl. Parker 1988, 87).

"An old, decayed and corpse-like rotten crow, who might have been a wet-nurse long ago to such as Tithon, Priam and Nestor, if not an aged woman e'en before their time, asks me that she may never lack a man — what if she asks her girlhood back? I'll tell her not to fret, nor be dismayed: if she can pay, they'll treat her as a maid" (*Priapea* 57; transl. Parker 1988, 157).

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Anna A. Novokhatko

Spoudaiogeloion Revisited: Homeric Text between a Scholar and a Cook

Abstract: This chapter discusses several comic and parodic fragments in which extracts of epic text are examined, quoted, or ridiculed. Two questions are posed: first, what prompts comedy to engage with Homeric texts and what effect it might have on the audience; second, how comedy contributes to the textual transmission of the Homeric epics. The first part of the chapter looks at the texts of ancient comedy and their interaction with the epic past. The second part examines key aspects of epic parody and how it contributes to the transmission of the Homeric epics. Finally, the third part analyses examples from later Greek comedy and how they use the epic tradition. The continuing preoccupation of comic and parodic poets with the Homeric text affords a glimpse into the state of the text in the pre-Hellenistic period, before the Alexandrian scholarly work. Parody and comedy preserved the treasure of the earliest layers of the Homeric textual heritage.

In his insightful study on the definition of comedy, Michael Silk emphasised the semantic difficulty of "seriousness" and analysed different senses of being "serious" in Greek.[1] Text transmission is a "serious" issue, and Greek comedy is known to engage with the early transmission of the Homeric epics and to play various games with the Homeric text.[2] Various literary genres reflect the diffusion of Homeric criticism in the course of the fifth and fourth century BCE. Comic and parodic authors sometimes deliberately distort Homeric "errors" and "problems". I suggest in this chapter that, while creating and employing a particular set of tools of epic-comic interweaving, both comedy and epic parody serve as important evidence for the contexts of Homeric textual transmission in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE.

Our awareness of the textual setting of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in pre-Hellenistic times derives from direct quotations and commentaries in other authors, from

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1 Silk 2000, 42–97, 301–349. On the problem of the "seriousness" of comedy, see also Henderson 1990; Lowe 2007, 58–60; Ruffell 2011, 54–111; Jendza 2020, 25–35. See also Reckford 1987, 367–387. On the dialectic of humour and seriousness, see Billig 2005, 175–199.

2 On the interaction of comedy with epics, see De Lamberterie 1998; Macía Aparicio 1998; Macía Aparicio 2000; Platter 2007, 108–142; Quaglia 2007; Bertolín Cebrián 2008; Macía Aparicio 2011; Revermann 2013; Telò 2013; Novokhatko 2018; Farmer 2020.

numerous papyrus fragments found in Egypt dating (at the earliest) to around 300 BCE, and from the information preserved in the Homeric scholia about the work of the Alexandrian critics and the readings in their sources.[3] This evidence suggests that in pre-Hellenistic and early Hellenistic times the poems were preserved in various "city-editions", individual "editions" (such as Antimachus' of Colophon), and the so-called *koinai*.[4] All these "editions" were marked by random interpolations, omissions, and variations in wording. The early attestations are sparse, so that in addition to the evidence of Aristotle and the scholia, which pertain to specific Homeric readings and explanations in a thoroughly "scholarly" context, evidence from Old Attic Comedy on Homeric textual criticism should also be considered crucial. This is not "scholarly", but rather points to the increasing popularity and availability of Homeric (and perhaps not only Homeric) textual criticism.

In the following, I will discuss some comic and parodic fragments in which epic textual quibbles are considered, or Homeric verses are quoted or ridiculed. In doing so, I pose two questions: first, what makes comedy engage with Homeric texts and what effect it might have on the audience, and second, in what way comedy contributes to the textual transmission of the Homeric epics. The first part of the chapter discusses the texts of Old Comedy and their interaction with the epic past, the second part examines some key aspects of epic parody and the way it contributed to the transmission of the Homeric epics, and the third part analyses some examples from later Greek comedy and the way they use the epic tradition.

1 Homeric transmission and Old Attic Comedy

In a much-debated fragment (fr. 233) from Aristophanes' *Daitales* (427 BCE), the speakers are a father and a son. They engage in a discussion of Homeric versus Solonian vocabulary.[5]

> Α. πρὸς ταύτας δ᾽ αὖ λέξον Ὁμήρου γλώττας, τί καλοῦσι κόρυμβα;
>   ... τί καλοῦσ᾽ ἀμενηνὰ κάρηνα;
> Β. ὁ μὲν οὖν σός, ἐμὸς δ᾽ οὗτος ἀδελφὸς φρασάτω, τί καλοῦσιν ἰδύους;
>   ... τί ποτ᾽ ἐστὶν ὀπύειν;

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3 Haslam 1997 and Pagani/Perrone 2012.
4 See Novokhatko 2020, 59–61.
5 On this fragment, see Montanari 2011 and Novokhatko 2017. See also Cassio 1977, 75–77; De Lamberterie 1998, 36; Olson 2007, 163–164; Perrone 2020, 346–347.

A. And now come on in turn tell Homeric words, what do they mean by *korymba*?
... what do they mean by *amenena karena*?
B. But let this guy, your (son?) and my brother, explain, what do they mean by *idyoi*?
... what is *opyein*?

The whole dialogue is set around the play with the explanation of obsolete words. One son studied law and rhetoric with the sophists, while the other son (ἐμὸς δ' οὗτος ἀδελφός) was educated in the traditional way. It follows from this text that apart from learning epic texts by heart, pupils had to learn to explain Homeric words such as κόρυμβα ("stern-posts") and ἀμενηνὰ κάρηνα ("strengthless heads"). κόρυμβος (plural both κόρυμβοι and κόρυμβα) is a *hapax* in Homer (*Il.* 9.241), and occurs once in Aeschylus (Aesch. *Pers.* 411) and once in Euripides (Eur. *IA* 258). The formula ἀμενηνὰ κάρηνα (the full form is νεκύων ἀμενηνὰ κάρηνα) is found only four times in the *Odyssey* (*Od.* 10.521; 10.536; 11.29; 11.49) before it occurs in the *Daitales*. It is therefore reasonable that this Aristophanic character should ask what this "Homeric gloss" means. Instead of explaining Homeric words, the son requires his brother to explain some archaic judicial and forensic terms from Solon's wooden tablets (the obscure ἰδύους for "witnesses" and the archaic ὀπύειν for "to wed").[6]

The use of the syntagma Ὁμήρου γλώττας is crucial, as the term γλῶττα must have been first used in this sense at around the time of the performance of the *Daitales*.[7] Homeric-Attic dictionaries looked like lists and were used by school

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6 The meaning of ὀπύειν remains open, as the text is corrupt. In some lexica it is quoted as a Homeric word, but it may have been employed as a juridical term with a sexual double entendre (cf. Hsch. β 466, βινεῖν· παρὰ Σόλωνι τὸ βίᾳ μίγνυσθαι. τὸ δὲ κατὰ νόμον ὀπύειν, "in Solon 'to rape', but when according to law, it is called ὀπύειν"; Apion Grammaticus, *Glossai Homerikai* fr. 88 Neitzel; Apollonius Sophista, *Lexicon Homericum* 122.9 Bekker). On ὀπύειν, see Henderson 1991, 157 and Olson 2002, 145: "Archaic language, attested elsewhere before the late Classical period only in high poetry [...], in a marriage law of Solon (*ap.* Plut. *Sol.* 20.2), and repeatedly in the Cretan Gortyn law code (IC iv. 72. col. Vii. i, 16, 20–1 etc.)". On the use of the authority of Solon in comedy, see Martin 2015 (on this fragment, see especially p. 80).

7 Democritus is also credited with the word; Diogenes Laertius mentions a title of a treatise by Democritus, the Περὶ Ὁμήρου ἢ Ὀρθοεπείης καὶ γλωσσέων (DK 68 A 33.11). The title suggests a distinction between correct language usage and archaic vocabulary, and this requires explanation. If the title is correct, and Democritus did in fact write this treatise, this must have been a kind of a Homeric-Attic dictionary, perhaps one of the proto-dictionaries dating back to the fifth century BCE, which served as a source for *scholia minora*, or the so-called D[idymus]-scholia. Thus, for example, Democritus read as *scriptio continua* the adjective μελανόστου instead of μέλανος τοῦ in *Il.* 21.252 and interpreted the "gloss" (Δημόκριτον ἱστορεῖν ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀετοῦ τὰ ὀστᾶ μέλανα εἶναι, DK 68 B 22 = Porph. *Quaest. Hom.* I 274.9 Schrader on *Il.* 21.252). See Fronmüller 1901 and Philippson 1929, 167–175. See also Ford 2002, 165–172 and Janko 2011, 208–215. Almost

children. They explained Homeric expressions, translating them into contemporary Attic.[8]

We have other examples of discourses on Homeric criticism finding their place on the Athenian comic stage. According to a short unattributed fragment, Cratinus seems to "have ridiculed Homer" (Ὁμήρου κωμῳδηθέντος ὑπὸ Κρατίνου) for his repeated use (διὰ τὸ πλεονάσαι) of the reply-formula τὸν/τὴν δ᾽ ἀπαμειβόμενος ("and he answered him/her", Cratinus fr. 355 = Porphyry *ap.* Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 10.3.21).[9] This formula in fact appears fifty-two times in the *Iliad* and fifty-eight times in the *Odyssey*, in all cases at the beginning of the verse. It is unclear from the quotation context whether Homer was mentioned explicitly by name, or whether Cratinus made one of his characters (mis)use the formula so that the audience would recognise the Homeric expression. In either case, fr. 355 suggests that discourses on Homeric criticism were so popular that an audience should have understood a joke on Homeric pleonasm.

Epic formulas and other metric units were in fact used by many comic playwrights, sometimes intact, sometimes transferred to Attic, but with the construction remaining epically marked. Some clear epic formulas are found at the beginning of hexameter verses, such as ἔστι δέ τις ("there is a") used by Hermippus (fr. 77.6) and Eupolis (fr. 249), and ναυσὶν ἐπὶ γλαφυραῖς ("with hollow ships") in Hermippus for νηυσὶν ἔπι γλαφυρῇσι(ν) (fr. 63.11).[10]

Formulas found at the end of hexameter verse are more frequent. Hermippus, in his hexametric catalogue of goods in fr. 63, used various epic *clausulae* (Homeric, Hesiodic, and others), such as Ὀλύμπια δώματ᾽ ἔχουσαι ("having home on Olympus", fr. 63.1), ἐπ᾽ οἴνοπα πόντον ("to the wine-coloured sea", fr. 63.2), νηΐ

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a hundred years afterwards, the use of the term γλῶττα is discussed by Aristotle; see Lucas 1968, 204. For Aristotle, who relied on a tradition that must have existed before him, γλῶττα belongs to the tools of a poet and is one of the main lexical and stylistic criteria of epic (heroic) poetry, alongside compound words typical for the dithyramb and metaphors for iambics. Aristotle prefers the words typical of the heroic style, γλῶτται, to current words, κύρια (Arist. *Poet.* 1459a 9–10, 1461a 10; *Rh*. 3.1406b 3, 1404b 28). On the fragment in the context of the glossographic tradition, see Pontani 2011, 32, 117–126.

8 Pfeiffer 1968, 41–42, 78–79; Latacz 2000, 3–4. There are several examples of such Homeric-Attic studies in which Homer is quoted and interpreted and Homeric words are systematically replaced by Attic ones (Pl. *Grg.* 485d; Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.58–59; Aeschin. 1 (*Timarchus*) *passim*; Ford 1999). Cf. Pl. *Resp.* 393d–394e: a summary paraphrase of *Il.* 1.12–42.

9 Olson/Seaberg 2018, 151. On the marked meaning of ἀμείβεσθαι in performative Archaic poetry as "to take turns", see Collins 2004, 169–175. On the spatial dimension of formulaic lines introducing and concluding speeches, see Zanker 2019, 105–106.

10 See also Cratinus fr. 355. On linguistic epic markers in Old Comedy, see Novokhatko 2018. On the hexameter fragments of the Old Attic Comedy, see Marcucci 2020.

μελαίνη ("on a black ship", fr. 63.3), δίχα θυμὸν ἔχουσι ("they have divided hearts", fr. 63.11), ἴφια μῆλα ("plump apples", fr. 63.17), σιγαλόεντα ("glittering", fr. 63.20), τὰ γὰρ τ᾽ ἀναθήματα δαιτός ("for these are the ornaments of a feast", fr. 63.21). Cratinus used ἐρίηρας ἑταίρους ("faithful companions", fr. 150.1) and ῥοδοδάκτυλος οὖσα ("her being rosy-fingered", fr. 351) recalling Homeric ῥοδοδάκτυλος Ἠώς. Pherecrates wrote ἐπὶ δαῖτα θάλειαν ("to a rich feast", fr. 162.1). Hermippus used ἐν δαιτὶ θαλείῃ ("at a rich feast", fr. 77.11). Hermippus used also θεοὶ αὐτοί ("the gods themselves", fr. 77.1) and ὑψερεφὲς δῶ ("high-roofed house", fr. 77.9). Plato Comicus wrote πολλὸν γὰρ ἄμεινον ("for it is much better", fr. 189.16). Metagenes used αἵ τε τάχιστα ("who very quickly", fr. 4.3) and ὑπὸ γούνατα μισθοῦ ἔλυσαν ("loosened the knees for a fee", fr. 4.4). Theopompus has υἷας Ἀχαιῶν ("the sons of the Achaeans", fr. 31.1).

The following cases are not exact formulas but metric units found at the beginning or at the end of hexameter verse, thus signaling epic register: ἀλλὰ μάλ᾽ ("but very", Pherecrates fr. 162.3),[11] ἀκούετε Σειρηνάων ("listen to the Sirens", Epicharmus fr. 121),[12] Σιδονίους καὶ Ἐρεμβούς ("to the Sidonians and the Eremboi", Cratinus fr. 223 and *Od*. 4.84), καὶ πλευρὰ βόεια ("and sides of beef", Hermippus fr. 63.6, cf. καὶ νεῦρα βόεια, *Il*. 4.122), ἀγορεύω ("I inform", Metagenes fr. 4.2).

Some hexameter lines are marked because of metrical and rhythmic resemblance, without an exact correspondence in vocabulary, such as: ὄζει ἴων, ὄζει δὲ ῥόδων, ὄζει δ᾽ ὑακίνθου ("it smells of violets, it smells of roses, it smells of hyacinth", Hermippus fr. 77.8). This resembles the structure of the verse πρόσθε λέων, ὄπιθεν δὲ δράκων, μέσση δὲ χίμαιρα (*Il*. 6.181).

Epic syntactic constructions within a sentence can also serve as an epic marker. Thus, ἧσθε ... πυὸν δαινύμενοι ("you (pl.) sat there ... dining the first afterbirth milk", fr. 149) in Cratinus includes the use of the Homeric participle δαινύμενοι. Furthermore, δαινύμενοι is used six times in Homer together with the verbal form ἥμεθα (ἥμεθα δαινύμενοι).[13] Similarly, the participle of the verb κυλίνδεσθαι is used mainly in epic texts: ἐν τοῖς ἀχύροισι κυλινδομένην ("rolling

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11 The dactylic foot ἀλλὰ μάλ᾽ occurs twenty-eight times in Homer before it appears in Pherecrates, seventeen times as the first foot and eleven times as the fifth. Pherecrates quotes here the beginning of the verse *Il*. 1.554, ἀλλὰ μάλ᾽ εὔκηλος.

12 Cf. ἀκούσῃς Σειρήνοιϊν (*Od*. 12.52) and see Cassio 2002, 71–72 and Bellocchi 2008, 268–269.

13 The verse ἥμεθα δαινύμενοι κρέα τ᾽ ἄσπετα καὶ μέθυ ἡδύ is repeated six times in the *Odyssey* (*Od*. 9.162, 557; 10.184, 468, 477; 12.30).

in the husks", Hermippus fr. 48.6).[14] And Hermippus also used a marked relative clause, οὗ καὶ ἀπὸ στόματος ("and from whose mouth", fr. 77.7), for which three epic parallels are found: τοῦ καὶ ἀπὸ γλώσσης (*Il.* 1.249), τοῦ καὶ ἀπὸ ῥίζης (*Hymn. Hom. Dem.* 12), and τῆς καὶ ἀπὸ κρῆθεν βλεφάρων τ' ἄπο κυανεάων ([Hes.] *Sc.* 7).

Metagenes, at one point in his hexameter fragment, employed a typically Homeric syntactic feature, the progressive enjambement (fr. 4.1–2):[15]

< — ‿ ‿ — > ὑμῖν ὀρχηστρίδας εἶπον ἑταίρας
ὡραίας πρότερον, νῦν αὖθ' ὑμῖν ἀγορεύω

... I told you before about dancing girls, beautiful
hetaeras; now, however, I am telling you of...

Sometimes syntactic structure is marked contextually. The use of the same form within the same syntactic structure makes the context recognisable: πίννῃσι καὶ ὀστρείοισιν ὁμοίη ("she like mussels and oysters", Cratinus fr. 8; cf. ἀθανάτῃσι φυὴν καὶ εἶδος ὁμοίη, *Od.* 6.16; παρθένῳ ἀδμήτῃ μέγεθος καὶ εἶδος ὁμοίη, *Hymn. Hom. Ven.* 82); στρώμασιν ἐν μαλακοῖς ("on soft bed-clothes", Hermippus fr. 77.2, cf. κώεσιν ἐν μαλακοῖσιν, *Od.* 3.38); εὐδαίμον' ἔτικτέ σε μήτηρ ("happy bore you your mother", Cratinus fr. 360.3).

Apart from quotations and formulas, elevated heroic or cosmological words can appear within Attic usage and thus create dissonance. Epic epithets are used whilst mocking contemporary politicians, such as πρεσβυγενής ("first-born, primeval", Cratinus fr. 258.1) and αἴθων ("fiery", Hermippus fr. 47.7). Further examples could be the Homeric Ὀδυσσῆος θείοιο changed by Cratinus into Ὀδυσσέι θείῳ ("with divine Odysseus", fr. 151.4), κλέος θεῖον ("divine glory", Epicharmus fr. 97.13), δίοις τ' Ἀχαιοῖς ("divine Achaeans", Epicharmus fr. 97.15), παιδί τ' Ἀτρέος φί[λωι ("dear son of Atreus", Epicharmus fr. 97.15), δέρμα βόειον ("ox hide", Hermippus fr. 63.4), δίχα θυμὸν ἔχουσι ("they have divided hearts", Hermippus fr. 63.11), ἄλλυδις ἄλλος ("one hither, another thither", Eupolis fr. 172.11), ἀσάμινθος ("bathing tub", Cratinus fr. 234), ἀγάννιφα ("much snowed on", Epicharmus fr. 128), σιγαλόεις ("glittering", Hermippus fr. 63.20), πανημέριοι ("all day long", Cratinus fr. 149), ἐριβώλακος ("with large clods", Cratinus fr. 61.2), πολύτρητος ("much-pierced", Cratinus fr. 226), ἄναλτος ("insatiate", Crates fr. 47 and Cratinus fr. 410), δαιδάλεον ("cunningly wrought", Theopompus fr. 34.2), the

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14 Before Hermippus, the participle is found eleven times in epic texts and three times in Pindar. Cf. Ar. *Nub.* 375. See especially the use of κυλινδόμενος with κατὰ κόπρον, "in dirt", *Il.* 22.414 and 24.640. See Silk 2000, 307–308.

15 See Orth 2014, 403 with further bibliography.

wordplay ἴφια μῆλα ("plump apples", Hermippus fr. 63.17), ὑψερεφής ("high-roofed", Hermippus fr. 77.9), the epic syntagma ἀμβροσία καὶ νέκταρ ("ambrosia with nectar", Hermippus fr. 77.10), βοῶπις ("cow-eyed", Eupolis fr. 438), κυνῶπις ("dog-eyed", Cratinus fr. 259), Ἰθακησία ("Ithacan", Cratinus fr. 264), εἰλίπους ("having a rolling gait", Eupolis fr. 174.3), the epic verbs ἀμφηγάπαζες ("you used to embrace with love", Cantharus fr. 7), παραλέχομαι in τυρῷ καὶ μίνθη παραλεξάμενος καὶ ἐλαίῳ ("having slept with cheese, mint, and oil", Cratinus fr. 136), ἐρέεινεν ("he asked for", Theopompus fr. 31.2), the (conjectural) epic adverb ἄψ ("backwards", Epicharmus fr. 97.16 and Matron fr. 534.32 SH), the mainly epic particles αὐτάρ ("but, nevertheless", Hermippus fr. 63.17) and ἠὖτε ("like as", Ar. fr. 29.1), the dative sing. form χήτει ("out of lack of", Eupolis fr. 491), the interjection τῆ followed by imperative ("there!", Cratinus fr. 145 and Eupolis fr. 378).

Comic playwrights also created "new" epic words out of recognisable morphemes or atticised Homeric words using Homeric vocabulary but Attic morphology for them. To such epicising coinages belong τερπότραμις ("perineum-delight", Telecleides fr. 72), κεφαληγερέτης ("head-gatherer", Cratinus fr. 258.4), πυροπίπης ("wheat-ogler", Cratinus fr. 484), ἀχρειόγελως ("untimely-laughing", Cratinus fr. 360), αἱμασιολογεῖν ("lay walls", Theopompus fr. 73), χλανίδες δ' οὖλαι ("wollen cloaks", Hermippus fr. 48), ὀπτότατος ("the best baked", Cratinus fr. 150.4) recalling epic ὁπλότατος, συκοπέδιλε ("you fig-sandaled", Cratinus fr. 70); cf. also γυναικάνδρεσσι ("for woman-men") in Epicharmus fr. 224.[16]

All this material, gathered from (sometimes short) fragments, does not allow us to hypothesise whether the authors of the comedies were parodying old-fashioned orthodoxy, Homeric criticism itself, or whether they were making their own observations on Homeric style. Even if we assume that these were their own jokes, the playwrights were nevertheless writing in a culture that was interested in such an issue and for an audience that would appreciate it. Homeric criticism and Homeric textual transmission were clearly the focus of interest in Athens in the late fifth century BCE. On the other hand, the engagement with the Homeric text in comedy is only one level in the overall framework of the comic plot and the comic machinery, which is preoccupied with several other issues in parallel, and here lies a crucial difference with Homeric parody, where the genre itself is exclusively dedicated to and fastened on the Homeric text.

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16 On a list of "epic-lyric" compound coinages found in Epicharmus, see Rodríguez-Noriega Guillén 2012, 84.

2 Homeric text and epic parody

Another important form of Homeric reception and criticism, and at the same time of the interaction and blending of serious epic and laughter, was parody. Parody as a literary genre presupposes a dual nature in the use of material: it creates a text at the expense of another text. Parody has been more generally defined as "any cultural practice which provides a relatively polemical allusive imitation of another cultural production or practice".[17] In epic parodies, a diachronic factor also plays an important role, as parodists signal both continuity and differentiation by using material from the (very distant) past, with a few consequences arising from both. Text parody plays a special and complicated role in text transmission and is coded in a twofold way: it elevates and legitimises the parodied text and undermines it at the same time.

Homeric parody commenced considerably early, with travesties of Homeric style dating to the sixth century BCE mock epic *Margites*, and was also performed by poets such as Hipponax (sixth century BCE) and Hegemon of Thasos (fifth century BCE), though surviving textual evidence is not sufficient for further analysis.[18]

Archestratus of Gela (from the first half of the fourth century BCE) composed a humorous didactic poem entitled *The Life of Luxury* (Ἡδυπάθεια) in hexameters which parodied epic poetry. The poem narrates a kind of gastronomic quest for the discovery of the best food in the Mediterranean world.[19] The text contains distorted verses from the Homeric text or from other epic poets. See for example Archestratus fr. 30.2 Olson/Sens:

> ἐν δὲ Θάσῳ τὸν σκορπίον ὠνοῦ, ἐὰν ᾖ
> μὴ μείζων πυγόνος· μεγάλου δ' ἀπὸ χεῖρας ἴαλλε

> Buy the sculpin in Thasus, unless it is
> bigger than a pygon (elbow); keep your hands off the big (fish)

The parodic point here is the inversion of a common Homeric formula ἐπὶ χεῖρας ἰάλλειν ("to lay hands upon") into ἀπὸ χεῖρας ἴαλλε.[20]

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17 Dentith 2000, 9.
18 On the history of epic parody, see Olson/Sens 1999, 5–12; Olson/Sens 2000, xxxi–xxxv; Bertolín Cebrián 2008, 23–58. See also Schröter 1967, 10–14, with earlier bibliography.
19 Olson/Sens 2000; Wilkins/Hill 2011.
20 Cf. *Il.* 9.91; 9.221; 24.627; *Od.* 1.149; 4.67; 4.218; 5.200; 8.71; 8.484; 9.288; 10.376; 14.453; 15.142; 16.54; 17.98.

At some point Archestratus comes to talk about cooking the bonito, a member of the mackerel family that resembles tuna:

τὴν δ' ἀμίαν φθινοπώρου, ὅταν πλειὰς καταδύνῃ,
πάντα τρόπον σκεύαζε. τί σοι τάδε μυθολογεύω;

<div align="right">SH fr. 166.1–2 = fr. 36.1–2 Olson/Sens</div>

As for the bonito in autumn, when the Pleiades set, prepare it in any way you wish. Why should I make a long story for you out of this?

The phrase τί σοι τάδε μυθολογεύω; in v. 2 might be an evocation of *Od.* 12.450, where Odysseus refuses to repeat the story of his treatment by Calypso:

ἥ μ' ἐφίλει τ' ἐκόμει τε. τί τοι τάδε μυθολογεύω;

... who loved and cared for me. Why should I make a long story for you out of this?

Homeric τοι may perhaps also have been written by Archestratus, although Archestratus uses σοι elsewhere, and in any case we cannot know what form of the pronoun he knew from his Homeric text, i.e. the version of the Homeric epics he had in mind, whether written or memorised.[21]

A few decades later, Euboeus of Paros (fl. second third of the fourth century BCE) is said to have written perhaps four books of parodies, two fragments of which survive from the *Battle of the Bathmen* (Ἡ τῶν βαλανέων μάχη).[22] Both fragments contain Homeric verses. The first quotes Homer literally:

βάλλον δ' ἀλλήλους χαλκήρεσιν ἐγχείῃσιν (*Il.* 18.534 = *Od.* 9.55 = Euboeus fr. 411 SH)

they hurled bronze-edged spears at each other

Most likely, the parody was introduced in a transformed context, in the fight of the bathers, and so the clash of registers created the humorous effect. The other fragment contains a distorted version of Homeric text (fr. 412 SH):

μήτε σὺ τόνδ' ἀγαθός περ ἐὼν ἀποαίρεο, κουρεῦ,
μήτε σύ, Πηλείδη

Neither do you, great man though you are, rob this fellow, barber, nor do you, son of Mud

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21 Olson/Sens 2000, 148.

22 Frr. 411–412 SH. See also Ath. 15.698a–b = SH 410.

In the *Iliad*, book 1, Nestor interferes in the argument between Agamemnon and Achilles over Briseis, appealing to them both (*Il.* 1.275–277):

> μήτε σὺ τόνδ᾽ ἀγαθός περ ἐὼν ἀποαίρεο κούρην,
> ἀλλ᾽ ἔα ὥς οἱ πρῶτα δόσαν γέρας υἷες Ἀχαιῶν·
> μήτε σὺ Πηλείδη ᾽θελ᾽ ἐριζέμεναι βασιλῆϊ

> Neither do you, great man though you are, rob him of his maiden, leave her instead as the prize that the sons of Achaeans first gave him; nor do you Peleus' son, desire to contend with the king

The transformation of the Homeric ἀποαίρεο κούρην into the invocation ἀποαίρεο, κουρεῦ belongs to Euboeus' technique which Athenaeus praises with the phrase "many witty elements" (πολλὰ ... χαρίεντα, Ath. 15.699a–b). Euboeus parodied the elevated tone of the epic in Homeric hexameters, taking verses from Homer and incorporating them, with modifications, into unheroic situations.

The fragments of Matron of Pitane (second half of the fourth century BCE), which belong to his poem *Attic Dinner* (Δεῖπνον Ἀττικόν), contribute to the Homeric tradition, for the poet masterfully adapted Homer in the cento technique. A running list of dishes provided the feast, including many fish dishes, the whole effectively enlivened by the interweaving of epic military imagery. The poem depicts a gluttonous hero wandering over a huge buffet. The texts of Matron's poems are the versions of the Homeric epics that he had in mind, either in written or in memorised form. He knows Homeric verses and whole passages by heart, but it is unclear whether he occasionally consulted the written text when composing his parodies. Matron's verses seem to deviate from the Hellenistic vulgate in a number of minor details and may indicate his access to an earlier version of the Homeric epics.[23]

Some of his readings correspond to alternative ancient readings from the Homeric tradition, such as the following (fr. 534.18–21 SH = fr. 1.18–21 Olson/Sens):

> αὐτὰρ ἐχίνους ῥῖψα καρηκομόωντας ἀκάνθαις,
> οἱ δὲ κυλινδόμενοι καναχὴν ἔχον ἐν ποσὶ παίδων
> ἐν καθαρῷ, ὅθι κύματ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἠϊόνος κλύζεσκε·
> πολλὰς δ᾽ ἐκ κεφαλῆς προθελύμνους εἷλκον ἀκάνθας.

> However, I threw away the sea-urchins with their long spiny hair, and they produced a sharp sound as they were rolling about among the slaves' feet in an open space, where the

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23 Olson/Sens 1999, 19.

sea's waves splashed over the seashore; and they pulled from their head many spines out by the roots.

The syntagma καρηκομόωντας ἀκάνθαις (v. 18) is used in the same formulaic way at the end of the verse in Matron fr. 536.2 SH (= fr. 3.2 Olson/Sens). This is a humorous adaptation of Homeric "long-haired Achaeans"; the phrase is taken to mean "with hair growing over the whole head", as opposed to tribes like the Thracians, who elsewhere are described as ἀκρόκομοι (*Il.* 4.533, "with topknots"). Cf. e.g. *Il.* 2.11–12:

> θωρῆξαί ἑ κέλευε κάρη κομόωντας Ἀχαιοὺς
> πανσυδίῃ

> bid him to arm for the battle the long-haired Achaeans, acting in haste

Here in Homer κάρη is printed as accusative of respect with κομόωντας. The text of Matron is traditionally transmitted as a single adjective καρηκομόωντας, written together as one word, although it is clear that word distinction is conventional in the fourth century BCE. In Matron, καρηκομόωντας refers to the sea-urchins' long spines.

To this initial verse Matron, using a kind of puzzle-technique, sticks three other different verses from the *Iliad*, concerning the death of Patroclus, Achilles' grief at Patroclus' death, and Agamemnon's lamentation, thus creating a novel composition out of old material. In the scene of the death of Patroclus, the famous *Il.* 16.794 reads:

> ἣ δὲ κυλινδομένη καναχὴν ἔχε ποσσὶν ὑφ' ἵππων

> and it (the helmet) produced a sharp sound as it was rolling under the feet of the horses

Achilles' grief at Patroclus' death is thus described in *Il.* 23.61:

> ἐν καθαρῷ, ὅθι κύματ' ἐπ' ἠϊόνος κλύζεσκον

> in an open space, where the sea's waves splashed over the seashore

Finally, this is Agamemnon's lamentation when he realises that there is no obvious way to bring the war to a successful end in *Il.* 10.15:

> πολλὰς ἐκ κεφαλῆς προθελύμνους ἕλκετο χαίτας

> and he pulled from his head many hairs out by the roots.

