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Slaves, Sex, and Transgression in Greek Old Comedy

By

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Abstract

Slaves, Sex, and Transgression in Greek Old Comedy

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This dissertation examines the often surprising role of the slave characters of Greek Old Comedy in sexual humor, building on work I began in my 2009 *Classical Quarterly* article ("An Aristophanic Slave: *Peace* 819–1126"). The slave characters of New and Roman comedy have long been the subject of productive scholarly interest; slave characters in Old Comedy, by contrast, have received relatively little attention (the sole extensive study being Stefanis 1980). Yet a closer look at the ancestors of the later, more familiar comic slaves offers new perspectives on Greek attitudes toward sex and social status, as well as what an Athenian audience expected from and enjoyed in Old Comedy. Moreover, my arguments about how to read several passages involving slave characters, if accepted, will have larger implications for our interpretation of individual plays.

The first chapter sets the stage for the discussion of "sexually presumptive" slave characters by treating the idea of sexual relations between slaves and free women in Greek literature generally and Old Comedy in particular. I first examine the various (non-comic) treatments of this theme in Greek historiography, then its exploitation for comic effect in the fifth mimiamb of Herodas and in Machon's *Chreiai*. Finally, I argue that humorous references to sexual relations between slaves and free women in the extant comedies blur the line between free and slave in order to maintain a more rigid distinction between relatively wealthy Athenian citizen males and a lower class comprising slaves, metics, foreigners, and the poorest Athenian citizens.

Chapter two examines what I term the "sexually presumptive" slave characters of Old Comedy. I argue that the audience is sometimes made to identify with a male speaking slave character who threatens to usurp the sexual role of his master and/or exposes free female characters to sexual comment, jokes, manhandling, and innuendo. I demonstrate that this phenomenon is more prominent in the genre than is generally recognized, in part through new interpretations of several passages. The latest extant play, *Wealth* (388 BC), affords the most interesting examples;

I argue that the slave character Cario, who shares the role of comic hero with his master in alternating scenes, repeatedly reverts to sexual humor that is multiply determined as transgressive (i.e., the location, specific sex acts, participants, manner of narration, and associations involved are all conspicuously contrary to ordinary ancient Greek social norms).

The third chapter addresses scenes with slave characters who make sexual jokes that do not threaten to usurp the dominant position of their masters, but may be jokes at their own or another character's expense. I examine in depth the final scene of the *Ecclesiazusae*, where (as I argue) a female speaking slave character engages in playful sexual innuendo with both her master and the Athenian audience. Finally, a close reading of the sexually aggressive, parodic, transformative game of song-exchange played at *Wealth* 290–321 by the slave Cario on the one hand and the chorus on the other further illuminates the interaction between slave and free characters in the context of sexual humor on the comic stage and the probable reactions of the audience to such material.

In chapter four, I balance out my arguments for slave characters as the active instigators and beneficiaries of sexual humor by noting that slaves in Aristophanic comedy are often treated as sexual objects for the sake of a joke. Such slaves are either brought onto the stage as silent characters or imagined verbally as the passive recipients of aggressive sexual action (often in song). This phenomenon, as I argue, is closely connected with the tendency of Old Comedy to use sex as a symbol for comic victory and rejuvenation. Further, I argue that the silent female slave characters of Greek Old Comedy were played by real female slaves, whose bodies were sometimes exposed to the audience in order to unite them in shared erotic desire. Because these mute female slave characters tend to appear in the celebratory final scenes of the plays and often take on the role of alluring symposiastic entertainers (such as *aulos* players and dancers), I argue that their exposure creates the impression that the members of the audience are participating together in a public symposium.

Finally, my fifth chapter treats the association of slave characters with non-sexual violence in the extant comedies. As with sexual humor, I argue that in physically abusive humor slaves play roles on both sides of the equation: they are beaten or threatened onstage for the amusement of the audience, but they also function as tools of violence against others. First I examine scenes in which slaves function as passive objects of staged or threatened physical abuse—as presented in South Italian vase paintings and in the texts of our extant comedies themselves—and consider what effect such humor might have had on ancient audiences. Finally I consider the corresponding evidence for the use of slaves (both private and public) as instruments of physical violence in comedy, and their occasional instigation of violent acts on their own initiative.

Introduction

Slave Characters and Multiple Transgression

Old Comedy is an inherently transgressive genre, descended in part from the invective of the iambographic tradition and situated in a festival context which celebrated a transgressive god.¹ It is characterized by transgression and the inversion of the ordinary both at the macro level of the plot and at the micro level of the humorous speech and interactions of characters within individual scenes. In Old Comedy the individual can triumph over the state (*Acharnians*), death (*Frogs*), or even the gods (*Peace, Birds, Wealth*), and women can triumph over men (*Lysistrata, Ecclesiazusae*). In all these cases the audience derives some emotional benefit from their identification with these characters who accomplish the impossible, even when they believe that such things *should not* (and not merely could not) happen in real life.

Likewise, the transgressive elements within individual scenes are designed to elicit from the audience a certain frisson: a slave character behaves insolently toward his master or other free people, and the audience, identifying with that slave character if only for a moment, experiences the thrill of violating a social norm. Even better, one character on stage may physically assault another, engaging in a type of behavior surely attractive to members of the Athenian audience at times in their own lives but strictly regulated by a legal system under which assault on another citizen (or even a metic or another person's slave) could carry serious penalties.² Or perhaps a character has mentioned what should not be mentioned by making a sexual or scatological joke; in that case the audience does not even need to identify with the character to experience the thrill of transgression, for they themselves as hearers are already party to the act.³

These seemingly disparate transgressive elements have in common an effect on the audience that was indispensable to Old Comedy as a genre. For this reason they are often found in concert: the same joke may be simultaneously sexual and gluttonous (oral sex jokes are ubiquitous) with a scatological element as well (coprophilia) or may feature in addition another element of transgression, as for instance when a slave character attempts to use sexual humor to displace his master, often at the same time appearing to make a sexual advance toward an at least nominally free woman.⁴ Transgression thus admits not only of degree (so for instance some sex acts in a given culture tend to be more taboo than others) but also of multiple kinds (sexual, gluttonous, scatological, violent, transgressive of the boundaries of social class, sacrilegious) that can coexist within the same utterance or stage action. Jokes that are multiply determined as transgressive were funnier, if their increasing incidence and complication over time is any indication.

By virtue of their marginal position at the bottom of the Athenian social ladder, slave characters were uniquely suited to add an element of transgression of appropriate class

1 For Old Comedy's relationship to the iambographic tradition, Rosen 1988 is an excellent resource. Both genres abuse individuals by name (*onomasti kōmōidein*) and make free use of obscenity to humorous effect. Both the major venues at which Athenian comedies were performed (the Lenaia in January and the City Dionysia in March) were festivals in honor of Dionysus.

2 Cf. [Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.10.

3 Henderson 1991, 9–12 offers a useful model for how obscenity can establish a rapport between two entities (particularly between a character and the audience) at the expense of a third party (another character or a victim of *onomasti kōmōidein*).

4 For this phenomenon, cf. Walin 2009 and Chapter Two below.

boundaries to any joke they told or action they took in the presence of or with reference to free people. Therefore as the playwrights of Old Comedy attempted to best one another year after year in staging multiply transgressive humor, there was more and more reason to delegate a major role in such scenes to slave characters. By the time of the production of *Wealth* in 388 BC we find the slave Cario constantly at the center of a web of transgression, the threads of which stretch toward insolence, sacrilege, gluttony, sexual deviance, and scatology.

The Audience at the Theater of Dionysus

Any theory as to how the staging of transgressive slave characters in Old Comedy works must take into account the composition of the audience and the identity of the poets and performers. Much is at stake here: a performance that even in part is for slaves or by slaves (as, for instance, one *could* argue for Roman comedy) is potentially a manifestation of what James Scott calls the hidden transcript.⁵ The written record of such a performance might have important things to tell us about how real Greek slaves and freedmen viewed themselves and their oppressors. On the other hand, if we find that the number of slaves and freedmen in the audience was not significant, nor were there slaves or even people who could truly identify with slaves among those responsible for the performance (poets, producers, actors, and chorus members), the performance necessarily will be part of the public transcript, a record of how Athenian masters imagined their slaves and used them as characters to their own ends. Whatever the case for Roman comedy, I argue that in Attic Old Comedy the situation is quite clearly the latter, and we must therefore ask ourselves how a system of alternating identification with and vilification of transgressive slave characters benefited an audience composed primarily of free people and masters.

Did slaves play a significant role in the production of Attic Old Comedy? No. Our evidence indicates that poets, chorus members, and *chorēgoi* were relatively wealthy citizens, members of the most privileged classes at Athens. While actors were not necessarily citizens, there is no indication that they were ever slaves or freedmen, nor was the acting profession subject to stigma in the Greek (in contrast to the Roman) world. Attempting to argue that slaves may have played a part in the production of Greek drama, Roselli is forced to confine his arguments to what are at best peripheral roles: distributing nuts and dried fruit to the audience and maintaining order.⁶ The first of these claims is based on a misunderstanding of the text of *Wasps* 54–63. Roselli confuses a reference to a pair of slave *characters* played by free actors (such as often appear in prologues like that of *Wasps*) with a reference to actual slaves. Likewise the slave who throws barley corns to the spectators at *Peace* 962–65, also mentioned by Roselli in this context, is a slave character rather than an actual slave. The second claim, however, is well-taken; there do appear to have been public slaves called "rod-holders" (*rabdouchoi*) in the charge of the Eponymous Archon who were responsible for maintaining order in the theater and in particular for removing people who sat in reserved seating.⁷ Their use in the theater would be analogous to Athenian practice elsewhere (one thinks of the Scythian archers). But these *rabdouchoi* were undoubtedly

5 Scott 1990. For an argument that Roman comedy does in fact constitute such a hidden transcript, cf. Richlin (forthcoming). Of course this is quite controversial and in direct opposition to the view of McCarthy 2000, who conceives of Roman comedy in terms of its effect on an audience of masters.

6 Roselli 2011, 150–51.

7 For the evidence, cf. Roselli 2011, 152.

few in number. Moreover, their status as public slaves under the supervision of magistrates and empowered to enforce laws on citizens (by force if necessary) was unique. They must have fallen into a rather different category in the minds of free people than the slaves of private individuals. At any rate, they were present merely to maintain order and were not involved in the creation of the play itself. Nonetheless, it is interesting to remember their presence in the theater as potentially violent enforcers of order when it comes to reading the many scenes of Old Comedy where one free person uses his slaves as weapons against another by ordering them to attack (cf. Chapter Five).

I argue in Chapter Four that many of the mute female roles in our extant comedies were played by real, slave women; if this is the case, then slaves (and women!) did have some role in the production of comedy, but that role was quite limited: their characters could not speak and were often exposed for the titillation of the audience and the comments and physical manipulations of the male actors. They were treated as objects, sometimes as no more than props. Probably the only such slave women who truly participated were the dancers and acrobats, who though silent would have contributed their skill to the success of the drama.

Auletrides probably only mimed playing while their music was supplied by the official *auletes*.

What about the audience? Were there likely to be a significant number of slaves among the spectators, either those in official seating (the wooden benches constructed for the occasion and subject to the full price of admission) or in the "unofficial" areas on the slope of the acropolis above? I argue that there were not many slaves present in either official or unofficial spaces in the fifth and early fourth centuries on the basis of the likely population of Attica relative to the maximum number of spectators that could be accommodated in the physical space in question.

Though traditional scholarly estimates of the capacity of the official seating in the fifth-century Theater of Dionysus have been in the neighborhood of 15,000 (i.e. close to the capacity of the Lykurgan stone theater which succeeded it), there is now compelling archaeological evidence that this number was much smaller, perhaps between 4,000 and 7,000.⁸ Roselli makes a convincing argument that there were also places on the slope of the acropolis above the official seating from which additional spectators could watch without the benefit of seats; he estimates the capacity of these unofficial areas at several thousand.⁹ Taking the absolute upper limit of the capacity of the official seating at 7,000 and adding as many as 3,000 more for the spectators standing on the slope of the acropolis above, we arrive at an upper limit of 10,000 for the size of the entire audience, both official and unofficial. The actual capacity was likely much less.

A standard estimate for the population of Attica in 431 BC is 300,000, thirty times the most generous possible estimate of the combined official and unofficial capacity of the Theater of Dionysus in this period.¹⁰ If this number is accurate, only slightly more than 3% of the population of Attica was physically capable of attending any given performance at that time. Of these 300,000, probably something like 30,000 would have been adult citizen males; in other words, there was only room for roughly a third of the total population of this privileged class, leaving slaves, metics, foreigners, women, and children completely out of the picture.

Moreover, there is good evidence that the population of Attica at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War was significantly larger than these traditional estimates. Mogens Hansen,

8 Csapo 2007, 96–100 is an excellent brief summary of the history of scholarship on this issue and the current state of the archaeological evidence.

9 Roselli 2011, 72–75.

10 Cf. Akrigg 2007, 31; Rhodes 1992, 83.

who has devoted much of his scholarly work to questions of the demography of Attica, argues that a population of about 300,000, of whom around 30,000 were adult citizen males, is likely for the mid to late *fourth* century. This in turn would imply an adult citizen male population of about 25,000 after the depredations of the Peloponnesian War (ca. 400) and of about 60,000 before the plague in 431. As Hansen 1988, 28 notes, this last figure "is perfectly compatible with Thucydides' account of Athenian manpower in 431".¹¹ Thus it may well have been the case that in 431 there was room for only about 17% of the total population of adult citizen males in the Theater of Dionysus. While the plague would have immediately reduced the population by something like a quarter or a third before the date of our earliest extant Old Comedy,¹² the dwindling of the remaining ca. 40,000 citizens at the production of the *Acharnians* in 425 down to about 25,000 in 400 would have been more gradual. Certainly the reduction in population over the course of the war would have made the competition for a viewing space somewhat less intense. But even at the absolute low point in 400 the theater, "unofficial" space included, could only accommodate 40% of adult citizen males. With such stringent limitations on the physical space available, it is *prima facie* unlikely that many slaves were present. This is especially true since there is excellent evidence that significant numbers of relatively wealthy foreigners (who would not even appear in our population figures) and metics were in attendance, and decent evidence for the presence of women.¹³

By contrast, almost all of the evidence marshaled by Roselli for the presence of slaves in the audience is late enough to reflect an era, not applicable to the extant plays of Aristophanes, when the capacity of the Theater of Dionysus was significantly larger.¹⁴ The only potential piece of evidence relevant to our period is *Wasps* 78–79, where a slave character observes a putative interaction between an audience member named Sosias and another named Derkylos. Because Sosias is one of the recurring names for slave characters in Greek comedy,¹⁵ Roselli argues that this may have been taken to refer to a slave. But Sosias was a fairly common name in real life, appearing much more often in our sources than other typical comic slave names such as Xanthias and Carion.¹⁶ It is often the name of a metic or freedman on inscriptions of the fourth century, and by the early third century Sosias the son of Hippocrates is introducing decrees in the Assembly (IG II² 1283–84). Moreover, the scholiast on *Wasps* 78–79 indicates that there are two possible targets: Sosias the son of Pythis and Sosias the son of Parmenon. We should infer from this that two different *citizens* named Sosias were ridiculed in other comedies and that one of them is therefore the most likely target in this one as well.¹⁷

Such limited space relative to the demand for attendance at such an important yearly festival goes a long way toward explaining the fact that at the City Dionysia spectators were charged admission.¹⁸ Though this may seem normal to us as moderns, it was completely anomalous for a

11 Cf. Hansen 1988; 1991, 90–94.

12 Losses of this magnitude are implied by the figures given by Thucydides 3.87.1–3. Cf. Akrigg 2007, 31–32.

13 For foreigners and metics, cf. Roselli 2011, 119–48. For women, cf. Roselli 2011, 158–94.

14 Roselli 2011, 148–54. The evidence in question comes from Theophrastus' *Characters* and Plutarch's *Phocion*.

15 In fact one of the two slave characters on stage in this scene is (rather confusingly) named Sosias, though the audience does not know this until his master calls him by name at 136.

16 *The Lexicon of Greek Personal Names* attests the name Sosias 179 times, of which 56 are in Attica. Contrast this with Xanthias (42 times, 12 in Attica) and Carion (19 times, 10 in Attica).

17 Cf. Sommerstein 1983, 159.

18 We do not know *when* admission to the festival began to be charged, but the numbers outlined above would argue for a rather early date, well before our earliest extant comedies, as would the fact that the proceeds from

Greek religious festival.¹⁹ Nor was the money involved insignificant: two obols (presumably) per admission, which would put the total cost of attending the entire festival at a drachma and four obols, or more than 3% of the purchase price of a cheap slave.²⁰ It is therefore likely that the primary constraint on who could attend the festival (other than sheer physical proximity to town) was financial. It is not surprising, then, that we find compelling evidence that wealthy visiting foreigners (many of whom will have been quite prestigious in their own city-states) and wealthy metics permanently resident in Athens were present.²¹ While an absurdly rich person (such as Nikias, who was rumored to have paid an unheard of 1,000 drachmas for a slave to oversee his silver mines) certainly had the *ability* to pay for slaves to accompany him to the theater, it seems likely that to have done so, especially for any very large number of slaves, would have been extremely invidious given how hotly contested the opportunity to participate in the festival must have been. Ordinary citizens, on the other hand, may have owned a slave or two without being able to afford the expense of bringing their slaves with them to the festival, even if they had desired to do so.

Roselli 2011, 72–75 argues that people could occupy the unofficial spaces on the slope of the acropolis without paying anything at all, which is of course quite useful for making his case that this space was available to slaves and other marginal and low-class groups. In particular he is interested in a certain poplar tree, mentioned in a fragment of Cratinus and some late sources, from which spectators could watch the activity in the theater. But our sources indicate that watching from this area was relatively cheap, not free.²² Roselli infers that these spaces were free from the fact that the primary responsibility of the people to whom the right to charge admission was farmed out by the state was to construct the wooden *ikria*, or bleachers. Since those watching from this area were presumably not *on* the bleachers, Roselli would argue that they could not have been charged admission. But it is not at all certain that the builders of the wooden seating would have agreed with this logic, nor that in the putative absence of their inclination or ability to charge these spectators there would have been no one else inclined to do so (as, for instance, the owner(s) of the property on which this poplar tree might have been located, keeping in mind that the archaeological evidence indicates that there were houses dating to the fifth century on the slope of the acropolis directly above where the bleachers would have been).²³ If indeed this area was cheap but not free, it was still just as off-limits to a person with no money as the proper wooden seating. It may have been populated on average by a somewhat poorer class

this admission went to pay the expenses of those who set up the wooden bleachers (how would these constructions have been financed before?). The tickets of citizens were subsidized beginning in the 350s, which would have increased the number of citizens in the audience relative to wealthy non-citizens by allowing access to the festival to even the poorest citizens as well as to those too cheap to pay the two obols. On these issues cf. Rhodes 2003, 110–111.

19 As has been pointed out by Csapo 2007, 97; Sommerstein 1997, 66–67; Wilson 1997, 97–98.

20 Cf. Csapo 2007, 97. For 50 drachmas as the lower end in slave prices, cf. Xen. *Mem.* 2.5. Of course something in the neighborhood of 200 drachmas was more typical, but an owner who paid for such a slave to attend the festival would still be paying nearly 1% of that slave's value each year to accomplish this, not to mention the loss of income from five days worth of labor.

21 For the evidence, cf. Roselli 2011, 118–45.

22 Thus Hesych. θ 166: θέα παρ' αἰγείρω· τόπος αἰγειρον ἔχων, ὅθεν ἐθεώρουν. εὐτελής δὲ ἐδόκει ἢ ἐντεῦθεν θεωρία· μακρόθεν γὰρ ἦν καὶ εὐώνου ὁ τόπος ἐπωλεῖτο. Eustathius ε 64 also uses the term cheaper (εὐωνοτέρα) rather than free. The other sources do not mention anything about cost one way or another.

23 For the houses, cf. Roselli 2011, 65 and the sketch on 66 (the houses would have been where the wells are). See further Dörpfeld and Reisch 1896, 30–31; Goette 2007, 118.

of people, but given the demographics outlined above these were likely to have been poorer citizens and metics, not slaves.

The *de facto* segregation in the Athenian theater of wealthier and poorer classes of free people suggested by the existence of "cheap seats" is itself interesting for my purpose in looking at the some of the larger ideological issues explored in the language of slavery on the Athenian stage. Griffith 2005, 173 is useful in this context:

The Athenian imagination was thus intensely preoccupied with developing forms of cultural expression that would, if possible, simultaneously legitimize Athenian supremacy in the eyes of the rest of Greece, build a sense of solidarity among all the residents of Attica concerning their own stake and membership in this Athenian democratic project, and yet also maintain and justify existing distinctions of privilege and value within that Attic population.

Much of my analysis in the first chapter will highlight how the broad phenomenon outlined above by Griffith manifests itself specifically in Attic comedy's use of slaves and the notion of slavery. Some scenes unify wealthy and poor or more and less respectable (in terms of profession, for instance) citizens, metics, and visiting foreigners in part by explicitly excluding slaves. On the other hand, we will find that humor involving slaves in our extant comedies often obscures the juridical distinction between free and slave in favor of a more rigid distinction between wealthy, independent people—who are regarded as being truly "free"—and people who are indeed technically/legally free in terms of their juridical status but who by virtue of their dependence on others, behavior, ancestry, or banausic occupations are regarded as somehow less than what a true "free" person should be. I refer to this latter category of people as those who are regarded as "slavish" in the eyes of the ideal audience, since our texts portray them with some of the stereotypical characteristics of slaves or lump them together with slaves in contrast to truly "free" people. It would have been all the easier for comic speeches and songs to emphasize these kinds of *de facto* social divisions if the audience were in fact separated into a larger group of at most 7,000 wealthier people sitting nearer the stage and a smaller group of at most 3,000 poorer people seated or standing on the margins of or even beyond the official space of the theater.

I conclude from the considerations above that Old Comedy was written and performed neither *for* slaves nor *by* them, though some poorer or less respectable members of the audience may have been perceived as "slavish" by others. My analysis of the comic effect of transgressive slave characters must therefore explain how an audience composed primarily of masters, or at the very least primarily of free people, reacted to this type of humor and what they got from it.

Slave Characters and the Emergence of Naturalism

Many people in the audience would have considered certain kinds of transgressive behavior (e.g. obsession with shameful sex acts, gluttony, and insolence) to be characteristic of slaves in real life. As comedy became increasingly naturalistic in the fourth century, such behavior was no longer felt to be appropriate to the comic depiction of Athenian citizen males, and it therefore became concentrated in slaves and other low-class and marginal characters. Thus while the typical behaviors of master and slave with regard to what we might call "base humor" can scarcely be differentiated in an early play like *Peace* (421 BC), they are quite distinct a few

decades later in *Wealth* (388 BC).

The prevalent use in our ancient Greek sources of various words literally meaning "characteristic of a slave" (e.g. ἀνδραποδώδης, ἀνελεύθερος, δουλικός) to indicate the lack of virtue and the presence of various vices without referring literally to actual juridical status confirms that the association of slave status with inferior character was ubiquitous and taken for granted long before it was codified so explicitly in Aristotle's theory of natural slavery.²⁴ There are also texts from the fifth century and much earlier (as for instance Herodotus 4.1–4, which I discuss in the first chapter) that assume a fundamental difference in nature between masters and their slaves. What is new in comedy of the mid to late fourth century, then, is not in my view a sudden ideological shift toward the idea that masters differ from their slaves in real life (this was already prevalent) but rather the idea that this difference should be realistically portrayed in comedy. In this connection it will be fruitful to consider Aristotle's discussion in the *Nicomachean Ethics* of the virtuous man's proper (moderate) disposition toward jesting (παιδιά) and the humorous (τὸ γελοῖον):

τοῦ δ' ἐπιδεξίου ἐστὶ τοιαῦτα λέγειν καὶ ἀκούειν οἷα τῷ ἐπιεικεῖ καὶ ἐλευθερίῳ ἀρμόττει· ἔστι γάρ τινα πρέποντα τῷ τοιοῦτῳ λέγειν ἐν παιδιᾷς μέρει καὶ ἀκούειν, καὶ ἡ τοῦ ἐλευθερίου παιδιὰ διαφέρει τῆς τοῦ ἀνδραποδώδους, καὶ πεπαιδευμένου καὶ ἀπαιδευτοῦ. ἴδοι δ' ἂν τις καὶ ἐκ τῶν κωμωδιῶν τῶν παλαιῶν καὶ τῶν καινῶν· τοῖς μὲν γὰρ ἦν γελοῖον ἢ αἰσχρολογία, τοῖς δὲ μᾶλλον ἢ ὑπόνοια· διαφέρει δ' οὐ μικρὸν ταῦτα πρὸς εὐσημοσύνην.

It is characteristic of the tactful man to say and endure hearing things of the sort appropriate to a decent and free-natured man. For some things are appropriate for such a man to say and endure hearing as a joke, and the jesting of a free-natured man differs from that of a slavish one, and that of the educated from the uneducated. But one can see this also from the ancient and modern comedies; for obscenity was funny to some, but to others rather insinuation. These things differ greatly in respectability.

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 4.1128a16–25

This entire passage is notable for its association of humor in general with the genre of comedy in particular, not only in the quoted section but elsewhere as well.²⁵ Here insinuation or innuendo (ὑπόνοια) is appropriate to a free man, while obscenity (αἰσχρολογία) is best left to slaves and those who are morally similar to slaves, the "slave-like" or "slavish" (ἀνδραποδώδης); the former is typical of the comedies of Aristotle's day, while the latter belongs to the ancient style (Old Comedy). Thus Old Comedy is implicitly a slavish genre. All its characters, whether free or slave, are liable to burst into obscenity at any time. The "modern" comedies of Aristotle's day (though he uses the word "new" or καινός, these would correspond more to what scholars today term "Middle" comedy than "New") make use of innuendo instead and are therefore more typical of the kind of humor appreciated by free (and free-natured) people. Of course some

24 Cf. Arist. *Pol.* 1.1254a–56a.

25 Tellingly, Aristotle's preceding discussion (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1128a4–9) of the two extreme attitudes toward humor makes use of distinctly comic terminology: those who go too far with their humor, ignoring propriety and the feelings of the person they are mocking, are termed βωμολόχοι (clowns) and φορτικοί (vulgar), while those who never say anything funny and become annoyed with those who do are called ἄγροικοι (boors) and σκληροί (stern).

obscenity was still present in these comedies, but by this point it tended to be concentrated in the mouths of slave and other low-class characters. Presumably Aristotle found this division of the labor of humor (namely obscenity for low-class characters and innuendo for respectable characters) more appropriate than Old Comedy's lack of distinction.

The growing popularity of such an attitude would have led to increasing specialization of roles. As to what caused this shift in attitude from the late fifth to the mid fourth century, we can only speculate. Did the international market for Attic comedy which was beginning to develop in the late fifth century privilege plays in which slaves and masters took on distinct roles because of the different expectations and ideas of audiences in city-states spread throughout the Greek world? Was the internal situation at Athens such that masters were feeling an increasing need to differentiate themselves from slaves and slavish people? Did the influence of tragedy (especially Euripides) demand a greater degree of realism in the language and deportment of free characters? It is likely that all of these traditional explanations played some role, though I would add to them too the trend (discussed above) toward using the slave status of characters to add yet another layer of transgression to scenes that were intentionally transgressive in multiple ways.

The increasingly transgressive behavior of slave characters in the early fourth century comedies of Aristophanes is also a function of the comic trend toward the use of stock characters in general, which I would connect first and foremost to the export of Attic comedy beyond the borders of Attica in the fourth century, as indicated by the proliferation throughout the Greek-speaking world of terracotta figurines representing stock comic characters (generally reproducing types whose earliest provenance is in Attica) and by the south Italian so-called "phlyax" vases, which are now recognized to represent scenes from Attic comedy.²⁶

The gradual differentiation in the behavior of comedy's slave and master characters dovetails nicely with the development of the comic mask and costume: it is well-known that fifth-century comedy does not distinguish free characters from slaves physically, but rather presents both with the grotesque features (padded fat suit, visible phallos, distorted facial features in the mask) that would be appropriate to slaves but not to free characters in any other genre or artistic medium. The costume of the young citizen male loses these grotesque characteristics by the 350's BC, followed by that of the wealthy old man. But the grotesqueness of the original type of comic costume does survive, albeit somewhat tempered, for slaves (and to a lesser degree for cooks, parasites, and other low-class characters). The change in costume thus seems to lag behind the broad development in the typical behavior of these character types by a few decades. A generation of theater-goers had to become accustomed to masters who did not behave in the grotesque fashion of their slaves before this difference could be codified into a change in physical appearance.²⁷

Mitigating the Offensiveness of Slave Transgression

A great degree of license was afforded to the playwrights of Old Comedy; their audience expected to see the shameful, unmanly, inappropriate actions of people worse than themselves,

26 In connecting the development of stock characters (among other things) to the export of Attic comedy I follow the arguments of Slater 1995. For more on these terracotta figurines, cf. Csapo and Slater 1994, 55, 70–71; Green 1994, 34–38, 64–65, 69–76. For the *phlyax* vases, cf. Taplin 1993.

27 For more on these developments in the costume (broadly conceived) of comic actors, cf. Wiles 1988 and 2008, 377; Csapo 2002, 143–45; Green 2002, 104–105.

and this fact goes a long way toward explaining how slave characters could be staged who make sexual advances toward free women, or who otherwise attempt to displace their masters sexually. The audience was accustomed to identify with low, transgressive figures even when they were not slaves (since the behavior even of masters in fifth century comedy is often "slavish"). When they did see slaves behaving badly their impulse was therefore similarly to identify with them to experience that thrill of vicarious transgression. But the audience knows full well all the while that the threatening slave figure is a phantom, a free actor only pretending to be a slave, and that the free women in question are likewise not women at all, but other male actors. They are therefore able to laugh at that which frightens them without being truly threatened.

In this regard it is also helpful to remember that the basic accoutrement of slave characters in Old Comedy did not differ significantly from that of their masters: both had the same grotesque masks and padded fat suits equipped with *phalloi*, and they could be distinguished only by the clothing worn on top of that or by props (so, for instance, in some scenes the slave(s) will be carrying baggage). The audience therefore had a constant, visual reminder that slave characters who usurped their masters sexually or were in any other way impertinent were not rebelling against *real* masters, but rather against masters who like themselves bore in their features the physiognomic signs of slavishness and who often behaved in a manner that would have been quite unseemly for real Athenian citizen males.

Nonetheless, we often find additional safeguards against offending the sensibilities of the audience. So, for instance, a slave character will sometimes speak in such a way that the utterance is at least as likely to be understood as belonging to the (free, and possibly citizen) actor as to the character himself.²⁸ The principle of discontinuity in comic characterization (usefully explored by Silk) is useful in this regard.²⁹ Thus the slave's apparent assertion at *Peace* 873–74 that he and his master have shared a sexual partner plays on Theoria's double status as a nubile young woman and a symbol of the celebration of festivals; the *we* in "Theoria...whom we used to bang to Brauron, when we were a little drunk" can be taken to refer not to master and slave but to the actor playing the slave and the entire audience, indeed the entire body of Athenian citizens, for whom the travel to and celebration of festivals is symbolized by the penetration of a woman named Festival.

Particularly transgressive sexual acts involving slave characters may also be relegated to the status of a fiction within the already fictional world of the comedy, as happens with Cario's sexual adventure in the sacred precinct of Asclepius (all of which is merely described by him, not staged) or with the remark about being "pounded" by slaves and mule-grooms at *Thesmophoriazusae* 491–92 (which comes not from a "real" female character but rather from the Kinsman of Euripides, who is impersonating a woman and describing the sorts of behavior he imagines they get up to). In both of these cases the transgression of the sexual boundary between free women and slaves is closely associated with sexual activity in a sacred space, both of which types of transgression seem to have been rather more serious than straightforward sexual/scatological joking and therefore more likely to make use of an additional distancing effect. Another example would be the curtailment of Xanthias' incipient enjoyment of Persephone's banquet, with all the sexual delights it entails; though Dionysus does not allow himself to be usurped by his slave in this way, he does sing a song imagining in detail exactly

28 The most prominent examples of this phenomenon are in *Peace*; cf. Walin 2009.

29 Cf. Silk 2000, 207–55.

what such an inversion of roles might have been like (*Frogs* 503–48).

As becomes clear from my analysis of the sexual interaction of slaves and free women in Greek historiography in Chapter One, anxiety about the possibility of slaves impregnating their wives and daughters, particularly in the event of a long absence due to military service, was prominent in the minds of the ancient Greeks. For this reason any form of sexual activity other than vaginal intercourse might actually be viewed as *less* of an affront to the established order, while simultaneously being more titillating for the audience the more exotic (and inappropriate for a citizen male) the action being performed by the slave. Thus, for instance, many of the relevant passages of Old Comedy feature cunnilingus.

It appears that cunnilingus was, with the possible exception of coprophilia, the most socially stigmatized of all possible sex acts for an ancient Greek citizen male.³⁰ Thus it is not mentioned outside of "low" discourse like that of comedy, nor is it often depicted in Attic vase painting (in stark contrast to fellatio performed by women, a relatively common theme).³¹ When it is mentioned in comedy, the purpose is to ridicule an individual accused of this practice (notably Ariphrades) or merely to exploit the simultaneous revulsion and fascination of the practice to produce humor.³² When Old Comedy depicts a slave character as an eager cunnilinctor (thus especially Cario throughout *Wealth*), it is explicitly undermining any measure of manliness that character might have been able to claim in spite of his slave status. A slave cunnilinctor, by virtue of merely being a cunnilinctor in addition to being a slave, is debased, ignoble, and non-threatening, since he is performing a sex act culturally marked among free and especially citizen men as something to be despised. At the same time an audience of masters is able to identify with this slave, imagining themselves performing this illicit act and thereby experiencing the thrill of sexual transgression without ever having to admit to themselves or to anyone else this particular aspect of their enjoyment. On the surface, everyone merely laughs at a slave debasing himself, as happens in many other passages of comedy. I would therefore read Cario's sexual liberation as an Athenian citizen male fantasy, like the fantasies of making a private peace, conquering the gods, and living among the birds explored in other plays (*Acharnians*, *Peace/Birds/Wealth*, and *Birds* respectively); unlike with these fantasies, however, the men in the audience are unlikely to have been entirely honest about how Cario's escapades were working for them.

Chapter Summary

The first chapter sets the stage for the discussion of "sexually presumptive" slave characters by treating the idea of sexual relations between slaves and free women in Greek literature generally and Old Comedy in particular. I first examine the various (non-comic) treatments of this theme in Greek historiography, then its exploitation for comic effect in the fifth mimiamb of Herodas and in Machon's *Chreiai*. Finally, I argue that humorous references to sexual relations

30 In this matter I follow the arguments of Parker 1983, 98–100 (especially n. 101) over those of Henderson 1991, 51–52 and Sulprizio 2007, 91.

31 In fact to my knowledge cunnilingus is *never* depicted in Greek art; cf. Henderson 1991, 51–52.

32 Cf. Stallybrass and White 1986, 4–5: "Again and again we find a striking ambivalence to the representations of the lower strata (of the body, of literature, of society, of place) in which they are both reviled and desired. Repugnance and fascination are the twin poles of the process in which a *political* imperative to reject and eliminate the debasing 'low' conflicts powerfully and unpredictably with a desire for the Other."

between slaves and free women in the extant comedies blur the line between free and slave in order to maintain a more rigid distinction between relatively wealthy Athenian citizen males and a lower class comprising slaves, metics, foreigners, and the poorest Athenian citizens.

Chapter two examines what I term the "sexually presumptive" slave characters of Old Comedy. I argue that the audience is sometimes made to identify with a male speaking slave character who threatens to usurp the sexual role of his master and/or exposes free female characters to sexual comment, jokes, manhandling, and innuendo. I demonstrate that this phenomenon is more prominent in the genre than is generally recognized, in part through new interpretations of several passages. The latest extant play, *Wealth* (388 BC), affords the most interesting examples; I argue that the slave character Cario, who shares the role of comic hero with his master in alternating scenes, repeatedly reverts to sexual humor that is multiply determined as transgressive (i.e., the location, specific sex acts, participants, manner of narration, and associations involved are all conspicuously contrary to ordinary ancient Greek social norms).

The third chapter addresses scenes with slave characters who make sexual jokes that do not threaten to usurp the dominant position of their masters, but may be jokes at their own or another character's expense. I examine in depth the final scene of the *Ecclesiazusae*, where (as I argue) a female speaking slave character engages in playful sexual innuendo with both her master and the Athenian audience. Finally, a close reading of the sexually aggressive, parodic, transformative game of song-exchange played at *Wealth* 290–321 by the slave Cario on the one hand and the chorus on the other further illuminates the interaction between slave and free characters in the context of sexual humor on the comic stage and the probable reactions of the audience to such material.

In chapter four, I balance out my arguments for slave characters as the active instigators and beneficiaries of sexual humor by noting that slaves in Aristophanic comedy are often treated as sexual objects for the sake of a joke. Such slaves are either brought onto the stage as silent characters or imagined verbally as the passive recipients of aggressive sexual action (often in song). This phenomenon, as I argue, is closely connected with the tendency of Old Comedy to use sex as a symbol for comic victory and rejuvenation. Further, I argue that the silent female slave characters of Greek Old Comedy were played by real female slaves, whose bodies were sometimes exposed to the audience in order to unite them in shared erotic desire. Because these mute female slave characters tend to appear in the celebratory final scenes of the plays and often take on the role of alluring symposiastic entertainers (such as *aulos* players and dancers), I argue that their exposure creates the impression that the members of the audience are participating together in a public symposium.

Finally, my fifth chapter treats the association of slave characters with non-sexual violence in the extant comedies. As with sexual humor, I argue that in physically abusive humor slaves play roles on both sides of the equation: they are beaten or threatened onstage for the amusement of the audience, but they also function as tools of violence against others. First I examine scenes in which slaves function as passive objects of staged or threatened physical abuse—as presented in South Italian vase paintings and in the texts of our extant comedies themselves—and consider what effect such humor might have had on ancient audiences. Finally I consider the corresponding evidence for the use of slaves (both private and public) as instruments of physical violence in comedy, and their occasional instigation of violent acts on their own initiative.

Chapter One: Male Slaves and Free Women in Greek Literature

In this chapter I consider the various treatments of the idea of sexual intercourse between free women and slaves in Greek literature broadly and in humorous literature in particular, setting the stage for the discussion of "sexually presumptive" slave characters that will constitute the second chapter. In the first part I briefly examine some treatments of intercourse between slaves and free woman in Greek historiography, mime, and Machon's *χρεῖται* (the only places besides comedy where it explicitly appears).³³ In the second part I consider the references to sexual relations between slaves and free women in the extant comedies and in particular how these references seem to blur the line between free and slave in order to maintain a more rigid distinction between free and slavish. The third part comprises a brief survey of those fragments of Old Comedy which probably or possibly attest sexual relations or innuendo between free women and their slaves.

Part 1.1: Slaves and Free Women in Greek Literature Outside Old Comedy

References to sex between free women and male slaves are somewhat more common in Latin than in classical Greek sources, but there is still enough evidence (even outside comedy) to show that the possibility of such an act could be acknowledged in classical Athens.³⁴ Certainly in Greek historiography the theme of women interbreeding with male slaves when their husbands are away at war, which then precipitates a conflict between the husbands and either the slaves themselves or their offspring, repeats itself in several different contexts: the first such story explicitly attested takes place in Scythia (Herodotus 4.1–4), but by the fourth century Aristotle is aware of a tradition that Epizephyrian Locri was founded by the offspring of such a union from the wives of the Opuntian Locrians and their slaves (Polybius 12.6a–b),³⁵ and there was a similar strain (dating at least as far back as the late fifth century) in the tradition involving the foundation of Taras by the Partheniai.³⁶

The earliest such passage, Herodotus 4.1–4, brings up the problem of the miscegenation of slave men and free women in such a way as to position it firmly in the sphere of the other, as not a Greek problem at all, while at the same time allowing the Greek audience to benefit from its lesson, which reinforces the idea of natural slaves and affirms that confident masters remain

33 We cannot be certain that the passage I discuss from the *χρεῖται* involves a *free* woman, because a prominent *hetaira* might be free or a slave; but it is certainly a case of the broader phenomenon of stories of servile sexual presumption.

34 Such references in Latin literature include: Quintilian 5.11.35–36; Petronius *Satyricon* 45, 75, 126; Martial 6.39; Apuleius *Metamorphoses* 8.22. Cf. Parker 2007 and Fitzgerald 2000, 51–52. For freedmen and free women cf. *Ov. Am.* 1.8.63–64.

35 This extended passage is part of a larger polemic against Timaeus, against whom Polybius defends Aristotle. Though we have neither the Timaeus nor the Aristotle in question, it is clear from Polybius' discussion (which assumes familiarity with both texts) that Timaeus had attacked Aristotle as a slanderer for arguing that the Italian Locrians were descended from slaves.

36 The accounts generally agree that Taras was founded by people called the Partheniai from Sparta, but exactly who these people were was hotly disputed in antiquity, as it is now. What is common to all the accounts is *some* sort of association with the helots.

masters even when their slaves are physically and numerically stronger than they.³⁷ There the Scythian men return home after having been absent for twenty-eight years, during which time they had pursued the Cimmerians into Asia Minor and wreaked havoc on the empire of the Medes in the process. They find that their wives have intermarried with their slaves, and the offspring of these unions have formed an army opposing their return. When they try to fight them as they would a military foe they have no success, until one among them remembers that they are slaves and should be treated accordingly: he suggests that they come at them not with spears and bows but rather with the whip. When the children of their slaves and their women see them holding whips instead of weapons, they will remember that they are slaves and be unable to fight. The plan, we are told, works; the children of slaves are terrified by this turn of events, forget how to fight, and flee (οἱ δ' ἐκπλαγέντες τῷ γινομένῳ τῆς μάχης τε ἐπελάθοντο καὶ ἔφευγον, 4). The story seems to the modern reader like a *reductio ad absurdum* of the argument for natural slaves; the opposing force holds the upper hand in military action against the men who had been masters until the latter go into battle armed in such a ridiculous way that they could all be easily slaughtered, but for the fact that this absurd self-confidence reminds the younger men of their ancestry and causes them to act, for the first time in their lives, like the slaves they "really" are. The idea seems to be that even when they have the numbers and material resources to supplant their masters, slaves do not have the psychological resources to stand up to confident masters. Such a thought would offer great comfort to masters like those of fifth century Athens who were outnumbered by their slaves, and there would have been a certain amount of empirical evidence to back it up. If they had acted in unison, slaves in fifth century Athens could have overpowered their masters, yet they did not. While a modern scholar might argue that the real reason for their lack of action lay chiefly in the problems inherent in acting in unison, the passage in Herodotus prefers to see it as the result of a fundamental difference in character between slave and master. And why not? That choice had the advantage of locating a systemic abuse of human rights securely within the natural order.

This passage can be read as a means of affirming the legitimacy and security of the position of masters while at the same time locating the problems of servile sexual usurpation and insurrection among the Scythians, who were foreign enough that the Greek audience could choose not to identify with them when they were being overcome by their own slaves, yet similar enough that the audience could still participate vicariously in the victory over those same slaves.³⁸ The possible problem of kinship, because the opposing army is not merely descended from the men's slaves but also from their wives, daughters, and sisters, is completely ignored; to highlight this problem would also be to highlight the possibility that free women could be giving birth to slave offspring in peacetime as well.

It is interesting that an account of how the Scythians milk their mares (1.2) is embedded within the account of this slave rebellion. One person inserts a bone tube into the mare's vagina³⁹

37 Corcella 2007, 574 observes in his commentary on this passage: "The theme of the union of slaves and women during the absence of men, and of the struggle against illegitimate children, is well attested in Greece (Antiochus, *FGrHist* 555 F 13; Polybius XII 5–10; cf. D. Briquel, *MEFRA* LXXXVI (1974), 673–705)."

38 Braund 2008, 8 emphasizes the juxtaposition of similarities and differences between the Greeks and the Scythians in his discussion of this passage, arguing that the return of the Scythians from war after 28 years is Odyssean (in which case their wives are failed Penelopes) and that the (non-Ionian) Greeks and Scythians shared a contempt for Ionians (on which cf. Braund 2008, 3–7).

39 There is some confusion about whether τὰ ἄρθρα should refer to the vagina or the anus. De Sélincourt's

and blows, which is meant to distend the udder. Another then milks the mare. The narration here of this practice, incredibly strange by Greek standards, would help the Greek audience to separate themselves from the Scythians who are usurped by their own slaves. More than that, however, the oddly sexual method of milking, combined with the fact that female horses are being used (possibly, see below) by slaves in a way contrary to Greek custom (i.e., they are being milked at all), suggests a kind of parallel with what has happened on the human level of Scythian society. As Griffith has shown in his two-part article on equids in Greek thought, the horse and donkey are often deployed by the Greeks as representatives of the upper and lower classes respectively, whereas the mule, the product of a male donkey (jack) and a female horse (mare), is the potentially problematic emblem of the in-between.⁴⁰ As the representative of the lowest class, the donkey naturally occupies the same symbolic territory as the slave. Therefore the penetration (albeit with an object) of a real mare by a slave to produce an unnatural result, mare's milk, could function as a sort of metaphor for what has happened in Scythian society: the penetration of free women by male slaves to produce an unnatural result, a mixed offspring.⁴¹

My reading of Herodotus 4.2 depends on the interpretation that it is a slave who penetrates the mare's vagina with a tube and blows, but this detail is not explicit in the text. The blower and the milker may be Scythian; this at least is how Braund takes it, arguing that "in any case, this was no operation for blind men".⁴² As far as that goes, while it might not be in the mare's best interest for a blind slave to do the actual inserting (although even in this matter, given that this appears to be the only reason the Scythians keep slaves, we might expect practice to make perfect), the blowing could have been done by a slave easily enough, and one might expect that it was not the sort of task a master would be overly eager to take on himself. The choice between Scythian and slave therefore comes down to the most natural interpretation of the Greek, which is unusually vexed in this passage: after writing that "the Scythians blind all their slaves for the sake of the milk they drink, which they make in the following way" (τοὺς δὲ δούλους οἱ Σκύθαι πάντας τυφλοῦσι τοῦ γάλακτος εἵνεκεν τοῦ πίνουσι, ποιεῦντες ὧδε), Herodotus describes the insertion of the tubes and the blowing without an expressed subject, and later we learn only that "some milk while others blow" (ἄλλοι δὲ ἄλλων φυσῶντων ἀμέλγουσι). Because the first sentence ends with a nominative participle that clearly refers to the Scythians, the grammar seems to indicate that the masters insert, blow, and milk. But later in the passage, when the

translation and Marincola's 1996 revision thereof have "anus", but other translators (Powell, Legrand, Grene, Fraschetti) opt for "genitals" vel sim. The same word is used of a mare also at Hdt. 3.87, where Oebares, the clever slave of Darius, makes his master's horse neigh (and so wins him the Persian throne) by letting it smell his hand, with which he had earlier groped a mare's τῶν ἄρθρων.

40 Griffith 2006, especially Part Two.

41 In an article exploring several curious juxtapositions in Herodotus, Griffiths 2001, 168–73 also argues for a relationship between the excursus on milking mares at 4.2 and the surrounding passage, but in his view the crucial point is the blinding. He argues, noting that blindness is a common punishment for sexual deviancy in Greek myth, that the affair between the slaves and their masters' wives should preserve an *aition* for the Scythian practice of blinding slaves. But he also recognizes that in the Herodotean account the slaves are already blind (their children are described as the "sons of blind slaves") and is therefore compelled to argue that "Herodotus is operating at several removes from the point at which cause and effect were coherently linked together...he is an unwitting carrier of the story's original meaning-in-context here" (172). I am not convinced. Without the benefit of Griffith 2006, Griffiths does not address the connection in Greek thought between mares and upper class women; consequently his argument does not involve the method of milking (though Braund 2008, 9 n. 27 seems to think it does) but only the blindness of the slaves.

42 Braund 2008, 9.

slaves are explicitly reintroduced, a similar reading of Herodotus' syntax would indicate that the slaves never do anything at all: "when they obtain the milk, they pour it into hollow wooden vessels, position the blind (slaves) around the vessels, and shake the milk" (ἐπεὰν δὲ ἀμέλξωσι τὸ γάλα, ἐσχέαντες ἐς ξύλινα ἀγγεῖα κοῖλα καὶ περιστίζαντες κατὰ τὰ ἀγγεῖα τοὺς τυφλοὺς δονέουσι τὸ γάλα).⁴³ The verb "they shake" (δονέουσι) must refer to the slaves (unless the slaves are meant to stand idly by while their masters do everything), but grammatically it agrees with their masters. I think it is clear that Herodotus has written "they shake the milk" but means "they have their slaves shake the milk".⁴⁴ Could he have done something similar in describing the insertion, milking, and blowing? Considering the unpleasantness of some of these tasks, this seems likely enough.

When a situation similar to the one outlined above for Scythia obtains in a Greek *polis*, Herodotus does not explicitly refer to the interbreeding of slaves and free women, despite the fact that in the situation he describes it can hardly not have occurred. Herodotus (6.83) informs us that Argos became so depopulated of men from the war with the Spartan king Cleomenes that it was ruled by its slaves for an entire generation, until the sons of the citizen men who had been killed in battle grew up and drove out the slave usurpers.⁴⁵ If our author and his readers did sincerely believe that Argos was literally ruled by slaves for a generation,⁴⁶ the idea that the slaves will have usurped the sexual role of their masters as well must have occurred to them.⁴⁷ Indeed, the historian Socrates of Argos interprets this passage of Herodotus as implying just this: "they did not marry their women to slaves, as Herodotus claims, but to the best of their *perioikoi*, whom they made citizens" (οὐχ ὡς Ἡρόδοτος ἱστορεῖ τοῖς δούλοις, ἀλλὰ τῶν περιοίκων ποιησάμενοι πολίτας τοὺς ἀρίστους, συνώκισαν τὰς γυναῖκας, *FGrHist* 310 F 6). But Herodotus does *not* say anything of the kind; he merely describes a situation where it will have been inevitable. His silence here, in contrast with 4.1–4, supports my argument that Herodotus chooses to locate his exploration of the interbreeding of slaves and free women in Scythia in order to distance it from the Greek world of his audience.

In contrast with Herodotus' account of slave revolt in Scythia, which is usually taken more or less on its own, the twin traditions that the Italian colonies of Locri and Taras were founded by the offspring of the union of free women and slaves, who were afforded the opportunity to

43 For περιστίζαντες in this sense, cf. Medaglia's critical apparatus in Corcella 1999.

44 Corcella 2007, 575 takes it so: "The slaves are 'set around' the vessels and 'turn' the milk, while all the other tasks must be performed by the Scythians themselves." But why should common sense trump grammar to allow the slaves to turn the milk, but not to do any other of the activities mentioned in this passage?

45 van Wees 2003, 41–45 identifies these "slaves" (outside of Herodotus, in writers referring to this same situation after the war with Cleomenes, generally called *perioikoi*) as the *gumnētes/gumnēsioi* of Argos who are found in ancient lists of historical statuses "between free men and slaves".

46 A phrase such as "ruled by slaves" itself implies a concept of natural slavery (an idea which, while not yet articulated as it is in the *Politics*, inheres very much in Herodotus' worldview): otherwise, in what sense is it possible for people to rule and still be called "slaves"?

47 Of course a Greek historian did not have to resort to such a facile interpretation of events as that offered by Herodotus here. Aristotle simply claims that because of their diminished numbers the Argives "were compelled to give citizenship to some of their *perioikoi*": καὶ ἐν Ἀργεῖ τῶν ἐν τῇ ἐβδόμῃ ἀπολομένων ὑπὸ Κλεομένους τοῦ Λάκωνος ἠναγκάσθησαν παραδέξασθαι τῶν περιοίκων τινάς (*Politics* 1303a). This seems much more likely, and any later conflicts would be instances of *civil* strife divided along class lines rather than the simple "slaves vs. (sons of) masters" scenario, which is a product of an ideological inclination to assimilate the "slavish" (lower classes, people of questionable pedigree, foreigners, etc.) to actual slaves (on which phenomenon see Part II below).

copulate while their masters were away fighting a war with the Messenians,⁴⁸ are typically considered in relation to one another. Some versions of the foundation of Taras are so similar to the story about Locri that one is tempted to wonder if the two cities have simply been confused with one another, but if so this had already happened by the fourth century.⁴⁹ Bérard argues that the similarity is the result not of confusion but rather of good relations between the two cities, which caused the Locrians to adopt a foundation legend similar to that of the Tarentines in solidarity.⁵⁰ But Pembroke and Briquel point out important differences in the two traditions that make this hypothesis of simple imitation unlikely.⁵¹ Nor does one imagine that any *polis* would willingly attribute its own origin to the union of slaves and free women: instead we should look for these tales to originate from political propaganda hostile to the cities in question.⁵² Of course in each case the descent from slaves and free women is also made to serve an aetiological function: it explains the designation of the colonists of Taras as Partheniai (rendered for this purpose as "children of unmarried women") and the tradition of tracing nobility matrilineally at Epizephyrian Locri.⁵³ These aetiological connections in turn make the accusations of servile ancestry much more resilient in later traditions than they would have been otherwise.

The recurrence of this theme in three different historical contexts (four, if we count the

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- 48 Polybius 12.6 makes clear that the mass cuckolding of the Locrians is meant to have occurred at the same time as that of the Spartans and for the same reason: the masters were away fighting the Messenians (the Locrians as Spartan allies). (I make no attempt to distinguish a "First" and "Second" Messenian War here; Luraghi 2003 convincingly argues that this division, quite often advocated by modern scholars, is not found in our fifth century sources but rather depends to a generally unrecognized extent on Pausanias, who should not be taken as a mere transmitter of data from earlier sources but as an author in his own right.)
- 49 Servile origins are already attested for the Tarentines in the fifth century: for Antiochus of Syracuse (*FGrHist* 555 F 13) the Partheniai were the *atimoi* children of originally free men who had been "judged to be slaves and called helots" (ἐκρίθησαν δοῦλοι καὶ ὠνομάσθησαν εἰλωτες) because they did not fight in the war with the Messenians. It is unclear whether this is actually meant to be an aetiology for the Spartan helot system. The first reference to the foundation of Epizephyrian Locri by slaves is in Aristotle (so attributed at Polybius 12.4–12).
- 50 Bérard 1957, 205.
- 51 Pembroke 1970; Briquel 1974. For one thing, the idea that the original colonists were the descendants of slaves dominates the tradition around the foundation of Locri (with Aristotle, Polybius, and Dionysius Periegetes against only Timaeus denying the claim), while the tradition around Taras is much more varied, the only constant being that the Partheniai are associated in some way with the helots. So while our earliest source, Antiochus, claims that they are the children of helots (made so from free men because they did not fight in the war against the Messenians), in the fourth century historian Ephorus they are merely *helped* by helots (though Briquel 1974, 677–78 detects signs of an earlier tradition where the Partheniai themselves were slaves in Ephorus' account). In Diodorus they are helped by the mysterious *epeunaktoi* (on which cf. Pembroke 1970, 1248–49).
- 52 In light of the ubiquity of accusations of *individual* servile ancestry for political or forensic purposes in the fifth and fourth centuries (especially in Old Comedy and the orators; cf. also the slur against the Spartan king Demaratus at Hdt. 6.63–69, discussed below), I would consider anti-Tarentine and anti-Locrian propaganda as by far the most likely source of these traditions, *pace* Briquel 1974, 704–5. We could suppose with Luraghi 2003, 116–17 that Antiochus of Syracuse inherited a tradition hostile to Taras from Syracusan sources of the early fifth century, around the time of the alliance between Taras and Rhegion (one of Syracuse's traditional enemies) in 473. On this view Aristotle would have either drawn on a tradition similarly hostile to the Locrians or invented one himself for political reasons. In either case the tradition may have been explicitly connected to the Tarentine one when it was formulated; this connection at Polybius 12.6 may well be taken from Aristotle.
- 53 For a useful overview of the term Partheniai, cf. Pembroke 1970, 1265–66. On the Locrian practice of reckoning nobility matrilineally, cf. Polybius 12.5. On matrilineality in general, cf. Pembroke 1967.

pregnant silence at Herodotus 6.83 and the explicit testimony of Socrates of Argos) demonstrates the willingness of the ancient Greeks to entertain the idea of free women sleeping with slaves when doing so would ultimately vindicate the status quo of slave-owning society, better explain their world (the aetiological factor), or cast aspersions on the legitimacy of a rival *polis*. But politically motivated accusations of servile ancestry, with their implications of the mingling of slave/foreign and free bloodlines, are even better attested against individuals.⁵⁴ A conspicuous example in historiography is the case of the Spartan king Demaratus (Herodotus 6.63–69), whom the other Spartan king, Cleomenes, conspires to replace with his kinsman Leotychides. The latter agrees to swear that Demaratus is not the son of Ariston, claiming that his father had counted the months at his birth and exclaimed that this could not be his son. Demaratus is deposed but not yet exiled, instead relegated to a magistracy in the Spartan state. Leotychides eventually taunts him by asking him how it feels to be a magistrate after being a king, prompting him to ask his mother whether he is really his father's son. In this context we first encounter the claim that the king's biological father was in fact a slave who took care of the donkeys (an ὄνοφορβός)—apparently not one of the political opposition's official claims but rather part of an anonymous smear campaign.⁵⁵ Demaratus' mother is incensed by this insinuation and places herself in the role of an Alkmene, describing a nocturnal visit by a phantom in the shape of her husband Ariston, who gives her his wreath and thereby prompts the discovery of the whole affair, since when the real Ariston returns he wants to know where she got it. The wreath is discovered to have come from the shrine of the hero Astrabacus, and the reader is left to question whether Demaratus is the illegitimate son of a slave or the offspring of a hero. His mother's concluding remarks, which include the assertion that "women bear children after eight or six months, and they don't all make it to nine; but I bore you, child, after six months" (τίκτουσι γὰρ γυναῖκες καὶ ἐννεάμηνα καὶ ἐπτάμηνα, καὶ οὐ πᾶσαι δέκα μῆνας ἐκτελέσασαι· ἐγὼ δὲ σέ, ὦ παῖ, ἐπτάμηνον ἔτεκον), would seem to undermine her credibility.⁵⁶ On the other hand, Boedeker, pointing to the bribery and subsequent hubristic behavior of Leotychides, as well as the fact that both he and Cleomenes are in separate incidents said to pay the penalty (*tisis*) for their treatment of Demaratus, argues that Herodotus assimilates Demaratus to a hero figure, which would seem to affirm his mother's claim that he is the child of Astrabacus.⁵⁷ This Herodotean ambivalence, possibly augmented by the similarity of the hero's name to a word for "donkey saddle" or

54 Particularly in Old Comedy and the orators. Cf. Kamen 2009; Ogden 1996, 171–72.

55 The choice of an ὄνοφορβός is particularly apt because the donkey is often a representative of slaves and the lower class in Greek thought, in contrast to the horse as the representative of the upper class, and therefore the existence as a category in the animal kingdom of mules (virtually always the product of a donkey jack and a mare) is potentially problematic. Cf. Griffith 2006 (and on Demaratus in particular cf. Part Two, 342).

56 That ἐπτάμηνον (literally "seven month") is inclusive reckoning and indicates what we would call a six month gestation is clear from the first sentence of the Hippocratic Περί Ὀκταμήνου, where the ἐπτάμηνοι are said to be born after 182 days (yielding 30.33 days per month if divided by six but only 26 if divided by seven; the average month has 30.42 days in a modern 365-day calendar). If the credulousness of this Hippocratic work is any indication (cf. at 4 = VII 441–42 Littré), the ancient Greeks may have been inclined to believe in the possibility of a six-month gestation. (But the detail that only "a few out of many" (2 = VII 438) such ἐπτάμηνοι survive may indicate a tendency to categorize late-term miscarriages as births.) We should note, however, that the fact that the author feels compelled to state in this context that "we should not disbelieve women about their children" (χρηὶ δὲ οὐκ ἀπιστεῖν τῆσι γυναῖξιν ἀμφὶ τῶν τόκων) implies that some people were disposed to do exactly this.

57 Boedeker 1987, 189–91.

"saddled donkey" (ἄστράβη),⁵⁸ between servile and divine origin for the Spartan king corresponds to a mythic pattern.⁵⁹

The mimiamb of Hero(n)das probably date to the third century BC. They are therefore a little late to be fully instructive for Athenian attitudes of the fifth and fourth centuries. Nonetheless, given the traces of comedy playing upon the interaction of slaves and free women that I detect in the extant plays of Aristophanes and a few comic fragments, I would read the fifth mimiamb as drawing on a tradition of such humor that already existed in the fifth century, with the caveat that it is much more explicit and broadly developed in the fifth mimiamb than we find it elsewhere. There an entire (quasi-?) dramatic scene follows from the premise that a woman has been sleeping with her male slave; not only that, but he has been unfaithful to her, and she therefore uses her position as his owner to threaten physical punishment against him for his infidelity in a way that would scarcely be available to her against a free lover.⁶⁰ All this is meant to be funny, and the idea of a free woman sleeping with a male slave is apparently not so offensive to the intended audience that it would spoil the humorous effect.⁶¹

Also in the third century we find in the comic poet Machon's collection of anecdotes in iambic trimeter (χρεῖαι) about famous *hetairai* and parasites a story about a clever slave sleeping with the famous *hetaira* Gnatheina (quoted at Ath. 13.43 p. 580a–b 28–37). When she asks him about the scars on his back, he dissembles his servile status by fabricating a tale of boyhood injury, but his reply plays on the double meaning of παῖς as both "boy" and "slave":

κάκεῖνος αὐτῇ συντόμως ἀπεκρίνατο
ὅτι παῖς ποτ' ὄν ἀνείλετ', εἰς πυρὰν ὅτε
παίζων μετὰ τινων ἡλικιωτῶν ἐνέπεσεν.

And he immediately replied to her that once when he was a child (slave) he was hurt, when

58 Cf. Nenci 2000, 234–35.

59 Arguably this mythic pattern is exploited for comic effect at *Wealth* 672–95 (see below), where (as I argue in Chapter Two) the comic slave character takes on the role of the serpent familiar of Asclepius to facilitate a sexual encounter.

60 Fountoulakis 2004, 252–53 points out that in Aristophanes' *Wealth* and in Menander there is already a comic tradition of jealous (but at least in Menander's case mistaken) men physically punishing women whom they believe to have been unfaithful (cf. *Wealth* 1014–16 and what can be reconstructed of the plot of *Perikeiromenē* and *Rhapizomenē*). One can therefore view the fifth mimiamb as playing on this tradition with gender inversion. For the comic potential of inverting gender in a typical scene, one could compare the red-figure vase (Madrid 11094 (L. 369); cf. *RVP* no. 2/127, pl. 46) signed by Asteas depicting a labeled Cassandra raping an unlabeled man who clings to a statue of a goddess in what is clearly a parody of the mythological rape of Cassandra during the sack of Troy (a common enough motif in vase painting). In an article comparing the depiction of actors and the theater in the vases painted by the Painter of Louvre K 240 and the Paestan fabric under Asteas on the one hand and by the Sicilian Manfria Group on the other, Hughes 2003 argues that Asteas drew his observations on the theater from time spent in Sicily in the first half of the fourth century but then lost contact with Greek theater in performance when he migrated to Paestum sometime around 350 (in his view the Manfria Group, in contrast, reflects the current state of the theater in Sicily in the 330's and the transition to New Comedy). If we accept this argument, the rape by Cassandra will reflect the performance of comedy in Sicily (most likely Syracuse) in the first half of the fourth century, which should be significantly closer to Aristophanes than whatever (if anything) was being performed in Paestum in the second half of the fourth century.

61 For a detailed discussion of the fifth mimiamb, which unfortunately is beyond the scope of my project here, cf. Fountoulakis 2004.

he fell into a pyre while playing with some friends. Ath. 13.43 p. 580b 33–35.

The first part of his reply both is truthful (when *παῖς* is taken as "slave") and fits into his story (with the meaning "child").⁶² Nonetheless the courtesan is not fooled, but remarks that he deserved his beating, since he is licentious (*ἀκόλαστος*, 40). While this may not strictly be a tale about a slave sleeping with a free woman, for some courtesans were slaves, it is certainly a tale of a slave usurping sexual territory that would normally have been reserved for masters. For while in Aristophanic comedy we do find a slave who claims to have taken advantage of the services of a *pornē* (*Vesp.* 500–02), one gets the impression that the upper class *hetaira*, especially a famous one, should have been off-limits.⁶³ Certainly that is the impression we get from this passage; the slave has accomplished something clever by sleeping with a famous courtesan under false pretenses. She does not attempt to have him punished, however, but merely observes that he deserves the beating he has already received. So he executes a clever plan on his own behalf, succeeds, and gets away without punishment. In these respects he is similar to the figure of the clever slave as it appears in New and Roman Comedy. But the absence in this scenario of any master whom his scheme also benefits, combined with the usurping nature of the act itself, makes him in some ways a more powerful slave figure than the audiences of those plays were accustomed to see.

Part 1.2: Free Women, Slaves, and Slavish Professions

The most explicit reference to sexual intercourse between slaves and free women in Aristophanes comes from the mouth of Inlaw, the unnamed relative in the *Thesmophoriazusa* whom Euripides sends in drag to infiltrate the assembly of women who are plotting against him during the Thesmophoria. It is therefore immediately suspect how much of what Inlaw says about women should be considered valid; though he speaks in the guise of a woman where there are ostensibly no men present (he emphasizes this fact before beginning his catalog of crimes, 471–72), the genuinely female characters do not acknowledge the truth of the claim about slaves (nor, on the other hand, do they explicitly deny it).⁶⁴ Audience members will have interpreted the truth value of his claims differently. Certainly the first of his claims, that he himself cuckolded his husband with an old lover on the third day of their marriage (*Thesm.* 476–90), the audience must regard as patently false because they know that he is not really a woman. Nonetheless they are free to interpret it as "the kind of thing women do". Certainly Critylla has already implicitly acknowledged the truth of many similar charges against women in her call to prayer (331–51),

62 This wordplay on *παῖς* may have been a stock feature of jokes about prostitutes noticing the whip-scars of slaves. It is exploited in another witticism at Ath. 13.49. When a *μαστιγιάς* hires the prostitute Kallistion and she notices his scars, he claims that meat-broth was spilled on him when he was a *παῖς* (again with a prominent placement of "when I was a boy/slave" at the beginning of the explanation). She quips that it must have been *beef* broth (i.e., a leather whip).

63 At [Dem.] 59.33–34 we are told that Phrynion took Neaira to a party where he fell asleep and she was repeatedly raped while drunk, even by the serving men (*καὶ οἱ διάκονοι οἱ Χαβρίου τράπεζαν παραθέμενοι*), which is the climax of a list of his insulting behavior. But the point of this story is Phrynion's outrageous treatment of her, and she immediately leaves him and Athens for Megara.

64 Elsewhere in Greek literature the difference between male presence and a lack thereof is crucial for what female characters will or will not discuss; for instance the juxtaposition of Hero(n)das 6 and 7 is instructive in this regard. Cf. McClure 1999.

though not the specific charge about sex with slaves and mule-grooms which will occupy us here.⁶⁵

Immediately after this first example of the vices of women that have gone unmentioned by Euripides, Inlaw makes the statement in question:

οὐδ' ὡς ὑπὸ τῶν δούλων τε κῶρευκόμων
σποδοῦμεθ', ἦν μὴ ἴχωμεν ἕτερον, οὐ λέγει·

And he (Euripides) doesn't mention that by slaves and mule-grooms we're pounded, if we don't have anyone else. (*Thesm.* 491–92)

Austin and Olson attribute "a high degree of class-consciousness" to the latter part of this remark; in their view Inlaw is expressing the assumption of the audience that no ordinary woman would want to sleep with a slave if she had any other option.⁶⁶ What is especially interesting in that regard is that there is ample evidence in the comedies (and in our other sources, for that matter) that the Athenian male to whom the plays were directed did not himself possess such scruples. To mention only a few examples, for Dikaiopolis the pleasures of peace are typified by the opportunity to rape someone else's slave (*Ach.* 271–75), the panhellenic chorus of *Peace* prefers the company of a slave girl to that of a bathing (and thus absent) wife (1136–39), and in their communist utopia the women of the *Ecclesiazusae* feel the need to prohibit men from sleeping with slave women by law (718–24). It is clear that for men in Aristophanic comedy the sexual exploitation of slave women (or for that matter free women, or boys, whether free or slave) is not perceived as a character flaw; on the other hand the women who are portrayed as participating in or being the object of innuendo from male slaves are thereby negatively characterized.

At the same time we should notice that this remark does not occupy a climactic position; it is merely one example in a lengthy catalog of the scandalous acts Inlaw attributes to women. Nor does it elicit any special reaction detectable in the text. From this we should infer what is confirmed by several other comic passages, that the intimation of sex between free women and slaves in Old Comedy—in stark contrast to the act itself in real life—was not taboo.⁶⁷ This is not surprising when one considers the license generally granted to Old Comedy. Nonetheless it is difficult to imagine that at any time a comic poet would have imputed such a thing to a specific respectable woman; in general it is interesting to note that women as a category in comedy are

65 For example, the call to prayer affirms that women try to pass off other people's babies as their own (339–40) and engage in trysts with the help of their slaves (340–41).

66 Austin and Olson 2004, 202. I take their reference to "class-consciousness" as either a loose employment of the term (strictly speaking "slave" should not be understood as an economic class but rather as an order or status) or as motivated by the conjunction of slaves and mule-drivers, of which the latter are certainly low-class and not necessarily slaves (*pace* van Leeuwen, Taillardat, and Prato; see below).

67 The mimiamb of Hero(n)das are relatively late (3rd century BC) and not comedy, but I think the fifth mimiamb can still be instructive in this regard, for both the mimiamb and Old Comedy trace part of their literary descent to the iambographic tradition, which embraced subversive sexual material (one thinks, for instance, of the Cologne Epode). For the relationship between the iambographic tradition and Old Comedy, cf. Rosen 1988. Hero(n)das models himself explicitly on Hipponax (8.78), imitating (without complete success) his Ionic dialect and choliambic meter. Cf. Headlam 1922, xxviii; Cunningham 1971, 14–15. For a discussion of the influence of Old and New Comedy on Hero(n)das, cf. Ussher 1980, 69–70.

infinitely more acceptable targets of ridicule than specific (real) respectable women, and that this gulf between the specific and the general is much wider than it is for Athenian men (who may be both respectable and *kōmōidoumenoi*).⁶⁸

This remark comes after a lengthy first-hand account of how Inlaw-as-wife cuckolded his husband, and in particular immediately after what may be the most scandalous detail of that account: that his adulterous lover penetrated him in the street at the pillar/altar of Apollo Agyieus beside the door to the house,⁶⁹ as he leaned forward, clinging to the sacred laurel tree (εἶτ' ἠρειδόμην / παρὰ τὸν Ἀγυῖᾶ κῦβδ', ἐχομένη τῆς δάφνης, 488–89).⁷⁰ According to Herodotus, the prohibition against intercourse in temples and sacred places separates the Greeks and Egyptians from the rest of humanity, who argue that if intercourse in temples were not pleasing to the god, animals and birds would not have sex in temples or sacred precincts (2.64). But most of the Herodotean passage is in fact dedicated to the argument *for* sexual relations in temples, which Herodotus then rejects without any counterargument (οὔτοι μὲν νυν τοιαῦτα ἐπιλέγοντες ποιεῦσι ἔμοιγε οὐκ ἄρεστά). This suggests that this argument portrayed by Herodotus as the universal opinion of non-Greek and non-Egyptian peoples may have had its advocates in the Greek world as well. Nonetheless, many Athenians certainly would have been disturbed by the idea of sexual relations in a sacred space in real life; it is therefore most productive to view this passage (and surely then also the immediately following reference to sex between free women and slaves) as an example of the license granted to Old Comedy as a carnivalesque genre.⁷¹ This seems likely from the text of the *Thesmophoriazusae* itself, for if the transgression involved were 1) too serious to be humorous and 2) taken seriously there would be no point in mentioning it in the play. Moreover, there was a considerable difference in the degree of sacrilege involved in sexual activity next to a small sacred space of a sort that was ubiquitous on public streets on the one hand and in the *adyton* of a major temple on the other.⁷²

68 On the other hand, ridiculing the mother (or sometimes the wife) of a politician or other public figure (such as Euripides) seems to have been a standard tactic. Nonetheless these women appear not to have been named unless they were dead. Cf. Sommerstein 1980a. Of course the rule against naming did not apply to *hetairai* and other women of ill repute, such as Lais and Aspasia. Cf. O'Higgins 2003, 111–14.

69 This aniconic pointed pillar stood in front of many Athenian houses, and was therefore also sometimes present onstage in both tragedy and comedy. It was often accompanied or replaced by an altar to the same deity. Cf. Aesch. *Ag.* 1081; S. fr. 370; E. *Ion* 184–7, *Ph.* 631; Ar. *Vesp.* 875, *Thesm.* 748; Cratinus fr. 403; Pherekrates fr. 92 K.-A.; *LIMC* ii.1.327–32, 2.279–83. Austin and Olson 2004, 201 seem to consider it a pillar here, whereas Sommerstein 1994, 187–88 takes it for an altar. There is no way to tell from the text which is intended.

70 Vase paintings often show women bent forward and being penetrated from behind in this way. But part of the humor here is that the audience knows that Inlaw is really male and may therefore imagine him being anally penetrated in drag.

71 For a recent demonstration of how Bakhtin's idea of the carnival is useful for the study of Old Comedy, cf. Platter 2007.

72 Cf. Hdt. 9.116. The satrap Artayctes convinces Xerxes to give him the house of an unspecified Greek who had made war on his empire. His request is granted, and in this way he cleverly appropriates for himself the shrine to the hero Protesilaus and all its dedications. Whenever he returned to that area, we are told, he had intercourse with women in the *adyton* of sanctuary. When Artayctes is captured fleeing the siege of Sestos, these crimes motivate the Athenian general Xanthippus to have him crucified instead of ransoming him (9.120). But the detail about his intercourse in the temple is minor in the larger account (αὐτός τε ὄκως ἀπίκοιτο ἐς Ἐλαιούντα, ἐν τῷ ἀδύτῳ γυναιξὶ ἐμίσητο, 9.116) and is not referred to again when the decision to crucify him is made. I cannot fathom why Sommerstein 1994, 188 asserts that it appears to be a worse crime than temple-robbing here; while this ranking of the crimes is not in itself unlikely, nothing in the Greek suggests it. We should compare the claim that Demetrius Poliorcetes introduced *hetirae/pornae* (both words are used in Plut.)

I would argue, therefore, that at *Thesm.* 488–92 we have mention in a short space of two phenomena, intercourse in a sacred space and intercourse between free women and slaves, that were taken quite seriously in real life but nonetheless furnished appropriate material for humor in the clearly fictional and fantastic (grotesque, carnivalesque) world of Old Comedy, especially in this instance, where they have been even further removed from the already fictional world of the stage in Old Comedy by the fact that they are clearly the fabrications of a specific character who is trying (and perhaps failing) to play the part of a member of the opposite sex. I will argue below that these two phenomena are also associated in the messenger-speech of Cario in *Wealth*, where they will again have been further removed from reality by the fact that the audience is free to take them as the fictional-within-a-fiction embellishments of the wily messenger.

The grouping of slaves and mule-grooms at *Thesm.* 491–92 is interesting. Some commentators would claim that the unusual omission of the definite article in the pairing τῶν δούλων τε κῶρεωκόμων tells us something specific about the relationship between the two. For Austin and Olson the omission "is intended to signal that the two groups are to be thought of as one". van Leeuwen on the other hand thinks it indicates gradation:

hoc igitur dicit personata haec mulier: "furta nunquam non committimus; si forte fortuna moechus non est, sunt servi; honestiores autem famuli si non sunt praesto, ne agasones quidem stabulum redolentes aspernamur."

Therefore this impersonated woman says this: "We always commit adultery; if by chance there is no adulterer, there are slaves; and if there are none of the nobler household slaves at hand, we would spurn not even mule-grooms stinking of the stable."⁷³

I see no reason to argue from the omission of τῶν; a study of the other instances in Aristophanes cited by Austin and Olson (*Eq.* 320; *Nu.* 622, 1465; *Ra.* 773; *Eccl.* 51) shows that there is no consistent effect common to them all. Therefore any argument that such an omission generates a specific effect is hardly better than speculation. Rather I would argue that the mere grouping of "slave" and "mule-groom" is telling, and may be associated with the fear of bringing children into the house that have actually been fathered by one's slave.

Despite its infrequent explicit appearance in our sources, this issue cannot have been far from the mind of masters, especially when the sexual fidelity (and good standards) of wives were in question. Griffith has shown that the ancient Greeks were in the habit of thinking about class relations in terms of equids; specifically, the horse with its relative uselessness for real work, involvement in the most prestigious events in panhellenic games, use in warfare, and sheer expense to acquire and keep is an obvious representative of the upper class, while the lowly but hard-working donkey stands in for the lower classes and slaves. In the context of this dichotomy the mule, as the product (almost always) of a donkey jack and a mare, represents an interesting and potentially unsettling middle ground.⁷⁴ Mules can represent a compromise between the two

to the Acropolis and specifically to the Parthenon. Cf. Philippides fr. 25 K.-A.; Plut. *Dem.* 24.1; 26.5.

73 van Leeuwen's notion that mule-grooms were a particularly lowly class of slave has been influential. Cf. Taillardat 1965, §796 ("Les muletiers étaient des esclaves, et même les derniers des esclaves.") and Prato 2001, 250 ("Gli <<stallieri>> erano al gradino più basso della schiavitù, addetti com' erano ai lavori più umili e gravosi").

74 Griffith 2006, especially Part Two.

extremes, the best of both worlds; on the other hand their very existence is potentially a reminder of the possibility of sexual activity between free women and low class men or even slaves. Because this Aristophanic passage deals explicitly with the sexual contact of free women and male slaves, the choice of *mule* grooms in particular for the other low-class option could dispose at least some among the audience to think about the possible consequences (i.e. a child) of such a union.

van Leeuwen (followed by Taillardat and Prato) asserts that mule-grooms are slaves (*nam etiam agasones sunt servi*) on the basis of Plat. *Ly.* 208b, where it is apparent from the dialogue that the mule-groom in question is indeed a slave. But this does not imply that all mule-grooms were slaves; many lowly (and even not so lowly) professions in classical Athens could be occupied by slaves, free(d) men, or even citizens.⁷⁵ In fact it is certain from epigraphical evidence that ὀρεωκόμοι could be freedmen at the least in the late fifth and fourth centuries, and there is nothing to suggest that it would be have been impossible for a regular metic or even an Athenian citizen to fill this role.

Our only evidence for the range of possible legal statuses for ὀρεωκόμοι in the fifth century⁷⁶ is the inevitably controversial *IG II² 10*, a decree of 401/0 awarding certain honor(s)⁷⁷ to about 1,000 followers of Thrasyboulos⁷⁸ who had been at Phyle (A 4), fought at Munichia (A 7), or were obeying orders when the reconciliation took place (A 8). These people are listed by name and occupation under tribal headings, and one of them, a certain Euphorion, is an ὀρεωκόμος (B 4). The restoration of A 4 (...]οι ὅσοι συνκατήλθον ἀπὸ Φυλῆς) is important for my purpose here, for it is universally held that the word ending in -οι that precedes ὅσοι should designate the

75 Cf. Cohen 2003, 217: "Confounding modern expectations, the same labor functions might be performed indiscriminately by slave workers or by free 'foreign residents' [*metics*] or by 'citizens' [*politai*]." Cohen's observation that autonomy or lack thereof helped to construct the difference between liberal and "slavish" work for the ancient Greeks is well taken, but I would maintain as well that the "actual nature of the labor undertaken" most certainly did affect the perception of "slavishness" (especially in the view of the upper classes), despite the fact that there were free men and even citizens in such professions.

76 *Thesm.* 491–92 is open to interpretation, and we gain nothing on this point from Ar. fr. 642 K.-A. (ἐστῶτας ὥσπερ τοὺς ὀρεωκόμους ἄθρους).

77 What these honors were is a matter of debate; arguments have been made for the restoration of πολιτεία and ἰσοτέλεια (vel sim.) in the lacuna after ἐ]ψηφίσθαι Ἀθηναίοις· εἶναι αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐγγόν[οις (A 5). Osborne 1981–83, 2.26–43 divides the names listed into different categories, some 70–90 of which would receive citizenship and the rest lesser privileges. But since Whitehead 1984 most have agreed that the honor bestowed is unlikely to have varied. Whitehead 1984 argues from the arrangement by tribes that all honorands received citizenship. Against the award of citizenship is the lack of demotic. Krentz 1980, 304 argues that metics already must have been registered by tribe because they served in the military (and therefore if the recipients are metics their arrangement by tribe tells us nothing). But one wonders why then at [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 58 the Polemarch must divide the metics (and the ἰσοτελεῖς!) into ten groups. Krentz 1980 and 1986 points out that what we have of the formula at A 5 is incompatible with the known formula for grants of citizenship prior to 229 BC, which follows the pattern εἶναι αὐτὸν Ἀθηναῖον for both individual and block grants (cf. the fifth century grants to the Plataians and Samians at [Dem.] 59.104 and *IG I³ 127* respectively). This last point seems to me compelling evidence that the grant in question is not one of citizenship. We know from [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 40.2 that Archinos indicted as unconstitutional a decree of Thrasyboulos granting citizenship to those from the Piraeus (some of whom, [Arist.] notes, were clearly slaves). Thrasyboulos may therefore have contented himself with a grant of *isoteleia* (which he promises to his supporters at Xen. *HG* 2.4.25). But again the grant of *isoteleia* by itself does not explain the division by tribes (unless we assume that ἰσοτελεῖς were assigned tribes in the fifth century but not in the late fourth; and in this case the same may apply to metics).

78 Thrasyboulos himself is not mentioned in the surviving parts of the decree.

group of people in question. The restoration printed in *IG II²* is μέτουκ]οι, and ξέν]οι has been suggested by Osborne.⁷⁹ If either of these is correct, an ὀρεωκόμος in 5th century Athens could be (but did not therefore have to be) a free man. On the other hand, at first glance Harding's argument for the restoration δοῦλ]οι would seem to reaffirm the impression created by Plat. *Ly.* 208b.⁸⁰ But if the people in question were indeed slaves, they must at a minimum have been manumitted by this decree, for slaves would hardly have been divided into tribes under any circumstances, nor is it easy to imagine any public honor that could be given to a group of slaves without freeing them first. Harding (1987, 180) himself restores the honors granted as "manumission and *isoteleia* and the right to own land and a house" (ἀπελευθερίαν καὶ ἰσοτέλειαν καὶ γῆς καὶ οἰκίας ἔγκτησιν), of which the latter two will have given them a considerable advantage over ordinary metics. In fine, it is not certain whether or not the recipients of *IG II²* 10 were slaves; if they were, one of the effects of the decree cannot have been other than to free them. Therefore any plausible restoration of *IG II²* 10 will provide an example of a fifth-century ὀρεωκόμος who was not a slave (at least after 401/0).

Two ὀρεωκόμοι named Sosias and Kuprios are paid 7.5 and 4 drachmai respectively for their work transporting materials for construction at Eleusis in 327/6 (*IG II²* 1673 18, 20). Their status is unclear, but since the money is paid directly to them and not to a master they must at least belong to the class of privileged slaves who did their own business and regularly brought their master a fixed sum (ἀποφορά).⁸¹ It is probably more likely that they are free(d), for our evidence for such privileged slaves is limited enough to suggest that they were not particularly common.⁸² Another named Pamphilos dedicates a silver φιάλη sometime before the late fourth century (*SEG* 18:36 A 559–60), which according to traditional interpretations of these inscriptions would indicate that he was a freedman who had won his δίκη ἀποστασίου (whether this was a genuine trial or a type of disguised manumission) and thereby had been released from dependency on his former master (though as a metic he would still require a citizen representative or προστάτης).⁸³ Therefore for those who accept one of the traditional interpretations this inscription supports what has already been demonstrated from the other evidence, that in the fourth century a mule-groom could certainly be either a slave or a freedman (for the same mule-groom will have been both at different times). If we follow the recent argument of Meyer 2010, on the other hand, the *phialai* inscriptions will provide no evidence one way or another for manumission, but will relate instead to prosecutions of metics by the δίκη ἀπροστασίου. If this is the case, *SEG* 18:36 A

79 Osborne 1981–83, 1.37–41; 2.26–43.

80 Harding 1987.

81 Such slaves must be kept distinct from those who were rented out for a μισθός which was paid to their master, not to the slaves themselves. On this point cf. Kazakévich 2008.

82 I follow the argument of Kazakévich 2008 that in this case scarcity of evidence signals the rarity of the actual phenomenon not without some trepidation.

83 These Athenian inscriptions (*IG II²* 1553–78) recording the dedication of silver bowls (φιάλαι ἐξελευθερिकाί) have been connected to the δίκη ἀποστασίου process since Wilamowitz (1887) restored ἀπο]στασίου in the heading of *IG II²* 1578. Whether these trials were genuine or a form of disguised manumission has been a point of debate for some time; I follow Zelnick-Abramovitz 2005, 274–92 in the former view. In either case the dedicators of these φιάλαι had become free, so that the significance of these inscriptions for my present argument remains the same if one adopts either of these positions. But in a revolutionary new book Meyer 2010 makes the case that the *phialai* inscriptions are not related to slaves at all, but rather reflect trials of free metics accused of not having a citizen *prostatēs* (she restores ἀπροστασίου instead of Wilamowitz' ἀποστασίου in the heading of *IG II²* 1578).

559–60 shows that a fourth-century mule-groom could be a metic.

In Plutarch ὄρεωκόμοι are twice associated with two other professions (innkeeper and sailor) which were low-class but not necessarily occupied by slaves (*De cohibenda ira* 460 F–461 A; *De tuenda sanitate* 130 E). In the former passage those employed in these professions often (!) provoke angry assaults when drunk by giving the impression of contempt; this anger is then redirected toward (their) howling dogs and kicking donkeys, which are acceptable targets for physical violence. The point is driven home by an anecdote about a man who goes to beat a donkey-driver (ὄνηλάτης), learns that he is an Athenian citizen, and must beat his donkey instead, pointing out that the donkey has no such claims to citizenship.⁸⁴ In the latter passage mule-grooms, innkeepers, and sailors are likely to laugh at a person who attempts to practice philosophy while exercising (when they would not do so if he were merely exercising). Together these passages create an image of the potentially free yet slavish mule-groom, associated with animals that must bear the brunt of the violence that would have been directed against a slave who had behaved in a similar way, and who is too boorish to have any appreciation of the value of philosophical pursuit in everyday situations. This image is supported by a Plutarchan anecdote attributed to the fifth century (*De vitioso pudore* 534 B–C). Apparently the priestess of Athena Polias at Athens, Lysimache (the same who has been associated by some modern scholars with the Aristophanic character Lysistrata),⁸⁵ was asked (lit. ordered) for a drink by some ὄρεωκόμοι who had transported some sacred vessels to the temple, to whom she replied: "I hesitate, for this too may become a tradition" ("ἀλλ' ὀκνῶ" εἶπε "μὴ καὶ τοῦτο πάτριον γένηται"). That the mule-grooms are presumptuous to ask for sacred water is made clear by the choice of the verb κελεύω. From the context it is clear that they are considered the lowest of the low, for this is one of several brief anecdotes introduced to support the assertion that "of those who importune (on us) it is not difficult to resist the unworthy (ἀδόξοις) and the lowly (ταπεινοῖς) and those who are worth nothing (μηδενὸς ἀξίους), but some dismiss such people with laughter and a joke" (534 B). At least in Plutarch, then, ὄρεωκόμοι probably are not slaves but rather the archetype itself of the low-class, jeering, importunate and yet (frustratingly) free person.

A similar image of the character of mule-grooms is evoked by Diodorus Siculus in his explanation of the assassination of Philip II (16.93.3–94.4). A certain Pausanias, both ἐρώμενος and bodyguard to Philip, finds that he has been replaced in the former function by a different Pausanias; he attacks his rival with sexualized invective, but the latter proves himself by giving his life for Philip's in battle. His friend Attalus then avenges him by inviting this first Pausanias to dinner, getting him drunk, and having him raped by ὄρεωκόμοι while unconscious. These events and the unwillingness of the king to punish Attalus afterward are advanced as motive for the assassination. What is interesting for my purpose in this passage is the choice of ὄρεωκόμοι where the intent is clearly to create the worst sort of violation imaginable. Regardless of the obviously doubtful historicity of the account,⁸⁶ the choice of ὄρεωκόμοι to fulfill this particular

84 The transition from mule-groom (ὄρεωκόμος) to donkey driver (ὄνηλάτης) occurs in the passage in Plutarch. The terms do not refer to the same person; rather the anecdote about the donkey driver is introduced rather abruptly in the discussion of how one treats a mule-groom (or an innkeeper, or a sailor). Of course the two professions are not the same; for one thing the ancient Greeks knew the difference between a mule and a donkey much better than most inhabitants of modern developed nations.

85 This was first argued by Lewis 1955.

86 The various Athenian accounts of the assassination of Hippas/Hipparchus are the obvious source for such a tyrannicide motivated by a sexual insult.

function in the story is further evidence for the low esteem in which this class of people was held and for their tendency to act in ways that others perceived as transgressive of their social station (or merely transgressive).

It is clear from these passages relating to mule-grooms that *de iure* freedom does not preclude a *de facto* perception of slavishness. Likewise, in the accusatory invective so ubiquitous in fourth century forensic speeches the mere imputation of slave ancestry, much less of being a former slave, was enough to cast aspersions on the character of an opponent.⁸⁷ Furthermore, there is a tendency in these same speeches to use the term *doulos* to refer to freedmen, thereby collapsing the perception of a distinction between the two legal categories.⁸⁸ In the third century the Stoic Chrysippos seems to have distinguished between a freedman (*ἀπελευθερος*) and a household slave (*οικέτης*) by claiming that freedmen were still slaves (*δοῦλοι*), but that household slaves were slaves who had not been released from one's ownership (Ath. 6.93 p. 266b).⁸⁹ Apparently for Chrysippos the status "slave" (*δοῦλος*) was not dependent on being owned but on some other criterion, such as (if I may speculate) dependency; it was certainly the norm for freedmen to continue to be dependent on their former masters to one extent or another, and the metaphorical assimilation of dependency or subjection of any kind to chattel slavery (*douleia*) in Greek thought is well known.⁹⁰

The evidence I have marshalled, some from close to the time of Aristophanes, some from much later, presents a fairly consistent picture of *ὀρεωκόμοι* as low-class and slavish but not necessarily actual slaves (though it is certain from Plat. *Ly.* 208b that they *could* be actual slaves). Therefore the grouping together of slaves and *ὀρεωκόμοι* at *Thesm.* 491–92 betrays a blurring of the line between slave and free in favor of maintaining a sharp line between free and slavish. There is no obvious distinction in these lines between sex with a slave and sex with a free(d) man who has a "slavish" occupation.

At different times in Aristophanes and indeed in Greek literature as a whole we find employed a dichotomy 1) between slaves and free men, 2) among citizens between the *chrēstoi* (upper class) and the lower classes (*hoi polloi*, *dēmos*, *ponēroi*, etc.), or 3) between citizens and non-citizens (whether free or slave). The latter two dichotomies, which I argue operate at *Thesm.* 491–92, tend to obscure the difference in juridical status at least between freedmen, metics, and slaves, and possibly, in a modified version of 2), also between low-class Athenians and these categories as well. Another example of a such a phenomenon would be a rather famous passage in which the so-called Old Oligarch explains why a free man is not allowed to strike another

87 Cf. Kamen 2009; Ogden 1996, 171–72. An instructive example of this sort of rhetoric is Dem. 45.86: εἰ σκέψαιτο πρὸς αὐτὸν ἕκαστος ὑμῶν τίν' οἴκοι κατέλιπεν οἰκέτην, εἶθ' ὑπὸ τούτου πεπονθόθ' αὐτὸν θεῖη ταῦθ' ἄπερ ἡμεῖς ὑπὸ τούτου. μὴ γὰρ εἰ Σύρος ἢ Μάνης ἢ τίς ἕκαστος ἐκείνων, οὗτος δὲ Φορμίων· ἀλλὰ τὸ πρᾶγμα ταυτό· δοῦλοι μὲν ἐκείνοι, δοῦλος δ' οὗτος ἦν, δεσπότης δ' ὑμεῖς, δεσπότης δ' ἦν ἐγώ. Cf. Dem. 57, where a citizen is disenfranchised because of claims that his mother had been a slave.

88 Garland 1988, 79.

89 διαφέρειν δέ φησι Χρυσίππος δοῦλον οἰκέτου γράφων ἐν δευτέρῳ περὶ ὁμονομίας διὰ τὸ τοὺς ἀπελευθεροῦς μὲν δούλους ἔτι εἶναι, οἰκέτας δὲ τοὺς μὴ τῆς κτήσεως ἀφειμένους. ὁ γὰρ οἰκέτης, φησί, δοῦλός ἐστι κτήσει κατατεταγμένος.

90 Herodotus is especially fond of this (in fact a *TLG* search shows that the majority of his uses of the *doul-* root are metaphorical). Cf. Hunt 1998, 47–52. Likewise Thucydides (1.98.4) refers to the subjection of former Athenian allies in the Delian League to a *de facto* Athenian empire as enslavement. But perhaps the most memorable of all is found in the Old Oligarch, where the inability of citizens at Athens to go about abusing other people's slaves is described as "being slaves to the slaves" (τοῖς ἀνδραπόδοις δουλεύειν, 1.11).

person's slaves at Athens:

εἰ νόμος ἦν τὸν δοῦλον ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐλευθέρου τύπτεσθαι ἢ τὸν μέτοικον ἢ τὸν ἀπελεύθερον, πολλάκις ἂν οἰηθείς εἶναι τὸν Ἀθηναῖον δοῦλον ἐπάταξεν ἄν.

For if it were customary that slaves or metics or freedmen (could) be beaten by free men, often one would strike an Athenian, having thought him a slave. [Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.10.

The virtual equivalence implied here between the ability to beat a slave, a metic, or a freedman is remarkable. The implied dichotomy is between citizen and non-citizen; elsewhere in the Old Oligarch the *chrēstoi/ponēroi* distinction among citizens is rampant. The Old Oligarch occupies the extremely conservative end of the spectrum of fifth century Athenian political thought, and he is further influenced in this particular passage by an implied comparison with the situation at Sparta. Nonetheless in grouping together slaves, metics, and freedmen without differentiation as opposed to citizens and especially the *chrēstoi* in this casual comment he is displaying an attitude found not only here but also in Aristophanes, as is evident in the grouping of slaves and mule-grooms at *Thesm.* 491–92, and indeed in any number of texts from the fifth and fourth centuries.

For a dichotomy between slaves and free, on the other hand, Ar. *Pax* 292–300 is instructive. There the comic hero Trygaios encourages the panhellenic chorus to join him in his efforts to free Peace from the cave where she is trapped:

νῦν ἐστὶν ὑμῖν, ὄνδρες Ἕλληνας, καλὸν
ἀπαλλαγεῖσι πραγμάτων τε καὶ μαχῶν
ἐξελκύσαι τὴν πᾶσιν Εἰρήνην φίλην,
πρὶν ἕτερον αὐτῆς δοῖδουκα κωλύσαι τινα. 295
ἀλλ', ὅ γεωργοὶ κάμποροι καὶ τέκτονες
καὶ δημιουργοὶ καὶ μέτοικοι καὶ ξένοι
καὶ νησιῶται, δεῦρ' ἴτ', ὅ πάντες λεῶ,
ὡς τάχιστα ἄμας λαβόντες καὶ μοχλοὺς καὶ σχοινία·

Now it's a fine thing, Greeks, for us who have been freed from trouble and battles to pull out Peace who is dear to all, before some other pestle prevents it again. But farmers, merchants, carpenters, craftsmen, metics, foreigners, and islanders, come here, all ye people, as quickly as possible, bringing shovels, crowbars, and ropes. *Pax* 292–99

Notably excluded from what I have translated "all ye people" (the traditional πάντες λεῶ, 298) are slaves, who are actually among those who are imagined as *not* benefiting from a renewal of peace, for it will mean an end to war conditions under which there were better opportunities for running away (*Pax* 451).⁹¹ In this relatively inclusive moment of a rather panhellenic play

91 Of course some of the professional categories mentioned in this list did include slaves. But they equally included metics, yet we find metics listed also as a separate category in that section of the list comprised of juridical statuses (metics, foreigners, islanders). The other status not listed is Athenian citizen, but citizens are surely the "default" addressee of such a summons, so that it would be odd to have to mention them specifically. One can imagine that this list is meant to be as inclusive as possible to encourage the audience to identify with the chorus. Because *Pax* was performed at the City Dionysia rather than the Lenaia, there would have been

metics (presumably including freedmen) are grouped together with the Athenian citizens, and the pointed exclusion of slaves helps to reinforce that unity. But within the same play the nameless slave character labeled in Olson's edition as *oiketēs B*, when he comes or returns onstage at 819–1126,⁹² participates in the struggle to establish Peace once she has been freed and is imagined as sharing in her various benefits.⁹³ Though slaves as a category have been excluded from the comic project implicitly at 292–300 and explicitly at 451, this particular slave character is emphatically included in the latter part of the play. While the presence of a slave character in the latter half of *Peace* can be explained as naturalistic, for Trygaios needs a domestic servant to prepare Opora for the wedding and help him with his sacrifice, there is no obvious reason why this *oiketēs* should be constantly making (often sexual) jokes, correcting his master as to the proper way to sacrifice, or interrupting his master's prayer to Peace with his own sexualized comparison of the goddess to an adulterous woman.⁹⁴ Indeed, while he is onstage this slave rivals his master in a competition for control of the humor, where one cannot help but suppose that the audience will have often considered him the temporary victor. Thus in a single play Aristophanes excludes slaves from the benefits of peace while including a particular slave character quite prominently in the dramatic business; the paradox is facilitated by the fact that the slave character is played by a free actor (some but not all of his jokes rely on such a metatheatrical element).

Another passage indicating sex between free women and men of low class but indefinite juridical status can be found in *Lysistrata*. After the women of Athens have seized the acropolis as a part of Lysistrata's plan to end the war, an Athenian πρόβουλος⁹⁵ appears onstage and immediately evokes as a comparandum to the present situation a comic vignette of the debate prior to the Sicilian expedition, with Demostratus (whom the speaker clearly reviles for his role in that debacle) speaking in the Assembly in support of the expedition, while a single woman dances on a roof celebrating the rites of Adonis, her ritual cries answering his arguments in an incongruous stichomythia. The event is cited as an example of feminine τρυφή, perhaps best translated as "licentiousness" here. The half-chorus of old men respond with the tale of their soaking at the hands of the other half-chorus of old women, and what has by now become a catalog of the outrageous actions of women is further embellished (and explained) by the πρόβουλος with tales of how Athenian women are allowed to commit adultery by their naive husbands:

foreigners and islanders in the audience. If we accept this line of argument, we should suppose that 1) there were few slaves in the audience and/or 2) these slaves were not considered important. Both seem likely.

- 92 I am inclined to follow Sommerstein and Olson in regarding him as one of the slaves who speak in the prologue, probably the one with the greater speaking part; but if it is the same character, he will have to have been recognized as such by his mask, and the degree to which slave masks were recognizable as individuals is not known. Cf. Walin 2009, 30 n. 1.
- 93 On this slave character and the (often unrecognized) ways in which he prefigures Xanthias in *Frogs*, Cario in *Wealth*, and the major slave characters in New and Roman Comedy, cf. Walin 2009.
- 94 For what I believe to be a compelling argument that this interruption (978–86) belongs to the slave and not to the coryphaeus (*pace* Brunck, van Leeuwen, Olson), cf. Walin 2009, 41–42.
- 95 These πρόβουλοι were a board of ten (later increased to thirty) appointed in 413/12 in the aftermath of the Sicilian disaster to facilitate a speedy reaction to emergencies. Their recommendations ultimately led to the oligarchic revolution in 411. *Lysistrata*, which was produced in 411 according to its hypothesis, is usually assigned to the Lenaia on internal evidence and therefore probably antedates the emergence of constitutional change as a serious point of debate.

ὅταν γὰρ αὐτοὶ ξυμπονηρευόμεθα
 ταῖσιν γυναιξὶ καὶ διδάσκωμεν τρυφᾶν, 405
 τοιαῦτ' ἀπ' αὐτῶν βλαστάνει βουλευήματα.
 οἱ λέγομεν ἐν τῶν δημιουργῶν τοιαδί·
 ὦ χρυσοχόε, τὸν ὄρμον ὃν ἐπεσκεύασας,
 ὄρχουμένης μου τῆς γυναικὸς ἐσπέρας
 ἢ βάλανος ἐκπέπτωκεν ἐκ τοῦ τρήματος. 410
 ἐμοὶ μὲν οὖν ἔστ' εἰς Σαλαμίνα πλευστέα·
 σὺ δ' ἦν σχολάσης, πάση τέχνῃ πρὸς ἐσπέραν
 ἐλθὼν ἐκεῖνη τὴν βάλανον ἐνάρμοσον."
 ἕτερος δέ τις πρὸς σκυτοτόμον ταδὶ λέγει
 νεανίαν καὶ πέος ἔχοντ' οὐ παιδικόν· 415
 ὦ σκυτοτόμε, μου τῆς γυναικὸς τοῦ ποδὸς
 τὸ δακτυλίδιον πιέζει τὸ ζυγόν,
 ἄθ' ἀπαλὸν ὄν· τοῦτ' οὖν σὺ τῆς μεσημβρίας
 ἐλθὼν χάλασον, ὅπως ἂν εὐρυτέρως ἔχη.

For when we ourselves abet our wives in worthlessness and teach them to live softly, such schemes sprout from them. For in the shops of the craftsmen we say such things: "Goldsmith, the necklace you fixed—my wife was dancing at dusk, and the pin fell out of its hole. Now I've got to sail to Salamis, but if you have time, by all means come this evening and stick it in (for) her." And another man says this to a cobbler, a young man and possessed of more than a boy's penis: "Cobbler, the strap is pressing the pinky toe of my wife's foot, tender as it is; won't you come by at noon and loosen it up to make it wider?" *Lys.* 404–19

As at *Thesm.* 491–92 we have here a reference to the sexual dalliance of married women with relatively low-class craftsmen whom we know from epigraphical and literary sources could be either slaves or free men in the fifth and fourth centuries (this has already been shown for the ὀρεωκόμος; for the χρυσοχόος and σκυτοτόμος, see below). The line between slaves and low-class free craftsmen is obscured in the former passage. At *Lys.* 404–19, on the other hand, we have no explicit indication as to whether the craftsmen in question are slaves or free; spectators would have been able to imagine either, and their choice in this matter necessarily will have been influenced by the perceived ratio of slaves to free men in these professions in 411 and also by linguistic cues in this passage. In the latter respect οὐ παιδικόν is tempting (415). Greek παιδικός can mean "characteristic of a child (παῖς)" or "characteristic of an *erōmenos*" (cf. the substantive παιδικά) but not apparently "characteristic of a slave", despite the fact that παῖς was a common word for slave in fifth century Athens, as the text of Aristophanes so amply confirms.⁹⁶ One interpretation of 415 is that it deploys the meaning "characteristic of a child" in a litotes to emphasize the sexual threat; the cobbler is a young man (νεανίας) and therefore does not have a childlike (i.e. small) penis.⁹⁷ Moreover, ancient Greek bodily aesthetics favored smaller penises

96 *LSJ* s.v. παιδικός.

97 There is also the possibility that οὐ παιδικόν interpreted as "not like that of an *erōmenos*" could mean that he has the erect and threatening penis of an *erastēs*; *erōmenoi* were not expected to enjoy being penetrated (cf. Xen. *Smp.* 8.21; Pl. *Phdr.* 240d; see also Golden 1984, 313–16) and are typically depicted as impassive with

(so at least in artistic depictions of gods and *kouroi*), and the large phallus of comic costume contributed to the grotesqueness of the entire ensemble not only by being visible under clothing but also by its size itself.⁹⁸ By specifically noting the largeness of the cobbler's phallus, the πρόβουλος already depicts him as the sort of person who belongs in a comedy, as a person who does not conform in his body nor (it is implied) in his behavior to the Classical ideal, as a slave or at least a "slavish" person, in contrast to the ideal free citizen male who conforms to aesthetic standards. If an audience member were to take this cue and imagine the cobbler as a slave, a wordplay might be perceived: despite his being a παῖς (slave), the cobbler's penis is not like that of a παῖς (child).⁹⁹ Such a wordplay would not require παιδικός to be able to mean "characteristic of a slave" under normal circumstances. The audience would simply have to make the connection between παιδικός and παῖς.¹⁰⁰ The weakness is that the audience will have to already be thinking of the cobbler as (at least possibly) a slave for the joke to work on this level. The evidence I marshal below for slave cobblers is substantial enough, I think, for this to be a real possibility, especially in light of the grotesque/slavish implications of the cobbler's large penis. Another possible linguistic cue is τῆς μεσημβρίας in 418; sexual activity at noon is associated with slaves elsewhere in Aristophanes.¹⁰¹ Of course noon could have been a conventional time for sexual intercourse for all kinds of people.¹⁰² Olson asserts that it is specifically working people who need a nap or a "break" at noon; the cobbler will be a working

flaccid penises where they are shown granting sexual favors in art (cf. Dover 1978, 96–97). Of course in real life the cobbler's penis would hardly be erect before he was hired to perform this ambiguous service for the woman of the house, but many Aristophanic jokes do not bear this kind of logical scrutiny well.

98 Cf. Dover 1978, 124–35.

99 Wordplay on these two meanings of παῖς is otherwise attested. Cf. *Vesp.* 1297–98; *Ath.* 13.43 p. 580a–b (discussed above).

100 Likewise the audience does not need to connect παῖς with παῖω under normal circumstances to get the wordplay at *Vesp.* 1307.

101 *Vesp.* 500–02; *Pax* 289–91. That the latter passage compares Datis to a slave is argued by Olson 1998, 129 and assumed by Dover 1978, 97. The evidence for this is mostly the fact that he is masturbating (δεφόμενος). Masturbation is associated with slaves at *Eq.* 24–29, *Ran.* 542–48, and, as I argue below, *Plut.* 695. When it is associated with free men in comedy, the point is usually that circumstances have reduced them to such desperate measures: so it is imagined as the last resort of the men in *Lys.* (1099), the young, handsome men in the utopia of *Eccl.* will have to masturbate because the ugly men will have priority access to the attractive women (690–709), and the soldiers of the Trojan War are imagined as masturbating and bugging each other for ten years in the pursuit of one *hetaira* (Eub. fr. 118 K.-A.). However there are no such desperate circumstances for Strepsiades at *Nub.* 734. That the proverb "a Lydian at noon" refers to masturbation further suggests that a predilection for masturbation was perceived as unhellenic and therefore perhaps slavish (cf. Olson 1998, 129). I would take similarly the frequent association of satyrs with masturbation in art (cf. Dover 1978, 97).

102 Sex takes place during the day, though not specifically at noon, in a number of Homeric passages: one thinks of the deception of Zeus at *Il.* 14.153–369, the lay of Demodokus at *Od.* 8.266–366, or the tryst of Aphrodite and Anchises in the Homeric hymn. From these examples and the passage under discussion one gets the impression that day is the time for *illicit* sex of all kinds. In that vein, it may be that Catullus 32 and *Ov. Am.* 1.5 play on a tradition of trysts at noon that existed already in Greek literature, though perhaps also on a Hellenistic tradition of divine epiphanies at that time, as Papanghelis 1989 would have it. McKeown 1989, 105–6 directs us to the discussion of the proper time for coitus at *Plut. Mor.* 653B–655D, where it is claimed that daytime sex is characteristic of adulterers (ὡς οὐκ ἀνδρὸς ἀλλὰ μοιχοῦ λυσσῶντος οὔσαν τὴν μεθημερινὴν ἀκρασίαν, 655A), interestingly with the authority of Homer, who, it is pointed out, does not depict any of his heroes engaged in daytime sex except for the adulterer Paris. The Plutarchan discussion refrains from mentioning that in this respect Paris is like the Homeric gods.

person whether he is a slave or not.¹⁰³

The two professions listed at *Lys.* 404–19, χρυσοχόος (goldsmith) and σκυτοτόμος (cobbler), comprise two of the five occupations listed for the slaves who had been sold at public auction among the property confiscated from the Hermokopidae.¹⁰⁴ These slaves were sold and listed with their occupations on a public monument by 412; we could hardly have more exactly contemporary evidence for the possible slave status of these artisans.

As in the case of mule-grooms, there is also late fourth century evidence for several χρυσοχόοι on the silver φιάλαι that record the results of the trials of freedmen (*IG II²* 1558 55–57, 1559 22–23); this would indicate that both slaves and freedmen could be goldsmiths in the late fourth century, unless we follow the recent arguments of Meyer 2010 (in which case the *phialai* inscriptions would indicate that these particular goldsmiths were free metics).

On the other hand, Demosthenes claims that in 348 his enemy Meidias ruined some golden crowns, which he had commissioned as a dithyrambic *chorēgos*, by invading the home of the goldsmith (Dem. 21.16). Regardless of the truth of this claim, the principle applies that an orator will not describe a situation which is impossible or even particularly improbable; to do so would obviously harm his case. Therefore an Athenian audience in 348 would have found nothing unusual in the idea of a goldsmith with a house. But the passage does not necessarily imply that the goldsmith *owned* his house (which he could do only if he were a citizen or one of those few metics on whom a grant of οικίας ἔγκτησις had been bestowed). The house could be rented, in which case he could be an ordinary metic or even one of those slaves who brought their masters a fixed sum regularly (an ἀποφορά), if we imagine that these slaves were allowed to live on their own, paying the rent with that portion of their income in excess of the ἀποφορά. There is no direct evidence for this latter phenomenon, but it stands to reason that if some slaves were allowed free run of their workshops (as were the leather-workers discussed below), they might also be allowed to live on their own.¹⁰⁵ Certainly this appears to have been the case with a certain public slave in the fourth century.¹⁰⁶ Unfortunately the written testimony of this goldsmith at Dem. 21.22 does not help to determine his status, for it is almost certainly a forgery from later antiquity.¹⁰⁷ Nonetheless the jurors may have envisioned a free goldsmith in this situation (though they would not assume that he owned the house, and thus may have thought of him as a metic).

The status of cobblers in the evidence is similarly distributed among free, freed, and slave. We have already seen that two cobblers are listed among the slaves in the property of the Hermokopidae, a monument put up sometime around 412. On the other hand, the same occupational title is given to one of the free men whose property is being sold on the same *stēlē*. As is the case with goldsmiths, there are several fourth century *phialē* inscriptions where the dedicator is a cobbler (*IG II²* 1556 40; 1577 4). According to the traditional interpretation, this

¹⁰³ Olson 1998, 129.

¹⁰⁴ *IG I³* 421–30. Two slave cobblers (σκυτοτόμοι) are listed among the property of Adeimantos at 426 14, 15. On the other hand, the same *stēlē* has a free cobbler at 25. We find a slave goldsmith (χρυσόχο[ο]ς, misprinted as χρυσοχό[ο]ς in *IG*) at 422 78. The other professions listed are ὀβελισκοποιός, ὀνηλάτης, and τραπέζοποιός. The majority of the slaves are listed by ethnic. Cf. Pritchett (1956) 279–80.

¹⁰⁵ The existence of such slaves would not necessarily imply that they are the χωρὶς οἰκοῦντες of Dem. 4.36–37. Cf. Kazakévich 2008. For an argument that these people were indeed slaves, cf. Hansen 1991, 121.

¹⁰⁶ Pittalacus. Cf. Aeschin. 1.54 and the discussion in Hunter 2006.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. MacDowell 1990, 245–46. Most damning is the name Pammenes, which does not otherwise appear until the second century BC.

would show that a cobbler could be a slave and subsequently a freedman in the fourth century. At Aeschin. 1.97 nine or ten "slave craftsmen of the leather-working profession" (οικέτας δημιουργοὺς τῆς σκυτοτομικῆς τέχνης) and their supervisor (who is distinguished from them in that he is expected to bring his master a daily ἀποφορά of three obols to their two) are listed as part of an inheritance. These slaves apparently constituted the staff of an entire leather-working workshop or ἐργαστήριον. Therefore in 346 there were at least ten slave σκυτοτόμοι.

At *Eq.* 740 cobblers are among the low-class professions to which Demos is said to give his favors just like an *erōmenos* (the implication being that *erōmenoi* generally have poor taste in which *erastai* they favor). The choice of a list of low-class professions here is determined to some extent by the conventional depiction of Kleon as a tanner; nonetheless it seems likely that the cobblers mentioned here, along with the other low-class professions, are envisioned as citizens of low repute, since the point of the metaphor is that the Athenian *dēmos* selects such men to be its leaders. Likewise at *Pl. Prt.* 324c it is clear that the cobblers in question must be citizens. Cobblers are of course continually a subject of discussion in Plato, mostly without firm implications for their juridical status; but when rarely such an indication is made it appears that they are thought of as low-class citizens. This stands in contrast to the epigraphical sources and the passage in Aeschines, where there is more evidence of slave cobblers.

A number of passages in classical sources portray cobblers in a negative light without actually implying anything about their juridical status. Thus at *Eccl.* 385 cobblers are pale like women (presumably because they work inside all day). At *Pl. Tht.* 180d Socrates implies that cobblers are the stupidest of men (and generally the view of cobblers in Plato is negative when they are thought of as real people and not neutrally as an illustration of one thing or another).

In some respects, then, the spirits of *Thesm.* 491–92 and *Lys.* 404–19 are similar. In each case a male character expresses disapproval at hypothetical but allegedly typical instances of free women who have intercourse with low-class people. In the former passage some of these low-class people are quite explicitly slaves, while others (some at least of the mule-grooms) will be free; in the latter the juridical status of the goldsmith and the cobbler are left to the imagination of the audience in a societal context where both these professions certainly included both slaves and free men. But in the case of the cobbler, the second and final example listed by the *proboulos*, there may be cues in what is said to indicate that he is a slave.

It is worth remembering that *Lysistrata* and *Thesmophoriazusae* were produced only months apart in 411. They are not definitely assigned to their respective festivals, but on internal criteria it is usual to place *Lysistrata* at the Lenaea earlier in the year. On this reading a relatively subtle but quite graphic reference to sex between free women and slaves or the slavish (*Lys.* 404–19) gave way to a more direct (if less sustained) approach, in which the women's lovers are not merely the juridically undefined practitioners of a banausic profession but explicitly slaves and mule-grooms, an archetypically slavish profession (*Thesm.* 491–92). Perhaps the delight the audience is clearly meant to take in the appropriation of the technical language of the professions of goldsmith and cobbler to describe intercourse would have been impeded by too clear a reference to the juridical status of these men. The relative brevity of the more explicit reference in the *Thesmophoriazusae*, on this view, would be necessary out of good taste. On this model the graphic detail of Dionysus' song in the *Frogs* (542–48, see below) could be regarded as less potentially offensive because it deals with a dancing girl and not a free woman. Likewise Cario in *Wealth*, who is truly transgressive in the sexual insults that he uses against the chorus of old

men, deploys only a rather heavy innuendo (as I argue) in his conversation alone with his master's wife (which may well have been transgressive enough to be edgy in 388).

Part 1.3: Slaves and Free Women in Comic Fragments

Three comic fragments may reflect discussion of sexual relations between free women and slaves. Though in each case the fragmentary nature of the evidence places this interpretation not completely beyond doubt, it seems certain that at least one and possibly all of them do refer to such activity, especially in light of the comic passages discussed above (and especially *Thesm.* 491). The notes on each fragment in Kassel-Austin do indicate this interpretation, and to that extent the treatment of these fragments here is orthodox.¹⁰⁸ In Ar. fr. 592 K.-A. (Pap. Ox. 212, from an unknown play) one in a group of women who have just been discussing the use of dildos (the text is fragmentary, but this much is clear) makes the following suggestion:¹⁰⁹

- B. φέρ', εἰ [δ]ὲ τοῖς θεράπουσι κοινωσ[αίμεθα]
 τὸ πρ[ᾶ]γμα, τί ἂν εἴη; λάθρα τεπια[
 A. ἐγὼ μ[ἐ]ν οὔτε π. ὅτερον αὐτησ[

Speaker B: Come, what if we should undertake the matter together with [share the penis with] our slaves? In secret... Speaker A: I neither before... Ar. fr. 592.29–31

We could suppose a line of thought here similar to what is implied at *Thesm.* 491–92, where the disguised kinsman of Euripides claims that women have sex with slaves and mule-grooms only if they do not have anyone else (ἦν μὴ ᾿χωμεν ἕτερον, 492). A group of women reduced to masturbation (itself a slavish act, at least for men in comedy) would have exactly the level of desperation necessary to go to their male slaves for satisfaction.¹¹⁰ The context and the use of the word "in secret" makes it quite probable, in my view, that this fragment does indeed contain the suggestion of sex with male slaves (note the masculine τοῖς). This would be true even if πρᾶγμα were taken simply to mean "the matter", but it is also a well-established euphemism for "penis" favored especially by women in Aristophanic comedy.¹¹¹ Likewise the verb κοινῶω in the middle voice can mean either "to undertake [accusative] together with [dative]" (*LSJ* s.v. II.1) or "to share [accusative] with [dative]" (the middle with active meaning, *LSJ* s.v. I.2). Engaging in a common struggle with their slaves is already a euphemism, but sharing a "thing" with them is more explicit, especially given the parallels.

Clearly τεπια[at the end of 30 is gibberish; the restoration βινοίμεθ' ἂν recommended by Papabasileios would support my reading, but is unprovable (given female speakers we might expect a euphemism rather than the unapologetically explicit βινεῖν, but of course any number of euphemistic restorations could fit the meter and still maintain the sense advocated by Papabasileios). From what we have of the other speaker's response it appears that she is about to

108 Cf. also Austin and Olson 2004, 202.

109 This fragment was assigned to the second *Thesmophoriazusae* by its original editors, Grenfell and Hunt, but that is merely an educated guess.

110 For masturbation as a slavish act, cf. my footnote on Datis above.

111 Cf. *Lys.* 23, 26, 661, 994; there may be puns on this usage at *Nub.* 196–97, *Thesmo.* 581, and *Eccl.* 1089. Cf. Henderson 1991, 116.

repudiate this suggestion (from sense alone I think that πρότερον is by far more likely than the other possible reading in 31, which would be πότερον or "fatter"), but unfortunately the end of 31 and the next few lines are completely missing from the papyrus. By line 35, which exists entire because the line in the papyrus has been matched to a one-line quotation at Ath. 15.60 p. 701b (this is how we know that the play is Aristophanic), the conversation has moved on to a parody of a tragedy by Agathon (ἐκφέρετε πεύκας κατ' Ἀγάθωνα φωσφόρους), so that it appears that the matter may have been dropped. But the suggestion itself, as at *Thesm.* 491–92, is interesting. It shows that this subject could be and was broached in comedy, and therefore that to some at least of the audience it would be funny (though we might imagine that the laughter so elicited was often uneasy).

Another potentially relevant fragment (Pap. Ox. 2741) comes from Eupolis' *Marikas*, but there the interpretation is less secure:

καὶ γὰρ αἱ γυναῖκ[ε]ς ὄσαι μ[ὲν ἄν] νεανίας ξυνῶσ[ι
καταγελῶνται, [ὄσαι δ'].[.] καὶ δούλοισιν
ὠφελοῦνται·

For also the women who have sex with young men are mocked ...(?)...and they are helped by male slaves.
Eup. fr. 192.100–102 K.-A.

The loss of the middle of 101 and the last half of 102 is unfortunate. The subject is definitely women who involve themselves in trysts, but is the point about being helped by slaves a euphemism for sex or simply a reference to their help in arranging and concealing these trysts (as at *Thesm.* 340–41)? We cannot know for certain. But the idea of a male slave facilitating an affair for his mistress is problematic, because in Aristophanic comedy slave attendants belong to the same gender as their masters or mistresses.¹¹² Indeed, it is a female slave (*doulē*) who is imagined as helping her mistress at *Thesm.* 340–41. But the idea that only *female* slaves act as emissaries of their mistresses in adulterous affairs is not confined to comedy; the nurse in Euripides' *Hippolytus* (433–668) plays a similar role, albeit against the wishes of her mistress, who would rather keep her desire for her step-son hidden. Likewise Eratosthenes gains access to the wife of Euphiletos through the female slave (θεράπαινα) of the latter's household who was responsible for buying supplies from the market, and Eratosthenes' former lover sends an old woman (presumably a slave) to Euphiletos to warn him (Lysias 1.8, 15). Because forensic narrative must be plausible to be effective, we can infer that adulteresses were normally imagined as being helped by female rather than male slaves. On the other hand, if we are meant to envision the slaves of both the woman and her lover as helpers, *douloisin* could certainly refer to a group of slaves of both genders. Either way, the instrumental dative rather than the genitive of personal agent after ὑπό objectifies the slaves in question. I have printed the more conservative text now in Kassel-Austin, but it is worth mentioning Luppe's restoration of line 101, which Austin printed a decade earlier in *CGFP*.¹¹³ From the isolated sequence]ονη[in 105

112 Mactoux 1999, 25–27 discusses this rule and how, despite its reflection to some extent of a real phenomenon in Athenian life, its rigidity pushes the bounds of credibility: "D'une manière générale la systématique de cette forme de division sexuelle est telle qu'elle peut friser l'invraisemblance" (25). An excellent example is the male "nurse" named Manes who attends Cinesias and holds his infant at *Lysistrata* 845–908.

113 Austin 1973, 98–99.

(where the subject is still apparently the same, at least as it appears from all that remains of lines 103 and 104, νεανισκο[and]δουλο[respectively) and by comparison with *Thesm.* 491, Luppe filled the space between the relatively likely restoration ὄσαι δ' and the preserved καὶ δούλοισιν with the word [ὄνηλάται]σ[ι] or "mule-drivers", which would certainly then indicate a sexualized meaning of ὠφελεῖν. While this reading is tantalizing, it is quite precarious; ultimately we cannot be certain about this fragment.

The preceding fragments, like the other passages discussed in this section, talk *about* slaves without implying that the slaves in question ever actually appeared as characters in the play. In contrast to these, there is one Aristophanic fragment that provides possible evidence of a slave character who is said to have sex with his mistress:

ὄστις ἐν ἠδυσμοῖς
στρώμασι παννυχίζων
τὴν δέσποιναν ἐρείδεις

You who party all night, banging the mistress on sweet-smelling sheets.

Ar. fr. 715 K.-A.

The crucial issue is the identity of the addressee of this lyric passage, which will depend on how we take the definite article τὴν. I have translated it as "the" above to preserve the ambiguity inherent in the fragment, but if we had a context a decent translation into English would employ the implied possessive adjective. Would this be "your", "our", or "my" mistress? Any one of these options is conceivable within the right context. Either of the first two will mean that the addressee is a slave, who is therefore imagined as cuckolding his master. If the speaker is also a slave, such a passage would be extremely interesting to the present study; we would have a pair of slaves undermining the authority of the master in a manner not unlike the slave pairs that introduce several Aristophanic prologues and characterize their masters as insane in the process (cf. *Knights*, *Wasps*, *Peace*) or the pair of slaves who speak the second prologue of the *Frogs* (738–829), except that the instrument of this undermining would be cuckoldry. Of course the context of this fragment can hardly be a prologue, for it is lyrical, and that is a significant but not insurmountable impediment to reading it as an instance of the kind of undermining that we see chiefly in prologue or pseudo-prologue scenes.

If on the other hand we consider attributing the passage to the chorus, on the grounds that they are typically given more lines of lyric than individual actors, the definite article will almost certainly mean "your" mistress,¹¹⁴ the addressee will be a slave, and the possibility arises of a slave character who is being celebrated by the chorus and to that extent has at least temporarily taken on the role of comic hero, as happens to Xanthias in the part of the *Frogs* where he repeatedly exchanges clothes with his master (590–604).

If τὴν here means "my", a slave will be addressing his or her master or a third party. At the

114 Unless we have a chorus of domestic slaves all belonging to the same master, which seems highly unlikely. If such a chorus did exist, the point presumably would be to mock an extremely wealthy individual. There were twenty-four people in a comic chorus, and if their master were also a character in the play, he would still need the various attendants that accompany free people on the comic stage, so that there might be closer to thirty slaves of the same household involved. Under such circumstances it would be impossible to avoid the impression of extraordinary wealth.

least, then, in this fragment a slave comments in graphic terms on the sexual life of his or her mistress; in itself this would not be an insignificant phenomenon. The same sort of frank involvement is much in evidence on the part of a certain *oiketēs* in *Peace*.¹¹⁵ Any imaginable context for this fragment has it contributing to the evidence for the involvement of slaves in the sexual sphere of their masters in Aristophanic comedy, but without knowing what the context is we cannot know exactly where this fragment fits in the distribution of that evidence.

Conclusion to Chapter One

In this chapter I have shown that the idea of sexual intercourse between free women and slaves is exploited in serious and humorous Greek literature for ideological and comedic purposes. I have also looked closely at references to this phenomenon in the texts of extant comedy and in the comic fragments, showing that they function in this genre in particular not only to elicit a laugh from the audience but also to accomplish particular ideological effects not necessarily directly related to master-slave relations, such as emphasizing the distinction between a truly "free" class of citizens with respectable occupations and the "slavish" people who practice the banausic occupations. Having thus established the miscegenation of male slaves and free women in comedy and elsewhere as a subject of ideological import and as a symbolic playing field even for seemingly unrelated class issues, in the second chapter I will treat the actual staging of sexually transgressive speaking slave male characters who attempt to upstage their masters with sexual humor and to usurp the sexual role of the master or of other free people. Such characters likewise have a comic and an ideological function to fulfill for the benefit of an audience composed primarily of masters.

115 Cf. Walin 2009.

Chapter Two: Sexually Presumptive Male Slaves in Aristophanic Comedy

In this chapter I argue that Old Comedy sometimes brings sexually presumptive male slaves onto the stage, and that an audience composed primarily of masters was accustomed to identify with such slave characters in order to experience a level of transgression unavailable to them as free people. I take it as axiomatic that vicarious participation in the transgression of the rules of ordinary life was part of the pleasure of Old Comedy for its audience; in order to experience the transgression of the taboo against sexual relations between male slaves and free women, the audience had to identify with an impudent male slave character. The context of the comic festival did much already to ameliorate the potentially unsettling aspects of such an identification, but we also find occasionally additional safeguards, such as the presentation of particularly scandalous material as a fiction *within* the already fictional world of the comedy or the extensive use of innuendo (at its most artful taking the form of double-jokes at once obscene and not, depending on how one chooses to take them). At the same time, and quite apart from the issue of audience identification, comic convention was tending increasingly at the end of the fifth and the beginning of the fourth century toward the concentration of the sexual, scatological, and gluttonous elements of comedy in slave rather than free characters, apparently because such behavior was considered more typical of slaves than of free people *in real life* (a consideration that, for whatever reason, was not so much in operation at the beginning of Aristophanes' career).

Slave characters who make sexual comments about free women to their masters or the audience are fairly common; they are either ignored or indulged by their masters, but never punished, even when these comments (and in at least one case the manhandling of what is at least notionally a *free* female character) seem to encroach on the sexual territory of their masters or other free men. Indeed, in one case it seems that a master actually sets up a symbolic sexual encounter between his daughter and a mute male slave (the procession in honor of Phales in the *Acharnians*). But there are also cases where a slave attempts to sexually usurp his master without his consent, either in the face of his active opposition (so Xanthias in the *Frogs*, when he is wearing his master's Herakles costume) or when he is absent (so the innuendo between Cario and his master's wife in *Wealth*). Some such acts of usurpation are relegated in their most extreme expression to the status of a fiction within a fiction, such as the song Dionysus sings imagining in detail what it would have been like if Xanthias had been allowed to take his master's place at Persephone's banquet.

Having examined in the first chapter the references to sexual relations between free women and slaves outside comedy, some talk *about* slaves and free women in comedy, and the evidence of the comic fragments on this matter, we are now ready to look with fresh eyes at certain slave characters in our extant comedies who behave in sexually presumptive ways: that is, slaves who make sexual comments about free women, grope them, attempt to replace their masters in sexual situations, and engage in innuendo in conversation with free women. Some of these aspects of their behavior have been recognized individually (e.g. in commentaries at the line in question) but never considered together as a trend in the characterization of slaves; in other cases I establish new readings of passages that up to this point have been (as I argue) poorly understood. In Part I, I consider how Dikaiopolis' exploitation of his slaves in sexual humor in the phallic procession in the *Acharnians* may provide a useful model for how slave characters work in other passages. Parts II, III, and IV examine the humorous use of sexually presumptive slave

characters in *Peace*, *Frogs*, and *Wealth* respectively.

Part 2.1: *Acharnians* 241–79

Before we begin our study of these *speaking* slave characters, all of whom play a very active role in the humor, we will benefit greatly from a study of the phallic procession at *Acharnians* 241–79, a context replete with sexual jesting, where Dikaiopolis uses *mute* slave characters to achieve a degree of sexual transgression he would have been unable to attain on his own.¹¹⁶ This procession seems to have been an occasion for visual and verbal sexual jesting, instigated by Dikaiopolis himself, involving his naive daughter, who serves as *kanēphoros* ("basket-carrier") for the sacrifice, and the two mute slave characters, one of whom is named Xanthias,¹¹⁷ who are instructed to stand behind her with a model phallus. I would argue that the sexual play begins immediately when the procession comes onto the stage:

- Δι. εὐφημεῖτε, εὐφημεῖτε.
 προῖτω ᾿ς τὸ πρόσθεν ὀλίγον ἢ κανηφόρος.
 ὁ Ξανθίας τὸν φαλλὸν ὀρθὸν στησάτω.
 κατάθου τὸ κανοῦν, ὧ θύγατερ, ἴν' ἀπαρξώμεθα.
 Θυ. ὧ μῆτερ, ἀνάδος δεῦρο τὴν ἐτήρυσιν,
 ἴν' ἔτνος καταχέω τοῦλατῆρος τουτουί. (245)
 Δι. καὶ μὴν καλὸν γ' ἔστ'.

Dikaiopolis: Keep the sacred silence, keep silent! Let the basket-girl come forward a little. Let Xanthias stand the (*his*) phallus erect. Put down the basket, daughter, so that we may begin the sacrifice. Daughter: Mother, hand the ladle up here, so I can pour my pea-soup over this banger-cake! Di: It looks great!
Ach. 241–46

As becomes clear from the text at 259–60, Dikaiopolis wants his daughter to stand directly in front of the slaves, who are holding an oversized model of an erect penis. When he tells her to come forward a little at 242, he is already positioning her correctly to set up the joke. After making sure that Xanthias is holding "the" phallos (easily interpreted as "his" phallos) erect,¹¹⁸ he orders his daughter to set down the basket, for which she will have to bend over, all the while with the slaves, whom their master has put there, holding a giant penis directly behind her. At this point the visual cues and the verbal ambiguity at 243 constitute a "Playful frame", to borrow Robson's terminology: the audience now expects a sexual joke.¹¹⁹ In this instance they are not disappointed, for the daughter's diction, while on the one hand appropriate for the context

116 Halliwell 2002, 120–26 is surely right to argue that this passage embodies the comic phenomenon of "institutionalized shamelessness" (a concept he further explains as "the comic violation of norms of public decency and inhibition prevalent in Athenian culture"). But he does not consider the role of the mute slaves in this scene.

117 In fact we would not even suspect that there was another mute slave in this passage but for the use of the dual (σφῶν) in the command at 259.

118 Henderson 1991, 112 demonstrates that ὀρθός ("straight, upright") commonly means "erect" in the sexual sense in comedy.

119 Cf. Robson 2006, 29–34.

"asking one's mother for a ladle", also conforms to an otherwise attested comic sexual code.¹²⁰ "Pea soup" (ἔνυος) is used to indicate vaginal secretion in comedy, from which ἐτήρησις (literally "pea-soup ladle") is clearly intelligible as "penis".¹²¹ Moreover, ἐλατήρ ("banger-cake") is employed here for a pun on the verb ἐλαύνω in its well-attested sexual sense.¹²² So Henderson 1991, 144 includes it among the various cakes that can indicate the vulva based on its use here. The "dirty version" of what the daughter says at 244–45, heard by the entire audience, will have been construed as "Give me the penis, so I can wet this vulva" (this will be particularly effective if her positioning of the cake she is holding and pointing at (τουτουί, 245) is unfortunate). Spoken as she is bent over, with the slaves holding the erect phallos behind her, her words could hardly not be taken sexually.

Dikaiopolis' comment about the ritual appropriateness of his daughter's preparation of this cake (καὶ μὴν καλὸν γ' ἔστ', 246) in this context runs the risk of being taken as an endorsement of the sexual joke (presumably in honor of Phales? cf. the song he sings at 263–79) that he has so successfully orchestrated and even as a sort of vicarious, incestuous participation in his slaves' figurative penetration of his daughter.

That the daughter bends over with the phallos behind her at 243 is inevitable, but my interpretation that she is still bent over when she speaks the inadvertently sexual lines at 244–45 may seem tendentious, especially in light of her use of ἀναδιδόναί. Olson 2002, 143 takes "hand up" (ἀνάδοξ) as an indication that the daughter has already stood up again and is asking her mother to get her the ladle from the basket that she has just put down. But coming in the line immediately after she is told to put the basket down this does not make much sense. Possibly her mother is at this point watching from the orchestra, while the procession itself is on the slightly raised stage; the daughter may even drop the ladle off the stage while getting it out of the basket, thus prompting her to bend further over after it and finally to ask for assistance from her mother. If on the other hand mother and daughter are together onstage but in front of the phallos, the staging treats them both as sexual objects, for on Olson's interpretation first the daughter at 243 and then the mother at 244–45 will bend over to access the basket. But I would take the concentration of the sexualized speech on the daughter as evidence (as far as it goes) that the staging should be such that the visual joke, too, focuses on her. I take it as axiomatic that the lines spoken by the daughter and the immediately prior obvious positioning of the slaves with their phallic device demand a sexualized staging of some kind.

At 259–60, after a prayer to Dionysus and some additional instructions to his daughter, the master again instructs the slave to hold the (his) phallos upright, this time specifying that he do so behind his daughter:

ὦ Ξανθία, σφῶν δ' ἐστὶν ὀρθὸς ἐκτέος
ὁ φαλλὸς ἐξόπισθε τῆς κανηφόρου.
ἐγὼ δ' ἀκολουθῶν ἄσομαι τὸ φαλλικόν.

120 I do not mean to argue that the daughter's character should be construed as intending to make a dirty joke, but rather that the joke is intended by Aristophanes and understood by the audience without the character herself necessarily being "in on it".

121 *Lys.* 1061; *Eccl.* 845; Alexis fr. 168.7 K.-A. The usage of ζωμός ("meat broth") at *Pax* 716 and 885 is similar. Cf. Henderson 1991, 145. I would also argue that ζωμός is so used at *Eq.* 1173–76 (see Appendix A).

122 The only other appearance of ἐλατήρ in Aristophanic comedy (*Eq.* 1183) is also a pun on ἐλαύνω. For the verb as a sexual euphemism, cf. Henderson 1991, 162.

σὺ δ', ὦ γυναῖκα, θεῶ μ' ἀπὸ τοῦ τέγουσ. πρόβα.

Xanthias, you two should hold the phallos straight behind the basket-girl. But I will follow singing the phallic song. And you, wife, watch from the roof. Onward! *Ach.* 259–62

Henderson argues that there is a joke here: "the phallus" refers both to the model phallus carried by the slave and to the slave's own penis (just as I have argued for 243). He cites numerous comic passages to establish the sexual potential of "behind" (ἐξόπισθε).¹²³ The staging of the procession, with two slaves carrying a giant phallus following a young woman who has already been verbally and visually objectified, followed in turn by Dikaiopolis himself, is itself an elaborate sexual figure; the two slaves holding the giant phallus have become a visual augmentation of Dikaiopolis' own comic phallus, which threatens the generic female figure represented in this case by his daughter. That the "phallic song" sung by Dikaiopolis at 263–79 is so thoroughly and unapologetically priapic supports this interpretation.

In this scene, then, the male mute slaves are objectified as much as the daughter and the imagined female slave (Thratte) mentioned in the song itself; they are likewise mere instruments through which the master, Dikaiopolis, orchestrates his sexual jokes and displays his sexual potency in honor of the god Phales. It is clear from his song that Phales (a deity about whom we otherwise know very little) is a god of specifically *transgressive* sexuality. Dikaiopolis calls him not only "fellow-*kōmast*" and "night-wander" but also "adulterer" and "pederast" (μοιχέ, παιδεραστά, 265). Likewise the sexual escapade imagined at 271–75 is transgressive in that it involves the rape of another man's slave (even if she is stealing firewood).¹²⁴ Furthermore, at the end of Dikaiopolis' hymn to Phales (277–78) is a previously unrecognized reference to cunnilingus, typically portrayed in Aristophanes as a transgressive and abominable act.¹²⁵ It seems appropriate, then, that Dikaiopolis should honor the god of transgressive sex by engaging in transgressive sex himself, using his mute male slaves as his instruments. Through them he is also able to participate in a symbolic violation of the taboo against sexual intercourse between male slaves and free women. He "borrows" their slave status from them in order to commit an offense which by his very social status he is incapable of committing himself, while at the same time using them to distance himself (and the audience) somewhat from the incestual implications of a procession where he and his daughter stand on opposite ends of an enormous phallus. In this way the audience can take delight in the transgression of multiple sexual boundaries (between a free woman and male slaves, father and daughter) while taking advantage of the distancing effect to avoid being threatened or offended.

This first instance of humor derived from the sexual interaction of slaves and free women in our extant comedy provides a model for how the humor of other such passages may work. Just

123 Henderson 1991, 112; cf. Sommerstein 2009b, 147 n. 41.

124 Halliwell 2002, 136–37 n. 6 is correct, I think, to suppose that there is something fundamentally transgressive and even hubristic here about (what we would call) raping another person's slave. See also my discussion of 271–75 in Chapter Four.

125 Dikaiopolis sings: "If you (Phales) drink with us, in the morning after the all-night party/hangover you will slurp at Peace's bowl." (ἐὰν μεθ' ἡμῶν ξυμπίης, ἐκ κραιπάλης / ἔωθεν εἰρήνης ῥοφήσει τρύβλιον, 277–78). Both the verb ῥοφεῖν ("to slurp") and the noun τρύβλιον ("bowl") are part of the shared (i.e. not exclusively Aristophanic, as fragments show) comic vocabulary of cunnilingus jokes. Cf. *Pax* 716; *Eccl.* 847; Henderson 1991, 143, 186. The sexualized personification of feminine abstract concepts is so common in comedy that it can happen here, in a comedy where a personified Peace is not a character, for the sake of a joke.

as the character Dikaiopolis uses his male slaves to access a greater degree of sexual transgression than he himself, by virtue of his social status, can attain, so too the masters who constitute the primary audience of Athenian comedy—who expected to see all sorts of transgressive behavior, sexual and otherwise—are occasionally made to identify with slave characters precisely because the low status of these characters makes them capable of greater levels of transgression and impudence than the audience themselves can hope to access. For what it is worth, we should recall Aristotle's derivation of comedy from "the phallic things" (τὰ φαλλικά, *Poetics* 1449a). If by this expression Aristotle intends something like the phallic song (τὸ φαλλικόν, *Acharnians* 261) sung by Dikaiopolis and perhaps the entire concomitant procession and ritual, we should expect a shared spirit between these φαλλικά and comedy. Indulgence in (specifically sexual) transgression certainly seems to loom large both in our "phallic thing" in the *Acharnians* and in Old Comedy as a whole.

At first it might seem surprising that the Athenian audience occasionally enjoyed watching the escapades of a speaking slave character who subjected free women to sexual comment, groping, and innuendo. But there is already evidence for audience identification with low-class, disreputable, sexually transgressive characters in what remains of iambic poetry.¹²⁶ The Cologne Epode (Archilochus fr. 196a) certainly comprises a first-person account of the seduction of a free, though not married, young woman. Likewise various fragments of Hipponax (14, 16, 17, 84W) offer glimpses of sexual encounters described in the sexual metaphors or obscene language one would expect in comedy. While none of these protagonists (as far as we know) are to be imagined as slaves, they are emphatically low figures.

In Aristophanes' *Birds* the chorus elaborates for the spectators the many benefits of having wings, one of which would be the ability to fly away and have sex with a married woman upon seeing her husband in the section of the theater reserved for the *boulē* (793–96). This is partially humor at the expense of a substantial portion of the audience, and indeed jokes that insult either the whole audience or specific targets within it are typically Aristophanic. But there is also an element of identification with the adulterer here, conforming to the pattern of transgression (sexual and otherwise) in the behavior of comic heroes. One imagines that Athenian reactions to seeing sexually presumptive slave characters onstage would walk a similar line between audience identification with a low, transgressive figure and the pleasure of laughing at oneself and one's class, knowing full well all the while that the threatening figure is a phantom, a free actor only pretending to be a slave, and that the free women in question are likewise not women at all, but other male actors, comically padded.

Part 2.2: A Word on the οἰκέτης at *Peace* 819–1126

Up to this point our discussion has addressed only passages of comedy where sexual relations between male slaves and free women are discussed or hinted at (Chapter One). That such passages exist is by this point beyond doubt. But the transmitted text seldom explicitly indicates that such sexual relations are consummated when they involve a speaking male slave character (the apparent exception to this rule is *Peace* 873–74, which has its own distancing effect built into Theoria's status as a symbol). Instead innuendo is the order of the day. There is a tendency in the behavior of several Aristophanic slave characters to sexualize the discourse, and the

126 For the relationship between the iambographic tradition and Old Comedy, cf. Rosen 1988.

unnamed *oiketēs at Peace* 819–1126 in particular constantly resorts to sexual jokes at the expense of the two mute female handmaidens of Peace, Opora and Theoria, who are to be given in marriage to his master and the *boulē* respectively, and later (as I argue) sexualizes the goddess herself in a prayer. I have discussed this slave character in detail elsewhere, and I will therefore confine myself to a summary of the relevant behaviors here. Those seeking a more detailed analysis should refer themselves to my recent article in *Classical Quarterly*.¹²⁷

First, it is quite likely that this slave character is the same as one of those in the prologue of the play; Sommerstein and Olson both argue that he is the more dominant slave who delivers the prologue and speaks with Trygaeus as he flies to heaven on the back of the giant dung-beetle.¹²⁸ The characters of the two slaves are certainly similarly impudent: the one in the prologue describes his master as mad, but not mad after the fashion of the audience, thereby mocking both his master and the audience at the same time (54–55). They also share a penchant for sexual and scatological humor. The prologue slave's joke at 41–42 (calling the dung-beetle a portent of Zeus the Shit-Walker) is certainly an example of the latter, but probably of the former as well.¹²⁹ If the two characters are indeed one and the same, the audience may already expect a similar impertinence and dominance of the slave character when he arrives onstage again at 819.

At any rate, when the master, Trygaeus, returns home from heaven with the handmaidens of the goddess Peace, this slave character immediately establishes his licentious attitude toward the symbolic mute female characters who will marry his master on the one hand and the *boulē* on the other by implying that they are low-class prostitutes (πόρναι, 848–49). When ordered to take his master's bride-to-be, Opora ("Harvest"), into the house and have her bathed in preparation for the wedding, this slave only leaves the stage (Opora in tow) after having made a joke about her having to perform fellatio (855). This is the last line before they both leave the stage, and it is potentially telling that the audience is allowed to infer the identity of the recipient of this sex act; certainly these lines could have been acted in such a way as to imply that the slave will enjoy the sexual favors of his master's bride to be as he is meant to be preparing her for the wedding, and there are several moments in the ensuing choral ode that might lend themselves well to such an interpretation, as I have pointed out elsewhere.¹³⁰ Likewise when the slave returns to the stage after this ode to report the success of the bath, his first comment is that "the girl has been bathed, and her ass is doing fine" (ἡ παῖς λέλουται καὶ τὰ τῆς πυγῆς καλά, 868), which would seem to imply that the slave has been present during all or part of the bathing process and has found the whole thing rather stimulating. After another line and a half of language that could equally describe the preparation of food for the wedding or the preparation of Opora for sexual intercourse, the slave remarks that only a penis is needed (870), again, as with the fellatio joke at 855, without specifying who in particular should provide it.

All of this is certainly evidence for a slave character's frank admiration of his master's bride-to-be, but possibly also of the staging of a slave who is eager to cuckold his master and who may (depending on how the scene is acted and also on how audience members choose to interpret

127 Walin 2009.

128 Sommerstein 1985, 172; Olson 1998, xliii, 231.

129 The choice of the epithet "Zeus the Descender" (καταιβάτης), normally used to refer to lightning strikes, is probably meant to evoke καταβαίνειν in a sexual sense (penetration; see the many κατα- verbs with this meaning in Henderson 1991) as well as sound like σκαταιβάτης ("Shit-Walker") when pronounced closely with the final sigma of Zeus' name (Διὸς καταιβάτου, 42). Cf. Henderson 1991, 193–94.

130 Walin 2009, 33.

certain aspects of delivery and staging) be successful. At any rate, when the slave notices Theoria for the first time in the immediately following lines, he indicates that he and his master have both slept with her at Brauron (872–74). The master confirms this (875), and the slave responds with an admiration of her ass to parallel what he had said about Opora a few lines before (876). It is certainly true that this joke exploits the symbolic equivalence of the mute character Theoria with the Festival she represents, so that the reference to a sexual partner shared by master and slave is really symbolic of the shared participation of free men and slaves in the delights of such festivals that is possible in a time of peace but not in war; for this reason I would hesitate to push too far in insisting on an interpretation of the slave as fully "sexually presumptive" here. Nonetheless, that avenue of interpretation does remain open for those members of the audience who wish to venture down it. The slave character is certainly using sexual humor to dominate the stage here, but each audience member will have chosen (within limits) to what degree he wanted to view what was happening as sexually transgressive, and to what extent he wanted to identify with the slave character to experience the pleasures of such a transgression vicariously.

But regardless of the individual audience member's decision, the slave's subsequent groping of Theoria onstage at 879–80 (οὗτος, τί περιγράφεις;) is likely to have inclined them further toward an interpretation of his actions as transgressive, as is likewise the case with his comment about Theoria's vagina at 891–93. He is characterized further as sexually obsessed and in particular interested in the sexual affairs of free people by his comment that the male audience members will "give their barley" (= penises) to their wives when they get home (966–67). Moreover, I have argued elsewhere that this slave character also interrupts his master's prayer to Peace to portray that goddess as an adulterous woman (978–86);¹³¹ the master then continues the metaphor, going along with his slave's sexualization of the discourse as he has done previously. Indeed, it is worth noting that Trygaeus always either ignores or actively abets his slave's sexually presumptive actions.¹³² This stands in contrast to the behavior of the masters in *Frogs* and *Wealth*; in *Frogs* Xanthias sometimes attempts to usurp Dionysus' sexual prerogatives in the face of his active opposition, and in *Wealth* Cario typically acts when his master is absent, since they share the role of comic hero in alternating scenes throughout the play.

Part 2.3: Xanthias in the *Frogs*

Xanthias, the slave of Dionysus who remains onstage with his master for most of the first half of the *Frogs*, displays independence from and even a kind of moral superiority to his master repeatedly during his tenure onstage. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that like the unnamed slave at *Peace* 819–1126, who repeatedly makes sexual comments about the goddess Peace and her handmaidens, he makes a sexual comment about the (at least mostly) free women (and/or girls) in the chorus of initiates.¹³³ When the chorus first arrives onstage, Dionysus and Xanthias decide to hide and observe them. After the strophe ends, Xanthias picks up on the initiates' final

131 Walin 2009, 41–42.

132 I have discussed possible explanations for this phenomenon throughout Walin 2009.

133 Of course, the chorus of initiates need not be envisioned as composed entirely of Athenian citizens. The Eleusinian mysteries were open to foreigners, metics (including freedmen), and even slaves, though these last would hardly be initiated without the consent of their masters. But Xanthias does not indicate specific women with his comment; it applies to the whole female component of the chorus.

word, χορείαν ("dance"), to make a sexual joke about the female members of the chorus:

ὦ πότνια πολυτίμητε Δήμητρος κόρη,
ὡς ἡδύ μοι προσέπνευσε χοιρείων κρεῶν.

Revered mistress, daughter of Demeter, how sweet a scent of pussy blows this way!
Frogs 336–37

This joke works on several levels. First, Xanthias exploits the similarity of the Greek words "dance" and "porcine" (χορεία and χοιρεῖος respectively) and the fact that χοῖρος ("young pig") is pejorative Greek slang for the vulva (roughly equivalent to American English "pussy") to transform the chorus' hymn to Iakchos (a cult name for Dionysus, who in another aspect entirely is Xanthias' master!) into a sexual (and objectifying) joke that nonetheless still incorporates the religious element by invoking Persephone, another deity intimately connected with the Eleusinian mysteries, in the buildup to the punchline.¹³⁴ Next, this comment stands in contrast to what Dionysus says to introduce the chorus at 313–14:

ἔγωγε, καὶ δάδων γέ με
αὔρα τις εἰσέπνευσε μυστικωτάτη.