The markedness of the participle κυλινδόμενοι, attested in comedy as well, has been discussed above.[24] Apart from the evidence that Matron had access to the *Iliad* as a whole, jangling with various parts of it, the form κλύζεσκε in v. 20 deserves particular attention. Matron's κλύζεσκε (v. 20) corresponds to the Scholia reading (Schol. A), whilst the vulgate reads κλύζεσκον. In fact, some ancient texts of Homer had κλύζεσκε (the reading of ACE[25] here) in place of κλύζεσκον at *Il.* 23.61, on which v. 20 is patterned.[26] Matron is probably reproducing his exemplar. If that is the case, then the verse constitutes a rare example of literal quotation of Homer. Since the words can scarcely be taken as a description of any actual feature of the dinner-party or its surroundings, they must be intended to be ridiculous.[27]

Importantly for the history of Homeric text transmission, there are several cases where Matron seems to follow his exemplar of Homeric epics against the vulgate. For example, Matron fr. 534.3 SH = fr. 1.3 Olson/Sens:

> ἦλθον γὰρ κἀκεῖσε, πολὺς δέ μοι ἕσπετο λιμός
>
> for I went there as well, and a great hunger followed with me

The verse is modelled on *Od.* 6.164:

> ἦλθον γὰρ καὶ κεῖσε, πολὺς δέ μοι ἕσπετο λαός
>
> for I went there as well, and many people followed with me

The form κἀκεῖσε in Matron is the only example of crasis in the fragments. κἀκεῖσε instead of the usual καὶ κεῖσε appears in some manuscripts at *Od.* 1.260 and *Od.* 6.164 and was probably the reading in the text of Homer available to Matron, though Aristarchus later forbade this and other similar forms.[28] See furthermore Matron fr. 534.12 SH = fr. 1.12 Olson/Sens:

> οἷς ἐπιτετράφαται μέγας οὐρανὸς ὀπτανιάων
>
> to them has been entrusted the great vault of the cookhouses

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24 See Hermippus fr. 48.6 and fr. 14 above.

25 A= Venet. Marc. 822 (10th c.); C= Laur. 32, 2 (11th c.); E= Scorial. Y I. 1 (291) (11th c.).

26 Olson/Sens 1999, 89.

27 On further examples of making pastiches out of Homeric lines, see Olson/Sens 1999, 20–22.

28 Olson/Sens 1999, 77.

Here is a deliberately farcical adaptation of the description of the Homeric Horae controlling the cloud gates of the sky.[29] Most of the manuscripts containing the verse (*Il.* 5.750 = *Il.* 8.394) τῆς ἐπιτέτραπται μέγας οὐρανὸς Οὔλυμπός τε ("to whose care the great sky has been entrusted, as well as Olympus") have ἐπιτέτραπται, whilst the ACE had ἐπιτετράφαται. Third person singular mediopassive forms in -αται and -ατο occur occasionally, however, in early epic and its Hellenistic adaptors, and it seems better to assume that this is what Matron read in his text of Homer, retaining the tradition. The form ἐπιτετράφαται occurs at *Il.* 2.25 = 2.62, ᾧ λαοί τ' ἐπιτετράφαται καὶ τόσσα μέμηλε ("to whom the troops have been entrusted, and he has so much to concern him"). ἐπιτετράφαται is third pl. here and has the sense "have been bequeathed/entrusted". A third case is Matron fr. 534.31 SH = fr. 1.31 Olson/Sens:

τρίγλης ἱπποδάμοιο κάρη μετὰ χερσὶν ἔχοντα

embracing the head of the horse-mastering red mullet in his arms

The verse is constructed as an adaptation of the Homeric description of Andromache's grieving for the dead Hector at *Il.* 24.724:

Ἕκτορος ἀνδροφόνοιο κάρη μετὰ χερσὶν ἔχουσα

embracing the head of man-slaughtering Hector in her arms

Matron's ἱπποδάμοιο occurs in various (also ancient) manuscripts and has been printed in Martin West's edition at *Il.* 24.724, although ἀνδροφόνοιο had been considerably better attested later.[30] ἱπποδάμοιο was in all probability the reading found in Matron's text of the poem.

There are some other indications of Matron's use of an earlier variant of the *Iliad*. The following three verses are composed on the basis of two Homeric ones (Matron fr. 534.95–97 SH = fr. 1.95–97 Olson/Sens):

παῖς δέ τις ἐκ Σαλαμῖνος ἄγεν τρισκαίδεκα νήσσας,
λίμνης ἐξ ἱερῆς, μάλα πίονας, ἃς ὁ μάγειρος
θῆκε φέρων ἵν' Ἀθηναίων κατέκειντο φάλαγγες.

A slave brought thirteen ducks from Salamis, from the sacred sea, very fat ones, which the cook served where the ranks of Athenians were reclining.

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29 Olson/Sens 1999, 83–84.

30 West 2000, 365–366. See Olson/Sens 1999, 95.

Cf. *Il.* 2.557–558:

> Αἴας δ’ ἐκ Σαλαμῖνος ἄγεν δυοκαίδεκα νῆας,
> στῆσε δ’ ἄγων ἵν’ Ἀθηναίων ἵσταντο φάλαγγες.

> Ajax brought from the island of Salamis twelve ships, led them and placed them where the ranks of Athenians were stationed.

Il. 2.558, on which v. 97 is patterned, was occasionally said to have been added to the text of Homer by Solon in order to lend support to Athens' claim to Salamis in a dispute with the Megarians (Plut. *Sol.* 10.1; Strab. 9.1.10). This is one of the two earliest witnesses for the verse, referred but not quoted at Arist. *Rh.* 1375b 29–30, which was apparently so poorly attested in the manuscripts known to the Alexandrians that they expelled it from the text.[31] Verse 96 interrupts the adaptation of two lines that were originally contiguous in Homer and is in fact clearly Matron's own creation. It serves the specific purpose of producing a contextually appropriate link between vv. 95 and 97. The Homeric vulgate has δυοκαίδεκα νῆας, but Pamphilus apparently read τρία καὶ δέκα (Schol. A), and Matron probably had τρισκαίδεκα rather than δυοκαίδεκα in his text of the poem.

Matron is the earliest attestation for the much-discussed verse *Il.* 2.558, στῆσε δ’ ἄγων ἵν’ Ἀθηναίων ἵσταντο φάλαγγες ("and leading (Ajax) stationed them where the battle-lines of the Athenians stood"). This is attributed by the later tradition to Solon as a favour made to the Athenians. Matron's variant reads: θῆκε φέρων, ἵν’ Ἀθηναίων κατέκειντο φάλαγγες ("the cook served where the battle-lines of the Athenians reclined", v. 97 Olson/Sens). In all probability Matron altered the Homeric text (κατέκειντο for Homeric ἵσταντο) as he knew it.[32] The Homeric original at *Il.* 2.558 has ἵσταντο, but Greek diners reclined to eat and Matron — while retaining φάλαγγες — has adapted the verse to reflect this fact.

Matron's parody can thus contribute in a significant way both to our understanding of sophisticated humour in the educated fourth-century circles and of the history of the Homeric text. Importantly, it contributes also to knowledge of the reception of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in the pre-Alexandrian period.

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31 The verses *Il.* 2.557–558 were transmitted in various ways, whilst the verse *Il.* 2.558 was regarded as an interpolation, ascribed to Solon already by the ancient sources starting with Arist. *Rh.* 1375b. As a consequence of this verse, among other arguments, Cassio (2002, 115) dates the fixed text of the *Iliad* to some decades before 560 BCE; cf. Merkelbach 1952. Cf. further Strab. 9.1.10; Plut. *Sol.* 10.1–2; Quint. *Inst.* 5.11.39–40; Diog. Laert. 1.48; Allen 1913, 38–39. For discussion and other versions of this account, see Higbie 1997, 284–287; cf. also Boyd 1995.

32 Olson/Sens 1999, 19–20.

We cannot know to what extent Archestratus', Euboeus', and Matron's readers were capable of solving the sophisticated puzzles created by the poets. Undoubtedly, these represent those authors' literary-aesthetic points of view. They must also be based on ideas that were familiar to their contemporaries and thus fit into the corresponding discourses of the time. However, the very fact of such an adaptation of the Homeric text gives important clues as to the way the text was heard and read by its recipients in late Classical times.

3 Homeric criticism and later comedy

At the same time as the parodists mentioned above, the playwrights of later Greek comedy reflected on the Homeric textual tradition. The longest passage (fifty verses) attesting to the interaction of Greek comedy with Homeric epics and the studies of epics is perhaps fr. 1 from Straton's *Phoenicides*. This depicts a cook who is a talented rhetorician and speaks in Homeric verses and vocabulary. The fragment is a monologue spoken by a householder who is complaining about his new cook. "Frankly he does not understand a word" of what his cook is saying (ἁπλῶς γὰρ οὐδὲ ἓν μὰ τοὺς θεοὺς ὧν ἂν λέγῃ συνίημι, vv. 2–3). The householder inserts an alleged dialogue into his monologue. At some point, says the householder, he became exhausted through the long quotations and complicated words employed by his cook. These he could not understand, and he did not know anything of the Homeric sacrificial rites the cook referred to either.[33] "I am a rather rustic man, thus converse simply with me" (ἀγροικότερός εἰμ', ὥσθ' ἁπλῶς μοι διαλέγου, v. 25), states the master, all in a manner rather reminiscent of Aristophanes' Strepsiades. This implies a difference in social registers, with uneducated people unable to follow obsolete Homeric language, which was anything but "simple" (ἁπλῶς μοι διαλέγου), ἁπλῶς being emphatically repeated in the passage (vv. 2, 25). The master then asks the cook to speak more clearly (ἐρεῖς σαφέστερον, v. 37), and becomes desperate: "Do you intend to ruin me in a Homeric way?" (Ὁμηρικῶς γὰρ διανοεῖ μ' ἀπολλύναι, v. 30). The ability of texts, books, or intellectuals to "ruin" people was already notoriously emphasised by Aristophanes. An Aristophanic character in his *Tagenistai* claimed similarly: this man here (τοῦτον τὸν ἄνδρ') it was either a book that destroyed him (ἢ βυβλίον

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[33] On the literary analysis of this fragment, see Dohm 1964, 198–201; Revermann 2013, 102. Cf. also Perrone 2020, 347.

διέφθορεν), or Prodicus, or one of those idle chatterers (ἢ τῶν ἀδολεσχῶν εἷς γέ τις, Ar. fr. 506).

Homeric glosses such as μέροπες (v. 6), δαιτυμόνες (v. 11), μῆλον (v. 21), οὐλοχύται (v. 34), and πηγός (v. 36) are brought onto the stage as material for jokes.[34] Morphological forms are confused; the stupid master cannot recognise the Homeric imperfect μίστυλλον and builds a plural μίστυλλα out of it. On the other hand, the cook applies the standard technique mentioned above for the Old Attic Comedy and coins some words, or at least utters on stage words that have never been witnessed before (ἐρυσίχθων, "earth-breaker", for ox, v. 19; θυσιάζεις instead of θύω, v. 21).[35] The cook makes a noteworthy admonition which sounds like the pompous paraphrase of a school teacher: "Watch that you do it in this way in the future" (κατ' ἐκεῖνον ἤδη πρόσεχε καὶ τὰ λοιπά μοι, v. 29). This sounds odd in the context of a cook speaking to his master, but would sound natural in a school context, with the grammar teacher lecturing his student — an early version of the Jeeves and Wooster paradigm.

A further important piece of evidence for contemporary Homeric scholarship is provided by the following passage (Straton fr. 1.42–44):

> ... ὥστ' ἔδει
> τῶν τοῦ Φιλητᾶ λαμβάνοντα βυβλίων
> σκοπεῖν ἕκαστα τί δύναται τῶν ῥημάτων...

so one would have had to get the books of Philitas to look up what each of the phrases means

We do not know exactly which "books" of Philitas are meant here. Philitas, a tutor of Ptolemy I Soter in Alexandria and a teacher of Zenodotus of Ephesus, probably returned to Cos prior to the foundation of the Alexandrian library.[36] From the surviving fragments it is hard to reconstruct Philitas' methodology, but the exegetical works Ἄτακτοι γλῶσσαι and Ἑρμηνεία are important for his studies of Homer (frr. 29–58 Kuchenmüller). Philitas' Homeric treatment was still considered significant in Aristarchus' time, as revealed by Aristarchus writing the treatise *Against Philitas*. Philitas seems to have exercised early scholarly practice and for the most part explained rare and obsolete Homeric words, examples including πέλλα, "(wooden) bowl" (*hapax Il.* 16.642, Philitas fr. 33 Kuchenmüller = fr. 5

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34 On the glosses μέροπες and πηγός, see Spanoudakis 2002, 401–402. Cf. also Di Marco 2010.

35 Revermann 2013, 103.

36 Pfeiffer 1968, 88–92; Dettori 2000a; Dettori 2000b; Spanoudakis 2002, 347–403; Montana 2015, 70–72; Montana 2020, 142–143, 176–177.

Dettori), which Philitas explained as a Boeotian designation for a cup (Φιλητᾶς δ' ἐν Ἀτάκτοις τὴν κύλικα Βοιωτούς).[37]

On some occasions, Philitas' evidence is important for the status of earlier Homeric text transmission (Philitas fr. 49 Kuchenmüller = fr. 21 Dettori = Hsch. σ 893):

> σκῖρος· ῥύπος καὶ ὁ δριμὺς τυρός. καὶ ἄλσος καὶ δρυμός. Φιλητᾶς δὲ τὴν ῥυπώδη γῆν.

> "hard (perhaps chalk) land overgrown with bushes, scrub" (LSJ): filth and bitter cheese. Also grove and copse. But Philitas designates filthy earth in this way.

According to the Homeric scholia, Aristarchus is said to have shortened two verses, *Il.* 23.332–333, ἢ τό γε νύσσα τέτυκτο ἐπὶ προτέρων ἀνθρώπων, / καὶ νῦν τέρματ' ἔθηκε ποδάρκης δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς ("or it was made as a turning-post in the time of earlier men; and now swift-footed divine Achilles appointed it to his end-marker"), into one, ἠὲ σκῖρος ἔην, νῦν αὖ θέτο τέρματ' Ἀχιλλεύς ("or it was hard/filthy land, but now Achilles appointed it to his end-marker", Schol. T ex., V 422 Erbse). Philitas' explanation of the obscure word σκῖρος might imply that this was the Homeric reading available to him (and perhaps Aristarchus) at the time. If so, this was not a conjecture by Aristarchus but received transmission.[38] The scholarship of Aristotle's time thus reveals a general interest in classifying authors and genres as well as employing close reading techniques to focus on disputed verses and obsolete words. Philitas' Homeric work was, we may thus posit, popular. In the comic fragment under discussion, a kind of reference book, perhaps a lexicon or encyclopaedia, is implied, in which the meanings (τί δύναται, v. 44) of Homeric words might have been explained.

Kassel and Austin added three "Homeric" lines that were preserved only in papyri to the fragment of Straton, for in the previous editions only 47 verses were presented (Straton fr. 1.48–50):

> καί μοι δοκεῖ ῥαψῳδοτοιούτου τινὸς
> δοῦλος γεγονὼς ἐκ παιδὸς ἀλιτήριος
> εἶτ' ἀναπεπλῆσθαι τῶν Ὁμήρου ῥημάτων.

> And it seems to me that this scoundrel was a slave of some sort of rhapsode from his childhood, so that he has been then filled to the full with Homeric expressions.

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37 Dettori 2000a, 69–77; Spanoudakis 2002, 359–361. For the list of Homeric glosses in Philitas' grammatical fragments, see Spanoudakis 2002, 387–388.
38 Dettori 2000a, 147–152; Spanoudakis 2002, 374–375.

The embodied verb ἀναπίμπλημι ("fill up") is used with the genitive case in Classical Greek to mean metaphorically "to infect with", as some parallel passages suggest.[39] The housemaster thus ascribes the erudition of his cook to his close relationship with a rhapsode using a (derogative) comic *hapax* ῥαψῳδοτοιούτου. The rhapsode "infected" the cook with Homeric phrases (τῶν Ὁμήρου ῥημάτων). Straton's fragment, along with epic parody generally, serves as important evidence for the narrative of epic text transmission, reception, and interpretation in the late fourth century BCE.

Growing scholarly discourse elicited a comic reaction, as has been shown in all the examples cited above as well, and this was a reaction both to Homeric criticism and to comic creation of Homeric criticism. Straton's fragment constitutes an example of this category, with the allusion to Philitas and emphasised metatextual "Homeric" connotations such as "don't you know that Homer uses these words?" (Ὅμηρον οὐκ οἶδας λέγοντα, v. 26), "do you intend to ruin me in a Homeric way?" (Ὁμηρικῶς γὰρ διανοεῖ μ' ἀπολλύναι, v. 30), and "he has been infected with Homeric expressions" (ἀναπεπλῆσθαι τῶν Ὁμήρου ῥημάτων, v. 50). The issues of Homeric studies were clearly recognisable to the audiences of comedy.

A fragment from a comedy by Philemon, in which Homeric studies are similarly reflected, falls into the same period. A speaker gives advice to his addressee, perhaps in a broader context of rhetorical debates, as to which speech should be considered too long and drawn out and which should not, pointing to Homeric texts as examples (Philemon fr. 99.5–7):

> τεκμήριον δὲ τοῦδε τὸν Ὅμηρον λαβέ·
> οὗτος γὰρ ἡμῖν μυριάδας ἐπῶν γράφει,
> ἀλλ' οὐδὲ εἷς Ὅμηρον εἴρηκεν μακρόν

> Take Homer as a proof of this: for he writes us thousands of verses, but nobody has ever called Homer tedious.

Here, not only is the case of Homer taken as an attest (τεκμήριον) to illustrate a stylistic point, but, more importantly, the literary quality of the Homeric text is discussed and evaluated. The metonymy of the poet for the poetic work has been known since Archaic poetry, and Homer stands by default for the Homeric epics, both oral and written.[40] Here in Philemon, the audience should expect the evaluation of written Homeric epics, something that is part of the current discourse in

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39 Cf. Ar. *Ach.* 847; *Nub.* 1023; Theognetus fr. 1.1–2; Pl. *Phdr.* 67a; Aeschin. 2.88; Xen. *Cyr.* 2.2.27; Dem. 24.205. See Dover 1968, 220 and Olson 2002, 283.
40 See the discussion in Zanker 2016, 146–163.

the late fourth century BCE.[41] The pattern of Homer serving as evidence for an argument (τεκμήριον δὲ τοῦδε τὸν Ὅμηρον λαβέ) is otherwise familiar in classical literature. Thucydides uses Homeric text to prove historical facts (τοσαῦτα μὲν Ὅμηρος ἐτεκμηρίωσεν), e.g. that there was a great assembly and feast on Delos in ancient times (ὅτι ἦν καὶ τὸ πάλαι μεγάλη ξύνοδος καὶ ἑορτὴ ἐν τῇ Δήλῳ, Thuc. 3.104.6). The Homeric epic as a testimony to stylistic and literary criticism is part of the interaction process between comedy and the current scholarly discourse in Athens.[42]

Later Greek comedy, just as Old Comedy used to do, continues to deal with the Homeric epics, exploiting the inconsistencies between the linguistic registers and the new contextualisation of characters and plots. Interest in the controversial nature of laughter, as well as in the physical and ritual components of laughter, was approached differently by Sigmund Freud and Mikhail Bakhtin in the twentieth century. Freud claimed that in all laughing situations we store a certain amount of physical energy that is normally used for a psychic purpose. Freud distinguished three laughing situations: in joking (*der Witz*), this energy is used to suppress aggressive and sexual feelings; in the comic (*die Komik*), it is saved for a cognitive processing; in humour (*der Humor*), the energy is that of an emotion that we believe is no longer needed.[43] Bakhtin examined carnival as a social institution and the carnivalesque parts of medieval comedy, which involved particular forms of free and familiar interaction between people, when people do not see a spectacle but live in it, with laughter having a unifying and universal function.[44]

The dual nature of comedy, involving the comic and the serious, is crucial. "Old Comedy plays dangerously on the border of two worlds, the older world of folklore and rural festival and what might be called the Middle Ages of ancient Greece, and the newer world of the fifth-century Athenian Renaissance, with its encyclopaedic learning, its wandering sophists (they might be called *umanistai*), and its new historical and artistic self-consciousness", wrote Kenneth Reckford.[45]

The parodic and comic Homer is not so different from ours that it could be conceived as the product of a living oral heritage, not determined by the availability of a written text. Indeed, there is no indication anywhere of extensive additions of events or of occasional random changes of plot in the late Classical text

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41 On the use and the context of γράφει in this fragment, see Mastellari 2022.

42 Cf. comic poets quoting Homer who "made clever remarks": Ar. *Pax* 1096 (ὁ σοφός τοι νὴ Δί' Ὅμηρος δεξιὸν εἶπεν) and Ar. *Av*. 575 (Ὅμηρος ἔφασκ').

43 Freud 1905. See Morreall 1986, 111–116; Billig 2005, 139–172.

44 Bakhtin 1968. For an overview of theoretical approaches to humour from antiquity to the twentieth century, see Morreall 1986 and Silk 2000, 73–95.

45 Reckford 1987, 386.

of the poems, as one would expect if they were still quintessentially oral. The comic variants, however, are all part of the same formulaic system that produced the epics in the first instance, and their provenance is therefore of some importance. In our sources for the late Classical text of the poems, there are so many minor variants of an essentially oral nature that this seems an inadequate explanation for their existence, and many are probably better explained as products of a living tradition of rhapsodic performances that were somehow put into literary mould (this topic has been much discussed in the last twenty years).[46]

Epic parody and comedy's engagement with Homeric text can only be understood against a background of constant public performance of the Homeric epics, and the impression created by what survives of the fourth century parody suggests that parodic poets favoured the clever reworking of strings of specific lines borrowed from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* over the use of vaguely epicising language attested in earlier writers such as Hegemon. The second half of the fourth century BCE is a time of decisive significance for the text of Homer itself and for other performance traditions.

I confronted two aspects of the interaction of Homeric epic with the genres of parody and comedy. The verses are comically distorted, but also discussed and clarified, which brings us to the level of literary criticism and textual criticism. More importantly for the textual tradition, this persistent treatment of the Homeric text, which specifically characterises epic parody but also comedy, allows us to open a door to the state of the text in the pre-Hellenistic period, before the Alexandrian scholars made the decision to collate and revise it, and one result of this purge is that some ancient readings — as we have seen — have disappeared forever. Parody and comedy preserved and handed down the treasure chest of the earliest layers of the Homeric textual heritage.

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46 Olson/Sens 1999, 15.

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Kostas E. Apostolakis

Proper Names, Nicknames, Epithets: Aspects of Comic Language in Middle Comedy

Abstract: Starting from the assumption that the development of a particular literary genre is reflected in changes in language and style that take place within the genre itself, this chapter attempts to examine particular aspects of humour associated with comic names, nicknames, and epithets of the *kōmōi-doumenoi* in fourth-century comedy, the so-called Middle Comedy. More specifically, the analysis focuses on wordplays, inventive metaphors, asymmetrical similes, hybrid epithets, and other impressive devices associated with these names. The aim of the chapter is threefold: first, to help us appreciate the art of the individual poet who makes use of these devices; secondly, to contribute to the reconstruction of the theatrical history of the characters bearing these names and nicknames or characterised by such epithets; and thirdly, to shed light on common techniques of fourth-century poets and the development of linguistic humour during the period between Old and New Comedy.

1 Introduction

It is a common assumption that the evolution of a literary genre is depicted in changes in form and expression within it. When it comes to fourth-century comedy, the so-called Middle Comedy, however, its fragmentary status has apparently dissuaded scholars from systematic research into its language, and this field has remained underexplored until recently. It is telling that the *Encyclopedia of Greek Comedy*, edited by A.H. Sommerstein in 2019, includes special lemmas on the language of Old and New Comedy, but not of Middle Comedy.[1] However, given that language is a crucial parameter of comic drama, it seems

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1 For the language of Old Comedy, cf. Tribulato 2019, 486–488; for that of New Comedy, cf. Cartlidge 2019, 485–486. The only field in the language of Middle Comedy that has systematically attracted scholarly interest is the parody of dithyrambic language; cf. Nesselrath 1990, 241–280; Dobrov 2002; Arnott 2010, 308–310. See also the introduction by Ioannis Konstantakos in this volume.

useful to turn our attention to it, especially when dealing with fragmentary texts such as those of Middle Comedy, where the signifier provides a more available — and safer — field of research than the signified.[2] Moreover, the international series *Fragmenta Comica*, still in progress, has already produced systematic commentaries on several poets of the fourth century, offering the opportunity to investigate and consider trends and inclinations in the comic language of that period.

Concerning the specific issue covered in this chapter, we should take into account that, unlike tragedians, who inherit the names of the tragic heroes from the mythological repertoire, the comic poets, with the exception of plays belonging to mythological burlesque, have to find names for their characters themselves. This supposedly advantageous position of tragic poets compared to comedians is playfully expressed in Antiphanes fr. 189 from *Poiēsis*, although the speaking character (perhaps the personified Comedy) implicitly admits that comic poets not only invent names, but also use recycled, stereotypical ones such as Chremes or Pheidon.[3] As is only to be expected, comic poets' naming decisions have an impact on their audience, who are implicitly invited to identify, interpret, and appreciate the characters in connection to their names as the play unfolds. Through this process, the comic nomenclature calls to mind the debate in Plato's *Cratylus*, where Hermogenes and Cratylus have different opinions on the nature of names: the former defends the accidental, the latter the truthful nature of the names.

In Old Comedy, Aristophanes in particular, speaking names and historical proper names dominate within the frame of political satire and *onomasti kōmōidein*.[4] This attitude declines over the following years, and in New Comedy historical proper names and personal satire are almost absent, whereas speaking names are very rare, applied mostly to particular secondary characters such as boastful soldiers and parasites.[5] On the contrary, most characters bear conventional, stereotypical names, which are not etymologically associated with

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2 The problem is aptly put by Willi 2002, 2: "For Doric and Middle Comedy, for example, the fragments provide us with rich evidence on the *signifiant* side, but we are frequently tapping in the dark when we ask for a coherent *signifié*, for entire plots and themes. So why should we not turn the tables for a change and think of literary history as the history of the *signifiant* as much as that of the *signifié*?"

3 Cf. Konstantakos 2003–2004, 21–30; Olson 2022, 342.

4 For comic names in the Classical period and their reception in English comedy, see Barton 1990; for speaking names in Aristophanes, see Kanavou 2011.

5 E.g. Cleostratus for a soldier in Menander's *Aspis*. On the names of the braggart soldiers of New Comedy, see Konstantakos 2015, 46–47. Speaking names reappear in Roman Comedy; cf. Fontaine 2010.

eminent characteristics but are easily identified as "generic" names. Old fathers, young lovers, slaves, courtesans, matrons, and citizen girls have distinct sets of names which are recycled from play to play, sharing, with variations, typical characteristics.[6]

The aim of this paper is to consider some aspects of the linguistic humour surrounding the personal names, the nicknames, and the epithets of the *kōmōidoumenoi* in the preserved fragments of Middle Comedy. More specifically, I focus on puns and word-plays, inventive metaphors, incongruous similes, impressive constructions, and further elaborations associated with comic names. This study has a triple aim concerning the function of comic language: firstly, to help us understand the art of a particular comic poet, as he creates his imaginary world;[7] secondly, to contribute to the reconstruction of the theatrical history of the characters bearing these attributes; and thirdly, to shed more light on current, generic trends of fourth-century comedy and the evolution of the linguistic humour of Attic comedy from the period of Old Comedy to that of New Comedy.

2 Personal proper names

2.1 Historical and mythological names

In the course of the fourth century, with a few exceptions, political satire and *onomasti kōmōidein* recede, as comic theatre gradually assumes an international character and addresses both Athenian and non-Athenian audiences.[8] On the other hand, social issues dominate and well-known personalities of the time are still satirised, mainly for their lifestyle, for example as gourmands and prodigals, or for some physical deformity, or for other individual shortcomings. Moreover, unlike New Comedy, where most characters bear fictitious names, in Middle Comedy many proper names, belonging either to mythical or to historical persons, appear both in the titles and in the preserved fragments. The change of attitude is already traceable in the two last plays of Aristophanes, *Assemblywomen* (392 BCE) and *Wealth* (388 BCE), which are sometimes considered to belong to Middle Comedy. Apart from personified concepts such as Plutus and Penia, there are also speaking names (e.g. Praxagora, Blepyrus), anonymous

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6 Cf. Ulmann 1916, 61–64; MacCary 1969, 277–294; Webster 1974, 94–98; Brown 1987, 27–34.

7 Cf. Barton 1990, 15; and Ioannis Konstantakos' chapter in the present volume.

8 For the internationalisation of comic theatre, cf. Konstantakos 2011, 153–162.

characters (e.g. Old Woman, Young Man), and characters bearing "generic" names indicating age or status (e.g. Chremes, Chremylus, Carion).

It seems that the coexistence on stage of mythical, historical, and fictional figures in fourth-century mythological burlesque favours the frequent use of composite comic titles, consisting of a mythical name and that of an invented generic character or of a well-known person of the time, such as Eubulus' *Sphingokariōn*, Alexis' *Asklēpiokleidēs*, Menecrates' *Manektōr*, or Timocles' *Orestautokleidēs*. This practice already appears in Old Comedy.[9] In such composite titles it is not always easy to tell who is the imitator and who the imitated, but it seems that at least in some of them, for example *Sphingokariōn* and *Orestautokleidēs*, the second part is that which denotes the most significant character of the play.[10]

Historical personal names appear as comic titles, denoting both foreigners (e.g. Eubulus' *Dionysius* and Mnesimachus' *Philip*) and Athenians (e.g. Heniochus' *Polyeuktos*, Anaxandrides' *Sōsippos*, Aristophon's *Kallōnidēs*, and Antiphanes' *Kleophanēs*, *Lampōn*, *Lykōn*), although the Athenian names are usually difficult to match to the proposed candidates.[11] Intellectuals, philosophers in particular, are often satirised.[12] Besides, although political satire declines in the course of the fourth century, it is not altogether absent. There are sporadic mentions of fourth-century politicians in Alexis, Mnesimachus, Antiphanes, and Anaxandrides. In Timocles in particular, the most "Aristophanic" poet of the fourth century, at least nine politicians are satirised, some for their policies and others for personal vices or inclinations. The main targets of his satire are the anti-Macedonian orators, some of whom are described in figurative language.[13]

The playful association of *kōmōidoumenoi* with mythical figures, which seems to be part of the Athenians' inclination for mockery, is often employed in

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9 Cf. Cratinus' *Dionysalexandros* (cf. Bianchi 2016, 198–301), Aristophanes' *Aiolosikōn* (cf. Orth 2017, 90–93); also the comic descriptions of Bdelycleon as Δημολογοκλέων (Ar. *Vesp*. 342b) and Κομηταμυνίας (Ar. *Vesp*. 466) by the Chorus. A variation on such hybrid constructions in Old Comedy consists in composites in which the first element is a general designation and the second a historical name, e.g. Pherecrates' *Anthrōphēraklēs*; Polyzelus' *Dēmotyndareōs*; Strattis' *Anthrōporestēs* (cf. Orth 2009, 43–54); and the mysterious composite Κολακοφωροκλείδης in Phrynichus Com. fr. 18; cf. Chronopoulos 2006, 140–143; and the chapter by Simone Beta in the present volume.

10 Cf. Apostolakis 2019, 203.

11 Cf. Henderson 2014, 185; Olson 2022, 143, 170.

12 Cf. Aristophon's *Plato* and Antiphanes' *Kleophanēs*; Henderson 2014, 187–188.

13 See below on Demosthenes/Briareos and the river Hypereides; cf. Apostolakis 2019, 115–123, 149–154.

Middle Comedy. It seems that a standard method was to call a person after a mythical figure, on the basis of a common (real or supposed) incident or characteristic. This practice may have its origin in real life, perhaps in sympotic contexts, through *eikasmos*, the play of mocking "likeness", which implies a metaphorical description.[14] Unlike riddles, however, where the description is set out first and the addressee is invited to reach the solution by explaining this metaphorical description, in *eikasmos* the reverse order is applied: the comparison comes first and the explanation follows.[15]

In some cases, the association of mythical figures with historical persons is supported by means of another comic technique: the mythical names are turned into speaking ones by means of false or far-fetched etymology. One of the most interesting passages in Middle Comedy is Timocles fr. 19, where contemporary people, the prodigal Autocles and the supposedly thievish politician Aristomedes, are explicitly associated with mythical figures, the satyr Marsyas and the Thracian king Tereus:

M[α]ρσύαν δὲ τὸν φ[ί]λαυλον Αὐτοκλέα δεδαρμέν[ο]ν
γυμνὸν ἑστάναι καμίνῳ προσπεπατταλευμένον,
Τηρέα τ' Ἀριστομήδην. (Β.) διὰ τί Τηρέα λέγεις;
(Α.) διότι τηρ[ε]ῖν δεῖ παρόντος τοῦδε τὰ σκεύη σφόδρα·
εἰ δὲ μή, Πρόκνη γενήσῃ, κνώμενος τὸ κρανίον,
ἂν ἀπολέσῃς. (Β.) ψυχρόν. (Α.) ἀλλὰ πρὸς θεῶν ἐπί[σ]χετε
μηδὲ συρίξητε

(A.) The flute-lover Autocles, a naked Marsyas, must stand nailed on the chimney, and so must also Aristomedes the Tereus. (B.) Why do you call him Tereus? (A.) Because, when he is present, you must be very careful of the vessels. Otherwise, you will become Procne, scratching your head, if you lose them. (B.) This is a frigid joke. (A) By the gods, hold and don't hiss at me.[16]

This fragment seems to reproduce a concise form of *eikasmos*, probably in a sympotic context. The comparison of Autocles with Marsyas calls to mind the famous scene in Plato's *Symposium* (215b) where Alcibiades compares Socrates with this notorious misshapen silen. Timocles employs here a complicated kind of linguistic humour, which includes identifications with mythical figures, on the basis of real or putative common characteristics, and then puns on the

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14 For the play on *eikasmos*, see Monaco 1966, 12–41, 50–60, 71–112.

15 See Konstantakos 2004b, 129–130.

16 For the translations of Greek passages, I follow the Loeb Athenaeus (Olson) and those provided in the commentaries of *Fragmenta Comica*, with slight adaptations.

mythical names and the supposed shortcomings of the satirised persons. More specifically, the persons who are mocked are given both their proper and a mythological name, which is explained in the following lines through etymological wordplay. This juxtaposition of historical and mythical names is already employed in Old Comedy, in Cratinus in particular, where Pericles is called "onion-headed Zeus" (σχινοκέφαλος Ζεύς, fr. 73), and Aspasia is described both as Hera and as "the dog-eyed concubine" (παλλακὴ κυνῶπις, fr. 259). Hints at sexually dissolute persons seem to exist in both Cratinus and Timocles. Aspasia is apparently so called because she was thought to be an ex-hetaera,[17] while the association of Autocles (probably a person notorious for sexual corruption) with the naked Marsyas nailed on the chimney may well activate an obscene imagery in the spectators' mind, i.e. a naked man with an erection.[18] The mention of Tereus and Procne further recalls Aristophanes' *Birds*, where the two mythological figures appear on stage as Hoopoe and Nightingale respectively.

However, this series of comparisons turns out to be a sequence of forced wordplays, containing incongruous associations and false etymology. Both the pun on Tereus, metrically supported by the repetition of a tribrach (resolution of the first long syllable of a trochaic foot: διὰ τί Τηρέα — διότι τηρεῖν), and that on Procne (πρό and κνῆν, "the one who scratches at the front"),[19] supposedly arouse the reaction of the spectators and the characterisation of the joke as frigid (ψυχρόν).[20] Such an onstage comment on a joke, which is evaluated on aesthetic terms through a metatheatrical device, including exchanges between characters and theatre audience, is very uncommon. The best explanation for rebuking such frigid jokes on stage is to avoid similar reactions from the audience; in order to prevent the audience from scolding frigid puns, it is the characters themselves who do so, and this preserves their dignity on stage.[21] It seems, therefore, that here Timocles innovates, first by having his character coin far-fetched connections between historical and mythical names, and then

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17 Cf. Ar. *Eq.* 765 and *Vesp.* 1032, where Cynna, "Bitch", a well-known prostitute, is mentioned.

18 There is archaeological evidence of ithyphallic figures in front of an oven (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, F683/757/829/822); cf. Apostolakis 2019, 163.

19 This pun also calls to mind the Aristophanic wordplay on προκρούειν ("beat", here metaphorically "screw") and Προκρούστης in Ar. *Eccl.* 1015–1021.

20 For "frigid" in comedy in the context of "bad joke", cf. Eup. fr. 261.3, σκῶμμα ψυχρὸν καὶ μεγαρικόν; as an aesthetic term of style, in connection with odd vocabulary and strained metaphors, cf. Arist. *Rh.* 1405b 34–1406b 19; Zink 1962, 65–73.

21 Cf. Kidd 2014, 181–183. Here one may also recognise an Aristophanic metatheatrical technique, as exploited in *Frogs* 1–4, where Dionysus attempts to discourage Xanthias from telling jokes which cause disgust. Cf. *Lys.* 1218–1220; *Eccl.* 888–889.

by elaborating the mythical names through false etymologies. Moreover, in order to anticipate the audience's negative reactions, the poet activates a metatheatrical device through which he provides a safety valve for the joke.[22]

In Old Comedy, politicians, philosophers, and poets are often mocked within the frame of personal satire (*onomasti kōmōidein*) in contexts both central and peripheral to the plot, or just incidentally. Some poets of Middle Comedy adopt this technique, through which personal satire is introduced by the side door. One such structure is the self-imposed challenge pattern, which entails asymmetrical consequences. A typical example is Alexis fr. 149:

> εἴ τινας μᾶλλον φιλῶ
> ξένους ἑτέρους ὑμῶν, γενοίμην ἔγχελυς,
> ἵνα Καλλιμέδων ὁ Κάραβος πρίαιτό με

If I love any other foreigners more than you, may I turn into an eel, so that Callimedon the Crayfish may buy me.

The pattern of this structure includes a transformation: "If I don't love A most of all, may I suffer a hateful transformation into a B".[23] Here the speaking person wishes to suffer what an eel would suffer in the hands of the *opsophagos* Callimedon. The same pattern, expanded through an accumulation of names, is employed in Ephippus fr. 16:

> Διονυσίου δὲ δράματ' ἐκμαθεῖν δέοι
> καὶ Δημοφῶντος ἅττ' ἐποίησεν εἰς Κότυν,
> ῥήσεις τε κατὰ δεῖπνον Θεόδωρός μοι λέγοι,
> Λάχητί τ' οἰκήσαιμι τὴν ἑξῆς θύραν,
> κυμβία τε παρέχοιμ' ἑστιῶν Εὐριπίδῃ

May I be forced to learn Dionysius' plays by heart and everything that Demophon wrote for Cotys, and may Theodorus recite speeches to me over dinner, and may I live next door to Laches, and may I supply Euripides with small drinking-cups, whenever I give a feast.[24]

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22 On this mechanism of pleasure and the psychogenesis of jokes, see Freud 1960, 143–170, who argues that the pleasure in a joke lies in its "nonsense". On the contrary, according to Aristotle, when the spectator gets the joke, he feels a pleasure which consists in this very learning of its content (*Rh.* 1410b 9–10).

23 Cf. Arnott 1996, 439.

24 Farmer (2017, 51–54) considers Ephippus' passage a sample of the ways in which the comic poets incorporate tragedy in everyday situations of their fellow-citizens. For a full discussion of this pattern, cf. Papachrysostomou 2021, 171–172.

This structure, which originated in epic poetry (e.g. Hom. *Il.* 2.258–261), also occurs in Aristophanes, again in a theatrical context.[25] It appears that this pattern offered comic poets the possibility of mocking well-known persons of their time, including other playwrights, by inserting their names (and their activities or habits) into an irrelevant scene in progress.

2.2 Speaking names

In Aristophanic comedy the fictitious characters bear significant names (e.g. Dicaeopolis, Trygaeus, Philocleon, Peisetaerus, Lysistrata etc.) which allude to emblematic characteristics; as the play unfolds, the true nature of these names is confirmed through the actions of the bearers.[26] This tendency recedes in fourth-century comedy, although it does not disappear altogether. It is striking that an interest in the relationship of a name to the real nature of the bearer sometimes appears in scenes containing pseudo-philosophising discussions. In Alexis fr. 247 (from the play *Phaedrus*), the speaking character appears to investigate the real nature of Eros, and after the description he concludes with a comic remark that "he is close to the name of the demon".[27]

Amphis' title-character *Dexidēmidēs* is a strong candidate for a significant name, since such a historical name is unattested. It may allude, for example, to a wealthy citizen who receives and treats people with hestiasis.[28] In the preserved fragments of Middle Comedy there are few speaking names of the Aristophanic type, and it is uncertain whether they are at the centre of the plot or constitute occasional wordplay. On the other hand, it is not always necessary for a poet to invent a significant name from scratch, since he can also semantically reload an existing one and turn it into a punning name.[29] Moreover, some of the historical personal names which appear as titles in Middle Comedy may well hint metaphorically at some characteristic of the bearer, and in that sense it is not impossible that they also function as speaking names. For example, in Antiphanes the

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25 *Knights* 400–401, εἴ σε μὴ μισῶ, γενοίμην ἐν Κρατίνου κῴδιον / καὶ διδασκοίμην προσᾴδειν Μορσίμου τραγῳδίᾳ, "if I don't hate you, may I turn into a blanket in Cratinus' house and be coached by Morsimus to sing in a tragedy".

26 For the function of speaking names in Aristophanes, cf. Kanavou 2011.

27 Cf. Arnott 1996, 702 (*ad loc.*): "the speaker's conclusion is presumably intended as a comic dig at the triviality of some of the current theorising".

28 Cf. Papachrysostomou 2016, 86.

29 For example the name Λάμαχος, which is associated with μάχη in Ar. *Ach.* 268–269; see ch. 4.1.

titles *Lampōn* and *Phaōn* may include connotations of a brilliant appearance or character, whilst the titles *Lykōn* and *Leōnidēs* may denote men of wolf-like or lion-hearted temperament,[30] and Amphis' *Philetairos* might be a historical person and/or a sobriquet denoting the very nature of the main character.[31]

Alexis in fr. 19 seems to employ a strong metaphor to show that the poet Choronicus, "the poet who wins with his Chorus", is far better than the (musician) Argas.

> Χορόνικος <ὁ> ποιητὴς ὁδί.
> (B.) τίνων ποιητὴς ᾀσμάτων; (A.) σεμνῶν πάνυ.
> (B.) τί πρὸς τὸν Ἀργᾶν οὗτος; (A.) ἡμέρας δρόμῳ
> κρείττων

> (A.) The poet here's Choronicus. (B.) What sort of songs does he write? (A.) They're very distinguished. (B.) How does he compare to Argas? (A.) He's miles and miles better.

The name Choronicus, otherwise unattested, appears to be invented, as is perhaps the name Nausinicus in another play by Alexis titled *Kybernētēs* (fr. 121).[32] The metaphorical description "a day's journey better" seems to retain the competitive vocabulary inherent in Choronicus' name and also has a flavour of Old Comedy.[33]

Also in Alexis, a father describes his son as a drunkard and compares him with notorious topers, both historical and mythical (fr. 113):

> ὁ μὲν οὖν ἐμὸς υἱός, οἷον ὑμεῖς ἀρτίως
> εἴδετε, τοιοῦτος γέγονεν, Οἰνοπίων τις ἢ
> Μάρων τις ἢ Κάπηλος ἢ <καὶ> Τιμοκλῆς·
> μεθύει γάρ, οὐδὲν ἕτερον

> As for my son, as you've just seen, this is what he's turned into: an Oenopion, a Maron, a Capelus, or even a Timocles. Because he's drunk; that's all there is to it.

It is worth noting that at least two of the four persons mentioned bear significant names. Oenopion, the mythical son of Dionysus or Theseus, apparently functions here as a *nom parlant*, from the popular etymology οἶνον πιών, "one

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30 Cf. Olson 2022, 143.

31 Cf. Papachrysostomou 2016, 224–225.

32 "Fortasse nomen est fictum, ut Agoracritus Aristophanis" (Kock). Cf. Arnott 1996, 19 and Kanavou 2011, 192.

33 Cf. Ar. *Nub.* 430, ἑκατὸν σταδίοισιν ἄριστον; *Ran.* 91, πλεῖν ἢ σταδίῳ λαλίστερα; and the famous compliment of Pericles in Eupolis fr. 102, ἐκ δέκα ποδῶν ᾕρει λέγων τοὺς ῥήτορας.

who has drunk wine", although it probably derives from οἶνοψ, "dark".[34] On the other hand Capelus, either as a significant proper name or as a common name, "tavern keeper", is also quite relevant, while Maron is a hero associated with wine in *Od.* 9.197, and Timocles (perhaps, but not certainly, the comic poet) was a contemporary toper.[35]

Paratragedy combined with wordplay on proper names is another technique. In Antiphanes fr. 74, the speaking character informs his interlocutor about Laomedon, apparently explaining his name etymologically.[36] In Philetaerus fr. 4, from the play *Achilleus*, by punning on *pēlos* ("mud"), the Iliadic hero Peleus becomes a potter:

Πηλεύς· ὁ Πηλεὺς δ' ἐστὶν ὄνομα κεραμέως,
ξηροῦ λυχνοποιοῦ, Κανθάρου, πενιχροῦ πάνυ,
ἀλλ' οὐ τυράννου νὴ Δία

Peleus; Peleus is the name of a potter — a skinny lamp maker called Cantharus, who's really poor. But it's not a tyrant's name, by Zeus!

This passage paratragically echoes Euripides' *Iphigeneia at Aulis* 701: Πηλεύς· ὁ Πηλεὺς δ' ἔσχε Νηρέως κόρην. While, however, the tragedians, Euripides in particular, find in the heroes' names their fate and character,[37] Philetaerus employs the comic practice of playfully using proper names as epithets. Such paratragic wordplay on mythical names originated in Old Comedy. Aristophanes, in particular, mockingly reproduces the tragedians' false etymologies.[38]

A wordplay on common and proper names also appears in Antiphanes fr. 278, φαινίνδα παίζων †ἦεις ἐν Φαινεστίου, "playing *phaininda* † you came † in Phaenestius' place". King Juba in Athenaeus identifies Phaenestius (*PAA*

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34 Cf. Arnott 1996, 305. Oenopion is also a cupbearer in Lucian, *Pseudologista* 21.

35 Cf. Apostolakis 2019, 9.

36 Unfortunately, the text is corrupt. Kaibel read v. 3 as an etymology of Laomedon's name from stone ("tamquam λίθινον ἦτορ ἔχων"), but Seidler's correction ἀπ' ἀρχῆς "after his royal office" (μέδων τοῦ λαοῦ) is preferable; for a convincing defence of this solution, cf. Konstantakos 2000, 107.

37 For example, Pentheus is associated with πένθος (*Bacch.* 367, 508), Polyneices with νεῖκος (*Phoen.* 636, 1493), Helen with ἑλεῖν (*Tro.* 891), Aphrodite with ἀφροσύνη (*Tro.* 990); cf. McCartney 1919, 348–349.

38 Cf. Ar. fr. 373, ἐνταῦθα <δ'> ἐτυράννευεν Ὑψιπύλης πατὴρ / Θόας, βραδύτατος τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις δραμεῖν, "here reigned as king the sire of Hypsipyle, Thoas, the slowest runner of all mankind", an apparent comic inversion of Eur. *IT* 31–32, Θόας, ὃς ὠκὺν πόδα τιθεὶς ἴσον πτε-ροῖς / ἐς τοὔνομ' ἦλθε τόδε ποδωκείας χάριν, "Thoas who came into his name, because of his swift-footedness, for he runs with the speed of wings".

913300) as a physical trainer, but, since this name is otherwise unknown, Juba is probably guessing.[39] In that case, Phaenestius might well be a name invented by the comic poet, suitable for a pun on this particular game: for instance, the addressee playing *phaininda* arrived at the place (*hestia*) of the man specialising in teaching (*phainein*) that game, i.e. Phaenestius. In any case, Antiphanes' practice recalls Aristophanes fr. 629, ὑπὸ γέλωτος εἰς Γέλαν ἀφίξομαι, "I'll go to Laughtown conveyed by laughter", included by Plutarch (*Mor.* 853a) in a list of wordplays and puns which were considered feeble and inopportune material for humour.

Antiphanes, again, creates characters with a surprising linguistic interest. Pistos is a slave-name attested not only in comedies (cf. Phot. *Bibl.* 532b 36) but also in real life (e.g. *IG* I³ 421.28, Attica, 414 BCE).[40] As a speaking character in the play *Boutaliōn*, he playfully modifies the meaning of ἀνθρωποφάγοι ἰχθύες, "man-eater fish", and Ἑλένης βρώματα, "the diet of Helen". Moreover, he sarcastically reacts to the hetaera's shopping instructions and says that the only way he knows to shop is with money (fr. 69.2–4).[41]

> (A.)   σὺ δ' ἀγοράσεις ἡμῖν λαβών,
> Πίστ', ἀργύριον. (Πίστ.) ἄλλως γὰρ οὐκ ἐπίσταμαι
> χρηστῶς ἀγοράζειν.

> (A.) You there, Pistos, take money and go to market to do some shopping. (Pist.) That is the only way I know how to shop decently.

Pistos playfully associates his own name not with the obvious derivation πιστός, "faithful", but with the verb ἐπίστασθαι, "be versed in", through a mere assonance (fr. 69.2–4). In addition to turning the true meaning of the words upside down, Pistos appears to associate his name not with faith, but with inventiveness. Far from looking like a devoted (πιστός) servant, he rather seems to have the requirements to evolve into a cunning slave.[42]

Another sub-category of the comic slave is the type of *servus currens*. The significant name Dromon appears in Menander's *Sikyonios*, in Euangelus' *Anaka-*

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39 Cf. Olson 2021, 246–247.

40 A steward named Pistus is also mentioned in Plautus' *Mercator* by the old man Lysimachus, who instructs his slave to meet Pistus in person and deliver a mattock into his hand (277–288). The language used by the old man (*Pisto ipsi, coram, tradas in manum*) implicitly describes a trustworthy (πιστός) man.

41 Cf. Konstantakos 2004a, 22–23; Konstantakos 2021, 147–148.

42 Interpreting a name in a different way to that suggested by etymology is common in Plautus' comedy; cf. Fontaine 2010, 94–95.

lyptomenē, in Plautus' *Aulularia*, and in Terence's *Andria*, *Heauton timorumenos*, and *Adelphoe*. In Dionysius fr. 3, Dromon appears on stage probably as a slave of a cook, and is given instructions in a figurative language using military vocabulary,[43] which contains some wordplay: Δρόμων ... κατάτρεχε, "Dromon ... run down". It appears that this is the earliest mention of this speaking name, which in the course of time would become a generic name for the *servus currens*.

Coining verbs from personal names is another practice. Unlike fourth-century oratory, where the pro-Macedonians were described with the verb φιλιππίζειν, "to be Philip's followers" ([Dem.] 58.37; Aeschin. 3.130), Alexis has coined the verb φιλιππιδόω, with reference to the emaciated politician Philippides (fr. 148).

> (A.) κακῶς ἔχεις, ⸆ στρουθὶς ἀκαρὴς νὴ Δί' εἶ·
> πεφιλιππίδωσαι. (B.) μὴ σὺ καινῶς μοι λάλει.
> ὅσον οὐ τέθνηκα. (A.) τοῦ ταλαιπώρου πάθους

> (A.) You're in bad shape, ⸆ you are nothing but a sparrow, by Zeus! You've Philippidised. (B.) Don't use newfangled vocabulary on me; I'm as good as dead. (A.) What a miserable turn of events!

To the best of my knowledge, πεφιλιππιδῶσθαι is the only instance in the preserved fragments of Middle Comedy of a verb formed from a proper name. However, such *hapax* coinings are not unknown in Old Comedy, for example μελλονικιᾶν (Ar. *Av.* 639) and ἐσωκράτων (Ar. *Av.* 1282), denoting a morbid condition of Nicias and Socrates respectively.[44] The coining of πεφιλιππιδῶσθαι in the context of a deathlike condition is a step further on from exaggerated descriptions like ἰσχνότερον Φιλιππίδου (Aristophon fr. 8), where a character (probably Plato) asserts that he will make a member of the Academy thinner than Philippides.[45] It also calls to mind a similar description of Chaerephon in *Clouds*, where Socrates promises Strepsiades that the latter will become indistinguishable from Chaerephon, and Strepsiades comments that he's going to become like

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43 Cf. Orth 2020, 348.

44 Such interesting plays on a character's proper name also appear in Plautus; see *Trin.* 975–977, where a trickster invites the old man Charmides to become un-Charmides, i.e. to admit that he is not Charmides: *proin tu te, itidem ut charmidatus es, rursum recharmida*. Cf. *Pseud.* 585, *Ballionem exballistabo*, "I'll cannonball Ballio".

45 Cf. Φιλιππίδου λεπτότερον ... νεκρόν, "a skinnier corpse than Philippides" (Menander, *Orgē* fr. 266).

a half-dead man.[46] What is worth noting in Alexis' passage is the comment of the interlocutor, who dismisses this kind of verbal coinage. Here, however, unlike the supposed metatheatrical comment in Timocles fr. 19 (see above on ch. 2.1), the critique remains within the bounds of theatrical convention.

Personal proper names are also turned into mocking epithets. Such is the compound epithet which occurs in Ephippus fr. 14.3, where a man from Plato's Academy is called τις τῶν Βρυσωνοθρασυμαχειοληψικερμάτων, "one of those taking coins like Bryson and Thrasymachus". The first component refers to Bryson of Heraclea, a pupil of Socrates, the second to Thrasymachus of Chalcedon, the sophist.[47] This *hapax* recalls known Aristophanic hybrids, e.g. *Eccl.* 1169–1175; *Av.* 491.

3 Epithets

3.1 Epithets as comic titles

Given that in fourth-century comedy political and personal satire recedes and social and domestic themes and subjects prevail, contemporary people appear rather peripherally, while the dominant characters are cooks, parasites, pimps, soldiers, rustics, courtesans, spendthrifts, and other figures stereotypical in later comedy. It is unsurprising, then, that these comic characters are often qualified with epithets denoting or alluding to their main occupation, an idiosyncratic element, or a ruling sentiment of their personality. Such epithets, apparently attributed to the main character of the play, even appear as comic titles in Middle Comedy: *Agroikos*, "Boorish fellow" (Anaxilas, Antiphanes, Philemon), *Monotropos*, "Solitary Man" (Anaxilas; cf. Phrynichus), *Misoponēros*, "Hater of Wickedness" (Antiphanes), *Philetairos*, "Loyal Comrade" (Alexis, Amphis, Antiphanes), *Philomētōr*, "Mother's Boy", and *Philopatōr*, "Father's Boy" (Antiphanes), *Mempsimoiros*, "Fault-Finding Fellow" (Antidotus), *Dyskolos*, "Bad Tempered" (Mnesimachus; cf. Menander), *Polypragmōn*, "Busybody" (Timocles, Heniochus; cf. Diphilus), *Epichairekakos*, "The Spiteful Man" (Timocles), *Philodikastēs*, "The Man Who Loved Jury-Duty" (Timocles), *Malthakē*, "Soft Woman" (Antiphanes), *Aischra*, "Ugly Woman" (Anaxandrides). In some cases these epithets, associated with relevant characters, are already used in Old Comedy, and

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46 Ar. *Nub.* 503–504: (ΣΩ.) οὐδὲν διοίσεις Χαιρεφῶντος τὴν φύσιν. / (ΣΤΡ.) οἴμοι κακοδαίμων, ἡμιθνὴς γενήσομαι.

47 Cf. Papachrysostomou 2021, 152–153.

in that sense the poets of Middle Comedy receive and upgrade them as comic titles. Examples include *agroikos* in Ar. *Eq.* 40 (said of Demos) and *Nub.* 42, 46 (of Strepsiades); *monotropos* (already as a proper name and title of a comedy in Phrynichus); *dyskolos* (Ar. *Eq.* 41, of Demos); *polypragmōn* (Eupolis fr. 238); *philodikastēs* (cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 87, φιληλιαστής, of Philocleon). In some cases the formation of such epithets may have originated in periphrastic expressions: for example, the epithet *misoponēros* is modelled after the description of Timon the Misanthrope in *Lysistrata* 816–818, οὕτω 'κεῖνος ὑμᾶς ἀντεμίσει τοὺς πονηροὺς ἄνδρας ἀεί. Likewise, epithet-titles with φιλο- as the first component (*Philetairos*, *Philopatōr*) recall Aristophanes' *Wasps* 77–88, where a series of jokes includes epithets denoting an inclination to a practice: φιλόκυβος, φιλοπότης, φιλόξενος, φιλοθύτης.[48] Since, however, such titles are relatively rare in Old Comedy, it seems that the poets of Middle Comedy are amplifying an existing practice.[49] On the other hand, some of these epithet-titles indicate an association with fourth-century philosophical inquiry and contemporary oratory. For instance, *misoponēros* occurs in Demosthenes (21.218) and Aeschines (1.69; 2.171), while *philoponēros* is one of Theophrastus' characters (no. 29); the titles *Agroikos* and *Mempsimoiros* are shared by Theophrastus (*Char.* 4 and 17), and *epichairekakos* as a character is described in Arist. *Rh.* 1379b 17–19, τοῖς ἐπιχαίρουσι ταῖς ἀτυχίαις.

These epithets are apparently substituted for the main character's real name, although he probably also had a fictitious proper name.[50] Sometimes the linguistic humour supports the representation on stage of such characters, who are given an epithet emblematic of their obsession. Antiphanes, for example, is a poet who tends to do this. In his play *Philomētōr*, "The Man who Loved his Mother", he associates the name of his title-character with food by means of an arbitrary etymology. In fr. 219, he crowns an accumulation of word-plays on μήτηρ, "mother" (ἔμμητρον ξύλον, "wood from the core of the tree", μητρόπολις, "mother-city"), with a pun on μήτρα, "womb", and Μητρᾶς (Metras of Chios).[51] Also in his fr. 157 of *Misoponēros*, "The Hater of Knaves", the fierce

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48 Cf. Simone Beta's chapter in the present volume.

49 In Old Comedy, cf. Phrynichus' *Monotropos*, "Solitary". Cf. Henderson 2014, 195, who recognises in Middle Comedy both amplifications of older elements and innovations.

50 Such a practice is attested in New Comedy; for example, Cnemon is the real name of the main character in Menander's *Dyskolos*.

51 μήτραν τινὲς πωλοῦσιν ἥδιστον κρέας. / Μητρᾶς ὁ Χῖός ἐστι τῷ δήμῳ φίλος, "some people sell sow's womb, the most delicious meat there is; Metras of Chios is a friend of the people". However, it is a matter of dispute whether the play was originally *Philomētōr* or *Philopatōr*; cf. Olson 2021, 116.

invective against different social and professional classes (Scythians, wet-nurses, pedagogues, midwives, mendicant priests, fishmongers, and money-lenders) is quite compatible with the idiosyncrasy of a *misoponēros*, in fact a misanthrope. More particularly, the expressions γένος μιαρώτατον, "the foulest kind" (v. 8–9), and ἔθνος ἐξωλέστερον, "a more pestilential race" (v. 11–12), the patterns of syntax, and the rhetorical questions support an indignant tone and contribute to the depiction of this particular misanthrope.[52] Moreover, at least one of Timocles' title-characters, named after an epithet, may be illustrated in the preserved fragments. In a play titled *Epichairekakos* (fr. 11), the speaking character narrates Corydus' behaviour in the fish-market. The sarcastic comment "What happened to him was ludicrous, alas!", about the destitute parasite whose mouth waters when looking at expensive fish, may well reveal a spiteful man, one who enjoys others' misfortunes.[53]

3.2 New epithets for stereotypical characters

Apart from standard epithets for stereotypical characters in Middle Comedy (e.g. *opsophagos*, *parasitos*), the comic poets often use equivalent, descriptive ones which, in the course of time, also become emblematic of the characters to whom they are attributed. For example, a parasite is often called ἄκλητος, "uninvited" (e.g. Antiphanes frr. 193.7, 227.1–3), Lat. *invocatus* (Plautus, *Captivi* 69); ἀσύμ-βολος, "without paying his contribution" (Timocles fr. 10.4); κεστρεὺς νῆστις, "a hungry grey-mullet" (Alexis fr. 258); παραμασήτης, "fellow-chewer" (Alexis fr. 238.2; Timocles fr. 9.6). Some poets of Middle Comedy exhibit an inclination for epithets which are unusual, even unique in the existing literature. In the following lines I focus on inventive epithets used for gourmands and fish-eaters (*opsophagoi*), persons commonly satirised in Middle Comedy.

In Theophilus fr. 4.3–4, the *opsophagos* politician Callimedon is satirised for his inappropriate rhetorical style as ψυχρός, "cold". The mechanism of the wordplay is activated by means of the particular epithet, which on a first level is applied to a crayfish within a culinary context, and is turned through metonymy into an aesthetic term for Callimedon's rhetoric.[54]

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52 Cf. the detailed analysis of Konstantakos 2021, esp. 167–176.

53 Cf. Apostolakis 2019, 105–106.

54 On ψυχρόν with aesthetic connotations, cf. Alexis fr. 184, (φρέαρ) ψυχρότερον Ἀραρότος; Ar. *Thesm.* 170, ὁ δ' αὖ Θέογνις ψυχρὸς ὢν ψυχρῶς ποεῖ; and ch. 2.1 above.