I did (hear the blowing of *auloi*), and a certain wafting of torches, most fitting for the mysteries, blew on me. *Frogs* 313–14

The correspondence between εἰσέπνευσε at 314 and προσέπνευσε at 337 is obvious, and a contrast is thereby set up between the master, who perceives the relatively innocuous wafting of the torches,¹³⁵ and the slave, who perceives what is ambiguously both a "smell of pork" and a "smell of pussy". The slave is thereby characterized in relation to his master as gluttonous, prurient, or (by far the most likely) both.¹³⁶ Certainly both of these qualities are commonly found in Aristophanic slaves.¹³⁷ The verbal correspondence also sets up Xanthias' comment as a parody of his master's, and one wonders if Dionysus' reply should be taken in the more hostile, anal sense as a "come-back" to this mockery (see below).

Just as one sees happen repeatedly in *Peace*, once the slave has sexualized the discourse, his master participates in the altered conversation on the slave's terms happily enough. Thus Dionysus replies to Xanthias at 338:

134 Neither Dover 1993, 237–38 nor Sommerstein 1996, 185 seem to recognize that χοιρείων picks up on χορείαν, though Dover does point out the correspondence of Xanthias' comment to Dionysus' at 313–14 and the double references to food and sex. Both scholars argue that both *choiros* and *chordē* probably have a sexual force here.

135 This is not to say that "torch" (δάς) in Aristophanes admits no sexual associations (cf. *Vesp.* 1372–78). But the fact that Philokleon there has to explain the torch metaphor at length to his son suggests that δάς is not a common sexual metaphor in this sense in Greek.

136 Gluttony and sexual desire are closely connected in Old Comedy, and the language of sex is often the language of food; cf. especially my arguments on Cario's role in *Wealth* below.

137 For Aristophanic slaves as gluttons: Stefanis 1980, 162–63. The gluttony of slaves becomes much more pronounced in New and Roman Comedy, though it is quite developed already in Ar. *Wealth*.

οὔκουν ἀτρέμ' ἔξεις, ἦν τι καὶ χορδῆς λάβης;

Won't you keep quiet/still then, in the hope that you may take hold of a sausage, too?

Frogs 338

I follow Seager, Dover, and Sommerstein in interpreting the sausage here as a penis reference.¹³⁸ Dover 1993, 237–38 puts the case well in asserting that despite the fact that χορδή (sausage) is not found to mean "penis" elsewhere,¹³⁹ "a sausage is so like a penis...that it is hard to believe that the audience would not see a double meaning in 339", especially considering Xanthias' immediately preceding sexual joke. Critical to the interpretation of this comment is exactly *how* Xanthias is intended to take hold of the penis, as Dover recognizes; this ambiguity was probably not present in the actual performance, where the manner of delivery will have made it clear. Is Xanthias to grab hold of a boy's penis with his hands? If so, there is no insult, but he will be invited to engage in the pederastic tradition, which (as we will see in our discussion of *Wealth* 149–59 in the next chapter) was ordinarily considered off-limits to slaves, at least by the fourth century. It is true that Dionysus is characterized as a master by extreme lenience, so that it would not perhaps be entirely surprising if he were to make such an inappropriate suggestion. The other possibility is that Xanthias is meant to "take" the penis by being anally or orally penetrated, which would be an insult, not least because the comment portrays the slave as eager for it. I think that this is the likelier reading, for, as I have argued above, Xanthias' comment about the scent of the choreuts' vaginas functions is a parody of his master's speech at 313–14, and therefore one might expect a biting response.¹⁴⁰ Further, on this interpretation the phrase "keep quiet/still" (ἀτρέμ' ἔξεις) will take on a humorous double meaning. On the one hand, Dionysus and Xanthias are eavesdropping on the chorus, and translated as "keep quiet" (cf. *Birds* 1244) the remark can therefore be taken as a comically phrased warning against giving away their presence. On the other, if the master is suggesting that the slave prepare himself to be penetrated, "keep still" (cf. *Clouds* 743; *Thesmo.* 230) will be an appropriate admonition in that context as well.¹⁴¹

The chorus of initiates continues to dominate the action with a song in praise of Iakchos (340–53), the anapests (354–71), a song in honor of a female deity called only by the epithet Σώτειρα (372–82),¹⁴² a song in honor of Demeter (385–93), and another song in honor of Iakchos (398–413), this time in three parts which are in responsion, each ending with the same refrain, "Iakchos lover of choruses, escort me" (Ἰακχε φιλοχορευτά, συμπρόπεμπέ με). In the last of those three parts sexual humor is once again introduced, this time by the chorus. In the second part they had attributed to Iakchos their ragged costume, which he introduced "for laughter and for thrift" (ἐπὶ γέλωτι / κάπ' εὐτελία, 404–05). It is this ragged clothing that provides the

138 Seager 1981, 250; Dover 1993, 237–38; Sommerstein 1996, 185.

139 Seager 1981, 250 does point out that the similarity between the two objects is noted at Hipponax 84.17W, where a different word for sausage, *allās*, is clearly used to mean "penis".

140 This argument is undermined to some extent by the fact that aggressive jokes often go unanswered in Aristophanes, even when a slave makes a joke at the expense of his master, as I have demonstrated in the case of one particular slave in Walin 2009.

141 The reference to the quiet/leisure (ἡσυχία) that will be available when it gets dark is an important element of the attempted seduction in the Cologne Epode (Archilochus fr. 196a).

142 Probably either Athena or Kore. Cf. Dover 1993, 244; Sommerstein 1996, 190–91.

material for sexual jesting in the third part, for there one of the choreuts describes in detail how he caught a glimpse of the breast of one the others, a young woman (μειρακίσκη), when it poked out from a tear in her tunic (408–13). It is the response to this last song which concerns us here:

A: ἐγὼ δ' αἰεί πως φιλακόλου–
 θός εἰμι καὶ μετ' αὐτῆς
 παίζων χορεύειν βούλομαι.

B: κάγωγε πρός.

Speaker A: But I always love to follow along, and I want to play with her and dance!

Speaker B: Me too! *Frogs* 414–15

Here the sexual humor introduced by the chorus at 408–13 is taken up by the characters. One of the speakers should be Xanthias, the other Dionysus. We might expect Dionysus to be Speaker A and therefore Xanthias to be Speaker B (the attribution adopted by Dover, Sommerstein, and Wilson), for in that case we would have some comic effect from the fact that the character Dionysus and the god Iakchos are aspects of the same divinity. On this interpretation, the chorus invites Iakchos to escort them twice with their refrain while Dionysus looks on in silence, but when they ask him a third time, this time after a sexual song about a young female choreut with an exposed breast, Dionysus the character collapses the barrier between himself and the Eleusinian divinity and finally expresses his willingness to accompany them, obviously motivated by the sexual benefit. On this reading the slave completes the single line of iambic trimeter begun by his master within this lyric interlude by interjecting "Me too!". While this is certainly an expression of sexual interest in a free woman, it is preceded by similar but more eloquent expressions from both the choreut and Dionysus.

On the other hand, given the importance of role reversal between master and slave for comic effect in this play, it might be funny if Xanthias instead of Dionysus were to respond as Speaker A, leaving the derivative "Me too!" to his master. In fact all the MSS except V V_{SI} assign the part of Speaker B to Dionysus, and Σ^{RVE} inform us that "some people" (τινὲς) held this position. One would think that these same MSS would then assign the part of Speaker A to Xanthias, but this is only the case in AMUV_{b3}Θ. The other MSS do not indicate a change of speaker, from which Dover 1993, 247 infers that it may have been generally supposed that the coryphaeus spoke the part of Speaker A. But this would not be nearly as humorous as either Dionysus or Xanthias taking the part; we should expect instead that Speaker A and Speaker B will both be characters. Dover, Sommerstein, and Wilson apparently agree, for they assign the part of Speaker A to Dionysus and that of Speaker B to Xanthias. But the reverse is equally likely and more in the spirit of role reversal that permeates the first part of the play. Therefore I would prefer to regard Xanthias as Speaker A. If that is the case, Xanthias is stepping in to try to appropriate the sexual benefits that belong to his master (in a sense, for it is Iakchos whom they invoked), just as he does later in the play (see below). Dionysus for his part merely joins in with a superfluous "Me too!". Sommerstein argues against this attribution that the master would have responded more strongly than "Me too!" to such a sexual coup from his slave, adducing comparanda from later in the play when Dionysus steps in to prevent Xanthias from taking his

place with the girls at the banquet (see below).¹⁴³ But such realistic responses are not inevitable in comedy; with strong slave characters we do find masters who let servile attacks on their masterly sexual prerogatives go unpunished, most notably Trygaios in *Peace*, whose pattern of lenience toward his oversexed slave I have demonstrated elsewhere.¹⁴⁴

In the scene where Xanthias and his master repeatedly trade costumes, much of the humor derives from the fact that when Dionysus is dressed as Herakles only characters hostile to Herakles are encountered, while his slave, who dons the lion-skin as his master is frightened each time, is first invited to a banquet (503–18) and then manages to turn a hostile situation to the detriment of his master as much as himself by volunteering his "slave", who is actually his master, for torture (605–73). It is perhaps not surprising, then, that in these scenes the audience sees a slave about to take advantage of the sexual benefits that would usually belong to his master.¹⁴⁵

As I discuss in more depth in Chapter Three, the (as I argue) female slave who announces the intimate banquet prepared by Persephone for the apparent Herakles (really Xanthias) at *Frogs* 503–20 fills her description of this banquet with food imagery that is also able to participate in a comic tradition of food-based sexual metaphors. The extent to which these metaphors are activated is unclear, but if they are activated at all they will leave the impression that the goddess is hitting on the slave disguised as a god. This impression would be confirmed by the fact that the banquet described features only a single table, an intimate setting suitable for seduction, as MacDowell and Sommerstein have argued.¹⁴⁶ Even without the activation of much or any of the potentially sexual food language, the spectators are left with the impression that Persephone is trying to seduce Herakles/Xanthias through the thinly veiled invitation of her female slave. It seems for a moment that his master's cowardice will allow Xanthias not only to experience the sexual charms of the *aulos* girl and dancing girls but also to make a pass at the goddess Persephone herself. But it is the dancing girls who evidently interest Xanthias most, as evidenced by his interruption of the slave at 515 (πῶς λέγεις; ὀρχηστρίδες;) and his reply to the invitation, immediately after the suggestion of an intimate atmosphere with himself and Persephone as the only diners:

ἴθι νυν, φράσον πρότιστα ταῖς ὀρχηστρίσιν
ταῖς ἔνδον οὔσαις αὐτὸς ὄτι εἰσέρχομαι.

Come now, first of all tell the dancing girls who are inside that I myself am coming in!
Frogs 519–20

Sommerstein 1996, 203 points out that *prōtista* here implies that the messenger should inform the dancing girls of the good news "even before conveying [Xanthias'] acceptance to Persephone". The slave slights the mistress in favor of the hired help. As Dover 1993, 259 observes, "one suspects that [Xanthias] might willingly forgo the meal in order to get at the

143 Sommerstein 1996, 193.

144 Walin 2009.

145 In this case, of course, these benefits belong properly to Herakles and thus to neither Dionysus nor his slave.

But in ordinary Athenian life it will have been masters, not their slaves, who were invited to symposia complete with fine food, wine, and dancing/*aulos* girls.

146 MacDowell 1971, 288; Sommerstein 1996, 203.

girls". Xanthias then orders his master, who is posing as his slave, to take up the baggage and follow him inside, calling him "boy" just as masters in comedy so often do (ὁ παῖς, ἀκολουθεῖ δεῦρο τὰ σκευὴ φέρων, 521). Dionysus will have none of it, but makes his slave change costume with him a second time, so that they are back to their original configuration (the slave who extends the invitation must go back inside immediately after Xanthias' reply). Xanthias complies, though not without protest. There follows a song in which the chorus praises, tongue in cheek,¹⁴⁷ the willingness of Dionysus to change his nature to fit the circumstances. Most telling is the conclusion of this song: "But to turn toward the *softer* is characteristic of a clever man with the nature of a Theramenes" (τὸ δὲ μεταστρέφεσθαι / πρὸς τὸ μαλθακώτερον / δεξιοῦ πρὸς ἀνδρός ἐστι / καὶ φύσει Θηραμένους, 539a–541). The ostensibly enthusiastic praise of proteanism is already suspect, but the deployment of the pejorative word μαλθακός (soft) makes the ironic attitude of the chorus clear, I think, from the text of the song alone.¹⁴⁸ The comment about Theramenes caps the song with a contemporary political reference, but its content still applies to Dionysus as well, who nonetheless completely misses the tone of the choral song, taking what they say at face value. He replies with a song of his own, in response to theirs and also to the corresponding pair of songs sung by the chorus and then Xanthias at 590–604. His song is quite interesting for our purposes, for it describes to the audience in vivid detail the kind of scene we might have seen had Dionysus not intervened and taken the role of the master back from his slave:

οὐ γὰρ ἂν γέλοιον ἦν, εἰ
 Ξανθίας μὲν δοῦλος ὢν ἐν
 στρώμασιν Μιλησίοις
 ἀνατετραμμένος κυνῶν ὀρ-
 χηστρίδ' εἶτ' ἤτησεν ἀμίδ', ἐ-
 γὼ δὲ πρὸς τοῦτον βλέπων
 τοῦρεβίνθου ὄραττόμην, οὐ-
 τος δ' ἅτ' ὢν αὐτὸς πανοῦργος
 εἶδε, κᾶτ' ἐκ τῆς γνάθου
 πύξ πατάξας μούξέκοψε
 τοῦ χοροῦ τοὺς προσθίους,¹⁴⁹

147 Dover 1993 does not indicate whether he takes this song seriously or ironically, but Sommerstein 1996, 204 remarks that "the chorus's praise of Dionysus is almost certainly ironical, the prudence they applaud being in fact cowardice".

148 Dover 1993, 262 and Sommerstein 1996, 204 take "turning toward the softer" to refer to getting comfortable in bed, but there is no evidence to support such a supposition. Given the ironic tone of the song, the pejorative associations of the word μαλθακός cannot have been far from the minds of the audience.

149 The MSS (followed by Dover 1993) read τοὺς χοροῦς at 548, but I have chosen to follow the emendation of van Herwerden and Kock, as do Sommerstein 1996 and Wilson 2007. On this reading χοροῦ will be a *para prosdokian* joke playing on Dionysus' double identity as a character in this play and as the god of drama himself. The scholiast at 548 detects such a joke even without the emendation, but as Sommerstein 1996, 205 argues this would require human beings to have three concentric rows of teeth and an ancient Greek custom of at least three choruses in the orchestra at once. When Galen compares the human teeth to a chorus, he compares them to only one (*De Usu Partium* 11.8): ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν χορόν τις ἔστησεν ἐν κόσμῳ δυοῖν καὶ τριάκοντα χορευτῶν, ἐπηνεῖτ' ἂν ὡς τεχνικός· ἐπεὶ δ' ὀδόντων χορὸν οὕτω καλῶς διεκόσμησεν ἢ φύσις, οὐκ ἄρα καὶ ταύτην ἐπαινεσόμεθα;

For wouldn't it have been laughable if Xanthias, a slave, topsy-turvy on Milesian blankets, had kissed a dancing girl and then asked for a chamber-pot, and I had looked at him and grabbed my dick, and he, being a scoundrel himself, had seen me, struck me with his fist, and from my jaw knocked out the front row of my...chorus? *Frogs* 542–48

We have noted above that the usurpation of a master's sexual prerogative by his slave is not ordinarily explicitly shown on the comic stage, but rather discussed in conversation or hinted at with innuendo. Here it is the master himself who chooses to dwell on the potential usurpation, creating for the audience an extraordinarily specific scenario to imagine. He emphasizes the humorousness of the idea, using the term *geloion*, and it is clear that what he intends to be funny is the ostensibly ridiculous reversal of roles. One wonders, too, to what extent laughter is triggered by the fact that this imagined role reversal is not as far removed from the master-slave pair as Dionysos might like to think, for in masterly qualities he fails abysmally throughout the play and is often enough shown up by his slave. The scenario incorporates the reversal of roles in many ways: it is the slave, not the master, who is kissing the dancing girl and giving a demeaning order (to fetch a chamber-pot) to his master.¹⁵⁰ The master, in turn, is confined to the typical role of the slave in that he must achieve his own sexual gratification by masturbating, in this case apparently with the visual aid of his master's exploits. The slave, either angered at his master's sexuality or upset because it has delayed his compliance with the order, resorts to violence against his erstwhile master and knocks out his lower front teeth (this is certainly the image evoked, despite the last minute substitution of a row of choreuts for the row of teeth).

One point bears further discussion. Dover 1993, 262 asserts that ἀνατετραμμένος (literally "overturned") must mean "lying back" here, an unparalleled meaning for the word which is suggested by the scholiastic gloss ἀνακείμενος in RV.¹⁵¹ I would argue instead that it must be taken more literally to mean "turned upside down" here, both in the general sense that his role and his master's have been flipped (so I have translated it as "topsy-turvy" above) and specifically that he has been turned upside down in relation to *strōmata*, the word used for the blankets in the song but also for the baggage carried by Xanthias throughout the play. The joke is that Xanthias would ordinarily be carrying the *strōmata*, but in this scenario (as Milesian blankets) they are supporting him. Such a joke finds its comparandum at *Wealth* 1204–7, where the old woman who participates in the procession at the end of the play carries on her head and therefore is under some *chytrai*, whereas "old woman" (γραιῦς) is also the name for the skin that would form on the top of the liquid in such pots.¹⁵²

I would argue that this imagined sexual usurpation of the master by Xanthias was too transgressive to be actually staged. Xanthias can play the role of the master on slave, giving Dionysus orders and even allowing him to be beaten, but this extreme of sexual usurpation is not acted out but merely imagined by the master himself in a lyric vignette. The vignette exists at all in the play because it is *geloion* (542) and because it fits into the theme of the exchange of roles between slave and master that is being explored in this passage. What is acted is merely suggestion: the slave is invited to the party onstage, he accepts the invitation, and he orders his

150 For fetching the chamber-pot as a particularly demeaning order, cf. Epicrates fr. 5 K.-A.

151 Sommerstein 1996 follows Dover in translating it so, but does not discuss it in his commentary.

152 The "under instead of over" aspect remains the same in my alternative interpretation of this final joke in *Wealth*, which I argue belongs to the slave Cario (see below).

slave/master to bring the baggage. At precisely this point Dionysus reclaims his identity as master and instead furnishes the audience with his own idea of what might have happened if he had not. But significantly his delay in responding to the chorus and providing the audience with this vignette prevents him from actually going to the banquet to which his costume has been invited and enjoying the sexual benefits he has taken back from Xanthias. Instead, immediately after his song another hostile figure, a female innkeeper with her slave, appears onstage, and Dionysus once again must deal with a situation where his costume has got him into trouble. Surely all this is humor at the master's expense. If the slave cannot really usurp his master sexually onstage, he can be imagined to do so in great detail, and he can prevent his master from enjoying himself because of his concern with preventing the slave from the same.

Part 2.4: Cario in *Wealth*

Another speaking slave character from the Aristophanic corpus who, as I argue, subtly usurps the sexual prerogatives of his master is Cario in *Wealth*. This slave's general importance to the plot and interchangeability with his master has been noted often in the scholarship: after the initial scene in which he and his master are both present, they are either never seen together again or at least not until the final scene,¹⁵³ but instead each plays the role of the comic hero in alternating scenes, with roughly equivalent speaking parts.¹⁵⁴ Less often noted but still important is the readiness with which Cario introduces sexual material. Here I will confine myself only to those passages which pertain specifically to free women; his general trend of sexualized language (including an extended song in which he taunts the chorus of free old men with sexual insults!) will become apparent in chapter three.

After Chremylus and his friend Blepsidemus, who is introduced only to appear in one scene, have rid themselves of the vociferous personification of Poverty (possibly played by the same actor as Cario),¹⁵⁵ they leave the stage to bring the blind Wealth to sleep in the temple of Asclepius and so be healed. In the last lines of the scene Chremylus calls to Cario, who is inside the house, to bring out the baggage, lead out Wealth, and make sure that everything is in order for the incubation (624–26). The master's address to Cario in this context, "boy, Cario..." (παῖ Καρίων, 624), provides the name of this slave for the first time in the comedy (a significant fact in light of the total dominance of the stage which Cario will exhibit in the following scene).¹⁵⁶ In the next scene the incubation has been successful, the god has been healed, and it has fallen to Cario to come onstage and report this joyful news to the chorus first (627–40) and then, and in much more detail, to the unnamed wife of his master (641–770).¹⁵⁷ At this point it has already

153 No modern edition of *Wealth* gives Cario a speaking part in the final scene, but many scholars think that he is present as a mute. I argue below that the final lines of the play belong to Cario, not to his master, which if accepted will change the interpretation of the play considerably.

154 Indeed, it is not improbable that Cario was played by the first actor. Cf. Sommerstein 2001, 27.

155 Thus Sommerstein 2001, 27. There are slightly fewer lines in the part of Cario than that of Chremylus, but if the same actor plays Cario and Poverty he will certainly have the most lines and therefore be the protagonist.

156 That the naming of Cario first occurs here is an argument *against* Olson's generalization that speaking slave characters are not named in Aristophanic comedy, and that when they are, the poet avoids naming them in a part of the play where they have a substantial role, not *for* it, *pace* Olson 1992, 312, who is only able to interpret it as he does by ignoring the immediately following scene.

157 Stefanis 1980, 149 points out that in this scene the wife seems to exist only to characterize the slave, which is the opposite of the more usual phenomenon, as observed by Stefanis, where a slave character exists only to

been established that Cario quite likes the power he holds as the bearer of good news, for he withholds from the chorus the news of his master having located Wealth as long as possible in his previous scene, giving them hints and taunting them (257–87). Moreover, in that scene his announcement was also the occasion for him to sexually taunt the chorus in song and receive similar taunts in turn (290–315). Likewise in his extended messenger speech to the wife of his master he uses his privileged status as the bearer of news to inject into the narrative a number of things which quite certainly did not actually happen, exploiting the credulity of his master's wife, whose lack of mental acuity has been well established in their dialogue before his invention begins. Cario's announcement is also the occasion for more sexual innuendo, first when he speaks to his master's wife before he has actually begun to relate his news, then in the messenger speech itself, where an accumulation of words with potentially sexual meanings suggests a sexual exploit inside the temple of Asclepius, in the guise of a familiar of the god.

Only the chorus are present when Cario first enters the stage in this scene (627). He briefly announces the good news to them, and they shout in praise of the god Asclepius. This shout brings the rather dull-witted wife of Chremylus onstage.¹⁵⁸ After she enters the chorus is silent for the rest of the scene (they will have sung a short lyric at 770 between the end of this scene and the beginning of the next, but that song is lost).¹⁵⁹ The slave and his mistress are effectively alone for 129 lines, at the beginning of which, on my reading, a certain amount of sexual tension is established:

- Γυ. τίς ἢ βοή ποτ' ἐστίν; ἄρ' ἀγγέλλεται
 χρηστόν τι; τοῦτο γὰρ ποθοῦς' ἐγὼ πάλαι
 ἔνδον κάθημαι περιμένουσα τουτονί.
 Κα. ταχέως ταχέως φέρ' οἶνον, ᾧ δέσποιν', ἵνα
 καύτη πίης—φιλεῖς δὲ δρωῶς' αὐτὸ σφόδρα— (645)
 ὡς ἀγαθὰ συλλήβδην ἅπαντά σοι φέρω.
 Γυ. καὶ ποῦ 'στιν;
 Κα. ἐν τοῖς λεγομένοις· εἴσει τάχα.
 Γυ. πέραινε τοίνυν ὅ τι λέγεις ἀνύσας ποτέ.

characterize his master. (I agree that slave characters *sometimes* seem to exist only to characterize their masters, but I would not extend this observation to the level of broad generalization asserted by Stefanis, who includes even Xanthias in the *Frogs* in this category.) Stefanis' argument that this makes Cario appear to be the main character of the play is well-taken ("...εμφανίζεται τώρα σάν ὁ πρωταγωνιστής τῆς δράσης").

- 158 The wife is characterized as unintelligent (and in particular incapable of distinguishing meaning by her own common sense when there is a grammatical ambiguity in the slave's speech) almost immediately when she mistakes Cario's reference to good news (ἀγαθὰ συλλήβδην ἅπαντα, 646) for physical "goods"; this impression is reinforced by her misunderstanding of what he says at 649–50, whether my interpretation of these lines or the conventional one is adopted. For both of these misunderstandings see below. When at 710–11 Cario refers to a "stone mortar, pestle, and a medicine chest" (λίθινον θυεῖδον / παρέθηκε καὶ δοῖδυκα καὶ κιβώτιον) she asks him if the medicine chest was made of stone, too. (For this kind of humor cf. Phoinikides fr. 2 K.-A..)
- 159 Whereas the spaces which would have been occupied by so-called "act-dividing" choral odes are marked in our MSS by the word "of the chorus" (χοροῦ), RV have here the phrase "short section of the chorus" (κομμάτιον χοροῦ), which should indicate a shorter song, especially since a χοροῦ is found a mere thirty lines later, following the rather short scene with Chremylus, his wife, and Wealth (771–801). Sommerstein 2001, 185 argues that Wealth's first line in that scene, beginning as it does with καὶ...γε, should respond to something said in a choral song, so that in this case the indication of the MSS should be trusted. For a study of the χοροῦ in *Wealth*, Russo 1994, 269 (n. 2) is an excellent starting point.

Κα. ἄκουε τοίνυν, ὥς ἐγὼ τὰ πράγματα
 ἐκ τῶν ποδῶν εἰς τὴν κεφαλὴν σοι πάντ' ἐρῶ. (650)
 Γυ. μὴ δῆτ' ἔμοιγ' εἰς τὴν κεφαλὴν.
 Κα. μὴ τὰγαθὰ
 ἃ νῦν γεγένηται;
 Γυ. μὴ μὲν οὖν τὰ πράγματα.

Wife: What's that shout? Is something good being announced? For I've been pining away for just that for a long time, sitting inside and waiting for this guy! Cario: Quick, quick, bring wine, mistress, so that *you* may drink it, too (and you really love to do it!) because I am bringing you all good things together! Wi: Well, where are they? Ca: In my words! You'll know soon enough. Wi: Then hurry up and finish what you're saying! Ca: Listen up, then, because I'm about to tell you the business, all of it, from (your) feet to (your) head! Wi: Not on *my* head! Ca: Not the good things which have just happened? Wi: Not the business!
Wealth 641–52

The phrasing throughout this passage is ambiguous but suggestive. First, the mistress declares that she has been waiting in the house specifically for Cario (the deictic *τουτοῦ* must be masculine) for a long time; this waiting has been characterized by an intense yearning or *πόθος*,¹⁶⁰ a word so regularly indicating erotic desire that when Dionysus uses it metaphorically at *Frogs* 55, referring as we find out later to a non-sexual desire for Euripides to be among the living once more so that his plays may continue, it occasions an extended sexual joke, with his interlocutor Herakles asking first if he desires a woman, then a boy, and finally a man.¹⁶¹ In fact, by my count Aristophanes uses the verb *ποθεῖν* and noun *πόθος* twelve times to refer to literal sexual desire, an additional seven times in a way that is clearly a metaphor for sexual desire (such as when Dikaiopolis is finally able to purchase a Copaic eel from a Theban and addresses "her" in terms appropriate to a lover, *Ach.* 885–94; his long wait for her is emphasized there just as in our passage of *Wealth*), and only six times in what seems to be a completely non-sexual way.¹⁶²

The most natural understanding of the word order at *Wealth* 642–43 would indicate that the object of the mistress' yearning is the news Cario brings, while she waits for the messenger himself. But it is itself suggestive that the mistress uses such a sexually charged verb as *ποθεῖν*

160 The mention of long waiting may be conventional before a messenger speech (cf. Eur. *Med.* 1116–17), but the use of *ποθεῖν* is not.

161 Dionysus' responses to the first two questions are simple denials, but to the third he responds with a cry of woe (*ἀπαπαῖ*, 57), either indignantly or in an extension of the joke to paratragedy. Sommerstein 1996, 161 advocates the latter, pointing out the similarity to Phaedra's οἴμοι when the nurse names Hippolytos at Eur. *Hipp.* 310. Dover 1993, 197–98 presents the alternatives but does not take a position. I am inclined to follow Sommerstein, whose argument would only strengthen my case here: not only is *πόθος* naturally interpreted as a sexual desire, but its use in comedy can quickly evoke a tragic, *forbidden* desire (like that of a step-mother for her step-son, or of a mistress for her slave).

162 Sexual desire: *Vesp.* 1365; *Pax* 456, 583, 728; *Av.* 1320; *Lys.* 99, 763 (twice), 888; *Thesm.* 481; *Eccl.* 948, 956. Metaphorical sexual desire: *Ach.* 33, 885, 890; *Pax* 586, 638; *Ran.* 53, 1425. Apparently non-sexual uses: *Ach.* 361; *Vesp.* 818; *Lys.* 605; *Plut.* 276, 509, 1127. Because *ποθεῖν* in *Plut.* 642 is at issue here, I have not placed it in one of the categories. The distribution of the adjective *ποθεινός* is more even: one sexual (*Av.* 696), two metaphorical (*Ach.* 886; *Ran.* 84), and one non-sexual (*Pax* 556).

in a sentence where the object *could* be, albeit with a rather contorted word order, a slave. At any rate the slave and his news are associated in the thought; she is clearly waiting not merely for the slave but also for his news. Does her desire too, then, extend from the news to the slave himself? Moreover, the situation she describes suggests the meeting of a woman with her illicit lover; she has been sitting inside, alone, while her husband is out of the house, waiting for a long time with intense desire for an appointment with a specific man.

The first task of the man in question is to get his master's wife drunk; he tells her to bring out wine so that she *too* may drink, the implication being that the slave has already had some wine. The drinking is certainly explicable in terms of a celebration of the successful incubation, but it also further establishes the parallel between this situation and what might presumably take place in a meeting of illicit lovers. The remark about how much the mistress loves to drink corresponds to a ubiquitous comic trope about bibulous women,¹⁶³ but it is nonetheless interesting that the slave feels free to invoke it to the face of his mistress, as he does also (with comic hyperbole) at 737. It suggests a familiarity with (and perhaps even a contempt for) his mistress. His announcement that she should bring out the wine because he is bringing her "all good things together" also admits a double interpretation. At this moment in the play, with the lines that have just been spoken, he could be interpreted as speaking about gifts he has brought her, something one might again expect in a scenario of adultery. There are also comic parallels for the use of similar language (i.e. the neuter plural of ἀγαθός paired with some adjective indicating abundance) to describe sexual experiences.¹⁶⁴ It is conceivable that this is what Cario intends to imply, but his mistress clearly takes "all good things" to refer to physical objects, asking where they are.

Just as in his scene with the chorus, the slave delays his message, spending two lines after he has been told to hurry up in emphasizing just how fully he plans to tell her everything (649–50). The traditional interpretation of the joke at 649–52 is that the mistress takes πράγματα as "trouble" (a well-established meaning of the plural, cf. *LSJ* s.v. III.5) and εἰς τὴν κεφαλὴν σοὶ as "on your head" (an established meaning for the similar phrase ἐς κεφαλὴν σοὶ in the context of averting an ill-omen from oneself to another, cf. *Pax* 1063; *Plut.* 526). Then Cario's clarification ("Not the good things which have just happened?") and her response ("Not trouble!") will also make sense. On this line of interpretation the sexual innuendo we have observed in previous lines will begin to dissipate here. But the passage may be written as a double joke; on one hand there is a relatively innocent wordplay with the traditional phrase ἐς κεφαλὴν σοὶ (the traditional interpretation), but there may be sexual undertones in these lines as well.

The phrase "from the feet to the head", which could easily be construed, with the immediately following σοὶ, as "from *your* feet to *your* head", is particularly suggestive. The similar Homeric phrase "from head to feet" (*Il.* 16.640, 18.353, 23.169) always refers literally to a physical body. It seems likely, then, that the need to set up a joke motivates this awkward

163 Cf. *Lys.* 113–14, 194–98, 233–36; *Thesm.* 347–50, 393, 630–32, 735–38; *Eccl.* 132–46; 227, 1118–24; *Plut.* 737; *Ar. fr.* 334 K.-A.

164 The exact phrase "all good things" is used by Hermes with a sexual meaning at *Wealth* 1121. Cf. Chapter Three. When at *Peace* 886–90 Trygaeus asks the *boule* to look at how many good things he is bringing to them (using ἀγαθα and a form of φέρειν just as here) he is referring quite explicitly to the sexual bounty of a recently disrobed Theoria. Cf. the discussion of that passage in Chapter Four. "Things many and good" (πολλῶν καγαθῶν, *Peace* 539) seems to have a similar force, also with reference to Theoria.

metaphorical usage with reference to recent events (τὰ πράγματα).¹⁶⁵ The only other comparandum for this phrase is a single fragment of a mime of Sophron which corresponds closely to what we have in *Wealth*:

κνυζοῦμαι δὲ οὐδὲν ἰσχύων. ἅ δὲ ξυσμὰ ἐκ ποδῶν εἰς κεφαλὰν ἰππάζεται.

But I scratch myself to no avail. The scab rides me from feet to head. Sophr. fr. 53

Here we find "from feet to head" once again, with the same word order as at *Wealth* 650 except that here there are no definite articles and the phrase is not followed by σοι.¹⁶⁶ The lack of context for this fragment is tantalizing. At first glance it appears to be a description of the effects of a disease, but there is also plenty of vocabulary with sexual potential: again the unusual phrase "from feet to head", the use of a verb for riding a horse,¹⁶⁷ and the rare verb κνυζόω, meaning "to scratch", which could admit a sexual interpretation as well. One thinks too of the similar verb κνύω employed to describe the scratching at the door that signals a woman's (in this case Inlaw's) visit from her/his illicit lover at *Thesmo*. 481. Then there is the feminine noun ξυσμὰ ("scratching"), which is unusually singular; as a feminine noun it is otherwise found only in the plural (referring to the scratch-marks which constitute letters of the alphabet) and then only in late sources.¹⁶⁸ This solitary use of the feminine singular would seem a likely disparaging reference to a woman, especially with the verb of riding. Certainly *LSJ* s.v. takes it as "a term of abuse" here. If there is something sexual going on in the context of the Sophron, Aristophanes could be playing on that in *Wealth* by imitating the unusual phrase "from feet to head".¹⁶⁹ But we

165 Cf. also Σ Ar. *Plut.* 650 and my discussion of it below.

166 Kaibel 1899 accepts Eustathios' reading and prints ποδόζ. But Et. M., Et. Gud., and Herodian *De Prosodia Catholica* 3.1.445 all have ποδῶν, and comparison with our passage in *Wealth* would suggest that this is the likelier reading. In Et. gen. AB the quotation ends at ἰσχύων. ποδῶν is printed in K.-A. and Hordern 2004.

167 A compound of this verb, καθιππάζομαι, is used to indicate a sexual position in Machon's *χρεῖα* (362 Gow); another verb of riding, κελητίζω, regularly has this meaning in Attic comedy. Cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 501; *Pax* 900; *Lys.* 60, 676–78; *Thesmo.* 153; Pl. Com. fr. 188.18 K.-A.; Machon 171 Gow. The verb κελητίζω definitely implies riding on a single horse. While ἰππάζομαι initially seems to refer to riding with a chariot (so in its first appearance at *Il.* 23.426), it is clearly being used of riding a single horse by the Classical period (an unambiguous example is Xen. *Eq.* 10.1, where a singular horse and rider are explicitly mentioned, but there are many passages in Herodotus which, while they are not grammatically decisive, would naturally be taken to refer to riding on individual horses rather than chariots). Therefore if ἰππάζομαι is a sexual joke at Sophron fr. 53, we do not need to presume a threesome (note that when multiple horses are mentioned at *Pax* 900 there is clearly a reference to double penetration), which the singular ξύσμα would preclude as well. Cf. also *Eccl.* 846, where Smoios performs cunnilingus ἰππικὴν στολὴν ἔχων—a phrase which in my view is first to be taken as "wearing a cavalry outfit" (thus Sommerstein) but in retrospect as "equipped like a horse", i.e. with a rider, for horse-riding as a metaphor for this sexual position requires the penetrator to be the horse (Anacr. fr. 417 and Anaxilas fr. 22.10 K.-A. do not refer to this position and therefore can have the penetrated be the horse). Sommerstein 1998, 211–12 objects that the horse-riding metaphor is nowhere else connected to cunnilingus, but there can hardly be a point to ἰππικὴν στολὴν ἔχων otherwise. Ussher 1973, 192 recognizes the sexual force but with the rendition "riding suit" seems to misconstrue who is the rider and who is ridden, despite citing other passages where the distinction is clear.

168 The earliest appearance of ἡ ξυσμὴ in the plural is in Dionysius Thrax, *Ars Grammatica* 1.9 (2nd BC); the next earliest is in Hesychius. The neuter ξύσμα, ξύσματος, on the other hand, is quite common in the medical writers.

169 The *Suda* problematically places Sophron "in the time of Xerxes and Euripides", and Hordern 2004, 2 is surely

do not need to posit direct influence at all; both texts could be playing on a common tradition of sexual jesting employing this phrase. We should note, too, that whether or not Sophron fr. 53 is sexual the phrase "from feet to head" will refer literally to a physical body, as it does everywhere except *Wealth* 650.

Once the audience detects innuendo, τὰ πράγματα itself becomes open to interpretation, for in Aristophanic comedy the singular πρᾶγμα can be a euphemism for "penis", generally used as an alternative to more blatant obscenity either by women or in their presence.¹⁷⁰ But as we might expect from a word that literally means "thing", it can be sexualized in other ways as well. There is evidence that it could refer to a sexual affair.¹⁷¹ Furthermore, it appears from what is probably a fragment of Aristophanes' *Anagyros*¹⁷² that this euphemistic use of "thing" could also refer to the vulva:

ἀλλ' Ἀριφράδῃ δέδοικα μὴ τὰ πράγματα
ἡμῶν διακναίση

But I am afraid that Aripgrades will wear away our "things"... Ar. fr. 926 K.-A.

We have no context for this fragment, since it was the verb κναίω that interested the grammarians.¹⁷³ But if other Aristophanic references to Aripgrades are any indication, we should expect here a joke about his predilection for cunnilingus (cf. *Knights* 1280–89; *Wasps* 1280–83; *Peace* 883–85).¹⁷⁴ In that case the speaker is either a female character or a male character

correct to argue that this cannot refer to the Xerxes who only reigned for one year in 425/4. So the range of dates encompassed by the Suda's description is effectively the entire fifth century; while this is not at all specific, it does place Sophron's *floruit* prior to *Wealth*, which was produced in 388. The detail that Sophron's son Xenarchus mocked the Rhegians to gratify Dionysius I would seem to support this, for that tyrant's conflict with Rhegium ended in 386, only two years after *Wealth*. But Aristophanes also had sons who were beginning to be active in the 380's, so that it is still quite possible that the two authors were roughly contemporary. While there is little to no compelling evidence of Sophronic influence on fifth century literature in mainland Greece, a mechanism for such influence exists in the Athenian invasion of Sicily in 415–13, and the tradition that Plato read Sophron and fact that Aristotle was aware of him suggests that he did begin to exert an influence on mainland Greek culture in the fourth century.

170 Cf. *Lys.* 23, 26, 661, 994; there may be puns on this usage at *Nub.* 196–97, *Thesmo.* 581, *Eccl.* 1089, and Ar. fr. 592.30 (see above). Cf. Henderson 1991, 116.

171 For the singular πρᾶγμα indicating a sexual affair, cf. Aeschin. 1.132 (referring to Harmodius and Aristogeiton) and possibly Ar. fr. 592.30, where it would indicate an affair between free women and their slaves (discussed above). Cf. also the phrase "the divine thing" (τὸ θεῖον χρῆμα) in the seduction attempt in the Cologne Epode (Archilochus fr. 196a).

172 Not without reservations Kock (fr. 63) considered the fragment genuine, but it has been placed among the *dubia* by Kassel and Austin, as it seems because they have little confidence in Dobree's emendation (1874, 206) of *περὶ τε Ἀριστοφᾶ ἀναγνώσεως* at Et. gen. AB s.v. κνυζώσω τὸ παρά τε Ἀριστοφάνει Ἀναγύρω. But this fragment supports my argument about the sexual potential of τὰ πράγματα even if it is not Aristophanic. As Sommerstein 1996b, 349 n. 152 observes, "there is no doubt that it is a fragment of Old Comedy, and its language clearly indicates that the Aripgrades mentioned in it is the alleged cunnilinctor of *Knights*, *Wasps*, and *Peace*".

173 In fact this fragment and Sophron fr. 53 (cited above) are found in the same source, Et. gen. AB s. v. κνυζώσω, though the Sophron is also found at Herodian *De Prosodia Catholica* 3.1.445.

174 If it does refer to the same man, *Eccl.* 129–30 is the only exception. But Ussher 1973, 93 and Sommerstein 1998, 150 maintain that the name must refer to a different man there because 1) *Eccl.* was produced decades

impersonating a woman, τὰ πράγματα refers either to female genitalia¹⁷⁵ or to the genitals of males in drag, and the fear is either that Ariphrades will "wear out" the vulva/disguised penis in his zeal or that his beard will be literally abrasive (probably the former). I would incline toward the view that this fragment is voiced by males in drag, because 1) all the other euphemistic instances refer to the penis and 2) we know from the *Thesmophoriazusae* and *Ecclesiazusae* that the Athenian audience considered cross-dressing amusing. But either way one reads this fragment, there is a substantial precedent for πρᾶγμα as a euphemism for "penis" in *Lysistrata* alone, not to mention the other comedies.

Part of the sexual potential of *Wealth* 649–50 is the word order; the verb is postponed to the end of the sentence, through the buildup of the potentially sexual phrases τὰ πράγματα and ἐκ τῶν ποδῶν εἰς τὴν κεφαλὴν σοι. Then there is the fact that the verb ἐρῶ need not be perceived as a future tense form of λέγειν, which would require the ὥς which precedes it by more than a full line to be taken as causal, probably not the audience's first instinct. If the wife (and the audience) initially take the ὥς as introducing a purpose rather than a causal clause, "Listen, so that I may...", a construction which unlike the imperative of ἀκούω followed by causal ὥς is attested elsewhere in Attic drama (cf. Eur. *Herakles* 1255), they may be inclined to interpret ἐρῶ as a present subjunctive of the lesser-known of the two Greek verbs with a present active infinitive ἐρᾶν.¹⁷⁶ This verb means "to pour forth, vomit, empty" and could therefore on one level be used colorfully of speech, especially with the emphasis on completeness in these lines. Certainly its compound ἐξερᾶν is used to mean "prattle on" in a fragment of the comic poet Pherekrates and in Plutarch's *De Garrulitate*, in each case with a negative tone.¹⁷⁷ Moreover, if the reading of the MSS is correct at *Frogs* 957, the simple form ἐρᾶν should mean "to talk too much" there as well.¹⁷⁸ On this line of thinking, the translation understood by the wife might be "Listen up, then,

after our latest mention of the other Ariphrades and 2) there is no mention of cunnilingus. As will become apparent later in this chapter, cunnilingus jokes continued into the latest Aristophanic plays; it was only their association with Ariphrades that disappeared (he is even replaced in this role by a certain Smoios at *Eccl.* 845–47). It therefore seems likely that for whatever reason Ariphrades had ceased to be a comic target by the production of the *Birds* in 415. There is good evidence that this Ariphrades is identical with the comic poet of that name mentioned at Arist. *Poet.* 1458b31 (cf. Sommerstein 1977, 276). If so, he might have stopped producing plays. The question then arises whether the Ariphrades mentioned in this fragment of *Anagyros* (if it is indeed from that play) is the same as the one repeatedly ridiculed by Aristophanes in 424, 422, and 421 BC. Fortunately, information in the papyrus commentary on the *Anagyros* (P. Oxy. 2737) allows us to date that play to the archonship of Antiphon in 418/17. On the identification and dating of the papyrus, cf. Hofmann 1970; Luppe 1971, 1973. The proximity in date would suggest that we are far more likely to have a reference to the Ariphrades who is mocked for cunnilingus three years earlier in 421 than to the one who is mocked for loquaciousness in the Assembly sometime between 393 and 389 (the range of possible dates for *Eccl.*).

175 Henderson 1991, 133–34 lists this as the sole instance of "euphemistic terminology" for the vulva in Aristophanes, allowing the possibility that "old age" (τὸ γῆρας) may also fulfill this function at *Lys.* 364.

176 The various compounds of this ἐρᾶν (ἀπ-, ἐξ-, κατ-, κατεξ-, μετ-, συν-) are common in the fifth and fourth centuries (as are several derived nouns), but the simplex is found uncontroversially only in an entry in Hesychius (ἐρᾶσαι· κενῶσαι, ε 5629). (But see the footnote below on *Ran.* 957–58.) Nonetheless if the joke is meant to be a double entendre with the future tense of λέγω heard on one level and this ἐρᾶν on the other, the use of the simple form would be necessary. The more well-known ἐρᾶν, meaning "to desire sexually" or "to love", though its definition would certainly admit innuendo, is inadmissible here because it takes a genitive object, unless we are to suppose that the wife's Greek is poor (she is portrayed as dense, but not necessarily in this way) or that she thinks the slave's might be (which would not be justified by his speech in the play).

177 Pherekrates fr. 138 K.-A.; Plut. *De Garrulitate* 512F.

178 At *Ran.* 957–58 Euripides claims to teach the Athenian audience "to perceive, see, understand, turn, talk too

so that I may gab on about / spew forth the business, all of it, from (your) feet to (your) head". The wife's response ("not on *my* head!") could be interpreted as again taking the slave's speech literally; she may be afraid that he will vomit on her. But with the addition of the noun *πρᾶγμα*, which as we have seen can stand in euphemistically for "penis", this *ἐρᾶν* could be taken to refer to ejaculation, with *τὰ πράγματα* functioning as an accusative of respect (literally "...so that I may spew forth with respect to my thing(s)").

Nonetheless, the fact that we have the plural *πράγματα* here instead of the singular *πρᾶγμα* as we find it elsewhere with this force significantly weakens this argument. It is quite unlikely that the euphemism will have randomly pluralized. There is another option: *τὰ πράγματα* could have been pronounced a bit closer to *τὸ πρᾶγμα τά*, so that both "because I am going to tell you all the business, from feet to head" and "so that my thing may spew forth (on) everything from your feet to your head" (*ὡς ἐγὼ τὸ πρᾶγμα τά / ἐκ τῶν ποδῶν εἰς τὴν κεφαλὴν σοι πάντ' ἐρῶ*) might be heard. Against this reading is the fact that lines of iambic trimeter rarely end with a form of the definite article.¹⁷⁹ But this does happen occasionally, in the Aristophanic corpus at *Ecclesiazusae* 452 (produced only a few years before *Wealth*) and four times in the tragedies of Sophocles.¹⁸⁰ Perhaps the audience will have been disposed to hear this happen for the sake of a double entendre, given the sexualized context. For this double entendre to work *ἐρᾶν* would also need to be understood to function like *βάλλω*, taking an accusative either of the thing spewed (which is certainly true of its compounds) or of the thing hit by the spew (which is how *τὰ ἐκ τῶν ποδῶν εἰς τὴν κεφαλὴν σοι πάντ'* would need to be construed). This is perhaps possible, especially since this does not need to be perfectly idiomatic Greek but merely an awkward double meaning.¹⁸¹

The wife's indignant response, "not on *my* head (*μὴ δῆτ' ἔμοιγ' εἰς τὴν κεφαλὴν*, 651), reinforces one's impression that something sexual or at least offensive is going on here. For Aristophanic humor at the expense of a dense female character who misinterprets masculine speech as sexual and then responds indignantly we could compare *Birds* 1214–16:

Πε. οὐδὲ σύμβολον
 ἐπέβαλεν ὀρνίθαρχος οὐδεῖς σοι παρών;
 Ιρ. μὰ Δί' οὐκ ἔμοιγ' ἐπέβαλεν οὐδεῖς, ὦ μέλε.

much, scheme, be suspicious, [and] examine all things" (*νοεῖν, ὀρᾶν, ξυτιέναι, στρέφειν, ἐρᾶν, τεχνάζειν, / κάχ' ὑποτοπεῖσθαι, περινοεῖν ἅπαντα*). Dover 1993, 311–12 doubts the argument of Richardson 1948 that the difference between this *ἐρᾶν* and the one meaning "to love" could be marked by a gesture, since "it is hard to think of a gesture which could unambiguously signify fluency rather than fluid". But this presumes that Aristophanes is being linguistically creative here; quite possibly *ἐρᾶν* was regularly used with this meaning in colloquial speech. Sommerstein 1996, 240–41 prints *στρέφειν ἔδραν* (a wrestling metaphor attested in Theophrastus and Theocritus) on the grounds that nowhere else does *στρέφειν* lack a direct object. But all the infinitives in 957–58 can be taken to have a direct object in *ἅπαντα*.

179 But Aristophanes freely employs the definite article at line end in lyric (*Ach.* 215; *Eq.* 586, 913, 987; *Nub.* 1028, 1314; *Vesp.* 274, 374, 1464; *Pax* 979; *Av.* 1480, 1704; *Lys.* 476; *Thesm.* 357, 365, 1022; *Eccl.* 912), in prose (*Av.* 1665; *Thesm.* 295), and once in recitative trochaic tetrameter (*Vesp.* 504).

180 *S. Phil.* 263; *Ant.* 409; *El.* 879; *O.C.* 351. In general Sophocles is much freer than the other tragedians in his use of monosyllabic prepositives at line end. Cf. West 1982, 83–84; Descroix 1931, 291.

181 We might also take *τὰ πράγματα* as a reference to the vulva, as it may be at Ar. fr. 926 K.A. (see above). But the plural is still problematic in that case, and *ἐρᾶν* will still need to function like *βάλλω*.

Peisetaerus: Wasn't there a magistrate of the birds there to throw a pass at you? Iris: No, by Zeus, no one made a pass at *me*, you poor sap. *Birds* 1214–16

The verb ἐπιβάλλω is common and easily interpreted as "hand you a pass" in Peisetaerus' question; we have no reason to suspect that his character intends a sexual meaning. But of course the playwright has engineered the diction to set up a joke at the expense of the messenger goddess Iris, who takes the verb sexually, at once raising a laugh with the sexual humor and assimilating herself to a type of dull-witted female character not uncommon in our extant plays.¹⁸² I would argue that her response here is remarkably similar to that of the wife of Chremylus at *Wealth* 651, an indignant denial which partially restates what has just been said with an emphasis on its inappropriateness for the status of the female speaker (in each case an emphatic ἔμοιγ').

The rather precarious arguments above (particularly those relating to τὰ πράγματα and ἐρῶ) are an (arguably vain) attempt to take us from the generalized sense of innuendo that I think is definitely present in this passage—the use of ποθεῖν, reference to drinking, misunderstanding about physical gifts, and relatively secure sexual force of the phrase "from feet to head" (with its parallel at Sophron fr. 53)—to a coherent alternative sexual interpretation of what the slave says before his mistress becomes offended at 651. But for the innuendo to work the audience may not need a fully coherent alternative interpretation of these lines. Perhaps the suffusion of words with sexual potential, even if these words do not point clearly in a single direction, helps to create an atmosphere where sexual jokes are expected without fully satisfying that expectation until later in Cario's speech, when he relates his encounter with the old woman in the *temenos* of Asclepius (see below).

As far as I can tell, my interpretation of these lines as a sexual innuendo is unprecedented in modern scholarship. The translation of 651 in Sommerstein 2001 ("don't you expose *me*!") makes the scene *seem* sexual, but he is clear in his commentary that he actually endorses the non-sexualized traditional reading of the Greek just discussed, explaining his free translation with the admission that "no English translation of this passage can be both accurate and intelligible". Stefanis 1980, 145 refers enigmatically to "the roughly cut jokes of the shameless messenger" which the wife of Chremylus is "unable to perceive" in this passage (ἀνίκανη νά ἀντιληφθεῖ τὰ χοντροκομμένα σκώμματα τοῦ ἀδιάντροπου ἀγγελιοφόρου), and his general reticence on sexual matters might incline one to infer from this that he does recognize some innuendo in these lines, but the progression of his discussion would seem to imply that the remark refers to something before line 648, and therefore perhaps to Cario's remark about his mistress' proclivity toward drinking. For what it is worth, however, a scholiast perceived something sexual in this passage as well, though he does not really explain what:

Τὸ μὲν φαινόμενόν ἐστι τοῦτο τὸ, ἐξ ἀρχῆς μέχρι τέλους ἐρῶ τὰ πράγματα· νοεῖται δὲ καὶ ἕτερόν τι πάνυ αἰσχρὸν καὶ ἄξιον τῆς τῶν δούλων ἀσελγείας καὶ μοχθηρίας.

The surface meaning is "I will tell you the circumstances from beginning to end". But a second meaning is also discernible, wholly base and worthy of the licentiousness and

182 For ἐπιβάλλειν as "assault sexually" cf. *Vesp.* 767–69; Pherekrates fr. 155.14 K.-A.; Henderson 1991, 170.

depravity of slaves.¹⁸³

This gloss of the phrase "from the feet to the head" as a vaguely defined double entendre supports my interpretation of it above. Of course, it is possible that the scholiast was merely unaware of the Greek idiom ἐς κεφαλὴν σοί for averting trouble onto another and therefore could not understand the passage according to what has become the orthodox interpretation. Thus he had to come up with another reason for the wife's indignation, and assumed an innuendo. But it is also likely, I think, that the same general atmosphere of innuendo, combined with the unusual phrase "from the feet to the head" with its tantalizingly difficult to interpret parallel in Sophron fr. 53, has independently affected both the scholiast and myself. Perhaps neither of us has been able to elaborate an unproblematic way for a climactic innuendo at 649–50 to function, but this should not be taken as evidence that we have perceived this atmosphere of innuendo in error.

A similar general impression of innuendo within a passage that is otherwise interpretable in strictly non-sexual terms occurs in Cario's report itself. But there the individual words with alternative sexual meanings unite together with the situation evoked to create a lengthy passage which has a completely internally coherent (previously unrecognized) "dirty version". I consider the probability of such a thing occurring without authorial intent so low that this passage, if not the accumulation of vague innuendo explored above, is undeniably a case of sexual interaction 1) between a slave and his master's wife, because she is his audience and 2) between a slave and a (presumably) free old woman around whom his tale of a sexual encounter revolves.

Immediately after the passage quoted above Cario begins his extended report about what happened during the incubation in the *temenos* of Asclepius, where he was present and, unlike both his master and Wealth himself, awake the entire time, at least by his own report (which we may have reason to suspect):

κάγῳ καθεύδειν οὐκ ἐδυνάμην, ἀλλά με
ἀθάρης χύτρα τις ἐξέπληττε κειμένη
ὀλίγον ἄπωθεν τῆς κεφαλῆς του γραδίου,
ἐφ' ἣν ἐπεθύμουν δαιμονίως ἐφερπύσαι.

And I couldn't sleep, but a certain pot of broth struck me with desire, lying a little away from the head of a little old lady; I wanted terribly to creep up on it. *Plut.* 672–75

A *chytra* of broth associated intimately in the language of the play with an old woman is quite likely to have a sexual force.¹⁸⁴ Aristophanic comedy usually does not make a cunnilingus joke without a reference to feminine vaginal secretions; perhaps the most well-known such reference is τὴν ἀπόπτυστον δρόσον ("the abominable dew") at *Knights* 1285,¹⁸⁵ but there are several other passages where the secretions are described as a broth, whether one derived from meat (ζωμός;

183 This scholion does not appear in RV.

184 In fact the artfully ambiguous feminine relative pronoun ἣν, which must in one sense refer to the pot but is separated from it by another feminine noun—the head (κεφαλή) of the old woman—may constitute a throw-away fellatio joke. To an extent this would be "in character" for Cario, since he has already made a fellatio joke at the expense of free *men* at *Wealth* 295 (see chapter three).

185 In fact Henderson 1991, 145 n. 194 infers from its use in Aristotle that "dew" (δρόσος) was a non-obscene (perhaps even technical?) term for feminine secretion.

Pax 716, 883–85; cf. Alexis fr. 168.7 K.-A.), peas (ἔτνος; *Ach.* 245–46, see above; *Lys.* 1061–64; *Eccl.* 845–47, see below), or lentils (φακῆ; *Plut.* 1004–5).¹⁸⁶ While the word ἀθήρη ("broth", apparently derived from boiled wheat poured through a strainer)¹⁸⁷ does not occur elsewhere in the Aristophanic plays and cannot be definitively shown to have a sexual meaning in the fragments of other playwrights (though half of its four appearances are suggestive),¹⁸⁸ the fact that three other different kinds of broth are at different times employed to refer to vaginal secretions affirms that the metaphor was not specific to a particular word. Rather the choice of various liquid foods reflects comedy's persistent inclination to consider cunnilingus a form of eating.¹⁸⁹ Moreover, it seems that in Old Comedy *chytra* ("pot") functions as a metaphor for the vagina and uterus (the imagined pot is upside down) in both non-sexual and sexual contexts. This is not observed by Henderson 1991 or anywhere else to my knowledge, but the case for it is straightforward enough. Nor is it surprising, given comedy's tendency to use cooking tools as sexual metaphors.¹⁹⁰ In fact it is well-known that in later antiquity medical writers often imagined the womb as just such an upside-down pot,¹⁹¹ my argument would merely establish that this metaphor was already active in the fifth century and being exploited for humorous effect in comedy. In order to avoid an extended distraction here, I have relegated the case for *chytra* as a vaginal and uterine metaphor to Appendix A.

So much, then, for the sexual implications of the phrase "a pot of broth" (ἀθήρης χύτρα) at *Wealth* 673. In the ensuing lines Cario relates how his desire for this pot caused him to look up and see the priest of Asclepius wandering around the *temenos* of the temple, snatching away the many offerings of food. He decides, comically, that this must be the appropriate ritual and accordingly stands up and heads toward the "pot". To the wife's indignant interruption asking if he had no fear of the god he replies, again with comic effect, that he did, in case Asclepius should get to the pot first, wearing his headband.¹⁹² He then begins his tale of his encounter with the old woman and appropriation of the contents of the "pot", an account rich in sexual innuendo:

186 Cf. Henderson 1991, 145; 186. We would do well to connect the emphasis on secretions in comic references to cunnilingus to the larger Greek habit of imagining women as problematically wet; for a thorough discussion of this ideological construct, cf. Carson 1990.

187 For this explanation of ἀθήρη cf. Phryn. praep. soph. p. 14,11.

188 This word occurs in a description of Tartarus as a paradise where "rivers full of broth and dark meat-broth were flowing, gurgling, through the narrows" (ποταμοὶ μὲν ἀθήρης καὶ μέλανος ζωμοῦ πλέω / διὰ τῶν στενωπῶν τονθολυγοῦντες ἔρρεον, Pherecrates fr. 113.3–4 K.-A.). It also occurs in conjunction with words otherwise associated with cunnilingus (*etnos* and *trublion*) at Crates fr. 11 K.-A.: οὐκοῦν ἔτνος χρῆ δεῦρο τρύβλιον φέρειν / καὶ τῆς ἀθήρης.

189 The verbs used of cunnilingus in Aristophanes (λείχειν, ῥοφεῖν, ἐκλάπτειν, διακαθαίρειν; and as I argue below, διαλείχειν, φλᾶν, ἐσθίειν) are appropriate to the eating/drinking metaphor even when the vaginal secretions are not indicated with a food word.

190 Cf. Henderson 1991, 143–44.

191 There is an illustration of this in the ninth century CE manuscript of Soranus; for a modern rendition of that illustration and an overview on recent scholarship dealing with the womb imagined as a pot in the medical writers, cf. Faraone 2011, 7.

192 The detail about the headband (στέμματα) is tantalizing when compared to Hdt. 6.69 (see above), where the hero Astrabacus impregnates the mother of the Spartan king Demaratus in the guise of her husband Ariston and then places his wreath (στεφάνοι) on her head. Cario's sexual encounter with the old woman in the guise of the serpent of Asclepius (also an impregnating force) is a parody of such accounts of impregnation by divine forces (more on this below). After all, there was always a tension even in myth between the explanations "some god did it" and "some guy did it", and the guy in question could even be thought to be a slave. Certainly Demaratus flings in his mother's face the rumor that his real father was a slave and a donkey-groom (ὄνοφορβός).

τὸ γράδιον δ', ὡς ἦσθετο δὴ μου τὸν ψόφον,
 τὴν χεῖρ' ὑφείρει· κᾶτα συρίζας ἐγὼ
 ὀδᾶξ ἐλαβόμην ὡς παρείας ὦν ὄφιν. (690)
 ἢ δ' εὐθέως τὴν χεῖρα πάλιν ἀνέσπασεν,
 κατέκειτο δ' αὐτὴν ἐντυλίξασ' ἡσυχῆ,
 ὑπὸ τοῦ δέους βδέουσα δριμύτερον γαλῆς.
 κἀγὼ τότε ἤδη τῆς ἀθάρης πολλὴν ἔφλων·
 ἔπειτ' ἐπειδὴ μεστὸς ἦν, ἀνεπαυόμην. (695)

But when the old woman perceived my sound, she thrust her hand under (me); and then I hissed and took hold of it with my teeth as if I were the sacred snake. At once she drew back her hand, and she wrapped herself up and lay in silence, because of fear farting worse than a weasel. I then chewed up a lot of the broth. Then, when I was full, I began to rest/satisfy myself (with her).
Plut. 688–95

That the slave is going to impersonate the deity or his familiar is already suggested by the verbal correspondence of 688 with 670–71, where we are told that the god's attendant instructed the party to remain silent if they perceived any sound (in both cases the verb is αἰσθάνομαι and the word for sound is ψόφος). The repetition of these words emphasizes that the slave is exploiting the ritual instruction for his own benefit. Likewise the verb "creep up on" (ἐφερπύσαι, 675) expressing Cario's desire to approach the pot has now for thirteen lines furnished the audience with an image of Cario creeping stealthily toward the *chytra* of broth and its neighbor/possessor, the old woman, with a verb of movement also appropriate to a serpent (as the scholia on 675 also observe). Next the verb ὑφείρει (the case for which instead of the ὑφήρει of the MSS is aptly made by Sommerstein 2001, 182) is ambiguous and suggestive.¹⁹³ While it is easy to see why the prepositional prefix ὑπό should have the force "away from under" when compounded with a verb like αἰρέω in which the idea of removal is integrated (and thus the reading of the MSS would be a nonsensical "she took her hand away from underneath"), the most natural interpretation of this same prefix compounded with a verb like εἶρω meaning "to fasten" would not be "she stuck out her hand from under" an implied cover (as Sommerstein translates), for which meaning with a verb like this one we would expect the prefix ὑπεκ-,¹⁹⁴ but rather "she fastened her hand to the underside" of an implied object, as indeed this verb is used in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*.¹⁹⁵ I would argue, then, that this verb should not indicate that she is thrusting her hand out from under an implied covering but rather that she is grabbing the lower part of Cario's person, whom the audience will imagine as creeping (675), perhaps on his hands and knees, toward the broth. The part in question would have to be something that she could mistake for the sacred snake, and for that reason I would argue that Cario is imagined in this reported scene to have the dangling phallus (the σκυτίον καθειμένον), whether or not he had it while he was making the messenger-speech.¹⁹⁶ All the ambiguity of this text is obliterated if

193 Torchio 2001, 192 (unnecessarily, I think) preserves the corrupt reading of the MSS in daggers.

194 *Pace* Sommerstein 2001, 182.

195 Philostr. *VA* 8.25: "Having fastened a sword to the underside of his left forearm" (ξίφος δ' ὑφείρας τῷ τῆς ἀριστερᾶς πῆχει).

196 I do think that Cario would have had the dangling phallus for parts of the play at least (certainly for the scene

Cario illustrates her action by grabbing himself in his speech, and the innuendo in the words that follow would be more likely to be noticed in that case. Yet even if he refrains, the audience will wonder about how to interpret the verb ὑφείρει in this context and may well still take it as I have suggested. They will then have to imagine him carefully bending his body in such a way as to allow no other part of himself to touch her arm, all while she holds his penis, and biting her so that she will let go. (The difficulty of actually *staging* such an interaction is nicely avoided, since all of this action is part of Cario's messenger speech.)

There is an accumulation of three potentially sexual words in lines 694–95. In light of the parallels cited above, "I was chewing up a lot of the broth" is certainly a cunnilingus joke. The verb of eating, the reference to broth (in a *chytra*, no less), and the emphasis on gluttony (πολλήν) all recall other definite manifestations of the cunnilingus joke in Old Comedy. It should also be considered that φλᾶν, the verb meaning "to crush" used for Cario's chewing, may have admitted the meaning "to masturbate" in its uncompounded form at some point, though we have no attestations of it in this sense in the Classical period.¹⁹⁷ Its compound ἀναφλᾶν, on the other hand, definitely had this meaning (and apparently no other) in Aristophanes and much later in Lucian,¹⁹⁸ and the conjunction of sounds in πολλήν ἔφλων (694) could approximate πολλ᾽ ἀνέφλων closely enough to constitute a wordplay.¹⁹⁹ It seems, then, that line 694 could suggest simultaneously "I performed a lot of cunnilingus on her" and "I was masturbating a lot"—perhaps giving the impression that both of these things are going on at the same time. That the verb φλᾶν, which really means "to crush" or "grind", is a strange choice to indicate the consumption of broth strengthens my argument for the heard reference to masturbation, for this otherwise inappropriate verb could have been chosen precisely for this reason. In this vein "when I was full" (ἐπειδὴ μεστὸς ἦν, 695) would simply bring the Aristophanic metaphor of cunnilingus as a meal to its logical conclusion. Finally, the verb ἀναπαύεσθαι ("to rest") is sometimes used as a sexual euphemism, beginning in the fifth century with Euripides' *Cyclops*:

οὐκ ἂν φιλήσαιμ'; αἱ Χάριτες πειρῶσί με.
 ἄλις· Γανυμήδη τόνδ' ἔχων ἀναπαύσομαι
 κάλλιον ἢ τὰς Χάριτας. ἦδομαι δέ πως
 τοῖς παιδικοῖσι μᾶλλον ἢ τοῖς θήλεσιν.

I would not kiss him; but the Graces tempt me. Enough! With this Ganymede I'll pleasure myself better than with the Graces. I suppose I'm pleased by boys more than by women.

Eur. *Cyc.* 581–84

Here "resting" with Silenos-as-Ganymede is clearly a euphemism for intercourse. The same

where he exchanges songs filled with sexual invective with the chorus, 253–321), and I make that argument in chapter three. For the distinction between a dangling and a tied-up (ἀναδεδεμένον) phallus, cf. Stone 1981, 72–126.

197 Cf. *LSJ* s.v. II. The source is supposed to be Hesychius, but I have been unable to locate the entry in question (I have found several entries for forms of φλᾶν, but none of them explicitly indicate masturbation). Cf. Hsch. φ 567, 569, 573. On the other hand, the entry in Hesychius for the compound ἀναφλᾶν does indicate masturbation (ἀναφλᾶν· χειροτριβεῖν αἰδοῖον. οἱ δὲ στύειν, ἢ μαλάττειν, α 4667).

198 Cf. Ar. *Lys.* 1099; *Ran.* 427; *Eccl.* 979; Ar. fr. 37 K.-A.; Luc. *Peregr.* 17.

199 There are Aristophanic comparanda for both πολλήν (*Pax* 167) and πολλὰ (*Pax* 1196) with a partitive genitive.

euphemism appears to have been considered a standard one by Machon; he uses it twice, in both cases clearly with a sexual meaning, in his anecdotes (χρεῖται) about *hetairai* preserved in Athenaeus (cf. Ath. 13.43 p. 580a 29, f 71). Athenaeus himself uses the verb so at least once (Ath. 13.79 p. 603a), and the historian Socrates of Argos employs the compound *συναναπαύεσθαι* in this way (*FGrHist* 310 F 6). Moreover, there is probably another such use of *ἀναπαύεσθαι* in a cunnilingus joke at Hermes' expense at *Wealth* 1120–23 (see Chapter Three). It seems likely, then, that at *Wealth* 694–95 we have an innuendo suggesting that Cario first performs oral sex on the old woman in the *temenos* of Asclepius, possibly while masturbating, then reaches a climax after he has finished. But all this is communicated in language that can equally describe him gobbling up an actual *chytra* of broth and then going to bed. Because all this takes place in a report he is making to his mistress, the sexual jokes are not overt but rather take on the subtler quality of innuendo.

One should keep in mind that Cario is certainly impersonating the serpent of Asclepius here, and that we know from the fourth-century Epidaurian miracle inscriptions (Iamata) that some women who had difficulty conceiving and therefore visited the temple of the god had dreams in which they had sex with the serpent of Asclepius.²⁰⁰ This is apparently the case with B 22 (42), where the god himself brings the serpent to her (ἐδόκει οἱ ὁ θεὸς δράκοντα μεθ[-----] φέρον παρ' αὐτάν, τούτῳ δὲ συγγενέσθαι αὐτά). The language of B 19 (39) is less explicitly sexual than *συγγενέσθαι*; there the serpent is merely said to lie (?) on her belly (ἐν τῷ ὕπνῳ δράκων ἐπὶ τᾶς γαστ[ρὸς κειῖσθαι]). But this is still symbolically sexual, especially since she goes on to have five children. At B 11 (31) yet another woman conceives after a sexual dream about a handsome boy who uncovers her. By my count most of the Epidaurian inscriptions involving women relate to childbirth (whether the problem is inability to conceive, unnaturally long pregnancy, or "false" pregnancy). Given the sexual dreams that were conventional on such occasions, the fact that Cario is impersonating the serpent, and the sexual cues here and from earlier in the narrative, the audience may suppose that he takes advantage of the circumstances to perform oral sex on the old woman in the guise of the deity or his familiar. The cunnilingus joke in particular is appropriate to his taking on the role of the serpent of Asclepius, for one imagines that in scenarios where a serpent is supposed to have intercourse with a human woman it might actually be imagined as entering her headfirst, being as it is a thinly veiled phallic emblem. The fact that it is an old woman being so treated, and by what is in fact a slave and not the divine familiar, constitutes a parody of the traditional restored fertility account.²⁰¹ The idea that a slave could disguise himself as a divinity to impregnate a woman turns on its head the mythic pattern of gods who disguise themselves as men (or any number of other things) to accomplish the same goal. One recalls the rumors about Demaratus' conception at Herodotus 6.69, where there is a

200 For what can be said about the chronology of these tales, cf. LiDonnici 1995, 76–82. Their inscription on the *stelai* we have now is dated to the middle of the fourth century, but of course the tales themselves could have existed significantly earlier. But LiDonnici argues that none of them are likely to predate the first major construction at Epidaurus in the fifth century. This would place the production of *Wealth* squarely within the period to which these narratives belong.

201 In another sense the old woman, as sexually undesirable to free men (cf. *Eccl.* 941), is a relatively appropriate sexual target for the slave (though he is having sex with a free woman, he still is not really *competing* with free men, whose lack of interest in older women is a subject of fun in both *Wealth* and *Ecclesiazusae*). It may also be relevant that in the *Ecclesiazusae* an old woman curses a young one with whom she is competing for the sexual attention of younger men thus: "May you find a snake in bed and pull it toward yourself, wanting to kiss it" (κάπτι τῆς κλίνης ὄφιν / <- > εὔροις καὶ προσελκύσαι <- >, / βουλομένη φιλήσαι, *Eccl.* 907–09).

tension between his mother's story that he is the son of the hero Astrabacus and the rumor that he is actually the son of a slave who took care of the donkeys.

I would argue that what Cario describes in this scene is multiply determined as transgressive and that his status as a slave relative to the old woman's presumably free status is but one element in the larger pattern. The taboo about sexual intercourse between male slaves and free women is being broken here, yes, but also the Greek prohibition against intercourse in sacred spaces, since all of this occurs in the *temenos* of Asclepius. Moreover, an old woman is not considered an acceptable object of sexual attention in Old Comedy, a fact that is much exploited for humorous effect particularly in the later plays. The method of intercourse, too, is marked as transgressive, since enthusiasm for cunnilingus is mocked elsewhere in the extant plays. This is emphasized all the more by the detail that the old woman has been farting, which is reported in the line immediately before the ambiguous description of the sex act itself. And the slave is delivering this entire account to his master's wife, with whom he is alone onstage, and this after an accumulation of vaguely sexual language in their exchange before his account begins. It is difficult to imagine how this passage could be more transgressive without running the risk of ceasing to be humorous. I would argue, then, that in this passage and others like it *transgression is the point*, and that an audience composed primarily of masters sometimes identified with such slave characters in order to experience a degree of transgression of which not only they themselves but also the *free* comic heroes with whom they normally identified were not capable because they were not slaves.

Sexual intercourse in sacred spaces was indeed forbidden in Greek culture, but I have shown in Chapter One that the violation of this prohibition was not so serious that it could not be mentioned in the carnivalesque world of comedy (cf. *Thesm.* 488–89), especially when it involved a sacred space that was less sacred than some (not, for instance, the *adyton* of a major temple). That the action in Cario's messenger speech takes place in the *temenos* of Asclepius—the sacred precinct outside the temple structure—and not in any part of the temple itself surely makes it much less offensive to the audience. Moreover, the mention of intercourse in a sacred space in the *Thesmophoriazusae* is immediately followed by a reference to intercourse between free women and slaves, and the two transgressive but potentially comic acts are thereby associated. On my reading this association would continue in *Wealth*, where the same act is an example of both. Here just as in the *Thesmophoriazusae* both ideas are relegated to the level of fiction within a fiction, for Cario's account of what he saw in the *temenos* of Asclepius is so fantastic that the audience is free to regard it as embellishment from a character who recognizes the authorial power available to him as a messenger and exploits it fully. The audience is thereby allowed to fully indulge in identification with a degree of sexual transgression of which they themselves (and the usual comic hero) are not capable by virtue of their social status without feeling threatened.

My discovery of *chytra* as a sexual metaphor also has profound implications for the ending of *Wealth* and (as I argue) for the continued presence of Cario at the end of the play, for the final joke involves an old woman and some *chytrai*. The old woman in question is the one whose young lover has abandoned her once he no longer depends on her financially in the episode at *Wealth* 960–1096; she now returns to take part in the final procession to the temple of Zeus Sōtēr, where Wealth will be established with an offering of *chytrai* (cf. *Peace* 923–24). She agrees to carry these *chytrai* on her head (the usual way for women to carry such jars) after

Chremylos has promised her that he will send her wayward young man to her in the evening. At this point someone makes the following joke:

καὶ μὴν πολὺ τῶν ἄλλων χυτρῶν τάναντία
αὐταὶ ποιοῦσι· ταῖς μὲν ἄλλαις γὰρ χύτραις
ἢ γραῦς ἔπεστ' ἀνωτάτω, ταύτης δὲ νῦν
τῆς γραδὸς ἐπιπολῆς ἔπεισιν αἱ χύτραι.