Amphis, on the other hand, a poet who often employs *hapax* epithets in his poetry,[55] uses in the same passage (fr. 10) the rare epithet κνισολοιχός, "fat-licker" (the only other instances where it occurs are Antiphanes fr. 64 and Sophilus fr. 8),[56] and the *hapax* ὀλβιογάστωρ, "belly-blessed", to describe Eurybatus (it is not clear whether he is a historical or a mythical person). But while compounds with κνῖσα are always derisive (e.g. κνισοτηρητής, "fat-hunter", adesp. com. fr. 622), ὀλβιογάστωρ is an inventive adaptation of elevated epithets (e.g. ὀλβιοδαίμων, "of blessed lot", Hom. *Il.* 3.182; ὀλβιόδωρος, "bestowing bliss", Eur. *Hipp.* 750) to a comic situation.[57]

In Timocles, in a context of political satire from the play *Heroes*, the anti-Macedonian orator Hypereides is called *opsophagos* (fr. 4.9). In another of Timocles' plays (*Icarian Satyrs*), Hypereides' notorious appetite for fish is described in a more inventive style (fr. 17):

> τόν τ' ἰχθυόρρουν ποταμὸν Ὑπερείδην πέρα
> ὃς ἠπίαις φωναῖσιν ἔμφρονος λόγου
> κόμποις παφλάζων †ἠπίοις† πυκνώμασι
> πρὸς παν ... δυσας ἔχει,
> μισθωτὸς ἄρδει πεδία τοῦ δεδωκότος

> Then cross the fish-rich river Hypereides, who with mild sounds of prudent speech, blustering boastfully with † wheedling † rhetorical aggregations ... as a hired servant he waters his employer's fields.

The language of the first line indicates a parody of high poetry, the possible serious pattern being that of a person giving directions to a traveller. Such an example occurs in *Prometheus Bound*, when Prometheus gives instructions to Io and advises her to avoid dangerous crossings: 717–718, ἥξεις δ' ὑβριστὴν ποταμὸν οὐ ψευδώνυμον / ὃν μὴ περάσῃς, "You will then come to the Violent River, not inaptly named; do not cross it". Timocles seems to inverse the serious pattern when he has the speaking character instruct the traveller to cross the river, and, perhaps, by ascribing to the orator characteristics of a river, instead of having the river acquire human properties (cf. ὑβριστὴν ποταμόν). Besides, the *hapax* epithet ἰχθυόρρους, "a river flowing with many fish", actually an innovative variation on the stereotypical epic epithets ἰχθυόεις (Hom. *Il.* 16.747) and βαθύρρους (Hom. *Il.* 7.421), is clearly bathetic. The poet, by ascribing this new-

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55 Cf. Papachrysostomou 2016, 15–16.

56 Perhaps surviving in Plautus' *nidoricupi*, "aroma greedling", said of Tranio, who hides in a kitchen (*Most.* 5); cf. Fontaine 2010, 172.

57 Cf. Papachrysostomou 2016, 78.

coined epithet to Hypereides, activates successive transformations of the fish-river Hypereides, who retains both human and riverine characteristics, into a tumultuous orator, who splashes on the model of the fifth-century demagogue Cleon, the Paphlagon of the *Knights*,[58] while in the final verse he becomes a paid (μισθωτός) gardener, who waters his master's fields.[59] In Antiphanes fr. 104, probably in the epilogue of the play *Thamyras*, pronounced by a god, it is said that a river will be called in the future by the significant name (ἐπώνυμος, an epithet unique in comedy) Strymon, after the (otherwise unattested) King Strymon. The river, endowed with the largest eels (v. 3, μεγίστας ἐγχέλεις κεκτημένος), calls to mind the fish-river Hypereides and is also compared to a gardener, who waters the land (v. 2, κατάρδων).[60]

3.3 Divine epithets

Traditional epithets from high poetry, adapted to comic situations, also appear in Middle Comedy.[61] To this category belong the divine epithets, mostly of epic origin. Although stereotypical divine epithets do not usually offer many opportunities for comic exploitation, the poets sometimes exploit them inventively in new contextual circumstances.[62] Such is their use in contexts of incongruous language. As a case study, I will consider the function of divine epithets associated with Hermes in Middle Comedy. Hermes' presence is well established in comedy since Aristophanes' time, as he was associated — perhaps more than the other gods — with everyday life, as his corresponding epithets denote: ἀγοραῖος (Ar. *Eq.* 297), ἐμπολαῖος (Ar. *Ach.* 816). Also, as a patron of tricks

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58 Cf. Ar. *Eq.* 918, ἀνὴρ παφλάζει, "the man is splashing"; *Pax* 313–315, παφλάζων καὶ κεκραγώς, "plopping and screaming". It seems, however, that another passage of the *Knights* is also recalled, namely the mention of Cratinus, who in the parabasis is described as a rapid stream flowing against his opponents (526–528, cf. Bernhard Zimmermann's chapter in the present volume).

59 The *opsophagos* Hypereides as a river rich in fishes perhaps finds a parallel in the parasite Neilus: Euphanes fr. 1.6, ποῦ Κόρυδος, ἢ Φυρόμαχος, ἢ Νείλου βία; "Where is Corydus, Phyromachus, the forceful Neilus?" Given that Neilus as a personal name is very rare (only one instance in the fourth century), it may be the nickname of a parasite, due to his impetuosity (cf. βία); cf. Mastellari 2016, 303. If so, then the impetuous river becomes a metonymy for an *opsophagos*, as well as for a parasite.

60 For the parodic language of the passage cf. Olson 2022, 24.

61 Cf. Anaxilas fr. 22.3–5, ἄμεικτος, πύρπνοος, τρίκρανος, which paratragically recalls Heracles' labours in Soph. *Trach.* 1089–1100; cf. Tartaglia 2019, 128.

62 Cf. Willi 2002, 5.

(cf. Ar. *Thesm.* 1202, δόλιος), he is more often involved in comic situations. For all these reasons he has sometimes been considered a divine patron of comedy.[63]

This tradition may be echoed in Middle Comedy. In Alexis' play *Thesprōtoi*, apparently in a scene of *nekyiomanteia*, personal satire occasionally intrudes, the target being the politician Philippides (fr. 93):

> Ἑρμῆ θεῶν προπομπὲ καὶ Φιλιππίδου
> κληροῦχε, Νυκτός τ' ὄμμα τῆς μελαμπέπλου

> Hermes, divine escort, to whom Philippides belongs by lot; and thou, eye of dark-robed Night.

Hermes as a *psychagōgos* is said to have a claim on the dead-like Philippides, who was often compared with a corpse.[64] This role is supported by the epithet "dark-robed", applied to Night, the appropriate time of action for the *psychagōgos* Hermes.[65] The joke is constructed on the juxtaposition of the grandiose synapsis θεῶν προπομπέ and μελάμπεπλος νύξ on the one hand, and the unexpected Φιλιππίδου κληροῦχε on the other, which comically subverts the imposing style of the verse and the darkness of the whole scene, probably coming from the prologue of the play.[66]

In Eubulus fr. 95, Hermes, "the son of Maia", is described as λίθινος, "made of stone", polished with prayers till he shines in the *kylikeion* (ὃν προσεύγμασιν ἐν τῷ κυλικείῳ λαμπρὸν ἐκτετριμμένον). The apparently dignified address is brought down to earth when one realises that this is only a statuette kept in the cupboards, among kitchen utensils.[67]

Comic inventiveness also characterises another passage of Timocles (fr. 14), from his play *Heroes*:

> Ἑρμῆς δ' ὁ Μαίας ταῦτα συνδιακτορεῖ
> ἂν ᾖ π[ρ]όθυμος· καταβέβηκεν ἄσμενος
> χαριζόμενός γ' Ἀριστομήδῃ τῷ καλῷ,
> ἵνα μηκέτ' αὐτὸν ὁ Σάτυρος κλέπτην λέγῃ

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63 Cf. Moodie 2019; for Hermes in Old Comedy, see Beta 2019.

64 θεῶν προπομπέ has rather a tragic tone (cf. πομπός, Aesch. *Pers.* 626; Soph. *OC* 1548). This formulation, however, causes textual problems, since Hermes appears in the epic tradition as *psychagōgos*, not as an escort of the gods, and Casaubon's correction of θεῶν into νεκρῶν might be correct; cf. Arnott 1996, 244–246.

65 Cf. e.g. Hom. *Il.* 24.694–695, where Hermes as *psychagōgos* addresses Priam in the darkness of the night.

66 Cf. Arnott 1996, 244–246.

67 Cf. Beta 2019, 99.

> Hermes, the son of Maia, aids in conducting these affairs, on condition that he is eager to do so. He has descended with pleasure, showing favour to Aristomedes the Handsome, so that Satyros will no longer call him a thief.

Here, too, the initial context suggests a grandiose intervention of the god. The (post-Homeric) formula "son of Maia", the echo of Hermes' epic epithet διάκτορος (an obscure epithet, perhaps "messenger") in the verb συνδιακτορεῖ (Wilamowitz's correction of the papyrus' συνδιακτονεῖ), an inventive coining of a verb out of a traditional divine epithet, and the prayer-formula in the context of a *katabasis* (v. 2, καταβέβηκεν ἄσμενος), by which Hermes is described as a god eager (πρόθυμος) to assist, suggest a context of response to a prayer. But the last lines subvert the initial grandiose description, causing a comic incongruity. Hermes is now acting as a patron of thieves, by offering his help to his protégé Aristomedes, a supposed "thief", in return for sexual services (v. 3).[68]

4 Nicknames

Unlike Aristophanic comedy, where the play on names mainly focuses on the "speaking names" of the main characters, invented by the poet, in Middle Comedy the stereotypical characters such as *alazones* (braggart soldiers), parasites, *opsophagoi*, and courtesans, when appearing on stage or just being mentioned, already have their well-established nicknames, by which they are known outside the theatre. The comic poets, in turn, exploit the possibilities offered by these nicknames by activating jokes which refer to the very mechanism of their creation. Sometimes, however, they invent themselves nicknames for their characters, which are strictly employed within the particular play or, possibly, within a particular context, in order to make fun of them.[69] Some nicknames may actually have originated on the comic stage. A typical case is Antiphanes fr. 27 from *Halieuomenē*, where a fishmonger's on-stage association of well-known persons with special fishes, on the basis of common (actual or supposed) characteristics, may provide such material. More specifically, there are two parallel lists of fishes and names, each name (either a proper name or a nickname) corresponding to and being playfully identified with a fish, so that the exposition

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68 For a discussion of this fragment, cf. Apostolakis 2019, 127–134.
69 Cf. Millis 2015, 169, who considers the first type "permanent nicknames" and the second "isolated jests".

of the fishmonger's trade in the fish market is transformed into a list of *kōmōi-doumenoi*.[70]

A common source of nicknames is the mocking association of a person with some material object indicative of his/her occupation. In this way, significant names are turned into standard nicknames in the course of time, and are recycled on the comic stage. In Philetaerus fr. 14, a cook is called *Pataniōn* (from πατάνιον "little flat dish").[71] Already in Aristophanes (*Ran.* 549), a baking woman is called Plathanē (from πλάθανον, a dish for baking bread), while the similar name Scapha (σκάφη, "Trough") occurs in Plautus (*Most.* 158, 162). On the other hand, the courtesan Λοπάδιον (Timocles fr. 27) is apparently named after a small vessel for boiling fish (λοπάς), but this must be an already established nickname, not one invented by the comic poet. On the procedure of generating a nickname, a telling passage is that in Anaxandrides (fr. 35):

> ὑμεῖς γὰρ ἀλλήλους ἀεὶ χλευάζετ', οἶδ' ἀκριβῶς.
> ἂν μὲν γὰρ ᾖ τις εὐπρεπής, Ἱερὸν Γάμον καλεῖτε·
> ἐὰν δὲ μικρὸν παντελῶς ἀνθρώπιον, Σταλαγμόν.
> λαμπρός τις ἐξελήλυθ' – ᣟ Ὄλολυς οὗτός ἐστι·
> λιπαρὸς περιπατεῖ Δημοκλῆς, Ζωμὸς κατωνόμασται·
> χαίρει τις αὐχμῶν ἢ ῥυπῶν, Κονιορτὸς ἀναπέφηνεν·
> ὄπισθεν ἀκολουθεῖ κόλαξ τῳ, Λέμβος ἐπικέκληται·
> τὰ πόλλ' ἄδειπνος περιπατεῖ, Κεστρῖνός ἐστι Νῆστις.
> εἰς τοὺς καλοὺς δ' ἄν τις βλέπῃ, καινὸς Θεατροποιός·
> ὑφείλετ' ἄρνα ποιμένος παίζων, Ἀτρεὺς ἐκλήθη·
> ἐὰν δὲ κριόν, Φρῖξος· ἂν δὲ κῳδάριον, Ἰάσων

> For you always mock one another, I know well. For if someone is attractive, you call him Sacred Marriage; and if he is an exceedingly small fellow, Drop. Someone has turned out comely [...] this one is Womanish; Democles walks about (over-)oiled, he has the name Soup; someone delights in being unanointed or dirty, he is clearly Dustcloud; a flatterer follows behind someone, he is called Skiff; whoever walks around generally dinnerless, is Starving Mullet. If someone stares at handsome boys, a new Theatre-maker; if he took a shepherd's lamb as a joke, he was dubbed Atreus; if a ram, Phrixos; and if a fleece, Jason.[72]

In this catalogue it is possible to discern two sources of nicknames. The first is from everyday life, referring either to physical characteristics or to a particular

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70 See Konstantakos 2000, 70–71, who convincingly remarks that Antiphanes may well have been inspired by an Old Comedy source, e.g. Archippus' *Fishes*, frr. 15–18. For comic descriptions of seafood as puns on the nicknames of some *hetairai*, cf. Lamari 2021.

71 This *Pataniōn* might well be the ancestor of the cook Citrio (probably associated with χύτρα) in Plautus' *Casina*.

72 Cf. Ar. *Av.* 1291–1299; Alexis fr. 183.3.

behaviour, such as Stalagmos, Zōmos, Ololys, Koniortos, Lembos, as parallels indicate; while the second is more sophisticated, including mythological parallels, and may well be the poet's inventive addition, in a comic culmination.[73] At the same time, this fragment illustrates the process by which comic poets take popular jokes and turn them into useful comic material. The nickname Stalagmos, in particular, has its own history, since it survives as the name of a slave in Plautus' *Captivi*, and as the title of a play by Naevius, apparently the eponymous character.[74] This might mean that this particular nickname was introduced to theatre at some point as the name of a comic character, and was subsequently adopted by the Roman comic poets. Finally, sometimes an existing nickname is used to stigmatise a particular behaviour of another person, by comparing the stigmatised person with the original bearer of the nickname. We can follow this process on stage in Timocles fr. 21, when the speaking character calls somebody "a Tithymallus and a parasite" (Τιθύμαλλον αὐτὸν καὶ παράσιτον ἀποκαλῶν), apparently because the person behaves like that notorious parasite by invading a dinner uninvited.[75]

4.1 Braggart soldiers

While in Greek New Comedy and Roman comedy braggart soldiers are mainly mercenaries, the old type is a prominent public figure.[76] In Timocles' *Heroes* (fr. 12), Demosthenes is described as a *miles gloriosus*, and this description rather looks backwards, to the early history of this stereotypical character.

> Οὐκοῦν κελεύεις νῦν με πάντα μᾶλλον ἢ
> τὰ προσόντα φράζειν. (Β.) πάνυ γε. (Α.) δράσω τοῦτό σοι.
> καὶ πρῶτα μέν σοι παύσεται Δημοσθένης
> ὀργιζόμενος. (Β.) ὁ ποῖος; (Α.) †ὁ Βριάρεως,
> ὁ τοὺς καταπάλτας τάς τε λόγχας ἐσθίων,
> μισῶν λόγους ἄνθρωπος οὐδὲ πώποτε
> ἀντίθετον εἰπὼν οὐδέν, ἀλλ' Ἄρη βλέπων

(A.) I see what you mean; you ask me to tell anything except what is appropriate. (B.) Just the thing! (A.) I will do it for your sake. This is the first: Demosthenes will stop being angry

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73 Cf. Timocles fr. 19. For the "Aristophanic" technique of ending a list with an abbreviated form, cf. Spyropoulos 1974, 12–17; Millis 2015, 169 n. 62.
74 Cf. Bechtel 1898, 11; Millis 2015, 169.
75 Apostolakis 2019, 174–175.
76 For a detailed discussion of the evolution of this character, see Konstantakos 2015.

with you. (B.) Who is Demosthenes? (A.) Briareos, who swallows catapults and spears, this hater of discourse, who never used a single antithesis in his speech but has a martial stare.

The ironical game played on stage (*antiphrasis*) requires the replacement of the qualities belonging to a person with quite the opposite ones. In this context, the expression "he never used a single antithesis" alludes to the anti-Macedonian slogan "not give (*dounai*) but return (*apodounai*)" of the Halonnesus debate (342 BCE), in response to Philip's offer of Halonnesus to the Athenians. By this antithetical expression (actually a paronomasia), which was credited to Demosthenes, the Athenian orator proposed the rejection of Philip's offer, since the island had belonged to Athens in the past. Through this ironical device Demosthenes, the supposed fervent champion of war, is revealed to be a false Briareos, a braggart *miles gloriosus*, who exhausts his combative spirit in uttering warlike cries against the Macedonian king. Briareos, perhaps originating from βριαρός, "strong", might be a significant name for a terrifying fighter, as Demosthenes is ironically described. It is telling that Lamachus, the comic archetype of the *miles gloriosus*, is also associated with μάχη in Aristophanes (cf. Ar. *Ach.* 269–270, πραγμάτων τε καὶ μαχῶν καὶ Λαμάχων ἀπαλλαγείς). The description of the martial stare of Demosthenes (Ἄρη βλέπων) also recalls a similar description of Lamachus in *Acharnians* 566, ἰὼ Λάμαχ᾽, ὦ βλέπων ἀστραπάς. Demosthenes' description, therefore, as a Briareos, has a rather Aristophanic flavour.[77] Mythical figures as braggart soldiers also appear, as one would expect, in mythological burlesque. In Ephippus' *Busiris*, Heracles (fr. 2) boasts and asserts that he, as a Tirynthian Argive, fights all his battles drunk, but his claims are dismissed by his interlocutor, who remarks that this is why Tirynthians always run away.[78]

Given, however, that during the fourth century the role and number of mercenary soldiers dramatically increased, the braggart soldier became a stereotypical figure on the comic stage. Plays titled *Stratiōtēs* were written by Antiphanes, Alexis, and Xenarchus (and also Philemon and Diphilus), while Ephippus wrote *Peltastēs*. *Milites gloriosi* bearing speaking names are very common in Greek New Comedy and Roman comedy. These names either existed in real life, e.g. Bias, Polemon, and Stratophanes (Menander), or are invented, e.g. Hairesiteiches (Diphilus) and Pyrgopolynices (Plautus). On the other hand, we have only scanty

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77 Cf. Hermippus fr. 47 and Cratinus fr. 300, where Pericles is described in similar terms to Demosthenes. Timocles fr. 12 also recalls Mnesimachus fr. 7, where a character boasts about his military abilities in similar terms. For further discussion of Timocles' scene, see Apostolakis 2019, 115–123.

78 Cf. Konstantakos 2014, 172; Papachrysostomou 2021, 34–41.

evidence for Middle Comedy. Possible, but far from certain, instances are the comic titles *Thrasōn* in Alexis, and *Kleophanēs* and *Tychōn* in Antiphanes.[79] However, sometimes we can trace the bombastic rhetoric of a *miles* in the preserved fragments.

In the following lines, I will consider the opportunities for jokes and word-play offered by a nickname for a braggart soldier. In the unique preserved fragment by Heracleides (fr. 1), Chares is ironically described as liberal and magnificent, since he gave a splendid banquet to the Athenian people for an insignificant — and easily earned — victory over Adaeus, the commander of the foreign troops of Philip, who was known as "Rooster":

> Ἀλεκτρυόνα τὸν τοῦ Φιλίππου παραλαβὼν
> ἀωρὶ κοκκύζοντα καὶ πλανώμενον
> κατέκοψεν· οὐ γὰρ εἶχεν οὐδέπω λόφον.
> ἕνα κατακόψας μάλα συχνοὺς ἐδείπνισεν
> Χάρης Ἀθηναίων τόθ', ὡς γενναῖος ἦν

> He caught Philip's Rooster as he was squawking and wandering around early in the morning, and chopped him to pieces; because he didn't have a crest. Even though he only chopped up one Rooster, Chares fed an enormous number of Athenians dinner. What a generous guy he was!

Through an established nickname, the slaughter of Philip's official is inventively transformed into a culinary event. The nickname Ἀλεκτρυών, "Cock" or "Rooster", is further elaborated in two inseparable levels. Philip's braggart officer is seen as a cock crowing too early, i.e. selecting the wrong timing for the battle. He goes astray without his basic armour, like a cock without his crest, and is eventually killed by Chares. Moreover, the victor gave a dinner for the Athenians to celebrate his battle against Philip's mercenaries under Adaeus the "Rooster", who is said to have been chopped into pieces and offered as a meal. The joke is probably inspired from Aristophanic material. In *Birds* (v. 290), Euelpides comments on a bird's crest and alludes to Cleonymus having flung away his shield on the battlefield.[80] Besides, the same culinary term (κατακό-πτειν, "butcher") is applied in a feasting context both to Alectryon's slaughter in Heracleides and to birds butchered for a wedding feast in *Birds* (v. 1688).

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79 For Thrason, see Arnott 1996, 249–250. Tychon (perhaps "Lucky') is an alternative title (Στρατιώτης ἢ Τύχων), and, since it is quite uncommon as an Athenian name, it might be a significant name for a *miles*; cf. Konstantakos 2000, 212–214; Olson 2021, 34.

80 Cf. also *Birds* 1366, where Peisetaerus advises the man who strikes his father (*Patraloias*) to become a brave fighter: νομίσας ἀλεκτρυόνος ἔχειν τονδὶ λόφον.

4.2 Parasites and *Opsophagoi*

Most parasites in fourth-century comedy bear nicknames. Interestingly enough, the very title *parasitos* seems to be a nickname, by which this particular character is introduced on the comic stage. The following fragment of Alexis (183.1–2) is telling:

> καλοῦσι δ' αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ νεώτεροι
> Παράσιτον ὑποκόρισμα· τῷ δ' οὐδὲν μέλει.

> All the young men call him "Parasite" as a nickname. But it doesn't bother him.

As Arnott speculates, this is the first time that this comic type, known during the fifth century as *kolax*, "flatterer", was launched in the comic theatre under this term, which had hitherto been reserved, both inside and outside the theatre, for men who offered their services to a cult and received free meals in return.[81]

Both Greek and Roman poets invent further nicknames for their comic parasites, and elaborate on them with various explanations, according to the special inclinations of their characters. Sometimes parasites themselves explain their own nickname when introducing themselves. In Aristophon (fr. 5.3), a parasite says that his name is *Zōmos*, "Broth", because he always arrives first at dinner.[82] In Antiphanes' *Progonoi* (fr. 193), a parasite declares that he is ready to offer any kind of service to the patron without a second thought (ἀπρόσκεπτος). And that is why the younger men call him "Thunderbolt" (Σκηπτός). He even argues that mocking remarks don't bother him (οὐθὲν μέλει τῶν σκωμμάτων μοι). The wordplay ἀπρόσκεπτος — Σκηπτός underlines the impetuosity of this particular parasite and his resolution to undertake any activity in order to help his patron. More importantly, this pattern of self-description survives in Roman comedy, in Plautus in particular (*Captivi* 69–76), where the parasite Ergasilus comically explains why the young people have named him "The Prostitute". The similarities between the two passages (e.g. καλοῦσί μ' οἱ νεώτεροι — *iuuentus nomen indidit*; ἄκλητος — *invocatus*; σκωμμάτων — *derisores*) leaves little doubt that

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81 Arnott 1996, 543–544; Arnott 2010, 323. For the parasites, see Damon 1995.
82 It is interesting that *Zōmion* (apparently the nickname of a parasite) is the alternative title of a play by Philemon (Μετιὼν ἢ Ζωμίον).

Antiphanes' passage has influenced Plautus in the creation of inventive nicknames of comic parasites on stage.[83]

When parasites are nicknamed, either inside or outside theatre, the verb καλῶ, "call", is regularly used. In Anaxippus fr. 3.3–6, this use also explains the title of the play *Keraunos* with impressive metaphorical language:

> τοῦτον οἱ φίλοι καλοῦσί σοι
> νυνὶ δι' ἀνδρείαν Κεραυνόν. (B) εἰκότως.
> ἀβάτους ποιεῖν γὰρ τὰς τραπέζας οἴομαι
> αὐτόν, κατασκήπτοντα † αὐταῖς † τῇ γνάθῳ

(A.) Nowadays your friends call him Lightning-Bolt, because he's so brave. (B.) That makes sense; because I imagine he makes their tables sacred ground, by descending † on them † with his jaws.

The supposed impressive braveness of the parasite is undermined by the second interlocutor, who explains the nickname "Lightning-Bolt" with another elaborate wordplay. In fact, Anaxippus' wordplay is a variation on Antiphanes' ἀπρόσκεπτος – Σκηπτός, and adds a religious dimension to the joke. More specifically, the tables are struck by a thunderbolt which descends on them (κατασκήπτειν), and become ἄβατοι in both senses, i.e. "untrodden", and "not to be trodden", as places struck by lightning and therefore sacred. At the same time the sacred context is subverted by the remark that the parasite Lightning-Bolt's attack is made with his jaws (κατασκήπτειν τῇ γνάθῳ).

This passage might be indicative that at least some of the stereotypical names of parasites have their origin in fourth-century comic descriptions of this character. The parasite described in Anaxippus' passage might well anticipate the stereotypical parasite Gnathon, "Big Jaws", who appears in both Greek and Roman comedy (e.g. Menander, *Kolax*; Terence, *Eunuchus*; cf. Cic. *Phil.* 2.15). Indeed, γνάθος, "jaw", and the related σιαγών, "mandible", are often associated with the parasite's voracity. In Alexis fr. 185.3, a parasite is said to never have his jaws idle (ἀργοὺς ἔχειν μηδέποτε τὰς σιαγόνας). Moreover, parasites are often associated with biting and chewing food (μασᾶσθαι; cf. Hegesippus Com. fr. 2.5; Antiphanes frr. 202 and 253).[84] The related term παραμασήτης, "fellow-chewer" (Timocles fr. 9.6; cf. Alexis fr. 238.2), and the alternative παραμασύντης

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83 Cf. Fontaine 2010, 230–233. Cf. also Plaut. *Men.* 77–78, *iuuentus nomen fecit Peniculo mihi, ideo quia ... mensam quando edo detergeo*, "The youngsters have given me the name 'Peniculus, the Brush' because ... when I eat I wipe the table clean".
84 See Konstantakos 2000, 235. Cf. Timocles fr. 10.5, where the parasite Corydus is always ready to set his teeth in motion (κινεῖν ὀδόντας).

(Ephippus fr. 8.6 and Alexis fr. 224.8) also describe a typical activity of a parasite. Therefore, such connotations with *gnathos* in fourth-century comedy may have contributed to the creation of the generic name Gnathon for parasites.

Tithymallus ("Ruddy") is another notorious parasite, so nicknamed after the homonymous plant or bush ("spurge").[85] He is a typical intruder at dinners, without paying his contribution. This practice is associated with his complexion in Dromon fr. 1, where a character says that he is embarrassed to go and eat dinner without contributing any money, and his interlocutor answers that Tithymallus also goes from house to house redder than a pomegranate seed (ἐρυθρότερος κόκκου), because he does not contribute to dinner either. Tithymallus' complexion, which accounts for his nickname, is now associated with his way of life and supports a joke on stage. What is surprising, however, is that the colour red, usually associated with the blush of modesty, is in Tithymallus' case ironically applied to his impudence.

Callimedon the *Karabos*, mentioned fifteen times in the preserved comic fragments, is the most famous *opsophagos* in Middle Comedy.[86] The origin of the nickname *Karabos* is disputable.[87] According to Athenaeus (3.104d), it is due to his predilection for crayfish. Also in Euphron fr. 8, it is said that once when a womb was served to him, it made him leap about as he ate it, whence he was called Crayfish (ὅθεν ἐκλήθη Κάραβος).[88] His *opsophagia* is also stressed through a wordplay in Alexis' *Pontikos* (fr. 198), where the speaking character declares that Carabus is eager to die not for the sake of his fatherland (πάτρα), but for a womb (μήτρα). While, however, Callimedon is the consumer of fish, a typical *opsophagos*, sometimes, through a playful use of his nickname, he himself becomes food for others. In Antiphanes, in particular, this transformation takes place in an impressive inversion, performed on stage (fr. 27.7–8):

> ὦ Καλλιμέδων, σὲ κατέδετ' ἄρτι τῶν φίλων;
> οὐδεὶς ὃς ἂν μὴ κατατιθῇ τὰς συμβολάς.

> Which of your friends, Callimedon, is going to gulp you down any minute now? No one who doesn't contribute his share of the dinner expenses!

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85 Theophr. *Hist. pl.* 9.11.7, τῶν δὲ τιθυμάλλων ὁ μὲν παράλιος καλούμενος κόκκινον φύλλον ἔχει περιφερές; cf. Bechtel 1898, 41; Orth 2020, 442.
86 Cf. Sommerstein 2019.
87 Cf. Apostolakis 2019, 215.
88 Cf. Antiphanes fr. 77; Eubulus fr. 8; Alexis frr. 57, 49, 249; Dioxippus fr. 3.

Here the play on names takes another form: instead of calling an *opsophagos* by the name of his favourite fish, it is the fish itself which is called by the *opsophagos*' proper name. This may be an amusing innovation by Antiphanes.[89]

On the other hand, ugliness is another source of mockery.[90] Bechtel believes that Callimedon was nicknamed *Karabos* due to his squint eyes.[91] Squint-eyed characters on the comic stage were a particularly welcome spectacle, especially if they aspired to attract others for political or erotic reasons, like the politician Callimedon and the *amator* Strabax in Plautus' *Truculentus*.[92] In fact Alexis, a poet with a strong inclination to linguistic humour, activates a wordplay on the squint-eyed man (fr. 117):

> τῷ Καλλιμέδοντι γὰρ θεραπεύω τὰς κόρας
> ἤδη τετάρτην ἡμέραν. (B.) ἦσαν κόραι
> θυγατέρες αὐτῷ; (A.) τὰς μὲν οὖν τῶν ὀμμάτων,
> ἃς οὐδ' ὁ Μελάμπους, ὃς μόνος τὰς Προιτίδας
> ἔπαυσε μαινομένας, καταστήσειεν ἄν

> (A.) I've been looking after Callimedon's pupils for three days now. (B.) You mean he had daughters? A. No — the pupils of his eyes. Not even Melampus, the only person who cured Proetus' daughters of their madness, could set them right.

The poet substitutes the nickname *Karabos* with a wordplay on the double meaning (daughters and eye pupils) of the word *korai*. In Timocles, the nickname *Karabos* is also playfully associated with his squint eyes (fr. 29):

> εἶθ' ὁ Καλλιμέδων ἄφνω
> ὁ Κάραβος προσῆλθεν. ἐμβλέπων δ' ἐμοί,
> ὡς γοῦν ἐδόκει, πρὸς ἕτερον ἄνθρωπόν τινα
> ἐλάλει· συνιεὶς δ' οὐδὲν εἰκότως ἐγὼ
> ὧν ἔλεγεν ἐπένευον διακενῆς. τῷ δ' ἄρα
> βλέπουσι χωρὶς καὶ δοκοῦσιν αἱ κόραι

> Then suddenly Callimedon the Crayfish arrived. He seemed to be looking at me, but he was talking to someone else. Naturally I understood nothing of this; but I kept nodding my head vacantly. You see, his eyes look in a different direction than they seem to.