These pots are acting in a way completely different from others; for the old woman is at the very top of other pots, but the (her) pots are on top of this old woman! *Wealth* 1204–7

That "old woman" (γραῦς) designates the film that forms on the top of boiling liquids such as milk is secure (cf. Arist. *GA* 743b; Nic. *Alex.* 91; Ath. 13.585c); this is certainly the basis for the joke on one level.²⁰² But in light of the extended sexual play on the old woman's *chytra* at *Wealth* 672–95 (not to mention the general use of *chytra* as a metaphor for the vagina and uterus in Old Comedy) this final joke should also have a prominent sexual dimension: normally an old woman is on top of her own pot/vagina, but the situation is reversed here.²⁰³ The fact that the *chytrai* are plural (indeed, these are actual props, of which there must have been two) is not a problem, for the audience can easily imagine the anus as another such *chytra* for the purpose of the joke.²⁰⁴ This double joke is a fitting end to *Wealth*, where Cario has introduced so many such multi-layered sexual jokes. Nor will the final joke of *Wealth* still "strike at least the modern recipient as notably flat" (Revermann 2006, 295); rather there is something here for everyone—the joke about the film on top of pots at which everyone can laugh, if not raucously, and the obscene joke occupying the same space which much of the audience must have picked up on, especially in light of the extended play on *chytra* in the *temenos* scene. Indeed, surely the wit involved in constructing a sequence of words that is effectively not one but two different jokes—and indeed is also a reference back to a previous such passage—has been reserved for the end of the play so as to remain memorable and therefore have the greatest impact on the judges.

This joke also forces us to reconsider the attribution of speaking parts at the end of *Wealth*. Modern editors (Wilson, Sommerstein, Torchio) have followed Holzinger in attributing lines 1204–7 to Chremylos on the grounds that the joke is merely witty, not vulgar, and therefore more appropriate to the character of the master than that of the slave—a line of argument which now, given my interpretation of the final joke, actually supports an attribution to Cario.²⁰⁵ We should indeed follow Holzinger in rejecting the Triclinian introduction of Cario as the speaker at 1191, 1196b, 1197b, and 1200b, for the order at 1194–95 should belong to the master, and it is likewise

202 The *opinio communis* is that this is the sole basis for the joke: cf. Sommerstein 2001, 217; Torchio 2001, 242–43; Holzinger 1940, 325.

203 There may also be a sexual joke in this use of γραῦς at Ath. 13.585c, where Glykera instructs Menander, who is rejecting milk upon which this skin (γραῦς) has formed, to "blow it away and make use of what's below" (ἦ δὲ ἀποφύσα, εἶπε, καὶ τῷ κάτω χρώ.).

204 Though *phusis* ("nature") in the singular typically refers to the genitals, in the plural it refers to a woman's vagina and anus at *PGM* IV.296ff and *Σ Ar. Lys.* 92. Cf. Winkler 1990, 217–20. Cf. Henderson 1991, 134 n. 137 on the use of ἰσχάς to refer to both the vulva and the anus.

205 Holzinger 1940, 325: "Da dieser Scherz vergleichsweise harmlos ist und kein πρὸς τὸ κακέμφοτον, sondern ein einfaches ἀστεῖον enthält, raßt die Stelle besser in den Mund des Chremylos als in den des Karion, der etwas Gesalzeneres sagen müßte, um in der Rolle zu bleiben."

Chremylus who should continue to interact directly with the old woman, since he occupied the role of comic hero in her scene at *Wealth* 960–1096.²⁰⁶ But the comment *about* the old woman, especially since it is now to be construed as a sexual joke and a reference back to the particularly scandalous tale at *Wealth* 672–95, should belong to Cario. Certainly a slave is called for at 1194 and again at 1196, and Sommerstein rightly notes that the language of the latter command (τὸν Πλοῦτον ἔξω τις κάλει) implies that the slave who carries out this order will remain onstage afterward.²⁰⁷ Furthermore, the tightly organized structure of this play (comparable to no other extant comedy), in which Cario and Chremylus are onstage together at 1–229 but thereafter each occupy the role of comic hero in alternate scenes, so that from line 230 to the end of the play *one* of them is onstage in every scene but never *both* of them, should demand that they are together again at last in the final scene, and it is especially appropriate for Cario, who spoke the first words of the play, to also deliver the last. *Wealth* already requires four actors (as do most of the extant plays). By my reading all four (playing Chremylus, Cario, the priest of Zeus Sōtēr, and the old woman) will be present and speaking in the preparations for the final procession. The first part of this scene occupies itself with the conversation of Chremylus and the priest, while the old woman stands idle. The introduction of Cario to the stage after he completes the order at 1196 corresponds exactly to the shift of focus to the old woman at 1197: a slave is called onstage to fulfill the order, but Cario in particular responds because he is needed to deliver the final joke. The order itself—his cue, as it were—is postponed until the setup for the joke begins.

This reading of the end of *Wealth* would emphasize Cario's role in the play, which has certainly been more conspicuous than his master's up to this point, and downplay any notion that the new utopia will be a place of absolute order controlled by morally upright free citizens who will keep in check completely the chaotic impulses of their slaves (*pace* Olson 1989). Instead the chaotic impulses that have become typical of slave characters in the later comedies—in particular the need to continually make shameful bodily jokes, whether these are sexual, scatological, gluttonous, or some combination thereof—are preserved symbolically by the inclusion of a representative example at the end of the play. I would argue that an emphasis on bodily humor of all kinds is quintessentially comic and must be retained for an Old Comedy to *be* an Old Comedy (which, I think, *Wealth* is), especially in the final scenes of plays, where sex and food so often figure prominently as symbols of comic victory and rejuvenation. *Wealth* certainly does divide the ordinary comic hero into his more respectable, citizen/master aspects (Chremylus) and his more ridiculous, transgressive, chaotic impulses (Cario). But in so doing the playwright does not aim to stage the ultimate victory of one of these aspects over the other and the consequent taming of that which is most comic about Old Comedy, but rather to create two distinct modes of comic action to complement each other and create a more pleasing whole. It is true that one of these modes (the relatively naturalistic and decorous mode primarily associated with Chremylus) would eventually replace the other (the farcical and obscene mode associated with Cario) in the development of Greek comedy from Old to New. But in *Wealth*, I would argue, they are carefully balanced, as the tightly organized arrangement of the play, with its two main characters in alternate scenes, would indicate.

206 Holzinger 1940, 322.

207 Sommerstein 2001, 216.

Conclusion to Chapter Two

The passages from *Peace*, *Frogs*, and *Wealth* discussed above are the most conspicuous examples of male slave characters sexually usurping their masters or the master class for comic effect to be found in Old Comedy; taken together, they demand an explanation of the function of such scenes for the Athenian audience. I have argued that the audience identified with such slave characters in order to access even greater degrees of transgression than would have been available to them had they merely identified with a free character, since the slave as social inferior is capable of greater presumption than a free man. At the same time, the masters in the audience who are identifying with such slave characters do not have to *admit* to themselves or to each other that this is what they are doing; they are free to suppose that slave characters are presented behaving in this way because this is precisely the sort of business that (in their view) morally as well as socially inferior real-life slaves are involved in or would like to be involved in. From this perspective, presenting a slave character behaving outrageously is *less* controversial than if he were a free character. By walking the line between identifying with the slave and disapproving of him, the audience is able to experience the pleasures of both transgression and judgment. Chapter three will continue to investigate this phenomenon of alternatively identifying with the comic slave, judging him, and laughing at him through an examination of sexual humor that is less potentially threatening to the audience than what has been discussed here.

Chapter Three: Speaking Slave Characters as Sexual Jokers

In this chapter I examine passages of Old Comedy where speaking slave characters create sexual humor at their own or someone else's expense. I move chronologically through the relevant plays: my discussions of *Knights*, *Wasps*, *Peace*, *Frogs*, *Ecclesiazusae*, and *Wealth* constitute parts one through six respectively. The bulk of the relevant material is found in the latest two plays, each of which (as I argue) features a sexually obsessed slave character played by the first actor who also leads the chorus in lascivious dance and innuendo-laden song. That Cario plays this role in *Wealth* is relatively well-recognized, though I do make new arguments in various passages which tend to make this role even more prominent. For the female slave in the *Ecclesiazusae*, on the other hand, my arguments are completely unprecedented.

Part 3.1: *Knights*

Three of the early plays of Aristophanes (*Knights*, *Wasps*, and *Peace*) feature a pair of slaves of the same master alone onstage in the first scene. In all these prologues the slaves complain about their various woes in a way that is clearly meant to be funny;²⁰⁸ they function not only as jokers but also as the butts of their own jokes. One of the more interesting examples of this phenomenon, from the earliest of these prologues (the one in the *Knights*), features a sexual dimension as well:

- B. λέγε δὴ “μο-λω-μεν” ζυνεχῆς ὦδι ζυλλαβῶν.
 A. καὶ δὴ λέγω “μο-λω-μεν”.
 B. ἐξόπισθε νῦν
 “αὐ-το” φάθι τοῦ “μο-λω-μεν”.
 A. “αὐ-το”.
 B. πάνυ καλῶς.
 ὥσπερ δεφόμενος νῦν ἀτρέμα πρῶτον λέγε
 τὸ “μο-λω-μεν”, εἶτα δ’ “αὐ-το”, κᾶτ’ ἐπάγων πυκνόν. (25)
 A. μο-λω-μεν αὐ-το μο-λω-μεν αὐτομολῶμεν.
 B. ἦν,
 οὐχ ἡδύ;
 A. νῆ Δία· πλήν γε περὶ τῷ δέρματι
 δέδοικα τουτονὶ τὸν οἰωνόν.
 B. τί δαί;
 A. ὅτι τὸ δέρμα δεφομένων ἀπέρχεται.²⁰⁹

208 Slave suffering is likewise clearly marked as something for the audience to laugh at in a number of other passages in the extant plays. Cf. *Nub.* 56–9; *Vesp.* 1291–7, 1307; *Av.* 1311, 1316, 1323–9, 1334–5; *Lys.* 1215–23. The claim in the parabasis of *Peace* (743–48) that Aristophanes avoids the sort of humor where one slave makes fun of another who has been beaten is, in my view, tongue-in-cheek, as are so many such poetic claims made in the authorial voice in Old Comedy. Though we have nothing *exactly* like the situation he describes in the extant plays, the larger phenomenon of slaves being beaten or threatened for comic effect (and often mocked during or afterward) is certainly present.

209 I use the text of Wilson 2007a here as elsewhere, but I designate the two slaves whom he calls “Demosthenes” and “Nikias” merely as “Slave A” and “Slave B” respectively. For the argument that the two slaves are not consistent representations of these two specific politicians (unlike Paphlagon, who consistently represents

Slave B: Say “Le-tse-go” like so, all together. Slave A: I’m saying it: “Le-tse-go”. B. Now say “a wall” after that “le-tse-go”. A. “A wall”. B. Well done! Now as if you were jacking off, gently at first say “le-tse-go”, then “a wall”, and then in rapid succession. A. “Le-tse-go” “a wall” “Le-tse-go” “a wall” “Let’s go AWOL!” B. Hey now, wasn’t that fun? A. Zeus yeah! But I fear this here omen for my skin’s sake. B. Why is that? A. Because you lose some skin when you jack off! (*Knights* 21–29)

Besides the obvious masturbation joke, which is another example of how often the humor introduced by slaves is of a sexual nature, we have here a reference to the possibility of running away and the concomitant risk of a severe beating.²¹⁰ In the two levels of meaning here, masturbation and running away on the one hand stand in relation to the retraction of the foreskin and being flayed by a whip on the other. Both gratuitous sexualization and gratuitous references to beating slaves are part and parcel of Old Comedy; the particular humor of this joke consists in bringing both elements together with a single wordplay. By highlighting the great disparity between the prospect of freedom, which they find positively orgasmic, and the threat of punishment, the slaves make their own condition the object of a joke, both for themselves and for the audience. The figurative association of flouting the authority of the master (here in an extreme form, running away) with sexual pleasure finds a parallel at *Frogs* 753, where the slave of Plouton confesses to Xanthias that he achieves orgasm in his clothes whenever he eavesdrops on his master and then babbles everything he has heard to the people outside (see below). Slave characters in Old Comedy use sex as both a *means* of and a *metaphor* for undermining the authority of their masters, while an audience of Athenian masters looks on with delight at the carnivalesque depiction of these different kinds of transgression.

The different social relationships implicit in being on the giving or receiving end of various sexual acts in fifth-century Athenian society are also exploited by slave characters to illustrate the sort of relationship they have with their masters. Thus the slave character (often identified as “Demosthenes”) who expounds the plot at *Knights* 40–72 graphically describes the degree of Paphlagon’s control over their master Demos in terms which ambiguously refer both to bribery with foodstuffs and to several different sexual acts:

"ἐνθοῦ, ρόφησον, ἔντραγ', ἔχε τριώβολον.
 βούλει παραθῶ σοι δόρπον;" εἶτ' ἀναρπάσας
 ὄ τι ἄν τις ἡμῶν σκευάση, τῷ δεσπότῃ
 Παφλαγῶν κεχάρισται τοῦτο. καὶ πρῶην γ' ἐμοῦ
 μαῖζαν μεμαχότος ἐν Πύλῳ Λακωνικὴν, (55)
 πανουργότατά πως περιδραμῶν ὑφαρπάσας
 αὐτὸς παρέθηκε τὴν ὑπ' ἐμοῦ μεμαγμένην.

"Put it in there, slurp it up, munch on it, and take three obols. Do you want me to serve you a second supper?" Then Paphlagon snatches up what one of us has prepared and gratifies the master with it. And this morning, when I had kneaded a Laconian barley-cake at Pylos, he

Cleon), cf. Henderson 2003.

210 For masturbation as a typically slavish act in Old Comedy, see the footnote on Datis in my first chapter.

ran around me most shamefully, snatched it up, and served what I had kneaded.
(*Knights* 51–57)

The first two lines here, which are quoted in the voice of Paphlagon to the master, on one level refer to the slave character's bribery of his master with food (though no word for food has been mentioned) and (with the comment about three obols) to the real Cleon's "bribery" of the Athenian *dēmos* with increased pay for jurors.²¹¹ But the language also quite clearly casts Demos in the role of a male prostitute who will take three obols to perform fellatio on the slave (three obols is attested as payment for a *pornē* at Antiphanes fr. 293.3 K.-A.) and possibly be willing to do it again immediately afterward (even the question implies a virility for the slave which further accentuates the unusual power differential being depicted). Of course these lines can be explained at least partially by the fact that slave and master are obviously allegorical representations of the politician Cleon and the Athenian people respectively; the irrumation joke is an effective way to make the point that there is nothing respectable about the alleged Athenian willingness to pass the decrees of a politician who also introduces popular measures (like increasing juror pay). But I would argue that the lines also play on a tradition of upstart comic slaves who attempt to use sexual humor to alter the distribution of power onstage. Though this tradition was present already in Old Comedy toward the beginning of the career of Aristophanes (as we can see by paying close attention to the *oiketēs* at *Peace* 819–1126),²¹² it is most manifest in the characterization of Cario in *Wealth*, the latest extant play.

The second sexual joke in this passage is likewise unflattering to Demos. Henderson points out that Pylos here is probably a pun on *pylē* ("gate"), which can designate either the vagina or the anus in comedy.²¹³ I think this is correct. But it is unclear whether we should follow Henderson's argument that *māza lakōnikē* should refer to the slave's phallus, since there are no parallels for such a usage (there are in fact several for *māza* as "vulva", but that will not do in this passage). We might also take *māza* as a turd, on the assumption that some such colloquial usage lies behind the scene at *Peace* 1–18.²¹⁴ This makes further use of *peridramōn* ("running around" behind him) for the joke. At any rate, whether Paphlagon somehow steals the slave's phallus and serves it up to Demos as his own or sneaks up behind the slave and pilfers his bowel movement out from under him (ὕφαρπιάσας) for the master's table, the master does not come off favorably. (The irony that what is ostensibly being criticized is the master's lack of discernment in being fooled as to *which* slave has done him the great favor of feasting him on phallus/feces is of course a major component of the humor here.)

The various contests of the Sausage-Seller and Cleon for the affections of Demos constitute the bulk of the play and comprise much sexual humor. But the allegory of Paphlagon as a slave and Demos as master is relatively inconsistently activated later in the play (as opposed to its

211 For the detail that Cleon was responsible for the increase in juror pay from two to three obols, cf. Σ *Vesp.* 88, Av. 1541.

212 Cf. Walin 2009.

213 Henderson 1991, 202. For this use of πύλη, cf. Henderson 1991, 95, 137, 139, 173–74, and 202.

214 It should be noted, on the other hand, that if we hypothesize that μᾶζα was a phallus metaphor familiar to the audience, we can still make sense of both *Eq.* 54–57 and *Pax* 11–12. In the latter passage (see below) the joke would be that μᾶζα in those lines refers to the phallus and not to the cake of feces, with τρίβειν referring to the stimulation of the phallus with the hand (as commonly depicted on pederastic vase painting) rather than the rubbing of the anus. Against this, however, is the fact that the word μᾶζα is not repeated for that joke.

dominance in the prologue and the first few scenes). For this reason I omit these jokes from the present study.

Part 3.2: *Wasps*

Twice in the *Wasps* a slave character who does not otherwise have a prominent speaking role in a scene interrupts the dealings of his masters by interjecting a sexual joke into a previously unsexualized conversation. In both cases the joke is passed over by the other characters without comment. These jokes consequently do not greatly disrupt the flow; they seem to exist merely to draw a quick laugh from the audience. The first comes as Bdelycleon has been lamenting the current state of affairs in Athens, alleging that accusations of aspiring toward tyranny have become so common that they are bandied about freely in the Agora by the sellers of fish and vegetables, who characterize any buying practice not in their interest as somehow potentially tyrannical (488–99). His slave Xanthias, seemingly trying to help his master to make his point but actually merely interrupting to insert a passing sexual joke, continues:

κάμέ γ' ἡ πόρνη χθὲς εἰσελθόντα τῆς μεσημβρίας, (500)
 ὅτι κελητίσαι ἔκελευον, ὄξυθυμηθεῖσά μοι
 ἦρετ' εἰ τὴν Ἰππίου καθίσταμαι τυραννίδα.

Yesterday my whore got mad at me too, when I came in to her at noon, because I was telling her to ride me. She asked if I was setting up a tyranny in the style of Hippias! (*Wasps* 500–2)

Of course, κελητίζειν ("to ride") refers not merely to racing on horseback but also to a particular sexual position, as I discussed in Chapter One. Because the male in this sexual metaphor occupies the role of the horse, Xanthias is compared to Hippias, the former tyrant of Athens whose name closely resembles a Greek word for "horse" (ἵππος). Xanthias' example, then, is based entirely on wordplay; it is not the sort of thing that the prostitute would ever say in earnest (unlike the examples cited by his master for the salespeople in the Agora). Moreover, the idea that a slave would set up a tyranny is ludicrous (indeed, this incongruity may also have been part of the humor). After this three-line interruption, the master returns to the point he had been making without acknowledging the content of what his slave has said.

The second such interruption in the *Wasps* happens at the mock trial of the dog Labes (891–1008). In that scene the prosecuting "Dog of Cydathenaeum" is a thinly veiled reference to the politician Cleon, who was a member of this deme, had a name that was phonetically similar to *kuōn* (dog), and probably actually referred to himself as the people's watchdog.²¹⁵ When this Cleon figure first comes onstage, a slave character, probably the same Xanthias from previous scenes, heckles him: "This guy is yet another Labes, good at howling and licking pots clean" (ἕτερος οὗτος αἰ Λάβης, / ἀγαθός γ' ὑλακτεῖν καὶ διαλείχειν τὰς χύτρας, 903–4).²¹⁶ This is certainly a reference to Cleon's greed; the name Labes is used to evoke the aorist stem of λαμβάνειν, so that calling him "another Labes" is to say that he is also greedy, and the image of

215 Cf. Sommerstein 1983, 210; MacDowell 1971, 250.

216 Sommerstein 1977, 270–71 makes a compelling case that a slave should speak these lines, not Philokleon, who is sympathetic to the prosecution. Consequently Sommerstein 1983 and Wilson 2007a assign this comment to Xanthias.

him not merely licking but thoroughly (δια-) licking the pots reinforces the idea.²¹⁷ But there is another insult here that commentators have missed. The word used here for pot (*chytra*) is a comic euphemism for "vagina", and cunnilingus is regularly described in comedy as a form of eating.²¹⁸ Indeed, Henderson 1991, 144 points out a similar use of the verb διαλείχειν in conjunction with Cleon (again in dog form) and sexualized cooking-ware at *Knights* 1030–34.²¹⁹ The verb itself in both these cases strongly supports this argument, for λείχειν is undeniably used of cunnilingus at *Knights* 1285, and the intensive prefix δια-, making of cunnilingus a kind of gluttony, finds its comparandum in διακαθαίρει at *Ecclesiazusae* 847 (and probably also in διακναίση at Ar. fr. 926 K.-A.).²²⁰ Just as Xanthias does at 500–2, then, this slave character (who may well be the same Xanthias) interrupts and sexualizes a completely non-sexual moment of the play, which is good for a quick laugh (and in this case a quick attack on Cleon) but does not break up the flow of the scene: in both cases the slave's comment is ignored.

Part 3.3: *Peace*

The prologue of *Peace*, which features a pair of slaves kneading cakes of feces for their master's giant dung-beetle, is naturally the occasion for several jokes about anal intercourse. Thus quite early on one of the slaves exploits the double meaning of τρίβειν as both "rub" and "stimulate sexually" to make a joke:

ἑτέραν ἑτέραν δός, παιδὸς ἡταιρηκότος·
τετριμμένης γάρ φησιν ἐπιθυμεῖν.

Another! Give me another (dung-cake), from a boy who has served as a "companion"; for (the beetle) says he wants one that's been rubbed! (*Peace* 11–12)

The same sort of joke emerges again at *Peace* 42, where the choice of the epithet "Zeus the Descender" (καταβάτης), normally used to refer to lightning strikes, is probably meant to evoke καταβαίνειν in a sexual sense (penetration; see the many κατα- verbs with this meaning in Henderson 1991) as well as sound like σκαταβάτης ("Shit-Walker") when pronounced closely

217 Cf. Sommerstein 1983, 210; MacDowell 1971, 252.

218 For the case for *chytra* as a vaginal and uterine metaphor in Old Comedy, cf. Appendix A.

219 The shallow pan used there, λοπάς, is otherwise attested as a euphemism for the vulva at Eup. fr. 60.2 K.-A.; Xenarch. 1.10 K.-A. But I would take issue with Henderson's apparent implication that the vulvae of the personified islands are in question; it seems clear to me that the language indicates that dog-Cleon first snaps at the penis of the sleeping Demos (ὄψον, 1032; cf. Henderson 1991, 167–68) and then, when he "gapes in a different direction", enters his "oven" unnoticed (ὀπτάνιον refers to the vagina at *Pax* 891; cf. Henderson 1991, 178; Walin 2009, 37) and gives a good licking to his "shallow pans" (λοπάδας; plural now because Demos has become all the Athenian citizens) and "islands" (which with this much preparation the audience will construe as a sexual metaphor, probably for testes). I do not find the description of the anus in terms normally applicable to the vagina odd here (cf. Henderson 1991, 134 n. 137 on the use of ἰσχάς to refer to both the vulva and the anus); but in any case there is also the idea that Demos is imagined as hermaphroditic at the same point where he becomes plural because he is an embodiment of the entire people, male and female.

220 The only other instance of διαλείχειν in comedy is probably also a reference to (in this case violent, cf. διακναίειν with regard to Aripheades above) oral sex: "devouring, dicing, and thoroughly licking my lower sponge" (δαρδάπτοντα, μιστύλλοντα, διαλείχοντά μου / τὸν κάτω σπατάγγην, Ar. fr. 425 K.-A.).

with the final sigma of Zeus' name (Διὸς καταβάτου, 42).²²¹ Both these jokes are more or less demanded by the scatological context of the first scene of *Peace*, and they therefore do little to characterize the slave characters in question as particularly sexually obsessed. For that phenomenon the audience must wait for the latter part of the play. I have made the argument in depth elsewhere that the household slave at *Peace* 819–1126 foreshadows Xanthias in *Frogs* and Cario in *Wealth* in his control of the humor and sexual obsession.²²²

Part 3.4: *Frogs*

At *Frogs* 503–20 a (probably female) slave²²³ comes onstage to invite an apparent Herakles, who is really the slave Xanthias in disguise, to a symposium being hosted in his honor by Persephone. This slave describes the banquet in detail, enumerating first the variety of food (505–7, 509–11) and then the variety of women: an extremely beautiful *aulos*-girl and two or three dancing girls, young and depilated (513–16). Xanthias twice refuses the slave's persistent invitations (508, 512), but then the first mention of the *aulos*-girl and dancing girls piques his interest (515). He happily accepts the offer, clearly looking forward to the prospect of a sexual adventure (519–20).²²⁴

The detail that there will be only one table (518) is significant, for the Greek *trapeza* was large enough for only two or three diners. MacDowell, observing the call to "bring in the tables" at *Wasps* 1216, notes that the mention of a single table at *Frogs* 518 indicates that Persephone and Xanthias/Herakles will be the only diners, which would be a romantically charged setting.²²⁵ Sommerstein advances this argument by citing two seduction attempts that take place at two-person banquets: the scene of Calypso's appeal to Odysseus to stay with her and become immortal at *Odyssey* 5.194–213 and Alcibiades' attempts to seduce Socrates, as if he were a *paidika*, with dinners for two at *Symposium* 217c–19d.²²⁶ It seems, then, that the spectators are left with the impression that the goddess Persephone, intending to seduce Herakles, is

221 Henderson 1991, 193–94.

222 Walin 2009. See also my brief summary of these points in Chapter Two.

223 The sex of this slave is unclear. The issue is of some importance, for if the slave is female, the number of speaking female slave characters in the corpus will be doubled: the only other is the slave of Praxagora at the end of the *Ecclesiazusae* (who may also be the heraldess at *Eccl.* 834–52; see below). The rule that the sex of a slave corresponds to that of the master or mistress with whom he or she is associated is quite rigid in comedy, and we would therefore expect a slave of Persephone to be female. This expectation is reinforced by the use of *philtate*, which is primarily used by women, at 503 (cf. Sommerstein 1996, 202). But this slave also swears by Apollo (508), usually a man's oath. When the women at *Eccl.* 156–60 are practicing acting like men, one woman substitutes ὃ νῆ τὸν Ἀπόλλω for her previous blunder of the feminine oath νῆ τὸ θεῶ. The matter is therefore less clear than we could hope. But Dover 1993, 257 and Sommerstein 1996, 202 point out that we do have a female character swearing by Apollo for no apparent reason at *Lys.* 917, again when speaking to a male. Furthermore, the correction at *Eccl.* 156–60 need only mean that "by Apollo" is not a feminine oath; it could be gender neutral and achieve its function in that passage. For this reason I prefer to envision a female slave inviting Xanthias to the banquet. Sommerstein 1996, 202 argues strongly that this slave is female; Mactoux 1999, 28 assumes it, and Wilson 2007 prints *therapaina* in the OCT. Dover 1993, 257 seems to lean more toward a male slave here.

224 For more on the characterization of Xanthias in this scene and his relationship with his master, cf. my discussion of it in Chapter One.

225 MacDowell 1971, 288.

226 Sommerstein 1996, 203.

unknowingly making a pass at the slave Xanthias, who in turn is not even interested in her advances, but repeatedly refuses her invitations until the female slave mentions alternative sexual possibilities.

The slave's advances to Xanthias on behalf of Persephone may in fact be more explicit than has been previously observed. Food terms in comedy are frequently used as sexual metaphors, including many of those used to describe the banquet prepared by the goddess for the slave. It is not certain whether these meanings are activated in the female slave's description. Certainly the detail that the first thing Persephone did when she heard that Herakles had arrived was to bake some loaves of bread (ἔπεπτεν ἄρτους, 505) is problematic, since ἄρτος is certainly a phallic metaphor when it is used sexually elsewhere in comedy (see below).²²⁷ But in the same line the reference to the goddess boiling two or three *chytrai* of crushed pea soup is consistent with a reference to vaginal secretion (since ἔτνος is a common comic euphemism for this secretion and χύτρα is a vaginal/uterine metaphor, see Appendix A). The reference to roasting a whole ox (506) again does not seem to fit (though ἀνθρακίζειν certainly does admit a sexual interpretation in comedy),²²⁸ but the detail that she was "roasting flat-cakes" (πλακοῦντας ὄπτα, 507) is potentially sexually suggestive, since both the noun and the verb would be straightforward in this sense.²²⁹ Likewise the κόλλαβος, another type of cake, was probably a euphemism for the vulva; at the least its variant form κόλλωψ is a Greek equivalent of *cinaedus*.²³⁰ But again, "bird's meat" (509–10) is not entirely straightforward in this sense (κίχλη or "thrush" would have been much better if the intention were to create a sexual double meaning).²³¹ On the other hand, τραγήματα ("sweetmeats") and οἶνος ("wine") are respectively attested as metaphors for the vulva and vaginal secretion.²³² The female slave's final reference to food (τεμάχῃ or "slices of fish" at 517), which is separated from the main description of the banquet and grouped instead with the description of the dancing girls as youthful and recently depilated, is likewise a common sexual metaphor for the vulva (see below).

I argue below that the only other definite speaking part for a female slave in extant Aristophanic comedy (in the final scene of the *Ecclesiazusae*) includes an obscene banquet catalog that grows increasingly more explicit until it is finally capped with an obvious cunnilingus joke. The "heraldess" at *Ecclesiazusae* 834–52 does exactly the same thing (and, as I argue, is in fact the same character). Therefore it is worth asking if "deliverer of an obscene banquet catalog" was a type role for speaking female slave characters in Old Comedy.²³³ The

227 The use of πέπτειν, on the other hand, would follow comic usage for the "baking" of vulvic cakes in intercourse; cf. Henderson 1991, 144.

228 Cf. Henderson 1991, 177. Roasting a whole ox is of course a sign of bounty and luxury beyond what is typically Greek, attributed to the East (*Ach.* 85–86) or the mythical past (Antiphanes fr. 170 K.-A.).

229 Cf. Henderson 1991, 144, 351.

230 κόλλαβος appears only one other time in the extant comedies (*Pax* 1196), but there it follows two well-established vulva metaphors ("thrush" and "hare's meat") as the final item in a list of things to be brought for Trygaeus' impending wedding to Opora. On κόλλωψ as *cinaedus*, cf. with the citations in *LSJ* s. v. II.2 also Plato *Comicus* fr. 202.5 K.-A. (κεκολλόπευκας: τοιγαροῦν ῥήτωρ ἔσει), which should surely be understood as another instance of the common Aristophanic joke that a successful politician must be καταπύγων.

231 "Thrush" would be better in the sense that it is definitely well-established as a metaphor for the vulva, but of course the reason for this metaphor (presumably the physical resemblance between the cooked bird and the feminine pudenda) would apply equally well to any bird.

232 For τραγήματα, cf. Henderson 1991, 144. For wine, cf. my arguments on *Eccl.* 1174 in Part 3.5 above (p. 85 n. 277) and *Plut.* 1121 below.

233 Of course male slaves could play a similar role, as Cario does in *Plut.*

question, however, is ultimately unanswerable from the currently available evidence. It should be emphasized that the female slave at *Frogs* 503–20 does *not* end her catalog with an obvious sexual joke, though she does transition to a frank catalog of sexually available *aulos* and dancing girls. I would therefore refer to the sexual overtones of the situation described by the female slave (already noticed by previous commentators) and the analogous use of a female speaking slave character (probably) twice in *Ecclesiazusae* to argue that *some* spectators may have been disposed to detect some sexual double meanings in the catalog of the female slave at *Frogs* 503–20. But the passage is not at all explicit by comparison with the comparanda from the *Ecclesiazusae*, and I would therefore not be inclined to press this argument far. The fact of the matter is that the comic sexual vocabulary makes such heavy use of food words that banquet catalogs will always have some sexual resonances, and we should hesitate to make too much of these unless (as happens, for instance, in the passages of *Ecclesiazusae* discussed below) they are so overwhelming as to leave no doubt that a sexual joke is intended.

There is an interesting use of sexual language in the "second prologue" of the *Frogs* (738–813), where Xanthias and a slave of the household of Pluton come outside and, after engaging in the kind of joking centered around their juridical status typical of the slave prologues in the earlier plays (*Knights*, *Wasps*, and *Peace*), discuss with each other the plot of the second half of the play. The early joking is a parody of a tragic recognition scene in which Xanthias "recognizes" the other slave as a kindred spirit by the various slavish things (δουλικόν, 743) in which they both take delight. As this anonymous slave describes his various responses to performing different types of slavish actions mentioned by Xanthias, his reactions progress from "I rejoice" (χαίρω, 744) and "I think I'm at the mysteries" (μᾶλλ' ἐποπτεύειν δοκῶ, 745) through "I am delighted" (ἠδόμεαι, 748) and "I do more than rave" (πλεῖν ἢ μαίνομαι, 751) to culminate in "I make a mess of myself" with an orgasm (κᾶκμαίνομαι, 753), which last prompts Xanthias to finally offer him his hand and exchange kisses, as if discovering a long-lost kinsman.²³⁴ The list of "slavish" things itself—cursing the master behind his back, complaining when one goes outside after having been beaten, eavesdropping on the master, and then telling the people outside all about what has been said—is quite easily construed as a list of the characteristics of *comic* slave characters rather than those of real slaves. The inclusion of an ejaculation joke at the climax of this recognition scene adds into the mix another prominent characteristic of many comic slave characters: their sexual obsession.

Part 3.5: *Ecclesiazusae*

Ecclesiazusae and *Frogs* are unique among the extant comedies in including roles for speaking female slave characters. The slave girl (*therapaina*) who comes onstage in the final scene of the *Ecclesiazusae* is particularly interesting for my purpose here. The women's revolution has succeeded: private property has been abolished, dining and sex have become communal, and even the social stratification caused by beauty and youth has been eliminated through a decree that men and women wishing to sleep with the young and comely must first sleep with their older and uglier neighbors. The immediately preceding scene fully exploits the comic possibilities of this latter development, with the result that by the time this drunken slave

234 Sommerstein 1996, 222 adduces Hp. *Superf.* 31 as a comparandum for the sexual significance of "to defile oneself" (ἐκμαίνεσθαι).

girl emerges at 1112 the audience's appetite for sexual humor has been whetted. She has been sent out by her mistress Praxagora to summon her master Blepyrus to the communal mess, which will be the destination for the final *kōmos* of the play.²³⁵ That she is drunk is surely immediately apparent to the audience from her mannerisms and style of speech, though the modern reader does not become fully aware of this until she begins her encomium of Thasian wine at 1119.²³⁶ Furthermore, she is accompanied (in my view; see below) by some nubile young women (*meirakes*) who are probably stage-nude or scantily clad, the common sexualized symbols of the victory of the comic hero. I would argue that in the world of Old Comedy the appearance of a drunken slave girl (not to mention one with a pair of mute nudes in tow) creates in an audience familiar with the conventions of the genre an expectation (which may or may not be fulfilled) of sexual humor; in Robson's terminology it establishes a "playful frame".²³⁷ Certainly an imagined drunken slave girl seems to function as a sexual symbol at *Peace* 537 (see the argument on that passage in Chapter Three).

This expectation of sexual humor is tantalized, but not really fulfilled, by the female slave's self-correction at 1126:

ἀλλ', ὦ γυναῖκες, φράσατέ μοι τὸν δεσπότην— (1125)
τὸν ἄνδρ', ὅπου 'στί, τῆς ἐμῆς κεκτημένης.

But tell me, women: my master—uh, my man—where is he? The man, that is, of my mistress.
Ecclesiazusae 1125–26

Commentators have correctly observed that the female slave adjusts her terminology to the reverse of typical Athenian language ("the husband of my mistress" being formed on analogy with the more usual "my master's wife") to reflect the ascendancy of women in the new regime.²³⁸ But the temporary ambiguity achieved by the first half of line 1126 seems to have gone unremarked. When "man/male lover/husband" (τὸν ἄνδρ') replaces "master" at the beginning of 1126, for a moment we are tempted to retain in the definite article the possessive force which had been active in the previous line (i.e., to move from "my master" to "my man"). This ambiguity is prolonged by the word order: the rest of the question ("Where is he?") and the

235 No names are mentioned in this scene, and there are problems of one sort or another with every possible identification of the master. I reject the arguments of Wilamowitz 1903, 451–2, Fraenkel 1936, 270–4, and Olson 1987 and 1991 that the master in this scene cannot be Blepyrus. I would follow Sommerstein 1998, 233 in stressing the female slave's exaltation of her mistress, which is only appropriate for Praxagora, and minimizing the importance of the inconsistency between *Eccl.* 727 (where Blepyrus leaves the stage following Praxagora to the Agora) and this scene almost 300 lines later. As Sommerstein notes: "The only satisfactory solution is to accept the inconsistency, which it is unlikely that any spectator in the theatre would even notice." Ussher 1973, xxxii–xxxiv, Stefanis 1980, 65, Vetta 1998, Henderson 2002, Wilson 2007a, and Capra 2010 all adopt versions of this position.

236 Cf. Vetta 1998, 268: "L'ancella avanza dalla parodo destra, forse con evidenti segni di ebbrezza." Stefanis 1980, 172 thinks that her disorderly speech and repetition are probably symptoms of her intoxication: "στὴν περίπτωση τῆς Θεράπεινας τῶν Ἐκκλησιαζουσῶν (1112 κέ.) οἱ ἐπαναλήψεις λέξεων καὶ ἡ κάποια συντακτικὴ ἀκαταστασία τοῦ λόγου τῆς ἔχουν πιθανῶς σχέση μετ' τῆς μέθης." It may also be true that the *makarismos* with which she begins to speak is conventional for characters who are happily drunk (cf. *Eq.* 157–59 with the drinking which immediately precedes at 85–124).

237 For the term, cf. Robson 2006, 29–34.

238 Ussher 1973, 229; Sommerstein 1998, 234; Vetta 1998, 269; Capra 2010, 272.

natural pause in the iambic trimeter at the caesura separate the ambiguous "(my) man" from its resolution into "the husband of my mistress". I would take this as "unintentional" innuendo put in her mouth for comic effect.²³⁹ The unfortunate phrasing plays upon the comic audience's familiarity with female slaves who function as sexual objects in comedy, but there is also a naturalistic element at work (inebriated people really are prone to such Freudian slips).

The identity of the young women (*meirakes*) mentioned by the female slave at 1138 and again at 1152 is disputed. That in both references the deictic τασδί is used certainly indicates that they are present onstage, but are they the chorus of married women (so the scholiast, Wilamowitz, Stefanis, and Thiery) or stage-nude women (*aulos* girls, dancing girls, or *hetairai*) of the sort who accompany a male character at the end of the play and embody his victory and rejuvenation, as at the end of *Acharnians*, *Knights*, *Wasps*, *Peace*, *Birds*, and *Thesmophoriazousae* (so Fraenkel, Ussher, Vetta, Sommerstein, Henderson, Capra)?²⁴⁰ I would argue that the introduction of such mute nudes at this stage of a comedy is so prevalent that the latter option is much more likely, especially since the term *meirakes* does not elsewhere refer to married women. Ingenious explanations such as those of Stefanis 1980, 68 (that the female slave misuses the term because she is drunk) and Thiery 1997, 1310 (that this strictly inappropriate use of the term is "polie, presque ironique") are unnecessary.

If one does accept that these pronouns refer to mute nudes, an additional question arises: do they come onstage with Blepyrus or with the female slave? Ussher assumes the former without argument, while Sommerstein asserts that "the former is more logical, since Praxagora could perfectly well have informed her husband that there were girls awaiting his pleasure in the Agora without sending them along with her messenger."²⁴¹ But this underestimates the centrality of such mute nudes to the final scenes of so many Aristophanic plays; they need to be seen by the audience, and therefore they are presented on stage. Old Comedy does not privilege considerations of logic over exigency.²⁴² Nor does Sommerstein mention a different illogicality on the other side, namely that Praxagora has no way of knowing that her husband is in the company of these women. Moreover, elsewhere in the extant plays male characters arriving onstage accompanied by (an) *aulos* or dancing girl(s) are coming *from* a dinner party (so at *Ach.* 1197; *Vesp.* 1326). The symposium is in fact the proper place for such girls to be both in real life and in comedy,²⁴³ and it is therefore best to pair them with the person who is coming *from* the newly instituted communal-mess-as-symposium rather than with the person who alone out of all

239 Of course the idea of a character's "intention" is problematic in Old Comedy, where the line between character and actor is continually blurred and naturalism is easily dispensable for the sake of a joke. As I argue below, this female slave makes quite explicit sexual jokes later in the scene and has already done so in the role of heraldess at 834–52. It might therefore seem unlikely that she also plays here the same kind of "unintentional" role in sexual humor as the naive wife does at *Plut.* 627–770. Still, it seems to me the most likely way for this particular joke to have been played.

240 For recent discussions of these mute nude female characters in Aristophanes, cf. Zweig 1992 and Hughes 2008, 17–22.

241 Ussher 1973, xxxii, 227; Sommerstein 1998, 235. Vetta 1998 and Capra 2010 seem to neglect entirely the issue of who brings these women onstage.

242 An example: at the beginning of *Wealth*, Chremylus and Cario appear to have traveled all the way from Delphi to just outside their home in Athens without meeting *anyone* on the road. This is not logical, but the audience will hardly care.

243 For dancing and *aulos* girls associated with dinner-parties, cf. also *Ach.* 1091ff.; *Ran.* 513ff. *Pornai* are more versatile; they can be imagined in comedy as located in a fixed place (a brothel) or as part of the entertainment at a dinner party. But there is no indication here that Blepyrus has raided a brothel and stolen its *pornai*.

the men in Athens has not yet had his supper.²⁴⁴ Surely then it is the slave girl, coming drunkenly onstage to recruit her master for the final *kōmos*, who brings with her the traditional mute nudes.²⁴⁵ This interpretation of the staging combines with the innuendo I have pointed out above and more I will point out below to associate this female slave character strongly with the idea of comic-victory-as-sex.

I argue that this female slave character's part should be substantially larger than what has been accorded her in the most recent editions. Blaydes, Ussher, Vetta, Sommerstein, Wilson, and Capra assign the slave her last line at 1143; in all these editions the final virtuosic song is sung by the coryphaeus. But there is no manuscript authority behind this decision (R has only a paragraphus at 1151, and A omits even that). Indeed, Wilamowitz, Willems, Coulon, Russo, Stefanis, and Thiery give these lines to the slave girl (with the exception of 1154–62, which all except Thiery give to the chorus because of its parabolic character).²⁴⁶ The second half of the *Ecclesiazusae* is already noteworthy for its lyric parts for actors playing characters with no prior role in the action (893–923, 938–45, 952–75),²⁴⁷ and the idea that an actor playing a slave would lead the chorus in dance and song is not at all incredible when one considers the role that Cario plays in the parodos of *Wealth* a few years later. Moreover, both comedy and tragedy at the end of the fifth century and the beginning of the fourth were tending toward more elaborate singing parts for virtuoso actors and less dependence on the chorus. Therefore we should prefer to give the singing part at 1163–78 to the slave girl rather than to the coryphaeus, especially since (as I argue below) it is likely that she was played by the first actor.

Sommerstein 1998, 235 rightly points out a flaw in the arguments of the scholars who have assigned these lines, but not 1154–62, to the female slave: there is no reason to suspect a change of speaker at 1154. Nor is it at all necessary to posit such a change of speaker. The fact that 1154–62 constitute a direct address to the judges and a plea for their votes does not exclude the slave; such moments also occur in the speeches of actors even in the earlier plays.²⁴⁸ Even if this were not true, the reduced role of the chorus and coryphaeus in the *Ecclesiazusae* would make the argument that the female slave and not the coryphaeus takes on this role tenable.²⁴⁹ Therefore

244 Stefanis 1980, 68 makes essentially the same argument to support his view that *meirakes* refers to the chorus (he does not consider the idea that the slave girl could have brought the mute nudes onstage).

245 Russo 1994, 223 makes too much of the word order *τασδι μετὰ σοῦ τὰς μείρακας*. The prepositional phrase is only unambiguously attributive if it is actually in attributive position (i.e., if it were between the definite article and its noun). As it stands it can be taken to mean "to lead you and these girls who are with you" or "to lead you and these girls with you", and the audience, having just seen the girls come onstage with one or the other of these characters, certainly would not have been confused as to which was meant. For words (other than mere particles) which are clearly not attributive separating a deictic from its following definite article and noun, cf. *Ach.* 161; *Vesp.* 987, 1158, 1342; *Lys.* 97–98; *Eccl.* 787; 1049.

246 Cf. Russo 1994, 220; Stefanis 1980, 64–70; Thiery 1997, 1310.

247 Moreover, this slave may not be appearing for the first time at 1112; Ussher 1973, xxxiii and Stefanis 1980, 67 suspect that she is the same as the female herald from 834–52. Certainly the female herald's inclination toward sexual humor would strengthen my arguments for the slave here if this were the case (see below).

248 One thinks immediately of the speech of Dikaiopolis in the voice of the poet at *Ach.* 497–508. There is a certain logic, too, in the notion that we need a citizen male like Dikaiopolis to stand in for the *poet* but can use a female to stand in for the *play* (note that at *Nub.* 534–36 the play itself is imagined as an Electra).

249 So for instance Thiery 1997, 1310 attributes these lines to the female slave while at the same time denying that such a thing could have happened in the earlier plays: "Les vers 1154–1162 auraient certainement été dits par le Coryphée dans les comédies du V^e siècle, mais les changements intervenus depuis et le rôle réduit du chœur et de la Coryphée dans cette pièce ne me semblent pas justifier une longue intervention de celle-ci."

I would follow Thiery in arguing that the female slave speaks not only 1151–53 and 1163–79 but also the intervening nine lines. These lines may even feature another previously unnoticed sexual joke—another wine-induced "unintentional" innuendo like 1126 above (see below).

There seems to be some sexual humor between the master, the *meirakes*, and the slave girl at 1150–53:

- Βλ. ἐγὼ δὲ πρὸς τὸ δεῖπνον ἤδη ῥεῖζομαι·
 ἔχω δέ τοι καὶ δᾶδα ταυτηνὴ καλῶς. (1150)
- Θε. τί δῆτα διατρίβεις ἔχων, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἄγεις
 τασοὶ λαβών; ἐν ὄσῳ δὲ καταβαίνεις, ἐγὼ
 ἐπάσομαι μέλος τι μελλοδειπνικόν.²⁵⁰

Blepyrus: I'll hurry to dinner now. It's lucky I have this here torch (*grabbing his phallus*)!
Slave Girl: Why then do you keep on rubbing it yourself / wasting time instead of taking these girls and leading them? But while you go down I'll sing a song for those about to dine!
 (*Ecclesiazusae* 1149–53)

I would read the master's eagerness to head to dinner here as at least partly sexually motivated; the slave girl has already pointed out the mute nudes to her master and instructed him to take them with him (1138). When in this context he claims that it is lucky that he has "this here torch", he probably accompanies the deictic with a gesture toward his phallus. With this staging "torch" would not even need to be a regular phallic metaphor in comedy to make sense in the sexual joke. But in fact there is evidence that this word was indeed so used, especially in two other instances earlier in this play (see below).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the verb τρίβειν ("to rub") and its various compounds often indicate sexual activity in comedy.²⁵¹ In *The Maculate Muse* Henderson cites only *Lysistrata* 942–43 as an example of this use of διατρίβειν (normally "to waste time, delay") in particular. But the pun there (in the context of Myrrhine teasing her ithyphallic and suggestively named husband Kinesias) seems to revolve around a double meaning of μύρον διατριπτικόν as both "pounded" (i.e. created from pounded ingredients) and "delaying" perfume.²⁵² The only conceivable (tertiary) sexual meaning appropriate for a perfume that "does not smell like weddings" (κοῦκ ὄζον γάμων, 943) would be "having to do with masturbation", which is precisely the meaning we require of the verb at *Ecclesiazusae* 1150.²⁵³ In colloquial English "jerking off" is a colorful expression for "being lazy" in addition to its primary meaning of "masturbating", and if there was any similar overlapping meaning in the Greek use of διατρίβειν to mean "wasting time",²⁵⁴ it

250 As elsewhere I use the text of Wilson 2007a, but I have changed the attribution of 1151ff. in accordance with my arguments above.

251 Henderson 1991, 176 notes sexual uses of the simplex and of compounds with ἀνα-, δια-, ἐν, ἐκ-, and ἐπι-. Stimulation of the penis by hand is specifically indicated of the simplex at *Vesp.* 1344. παρατρίβειν indicates masturbation at Diogenes Laertius 6.45.

252 Both Henderson 1987, 182 (the Oxford edition of *Lys.*) and Sommerstein 1990, 203 understand the joke this way.

253 With this hypothetical use of διατριπτικόν we should compare the repeated use of ἐπιτρίβειν as "to bring into a full state of erection and then leave unsatisfied" in the same scene (*Lys.* 876, 952, 1090).

254 The fact that τρίβειν and its compounds are so frequently used sexually in comedy makes this more likely. Also the association of masturbation with noontime (cf. *Pax* 289–91) would seem to characterize it as an idle

certainly would have been activated by both the joke at *Lysistrata* 943 and especially by *Ecclesiazusae* 1151. For our passage of the *Ecclesiazusae* the immediately following use of the verb καταβαίνειν is suggestive too. If a double meaning of "while you penetrate them/while you go down" is indeed heard, Blepyrus could even make a thrusting motion or two during the final procession to drive home the point.²⁵⁵

Though my interpretation of the master's deictic reference to his "torch" as a phallic metaphor at *Ecclesiazusae* 1150 is unprecedented, Vetta (followed by Sommerstein and Capra) does suspect a similar joke less than 200 lines earlier in the same play.²⁵⁶ In that scene an attractive young reveler named Epigenes, arriving at the house of a young woman whom he desires, is accosted to his chagrin by first one old woman and then two others, with whom under the new law he is obligated to sleep before he can have access to the woman for whom he came:

Γρ. τοῦ δαί δεόμενος δᾶδ' ἔχων ἐλήλυθα;
 Επ. Ἀναφλύστιον ζητῶν τιν' ἄνθρωπον.
 Γρ. τίνα;
 Επ. οὐ τὸν Σεβῆνον, ὃν σὺ προσδοκᾷς ἴσως. (980)

Old Woman: What did you want, coming here with a "torch"? Epigenes: I was looking for a guy from Wankersville! OW: Who? Ep: Not Mr. Fokker, whom you seem to be waiting for. (*Ecclesiazusae* 978–80)

Epigenes' statement that he is searching for an "Anaphlystian" man clearly recalls the verb ἀναφλάω (with the exclusive meaning "to masturbate"), while the name of the man whom *she* seems to be waiting for—but in whom he professes to have no interest—suggests intercourse (the verb suggested by the name "Sebinus" being βινεῖν, the ancient Greek equivalent of English "fuck"). Vetta argues that the actor playing the old woman evokes a double meaning of "torch" with a gesture toward Epigenes' erect phallus.²⁵⁷ In the absence of a deictic we cannot be certain that a gesture is actually involved, but (as Sommerstein notes) the young man's response does indicate that he understands "torch" as a sexual metaphor, even if it was not obviously so intended by the old woman. An interpretation of the staging that forgoes the gesture will therefore rely more heavily on the presumed intelligibility of this "torch" metaphor, suggesting that this was part of the standard comic vocabulary of everyday things with specific sexual

activity.

255 Henderson 1991, 194 n. 10 suspects that a sexual dimension of καταβαίνειν may also be present in the reference to "Zeus the Descender/Shit-Walker" (Διὸς καταβάτου, heard as Διὸς σκαταβάτου) at *Pax* 42. This seems to me especially likely given the association of anal penetration and feces in a joke thirty lines earlier (*Pax* 11–12). See the discussion above. For sexual uses of the compounds of βαίνειν, cf. Henderson 1991, 155. Note that though Greek verbs which focus on the act of penetration tend to use "down" (κατα-) instead of "up" (ἀνα-)—precisely the opposite of English usage—ἀναβαίνειν is actually the more common Greek verb for copulation because it refers primarily to quadrupedal animal (rather than human) "mounting". The ἀνα- there refers not to the penetration itself but to the preparatory positioning.

256 Vetta 1998, 251–52; Sommerstein 1998, 222; Capra 2010, 259.

257 Vetta 1998, 251: "L'attore ha realmente una torcia in mano, ma, con un gesto, si poteva evocare in δᾶδα un doppio senso, accennando al membro finto vistosamente eretto." I do think that Epigenes is ithyphallic in this scene; Sommerstein 1998, 222 points out the several textual indications, and there is also a situational analogy with the teasing of men with erect phalloi at *Lys.* 831–1187.

meanings (which in turn would support my argument for *Ecclesiazusae* 1150 above).²⁵⁸ As Capra 2010, 259 points out, the erect comic phallus did look something like a torch, right down to being red at the tip.²⁵⁹ The torch may even have been a conventional comic metaphor for the penis; certainly it would have lent itself well to suggestive physical manipulation, as I argue happens in a comic scene on a certain red-figure bell-krater by the Libation Painter.²⁶⁰

The phrase "having a torch" (δᾶδ' ἔχων, 978) is common in comic descriptions of the *kōmos*, an already sexualized context.²⁶¹ It is therefore sometimes difficult to determine whether references to torches in erotically charged passages should be interpreted solely as descriptions of the accoutrement of a *kōmos* or as phallic references as well. But the most likely other such reference is also from the same play: at *Ecclesiazusae* 692 Praxagora describes to her husband and neighbor how under the new system each man will go away from dinner "taking his torch" (τὴν δᾶδα λαβών) and immediately be accosted by women wanting to sleep with him. If this too is a phallic metaphor, the "torch-as-phallus" joke crops up three times over the course of less than 500 lines in the second half of the *Ecclesiazusae*. Under these circumstances it seems likely that the audience would have readily understood the third joke at 1150 even without the benefit of a generically established sexual metaphor or a gesture.²⁶²

I argue above that *Ecclesiazusae* 1154–62 should also be attributed to the female slave (this following Thiery and in contrast to others, even those who have otherwise argued for a larger role for this character). If this is correct, she temporarily speaks as an incarnation of the play itself (just as Dikaiopolis momentarily becomes an incarnation of the poet himself at *Acharnians* 497–508).²⁶³ Her repeated injunction to the judges to "pick me", with its emphatic placement of this phrase at line-end in three successive lines (κρίνειν ἐμέ, 1155–57), may be the occasion for another sexual joke, again tied in with her drunkenness:

τοῖς σοφοῖς μὲν τῶν σοφῶν μεμνημένοις κρίνειν ἐμέ, (1155)
 τοῖς γελῶσι δ' ἠδέως διὰ τὸ γελᾶν κρίνειν ἐμέ·
 σχεδὸν ἅπαντας οὖν κελεύω δηλαδὴ κρίνειν ἐμέ.

(I advise) the clever judges to remember the clever bits and pick me, and those who like a laugh because of their laughter to pick me. In other words, I command just about everybody to pick/have sex with me! (*Ecclesiazusae* 1155–57)

258 "Torch" as a phallic metaphor would also lend much in the way of "unintentional" humor to Mnesimachus fr. 7 K.-A.: ὀτυή πρὸς ἄνδρας ἐστί σοι μάχη, / οἱ τὰ ξίφη δειπνοῦμεν ἠκονημένα, / ὄψον δὲ δᾶδας ἡμμένας καταπίνομεν (1–3).

259 The most famous sexual use of "torch" in Aristophanic comedy is the scene in *Vesp.* (1361–78) where Philokleon tries to convince his son that the *aulos* girl he has stolen from the symposium is really a torch. But the fact that Philokleon there, after he has given her a torch to hold and instructed her to stand still, must nevertheless explain the torch metaphor at length to his son shows that δᾶς is not regularly so used in comedy (pace Ussher 1973, 232).

260 See Chapter Four.

261 Of course torches along with garlands are the characteristic accoutrement of the real-life *kōmos*; cf. Pütz 2007, 53 n. 213.

262 For the recurrence of a specific sexual joke within a single play, cf. the use of *chytra* in *Plut.* (see Chapter One). In that play, too, a slave character with an inclination toward sexual humor reintroduces the joke in question in the final scene.

263 There is a precedent for the characterization of a comedy as a woman in the parabasis of *Nub.* (534–36), where the play is imagined as the Electra in *Choephoroi*.

The emphatic repetition cries out for a climactic *para prosdokian* joke, which can be easily accomplished if the actor playing the female slave "accidentally" says κινεῖν instead of the metrically equivalent and phonetically similar κρίνειν at the end of 1157.²⁶⁴ The sexual exploitation of subordinate women in the final scene of a comedy as a symbol of victory is quite common. In the context of the temporary assimilation of a female slave character to the play itself the metaphor of choosing the winning play as choosing a sex partner is therefore obvious (and particularly resonant with the themes of the second half of the *Ecclesiazusae*). On one level this "slip" can be interpreted as the result of her drunkenness. Were metrical length not an issue, I would be tempted to argue for a continuation of this joke at 1160.²⁶⁵ At any rate, the slave certainly brings sex into the fore once again at 1161–62, where she instructs the judges not to act like the prostitutes who only remember their most recent benefactor (because the *Ecclesiazusae* was the first of the comedies to be performed that year).

After this aside to the spectators, the female slave addresses the women of the chorus in song, urging them to get moving toward dinner (ἐπὶ τὸ δεῖπνον ὑπανακινεῖν, 1165), and instructs her master to dance in the Cretan fashion (Κρητικῶς οὖν τὸ πόδε / καὶ σὺ κίνει, 1165–66). Here she does use the verb κινεῖν twice in short succession, both times within ten lines after the joke where (as I argue above) she "accidentally" says κίνειν instead of κρίνειν. It is unclear whether in this context these two uses of κινεῖν should only refer to hurried and dancing movement respectively (they certainly do that) or also function as sexual jokes. It is easy to see how the slave girl telling her master to move his legs in the Cretan fashion, naturally accompanied by a demonstration of the required movement, could carry a sexual force, to which the master could respond in kind as he says "I'm doing it" (τοῦτο δρῶ, 1165). The compound verb ὑπανακινεῖν, which we infer from the context must mean "get a move on" or "hurry", does not appear elsewhere in extant Greek and is not even the subject of discussion in any ancient scholia or lexica, so that its potential for use in a sexual joke is quite difficult to gauge.²⁶⁶ The female slave then sings something lacunose about the *meirakes*; this is typically (and probably rightly) taken as an injunction for them to dance as well, but the verbs (both something indicating "it is necessary" vel. sim. and the verb of dancing) are a matter of conjecture. But if my arguments for a lascivious, joking atmosphere in the surrounding scene are accepted, we will want to suppose that the missing text here not only instructs the young women to join in the dancing but also makes a sexual jokes or admits some innuendo, especially since this is normal when attention turns to mute nudes in comedy even when the previous discussion has not yet been sexualized. In this connection it would be tempting to argue for a joke playing upon the pronunciation of λαγάρας ("thin") as Λαχάρας, since we know that the latter could indicate the vulva in comedy.²⁶⁷

264 Of course βινεῖν is also a possibility, but that would be more of a stretch from the pronunciation of κρίνειν, and the sexual force of κινεῖν would already be quite clear. The sexual force of κινεῖν ("to move") in Greek comedy is well known; cf. Henderson 1991, 151–53.

265 With ἀλλὰ κρίνειν τοὺς χοροὺς ὀρθῶς ἀεὶ pronounced closer to κινεῖν (this metrically viable) and χοίρους (the long diphthong in short position being a seemingly insurmountable obstacle). Of course ὀρθῶς would work quite well with both meanings. Of course there could still be a sexual joke even if χοροὺς is kept; this would extend the metaphor of voting for a play as a sexual act to the chorus of that play as well.

266 The Suda (μ 536 and κ 2410) quotes these lines twice but does not discuss the verb at all.

267 Cf. Hesych. α 7248 (= *com. adesp.* 283): Φορμισίους δὲ τὰ γυναικεῖα αἰδοῖα (Ar. *Eccl.* 97) καὶ Βασιλείδας, καὶ Λαχάρας. Note that this section of Hesychius is specifically concerned with the comic use of people's names to indicate various pudenda, and that the source of one such example (Φορμισίους) is clearly a different part of

In that case we are left with the possible interpretation: "and these women, then...vulvae with your/their legs the rhythm" (καὶ τάσδε νυν <υ̅ – υ̅ υ̅ / – υ̅ – υ̅ | – υ̅> λαγαράς τοῖν σκελίσκοιν τὸν ῥυθμόν, 1166–67), where any number of readings in the lacuna could complete the sexual joke while at the same time referring to dancing.

In this already potentially sexualized atmosphere the female slave sings the longest attested word in ancient Greek: a seven-line, 79-syllable tour de force of different food terminologies, probably sung in one breath (like a πνῖγος):²⁶⁸

τάχα γὰρ ἔπεισι
 λοπαδοτεμαχοσελαχογαλεο-
 κρανιολειψανοδριμυποτριμματο- (1170)
 σιλφιοπαραλομελιτοκατακεχυμενο-
 κιχλεπικοσσυφοφατ<τ>οπεριστερα-
 λεκτρονοποπιφαλλιδοκιγκλοπε-
 λειολαγωσριαοβαφητραγα-
 λοπτερυγών.²⁶⁹

For soon there will be (on the table) a dish-sliced fish-shark-dogfish-head-leftover-strong sauced-silphium-salty-honey dripped down-thrush-on-a-blackbird-wild pigeon-other pigeon-chicken-cooked-lark-wagtail-rock pigeon-hare-dipped in wine sauce-tasty-winged thing!²⁷⁰ (*Ecclesiazusae* 1168–75)

On one level, this gastronomic polysynthesis is probably a parody of the dithyrambic poet Philoxenus' Δεῖπνον (*Dinner*), which likewise contained (somewhat shorter) compounds consisting of food words.²⁷¹ But though it is not generally noted, many of the words present in this list also have sexual overtones in comedy, and others are probably chosen and metrically divided in conspicuous ways because they sound like other words which facilitate a sexual interpretation. Moreover, the sexual humor achieved through food terms in the parody of Philoxenus' work in the comic poet Plato's *Phaon* (produced in 391, squarely within the range of possible dates for the *Ecclesiazusae*) should make us even more aware of the susceptibility of

this same play. It is therefore somewhat tempting to go even further and suppose that the text here should actually read Λαχάρας, and that this is the source of the information in Hesychius.

268 Eustathius (1277.49), in describing the excessive fondness of Attic comedy for polysynthesis, mentions a "passage in some unfamiliar comedy so polysynthetic that the person who begins to read it either will not get through all of it without breathing or else will die there, breathing hard". Ussher 1973, 235 seems to understand this as an (incorrect) argument that it would have been impossible for the actor in the theater to have pronounced this passage of *Eccl.* as a πνῖγος, but this seems rather unfair to Eustathius, who clearly imagines a casual reader (ἀναγνῶναι) of the play with no special training, is arguably being intentionally hyperbolic, and may even be referring to a different play entirely. Brunck 1783 vol. 2:2, 62 had already made the connection between Eustathius' comment and our passage.

269 I depart from Wilson's text in printing Blaydes' emendation -τραγαλο- (for -τραγανο- in the MSS), as do Vetta and Sommerstein. See the discussion below.

270 I have not attempted to render the many sexual doubles entendres into idiomatic English, a feat which could not be accomplished without obscuring the primary meaning of the food words.

271 For the fragments of Philoxenus' Δεῖπνον, cf. *PMG* 836. There is some confusion in the fragments themselves about whether the person in question is Philoxenus of Leucas or Philoxenus of Cythera; Ussher 1973, 235, Vetta 1998, 276, Rosen 1995, 135, and Sommerstein 1998, 238 favor the former.

food-related higher poetry (and Philoxenus in particular) to this kind of comic parody.²⁷²

Henderson classifies four of the words in this compound—λοπάς ("shallow dish"), τέμαχος ("fish-slice"), κίχλη ("thrush"), and λαγῶα (sc. κρέα, "hare's meat")—as comic metaphors for the vulva, though he does not so interpret their use in this passage.²⁷³ I would argue that all these terms are deployed secondarily as vulva metaphors here as well. The fact that λοπάς and τέμαχος are the first two words in the compound may have predisposed the audience from the beginning to be looking for additional sexual metaphors. Additionally, the standardization of the spelling of "blackbird" in modern editions (where R's -κοσσυκο-, which is attested as a variant form in the Carolingian Greek-Latin *Hermeneumata Leidensia*, is changed to the more common -κοσσυφο-) obscures another such ambiguity: as R stands one could reasonably expect a wordplay on σῦκον ("fig"), another established metaphor for the vulva in comedy.²⁷⁴ "Thrush-on-a-blackbird" (-κιχλεπικοσσυκο-) can then be interpreted as a doubly determined vulva reference.

Moreover, several elements in the list are likely metaphors for vaginal secretion. "Pungent sauce" (-δριμυποτριμματο-), coming in the second line of a list that began with two conjoined metaphors for the vulva, suggests this; it is also susceptible to a generalized sexual interpretation because of its derivation from ὑποτρίβειν ("to rub gently").²⁷⁵ In the same position in the third line we find "poured down/dripping honey" (-μελιτοκατακεχυμενο-). Honey can be otherwise established as a comic metaphor for vaginal secretion; the relevance of the participle to the sexual interpretation hardly needs explication.²⁷⁶ Finally, given the prevalence of "hare" as a metaphor for the vulva in comedy, the immediately following descriptor "dipped in wine sauce"

272 That Plato is parodying Philoxenus is explicit at fr. 189.4 K.-A. The sexual humor revolves around foods useful for (the βολβός; cf. 9–10) or detrimental to (the τρίγλη; cf. 20–21) achieving erection. The scholium on Ar. *Plut.* 179 provides our date for *Phaon*. Cf. Rosen 1995, 131–37.

273 For κίχλη ("thrush"), cf. Henderson 1991, 147; for the other three, cf. 144. His case for this meaning of τέμαχος is limited to a single and by itself doubtful example (*Eccl.* 842), but the others terms are well-established in this meaning from the examples he cites. In fact τέμαχος too can probably be confirmed as a metaphor for the vulva from passages not mentioned by Henderson: cf. *Ach.* 881, *Eq.* 1177, (in conjunction with my argument on the immediately preceding joke in Appendix A), *Nub.* 338–39, and *Ran.* 517. In all these cases, as at *Eccl.* 842, the sexual interpretation fits the context quite well (in *Ach.* the eel is being treated like a young woman; in *Eq.* the cunnilingus joke at Athena's expense immediately precedes; in *Nub.* we find the collocation of δροσερῶν, κατέπινον, and κιχλῶν and the presence onstage of the newly arrived chorus, whose resemblance to young women rather than clouds is pointed out exactly here; in *Ran.* references to the dancing girls precede and follow).

274 *CGL* III, 412. For the *hermeneumata*, which descend from late antique school texts, cf. Dionisotti 1988, 26–31. For the Latin *glossaria* in general, cf. Dionisotti 1996. For σῦκον in this sense, cf. Henderson 1991, 135. Λ's -κοσσυφαο- is a syncope of R's -κοσσυκοφαττο-; the φ in that garbled form does not necessarily belong to the "blackbird" root. κόπιχος (cf. *Ach.* 970; *Av.* 305, 806, 1081), another variant of the same word, also has a palatal at the end of the stem.

275 Cf. the discussion of comic sexual uses of τρίβειν and its compounds above.

276 Cf. Ar. fr. 598 K.-A.: ὁ δ' αὖ Σοφοκλέους τοῦ μέλιτι κεχρμένον / ὥσπερ καδίσκου περιέλειχε τὸ στόμα. The point is presumably 1) that the enthusiast being described is so enamored of the "sweetness" of Sophocles' use of language that he wants to lick the honey from around his mouth and 2) that the whole figure is constructed so as to sound like the performance of a sexual act. Note that "jar" (*kadiskos*) appears to function like *chytra* here (cf. Appendix A). For στόμα (with or without a word designating the vagina itself) describing the entrance to the vagina, cf. Hp. *Mul.* 37; 244. I also argue that honey is used as a metaphor for vaginal secretion at *Plut.* 1121 (see below). Cf. also Plato *Comicus* fr. 188.9 K.-A. (where whole thrushes mixed with honey, in a list of quite sexualized sacrifices demanded by Aphrodite, are clearly a sexual metaphor).

(-σπραιοβαφη-) should be taken similarly, especially since the ordinary word for wine (οἶνος) is elsewhere a metaphor for vaginal secretion.²⁷⁷

The catalog also exploits the running together of terms to create other meanings when the division between words is heard differently. The fact that περιστερὰ ("pigeon") and ἀλεκτρυών ("chicken") share an alpha, which is separated from the rest of -λεκτρυων by line-break, accentuates the λεκτρ- element; possibly the audience could hear in that a reference to λέκτρον ("bed") if by that point they are disposed to be actively looking for alternate meanings. Even more probable is the idea that the division of πέλεια ("rock pigeon") over a line-break so that 1174 begins with λειο- is meant to evoke λείος ("smooth, soft") as an additional descriptor of "hare dipped in wine sauce", the subsequent vulva metaphor. Moreover, the phrase "roast lark" (οπτοπιφαλλίδο) strongly suggests "cooked on a phallus" (ὄπτ' ἐπὶ φάλλῳ).²⁷⁸ The notions of a phallus as a spit and of sexual activity as a form of cooking both have comic parallels.²⁷⁹

Rounding out the end of 1173, we have "wagtail" (κίγκλος), a bird associated with a particular kind of lewd dance and coital maneuver in comedy.²⁸⁰ At 1174–75 the reading of the MSS (τραγανός, meaning "gristly" or "cartilaginous") does not have an obvious sexual sense, is not otherwise found in comedy, and is not unambiguously appetizing (as are the other food words in their primary sense). But Blaydes' simple emendation to a hypothetical *τραγαλός (perhaps "tasty"; τραγαλίζω means "to munch" at *Wasps* 674) solves all of these problems.²⁸¹ The final semantic unit of the compound, "wings" (-περυγῶν-), is surely a comic metaphor for the phallus, as numerous (mostly unnoticed) Aristophanic parallels show.²⁸²

277 For οἶνος, cf. *Eq.* 351–58; *Pax* 1322–25 in conjunction with 1346–54 (and cf. 916); possibly *Ran.* 1150; possibly *Plut.* 1084–85, if the selection of this particular aphorism is meant to be humorous; *Plut.* 1121 (discussed below); Pherecrates fr. 113.28–31 K.-A.; possibly Philyllius fr. 5 K.-A.

278 For other comic phallus-puns, cf. Henderson 1991, 112–13. Ussher 1973, 236 makes an excellent case for his emendation of οπτεγκεφαλλίω in the MSS to οπτοπιφαλλίδο. For the πιφαλλίς, cf. Hsch. s.v.

279 For the phallus as a spit, cf. Henderson 1991, 170; for ὄπτᾶν ("to roast, bake") specifically as a sexual metaphor, cf. Henderson 1991, 178.

280 For the wagtail, cf. Henderson 1991, 178–79.

281 Vetta, Sommerstein, and Henderson follow Blaydes; Ussher, Wilson, and Capra keep -τραγανο-.

282 Cf. Henderson 1991, 128. In addition to the passages mentioned by Henderson, a phallic interpretation of various "wing" words is quite likely in at least some of the following: *Ach.* 987 (actual feathers, surely, are props, but when the chorus draws attention to them as evidence of Dikaiopolis' new lifestyle immediately before a sexualized invocation of Reconciliation there is a good chance that they are interpreted symbolically); *Pax* 160–62 (which could be understood as an injunction for the dung-beetle to bugger Zeus); *Av.* 273 (which could be a joke if the flamingo in question wears an erect phallus, which was red at the tip; note also the suggestion of κόπτειν), 286, 654–55 (where in this sense the root could easily be taken as a reference to the aphrodisiac βολβός), 795–96, 1361–63, 1402, 1714, 1759–61; *Lys.* 666; *Ran.* 1311 (in the presence of the Muse of Euripides and some rather suggestive language); Ar. fr. 236 K.-A. It is possible that "feather" (πτερόν) as a phallic euphemism derives from medical practice; certainly the Hippocratic *Gynaikeia* advocates the insertion of πτερά into the vagina to treat a wide variety of conditions. Cf. Hp. *Mul.* 37; 74; 81; 84; 91; 201; 205; 225; 244. A putative transition from this use of πτερόν as "feather" (it can mean either "feather" or "wing") to a similar use of πτέρυξ (which can only mean "wing") would have required enough time for the original sense of πτερόν in the metaphor to have been misinterpreted, perhaps a generation. Aristophanes' first phallic use of πτέρυξ is probably *Pax* 160 (421 BC). In the Hippocratic passages the feather-probe is sometimes first dipped in honey, which is also a comic metaphor for vaginal secretion. Likewise βάλανος (lit. "acorn") is a phallus metaphor in comedy (*Lys.* 410–13) but a pessary in medicine (Hp. *Mul.* 74; 84; 201). A more detailed study of the relationship between the comic sexual vocabulary and medical practice and terminology might yield interesting results.

From the arguments above it is apparent that, while not every single word constituting this gastronomic polysynthesis can be construed as a sexual metaphor, most of them (by my count eighteen of twenty-six, though this depends on how one divides the units) can, and this includes not only the first two elements of the compound but also the entirety of the last two and a half lines, which admit a rather graphic alternative interpretation something like "in bed, cooked on a phallus, booty-shaking-bird, smooth vulva dipped in vaginal secretion eating a penis" (λεκτρονοποπιφαλλιδοκιγκλοπε- / λειολαγωσοιραιοβαφητραγα- / λοπτερυγών, 1173–75). Surely this is more than coincidence. The drunken female slave, who has already established herself firmly as a sex-obsessed character in the preceding scene, brings the play toward its "climax" with a sexually explicit song parodying the dithyrambic food-poetry of Philoxenus.

The drunken slave girl immediately caps her run-together list of sexualized food terms in this final scene with a cunnilingus joke:

θε. σὺ δὲ ταῦτ' ἀκροασάμε- (1175)
 νος ταχὺ καὶ ταχέως λαβὲ τρύβλιον.
 εἶτα κόνισαι λαβῶν
 λέκιθον, ἴν' ἐπιδειπνῆς.
 Βλ. ἀλλὰ λαιμάττουσί που.

Female Slave: But you, now that you've heard these things, quick and quickly grab a bowl, then hurry up and grab some porridge, so you can eat it up! Blepyrus: I bet they're wolfing it down!
(*Ecclesiazusae* 1175–79)

The relevance of the preceding mouth-watering catalog to the sexual joke is made explicit by the phrase "having heard these things" (ταῦτ' ἀκροασάμε- / νος, 1175–76). Coulon, Vetta, Thierry, Sommerstein, and Capra explain the joke solely as a humorous deflation of Blepyrus' expectations through the sudden reduction of the fantastic abundance of foods in the previous polysynthetic list to an unremarkable quotidian porridge (analogous to the effect of *Ecclesiazusae* 1140–48, where the spectators are told that a dinner awaits them...at home).²⁸³ But Ussher is surely correct in detecting a cunnilingus joke as well; certainly τρύβλιον indicates the vulva elsewhere in the play (in a similar moment, when the heraldess' description of the pleasures of the feast laid out in the Agora devolves into a cunnilingus joke), and "porridge" falls readily into the class of soups, broths, and gruels signifying vaginal secretion in Old Comedy.²⁸⁴ In retrospect, the female slave's former claim that she would sing "a song for those about to dine" (μέλος τι μελλοδειπνικόν, 1153) is humorous. As often in Aristophanes, the master does not take offense at his slave's joke.²⁸⁵ His final remark ("I bet they're wolfing it down!") can be reasonably interpreted as either an endorsement of the sexual joke (with comic effect much emphasized over naturalism, as often) or a failure to comprehend it. Either way, as the exiting chorus sings the final song anticipating a feast (1180–83), which has now become the after-party

283 Coulon 1923, 70; Vetta 1998, 276; Thierry 1997, 1311; Sommerstein 1998, 239; Capra 2010, 277.

284 Ussher 1973, 237. For τρύβλιον, cf. *Eccl.* 845–47 (and possibly 252–53) and Henderson 1991, 143. While there is no parallel for λέκιθος specifically as vaginal secretion, it is (like ἀθήρη; cf. Chapter One) a relatively uncommon word which clearly belongs to the same broad category of food as ἔτνος and ζωμός. Cf. Henderson 1991, 145.

285 Cf. Walin 2009.

held for them as male citizen choreuts rather than the fictional dinner in the Agora, the memory of the elaborately described sexual feast offered by the drunken female slave is still quite fresh. As the slave herself has so recently implied, speaking as an embodiment of the play itself, audiences are prone to remember their most recent experiences (1162). Like Cario in *Wealth*, she is the last character to command the attention of the spectators.²⁸⁶

Again like Cario, the female slave is probably played by the first actor. Assuming that the male character in this scene is indeed Blepyrus and that he is played by the same actor who played him throughout (not the first, who surely would have played Praxagora), the only way for the first actor to have been in the final scene (surely a desirable outcome) is as the only other character in that scene: the female slave.²⁸⁷ Moreover, the polysynthetic πνῖγος laden with sexual imagery demands the sort of virtuoso performance at which a first actor might excel. Having established that the same actor probably played both Praxagora and her female slave, Sommerstein merely takes the next logical step in assigning the third representative of Praxagora, the heraldess who announces that the banquet has been prepared in the Agora (834–52), to the same actor; the protagonist could easily have played all three roles as well as that of the first old woman.²⁸⁸

But the slave girl and the heraldess share more than an actor and a similar role as announcers of a lavish feast; as Ussher and Stefanis suggest, they are probably the same character.²⁸⁹ In that case the audience would have immediately recognized her from the previous scene, where the "heraldess" was probably assumed to be a slave of Praxagora (see below); otherwise, if she is a completely new character, her identity is potentially confusing until the master she is looking for turns up onstage at 1128 and is seen to be Blepyrus. Moreover, there are some striking similarities in the behavior of these two subordinate female characters. Each one describes the feast in the Agora in some detail; toward the end of each description the language becomes increasingly sexually explicit, then culminates in a cunnilingus joke.²⁹⁰ This interpretation of the speech of the "heraldess" is widely recognized as correct (indeed, the joke at Smoios' expense at 846–47 would be quite difficult to deny), and I will not belabor it here.²⁹¹ My arguments above for the final scene of the play, if accepted even in part, greatly strengthen the previously recognized resemblance between the roles of these two characters.

The heraldess enters the stage, makes her announcement, and leaves again without anyone speaking directly to her (834–52); therefore it is not at all strange that there is no explicit textual indication of her putative slave status. The role she plays is a conflation of that of an actual herald and that of a female slave sent by her mistress to invite the men onstage to a *private* banquet, as her early injunction for them to hurry "straight for the female general" (εὐθὺ τῆς στρατηγίδος, 835), which casts Praxagora individually as the hostess of the public mess, confirms. In fact this is precisely the role played by both of the other instances of speaking

286 Unless the slave who speaks the final *chytra* joke is Hermes, in which case Cario's actor will play the Old Woman who is the butt of the joke; see below.

287 Sommerstein 1998, 31 arrives at the same conclusion, though he is not so explicit about his assumptions.

288 Sommerstein 1998, 31–32.

289 Ussher 1973, xxxiii; Stefanis 1980, 67.

290 Capra 2010, 276–77 points out the potentially sexual verbal repetitions (τέμαχος, λαγῶα, and τρύβλιον occur in both scenes) but claims that they are used as obscene metaphors only in the speech of the heraldess. I hope to have refuted this argument with my observations above.

291 Cf. Ussher 1973, 192; Sommerstein 1998, 211–12; Henderson 1991, 143.

female slave characters in Aristophanic comedy (cf. *Frogs* 503–20 and *Ecclesiazusae* 1112–83). As Mactoux points out, the association between the gender of masters and that of their slave characters in Old Comedy is rigid beyond naturalistic representation, clearly a generic convention.²⁹² That the heraldess is female at all makes her likely to be construed as a slave of Praxagora. Moreover, Praxagora's language about "taking" a heraldess as she left the stage in a previous scene (λαβοῦσα κηρύκαιναν εὐφωτόν τινα, *Ecclesiazusae* 713) might suggest the same. Therefore I would take the parts of the "heraldess" and the "slave girl" as two different appearances of the same character.²⁹³

If my arguments for the attribution and sexual content of the final scene of the *Ecclesiazusae* are accepted, the female slave character emerges as an extremely interesting and dramatically significant character, much more similar to the sexually obsessed joking male slaves of *Peace*, *Frogs*, and *Wealth* than to the mute female characters commonly deployed as sex objects. Mactoux 1999, 28 argues that she and the other speaking female slave in Aristophanic comedy (at *Frogs* 503–20, see above) are flat characters who relate the accomplishments of others and only exist as products of a collective theme.²⁹⁴ Such a characterization is relatively accurate for the female slave of Persephone, who is onstage only briefly and merely follows the order of her mistress to invite "Herakles" to the banquet (perhaps adding in some sexual innuendo herself). But my arguments above would create in the female slave from the final scene of the *Ecclesiazusae* quite a different sort of speaking female slave character, whose preoccupation with the sexual (and, more specifically, with the sexual as food), use of sexual innuendo on her owner of the opposite sex, humorous exploitation of messenger speeches, and role leading the chorus in song and dance foreshadow the single most dominant and larger-than-life slave character in Aristophanic comedy, Cario from *Wealth*, who came onstage only a few years later.

It is worth noting that by my arguments both *Ecclesiazusae* and *Wealth*, the two fourth-century plays of Aristophanes, end with a slave character making an elaborate joke that blurs the boundary between food and sex, so that sex can be viewed as a type of eating and eating as a type of sex.²⁹⁵ In some ways this is not surprising, since it is well known that abundance of food and sexual abandon are frequent symbols for victory, rejuvenation, and peace after years of war in the extant comedies. As such, both belong at the end of a play, where such themes dominate most, and combining both of them into a single image is not only particularly effective (in that it evokes both sets of pleasures at the same time) but also particularly appropriate to Old Comedy, considering its obsession with cunnilingus and fellatio jokes. In fact, I would argue that Aristophanes' *Peace* also ends with a cunnilingus joke.²⁹⁶ It is interesting to note, however, that if my interpretation of the endings of these three plays is accurate, what has changed in the fourth century is not comedy's tendency to end plays with jokes that blur the line between eating and

292 Mactoux 1999, 25. The male nurse of Cinesias' infant son in *Lys.* illustrates this rigidity nicely.

293 As noted above, the slave character who describes a banquet in sexually suggestive detail seems to have been a commonplace of late fifth and early fourth century comedy (cf. *Ran.* 503–20; *Plut.* 665–95). Nonetheless I think it is more reasonable to posit a single character rather than two for the extremely similar roles of the heraldess and female slave. Stefanis 1980, 107–8 notes that ten of the twelve slave messenger speeches he identifies bear some relationship to food, but most of these are simple invitations to dinner and do not admit the kind of development we see in the longer speeches of *Ran.*, *Eccl.*, and *Plut.*

294 "Ces deux esclaves mettent en discours ce qui a été réalisé par ailleurs et n'existent qu'en tant que résonance d'un sujet collectif qui crée leur identité."

295 For the argument for *Wealth*, see my discussion in Chapter Two.

296 I will not get into this argument here, since it does not relate to the use of slave characters in comedy.

sex—since this will have already existed in 421 BC, some thirty years before the other two plays—but rather the decision to give these jokes to slave characters. I would argue that this is a manifestation of the fourth-century trend of relegating more and more of the bodily (gluttonous, sexual, scatological) humor to slave and other "low" characters, thus allowing the citizen characters to become more respectable than they had been in fifth-century comedy. The cunnilingus joke was, at least in my view, the most offensive of the various sexual jokes one finds in Old Comedy; it would therefore be the least likely to remain in the mouth of a citizen character once the idea that the grosser bodily jokes should belong to "low" characters had developed.²⁹⁷ This would go a long way toward explaining why the only two scenes in the *Ecclesiazusae* that have a slave character with a speaking part also both have prominent cunnilingus jokes.

Part 3.6: Cario in *Wealth*

Sex first comes under discussion in *Wealth* in a series of examples meant to show that "all things are obedient to wealth" (ἅπαντα τῷ πλουτεῖν γὰρ ἐσθ' ὑπήκοα, 146). Unusually it is the master of the house and comic hero, Chremylus, who introduces the sexual content; it is Cario, the slave, who responds.²⁹⁸ When the master claims that the *hetairai* at Corinth do not pay attention to poor prospective clients but immediately offer their anus to a rich man, the slave extends the example to include boys (*paides*) as well, who likewise allow themselves to be penetrated for the sake of money, not for the sake of their lovers. When Chremylus objects that it is only *pornoi* ("male prostitutes") and not "good/well-bred" boys (χρηστούς, 155) who behave so, adding that *chrēstoi* do not seek money, Cario asks what they do seek, to which the response is that one asks for a good horse, another for hunting dogs. The slave points out the flimsiness of the distinction, arguing that they are ashamed to ask for money and therefore cover up their depravity "with a name" (ὀνόματι, 159). The implication is that receiving gifts in a pederastic context and prostitution are really the same thing; the one is a euphemism for the other. The accusation is potentially quite serious. We know from Aeschines 1.29–32 that by 346 citizens convicted of prostitution lost their citizen rights, and *Knights* 876–77 suggests that this or a similar law was already in effect in 424. In effect we have a slave (παῖς) making a generalized accusation the effect of which, if it were taken seriously, would be to hinder the transition of free sons (παῖδες) of citizens into full citizen adulthood, a transition normally made by one kind of παῖς but not the other.²⁹⁹

This critique is all the more interesting because it comes from a slave. Sommerstein points out that from what we know of the relative prices of slaves and horses in the late fifth century, the gift of a horse given to the hypothetical *erōmenoi* in lieu of money should be equivalent in value to seven or eight slaves.³⁰⁰ Moreover, the audience has just been explicitly reminded that

297 The application of this rule is not absolute; the master, Chremylus, makes a cunnilingus joke at the expense of an old woman and her young lover at *Wealth* 1004–5.

298 The attribution here is secure, for 147–48 must be spoken by the slave, and καὶ τὰς γ' (149) in opposition to καὶ τοὺς γε (153) should introduce a new speaker.

299 For a discussion of the problem of male children making the transition from servile status to citizen adulthood and the potential implications for slaves, cf. Golden 1984.

300 Sommerstein 2001, 144. We have inscriptional evidence for slave prices in the late fifth century from *IG*³ 421–30, and we know the price of a racing horse ten years earlier from *Nub.* 21–23. There is little reason to suppose

Cario is a chattel with a relatively small monetary value: immediately before the discussion of *hetairai* begins, Cario mentions that he became a slave because of a small amount of money (μικρὸν ἀργυρίδιον), having been free previously (147–48). What then is the effect of Cario's critique? Is the audience meant to laugh at the absurdity of a slave criticizing practices so far beyond his social position that they are characterized by expenses much greater than his own monetary value? But Chremylus' notion of what constitutes an appropriate gift from an *erastēs* to his *erōmenos* seems too expensive; more usual in the Athenian context would be a hare or a rooster.³⁰¹ According to Sommerstein the most expensive gift known to have been depicted in art is a lone dog.³⁰² What purpose does this exaggeration serve? Certainly it makes the gulf between the slave and the practice he criticizes as wide as possible. Even Cario's verb choice at 159, περιπέττω, literally meaning "to bake a crust around" and therefore metaphorically "to conceal", may have a certain low-class ring to it, further emphasizing the point.³⁰³ On this line of thinking the class disparity would be part of the humor.

We know from the *Against Timarchus* that a law forbidding slaves from being pederastic *erastai* of free boys existed by 346.³⁰⁴ If this or a similar law existed already in 388, Cario would be criticizing an institution from which he as a slave was legally debarred.³⁰⁵ This is tantalizing, but unfortunately the state of the evidence prevents us from knowing for certain one way or the other whether the law existed that early in the fourth century. Plutarch's assertion that this law was created by Solon (*Solon* 1.3) likely finds its roots in a widespread fourth century Attic tradition of ascribing laws to that venerable source. Nonetheless, it would seem that only older laws could admit this kind of retrojection; a law could hardly be attributed to Solon the passage of which could still be remembered by a substantial portion of the population. This argues for an earlier date for the law on pederasty; whether as early as 388 is impossible to determine.³⁰⁶ But it is worth noting that Cario does not claim to have any personal experience of the behavior of *erōmenoi*. Rather his assertion is based on hearsay: "And *they say* that boys do this same thing" (καὶ τοὺς γε παῖδάς φασι ταῦτο τοῦτο δρᾶν, 153). Even if acting as an *erastēs* was not yet

that the relative value of horses and slaves would have changed much in the interval between the late fifth century and 388.

301 Cf. the plates in Dover 1978.

302 Sommerstein 2001, 144. An example would be Munich 2290a, depicted in Dover 1978 as B502 and in *CVA* Germany 9, plate 140.8. Ephorus (*FGrHist* 70 F 149) informs us that military equipment, a cup, and an *ox* are the customary gifts for an *erōmenos* among the Cretans (though these are given after the two-month hunt for which the *erastēs* "abducts" him).

303 The word is certainly colloquial. It appears in comedy (Ar. *V.* 668; fr. 337 K.-A.; Bato 7.6 K.-A. if Meineke's emendation is adopted; *Com. Adesp.* 338) and dialogues (Pl. *Lg.* 886e; Xen. *Oec.* 1.20). But of course there is a difference between colloquial and low-class diction, and in comedy it may be hard to distinguish the two. It is also tempting to suggest that the word might be perceived as *new*, a young person's word; the young Bdelkleon uses it to describe how his father has been hoodwinked by politicians in the *Wasps*. Of course even if the word were perceived as new in 422, there is no guarantee that it would still be so perceived in 388. Nonetheless we expect that Cario is a relatively young man, and Chremylus is certainly old, so that there may be here a brief foray into the kind of generational conflict over specific issues we often find in Aristophanic comedy.

304 Aeschin. 1.139: δοῦλον ἐλευθέρου παιδὸς μήτ' ἐρᾶν μήτ' ἐπακολουθεῖν, ἢ τύπτεσθαι τῇ δημοσίᾳ μάστιγι πενήκοντα πληγᾶς.

305 The exclusion of slaves from pederastic relations should be contrasted with the fact that there is no evidence of any law prohibiting slaves from having sex with free women. This is pointed out at Plut. *Mor.* 751b: δοῦλοις μὲν γὰρ ἐρᾶν ἀρρένων παιδῶν ἀπέειπε καὶ ξηραλοφεῖν, χρῆσθαι δὲ συνουσίαις γυναικῶν οὐκ ἐκόλυσε· καλὸν γὰρ ἢ φιλία καὶ ἀστεῖον, ἢ δ' ἡδονὴ κοινὸν καὶ ἀνελεύθερον.

306 This of course assumes that the attribution of this law to Solon occurred in the fourth century.

actually illegal for a slave in 388, Cario's language suggests that it was not at any rate considered to be something that might typically be within a slave's range of experience.³⁰⁷ This is in contrast to visiting a low-class prostitute, which apparently was within that range (cf. *Wasps* 500–502).

In this brief dialogue (149–59), then, Cario occupies an almost Socratic role, using his master as interlocutor to underline the flawed reasoning inherent in upper class attitudes toward pederastic *erōmenoi* on the one hand and male prostitutes on the other.³⁰⁸ He criticizes this predominantly aristocratic (certainly predominantly, if not exclusively, *citizen*) practice from outside and below.³⁰⁹ It is worthwhile to adduce here the words of Plato's Socrates in the *Lysis*:

τυγχάνω γὰρ ἐκ παιδὸς ἐπιθυμῶν κτήματός του, ὡσπερ ἄλλος ἄλλου. ὁ μὲν γὰρ τις ἵππους ἐπιθυμεῖ κτᾶσθαι, ὁ δὲ κύνας, ὁ δὲ χρυσίον, ὁ δὲ τιμάς: ἐγὼ δὲ πρὸς μὲν ταῦτα πράως ἔχω, πρὸς δὲ τὴν τῶν φίλων κτῆσιν πάνυ ἐρωτικῶς, καὶ βουλοίμην ἄν μοι φίλον ἀγαθὸν γενέσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ τὸν ἄριστον ἐν ἀνθρώποις ὄρνυγα ἢ ἀλεκτρούνα, καὶ ναὶ μὰ Δία ἔγωγε μᾶλλον ἢ ἵππον τε καὶ κύνα.

For since childhood I have desired a certain possession, just as each person desires a different thing. For one wants to acquire **horses**, another **dogs**; one money, another honors. But I care little about these things, but am completely in love with the acquisition of friends, and I would want to have a good friend more than the best quail or rooster in the world, and certainly, by Zeus, more than both a **horse** and a **dog**.
Pl. *Lysis* 211d–e

Here Socrates is among the *paides* in a gymnasium to surreptitiously observe Lysis, a boy whom Hippothales would like to make his *erōmenos*. He engages Lysis and his friend Menexenus in dialogue, the bulk of which, beginning here, is devoted to the attempt to determine the nature of a friend (φίλος). But what is interesting about the quoted passage, laden as it is with the vocabulary of pederasty and situated in a firmly pederastic context, is the framing effect created by the repetition of the words "horse" (ἵππος) and "dog" (κύων), which as gifts from the lover to the beloved (their implicit meaning here, as the references to a quail and a rooster confirm) exactly recall the extremely high-class form of pederasty defended by Chremylus and attacked by Cario in our passage of *Wealth*. *Lysis* is generally classed among Plato's earliest works (by those who do consider it genuine), which would place it in the 390's or early 380's, at least roughly contemporary with the production of *Wealth* in 388. It may be that Cario's superficial resemblance to the Platonic Socrates here is not coincidental, but rather an intentional parody of that incipient figure as presented in one of the earliest works of Plato. Alternatively, the depiction of Socrates in *Lysis* could owe something to Cario; certainly in general there is much

307 Nor does the fact that we know by this point that Cario was once a free man allow him to speak from experience here.

308 Stefanis 1980, 158 describes Cario's final verdict on the *erōmenoi* as a "philosophical barb" (φιλοσοφημένη δηκτικότητα). This passage is also (oddly, I think) included in a list of passages where the slave is said to occupy the role of *tertius gaudens* (115).

309 I take it as self-evident that a person who is struggling for subsistence will not trade a rooster or a hare for the sexual favors of a free boy when gratification was cheaper elsewhere, and therefore that at the least the very poorest Athenian citizens were effectively cut off from pederasty. This passage also makes pederasty into much more of an aristocratic institution than it really was with the specification of a horse or hunting dogs as possible gifts. The difference in the depiction of homosexual relations in Plato and Aristophanes is sometimes attributed to a class difference between the rich and poor respectively (e.g. Dover 1964, 38; Golden 1984, 320).

better evidence for the influence of Aristophanes on Plato than *vice versa*, though chronology alone would make this necessary in most cases.³¹⁰ At any rate, both Cario and the Platonic Socrates are probably indebted to the figure of Aesop (who was traditionally a slave like Cario) as a criticizer of high culture from below.³¹¹

Most of the manuscripts attribute the lines that follow (160–68) to Chremylus alone, but recent editors have seen the appearance of disreputable and even illegal acts among the list of professions motivated by wealth as evidence that Cario interrupts his master at several points; certainly the strong presence of the slave in the immediately preceding and following lines would argue in their favor.³¹² But even if Cario speaks the lines interjecting stealing people's clothes and burglary (165), among other things, into his master's list of somewhat less scandalous banausic professions, it is interesting for our purpose here that the line about the man caught in adultery should probably not be attributed to him, for in the immediately following lines (170–88) Chremylus addresses Wealth directly in the second person while Cario speaks about him to his master in the third person, and the line in question contains a second person pronoun (ὁ δ' ἀλόους γε μοιχὸς διὰ σέ που παρατίλλεται, 168).³¹³ Once again the generally observable trend of slaves introducing sexual material is broken here by Chremylus, who takes on that role for himself. The explanation cannot be that adultery is fundamentally an act performed by a citizen male and therefore appropriate only for Chremylus, for Cario introduces several political examples that should also fall into this category: according to him, it is because of Wealth that the King of Persia grows his hair long (170), the Athenian Assembly is held (171), the mercenary force at Corinth is maintained (173), Pamphilus is prosecuted for embezzlement (174), and the politician Agyrrius is care-free (lit. "farts", 176). His incipient reference to the tower of Timotheus is probably also political, but his master interrupts it, thus ending what has become a sort of contest of political references between the master and his slave (180).³¹⁴

Sexual insults are an important part of how Cario interacts with the chorus in their first scene, when the chorus enter the theater for the first time led by and in dialogue with the slave, a novel kind of *parodos*. Russo 1994, 6 notes how exceptional this method of introducing the chorus is and how much weight that lends to the slave as a character:

"The chorus of *Plutus* does not enter the theatre out of any impulse of its own; the choreutai are treated like muscles, driven by a colossus. Who is this colossus? Not the coryphaeus, but the first actor. And who is the first actor? A slave promoted to the rank of autonomous

310 Cf. the reference to Aristophanes in *Apology*, his appearance as a character in *Symposium*, and the probable formative influence of the *Ecclesiazusae* on Plato's vision of the ideal society envisioned for the Guardians in the third and fifth books of *Republic*. On the latter point, cf. Sommerstein 1998, 13–18.

311 For this Aesopic tradition, cf. Kurke 2011.

312 Rogers 1907, 16–17; Sommerstein 2001, 144; Torchio 2001, 132–33; Henderson 2002.

313 Recent editors have preferred (*pace* Rogers 1907, 17) to see the alternation between second and third person forms in 170–88 as the product of two speakers, each of whom is consistently using either the second or the third person to refer to Wealth. Coulon, Thiery, Halliwell, Sommerstein, and Torchio give the lines which use the second person to the master, which seems more likely than the alternative. Rogers, on the other hand, assigns lines based on his sense of what is appropriate to each character, which requires each speaker to refer to Wealth in both the second and the third person.

314 This passage is excellent evidence against the position that slaves in comedy do not discuss or participate in the affairs of citizens. The line attributions are secure (with the exception of 175, which I have assigned to Chremylus) because of the alternation between the second person and the third.

character, an individual whom one has not encountered until now, if not in embryo in *Frogs*."

Russo assumes here what I also think likely, that the part of Cario will have been played by the protagonist. After their initial scene together, Cario and Chremylus never appear as speaking characters onstage together again, but instead take the role of comic hero in alternate scenes. The part of Chremylus has slightly more lines, but Cario's parts are more compelling, and the same actor could easily have played Cario and Poverty, which would place him securely in possession of the largest number of lines and the most bombastic roles.³¹⁵ At any rate, the slave leads the chorus of old men onstage, taunting them by withholding his news and only hinting at it for some thirty lines (253–83), just as he does later with his master's wife (641–726, see Chapter One). An antagonistic relationship is quickly established, in which the coryphaeus, taking the slave's reference to the evils of old age personally, throws the juridical status of the slave in his teeth by emphasizing his susceptibility to corporal punishment. The slave responds in kind by identifying and mocking the conspicuous weakness of the chorus: their old age, which is emphasized in this passage by the meter itself (iambic tetrameter being associated with a chorus of old men in a hurry elsewhere in Aristophanic comedy).³¹⁶

- Κα. ἔχων ἀφίκται δεῦρο πρεσβύτην τιν', ὃ πόνηροι, (265)
 ῥυπῶντα, κυφόν, ἄθλιον, ῥυσόν, μαδῶντα, νωδόν·
 οἷμαι δὲ νῆ τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ ψωλὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι.
- Χο. ὃ χρυσὸν ἀγγείλας ἐπῶν, πῶς φῆς; πάλιν φράσον μοι.
 δηλοῖς γὰρ αὐτὸν σωρὸν ἤκειν χρημάτων ἔχοντα.
- Κα. πρεσβυτικῶν μὲν οὖν κακῶν ἔγωγ' ἔχοντα σωρόν. (270)
- Χο. μῶν ἀξιοῖς φενακίσας ἔπειτ' ἀπαλλαγῆναι
 ἀζήμιος, καὶ ταῦτ' ἐμοῦ βακτηρίαν ἔχοντος;
- Κα. πάντως γὰρ ἄνθρωπον φύσει τοιοῦτον εἰς τὰ πάντα
 ἡγεῖσθέ μ' εἶναι κούδεν ἂν νομίζεθ' ὑγιᾶς εἰπεῖν;
- Χο. ὡς σεμνὸς οὐπίτριπτος· αἰ κνῆμαι δέ σου βοῶσιν (275)
 "ἰοῦ ἰοῦ," τὰς χοίνικας καὶ τὰς πέδας ποθοῦσαι.
- Κα. ἐν τῇ σορῶ νυνὶ λαχὸν τὸ γράμμα σου δικάζει,
 σὺ δ' οὐ βαδίζεις; ὁ δὲ Χάρων τὸ ζύμβολον δίδωσιν.
- Χο. διαρραγεῖς, ὡς μόθων εἶ καὶ φύσει κόβαλος... (279)

Cario: He has come here with a certain old man, you bastards, who is dirty, stooped, wretched, wrinkled, bald, and toothless; and I think by heaven there's something odd with his foreskin, too. Chorus: You who have announced a golden message, what are you saying? Tell me again. For you are clearly saying that he has come with a heap of money. Ca: With a heap of the evils of old age, more like it. Ch: You don't think that you will prattle on and escape scot-free, do you, especially since I have a cane? Ca: Do you think that I am by nature such a man totally, and that I would say nothing sound? Ch: How pious the rogue! But your shins cry out "iou, iou" with desire for their shackles and chains. Ca: The letter

315 Moreover, if it is Hermes and not Cario who tells the final joke at *Plut.* 1204–7, it must follow that the same actor plays both Cario and the Old Woman (see below).

316 For this use of iambic tetrameter, cf. *Vesp.* 230–48; *Lys.* 254–55, 266–70, 281–85, 306–18; *Eccl.* 285–88. See also Perusino 1968, 41; Zimmermann 1996, 188–89; Sommerstein 2001, 152.

you've received by lot now sits in judgment at the Tomb, aren't you going? Charon is handing you your token! Ch: May you burst, because you are an upstart slave and behave like a porter by nature... (*Wealth* 265–79)

Scholarly interpretations of lines 265–72 vary widely. The text itself is at issue, not from metrical necessity or variant readings, but because many scholars insist that what the MSS give us does not make sense. Therefore some rely on transposition, others on emendation. I would argue that the original text and line order of this passage do in fact make sense and should be maintained (see below). Consequently I have printed the text used by Sommerstein and Torchio, which preserves the order of lines and text in our MSS, instead of Wilson's, which follows Richards in transposing 268–70 after 263. At the crux of the matter is the remark of the chorus at 268–69 and again their violent reaction at 271–72. There are really two separate problems: 1) Cario's list of the attributes of Wealth at 266 would seem quite clearly to be an account of the evils of old age and poverty (as he himself clarifies at 270), but the relevance of the circumcision mentioned in 267 is not straightforward, and 2) the response of the chorus indicates their understanding that the man in question has brought a heap of money, but it is not at all clear how they have arrived at this inference (that they initially *misunderstand* the slave's meaning is clear from their anger after his correction at 270).

On the first point, Sfyoceras' argument that the slave's use of *psōlos* constitutes an allusion to the earlier comic phenomenon of old men with visible and frequently referenced phalloi cannot be correct.³¹⁷ It does not fit the tone of the rest of the description, since it would prematurely suggest a rejuvenation (which we do not see until 771–801) for this currently miserable old man. By far the most convincing interpretation of what Cario intends with this term is Sommerstein's.³¹⁸ He argues that *psōlos* is a reference not to circumcision but to adhesion of the foreskin, a disease known in the medical writers as *lipodermiā*. Crucially, this fits the tone of the other elements of Cario's description exactly. To object that the slave has not actually seen Wealth's phallus would be to miss the point entirely; he is making an inference from the other, more evident signs of disease and the infirmity of old age.

As regards the second problem: when the slave corrects the chorus at 270 they respond angrily, as if they have understood his remark as a personal affront for the first time (for they too are quite emphatically old, a fact that the slave does exploit to insult them at 277–78 after they have begun to threaten him by dredging up his servile status). The explanation that the chorus, consisting as it does of old men, somehow mishears what Cario says at 266–67 has been popular since it was first advanced by the scholiast to R.³¹⁹ van Herwerden (followed by van Leeuwen) emends Cario's ψωλὸν to ψωρὸν ("scabby"), then argues that the chorus mishears that as σωρὸν ("heap", as they mention at 270). Süß 1954, 144 contends that they misunderstand the slave's ῥυσσὸν ("shriveled") as χρυσὸν ("gold"). Radt argues that rather than mishearing an individual word the chorus simply does not understand any of what the slave says in 266–67; they know only that his description is a long one, and they infer from what has already been said at 262–63 that there must be money involved.³²⁰ To all such arguments Sommerstein rightly objects that 1) there is no other indication that the chorus suffers from hearing problems, and 2) their language

317 Sfyoceras 1995, 249–50.

318 Sommerstein 2001, 152–53.

319 διαβάλλει ὁ ποιητὴς αὐτῶν τὴν κωφότητα· ἕτερα γὰρ εἰπόντος, ἕτερα ἀκούειν ἔδοξαν.

320 Radt 1976, 255–56. He is followed by Torchio 2001, 144.

is consistent with them making an inference from Cario's speech rather than simply repeating what (they think) he has said.³²¹ Sommerstein concludes that the chorus, understanding what Cario means by *psōlos* correctly, infers that the only explanation for Chremylus' excitement at the arrival of such a miserable man is that he is extremely wealthy (and likely to die soon, leaving his wealth behind).

I would argue, on the other hand, that while the chorus does not mishear anything in Cario's description, they misunderstand what he means by *psōlos*. That this word immediately precedes their response strongly suggests that it, not any of the words in 266, is the source of the confusion. I think that the chorus understands *psōlos* (literally "with foreskin pulled back") to refer to circumcision here (as it often does). The Greeks associated circumcision with eastern Mediterranean peoples such as the Egyptians and Phoenicians (cf. Hdt. 2.104; *Birds* 504–7);³²² upon hearing that such a person had just arrived at Athens it would be quite natural to infer that he was a trader (and thus had brought wealth of some kind), especially when his arrival has already been presented as a cause for jubilation. Moreover, Egyptian or Phoenician ethnicity would be easily interpreted by the chorus as a likely outwardly visible basis for the slave's inference (οἴμαι, 267) that Wealth is in fact *psōlos* in this sense. Henderson 2002a, 463 also takes *psōlos* to refer to circumcision here, but his position (as I infer it from his translation) is that this is both what the slave intends and what the chorus understands; I argue that the slave intends to describe the medical condition *lipodermiā* but that the chorus understands this as a reference to circumcision. When this misunderstanding is corrected at 270, the chorus realizes that the slave had been mocking Wealth solely as a decrepit old man and not at all as a foreigner, and this is the reason for their sudden rage.

It appears, then, that the chorus' aggression toward the slave develops when they perceive that what they had thought was a "harmless" reference to Wealth's ethnicity was actually a purely speculative reference to a sexually debilitating illness which, as Cario implies, is likely to be suffered by older men (like the chorus themselves). When they threaten to beat him, he mistakes the source of their aggression and defends his credibility (271–74). They in turn are outraged that he is indignant, and bring sexual language back into the equation with the notion that his shins are in heat, overwhelmed and crying out with desire (πόθος) for their chains and shackles (275–76); this association of servile punishment with passive sexual gratification may be reinforced by the use of the term of ἐπίτριπτος, which in addition to its usual derivation from ἐπιτρίβειν in the sense "to destroy" may here admit a sexual meaning, as the verb itself certainly does in several passages.³²³ Cario's rejoinder (277–78) is a double reference to the chorus' old age, first because he tells them to go serve on a jury at all,³²⁴ and secondly because the jury in question happens to be in hell. He may also try to turn the sexual invective back around on them if "Charon is giving you the (his) token" (ὁ δὲ Χάρων τὸ ξύμβολον δίδωσιν, 278) can be taken

321 Sommerstein 2001, 153.

322 The joke exploiting the double meaning of *psōlos* as both "circumcised" and "erect" at *Av.* 504–7 depends on the audience's assumption that Egyptians and Phoenicians were circumcised. According to Hdt. 2.104 circumcision was also practiced by the Colchians, Syrians, Ethiopians, and Macrones. Cf. Hodges 2001, 384–88. But his contention that *psōlos* is always a pejorative (392–93), even when it refers to mere erection, is misguided.

323 For the sexual sense of ἐπιτρίβειν, cf. Henderson 1991, 176.

324 Besides the comic stereotype that juror pay primarily attracts old men (cf. *Vesp.*), Athenian citizens had to be at least thirty years old to serve on a jury, which would have made the average age there considerably older than the average age in the Assembly.

metaphorically. Certainly Iris understands σύμβολον to mean "penis" at *Birds* 1214, and it seems to bear a similar meaning in the pseudo-Lucianic *Ass.*³²⁵ Likewise "give" (δίδωμι) easily indicates sexual activity when coupled with a phallic metaphor.³²⁶ Of course a simple gesture could make the meaning completely unambiguous; the subsequent sexually aggressive song-exchange strongly suggests that Cario is wearing an erect phallus.

When Cario finally does reveal the good news (284–85), the coryphaeus is clearly elated (ὡς ἦδομαι καὶ τέρπομαι καὶ βούλομαι χορευῆσαι, 288), and consequently one might expect the tension that has been established between slave and chorus to abate. But instead Cario sets a tone of sexually aggressive invective for the choral interlude as he sings the first strophe, a parody of a recent dithyramb of Philoxenus of Cythera in which Polyphemus was depicted in love with the Nereid Galatea.³²⁷ There the slave takes on the role of the mythological giant, consigning to the chorus the role of his flock, thereby dehumanizing them (as he had done subtly too with the reference to them acquiring donkey's ears at 287), and worse, caps his song with a sexual insult:

καὶ μὴν ἐγὼ βουλήσομαι—θρεττανελο—τὸν Κύκλωπα (290)
 μιμούμενος καὶ τοῖν ποδοῖν ὡδὶ παρενσαλεύων
 ὑμᾶς ἄγειν. ἀλλ' εἶα, τέκεα, θαμίν' ἐπαναβοῶντες
 βληχωμένων τε προβατίων
 αἰγῶν τε κιναβρώντων μέλη
 ἔπεσθ' ἀπεψωλημένοι· τράγοι δ' ἀκρατιεῖσθε. (295)

And I'll want—threttanelo!—to imitate the cyclops, swaying my feet like so, leading you.
 Come on then, children, keep on yelling the songs of bleating sheep and goats that stink, and follow (me) with yours cocks at attention: you'll have a "billy goat's breakfast!"³²⁸
 (*Wealth* 290–95)

The scholiast on this passage tells us that billy-goats lick their genitals after copulation.³²⁹ Relying on this information, Brunck, Blaydes, Sommerstein, and Holzberg argue that "with erect penises you will have a billy goat's breakfast" (ἀπεψωλημένοι· τράγοι δ' ἀκρατιεῖσθε, 295) refers to self-fellation.³³⁰ In fact we do not have to place our trust entirely in the scholiast. In the

325 [Luc.] *Asin.* 56. I am not convinced by the assertion of Henderson 1991, 124 n. 88 that the use of the term in pseudo-Lucian is different. For *Av.* 1214, cf. Chapter One.

326 E.g. at *Ach.* 835.

327 On first glance it seems improbable that the Philoxenus whose dithyrambic poetry is mocked in sexual terms here is a different person from the Leucadian dithyrambic poet of the same name whose work was similarly mocked in a sexual fashion by Plato Comicus and Aristophanes a mere three years earlier (see above), but this appears to be the scholarly consensus.

328 I borrow the locution "billy goat's breakfast" from Sommerstein's translation.

329 Σ^R: ἦγουν δίκην τράγων τοὺς ὄρχεις λείχετε. Σ^V: ἐπει μετὰ τὴν συνουσίαν οἱ τράγοι λείχουσιν ἑαυτῶν τὰ αἰδοῖα ἐν τῷ ἄκρω μέρει.

330 Brunck 1783 vol. 1:2, 249–50; Blaydes vol. 6, 197–98; Sommerstein 2001, 157; Holzberg 2010, 207. Holzinger 1940, 112–13 insists that ἀκρατίζομαι should here (and only here) be interpreted as a word meaning "to be intemperate", jointly derived from ἄκρατος (in the sense of unmixed wine, evoking Thracian and Scythian barbarism) and ἀκρατής. But the ordinary meaning of this verb (which should literally mean "to drink unmixed wine"), as the parallels cited by Blaydes and the entry in *LSJ* show, is "to eat breakfast" (from the practice of dipping bread in neat wine, ἄκρατος). Either meaning would make sense here as a self-fellatio joke

weeks before and during their breeding season, the male ungulates of most species urinate on themselves, a behavior variously called "scent-urination", "urine-marking", or "thrash-urinate".³³¹ This act was still being mistaken for ejaculation by scholars of animal behavior well into the second half of the twentieth century. One of the two postures favored by goats is of particular interest for *Wealth* 295:

"...the male...bends only one hind leg while arching and forming a sideways arc with his back to urinate into his mouth, beard, and throat. In this second posture the goat turns his head and neck to the inside of the bend of the body and may take as much as three inches of the erected penis into his mouth. The penis was always seen to pulse in a vertical plane during the act. Whether or not the male actually sucks on the penis as reported by Katz (1949) for barbary sheep and Schaller (1972) for blue sheep is impossible to say, although in many instances the act had that appearance." (Coblentz 1976, 550)

Clearly such a behavior would have been interpreted as self-fellation in the ancient world.³³² In light of this, it seems certain to me that Cario's insult to the chorus of old men at 295 is a fellatio reference. But depending on his gesture Cario could instead be telling them that they will perform fellatio on him and like it (*ἀπερωλημένοι*, 295), in which case they would resemble billy-goats only to the extent that they are performing fellatio (the metaphor would not extend to the target).³³³ Either way, the slave ends the first song of this exchange by directing an extremely aggressive sexual insult at the chorus of free old men.

The chorus reply with an aggressive song of their own, gradually revealing that they are transforming themselves from the Cyclops' sheep into the companions of Odysseus. When he finally does fall asleep, they will blind him with a massive fire-sharpened stake. They continue Cario's parody of Philoxenus' dithyramb (this must be the source of the information at 298) but do not seem inclined at this stage to engage with him in specifically sexual invective, unless perhaps the stake itself is meant to be construed as a phallic implement.

Cario's second song, like his first, features elements of competitive transformation, mythological burlesque, reference to contemporary phenomena, and sexualized invective:

ἐγὼ δὲ τὴν Κίρκην γε τὴν τὰ φάρμακ' ἀνακυκῶσαν,

without resorting to hypothetical impromptu audience exercises in etymology. One's confidence in Holzinger's judgment is not bolstered by his immediately preceding observation that Aristophanes makes fun of the elderly *less* in the later comedies because he himself was growing older (if anything the opposite is true).

331 Coblentz 1976, 549.

332 Indeed, Coblentz 1976, 551 concludes that "there are elements of both urination and ejaculation involved in scent-urination, with sexual stimuli probably playing a role."

333 Regarding the comic parallels for self-fellation cited by Sommerstein 2001, 157: Jacobson 2011 argues that *Eccl.* 470 (δρᾶ ταῦθ', ἵνα ἀριστᾶς τε καὶ κινῆς ἅμα) is not a reference to self-fellation (*pace* Sommerstein 1998, 180–81) because ταῦθ' there cannot do the work of a deictic to indicate a gesture (as Sommerstein thinks) but should instead refer to what has just been said. A gesture unmatched to the demonstrative is still possible, but without the textual indicator this is speculation. At *Eq.* 1010 (τὸ πέος οὔτοσι δάκοι) it is not entirely beyond doubt whether the penis in question belongs to the speaker or the subject, but the definite article strongly suggests the latter (as Sommerstein 1997, 197 takes it). Both *Eq.* 1010 and *Plut.* 295 use the reference to self-fellation as an aggressive sexual insult; that this is not quite the tone of *Eccl.* 470 is a further argument against reading a third self-fellation reference there.

ἦ τοὺς ἐταίρους τοῦ Φιλωνίδου ποτ' ἐν Κορίνθῳ
 ἔπεισεν ὡς ὄντας κάπρους
 μεμαγμένον σκῶρ ἐσθίειν, αὐτὴ δ' ἔματτεν αὐτοῖς, (305)
 μιμήσομαι πάντας τρόπους·
 ὑμεῖς δὲ γρυλίζοντες ὑπὸ φιληδίας
 ἔπεσθε μητρὶ χοῖροι.

Then I'll imitate Circe, the one who mixes up potions, who once at Corinth convinced the companions of Philonides that they were hogs and should eat kneaded shit—and *she* was doing the kneading for them; I'll imitate all her positions! But you grunt with delight and follow your mother, piggies (*vulvae*)! (*Wealth* 302–8)

Circe is of course an extremely appropriate choice of mythological character to imitate given that Cario's two songs (unlike the responses of the chorus) both involve changing not only the role he himself is playing but also that played by the chorus (and in each case he transforms them into animals of some kind). But the Circe whom Cario imitates is simultaneously the mythological figure responsible for turning the companions of Odysseus into swine and a reference to the famous Corinthian courtesan Nais, whose mercenary relationship to Philonides has already been mocked by Chremylus at 179.³³⁴ Sommerstein rightly argues that "she herself was doing their kneading for them" is a reference to manual stimulation, an act typically reserved in comedy for older men who have trouble achieving an erection.³³⁵ Cario is once again exploiting the old age of the chorus to insult them. Likewise πάντας τρόπους should be taken both as "I will imitate her in every way" and "I will imitate all her sexual positions" (a common specialized meaning of τρόπος).³³⁶

It should be noted that Cario's second attempt at insulting the chorus in song might seem somewhat less successful than the first; though they are figuratively transformed into swine who eat feces on one hand and the doting and semi-impotent clients of a *hetaira* on the other, he himself is obliged in this metaphor to play the role of the *hetaira* who gratifies them in manifold ways. But this conforms to the characterization of Cario throughout the play. Not only does he delight in sexual transgression (indeed, this in itself would not set him apart from many Aristophanic characters) but specifically in bragging about his performance of sex acts which would be considered degrading not only by a real Athenian male but also by other Aristophanic characters. The most conspicuous example of this, of course, is his description of his encounter with the old woman in the *temenos* of Asclepius. Certainly the *where* of his account (a sacred place) is mildly transgressive; but more importantly, the *whom* (an old woman, conventionally disdained as a sex object in Old Comedy) and the *what* (cunnilingus, which appears mostly in invective) would be considered disgusting even by most other sexually obsessed Aristophanic characters.³³⁷ That he brags about his exploit in his messenger speech indicates that he does not

334 For more on Nais and Philonides, and the problem of the confusion in our sources of the names Nais and Lais (apparently both famous contemporary Corinthian *hetairai*), cf. Sommerstein 2001, 148. For the view that it is in fact Lais, and not Nais, who is referenced here and at 179, cf. Torchio 2001, 135–36.

335 Sommerstein 2001, 158–59. For the manual stimulation of older men, cf. *Ach.* 1149; *Vesp.* 739–40, 1343–44.

336 Cf. Sommerstein 2001, 159.

337 Cf. e.g. *Eccl.* 877–1111. But it does appear that there was a comic tradition of Hermes as being especially fond of cunnilingus (cf. below); likewise it is hard to imagine that this was entirely absent from the tradition of

subscribe to the same notion of what is shameful as other Aristophanic characters (or does not care). This is confirmed by his refusal to distinguish between prostitution and pederasty (see above) and his seemingly unfortunate appropriation of the role of a *hetaira* at *Wealth* 302–8.

Given the abundant sexual content of Cario's first two songs, it is surprising that the significance of the slave's final remark in the second strophe has gone largely unremarked. Certainly it is true, as Torchio notes, that the "follow" in "follow your mother, piggies" (ἔπεσθε μητρὶ χοῖροι) evokes the language of the several encounters with Circe in book ten of the *Odyssey*.³³⁸ Likewise Sommerstein's reliance on the scholia is not entirely misguided; at least the information that "follow your mother, piggies" is something that children say (in a game, as Sommerstein infers) could be correct and would add another layer of meaning to the joke.³³⁹ But the elephant in the room is that Cario quite conspicuously calls the chorus vulvae, deploying what is easily one of the most well-known comic euphemisms, χοῖρος.³⁴⁰ That this remark occupies the same climactic final position in this song as the reference to fellatio does in the first lends further credence to this already straightforward interpretation. The term χοῖρος is used in comedy not merely to indicate the vulva itself but also to refer to any female character construed as a sex object;³⁴¹ Cario's use of the term against the chorus therefore attempts to consign them to a sexually passive role and constitutes a claim to a position of sexual dominance. This final effort attempts to abruptly reverse the sexual situation evoked by his own unfortunate choice of metaphor, where he plays the courtesan servicing the chorus.

The chorus' second and final song in this interlude reacts angrily to Cario's second song. The one is closely patterned on the other; the first line in each is quite similar, and the chorus also repeats the phrase ὑπὸ φιληδίας, the verb μιμεῖσθαι, and the final capping line "follow your mother, piggies". At first they appear to be following the pattern established in their previous song of changing their own identity from the role to which Cario has consigned them to a different one more capable of overcoming the persona being affected by the slave. But just as this pattern seems to be confirmed, when they have indicated that they will imitate Odysseus (312), the perfect figure to disrupt the designs of Cario's Circe, they completely disrupt the mythological allusion with a threat that they will hang him up by his testicles (τῶν ὀρχέων κρεμῶμεν, 312). Of course the reference to male genitalia alone shatters the pretense that he is Circe. But the chorus also suddenly emphasizes Cario's real status as a slave with the threat to hang him up. As Sommerstein points out, suspension by the wrists or feet is attested as a method of punishing or torturing slaves.³⁴² The chorus seem unable to match Cario's elegant integration of a personal insult based on their old age (the manual stimulation) with an imagined transformation of his rivals into the "companions of Philonides".³⁴³ Instead, they revert to

a gluttonous Herakles (who was apparently especially fond of ἔτνος).

338 Torchio 2001, 149–50.

339 Sommerstein 2001, 159. But the alternative explanation in the scholia, that χοῖρος is said "in reference to the uneducated", would seem to prefer an obscure and unparalleled explanation to the obvious one. All the examples cited by Sommerstein to show that "swinish" can mean "stupid" deal with forms of ὄς/σός rather than χοῖρος and are therefore of dubious value in the face of the overwhelming evidence for χοῖρος as a comic sexual metaphor.

340 For this use of χοῖρος, cf. Henderson 1991, 131–32. Henderson notes the obscene usage in this passage but does not discuss it in depth.

341 E.g. throughout *Ach.* 729–835; *Vesp.* 1353.

342 Sommerstein 2001, 159.

343 Meaning presumably "people like Philonides, who become dependent on *hetairai*"; of course the formulation

threatening the slave with typically servile punishment (unlike the punishment befitting a Cyclops threatened at 301), as they had at 271–79 before the lyric interlude began.

Likewise their threat that they will smear his nose with feces "like a billy goat's" (ὥσπερ τράγου, 313), which simultaneously responds in kind to Cario's threat that he (as Circe) would make them eat kneaded feces as boars and recalls the billy-goat fellatio insult from the end of the first song, should be taken as a real threat from chorus to slave rather than as something that they might do to a Circe, imitating Odysseus. Rather than playing the game of verbal transformation any longer, the chorus threatens to *actually* smear Cario's face with dung, thereby physically making him like Aristyllos, who (as comparison of this passage with *Ecclesiastusae* 647–48 shows) must have been associated in comedy with some form of coprophilia (probably, in my view, anilingus, though commentators are not generally so specific).³⁴⁴ In refusing to play the game they might be viewed as ceding the victory to Cario, except that in doing so they have reminded him that they are his social superiors in real life and much more of a genuine threat to him than he is to them. Moreover, by threatening to make him an Aristyllos they do imitate his repeated transformation of them after a fashion, as well as his incorporation of *onomasti kōmōidein* into the song competition with the reference to Philonides. Surely the reference to Aristyllos has been chosen because it allows the chorus to reuse Cario's insult ("follow your mother, piggies") in a different way: transformed into the coprophiliac Aristyllos, Cario will have no use for vulvae and therefore will tell (ἐρεῖς, 314) them to follow their mother (now at least interpreted as something like "get lost", which might well be the meaning of the obscure children's phrase). This previously overlooked interpretation seems quite straightforward to me.

These threats from the chorus effectively end the antistrophic song competition; Cario immediately sings a fifth and final iambic song as an epode, bidding the chorus to quit joking around and turn toward "another form" (ἄλλ' εἶδος), an appropriate turn of phrase considering the game they have been playing:

ἀλλ' εἶά νυν τῶν σκωμμάτων ἀπαλλαγέντες ἤδη
 ὑμεῖς ἐπ' ἄλλ' εἶδος τρέπεσθ',
 ἐγὼ δ' ἰὼν ἤδη λάθρα
 βουλήσομαι τοῦ δεσπότη
 λαβῶν τιν' ἄρτον καὶ κρέας (320)
 μασώμενος τὸ λοιπὸν οὔτω τῷ κόπῳ ζυνεῖναι.

But now leaving off from jokes, you guys, turn toward another form. But I'll want to go get hold of some of my master's bread and meat in secret and chew on it. As to the rest, I'll be involved in my work in that way. (*Wealth* 316–21)

There may be a reference to fellatio in the language about taking and chewing on some bread and meat that belongs to his master (though this would be much more likely if τὸν were heard instead of τιν'). Henderson asserts that "meat" (κρέας) appears as a phallic metaphor only in homosexual situations, which would certainly fit the context here.³⁴⁵ He does not record any

also serves to assimilate them to the companions of Odysseus in the other imagined situation.

344 On *Eccl.* 647–48: Ussher 1973, 165–66; Vetta 1998, 207; Sommerstein 1998, 195–96; Henderson 2002a, 333; Capra 2010, 235. On *Plut.* 313–15: Holzinger 1940, 124; Sommerstein 2001, 159–60; Torchio 2001, 150.

345 Henderson 1991, 129; cf. also 186.

instances of ἄρτος as a phallic metaphor, but this can be established through comic parallels.³⁴⁶ If this joke is heard, it will be another example of the type of self-deprecating humor we often find in the mouths of comic slaves; as elsewhere, it will make Cario seem less potentially threatening to an audience of masters. Such an effect might well be necessary after the intensely aggressive and insulting song-exchange with a chorus of free men that has immediately preceded.

In Cario's last appearance onstage before the last lines of the play, he speaks with an emphatically slavish Hermes (clearly presented as the patron god of disobedient slaves at 1139–45) who desires to run away (like a slave; cf. 1148–51 and especially ἀτομολεῖν at 1150) from the gods, who are now afflicted by the lack of sacrifices from human beings, to become a slave in Chremylus' household. The decision apparently rests with Cario, who repeatedly refuses to take Hermes on until he comes up with an epithet for himself designating a function that has not been rendered useless by the new state of affairs: ἐναγώνιος ("of the contest", since athletic competitions are appropriate to the wealthy). But this scene is also the occasion for extended sexual humor in the form of numerous (previously unnoticed) cunnilingus and fellatio jokes created by Hermes at his own expense:

Ερ. καὶ τῶν μὲν ἄλλων μοι θεῶν ἦττον μέλει,
 ἐγὼ δ' ἀπόλωλα κάπιτέτριμμαι.
 Κα. σωφρονεῖς.
 Ερ. πρότερον γὰρ εἶχον ἄν παρὰ ταῖς καπηλίσιν (1120)
 πάντ' ἀγάθ' ἔωθεν εὐθύς, οἰνοῦτταν, μέλι,
 ἰσχάδας, ὅσ' εἰκός ἐστιν Ἑρμῆν ἐσθίειν·
 νυνὶ δὲ πεινῶν ἀναβάδην ἀναπαύομαι.

Hermes: And I care less about the other gods, but *I* have perished and have been rubbed terribly. Cario: You're being sensible! Hermes: For before I used to have all good things at the crack of dawn at the establishments of the female innkeepers: wine-cake, honey, dried figs—whatever a Hermes would eat; but now I rest/pleasure myself on an empty stomach, with my feet up. *Wealth* 1118–23

The second word Hermes uses for "to be destroyed" (ἐπιτρίβεσθαι) is used three times in the latter half of *Lysistrata* (876, 952, 1090), all also in the perfect tense, to indicate the exaggerated and painful state of erection experienced by the male victims of the sex strike.³⁴⁷ The use of the verb ἀναπαύεσθαι ("to rest" but also "to have sex") at line end to cap the joke recalls *Wealth* 695 (see Chapter One), as does the detail at the beginning of the same line that he is hungry (as opposed to Cario being full at the same point in the earlier joke). The reference to eating is appropriate to a cunnilingus joke, as is the climactic positioning of "dried fig" (ἰσχάς), a Greek

346 Cf. *Eq.* 282–83; *Pax* 120; *Lys.* 1205–8; *Ran.* 505; *Plut.* 1136–38, after the extended joking at 1120–30; Ar. fr. 111 K.-A.; possibly Antiphanes fr. 174 K.-A.; perhaps Teleclides 1 K.-A.; possibly com. adesp. 106 K.-A.. The frequent comic pairing of ἄρτος and μᾶζα (the latter of which has several obscene meanings, cf. Henderson 1991, 112–13, 144, 200–2) would fit easily into obscene food catalogs. For ἄρτος as a phallic metaphor outside of comedy but paired with a comic metaphor for vagina (ἰπνός or "oven"), cf. Hdt. 5.92. Why ἄρτος should be plural there, unless it is meant to imply that Periander slept with his dead wife more than once, is a mystery.

347 Cf. the innuendo attributed to the prostitute Glykera at Ath. 13.46.33.

euphemism for the vulva,³⁴⁸ in the list of sacrifices offered by the specifically female innkeepers. Honey, too, interpreted as a euphemism for vaginal secretion, has Aristophanic parallels.³⁴⁹ This is the only appearance of the word οἰνοῦττα in extant comedy, but from Julius Pollux' description of it as "barley-cake dipped in wine" (μᾶζα ἢ οἴνω δεδευμένη, 6.23) it would seem quite an obvious euphemism, since elsewhere in comedy μᾶζα refers to the vulva and wine to vaginal secretion.³⁵⁰ The detail that Hermes has his feet up would contrast his position in solitary masturbation with that adopted while performing cunnilingus.³⁵¹ If this interpretation is correct, the use of "all good things" (πάντ' ἀγάθ', 1121) to indicate (ultimately) sexual favors will be an interesting comparandum for its use at *Wealth* 646 (where Cario intends good news with the expression ἀγαθὰ συλλήβδην ἅπαντα, but his master's wife thinks that he refers to physical objects).

After this cunnilingus joke Hermes continues to lament the loss of what are simultaneously sacrificial offerings and, given the context, sex objects. First he makes another reference to cunnilingus in bemoaning the loss of the "flat-cake baked on the fourth of the month" (οἶμοι πλακοῦντος τοῦ ἅ τετράδι πεπεμμένου, 1126). "Flat-cake" is a common comic metaphor for the vulva, and πέττειν ("to bake") is the usual associated metaphor for sex.³⁵² Cario's use of ποθεῖν in the next line would be particularly appropriate for the sexual metaphor. After this second cunnilingus joke, Hermes transitions to lamenting the loss of the emphatically phallic ham (κωλῆ, 1128).³⁵³ Likewise, before being reduced to begging for a place in the household as a slave, he begs Cario for "some well-baked bread and a young man's meat" (ἄρτον τιν' εὖ πεπεμμένον...καὶ κρέας νεανικόν, 1136–37). Meat and bread as phallic metaphors are familiar from the end of Cario's last song at *Wealth* 320 (see above).

It is interesting that in this scene Hermes is not only the prospective slave to Cario's master-like authority but also takes on what had been Cario's more specific role in the humor by volunteering himself as the butt of a number of sexual jokes. This is further highlighted by the verbal correspondences between some of these jokes and Cario's: I have noted above how the initial cunnilingus joke told by Hermes at his own expense recalls in several ways the language at *Wealth* 694–95, where Cario is doing something similar, and how the reference to meat and bread occurs in the context of a fellatio joke told by Cario at his own expense at *Wealth* 320 and again in one told by Hermes at his own expense at 1136–37. It seems that Hermes is taking on the role of a Cario, thereby shifting that slave into a more respectable position.³⁵⁴ But perhaps

348 Cf. Hipponax 124W. This reading would constitute a use of the metaphor in Old Comedy, *pace* Henderson 1991, 134. Further, the comic poet Strattis, whose datable plays fall in the second half of Aristophanes' career, also used the term in this way. This seems to me at least to be the natural import of *P. Oxy.* XXXV 2742, 8–11: (Στρ)άττις Ἀταλ[άν]τωι· "ἀπὸ τῆς / κράδης, ἥδη γὰρ ἰσχὰς γίν[ομαι] / ὁ μηχανοποιός μ' ὡς τάχιστα / καθελέτω"). For a text of this papyrus and a discussion of the use of "fig branch" (*kradē*) in comedy as a nickname for the *mēchanē*, cf. Perrone 2008. Perrone does not argue that *ischās* at line 9 is obscene.

349 Cf. my argument on *Eccl.* 1171 above.

350 For μᾶζα, cf. *Ach.* 835. For wine, cf. my argument on -σιραιοβαφη- at *Eccl.* 1174 in part 3.5 above (p. 85 n. 277).

351 Hermes seems an especially appropriate god to associate with masturbation given his other slavish and mischievous qualities. In fact, Dio Chrysostom (*Orat.* 6.20) attributes to the cynic Diogenes the humorous notion that it was Hermes who invented masturbation (then taught it to Pan, who taught it to human shepherds).

352 Henderson 1991, 144. Hermes was celebrated on the fourth of the month, his birthday (cf. Sommerstein 2001, 210).

353 For κωλῆ as a phallic metaphor, cf. Henderson 1991, 129.

354 Because this is Cario's last appearance before the final scene, it is somewhat doubtful whether the slave who

Cario had occupied all along the role of a comic Hermes, and is now ceding that role to the person to whom it properly belongs. We should note that this is not the only scene featuring sexual humor at Hermes' expense in Aristophanic comedy; in the parodic prayer of the chorus at Peace 385–88 the phrase "if you remember having been pleased at all when you gobbled up a piggie provided by me" (εἴ τι κεχαρισμένον / χοιρίδιον οἴσθα παρ' ἐ- / μοῦ γε κατεδηδοκώς, 386–87b) is probably another cunnilingus joke.³⁵⁵

Conclusion to Chapter Three

In this chapter I have examined passages of Old Comedy where speaking slave characters create sexual humor at their own or someone else's expense, showing that this phenomenon exists from the time of our earliest extant plays but becomes decidedly more pronounced in the fourth century plays, *Ecclesiazusae* and *Wealth*. This mirrors the similar chronological development in the slave characters discussed in the second chapter who use sexual humor even more aggressively to usurp the sexual prerogatives of free people; transgressive sexual humor, it seems, was becoming more and more the prerogative of slaves and other low-class or marginalized characters in comedy at the end of the fifth century and the beginning of the fourth. By contrast, the exploitation of silent slave characters as the objects of sexual and non-sexual physically abusive jokes was already quite popular in our earliest extant plays, as we will see in the fourth and fifth chapters.

makes the final *chytra* joke of the play (see my argument in Chapter One) should be Cario or Hermes. Given the reference to Cario's cunnilingus joke from the middle of the play, I think that the former is more likely. Because all four actors are onstage at the end of *Wealth*, whichever actor of the two does not play the slave who speaks 1204–7 must have played the Old Woman, who comes onstage third in the final scene shortly before 1197 (leaving an interval of more than twenty lines between this scene and the previous one, enough time for a costume change). Therefore if Cario is not the one *making* the final *chytra* joke, his actor must be playing the butt of it (and that same actor would have played a prurient old woman roughly 200 lines after playing Cario describing himself performing cunnilingus on an old woman, an interesting possibility).

355 For χοῖρος ("piggie") as a metaphor for the vulva, cf. Henderson 1991, 131–32.

Chapter Four: Slaves as Sexual Objects

The first three chapters have been dedicated in part to showing how comic slave characters are implicated in active sexual jokes to a much greater degree than is generally recognized and to providing a model for how an audience composed primarily of free people and masters might be thought to have reacted to such material, especially when it seems to depict a slave character's triumph over his master through a usurpation of masterly prerogatives. Chapter Four will balance out this line of argument by emphasizing something rather better recognized in previous scholarly work on Old Comedy: the ubiquity of comedy's sexual exploitation of passive slave characters for humorous and symbolic purposes.³⁵⁶

First I examine the mute and semi-mute female characters who are often presented explicitly as slaves and always treated as "slavish" in their exposure to the audience's gaze and the ribald comments and physical advances of the actors and chorus members. I argue that they serve as sexual objects to symbolize the success of the comic project and the rejuvenation of the hero, and that their exposure to the sexual attention of characters and chorus members enacts the attainment of those goals. Moreover, if (as I argue) these characters were sometimes played by real women, they will also necessarily have functioned in a real way to unify the (predominantly or exclusively male) audience through shared sexual arousal, especially those in the front rows, who will have included the judges.³⁵⁷ The involvement of real women (often explicitly *aulos* players or dancers), much more than padded male actors, would create the impression that the members of the audience are participating together in a kind of public symposium or *kōmos*. This would not only contribute to the atmosphere of celebration appropriate to the end of a comedy but might also minimize for the moment the factional divisions among the audience members themselves. The fact that these mute female characters are most commonly found toward the end of the drama is consistent both with their thematic association with comic victory and rejuvenation and with the possible ulterior motive of influencing the judges through titillation. Public female nudity (even that of low-class and slave women, including prostitutes) was transgressive at Athens, but this may easily be interpreted as evidence in *favor* of the practice of using real women, since transgression of all kinds is very much in the spirit of Old Comedy.³⁵⁸ Unlike many who have argued for the use of prostitutes or other low-class and slave women in these roles, however, I do not think that they were completely exposed for entire

356 Mactoux 1999 is a particularly illuminating in depth treatment of this topic.

357 Of course this would make Old Comedy extremely demeaning toward women; but even if *all* these roles were played by padded male actors (an unlikely scenario in light of the evidence from vase paintings discussed below), the scenes in question are already quite demeaning in their own right, as are many other passages of Old Comedy. Zweig 1992 does well to emphasize this point, which is sometimes too readily glossed over.

358 The accounts of the various public exposures of the mid-fourth century courtesan Phryne at Athenaeus 590f are illuminating in this regard. When she was prosecuted for impiety, Hyperides is said to have successfully defended her by bringing her into full view of the judges and tearing open her undergarment, exposing her naked breasts (*παραγαγὼν αὐτὴν εἰς τοῦμφανῆς καὶ περιρρήξας τοὺς χιτωνίσκους γυμνά τε τὰ στέρνα ποιήσας*); at the Eleusinia she is said to have cast aside her over-cloak (wearing only her close-fitting little tunic, or *ἐχέσαρκον χιτῶνιον*, underneath), let down her hair, and waded into the sea. That she did this in full view of all the Greeks is a matter of great emphasis: *τῇ δὲ τῶν Ἐλευσινίων πανηγύρει ἐν ὄψει τῶν Πανελλήνων ἀποθεμένη θοιμάτιον καὶ λύσασα τὰς κόμας ἐνέβαινε τῇ θαλάσσει*. Of course these accounts are ahistorical, not least because they explicitly provide aetiologies for the most famous of the statues of exposed women which first began to appear in the fourth century. Cf. McClure 2003, 126–36. What is relevant for my purpose is the text's unspoken assumption that it was a great scandal for even a courtesan to be partially bare in public.

scenes. Instead, I argue that their clothing is generally removed, if at all, for the relatively brief period of time corresponding to the most explicit inspection and palpitation, which tellingly happens in each instance immediately before the mute character disappears entirely. This reading of the texts better fits the idea that their exposure is a fundamentally transgressive act (rather than a simply matter of fact one). At any rate, by the time of *Ecclesiazusae* in the late 390s these characters seem to have become so traditional in the final scene that they are present even when much of the focus of the climactic sexual play lies elsewhere.

Next I analyze those passages which feature the sexual exploitation of imagined female slaves (these are typically songs); I argue that these songs serve a function similar to scenes with mute female characters by celebrating the success of the comic project (in both cases represented by sexual bounty) and inspiring a sense of male rejuvenation. They also frequently serve to contrast the advantages of success in the comic project with the disadvantages of opposing it, as also sometimes happens in scenes where mute female characters are staged. Finally, I examine those passages of Old Comedy where sex is inflicted on slaves as a method of punishment, often for such paltry "crimes" that it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that they are merely pretexts. This last discussion anticipates the final chapter, where I discuss the non-sexual physical abuse of slave characters in comedy as well as their use as instruments of their masters in the commission of violent acts.

Part 4.1: Slavery and the Objectification of Mute Female Characters

The sexual objectification of silent female characters for symbolic and humorous purposes is ubiquitous in our extant comedies. In many cases, though not always, such characters are presented explicitly or implicitly as slaves. But even when nothing in the passage indicates that these characters are to be understood as slaves, I would argue that their status as sexual objects presented onstage for the inspection of a large, public male audience while the characters and chorus members make sexual jokes at their expense disposes the audience to think of them as such. This is why Trygaios' male slave can not only refer to Opora and Theoria, the silent brides of his master and the *boulē* respectively, as whores (*pornai*), but actually obtain his master's implicit agreement with this assessment of their status (*Peace* 848–50). It is not strictly necessary to suppose that such mute female characters were in reality played by naked or scantily clad prostitutes in order for comments like this and the attitudes displayed by characters and choruses toward these figures to make sense.³⁵⁹ The clearly recognizable role of such

359 Though Willems 1919, 388 ff. had already made a similar proposal independently, Wilamowitz 1927, 186–87 brought into fashion the idea that naked or scantily clad prostitutes played such mute nude female characters in his commentary on the introduction of a naked Reconciliation at *Lysistrata* 1114; he proposes this not only for Reconciliation but also for the female companions of Dikaiopolis in *Acharnians*, the *aulos*-player at *Wasps* 1374, Theoria in *Peace*, the nightingale at *Birds* 209, and the female slave who diverts the Scythian in *Thesmo. Frogs*. Scholars sympathetic to Wilamowitz include: Newiger 1957, 107 with n. 3; Fraenkel 1962, 167 with n. 3; Pickard-Cambridge 1968, 153 n. 1 and 221; McLeish 1980, 153; Walton 1987, 194; Zweig 1992, 78–81. Holzinger 1928, 37ff. was an early objector, arguing that these roles must have been played by male extras in stage-nude costumes with exaggerated female genitalia; thus spectators in the back rows could see the genitalia being referenced, and we would not have to suppose that Athenian prostitutes were expected to stand outside naked in winter for long periods of time. The following scholars have likewise argued (with varying degrees of confidence in our ability to know for sure) that these mute female characters (or at least some of them) were

characters as frequent sexual objects in comedy makes a reference to them as *pornai* perfectly intelligible even if that is neither their role within the plot of the drama nor their status in real life.

In fact many of the more recent scholarly treatments suggest that *both* real prostitutes or other types of sexually available female performers (*aulos* players and dancers) *and* padded male actors may be involved in these types of scenes, depending on the individual scene in question.³⁶⁰ I think that this is a necessary complication, and I therefore discuss this issue mainly in the context of specific scenes. In general I am inclined to suppose that these mute, sexually objectified roles were at least sometimes played by real (probably slave) women in varying stages of dress. The widespread realization in the last few decades that many if not all of the South Italian so-called "phlyax" vases actually depict scenes from Attic comedy, which adds potentially nearly 170 vase paintings of Attic comedy to the previously recognized 18, has tipped the balance of evidence³⁶¹ firmly in that direction: while there are no vase paintings of stage-nude male actors playing women, there are several depictions of real women in varying stages of dress on the comic stage. They are painted as real women, with no indication that they are men wearing masks or comic body suits, often in the presence of comic actors who *are* thus equipped. These figures painted as real women seem to be exclusively female *aulos* players (*auletrides*) and dancers (*orchestrises*).

Part 4.2: *Auletrides*³⁶²

Several South Italian vases depicting scenes of Attic comedy (what were once called "phlyax vases") depict male characters, more or less obviously with lascivious intent, in the company of *auletrides*. Despite the fact that the male characters are clearly in comic costume—they wear full body tights with bulging bellies and buttocks and comic masks with grotesque features—the female *aulos* players are never so depicted. Instead, they look exactly like real women who are playing the *aulos*. This in itself seems an excellent argument for the idea that female *aulos* players in comedy were played by actual *auletrides*, who wore something in the range of the

played by padded male actors: Vaio 1973, 379 n. 48; Henderson 1980, 163–65 and 1985, 195–96; Stone 1981, 150; Reckford 1987; Sommerstein 1990, 212; Revermann 2006, 157–58. Hughes 2008, 18–22 argues in contradiction to all of the previous scholarship that these characters were not actually depicted as naked or scantily clad; rather, they wore clothes, and the audience did not expect to see the genitalia about which the actors were making comments. While the point about the visibility of genitalia to the back rows being irrelevant is well taken, the idea that these characters always remained clothed cannot be reconciled with the text of some of the relevant passages (see below). But Hughes does not take a firm stance on whether such characters were played by men or women; he suggests that men played the Treaties in *Knights* while the *aulos*-player Dardanis in *Wasps* and the dancer Elaphion in *Thesmo.* were played by women. He does not address who played such figures in the other relevant passages, even when he is making conjectures about how they were costumed.

360 Thus Zweig 1992, 78–81; Taplin 1993, 105; Hughes 1997 and 2008, 18–22; Marshall 2000; Revermann 2006, 157–59.

361 The evidence was perfectly balanced before, since there was essentially none of it on either side of the scales. All arguments therefore involved the subtle use of one's thumb.

362 I use the Greek term *auletris* (female *aulos* player; plural *auletrides*) to designate these characters rather than "flute-girl" (which has been traditional in the scholarship) because the *aulos* is not a flute and these women are not girls, unless we are channeling the ancient Greeks by using that word in its pejorative sense or in reference to their status as sex workers (which is still, I think, a pejorative use in English).

normal attire of a real-life *auletris* (anything from full and rather formal clothing to a scanty negligee) rather than a grotesque comic costume.³⁶³ These *auletrides* are only rarely separated in any way from the actors, nor do they typically wear the *phorbeia*, which would seem to indicate that they mostly represent *auletris* characters rather than the official *aulos* players of the drama. Moreover, there is good reason to think that these South Italian vases reflect an originally Attic practice rather than an Italian innovation in the staging of Attic drama. The evidence for continuity is 1) part of an Attic fourth-century vase (c. 360 BC) showing hands painted white playing the *aulos* to accompany a comic chorus³⁶⁴ (fig. 1) and 2) the apparently female headless figure of another *aulos* player accompanying a comic chorus on fragments of a relief found in the Athenian agora (fig. 2).³⁶⁵ The former piece was first published by Pingiatoglou in 1992, around the time when the realization that South Italian "phlyax" vases were actually depictions of Attic comedy was beginning to catch on (cf. Taplin's publication of *Comic Angels* the following year). Before that, the only evidence for female *aulos* players in Attic drama had been the (on its own) rather easily dismissed relief (#2 above) of a sexually ambiguous, headless *aulos* player who had been identified as female by Bieber. This previous lack of evidence for female *aulos* players, especially in comparison to the much ampler evidence for male *aulos* players, created the widespread impression that all dramatic/public *aulos* players at Athens were male.³⁶⁶ Such a view could in fact still be defended, if we suppose that the two *auletrides* in the Attic evidence are miming playing their *auloi* while the actual music is being supplied by an official (male) *auletes*, as happens quite clearly in the comic scene depicted on the Bari Pipers vase and as must have happened in the scenes corresponding to those vase paintings which like the Bari Pipers show a masked actor pretending to play the *aulos*.³⁶⁷ Whether we think they actually played their *auloi* or not, the evidence for the *auletris* characters of Attic comedy being played by actual *auletrides* or at least by real women who were not in comic costume is sound. If they only mimed playing, the reason for their not wearing the comic costume must have had nothing to do with the difficulty of playing the *aulos* while masked; they did not make use of the conventional costume of comedy either because they were women and that was something done in the theater only by men or because their role in comedy was ornamental and alluring in contrast to the grotesque roles and accoutrement of the actors and choreuts. Both explanations are likely enough, and we should bear in mind that female dancers, too, seem to have been played by real women (see below).

363 Cf. Taplin 1993, 73–74; Revermann 2006, 158.

364 Benaki Museum 30890. Cf. Pingiatoglou 1992; Green 1995, 150–51; Hughes 2008, 5–6 and fig. 1.

365 Agora S1025, 1586. Both Bieber 1961, 43 and Hughes 2008, 6 take this figure to be female, and I tend to agree. But the case is less cut and dried than for Benaki Museum 30890, where the white paint conventionally used to depict the skin of women is conclusive evidence.

366 With the exception of Benaki Museum 30890, in all known vase paintings of Attic provenance that depict an *aulos* player associated with any kind of drama, that *aulos* player is male. Cf. Beazley 1955; Pickard-Cambridge 1968, 180–88 and figs. 35–50; Taplin 1993, 71. However, it is worth noting that the vast majority of these vase paintings do not depict *comedy*, and that both pieces of Attic evidence for dramatic *auletrides* (as well as the relevant South Italian pieces) do. It is possible that comedy was the only dramatic genre to allow official *auletrides*. But if these *auletrides* were never official players but always mute characters who mimed playing while being accompanied by the official *auletes* (the more likely option, in my view), their association with comedy but not tragedy or satyr play is completely understandable.

367 For the Bari Pipers (Bari, collection of the Contessa Malaguzzi-Valeri no. 52), cf. Taplin 1993, 70–71 and fig. 14.11; for three other South Italian vases where masked comic actors pretend to play *auloi*, cf. *PhV* (= Trendall 1967b) 125, 118, and 82 and especially the discussion at Taplin 1993, 72–73.