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89 Cf. Konstantakos 2000, 75. Also in Philemon fr. 43, a certain Agyrrhius (apparently Callimedon's son) addresses a crayfish which was served to him with the words "Hail, dear papa"; cf. Theophilus fr. 4.

90 *Est etiam deformitatis et corporis vitiorum satis bella materies ad iocandum* (Cic. *De or.* 2.59.239).

91 Bechtel 1898, 23–24.

92 The squint-eyed character also appears in Old Comedy (Eupolis fr. 298.3).

The fragment comes from the play *Polypragmōn*, "Busy-body". Callimedon, indeed, displayed some elements of a busy-body in his real political life, since he was an active supporter of the Macedonians, was involved in political trials, and also engaged in mine-enterprises. When the speaking character describes his squint-eyed stare, he may be alluding to his practice of acting for different goals at the same time, as a busy-body politician. However, it is quite uncertain whether he was the emblematic *polypragmōn* of the title. It seems more plausible that the play contains a series of episodes involving meddlesome persons, in which case Callimedon, the notorious *opsophagos* and squint-eye, is perhaps a fitting participant.[93]

4.3 Courtesans and lovers

The "women most mentioned" in Classical Athens were by far the courtesans.[94] However, it is not always possible to identify them with certainty, since their original names are often hidden under professional nicknames. Athenaeus in his thirteenth book has the grammarian Myrtilus deal with these names, which mainly occur in Middle and New Comedy, as well as in fourth-century oratory. Professional nicknames were the vehicle through which courtesans were fictionalised and turned into subjects and characters on the comic stage. Thanks to the second-century grammarians who dealt with glossing the courtesans' names — and Myrtilus represents a typical case — we are given a glimpse of these nicknames and their bearers. The problem is that this material is often decontextualised and adapted to the intellectual and literary environment of the late Classical period. On the other hand, we have many quoted comic fragments at our disposal, and in some cases it is possible to trace original techniques employed by the comic poets concerning the nomenclature of courtesans and their lovers. In this chapter I confine myself to a few typical instances in which these nicknames provide fodder for inventive jokes and plays on language in the preserved fragments of Middle Comedy.

Courtesans were often known by suggestive working names, some of which appear as comic titles: *Klepsydra*, "Water-clock" (Eubulus), *Neottis*, "Nestling, Little Bird" (Antiphanes, Anaxilas, Eubulus), *Pannychis*, "Vigil" (Eubulus, Alexis), *Kynagis*, "Huntress" (Philetaerus), *Malthakē*, "Soft" (Antiphanes), *Melitta*,

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93 Cf. Apostolakis 2019, 212.
94 For naming a hetaera, cf. McClure 2003, 59–78; for courtesans in fourth-century comedy, cf. Henderson 2014, 190–194.

"Honeybee" (Antiphanes). These titles usually denote the main characteristic of the courtesan, whether she herself is the title-character of the play or another person is named after her, through a common dominant characteristic. The sympotic material provided by Athenaeus allows some speculation on the origin and function of these names. Such an instance is mentioned in *Deipnosophists* 6.245d, when the parasite Corydus asked the courtesan Gnome, "Opinion", to contribute not money, but "whatever the people thought fit" (Γνώμην δὲ συμβάλλεσθαι ὅ τι δοκεῖ τῷ δήμῳ). Moreover, in Machon's *Chreiae*, also preserved in Athenaeus, elaborations on hetaeras' nicknames are a favourite subject. A telling example is the explanation of the name of the courtesan Mania by her habit of crying "Crazy!" (μανία) whenever she wanted to approve or disapprove of something (fr. 14.204–210 Gow). Such punning explanations in Athenaeus echo the Alexandrian and Second Sophistic scholars' linguistic interest in these matters. Comic titles such as *Klepsydra* might allude (literally or metaphorically) to the courtesan's sexual practices, i.e. allowing her clients to have sex as long as the water clock runs (Ath. 13.567c–d). It has also been suggested that Timocles' *Lēthē* might denote a courtesan, a name — or, more probably, a nickname — deriving from side-effects associated with sympotic activities and love affairs.[95]

On the other hand, nicknames denoting plants, birds, or fishes might be facilitated and/or explained as metaphors in existing comic passages. Concerning bird-titles (e.g. *Neottis*), birds were sometimes used as metaphors for female genitals.[96] In Epicrates' *Antilais* fr. 3.11, the hetaera Lais is described in her youth as νεοττός, "a young chick". In Eubulus, courtesans are identified with decoy-birds, which attract other birds with their tuneful song (fr. 82, τὰς φιλῳδοὺς κερμάτων παλευτρίας).[97] A different image occurs in Ephippus fr. 6, where the good courtesan kisses her lover "not with her lips squeezed together, as if he were an enemy, but instead with her mouth wide open just like baby sparrows do". Such images might have contributed to the creation of nicknames such as Στρουθίον, "Little Sparrow", in Lucian.[98]

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95 Cf. Pherecrates' Ἐπιλήσμων ἢ Θάλασσα (where the title probably denotes a hetaera); and Μνησίς, the opposite of Λήθη, mentioned as a flute girl (αὐλητρίς) in Ath. 13.576f. Cf. Apostolakis 2019, 182–183.

96 Cf. Ar. *Lys.* 770 (on χελιδών); Henderson 1991, 48.

97 For a similar description of courtesans, cf. Amphis fr. 23, where Sinope, Lyca, and Nannion are described as παγίδες τοῦ βίου ("traps of life").

98 On this description of the *bona meretrix*, cf. Papachrysostomou 2021, 89. On courtesans compared with predators, cf. Epicrates fr. 3.

Love affairs, a standard theme in Middle Comedy, and relationships between courtesans and lovers in particular, are often expressed metaphorically. In Ath. 13.582e–f (attributed to Machon), the nickname Aix, "Goat", is mentioned for the hetaera Nico, who supposedly devoured her lover Thallus, "Sapling", and the grammarian Myrtilus explains that goats delight in saplings (θαλλῷ χαίρουσιν αἱ αἶγες). In Eubulus fr. 54, Heracles describes a love affair with the courtesan Ocimon, "Basil", at Corinth in gastronomic terms, as a proverbial gluttonous hero: λάχανόν τι τρώγων ὤκιμον διεφθάρην, "eating an herb called Ocimon, I was destroyed". As a result, the hero lost his tunic. Perhaps the subsequent verses explained how this love affair was associated with the loss of the tunic.[99] A plausible explanation is that this particular courtesan was very expensive.

The insatiable courtesan who consumes her lovers also appears in the context of fish-eating (*opsophagia*), in an interesting inversion of the pattern of "the *opsophagos* lover and the fish-courtesan".[100] The emblematic *opsophagos* courtesan in Middle Comedy is the famous Pythionice. In Antiphanes fr. 27.22 (from *Halieuomenē*), Pythionice is mockingly said to have a taste for salt fish (ἐπὶ τὸ τάριχός ἐστιν ὡρμηκυῖα), the commodity which Chaerephilus, the father of her lovers, imported.[101] Also in Timocles, she devours two *saperdai*, "Nile perches", also called *skombroi*, "mackerels", i.e. the sons of Chaerephilus. In fr. 15 she is said to be fond of salt fish (φιληδεῖν ταρίχῳ), and in fr. 16 she "keeps company with two Nile-perches" (σύνεστι σαπέρδαις δυσίν), an expression with sexual connotations. In this case it is not the courtesan herself who is nicknamed after her penchant for fish, but her victims.[102]

One of the most interesting couples of a profligate lover and his hetaera is mentioned in Axionicus fr. 1.

>   ὁ Πυθόδηλος οὑτοσὶ
> ὁ Βαλλίων προσέρχετ' ἐπικαλούμενος
> μεθύουσά τ' ἐξόπισθεν ἡ σοφωτάτη
> Ἀποτυμπανισχὰς κατὰ πόδας πορεύεται

> Here comes Pythodelus, whose nickname's Ballion; and behind him, drunk, the clever Apotympanischas is dogging his steps.

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99 Cf. Hunter 1983, 141.
100 Courtesans nicknamed after fish: Aphye, "Small Fry" (Anthis, Ath. 13.586b); Saperdion, "Little Fish" (Phryne, Ath. 13.567e).
101 Cf. Konstantakos 2000, 87–91.
102 Cf. Apostolakis 2019, 141–142.

Both the hetaera and her lover probably enter on stage at the moment of their presentation (cf. οὑτοσί, προσέρχεται), although it is not clear whether they play an important role in the play or participate in a short episode.[103] Pythodelus is nicknamed (ἐπικαλούμενος) Ballion, "Big Dick", from βαλλίον "phallus". This nickname became a generic name for pimps in later comedy.[104] On the other hand, Apotympanischas is an *ad hoc* invented name for the courtesan nicknamed Ischas.[105] This seems an appropriate nickname for a courtesan, since ἰσχάς, "dry fig", indicates the female genitals.[106] Although it is not attested in this sense in Attic Comedy until Axionicus, it already appears in Hipponax (fr. 124 West), in a description of cunnilingus. If this allusion is accepted, it is interesting that both the profligate *amator* and the drunkard courtesan are nicknamed here after their genitalia. On the other hand, it is not clear why Ischas is associated with a particular method of execution, crucifixion on a plank (*tympanon* or *apotympanismos*). Perhaps, according to the speaking character, she deserves such torture for the damage she causes her lovers.

Courtesans and lovers also appear in paraepic and paratragic contexts. In Anaxilas fr. 22, whether the *persona loquens* is a young lover or a father or old friend who warns the young man about courtesans' greed and infidelity, well-known nicknamed courtesans are called a "criminal bunch" (κατάπτυστον γένος) and compared with mythical monsters: Chimaera, Charybdis, Scylla, Sphinx, Hydra, and Siren.[107] This long collective type of invective, which addresses a specific group of men or women, here the courtesans, derives from Euripides. There are also indications of an intertextual dialogue with epic and tragic poetry.[108] In fact, this type of comparison leads in some cases to a third level of qualification. The poet takes established nicknamed courtesans of the time and further elaborates their characteristics by associating them with

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[103] For a full analysis of the scene, cf. Orth 2020, 169–174.

[104] Cf. Plautus, *Pseudolus* and Cicero, *Pro Roscio* 20, *Ballionem illum improbissimum et periurissimum lenonem*.

[105] Cf. Menander, *Colax* fr. 4.1; perhaps it is the same person as that mentioned in Axionicus; cf. Orth 2020, 173.

[106] Henderson 2014, 118.

[107] See the analysis of Tartaglia 2019, 120–156. For such corresponding parallel lists as material for comic accumulation, cf. Ar. *Av.* 565–569, 760–767, 1136–1157; Timocles fr. 6; Anaxippus fr. 1.28–49; see Konstantakos 2000, 71.

[108] Chimaera: Hom. *Il.* 16.328–329; Sphinx: Eur. *Phoen.* 806–811; Clytaemnestra as Scylla: Aesch. *Ag.* 1231–1236; as a viper: *Cho.* 246–249; Medea as a lioness and Scylla: Eur. *Med.* 1342; cf. Tartaglia 2019, 125. Also Stuligrosz (2017, 17–27) discusses the reworking of mythical motifs and characters from Homer and their adaptation to everyday situations.

mythical figures. Eleven courtesans are also paratragically described as Furies in Timocles' *Orestautokleidēs* fr. 27, probably because Autocleides, being a pederast, has usurped their privileges. Courtesans are given real names (Pythionice), nicknames (Lopadion), and generic or common names (Plangon, Lyca, Myrrhine, Chrysis).[109]

5 Conclusion

The poets of Middle Comedy often play with proper names, nicknames, and accompanying epithets. In the preserved fragments, characters bearing historical names sometimes appear in the frame of personal satire and are often compared with mythical figures, in order to highlight their true character. Invented speaking names of the Aristophanic type and relevant wordplay also appear in Middle Comedy, but less frequently. Moreover, the poets of Middle Comedy show a notable inventiveness in adapting traditional epithets or transforming them into new-coined ones in order to describe their characters, most often in parodic passages. Antiphanes, Alexis, and Timocles are poets with a tendency to employ wordplay in connection with names, and show a notable versatility in creating innovative epithets which aid the comic subversion of a seemingly serious situation.

On the other hand, it seems likely that some techniques characteristic of the comic language of New and Roman Comedy can already be traced in Middle Comedy. More specifically, parasites, courtesans, and gourmands are mainly presented on stage or mentioned with their established nicknames which, however, still offer an opportunity for comic exploitation. They are often further elaborated through wordplay and metaphorical language, and in a sense they anticipate the generic names of the stereotypical characters of New Comedy. Finally, as far as the fragmentary status of Middle Comedy allows us to say, nomenclature in Middle Comedy is a combination of Aristophanic "Cratylism" and the "Hermogenean" stance of Menander. It includes both earlier comic elements and innovative amplifications, and prepares the way for New Comedy, where the comic characters acquire typical names and nicknames in the same way as type-masks.

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109 Plangon and Myrrhine are also names of free women. Cf. Apostolakis 2019, 204.

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Antonis K. Petrides

Strategies of Verbal Humour in Menander's *Dyskolos*: From Linguistics to Dramaturgy

Abstract: This chapter uses the advances in Humour Studies to examine Menander's techniques of verbal humour in his play *Dyskolos*. Menander's credible pretensions to linguistic naturalism render his scripts privileged data pools for studying Greek conversational humour in the late fourth century BCE. However, in Menander, the nature and the distribution of the various verbal humour mechanisms and idiosyncrasies to a play's characters transcends naturalism, constructing an artificial theatrical discourse of ethical and thematic import. The chapter's main points are the following: (a) that on the surface, Menander uses verbal humour *naturalistically*, mirroring its occurrence and function in natural conversational contexts; (b) that dramaturgically speaking, Menander's conversational humour is *characterisational* and *relational*, contributing to the construction and individualisation of character and drawing connecting lines between various *dramatis personae*; and (c) that its function is also *thematic*, distributed to characters in such a way as to bolster the fundamental dichotomies of the play (city/country, rich/poor, slave/free).

1 Introduction

Humour Studies, an aspect of which is the linguistic analysis of verbal humour primarily from a semantic and pragmatic viewpoint, is a rapidly growing field.[1] The notion of verbal humour comprises the linguistic (lexical/stylistic/pragmatic) resources and techniques of inciting laughter. Although verbal humour can circulate in the form of canned jokes (indeed, such jokes provided the initial stimulus to the linguistics of humour), it is primarily interactional/conversational

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1 For overviews of Humour Studies, see Raskin 2008; Attardo 2014; Attardo 2017. For the linguistics of humour particularly, a firm starting point is provided by Dynel 2008a; Attardo 2008; and Attardo/Raskin 2017. In humour semantics, the most influential theories have been the so-called "Semantic Script Theory of Humour", proposed by Victor Raskin (1985) and developed by Raskin and Salvatore Attardo into a "General Theory of Verbal Humour" (Attardo/Raskin 1991; Attardo 1994; Attardo 2001). For the pragmatics of humour, that is, humour in interaction, see Norrick/Chiaro 2009 and the special issue on humour of the journal *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics* (issue 4.1, 2008).

in nature; therefore, it is best observed and studied in pragmatic contexts. In these contexts, laughter is a reflex reaction to a semantic incongruity and/or a breach of the "cooperative principle" that governs everyday conversations,[2] produced by one speaker and perceived as mirthful by another, either the direct addressee or a third party — for instance, a theatre audience — if the direct addressee being the "butt" of the joke is not amused.[3] As such, verbal humour is differentiated from laughter produced — in the ancient comic performances that concern this chapter — by visual or other means, such as outrageous imagery (sexual images, bodily deformities, and the like), caricatures/jesting mimesis of comportment, voices etc., gestures, slapstick, and any other nonverbal/non-rhetorical medium.

Taxonomies of verbal humour vary widely in content and inclusivity. The consensus, however, is that conversational humour ranges from humorous units produced within a single word or utterance to more extended exchanges between speakers. The shorter units may comprise puns based on sound play (phonemic puns) or semantic ambiguity (e.g. homophony or homonymy puns); "lexemes", e.g. humorous neologisms such as coining, derivation, compounding, blending, acronyms etc.; or "phrasemes", humour produced by syntactical and stylistic play, such as surprising juxtapositions of semantic elements, witticisms, simile, metaphor, hyperbole, paradox etc. Verbal humour unfolding in extended dialogue includes sarcasm, retort, teasing, banter, putdown humour, allusions (ironic echoes), distortions, quotations etc.[4] On the contrary, one should not count irony among the subcategories of conversational humour. Although aspects of irony are certainly verbal — for instance, "aggressive" irony/sarcasm — others are more far-reaching (tonal, structural, even philosophical) and not by necessity humorous in nature; thus, they exceed the purview of humour studies and constitute an independent field.[5]

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2 On H.P. Grice's "cooperative principle" and the "maxims" governing it, see Grice 1989. Humour is commonly perceived as violating the cooperative principle; see Attardo 2008, 115, with bibliography.

3 Several theories have been propounded on the provenance and purposes of laughter, the most prominent of which are the superiority/disparagement theories, various psycho-physiological approaches, and the incongruity theories (the latter focus on the linguistic and cognitive aspects of humour). For a neat summary, see Larkin-Galiñanes 2017.

4 For a useful taxonomy and a bibliography on the various levels of verbal humour, see Dynel 2009.

5 Useful guides to Irony Studies are Muecke 1969; Muecke 1982; Hutcheon 1994; Colebrook 2004; Kreuz 2020.

This chapter uses the advances in Humour Studies to examine Menander's techniques of verbal humour in his play *Dyskolos* (produced in 317/316 BCE). As such, this study differs from the three major strands of Menandrian humour studies that have so far seen the light of day; namely, (a) works fleshing out the ancient observations vis-à-vis the difference between Menandrian and Aristophanic humour to construct general typologies of laughter;[6] (b) examinations of particular humorous phenomena, such as double entendres[7] or plot-building techniques;[8] or (c) syntheses on Menander's perception of laughter chiefly from a psychological perspective.[9] Halliwell's study (2008), by far the most sophisticated treatment of Menandrian laughter as a tool for manipulating audience response and generic boundaries, turns on the cognitive phenomenon Halliwell terms "perspectivism", the schism between character and audience evaluations of stage events. This, I would argue, is but one of several facets of Menandrian irony. A complete examination of this broad phenomenon should incorporate Menander's metatheatrical, intertextual, and other situational ironies, not the least of which is the technique I called elsewhere Menander's "pseudo-happy ends".[10] Aspects of these techniques have been explored,[11] although a comprehensive study of Menandrian irony remains a desideratum — and falls outside this chapter's scope.

Menander's credible pretensions to linguistic naturalism render his scripts privileged data pools for studying Greek conversational humour in the late fourth century BCE.[12] However, as I hope to show, in Menander the nature and especially the distribution of the various verbal humour mechanisms and idiosyncrasies to a play's characters transcends naturalism, constructing an artificial theatrical discourse of ethical and thematic import.

I expanded on Menander's "departure from realism", the trajectory from realism to (inter)textuality, cardinal for understanding Menander's dramaturgy,

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6 Arnott 1997; Hunter 2000; Gantar 2005. See also the chapters in Mureddu/Nieddu 2006.

7 Craik 2001; Rampichini 2002.

8 Stoessl 1973; Borgogno 2003.

9 Halliwell 2008.

10 Petrides, forthcoming a.

11 *Exempli gratia*: metatheatrical irony, Gutzwiller 2000; intertextual and intervisual irony, Petrides 2014.

12 Menander's language reflects the colloquial discourse of fourth-century Athens, including elements soon to crystallise into the Hellenistic Koine: see mostly López Eire 2002; Cartlidge 2014; and Hurst 2014, with earlier bibliography cited there. For the ancient, mostly Atticistic, perceptions of Menander's language as "non-Classical", one may start from Lamagna 2004 and Tribulato 2014.

in Petrides 2014. My emphasis there was on plot and character rather than language. Menander, I argued, constructs fictional "possible worlds" from realistic points of departure:

> The overall realistic ambience, the very fact that the play begins from a realistic point of departure, and the way it resolves its plot by abandoning verisimilitude so palpably in the end, invites an inescapable comparison between historical reality and its fictional analogue in Menander's denouements.[13]

Mutatis mutandis, a comparable effect is produced by Menander's ostensibly realistic representation of contemporary oral discourse. Linguistic realism only serves as a foil for observing the dramaturgical significance of non-realistic/comical configurations, such as that comparable linguistic tics connect characters of the same household or that "antagonists" share the same penchant for, say, hyperbole or, more subtly, that the characters of a play — in this chapter, *Dyskolos* — are neatly divided in terms of their share in the production of verbal humour along the drama's primary socio-political fault lines, namely rustic/poor/agelastic, on the one hand, and urban/rich/gelastic, on the other.

My goal, therefore, is to offer a comprehensive study of verbal humour in a single drama of Menander's, hoping to establish that for this playwright, verbal humour is not an end in itself — as it is for Aristophanes as a rule — but one of several instruments in his dramaturgical toolbox, organically interwoven with the play's characterisation and ideology. Section 2 of this chapter catalogues and annotates from a semantic and pragmatic viewpoint[14] the most notable instances of verbal humour in *Dyskolos*, organised by utterer and tagged by category (or categories). The catalogue includes instances explicitly intended as humorous either by the speaker (character-controlled verbal humour, CCVH) or the playwright (authorially-controlled verbal humour, ACVH). Thus, the selection is not mechanical: for instance, both Knemon and Sostratus resort to hyperbole, but whereas Sostratus' utterances are undoubtedly meant to make us smile, Knemon's crazed cries and excessive reactions are more complex in meaning and import (see section 3.5). The examples are consecutively numbered and arranged in descending sequence, starting from the characters most given to utterances perceived as humorous, namely, Getas and Sikon, who together

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13 Petrides 2014, esp. 10–83. The quotation is from p. 3.

14 Pragmatic approaches to Greek drama have been accumulating in recent years, but the field is still in its preliminary stages of development: see the introduction and the essays in Martin/Iurescia/Hof/Sorrentino 2021, and for Greek and Roman New Comedy, Sorrentino 2013; Barrios-Lech 2016; and Barrios-Lech 2021.

count for more than two-thirds of the examples listed. In each example, the commentary unpacks the joke in terms of humour theory (hopefully, without too much tedious technicality), furnishing relevant *realia* wherever necessary and contextualising its humorous import. Wherever other considerations do not prevail, instances of the same humorous mechanism used consistently by a character (for instance, sarcasm) are bundled, and a character's most common humorous techniques are placed at the top of the catalogue.

In section 3 of the chapter ("Compendium of lessons learned"), the findings are integrated and expanded upon to verify a threefold working hypothesis: (a) that Menander uses verbal humour *naturalistically*, mirroring its occurrence and function in natural conversational contexts; (b) that dramaturgically, Menander's conversational humour is *characterisational* and *relational*, contributing to the construction and individualisation of character and drawing connecting lines between various *dramatis personae*; and (c) that its function is also *thematic*, distributed to characters in such a way as to bolster the fundamental dichotomies of the play (city/country, rich/poor, slave/free). This very distribution, I postulate, in its palpable artificiality, acquires humorous resonances at a higher level and constitutes a "departure from realism" equivalent to a similar effect on the level of plot design. The following sections 2 and 3 can be perused in the order presented or the reverse.

2 Verbal humour in Menander's *Dyskolos*: an annotated corpus

2.1 *Getas*

(1) Act II, 402–404 (hyperbole-backfiring/stock comic scene/ironic echo)

> τεττάρων γὰρ φορ[τίον
> ὄνων συνέδησαν α<ἰ> κάκιστ' ἀπολού[μεναι
> φέρειν γυναῖκές μοι.[15]

I start the Getas catalogue with this example because the humour in it rests on a combination of this slave's most characteristic ethical idiosyncrasies (namely, his dramatic fondness for hyperbolic grumbling and his tendency to lash out at

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15 The *Dyskolos* text is quoted from Petrides, forthcoming b.

his masters, especially the women — see further below) with a stock comic scene: the overloaded slave reeling under the weight he is carrying.

The humour here is authorially-controlled: Getas is entirely serious in denouncing the women and their tendency to overburden him; however, the facts work against him. Slaves who enter carrying heavy loads while complaining and making crude jokes had been a stock scene since Old Comedy.[16] Traces of the motif can also be found in Men. frr. 315–316.[17] Part of the humour in these scenes is that playwrights debunk the slaves' complaints. For example, in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, most if not all of the weight is carried not by Xanthias but by a donkey (*Ran.* 25–30). In *Dyskolos*, too, Sikon expresses ironic astonishment at the number of rugs Getas is bringing: as the sacrifice is designed only for the inner circle of Sostratus' family, these must not indeed be that many (ex. 16). Getas' hyperbole backfires, as his sarcastic comments usually do (see the examples below).

More subtly, the audience might notice that in calculating the weight, Getas, just as hyperbolically, echoes the words of Sostratus a few lines above (390–391): ἀλλ' ἡ δίκελλ' ἄγει τάλαντα τέτταρα αὕτη, a clear exaggeration by a soft urban man who knows nothing of hard manual labour. From his first words, hyperbole, a linguistic trope usually functioning as an (over)emotional marker,[18] binds this slave with his young master more closely than any other character in the play. This binding, of course, only serves to highlight the differences between the two, which are as telling as their similarities: far from being a grumbler, Sostratus is indefatigable in his perseverance.

(2) Act II, 407–409 (sarcasm — against his mistress/backfiring/hyperbole)

> <ἐ>ὰν ἴδη γὰρ ἐνύπνιον τὸν Πᾶνα τὸν
> Παιανιοῖ, τούτω βαδιούμεθ', οἶδ' ὅτι,
> θύσοντες εὐθύς.

Getas' first utterance (ex. 1) was hyperbole-*cum*-grumbling; his second is hyperbole-*cum*-sarcasm. This is his general tenor in the play: Menander encapsulates his entire character in just six lines.

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16 Cf. Ar. *Ran.* 1–34, mentioning similar vignettes in other comic playwrights.
17 Depictions of such scenes in vase-paintings and terracotta figurines are discussed by Bieber 1961, fig. 147, 153, 154, and Biers/Green 1998.
18 McCarthy/Carter 2004; Norrick 2004, with bibliography.

Ex. 2 provides the first of several cases where Getas' sarcasm backfires. The slave means to undermine his mistress (CCVH), but he deflates himself (ACVH).[19] The sarcasm lies in that Paiania and Phyle lie at opposite ends of Attica. Getas presents his mistress as a religious nut. Sostratus' portrait of her was not entirely dissimilar (260–263), but the range of Mother's sacrificial fervour now balloons from τὸν δῆμον κύκλῳ to the whole country. As in ex. 3, Getas' sarcasm reflects comically on the speaker rather than his target. Having been visited by a disquieting dream, Sostratus' Mother is neither unreasonable in her solicitude nor excessive or self-serving in her offerings (as Knemon thinks all sacrificers are, 447–453), despite her financial capabilities. Getas attempts to trivialise his mistress' worry through sarcastic misrepresentation of her religious habits, but he only achieves to expose himself, yet again, as an obnoxious moaner.

In *Dyskolos*, the characters who primarily seek recourse to sarcasm — verbal irony geared towards causing pain[20] — and other forms of aggressive humour (for instance, putdowns) are the two urban slaves, Getas and Sikon. Their sardonic darts aim mainly at their masters. It is ironic that outsiders hurl sarcasm at insiders, given that most superiority theories of humour[21] consider sarcasm as a method of exercising social control.[22] With sarcasm, Getas and Sikon, normally controllees rather than controllers, produce a carnivalesque microcosm within the world of the play. The audience will witness the fulfilment of this linguistic quasi-rebellion in the final scene where Getas and Sikon abuse Knemon verbally and physically, overturning the power dynamics of the door-knocking scenes in Act III. The two slaves fruitlessly claimed power over their masters through sarcasm throughout the play. They finally achieve their goal in Act V — at least superficially.[23] Until then, Getas' and Sikon's inferior position in the play's hierarchy is reflected by the fact that in their attempts to sneer at the masters, they unwittingly render themselves the joke's butt. "Backfiring" sarcasm is Getas' manner of doing so; Sikon's will be inane self-aggrandisement.

(3) Act III, 434 (sarcasm — against his mistress/backfiring)

νὴ Δί' ἀπεσώθητέ γε.

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19 Cf. section 3.3.
20 Kreuz 2020.
21 Billig 2005, 37–56.
22 Ducharme 1994.
23 See section 3.3.

Here is another case of Getas' "backfiring" sarcasm. As a house slave, Getas has a particular bone to pick with the women to whom he is often more than discourteous (cf. 403–404, 438–439, 456 ff., 563–570). ἀποσῴζομαι suggests arrival after a perilous journey,[24] but, of course, for Getas, the delay was only due to sluggishness. γε adds a touch of contemptuous impatience, reinforced further by the oath.[25]

The following fact reveals an additional level of humour. In 145, Pyrrhias addresses Sostratus with the phrase: ὕπαγ᾽, ὦ βέλτιστε, σὺ δὲ τούτῳ λάλει. βέλτιστε is not a common way for a slave to address his master.[26] Handley (1965, *ad loc.*) assumes that Pyrrhias' verbal boldness is because he is "different from the ordinary household slave": he is Sostratus' συγκυνηγός, addresses his master by name, never using terms such as τρόφιμε or δέσποτα, and he is not afraid of being ironic. However, the similarities with Getas' impertinence to his mistress here and elsewhere show that Kallippides' household is liberal enough towards its slaves for them to be at ease with their masters to the point of disrespect.[27]

(4) Act III, 563–570 (*para prosdokian*/sarcasm — against his masters in general, the women in particular/hyperbole-extreme case formulations/comic stereotypes/proverbial expression)

> τί φῄς; ἐπ᾽ ἄριστόν τινας παραλαμβάνειν
> μέλλεις πορευθείς; ἕνεκ᾽ ἐμοῦ **τρισχίλιοι**
> **γένοισθ**᾽· ἐγὼ μὲν γὰρ πάλαι τοῦτ᾽ οἶδ᾽, ὅτι
> οὐ γεύσομ᾽ **οὐδενός**· πόθεν γάρ; συνάγετε
> πάντας. καλὸν γὰρ τεθύκαθ᾽ ἱερεῖον, πάνυ
> ἄξιον ἰδεῖν. ἀλλὰ <τὰ> **γύναια** ταῦτά μοι
> (**ἔχει γὰρ ἀστείως**) μεταδοίη γ᾽ ἄν τινος;
> οὐδ᾽ ἄν, μὰ τὴν Δήμητρ᾽, **ἁλὸς πικροῦ**.

There is fine, concentrated humour in this passage, expressed in various ways. Already at the start, one comes across a subtle *para prosdokian*. Getas' surprise — articulated by the exclamative τί φῄς; — is not caused, as one would expect, by the news of Sostratus' wedding or the mention of "this young guy here" (559;

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24 Cf. Xen. *Hell.* 1.3.22: ἀπεσώθη εἰς Δεκέλειαν.