One such vase is a Campanian bell-krater of the third quarter of the fourth century, first published in 1975 (fig. 3).³⁶⁸ There a slave character stands on the elevated stage, bending over so that he is face to face with an *auletris* who stands on the ground below.³⁶⁹ The base of the torch he is holding is positioned suggestively at his crotch, and the torch extends upward at a roughly 45 degree angle until the flaming red "tip" emerges in the face of the *auletris*, who is playing her *aulos*, which extend downward from her mouth at a roughly 45 degree angle, parallel with the torch. *Auletrides* are associated with fellatio, in part because of the phallic associations of the *aulos*; moreover, the torch is a comic metaphor for the phallus.³⁷⁰ It is therefore likely that this vase depicts a scene of Attic comedy in which a slave character engages in sexual innuendo at the expense of the *auletris*. The slave points at the tip of the torch with his free hand, perhaps capturing the very moment of a deictic phallus joke.³⁷¹ In this scene the *auletris* clearly wears the *phorbeia* and the *xustis*, and she stands in the orchestra to one side of the stage. For these reasons Taplin 1993, 72 argues that she is not a silent character of the type we see on other vases and in passages like *Wasps* 1341–87 but rather the official *aulos*-player of the drama; the slave's obvious address to her would then be metatheatrical. Such metatheatrical address to the official *aulos* player is already familiar from *Ecclesiazusae* 890–92.

Remarkably, Taplin's other example of an official female *aulos* player is also a Campanian bell-krater of the third quarter of the fourth century that features a slave character positioning his torch suggestively in relation to the *auletris* (fig. 4).³⁷² There the slave and *auletris* stand opposite one another, on the same level, with an altar between them. There is no stage. Again the *auletris* is playing the *aulos* (though here without the *phorbeia*) and wearing elaborate attire suggestive of an official capacity (the *xustis*). The slave, too, could easily be the same character from the same drama; like his counterpart he wears a short white *chiton* and a garland, has a pointy black beard, and is wielding a torch the base of which is suggestively held near his groin. The flaming red tip again protrudes toward one of the *auletris*' orifices, though in this case it is angled toward her groin rather than toward her mouth. Of course it is true that the slave could merely be attempting to light the altar (and this is indeed how Taplin explains his behavior), but

368 Melbourne D 14/1973; for a better photo, cf. Trendall 1989, pl. 304 or Taplin 1993, pl. 15.13. See also Trendall 1967 suppl. III, 201, no. 337a; Trendall 1975; Taplin 1993, 72.

369 Close attention to those South Italian vases that do label characters with their names (and therefore distinguish slaves, who have distinctive names, from free people) shows that white-haired men regardless of dress are likely to be old masters, while black-haired (and therefore younger) men in simple dress, whether balding or not, are typically slaves. It is on this basis that I identify the character in Melbourne D 14/1973 and *PhV* 55 as a slave (to my knowledge no one else has done so). It is worth noting that in extant Old Comedy an old master is much more likely to be accompanied by a younger male slave or slaves (*Ach.*, *Eq.*, *Vesp.*, *Pax*, *Av.*, *Ran.*, *Plut.*) than a son (*Nub.*, *Vesp.*), and when the main character's principal companion is neither a slave nor a son (*Av.*, *Thesm.*), that companion seems to be of similar age (it is quite explicit, at least, that both Euripides and his kinsman are *gerontes*). Sons (and the interactions of those sons with slaves) become important in New Comedy, and the resemblance of most of the South Italian vases (many of which date to the mid-fourth century) to Old rather than New Comedy in this respect is telling.

370 At *Wasps* 1346–49 Philocleon assumes that fellatio is included among the duties of the *auletris*. The similarity of the act of playing the *aulos* to fellatio is taken for granted in an insult attributed to Hyperides at Athenaeus 591f. Henderson 1991, 184 argues that *προσαυλεῖν* ("to play the *aulos*") can refer to fellatio. For the torch as a phallic metaphor, cf. Chapter Three.

371 Taplin 1993, 72 agrees that the central character in this vase "is evidently accosting the *aulos*-player" but does not specify exactly what makes him think so, nor does he mention the role of the torch.

372 *PhV* 55. Cf. the discussion at Taplin 1993, 71–72; for a photo, cf. Trendall 1967a, pl. 164, 3–4.

the pose is still suggestive, especially when taken with the similarly suggestive positioning in Melbourne D 14/1973. I would argue that in these two roughly contemporary Campanian vases we find depicted two moments from the same scene of the same comedy; the scene apparently featured memorable extended play on the idea of the torch as a phallic implement, assuming that the angling of it toward the mouth and the groin of the *auletris* in the two vases represents at least two different jokes of this type. Of course once one such joke had been made in a way clearly intelligible to the audience, making another with a different angling of the torch would have been quite simple.

Another such vase is *PhV* 26 (fig. 5), a Campanian bell-krater from the third quarter of the fourth century showing what appears to be a garlanded slave character (at least he wears the dark black hair and beard more typically associated with slaves in these vases) wielding a lit torch in each hand and leading the *auletris* in a dancing procession.³⁷³ She is fully but not elaborately clothed and clearly playing or pretending to play the pipes, though apparently without a *phorbeia*; though he moves forward on the tips of his toes, his upper body and mask are turned backward, leering at her. Surely this depicts a comic scene that would have featured some sexual joking at the expense of the *auletris*; if the male character is indeed a slave, it is an example both of the lascivious tendencies of many comic male slaves and of the sexual exploitation of female servile figures.

Another such vase is the St. Petersburg Obeliaphoroi (fig. 6), an Apulian bell-krater of the second quarter of the fourth century which shows a pair of slaves, equipped with the dangling phallus, carrying above their heads what appears to be an enormous piece of spitted meat.³⁷⁴ They are in a dancing procession behind an *auletris*, again depicted without any grotesque comic costume, who is playing or pretending to play a tune. She is either rather diaphanously clad or, as seems rather more likely to me from what I can make out in plates, her clothing has been disheveled in such a way that her backside and much of her pubis are uncovered, while her top and her legs below knee level remain clothed. Such a state would correspond to what might happen to the *auletris* at *Wasps* 1341–87 and to *Theoria* at *Peace* 879–80 before she is instructed by the master to dispense with her clothing entirely. In both these cases there is evidence in the form of specific comments for the exposure of the mute female characters' pubic region and buttocks, but not for the exposure of their breasts. Given the *auletris*' state of dress and position walking in front of these visibly sexual male slaves carrying a gigantic phallic symbol, it is difficult to imagine a way the corresponding comic scene could have been played without any humor at her expense. The slave in front (immediately behind the *auletris*) is looking back at his fellow slave, and we therefore presumably are witnessing an exchange between the two. Though his face looks back toward his fellow slave, his phallus (in contrast to the truly dangling phallus of the slave who is further away) is angled forward, threatening the exposed *auletris*.

Female *aulos* players could be hired to perform at private symposia, where their unofficial

373 Cf. the discussion at Taplin 1993, 73; for a photo, cf. Schaal 1923, pl. 55b.

374 *PhV* 34. Cf. Taplin 1993, pl. 14.12 and the discussion at 73. The plate at Bieber 1961, fig. 511 is somewhat clearer. The slave status of the males seems likely from their obvious engagement in manual labor and from the typical dark hair and beard of the one at the back, though of course one cannot be absolutely certain in the absence of slave names written above their heads. The complete baldness of the one at the front is unusual; even old masters are never, to my knowledge, depicted as being completely bald. Taplin 1993, 76 would like them to be choreuts (especially since we know of at least one comedy entitled *Spit-Bearers*, or *Obeliaphoroi*) but admits that the fact that they are not wearing the same mask is a significant problem.

duties could include the sexual gratification of guests.³⁷⁵ The slave status of such women is likely, and in the event that a free(d) woman functioned thus the perception of her as "slavish" seems all but inevitable. At any rate Dardanis at *Wasps* 1326–86, the most noteworthy *auletris* character in the extant plays, is clearly a slave, since Philocleon promises to buy her freedom and make her his concubine (λυσάμενος ἔξω παλλακὴν, ὃ χοιρίον, *Wasps* 1353) as soon as his son dies, in a reversal and parody of the more usual situation, familiar from the plots of New Comedy, where a father stands in the way of his son's romantic efforts.³⁷⁶ This *auletris* appears at the end of the play, toward the beginning of the pile-up of brief scenes designed to show how excessively youthful and indeed hubristic Philocleon has become. A slave messenger arrives immediately before and informs the chorus (and the audience) about Philocleon's outrageous behavior at the symposium, which includes getting drunk, insulting all the guests in turn, beating the slave while making an obnoxious pun—playing on the similarity of παῖ (slave/boy) to παῖε (strike/hit)—and striking everyone he meets on his way home. The messenger speech is framed by emphatic references to Philocleon's physically violent behavior, which prepares the audience for his threats of (and probably actual) violence and sexually objectifying behavior in the scene that follows. The slave makes a hasty retreat as Philocleon enters the stage, dragging along with him a nude or scantily clad *auletris* whom he has "stolen" from the symposium.³⁷⁷ He is pursued by a crowd of people who threaten lawsuits, but Philocleon himself is the first to speak, or rather sing: his heavily trochaic song accentuates his manic and abusive drunkenness through both its form and its content, moving from a generic intimation of physical violence (κλαύσεται τις, 1327) to a specific threat that he will roast them with his torch unless they go away (ταυτηῖ τῆ / δαδὶ φρυκτοῦς σκευάσω, 1330–31).³⁷⁸ One of his pursuers attempts to calm him down, interrupting his song with three lines of (spoken) iambic trimeter in which he threatens legal action as a representative of the group (1332–34). MacDowell 1971, 306 argues that this has some temporary calming effect, since Philocleon transitions to sung iambs (not iambic trimeter) for three lines before returning to trochaics. I would argue the opposite. Philocleon's sung reply is filled with excited shouts indicating an elevated emotional state: ἠῦ ἠῦ at 1335 and ἰαῖβοῖ αἰβοῖ at 1337. Kidd 2011 has recently shown that the particle ἠῦ must indicate derision, and it is therefore likely that both its occurrence at the beginning of the song and the initially iambic meter with which it is associated are actually mocking Philocleon's interlocutor. While there are no threats of violence in this second song, it is likely that he actually strikes or attempts to strike them as he drives them off the stage (1339–41).

375 On the *auletris* as a category of prostitute, cf. McClure 2003, 21–22; Glazebrook 2005, 45; Davidson 2006, 37–41; Coccagna 2011.

376 An old man's sexual attraction to a female aulos player was also depicted in the comic poet Plato's *Phaon*, which we know was produced in 391. It seems, then, that this kind of humor retained some measure of popularity in the three decades that separate this play from *Wasps*. Cf. Plato fr. 195 K.-A. with Phot. γ 148 = Sud. γ 316. For the date of *Phaon*, cf. fr. 196 K.-A.

377 The audience probably would have assumed that the *auletris* came from the symposium, but the fact is not stated until 1345–46, well after her appearance at 1326. Presumably the slave makes no mention of her in his catalogue of Philocleon's indiscretions to avoid spoiling the surprise for the audience.

378 Considering the deictic and the evidence for torch as a phallic metaphor I have collected in Chapter Three, this threat may also have aggressive sexual overtones. Certainly if he points to his phallus or even positions the torch suggestively in relation to his phallus (as does the slave in the two vase paintings discussed below), the sexual force of the phrase "this here torch" will be quite clear.

What is the *auletris* doing while all of this is going on?³⁷⁹ The extant text does not refer to her at all until after Philocleon's pursuers have been temporarily routed, but she must have been present and visible to the audience throughout the preceding conflict. When Philocleon first addresses her he tells her to "come up here" (ἀνάβαινε δεῦρο, 1341), which implies that he is standing on a raised platform while she is standing in the orchestra.³⁸⁰ She is therefore at this point separated from the actors' space, like the apparently official *auletris* (fully decked out with the *xustis* and *phorbeia*) depicted interacting with an onstage actor on a Campanian bell-krater from the third quarter of the fourth century.³⁸¹ Is it possible that our *auletris* in *Wasps* stands in the orchestra and either actually plays or pretends to play her *aulos* to accompany Philocleon's abusive, drunken songs (1326–39)?³⁸² If so she is a participant, after a fashion, in his revel; though she is not allowed to speak and appears to be completely passive in the following spoken scene, when songs are sung she plays an active role. It is worth noting that though she is apparently separated from Philocleon during his altercation with his pursuers, she does not take that opportunity to run away. This may be explained in several ways: possibly she is so completely passive that she cannot take the initiative in that way, which would conform to the way these mute characters tend to be depicted. Alternatively, she may stay simply because she is needed in the following scene, and Aristophanic comedy regularly sacrifices realism and believable/consistent characterization at the altar of pragmatism (and not infrequently at the altar of nothing at all).³⁸³ She could even be on a leash, as Philocleon's description of her as a "little golden cockchafer" (χρυσομηλόλονθον, 1341) may indicate.³⁸⁴ But if she does play or pretend to play the *aulos* to accompany his song, it is likely that the audience will have taken her at that moment as a willing participant in Philocleon's revel. The apparent loss of the antode that once

379 Commentators are surprisingly silent on this point.

380 The degree to which this raised platform might have conformed to our notion of a "stage" in 422 BC is a matter of debate. It may have been low enough to comprise only a single step, but there must still be a potentially important symbolic difference between the elevated area and the area below.

381 Melbourne D 14/1973; see above.

382 Hughes 2008, 20–21 argues that she accompanies *later* songs (Philocleon's dancing at 1482–95 and his dancing competition with the sons of Carcinus at 1518–37) but says nothing about these.

383 Silk 2000, 207–55 is excellent on this point.

384 Why does Philocleon call the *auletris* a χρυσομηλόλονθον ("little golden cockchafer")? The sexual potential of "cockchafer" in English is mere happenstance: the Greek word for this beetle (μηλόλονθον) suggests nothing at all about the chafing of cocks. It may simply be a term of endearment, as suggested by the diminutive, but this is strangely coy given the intensely sexual force of the following lines. The first part could suggest a slang term for breasts (μῆλα, cf. Ar. *Lys.* 155; *Eccl.* 903; Theoc. 27.50), but to my knowledge no one has taken it that way. Sommerstein 1983, 237 suggests that it means "little plaything" because "children played with cockchafer beetles by letting them fly on the end of a string anchored by a piece of wood," but the fact that both Ar. *Nub.* 762–63 and Hero(n)das 12.1 associate this type of beetle with this leashing practice suggests that here, too, this may motivate the reference. At least one South Italian vase painting (Berlin 3043; cf. Bieber 1961, fig. 513) does depict a comic slave being held on a leash. In that case, however, it is a male slave who is about to be beaten by another male slave (cf. the discussion of this vase in Chapter Five, with my fig. 2 for that chapter). This explanation also works well with his telling her to grab onto "the rope" to pull herself up onto the stage, where he is, at 1342–43. This has traditionally been taken as a reference to his phallus; indeed, 1344 ("it doesn't mind being rubbed") confirms that it would still have to be, but the use of the phallic "rope" when a real one is readily available might be funny in itself. On the other hand, leashing would complicate the staging during the altercation significantly, especially since the *auletris* is in the orchestra and Philocleon is not. Needless to say, the use of a leash would add significantly to the degradation and humiliation of this mute female character (but it must be said that this would be rather in the spirit of the scene).

separated Philocleon's songs at 1326–39 from his (now) immediately following spoken harassment of the *auletris* is extremely unfortunate; its text might have shed some light on her role during these songs.³⁸⁵

Whatever her role may have been during the preceding songs, in the spoken scene at *Wasps* 1341–87 the *auletris* functions as a completely passive sexual object to be manipulated and commented upon, just like so many other mute female characters of Aristophanic comedy. This begins immediately after Philocleon's songs, when he directs her to climb onto the stage by taking hold of "this here rope" with her hand; as becomes clear from his statement that the rope is rotten (with age) but still likes to be rubbed, he must be directing her to grab onto his oversized leather phallus (1342–44). Moreover, he claims to have snatched her away from the symposium at the very moment when she would have fellated the guests and directs her to pay back the favor to his own penis (1345–37). This kind of objectification continues with his casual use of the pejorative "little pussy" (ὦ χοιρίον, 1353) toward her, in the same line in fact where he promises to buy her and make her his concubine. The same sort of casual pejorative is used by his son when he first arrives onstage: concerned only to insult his father by calling him a stupid pussy-squeezer (τυφεδανὲ καὶ χοιρόθλιψ, 1364), he nonetheless implies the lowest possible status for the *auletris* as well. The scene moves on to the exposure and physical inspection of the *auletris* when Philocleon comically claims that she is not an *auletris* at all but rather a torch (he had prepared for this by instructing her to hold a torch and stand still at 1361–63):

- Bδ. οὐ δεινὰ τωθάζειν σε, τὴν αὐλητρίδα
τῶν ξυμποτῶν κλέψαντα;
Φι. πόθεν; αὐλητρίδα;
τί ταῦτα ληρεῖς ὥσπερ ἀπὸ τύμβου πεσῶν; (1370)
Bδ. νῆ τὸν Δί', αὐτὴ πού 'στί σοί γ' ἡ Δαρδανίς.
Φι. οὐκ, ἀλλ' ἐν ἀγορᾷ τοῖς θεοῖς δᾶς κάεται.
Bδ. δᾶς ἦδε;
Φι. δᾶς δῆτ'. οὐχ ὀρᾶς ἐσχισμένην;
Bδ. τί δὲ τὸ μέλαν τοῦτ' ἐστὶν αὐτῆς τοῦν μέσῳ;
Φι. ἡ πίττα δῆπου καομένης ἐξέρχεται. (1375)
Bδ. ὁ δ' ὀπισθεν οὐχὶ προκτός ἐστιν οὐτοσί;
Φι. ὄζος μὲν οὖν τῆς δαδὸς οὗτος ἐξέχει.

Bdelycleon: Isn't it terrible/clever that you mock me after having stolen the *auletris* from your fellow-drinkers?³⁸⁶ Philocleon: From where? An *auletris*? Why do speak this nonsense, as if you'd fallen off a tomb? Bd.: Yes, by Zeus! I suppose this is *your*

385 On this issue, cf. Parker 1997, 253. The scholia vetera refer to a lacuna of eleven lines (exactly the right length for an antode, since 1326–39 occupies eleven lines in the colometry of RV), presumably occurring in some now-lost ancestor of all the extant MSS of *Wasps*. The loss would be quite ancient, since the scholia also tell us that Heliodorus (the metrist of the first century CE who worked on the colometry of Aristophanes) found traces of seven missing lines.

386 The double meaning of δεινός in Greek ("terrible" but also "clever") is probably at play here, since much of the humor in the next few scenes depends on the difference between what Philocleon thinks is clever and what actually is.

Dardanis?³⁸⁷ Ph.: No, but in the agora a torch burns for the gods. Bd.: This is a torch? Ph.: Of course! Don't you see where she's split? Bd.: But what is this black part of her, the one in the middle? Ph.: I suppose it's the pitch coming out as she burns. Bd.: Well isn't the back part an ass, this part right here? Ph.: That's just a knot sticking out of the torch!

Wasps 1368–77

Clearly at this point in the scene the lower half at least of the *auletris* is completely exposed, as probably happens to Theoria at *Peace* 879–80 (see below) and to the *auletris* depicted on the St. Petersburg Obeliaphoroi (*PhV* 34, see above). The reference to pubic hair ("this black part in the middle") can make no sense unless this is so. Hughes' claim that she can remain fully clothed because "dialogue describes precisely those things which spectators *cannot* see" cannot stand, because while it is indeed not essential that all or even any of the *spectators* be able to see the details of the *auletris*' pubic region, the scene cannot be believable unless there is some reason for them to suspect that the *characters* who are making the comments can see it.³⁸⁸ The analogy with Lear's words being the only way for the audience to know that Cordelia is crying is disingenuous: Cordelia's face is not hidden from Lear under layers of cloth, and even if it were, crying does not have to be detected visually (unlike the color of pubic hair). On the other hand, there is little reason to suppose that the *auletris* has been naked throughout the entire scene. As we saw above, the evidence from South Italian vase painting supports the idea of real women in some degree of dress (anything from the modest *xustis* to a partially removed diaphanous gown) playing the roles of comic *auletrides*; moreover, even apart from the issue of weather conditions in an outdoor theater in March, it is difficult to imagine an Athenian audience being able to pay sufficient attention to what is happening in a scene or scenes if we suppose that completely naked real women are onstage the entire time. Rather we should imagine that the women who play such mute roles are in some stage of dress until the moment arrives in which their exposure is demanded, then remain exposed for the duration of the pornographic interlude.³⁸⁹ Certainly the text of *Peace* 871–922 explicitly indicates that Theoria is made to disrobe onstage, and this occurs directly before the worst of her objectification (see below), which does not cease until she is no longer visible. The same is true in *Wasps*: Philocleon probably removes the *auletris*' clothes immediately before the explicit attention to *her* body (rather than to what she can do for his) begins, which would be when he asks his son whether he can see "where's she's split" (1373). This intense inspection of her body lasts only a few lines before Bdelycleon attempts to

387 The use of the name Dardanis does not imply that she is a famous (real) *auletris*, *pace* Hughes 2008, 21. As Sommerstein 1983, 239 notes, this is an ethnic ("woman from the area around Troy"), corresponding to normal Greek conventions for slave names. Bdelycleon probably does not know her real slave name, but rather assigns her a typical one (with the particular ethnic possibly motivated by the way she looks, or by the reputation of *aulos* players from that region of Asia Minor), just as masters in real life constantly replaced the real names their slaves had once had with repetitive descriptive or ethnic names, thus obscuring their previous identities. The emphasis of his statement is not on the name Dardanis, as it should be if she is really a famous *aulos* player, but rather on αὔτη (which comes first after the oath) and on σοί (which is made emphatic by the following γε). The point is to illustrate the ridiculousness of Philocleon's feigned ignorance by pointing out the *aulos* player in plain sight (αὔτη) and the fact that she surely is not *his* (σοί γ'), and therefore that the initial claim that he had stolen her is accurate.

388 Hughes 2008, 19–20.

389 Many people have qualms about the appropriateness of the term "pornographic" to these portions of Old Comedy. I do not.

take her away; his rationale (that his father is old and rotten and cannot "do anything" with her anyway) implies that he, under the influence of her recent nakedness, has ceased to be indignant at her "theft" from the symposium and begun instead to think that she should be with someone young, like himself (1378–81). Father and son quickly begin to fight over her (1381–86), and the *auletris* takes her opportunity to escape the stage and the gaze of the actors and audience via the quickest possible (though somewhat illogical) route: she runs inside the door in the middle of the stage, which represents the entrance to Philocleon's house. Later, when we learn from his slave that Philocleon has been drinking, listening to the *aulos*, and dancing all night (1474–81), we assume that the *aulos* music in question is that of this *auletris*, but we probably do not see her again. When Philocleon emerges and dances comically amid the derisive jibes of his male slave (1482–95), and when he competes with the sons of Carcinus and Carcinus himself in dance in the final lines (1518–37), the actual *aulos* music is provided by the official *aulos* player of the drama, who has been sitting in his usual place and providing all the actual music throughout the play; notionally, however, this final *aulos* music probably comes from the *auletris* within the house.

Another prominent *auletris* of Attic comedy is the nightingale (Prokne), who is first mentioned in the parodos at *Birds* 201–62 but not actually brought onstage until the parabasis at *Birds* 665–800. At the beginning of the parodos Tereus (the hoopoe) tells Euelpides and Peisetaerus that he will go inside his thicket and wake his nightingale, and that together they will summon the other birds who will constitute the chorus (201–5). The words of the ensuing songs belong to Tereus, and it is therefore often supposed that the accompaniment of his spouse, the nightingale, is represented by the sound of the official *aulos* player, which to some extent will mimic birdsong.³⁹⁰ Tereus says that he is going inside the thicket (represented by the stage door) to awaken her (202), which has been taken as a way of getting his actor off the stage so that his virtuoso monodies can be sung by a specialist.³⁹¹ According to this view, Tereus and the nightingale are both imagined as making their music inside the thicket, and neither are visible. The nightingale at least cannot be visible, for the text clearly indicates that she is seen for the first time at 667. Even without a visible *auletris*, however, the bird-song of her *aulos* is seductive enough to cause Euelpides and Peisetaerus to make erotically charged comments of the sort that are frequently directed toward mute female characters, except that these are directed at her voice alone (223–26). Indeed, everyone who hears her song is so enamored that when much later at 659–60 the chorus-leader instructs Tereus to bring out the nightingale and leave her with the chorus "so that we may play/get our bang on with her" (ἵνα παίσωμεν μετ' ἐκείνης, 660),³⁹² Peisetaerus and Euelpides demand to stay outside as well to see her, instead of being feasted within (661–64). Her appearance must be seductive:

390 Cf. Russo 1994, 156; Dunbar 1995, 203. For a more skeptical view of the idea that the nightingale is presented as an *auletris* both here and later in the play, cf. Taplin 1993, 106–7.

391 Russo 1994, 156–57; Sommerstein 1987, 211–12.

392 παίσωμεν may be the aorist subjunctive of either παίζειν ("to play", in itself a word with amorous potential) or of παίειν ("to bang", a common comic euphemism for sexual intercourse). While παίειν would normally take an accusative direct object (i.e. they would bang her rather than banging with her, using ἐκείνην rather than μετ' ἐκείνης), the syntax is close enough for a wordplay. For παίζειν as a sexual euphemism, cf. Henderson 1991, 157, who argues as well for a wordplay on παίειν at *Plut.* 1055 (but not for this passage). For παίειν, cf. Henderson 1991, 171.

- Πε. ὦ Ζεῦ πολυτίμηθ', ὡς καλὸν τοῦρνίθιον,
ὡς δ' ἀπαλόν, ὡς δὲ λευκόν.
- Ευ. ἄρα γ' οἶσθ' ὅτι
ἐγὼ διαμηρίζοιμ' ἂν αὐτὴν ἠδέως;
- Πε. ὅσον δ' ἔχει τὸν χρυσόν, ὥσπερ παρθένος. (670)
- Ευ. ἐγὼ μὲν αὐτὴν κἂν φιλήσαι μοι δοκῶ.
- Πε. ἀλλ', ὦ κακόδαμον, ῥύγχος ὀβελίσκοιν ἔχει.
- Ευ. ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ὠδὸν νῆ Δί' ἀπολέψαντα χρῆ
ἀπὸ τῆς κεφαλῆς τὸ λέμμα κἄθ' οὔτω φιλεῖν.

Peisetaerus: Sweet upscale Zeus!³⁹³ What a fine birdie, how delicate, how white! Euelpides: Know what? I'd spread those thighs with gusto! Pe.: Look how much gold she has on, like a virgin! Eu.: I think I'd like to kiss her. Pe.: But she's got a beak like two spits, doofus!³⁹⁴ Eu.: Well then, by Zeus, I'll have to strip the peel from her head like an egg and kiss her like that.
Birds 667–74

Like the *auletris* in *Wasps*, the nightingale is quite obviously the object of the male characters' erotic desire. Unlike that *auletris*, however, she is portrayed as high-class and retains some element of mystery. There are no comments here of the sort which would demand her to be naked or even particularly scantily clad; she need only be pale-skinned and attractive. Indeed, from the text of the following choral songs it is clear that she remains onstage for some time, pretending to accompany the chorus in their songs at least until the end of the bird-imitating antistrophe at 769–84 and possibly until the end of the parabasis at 800.³⁹⁵ But although the choreuts request the accompaniment of the nightingale (676–84) and later invoke her as their muse (737–52), they do not make any explicitly sexual comments about her. For this reason I would argue that the nightingale, though played by a real *auletris* as is consistent with the evidence from vase painting discussed above, is never disrobed as is the *auletris* in *Wasps*. Her scene, then, is alluring and seductive and may well titillate the audience, but it is not pornographic or demeaning in the way that some other scenes featuring mute female characters are. When she is gone, her absence is sorely missed: in the first lyric interlude after her disappearance the official *auletes* seems to have been instructed to play badly on purpose in order to set up a couple of jokes at his own expense, comparing him to the notoriously bad piper Chaeris (858) and, in contrast to the sweet-voiced nightingale, to a raven wearing a *phorbeia* (860–61).³⁹⁶ This is a particularly amusing exploitation of the conceit that the mute nightingale, not the official *auletes*, had accompanied the previous songs.

393 πολυτίμητος is both a standard divine epithet meaning "highly honored" and a comic word meaning "excessively expensive" (cf. *LSJ* s. v.); I would argue that both meanings are activated here, the latter commenting on the nightingale's appearance as a high-class *hetaira/auletris*, as is consistent with the detail that she wears a lot of gold jewelry.

394 Either the nightingale arrives onstage in a bird mask, which Euelpides would probably then remove, or the "beak like two spits" refers to her twin *auloi*, which could easily be likened to spits. I think the latter is more likely. Cf. Romer 1983, 136–38; Sommerstein 1987, 240; Dunbar 1995, 423–24.

395 Cf. Russo 1994, 157.

396 For Chaeris, cf. *Ach.* 15–16, 866; *Pax* 951–55; Cratinus fr. 126 K.-A.; Pherecrates fr. 6 K.-A. Taplin 1993, 105–6 suggests that he might have been the official *auletes* of *Peace* and *Birds*, which would add another dimension to these jokes at his expense.

One final possibility for the appearance of a mute *auletris* as a character on the comic stage is *Thesmophoriazusae* 1160–1231, where Euripides, disguised as a bawd, distracts the Scythian archer who is guarding his captive relative with the antics of the mute female dancer Elaphion (on whom see below). Of course her dancing requires music, and so Euripides calls upon someone named Teredon to play a Persian tune (σὺ δ', ὦ Τερηδών, ἐπαναφύσα Περσικόν, 1175). The gender of the name is ambiguous, so that we cannot tell whether this command indicates the presence of another comely mute female character or rather constitutes a metatheatrical reference to the official *auletes* of the drama, as happens at *Birds* 858–61, *Ecclesiazusae* 890–92, and *Dyskolos* 880–81 (though this last is somewhat less relevant as a parallel). It almost certainly does not indicate an obviously male *auletes* character, because this would violate the comic convention that male and female masters are associated with slaves of matching gender (in his assumed role as a bawd, Euripides requires at least apparently *female* attendants). Moreover, it is not particularly believable that a real official *auletes* would have had such an appropriate name as Teredon (literally "woodworm"), which suggests an analogy between the complex windings of *aulos* melodies and the network of holes a woodworm produces in wood.³⁹⁷ Such descriptive names are characteristic of slaves (whose masters assign them names in keeping with their perceived ethnicities, physical characteristics, or roles), not of free people, and the official *auletes* will not have been a slave. There is, however, another possibility: Teredon may be a young male *auletes* character who is dressed as an *auletris*, just as Euripides is dressed as a bawd. Immediately after the archer has left earshot to have his way with the dancer, Euripides directs one of his attendants to take the bow-case which the archer has left in his keeping and run away with it (1203). This attendant must be both young and male, because he is addressed as παιδάριον ("child") and assigned a masculine participle (λαβών). He is therefore either the *auletris* (who is really an *auletes*) or some other male slave attendant, also dressed as a female, who has not been mentioned in the text until now.³⁹⁸ If the former, we have here a partial inversion of the usual pattern whereby the final scene of a comedy is supplied with mute female characters; such an inversion would in fact be fitting at the end of a play in which men dressing up as women have played such a major role. For an example of thematically appropriate gender inversion at the end of a play moving in the other direction, we might think of *Ecclesiazusae*, where a female slave takes on the sexually transgressive role typical of some Aristophanic *male* slaves in a play in which the women of the *polis* have seized traditionally masculine roles.³⁹⁹ On the other hand, if Teredon is a real mute female *auletris*, she probably remains in some relatively clothed state (since there are no comments about her body, and the attention of the scene is on the dancer) but may nonetheless be taken to add something to the festive atmosphere of the end of the play.⁴⁰⁰

397 Cf. Sommerstein 1994, 234; Austin and Olson 2004, 339–40.

398 Sommerstein 1994, 233 argues from 1203 that the attendant must be a male Teredon, but this discounts the possibility of an additional attendant. Mute male slave characters whose jobs are simply to take things and perform other such menial tasks are often not mentioned in scenes until such time as they are needed to do something. Sommerstein also does not appear to consider that if Teredon is male, he should be in drag. Austin and Olson 2004, 337 simply state that Teredon is male without arguing the point, referring the reader to 1203 and thereby implying agreement with Sommerstein's argument; they too do not consider the likelihood that he is wearing women's clothes. Likewise van Leeuwen 1904, 145 simply states that Teredon is male.

399 Cf. the discussion of this female slave in Chapter Three.

400 For another discussion of the staging of Teredon, cf. Taplin 1993, 107–8.

Part 4.3: Dancers/Acrobats (*orchestrides*)

There is ample evidence from both art and literature that the private setting of an Athenian symposium often featured female dancers or acrobats, whose erotic allure and (at least sometimes) sexual favors were a part of the entertainment.⁴⁰¹ Did these dancers also sometimes perform on the comic stage at Athens, in the context of public festivals such as the City Dionysia and Lenaia? Probably, given the evidence outlined above for a similar practice with *auletrides* and since several South Italian vases of the mid-fourth century associate real dancers, too, with the comic stage. In the artistic evidence (both that associated with comedy and that which is better understood in the context of the symposium or mime) such dancers are sometimes scantily clad or naked, at other times heavily veiled.⁴⁰² Paintings of women who have put these heavy coverings (*enkukla*) to one side and are performing or practicing in a scanty *chitoniskos* or nothing at all may indicate that those who began in the heavily veiled state sometimes engaged in a strip-tease for the benefit of their audience.⁴⁰³ As with the *auletrides*, the staging of these dancers contributes to the komastic or symposiastic atmosphere of certain comic scenes.

Perhaps the most clearly comic South Italian vase is a Paestan krater attributed to Asteas (ca. 360–50 BC) which shows an unambiguously female (painted white, and with appropriate body shape) and completely nude acrobat doing a handstand (a posture familiar from Attic and South Italian vases depicting acrobats at symposia) on a low table (fig. 7).⁴⁰⁴ There are a stage and two windows in the *skene* on either side of the acrobat, from which two female characters watch the proceedings. In contrast to these two female characters, who are quite clearly comic actors in female masks, there are no indications of comic costume in the body or face of the acrobat. Moreover, the acrobat is being rather closely inspected by a comic actor dressed as an old man (the typical comic hero), while a younger comic slave stands behind him, apparently leaning against part of the stage building. On the other side of the acrobat we see a seated Dionysus. While the stage is not enough in itself to associate an acrobat with comedy in particular (since various types of mime would also be possible), the quintessentially *comic* combination of an old master and a younger slave as the primary characters in this scene strongly suggests that this is a depiction of Attic comedy. Given the complete exposure of the acrobat and the close inspection of the old man, this would certainly correspond to an intensely pornographic moment in the play, of the type familiar from *Wasps* 1373–86 (discussed above) and from several other passages of extant comedy (see below).⁴⁰⁵ With this krater we should also compare a slightly later (ca. 350–

401 I use the terms dancer and acrobat interchangeably, as the Greeks seem to have used their term *orchestris* to designate both, or rather women whose performances were really a combination of both activities. The evidence from art for dancers both at private symposia and on the stage is usefully outlined by Hughes 2008, 8–17. For the literary evidence, cf. Xen. *Sym.* 2.1–3.2 in addition to the relevant passages of comedy (*Ach.* 1093; *Thesm.* 1172–1234; *Ran.* 514–16; Metagenes fr. 4 K.-A.). I examine the artistic evidence for real female dancers on the stage below, but I take their function at private symposia as a given.

402 The latter are the "muffled dancers" discussed at Hughes 2008, 15–17.

403 Hughes 2008, 15–16.

404 Lipari 927. Cf. Bieber 1961, fig. 535.

405 I do not agree with the claim of Hughes 2008, 12–13 that the attitude of the scene is astonishment rather than lust (though an attitude of astonishment *and* lust would be quite probable). This is comedy; the old man simply cannot stick his face into the vicinity of all that exposed flesh without *someone* making the requisite jokes, though if the old man really is comically only interested in acrobatics these might easily have come from the slave who stands behind him. While some astonishment at the acrobatic feat is warranted, her nakedness is

35 BC) Paestan skyphos, also attributed to Asteas, which shows a female acrobat (again presented as a real person rather than a comic actor in grotesque costume) balancing on a wheel which is being turned by a comic actor.⁴⁰⁶

Nudity on the comic stage was not restricted to dancers who were performing acrobatic feats. Hughes 1997 has argued convincingly for the comic context of a Tarentine *krater* fragment (ca. 360 BC) which depicts the apparently drunken dance of an essentially naked woman labeled Konnakis (fig. 8).⁴⁰⁷ The only garment in her possession is draped over her arm, hiding only her right elbow from view, and she is painted in the middle of high kick, which exposes her even further. She is wreathed and holding a torch in an apparent parody of the komastic behavior of young (and, in comedy, old) men; this in conjunction with the fact that she looks as if she may be about to fall over motivates the description of her as inebriated. There is no stage, but there is a double door with one of its doors open behind her. This is the basis for the association with comedy: Hughes points out that in Italiote vase paintings such doors typically indicate either a temple or the stage, and that of the two the stage here is by far the likelier option. Moreover, the other two named portraits of the same period and provenance clearly depict actors in comic costume, which would seem to indicate that this is more likely to be a representation of a scene from comedy than of mime.⁴⁰⁸ Other depictions of real women as dancers in a comic context are flattering: their bodies do not have any of the grotesque features typical of comic costume. Konnakis is unusual, then, in that while there is no indication that she is in costume, her body is presented as comically grotesque. There is more (too much) of everything: her breasts are large and hang down,⁴⁰⁹ her pubic hair is quite ample, and in general the various regions of her body are simply heftier than we find in depictions of other female entertainers or in idealized female forms in Greek art. In short, her actual body is like a comic costume. Her face, however, exhibits none of the grotesque features of a comic mask. Hughes argues that the label Konnakis indicates that she was a famous female performer, but I should think comparison with the other vases he cites, where the label is the name of the comic character rather than that of the actor, makes a more convincing case for the idea that Konnakis is the name of a very memorable, grotesque mute female character from a particular comedy. Like many comic characters, her name is descriptive: it suggests the Greek word κόννοϋς ("beard" or "fringe of hair"), which would indicate her untrimmed pubic hair.⁴¹⁰

Heavily veiled dancers, too, are associated with comedy in South Italian vase painting. An Apulian *oenochoe* by the Felton painter (370–60 BC) shows such a woman, who is fully covered

supposed to be part of the spectacle; after all, she could just as easily have performed a handstand in a close-fitting *chiton*.

406 Oxford 1945.43 = *PhV* 96. Cf. Trendall 1987, 2/33 pl. 24f. Marshall 2000 argues from this vase that it is likely that some of the mute female roles in Aristophanic comedy were played by real women.

407 Taranto I.G. 4638. Hughes' article has a plate.

408 These are Berlin 169.7 and a vase in the collection of William Knight Zewadski (Tampa, FL) which is the frontispiece of Green 1994.

409 Cf. Gerber 1978, 208, who finds that the Greek aesthetic for breasts emphasized firmness, shape, and color but not size (if anything the preference seems to have been for smaller breasts).

410 Many comic passages establish the existence of an aesthetic that demanded careful shaping of feminine pubic hair. Cf. especially *Eccl.* 721–24, where the idea that female slaves should only be allowed to sleep with male slaves, not with free men, is closely associated with the injunction that they be forced to wear their pubic hair "shaggy-style". Cf. also *Lys.* 87–89, 151, 825–28; *Ran.* 516; *Eccl.* 13–14. Partial depilation was achieved by either singeing or plucking. Cf. Kilmer 1982.

including the lower half of her face, dancing along with a padded comic actor playing a male character; his movements seem considerably more exaggerated (comic) than hers (fig. 9).⁴¹¹ An Apulian *askos* by the same painter and from the same period depicts a similar scene, where a comic actor playing a male character dances (somewhat more expertly?) between an elaborately veiled female dancer and a satyr, who wears an ivy crown and wields a torch, as part of a *thiasos* which is making its way around the circumference of the vase (fig. 10).⁴¹² Both the veiled dancer and the actor seem to be advancing forward while looking backward, with the result that the actor is looking at the dancer while she is looking away. Like the veiled dancer in the similar *oenochoe*, she is lifting the arm closest to the actor into the air, taking that part of her *enkuklon* with it; she uses her other hand to keep the lower half of her face covered. The same scene also depicts a nude, grotesque female dancer, whom Hughes 2008, 16 compares to Konnakis.⁴¹³ An Attic *hydria* by Polygnotus of the third quarter of the fifth century depicts a muffled dancer, who has put aside her outer covering and is dancing in a skimpy *chitoniskos*, in the company of other female entertainers who are elsewhere in our evidence associated both with the symposium and with the comic stage (two *auletrides*, a naked acrobat, a naked dancer, and a *krotala*-player).⁴¹⁴ This would seem to indicate the probability that such muffled dancers could appear specifically on the Attic stage in the era of Aristophanes; at any rate Elaphion in *Thesmophoriazusae* seems to begin her routine as just such a muffled dancer.

I have discussed the role of the *aulos* player Teredon in final scene of *Thesmophoriazusae* (1172–1231) above, but it remains to consider the role of the female dancer Elaphion ("Little Fawn") in that same scene. As is the case with Teredon, her name suggests her profession, which (in addition to the behavior of Euripides as her bawd) would indicate that she is a slave.⁴¹⁵ Moreover, such animal names are characteristic of prostitutes.⁴¹⁶ Both Elaphion and Teredon are named at the beginning of their scene precisely because their names define their roles.⁴¹⁷ Elaphion, who we learn has received some previous, off-stage instruction from Euripides (1172–73), is instructed by her mistress/master to advance in the direction of the sleeping Scythian archer and dance (διέλθε κάνακάλασον, 174). He immediately wakes and is entranced by the spectacle of a comely female figure dancing seductively nearby; he insists that he does not mind the noise about which he had initially complained at all, and marvels at her grace, comically comparing her to something nimble from his own experience, a flea on a blanket (1176–80). Up until this point Elaphion has been wearing an outer garment (ἱμάτιον) like the muffled dancers familiar from vase painting, but at 1181–83 Euripides instructs her to take it off and sit on the

411 Taranto 29031; cf. Hughes 2008, fig. 11.

412 Ruvo 1402; cf. Bieber 1961, fig. 537.

413 For this part of the vase, cf. Catteruccia 1951, pl. IV.

414 Naples 81398; cf. Matheson 1995, pl. 14A–D. There are actually two dancers in the *chitoniskos*, but it is difficult to tell whether both or only one had previously been practicing as a muffled dancer; the pile on the table might contain one or two *enkukla*. Also depicted are a female *cithara*-player and a Pyrrhic dancer, but we have no textual or artistic evidence specifically associating these two types of female performer with the comic stage.

415 As Austin and Olson 2004, 340 note: "That Elaphion (like Teredon) is a slave and her body available for sale, and that the old woman played by Euripides is her owner and procuress, is apparently so obvious that none of the characters on stage needs to comment explicitly on the fact."

416 Cf. McClure 2003, 21–23; Austin and Olson 2004, 339.

417 Ordinarily the Athenian audience could expect to wait for hundreds of lines before finding out the name of a character, whether slave or free; cf. Olson 1992.

Scythian's knees, under the pretext that in this way he will most easily be able to remove her shoes. Her outer garment removed, the dancer probably stands before the audience wearing a tight-fitting and alluring *chitoniskos*.⁴¹⁸ The Scythian can hardly contain himself, repeating over and over his wholehearted endorsement of Euripides' suggestion that she sit on his knees in this state (1183–84). He gropes her breasts with glee, and Euripides instructs Teredon to play faster while prompting the dancer, who has apparently stood up and begun to dance, to overcome her apparent fear of the Scythian (1186–86). He in turn marvels at her buttocks as she dances and threatens to beat his penis (as if it were a slave) if it does not "stay in" (κλαῦσί γ', ἦν μὴ ἴδον μένης, 1187). The archer is attempting to maintain some level of propriety by keeping it inside his pants (literally, since he is probably dressed like a Scythian).⁴¹⁹ There was probably originally another line after this one in which he continued to address his penis as it moved about inside his trousers, but it has been partially replaced by a versified gloss.⁴²⁰ At any rate, by the next fully preserved line "the situation with (his) dick is fine" (εἶεν· καλὴ τὸ σκῆμα περὶ τὸ πόστιον, 1188). All this talk about what his penis is doing as Elaphion dances may in fact be necessary; if the Scythian is indeed wearing trousers, his leather phallus cannot hang down below the level of the *chiton* as it does for characters in Greek dress. It is difficult to imagine how his arousal can be visually indicated unless his pants are removed or at least lowered.⁴²¹ If the audience cannot *see* his state of arousal, his extended description of it has an important dramatic function. This level of eagerness from the Scythian is exactly what is demanded for the next phase of Euripides' plan: he orders the dancer to get her outer garment, since it is time to go (1189–90), thus placing the archer in a rather desperate plight (akin to that of the men with prominent erections at the end of *Lysistrata*). He begs for a kiss first, which is granted to his inarticulate delight (ὄ ὄ ὄ, παπαπαπαῖ, 1191). Her tongue, he claims, is sweet like Attic honey, and he must sleep with her (1192–93). Euripides initially refuses, then asks for a drachma, then with feigned reluctance takes the archer's bow-case, with his bow in it, as a deposit (1193–98). Completely duped, the archer takes the dancer inside the stage door to have his way with her, affording Euripides the chance to free his kinsman and escape (1199–1209). He reemerges

418 Perhaps this looked something like what the two dancers between the *cithara*-player and the seated *auletris* are wearing on Naples 81398 (an Attic hydria of the third quarter of the fifth century; cf. Matheson 1995, pl. 14A–B). At least one of these dancers has put aside her outer garment, which sits on a low table between her and the *auletris*. Because no one makes comments of the sort which would require Elaphion to be naked, I would argue that she is not; the Scythian can grope her quite well enough if she wears a scanty *chiton*, and this in itself would be erotically appealing to the audience if she is indeed played by a real woman (cf. the obviously erotic tone of the description at Athenaeus 590f of the courtesan Phryne bathing in her close-fitting *chiton*). Sommerstein 1994, 133 thinks that Elaphion is completely naked at this point, while Austin and Olson 2004, 342 do not take a position.

419 For the idea that he is wearing trousers, cf. Dover 1977, 147 and Sommerstein 1994, 133. For the notion that he is attempting to maintain propriety, cf. Austin and Olson 2004, 343.

420 In R and Π68 there is a problematic line between 1187 and 1188: ἀνακόπτῃ καὶ παρακόπτῃ ἀπεψωλημένος (1187b). The line is metrical, and the first two verbs are in the mangled Greek of the Scythian, but the participle is proper Attic Greek, which will not do. At least part of this line, then, represents the versification of an ancient (fourth-century CE or earlier, since that is the date of Π68) commentator's stage direction, which indicated that the Scythian's phallus is at this point moving about and fully erect, with retracted foreskin. Cf. Dover 1977, 147–48; Sommerstein 1994, 234; Austin and Olson 2004, 343.

421 Sommerstein 1994, 133 has him lower his pants, while Austin and Olson 2004, 343 claim that his "phallus is now prominently visible within his clothes, like the massive erections of the Spartan and Athenian ambassadors at *Lys.* 1076–99" without indicating how this would work for a character in non-Greek dress.

extolling the dancer's obliging conduct inside, but is so shocked to find that both the bawd and his prisoner are gone that he sends Elaphion running off to find them, thereby losing his access to her as well (1210–14). If at any point Elaphion is completely naked it will be here, at the very end of the play, when she emerges from inside, where she had engaged in intercourse, and is sent running off the stage and out one of the *parodoi*. Even this, I think, is less than likely, given the continued lack of explicit comments of the sort one finds elsewhere. The rest of the play is humor at the archer's expense, as the chorus misdirect him in his pursuit and curse him once he is gone.

All commentators seem to agree that Elaphion is a scantily clad female, in contrast to the prevailing view that Teredon is male.⁴²² By this I mean that they consider her *character* at least to be a "real" female rather than a male character in drag; whether this "real" female mute character was in fact played by a real female person is another issue altogether, on which I have been able to find no explicit stance in the commentaries of van Leeuwen, Sommerstein, or Austin and Olson. If the *character* Elaphion is genuinely female, the evidence from vase painting points to the probability that she was played by a real woman, who almost certainly would have worn a tight-fitting *chitoniskos* for most of the scene. Because there is no reason not to take the opportunity presented by her dance in front of the Scythian to impress the audience with a display of skilled dance, it is likely enough that such a woman would have been an actual professional dancer, though we cannot infer from the fact that she is named that she was particularly famous. If a real female dancer did play Elaphion, her presence in the final scene would have contributed to the festive, komastic atmosphere at the end of the play.

On the other hand, it is possible that the character of Elaphion is actually meant to be a male in drag: not merely a male actor dressed as a female character, but rather a male actor playing a (young, boyish) male character who is dressed as a female dancer, just as the actor playing Euripides is a male actor playing a male playwright playing an elderly procuress.⁴²³ This would add much to the humor at the expense of the Scythian, who would have been shown onstage groping the fake breasts of a male in drag without being able to tell the difference. The audience may have expected the Scythian to emerge from the stage door, where he had gone to copulate with the dancer, in a rage at his deception; the fact that he is pleased at the obliging ways of Elaphion would on this reading be an utterly absurd and comically unrealistic subversion of the audience's expectations. It cannot mean that he is equally interested in the sexual favors of males (not in itself an insult in comedy), because he calls her Euripides' daughter and therefore still believes that she is female (1210). For the scene to be played this way, the staging of mute female characters as real women would have to have been the rule; if they were sometimes played by padded male actors, there would have been no reliable way to tell an actor playing a mute female from an actor playing a boy playing a mute female in the absence of verbal cues.

The other scene in Aristophanic comedy which must stage a female dancer is *Frogs* 1301–28, during the contest between Aeschylus and Euripides. The contest has moved on to a competition of songs, and Aeschylus has decided to illustrate his point about Euripides' indiscriminating taste in the sources of his inspiration—the songs of prostitutes, drinking-songs by Meletus, and the tunes on the *aulos*, dirges, and dances of Caria (1301–3)—by calling onto the stage an embodied

422 van Leeuwen 1904, 145; Sommerstein 1994, 131; Austin and Olson 2004, 337.

423 To my knowledge, no one has ever suggested this. In the few lines when they are not in the presence of the Scythian, Euripides uses no forms which are inflected for gender in reference to her.

(and, of course, female) Muse of Euripides, who will accompany him as he sings a parody of Euripidean lyric.⁴²⁴ She plays her music by striking together the *krotala*, clappers held one pair in each hand, which Aeschylus dismissively describes as broken bits of pottery (τοῖς ὀστράκοις, 1305).⁴²⁵ The *krotala* were used in what were perceived as Asiatic rites typically associated with women (notably the worship of Cybele) and by female entertainers in symposiastic contexts,⁴²⁶ but they were not usual in tragic lyrics; their association with the Muse of Euripides here is apparently a parody of his *Hypsipyle*, in which the former princess reduced to slavery had played the *krotala* to calm an infant. The implied point, then, may be (once again) that Euripides has reduced tragedy from an elevated, upper-class art form to something low and common (i.e. Hypsipyle the princess is to Hypsipyle the slave as the untainted Muse of Tragedy is to the *krotala*-playing Muse of Euripides, and Euripides himself is the calamity that has so reduced a once great woman). The mute female character who emerges onstage in response to Aeschylus' summons should therefore be suitably abject, probably ugly/grotesque and old; we might imagine a body like that of Konnakis (see above). As soon as she emerges, Dionysus remarks that "this Muse once...didn't do anything associated with Lesbos, no, not at all" (αὐτῆ ποθ' ἦ Μοῦσ' ... οὐκ ἔλεσβιάζεν, οὔ, 1308). The sexual act associated with the women of Lesbos in this period was fellatio (not what we call lesbianism today).⁴²⁷ Dionysus' phrasing, beginning as he does to say that she *once* performed a sexual act, indicates that she is old enough at least to be past her sexual prime; the fact that he corrects himself, reflecting his considered opinion that she had *never*, not even in her youth, performed fellatio, should mean that the figure onstage is very grotesque indeed. All female speaking characters who took the stage in Attic comedy were played by comically (i.e. grotesquely) padded male actors, so that it is difficult to imagine such a padded male actor dressed as the Muse looking so extremely different as to be able to produce a suitably shocking effect. We might instead imagine that a real woman, like Konnakis, could have accomplished this more effectively. Of course placing a real woman onstage to function as an object of revulsion, in contrast to the usual use of mute female characters as objects of erotic desire, is dehumanizing in its own way and to modern sensibilities in extremely poor taste. But such humor being on the Athenian stage in 405 is consistent with the obsession with mercilessly

424 In addition to its explicitly musical associations, "Carian" here may also imply low-class/foreign/slavish, since Caria was one of the major regions from which the Athenians drew their slaves in the fifth and fourth centuries; this would fit well with the reference to prostitutes' songs, which also, of course, would have low-class associations, especially since the pejorative term πόρνη (really closer to English "whore" than the relatively neutral "prostitute") is used. If the contemporary tragedian Meletus is meant rather than the sixth century composer of love-songs, the sandwiching of "the drinking-songs of Meletus" will be a throw-away bit of *onomasti komoidein*.

425 For the *krotala*, cf. Mathiesen 1999, 163–72.

426 An Attic red-figure hydria by Polygnotus from the third quarter of the fifth century (Naples 81398) shows a variety of female entertainers practicing their arts. The woman playing the *krotala*, who is clothed distinctively, stands to the left of a naked acrobat, a clothed, standing *auletris*, and a naked dancer (in that order moving away from her) and to the right of a Pyrrhic dancer, a seated, clothed *auletris*, two dancers in *chitons*, at least one of whom has put aside a heavy covering (*enkuklon*) like that used by the muffled dancers, a clothed, standing *cithara*-player, and finally (on the far left of the scene) a single male youth who watches the scene while leaning on a walking-stick. Their inclusion in this group suggests that *krotala*-players, too, could entertain at the symposium and on the comic stage. The *krotala*-player appears to be accompanying the Pyrrhic dancer (a woman dancing in hoplite gear), who stands to her left. Cf. Matheson 1995, pl. 14A–D.

427 There could also be an association with Aeolic lyric, which is quite fitting if (as is likely) her accompaniment on the *krotala* is intentionally poorly suited to the Aeolic meter of the following song.

mocking women and sex workers in particular who had grown old and lost their charms that we find in the fourth-century plays of Aristophanes, *Ecclesiazusae* and *Wealth*.

The song Aeschylus sings to parody the choral lyrics of Euripides exploits the presence onstage of this grotesque female body, which accompanies his singing with its intentionally cacophonous music, through a number of sexual innuendos, some of which are perversions or verbatim (out of context) quotations of actual Euripidean lines. These address the audience graphically as penetrators of the Muse, contributing greatly to the sense of revulsion that they are meant to feel for Euripides' lyric. Of course apostrophes in the vocative case are common in lyric poetry, and it is therefore not immediately apparent that it is the members of the audience who are being addressed in the first line as halcyons (1309). But this is made clearer when the halcyons are said to be "dipping the skin of (their) dewy feathers in wet drops" (τέγγουσαι νοτίοις πτερῶν / ῥάνισι χροά δροσιζόμεναι, 1311–12); the word for "feather" used here (πτερόν) is a common comic metaphor for the penis with a readily intelligible parallel in Greek medical practice.⁴²⁸ References to vaginal excretions (the wet drops) are exceedingly common in comedy, not to mention that "drop" (ῥανίς) can also refer to semen.⁴²⁹ Moreover, birds rarely touch anything with the *skin* (χροά) of their feathers; the innuendo "you halcyons who dip the skin of your cocks in wet drops" almost makes better sense than the non-sexual reading.

The audience will probably detect the sexual innuendo by the fourth line of the song (1312), which concludes the invocation of halcyons. If any of them have yet to grasp that it is *they* who are being addressed, however, that situation will be remedied in the next animal metaphor: "and you ranks who in that roofed nook r-o-o-o-o-o-o-oll around with your fingers/dicks the woof that's been stretched on a vertical shaft, the care of the singing shuttle/cock" (αἱ θ' ὑπωρόφιοι κατὰ γωνίας / εἰειειειελίσσετε δακτύλοις φάλαγγες / ἰστότονα πηνίσματα, / κερκίδος αἰδοῦ μελέτας, 1313–16). Obviously the non-sexual signified of these lines are spiders, though the word spider (which is presumably without sexual potential and which in any case would not help the audience to identify themselves as Aeschylus' addressees) is never used. Instead they are called ranks, *phalanxes*, a word properly indicating large groups of men arranged in orderly rows, like the men sitting in the Theater of Dionysus.⁴³⁰ I think the potential vaginal imagery inherent in the nook (γωνία) and in the notion of the ranks of spiders/men being under a roof (ὑπωρόφιοι) is straightforward, as is the sexual potential of a verb (ἐλίσσειν) meaning "to roll around" when used in this context. δάκτυλος (finger) fits well here, since it is a phallic metaphor in comedy.⁴³¹ ἰστός designates anything set upright (a ship's mast or the beam of a loom), which should be more than enough to give it phallic associations here. κερκίς may refer both to the weaver's shuttle (here, on the non-sexual level) and to various kinds of pins, rods, and dowels of which the potential phallic associations should be obvious; moreover, the similar word κέρκος

428 The Hippocratic gynecological texts indicate that it was standard practice to use a πτερόν soaked in various drugs as the delivery mechanism for vaginal medication. For the extended argument for this use of πτερόν in comedy, which is much more common than the handful of passages collected by Henderson 1991, 128 would indicate, cf. p. 85 n. 282.

429 Cf. *LSJ* s. v.

430 If *Frogs* had been produced later, in an era with a rounded theater, I would have been tempted to suggest that κερκίς, too, suggests that the audience is being addressed. This is a proper Greek term for a wedge-shaped division of the theater's seating (Latin *cuneus*), first used in our extant texts by the comic poet Alexis (fr. 42 K.-A.).

431 Henderson 1991, 114–15.

(properly "tail") is common slang for the phallus both in and outside of comedy.⁴³²

The sexual innuendo of Aeschylus' parody continues with a third animal metaphor. Unlike the first two, this is not framed as a vocative address really meant for the audience, since the animal in question is going to be a metaphor for the vulva. Recall that the previous line had ended with a reference to the site of coitus ("the woof that's been stretched on a vertical shaft, the care of the singing shuttle/cock"). When Aeschylus follows this with a "where" (ἵνα), he is still talking about coitus: "where the pipe/dick-loving dolphin/vulva used to cavort with the prows and their dark blue rams" (ἵν' ὁ φίλαυλος ἔπαλλε δελ- / φῖς πρόραις κυανεμβόλοις, 1317–18). Hilariously, despite the fact that these two lines are quoted *verbatim* from Euripides' *Electra* 435–37, in their new context they constitute a perfectly intelligible sexual innuendo. The word dolphin (δελφίς) does not have sexual associations in Greek, but a similar set of words—δέλφαξ, δελφακίς, and δελφάκιον, all of which refer literally to pigs—are comic metaphors for the vulva.⁴³³ More specifically, they are metaphors for the mature, hairy vulva, in contrast to the young or depilated χοῖρος ("piglet"), which would strengthen the case that the Muse of Euripides is represented by a grotesque, Konnakis-like figure with ample pubic hair (not the Greek ideal of beauty). The phallic symbolism of the *aulos*, which is the foundation for the persistent association of the *auletris* with oral sex (see above), endows a word that literally means "fond of the *aulos*" (φίλαυλος) with sexual potential, especially since it is modifying a metaphor for the vulva. This dick-loving hairy vulva / *aulos*-loving dolphin is cavorting, at the site of coitus already described in the spider metaphor, with prows that have dark blue rams (πρόραις κυανεμβόλοις). ἔμβολος / ἔμβολον designates "anything pointed so as to be easily thrust in" (*LSJ*'s first definition) and therefore both the ram of a trireme and, via an easy comic metaphor, the phallus.⁴³⁴ κύανος ("dark blue") easily approximates the color of a fully erect phallus, and the innuendo is therefore quite explicit. In accordance with the fact that there is only one Muse of Euripides but an entire audience of unwilling lovers, this metaphor pairs a singular signifier of "vulva" (φίλαυλος δελφίς) with a plurality of phalloi (πρόραις κυανεμβόλοις). Note that the interpretation of this song as an extended series of sexualized animal metaphors actually makes sense of Aeschylus' use of "where" (ἵνα) at 1317, which is otherwise completely nonsensical and motivated only by a desire to quote from *Electra* exactly.

Aeschylus' gift for sexual innuendo peters out at the end of his song, and he therefore concludes his parody by throwing out some nonsensical words and phrases which he considers characteristic of Euripidean lyric. These are all in the accusative case, which makes it virtually impossible to understand them grammatically in relation to anything that has preceded. It is just possible that the first two—oracles (μαντεῖα) and race-tracks (σταδίους) in line 1319—could be construed as accusatives of extent of space, so that the vulva/dolphin is said to have been wont to cavort with blue-rammed prows/penises over a distance comprising some number of oracles (here taking μαντεῖα as the physical seats of oracles rather than their pronouncements) and race-tracks, which would be vigorous activity indeed. At any rate it is difficult to make anything coherent of "sparkle of the vine's blossom" (οἰάνθαζ γάνος ἀμπέλου, 1320) or "toil-ending tendrils of the grape-bunch" (βότρυος ἔλικα παυσίπωνον, 1321), both of which seem to parody Euripides' *Hypsipyle* (fr. 765). At least these lines might prepare the audience for the renewal of the parody

432 Henderson 1991, 128.

433 Henderson 1991, 132; 146; 197.

434 *LSJ* s. v. Henderson 1991, 120–21.

of that play in particular, if they can recognize such a brief reference (which seems doubtful). When Aeschylus sings "throw your arms around me, child" (περίβαλλ', ὦ τέκνον, ὠλένας, 1322) he may be making a reference to a scene in which Hypsipyle was reunited with one or more of her sons.⁴³⁵ The Muse, apparently acting the part of Hypsipyle, then throws her arm around someone; this is most likely Dionysus, for the reasons outlined by Sommerstein 1996, 276 and also (perhaps most importantly) because this would influence him, as judge of the contest, away from Euripides, whose lyrics have been embodied in the grotesque figure impinging on his personal space. The ensuing jokes about feet (1323–24) will of course play on the double meaning (metrical feet and the physical feet of the Muse), as will Aeschylus' indignant question asking whether Euripides dares to find fault with his μέλη (lyric songs) when he makes such μέλη himself (his lyric songs, but also the physical limbs of the embodied Muse) according the twelve tricks of Cyrene (that is, in the manner of a prostitute, referring both to Euripides' practice of drawing inspiration from low sources and to the embodied Muse, who will be perceived as a prostitute who has seen better days, like a queen who has been reduced to a concubine slave or nurse).⁴³⁶ At this point the scandalous Muse of Euripides will leave the stage without prompting any comment, unless the first part of Aeschylus' ensuing parody of Euripidean monody, which describes a terrible monster who (as we find out many lines in) is in reality a woman who had stolen a rooster (1331–43), is also taken initially to describe this Muse, who might then actually be doused with water at 1341 and thus driven off the stage.

Part 4.4: Mute Female Characters Other Than *Auletrides* and Dancers

In South Italian vase painting the real women who are associated with the comic stage and with actors in grotesque costume are almost always entertainers of a specific type (*auletrides* or dancers).⁴³⁷ There is therefore no direct, specific evidence from art that other types of mute female characters were played by real women. Nonetheless, there is clearly a fundamental similarity between mute female roles that represent skilled (musical, or dancing) entertainers and those that represent female companions of at least textually ambiguous occupation, especially when characters in each category serve similar functions within the play and are similarly exposed before the audience and subjected to the crude comments and manipulations of the actors. Once the idea that *some* of the mute female characters of comedy were played by real women is accepted, the simplest possible explanation of their staging requires that *most* or even *all* of them were played in this way, unless something about the specific scene seems to demand an unusual staging. I therefore argue that many if not all of these unspecified mute female roles were also played by real (slave) women. Even if this argument is not accepted, however, the exposure of these characters (played in that case by padded male actors) still contributes to the overall association of comic slave characters with all kinds of bodily humor and sexual humor in particular.

Sexually objectified female characters are not always completely mute; the daughters of the Megarian at *Acharnians* 729–835 get one line of human speech spoken in unison at the

435 Thus Sommerstein 1996, 276, who states that this is the case with apparent confidence. I am not sure on what basis he makes the claim; Dover, 1993, 356 knew nothing about it.

436 Cyrene was the name of a famous courtesan, and her twelve tricks were presumably sexual techniques or positions. Cf. Dover 1993, 357; Sommerstein 1996, 276–77.

437 Konnakis dances but hardly seems like a *professional* dancer, and therefore may be the only exception.

beginning of their scene, affirming that they want to be sold into slavery rather than starve (πεπρᾶσθαι, πεπρᾶσθαι, 735). Immediately after that, their father, supposing that no one would be willing to buy them as slaves and take a loss, decides to disguise them as piglets (χοῖροι), a word that (like English "pussy") both designates an animal and quite frequently serves as a pejorative term for the vulva. From here on the daughters make only oinking sounds, faithfully playing their part as actual piglets in the face of numerous sexual jokes revolving around the obscene meaning of "piglet" in Greek. These jokes are well-recognized and may be understood from following along in either of the up-to-date English commentaries, and for that reason I will not dwell on them here.⁴³⁸ It is worth noting, however, that the reduction of these female characters' speech to the oinking of piglets allows them to function as effectively mute sexual objects in much the same way as completely silent characters; moreover, the connection with slave status is explicit, since the whole scene occupies the moment at which they are being sold into slavery. Their transformation into χοῖροι at this precise point emphasizes that both sexual exploitation and concomitant silencing are integral parts of the experience of slavery.

Another scene involving sexually objectified mute female characters comes at the end of *Acharnians* (1197–1235), where Dikaiopolis emerges onto the stage in the company of two such women. Nothing in the text indicates whether they were dancers, *auletrides*, or simply prostitutes, but he will have obtained them from the symposium to which he had been invited by the priest of Dionysus (1085–94), which we know featured both common prostitutes and dancers (1091–93). In any event, they represent visually the sexual benefits of peace in contrast to the deprivations of war as embodied in the already present Lamachus, who has been injured ingloriously while attempting to leap over a ditch in the course of his military duties. Dikaiopolis' first utterance on reentering the stage expresses inarticulate surprise and delight at the firmness of their breasts (ἀτταταῖ ἀτταταῖ / τῶν τιθίων, ὡς σκληρὰ καὶ κυδώνια, 1197–98). He then commands each of them to kiss him in turn, since he has won the drinking competition in the Pitcher Feast of the Anthesteria. As Lamachus complains of his injuries, Dikaiopolis "complains" that his female companions are kissing and (erotically) biting him. When the general asks his friends to grab his leg to help him, the comic hero predictably asks the rest of his threesome to grab him by the middle of his phallus. Such back-and-forth continues with a verbal parody: Lamachus experiences vertigo (σκοτοδινῶ, 1219), while his more peaceful and therefore more fortunate counterpart, changing the word by one letter, gets to do some fucking in the dark (σκοτοβινῶ, 1221). Here, as elsewhere, the sexually objectified female slaves function both as a concrete example of the benefits of the comic hero's success and as visible evidence of his rejuvenation. However, there is no language of the sort which would imply that they are completely naked. There are no comments about their pubic regions or buttocks, and the comment about their breasts relates to texture rather than appearance. We should therefore imagine that these characters are played by real women in some degree of dress; perhaps they wear the *chitoniskos*, like Elaphion. The audience imagines that Dikaiopolis will indeed have his way with them later, and this is enough for them to fulfill their symbolic function. Nothing so transgressive as true female nudity needs to be staged.

Mute female characters fulfill a similar function at the end of *Knights* (1384–1408). The sausage-seller, who had occupied the role of the comic hero for most of the play, has ceded that place to the old master Demos, whom he has "boiled down" (in a pun on the similarity between

438 Sommerstein 1980 and Olson 2002.

the Greek words "People" and "Fat") and thus rejuvenated, figuratively restoring Athens itself to its former glory. Demos had actually emerged onstage in the mask of a younger man to illustrate this rejuvenation at 1331. Such comic rejuvenation is frequently demonstrated and celebrated sexually, and for this reason the faithful slave offers his master first "a boy with good testicles" whom he may "use as a folding chair" (have intercourse with) if he likes and next a pair of thirty-year peace treaties, or Spondai, who will actually be mute female characters (1384–89). The offer of the boy is unparalleled in this kind of scene; usually only mute *female* characters are used as symbols of comic victory and rejuvenation. Indeed, Demos dismisses the offer of the boy by way of a reference to pederasty being old-fashioned (1387), after which we hear no more about him. By contrast, his immediate reaction to the emergence of the female Spondai is exactly the same as the initial reaction to the appearance of the alluring Nightingale at *Birds* 667: "Sweet upscale Zeus, how beautiful!" (ὦ Ζεῦ πολυτίμηθ', ὡς καλαί). This should probably indicate that the Spondai are played by ostensibly high-class (read: expensive) prostitutes of the type more often called *hetairai*. Like the Nightingale, they are probably alluringly clad but not naked, since their specific body parts are not held up for commentary. Demos merely asks if he can "satisfy (his) thirty-year itch" with them, playing on their symbolic status as thirty-year treaties to create a sexual euphemism (1390–91).⁴³⁹ Even this question receives no response, for immediately he goes on to ask where the sausage-seller got them, to which it is replied that the deceptive rival slave/politician Paphlagon had kept them hidden inside, presumably for his own exclusive benefit (1392–95). The alluring Spondai, then, represent not only rejuvenation but also, quite explicitly, the conquest of the antagonist, from whom they have been taken as spoils. After this no further mention of them is made; they and the boy will follow silently when Demos and the sausage-seller leave the stage at the end of the play.

When at *Peace* 520 Trygaeus and his panhellenic chorus finally manage to unearth the goddess from the cave in which she has been hidden, she emerges (in statue form) onto the stage in the company of two handmaidens, who embody the abstractions Harvest (Opora) and Attendance at Festivals (Theoria). These mute female characters are subjected to the gaze of the audience and characters, verbally exposed, and manhandled periodically throughout the remainder of the play. Hughes 2008, 20 argues that they wore the costume of brides, and this does indeed seem the most likely option for Opora in her appearance in the final scene of the play (1329–59), where the chorus supply the Hymen song for the wedding procession. But Opora's last appearance prior to this was her entrance into the house to be bathed in preparation for the wedding (855), and we should therefore suspect that what she wears in the final scene may not be the attire in which she was first discovered in a cave. The slave's insinuation that Opora and Theoria are prostitutes (848–49) does not fit well with the idea that they are already in wedding attire when he first encounters them. Possibly when they are first unearthed they are wearing the close-fitting *chitoniskos*; at any rate they are clothed, for we find none of the explicit comments associated with full exposure until after Theoria's disrobing begins hundreds of lines later. Trygaios does spend an inordinate amount of time *sniffing* Theoria when she first emerges (525–38),⁴⁴⁰ and the climax of the long list of pleasant smells she emanates is filled with vaginal

439 I follow Sommerstein 1997, 139 in using the translation "satisfy my thirty-year itch" for κατατριακοντουτῖσαι.

440 Grammar and logic require ταύτης at *Peace* 530 to refer to Theoria, since it is she whom Trygaeus had been smelling at 524–26. Nonetheless, Festival (Theoria) smells not only like things associated with religious festivals (entertaining guests, the Dionysia, *auloi*, tragedies, the songs of Sophocles, and the lines of Euripides) but also like things associated with Harvest (Opora), the other handmaiden of Peace (harvest, ivy, wine-

imagery, which suggests that by that point his nose has gravitated toward that region of her body.⁴⁴¹ This does not require her actual exposure (which at any rate must wait until later), but he may attempt to lift her *chiton* slightly to get a better whiff.

Later in the play Theoria is quite clearly made to disrobe while onstage. At 891–93 the slave jokingly explains Theoria's dark pubic hair as the result of smoke, which requires him to be able to see her pubic hair in the first place. Theoria, then, is close to naked at this point in the play. Her disrobing probably begins at 878–80;⁴⁴² when the slave jokingly explains his apparent groping of her as setting up a tent for his penis at the Isthmian Games (this last in itself a reference to her pubic area), he may actually pull up whatever garment she is wearing in a tent-like fashion, notionally exposing her vulva to himself, his master, and the audience.⁴⁴³ This will have left her garments in a disorderly state, prompting the immediately following obligatory joke at the expense of the notorious cunnilinctor Aripkrades, who at this point is assumed to be positively bursting with desire for her. When that is accomplished, the master clearly orders her to put her clothes on the ground (ἄγε δὴ σὺ κατάθου πρῶτα τὴν σκευὴν χαμαί, 886) before bidding the members of the *boule* and the *prytaneis* (who would have been sitting in the front rows) to look at her, to examine how many *good things* he has brought them, so that they may lift her legs in the air and have intercourse with her (888–90).⁴⁴⁴ After the jokes about her "oven" which explain her pubic hair as soot, Trygaeus embarks on a lengthy description of various athletic activities, all of which are euphemisms for sexual activities, which the *boule* will be able to perform with Theoria on the next day (894–904). Throughout all of this she must remain naked onstage, and that will have added a great deal to the transgression of the scene; Trygaeus probably uses her as a prop to illustrate some of the graphic actions he is describing. Finally he hands her off to one of the *prytaneis*, whose eagerness to take her is mocked (905–8). At some point during the following songs she will disappear. Like the *auletris* in *Wasps*, after she is exposed fully she cannot remain in the view of the audience for any lengthy period. She is never seen again, though her companion, Opora, who is never disrobed onstage, is present in the final

strainers, and bleating flocks). The ability of one of the pair of women to stand for what both together represent (and indeed, for the benefits of Peace herself) at this initial stage, when their respective roles have not yet been fully established, is not really surprising.

441 It seems natural that the actor playing Trygaios would mime sniffing from time to time during the fourteen lines of the play devoted to what Theoria smells like (525–38). The tendency to sexually exploit mute female characters like Theoria for comic effect is well established, and indeed, she will be the victim of extended sexual attention later (871–908). Therefore I do not think it unreasonably imaginative to suggest that Trygaios, who will have been sniffing her for eleven lines already by 536, finishes by sniffing her crotch and that this motivates the vaginal imagery in 536–37. For a discussion of this imagery, cf. below in the section on imagined slaves (since this vaginal imagery frames a reference to an *imagined* drunk female slave, quite apart from the fact that it is created while he is sniffing an actual mute female).

442 The slave makes a comment about her posterior at 875–76, but this hardly requires her to be nude (unlike the description of her pubic hair).