25 Cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 903–904, 1387; *Nub.* 1064; *Av.* 176–177.

26 Gomme/Sandbach 1973, *ad* 142–146. This, however, should not make us doubt that line 145 is spoken by Pyrrhias. βέλτιστε is used in the same sarcastic tone by Getas at 476 (ἀλλ᾽ εὐτύχει, βέλτιστε): Knemon may be a disagreeable stranger, but he is still a social better. For ironic uses of βέλτιστε, see Dickey 1996, 139.

27 Cf. section 3.4.

Getas does not know Gorgias, yet he remains unconcerned who he is). Getas is nonplussed because Sostratus invites even more people the slave will have to serve.

More humour still turns on Getas' tendency to utter hyperbole (τρισχίλιοι γένοισθε), "extreme case formulations" (οὐ γεύσομ' οὐδενός, οὐδ' ἁλὸς πικροῦ),[28] disparaging diminutives (τὰ γύναια; cf. ex. 9), and sarcastic irony (καλὸν ... ἱερεῖον, ἔχει γὰρ ἀστείως) to express excessive annoyance and impatience. His hostility is directed chiefly at his favourite target, the women.

οὐδ' ἁλὸς πικροῦ is Getas' second proverbial expression within a few lines (cf. ex. 12). It reminds one of his likewise hyperbolic quip against Knemon at 475: οὐδὲ κοχλίαν ἔγωγέ σε.[29] The use of proverbs is another connector between Getas and Sikon (cf. the commentary on ex. 21).

This passage's verbal humour is capped by Getas' inadvertently aligning himself with the comic stereotype of the esurient slave, which Sikon had used to put Getas down at 423–424 (ex. 17). Once again, Getas' verbal stings bite him rather than his targets in the buttocks.

(5) Act II, 425–426 (sarcasm — against Sikon, backfiring?)

> ἐπαινέτης οὖν εἰμί σου καὶ τῆς τέχνης
> ἔγωγ' ἀεί ποτ' — οὐχὶ πιστεύω δ' ὅμως.

Getas' utterance can be read in two ways which need not be mutually exclusive: (a) ironically, Getas pretends to be admiring Sikon, lauding his "art", and then debunks him *a parte* as the cook disappears first into Pan's cave; (b) the second part of the utterance is not an aside: Getas is indeed appreciative of Sikon's art; what he does not believe is that the cook will indeed be able to quench his hunger: the sacrificial animal is too scrawny and the women too unwilling to leave much for their slave. The audience, of course, could understand that such a person is impossible to satisfy with anything — in which case, Getas' taunt at Sikon would again turn out to be self-undermining.

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28 Extreme case formulations are studied by Norrick 2004.
29 Proverbial phrases such as οὐδ' ἅλα δοίης (Hom. *Od*. 17.455) *vel sim*. ascribed to the sharing of salt the symbolism of essential human friendship and hospitality; cf. Arist. *Eth. Eud*. 1238a 2–3; *Eth. Nic*. 1156b 26–28.

(6) Act III, 473–476 (sarcasm — against Knemon/comic stereotype)

> (Κν.) θύειν με βοῦς οἴει ποεῖν τε ταῦθ' ἅπερ
> ὑμεῖς ποεῖτε;
> (Γε.)   οὐδὲ κοχλίαν ἔγωγέ σε.

Getas' sarcasm is predicated on hyperbole and an "extreme case formulation" as in ex. 4. Getas wants to paint Knemon as a petty man: he would eschew even the most risibly humble sacrifice, not for ideological reasons (of the sort that Knemon purports in 448–453) but because he is like Theophrastus' "penny-pincher" (μικρολόγος, *Char.* 10), the kind of man who hates even the slightest expense. At 566–570, Getas hurls the same accusation of pettiness against the women, suspecting they do not intend to cut him a share of the sacrificial meat. Getas is correct in neither of these assessments; the problem lies elsewhere. However, one cannot characterise this sarcastic instance as "backfiring": Knemon himself is responsible for the misconceptions regarding his character and *Weltanschauung*.

(7) Act III, 600–606 (sarcasm — against Knemon/self-sarcasm/*para prosdokian*/ hyperbole)

> (Κν.) κακὸν κάκ[ιστά σ' οἱ θεοὶ
> ἅπαντες ἀπόλεσειαν εἴ τί μ[οι λαλεῖς.
> (Γε.) καὶ μάλα δι[καίως. εἰσ]πεπήδηκεν πάλιν.
> τοῦτ' ἐστὶν εἰλικρ[ινὴς] γεωργὸς Ἀττικός·
> πέτραις μαχόμ[εν]ος θύμα φερούσαις καὶ σφάκον
> ὀδύνας ἐπισπᾶ[τ' ο]ὐδὲν ἀγαθὸν λαμβάνων.

A double sarcasm, of which the first part (καὶ μάλα δι[καίως) is probably uttered in Knemon's presence and the second (εἰσ]πεπήδηκεν πάλιν) while the oldster is moving back to his house.

With καὶ μάλα δι[καίως, Getas (self-sarcastically in part) bewails his ill-advised offer of help to Knemon (599–600), who is still as disagreeable as ever in his hour of need. Still, right below, he will utter words of apparently genuine commiseration (603–606). These last comments are a *para prosdokian*: instead of ranting against Knemon's ingratitude, as one might expect, Getas resumes the words of Pan (3–4), Chaereas (129–131), and Gorgias (285, 295–298, 326–331, 342–343) on the harsh and bitter life of the Attic farmer. However, it would not be amiss to suspect that the actor's delivery may connote an air of superiority, problematising the degree of sympathy indeed expressed. This urban slave

knows nothing of the farmer's hardship, and he is the kind of man that would sympathise only from the safe distance of his comfortable lifestyle.

Getas' second sarcastic jibe rests on the hyperbolic description of Knemon's movements. The verb εἰσπηδάω describes jerky, rushed action, often under the influence of overpowering emotion.[30] Knemon's quick getaway here contrasts sharply with his inability to move in the final scene.

(8) Act IV, 574–583 (sarcasm — against Simiche, backfiring/hyperbole/debunking/self-undermining)

> Σιμ. ὦ δυστυχής, ὦ δυστυχής, ὦ δυστυχής.
> (Γε.) ἄπαγ' εἰς τὸ βάραθρον· τοῦ γέροντός τις γυνὴ
> προελήλυθεν.
> (Σιμ.)   τί πείσομαι; τὸν γὰρ κάδον
> ἐκ τοῦ φρέατος βουλομένη τοῦ δεσπότου,
> εἴ πως δυναίμην, ἐξελεῖν αὐτὴ λάθρα,
> ἀνῆψα τὴν δίκελλαν ἀσθενεῖ τινι
> καλῳδίῳ σαπρῷ διερράγη τέ μοι   580
> τοῦτ' εὐθύς.
> (Γε.) **ὀρθῶς.**
> (Σιμ.)   ἐνσέσεικά θ' ἀθλία
> καὶ τὴν δίκελλαν εἰς τὸ φρέαρ μετὰ τοῦ κάδου.
> (Γε.) ῥῖψαι τὸ λοιπόν σοι σεαυτήν ἐστ' ἔτι.
> [...]
> (Σιμ.) ζητεῖ βοᾷ τε — καὶ ψοφεῖ γε τὴν θύραν.
> Γε. φεῦγ' ὦ πονηρά, φεῦγ'. ἀποκτενεῖ σε, γραῦ.
> **μᾶλλον δ' ἀμύνου.**
> Κν.   ποῦ 'στιν ἡ τοιχωρύχος;
> (Σιμ.) ἄκουσα, δέσποτ', ἐνέβαλον.
> (Κν.)   βάδιζε δὴ
> εἴσω.
> (Σιμ.) τί πο<ι>εῖν δ', εἰπέ μοι, μέλλεις;
> (Κν.)   ἐγώ;   590
> δήσας καθιμήσω σε.
> (Σιμ.)   μὴ δῆτ', ὦ τάλαν.
> (Κν.) ταὐτῷ γε τούτῳ σχοινίῳ, νὴ τοὺς θεούς.
> <Γε.> κράτιστον, εἴπερ ἐστὶ παντελῶς σαπρόν.

Funnily enough, Getas has no words of compassion for Simiche's (superlatively and undeservedly) harsh life as he will have for Knemon's self-imposed one, nor does he reserve a sliver of solidarity for his social peer: Getas' "class conscious-

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30 Cf. Men. *Sam.* 563–564; Philemon fr. 3.11–13; Ar. *Eq.* 363; Dem. 21.78.

ness" is exhausted in comments about the unfairness of the masters to himself. Getas reacts to the old woman's outburst with the most hyperbolic malice. Having first called for the "poor wretch" to run for her life (586), in a burst of momentary, almost involuntary sympathy (as connoted by the *correctio* in μᾶλλον δ', 588), Getas displays his full mean streak against Simiche once again. He derides her plight (μᾶλλον δ' ἀμύνου, "or rather, stay and defend yourself" — so that he beats you to death and we are done with you!), eventually expressing compassion for her tormentor (603–606)! Getas' mood swings and misplaced sentimentality are especially amusing. On a metatheatrical level, his sarcasm debunks Simiche's *air tragique*,[31] but again (cf. ex. 3), it is the slave himself who bears the brunt, his character tarnished by his wit.

(9) Act III, 460–463 (comic stereotype/hyperbole/scurrility/ψόγος)

> θεραπαινίδια γὰρ ἀθλιώτερ' οὐδαμοῦ
> οἶμαι τρέφεσθαι. παῖδες. οὐδὲν ἄλλο πλὴν
> κινητιᾶν ἐπίσταται — παῖδες καλοί —
> καὶ διαβαλεῖν, ἐὰν ἴδῃ τις.

In his denunciation of slave women, Getas employs a threefold strategy. He energises a comic stereotype (the purported promiscuity and mendacity of θεραπαινίδια — note the disparaging use of the diminutive, a standard impoliteness marker),[32] which he presents with his usual hyperbole (a stream of his favourite "extreme case formulations" using the adverbs οὐδαμοῦ and οὐδέν) and punctuates with a scurrilous term (κινητιᾶν). The overall humour of the scene is augmented by the fact that Getas interrupts his (Knemon-like) rant to knock on Knemon's door.

Getas' employment of offensive language is especially notable. Modern pragmatics shows that offensive language is gender- and culture-specific.[33] Menandrian scurrility is still predicated on the same patriarchal attitudes towards passive sexuality (female or homosexual male) as that of Aristophanes.[34]

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31 The metre (a three-word trimeter, rare in Comedy) and the fact that she is bursting in unannounced (Frost 1988, 12, 54) accentuate Simiche's high emotion and the impact her entrance is supposed to make; cf. Plaut. *Trin.* 1094–1095. Simiche's anguish reminds the audience of Daughter's in 189: we understand how Knemon could make the life of anybody in his household ἐπίπονον καὶ πικρόν (21).

32 Cf. Schneider 2017, esp. 349–350.

33 For the pragmatics of swearing, see Jay/Janschewitz 2008.

34 Cf. Henderson 1991. Menander's audiences would not be surprised by a foreign slave appropriating the Greek axiology, as such attitudes were considered "natural" (i.e. universal).

The very rarity of offensive language in later comedy drives Getas' ψόγος home. Based on Plutarch's *Comparison of Aristophanes and Menander* and similar sources, it is generally assumed that swearing is reduced in Menander because of a newfangled aversion to coarseness in late-Classical society. This need not be correct. Hunter (2000) shows how the *Comparison*, which harks back to fourth-century BCE philosophy, reflects elite politics and aesthetics. However, Menander's primary concern in constructing his dialogues was dramatic rather than aesthetic or ideological. The rule of thumb is that vulgarity in Menander is never wanton as it often is in Aristophanes. This is strictly in keeping with New Comedy's imperative for linguistic and psychological naturalism. As in modern everyday conversational contexts, Menandrian characters (slaves and old men more than others) swear sparingly to express strong emotion (frustration here; indignation in ex. 10). Anything else would be unrealistic.[35]

(10) Act V, 891–892 (scurrility/sexual double entendre?)

> (Γε.) τιμωρίαν [βούλ]ει λαβεῖν ὧν ἀρτίως ἔπασχες;
> (Σικ.) ἐγὼ δ' ἔπασχ[ον ἀ]ρτίως; οὐ λαικάσει φλυαρῶν;

With ὧν ἀρτίως ἔπασχες, Getas refers to Knemon's treatment of the cook in Act III. Sikon is offended because of his puffed-up ego. It is not necessary, but neither is it impossible to interpret ἔπασχες as a sexual double entendre denoting passive homosexuality. Some assume that crude gestures accompany this dialogue, illuminating the double meaning.[36] Anyhow, the scurrility (λαικάσει) brings forth Sikon's indignation. Its semantics and pragmatics are the same as in ex. 9.[37]

Moreover, the assimilation of foreign slaves to the value system of their masters is the New Comedy standard (cf. Petrides 2017).

35 See further in section 3.2.

36 Jocelyn 1980, 40–41; Rampichini 2002, 167–168. For the use of πάσχω in erotic contexts, cf. Aeschin. 1.41; [Arist.] *Pr.* 879b 31; Plut. *Mor.* 768e; Luc. *Dial. meret.* 5.2 etc. Rampichini (2002, 168 n. 18) reminds us of the similar meanings of the Latin *patior*: Plaut. *Capt.* 867; Catull. 16.2, 57.2, 112.2; Juv. 2.99; Petron. 86.1, 87.7. Also in Latin, *pathicus* is the passive homosexual.

37 Strictly speaking, the *vox propria* for fellatio, λαικάζω, a vulgar word ("suck dick"), developed into a generic term of verbal aggression and abuse; cf. Ar. *Eq.* 167; *Thesm.* 57; Cephisodorus fr. 3.5; Straton fr. 1.36 etc.; Jocelyn 1980. Elsewhere Menander uses λαικάστρια, "whore" (*Pk.* 485).

(11) Act II, 409–410 (pun/polysemy/witticism/sarcasm — against Sikon, backfiring)

(Σι.)   τίς δ' ἑόρακεν ἐνύπνιον;
(Γε.) ἄνθρωπε, μή με κόπτε.

Getas is punning on the double meaning of κόπτω ("to cut to pieces" and "to bother excessively") to cast an aspersion at the pestering cook's persistent questioning. The joke is old and ostensibly outworn (cf. ex. 13). The comic cook's employers can hardly bear his fussiness or arrogance, and μή με κόπτε is their usual response.[38] Menander's humorous novelty lies neither in the utterance nor its butt but in the utterer. Unlike his forebears, the cook Sikon is *not* fussy about the party's needs: he is naturally intrigued by Getas' revelation that the sacrifice was motivated by a dream. Continuing his string of sarcastic utterances that backfire, Getas rehashes an old comic trope to express annoyance, but he achieves to expose himself — here like elsewhere — as a moaner.

(12) Act III, 550–551 (proverbial expression/witticism)

                    τούτοις ὄνος
ἄγειν δοκῶ μοι τὴν ἑορτή[ν.

Getas, ever the grumbler, complains of "playing the donkey's part in this celebration of theirs". He is doing all the work without even a flimsy share in the meal; cf. 565–569.

The paroemiographer Apostolius (12.75, *CPG* II, 563) glosses the proverb as follows: ἐπὶ τῶν παρ' ἀξίαν τι πραττόντων· τοῖς γὰρ μυστηρίοις ἐξ ἄστεος εἰς Ἐλευσῖνα διὰ τῶν ὄνων ἔφερον τὰ εἰς χρείαν· ὅθεν καὶ ἡ παροιμία, διὰ τὸ κακοπαθεῖν μάλιστα τοὺς ὄνους ἀχθοφοροῦντας. ὡς ἂν οὖν ὅμοια πάσχων τῷ πιέζεσθαι τῷ ὑποκειμένῳ ἄχθει τὴν παροιμίαν μίγνυσιν ὁ Ἀριστοφάνης.[39] Donkeys are commonly used in proverbs: see, for instance, Apostolius 12.75–87, 89–92 (*CPG* II, 563). In most cases, their assumed attribute is obtuseness and naiveté. Getas' comment, however, is not meant as self-sarcasm so much as an incrimination against his masters for reducing him to this barely human status. Getas is incapable of the sort of self-sarcasm Sikon displays.[40] Even compared to the

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38 For the joke, cf. *Sam*. 283–293 (with Sommerstein 2013, *ad loc.*); Alexis fr. 177.12; Anaxippus fr. 1.23 etc.; Dohm 1964, 213, 218–219; Krieter-Spiro 1997, 136–137. For the metaphorical meaning ("to bore/annoy"), cf. Hegesippus fr. 1.2–3; Sosipater fr. 1.20; Com. Adesp. fr. 1081.2; Com. Adesp. fr. 1147.54, 56.

39 Cf. Gregorius Cyprius (Mosq.) 4.55 (*CPG* II, 124), ἐπὶ τῶν ἀναξίως τι βασταζόντων.

40 For the humour of proverbs, see ex. 21.

cook, who is by generic definition full of himself, Getas is too self-centred for even the most fleeting introspection.

2.2 *Sikon*

(13) Act II, 393–399 (witticisms/sarcasm/pun/*para prosdokian*/metaphor)

> τουτὶ τὸ πρόβατόν ἐστιν **οὐ τὸ τυχὸν καλόν**.
> ἄπαγ' εἰς τὸ βάραθρον. ἂν μὲν αἰρόμενος φέρω
> μετέωρον, ἔχεται τῷ στόματι θαλλοῦ, κράδης
> κατεσθίει τὰ θρῖ', ἀποσπᾷ δ' εἰς βίαν.
> ἐὰν δ' ἀφῇ χαμαί τις, **οὐ προέρχεται**.
> τοὐναντίον δὴ γέγονε· **κατακέκομμ' ἐ[γώ**,
> ὁ μάγειρος, ὑπὸ τούτου **νεωλκῶν τὴν ὁδ[όν**.

Sikon's monologue upon his first entry combines sneering humour with two attempts at cracking a witty joke and a forced metaphor. If grumbling and sarcasm are Getas' linguistic tics, Sikon's is frigid witticisms, florid language, and self-aggrandisement (common to the comic cook's type), punctuated by moments of self-recognition and self-irony (unique to this Menandrian instantiation of this stock character). As with Getas, the cook's opening monologue circumscribes his character and linguistic habits in just a few lines.

First, Sikon sneers at the sheep in a way that mixes contempt for the sacrificial animal (and those who purchased it?) with self-commiseration. καλόν could refer to the sheep's physical appearance (a sacrificial victim had to look "uncommonly fine", but this does not). However, in this context, the phrase could translate "what a remarkable blessing this sheep has been [sc. to me]"[41] — clearly ironic, as the animal has been tormenting Sikon. For the reverse play with καλός/κακός, cf. 661: εὔχεσθε τὸν γέροντα σωθῆναι — κακῶς, where both the cook's wish for Knemon to be saved and his qualification κακῶς (instead of καλῶς) are comical *para prosdokian* jests. Self-commiseration is a trait Sikon shares with Getas — only in Sikon, it is much less pronounced.

Next is an etymological pun: πρόβατον ... οὐ προέρχεται. Arnott (1997, 68) comments:

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41 Aristophanes uses ἀγαθόν in similar sarcastic utterances four times: *Eq.* 186–187; *Pax* 369–370; *Thesm.* 22–24; *Plut.* 546–547.

> The word for sheep in contemporary Attic Greek was πρόβατον, literally "an animal that walks in front" (viz., of larger animals in mixed flocks). Here the cook complains that his "front walker" just "doesn't walk forward" (οὐ προέρχεται, v. 397).

An audience's reactions to such jokes can widely diverge, as evinced by modern assessments of this one. Arnott finds Sikon's wisecrack "delightful"; Rampichini (2002, 169) sees in it a "raffinata figura etymologica", whereas to my taste, the joke is frigid (ψυχρόν). My assessment, of course, does not imagine Menander's comic art to be failing; Menander uses frigidity as a characterisation touch. Sikon would love to be but is not the urbane (ἀστεῖος) kind of cook. His jokes are, as a rule, hackneyed and unoriginal. The κατακέκομμαι-joke that follows is a case in point. Instead of cutting the sheep into portions of meat, Sikon himself is being "cut up" by it: Getas will throw the joke at Sikon's face a few lines below (ex. 11). If "Menander has given new life to an old joke",[42] it is by having the cook unwittingly turn it against himself in a moment of self-recognition. By recycling a timeworn quip right after a dry etymological pun, Sikon fails to live up to the expectations of wit that come with the territory of his comic type — and this is precisely what is funny.

Beyond his dubious attempts at witty humour, Sikon is aligned with the linguistic norm of cooks in terms of his "picturesque language"[43] and "peculiar vocabulary", which "unlike that of Getas, consists mainly of words found elsewhere in authors with some claims to style".[44] In this respect, he is being more original. The best example is 946–953 (ex. 22). Already here, however, with νεωλκῶν τὴν ὁδ[όν, Sikon uses a metaphor from seafaring to describe his arduous land journey to the Attic interior. The inappropriateness is indeed amusing, and it is no doubt reinforced by stage action: rather than "marching forward", the πρόβατον is hauled by Sikon "like a ship overland".[45] Sikon's hyperbolic image aligns well with his propensity for drama and vividly evokes the sheep's resistance. It is notable that except for his symposion description in Act V (946–953), Sikon's most colourfully metaphorical language underlines moments of self-mockery such as this. Further down, in his rueful admission that his self-professed and haughtily heralded mastery of door knocking has miserably failed, Sikon piles up two colourful metaphors from boxing (βεβωλοκόπηκεν, 515; σφαιρομαχοῦσι, 518).

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42 Gomme/Sandbach 1973, *ad loc.* On the joke, cf. n. 38 above.
43 Giannini 1960, 190.
44 Sandbach 1970, 119–120.
45 As at the Isthmus (Thuc. 3.15.1; Strab. 8.2.1; Plin. *HN* 4.10) and elsewhere.

(14) Act III, 507–509 (witticism/ambiguity)

> (Κν.)   εἴρηχ' ἁπλῶς
> μὴ προσιέναι μοι πᾶσι τοῖς ἐν τῷ τόπῳ.
> (Σι.) ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐκ εἴρηκας.
> (Κν.)   ἀλλὰ νῦν λέγω.

Cracking another arguably feeble witticism, Sikon exploits the ambiguity in Knemon's πᾶσι τοῖς ἐν τῷ τόπῳ: he is not from around there! The humour relies on Knemon's earlier, thoughtless identification of Sikon with the preceding knocker, Getas (πάλιν αὖ σύ; 500).[46]

(15) Act III, 512–513 (witticism/retort/polysemy/ambiguity)

> (Κν.) ἔτι μοι λαλήσεις;
> (Σι.)   χαῖρε πολλά.
> (Κν.)   οὐ βούλομαι
> χαίρειν παρ' ὑμῶν οὐδενός.
> (Σι.)   μὴ χαῖρε δή.

Here, too, Sikon's humour, based on the polysemy of χαίρειν (a salutation and a wish for happiness), is probably meant to sound trite. The joke is certainly not restricted to Menander, and it was probably not his invention, although the best parallels postdate him.[47]

(16) Act II, 404–406 (sarcasm — against Getas)

> πολύς τις ἔρ[χεται
> ὄχλος ὡς ἔοι[κε· στρ]ώματ' ἀδιήγηθ' ὅσα
> φέρεις.

See the comments on ex. 1.

(17) Act II, 423–424 (putdown/comic stereotype)

> καὶ τὰς ὀφρῦς ἄνες ποτ', ὦ τρισάθλιε·
> ἐγώ σε χορτάσω κατὰ τρόπον τήμερον.

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46 Cf. Petrides 2004.
47 Cf. Plaut. *Truc.* 259; Callimachus, *Anth. Pal.* 7.318.

Sikon's putdown implies that Getas' irritability is due to the esurient slave's stereotypical hunger and gluttony (cf. exx. 4–5). The cook's utterance is reinforced by a term of abuse (τρισάθλιε)[48] which has the illocutionary force of an exhortation and the projected perlocutionary effect of the addressee being shamed into changing his attitude (which Getas, of course, does not). The following utterance's positive content ("I will fill your belly") hedges the "face-threatening" element of the abuse.[49]

Moreover, as Marta Dynel clarifies, putdown humour is a "way to exert power over the hearer of a lower status".[50] This is precisely what Sikon is attempting to do over Getas: notice the strongly emphatic ἐγώ at the beginning of 424. Sikon's authority over Getas' belly is extended to symbolise his overall superiority. Sikon will engage in a similar speech act at 486–499, where he decries Getas' inexpertness in the art of knocking. The audience will notice the ironic reversal of the power dynamics between Getas and Sikon in the final scene, where Getas takes the lead in exacting vengeance over Knemon.

The humorous import of an exhortation "to relax one's eyebrows" would be increased by the irony of such a feature being a fixed sculptural trait of Getas' mask — thus, impossible to relax! This is indeed the case for the ἡγεμὼν θεράπων (Pollux mask no. 22) and the ἐπίσειστος ἡγεμών (Pollux mask no. 27), the two likeliest candidates for Getas' πρόσωπον.[51]

(18) Act IV, 630–631 (*Schadenfreude*/possible mimesis of high style/ironic echo)

> ὦ φιλτάτη γραῦ, νῦν σὸν ἔργον ἐστί.
> (Σιμ.)   πῶς;
> (Σικ.) ὅλμον τιν' ἢ λίθον τιν' ἢ τοιοῦτό τι
> ἄνωθεν ἔνσεισον λαβοῦσα.

After Getas' sarcasm, Simiche now has to endure Sikon's untimely humour, too. Far from willing to rescue Knemon, the cook asks Simiche to finish the old man by hurling a mortar on his head. His *Schadenfreude* prepares the audience for his monologue at 639 ff. and for the vengefulness he and Getas will display

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48 As a term of abuse in the vocative, τρισάθλιε is not attested prior to Menander (cf. Dickey 1996, 291). Knemon will also use it in 466.

49 For the pragmatics of verbal abuse, Jucker/Taavitsainen 2000.

50 Dynel 2008b, 249–250. For putdown humour, see also Zillmann/Stocking 1976.

51 Poll. 4.149–150. The ἡγεμὼν θεράπων σπεῖραν ἔχει τριχῶν πυρρῶν, ἀνατέταται τὰς ὀφρῦς, συνάγει τὸ ἐπισκύνιον. The similar ἐπίσειστος ἡγεμών ἐοίκοι ἂν τῷ ἡγεμόνι θεράποντι πλὴν περὶ τὰς τρίχας, which in his case are not "braided in a roll" but "flowing".

against Knemon in the final scene. The humour here is subtle, but like Getas' backfiring sarcastic comments, it is authorially- rather than character-controlled. For one, in Sikon's ἔνσεισον, the audience might catch an ironic echo of Simiche's ἐνσέσεικα (581), which referred to the mattock. Additionally, line 630 is a probable paratragedy.[52] Recognising greater forces at work in his favour as he shall soon proclaim (639–647), Sikon puts on airs by imitating high style. νῦν σὸν ἔργον is a common tragic expression, but *Dyskolos* may evoke specifically the *Bacchae*: Διόνυσε, νῦν σὸν ἔργον ... τεισώμεθ' αὐτόν (847–849), followed by suggestions — in the imperative as in *Dyskolos* — on the manner of the punishment.[53]

(19) Act III, 515–516 (self-sarcasm/sexual double entendre?)

<blockquote>

καλῶς γέ με
βεβωλοκόπηκεν. οἷόν ἐστ' ἐπιδεξίως
αἰτεῖν· διαφέρει νὴ Δί'.

</blockquote>

For Sikon's endearing ability to cast sarcasm upon himself when nobody is around to witness his weakness, see ex. 13 above. Menander's tendency to create ironic echoes of earlier passages is at work here, too: ἐπιδέξιος was also Pyrrhias' word of choice for the way he approached Knemon (105). In both cases, the result was the same: βωλοκοπεῖν here, literal bombardment with βῶλοι there.

βωλοκοπέω means literally "to break clods of earth", i.e. to dig the land.[54] With the possible exception of Ar. fr. 800, the *Dyskolos* passage appears unique in supporting the metaphorical sense "to smack, to pound someone" (not listed in LSJ). Rampichini (2002, 170) sees in βεβωλοκόπηκεν a possible sexual double entendre, citing *IG* IX.1² (2) 253: ἐγὼ τόδε πρὸς Κύπριν οὐ κακόσιτος [ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ ἡ]λικίαν βωλοκοπεῖν δυνατός.[55]

(20) Act IV, 660–662 (*para prosdokian*/malapropism)

<blockquote>

ὑμεῖς δ' ὑπὲρ τούτων, γυναῖκες, σπένδετε.
εὔχεσθε τὸν γέροντα σωθῆναι — κακῶς,
ἀνάπηρον ὄντα, χωλόν.

</blockquote>

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52 Gomme/Sandbach 1973, *ad loc.*
53 On *Bacchae* as one of several tragic "mirrors" of *Dyskolos*, see Petrides 2014, 53–58.
54 [Hippoc.] *Ep*. 17; Ael. *Ep*. 19.
55 Cf. Henderson 1991, 166.

See the comments on ex. 13. The misuse of the word κακῶς instead of καλῶς is an intentional "malapropism", functioning as a *para prosdokian*.[56]

(21) Act IV, 633 (proverb-stock conversational witticism/rhetorical question/ sarcastic retort)

> Πόσειδον, ἵνα τὸ τοῦ λόγου πάθω,
> ἐν τῶι φρέατι κυνὶ μάχωμαι;

Not all proverbs can be categorised as verbal humour — even if in a comedic frame such as Menander's, they retain a humorous ring. The cook rejects Simiche's pleas to go down the well and save Knemon by employing a proverb functioning as a "stock conversational witticism". Proverbs are especially useful for humorous/sarcastic utterances because they are "fairly generally known, if not regularly used, by all members of the linguistic community or peer group in question".[57] As Neal Norrick (1985) has shown, in conversations, proverbs imply an evaluation of previous utterances by the speaker, who fortifies his position by invoking traditional wisdom.[58]

The customary meaning or, in Norrick's terminology, the "Standard Proverbial Interpretation" (SPI) of the proverb ἐν φρέατι κυνὶ (or κυσὶ) μάχεσθαι (or κυνομαχεῖν) refers to people forced to deal with something disagreeable they cannot avoid.[59] Alternatively, the proverb could be related to, or even originate from, Aesop, fable 120 Perry, specifying "an ungrateful man harming his benefactors":

> κηπουροῦ κύων εἰς φρέαρ ἔπεσεν. ὁ δὲ ἀνιμήσασθαι αὐτὸν βουλόμενος ἐπεκατέβη. ὁ δὲ κύων ἠπορημένος, ὡς προσῆλθεν αὐτῷ, οἰόμενος ὑπ' αὐτοῦ βαπτίζεσθαι ἔδακεν αὐτόν. καὶ ὃς κακῶς διατεθεὶς ἔφη· "ἀλλ' ἐγὼ ἄξια πέπονθα. τί γὰρ σοῦ ἑαυτὸν κατακρημνίσαντος τοῦ κινδύνου σε ἀπαλλάξαι ἐπειρώμην;"

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56 For malapropisms, see Zwicky 1982.

57 Norrick 1984.

58 On the use of proverbs by Menander, see Quinn 1949; Tzifopoulos 1995; Leurini 2006; Schirru 2009; Tosi 2014; cf. Cusset/Lhostis 2011 (on γνῶμαι, which are often but not by necessity coextensive with proverbs).

59 Zenobius 3.45 (*CPG* II, 68), ἐπὶ τῶν μοχθηρῶς τινι προσπαλαιόντων καὶ ἀποφυγεῖν μὴ δυναμένων; cf. Suda, Hesychius etc., *s.v.* ἐν φρέατι κυνὶ μάχεσθαι; Gregorius Cyprius 2.43 (*CPG* I, 362); Gregorius Cyprius (Mosq.) 3.16 (*CPG* II, 111); Apostolius 7.40 (*CPG* II, 405).

The reaction of Aesop's gardener reminds one of Getas' καὶ μάλα δικαίως (*Dys*. 602). In this light, the proverb can be paraphrased as "inconveniencing oneself to provide services to a person who is not appreciative".

A proverb's SPI, Norrick writes,

> may coincide with the literal reading of the proverb, in which case the proverb is said to be *literal*. The proverb "Like father, like son" counts as literal because its SPI coincides with its literal reading "father and son are alike". But the SPI may also differ from the literal reading, in which case the proverb is said to be *figurative*. The proverb "No rose without a thorn" counts as figurative because its SPI "there is no pleasant thing without some unpleasant aspect" differs from its literal reading "there is no rose without a thorn".[60]

Sikon's witticism acquires extra humorous force by uncommonly *combining* the literal and figurative SPIs of the proverb ἐν φρέατι κυνὶ μάχεσθαι. Sikon is asked *literally* to go down a well to grapple with Knemon, a *figurative* "dog". Knemon's dog-like qualities derive both from his attitude towards strangers, especially those approaching his door, but also from the fact that his life mantra had been the Cynic ideal of αὐτάρκεια.

Neal Norrick categorises proverbs into two main groups: "evaluative comments with a didactic tone" and "evaluative arguments".[61] "Evaluative comments" have a didactic tone (they constitute a form of *argumentum ex auctoritate*), whereas "evaluative arguments" state or support positions. Sikon's proverb functions clearly as an "evaluative argument", supporting his rejection of Simiche's plea. The humour turns on the way Sikon exploits the "inventorised" nature of the proverb as "an escape route from a double bind situation",[62] in which he has to deny assistance to a man in life-threatening danger. Pragmatic research shows how modern speakers "cite proverbs to avoid personal commitment and refutation".[63] Sikon does something of the sort: using a proverb whose SPI invokes a disagreeable service to a thankless recipient, the cook waives responsibility for his response, masking its moral depravity with a piece of time-tested wisdom.

It is ironic that in *Dyskolos*, verbal humour in the form of proverbs is uttered by two slaves. A proverb's primary pragmatic value, at least in modern linguistic communities, is to "signal group membership": in *Dyskolos*, proverbs are cited by outsiders, acculturated in the ways and the language of the master

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60 Norrick 1985, 1–2 (Norrick's emphases).

61 Norrick 1985, 13.

62 Norrick 1985, 27.

63 Norrick 1985, 27, with bibliography; cf. Norrick 1981.

class but far from included in its inner circle. The irony is redoubled if we also accept that such utterances "can lead to bonding between people".[64] Bonding is anything but Sikon's intention here. By repudiating Simiche's entreaty, he moves to the other extreme, denying the most basic solidarity to another human being. In this respect, it is significant that the cook phrases his answer as a rhetorical question fortified by an invocation of the divine as a marker of great surprise. Schaffer (2005), unpacking the pragmatics of rhetorical questions, displays how effective they can be as sarcastic retorts to questions (or here, requests) that the addressee considers obtuse. Sikon's rhetorical question implies that the answer to Simiche's plea should have been obvious: Knemon has relinquished the right to human fellowship because he has not been behaving like a human being but rather like a dog.

(22) Act V, 946–953 ("torture with/by style")

> ἄλλος δὲ χερσὶν Εὔιον γέροντα πολιὸν ἤδη
> ἔκλινε κοῖλον εἰς κύτος, μειγνύς τε νᾶμα Νυμφῶν
> ἐδεξιοῦτ' αὐτοῖς κύκλῳ, καὶ ταῖς γυναιξὶν ἄλλος.
> ἦν δ' ὥσπερ εἰς ἄμμον φοροίης· ταῦτα μανθάνεις σύ;
> καί τις βραχεῖσα προσπόλων εὐήλικος προσώπου   950
> ἄνθος κατεσκιασμένη χορεῖον εἰσέβαινε
> ῥυθμὸν μετ' αἰσχύνης ὁμοῦ μέλλουσα <καὶ> τρέμουσα,
> ἄλλη δὲ συγκαθῆπτε ταύτῃ χεῖρα κἀχόρευεν.

Knemon's punishment by the two slaves in the final scene of the play unfolds in three stages: first, the old man relives the door-knocking sequence, only the circumstances now are reversed (910–930); then, he is forced to sit through a description of the symposion inside Pan's shrine (931–953); and finally, he is made to join initially the dance on stage and afterwards the party itself (954–969). The humour here unfolds on two levels, which cross-pollinate: (a) the "paradithyrambic" style[65] debunks the cook himself and his lofty pretensions;[66]

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64 Norrick 1985, 25.

65 This is a singular instance of a Menandrian μάγειρος taking a leaf straight out of his counterparts' book in earlier comic drama. Middle Comedy cooks commonly wax poetic in an affected style parodying that of the "New Dithyramb". The New Dithyramb was characterised by a language not simply ornate but riddling and deliberately contorted (συστρέφειν πυκνά: Antiphanes fr. 55). It was a language full of obscure tropes, conceited descriptions of everyday objects and situations, and a fascination for strings of words arranged in asyndeton, particularly compound adjectives, often neologisms of the poets (Zimmermann 1992, 118–121; cf. Zimmermann's chapter in the present volume). Sikon's style certainly presents some of these elements (946, 950, 951), thrown into relief by their very discordance from their textual sur-

(b) the very floridness of the language is meant as punishment for Knemon, who cannot tolerate regular conversations with most people, let alone a laughably flowery description such as this. In other words, Menander's cook consciously instrumentalises his generic ancestry not to sound more important himself but to strike his victim a blow: this is torture *with* and, more importantly, *by* style!

2.3 Sostratus

(23) "Affective surplus"

Accumulation of all sorts (of oaths, invocations of the divine, interjections, politeness mitigators etc.) is the trademark of Sostratus-related humour in *Dyskolos*. It functions as the rhetorical signifier of an outflow of energy and emotion — an "affective surplus", one might say — which the audience knows is not natural but the result of Panic possession. I describe this attribute of Sostratus with the term "affective surplus": it is both a character trait[67] and a verbal humour technique — again, an authorially-controlled one since Sostratus' intentions in producing this effect are not humorous.

(23a) Act I, 192–194 (accumulation of interjections)

> ὦ Ζεῦ πάτερ,
> καὶ Φοῖβε Παιάν, ὦ Διοσκόρω φίλ[ω,
> κάλλους ἀμάχου.
> [...]
> (Σω.) ἄνδρε[ς, τέρας!

Sostratus is so overwhelmed by the girl's marvellous beauty that he invokes not one but three apotropaic gods in sequence: Zeus, Apollo, and the Dioscuri, capping his invocation with a *genitivus exclamativus* (κάλλους ἀμάχου),[68] before

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roundings. Nonetheless, compared to Middle Comedy, this cook is much more restrained and lucid ("eine gedämpfte Reminiszenz an die Mese", Nesselrath 1990, 265).

66 "Dithyrambising" cooks usually exalt the culinary wonders they worked (Nesselrath 1990, 257–267). However, in Eubulus fr. 56, the speaker describes, in Sikon's manner, a "Thericlean" cup used in a σπονδή.

67 The classic reference for Sostratus as an "overactive" lover is Zagagi 1979.

68 Cf. Sceparnio's reaction at Ampelisca's sight (Plaut. *Rud.* 415–416). At *Rud.* 420–423, Sceparnio, unlike Sostratus who refrains from any indecency, expresses his appreciation of Ampelisca's beauty in a fashion too tactile for her liking.

returning with another exclamation of wonder ("man, what a marvel", 194).[69] Apotropaic gods guarded against "dangerous intrusions upon the normal tenor of life".[70] For Sostratus, the threat is the sudden onset, not so much of love (this has already happened) as of a powerful sexual temptation in a milieu brimming with opportunity. For Stoessl, Sostratus' repeated appeals to the divine in this form or that of oaths (ex. 23b) indicate this character's inability to act.[71] If so, this helplessness is nothing if not advantageous in this situation, preventing Sostratus from crossing the boundaries of decency and the law. The anaphoric ὦ expressing strong sentiment is paralleled in *Sam*. 325–327: ὦ πόλισμα Κεκροπίας χθονός, / ὦ ταναὸς αἰθήρ, ὦ... In both examples, the device has a tragedic ring — indeed, in *Samia*, the phrase is an actual tragic quotation.

(23b) Act IV, 666–667 (accumulation of oaths)

> ἄνδρες, μὰ τὴν Δήμητρα, μὰ τὸν Ἀσκληπιόν,
> μὰ τοὺς θεούς...

The triple anaphora of μά in 666–667 intensifies further the pattern of ex. 23a.[72] Moreover, stringing multiple oaths together is a remarkably forceful rhetorical device. Here, it expresses excitement beyond ordinary measure (but not for suggesting that Sostratus shared some of his mother's excessive religiosity, as Stoessl has it).[73] The use of such a device by Menandrian characters is very infrequent. The closest parallel is Parmenon's μὰ τὸν Διόνυσον, μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω τουτονί, / μὰ τὸν Δία τὸν σωτῆρα, μὰ τὸν Ἀσκληπιόν (*Sam*. 309–310), where rhetorical exuberance masks guilt (311).[74]

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69 τέρας is a supplement by Bingen, which expresses eloquently Sostratus' wonder at a beauty that is almost metaphysical to his eyes. In 677–678, he will describe the girl as ἄγαλμα οὐ τὸ τυχόν.

70 Parker 1983, 220.

71 Stoessl 1965, *ad loc*.

72 On anaphora in Menander, see Feneron 1974, 85–86.

73 Stoessl 1965, *ad loc*.

74 For other examples of stringed oaths, cf. Aesch. *Ag*. 1432–1433; Trag. Adesp. fr. 123a (supposedly cited by Demosthenes in a speech and parodied by Antiphanes fr. 288); Ar. *Eq*. 941; and the reported oath in Aesch. *Sept*. 45–46. The aura of solemnity about this device is easily given to comic parody: *Av*. 194; *Nub*. 627. Multiple swearees were common in formal contexts such as the Hippocratic Oath (ὄμνυμι Ἀπόλλωνα ἰητρὸν καὶ Ἀσκληπιὸν καὶ Ὑγείαν καὶ Πανάκειαν καὶ θεοὺς πάντας τε καὶ πάσας), the Ephebic Oath (ἴστορες τούτων Ἄγλαυρος, Ἐνυάλιος, Ἄρης, Ζεύς, Θαλλώ, Αὐξώ, Ἡγεμόνη), and other official instances of oath-taking.

(23c) Act II, 299–300 (accumulation of politeness mitigators)

> μειράκιον, οὕτως εὐτυχοίης, βραχ[ύ τί μου
> ἄκουσον –

Sostratus scrambles to secure Gorgias' attention to clear himself of the horrible accusations levelled against him while not offending his interlocutor further. His urgency is graphically expressed by the unusual accumulation of as many as three "politeness mitigators" preceding the imperative ἄκουσον. An initial address in the vocative (μειράκιον), establishing a connection between the speakers ("positive politeness") by recalling the term Gorgias had used in his opening address at 269, is accompanied by two expressions observing the necessary respectful distance between them ("negative politeness").[75] Sostratus' politeness strategy thus mirrors and intensifies that of Gorgias, who also accompanied μειράκιον with a negative-politeness mitigator (ἐθελήσαις ἄν...).

(24) Act IV, 667–669 ("affective surplus"/paradox/humorous repetition)

> οὐπώποτ' ἐν τὠμῷ βίῳ
> εὐκαιρότερον ἄνθρωπον ἀποπε<π>νιγμένον
> ἑόρακα μικροῦ. τῆς γλυκείας διατριβῆς.

In this example, Sostratus' penchant for the *genitivus exclamativus* (τῆς γλυκείας διατριβῆς, 669; cf. ex. 23a) is coupled with the paradox of a man "drowned in the most opportune moment — well, almost"! The delayed addition of μικροῦ, which qualifies ἀποπεπνιγμένον (Knemon can only "almost" drown in a comedy!),[76] has a distinct humorous effect. Sostratus repeats the adverb three times in this speech (cf. 681, 687). Undoubtedly, the actor was expected to stress it accordingly in his delivery.

ἑόρακα — perfect in the place of an aorist[77] — also carries humorous overtones. In Menander, this kind of perfect tends to be used "en particulier, quand

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75 On the terms "positive" and "negative politeness", and generally on the diverging politeness strategies employed by Sostratus and Gorgias in this scene, see Sorrentino 2013, 212–213, 259–260, 272.

76 Norrick (1989) identifies paradox as follows: "an initial contradiction resolves itself into a consistent proposition at some higher level". He identifies three major pragmatic strategies of resolving paradoxes in discourse: (a) separating frames of reference, (b) averaging opposites, and (c) modifying one term. Sostratus' paradox clearly belongs to the last category.

77 "Ein schönes Beispiel der sich in der hellenistischen Zeit vollziehenden Angleichung des Perfekts an den Aorist" (Radt 1972, 144).

un personnage s'exprime avec force ou avec passion", for instance in *Her.* 41–43 (ἐγκεχείρηκ').[78] This is undoubtedly the nuance in Sostratus' speech, too — his "affective surplus" is expressed with a different grammar.

(25)   Act IV, 673–678 (self-sarcasm/euphemism/*para prosdokian*/misleading simile)

> πλὴν ἡ μὲν αὑτῆς τὰς τρίχας
> ἔτιλλ', ἔκλα', ἔτυπτε τὸ στῆθος σφόδρα,
> ἐγὼ δ' **ὁ χρυσοῦς**, **ὡσπερεὶ νὴ τοὺς θεοὺς**
> **τροφὸς** παρεστώς, ἐδεόμην γε μὴ ποεῖν
> ταῦθ', ἱκέτευον, ἐμβλέπων ἀγάλματι
> οὐ τῷ τυχόντι.

Typical Sostratean pathetic description (though, apparently, not unfaithful to the events), punctuated by a self-sarcastic euphemism (ἐγὼ δ' ὁ χρυσοῦς) and a simile that *prima facie* sounds παρὰ προσδοκίαν: a young male is likening himself to an old female, a nurse.

ὁ χρυσοῦς, "fine fellow that I am", is a phrase often used euphemistically and (self-)sarcastically.[79] However, the humour in Sostratus' utterance is that the euphemistic and the non-euphemistic usages coexist and cooperate. Sostratus would aptly poke fun at himself given his lack of contribution to the rescue, but he is indeed χρυσοῦς as regards his conduct towards the girl since he refrains from any action that would offend her honour. The deceivingly inept simile works towards the same humorous goal: likening himself to the girl's τροφός, Sostratus cleanses his affection for her from anything that could be construed as immoral. He is enamoured but not lustful, immoderate, or disrespectful — in one word, he is not ἄτοπος (288).

(26) Act II, 384–389 (gender stereotypes/leap of thought/self-delusion)

> εἰ μὴ γὰρ ἐν γυναιξίν ἐστιν ἡ κόρη
> τεθραμμένη μήδ' οἶδε τῶν ἐν τῷ βίῳ
> τούτων κακῶν μηδὲν ὑπὸ τηθίδος τινὸς
> δεδιξαμένη μαίας τ', ἐλευθερίως δέ πως
> πατρὸς μετ' ἀγρίου, μισοπονήρου τῷ τρόπῳ,
> πῶς οὐκ ἐπιτυχεῖν ἐστι ταύτης μακάριον;

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78 Chantraine 1926, 183.
79 LSJ, *s.v.* IIIb; cf. Luc. *Laps.* 1; Ael. *Ep.* 19.

Gender stereotypes are a comic staple that Menander does not relinquish in this play. See also ex. 28. The joke in Sostratus' eminently peculiar situation is that these stereotypes reinforce rather than check his eagerness as they work in the girl's favour. If she has not been exposed to the influences that regularly spoil a woman's character, Knemon's daughter is even more desirable. In a leap of thought, and because it so suits him, Sostratus identifies the idea of πονηρία with women and their ways. For similar rhetorical purposes, the female semi-chorus of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* (805–820) presents the paradigmatic Timon as a hater exclusively of males. For Aristophanes' women, this is part of a dis-cursive outmanoeuvring of the men. Sostratus is just self-deluded in assuming that Knemon's misanthropy is gender-biased.

2.4 Kallippides

(27) Act V, 835–837 (teasing/ironic echo/gentle reproach/CCVH)

> νὴ τὸν Δία τὸν μέγιστον, εὐγενῶς γέ πως
> ἄγροικ]ος εἶ.
> (Γο.)   πῶς;
> (Κα.)   οὐκ ἔχων βούλει δοκεῖν
> ..... ἐ]πειδὴ συμπεπεισμένον μ' ὁρᾷς.

Kallippides teases Gorgias for his resistance to marrying his daughter. εὐγενῶς [ἄγροικ]ος is Merkelbach's supplement, which I favour, as it connects Gorgias with his sister, who is ἐλευθερίως ἄγροικος (202–203). The spectators could perceive a second layer of humour by noticing that Kallippides evaluates Gorgi-as precisely as Sostratus had evaluated the Daughter. Kallippides' teasing turns into gentle reproach in 836–837. The beginning of 837 is lacunose and variously supplemented, but the general meaning is clear: Gorgias is "a noble rustic" because, although he has no money, he wants "to give the impression" (δοκεῖν) either that he has it or that he does not care about it or that he is wise and pru-dent (according to which of the suggested fills one prefers). It would perhaps make Kallippides' jest less biting if the beginning of 837 were supplemented with ἴσως ("... maybe because you see that I am already sold on the idea").

The primary pragmatic function of teasing as a form of benevolent, playful humour is to build rapport. Teasing is differentiated from putdown humour, which aims to ridicule and ostracise the interlocutor. "Teases, even if ostensibly aggressive, i.e. face-threatening, are geared towards solidarity, in conformity with the framework of politeness, including mock impoliteness, holding between

intimates".[80] Kallippides' teasing of Gorgias is a symbolic linguistic performance incorporating the "peasant" into Kallippides' social circle.

(28) Act V 855–859 (retort/self-sarcasm/gender stereotypes/CCVH)

> (Σω.)   δεῖ πότον
> ἡμῶν γενέσθαι, παππία, νυνὶ [κ]αλόν,
> καὶ τῶν γυναικῶν παννυχίδα.
> (Κα.)   τοὐναντίον
> πίοντ' ἐκεῖναι, παννυχιοῦμεν οἶδ' ὅτι
> ἡμεῖς.

To Sostratus' suggestion to organise a drinking party, Kallippides retorts that they will, but men and women will end up switching places. The old hand, whom Sostratus had just subjected to a tedious lecture on how best to use one's money, can still school the youth in society's ways!

The women's supposed intemperance in drink, which is homologous to their partiality for sex and food, is a time-honoured comic stereotype. A sizeable section in Athenaeus, book 10, illustrates the *topos* with quotations from comedy (ὅτι δὲ φίλοινον τὸ τῶν γυναικῶν γένος κοινόν, 10.440e–442a).[81] Kallippides' kindly disposition is again brought forth by the light-hearted resignation with which he accepts the "fact of life" that the women will be carousing and the men will do all the work. Sure enough, he darts off "to prepare everything".

2.5 Chaereas

(29) Act I, 50–55 (teasing/insinuation)

> ΧΑΙΡΕΑΣ τί φήις; ἰδὼν ἐνθένδε παῖδ' ἐλευ₁θέραν
> τὰς πλησίον Νύμφας στεφ[ανο]ῦσαν, Σώστρατε,
> ἐρῶν ἀπῆλθες εὐθύς;
> ΣΩΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ   εὐθ[ύς.]
> [Χαι.]   **ὡς ταχύ**.
> ἦ τοῦτ' ἐ<βε>βούλευσ' ἐξιών, ἐρᾶ[ν] τινος;
> (Σω.) **σκώπτεις·** ἐγὼ δέ, Χαιρέα, κακῶς ἔχω.
> (Χαι.) ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀπιστῶ.

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80 Dynel 2008b, 253.
81 Sources and discussion in Oeri 1948, 13–18, 39–46; Finnegan 1995, 121–131; García Soler 2010. Venit (1998) discusses artistic depictions of "women in their cups".

First with the suggestive ἐρῶν ἀπῆλθες (52),[82] then with the ironic exclamation ὡς ταχύ ("how fast!", 52), Chaereas is teasing Sostratus for his *coup de foudre*, insinuating that hunting a woman rather than animals was his friend's goal from the start ("is this what you planned setting out, to fall in love?", 53). Sostratus does not appreciate his friend's humour, which he considers as belittling his lovesickness (σκώπτεις, "you are mocking me", 54). Sostratus, having seen the girl just once, declares himself already "in bad shape". Chaereas asserts that he "does not disbelieve" him (55). The implicature of the litotes (οὐκ ἀπιστῶ), introduced by the emphatically reassuring ἀλλά,[83] must be that he remains incredulous, but he does not wish to press the teasing further. We may imagine the actor delivering this line with a subtextual smile emanating from the colour of his voice.

There are at least two ironic substrata to the humour of this delightful vignette. On the spectator's level, Chaereas' teasing verifies that Sostratus is under a metaphysical influence, as indicated by Pan's prologue. Chaereas is sneering at Sostratus' "speed", but his passion *is* stunning in its swift and violent outburst. Similarly, everything Sostratus is about to do to promote his love, that he would be willing to persevere even though the girl's father is μαινόμενος τελέως (116–117), should be taken as equally extraordinary. Sostratus himself is μανικός; a sane man would not go to such lengths. Additionally, on the metatheatrical level, Chaereas' teasing underlines from the start that he is not to behave like a παράσιτος, even if he dons the mask of that name.[84] He is Sostratus' peer, a friend

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82 The verb ἀπέρχομαι with a participle or a predicate ("I come off/come away...") denotes immediate effect with lasting consequences; cf. Ar. *Ran.* 18; Men. fr. 6.5–7; Isoc. 17.57; Kassel 1963, 300–301. For love as a *coup de foudre* with a definite "starting point", Latin uses the phrase *amare coepit* (Ter. *Phorm.* 111; *Haut.* 97).

83 ἀλλά here implies that despite his teasing, Chaereas does not doubt his friend's suffering — although he may still smile at its intensity (Denniston 1950, 16, §6 — the "assentient" ἀλλά where "agreement is presented not as self-evident, but as wrung from the speaker malgré lui. ἀλλά then points the contrast between the assent given and the considerations which militated against the giving of it").

84 The *dramatis personae* catalogue in Papyrus Bodmer IV describes Chaereas as ὁ παράσιτος. The services Chaereas boasts of are indeed reminiscent of other Middle and New Comedy parasites (Aristophon fr. 5; Antiphanes fr. 193; Timocles fr. 8). However, Chaereas lacks the most distinctive traits of the type: the esurience, the obsequiousness to the τρέφων, and above all, the shameless commercialisation of his skills. Hints of baser motives are not lacking (for example, could the "everlasting legacy" he leaves behind [*Dys.* 67] be an investment for material rather than moral rewards?); nonetheless, Chaereas generally behaves more like a friend and a peer of Sostratus than a parasite — an aspect with direct consequences also on the kind of verbal humour he employs. Chaereas is a typical lover's adjutant — and in New Comedy, this is not a role exclusive to παράσιτοι. It is primarily professional soldiers who depend on κόλακες

rather than a hanger-on, comfortable enough to poke kindly fun at him and eventually independent enough an operator to recede from the endeavour upon smelling danger (131–134). For the pragmatics of teasing as a jocular performance between intimates, see ex. 28.

2.6 Pan

(30) Prologue, 2–4, 8–12 (alliteration/consonance/"phonemic witticism")

> **Φ**υλήν, τὸ νυμ**φ**αῖον δ' ὅθεν **π**ροέρχομαι
> **Φ**υλασίων καὶ τῶν δυναμένων τὰς **π**έτρας
> ἐνθάδε γεωργεῖν ἱερὸν ἐ**π**ιφανὲς **π**άνυ.
> [...]
> ζ[ῶ]ν οὗτος ἐ**π**ιεικῶς χρόνον
> **π**ολὺν λελάληκεν ἡδέως ἐν τῶι βίῳ
> οὐδεν‹ὶ›, **π**ροσηγόρευκε **π**ρότερος δ' οὐδένα,   10
> **π**λὴν ἐξ ἀνάγκης γειτνιῶν **π**αριών τ' ἐμὲ
> τὸν **Π**ᾶνα.

At the beginning of his prologue, the god Pan demonstrates a penchant for alliteration and consonance, playing with [p] and [ph] consonants. Menander's Pan "imprints" his presence on the audience's subconscious, as it were, by repeating (fourteen times!) the labial sound of his initial. Indeed, this prolonged playful sequence ends with the (delayed) announcement of the god's name. The perceptive spectator smiles at this verbal humour, which operates at the basic phoneme level. One could speak of "phonemic witticisms",[85] subtle and inconspicuous, detectable nonetheless to the discerning ear — like the god's involvement in the plot.

(31) Prologue, 36–39 (misleading innuendo)

> τὰς δὲ συντρόφους ἐμοὶ
> Νύμφας κολακεύουσ' ἐπιμελῶς τιμῶσά τε
> πέπεικεν αὐτῆς ἐπιμέλειαν σχεῖν τινα
> ἡμᾶς.

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to get what they want (Petrides 2014, 216–220, 229–245). Even in cases where the girl is abducted from a brothel and violence is used (the situation Chaereas imagines), somebody other than a parasite can be employed; for instance, the lover's brother, as in Terence's *Adelphoe*.
85 In this initial part of the Prologue, Pan also demonstrates his wit by twice employing oxymoron: τῶν δυναμένων τὰς πέτρας ἐνθάδε γεωργεῖν (3–4); ἀπάνθρωπός τις ἄνθρωπος (6).

Greek audiences familiar with Pan's image in cult and myth would not miss an innuendo in this phrase, which rests on the possible double meaning — literal or ironic — of the term ἐπιμέλεια. That there is something to be noticed here is conveyed to the audience by the repetition ἐπιμελῶς ... ἐπιμέλεια. Pan had a particular way of "taking care" of women around him — and that was rape.[86] Assuredly, this was not at all outside the confines of a New Comedy spectator's *Erwartungshorizont*. Ironically, rape and marriage are not incompatible either in New Comedy or in tragedy whence the motif derives. Pan hints at the eventuality that the *Dyskolos* will offer another instance of the "girl's tragedy", rape ending in an upwards social movement. The scene between Sostratus and the Daughter in front of Pan's grotto in Act II will also be brimming with intertextual reminiscences of rapes in Panic milieus. Breaking expectation, Sostratus will prove to be nothing like other New Comedy νεανίσκοι, for instance, Lyconides of Plautus' *Aulularia* or Chaerea of Terence's *Eunuchus*. The latter violated their respective maidens as soon as they got the chance (Chaerea explicitly likened his actions to the divine rapes of myth).

(32) Prologue, 35–36 (paradox)

> γέγονεν ὁμοία τῇ τροφῇ τις, οὐδὲ ἓν
> εἰδυῖα φλαῦρον.

Given the unforgivingly negative portraiture of Knemon that preceded, it certainly comes as a surprise that the girl's "upbringing" ends up being an advantage. Pan is indicating a paradox: Knemon's surliness and misanthropy had a positive collateral effect in that his daughter was raised away from all evil. Sostratus will pick up Pan's words later, adding a touch of misogynistic spice: the girl "knew no evil" because she was explicitly raised away from women (384–387). Just as Sostratus is regurgitating a common comic stereotype, the god obliquely invokes a *topos*: the girl was raised in the country, and the country is more moral than the city. These *topoi*, of course, are ultimately debunked. Sostratus is a city boy, but despite his frivolousness, he is no less moral than Gorgias; and Plangon, Sostratus' sister, raised by her mother in the dreaded γυναικωνίτης, is never doubted as to her fitness to be the wife of a morally uncompromising ἄγροικος.

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86 See Borgeaud 1988, 74–87. See also Craik 2001.

3 General principles of Menander's verbal humour: Compendium of lessons learned

3.1 Menander is funny — καθ᾽ ὑπόνοιαν

Menander is *funny*. Admittedly, most humour in *Dyskolos* is situational rather than verbal/conversational. It derives less from the dexterous self-referentiality of language (as in Aristophanes) and more from the absurdity of characters and circumstances — Knemon's invariably hysterical reactions in Acts I–III, Sikon's clueless self-aggrandising and occasional sobering self-recognition, Getas' incessant grumbling and meanness, Sostratus' laughable ineffectuality that gets the job done, nonetheless. Still, the instances in which Menander's scripts produce verbal humour, albeit fewer compared to Aristophanes, are not negligible in number. One must not equate humorous discourse with verbal pyrotechnics or scurrility. Menander does not eschew these techniques altogether (see 3.2), yet his comic tone is usually low-key. Most "obvious" verbal humour in *Dyskolos* is accumulated in the mouths of Getas and Sikon, the two lowest characters in terms of ἦθος if not social rank.[87]

All ancient sources, starting from Aristotle (*Eth. Nic.* 1127b 33–1128b 9), locate the distinctive quality of later comedy in the intertwined notions of ἐπιδεξιότης (tact), εὐσχημοσύνη (decorum), εὐτραπελία (wit), and ὑπόνοια (innuendo, understated humour). These notions encompass later comedy's tendency to avoid coarse language (βωμολοχία, αἰσχρολογία, τὸ σκληρόν), excessive comicality (τῷ γελοίῳ ὑπερβάλλοντες), offensive humour (λοιδόρημα), and *ad hominem* attacks (ὀνομαστὶ κωμῳδεῖν) as ends-in-themselves (γλιχόμενοι πάντως τοῦ γελοίου, Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1128a 5).[88] Aristotle politicises such gentle and understated comic discourse: it is the kind that becomes the virtuous gentleman (ἐπιεικής, ἐλευθέριος) and the educated man (πεπαιδευμένος), as opposed to the φορτικός (vulgar) and ἀνδραποδώδης (servile). Plutarch's famous *Comparison of Aristophanes and Menander*, of which we possess the epitome (*Mor.* 853a–854d), echoes the aesthetic politics of Aristotle (and Plato).[89] Plutarch's comparative judgement is ideologically slanted in Menander's favour: the *Comparison*

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[87] Sikon's social status is indeterminate. Even if he is a slave, the two are not the only θεράποντες in the play, and the others (Pyrrhias, Daos, Simiche) do not speak the way Sikon and Getas do.

[88] None of these elements disappears overnight or altogether: see Gelli 2014.