443 Regardless of whether a padded male actor or a real woman plays Theoria, the effect of this exposure does not depend on the audience's ability to discern the details of her (real or painted) vulva. Hughes 2008, 19–20 is certainly correct in his criticism of this aspect of the scholarship, but he does not consider that for the characters onstage to describe her pubic hair it is necessary that *they* be able to see it.

444 He actually says "so that you can celebrate the second day of the Apaturia" (κἄτ' ἀγαγεῖν ἀνάρρυσιν, 890), where the word for that day (ἀνάρρυσις, which refers to the drawing back of a sacrificial victim's head) is apparently taken in reference to ejaculation (as if from ἀναρρεῖν). Cf. Sommerstein 2005, 175. This is typical of the way Theoria's sexual exploitation goes hand in hand with her symbolic status.

scene, where she marries the comic hero.

Both *Peace* (1316–59) and *Birds* (1720–65) end in weddings, a variation on the usual komastic atmosphere. In each case the bride of the comic hero is symbolic: in *Peace* she is Opora/Harvest, an embodiment of the abundance of food which is only available in times of peace, a fitting reward for the hero who has put an end to the war between Greek city-states. In *Birds* she is Basileia, or kingship, the embodiment of the power of Zeus himself, symbolizing Peisetaerus' conquest of the gods and complete dominion over all things. Both of these mute characters were probably played by real females, but logic demands that they be dressed in wedding attire for the final Hymen song. They are not at any point physically exposed like some other mute female characters, nor are they imagined as slaves when the wedding song is being sung. Basileia in particular is never the object of any sexual jokes, so there is no basis for arguing that she should be played by someone nude or scantily clad.⁴⁴⁵ She could even be played by a statue quite easily.

Opora, on the other hand, is the object of sexual jokes made by Trygaeus' slave earlier in *Peace* (848–70) and of others made by the chorus and by Trygaeus himself in the Hymen song at the end of the play (1329–59). Some of these are relatively tame: Trygaeus sings about how she will lie with him once they get to the countryside (1329–31), and the chorus refer to her sexual favors as "good things" (1333–34). Others are relatively intense: the chorus ask themselves twice what they will do to her, then twice answer by repeating their intention to "harvest" her (1337–40),⁴⁴⁶ an obvious sexual euphemism when used with reference to a mute female character who embodies Harvest.⁴⁴⁷ Again, the chorus frankly describes Trygaeus' penis as big and thick, and her "fig" (vulva) as sweet,⁴⁴⁸ an adjective which is taken literally by Trygaeus' response: "You will say so, when you eat it and drink much wine!" (φήσεις γ', ὅταν ἐσθίης / οἶνόν τε πῆς πολύν, 1354–55).⁴⁴⁹ The chorus respond to the intimation that they are cunnilinguists with equanimity, merely repeating the Hymen chant (Ὑμήν, Ὑμέναι' ὦ, twice at 1355–56), and so Trygaeus concludes the play by first saying goodbye to the men in the chorus and the audience, then by telling them that if they come with him, they will eat flat-cakes (κᾶν ξυνέπησθέ μοι, / πλακοῦντας ἔδεσθε, 1358–59). This last is yet another invitation to perform cunnilingus on his bride, probably notionally extended beyond the chorus to the audience itself.⁴⁵⁰ Though Opora is certainly sexually objectified, there are no indications that she is physically exposed. Moreover, there is good reason to think that the sexual jests in this particular scene reflect the prominent

445 Dunbar 1995, 751 states merely that she "is played by a mute, and presumably looks beautiful", an admirably succinct handling of a sometimes overcomplicated aspect of the scene.

446 As one harvests wine-grapes (τρυγᾶν, playing on Trygaeus' name).

447 Cf. Sommerstein 2005, 195; Olson 1998, 317.

448 As Olson 1998, 318 notes, there can be no doubt in this context but that σῦκον refers to Opora's genitalia. Cf. Henderson 1991, 135. Sommerstein's commentary is silent on this point.

449 To my knowledge no one has ever commented on this rather obvious cunnilingus joke. Though it is not at all necessary to know this for the joke to make sense, there is some indication that wine (οἶνος) is among the comic metaphors for vaginal secretion. Cf. part 3.5 above (p. 85 n. 277).

450 For the flat-cake (πλακοῦς) as a metaphor for the vulva, cf. Henderson 1991, 144 (though he omits this passage). Again, there is no intimation in any of the commentators that this is a cunnilingus joke, but given the parallels listed by Henderson for πλακοῦς as a metaphor for the vulva and the immediately preceding context, there can hardly be any doubt that this is the case. That three of the eleven extant Aristophanic comedies (nearly a third of them!) end with cunnilingus jokes surely says something about the desirability of the effect such jokes had on the audience. Cf. the final lines of *Eccl.* and *Plut.* as discussed in Chapters Three and Two respectively.

role such jokes played in real life wedding processions.⁴⁵¹ If so, they function rather differently from similar jokes at the expense of mute female characters in other scenes.

Lysistrata, too, is noteworthy for its use of mute female characters who have been invested with symbolic meaning, though these are somewhat unusual in that they are manhandled mostly by speaking *female* characters, whose treatment of them is not substantially different from that of the male characters who expose and comment upon mute females in other plays. *Lysistrata* is also the only extant comedy where we find such characters in the first scene. These are the two women from Boeotia and Corinth, who arrive onstage in the company of the Spartan woman Lampito. Lampito herself, being a speaking character, must be played by a padded male actor.⁴⁵² Her companions, however, are silent characters who are taken as symbolic representations of the corresponding regions of Greece, and they are therefore probably played by real women. Certainly the actors treat them in much the same way as other mute female characters are treated:

Λυ. ἡδὶ δὲ ποδαπή 'σθ' ἡ νεᾶνις ἡτέρα; (85)

Λα. πρέσβειρά τοι ναὶ τὸ σιῶ Βοιωτία
ἴκει ποθ' ὑμέ.

Μυ. νῆ Δί' ὡς Βοιωτία
καλόν γ' ἔχουσα τὸ πεδίον.

Κα. καὶ νῆ Δία
κομψότατα τὴν βληχῶ γε παρατετιλμένη.

Λυ. τίς δ' ἡτέρα παῖς;

Λα. χαῖα ναὶ τὸ σιῶ, (90)
Κορινθία δ' αὔ.

Κα. χαῖα νῆ τὸν Δία
δήλη 'στὶν οὔσα ταυταγὶ κἀντευθενί.

Lysistrata: Who and from what nation is this other young woman? Lampito: She comes to you as a Boeotian ambassador, by the two gods! Myrrhine: By Zeus, she's like Boeotia, since she's got a fine plain! Kalonike: And, by Zeus, she's very well-groomed, with her pennyroyal plucked! Lys.: And who's your other slave? Lam.: A noble one, by the two gods, and a Corinthian to boot! Kal.: She's a noble/attractive/gaping one all right, by Zeus, especially here and here!
Lysistrata 85–92

Lysistrata's description of the Boetian as a "young woman" (νεᾶνις) is interesting, since this is apparently an elevated, poetic term that can designate a fully respectable person (quite unusual in reference to a mute female character). It is surely ironic, or else the point of this line and the next is to mock high-flown tragic diction.⁴⁵³ Lampito responds by granting her the lofty title of "female ambassador" (πρέσβειρα, 86), a poetic feminine form of πρέσβυς which outside of comedy describes personages of the highest dignity.⁴⁵⁴ Comic usage, of course, tends to use such grandiloquent words ironically; thus in its only other comic appearance πρέσβειρα is used of an

451 Cf. Sommerstein 2005, 195.

452 This may lend some comic effect to Lysistrata's groping of her (fake) breasts at 83–84.

453 νεᾶνις is found only at Euripides' *Andromache* 192 and paratragically at *Thesmophoriazusa* 1030.

454 The term πρέσβειρα is used of the goddess Hestia in one of the Homeric hymns to Aphrodite (5.32) and of the representative of the Furies in Orestes' trial on the Areopagus in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Tauris* (963).

eel to ridiculous effect.⁴⁵⁵ Myrrhine takes a comic tone more conventional for describing a mute female character, comparing the Boeotian woman to her country itself in that both feature an alluring plain/pubic region.⁴⁵⁶ She is joined by Kalonike, whose reference to the Boeotian woman's pubic depilation may also allude to a stereotype about the loose morals of Boeotian women.⁴⁵⁷ Again in these lines we face the fact that there is no believable way for a character to comment on the specifics of another character's pubic hair without the first character being able to see it. I argue that both the Boeotian and the Corinthian arrive onstage dressed (possibly in the *chitoniskos*) rather than naked, since they will be onstage for nearly two hundred lines (77–253), of which only a small portion is devoted to comments about them. At 87 Myrrhine must pull up the Boeotian's garment so that her pubic region is at least notionally exposed, and it should remain so for two lines, until the end of Kalonike's remark about her depilation (88–89). Now that the comic mode in which mute characters are exposed and subjected to comment and manipulation has been activated, there is no more pretense (ironic or not) that these women are respectable; when Lysistrata's attention turns next to the Corinthian, she calls her a slave (παῖς, 90), in stark contrast to her previous description of the Boeotian as a young woman (νεῦνις).⁴⁵⁸ Lampito introduces her as a Corinthian and again assigns to her an honorific epithet, the Laconian adjective χάϊος, which can indicate both nobility and physical attractiveness. On one level Lampito clearly intends the former, but her introduction is also the set-up for Kalonike's joke, which either plays on the latter ("she clearly *is* physically attractive, here and here!") as Henderson and Sommerstein think or, more explicitly, takes χάϊος as related to χαίνειν (= χάσκειν), a word meaning "to gape" which is used in comedy in reference to bodily cavities.⁴⁵⁹ In the latter (as I think, more likely) case, when she says "here and here" Kalonike will point out the vagina and anus of the Corinthian woman, which will require here to pull up her garment as had happened to the Boeotian woman a few lines before. At this point the fun at the expense of these two mute characters is finished; they are allowed to recover themselves and are not mentioned again for the duration of the scene.

More usual is *Lysistrata's* use of the abstract concept of Reconciliation (Διαλλαγή), embodied in the person of a mute female character at the end of the play (1114–88), to unite not only the audience but also the male characters (ambassadors from Athens and Sparta entrusted with the task of making a peace) in the shared experience of erotic desire. She is called onstage by Lysistrata herself for exactly the latter purpose, being instructed first to take hold of the Spartans and then of the Athenians and lead them over; if they do not offer their hands, she should grab them by their erect phalloi (1119–21), a detail which recalls Philocleon's similar

455 *Acharnians* 883.

456 Myrrhine's comparison of this Boeotian woman to the land of Boeotia itself is facilitated by the coincidence that the words for "Boeotian woman" and "Boeotia" are identical in Greek. For πεδῖον ("plain") as slang for the female pubic region, see Henderson 1991, 136.

457 Pennyroyal, here a metaphor for pubic hair (cf. Henderson 1991, 135), is counted among the plants which were held in antiquity to be effective contraceptives. Is this line then a joke about Boeotian women's readiness for sex? Possibly, but pennyroyal as an agricultural product is connected with Boeotia in the *Acharnians* (861, 869, 874).

458 Of course this also has interesting ideological implications for the denigration of Boeotia/Thebes and Corinth as really being slaves, rather than allies, of Sparta.

459 Henderson 1987, 78; Sommerstein 1990, 160. Willems 1919, vol. 2, 420–21 anticipates my argument for a perceived connection between χάϊος and χαίνειν/χάσκειν. For χάσκειν in the sexual sense (often but not always of the male anus), cf. Henderson 1991, 211.

instruction to the *auletris* at *Wasps* 1341–44. Just as is the case with that *auletris*, Reconciliation will eventually be exposed for the characters and audience, but there is no need for her to be in this state at this early stage. The lack of any comment about her body until 1148 should probably indicate some state of dress, perhaps the *chitoniskos*. At that point the head of the Spartan delegates makes a comment about how fine her buttocks are; while this does not strictly require them to be exposed, we should probably imagine that the Spartan has become more and more visibly interested in Reconciliation throughout Lysistrata's rather long-winded and scolding speech, in which she lists the wrongs done to the Athenians by the Spartans, and that at 1148, unable to restrain himself any longer, he lifts her garment. Likewise when she continues with the corresponding list of the wrongs done to the Spartans by the Athenians, the Athenian delegate's amorous interest in Reconciliation should be piqued visibly. When at the end of that speech the Spartan says "I've never seen a finer/more gaping woman" (οὔπα γυναῖκ' ὄπωπα χαιωτέραν, 1157), it is by no means clear whether he using the Laconian word *χάϊος* in its proper sense to mean "noble" in reference to Lysistrata, since she has been scolding the Athenians, or with the sexual innuendo discussed above to refer once again to Reconciliation. If the former, it is the Athenian who exposes Reconciliation again by lifting her garment in the next line, when he claims quite explicitly that he has never seen a finer vulva (ἐγὼ δὲ κύσθον γ' οὐδέπω καλλίονα, 1158). But the latter option is probably more likely; in that case it will be the Spartan once again who pulls up her garment at 1157, and it will remain in that state for the Athenian's comment in the following line. *χάσκειν* in its comic sexual sense almost always refers to the anus,⁴⁶⁰ and we would therefore have another Spartan comment about her posterior juxtaposed with an Athenian comment about her vulva, which would anticipate the division of her body on which they agree at 1162–72. In the next line Lysistrata asks them why they continue to fight when many good things are present (ὕπηργμένων γε πολλῶν κάγαθῶν, 1159), referring to the sexual opportunities presented by Reconciliation with typically Aristophanic phrasing.⁴⁶¹ She asks why they do not reconcile, by her choice of words indicating that this is synonymous with having sex with Reconciliation (τί δ' οὐ δηλλάγητε, 1161).⁴⁶² This conceit continues as the Greek world is mapped onto Reconciliation's body: the Spartan and the Athenian discuss which regions of Greece each *polis* will control and, in exactly the same words and at the same time, with which regions of Reconciliation's body each will disport himself. Given the intensity and wide range of the focus on her body in these lines, she is probably completely naked by this point. Most likely Lysistrata herself disrobes her at 1159, thus accentuating her point that many good things (that is, sexual experiences) are available to them. The Spartan first agrees to come to terms as long as he can have "this circular thing" (τῷγκυκλον...τοῦτο, 1162–63); the Athenian, however, does not find his gesture sufficiently specific, and asks which of Reconciliation's orifices he means. The Spartan, speaking for his people, says that they want Pylos, which they have been desiring and feeling over for a long time (τὰν Πύλον, / τᾶσπερ πάλαι δεόμεθα καὶ βλιμάδδομες, 1163–64). Pylos, of course, was a region of the Peloponnese at which the Athenians had established

460 Cf. the discussion of the first scene of *Lysistrata* above.

461 In Aristophanic comedy, the neuter plural substantive of *ἀγαθός* paired with an adjective indicating abundance (πάντα, ὄσα, πολλά) often refers to specifically sexual pleasures. Cf. *Peace* 538, 886–90 (both with reference to Theoria, see above); *Wealth* 646, 1121 (on which see Chapters Two and Three). This can also happen without the adjective: thus τὰγαθά at *Peace* 1334, when examined in the larger context of the whole song, is clearly sexual.

462 Lysistrata makes this even more explicit at 1175.

fortifications, of significant strategic importance in the war; it was also, however, a common comic euphemism for the anus via its similarity to a word for "gate" (πύλη).⁴⁶³ Initially the Athenian is reluctant to make this concession, and when prompted to do so by Lysistrata he asks "But what will I stir up / have sex with?" (κᾶτα τίνα κινήσομεν, 1166), continuing the innuendo by choosing a word which can designate stirring up rebellion (as the Athenians had been doing from Pylos) but which also is a common comic euphemism for sexual intercourse. She probably joins in as well when she tells him to choose another place instead, since her word for place is quite similar to Greek slang for the vulva (χωρίον at 1167 in this context may suggest χοιρίον to the audience). The Athenian decides to make a series of claims in response: he wants the town of Echinus in Thessaly, the Malian Gulf behind it, and the long walls of Megara (τὸν Ἐχινούντα καὶ τὸν Μηλιά / κόλπον τὸν ὀπίσθεν καὶ τὰ Μεγαρικὰ σκέλη, 1169–70). These are all real places of more or less strategic importance in the war, but they have been chosen, like Pylos above, because their names also indicate regions of Reconciliation's body. Echinus may refer to her prickly pubic hair, since the name of that town sounds like a Greek word for Sea Urchin (ἐχῖνος); words for similar sea creatures refer to the female pubic region not only in comedy but also in the poetry of Hipponax.⁴⁶⁴ Alternatively, it refers to her vagina specifically, since the same Greek word could indicate a type of jar and there are many parallels for the idea of the vagina and uterus as a vessel.⁴⁶⁵ The former is more likely, since the Malian Gulf (which, as Sommerstein 1990, 216 points out, is not actually geographically *behind* the town of Echinus) should indicate the vagina, which is behind the pubic hair in the geography of Reconciliation's body. The word used for gulf (κόλπος) can refer properly to the vagina (thus not only in comedy but also in medical writers), and Malian (which looks like Greek μῆλα or apples) will presumably refer to the buttocks which, as Sommerstein notes, frame it from a certain angle.⁴⁶⁶ Megara's long walls are actually called legs (σκέλη), the significance of which in relation to Reconciliation's body is straightforward. This division accomplished, the Athenian and Spartan emissaries restate their eagerness to perform their respective sexual functions, which Lysistrata assures them they will do when they reconcile (1173–75); once again she is driving home the point that their shared sexual experience of this mute nude female is not merely associated with their agreeing to make peace, but actually the same thing. This is the end of the extensive attention to Reconciliation's body, though there are sexual jokes of a different sort in the following lines. The illusion that they are actually going to have sex with Reconciliation on stage, and that this itself will be the means of their reconciliation, is no longer sustained; Lysistrata sends them to the Acropolis to be entertained by the women there and exchange their oaths, after which each man will take his own wife and go home. If not before, Reconciliation will leave the stage with the actors at 1188. But since the last reference to her is at 1175, and at that point her function has been fulfilled, she may leave the stage or put her clothing back on then.

In *Ecclesiazusae* the neighbor addresses various household objects, which he is preparing to surrender to the state in accordance with the laws of the new communist utopia, thus:

463 Cf. Henderson 1991, 202.

464 Cf. Hipponax fr. 70.8 (βρύσσοσ or sea urchin); Ar. fr. 425 K.-A. (σπατάγγης or sponge).

465 For all these considerations with regard to Greek ἐχῖνος, cf. Henderson 1987, 205; Sommerstein 1990, 216; Henderson 1991, 142. On the vagina and uterus as a vessel, cf. Appendix A.

466 Sommerstein 1990, 216. μῆλα as a sexual euphemism are normally breasts, and that would also make sense with their association with κόλπος, which can refer to the bosom as well as the vagina; but it is difficult to see in what sense the breasts could be construed as behind the pubic hair.

χώρει σὺ δεῦρο, κιναχώρα, καλὴ καλῶς
 τῶν χρημάτων θύραζε πρώτη τῶν ἐμῶν,
 ὅπως ἂν ἐντετριμμένη κανηφορῆς,
 πολλοὺς κάτω δὴ θυλάκους στρέψασ' ἐμούς.
 ποῦ 'σθ' ἢ διφροφόρος; ἢ χύτρα, δεῦρ' ἔξιθι.
 νὴ Δία μέλαινά γ'· οὐδὲν εἶ· τὸ φάρμακον
 ἔψουσ' ἔτυχες, ᾧ Λυσικράτης μελαίνεται;
 ἴστω παρ' αὐτήν.

Come out here prettily, my pretty Bran-Sifter, best of my possessions, so that all made-up (screwed?) you may serve as basket-girl, after you have emptied many of my "meal-bags". Where's the stool-bearer? Hey "Pot", get out here. You're a dark* one, by Zeus. You're nothing. Did you happen to boil the drug with which Lysikrates dyes his hair? Stand next to her.

Ecclesiazusae 730–37

Several of the objects are imagined as people participating in a ritual procession; thus the bran-sifter (κιναχώρα) will fill the role of the girl who carries the sacrificial basket, and the *chytra*, which is commanded to come out of the house of its own volition, is told to stand beside her. Both the bran-sifter and the *chytra* are simultaneously imagined, then, as objects and as female participants in a ritual procession. Scholars have tended to think that these are actually objects being treated as if they were mute characters.⁴⁶⁷ But I would argue that they are actually mute female slave characters who are treated as household objects, and given the names of those objects, for the sake of a joke. We should remember that *chytra* was a comic metaphor for the vulva,⁴⁶⁸ and that Greek men in comedy sometimes called low-class women by such terms.⁴⁶⁹ duBois 2003, 219–20 has argued that both the bran-sifter and the *chytra* function as the objects of sexual jokes here. I would argue in addition that the extended emphasis on the darkness of the *chytra* occupies the space in which the neighbor is pointing out the pubic hair of the mute character playing a *chytra*; similar "darkness" language is used to point out the pubic hair of the *auletris* at *Wasps* 1374 and *Theoria* at *Peace* 892–93. As in those two scenes, here the *chytra* is probably played by a mute female character in some degree of dress. Because she is notionally a cooking pot that the neighbor is about to turn over to the state, he naturally inspects her, which entails looking at the bottom of the pot (the mute character's pubic region) for scorch marks acquired from the fire. This will require him to life up her garment, at which point he discovers her dark pubic hair, which he explains as the result of the fire just as the slave does for *Theoria*'s "oven" at *Peace* 892–93. After this the women who play her and the bran-sifter stand to one side with the other (actual) objects being assembled, until they are all sent on their way at 745.

In Chapter Three I argued in depth that the young women (μείρακες) of the last scene of *Ecclesiazusae* are a pair of mute female characters, not the members of the chorus. If this is accurate they will constitute another example of this phenomenon at the end of plays. We should note that in some ways their presence is not strictly necessary; there is little if any humor directly at their expense, nor is there any need for it to express the typical comic themes of abundant

467 Thus Ussher 1973, 178 and Sommerstein 1998, 203.

468 Cf. Appendix A.

469 Thus the humor of *Acharnians* 729–835 depends on the Megarian's daughters actually *being* vulvas/piglets (χοῖποι) rather than simply *having* them, and Philocleon at *Wasps* 1353 calls the *auletris* a χοιρίον (little vulva).

food, drink, and sex, since the inebriated speaking female slave who dominates the scene fulfills this function admirably. Instead their presence is traditional, echoing the many earlier plays we know about (and surely many others we do not) that had ended with a *kōmos* featuring sexually objectified mute female characters.

Part 4.5: Imagined Female Slaves

In comedy male characters and choreuts often fantasize about the sexual exploitation of their own or other people's slaves. In this way imagined (predominantly female) slaves can function as sexual objects despite the fact that they never appear onstage. Thus the first comic hero we encounter in the corpus, Dikaiopolis, no sooner arrives at a preliminary solution to the problem of war (a private peace) than, celebrating the rural Dionysia and singing to Phales in a phallic procession, in which a pair of male slaves are responsible for holding erect the model phallos (243, 259–60), he imagines raping another person's Thracian female slave:

πολλῶ γάρ ἐσθ' ἦδιον, ὦ Φάλης Φάλης,
κλέπτουσαν εὐρόνθ' ὠρικὴν ὕληφόρον,
τὴν Στρυμοδώρου Θραῦτταν ἐκ τοῦ φελλέως,
μέσην λαβόντ' ἄρα ντα καταβαλόντα καταγιγαρτίσαι.

For it is much sweeter, Phales, Phales, to find hot-to-trot Thratta (from) the scrub, the slave of Strymodoros, stealing, with wood in her hands, and to take her by the waist, lift her up, throw her down, and stick your grape-stone in her.⁴⁷⁰ (*Ach.* 271–74)

Whereas the male slaves are allowed to participate in the sexualized rite in their arguably crucial role carrying the model phallos, which must be held erect, the imagined female slave is the passive canvas on which Dikaiopolis paints his idealized image of this newly created world where, free from the obligations of war, he can reap all the benefits of peace, a material and sexual bounty.⁴⁷¹ The imagined rape of this slave is also the ultimate outlet of the build-up of sexual tension in honor of Phales that had previously threatened to break loose on Dikaiopolis' own family, his wife and especially his daughter.⁴⁷² As often happens at the *end* of comedies, a speechless female figure has here become a symbol of the comic hero's goals (rejuvenation and victory over his problems, as for instance the deprivations of war in this passage); the moment when he sexually assaults her symbolizes his attainment of that rejuvenation and victory, though in this case his celebration is premature, since he has not even won over the chorus yet.

The sexual exploitation of imagined female figures who in their silence and passivity resemble slaves continues towards the end of *Acharnians* as well. As Dikaiopolis is offstage preparing to celebrate the Pitcher Feast, the drinking competition held on the second day of the Anthesteria festival, the chorus observes literally that he "has become feathered for dinner" (ἐπτέρωταί τ' ἐπὶ τὸ δεῖπνον, 988), a curious expression that editors have understood to indicate both that he is amply provided with delicious birds (as the lines that follow show) and that he is

470 I have chosen English "scrub" for this translation because it can mean both "overgrown land" and "tart", the former being a fairly literal translation of φελλεύς and the latter approximating the probable pun on φαλλός.

471 For the role of the mute male slaves in this scene, cf. my analysis in Chapter Two.

472 Cf. my reading of the phallos procession scene in Chapter Two.

excited ("in a flutter") about his dinner.⁴⁷³ While these interpretations are undoubtedly correct, I would argue that a verb that literally means "has become equipped with a πτερόν" ("feather") is also suggestive in this context of erection, since this word is a common comic euphemism for the penis.⁴⁷⁴ This would certainly fit the following scene, where virtually all of the foods that constitute Dikaiopolis' dinner are otherwise known as comic metaphors for the vulva and many of the verbs used in connection with them have sexual potential. The chorus' comment about the old man becoming feathered may in fact prepare the audience for his arrival onstage with an erect or dangling phallus. Similarly, when the chorus asserts that the feathers he has thrown out in front of the house constitute evidence of his mode of living, they may not only refer to their visual indication of the fact that he is sacrificing birds but also to the fact that they can be construed as phallic symbols, indicative of the sexual exuberance that goes hand in hand with an abundance of food both here and in many other comic scenes. Immediately after these remarks the chorus-leader propositions a personified and deified (but not present onstage) Reconciliation, who is depicted as an erotic object, raised along with Aphrodite and the Graces;⁴⁷⁵ he counters an imagined objection, that she may think that he is too old, with an elaborate description of how he will bed her three times in a row (993–99). All these sexual promises are presented as thinly veiled agricultural euphemisms: he will drive in a long row of young vines, some young fig shoots, and a third row of cultivated vine, after which he will surround the whole place (χορῖον, which given the context may pun on χορῖον in its obscene sense as a pejorative word for "vulva") with olive trees so that they may both be well-oiled for the festivals of the new moon. Of course Reconciliation here is a personification of an abstract concept and a goddess, but I would argue that her role as symbolic sexual object endows her in the eyes of the audience with perceived slave status, as happens with the mute characters who personify such abstractions in physical form onstage.

The chorus of *Acharnians* employs an imagined female slave to emphasize the sexual benefits of peace again in their song at 1143–49, where they draw a contrast between the Athenian general Lamachus, who must shiver with cold and keep watch, and Dikaiopolis, who gets to drink wearing a garland and sleep with an exceedingly attractive young female slave, getting rubbed you-know-where (τῷ δὲ καθεύδειν / μετὰ παιδίσκης ὠραιότητος, / ἀνατριβομένῳ γε τὸ δεῖνα, 1147–49). This choral song occupies a transitional moment between two scenes in which the fortunes of the general and the comic hero are contrasted repeatedly, line by line. The second of those scenes is the last of the play, where Dikaiopolis enters with a pair of nubile mute female companions (surely understood to be slaves; cf. the discussion above) in the final *kōmos* opposite a Lamachus who has been wounded ingloriously. At the end of *Acharnians*, then, the sexual exploitation of an imagined female slave in song is combined with the spectacle of mute, sexually objectified characters to serve a single purpose: to draw the strongest possible contrast between the fortunes of the comic hero and those of his principal opponent.

473 Sommerstein 1980, 205; Olson 2002, 315.

474 Cf. Henderson 1991, 128–29. On p. 85 n. 282 I argue that there are in fact many more instances of this euphemism than are cited by Henderson and that there is a connection between the comic idea of a feather (not a wing) as a penis and the fact that, as the Hippocratic gynecological texts make clear, ancient Greek doctors regularly inserted feathers coated in a variety of different substances into women's vaginas as a means of delivering medication.

475 Cf. the prayer at *Peace* 974–95, where slave and master address the goddess as a skittish adulteress whom they wish would be more brazen.

Aristophanes' *Peace* constitutes a celebration of the prospect of a peace with the Spartans after ten years of war; the notion of peace is in turn associated with both agricultural and sexual abundance. It is notable how often the choral passages of this play, concerned to celebrate the bounties of peace, turn to the imagined sexual exploitation of servile women as a means of expression. The first such instance occurs before the symbolic statue of Peace has even been recovered and is thus purely speculative. In preparation for the rescue of Peace from the cave in which the gods have imprisoned her, Hermes calls for ritual silence (433–34) and the comic hero Trygaios prays that the present day be the beginning of many and good things for all the Greeks and that any man who helps to free Peace never have to take up a shield (435–38).⁴⁷⁶ At this point the Panhellenic chorus joins in with its own blessing for this hypothetical man:

μὰ Δί', ἀλλ' ἐν εἰρήνῃ διαγαγεῖν τὸν βίον
ἔχονθ' ἑταίραν καὶ σκαλεύοντ' ἄνθρακας.

No by Zeus, but (let us pray that) he lead his life in peace, having a *hetaira* and poking the coals.
(*Peace* 439–40)

Here as often elsewhere in this play the sexual enjoyment of a subservient female is imagined as one of the many benefits of Peace. This particular passage could be heard as almost innocent in tone; the hypothetical male will merely "possess" or even "hold" the *hetaira*. If the reference to poking the coals is taken literally, minimized are the exploitative aspects of the sexual relationship and obscenity, both references to specific body parts and to specific sexual acts or even the (explicit) idea of sex at all. We might call the scene domestic if the word in question were γυνή ("woman" or "wife"). The term *hetaira* (literally a female "companion") is itself a euphemism; to call her a whore (πόρνη) in such a context would not suit the tone.⁴⁷⁷ On the other hand, it would be possible for an audience member to take "poking the coals" as a sexual euphemism, since "poke" (σκαλεύειν) would be straightforward enough as a verb of sexual activity⁴⁷⁸ and the otherwise attested euphemism "sticking it in the coal" (ἀνθρακίζων, *Peace* 1126) would seem to indicate that "coal" (ἄνθραξ) could be a metaphor for the vulva, especially since descriptions of the vulva as a source of heat (e.g. a hearth or fireplace) are commonplace. Several scholars argue that this sexual metaphor is in effect here,⁴⁷⁹ but I am not so sure; the lack of a definite article with ἄνθρακας (which we would want to be "the/her coals") is a problem.

Not all the choral passages in question are so (at least possibly) innocent. Among the benefits of Peace, which in a sexually exploitative joke are listed as smells given off by her newly arrived attendant Theoria, we find mentioned together "the bosom/vagina of women running to the cook-house" (κόλπου γυναικῶν διατρεχουσῶν εἰς ἰπνόν, 536), "a drunk female slave" (δούλης μεθουούσης), and "an overturned jug" (ἀνατετραμμένου χοῶς, 537). Though our text of the play is not explicit on this point, it is safe to assume that the perceived value of a

476 Again, as in the many other passages discussed above, there may a specifically sexual connotation to Aristophanes' use of the substantive ἀγαθά here, especially considering the immediately following choral song.

477 Cf. Olson 1998, 165–66. It is worth mentioning that this is apparently the first use of the term *hetaira* without a modifier attested in Greek. Cf. *OCD* s.v. *hetairai*.

478 Indeed, ὑποσκαλεύειν may be so used at *Acharnians* 1014. Cf. Henderson 1991, 168.

479 Sommerstein 1985, 153; Henderson 1991, 143; Olson 1998, 166.

drunk female slave will be sexual,⁴⁸⁰ especially considering the accumulation of vaginal imagery in these two lines.⁴⁸¹ If, as I think, the actor playing Trygaeus sniffed Theoria's crotch before speaking these lines, the sexual meaning was obvious. As we saw happen at the end of *Acharnians*, in this passage the (implied) sexual exploitation of an imagined female slave and the objectification of a slavish mute female character visibly present onstage (Theoria) occur together with the common purpose of standing in contrast to the deprivations of war (which are symbolized by the unpleasant smells listed at *Peace* 527–29).

The same association between relaxing beside a warm fire and sexually exploiting a female slave we found at *Peace* 439–40 recurs toward the end of the play, again in the context of celebrating the joys of peace in contrast to the deprivations of war:

ἤδομαί γ' ἤδομαι
 κράνους ἀπηλλαγμένους
 τυροῦ τε καὶ κρομμύων.
 οὐ γὰρ φιληδῶ μάχαις, (1130)
 ἀλλὰ πρὸς πῦρ διέλκων μετ' ἀνδρῶν ἐταίρων φίλων,
 ἐκκέας τῶν ξύλων ἄττ' ἂν ἦ δανότατα τοῦ θέρους
 ἐκπεπρεμισμένα, (1135)
 κἀνθρακίζων τοῦρεβίνθου τήν τε φηγὸν ἐμπυρεύων,
 χᾶμα τήν Θρᾶτταν κυνῶν
 τῆς γυναικὸς λουμένης.

I rejoice, I rejoice, freed from the helmet, cheese, and onions; for I do not take pleasure in battles, but in drinking deeply by a fire with my dear companion-men, after having burnt up those of the logs which are driest, the ones uprooted in the summer, and in lighting up my chick-pea and sticking my acorn in the fire, meanwhile kissing Thratta while my wife's in the bath.

Peace 1127–39

The chorus here speaks as one man in the singular voice, taking the perspective of an individual within a choral group of male companions who are relaxing and drinking beside a fire. The deprivations of being involved in a military campaign (the helmet standing for the need to walk about in armor and the cheese and onions for the blandness of rations) stand in contrast first to the pleasures of drinking and warmth and finally to the pleasure of illicit sex, which caps the song as comic sexual references so often do. Though the text refers explicitly only to *kissing* the female slave, there is a sexual subtext to the language about kindling chickpeas and acorns (both comic phallic metaphors, with flame and cooking both exceedingly common metaphors for

480 This much is assumed by Mactoux 1999, 33.

481 For κόλπος as "vagina" rather than the more usual "bosom" cf. Ar. *Eccl.* 964–65; Henderson 1991, 140–41; *LSJ* s.v. I.2. See also the discussion of *Lys.* 1168–70 above. If Olson 1998, 187 is correct to regard ἰπνός as a synonym for ὀπτάνιον, the two words might admit the same vaginal metaphor (ὀπτάνιον unambiguously refers to Theoria's vagina at *Peace* 891; cf. Walin 2009, 37). An overturned pitcher is an obvious visual metaphor for the vagina as well as an indicator of a drunken, festive atmosphere. Moreover, the idea of the combined vagina and uterus as various types of upside down earthenware may have been familiar from the Hippocratic gynecological tradition (on this point cf. Appendix A).

sexual arousal and activity).⁴⁸² Moreover, the mildly transgressive (apparently, because it requires evasion of the wife)⁴⁸³ dalliance may also symbolize the rejuvenation and sexual renewal of the chorus, if the language about kindling "logs" that have had a long time to dry up is taken to refer to the restoration of sexual vigor after years of impotence (1131–35).

Part 4.6: Sex as Punishment

Like the non-sexual physical violence explored in Chapter Five, sexual violence was available to masters as a means of punishing slaves, both in real life and in the world of Greek comedy. The most famous example in Aristophanic comedy is *Acharnians* 271–75, discussed above in this chapter; there the master, Dikaiopolis, indulges in a sexual fantasy in celebration of Phales, a god of transgressive sex. He imagines himself catching another person's slave in the act of stealing firewood from his land and exacting from her a sexual penalty. The choice of sexual aggression against another person's slave rather than one of his own presumably has to do with the need for the imagined sex act to be special, an opportunity not ordinarily available to him (as his own female slaves, if he had any, would have been), and also in some way transgressive (a master's rights to beat slaves and use them sexually did not normally extend to the slaves of another person).⁴⁸⁴ On the other hand, the fact that she is stealing seems to be added to produce some pretext for the act. Comparison with passages in which slaves are beaten (cf. Chapter Five) suggests that masters did feel the need for a pretext to abuse their slaves, even when the real cause of the beating or sexual assault is clearly the master's desire to be doing it.

We find another example of sexual punishment mentioned as Bdelycleon is attempting to persuade Philocleon to set up his court at home in *Wasps*:

- Bδ. σὺ δ' οὖν, ἐπειδὴ τοῦτο κεχάρηκας ποιῶν,
ἐκεῖσε μὲν μηκέτι βιάδιζ', ἀλλ' ἐνθάδε (765)
αὐτοῦ μένων δικάζε τοῖσιν οἰκέταις.
Φι. περὶ τοῦ; τί ληρεῖς;
Bδ. ταῦθ' ἄπερ ἐκεῖ πράττεται·
ὄτι τὴν θύραν ἀνέωξεν ἡ σηκίς λάθρα,
ταύτης ἐπιβολὴν ψηφιεῖ μίαν μόνην.
πάντως δὲ κάκεῖ ταῦτ' ἔδρας ἐκάστοτε.

Bdelycleon: But since you enjoy doing that (sc. judging), go there (sc. to court) no longer, but remain here and judge your household slaves. Philocleon: On what charge? What are you babbling on about? Bd: The same things that are done there. Because the (slave) housekeeper has opened the door in secret, you'll vote for just one sexual assault against her; and of course you used to do these things there, too, every time. *Wasps* 764–70

482 For chickpea and acorn as comic phallic metaphors, cf. Henderson 1991, 119–20. For cooking and heat as sexual metaphors, cf. Henderson 1991, 47–48; 142–44; 177–78.

483 At *Lys.* 1.12 a wife accuses her husband of wanting her gone so that he can sexually assault their female slave, which (as she says) he had done before while drunk. This together with our passage implies that Athenian males generally thought it wise to hide their sexual indiscretions from their wives.

484 Cf. Halliwell 2002, 136–37 n. 6.

Much of the humor of this passage ostensibly comes from the pun on the Greek word ἐπιβολή, which can mean both a "fine" (as might be imposed in a real court) and a sexual assault (clearly the meaning in the domestic context). MacDowell 1971, 236 takes this to be the point of comparison represented by the "these things" of line 770. It is worth wondering, however, whether there might be something more at work here. The point is made throughout *Wasps* that Philocleon loves the power trip of being judge and is eager to pass sentence. For him, judging is about the pleasure he gets from declaring someone guilty; he does not need to be *convinced* that the defendant is guilty, but rather to be given any pretext at all for the exercise of his favorite pastime. It is tempting to read this, too, as a point of comparison, inherent in the "these things" of line 770, with the master who punishes his slave with a sexual assault. That the female slave's putative offense was to offer herself sexually to someone other than the master without his permission—as is implied by the phrase "opened the door" even if it is taken to refer to a literal door and not, as it sometimes functions, as a sexual euphemism—only serves to help the master to justify the act.⁴⁸⁵ Like the real Philocleon as juror, this hypothetical Philocleon as master needs to manufacture the barest suspicion, not proof, in order to do as he pleases.

Peisetaerus' threat to rape the goddess Iris at *Birds* 1253–56 is also noteworthy for our analysis of the idea of sex as a punishment for (as we are seeing, typically female) slaves in comedy. While in one way this sexual threat against a goddess is completely brazen and transgressive, coming as it does from a human male, in another it is intelligible as an instance of the more typical and straightforward sexual threat from a free male toward a female slave. The fact that Iris is a slave (albeit a divine one) is emphasized early on (τῆς διακόνου, 1252), before any verbal hint of the sexual threat is made.⁴⁸⁶

Conclusion to Chapter Four

We have seen how the bodies of real slave women were probably put to use in Greek Old Comedy to serve as mute female characters. These characters are often explicitly presented as slaves, but even when they are not the master-slave relationship furnishes the model for how the audience sees their sexually and ideologically available bodies. Such characters and the women who play them are imbued with great symbolic significance; their exposure to the gaze of the audience and to the comments and physical advances of the actors/speaking characters and chorus members frequently enacts the success of the comic project, often in the process drawing a heavy contrast with the misfortune and misery of those who have opposed it. Such characters also symbolize the rejuvenation of the comic hero, and the women who play them are sometimes exposed to the audience in a manner perhaps calculated to transfer some of that frisson from the fictive world of comedy into a real audience, in the hope that some of the symbolism with which the drama had endowed those bodies would make it through as well. Likewise the songs of comedy make use of imagined female slaves for similar purposes, sometimes in close collaboration with scenes that feature mute characters. It is noteworthy that almost all the slaves who function in these ways, both those represented as characters onstage by physical bodies and those who are only imagined in song, are female; Greek comedy also put the body of the male

485 For θύρα ("door") as a comic euphemism for the entrance (to the vagina, cf. Henderson 1991, 137. But even when this euphemism is not necessarily active, a woman in control of a doorway typically implies illicit sex in the Greek context, where men are supposed to control access to their women at all times.

486 Cf. Dunbar 1995, 629, who compares this passage with *Ach.* 271–76.

slave to work, but in a different way. As we will see in Chapter Five, the passages of comedy in which masters use intercourse as a means of punishing their female slaves betray interesting similarities to passages in which masters beat their male ones.

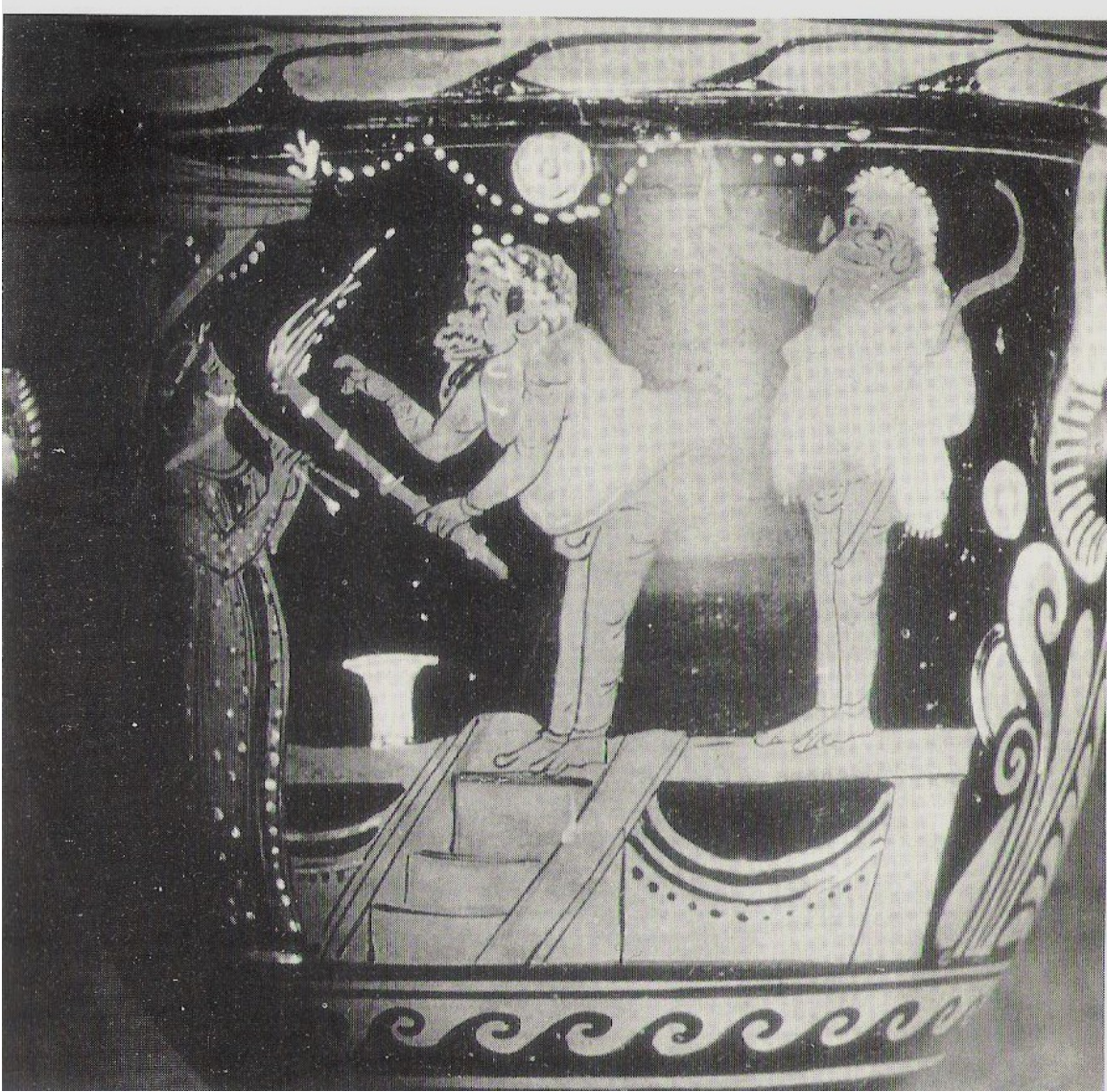
Figures for Chapter Four

Chap. 4, Fig. 1
Attica, c. 360 B.C.
Benaki Museum 30890
Photograph taken from Hughes 2008, fig. 1



Fig. 181a-d. Comic chorus.
Relief found on the Agora, Athens

Chap. 4, Fig. 2
Relief found in the Athenian Agora
Attica
Agora S1025,1586
Scanned from Bieber 1961, fig. 181a-d



Chap. 4, Fig. 3
Bell-krater
Campania, third quarter of the fourth century
Melbourne D 14/1973
Scanned from Taplin 1993, fig. 15.13



Chap. 4, Fig. 4
Bell-krater
Campania, third quarter of the fourth century
PhV 55
Scanned from Trendall 1967a, pl. 164, 3–4



Chap. 4, Fig. 5
Bell-krater
Campania, third quarter of the fourth century
PhV 26
Scanned from Schaal 1923, pl. 55b



Chap. 4, Fig. 6

Bell-krater

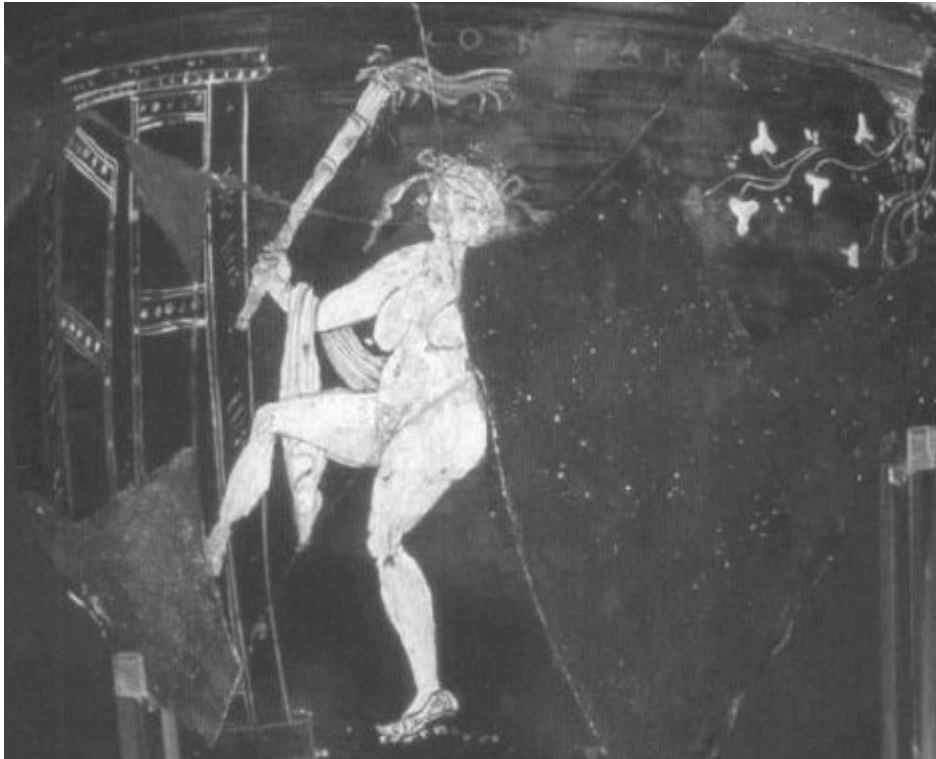
Apulia, second quarter of the fourth century

PhV 34

Scanned from Bieber 1961, fig. 511



Chap. 4, Fig. 7
Krater attributed to Asteas
Paestum, ca. 360–50
Lipari 927
Scanned from Bieber 1961, fig. 535



Chap. 4, Fig. 8
Krater fragment
Tarentum, ca. 360
Taranto I.G. 4638
Photograph taken from Hughes 2008, fig. 3



Chap. 4, Fig. 9
Oenochoe attributed to the Felton painter
Apulia, ca. 370–60
Taranto 29031
Photo taken from Hughes 2008, fig. 11



Chap. 4, Fig. 10
Askos attributed to the Felton painter
Apulia, ca. 370–60
Ruvo 1402
Scanned from Catteruccia 1951, pl. IV

Chapter Five: Beating Slaves

Greek Old Comedy exploits the bodies of slaves and slave characters, both present on stage and imagined, for bodily humor of all kinds, just as the bodies of slaves were exploited day by day in the real world to accomplish whatever their masters desired. This bodily humor encompasses not only all kinds of sexual humor (quite often tied up with other bodily functions, such as eating and defecation) but also the humor of non-sexual physical abuse. The relationship between sexual and purely physical acts is emphasized in Old Comedy through the frequent use of sexual metaphors drawn from the world of violence.⁴⁸⁷ As we have seen with sexual humor, in physically abusive humor slaves play roles on both sides of the equation: they are beaten or threatened onstage for the amusement of the audience, but they also function as tools of violence against others. Occasionally their role even goes beyond that of mere tools of their masters, and we find slave characters who seem to instigate violence against free men without being ordered to do so. It is with this in mind that I have chosen the ambiguous title of this chapter, in which "beating" should be taken at once as a gerund and a participle. First I examine scenes in which slaves function as passive objects of staged or threatened physical abuse—as presented in South Italian vase paintings and in the texts of our extant comedies themselves—and consider what effect such humor might have had on ancient audiences. Finally I consider the corresponding evidence for the use of slaves (both private and public) as instruments of physical violence, and their occasional instigation of violent acts on their own initiative.

Part 5.1: Slaves as Objects of Staged and Threatened Physical Abuse

The beating and threatening of slaves onstage is a regular feature of Aristophanic comedy, so much so that Dover has claimed that serving as the objects of such abuse is one of two principal functions of Aristophanes' slave characters prior to the production of *Frogs* in 405.⁴⁸⁸ While this oversimplifies the role of slaves in earlier Aristophanic comedy,⁴⁸⁹ the underlying observation that laughter at the pain (staged, anticipated, or reported) of slave characters is ubiquitous in our extant comedies is quite sound. To some extent this treatment of slave characters is one aspect of the similar treatment of (potentially) *all* characters in comedy; thus Kidd 2011, 459 argues that the apparent absence of sounds expressing laughter and frequency of sounds expressing pain in the extant comic texts reflects the otherwise observable fact that "suffering is not only the bread and butter of tragedy, but the vital *sine qua non* of comedy as well." Indeed, one can hardly read the comedies without coming away with the impression that the ancient audience must have taken pleasure in the suffering of characters onstage. But the treatment of slaves in this way differs from similar treatment of free people in important ways: not only do slaves receive a disproportionate share of this suffering, but their woes are also by and large representative of the real woes of real slaves, who may easily spend their lives in fear of the master's whim. The

487 Cf. Henderson 1991, 170–73 on comic sexual metaphors of hitting and piercing. Of course Attic Old Comedy does not stand alone in the comic exploitation of slave bodies and in its association of the different forms of such exploitation; the same tradition is still very much alive in the Roman *comoedia palliata*. Richlin (forthcoming in *CA*) argues that "the fear of a beating and the fear of sexual abuse are closely connected in Roman comedy, both breaches of the body's boundaries, and both well attested as part of slaves' experience".

488 Dover 1993, 43.

489 As I argue in Walin 2009, and as I hope to have shown in the preceding chapters.

suffering of people in general is apparently funny in the comic context, but the beating of slaves in particular also fulfills an important ideological function. At Athens slaves outnumbered their masters by a wide margin, and it is therefore inevitable that there was at some level psychologically significant fear of slaves and slave revolt both at home and in the *polis*, especially when the events of the Peloponnesian War allowed large numbers of slaves to escape the control of their masters successfully. The beating and threatening of slaves onstage, like the reduction of slaves to sexual objects and the self-deprecation of speaking slave characters we have observed in previous chapters, functions in part to alleviate this fear by putting slave characters (and therefore the real slaves they represent) in their place.⁴⁹⁰

Part 5.2: Slaves Beaten Onstage

The evidence of both South Italian vase painting and our extant texts confirms that slave characters were indeed sometimes beaten on the comic stage, in addition to being threatened, chased, and beaten offstage as described in detail by the reports of messengers or of the beaten slaves themselves. The parabasis of Aristophanes' *Peace* characterizes this practice as common and positions the poet himself on the ostensibly more tasteful side of the issue:

...καὶ τοὺς δούλους παρέλυσεν (743)
 τοὺς φεύγοντας κάξαπατῶντας καὶ τυπτομένους, ἐπίτηδες (742)
 {οὓς ἐξῆγον κλάοντας ἀεὶ, καὶ τοῦτους οὐνεκα τουδί}⁴⁹¹ (744)
 ἴν' ὁ σύνδουλος σκῶνας αὐτοῦ τὰς πληγὰς εἶτ' ἀνέροιτο (745)
 “ὦ κακόδαιμον, τί τὸ δέρμ' ἔπαθες; μῶν ὑστριχίς εἰσέβαλέν σοι
 εἰς τὰς πλευράς πολλῆ στρατιᾶ κάδενδροτόμησε τὸ νῶτον;”
 τοιαῦτ' ἀφελὼν κακὰ καὶ φόρτον καὶ βωμολοχεύματ' ἀγεννῆ
 ἐποίησε τέχνην μεγάλην ὑμῖν...

And (Aristophanes) got rid of⁴⁹² the slaves who kept running away and engaging in

490 Parker 1989 makes a similar argument for the function of laughter at the beating and threatening of slaves in Roman comedy; he is followed by Richlin (forthcoming in *CA*), who adds that slaves in the Roman audience likely would laugh to suppress their own fear of beatings rather than (as their masters) to suppress their fear of slave uprising. Surely the same would be true of any slaves (or, in all likelihood, freed people) in the Greek audience (whether official or unofficial), but I argue in the introduction that there were not many of these in the fifth and early fourth centuries (i.e. prior to the substantial expansion of the Theater of Dionysus, before which there was space for only a fraction of the male adult citizens).

491 *Peace* 744 is in Π11 and all the MSS; its deletion was proposed by Hamaker and Bergk. Sommerstein omits it from his text, while Olson retains it but also keeps the original order of 742 and 743, thereby associating the fleeing, deception, and beatings with comic depictions of Herakles rather than with comic slaves. As usual, I use Wilson's text, which in this case I think adopts the most reasonable position. I agree with Wilson and Sommerstein (*pace* Olson) that 742 and 743 should probably be metathesized; 744 is probably but not certainly an intrusion, and keeping it in brackets rather than excising it from the text entirely therefore seems best. I am not sure that scholarly objections to the use of ἐξάγειν (lit. "lead out") at 744 are entirely justified. Certainly εἰσάγειν (lit. "lead in") is the *vox propria* for introducing a character to the stage, but why do we think that this must be the intended meaning of ἐξάγειν here? When an already introduced slave character received a beating inside (within the *skene*), he would naturally be led *out* from the stage door weeping.

492 The use of παραλύειν may also suggest the idea that Aristophanes has actually "freed" such slave characters, though it would be wise not to read any serious ideological statement into the choice of words.

deceptions and being beaten, {whom (the other poets) always kept bringing out weeping}, so that his fellow slave could mock his blows and then ask: "You poor bastard, what's happened to your hide? Surely a bristly whip hasn't invaded your ribs with a great army and cut down the trees on your back, has it?" He took away such things, which were worthless and vulgar and the sort of silly jokes the low-born tell, and made instead a great art-form for you...

Peace 742–49

This passage is often quoted because it constitutes the primary evidence that certain types of slave character behavior familiar to students of New and Roman comedy must have had precedents in the comedy of Aristophanes' era, despite their infrequency in or absence from the extant plays. Thus when the chorus mentions the apparently hackneyed trope of slaves engaging in acts of deception, they are for the most part speaking of something foreign to the fifth-century slave characters of which we are aware, yet clearly a part of the larger picture, at which we cannot get a clear view from our eleven plays by the same playwright.⁴⁹³ The *servus callidus* must have had ancestors on the Attic stage already at some point at least a few years before 421 BC. Likewise the fascination with specifically military terminology we often find in the speech of Plautine slaves seems to be anticipated by the imagined mocking slave character, who is characterized as already hackneyed.

But what is most interesting about this passage for our current purpose is the concomitant characterization of the beating of slaves as a commonplace. This includes the trope of the slave who runs away from a beating (φεύγοντας, 742), who constitutes a specific type of *servus currens*. Such running slaves are also detectable at points in our extant Aristophanic texts and in South Italian vase painting (see below). Likewise there are points in our texts where it is quite clear that slaves are in fact beaten onstage (τυπτομένουσ, 742), and some characters who are beaten offstage emerge to complain about it (which would be the situation imagined in the direct speech of the mocking slave if we do not strike line 744 from the text). Despite the poet's parabolic claim to have done away with such treatments of slave characters, Aristophanic comedy is still implicated in a comic tradition in which they feature heavily. Moreover, it is likely that the claim to have created a more serious form of comedy is mostly facetious, since artistic claims in the *parabases* of Aristophanes' plays are notoriously inconsistent with his practice elsewhere. At any rate, it is worth noting that the implied reason that such humor should be avoided is because that humor is low, common, vulgar, and ignoble: in other words, we should not write such jokes about slaves nor laugh at their misfortunes because to do so would be to behave like slaves or other low-class people ourselves. Elite aristocratic ideology and purism thus lies at the root of the Aristophanic criticism of the comic abuse of slaves.

Several South Italian vase paintings—of the type once called "phlyax" vases but now generally recognized as depicting scenes of Attic comedy—show the beating of slaves onstage,

493 The clothing swap between Xanthias and Dionysus in *Frogs* might be characterized as deceptive, but this is Dionysus' idea; the slave does, however, continue to pretend to be the master past the point at which Dionysus has given up on the charade, with hilarious results (see below). The fact that the chorus of old men at *Wealth* 271–83 clearly do not trust the slave Cario could be taken to imply a tradition of deceptive comic slaves, but at this point Cario is actually being truthful. Cario does, however, end his song-exchange with the chorus by explaining his intention to steal bread and meat without his master knowing (*Wealth* 316–22); moreover, I argue in Chapter Two that the audience is meant to take much of what he reports in his messenger-speech to his master's wife at 653–749 as fabrication.

which is consistent with the evidence for this practice in our extant texts. An Apulian red-figure *askos* (360–50 BC) shows one comic actor chasing another, evidently intending to beat him with a club (fig. 1).⁴⁹⁴ He holds it back behind his head in his right hand, at the ready to achieve the greatest possible momentum for the blow. The fleeing actor wears the mask of a slave, and the white-haired character chasing him probably therefore represents an angry master. The master beckons the slave with his left hand as he chases him, as if ordering him to come back and take his beating. This probably represents the type of scene Aristophanes had in mind when he claimed (surely with tongue planted firmly in cheek) to have abolished the practice of staging slave characters who were running away (*Peace* 743–42, see above). The verb used in that passage does not indicate a slave who runs away in the sense of trying to permanently escape the control of his master (ἀπομολεῖν) but rather one who runs away in the sense of trying to escape the reach of someone who is actively chasing him (φεύγειν).

An Apulian calyx crater now in Berlin shows two stage-nude male characters, one of whom is about to beat the other (fig. 2).⁴⁹⁵ Their masks are virtually identical, and it therefore seems likely that both are slaves. The slave who is about to be beaten squats in preparation with both hands on his knees; a leash made of rope is tied around his neck, apparently to keep him from running away from the beating like the slave in the Apulian *askos* discussed above. The other slave holds the other end of this leash in his left hand and a long wooden club in his right. He grips the club at its base, which he positions near his groin in such a way that it might be read as a phallic metaphor. Directly above this vignette there is yet a third (disembodied) comic mask, identical to that worn by these two actors. In addition to the mask itself a single hand is represented, the fingers of which touch the mask's forehead while the thumb appears to press the nose. Bieber 1961, 141 interprets this as a third slave who is mocking the pain of the one being beaten. If this is correct, we have here a representation of the kind of scene described at *Peace* 743–47 (see above).⁴⁹⁶ Alternatively, this third mask may represent the first slave recuperating after his beating, his hand held to his face as he copes with his own suffering. Either way, this scene constitutes evidence for the beating of slave characters on the comic stage.

Several scenes in our extant comedies demand the striking of slave characters onstage. In these cases the slave in question may be a mute male character whose primary or even only dramatic function is to receive a beating, just as the primary dramatic function for many mute female characters is to be exposed. One such scene is *Birds* 1308–36, where a mute slave character named Manes is tasked with bringing baskets of feathers onto the stage from inside so that his master Peisetaerus, who is waiting to greet the many people from the human world who are immigrating to his city of birds, may equip these new citizens with feathers of their own. The messenger who had just reported this influx of immigrants had claimed that their number exceeded ten thousand (1305), and Manes' task of keeping up with demand is therefore fundamentally impossible. As his master and the chorus sing a strophe and antistrophe in celebration of the newly founded city, they constantly interrupt themselves at first merely to

494 Getty Villa 96.AE.114.

495 Berlin 3043. Cf. Olivieri 1930, 164–65, fig. 11; Catteruccia 1951, 43, No. 37, pl. IX; Bieber 1961, 141, fig. 513.

496 Catteruccia 151, 43 also interprets the gesture of this third figure as mocking but takes him to be the master of these slaves, who is watching the execution of punishment. I would argue that the nearly identical masks make this interpretation unlikely; moreover, if the gesture is indeed mocking, this attitude seems more typical of the behavior of a comic slave rather than of a master.

criticize Manes as slow and lazy but later also to strike him as he hurries to and fro, a counterproductive act that is best explained as the indulgence of a penchant among at least a substantial portion of the audience for physical humor at the expense of slaves. The first of the textual indications for this behavior is at 1317, where Peisetaerus sings "I order you to bring them more quickly" (θᾶπτον φέρειν κελεύω). After a few lines of choral song, the master again addresses his slave, this time with a harsher tone: "What a sluggish slave you are! Won't you hurry up?" (ὡς βλακικῶς διακονεῖς. / οὐ θᾶπτον ἐγκονήσεις; 1323–25). In the next two lines the chorus join in for the first time, calling for someone to bring out a basket of wings quickly and prompting Peisetaerus to urge on his slave (φερέτω κάλαθον ταχύ τις πτερύγων· / σὺ δ' αὖθις ἐξόρμα—, 1325–26). Here the text first demands that he strike Manes. He finishes the chorus' sentence for them, specifying *how* he will urge on his slave: "...by striking him like so" (τύπτω γε τοῦτον ὡδί, 1327). The choreuts implicitly praise Peisetaerus' act, claiming that the slave is slow like a donkey (πάνυ γὰρ βραδύς ἐστί τις ὡσπερ ὄνος, 1328),⁴⁹⁷ to which the master responds "Yes, since he's a worthless Manes" (Μανῆς γὰρ ἐστί δειλός, 1329), turning the slave's very name, which would have been bestowed on him in the first place by his master and thus already embodies his master's perception of him, into a pejorative. In the following lines, which end the sung portion of this scene, the chorus ceases to pay attention to Manes and instead focuses on directing Peisetaerus as to how he should be careful to equip each new arrival with the feathers of musical, prophetic, or aquatic birds according to the nature of the man (1330–34). But the master is not easily distracted by attention to his own work. When the singing has ended and with it Manes' task, he chases the slave off the stage with blows:

οὔ τοι μὰ τὰς κερχνῆδας ἔτι σου σχήσομαι, (1335)
οὔτως ὀρῶν σε δειλὸν ὄντα καὶ βραδύν.

By the kestrels, I'll hold off from you no longer, since I see you are so worthless and slow.
Birds 1335–36

Like several of the mute female characters, Manes is clearly driven off the stage once the comic potential of the abuse of his body has been exhausted. Though his performance of his duties is constantly criticized as excessively slow, it is probable that it was in fact comically fast; on this reading Manes will constitute an early type of the *servus currens* who is constantly running in a vain attempt both to accomplish his impossible task and to escape the blows of his angry master. The master and chorus do not recognize the fundamental impossibility of one slave bringing out enough feathers for so many people in such a brief time because their unrealistic expectations and the unjustified beating of a hapless slave are themselves part of the humor of the scene.⁴⁹⁸ The scene has some of the effects of the montage in film editing, by means of which an audience can witness the accomplishment of a task that demands days or sometimes even years in a matter of minutes or even seconds. There are even formal similarities: this scene, like the typical modern montage, is set to music. Without the ability of film to jump from clip to clip, however, this scene relies on masterly disincentives to drive Manes into "fast

497 The donkey is especially likely to be associated with slaves and other low-class people in Greek thought. Cf. Griffith 2006.

498 Thus Dunbar 1995, 648 thinks that "it is dramatically far more effective if Peisetaerus becomes impatient and annoyed at 1324–5 *despite* the obvious speed with which the slave is running out and in".

forward" mode, as it were, in the eyes of the audience.

This scene probably also associates the physical abuse of the slave with the rejuvenation and indeed new-found virility of the comic hero and his city; the word used for "feather" throughout the passage is *περόν*, a common comic metaphor for the phallus,⁴⁹⁹ and the erotic vocabulary of much of what the chorus sings when it is not talking about Manes would seem to confirm that this metaphor is active at some level. Thus for example the chorus sings that passions (*ἔρωτες*) dominate in the city at 1316, and after Peisetaerus' first interruption their song lists several abstract concepts, depicted as alluring, which are present in the city and appealing to men (not humans, but *ἄνδρες*) specifically; given comic conventions and the surrounding language of erotic attraction it is quite likely that the audience will imagine Wisdom, Desire, the Graces, and Tranquility as symbolic female bodies with whom the chorus and Peisetaerus are imagined to disport themselves in their victory (1318–22). Moreover, the chorus begins the sung passage with the claim that people will soon call their city *πολύανωρ*, or well-endowed with men (1313–14), which might refer equally either to the large number of men who are coming to join the city or, with emphasis on the hyper-masculine connotations of *άνήρ* in certain contexts, to the fact that these men will soon be equipped by Peisetaerus with feathers-as-phalloi (*πετέρα*). If this reading is correct, the similarities between the beating and the sexual exposure of mute slave characters in our plays become even more pronounced, since both types of scene will function in part to signify the rejuvenation and aggressive virility of those who have aligned themselves in support of the comic project.

Another scene in Aristophanic comedy which requires the onstage beating of mute slave characters, *Lysistrata* 1216–40, also constitutes a (drunken, post-symposium) celebration of the success of the comic project; moreover, it is likewise embedded in a larger context that associates sexual potency with comic victory, coming as it does at the beginning of the scene immediately following the exposure of Reconciliation and the division by treaty of the sexual rights to the various regions of her body.⁵⁰⁰ At the end of that scene the Athenian and Spartan delegates, having successfully negotiated the treaty, had gone offstage to the Acropolis to exchange their oaths and celebrate with a symposium. The intervening choral song (itself laden with innuendo) creates the impression of the passing of time, and when it is over the Athenian delegates emerge from the stage-door drunk and disorderly. In this state they encounter a group of mute slave characters who are sitting at or near the door; their reaction is immediately aggressive, since they want this rabble out of the way of the soon to emerge Spartan delegates, with whom they are now on the best of terms:

- Aθ. Α. ἄνοιγε τὴν θύραν σύ· παραχωρεῖν σ' ἔδει.
 ὑμεῖς, τί κάθησθε; μῶν ἐγὼ τῆ λαμπάδι
 ὑμᾶς κατακαύσω; φορτικὸν τὸ χωρίον.
 οὐκ ἂν ποιήσαιμ'. εἰ δὲ πάνυ δεῖ τοῦτο δρᾶν,
 ὑμῖν χαρίζεσθαι προσταλαιπωρήσομεν. (1220)
- Aθ. Β. χῆμεῖς γε μετὰ σοῦ ξυνταλαιπωρήσομεν.
 οὐκ ἄπιτε; κωκύσεσθε τὰς τρίχας μακρά.
- Aθ. Α. οὐκ ἄπιθ', ὅπως ἂν οἱ Λάκωνες ἔνδοθεν

499 Cf. p. 85 n. 282.

500 On Reconciliation in *Lysistrata*, cf. Chapter Four.

καθ' ἡσυχίαν ἀπίωσιν εὐωχημένοι;

First Athenian Delegate: Hey you, open the door! You should have gotten out of the way! Hey! Why are you guys sitting here? You don't want me to burn you good with my torch, do you? It's a vulgar little *topos*, and I wouldn't do it; but if indeed I must, I'll endure it in order to gratify you guys (to the audience). Second Athenian Delegate: We too will endure it with you. Won't you guys beat it? You'll shriek like a banshee for a long time over that hair of yours.⁵⁰¹ First Ath.: Won't you get gone, so the Spartans can come out from inside in peace, having been thoroughly entertained?

Lysistrata 1216–24

Like *Peace* 742–49 (discussed above), this passage implies that the physical abuse of slave characters is conventional in comedy and already hackneyed; both passages also ostensibly attempt to distance the playwright from such vulgar humor, though the humorously hypocritical tone of this one is more obvious from the text alone. Though the comic poet himself and the actor through whom his artistic opinions are voiced claim to be above such practices, the torch-wielding drunken *komasts* do in fact assault the slaves with their torches, thus driving them away from the door. The joking tone of the implication that *they* are better than this but the audience is not is difficult to miss. There is also considerable comic potential in the ironic language: one usually endures miserable circumstances or indeed the abuse of others, but these *komasts* rather than their victims are said to reluctantly *endure* (ταλαιπωρεῖν) the role of physical aggressor for the benefit of the audience. There may be sexually aggressive overtones to the actual act of abuse if the phallic association of "torch" is activated, but this will have required a suggestive staging that would complement the humor of but is not really necessary for the scene as it stands otherwise. At any rate, this scene will constitute further evidence of slaves being beaten and slaves running away from beatings on the comic stage. As is the case with Manes in *Birds*, who continually runs away from the blows of his master into the house only to return with even more baskets of feathers to receive even more blows, the slaves in this scene apparently run away only to come back a few lines later, seemingly for the dramatic purpose of working in even more physical humor while they are driven away a second time (ἀλλ' οὐτοὶ γὰρ αὐθις ἔρχονται πάλιν / εἰς ταῦτόν. οὐκ ἐρρήσεται, ὃ μαστιγίαί, 1239–40). Just as the slave in *Birds* is compared to a slow donkey and a called a worthless Manes, so too these slave characters are labeled "whipping-posts" as they are driven from the area around the stage door for the second and final time, heaping verbal on top of physical abuse.

Of course a slave character does not have to be mute to receive a beating onstage for the amusement of the audience. Thus Uproar (Κυδοιμός), an abstract concept embodied as a slave of War at *Peace* 255–88, speaks some few lines before and after he takes his beating and later uses his power of speech as a messenger to his master of events in Greece. What he has to say in

501 Much has been written about the hair of these people. Was it long, in contradiction to the custom for the hair of slaves at Athens, and did this prompt some of the Athenians' aggression? (Cf. Radt 1974, 15–16; Henderson 1987, 208–209; Sommerstein 1990, 219.) But as Henderson and Sommerstein correctly point out, what we have in the text does not necessarily imply that there is anything at all wrong with their hair. The reference may instead indicate that when the Athenian burns them with his torch he will set their hair on fire, which would be guaranteed to ruin virtually any hair style. Certainly if he threatens their heads with the torch this meaning will be quite clear.

the former context serves primarily to accentuate his suffering for the enjoyment of the audience. The comic hero Trygaeus has flown up to Olympus to demand from Zeus what he has in mind for the Greeks and to take aggressive action if it is not favorable; when he arrives, however, he finds that the gods have departed, leaving War and his slave Uproar to have their way with the warring city-states. After encountering Hermes (who, as fits his role as slave of the gods, has been left behind to guard their various pots and jars) and learning the state of things from him, Trygaeus encounters War coming out from the stage door and hides. He is eavesdropping throughout the scene quoted below, and his comments are therefore asides to the audience. In what immediately precedes, War is mixing ingredients that represent the various Greek city-states in his mortar and preparing to pound them together, thereby reducing them to an unrecognizable mass, a potent symbol of the effects of war. He is frustrated in his efforts, however, by the lack of a pestle, and this motivates his calling for Uproar:

Πο. παῖ παῖ Κυδοιμέ.
 Κυ. τί με καλεῖς;
 Πο. κλαύσει μακρά. (255)
 ἔστηκας ἀργός; οὐτοσί σοι κόνδυλος.
 Τρ. ὡς δριμύς.
 Κυ. οἴμοι μοι τάλας, ὃ δέσποτα.
 Τρ. μῶν τῶν σκορόδων ἐνέβαλες εἰς τὸν κόνδυλον;
 Πο. οἴσεις ἀλετρίβανον τρέχων;
 Κυ. ἀλλ', ὃ μέλε,
 οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμῖν· ἐχθὲς εἰσφκίσμεθα. (260)
 Πο. οὐκουν παρ' Ἀθηναίων μεταθρέξει ταχὺ <πάνυ>;
 Κυ. ἔγωγε νῆ Δί'· εἰ δὲ μή, κεκλαύσομαι.

War: Boy, boy, Uproar! Uproar: Why are you calling me? War: You'll weep for a long time. Are you standing idle? This here fist is for you! Trygaeus: How fierce! Up: Argh, poor me, master! Tr: You didn't throw some garlic into that punch, did you?⁵⁰² War: Will you run and get a pestle? Up: But sir, we don't have one. We moved in yesterday. War: Won't you run and fetch one from the Athenians right quick? Up: I sure will, by Zeus, or I'll take a beating.
Peace 255–62

Here as at *Birds* 1308–36 the master's pretext for striking his slave is his laziness, though in this case, too, there may be nothing in the staging that indicates the complaint is justified.⁵⁰³ Rather War is frustrated by not having his pestle handy, and he takes this out on his slave to the amusement of many in the audience.⁵⁰⁴ Trygaeus' reaction is suitably ambiguous, since the

502 Garlic is associated frequently with violence in Greek comedy, and a person who is in a fighting mood is sometimes said to have eaten it.