[89] Hunter 2000.

is not a history of Greek humour but a rhetorical argument regulating the aesthetics of contemporary sympotic entertainment. Still, it can be a rich pool of valid critical observations. Menander's language, Plutarch contends (*Comp. Ar. et Men.* 853b 1–3), has no place (οὐδαμῶς) for τὸ φορτικόν (coarseness), τὸ θυμελικόν (vulgarity), and τὸ βάναυσον (ribaldry). The assertion is hyperbolic but not inaccurate. The *Dyskolos* squares perfectly with it. The play's humour is subtle, gentle, and faithful to the outlook of realistic conversations (3.2). Above all, Menander never uses humour for humour's sake but gears it towards dramaturgical ends (3.3–3.5).

3.2 Menander's verbal humour is moderate(d) and naturalistic

Plutarch specifies linguistic moderation and naturalism as the distinguishing qualities of Menander's verbal humour. Unlike Aristophanes, who employs them *ad nauseam*, Menander makes reasonable and frugal use (μετὰ τοῦ προσήκοντος λόγου καὶ ὀλιγάκις χρῆται) of verbal *feux d'artifice* such as ἀντίθετα, ὁμοιόπτωτα, and παρωνυμίας (*Comp. Ar. et Men.* 853b 3–d 9) — what Marta Dynel (2009) calls humour on the "lexeme" level.[90] This is indeed the *Dyskolos* case. The drama contains no lexemic humour and only limited humorous play with sound, the most palpable instance being Pan's witty alliterations in the prologue (ex. 30). The play's verbal humour on the "phraseme" level is moderate, comprising primarily puns and witticisms, exclusively uttered by Getas and Sikon. The *Dyskolos*' humour is chiefly "stylistic". Stylistic humour mechanisms (hyperbole, absurdity, interjections, self-address, oxymoron, curses, oaths, innuendo, sarcasm etc.) are not, in *Dyskolos* or anywhere, necessarily humorous in themselves; they acquire a humorous hue in context — recognised, for instance, as a character's particular linguistic penchant (3.3).

Menander's diction, Plutarch continues, is polished and mingled into a consistent whole (συνέξεσται καὶ συμπέπνευκε κεκραμένη πρὸς ἑαυτήν, *Comp. Ar. et Men.* 853d 10–11) that reflects the actual linguistic habits of people in his time (τὴν ὁμοιότητα τηρεῖν ἐν τοῖς κοινοῖς καὶ συνήθεσι καὶ ὑπὸ τὴν χρείαν ὀνόμασιν, *Comp. Ar. et Men.* 853e 3–4). Forays into more colourful discursive modes are allowed only if dramatic exigencies call for them (ἐὰν δέ τινος ἄρα τερατείας εἰς **τὸ πρᾶγμα** καὶ ψόφου **δεήσῃ**). Even so, they are momentary, and the language soon reverts εἰς τὸ οἰκεῖον (*Comp. Ar. et Men.* 853e 4–8). In Menander, Plutarch adds, each character genus is provided with a linguistic style that

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90 Compare *Tractatus Coislinianus* 5.

pertains *naturalistically* to his/her nature, disposition, age, and station in life, as well as to the sentiments he/she experiences at any given moment (διὰ πολλῶν ἀγομένη παθῶν καὶ ἠθῶν καὶ προσώποις ἐφαρμόττουσα παντοδαποῖς, *Comp. Ar. et Men.* 853d 11–e 2). Menander, that is, does the opposite of Aristophanes, who "puts in his characters' mouths random words that appear chosen by lot" (ἀπὸ κλήρου ἀπονέμει τοῖς προσώποις τὰ προστυχόντα τῶν ὀνομάτων, *Comp. Ar. et Men.* 853d 5–7), to the extent that it is impossible "to discern whether the speaker is a son or a father or a farmer or a god or an old woman or a hero" (οὐκ ἂν διαγνοίης εἴθ' υἱός ἐστιν εἴτε πατὴρ εἴτ' ἄγροικος εἴτε θεὸς εἴτε γραῦς εἴθ' ἥρως ὁ διαλεγόμενος, *Comp. Ar. et Men.* 853d 7–9).

Menander's linguistic naturalism is cardinal for understanding the nature of his verbal humour, especially the avoidance of Aristophanes' linguistic licentiousness. Until recently, scholars used to associate fourth-century BCE philosophical precepts on the humour that becomes the liberal man with the vagaries of enfranchisement after the Lamian War (322 BCE). The erroneous idea thereby promoted was that New Comedy addressed a new kind of audience, which differed from Aristophanes' in taste and sociology, comprising only the upper social echelons and thus conditioned by such refined tastes as privileged by the philosophers. However, no evidence suggests that theatre ceased being mass entertainment in Menander's time.[91] The aesthetics of humour shifted not abruptly due to some *force majeure* but gradually from the beginning of the fourth century onwards. The shift was thus obviously unconnected with democracy's gradual decline, and by no means was it imposed by elite axiology. The philosophers' politics — or Plutarch's — are not necessarily Menander's. The playwright's priorities in fashioning his characters' discourse are plot and characterisation. Aristophanes' language was geared towards maximum comicality with no regard for linguistic verisimilitude. On the contrary, as Plutarch himself remarks, Menander's primary concern is the construction of *a verisimilar comic discourse.* Menander aims to project a "mimesis of life" in the fourth-century BCE polis.[92] An integral part of this venture is painting an accurate picture of everyday verbal communication amongst the social groups populating his comedies. Following trends already at play in earlier comic drama, Menander avoids Aristophanes' outrageous humour not for ideological but for dramaturgical reasons — because it is strategically *antirealistic*.[93]

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91 Rosivach 2000, with bibliography.

92 Aristophanes of Byzantium's phrase is famous: ὦ Μένανδρε καὶ βίε / πότερος ἄρ' ὑμῶν πότερον ἀπεμιμήσατο; (Men. test. 83).

93 The best study of Aristophanes' anti-realist politics and poetics is Ruffell 2011.

Despite the chronological and cultural gap, modern linguistics helps establish that in Menander, too, verbal humour — as a part of realistic conversational exchanges and as opposed to humour for humour's sake in the context of a comic heterotopia like Aristophanes' — is subjected to pragmatic objectives specific to each distinct conversational context. Thus, Menander does not forego scurrility so that his comedy is "less offensive" to the gentleman listener; neither does he excise ὀνομαστὶ κωμῳδεῖν primarily because it would make little sense to the "international" (i.e. non-Athenian) audiences to which he aspired. The latter factor weighed heavily on shaping humour aesthetics in the decades before. I argue, however, that by 316 BCE, the trend-setting process was complete, and Menander could now employ verbal humour *like any other dramaturgical tool at his disposal*. As Plutarch saw, Menander *moderates* the use of verbal-humour mechanisms according to the perceived linguistic habits of the various characters' groups and according to the requirements of the communicative occasion to produce, at first sight, an exact imprint of contemporary linguistic reality. Verbal humour in Menander is meant *naturalistically* to reflect its occurrences and functionalities in everyday conversational contexts among people of similar age and status as depicted in the comedies. If the occasion calls for scurrility in one form or another, Menander allows it, always observing the truth of the moment and the authenticity of the character. If he resorts to "obvious" verbal humour mechanisms less than Aristophanes, it is because everyday conversation is *not*, as a rule, deluged with profanities, imaginative wordplay, outrageous imagery, literary parodies, mixed registers, logical leaps, and canned jokes barely congruous with their context.

In a nutshell, Menander is not "less funny" or "more polite" than Aristophanes — or Plautus; *everyday natural conversation is*, as it aims at much more than merely producing laughter. Verbal humour is not the be-all and end-all of Menandrian characters' naturalistic discourse. On the contrary, it is employed only to the extent and fashion it would be in real (that is, extra-theatrical) talk. In Aristophanes, plot and character are continuously (and self-consciously) hijacked by the overarching imperative of τὸ γελοῖον. In Menander, plot coherence and psychological verisimilitude reign supreme: verbal humour could not veer away from these ends.

3.3 Menander's verbal humour is characterisational

As the arrangement of section 2 implies, the primary function of verbal humour in Menander, an integral aspect of his linguistic naturalism, is *characterisational*. Specifically, the characters' distinctive use of verbal humour is an underappre-

ciated exhibit of Menander's famous knack for *individualising character*, endow-
ing his otherwise stock types with recognisably personal traits. Plutarch grasps
this feature, too.[94] He likens Menander's language to that of the artists making
the actors' shoes, costumes, and masks.[95] These external elements of characteri-
sation, Plutarch remarks, are crafted differently for each *dramatis persona* ac-
cording to gender, age, and social status. Accordingly, the playwright οὕτως
ἔμιξε τὴν λέξιν, ὥστε πάσῃ καὶ φύσει καὶ διαθέσει καὶ ἡλικίᾳ σύμμετρον εἶναι
(*Comp. Ar. et Men.* 853f 1–3). At Plutarch's behest, modern scholarship has done
much to illuminate Menander's individualisation of character by linguistic
means — but not regarding the issue of verbal humour.[96]

The examples in section 2 clearly show that not every *Dyskolos* character
uses humour in the same way. Pan's domination over the play world is reflected
in the fact that he uses the cleverest, almost imperceptibly sophisticated hu-
mour strategies, such as the "phonemic witticisms" of ex. 30, which require a
spectator to pay rigorous attention to the flow of the god's language, or the mis-
leading innuendo of ex. 31, which manipulates the audience's *Erwartungshorizont*
by brandishing the spectre of the rape plot.

The freeborn Athenian males of Kallippides' *oikos* and their entourage use
mild, polite forms of humour. Chaereas displays his alleged expertise in *ars
amatoria* by employing innuendo (of the "I-am-clever-enough-to-see-behind-
the-surface" kind, ex. 29). His teasing of Sostratus is a combination of CCVH/
ACVH that implies homosociality rather than "parasitic" dependence: the sub-
tlest touches become characterisational masterstrokes in Menander's hands.
Sostratus, on his part, is given to hyperbole and the sort of verbal effusion I
termed "affective surplus" (exx. 23–25). His fondness for oaths connects him, for
some scholars, to his religious zealot of a mother,[97] but it is also an ironic hint
that he is under divine possession: the effusion of Sostratus' language is the
linguistic avatar of his Panic drive. Kallippides' kindly disposition is brought
forth by his recourse to gentle teasing (ex. 27) and by a self-sarcastic evocation of
gender stereotypes (ex. 28), uttered with a resignation most winsome. Sostratus,

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94 Katsouris (1975, 22–32) summarises the various ancient theories on the relationship be-
tween character and language, from Aristotle to Hermogenes.

95 I base the inference that Plutarch is referring specifically to theatrical shoes and clothes on
the fact that the references to the shoemaker and the costume maker flank the mention of the
σκευοποιός. Admittedly, however, the phrasing may be the epitomiser's.

96 General studies: Zini 1938; Sandbach 1970; Katsouris 1975; Arnott 1995. On the idiolect of
specific character genera: (a) Old men: Silk 1995; Grasso 1995; (b) Young men: Brenk 1987;
(c) Women: Bain 1984; Ferrari 2014.

97 Arnott 1995, 156.

too, evokes a gender stereotype (ex. 26): his argument (the arbitrary equation of Knemon's μισοπονηρία specifically with women) has so much special pleading in it that the utterance's actual humorous function turns out to be emphasising Sostratus' blind, unflagging devotion to his cause. Sostratus is comically oblivious of anything other than the girl and his monomaniacal pursuit of her. The μισοπονηρία comment feeds into this trait, as does his comportment during Knemon's rescue (666–689) and the way he recaps his "achievement" in 860–865.

As for the two slaves connected to Kallippides' family who dominate the play's verbal humour, Sikon's discourse is individualised by his proclivity for frigid witticisms and recycling outworn jokes in a fashion that belies his type's aspirations to eloquence and wit. Only at the end does Sikon recapture some of the comic cook's traditional "dithyrambic" gusto (ex. 22). The stamp of Getas' verbal humour is that his grumbling and bitter sarcasm, meant to disparage the master class, unwittingly turn against their utterer: Menander upholds the *scala naturae* here in a cunningly comic fashion.[98] A similar effect is also at play vis-à-vis Sikon. By toying with ACVH and CCVH, Menander turns Getas and Sikon into butts of their own jokes. This reflects in their performance in the final scene of the play. The two slaves' assumption of power over Knemon is illusory; they feel triumphant manhandling the old man, but the joke is on them because their timing is off. They treat Knemon like a beast in need of taming (ἄνθρωπος ἡμερωτέος, *Dys.* 903) when he has humanised himself in the audience's eyes. Their triumph is not met with *Schadenfreude* so much as with unease, and the play's denouement bears Menander's characteristically bitter aftertaste.[99]

The Phylasians share no part in the play's verbal humour — but for that, see 3.5.

3.4 Menander's verbal humour is taxonomic and relational

Therefore, it is no surprise that in Menander's linguistically verisimilar play world, like in real life, individual speakers formulate personal styles of humour, which define their projected personas.[100] However, modern pragmatics also shows that beyond the individual, communal humour-producing strategies may additionally be developed by members of close-knit social units (families, professional

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98 For New Comedy and the *scala naturae* that keeps slaves in their place, see Petrides 2017.
99 Petrides 2014, 3.
100 For discussion from a pragmatics point of view and examples from modern natural conversations, see Tannen 1984.

groups etc.). Their deployment is a code that signals group membership.[101] In Menander, too, utterances often become humorous or acquire added layers of humour if/when the audience recognises that they are shared by *dramatis personae* of the same household or bound by other social bonds. The members of Kallippides' οἶκος, "natural" or "adjunct" (to the former, I incorporate the slaves; to the latter, the hired cook), are especially marked by communal humorous strategies. Getas and Sostratus have the same knack for hyperbole. Getas and Sikon, Knemon's victims-turned-victimisers, are connected by aggressive humour, proverbs, and self-commiseration. They both produce authorially-controlled laughter by inadvertently falling victim to their own verbal aggression. Getas also shares with Pyrrhias the habit of mouthing off to the masters (ex. 3), which is not the custom of either Daos or, of course, poor Simiche. Daos is deferential to Gorgias, although he was practically his surrogate father, and when once he speaks to Gorgias' mother with mild impertinence, the effect is mitigated: the slave is talking back to the house, so his mistress probably does not hear his words (*Dys.* 206–207).

Menander's verbal humour, then, is more than an individualising strategy; it is also *a taxonomic instrument*, mapping the discursive universe of the play with "communities of humorous practice"[102] coextensive to the social groups of the play at large. The effect is realistic enough at first glance; it becomes less so, however, when shared humour-producing tics create contiguities between characters with no external ("objective") associations. In this case, the function of Menander's verbal humour becomes *relational*, underscoring deeper connections of thematic import (cf. 3.5).

Getas, for one, is linked with Knemon by their shared proclivity for "extreme case formulations", rambling diatribes, and a brutality in language and thought: the slave's Knemon-like qualities will be vented fiercely against Knemon himself in the final scene.

Interesting is also the liaison between Knemon and Sostratus created by their common propensity for interjections expressing self-pity, anger, or other emotions. Knemon is given ample "affective surplus", too — and if Sostratus' affective surplus is to be understood as a manifestation of Panic possession, then this shared linguistic trait could underline that *grâce à Dieu* Sostratus has been endowed with a spirit as indomitable as to match the intractability of his quasi-antagonist.

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101 Attardo 2008, 118, with bibliography. Note especially Everts 2003.
102 The term is derived from Mullany 2004.

When Sostratus finally comes to his own in Act V, he becomes preachy like Gorgias, delivering a moralising sermon to Kallippides reminiscent of the one he received from Gorgias in Act II. And since now Sostratus is practically a farmer himself, having undergone a nearly initiatory *baptême du feu* under Phyle's scorching sun,[103] he even adopts a habit Aristotle associates specifically with ἄγροικοι (*Rh.* 1395a 6–7): talking in maxims.[104]

In Menander, language — and verbal humour at that — is not only a sharp chisel for sculpting minutely individualised characters; it is also a fine thread for interweaving those characters so as to open wide interpretive avenues for the play.

3.5 Menander's verbal humour is thematic

The relational function of Menander's verbal humour is already a "departure from realism" insomuch as it facilitates goals other than the accurate depiction of everyday conversation. Connecting characters via humour ultimately has a *thematic* import: it promotes the play's major themes and motifs and produces effects of exegetical significance. Menander uses verbal humour, among other means, to produce faithful imprints of everyday dialogues and endow his characters with credible individualising features. But he does not stop there. He moves *beyond realism* toward deploying verbal humour as another way of inscribing the social and moral issues raised by his characters' actions. In *Dyskolos*, this thematic function of verbal humour is appreciated to the fullest upon noticing how verbal humour is meted out to its various "carriers". *Almost no verbal humour is generated by the rustics of the play* (Gorgias, Daos, Knemon, Simiche, Daughter), who speak sombrely and matter-of-factly, with an air of grandiosity and self-righteousness. The conveyors of verbal humour in *Dyskolos* are exclusively the urban *dramatis personae*. In other words, the distribution of verbal humour is such as to promote one of the play's central themes, the city/country divide.

Gorgias never makes us laugh — at him or with him. He remains altogether serious to the point of grimness throughout the play.[105] So is Simiche in her almost saintly disposition. We enjoy Daos' cunning in suggesting that Sostratus

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103 Such "mystery elements" in *Dyskolos* are studied by Keuls 1969.

104 Cusset/Lhostis 2011, 95–97.

105 Subtle visual irony could be generated if Gorgias is wearing the *agroikos*-mask, which carries Middle Comedy baggage and a physiognomy contrary to the ethos emanating from Gorgias' works and deeds. I discuss this point in Petrides 2014, 150–151.

follows them to the fields, and we smile at his malicious comments when the urban fop gladly accepts (361–374) — especially if we also appreciate the *Bacchae*-intertext lurking between the lines[106] — but this is as far as hilarity goes. Daos may have miscalculated the danger posed by Sostratus in particular, but he is not wrong about Knemon's paternal misgivings and the dangers of ἐρημία overall. As for Knemon, we are certainly amused by his antics in Acts I–III, we even crack a guilty smile at his maltreatment by the slaves in Act V, but this laughter is never light and unencumbered. Knemon is not a madman or a buffoon. His ethos, which blocks his daughter's marriage and renders her the potential prey of sexual predators, poses a moral and philosophical problem to ponder rather than a spectacle to laugh at. If Knemon is complicit in a monster image being constructed around him, this image is compounded enough by the end of Act IV to disallow his being easily dispensed to the cardboard baddies bin.

The Phylasians are humourless, but they are *not* agelasts *stricto sensu*, enemies of mirth, merriment, *comedy*. Their non-involvement in the production of verbal humour is intricately implicated in the play's central question: what is a misanthrope, and how is he produced? The play allows various relevant theories to float around. The first, propounded mainly by lower-caste characters, inimical to Knemon (Pyrrhias, Chaereas, Getas, Sikon), is a "medical" one: misanthropy is a mental illness, and Knemon is a madman and a savage beast (*Dys.* 82, 88–90, 116–117, 122–123, 467, 480, 634, 903). At more reflective moments, the characters suggest a "positivistic-deterministic" theory, which associates misanthropy with the geographic-economic conditions of Phyle and the harsh bitterness experienced by the poor in the face of the upper classes' disdain towards them (*Dys.* 129–131, 296–298, 603–606). If this theory were valid, it would place Gorgias, too, who already shows disconcerting signs (for instance, his lack of concern for love, which is altogether unnatural for a New Comedy νεανίσκος) *en route* to becoming another Knemon.

Gorgias' and the Phylasians' extreme humourlessness continues to feed into this theory until the end of the play. The deterministic view of misanthropy, however, is destabilised already from the start of Act II, when Gorgias solemnly declares that he is not one to "imitate the δύσκολον" of Knemon (242–243). Misanthropy, it transpires, is ultimately a *proairetic choice* in Aristotelian terms.[107] For reasons that remain vague to the end, Knemon *chose* to condemn humanity

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106 Petrides 2014, 53–58.
107 On Aristotle's notion of *prohairesis* ("purposive moral choice") and its involvement in constructing character in New Comedy, especially the character of young men, who are still *in statu formandi*, see Petrides 2014, 169–201.

tout court and grew reluctant to accept human virtue even as a theoretical possibility, to the extent of becoming blind to the existence of an ἀνὴρ εὐγενέστατος right next door (723). Gorgias made the opposite choice. Exacting life conditions instilled in him elements of irascibility, class suspicion, excessive pride, and ultimately a "freezing" of sensibility, which Aristotle associates with old men.[108] However, as his attitude towards Sostratus already displayed, unlike Knemon, Gorgias remained open to the possibility of being wrong; he remained willing to listen and be dissuaded. Above all, when push came to shove, he did not allow past grievances to strip him of his humanity: he jumped into the well and rescued Knemon.

Stripping the Phylasian group of verbal humour is Menander's way of underscoring that a fine thread separates misanthropy and philanthropy, the two opposing human conditions at the play's discursive heart.

4 Conclusion

This study offered a comprehensive analysis of verbal humour strategies in Menander's *Dyskolos*, annotating a corpus of thirty-two instances that correspond to ancient and modern taxonomies. Combining the insights of modern linguistics, specifically Humour Studies, with the contextualisation and analysis of each example, I attempted to anatomise the dramaturgical function of verbal jocularity in this play and extrapolate general principles governing Menander's verbal humour, whose application in other plays could be tested. I hope to have shown that Menander's characters deploy verbal humour strategies in a way that is naturalistic in its moderate and targeted use, but which effects an ultimate "departure from realism" towards more discursive goals. In *Dyskolos*, Menander deploys verbal humour mechanisms for (a) enhancing the play's outlook as a μίμησις βίου; (b) constructing individualised characters out of New Comedy's stock types; and (c) creating relational nexuses between the *dramatis personae*, which carry the drama's central themes.

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108 Gorgias uses the term λογισμός (ὁ τῶν ὄντων κακῶν λογισμός, ἀνάπαυσιν διδοὺς οὐδ᾽ ἡντινοῦν, 343–344), which hints directly at Aristotle's comparison of old and young men in *Rhetoric*. For Aristotle, λογισμός, an obstinate emphasis on reason and interest, is the hallmark of the old. Youths, on the other hand, are guided by natural impulse (*Rh.* 1390a 15–16, τῷ ἤθει μᾶλλον ζῶσι ἢ τῷ λογισμῷ) and cupidity (*Rh.* 1389a 3–4, οἱ μὲν οὖν νέοι τὰ ἤθη εἰσὶν μὲν ἐπιθυμητικοὶ καὶ οἷοι ποιεῖν ὧν ἂν ἐπιθυμήσωσιν). Λογισμός is nothing but the freezing of youthful zest for life.

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List of Contributors

Kostas E. Apostolakis is Professor of Classical Studies at the University of Crete, where he has been teaching Greek and Latin since 2003. He studied Classics in the Universities of Crete and Groningen. His research interests include Greek and Latin oratory and historiography, and Attic and Roman comedy. He has published numerous articles and book chapters on ancient rhetoric, Attic oratory, Attic comedy, and ancient historiography, and has authored four books: *[Lysias]: Or. 20, For Polystratos* (in Greek, Athens 2003); *[Demosthenes]: Or. 42, Against Phaenippos* (in Greek, Athens 2009); *Timokles. Translation and Commentary* (Fragmenta Comica 21, Göttingen 2019); and *Titus Livius: Ab urbe condita liber xxxix* (in Greek, Athens 2022).

Simone Beta is Full Professor of Greek Language and Literature at the University of Siena. His research interests include Greek and Roman drama (and its reception), sympotic poetry, and riddles. He has published the books *Il linguaggio nelle commedie di Aristofane. Parola positiva e parola negativa nella commedia antica* (Rome 2004); *Il labirinto della parola. Enigmi, oracoli e sogni nella cultura antica* (Turin 2016); *Io, un manoscritto. L'Antologia Palatina si racconta* (Rome 2017), translated into French (*Moi, un manuscrit. Autobiographie de l'Anthologie Palatine*, Paris 2019); and *La donna che sconfigge la guerra. Lisistrata racconta la sua storia* (Rome 2022).

Dimitrios Kanellakis is an Early Career Fellow at the Centre for Hellenic Studies, Harvard University, and Adjunct Lecturer at the Department of Classics and Philosophy, University of Cyprus. He studied Greek literature at the Universities of Athens (BA) and Oxford (MSt, DPhil). Recent books: *Aristophanes and the Poetics of Surprise* (De Gruyter, Berlin/Boston 2020); *Mimnermus: Elegies. Edited with Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Liverpool University Press 2023); *Pathologies of Love in Classical Literature* (ed., De Gruyter, Berlin/Boston 2021); *Ancient Greek Comedy: Genre, Texts, Reception. Essays in Honour of Angus M. Bowie* (co-ed. with A. Fries, De Gruyter, Berlin/Boston 2020).

Ioannis M. Konstantakos is Professor of Ancient Greek Literature at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, where he has been teaching since 2003. His scholarly interests include ancient comedy, historiography, ancient narrative, folklore, and the relations between Greek and Near-Eastern literatures and cultures. He has published widely on these topics. In 2009, his study *Akicharos. The Tale of Ahiqar in Ancient Greece*, vols. 1 and 2 (Athens 2008) was awarded the prize of the Academy of Athens for the best monograph in classical philology. In 2012, his book *Legends and Fairy Tales about the Land of Gold. Archaeology of a Folktale Motif* (Athens 2011) was shortlisted for the Greek state prize for critical essay. He recently published the short monograph *War, Nekyia, Quest: George Seferis and the Archetypical Myths of Hellenism* (Benaki Museum, Athens 2021) and edited *Suspense in Ancient Greek Literature* (De Gruyter, Berlin/Boston 2021, in collaboration with V. Liotsakis).

Anna A. Novokhatko is Associate Professor of Classical Philology at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Her research interests include ancient Greek comedy, the history and terminology of ancient scholarship, textual criticism, and rhetoric. In her recent book *Greek Comedy and Embodied Scholarly Discourse* (De Gruyter, Berlin/Boston 2023), she explores the interaction

of comedy with pre-Alexandrian scholarship. Furthermore, she explores cognitive studies and their interaction with classics, ancient considerations on metaphor, as well as the methodologies and development of Digital Classics.

S. Douglas Olson is Distinguished McKnight University Professor of Classical and Near Eastern Religions and Cultures at the University of Minnesota. The author or co-author of over 30 books on Greek literature, he is best known for his critical editions and commentaries on individual Aristophanic comedies — *Peace* (1998), *Acharnians* (2002), *Thesmophoriazusae* (2004, with Colin Austin), *Wasps* (2015, with Zachary Biles), and *Knights* (forthcoming 2024, with Zachary Biles) — and on the fragments of Eupolis (3 vols., 2014–2017) and Antiphanes (3 vols., 2021–2023) for the Fragmenta Comica series. He has also produced both a bilingual Loeb edition (8 vols., 2006–2012) and a full-scale Teubner critical text (5 vols. in 9 fascicles, 2019–2024) of Athenaeus of Naucratis. In addition, he has produced a book-length study of the epigraphical evidence for the history of Athenian drama (2012, with Benjamin Millis), and commentaries on the fragments of Matro of Pitane (1999, with Alex Sens) and Archestratus of Gela (2000, with Alex Sens), and on the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* (2012), and is the General Editor of the Basel Homer Commentary English Edition. His current major research project is a critical text and translation of Eustathius' of Thessalonica *Commentary on the Odyssey* (projected 7 vols., 2022–, with Eric Cullhed).

Antonis K. Petrides is Associate Professor of Classics at the Open University of Cyprus, where he has been teaching since 2007. He earned his PhD from Trinity College Cambridge in 2005 and specialises in ancient theatre and its modern reception. Currently, he is working on a new edition and commentary of Menander's *Dyskolos*, which is set to be published by Oxford University Press.

Piero Totaro is Full Professor of Ancient Greek Language and Literature and History of Greek Drama at the University of Bari "Aldo Moro", where he was also Head of the Department of "Scienze dell'Antichità e del Tardoantico"; currently, he is Head of the "Centro Internazionale di Ricerca e Studi su Carnevale, Maschera e Satira" (CMS). His scholarly interests are mostly concerned with Greek comedy and tragedy. Among his publications: *Le seconde parabasi di Aristofane* (2nd ed., Metzler, Stuttgart/Weimar 2000); various entries in the *Encyclopedia of Greek Comedy*, ed. A.H. Sommerstein (Wiley-Blackwell, Hoboken 2019); in collaboration with Giuseppe Mastromarco, *Commedie di Aristofane* (vol. II, UTET, Turin 2006) and *Storia del teatro greco* (Mondadori, Milan 2008). He is currently working on new critical editions with commentary of Aristophanes' *Wealth*, of Aeschylus' fragmentary plays (under the patronage of the "Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei", with the collaboration of a multidisciplinary scholarly team), of Euripides' *Alcestis* (under the patronage of "Fondazione Lorenzo Valla", in collaboration with Maria Pia Pattoni), and of *Adespota Comica* book-fragments in the frame of the international research project Fragmenta Comica.

Georgios Triantafyllou studied Medieval and Modern Greek Philology at the University of Athens, and then pursued postgraduate studies in Classics at the University of Crete, from which he holds a Master's degree and where he is now a doctoral candidate. He is currently preparing a doctoral thesis on the use of language in Aristophanes' works, under the supervision of Professor Kostas E. Apostolakis. His research interests include papyrology, epigraphy,

and ancient comedy, with emphasis on linguistic issues. In collaboration with Dr. Nikos Litinas, he has co-authored the book *Adverbs in -ως in Documents of Graeco-Roman Egypt* (*Eulimene* Series of Independent Publications 3, Rethymno 2019) and has edited three Michigan papyri (*P.Mich. inv.* 373 and *P.Mich. inv.* 416 *recto* and *verso*, forthcoming).

Andreas Willi is Diebold Professor of Comparative Philology at the University of Oxford. He is the author of *The Languages of Aristophanes. Aspects of Linguistic Variation in Classical Attic Greek* (Oxford 2003); *Sikelismos. Sprache, Literatur und Gesellschaft im griechischen Sizilien (8.–5. Jh. v. Chr.)* (Basel 2008); and *Origins of the Greek Verb* (Cambridge 2018). He has edited, among other things, *The Language of Greek Comedy* (Oxford 2002); *Laws and Rules in Indo-European* (Oxford 2012, with P. Probert); and *Formes et fonctions des langues littéraires en Grèce ancienne* (Geneva 2019). He is one of the editors of *Glotta: Zeitschrift für griechische und lateinische Sprache* and has written numerous articles on Greek, Latin, and Indo-European historical and comparative grammar, as well as on the language-literature and language-culture interfaces in the ancient world.

Bernhard Zimmermann is Professor of Greek Literature at the Albert Ludwig University of Freiburg since 1997. He is a member of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, the Academia Europaea, the Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati, and the Academy of Athens. His main research interests are ancient drama, Greek choral lyric, and the reception of ancient literature in German literature. He is the author of *Untersuchungen zur Form und dramatischen Technik der aristophanischen Komödien* (3 vols., Meisenheim/Frankfurt 1985–1987), *Dithyrambos. Geschichte einer Gattung* (2nd ed., Berlin 2008), *Greek Tragedy* (Baltimore/London 1991), *Die griechische Komödie* (2nd ed., Frankfurt 2006), *Spurensuche. Studien zur Rezeption antiker Literatur* (Freiburg 2009). He edited *Handbuch der Geschichte der griechischen Literatur der Antike* (3 vols., Munich 2011–2022).

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