503 The Athenian *proboulos* at *Lysistrata* 426–30 likewise criticizes at length the slaves who accompany him as lazy, but the text does not suggest that he actually strikes them. The difference may be that they are public slaves, so that while he can order them to assist him in his magisterial duties he does not actually have the full rights possessed by an Athenian master over his own slaves.

504 Thus Sommerstein 2005, 145: "War, it seems, is portrayed as having so savage a temper that he beats his slave for idleness when the latter is merely waiting to receive his orders."

adjective "fierce" or "sharp" (δριμύς) could describe either the fist and therefore the blow (κόνδυλος) or War himself.⁵⁰⁵ Those in the audience who find the beating of slaves particularly amusing will understand the former, since the detail that the blow is a harsh one will please them. On the other hand, any audience members who feel more or less strongly that such humor is low-brow and not worthy of their laughter can take Trygaeus' aside to describe War as excessively harsh, identifying with their perception of the comic hero as disapproving of such behavior. But the slave's subsequent howling is for the benefit of all audience members, and Trygaeus' joking question about the garlic (which of course War does not actually hear) certainly emphasizes unambiguously the violence of the blow while at the same time probably characterizing the slave's reaction as excessively dramatic.⁵⁰⁶ A united audience laughs at the pain of the slave, though some of them may have had to disapprove of the character causing that pain in order to feel better about their own *Schadenfreude*. Finally, the actual violence of this scene gives way to the threat of violence when the slave departs the stage with a reference to the future blows he can expect if he fails in his new task (262). Interestingly, the slave actually *does* fail at not only this task but also his next one (to fetch a pestle from the Spartans).⁵⁰⁷ Nothing indicates that his master strikes him in either case, though the second time he arrives onstage wailing in anticipation of a beating he never receives (οἶμοι τάλας· οἶμοι γε κᾶτ' οἶμοι μάλα, 280). This illustrates well a general principal of the beating of slaves in Aristophanic comedy, which is that the behavior of the slave and the punishment he receives are not necessarily related in a realistic way. If anything they are inversely related: the slave characters discussed in previous chapters who engage in all sorts of innuendo—usurping the sexual role of their masters and of other free people—may sometimes be threatened but are rarely actually beaten, while those slaves who *are* beaten onstage almost invariably seem to have done nothing at all wrong. Incurable slaves are not beaten because the audience enjoys their behavior and beatings would tend to discourage it; slaves who are innocent bystanders *are* beaten because the audience thinks that beating slaves is funny, all the more so when it happens for no reason at all.⁵⁰⁸

No discussion of the beating of slave characters on the comic stage would be complete without an analysis of *Frogs* 615–73, where the slave Xanthias disguised as Herakles and his master Dionysus disguised as a slave are both beaten onstage, with alternating strokes, to try to determine which of them is a slave and which of them is not only free but also a god. When the Doorman of Pluto identifies Xanthias as Herakles from his outfit he immediately orders his slaves to arrest him, since Herakles had stole the hound Cerberus from the underworld; Xanthias in turn denies ever having been there before and offers his accuser the opportunity to torture his slave to ascertain the truth of what he says.⁵⁰⁹ He lists all the methods of torture he is allowing

505 Olson 1998, 122 and Sommerstein 2005, 145 consider only the former possibility, but it is worth noting that at *Knights* 808 this same adjective is used to describe an ἄγροικος, i.e. a person with boorish manners, often characterized by an unnecessarily violent disposition, who might do something like strike his slave for no apparent reason.

506 Stefanis 1980, 126 (under ἄλλες ζωηρές ἐκδηλώσεις) points out with a number of examples that the behavior of slaves as they are depicted in comedy is often over the top: they guffaw instead of merely laughing and wail instead of merely crying.

507 The pestles War had been planning to use to beat Greece to a pulp were actually the principal war-hawks at this point in time on each side of the Peloponnesian War, the Athenian politician Cleon and the Spartan general Brasidas. Both had died in the battle at Amphipolis the previous year.

508 Cf. Walin 2009, 35–37.

509 Sommerstein 1996, 209–10 is an excellent starting point for the practice of torturing slaves as a test of their

the Doorman to use, barring only those which are too easy to endure (618–22), and from this it becomes clear, if it was not already before, that Xanthias' motivation in offering up his master (who is mistaken for his slave) for torture is to get back at him for the many troubles he has had to endure in his master's service in the first half of the play.⁵¹⁰ Dionysus of course protests that he is really a god, from which the idea emerges of a test by flogging to see who is the god and who is the slave; the god should not be able to feel the pain of the whip. The Doorman strikes each with the whip in turn, and each pretends not to feel the blows. As the scene progresses and more and increasingly violent blows have been dealt, it becomes more difficult for the master and his slave to stand the pain; they begin to cry out and then attempt to justify or mask these cries after the fact in a number of humorous ways. What is absolutely clear from our text is that both Dionysus and Xanthias *do* feel pain. The idea that the slave and the god—and therefore, perhaps, that slaves and free men—somehow differ fundamentally in their bodies and specifically in their ability to feel pain is refuted by events onstage. It would be unwise to draw from this too sweeping a conclusion; Aristophanes probably does not really mean to indicate to his audience that masters and slaves are fundamentally the same, differing only in the position they hold within society. If nothing else, the logical leap from a the observation of a similar tolerance for pain to the presumption of similarities in mental capacity and virtues is enormous. Nonetheless, the scene as we have it could be taken in that way, as a kind of refutation of the idea of natural slavery. The Doorman ultimately cannot tell the difference between them by beating them, and it is only at this point that he comes up with the convenient solution of bringing them before Pluto and Persephone, who as gods will be able to recognize other gods. In fact being known and recognized by family members and neighbors as a free person and a citizen was vitally important at Athens; nothing prevented a free person without such ties from being seized and held as a slave. The convenient comic solution therefore resembles the actual solution to the problem of determining who was a slave and who was free at Athens. Reflective members of the audience might have taken this scene as inspiration to ponder the role of fortune in human affairs, including in the difference between life as a free person and life as a slave, but it is likely that many and probably most simply enjoyed the spectacle of a good beating with plenty of vocal and colorful suffering.

Part 5.3: Threatened Beatings

Threatened beatings are somewhat more frequent in our extant comedies than staged ones, though we typically cannot be quite sure that when the language of threats is used it is not accompanied by an actual blow or blows. Masters often threaten their slaves by telling them that they will weep, using various verbs which indicate the sounds of pain and begging. These phrases are ubiquitous in comedy; in fact they are much more often employed against characters who are *not* slaves, and who may even be of a higher social class than the speaker. Thus in the passages I have been able to find (based on a word search of all forms of κλάειν, οἰμώζειν, κωκύειν, and ὀτοτύζειν)⁵¹¹ such physical threats are used only six times against slaves but fifty-

masters' testimony in legal proceedings.

510 The list of allowed forms of torture is itself interesting, but it is beyond the scope of my argument here.

511 Such a word search is greatly complicated by the fact that in colloquial Attic speech such words seem to have been used both to make physical threats (whether bluffing or not) and to mean something roughly equivalent to colloquial English "fuck off". I have attempted to consider only the former, but sometimes which of the two is

one times against non-slaves, though in three of the latter cases the threatened entity is an inanimate object or animal that could be notionally regarded as a slave.⁵¹² In fact such threats seem to be made *by* slaves (nine times) more often than they are directed *at* them.⁵¹³ They are directed most frequently at unwanted visitors whom the other characters find annoying.⁵¹⁴ The frequency of these threats in comedy likely reflects in part tendencies of colloquial Attic speech and in part comedy's obsession with violence of all kinds as yet another form of transgression. But despite the fact that these sorts of threats are often made against free people, their import is fundamentally different when they are directed toward slaves, who can in fact be beaten with impunity by their masters both in comedy and in real life.

Threats of violence toward slaves, which in the absence of explicit textual clues may or may not be carried out, typically function as brief and apparently humorous distractions from whatever is happening in the surrounding scene. Often they only take a few lines. Thus in the prologue of *Clouds*:

Οι. ἔλαιον ἡμῖν οὐκ ἔνεστ' ἐν τῷ λύχνῳ.
 Στ. οἴμοι. τί γάρ μοι τὸν πότην ἤπτες λύχνον;
 δεῦρ' ἔλθ', ἵνα κλάης.
 Οι. διὰ τί δῆτα κλαύσομαι;
 Στ. ὅτι τῶν παχειῶν ἐνετίθεις θρυαλλίδων.

meant is difficult to discern. Such words can also, of course, refer to literal weeping, but such uses are much more easily distinguished.

- 512 Threats against slaves: *Nub.* 58; *Pax* 255; *Av.* 1207; *Lys.* 436, 1222; *Plut.* 58. Of these, at least *Pax* 255 and *Lys.* 1222 demand that the slaves actually be struck (see the discussion above). Threats against non-slaves: *Ach.* 822, 827, 841, 1035; *Eq.* 891 (unless we want to regard the Sausage-Seller as a notional slave); *Nub.* 217, 933; *Vesp.* 1327; *Pax* 466, 532, 1277; *Av.* 347, 846, 960, 1043, 1503, 1572, 1628; *Lys.* 505, 516, 520; *Thesm.* 248, 916, 1001, 1063, 1081 (twice), 1088, 1187; *Ran.* 34, 178, 257, 279, 707, 743, 1209; *Eccl.* 425, 648 (twice), 692, 809, 1027; *Plut.* 62, 111, 425, 572, 612, 876, 1099; *Ar. fr.* 17 and 212 K.-A. The three instances in the latter category of threats against an object are *Thesm.* 1187, where the Scythian archer threatens his unruly penis (discussed in Chapter Four), *Plut.* 1099, where Cario threatens to beat the door for making noise when no one is there, and *Ar. fr.* 17 K.-A., where a chicken who has knocked over a cup is threatened.
- 513 Threats made by slaves: *Thesm.* 1001, 1088, 1187; *Ran.* 34, 178, 743; *Plut.* 111, 876, 1099. Note that in most cases there are extenuating circumstances: the Scythian archer as a public slave responsible for keeping the peace at Athens occupies a special position, Xanthias in *Frogs* once threatens a prospective hired day-laborer who is (to a traditionally "free" Greek mind) scarcely of any higher status than himself, and two of Cario's threats are directed against an informer (always an unsympathetic character, and Cario's threat is in response to being threatened by him) and against an inanimate object (a door). This leaves only Cario's threat to Wealth when the latter claims that all people everywhere are wicked and two of Xanthias' comments, which are indeed made in reference to his master Dionysus (who is offstage for one and does not seem to be able to hear the other). These last are not really surprising given the unmasterly depiction of Dionysus throughout the first half of the play and the fact that he trades roles with his slave repeatedly and is whipped alongside him.
- 514 If we use threats of physical violence as an index for how annoying the other characters onstage find an unwanted visitor, the title of most annoying character in extant comedy clearly goes to Euripides as Echo, who is physically threatened four times (*Thesm.* 1063, twice at 1081, 1088) in a mere forty-one lines (1056–97), making her/him the clear victor to the delight of children everywhere, whose strategic brilliance in the game of repeating everything a person says in order to annoy them is thereby vindicated. Second place would go to Penia/Poverty, who is threatened three times (*Plut.* 425, 572, 612) over the course of a little more than two hundred lines (*Plut.* 415–618).

Slave: We don't have any olive oil in our lamp. Strepsiades: Shit! Why did you light the thirsty lamp for me? Come here and take your beating (lit. so you may weep). Sl.: Why will I weep? Str.: Because you stuck in one of the thick wicks. *Clouds* 56–59

These few lines constitute a self-contained interruption of Strepsiades' monologue, with no discernible connection to what precedes or follows. As Dover 1968, 101 argues, surely one dramatic function of this brief interlude is simply to interrupt the catalogue of Strepsiades' debts and afford him the opportunity to continue his narrative afterward, thereby creating the impression that there are in fact many more debts which he never managed to mention. But that implies that these lines are preferable to four more lines about his debts; the audience should therefore find them funny or otherwise engaging. We should probably infer that the threat of physical violence toward the slave—and possibly the driving of the slave from the stage with blows, since he is not heard from again—is in itself amusing, in addition to the characterization of Strepsiades as excessively thrifty (since he is quite concerned about the rate at which his lamp burns oil, a minor expense relative to the debts he has incurred on behalf of his son). It is useful to compare this scene with *Wasps* 248–57. There too another old man, in this case the chorus leader, criticizes the person carrying his lamp and strikes him with his fists to punish him for wasting oil. In *Wasps*, however, the person struck is clearly the old man's son, who (unlike the slave *Clouds*) becomes indignant with his father and threatens to leave, taking the lamp with him and leaving the old man in the dark to stumble through mud puddles, if he does not stop punching him. In both cases we find humor at the expense of a thrifty old man who becomes violent over lamp oil combined with the entertainment value of actual physical violence or threats, but in the latter case the son is allowed to recover some of his dignity, while in the former the slave remains silent after the threat of violence has been made.

Perhaps the most frequently threatened slave character who appears on the Aristophanic stage is Cario in *Wealth*. As I have detailed in chapters two and three, he behaves constantly in such a way that we might expect the free characters around him to strike him. Yet he never actually *is* struck by anyone, despite his driving more than one character to make threats.⁵¹⁵ The first such threat is also the first reaction to him in the play and indeed the first opportunity any character other than the slave gets to speak. Cario ends the monologue with which he begins the play by delivering to his master an ultimatum: Chremylus must tell him why they are following a blind man around, or he will make a scene (thus presumably attracting the attention of the blind man, whom they have apparently been following quietly for a long time). The slave expresses his confidence that his master cannot simply beat him for his insolence, since he is still wearing the garland from their visit to the shrine of Apollo:

Κα. οὐ γάρ με τυπήσεις στέφανον ἔχοντά γε.

515 At *Wealth* 821–22 Cario emerges back onto the stage from inside, complaining that the smoke from the sacrifice had been biting at his eyelids. Olson 1989, 197 reads this as a metaphorical blinding, a signal that despite the elevation of his master the slave is excluded from the benefits of *Wealth* and must remain in his place. If he is correct, this would have had a symbolic effect not unlike the character taking a blow. But the language of blinding is not explicit here, unlike in the other passages of *Wealth* he adduces, and his argument ignores the dramaturgical reason for Cario's comment, which is to explain why he has come out of the house when no one has knocked on the door. Indeed, the same explanation is implied for the emergence of Getas from the stage door at *Men. Dys.* 550, indicating that this may have been a commonplace in comedy.

Χρ. μὰ Δί', ἀλλ' ἀφελὼν τὸν στέφανον, ἦν λυπῆς τί με,
ἵνα μᾶλλον ἀλγῆς.

Κα. λῆρος· οὐ γὰρ παύσομαι
πρὶν ἂν φράσης μοι τίς ποτ' ἐστὶν οὗτοςί·

Cario: For you won't strike me while I'm wearing a garland. Chremylus: No I won't, by Zeus, but instead I'll take it off first, if you annoy me at all, so you'll be in more pain! Ca. Nonsense! I won't stop until you tell me who this guy is. *Wealth* 21–24

This is a prime example of the comic principle outlined above that the defiant, outlandish, insulting and otherwise undesirable (in real life) behavior of clownish slave characters is not punished with physical violence, since the behavior of such characters delights the audience and a realistic response would naturally silence them. Cario's assertion that his master will not dare to strike him demands a response, but this is merely an intimation of future violence if the slave presses his luck. Cario of course completely ignores this warning, even calling it nonsense, and upholds his original ultimatum. The master concedes without ever punishing the slave, comically explaining his action as the indulgence of his most faithful and most thieving (κλεπτίστατον, 27) slave. Thus from the very beginning of the play Cario is set up in the eyes of the audience as an incorrigible but ultimately tolerated rogue; this impression will be confirmed again and again throughout the course of the play.

The next such confirmation comes in fact from the first response of the *next* character who meets Cario. At 56–57 the slave approaches the old, blind man who (as we learn later) is actually the embodiment of Wealth himself and asks him who he is quite rudely, implicitly threatening violence if he does not answer quickly. Wealth's response is literally "I tell you to weep!" (ἐγὼ μὲν οἰμώξω σοι, 58), which may be taken either as a threat of his own in response or as an equivalent to colloquial English "fuck off". Indeed, it may function in both these ways. Nonetheless, there is again no indication that Wealth actually strikes him, which confirms for the second time in less than sixty lines Cario's tendency to get away with provocative behavior toward free people.⁵¹⁶ Likewise the dialogue immediately preceding Cario's song-exchange with the chorus of old men and the song-exchange itself are filled with insolent remarks and aggressive insults from the slave (253–322); the chorus behave in response according to the pattern as we have observed it, becoming angry and threatening him multiple times but never actually coming to blows.⁵¹⁷

Much later in the play (850–950) the Informer attempts to exploit Cario's slave status for an edge in their confrontation after Cario has insulted him, just as the chorus had before him. Like them, he threatens the slave with the prospect not merely of an informal beating but of actual torture; he threatens to have him racked on the wheel (875–76).⁵¹⁸ As we saw happen at the

516 Of course Wealth comically also says something quite similar to the master Chremylus, who asks him who he is much more politely, but this response is conditioned by how Cario has already set the tone of their interaction.

517 I discussed this passage in depth in Chapter Three.

518 Cf. *Peace* 452, where Trygaeus wishes that a hypothetical slave who might be resistant to the idea of peace with the Spartans because he is planning to run away (an act which is imagined as much more likely to be successful with Spartan forces in the Attic countryside) be stretched out on the wheel and whipped at the same time: ἐπὶ τοῦ τροχοῦ γ' ἔλκοιτο μαστιγούμενος.

beginning of the play with his master, Cario simply dismisses the threat in a cavalier and insulting way: here he tells the Informer, who must surely be a citizen, that he will wail (that is, receive a beating) if he tries any such thing (οἰμῳῆρα σύ, 876). The counter-threat is effective, and the Informer turns his attention instead to the (free, citizen) Honest Man, whose behavior is less physically intimidating. In the lines that follow, Cario eventually becomes exasperated with the Informer and robs him of his clothing, thereby committing a violent act punishable under Athenian law by death,⁵¹⁹ and this too as a slave and against a citizen (more on this below). The fact that he can do all this and escape unscathed is consistent with what we can observe about the role he plays throughout the entire play.

Part 5.4: Offstage Beatings and Discussions of Slave Abuse

Being beaten was an integral part of the experience of real slaves, and it is not therefore surprising that in our extant comic texts we find not only scenes where slave characters are beaten or threatened but also scenes in which slave characters speak amongst themselves about the experience of being beaten—with humorous elements added, of course, for the benefit of the audience—or describe to the audience the beating they have just received offstage. The prologue of *Knights* provides us with an early example of both these phenomena:

- A. Ἰατταταιὰξ τῶν κακῶν, ἰατταταί.
κακῶς Παφλαγόνα τὸν νεώνητον κακὸν
αὐταῖσι βουλαῖς ἀπολέσειαν οἱ θεοί.
ἐξ οὗ γὰρ εἰσήρρησεν εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν
πληγὰς ἀεὶ προστρίβεται τοῖς οἰκέταις. (5)
- B. κάκιστα δῆθ' οὗτός γε πρῶτος Παφλαγόνων
αὐταῖς διαβολαῖς.
- A. ὦ κακόδαιμον, πῶς ἔχεις;
- B. κακῶς, καθάπερ σύ.
- A. δεῦρό νυν πρόσελθ', ἵνα
ξυναυλίαν κλαύσωμεν Οὐλύμπου νόμον.
- A+B. μυμῦ μυμῦ μυμῦ μυμῦ μυμῦ μυμῦ. (10)

Slave A:⁵²⁰ Ouchity ow ow that hurts, holy shit, ow! May the gods destroy that worthless new-bought Paphlagon as befits his worthlessness, and his plans with him! Ever since he came into the house he's always getting the other slaves beaten. Slave B: Yes, let him suffer most terribly, him first of all the Paphlagonians, and his false accusations with him. A: How ya doing, you poor bastard? B: Just as badly as you. A: Come here, then, so we can wail an *aulos* concert, one of Olympus' tunes. Both: Boo hoo boo hoo boo hoo!

Knights 1–10

519 [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 52.1.

520 As in the case of my treatment of *Knights* 21–29 in Chapter Three, here I use the text of Wilson 2007a but designate the two slave speakers merely as Slave A and Slave B rather than as Demosthenes and Nicias; the characterization of the two slaves as these two politicians is inconsistent (on which cf. Henderson 2003), and at any rate in these first ten lines the audience have not yet learned that they represent anyone other than a pair of nameless slaves.

Slave A exits the house immediately after having been beaten, still wailing in pain from the experience; the first words of the play are his inarticulate cries. The spectacle of slave suffering therefore has the important function of immersing the audience in the action of the play for the first time, indicating that the comic effect of such humor must have been significant enough to attract the attention of the audience when the commotion of people talking and getting comfortable prior to the show had not yet abated entirely. The audience is probably meant to understand that Slave B, who is already outside when Slave A arrives fresh from his beating, had received a beating of his own not too long before; certainly this should be the implication of the question and response at 7–8. This might well create the impression that there is a whole line of slaves inside the house waiting to be whipped in turn, who would then come outside and complain about their treatment. It is quite explicit in these lines that the new Paphlagonian slave has fabricated the charges on which these slaves are being whipped, and the audience is therefore laughing at the beating of slaves who have done nothing to deserve their treatment. This conforms to the pattern observed above whereby the physical abuse of slave characters onstage seems to have been concentrated on those slaves who seem conspicuously undeserving of such treatment, apparently because unmotivated abuse is comic and amusing while the beating of slaves for (perceived) cause is merely an unremarkable part of the everyday experience of Athenian masters.⁵²¹ Finally, the pain and suffering of real slaves is trivialized further in this comic context by the expression of their cries as a parody of an *aulos* tune; when they sing together the audience will laugh not only at the parody but also at their suffering.

There is some reason to suspect that the portion of the prologue of *Knights* examined above represents a conventional type of scene in Old Comedy. In the second prologue of *Frogs* (738–813), where Dionysus' slave Xanthias and an anonymous slave of Pluto bond over their shared, typically slavish proclivities, one of the points of common ground they discover is their mutual delight in going outside and grumbling after they have received a harsh beating (τί δὲ τονθορούζων, ἦνίκ' ἄν πληγὰς λαβῶν / πολλὰς ἀπίης θύραζε, 747–48). Of course this is exactly what happens at *Knights* 1–10. Many of the things in which they both claim to take pleasure seem more readily intelligible as descriptions of *comic* slave characters than of actual real life slaves, and it therefore seems likely that they are understood to be listing the stereotypical traits of their character-type rather than common features of actual slaves. Comparison with the end of *Wasps* would tend to confirm this impression:

Οἱ. ἰὼ χελῶναι μακάριαι τοῦ δέρματος,
 {καὶ τρισμακάριαι τοῦ ἔπι ταῖς πλευραῖς}
 ὡς εὖ κατηρέψασθε καὶ νουβυστικῶς
 κεράμφω τὸ νῶτον, ὥστε τὰς πλευρὰς στέγειν. (1295)
 ἐγὼ δ' ἀπόλωλα στιζόμενος βακτηρία.

521 Hunter 1994, 162–73 emphasizes simultaneously: 1) that the beating and torture of slaves in real life was absolutely routine for all masters, including those considered "good" and 2) that "good" masters were supposed to take great care to mete out punishment only when it was warranted. What we witness in comedy, then, and therefore what amused the audience, is specifically the behavior of "bad" masters, both those who abuse their power by beating their slaves without cause and those who unaccountably do not beat their slaves when they *do* have cause. Both extremes are amply represented; the only kind of master we do not find in comedy is the kind that was socially acceptable in real life.

Χο. τί δ' ἐστίν, ὦ παῖ; παῖδα γάρ, κἄν ἦ γέρων,
καλεῖν δίκαιον ὅστις ἄν πληγὰς λάβῃ.

Slave:⁵²² Yow! You tortoises are fortunate in your skin {and thrice-fortunate in the bit on your ribs}, since you've roofed over your back well and sensibly with tile, so as to cover your ribs. I, on the other hand, have been tattooed to death with a cane. Chorus-Leader: What is it, boy/slave? For it's right to call a man a boy/slave, even if he's an old man, if he takes a beating.
Wasps 1292–98

In this scene, too, a slave emerges onto the stage having just been beaten and still wailing in pain for the benefit of the audience. The extended invocation of the tortoise with its beating-resistant shell is intentionally ridiculous, making the slave's appearance more humorous and therefore making it easier for the audience to laugh at his suffering, which is trivialized by his method of talking about it, just as we saw with the expression of servile pain as a parody of an *aulos* tune at *Knights* 9–10. It is clear from his language that the chorus-leader does not recognize this slave; he should not therefore be identified with Xanthias, who had interacted with the chorus extensively during the first half of the play.⁵²³ It is likewise clear that this slave (unlike most comic slaves, if the evidence of vase painting is any indication) must be an old man himself. Nonetheless the chorus-leader correctly infers from the slave's behavior and from the treatment he describes that he is a slave; he communicates this inference by way of an aetiological pun, which implicitly connects the status of being a παῖς ("slave" but also "boy") with being beaten, not only because both slaves and children could be beaten by the master of the house but also because the word "beat" (παίειν) inheres in the word παῖς itself. It is likely enough that this was a popular folk etymology of παῖς. Certainly the pun is picked up again at 1307, when the slave describes how the old man Philocleon beat him like a young man would, calling out "Boy! Boy!" (κάτυπτε δὴ με νεανικῶς "παῖ παῖ" καλῶν). The repeated vocative case of the noun meaning slave or boy (παῖ παῖ) comes quite close in pronunciation to an exhortation to "hit, hit" (παῖε παῖε) such as we find, repeated twice just as here, in two separate choral passages (*Acharnians* 282 and *Knights* 247)—where it represents the members of the chorus exhorting themselves to attack some figure they find reprehensible—and at *Peace* 1119, where a master exhorts himself to strike a greedy oracle-monger.⁵²⁴ If we read this pun into comic scenes at the door, where a character regularly calls out παῖ παῖ for a slave to answer the door while banging (παίειν) on the door at the same time, it becomes much more pervasive, and the association of slaves with physical violence in this particular way becomes a comic trope. This would also provide a conventional context within which to understand Cario's joke about the door taking a beating at *Wealth* 1098–99.

In fact the prologue scenes of extant Old Comedy frequently stage a complaining slave or a pair of slave characters commiserating about their common plight, with the experience of being beaten sometimes figuring prominently as it does at *Knights* 1–10. Thus in *Wasps*, which was

522 I depart from the text of Wilson 2007a in attributing these lines to an anonymous slave rather than to Xanthias. Cf. below.

523 MacDowell 1971, Sommerstein 1983, and Wilson 2007a give these lines to Xanthias in their texts, though MacDowell 1971, 300–1 recognizes that there is really no basis for this attribution.

524 Though it may seem odd, choruses regularly exhort themselves to do things in comedy by using the singular imperative.

produced only two years later (422), we again find a pair of slaves talking about being beaten in the very first lines, though here they discuss not a recent beating but rather the prospect of a future one for the one who is taking a nap while he is on the guard duty assigned to him by his master (1–3). The language used is colorful: he is said to owe his ribs "a big bad debt" (κακὸν ἄρα ταῖς πλευραῖς τι προῦφείλεις μέγα, 3). Such language, like the colorful, metaphoric language we often saw in connection with the sexual exploitation of slaves in Chapter Four, tends to trivialize the abuse of slaves and make it easier to take as a joke. The effect, then, is similar to that of the assimilation of the cry of slave suffering to a parody of an *aulos* tune in the corresponding scene in *Knights* and to the apostrophe of the happily shelled tortoise in *Wasps*. In contrast to the prologues of *Knights* and *Wasps*, which begin with references to being beaten, the second prologue of *Frogs* ends with such a reference. When Xanthias and the slave of Pluto are finally about to reenter the stage door after their extended discussion of the various nefarious acts they enjoy committing as slaves and after the anonymous slave has explained the plot of the second half of the play to Xanthias and thereby to the audience as well, the anonymous slave decides that it is time for them to go back inside because "when masters get serious, we get beatings" (ὡς ὅταν γ' οἱ δεσπότες / ἐσπουδάκωσι, κλαύμαθ' ἡμῖν γίγνεται, 812–13). As at *Wasps* 3, then, we have here a pair of slaves in a prologue scene who anticipate the possibility of a beating for their misbehavior. The first scenes of *Peace*, *Frogs*, and *Wealth* also feature slaves who are clearly suffering in some way and discontented with their lot, and their misfortune in each of these plays will have been a source of amusement to the audience. Since the slaves in these three plays do not suffer from the results of physical violence, however, a detailed discussion of them is beyond my purpose here.

Part 5.5: Slaves Who Beat: Slave Bodies as Instruments of Violence

As Stefanis 1980, 125 observes, in Old Comedy slaves are hardly ever absent from scenes of violence ("οἱ δοῦλοι ποτέ σχεδὸν δὲν λείπουν ἀπὸ βίαιες σκηνές"). Part of this is surely realism; certainly the public slaves who sometimes have violent roles to play in our comedies had counterparts in real life in the form of public slaves (notably the Scythian archers) who functioned as rudimentary peacekeepers. They were at the disposal of the various magistrates, and in particular the *prytaneis*. On the other hand, in our plays free men who enter into violent altercations with other free men use the bodies of their private slaves as weapons, ordering them to enter the fray. This, too, probably has some analogue in the life experience of real Athenians, though the frequency of violence in comedy is surely greater than it would have been in reality. Finally, the comic tendency for masters and magistrates to use their slaves as instruments of violence reaches an extreme form when slave characters begin to innovate their own violent acts independently of their masters; this type of behavior is probably valuable in the comic context because it is inherently transgressive while at the same time it allows an audience composed primarily of masters to laugh at the idea that their slaves might achieve an independent inclination toward violence and therefore to assuage their fears that this might happen.

Part 5.6: Privately Owned Slaves as Weapons

Virginia Hunter has shown convincingly that Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries lacked

the means to enforce certain types of legal decisions; it therefore often fell to private individuals to make arrests and to seize the property (including slaves) of people with whom they were engaged in legal battles, or on the other hand to defend themselves from such acts when they believed them to be unjustified.⁵²⁵ Of course such a system inevitably leads to conflict, and physical violence would always have been a possibility. Hunter's discussion makes it clear that citizens relied on a network of kinsmen and neighbors to take their side in such confrontations. The larger their network of support, the more difficult it would be to take advantage of them; conversely, a citizen without such a network was fundamentally vulnerable. Because the point in these interactions seems to have been that the person who could marshal the largest force had a distinct advantage, it seems clear to me that a person's slaves—as well as his free kinsmen, friends, and neighbors, and possibly *their* slaves—must have played some role as well. The forensic accounts with which Hunter has to deal mention slaves in this role rather more rarely than we might expect, but I argue that this is because the role of slaves is assumed but not considered to be important except in the case of exceptional circumstances, as when a certain Theophemus and his brother fatally wounded an elderly nurse who was defending the house of her master when they came to seize his property in his absence.⁵²⁶ Such a view is supported by the frequency with which comic slave characters are implicated in violent confrontations at the behest of their masters.

I argue that the Doorman's apprehension of Xanthias at *Frogs* 605–17 was mostly likely understood by the Athenian audience as an instance of the type of arrest of an alleged wrongdoer by a private citizen discussed above, rather than (as it has generally been taken) as the arrest of a wrongdoer by a public official.⁵²⁷ All five slaves whom the Doorman employs for this task will on this reading be private slaves of the house of Pluto rather than Scythian archers. After the final costume change between master and slave, when Xanthias has once again taken on the role of Herakles, a Doorman emerges from within whom the audience will understand to be a slave of overseer status in the house of Pluto.⁵²⁸ This overseer first orders two unnamed slaves who accompany him to tie up Xanthias/Herakles as a dog-thief (since Herakles had famously stolen the hound Cerberus from the underworld). When Xanthias resists, he calls three more slaves from inside by name—Ditylas, Skeblyas, and Pardokas—and orders them to fight him (χωρεῖτε δευρὶ καὶ μάχεσθε τουτῶν, 609). As Dover 1993, 270 points out, these appear to be joke names: they suggest respectively "Two Humps", "Baboon", and "Fartinator". The former two might easily be taken to indicate ogre-like features appropriate to slaves apparently kept for the purpose of physical intimidation; the latter seems to end the list of fabricated names with a throw-away scatological joke. That Pardokas ("Fartinator") *could* be a corruption of the name Spartokos, which is attested in the royal house of the Crimean Bosphorus in the fifth century, is hardly

525 Hunter 1994, 120–53.

526 Demosthenes 47.52–66. Cf. Hunter 1994, 123–24. The argument of Hunt 1998 that slaves were involved in Greek warfare to a much greater extent than our historical sources indicate—and that consequently we must infer that these sources did not find the role of these slaves worth mentioning in many cases—has influenced my envisioning of a similar unsung role for slaves in potentially violent arrests and seizures of property carried out by private individuals.

527 Dover 1993, 270 and Sommerstein 1996, 208–9 both take the traditional position.

528 Dover 1993, 50–55 makes a compelling case against the traditional identification of this Doorman as Aiakos, though Sommerstein 1996 persists in identifying him thus. That he is a slave is made absolutely explicit by the text at 670, but the audience probably would have inferred this beforehand. His overseer status is evident from the way he orders the other slaves around.

copious evidence that these three are meant to be publicly owned Scythian archers, nor should we assume that the other two names should be Scythian names with which we are not familiar simply because they are not traditional comic slave names.⁵²⁹ The names Plautus gives to his *lorarii*, slaves who serve as intimidating bruisers and who are often responsible for the punishment of other slaves, are often based on Greek or Latin roots that suggest violence rather than being drawn from the stock of usual slave names.⁵³⁰ This practice might easily go back to Greek Old Comedy. It will be useful on this point to compare a similar scene from *Wasps*. Like the Doorman in *Frogs*, at *Wasps* 433 Bdelycleon, despite already being accompanied by a pair of household slaves, calls out three bruiser slaves to help him detain his father. These are clearly his private slaves; while two of their names (Phryx and Midas) are ethnics indicating Phrygian provenance, the last (Masyntias or "The Masticator") may indicate either prodigious consumption of food or violent tendencies, either of which might be appropriate to the name of a slave who sometimes functions to intimidate. There is therefore every reason to consider the five slaves under the direction of the Doorman at *Frogs* 605–17, and indeed the Doorman himself, to be privately owned slaves in the house of Pluto. That Xanthias offers his slave/master up for torture is consistent with the idea that this is a private arrest, since the torture of slaves in forensic contexts had to be agreed upon by both parties, and it was the private citizen who was serving as prosecutor and plaintiff (here effectively the Doorman as a representative of Pluto) who was responsible for supervising such torture.⁵³¹ Certainly some collapsing and simplification of the ordinary legal process has occurred, but that is in the nature of comedy. In the use of a posse of slaves as enforcers of an allegedly legal arrest we probably find in this passage a humorous but basically realistic depiction of something that could and did actually happen at Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries.

The situation we find in the first half of *Wasps* also benefits from reading in the light of Hunter's study. There a son, Bdelycleon, attempts to detain his father, Philocleon, within the house with the help of his slaves. His justification for doing so is that his father is mentally ill; he is confining him for his own protection. The chorus of older male jurors/wasps disputes the validity of this claim, and in their eyes Philocleon is therefore the victim of unlawful imprisonment. They undertake to free him by force, but they are opposed by the force of Bdelycleon and his five slaves (three of whom, as in *Frogs*, seem to be specifically of the mute "bruiser" variety).⁵³² We therefore find a situation in some ways quite similar to that of *Frogs* 605–17: a force of private individuals attempts to take action in anticipation of a legal claim, but the opposing party does not recognize the validity of this claim and therefore attempts to oppose their force with his own. The difference lies in the balance of power. Xanthias in *Frogs* does not command a force of slaves capable of holding their ground against the five slaves under the command of the Doorman, and the struggle is therefore quite brief. In *Wasps*, on the other hand,

529 Pace Sommerstein 1996, 208–9.

530 Thus Artamo at *Bacch.* 799 (cf. Gr. ἀρταμεῖν, to cut in pieces); Colaphus, Cordalio, and Corax at *Capt.* 657 (cf. respectively Gr. κολάπτειν, to strike; Lat. *scordalus*, a brawler; Gr. κόραξ, a hook used in torture); Turbalio and Sparax at *Rud.* 657 (cf. respectively Lat. *turba*, as in brawl; Gr. σπαραγμός, tearing).

531 Sommerstein 1996, 209–10 offers an excellent overview of the process.

532 One of the two speaking slaves from the prologue, Sosias, is sent behind the stage building at 140–41 to watch for any escape attempts from that quarter. He is therefore still notionally involved with the detaining of Philocleon, but from that point is out of sight and out of mind. Presumably he is sent offstage to conform with the general rule in comedy that only three speaking characters are onstage at any one time; Philocleon emerges and speaks for the first time a few lines later at 144.

Bdelycleon and his five slaves, who also have the advantage of a fortified position (the house), are able to hold their own against the chorus of old men/wasps, producing a physical stalemate that only then gives way to a verbal *agon*. But the establishment of this stalemate entails the use of private slave force against a citizen (indeed, against the old master of the house) and later against an entire chorus of citizens. At first Xanthias, the household slave who is tasked with guarding Philocleon, keeps him inside primarily by preventing him from opening the stage door (152–55) and by notifying his master of his attempts at escape (181–83; 205–6). But when Bdelycleon mentions the imminent arrival of the chorus of jurors, the slave advocates serious violence on his own initiative, suggesting that they pelt the old men with rocks if necessary (οὐκοῦν, ἦν δέη, / ἤδη ποτ' αὐτοὺς τοῖς λίθοις βαλλήσομεν, 221–22). When the master responds by characterizing the jurors for the first time as wasps, who will sting them if they anger them in this way, the slave expresses his confidence that with stones he can scatter a sizable wasp's nest of jurors (μὴ φροντίσης· ἐὰν ἐγὼ λίθους ἔχω, / πολλῶν δικαστῶν σφηκιὰν διασκεδῶ, 228–29). At this point master and slave fall asleep onstage while guarding Philocleon, effectively postponing their interaction with the chorus, which ignores them during its extended *parodos* (230–317). Next Philocleon calls out in song to his companions to save him, eventually making a comic comparison of his current situation to the wartime adventures of his youth, which were themselves not especially heroic (354–64).⁵³³ In this context he imagines that the slaves, and possibly his son as well, are armed with spits and guard him like a weasel that has stolen a piece of meat (ὥσπερ με γαλῆν κρέα κλέψασαν / τηροῦσιν ἔχοντ' ὀβελίσκους, 363–64). As is the case with Xanthias' previous suggestion that they pelt the chorus with stones, there is no indication in the text that the slaves ever actually wield such weapons in the ensuing conflict (in contrast to the chorus of wasp-jurors, who do indeed turn out to possess spit-like stingers).⁵³⁴ Rather references to both types of weapons serve to imbue Bdelycleon and his slaves with a perceived potential for violence which they do not actually possess in that degree. Later, as Philocleon is attempting to lower himself from a window by means of a rope, Bdelycleon and his slave wake up and move once again to prevent his escape. Here for the first time the slave is actually made to strike the father on the orders of the son, but the act is rendered comically rather than disturbingly violent by the choice of weapon: Bdelycleon orders Xanthias to take the harvest-wreaths (εἰρεσιῶναι) from the door of the house and strike Philocleon with their leaves (398–99).⁵³⁵ It is at this point that the chorus escalate the situation by unveiling their stingers and threatening to attack (404–29), in response to which Bdelycleon calls out the three "bruiser" slaves mentioned above, whom he orders to take hold of his father and to let him go for no one, or else he will put them in thick chains and starve them (433–36). The fact that Philocleon is at this point being manhandled by his own (former?) slaves is exploited for paratragic comic effect; the old master and the chorus alternate in pitifully evoking the favors Philocleon had done for these same "bruiser" slaves in the past. While the chorus mention the clothing their old master had bought them in winter (441–47), Philocleon himself frames that rather more serious attempt with references to all the *beatings* he used to give them, which he comically expects them to remember fondly:

533 Rather than describing an actual battle, he describes his role stealing some skewers during the looting of Naxos (about fifty years earlier, c. 470).

534 Cf. Sommerstein 1983, 178–79.

535 For these harvest-wreaths, which were dedicated to Apollo and hung on the house door each year at the *Pyanopsia*, cf. Sommerstein 1983, 181.

ὦ Κέκροψ ἥρωε ἀναξ, τὰ πρὸς ποδῶν Δρακοντίδη,
περιορᾶς οὕτω μ' ὑπ' ἀνδρῶν βαρβάρων χειρούμενον,
οὓς ἐγὼ ᾿δίδαξα κλάειν τέτταρ' εἰς τὴν χοίника; (440)

O lord Kekrops the hero, you who are a defendant-snake⁵³⁶ below the waist, do you overlook my being manhandled in this way by non-Greeks, whom I myself taught to weep four to a quart?⁵³⁷
Wasps 438–40

οὐκ ἀφήσεις οὐδὲ νυνί μ', ὦ κάκιστον θηρίον,
οὐδ' ἀναμνησθεῖς ὅθ' εὐρῶν τοὺς βότρυς κλέπτοντά σε
προσαγαγὼν πρὸς τὴν ἐλάαν ἐξέδειρ' εὖ κἀνδρικῶς, (450)
ὥστε σε ζηλωτὸν εἶναι; σὺ δ' ἀχάριστος ἦσθ' ἄρα.

Won't you let me go even *now*, you worst of beasts, not even though you remember the time I found you stealing some grapes, led you to the olive tree, and flayed you well and in manly fashion, so that you were an object of envy? But it seems you were ungrateful for it.

Wasps 448–51

Thus in the midst of a scene where slaves are being used as instruments of physical violence we find several graphic reminders of the other major role of slaves in relation to violence, their status as whipping posts at the whim of their master. At the end of the first remark at 440 we expect that Philocleon will claim to have taught these slaves some useful skill, but comically our expectation is subverted by the reference to beating, which is also made more humorous for the benefit of the audience by its colorfully hyperbolic language, just as we have seen in other references to violence against slaves. Likewise in the second remark one might expect a non-comic speaker to remind his interlocutor of some past benefaction, but here we again hear of a particular incident when Philocleon beat the specific slave to whom he addresses himself in a memorably vicious fashion. It is noteworthy that the pretext for this beating is the theft of food; just as Dikaiopolis uses theft as an excuse to take sexual advantage of a female slave at *Acharnians* 271–75, so too Philocleon uses it as a reason for giving this slave a severe, public beating. That the punishment in these two cases differs so substantially offers insight into how Athenian masters generally perceived their male and female slaves and with what meanings such gendered slave figures can be invested in Greek comedy. Finally, the transition from the extended scene of threatened and actual physical violence to the verbal *agon* is effected by treating the chorus fully as wasps rather than as Athenian citizens: Bdelycleon orders Xanthias to

536 Depictions of Kekrops in art show him with the body of a serpent below the waist; the proper word to describe this would be serpentine (δρακοντώδης), but Philocleon is so concerned with missing jury duty that he misspeaks a vowel, saying instead the name of a current defendant in a court case (Δρακοντίδης) whom he was afraid would be acquitted in his absence at 157. We cannot say for sure who this Drakontides was, but there are several known people of this era who bore the name. For a discussion of them, cf. Sommerstein 1983, 184.

537 "Weeping/wailing four to a quart" is an ambiguous notion. Have the slaves learned to fill a *choenix* (a unit of volume somewhat smaller than our quart) with four of their tears, making each tear a little less than half a pint in volume, as MacDowell 1971, 194 and Sommerstein 1983, 184 think? If so, this is indeed extraordinarily exaggerated comic hyperbole. Or does Philocleon mean that each stroke of the whip produced about a half pint of tears? This in itself would be no mean feat.

beat them away from the house with a stick and another, unnamed slave to blow smoke at them (456–59). Any potential issues the audience may have with the idea of slaves assaulting free men are thus laid to rest by the conceit that they are actually wasps, which slaves surely would have been in the habit of driving away in the manner described.

Part 5.7: Public Slaves as Enforcers

Publicly owned slaves served an important function in the bureaucracy of the Athenian state, including maintaining order at public events such as the meetings of the Assembly and the theatrical festivals and carrying out the instructions of magistrates. The duties of such public enforcers might include physically restraining a citizen. Though the use of public slaves for such tasks did avoid the creation of private resentment of citizen enforcers, and while their performance of this role seems to have been generally considered better than this alternative, perhaps avoiding potential charges of *hubris* that might be leveled against a citizen but not a public slave, nevertheless such public slaves themselves seem to have been the object of considerable hostility.⁵³⁸ The most prominent set of publicly owned slave enforcers in our extant comedies are the three hundred Scythian archers who were first introduced to Athens c. 460 and who clearly had the duty of restraining and arresting citizens on the orders of the *prytaneis*; these archers in particular are mocked in comedy, most notably in the final scenes of *Thesmophoriazousae*, for their foreign ways and speech, unlike privately owned slaves, who are mostly not differentiated from their masters in these terms, speaking and acting for the most part like Greeks despite the fact that their typical slave names so frequently suggest non-Greek origin.

Scythian archers under the direction of the *prytaneis* already play a significant role in the first scene of extant Greek comedy, the Assembly meeting at the beginning of *Acharnians*. There the *prytaneis*, who are hostile to the idea of peace with the Spartans, apparently abuse their power by ordering the archers to remove forcibly a man who requests travel funds—which, as he says, the *prytaneis* have already denied him—so that he may serve as an ambassador of peace to the Spartans (51–55). When Dikaiopolis protests this treatment of a fellow advocate of peace, he is told (quite literally) to sit down and shut up (56–59). In spite of this warning and others after it he continues to object and interfere with the proceedings in the Assembly, essentially heckling the *prytaneis* and their agenda; his transgression of the normal rules of order in the Assembly is therefore considerably more severe than anything done by the man who had been forcibly ejected before, but Dikaiopolis is allowed to remain because he is the comic hero, and the humor of the scene demands him to stay and continue to speak to the frustration of the *prytaneis*. The scene does in fact end when Dikaiopolis is physically assaulted by a non-Greek, but this is one of the Odomantian mercenaries whom the ambassador Theorus has brought back from Thrace rather than one of the Scythian archers (161–71).

Another passage where Scythian archers play an important role in a scene of violence under

538 According to Dem. 21.178–79 an Athenian court ruled in favor of a plaintiff who argued that no citizen, not even the archon himself, had the legal authority to forcibly remove him from the Dionysia when (as his opponent alleged) he was not obeying the announcements. That plaintiff argued that the archon had the authority to command his attendants (public slaves) to remove such a person, but not to do it himself. For one citizen to handle another this way was *hubris* (ὕβριζεσθαι, 179); the implication is that the public slaves acting on the orders of a magistrate could not commit *hubris* where the magistrate himself could if acting in the same capacity.

the direction of an Athenian magistrate is *Lysistrata* 430–66. There the *proboulos* has come with a force of archers to take back the Acropolis from the women who have seized it. He orders some of the public slaves under his direction to fetch crowbars to pry open the sealed gate, but Lysistrata immediately emerges from within to countermand his order, claiming that common sense is needed in this situation rather than crowbars (424–32). The magistrate becomes enraged and orders one of the Scythians to seize her and bind her hands behind her back (433–34), but she threatens this slave with a beating if he so much as touches her with the tip of his hand (435–36) despite the fact that he is publicly owned (δημόσιος ὦν κλαύσεται). The participle might be taken grammatically as either concessive or causal, so that whether we translate the latter part of 436 as "he'll take a beating *even though* he's a public slave" or "he'll take a beating *because* he's a public slave" depends on our idea of what best fits this context. A free woman might certainly object to being manhandled by a slave, and if the word she uses were simply *slave* rather than *public* (slave) we would therefore naturally prefer the latter. But as we have seen above, it was actually the special role of such public slaves, and of Scythian archers in particular, to handle citizens with violence when ordered to do so. It therefore makes more sense to infer that she means that his status as a public slave responsible for keeping the peace should under ordinary circumstances prevent her from striking him as she might her own slave, but that in this extraordinary situation she is willing and able to fight him. At any rate, this archer hesitates in apparent fear of her threat, prompting the *proboulos* to order him to grab her once again and to give some kind of fetter to a second slave, with which he is instructed to bind her (437–38).⁵³⁹ Now Lysistrata is outnumbered two to one (the *proboulos* not participating in the violence itself, since that was not his role), so that she runs the risk of quickly being overpowered as Xanthias is at *Frogs* 605–12. But the door behind her, representing the gateway to the occupied Acropolis, turns out to be a perpetual source of reinforcements; another woman comes out from it to even the odds, as she does threatening the public slave in a manner comically unfitting for a respectable Greek woman.⁵⁴⁰ The flummoxed *proboulos* immediately calls for another archer, making a total of three slaves against two women, and instructs the slaves to bind this new woman first, since she is prattling (441–42). The door produces a third woman, who threatens the archer who is moving against the second with a black eye; the *proboulos* responds by calling for yet another archer, who is in turn offset by yet another woman emerging from within, this time threatening to tear out his hair (444–48). There are now four slaves and four women, and the *proboulos* laments that he has run out of archers. Despite the even odds, however, he concludes that he cannot allow himself to be defeated by women, and therefore joins the slaves

539 Henderson 1987, 125 and Sommerstein 1990, 61 take this second slave who is ordered to bind her to be another archer. But unlike all the other slaves whom the *proboulos* calls into the confrontation, he is not specifically called an archer; moreover, when the *proboulos* calls for the slave whom Henderson and Sommerstein would take as a third archer, he is actually calling for a *second* archer if we take his word choice seriously (ἕτερος τοξότης, 441). Archers seem to have responsible mainly for arresting people and other violent acts, and it would therefore not be surprising if the *proboulos* also has in his retinue a slave or slaves of the sort typically charged with more ordinary tasks, such as fetching and carrying things. On this reading at 437–38 the first archer is ordered to restrain her, and one of these other slaves is ordered to tie her up after she has been subdued.

540 She tells him that he will be trampled and shit himself (in fear): ἐπιχεσεῖ πατούμενος, 440. Even in comedy, respectable female characters often avoid such obscenities. There may be additional comedic value in the fact that this could be also taken to mean "you will shit yourself while eating" (the passive forms of πατεῖν "to tread" being indistinguishable from the deponent πατεῖσθαι "to eat" in the present tense).

himself, making five men against four women, and begins to treat the situation as a battle rather than an arrest, telling the archers to arrange themselves in formation (449–52). Lysistrata is only too happy to oblige him, picking up on his military language by claiming that she has four companies of armed fighting women within (452–54). He apparently does not believe her, ordering the Scythians to bind the hands of the women once more (455). At this point Lysistrata calls the half-chorus of old women onto the stage and encourages them as they do battle with the Scythian archers (456–61). When the *proboulos* laments the defeat of his archers, Lysistrata expresses surprise that he had anticipated any other outcome, reminding him that they are not slaves but free women (462–65). This exploits for comic effect a traditional Greek identification of courage with the nature of the free citizen male in contrast to the cowardice of the natural slave; that antithesis is not typically applied to women in the Athenian context, where women, whether free or slave, are not supposed to be warlike.

The women's staged physical attacks and successful defeat of the force of Scythian archers were probably also vicariously satisfying in some sense to the Athenian audience. By the production of *Lysistrata* in 411 two generations of Athenians had grown up in a state that made use of these particular public slaves to arrest citizens and to exert on them any other type of physical force deemed necessary by the magistrates; on one hand they were merely fulfilling a necessary public function that would have been even more problematically performed by citizens, but on the other it must have been galling for a free citizen whose perceived superiority to slaves was so ideologically important to be manhandled by slaves in this way. The staged trouncing of such public slaves by a group of women probably appealed to the sensibilities and psychological needs of the audience by putting these slave enforcers in their place, which is shown to be not only below that of the free male citizens whom they were sometimes directed to accost but also below that of free women. We should recall that the experience of being ordered about by magistrates who were supported by the physical force of public slaves was not only a part of daily life at Athens but also specifically a part of the experience of participating in the dramatic festivals themselves: the slave attendants of the eponymous archon were responsible for removing from the theater people who did not pay attention to official announcements.⁵⁴¹ Presumably these announcements concerned things such as which seats were reserved for whom and when people in the audience were expected to become quiet in preparation for the beginning of a play or other event. Likewise our sources indicate the existence of a class of people called "rod-holders" (*rabdouchoi*) responsible for keeping the peace within the theater, evidently by striking the unruly with their rods.⁵⁴² There is no explicit evidence in our texts as to whether these people were slaves or free men, or indeed whether they were associated in some way with the slave attendants of the eponymous archon; but the indignation of the plaintiff mentioned at Demosthenes 21.178–80 at having been struck by the father of the archon, when such physical violence should have been the prerogative of a public slave attendant, strongly suggests that when it was necessary to resort to corporal punishment of citizens in the theater that punishment would most likely have been meted out by public slaves. Though Scythian archers specifically do not seem to have been involved with keeping order at the dramatic festivals, they were surely capable of standing symbolically for all public slaves who wielded power over free men. The feeling that these archers had been put in their place through real or threatened violence might

541 Dem. 21.178–80.

542 *Peace* 734–35 with Σ ad loc.; Plato *Laws* 700c. Cf. Roselli 2011, 152.

have been all the more pleasant for audience members who had recently been compelled to change seats by the threat of state-sanctioned violence from public slaves.

The idea that many Athenians resented the Scythian archers on some level and therefore enjoyed laughing at them is supported by the derisive depiction of the archer in the final scenes of *Thesmophoriazusae*. This is the only speaking public slave character in the extant plays, and so it is only through him that we learn much about how Athenians may have perceived these slaves as people. Every occasion this archer has to open his mouth during his three hundred lines onstage (929–1231) is also an occasion to laugh at him, since he is depicted as having a truly terrible command of Greek. This stands in stark contrast to the treatment of the other speaking slave characters in comedy, all of whom are privately owned slaves; their Greek does not differ substantially from that of their masters. Moreover, the archer's poor grasp of Greek leads to continual misunderstandings between himself and the other characters that make him look unintelligent. But the Scythian is not merely depicted as ignorant of Greek language and culture:⁵⁴³ he also really does appear to be quite dense. For instance, he goes on far too long in speaking to Echo, despite the fact that she repeats everything he says; moreover, he is easily fooled by Euripides' scheme with the *auletris* and the dancer at the end of the play, and after that does not detect that the chorus are mocking him, directing him everywhere but toward the fleeing Euripides. The point that he is in fact stupid is made explicitly, and with a strong connection to the fact that he is non-Greek, by Euripides at 1128–32, when he considers that his previous schemes have been too sophisticated for the nature of a non-Greek (βάρβαρος φύσις, 1129) and arrives at the plan for the final, successful scheme which plays on the slave's base sexual appetites.⁵⁴⁴ It is worth noting that this extended mockery of a Scythian archer is possible only because he is separated from his associated magistrate early on, unlike any other such character in the extant plays. After the *prytanis* arrives, assesses the situation, and orders the archer to bind Inlaw and guard him, striking anyone who approaches him with a whip, he leaves the stage and never returns again (929–46). Magistrates of various types were in control of the actions of the real Scythian archers, and their power within the apparatus of the state was presumably recognized by most people as legitimate; in order for audience resentment at being subject to the violence of slaves to be converted into laughter, the foreign slave must be separated from the official, legitimate authority figure with whom he is associated.

Part 5.8: Slave Violence Beyond the Master's Orders

As we have seen above, mostly the slaves who engage in physical violence in the comedies of Aristophanes, whether privately or publicly owned, do so at the behest of their masters or of people who are otherwise in charge of them (magistrates in the case of public slaves). Cario in *Wealth* is a significant exception, since violent tendencies are clearly a part of his character. Some of the specific manifestations of these tendencies have come up elsewhere, whether under the heading of threatened slaves (since his threats and physical aggressiveness often prompt

543 Probably he is *dressed* like a Scythian as well, but if so it will have been because this was the uniform of the actual Scythian archers. It is therefore unclear to what extent this aspect of his foreignness would be amusing, since by this point in Athenian history it would have been familiar. I take it for granted that the Greek of actual Scythian archers cannot have been nearly so terrible as this character's; otherwise their ability to perform their duties would have suffered.

544 For an extended treatment of the archer's humiliation in the final scene of the play, cf. Chapter Four.

threats in turn) or in the discussion of his aggressive argument and song-exchange with the chorus in Chapter Three. But he shows the same disposition already in the first scene of the play, not only by his unjustifiably aggressive initial approach to Wealth, threatening violence before the old blind god even has a chance to speak (56–57), but also by his gleeful escalation of the situation once his master, too, has become angry at the irascible god. At that point the slave's threats become more explicit (ἀπό σ' ὀλῶ κακὸν κακῶς, 65), and he suggests to Chremylus the rather cruel vengeance of taking the blind man to the top of a cliff and leaving him there so that he will fall and break his neck (67–70). The master follows the slave's suggestion and orders him to pick up Wealth; we must assume that the slave at that point begins to do so and only stops because the old man begins to cooperate. Thus the sexual aggressiveness of this particular slave character (the song-exchange with the chorus, the innuendo in his interaction with his master's wife, and the story he tells her about his adventure with the old woman in the *temenos* of Asclepius) is complemented by pure physical aggressiveness as well. This characterization serves to distinguish him from his master, who alternates with him in the role of the comic hero; moreover, these scenes fulfill an important comic function by staging extremely transgressive behavior which in one way is all the more transgressive because it comes from a slave.

I have discussed briefly above the scene in which Cario and the Honest Man are harassed by and ultimately drive away the Informer, focusing on the threat of torture invoked against the slave by the Informer and how Cario disregards it with impunity according to the pattern of threat and lack of action that characterizes the interactions of free people with him. Eventually, however, Cario loses patience with the Informer and decides to rob him, first demanding his outer garment (κατάθου ταχέως θοιμάτιον, 925) and then his sandals (ἔπειθ' ὑπόλυσαι, 927). The Honest Man seems to join him in his endeavor, or at least provides verbal support (925–27). When the Informer attempts to put up a fight, Cario is happy to oblige, in so doing taking on the metaphorical role of a citizen: the Informer challenges "whoever wants it" (ὁ βουλόμενος, 929) to a brawl for his clothing, using common terminology for a courtroom prosecutor (whose role could be played by anyone—that is, any adult male citizen—who wished to do so). In fact this same language had been used with that technical meaning only a few lines earlier at 908–918. Cario responds with the Informer's exact words from that earlier exchange: "Well isn't that me?" (οὔκουν ἐκεῖνός εἰμ' ἐγώ;, 929). The slave thereby symbolically takes on the role of a courtroom prosecutor as he beats a citizen and robs him of his clothing, a crime which by the mid-fourth century if not before could carry the death penalty.⁵⁴⁵ That he actually does strike the Informer seems clear from the latter's wailing at 930. The witness whom the Informer has brought with him runs away, a fact to which Cario draws his attention with glee when he calls out for him to witness these acts of violence (932–35). More outcries from the Informer should indicate that he is being beaten further, surely by Cario but possibly also by the Honest Man. Finally, the slave adds further insult to injury by outfitting the Informer with the tattered old clothing which had formerly belonged to the Honest Man, claiming in addition that he will dedicate his old shoes to the god by nailing them to the Informer's forehead (942–43). At this point the Informer has had enough, and he leaves claiming that he will be back to punish Wealth if he can find allies. As should be clear from the above, Cario behaves extremely hubristically in this scene. Nonetheless, he never experiences any reprisals for his actions, neither in the form of blows from the Informer during the scene nor in any other way for the duration of the play. Of course part of

545 [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 52.1.

this has to do with the role of the Informer within the comedy; visitors who are aligned against the comic project are regularly treated quite badly in our extant comedies, and to that extent Cario is merely performing in the role of a slave a function that is more often performed by the usual comic hero, who is a citizen. But his obsession with not merely driving the irritating interloper away (as the usual comic hero would) but actually robbing him of his clothes, thereby performing an action associated with the worst type of rogue and highwayman, seems to characterize him not merely as an incorrigible slave but actually as a criminal. The theft of clothes was undoubtedly a transgressive act, and for that reason alone an audience might like to see it performed, particularly against an unsympathetic character such as the Informer. But the association of such an act with a slave character in particular also conforms to ideological distinctions in the respective natures of free men and slaves, thereby reinforcing the idea of the natural slave as inferior to free men and making the actions of the character more believable because he has been established to be this type of undisciplined and irredeemable figure.

With Cario's theft of the Informer's clothing on his own initiative and in the complete absence of his master we should compare a similar act performed by the unnamed slave at *Peace* 819–1126. This slave and his master attempt to perform a sacrifice to the goddess Peace toward the end of the play but find themselves continually harassed by the oracle-monger Hierokles (1043–1116), who first warns them vehemently that the oracles are not in favor of a peace with the Spartans and then demands a portion of their sacrificial meat. When this is denied him, he ultimately chooses to try to steal it, prompting the master Trygaeus to strike him in an attempt to drive him away (1119). When the master then orders his slave to strike the oracle-monger with his stick, the slave refuses, telling his master to do that instead; he himself wants to strip Hierokles of the sheepskins he is wearing (1122–24). Here too, then, we have a slave character who beyond the orders of his master turns to the theft of clothing from a free man. Clearly this particular type of violent and scurrilous behavior is meant to be associated with a slavish disposition.

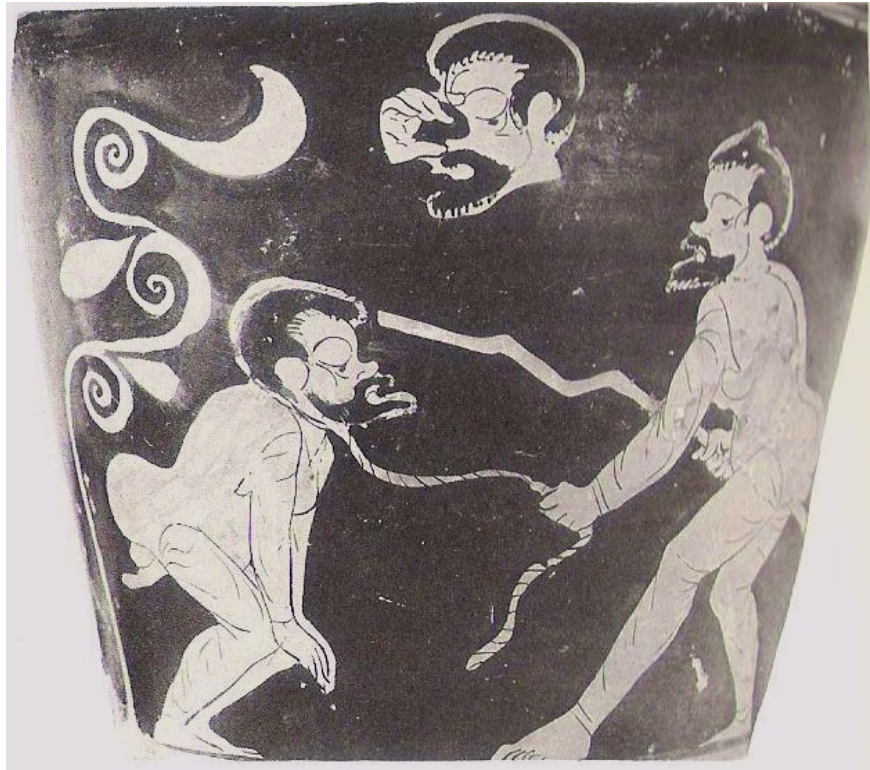
Conclusion to Chapter Five

I have argued above that the combination of active and passive roles played by comic slave characters in non-sexual physically abusive humor is similar to what we find for explicitly sexual humor. On one hand, in both kinds of humor there are silent victims who are exposed, abused, or beaten onstage for the amusement of the audience. Their objectification also serves an ideological function or functions: often it allows an audience composed entirely or at least predominantly of free people to deride and symbolically punish a representative slave scape goat, thereby assuaging their fear of their own slaves. Moreover, the violent domination of slave bodies often holds a symbolic value that has little to do with the real life interaction of masters with their slaves. A free character who exposes, manhandles, or beats a slave character is usually in the midst of a komastic celebration; in this context, these violent acts serve to symbolize the rejuvenation of the comic hero and the success of the comic project. On the other hand, slave characters not only function as tools of violence for their masters in comedy—a phenomenon which I argue is largely a realistic reflection of how scenes of violence played out in everyday Athenian life—but also sometimes engage in violent acts on their own initiative in the absence of or even in defiance of their masters' orders. It is no coincidence that these slave characters—in

particular the unnamed *oiketes* in *Peace* and Cario in *Wealth*—are also noteworthy for their recurrent introduction of transgressive sexual humor that usurps the prerogatives of their masters. One of the primary functions of such slave characters is to transgress in any and every way possible for the benefit of an audience that is actively identifying with them to experience such transgressive acts vicariously.

Figures for Chapter Five

Chap. 5, Fig. 1
Red-figure Askos
Apulia, 360–50 BC
Getty Villa 96.AE.114
Photographed by Daniel Walin at the Getty Villa



Chap. 5, Fig. 2
Red-figure calyx crater
Apulia
Berlin 3043
Scanned from Bieber 1961, fig. 513

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Abbreviations

- CGL* G. Goetz, ed. 1888–1923. *Corpus Glossariorum Latinorum*. 7 vols. Leipzig.
- LSJ* H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, H. S. Jones, and R. McKenzie, eds. 1996. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford.
- TAL* Sommerstein, A. 2009. *Talking About Laughter*. Oxford.

Appendix A: χύτρα (*chytra*) as a Vaginal and Uterine Metaphor

It is well known that medical writers in antiquity often imagined the womb as an upside-down vessel, beginning with Hippocratic texts dating in their earliest forms to the fifth century BC.⁵⁴⁶ In this appendix I argue that this metaphor of the womb as a pot, and therefore of the vagina as the neck of the pot, was not solely medical but also popular, and that it was exploited for humorous effect in Greek comedy. I argue specifically that comic playwrights used the word *chytra* (or "cooking pot") in this way. This term should join the other comic sexual metaphors derived from kitchen utensils which have been usefully explored by Henderson in *The Maculate Muse* (142–44). The idea of *chytra* as a sexual metaphor is particularly important for my reading of Aristophanes' *Wealth*. If my reading is correct, *Wealth* 665–95 and 1204–7 should also be regarded as examples of the comic exploitation of *chytra* as a sexual metaphor; since I discuss those passages in depth in the second chapter, I will make no further mention of them here.

In addition to the parallel with medical texts, this metaphor is also intelligible on analogy with everyday cooking, since it has been established by Morris 1985 that the Greeks used two pot-props called λάσανα or χυτρόποδες (*chytra* feet) to hold round-bottomed cooking pots over a fire; the resulting arrangement looks much like the lower half of a comically padded person squatting over the fire, as is reinforced by *Peace* 891–93, which depends for its humor on the notion that a dark patch on Theoria's "cooker" (ὀπτάνιον) near the point where it made contact with her λάσανα is intelligible as a reference to pubic hair.

The paratragic description in Antiphanes' *Aphrodisios* of a *chytra* as "pregnant with tender-fleshed forms" (τακερόχρωτ' εἶδη κύουσαν, fr. 55.5 K.-A.), while probably not in itself sexual, does imagine the *chytra* as a kind of womb. Such is the case too at *Thesmophoriazusae* 505–16, where a purchased infant is brought into the house hidden in a *chytra* to avoid the eyes of a husband who has been fooled into believing that his wife is in labor; any doubt there might have been about the *chytra*-as-womb metaphor in that passage is dispelled by the detail that the child "kicked the belly of the *chytra*" (τὸ γὰρ ἦτρον τῆς χύτρας ἐλάκτισεν, 509) when it was ready to be "born".⁵⁴⁷

It is clear, then, that in Old Comedy *chytra* could function as a metaphor for the womb in non-sexual contexts. But it also functions this way in several cunnilingus jokes, one of which adds considerably to the comic potential of *Knights* 1173–76. Anderson 2008 argues convincingly that this passage is filled with sexual double entendres and (what is particularly useful for my current purpose) that 1175–76 constitutes a cunnilingus joke, but he is not aware of the sexual valence of *chytra* in comedy. My argument for *chytra* as a vaginal and uterine metaphor further strengthens his case. In this passage the sausage seller, claiming that Athena is watching over Demos, replaces Solon's protective image of Athena holding her *hands* (*cheiras*, fr. 4.4W) over the city via a *para prosdokian* joke with one of her holding a *chytra* of *zōmos*

546 Cf. Dasen and Ducaté-Paarmann, 240–41. Words for various kinds of vessels used in this medical metaphor include: ἄγγος at Hip. *Epidemics* 6.5.11 (= Littré V, 318), Hip. *Generation* 9 (= Littré VII, 482); ἄσκός at Hip. *Diseases of Women* 1.61, 2.170 (= Littré VIII, 124, 15–21; 350, 16–17); λήκυθος at Hip. *Diseases of Women* 1.33 (= Littré VIII, 78); and ἀρυστήρ at Hip. *Generation* 9 (= Littré VII, 482).

547 This *chytra*-as-womb metaphor may have some relation to the exposure of infants in pots, which by this logic could be considered a kind of return to the womb. On exposure in pots cf. Hdt. 1.113; Ar. *Ran.* 1189–90; Paus. Gr. s.v. ἐγχυτρίστρια. On exposure in general cf. Patterson 1985.

(doubly determined as a sexual phrase) over Demos.⁵⁴⁸ In his reaction Demos drops the reference to broth but adds the definite article:

οἶει γὰρ οἰκεῖσθ' ἄν ἔτι τήνδε τὴν πόλιν,
εἰ μὴ φανερωῶς ἡμῶν ὑπερεῖχε τὴν χύτραν;

Do you think this city would still be inhabited were she not clearly holding her "pot" over us?
Knights 1175–76

For the sake of the joke the definite article is to be taken to indicate possession (*her* pot/vagina, as I have translated). On this line of argument we have here a playful insult directed at the audience (and indeed the entire *polis*): the continuing survival, not to mention hegemony, of Athens is comically construed as a result of the ability of the goddess' organ to attract the interest of a populace obsessed with cunnilingus. *Peace* 716 is a useful comparandum (a cunnilingus joke at the expense of the *boulē*); for the humorous sexualization of goddesses we could compare *Peace* 978–90, *Birds* 1253–56, and *Frogs* 503–18.⁵⁴⁹

I argue in my third chapter that in the slave Xanthias' aside at *Wasps* 903–4 about the Dog of Cydathenaeum—an obvious Cleon figure—the phrase "good at thoroughly licking pots" (ἀγαθός...διαλείχειν τὰς χύτρας, 904) should be taken not only as a reference to that politician's greed (the *opinio communis*) but also as an insinuation that he enjoys performing cunnilingus. I show in that chapter that there are comic parallels for the verb διαλείχειν ("to lick thoroughly") in this obscene sense and that the double image of Cleon as a dog licking cookware and as a debased politician performing oral sex had already occurred, in a play produced two years earlier, at *Knights* 1030–34. The common comic practice of using various types of cookware as metaphors for genitalia facilitates this kind of humor.

In the fourth chapter I argue that this metaphor is also in effect at *Ecclesiazusae* 730–37. In that passage two household objects, a bran-sifter and a *chytra*, are simultaneously imagined as household objects and as female participants in a ritual procession; scholars have tended to assume that these are actually objects being treated as if they were mute characters. But I argue that they are actually mute female slave characters who are treated as household objects, and given the names of those objects, for the sake of a joke. Expanding on the argument of duBois 2003, 219–20 that both the bran-sifter and the *chytra* function as the objects of sexual jokes here, I argue in addition that the extended emphasis on the darkness of the *chytra* occupies the space in which the neighbor is pointing out the pubic hair of the mute nude character playing a *chytra*. Similar "darkness" language is used to point out the pubic hair of the female *aulos* player in *Wasps* and *Theoria* in *Peace*.

548 Sommerstein 1981, 205 adduces Solon 4, which I do still think is in play here, to explain Demos' reaction: it is because of his familiarity with Solon's poem, of which his memory is "a little muddled", that the "pot of broth comes as no surprise to him". But my interpretation has the advantage of explaining his reaction as something quintessentially Aristophanic: a playful insult directed at the audience. My reading also explains the introduction of τὴν at 1176.

549 Such an explicit sexualization of Athena in particular, in contrast to *Peace* (whose cult at Athens was not founded until 374; cf. Philoch. *FGrH* 328 F 151; Isoc. 15.109–10; Nepos *Timotheus* 2.2) or Iris (who was never worshipped in Attic cult), might seem surprising; but Persephone (*Frogs* 503–18) was obviously quite important at Eleusis. For that matter Dionysus, if we can transition to male gods, was important in Attic cult, and he is made thoroughly ridiculous again and again in the *Frogs*.

Chytra as an obscene metaphor occurs again a little more than a hundred lines later in the *Ecclesiazusae*:

χύτρας ἔτνους ἔψουσιν αἱ νεώταται·
Σμοῖος δ' ἐν αὐταῖς ἵππικὴν στολὴν ἔχων
τὰ τῶν γυναικῶν διακαθαίρει τρύβλια.

The youngest women are boiling pots of pea-soup, but Smoios among them, decked out like a horse(man), is giving the bowls of the women a good cleaning.⁵⁵⁰ *Eccl.* 845–47

The reference to *chytrai* at 845 occupies the moment when the speech of the female herald turns from a list of the foods present at the banquet to the climactic sexual joke. It is clear enough, I think, especially with reference to the abundance of other broth/soup-based cunnilingus jokes in Aristophanes, that the ἔτνος ("pea soup") refers to vaginal secretion and the τρύβλια ("bowls") to the region with which Smoios has primarily to deal. The *chytrai* ("pots"), then, will need to refer to the interior space imagined as the source of the secretions.

When placed in relation to these passages, the comic coinage *καταχυτρίσαι* (Ar. fr. 833 K.-A.) would seem to be a typically creative synonym for βινεῖν on analogy with similarly formed *κατα-* compounds, such as *καταπύγων*, *καταβάλλειν*, *καταγυαρτίζειν*, *καταπελτάζειν*, *κατατριακοντουτίζειν*, *κατελαύνειν*, and *κατορύττειν* (on all of which cf. Henderson 1991).⁵⁵¹ The fragment of Diocles which reads "I will take away the *chytra* hot from the pot-props" (ἀπὸ λασάνων θερμὴν ἀφαιρήσω χύτραν, fr. 9 K.-A.) is probably also sexual, for pot-props (*lasana*) are a phallic reference at *Peace* 893 and heat is a commonplace in the language of desire and intercourse.⁵⁵²

550 For my interpretation of "decked out like a horse(man)" (ἵππικὴν στολὴν ἔχων, 846), cf. my discussion of Sophr. fr. 53 in the second chapter.

551 The indication of the testimonia that Aristophanes (among others) used *καταχυτρίσαι* to mean "harm" (ἔλεγον δὲ καὶ τὸ βλάψαι καταχυτρίσαι, ὡς Ἀριστοφάνης) is surely either a euphemism itself or a misunderstanding.

552 On pot-props: cf. Walin 2009, 37; Henderson 1991, 142–3. On heat: cf. Henderson 1991, 47–48; 177–78.